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Educational Marginalization in Rural Pakistan: Sociocultural Economic Determinants for Policy Implications

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Abstract

In the socioeconomic context of the Koh-e-Suleman Tamun Qaisrani region of District Dera Ghazi Khan, the research examined the critical issue of early school departure and its multifaceted implications for the community and broader economic progress. Addressing a core aspect of human capital formation and societal development, the study scrutinized the impact of educational discontinuation on a country's overall advancement, emphasizing the linkage between early school dropout and a low literacy rate with manifold concomitant social challenges. Using a methodological approach encompassing convenient sampling techniques, data was elicited from 250 respondents via questionnaires. The research's analytical focus unearthed a clear correlation between parental income and literacy levels with students' dropout ratios and early school leaving tendencies. Key determinants were identified, including familial socioeconomic background, peer relationships, cultural phenomena such as early marriages, and logistical barriers like school distance. The findings divulged that lower parental income and literacy contribute to higher dropout rates and augmented probabilities of premature educational withdrawal. The study thus expounded a sociological critique of these systemic failures, accentuating the state's onus to ameliorate these issues. Recommendations were proffered, accenting the government's obligation to furnish elementary school amenities and institute financial aid measures for economically disadvantaged students, thereby cultivating an environment conducive to the amelioration of this profound social malaise.

INTRODUCTION

According to Devkota, Eklund, and Wagle (2020), the dropout ratio of the deprived group is 8% which is 7% higher than the indigenous group. The socio-economic status, such as poverty, unemployment, and landholding are less than native people. The other factors are the education and occupation of parents, and their homes at hills distant from school have higher rates of school dropout. The parents prefer their sons to teach therefore the female dropout ratio is higher. Early marriages of females are one of the reasons to drop out of their children from school. Family background, unemployment, poverty, student engagement and performance of students are playing a triggering role in school dropout but the effects of labor market cannot be ignored. The influence of the labor market in the context of human capital theory, where leaving and staying in school is a rational choice. The student focus opportunity cost and benefit of education. The labor market influences early school dropout in the unemployment context and

low wages. The role of educational policies and educational institutions are also responsible for student's early dropout in school (De White et al, 2013). The early school leaving ratio in Pakistan is very high, but it is crucial to tackle this issue through the implementation of proper policies. The research findings have revealed that the girls are leaving school significantly in high ratio as compared to boys due to parents' poverty and their lack of interest in female education. Parents are often interested to teach their sons as compared to their daughters. The poor economic condition has often compelled the parents to withdraw their girls from school and engage them in domestic responsibilities. The findings further revealed that 19% leave school due to safety concern. There are numerous other factors of girls early leaving schools such as school distance, lack of schools in the area, poor infrastructure, social exclusion and religious factors (Khan, Azhar and Shah, 2011).

The European Commission and euro-state (2010) defined early school leaving as "an individual aged 18 to 24 has attained at lower secondary education and is no longer in education and training". Early schooling affects individuals, and societies in various ways. The policymakers through evidence-based policy making (EPBM) must focus to reduce the dropout ratio in the region. The European Commission's target was to remove 10 percent of the dropout ratio in 2020, a really challenging task to achieve.

Unequal distribution of educational opportunities, and territorial distribution is one lenses to see schools leaving in Italy. Comparing southern to northern Italy, there is unemployment, lack of social care, and unequal distribution of resources revealing inequity between both regions. The school dropout ratio in the northern area is 11.6% while it increased to 19.2 per cent in the southern part. The stratification of the population in Italy is immense. The higher-income population lived in the Northern area while low-income people belong to the southern areas. Such stratification among regions increased the school dropout ratio in Italy (Cachia et al., 2010). School failure is a comprehensive concept and various people defined this term in a different way. It may be failing to the provision of services, learning, or upgrading a student in the next class. Finally, students drop out of school and the demand for skilled labor in the market is unachieved. The reason for school leaving is family, individual, and the poor school system (Psacharopoulos, 2007).

