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Narrating the 'Other': Unreliability, Stereotyping, and Islamophobia in John Updike's Terrorist (2006)

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of parental upward and downward mobility on girls' secondary education and subsequent women's empowerment in Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K), utilizing an intergenerational lens. Through a qualitative, exploratory research design, the study explores how socio-economic shifts within families influence educational aspirations, career trajectories, and empowerment outcomes for girls. A purposive sample of 30 female students and 10 parents from two Governments Higher Secondary Schools (GHSS), one urban and one rural was selected. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with students and their parents, focusing on parental mobility, girls' educational outcomes, aspirations, and empowerment. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data, identifying key themes related to mobility, geographical disparities in education, factors contributing to intergenerational mobility, and socio-economic status. The findings indicate that upward mobility significantly enhances girls' educational opportunities and empowerment, while downward mobility often limits access to quality education and socio-economic advancement. This research highlights the critical role of parental socio-economic status in shaping educational outcomes and the broader socio-cultural empowerment of women, emphasizing the need for targeted educational policies that address these disparities in Muzaffarabad, AJ&K.

Keywords: Mobility, Empowerment, Intergenerational, Aspirations, Disparities, Socio-cultural, Upward Mobility, Downward Mobility

Introduction

Education is a right and an effective agent of change that has been espoused by the UN as an essential liberating force, did not leave gender bias in education behind in the developed country paradigm, but instead persists in developing regions. In Pakistan especially Azad Jammu and Kashmir State (AJ&K) these gaps exists and the socio cultural economic and structural barriers created by the society exclude girls from secondary education (UNESCO, 2021). These barriers can, therefore, be associated with family socio-economic status and their movement or otherwise within family socio-economic strata. Socio-economic

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mobility, being a measure of the status of one's family moving up or down in the socio-economic ladder indicates the extent to which a child, especially the daughter, can be educated (Rao & Chaudhury, 2020).

Such families are better placed to provide better educational endowments such as; financial support, motivation, and better social networks, all of which will improve the education opportunities of girls (Liu et al., 2022). On the same note, upward mobility may lead to considerable economic costs, social capital loss and hampers the family's capacity with regards to sponsoring girls' education. This leads to early withdrawal of girls from schools to allow the boys to go to school or engage in household works (Siddiqi & Kamal, 2021). Such patterns are magnified in the rural area like Muzaffarabad as the prevalent gender biases and sociocultural practices of early marriage and gendered division of labor restricts girls' education (Rahman & Zafar, 2020).

The social class of parents directly affects the education and chances of children to be empowered especially the girl child. It is also meant as a change in the status of a family from the lower class, to the higher one brought about by way of change in education, jobs or improvements in the economic system. Better off families are more likely to be able to afford quality resources like improved earnings, affordable homes and large networks, which are key drivers towards the support of children education. Such families can afford to cater for their children's education especially the female child hence increasing their chances of success in school and hence empowering those (Liu et al., 2022). Downward mobility, on the other hand, is the movement of a family in the lower socio-economic strata caused by situations like job loss, economic downturns or other form of hardships like ill-health. Families that experience downward mobility find that their incomes, resources, and opportunities decrease, making it hard for families to emphasis on education as they try to survive in the new economic status. In such cases, daughters may drop out of school early and may be forced into early marriages or other long hours of domestic work hence reduced prospects of being empowered and having mobility (Siddiqi & Kamal, 2021).

Parental socio-economic mobility is another significant factor when considering the overall themes of education and women empowerment. A study

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that has been conducted revealed that mothers with higher education led to maximum investment in education of their daughters hence coming up with empowered generation (Chaudhary & Malik, 2021). While Education has being widely acknowledged as important component for women and girls' empowerment there is dearth of research literature investigating the relationship between parental socioeconomic mobility and girl secondary education in AJ&K. In order to fill this gap, the present study aims at providing an inter-generational perspective in Muzaffarabad to demonstrate how mobility process of parents: upward or downward, affects the process and the level of female education and how the resultant education determines women's empowers in both socio-economic and cultural realms of the area under study. The purpose of this study is to examine factors that enhance or constrain education for girls, and consequently, highlight issues of gender equality and development.

