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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Normative Barriers, girls' education, Bajaur, norms	This study focuses on various obstacles that are faced by girls' education in the tribal and post-conflict District of Bajaur in KP, Pakistan. It is particularly looking at the interplay between structural barriers, including constrained education provision, a lack of women teachers, economic constraints, and security issues, and normative barriers rooted in sociocultural and religious norms including Pukhtunwali norms, gender roles, and the issue of early marriage. Twenty in-depth interviews of female students between the ages of fifteen to twenty-four were used to gather data using a qualitative methodology. Its findings illustrate this interlinking and reinforcing interplay between these normative and structural factors and its contribution to a system of exclusion in girls' education. The research also found that policy interventions alone are not sufficient to improve the sustainability of girls' education access, and suggests a broader, culturally relevant approach that includes policy alongside improvements to infrastructure and support, strategies to engage communities, and measures to address security. The findings of this research project shows how urgently it is needed to adopt approaches that are relevant and contextual, offering solutions to both the actual and potential challenges that girls face in underprivileged communities when it comes to learning and empowerment.
ARTICLE HISTORY	
Date of Submission: 30-08-2026	
Date of Acceptance: 26-09-2026	
Date of Publication: 29-09-2026	
	 2026 Journal of Social Research Development
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Email:	lhabib9885604@gmail.com
DOI	https://doi.org/10.59075/jsrd.v7i7.593
Volume/Issue	7(7), 2026, 497-525

Introduction

Background of the Study

Education is generally consider a major factor in social mobility, personal development, and national advancement. However, females in the Global South still face significant barriers to obtain formal education, even after decades of national reforms and international commitments. According to the World Bank (2023), 129 million girls worldwide are not in school now. This number is indicative of long-standing structural inequalities and gendered societal norms that limit

girls' full participation in public life. Not all of these barriers are equal; in low-income, conflict-affected and culturally conservative areas, where poverty, gender norms, and institutional neglect interact, girls' education is frequently deprioritized (World Bank, 2023).

Social inequalities, religious interpretations, cultural expectations, and more remain significant contributors toward gender-based educational inequality in South `Asia. Studies have shown that boys and those girls who are privileged and living in urban centres have better access to education, while low-income girls and those living in rural areas are excluded. The South Asia Regional Gender Innovation Lab (2022) reported that girls belonging to the poorest are three to four times more likely to be out of school than boys among the richest families in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. The inequalities are accentuated in rural areas where the conservativeness of the situation, which means that women have reduced mobility, is aggravated by the fact that they have to travel longer distances to reach school, there are few women teachers, and there are also no separate toilets for women. In the absence of basic support systems and infrastructure, girls may drop out of school. When pairing education, there are also considerations to be included, especially structural barriers and even society norms. (Shehnaz Gul & Akhtar, 2025). As females are taught to accept their second-class status in a society that has progressive policies, even in such a scenario they may suffer from low academic self-esteem, and limited career aspirations and may prematurely drop out.

These differences become worse in Pakistan due to systematic underfunding of the public education sector and institutional fragility. According to a 2023 report by the Malala Fund, poverty and a lack of infrastructure, the belief systems that govern female behavior and movement in many regions of the nation also keep millions of school-age girls out of the classroom. (Malala Fund, 2023). Among these is the belief that girls' education is a costly task with little return, particularly in societies where women are primarily responsible for household chores. Furthermore, Pakistan has one of the lowest levels of educational investment in South Asia, allocating less than 2.5 percent of its GDP to education (UNDP, 2023).

In the formerly FATA, which is now a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a combination of neglect, conservatism, and conflict has created a unique set of barriers to female education, making the situation even more complicated and serious. According to a field research conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, girls have long been excluded from formal schooling in these areas due to tribal norms, a lack of investment in education, and fear of militancy (SDPI, 2022). Since the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, attempts have been made to incorporate FATA into the provincial system; nevertheless, these reforms have not yet resulted in notable advancements on the ground. With some of the lowest percentages of female literacy in the nation found in rural and tribal districts, access to education for girls is still incredibly unequal.

Over 70% of girls in FATA never went to school, and only 7.5% of women were literate, according to the FATA Development Indicator Household Survey (2013-2014). The Taliban insurgency, in particular, was an important factor to this lack of schools since it viewed girls' education as a threat to tribal and religious values. The destruction of over 460 schools, primarily for females, by

terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA between 2007 and 2014 sent shocks through communities and caused the closure of many educational institutions (HRCP, 2015). District Bajaur is one vivid example of multidimensional deprivation. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023, Bajaur ranks among the lowest female literacy rates in the country and only a small number of middle or high schools for girls can be found within its union councils. Militancy in the region primarily used to be prominent in the period of 2007 to 2014 insurgency and even now, the fear of visibility of females and honor in the community tend to dampen the motivation to access educational growth (Government of Pakistan, 2023).

Structural and normative constraints of girls education in the tribal areas of Pakistan are interlinked, interdependent and have constraining effect on the progress as a coherent system of constraints, particularly in District Bajaur. Structures's inadequacies, including nonavailability of qualified female teachers, poverty and lack of educational infrastructures, constrain access considerably. It is hard to distinguish these barriers from the constraints in local norms. This environment of female education comes hand-in-hand with strong opposition both socioculturally and culturally, rigid conventions, abiding security concerns, and entrenched gender norms and expectations all of which interfere and sometimes jeopardize female education. This leaves to girls and therewith nearly everyone in the country, a clear cut gender way in education, perpetuated by lack of state capacity and cultural orthodoxy (Bibi, 2007).

Addressing these tangible barriers is difficult due to the ongoing lack of public investment, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inadequate monitoring systems. Coverage remains limited and often fails to reach the most disadvantaged areas in Bajaur, even when donor-funded projects attempt to renovate schools or implement conditional funding transfer programs, which assist girls who attend school in the form of financial support or educational resources.

There are many barriers in accessing girls education in district Bajaur but this research will more focus on structural and normative barriers in girls' education. Structural barriers refer to educational facilities, poor infrastructure, shortage of female teacher, economic hardships or poverty and weak governance while normative barriers refer to tribal customs, gender roles, early marriages, social stigma and community behavior.

Research Questions

1. What were the structural barriers that affected girls' education in District Bajaur?
2. What were the normative barriers that influenced girls' education in District Bajaur?
3. How did the structural and normative barriers interact with and reinforce each other?
4. What was the response of Government and non-governmental organizations to girls' education in District Bajaur?

Research Objectives

- To determine structural barriers in girls education.
- To explore the cultural and normative barriers in girls education.
- To examine how normative and structural constraints interact with each other.
- To make recommendations that are attentive to cultural differences and context.

