

**An Interview Study into the Effects of Winter Migration on Girls Education in Swat,
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

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Abstract



In order to analyse the role played by winter migration on girls' schooling in upper Swat District, Pakistan, the paper employed qualitative methods and emphasized particular areas including Gabraal, Lai Kot, Kalam, Matiltan and Usho. This research examines how cultural norms interact with deficiencies in infrastructure and bureaucratic impediments that resulted in educational chaos. Laikot and Gabbral are places with severe weather conditions due to close proximity to glaciers hence they experience seasonal movements to urban areas. In these areas annual movement is usually observed from November to April. This consequently results in disrupting the education of children particularly girls. The interviews data indicate that the winter migration is not the sole factor influencing girls' education. Upon analysing the data, it was discovered that other variables, such as patriarchal mind-set and cultural expectations also play a role in shaping girls' education in the region. The analysis indicates that the educational infrastructure provided by the government in these places is inadequate. As a result, the proportion of females receiving education significantly decreases to a concerning level, with just 4-5 girls having completed school up to grade 5. Significantly, there were no girls who advanced to the middle school level. The tradition of early marriage is popular among young girls aged between 14 and 17 years which also limit their chance of attending school. Semi structured interview based on interactive observation has been used in this research to get the viewpoints of local inhabitants both male and female who think girls' education may be a source of disturbance. They have an underlying fear that acquiring knowledge might make them deviant or rebel against these cultural norms.

Keywords: Seasonal Migration, Girls education, Swat, Gender

Introduction

Study Background

Migration for many individuals, serves as a method of ensuring their survival, whilst for others, it is an opportunity to enhance their quality of life. Seasonal migration is a cyclical occurrence that typically takes place at a specific time of year. The time frame is commonly referred to as a season. Seasons often impose limitations due to certain weather conditions, which in turn affect economic activity and other living conditions. Seasonal migration arises from regional inequalities in employment prospects and economic expansion (Borse, 2020).

Migration, plays a crucial role in the geographical study of population change in any given area (Trewartha, 1969). The process of migration is essential for understanding the dynamic evolution of a region's content and connectivity with the rest of the country. Migration may not be perceived as a mere relocation of individuals from one place of to another. According to (Garnier, 1966) and (Smith, 1955) the regions from which people emigrate, the regions to which they migrate, and the lifestyles of migrants are always changing.

According to Prescia (2021) Pakistan ranks as one of the ten countries most susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Pakistan is confronted with several obstacles in adapting to climate change following the destructive flood on July 28, 2010. These issues stem from a combination of low

climate resilience, inadequate disaster risk preparedness, ineffective governance, and insufficient infrastructure. The phenomenon of climate-induced migration is a substantial consequence of climate change that has received little attention and research, particularly in the context of Pakistan. By 2050, it is projected that almost 2 million individuals in Pakistan would be displaced as climate migrants as a result of climate-related catastrophes.

Forced climatic displacement and migration are evident in all provinces of Pakistan, stemming from various reasons such as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), flash or riverine floods, drought, and water shortage. During periods of extreme weather, individuals residing in Swat, Skardu, Chitral, and Gilgit opt to migrate to metropolitan centres or locations that provide sustainable economic prospects. Comparable situations arise in Sindh and Baluchistan, as villagers migrate to Karachi or other urban areas in pursuit of job, educational prospects, and personal development (Ishtiaq, 2023).

Climate displacement refers to the act of people moving, either temporarily or permanently, inside their own country or across borders, as a result of climate-related calamities. Climate related disasters can be rapid or gradual in nature (Jiménez-Martínez, 2021). Seasonal migration is a survival tactic employed by individuals who are unable to sustain themselves in their houses. However, it primarily focuses on survival rather than improving one's well-being or generating profit, hence intensifying the cycle of poverty. A significant number of individuals who travel for work reside in unhygienic environments, either outdoors or in temporary dwellings, lacking basic amenities such as power, clean drinking water, and affordable food. These migratory tendencies demonstrate the need of understanding the impact of winter movement on several aspects of the community, particularly girls' education in Upper Swat (Torwali, 2021).

