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**Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors on Female Education in Suleman Khel Tribe of District South Waziristan, Pakistan**

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**ABSTRACT**

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This research endeavors to investigate the intricate interplay of socio-cultural and economic factors that serve as impediments to female education within the Suleman Khan tribe. Echoing Napoleon's assertion about the indispensable role of educated mothers in national progress, this study aims to uncover the multifaceted challenges hindering the educational pursuits of women in the Suleman Khel tribe. The socio-cultural barriers prevalent in this community have significantly curtailed females' access to education, representing a formidable impediment to their aspirations and dreams. The dearth of opportunities and the prevalence of numerous social obstacles create a complex landscape for females striving to fulfill their educational ambitions. With the primary objective of identifying and understanding the socio-cultural and economic factors obstructing female education in the Suleman Khel tribe, this research employs a qualitative and subjective approach for data collection and analysis. Utilizing the purposeful sampling method within the framework of non-probability sampling, a total of 15 respondents from various villages were selected to provide primary data. Contrary to prevailing assumptions, the findings of this study reveal a nuanced perspective, highlighting that a majority of respondents express support for female education. Furthermore, the study challenges the conventional belief that both male and female education in the Suleman Khel tribe is uniformly low, thereby introducing a novel perspective to the discourse on educational disparities within the community.

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## **Introduction**

Education is considered to provide information and resources that hold possibilities for economic strengthening for better jobs and social development of events. Hence, accessibility to education has been the major objective of everybody. This also explains why education has been seen as a fundamental human right. The increasing requirement for higher education was first expressed during the oil boom of the 1970s in Nigeria, which led to the foundation of many education institutions in the country. Interest in pursuing higher education or part-time programming is complemented by the longing wish to attain education, skills, and qualities that would enable the recipient to adjust to ordinary changes in the climate or social milieu in which the individual finds himself or herself (Egenti and Omoruyi, 2011).

Education is essential for the development of any nation. The public authority of Pakistan is resolved to accomplish the objectives of universalizing essential education. In such a manner, Pakistan, being a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has gained moderate ground to accomplish the set objective. Preparing is the pleasing improvement of the physical, mental, good, and social assets of individuals in the presence of stalwart duty. By and large, the literacy level in Pakistan is 57% (69% for males and 45% for females). Literacy levels remain higher in metropolitan zones (74%) than in commonplace regions (48%). The literacy rate for men is 69%, and for women it is 45%. Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (Meraj and Sadaqat, 2016).

Education has been of dynamic importance to the improvement of human culture. It might be the beginning of individual data, information, and care, yet moreover, a sweeping policy for headway and change. Simultaneously, one of the endeavors of the public authority is to build enlistment at the elementary school level. In any case, there are numerous issues with the method of emergence of this objective. Aside from the exercise of psychological oppression, there are various issues that have essentially frustrated the advancement toward the accomplishment of widespread essential education in the nation. In Pakistan, guidance as an advantage is denied to various children; the state of education, particularly for females, is one of the most denied areas (Irshad, 2011).

For an impressive period of time, serious education establishments had an essential occupation in conveying specialists, scientists, political pioneers, market investigators, and social analysts, who serve the overall population to propel its characteristics and develop its resources. At the forefront, youths and women outfitted with cutting-edge educational aptitudes lead countries towards progress and social value. In any case, the issue with countries including Pakistan is that they have focused on cutting-edge schooling. If the females of our state are not instructed about this segment of people, they will be clueless. They are the ones who lead to the adolescence of children and fulfill the commitment of educating them (Haider, 2008).

Education is one of the social components whereby sex differences are reflected. The level of female education is very low. As the evaluation level of education increases, the number of female students begins to decrease. Thusly, higher education remains the level of learning where the representation of females is poor, not only as students but also as staff. Lower academic performance and higher constrained withdrawal are characteristics of the very few

women who are qualified to enroll in higher learning institutions. Subsequently, such inequality in higher education portrayal Longley affects their chances to take part in the country's political force sharing, economic advantages, and social portrayals (Mersha et al., 2009).