Problem Statement

In this study the issues of structural and normative barriers obstructing the education of women in District Bajaur, K-P, has been explored. Despite the national and provincial efforts to improve the medium education level, the district is still experiencing girls having lesser participation and completion levels in educational programs when compared to boys. Normative barriers such as rigid cultural norms and traditional tribal traditions which actively focus on male education, as well as structural barriers in the form of less female teachers and poor school infrastructure, are found to reduce girls' participation. The study's purpose will be to present a comprehensive picture of existing gender gaps in school attendance in the local context by investigating how they interact and synergize.

Significance Of the Research

The study is both academically and practically very useful particularly in the neglected and neglected areas such as District Bajaur. It analyzes the interplay between structural and normative obstacles in the context of poverty and tribal social systems, bridges a critical gap in the existing research on girls education in the post conflict rural areas of Pakistan. As in this research, which examines the interplay of systemic failure and entrenched gender norms at the regional level that produce educational exclusion (a used bottom-up, sociological approach), national-level governments can be said to often fail to recognise the situation at regional level. The study offers a fine-grained description of the life-worlds of girls in Bajaur with a focus on the interpersonal and institutional dynamics of the problem. The findings will assist not only scholars in the field of gender studies, education and the study of rural sociology, but also extend to policymakers, NGO's and community leaders who seek to deliver culturally appropriate and contextually relevant interventions to pave the way for more girls' education in the former tribal areas of Pakistan.

Literature Review

The foundation of both an individual and a society is education. It promotes social justice, economic expansion, and societal development. Many national and international organizations, like Human Rights Watch, UNESCO, and the World Bank, do a lot of work. In South Asia, millions of females are not attending school because of numerous structural and normative issues (UNESCO, 2023).

Understanding how these issues function at the regional, national, and local levels is crucial in this context in order to understand the combined effects of girls' education in remote areas like Bajaur, KPK. This literature review's goal is to examine and analyze the current academic discussion surrounding the structural and normative challenges to girls' education.

In addition to being a barrier to development, the lack of education for girls has its roots in sociopolitical structures that perpetuate inequality. Girls' education is severely limited by structural problems such as poverty, a lack of female teachers, inadequate facilities, and a long commute to school (Birdsall & Ibrahim, 2005). Traditional practices, cultural norms, attitudes, gender roles, and a lack of social mobility are the main causes of normative obstacles to girls' education. These issues are interrelated and reinforce patriarchal systems rather than being independent phenomena (Lloyd & Sathar, 2002).

Access to education for females is a persistent problem in emerging and underdeveloped countries in the global village. UNICEF estimates that 132 million females worldwide are not enrolled in education, with 34.2 million in primary school, 30 million in lower secondary, and 67.4 million in upper secondary. The two-third of people on earth are girls. Structural and normative issues limit girls' education and mobility in South Asia (UNICEF, 2020).

Across South Asian nations such as India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Afghanistan, girls from rural and underprivileged areas experience significant challenges to accessing education. These issues, which linked significantly to low girls' enrollment and high dropout rates, include poverty, poor sanitation, long commutes to school, and a shortage of female teachers. (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005)

It observed that parents are discouraged from sending their daughters to school, particularly after puberty, when there is no gender-sensitive facilities such as separate bathrooms or secure transportation (UNESCO, 2019). In addition, long-standing cultural norms on gender roles, early marriage, and household responsibilities serve as normative limits, forcing girls to drop out of school and start working in the home at an early age (Colclough, Rose, & Mercy, 2000).

A stark example of the perils of militant ideology with regards to ensuring equal access to secondary education: The Taliban, which seized power in 2021 in Afghanistan, ended women's access to secondary education. A clear-cut illustration of the consequences of militant and religious ideology for equal access to secondary school: After regaining power in 2021 in Afghanistan, it was the Taliban who closed secondary education for girls. However, despite the laws in place, cultural norms and religious beliefs often hinder efforts to make progress in democratic countries such as India and Pakistan (UNESCO, 2021).

However, for girls, regardless of country development level, girls of a low socio-economic status (SES) status are less likely to finish even elementary school. The fact of poverty, insecurity and less schools for girls, and less foreign funding to study in female schools places Afghanistan in a lot of

problems. The strong cultural constraints that hinder girls' access to school. Some of the set rules are child marriages, denial to girls to attend coeducational school (Bamik, 2018).

These regional trends are important to analyse the situation in District Bajaur, where underdevelopment, due to the conflict, and the cultural norms of the tribal society, contribute added structural and normative problems. Thus, the South Asian background is an integral part of the discussion as it demonstrates the common lacunae in the education system in South Asia when it came to gender inequity. This research opens the door for further work which investigates the impact of the cultural and institutional elements of the local region which characterize the Bajaur, and at the same time the Bajaur's reflection of these larger cultural and institutional trends.

Despite having accepted international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), Pakistan still faces gender disparities in education, with an excessive number of girls out of school, particularly in rural, tribal, and conflict-affected areas. The Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey 2020–21 shows that the net enrollment rate for girls at the secondary level is still far lower than that of boys, with the situation being worse in provinces like Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where conservative social structures and poor infrastructure combine to discourage girls from formal education (World Bank, 2023).

One of Pakistan's major challenges is terrorism and militancy, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Taliban continued to attack tribal regions under their authority, including educational institutions. Education suffered greatly when these insurgents moved to KP province developed and settled districts like Swat and greatly affected these areas (Ullah & Farooq, 2024). The Taliban, a militant group, used violence and the fear of violence to prevent girls in Swat from getting an education because they felt that women and girls belonged at home and should not pursue education or employment. The Taliban targeted education, especially for girls in Swat, and banned girls from moving around in society (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013).

The World Bank report from 2023 states that 12 million Pakistani girls are not enrolled in school. They face many obstacles in their pursuit of education. Poverty is one of the biggest obstacles to girls' education in Pakistan since girls from low-income homes are less than boys. Girls from rural areas are more likely to be deprived and have lower enrollment rates. Insecurity is a second significant issue since girls are at risk for violence in public areas, on public routes, and due to the great distances between their homes and schools. In general, girls of all ages are less likely than boys to attend school in every province in Pakistan (Barón & Bend, 2023).

According to empirical research, school dropout and non-enrollment among girls are significantly impacted by the association of normative pressures like early marriage, household labor expectations, and traditional gender norms with structural barriers like lack of infrastructure (Aslam & Kingdon, 2012).