Objectives of the study

The study's research objectives were created based on its nature.

- i. To investigate the impact of winter migration on female schooling.
- ii. To investigate the parental perspectives on enrolling female students during their winter travels

Research Questions

The study questions were prepared with the aims in mind.

- i. How does winter migration impact the education of female students in upper Swat?
- ii. How do parents feel about girls being enrolled in school during their winter migrations?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research technique to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the challenges encountered by female students during winter migration in Upper Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The primary objective of the inquiry was to thoroughly explore the intricacies of the impact of winter migration on girls' schooling. The findings of the qualitative study will inform the development of Programs and policies that specifically address the unique requirements of girls during their seasonal migration.

In this chapter, the researcher has diligently explored the intricacies and complexities of the research phenomenon. They have also provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and viewpoints by thoroughly explaining the methodologies, tool development, and data collection process.

Population of the Study: The study's population includes families residing in Laikot, Gabral, Kalam, Pashmal, and Utror, which are the primary areas of migration in Upper Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. A total of five households were consulted. Interviews were done with the father, mother, and daughter of the family unit. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted.

Sample and sampling procedure:

Five immigrant households were selected for the research. The selection of families was done meticulously to ensure that the sample encompasses a diverse variety of perspectives and experiences on winter migration in Upper Swat. Families from various regions of Upper Swat were chosen to account for any variations in migration patterns and educational methods.

Data Collection Tool

The selected participants had semi-structured interviews to gather thorough insights into their perspectives and experiences on winter migration and its impact on girls' schooling. Semi-structured interviews ensured so that the conversation remains focused on the study subject while also allowing

for some freedom in the shape of probing questions. Using this approach, the researcher thoroughly examined the participants' personal experiences and obtained valuable insights into the challenges encountered by female students and their families during their winter migrations.

Ethical Considerations

The inquiry meticulously adhered to the ethical guidelines governing research with human beings at all stages. The study's objective, the participants' entitlement to privacy, and their freedom to either consent or decline research involvement were also elucidated to the participants. The participants' identities have been kept anonymous in accordance with ethical and cultural norms. Before their involvement in the study, all individuals were given their informed consent.

Data Analysis

We employed thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. Through the identification of patterns, recurring ideas, and categorizations within the data, this approach enables a systematic analysis of the perspectives provided by the participants. In order to fully understand the effects of winter migration on girls' education in Upper Swat, relevant themes were identified and analysed through a systematic process of coding and interpretation, in line with the study goals.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

To ensure the study's rigour and reproducibility, several procedures such as member verification, peer debriefing, and reflexivity were employed. Conducted member verification to ensure that the participants' perspectives were accurately represented in the findings. Obtaining input from peers through a peer debriefing process enhanced the validity and reliability of the study's findings. Reflexivity, as a means to mitigate potential biases, involved the rigorous examination of the researcher's preconceived notions and prejudices during every phase of the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Prior to commencing the identification of the respondents' themes, their region data and names were encoded.

F-1 represents the first family interviewed, whereas M represents the mother in family 1. Similarly, the symbol D-1 represents a daughter within the family.

During the study, a wide range of topics developed, but only the significant ones were chosen. The data analysis was halted after the answers reached the point of saturation. The data were organised according to the aims and study questions. The following passages are selected from various themes within the data.

The initial finding of the study on the impact of winter migration on female schooling in upper Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, focused on the first female participant, referred to as F-1, who is also a mother.

"I am uncertain, but we do not enrol our daughters in educational institutions." Although we instruct kids in reading the Qur'an, formal education is not offered to them nor seen as significant. January 25, 2024.

