

The Influence of Poverty and Parental Literacy on Educational Access among Christian Children from Brick Kiln Families in Punjab: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

This study explored the influence of socio-economic status, parental education and literacy and educational challenges on children's educational access in Christian brick kiln communities of Punjab, Pakistan. The study utilized a quantitative research design with 383 respondents who were gathered with survey questionnaire. The data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis such as mean and standard deviation. It found that poverty, child labour, low literacy of parents, poor education facilities and social discrimination have a significant impact in the education participation of children. The financial constraints and child labour had a significant impact on school attendance and continuity, with the high degree of agreement among respondents, and the parents' limited literacy was also thought to have a negative effect on school support at home. Overall, the study revealed that institutional obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure, limited government support and the absence of inclusive education policies also hinder access to quality education. Further, financial support, transport facilities, scholarship schemes, and gender sensitive learning environment were identified by respondents as effective programs to enhance access to education. The study identifies the need for a comprehensive approach of socio-economic and educational interventions to guarantee equitable educational opportunities to children of the margins.

The Keywords: Socio-economic status, parents' literacy, access to education, child labour, brick kiln communities, marginalised children, Pakistan.

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Introduction

Education is recognized as a basic human right and one of the best methods of social and economic development. It is an important aspect of poverty reduction, equality, enhancing living standards, and social mobility. Education also allows people to grow into their knowledge, skills and awareness that adds to the good of society and national development. However, access to quality education is still unequal in developing countries like Pakistan particularly for the marginalized community and the economically weaker community. The Christian community in Brick Kiln business in Punjab, Pakistan is one of the most overlooked communities in this area. They live in extreme poverty, in bonded labour, with low literacy and high level of child labour and social discrimination which all have an adverse effect on the education offered to their children. Due to the lack of access to education, the brick kiln Christian children are creating a significant social problem as it helps in perpetuating poverty, illiteracy, child labour exploitation, and intergenerational social exclusion (UNESCO, 2020).

The brick kiln sector is one of the major informal employment areas in Pakistan, employing around 4.5 million people in about 20,000 brick kilns all over Pakistan (Radio Veritas Asia, 2023). Many of them work in minority Christian communities and are engaged in bonded labor. Bonded labour, as described by Al Jazeera (2019), is a form of slavery in the modern world, where people are caught in cycles of debt, and are forced to work in poor conditions for generations to come, directly with the kiln owner. Due to low income and the ever-rising indebtedness, it is forcing whole families, including women and children, to engage in brick making to achieve the daily production target. The children are often engaged in physically strenuous activities like carrying, molding and stacking bricks for extended periods of time in difficult working conditions. Consequently, children are not going to school and many do not re-enter or are forced out of school prematurely due to the need for economic survival. In this situation, the families are stuck in an intergenerational cycle of poverty, illiteracy and exploitation in the labor market (Ahsan, 2020).

Among the brick kiln family's poverty is one of the most serious obstacles to access to education. The vast majority of workers receive low wages, and these wages are not enough to cover the cost of a basic standard of living for their households, including costs for food, housing, health and education. Educational costs like admission fees, uniforms, books, transportation and stationery are often difficult to afford for families who are living on the edge of survival. Families also bear indirect costs of school as a result of children's inability to work in the household and family. This means that children have to work if they are to earn a living. The research shows that poverty has a substantial impact in lowering children's school attendance and raising the dropout rate in the low-income

population (Khan & Shah, 2022). UNESCO (2020) also noted that children in low-income families are more at risk of missing school, poor performance, and a lack of education attainment. Poverty exists in brick kiln communities and it hampers access to education, while also perpetuating social inequality and economic dependence.

Brick kiln workers are also subjected to poor living conditions which further increases the educational deprivation. The majority of kiln workers reside in makeshift settlements near the kiln/worksites with limited access to clean water and health services, sanitation and electricity. These settlements are frequently in isolated rural areas with limited access to schools. Schools are often either not available or are poorly equipped with classrooms, teachers, furniture, learning materials, etc. Poor educational infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms diminish the quality of education that is available to the marginalized children. The World Bank (2021) states that educational infrastructure and learning environments are important factors that affect children's educational participation and achievement. ICIMOD (2022) also observed that a large proportion of brick kiln families continue to be socially and economically vulnerable as they live in the accommodation provided by the brick kiln owner, restricting their movement and access to public services, such as education. This creates a set up where many children cannot access educational opportunities due to these structural inequalities.

