



## Analyzing the Low Female Education Ratio and Barriers at Different Levels in Dir Upper Barawal

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### Abstract

Despite the global progress towards gender equality in education, Dir Upper Barawal continues to struggle with a notably low female education ratio. This disparity is evident across various educational levels, from primary through secondary schooling. The low female education ratio in this region poses significant challenges to socio-economic development and limits the potential of women in the community. The educational inequities in Dir Upper Barawal are exacerbated by a range of barriers that impede female students' ability to access and complete their education. Understanding these barriers is crucial for developing targeted interventions to improve educational outcomes and foster equitable development.

**Key words:** Female education, Education barriers, Dir Upper Barawal, Socio-cultural challenges, Economic barriers, Institutional issues, Rural education, Education access.

### Introduction

Upper Dir (Pashto: *بالا ډير*) is one of the 26 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. At the time of independence, Dir (princely state) was a state ruled by Nawab Shah Jehan Khan. It was merged with Pakistan in 1969 and later on declared as a district in 1970. In 1996, it was bifurcated into Upper and Lower Dir districts. This district is situated in the northern part of Pakistan. It borders Chitral district and Afghanistan on the north and North West and Swat district to the east, and on the south by Lower Dir District. Upper Dir district is 3,699 square kilometers in area and formed part of the former Malakand Division, lying along the Afghanistan border between Chitral, Bajaur Agency and Lower Dir. It is connected with the Kohistan District via the Badawi Pass and connected with Chitral District through Lowari Pass and with Afghanistan through Bin Shahi Pass. (SMEDA).

The cultural values and Norms are very strictly followed and their community keeps women away from the social, political and educational activities (Sadeeq, 2024). Dir Upper Barawal, situated in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, presents a distinctive case in the study of female education. Despite significant global and national



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advancements in gender parity in education, the region continues to experience a pronounced gender gap in educational attainment (UNESCO, 2020). This disparity is evident across various educational levels primary, middle, and secondary—and has substantial implications for the socio-economic development of the area. Education is a fundamental human right and a crucial element for socio-economic development. However, in Dir Upper Barawal, the low female education ratio is a pressing issue that undermines the region's development potential and limits opportunities for women. Female education in this context is influenced by a complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors that create significant barriers for girls and women.(World Bank, 2019). The low female education ratio in Dir Upper Barawal reflects broader regional and national trends where cultural norms and economic hardships continue to impede female educational participation (Ali & Ali, 2021). Historically, regions like Dir Upper Barawal have faced challenges in achieving gender parity in education due to entrenched patriarchal values and socio-economic constraints. These issues are exacerbated by limited educational infrastructure and inadequate policy implementation (Agha, 2022). The significance of addressing this issue extends beyond mere educational attainment. Educated women contribute significantly to economic growth, health improvements, and social stability. When women are educated, they are more likely to participate in the labor market, contribute to household income, and invest in their children's education (Miller, 2021). Therefore, addressing the barriers to female education in Dir Upper Barawal is crucial for fostering inclusive development and enhancing the region's overall socio-economic status.

### **Literature Review**

Education plays a vital role in the development of every nation. We can't single out a single country which has progressed without education. Academic institutions are established to spread education and there is a wide network of Govt schools, colleges and Universities in the district. It also paves way for interested people to start Private sectors institutes and Universities. The literacy rate in the upper dir district is 21.21% (SMEDA).

The low ratio of female education in regions like Dir Upper Barawal, a remote district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, reflects a complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers. Understanding these challenges is essential for devising effective strategies to improve female educational outcomes in such areas. This



literature review synthesizes research on the factors influencing female education and the barriers specific to regions similar to Dir Upper Barawal.

Socio-cultural norms play a significant role in shaping educational opportunities for females. In many rural and traditional societies, cultural attitudes and gender roles restrict women's access to education. According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2019), cultural norms and traditional practices often dictate that girls should prioritize domestic responsibilities over education, leading to higher dropout rates and lower school enrollment among females (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2019). Moreover, the prevalence of early marriages in some communities further hampers educational progression for girls (Khan et al., 2017). These cultural constraints are deeply embedded and can be challenging to overcome without substantial community engagement and awareness programs.

Economic factors significantly impact female education, particularly in impoverished areas like Dir Upper Barawal. Financial constraints are a major barrier, affecting both school attendance and academic performance. As outlined by Aslam and Kingdon (2012), the direct and indirect costs of education, such as school fees, textbooks, and uniforms, are often prohibitive for families with limited resources. In such settings, families may prioritize boys' education over girls' due to perceived higher returns on investment (Aslam & Kingdon, 2012). Additionally, girls are frequently required to contribute economically to their households, either through labor or other means, which can lead to reduced educational participation (Al-Samarrai, 2018).

Institutional barriers also play a crucial role in limiting female education. Poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and a lack of female teachers contribute to an environment that may not be conducive to learning for girls. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics Report (2020), many schools in remote areas suffer from insufficient resources and poor infrastructure, which disproportionately affects female students (Government of Pakistan, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of gender-sensitive policies and the absence of supportive educational programs for girls exacerbate these challenges (UNICEF, 2015). Institutional reforms are necessary to address these infrastructural deficiencies and to create an inclusive educational environment.

The cumulative effect of these barriers has a profound impact on the educational outcomes for female students. Low enrollment rates, high dropout rates, and lower educational attainment are common issues observed in regions with similar socio-economic conditions. Research suggests that targeted interventions can help mitigate these issues. For example, community-based programs that address cultural attitudes and promote gender equality in education have been effective in improving female



educational outcomes (World Bank, 2019). Additionally, financial aid and scholarships tailored for girls, coupled with investments in school infrastructure, are crucial for enhancing educational opportunities (Khan & Naheed, 2021).

