



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: EXPLORING SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN KECH DISTRICT, BALOCHISTAN

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Abstract

This study explores the socio-cultural barriers affecting children's access to education in District Kech, Balochistan—an area where many communities remain marginalized and excluded from the advancements of modern science and technology. The region suffers from chronic neglect by central authorities, resulting in deep-rooted educational disparities. The primary objective of this research is to identify the socio-cultural and institutional factors contributing to low enrollment, high dropout rates, and poor educational outcomes among children. A descriptive research design was employed, and data were collected using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions. Participants included parents of out-of-school children, school principals, and district education officials across the four tehsils of District Kech. Thematic analysis and data verification techniques were used to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. The results revealed a complex set of interlinked barriers including poverty, early marriages, gender bias (particularly son preference), social exclusion, lack of female teaching staff, and insufficient educational infrastructure. The study highlights the pressing need for culturally responsive educational policies, enhanced investment in local schooling systems, and community-level interventions to address the multifaceted challenges impeding children's education in the region.

1. Introduction

The research focuses on the socio-cultural barriers affecting children's education in District Kech, Balochistan. The Pakistan education statistics report (SHAH, 2018) indicated that forty-four percent of girls and fifty-six percent of boys are enrolled in educational institutions. In most institutions, the gender equality or gender discrimination is observed in District Kech. The education of children also improved society and the socio-economic development of the family; it is a main component of early societies. It is observed in many developing and underdeveloped countries that children mostly face socio-cultural barriers in the way of their education.

In such societies, boys' education is preferred over girls' education with the perception that men are the earning hand of the family in latter stages of life. In law (Ali, 2022) in many research studies, it is emphasized that girls' educational institutions are fewer in number compared to boys' educational institutions. (Gul, 2021). It is statistically shown in research studies that early marriage among girls is a socially approved practice and it is considered a sign of shame for parents if their daughter remains at home without being married. Education is an integral part of society that can potentially influence many different facets of it. At the same time, the shape of education can vary

greatly with diverse feature of each society as social and cultural values or beliefs could affect how education is perceived implemented and poetized. Almost five and half millions of children are out of school and 72% of school aged children are enroll in school and it is considered.

According to the imam Gazali point of view that education is way that enable a person or individual to understand what is right or wrong, what is true or false. through the education the individual can understand. Aristotle explain that education make a person perfect to create new ideas and develop skills, improve the thinking capability, and refines the human personality.

2. Objective of the study

A. To investigate the key socio-economic factors hindering children's access to education.

B. To examine the socio-cultural barriers affecting early childhood education and school enrollment.

3. Literature Review

According to one study, inequality is highly noticed at the level of HSE where the ratio of enrolled boys is sixty-two percent, while only thirty-nine percent of girl student are registered. It is also shown that in are total 6.million school children at the higher secondary level in the country and among the out of school children 34211 (3.20 million) are girls that out of school at the age of 15-16 year. The many authors that major barriers in girls access to higher secondary education area due to poor institution performance and lack of facilities (2022), in many research studies it is emphasized that girls education institution are less in number as compared to boy educational institution. It is also shown facilities in girl educational institution are lacking due to low priority given to girl education (suleman, 2018). According to the another study the children marriages are prevalent with a high percentage of girls married before the legal age of 18, which not only deprives girls of education and opportunities but also exposes them to health risk the mostly in Balochistan are the early marriage that affect the children education the mostly cases are present that all from the several district like the district kech there is a one small village where the children face problem of early marriage. One of the key influences of gender disparities on education in Pakistan is the confluence of low enrollment rates, early dropouts, and limited access to higher education for girls, particularly in rural and conservative areas.