Another key driver to children's educational access and achievement is parental literacy. Parents who are literate and have a knowledge of education are more inclined to acknowledge the value of education and to ensure that their children are at school regularly. Parents can educate their children, help with homework, contact teachers in a positive way and provide positive learning environments at home. Illiterate parents, on the other hand, are unaware about the significance of education in their children's future lives and tend to focus on day-to-day survival rather than investing in their children's education. Raza et al. (2022) stated that children's educational results are adversely impacted by low levels of parental literacy due to its inability to offer kids guidance and motivation in their educational development. Children have weak aspirations to education and no support in the brick kiln communities where adult literacy levels are very low. Parental illiteracy is thus an important factor which affects school enrolment, attendance and school performance of children.

Child labour is one of the most conspicuous effects of poverty and out-of-school attendance in brick kiln settlements. The children doing work in the kilns are engaged in strenuous activities for extended periods in harsh working conditions. This participation in labour activities takes time away from school attendance, schoolwork and learning. Studies have shown that child labour has detrimental effects on children's physical, psychological,

cognitive and educational development (Bhardwaj et al., 2023). Children get permanently out of school as they are expected to participate in economically productive work for the survival of the family from a very early age. The ongoing involvement of children in labour activities hinders their access to knowledge and skills for social and economic mobility in the future. Thus, poverty breeds child labour, child labour hinders education, and the lack of education perpetuates poverty from generation to generation (Nawaz & Saeed, 2021).

There is also a considerable amount of religious discrimination and social exclusion which leads to the educational marginalization of Christian children in Pakistan. Christian communities are more likely to be at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder and face discrimination in schools, workplaces and housing. A Christian child is at risk of being bullied, excluded and discriminated against by fellow school children and teachers in schools. Such discriminatory treatment adversely impacts children's confidence, engagement and learning motivation, Barnabas Aid (2023) reported. These experiences lead to higher dropout and lower education hopes of minority children. Christian brick kiln children are in a particularly vulnerable situation in the educational system due to the combined impact of poverty, bonded labor and social discrimination (Ali & Chaudhry, 2021).

There are two theories that can explain the relationship between poverty and parental literacy and access to education: Human Capital Theory and Social Exclusion Theory. According to Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), education is a means of investment that will increase the skill level and productivity of humans and also extend their opportunity to improve their economic situation in the future. Where families see the value in education, they are more inclined to invest in their children's education because they know that it will benefit their children in the long run. But poor families tend to have limited financial resources to invest in higher education, which means that their children have fewer learning opportunities and options for mobility. Social Exclusion Theory outlines the exclusion of marginalized groups in terms of structural inequalities and discriminatory practices in the social, economic, and political sphere. The Christian brick kiln families are excluded due to the three levels of poverty, bonded labor, and religious discrimination which limit their access to quality education and social mobility of the family.

Although there has been some Government and non-Government activity around educational access to disadvantaged community, there are still challenges. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and Ehsaas Education Stipends aim at lowering the cost of education, whereas community-based schools and educational support programs like The Citizens Foundation (TCF) and The Indus Resource Center (IRC) have been set up. But these efforts are not enough as they do not address the structural causes of education

deprivation, especially poverty, bonded labour and social discrimination. Thus, there are compelling reasons for comprehensive policies and interventions aimed at: enhancing education access, alleviating poverty, raising parents' literacy, and safeguarding children from labour exploitation. To effectively design educational interventions and enhance the education prospects of the Christian brick kiln children in Pakistan, Punjab, it is important to first grasp the relationship between poverty, parental literacy, and educational access (Iqbal, 2022).

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study:

- To gain insight into the life stories of Christian children of Brick Kiln parents and their experiences of access to education.
- To examine how deprivation affects educational opportunities for these children.
- To investigate the influence of parents' literacy ability on educational opportunities.

