

Nomadic Community and Child Education: A Case Study of District Jhelum

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Abstract

Nomads do not have any formal education as they are constantly moving from one place to another. The main objective of the study is to understand the aspirations of nomads and the challenges they face during their child education due to nomadic socioeconomic background. Study analyzed the views, practices, and experiences of nomadic communities' parents on their children's schooling. The theoretical framework of this study is based on conflict theory of Karl Marx, Cultural capital theory of Pierre Bourdieu along with the "Theory of Human Motivation" by Abraham Maslow. The study is qualitative as in-depth interview of nomadic households of Jhelum City are conducted by using a semi-structured questionnaire. The data is analyzed through a thematic analysis technique. It is found that the factors contributing to the high dropout rate of nomadic children are habitual migration, early marriages, overage students, poverty, ignorance, and nomad professions, multiple marriages of their parents, father's addiction.

Keywords: Nomadic community; Child education, Socioeconomic Background, High Dropout Rate, habitual migration

Introduction

Society creates people and people create society. The word "nomads" is derived from the Greek verb "nomas," which means "to wander about". Therefore, pastoral nomads are those who once traveled from place to place with their livestock on a seasonal basis (Suresh & Srinivasan, 2019). The causes of migration have altered over time along with migration patterns. The necessity for food and water was the main motivator for the nomads in the past. The causes of migration nowadays vary greatly between different parts of the world. Numerous nomads live in various regions of South Asian nations like Pakistan. Today's nomad communities create semi-permanent urban settlements (kuchiabadis) on the outskirts or in the background of cities as opposed to the seasonal migrations of the past (Shah, Faiq, & Hina, 2020)

The integration of nomad children who are educationally excluded and disadvantaged in the national school system requires more consideration. The national education system must comprehend how nomad children fit into their household economy, the reasons why they drop out of school or are under-enrolled, and the reasons why they are socially, politically, and economically marginalized. Children in nomadic communities should receive modern education to prepare them for society and employment (Pasha, 2021)

The nomads are less privileged and they do not have access to education. According to the researcher, the word "nomad" is a synonym of pastoralism which itself comes from the word pasture means live stocks which is a part and parcel of the nomadic people. Most of the nomads live in villages, outskirts of cities, and in suburbs of metropolitan areas. An article titled "Consultation on gypsies' issues" in Dawn Newspaper discussed the issues of gypsies and how they are treated as untouchable by other society members. It has been lectured that seven million gypsies and nomadic people have no political representation as they have no ID cards. They lack basic amenities like gas, electricity, potable water, and health facilities. They have no formal birth and death registration. Most of them live in worse conditions as they do not care about cleanliness and hygiene (Dawn News, 2015).

Education for All (EFA) is a global initiative launched in 1990 to ensure that every individual in every society receives the benefits of education. To achieve this aim, national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies like UNESCO and the World Bank Group committed to six specific

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education goals. These goals include expanding and improving early childhood education, ensuring access to quality primary education for all children, meeting the learning needs of young people and adults, achieving gender equality in education, improving the quality of education, and achieving adult literacy. Achieving EFA is critical for attaining all eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including child and reproductive health, decreased poverty, and environmental sustainability (Hoel, 2023).

Despite some progress in the last few decades, Pakistan still struggles to achieve 100% literacy and primary education enrollment for 5-9-year-olds. According to a review of public schools, 16% of them lack a building, 55% lack a boundary wall, 79% lack electricity, 44% lack water, and 60% lack a washroom, indicating poor physical infrastructure. In Punjab, the ratio is 63 children per teacher. Enrollment rates vary with urbanization, location, and gender, and the quality of public sector education is poor. The private sector has a limited role, mostly in for-profit markets, and NGOs have stepped up with innovative methods to improve education access and quality. However, there is still much work to be done to achieve universal primary education in Pakistan (Shah, et al., 2005). Along with nomadic communities, many communities in Pakistan lack access to basic educational services due to poverty, conflict, or geographical barriers. NGOs have established schools in these areas to provide education to children who would otherwise be denied this opportunity (The Citizens Foundation, 2023).

