

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMME FOR INCREASE IN FEMALE ENROLMENT AT SECONDARY LEVEL IN DISTRICT SWAT

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Abstract

In 2009, the government incentive (stipend) programme which was started in district Swat for increasing girls' enrolment. The major objectives of the study were to find out the perception regarding female education and the role of incentive in promoting enrolment of female education. This research study is descriptive in nature data were collected through questionnaire from the respondents (teachers and head teachers). For exploring incentive program, outcomes, importance, and change in enrolment, and analyzed to find out the weak areas, strong areas and suggestions regarding incentives practices at district Swat. Research respondents pointed out that girls in district Swat got married at very early age. Most of young females left the school after primary level and some of them hardly continued their education after marriage. Teachers revealed some strong areas of the incentive program. They told that provision of stipend money to female students was financial support to poor parents. They used this money for educational needs; they bought shoes, uniform and stationary etc. The stipend money increased the enrollment and decreased the absenteeism so it should be continued and the amount should be increased with the passage of time.

Keywords: Incentive, Absenteeism, Stipend, Swat, Enrollment

Introduction

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stipend money is provided to female students to increase girls' enrolment and reduce the number of dropout. It also improves school attendance of the students as provision of money is based on some conditions, for example, 80% school attendance is compulsory for every student to receive the next installment and if they do not fulfill the criteria, they are deprived of the stipend money incentive. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Reform Unit (ESRU) working to provide money to girls students in some districts to increase girls' enrolment. Many developing countries where there female enrolment was low and drop-out was not in control, they started incentive program for the purpose. Some countries provided food items or small amount to the female students on high attendance as incentive to promote girls' education. Pakistan was one of them which started to provide incentive for education in rural areas. In 2009-2014 the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa started provision of food items at primary level but after some years government stopped the incentive at primary level. In 2009, provision of stipend money was also started to female students at secondary level to increase in enrolment which suffered due to militancy. The girl students are still being provided the stipend money (Mustafa, 2012).

According to Pakistan Social and Living Measurement (PSLM) 2010-11, the District Swat was ranked 11 among 24 districts on literacy indicator (Hamid, Akram, Bashir, & Janjua, 2011). While Annual Status of Education Reports 2011, stated the enrolled children in the age group 6-16 as 96% (32% girls and 68% boys) 4% (6-16 years) as not attending any school. Out of this number, 55% were girls and 45% boys (Shaheen, 2013).

Table 1. Enrollment in government schools in District Swat

	Primary	Middle	High	Higher Secondary	Total
Boys	161740	10117	24142	8980	204979
Girls	96631	6580	10638	4745	118594
Total	258371	16697	34780	13725	323573

Source: <http://sed.edu.pk>

The table 1 shows the low female enrolment at district Swat. The Government started incentive program to increase female enrolment.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to analyze the importance of stipend money in seven non developed districts, where there was low enrollment in girls' education. The government took initiative to provide girls with stipend money from grade 6th to 10th in Swat to support their further schooling. The initiative also aims to control dropout and increase girls' enrollment. This study was carried in District Swat to find out that whether this initiative increased girls' enrollment and decreased their dropout.

Significance of the Study

This research study may provide evidences of stipend program's outcomes as to what extent the incentive for education was helpful for increase in enrolment and aware community of Swat district about importance of female education. The study might reveal that whether enrollment has been increased due to stipend money or some other factors. Whole community might realize the importance of female education and they would also contribute to resist early marriages and protect their daughters from the conservative society especially in villages, where parents think their daughters and their education a burden. The purpose of the study about gender specific program is to remove gender disparity in education.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the nature and importance of the incentives.
- To Identify change in enrolment after starting incentive program.

Research questions

- To what extent the incentives programs are helpful in increase in girls' enrolment?
- What are the changes in enrolment after starting the incentive programs?
- To what extent money incentives has brought positive change in enrolment?

Review of Literature

Literature provides an over view of previous research on incentive programs for education in different developing countries. It introduces the outcomes of the stipend money as incentive for education. Stipend is a type of incentive in monetary terms.

