

The Role of Family Background in Shaping Educational Outcomes: An Empirical Analysis of High School Girls from Rural Areas of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how family background factors, including parental support, parental education, parental occupation, annual family income, and family size, influence the educational outcomes of high school girls in rural areas of the Ganderbal district in Kashmir. Employing an ex-post facto analysis, the researcher gathered primary data from a sample of 120 high school girls enrolled in six rural high schools within the Ganderbal district of Kashmir. This data was collected through the administration of a custom-made questionnaire. The gathered data was subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS software, utilizing both descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential techniques (chi-square test). The empirical analysis revealed that the educational outcomes of high school girls are significantly affected by parental education, parental support, and annual family income. However, parental occupation and family size were found to have no substantial influence on their educational outcomes. The findings suggest that parents should diversify their income sources to ensure adequate financial support for their daughter's education. Additionally, parents should actively motivate their daughters to excel academically. By addressing these factors and promoting greater awareness of the importance of girls' education, we can work towards a more equitable and prosperous future for the girls of rural Kashmir and, by extension, similar communities around the world.

Keywords: Family Background, Educational Outcomes, High School Education, Girl's Education, Rural Education.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Education serves as a pivotal mechanism that exerts influence not only on individual well-being and accomplishments but also on the quality and innovative potential of the workforce, ultimately shaping a nation's capacity for growth (Heckman, 2011). Education plays a multifaceted role, fostering character development, imparting moral values, expanding knowledge, and nurturing individual talents (Chowdhury, 2016). In the wake of the successful repeal of Article 370 of the Indian constitution, along with efforts to curb terrorism and separatism in Kashmir, there emerges a pressing need to address the deteriorating educational environment and infrastructure. This necessitates targeted interventions aimed at catalyzing both economic and ideological transformation within a society previously marked by conflict, moving it toward greater integration and alignment with the Union of India.

Moreover, the persistence of educational disparities, stemming from a scarcity of resources and uneven distribution, underscores the imperative for addressing and enhancing educational equity. While inequalities within the realm of education may find their roots in institutional structures, they are equally molded by disparities in opportunities and the capacities of families to engage with the educational process (Li & Qui, 2018). Consequently, the relationship between family background and educational outcomes is gaining significance as a crucial benchmark for evaluating educational equity or inequity. Against this backdrop, this study aspires to scrutinize the role of family background factors on the educational outcomes of girls in high school settings hailing from the rural regions of Kashmir.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of the literature incorporates several studies conducted by different researchers on the influence of family background and related factors on educational outcomes. Bouiri et al. (2022) found

that gender, extracurricular activities, and grade repetition significantly affect educational outcomes, while family social characteristics had a negligible correlation with it. Bartolome (2021) emphasized the significant influence of family background, including living conditions, family structure, parental involvement, education, finances, income, and family size, on children's educational outcomes. Liu (2021) highlighted the importance of stable family structures and high parental involvement in boosting educational outcomes. Das (2020) stressed the role of the family in preparing children for future responsibilities and the need for parental involvement in education, suggesting interventions to improve educational outcomes. Praveen & Shafeeq (2019) found that gender and place of residence play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of the home environment, which in turn affects educational outcomes. Li & Qui (2018) identified two trends: parents providing educational opportunities and support, and parental behavior and involvement influencing learning habits, with urban children's educational outcomes being more affected by family background compared to rural children. Overall, these studies collectively highlight the multifaceted relationship between family background and educational outcomes, emphasizing the importance of various factors such as gender, family structure, and parental involvement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an ex-post facto analysis to investigate the role of family background in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls. Ex-post facto analysis is a research method where the researcher cannot directly manipulate the independent variables but examines them in their natural state (Das, 2020). The study collected primary data from respondents in their home environments using a custom-made questionnaire with 23 items, covering topics like parental support, education, occupation, family income, and size, rated on a five-point Likert scale. The sample consisted of 120 female students randomly selected from six rural high schools in the Ganderbal district of Kashmir. Data was gathered over eight weeks, from mid-May 2023 till mid-July 2023. The analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi-square test), conducted using the SPSS program (version 23.0).

EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines the research questions and the corresponding hypotheses that directed this investigation, in addition to the analysis of empirical data and the presentation of statistical findings.

Research Question 1: What is the role of parental education in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls hailing from rural areas in Kashmir?

