

# ***Gender Disparity in Access to Basic Education: The Case Study of Village Thatthi Fareed***

Research Report 2012

***Prepared by:***                      ***Zahid Aqil***

***Research team:***                      ***Zahid Aqil***                      ***(Research Supervisor)***  
   ***Saif Ullah***                      ***(Researcher)***  
   ***Sumaira***                      ***(Research Assistant)***  
   ***Zubair***                      ***(Research Assistant)***



**Good Thinkers Organization for Human Development, Kasur**

*Office: Tehsil Road, Kot Ghulam Muhammad Khan, Kasur (Punjab) Tel: 049-2009890, 2774196  
info@gtopak.org                      www.gtopak.org*

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Literature Review.....	5
Research Methodology .....	7
Village Thatthi Fareed: The Case Study.....	7
An Overview of the Village.....	7
Gender Disparity in Access to Basic Education at Village Thatthi Fareed .....	10
Reasons of Gender Disparity in Access to Basic Education at Village Thatthi Fareed .....	12
Indigenous Model to explain and reduce gender disparity in access to basic education at Village Thatthi Fareed .....	19
Policy Recommendations to reduce gender disparity at village Thatthi Fareed.....	20
Bibliography .....	21

## Introduction

Amartya Sen, in his famous and remarkable work *Development as Freedom*, considers education as an instrumental freedom which enhances other human freedoms and thus contributes to development. He argues that better education for women leads to lower infant mortality and lower fertility, which reinforces the influence of basic education for all. (Sen, 1999)

“Literacy is at the heart of basic education, and is essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing rapid growth of population, and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy”. (UNESCO, 2010: pg # 30)

Education of women is not only necessary because of the great benefits that it renders to them and their families but also because it is a universal fundamental human right which is recognized in Universal Declaration of Human Rights and then reaffirmed in international human rights conventions.(UNESCO, 2010)

Pakistan is the signatory of international declarations and agreements on equality in access to basic education, including World Declaration on Education For All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action for EFA (2000). By signing these declarations and agreements, Pakistan has committed to achieve equality in access to basic education. (UNESCO, 2010)

Dakar Framework for Action for EFA (2000), emphasizes on all of its signatories to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.(UNESCO, 2010)

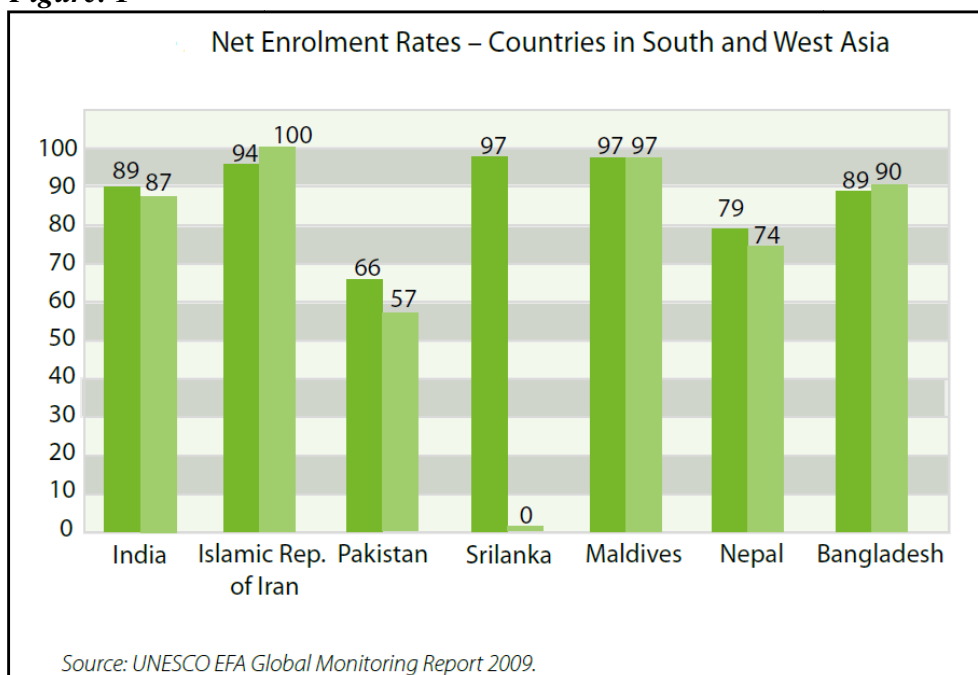
As a signatory of this international agreement, like many other developing countries, Pakistan has made improvements in these goals but has yet not been able to achieve these goals fully by their due period of time. Pakistan is lacking much behind in achieving these goals as compared to most of the other developing countries. [See table: 1, figure: 1]

**Table: 1**

Human Development Index, Public Expenditure on Education and Literacy Rates; Countries in South and West Asia					
Country	Human development index ranking	NER boys	NER girls	Public expenditure on education (as % of GNP)	Literacy rate (aged 15 +)%
Iran	94	94	100	5.2	84
Sri Lanka	99	97	97	5.4	91
Maldives	100	97	97	8.3	97
India	128	89	87	3.3	65
Pakistan	136	66	57	2.7	54
Nepal	142	79	74	3.2	55
Bangladesh	140	89	90	2.8	52

Source: Human Development Report 2007-08, and UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009.

(UNESCO, 2010: pg # 12)

**Figure: 1**

(UNESCO, 2010: pg # 12)

The primary Net Enrolment Rates (NERs) in Pakistan during the period between 2000 and 2008 point out that the NERs for girls are constantly lower than boys, which highlight that girls have less access to primary education than boys in Pakistan. [See table: 2] (UNESCO, 2010)

**Table: 2**

Year	Male NER	Female NER
2000-01	67.5	45.8
2004-05	73.3	55.7
2005-06	56	48
2006-07	60	51
2007-08	59	52
2008-09	61	54

Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Surveys 2001-08.

(UNESCO, 2010: pg # 10)

In spite of its commitment to international agreements and declarations on gender equality in access to basic education, Pakistan, like many other developing countries, has not been able to achieve these desired targets. Figures on primary NERs, in table 2, indicate that Pakistan would even not be able achieve these targets by 2015, last year for the achievement of these goals.

Therefore, it becomes important to investigate the factors which are hindering to achieve these targets.

## Purpose of the Study

This research study attempts to explore the factors which are impeding in Pakistan to achieve the targets of gender equality in access to basic education. Specifically, it attempts to look at the gender disparity in access to basic education with reference to Thatthi Fareed, a village of district Kasur, Punjab. On the basis of the findings of field research at Thatthi Fareed, this study attempts to make some policy recommendations and formulates an indigenous model to reduce the gender disparity in access to basic education there.