Statement of the Problem

Parents' intergenerational mobility can have a variety of issues on secondary school girls, affecting their educational experiences and results. Parent's low intergenerational mobility can have an impact on girls' access to tutoring services, co-curricular activities, and educational materials. Girls from families with limited mobility can affect their aspirations and belief in their own capabilities and also affecting girls' self-esteem and sense of belonging in the school environment (Farooq, et al., 2011). Girls encounter various challenges in the context of their parents' upward mobility, such as changes in schools, adaptation to new curricula, financial strain, cultural and social adjustments, and academic pressure. Conversely, when parents experience downward mobility, girls face issues such as diminished educational resources, restricted access to educational facilities, heightened responsibilities, stress, anxiety, and limited aspirations. Additionally, girls confront problems such as school dropout rates, health and nutrition issues, and social challenges that impact teacher-student relationships. These issues need attention and targeted interventions to ensure a more equitable and supportive educational environment for female students (Javed & Irfan 2014).

Objectives of the Study

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- To investigate the influence of parental upward and downward socio-economic mobility on girls' secondary education and the resulting intergenerational effects on women's empowerment in Muzaffarabad, AJ&K

Research Questions of the Study

- RQ1: How does parental upward and downward socio-economic mobility influence girls' secondary education and contribute to women's empowerment across generations in Muzaffarabad, AJ&K?

Significance of the Study

Girls education in Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K), is influenced by a complex interplay by parent's involvement factors. The results can guide programs and policies that support girl's education and advance more general societal objective. It can support the overarching objective of empowering girl and advancing gender equality. The results can help educational policies and initiatives that improve access to high-quality education for girl, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. By shedding light on the complex processes that affect girls' access to education and success in secondary school, it advances the larger goals of gender parity, poverty reduction, and human capital development. Informed policymaking, community involvement, and efforts focused at improving educational chances for all girls, regardless of their familial origin and financial status will all be built on the research's findings.

Theoretical Framework

Social Capital Theory, an idea by Robert Putnam (2000), focuses on the importance of social networks, trust and shared values in accessing resources and opportunities. In an educational setting, social capital is the resources children can tap on through family networks, school, and community that can inform their educational success. For parental upward and downward mobility, this theory provides an explanation of how socio-economic status of a family influences the educational opportunities for girls. Families that are experiencing upward mobility tend to enjoy the access to more social capital (stronger

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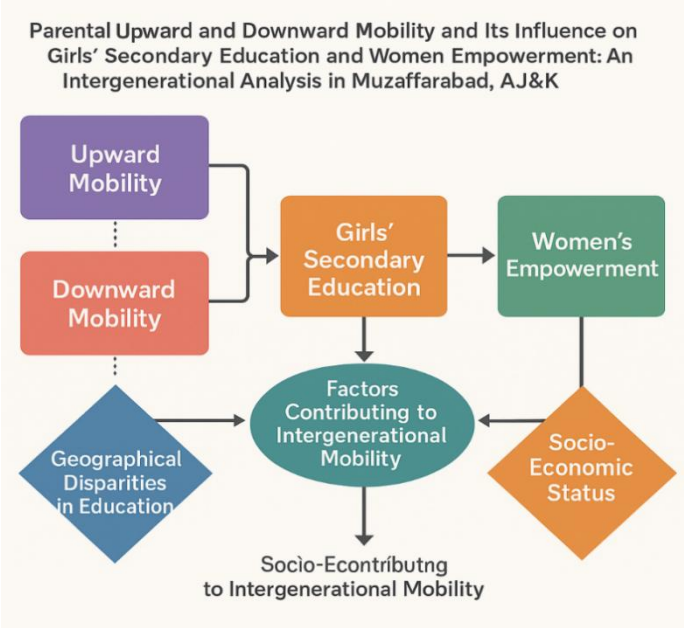
networks), better economic resources, and increased support for education. Families on the downward trajectory of aggregate mobility commonly suffer a loss of social capital, which hampers their capacity to offer the resources and support that would be required in the education of girls. According to Social Capital Theory, social networks and the provision of community support is an essential tool that supports educational outcomes. Upward mobility widens these opportunities; downward mobility restricts them; girls in socio-economically undesirable areas are especially affected.

