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Investigating the Factors of Low Enrolment of Girls at Secondary School Level: A Sociological Analysis

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Abstract

The enrolment of girls in schools poses a significant challenge within underdeveloped nations. Education provision is a fundamental human right that is universally recognized and acknowledged. Each academic year witnesses many female students discontinuing their education at the primary level, thereby failing to complete their secondary education successfully. The primary aim of this study was to investigate and analyze the factors associated with the relatively low enrollment rates of female students at the secondary school level within the Kashmor district, specifically in the Knadhkot area. A research investigation was undertaken within a sample of 15 Government Schools, wherein the active participation of parents and community members was sought through the questionnaire administration. The research study employed a stratified random sampling technique to select participants from parents and community members carefully. Hence, the sample comprises 384 individuals, either parents of dropped-out female school children or community members. The data were obtained by using the questionnaire. The data collected underwent analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The identified factors, such as poverty (M=3.26), customs and traditions (M=3.26), an unsafe environment (M=3.15), and a lack of institutional support (M=3.39), have been determined to be the primary contributors to the low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level in the study area, the null hypothesis is rejected based on regression analysis results with an R-squared value of 0.549,($F = 144.083$, $p < 0.001$). The average score of each question indicates a high extent of agreement among respondents regarding the impact of the factors. To enhance the enrollment rate of girls, it is recommended that the government increase the stipend amount and provide it monthly rather than quarterly or yearly. A community-level transport system should also ensure girls and their parents feel

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safe when sending their girls to school after completing 5th grade. A community citizenship organization should also be established to facilitate meetings and discussions regarding girls' enrolment and admission at the local level.

Keywords: Low Enrolment, Girls Education, Poverty, Customs and Traditions, Unsafe Environment, Lack of Institutional Support, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

The low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level is a critical and concerning matter that requires immediate attention and thorough investigation. Education is the fundamental pillar that drives socioeconomic progress in any nation. It unites people by fostering a collective understanding of knowledge, encouraging innovation, and ultimately leading to prosperity. Without it, the foundation of a country's survival crumbles, as no civilization can withstand the tests of time without the solid pillars of tangible development and ongoing advancements in this crucial sector. Despite significant advances in educational opportunities worldwide, there continues to be a gender disparity, particularly when it comes to girls' access to and completion of secondary education in Pakistan, especially in Sindh province (Qureshi, 2004).

The Province of Sindh in Pakistan is a significant contributor, as 23% of the nation's total population lives in Sindh. However, within this densely populated region, a troubling issue casts a dark cloud over the area - the pervasive problem of unemployment. This issue has affected a significant portion of the workforce, with 40% of individuals trapped in its grip, preventing them from pursuing their dreams and aspirations. The widespread unemployment has a ripple effect, causing a harmful cycle of poverty that traps numerous families (Sindh, 2019). As poverty tightens its grip, the education sector is heavily impacted. The enrollment of children, particularly young girls, is greatly affected by economic hardships. It is quite alarming that over half of the girls in Sindh are being deprived of the chance to attend school, as various societal and economic limitations hinder their potential. The urgent call for change is evident in the plight of these young minds who desire knowledge and growth. This gender gap has made Pakistan vulnerable to various issues within its education system, especially at the secondary school level (Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education, 2021).

To address this discouraging situation, the Sindh Education Sector Plan for 2014-18 has significantly increased the education budget (Reform Support Unit, Education and Literacy Department, 2014). Since 2009, there has been an impressive surge of 108%, 119%, and 44% in the budget. Although this surge provides a glimmer of hope, it has drawbacks. The uneven distribution of resources diminishes its impact in certain areas, making it less potent. Unfortunately, despite the increased budgetary allocations, the issue of gender disparity continues to persist in every district of the province. Discrimination becomes apparent in the

unequal representation of schools dedicated to girls compared to those for boys. The issue of School Children is marked by a noticeable disparity, particularly in the case of girls, who make up the majority. The echoes of this disparity can be heard loud and clear. Furthermore, the lack of adequate facilities greatly affects girls' schools, placing them at a continuous disadvantage. This disheartening fact is evident in the records, which quietly document the lack of progress and emphasize the urgent need for change (ASER, 2020).

