



# Cultural Barriers Faced by Women in Acquiring Higher Education in Tribal

## Areas of Pakistan: A Case of Dera Ghazi Khan

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Keywords:	
Cultural Barriers,	ABSTRACT
Higher Education, Tribal	The purpose of this research was to explore the Cultural Barriers
Areas,	Faced by Women in Acquiring Higher Education in Tribal Areas of
Dera Ghazi Khan.	Pakistan. The study is quantitative in nature, and the information
Article History:	was obtained through the use of a questionnaire. Questionnaire validity was confirmed by the judgment of experts in the field. Lack of basic infrastructure, Absence of girls' schools, Lack of female
Received: January 07, 2023	teachers, Poor quality education, Lack of supervision of school, Early marriage, and Lack of adult literacy programs are major
<b>Revised:</b> June 26, 2023	obstacles that hinder female higher education. The reason behind the
Published: June 30, 2023	low literacy rate of females in tribal areas is the lack of facilities, institutes, and most importantly negligence from the state had kept the tribal women apart from her basic right; quality education. The reason behind the low literacy rate of females in tribal areas is the lack of facilities, institutes, and most importantly negligence from the state had kept the tribal women apart from her basic right; quality education. Awareness campaigns should be launched to reduce the Cultural Barriers Faced by Women in Acquiring Higher Education in Tribal Areas of Pakistan. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial 4.0 International License.
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## 1 Introduction

More educational opportunities are a significant factor to the growth of women's rights. Women must be educated in order to progress since the benefits of education extend to her entire family as well as society. Women have played an important role in the advancement of human history and culture throughout history. Female education is critical because women have the opportunity to contribute to their communities in a variety of ways, including economic, cultural, and social. Historically, society assumed that only men should pursue higher education, while women were expected to stay at home and care for their children. Despite the fact that women in Islam have equal access to higher education as men. Education, particularly education in the current curriculum, should be mandatory for both men and women without exception (Kim et al., 1998).

Some cultures are skeptical of a woman's ability to enhance her education. A male obtaining a college degree signifies that one individual has access to excellent education, whereas a woman obtaining a college degree indicates that her entire family has access to excellent education. Because a woman is a system as much as an entity in and of itself. This is the most obvious reason. Equal access for men and women to educational opportunities allows civilizations to more quickly adapt to changing situations. In Pakistan's traditional societal structure, housewives are seen as the primary role for women (Gulati, 2006).

Furthermore, the majority of Pakistanis, particularly those living in tribal areas, have become increasingly skeptical of women's empowerment. As a result of increased degrees of independence, wives and mothers now have a stronger capacity to care for their family. The possessiveness of males and the unwillingness of their spouses to complete their education are two of the most major challenges that women face. As a result, women are actively discouraged from participating in political life, as well as economics, politics, recreation, and society as a whole. It is common practice to regard education as a necessary tool for growth. As a result, it is critical that everyone has access to a high-quality education that emphasizes the development of their creative, social, and human potential. The influence of these various cultures is what has allowed men and women to have equal opportunities in the workplace and in the classroom (Ahmad et al., 2014).

Women in Pakistan face challenges in obtaining higher education because cultural norms limit their mobility, prevent them from holding political power, and prevent them from creating social capital (Ahmad et al., 2014). It is not uncommon for men and women to have finished various levels of schooling in rural areas due to gender conventions and preconceptions around sexual identity. Higher education is deemed improper for women in some more conservative civilizations. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to complete their education, which has a negative impact on the percentages of women who enroll in school and are literate. Parents are more inclined to invest financial resources in their boys' education than in their daughters' education since the latter are more likely to be anticipated to enter another family through marriage and perform only domestic tasks. As a result, sending them to college would be a complete waste of money (Jamshaid, 2020).

Women's access to higher education is a key issue in Pakistan because the country's different cultural customs prevent the great majority of women from obtaining an education. Patriarchal homes are common in Pakistani society, and males continue to play a dominant role as breadwinners and decision-makers in the home. Men and women, who are both referred to using the term "sex," which is a biological phrase that denotes the difference between the sexes,

are the foundations of civilization and may be found wherever on the planet. Men have always been significant parts of society and will continue to be so in the future (Mujahid et al., 2015).

