

UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON OF FEMALE STUDENTS' DROPPING OUT
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN RAHIM YAR
KHAN PAKISTAN

By

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Abstract

In Pakistan, the phenomenon of dropout is observed at all educational levels, spread in all areas of the country. The rate of dropout however is the highest for secondary education (grade 9 & 10) in both urban and rural areas. At this level, girls have a higher probability of dropping out before completing matriculation than their male counterparts. This research aims to explore the reasons behind their dropping out of secondary school in the city of Rahim Yar Khan from the perspectives of teachers, parents, and the dropouts themselves. Data was collected and analyzed on the reasons of dropouts form 10 (5 rural & 5 urban) from the government secondary schools in Rahim Yar Khan, a small town in Southern Punjab. The dropouts for the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 were considered. To gather data, face-to-face in-depth interviews were carried out. The sample comprised of 160 participants: 10 heads of schools, 50 teachers, 50 school dropouts, and 50 mothers of the dropouts. The study's findings reveal various factors contributing to dropout, including “pull-out”, “push-out”, and “policy-related elements”. Factors pulling students away from education include an unsupportive home learning atmosphere, disengagement from parents and students, failure during ninth grade, financial hardships, domestic chores, local employment conditions, and customs like early marriages and dowries. On the other hand, elements pushing them out involve school geographical locations, subpar learning resources and amenities, ineffective teaching methods, reliance on memorization, and educator-related harassment. Policy-related aspects consist of automated promotion strategies, inconsistent testing criteria at multiple stages, and burdening educators with responsibilities unrelated to instruction. This extensive study, which takes into account views from various stakeholders regarding student dropout, offers valuable insights for shaping public policies and launching effective interventions. This research proposes that in order to achieve the targets of Education for All (EFA) and to reduce the number of “out-of-school children” (OOSC), policies for dropout prevention are required