



HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN PAKISTAN: PROMISES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND BARRIERS

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to explore parents' perceptions about women's higher education in Pakistan. Data was collected through qualitative in-depth interviews from both mothers and fathers of young women aged between 23 and 27 years who had completed university education. Some of these women had taken up employment as well. The findings indicate that parents were very supportive of their daughters' right to university education. They associated higher education of women with empowerment, personal development and employment opportunities. The study also unveiled some of the barriers to girls' higher education. The findings reveal that financial constraints and patriarchal norms were the major barriers towards female education at the university level. In addition, parents also showed their concerns about the security risks associated with education, since university education involved mobility away from home, often alone. The study highlights the need for further research to develop strategies to overcome the barriers young women face in gaining education at the university level.

Keywords

Women's education, higher education, women empowerment, barriers to female education, women's education in Pakistan