

**GUARDIANS' DECISION ABOUT GIRLS'
EDUCATION BEYOND PRIMARY LEVEL IN
THE NEWLY MERGED DISTRICT BAJAUR OF
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN**



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2021

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**“Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam
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MPhil in Sociology”.**

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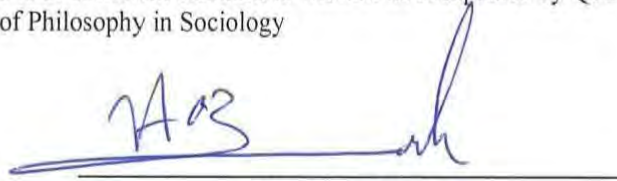
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FINAL APPROVAL

This is to certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Mr. Kefayat Ullah “ *Guardians’ Decision about Girls Education Beyond Primary Level in the Newly Merged District Banjur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*” and it is our Judgments that this is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Sociology



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Abstract

Girls' education in general and their education beyond primary level in particular is one of the serious concerns for national and international organizations in the context of developing countries, including Pakistan. The ratio of girls' post primary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 23% and 5% in district Bajaur. The issue of girls' education beyond primary level in the newly merged districts, including District Bajaur, is very dismaying. The aim of this study, thus, is to explore guardians' decision about girls' education beyond primary level in District Bajaur. I have attempted to explore the prevailing belief and practices about girls' education and to unpack the factors that affect girls' education beyond primary level. The study is qualitative. The data for the study come from 18 in-depth qualitative interviews with male guardians/respondents. The respondents consisted of both literate and illiterate guardians. The respondents were included in the study with the help of purposive sampling technique. The data was processed and analyzed in line with thematic analysis technique. The two key approaches-“Equality of Opportunity in Education” and “Equity of Opportunity in Education” were utilized as theoretical framework for the informed analysis of field data. The study's findings reveal that the people of district Bajaur are not against girls' education beyond primary level provided that their daughters and sisters are provided education in the nearby vicinity with

reasonable transportation facility. The study also reveals that Purdah (veil) is an opportunity for girls' education instead of a barrier.

Contents

Chapter No. 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
The study background.....	2
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	6
1.3 Objectives of the study.....	8
1.4 Broader Research Questions.....	8
1.5 Significance of the study.....	8
1.6 Organization of the study.....	9
Chapter No. 2	12
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
2.1 part one:	13
2.1.1 Post-primary girls’ education: Broader picture.....	14
2.1.2 Empirical evidence from the developed countries.....	18
2.1.3 Empirical evidence from the developing countries.....	19
2.1.4 Contextualizing the study: empirical evidence from Pakistan.....	22
2.1.5 Empirical evidence from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)	24
2.1.6 Empirical evidence from the newly merged districts (NMDs)	25
2.1.7 Crux from the empirical reviews	27
2.1.8 Poverty.....	28
2.1.9 Lack of basic facilities/education infrastructure	29

2.1.10 Social and cultural barriers	31
2.1.11 Parental education.....	34
2.1.12 Parental attitude	35
2.1.13 Structure of patriarchy	37
2.1.14 Unfavourable condition	39
2.2 Part two: Theoretical underpinning of the study.....	41
Chapter No 3	45
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	45
3.1 The universe of the study	46
3.2 Unit of analysis	47
3.3 Sampling and sample size.....	47
3.4 Tool and method of data collection	48
3.5 Data analysis	49
3.6 Ethical concerns	49
Chapter No. 4	51
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	51
4.1 Introduction.....	52
4.2 Guardians' opinion's about girls' education beyond primary level.....	52
4.3 Veil and girls' education: a barrier or gateway toward girls' education	53
4.3.1 <i>Purdah</i> as a gateway to girls' education beyond primary level	53
4.3.2 Veil as a barrier to girls education beyond primary level	55
4.4 Guardians' perceptions about boys and girls similar type of education	56

4.5 Guardians favour education up to secondary school for both boys and girls	59
4.6 Guardians supported higher education both for boys and girls.....	60
4.7 Tradition and traditional mind set as a barrier to girls’ education	62
4.8 Community response toward girls’ education	64
4.9 Girls education: the influence of culture.....	66
4.10 Poverty as barrier to girls’ education beyond primary level	71
4.11 Lack of educational institutions and transport facilities for girls.....	73
4.12 Early marriages	76
4.13 Parental illiteracy	77
4.14 Guardians’ perspective towards investment on girls’ education.....	78
4.15 Guardians opinions about responsible factors for low literacy of girls in district Bajaur.....	81
4.15.1 Government is responsible.....	81
4.15.2 Reluctant parents and unfavourable social surrounding are responsible	84
4.16 Strategy for promoting girls’ education.....	85
Chapter No. 5	88
CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	88
5.1 Summary of the argument.....	89
5.2 Reflections on themes	90
5.3 Relating findings with previous studies	92

5.4 Theoretical Implication	97
5.5 limitations of the study and future research	98
5.6 Conclusion	99
5.7 Recommendations.....	100
References.....	102

Chapter No. 1
INTRODUCTION

This study examined guardians' decision about their girls' education beyond primary level in the newly merged district of Bajaur KP. I have attempted to unpack guardians' opinion and perceptions regarding girls' education. The study is divided into five chapters. These include introduction, review of literature, research methodology, data analysis and findings, conclusion, implication and recommendation for future research. This chapter covers the study background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study.

1.1 The study background

Pakistan, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2019), ranks second in the world with the highest number of out of school children. An estimated 22.8 million children between the age of five and 16 years are out of school in Pakistan (Ullah 2020). Five million children are out of school at primary level, and 60% of them are girls. However, out of school children are rapidly increasing after primary level. About 17.7 million children in the age group of 10-16 years are out of school, and 51% of them are girls (UNICEF 2019). About 10.7 million boys and 8.6 million girls are enrolled at the primary level, 3.6 million boys and 2.8 million girls' drops at the lower secondary level. The dropout rate is higher in Pakistan (Ullah 2020; Cyan et al. 2017). The Pakistan Bureau of Statistic Labor Force Survey, 2017-18 illustrated that the total education

ratio of Pakistan is 62.3%, 72.5% are male and 51.8% are female education (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019).

In addition to this, the total ratio of education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is 55.3%, among them 73.3% are males and 38.5% are females (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019). The enrollment of students in KP (excluding the newly merged districts) at primary school level is 70% and 30% are enrolled at middle and secondary schools level (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

According to the Annual Statistical Report (2018), the overall literacy ratio at the primary level in the newly merged districts (NMDs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 57%. Males' literacy rate is claimed to be 73% whereas the literacy rate among females is 40%. Similarly, the total Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at the secondary level is 16%, including 25% boys and 6% girls. These statistics show a very dismaying picture of females' education in the newly merged districts, including district Bajaur. The status of females' education in district Bajaur is dismaying. The ratio of girls' education is very low as compared to boys. At the primary school level, the total net enrolment ratio is 58%. The net enrollment ratio for girls and boys is 32% and 83% respectively. It is important to mention here that beyond primary school level girls' enrolment ratio immensely decreases. The enrollment ratio at the secondary level is 18% including 5% girls and 37% boys (Annual Statistical Report 2019). This low literacy of girls in general and girls'

education beyond the primary level in particular is due to the deeply embedded gender discrimination in the area (Amer et al. 2017). These enrollment statistics show that girls' literacy and education beyond primary level in the newly merged districts is the lowest compared to national-level statistics along the axes of gender. It is claimed that in Pakistan the NER ratio at primary level is 66%, including 68% boys and 63% girls. While 39% boys and 35% girls are enrolled at secondary school level (Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20; Naveed 2018).

The condition of females education based on the number of schools and teaching staff is also miserable in district Bajaur. The total number of primary schools in Bajaur is 543, including 353 for boys' and 190 for girls. Besides this, the total number of middle schools is 65 (36 for boys and 29 for girls). Total functional schools for boys and girls are 58 and the remaining 7 are non-functional. The overall enrolled students in these schools are 2711 while the number of total working teachers is 82, which means only three teachers for each school (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

Furthermore, the total number of high schools in district Bajaur is 43, including 32 schools for boys and 11 for girls. The number of female working teachers is 72 in the 11 girls' high schools in the district. However, there are only 2 higher secondary schools for boys and no higher secondary school for girls in the whole district Bajaur for the

population of 536,520 females (Annual Statistical Report 2019; provisional census results 2017).

In addition to this, district Bajaur is the smallest district by area and largest based on population. It remained an agency of the erstwhile federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) till May 2018. The total area of Bajaur is 1290 km and the total population is 10, 93,684 included males and females are (557,160, 536,520) respectively. And the females' ratio is 49.056% (provisional census results 2017; Pakistan Bureau of Statistic (PBS) 2017). Geographically, it is 52 Km long border with Afghanistan province to the east; district Dir to the northeast side, and district Mohmand in the Southside. In district Bajaur four major tribes are inhabited. These are *Utman Khel*, *Tarkalanri*, *Mamund* and *Salarzi* including a small population of *Safis* (Rehman, Atta and Malik 2016; Khan 2010).

The low ratio of girls' education is due to various factors. Parental and community attitude towards females' education is one of the important factors. The unfavorable attitude of parents is a major barrier toward their girls' education (Purewal and Hashmi 2015; Onoyase 2018). Most parents spend money on boys' education instead of girls'. They did not consider girls' as a breadwinner for their families (Purewal and Hashmi 2015). Investment in girls' education is considered no or fewer chances of return as compared to investment in boys' education (Herz et al. 2006). In the rural areas of Asia, parental decision regarding their children's education

is not only based on what will be better for their children but are also based on what will be best for their family's future income (Mahmud and Amin 2006). Moreover, socio-cultural practices also main barrier toward the low ratio of girls' education. The male member of family is not willing to send their girls to school due to family honor (Yakubova 2020). However, strict implementation of *Purdah* restricts girls' from getting education (Awan and Malik 2020). Furthermore, lack of educational facilities creates an obstacle in the way of girls' education in most of the developing countries (Naveed 2018; Ullah et al. 2021).

Based on the above statistics of girls' education, the current study focuses on exploring the role of guardians' decision about girls' post-primary education in district Bajaur. The present study is an attempt to explore guardians' decision regarding their girls' education beyond the primary school level in the specific context of district Bajaur, erstwhile Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA), which is not documented in the previous literature.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Gender inequality in access to education is one of the persistent issues in almost all developing countries. The latest report of UNICEF (2020) revealed that 132 million girls are out of school worldwide, 30 million of these out of school are from middle school. The case of Pakistan is not different, 73% of children at the age of 5-16 drop out before completing secondary level education. Pakistan ranks second in the world with the

highest number of out of school children. An estimated 22.8 million children between the age of five and 16 years are out of school in Pakistan. Two-third of them are girls (Ullah 2020; Mughal et al. 2019; UNICEF 2019). 17.7 million children at the age of 10-16 years are out of school, of which 51% are girls (UNICEF 2019). The issue of girls' education in general and girls' education beyond the primary level, in particular is one of the key issues in the context of KP. The total ratio of education in KP is 55.3%, including 73.3% males and 38.5% of females (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019). It is estimated that girls' out of school ratio in KP are 51%. Girls' education ratio in the newly emerged districts is very alarming as compared to the rest of the province. More than 1 million children at the age of 4-16 years are out of school in the NMDs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while 67 percent of the population are unable to read and write, including 87 percent of women (Bureau Report 2020; The Express Tribune 2020). In the NMDs, the total ratio of post-primary education is 16% (25% for boys and 6% for girls). In district Bajaur, the total education beyond the primary level is 18%. The percentage of girls is 5 and boys is 37 (Annual Statistical Report 2018). The issue has not received due academic attention in the context of KP in general and in the socio-economic context of the newly merged districts in particular. Therefore, this study aims to explore the guardians' decision about post-primary girls' education in district Bajaur, the newly merged district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study was carried out with the following objectives.

- To explore the prevailing belief about girls' education beyond primary level;
- To unpack the factors that affect girls' education beyond primary level.

1.4 Broader Research Questions

This research study was carried out with the following broader research questions.

- How is girls' education understood in the socio-cultural context of district Bajaur?
- How do guardians perceive and interpret girls' education beyond primary level?
- How social and cultural forces encourage or discourage girls' education?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study has practical and theoretical significance. Practically, the study findings may be used for informed policy and strategies for females' education in the newly merged district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Thus, the study's findings are a rich source of information for policymakers.

Theoretically, the findings may contribute to the existing theoretical debate on equal access to education. The findings add new explanations to the existing argument around girls' education. In short, the findings add new insights to the existing literature and scholarship. The findings may be used by other researchers to extend this ongoing debate and struggle for girls' education in the socio-cultural context of KP

1.6 Organization of the study

In order to engage the readers and keep coherence in my study, the current study has been organized into five chapters. A brief introduction of each chapter is given in the following paragraphs.

Chapter one was a short introduction to the study. It briefly discussed the status of girls' education in Pakistan. The chapter further elaborated the ratio of enrolled schools girls' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the newly merged districts (NMDs) of KP. It also spotlighted the number of schools and active teaching staff in the NMDs. It further defined the geography of Bajaur. The chapter covered also the statement of the problem and discussed the issues of girls' education beyond primary level. The chapter further covers the objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study.

