

Exploring Nomadic Parents' Attitudes towards Education of Children in District Kasur

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Abstract

The present study was designed to explore nomadic parents' attitudes towards the education of their children. The study was ethnographic and qualitative in nature. The population of the study was nomadic families of Kasur district. Two families were selected through purposive sampling technique. Semi structured interview protocol and focus group discussions were conducted to collect the data. The common theme repeatedly found in nomads was that they had the desire for education especially for their next generation. Nomads were much enthusiastic to see their children particularly their daughters in schools. Majority of respondents reported that poverty was the main cause of the prevailing illiteracy.

Keywords: Nomadic Parents, Attitudes, Children Education

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Introduction

Providing education to nomads has globally been a challenge particularly in South Asian countries especially Pakistan. However, all over the world, a number of efforts have been made regarding nomads' education. Dyer (2010) has revealed that numerous studies and reports have shown that the achievements are far from the set targets.

According to Sharma (2011), the word "nomad" is identical to "Pastoralism", and driven from a Greek term meaning "to pasture". "Pastoralism", in turn, derives from the Latin term *pasture* and refers to raising livestock (p. 9).

Shagari, Bello, and Umar (2013) conducted a study in Africa and reported that children have no access to education; the nomadic children' education is influenced by their traditional values and parents' attitudes towards education. Nomadic children suffer due to familial issues which may include economic crisis or certain traditional values causing them to leave schools.

In South East Asia, in which Pakistan is also included, mostly nomads live in villages and remote areas which are far from the cities. Nomads are found in all the provinces of Pakistan, especially in northern and tribal zones, and similarly also in the suburbs of the federal capital, Islamabad. Some nomadic groups move from one place to another in search of festivals with children's portable games and they sell these, which becomes their source of income. They are a part of every land and yet a part of no land. Nomads are found all over the world (Choudhry & Bokharey, 2013).

Six percent of the total population in Afghanistan consists of nomads. In Pakistan, nomads are found especially in Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province. No exact data are available regarding nomads, and they are estimated to be in the millions (Kratli & Dyer, 2009).

Sharma (2011) conducted a study on South Asian nomads. The major objective was to examine nomads' access to schooling. The findings concluded that nomads have the desire to educate their children and seek ways to educate them. Numerous nomads have settled down nearby cities and towns for the purpose of getting the basic necessities like education.

Empirical studies by Abdi (2010), Anastasia and Teklemariam (2011), Nangurai (2007) and Sifuna (2005), have been conducted on nomadic education. All these studies revealed that nomads' education is not possible without the holistic nature of access to education. Frequently, old-style nomadic communities settle into a regular seasonal pattern of transhumance. They move a number of kilometers from one place to another. Particularly, nomadic girls' education gets affected due to their family movements from one place to another. The schools might be far from new living settings. These obstacles influence nomadic girls' education in most countries due to which most nomadic girls cannot get education. Nomadic parents consider that their daughters are more engaged in domestic tasks and income generating actions than sons, also nomadic parents are very sensitive about their daughters' safety; or some of the nomadic families favor sending boys to school rather than girls, where economic decisions are involved. Poverty is the primary reason limiting nomadic girls' involvement in education.

Financial deficiency plays a vital role when it originates in managing with direct costs such as extra school necessities, the price of books, school uniform, conveyance, and other expenditures. In most of the nomadic groups, when they face financial problems, girls are the first to be deprived of schooling. Decisions are made on the basis of gender; sending nomadic girls to schools are always affected by parents' financial position and social values. Girls are expected to perform domestic tasks as well as taking care of their younger brothers and sisters; all these restrictions may affect nomadic girls' education due to which illiteracy rate of girls is very high in Kenya (the Republic of Kenya, 2003).