Many NGOs work in Pakistan to provide quality education to children and a special focus on school children. The government of Pakistan only spends 4% of its GDP on education and it was on the decline in 2014-15 as it was reported that Pakistan only spent 2% on the education sector. According to the reports on the Government of Punjab 2013 shows that it only spends 1.5% of the respective provincial GDP. To alleviate this condition, the World Bank, spent \$910 million for early childhood education in Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan. USAID's mission aims to provide quality education and improve access to higher education through various programs which include flagship education projects like the Pakistan Reading Project (PRP), The Sindh Basic Education Program (SBEP); Merit and Based Scholarship Program (MNBSP) and the Centers for Advanced Studies Project (CAS). For these flagship projects, USAID disbursed \$316 million and provided strategic, technical, and leadership support (Office of Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development, 2020). Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to implement the Non-Formal Education Promotion Project (NFEPP). JICA-NFEPP helps to contribute to arranging minimum educational standards, special curriculum development for NFBE and Adult Literacy, motivation and capacity building of LNFBE staff, development of assessment methods and tools, and equivalency mechanism with other academic institutions like Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) and formal school and Training Education (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2022).

NFE and adult quality education, equity, access, quality, and incentives for public and private sectors and focuses on upgrading educational allocation to 7% of GDP by the fiscal year 2015. Moreover, the National Education Policy (2017-2025) also sets a target of a 90% literacy rate in Pakistan by year 2015 (Government of the Punjab, 2019). Education is a fundamental right of citizens of any civilized country. Pakistan also has stressed educational policies like Article 2(A), Article 22-3 (B), Article 25-A, Article 25-(2), and Article 37 (B) to provide free and quality education for all citizens. Article 7 of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, defines the government's status and responsibility in implementing laws and enforcing fundamental rights (Bibi, 2018).

The L&NFBE Department offers three types of literacy programs, which include Kachi for grades 1-3, Kachi for grades 1-5, and Adult Literacy Centers. These schools are operated by a single teacher and are cohort-based, mostly located in rooms or courtyards within their homes. The gender ratio of students is 55% girls and 45% boys, with 90% female teachers. Students who complete grade 5 take the PEC Grade 5 exam to qualify for transitioning from primary to middle school. In recent years, over 12,000 non-formal students participated in the exam with a pass rate of 96%. However, girls face challenges in joining middle and secondary schools due to distance constraints. The L&NFBE Department is addressing this issue by upgrading primary NFBE schools and offering Grade 10 exams through the Allama Iqbal Open University

for continued access to girls. The L&NFBE Department has assessed the needs of its teachers and delivers support and training through a cluster-based model, with learning managers and program managers overseeing the operation of the centers.

One of the main challenges faced by the L&NFBE Department is the funding mode, which is project-based. This means that the L&NFBE Department cannot establish additional schools beyond the approved number even if there is a critical need for it. The PSESP 2013-2017 aimed to enhance education quality access, relevance, equity and management. The NFBES schools predominantly cater to the needs of nomads and the allocation of schools and educators primarily depends upon the size of the pastoral communities. These educational institutions are typically not situated within government accessible areas, but rather within the confines of pastoral and nomadic settlements. These schools are community need based schools so due to seasonal migration majority of schools closed.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are given as;

1. To explore the factors contributing in the high dropout rate among nomadic children.
2. To investigate the issues faced by nomadic children regarding their education.
3. To analyze the views, practices, and experiences of nomadic communities' parents on their children's schooling.

Significance of the study

- This study can be helpful for the government to get an overview of the poor schooling system and lack of educational resources for socially marginalized communities like nomads. The aforementioned study examine non- formal schools, highlighting issues such as high dropout rates among nomadic children, inadequate teacher qualification, co-education, mixed-grade classrooms, and a lack of proper school infrastructure.
- The primary goal is to improve the well –being and educational opportunities of nomadic children. To achieve this, the study aimed to spread awareness among these children and their families, shielding them from social evils. Education can also play a vital role in breaking their cycle of poverty and empowering the nomadic community.
- This study aimed to develop the educational policies according to the needs and requirements of the nomads and their overall well-being. Community engagement, dedicated teachers, social workers, and financial donors are crucial for enhancing the non-formal education.
- The study emphasizes the need of curriculum policies tailored to the needs of nomadic children, focusing on practical, regional language, vocational and technical training so that they can get decent earning in the society. These key findings and recommendations not only help nomads but also will create a skilled workforce and contribute to the country's economic development.