## Literature Review

One possible factor for wide gender gaps in education in Pakistan is the difference in labour market returns to male and female education. Labour market returns are higher for men than women education. This motivates the parents to allocate more resources for boys than girls within households.(Aslam, 2007)

Aslam (2009) finds that in Pakistan there are notably higher economic incentives for investment over female than male education. This consideration implies that labour market does not explain lower female schooling in Pakistan. It highlights that parents may have objectives other than maximization of financial returns to family allocation of resources. This puzzle is partly explained by the fact that women's participation is constrained by cultural factors. Among these cultural factors include; unlike sons returns of daughters' education go to their in laws instead of their parents due to cultural practice of parents' preference of living with their sons, non-availability of segregated girls schools, safety concerns, conservatism of attitudes towards female education and employment. Pakistan needs to subsidize girls' schooling until the time that family investment in schooling becomes equal for boys and girls.(Aslam, 2009)

Some countries have implemented gender targeted Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) to clearly address intra-household inequalities in human capital investments. CCT programs targeted to poor households are rapidly becoming a key policy apparatus used by developing countries to lessen poverty and increase human capital. Gender targeted CCT program implemented at middle level in girl schools of 15 out of 34 districts of Punjab was very effective in achieving its goals. The average program impact during the period 2003 to 2005 was an increase of six female students per school in terms of absolute change and an increase of 9 percent in female enrolment in terms of relative change.(Chaudhury & Parajuli, 2006)

Conditional education subsidy programme on school enrolment in Colombia has been effective at increasing enrolment, particularly amongst 14 to 17 year olds, in both rural and urban areas. Males have generally been found to benefit more than females from the programme. After the enrolment rates have increased, now there is a need to effectively redirect the educational resources at other interventions, like improving the school quality rather than increasing school enrolment of young children.(Attanasio, Fitzsimmons, & Gomez, 2005)

Bangladesh has made important gains in rendering primary education accessible to its population. It has made these gains by taking positive discriminatory steps in favour of deprived and marginalized groups. These steps include; The Food For Education (FFE) programme, Female Stipend Programme (FSP), and The BRAC Non-formal Schools Programme. Bangladesh can hope to establish itself as a more equitable society than it is now, if this trend continues.(Chowdhury, Nath, & Choudhury, 2003)

Bangladesh was one of those countries where there was a profound devaluation of women and girls and there was a restriction on their public mobility until the first half of the twentieth century. Gender disparity in access to basic education was also widespread over there. Then certain factors, during the middle of the twentieth century, led to the social change and more gender equality in access to basic education there. These factors include; 1) women were consistently losing faith in marriage as a means of security, for them education of daughters was seen as a source of security which their own lack of education had denied to them 2) Famine of 1970s forced many poor and lower middle class women to work as labourer to contribute to their small household budget which was not sufficient to meet even their basic needs 3) the need of at least primary education to take advantage of new forms of employment opportunities may have added an extra boost to the incentive to educate girls. These factors have significantly contributed in Bangladesh to achieve notable success in expanding primary education, especially for girls, despite of consistent prevalence of widespread poverty and social devaluation of women and girls.(Hossain & Kabear, 2004)

There is an adverse impact of gender disparity in education on rural poverty in Pakistan. Female-male enrolment ratio female-male literacy ratio, female-male ratio of total years of schooling, female- male ratio of earners and education of the head of household have significant negative impact on rural poverty. Household size and female-male ratio in the household have strong positive association with the likelihood of poverty. The inverse relationship between gender gap in education and rural poverty advocates that education provides more employment opportunities and rejects poverty in developing countries like Pakistan.(Chauhdry, 2009)

Under-enrolment of school age children is caused by poverty both at national and household levels, but the gendered results of under-enrolment are not because of poverty rather the product of cultural practice.(Colclough, Rose, & Tembon, 2000)

Parents may desire to educate both sons and daughters but poverty hinders the enrolment of both boys and girls. Direct and opportunity costs are other factors which influence the parents while deciding to send their children to school. Fear of negative social pressure, distant school location, presence of male teachers and fear of negative gossip are some of the factors which are particularly associated with girls' under-enrolment.(Hunte, 2009)

The Primary Net Enrolment Rates (NER) during the period 2000 to 2008 reveal that Net Enrolment Rates for girls are constantly lower than boys which highlight that in Pakistan girls have less access to education than boys. NER figures disclose the fact that female are facing barriers in access to basic education and this problem is found to be severe in rural and remote districts of the country. Reasons for gender disparity in access to education include; poverty, absence of free and compulsory education to all, low budget allocation to education at national

level, gendered division of labour, cultural norms restricting the freedom of movement of girls and women, conflict, cultural preference for male children, school shortage, and shortage of female teachers. There is need to; allocate more budget for education, build more schools, train more teachers, make primary education free and compulsory both for boys and girls, introduce flexible school timings and region specific calendars, establish monitoring and evaluation mechanism, improve advocacy, improve coordination, and ensure that policies support equal opportunities for employment and equal wages.(UNESCO, 2010)

## Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is both quantitative as well as qualitative. In quantitative methodology, household survey method is used. There were total 50 households in the village. As the population was too small so we increased the sample size to get more diverse and representative views. So, we decided to take 60% households as our sample size, which was estimated to be 30 households. Out of the 50 households 30 were randomly selected. These 30 households were visited and interviewed one by one to fill the household survey form.

In qualitative tools, Key Informant Interviews, and Focussed Group Discussion (FGDs) were employed to make the study more enrich. Two Key Informant Interviews, one FGD with parents, and three small interviews with a Key Informant and children were done. However, this study is also enriched with a wide range of scholarly literature on gender disparity and its impact on development.