According to the one study the (UNICEF, 2024), the rate of female education is only 49% whereas the rate for men is career prospects and opportunities for leadership roles in the future their career prospects and opportunities for leadership roles in school can limit girl aspirations and confidence to pursue education and career (Iqbal, 2024). (Loyalka, 2021)According to the another research such children also show higher dropout rates as well because they are often forced to work or help support their families patrons, (2010) and restricted access to higher education, limiting their opportunities for personal and career growth thereby contributing to high youth unemployment and understanding rate on (thattai, 2017). In Balochistan several areas lack a single school for children and many children, are unaware about their basic rights. Mostly the rural areas included. If a school exists, there may not be a single teacher is available. Some rural areas have no school, leaving children illiterate in this twenty first century and not aware of their basic rights. It is disheartening that many school lack chairs, course books, talented teachers, drinking water electricity, fans, toilets and building walls, yet the government has not taken any action to address these issues. On the other hand, in Balochistan many student in some villages manage to get an education without a school building. (point, 2016).



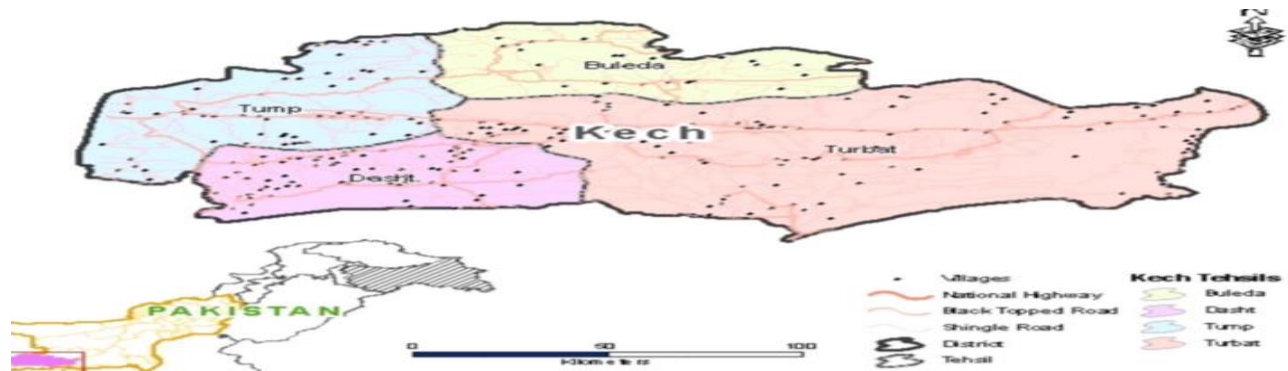
Significant effort have been made to improve education by promoting the right to education in international law. Although everyone has the right to education, access to education varies considerably. Widening inequality negatively impacts education as approximately 124 million children do not attended primary education gender equality are prominent and the majority of children are out of school. Many equality remains a major issue, with the major of children out of school. Many children are out of school due to culture values affecting their education. Approximately two third of the 785 million children are illiterate the mostly the woman (colclough, 2014).

Gender inequality, or gender discrimination refer to unfair right between male and female based on different gender roles, leading to unequal right for both the males and females in society. From an Islamic perspective, women are given the highest status. However gender equality should be encouraged. Regarding this issue, Pakistani people generally appreciate the position of men. However, in Balochistan, gender discrimination negatively impacted children education especially for women (Gregory, 2003). Aristotle said that education differ from the uneducated as much as the living differ from the dead. Government authorities and society realize that education is a strong powerful force that can solve incapacity issues and transform society. Illiteracy remain a major issue in Pakistan. The country has allocated only 2.3 percent of its budget to education, which is 0.3 percent less than in 1999. Nine percent of government spending goes toward education, placing Pakistan 113 among 120 countries on the education development index (NNI, 2013). The education is essential for empower woman in all spheres of life. Qualified woman who obtain higher education, not only become strong but also serve as role models for young girls. According to global gender gap index report, Pakistan ranks 56th out 58th countries in gender equality, reflecting the gender disparity present in Pakistan.

