Reasons of Girls Dropout from Government Schools in District Muzaffargarh, Punjab
Reasons of Girls Dropout from Government Schools in District Muzaffargarh, Punjab

A Research Study by

AWAZ Foundation Pakistan Centre For Development Services

Under

Educating Girls, Transforming Communities Project
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWAZCDS</td>
<td>AWAZ Centre for Development Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASER</td>
<td>Annual Status of Education Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavior Change Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISP</td>
<td>Benazir Income Support Programme</td>
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<td>DCR</td>
<td>District Census Report</td>
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<td>EDO</td>
<td>Executive District Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGTC</td>
<td>Educating Girls Transforming Communities</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDI</td>
<td>In-Depth Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEC</td>
<td>National Education Census</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARC</td>
<td>Peoples Awareness Raising Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEF</td>
<td>Punjab Education Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLM</td>
<td>Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parents Teachers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKAID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Aid for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village Development Committee</td>
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Foreword
Young girls are deprived of many constitutional rights in Pakistan including basic right to education. There are many factual socio-economic and political impediments whereas some are myths. AWAZ’s strategic objective-1 under social and economic management (SEM) program primarily focuses upon girls and youth development and education. During our field interventions in southern districts of Punjab province in Pakistan it was observed that rate of girls enrolment is extremely low particularly in the rural areas. The data available at various levels also shares the similar dismal situation as 23% of the rural and 7% of the urban children aged 6-16 are out of school. Nearly 25 million have never attended the school and those who were lucky to attend the school 77% leave school without completing their primary level as only 22% girls complete their primary education as per the MICS survey conducted by the government of Punjab. 7% girls leave the school after first menstruation as determined in the study conducted by AWAZ in district Multan regarding the impact of early age marriages on girls right to education. The study in hand is again an effort of AWAZ in district Muzaffargarh that is placed at 35th in girls enrolment rate out of 36 districts in Punjab leaving behind tribal district of Rajanpur. The current study reveals that nearly 78.8% girls leave school before completing their primary because of the poverty, and 48.4% girls leave school because of religious extremism and poor law and order situation in the form of local gangsters patronized by the elected representatives and feudal/ landlords. The study also reveals other socio-economic and political factors dominant by the feudal culture and religious influence in the poor and rural areas of Muzaffargarh. The findings may also be applied in other rural districts of southern Punjab including D G Khan, Rajanpur and rural area of Bhakkar, Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Layyah, Bahawal Nagar, Jhang and Khanewal because of similar natures of culture and socio-economic conditions. The study provides invaluable recommendations in terms of policies and programs to address this drawback.

Towards the end, I personally and on behalf of AWAZCDS-Pakistan extend thanks to all the participants of the study especially parents, students and government school teachers for their willingness in sharing the information at their end openly. AWAZCDS-Pakistan extends special thanks to Mr. Zulfiqar A. Rao and other research team members including Ms. Sadia Saeed for leading the research team and reviewing and editing the draft. We are also thankful to IIMIdeas and UKAid for extending technical and financial support for conducting this invaluable study.

I believe that all stakeholders including parents, teachers, trainers, researchers, government policy makers and politicians would take benefit out of the recommendations enshrined in the study. This would definitely set the way forward to empower our rural girls while ensuring their fundamental and constitutional right to education.

We look forward to your kind feedback
Mohammad Zia ur Rehman
Chief Executive
About the Report

This report is the outcome of a research study which has been carried out at AwazCDS as a part of a project called Educating Girls, Transforming Communities (EGTC). The EGTC was funded by UKAid's Ilm Ideas initiative in Pakistan. The overall purpose of the research was to investigate and describe the causes of high drop-out at primary, middle and high school levels; for girls, and suggest measures for designing strategies to reduce girls' dropout rate in District Muzaffargarh.

The research was restricted to Muzaffargarh and carried out in April-May 2013. This study entailed review of secondary literature, field survey with head teachers, focus group discussions (FGDs) with class teachers, students, and parents; and in-depth interviews (DDIs) with local opinion leaders and intelligentsia.

This report describes the background of the research study, the universe and sample of the study, research tools, the statistical and qualitative findings and analysis thereof. The last part of the document concludes the lessons and learning from the study and paves way for developing a consequent advocacy agenda for AWAZCDS and its partners and donors.
Executive Summary

The purpose of this research is to investigate and describe the causes of high drop-out at primary, middle and high school levels; and suggest measures for designing strategies to reduce girls' dropout rate in District Muzaffargarh in Punjab province. The study employed a mix-method approach in data collection and information gathering; it included both the quantitative and qualitative information collection. For quantitative bit of the work a total of 200 schools were researched through structured questionnaire, which consisted of 100 % middle and secondary girls' schools of the district i.e. 95 and 40 respectively, and 7.3 % of the randomly selected primary girl's schools i.e. (65 out of total 890 primary schools). The reason behind selecting less primary school was the least probability of drop out of girls under grade 5. For qualitative information collection, 20 focus group discussions were done with each of three main stakeholders i.e. class teachers, parents, and girl students. Another 20 in-depth interviews were undertaken with local opinion leaders and intelligentsia.

The major findings from the study may be presented as below:

- Around 90% of the surveyed schools were all Pacca (cement and concrete built) while only 4.7 % high school buildings are semi Pacca (built of mortar & bricks) constructed followed by 10.3 %primary school buildings and 11.2 %middle class buildings.

- While the 90%+ schools were found with drinking water facility, toilets, and boundary walls, availability of other classroom facilities such as desks and benches (32.35%), white and blackboards (16.18%) and library or books rack (82.35%) were largely missing in the primary school.

- The student teacher ratio didn't seem to be too bad i.e. 1:33 at primary, 1:24 at middle, and 1:26 at high school levels. However, the lack of competence of teachers on subjects like English, Science and Mathematics push the students towards losing their interest and ultimately abandon the studies.

- Though the 90%+ schools in survey had PTA/SMC and the meetings seemed to have held more or less regularly, the running of its affairs leaves many questions in the mind of parents. The government school teachers are government officials (sort of local elites) who remain unmanageable by SMC and often flout local accountability and good governance of the institution. Lack of democratic spirit within SMC/PTA functions has hindered the participation of poor and devolution of education management at grassroots.

- Among the causes of dropout, poor economic conditions at household level seem to have taken the toll on girls' education in District Muzaffargarh by 78.8%. This is closely followed by pressure of domestic chores (59.1%) and access to school in terms of distance (37.9%). Religious factors (24.2%) and law and order situation (24.2%) also restrict girls from realizing their dream and right to primary education.

- Parents' lack of literacy and comparatively lesser appreciation of girls' education inevitably lead to premature school leaving. General perception of parents' regarding girls' education appear to be at a low level as they fail to relate education with income generation which is true for the boy-child. The minimum level of expectation they cherish is that the girl when married to should be able to read and write a letter and have knowledge to perform religious duties.

- Around 50% of the dropout girls have been found to be frequently irregular at schools prior to their final disappearance.