Chapter two is about a review of the relevant literature. It focuses on empirical evidence taken from other research studies about the status of girls' education around the world. The review of literature consists of journals, articles, newspapers, books, government and Non-government

organizations Reports. This chapter is divided into two parts: Part one empirical evidences, part two theoretical reviews and theoretical framework. Part one represents empirical evidence skims from other research studies on the issue of girls' education beyond primary level. This part also elaborates the status of girls' education around the world and the factors which affect their education. Part two is a theoretical review it gives a brief discussion of the theoretical argument around gender and education. In this part, the discourses of equality of opportunity in education and equity of opportunity in education regarding gender and education have been discussed and debated. The theoretical review and discussion of this chapter guided the study direction and enabled me to develop a theoretical framework for the informed analysis of field data. The theoretical frame is drawn on two key arguments: a) equality of opportunity in education and b) equity of opportunity in education.

Chapter three is about the research method and techniques adopted for this study. This study used qualitative research method. It consists of universe of the study; unite of analysis, sampling technique and sample size. It also sheds light on the tool and method of data collection, data analysis and ethical concerns.

Chapter four presents the analysis of field data. The data have been processed and analyzed through thematic analysis technique and the findings of the data are also compared to the existing literature. The

chapter confirms that most of the guardians were in favour of post-primary girls' education but the number of factors create hinder in the way of girls' education beyond primary level.

Chapter five Sums up the study. In this chapter I have linked the study's findings with theoretical and empirical literature for engaged discussion. The chapter sums up with brief recommendations and the possibility of work for future researchers on the issue of girls' education in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Chapter No. 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents literature review on the topic under study. The chapter is divided into two parts. Part one represents empirical evidence skimmed from other research studies. Part two gives a brief discussion of the theoretical argument around gender and education. It also provides a theoretical framework that informs the analysis of filed data.

2.1 part one:

This part presents empirical findings from studies conducted on post-primary girls' education across societies. A recent report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics ([UIS] 2019) revealed that a total of 61.5 million children are out of school at the lower secondary level in the world including 29.6 million boys and 31.9 million girls. Three regions have been spotted as home with the highest out of lower secondary school adolescent. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 28 million adolescents are out of school, including 13.7 million males and 14.5 million females. In South Asia (17 million) of which 9.2 million males and 7.3 million females, in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (9 million), the males and females ratio is (5.1 million and 4.0 million). Similarly, in the world total out-of-school youth of upper secondary level (137.8 million), the males and females ratio is (70.8, 67.0 million). Southern Asia is the highest ratio (64 million), including males and females (32.6 and 31.5 million). In Sub-Saharan African 17.7 million males and 19.3 million females respectively are out of school at the upper secondary level. In most of the developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the number of enrolled boys

and girls at primary school level is greater than in secondary schools (King and Winthrop 2015). According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Annual Report, 3.7 million children in Afghanistan are out of school and just 54% of them complete primary education. In Pakistan, 17.7 million children at the age of 10-16 years are out of school, of which 51% are girls (UNICEF 2019; Ullah 2020; Mughal et al. 2019).

2.1.1 Post-primary girls' education: Broader picture

Worldwide the overall education ratio of males and females at the age of 15 years is 86.3%, among them males literacy rate is 90% while females' ratio is 82.7%. In the developed countries, the overall literacy ratio is 99.2% (World Population Review 2020).

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 132 million girls are out of school globally. 34.2 million of them are out of school at primary school, 30 million girls from middle school, and 67.4 million are out of high and higher secondary school (UNICEF 2020). Females are the two-third illiterate population of the world (World Population Review 2020).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2016) has illustrated that in many countries gender inequality is widely spread in the field of education. In various countries majority of girls' are still denied the right to education. For the last two decades, worldwide the gender gap has decreased gradually at primary and secondary school level (Psaki et al. 2018). Gender discrimination based

on primary schooling still exists in 60 countries out of 177. Girls' cannot complete their schooling as compared boys, and majority of them belong to low-income countries. For girls', the lower secondary education opportunities are still lacking. However, in low and middle-income countries, just 50% of boys and girls complete their lower secondary schooling (Sharma et al 2020; Psaki et al. 2018). In Pakistan, females do not have equal chances of education (Zeshan 2020).

Similarly, in 2012, about 781 million adult children have deprived of basic education and 64% of them were girls. Gender gaps frequently exist in countries where boys are achieving higher education. Since 2000 gender parity at primary and secondary school level is one of the greatest achievements. At the primary level, the number of girls' for every 100 boys has increased from 92 to 97 and from 91 to 98 at secondary education, between 2000 and 2015. Moreover, from 2000 to 2015 the number of countries that achieved gender parity at both primary and secondary education increased from 36 to 62 (Evans et al 2020; UNESCO 2015). Gender inequality in schooling has improved highly, but cultural stereotypes are still practicing in our school system which contributes to gender inequality in education (Bernhoft 2020).

The failure of equality of opportunity for girls at school, and in higher education is due to sex stereotypes and gender-conservative socialization. The factors which lags girls/ women from equal opportunity in education are included the existing pattern of sex stereotypical subjects' choice

(especially math, sciences and technology) for boys and girls. Similarly, portray gender stereotyping in textbooks, curriculum, and unfairness in examination and test marking are some of the issues that deprive girls/women of equal educational opportunity (Arnot 2007). The struggle for equality within the school was ignored; therefore, the boys get more benefits than girls (Weiner 1986). There are significant discriminative factors in boys and girls education attainment (Lazenby 2016; Acker 1987).

According to the latest report of UNICEF, in Afghanistan, 55% of schools have no proper building and about 3.5 million children are still out of school, including 75% girls (UNICEF 2018). In fact, Afghanistan has been facing serious issues such as war, security, and displacement which create barriers in the way of female education. In Tajikistan, out-of-school ratio for girls is higher than boys. In 2017, it was estimated that the total out-of-school children were 11435; including 8176 girls and 3259 boys. The data illustrated that the out of school ratio for girls is greater than boys. The main reason is due to the costly education system and cultural norms (Yakubova 2020).

Moreover, due to the poor quality of the education system, the dropout ratio is higher in Sub-Sahara Africa and South Asian countries. It creates a drastic cycle of a poor education environment. Thus, half of the students have reached secondary school level (UNICEF 2018). Quality of education includes qualified teachers, availability of textbooks, and

classroom facilities which encourage parents to send their children to school. If parents perceive that school cannot provide basic skills to children. These may discourage parents to send their children to school. Thus, poor quality of schooling increases the dropout ratio of children from school. Schools existence in a distance from households also negatively impacts attendance and augment the dropout ratio of girls, especially in rural areas. In Nigeria, poor quality of education increase children's school dropout (Lawal et al. 2020). Girls' dropped out more than boys after primary level (Christian 2015). The absenting of teachers, lack of physical structure of school (boundary walls, classrooms), and long distances from school are the factors that affect the quality of education. Poverty is also a reason for poor quality education because the upper class can send their children to costly school. But the lower class sends their children to the government school, where the teachers did not give full attention to maintaining quality education in Bangladesh (Sarker et al. 2019).

Besides this, girls who were studying in school, most of them were not facilitated in basic writing and reading skill. In 51 developing countries, only 50% of girls who received education up to grade 6 could read a simple sentence (Evans and Yuan 2019). A report of the UNESCO Institute for Statistic (UIS) revealed that about 617 million children and adolescents globally have not gained a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics. Those children who were enrolled in schools,

after completing their schooling, majority did not achieve the basic skill (Randall et al.2020; Evans and Yuan 2019). Both in Central Asia and South Asia, the children who attend primary and lower secondary school, only 19% develop basic skill of reading and writing. 48% children from government schools in India and 46% children of public schools in Pakistan by the time they reach class five can read a class 2 level text (UNICEF 2018).

2.1.2 Empirical evidence from the developed countries

The developed countries of the world have the highest literacy rate with a small gender gap. The overall literacy ratio of developed nations has 99.2%. It is reported that thirty-one nations have literacy rate is 99.0% and above while four countries of them have 100% literacy rate including Andorra, Greenland, North Korea and Uzbekistan (World Population Review 2020). On the other side, Latin America illiteracy rate was 8%, in Europe 2%, while in East Asia and Pacific the ratio were 4% (Osho and Ebalunode, 2018). From the last couple of centuries, the literacy ratio of the world population has been raised dramatically. After the last 65 years, the world literacy rate has been increased by 4% in every five years (Roser and Ortiz-Ospina 2016). In the developed countries most of the dropout rates have been found at the secondary level because dropout at that level has seen a strong influence on individual and family, as well as on the economic and social development of a country (Pov et al. 2020).

Males' and females' literacy ratios at the age of 15 and 24 years are different across the region (Osho and Ebalunode 2018).

The gender gap in literacy has almost closed by the developed countries. These countries included Europe and central Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, East Asia and the Pacific region (Wadhwa 2019). The male literacy ratio in Europe and central Asia is 100%, while female literacy is 98.21%. Moreover, the literacy ratio of males in East Asia and the Pacific region is 96.55% while female ratios are 93.56%. The ratio of males' education in Latin America and the Caribbean is 93% while the female literacy ratio is 90.70%. However, the literacy rates decrease gradually in the poor and low-income countries. The ratio of male in the Middle East and North Africa is 90.88% while the female ratio is 80.64%. Similarly, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the male literacy ratio is 74.46% and female ratio is 62.10%, while the literacy ratio in South Asia countries is the lowest for both genders. The male literacy is 72.95% and female is 56.55% (Sadasivam et al.2018).

2.1.3 Empirical evidence from the developing countries

Education is a fundamental right for all children. But girls have been discriminated against in education (Verma 2006). Post-primary girls' education is the prevailing issue in most of developing countries. The literacy ratio of girls is less than boys in majority of the developing countries. A large number of illiterate adults are living in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and West Asia. About one-third of the world's

illiterate adults are females. Niger is the world lowest country based on literacy; just 19% of adults can read and write. The females' literacy rate is just 11%. While Chad literacy rate is 22.3%. South Sudan is another African country where the literacy rate was 34 percent, including 40.26 percent males and 28.86 percent females (World Population Review 2020; Zua 2021). Furthermore the literacy ratio of Yemen is 70.10%, Iraq 50.10%, Egypt 71.2%, Afghanistan 43.0%, Iran 85.5%, India 74.4%, and Bangladesh 73.9% (World Population Review 2020).

In majority of the developing countries, females have been deprived of their due right of education, due to which they are less contributed to the development of society. However, in the world there are more than 50 million children are out of school, and at least 200 million children are not receiving quality education (Gouleta 2015; John 2017). In all-out of school-going girls in the developing countries, one-third is living in South Asia. Besides this, just one girl out of four attends primary school in some parts of South Asia. At the secondary school level, the enrollment ratio of girls is less than boys (Herz et al. 2006). In Bangladesh, the dropout rate was 38.3 percent. The main reasons are poverty, early marriage, and eye-teasing to school-going girls, and failing in examination (Sarker et al 2019).

It reported that in developing countries, the highest Out of school children are living in the Sub-Sahara Africa of all age groups. There are 10 million out of school children of all age groups living in Southern

Asia which is the second-highest number based on out of school children. In Sub Sahara Africa girls of all age groups were more deprived of education than their boys' counterparts (Randall et al. 2020). Besides this, worldwide gender inequality in education always asserted that females' education ratio is less than males. But in some African countries, the females' literacy is greater than males' counterparts. These countries are Botswana, Seychelles, and Lesotho which has the highest females' literacy than males. In Botswana, 88 percent of females at the age of 15 years and above were literate as compared to 85 percent of males. In Lesotho 85 percent of females and 68 percent of males were literate. Similarly, Seychelles is the smallest country in African by population with a total adult literacy rate was 95 percent. The women's education ratios were 95 percent and men's were 94 percent (Zua 2021).

Similarly, in most low and middle-income countries, 1.4 billion school children are out of school and 420 million will not have acquired basic skills by 2030, and 425 million will not fulfil secondary level schooling (UNICEF Annual Report 2019). A large portion of the poorest countries is still illiterate (Roser and Ortiz-Ospina 2016). 3.7 million children in Afghanistan are out of school and just 54% of them complete primary education. The most vulnerable people in Afghanistan are girls (UNICEF Annual Report 2019). Moreover, the overall dropout rate in Cambodia at primary level was 4.6 percent, 17 percent at the lower secondary level, and 19.4 percent for the upper secondary level. A study has revealed that

Most students' drop out due to family financial problems in African countries. In Cambodia, father education has a strong influence on children dropout than mother education (Pov et al. 2020). In Ethiopia, the majors factors that increase the girls' dropout rate at the primary level are included economic factor; such as the perception that to invest less on girls and more on boys education, migration due to poverty, the death of a breadwinner. The school level factors consist of poor school facilities and infrastructure, lack of quality female teachers in village, absenteeism, and teachers negative attitude toward girls education are the major's factors due to which girls dropout rate has increased (Yassin 2020).

Furthermore, Pakistan is ranked at 150 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), in the education sector, and only Afghanistan is lagged from Pakistan with the rank of 169. In Asian countries, Pakistan spends 2.4% part of the total GDP in the education sector, while spends Iran 3.4%, Nepal 3.7%, Bhutan 7.4%, Maldives 4.3, Bangladesh 2.5, Sari Lanka 3.5, and Afghanistan 3.2 (Pakistan economic survey 2018-2019). Pakistan spends the lowest public expenditure on the education sector; therefore the overall education condition of Pakistan is not satisfactory as compared to other Asian countries.