The Province of Sindh, known for its vibrant culture and resilient people, must unite to empower its daughters and address the challenges of unemployment, poverty, and educational disparity. Sindh can only aspire to create a brighter future for all its children, regardless of gender, and empower them to achieve their dreams and shape a prosperous tomorrow through collective effort and dedicated focus on gender equality (UNICEF, 2017a).

The purpose of this sociological analysis is to explore the various factors that contribute to the low enrollment of girls in secondary schools. The research aims to delve into the societal norms, cultural beliefs, and structural inequalities that impede girls' access to education and contribute to gender-based discrimination. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can develop targeted interventions and strategies to promote gender equality and improve access to education by comprehending these intricate factors (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Scope of Research

The current research on investigating the factors of the low enrollment of girls at school in the province of Sindh, particularly in upper districts, especially in Kashmor at Knadhkot, is widespread and can significantly impact. Investigating and understanding this issue requires considering many socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental factors. Investigation in this field can explore different dimensions to provide a comprehensive understanding. It allows one to analyze local customs and traditions deeply, examining how they have changed and the potential for improvement. In addition, research can explore the economic dynamics within the region, uncovering strategies to reduce poverty that can directly impact improving girls' access to education. Examining the safety concerns experienced by girls and assessing community-based safety initiatives is another important aspect of this research. Furthermore, delving into the role and effectiveness of institutional support, such as scholarships and mentorship programs, can offer valuable insights. The research scope encompasses policy recommendations, program development, and advocacy efforts to tackle this intricate challenge and advance gender equality in education in Sindh Upper and as a potential model for similar regions.

Rationale of Research

The World Economic Forum (WEF) released its 2021 Global Gender Gap Report on March 31, 2021, ranking Pakistan as the world's fourth worst nation for gender parity. According to the research, Pakistan ranked as the 153rd most unequal country in the world, with a gender disparity of 55.6 percent. The truth of the matter is that women and men are still unequal in terms of access to resources and opportunities. This gap not only harms the quality of women's lives but also threatens the long-term growth and well-being of nations that do not fully use the potential of one-half of their human resources; this limits the competitive potential of such countries (WEF, 2021).

The gender enrollment gap in Pakistan's educational system, according to the data from 2021, is 13%. At the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels, the disparities widen to 84.1 percent, 84.7 percent, and 87.1 percent, respectively. In addition, just 46.5% of women are literate, and only 61.6% complete elementary school, 34.2% complete high school, and 8.3% go on to further their education after high school (Asian Development Bank, 2019).

When it comes to their education, Pakistani women confront a bleak and depressing situation. A person's rights are better understood when they are educated. It's impossible for someone unaware of their rights to ask for them. It is a violation of women's human rights to be denied the chance to get an education, to have their health and well-being threatened, and to have their voices suppressed in political decision-making.

Girls in rural Sindh are not given equal access to education. There is a lot of gender segregation and discrimination, and the enrolment ratio of girls is lagging in the whole of Sindh province (Center of Gender and Policy Studies, 2018).

Statement of the problem

Girls' attendance in secondary schools in District Kashmor, particularly in the Kandhkot district, has consistently been low, raising serious concerns about gender parity and the quality of education. The enrollment rates continue to be significantly biased towards males despite the government's attempts to encourage female education. To identify and remove the obstacles preventing females from pursuing secondary school, this research aims to explore the underlying social and cultural elements that give rise to this phenomenon. The study attempts to yield practical knowledge for policymakers, teachers, and community members to design focused actions and interventions that might advance gender parity in secondary school enrollment in this region by identifying and understanding these determinants. This current study aimed to discover the social and cultural factors

responsible for the low enrollment ratio of girls at the secondary school level in district Knadhkot at Kashmor.

Objectives of Research

1. To explore the socio-cultural factors responsible for the low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level in district Kashmor at Kandhkot.

2. To determine the impact of socio-cultural factors on girls' secondary school enrollment in districts Kashmor and Kandhkot.