In Pakistan, man has a solid grasp on every area of life and is responsible for everything. Men make all of the choices, especially after marriage, without consulting women. Because they are expected to prioritize family responsibilities over their own progress, this inhibits women's independence and makes it difficult or impossible for many of them to pursue additional education. Because Pakistan is such a patriarchal society, a father is unlikely to push his daughter to pursue higher education. Despite the fact that women are not legally obligated to complete high school, parents of boys are more likely than parents of girls to insist on their sons pursuing further education. This is because parents of males have a harder time making ends meet than parents of girls, and parents of girls have a greater financial commitment to support their family. As a result of these barriers, women may find it difficult to continue their education after high school (Yousaf & Schmiede, 2016). According to Parveen (2008), the limits imposed by custom on rural women create a number of barriers to their pursuit of higher education. Due to the aforementioned, as well as other cultural, social, and economic barriers, rural women are unable to pursue higher education (Farid et al., 2014).

In Pakistan, there is immense need to explore the facts regarding cultural barriers faced by women to attain higher education specially in tribal areas of D. G. Khan. There is very little research available regarding this issue, so, we are conducting research to explore data that which and what kind of cultural barriers women are facing in tribal areas. It will provide a pathway for future researches. Following were the objectives of this research study;

- 1. To explore the barriers faced by Tribal Women in attaining higher education in district Dera Ghazi Khan and Tribal Areas
- 2. To explore the response of culture towards higher education of women in tribal areas.
- 3. To compare the difference of the different stake holders of Society regarding the attaining of the high education in tribal areas

## 2 Literature Review

The term "culture" refers to a wide idea that encompasses all aspects of the human experience. Culture is one of the primary factors in determining norms of behavior (Ghazi et al., 2011). One definition of culture is a group's shared understanding of and adherence to a common set of rules and expectations. Despite Pakistan's signature to the United Nations Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action (2000) Document, which emphasizes higher education for women, the country has made little progress toward this goal. Skalli (2001) claims that the gender discrepancy in reading rates demonstrates that cultural norms favor men over women. The existence of the gap demonstrates this. A society's cultural standards act as a glass ceiling, preventing women from gaining entrance to higher education and from obtaining professional degrees (Ahmad et al., 2014).

Ideas, norms, practices, knowledge, reasoning, ethics, and social status are examples of intangible assets that comprise a person's cultural capital. Cultural capital is what permits a person to gain access to societal resources such as money and power. The vast majority of a person's cultural assets will have come from blood relatives or other close relatives and associates. Our "cultural capital" refers to the resources that we have access to in addition to financial ones that influence our degree of academic accomplishment. These resources include our family's history, socioeconomic situation, level of interest in and commitment to our

education, one-of-a-kind abilities and resources, and so on. Another significant impediment that women encounter in pursuing higher education is the scarcity of resources available to persons from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Due to financial restrictions, the higher education of the family's men is usually prioritized over that of the daughters in low-income families. Some families believe that investing in their daughters' higher education is a waste of money because the girls will eventually marry and move out of the house to live with their spouses. As a result, women are expected to keep their responsibilities exclusively domestic and to assist with housekeeping (Shaukat & Pell, 2015).

Higher education is also more expensive for women than for men, owing to the fact that women are more likely to require private transportation to and from school, which may be out of reach for families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Women's lower degree of cultural capital often functions as a barrier to their ability to achieve in their careers and in society. Because of this movement, the word "social mobility," which refers to women's ability to ascend in the socioeconomic hierarchy, has become synonymous with itself. When determining a person's standard of life, the pay, job security, and possibilities for promotion are all aspects to consider. A wide range of factors have influenced women's social mobility, including but not limited to urbanization/ruralization, educational attainment, social/economic standing, and chronological age, among many others. There are currently numerous initiatives at the national and state levels that give financial assistance, education and training, combat gender-based violence, and political advocacy for women's growth. Higher education programs for women open up a world of possibilities for positive social transformation (Shaukat & Pell, 2015).