Gender inequalities are also exacerbated by issues affecting the education sector such as lack of female teacher, inadequate school management and monitoring. All children between their

ages of 5 and 16 must receive free and compulsory education, according to Article 25-A of the Pakistani Constitution. But the provision's enforcement is the weakest in communities where traditional manhood is still dominant and the government is not aware of such traditional norms (Hussain, 2018).

The challenges these face do not impact equal parts of the country. Some societal factors and poverty also result in the marginalization of girls from rural and tribal areas like Bajaur while girls in the metropolitan areas with an educated family have chance of facing less restrictions and better opportunity. Significance of localising analyses of these co-determining issues are examined in the following sections of the thesis.

Former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which were merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution (2018), had long been on the outside of Pakistan's political, social, and economic development agenda. Female literacy and enrollment in school have continuously lowered short of the national norm, making this marginalization more apparent in the region's educational indicators. The colonial-era Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), which controlled FATA before to the merger, excluded the area from Pakistani legal and public service delivery systems, including the school system (ICG, 2014). As therefore, females' education was either completely prohibited or severely limited, and institutional development particularly in the field of schooling was insignificant.

Over 70% of girls in FATA never went to school, and only 7.5% of women were literate, according to the FATA Development Indicator Household Survey (2013-2014). The Taliban insurgency, in particular, was an important factor to this lack of schools since it viewed girls' education as a threat to tribal and religious values. The destruction of over 460 schools, primarily for females, by terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA between 2007 and 2014 sent shocks through communities and caused the closure of many educational institutions (HRCP, 2015).

The Pushtun region is regulated by the ancient Pushtun code of behavior known as Pukhtunwali, which emphasizes gender segregation, family honor (*ghairat*), and women's role in the home. These beliefs have been framed in ways that restrict girls' mobility, particularly after puberty, and limit them to domestic duties, even though they are not fundamentally anti-education (Ullah, Khan, Shah, & Fakhruddin, 2019). Regardless of if a school is actually situated there, sending a daughter to school, especially one outside of the nearby village, is viewed as dishonorable or culturally incorrect in numerous indigenous communities (Shinwari, 2017).

Decades of neglect and warfare continue to have an impact even after the merger. According to Pakistan Education Statistics 2018-19, the secondary school drop-out rate in girls is very high for MTA. Staffing, boundary walls, drinking water and electricity, sanitary conditions and other elements of school infrastructure are weak in many schools, particularly for the safety and enrolment of the female students. Inadequate teacher recruitment practices, as well as social limitations for female employment, contribute to a very poor ratio of girls to teachers, which severely restricts girls' rights to education.

The longstanding administration model, conflicts, and social norms of the area need to be understood in order to fully assess the situation of girls' education in District Bajaur, a key district in the formerly FATA. The mixed messages from these competing demands have not led to a situation in which state and society have made education for girls the top priority or a norm.

Combined instances of institutional neglect, weak infrastructure and geographical marginalization can be witnessed in the district of Bajaur, one of the semi autonomous tribal areas now encompassed under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pakistan has a seriously affected education system in marginalized Bajaur district which resultantly have affected all the development issues. Girls are significantly affected by their long journey to educational institutions, absence of functional schools, poor school infrastructure, teacher shortage, especially in the rural area, where most of them study in, and the difficulty of having female teachers to instruct them. These are no side effects, but fundamental problems that stem from factors such as poor governance, underdevelopment that results from a conflict or civil war.

Structural and normative issues in Education of females in tribal areas especially District Bajaur are inter-dependent and act in concert to stunt progress as a package. Lack of quality female teachers, high levels of poverty, and poor education provision are all serious structural issues which limit access. But it is hard to disentangle these problems from the lack of values prevailing in local reality. Culturally strong opposition, dogmatic tribal norms, episodic security concerns, and entrenched gender norms prevail, creating an environment that restricts women's access to education and, in some cases, poses challenges to tribe identity and culture. This leaves girls under-represented in education and where disenfranchised by a lack of state effort to protect or support their schooling (Bibi, 2007).

The results highlight the importance of structural problems: transportation difficulties, financial issues, long distances to secondary schools, unsafe or poor facilities are pointed to as some of the most common causes for school drop-out after primary school. Often girls are not allowed to go to school due to practical difficulties or because they must stay at home to help with household tasks, rather than ideological opposition. In Bajaur where a post-conflict condition where the terrain and tribalism causes fragility in the infrastructure option is very much like this (Khan & Naqvi 2012).

In Bajaur, a cross-sectional study identified a statistically significant correlation between dropout rates and factors including poor sanitation, no boundary walls, no electricity, and a lack of educational facilities. According to the study, over 75% of participants named unsafe school environments and long commutes as the main causes of their exit from primary school. The study also found that more than 60% of schools did not have any female teachers, which discourages parents from sending girls to school because they are worried about their safety and gender acceptability (Hammad & Bibi, 2023).

The female literacy rate in Bajaur is still approximately 10%, and despite nearly equal population ratios, there are far fewer functional girls' schools than boys' schools, according to the Government of Pakistan's education census (2018–19). Many of the region's government schools are either

insufficient or run without even the most basic facilities, such classrooms, clean water, or toilets. Parents, especially after puberty, point to the lack of boundary walls as a rationale for keeping daughters at home (Khan & Naqvi, 2012).

Reversing these practical problems is tough because it requires sustained investment in public services, greater streamlining of operations, and better oversight mechanisms, which are still scarce, especially in the rural parts of the country. Even conditional cash transfer projects and school renovations initiated by donors generally fail to provide adequate coverage, particularly the most peripheral parts of the district of Bajaur.

To sum up, structural issues faced by girls' education in Bajaur are not individual obstacles, but elements of a systemic problem that encompasses logistical limited access, limited resources and poor infra-structure. These obstacles are at the bottom end, upon which further normative barriers are imposed, which is explored in the next section.

Cultural and normative constraints are among the trickiest and enduring problems faced by females' education in District Bajaur. Tribal code of Pukhtunwali is another major contributor to gender norms in District Bajaur which include high value on women's domesticity, modesty and obedience to the patriarchal authority. These norms affect the perceptions of and values held about women's mobility, visibility and education in the wider community. As such, at times girls' education is perceived as an issue that compromises cultural identity and family honor (Ullah et al., 2019), and is not seen as a right or need after puberty.

The way that communities behave to those realities are determined by normative views, even though structural problems like poverty and poor infrastructure are commonly mentioned in public policy talks. For example, concern over co-education, the scarcity of female teachers, and "moral risks" of a separate school for girls are indeed valid reasons for questioning education in this situation, not school closures motivated by a hierarchical opposition to education, as they would be in other contexts (Shinwari, 2017). They often receive an expectation that they do chores around the home, provide for younger brothers and sisters and will be prepared to handle the responsibilities of marriage before they should be attending school (Bibi, 2007).

