

Socio-economic Affects of Floods on Female Teachers in Jampur (Pakistan)

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Abstract

Women are major affected segment of society in any disaster in under developed countries. Floods of 2010, in Pakistan, affected more than 17 million people. Ultimately, it created several social, psychological and financial problems for affected females. The current paper aimed to study the socio-economic affects of floods on female teachers of private schools in tehsil headquarters Jampur. There were sixty two registered and non-registered private schools in the city in which five hundreds and seventy nine female teachers were working. Eight schools were selected as cluster to collect the data. Totally sample was comprised fifty eight female teachers. Semi structure interview and focus group discussion techniques were used to gather the data. Collected data were analyzed use thematic analysis approach. Findings indicated that female school teachers working in private school of city Jampur were badly affected in floods 2010. They had to face several social and financial problems. There was much space to improve relief and aid activities in the affected areas. Separate health facilities for women were also needed. The paper recommends better planning and its transparent and fair implementations in next rainy season.

Keywords: *Social behaviors; religiosity; professional issues*

Introduction

Floods of 2010 have created huge problems for the people of affected areas of the country. The World Bank estimated some 17.6 million have been affected by this disaster (Independent Evaluation Group, 2010). Damage of crops, roads, housings and other infrastructure is estimated more than \$6.5 billion. Health problems including the spread of water-borne diseases have made the life challenge for the people of affected areas. Defra (2004) evaluated health impacts on flood affected people of England and Wales and found the existence of stress and other psychological difficulties among them. The study of Defra also concluded that these problems are correlated with the income of affected people. The situation in Pakistan is more inferior where majority people are already experiencing low income and poor life standards (Government of Pakistan, 2009).

Devastating floods have badly disrupted the lives of affected people working in different spheres. United Nations' Development Fund for Women (2010) in one of their need assessment studies discloses various problems of women in flood affected areas. Government of Pakistan, international

and national non-government organizations (NGOs), and local groups initiated relief and recovery activities in the areas. Consequently the problems of affected people decreased but it is not possible to cover all damages in such a short time. The current study is to explore the social and economic situation of low income women working as private school teachers in Jampur, a city badly affected from the 2010 floods.

Research Questions

Women are the more deprived segment of the society especially in flood affected areas they are suffered very much. A large number of educated women are working in private schools at low salaries; consequently their problems are more than women from affluent families and/or working at sufficient salaries. Major objective of the current study is to explore the socio-economic affects of floods on these women. It tried to answer following research questions.

1. What is the difference between before and after floods monthly incomes of female private school teachers of Jampur city?
2. What are social and economic problems of the teachers after floods?
3. How much the teachers are prepared to face next rainy season?

Research Methodology

Research objective and questions demanded for deep understanding of the issue with comprehensive investigation of the impacts of flood on female private primary school teachers. Creswell (2003) and Bernard (2000) recommend qualitative method of inquiry to achieve such type of purposes when the task is to investigate the behaviors rather than count down. So considering the study a qualitative inquiry semi-structured interview was conducted from the samples.

Sample

Jampur city have the population of four lakh, second large city of district Rajanpur. The city was badly affected by floods of 2010. Flood water entered the city destructing public and private infrastructure. The city has sixty two registered and non-registered private schools in which five hundreds and seventy nine women are working as teachers. Eight private schools were selected using cluster random sampling techniques in which one school was of high level, one of middle level and six schools were of primary level. All the female teachers working in sample schools were approached to collect data. It comprised the sample fifty eight female school teachers working in private schools of Jampur city. Qualifications of women teachers were ranged from F.Sc. to M.A. B.Ed. however majority had only B.A. degree without any professional degree. Mean age of sample teachers was 24 years which ranged from twenty to twenty seven years. Twenty five percent of respondents were married. Eighty percent of respondents was living in joint family system. Mean of their teaching duration in private schools was twenty seven months which was ranged from three months to forty eight months.

Instruments

Semi structured interviews were conducted to collected data from each teacher. A focus group discussion was also conducting in each sample school after individual interviews. Focus of the interviews were to collect data regarding teachers' qualifications, monthly incomes, their residents, social relationships, economic issues, damages of assets and relief/assistance activities. In focus group discussions social and economic impacts of floods, relief activities, and future strategies were discussed.

Data Collection

The researcher personally visited the sample schools and met the female teachers. To enhance the richness and accuracy of the findings, the respondents were described the research objectives and ensured the confidentiality of the gathered data. Boundaries of the data were defined and confined only to search the answers of the research questions.