Research Questions

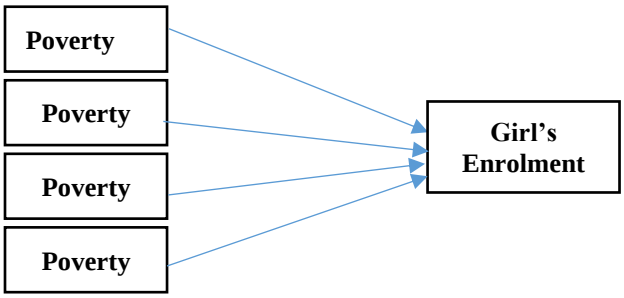
- How does poverty influence the low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level?

- What role do customs and traditions play in girls' secondary school enrollment?

- How does an unsafe environment impact the enrolment and retention of girls at the secondary school level?

- How does the lack of institutional support influence the enrolment of girls at the secondary school level?

Conceptual Framework



Significance of Research

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the many socio-cultural barriers that hinder females from obtaining and furthering their education at this critical phase.

Understanding this issue is important for policymakers, as it equips them with the essential facts and insights to formulate evidence-based policies and

actions. These methods may efficiently address the root causes of female students' poor enrollment and high attrition rates. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations (NGOs and INGOs) might use the study findings to create targeted activities and initiatives to support females in their educational journey. It thoroughly explains the complex obstacles that impede girls from accessing and pursuing their education during this crucial stage.

Limitation of Research

This current study faced some limitations due to a lack of resources, faced challenges in data collection due to non-responsive parents, and experienced difficulty frequently in the area. The study was also limited to considering the parents whose daughters dropped out after completing primary education.

Literature Review

Mustafa et al. (2016) explain how parents influence and create excuses for the fact that girls are not permitted in Islam, particularly in coeducational schools where men and females are educated alongside one another. As a result, parents erroneously use religion in the context of social and cultural standards (Sadaf Mustafa, M. Sadiq Ali Khan, 2016). Bradley and Saigol (2012) affirmed that in Islam, there is no discrimination between men and women; both must be educated in worldly and religious knowledge.

Ali, S., & Cheema, A. R. (2018, May 15) investigated that Pakistan, although being a signatory to the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework for Action (2000), which strives to ensure that education is a fundamental human right, particularly for females, has failed to achieve the necessary level of literacy in the country. He believed that child labor, poverty, and a lack of educational opportunities were the primary reasons for the country's low literacy rate to stagnate. He demonstrated that, as a result of the factors above, the ratio of dropouts among children under five is alarmingly high, with 56 percent of children in group five leaving school.

Ayesha Khan and Naqvi (2011) mentioned that Gender equality in education is a global problem; "The entire world is working towards education 2030 framework for action, to guarantee that all and equal quality education for women (Khan & Naqvi, 2020). Despite the efforts made throughout the globe by educational partners, they continue to exist (Sustainable Development Goals, 2017). Around 16 million out-of-school females live in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2017b).

Isran Samina (2012) provided various explanations, including the fact that rural communities in Pakistan are mostly male-dominated and that fathers make decisions about the mobility of daughters. As a result, parent education is seen to

be more significant than that of their children. Second, elements in the neighborhood, such as the school's location, directly impact the female literacy rate. They discovered that people living far from schools are less likely to seek a higher degree. Third, families with low levels of money cannot continue their daughter's education after graduating high school. Fourth, women's education is influenced by the social class distinctions in the community. Respected families seek higher education, and vice versa, to further their careers. From the perspective of employment, the top class of society takes a more proactive approach to finding appealing occupations for their daughters. In contrast, those who do not take this approach are denied their rights, decreasing the literacy rate among low-income people (Isran, 2012).

UNESCO (2011) Pakistani society's structure is often classified as patriarchal, and the largely conservative perspective of women's involvement in social, cultural, intellectual, and political discourses predominates. Narrow-mindedness, social standards, and traditional customs are crucial variables that play a big influence in denying females the opportunity to get an education. In a similar vein, individuals in society use the name of religion to justify preventing females from pursuing higher education (Akhter & Akbar, 2016).

Factors Affecting Girls' Education In Pakistan

Deep-rooted Cultural Norms and Traditional Gender Roles

Deep-rooted cultural norms and traditional gender roles often dictate that girls are primarily responsible for domestic duties, which can limit their perceived value in pursuing education beyond basic levels.