During the initial interview, the researcher aimed to investigate the impact of winter migration on female education. However, it was unexpectedly discovered that female education was not seen as significant.

When questioned about the reason for it? She responded.

According to F-1, there is an expectation for girls to excel in household chores. Traditionally, there is a cultural expectation for females to marry between the ages of 14 and 17 and establish their own families". January 25, 2024.

Similarly, when questioned about her education, M1 of F2 responded that she is illiterate and stated that no one in her family has had formal schooling. Additionally, she stated that during the migratory season, we halt the education of school-age children, despite the fact that my grandson is now attending elementary school. January 25, 2024.

Overall, the educational status for males and females was equal, irrespective of gender disparities. Traditionally, boys would often attend school until the 5th grade, while females would attend the same and only primary school accessible, which provided instruction to both boys and girls owing to the absence of a distinct educational institution for girls. The school's curriculum only extends up to the 5th grade, hence it does not take into account any gender disparities. Although migration does impact students' schooling, the data did not support the research question that

explicitly attributed the decline in female students to winter migration. Investing in female education is not culturally perceived as a valuable investment, and the allocation of funds towards their education is not deemed significant. According to Ambreen and Mohyudin (2014), parents in rural parts of Pakistan perceive spending on males as a worthwhile investment with expected returns, whereas they view spending on daughters as wasteful since daughters are seen as burdens.

F3-FA1 explained that the reason why girls' education is not given importance is because their desire to pursue further education is often hindered by the societal expectation that they should be married at a young age, often after turning 14. Moreover, the prevailing viewpoint promotes conventional gender norms, wherein females are urged to prioritise domestic duties above their educational endeavours. January 27, 2024.

The individual in question was a school teacher who relocated to Mingora city in order to provide education to his children, a task that was not feasible in Utror, a remote location in upper Swat. In addition, he desired to evade the stringent cultural norms imposed by the general public and his family in the region. He stated that his occupation as a school teacher provides him with a legitimate reason to continuously live in this location. He stated that *"while no one would have explicitly prevented me from permanently relocating, relatives and family members have certain expectations based on the cultural norms in that place. Here, I am free from scrutiny when it comes to educating my daughters and sons. Education is not given high emphasis, especially for girls, as compared to getting married"*. January 27, 2024

Asad, Levison, and Zabani (2010) acknowledge that girls' job might have consequences for schooling. It may impact the consistency of school attendance, as well as academic achievement and grade progression.

The endorsement of the aforementioned truth about the significance women place on education was also given by M-2 of the F-2 when questioned. She noted;

Women have challenges in ensuring the continuation of their daughters' education when relocating due to the lack of emphasis placed on education within our family and the prevailing male-dominated societal norms that do not prioritise the education of daughters. As a mother, I really desire for my girls to get education, yet I acknowledge that this desire is solely mine. January 25, 2024

Furthermore, D-1 in F-1 corroborates the notion that migration plays a little role in the lack of education among girls in the upper swat region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She documented it when questioned about the reason behind her absence from school. She observed that. Girls encounter several challenges, including early marriages, financial limitations, migration, and societal distrust, all of which impede their access to school. January 25, 2024.

The mother of F-2 likewise had similar feelings. She observed that.

"I believe that migration does not have any adverse consequences." Indeed, whereas males are enrolled in both schools and madrasas, girls, on the other hand, usually do not have the opportunity to attend an educational institution except madrassa. Consequently, for girls, the circumstance exacerbates the already existing stress of having to relocate every six months.

Furthermore, the influence of cultural patterns, conventions, and expectations is so powerful that those who have permanently relocated to cities for the sake of their children's education are subject to social disapproval. As per the account of a participant, namely F2-D1. According to her,

My mother has the belief that well-educated females tend to stay unmarried. This belief stems from the experience of one of our cousins who moved to the city to provide their daughter with an education. Due to the daughter's outspoken character, none of our family members are willing to marry her. Her daughter is presently pursuing a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree.

