



Original Article

Obstacles to Co-Education in Pakistan and Their Impact on Girl's Education: A Critical Analysis of Literature

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Abstract

Education is an essential human right. In countries where women and men have equal educational opportunities, are successful in all areas of society today. The focus of this research is the governmental, social, and cultural barriers to bringing harmony in Pakistani culture. To do this, the research critically examined the adaptive political, religious, and social components of Pakistani society. The study's major results were reached after a thorough review of the literature. The study identified a number of socioeconomic and ethical hurdles to co-education in Pakistani culture through literature review. Male dominance, conservatism, rigid customs and traditions, stereotype social codes, acute and chronic poverty, male insularity toward women's roles, complex social structure, religious misconceptions, gender differences, feminine discrimination, home issues, and a lack of women's political liberation are just a few of the barriers to co-education mentioned in the study. The data analysis in this study leads to the conclusion that removing these barriers will aid girls' educational development.

Keywords: Co-education, complex social structure, girls' education, obstacle, rigid customs and traditions

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's many cultures and traditions contribute to the society's complicated dynamics. Traditional Islamic philosophy, which provides the cornerstone of people's social, political, economic, and moral values, is the foundation of society as a whole. This mindset has influenced educational limitations in Pakistani society. One aspect of this dynamic is the concept of co-education. Although Islamic law considers education to be a necessity for both men and women, males in society place a higher importance on education than women. Women must bear the brunt of this predicament. Inequality in the educational system has always existed. Several variables are influencing this tendency (Haq & UNICEF, 1998).

As a result, women consistently lag behind men in virtually every field. Discrimination occurs in many regions, including the most traditional and conservative societies in the interior of Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Traditional customs are a problem in every province's tribal areas (Ahmad, 1986). Although education and development have enabled girls to attend school in some areas, schools are still unavailable in many other areas. Co-education improves the social skills of both men and women. Male and female students studying in the same institution develop social maturity at a younger age than those studying in different schools because of the interaction and sharing of their life experiences. In developing countries like Pakistan, where women constitute more than half of the population, this trend is slowly changing. Because there are not enough schools for women and women face discrimination, Pakistan has one of the lowest female literacy rates in the region. The situation is much worse in Pakistan, especially in some ethnic groups, such as tribal areas, where co-education is prohibited in some places (Zafar, 2004).

Without an appreciation of how important women are in many facets of life, no civilization can advance in any meaningful way. In developing societies all around the world, gender inequality plays a crucial part in injustice, social discontent, and role crises. All of these issues encourage unfairness and role conflicts, which in turn contribute to social crimes. Gender inequality is a major problem in many Asian societies. Terrible things are happening in Pakistan. Due to a lack of education, women have a relatively low role in all spheres of society. Pakistani women do not have the right to vote in politics and are socially and culturally oppressed. As a result, despite the wave of cultural change, women's education is still not accepted among rural ethnic groups, especially some Pakhtun communities, exacerbating the situation there. Mixed education is hindered by several social, cultural, economic, religious, and political issues. In contrast, women in industrialized countries are seen working alongside men in many aspects of life, and as a result of their inclusion, civilizations have developed. Today, blended learning is vital. It is banned in schools in many tribal areas of Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

- To look at Pakistan's co-educational obstacles
- To look at the reasons behind Pakistan's co-educational restrictions
- To provide answers to Pakistan's co-educational issue

Research Questions

- What are Pakistan's primary obstacles to co-education?
- What are the key reasons Pakistan has for not allowing co-education?

- What obstacles could be removed to allow co-education in Pakistani schools?

This research will assist all stakeholders in reducing co-education hurdles in Pakistan. Based on this, he will come up with a realistic solution to this formidable challenge, which has hindered the development of the country since its inception. Although women constitute 52 percent of Pakistan's population, scholars, governments, educational institutions, and certain non-governmental groups have recently tackled the subject of educational inequality against Pakistani women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Boys and girls go to school together, sharing the same facilities and classrooms, under a system of education known as co-education. The concept of co-education is very recent. In many rural villages in both the east and the west, sex segregation was formerly a practice that predated modern society (Lee & Marks, 1990). The idea of gender coherence developed with the introduction of the contemporary learning system in the 19th century, and co-educational schools were initially formed in Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Russia. This concept gradually spread throughout the world despite fierce opposition (Oxfam, 2006). In both Europe and America, co-educational schools are becoming more and more common. Some eastern nations, like China, Malaysia, Taiwan, and India, also adopt coeducation. Girls and boys continue to study together in many regions of Pakistan despite considerable resistance to the co-educational system there because there aren't enough schools only for girls. A conservative section of society has resisted co-education in both typical western and eastern nations. A co-educational system is one in which both sexes equally and cooperatively share educational opportunities and resources. While attending the same school, this method has a noticeable effect on the attitudes of both sexes (Khalid & Mukhtar, 2002).