Children are socialized from early childhood to the traditional role norms for girls and boys. Rarely do girls learn anything other than the ideal of being a good mother and a loving wife, while boys are taught everything they need to know to participate in the world of business and public service. At the local level, the roles of the local religious leaders, extended families, neighbouring households all may exert pressure on families to conform with the cultural norm that divides labour roles by gender. It may cause parents to fear that their daughters get excluded from the social context, have less respect, obtain less support from the school, or will be looked down on for attending a co-educational or distant school (2021, UNESCO).

Moreover, despite the demonstrated religious dimension of the need for women education, the notion that girls' education is not in line with the values of the tribe and the Islamic religion remains.

This was further evidenced by the terror imposed by the previous Taliban rule of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in which teachers were threatened and girls' schools were bombed. These messages were accepted even after the peace between two groups. Hence long-term delay was observed with regard to the introduction of girl into schools in Bajaur villages (Zada, 2012).

To date some donors-assisted projects and awareness-raising events have been successful, although they often do not reach the sources of resistance to culture. They frequently put a strong emphasis on financial incentives or infrastructure upgrades, thinking that communities are bound to respond by sending more females to school. But these efforts have limited cultural effect unless local religious leaders, the elders and women themselves are engaged in the process of discussion on the value of education (UNESCO, 2019).

In summary, the enforced non-normative challenges in Bajaur are ongoing due to the society's entrenched norms where learning is perceived as something that deviates from established norms. However soundly conceived the structural changes may be, if they are to have any lasting effect, it is essential that these norms be analysed carefully and acted on, specifically, in each context.

Methodology

The research site of this study was District Bajaur in the ex- FATA, KPK. The area is famous for its border regions, hospitality and rich cultural heritage. It must be added that the conservative cultural values and geographical case in the district has maintained it vulnerable to terrorist and militancy. The selection of the site of this study was motivated by its need to represent a setting that is highly exposed to culture and with minimal governmental support for development, both of which have been influenced, and adversely affected, girls' education and broader wellbeing.

By making the choice of this location for study, this research study seeks to offer insight to an area which previously has not been explored in this particular field. The work in this study could add value to the discussion on the Education of girls.

Tool Of Data Collection

This investigation is based at the qualitative research level. An extensive assessment had been done after reading several articles on the subject in order to develop an in-depth interview guide that would comply with the goals of this particular study. Well-structured and open-ended questions were used in the in-depth interview guide. In all there were 25 questions. To grasp the complexities and to obtain information from the research participants, which is necessary and detailed enough.

Pre-testing was conducted during the development of in-depth interview guide so that the questions were relevant for measuring the time elapsed.

Pre-Testing

Pre-testing of the guide was done on three research participants, before conducting the in-depth interviews. This was performed to ensure the validity of the created tool as well as to assess its reliability. Since some necessary changes were made to the structure and the addition of questions turned out to be beneficial for improving the research instrument.

In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were selected as a suitable method for this research study as individual experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints were significant. The questions were open-ended; participants had more freedom to share their experiences. Only the gatekeeper's presence was considered necessary; the interviews took place in different locations. This was done to help the participants feel at ease so they could freely express their opinions. Every interview was done in an unbiased manner.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to gather the data. The selection of participants was based on the presence of female participants from the selected district. Only literate girls who were enrolled in educational institutes or had completed their education were among the participants from the location. The age group of the participants were 15 to 24 years. However, girls who were enrolled in school or had dropped out of educational institutes met the inclusion requirements for this study. The girls of middle school, Madrasa and those who never joined school met the exclusion criteria.

Snowball sampling was also employed during the sampling procedure to reach additional local participants. Three of the twenty-three participants were interviewed in order to pre-test the interview guide.

Data Collection

All the research participants were reached out separately in the presence of a gatekeeper. Every interview took place in their homes and schools. The data collection process took seven days. This was because the gatekeeper knew the home addresses of the girls who were studying or had left, and the researcher knew the specific location very well. The main objective was to get the deep insights from the sample.

Data Analysis

Both Urdu and Pushto the native language of the Bajaur residents were used as the language medium for data collection. The gathered information was later translated into English. After the transcriptions were coded, specific themes were derived from the codes.

Ethical Considerations

The research of normative and structural barriers in girls' education in District Bajaur required careful attention to ethical issues. Several ethical considerations were made when gathering data through in-depth interviews. Given the vulnerable nature of the population and the delicate nature of their experiences, an ethical framework was required to protect participants' rights, dignity, and general well-being.

Efforts to secure informed consent included providing clear explanations of goals, methods and advantages of the study. Participation was voluntarily. Prior to the start of every interview, consent was obtained from participants. No personal questions were asked and the respondents were not under any obligation to answer all of the questions.

Due care and concern were taken on the part of the participants to ensure their safety and honor. Personal information was kept confidential and only used for research purposes and privacy and confidentiality were well maintained. Interviews conducted in a relaxed and safe environment.

Awareness of cultural norms and culture-appropriate practices was important as well as cultural sensitivity and respect for the variety of backgrounds and of belief of the participants. It required the awareness of cultural norms and practices, cultural sensitivity and respect for the participants in different cultures and beliefs. Appropriate measures were taken to ensure the safety of the interviewees throughout the process of interviews. Thus, it was ensured that ethical considerations have been fulfilled in the process of in-depth interviews.

Selected Themes And Codes

From the in-depth interviews, a list of themes and codes were derived. These are provided in tabular form. From twenty in-depth interviews, ten themes were emerged.

Main Theme	Sub Theme
Lack of Educational Infrastructure	Shortage of Classrooms and Furniture Electricity and Climate-Related Discomfort
	Insufficient Number of Schools Inadequate Sanitation Facilities Shortage of Classrooms and Furniture
	Poor Building Conditions
Shortage of Qualified Female Teachers	Insufficient Number of Female Teachers Subject Gaps in Female Teaching Staff Parental Reluctance with Male Teachers Comfort and Communication Barriers

