

Pakistan: Education & Women (2015)

Pakistan: Education & Women (2015), a film produced by Wajiha Raza Rizvi evaluates the stark difference in female literacy ratio in Pakistan. The film addresses the issues about 75% lapse in female literacy and portrays the negative discriminative attitude of Pakistani society towards women's education in Pakistan, through different personal stories of the subjects especially in rural areas and interviews of the education experts. *Pakistan: Education & Women* covers the causes of illiteracy explosion in Pakistan since Partition and millennium development goal for achieving 100% literacy rate in Pakistan by 2015. The beauty of this film is that it based on the real stories and issues and authenticity in the form of experimental reality of the education workers and experts. The film points to the stark difference in the number of boys and girls enrolled at schools. In fact there are considerably more boys' schools in Pakistan than girls' school, in many distant rural areas even there is no school designed for girls. (Sadaf, Sadiq & Kiran, 2016) states that even according to article-37 & 25-A of the constitution of Pakistan getting education is a basic right of every female citizen and responsibility of the state. Pakistan is an Islamic republic of Pakistan and status of a female is excellent in Islam and teaching of Islam starts with "Iqra" (Read). This Islamic teaching is for all without any gender discrimination. *Pakistan: Education & Women* reviews the life of women in Pakistan especially in distant rural areas of four provinces of Pakistan such as Goth Kando Khan Bozdar, Jamshoro, Manchar lake (Sindh), Kili Abdullah (Balochistan), Mandi Faizabad (Punjab) and Mera Kachorri KPK filmed the real picture of women's life. *Pakistan: Education & Women* highlights the difficulties and problems such as gender discrimination, family norms, feudal system, poverty, lack of authority, lack of facilities and lack of security to move freely which are faced by the females of Pakistan to get even basic education. Pakistan has gone through illiteracy explosion

from 18.64 % to 55.24 % since 1951-2010. This increase ratio is due to failure of Pakistan even no to provide basic education to 25 million children. This film is based on the different stories of struggling and desirous women to acquire education.

Aik darwaza khollo gi

[I will open one door]

Pakistan: Women & Education starts with these ironical lyrics of rhyme by of a little girl, these words are ray of hope and belief towards the women's education and a step to cross the obstacles on the way of getting education.

Pakistan: Women & Education pictured the struggling journey of a courageous girl Bakhtawar of Goth Kando Khan Bozdar Sindh to get education. She belongs to a feudal family, when she exposed her strong wish to get education; she was badly opposed by her father and her real uncle, because there was only one boy's school in the village. Her father said, "We are feudal. You will bring bad name to us". But, Bakhtawar was very passionate to get education. So, in front of her determination her father had to surrender and let her go to the only one boy's school in the village. But another challenge was in front of her to fulfill her dream to get education because her uncle was not in the favor of this decision; he put lots of hurdles in front of her. As shown in the film, Boys of the village and her cousin on the instruction of her uncle used to throw stones on her whenever she went to school and boys were watching her through windows of the classroom and mocking at her to down her morale both physically and mentally because it was unusual for male supremacy to accept a girl to be such powerful to make her own decisions. But Bakhtawar endured all miseries with courage and did not leave hope and completed her studies till 10 grades. She set an example for the other girls of the village by opening adult

literacy center in Goth Kando Khan Bozdar Sindh. Robinson (2004) stated that males dominate on women in decision making and women are never allowed to make decisions. They have no authority to make important decisions even related to their own lives and gender discrimination is very common. Akhter (2011) reported that Pakistani women face violence at different phases in life. . In addition, women have no security to move freely in society. There is dependency on husband after marriage, and no respect for women who raise voice for justice especially in rural areas of Pakistan. This negativity of society damages personality of women and affects their mental and physical health which destroys their creative and productive abilities too.

Pakistan: Women & Education reports another story of illiteracy. Zakia and her four sisters, even her two brothers belong to Miskeenabad, Islamabad never ever visited school. She told that no one ever enrolled in school from her families. In fact in Pakistan low literacy rate is due to of low female education attainment. Though, Pakistan is struggling to alleviate this educational lapse through public and private means. Many women are also contributing in this effort to spread education in distant areas of Pakistan. Poverty & lack of resources is also a big hurdled in the progress of education for both genders but girls suffer more (Nasreen & Razaqat 2013).

Pakistan :Women & Education highlighted that big factor of illiteracy explosion in Pakistan is unavailability of girls' school as Rozina explained that due to rigid family traditions, her sisters never allowed to visit school because it was the only boy's school at her village Kando Khan Bozdar. Therefore she was not also allowed to go and eventually she had to kill her desire. Many people thinks that exposure and literacy could be harmful for the girls as they could violate the family norms and values. They do not like idea to sit boys and girls together in a class room as community schools were designed for co-education due to limited resources as Jamil Afridi from Maira Kachori KP said that they do not like to send their girls to boys school because in

Pakistan male-female premarital connection is not acceptable due to social values, purity and security issues of females. Noureen & Awan (2011) described that people are so rigid towards their customs in Pakistan specially in distant rural areas they presume that if girls will meet boys they could defame their families by running away with boys for court marriages. They prefer to marry their girls at very early age to resolve the issue of purity and security as explained by Muhammad Ismail. (Ali & Bustamante, 2008) reported that dominance of male in all matters is root cause of failure of female empowerment. *Pakistan: Women & Education* highlighted that violent attack on schools, economic issues, poverty and specially terrorism are also major causes to deprive females from their basic right of getting education. Dr Anar Gul interviewed in the film said that we are not against female education but due to limited resources and poverty, it is preferred to spend money to educate boys rather than girls because it is believed that males can only be earning hand and support of the family and can return back double of their expense by earning. The destruction of schools by Talibaan to vanquish girls' basic right to get education. As in October 2012 Malala Yousafzai was shot by Taliban to raise voice for basic rights to get education. Nasira Habib an educationist said that female have more potential than men; they are more hardworking and sensitive. A comparison survey by The Citizen's Foundation in *Pakistan: Women & Education* highlights the reality by collecting facts from 940 schools in slum areas in Pakistan that promotion rate of females is higher to next class is higher than boys. If Pakistan wants to reduce dropout, should improve female literacy. Chaudhry, Chani and Pervaiz (2012) reviewed that Woman empowerment is a source of empowerment of whole society. Women empowerment provides new energy, vision, insights, benefiting their families and can improve quality of their life. So there is a need to take serious steps to improve literacy rate in

Pakistan and to achieve target of literacy in few years. In another scene girls are studying at the school, scene shows that girls are praying for their bright future

Zindagi Shama ki surat ho khudaya meri

[May Allah my life be like that of a candle]

This scene is juxtaposed to Nilopher Saeed's interview. She said that Islam supports the learning and getting education of human beings and acquiring knowledge is compulsory for all regardless of race, gender and social status. According to Islam education is necessary for all the Muslims. If males consider themselves superior they should prove it logically.

Conclusion

Statistics show that education in Pakistan have extensive gender inequalities Education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. Unfortunately Pakistan has a sizeable gap in female literacy. It is suggested that implementation of laws towards women education policy should be monitored strictly. Male persons should review their behavior towards women to eradicate the gender discrimination. Education enables the analytical and logical thinking which enhances the organizational, administrative and managerial skills among women who are actually builders of the nation. Women education is important to alleviate poverty as women are more than 50% of the population. Therefore, by promoting education among women, Pakistan can achieve social and human development. Education can be used as a tool to bring improvements in their life so that they can play their role towards the progress of society in a better way and can play a significant role for the development of society.

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