4. Methodology

The study adopted an questionnaire and data has been collected from five schools in district kech, Balochistan. The Methodology involves the selection of appropriate tool and technique for data collection. It determines the proper method for gathering data. Methodology techniques and observational analysis are significant for sociological pursuits and empirical research. The advancement of sociological knowledge in the modern age possible only through the use of recommend methodologies. There are several method which use in research such as quantitative method or qualitative method and mix method. The style use the method is quantitative method now this research is also the quantitative research. The following research aims and purposes to investigation socio-culture barriers affective in children education in district kech, Balochistan.

The study adopted a survey research design. Define survey research as the collection of quantifiable data from a population for purposes of description of identifying verification that many point to casual relationships. This design was applicable for the study because it captured people opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about socio-cultural constraints to children education.de Researchers used the quantitative approach and across sectional research design to collect the statistical in the study area there were higher secondary school of district kech Balochistan.



The study adopted a responses of selected samples were collected through random sampling technique research and pre-tested a self-administration questionnaire 101 selected. In the questionnaire, authors covered the socio-economic demography variable and socio-culture factors as a barrier to children. The research questions in the study. The study applied close-ended questionnaire to gather the information from the targeted respondents and documentary review. The question developed from the research question and review of the related literature and studies. In the closed ended questionnaire, the respondents were specifically respond using tick () for their answers. The closed-ended questionnaire is easy to manage because each item is followed by alternative answers and is inexpensive to use concerning duration. The research requested for ethical agreement with school principals and respondents. Then after, the research distributed the questionnaire to be filled. This took place during break time to avoid interference with class timetable of students and also give the researcher the chance to have some informal discussion and interview with teachers and students as they are free at girls and completion used as secondary data, whereby the researcher visited the Kech district Balochistan education office to get the data. Researcher used SPSS for statistical analysis. Researchers applied descriptive statistic to draw the frequently and percentages of the respondent while inferential statistic with person correlation test was applied to draw the strength and direction of the association in independent and dependent variables.

5. Results and Discussion

This section comprises tables and explanation of the numerical results of the tables. The most essential step in scientific research is the interpretation and analysis of the data and analysis leads to re-categorization, interpretation, generalization, explanation and tabulation of the variable and drawing meaningful inferences, these steps were used to confirm the prediction and target of the scientific research. Analysis of the data helps to examine the relationship between the variables and relate the study to the main objective of the study. Researcher draws inference of the study through data analysis by using statistical package of the social science (SPSS). Data were analyzed in SPSS and results were described below each tables systematically. The description of percentage enables the people to understand the study when he does not directly comprehend the numerical data in the tables. The data was collected from male members because local society follows the patriarchal setup and make were the head of the households. And there on enrollment of female respondent of data collection regarding the issue of socio-cultural barriers affecting the children education in District, Kech, Balochistan, Survey indicates that 37.8% of the respondents belonged to age 30-39. 33.6% of the respondents were in the age of 20-29. The rest 25.9% of the respondents were in the age of 40-49 and the last 3% of the respondents were above 50 year of age.

Table 2: Socio-cultural barriers of forced marriage affecting the children education

Forced Marriage	SD	DA	N	A	SA	f %
Forced marriage is common in Baloch society.	5 (05.00)	5 (05.00)	16 (15.8)	35 (34.70)	40 (39.60)	101 (100.00)
Forced marriage had been playing a great role to stop children towards their education.	6 (05.90)	6 (05.90)	7 (6.9)	39 (38.60)	43 (42.60)	101 (100.00)
Forced marriage is the cultural taboo which decline the literacy rate of children's education.	4 (04.00)	4 (04.00)	6 (5.9)	46 (45.50)	41 (40.60)	101 (100.00)
Forced marriage is one of the greatest causes towards children's educational deprivation.	4 (04.00)	4 (04.00)	6 (5.9)	46 (45.50)	41 (40.60)	101 (100.00)
Vani (forced marriage) is also a barriers in fronts of children education.	7 (06.90)	3 (03.00)	15 (14.90)	41 (40.60)	35 (34.70)	101 (100.00)
Wattastta (forced marriage) system in rural area of Balochistan people never let their children get education	9 (08.90)	12 (11.90)	32 (31.70)	35 (34.7)	13 (12.90)	101 (100.00)