Data was collected in three stages. In first stage data regarding numbers of registered private schools in the city was gathered from the office Executive District Officer (Education) Rajanpur. Previous studies concerning impacts of floods on women population especially in Pakistani perspective were reviewed in second stage, and the third stage consisted of interviewing of participants and focus group discussions. Semi-structured interview technique was used to collect required data. Consent to use audio tape recorder was sought from the participants. It was intended that each interview did not take more than 15 minutes. After the interviews female school teachers of the school were requested to participate in focus group discussion. It was tried that focus group discussion did not take more than 40 minutes. One discussion was arranged in each school. Totally eight focus group discussions were conducted. Participation of the female teachers in the discussions was ninety one percent.

Validity & Reliability

In qualitative research trustworthiness of collection and analysis of the data is considered as traditional validity and reliability of the quantitative method of research. Richards (2005) and Silverman (2001) have demonstrated the measures to meet the issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. In present study, different steps were adapted in this regard. Initially formal consent was sought from all participants before interviewing. Confidentiality was assured to all participants and acquired data was only used for research purpose and dealt as confidential document. Use of triangulation is best, according to Patton (2002), to meet trustworthiness, neutrality, credibility, and consistency features of a research. For this regard, two data sources (interviews and focus group discussions) were used in the study to draw a single picture and increase trustworthiness of the study.

It was maintained that the data was appropriate and was appropriately handled. Richards (2005) described two rules to meet this requirement. Firstly, specific way of checking was designed, which checked consistently how the data and handling of the data were supportive to answer the research questions. Secondly, researcher's ability was ensured to count each step of the research properly.

Delimitations of the Study

The major limitation of the study was generalizability of its conclusions. Emerging themes from the research accept the relevancy with only the contexts of Jampur city. Female school teachers are working in both public and private sectors. However, low salaries and lack of service structure for teachers working in private sector made them more vulnerable. Viewing this, boundaries of the current study were limited to the exploration of socio-economic impacts of floods only on female private school teachers. Participants, selected using two-stage sample technique, were strong point for the study to get relevant and significant data. It was ensured to collect data from every member of the randomly selected cluster.

Data Analysis

Data gathered through interviews and focused group discussions were written in transcripts. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis approach. Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) suggests thematic analysis for qualitative inquiry to focus on both explicit and implicit concepts available in the data. Different themes were derived from the data and were categorized. It provided opportunity to create association among different opinions and interpret the data according to local context. Conclusions were drawn and verified looking the answers of research questions. Finally recommendations were provided to reduce the socio-economic affects of such disasters on low income women.

Findings

Data collecting through interviews and focus group discussion were written in transcripts and following themes were derived.

Joint Family System

It is found that more than eighty percent of respondents were living in joint family system. The joint family system is a preferred system of living in the affected districts of Punjab. The system has both merits and demerits. It is supportive in case of disasters. Female teachers of private schools revealed that their joint family system provided them sense of security when they were displaced. "When we were in a relief camp, a 25 years unmarried teacher described, major problem with us was insecurity. I found myself helpless and hopeless but my parents, brother, uncle and other family members realized me that I am not alone in this situation. They all are to support me and protect me." Such things also created affection and sense of unity among the family members. Majority of respondents supported the idea of harmony and unity among family members during and after the days of floods. In contrast, few numbers of the teachers (less than eight percent) argued that floods created disputes and problems in their family relationships. Opinions regarding the behaviors of city fellows were also disappointing. A 27 years old married teacher explained that during the flood days every person was in effort to protect his own house and property even at the cost of other people's loss. These situations created disputes and violence in many places.

Social Behaviors

Generally, female teachers working in private schools belong to middle class. According to majority opinions they faced the disaster collectively at family level whereas they revealed huge concerns about social behaviors of out of family persons i.e. neighbors, city fellows etc. People conducted, according to their opinions, negatively in many cases. Transporters increased fares when people were in emergency for leaving the city. House rents were also gigantically increased in nearly secure areas. Raise in prices hit all the basic requirements. Theft, robbery, harassment and kidnapping also became common in affected areas. These all factors consolidated the opinion of respondents that floods exposed many negative social behaviors of the people. "n some cases, a 25 years married respondent disclosed, disputes over the conversion of flood water flow became worst. Affluent and influential persons tried to convert the water flow from their housings and agriculture lands." According to majority of respondents, in such cases the role of administration was significantly weak.

But at the same time there were some voices, though not in majority, in favor of positive social behaviors. In focus group discussions female private school teachers admitted that some of their city fellows individually and in groups performed reasonably good job. Positive social behaviors like help,

sacrifice, relief, and assistance was also found in society in the days of floods. In some cases people also showed positive and acceptable social behaviors but the numbers of such people remained significantly low. Twenty seven percent female private school teachers accept that they are still in depression. According to their point of view floods have affected their entire lives and created several psychological and social problems for them.