There is a cultural belief that those who have an education tend to be vocal, which might be perceived as rudeness in the context of local culture. According to societal standards, women are expected to be shy, quiet, and subservient to males. Deviating from these expectations leads to disapproval and being labelled as disobedient and impolite. Nevertheless, the research done by (Zia, Rahim, and Mehmood 2022) reveals that male students had a higher frequency of aberrant behaviour compared to female college students'.

Parental perceptions regarding enrolment of female students

During the interviews, the researchers also uncovered the overall viewpoints of the families, since this was the main emphasis of the second research purpose in this study. The data analysis revealed that the majority of parents expressed opposition towards female education, citing various reasons. The

majority of the households attributed the lack of female education to cultural constraints, whereas few families cited financial difficulties as the primary cause. According to the F1, the primary emphasis of education for females in our culture is on religious teaching and the learning of household skills.

Girls are permitted to receive Qur'anic instruction, with the primary emphasis being on preparing them to become proficient homemakers in the future. Girls are obligated to acquire knowledge and skills pertaining to household duties, such as culinary arts, sanitation, and textile craftsmanship, among others. Based on the statement provided, religious education is also taught since it is culturally perceived as beneficial. The scholar argues that our culture should be shaped by our faith, rather than the other way around.

Similarly, a member of family 1 stated that she has not attended school and has not received any form of education at home. However, when questioned about whether any other member among her siblings go to school, she responded that three of her brothers do. She elaborated on the topic of female education, stating that:

Girls are often seen as the possessions of their future husbands' families once they are married. This results in the question of why invest in their education if they will eventually leave their own families. In addition, she stated that there is a prevailing perception that investing in the education of sons secures the future of our parents, since sons are traditionally seen as the successors to the family lineage.

The cultural norms dictate that women are primarily suited for domestic roles, and education is valued solely for its potential to generate income. As women are not permitted to work outside the home, investing in their education is seen as a waste of resources. Even if women are educated, the benefits are expected to accrue to their husbands' families rather than their own fathers'. This assertion has been substantiated by the research study conducted by Zia, Rahim and Mehmood (2022). In their research article, (Zia Rahim and Mehmood, 2022) emphasised that, for males, the reproductive function of women has greater significance than education or employment.

When questioned about the reasons for the absence of female education in the region, M of F-2 stated that:

Girls face numerous barriers in their quest for education, including cultural norms that prioritise household responsibilities over academic pursuits and a lack of awareness about the importance of education. She further stated that "Girls in our community often do not receive formal education." The ability of girls to obtain education is impeded by cultural obstacles and a deficiency in recognising the importance of education.

According to Aftab, Ali, and Bashir (2023), women's independence is hindered and their ability to pursue education is made difficult or impossible due to the expectation that they prioritise family obligations above their personal growth.

The FA of F-2 also expressed concerns about the safety and unfamiliar environment that sometimes make them unwilling to take their daughters to school.

Due to cultural norms, women are seen as the embodiment of family honour. Any terrible event happening to them would bring dishonour not only to the family but also to the entire community. Consequently, parents perceive it as an extreme risk to undertake. Consequently, in order to alleviate the persistent anxiety over the safety of their daughters, it is felt that the only secure location for them is within the confines of their own house. Although some individuals may prioritise female education, there are some who hold the belief that females should only get education up to 5th grade only.

Similarly, D of the F-2 had the belief that while the importance of females' education is recognised, she has not been enrolled in school. When questioned about the reasons for not being sent to school, she responded by stating,

"My mother holds the belief that educated girls tend to remain unmarried. Due to our relative's relocation to the city for their daughter's schooling and her outspoken character, none of our family members are willing to marry her. Her daughter is presently enrolled in Bachelor of Science (BS) programmes.