As per Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26 (1948), "Everybody has the privilege of education. Education will be free at any rate in the simple and fundamental stages. Particular and capable training will be made usually available, and high-level training will also be open to all dependent on merit." But deplorably, young ladies have consistently been unrepresented in education when contrasted with young men. This sexual orientation uniqueness is obvious from the fact that in 2006, just 14 million young ladies had been learning at an essential level when compared with 18.3 million young men (Lloyd *et al.*, 2005). The educational status of many females in Pakistan is alarmingly low. Just 19% of females are proficient up to the metric level, 8% to halfway, 5% to bachelor's, and 1.4% to masters. Consequently, 60% of the adult female populace is ignorant. Thus, out of the 3.3 million (out of school) population, 2.503 million are females (Aly, 2007).

### **Significance of the Study**

The current study is significant for the field of sociology. The discipline of sociology focuses on problems and issue resolution with regard to individuals, groups, and communities. Education is the most effective, cheap, and swift measure for resolving the community's issues. It is based on the local customs and local resources of the community. Therefore, the research is justified. This research is expected to benefit the researchers, teachers, and development workers in the government sector and non-government sector. It will also be beneficial for the government in policy-making for the judiciary and the formal reconciliation system. The research has academic significance and makes a contribution to the field of sociology.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To find out socio-cultural factors that are barriers to females' education.
- To find out the economic factors that are barriers to females' education.
- To find out the religious factors that are barriers to women's education.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

UNICEF (2005) showed that the South Asian nations can't meet the objective of achieving sexual orientation balance in education in 2005, and it appears to be hard for them to accomplish the target of universal primary education before the end of 2015. UNICEF detailed that sexual orientation imbalances are diminishing in essential schooling in barely any South Asian nation. Shockingly, Pakistan is excluded from those nations. The Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (2001–2002) states that Pakistan has appeared in a list where sexual orientation differences are raising, particularly in far-off zones of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (as referred to in Arai and Tabata, 2006, p. 2).

Magaji (2010) saw that despite the fact that education is viewed as a common liberty for the acknowledgment of human dignity, numerous components have been discovered to be responsible for the low admission of females in schools when contrasted with the enrolment of boys. Among these components, as indicated by her, are destitution, sociocultural obstacles,

strict confusion of the Holy Book, cultural negative demeanor toward female education, early marriage, and sex predispositions. These factors, obviously, obstruct the advancement and improvement of women in the public arena.

Khan, Azhar, and Shah (2011) Some examinations center around parental ignorance and think of it as a cause to forestall girls' schooling. A significant social factor, early relationships, is firmly connected with the schooling of young ladies.

Orakzai (2011) contemplated that Pashtun society does not like women's participation in public sectors. The traditional and rigid group of people misinterpret religion, which is in line with the Pashtun way of life. The rigid misconceptions of religious affairs have damaged women's education in the locality, and such areas are under the major influence of inept local priests. The current situation of confused Islamic persuasions is hard to settle with female education in Pakistan. This is very apparent from the reality of assaults on women's education institutions in the northwest of Pakistan.

Benjamin *et al.* (2012) found in their investigations that the socioeconomic factors considered in the examination were: parents' income, education, and occupation. Results show that 74% of the female children clearly concurred that the pay of guardians influences their support in grade school education, though 21.5% concurred. Consequently, aggregately 95.5% of the females are in such an arrangement that surely parental pay is a factor that has influenced them. High parental pay empowers guardians to meet the essential necessities and consistently purchase school uniforms, food, learning materials, and clean towels for their girls. Nonetheless, in public, for example, where the examination was done where the education of men is viewed as more significant than that of females, the necessities of the females may not be considered by their males, thus making them miss or drop out of school. In Kenya, the Free Primary Education that was presented in 2002 just cooks for educational costs and essential learning materials, not garbs, food, and sterile towels, among the different requirements for female children. The sociocultural factors inspected were female genital mutilation, early marriage, and parental mentalities towards female education. The outcomes show the socio-cultural impacts of female child investment in elementary school education in Kenya. 92% of the females decidedly concurred that female genital mutilation (FGM), as a sociocultural factor, has influenced their cooperation in elementary education.

