

The Impact of Poverty on Students Learning at Secondary School Level: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of poverty on students' learning outcomes at the secondary school level, focusing on the district of Muzaffargarh. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data was gathered through a questionnaire administered to 200 teachers across secondary schools, with a total of 996 8th-grade students participating from the district. Two primary research questions were addressed: 1) the impact of social and emotional issues on student learning, and 2) the impact of low academic achievement. The questionnaire's validity and reliability were ensured through expert opinion and Cronbach Alpha scores during the pilot phase in Muzaffargarh district. Analysis of the collected data revealed significant findings. Notably, female students in Tehsil Chowk Munda exhibited a superior performance by 23.95% compared to their counterparts in Tehsil Jatoi, where the performance margin was 11.59%. These results underscore the differential effects of poverty on academic outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address disparities and enhance educational equity among students facing socioeconomic challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam is the only religion that provides the best and complete guidelines to human beings for how to spend life in the world, which should be sinless, have ethics, and take care of the rights of other human beings. For this purpose, Allah SWA sent 124,000 prophets into the world, of which 25 are mentioned in the holy Quran. The sole purpose of all these prophets was to provide Defining Poverty is a global issue that has been in existence for many decades. According to Berger et al. (2018), poverty has different definitions depending on the context. Poverty can be defined as lack of material wealth and poor standards of living. It can also be defined as lack

of economic resources or social exclusion. Poverty can lead to homelessness, an increase in health issues, and low academic achievement. There is a widely known misconception that people are poor because of being lazy and lacking motivation. Families find themselves in poverty and without support and they keep living in poverty from generation to generation. Children who are born in neighborhoods where poverty level is high can experience poverty from childhood to adulthood, and the cycle continues. Poor neighborhoods are likely to expose children to violence, insecurity, abuse, and drug abuse (Berger et al., 2018).

Poverty

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Lack of enough resources to provide the necessities of life (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) Effects of Poverty on Students' Mental Well-Being According to Smith-Carrier et al. (2019), There are three ways in which people perceive poverty. First, people who are poor are to blame for being poor because they have made wrong choices and have failed. Poor people are not motivated, they lack work ethics and moral stature. They need incentives for them to work and get out of dependency, addiction, and wrong behaviors. The second explanation is that people are poor because of systemic inequalities. The system favors a few and limits opportunities for other people.

There are two main factors that can lead a person into poverty: economic condition and institutional support (Smith-Carrier et al., 2019). The third explanation of poverty is that, some people believe that poverty is a result of bad luck, fate, and divine will. However, with time, research has shown a shift on how people perceive poverty. Some organizations and researchers have strived to promote poverty awareness activities among students as a means of correcting the misunderstanding of poverty (Smith-Carrier, 2019).

According to Blackstock (2018), some of the barriers that exist between school aged children and mental health care include the cost of services, the stigma associated with mental health, lack of infrastructure, and being unable to identify mental health concerns because of lack of awareness. Mental health concerns can be addressed at school level by teachers, school counselors, and school psychologists. Their role can be working towards increasing the number of mental health resources in schools. Teachers would need professional development opportunities that will train them on mental health concerns (Blackstock, 2018).

Poverty Affect a Child's Development

Poor children also experience a disproportionate amount of neglect and social deprivation thanks to poverty. They are less likely to feel valued and

loved. They often have lower self-esteem, less self-confidence, and greater incidences of mental health problems. They feel unsafe, marginalized, exceedingly vulnerable, and constantly threatened.

1) *Poverty Affect Children's Health*

The likelihood of lifelong health or illness is set in childhood. A healthy diet throughout childhood and life protects against nutritional imbalances, malnutrition and malnourishment, as well as chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer.

A developing body that is given the food and nutrition needed to grow and thrive will develop a foundation for a sturdy brain architecture and the accompanying range of broad physical, social, and emotional skills. And optimal nutrition is particularly important in the first years of life. Without a nutrient-rich diet, children are more likely to die before reaching age 5. More than five million children died before the age of 5 in 2018, and 45 percent of those deaths were linked to undernutrition.