- It's found that initiatives such as more investment into schools missing facilities, girls' stipend, teachers training, and mass awareness raising campaign and advocacy hold the key to retaining girls at school and help them grow as an educated and more productive citizen of the country.
The findings from the study recommend the organizations like AWAZcds to target its advocacy at both sides i.e. supply and demand of the girls' education. Obviously there is a need to have an advocacy agenda that not only aims at, in longer terms, influencing the parents and communities through BCC techniques on the importance of girls education but also a consistent advocacy with governments on making girls education their priority number one. A two way pro-active campaign against early-marriages wherein it calls for stricter implementation of Child Marriage Restraint Act by the government beside raising awareness among rural masses on the socio-economic costs and perils of early marriages. Similarly another area could be influencing government's social safety net programmes such as BISP to condition the incentives for households with milestones in girls' educational attainments.

The findings also hint at the fact that the educational planning and management at grassroots will have to be made more participatory, transparent and democratic. There may be a campaign to make SMC's/PTA's executive body through popular votes in the respective administrative area. If done so these bodies will be more vibrant, effective and accountable. what types of concrete measures may be taken in this regard?

There is a lack of coordination and integration in district education planning; children drop out from regular schools to avail themselves a better subsidized NGO run school or enroll them with PEF assisted programme. This defeats the purpose of regular schooling system in government sector. It is imperative to have an integrated and coordinated educational planning at village, UC, Tehsil and District level to make sure that all other programmes by government or NGOs are well synched with regular primary, middle and high school planning and objectives instead of creating parallel programmes that outshine the role and importance of regular schools.
1. Introduction:

1.1 Background.

Pakistan classified as middle income country suffers from high levels of poverty and vulnerability with skewed income distribution between the rich and the poor. Its ranking in the Human Development Index stands at 125 out of 169. In Pakistan, Girls' enrolment ratio at primary level is overall 77% and 68% in rural areas whilst female literacy is overall 40% with 32% in rural areas. Access to education and quality education remains a challenge for the poorest quintile groups particularly amongst girls in Pakistan. 23% of all school aged children; predominantly girls in rural areas are still out of school reinforcing the urgency to address the education emergency, 23% of rural and 7% of urban children aged 6-16 are not in schools with girls lagging behind boys by one third in rural areas [ASER 2012]. The number, location of schools and teachers needed is far less than what is required at all levels of the system.

Whilst on the one hand there are insufficient schools at primary level with almost 17,000 urban blocks and villages without any educational institutions, there is a huge gap between primary and middle level transitions (NEC 2006); teachers and more importantly well-trained teachers with mastery in subject competencies are in short supply. Most teachers continue to use outmoded learning methods rather than giving children opportunities for engaging in critical thinking for connecting with local and global contexts. The attitude of teachers and adults often undermines the dignity of the child and confidence in learning and living.

Seen in gender perspective, preferential treatment of boys in society, leads to unequal chance for girls to access most basic rights as enshrined in the constitution and international human rights instruments, including their right to education which has now become a fundamental right as per the 18th Amendment to the constitution. Bias against girls is rooted in socio-cultural beliefs/values and also influenced by the economic Conditions. Added to these reasons are the problems of access to and quality of schools. Parents do not send their daughters if schools are at a distance for fear of exposing them to insecurities. The absence of basic toilet facilities in many schools, inaccessibility to clean drinking water and adequate security in the form of boundary walls are additional obstacles to sustained female enrolment. The above situation reflects the overall context in Pakistan in which girls' education has to be negotiated in the remote rural area of the country especially South Punjab and Sindh.

The national education system in Pakistan is drastically poor and under-resourced. Only 2.4% of GDP is invested in education, compared to a global weighted average of 4.9%. Progress towards the achievement of the education related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has, as a result been slow. Women and girls are particularly disadvantaged who suffer the most in terms of social and human development. Only 22% of girls, compared to 47% boys, complete primary schooling. School dropout rates are high, especially, at the secondary level, where only 34% of Pakistan's children (2010) receive education and 19% of girls get opportunity to attend higher secondary schools. According to UNESCO Institute for Education Statistics (2012), there are more than five million out of school children of primary age in Pakistan. Females constitute 3.2 million (more than 60%) of the total figure. During the year 2010, the net enrolment rate at primary level was 79.1%, whereas, total dropout rate at primary level was more than 38%. The net enrolment at secondary level during the same year further dropped down to 34%. In Punjab and specifically in South Punjab, the situation regarding girls' right to education is particularly dismal. In most parts of South Punjab, majority of girls do not get education beyond 5th grade. In entire Southern Punjab literacy rate for girls (10+ years) is lowest with Multan 53 per cent, DG Khan, Ry Khan and Lodhran 44 per cent each, and Rajanpur as lowest as 33 per cent. The female literacy rate is lowest in Muzaffargarh i.e. only 19.2%.
District Muzaffargarh has a population of 4.19 million with 47.61 % females and 87 % population living in the rural areas. The district has been ranked 35 out of 36 districts in terms of literacy, which shows an alarming literacy situation. The overall literacy rate of the district is 28.5 %, while female literacy rate is the lowest i.e. only 19.2 %. According to PSLM 2010-11, only 22 out of 100 girls (age 5-9 years) get enrolled at the primary level, while only 19 girls complete their education till grade 5. The drop out situation becomes further worse during transition from primary to middle level, as only, 13 out of 19 girls (age between 10-12) get enrolled in the middle level, while only 10 out of 13 girls (age between 13-16) get enrolled at the matric / Secondary level. Besides unawareness among parents about the importance of girls' education, lack of access, cultural barriers and poverty seems as important contributing factors for low female literacy rate in the district.

1.2 The Project: 'Educating Girls, Transforming Communities (EGTC)

Financially supported through ILM IDEA Fund, which has been set up by UKAid, the EGTC project will directly contribute to improving the working of public education sector in Pakistan, especially in district Muzaffargarh. It will be achieved, essentially, through project's two components of research and advocacy for an enabling education environment for girls who are at risk of being victims of drop outs at initial grades.

The EGTC project has following objectives:

- Increased availability of evidence-based knowledge and factors behind girls' dropout from schools in District Muzaffargarh

- Improved and deepened knowledge and action of target communities to reduce girls' drop outs in their early schooling years

- Improved realization and understanding among policy makers and government officials to work on reducing dropouts of girls in their early years of schooling

- Improved and accessible schooling facility for girls in targeted areas/ schools.

It will also be instrumental in setting positive trends in education sector by promoting more acceptance among parents and educators for girls' right to education and address the underlying causes behind their dropouts. It will ultimately contribute to foster public demand for more accountability and transparency in the education sector.
2. The Research Study:

The EGTC project is built on a two-pronged theory of change i.e. research and advocacy, wherein research findings will inform the precise agenda for campaigning and policy advocacy. The research study at hand represents one of the two components of the EGTC project, whereby it aims to explore the causes of 'girls' dropout from government schools in Muzaffargarh district'.

Support from the young girls, communities, grassroots women groups, civil society including PARCs, the policy community and media will be mobilized to underscore the need for addressing the reasons behind dropouts of girls from schools.

The objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate and describe the causes of high dropout at primary, middle and high school levels.
- Suggest measures for designing strategies to reduce girls' dropout rate in District Muzaffargarh.

