

A Study of Reasons and Implications of the Dropout Phenomenon in Women at University

¹ *Afifa Khanam*, ² *Uzma Quraishi*, ³ *Habiba Nazir*

¹ *Assistant Professor, Lahore College for University*

² *Acting Vice Chancellor, Lahore College for University*

³ *PhD Scholar, Lahore College for University*

(Email: dr.khanam.wattoo@gmail.com)

The present study explored the reasons and implications of dropout phenomenon in students of a women university in Pakistan. It focused dropout women's feelings, expressions and aspirations after leaving the university without completing their degree. Thirty dropouts of different grades were selected purposively. An unstructured interview was conducted to the participants. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically through inductive approach. The study revealed that poverty, male members' opposition, domestic responsibilities, institutional deficiencies, participants' own personality traits and intentions were the major factors of leaving university before completing their target degree. Most of the dropout females were disappointed and started low grade jobs or were engaged in household. A few women wanted to carry on their education whenever they find an opportunity. It was recommended that a women university should provide more scholarships and wider options of professional and vocational subjects as well as alternative modes of education like online and weekend education to let dropouts complete their degrees.

Key words: *women university students, reasons of dropout, implication of dropout school examination*

Introduction

Dropping out from an educational program means leaving the institution without completing the course of studies. The reasons could be many such as disappointment from the system, social requirements or other adverse circumstances. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) states that usually dropping out is considered as the students are leaving the institution without qualifying the degree but it does not happen in a day rather it is a long process.

According to Geul (2004) dropout means leaving the institution without completing the education and having no certificate at the end. Some students leave their institutions in early stages, some in the middle and some at the last years. System of education in Pakistan is separated into five stages and the last stage is considered as the university education. Pakistan is facing the problem of a large

dropout rate at all five stages (Qureshi & Rarieya, 2008).

According to Vision 2030 of the country, "Education is the key component of economic growth" as it has positive influence on entrepreneurship, employment, opportunities for women empowerment and growth in productivity (Latif, 2015). It helps to prepare youth for national and global demands like vocational and professional skills, technological advancement, leadership and management and all other progressing fields. While student dropout reduces chances of overall development and as stated by Nazarul Islam & Pavel (2011) it exerts a harmful effect on the investment in education by creating non-productive and non-innovative environment.

An analysis of the different studies show that the phenomenon of drop out is due to different reasons such as differences within students, families,

schools, communities and student's behaviour. It is also found that the socio-economic status of the family, parent's education and student's motivation are the dominant forecasters of institutional accomplishment or dropout phenomenon (Farooq, 2013).

Qureshi & Rarieya (2008) emphasized that the decision to withdraw from the university was mostly based upon the financial, social and personal conditions. Bergson (2005) states that type of family mobility, too much interest in sports, further opportunities in business or jobs affect continuity of their education. Moreover, social status, cultural factors and economic conditions also show effect on students' retention. In addition, dropout students get influenced by bad company, especially gangs and drug addicted people. There are different reasons of dropout, i.e. poor grades, bad environment, depression, mental illnesses, lack of freedom, job opportunities and boredom due to less relevance of courses to the desired occupations.

It was explored that pregnancy and marriage were also the reasons for non-completion of education among university female students. The female students did not receive any help from community to complete their education; sometimes including their family and so they dropped out (Khan & Rizwan, 2011).

Apparently it seems that no single factor is causing dropout. However, Colclough et. al. (2000) & Hunt (2008) stated that the basic factor behind increased dropout rate is poverty which disables students to fulfill their basic needs as to pay tuition fee, transport fares, buy stationary or food and other necessities of life. Institutional distance, poor management, poor infrastructure, lack of interest of teachers with their teaching profession, security problems especially for girls and language differences among students have been considered other major problems causing dropout.

Little (2008) found that over age students who are repeating their grades or adult students in university years have the greater pressure to do some jobs for families. Moreover, early dropout indicates toward some specific problems. These specific problems are large number of students in the classes, limited resources of learning and lack of infrastructure.

Grant & Mete (2009) state that students of different ages and students of different potential, when put together in the same class, treated with inappropriate methodologies, increase the chances of dropout.