## Village Thatthi Fareed: The Case Study

### An Overview of the Village

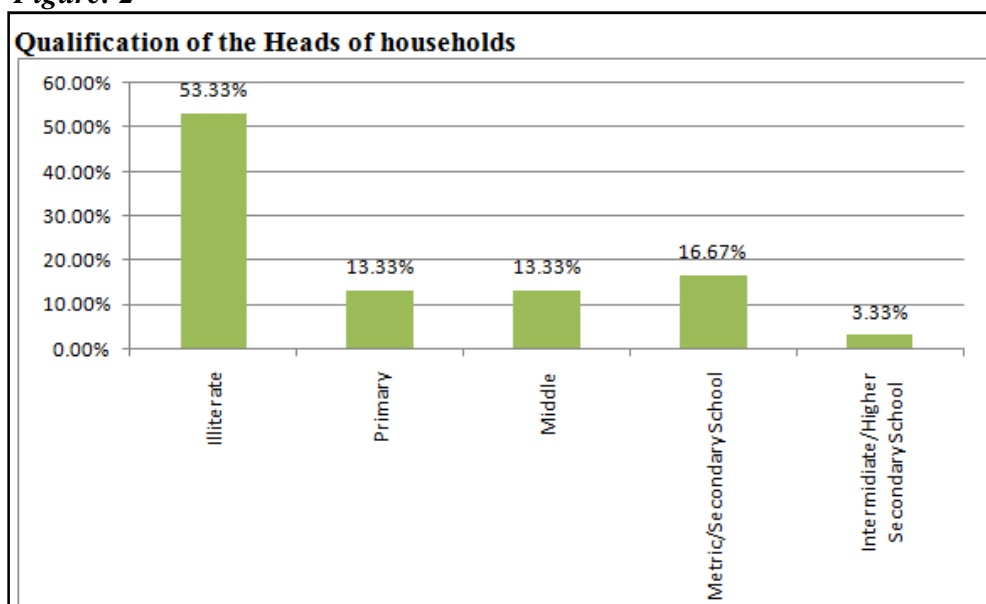
Thatthi Fareed is a small village of union council Hussain Khan Wala in district Kasur. It is situated near Sajluj River. Ranga Wala border is in its South on a distance of 4 KM. This border is the boundary line between India and Pakistan. Village Ratna Wala is in its East on 3 KM distance while Ranga Wala is also in its East but on 2 KM distance. Village Bakhsha Wala is situated on 3 KM distance in its West. The village is on a distance of 13 KM from town Hussain Khan Wala while it is 26 KM away from Kasur city.

Total households in the village are 50 while its total estimated population is 339. Average household size is 6.77 persons. Estimated percentage of male population in the village is 45.71% whereas estimated percentage of female population in the village is 54.29%.



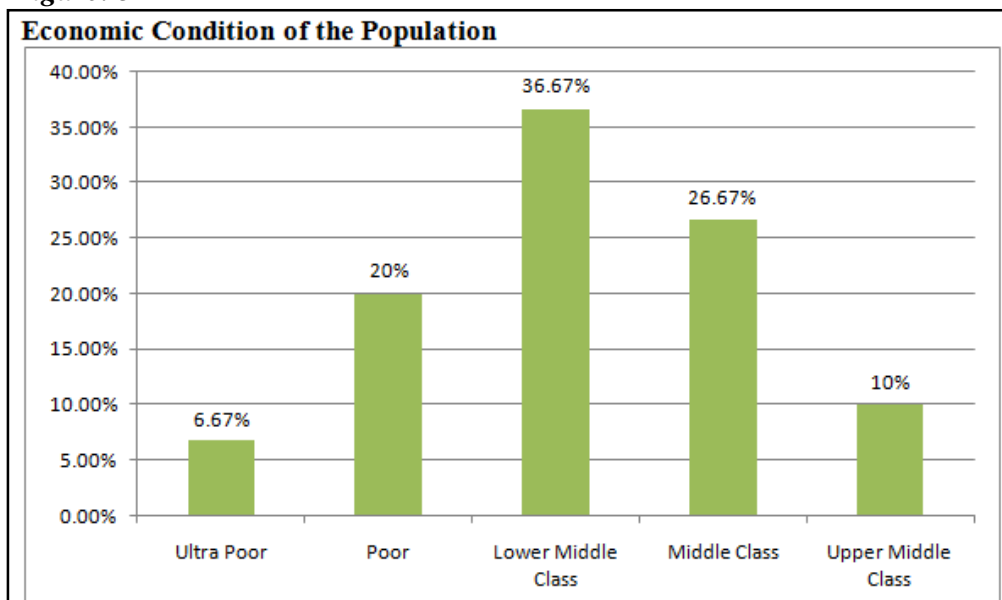
A View of Village Thatthi Fareed

53.33% of the total heads of households are illiterate, 13.33% are primary pass, 13.33% are middle pass, 16.67% are secondary school pass while only 3.33% have qualification up to the higher secondary school level. [See figure: 2]

**Figure: 2**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

Majority of the population belongs to the lower middle class. Out of the total population 6.67% is ultra poor, 20% poor, 36.67% belong to lower middle class, 26.67% is from middle class and 10% belong to upper middle class. [See figure: 3]

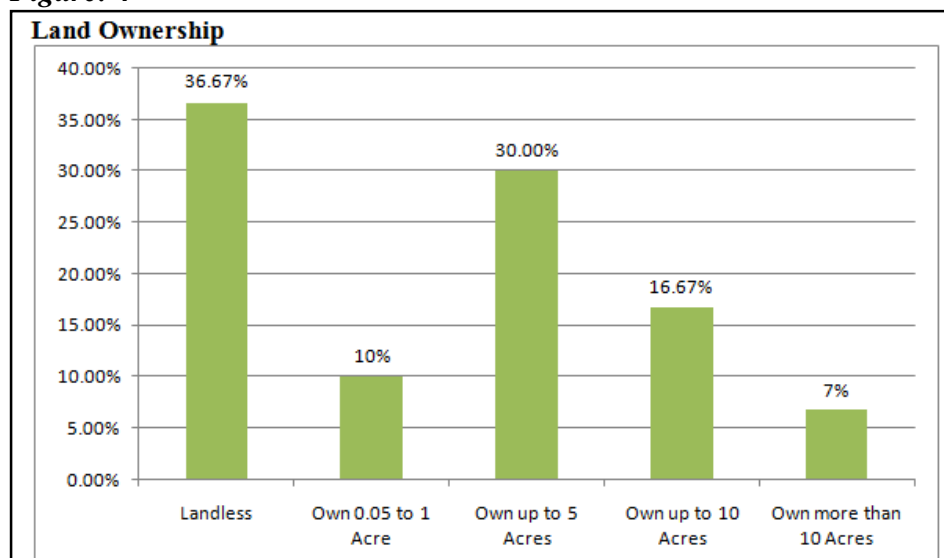
**Figure: 3**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey



Majority of population is either landless or small land holder. There are very few people who own more than 10 acres land. And no one in the village owns more than 15 acres land. [See figure: 4]

