

## Parents' Involvement in Female Secondary Schools

By

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### Abstract

*Parents' involvement in schools is considered a vital factor in today's schooling system. There was sufficient ground to conduct the study in Pakistan scenario as majority of people give top priority to their male children as compared to female children and females are consciously ignored and parents give less importance to female education. Therefore, there is possibility for females to become victim of various types of psychological problems. The study aimed to explore parents' involvement in female secondary schools with reference to female students' problems. Understanding of students' problems relating to their education like not doing home assignments, absenteeism from school, lack of interest in learning, health related problems like any typical disease (s), psychological problems like students' inferiority complexes, telling lies, remaining disturbed, being isolated and introvert in school, interpersonal relations and maladjustment problems, personal family related problems like separation between parents, financial problems. Such problems affect on students' behavior at school and causes lack of interest in learning. Information from parents about the nature of students' problems can help teachers in understanding problems. At the same time parents' involvement in schools can raise some problems for teachers however, such problems may be controlled through proper leadership and administration.*

**Keywords:** *Female secondary schools, parents' involvement, psychological problems, family and financial problems.*

### Introduction

The system of school education is introduced for the purpose of educating and training the generations of the country according to the aspirations of the nation. Administrators, curriculum, teachers' training institutions, teachers, students and parents equally play their particular roles in the development of the school education system, in the training and education of students, and in the achievement of the objectives of school education system.

Generally, to run an education system, a specific curriculum is developed and implemented and trained teachers for certain specific school level are appointed at certain level for the purpose of educating the generations of the nation. In order to make the education system a success and to it smoothly, it is essential that all segments involved contribute sufficiently and play their required, expected and active role for the achievement of the objectives of education system as a whole.

Teachers and head teachers have to play their specific roles to be within the environment of the institution in order to achieve the target objectives of education, e.g. to educate students and to build their character in accordance with aspirations of the society. These objectives can be achieved only through cooperative participation in schools. Actually, it is a trio: the teacher, the students and the parents, that makes the learning process a possibility.

The learning of students and their behavior can be made better and fruitful only by getting their parents involved in their schools. Parents are copartners in the learning process of their children; as there are various problems which teachers and school alone are unable to solve. For instance there are many such learning and behavior problems that for solution of these problems parents /home/family information and cooperation is required. These problems may be of diverse kind; psychology problems, emotional problems, educational problems, health problems, economic problems, absenteeism problems, etc.

For better and fruitful learning of students it is essential that students should be free from all kinds of problems and tensions with in school environment and even at home they should provide a relaxed environment. For this purpose parents' involvement is essential. Parents' involvement means helping children in their reading, in doing their homework, in comprehension of text material, keeping time check on children while watching television, visiting children's schools, meeting teachers and getting information about children's progress in studies.

Many studies have been conducted so far about active involvement of parents in schools. Findings of such studies suggest that parents' involvement in schools has a significant and positive effect on students' achievement and considerably helps in understanding students. Parents' involvement in a conventional setup at home is confined only to help their children in their study matters like in doing homework, helping in reading their textbooks and in some cases regularizing them in their attendance at school.

William jeynes (2004) indicates in Meta analysis study that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement outcomes. This trend holds not only for parental involvement overall but for most components of parental involvement that were examined in the Meta analysis. Nowadays parents' involvement with reference to their children's education requires more than mere at home assistance.

Now parents are involved in schools through parents' Teachers Association (PTA) Or through school Management committees (SMCs) in their regular sessions and they on voluntary basis contribute intellectually, physically and some times even financially in order to solve the problems relating to the studies of their children. "The Centre on Families, communities, schools and children's learning (1994) indicates that parents who receive frequent and positive messages from teachers tend to become more involved in their children's education than do other parents". Dauber and Epstein (1993) found that many parents responds to encouragement from educators. In their national study of 2,317 inner-city elementary and middle school students, the best predictor of parents'

involvement was what the school did to promote it. (On line reference retrieved on October 10, 2005).

Educators have also assumed that parents' are not as involved or as interested in the progress of their adolescent children as is required. However, Shaver and walls (1998) have found that parents do have a desire to be involved in the lives of their adolescent children regardless of their economic status or ethnicity. Parents just are not always successful in their efforts, so they tend to be more cautious in their actions. The crux of family school involvement at the middle and high school level is determining the kinds of adult interactions that not only allow teenagers to have autonomy and respect but also meet the needs of families and schools. (Chris Ferguson and Victor Rodriguez, 2005). Online retrieved on 23-05-2009.