Education is the process of shaping an individual's many dimensions of personality. It is an instrument for social and political growth in all aspects of life. It acts as a mechanism for national development by allowing individuals to pass on cultural values and norms to future generations. Both men and women must have an education. It is a potent force for change that influences how both men and women perceive themselves in society. The type of schooling a child receives influences both their overall development and their sociability. Numerous social, emotional, and psychological encounters throughout a child's growth have a profound effect on their personality. However, school is one of the most crucial periods in a child's life since it offers chances for social development.

In school environments, children can engage with a range of individuals, including instructors, peers, friends, and even those of the opposite gender. As a result, a child's personality is constantly being shaped and reshaped by various societal factors. This contact shapes the child's path in life in the future. The institution has a stronger effect on a person's decisions. A child's growth is greatly influenced by the institution that they or their parents chose for their formal education. Some institutions are single-sex and coeducational. Parents and children frequently lack knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of these two categories of groups (Latif, 2011).

The Advantages of Co-Education

Co-education is essential for the social development of both men and women. Male and female students at the same institution achieve social maturity at a younger age via contact and the sharing of personal experiences than students in diverse organizations. This trend is gradually reversing in developing countries, most notably Pakistan, where women are fifty percent of the population (Mathieu, 2006).

Pakistan has the lowest literacy rate in the world as a result of gender discrimination in the area. In some villages in northern Pakistan, boys are preferred above girls in every facet of society. Girls are kept apart from males for cultural, social, and religious reasons, and it is believed that they benefit from attending different schools. In both cases, parents restrict their daughters from attending schools for males. Due to these circumstances, female participation in societal growth is at its lowest level. While girls are urged to stay at home, work in the kitchen, and take care of small children, boys are trained in a range of vocations (Yasmeen, 2005).

Co-education is seen as a crucial component of this age-old system of labor division. Additionally, the current social structure and hierarchy are perceived as potentially being threatened. Many individuals think that education would encourage society's use of vulgarity and obscenity, which is in opposition to the core ideas of Islamic teachings. It is thought that when both sexes are allowed to freely live together during their adolescent years, they may end up being emotional victims. Co-education is publicly forbidden in the deeply

ethnic populations of Pakistan, such as the tribal Pathans in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Klasen, 2002).

Co-education is controversial in Pakistan. Some parents send their daughters to male schools in areas of the nation where there are no separate schools for girls. Parents are still hesitant to enroll their children in co-educational programs because of the moral and social implications. The lack of secondary education for many girls has resulted in a large section of the population being illiterate. At the elementary school level and to some extent in high school, parents reluctantly send their girls to coed schools. However, the co-education debate intensifies when it comes to postsecondary or college education. Time is given as the main justification (Khalid & Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2002).

Traditional views, religious intolerance, ethnic identities, and patriarchal attitudes all have a substantial influence on Pakistani culture and long-standing political prejudice. Gender's prominence and role in society are thus dictated by regional conventions. Women have traditionally been thought to have a lower standing when it comes to utilizing resources or making decisions. This kind of thinking has resulted in the problem of gender inequality. These attitudes and practices are prevalent in remote tribal villages where women continue to strive for their legal rights to liberty and education. The situation is tragically worse in Pakistan's indigenous tribal cultures, where women are socially ostracized, culturally oppressed, and politically victimized (Qureshi & Ravieya, 2007).

The Primary Reasons for a Lack of Co-Education

Extreme poverty, women's economic dependence on men, engrained illiteracy, and persistent unemployment are the main socioeconomic barriers to co-education in Pakistani culture. Co-education is politically hampered by women's lack of access to politics, lack of authority, prejudice against them, men's control over resources, and the rise of man-dominated policies in all spheres of society. Above all, illiterate clergy and so-called experts misrepresent religious doctrine.

According to historical documents, separate schooling was common in all periods. In traditional culture, males and females were assigned certain responsibilities. This resulted in discriminatory behavior and even uneven social status for men and women. This kind of thinking progressively made it possible for men to dominate females in many domains of life. One of the clear disparities was the low literacy rates among women in many pre-modern nations. Boys were instructed for business, politics, and combat while girls were trained for the domestic spheres of home, hearth, and nursery. The idea of co-education as a whole was considered a threat to this existing labor structure.