Table 1 – Descriptive Statistics on Parental education and its influence on educational outcomes

| S.No. | Items | Mean | SD | Remark |
|-------|---|------|------|--------|
| 1 | Educated parents always want their children to achieve academically better | 3.97 | 1.05 | Accept |
| 2 | Educated parents always want to provide learning resources to their children | 3.31 | 1.44 | Accept |
| 3 | Educated parents always encourage their children to achieve better to get admission in good University | 3.60 | 1.38 | Accept |
| 4 | Educated parents provide a better conducive home environment to their children for studies | 3.71 | 1.27 | Accept |
| 5 | Educated parents arrange for supportive teachers in weak subjects for their children | 3.43 | 1.52 | Accept |
| 6 | Educated parents guide their children in school assignments | 3.81 | 1.16 | Accept |
| 7 | Educated parents keep a watch on progress report of their children to know children's academic progress | 4.02 | 0.97 | Accept |

Hypothesis 1: Parental education has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir.

Table 2 – Chi-square Test Results

| Statistical Measures | Value | Df | Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 17.89 ^b | 1 | .000 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^a | 16.84 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 18.57 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .000 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 17.76 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Valid cases | 120 | | | | |

Implication: The Chi-square test result depicted in the above table ($\chi^2=17.89$; $p=.000$) evidenced that the parental education has a significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Idris et al. (2020), which showed similarly that high levels of parental education positively contribute to children's educational outcomes.

One of the most significant determinants of academic success among the surveyed high school girls was parental education. This aligns with previous research highlighting the positive influence of educated parents on their children's educational outcomes. Parents with higher levels of education tend to provide a conducive learning environment and can better support their children's academic pursuits. Thus, policymakers and educators must focus on strategies that promote parental education, particularly in rural areas where educational opportunities may be limited.

Research Question 2: What is the role of parental support in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls hailing from rural areas in Kashmir?

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics on Parental support and its influence on educational outcomes

| S.No. | Items | Mean | SD | Remark |
|-------|---|------|------|--------|
| 1 | Parents providing adequate educational resources makes their children achieve academically better | 4.04 | 0.95 | Accept |
| 2 | Parents reinforcing children for good educational performance makes children work hard to achieve academically better | 3.91 | 1.13 | Accept |
| 3 | Separate reading room and library at home motivate children to achieve academically better | 3.74 | 1.17 | Accept |
| 4 | When parents show a greater concern about their children's educational scores and performances, children are motivated to achieve academically better | 4.22 | 0.81 | Accept |
| 5 | When parents discuss academic career and courses of interest, their children feel happy and motivated | 3.98 | 1.09 | Accept |

Hypothesis 2: Parental support has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir.

Table 4 – Chi-square Test Results

| Statistical Measures | Value | Df | Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 18.39 ^b | 1 | .000 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^a | 16.84 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 18.76 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .000 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 18.15 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Valid cases | 120 | | | | |

Implication: The Chi-square test result depicted in the above table ($\chi^2=18.39$; $p=.000$) evidenced that the parental support has a significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from

rural areas of Kashmir. The finding of Blank (2016) supports this result narrating that students with high parental support showed higher educational outcomes in contrast to students with low parental support.

The study underscores the vital role of parental support in shaping educational outcomes. High school girls who received strong support from their parents exhibited better academic performance. This support can take various forms, including emotional encouragement, assistance with homework, and active involvement in their children's education. Encouraging parents to actively engage in their children's academic journey can yield positive results.

Research Question 3: What is the role of parental occupation in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls hailing from rural areas in Kashmir?

Table 5 – Descriptive Statistics on Parental occupation and its influence on educational outcomes

| S.No. | Items | Mean | SD | Remark |
|-------|---|------|------|--------|
| 1 | Parents indulged in prestigious occupation want their children to get involved in same occupation | 2.45 | 1.22 | Reject |
| 2 | Parents are so involved in their occupation that they cannot give time to their children for academic needs | 2.17 | 1.29 | Reject |
| 3 | Parents indulged in low-level occupation face difficulty in providing their children with educational resources | 2.29 | 1.30 | Reject |
| 4 | Parents indulged in low-level occupation face difficulty in enrolling their children into apprentice programs | 2.04 | 1.15 | Reject |

Hypothesis 3: Parental occupation has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir.

Table 6 – Chi-square Test Results

| Statistical Measures | Value | Df | Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 3.64 ^b | 1 | .057 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^a | 2.39 | 1 | .122 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 3.83 | 1 | .051 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .079 | .062 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 3.52 | 1 | .060 | | |
| Valid cases | 120 | | | | |

Implication: The Chi-square test result depicted in the above table ($\chi^2=3.64$; $p=.057$) evidenced that the parental occupation has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir. However, this finding is in contradiction to the conclusion made by the study of Shah & Hussain (2021) noting that parental occupation plays a significant role in shaping educational outcomes. This contradiction may arise due to the fact that their study was conducted in urban areas of Kashmir and this study is conducted in rural areas of Kashmir.