Socioeconomic Constraints and Poverty

Socioeconomic constraints, poverty, and financial limitations can result in families giving priority to the education of male children, which can create a disparity in educational opportunities for girls (Choudhry, Mutalib, & Ismail, 2019; Sharif, Muhammad S., & Sharif, N., 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic has also worsened the socioeconomic conditions in Pakistan, with high inflation rates and poverty severely hampering efforts to improve educational opportunities. Nearly half of the population in Pakistan lives below the poverty line (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, 2020), exacerbating the existing problem. Economic constraints often prioritize boys over girls in education, leading to the denial of girls' right to education at the family and community level (Me, Angela, 2020). Impoverished families often cannot afford to educate all their children, and the daughters usually remain home until marriage. Moreover, the health of children, especially those affected by severe malnutrition during the pandemic, raises concerns about

attending school, particularly for girls (ILO & UNICEF, 2020). Parents hesitate to send their daughters away from home, and inadequate school facilities add to the challenges (ASER, 2020).

Distance and safety concerns

The absence of secure and convenient school transportation options can discourage girls from enrolling, especially in rural areas where schools may be far away from their homes.

Early marriage and high rates of teen pregnancies

Early marriages and high fertility rates at younger ages often observe a decrease in girls' enrollment in education. This is because there is an expectation that marriage and motherhood should be prioritized over pursuing an education.

Gender-based violence and harassment

Gender-based violence and harassment can instill fear in individuals while they are on their way to school or even within educational institutions. This fear can create a hostile environment that discourages girls from attending school. The limited presence of female educators and role models in academic settings can have a negative impact on girls' motivation and aspirations to pursue higher education.

Discriminatory Policies and Practices

Certain educational systems may have policies and practices that unintentionally or deliberately discriminate against girls, negatively impacting their enrollment and retention rates (Saha, Torous, Caine, & Choudhury, 2020).

Government Initiatives to Promote Girls' Education

The Pakistani government has implemented several initiatives to tackle the gender gap in education. Two notable programs are the Ehsaas undergraduate scholarship program and the Kafalat program. These initiatives are designed to promote education without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity or gender. In addition, regional governments like the Sindh and Punjab governments have implemented stipend programs for girls to promote education in disadvantaged communities. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) government has initiated a program to offer stationery and stipend support to secondary school students, focusing on girls.

Research Methodology

The current investigation adopted descriptive research and utilized the quantitative approach. The survey technique employed in this study was chosen based on carefully considering the study's objectives. The focus of this study is the district of Kashmor at Knadhkot. The study focuses on engaging community stakeholders as the targeted population.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The stratified Random sampling method was applied to select the study's sample size. A sample (n=384) comprised community members/parents using the Krejcie & Morgan formula for an unknown population. For equal proportions, the Cochran formula for stratified sampling method was used. In this regard, every Taluka has been given an equal number, for example, (n=128). The response rate achieved was (n=327). After data cleaning, every Taluka equally assigned (n=109) responses as the return rate of questionnaires.

$$n=\frac{Z2\times P\times (1-P)}{e^2}$$

We can proceed with our analysis by assuming a desired % confidence level of 95% (Z = 1.96, as determined by the standard normal distribution for a 95% confidence level) and a specified % margin of error of 5% (e = 0.05).

Applying the formula:

$$n = \frac{1.962*0.5* (1-0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n= \frac{3.8416*0.5*0.5}{0.0025}$$

$$n= \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

n=384

Table No. 2. Distribution of Sample Size

Taluka	Community members/ Parents
Knadhkot	128
Kashmor	128
Tangwani	128
Total	**384**

Data Collection Techniques
Questionnaire

A self-developed Likert scale questionnaire was utilized for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire is quite high, with a coefficient of $\alpha = 0.946$, indicating a strong level of reliability.

Table No.3. Scale Reliability Statistics

	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
scale	3.93	0.657	0.946

Analysis of Data

In this study, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics typically involve examining the frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

Research Hypothesis

H_{O1}: There is no significant impact of socio-cultural factors on the girl's enrolment at the secondary school level.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The selected research area was District Kashmor at Knadhkot (n = 327, 100.00%). Community members and parents were included in the chosen research Taluka, and all talukas were given equal proportions in selecting sample size using the stratified random sampling formula of Cochran. The study was conducted in three Taluka of district Knadhkot at Kashmor as a sample taken from the Taluka Knadhkot (n = 109, 33.33%). Taluka Kashmor (n = 109, 33.33%) and Taluka Tangwani (n = 109, 33.33%). According to the observed category of Gender was Male (n = 300, 92%) and Female (n = 27, 8%).