	Impact on Learning Quality
	Demand for More Female Teachers
Cultural and Religious Norms Restricting Girls' Mobility	<i>Pukhtunwali</i> and Honor Codes Cultural Expectations of Gender Roles Preference for Gender-Segregated Education Religious Misinterpretations Used to Limit Girls' Education Restrictions on Travel Without Male Escort Community Stigma Toward Educated Girls Early Marriage as a Cultural Expectation
Early Marriages and Household Responsibilities	Marriage at a Young Age Education Discontinued After Marriage Balancing Household Chores with Studies Family Pressure to Prioritize Domestic Roles Community Norms Supporting Early Marriage Supportive Exceptions Impact on Career Aspirations
Parental Literacy and Awareness Gaps	Low Educational level of Parents Limited Understanding of Education's Long-Term Benefits Preference for Educating Boys Over Girls Influence of Extended Family and Relatives Awareness Positive Role of Supportive Parents Need for Awareness Campaigns
Militancy and Terrorism as Barriers to Girls' Education	Destruction of Girls' Schools by Militants Fear of Traveling Due to Militancy Threats and Warnings to Families Psychological Impact on Students School Closures During Heightened Militancy Targeting of Female Teachers

Economic Constraints	Long-term Educational Disruption	
	Threat Letters and Verbal Warnings to Families Restricted Mobility Due to Security Concerns	
	Inability to Afford School Supplies Transportation Costs as a Barrier	
	School Dropouts Due to Financial Pressures Preference for Educating Boys in Limited Budget Dependence on Scholarships or Aid	
	Impact on Daily Attendance and Participation	
Curriculum Misalignment with Local Realities	Poverty Intensifying Other Barriers Narrow Career Pathways for Women	
	Cultural Restrictions on Professional Choices Overemphasis on Theoretical Learning	
	Lack of Vocational and Skills-Based Training Perception of Modern Education as a Cultural Threat	
	Low Motivation to Pursue Higher Education	

ResultsAndFindings

Analysis of Themes

Infrastructure and Physical Accessibility Barriers

According to the participants' responses, girls encountered significant barriers to physical accessibility and infrastructure when they get education. The barriers have variety of forms, from inadequate school facilities to transportation issues. According to the responses, many girls had to walk a considerable distance to get to school, frequently over challenging terrain and without access to adequate travel. This theme highlights how urgently infrastructure deficiencies must be addressed in order to increase girls' access to education in rural areas. The following quotation was taken from the participants responses during the research process.

“The distance of the school from the girl's house is quite far i.e it is a 45 to 60 minutes journey, and there is no fan special service for girls to attend their schools and college which makes it very difficult to reach their school, and in many times girls are absent because of this.”

(Participant 1)

"My school is approximately 5/6 kilometers from my home and I have to walk to school every day and as there is no school transport it means that my all family members cannot manage them and mostly I am required to take leaves because of it."

(Participant 2)

As per the answers provided by the participants, biggest challenges which are facing girls' education in District Bajaur are distance and transportation. The distance traveled is long for some girls, they not only have to spend lots of time commuting like said by one of the participants but the safety aspect is also worth considering. Another participant highlights the issue of lacking access to private vehicles in the family to attend school and girls walk here each day in the rain. In addition, other participants report that these lackings in schools' infrastructure also creates disadvantages particularly for female students who require sufficient facilities, which are different from men's, for safety and privacy.

"Our school has a broken boundary wall, no separate toilets for girls. Therefore, we do not go to school if there is any medical emergency or problem. Because of the broken boundary wall we feel very unsafe as well."

(Participant 20)

It is observed that the primary barriers to girls' education are the lack of transportation and the physical distance to educational institutions. After analyzing the data, participants' responses also highlighted that these factors negatively influence girls' education. Another major issue is that parents are often unable to afford private transportation, which further affects girls' ability to access education.

Socio-Cultural and Traditional Norms

One of the biggest issues influencing girls' education in the area is sociocultural barriers. The barriers include community attitudes, gender role expectations, and the influence of the *Pukhtunwali*. The responses from the participants showed how traditional norms and deeply rooted cultural practices, which makes it difficult for girls to pursue an education.

"Our cultural beliefs are tough and do not allow us to go to school... 'Pukhtunwali' means code of behavior that makes it harder for girls to go to school. Many people of the area do not allow their daughters and sisters to pursue their education at all, while some of them just allow their daughters to get primary education only."

(Participant 4)

"Our culture plays a very crucial role in stopping women's education, in the name of 'ghairat' and 'izzat'. They think that it is a threat for them that the girls will get exposed to western cultural practices and they can get out of control."

(Participant 11)

"Girls should participate in household work with their studies as it is also their responsibility. So, they think that the only duty of any girl is to hold the household responsibilities and not go out of their homes."

(Participant 3)

"People in my community consider girl's education a kind of waste of time."

(Participant 9)

These answers highlight the complex association between cultural norms and girls' access to education. The way that traditional codes of conduct are interpreted to limit girls' mobility and educational opportunities is demonstrated by one participant explanation of *Pukhtunwali*. Another participant reference to the ideas of "*ghairat*" (honor) and "*izzat*" (respect) illustrates how cultural ideas of family honor are used to defend restricting girls' access to higher education. According to one of the participants, girls must manage their studies and domestic responsibilities, which adds a burden to female students that their male counterparts do not generally experience.

It is noticed that sociocultural restrictions are one of the biggest obstacles to girls' education. Understanding of the community has shown that how rigid traditional norms, along with strict gender role expectations and the *Pukhtunwali* influence; create a complex web of barriers for females who want to obtain education. Through conversations with girl participants, I discovered that their families place a higher value on social norms than educational prospects, severely discourages girls from going to school. These sociocultural restrictions are the most important causes of educational exclusion in Bajaur, often having a more severe and long-lasting adverse effect on girls' education.

Religious Preaching and Misrepresentations

The study showed complex connections between religious preachings and how they affect girls' education. Participants emphasized how religious teachings are sometimes misinterpreted or turned to discourage girls from going to school, yet they acknowledged that Islam supports education for all.

"Actually, Islam does not stop women from education but religious leaders don't like it, they say that only reading Quran is important and girls should not go out to get any other education from their homes."

(Participant 5)

I don't think that religious beliefs stop women's education in our region because the prophet said that education is compulsory for women and men but these typical religious leaders do not allow girls to carry on their education but encourage to do so."

(Participant 11)

"Most of the local religious leaders don't support girls' education in our area and they brain wash our elders that it will be a sin if their sisters and daughters will go out of their homes."

(Participant 13)

"They considered the girls' education non-religious and said it spread immodesty in the society"

(Participant 18)

Responses from the participants show significant differences between local religious interpretations and true Islamic teachings. The participants' awareness of true Islamic principles is shown by one participant reference to the Prophet's emphasis on education being mandatory for both men and women. However, according to other Participants, local religious leaders frequently oppose girls' education, which causes uncertainty and barriers for families. While these restrictions are not founded on true Islamic teachings, the concern about self-respect expressed by one of participant response highlights how religious justifications are used to limit girls' educational opportunities.

