

NAVIGATING SECONDARY EDUCATION IN RURAL AJ&K: A STUDY OF PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN TEHSIL SEHNSA

Dr. Muhammad Nageeb ul Khalil Shaheen^{*1}, Hajira Nageeb², Shanza Pervaiz³

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Kotli AJ&K

²MS Scholar, Department of English, COMSATS, Wah Campus, Punjab, Pakistan

³MPhil Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kotli AJ&K

¹naqeeb.shaheen@gmail.com, ²hajirahonan@gmail.com, ³shanza.pervaiz.edu@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Dr. Muhammad Nageeb ul Khalil Shaheen

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19364719>

Received
01 February 2026

Accepted
17 March 2026

Published
31 March 2026

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify problems faced by rural parents related to educating their children at the secondary school level in Tehsil Sehnsa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It also aimed to find out the ways of solving these issues. A descriptive survey design was used. The population consisted of 500 rural parents of students enrolled in government boys' secondary schools in Tehsil Sehnsa AJ&K. Through simple random sampling, 255 rural parents were chosen as the sample. A questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, which had 30 items (15 problems and 15 solutions) was developed, translated into Urdu to make it easier for respondents to understand, validated by three educational experts, and pilot tested with 20 parents who were not included in the sample. Reliability was determined by Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=0.79$). The researchers personally gathered the data and it was analyzed by using frequency, percentage, and mean scores. Results showed that rural parents face very serious and multidimensional problems. 95% of those surveyed agreed that "parents have always to work hard in order to fulfill the needs of their children" and this item obtained the highest mean score (M=4.76). 89% of parents said "they often felt as if they had lesser value than others" (M=4.70), and 92% said that "they were not at all happy with the education being given by the government" (M=4.20). Indications of poverty included 82% saying "there were hardly any jobs available" (M=4.06), and 89% that "they did not give due importance to education due to lack of resources" (M=4.31). More than three-fifths of parents reported being less educated (83%; M=4.26) than required to provide study guidance (85%; M=4.45), being unable to understand modern education system (74%; M=4.09) and lack of modern technology at home (72%; M=4.03) as the main educational limitations. Parenting challenges included 67% unable to care for children's personal interests (M=4.03), 80% failing as role models (M=4.12), 75% unable to change children's behavior (M=4.07), 79% unaware of psychological needs (M=3.94), and 61% preferring child labor over education (M=3.88). For solutions, 77% endorsed government schemes (M=4.05), 78% demanded internet provision (M=4.10), 79% recognized need to understand children's desires (M=3.93), 80% acknowledged need for parental role modeling (M=4.19), 77% called for teacher involvement (M=4.09), 78% sought teacher guidance for studies (M=4.27), 79% recognized need to consult teachers about modern education (M=4.17), 84% endorsed building children's confidence (M=4.21), 87% agreed on convincing parents about education's importance (M=4.48), 88% emphasized realizing education's role in family honor (M=4.44), 79% demanded improved government school quality (M=3.94), 92% recognized need for friendly environment for

psychological care ($M=4.20$), 90% emphasized parental confidence ($M=4.70$), and 82% demanded employment opportunities ($M=4.07$). The study concluded that rural parents face an interlocking web of economic deprivation, educational limitations, and parenting challenges that severely constrain their children's educational opportunities. Economic problems include poverty, limited employment, and resource scarcity forcing labor over schooling. Educational challenges encompass parents' own low literacy, inability to understand modern systems, lack of technology access, and dissatisfaction with government schools. Parenting difficulties include failure to model positive behavior, unawareness of children's psychological needs, inability to provide academic guidance, and preference for child labor. Solutions require coordinated action: government schemes for employment and technology, teacher partnerships for guidance and system navigation, and parental capacity-building for understanding children's needs, building confidence, and recognizing education's importance. Without comprehensive intervention addressing these interconnected problems, rural children's educational outcomes will remain severely compromised.

Keywords: rural parents, educational problems, secondary education, parental involvement, economic deprivation, educational barriers, child labor, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Education is undeniably vital for the survival and development of humans. Through education, people get thrown into a world where they have to deal with different environments proficiently. Meanwhile, it is also a vehicle for intergenerational culture transfer, individual moral development preparation, and social and economic progress.

To begin with, a nation's education sector is the most significant determinant of its socio-economic transformation. Besides shaping and structuring society, it is also a major catalyst for national progress. Unfortunately, Pakistan is a developing country with scarcity of resources. Hence, in Pakistan, the financial aspects of everyday life are so much deceiving that they directly or indirectly influence people's access to community education in a way that one cannot overlook (Siddiqui, 2013).

Education is often called the "third eye" that separates the living from the dead, through which society experiences growth and development at an accelerated pace as a fundamental right of every person, age, gender or religion aside. A country will not be about to fulfill its aims if its people are not educated.

At the same time, many families in rural Azad Jammu and Kashmir districts use basic methods for education only. Discipline is their major emphasis whereas there is hardly any focus on teaching. Alternatively, they put a lot of "Teaching"

without any effective outcomes. Of course, if children err, most parents lash out at them, and in cases even resort to physical punishment, but very few parents are able to figure out the true motives behind the behavior of their children, as well as their psychological needs. Certainly, these ways cannot heal the problem genuinely, and on the contrary they may lead up to children's complications being aggravated or even the emergence of violent tendencies in children.