According to Bano (2012), female strict theological colleges began building up in Pakistan during 1970, when General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) had the portfolio of President of Pakistan. The number of young ladies taking on strict theological schools expanded step by step, which demonstrates the way that the foundation of strict theological schools will increase over the long haul. Their confounded lessons influence individuals' mentalities towards female instruction. These impacts can be found in the educational plan instructed at ladies' theological colleges.

Bradley and Saigol (2012) encounter that there have been two schools of thought in Pakistan since the day of independence. One soft corner represents education for girls, and the second takes into consideration religious education to impact them from varying backgrounds. In

any case, religious scholars think of females as an important agency that moves religious lessons starting with one age and then onto the next. The religious scholars don't appear to support present-day schooling for females for the reason that this sort of education penetrates females' brains and draws them towards their current way of life. Thinking about this perception, they began working on expanding the quantity of madrasas, which are additionally called strict theological schools and intended to furnish ordinary training alongside Islamic lessons.

Eweniyi and Usman (2013) examined the fact that several researchers have dealt with the issue of the girls, especially concerning their schooling and different types of separations and sharp practices against them. These examinations have zeroed in on issues of their denied education, the development of their schooling, or segregation in affirmation and enrollment, as well as other sharp practices against them. A large portion of these investigations have been focused on little zones—nearby government, a state, or even a town. Yet, regardless of these measures, authority and financial issues in the nation have not taken into consideration the powerful usage and checking or recognition of the privileges of females.

Sabina and Gerhard (2018) There are diverse sociocultural variables that forestall ladies' schooling in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Educators in the school's pinpoint that the young ladies have not been given consent by the guardians to join schools when contrasted with young men in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, just as in Baluchistan. Distinctive ethnic networks live in these two territories. The nearby traditions are not the equivalent in these regions; in any case, they have a typical custom of keeping ladies to the limit. This notion of repression has been additionally fortified by the presence of a male, closed-minded society. It is tracked down that there are similar circumstances of man-centric qualities in day-to-day life. The examination directed in the space of Dera Ghazi Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shows that all guardians are not slanted towards keeping their little girls clueless and oblivious to cutting-edge considerations. There are a few guardians who need to leave the country regions to instruct their little girls; notwithstanding, destitution doesn't permit them to go to metropolitan regions and bear the cost of schooling. In opposition to this, Purewal and Hashmi (2014) discover more (52%) individuals supporting young men's schooling and less (1.7%) upholding young ladies' schooling. Another gathering of guardians just blessed madrasa (strict theological college) schooling for females.

Zainab *et al.* (2020) found in their investigations that cultural and socio-economic factors were discovered to be the main considerations influencing female schooling. Cultural facts are Cultural practices, for example (early marriage, youngster work, sexual orientation disparity) Religion and fragility 12-13. Considering past studies, young ladies are considerably more likely to exit school and complete fewer long periods of training than their companions who wed later. This influences the education and wellbeing of their kids and their capacity to make money. The researcher added that a few females are permitted to begin school yet will later be removed due to financial or socio-economic factors. Researchers reported that there are approximately double the number of males graduating from school as compared to females. A female youngster apparently belongs to another family due to marriage. A few guardians send the female child into early marriage. Misconceptions of religious belief are used to contradict the right of female

children to get an education. The general slogan is that “women’s education ends in the kitchen.” Sex disparity: females are not given equivalent rights to male youngsters since they are viewed as mediocre compared to them. That is the reason they are overburdened with housework to offer the guys the chance to go to class. Their strict conviction is that females shouldn't be educated by males and should be a cohort of males. There are those against the dressing because of the non-appearance of hijab in uniform construction. Neediness, uninformed guardians, low financial status guardians, and joblessness are the economic factors.

ALI, H. M., and Khan, A. R. (2021) said that the region has been suffering from a chronic low literacy rate among adults and NER among the youth, predominantly girls. Education is among the least developed sectors because it is at the bottom of the state's priority list. Considering education as a key pillar of social progress and development, the main objective of the study, Structural Challenges in Education Equality: Hindering Prosperity in Merged Districts (Erstwhile FATA) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, is to find out major structural challenges impeding the region’s progress. Adopting the methodological approach of content analysis, efforts were made to provide a holistic approach to the issue by studying the females' educational status in all seven merged districts together and carefully analyzing secondary data provided by the government and other entities. It took into account the structural issues, such as structural gender discrimination and supply-side gaps, particularly regarding institutional support in the newly merged districts. The study concluded that thousands of young girls were out of school; for those who were currently enrolled, college and vocational and technical education were a dream. The dropout rate was significantly high because of limited access to schools, particularly after the primary levels. The analyzed data established that there were several structural challenges and factors that barred girls from getting an education. Some of the prominent ones included the unavailability of schools, the scarcity of female teachers, and insufficient schools’ facilities.