Education profile of the study respondents

Education is a key indicator of human progress and essential for social, economic, cultural, and psychological growth. People can distinguish between right and wrong things by getting an education. All these factors are equally true for both males and females in society. However, Sindh's female literacy rate is lower than its male one. Because girls have limited opportunities to pursue high school education, since parents have a significant influence on their children's growth, their education is crucial for the future.

Table No.4. Education Level of the study respondents

S.N	Education level	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	90	27.52
2	Primary	98	29.96
3	Secondary	80	24.46
4	Higher Secondary	10	3.05
5	Graduate	40	12.23
6	Postgraduate	10	3.05
	Total	**327**	**100.0**

Analysis: Based on the data presented in Table 4, it is evident that a significant proportion of individuals within the community and parents of the children in the group possess limited educational backgrounds. At the same time, some respondents possess graduate and postgraduate degrees. Specifically, approximately 27.52% of the population can be classified as illiterate, while 29.96% have completed only primary education.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF EACH ITEM OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table No. 5. Poverty-related factors

Poverty	N	Mean	SD	Extent
Poverty is a significant contributor to girls dropping out and low secondary education enrolment.	327	3.63	1.242	High
Domestic employment contributes to the low enrolment rate among girls at the secondary school level.	327	3.06	1.479	High
The excess of children contributes to the low enrollment of girls at the secondary school level.	327	2.98	1.441	High
High educational fees are a contributing significant factor to a low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level	327	3.18	1.393	High
Parents' illnesses contribute to poor enrolment among girls at the secondary school level.	327	3.43	1.294	High
Total Overall Mean Score =		**3.26**	**.693**	**High**

Analysis: According to the information presented in Table 5, it can be observed that poverty is widely recognized as a significant factor influencing girls' dropout rates and low enrolment in secondary education. Domestic employment and high educational fees are also considered contributing factors. Parents' health conditions and the number of children in a family are also considered factors, though slightly less significant. The average score of 3.26 indicates a moderate level of agreement among respondents regarding the impact of the factors.

Table No.6. Custom and Tradition related factors

Custom & Tradition	N	Mean	SD	Extent
Early marriage is a contributing factor to female illiteracy in secondary school	327	2.94	1.446	High
The girl's education at the secondary school level is affected by the family's customs and traditions.	327	2.96	1.439	High
Parents' attitude on girls' education is a significant factor in low enrolment	327	3.46	1.153	High
Separation among the husbands and wives is a significant cause of dropouts among girls at the secondary school level.	327	3.64	1.115	High
Male dominancy in the families is the real cause of low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level	327	3.31	1.469	High
Total Overall Mean Score =		**3.26**	**0.697**	**High**

Analysis: According to the information presented in Table 6, it can be observed that factors such as early marriage, family customs and traditions, and parents' attitudes have a notable impact on female illiteracy rates and lower enrolment in secondary school. Differences in roles and dynamics between husbands and wives and certain traditional family structures also play a role. The average score of 3.26 indicates a moderate level of agreement among respondents regarding the impact of the factors.

Table No.7. Unsafe environment-related factors

Unsafe Environment	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Extent**
An unsafe living environment is a significant factor in girls' poor enrolment rates at the secondary school level.	327	3.10	1.420	High
Distance of school is also a significant factor in low enrolment of girls' education at the secondary school level.	327	3.61	1.126	High
Parents' illiteracy is a contributing factor to a low enrolment of girls at the secondary school level.	327	2.77	1.436	High
Threatening behavior from village elders and families contributes to poor enrolment rates among girls at secondary school.	327	2.98	1.441	High
The negative influence played by the media (both electronic and social) on rape cases in the nation contributes to poor literacy rates among girls in secondary school.	327	2.78	1.466	High
Migration of families is a significant cause of low enrolment in girls' secondary education	327	3.63	1.122	**High**
Total Overall Mean Score =	**327**	**3.15**	**.675**	**High**

Analysis: According to Table 7, it appears that there are certain factors, such as the living environment and the distance to schools, that are perceived to have an impact on girls' enrolment in secondary education. The lack of literacy among parents and the challenging behavior exhibited by village elders and family members are also considered potential factors that may influence the situation. The media's influence and family migration can also be factors impacting enrolment. The average score of 3.15 indicates a discernible impact of the unsafe environment on girls' enrolment.