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

For this study, a qualitative approach was carried out by using an exploratory research design, the nature of the research questions which intends to students regarding parents' involvement teachers at the secondary school level in District Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Exploratory qualitative research promotes better appreciation of social realities, as it examines under researched issues using methods like interviews and observation hence, the participants' experiences influence the findings (Cohen et al., 2017; Zohrabi, 2013).

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Population of the Study

It is not viable to serve the whole population due to time and financial constraints. The population is a word used in research to describe an enormous collection of people, organizations, objects, and other things that have a similar interest to the researcher. A population was described as a collection of people who have a common set of characteristics (Cooper et al., 2006). The study targeted 13 girls' higher secondary schools in Muzaffarabad, AJK, with a total enrollment of 920 students, as per the Higher Education Department (HED) of AJK's website. For this research, four girls' higher secondary schools with a total of 317 students were conveniently selected in District Muzaffarabad. Families residing within Muzaffarabad city, AJK, were also included in the study.

Sample and sampling technique

Purposive sampling is a sampling technique where the researcher uses judgment to choose participants from the population for the study (Baker & Black, 2011). The study's sample was drawn from the target population, comprising two Government High Secondary Schools (GHSS) one urban and one rural. A total of 113 students were initially selected, 15 students were selected from each of the two schools, yielding a total sample size of 30. 10 parents of these students were chosen as the sample size for the study. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select respondents. The final sample consisted of 15 female students from each school, accompanied by either their father or mother, all residing in MZD (AJ&K). It is noteworthy that data collection through interviews was continue until point of saturation is achieved, ensuring thematic exhaustion. The point of saturation is the point when collecting more data doesn't provide any new information or insights.

Data Collection Tools

The researcher was using two semi-structured interview data-collecting tools based on the methodology of the current study:

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Interview

In collecting the data, the researcher was using a two semi-structured interview. According to Fontana and Frey (2000), a semi-structured in-depth interview allows the researcher to gain a thorough knowledge of the participants' perspectives on reality. The researcher was establishing a connection with the parents and communicates with them in Urdu, and English transcription notes will be made. The researcher visited schools and homes personally, engaging with families through an appropriate channel to schedule appointments. Interviews were recorded after obtaining consent the first interview will be conducted with students, followed by interviews with their parents (either mother or father). A pilot study was conducted by teachers to determine the sample size. The questions for the interviews were focus on three aspects: upward & downward mobility of parents, women empowerment, and aspirations of the girls.

Data analysis

The qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews was recorded, themed, coded, transcribed and analyzed with the help of thematic analysis in the light of research objectives. Every interview was initially translated into English. Before transcribing, the researcher listened to each interview three times. Each set of interviews was translated and transcribed quickly, usually the same day it was conducted to prevent any kind of ambiguity. It was a crucial initial step in getting a general understanding of the data. The researcher was able to become familiar with the data by carefully listening to the interviews, translating them and transcribing them. It was being preceded in the following four steps:

Step 1: Translation and transcription of the data

Step 2: Initial coding

Step 3: Identifying themes

Step 4: Refining themes and developing explanation

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Ethical Consideration

A systematic exchange of ideas between and among people is research. While conducting the research, codes of conduct and a sense of responsibility were kept in mind. Instead of taking advantage of individuals for our personal gain, we should work for theirs. Participants' permission, information privacy and other ethical issues were guaranteed. Before anyone participates in any research, it is crucial that ethical concerns are fully addressed. To protect vulnerable groups, Cohen et al., (2017) contended that ethical considerations in research must be satisfied.