Pishmal area in the upper Swat region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, observes patriarchal customs to an extreme degree. The provided sample from the participant interview indicates that education itself is not considered undesirable, but rather the potential for education to incite revolt against traditional norms. Cultural norms dictate that women should remain quiet and submissive, while education

encourages them to question and seek reasons before accepting things. Individuals possessing such traits are often labelled as outspoken and deviant. Consequently, girls' education is perceived as potentially harmful for them.

Typically, when fathers are absent due to work, it is the mothers' duty to care for the children, particularly the daughters. Consequently, if the daughters develop any negative habits or deviant behaviour, the mothers/wives are held accountable for their neglect. As a result, instead of taking the risk of educating girls, they believe it is safer to keep them confined within the home, leading to a lack of education and avoidance of potential risks.

Conversely, several regions are experiencing a progressive increase in awareness among individuals about significance of education. Occasionally, they draw inspiration from the residents of the established regions inside the city. The participant's reaction indicates a gradual shift in thinking. The individual identified as M of F-3 expressed her sentiment as follows:

"I sincerely desire that my daughter acquires a high-quality education. There is a woman residing near our home in Mingora city who works as a professional educator. I like the eloquence of her and her children's speech, the meticulousness with which she maintains her home, and their exemplary behaviour. Nevertheless, my spouse has declined to enrol my seven-year-old daughter in school. I have apprehensions regarding her future, despite my efforts to instruct her in the fundamentals.

The FA of F-3 held a similar perspective, acknowledging the significance of education for females but expressing a preference for them to remain at home owing to cultural customs. The responder had obtained schooling up to the level of Higher Secondary School. He expressed his belief that, although recognising the need of education, in the current day, he strongly advocates for girls to stay at home. The above mentioned speaker is suggesting that cultural standards prevent us from educating our daughters. Although he may desire otherwise, going against the societal standards is a challenging endeavour, particularly for individuals who are born and reared inside that culture. Baqri (2023) accurately noted that it is often seen that women are historically regarded as the property of male members within a household. Therefore, the male elders of the family are accountable for making decisions regarding their life.

When questioned about the prevailing parental opinion regarding girls' education, M, a 40-year-old individual, had a unique viewpoint. M said that it is mostly the mothers and other female members of the family who do not provide adequate support for girls' education. According to her, mothers have the belief that daughters should be taught household tasks instead of being educated in literacy. She stated that:

A significant obstacle is the prevailing lack of knowledge in our society regarding the need of education for girls. Within our patriarchal culture, there exists a widespread notion that the pursuit of education by girls has the potential to incite rebellion or disrupt the established order due to entrenched traditional and cultural norms. This erroneous assumption sometimes leads to families and communities resisting girls' education, hence impeding their access to schooling. Occasionally, it is the mother who would object to sending daughters to schools.

Field observations

Mothers may oppose sending their girls to school since they are burdened with all the household tasks when their children are away, leaving them with no assistance during the time the daughters would spend at school. Conversely, when girls stay at home, they acquire not only the skills to undertake various household activities but also assist their mothers in doing so.

While the majority of respondents expressed that education is not a priority or of very low importance for their families, there are, nonetheless, some instances of children and families who are resolute in their commitment to pursue education. D-1 of F-4 stated that:

it might be challenging to find schools or adapt to new ones after relocating. Furthermore, females may face discouragement in pursuing education as a result of societal norms or cultural barriers, as well as limited options for girls' education.

In addition, she stated that.

"Despite our migration, my elder brother motivated me to persist with my education and provided support to our other siblings as well."

Based on the provided interview excerpts, it is evident that the low female literacy rate cannot be attributed to migration, although migration may have a minimal influence. The primary factor

contributing to the low female literacy rate is the prevailing public perception and cultural expectations regarding gender roles.