The findings of this study could be of great significance to policymakers, teachers, NGOs, religious institutions, social activists, future researchers, and it might help to create a better understanding of the educationally challenging situations of Christian children of brick kiln families in Pakistan. The results may be useful for policy makers to create inclusive education policies, scholarship programs, and child labour prevention policies to enhance education access for marginalized communities. This study could be applied in education to establish supportive learning environments, minimize discrimination and provide financial aid for less privileged students. NGOs and religious institutions could be more effective in designing specific initiatives like free education, mentoring, and child rights and education awareness creation programs. The study could also help to inform Christian communities and social activists on the need for equal access to education and socio-economic reforms, through evidence-based advocacy campaigns. Moreover, this study could be helpful in the literature because of the lack of information on poverty, minority education and minority status in Pakistan. The future researchers can utilize this study as a base to debate on other related issues like gender disparity, literacy achievement, and long-term socio-economic effects of education on brick kiln communities. The study overall could inspire approaches that foster social justice, equality and educational empowerment.

Research Methodology

This study adopted the quantitative cross sectional survey design. This design was found suitable as it allowed the researcher to collect numerical data and explore the effect of poverty and parental literacy on access to education among Christian children of brick kiln families in Punjab. The study was directed towards discovery of relationships among the variables analyzed and not detailed in the personal experiences.

Population

The total population of Punjab, Pakistan as per latest population census report (2023) is 127,333,305. Of these minorities there are 2,870,408. Moreover, Christians are 2,458,924. This represents 2.25% of the minorities, including 1.93% Christians.

Around 94,590 families are likely working at the 9459 brick kilns (active) in Punjab.

This study was limited to 3 Cities (Table). 3.1) each from various regions of Punjab, Pakistan i.e.

1. Upper Punjab	=	Rawalpindi	=	220 brick kilns
2. Central Punjab	=	Faisalabad	=	607
brick kilns				
3. Lower Punjab	=	Multan	=	614 brick kilns
4. Total			=	1441
brick kilns				

On an average 49 (female=10, and male=39) workers are employed per kiln in Punjab, therefore the number of workers likely in these three cities were 70,609.

Sample Size

As per De Morgan Table and online sample size calculator (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>), the sample size was **383** participants.

Sampling Technique

In the quantitative part of this study, a multistage sampling proportionate sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of the parents, teachers and school administrators from the primary schools in Brick Kiln community.

A multistage proportionate random sampling

Multistage sampling is an efficient probability sampling method that involves selecting samples at two or more stages, typically using a combination of different sampling methods like stratified, cluster, and random sampling to yield a manageable and representative sample from a large and diverse population (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Multistage proportionate random sampling is a complicated probability sampling method that utilizes multiple levels of random sampling with each level employing a proportionate allocation. It is similar to cluster sampling and stratified sampling, but usually subdivides a population into smaller and smaller groups (clusters) at each stage, and keeps the proportions in each stage like the proportions in the population.

The primary schools in the first stage were sampled using a stratified random sampling technique, which was designed to account for important contextual differences between schools by stratifying schools by type (public versus private) and geographical region (urban versus rural). Strata were randomly sampled with clusters of schools.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation) were used to investigate relationships between variables.

Table1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Socio-Economic Status (SES) (N = 383)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
A1	Family difficulties meeting basic needs affect school attendance	3.90	0.74
A2	Choices between education and other immediate family needs	3.88	0.77
A3	Child misses' school due to inability to afford transport/costs	3.90	0.74
A4	Worry about paying child's school fees and related expenses	3.94	0.76
A5	Financial strain limits access to learning materials	3.86	0.75
A6	Better economic situation would improve child's school chance	3.84	0.77
A7	Without financial support, future educational opportunities limited	3.89	0.74
A8	Prioritize work over education due to child labor income	3.89	0.73

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
Overall Scale Average		3.89	0.53

The Socio-Economic Status (SES) scale descriptive analysis shows that the children's access to education in brick kiln communities is clearly affected by their economic hardship. The overall mean score ($M = 3.887$, $SD = 0.534$) is high, showing high level of agreement among the respondents that socio-economic problems are important obstacles to education. The financial problems directly affect school participation strongly, especially when it comes to basic household needs ($M = 3.898$), transportation and educational expenses ($M = 3.896$) and paying school fees ($M = 3.937$). The results underscore the harsh economic realities faced by low-income families.

The findings also show that the households' survival needs are often the priority over education. Poverty often means that school is a low priority compared to immediate family needs ($M = 3.883$) as indicated in the agreement about choices between education and immediate family needs. The same applies to financial pressure that does not allow for access to learning materials ($M = 3.864$), which could have a negative impact on children's learning performance. Similarly, when asked about prioritizing work over education due to child labour income, there is also high agreement ($M = 3.890$) which also indicates dependency on children's income. In general, the results validate that socio-economic status is an important factor affecting access to and continuity in education, highlighting the importance of financial support, subsidized education, and social protection programmes to ensure the education of marginalized families.