Khan *et al.* (2022) analyzed that view at the statistics and argued that there is a shortage of girls’ educational institutions in Waziristan. For instance, as per the data, there are only 18 higher secondary schools, 5 secondary schools, and 1 government degree college for the whole population of South Waziristan. There is not a single girl’s high school in Tehsil Makeen. There are five girls’ secondary schools: 03 exist in Tehsil Wana, 01 exist in Tehsil Ladha, and 01 exist in Tehsil Sarwaikai. There is only one degree college for women that exists in Tehsil Wana, and that is at the disposal of our security forces in Pakistan after the completion of its civil works. This college is being used as a parade ground and compound of the armed forces instead of providing education to the girls of this area. It is worth mentioning here that there is not a single university in the whole FATA region, including South Waziristan. Furthermore, it may be noted that the FATA University was established in 2016, but it is situated at a distance of 37 kilometers from Peshawar, where Peshawar already has 28 public sector universities up until now.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is the structure that can help a theory or research study. The theoretical structure introduces and explains the theory, which explains why the research issue

under study exists." Simone de Beauvoir (1949): In her groundbreaking book "The Second Sex," Simone de Beauvoir examined the concept of "otherness" and the ways in which women have been historically marginalized and oppressed in a male-dominated society. She argued that women's subordination was not a result of their inherent nature but a product of social and cultural construction. Betty Friedan (1963): Betty Friedan's book "The Feminine Mystique" played a significant role in sparking the second wave of feminism. She critiqued the limitations of traditional gender roles and highlighted the frustrations and fulfillment experienced by many women confined to domestic roles. Her work helped raise awareness about gender inequality in various spheres of life.

Patricia Hill Collins (1990): In her influential book "Black Feminist Thought," Patricia Hill Collins introduced the concept of intersectionality, which acknowledges how multiple social identities, such as race, class, and gender, intersect to shape a person's experiences and opportunities. Her work expanded feminist theories to be more inclusive and attentive to the diverse experiences of women. Raewyn Connell (1987) is known for her work on the concept of "hegemonic masculinity." She explored how traditional notions of masculinity can reinforce gender inequality and create harmful expectations for both men and women. Her research contributed to a more nuanced understanding of gender roles and their impact on society. Judith Butler (1990) work on gender performativity challenged the idea of fixed and binary gender roles. In her book "Gender Trouble," she argued that gender is not an inherent quality but is constructed through repeated performances of societal norms. This perspective has been influential in queer theory and feminist discussions on the fluidity of gender identities.

Michael Kimmel (1990s) is a sociologist known for his work on masculinity and gender studies. He has explored the impact of traditional notions of masculinity on men's lives and how these expectations can contribute to gender inequality. Gender Inequality Theory, also known as Gender Stratification Theory, is a sociological perspective that examines the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities between men and women in society. It seeks to understand the social structures and cultural norms that perpetuate gender-based disparities and discrimination. Gender inequality can be a significant factor contributing to low female education in traditional societies. Patriarchal norms and traditions may prioritize male education, resulting in limited opportunities for girls and women to access education. My research that was conducted to examine the causative factor of low female education in the Suleman Khel tribe was also based on gender inequality and covered the area of South Waziristan.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The qualitative research methodology is inherently geared towards capturing information that often eludes numerical quantification. This approach involves a degree of interpretative involvement from the researcher, who synthesizes data gathered through observations or interview responses. The present study adopts a qualitative paradigm, emphasizing a nuanced exploration of the subject matter. In this qualitative investigation, the study design hinges upon semi-structured, in-depth interviews as the primary mode of data collection. Participants were

duly assured of the confidentiality of their personal information. The research unfolds within the context of the Suleman Khel Tribe, situated in District South Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. This district is delineated into three administrative subdivisions: Ladha, Sarwakai, and Wana, each further subdivided into eight tehsils, including Ladha, Makin, Sararogha, Sarwakai, Tiarza, Wana, Barmal, and Toi Khullah. Notably, the study is centered within the subdivision of Wana, which comprises three tehsils: Wana, Barmal, and Toi Khullah. Toi Khullah Tehsil specifically serves as the focal point of inquiry, chosen purposefully to delve into the intricacies of the research topic.