Consequently, the study is an attempt to answer the broad research questions such as:

- What is the quality and quantity of government educational services?
- Why do girls dropout from schools?
- What are the causes of high dropout rates?
- How are these causes related to dropouts?
- How can the dropout rate of girls be reduced?

3. Research Design

This is an exploratory study on the causes of girls' dropout from government schools in Muzaffargarh to collect evidence with respect to the causes and extent of girls' dropout. The study employed usual research technique of social surveying which included quantitative and qualitative research tools to extract information from a variety of primary, secondary and tertiary level stakeholders, such as girl students, their parents, teachers, and local intelligentsia. The study also serves as cross sectional comparative analysis with respect to dropout causes and rates for girls at three different levels i.e. primary, middle, and high school level.

3.1 Methodology

A mixed method data collection approach has been used for the study. The assessment framework consisted of various set of tools for data collection, which mainly included mapping and scaling to identify the target population, quantitative and qualitative assessments.

The process also included comprehensive desk’s / literature review (Identification phase), quantitative self-completion surveys with the samples of target populations and additional qualitative assessments through series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with the selected groups / individuals of target population. The research required extensive consultations with experts from different fields of education and other social sciences.

To identify and enroll the girls who dropped out from schools, AWAZCDS adopted the technique of 'key informants'. For this purpose, AWAZ utilized its network of VDCs. A pre-test of all the tools was carried out before its full-scale launch. All the research ethics were followed while carrying out specific data collection activities. Participation in the research was voluntary and confidential. An informed consent was taken from the participants before conducting any FGD’s / Interview and no personal identifiers were included in written notes and audio recordings. Audio recordings will be erased upon completion of data analysis.
The study was conducted in 200 registered public primary, middle and secondary girls' schools in district Muzaffargarh. In order to seek formal permission and engage district government officials in the process, an orientation meeting was held and a formal Mou was signed with the Executive District Officer (EDO) Muzaffargarh.

### 3.1.1 Selection of the Universe and Sample Size

The study was conducted in District Muzaffargarh with a specific focus on getting representation from rural, urban and semi-urban areas. A total of 200 schools were researched, which consisted of 100% middle and secondary girls schools of the district i.e. 95 and 40 respectively, and 7.3% of the randomly selected primary girls schools i.e. (65 out of total 890 primary schools). The reason behind selecting less primary school was the least probability of drop out of girls under grade 5. The tentative list of schools under study and the visit plan are appended as Annexure 2. This list was finalized in consultation with EDO education at the start of the research study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Types</th>
<th>Total No. Of Schools</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>% age representation</th>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>FGDs</th>
<th>IDIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N=102 S=200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.2 Desk Review

As a first step, a more in depth and comprehensive review of all the relevant documents was undertaken. Documents which were reviewed included district education statistics, especially those related to girls' enrolment and dropouts. The documents also included national and provincial policies and their associated plans of actions for reducing dropouts in the district.

The desk review encompassed information on education department's policies towards increasing girls enrolment and reducing their dropouts, plans of actions which translate policies into implementation; the implementation/performance gaps and the underlying factors; the practices adopted by the government in allocating resources to address reasons behind dropouts; and adequacy, coverage, acceptability, cost effectiveness, and equitability of public education services for young girls.

### 3.1.3 Field Research

A mixed method data collection approach was adopted for the field research. The overarching aim was to identify gaps in policy enforcement in target districts. The activities included quantitative field survey, FGDs, and IDIs. The assessment framework targeted both service providers and recipients and consisted of a set of tools for data collection, which are discussed in the next section.
4. Research Tools for Data Collection

4.1 Quantitative data collection

The quantitative data was gathered through a questionnaire, which was designed to provide both a clear picture of dropouts and related statistics and key reasons behind this issue (sample questionnaire attached as Annex 3).

4.1.1 Sample profile

Schools:

A total of 200 schools were taken under study in four Tehsils, namely, Alipur, Jatoi, Kot Addu and Muzaffargarh. The breakdown of these schools is as follows: 33 in Ali Pur (16.5%); 36 in Jatoi (18%); 59 in Kot Addu (29.5%) and 72 in Muzaffargarh (36%).

These schools were further sampled at three levels as follows: Primary schools were 68 making 34 % of the sample; with 44.5 %, Middle Schools which were studied during the process were 89, and the ratio of High Schools was 43 which made 21.5 % of the total sample. Similarly, a great majority of primary schools i.e. 58/68 and elementary/middle schools i.e. 62/89 were located in 'rural' areas, which make it to 122 of the total 200 schools surveyed. The number of schools in 'semi urban' areas was 53; and it had most of the high schools i.e. 33/43. The urban category had least number of schools i.e. 25 of the total 200 schools studied. This is obviously for the reason that urban areas are limited to four Tehsils (sub district) of the districts and a great majority of population live in the rural areas away from Muzaffar Garh city and other three Tehsils.
Respondents:
About 200 respondents were reached out with the study questionnaire. The respondent sample consisted of 101 Headmistresses; 78 Principles; 12 Head Teachers; 7 In-charges and 2 Teachers.

4.2 Focus Group Discussions
Subsequently, AWAZ conducted a series of 60 Focus group discussions (FGDs) with three types of target groups i.e. 20 FGDs with Teachers, 20 FGDs with parents (10 groups of mothers and 10 groups of fathers) and 20 FGDs with female students (of grade 6th-10th). The aim was to validate the information and key factors identified through quantitative data collection. A total of 900 participants were engaged in the FGDs (300 parents, 300 teachers and 300 students).

4.3 In-Depth Interviews
In order to further strengthen and verify findings, a series of In-depth Interviews (IDIs) (total 20) were conducted with education experts, government officials, NGO representatives, media social reporters, psychologists, and religious leaders. These experts were identified in consultation with AWAZ community volunteers i.e. members of PARCs. A separate questionnaire for IDIs was developed in the light of quantitative and qualitative analysis which was further validated through experts’ opinions during In-depth-Interviews.

The aforementioned tools have been refined and finalized through extensive in-house feedback and discussion exercises. AWAZ engaged a team of enumerators and consultant to complete data collection and analysis. The enumerators were properly trained on the process to ensure quality of the research.

5. Data Analysis
For an extensive analysis, the data has been divided into following thematic areas:

- Socio-Cultural Factors
- Economic Factors
- Physical Factors
- Religio-Political Factors
- Environmental Factors
At the same time, different sub-factors have been developed under each major category. The comparison of the data is made at two levels; i.e. initially, within every major factor, %ages of sub-factors are compared and contrasted with respect to the responses of respondents in urban, rural and semi-urban areas, followed by analysis of variance on the basis of urbanization through calculation of mean score of each sub-factor. When separate questions were asked with regard to gender or any other variable, responses were compared with paired T-tests.

Qualitative data obtained from the FGDs and IDIs have been analyzed thematically on the basis of the written notes, complimented by information abstracted from the audio recordings where appropriate. Matrices have been constructed that present extracted information against the themes from the different groups within a specific target group. In addition, a summary of information for key factors have been developed for each target group.