Literature Review

Education is a vital asset that makes an individual think critically about himself and his surroundings. The word Education comes from the Latin word “*educātiō*” which means bringing up, rearing, or breeding. Thus, Education practically means a form of learning in which skills, habits, and collective knowledge are transferred from one generation to another through written text or oral technique. It helps us to understand ourselves better, it helps us realize our qualities and potential as human beings that we should need in this world (Bhat, 2022).

Nomads, travelers, and gypsies do not have any formal education as they are constantly moving from one place to another. Moreover, their children should also get an education and they require societal recognition. An American psychological and social educator, John Dewey, asserted that the purpose of education is not only constrained to the communication of knowledge but also of moral and social experience. It should benefit both society and individual mental growth. Paulo Freire's philosophy also suggested that education is critical in projecting cultural and societal reform. By combining these aspects, one can say that

the purpose of education is to benefit an individual as well as society. It should play its part in making its learners both mentally and physically well-rounded, critical individuals and functional members of society (Macur, 2020).

Levels of Education vary among nations due to cultural, political, religious, and social fragments. But, despite the huge gap all countries have agreed upon some basic structures of learning to summarize, enumerate, and clarify some basic methods of education (Pratley, 2020). Thus, there are three types of educational modes provided to students at the primary level, i.e., Formal Education, Informal Education and Non-formal Education.

Primary education is a source of developing and imparting basic life skills to students regarding reading, writing, mental, and arithmetic skills. Formal education of learning is organized, intentional, and properly structured. Formal education is a systematic, pre-arranged, and well-defined curriculum that is provided in well-defined walls of the school. (Eaton, 2010). Informal education refers to various types of alternative education, such as homeschooling, auto didacticism (self-teaching), unschooling, and youth work. This type of learning is guided by individual learning needs and led by some more advanced volunteers, educators, or students. It is not necessarily that the volunteer has formal training as an educator. It is more spontaneous and natural. There is no age, gender, or social barrier to acquiring informal education like an old man can learn about an iPhone anytime (Jumani, 2011).

Non-formal Education (NFE) gets its popularity in the 20th century. It refers to a collective structure of learning, which takes place outside any formal system. A learning environment for their literacy skills is provided outside of a formal school setting. The concept of non-formal education emerged in the 20th century because of economic, social, and political development crises concerning individuals and nations. NFE provides a substitute learning environment to all people as formal education has failed to provide education to all children from ages 5 to 14 years. In developing countries like Pakistan, the Majority of the people live in rural areas that do not get any formal education and their basic needs are numeracy, literacy, community improvement, health education, and educational and technical skills which can be facilitated by Non-formal education (Dieuzeide, 1983).

Education is widely accepted as a key factor in social and economic development. Literacy rates indicate the presence of primary education that has made it possible for the population to learn a word and perform basic mathematic calculations in daily life. South Asia is a great example of how illiteracy impacts social and financial poverty. South Asia is particularly dominated by the subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc.). "Education for all" programs in South Asian countries are to accommodate the poor and nomadic communities. Whereas the private educational sectors are stressing the importance of education and building their educational networks (Ahmed, 2021).

Jhelum is one of the oldest districts of Punjab. It is situated on the bank of river Jhelum. As noted in the 1908 Imperial Gazetteer of British India, Jhelum's strategic location on the north-western highway, through which many conquerors entered India, from the Greeks to the Mughals, has made it a land of fortresses and fostered a tradition of hereditary warriors among its people. The region was ruled by King Porus, the Sikh dynasty, Afghans, and the British, which had complex enduring effects on the native population (Singh, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The researcher has applied a compound framework by applying Karl Marx's 'conflict theory', Pierre Bourdieu's 'cultural capital theory' and Abraham Maslow's "theory of human motivation" as a theoretical framework that deals with the methodological framework of the qualitative research paradigm.