Table No. 8. Lack of Institutional support related factors

Lack of Institutional Support	N	Mean	SD	Extent
Lack of educational resources in schools is a significant factor in poor enrolment rates of girls at the secondary school level.	327	3.64	1.187	High
Ineffective teaching and learning processes are a significant factor in the low enrolment among girls at the secondary school level.	327	3.50	1.185	High
Lack of scholarship or stipend results in low enrolment among girls at the secondary school level.	327	3.06	1.446	High
Fear of failure in exams is a significant factor among girls dropping out of secondary school.	327	3.57	1.159	High
Lack of career options and employment contributes to the girls' low enrolment rate at the secondary school level.	327	3.18	1.445	High
Total Overall Mean Score =		**3.39**	**0.716**	**High**

Analysis: Table 8 above highlights various factors that impact girls' enrolment in secondary education. These factors include challenges related to educational resources, teaching and learning methods, availability of scholarships or stipends, concerns about exam performance, and limited career prospects. The average score of 3.39 indicates a moderate influence of these factors on enrolment.

Table No. 9. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.741[a]	0.549	0.545	0.407

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lack_of_Institutional_Support, Poverty, Unsafe_Enviornment, Customs_Traditions

b. Dependent Variable: Girls_Enrolment

Table No. 10. ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	95.473	4	23.868	144.083	0.000[b]
	Residual	78.355	321	0.166		
	Total	173.829	324			

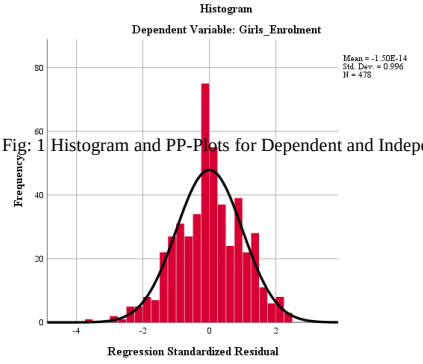
a. Dependent Variable: Girls_Enrolment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Lack_of_Institutional_Support, Poverty, Unsafe_Enviornment, Customs_Traditions

Table No. 11. Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.930	0.145		6.415	0.000
	Poverty	0.583	0.054	0.606	10.702	0.000
	Customs_Traditions	0.677	0.050	0.846	13.509	0.000
	Unsafe_Enviornment	0.025	0.058	0.024	0.429	0.668
	Lack_of_Institutional_Support	-0.662	0.047	-0.957	-14.176	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Girls_Enrolment



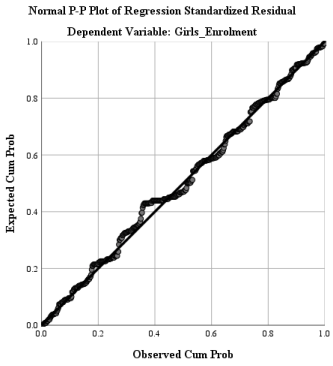


Fig: 1 Histogram and PP-Plots for Dependent and Independent variables

Analysis

For this regression analysis, we conducted a study to examine the hypothesis (H01) regarding the potential impact of socio-cultural factors on girls' enrollment at the secondary school level. Based on the results, it is evident that the model holds great statistical significance. The R-squared value of 0.549 indicates that the predictors used in the model collectively account for approximately 54.9% of the variance in girls' enrollment. The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is significant ($F = 144.083$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests a noteworthy influence of at least one of the independent variables, specifically socio-cultural factors, on the enrollment of girls.