2.1.4 Contextualizing the study: empirical evidence from Pakistan

Pakistan Bureau of Statistic Labor Force Survey, 2017-18 illustrated that the total education ratio of Pakistan is 62.3%, where 72.5% are males and 51.8% are females (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019). Based on the

provinces, it is observed that the females' education ratio has improved with time. In the province of Punjab, the total education ratio is 64.7% among them 72.2% of males and 57.4% of females, while in Sindh 72.8% of males and 49.9% of females ratio out of 62.2% of the total education. Similarly, in Baluchistan total literacy ratio is 55.4% among them 73.0% of males and 33.5% of females education, while in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa total ratio of education is 55.3%, among them 73.3% of males and 38.5% of females education (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019).

In rural areas of Pakistan, girls' access to school is less as compared to boys. In urban areas, the literacy rate of girls at the age of 10 and above is 69.3% while males 82.4%, while in rural areas the ratio among boys and girls are 65.3% and 38.4% respectively which is a big difference. The gap based on gender education almost not exists in urban areas but in rural areas, the gap is more widen (Social Indicators of Pakistan 2016). However, there is a gap between males and females education in Pakistan. Males' school attendance rate is 20% higher than females. Based on regular attendance of enrolled students, boys are 50% as compared to 41% of girls (Cyan et al. 2017).

Furthermore, Pakistan, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2019) is ranked second in the world with the highest number of out-of-school children. An estimated 22.8 million children between the age of five and 16 years are out of school in Pakistan (Ullah 2020). Five million children are out of school at the primary level, and 60% of them

are girls. However, out-of-school children are rapidly increasing after primary education. About 17.7 million children in the age group of 10-16 years are out of school, and 51% of them are girls (UNICEF 2019). On the national level out of school boys are 10.7 million, and 12.1 million (51%) are out of school girls. In Pakistan, the dropout rate is higher (UNICEF 2019; Cyan et al. 2017). About 10.7 million boys and 8.6 million girls are enrolled at the primary level, among them 3.6 million boys and 2.8 million girls' drop at the lower secondary level. The dropout rate is higher in Pakistan (Ullah 2020; Cyan et al. 2017).

2.1.5 Empirical evidence from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

Total government schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (excluding newly merged districts), are 27,544 in which 141 are non-functional. Out of the non-functional schools, 137 are primary and 4 are secondary schools. Moreover, out of 27357 schools, 21780 primary schools, including 13338 males and 8442 females. The total number of secondary schools is 5577 of which 3314 are males and 2263 are females. Furthermore, out of 5581 secondary schools, 2637 are middle in which 1447 for males and 1190 for females, while 2253 (1428 males and 825 females) are high schools. Moreover, 692 are higher secondary schools, of which 441 for males and 250 for females (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

The NER of students in KP (excluding the newly merged districts) in all institutions (Govt., Non-Govt. and Deeni Madaris) at primary school level is 65%, including 75% males and 55% females respectively.

Whereas 32% are enrolled at middle, high and higher secondary schools level, males and females ratio are 40% and 23% respectively (Annual Statistical Report 2019). There is a big gap between the enrollment of males and females students in rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially the Pashtun area (Jamal 2016). While in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the total ratio of education is 55.3%, including 73.3% of males and 38.5% of females (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019).

Furthermore, the total number of teachers in Government schools is 140034 among them 89227 males and 50807 are females. There is total of 72848 government primary school teachers (45952 males and 26896 females). Furthermore, there are 14694 (8714 males and 5980 females) middle school teachers. At the government high school level, the total number of teachers is 33059 (21743 male and 11316 female). Lastly, there are 19433 (12818 males and 6615 females) teachers in government higher secondary schools (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

2.1.6 Empirical evidence from the newly merged districts (NMDs)

The total numbers of schools in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NMDs) are 5896. Among them, 5573 are functional while 305 are non-functional schools. In 5573 functional schools, 4673 (2670 males and 2003 females) are primary schools. While total 900 secondary schools of which 606 for males and 294 for females (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

According to Annual Statistical Report (2019), the enrollments of students at primary and secondary level in the NMDs are; the overall enrolment ratio at primary level is 84% and 16% at middle and secondary level. The numbers of enrolled children in government schools are 65% while in private school are 34%. Similarly, just 1% of children are enrolled in Madrassa education (Moeed 2019). The overall literacy ratio in the NMDs at primary school level between ages 5-9 is 57%, among them 73% of males and 40% of females. The total net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at secondary level is 16%, including 25% of males and 6% of females (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

The working teachers in the government schools in NMDs are 18510, among them 12252 are males and 6258 are females. While 11424 (6822 males and 4602 females) are primary school teachers. Out of 2593 middle school teachers, 1793 are males and 800 are female. At the high school level, there are 3987 teachers, in which 3217 are males and 770 females. Lastly, there are 506 (420 males and 86 females) working teachers in higher secondary schools (Annual Statistical Report 2019).

It is estimated that girls' out-of-school ratio in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 51%. There are 15% of children at the age of 6 to 13 who are out of school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Moeed 2019). But it is a very alarming situation in newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that the largest number of girls is out of school. More than 1 million children at the age of 4-16 years are out of school in the newly merged districts of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Moreover, 67 percent of the population are unable to read and write, including 87 percent of women (Bureau Report 2020; The Express Tribune 2020). Additionally, in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), 74% of girls have been deprived of the right to education (PAGE 2017).

In addition to this, the status of females' education in Bajaur district is very worse. According to the Annual Statistical Report (2018), the ratio of girls' education is very low as compared to boys. At the primary school level, the total Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) is 58%. The Net Enrollment Ratio for girls and boys is 32% and 83% respectively. It is important to mention here that beyond primary school level girls' enrolment ratio immensely decreases. The enrollment ratio at the secondary level is 18% including 5% girls and 37% boys. This shows a significant difference in enrollments for different gender and age groups. The ratio of male students in Bajaur is greater than the girls at primary and secondary school levels. It also shows that girls education ratio drastically declines beyond primary level (Annual Statistical Report 2018).

2.1.7 Crux from the empirical reviews

Multiple barriers that prevent girls from post-primary education are under:

2.1.8 Poverty

Poverty is a major obstacle in the way of girls' education. Children living in poor families easily drop out of school (John 2017; UNICEF Annual Report 2019). In Pakistan, many children are willing to get an education. But they are unable to pay tuition fees and drop out of school (Mustafa et al.2016).

Furthermore, because of financial problems, the majority of parents prefer to educate their son rather than a daughter. Family income condition influences the access of girls' higher education (Buzdar et al. 2011; UNESCO 2010). Women in rural areas are facing poor economic status (Hannum et al. 2009). However, gender disparities were practicing in the rural area of China. Among the poor household and economic background, the cost of children education was considered as a Burdon on family (Chingtham and Guite 2017; Connelly and Zheng 2003). In Pakistan men and women are not behaved equally (Mustafa et al.2016). Guardian of girls claimed that due to poor economic conditions we are unable to educate our daughter (Yadav and Yadav 2016). In district Bajaur, Poverty is one of the major obstacles toward girls' education beyond primary level. More than 50% of the population live below the

poverty line and could not afford the expenses of children education (Naveed 2018; Jamal 2016).

Furthermore, poverty is a major factor in early marriage. The majority of girls have been getting marriage at the age between 12 and 15 which is the main hindrance in their education. When a girl gets married then she automatically stops school. Because her parents considered her is the property of another family (Jamal 2016; UNESCO 2015). In Pakistan, most parents were not willing to enroll their girls in school due to the early marriage of girls (Mustafa et al.2016).

2.1.9 Lack of basic facilities/education infrastructure

Lack of educational facilities is also an obstacle to girls' education. Lack of basic facilities, such as, school building, absence of teaching staff, and transport services, the majority of parents are not willing to send their daughter to school. Besides this, lack of quality of education is also creating an obstacle in girls' education (UNESCO 2010; Buzdar et al. 2011). Along with this, more than 50% of females' schools have no water, toilet and electricity. The majority of females have no access to secondary schools. There is lack of transport facilities. And schools are far away from their homes. Moreover, lack of understanding and awareness regarding the importance of girls' education is also a major factor towards the lower literacy among girls (Naveed 2018; Jamal 2016).

The latest study shows that majority of educational institutions have lack of basic facilities such as boundary walls, proper shelter, drinking water,

and toilet etc. People of the residents complained that due to lack of basic education requirement beyond primary school level. Girls quit school (UNDP 2013). A recent study of Education for All (EFA) illustrated that in some African and Asia countries education is only available for male students (John 2017).

Girls and women are mostly deprived of equity of opportunity in access to education in more cases than boys and men. The majority of girls' schools are far away from their access. Deficiency of sanitation facilities in girls' schools, such as toilets, clean water, etc, result low attendance rate and high dropout ratio of teenage girls from school. Moreover, family and communities are ideologically against girls' education (INEE 2010).

Structure issue also creates hindrance toward female education. The lack of female teaching staff in most of rural areas is the main problem. Parents in some developing countries are not ready to send their daughters to schools where there are no female teachers (John 2017). Lack of resources for education and awareness among people is also a main reason for the low literacy in Pakistan (Din and Khan 2008). The majority of females leave their schools after passing primary school, due to the shortage of middle and high schools in district Bajaur. However, most the girls' schools are located at either a non-feasible location or shortage of teaching staff and other basic facilities. Some the parents asserted that their daughters would like to become doctors, teachers and

contribute to the development of society. Nevertheless, lack of educational facilities is a major obstacle to their achievements (Dawn news paper 2017).

Furthermore, unavailability of secondary schools in their vicinity, the majority of girls dropped out after getting primary education. Apart from this, community-based schools can also contribute to a considerable amount in girls' education. However, in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the community-based schools result is not satisfactory. Moreover, absenteeism is also a serious issue in female education institutions. The unavailability of local females teaching staff creates barriers in girls' education. The majority of teachers have been recruited from outside districts including *Mardan* and *Charsada*. They are frequently absent. Most of them did not belong to the local areas. Sometimes, these teachers hire proxy teachers. They are local women, and not well qualified. Resultantly, they are promoting low quality of education which directly leads to an increase in the drop-out ratio of girls. And low enrolment ratio as well (Naveed 2018).

2.1.10 Social and cultural barriers

In the rural areas of developing countries, girls' education is facing numerous socio- cultural hindrances from the side of the head of household and society. Resultantly, these ideas and cultural stereotypes have inculcated in the mind of people that high schooling for girls is not necessary (Purewal and Hashmi, 2015; John 2017). Socio-cultural norms

and values limit females' access to education and job opportunities. It is reported that in Uttar Pradesh India 90% of women take permission from their husband to work (Gauthier 2018).

In cultural norms and values, girls are considered vulnerable in the public sphere, as well as in educational institutions. Moreover, girls carry the burden of respect or '*Azzat*' in the family and kinship due to which their mobility was restricted in the public sphere. In this perspective the socio-cultural norms of Pakistani rural society is very strict which created barrier in the way of girls' high schooling (Purewal and Hashmi 2015; Hamid 1993). Furthermore, females in Tajik societies are not secure. It dishonours the family when negative comments are circulated girls' names. The male member of a family is not willing to send their girls to school due to the unsafe environment because girls' self-respect and honour is very important parts of their culture (Yakubova 2020).

In Pakistani society one of the reasons that limit girls' from high schooling is *Purdah* wearing a veil when girls reach adolescence. The degree of enforcement of modesty for girls' is different in society, such as wearing a veil limits adult girls from the public sphere, and controls them from outside activities to performed household duties. These cultural barriers further decreased females' chances of pursuing high schooling. After primary school girls were drop out of school due to parents thinking that the age is not suitable for girls to move outside from home (Awan and Malik 2020).

Parents' believed that educated females could control their husbands after marriage. Thus, parents perceived that girls' did not need secondary school (Onoyase 2018). Mothers also have traditional attitude toward girls' education, and they claimed that sending girls' to school is not mandatory, because girls' will get married and left their parents home (Hannum et al. 2009). Moreover, due to traditional norms females have limited access to education and other workplace opportunities. Thus, the ratio of girls' education in Pakistan is very low, and the majority of female are illiterate, because a large number of people did not consider education as a good thing for females (Mustafa et al.2016).

Furthermore, 52.3% of parents claimed that higher education of girls' can create problems for their parents. They can rebel against their parents and can raise a question for their rights. Conversely, 45.7% of parents were in favor of higher education. Apart from this, in rural areas people consider girls' higher education against their cultural and social values (Purewal and Hashmi 2015; Herz et al. 2006). Many girls' do not go to school or they drop out due to early marriage, cultural barriers and community negative attitudes toward girls' education (Totakhail 2015).

Due to strict cultural norms parents are encapsulated in the intellectual jacket of narrow-mindedness and they cannot allow their girls' education (Chingtham and Guite 2017; UNICEF Annual Report 2019). *Pashtunwali* (Pashtun tribal code) is also a hurdle in the remote areas of Pashtun. It has confined the women life to the four walls of the home. They have

predefined their responsibilities such as, cooking, homemaking, childbearing, etc. Thus they do not get an education. However, some religious leaders have misinterpreted Islamic injunction and they did not allow their girls out of their home for schooling (Jamal 2016). In Pakistani culture women are treated second class citizens, due to which they are deprived from their basic rights including education (Din and Khan 2008). In addition to this, because of traditional mind set up and rigid values of society women have been assigned more household responsibilities which have deprived them of education (UNESCO 2015). Likewise, in the rest of Pashtun society the people of district Bajaur have also confined their girls in the four walls of home and very limit girls have access to education (Khan 2017).