Migration as an opportunity for male children

The data indicates that winter migration is a challenging undertaking that requires relocating household belongings, finding an affordable rental property, identifying areas with better business opportunities, obtaining school migration certificates, readmitting to the previous school, and adapting to a completely new environment. However, it does offer advantages for certain family members as they get inspiration from the people of the cities they migrate to. For example, according to M in F-1, *"I have high hopes that my daughter will receive a quality education."*

There is a woman residing near our home in Mingora who works as a professional educator. I like the eloquence of her and her children's speech, their ability to maintain a neat home, and their exemplary behaviour. Enrolling my daughters in school is a challenge due to my husband's disapproval, but I am contemplating sending my sons to school. I desire for them to possess the ability to comprehend written text and express themselves through written communication.

The shift in this mother's mindset can be attributed to the change in location and cultural context. In their hamlet, there is a lack of role models to inspire them. However, in the cities, families witness others who prioritise sending both their male and female children to school.

Similarly, when asked about female education, M in F-4 expressed regret that her daughters were unable to attend school. However, she mentioned that her older son, having witnessed students attending school in cities, is now actively challenging these traditions and has enrolled his younger siblings in schools.

The father in F-4 was optimistic about the future potential of education as a result of the shift in societal norms towards schooling and the importance placed on education. He observed that migration-induced relocation has led to significant cultural changes, exposing families to novel educational norms and views. Currently, only male children are benefiting from the shift in people's perception of the significance of education.

Salik et al (2023) argue that climate-induced migration offers less developed areas the opportunity to get improved educational and other services.

M, a member of family-4, believes that the absence of segregated schools and government support in terms of enrolment and fees is creating difficulties in giving education to our girls. While the costs for government schools are very low, our situation allows us just six months to make money. During the remaining six months, we either relocate or stay indoors to use the money we have earned. She stated that:

It is necessary to provide enrolment support, tuition facilities, access to educational resources, and cultural awareness efforts in order to ensure that females successfully finish their education.

In addition to cultural hurdles, poverty is also a contributing factor to parents' decision not to send their girls to schools. Due to their limited means, they choose individuals who could provide family members assistance in old age instead of girls who get married and join a new family. They inherently have a preference for a male offspring as opposed to a girl. (Askari, Jawed, and Askari 2022) assert that the primary obstacles to women's education in Pakistan include cultural norms and orthodox attitudes towards gender roles, poverty, limited educational resources, security concerns, and a shortage of female teachers.

Similarly, D, a 17-year-old, stated that our girls' school only goes up to 5th grade. This implies that if a family wants to educate their daughters, it is not feasible for them. In addition, she mentioned that up until the fifth grade, we attend schools that are exclusively for males and study in a mixed-gender setting, which is not favoured by the majority of parents.

D of F-5 from Utror, who relocated to Mingora city, also highlighted the same issue. She documented that:

our region's educational infrastructure is inadequate. The region only has three primary schools. Unfortunately, the only middle school was devastated in the catastrophic 2010 flood and has not been reconstructed. She further observed that "Our family, like many other families, struggles to afford education in urban areas due to its exorbitant cost."

Natural disasters have contributed to the inadequate state of educational infrastructure. In 2010, a flood severely damaged the educational infrastructure and had a devastating impact on local

businesses. After a difficult recovery, the northern areas of Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa experienced another disastrous flooding in August 2022. This event resulted in significant losses to both private and government assets, including hotels, hospitals, and schools. Furthermore, it is a regrettable reality that the environmental problem of frequent flooding has rendered them incapable of bearing the financial burden of education. Consequently, the government should earnestly contemplate implementing some sort of assistance to these communities, ensuring that they can offer education to their children without regard to gender disparities or preferences.

Similarly, a 36-year-old male from F-1 expressed his opinion on the availability of educational facilities in our region of Kalam, stating that there is a scarcity of such facilities with just one elementary school being there.

Having only one coeducational primary school up to 5th grade is insufficient to alter the fate of the local population. The only function it serves is to offer wages to its employees. It offers minimal assistance in terms of education to the local population.