Because children growing up in poverty don't get the food and nutrition they need to develop properly, tens of millions of children under age 5 are severely wasted (low weight-for-height) and hundreds of millions are stunted low height-for-age (Briana, Normandin 2022).

2) *Child Poverty and Mental Health*

The consequences of not addressing the mental health needs of children in poverty shorten their life expectancy and impair them as adults, limiting the possibility for them to lead fulfilling lives. Mental health conditions account for 16 percent of the global burden of disease and injury in children aged 10–19 years. Childhood behavioral disorders are the second leading cause of disease burden in children aged 10–14 years. Nearly 90 percent of the world's adolescents live in low-or middle-income countries and more than 90 percent of adolescent suicides are among

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adolescents living in those countries. (Laura, D Tissington 2011).

1) Effects of Poverty on Children's Education

When it comes to education, poverty creates and widens achievement gaps. It causes children to underachieve in school and to have greater difficulty finding employment as adults. It denies poor children access to resources and limits educational opportunities; poor children are disproportionately less likely to attend school than their peers. (Shuaib, Lateef 2020).

"Consider two children born in 2000, one in a very high human development country, the other in a low human development country. Today the first has a more than 50-50 chance of being enrolled in higher education: More than half of 20-year-olds in very high human development countries are in higher education. In contrast, the second is much less likely to be alive. Some 17 percent of children born in low human development countries in 2000 will have died before age 20, compared with just 1 percent of children born in very high human development countries. The second child is also unlikely to be in higher education: In low human development countries only, 3 percent are." (Shuaib, Lateef 2020).

Tens of millions of children around the world have no access to education. And tens of millions more children aren't benefiting from their time in school. Inequalities in income, gender, culture and health deny children in poverty the basic human right of education. Unable to attend school and on the margins of society, these children do not develop intellectually and socially, and do not have the skills necessary to improve their circumstances as they grow up. (Shuaib, Lateef 2020).

Poor children who do attend school have more difficulty developing intellectually and cognitively as well. Living conditions including substandard housing and homelessness, along with inadequate or non-existent access to health care, and poor nutrition and hunger contribute to childhood disease and sicknesses, as well as

wasting and stunting, all of which hampers a child's physical and cognitive development. (Shuaib, Lateef 2020).

Poverty, and all the ills associated with it, such as hunger, disease, inequality, violence, exploitation, and unemployment, increase the risk of non-schooling and increase the school drop-out rates. Poverty takes away the opportunity for a quality education. It limits future potential. It increases risk for trafficking and exploitation. It prevents children from dreaming and hoping for a better life, trapping them in a life of misery. And the trap can extend to their children and last generations more. (Shuaib, Lateef 2020).

2) What are the Effects of Child Poverty on Society?

In 2000, the United Nations identified eight contributors to human suffering; one of the eight causes were poverty. Along with hunger, inequality, infectious diseases and child mortality, poverty affects our ability to create a sustainable future for our children. Child poverty tears children down through lack of food, clothing, medical care, education, and work opportunities. It marginalizes and traumatizes children, creates dependencies, and fosters a society that feeds upon its weakest members.

3) Ways Poverty Affects Children

Poverty stunts physical growth and development. Poverty hinders social and emotional development. Poverty shortens life expectancy. Poverty inflates infant and child mortality rates. Poverty increases the likelihood a child will have a chronic health condition. Poverty ravages children with preventable diseases. Poverty creates, perpetuates and widens achievement gaps. Poverty increases parent stress and impairs parenting practices. Poverty introduces hunger, neglect, insecurity and instability into children's lives. Poverty increases the violence children

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personally experience and witness. (Dew mi, Bartholomeus 2023).

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the impact of social and emotional issues on students learning due to poverty
2. To examine the impact of low academic achievement due to poverty

Research questions of the study

- (1) What is the low academic achievement due to poverty?
- (2) What are the social issues, what are the emotional issues due to poverty?