Privacy and confidentiality

During data collection, confidentiality and privacy were maintained. Participants' names and whereabouts were not recorded for the sake of privacy (Basit, 2010). All information that the researcher deemed to be sensitive were kept out of the public access. For example, rather than registering data by name, it was done by numbers with the understanding that each participant would remain anonymous and that the research would focus on the views they expressed rather than the persons themselves (Cohen et al., 2017). Interviews were marked with a date and place of where and when they were conducted.

Data Analysis

The data reflects a series of challenges faced by girls in accessing and continuing their education.

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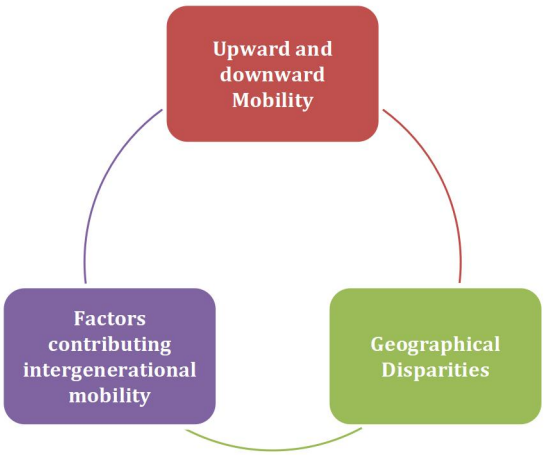
Main theme



Theme-1 Upward and downward Mobility

Parental Economic Mobility and Educational Opportunities

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, despite the challenges, we remain committed to doing everything we can support our daughter through these difficult times. Our goal is to ensure that she can continue her education without obstacles as much as possible and achieve her full potential, despite the financial and emotional strains.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"It's been tough on our daughter, emotionally and academically. She knows we're struggling, and it's affecting her focus in school. We're trying to support her as best as we can, but it's challenging." (Respondent-03)*

Social Mobility and Educational Aspirations

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, while our circumstances have led us to adjust our expectations, our commitment to our daughter's future remains unwavering. We continue to support her in every way we can, guiding her towards opportunities that will ensure her long-term stability and fulfillment. By adapting our approach, we aim to equip her with the tools she needs to build a secure and prosperous future, regardless of the changes in our social standing.

One of the respondent parents revealed that:

> *"As our social standing declined, we've had to adjust our expectations for our daughter's education. We still want*

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her to succeed, but we're more focused on her learning practical skills that will help her find stable work, rather than aiming for prestigious universities."(Respondent-06)

Parent's upward mobility

Majority of the respondent parents responded that their hard work and sacrifices made them to achieve upward mobility. They might describe how they overcame challenges, sought better job opportunities, or pursued education to improve their family's circumstances Parents often emphasize how their primary motivation for upward mobility was to provide a better life for their children.

One of the respondent parents argued that:

"We worked very hard to provide a better life for our children. There were times when things were difficult, but we always stayed focused on improving our situation, whether it was by taking night classes or looking for better jobs my biggest goal was to make sure my children had more opportunities than I did. I didn't want them to struggle the way I did, so everything I worked for was to ensure they had the education and resources they needed." (Respondent-07)

Some of the respondent parents responded that, the reflection on the challenges they faced in pursuing education, particularly if they came from disadvantaged backgrounds or had to overcome systemic barriers like lack of access to quality schools, discrimination, or financial constraints. Despite these challenges, they often emphasize their resilience and determination to succeed.