Incentive Program for Girls' Education

This study is about incentive program assessed the aim and success of a stipend program for girl students launched by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government few years ago. The program aimed to increase the female enrolment and reduce gender parity in education. Study shows that program did not put any impact or positive change on girls' enrolment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They reported different other factors that affecting the enrolment ratio in the province. They further explored the other factors and depicted some other causes of girls' low enrolment, cultural and social constraints were on the top in this regard. Results of the study clearly show that, it was not the money but culture which was the real hurdle in increase in enrolment ratio. Most of the parents still do not allow girls to go to school due to cultural barriers. Awareness campaigns regarding girls' education need to be designed for the parents to enable them and the whole community to contribute in girls' education and increase in enrolment. The stipend money program Avancemos is known as in Costa Rica in Malawi. Different countries use different words for the stipend money incentive, which is given to female students because most of developing countries have low enrolment of girls at secondary level. The literature review of this study provides the background of the stipend money globally.

The Avancemos program encouraged human capital development by requiring students to stay in school to get secondary education. Costa Rica first introduced Avancemos in 2006 to address educational concerns of low secondary school attendance and low graduation rates by supporting low-income families financially. Human capital development is possible only through education. Education is the pioneer for the overall development of a country. During the evaluation of the stipend program the school-reported dropout rate almost decreased by 3.2 percent. The estimate suggested 6.7 percentage increases in school enrolment.

Effectiveness of Incentives in Developing Countries

Lora (2009) stated that there was very close link to the interest of the government and institution which invested and supported financial programs as much as the students and their families benefited from them. In the study he examined that program of Bolsa Escola had an important impact upon the academic results and performance in the school of the students. The researcher had the purpose to sort out was the significant differences in Bolsa and non-Bolsa groups. Further he told the most of the families participated in education due to this program. During the two decades the cash transfer program was started to test the efficiency, efficacy and success across the broad goals and objectives. New programs were launched under the models of old programs, which however needed to struggle with issues left and unresolved for their predecessors. Outdoor strategies address the question of what happened once the students reached the age limits and no longer qualified to receive cash transfer for education. The student graduated from CTE program were either transferred to the next stage of educational employment or remained unable to achieve self-sustainability. The implementation of social program alone might abolish extreme poverty in Brazil or any other nation employing conditional cash transfer in education only, but they had to offer health care, nutrition, and support to the poor families because all these things were students' needs incentives remained effective in developing countries. In few countries it reduced poverty to some extent while in few others it abolished trend of early marriages and premier sex as the researcher stated for improving education facilities, health care and diet (food items) through conditional cash transfer for acquiring education. The study depicted the program effects on fertility and early

marriages of young poor people in third world countries. Most of the youth entered in early marriages and then early childbearing that sealed off their further opportunities for schooling.

Effectiveness of Incentive programmes for Enrolment and Achievements

Mills (2015) investigated in his study that two educational interventions utilizing cash transfer affected participating students and their enrollment and achievements (results, attendance). The first was the Louisiana Scholarship Program, which was a statewide program offering publicly to provide scholarships for low income students who performed poorly and had low attendance in K-12 private schools. The second program, the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship (ARK) was a state financed broad based merit-aid scholarship for the students in college in Arkansas state. The findings suggested that the enrolled students who qualified for Academic Challenge Scholarship, performed no differently after one year than the students who missed the academic requirements but earned significantly lower GPA and were less likely to graduate within four years. The research suggested that scholarship recipient may have delayed graduation in response to the program. He found no evidence of significant differences between students. The researcher used the household data to assess effect of conditional cash transfer program (Brazil's Bolsa Familia) on children education (6-17 years). Among girls, the program significantly increased school participation by 8% and 10% grade promotion but it was significantly increased among girls in rural areas. Few significant negative impacts of conditional cash transfer were found among boys because they were not given the stipend amount. In the research paper, the researcher stated that there was positive effect of Bolsa Familia upon childrens' academic outcomes. The researcher separated the students' on the basis of gender proved critical impacts of Bolsa Familia's (incentives), of students who received an LPS scholarship and those who didn't receive a scholarship.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