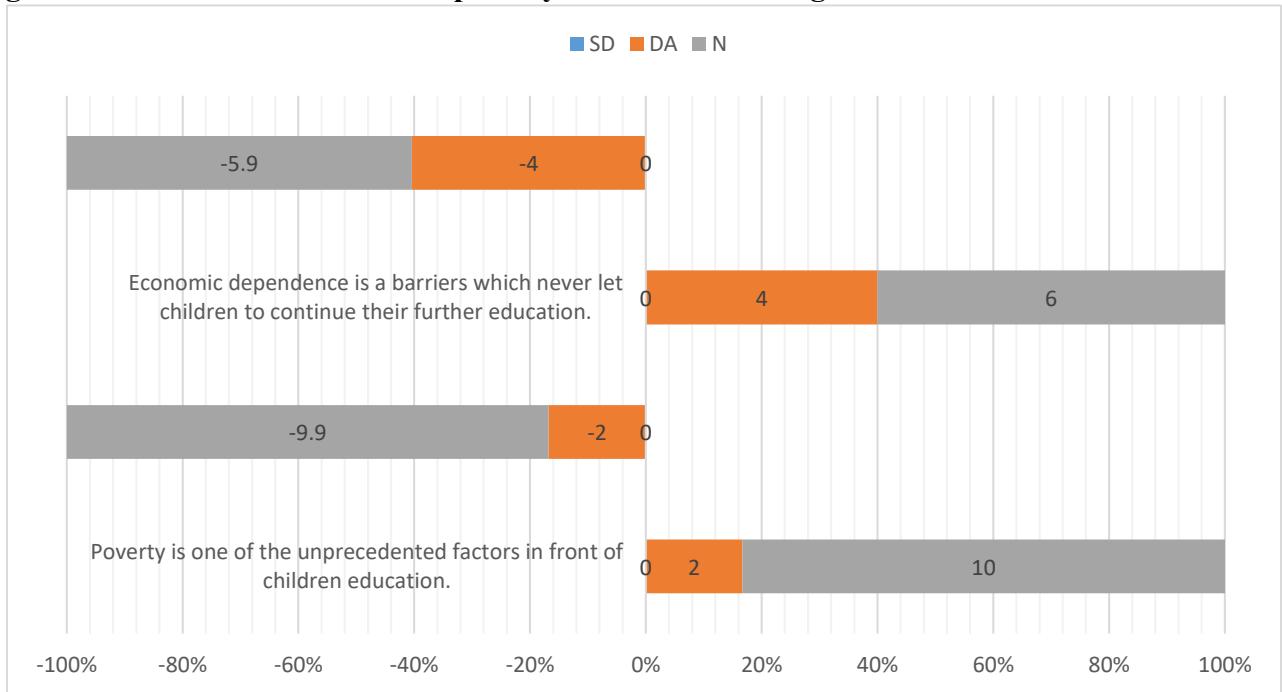
SD: Strongly agree, DA: Disagree, N: Neutral, A: Agree & SA: Strongly Agree

Forced marriage a children as defined as a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and forced is a marriage in which duress whether physical or emotional is a factor a children appear to give their consent anyone under the age of 18 years not able to make a fully informed choice whether or not marry a children marriage must be viewed with that lack the choice or capacity to give their fully consent. Table 2 also shows the effects of forced marriage on children education. The data indicate that 39.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that forced marriage is common in Baloch society, 34.7% of the respondents just agreed about the commonalty the respondents disagreed whereas last 5% of the respondent strongly disagreed the common existence of forced marriage in Baloch society and role of forced marriage stopping children to get education. The data shows that majority 42.60% of the respondents strongly agreed there by 38.6% of the respondents agreed that force marriage can stop children from getting education 6.9% of the respondents were neutral; whereas 05.90% of the respondents disagreed and the rest 5.9% strongly disagreed force marriage can prevent children to get education. The table 2 also shows that 45.50% percent of the respondents agreed that force marriage is a cultural taboo which decline the literacy rate of children education there by 40.60% of the respondents strongly agreed, 05.90% of the respondents were natural, 04.00% of the respondents disagreed and the last 4% strongly disagreed with the statement that force marriage is the cultural taboo which decline the literacy rate of children education. Above table describes data about shows that 45.5% of the respondents agree that forced marriage is one of the greatest causes towards children educational deprivation while 40.60% strongly agree about the statement whereas 5.9% of the respondents were neutral. 4.0% of the respondents disagreed and the last 04.00% strongly with the statement that forced marriage is one of the greatest causes toward children educational deprivation.