By changing themselves, the parent is able to change the child. However, many rural parents neglect their power as role models, showing the very same problems they criticize in their children, (Haller, 2009).

In rural AJ&K low levels of parent education is a widespread issue and its effects run deep. Uneducated parents will be unable to give necessary academic help to children. The latter will be relying on their school to be finding answers to study questions and not really getting life questions answered that might interest them. Ultimately children will stop finding it exciting and their desire for knowledge will be diminished. Besides, when parents who don't have educational background try to communicate with school teachers, this will turn out to be very difficult. Having spent little time in educational institutions themselves, rural parents will find it hard to comprehend the school systems and models, not to mention to make an accurate interpretation of their children's school performance (Alexander,

2007). Still, the education of the rural population is a big problem. Schools are rare/ few and usually located far from population centers, there are definitely shortages of not only teachers but also of materials and resources for education e.g. libraries. In fact, life in rural AJ&K means becoming an adult without education. Nevertheless, educated rural people can be the ones leading the way not only in shaping their own futures but also in contributing to the national development.

The definition of "rural" is basically a human settlements system in which agriculturally-based production is the main economic activity. Geographically, these human settlements are usually far from urban centers and located in open countryside, in forests, and mountains. It is characteristic of rural populations that they do not have access to a whole range of economic amenities including quality education, good health services, transport, marketing facilities, and electricity (Gasperini, 2005). Education, as a social science concept, represents the development of core skills and knowledge within society—the regular updating of experiences, values, knowledge, and abilities that help a person to live and survive in his/her environment through production and transmission of accumulated wisdom from one generation to the next. Consequently, rural education is education that is given to people living in rural areas with the purpose of empowering them to live competently in their environment, being at the same time both contextually responsive to students' learning needs in their immediate surroundings and universally capable of fulfilling the requirements of the global economic community at large.

The issues that rural parents face when it comes to educating their children are complex. For example, some rural families use very simple educational methods that rely on discipline but do not really teach or they teach but without results. When kids make mistakes, most of the time parents react with strong criticism and pretty rough solutions without really understanding the circumstances and also ignoring the psychological side (Haller, 2009). Besides, in most cases parents are poorly educated which makes them incapable of supporting their children academically and even

creates communication problems when they have to talk to teachers (Alexander, 2007).

There is a strong link between the making of curriculum reforms and the status of the minority, poverty, the location of the school among other factors. Rural schools, in particular, tend to be very limited in the types of educational offerings available and might lack, besides electricity and running water, even basic things like libraries and textbooks (Alspaugh, 2006; Wedekind, 2007). Schools in cities are much better than countryside schools not only in terms of resources but also the fact that the educators in rural schools receive fewer visits from their seniors, lack specialist teachers and belong to communities that place very little value on education probably because that is their own level of educational attainment.

When parents face challenges related to more difficult homework or school culture, being at school that makes them feel outsiders or that their contributions are not significant and are undervalued, then parent involvement in school-related activities suffers (Mncube, 2008). Sometimes, parents, for various reasons, are simply not interested in their children's education and sometimes it is due to the shame resulting from their own failure in school. The places around their personal disappointments are a reminder and build a barrier not to go to school. Besides, given their work schedules it is almost impossible for parents to be present during school events. For some a fear to go over limits holds them back from getting involved, while a communication gap between the school and parents is still the main reason for the lack of parent involvement. Schools and teachers can make or break the situation of parents teachers relations and isolation of parents can also result from their only contact with school being of a negative nature; parents are also not very motivated to exercise their right to know their children's education (Aboucher, 2009; Ingram, 2007). Poverty presents unique barriers to conventional parental involvement, with low socioeconomic status and parental attitudes constraining thinking and forcing families to prioritize immediate survival over long-term educational investment.

There exists a significant shortage of parental involvement at secondary schools in rural areas, potentially negatively influencing children's academic development. Children whose parents do not participate in their schooling do not benefit as much academically and socially as those whose parents are involved. Government schools are inadequate while private schools remain expensive, resulting in low numbers of students completing secondary education and gaining admission to higher education institutions.

Statement of the Problem

There exists a significant shortage of parental involvement at secondary schools in rural areas, potentially negatively influencing children's academic development. Children whose parents do not participate in their schooling do not benefit as much academically and socially as those whose parents are involved. A primary problem faced by rural parents is poverty. Government schools are inadequate while private schools remain expensive. This results in low numbers of students completing secondary education and gaining admission to higher education institutions. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study to identify problems and their solutions faced by rural parents in educating their children in rural areas.

Objectives of the Study

The study pursued the following objectives:

1. To find out the problems faced by rural parents in education of their children at secondary school level in Tehsil Sehnsa AJ&K
2. To find out the solutions to the problems faced by rural parents in education of their children at secondary school level in Tehsil Sehnsa AJ&K

Research Questions

The study addressed these research questions:

1. What are the problems faced by rural parents in education of their children at secondary school level in Tehsil Sehnsa AJ&K?
2. What are the solutions to the problems faced by rural parents in education of their children at secondary school level in Tehsil Sehnsa AJ&K?