Family Economics

It is found that majority female private school teaches belonged to middle class. Mean score of their salaries was PKR 3225 per month which ranged from two thousands to four thousands and five hundreds per month. Only twelve percent of respondents described that their husbands or other family members are in government job. Majority told that their family members were involved in small private businesses whereas only few private female teachers were from peasant families. Mean score of family incomes was PKR 27745 which ranged from fifteen thousands to forty seven thousands. It showed that remuneration is an important motive of job for female private school teachers in affected areas. Thirty percent of the respondents disclosed that the affects of floods compelled them to search and join job. All the respondents whose families were involved in business and agriculture revealed severe affects on their monthly incomes. A respondent told "cloth store was a sole source of income for my family before floods but the floods destroyed our shop. Now my two brothers are also working at private jobs for earning like me". Data revealed a reduction in family incomes of respondents from quarter to half of their total monthly income before floods. Displacement and return increased the daily expenditures of affected population. The teachers told that it was difficult for them and their families to resettle easily. Houses and other buildings needed immediate reconstruction or repairing. Money was also needed to restart the businesses. Findings revealed that the floods badly disturb the family economic of all female private school teachers working in affected areas.

Professional Issues

Displacement of population and damage of assets put impacts on professional lives of female private school teachers. There are no service rules for private teachers. All the respondents loosed their two month salary due to closure of schools in flood season. According to the teachers' opinions, in some cases, problems emerged in rejoining after floods. As financial crises hit the affected areas, the numbers of job seeking candidates suddenly increased after floods. Many people who were, earlier, not interested now came out for the search of job which affected job market in the affected areas. Financial constraints and migration of population decreased school enrollment and attendance which also affected teachers' remunerations. A small but significant proportion of the respondents indicated toward a tension between school owners and the teachers. School owners were also financially affected from the floods. Their current conduct was different and new for the employees. It created problems in professional lives of the teachers at the time when they were expecting more coordination than past from the owner side.

More than twenty percent respondents revealed that they were part time students. Their studies were badly affected due to floods. "I could not present in university exams which caused the loss of one year for her studies" a 22 years old unmarried teacher told. Another teacher, according to her opinion, missed her CCA exams. It established the viewpoint that loss of time disturbed the social and economic lives of the female private school teachers.

Relief and Aid Activities

The opinions regarding relief and aid activities were mixed. More than ninety percent female private school teachers accepted that their families received "Watan Card" (an ATM card issued by Pakistani government. The government claimed to pay one lakh rupees to each affected family through these cards but still (August, 2011) twenty thousands have been paid as first installment through each card). Ten percent of respondents revealed that they received commonly used goods and flour of approximately three thousands Pakistani Rupees. Majority respondents complained that the delivery system of relief goods like flour, blankets, tents, food items, water was not transparent. They disclosed that, generally, local representatives of political parties used to oblige their workers and supporters. Delivery points of different national and international NGOs were also overcrowded and filled with habitual persons (the persons who used to collect relief goods on daily basis more than their requirements). A small proportion of respondents told that they and their families were not willing to get assistance and aid however according to majority of female teachers they were not in position to go relief camps for collecting aid. Social pressures and fear of losing family and personal prestige stopped majority of middle class to be part of crowd at relief camps. Married female teachers of private schools also described their problems regarding health facilities for women in the affected areas. Lack of maternity homes and separate medical camps, according to majority opinions, created problems for them.

Religiosity Factor

Floods have enhanced the religiosity affiliation of the persons. Female private school teachers were divided on the issue that, according to their opinion, whether the floods were test from God or wrath. Majority of them declared the floods a test from God however more than twenty percent described the floods wrath from God. However a consensus developed on the issue that floods caused to increase religiosity among the affected people. The teachers accepted that floods have made them and their family members more religious. When they were asked to describe the dimensions of religiosity which they felt were increased. The majority indicated toward an enhanced spiritual attachment with God. "I feel, according to an unmarried female private school teacher of 21 years age, an association with God which results in consistency in daily prayers and performing other religious obligations." Majority of the teachers also accepted that emerging religiosity factor guided them to refine their social behaviors. A teacher told that her conduct with her subordinates was softer than before floods. Similar opinion was also described by a female school head teacher when she said "now I am in position to understand the problems of my colleagues and supporting staff which makes my behavior softer and more cooperative than past."

Precautions for Future

All female teachers of private schools showed concerns about their future. A fear is found among all the interviewees. The teachers were agreed that if it will be danger of floods again, they will pre-plan their activities. They will leave homes earlier and try to shift their families to secure places before the flood hit. They will try to enhance cooperation and coordination with their neighbors and city fellows. A significant segment of the respondents opined that next time, if it happened again, they will spend their potentials to facilitate affected and deserving persons. Another opinion was in favor of storing required things. Majority of respondents supported this opinion that in future they will maintain their savings for emergency time. All teachers were of opinion that government should take measures to protect the city from another disaster. Recommendations for better and transparent planning and implementation were also emerged in the data. The respondents claimed that till now no international

or national organization working for women betterment contacted them or their institution. The interviewees also urged on the need of separate health facilities for women especially to cater pregnancy and maternity requirements of affected women.