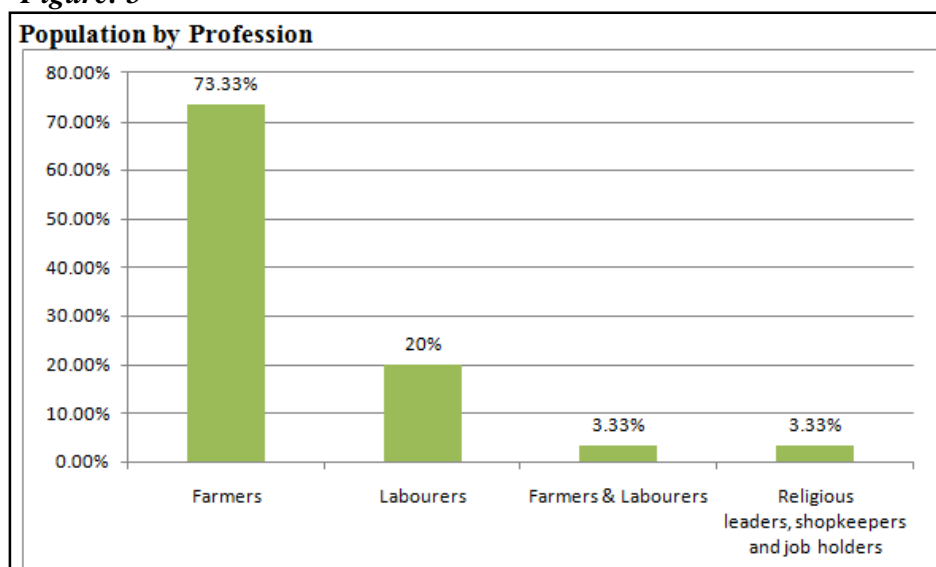
**Figure: 4**



Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

Majority of the population is attached to the farming occupation (73.33%). There are 20% labourers, 3.33% are those small farmers who have to work as a labourer on land of other farmers in order to supplement their household budget. 3.33% population is of religious leaders, shopkeepers and job holders. [See figure: 5]

**Figure: 5**



Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

A large number of farmers from this village also do cultivation across the Satluj River. They cross the river through boats to take their crops to their village or markets. During floods not only their crops are destroyed but they also face several other problems.

Roads connecting to this village are in very poor condition. There is no hospital, dispensary, medical clinic, physician, or even quack. However a shopkeeper over there has some medicines of common diseases, like headache and fever etc. To treat simple and common diseases they also use home remedies. For treatment of complex diseases they mostly visit adjoining villages, Hussain Khan Wala town or city Kasur.

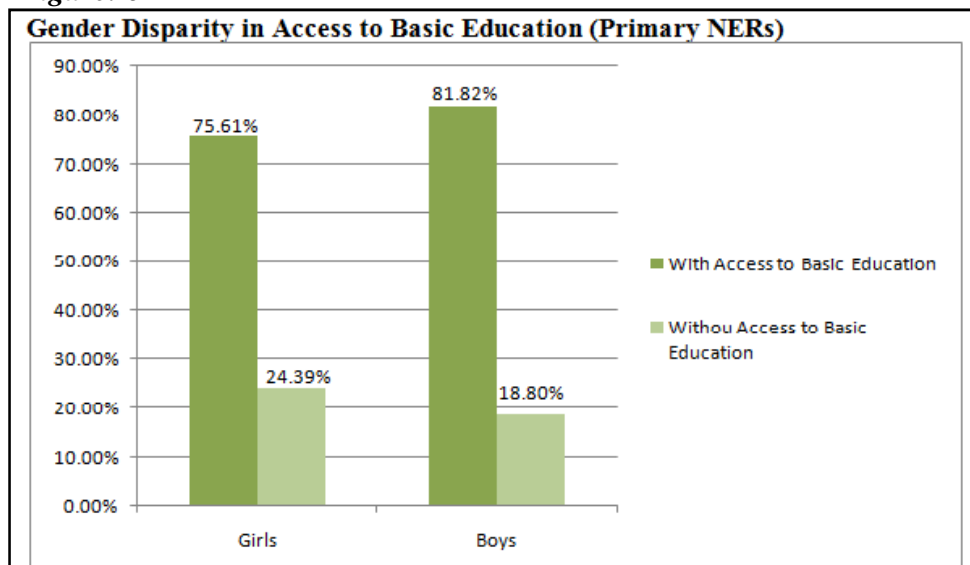
Diseases reported in the household survey were: fever, dysentery, bone pain, blood pressure, liver problem, back pain, muscle contraction, eye problem, shoulder injury, brain haemorrhage etc.

Drainage of waste water of the leather industry of Kasur city passes through this village and falls in Satluj River. This has contaminated the underground drinking water in the village. There is no safe drinking water supply scheme over there. As inhabitants of this village drink contaminated water so they suffer of a number of water born diseases.

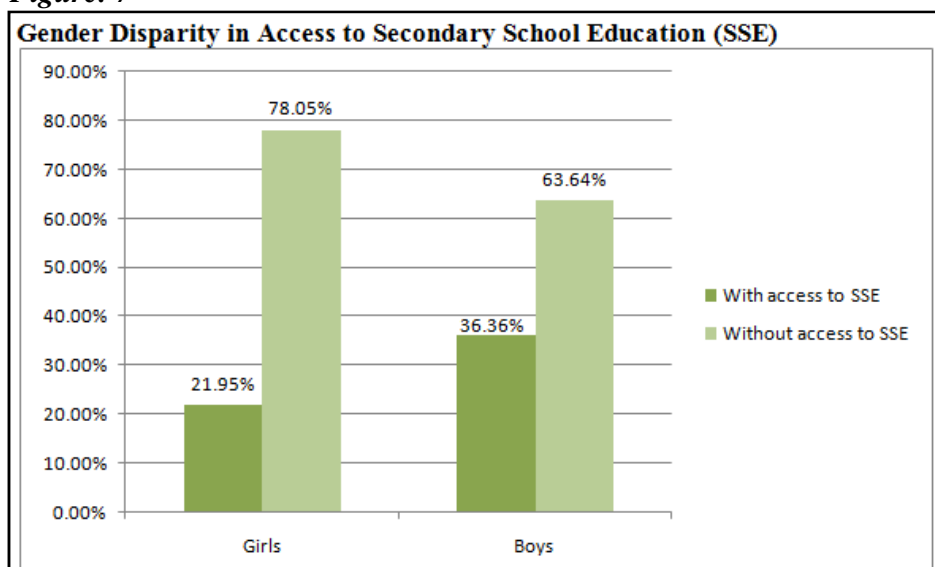
The inhabitants of this village are Punjabi by ethnicity and Araen by cast. Whereas it's adjoining villages, Ranga Wala and Bakhsha Wala are also Punjabi but dominated by Dogar cast.

