

# **THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS AND GIRLS' LEARNING**

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**Abstract:** Education is very important for everyone in the society whether boy or girl. It is sad that some communities still discriminate against the education of the girl. In some rural societies most of conservative people do not allow their daughter to go to school because of traditions and especially because of lack of female teachers. It is one of our responsibilities to develop the improvement of female teachers in schools as well in girl's school if we invest in the education of women and help them to become a perfect teacher it would be very useful to our society and it will encourage people to send their daughter to school. The aim of this paper is how to help women to become teacher as well the value of female teacher to the enrolment of girls in school. And we will explain the effects of female teachers on girls learning and their education.

Hazrat Ali (R.A) says, "If you teach a man, you teach an individual and If you teach a woman you teach a family, – and a whole nation." By sending a girl to school, we help her to stand on her own feet make her to gain knowledge, became useful for herself and society even she will be able to ensure that her children also can receive an education. Most of scholars claim that, investing in female education is investing in a nation. Because by the coming of future they will become mother and if a mother would be educated she would be able to raise her children in a better way and she use to teach the basic steps of learning in the early years of their children.

**Keywords:** Female Teachers, Girls Learning, Value of Female Teachers.

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**Introduction:** The employment of female teachers is an issue that has become increasingly very important to Ministry of Education AFG, and other agencies supporting educational development. This is particularly so because of the impact women teachers can have on girls' enrollment. The need to increase girls' enrollment is an important reason for giving greater policy and programming attention to women teachers, but it should not be the only reason. Beyond employment strategies, there are other issues which have to be addressed if women are going to be empowered in their roles as teachers. These include the lived experiences of female teachers in schools, the accessibility and relevance of teacher training, and both professional and career development opportunities for women. From a gender equality perspective, empowering women as teachers is critical to ensuring that the experience of being a teacher is a positive one for them, and that their work has a sustained effects on gender relations in the community and in society, at large. In some contexts, the feminization of the teaching profession has negative implications. We need to support and encourage women to be effective and inspiring teachers for girls and boys. This means addressing policy and practice to ensure that a feminized education sector can be a high status, respected one in which adequate resources are allocated to ensure the highest professional performance of all teachers - whether they be women or men. This advocacy brief looks at these issues, drawing on research and practice from different contexts. It highlights the importance of women teachers, and also highlights the need for a broad gender equality perspective when developing policy and programs for women teachers. Specific strategies are presented for doing so.

**Female Teachers and its Effect on Girls Learning:** One of the most compelling arguments for increasing the number of women teachers in schools relates to the positive impact that doing so has on girls' education. There is evidence to show a correlation between the number of women teachers and girls' enrollment, especially in rural areas. In countries where there are more or less equal numbers of male and female primary teachers, there is close to gender parity in student intake. In contrast, in countries where women constitute only 20% of teachers, there are far more boys than girls entering school. However, as highlighted in recent research from developing countries and post war countries, such large-scale trends mask more complex patterns at the local level. The relationship between women teachers and girls' enrollment is more than a simple cause and effect, as there are many factors that prevent girls from attending school some of which also effects on the number of women teachers. Increasing the number of female teachers has to be accompanied by other strategies to promote girls' education, such as ensuring that the timing of the school day fits with girls' domestic workloads, and ensuring a high quality of education in a safe and secure environment, (UNESCO, 2003, p. 60).

In some conservative societies, parents will not allow their daughters to study by the guidance of a male teacher. This is the case in some areas of Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The placement of a female teacher, therefore, can have an immediate effect on access. Even where the presence of male teachers is not necessarily a barrier to girls' enrollment, parents may prefer women teachers than man teachers. A study in Afghanistan, has shown that mothers feel more comfortable talking about their children with a woman teacher, and in such countries - an environment where local politics is often considered to be about contacts, favors and inside-dealings - women teachers are considered "more sincere" because they are less likely to be involved in local politics.

