

# 1 Pakhtun Social Structure and its Impacts on Women's Education

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## 6 **Abstract**

7 The current study analyze the social structural dimension of Pakhtun society emphasizing on  
8 the cultural, economic, physical, religious and political factors to women's education. A  
9 quantitative approach was adopted and the data was collected from 323 male and female  
10 respondents of eight Union Councils of District Dir lower using stratified random sampling  
11 (proportionate method) and interview schedule. The data was analyzed using SPSS and  
12 discussion was made over the collected data. The empirical results show that there exists a  
13 strong relationship between the structural impediments including, system of patriarchy, male  
14 dominance, customs and traditions, religious misinterpretation, feudalism etc and women's  
15 education. The analysis further suggested that a comprehensive strategy including provision  
16 of education, the role of mass media, policy making in regard to women's empowerment and  
17 religious knowledge and the role of religious leader is basic for brining equality at the  
18 educational spheres.

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20 **Index terms**— patriarchy, male dominancy, traditionalism social structure, physical, economic, religious,  
21 political, impediments, empowerment.

## 22 **1 Background of the Study**

23 Education is the key to empower women and brings control on their lives. Women education is an acknowledged  
24 fact for development and to educate a girl is like educating a family (Alderman, 1998). The importance of female  
25 education and its dissemination to all sections is the existing and emerging problems of the society (Carolyn,  
26 2004) and to educate a mother is perceived to contribute to the household because members might come to her  
27 for advice ??Choudhry, et.al, 2001). Female population constitutes 49.6% of the total population in Pakistan  
28 (Choudhry, 2009) and thus ignoring female population will be fruitless for country progress ??Berhman, 1997  
29 andHaq, 2000). In this regard Naz (2011) expound that women in Pakistan suffer mostly and the most serious is  
30 perhaps the denial from educational rights. Similarly, male preference is common and they usually dominate the  
31 socio-cultural, economic and political aspects while E-mail : [hod.sociology@uom.edu.pk](mailto:hod.sociology@uom.edu.pk) in contrast, females are  
32 discriminated educationally, in contrast, females are discriminated educationally, economically, politically and  
33 socially ??Colclough et.al, 2000).

34 Education in this context is a key to overcome various barriers and has been of central significance for  
35 development of human society (Haq, 2000). However, in Pakistan the status of women education is not  
36 homogeneous at the primary, middle, secondary and higher level and differences are there in the rates of  
37 enrollment of boys and girls (Dollar and Gatti, 1999). The primary school enrolment for girls stands at 60  
38 percent as compared to 84 percent for boys ??UNESCO, 2005 and2006). The secondary school enrolment ratio  
39 is even more discouraging, 32 percent for females and 46 percent males. Regular school attendance for female  
40 students is estimated at 41 percent while that for male students is 50 percent. The Population Census of (1998)  
41 shows, the overall literacy rate in Pakistan was 45 percent. The number of literate females increased from 0.8  
42 million in 1961 to 11.4 million in 1998 -97. The growth rate for male's literacy was 5.1 percent per annum. It  
43 may be noted that the overall literacy rate in Pakistan is lower when compared to other countries in the region  
44 (El-Gibaly, 2002). The reason for this diversity in the education of male and female is the cultural setup which

#### 4 III.

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45 promotes male education on priority (Gaskell et. al, 2004). Besides, in the rural areas, the situation is more  
46 miserable for female as schools are in far flung areas (Women in Pakistan, 2000). The nature of constraints  
47 to women education differ from culture to culture and society to society (Gulati, 2006) and to Mishra (2005)  
48 there is no acceptable excuse for denying female education opportunities and to develop her potential. Similarly,  
49 gender equality does not necessarily mean equal numbers of men and women or girls and boys in all activities,  
50 nor does it mean treating them in the same way (Foley, 1995) while the same refers to equal opportunity for  
51 both male and female to lead equally and fulfill their needs (Forbes, 2000) and in general context gender equality  
52 to ??halid & Mujahid (2002:10) include education for all which is the source for women economic, political and  
53 social liberation (Haq, 2000).