Table2

Mean and Standard Deviation of Parents' Literacy Level (PLL) (N = 383)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
B1	Reading ability positively affects child's performance in school	3.76	0.83
B2	Difficulty helping child with schoolwork due to limited literacy	3.71	0.81
B3	Literate parents provide better educational guidance and support	3.69	0.82
B4	Unable to read progress reports or communicate with teachers	3.73	0.83

B5	Effort to improve own literacy to better support child	3.73	0.82
B6	Lack of education limits involvement in child's educational journey	3.74	0.84
B7	If more literate, could actively advocate for child's needs	3.73	0.79
B8	Spouse's literacy level critical in navigating education system	3.77	0.80
B9	Child's educational success closely linked to parents' education	3.75	0.80
Overall Scale Average	—	3.73	0.61

The descriptive analysis of the Parents' Literacy Level (PLL) scale shows that parental education level greatly affects children's educational experiences and academic results. The overall mean score ($M = 3.733$, $SD = 0.611$) is generally high and indicates that respondents agree to an extent that limited parental literacy is an important barrier in the way of children's learning and school participation. Children's academic performance is positively affected by their ability to read ($M = 3.76$) and literate parents give better education direction and support ($M = 3.69$) as strongly agreed by the respondents. The results show that the knowledge of parents is a key factor in the education development.

The results also show that there are challenges facing parents with low levels of literacy. Difficulty in supporting children with schoolwork ($M = 3.71$) and not understanding progress reports or being able to communicate effectively with teachers ($M = 3.73$) are also factors that impact parental involvement in education. In addition, agreement with items about children's education and parent education ($M = 3.75$) and spouse's education and literacy ($M = 3.77$) indicates an awareness of intergenerational effects of literacy. The results overall reveal that parental literacy is a vital factor that affects access and achievement in education, and this calls for the need of adult literacy programs and awareness campaigns in the marginalized communities.

Table3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Educational Access (EA) (N = 383)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
C1	School provides all necessary resources for quality education	2.85	0.78

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
C2	Child faces challenges attending school due to travel distance	2.83	0.83
C3	School well-equipped with basic facilities (water, toilets, classrooms)	2.85	0.82
C4	Teachers provide adequate support for child's academic progress	2.82	0.83
C5	Child often absent due to need to help with brick kiln work	2.80	0.80
C6	Education system inclusive and accessible for all backgrounds	2.84	0.77
C7	Satisfied with safety and security provided by school	2.77	0.77
C8	School encourages community involvement and parental engagement	2.84	0.75
C9	Government provides sufficient support for education without barriers	2.83	0.81
C10	Child has access to education despite challenging socio-economic conditions	2.83	0.77
C11	School curriculum aligns with needs of marginalized communities	2.85	0.77
C12	Improving school accessibility would significantly increase attendance	2.83	0.82
Overall Average	Scale —	2.83	0.57

The descriptive analysis of the Educational Access (EA) scale shows that the access to quality education for children in brick kiln communities is still restricted and irregular. The overall mean score ($M = 2.827$, $SD = 0.565$) indicates that overall, the participants were not satisfied with nor were they certain about the quality of educational opportunities and institutional support. Schools offering adequate spaces ($M = 2.85$) including classrooms, sanitation, and utilities; and schools that offer proper educational facilities ($M = 2.85$) were relatively low ratings of agreement, with respondents being worried about the lack of these facilities and infrastructure.

Barriers to accessibility were also identified as being a significant concern. For the girls, the difficulties in attending school because of the distance to school ($M = 2.83$) and

absenteeism due to involvement in brick kiln work ($M = 2.80$) are examples of how geographical and socio-economic pressures affect school attendance. Moreover, teacher support ($M = 2.82$), government support without barriers ($M = 2.83$) and school safety ($M = 2.77$) showed low agreement, indicating a lack of institutional support for marginalised children. Some respondents also felt that schools were not inclusive or very little parental involvement was taking place. The results generally show that structural, economic and institutional factors limit access to education and that greater investment in better infrastructure, transport and inclusive policies and better educational support systems is required.