In reality, obtaining cultural capital is critical in order to advance in one's appropriate social class. People can reduce their chances of living in a harmful environment by educating themselves and rising through the ranks of society. This improves their chances of survival in the wild. Both the middle and lower classes rely on cultural capital to maintain their positions in society and continue to benefit from it. People and families can engage in a process known as social mobility to enhance their standard of living and quality of life. According to the findings of Younas et al. (2019), an individual's economic and occupational standing are the most important predictors of social mobility. People from all social strata, regardless of socioeconomic origin, are respected in today's culture for the talents they've acquired. Yosso (2013) concluded that persons who are not born into literate families can benefit from formal education to acquire the same abilities as upper-class society and become socially active. The cultural norms and beliefs of a society have a significant impact on the status of women there. The general public holds more regard for those who have achieved greater success in life through education and work achievement (Nazimuddin, 2015).

Women will have more confidence in their talents if they can achieve in their careers and in the communities in which they reside. The country's traditional culture pervades Pakistan's educational institutions, making women dependent rather than independent. The classroom has a fundamentally different impact on boys and females (Jayachandran, 2015). It is sad that women continue to face severe prejudice and that, despite some progress, women still do not have equal access to opportunities to enhance their economic standing. Despite the fact that some progress has been made in this area. This sexist and disrespectful attitude toward women can be found in a wide range of workplaces. Throughout history, women have not received equal treatment in the field of education, despite the fact that education is critical to a nation's economic and social growth. According to the conclusions of a 2014 study done by Nath, one-half of Pakistan's population is held back because women do not take advantage of educational opportunities. Women are confined to the confines of the home and are denied access to higher education, scholarships, and employment. Without a doubt, these restrictions reduce women's cultural capital, making it more difficult for them to attain higher education and be successful once there. Instead of empowering women, today's educational systems just serve to reinforce their subservience (Nath, 2014).

Cultural standards have a wide-ranging impact on everything from girls' and women's physical to mental health when it comes to schooling. Women's rights to work in any industry, to relocate wherever they like, and to make their own decisions are all aspects of Western civilization that have had a significant impact on their upbringing. Other components of Western culture that influenced their upbringing include: The cultural norms and social structure of a community are the major elements that are taken into account when choosing how much weight to give to a variety of socioeconomic and demographic aspects. The majority of studies that study the relationship between these demographic features and the causes for them blame the country's cultural milieu (Yu & Su, 2006).

Women's access to education in developing nations is limited by a confluence of cultural norms and demographic realities. The cultural norms of a community influence the degree to which certain features of a child's family, such as the number of siblings, the sequence of birth, and the amount of time between births, influence the child's academic ability. In this section, we shall discuss the numerous empirical studies that have been undertaken on the influence of children's cultural backgrounds on their educational attainment (Nazimuddin, 2015).

The idea that a country's family structure has any effect on the educational attainment of that country's children was the focus of Young (1965) research, which aimed to disprove that hypothesis. However, it is critical to remember that perceived family structure has a lower independent effect on academic achievement than cultural and opportunity structure. According to Hamid (1993), Pakistan's social and cultural traditions make it impossible for girls to attend school. It was discovered that the traditional milieu of Faisalabad (in Pakistan) was not favourable to women's education. They found that young women have few opportunities for upward mobility, which hinders their pursuit of higher education. This finding demonstrates how social constraints imposed by present sociocultural norms are detrimental to women's access to school as well as women's success once they are enrolled there. [Further citation is required] This finding indicates how social limitations are detrimental to women's access to, and success in, educational settings. These data also show that social restrictions imposed by existing sociocultural norms are harmful to female education.

Researchers in Guinea and Ethiopia investigated the current state of women's education in their respective nations using qualitative approaches. During their investigation, they looked closely at how cultural norms influence the educational options available to girls. Bad cultural practices at the household, school, labor market, and society levels, according to their structural model on the expected educational ramifications of "poor income and unfavorable cultural practices," impede women's access to education. This is mirrored in their concept of the educational consequences of "poor wealth and unfavorable cultural habits." They argue that due of the gendered division of labor in the family, this has greater externalities for girls and women than for boys. Families who believe that it is more vital for their daughters to look after their younger siblings and sisters at home are less likely to invest in their daughters' education. Ineffective teaching and the danger of sexual harassment in the classroom exacerbate the problem. Girls are also expected to participate in less extracurricular activities at school. Furthermore, they are designed to be more obedient. Because of the frequency of job discrimination against women and low pay, parents are less likely to appreciate the benefit of their daughters pursuing their education. Gender traditions that are presently prominent make it difficult to pursue one's education on a societal level. Girls' education is underfunded in 64 of the world's civilizations, including those where men rule local and national politics and women are expected to stay at home (Johnson & Kyle, 2001).