The phenomenon of dropout is rampant not only in Pakistani universities but it has increased in many other developed and developing countries. For example, Lockhart (2004) states that the phenomenon of student dropout from higher education is a problem that has increased in UK during recent years. Likewise, it is estimated that annually 1.2 million students drop out from high schools in the United States (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). "The rates are even worse for girls of color: nationwide, 37% of Hispanic female students, 40% of Black female students, and 50% of Native American/Alaskan Native female students failed to graduate in four years in 2004" (National Women's Law Center, 2007). But, the Centre states that, "There has been little research on how a particular risk factor may affect students differently by gender, by race or ethnicity, or both" (National Women's Law Center, 2007. P.12).

It is stated in Pakistan's National Policy (2009) that the rate of dropout in the country, especially among female students is alarming and it indicates poor productivity of educational system. Like other developing countries, Pakistan is also facing problems due to high dropout rate as unemployment, poverty and unsatisfactory law and order situation (Gull, Gulshan & Ali, 2013). It is realized in the education policy (2009) that to improve the education, it is not enough to enroll maximum students but to retain them and provide them quality education is the major concern.

As compared to international benchmarks, the dropout rate in Pakistan is very high (Pakistan's national educational policy, 2009). Supporting this statement, a recent report of [UNICEF](#) Statistics for Pakistan (2012) shows that the "female literacy rate has risen significantly from a rate of 39.6% to a much higher rate of 61.5% for 15-24 year-olds, a highly significant factor given that 70% of Pakistan's population is under 30." It is observed that there is almost 16% dropout at university level while female dropout rate is greater than that of male (Ali, et al., 2011).

It is found that very poor, illiterate, and traditional families believe that girls should not be given higher education rather they should be engaged in household. A stereotypical male dominant culture also prevails around the country, “A father takes all decisions of his daughter’s life in Pakistani society, because it is a patriarchal society” (Khan & Rizwan, 2011).

However, all of the educational policies emphasized the importance of women education and acknowledged their role in national progress. The policies suggested educational reforms for provision of vocational and professional degrees to women. The National Education Commission 1959 emphasized the provision of hostels, transport and other facilities to provide women a vast range of vocational and professional degrees and to make them an active part of the society (Siddiqui, 2016).

Farooq (2013) explains that slogan of free education by the government holds the goals of providing the basic and necessary education, child care, justice, and access of compulsory education for everybody. It also aims to complete the learning needs of all students, improve the literacy rate, remove disparities and reduce the dropout rate among all groups of youth including women.

There are several studies which focused remedies for reducing dropout rate and searched for the factors improving the situation. Peters (2003) talks about teachers’ educational and societal roles for enhancing retention rate. He is of the opinion that these roles may be of collaborative nature because teachers and administrators should work for the same objective. Communities are overall responsible for the retention of students in the institutions, that is why campaigns must be launched and committees be formed on communal basis to move parents to enroll their students and help them complete their education.

How rare is the accessibility to higher education for girls may be understood through a case study of a district in Punjab. Qurbani Foundation conducted a research in 2005 to find out the proportion of female students going to school and the results were disappointing; 2500 students entered schools in District Sheikhpura and only 250 girls qualified 12th grade. The foundation came to know

that 50% girls never saw the school in their life. The parents were very poor and they could not afford daily essentials of life so they created such environment that girls could not go to school and the literacy rate for women was merely 30% at the district.

Having such a rare opportunity to join a school, it is pity to leave a university for a woman without completing her terminal graduate or post graduate degree. It is assumed that she is able to reach up to this level of education by consistent support of her family, their economic and moral support, by facing social and cultural resistance, by sacrificing her stereotype role and spending almost decades of her life for her career destination and then for one reason or the other, drops out from the institution without completing her degree. How does she feel at this moment of her life, how does she cope with the situation and how she plans for future are the major research questions of the study. The researchers intended to find out the native dropout women’s aspirations about their career and suggest possible solution of this phenomenon through this research.

Statement of the problem

Keeping in view the rationale discussed above, the researchers conducted a study to explore reasons and implications of the dropout phenomenon in women at university level.