Aliyu (2002) conducted a study and the findings of that study concluded that pastoralism is very vital means of earning livelihood among the Fulani nomads. The activities involve both men and women. Generally, men with taking care of the cattle and women perform in regard to the dairy production, and they sell the milk to earn a livelihood. Saad (2002) conducted a study and recommended that the opportunity of schooling should be given to nomadic Fulani girls as other girls have. Ezeomah (1997) reveals that providing the opportunities to nomadic women will improve their lifestyles and training should be given with the purpose of their children's education. Education has major objectives in which one of them is to provide skilled and knowledgeable individuals for the betterment of society. Well educated individuals are considered for the necessary performance of particular roles.

Mohammed (2002) conducts a study and concludes that nomadic girls have a desire for getting the education and recommends opportunities should be given to get education.

Financial related matters are behind in regard of low participation rate of nomadic children in formal schools. Imoudu (2004) conducted a study in Nigeria and revealed that numerous factors are the main cause of illiteracy of nomadic children like child labor as well as basic facilities of education are not available in nomads' settings. (Imoudu, 2004; Ngasike, 2011; Woldab, 2012). Ngasike (2011) conducts a study and the findings of that study reveal that educational guidance is much important at early childhood education.

Statement of the Problem

Nomads are found in every part of the world but in this modern era, millions of nomadic children are illiterate. Nomads form a significant population in the world that has greatly been disadvantaged in regard to educational matters.

Nomadic education has become one of the systems that attract worldwide consideration. Efforts have been made to educate them in the world. The present study was designed to explore nomadic parents' views regarding their children education in district Kasur.

The significance of the Study

The current study in its significance is multi-dimensional. The findings of this study would be helping teachers, educationists, and policymakers to recognize the significance of education for nomadic children. It will open gateways of research in the field of nomadic education. This study will add to literature review in this area of research. The findings of this current study will be helpful for stakeholders to recognize the nomadic parents' attitudes towards their children education.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. explore the attitudes of nomadic parents towards the education of their children.
2. explore gender differences in nomadic parents' attitudes towards children education.

Research Questions

Following were research questions of the study

1. What are the attitudes of nomadic parents towards the education of their children?
2. What are the gender differences in nomadic parents' attitudes towards children education?

Methodology

The current study was ethnographic and qualitative in nature. Multi-stage purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants from nomadic families of Kasur district. At the first stage, two families were selected for interviews. At the second stage, one group was selected for a focus group discussion consisting of seven children. Two instruments were used for the collection of data from the participants. Semi-structured interviews were taken from nomadic parents' views regarding their children education. Focus group discussion was conducted to investigate nomadic children's attitudes towards schooling. Interviews were conducted by the researcher personally. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Data collection and analysis procedure was conducted simultaneously. Critical listening and reading of the repeated ideas were done to determine themes. The recorded data were transcribed into the text after that thematic analysis was done.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The aim of this study was to explore nomadic parents' attitudes towards children education. The data were collected through group interviews, FGD (Focus Group Discussion) and recorded it. The recorded data were transcribed into the text after that thematic analysis was done. The following themes were constructed from the data.

Attitude towards Children Education

The common theme repeatedly found in nomads was that they have a desire for education particularly for the next generation. Majority of the participants have the same desire for education and opportunities for better livelihood. They also have a desire to educate their children with regard to Islamic education. They also reported that when their children do not go to schools, punishment is given to them.

Attitude towards Girls' Education

Both families responded that their daughters are already in grade 7/8 but they are separate from boys. They wanted girls' education to be done in their teenage. The attitude toward girls' education was positive. They convinced their daughters to go to school. The participants responded that they send their children to schools; punishment is given if they don't go to school. When girls come back from schools to home, they perform domestic responsibilities and take care of their younger siblings.

Lack of Education Facility

The participants reported that they have no educational facility because schools are located far from their living setting. They wanted to provide education to their children so that they can live a better life. The participants reported that schools for nomads should be established in their living settings.