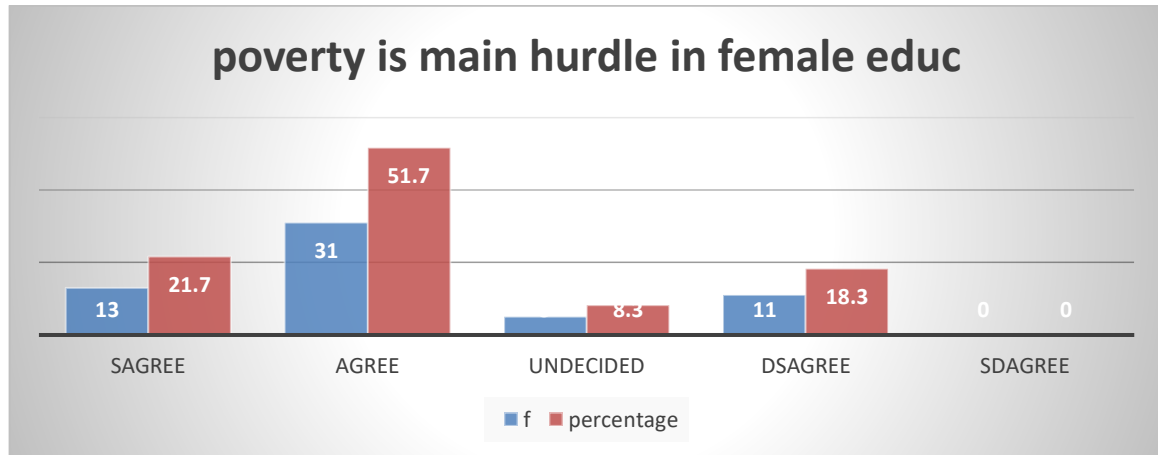
The study was quantitative in nature. The selection of sample was made through convenient sampling technique. Data was collected from (teachers and head teachers) regarding incentive programme in district Swat. The data was analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS to draw study findings and conclusion. Sixty (60) Head teachers and 120 teachers were part of the study pilot was run and Cronbach Alpha value was .8731 which was acceptable for data collection.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through (SPSS). Descriptive analysis of the data was done by finding frequencies, Mean, Standard Deviation and percentage. The data regarding incentive program were presented by using graphs. Separate tables were made of every statement and graphs were also included to help the reader to understand the ratio and percentage easily.

Table 1. Poverty and female education

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	Parents did not use to send their girls to schools because of poverty.	13 21.7%	31 51.7%	5 8.3%	11 18.3%	0 0%	3.83	1.107



The above table shows the majority of the respondents 72% (51+21) were agreed that poverty was the main hurdle for girls' education. Mean (M=3.83, SD=1.107) also shows the agreement of the respondents.

Table 2. Incentive program

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	Government took initiatives for increase in girls' enrolment.	20 33.3%	39 65%	0 0%	1 1.7%	0 0%	4.30	.5614

