

Challenges for Girls in Seeking Higher Education: A Case of Qutbal, Pakistan

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Abstract

Girls' education is often considered as a challenge in societies where a huge gender gap exists and patriarchy is in practice. But getting higher education for girls living mostly in rural areas of Pakistan is the challenge itself. This study aims to see the difficulties faced by the girls to get their higher education. The objective of this research is to examine the socioeconomic and cultural obstacles faced by girls in a particular area of district Attock's village named Qutbal. Girls' own will related to their higher education and the decision-making of their families is explored in this research. For that reason, data were collected from girls who are unable to take admission to the university. And parents of those girls who are studying at university. Exploratory research methodology is used. A sample size of 15 girls and 10 parents have been selected. A purposive sampling technique has been used. In-depth interviews had been conducted to collect data. After the research findings suggest the ground realities. What sort of struggles do girls have to face when they want to pursue higher education? What type of cultural and socioeconomic hindrances do parents face when they let their daughters to complete their education? Research also covers societal narratives related to girls' education. This study is helpful to figure out what is the actual struggle of girls in perusing their higher education. How one can strengthen those who are enthusiastic to fulfill their dreams to get financial independence as well as take their part in the country's development.

Key Words: *Women's education, Higher education, Cultural barriers, Socio-economic Challenges, Decision making, Financial independence.*¹

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1. Introduction

In its broadest sense, education serves as a tool for a social group to renew and defend its beliefs. H.H Horne. Education is what broadens one's ideas. It gives you a sense of logic and reasoning. The provision of inclusive and equitable education to everyone is one of the goals of Sustainable Development goals (United Nations , n.d.). It is everyone's right to get a quality education irrespective of their gender. Elimination of gender disparities in education is very important. A country becomes successful only when both male and female members contribute to its development. There is no contradiction in the fact that education plays a very crucial role in a country's socioeconomic development. But unfortunately, women have been facing strong biases related to their education rights mostly in developing countries like Pakistan.

In Pakistani society, social roles are clearly defined men are considered to be the bread earner for their families while women are responsible only to perform household activities. This social construction gave rise to the fact that invest more in boys' education than in girls. So male members are equipped with skills that will help them to compete for resources but females are taught domestic skills. These societal roles restrict girls to complete their education. The trend is most common in rural areas of the country. Where matric or inter-level education is considered enough for girls. Country where the female literacy rate is 48% as compared to men's 70%. While considering that literacy rate in Pakistan is defined as people with age above 15 years who can read and write. Still, the literacy rate for females is not in good numbers. Due to this fact getting higher education becomes a serious problem for the country's girls.

‘Any official post-secondary education, including those offered by public and private universities, colleges, technical training facilities, and vocational schools, is referred to as tertiary education’. (The World Bank , n.d.) Higher education is considered as the education of university level which enable the individual to get a degree. In Pakistan education after the intermediate level is called higher education. ‘Higher education is a valuable cultural and scientific resource that fosters individual growth and advances economic, technological, and social transformation’ (UNESCO , n.d.). Higher education enables the student for knowledge sharing. Helps them to polish their skills related to research and innovation. In these unstable circumstances, tertiary education equips the students to get financial security and a stable future.

Role that higher education plays in an individual's life is astonishing. But in Pakistan especially in rural areas females are far behind in this race. We need to understand that higher education is very important for girls. It play phenomenal role in increasing women's confidence. It enhance their status in family as well as in society. Higher education enable women's to know about their fundamental rights (Uddin, Khan, & Ghani, 2021). In developing countries like Pakistan Girls have to face various problems when they tries to do something for their self. Rural areas women's specially have various problems like financial constraints, household responsibilities and societal pressure which restrict them to continue their higher education (Rizwana, Afzal, Safdar, & Hasan, 2021).