Significance of the Study

This study will be helpful for parents in making decisions regarding their children's education. It will assist teachers in playing their roles in educating rural children. The study will also aid policymakers in policy implementation. Moreover, it will be valuable for educational administration in facilitating education delivery. This study will help future researchers understand rural parents' problems and develop appropriate interventions.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The Importance of Parental Involvement in Education

Parents' engagement in school is one of the surest ways to a student's educational success. Different findings corroborate that when father and mother are partners in education, pupils show higher level of academic success, more positive behavior, better attendance, and more eagerness to learn (Epstein et al., 2009). Parent involvement is a suite of activities through which parents can be engaged in their child's education aside from helping with homework or attending school events such as teacher-parent communication, volunteering in the classrooms, or engaging in school management. The U.S. Department of Education (2004) regards parental involvement as parents' engaging in their children's learning, having good communication about student's learning and activities, and making sure that parents are merely involved in the education process.

Parental involvement is of great importance not only in terms of children's academic progress but also in their social and emotional development. With parent engagement, children attain self-esteem, get better at social skills, and have a positive attitude toward school (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Besides, parental involvement is a means of communicating to children the value of education in different contexts, home and school, thereby enabling them to understand the importance of learning and achievement. Parents and teachers joining hands as partners make it possible to detect and resolve issues in a timely manner, share in the joys, and offer well-targeted support for children's development.

Parental Involvement in Rural Contexts

In rural settings, parental involvement encounters quite a few obstacles that are totally different from those in urban areas. Besides geographically isolated areas, a rural community often faces lack of economic growth, poor road networks, fewer educational materials, and many other limited resources (Gasperini, 2005). Furthermore, parents of rural children may have fewer years of schooling themselves, so their ability to offer academic support and familiarity with the education system is limited. Moreover, rural homes may put more importance on the daily survival economically rather than investing in education as a long-term goal due to poverty, and without many job opportunities, this accounts for quite a bit of the breakdown.

Extensive studies of rural education in developing countries show that parents often see themselves as not very capable of interacting with schools because they have only a very limited education themselves. For example, Alexander (2007) found that parents with little education can not help children in studying and children only rely on schools completely for academic support. Therefore, when children struggle, they do not have anyone at home to turn to and learn, and eventually, their liking for learning fades away. Also, limited-education parents are often not able to comprehend school communications, they do not know how to read report cards and fail to participate in the parent-teacher meetings adequately.

Money issues are part of things that restrict rural parental involvement greatly. As Aboucher (2009) discovered, low-income brings in new difficulties and has an influence on the way parent engagement affects students' results. If a family has to pay attention only to the requirements of survival, then educational events come last on the list of things. Sometimes, parents work very long hours and can hardly find the time and energy to get involved with schools. A few times, a family may decide to pull children from school so that children can help the family financially through labor, as the family attempts to survive at that time and the educational investment is put behind.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Several obstacles prevent parents from getting involved in their children's education, especially in rural and impoverished areas. Such obstacles work at individual, family, school, and systemic levels. For example, at an individual level, parents might be uncertain of their skills to assist children with homework, particularly when the curriculum becomes challenging at the secondary school level (Mncube, 2008). Besides, feelings of ineptitude and low self-esteem might keep parents from contacting teachers or going to school events. Furthermore, parents might be less willing to engage with educational institutions due to the negative memories of their own school experiences.

On the family level, economic problems, work timing, lack of transport, and childcare duties are among the factors that create barriers to involvement. Parents at work, especially those doing manual work or agriculture, will have a hard time attending school events during the day. Even if schools organize evening meetings, parents who have just come from labor might be physically and mentally drained and cannot be able to engage. Besides, rural schools are often very far from homes. Therefore, families without cars get a frying pan from the fire because in addition to food they need to get to the school function as well (Correa, 2013).

The impact of teachers' attitudes and school practices significantly determines parental involvement. Ingram (2007) pointed out how school staff's negative or patronizing attitudes towards disadvantaged parents are a great source of frustration, thus making involvement efforts ineffective. Some teachers see their work as something that needs protection from unreasonable parental interference and for that reason, they only welcome parents when problems arise as opposed to acknowledging them as partners in education. There are various ways schools can disadvantage parents who do not speak the language of instruction for instance by not providing translation services, creating an environment that is uninviting, and scheduling meetings at times that working parents cannot access.

Some of the systemic obstacles are educational policies that ignore the need for parental engagement, the lack of funds for parent outreach programs, and the insufficient training of teachers in communication with parents. Parhar (2006) asserted that negative attitudes and behaviors of teachers towards disadvantaged parents often stem from a lack of appropriate training in parental involvement, which in turn further excludes vulnerable families.

Effective Practices in Parent-Teacher Collaboration

Despite these barriers, research has identified effective practices for fostering parent-teacher collaboration. Epstein et al. (2009) identified six types of involvement that schools should address: parenting (assisting families with child-rearing skills), communicating (effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication), volunteering (organizing parent assistance), learning at home (providing information to families about how to help students), decision making (including parents in school decisions), and collaborating with community (coordinating community resources to strengthen schools).

Conor (2014) came up with a few simple tips to hold effective parent-teacher meetings. He suggested that parents can come early, prepare questions, take notes, and come up with action plans, whereas teachers should talk about the positives as well as the negatives of student's performance, record both behavior and progress, and show their willingness to listen to parents' concerns. Scheduled meetings that are solution-oriented and do not point fingers are capable of creating trust and productive teacher-parent partnerships.