One of the respondent parents replied that:

"It wasn't easy coming from a background where education wasn't prioritized. I faced a lot of challenges, from financial struggles to balancing family life, but I knew that getting an education was my way out of those difficulties." (Respondent-06)

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Parent's downward mobility

Majority of the Parents often discuss the missed opportunities for education; either because they couldn't afford it, had to leave school to work or care for family members, or faced systemic barriers. They might reflect on how these missed opportunities limited their upward mobility and resulted in financial or professional struggles.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"I had to drop out of college to help support my family, and that decision still affects us today. Without a degree, it's been really hard to find stable, well-paying work, and that's affected our family's financial situation." (Respondent-08)*

Some of the parents talk about the difficulties they faced when trying to return to school later in life. They may mention the financial burden, the struggle to balance education with work and family responsibilities, or the emotional toll of returning to an academic environment. Another parent mentioned that:

> *"I tried going back to school a few years ago, but juggling classes work, and raising kids was too much. I couldn't keep up, and now I feel stuck in low-paying jobs because I don't have the qualifications."(Respondent-07)*

Evolution of Parental Education across Generations

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, as we move forward, the emphasis on education continues to evolve, with an increasing recognition that learning is a lifelong journey, extending beyond traditional academic settings. The foundation laid by past generations serves as a stepping stone for future ones, who must navigate an ever-changing landscape where continuous learning and adaptability are key to success.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Growing up, my parents always told me education was the only way to succeed, even though neither of them had more than a basic education. They worked hard so I could*

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> *go to college. Now, I see my children growing up in a world where continuous learning is necessary, even beyond formal education." (Respondent-04)*

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, while earlier generations may have limited access to formal education, they often instilled in their children the importance of learning and self-improvement, despite their own constraints. Over time, these values have driven subsequent generations to pursue more formal education and break the cycle of limited schooling. This ongoing progression underscores the determination of families to adapt and grow; ensuring that each new generation is better equipped to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world.

One of the respondent mothers argued that:

> *"My father didn't go past the 8th grade, and he always regretted it. He learned on the job and through life experiences. For me, it was important to break that cycle and get a high school diploma, but now I see the need for my children to go even further, with college or vocational training." (Respondent-07)*

Parental Investment in Girls' Education

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, despite the ongoing struggle to balance financial constraints with our aspirations for our daughter's future, we remain steadfast in our belief that education is her most valuable asset. We are committed to supporting her academic efforts as best as we can, understanding that this investment is crucial for opening doors to better opportunities. Our hope is that through her dedication and our continued support, she will be able to overcome these challenges and achieve a brighter, more secure future.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"It's a struggle to balance our immediate financial needs with our desire to invest in our daughter's future. We encourage her to focus on her studies because we believe that education is her best chance at a better life." (Respondent-01)*

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Majority of the respondent parents responded that, despite the challenges we face, our dedication to our daughter's education remains our highest priority. We are determined to provide her with the opportunities and resources that we never had, believing that education is the key to unlocking a brighter future. By focusing on her academic success, we hope to give her the tools to achieve more and build a life that surpasses our own, paving the way for upward mobility and fulfilling her potential.

One of the respondent parents argued that:

> *"We're doing everything we can to help our daughter achieve more than we did. Education is our primary focus because we believe it's the most reliable path to upward mobility. We want her to have the opportunities we never had."(Respondent-04)*

Intervention for Downward Mobility

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, despite the hardships we are facing, we remain hopeful and committed to supporting our daughter's educational journey. We believe that perseverance and dedication to her studies will ultimately lead to a better future, regardless of our present struggles. Our encouragement and belief in the power of education are aimed at helping her stay focused and motivated, so she can overcome these challenges and build a more promising and successful life.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Even though things are tough right now, we're trying to keep hope alive. We encourage our daughter to stay committed to her education because we believe that it's still her best path to a better future, despite our current struggles."(Respondent-08)*

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, while balancing traditional gender roles with our desire to provide equal opportunities for our daughter has been challenging, we are committed to making progress. We understand the importance of adapting our beliefs and practices to ensure she receives the same opportunities as our son. Although the transition is difficult, our goal is to

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support her aspirations and create an environment where she can thrive, regardless of societal expectations. We hope that through our efforts, she will have the chance to achieve her full potential and break free from restrictive norms.