6. Findings from the Quantitative Survey

Backdrop profile of District Muzaffargarh

The Town of Muzaffargarh was founded in 1794 by the Governor of Multan Nawab Muzaffar Khan. In 1854 it became the headquarters of Muzaffargarh District. Muzaffargarh spreads over an area of 8,249 km² and forms a strip between the Chenab River on its east and Indus River on its west. Muzaffargarh is one of oldest districts of Punjab.

Although Muzaffargarh is one of the oldest and largest districts of Pakistan by area and population, it still has only a single campus of Virtual University of Pakistan. The literacy rate is one of the lowest in the country.

According to 1998 National Census, Muzaffargarh District has a population of 2.63 million with 47.91% females. The rural population makes up 87.1% of the total population. The overall literacy rate of Muzaffargarh District is 28.5% where rural literacy rate is 24.1% and urban is 55.5%. Female literacy rate is 14.8%, while male literacy rate is 40.9%. Projected population growth rate for Muzaffargarh District is 3.38% (DCR 1998). Muzaffargarh is ranked 33 out of 34 districts in Punjab in terms of literacy rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Stage</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>3-4 Years</td>
<td>102,033</td>
<td>99,015</td>
<td>201,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5-9 Years</td>
<td>246,357</td>
<td>226,309</td>
<td>472,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elem/Secondary</td>
<td>10-14 Years</td>
<td>191,156</td>
<td>162,563</td>
<td>353,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>15-16 Years</td>
<td>47,883</td>
<td>38,999</td>
<td>86,882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Infrastructure

School buildings:
Proper school buildings are imperative for student retention and enrollment enhancement. This becomes paramount in case of girls, who are faced with multiple challenges vis-a-vis safety in the world outside their homes. The study findings reveal that around 90% of the surveyed schools were all Pacca (cement and concrete built) while only 4.7% high school buildings are semi Pacca (built of mortar & bricks) constructed followed by 10.3% primary school buildings and 11.2% middle class buildings.
Facilities: Lack of physical facilities is also one of the major reasons of girl students' drop-out in Muzaffargarh. In this regard, findings show that drinking water and proper toilet facilities take precedence over all other facilities. At high school level the drinking water supply stands highest with 97.67%. About 98.88% middle schools and 97.06% primary schools are supplied with drinking water facility. Interestingly, 100% middle and high schools have the toilet facilities, with only 2.94% primary schools lacking proper toilets within the premises.

Similarly, the existence of boundary wall in high school is 100% as compared to middle and primary schools, which is 98.88% and 92.65%, respectively. While the supply of electricity existed in 100% high schools, only 93.02% fans and bulbs were in a running condition. The ratio of supply of electricity to running bulbs and fans in the middle and primary schools was 92.13:86.52 and 77.94:58.82, respectively.

Availability of other classroom facilities such as desks and benches (32.35%), white and blackboards (16.18%) and library or books rack (82.35%) were largely missing in the primary schools.

Playgrounds, which contribute to the physical growth and development of students, existed in 79.07% high schools; while, compared to middle schools, 75% primary schools had a playground.
Out of Existence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Functional</th>
<th>Non-Functional</th>
<th>Functional</th>
<th>Non-Functional</th>
<th>Functional</th>
<th>Non-Functional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water Supply</td>
<td>95.45</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>97.73</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet Facility</td>
<td>89.39</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>96.63</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary wall</td>
<td>88.89</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>95.45</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>97.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>92.45</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>97.56</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>97.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Condition</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>98.70</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fans and Bulbs</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>98.70</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desks and Benches</td>
<td>82.61</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>81.43</td>
<td>18.57</td>
<td>71.43</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or White boards</td>
<td>94.74</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>91.86</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>97.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library or book Chest</td>
<td>91.67</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>83.72</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>94.44</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play ground</td>
<td>96.08</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>96.97</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Teacher - Student Ratio

Teacher-student ratio is central to the education system in any institution. It not only illustrates the overall education quality in a particular school but also provide an insight into the variables related to student drop out or retention. A broader perspective on this is that most of the primary schools in Punjab province are single teacher. It is not possible for a single teachers to manage large groups of children. They cannot manage students' activities properly and students do not take interest in their studies. Resultantly, some of the students remain absent from school and subsequently leave the school.

The findings of the study reveal that in sample schools in Muzaffargarh, teacher-student ratio varies significantly at primary, middle and high school levels. In primary schools the ratio is 1:33; it is relatively realistic in middle schools with 1:24 and in high schools this jumps to 1:26.

![Students Teacher Ratio](image)

The total working teachers in the sample schools are 1,811 and their age distribution is an interesting analysis which reveals that the presence of teachers below the age of 25 is far greater in middle schools (5.7%) as compared to primary schools (3.5%). It is lowest in high schools (2.2%). Teachers aging between 25 to 35 years are present in significant proportion in middle schools (29.3%) followed by primary schools (27.3%) and high school (25.4%).
Teachers falling in the 35-45 years age bracket are the popular group, recorded in large numbers in middle schools (44.7%) and high schools (40.9%). As we move to the next age bracket i.e., 45 to 55 years, we see that teachers’ interest in the teaching drops with only 17.9% continuing with the profession at middle school level. This number encouragingly increases at high school and primary school levels with 26.5% and 25.1% respectively. These variations are reflective of the teaching caliber and quality in these schools.

### 6.3 Number of Enrollment and Dropout in Last Three Years

A look at the drop-out trend over the last three years (2010-2013) at the primary, middle and high school levels shows that in primary schools the incidence of drop-out between 2010-11 and 2011-12 increased twofold i.e. from 7.4% to 14.2%. This dropped by just one % in year 2012-2013 but still it was 13.2%.
### Number of Enrollment and Dropout Over Last Three Years

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary</strong> (1 to 5)</td>
<td>22,142</td>
<td>22,468</td>
<td>22,588</td>
<td>1,636</td>
<td>3,187</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle</strong> (6 to 8)</td>
<td>13,572</td>
<td>12,707</td>
<td>13,759</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong> (9 and 10)</td>
<td>6,076</td>
<td>6,862</td>
<td>6,717</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the sample middle schools, the drop-out rate in years 2010-2011 was 5.1% which gradually increased to 7.6% in 2011-2012. With similar pace, the rate increased to 9% in year 2012-2013.

In high schools, the drop-out rate in years 2010-2011 was 4.1% which dramatically increased to 7.4% in 2011-2012, further increasing to 9.2% in year 2012-2013.

### 6.4 Dropout across Urban Rural locations:

The situation of dropout across geographic location is of significant interest in this study. It has been mentioned elsewhere that cities (urban areas) form a very small portion of Muzaffargarh district and that most of the schools are located in the rural areas. In this study, of the 200 schools surveyed, as many as 122 schools were located in rural areas. However, these were mainly primary schools.