2.1.11 Parental education

In many studies, parental education has determined an important factor about the decision of children education especially girls education. Mother education has a significant impact on the schooling of a daughter education than a son. Increases mothers schooling promotes and supports daughter education, while father education has influence both son and daughter schooling. The data illustrated that educated parents have more educated children as compared with less-educated parents (Glick and Sahn 2000).

Parents' education play a significant role in the positive attitude of parents toward girls' education. And they better understand the necessity

of girls' education as compared with illiterate parents (Chingtham and Guite 2017). Parents/guardians education contributes highly to the enrollment of children in schools and decreases the possibility of drop out ((Lawal et al. 2020). Educated families background has a positive attitude toward girls education. The majority of respondents (51 percent) agreed that an educated family could be constructed through female education (Rehman and Rafi 2018).

On the other hand, illiterate parents have less interest and engagement with education-related activities due to which there is a greater risk of drop out of their children as compared with literate parents' children (Sarker et al. 2019). In Pakistan the ratio of girls' education is lower, because of lack of awareness among people about females' education (Mustafa et al.2016).

2.1.12 Parental attitude

A study about parents' attitudes toward girls' secondary schooling in the rural area revealed that parents have unfavorable attitudes toward girls' secondary school. The findings further added that female secondary schooling late their marriage. Parents are agreed that instead of providing secondary education to females and the money spending on their education, its better to get them married. Because parents' believes that educated girls' very less contribute in household income and nation-building. In India despite the government struggles in providing free education to all, the attitudes of parents toward girls' secondary schooling

were unfavorable (Onoyase 2018). People perceived that money spends on girls' education, it will be better to spend it on boys' secondary education. Investment on girls' education is temporary and there have less chance of income return to invest in daughter education (Purewal and Hashmi 2015; Herz et al. 2006; Onoyase 2018).

Moreover, a large number of mothers are still expecting that their son would be supported us during the aged time. In the context of family economic, guardians expected that girls are less likely to contribute to the family income, because girls' are always busy with household chores. Thus, portents are less likely to educate their daughter (Hannum et al. 2009). A study shows that in rural China parents believe that son is more worthy and capable than girls in education and income (Honing and Hershetter 1988). In rural areas of Asia, the parental decision regarding educating their children is not only based on what will be better for their children but think that what will be best for their family future income (Mahmud and Amin 2006). A recent study about parental attitudes toward daughter education shows that 52% of parents were in favour of boys education while 46.3% argued that we are not biased of girls education (Purewal and Hashmi 2015; Herz et al. 2006).

Furthermore, the urban and rural environment has a significant role in determining parental attitude towards girls' education. Urban parents as compare to rural had a better understanding regarding the necessity of girls' education, 90% of urban parents support the statement that

educated girls make a good citizen than illiterate girls'. On the other side, 70% of rural parents considered girls as a burden on the family. Therefore, the attitude of parents of urban areas has more positive than rural parents (Chingtham and Guite 2017). However, attitude toward girls' education is mostly associated with the cultural value of society, due to which it becomes a barrier in the way of their high schooling (Stromquist 1990). The majority of the rural areas parents attitude toward daughters education are very negative than sons, 82% of rural parents and just 12% of urban parents were in the favour to dropout their daughter from school instead of their son. In short, the highest portion of rural parents is doing discriminating against their daughter in the field of education as compared to urban areas parents (Chingtham and Guite 2017).

2.1.13 Structure of patriarchy

Furthermore, structure of patriarchy (male dominancy in society) is another obstacle. Parents spend money on son education and believe that only a male child can earn money for the family (Jamal 2016). The condition of female education is alarming; even some people did not consider education mandatory for female. Thus, the male is dominant in society and their education ratio is also higher than female (Mustafa et al. 2016). Adrienne Rich argued that male dominancy and the power structure is the main reason of subordination of girls/women by boys/men. Gender-based violence and marginalization of the female is

still present in the education system and society (Arnot 2007; Weiner 1986).

The Patriarchal structure of the family, strict traditional rules in society create hindrance in the way of gender-equal opportunity in education. There has a huge gap in opportunities provided to males and females. The majority of women are illiterate as a result of sex discrimination, poverty, inadequate education facilities and incomplete education. Most the girls' are at home to look after of children and help with mothers in the household chore. Boys' are enjoyed the superior position, and the family consider them breadwinner, and provide them any sort of education facility. Different reports show that there is still an explicit gap between the girls' and boys' access to education. The gender inequality in schooling is still wider (Sahin 2014).

The preference of parents over their children affects education of sons and daughters. For son parents get ready to enroll him in a good school in the context of fee, while for the daughter they don't think like son. Tribal people are less likely to send their daughter to school as compared with their son (Buzdar et al. 2011). Parents intend toward boys' education and consider them as a breadwinner and head of family, ignore girls' education. Parents are not interested in daughter education, because they know that they will go to another home after marriage. Thus, there is no need to invest in daughter education (Naveed 2018; Hannum et al. 2009; Herz et al. 2006; Purewal and Hashmi 2015; UNESCO 2015).

Most people consider females inferior than males. They did not want to spend on female education and consider it waste of income (Purewal and Hashmi, 2015; John 2017). Furthermore, Pakistan ranked in gender parity 148 out of 149 countries, reported by World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap 2018. Restrictions on teenage girls' mobility limit their opportunities for education and work outside of the home (UNICEF 2019). Despite of this, children under 5 years of age are a big hurdle in female education because they have the responsibilities to take care of young siblings (Glick and Sahn 2000).

The landlordism and tribal system did not permit their tenants to provide education for their girls. *Tharparkar* is one of the backward regions of Sindh province and shares a multi-ethnic culture, where girls' education has always a big challenge. Local leaders and community members always ignored girls' education (UNESCO 2018). Moreover, in *ex-Fata Malikism* and *Khanism* is a big impediment in female education such as they have made schools in such areas to which neither common people access and nor they want to equip common people with the ornament of knowledge (Naveed 2018).

2.1.14 Unfavourable condition

In those countries which have been miserably affected due to war, the number of girls' out of schools is double that of those girls who are living in non-affected countries (UNICEF 2020). The most vulnerable people in Afghanistan are girls' students (UNICEF Annual Report 2019). Those

students who are living in lawless areas and disorganized communities have low access to education as compared to those students who are living in an organized and peaceful society (Bowen and Bowen 1999).

However, in disorganized families, children have no proper guidance and influence from their elder side to motivate them toward education. Besides this, war, disease, disaster, and climate change were impediments in the way of children education. After the outbreak of the covid-19 large numbers of children from different corners of the world were deprived of the right to education. More than 200 nations worldwide, including Pakistan have closed their educational institutions to avoid the spread of the covid-19 pandemic (UNICEF Annual Report 2019; Ullah and Ali 2021). Moreover, due to drone attacks by the United States and military operations by the Pakistani army against militants in the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) till 2014, have been displaced about three million people and the majority of schools were destroyed. In the district Bajaur total 85 of schools was destroyed including 12 girls schools. Similarly, in district Mohmand 109 schools were wrecked and among them 28 girls schools. 9 schools have declared closed in Bajaur because of militancy (Naveed 2018; Usman and khan 2015).

Likewise, the war on terror affected both schools and school-going children and compelled them to live at home. Due to lack of attendance majority of children failed exams and abandoned further going to school. The Schools of girls were attacked to discourage and create fear among

people who send their girls to schools. Before the war on terror there were government, private, *Madrassas* and community schools. But after the military operation, the number of *Madrassas* decreased. On the account of the operation most of teachers transferred themselves to safe places or they were forced to leave their services (UNDP 2013). Moreover, there are other obstacles in female education including housing instability, mobility, family changing home and or change residence etc. Sometimes school-going children can disturb and they leave their schooling (Wallac 2017). The newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have suffered due to extreme war, poverty and Unemployment (Jamal 2016).

2.2 Part two: Theoretical underpinning of the study

This section outlines theoretical debate and argument around the issue of gender and education. Broadly speaking the study is informed by five decades long worldwide feminists' intellectual, social and political struggle for social equality and justice in education (see Ullah, 2013). In gathering together leading discourses and theoretical debate feminists' educational agendas on social justice and greater social equality in education, I have attempted to inform my study and analysis with the discourses of "Equality of Opportunity in Education" and "Equity of Opportunities in Education". These popular discourses have enabled me to make critical analysis of the contemporary thinking, belief and

practices about girls' education beyond the primary level in the specific context of Bajaur district KP.

Equality of opportunities means equalizing existing school resources and educational benefits, rather than giving favour only to girls/women or boys/ men education. Having observed and experienced vivid inequalities and discrimination in education, feminists, in the 1970s, argued that equality of opportunity in education is essential as every student (boys/girls) need the same opportunity and access to education (Weiner 1986; Wrigley 1995, p.50). Feminists argue that gender inequality in education is directly related to the subordination of girls/women by boys/men in society (Weiner 1986; Ullah 2013). Without equal education, especially equal education opportunities, equal subject choices, experiences, or qualifications, girls/women as social groups have over the years been subordinated and subjected to inferior status in society (Weiner 1986; Dalal 2015). Without education, women will not be able to fully explore themselves and act as equal citizens who exercise their power to participate in different field and processes in society (Byrne 1983). Drawing the equality of opportunity in education, I have tried to know the parents aspiration and the available opportunities for girls' education in the study's local. With this lens of equality of education, I have attempted to know whether guardians believe in equal access and type of education for boys and girls. Do guardians intend and struggle for providing equal education to their girls?

It is, however, important to stress here that achieving greater social justice in education for girls in the social cultural environment of Bajaur will be a gigantic task in the near future. My own experience as a resident of the district and my understanding of feminists' stance on gender equity-males and females have different needs and policy makers should ensure that both females and males are provided adequate opportunities learn in equitable learning environments. It was this understanding of "Equity in Education" that pushed me to engage the equity in education debate for the informed analysis of my data. "Equity of Opportunities in Education" means promoting fairness in education for all. And gender equity is the eradication of sex-role stereotyping and sex prejudice from the educational process, providing equal educational opportunity and an environment free from discrimination based on sex. Empower individuals to design their life choice and careers (Hilke and Gerhard 1994). According to Andres, gender equity means the fair treatment of both boys' and girls' concerning their relevant needs. Gender equity refers to "freedom from favouritism based on gender" (Roya 2017; Soika 2020; Billters and Foxwell 1990). According to Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency (INEE) Gender equity means being fair to girls/women and boys/men. Similarly, gender equity focuses on those individuals who are in a disadvantaged position in education and other fields of life. It focuses to provide a fair share for those who have few shares on the basis of need. Equity leads to equality (INEE 2010). Equity

in education with reference to gender means promoting fairness in education and challenging the existing stereotypes and sexism that have historically limited girls' talents and access to education. Drawing on this I have attempted to know whether girls in Bajaur have conducive, free and fair environment to pursue their education without fear of harassment, discrimination and threat of honour.

Chapter No 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter outlined a comprehensive literature review. This chapter presents the methodological canons and procedures adopted and employed for conducting this study. This study was carried out under the broader interpretive research paradigm. I intended to explore the prevailing belief and guardians' decisions regarding girls' education beyond primary level in the newly merged district Bajaur. The interpretive qualitative research approach was adopted to have deeper understanding of guardians' attitude about girls' education. It was attempted to know how they think about girls' education beyond the primary level. The forthcoming sections explain the methodological decisions and steps in details.

3.1 The universe of the study

This study was carried out in Bajaur, the newly merged district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The total population of the district is 10, 93,684. Females are 49.056% and males are 50.943% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistic {PBS} 2017). There are a total of 653 schools (423 for boys and 230 for girls) in the District. At the primary school level, the total net enrolment ratio is 58%. The net enrollment ratio for girls and boys is 32% and 83% respectively. The enrollment ratio at the secondary level is 18% (5% girls and 37% boys) (Annual Statistical Report 2018).

3.2 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was both literate and illiterate male guardians aged groups 18 and above. The respondents consisted of different socio-economic backgrounds such as farmers, labor, teachers, students, doctors, and *Ulema* (religious scholar). It is important to mention here that all respondents were males who had daughters and sisters of school-going age or they either attended or attending primary schools. I have also interviewed guardians whose daughters and sisters were not studying. The diversity of my respondents enabled me to collect rich responses.

3.3 Sampling and sample size

I used non-probability sampling technique in this study. In non-probability sampling, I employed purposive sampling technique for the selection of study respondents. This is also called judgmental sampling. Purposive sampling is used in field research to identify particular cases for an in-depth investigation and gaining deeper insight into a specific issue (Neuman 2015). I used this sampling because I wanted to explore guardians' decisions about girls' education beyond the primary level. Only men guardians were focused for inclusion in the study. It is important to mention here that women are rarely guardians in the socio-economic and socio-cultural context of Bajaur. Rather, they are guarded. It was also not possible to interact with women in the specific social and cultural context of Bajaur.

Bajaur is divided into two sub-division; *Khar* and *Nawagai*. I collected data from both sub-divisions. The sample size was fixed at 18 when reached the point of saturation in my data. The saturation point in data is a standard method of fixing sample size in qualitative research. Thus, data collection continued until I reached the point where no new information was coming from respondents.