One of the respondent parents responded that:

> *"We come from a background where traditional gender roles are still quite strong. It's been a challenge to balance those expectations with the desire to give our daughter the same opportunities as our son. We're slowly adapting, but it's not easy."(Respondent-07)*

Intergenerational Impact of Mobility on Education

Majority of the respondent parents responded that having experienced the transformative power of education ourselves, we are dedicated to providing our children with the same opportunities that helped us succeed. We believe that investing in their education will not only benefit them but also set a positive precedent for future generations in our family. Our commitment is rooted in the hope that by equipping our children with the tools for success, we will create a lasting impact that extends beyond our own achievements, fostering a legacy of upward mobility and opportunity.

One of the respondent parents responded that:

> *"Our own experience of moving up economically has shown us the value of education. We're committed to ensuring our children benefit from the same opportunities we've gained. We're confident that this will create a positive ripple effect for future generations in our family." (Respondent-06)*

Psychological Impact on Girls' Educational Outcomes

Majority of the respondent parents responded that, despite the instability we are experiencing, our primary goal is to provide our daughter with a stable and supportive environment where she can concentrate on her education. We are committed to ensuring that she feels secure and supported, allowing her to focus

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on her studies and achieve her academic goals. By maintaining this sense of normalcy, we hope to help her navigate through these challenging times and build a foundation for a successful and fulfilling future.

One of the respondent parents mentioned that:

> *"Even though our situation is unstable, we strive to offer her a sense of stability and normalcy. We want her to feel secure enough to focus on her education, despite the external pressures we're facing."(Respondent-02)*

Lack of Guidance and Awareness:

Majority of the respondent parents responded that there is a noticeable lack of direction in selecting pertinent subjects and a general ignorance of the value and advantages of education.

One of the respondent mother parents stated that:

> *"I often faced financial and safety issues while pursuing my education. No one guided me in choosing relevant subjects, and there was a general lack of awareness about education" (Respondent-1).*

Most of the respondent parents responded that girls are frequently expected to put caring for others and doing housework before their education. One major obstacle to allowing daughters, especially the eldest, to devote time and attention to their education is the expectation that they will handle household chores.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"I have a lot of duties at home as the oldest daughter, one of which is looking after my younger siblings. It's a constant struggle for me to balance these responsibilities with my studies" (Respondent-2).*

Gender Inequality in Education

Majority of the respondent mother responded that viewed that, in families, boys are frequently given preference for educational opportunities over girls. As a result, girls must struggle to get fair treatment and access to education.

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One of the respondent mothers stated that:

> *"In my family, boys are prioritized when it comes to schooling. Since my brothers' education is valued more highly than mine, I must fight for equitable treatment" (Respondent-5).*

Ineffective communication with educators and school administrators is caused by language barriers. Inadequate support and information for the daughter's parents may result from difficulty comprehending and navigating the educational system.

One of the respondent mothers stated that:

> *"Our capacity to interact with educators and school officials is hampered by language limitations" (Respondent-5)*

Cultural Norms

Cultural customs that place a higher priority on early marriage and household duties than on education can hinder educational attainment. The value of education may be diminished by societal expectations, which could result in less support for the daughter's academic endeavors.

One of the respondent parents argued that:

> *"Cultural norms place a higher value on domestic responsibilities or early marriage than on pursuing an education" (Respondent-6)*

Due to the perception that girls' education is inferior or less significant, traditional gender roles may favor boys' education over girls. This kind of thinking could make education for girls less important.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Girls' education may be seen as secondary or less important by traditional gender roles, which may favor boys' education over girls" (Respondent-1)*

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Early Marriage Norms

According to most of the respondents, girls may be forced to leave school early due to cultural norms that support early marriage, which will limit their access to higher education and future possibilities.

One of the respondent parents mentioned that:

> *"In some cultures, early marriage norms may lead to girls being withdrawn from school prematurely, limiting their educational opportunities" (Respondent-4)*

Girls' time and energy allocated to their education may be limited by cultural norms that place a premium on housework and childrearing.