Early marriage, firm religious or cultural views, and traditional societal attitudes are all factors that weigh against a female completing her formal education. They believe that this disparity exists between impoverished countries with low levels of schooling and wealthy countries with high enrollment levels but considerable gender gaps. They argue that 'cultural practices' are the primary barrier to female education and are unrelated to poverty. They assert this to back up their contention that there is a difference between the two types of countries. Even in affluent communities, the rate at which girls enroll in school varies greatly depending on whether or not the neighborhood has access to educational facilities, suggesting that "the protective benefits of increased prosperity do not extend to girl's learning". According to Johnson and Johnson and Kyle (2001), income had just a modestly positive effect on female schooling. This led them to the conclusion that in Ghana, the most important factor determining girls' educational attainment is social structure. The social position of a child, not their economic level, affects whether or not they will attend school (Johnson & Kyle, 2001).

According to Jayachandran (2015), the rationale for this phenomenon is more social than economic, because women who work have a higher probability of enrolling in and attending school on a constant basis. She hypothesizes that because women will have greater access to knowledge and resources as a result of their increased labor-force involvement, this will empower them to make household decisions. If a woman has a paying job, she has a better chance of furthering her education and becoming involved in politics and other social concerns. As a result, it stands to reason that moms in positions of authority will be more concerned with their children's intellectual development. Girls whose mothers work full-time may be precluded from attending school because they must care for their younger siblings. This complicates the girls' academic aspirations (Jayachandran, 2015).

From an economic standpoint, Bélanger and Liu (2004) examined the low levels of education among Vietnamese females and concluded that society discourages girls from pursuing higher education by offering parents a low return on their investment. In other words, society provides a lesser return on education for girls than it does for boys. "Such habits and practices would alter parents' estimation of the rate at which their children's income is transmitted to them," the researcher theorized. Parents should not expect a monetary return on their investment in their daughter's education because sons are generally expected to pay for their parents in their old age, whereas girls marry and offer nothing financially. When it comes to female education, it is vital to note that boys are not included toward the household income ceiling; this shows that cultural norms and other factors may be more relevant than financial resources.

According to Subrahmanian (2005), there are a variety of barriers that prevent young women from continuing their education after high school. Gendered curricula and teaching practices, as well as local cultural norms that distinguish the roles of women and men in society, are significant reasons that cause fewer girls to choose to attend school in her community, according to the findings of her study. Cultural influences, gender stereotypes, and women's own negative self-evaluations and worries about their abilities can all be blamed for women's lower educational attainment.

According to Smits and Hoşgör (2006), the disparity between the sexes in terms of educational attainment is the product of long-held cultural mores and prejudices embedded in institutions. Despite the fact that economic causes have a greater impact on the education of girls than on the education of boys, cultural factors have a greater impact on the education of females in Turkey than economic reasons do. The findings corroborate the thesis of human capital theory, which holds that there is no economically justifiable rationale for the gender gap in school success.

## 3 Materials and Methods

**Research Design:** Survey method research design was used for present study. The nature of this investigation is quantitative. The study's design was descriptive.

**Population:** Population of the study was comprised of the females from tribal areas.

Sample: Data was collected from the 383 females of tribal area of DG Khan.

Instrumentation: A self-made questionnaire was developed to collect data from respondents.

## 4 **Results**

The questionnaire instrument was provided to participants in groups and individually by the researcher. Those that could not be reached physically had been approached directly via phone calls. SPSS software was used to tabulate and analyze the collected data. The results were drawn using descriptive and inferential statistics.