The presence of women in schools can also effects positively on girls' tendency in school. Studies have shown a positive effects from women teachers on girls' and boys' significant achievement. A female role model can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies and they may continue studying to become teachers, themselves. A female teacher can also be a good listener to any problems which might happen on a girl and she can provide guidance and solution from the female viewpoints or experience when necessary. In schools where girls are in the minority, especially, the presence of few or more female teacher may also ensure protection for girls from unwanted attention from male and even from exploitation and harassment. Female teachers provide new and different role models for girls especially those in rural and conservative societies. They point out to possibilities for women to be active outside the home and to be agents in the society's development. Where they have key roles in educating and socializing their children beyond gender stereotypes, and so are crucial agents of change, and they might learn to their children to be humble with people in the society.

#### **Why There Are Often Few Female Teachers In Rural Areas?**

There is little systematic research on the specific reasons in particular contexts, but there are different reasons to explain the low numbers of women teachers in schools. There may be less educated women to become teachers. This is especially the case in rural societies and amongst indigenous and minority populations. The other barriers and discouragements. These include the belief that it is men who should teach and run schools, as well as women's family and household workloads/commitments, more lucrative employment or other income-generating possibilities elsewhere, and inaccessible(often residential) training programs. Husbands and family members may also not feel comfortable with women teaching in schools that are dominated by men. As highlighted in a recent study in developing countries, traditional beliefs about women's exclusion during pregnancy also effects negatively on their opportunities to become teachers. If women are recruited and assigned to positions in rural areas, they often face several barriers when working away from their home, family and/or husband. Traveling long distances alone is often culturally unacceptable and unsafe for women, and travel by public transport would be difficult and costly for them. Women may be teased and harassed by male or in the villages where they teach. Stacki, S. L. and Pigozzi, M. J. (1995)

**Teacher Training and Professional Development:** Even if there are effective strategies in place to employ women, teacher training rarely pays attention to the different experiences, perspectives, and priorities of women, and assumes the gender neutrality of being a teacher. Few teacher training programs explicitly include gender equality issues within the curriculum, nor discuss critical issues such as the feminization of the profession. This is the case in India, for example, where researchers describe the way in which women are brought into a teacher training program that remains exactly the same as it had been for men only. This approach is characteristic of a 'Women in Development' (WID) approach. This is quite different to a Gender and Development (GAD) approach, which implies that the program would acknowledge gender differences, would aim to meet the sometimes different needs of men and women, and would explicitly address gender equality issues. A WID approach, for example, might increase the number of women teachers in a teacher education program, but indicators for success would be a numerical count of women relative to men, rather than any measure of the extent to which male and female teachers are empowered to act as agents of gender equality. There are a small number of inspiring examples of teacher education programs in which the gender nature of teaching and the gender identities of male and female teachers are discussed. These have not been formally evaluated, but are recognized to make a considerable impact on individual teachers' awareness of gender relations in the classroom, school and wider community, as well as to empower them to use their potential as teachers to address inequities. Women are rarely found in positions of authority and leadership in schools, and career development for women teachers is rarely prioritized. Even in countries where the percentage of women teachers is high, there are rarely many women head teachers, education officers and

managers at the district, regional and national levels. There are systemic constraints for women wishing to develop their career within the education sector, such as negative attitudes towards women's ability to manage and lead schools, lack of female role models, long hours, and commitments that are difficult to reconcile with family and child care responsibilities. There are also constraints within families and communities. For example, a study of women teachers in conservative societies reported that women teachers were reluctant to apply for or take up promotions because they feared their husband's violent reactions. Negative attitudes in the school, family and community inevitably shape women's beliefs about themselves, their capabilities, aptitudes and appropriate roles. In this way, women's own attitudes may be a further block to their career development in education. The term 'professional development' is used to refer to a wide range of opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge and skills. It is not limited to traditional teacher training activities, such as workshops and seminars, and may also include more innovative strategies such as mentoring, teachers' meetings, and classroom-based trainings. The term 'professional development' also gives a sense of an ongoing process over time. Although there is some overlap and terms are sometimes used interchangeably, the term 'teacher education' is usually used to refer to specific courses which lead towards teacher certification.