Table 4

Mean and Standard Deviation of Barriers to Educational Access (BEA) (N = 383)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
D1	Child labor seen as necessary for family survival (limits schooling)	3.90	0.77
D2	School administration resists addressing financial challenges	3.88	0.75
D3	Religious discrimination affects education and resources	3.85	0.77
D4	Insufficient programs for marginalized children's education	3.85	0.75
D5	Inadequate school facilities prevent full participation	3.86	0.80
D6	Curriculum does not address needs of low-income families	3.84	0.74
D7	Child faces bullying or exclusion due to socio-economic status	3.83	0.77
D8	Education system ignores challenges of marginalized families	3.83	0.70
D9	Lack of community support affects child's education	3.90	0.78
D10	Gender inequality limits girls' access to education	3.86	0.76
D11	Lack of safe spaces discourages girls' attendance	3.82	0.74
D12	Social stigma prevents low-income children from entering schools	3.85	0.79
Overall Average	Scale —	3.86	0.55

The BEA (Barriers to Educational Access) is interpreted as follows:

The descriptive analysis of the Barriers to Educational Access (BEA) scale shows that there are substantial structural, socio-economic and institutional barriers for children in brick kiln communities to access education. The overall mean score ($M = 3.856$, $SD = 0.547$) provides overall good degree of agreement for the respondents, suggesting that these barriers are very much entrenched and are prevalent in the educational system. Economic hardship and child labour came out as major concerns, with a high consensus among the respondents that child labour is essential to family survival ($M = 3.90$) and lack of community support is having a negative effect on children's education ($M = 3.90$). The findings show the impact of poverty and external support on participation in school.

Institutional challenges also were conspicuous. Respondents noted that financial problems in the school are not adequately dealt with ($M = 3.88$) and there are too few programmes for marginalised children ($M = 3.85$). Religious discrimination ($M = 3.85$) and bullying based on socio-economic status ($M = 3.83$) are other social barriers associated with educational exclusion, as is social stigma that stops children from entering school ($M = 3.85$). Gender-based issues such as inequities in educational access for girls ($M = 3.86$) and lack of safe learning environment ($M = 3.82$) are also significant challenges. The results indicate that the educational barriers are multi-faceted and that it is important to implement holistic economic, institutional and community-based interventions to promote equitable educational access.

Table5

Mean and Standard Deviation of Initiatives for Improving Educational Access (IEA) (N = 383)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
E1	Free or subsidized school supplies would make education more accessible	4.28	0.68
E2	More schools within walking distance would ease regular attendance	4.28	0.64
E3	Scholarship programs for low-income families would increase enrollment	4.26	0.67
E4	After-school support programs would help disadvantaged children perform better	4.24	0.65
E5	Need for safe, inclusive, and gender-sensitive learning environments	4.28	0.70

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
E6	Compulsory education policies would ensure no child is left behind	4.32	0.65
E7	Financial literacy programs for parents would support children's education	4.24	0.69
E8	Community-based initiatives involving parents/leaders would increase enrollment	4.27	0.67
E9	Awareness campaigns on child labor laws and education importance	4.27	0.66
E10	Vocational training and skills programs as alternative education pathways	4.27	0.66
E11	Transportation services would reduce barriers to school attendance	4.30	0.66
E12	Gender equality programs would ensure girls' equal access to education	4.26	0.67
E13	Building awareness of children's right to education shifts cultural attitudes	4.25	0.67
Overall Average	Scale —	4.27	0.42

The interpretation of Initiatives for Improving Educational Access (IEA)

The descriptive analysis of the Initiatives for Improving Educational Access (IEA) scale shows high levels of consensus among respondents about the priority given to specific interventions to increase educational opportunities in brick kiln communities. The overall mean score ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.419$) indicates a high degree of consensus and among those who responded, there was strong support for practical measures to address obstacles to schooling. Free or subsidized school supplies ($M = 4.28$) and scholarship programs for low-income families ($M = 4.26$) were especially popular among financial assistance initiatives. These results highlight the importance of economic assistance to boosting enrolments and participation.