54 Studies show that schools, teachers and text book in the education system also produced discriminatory  
55 characters at the end (Kabeer, 2005), the larger masses (Khan, 2005). Parents usually bear the costs for books,  
56 clothing, and even spent for other minor activities of the children, where the children are also not available  
57 for household chores and wage labor (Khalid, 1996). Girls perform more chores at home than boys, thus  
58 their educational opportunity is comparatively less than boy (Latif, 2007). Another constraining factor is the  
59 perception that the investment in educating a girl will not benefit her parents once the girl gets married (Latif,  
60 2009) is prevalent in the social structure of the country therefore parents are often reluctant to allow their  
61 daughters to be sent to schools (Haq, 2000), and their isolation is a culturally approved pattern (King and Hill,  
62 1993).

63 The social and cultural context of Pakistani society is predominantly patriarchic and men and female are  
64 conceptually divided into two separate worlds that are masculine and feminine (King, 1990), and thus divides  
65 the role of both male and female into productive and reproductive domains (Naz et. al, 2011). Further, the  
66 domestic sphere is woman's legitimate ideological and physical space, while a man dominates the world outside  
67 the home. The false ideological demarcation between public and private, inside and outside worlds is maintained  
68 through the notion of honor and institution of purdah in Pakistan (Naz, 2011). Since the notion of male honor  
69 and izzat (honor) is linked with women's sexual behavior, their sexuality is considered a potential threat to the  
70 honor of the family. Besides, the traditional values, i.e. the ideology of purdah (veil), negative social biases,  
71 cultural practices, concept of honor are linked with women's sexuality (Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007). Restrictions  
72 on women's mobility, strict custom and traditions, conservatism, misinterpretation of religious values and hold  
73 of patriarchic values becomes the basis for gender discrimination and disparities in most of the spheres of life  
74 particularly in education (Women in Pakistan Report, 2000). Further, low school enrolment and patriarchal  
75 social structure along with intensive poverty affecting women's education to a major extent as argued by Khan  
76 and Ali (2005), Latif (2009) and Robison-Pant (2004). Thus the above discussion highlighted that Pakhtun social  
77 structure is male dominated and the traditional values are highly prevalent along with religious misperception  
78 which is leading towards women's educational disempowerment.

#### 79 2 II.

### 80 3 Statement of the Problem

81 This study analyzes Pakhtun social structure and its impacts on women education in District Dir lower with  
82 particular emphasis on social, cultural, economic, political and religious aspects. Previous studies show that  
83 patriarchic social structure, centuries old customs and traditions, and observance of Purdah negatively influence  
84 women's education (Naz, 2011). The sociopolitical context have been dominated by male oriented values and  
85 the role of masculinity is hindering women's empowerment as Qureshi and Rarieya, (2007) illuminates that  
86 Pakistan in general and Pakhtun society in particular women is laying at pathetic condition regarding their  
87 education in comparison to male as stated in Women in Pakistan (2000) where the status of male and female  
88 in the educational sector is not homogenous and diversity exists not only on the regional level but also at the  
89 national level. Similarly, the preference for sons is one of the reasons to mobilize most of the household resources  
90 in their favor and hence they are given better education and are equipped with skills to compete for gaining  
91 resources in public domain. However, female members as compare to male are imparted domestic skills, i.e.,  
92 to be good mothers and wives etc. In this connection Pande and Astone (2001) expresses that parents prefer  
93 to invest more over males' educations as their old age social security is attached with better economic ability  
94 of their sons because sons in a traditional society usually shoulder the economic responsibility of the family.  
95 Similarly, women have very limited access to education, health, recreation, and other basic facilities of life and  
96 thus become dependent for ever (Rafiq, 2000;Mehta, 2005). This not only contributes in women subordination  
97 rather it devalues her status in the larger social context and increase women's illiteracy ??Sattar et.al, 2000) and  
98 further to Gaskell et. al (2004) the lower economic conditions of people also lead to resist women's education  
99 because it is difficult for the parents to afford the educational expenses of both male and female.

#### 100 4 III.

101 Objectives of the Study 1. To identify socio-economic and physical constraints to women's education 2. To  
102 investigate the religious and political barriers in the way of women's education IV.

103 Hypotheses of the Study 1. Socio-economic and physical impediments have close association with women's  
104 education. 2. Religious and political obstacles affect women's education.