Examining the coefficients reveals that Poverty (Beta = 0.606) and Customs and traditions (Beta = 0.846) have a statistically significant positive effect on girls' enrollment. This implies that higher poverty levels and adherence to traditional customs and traditions are linked to higher enrollment rates. On the other hand, the study found that a lack of institutional support significantly negatively impacts girls' enrollment. This suggests that when institutions fail to provide support, it lowers enrollment rates. However, the coefficient for Unsafe Environment and its statistical significance is not substantial, indicating that it does not have a significant impact.

Based on the analysis, it is clear that socio-cultural factors play a crucial role in influencing girls' enrollment at the secondary school level. This is evident from the significant coefficients for Poverty, Customs and traditions, and Lack of Institutional Support.

Discussion

It is widely accepted that everyone should have equal educational opportunities regardless of background. However, it is worth noting that in the context of Pakistan, there exists a concerning disparity in the enrollment rates of girls' education at the secondary school level, especially in backward areas of upper Sindh Province, indicating a need for investigation and intervention. This was a descriptive study, and the goal was to determine the factors contributing to the low enrolment of female students in secondary education. Social development indices, including schooling (i.e., girls' enrolment and dropout rates) in Pakistan, show a wide discrepancy between male and female students. Article 25A of Pakistan's 18th Amendment ensures that girls and boys, ages 5 to 16, have equal access to a quality education and equal opportunity. The ground facts, on the other hand, paint a quite different image. Despite the constitutional and legal guarantee of the right to education, Sindh shows significant inequalities in terms of gender and regional distribution, and these inequalities persist in the education sector in Sindh as well.

Sindh has a literacy rate of 55 percent, according to the most recent SE&LD report (SESP&R 2019-2024), which was released recently (Sindh, 2019). Meanwhile, according to the PSLM (2018–2019), the total literacy rate in Sindh is 57 percent. The number of females aged ten years and older who have ever attended school (44 percent) is much lower than the rate of boys (68 percent) (PBS, 2020).

Further analysis of the literacy rate in urban vs. rural areas revealed that the literacy rate in urban areas is only 72 percent, which is greater than that in rural areas, only 36 percent. Women's education levels differ significantly between rural and urban regions in Sindh, with just 19 percent of rural women educated compared to 64 percent of women literate in urban areas. It is also important to consider the Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) from elementary to secondary level from one year to the next. In Sindh, just 79 percent of females are enrolled in elementary school, according to GER statistics. This reduces even more due to the large number of dropouts, reaching 55 percent at the elementary school level and falling even further to 51 percent at the secondary school level. For females in rural Sindh, it was discovered that the total Net Enrolment Rate (NER) is 61 percent, with just 41 percent of girls enrolled in primary school. This figure reduces to 14 percent in elementary and 6 percent in secondary school. Equal educational opportunities for all girls and women in Sindh can help ensure that women's societal roles are recognized and that they are afforded equal rights and dignity. If educational resources are available to all girls, the family, the community, and society will benefit from increased access to and control over education, academics, knowledge, participation, and power issues. These findings highlight the need for thorough and focused interventions to tackle these complex challenges. Efforts should be focused on addressing poverty by implementing economic empowerment programs for families while also working towards dismantling harmful customs and traditions that contribute to gender inequalities. Ensuring a secure environment for girls to access education should be a paramount concern, with active involvement from local communities and authorities. In addition, providing institutional support, such as scholarships, transportation, and mentorship programs, can have a significant impact on increasing girls' enrollment and retention in secondary schools.

To enhance girls' enrollment at the secondary level, it is crucial for all parties involved, such as government entities, civil society, and the community, to work together and establish a supportive and inclusive educational environment. This research provides a valuable resource for policymakers and advocates working towards addressing the gender disparity in education and striving for a more equitable and prosperous future for all girls in Pakistan's Sindh Upper districts.

Findings In light of the data provided in Table 5, it becomes evident that poverty holds a prominent position as a key determinant affecting the alarming rates of girls' disengagement from education and their limited enrollment in secondary

schooling. In addition to the concerns above, it is imperative to acknowledge the impact of domestic employment and exorbitant educational fees. These factors, too, play a significant role in shaping the current socioeconomic landscape. When determining the factors that influence a family's dynamics, one cannot overlook the importance of parents' health conditions and the number of children in the equation. While these factors may not carry as much weight as others, they are worth considering. With an average score of 3.26, there seems to be a moderate level of agreement among the respondents when evaluating the impact of the various factors.