Above table also illustrates that 40.60% of the respondent agree about the statement of Vani forced marriage is also a barrier in front of children education, while 34.70% strongly agree about the

statement, whereas 14.90% of the respondents were neutral, 03.00% percent of the respondents disagreed and the last 06.09% percent strongly disagreed with of Vani forced marriage is also a barrier in front of children education. Data also demonstrates that forced marriage system in rural area off Balochistan people never let children get education. The data shows that majority 34.70% of the respondents agreed there by 31.70% of the respondents were neutral, and 11.90% of the respondents disagreed and the last 08.90% strongly with the statement that forced marriage system in rural area of Balochistan people never let children education.

Figure 1: Sociocultural barriers of poverty and labor affecting the children education



Forced labor is any work or service which people are forced to do against their will, under threat of punishment. Almost all slavery practices contain some element of forced labor. Forced labor in the most common element of modern slavery. It is the most extreme form of people exploitation, although many people associate forced labor and slavery with physical violence, in fact the ways used to force people to work are more insidious and ingrained in some cultures, forced labor often affects the most vulnerable and excluded groups, for example commonly discriminated that in Pakistan and India, women and girls are more at risk then boys and men, and children make up a quarter of people forced labor, migrant workers are targeted because they often don't speak the language, have few friends have limited rights and depend on their employers.

Figure shows that poverty is one of the unprecedented factors in front of children education. The data indicate that 52.5% of the responding agreed, that poverty is one of the unprecedented factor in front of children education, 35.6% of the respondents strongly agreed about this unprecedented factor which is a barrier in front of children education 9.9% of the respondents were neutral, only 02.00% of the respondents disagreed with this statement whereas strongly disagreed of the respondents where 0% in filed area.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that multiple interrelated factors negatively influence the quality of education in rural areas of District Kech, Balochistan. Among the most significant are socio-cultural barriers, particularly gender-based educational preferences that favor sons over daughters. The entrenched patriarchal family structure positions men as primary decision-makers, often leading to the discouragement of girls' education. Furthermore, early marriage of girls is widely accepted as a cultural norm in the region, severely disrupting educational continuity and long-term development. These socio-cultural dynamics not only limit access to education but also hinder children's broader social and economic growth, especially for girls.

7. Recommendations

- **Empower Girls in Decision-Making:**
Girls should be actively involved in household decision-making processes, particularly in matters related to their education and marriage.
- **Discourage Forced Marriages:**
Community-level awareness campaigns and legal enforcement mechanisms should be developed to prevent early marriages. Government agencies must implement targeted policies to delay marriage age and support girls' educational continuity.
- **Promote Gender Equality in Education:**
Civil society organizations should intensify civic education campaigns that emphasize the long-term benefits of educating girls—not just for individual empowerment, but for the social and economic uplift of the entire community.
- **Address Child Labor Issues:**
Forced labor among children should be addressed through coordinated efforts involving government, NGOs, and local stakeholders to ensure that all children have the opportunity to pursue education without economic exploitation.
- **Strategic Policy Interventions:**
The government should adopt culturally sensitive and context-specific intervention strategies aimed at dismantling the socio-cultural barriers to education, with a special focus on rural and marginalized communities.

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