1.1.Problem Statement

Rural areas having low ratio of girl's education are prominent same goes with completion of higher education persuasion. Qutbal is a village in the Attock district which is at a distance of 52.3km from Attock city. Also having less distance towards Rawalpindi which is 34.1km. This village is also one of them where the completion of higher education is a serious challenge for girls. No University is existing nearby the village. So that girls can go and get their degrees. Only colleges are present in Fateh Jang city which is almost 13 km away from the village. These are public and private colleges. Where the education is not up to the standards of higher education provided by universities. Degrees of BSC and BA are available in public college while there is no other institute which is offering a four-year bachelor's degree or Master's degree. Most of the girls of the village got admission to this college for their higher secondary education. But now it is seen as a rare number of girls who are taking steps and taking admission to the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. As the number of these girls is not large but still, the trend is coming.

This research will focus on why the number of girls taking admission to universities of this village is not large. What are the challenges faced by those girls who are pursuing their higher education. Why most of the girls are not completing their higher education? Are the girls self-interested to pursue their higher education? Or they have parental or societal pressure that instead of getting higher education they have to learn some skill base knowledge like sewing or beautician courses. This study will also explore the cultural challenges faced by the girls of area when they want to continue their studies.

1.2 Research Question

1. How family decisions influence the girl's access to higher education?
2. How do girls navigate the financial and cultural obstacles to higher education?

1.3 Objectives

- To investigate decision making process related to girls' higher education.
- To assess the socioeconomic and cultural challenges faced by girls while pursuing higher education.

2. Review of Literature

Ingrid Robeyns (2006) states about three model of education that education serve as human capital by producing skills and increase human production. Then education is human right that should be guaranteed. Further education act as capability which says equality of capabilities in and through education. This research was conducted in Amsterdam by analyzing three model of education. Research findings suggest that aim of research policies is to expand capabilities. As well as right to education is used strategically (Robeyns, 2006).

Emma Z. L. Richardson et.al (2019) demonstrated about the program of opening opportunities by population council of New York in their research. This program is related to providing skills and opportunities to rural girls. This research further talk about realist evaluation which explore the social intervention and examine how and why they work. Research is conducted in Guatemala for which sample of 36 graduates is taken. Snow ball sampling technique was used. Data was collected through life history interviews and open ended interviews. Research findings suggest that this program was helpful for girls in building confidence and develop leadership qualities in them. As well as enable them for paid work (Richardson , Phillips, Colom, Ielaf Khalil, & Nichols, 2019).

Muhammad Amin et.al (2018) conducted research on female's problem in progression of their education. In this research it shows that cultural norms, low socio economic status, ignorant parents, unavailability of university and stereotype thinking are some of the major problems faced by females while pursuing their education. For that reason this research was conducted in public university of Pakistan sample size of 200 female students was taken and mixed method approach was used. For quantitative data structured questionnaire and for qualitative data semi structured interviews were conducted. Findings shows that ignorant parent are barrier in girl's higher education. As well as socio cultural norms also become hurdle to girl's education (Amin, Tatlah, & Afghani, 2018).

Sheila Aikman et.al (2013) in their research about gender inequality and girls education stated about theories of human development related to education. That focuses on gender equality through lens of quality education. This research is further discussing gender education and development locating “quality” and experience of education. Research is conducted in Low income countries including Pakistan, Malawi, Cambodia and Peru. This was a qualitative research by reviewing the literature. Finding shows that Gender equitable quality education can be ensure by examining how inequalities are intersect and interrelated (Aikman & Rao, 2013).

Waqar Shahzad (2017) while exploring the barrier to female higher education states that these were some prominent issues faced by girls including security related issues, transport problems and hostel dues. This research was conducted in Dir Lower, KP. Sample of 374 females were taken and quantitative research technique was used while structured questionnaire were established. Research findings suggest that Females have encountered various issues while attaining higher education. Including transport, hostel and security (Shahzad , 2017).

Velu Suresh Kumar (2021) suggest that family, social, economic and institutional challenges are major for rural women’s who wanted to pursue their higher education. This research was conducted in Pudukkottai District in Tamil Nadu, India. Sample size of 330 undergraduate and postgraduate females was taken. Multistage sampling technique was used. For primary data collection snowball sampling was used. Findings of this research shows Significant progress has been seen in women education and the gap is narrowing down between male and female education. Still serious challenges are faced by women’s (Kumar, 2021).