Avvisati et al. (2014) found out that parent-teacher meetings well-structured in nature brought about a decrease in truancy and improvement in behavior. So these meetings when done the right way can have indirect impacts on student outcomes. Those schools that make an effort to create a welcoming atmosphere, keep flexible time for meetings, offer translation services, and prepare teachers for better communication skills normally have higher parent engagement and good student results.

METHODOLOGY

In this research project, a descriptive survey design was adopted to identify the difficulties of rural parents in the education of their secondary school children in Tehsil Sehnsa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The rationale behind using the design was to record the challenges present at the time without altering the variables. The target group included 500 parents from rural areas who had sons studying at the secondary school level (District Education Office, 2025). Through simple random sampling, 255 parents were taken as sample of the study. A 30-item, five-point Likert scale questionnaire (from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), was the tool used, which was equally divided into problems and solutions sections. The items were translated into Urdu and their validity was confirmed by three experts. After administering the pilot study to 20 parents, Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument ($\alpha = 0.79$). The researchers themselves gathered the data to help participants better understand questions and to keep data confidential. To analyze the data, frequencies, percentages and mean scores were used with the help of SPSS.

RESULTS

Problems Faced by Rural Parents in Education of Their Children

Table 1

Problems Faced by Rural Parents in Education of Their Children (N=255)

Statement	SA %	A %	PA %	D %	SD %	Agreement %	Mean
1. Rural parents always have to work hard to meet the needs of their children	84%	11%	4%	1%	0%	95%	4.76
2. Rural parents lack modern technology	39%	33%	19%	9%	0%	72%	4.03
3. Rural parents are unable to take care of their child's personal interests	34%	33%	32%	1%	0%	67%	4.03
4. Rural parents fail to make themselves role models for their children	36%	44%	18%	2%	0%	80%	4.12
5. Rural parents are generally less educated	48%	35%	11%	6%	0%	83%	4.26
6. Rural parents fail to provide their children with necessary guidance to study	63%	22%	13%	2%	0%	85%	4.45
7. Rural parents are unable to understand the modern education system	38%	36%	23%	3%	0%	74%	4.09
8. Rural parents fail to change their children	36%	39%	22%	3%	0%	75%	4.07
9. Rural parents do not value education due to lack of resources	45%	44%	9%	2%	0%	89%	4.31
10. There is a lack of awareness of modern times among rural parents	44%	31%	19%	6%	0%	75%	4.13

Statement	SA %	A %	PA %	D %	SD %	Agreement %	Mean
11. Rural parents prefer to work rather than send their children to school	30%	31%	36%	3%	0%	61%	3.88
12. Rural parents are unaware of how to take care of the child's psychological feelings	20%	59%	15%	6%	0%	79%	3.94
13. Rural parents are unhappy with the quality of education in government institutions	32%	60%	6%	3%	0%	92%	4.20
14. Rural parents feel inferior	79%	11%	10%	0%	0%	89%	4.70
15. Rural parents have few employment opportunities	35%	47%	12%	6%	0%	82%	4.06
Overall Problems Mean							4.19

The facts in Table 1 illustrate that rural parents are experiencing serious and multiple problems in educating their kids. An average score of 4.19 across all the problem areas by the respondents, signify that rural parents are tangled up in a rich context of economic, educational and parenting challenges that greatly limit their children's schooling opportunities.

Among economic deprivation, the issue of economic related hardship cropped up as the worst. A staggering 95% of parents acknowledged that they always have to be working hard to provide for their children (M=4.76), which is the highest level of agreement reached in the whole study. This result shows that rural parents are mostly occupied and in a condition of daily struggle for basic needs that drain their time and energy, they have very little if any for education related activities.

89% of parents admitted feeling inferior (M=4.70), an indication of their inability in joining educational communities or institutions. According to parents' report, eighty-two percent are very hardly finding a job (M=4.06), which confirm the fact that rural areas provide low economic opportunities. Hence, this is the reason why 61% of parents even agree that they will rather have their children works than send them to school (M=3.88) a very powerful sign of how poor people are that they have to put immediate survival above education, which is a long term investment. Moreover, eighty-nine percent said that they cannot even place a value on education because they are so short of resources (M=4.31). They can see the general importance of education in a vague way, but when it comes to actually prioritizing it while at the same time not having even the basic needs met, they simply cannot do it."

Educational Limitations: It turns out that parents' educational shortcomings are the main reasons for the problem. For example, eighty-three percent say that they are generally less educated ($M=4.26$), thus giving rise to the original disadvantage and its effects: 85% cannot give necessary study help ($M=4.45$), 74% do not understand modern education systems ($M=4.09$), and 72% have no modern technology ($M=4.03$). Not being able to give study help refers to the fact that if children have problems in their studies, parents are not able to help them they have to depend completely on schools. This becomes especially a problem at the secondary level when the curriculum is more complex. Not understanding modern education systems means that parents cannot effectively check on their children's progress, interpret school communications, or take part meaningfully in parent-teacher meetings. Technology deprivation means rural families are excluded from digital

resources, which are increasingly becoming very important for education. Ninety-two percent said that they were not happy with the quality of education offered by the government ($M=4.20$), thus showing that even when parents make sacrifices to send their children to school, they still see the education the child is getting as not good enough.