Objectives of study

Following objectives have been set for the study:

1. To find out the domestic, social, cultural, institutional and economic factors of female dropout at the university level.
2. To investigate social, emotional impact of dropout phenomenon on female university students.
3. To find out various suggestions and recommendations elicited by the respondents for the prevention of dropout.
4. To develop recommendations to adopt suitable strategies for a desirable transformation in education system.

Research questions

1. What are the factors causing female students' dropout at university level?
2. What is the social and emotional impact on dropout women at university level?
3. What are the feelings and aspirations of the university level dropout female students for future?

Methodology

The research was designed in qualitative paradigm and a phenomenological study was conducted to find out psycho-social impact of drop out phenomenon on women at university level and to explore their feelings and aspirations for future.

Population of the study

All women who were enrolled at a Women University in Lahore, Pakistan, during sessions 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 in all graduate and post graduate programs of the university and had left without completing their degrees were the population of the study.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select participants because the researchers intended to trace informants at their homes to conduct interviews. Twelve interviews were conducted at the university because the respondents liked to come to university for giving information. The researchers ensured the participants that the results would not be used for any purpose other than research and their identity would not be disclosed. All interviews were recorded by the recording device.

Data analysis

The researchers transcribed all 30 interviews and matched the transcription with audio files
Q 1: How would you describe yourself?

Table No.1

Respondents' Introduction		
Education and age	Social Role	Social Status
-Ages between 20-35	-Became house wives (17)	- Women belonged to middle class (23)
-Left university at BS level (24)	-Started their education on another place (8)	- from rich families (7)
-Left education at MS level (6)	-Some started low grade (teaching)	-No woman belonged to a poor

only dropout women from different programs or students who enrolled at BS, MS or PhD programs at the Women University and then left without completing their degree for some reason or the other. The researchers approached 30 drop out students of BS, MS and PhD programs from six different departments; Education, Psychology, Physics, Biology, Chemistry and Political Science.

Instrument

The researchers prepared an unstructured interview protocol with 8 major open ended questions to investigate the factors involved in women's dropping out incident and their implicit and subtle feelings and emotions emerged after leaving their studies incomplete. The instrument was validated by conducting three pilot interviews for improving the content and language after getting feedback from participants and experts.

Procedure of the study

The information of students' addresses and contact numbers were obtained from the university's registrar office after taking formal permission from the competent authority. The researchers got appointments from the students residing in district Lahore and then approached personally to eighteen repeatedly to ensure that all information given by the participants was written correctly. Inductive approach for data analysis was adopted and major themes, sub themes and related patterns were derived for each research question. The central idea and themes were presented in tabulated form for visual convenience.

Results

The information provided by the respondents has been analysed and interpreted as below:

jobs (5)	family
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The table above shows that during introduction, women provided information about their education and age, their social status and their social role. Twenty four women had left university from different programs at graduate (BS, four years) level and six women left at post graduate level (MS two years). All of the students had left university six months to one year before. All of the women had ages from 20 to 35 years. Most of the women got

married and were housewives. Five of the women had started lower grade teaching job at schools and eight women joined their education after the gap. Most of the dropout women belonged to middle class families, some belonged to rich families and none of them told that she came from any poor family. The information revealed that university students were coming from rich and middle class families who could afford the fee.

Q2: What were your roles and responsibilities when you left the university?

Participants' roles, responsibilities and personal characteristics

Family background	Roles and responsibilities	Personal characteristics
- Belonged to middle class families (23) -Women's parents and husbands, either educated or uneducated often made decisions about their education (24)	-All of the women had domestic, educational and professional responsibilities. (30) -Some married women had to do jobs before completing their degree. (4)	- Women were eager and ambitious about their education (23) -Some women were not persistent or could not cope with crisis. (4) -A few women were not interested to continue education (3)

The dropout women described their different responsibilities due to which they left the university. Most of the participants told that they left the university due to domestic responsibilities and problems. Eight students explained that although they left the university but they were not free, after the university they had inducted themselves in different professional activities. Eight respondents told that they were completing their education at some other places. They got admission in other colleges or universities (formal or non-formal). Some were doing preparations to take exam privately. A few of them got admission in the religious institutions. Some of the respondents informed that they left the university because they were not studying their favourite subjects.