Fauzia Maqsood et.al (2013) discuss the problems faced by females in obtaining higher education. Girls face these problems in pursuing higher education. Specification of gender roles, Social pressure on family, financial constraints, Perception about coeducation and Distance to educational institutions. This research was conducted in university of Gujrat. For conducting this research Mixed method approach was used including 8 students for FGD and 4 for in-depth interviews. Findings of the research suggest that Family resentment and stereotyped gender roles are the hurdles. While those who cope up will help other girls to get higher education (Maqsood, Maqsood, & Raza, 2012).

Sumara Mehmood et.al (2018) discuss the socioeconomic and cultural challenges faced by girls while completing higher education. Research highlights that these are the challenges faced by females. Travel freedom, Sexual harassment, Family support and opposition to higher education and Socio-cultural challenges while discussing with the girls across Pakistan. For this research Sample size of 601 individual was taken. Survey method was used, structured questionnaire prepared. Finding shows that Parents are sensible regarding their daughter's physical security. Socio-cultural and economic factors are main challenges (Mehmood, Chong, & Hussain, 2018).

3. Methodology

This research has explored the trend of higher education for girls in rural areas. The locale selected for the research is a village name Qutbal. Which is about 13km away from the Fateh Jang city of Attock district. The reason to select this location is that it has been seen that a very less number of girls went to university from this village to complete their education. This research is designed in a way that it was qualitative. So the data collected was qualitative in nature.

For conducting this research exploratory research methodology was used. Exploratory research methodology is used when we have a general idea about the topic. As we have some information on why girls are not pursuing their education. But this research has explored the challenges of girls as well as what their parents have to face. Furthermore, what is the societal narrative related to girls' higher education? For that reason, a purposive sampling technique was used. Primary data were collected to complete this research. In-depth interviews were conducted with 24 respondents to gather data. These 24 members include 15 girls who are not studying in universities and 9 parents of university-going girls to explore the challenges they face. For the collection of data, two types of interview guides were prepared one to collect data from girls and the other from parents. Data collection has been completed in a period of one month.

4. Results

Demographic Information of Respondents

Table I. Demographic Information of Girls (n=15)

Age- Wise Distribution of Respondents	
16-20	5 (33%)

21-25	8 (53%)
26-30	0 (0%)
31-35	2 (13%)
Level of Education	
Matric	1 (6%)
Intermediate	6 (40%)
Bachelors	8 (53%)
Family Type	
Nuclear	10 (66%)
Joint	5 (33%)
Monthly Household Income	
Below 8k	1 (6%)
Between 8k-25k	5 (33%)
Above 25k	9 (60%)

Table II. Demographic Information of Girls Parents (n=9)

Age- Wise Distribution of Respondents	
41-50	2 (22%)
51-60	5 (55%)
61-70	2 (22%)
Level of Education	
No schooling	1 (11%)
middle	2 (22%)
Matric	3 (33%)
Intermediate	2 (22%)
Bachelors	1 (11%)
Family Type	
Nuclear	7 (77%)
Joint	2 (22%)
Monthly Household Income	
Below 30k	2 (22%)
Between 30k-60k	4 (44%)
Above 60k	3 (33%)

Thematic Analysis

Data was qualitative in nature so the analysis of data has been done by thematic way. For thematic analysis six steps has been followed. First of all is formalization which includes transcription of recorded interviews then different codes were given to similar text. After that different themes were

generated then review these themes after that particular names were given to each theme. After all this process finally writing of that themes were done. As a result of this process following themes were generated.