### **Gender Disparity in Access to Basic Education at Village Thatthi Fareed**

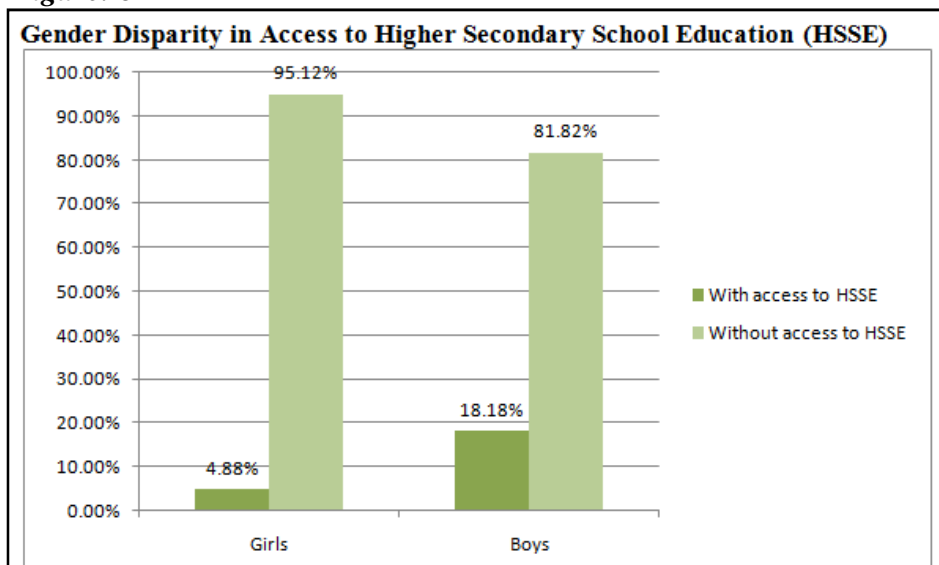
In village Thatthi Fareed, girls with access to basic education are 75.61% whereas boys are 81.82%. [See figure 6] Girls with access to secondary school education are 21.95% while boys are 36.36%. [See figure 7] Girls with access to higher secondary school education are 4.88% whereas boys are 18.18%. [See figure 8] These figures highlight that there is a slight gender disparity in access to basic education. But this gender disparity is found to be more severe at secondary and higher secondary level of education. So it is not wrong to say that gender disparity in access to education increases with the level of education.

**Figure: 6**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

**Figure: 7**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

**Figure: 8**

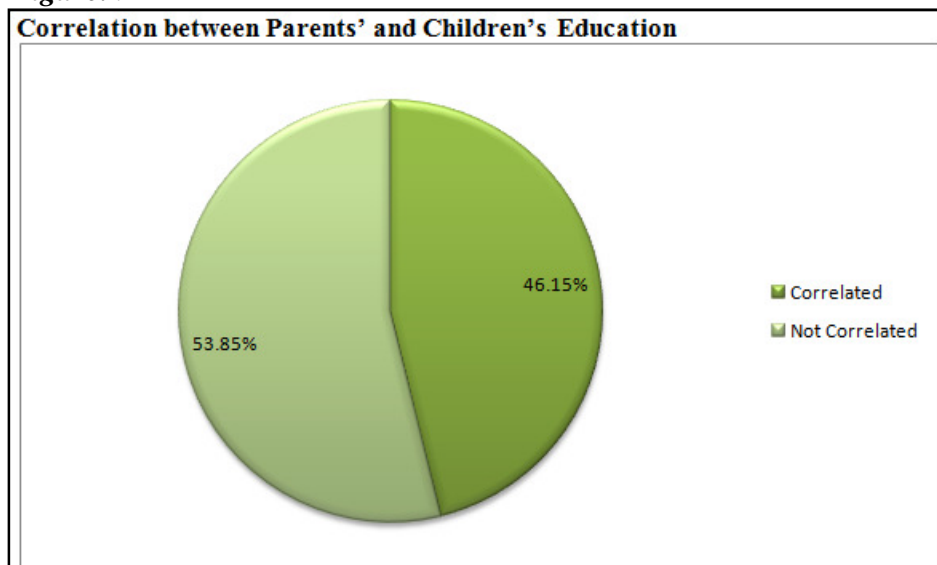
Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

## Reasons of Gender Disparity in Access to Basic Education at Village Thatthi Fareed

To know what factors are contributing to gender disparity in access to basic education at village Thatthi Fareed, let us analyse various factors:

### 1) Correlation between parents and children's education

When the data was analysed to know that if the parents are educated or illiterate then what impact does it have on their children's education, data analysis revealed that correlation between the two variables is found to be 46.15%. The relationship between the two variables is found to be weak which means they do not explain low enrolment rates and gender disparity there. [See figure 9]

**Figure: 9**

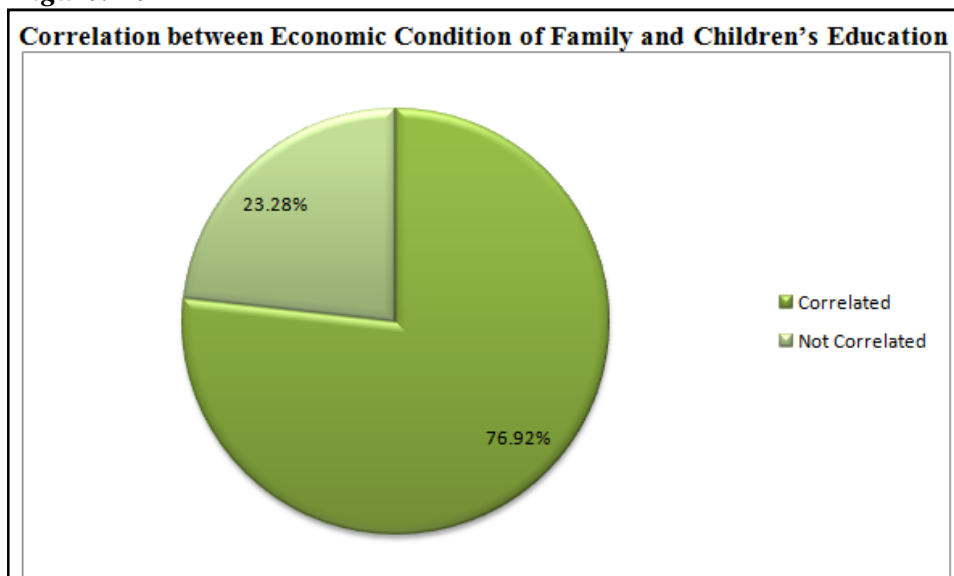
Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

## 2) Correlation between economic condition of family and children's education

When household data was analysed to know that if family/household is poor or non-poor then what impact does it have on their children's education, analysis revealed that correlation between the two variables is found to be 76.92%. The relationship between the two variables is found to be strong. [See figure 10]

Although there is a correlation between parents' and their children's education but that is of low level as compared to the correlation between economic condition of family and their children's education. In majority cases if a family is non poor then their children attend school regardless of the fact that their parents are illiterate. In the case of higher secondary school education this relationship is found to be very much strong.