To start with the overall situation in the district, it is noticed that as many as over 2200 students dropped out from the schools located in rural areas in 2012-13. The Semi-urban areas also present a dismal picture as over 2000 girl students had to desert schools during the same period. The situation in urban areas though looks comparatively better yet over there too the number of dropouts ranged in 400 to 500 plus.
6.4.1 Tehsil Muzaffar Garh:

In terms of situation in each of the four Tehsils of the district, when we see the situation in Tehsil Muzaffargarh, which houses the district headquarter and the largest urban population in the area- it presents a similar trend as is noticed in the overall situation. In this Tehsil, the dropout in its rural fringes is far from acceptable as just in 2012-13 only over 1300 girls left the schools. The semi urban areas have also been suffering from the dropout problem, where though overall number of dropouts in three years is less than what is there in the rural areas, yet in the year 2012-13 over 1500 girls had to leave their schools. The dropout numbers are far lower in the urban areas of the Tehsil; nevertheless they range in 150 to just short of 300.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropouts</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>1,513</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>1,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>4,046</td>
<td>3,669</td>
<td>3,811</td>
<td>7,156</td>
<td>8,057</td>
<td>8,645</td>
<td>5,021</td>
<td>5,967</td>
<td>5,783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.2 Tehsil Kot Adu:

In Kot Adu Tehsil is mainly a rural location; the dropout in its rural areas is, as per overall trend, higher than in the urban fringes. During the three years i.e. 2010-13 almost 600 girl students fled from their schools. Here interestingly though semi urban locations seem to have suffered less where in none of the three years the dropout number did cross hundred. The urban locations have suffered significantly as over 350 girls discarded education in the last three years.
6.4.3 Tehsil Jatoi:

Thesil Jatoi is relatively the remotest location in the district. In this Tehsil, the dropout in the rural schools leave much more to be desired because just in three year 2010-13 only over 1300 girls bade adieu to education. The semi urban areas have only confirmed the overall trend, where though overall number of dropouts in three years is slightly less than that of the rural areas yet every year between 300 to well over 400 students dropped out of schools. The dropout numbers are far lower in the urban areas of the Tehsil; nevertheless they range in 150 to well over 400.
6.4.4 Tehsil Alipur:

Tehsil Alipur is relatively well connected through metalled road as compared to Jatoi and Kot Adu. However, the situation here also is somewhat similar to rest of the district. During the three years i.e. 2010-13 over 700 girl students left from their schools. In the semi urban locations, where though overall number of dropouts in three years is considerably less than that of the rural; still around 300 girls dropped out of schools. The urban schools here have not suffered as significantly as in other Tehsils though over 50 girls left education in the last three years.

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>1,976</td>
<td>1,581</td>
<td>1,791</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>2,183</td>
<td>1,969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC)

PTAs and SMCs play the role of a watchdog in ensuring that quality education is being provided to the students and their access to basic facilities is being fulfilled in the best of manner.

In Muzaffargarh district, the existence of PTAs and SMCs is greater in primary schools as compared to middle and higher schools. 97% primary schools have PTA/SMC meeting on monthly basis by 88.9%. 96.6% middle schools have PTA/SMC meeting on monthly basis by 90.3%. 95.3% high schools have PTA/SMC meeting on monthly basis by 76.9%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of PTA/SMC Meetings</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi Annual</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.6 Factors contributing to female students' drop out

A number of factors come into play when we look at the data on reasons for dropping out of schools at three different levels.

Poor economic conditions take toll on girls' primary education in District Muzaffargarh by 78.8%. This is closely followed by pressure of domestic chores (59.1%) and access to school in terms of distance (37.9%). Religious factors (24.2%) and law and order situation (24.2%) also circumscribe girls to realize their dream and right to primary education.

This situation is no different at the middle and high school levels where financial upheavals come in the way of girls who aspire to continue with their education beyond primary level. However, the issue of access is paramount for older girls going to high school. 74.4% girls do not follow through their education at high level due to distance. 69.8% girls are faced with economic crises which compel them to bid adieu to education at the middle school level.
In the category of Others, early marriage (24%) and migration (6%) is evidently another primary reason for girls to stop in their tracks and sit at home. These two factors need to be studied and examined in the broader framework of social and cultural practices and trends.

### 6.7 Regularity prior to drop-out

Irregularity or absenteeism from school is more rampant at the primary (53%) and middle school (52.9) levels as compared to high schools (41.9%). This eventually results in drop-out from school and provides a key insight into another overarching factor contributing to the overall drop-out rate.

#### 6.8 Important Steps for Improvement of Girls Retention

As to what steps can help retention of girls in the school, the responses show that more investment into schools facilities such as library, provision of stipend, and mass awareness campaign may fetch us desired results.

Girl students stipends seems to be a popular step at the primary school level, with 59.1% schools confirming that girls receive monetary incentive to become regular at school.
**Important Steps for Improvement of Girls Retention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More funds for improvement in school facilities</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls student stipends</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringent implementation of 'compulsory education act'</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers training</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass advocacy for girls education</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This trend differs at the middle and high school levels where increased fund allocation for improving school facilities takes precedence. The Implementation of Compulsory Education Act is also another critical measure to improve retention of girls.

7. Insight from FGDs and IDIs

As per the agreed survey methodology, FGDs and IDIs were conducted to supplement the information collection process. Both of these tools were essentially employed to validate the information / key factors identified through quantitative data collection.

A total of FGDs were done with three types of target groups i.e. 20 FGDs with Teachers, 20 FGDs with parents (10 groups of mothers and 10 groups of fathers- and 20 FGDs with female students (of grade 6th-10th). A total of over 900 participants engaged in the FGDs.

In order to further strengthen and verify findings, a series of In-depth Interviews (IDIs) (total 20) were conducted with local intelligentsia i.e. education experts, government officials, NGO representatives, media social reporters, psychologists, and religious leaders. Below is information gathered from respective stakeholders in this regards.

7.1 Teachers' Views:

1. Generally all of the teachers had full conviction on importance of girls education as they saw socio-economic and cultural benefits.
2. Interestingly, they saw relatively higher dividend of education for girls keeping in view the future roles and responsibilities of girls as mothers.
3. The mechanism of PTA and SMC though exists yet very few parents seem to be aware of and are able to find time to benefit from these platforms.
4. To them the common causes of dropouts are:
- The girls belonging to very poor families.
- The girls have to take care of the younger siblings while their mother is busy in household chores or out for some economic activity.
- For lack of proper diet the girls are victim of high morbidity rate and can't be regular or concentrate on studies which makes them slow in studies and ultimately they lose interest in school.
- Distance between schools and their houses also discourage their parents to send them school.
- Derailed boy teens, at places, are threats to girls' movement.
- Parental preference observed to get their girl children married as soon as possible.
- Illiteracy and lack of awareness among parents.
- At places parallel government programmes with better incentives such as Punjab Education Foundation assistance programmes encourage girls to be dropped out before they are eligible for PEF subsidies.
- Some girls find English language, which is the medium for Science and Social Studies subjects, as a hindrance and leave.
- For some even the cost school uniform and shoes is unaffordable.

5. They saw a number of ways to help girls' retention in schools such as:
- Stipend program & food support have been helpful to enhance girls' rate of completion but inadequate to arrest dropout in case of hard-to-reach hardcore poverty.
- Uniforms and shoes be made part of subsidies for girls students.
- Awareness-raising for rural masses on girls education.
- More schools and fully equipped with necessary infrastructure/facilities.
- Strict implementation of 'Compulsory Primary Education Act'.