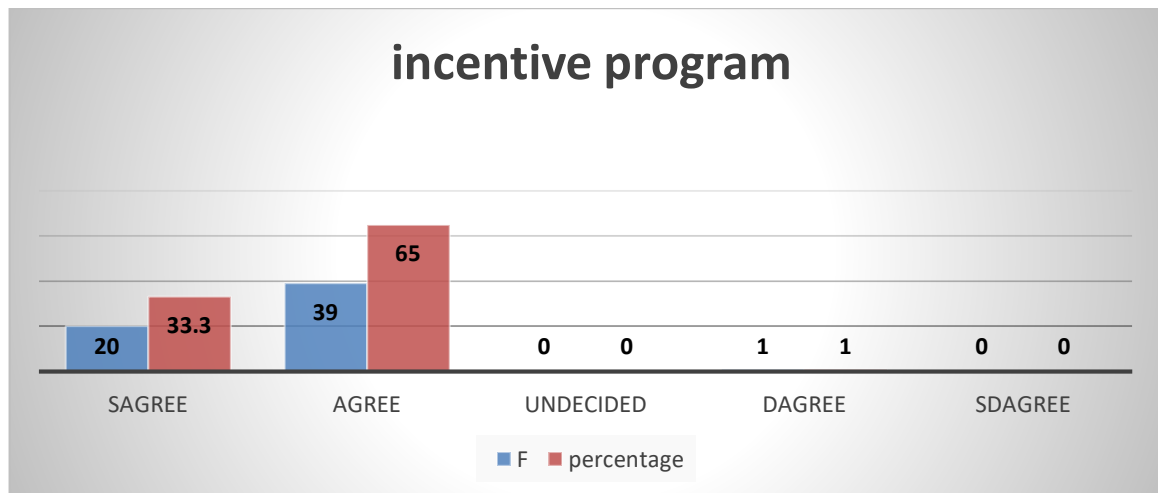
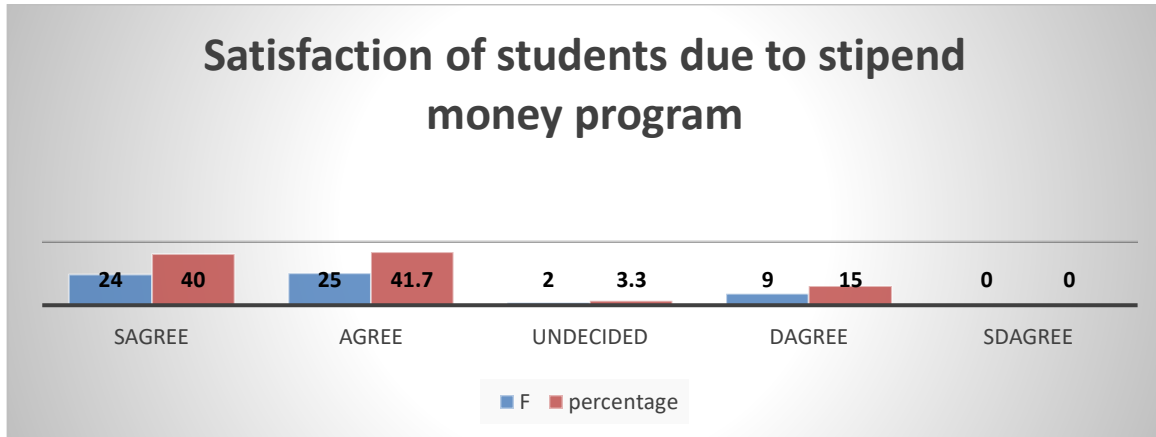


Table 02 and graph gives the information that 65% respondents were agreed and 33% were strongly agreed that government took initiatives for education in Swat. Provision of stipend money to just female students at secondary level was one of them. Mean (M=4.30, SD=.5614) also shows that the agreement of the research respondents.

Table 3. Satisfaction of students

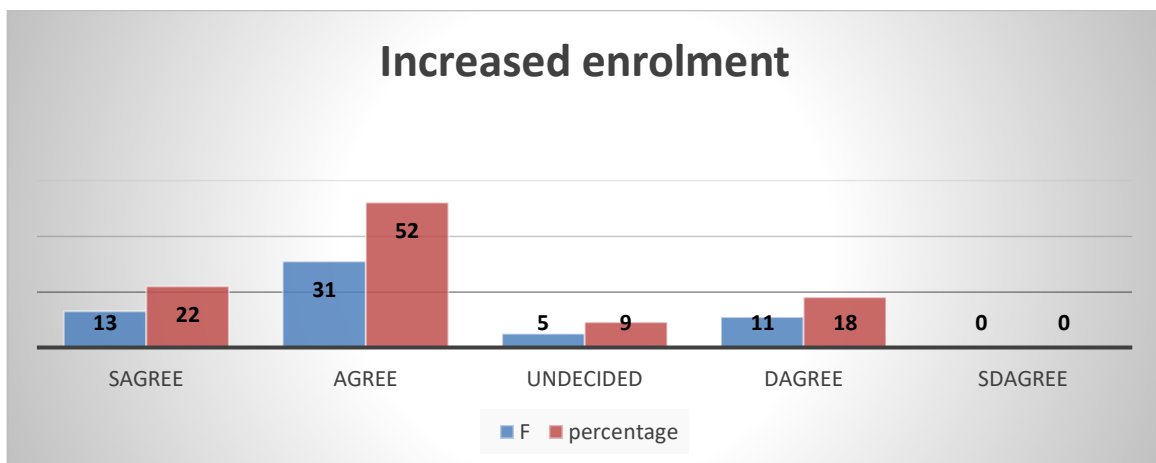
Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	Students are satisfied with this stipend money program.	24	25	2	9	0	4.06	1.022
		40.0%	41.7%	3.3%	15%	0%		