**Employment Strategies:** Different strategies have been identified by ministries of education, UN agencies and AFG to increase recruitment of women teachers. Unfortunately, some of these are never fully implemented, and very few are rigorously evaluated. Use specific quota targets for women (such as a percentage of the teaching force, or one woman per school). Relax age restrictions for entry into teaching. Develop more flexible teacher training programs which do not require long periods of absence from home or programs which allow women to take young children and even baby sitters with them. Hire local women without the necessary formal qualifications and support them with intensive teacher training and specialized supervision in order to help them quickly develop both their subject content and pedagogical knowledge.

Use creative deployment strategies to ensure that well-qualified female teachers are attracted to rural schools. Provide rural incentive allowances, employ two women teachers to work and live together, coordinate with other government departments to allow for husbands' transfers, and encourage communities to set up welcoming support structures for women teachers moving in from the outside. Work with local women's organizations to encourage them to support potential women teachers, such as sharing childcare responsibilities, cultivation and other tasks such as firewood collection. This can free up time for women to teach. Develop creative recruitment campaigns in the local media which specifically target women and promote the active role that women can play in education. These should be targeted at secondary school leavers as well as older women in the community, and where needed, to ethnic minorities using local languages and media channels. The BRAC programs of community girls' schools staffed by local women teachers in Afghanistan is perhaps one of the best known program of women teacher recruitment, training and support, and has had a significant effects on increasing enrollment for girls in rural areas of the country. The strategy of training local women to become teachers has been accompanied by programs features such as appropriate timing and location of classes and community input on the curriculum. Kirk, J., and Winthrop, R. (2005)

**Women-Centred, Professional Development Strategies:** Ensure that all professional development opportunities are equally accessible for women, such as providing childcare facilities, transport and female trainers. Use innovative strategies to reach women, such as classroom-based training and distance education. As example, professional development in the form of regular supervision visits from female teacher trainers is one critical component of the support provided by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to female teachers teaching in their homes in communities in Afghanistan where girls and often boys have no access to formal government schools. Ensure that the content of all teacher training is oriented to the specific experiences, priorities, and concerns of male and female teachers, and that gender equality is a specific topic of study. Gender-aware teacher training will be relevant and empowering to male and female teachers. Specific gender equality content will enable them both to support and encourage girls in schools and to promote gender equality in different ways. This training should include critical discussions of patriarchy, gender and power relations in schools, and should help teachers to better understand themselves and their societal situation and to work towards new definitions of men and women. Bonder, G. (1992)

If some of local female teachers who can meet on a regular basis create a network in order to share experiences and provide support to each other and we should create female teachers association in order to mobilize women teachers and create opportunities to break their isolation, come together in different activities, and

promote personal and professional development. Set up mentoring programs for new female teachers to be paired with a woman educational leader who will be a role model and encourage/support professional development. Provide gender training and professional development opportunities for women education leaders to enable them to promote gender equality initiatives in their own schools and to provide appropriate support for women teachers.

Make sure that women teachers are fully involved in decision-making processes and that they participate in all meetings and activities - not just in subordinate roles in school. Make sure that recruitment is gender-balanced across levels and subject matter, a female teacher at field of math or science may challenge gender stereotypes and encourage and support girls in subject areas that have been previously considered male domains. Where possible, men should also be recruited to typical female positions in the school, such as lower grade classes. make sure that 'safe school' and anti-harassment policies and teacher codes of conduct also address sexual harassment of women teachers, that there are specific reporting and follow up procedures in place and that male teachers are trained to address such issues with male students who may be disrespectful and/or abusive towards women teachers. (Kirk and Winthrop, 2005)

**Conclusion:** More formal evaluations of the specific effects of such strategies for employing and working with female teachers are greatly needed to inform future policy development. It would seem, however, that all may contribute to increased employment of women teachers, but they do not work alone. They have to be developed and implemented within a gender equality framework which is also attentive, for example, to gender-responsive teacher training for male and female, to ensuring that schools are female-teacher friendly and to challenging family and community attitudes about women's roles and activities. Such processes have to be mirrored at the highest levels of policy-making in order to ensure that teachers male and female are accorded status and that adequate resources are allocated to provide decent salaries, as well as appropriate training and professional development opportunities.

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