3.4 Tool and method of data collection

The tool of data collection for the study was an interview guide. An interview guide as a tool generally use for qualitative study. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions. This enabled me to have rich data. The interview guide gave me the freedom to ask probing questions from the respondents (Flick 2018).

The data was collected in face-to-face in-depth interview with respondents. The data collection processes involved visits to the respondents in their homes and markets. At the very outset, I introduced myself to the respondents. I, then, ensured them that the data is purely for academic purposes and their information will be confidential. After a brief introduction, I interviewed them in *Pashto* language because all of the people are Pashtun. I used a voice recorder for recording interviews with the permission of respondents. Each interview took 15 to 30 minutes. All interviews took place in a friendly and productive environment.

3.5 Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed in lines with thematic analysis technique. Thematic analysis is carried out with a variety of approaches. However, I followed the six common steps of thematic analysis. These include: familiarization with data, coding my data. Generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally write up. The data analysis process went through the following steps: I repeatedly listened all interviews and transcribed these into elaborated plain text. I then familiarized myself with my data. I coded data. Similar codes were clubbed together for generating broader and specific themes. After a thorough review of the broader themes, I came up with more specific themes. I titled each theme to know that what every theme is all about. Last but not the least I presented relevant respondents under each theme and supported them with similar findings from other studies where needed. Each theme is discussed and debated with the help of relevant theoretical reviews and empirical reviews.

3.6 Ethical concerns

The study followed ethical protocol of social sciences research. I tried to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. I have avoided any harm to the respondents, whether physical, mental, or emotional. I followed the dress code of the research universe and did not look like an outsider. I took permission from the respondents before taking an in-depth interview and recording. I have tried my level best to

avoid all sorts of academic fraud. I have strictly followed academic norms and integrity standards.

Chapter No. 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented methodology of the study. The current chapter presents the study findings. I attempted to discuss the prevailing belief about girls' education and factors affecting girls' education beyond primary level in district Bajaur. I have tried to present, compare and contrast my study findings with the existing body of knowledge for exploring similarities and differences. I have presented, interpreted and discussed the findings with the help of theoretical and empirical lens from the existing body of knowledge on the issue, broader speaking feminist insight regarding justice in education.

4.2 Guardians' opinion's about girls' education beyond primary level

The findings of the present study reveal that majority of the study respondents were in favour of girls' education beyond primary level. A considerable number of respondents argued that girls' education is important for the betterment of society. One of the respondents said: "girls' education is mandatory for the uplift of society." Another respondent stated that: "we are in favour of girls' education. We want our girls to become doctors and teachers to serve the people of our area". Another respondent argued:

"girls' education is indispensable for the development of society. Education of both boys and girls is mandatory for a progressive and civilized society. We cannot compare a literate and an illiterate girl as we cannot compare light and darkness. An

educated girl can manage her responsibility well after marriage”.

(Extract from the interviews).

The above responses illustrated that majority of the respondents were in favour of post-primary girls’ education. These findings are similar to the findings of Raymond (2021) study. Raymond argued that boys and girls should be provided equal education to contribute to their family in their respective capacities. Similar findings were given by Ullah et al. (2021). According to them, most of the respondents were positive toward girls’ education and demanded for educational facilities in order to promote girls education in district Bajaur.

4.3 Veil and girls’ education: a barrier or gateway toward girls’ education

4.3.1 *Purdah* as a gateway to girls’ education beyond primary level

Our respondents argued that *Purdah* is not a barrier in the way of girls’ education. Many of the respondents asserted that they want to educate their girls but lack of educational institutions and transport make this difficult for them. A similar response was given by other respondents that we are in favor of girls’ education beyond primary level but girls should be in *Purdah*. One of the respondents argued that: “girls should be educated up to Master level but they must be in *Purdah* according to the Instruction of Islam”.

One of the common responses from the data is summarized as:

We believe that when a girl wants to get education beyond primary level, she can but in *purdah*. *Purdah* is mandatory for her. If a girl goes to school without *Purdah* then people criticize her parents. Because when an adult girl moves outside from her home without *Purdah*, she challenges principle of Islam and our *Pashtun* culture.

A similar response came from another respondent who said:

When girls go to school in proper *Purdah* (wearing veil), people (parents) have no issue. Although, people are passing negative comments because no one in our society is without blame. Another respondent asserted that: “after primary school, there is no school in the vicinity of our area and people do not allow their girls to go to another village for education because they want to educate their girls according to their cultural norms”. The above responses reveal that people are not against girls’ education but they want to educate their girls according to their socio-cultural norms. *Purdah* is not obstacle in the way of girls’ education if education ‘facilities are available for girls within their socio-cultural context. Thus, *Purdah* is not an obstacle in the way of girls’ education. Similar findings were given by Sultana et al. (2009). They asserted that *Purdah* does not hinder females’ access to education. Majority of the respondents stated that they could carry on education and job while observing *Purdah*. They like that their women wear *Purdah* due to various reasons such as religion and culture norms. Similarly, Asadullah

et al. (2012) found that women observe *Purdah* due to personal security, cultural and religious practice. Number of girls stated that we get education by observing *Purdah*. So, *Purdah* is not a major barrier to girls' education if education facilities are available for girls.

4.3.2 Veil as a barrier to girls education beyond primary level

Although few in number, but important to mention that some respondents reported *purdah* as a barrier. Veil is one of the main hindrances in the way of girl's education. For example, Ambreen and Mohyuddin (2014) illustrated that veil create a barrier in access to girl's education. Similarly, Bangash et al. (2019) found that veil is the basic part of *Pashtun* culture. Family honor and dignity are linked to women's *Purdah*. Therefore, veil has influence on female education. Likewise, Alam (2009) asserted that *Purdah* has been commonly associated with women seclusion. The dignity and respect of families link to its women who use *Purdah*. Similarly, a small number of the study respondents were not in favour of female education beyond primary level due to violation of *Purdah*. They just send their girls up to primary level and after that they consider girls' education as immoral. One of the respondents stated: "I don't like to educate my daughters beyond primary level because it is immoral when an adult girl go outside of her home". Another respondent asserted: "we don't like girls' education beyond primary level due to violation of *Purdah*".

Another respondent stated: “negative comments practice in our tribal culture. People discuss about a girl when she get post-primary education and link girls’ education with vulgarity and elopement”. Another respondent said: “we feel dishonoured when someone passes negative remarks about our girls when they go outside of their homes”.

The above responses show that in tribal area people discourage parents of school going girls’ by passing negative comments against their girls who get education. Similar findings were also reported by Yakubova (2020). He asserted that it is a disgrace to the family when negative comments are circulated around a girls’ name.

Another respondent argued: “*purdah* is a barrier in girls’ education. Without adequate transport facilities, guardians do not allow their girls to go to school”. The above findings illustrated that some people of district Bajaur are still reluctant to send their girls to school beyond primary level. They considered it a violation of their family, culture and religion norms. Most of the people emphasized that girls should be in proper *Purdah* while going out. Similar findings have given by Ullah (2017). He argued that the existing system of *Purdah* contributes to illiteracy of girls. It restricts girls’ mobility, access to education and work outside home.

4.4 Guardians’ perceptions about boys and girls similar type of education

This study found that most of the respondents want equal level of education for both boys and girls. Majority of the study respondents

asserted that girls and boys should get same level of education. However, lack of educational institutions and other facilities, girls cannot get the same education as boys and drop out from school at primary level. One of the respondents stated: “both boys and girls need equal education. Most of girls complete their school up to primary level. Then quit their school due to the shortage of middle and high school”.

Another respondent said: “I support boys and girls. They both should be given equal opportunity in education”. One of the respondents asserted: “girls can get similar level of education. When provide them proper arrangement of *Purdah* and availability of educational facilities”.

A Masjid *Immam* (religious scholar) stated:

Boys’ and girls’ are the servant of Allah and education is necessary for both. I am in favour of equal education both for boys and girls. But girls should be educated by the way which has been explained in the Holy Quran and *Hadith*. If there is provision of *Purdah* in education institutions then girls can get education up to graduation.

The above responses reveal that majority of the data respondents were not against girls’ similar level of education provided in their locality. However, people don’t allow their girls to get education in other cities. They believed that girls can get education like boys but for girls, there is need of educational institutions in their locality where girls can easily access according to their cultural norm. Similar findings were given by

Hashmi (2015). According to them, girls can carry the burden of family dignity and respect. People don't want to allow their girls to get education when their honour is threatened.

Conversely, few of the respondents were not in favour of equal education. They asserted that girls cannot get similar level of education because girls will become member of other family after getting married. They considered investment on girls' education is a liability rather than asset. Similarly, one of the respondents stated: "girls' are the members of other family. Therefore, they do not need similar level of education". Another respondent argued: "we don't want to provide school education to girls'. The school education is not our education. It is western education which imposed on us."

The above responses reveal that some of the guardians did not want similar education for both boys and girls. Similar findings were illustrated by different researchers. For example, Chingtham and Guite (2017) found that guardians have unfavourable attitudes toward girls' equal level of education. They preferred boys' education instead of girls and consider boys are the breadwinner of family. However, the attitudes of urban parents are more positive as compared to rural parents about similar level of education (Onoyase 2018).

The above responses are closely linked to the discourses of "equality of opportunity" and "equity of opportunity" in education. The "equality of opportunity" in education refers to equalizing the existing educational

institutions and transport facilities rather than to favour boys' or girls' education. But girls have been deprived from equal educational opportunity in district Bajaur. Therefore, there are no equal educational institutions and transport facilities for girls like boys. On the other hand, equity of opportunity in education for girls is a serious issue. Most of schools are not accessible to girls due to which parents don't allow them to get education. Some of the respondents did not believe in the provision of education to girls like boys. They think girls are inferior to them and believe that they should not be given education on the same line as boys.

4.5 Guardians favour education up to secondary school for both boys and girls

Some of the study respondents were in favour of girls' education only up to matriculation. They do not expect job from girls. They consider male as breadwinner. They believed that higher education is not mandatory for girls. They have presented various reasons to buttress their argument. One of the respondents stated: "matriculation is enough for a girl. In our *Pashtun* culture, we expect job only from sons. Therefore, we do not support girls' higher education". Similarly, another respondent argued: "matriculation is necessary for girls in order to know about their social responsibilities".

Apart from this, another respondent asserted: "girls need to get education up to matriculation in order to read and understand the instruction of Islam". The above findings show that people want to educate their girls in

order to differentiate between right and wrong and can read Islamic books. Furthermore, one respondent stated: “when we get rid from girls’ early education issues then they can get higher education”. It means that girls’ education related issue are existed in district Bajaur due to which girls could not get higher education. Similar findings were also given by Naveed (2018). He identified that majority of female have no access to higher education due to lack of educational facilities and some of the people think that higher education for girls is not necessary.

The above findings led me to engage argument of equality of opportunity in education. Equality of opportunities in education stresses equal education for all irrespective of boys and girls or transgender. Feminists argue that gender inequality in education is directly related to the general subordination of girls/women by boys/men. Some of the study respondents did not support girls’ higher education. They focus on boys’ education more instead of girls. Therefore, girls are unable to achieve equal level of education due to male dominancy in a society.

4.6 Guardians supported higher education both for boys and girls

Majority of the study respondents were in favour of girls’ and boys’ higher education. They asserted that higher education is necessary for both boys and girls. Those who afford their children education expenses need to provide higher education to them. One of the respondents stated: “Higher education is necessary for every person. Both boys and girls need to get education until they achieve their goal.” Another respondent

said “both boys and girls must get education till master”. Another respondent asserted: “girls related problem increases and its solution is impossible without highly educated girls”. Another respondent argued that: “both boys and girls are required to get education up to Bachelor level. Through higher education people can learn a lot about their society. Educated girls can contribute financially to their family”.

The above findings reveal that most of respondents supported higher education for their boys and girls. They believed that higher education is mandatory for every person in order to perform their responsibility in a polite way and contribute to the socio-economic development. Similarly, Mustafa et al. (2016) highlighted that educated female not only play a significant role in socio-economic development of a society but also have an effective role in society and family. Sperling & Winthrop (2015) stated that education for female is indispensable because an educated girl can contribute to family income, avoid early marriage, control birth rate and socialize children in a better way. Moreover, Educated female have more sense of control on their lives and have greater control and understanding on family assets as compared to illiterate female (Shaukat 2016).

Another respondent asserted: “I want girls to become doctors and teachers. Because most of the female teachers of our schools are not local they come from other cities such as Swat, *Malakand*, *Mardan*, *Charsada*”. Similarly, another respondent narrated: “girls who want to

get job they need to get higher education”. The above responses show that people were in supported of higher education for their children. But most of females school teachers belong to the settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who cannot perform their responsibility regularly and remained absent from school frequently. Similar findings were given by Naveed (2018), whose study revealed that absenteeism of female teaching staff is a serious issue in female education. Majority of them are out of station and frequently remained absent.

4.7 Tradition and traditional mind set as a barrier to girls’ education

This study found traditional mind set is one of the main barriers in the way of girls’ education. The study findings reveal that many study respondents believed that people with traditional mind set don’t allow girls to get education. People discourage parents whose daughters are going to schools. One of the respondents stated: “elder people are still not supporting the idea that an adult girl should go outside of her home”. Another respondent reported: “young girls are not considered good when they go to school after primary level”. One of the respondents stated: “I am ashamed to send my daughter to education beyond primary level”.