Early school dropout generates critical social and economic issues which the developing world is facing. They are facing massive crime, injustice, segregation, ethnic conflict poverty, juvenile delinquency, high mortality, and unbelievable human rights violations. All these matters are associated with low literacy rates, high dropout ratios in schools. The increasing crime among youth pulling these societies into a more devastating and overwhelming situation. I think a low literacy rate is among the root factors of such shocking challenges. Before discussing any social or economic issue, we should understand the cause of the problem. The causes also create effects. Then we should measure the magnitude of the incident. The main objective of our research was early school leaving. We should find the possible root of this issue and we should measure its effect on society. When we do not understand the nature of the problem then it is difficult for us to answer or solve these problems. This research used a standard method to explore the significant problem and conclude through relevant outcomes. We explore in detail the causes associated with this problem. The countries whose youth are not participating in educational activities their

economic condition and social condition are badly affected. In developing nations, the youth are more engaged in criminal activities compared to countries having higher literacy rates. The civic engagement of youth is the backbone of the country. It is due to some problems that this shocking phenomenon is occurring. It is the responsibility of the state to overcome these challenges. This research will benefit not only the economy of a country and create social stability for the country and humanity at large. The multidimensional factors for early school leaving are, personal, social, peer group pressure, lack of institutional support, poverty, individual problems, family issues, cultural factors, and lack of students' interest in school are the factors of leaving school. Bademci et al (2020) in a study collected data from Italy, Turkey, Malta, Bulgaria, and Romania through an online survey of 796 secondary school teachers, and 900 students. The respondents responded that government, families, and schools should take rational actions to prevent early school leaving.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Zeb, et al. (2021) conducted research in the area of District Peshawar using convenient sampling technique. The data was collected through questionnaire and interviews from 400 household. The study results revealed that there are multifaceted reasons of early school leaving. In the case of boys' 60% percent respondents' response that due to poverty children leave schools. On the other hand, 45% girls leave school due to financial crisis. It is a global issue and modern world is facing this crisis due to socio-economic, parent's education, illiterate community and gender discrimination.

Asif, Hayat, and Khan (2021) found that academic failure, low marks, financial issues, students' mental illness, and personal challenges become factors in school dropout. The data is collected through a questionnaire survey from each student. The logistic regression method was used for statistical analysis. The findings from students clearly depict that socio-economic issues, demographic, institutional peer group relationships, and the extra work at home became the reason for early school leaving. From the parental side, the lack of interest, unemployment, and educational expenses are the factors of student dropout.

Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Vieira, and Vidal (2019) documented that early school leaving is an international issue and its impact is not limited to countries, but it also affects the community. It is not due to educational training, but the transition of young people in the labor market. The research analysed a total of 122 variables including academic and non-, that are linked with early school leaving. The academic variables include school, teachers, and classmates. The non-academic variables are family, individuals, and friendship. The research concluded that early school dropout is a complex issue that is not easy to address alone but is addressed through coordination.

Lavrijsen, & Nicaise (2015) showed that poverty and social equality have strongly associated with high school leaving. The poor parents with low education face class stratification and their children soon leave school and work with their parents. Youth unemployment has been strongly linked with a high dropout ratio. The role of the educational system is not neglected the poor policies are also factors of early school leaving. Song, Benin, & Glick (2012) conducted a longitudinal study of a total population of 21,420 using clustered sampling technique to study "the effects of family structure and family transitions on

adolescent high school dropout". The researcher examined single parents (mother, Father) and step (mother, father) distinctly. The study findings show that nontraditional families have a higher rate of dropout as compared to biological parents' families. Single mothers' children are attending more school compared to single fathers' children. The results of stepfamilies are the same as single families. Divorce parents, and children's schools are badly affected. The limitation of the data of the research study missed important dynamics e.g, the nature of the family, and family structure.

Markussen, Frøseth., & Sandberg (2011). Conducted research in Norway with a sample of 9,740,209 students. The data was collected through surveys and publicly registered students. The findings identified three major variables that cause early school leaving. i)- social background of students is measured through parents' education. The results showed that lower educated parents' children early school leaving is higher than high educated parents. The non-western and immigrants had a higher ratio of early school leaving (ii)- Students' performance or engagement also causes early leaving. Students whose performance average aggregate is good are low dropouts as compared to the students of less engagement and absence from school. The weak students leave school earlier. (iii) The gender difference was also noted among boys having a higher probability of not completing upper secondary education. (iv)- Parents' engagement in work is also identified as low early leaving than the parents who are not engaged in work.

According to the definition of early school leaving is the young people that have dropped out before completing compulsory education or those who have completed primary school and not gained upper secondary education or those who completed their vocational or pre-vocational school, and their education is not equal to upper secondary school'. The findings of early school leaving are low income. Family conflict was also observed as a key factor. A lot of students leave school to enter the labor market and do part-time activities. The rate of unemployment also linked to early school leaving (Gyenos, 2011). Oreopoulos and Salvanes (2011) argued that schooling is a financial investment where in return we receive wealth and happiness.