It was found that women were influenced by family and especially male members' decisions. For example one respondent said *"I am studying in B.A. in Patoki College. My father is a doctor. He wanted to make me a doctor, but in F.Sc. I got less marks.*

So I took admission in BS, then I left BS and again took admission in general B.A."

Some respondents were married. Their husbands were doing jobs; one woman was jobless and her husband was doing his own business. Most of the students left the university because their husbands were doing jobs. This ratio was double as compared to other students whose husbands were jobless or had their own business. It shows the trend that married women depend on their husbands for economic support in Pakistan and having an earning husband is a big factor of their leaving education or job.

Analysis of the data revealed that family back ground played an important role in the study of women students. Parents always kept in touch with their daughters' studies. Parents of three respondents were educated. These parents decided to change their daughter's subjects after discussion with her. One respondent's parents were non-educated and they had no time to observe her problems. Two of

the students were committed to their mission. They had strong willpower and although they left the university but they were trying to complete their education privately or they took admission in another university. Five of the students were hardworking by nature. They were doing jobs as well as continued their education in some other

institute in the evening. Some were doing jobs as a teacher and some were in different organizations. For example one respondent said: *“I am doing job in an office near my house. My salary is good. I left this college during BS. After taking B.A. papers privately now I am doing M.A.”* Some women wanted to support their parents economically.

Q3: What are your plans and aspirations about your future education?

Table No. 3

Ambitions and future plans	
Ambitions before dropout	Future plans after dropout
- Most of the women wanted to have a professional degree before dropout as a pharmacist, doctor, professor or a computer programmer. (20)	-Less than half of the women did not think for further education; They had broken their aspirations and ideals (12)
-Some women wanted to have good (Highly paid) jobs. (5)	-Some of the dropout women wanted to continue their education by some other means during their jobs. (6)
-A few women wanted to support their families.(3)	-Some women wanted to shift to some professional degree instead of general education (6)
-A few wished to be independent (pay their own fee) (2)	-A few women were not intrinsically interested in education so they left university.(2)

The table shows participants’ feelings, aspirations and future plans for education. Twenty one of the respondents left the university more than six months before and 9 of them had left for less than six months. Two of the participants said that they could afford university education very easily. They did not have any sort of financial problem. They left the university due to other problems such as they could not manage home and university simultaneously. Some participants wanted to study different subjects according to their own choices and some wanted to join the professions such as medical etc. For example, one respondent said, *“I wanted to become a doctor but the merit of medicine was very high and my marks were less. It was not possible for me to get admission in medical college, I took admission in BS (four year) in this university but my parents suggested me to do B.A (two years) so I left this university and took admission in B.A in another college.”* Some participants left the university because they did not take admission in their favourite subjects, so they were not interested to complete it. Two of the respondents said that they

could not afford this university because their sources were less than the expenditures. It was not possible for them to continue education here. They left this university and continued their education through other sources. As one respondent said, *“I wanted to do something for my family. I belong to middle class family for whom it was very difficult to pay very heavy dues and that is why I left the university.”*

A few of the respondents were not interested in education so they left the university. They were spending life at home in a satisfied condition. Some of the women left the university because they wanted to adopt some profession. According to them, professional education was more important than the simple education because it is the era of professionalism. For example one of the students said *“I have done BS in computer science, I wanted to become a computer programmer. I wanted to do job in office; girls are scarce in this field. I think girls should come in this field.”* Three of the students left the university because their ideas changed with the passage of time. Now they wanted to do something other. Three of the respondents were

interested in job as a teacher, they showed satisfaction because they were doing the work of

their choice. As one respondent said “*I wanted to become a teacher and now I am a teacher.*”

Q-4: What were your expectations from the university when you joined it?