It is found that religious preaching's have a significant effect on girls' education, some community members misinterpreting or using Islamic teachings selectively to discourage girls from attending school. However, it is also noted that parents and religious experts who highlighted that Islam essentially encourages universal education. This paradox causes misunderstandings in the community and frequently leads to hurdles that have an adverse effect on girls' access to education.

Economic Constraints and Financial Barriers

A major barrier preventing girls from obtaining and continuing their education is financial constraints. Many facets of financial hardship were identified by the responses, such as opportunity costs, resource allocation within families, and the direct costs of education.

"Yes, I face a financial crisis and do not afford books, uniform and transport. I study hard but I am afraid that my father works hard for us but one day his heart will be broken if I fail."

(Participant 1)

"Yes, financial difficulties are common. Many of my friends had to drop out... Because their families couldn't afford books, uniforms, or exam fees"

(Participant 4)

"When the family is poor and they can't support the expenses of their children, mostly girls leave education because their brothers can complete their education"

(Participant 10)

"No, I didn't receive any sort of scholarship from the government. The people in my area are not salaried, they live on daily wages and it becomes hard for them to fulfill the educational needs of all of their children, especially girls."

(Participant 18)

All these answers attest that financial constraints to girls' education are multifaceted. The psychological strain financial limitations place on families who are helping to support their daughters' education is reflected in one participant answer, emotional reference to her father's possible heartbreak. Considering that it was the second participant observation, where her several friends walk away due to financial constraints indicates that there is a systemic problem. Another participant response confirms the gender bias of investment decisions in learning: when funds are limited, it is the family's perception that it is a better long-term investment in the education of a boy than of a girl.

It has come to understand that a large proportion of the district's population are living below the poverty line and have deep economic and financial issues. Some of the most recurrent reasons for school dropout or discouragement of girls in pursuing education due to economic challenges are some.

Educational System Deficiencies

The participants, including a lack of teachers, poor infrastructure, and poor instruction, identified numerous deficiencies in the educational system itself. These structural problems greatly affect the standard of education accessible to girls and increase existing barriers.

"The ratio of students is 200 and we have just 3 teachers but unfortunately, they are not regular and sincere to their job. They do not come to school daily."

(Participant 3)

"The main problem in our school is the shortage of science teachers... Because of this, 70 to 80 students sit in the same class and no one gets proper attention which makes it difficult for us to learn and participate in classes."

(Participant 9)

"Most science subjects are taught by male teachers... Most families do not allow their daughters to study with male teachers due to their religious mindsets."

(Participant 14)

According to the responses, the educational system is severely underfunded and unable to provide for students' basic needs. The 200:3 student-teacher ratio pointed out by one of the participant highlights to an educational crisis that makes meaningful learning all but impossible. Another participant description of the overcrowding further decreases the standard of teaching. For girls whose families follow rigid gender segregation principles, the gender-specific issue raised by some other participant about male science teachers adds even more barriers.

It has measured that one of the biggest obstacles to females' education in District Bajaur is the lack of quality in the educational system. Girls and their families are prevented from attending school by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of competent female teachers. These structural flaws not only degrade the standard of education but also strengthen the already-existing cultural barriers by failing to establish an atmosphere that encourages girls to succeed academically.

Security and Safety Concerns

The participants emphasized on the problems of security – which was identified as the largest problem affecting girls' education – both in the past and at present. These are issues such as mobility concerns towards and from school, terrorism, and militancy.

Currently, the terrorists attacked the girls' school, the education of women is a big issue, and they are the main reason of stopping the girls from education," he was quoted as saying.

(Participant 1)

"Due to the terrorism, many of the teachers were killed or warned to leave and after some time they have left from the schools due to safety concerns, "Our education system has been affected a lot due to terrorism... Terrorists killed and warned teachers. Due to that many teachers come from outside the area, but after sometime they leave the schools due to safety concerns."

(Participant 12)

"If our living area is unsafe because of terror, our parents will never let us go to the school – we would wait at home until it improves."

(Participant 16)

The responses range from provision of support to the education of girls after the incident of terrorism. The responses demonstrate the impact of terrorism on girls education in the area and how it has taken a deep root and long establishment. To conclude, one girl mentioned her "past trauma" demonstrated that the impact of historical events involving girls' schools as a terrorist target still has an impact on Today's decision making in education. According to second participant response, a culture of fear has been fostered by the deliberate targeting of educational institutions and teachers, which still has an impact on educational participation. For cultural reasons related to the safety of girls and their mobility, girls also have various challenges as a result of persistent security concerns.

It has shown that one of the biggest obstacles to girls' education are those related to safety and security. Rooted fears instilled through threats to institutions, militancy and terrorist acts has given rise to apprehensions among families of sending their daughters for School. It have seen that many parents have pulled their daughters out of school, putting short-term safety ahead of long-term educational potential, due to worries about their safety when travelling and an uncertain security environment.

Early Marriage and Family Pressures

One important factor affecting girls' educational paths is the practice of early marriage. The answers showed how marriage-related family decisions frequently clash with academic goals, making decisions difficult for young women.

"The age of marriage is probably 17 to 18 years. My age is 16 but people come to my home many times for the proposal. And my parents are also concerned about my marriage."

(Participant 1)

"I got married at the age of 16 years when I was in 9th grade. At that I had to quit my education and hold the responsibility of my home in which I got married because it is not allowed for girls to continue their education."

(Participant 8)

"I myself left education due to engagement because my father-in-law is an Islamic scholar; he does not like girl education. He asked me to join the Madrassa instead of going to school."

(Participant 12)

These answers reveals that how girls' educational paths in the area are disrupted by early marriage. The social pressure to put marriage before education is reflected in first participant experience of

getting marriage proposals at the age of 16 while still pursuing her education. One of the research participants in grade 9 was an example of the way in which traditional life expectations often outweigh educational opportunities. This paradox, showcased by another participant – an Islamic scholar who is against girls' education – but Islamic teachings are for girls' education, reveals the complex contradictions in religious and cultural interpretations.

The study results reveals that early marriage is an important disadvantage affecting girls education, as girls' education is not regarded by the family as their first priority. However, the pressures grow upon meeting with the girls at the adolescent stage, when parents and others in the family subject the girl to the pressure of marriage instead of further education. These practices aren't only depriving girls of education but also have been contributing to the notion that women have a domestic function in life and not a cultural or academic or professional one.

Gender Discrimination and Differential Treatment

The study discovered that expectations, resources, and educational opportunities all systematically discriminate against women. Participants emphasized the disparities in expectations and support that boys and girls experience in relation to their academic endeavors.

Boys are given more freedom and support for education, including tuition and transport.