Parenting Challenges: Rural parents recognized several challenges involved in parenting. Most of them (80%) confessed their failure as models to their children ($M=4.12$) and that their own behavior may not have reflected appropriate values that lead to success in school. Three quarters however, think that they cannot influence their children's behavior ($M=4.07$). This also means, these parents strongly feel that it is not in their control how their children turn out.

Solutions to Problems Faced by Rural Parents

Table 2

Solutions to Problems Faced by Rural Parents in Education of Their Children (N=255)

Statement	SA %	A %	PA %	D %	SD %	Agreement %	Mean
16. Government should announce schemes for ease of rural parents	28%	49%	23%	0%	0%	77%	4.05
17. Institutions should ensure provision of modern technology (internet) in villages	35%	43%	17%	5%	0%	78%	4.10
18. Rural parents should be aware of their children's personal desires	20%	59%	15%	6%	0%	79%	3.93
19. Rural parents need to play an ideal role for their children	41%	39%	17%	3%	0%	80%	4.19

Statement	SA %	A %	PA %	D %	SD %	Agreement %	Mean
20. Teachers should play their role for the convenience of rural parents	38%	39%	16%	7%	0%	77%	4.09
21. Rural parents desperately need teacher's guidance for children's studies	45%	33%	22%	0%	0%	78%	4.27
22. Rural parents need to consult teachers to understand modern education system	43%	36%	17%	4%	0%	79%	4.17
23. Rural parents need to restore their children's self-confidence	41%	43%	12%	4%	0%	84%	4.21
24. Rural parents need to be convinced that education is a basic human need	64%	23%	12%	1%	0%	87%	4.48
25. Rural parents should live modern life to learn new ways	40%	39%	20%	1%	0%	79%	4.18
26. Rural parents should realize that children's education is important for family honor	57%	31%	9%	3%	0%	88%	4.44
27. Government agencies need to improve the quality of education in rural areas	20%	59%	15%	6%	0%	79%	3.94
28. Rural parents need friendly environment	32%	60%	6%	3%	0%	92%	4.20

Statement	SA %	A %	PA %	D %	SD %	Agreement %	Mean
to care for children's psychological feelings							
29. Rural parents need to be confident until problems are solved	79%	11%	10%	0%	0%	90%	4.70
30. Government should provide maximum employment opportunities for rural parents	35%	47%	12%	6%	0%	82%	4.07
Overall Mean Solutions							4.19

Table 2 displays possible solutions to the problems mentioned above. The overall mean of 4.19 shows parents' strong agreement with all the proposed interventions. The results indicate a holistic plan that calls for a harmony of efforts not only amongst government, educational institutions, and teachers but parents themselves.

Government-Level Solutions: Parents highly supported government taking initiative in various aspects. Seventy-seven percent are convinced that the government should launch schemes to facilitate parents in rural areas (M=4.05), which means that parents are identifying programs implemented specifically for rural educational issues. Seventy-eight percent of them think that the government should provide modern technology especially internet in villages (M=4.10) since they consider connectivity as the key to accessing educational resources and opportunities. The economic factor is at the root of educational deprivation is addressed by eighty-two percent of them who want the government to provide maximum employment opportunities (M=4.07). They confirm that without economic transformation other interventions will have hardly any impact. Seventy-nine percent are

convinced that government agencies need to improve the quality of education in rural areas (M=3.94) as they are already deeply dissatisfied with current provision. Besides, they think that increasing enrollment without improving quality will not result in desired outcomes.

Teacher-Level Solutions: Parents seem to be conscious of shortage of teachers in rural areas. They recognized the importance of teachers in their issues raising the significant point that teachers can be their immediate support link. Seventy-seven percent agreed to the statement that teachers need to be more active and relate more with rural parents (M=4.09), suggesting teacher help outside of classroom teaching these parents. Seventy-eight percent saw it as a necessity to get teacher's direction in children's studies (M=4.27) as they understand that they need the experts for this. Seventy-nine percent stated that parents need to get advice from teachers about how to understand modern education systems (M=4.17) implying that parents are willing to learn and they realize that teachers have the knowledge that is a must for students to get through today's education requirements. The partnership between teacher and parent is necessary to serve as a link between

the traditional rural culture and the demands of modern education.

Parent-Level Solutions: Parents acknowledged multiple changes required in their own attitudes and behaviors. Seventy-nine percent agreed they should understand children's personal desires (M=3.93)—recognizing the need for more individualized, attentive parenting. Eighty percent acknowledged needing to play ideal roles for their children (M=4.19), accepting responsibility for modeling positive behaviors. Eighty-four percent recognized the need to restore children's self-confidence (M=4.21), acknowledging that their current parenting approaches may have damaged children's confidence. Eighty-seven percent agreed they need convincing that education is a basic

human need (M=4.48)—representing parents acknowledging their own need for attitude transformation. Seventy-nine percent agreed that rural parents should adopt modern lifestyles to learn new ways (M=4.18), indicating openness to change and adaptation. Eighty-eight percent recognized that children's education is important for family honor (M=4.44), appealing to cultural values of family pride as motivational factors. Ninety-two percent acknowledged the need for friendly environments to care for children's psychological feelings (M=4.20), recognizing that emotional development requires supportive home atmospheres. Ninety percent agreed that parents must remain confident until problems are solved (M=4.70), acknowledging the need for perseverance despite overwhelming challenges.