Table No.4

Participants expectations from university			
Role of Teachers	Administrative policies	Fee structure	Atmosphere
-Supportive (13)	-The university should reconsider excessive exam policy (causes anxiety) (7)	-The university should revise fee structure (11)	-Must be encouraging (9)
-Fair (6)		- should have reasonable fee structure (8)	-Supportive (2)
-Unbiased (6)	-Introduce more disciplines (3)	-greater number and amount of scholarships (4)	-Friendly (2)
-Concerned (15)	Start technical programs (5)		-Equality (3)
-Sincere (3)	-Offer short term diplomas and certificates(3)		-Patronizing (4)
-Engaging (4)	-Show flexibility in schedules (7)		-Fun (5)
	-Research equipment (3)		
	-Educational trips (8)		

When women entered the university they had several expectations from the university. The university failed to meet these expectations which increased the dropout ratio. One of the respondents said “*University is a place that gives life to the young generation. It is a place which makes us scholars, so university environment has a big role in retaining students*” Three of the students were of the opinion that institution cannot not play any role; students should have their own will power to achieve something.

Drop out women were of the opinion that teacher’s influence and teacher’s style had a great effect on overall achievement of students. Teachers’ negative comments could discourage students and they could be disinterested in education. Some teachers ignored students in class and showed ‘*bad behaviour*’ which caused student’s dropout. Two of the respondents said that teacher should be supportive, 3 respondents said that a teacher should be sincere, fair and calm. During taking decisions, a

teacher should be fair for the whole class. Three students said that university should make policies in favour of students. Two of the respondents discussed about different educational trips. One student talked about the less option of professional education and the other talked about the shortage of research based facilities and two students suggested about raising standards of education. Two respondents complained against frequent exams which always happened after short periods. Two participants discussed that low fee structure always gives relief to the parents. Seven respondents commented about university atmosphere, “*Just like a wasted piece of iron which is thrown in fire and then it comes out as a useful tool, the university should shape up its students’ potentials and capabilities to make them useful citizens.*” Two participants opined that universities should have friendly atmosphere. Four women said that there should be patronizing atmosphere and two participants said that education should be given the first and foremost importance. Rest of the

respondents said that they did not expect from the

university except completion of courses.

Q 5: What type of problems caused you to leave the university?

Table No.5

Participants' problems causing dropout						
Personal	Domestic	Social	Emotional	Academic	Financial	No problem
-Remained depressed (2)	-Care for elders, siblings and children (7)	-Father's, brother's, husband's and mother's pressure to leave education (4)	-Had no friends (1)	-Could not understand concepts; teacher's support (2)	-Could not pay fee (3)	-mentioned no serious problem (7)

Several personal, domestic and social factors came to light during the answer of this question. Two respondents said that they did not like studies because they were not confident enough to participate in the class. They remained depressed after joining university. They had no friends and acquaintances. Most of the respondents said that they had domestic responsibilities because they were married or had family problems. As respondent No. 8 said, *“My mother is ill; she cannot do the household work. I have two younger sisters and a brother. I am the oldest one. After completion of BS, I joined MS. But in this situation, it was difficult for me to continue my education. Study needs time. If I give time to my study then my brothers and sisters become disturbed and ignored. I decided to leave my studies. So I left studies and continued doing my household work. I also started teaching to my brother and sisters.”*

Another participant, No.18 said, *“When I started doing M.Phil, I was married. Although I left the job, but with two kids it became very difficult for me to continue education. My mother in law forbade me to leave kids at home while studying. So during this strain, one of my kid died. It disturbed me a lot and finally I left the university.”*

It was found that women had to give helping hand at home and could not manage studies and

home at the same time. Another major problem was the finance. Three participants said that they could not afford university fee so they left university. Respondent No. 9 said, *“I have financial problem due to which I left the university. I took admission in F.A. in this college. I deposited the first fee with admission charges but after that it became very difficult for me and my family to afford it further. My other brothers and sisters were also studying. One day my mother discussed with me that I should continue my study privately. So I agreed and left the college. I did B.A. and after that I started a job in an office. Now I will appear for M.A. this year, which is very good news for my parents. With the job I can afford the fee of my brother and sisters also.”*

Four of the participants said that they left university due to social pressure. Their parents and relatives did not like further education. Their parents and husbands exerted pressure on them to leave university. Respondent No. 13 said, *“After F.A. I applied in BS and I got admission on merit. Then I came to know that my family was not interested in women's education. My brother and father strictly forbade me to attend university. According to them F.A. is enough for the women's education. They said that women's duty is to care about home and nothing more. They also didn't like that women*

should do job. At first I tried my best to argue with them. But at last I left my education and college.”