Literature review

low academic achievement

A report by Thomas concluded that children from lower income households score significantly lower on measures of vocabulary and communication skills, knowledge of numbers, copying and symbol use, ability to concentrate and cooperative play with other children than children from higher income households. Janus et al found that schools with the largest proportion of children with low school readiness were from neighborhoods of high social risk, including poverty. Wilms established that children from lower socioeconomic status (SES) households scored lower on a receptive vocabulary test than higher SES children. Thus, the evidence is clear and unanimous that poor children arrive at school at a cognitive and behavioral disadvantage. Schools are obviously not in a position to equalize this gap. For instance, research by The Institute of Research and Public Policy (Montreal, Quebec) showed that differences between students from low and high socioeconomic neighborhoods were evident by grade 3; children from low socioeconomic neighborhoods were less likely to pass a grade 3 standards test. By Thomas (2017)

“poverty” as a proxy for lower social class status. This shortcut causes great mischief in educational policy. Lower class children are not only characterized by having families with low current money income; they also have a collection of interacting characteristics, each of which affects the ability to learn.

Years ago, the Heritage Foundation published a report called *No Excuses*, by Samuel Casey Carter. Among others, one school it found enrolled a majority of children who were eligible for subsidized lunches yet who still had high achievement. According to the report, this (along with other, equally flawed examples) proved that poverty is no bar to high achievement. The school in question was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and it turned out that the students mostly had parents who were graduate students at Harvard or MIT, whose stipends were low enough that their children were eligible for the lunch program. Thomas (2017)

Of course, how much money a child’s parents earned last year (the qualifier for the lunch program) does not itself impede learning. But poverty is a good proxy, sometimes, for lower class status because it is so highly associated with other characteristics of that status. Lower class families have lower parental literacy levels, poorer health, more racial isolation, less stable housing, more exposure to crime and other stresses, less access to quality early childhood experiences, less access to good after school programs (and less ability to afford these even if they did have access), earlier childbearing and more frequent unwed childbearing, less security that comes from stable employment, more exposure to environmental toxins (e.g., lead) that diminish cognitive ability, etc. Each of these predicts lower achievement for children, but none of these (including low income) itself causes low achievement, and lower social class families don’t necessarily have all of these characteristics, but they are likely to have many of them. Sociologists used to define social class solely by assigning a reputational status to a father’s occupation. That no longer is as useful,

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but sometimes it might lead to less mischief than “poverty.” Thomas (2017)

One problem that has puzzled observers of education for some time is the fact that after controlling for poverty, black achievement is still lower than white achievement, and some conclude from this that they have now disposed of background characteristics and can be certain that an important cause of the achievement gap must be poorly qualified and motivated teachers and/or low teacher expectations. Without denying that some teachers are poorly qualified and motivated, and do have low expectations, and that this should be a target of educational improvement efforts, this explanation as a major cause of the achievement gap is mostly false, because black children have many social class characteristics that are different from those of white children whose parents have the same current-year income, even when all of them—black and white—have excellent teachers. Some years ago, in the Jencks-Phillips book, *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, Meredith Phillips addressed this issue, and showed that adding very few other social class controls, besides family income, explained much of the black-white gap. Patrick Sharkey’s new book, *Stuck in Place*, shows that black children living in high poverty neighborhoods are more likely than white children to have parents who also lived in high poverty neighborhoods. Black poverty tends to be multi-generational, white poverty tends to be episodic. Others have shown that permanent (i.e., multi-year) income explains more than current year income. Thomas (2017)

In short, the poverty rate itself is not an adequate explanatory factor. Lower class status better explains what we puzzle about. Unfortunately, it is a lot harder to find simple data to compare children across countries by social class status than to pick an easy (but mischievous) one like “poverty rate,” no matter how it is adjusted. If I had to pick a single one, it would not be poverty but mother’s educational attainment, although this single measure would also be unsatisfactory. In the report that Martin Carnoy and I did earlier this year on international test

scores, we compared the achievement of children across countries by the number of books they reported having at home (actually, the number of feet of shelf space devoted to books). This, too, was an inadequate measure, but we thought it the best one available cross-country because it was more academically relevant. Martin Carnoy Thomas (2017)