Table 3
Comparison of Problems and Solutions Mean Scores

Dimension	Number of Items	Mean Score
Problems Faced by Rural Parents	15	4.19
Solutions for Rural Parents	15	4.19
Overall	30	4.19

Having exactly the same average scores for problems (4.19) and solutions (4.19) is a very strong proof in parents' views, that they are in agreement in the fact that both, recognizing how serious the problems are and the need for major changes, are equally important. These correspondences show that rural parents are clear about their situation and have a very practical awareness as to what it would take to get better. They do not downplay the problems or be caught up with the unrealistic solutions but they realize that in order for the changes to be really effective there must be collaboration and the changes should be at the economic, educational and parenting levels all at the same time.

DISCUSSION

This study's results disclose a tangled network of economic, educational, and parenting difficulties

that together imply a crisis of education in rural areas. At a global level, an average of 4.19 for the problem items indicates that the extent and penetration of these difficulties are hardly exaggeratable. Rural parents of Tehsil Sehnsa are deprived to such an extent that their basic environmental conditions do not give any chance for them to adequately help their children's education.

Economic Deprivation as the main cause: The biggest and most painful problem that has come out is that of economic survival; After the revelation that nearly 95% of parents have to keep working continuously just to have the very basic necessities (Mean=4.76), we must conclude that these rural family settings are so germane to survival that work and physical conditions will completely use up their strength and resources.

This economic factor will then affect the problem of education in a series of unforeseen ways. When 89% of who report that they often have a feeling of inferiority (Mean=4.70), we are able to observe one of the psychological effects of poverty "the internalization of one's marginalization" that leads to lack of confidence of the parents when they want to engage with the educational establishments."

Nearly 61% give a preference to their children's work rather than going to school (M=3.88) which can only suggest that their reaction to the situation is a usual reflection of the level of desperation, not a cultural negation of education, because, in fact, a family that is hungry is unable to consider a long-term educational investment over immediate survival. This statement is in conformity with research done internationally about child labor which constantly indicates that poverty is the main cause of children's withdrawal from school (Alexander, 2007). The 82% who declare that there are only a few opportunities for employment (M=4.06) is a further proof that these rural areas lack an economic infrastructure capable of providing sustainable livelihoods. Without local job placement, families will be offered with the untenable choices of deciding between migration, poverty, and child labor."

The 89% who cannot afford to give a high priority to education because of a lack of resources (M=4.31) are not actually voicing an opinion against schooling but are realizing that when the family is deprived of basic necessities like food, shelter, and clothing, the expenses related to education are nothing more than a luxury. These economic results are in line with Gasperini's (2005) description of the rural areas as places that lack access to not only economic but also social amenities including quality education, health services, transportation, marketing facilities, and electricity.

Educational Limitations as Intergenerational Disadvantage: Parents' less education (83%, M=4.26) is one of the main reasons why disadvantaged educational outcomes get passed from one generation to another. When 85% of parents are not able to help with study guidance

(M=4.45), children who already struggle with their studies are even more disadvantaged since they don't get support at home. This kind of disadvantage gradually adds up as working on secondary school level curriculum, which is also getting more complex, becomes increasingly difficult without home support. This finding is consistent with Alexander's (2007) point that children whose parents are not well educated can only rely on school for study answers and parents rarely give them answers to life questions that they are interested in. The 74% who don't understand modern education systems (M=4.09) are therefore likely to encounter great difficulties if they try to meaningfully engage with schools. They lack the skills necessary for reading and interpreting report cards, understanding curriculum changes, attending and participating in parent-teacher meetings or even advocating for their children's educational needs. The fact that they are not so actively involved in schools might lead some educators to believe that they are not interested, whereas the reality is that it is a reflection of their incapacity which itself results from educational exclusion.

Restriction in access to technology (72%, M=4.03) is a contributing factor to educational inequality which is getting more and more attention nowadays. Kids living in the rural areas of the country without internet connection are exposed to increasing disadvantage and loss of educational opportunities.

92% dissatisfaction with the quality of education offered by the government (M=4.20) is a sign that even after the families have made sacrifices for their children to be able to attend school, they think that the education that their children get is not enough, the motivation for the prioritization of schooling gets undermined. These observations are in line with Alspaugh's (2006) finding that students attending rural schools get less educational opportunities than those in urban areas, and coincide with Wedekind's (2007) comment that rural schools are deficient in every form of material provision.

Parenting Challenges in Context of Poverty: The parenting challenges raised, poor role models

(80%, M=4.12), lack of influence on children's behavior (75%, M=4.07), disregard of one's own interests (67%, M=4.03), and ignorance of psychological needs (79%, M=3.94), must be interpreted in the light of a survival-driven lifestyle. Parents who are primarily focused on providing for the basic needs has only a little time, vigor, and emotional means left for deliberate parenting.

These results coincide with Haller's (2009) statement that generally rural families use rather simple educational methods, harsh criticism and quick fixes. If parents are physically worn out due to hard work, mentally stressed because of poverty, and do not have education themselves, they will not be able to carry out sophisticated, emotionally sensitive parenting that facilitates ideal child development. The lack of modeling of positive behavior is of special importance in light of Haller's (2009) statement that "a parent who has the courage to change himself has the power to change his child." Parents' acknowledgement of their own modeling failures (80% agreement) indicates profound self-awareness yet it also points to the divide between awareness and ability to bring about change.