Analyzing the data provided in Table 6 shows that certain factors significantly influence female illiteracy rates and hinder enrollment in secondary education. Early marriage, family customs and traditions, and parents' attitudes are key contributors to this educational disparity. When examining the intricate tapestry of marital relationships, one cannot overlook the significant inequalities in roles and dynamics between husbands and wives. These disparities, coupled with the influence of traditional family structures, undoubtedly shape the intricate dance of matrimony. With an average score of 3.26, a moderate level of consensus exists among the respondents when evaluating the influence of the various factors.

In a thought-provoking revelation, Table 7 sheds light on the critical factors that impede girls' enrollment in secondary education. It unequivocally highlights the detrimental impact of an unsafe living environment and the formidable distance of schools on the educational journey of young girls. These factors, deemed significant by those surveyed, serve as formidable barriers hindering girls' progress in their education. In the realm of educational challenges, the issue of parents' illiteracy and the distressing conduct exhibited by village elders and family members cannot be overlooked. These factors undoubtedly play a significant role in hindering the progress of individuals seeking knowledge and personal growth. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, it is undeniable that the media wields a significant influence over our lives. From shaping our opinions to dictating our preferences, the media's impact is far-reaching and often profound. Unfortunately, this influence is not always positive, particularly in education. One area where the media's negative influence is keenly felt is in the realm of enrolment. With the constant bombardment of advertisements and messages promoting alternative paths to success, such as analyzing the data, it becomes apparent that the average score of 3.15 indicates a moderate impact of the unsafe environment on the enrollment of girls.

In a revealing display of statistics, Table 8 sheds light on the myriad factors that substantially influence the enrolment of girls in secondary education. Among these factors, we find limited educational resources, which act as a formidable barrier, hindering the progress of young women in their pursuit of knowledge. In

addition, the inefficacy of teaching and learning processes further compounds the challenges these aspiring learners face, impeding their educational journey. Moreover, the absence of scholarships or stipends adds another layer of complexity to the equation. Financial constraints often loom large, discouraging girls from pursuing their educational aspirations and perpetuating a cycle of limited opportunities. The fear of exam failure, a palpable concern for many students, particularly affects girls, as societal expectations bear heavily upon them.

Furthermore, the absence of viable career options exacerbates young women's already daunting decision-making process. The lack of diverse and promising paths forward can dissuade girls from investing in their education as they grapple with uncertainty about their prospects. In light of these compelling insights, it becomes evident that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to address the issue of girls' enrolment in secondary education. Efforts must be made to bolster educational resources, revamp teaching and learning methodologies, and establish robust scholarship programs. Additionally, reducing exam-related anxiety and expanding career opportunities for girls are imperative steps toward fostering an environment that encourages their educational pursuits. Based on the data collected, the factors under consideration have a moderate impact on enrolment, as indicated by the overall mean score of 3.39.

Conclusion

After careful examination, the study on the low enrollment of girls at the secondary school level in Pakistan's Sindh Upper district, specifically in Kashmor at Knadhkot, has revealed many factors that play a role in this issue. Our examination from a sociological standpoint has uncovered that poverty, long-standing customs and traditions, an unsafe environment, and a lack of institutional support are crucial factors impacting girls' ability to access education in this particular area.

Recommendations

1. The stipend amount may be increased to increase the enrolment of girls at the secondary school level.

2. The stipend amount may be provided every month rather than quarterly.

3. The local transport system may be introduced to enhance girls' enrolment rate at the secondary school level. Schools should be provided with monthly transport funds in SMC accounts for this.

4. A community citizenship organization should be established to facilitate meetings and discussions regarding girls' enrolment and admission.

5. A public-private partnership should be initiated to manage secondary schools in the evening on the same premises where government primary schools already exist. Implementing this approach can save money and enable a quick response at the local level, allowing all girls from the community to enroll in the evening.

6. A harassment cell should be established so parents can report their grievances in that cell rather than go to the police station. This approach can help alleviate confusion and concerns about reporting incidents.

7. Efforts should also be made to encourage and motivate parents, addressing negative stereotypes against girls' education, particularly in light of recent harassment cases at the university or school level.

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