7.2 Parents' Views:

1. Despite their operational difficulties, all parents saw the socio-economic and cultural advantages of girls education.
2. As with teachers FGDs, they too saw relatively higher dividend of education for girls, as compared to boys, keeping in view the future roles and responsibilities of girls as mothers.
3. A great majority of parents is either unaware of PTA/SMC mechanisms or doesn't see a great value in participating these mechanisms.
4. Most parents saw following as the common causes of dropouts:
   - Poverty in the families of girl students.
   - Illiteracy and lack of awareness among parents.
   - The girls have to take care of the younger siblings while their mother is busy in household chores or out for some economic activity.
   - Distance between schools and their houses also discourage their parents to send them school.
   - Derailed boy teens, at places, are threats to girls' movement.
   - Parental preference to get their girl children married as soon as possible, mostly for local culture.
   - Schools with missing facilities such as boundary wall, functioning toilets.
   - Higher morbidity rate among girls.
   - The view among parents that since they will not require their girls to do a 'job', the girls don't need to be as educated as boys.
5. Parents viewed a number of possible ways to help girls' retention in schools such as:
   - Transport facility in the form of School Bus, especially for the girls of middle and high schools.
   - Stipend program & food support have been helpful to enhance girls' rate of completion but inadequate to arrest dropout in case of hard-to-reach hardcore poverty.
   - Well qualified and trained teachers who are also regularly available in schools.
- Better organized and more democratic PTA/SMCs.
- Uniforms and shoes be made part of subsidies for girls students.
- Awareness-raising for rural masses on girls' education.
- More schools and fully equipped with necessary infrastructure/facilities.

7.3 Girl Students' Views

1. Though mostly the girls students belonged to low income and poverty ridden households, the girls enjoyed coming to and being in school as to them it provided them with an immense opportunity to get knowledge, consciousness, and skills and abilities to help them meet the challenges in their lives to come.
2. The girls saw enormous importance of education as they were conscious of the socio-economic and cultural advantages of their education.
3. Most of the girls want to be a teacher, doctor, advocate, or serve in the Pakistan Army.
4. The girls saw following as the common causes of dropouts:
   - Difficulties in learning and being unable to 'pass' the exam for the next class.
   - Difficulties to learn English language, Science, and Social Studies which are taught in English.
   - Distance between schools and their houses.
   - The frequent teasing by boys on their way to and from school.
   - Poverty in their households.
   - Illiteracy and lack of awareness among parents.
   - Household chores, while their mother is busy in some economic activity.
   - Early marriages.
   - Schools with missing facilities such as boundary wall, functioning toilets.
   - Frequent sickness among girls (for lack of proper diet and household hygiene).
   - Existence of PEF assisted programme in the area.
5. There are a number of possible ways that girls thought to help girls' retention in schools such as:
   - Transport facility in the form of School Bus, especially for the girls of middle and high schools.
   - Stipend program & food support.
   - Increase in number of well qualified and trained teachers who are also regularly available in schools.
   - Uniforms and shoes be made part of subsidies for girls students.
   - Generous scholarship programs.
   - More schools and fully equipped with infrastructure/facilities such as library, computers and sports ground.
   - Awareness-raising among parents on girls' education.
   - Sanitation Facilities.

7.4 Views from local intelligentsia through IDIs:

1. The district of Muzaffargarh is among least developed areas of Punjab. For widespread poverty, patriarchic and gender biased conservative beliefs, education of girls is more often overlooked. Lack of educational planning and effective implementation on the part of government only exacerbate the situation vis-à-vis girls' education.
2. As traditionally boys are seen as bread-winner in future for the parents when they are old, while girls are seen as someone who will have to be sent off to some other family as a result of marriage- the investment in girls education is not seen as personally profitable to the family.
3. In terms of interaction between parents and teachers, though there is a mechanism of PTA/SMCs yet more often these bodies are either dysfunctional or exist only on paper and lack democratic spirit and popular ownership.
4. To them the common causes of dropouts are:
   - The girls belonging to very poor families
   - The girls have to take care of the younger siblings while their mother is busy in household chores or out for some economic activity
   - Frequent sickness for lack of proper diet doesn't keep them regular or concentrate on studies which make them slow in studies and ultimately they lose interest in school
   - Distance between schools and their houses also discourage their parents to send them school
   - Eve teasing by delinquent boys on their way to and from school
   - Parental preference to get their girl children married as soon as possible
   - Illiteracy and lack of awareness among parents
   - At places parallel government programmes with better incentives such as Punjab Education Foundation assistance programmes encourage girls to be dropped out before they are eligible for PEF subsidies
   - Some girls find English language, which is the medium for Science and Social Studies subjects, as a hindrance and leave
   - For some even the cost school uniform and shoes is unaffordable

5. They saw a number of ways to help girls' retention in schools such as:
   - Stipend program & food support have been helpful to enhance girls' rate of completion but inadequate to arrest dropout in case of hard-to-reach hardcore poverty
   - Uniforms and shoes be made part of subsidies for girls students
   - Awareness-raising for rural masses on girls' education
   - More schools and fully equipped with necessary infrastructure/facilities
   - Strict implementation of 'Compulsory Primary Education Act'

8. Conclusion on Findings and Advocacy Recommendations

There is a wide-spread awareness that exists for education of girls among parents, though with certain reservations and limitations when it comes to action and practices. This is an apt example of cognitive dissonance that characterizes the rural communities in relation to modern education. Yet the large scale awareness is due to a number of measures taken by the government, such as, introduction of compulsory primary education, initiatives such as 'food for education' with the support of World Food Programme and stipend to girls, besides provision of free text books, stationary items and sports goods.

Stipend for the female students at the secondary level has created among girls eagerness to continue schooling and parents desire to spare their girls unless impeded by financial difficulties bordering on starvation and/or socio-cultural impulsiveness to confine girls and look for their marriage. Study finding shows girls dropout in grade IX and X within 10% in the last three academic years.

8.1 Socio-Cultural Factors

Parents' lack of literacy and comparatively lesser appreciation of girls' education inevitably lead to premature school leaving. General perception of parents' regarding girls' education appear to be at a low level as they fail to relate education with income generation which is true for the boy-child. The minimum level of expectation they cherish is that the girl when married to should be able to read and write a letter and have knowledge to perform religious duties. Instances of employment of educated girls in the community have cast a shadow of optimism for secondary education for their wards. To them education should be beneficial for comfortable living prima facie.
In certain communities, education of girls from poor families are considered an impediment to their marriage as the males/boys with relatively higher level of educational attainment are less likely to be available within their clan. In fact recent trend shows more girls than boys in the middle and high school levels.

There is a need to design and undertake an awareness-raising campaign 'Every Girl in School' that runs round the year along with annual EFA week celebrated across Pakistan. This may also supplemented with a behavior change communication (BCC) and parents counseling programmes in favor of girls' education.

There is also a need to advocate with government to pay more attention to the prevention of early marriage, stricter implementation of compulsory education laws and resist child labor.

8.2 Economic Factors

In many instances girls had to leave the school to look after parents family, while her mother is released of family chores to earn livelihood. Thus financial hardship and ease of financial pressure, to a degree, alters girls' intention to continue education further resulting in premature dropout/discontinuation. This is evident from the fact that 'pressure of household chores' has been the most prominent cause after family poverty and distance between school and their homes.