The District Officer of Education from the Pishmal region of Kalam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is of the opinion that there are schools in our area that provide education up to grade 5, however these institutions are exclusively for males. While girls are permitted to enrol in this institution, individuals typically attend school for only six months before migrating to more established regions. Upon returning, they often discontinue their education or struggle to recall what they had learned in the previous months. Therefore, the teachers lack enthusiasm in imparting knowledge.

General Positive effects of winter migration

While the study participants indicated some unfavourable consequences of the winter migration in the interviews, overall, there are meagre adverse effects that lead students to stop their studies. However, the main obstacles that prevented female pupils from receiving a school education in upper Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, were the cultural norms and patriarchal society. Conversely, other families documented the beneficial outcomes of the winter relocation and discussed the motivation they derived from the metropolitan setting, where sending daughters to schools is a customary practice. For example, as documented by M of F-4. She stated that exposure to urban environments expanded her understanding of the importance of education, potentially questioning traditional beliefs and motivating families to prioritise girls' education. A notable example of this is her son, who took the initiative to enrol his siblings, including his sister, in school.

The FA of F-2 saw individuals enrolling their children in schools during the process of migration. He lamented his decision not to enrol his children in schools, but he is resolute in his determination to support his grandchildren's education. He insisted that; I did not permit my daughter, but I will certainly provide permission to my grandkids to defy the prevailing norms.

M, a female participant in F-2, shared her aspiration for a future when girls from rural areas receive the same level of education as girls in urban areas. She articulates her desire for her girls to get a comprehensive education. The woman expressed her desire for her daughter to have a high-quality education. There is a woman residing near our home in Mingora who works as a professional educator. I like the eloquence of her and her children's speech, their ability to maintain a neat home, and their exemplary behaviour.

She would have never developed these new hopes for the future, where she envisions sending her daughters to school, if she had stayed in an environment that exclusively presented a patriarchal view on girls' education. The culture at her place of birth is distinct. Through migration, she gained exposure to a diverse culture and a fresh viewpoint where it is customary to educate girls. A similar desire for change was expressed in an interview with M of F-4. Additionally, she believes that migration and exposure to a diverse cultural environment are contributing to a shift in people's perception of the importance of education. She stated that exposure to urban environments expanded people's outlook on the importance of education, which could potentially challenge conventional beliefs and motivate families to prioritise girls' education. A notable example of this is my son, who took the initiative to enrol his siblings in school, including his sister.

The FA of the F-4 also share similar perspectives about the advantageous aspects of winter-related migration. He observed that:

migration-induced dislocation has led to significant cultural transformations, which have exposed families to novel norms and viewpoints towards schooling, particularly for females. Urban environments offer unique perspectives on the importance of education.

D, a member of a family of five, similarly shares the belief that their exposure to urban living and education has resulted in significant and predominantly favourable transformations. They acknowledge and value the ways in which city life and education have contributed to their individual development.

A school teacher from Utror upper Swat, belonging to family-5 of FA, has relocated his entire family to the city on a permanent basis. He believes that the primary motive for relocating my family to the metropolis is education. In the city, I have the opportunity to provide education for all of my children, regardless of their gender. He argues that cultural limitations are much less tight here compared to Utror.

Findings, Discussion, Conclusions & Recommendations

Findings

The study's findings indicate that while winter migration does have some minor impacts on females' education, the primary factor that influences female students' education is the patriarchal mindset. Parents, particularly male heads of households, have the belief that it is culturally unacceptable to send females to schools and higher educational institutions for the sake of education. My mother likewise shared the belief that females are more adept at assisting her with household tasks rather than attending school. Male participants, specifically, believed that educating females is a futile expenditure as they are expected to be married off to other families, rendering the money invested in their education useless.