Early school leaving drew the attention of policymakers and researchers during the last decade. The school dropout ratio is higher among ethnic minorities and low-income families in the Netherlands. The males of ethnic minorities have a higher risk of school leaving and according to cognitive skills, such students are less intelligent and perform less in class than other students. The other factor of early school leaving is family. The low-income family do not provide school materials for their children and low-educated parents are also less interested in educating their children. A large number of ethnic minority students from urbanized areas have also a high ratio of early dropout. The researchers suggest that these factors are reduced through the involvement of parents and school reforms (Traag & Van der, 2008).

Education plays a central role in social stability. The case studies of seven selected countries (Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Chile, Ukraine, Mexico, and Egypt) noted that the findings of the cost of early school leaving are social, government, and private. The research revealed that a higher educational level is associated with high tax paying, higher participation in the labor market, good health, and improvement in family conditions with a good lifestyle. Higher poverty and lower poverty are also linked with school participation and school leaving. The social

cost of such countries is good where the participation of the public in school is higher. The researcher found that in early school leaving areas the crime ratio was also high (Belfield, 2008; Psacharopoulos, 2007). Various factors contribute to early school leaving e.g., family support, caregiving environment, academic difficulties, and student behavior, but teacher aggression and peer group relationship are also identified as school leaving factors. Those students' group who faced teacher aggression soon leave school as a reaction. The non-aggressive youth association also leaves school due to the same group membership. Such multiple factors developed before adolescence then they contribute to dropout (Farmer et al, 2003). The application of urban transformation is to the provision of healthy qualities, and the renewal of social, economic, environmental, and technology of damaged areas (Keles, 2003). As schools voluntarily accept students but sometimes schools involuntarily discharge students due to their test scores or achievement of good results. Then the schools reduce the membership of low-grade students. The other factors that cause students to drop out are the availability of low resources that cannot fulfill the students' needs. (Rumberger and Thomas, 2000)

Research Methodology

All the methods that researcher use during research are entitled as research methods. The researcher planned it in a systematic and scientific way. The demand of good research is to follow scientific approach and carefully design research methodology. According to Singh (2006) research simply answers those questions which have not been answered. Research is a human effort and a process of exploration. Research methodology are planned skills, process of data collection and interpretation of data. Research effectively solves problems in a scientific way. The present study was designed to investigate the factors of early school leaving in the selected region of Koh-e-Suleman. The current study is quantitative in nature. Watson (2015) argued that the quantitative research is essentially deductive in nature measurement are made and conclusion are drawn. Different statistical method is used for outcome however the reliability and validity are necessary for the purpose of research. The research instruments are designed for reliability and validity. During research random error occurred in quantitative research.

It is difficult to study the whole population, so we select subset of population for our study. The entire population is very expensive and cannot be afford for study. So, sampling is crucial for research. Researcher choose different sampling techniques for the purpose of study. The sampling size should be systematic and relevant for valid inferences (Acharya et al., 2013). Tehsil Koh-e- Suleman of District Dera Ghazi Khan are comprised of different union councils and Tamundar. Our target population is Tamun Qaisrani bordered with KPK and Baluchistan. In Tamun Qaisrani the early school leaving ratio is very high as compared to other Tamuns. A sample of 250 people were selected in Tamun Qaisrani for the purpose of study. The convenience sampling techniques were used for data collection. For the purpose of the research, we used convenience sample as it is goal oriented. The data of 250 people were collected through questionnaire and later the data were analyzed through chi-square test.

The respondent's responses clearly revealed that parents' literacy rate play a vital role in children education. The illiterate parents' children leave earlier schools. Foley, Gallipoli & Green. (2014) also investigated the impact of parents' education and socio-economic condition of parents are correlated with high school dropout ratio.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.

Percentage distribution of the respondents with respect to their education

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	189	75.6
Matric	27	10.8
Graduate	16	6.4
Postgraduate	18	7.2
Total	250	100.0

The unskilled parents have high dropout ratio as compare to the educated and skilled parents.

Table 2.

Percentage distribution of the respondent with respect to monthly income

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
5000-15000	132	52.8
16000-30000	62	24.8
31000-50000	49	19.6
Above-50000	07	2.8
Total	250	100.0

The percentage distribution of the respondents' exposed that the majority of parents income is very low. With this income they are unable to afford educational stationery. They indulge their children in earning. Latif, Choudhary & Hammayun, (2015) examined that financially week students leave school earlier their parents unable to afford the high institutional costs. The disinterested parents and poor students do not attentive to attend school soon they leave school. The poor parents force their sons to earn money in labour market. The researcher found that poor family background and uneducated parents dropout ratio are high in schools. The researcher also found that poor parents' children are unhealthy and their parents have lack of awareness about teaching their children.