Even though social and political empowerment of women is seen to be the primary element defining their status in society, women in Pakistan continue to face financial, cultural, and religious exploitation in addition to other types of oppression. Despite recent efforts to build policies for women's empowerment in all sectors of life, certain national initiatives have entirely failed to ensure the genuine rights of the nation's women. It has been demonstrated that gender equality is necessary for women's empowerment and that these two goals cannot coexist (CEDAW, 2004).

The social and cultural hurdles to co-education exist in every country. But these constraints vary amongst communities. The proportion of barriers to co-education is comparatively high in South Asia, notably in Pakistan, where cultural norms such as male dominance, the patriarchal system, rigid customs and traditions, and conservative beliefs are the main social economic obstacles (Younger & Warrington, 2002). Similarly, the contemporary curriculum promotes women as shy, modest, and wean, whereas boys are powerful, bold, daring, and ambitious. This prevalent mindset has also limited girls' inclusion in educational institutions alongside males. This condition has strengthened the social, political, and social dependency of Pakistani women. Many Pakistani communities are against co-education. Education for female children is discouraged. Male and female arrangements and provisions are made independently (Mehdi, 2007).

Islam does not make distinctions between men and women based on their educational backgrounds. Islam mandates education for everyone, men and women alike. Self-made customs and cultural traditions are frequently used to impose discrimination. In primitive Pakistani cultures, it is the deeply ingrained cultural custom that females should be shielded from boys once they reach puberty. Girls have been unable to participate in school because of this mentality. In certain cultures, girls are seen as a financial burden on families. In Pakistan, the more recent action plan (2001, 2005) under the School Sector Reforms has encouraged public-private partnerships to expand everyone's access to education, especially girls' access, while a boy's birth is celebrated with considerable pomp and circumstance (Ministry of Education, 2009). Co-educational systems are promoted in areas where there are no separate schools for females. Even in certain regions, the private sector is encouraged to use institutions that the public sector does not use because of a

lack of personnel or material resources. Despite all of this excellent progress, it is uncertain if parents in rural regions, particularly those concerned about girls' education, would accept this.

Women's Status in Pakistani Society

Women's roles in Pakistani society are particularly vulnerable due to substantial social and cultural barriers to co-education, particularly in many tribal and rural regions. Girls are not permitted to attend school in some areas. One of the most tragic aspects of the problem is that in some places, whether it is related to education, marriage, or career, the parents alone decide the fate of the lady. Sending females to school is considered detrimental to the family's dignity (Memon, 2007). The biggest barrier to women's education in general and coeducation, in particular, is a concern for family honor. There are some traditional tribal tribes in Pakistan where women are not allowed to leave the house. This prohibition covers health care, professional employment possibilities, voting, and other types of political and civic participation in addition to education (Datnow, et al., 2001).

Recently, as a result of the impacts of Talibanization in Pakistani culture, the subject of co-education has taken on new dimensions, with local militants threatening to blow up schools that have a co-education system. This feature has worsened the issues of women in Pakistani society, who have been directly targeted by terrorist groups in the aftermath of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's wave of terrorism (Mehdi, 2007).

The Current Global & Pakistan Situation

Co-education has grown in popularity, ushering in an era in which men and women are treated equally in the classroom. This has called into question the traditional views of gender separation. This was first accepted in secondary and postsecondary education. Even though this practice had a stronger start in the United States, criticism exists in many regions of the world where women's rights are aggressively fought against. The debate over co-education demonstrates that this issue is not going away anytime soon. Co-educational institutions are more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas. Parents do not send their girl children to school in rural regions due to strong family structures. Boys are viewed as the primary support system in the family. This thinking has resulted in a decline in the literacy percentage of girls in several traditional tribal communities (Sax, 2005).

One of the key factors of the country's lack of economic and social growth is illiteracy among women. Pakistan lags considerably behind several other nations in terms of educated and technically trained women. Gender rights activists have recently raised their voices, igniting fresh arguments in many civilizations throughout the world where religion reigns supreme or the direction of individual rights is understood and judged using moral and cultural means. Despite this dispute, both conservative and liberal nations see school as a major social institution, and education is highly valued (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005)

Everyone has the right to an education, irrespective of gender, class, race, or faith. Education is essential in educating both sexes for maturity. Co-education gives girls and boys equal opportunities to interact joyfully and successfully with one another. This encourages courteous friendship, which is necessary for a happy life. Co-education allows girls and boys at school to share their own life experiences, ideas, and practical chores and obligations. Men and women engage before entering the practical world to foster understanding and a sense of belonging among both sexes (Karpiak & Buchanan, 2007)