One of the respondents argued:

There is no such environment to support girls’ education. My daughter was very fond of education. After completion of her primary schooling, she was going to distanced middle school without transportation. Being a poor man, my daughter was

wearing his elder brother shoes when she was going to school. People in my neighborhood and relative told me that now your daughter is mature and still she is going to school without transport. Don't send your daughter to school it is not safe. That's why she dropped out of school in the seventh class.

The above responses reveal that people in peripheries of tribal areas have still traditional mindset and negative attitude toward girls' education. Some of the elder and illiterate people are still against girls' education. Similar findings were given by Onoyase (2018). He found that parents believed that females did not need secondary education. Due to traditional norms, females have limited access to education. Khan (2017) asserted that tradition mind set and rigid social values adversely affected female education. The people of district Bajaur have confined their girls in the four walls of home. Similar findings were revealed by Jamal (2015). He stated that parents of the school going girls sometime face resistance from their brothers and neighbour as well. Most of them consider girls education as a violation of their *Pashtunwali* (code of conduct). They are gossiping and passing negative comment against school going girls. Mehmood et al. (2018) indentified that the tribal structure and traditional norms have influenced parents' to restrict their girls from higher education. Girls are not encouraged and supported by their family for education.

The above findings allow me to put these findings in the broader framework of gender equality of opportunity in education. Same like the above responses, the theory state that gender inequality in education still exists in society. There is a huge gap in opportunities provided to male and female. Females are giving less preference than males from accesses to and chances of completing education by their family and society. Patriarchal structure of family, strict traditions create hindrance in the way of gender equal opportunity in education. That is why people less encourages the parents of school going girls which result in illiteracy of girls.

4.8 Community response toward girls' education

Some of the study respondents have told that people responses are positive and they want girls' education beyond primary level. They argued that in the past people were conservative and rigid toward girls' education. They, however, are now aware of the importance of girls' education and support girls, education. One of the respondents argued: "people responses toward girls' education are positive. They are now aware and know the importance of education". Another respondent argued: "most of girls from our area are going to school but no one considers them bad". Similar response came from another respondent who argued: "people have become financially stable. Girls are going to school and people are arranging transport facilities for them". Another

respondent stated: “my sister has already engaged but still my father is supporting her to get education”.

A male private school principal argued:

In our village *Qazafi* people do not talk bad about girls’ education beyond primary level. People don’t like those girls who are not getting education. Contrary to them, people in the peripheries might be against girls’ education. But in the settled areas, like *Qazafi, Khar and Anayat kalay*, people don’t create barriers in way of girls’ education.

The findings of the above respondents show that parents’ attitude toward girls’ education has changed considerably and they want to educate their girls. People are feeling proud and consider girls’ education mandatory. They are appreciating those girls who are getting post-primary education. It is important to mention here that lack of educational institutions and transport facilities for girls’ are not barriers in the settled area of the district. But some guardians are still reluctant to educate girls. It was inferred that, impediments for girls’ education exist in the periphery areas. These, however, are not different from other research finding as similar findings were showed by Hussain, Zulfiqar and Ullah (2020). They reported that lack of awareness, guardians’ gender base discrimination, political factors socio-cultural norms and access to education are the major’s barriers to girls’ education in rural areas of Pakistan.

The crux of responses from field data is summarized here:

The study's respondents expressed positive opinion about girls' education beyond primary level. Most of the guardian supported and promoted girls education. Nevertheless, a difference between settle and periphery areas exists. In the settle areas, support toward girls' education beyond primary level is greater than rural area. In the rural areas some of the guardians were against girls' education. (Extract from interviews).

4.9 Girls education: the influence of culture

The cultural and social environment of any society has significant impact on girls' education. Conducive and supportive socio-cultural environment and availability of education facilities for girls results in increasing ratio of girls education while in a socio-cultural setting where girls education is discouraged and have lack of educational institutions and transport facilities often lead to lower levels of girls education (Ullah etc. 2019; Ullah et al. 2021). My study findings buttress the above studies. Most of the respondents were of the view that their socio-cultural environment is not a major barrier to girls' education in Bajaur. They argued that their culture is promoting girls post-primary education but the major factors are lack of girls' educational facilities in the areas. Most of the respondents stated that people do not take culture as a serious factor in the context of girls' education. One of the respondents stated: "our culture is promoting female education. Because girls related issues

increase and for the solution of these problems education for girls is mandatory”. Another respondent argued: “the present generation do not take their culture seriously in the context of girls’ education and they are ambitious to see their girls educated”. A similar response came from another respondent who argued: “culture is not an obstacle at all, but the main issue is lack of educational institutions and adequate transport facilities”.

A Masjid *Immam* stated:

Pashtu is two types; one which is according to the Islamic injunctions and one is against of Islamic principles such as on 8 March women raised their voice that my body my choice “*mera jasm mery marze*” which is completely against the instruction of Islam and Pashto as well. However, if girls demand for their rights such as we need school and college, it is their due right and we support it wholeheartedly. Because Islam gives their rights and Almighty Allah have commanded in the Holy Qur’an that both men and women have equal rights.

A veterinary assistant argued: “our culture is not a barrier in the way of girls’ education. In my home one of my nieces has done intermediate and also got degree from *Wifaqul Madarris* (Board of religious institutions) and currently searching for job”.

Another respondent argued:

If government provides educational facilities for girls in the socio-cultural context of our areas then I think people will happily send girls to school than preventing them. Our culture is not a barrier in the way for girls' education provided that they get educational opportunities in line with our cultural norms.

The above findings illustrated that majority of the guardians were not against girls education beyond primary level. They wanted to educate girls according to the socio-cultural norms. They very explicitly stated that *Pashtun* cultural was once a barrier, but not now. People now support girls' education. Majority of the respondents argued that cultural and environment is not a major obstacle toward girls' post-primary education provided that they get it within the framework of normative structure of the area. Similar findings have also explored by Ullah et al. (2021). They argued that socio-cultural environment is not a major barrier in the way of school going girls but the majors factors which affecting girls education in district Bajaur are lack of girls educational institutions, lack of female teaching staff, inadequate transport system and poverty.

The responses of the majority are concluded here:

Our cultural is not a barrier. Female related issues are increasing day by day. Female in district Bajaur face different issues (such as health, children socialization, etc) and its solution are impossible without education of girls. Education of girls is need of the time in our tribal areas. Most of female are illiterate and they don't facilitate their

parents financially and even unable to socialize their children. Now a day tribal culture promotes girls education because people become aware and they realize the bad impact of their culture on girls' rights. People favour to educate their girls according to their socio-cultural environment. (Extract from interviews).

On the other side, a few of the study respondents believed that socio-culture as an impediment toward school going girls in the newly merged district Bajaur. They stated that people considered female as a servant but not provide education to them. Parents think that grown-up girls move outside from home is an appropriate. One of the respondents stated: "our culture is a barrier. In *Pashtunwali* females have to live in the four walls of their home". Another respondent argued: "most of the elder of our areas are not in favour of girls' education". Similar response came from another respondent who asserted: "*pardah* as a part of our culture thus some of the people don't favour allowing of girls outside from their home". Another respondent stated: "*pashtun* culture does not promote girls education". Another respondent argued:

Cultural is a barrier in the way of girls' education. It is inculcated in our mind by elders that adult girls go to school is the violation of our culture norms, thus we don't allow girl to go outside from home. Moreover, when a girl engaged then we don't want to educate her because we consider her the member of other family.

Another respondent stated: “in our area, people consider inappropriate, passing negative comments and discourage guardians when a girl goes to a distance school beyond primary level”. Similar response came from another respondent who argued: “in my area the main obstacle toward girls’ education is culture. Because there is no issue of educational institutions, transport, etc. However, those guardians who do not educate their girls are due to socio-cultural norms”.

The above study responses reveal that socio-cultural create hurdle in the way of girls’ education. There is less support of community for school going girls. Some of the people consider girls’ education beyond primary level against their cultural norms. They believed that girls’ education beyond primary level is inappropriate and consider it is the violation of tribal culture. Some people link girls school education to vulgarity and threat for family dignity and respect that is why they consider better to keep girls inside home instead to go outside from home. Similarly, Gauthier (2018) found that Socio-cultural norms limit females’ access to education. Culture is a hindrance in the way of school going girls. Most of the tribal culture is rigid and create barrier toward girls’ education (Amir 2015). Moreover, the male member of family is not willing to send their girls to school due to the unsafe social environment. Girls self respect and honour is very important for family (Yakubova 2020).

A same response came from another respondent, who argued:

In my area, people behave with girls like a servant. Girls do different task inside and outside home. Girls perform household responsibilities such as, cooking, washing clothes, take care of children and outside of home, they work in field i.e., harvesting of crop, collect food for animal, bring woods for fire, bringing water, etc due to which girls are unable to get education.

The above study responses reveal that in some parts of district Bajaur people don't consider female is a human being. People exploit girls from their basic rights including education. In Bajaur girls perform most of household chore as well as field work. Outside from home female perform different work such as bring grass and woods for cattle and fire respectively. Female perform different task in society due to which they are unable to get education. Similar findings were given by Naz et al (2020). They stated that women perform double responsibility in community. Managing household task and working in the field. Furthermore, female treated differently than boys. Females have excluded from decision making and deprived from right of education (Arif 2011).

4.10 Poverty as barrier to girls' education beyond primary level

Poverty is a serious issue which disables people financially to educate their children. Girls easily drop out from school due to lack of financial assistance (Mueni, Njeru and Mburugu 2020). The study findings are in line with the findings of the cited study. The study findings reveal that poverty is a major issue in district Bajaur. Most of the people are poor

and cannot afford educational expenditure of their daughters/sisters. Girls after primary school are forced by financial constraint to quit their education. One of the respondents stated: “poverty is the main reason. I am poor and cannot afford the educational expenditure even though I am unable to give Rs.10 rupee to buy a notebook and writing pen for my children”. Similar response came from another respondent who argued: “poverty is a major issue. Most of the people are poor and cannot afford girls transport expenses.

Another respondent asserted:

People in my village are poor and do not pay children transportation fee. I am a labour. I earn Rs.300 per day. My sons were going to school and college. I paid them Rs.100 per day. Even I was unable to afford the expenses of sons’ education. Children education is out of the capacity for a labour man.

The above responses show that majority of people lack financial capacity to afford their children’s education expenses. They expressed that they could hardly fulfil their basic needs of life i.e., food, clothing and shelter and have no resources to bear the expenses of their daughters’ education. This situation reflects hurdles in the way of girls’ education is an already male dominated social structure, where girls education is not considered worth of investment and people find these kinds of excuses for girls who do not get education beyond primary level. It is also true to a greater extent that these tribal areas lack of basic educational facilities but only

considering lack of educational infrastructure for not sending girls to schools is beyond comprehension. Similar, findings were given by John (2017). He argued that Children living in poor family easily drop out from school. Due to financial problem the cost of children education were considered a Burdon on family. Poverty is one of the major obstacles in the way of girls' education beyond primary education, in district Bajaur (Naveed 2018).

4.11 Lack of educational institutions and transport facilities for girls

Lack of educational institutions and transport facilities were reported as the major barriers to girls' education beyond primary level in district Bajaur. Majority of the respondents told that unavailability of middle and high schools in the area are seriously discouraging girls' education. Majority of middle and high schools are situated in the settled areas which are inaccessible to rural girls. Therefore, highest numbers of girls quit their education after primary schooling. One of the respondents asserted: "lack of educational institutions is a serious problem. School is situated in a long distance from my village due to which girls quit their education after primary level". Similar response came from another respondent who argued: "there is no middle, high school and college for girls". Another respondent said: "my sister studied primary school, but quit her education because there is no nearby middle or high school in our area".

Lack of schools beyond primary level is one of the main hurdles in the way of girls' education. It was repeatedly pointed out by respondents. The main reason is the lack of educational institutions beyond primary school in the area. Small girls attend school without supervision of their male. However, the grown up girls are not allowed to go out without proper security and supervision of their men.

The above responses reveal that most of girls get education up to primary level but after that they quit their education due to the unavailability of middle and high schools in the nearby vicinity. These findings buttress the previous findings most of the rural areas girls lack access post-primary education due to lack of educational institutions (Naz et al. 2020). Similarly another respondent stated:

People don't allow their girls to go to a distance school. People consider it is an embarrassment and think that someone can tease or harass them on the way to school. Because girls' related incidents have risen in our area.

The above findings indicate that some people are reluctant in sending their girls to a distant school. They fear harassment of their girls which may cause disrespect to the family. Similarly, Bangash et al. (2019) found that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa girls have limited access to higher education due to family honour. Same opinions were expressed by another respondent. Who argued: "high school is at distance from us. Lack of transport facility makes it difficult for girls to get education

beyond primary level. I am poor and can't afford daughter transport expenses". Another respondent stated: "one main reason is long distance of schools in our village. Schools are about 10 to 15 Kilo meters (km) in distance. Other reason is transport issue. We have no special transport facilities for girls' education".