## **Exploring socio-cultural, economic, and institutional challenges that affect female education at the primary, middle, and secondary levels.**

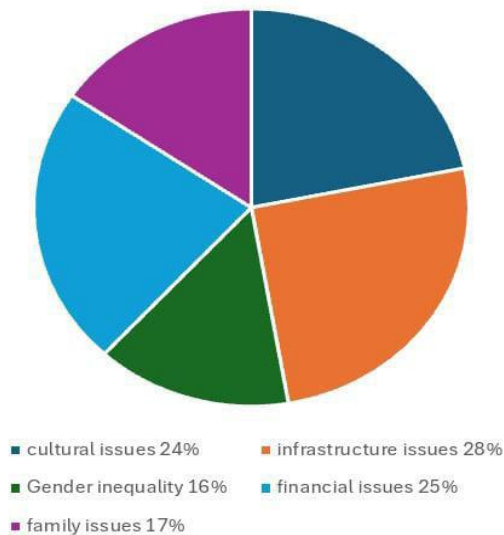
Institutions	Total	Male	Female
Primary school	806	591	215
Middle school	94	68	26
High school	52	41	11
Higher secondary	11	8	3
Degree colleges	4	3	1
University	1	1	
Management science colleges	1	1	

Primary school The gap is already noticeable, with 215 female students compared to 591 male students. Middle school The gap widens, with only 26 female students compared to 68 male students. High school The trend continues, with 11 female students compared to 41 male students. Higher secondary The gap remains significant, with only 3 female students compared to 8 male students. Degree colleges There's only 1 female student compared to 3 male students. University There's no female student representation at this level. Management science colleges There's no female student representation at this level either.

## **Respondents review on female educational barriers**



Response percentage



## Interpretation & Connections

**Cultural and Family Issues as Major Barriers:** The pie chart shows that "cultural issues" and family issues: account for a significant portion of the responses (24% and 17% respectively). This aligns with the common challenges faced by girls in many regions, including conservative cultural norms, gender roles, and family preferences that prioritize domestic responsibilities over education. **Highlighting the Importance of Context:** The pie chart emphasizes that cultural and family issues are major concerns in the context of female education in Dir Upper Barawal. This data can be used to support your thesis by highlighting the specific challenges faced by girls in this region.

**Supporting Policy Recommendations:** The data from the pie chart can be used to inform policy recommendations aimed at improving female education in Dir Upper Barawal. For example, interventions could focus on:

**Challenging cultural norms:** Promoting gender equality through awareness campaigns, community engagement, and educational programs. **Empowering families:** Providing financial incentives, scholarships, and vocational training opportunities for girls. **Improving infrastructure:** Ensuring access to safe and quality schools, particularly for girls in remote areas.



## Respondents' Attitudes towards the Importance of Female Education

Serial No	Options	Response
1	Agree	33
2	Disagree	09
3	Strongly agree	42
4	Strongly disagree	17
5	Totally response	100

Agree (33) Respondents who somewhat agree with the statement. Disagree (9) Respondents who somewhat disagree with the statement. Strongly agree (42) Respondents who strongly agree with the statement. Strongly disagree (17) Respondents who strongly disagree with the statement.

## Assessment of the Current State of Female Education in Dir Upper Barawal

Serial No	Options	Response
1	Excellent	00
2	Good	07
3	Average	16
4	Below average	32
5	Poor	45
		Total 100



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Excellent (0) No respondents rated the quality of female education as excellent. Good (7) A small proportion of respondents (7%) rated the quality as good. Average (16) 16% of respondents rated the quality as average. Below average (32) 32% of respondents rated the quality as below average. Poor (45) The majority of respondents (45%) rated the quality of female education as poor.

### **Recommendations**

**Community Engagement and Awareness:** Organize community-based initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of female education, addressing cultural and societal norms that hinder girls' education. **Religious Leaders' Engagement:** Engage with local religious leaders to promote the importance of female education, highlighting the compatibility of education with Islamic values. **Family Empowerment:** Provide financial incentives, scholarships, and vocational training opportunities for girls, as well as education and awareness programs for parents, particularly mothers.

**Capacity Building:** Invest in building the capacity of local schools and educational institutions to provide quality education for girls, including training for teachers and educators on gender-sensitive education practices. **Addressing Cultural and Societal Norms:** Implement programs to challenge and change cultural and societal norms that hinder girls' education, such as early marriage and domestic responsibilities. **Uneducated Parents Education:** Provide literacy programs and education for uneducated parents, particularly mothers, to empower them to support their daughters' education. **Infrastructure Development:** Improve access to safe and quality schools, particularly for girls in remote areas. **Policy Reforms:** Advocate for policy reforms that promote gender equality in education and address the specific challenges faced by girls in Dir Upper Barawal.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of the low female education ratio in Dir Upper Barawal reveals a complex interplay of factors, including cultural and family issues, societal and religious norms, and a lack of capacity and education among parents. The data shows a significant gap in female education at all levels, from primary to university, with cultural and family issues accounting for a substantial portion of the barriers. To address these challenges, it is recommended that interventions focus on challenging cultural norms, empowering families, and improving infrastructure, as well as building capacity and providing education for uneducated parents. Furthermore, policy reforms and awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in promoting gender equality and challenging





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discriminatory norms. By addressing these issues, it is possible to improve the education ratio and opportunities for girls in Dir Upper Barawal, ultimately contributing to the empowerment of women and the development of the region. Ultimately, this research highlights the need for a multi-faceted approach to address the complex barriers to female education in Dir Upper Barawal, and emphasizes the importance of education as a key driver of social change and development.

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