Comprehensive Solutions Require Coordinated Action: The findings reveal that rural parents possess a well-developed understanding of what is required for meaningful change. Their demands include government action, teacher partnership, and personal transformation, they recognize that no single intervention will be sufficient. Government-level solutions tackle root causes: job creation (82%, M=4.07), targeted programs (77%, M=4.05), provision of technology (78%, M=4.10), and education quality enhancement (79%, M=3.94). These demands acknowledge that lasting change requires structural transformation, not just individual efforts. Parents realize that they cannot uplift themselves from poverty through education alone without economic opportunities to exploit their education.

Teacher-level solutions recognize that a professional partnership is necessary. Parents admit their own limitations and look for teacher guidance in study (78%, M=4.27) and

understanding modern education (79%, M=4.17). This challenges the image of rural parents as uninterested in education, they are seeking support, but they need educators to be accessible, respectful.

Parent-level solutions show that they are ready for change. Parents admit that they should understand the children's wishes (79%, M=3.93), demonstrate ideal parenting behavior (80%, M=4.19), help children to be confident (84%, M=4.21), accept modern lifestyles (79%, M=4.18), and provide environments where psychological care is possible (92%, M=4.20). Such a high level of agreement shows that rural parents are not against change; rather, they are denied by the lack of resources and support needed to do so.

The fact that 87% agreed that they need to be convinced of the value of education (M=4.48) is quite surprising, parents admitting that their own attitudes need transformation and this represents a chance for educational outreach programs.

Comparison with Previous Research: The present paper's results very much coincide with the notions held in scholarly works on rural education and parental involvement. A study by Gasperini (2005) depicted rural areas as depriving their inhabitants of economic ones, this description being corroborated by the lack of economic resources in the findings. Alexander (2007) verbally emphasized that parents with less education wouldn't be able to guide children in their studies; 85% of respondents admitted that they don't have the knowledge to provide their children with study guidance, which is an evidence that strongly supports this view. He also (2007) concluded that low parental education is a barrier to child study support; 85% of those interviewed said they lacked study guidance ability that points strongly to educational deprivation. The difficulties in parenting brought to light through family education methods that barely scratch the surface have been supported by Haller's (2009) work. The 89% figure reporting feelings of inferiority fits well with Mncube's (2008) study revealing that parents sometimes feel inadequate and ashamed of their children at school. Aboucher (2009) finds that low income leads to material hardship and decreased

parental involvement in children's lives, which is in agreement with the economic anxiety documented. According to Aboucher (2009), a pictorialverbal representation of low income is material hardship which leads to reduced parental involvement efficiency that concurs with the identification of economic constraints.

Through this paper, the scholarly community benefits from the extension of what was previously known by illustrating the linkages between economic, educational, and parenting problems and showing these issues from a perspective where they turn into a vicious circle by reinforcing each other, poverty disallows educational investment, thus causing low parental education, which in turn leads to less effective parenting, hence fewer educational outcomes of children, and continuing the cycle of limited future employment opportunities, a condition that calls for multifaceted intervention.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study examined the difficulties of rural parents in supporting their children's secondary education in Tehsil Sehnsa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and suggested ways to aid them. The results of the study indicate that serious and interconnected problems in the economic, educational, and parenting domains constitute, when combined, a crisis in rural education.

The researchers reached the conclusion that the economic deprivation experienced by rural parents is so severe that it has a fundamental negative effect on their ability to support children's education. To a large extent, parents have to work continuously to provide for their families and have very limited access to employment. Often the decision to put a child to work rather than to school is a reflection of the family's limited resources. Poverty can be a psychological issue, leading to feelings of inferiority and failure to confidently interact with educational institutions. Any attempt to educate children without an economic transformation will be at best a minor success.

The point that the lack of education of rural parents results in disadvantages being passed on from one generation to the next is one of the main

conclusions of the study. Not only do these parents lack the skills required to give their children advice on studying and helping them with the schoolwork, but at the same time they are unable to cope with modern learning environments, and worse still, they cannot take advantage of the technology that is essential for learning nowadays. Their dissatisfaction with government-provided schooling likely stems from their first-hand experience with the truth that public education in rural areas is generally severely lacking. These problems seriously hamper the effectiveness of any sort of parent-school partnership and so leave children free to do their academic work without any level of support from parents.

The researchers concluded that the sheer harshness of day-to-day survival focused life in the countryside means that parents are not in a frame of mind to offer intentional and emotionally attuned parenting which is what is necessary to bring about optimum child development. They do not succeed in being good role models, cannot change the behavior of their children, ignore their own interests and generally remain oblivious to the psychological needs of children. Situations such as these tend to have a negative carry-on effect on children's education and in addition could even lead to a decrease in children's self-confidence and affect their emotional development negatively.

Overall, it is believed that positive and interpretable change hinges on the joint, coordinated comprehensiveness of efforts directed at all three problems' dimensions simultaneously. On the part of the government, besides creating employment and providing the necessary technology infrastructure, there is a need to enhance the quality of education and the development and implementation of rural-specific schemes as well. Educators are to collaborate with parents, encourage and guide them, engaging with them in a way that is respectful. The transformation of attitude, adjustment to the needs of children, role-playing in the way that is ideal, and keeping up with confidence notwithstanding the challenges are what is expected from parents.