The lack of educational facilities, social stigmas, and under-privileged status of the nomads are a hindrance to getting an education. Karl Marx's class division is also observed in this research. In my fieldwork, I have conducted interviews with the NFBE teachers, nomadic parents, and nomadic children, to analyze the accurate picture of the pathetic status of the educational defloration in nomads so the researcher has concluded that all of these theories are fully applicable to this research work.

Karl Marx's Conflict Theory in Education states that the purpose of education is to maintain social inequality and preserve the power of those who dominate Society. Conflict theorists argue that schools endorse cultural repression along distinct class and ethnic lines. Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus and conformity. First, schools in the good areas target the bourgeois class. Therefore, schools in affluent districts have more money. Such areas are predominantly catching the elite class.

Pierre Bourdieu proposed the theory that looks at how the education system is molded in a way that helps to support our middle and educated class. Moreover, he argues that the bourgeois class, as he named it middle class ingrained and trained by their "Habitus". Cultural Capital is the set of skills and knowledge that gives them an upper hand in acquiring a better education. Habitus is the set of norms, values, and leisure activities that one grew up in, for instance, these children are likely to be exposed to extra-curricular readings, sports activities, traveling, and foreign vacations, which give them exposure to worldly affairs. Abraham Maslow's "Theory of Human Motivation and Hierarchy of Needs". Pierre Bourdieu proposed the theory that He stated that individual behavior is governed by five types of human needs.

Those needs include physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, self-esteem needs, and finally self-actualization needs, from bottom to top. He presented the hierarchy of needs in the form of a pyramid with high-level needs at the top and basic needs at the bottom. He further explains his theory by concluding that when a person's basic requirements are fulfilled to an appropriate level, they can then move on to addressing the higher-level demands. He also stated that individuals fulfill the needs that are vital for survival first and then reach the upper stages in his hierarchy of needs.

Research Methodology

The researcher used qualitative research methodology to investigate and explore the aforementioned topic "Nomadic community and child education". The study explores varying factors that affect children's education, along with reasons for high dropout rate among these students, their parents' views, and practices. The qualitative approach enables in-depth detailed analysis and explanation of a given phenomenon, due to its intrinsic data collection and analysis methods. An in-depth interview method was used for data collection. Data was analyzed by thematic analysis technique.

The process of selecting the samples is called sampling. In this study researcher used a type of nonprobability sampling technique named convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used for sample selection and an in-depth interview method for data collection; therefore nomadic households and the Literacy department of Jhelum city were chosen as the project's case study. It was convenient for the researcher to have easy access to the mentioned community and department.

The large pool is the population, which has an important role in sampling. In this study Nomadic community's parents of district Jhelum, the Literacy department of District Jhelum, Non-formal basic education schools teachers of district Jhelum, and students of NFBES in district Jhelum, and all community notable persons were the population of the study.

A target population is the specific pool of cases that a researcher wants to study. A population about which a researcher wishes to draw inferences is called a target population of the study.

In this study targeted population Nomadic communities and NFBE schools settled in slum areas of the localities of Peer Harra Belt, BaghMuhala, Shantinagar, Sulemanparas, Bilal Town, and Talianwala Rohtas Road, Chitton Road. In all these nomadic settlements, School teachers, students, parents, and Notable persons provided the needed data in the form of written interviews which carry complete information regarding their socio-economic attitude toward child education. The data was rich in human experiences regarding nomadic child education. For data collection, face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted. These interviews were conducted with nomadic parents, NFBES teachers, NFBES students, Notable persons, and the DEO literacy department of District Jhelum.

A subset of the population is called a sample from that population. A sample that is free from selection and procedural bias is called a good or unbiased sample. Teachers and student samples were selected

from 7 Non Formal Basic Education primary schools that 5 schools had a 100% nomadic population and 2 schools had a 95% nomadic population. Nomadic parents were living near the school's slum area. DEO Literacy was selected from the Literacy Department of District Jhelum. Notable persons were also living near the nomadic communities and had a vast experience of nomadic people's lives and interacted with them for a long time.