Research Question 4: What is the role of family size in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls hailing from rural areas in Kashmir?

Table 7 – Descriptive Statistics on Family Size and its influence on educational outcomes

| S.No. | Items | Mean | SD | Remark |
|-------|--|------|------|--------|
| 1 | In contrast to large size families, children from small size families enjoy more parental attention and support | 2.53 | 0.78 | Reject |
| 2 | In contrast to large size families, children from small size families have better facilities for educational resources | 2.08 | 0.91 | Reject |
| 3 | In contrast to large size families, children from small size families achieve academically better | 2.41 | 0.86 | Reject |

Hypothesis 4: Family size has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir.

Table 8 – Chi-square Test Results

| Statistical Measures | Value | Df | Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 2.92 ^b | 1 | .098 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^a | 2.33 | 1 | .104 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 2.61 | 1 | .099 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .065 | .052 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2.18 | 1 | .112 | | |
| Valid cases | 120 | | | | |

Implication: The Chi-square test result depicted in the above table ($\chi^2=2.92$; $p=.098$) evidenced that the family size has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir. The finding of Omeh (2010) supports this result narrating that family size has no significant role on the educational outcomes of students.

In contrast, the study found that parental occupation & family size have no significant influence on the educational outcomes of high school girls in rural Kashmir. This suggests that while parental occupation and family size may have indirect influences on a student's educational journey, their direct effects on educational outcomes are relatively limited. This insight highlights the importance of focusing on factors such as parental education and support as more immediate drivers of academic success.

Research Question 5: What is the role of annual family income in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls hailing from rural areas in Kashmir?

Table 9 – Descriptive Statistics on Family income and its influence on educational outcomes

| S.No. | Items | Mean | SD | Remark |
|-------|--|------|------|--------|
| 1 | Children from high-income family achieve academically better, in contrast to children from low-income family | 2.36 | 1.26 | Reject |
| 2 | Children from high-income family have better educational resources, in contrast to children from low-income family | 3.83 | 1.03 | Accept |
| 3 | Children from high-income family have higher career aspirations, in contrast to children from low-income family | 4.08 | 1.14 | Accept |
| 4 | Children from high-income family have better resources to train their children beyond higher secondary schools, in contrast to children from low-income family | 2.78 | 1.33 | Reject |

Hypothesis 5: Family income has no significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir.

Table 10 – Chi-square Test Results

| Statistical Measures | Value | Df | Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 139.58 ^b | 1 | .000 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^a | 128.03 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 88.47 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .000 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 137.33 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Valid cases | 120 | | | | |

Implication: The Chi-square test result depicted in the above table ($\chi^2=139.58$; $p=.000$) evidenced that the annual income of family has a significant influence in shaping the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of Kashmir. This finding is consistent with the study of Li & Qui (2018) narrating that family income has a significant role on the educational outcomes of students.

This finding indicates a significant association between annual family income and educational outcomes. Higher family income provides students with access to better educational resources, including

books, tutoring, and extracurricular activities. Therefore, it is imperative for families to diversify their income sources and allocate a portion of their resources to support their children's education, especially in rural areas where financial constraints can be pronounced.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The study analyzed the role of family background factors (represented by parental support, parental education, parental occupation, annual family income, and family size) on the educational outcomes of high school girls from rural areas of the Ganderbal district of Kashmir. Through an ex-post facto analysis and collection of primary data from 120 female students in six rural high schools, valuable insights into the complex interplay between family background and educational outcomes have been gained. The study identified parental education, parental support, and annual family income as influential factors, while parental occupation and family size showed no significant influence on educational outcomes.

This study underscores the need for increased awareness and advocacy surrounding girls' education in rural areas. Despite the demonstrated role of family background on educational outcomes, there may still exist gaps in parental awareness regarding the importance of education for their daughters. Policymakers and educational institutions must collaborate to launch initiatives that raise awareness about the benefits of educating girls and promote a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

These findings provide a foundation for targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the educational prospects of girls in rural areas. By addressing these factors and promoting greater awareness of the importance of girls' education, we can work towards a more equitable and prosperous future for the young women of rural Kashmir and, by extension, similar communities around the world.

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