Battin-Pearson, et al identified five theories of school dropout and each hypothesize have influences in school failure. i) Academic Mediation Theory explain the poor academic achievement is a major factor of early school leaving. Several studies data clearly depict that student performance have impact on early school leaving. ii) General Deviance elucidate that anti-social behaviour, personal deviancy and family socialization is closely associated with high dropout ratio in schools. iii) Deviant Affiliation Theory accept the influence of peer groups; deviant friends are the factors of early school leaving. iv) Poor Family Socialization Theory explain the role of family background in school dropout. The uneducated parents' children leave school early as compare to educated parents. The family socialization and education have direct influence on students' academic achievement. v) Structural Strain Theory discuss the structural factors like gender discrimination and ethnicity are mediating factors of school dropout.

The research revealed that early school leaving is very high in the selected region due to many problems. Lack of awareness, poverty, unemployment, peer groups, relationship, poor performance of students and schools the migration of tribal people are the chief reasons of early school leaving in Tamun Qaisrani. In overall Pakistan the

school dropout ratio is very high and less attention is paid on this serious issue. Majority of students are not enrolled or leave school in early age.

Table 3.

A Breakdown, by Percentage, of the Responses to Certain Questions on Early School Leaving

Opinion	Agree		Strongly Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Percentage	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Do your children leave school for school distance	65	26.0	137	54.8	23	9.2	14	5.6	11	4.4	250	100
Do your daughter leave school for insecurity	79	31.6	98	39.2	13	5.2	43	17.2	17	6.8	250	100
Do your children leave school for financial issue	88	35.2	92	36.8	37	14.8	22	8.8	9	3.6	250	100
Do your children leave school with their friends	64	25.6	88	35.2	42	12.5	29	11.6	27	10.8	250	100
Do you leave schools for home tasks	83	33.2	89	40.6	26	7.5	29	12.5	23	4.4	250	100
Do your children leave schools for poor performance	69	27.6	100	40.0	39	15.6	28	11.2	14	5.6	250	100
Do your children leave school for early marriage	57	22.8	117	46.8	43	17.2	09	3.6	9.6	13.1	250	100

The rural areas are facing massive educational crisis due to these issues. The government of Pakistan is not taking any initiative in Koh-e-Suleman region where the literacy rate is alarmingly low. Our research will contribute national and international level the terrifying situation of Koh-e Suleman. In future researches must be conducted in the other parts Tamun of Koh-e- Suleman to raise awareness and to know the more about educational system.

CONCLUSION

The exhaustive inquiry into the phenomenon of early school leaving in the Koh-e-Suleman Tamun Qaisrani region paints an alarming portrait of educational barriers deeply entrenched within structural, economic, and sociocultural fabrics. The study's data meticulously elucidates the integral role that parental literacy and financial status play in shaping educational outcomes. With a staggering 75.6% of the respondents being illiterate and 52.8% falling into the lowest income bracket, the research lays bare the pronounced correlation between these factors and the high school dropout ratio. Five prominent theories delineated by Battin-Pearson et al. further delineate the complex nexus of factors underlying school dropout. This includes the mediatory influence of academic performance, general and personal deviance, deviant affiliations, family socialization deficits, and structural strains such as gender and ethnic biases. The study's respondent breakdown vis-à-vis various reasons for early school leaving, from school distance to financial challenges, early marriage, peer influence, and poor performance, underlines a multidimensional crisis. It necessitates comprehensive, targeted interventions that acknowledge the intersecting influences at play. Consequently, this research not only sheds light on a localized educational calamity in Tamun Qaisrani but also echoes the broader crisis in rural areas across Pakistan. The state's negligence in addressing this grave issue in regions like Koh-e-Suleman, where literacy rates are alarmingly low, calls for urgent, concerted actions. These must include substantial policy reforms, investment in educational infrastructure, targeted literacy programs for parents, and financial support mechanisms for impoverished students.

The study's limitations, such as time and budget constraints and the area's complexity, further underscore the need for expansive future research. Such endeavors must be dedicated to unearthing the multifarious causes of school dropout and the specific migratory factors contributing to early school leaving in the Koh-e-Suleman region. The collective findings constitute a critical call to action, not only for local and national policymakers but also for international stakeholders, to rectify a situation that threatens the very fabric of societal progress and human capital development in the region and beyond.

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