Samples of the study were 7 teachers from 7 NFBES, 12 nomadic parents from Nomadic community slums areas, 14 NFBES nomadic students from grade 1 to grade 5, one DEO literacy from Literacy Department Jhelum and 5 Notable persons. (NFBES indicates Non Formal Basic Education school)

Data collection

The data was collected from nomadic parents and literacy school teachers, students, notable persons, and DEO literacy with the help of a semi-structured interview guide. The samples of the study were selected through convenience sampling techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect real information about the nomadic community and child education. All the questions were discussed with participants in detail ambiguities in various responses were clarified by probing. The researcher made sure to conduct interviews in a comfortable place so that interviewee feels relaxed and share their experiences. Moreover, probing was used to motivate candidates to express their feelings accurately. The purpose of visiting schools first day was to tell the all teachers about the research purpose and explained the research topic. The teachers set the interview schedule of students, teachers and notable person. Teachers arranged the meeting the next day with parents and notable community person.

The interview schedule was designed to explore the causes of the high dropout rate in nomadic communities. Difficulties faced by nomadic students regarding their education. Practices views and experiences of nomadic parents regarding difficulties faced by their children, and demands of nomadic parents for their children education facility. Questions were designed to identify the issues behind low educational trend in nomadic community. Questions were about the Effect of economic and social backwardness, Behavior of teachers and society towards nomadic children, Role of family in education, Vocational skills with education, Changes in nomadic community, Suggestions of improvement in school's infrastructure, and Curriculum problems for the nomadic community children.

The interviews schedule allowed the respondents to express their views, problems, and suggestions. The respondents of open ended questions were offered to explore critically the contribution of society, teachers, parents and government policies in low attainments of education level in nomadic community. The respondents were also requested to suggest suitable measures at household level, school level, teachers' level, community level, and government level improvements in nomadic children's education.

Ethical concerns

During this research process, all measures were taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. They were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained before the interview process. All interviews were written after seeking permission from participants. Researcher assured all the respondents that their name will not be disclosed anywhere.

Data analysis

Collected and refined data was analyzed through thematic analysis. In qualitative research, researchers use the method called thematic analysis to analyze the complexes and scattered data systematically. It looks for the central idea that is hidden in the stories told within the data. Themes are created by repeatedly reading the transcribed data and thinking deeply about themes to provide complete reliable findings, and information on religious, moral, political, and social issues, and other important matters. (Nowell, Nowell, & White, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that from a theoretical point of view, this method has flexibility for identification, description, and interpreting patterns (themes) in data in great detail. It is a fit method for qualitative research because of its vast and complex data handling. it argued that this method makes analysis more efficient and reliable because of its three qualities: accessibility, transparency, and flexibility.

Nomadic children face many obstacles during education. When they go to formal school, teachers and children do not like those NFBE schools need base. Migration is an important part of nomadic community life. The biggest problem of these children is that their fathers often have 2 or 3 marriages as a result of which the children are from 24 to 30. The Parents cannot afford the expenses of so many children, so all the children go to beg or they work at a young age. Some children parents prevent them from studying because of their father's addiction and poverty. No attention is paid to these children's studies at home, they are completely at the mercy of teachers or they study because of their God-given talents. Nomadic children are prone to educational problems due to the ignorance and poverty of their parents. Nomadic parents are caused by their children's low enrolment and earlier drop out of school.

The parents of these students are not interested in sending them to school, so often the teachers have to go and bring them to school from home. Nomads do not care about cleanliness and hygiene. Regular migration /their mobile lifestyle, sudden drop out of students from school these common problems of daily life. Education of children is not the priority for parents; children come to school hungry in the morning. Students do not do homework. Nomads do not cook at home; Nomadic students are sick due to stomach upset. Nomadic students are not punctual. The problems and difficulties faced by teachers are lack of parental interest, unhygienic condition of nomads, sudden drop out of students from school, regular migration, no priority of education of children by the parents, sickness due to stomach upset because of hungriness, uncivilized, lack of moral upbringing, wearing messy and dirty clothes, heads with lice and psychological problems because of their stressful environment, and regular migration.