Researches report that though parents' involvement in schools facilitates students' learning at schools but there are some parents' who are unable to play their active role in schools either due to their different responsibilities and time constraints or due to communication problems resulting from some sort of psychological barriers or illiteracy which prevent them from conveying their and their child's' problems to the teachers. In such circumstances it is essential for schools to facilitate parents by accommodating them through a relaxed and flexible time schedule and by arranging different meetings or conferences for them. It is also fact that some parents feel reluctance in attending schools and meets the teachers and gets information about their children's progress.

"To affect change, parents must find time to participate in their children's education while schools must provide the supports necessary for them to be involved. The resulting partnerships between parents and teachers will increase students' achievement and promote better cooperation between home and school. A growing number of parents do not speak or read English well enough to communicate with teachers and administrators. Because of cultural differences, many parents' are not familiar with the expectations of their children's' schools and do not understand how to go about getting involved, even if they want to. Some parent's lack the educational background or skills they feel they need to interact with teachers and staff. For others, their own negative experiences as students make them uncomfortable going to the school."(Aronson, 1996, p .58) (Online reference retrieved on 10-10-2008).

Ballen and Moles (1994) also describe that the language barrier may be a problem for the parents who can not speak English. One solution is to have a resource person either a teacher or another parent who can communicate with the parents in their first language. Like wise in school scenario it is generally observed that the teacher is so much involved in school routine work that he/she does not have enough time to manage daily meetings with so many parents and listening to and talking to them about their children's problems.

"Teachers who feel overburdened with their teaching load may not have the time to reach out to parents. They need to be given the necessary time to contact and meet with parents. To coordinate parent- teacher meetings and develop parent-involvement programs, the school may designate a parent liaison or home school coordinator" (Ballen & Moles, 1994). Online reference retrieved on October 10, 2008.

Technically speaking when parents get involved in schools and get in touch with the academic progress and behavior of their children at school, then it exercise a remarkably Positive effect on students' academic performance .In family context, three kind of Parental involvements at home are consistently associated with students' higher achievement at school.

1. Actively organizing and monitoring a student's time at home.
2. Helping with home work and.
3. Discussing school matters with the student.

The earlier the parent involvement begins in a child's educational process, the more powerful are the effects. Positive results of parental involvement include improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, improved behavior, and restored confidence among parents in their children's schooling. (Online reference retrieved on October 10, 2008).

The family makes critical contributions to student's achievement from preschool through high school. A home environment that encourages learning is more important to student's achievement than income, education level or cultural backgrounds. (Online reference retrieved on 09-10-2008).

Generally some intellectuals believe that parents' involvement in school system can create problems for school administration. They consider it as wastage of school and teachers' time as when parents come to school and talk to teachers and principal then in this activity teachers' and principal's time is wasted.

Parents should also be active in collaborating on school curriculum to ensure that their children will have appropriate option available to them when they leave school. as O'Neill et al. (1990) present some recommendations in this regard:

1. Parents should share information with school personnel about student and family needs, activities and goals.
2. Parents should participate in selecting goals, the kind of learning experiences their children will have, and the kind of skills they will be taught.
3. Parents should participate with school personnel in exploring post-school options.
4. Parents may need to work with professionals and/or other parents to develop more appropriate options when service gaps exist.

Commonly, when parents attempt to talk to their teenagers about school, the response is short and uninformative. However, research in that field shows that in fact, teenagers do want to interact with their parents as well as other adults, and have them involved in their lives (Duffett & Johnson, 2004). "Lack of parents' participation and involvement may be detrimental to the achievement of successful transition outcomes" (Johnson and Rusch 1993, p.6).

Secondary school level is the most crucial level of schooling for students, especially for female students. At this stage different mode of physical developmental

changes occur. Parallel to this various psychological, emotional, and social. etc and changes also take place at this crucial age level. In respect to female students, it is rather essential to be more conscious about female students' problems of specific nature as compared to male students. So, it becomes mandatory that parents should be involved in schools in order to understand the nature of these problems and to extend cooperation for a quick and workable solution to these problems.

“There are numerous studies that explore successful family involvement at the secondary level. The studies reported here represent several research designs: comparison studies, random surveys, and other descriptive methods. While each study provides comparative data or is rich in description about issues and factors influencing family involvement at the secondary level, they do not provide empirical evidence on what intervention strategies can positively impact students' performance and can be found in randomized control trials. Additionally, the studies described in this section not only current research, they also help to define what is known about effective family and community connections with schools”. (On line reference 04-05-2006).

It is generally observed in Pakistan scenario, where female are given lower social status than male, female students at female secondary schools suffer many problems and due to presence of these problems, their studies are also affected. Mostly, these problems have their roots in educational social, psychological, health, absenteeism from schools or economic problems.