Addressing any one of the characteristics of lower-class status can make some difference, but if addressed in isolation, will not make the difference to which we aspire. So while the start of this discussion had some merit—it would make some difference if lower-class women could be encouraged to delay maternity, or if they bore children only with a stable co-parent—telling women to marry if they live in communities where unemployment and underemployment of young men reaches 40 percent (as is true in some African American communities today), or where the failures of economic policy lead to few “marriageable males,” that advice, even if followed, won’t accomplish all that much. For example, if children are born into more stable marriages, or get better early childhood care and education, but still lose 5 to 10 points of I.Q. because of lead exposure (as the medical literature shows is the result), having a husband present or attending pre-school, in themselves, won’t substantially narrow the achievement gap. Richard Rothstein 8 October 2013.

As Martin Carnoy and I showed, there is a social class achievement gap in every country, and it is of roughly similar size, even in countries which purportedly have much superior school systems. This should suggest that school improvement alone will not narrow that gap in the absence of addressing its social and economic causes. Certainly, we should improve schools, but if we want to raise the achievement of disadvantaged children substantially in our own country, we will have to improve the collection of interacting and mutually reinforcing characteristics of lower social class status. Addressing any one of them alone—whether it be income, or teen childbearing, or some other—will

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be a good thing to do, but won't get us very far on the path we hope to take. by Richard Rothstein 8 October 2013.

Social issues due poverty

Poor children typically go to rundown schools with inadequate facilities where they receive inadequate schooling. They are much less likely than wealthier children to graduate from high school or to go to college. Their lack of education in turn restricts them and their own children to poverty, once again helping to ensure a vicious cycle of continuing poverty across generations. Regardless of exactly why poor children are more likely to do poorly in school and to have low educational attainment, these educational problems are another major consequence of poverty. Regardless of its causes, poverty has devastating consequences for the people who live in it. Much research conducted and/or analyzed by scholars, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations has documented the effects of poverty (and near poverty) on the lives of the poor (Lindsey, 2009; Moore, et. al., 2009; Ratcliffe & McKernan, 2010; Sanders, 2011).

Many of these studies focus on childhood poverty, and these studies make it very clear that childhood poverty has lifelong consequences. In general, poor children are more likely to be poor as adults, more likely to drop out of high school, more likely to become a teenaged parent, and more likely to have employment problems. Although only 1 percent of children who are never poor end up being poor as young adults, 32 percent of poor children become poor as young adults (Ratcliffe & McKernan, 2010).

Emotional issues due to poverty on students

Poverty in childhood and among adults can cause poor mental health through social stresses, stigma and trauma. Equally, mental health problems can lead to impoverishment through loss of employment or underemployment, or fragmentation of social relationships. This vicious cycle is in reality even more complex, as

many people with mental health problems move in and out of poverty, living precarious lives. By Lee Knifton 2016 students in poverty can face constant, **high levels of stress**, for example due to struggling to make ends meet, overcrowded or unsafe housing, fear of crime, and comparatively poor physical health. Poverty is **clearly linked with a number of mental health problems**, including schizophrenia, depression and anxiety, and substance misuse. by Philippa Watkins 2022.

Statement of problem

The intention of present study is to find out the impact of poverty on students learning at high secondary high schools' students.

Purpose of study

Purpose of this research aims to the impact of poverty on students learning. research questions one is What is the low academic achievement? The second is What are the social and emotional issues?

Methodology

Study of data is collected by a total 200 teachers. Teachers are all from the district Muzaffargarh. Of four tehsils Kot addu, chowk munda, jatoi and ali pur. All the teachers were from secondary level high school. No stress was placed when divided the questionnaire they feel free from and filled the form. No stress was placed on them before they filled out the survey form.

Material / Instruments

A questionnaire survey method is used to analysis and assessment the impact of poverty on students learning. All the items prepared in the Likert scale method from 1 to 5 was agree, disagree, strongly agree, strongly disagree and Nil was designed.