During an interview, a female participant (referred to as the daughter) informed the researcher that her mother holds the belief that females become deviant after receiving an education, and that they no longer adhere to conventional norms of showing respect towards males and other family members. Additionally, she held the belief that these females remain unmarried as their unconventional lifestyles make them undesirable as potential spouses. Nevertheless, there were cases where family members had permanently relocated to established regions for the sake of their children's education. Interviews with these individuals indicated that they recognised the importance of education. The majority of the participants held the belief that sending females to schools is culturally incorrect. However, a few individuals expressed the opinion that the absence of educational facilities in the region results in a lack of educational possibilities. The majority of the available schools only offered instruction up to the fifth grade. Those fortunate enough to receive an education were largely enrolled in boys' schools. The majority of the participants, who were parents, expressed a strong desire for their children to get religious instruction.

Winter migration can serve as a source of inspiration for certain family members, particularly the younger generation. They become integrated with the urban population and other social groups, drawing inspiration from their interactions. Three participants from the target families stated such feelings and have enrolled their children and younger siblings in schools. They are committed to provide them with education beyond the limited options of primary school.

Discussion

The prevalence of patriarchy and its associated mind-set has significantly contributed to the systematic deprivation of girls and women, not only in terms of schooling but also in their ability to make important life decisions, such as choosing their own careers, marriages, and professional priorities. This phenomenon is not limited just to the upper Swat region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, but is also observed in other locations, particularly those dominated by the Pakthun community in Pakistan. In addition to the government's failure to provide facilities for girls' and women's education, there is also a significant disregard for addressing cultural inequities at the policy level. This investigation also identified the detrimental impact of cultural inequities and patriarchal mind-set. Women and girls were denied access to education under the pretext of cultural inappropriateness. However, the underlying reason was the fear of the male dominant mind-set losing their superiority over women if they were educated and exposed to different patterns of thought than what they were traditionally trained in.

Education fosters the development of scientific and logical modes of thinking, enabling individuals to critically examine the nature of phenomena and established procedures. Cultural norms in these regressive regions attempt to restrict women from engaging in such activities. One of the findings of the current research study is that the pursuit of economic survival and economic inequities contribute to families neglecting the education of their children, particularly girls and women.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the combination of cultural traditions and a patriarchal mindset presents substantial obstacles to the education of females in Upper Swat. This further worsens the existing gaps and continues the cycles of poverty and inequality. In addition to cultural constraints and a patriarchal mind-set, the absence of infrastructure and economic prospects in these communities exacerbates the already dire situation. To tackle these difficulties, it is necessary to adopt comprehensive approaches that take into account the complex character of migration and its influence on educational results. To provide equal access to education for all children in migrant communities, it is crucial to implement policy interventions, engage the community, and invest in infrastructure.

Recommendations

Based on the many themes identified through thematic analysis of the collected data, the following recommendations are suggested for further research and for enhancing the existing situation: Create specialised educational initiatives to facilitate girls' education throughout migratory periods for families who have been influenced by the settled urban population. This would help ensure universal access to education, particularly for girls.

The government should implement focused interventions to increase awareness and address gender stereotypes that impede girls' access to school.

The government should focus on enhancing the availability of high-quality education and infrastructure in areas with high rates of migration.

The government should implement various economic initiatives in these regions to prevent winter migration and provide uninterrupted schooling in these areas.

Providing internet access to both pupils and instructors might serve as an alternate approach during severe winter seasons.

Areas for Further Research

Subsequent investigations should examine the enduring consequences of winter migration on the educational achievements and social status of females. Furthermore, conducting comparison studies across various areas and groups can offer valuable insights into the specific contextual factors that influence educational objectives and results in migratory environments. There is a need for additional research to examine how technology and distant learning might help reduce the negative effects of migration on education. Distance education might be considered as an alternate approach in locations with severe weather conditions.

This comprehensive approach seeks to offer a deep understanding of the intricacies of migration and its impact on girls' education. It attempts to educate interventions and policy decisions that are based on research, with the goal of promoting educational fairness and empowerment in communities affected by migration.

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