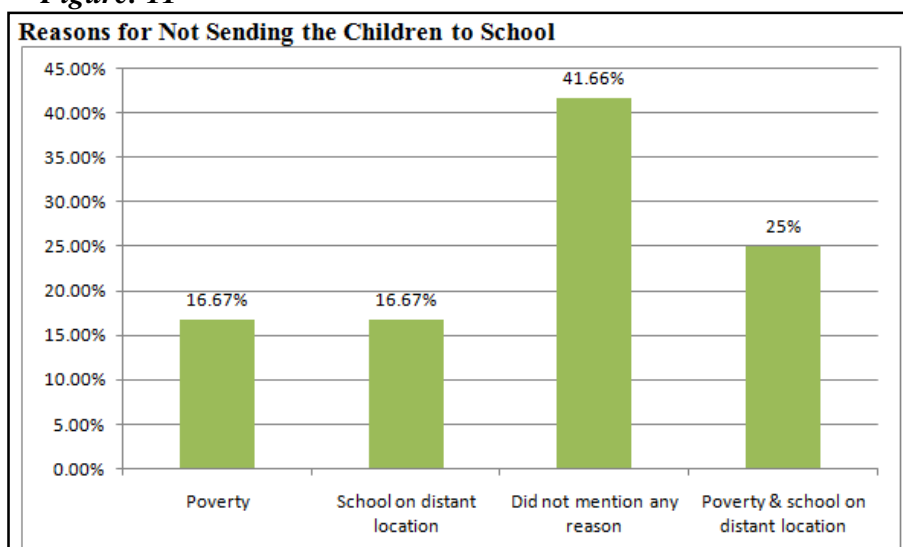
Correlation between economic condition of family and their children's education explains well the low enrolment rates and less access to secondary and higher secondary school education of both boys and girls but alone it does not explain the gender disparity in access to education.

**Figure: 10**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

### 3) Reasons for not sending the children to school

When the parents, of those children who were not found to have access to basic education, were asked the reasons for not sending their children to school there were diverse responses. 16.67% of them reported poverty, 16.67% reported school on distant location and 25% reported both poverty and school on distant location as causes for not sending their children to school while 41.66% person respondents did not respond to the question. [See figure 11] Again these reasons explain low enrolments and less access to education of both genders but these variables do not give us a clear picture that why there exists a gender disparity in access to basic education and why this gender inequality in education widens so much at secondary and higher secondary level of education.

**Figure: 11**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

#### 4) Attitudes towards female education and employment

In the household survey, when it was asked should the female children be allowed to attend school/get education all the respondents replied with affirmation. They were of the view that yes parents must educate their daughters same like their sons. Some of the respondents added that although they want their daughters to be educated but due to the absence of school in their village and distant location of other schools, a number of their of female children are not getting education.

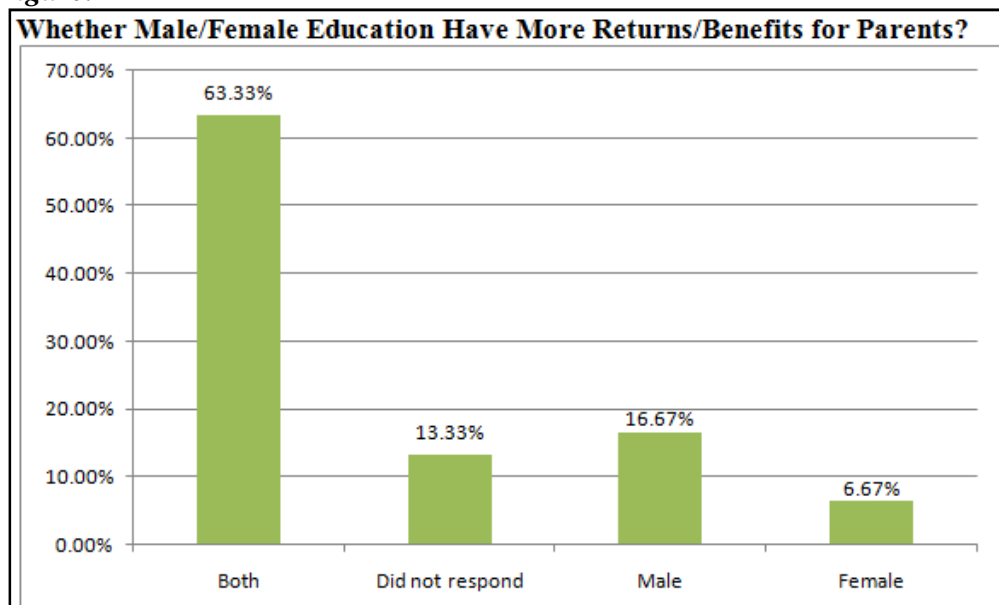
In response to the question could female education have any benefits, 30% responded that they can do job and financially support their family, 6.67% replied it raises awareness among them, 6.67% replied they can lead a better life, 6.67% said they can better educate their children, 3.3% said yes it has benefits but did not mention any, 3.3% said it leads them to do good job and lead a better life, 10% replied awareness and better employment, 3.3% replied better employment and well management of the house affairs, 3.3% replied better employment and better proposal to get marry, 3.3% replied well management of house affairs and awareness, 3.3% replied it raises awareness among them, lead them to better employment and enable them to better educate their children, 3.3% said it raises awareness among them and enable them to lead a better life and better educate their children, whereas 16.67% did not respond to the question. [See table 3]

**Table: 3**

<b>Could female education have any benefits?</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage of response</b>
Did not respond to the question	16.67%
They can do job and financially support their family.	30%
It increases awareness among them.	6.67%
They can lead a better life.	6.67%
They can better educate their children.	6.67%
Only replied with yes.	3.33%
They can do job and lead a better life.	3.33%
Awareness and better employment	10%
Better employment and well manage the house affairs	3.33%
Better employment and better proposal for marriage	3.33%
Well management of house affairs and awareness	3.33%
Awareness, better employment and able to better educate their children	3.33%
Awareness, lead a better life, and able to better educate their children	3.33%