Procedure

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A survey form is provided for each teacher by physically to test the impact of poverty on students learning. A total of 20 items were asked for their low academic achievements. The survey question was intended to determined, analysis assessment to the impact of poverty on students learning. Moreover, a question based on need assessment analysis has been added to assessment to the impact of poverty on students. All questions were analyzed by means of statistics and numbers. Since the data for answer using the Likert scale is categorical. Only the data model and frequency are analyzed. The correlation coefficient of Pearson has been used to determine the linear correlation between two data variables.

Table 1.

Impact of social and emotional issues on students learning due to poverty

	Kot addu	Ali pur
Male students	12.62%	15.18%
Female students	8.32%	9.65%
Total	20.94%	24.83%

It reveals that males in kot addu tehsil have performed 12.62% while females performed 8.32% in total, they performed 20.94% where in ali pur tehsil male have performed 15.18% while female performed 9.65% in total, they performed 24.83% as well as in tehsil jatoi male have performed 11.09% while females performed 10.76% in total, they performed 21.84% similarly in tehsil chowk munda male have performed 11.44% while females performed 20.97% in total, they performed 32.39%.

According to this collected data female in tehsil chowk munda performed more 20.97% which is more in tehsil jatoi 11.09%. so, in tehsil chowk munda the females performed better then male in tehsil ali pur in this poverty's impact.

Table 2.

Impact of low academic achievement due to poverty

	Kot addu	Ali pur
Male students	14.44%	16.13%
Female students	9.30%	10.96%
Total	22.74%	27.07%

It reveals that males in kot addu tehsil have performed 14.44% while females performed 9.30% in total, they performed 22.74% where in ali pur tehsil male have performed 16.13% while female performed 10.96% in total, they performed 27.07% as well as in tehsil jatoi male have performed 11.59% while females performed 12.00% in total, they performed 23.59% similarly in tehsil chowk munda male have performed 12.42% while females performed 23.95% in total, they performed 36.37%.

According to this collected data female in tehsil chowk munda performed more 23.95% which is more in tehsil jatoi 11.59%. so, in tehsil chowk munda the females performed better then male in tehsil jatoi in this poverty's impact.

Table 3.

Analysis of student's impact of poverty on students learning by tehsil level

Sr no.	Tehsil	Performance by percentage
1.	Chowk Munda	34.4%
2.	Ali Pur	22.72%
3.	Jatoi	26.00%
4.	Kot Addu	21.08%

in an overall performance of total four tehsils in tehsil chowk munda students performed 34.4% and in tehsil ali pur students performed 22.72% and in tehsil jatoi students performed 26.00% whereas in tehsils kot addu students performed 21.08%. because in tehsil kot addu students performed low rather tehsils of district

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Muzaffargarh so there is huge impact of poverty on students learning of this tehsil.

Findings and analysis

The main purpose of this study was to assess. And analysis that impact of poverty on students learning. A total of 20 responses were collected. And analyzed for the purpose to answer the research questions 1. Poverty impact gaining day by day. Poverty impact on students learning and academic achievement performance day by day falling. Also, poverty impacts on school management. Interest of students in studying is minimum. The issues of social and economic issues are increasing. Students finding the technical works rather than study. Mostly students are suffering from mental stress.

Significant

The research benefits are that people, students, teachers, parents, policymaker, education department, govt of Pakistan, stakeholder, aware of the impact of poverty on students learning. In

addition, this research will enable the public to how now the impact of poverty on students learning in the school, class, at home, and outside the school of individual. In order to improve the cooperate with students with economically. This study will be beneficial for the students, parents, teachers, societies, provincial govt, administration, educational leaders.

Recommendation

We hope that in future studies teachers, parents, and govt will consider and overcome the limitation of this study. Future should studies include questionnaire to impact or effect the poverty given the justify and further understanding by the respondents. Future study should also conduct experiments to clearly determine the impact of poverty on students learning. In the future studies should the describe way of decreasing the poverty. In the future studies should be do students entre the future by entering poverty and encourage them.

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