Another participant No.7 said, “After BS I got married. Although I was interested in further education, but my husband was not interested. One day he asked me to leave further education. He said that instead of giving time to education and college I should give time to my family and home. In other words, according to him I should spend time at home. So at last I left the university.” Three of the participants said that their husbands forbade them to attend university and exerted pressure to leave education. Some women said that they were weak in their studies and teachers could not help them as they required. Respondent No.13 said, “I have done FA from here. Here I found that there were so many students in a class... Some teachers didn’t have any concern that either lecture is understandable for the

students or students were listening to the teachers or not.” Another student said, “There were so many problems which I faced during study; one greatest problem was that teaching staff was very non co-operative. They just took classes and never thought about the problems of the students”.

Another problem was distance from the university, for example participant No. 21 told, “I do not live in Lahore. I come from another city. It was very difficult for me to come to the university daily by local transport. As a result my parents forced me to leave this university and join the one nearby my home.”

Some of the respondents said that teachers’ behaviour is responsible for the dropout from the institution. As respondent 17 said, “Teachers’ compassionate behaviour is very important for retention of students at university.”

Q 6: Do you have a plan to complete your education in future?

Table No.6

Participants’ Plans to join education in future	
Agreed to continue the education	Disagree to continue education
-More than half of the participants were willing to re-enter education by any alternative means. (16)	-Almost half of the dropout women had no intention to re-join education due to previously told reasons. In addition, a few women mentioned problems of long distance from the university, their health issues and weak academic support by the university. -Some women were not allowed to join education again by their families. (14)

The analysis of the data showed that all of the students were agreed to continue education but different factors forced them to leave it. Two of the students said that they wanted to continue education but illness affected them. Five respondents said that there was transport problem. It was considered as the second major problem for the students and three women said that there were personal family matters which had prohibited them not to join the university again. Six respondents said that non supportive system of education caused them to dropout so they would not join it again. Some respondents indicated

different reasons for leaving university forever. For example one respondent said, “I was completely misfit with this system of university. The university had wrong timing for post graduate classes.” And another respondent said, “I want to become a lawyer which is professional education. Such professional education is not available in this university. This factor forced me to leave.”

Ten of the respondents said that they were not agreed to get admission in this university but their parents forced them to get admission here. So they were not satisfied and whenever they got

chance they left this institution. As one respondent said, *“I have done M.Sc. from another University. I got admission in MS here but I was not satisfied so I left the university. Next year I shall again get admission in MS in the other University.”* Four students said that they were satisfied with this university but other family members forced them to leave it. For example one respondent said, *“I took admission in the university forcefully without consulting anybody. My husband was not agreeing over this. When he came to know that I got admission in university. He became angry and completely forbade me. In other words he openly said that he shall never allow me to join university. He also gave me some sort of threats. I tried my best to convince him. He refused to accept any of my suggestions. Finally I left the university.”* She complained against patriarchal dominance in the culture.

Some of the respondents said that they continued education through other sources after leaving the university. They continued it either privately or by taking admission in other universities. Majority of the respondents, sixteen women discontinued education after leaving the university. Some started doing jobs and some were free at homes and doing nothing. Six of the respondents said that after leaving the institution they discontinued the education with their own intentions. Some were interested in different jobs instead of higher education. Two of the students left the institution and discontinued education because they were asked to do so. For example one respondent said that, *“My father and brothers were not highly educated so they forced me to leave the institution. According to them this education is enough for the girls.”* Many women had no option or solution except discontinuing education permanently.

Q7: What about your feelings, aspirations and motivation after leaving the university?