Teachers prioritize teaching these students basic hygiene practices, including how to wash their face and body, as well as providing religious instruction such as reading the Holy Quran, language, and cultural norms. They try their best to make them polite and knowledgeable. Difficulties faced by parents are sending their children in school and support them in getting education only due to poverty and migration they withdraw their children from school. Nomadic parents strongly advocate that the government should establish proper educational institutes in their slums for nomads. Furthermore, access to healthcare services and education should be provided to these students free of cost. Their schools should also be properly constructed and provide vehicles for the students to pick up and drop them from school accordingly. Some of the parents demand well-built schools and free-of-cost education along with financial aid. Nomadic parents want school-like government-model schools for their children. Charitable schools for nomadic communities, where boarding is also available and all educational facilities are provided by the government. Suggestions from the respondents at the Job level are that Teacher salary should be increased. Utility bills and school buildings should be the responsibility of the government. The salaries of NFBES teachers should be equal to standard government schools.

Government should provide buildings, increase the salary of teachers which should be paid every month, and service should be regular. The old age pension should be along with job security. Suggestions from the respondents at the school level are facilities which are present in the formal schools should also be available in non-formal schools. Co-curricular activities should also be promoted in the non-formal education system. Promoting education in slums requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, educators, and government officials. Nonformal school advertisements and awareness should be promoted in slums by the local public and the government to create awareness about education. Teachers and students wear decent clothes. Prizes and certificates should be given to the students to promote learning. School rent, cleanliness expenditures, and utility bills should be paid from government funds. The government should construct the school building, keeping in policy the basic facilities as per the needs of the teachers and students. The issue of children's age needs an immediate solution. Students should be provided financial assistance in the form of scholarships. By ending coeducation make separate schools, for girls and boys. These are analysis of respondent's views. During interviews, researcher asked the questions from the teachers, students and their parents suggestions about school improvement, Teacher's job facilities and

Curriculum problems from nomadic parents about improvement in their children education and facilities which they want from government apart from their children education.

Conclusion

The factors contributing to the high dropout rate of nomadic children are habitual migration, early marriages, overage students, poverty, ignorance, and nomad professions, the issues faced by nomadic children regarding their education are multiple marriages of their parents, more children up to 24 to 30, ignorance and poverty of their parents. parents prevent them from studying because of their father's addiction and poverty. no attention is paid to these children's studies at home, they are completely at the mercy of teachers or they study because of their God-given talents. issues faced by nomadic children regarding their education is that their parents cannot afford their children's accommodation, health facilities, food, and education due to being very poor, due to the migration and nomadic traditions is also a hindrance in the education of nomadic children.

Recommendations

Recommendations at the teacher's level are that instead of a teacher's Honorarium, there should be proper pay according to the government of Punjab school service rules. Honorius should be increased up to at least PRs. 25000/. Multi-grade teaching should replace one teacher for each class. Multi-grade age students in classes should be ended. Classify the children according to their age. The service should be scored. Recruitment should be permanently based on minimum BA and BSC education.

Recommendations at the students/learner level are that B form and parents' ID cards of these children should be made immediately with the support of the school administration and NADRA office. Nomadic students' parents should arrange permanent residence. There should be a boarding house school in every tehsil for nomadic children where education and accommodation are free. Apart from books, also give financial assistance in the form of stationary, uniforms, Shoes, and cash.

Nomadic students' parents should receive monthly assistance in the form of rations, and cash. Their syllabus and curriculum should be according to their needs and traditions. Like in other countries, worthy and intelligent students should be given modern education like formal education school and the rest of the students should be given handicraft and vocational and technical education according to the local regional culture and conditions.

Recommendations at the school level are that proper school buildings should be provided to the nomadic community children. School building should be according to the needs of the nomadic community children. To solve the problem of migration, there should be a boarding school in every tehsil. Girls' school should be separate from boys. School building should consist of two sections, one for the children enrolled from 4 to 6 years old and age second for those students who enrolled in the age of 7 to 14 years old.

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