They are even sent to tuitions if they need any help in their studies."

(Participant 2)

Boys have more chances to go to their favorite fields and educational institutions but girls have limited access. As the boys have to be the bread-earner of the family."

(Participant 8)

"Yes, I have been told that engineering or law is not suitable for girls as it is a male dominated field."

(Participant 13)

Boys are seen as future providers, so their education is important. They can do anything and pursue any subject. Girls are expected to stop studying once they can read, write, and help at home "

(Participant 19)

Responses of the participants highlighted systemic discrimination in a variety of forms. The observation made by one of the participant regarding unequal resource distribution displays that how families spend more money on boys' education by providing extra support services. The career restrictions mentioned by another Participant reflect how gender stereotypes limit girls' career goals and choices. The basic difference between how society perceives the purpose of education for

boys and girls. Another participant response expresses the opinion that girls' education is only useful for basic reading.

As per this research insight, one of the biggest obstacles to girls' education in our community is bias based on gender, as I have seen myself as a resident of District Bajaur. Boys are constantly given preference by their families in terms of better schools, tutors, and learning materials, whereas girls are frequently left with little to no help. I saw how parents continue to have different expectations for their sons and daughters, giving boys' education more money and considering females' education as less significant or temporary. In addition to having negative impacts on girls' education, this unfair treatment perpetuates cultural perceptions that undervalue women's intelligence.

Institutional and Governmental Inadequacies

Key conflicted points raised by the participants were the lack of institutional support and the gap in governmental policies relating to girls' education. Inadequacies include problems of planning, implementation, implementing, allocation of resources, and absence of support measures particularly created for young women students.

"In all the tribal areas, there is no proper budget we get, there are very less schools in the area, scholarships for the students are lacking, there is no one to have a check on what is happening in the education sector from the government our side. "

(Participant 4)

"Though, No, I didn't get any scholarship from the government, there is no scholar allotted in our under-developed area, the families are vulnerable, so that they can't educate their children. "

(Participant 1)

The answers indicate systematic failures of the government in meeting girls' educational requirements in District Bajaur. The particular feeling of belonging to neglectful institutions in tribal areas is expressed by one participant that "the government failed in tribal areas". However, one participant noted that school transport services were discontinued since 2014 which shows how the policy changes had a disproportionate impact upon girls who depended on being transported to school safely to attend. Governmental support systems, as underscored by the next participant, are either lacking or ineffective for female students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, given the lack of scholarships and support. Finally, the participants responded via a call for NGO interventions and governmental Programs, which indicated that existing institutional structures would not be sufficient to meet the multi-faceted problems of the region's girls' education.

"Their school transport system is not available since 2014, our belief is that's an easy target for the terrorists, but the opposite was the case as it's a fundamental service, which created a big problem. "

(Participant 9)

“NGOs should create awareness about girls' education. Government should initiate programmes on girls' education and start to cooperate with the tribal community and government in this respect for solving the basic problems of education.”

(Participant 16)

It has noted that its government initiatives have neglected to consider transport programmes and infrastructure accessible to women, as well as scholarships to encourage girls to return to school, all of which should respond to the education needs of girls. Additionally, the absence of any support systems specifically designed to address the unique challenges of the girls' education, such as the creation of safety mechanisms, mentoring initiatives, or awareness campaigns to tackle cultural stigma. The lack of systemic awareness and support by the authorities builds existing barriers in society and determines to communities that they are not given a priority from authorities hence it builds the vicious cycle of educational inequality. The resulting gaps within institutions and governments have a tremendous impact on girls' education.

Aspirations, Resistance, and Agency

Despite facing a number of obstacles, the participants emphasized the remarkable resilience, specific aims, and diversity of resistance tactics that they adopted as they struggled against those obstacles. All of them responded that they had high aspirations for their education and career as well as coping strategies.

“In the future I want to be a doctor because female doctors are very important for my society. There's a soft corner for the doctors in my society and I can help my people as much as the boys.”

(Participant 1)

The participants' answers to the question of their sense of purpose going forward and will to do more learning despite of the challenges shows their strong sense of purpose and their will to further their learning going forward. Both personal ambition and an awareness of the need for female healthcare providers in the community are reflected in two participants repeated aspirations to become doctors. Another participant's adaptation strategy of home-based continue education after marriage“ demonstrates innovative problem solving and commitment to maintaining academic performance. One of the others echoed this phenomenon of girls' education turning heads not only for personal success, but for communities too, saying it's a light that can shine on a whole community.

“The idea for me was not to drop out of school, but continue it as one usually does at home, taking the exams at school as they were held, and there was a lot of pressure from the society on me- but I made it simpler for myself making it possible to complete my education at-least.”

(Participant 8)

"I believe empowering a girl through education is to lit her life and lighten not only her own but her family and society as well because education is no longer just a matter of boys; it is also compulsory for girls and they will be taught to stand in any society, fight for their rights and contribute to their households and people productively."

(Participant 3)

It has recognised the tremendous spirit of the girls in District Bajaur that keeps them engaged in educational activities even amid all the difficulties. Most of the young girls have the same aspirations as to become teachers or doctors and they demonstrated initiative in easing their education by engaging into creative strategies such as negotiating with family members, seeking assistance from extended family members, establishing peer networks. They help them face challenges and their determination and resilience embolden families to think more highly of the value of educating girls.

Discussion, Conclusion And Recommendations

Discussion

The findings of this study clearly indicate two points; firstly, girls in District Bajaur face ongoing denial of education access at regular intervals at the same time as facing a series of interconnected, "structural" and "normative" barriers. Barriers, some small, some very large, ranging from mere absence of suitable physical facilities to the entrenched status quo cultural values, are serious obstacles for girls to realize their education is hard to be conquered or sustained.

The outcomes of the study show that while they can be observed and quantified, structural barriers are embedded in and or embedded by their corresponding normative barriers, which impact how the community responds to the future possibilities of girls' education. The issues identified – specifically the lack of female teachers (over 60% of schools feature no female teachers), the quality of sanitation facilities, damaged boundary walls, and no secure means for transporting pupils – is more than just a logistical challenge and is a symptom of the general neglect of girls' educational needs from the system. The major problems highlighted in previous studies are also present across South Asia in various forms (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005), with the type of infrastructure and accompanying cultural attitudes being especially problematic in the context of tribal region in Bajaur.