The above responses reveal that the main obstacles in the way of girls' education are lack of nearby schools and transport facilities. It is important to mention here that neither people allow their girls to continue their education by using private transport nor they afford special car for them. Similar findings were given by Shahzad (2017). He stated that lack of transport facility; time wasting in long travelling and costly transport has badly affected girls' education. Moreover, Okafor, Ifeoma (2020) found that the low participation of girls in education is due to economic factors.

The above findings allow me to put these findings in the broader framework of gender equality of opportunity and equity of opportunity in education. The equality of opportunity in education argues that male and female are treated differently. Gender inequality still exists in access to education. Girls are deprived from equal access to education as compared to boys' due to which the ratio of girls' education is less than boys. In district Bajaur girls are deprived from equal right of education. They have less opportunity of getting education as compared to boys. There is lack of girls' schools and transport facilities. Similarly, the equity of

opportunity in education stresses fairly treatment for all irrespective of boys and girls. Same like the above study findings the theory says that girls are always less privilege in education. Girls and women are mostly deprived from equity of opportunity in access to education than boys and men. Majority of girls schools are situated at distance. Lack of transport facility creates barrier in the way of girls' education. Most of people do not allow their girls for distanced school due to violation of their cultural norms. However, this issue is not link to boys' education because they can go to school on feet or by public transport.

4.12 Early marriages

Early marriage is one of historical factor that led to girls' low literacy and other societal issue. In most of the developing countries, early marriage has practiced which deprive girls of their education right. When a girl gets married at an early age, she faces different health, financial and social issues. Early marriage leads to girls' illiteracy, maternity death, and domestic violence (Mughal and Awan 2020). Female don't need to get education .They have to manage their home and take care of their children (Holcamp 2009). The consequence of child marriage more affect girls in Pakistan because girls generally drop out from primary/secondary school and face with psychological and sexual violence (Ahmed et al. 2013; Naveed et al. 2012). The study findings are in line with the findings of the cited studies. A few number of study respondents argued that early marriage is commonly practice in district Bajaur. Parents

consider daughter a financial burden when they reached to maturity stage. Most of the parents don't prefer to educate their daughters instated of sons. One of the respondents stated: "early marriage is a main reason in our area. Those girls who don't get education get married at the age of 15 and above". Another respondent argued: "early marriage is commonly practice, because there is lack of educational opportunities for girls". Most of girls quit school after primary education and parents get their married early as possible.

4.13 Parental illiteracy

The study found that most of guardians do not aware of the importance of girls' education. They only believed on girls' household responsibility. Illiterate parents don't take the issue of girls' education seriously. One of the respondents argued: "most of the parents in our areas are illiterate and they don't know how important education is for a girl". Similar response came from another respondent who asserted: "our guardians are illiterate. They don't aware from the socialization of their children". Another respondent argued: "most of parents are illiterate and poor. They don't take girls education is a serious matter because they think that school education is only necessary for boys, not for girls".

The above responses reveal that illiterate parents are also one of the factors of low ratio of girls' education. They have lack of awareness about girls' education. Similar findings have also highlighted by Chingtham and Guite (2017). They found that educated parents better

understand the necessity of girls' education as compared with illiterate parents. Moreover, illiterate parents have less interested and engagement with education which is a greater risk of drop out their children from school as compared to literate parents' children (Sarker et al. 2019). Parental education has positive impact their children education. Educated parents can provide good education facilities to their children than illiterate parents (Shoukat et al. 2013).

4.14 Guardians' perspective towards investment on girls' education

The majority of the study respondents asserted that education is the basic right both for daughters and sons. Spending on daughters' education does not mean to expect financial return from them. Education brings awareness and educated girls socialize well their children and after marriage they manage their household responsibilities in a good way. One of the respondents argued: "I never thought that my daughter will earn money for me. Education doesn't mean to earn money. After getting married, an educated mother can better train their children". Another respondent asserted: "we don't expect from daughters education, but educated daughters can financially contribute to their family after marriage". Similar response came from another respondent who argued: "in our area people don't think that investment on girls' education is wasting of money". Likewise, another respondent asserted: "I educate my daughter because her life will be comfortable after get marriage". Another respondent said: "my sister has engaged but my father is

willingly sent her to college in order to have comfortable life after marriage”. Another respondent stated: “I educate my children because education is light. I feel proud when my daughters get education”.

Another respondent argued:

I think that our daughters have also right. Tomorrow they will be a mother and will need financial support to afford their children educational expenditure. I do not consider daughters’ education as a burden and liability.

Similar response came from another respondent who stated:

Spending income on children education is the duty of parents. I believed that daughter is the member of other family, but an educated daughter will pass her life easy and comfortable and will have respect after marriage. And she will perform her responsibility in a polite way.

The above responses illustrate that majority of guardians favour education both for both daughters and sons. Most of the guardians were claimed that spending income on daughters/sisters education is not wastage of money. They considered the education of girls positive and spending income their education is own responsibility without any financial return. Some of the parents provide education to their daughters even after getting engagement. They believed that educated female can pass their life comfortable and easily manage household responsibility.

A village *Imam* (Religious scholar) argued in the following way:

Allah says in the Holy Quran that a man will rule over a woman. Education is the basic right of men and women, but it is against the principle of Islam to expect from women to earn money after getting education and become a doctor or teacher. What Allah has decided is the best. Allah has decided that a man will be ruler, he will earn money and a woman serves the house. Allah Almighty has made the house a place of great honour for women. However, girls can get education and do a job when there is surety of the provision of *Purdah*.

The above responses reveal that spending income on girls' education is the responsibility of parents. But it is inappropriate to expect financially return from girls after getting education. Men are responsible for supporting their women.

On the other side, sometime gender inequality start from family when parents treat differently with sons and daughters. This unequal behaviour of parents with children leads girls limit access to education. Parents from underprivileged parts of society could not afford their children education expenses. They only focus on sons' education and daughters train for households' chores (Kaur and Kaur 2020). Investment on girls' education is temporary and there have less chance of income return to invest on daughter education (Onoyase 2018). This concept is very common found on poor family background (Jan and Sharma 2019). My study findings are in line with the above studies. The responses of the study reveals that

few of the respondents did not expect that investment on daughters' education can return us like we invest on sons' education. They think that daughters/sisters do not need higher education because they don't expect job from them. It is against their culture that a girl gets education and do job. Therefore, the tribal people are thinking that investment on girls' education is meaningless. One of the respondents argued: "we more focus on boys' education instead of girls and consider girls are member of other family". Another respondent asserted: "I don't favour the job of a girl. We believed on the earning of boys not girls". Similar response came from another respondent who argued: "it is reality; the tribal people think that there is no need to invest on girls' education".

The above responses illustrate that some of the guardians had negative attitude toward girls' education. Parents don't take girls education is a serious issue. They only focus on boys education because they know sons/brothers is the permanent member of family and consider investment on sons' education is good instead of daughters' education.

4.15 Guardians opinions about responsible factors for low literacy of girls in district Bajaur

4.15.1 Government is responsible

Girls' education is one of the dismaying issues in the newly merged districts, including Bajaur. There are various factors related to girls' education which unable girls to continue their education after primary

level. The study found that lack of educational institutions beyond primary level as well as inadequate transport facilities is major barrier in the way of girls' education. Majority of the study respondents were unanimously expressed that the main responsible for low literacy of girls' educations in district Bajaur is government authorities. The government authorities do not focus seriously on the worse situation of girls' education. The region has been deprived from all basic right since the inception of Pakistan. One of the respondents stated: "the government is responsible, because there is no basic educational facilities, including institutions and transportation". Another respondent said: "lack of government attention to girls' education is the main factor of low literacy of girls. People want to educate girls but unavailability of educational facilities is a key obstacle in the way of girls' education". Similar response came from another respondent who stated: "girls' education is not the priority of the government. There is one middle school but it has been closed since its inception". Another respondent narrated:

Solely responsible is the government because people are poor and do not afford expenses of girls education. Government does not facilitate us in term of school, transport facility and scholarship for poor girls".

The above responses reveal that one side the people of Bajaur are poor and schools are out of access from the majority girls. Primary schools are available to some level but after that there is shortage of middle and high

schools. Majority of people considered government authorities responsible for the scarce educational facilities in the areas. Another respondent said: “government is liable, our area is backward we need schools, road and transport facilities”. The above responses show that the major barriers toward girls’ education are the lack of federal and provincial government attention. A male health technician reported:

The government and concerned authorities of the district Bajaur such as Members of National Assembly (MNAs), Member of Provincial Assembly (MPAs), District Education Officer (EDO), etc are responsible of the low literacy of girls education. They don’t focus on the serious issue of our areas. Even some girls go to distance school but after couple of months and they quit their school and their guardian also discourage due to lack of basic educational facilities. The fact is that the government Girls Middle School *Mano Dehari* (GGMSM) was constructed in 2009-2010, but since its inception it has been closed. No government authority takes step to functional it.

Similar response came from another respondent:

We have politically exploited by our politician. They do not focus on education issues. For, instance, the Engineer Shaukat Ullah ex-KP governor did not contribute in the promotion of girls education. Similarly, others MNAs and MPAs have struggled and

installed schools and college in their own land which is sometime an unfeasible position for majority of girls.

Another respondent argued: “*Maliks* (elders of society) and MPAs build schools in their own land so the schools often out of access of the rest of communities”. Similar findings have also given by Naveed (2018). He found that in ex-Fata *Malikism* and *Khanism* is big impediment in the way of female education. They have made schools in such areas to which neither common people access and nor they want to equip common people with the ornament of knowledge. On the basis of number of government schools the situation in rural is worse as compared to main cities. Secondary schools for girls are less than boys and college is scarce especially for female (Human Rights Watch 2018).

4.15.2 Reluctant parents and unfavourable social surrounding are responsible

Parents play significant role in their children education. But the conservative and traditional mind set parents do not allow girls to get education. Even some people did not consider education mandatory for female (Mustafa et al. 2016). Tribal people are less likely to send their daughters to school as compared to their son (Buzdar et al. 2011). Similarly, the study found that some of the respondents asserted that parents have a main role in the low literacy rate of girls’ education. They further argued that there are some guardians who can afford education expenses of their children but they are reluctant to educate them.

However, in the settled areas there is no shortage of post-primary schools but some parents do not allow their daughters to get education. One of the respondents stated: “parents are responsible because some of them financially stable but do not provide education to their girls”. Another respondent said: “parents are liable, because schools are available but they don’t allow their girls to go to school”.

Furthermore, another respondent argued: “the main responsible is our surrounding because we do not feel secure our girls on the way to school. People pass negative comments against school going girls. We are very serious about girls’ honour”. Another respondent stated “in my area the main responsible factor is the conservative mind set people. They themselves do not educate their girls and also discourage other people”. The above study responses reveal that social environment also matter when a girl go to school. Number of schools is situated in a non-feasible position which is very tricky for girls to continue education. Guardians feel insecure their girls on the way to school. Therefore, guardians become hesitant to allow their girls to go to school. Moreover, some of the people do not educate their education but discourage other parents of school going girls.

4.16 Strategy for promoting girls’ education

The study found that it is the duty of government to provide schools in every village so that girls can go to school without any fear. The findings of the study revealed that for distanced schools, government should

ensure special transport facilities. Those schools which have lack of qualified teaching staff and have unhygienic condition must be solved. For poor and needy girls, government should ensure scholarship. Furthermore, the findings reveal that parents should need to change their attitude towards girls' education. They should educate their girls like boys.

The responses of majority respondents summarized here:

Government should open schools up to matriculation in every village. We need good institutions and qualified teaching staff. Most of the teachers are unable to teach current syllabus. In most of schools, there is lack of teaching staff. Government should hire new teachers. Due to insufficient teaching staff in school quality work is not provided to children. Government should ensure transport facilities for girls where schools are in distance. There is shortage of primary, middle and secondary schools. Furthermore, community base awareness regarding girls' education is necessary. Most of people have no proper information about the importance of girls' education. The erstwhile Fata is an embryonic region and most of the people were kept aside from education by the state authority. Most of people still don't consider girls education is a serious issue due to unawareness regarding girls' education. The young people should avoid standing on the way where girls go to school. We need to make our surrounding safe and secure for girls education.

In sum up, the responses of the study reveal that majority of guardians were supported education for boys and girls beyond primary level and wanted to educate their daughters similar like sons. The main barriers in the way of girls' post-primary education are lack of educational institutions, inadequate transport facilities, tradition and traditional mind set of people and poverty. The study recommended that the surety of educational facilities for girls beyond primary level in their locality can improve the literacy rate of girls.

Chapter No. 5

**CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

5.1 Summary of the argument

There is a gap between boys' and girls' access to education in developed and developing countries, including Pakistan. A number of studies in different socio-cultural background have identified this lacuna between boys and girls in access to education beyond primary level (Yakubova 2020; Evans and Yuan 2019; World Population Review 2020; Wadhwa 2019; Yassin 2020). The gender disparity in access to education beyond primary level in the socio-cultural context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in general and in the newly merged districts in particular is very dismaying (Ullah 2020; Purewal and Hashmi 2015; Ullah et al 2021; Mughal et al. 2019). This research study was conducted in the socio-cultural context of the newly merged district Bajaur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to explore the prevailing beliefs and guardians' decisions regarding girls' education beyond primary level. The findings of the study revealed many impediments and opportunities with reference to girls' post-primary education. Some of the major barriers, unpacked by this study, are lack of educational institutions, insufficient transport facilities, traditional mind set and poverty in the area. The opportunities which the study findings indentified for girls' education in district Bajaur are: majority of the respondents were in favour of boys and girls education beyond primary level. Moreover, the findings show that most of the respondents did not consider veil as a hindrance in the way of girls' education. They argued that girls can get education according to their socio-cultural context. The

socio-cultural environment is in favor of girls' education. In short, the majority of respondents were supporting girls' post-primary education in district Bajaur but lack of educational facilities makes it difficult for their girls to get education beyond primary level.