Source of Income

They kept on practicing the traditional profession of their ancestors and tried to be conformist to their cultural values. The male had to play a key role in the livelihood of the household. Majority of the nomads were not satisfied with their present source of income. Two respondents reported that selling balloon was a chief source of their income. The other respondent reported that drum beating and singing songs at marriage functions is their major source of income. They considered their present profession insufficient and inappropriate to fulfill their basic needs of life.

Lack of Basic Needs

The participants reported they have no basic facilities of life. Due to poverty, they can't buy medicines. They face difficulties to get basic needs of life. The participants had awareness concerning their underprivileged conditions; they had to face due to their lack of access to clean drinking water. They have no health facilities.

Poverty

Majority of respondents reported that poverty is the main cause behind the illiteracy of their children. They have not enough resources to send their children to schools. They also reported that their children help them to fulfill basic necessities of life.

Table 1*Summary views from the group interview of nomadic parents*

Responses from the participants in group interviews		
Questions	Group 1	Group 2
Do you want education for your children?	We have a desire to educate our children.	Why not, we want to educate our children.
Do you want education for your children including girls?	Yes	Yes
Do you want your girls to continue to study while at teenage?	Yes, we want.	Yes, our daughters are already in grade 8/9 but they are separate from boys.
What are the challenges you have had that make education harder to reach to your children?	Our children are moving with us in order to help us, but there is no school. Government does nothing for us.	We face a major challenge like poverty in regard to educating our children.
Under what circumstance do you want schools either to be settled or being nomads?	We want to be settled here. we kept moving from one place to another due to poverty.	We need education for our children in our settlements.
What is your source of income?	Our source of income is drum beating and singing songs at marriage functions.	Our source of income is balloon selling.

Table 2*Summary views from the Focus Group Discussion*

Responses from the participants in the FGD

Questions	FG -1
Do you go to school?	Yes
What is the attitude of your parents towards your education?	Our parents have positive attitudes towards education. They send us to schools to get an education.
Do you convince your parents to get an education?	Yes, we convince them to go to schools.
Which type of hurdles do you face in getting the education?	We face a hurdle because schools are located far from our living settings. Our parents can't bear our educational expenses due to lack of income.
Do your parents have positive attitudes towards girls' education?	Female respondents reported that our parents want to educate us. They convince us to go to schools.

Discussion

The present study concludes that nomadic parents have positive attitudes toward children education including girls. The participants reported that they were uneducated but had the desire to educate their children. The results indicated that nomad children had the desire to get an education. The results of the current study are consistent with given below studies. Blanka and Nada (2007) conducted a study in Serbia to examine the influence of well-educated family on their children and nomadic parents' attitudes regarding their children education. The findings of the study revealed that cultural values, family educational background, and dynamic parental attitudes directly influence their children education. The findings concluded that cognitively and academically encouraging environments within the family and parental constructive attitudes towards their children education could be stimulated in attaining education, and even children could perform their roles with high motivation outside the classrooms.

The nomadic parents reported that they had the desire to see including their daughters in schools and educated. Saad (2002) conducted a study and recommended that education should be provided to girls. After getting the education they may be enabled to improve their way of life as well as educating their children (Ezeomah, 1997).

Majority of the nomads were not satisfied with their present source of income. They reported that their source of income did not fulfill basic necessities of life. Most of the participants replied that they have insufficient sources of income. Imoudu (2004) revealed that child labor is the major factor behind the illiteracy of nomadic children in Nigeria.

The participants reported that they had no health facilities. Illness is the major cause behind the illiteracy of their children. Chaudhry and Bokharey (2013) reported that the problems of nomadic life in Lahore, including lack of basic needs of life and unawareness of health care, lack of educational facility and lack of awareness of mental health. These problems are the major cause of low participation of nomadic children in schools.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings of this current study it may be recommended that government and society may encourage nomads to get education. A mobile education program may be made for nomads' children. Nomads' development strategies and plans may be carefully designed by the government. Development strategies and programs for nomads might be carefully designed and executed.

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