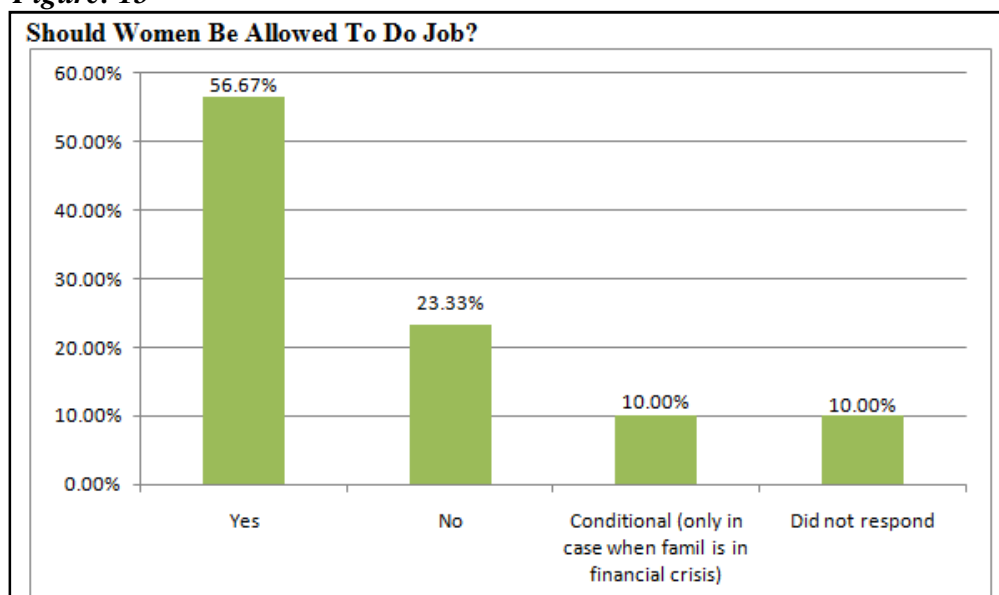
Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

In response to the question whether male or female education have more returns/benefits for parents, 63.33% respondents said both, 6.67% said female, 16.67% said male education have more returns to or benefits for parents , while 13.33% did not respond to the question. [See figure 12]

**Figure: 12**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey

When they were asked to respond that should the women be allowed to do job, 56.67% of them replied with yes, 23.33% replied with no, 10% said women should do job only in case when their family faces financial problems otherwise they should not be allowed to do job. [See figure 13]

**Figure: 13**

Source: Aqil, Z. (2012). Household Survey



We tried to further explore the specific reasons of gender disparity in education over there. Our Key Informant Interviews and Focussed Group Discussion (FGD) with parents from the targeted community provided us a clearer picture of the issue. The analysis of our findings from household survey, Key Informant Interviews and FGD reveal that almost all people have very positive attitude toward female education at least up till the primary level. But in spite of the parents' aspirations to educate their daughters, girls have less access to even basic education as compared to the boys of the same community. The reasons, explained by the local community, for this gender disparity in access to basic education are: non-availability of school in the village, schools on distant location, poor quality of education in the adjoining village Ranga Wala, cultural practices, negative social pressure, poverty etc.



There is no girls or boys school in the village. There is one government girls' primary school in its adjoining village Ranga Wala which is on a distance of 2 Km from there. The quality of education is very poor over there. There are total 25 students and 2 female teachers over there. Out of these two teachers one is government teacher whereas other is private teacher, employed by the local school council. They rarely pay their visit to the school. On 27 April 2012, we paid a visit to the school for the sake of their interviews and found both of them absent. However, some students were present there in their uniforms. We asked them about their teachers they told us that they are on leave for training. When we visited government boys' primary school in the same village, we found it locked. We interviewed a local person about this school. He told us that there are total 10 students and one teacher, which is privately employed by local school council. In such miserable condition of schools and education there, parents from Thatthi Fareed prefer not to send their children to such schools. In village Bakhsha Wala, which is 3 Km distant, there is only one government boys school. There the situation is relatively better but not satisfactory. So a large number of boys from poor and lower middle class of this village go to Baksha Wala. But girls are again missed with access to basic education because there is no girls' school there.

The cultural restriction on the public mobility of adult girls also causes gender disparity in access to education. Mostly people send their daughters to schools of adjoining village of Ranga Wala, town Hussain Khan Wala or Chabbar Chowk after the age of 5 years. But they take them out of school after they reach the age of 10. So, mostly girls hardly pass primary school when they leave school. People do this to avoid negative social pressure and save their honour. But parents say if there could have been a girls' school in their village this could have addressed their concern and their daughters could have completed at least primary education.

Only those families send their children to Hussain Khan Wala, Chabbar Chowk or city Kasur who are well off. They can afford the fees and bear expenses of private schools of these towns or city. But the problem of daughters' education is also prevalent in this class. They only send their daughters to these schools if their brother also studies there or if someone of their family daily

goes to town or city. Otherwise they are also not allowed to attend school after they get 10 years old.

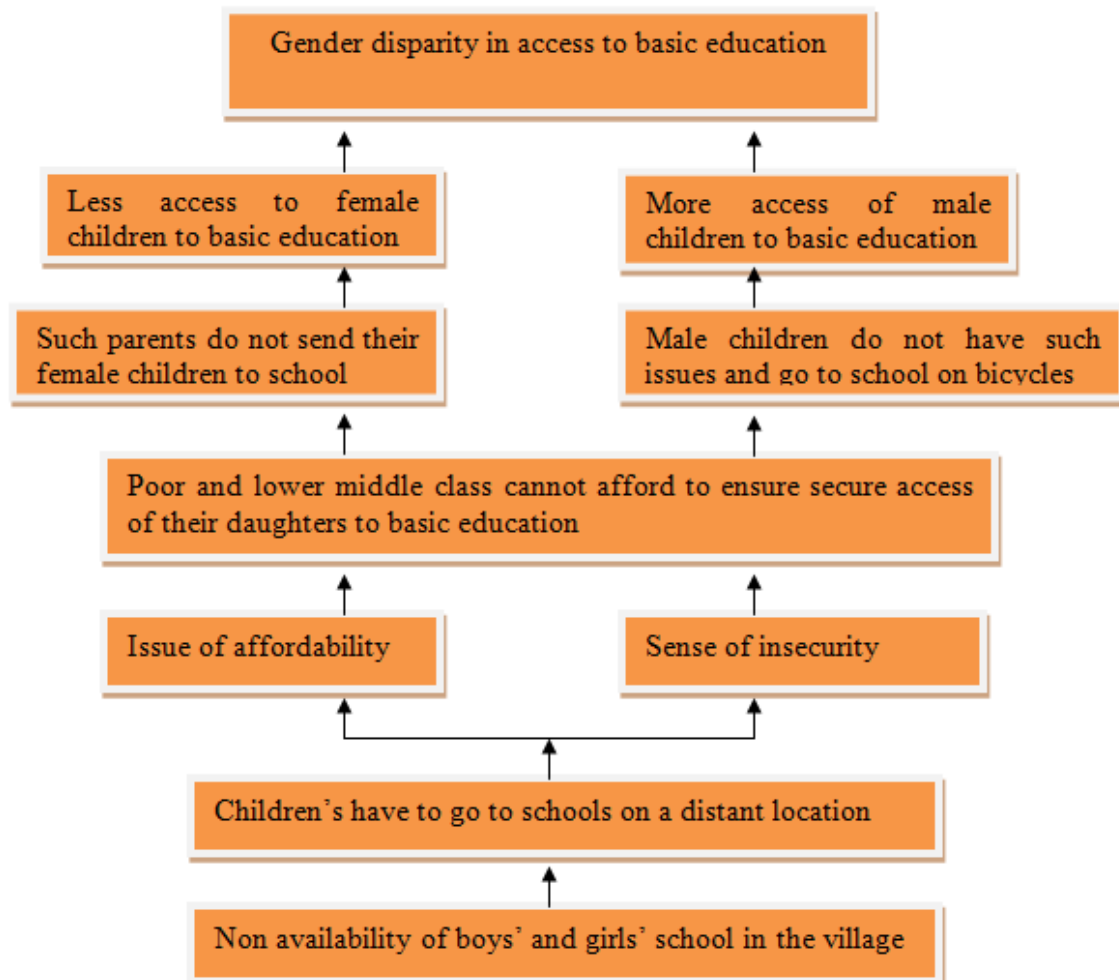
Recently, SOS school in Chabbar Chowk have to some extent solved this problem by initiating a bus service which takes pick the children to school and drop them out in their village. But this school is only for upper middle and middle class only because their fee is too much to be afforded by poor and lower middle class. So, the upper middle and middle class have less difficulty in educating their daughters because of the resources they own and their affordability. But poor and lower middle class is still facing difficulties in educating their daughters. At higher secondary school level only upper middle class is able to educate their children. As their ratio is very less in the village so you find very few children, especially girls with access to higher secondary school education.