Most importantly, the study results highlight that there are normative barriers which are related to Pukhtunwali norms and misperceptions of religious teachings that have frequently made girls' education seen as a threat to cultural identity and family honour (Ghaiarat) to girls. The participants' experiences give glimpses into the way culture and values of "izzat" (respect) are weaponized to restrict the movement and aspirations of girls. This discovery is consistent with

earlier research on societal and governability values among tribesmen and women carried out by Shinwari (2017) but extends the knowledge by explicitly examining the effect of these cultural rules on the family level education decision-making process.

The results of the study on economic constraints indicate a gender dimension to poverty which goes beyond the economic one. The opportunity costs can be seen as systematic discrimination as limited resources are allocated to boys' education even while families are biding their time between the actual costs of boys' education (books, uniform, transportation) and that of their sons' educations.

Such gender-based disparity in distribution of the resources further underlies the cycles of exclusion that these expectations on the comparative economic value of girls' and boys' education engender.

Terrorism and militancy are particularly having a long-term harmful effect on girls' education in this region. Girls' schools faced constant attacks by the Taliban between 2007 and 2014 resulting in psychological trauma which has stunted children's educational activities even when some sort of tranquility is restored, the study released by Human Rights Commission Pakistan (2015) concluded. The terror that ensued, from more than 460 schools being destroyed, largely to teach women, compounds existing crises. This study is similar to the earlier study conducted by Khan & Nagvi (2012) which was oriented towards examining historical trauma resulting from militancy and its effects on education across a long term period since the impact was not just on security but on education as well.

While the participants' responses also indicated the mis-interpretation of religious values in justification of girls' education restrictions, Islam has specifically called for education for all followers. The sources reported that local religious leaders' negative views on girls' education "misrepresented" Islamic beliefs, which the participants agreed. This discrepancy of meanings gives pretext for education not to be included as it is within the confines of local meanings, and not within the bounds of the true teaching of religion.

The study did show, however, that the female co-respondents were remarkably entrepreneurial, incredibly resilient and very heroic. Although many girls faced various difficulties, such as continuing their studies at home after marriage, they were still able to demonstrate creative approaches to achieving their objectives. Women's aspirations reveal both individual aspirations and socialised versions of the work opportunities which are socially acceptable for women in that cultural context; the constant desire to become doctors to serve their communities seems to imply both of these factors.

The annexed deficits of institutions and government are indicative of unmet state attention in these areas in the past. The goal of FATA's 2018 merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was to integrate these areas into mainstream governance and providing services; anyway, the results indicate that support systems and educational facilities are still seriously insufficient. Since 2014, the suspension

of school transportation due to security concerns has been an example where policy decision on safety concerns can negatively impact the access of girls to education.

Conclusion

Single-intervention strategies are insufficient to address the complex system of exclusion represented by the structural and normative barriers to girls' education in District Bajaur. This study shows how normative barriers derived from cultural conceptions of honor, gender roles, and religious teachings reinforce and perpetuate structural barriers that immediately hinder girls' education, such as poor infrastructure, a lack of female teachers, and transportation issues.

The data make it clear that although the experiences of these girls are the same as boys in District Bajaur, they also manifest themselves in girls' unique problems that differ from those of girls in the affluent parts of Pakistan. In the context of tribal traditional values, post-conflict underdevelopment and enduring security problems, systematic neglect and restriction of girls' education combine in a setting.

District Bajaur girls demonstrate extraordinary determination and have a great will to reach their goal even to the face of huge obstacles by pursuing their studies in schools. Their commitment suggests that, with proper interventions that tackle structural and normative problems, fair enhancements in school participation rates for girls could be achieved.

The findings call for a holistic approach that seeks to improve girls' education in a sustainable way, addressing infrastructure gaps whilst addressing those cultural barriers through community engagement, providing financial support for poor families, and creating supportive government structures. Partial interventions directed at awareness raising or infrastructure are unlikely to bring about change on the long term if they do not include actions towards the normativity of exclusion.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will be able to solve the various issues. This research has uncovered, based on an in-depth review of the normative and structural barriers in girls' education in District Bajaur.

Strengthening of the Educational System and Infrastructure

The district's girls' schools should all have gender-sensitive facilities, including separate bathroom facilities, boundary walls, and sufficient lighting. Additionally, a reliable school transportation system with female conductors and safety procedures should be put in place. Hire and engage qualified female educators at all levels of school, offering extra rewards to those who are prepared to work in rural areas. All educational institutions should have access to basic facilities including electricity, clean drinking water, and appropriate classroom furniture.

Community-Based Interventions

Engage with religious leaders and tribal elders regarding Islamic teachings that promote girls' education. Create culturally aware awareness campaigns that frame girls' education within appropriate religious and cultural narratives. Established community education committees that include women, religious leaders, and tribal elders – Provide forums for community-based educated women to act as advocates and role models.

Economic Support Systems

Provide free textbooks, uniforms, and educational materials to all female students. Implement targeted scholarship programs for girls from low-income families. Create conditional funds transfer programs that encourage families to keep girls in school and give women opportunities to earn money to mitigate financial burdens in the home.

Safety and Security Measures

Establish secure routes for girls to take to school. Implement community-based security measures in place for educational establishments. Educate teachers and school employees in security and develop emergency response plans for schools in the event of a security threat.

Implementation of Government Policy

Establish district specific educational policies that address the particular difficulties in tribal areas. Ensure that Article 25-A of the Pakistani Constitution, which guarantees free and compulsory education, is strictly enforced. Set aside funds specifically for girls' education in formerly FATA regions and establish accountability systems to track developments of girls' educational participation.

Implementation Method

Start with interventions that are widely accepted in the community. Introduce increasingly difficult normative changes gradually as success and trust increase. Establish local ownership and capacity building to ensure sustainability. Adjust strategies in response to ongoing input from participants and communities.

Inclusive Research Policies

The area needs more research studies, and I suggest that future researchers explore this field from different perspectives, particularly by identifying the roles and attitudes of parents, community members, and religious leaders toward girls' education in District Bajaur.

Limitations

The study has been conducted only with 20 Literate People from District Bajaur, which limits the generalization of the results. It did not cover for the girls who are unable to read and write and it could not reflect in various circumstances of other tehsils and villages.

The length of the data collection period (7-day) and possible family presence during interviews, depending on the nature of the interviews, and the dependency on the gatekeepers for participant access may have influenced participant selection and the depth of disclosure of sensitive information.

The sole emphasis on female viewpoints, although crucial for comprehending the experiences of girls, excludes the views of men (fathers, community leaders, and religious leaders), who have a big say in educational choices in this culture.

Chances are these features were lost during translation in converting Urdu and Pushto to English, such as preserving culture-based meanings and complex phrases. There may have been nuances conveyed in the translation of Urdu and Pushto to English, including words and phrases that bore little cultural or situational meaning.

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