Conclusion

It is concluded that floods have affected social and economic aspects of female teachers working in private schools of a badly affected city of Southern Punjab - Jampur. It was found that majority of the teachers belonged to middle class families. Their family finance already was not reasonable sound. Floods brought bundle of problems for them. They had to leave their homes and city. Shifting at new place might create the challenge of security especially for females but the joint family system provided a sense of security and safety to them. Jampur city is located in the Southern Punjab where people's affiliations with their families and tribes are stronger than other urban areas of the country. Sense of family developed the idea of unity among the family members in majority cases except only few where interfamily disputes were reported by the respondents. However disputes among the families were very high. The teachers told about various negative social behaviors like selfishness, fraud, greed, theft, robbery which they observed in their out of family social relationships.

The female teachers working in private schools expressed that the floods caused to enhance their religious affiliations. The indicators of this change, described by the interviewees, were consistency of five prayers, extra time consumptions on recitation of Holy Quran and other religious activities as well as an enhanced fear of God. The teachers further explored that these new feelings of religiosity and association with God have changed their social life pattern. Consequently the conducts of the female teachers with their colleagues and subordinates were molded. Teachers' viewpoints for future second this notion. Significant numbers of teachers admitted that if such disaster hit again they will spend their abilities to facilitate their surrounding population more effectively.

Relief and aid activities, according to respondents' opinions, remained continue for long time. But the share of female teachers or their families of receiving relief goods like flour, blankets, tents, were reasonably small. Relief camps were hijacked by the professional beggars and habitual collectors of aid and relief goods. It was not possible for educated women, according to the teachers' point of view, to wait hours on relief camps for collecting aid. The only thing that was received by families of dominate majority of the teachers were "Watan Cards". There was no special support announced by the federal or provincial governments for low income women of the affected areas. The female private school teachers whose income was between two thousand to forty five hundreds suffered very much in this disaster. They, individually, received no aid from the government and the institutions where they were working. The role of women organizations was also pathetic. Despite it was easy to access the respondents; no organization working for women welfare approached any interviewee and their institutions. It can be assumed that the situation in far remote areas would be worse.

Another issue that is correlated with the social and economic life of the female private school teachers is their professional life. Floods' affects disturbed the teachers' professional lives. They leaved the city approximately for two months. Schools were closed and studies of students badly distressed. Small number of teachers missed their university exams. All the teachers could not receive their two months salaries. Displacement increased their personal and family expenditures. High prices and damage of houses and other properties made the situation challenge for the female teachers having low income. Consequently they faced problems in their economic and social lives.

Precautions described by the female private school teachers for the situation if the disaster occurred again showed their maturity and civilized behaviors. The majority urged to timely plan the things. Need to store the daily require things was also inferred from their discussions. The passion to help their fellows and needy persons showed the teachers' commitment to fight against the emergencies. Since huge majority of the teachers could not get any relief and aid from relief camps, their demand for a fair and respectable system of giving aid and relief to affected persons was also justified. Special health and care facilities for women are also important. There are areas in Pakistan where women are bound in different religious and cultural taboos and their free mobility is prevented in the society. Disasters and displacements multiply the problems of women of such areas. Married teachers told about lack of health facilities and maternity homes. These issues directly affected personal, social and economic aspects of the lives of affected teachers.

Recommendations

The paper recommends special measures to ease the socio-economic affects of floods on female private school teachers working in the Jampur city. The important and essential step is to expand the role of organizations working for women welfare. The organizations should plan to approach all tiers of women including low income and private job holders to lessen the affects of floods on their social and economic lives. Similarly proper health facilities and maternity services are the rights of women. It should be ensured. Relief and aid activities should be arranged in view of women separate role in society. In the areas where women are prohibited to mix up in the males separate relief camps and aid delivery points are necessary for them. Financial assistance for low income women is mandatory. Females working in private organizations like schools have no service rules and privileges. Government should try to provide financial help to these women. Though joint family system provided majority of respondents a sense of security however there are complaints of theft, robbery, kidnapping and harassment. Law enforcement agencies should work to scrub out these crimes. Many teachers who were part time students missed their exams. It is necessary to provide them special chance to reappear in their examinations. It is reported by the teachers that in many cases their social relationships were disturbed. Female school teachers are educated. They should provide social and psychological guidance to alleviate family and social disputes and clashes.

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