Table III. Thematic Distribution of Data

Themes	Subthemes
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male as decision maker • Decision making in absence of male head • Mutual decision making
Role model to Pursue higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of influence • Inspirations from family
Specification of gender roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household chores • Getting married • learning skills
Financial constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel expenditure • Tuition fee
Factors influence Parents decisions about their daughters Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security concerns • Societal pressure • Lack of resources
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On mother's desire • Girls own wish
Expectation from daughters after completing degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build career • Helpful in longer run

Sociocultural Hindrances faced by Girls

1 Decision Making

1.1 Male as Decision Maker:

Pakistan is considered as male dominant society. Where patriarchy is in common. Male member of the house is responsible to take decision. Most of the responses during my research shows that their father's take decision related to their every matter including education. Result shows that most girls

belongs to nuclear family system. As well as there are few respondents who belongs to joint families still that decision related to daughters is taken by their fathers. As the following statement shows:

“My dada abu lives in same house but still my father takes every decision for us.” R1

1.2 Decision Making in absence of Male Head:

In absence of male member of the house females take decision. Findings show that in case if father is not living with families or died then mother is responsible for decision making in nuclear families. But females further concern with other males of the families.

“My Father lives in Saudi Arabia so my mother is responsible for our immediate decisions but yes she concerns with father.” R5

“After death of my father my mother take decision for every matter she also concern with my maternal uncle.” R8

1.3 Mutual Decision Making:

Field findings suggest in families where wives are educated and are financially independent contribute more in decisions related to their children’s. As respondents says that they also support their husbands financially so they have important role in their daughter’s education related decisions.

“I and my husband both take decision mutually.” R14

“My husband and I make every decision together.” R20

Above mentioned two respondents are educated and doing jobs. Which shows that those mothers who are educated and are contributing financially can take more part in their daughters education related decision.

2 Role model to Pursue Higher Education:

The study investigates the influence of female role models for girls who have completed their higher education and have successful career. So following are three major themes generated.

2.1 Lack of Influence:

Field findings suggest that most of the girls do not have any role model from their close family or from surrounding from whom she get inspired. This also show one reason for parents not letting their

daughters to go and complete their higher education from universities. Because no one from their families ever go to university. As one of the respondent says that when she asked her father to let her go to university he replied:

“No one from our family has ever gone to university how can we allow you?”R₁

Another one replied responded me in answer to have role model:

“No there is no role model. I am the only one who got admission in college my elder sisters only matriculated.” R₂

This shows that not having role model or influence from near family also restrict girls to pursue their higher education from universities.

2.2 Inspirations from Family:

Few respondents said that they have inspirations from immediate families. Some said that their cousins or girls living their surrounding go to university or have completed their higher education. They get inspired from those who have pursued their higher education.

“In my family there is a girl who has done his masters in political science and she is headmistress of a school. I really admire her.” R₃

“My cousins are currently going university they are pursuing their higher education. One of she has completed education and she is now psychiatric”. R₈

If girls from family pursue higher education from her other girls also get inspired. As people from rural areas are not much educated they are unaware of the importance of education. So seeing others daughter getting education can inspired them. As one of respondent says this to me:

“If there are girls around us who are educated have their career and are empowered this definitely influence our parent. They also wish their daughters should also become like that.”R₃

Few respondents said that there is no one from their family who get admission to university but they are inspired from their teachers. Which shows that teachers also plays important role and influence many girls to pursue their higher education.

3 Specification of Gender Roles:

In Pakistani society gender roles are very specific. Especially in rural areas it's very common that these things are men specific and these are women. From research following are the themes generated which shows what are the expectations placed in society from girls instead of getting higher education.

3.1 Household Chores:

Most of the respondents says that being girl it is expected from them to place their full consideration into household work. Because this is what that will be helpful for them in future. When they have completed their intermediate level education they must focus on their house. Discussion with respondents led to assume that gender specific barriers are very common towards girls while asking them to involve more in household work.

“In my family it is said that most important duty of a girl is taking care of her house. After marriage she has to manage her household so there is no need of too much education or any proper degree for a girl.”

“In village people expect from their daughters to do household work. She must be educated is not taken into consideration.” R₇

So from the field findings it is assumed that the primary duty of girl must be household work. That will be beneficial for her in future because their parents consider education will not helpful in later part of their lives.