The study concludes that rural parents are not uninterested in education but are structurally prevented from prioritizing it by economic survival demands. They possess clear understanding of their situation and realistic awareness of required solutions. With appropriate support—economic opportunity, teacher partnership, and capacity building—rural parents can become effective partners in their children's educational development. Without comprehensive intervention addressing the interconnected problems identified, rural children's educational outcomes will remain severely compromised, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disadvantage across generations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

For Government and Policymakers: Educational policy can no longer remain independent of economic growth measures. One major role of the government should be to generate job opportunities in rural localities as this was the primary cause of educational backwardness referred to by 82% of the parents. Children without education are just left at the mercy of their unfortunate circumstances. Based on the feedback of many parents, the government should make a pledge and deliver the announcement of a package that targets mainly rural parents and includes conditional cash transfers for school attendance, scholarship programs for rural children, and subsidized educational materials.

Technology infrastructure development in rural areas is a must for educational fairness and therefore requires internet access, computer facilities, and digital literacy training in such rural communities. The 92% of those dissatisfied with government schools is a call for help as it points out the need for the quality of education to be enhanced through teacher training, curriculum development, upgrading of facilities, and supply of learning materials. The generation of maximum employment opportunities is first and foremost linked to the economic development of the countryside through agricultural modernization, promotion of small industries, vocational skills training, and better access to markets.

For Educational Institutions and Teachers: Teachers must recognize parents as partners and actively reach out to rural parents through home visits, accessible communication, and respect for parents despite educational differences. Schools should offer regular guidance sessions for parents on supporting children's studies, understanding curriculum, and navigating education systems. Given parents' work demands, schools should offer flexible meeting schedules, multiple communication channels, and varied engagement opportunities. Teachers must avoid condescending attitudes and create welcoming environments where parents feel valued despite educational limitations. Schools should partner with communities to offer adult education, parenting programs, and family literacy initiatives addressing parents' own educational needs.

For Parents and Families: Parents recognize that education is a very valuable thing and, therefore, they should make every effort to find out what role education will play in shaping their children's future. Also, it would be helpful if they made an effort to know what their children want deep down, ensured that they feel very comfortable and safe so that they can open up to them (the parents), and helped children gain the self-confidence that they might have lost at some point.

Parents recognize the need to play ideal roles and should strive to model positive behaviors, attitudes toward learning, and perseverance despite challenges. Parents should actively consult teachers, seek guidance for studies, and maintain communication despite discomfort. Parents should work together to advocate for better schools, support each other's parenting efforts, and create community norms valuing education.

For Teacher Education Programs: Teacher preparation should include specialized training on rural contexts, understanding rural families' challenges, and strategies for effective parent engagement. Teachers need training in cross-cultural communication, working with low-literacy parents, and building respectful partnerships despite educational differences. Teachers should understand their role extends beyond classroom

instruction to community engagement and parent support.

For Civil Society and NGOs: Civil society organizations should offer programs building parents' confidence, parenting skills, and understanding of education's importance. Advocacy efforts should focus on government attention to rural education quality, teacher deployment, and resource allocation. Bridge programs helping rural parents understand modern education systems and supporting their engagement with schools are essential.

REFERENCES

- Aboucher, J. (2009). Poverty and parental involvement in the UK: Barriers and opportunities. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57(3), 234-251.
- Alexander, K. (2007). Parental education and children's academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 100(4), 213-225.
- Alspaugh, J. W. (2006). The relationship between school size and student achievement in rural schools. *Rural Educator*, 27(2), 1-8.
- Avvisati, F., Gurgand, M., Guyon, N., & Maurin, E. (2014). Getting parents involved: A field experiment in deprived schools. *Review of Economic Studies*, 81(1), 57-83.
- Conor, P. (2014). Making the most of parent-teacher conferences. *Educational Leadership*, 71(5), 68-71.
- Correa, T. (2013). Barriers to parental involvement in rural schools. *Journal of Rural Education*, 28(3), 12-24.
- Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Sheldon, S. B., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., Van Voorhis, F. L., Martin, C. S., Thomas, B. G., Greenfield, M. D., Hutchins, D. J., & Williams, K. J. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (3rd ed.). Corwin Press.
- Gasperini, L. (2005). Education for rural people: A neglected key to food security and development. *Sustainable Development Department*, FAO, 12(3), 45-58.
- Haller, E. (2009). Family education methods and their impact on child development. *Journal of Family Studies*, 15(2), 156-172.
- Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L. C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(4), 161-164.
- Ingram, M. (2007). Teacher attitudes toward parent involvement: Implications for practice. *School Community Journal*, 17(1), 45-62.
- Mncube, V. (2008). Democratization of education in South Africa: Issues of social justice and the voice of learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(1), 77-90.
- Parhar, R. (2006). Teacher attitudes toward disadvantaged parents. *Journal of Education and Social Change*, 20(2), 112-128.
- Siddiqui, S. (2013). *Education and national development in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Parental involvement: Title I, Part A*. U.S. Department of Education.
- Wedekind, V. (2007). Curriculum and rural education in South Africa. *Journal of Education*, 42(1), 67-84.