One of the respondent parents was of the viewed that:

> *"Cultural norms that assign girls primary responsibility for caring for the home and others may limit the amount of time and energy that they have to devote to their education" (Respondent-3)*

Religious interpretations or beliefs can influence attitudes toward girls' education, which can help or hurt their ability to receive a formal education.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Attitudes regarding girls' education can be influenced by their religious beliefs or interpretations, which can either support or oppose their attendance in formal education" (Respondent-4)*

Theme-2 Geographical Disparities

Family Influence and Inspiration

R1 illustrates the influence of family members who recognize the value of education even though they have never attended formal schooling. He is inspired by his illiterate brother.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Her brother inspires her to pursue an education, even though he is illiterate" (Respondent-1)*

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Most of the respondent parents stated that teaching budgeting and financial responsibility for future education is a challenge. The plan of action involves teaching the daughter financial literacy in order to assist her with money management and education planning.

Two of the respondent parents claimed that:

> *"Our daughter is better equipped to manage money responsibly and budget for her future education thanks to our financial literacy instruction" (Respondent-6 & 7)*

Community Role Models

R4 motivated by the example set by accomplished women in the community who have completed their secondary education.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"I have been motivated to follow in the footsteps of accomplished women in my community who went on to complete their secondary education" (Respondent-4)*

R6 wants to inspire the next generation by demonstrating the value and possibilities that come with education.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"I want my daughter were model for my family and the next generation of girls in my community, demonstrating to them the value of education and the possibilities it opens up" (Respondent-6)*

Empowerment and Social Change

R5 believes that education empowers girls and leads to positive social change, providing a strong motivational drive.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Education, in my opinion, empowers girls and results in constructive social change. This encourages me to work hard at my studies" (Respondent-5)*

Giving their daughter financial literacy lessons so she can manage her money

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and make wise decisions about the cost of her education. These lessons include budgeting and saving.

One of the respondent parents stated that;

> *"In order to enable me to make wise decisions, they teaching me financial literacy skills like budgeting, saving, and comprehending the cost of education" (Respondent-2)*

Not having enough money to pay for tuition, books, and other educational supplies. The female's education may be of lower quality if she is unable to access opportunities and resources for her education.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Having limited funds makes it difficult to pay for books, educational materials, and tuition" (Respondent-1)*

Lack of Quality Schools

Most of the respondent parents stated that the community's lack of excellent educational institutions is a barrier. The female's academic growth and opportunities may be restricted if there are no well-resourced and respected schools in the area.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Our ability to offer the greatest education is limited by the lack of excellent schools in our community" (Respondent-4)*

Theme-3 Factors contributing intergenerational mobility

The data highlights the significance of education, social networks, healthcare access, neighborhood safety, financial resources, geographic mobility, and family support systems as well as other important factors that contribute to intergenerational mobility.

Education

Majority of the respondent's parents responded that education is thought to be a major factor in intergenerational mobility since it gives people the credentials, abilities, and information needed for better jobs with greater pay.

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One of the respondent parents mentioned that:

> *"Intergenerational mobility is greatly aided by education, which offers chances to acquire the skills, knowledge, and credentials that can lead to better employment opportunities and higher salaries" (Respondent-2, 3&5)*

Having strong social networks and contacts in the neighborhood and at work can lead to new chances, support systems, and mentorship all of which are essential for career advancement.

One of the respondent parents revealed that:

> *"Creating strong social networks and connections in both the community and the workplace can lead to new opportunities, mentoring, and support, all of which are factors in the upward mobility process" (Respondent-3)*

High Expectations

Encouraging the daughter to strive for academic success and realize her full potential can be achieved by having high expectations for her academic performance.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"I encourage my daughter to pursue her academic potential and aim for excellence by having high expectations for her education" (Respondent-2).*

Access to financial resources, such as savings, investments, and credit, offers a safety net during economic downturns and supports long-term economic mobility.