Conversations, discussions, and encounters in the classroom have a high likelihood of teaching both sexes tolerance, harmony, and mutual respect. Both sexes will be able to explore their points of view and have a better knowledge of a coeducational system, which will eventually lead to a harmonious marriage life. They will learn that sex and gender variations in perspectives, needs, and priorities do not imply equality. This mindset will serve as a firm basis for a healthy society (Noureen & Awan, 2011). Recognizing this, many parents throughout the world opt to send their children to co-educational schools. The ultimate purpose of this choice is for both girls and boys to create a feeling of honor for females, gender role discrimination, and the sharing of personal experiences and respect for the opposing sex (Mehdi, 2007). Co-education, on the other hand, is fiercely opposed in many traditional countries, where it is viewed as a breach of morals and cultural values. Educating girls and boys together opens the door to opposite-sex marrying, which can lead to difficulties such as adolescent illicit sexual encounters, independence, immodesty, immorality, and societal disturbance (Mathieu, 2006)

The concept of gender equality in the educational system and increased possibilities for women have historically been linked to co-education. The women's rights movement and the development of contemporary

educational systems have been boosted by the spread of the coeducational system, which has led to conditions where education is provided to both sexes under one roof and with the same resources. This method has saved a lot of resources that would have been used independently. Co-education has therefore become a universally accepted practice since it is economical (Rossi, 1987). Men and women are now treated equally in the classroom as co-education has grown in popularity. This has challenged the conventional notion of sex segregation. In comparison to rural regions, metropolitan areas have more co-educational institutions. Parents in rural regions do not send their girl children to school because of the strong family structures there. Boys are viewed as the basis of the family. Girls' literacy rates are lower in many traditional tribal cultures in Pakistan as a result of this mentality. According to Ahmad (1986), the low rate of female literacy is one of the main factors contributing to the nation's lack of economic and social progress. Pakistan lags considerably behind many other nations when it comes to the proportion of educated and technically skilled women.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the literature previously cited, this study summarizes the key results:

- The findings of this study indicate that education is a basic requirement shared by both sexes. Due to the patriarchal system, male dominance, rigid culture and traditions, gender inequality and discrimination, old culture and traditions, conservatism, misperception of religions, and female exploitation that fuels illiteracy in the region, women in Pakistani culture do not have the right to co-education
- This research argues that co-education is critical for a country's progress and prosperity. As a result, a strong and united country is formed. It sets the groundwork for achieving democratic, socially fair, contemporary, forward-thinking, and transformational aims
- According to this study, co-education promotes women to apply their abilities in a range of professions, which helps society as a whole. Women have equal opportunity to participate in all sectors of life, including politics, business, entertainment, and education, which is one of the reasons why the majority of industrialized nations in the globe have had better economic growth, prosperity, and advancement
- This study's findings suggest that Pakistan's social structure is based on cultural rigidity, bias, conservatism, the patriarchal system, stringent customs and traditions, customary laws, the purdah system, and the confinement of women to the home's boundary wall, all of which work to prevent them from being permitted to participate in a variety of life spheres in various ways.

The study's additional finding is that Pakistani cultural norms restrict women from engaging in a range of everyday activities. The participation of women in all aspects of life is constrained in different ways by a range of cultural, economic, political, and religious limitations, especially in co-education. The political obstacles to co-education in Pakistani society were also examined in this study. The main political obstacles to co-education are a lack of successful government co-educational policies, a hostile environment for women in politics, obstacles for women to enter politics, and a lack of women in leadership positions in politics, all of which result in co-educational policies that are male-dominated.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the research report mentioned above, the coeducational divide in Pakistani society is widening despite the numerous efforts made by governments and non-governmental organizations. This study's findings suggest that co-education in Pakistani culture is a more complex issue that will need more time, effort, and dedication on the part of educators, researchers, and education planners to resolve and remove the related social, cultural, economic, political, and religious impediments. This study also reveals that co-education offers men and women a beneficial chance to comprehend one another and live in peace with one another. In the context of traditional Pakistani culture, co-education enables women to demonstrate their untapped qualities, potential, and skills in a variety of life domains.

According to this study, co-education helps a woman's knowledge grow, enhancing her effectiveness and efficiency in the setting of Pakistani culture. Effectively teach and socialize children Co-education may be used as a helpful tactic to foster better interactions and understanding between men and women. This might help with the objective of creating a generation that is intelligent, wise, and affluent. Sadly, this study shows that different problems specific to women exist in different parts of the world. A woman, however, confronts severe cultural, political, economic, and religious barriers in third-world countries like Pakistan. These barriers are especially severe in the tribal areas due to Pakistan's strict culture and social structure. Last but not least, this study views co-education as one of the major problems in Pakistani society and suggests taking effective

action to address the problems with co-education to give women in the community a better platform to fulfill their obligations for the development of the country.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

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