Girls from poor families attending primary schools in the afternoon hardly can afford a good meal to stay fit up to late hours. Suggestions came from the community and pupil to introduce a mid-day meal in lieu of prevailing incentives. Quite often than not both the food support and stipend money pass on to family and the children, particularly girls, remain onlookers and are not the beneficiaries.

This and other causes such as family being unable to afford cost of uniforms, shoes, and Rs 20/month fee are related to poverty. Advocacy may be targeted at influencing government’s social safety net programmes such as BISP to condition the incentives with milestones in girls educational attainments.

8.3 Religio-Political Factors

There is a widespread following of conservative religious clergy who also run religious education which is not only free but more often provides for feeding of the enrolled child. The prevalent religious belief entrenched very deep in these communities is girls should only be educated so much so that she can recite Quran, read and write in Urdu.

The conservative religio-political groups attribute love marriages and any unacceptable behavior as negative effects of modern education. Every time there is a report of love marriage in the areas, school going girls, especially those in middle and high schools, are seen with suspicion of similar act in future on their part too.

The government school teachers are government officials (sort of local elites) who remain unmanageable by SMC and often flout PTA for local accountability and good governance of the institution. Authoritarian and self seeker groups in both government and governed well-to-do members in SMCs appear to have been successful to hinder the participation of poor and devolution of education management at grassroots.

While part of this too may be addressed through mass campaigns such as suggested before i.e. 'Every Girl in School' and BCC interventions in the community, the educational planning and management at grassroots will have to be made more participatory, transparent and democratic. There may be a campaign to make SMC’s/PTA’s executive body through popular votes in the respective administrative area. If done so these bodies will be more vibrant, effective and accountable.
8.4 Physical/Environmental Factors

Muzaffargarh district has got 890 Primary, 95 Middle/Elementary, and 40 High schools. The student teacher ratio was found relatively satisfactory i.e. 1:33 at primary, 1:24 at middle, and 1:26 at high school levels. The lack of competence of teachers on subjects like English, Science and Maths, however, seem to be a factor which doesn’t help students fully learn and acquire mastery of these subjects and consequently lose their interest. This is especially true in case of English language in which the teachers’ expertise is extraordinarily low.

Apart from schools with missing facilities such as water, toilets, boundary wall that hamper girls retention, factors, such as, difficult access to school, lack of safety among girls and opportunity of transfer to NGO schools/madrasah have also been noticed in a few locations.

As is noted in the findings section, most of the girls’ dropout has been reported at primary school level, which mainly located in rural areas; this rate is twice the rate at middle and high schools level, mostly located in urban areas. The finding has a necessary cue for government and NGOs to focus on girls education in rural areas of Muzaffar Garh.

Parallel institutions, such as, madrasah, NGO schools, Punjab Education Fund’s assistance programmes compete with regular primary and secondary schools. With easy access, community leanings for religious learning, motivation by sponsors and comparatively easy to secure a certificate, girls from farm/marginal families prefer to choose the alternative systems.

In the recent years the government has introduced English as medium of instruction for the subjects of Science and Social Studies in schools. While there are different opinions on this, it certainly has been a frequently cited cause of girls’ dropout in schools as their teachers themselves have very limited mastery over English language and have not been trained as English language teachers.

Lack of coordination and integration has resulted in children dropping out from regular schools to avail themselves a better subsidized NGO run school or enroll them with PEF assisted programme. This defeats the purpose of regular schooling system in government sector. AWAZ may voice for an integrated and coordinated educational planning at village, UC, Tehsil and District level to make sure that all other programmes by government or NGOs are well synched with regular primary, middle and high school planning and objectives. Regular schools system in government sector should be continuously invested for development, provision of missing facilities and quality education and be given priority over creating parallel programmes that outshine the role and importance of regular schools.

Another very important area is advocacy for recruiting teachers on merit and investing in their continuous professional development. As English has been made medium of instruction for substantive part of school level syllabus up to class X, teachers education colleges need to incorporate mastery of English language as a requirement to their teaching certificate, diploma and degrees.
TORS of the Study

Annex I

1. Background

Education is considered as a key factor in overcoming barriers that women face and the means for empowering women and bringing them into the mainstream of development, but unfortunately the high levels of drop-outs at the primary, middle and secondary school level remain the milestones of journey through school education. Women and girls in Pakistan suffer the most in terms of social and human development. The girls are either not enrolled into school or are withdrawn at puberty often to undertake domestic duties.

Although, many studies and surveys have been conducted in Pakistan about high dropout rate but no specific study has been found in context of South Punjab, and more specifically of district Muzaffargarh. During 2009, AwazCDS, from its own resources, conducted a pilot small scale research study to assess dropouts of girls from public schools in district Multan due to early age marriages. This study was carried out in 23 urban, rural and semi-urban schools of the district. According to the findings, 7% of the rural girls (age between 9-16), dropped out from schools due to early age marriages. Through this proposed project, AWAZ intends to scale up its research at wider level in most deprived district of South Punjab i.e. Muzaffargarh and identify other key causes of girls' dropouts from schools. The project further aims to build an effective advocacy campaign to address identified issues. Main objectives of the project 'Educating Girls' Transforming Communities’ are;

- Increased availability of evidence-based knowledge and factors behind girls' dropout from schools in District Muzaffargarh;
- Improved and deepened knowledge and action of target communities to reduce girls' drop outs in their early schooling years;
- Improved realization and understanding among policy makers and government officials to work on reducing dropouts of girls in their early years of schooling; and
- Improved and accessible schooling facility for girls in targeted areas/ schools

2. Scope of Work

For achieving the project objective of generating evidence-based knowledge and factors behind girls' dropout from schools in District Muzaffargarh AWAZcds-Pakistan will engage consultant for the following assignment. He will provide the necessary technical assistance primarily to, Project team in order to help them establish

- A suitable demonstration project baseline for monitoring changes;
- A selection/designing of appropriate data collection tools to use during data collection;
- A simple and clear approach to initial data analysis
- A simple and clear reporting format for reporting results before handing over to consultant.
3. **Workplan**

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<th>Activities</th>
<th>March/April</th>
<th>May</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Review of Project Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Working on pre-draft Survey tools</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preparation for enumerators training stuff</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Travel to Multan</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Training of enumerators on questionnaires</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Pre-test in the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Questioner Revision and finalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Travel Back to ISB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Data Collection and entry/ compilation by AWAZ</td>
<td>Most of April (06-30)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sharing of Results</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Drafting report and share with AWAZ for feedback</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Feedback incorporated in final report</td>
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</table>

4. **Expected Outputs of the Assignment**
   - Development of standard questionnaires for quantitative data collection from School heads.
   - Development of standard questionnaires for qualitative data collection through FGDs and IDIs.
   - Data analysis on the basis of five thematic areas as Socio-Cultural Factors, Economic Factors, Physical Factors, Religio-Political Factors and Environmental Factors.
   - A mapping and assessment report developed capturing the status of dropouts of girls from schools (ages between 9-16 years) and key factors behind this issue.
5. Expected Outcomes
- Girls' dropout from schools reduced by 20%.