As researches suggest that parents involvement in schools have positive effect on students' achievement as well as in solving their problems of different nature, so that researcher, keeping in view the situation at of Pakistani female secondary schools ,decided to conduct a research study to find out the role of parents' involvement in female secondary schools and its impact on solving students problem of different nature like educational problems, psychological problems, health problems and social problems etc.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Generally, female students of secondary school level (class IX-X) face typical problems of various natures at school and due to such problems they create difficulties for teachers and studies are also affected. The present study was conducted to appraise parents, involvement in female secondary schools with reference to students' problems. The study aimed at exploring effectiveness of parents' involvement in girls' secondary schools and its impact on solving students' problems.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out nature of problems that female students' generally face at secondary school level.

2. To measure effectiveness of parents' involvement in female secondary schools in understanding problems of female students.
3. To explore problems relating to parents' involvement in female secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do female students face typical problems at secondary school level?
2. Is parents' involvement in female secondary schools effective in understanding problems of female students?
3. Can parents' involvement in female secondary schools bring addition in the problems of teachers?

### **Delimitation of the Study**

As the researcher had limited time and financial resources so the study was delimited to the following factors:

1. Randomly selected 10 female secondary schools of public sector located in Mianwali district;
2. On the basis of the researchers' experience in the field of secondary education and with consultation with secondary school teachers, the following major areas of problems of female students were investigated in the study:
  - a) Educational Problems
  - b) Health related problems
  - c) Family problems

### **Population and sample**

All teachers teaching secondary level classes in female secondary schools of Mianwali District were the population of the study. Ten secondary level schools of public sector were selected randomly and then ten teachers from each school were selected randomly for collection of data. So the total sample was 100 secondary school teachers.

### **Research Methodology**

It was a survey type descriptive study and keeping in view the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was developed in order to collect data for the study. A team of experts from the National University of Modern Language Islamabad checked the validity and authenticity of the questionnaire. The language of the some statements was revised in the light of experts' opinion. When the experts validated the questionnaire, it was administered on the sample.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

### Demographic Data

- Detailed information about teachers' educational and professional qualification, age, and their teaching experience in secondary classes is mentioned below in the table No.1: Insert table one

### Analysis of Teachers' Responses on Questionnaire

Insert table No. 2

The above table describes that teachers are of the view that female students certainly face problems of typical nature at school. These problems may be due to crucial stage of girls' adolescent.

Insert table No. 3

A significant majority of teacher is sure that for understanding typical problems of female students regarding crucial age stage parents should involve in schools so that such problems may be discussed with them.

Insert table No. 4

Table -4 Explain teachers' views on educational problems of female students like not doing home assignment. In this way on one hand students suffer shame and humiliation in the class and on the other hand this type of behavior on the part of the student has a negative impression on other students in the class as well. Parents, involvement can minimize these problems as parents can be informed about the progress of their girls at school regarding attempting home assignment.

Insert table No. 5

The table No.5 shows that teachers are of the view that students do not take interest in learning activities. As students at secondary school come from different backgrounds so some students may have specific learning deficiency and due to this deficiency they may be unable to maintain their learning speed with other students and they lose interest in their studies. The reason for this type of problem may be that students do not have interest in their studies and their area of interest may some type of home economics, technical, vocational. Any how parents' involvement can be helpful to find out the reason for lack of interest in studies.

Insert table No. 6

Table No.6 depicts that teachers face problems due to absenteeism of students. Often students do not come to school without any particular reason. Parents' involvement in school can minimize this problem as parents may realize the importance of regularity in school and studies.

Insert table No. 7

Table: No. 7 describes that sometimes teachers face such situation that students have some typical disease (s) and for understanding such disease (s) parents through involvement in

schools can inform teachers about some typical disease (s) and related information about that disease (s).

Insert table No. 8

Table No.8 informs about teachers views regarding psychological problems of female students like inferiority complex is the major problems among female students at secondary level. Due to this type of problem students have adjustment and interpersonal relations problems. They do not want to disclose their weaknesses and they try to hide truth from teachers and from others classmates. They remain often disturbed, reserved, isolated and are unable to communicate with teachers or classmates or concentrate on their studies effectively. Such kind of situation and problems can be well explored by consulting with parents.

Insert table No. 9

Table: 9. Teachers give their consent about students' personal or family problems, which disturb students at school. The nature and type may be varied from student to student but it's a fact that student's personal and family problems have their affect on students' behavior at school. They cannot get them free from home problems even at school. Some important problems of such kind are violence within the home, separation among parents, social and financial problems.

But often students hide such problems from teachers and from peer group and do not share these with others. Due to pressure of such problems they become psyche case and their studies are affected. Parents' involvement in secondary schools can be beneficial to understand the nature and sort of students' personal and family problems at secondary level.