106 **5 Methodology of the Study**

107 This study was undertaken in Tehsil Adenzai of District Dir lower focusing on eight union councils. The total  
108 population of mentioned union councils is 156641 (DSR, 2011) in which data was collected using interview  
109 schedule and stratified random sampling technique (proportionate method) from 323 educated respondents (both  
110 male and female) selected from 1356 target population.

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112 **6 Study Model**

113 The theoretical discussion elucidate that sociocultural constraints are prevalent including the system of patriarchy,  
114 centuries old customs and traditions, feudalism, prevailing system of Purdah gender bias social structure, Pakhtun  
115 codes and male control over decision making process which directly influence women's education. In addition  
116 the socio-economic impediment consists of poverty, unemployment, extravagances and low income, limited means  
117 of livelihood, unpaid labor, female restricted mobility and lack of infrastructure facilities such as transport,  
118 communication system, lack of female schools, lack of female teachers, lack of higher education for female and  
119 other school related facilities has an adverse impacts on women' education. The modular form of the study is  
120 given as under:

121 **7 Results and Discussions**

122 The results of the field data has been analyzed with the help of statically derived tables along-with their  
123 observation and percentages. Besides, theoretically discussion on the field data has been made with statistical  
124 co-relations and statistical test to determine the validity of the given hypothesis.

125 **8 VIII.**

126 **9 Socio-Cultural Constraints**

127 The statistical analysis highlights that majority of the respondents are in favor of patriarchy, centuries old custom  
128 and traditions are the sources of making women's inferior and subordinate in deprivation of their basic right of  
129 education. Similarly Pakhtun codes and female domestic involvement are also favor by majority of the respondents  
130 as the causes of female illiteracy while a portion of the field data suggest that the prevailing Purdah system and  
131 the feudalistic way of demonstrating education to female contribute to some extent in women's illiteracy. The  
132 hypothetical statement has been judged with the numerical findings and statistical test i.e. chi-square test and  
133 correlation which signifies a strong relationship between the socio-cultural factors and women's literacy in the  
134 area. The value of chi-square test is  $P=.000 ** <.05$ , with the Chi-square value  $2 = 3.623$  and the degree of  
135 freedom value D.f. =7, shows highly significant association among the independent and dependant variable.  
136 Further the correlation technique validate the result in a manner that ( \*\* Correlation is highly significant at  
137 the 0.01 level (2tailed),  $r (323) =.0956$ ;  $p<.01$ .  $r 2 =0.932$ , since 87% of the variance is shared, the association  
138 is obviously a strong one), which conclude that cultural obstacles is a threat to women education.

139 **10 IX. Physical and Economic Constraints**

140 The role of physical and economic facilitation is playing a dominant role in the dissemination of education to  
141 both male and female. The field information explicitly demonstrate that means of livelihood and utilization of  
142 resources and family income is used for imparting male education in the area. Similarly, a remarkable portion of  
143 the population support technical education and income generating resources for male strata of the population.  
144 Besides, the majority of population support that due to lack of infrastructural facilities, schools, transportation  
145 and high expenses over education family support is meager for female education (see table-II) ( $P=.000 ** <.05$   
146 there is only significance relationship between physical, economic constraint and women education, (  $2 = 4.531$ ,  
147 D.f. =7)

148 The statistical analysis in the form of chi-square test express as ( $P=.000 ** <.05$ , with the Chi-square value  
149  $2 = 4.531$  and the degree of freedom value D.f. =7), the relationship of dependant and independent variables  
150 is highly significant that validates the proposed hypothesis. Further the correlation analysis authenticate the  
151 results in the context of economic obstacles to women education describes as ( \*\* Correlation is only significant  
152 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),  $r (323) =.915$ ;  $p<.01$ .  $r 2 =0.84$ , since 84% of the variance is shared, the

153 **11 Religious Impediments**

154 The information in regard of religious constraints obtained from primary data argues that there is a complete  
155 misperception regarding women's education in Pakhtun society. Culturally, majority of the respondents interpret  
156 the religious values against women's education. Similarly, a greater number of respondents linked women deprived  
157 position in education with strict customs, traditions, and other such values. Besides, a major chunk of the  
158 population direct the religious sermon and speeches against female education while the role of ignorant and