3.2 Getting Married:

Field findings suggest that girls have more pressure of getting married. When they are done with intermediate level education parents consider that their daughters should be married now. Due to which many girls said they are unable to complete their education. Or pursue higher education degree which is of four years.

“In our family when a girl grows up the only expectation towards her is get married.” R₂

Discussion with the respondents also reveal that parents of a daughter are worried about their daughter's wedding expenses which also restrict them to spend on the educational expenses. So most of the respondents says that marriage become one of the hurdle in higher education of girls.

“Before marriage parents are worried about their daughter’s wedding expenses with their educational expenses which restrict parents from spending on education of girls. And after marriage most of the girls are not able to continue their education.”R₈

“Girl’s marriage in our family is more important than anything else. So marriage is one of the biggest hurdle in their education.”R₂

Research shows that wedding has given important priority in girl’s life. So often girls are discourage to continue their higher education because their priority is to get married and education has no concerns with that.

3.3 Learning Skills:

Most of the girls explained in this study that it is expected from them to learn some skills. Because these skills will be beneficial for them in later part of their lives. Girls are asked to learn cooking. As well as sewing. And many girls share that they learn the skill of sewing after their matriculation or intermediate level education. As their families thinks if they have these skills they can work while staying at their home.

“Girls are told to learn to sew clothes, I also sew clothes and earn from it.”R₄

“In our society it is said to girls after FA learn some skills like sewing.” R₁₁

Data shows that mostly girls are encouraged to learn these household skills *silai, karhai* (sewing and embroidery). And mostly girls have already learnt these things.

4 Financial Constraints:

Data collected from in depth interviews with girls suggest that financial constraints are very much obvious due to which girls do no take admission to university. As universities are far away from the village and there are a lot of expenses when a girl want to take admission to university. These things restrict girls from taking admission to university.

“If you don’t have resources how you can get admission to university. I have two younger brother if my father spend all his money on my education how will they study. Due to which I have not taken admission to university.” R₁₁

“My father agreed for me to take admission in college but then these financial problems did not let us. We are not able to meet the transport expenses as universities are very far.”R₁

Every girl during discussion with her said that financial issues are real challenge for them due to which they are not able to continue their higher education from universities. When they talk about financial issues these are not just paying tuition fee in fact due to unavailability of universities near the village also cause many difficulties. Girls have to travel to cities if they want to take admission to university. For that they must need travel or live in hostel. Most of the respondents says that they are not allowed to travel on local bus and they can't afford the van service due to which they are not able to go to university.

“My parents says it's not good for girls to travel on local bus.” R₁₁

5 Factors influence Parents Decisions about their Daughters Education:

Discussion with girls revealed when their parents take decisions related to their daughter's decisions what are some factors that influence their decisions. Following are these major factors that parents take into consideration.

5.1 Security Concerns:

Field findings suggest that most of the respondents says that their parents are much concerned about their daughter's security. Parents feel insecure to send their daughters to universities in cities. Because they think daughters will not be safe while travelling. Another concern parents have is that what type of culture or environment universities has. According to girls their parents have major concerns about universities due to which they do not let their daughters study there.

“Very first thing that came in my parents mind when I say I want to get admission in university is that the environment of university is not suitable for me.” R₁

Another respondent said this:

“My parents are concern about my security and expect me to take care of their owner.”R₁₁

5.2 Societal Pressure:

Societal pressure is also one thing that often restrict parents to let their daughters' study in universities. Respondents reveal that their parents mostly start thinking what other people will say when their daughters travel alone and goes to university.

“In our family the main concern is what people will say about us. They will say why their daughter is studying. What will be benefit of her education? She will get married in future. My own dada says get her married why is she studying much.”R₂

People of rural areas are mostly unaware of importance of girl's education and take societal pressure a lot. Like the statements indicate:

“Even in this modern time some parents never consider girls education as important. And says girls become independent after getting higher level of education.”R₄

From these responses it is indicated that parents somehow take a lot of pressure from their surroundings. Which ultimately affect their decision.