6. Gender/ SRHR Focused
Facts and figures given in review report should be gender sensitive. Facts and figures should clearly define the number of males/females/transgender/others in the beneficiaries when and where needed.

7. Assumptions & Risks
It is assumed that the service provider who undertakes this assignment understands the importance of it and will be committed to the work, and is competent to deliver as required. It is further assumed that AWAZcDs-Pakistan will fully support the service provider. Risks noted herein include the inability of the service provider to meet the deadlines, unforeseen internal and external structural as well as natural aspects that are beyond the control of both parties.

8. Copyright & Ownership
Said assignments will remain the property of AwazCDS-Pakistan and will not be shared with anyone else before submission to AwazCDS-Pakistan

Official language of the document will be English.

Annex 2

School Visit Plan
Annex 2

Tehsil Alipur

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>FGD Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.of FGD</th>
<th>Male Members</th>
<th>Female Members</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Day</td>
<td>School/Location</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
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**FGD Tehsil M.Garh**

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<th>School Name</th>
<th>FGD Type</th>
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<th>Female Members</th>
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# Survey Tools

## Annex 3

### Tool #1

#### Questionnaire for School Heads

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<th>Answer</th>
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<td>2. Designation(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Name of School:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Location: Village/Moza _________ UC _________ Tehsil _________</td>
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<td>5. Level of School:</td>
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<td></td>
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Name and Signature of Interviewer: ________________________________

Date of Interview: ________________________________

Checked by; Name and Signature: ________________________________

Computed by: ________________________________ File Name: ________________________________

Record No: ________________________________ Data Cleaned on: ________________________________
6. School Building:  All Pacca ☐  Semi-Pacca ☐  Katcha ☐

7. Drinking Water Supply:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

8. Toilet Facility:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

9. Boundary Wall:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

10. Electricity:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

11. Has running fans and bulbs:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

12. Desks/Benches in the classroom:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

13. Black/White Board:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

14. Library/library Book Chest:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

15. Playground:  Yes ☐  No ☐  Non-Functional ☐

16. Number of teachers officially assigned to school: ____________________________

17. Number of teachers actually working in the school: ____________________________

18. Number of teachers by Age: ____________________________

Below 25 Yrs ☐  25 to 35 ☐  35 to 45 ☐  45-55 ☐  above 55 Yrs ☐

19. Enrollment Situation by grades (Last three years):

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<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
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20. What government incentive programmes available to girls for continuing school?
   a. At Primary Level
      i. Free Text Book
      ii. Stipend
      iii. School feeding
      Any other ____________________________
b. At Middle Level
   i. Free Text Books
   ii. Stipend
   iii. School Feeding
   Any other ______________________

c. At Higher Secondary Level
   i. Free Text Books
   ii. Stipend
   iii. School Feeding
   Any other ______________________

21. No of girls dropout in the last three years

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
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<th>VIII</th>
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22. Is there an institutionalized mechanism such as PTA/SMC in the school?  Yes ☐ No ☐

23. If Yes, How often parents teachers meetings are held?
   Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Bi-annual ☐ Non-Funtional ☐

24. Which of the reasons are responsible for girl students dropout?
   a. Because she was a slow learner in the class
   b. Teachers attention and encouragement to her lacked
   c. Pressure of households chores
   d. Distance between home and school farther
   e. Law and order situation
   f. Religious reasons
   g. Carporal punishment
   h. Financial difficulties in the family
   i. Missing facilities like boundary wall, toilet and potable water
      Any other ______________________

25. How regular the girls at-risk happened to be prior to dropout?
   Very regular ☐ Regular ☐ Not regular ☐
26. What could be the most important steps/actions that could improve retention of girls?
   a. More funds for improvement in school facilities
   b. Girls student stipends
   c. Stringent implementation of 'compulsory education act'
   d. Teachers training
   e. Mass advocacy for girls education

   All of the above __________________________________________

   Thank You Very Much!

Tool#2

Focus Group Discussion for Teachers

Name of School Representative: __________________________________________

Location: Village/Moza _____________ UC. ____________ Tehsil ____________

Level of School Represented: Primary [ ] Middle [ ] High [ ]

Number of respondents in the group: _________________________________________

Name and Signature of the moderator: _________________________________________

Date of Interview: __________________________________________________________

Checked by; Name and Signature ___________________________________________

1. How important is the girls' education?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
2. If the girls' education is important what do you do to keep the at-risk girls from dropout?

__________________
__________________
__________________
__________________

3. What kind of mechanisms are there between you and parents of the students?

__________________
__________________
__________________
__________________

4. Why do girls tend to dropout from school?

__________________
__________________
__________________
__________________

5. What are the difficulties responsible for girls' dropout/non-completion?

__________________
__________________
__________________
__________________

6. Finally, what are your suggestions for overall improvement of in girls' retention in schools?

__________________
__________________
__________________
__________________

Thank you very much.
Tool # 3

Focus Group Discussion for Parents

Number of respondents in the group: ________________________________

Location: Village/Moza _______________ UC _______________ Tehsil _______________

Name and Signature of the moderator: ________________________________

Date of Interview: ________________________________

Checked by; Name and Signature: ________________________________

1. How important do you see education for your children

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Do you see girls’ education in schools equally important as boys’?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. What kind of mechanisms are there between you and teachers of the students to discuss issues related to your child's education

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
4. Why do parents of girls tend to remove them from school?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. What are the factors responsible for girls' dropout/non-completion?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. What measure do you think government can take to encourage parents to continue with their girl child's education?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much.

Tool # 4
Focus Group Discussion for Girls Student

Name of School Represented: ________________________________________________

Location: Village/Moza _______________ UC. ___________ Tehsil ___________

Level of School Represented: Primary [ ] Middle [ ] High [ ]

Number of respondents in the group: _____________________________

Name and Signature of the moderator: ________________________________

Date of Interview: _____________________________________________

Checked by; Name and Signature ________________________________
1. How do you find coming to school for education?

2. How important do you see education for yourself?

3. To what level you wish to take your education?

4. Why do girls often tend to dropout from school?
5. What are the factors responsible for girls' dropout/non-completion?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. What do you think government can do to discourage girls' dropout?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much.

Tool # 5

IDI's with local Intellectuals

Name of the respondent: ______________________ Category: ______________________
Location: ________________________________ Tehsil: ____________________________
Name and Signature of the moderator: __________________________________________
Date of Interview: _________________________
Checked by; Name and Signature ______________________________________________

1. How important do you think masses in Muzaffargarh see education for their children?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Do you think masses see girls' education in schools equally important as boys'? If not what may be the causes?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
3. Do you find any interaction between parents and teachers to discuss issues related to their child's education satisfactory? If not how can this be improved?

4. What factors force the parents of girls to remove them from school?

5. What are the deeper problems/issues responsible leading to girls' dropout/non-completion?

6. What do you think government can do to encourage parents to continue with their girl child's education?

Thank you very much.
Media Gallery
A research Study by:

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AWAZ Foundation Pakistan: Centre for development Services was founded in 1995. The statutory mandate was "to help promote the development of a socio-economic and politically sound society and to improve the living standards of marginalized communities in Pakistan"