The above percentage (41+40= 81.7%) shows that majority of research respondents were agreed that female students were satisfied with stipend money. They felt happiness when they received the money as incentive. Mean (M= 4.06, SD=1.022) also shows the respondents were agreed with the statement.

Table 4. Increased enrolment

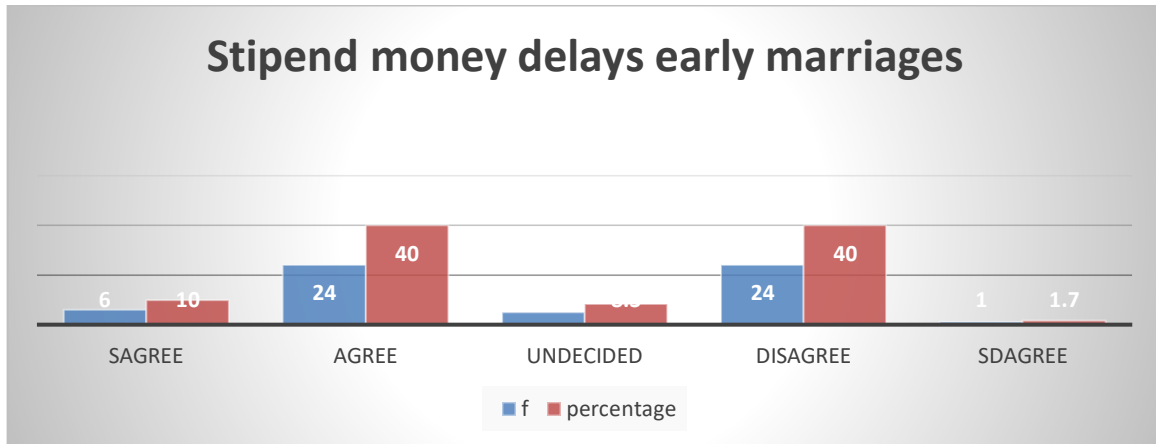
Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	The enrolment at high school level has been increased due to stipend money.	13	31	5	11	0	3.766	.9977
		21.7%	51.7%	8.5%	18.3%	0%		



The above Mean (M=3.766) shows that many of the respondents (73.4%) were agreed with the statement that enrolment has been increased due to incentive program.

Table 05. Early marriages

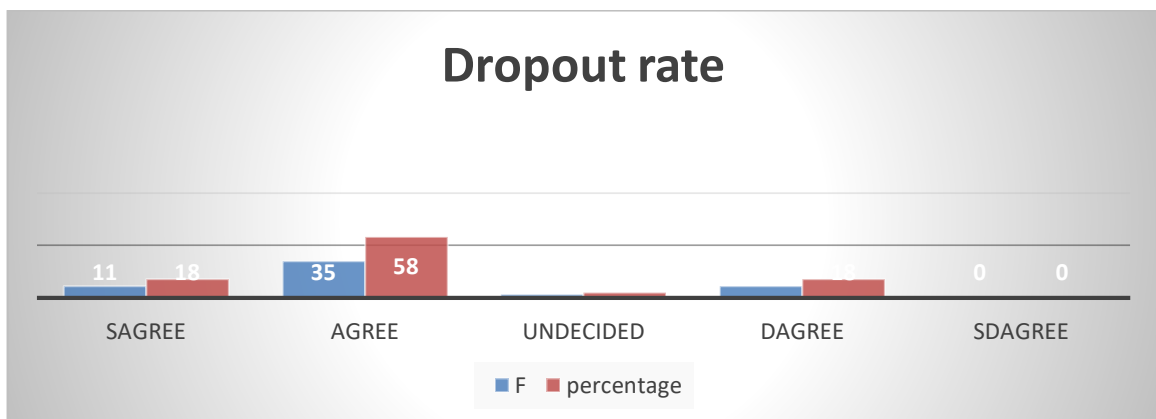
Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1.	Stipend money started to girl students at high school level to delay early marriages.	6	24	5	24	1	3.16	1.122
		10.0%	40.0%	8.3%	40.0%	1.7%		