5.3 Lack of Resources:

Responses from field shows that many parents do not allow their daughters to take admission to university because they don't have resources. Low socioeconomic situation restrict parents from letting their daughters to complete their higher education. Some parents are not able to spent money on one child because they have other children too and they have much expenses.

“My parents said that you are not our only child we have to spend money on our other children's too. Which I would say influence my decision related to higher education.”R₅

Few respondents says that their poor financial situations influence their parent's decision related to their higher education. That's why they have not taken admission to universities.

Parental Perception of University going Girls

1 Motivation:

Discussion with parents from this village whose daughters are studying in universities or have studied explain various things. From their responses following are the themes generated which shows what motivate them to let their daughters to get admission to universities.

1.1 On Mother's Desire:

Interviews with mothers of university going girls reveal that they want their daughters to complete their higher education. Some of them are educated and doing jobs and says that their education is very helpful for them in their lives so they wish their daughters same. Some of mother reveal they are not educated and was not able to complete their education so it's their wish that their daughters can complete their desires.

One of the mother says this to me when I asked her motivation behind letting her daughter to pursue higher education:

"It's my own thinking to educate my daughters. As I am educated and doing job and seeing how helpful is my education for my life so it's my duty to educated my daughters and encourage them to build their careers." R₁₄

Another one said:

"During my studies I got married due to which I was not able to continue my education so I wish my daughters to complete their education." R₁₉

Data reveals that mothers play important in their daughter's life. If she want she can take stand for their daughter's education.

1.2 Girls Own Wish:

Few parents reveal that this is their daughters own wish to take admission to university and they are the first ones from their families to take admission to universities. Findings from field suggest that some parents are financially well of. If their daughters want to pursue their higher education they become first one from their families to take step and let them study.

"My daughter want to study and we are able to afford her expenses so let her take admission to university." R₂₄

It depends on socioeconomic situation of families if they are able to afford expenses they let their daughters even when no one before them has gone.

2 Expectation from Daughters after Completing Degree:

Discussion with parents whose daughters are currently studying in universities reveal what they expect from their daughters after completion of their higher education. Following are the themes generated what parents expect from their daughters in longer run.

2.1 Build Career:

Most of the respondents says that as their daughters are pursuing their higher education they wish for them to do job and build career for them. Mostly parents are passionate about their daughter's successful career. Which shows that not only not want from their daughters to complete their education but they wish from them to do jobs if she wants.

*“She want to do job and build her career so we are here to support her in everything she wants to do.”*R₁₃

*“My daughters have our full support to do job and pursue their careers.”*R₁₄

One of the respondents says she want their daughter become support of her father as her sons have no interest in studies.

*“If she gets good job she will become a good support to her father.”*R₁₅

Results revealed that those parents who let their daughters pursue their higher education also shows that they will support them in future to build their careers.

2.2 Helpful in Longer Run:

Field findings suggest that parents reveal they expect that after completion of their daughter's education they will be helpful for families in longer run. Most of respondents said education is very important for girls not only for doing jobs in fact education will be helpful for girls after their marriage. Their education will be helpful for them in upbringing of their own children's

*“Their education is helpful for their kids like one of my daughter has children and she is doing her upbringing so well because she herself is educated.”*R₁₇

One of the respondent said that her educated daughter helps her and advise her in different matters:

*“In every situation we want someone who is more educated so she will help us a lot. Even now we take advice from her in different matter.”*R₂₄

Data shows with change in time parents perception toward girl's education is also changing. Now parents are taking into consideration about girl's higher education. Educated parents as well as illiterate parents believe their daughter's education will be helpful for them in longer run.

This shows parents perception related to their daughters education and how they think higher education plays its role in their lives.

4.2 Discussion

Influence plays an important role in every aspect of life. Same goes with educational perspective in girl's life. Result shows that girls are taking much influence from their peers and surrounding about their decision to pursue higher education or not. Finding suggest that girls from particular location face a big challenge of lack of influence to pursue higher education. influence have greater role not just on the girls decision as well as parents also get influence from girls who are educated and have pursued their education which inspire them to take decisions related to their daughters higher education. As there are very less number of girls from this village who have taken admission to university which become major obstacle to those girls who want to take admission to university.