One of the respondent parents argued that:

> *"A safety net during economic downturns and support for long-term economic mobility can be provided by having access to financial resources, such as savings, investments, and credit" (Respondent-6)*

Geographic Mobility

Relocating to a place with more reasonably priced housing, better job prospects,

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or better educational resources can promote upward economic mobility and success.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Moving to a place with more affordable housing, better employment opportunities, or better educational opportunities can help families achieve greater economic success and upward mobility" (Respondent-7)*

Children are best equipped to thrive and move up the social ladder when they have a secure home, robust emotional support networks, and positive role models in their families.

One of the respondent parents mentioned that:

> *"A stable home, strong emotional support systems and uplifting role models within the family can give children the tools they need to thrive and rise up the social ladder" (Respondent-8)*

Encouraging Part-Time Work

Majority of the respondents stated that, by encouraging part-time work, the daughter can balance her academic goals with her financial responsibilities and help pay for her education while gaining real-world experience.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"We encourage our daughter to work part-time while she is in school in order to help pay for her education and gain useful experience" (Respondent-4&6)*

According to the majority of the respondents, family demonstrates a high level of commitment by being prepared to make personal sacrifices in order to guarantee that the daughter receives the best education possible. Supporting students emotionally during trying times, like tests or college applications, highlights how crucial mental and emotional health is to the learning process.

One of the respondent parents claimed that:

> *"We are prepared to give up something personal in order to give our daughter the best education possible" (Respondent-5&8)*

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The first priority is to make sure that the daughter has access to all the material and financial resources she needs to succeed academically.

One of the respondent parents stated that:

> *"Indeed, our top priority is giving our daughter all the resources she needs to thrive academically, including both material and financial support" (Respondent-7)*

Conclusion

The conclusion this study draws is that parental socio-economic mobility (either up or down) has a profound and complex impact on secondary education of girls and intergenerational path of empowerment for women in Muzaffarabad of AJ\&K. The results show that families experiencing upward mobility have the ability to invest in their daughters' education, providing superior academic support, emotional encouragement and career guidance. To many of these families education is the key to success and their history serves as a form of inspiration for the younger generation. Conversely downward mobility is connected with financial pressure, broken educational trajectories and perpetuating gender norms that constrain educational progress and empowerment of girls. Study highlights major geographical differences between rural and urban places; the urban students enjoy more access to educational resources, compared to rural students who face lot of cultural, financial and institutional barriers. Moreover, intergenerational aspects (parents' own educational background and aspirations, as well as their resilience) were also found to make a significant difference considering the academic and social life of their daughters. Overall, the research further strengthens the central role of education as a contributor to social mobility and gender equality but also highlights the need for policy interventions to attend to socio-economic inequality and cultural constraint. Target based support systems are necessary to allow families especially those going downward mobility to afford equitable opportunities for their daughters to access education and future empowerment.

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Discussion

The results of this study clearly illustrate that the parental socio-economic mobility is fundamental to influencing the education experiences and empowerment trajectories for girls in Muzaffarabad, AJ\&K. Coming up from the bottom of the social ladder allows them to change the intergenerational tendency to be poor, by making education for their daughters a priority and enabling them to leverage material support with a vision of a brighter tomorrow (Liu et al., 2022; Chaudhary & Malik, 2021). Conversely, downward mobility aggravates existing obstacles: financial instability, gender discrimination, early marriage, making girls more vulnerable to exclusion from education and long-term disempowerment (UNESCO, 2023; Rao & Chaudhury, 2020). These patterns are highly affected by geographical differences, with rural girls experiencing double jeopardy because of their limited access to quality schooling, in addition to traditional socio-cultural expectations. The research supports the Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) that proves that the powerful family networks and educational values are necessary to turn mobility into actual possibilities. Nevertheless, the economic support is not an answer in itself. Change entrenched cultural values and equity in access to potential resources is essential for sustainable development. Finally, the research finds that educating girls in socio-economically pressurized spheres is not merely an issue of access, but empowerment, justice, and generational change.

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