5.2 Reflections on themes

The present study explored and examined the prevailing belief about girls' education and the factors affecting girls' education beyond primary level in district Bajaur. The study identified various opportunities and barriers toward girls' post-primary education. The study findings reveal that majority of the respondents were in support of girls education beyond primary level. It is pertinent to mention here that most of the guardians consider *Purdah* as a gateway toward girls' education rather than a barrier. They argued that girls can get post-primary education in line with normative requirement of the area. Moreover, a considerable number of respondents were in favour of both boys and girls access to equal education. They stated that girls can get the same education as that of boys. Interestingly, the findings of the study show that majority of the respondents were supporting higher education for boys and girls. They argued that those who can afford the education expenses of their girls can provide them education up to master level. These responses reflect that the socio-cultural environment of the area allows post-primary girls education provided that it is given in lines with the cultural norms and values. Considerable number of respondents neither considers spending

income on girls' education a burden nor wastage of money. The major factor which prevents girls from education is the lack of education facilities for girls in the area.

Moreover, traditional mind set was pointed out by some respondents as one of the major obstacles in the way of girls' education beyond primary level in newly merged district Bajaur. Some of the respondents revealed that people with traditional and conservative mind don't allow their girls to get education. They even condemn other people who send their girls to school. The study findings reveal that education facilities are available for girls in the settled areas of district Bajaur. Despite the availability of education facilities in the urban areas of the district some guardians do not send their girls to school beyond primary level. Furthermore, the study findings illustrated that poverty is also a serious issue in Bajaur. Most of the guardians are poor and cannot afford their daughters/sisters education expenditure. Apart from this, lack of transport facilities in the district in general and that in the rural part of the district in particular is big impediments in the way of girls' education. Similarly, it was asserted that lack of middle and high schools in the area prevent most girls from post-primary education. These barriers are seriously discouraging girls' education. Majority of middle and high schools are situated in the settled areas and rural girls have no access to these institutions. It is indispensable to mention here that neither people allow their girls to continue their education by using private transport nor they can afford

special car for them. The main responsible factors which guardians considered for low literacy of girls education beyond primary level are government authorities and reluctant parents. They argued that neither government authorities focus on the issue of girls' education, nor the reluctant guardians struggle for the promotion of girls' education beyond primary level.

5.3 Relating findings with previous studies

A considerable number of studies on girls' education beyond primary level have been conducted in different socio-cultural context (see literature review). This study, in the context of newly merged district of KP, buttresses the findings of most of the existing studies and also further the existing scholarship on the issue. The present study found out that lack of educational institutions and inadequate transport facilities for girls' education as the key issues in district Bajaur. Majority of the respondents revealed that unavailability of middle and high schools in the area are seriously discouraging girls' education. Most of middle and high schools are situated in the settled areas which are inaccessible to rural girls. Therefore, highest numbers of girls quit their education after primary schooling. Most of girls get education up to primary level but after that they quit their education due to the unavailability of middle and high schools in the nearby area. Similarly, the previous studies highlighted that most of the rural areas girls have lack of access to post-primary education due to the shortage of education institutions and

transport facilities (Naz et al. 2020; Buzdar et al. 2011; Naveed 2018). Apart from this, lack of females teaching staff in most of girls' schools are also discouraging girls to continue their education. Likewise, lack of transport facilities; time wasting in long travelling and costly transport has badly affected girls' education (Shahzad 2017; Jamal 2016; John 2007).

Furthermore, this study findings show that traditional mind set has created barriers in the way of girls' education. People with traditional mind set don't allow girls to get education. They are discouraging those parents whose daughters go to schools. People in peripheries of tribal areas have still traditional mindset and negative attitude toward girls' education. Some of the elder and illiterate people are still against girls' education. Likewise, most of the previous studies identified that some of the parents' don't believe on girls' secondary education. Traditional mind set and rigid social values have adversely affected female education. The people of district Bajaur have confined their girls in the four walls of their home. The tribal structure and traditional norms have been influenced parents' attitude to restrict their girls from higher education (Onoyase 2018; Khan 2017; Mehmood et al 2018).

Moreover, the study findings illustrated that poverty is a major issue in district Bajaur. Most of the people are poor and cannot afford the education expenditure of their daughters/sisters. They expressed that they could hardly fulfil their basic needs of life i.e., food, clothing and shelter

and have no resources to bear the expenses of their daughters' education. Similarly, the previous studies buttress to the present study findings. Poverty is a serious issue due to which people unable to educate their children. Girls easily drop out from school because of lack of financial assistance (Mueni, Njeru and Mburugu 2020; Yadav and Yadav 2016; Mustafa et al. 2016).

In addition to this, the study findings show that most of the guardians in district Bajaur are illiterate. They do not aware the importance of girls' education. They only believe on girls' household responsibility. Illiterate parents don't take the issue of girls' education seriously. Likewise, (Chingtham and Guite 2017; Sarker et al. 2019) identified that illiterate parents were less interested in education of their children which is a greater risk of drop out their children from school as compared to literate parents' children. The educated guardians contribute highly to the enrollment of their children in schools and decrease the possibility of their drop out from school (Lawal et al. 2020; Rehman and Rafi 2018).

On the other side, some of the study findings are also in contrast with the findings of previous studies about post-primary girls' education. The major variation of the study findings with the previous studies are under: most of the respondents revealed that Veil (*pardah*) is not a major barrier in the way of girls' education. They considered *Purdah* as a gateway toward post-primary girls' education provided that their daughters and sisters provided education in the nearby areas. Most of the guardians do

not believe *purdah* restrict girls from school. They argued that girls can get education while observing *purdah*. In contrary, the previous studies found that veil (*purdah*) is one of the key barriers in the way of girls' post-primary education (Ambreen and Mohyuddin 2014; Ullah 2017). *Purdah* is the basic part of *Pashtun* culture and family honour and dignity link to women's *Purdah*. Therefore, it creates barriers in access to girls' education (Bangash et al. 2019; Alam 2009). Most of the previous studies identified *purdah* unlike this study as a hurdle in the way of post-primary education.

Furthermore, guardians' positive decisions regarding girls education is an important factor for the promotion of girls' education. The present study's findings are in contrast with the previous studies. This study's findings show support for an equal level of education for boys and girls provided that girls' education is provided in their locality. Respondents considered girls' education immensely important for the betterment of society. Most of the study respondents were staunch supporters of girls' higher education. They were impatiently waiting for girls' higher education in order to perform their responsibility and contribute to the socio-economic development. Conversely, the previous study found that most parents have unfavourable attitude towards post-primary girls' education. They considered spending on girls' education as temporary and burden on their family (Onoyase 2018; Purewal and Hashmi 2015). On the other side, most of the study findings reflected that the guardians

supported post-primary girls' educations for boys and girls provided that girls' education is provided in their respective areas. Respondents do not deem spending on girls educations as wastage of money.

In addition to this, majority of the study respondents asserted that education is the basic right for daughters and sons. Spending on daughters' education does not mean to expect financial return from them. Most of the guardians supported girls' education and claimed that spending income on daughters/sisters education is considered their prime responsibility without any financial return. They stated that it is inappropriate to expect the returning of income from girls after getting education. Men are responsible for supporting their women. Conversely, the previous studies identified that guardians believed investment on girls' education is temporary and there has less chance of income return to invest on daughters education (Kaur and Kaur 2020; Onoyase 2018; Herz et al. 2006).

Similarly, the cultural and social environment of any society has significant impact on girls' education. Conducive environment and availability of education facilities for girls results in increasing ratio of girls' education. It is relevant to mention here that the socio-cultural environment of district Bajaur is supportive for girls' education. Majority of the study respondents asserted that their socio-cultural environment is not a major barrier to girls' education. They argued that their culture is promoting girls post-primary education but the major factors are the lack

of girls' education facilities in the area. The findings revealed that *Pashtun* cultural was once a barrier to girls' education, but not now. Most of the respondents argued that cultural and environment is not a major obstacle toward girls' post-primary education provided that they can get it within the framework of normative structure of the area. In conversely, the previous studies found out that the socio-cultural norms limit females' access to education. Most of the tribal culture is rigid and create barriers toward girls' education (Gauthier 2018; Amir 2015). Parents' don't want to educate their children after primary level. They believed that after primary schooling girls are not considered appropriate to move outside of their homes. The ratio of girls education in Pakistan is low, because most of people don't consider education mandatory for females (Awan and Malik 2020; Mustafa et al. 2016).

5.4 Theoretical Implication

The findings of the study buttress the equity of opportunity argument (see theoretical framework). The core belief of equity of opportunity believers is that boys and girls should be fairly treated and they should be provided access and opportunities as per their need (Roya 2017; Soika 2020). As stressed in theoretical framework and unpacked by the data, girls in Bajaur district need to be provided education as per their needs within their normalized existing socio-cultural environments. As stressed by the study respondents that girls need to be provided transportation, availability of middle and high school in the adjacent areas.

Similarly, our respondents unanimously asserted that girls must be provided education within the existing standards of *purdah* which encompasses decent transportation from doorsteps to school and school boundary walls, and toilet facilities in school. Thus, stresses for the special needs of girls vividly reflect and buttress the “gender equity in education” argument. Gender equity in education focuses on special needs and requirements of education for girls who are disadvantaged. Gender equity in education will lead to gender equality in education (INEE 2010).

5.5 limitations of the study and future research

The limitation of this research includes a small sample size the study was only limited to one district Bajaur. The researcher only focused on male prevailing belief and decisions about their girls’ education beyond primary level in the socio-cultural context of Bajaur because female were not allowed to give information to any strange in the socio-cultural context of district Bajaur.

Further research can be carried out on:

- a) The research can be extended to other districts of ex-fata;
- b) Quantitative study requires to knowing the guardian decision about their girls education beyond primary school level;
- c) Female students’ views need to be explored.

5.6 Conclusion

The review of literature and this study's findings enable me to conclude that post-primary girls' education is an issue in all developing countries, including Pakistan. The issue of girls' education beyond primary level is existed in KP as well as the newly merged district of Bajaur. The existing empirical studies show multiple barriers in the way of girls' education; these are included, unfavourable guardians decisions toward girls' education, *Purdah* (veil), socio-cultural hindrance, tradition and traditional mind set, lack of education facilities for girls' education beyond primary level, parental education, poverty, and early marriage. However, some of the study findings alike with the previous studies that the major and key barriers in the way of girls' education beyond primary level are lack of girls' education institutions, inadequate transport facilities in the area, tradition and traditional mind set and poverty. Majority of the study respondents supported girls' higher education but the main impediment is lack of post-primary education facilities in the area.

Nevertheless, most of the study findings are contrasting with the studies of existent literature about post-primary girls' education. The study findings revealed several opportunities to post-primary girls' education. Most of the respondents have favourable attitude toward boys and girls education beyond primary level. They supported equal level of education for boys and girls. Majority of the respondents argued *Purdah* is a

gateway toward girls' education provided that girls provided education in their socio-cultural context of the area. Moreover, most of the respondents asserted that the socio-cultural environment of district Bajaur is promoting and supporting girls' education. In the past cultural was once a barriers but currently people don't take cultural seriously in the issue of girls' education. In a nutshell, most of the study respondents were not against post-primary girls' education on condition that education facilities provided in their nearby vicinity.

5.7 Recommendations

Most of the responses reveal positive attitude toward girls' post-primary education provided that it is within the framework of local culture and the nearby vicinity. Keeping in view the study findings following suggestions are forwarded for improving girls' education beyond primary level in the area.

- Middle and high schools should to be constructed and accessible to all girls in their nearby vicinity.
- The government should provide special transport facilities to all girls' distant schools.
- Government should hire qualified female teaching staff and ensure the attendance of all teachers.
- Government should grant special scholarships for poor and needy girls' students.

- Government and non-government organizations should create community-based awareness about girls' education.
- Last but not the least; reluctant parents should be motivated through media and community mobilization to change their attitude toward girls' education.

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**GUARDIANS' DECISIONS ABOUT GIRLS' EDUCATION BEYOND PRIMARY
LEVEL IN THE NEWLY MERGED DISTRICT BAJAUR OF KHYBER
PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN**

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Demographic information

1. Age of the respondents.....
2. Education.....
3. Profession/occupation.....
4. Per month income.....
5. Number of children.....
6. Number of sons.....
7. Number of daughters.....
8. Son(s) Education details.....
9. Daughter (s) education.....

How do you perceive the schooling of your sister/daughter beyond primary level?	
Why education for girls is not necessary beyond primary level?	
Should boys and girls get similar type of education? Explain	

How much education is necessary for both boys and girls?	
What is the response of people in your surrounding towards your daughter or sister education?	
How do you see your culture with reference to female education? Is it preventing or promoting female education	
How you understand the reasons and issues due to which you are not willing to educate your girls?	
How do you see sons and daughters education in terms of financial return?	
Who is responsible for the low literacy of girls' education in your area?	
How can girls education be promoted as the similar as boys?	