Table No.7

Participants' feelings, aspirations and motivation after leaving university	
Regained motivation	Broken and disheartened
<p>Several dropout women had regained their motivation and spirit to continue their education after dropping out from the university. They had continued or wanted to continue some online course or private study.</p> <p>(16)</p>	<p>Almost half of the women were disappointed and did not want to continue education anywhere. They never thought of taking further admission. Some of them were doing low paid jobs and some became housewives. (14)</p>

Some of the students said that their career was affected due to dropout. As one respondent said, *“There was a great impact of leaving the university at that stage on my career. Now I am a school teacher, if I would complete my M.Phil, I could get a good and better job.”* Three students said that this phenomenon had great effect on their motivation. For example one respondent said that, *“I don't think that a woman may have any career and all that motivation or aspirations... whatever you are saying, become meaningless after this (dropout).”*

Two students said that their career was 'finished' after leaving the university. One respondent said, *“All is changed.”* One respondent

said that *“She was affected completely.”* Five of the students were not worried after leaving the university because they had made different plans for life and had continued their education again. For example, one respondent said, *“I am fine and relaxed because I am going to start it again, now my mother is good in health. She is o.k. completely”* another respondent said, *“It has changed nothing for me, I wanted to become a teacher, so I am teaching. I don't have any sort of depression. After M.Phil. I had to become a teacher and now I am a teacher that is all. So I am satisfied completely and nothing more.”*

One of the women said that it had a bad effect on her aspirations. None of the respondents

said that it had good effect on their aspirations. However, some women said that they had compromised the situation. One of the respondent said that family pressure played an important role on her motivation to study. She was disappointed and dejected for her family's lack of support.

Some students believed in struggle. As one respondent said, *"Goals can only be achieved through hard work so we have to work"*. Some of them had progressive ideas. They not only wanted to do something for themselves but for others also. For example one respondent said, *"I saw so many drawbacks during my studentship, so by entering into teaching profession I want to remove these drawbacks."* Eleven of the respondents said that they had to accept whatever they had to face in the present situation. As one respondent said, *"I do not have any sort of goal."* And the second said, *"I do not have any sort of planning yet."* After leaving the institution some students became so disappointed that one said, *"I have stopped thinking about this*

matter after leaving the institution." Some respondents said that in future they would do something. For example one respondent said, *"By continuing my study I can achieve the goals I had."* Ten of the respondents said that goals of life can be achieved if someone starts working hard in the beginning. For this, some of them got admission again in different colleges according to their suitability and choice. One of the respondents said, *"To achieve the goals of education, I am trying to get admission in my favourite subjects."* Some women said that they wanted to do something else but their elders forced them to do something different. Four of the women said that they had to accept the different decisions about their life forcefully. One respondent said, *"I don't have any sort of planning, because most of the time my parents plan for me."* Seven of the students said that after leaving the institution they adopted the profession as they wished, therefore, they were looking satisfied.

Q 8: What are your suggestions for other women students for their successful career?

Table No.8

Participants' suggestions for other women for their successful career	
Move on	Accept your fate
Women should work hard and find ways to continue their education (11)	Women should accept their fate because ultimately they have to do what others want them to do.(6)
They should take subjects of their own interest rather than chosen by family pressures (9)	
They should fight for their rights (4)	

The analysis revealed that most of the women suggested that women should work hard to lead a successful life because they may face hardships according to the conditions and time. Four participants said that they should accept the life as it is. Five of the respondents said that women should fight for their rights or for successful life and one of the respondents said, *"women should not fight for their rights because ultimately they had to do what others want them to do."*

Ten of the respondents said that women should work hard for their career; either by getting admission in their favourite subjects, in their favourite college or university, or privately, etc. One respondent said, *"All other women should have their aims high. All should study their favourite subjects."* Another said, *"All should study, because education is such a weapon, which solves all problems of life."* Eleven of the respondents said they should work hard not only in education but in other fields also.