There was also a high level of appreciation for access related activities. A large majority agreed that an increase in the number of schools within walking distance of the community would increase regular school attendance ($M = 4.28$) and that transportation services would increase regular attendance ($M = 4.30$). The interventions with the highest

level of agreement were institutional and policy-based interventions, such as compulsory education policies that ensure that no child is left behind ($M = 4.32$), which was reflective of confidence in policy-based solutions. In addition, the respondents endorsed community-based measures, awareness campaigns and gender sensitive learning environments. Overall, the results reflect general support for a holistic strategy which includes financial support, infrastructure, inclusive policies, community engagement and gender equality programmes to secure equitable access to education for out-of-school marginalised children.

Findings

Analyses of the result shows that socio-economic, parental, institutional and structural factors play a significant role in children's access to education in brick kiln communities. The findings suggest that socio-economic status (SES) is an important factor influencing educational participation, as the respondents strongly agreed that poverty, the inability to afford school-related costs, the cost of transportation and dependence on child labor negatively impact school participation and continuity ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.53$). When families face hardship, they typically have to prioritize their survival needs before their children's education, reducing their children's educational opportunities.

These results also show that the level of education of parents matters to children's education. Parents who can read and write well recognize how they can help with academic activities, communicate with teachers, and guide their children's learning, while parents with low literacy skills have low levels of educational involvement and support ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.61$). This emphasizes the role of education in the intergenerational issues of marginalized communities.

Lack of educational facilities, lack of educational resources, distance, child labour and weak institutional support were identified as constraints on educational access. The overall educational access mean score ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 0.57$) is relatively low, which indicates low satisfaction regarding the accessibility and quality of the educational services received by children in brick kiln communities. The issues of the poor infrastructure, unsafe environment, lack of teacher assistance and inadequate government support were of particular concern to respondents.

In addition, the study highlighted a number of factors that affect educational access such as poverty, child labour, social discrimination, gender inequalities and institutional neglect. Participants strongly agreed that these barriers are common and entrenched in the educational system ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.55$). Further, gender-based issues, social stigma, bullying and absence of support within the schools and communities create an environment

for educational exclusion of the marginalised children. Finally, there is significant agreement for work to be done on enhancing educational access. The financial support, scholarship programs, transportation facilities, compulsory education policies, community-based awareness campaigns, and gender-sensitive learning environments were highlighted as their importance ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.42$). These results indicate the need for a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to tackling educational inequality and providing an equitable learning opportunity for children in brick kiln communities.

Discussion

The results of the present research shows that socio-economic disadvantage is one of the serious challenges faced by children in brick kiln communities in accessing education. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that poverty, cost of school attendance, transportation costs and reliance on child labour have a tremendous impact on reduced enrolment in school. The results are in line with existing evidence that children living in poor families have restricted access to education, as a result of financial instability and social deprivation (UNICEF 2025; World Bank 2022). It also has been found that poverty leads to chronic stress, poor school performance, and long-term educational inequity (Jensen et al., 2023).

The study also underscores the role of parents' literacy in their children's educational outcomes. It was found that literate parents have the ability to help children with school-based learning, communicate with teachers, and provide educational guidance to their children. The results are consistent with research from 2015 to 2025, revealing parental education's positive impact on children's learning success and school retention rates (D'Agostino et al., 2024). Parental illiteracy, thus, contributes to the weakness of parental involvement, thereby, to intergenerational educational disadvantage.

The other significant finding is the lack of educational access and institutional support. The respondents were not happy about the infrastructure, support of teachers, safety and government assistance provided in the schools. Recent studies have also found evidence that marginalized and rural communities may have poor educational facilities, learning opportunities, and limited institutional resources (Global Partnership for Education, 2024). Access to school, i.e., distance to school, and child labour were also cited as some of the important influences on absence and irregular attendance.

The results also show that difficulty in accessing education is multifaceted and encompasses challenges like economic hardship, social discrimination, gender disparities and institutional neglect. Girls were seen as being challenged further because of safety issues and expectations of girls. In fact, based on the available literature, some children are

more likely to be excluded from school than others, including children living in poverty and girls (Paschall et al., 2024; UNICEF, 2025), due to structural inequalities and the limited social support systems.

Lastly, the respondents were very supportive of such measures as financial support, tax breaks for education, transportation services, awareness programs and gender-sensitive learning environments. The findings are in line with current research that has highlighted the need for multifaceted approaches, including economic support, inclusive education policies, and community engagement, to enhance access to education for marginalized groups (GPE, 2024; Poverty Solutions, 2025).

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