#### Analysis at the Basis of Demographics

#### Table 1

Sr. No	Description	Frequency	Percentage
	Gender		
1	Female	383	100%
	Age of Respondents		
1	20-30 Years	287	75.33
2	31-40 Years	61	16
3	41-50 Years	30	8
4	51-60 Years	3	0.7
	Qualification		
1	Masters	277	71.3
2	M.Phil.	111	28.7
	Area		
1	Urban	179	46.7
2	Rural	204	53.3
	Occupation		
1	Govt Job	150	39.3
2	Private Job	105	27.4
3	Other	128	33.3
	Tehsil		
1	D.G Khan	178	46.7

#### Frequency Distribution for Demographic Analysis

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2	Taunsa	99	26
3	Tribal Area	88	22.7
4	KotChutta	18	4.7
Total		383	100

In table-1 the analysis at the basis of demographics and their percentages are detailed. Total 383 took part in the responding the questionnaire.

## Table 2

## Frequency Distribution for Barriers faced by female in acquiring higher education

Sr#	Statements of Questions	SA f(%)	A f(%)	UD f(%)	D f(%)	SD f(%)	М	SD
1	Absence of girl's schools is a major barrier in female higher education.	176(46)	118(31)	57(15)	24(6)	8(2)	4.13	1
2	Provision of poor-quality education is a prime factor in lowering female literacy rate.	149(39)	156(41)	50(13)	20(5)	8(2)	4.10	.95
3	Lack of basic infrastructure hinders female higher education.	138(36)	156(41)	50(13)	23(6)	16(4)	4	1.04
4	Lack of number of female teachers is main reason of lesser literacy rate of girls.	134(35)	149(39)	54(14)	38(10)	8(2)	3.90	1.05
5	Uneducated mothers think that educated girls show poor attitude towards domestic work.	115(30)	134(35)	80(21)	42(11)	12(3)	3.78	1.07
6	Poor decision making of female is one of major hindrance in higher education of female.	122(32)	149(39)	50(13)	46(12)	16(4)	3.82	1.12
7	Lack of guidance and counseling at school is main barrier in the higher literacy rate of female education.	157(41)	134(35)	65(17)	23(6)	4(1)	4.10	.93
8	Early marriage of girls is basic barrier in female higher education.	157(41)	134(35)	49(13)	27(7)	16(4)	4.02	1.08
9	Lack of adult literacy programs is main obstacle to female higher education.	138(36)	138(36)	65(17)	38(10)	4(1)	3.96	1.01
10	Culture of tribal areas does not allow girls to do any kind of job.	125(33)	146(38)	54(14)	42(11)	16(4)	3.82	1.20
11	The norms of tribal areas do not permit the girls to travel without Mahram if schools are at long	125(33)	146(38)	73(19)	23(6)	16(4)	3.90	1.05

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#### distance.

In table 2 the Barriers faced by female in acquiring higher education are listed and response is recorded in terms of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

#### Table 3

Frequency Distribution	for Impacts o	f cultural norms on	female education
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Sr#	Statements of Questions	SA f(%)	A f(%)	UD f(%)	D f(%)	SD f(%)	М	SD
1	Tribal cultural norms affect female higher education.	137(36)	161(42)	43(11)	27(7)	15(4)	3.99	1.05
2	Honor issue is a major obstacle in enhancement of female literacy rate.	126(33)	154(40)	57(15)	38(10)	8(2)	3.87	1.11
3	Perception of future societal role of female is to look after her husband.	111(29)	172(45)	50(13)	27(7)	23(6)	3.83	1.10
4	In tribal perception educated women deviate from decisions taken by men	88(23)	188(48)	57(15)	42(11)	8(2)	3.78	1.01
5	Availability of schools at for long distances.	130(34)	157(41)	61(16)	27(7)	8(2)	3.93	.98
6	People of tribal areas want to bind their girls as housewife.	130(34)	157(41)	61(16)	27(7)	8(2)	3.73	1.16
7	Highly educated females commit immorality.	100(26)	119(31)	57(15)	84(22)	23(6)	3.47	1.27
8	Higher education of girls promotes the demand of undue freedom that is against the tribal norms.	80(21)	134(35)	73(19)	73(19)	23(6)	3.45	1.19

In table 3 the Impacts of cultural norms on female education are listed and response is recorded in terms of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

#### **Inferential Statistics**

#### Table 4

#### Independent Sample t-test for Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.	
Masters	272	43.77	7.39	381	.50	.61	
M.Phil.	111	43.06	8.51				

#### \*P > .05 Level of Significance

Table-4 describes that there is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents regarding cultural barriers faced by women in acquiring higher education in tribal areas of Pakistan at the basis of qualification.