For example one respondent said, “*Work hard in any case to make you useful either at home or outside the home.*”

Two of the students said that they had the ability to fight for other family members also. Rest of the two students said that they had the capability of getting their own rights. It was a difficult process but not impossible.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to explore the problems of the dropout students which they faced while studying and as a result they left the university and the feelings and aspirations they had after the phenomenon. All of the participants of the study were female and they belonged to different ages, programs and years of drop out. The study intended to bring to light voices of dropout women and the factors causing this phenomenon. The information gathered from the participants supported previous researches like; Peters (2003), Grant and Mete (2009) and Little (2008) which revealed that poverty, gender biases, institutional deficiencies, participants' own personality traits or intentions may be the major factors of leaving universities before completing their target degree. Most of the students had to leave the college due to domestic problems. They tried to overcome these problems but there was a time when they failed to resolve them. As a result they left the university. Some of them left the university due to domestic responsibilities. After leaving the institution they were doing their household work and were helping their relatives. The data supported Jummani & Bibi (2011) study which discussed that social and academic goals interact to influence students' performance and leaving of institutions. The most important factors which came to light as the causes for women drop out were repeatedly mentioned in the related literature for example, 'financial problems' described by Hunt (2008), & Colclough, et al. (2000), 'marriages & parenting' found by Earle & Roach (1989), 'vague objectives & family pressure' given by Bryk & Thum (1989), 'long distance from the university' reported by UNECIF (2010), 'teachers' non cooperative behaviour' mentioned by Ali (2011), 'having no choice of subjects as per participants' intention' Earle & Roach (1989) etc. Some participants criticized 'over crowded classes' previously mentioned by Grant & Mete (1989), and

teachers' indifferent behaviour and academic difficulties (Khan & Rizwan, 2011). Several participants were dissatisfied with heavy fee structure of the university. They said that poor and middle class students could not afford higher education.

Most of the drop out women kept working hard and continued their education elsewhere with a different mode. They advised their fellow students to work hard in the beginning and fight for their rights. They declared it difficult but not impossible. Some of the women were dejected and thought that women could not do anything in this patriarchal culture so they were contented to their fate.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there are many inter related factors which are responsible for women drop out. It was found that low socioeconomic status, family background, college atmosphere and curriculum are the basic reasons of dropout. The study also revealed that teacher's behaviour and university's policies have a great effect on this phenomenon. In addition to the factors mentioned above, college distance, teachers' favouritism, poor financial resources and less institutional facilities appeared to be important reasons for respondents to leave the university. It was also found that frequent examinations, rigid type of curriculum and system of education also led to dropout. Most of the women were dissatisfied with the situation and wanted to continue their education or plan to do a job in future but some women were very disappointed and they had stopped thinking about further education or job. They gave priority to their families and married life. The study attempted to explain how women's motivation was affected who experienced dropout phenomenon. The data revealed that the external support and motivation from teachers, friends and family members had a positive influence on women's academic achievement. When students do not achieve good results or enough grades, they are forced to drop out. The present research also indicated that if parents, teachers and guardians of women lack interest and support; especially in education, it leads to dropout. The students also left university due to lack of interest in subjects being taught. Several participants suggested for better institutional support including scholarships and fee concession and individualized

instruction in the class. Cumulatively the research holds an impression that though women were dejected at leaving the university without completing the degree, yet they were ready to fight for their rights and move further with their plans.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, following changes can be made in the institution to reduce the ratio of dropout and increase students' retention:

1. The university should widen the curricula by adding professional courses like law, poly technique (vocational courses and diplomas), nursing and practical ICT in different fields.
2. More scholarships should be arranged for deserving students
3. Hostel facilities should be expanded
4. Behaviour of teachers should be friendly and they should understand the problems of students
5. Teachers should engage all students in the class for participation in discussion and activities
6. Students should be encouraged and motivated in the class
7. Counselling experts should be present at the university to solve students' problems
8. Class size should be reduced and should not exceed 30 students per class
9. Alternative mode of education should be presented for students who are compelled to leave institution so that they may maintain their studies while remaining at their homes like online courses or blended courses.
10. Annual system of examination is very suitable for women; it could be introduced as an alternative system of examination with semester system.

11. Short courses and diplomas should be introduced for women who have less time for education
12. Universities have less communication with parents as compared to schools. An awareness campaign should be launched for family members to convince them to send and support their daughters for higher education.

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