Decision making is one thing that is very crucial in rural societies. Men's are consider to be the actual decision maker of house. Research also indicate that male as decision maker in highly acceptable and very common in this locale. Every decision related to their daughter's life has been taken by their fathers. When parents are not educated especially mother findings suggest that father is the alone decision maker. While findings indicate that educated mother has greater role in household decision making. Educated mothers are more enthusiastic for their daughters to complete their higher education and build their careers. Result shows that educated mothers want from their daughters to get independent in every matter including financial independence. After getting education women's become independent financially and socially. 'Education gives them exposure in different aspect of life including media, they become economically empowered and know about their writes in much better ways. Education also helps them to take their part in family decision making.' (Khare, 2021)

From research findings it is suggested that girls have to face various barriers at household and societal level when they tries to convert their intermediate education to higher education. These barriers include financial constraints as one of the greatest hurdle for girls of this village. Because those

parents whose daughters are now studying in universities are financially well. Those girls who wish to take admission to university major hurdle they face is lack of resources. Travel expenditure is the main concern of girls who are not continuing their higher education from universities. Due to which various girls are using online mode of education by taking admission to virtual university. Financial constrains further proposed problems like allocation of resources more to boys and gave rise to gender discrimination. (Mehmood, Chong, & Hussain, 2018).

Girls have to focus on household work which also limit them to pursue their higher education. They have household burden further girls also face societal pressure when they wanted to continue their education. Early marriages also become hurdle to girl's higher education (Exploratory study on the Enablers and Barriers of Girls Transition Secondary and Higher Education in Puntland , 2021). Research findings also suggest girls are specified due to their gender. Findings suggest mostly from girls it is expected to invest more on household chores rather getting higher education. From girls of this it is expected to learn household skills like sewing and cooking which will be beneficial for later part of their lives. From result it is also concluded early marriage also restrict girls from pursuing higher education.

4.3 Conclusion

Higher education plays a very important role in person's life. It will open a lot of opportunities at personal and societal level. Women's contribute half percent of total population of the country. Higher education is equally important for girl's life and country's development. In Pakistan especially in rural areas where higher education for girls is not consider as important as other things in their life. This research is focused to highlight what are the challenges of girls living in village Qutbal when they tries to pursue their higher education.

Findings conclude that girls from particular location want to continue their higher education by taking admission to universities but there are various issues at household and societal level to whom these girls have encounter. Girls have to face a major problem of decision making related to their educational decisions. Result shows that decision making authority is not in the hands of girls but male member like father is responsible to take decisions for their daughters. So if father is educated and knows the importance of higher education he is the one who support her daughter. But know with times parents are playing very crucial role in their daughter education.

As the result conclude that number of girls are now taking admissions to university from this village. Even if they are not going to university they are using alternative ways to complete their higher education because girls include in this research have mostly continuing their higher education from Virtual University or from Punjab University. Which shows how much eager girls are to pursue their higher education.

Research findings also conclude that parent's plays major role in their daughter's education. As those girls who are currently going to universities have support from their parents. Which is the biggest reason of their confidence to step out and take admission to universities outside from their village. Financial support is one thing that differentiate the university going girls from those who are not going to university. Girls from better socioeconomic backgrounds are most likely to take admission to university because they are able to meet the expenditure then those who belongs to low socioeconomic status.

This research will be helpful to come out with solutions that will be useful for girls from this village to pursue their higher education. Research will be beneficial to remove the hurdles face by rural girls. As the girls are really passionate about their studies but some challenges limit them. Government must take into consideration that how much important is availability of universities near rural areas so that girls from these areas can also complete their higher education from renowned institute and inspire others. Which will ultimately beneficial for country's development.

5. Recommendations

- Scholarship and incentive programs must be started in supporting rural girls' Higher education.
- Investigate strategies to increase family and community support for girl's Higher education.
- Importance of higher education must be studied in accordance with its link to the job opportunities for rural girls and their career outcomes.

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