#### Table 5

Independent Sample t-test for Qualification of Respondents
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Area	Ν	М	SD	df	t	Sig.
Urban	176	43.95	7.07	381	.56	.57
Rural	207	43.23	8.25			

\**P* > .05 Level of Significance

Table-5 demonstrates that there is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents regarding cultural barriers faced by women in acquiring higher education in tribal areas of Pakistan at the basis of area.

#### Table 6

One-Way ANOVA	test for Age	of Respondents
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Age of Respondents	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Groups	834.83	3	278.27		
Within Groups	8029.85	379	54.99	5.06	.002
Total	8864.69	382			

#### \*P < .05 Level of Significance

Table-6 describes that there is a significant difference in the opinion of respondents regarding cultural barriers faced by women in acquiring higher education in tribal areas of Pakistan at the basis of age.

#### Table 7

One-Way ANOVA test for Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Groups	131.35	2	65.67		
Within Groups	8733.34	147	59.41	1.10	.33
Total	8864.69	149			

## \*P > .05 Level of Significance

Table-7 demonstrates that there is no significant difference regarding cultural barriers faced by women in acquiring higher education in tribal areas of Pakistan at the basis of occupation.

Table-8 demonstrates that there is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents regarding cultural barriers faced by women in acquiring higher education in tribal areas of Pakistan at the basis of tehsil of respondents.

## Table 8

Tehsil	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f		
Between Groups	29.54	3	9.84			
Within Groups	8835.15	379	60.51	.16		
Total	8864.69	382				

Sig.

.92

One-Way ANOVA test for Tehsil of Respondents

\*P > .05 Level of Significance

#### 4.1 Discussion

The study was conducted to explore the role of family in promoting female education. Secondly this study was conducted to illustrate the barriers lowering female education in such areas. Thirdly this study clarifies that the culture itself is not a barrier in female education. The majority of mountain residents is financially destitute, has no educational facilities for their daughters. The women of such families face educational trials and are not fostered. They are deprived of transportation services. The literacy rate depends directly on 2 important factors: (a) easy access to facilities and (b) social motivation. Facilities motivate and encourage the development of facilities. In terms of facility and motivation, the tribal population of the Dera Ghazi Khan is comparatively poor (Jamshaid, 2020).

## 5 Conclusion & Recommendations

This study aimed to discuss the role of family in promoting female education in tribal areas. Parents play a significant role in promoting female education. Educational level, Economic status, Occupation of parents, Motivational level of parents and Decision taking power of parents directly impact female education. Secondly the aim of study is discussion about the obstacles faced by girls in acquiring education in tribal areas. Lack of basic infrastructure, Absence of girl's schools, Lack of female teachers, Poor quality education, Lack of supervision of school, Early marriage, and Lack of adult literacy programs are major obstacles that hinders female higher education. The reason behind the low literacy rate of female in tribal areas is lack of facilities, institutes, and most importantly negligence from the state had kept the tribal women apart from her basic right; quality education. The study found that lack of female school teachers and untrained teachers, one school one teacher, unauthorized and uneducated mothers, early marriages of girls, lack of adult literacy programs and lack of supervision of schools are the major barriers in female education.

It is recommended that awareness campaigns should be launched to reduce the Cultural Barriers Faced by Women in Acquiring Higher Education in Tribal Areas of Pakistan. Expanding educational investment according to suggested UNESCO levels required to comply with the rights to education obligations. Facilitating pupils with free or inexpensive transportation travelling greater distances to a government school or in harsh climates.

It is also recommended that elevating the federal power in supporting provincial governments in education in order to address gender imbalances. Increasing national matrimonial age to 18 unfailingly. Ensuring enough border walls and accessibility to potable drinking water is

available in every school. Facilitating the girls from tribal areas with funds and scholarships. Ensure the availability of free books and notes to underprivileged girls.

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