159 untrained religious scholars is also to some extent dominant which causes women's deprivation in education (see  
160 Table-III). (P=.000\*\*< .05 there is significance relationship between religious constraint and women education,  
161 2 = 5.871, D.f. =7 )

162 In relation to the above facts the application of chi-square test and correlation techniques validate the  
163 hypothetical statement and demonstrates that there is highly significant relationship among religious constraints  
164 and women education which is statically coded as (p=.000 \*\* <.05, 2 = 2, D.f. =7). The correlation further  
165 validate the alliance of religious impediments and women's education in compile numerical form as (\* Correlation  
166 is only significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), r (323) =.862; p<.01. r 2 =0.71, since 77% of the variance is shared,  
167 the association is noticeably a strong one). Correlation (\* Correlation is only significant at the 0.01 level (2-  
168 tailed), r (323) =.862 \* ; p<.01. r 2 =0.74) (Since 74% of the variance is shared, the association is obviously a  
169 strong one) XI.

## 170 **12 Political Obstacles**

171 The political structure is mainly headed by a patriarch or male at the local, regional and national level in the  
172 area under discussion. The policy which recommends for improvement in women's education as per the collected  
173 information is not favoring women's education. Similarly, the area under study is ruled by traditionalism,  
174 patriarchy and male dominated values

## 175 **13 XII. Conclusion and Recommendations**

176 This study palpably concludes that the custom of patriarchy and male dominancy is a deeply rooted phenomenon  
177 in the research area that is impeding women's education. Besides, the male dominated social structure treat  
178 women as they wants, they are only engaged with house hold chores and can not go outside of their home as it  
179 was thought against the women honor. The traditional, religious and cultural values or Pakhtun codes define the  
180 way of life and the role of male and female and thus the dominant male perspective is the outcome of such mind  
181 set.

182 Apart from socio-cultural constraints there are also economic constraints such as women's economic dependency;  
183 women are economically dependent on male members of society they have no share in the economic spheres  
184 of life which is earned by male member of society and further decreases the status of women in regard of education.  
185 Similarly, the prevailing poverty, low monthly income of family and preferences to male member to education  
186 for gaining further benefits are regarded as the most triggering factors contributing in women's deprivation. In  
187 addition, the political structure, policy making and governmental role is weaker in term of women's educational  
188 empowerment which makes them dependent over male.

189 The study recommends that the government should invest more in girl's education in order to promote women  
190 status in Pakhtun society. Similarly, awareness through educational seminars, campaign regarding "education for  
191 all" in light with the teaching of Islam and relevant to the cultural traditions of the area should be propagated  
192 properly so that the mental horizon of the common people become widen for acceptance of women's education.  
193 Besides, the government should adopt gendered balanced policy in education and scholarships or rewards scheme  
194 for encouragement of vulnerable strata of the community for their encouragement.

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Figure 1:

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Socio-Economic and Physical constraints	Pakhtun social structure
Socio-Economic and Physical reforms	Political and religious constraints
	Women's Illiteracy
	Political and religious reforms
	( D D D D )
	Women's Educational Empowerment

[Note: E(\*\*Correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),  $r (323) =0.932^{**}$ ;  $p<.01$ .  $r^2=0.87$ ) (Since 86% of the variance is shared, the association is obviously a strong one)]

Figure 2: Table 1 :

2

Figure 3: Table 2 :

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Figure 4: Table 3 :

		Frequency	Percent
Political Constraints to Women's Education			
Lack of governmental interest		53	16.4
No political intrusion		77	23.8
Male dominated policies		72	22.3
Lack of women political participation		72	22.3
Year Vested interest group Total		49 323	15.2
			100.0
(P=.001 Women Education	Political		
Women Education	Obsta- cles		
	Pearson Cor- 1	.897 *	
	relation		
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.080	
	N 323	323	
Political Obstacles	Pearson Cor- .897 1		
	relation *		
(	Sig. (2- .080 323		
D	tailed) N 323		
D			
D			
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[Note: \* 2. Arif, G.M., Saqib, U.S., and G.M. Zahid. (1999), "Poverty, Gender, and Primary School Enrolment in Pakistan", *The Pakistan Development Review*, Volume. 38. No.4, pp. 979-992.]

Figure 5:

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