Insert table No. 10

Table No.10 explains that majority of teachers are agree that when ever parents are called in school with reference to their girls' problems, then often majority of parents do not come to school for this purpose as they have not time due to their certain commitments. At the same time if some parents come to school, they do not come on exact time as requested, then teachers have to manage time for them within their short time frame and have to discuss with them problems of their girls. In this way teachers' time is wasted and their daily routine work is disturbed.

Insert table No. 11

Table-11 depicts that teachers are of the view that parents do not understand the importance of their girls' problems. They just leave them to teachers to solve them. From open ended questions, it was found out that parents rarely come to school in spite of the fact that the school calls them again and again and that they had no time.

Insert table No. 12

The above table shows that when parents come to school for meetings. They generally unjustly criticize teachers with reference to their daughters' problems and do not try to understand the problems of their daughters.



## Conclusions and Recommendations:

From the above findings it is obvious that understanding various types of problems of female students, parents' involvement in secondary school is essential as the involvement can be beneficial in understanding and solving the typical problems of female students like:

1. Understanding female students' educational problems like not doing home assignments, absenteeism from school, and lack of interest in learning.
2. Understanding the nature of female students' health related problems like any typical disease (s).
3. Considering the nature of female students' psychological problems like students' inferiority complexes, telling lies, remaining disturbed, being introvert and reserved in school, and problems related to maladjustment and interpersonal relations, in addition to these, in a society like Pakistan, where majority of people give top priority to their male children as compared to female children and they often consciously ignore their female children. In such situation there is a possibility for female child to become victim of various types of psychological problems.
4. Understanding nature of female students' personal and family related problems like violence within the home separation among parents' social back ground or financial problems. Parents' involvement in schools can be beneficial to understand the nature and sort of students' personal and family problems.
5. Understanding nature of female students' problems can provide teachers the data to find the solution to these problems and manage students' learning in better way.
6. Parents' involvement in schools can have positive effects on students progress in their studies and their attitudes can be diverted towards a positive direction by solving their problems with the help of parents and their personality can developed by understanding the nature of their various problems.
7. Some problems are also associated with parents' involvement in female school like parents have shortage of time due to different job or personal matters. For teachers it is also difficult for to manage time for parents' casual meetings. In addition to this, in meetings parents often blame teachers unjustly and do not try to understand the nature of their daughters' problems.
8. It is suggested that in educational calendar of secondary schools there
9. Should be planned time for parents' visits regarding their meeting with teachers for exchange information about their daughters at school.
10. Teachers may be provided special training regarding dealing with parents of various categories. So that they may be able to explain parents about the various problems of their daughters.
11. Parents may be informed from time to time about not only educational progress but also about the behavior and the conduct of their daughters within the school.

12. Researches have provided that regularity at school and in home assignment, leads to better learning achievement, positive change in behavior and it is possible only through parents' involvement in school.
13. Female schools may adopt a complete system, programs or plate form through which teachers may voice their views regarding typical problems, their nature, intensity, results, and suggested remedy for such problems of female students at secondary level school.

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**Table: 1.**

Characteristics of Sample	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers' qualification M.A/M. Sc, M.Ed	26	26%
M.A, B. Ed	23	23%

B.A, B. Ed	45	45%
others	9	9%
Age: 25-35	6	6%
36-45	30	30%
46-55	14	14%
Teaching experience in secondary classes 5-10	6	6%
11-15	20	20%
16 on wards	24	24%

**Table- 2. Female students face problems of typical nature:**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Female students at secondary level face a lot of problems of typical nature.	95	95%

**Table-3 Parents' involvement for understanding females' problems:**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Parents' involvement is essential for understanding the typical problems of female students.	89	89%

**Table- 4 Educational problems like not doing home assignment and parent's involvement.**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Female students do not do their home assignment regularly.	79	79%

**Table: 5. Educational Problems like not taking interest in learning activities:**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Students do not take interest in their studies.	85	85%

**Table: 6. Educational problems like absenteeism of students from school**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Students learning suffers a lot due to absenteeism of students	83	83%

**Table: 7. Students have physical health related problems.**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Sometimes students have some typical disease (s).	74	74%

**Table: No. 8 psychological problems of female students.**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Female Students have often various psychological problems like inferiority complex, Maladjustment, Interpersonal relations, Telling lies, Remaining disturbed, reversed, Isolated, introvert. etc.	92	92%

**Table No. 9. Personal/Family problems**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Students' personal or family problems like, violence, separation among parents, social, and financial problems disturb them.	88	88%

**Table No. 10. Problems associated with parents' involvement in female secondary school.**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Parents do not come to school on time when called and teachers' time is wasted due to this reason.	78	78%

**Table-11 Illiteracy of Parents**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Most of parents are illiterate and they do not understand the importance of students' problems.	62	62%

**Table-12 Parents Criticize Teachers Unjustly**

Statement	No of responses	Percentage
Most of parents criticize teachers unjustly.	69	69%