In this way the reasons for gender disparity in access to basic education are mainly economic, but along with that they are also rooted in their social structure and cultural practices.

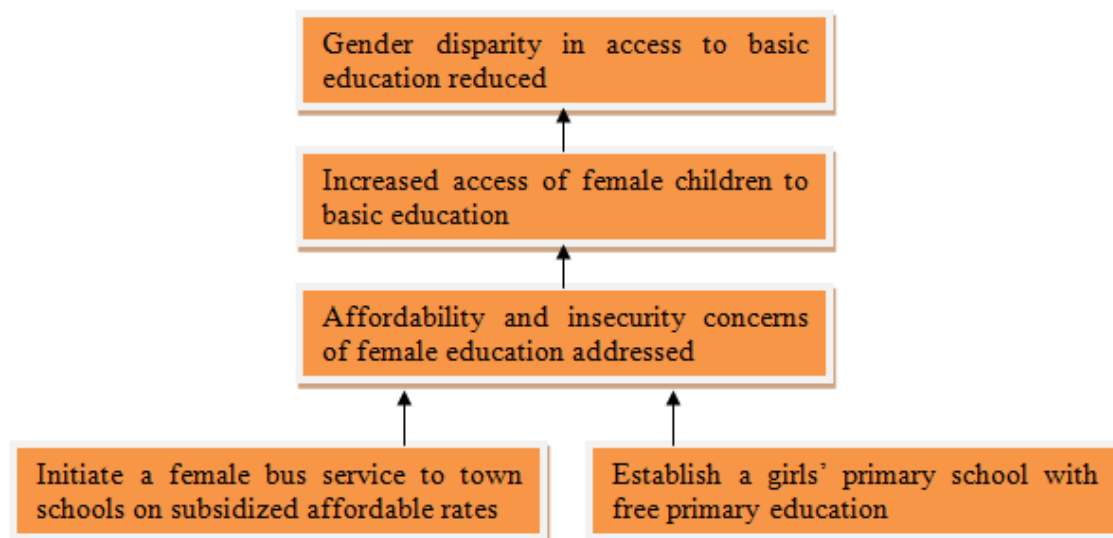
## Indigenous Model to explain and reduce gender disparity in access to basic education at Village Thatthi Fareed

On the basis of its findings this study suggests following model to explain the factors involved in gender disparity in access to basic education and suggests how gender disparity in access to basic education can be reduced there.

Following model explains how there exists a gender disparity in access to basic education at village Thatthi Fareed:



Following Model explains how gender disparity in access to basic education can be reduced at village Thatthi Fareed:



### Policy Recommendations to reduce gender disparity at village Thatthi Fareed

Findings of our field research suggest following policy recommendations to reduce gender disparity at village Thatthi Fareed:

- 1) There should be at least government girls primary school in the village
- 2) As school building takes time, so the classes can be immediately initiated in some building or tents in the village
- 3) Proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be build to enhance the quality of education in already available public schools.
- 4) Role of local school council should be enhanced by giving membership to the parents of students form Ranga Wala and Thatthi Fareed, capacity building, mobilization and sensitization of the council on issues of education governance.
- 5) Educational bus service to town can be initiated on subsidized rates, which could be affordable for poor and lower middle class families.
- 6) Subsidy can be provided to the girls from poor and lower middle class in the already available bus service of SOS school.

## Bibliography

- Aslam, M. (2007). Rates of Return to Education by Gender in Pakistan.
- Aslam, M. (2009). Education gender gaps in Pakistan: is the labor market to blame? *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 57(4), 747-784.
- Attanasio, O., Fitzsimmons, E., & Gomez, A. (2005). The impact of a conditional education subsidy on school enrollment in Colombia. *The Institute of Fiscal Studies, Report Summary Familias, 1*.
- Chaudhry, N., & Parajuli, D. (2006). Conditional Cash Transfers and Female Schooling: The Impact of the Female School Stipend Program on Public School Enrollments in Punjab, Pakistan. *SSRN eLibrary*.
- Chauhdry, I. (2009). The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education on Rural Poverty in Pakistan: An Empirical Analysis. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*(15).
- Chowdhury, A. M. R., Nath, S. R., & Choudhury, R. K. (2003). Equity gains in Bangladesh primary education. *International review of education*, 49(6), 601-619.
- Colclough, C., Rose, P., & Tembon, M. (2000). Gender inequalities in primary schooling:: The roles of poverty and adverse cultural practice1. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 20(1), 5-27.
- Hossain, N., & Kabeer, N. (2004). Achieving universal primary education and eliminating gender disparity. *Economic and political weekly*, 4093-4100.
- Hunte, P. (2009). Looking Beyond the School Walls: Household Decision-Making and School Enrolment in Afghanistan.
- Sen, A. K. (1999). *Development as freedom*: Oxford University Press.
- UNESCO. (2010). *Why Gender Equality in Basic Education in Pakistan?* Islamabad.