The above table shows that 50% respondents were agreed with the statement that stipend money program helped in delaying early marriages and 40% were disagreed with the statement that stipend money did not help in delaying early marriages of girls. Mean (M= 3.16,SD=1.122) also shows the agreement with the statement.

Table 06. Controlled dropout

Sr. No	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	X	SD
1	After starting stipend program, the dropout rate is controlled to some extent.	11	35	3	11	0	3.766	.9631
		18.3	58.3%	5.0%	18.3%	0%		



Above graph and table show that most of respondents (76.6%) were agreed that students' dropout ratio has been controlled to some extent due to stipend money program. Mean ($M=3.766$, $SD=.9631$) also shows the agreement of the respondents.

Findings of Research

- It was found that 82% respondents (teachers) said that students were happy with the stipend money.
- Seventy five percent (75%) respondents (parents of enrolled students) appreciated incentive program for female students for increase in girls' enrolment.
- Sixty two percent (62%) respondents (teachers) told that the provision of stipend money to female students is a financial support to students and poor parents.
- Ninety six percent (96%) respondents were of the same opinion that aim of starting the stipend program was to increase girls' enrolment and decrease absenteeism.
- Fifty percent (50%) respondents (head teachers) were of the opinion that students' attendance had been improved due to stipend money program.
- Forty five percent (45%) head teachers and 48% teachers told that enrolment had been increased due to stipend program.
- 50% research respondents were agreed that Stipend money helped in delaying early marriages but 41% were disagreed with the statement.

Discussion

The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa started different incentive programs in girl schools, at primary level. The program aims at providing different incentive items such as food (oil, wheat and biscuits) were to promote girls' education. This study aimed to investigate the impact of these incentive/s programs in promoting the enrollment of girls in the targeted schools/areas. The study also analyzed the changes that have brought by the incentives (stipend money) program. The target area of this stipend program comprised seven backward districts, including, Battagram, Bonaire, Hangu, Kohistan, Shangla, Tank, and Upper Dir. Around 0.28 million female students were registered under this program (Ahmad and Zeeshan, 2014). Report shows that stipend program has a significant impact on female education because it eases household financial constraints to some extent. It has increased female enrolment in secondary schools, and around 93% of families have availed themselves of the stipend program, resulting in a 7% increase in female enrolments (Ahmad and Zeeshan, 2014). Chaudhury and Parajuli (2010) research studies strongly support the findings of this study according to their research study conclusions incentive programmes major objective were increasing female enrolment in public schools in Punjab. It has also achieved target of increase in girls' enrollment, decreased of absenteeism and controlled dropouts however, study conducted by (Ahmad and Zeeshan, 2014) shows that such programs are not fulfilling all the targeting objectives completely due to certain other socio-cultural and structural barriers in the society.

Recommendations

Incentive programmes are financial support to poor students therefore such incentive program should be continued that students may fulfil their educational needs (shoes, uniform, and stationary). The government should increase the budget for such programs so that parents fulfill the financial requirements of their children education. Further, the study recommends that for promoting girls' education, awareness programs regarding importance of girls' education should start in rural areas of District Swat. The study also suggests availability of girl high schools in every village for promoting girls education. Also, filling of vacancies (teaching staff) should be made sure urgent basis, while accessibility to school should be made easy through constructing new schools in far-flung villages.

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