Employing a qualitative lens, the research methodology leverages subjective tools for data collection and analysis. Purposive sampling is employed as the sampling technique, with 15 respondents selected from the villages of Gull Koch and Zarmalan within the South Waziristan district for interview participation. Each of the 15 respondents undergoes interview sessions, and their responses are meticulously recorded within the study framework. Subsequently, the collected data undergoes analysis utilizing the descriptive approach of thematic analysis, whereby themes emerge organically from the rich tapestry of responses gathered during the interviews.

#### **4.0 Results**

**Theme I: Respondents support female education.** It was found that a significant majority of respondents were in favor of women's education. They support their stance by arguing that education will enable women to work for the development of their land, countries, and societies; they may also become literate and aware of the world because education is light, necessary for building a good nation, and beneficial to the individual woman herself, her family, community, and country. Through education, she will be a good daughter, sister, wife, and mother. Islam also stresses the education of everybody, because education is known for the local development of women. She could help women in every field, and they have no problem in their lives. Female education is the need of the day; their education plays an important role in the care of their children. Life and female education play an important role in the medical field because they can very well know about female diseases, especially in surgery, which is very important for the progress of every society. Women are also an important part of society because education is a tool that can change the fate of every individual, and females are also very important. Females should be given education because they have the right to it.

**Theme II: Culture Supportiveness in Female Education** The respondent shared that family education in their primitive customs was low. Hence, contemporary culture is comparatively supportive of female education. Culture is supportive of female education because society wants the new generation to try to finish the ignorance in their families. While some communities prefer uneducated women over educated women, A significant number of our elders are value-preserving in their approach and are reluctant to enroll their daughters in school.

**Theme III: Cultural Practices Prevail in Your Area in Relation to Females, e.g., Honor Issue, Families Related, Gharat, Strict Purdah Hampering Families Lawful Mobility.**



The respondent shared that women cannot get education because of their respective cultural traditions in Gull Kuch. Some cultural methods are also due to respect for women in the area due to a strict purdah. Such issues are prevailing in culture. There are lots of such old-age customs that are still followed by true spirits. Yes, probably it is stricter than any other society to follow these cultural practices.

**Theme IV: Female education was not prevailing traditionally in your community.**

The respondent shared that they think that female education is not prevailing in their community because men and women pay little attention to education. The respondent disagrees with the statements.

**Theme V: Reasons Your Ancestors Shared for Not Educating Females**

The respondent stated that poverty and illiteracy were the result of their grandparents' lack of literacy. There is no reason; education was common because of poverty, cultural restrictions, unawareness, modesty, and honor. In our area, male and female education is low. Social taboos, honor, and Gharat were such issues of low education. They think that their females will suffer badly from education. They are very conservative in their approach, and female education spoils them.

**Theme VI: Women Who Deviated Social Norms, e.g., Attempted for Education, Were Discussed at Public Places, Some One's Women Discussion at Some Public Places Was Considered Bad.**

The respondent shared that they disagreed with the statement they considered bad because people are not becoming educated or low educated. Yes, of course, it is a very bad habit for society people to discuss the female deviating social norms and public places. It is not a bad habit of deviation because they want to get an education. This is a hard reality, but slowly, this trend is dying down day by day. It has become social taboo to be a female university student. It is bad to discuss women in public places. Parents don't educate the girls. It is not a good sign; education is obligatory for both males and females. So, it should be appreciated rather than considered bad.

**Theme VII: Women's Leaving Parents Home After Their Marriage and Started Living at Husband's Home is a Determinant Factor for Their Education.**

The respondents shared that it is not true that male and female education is very low. It was not thought that time was not a matter of education. The respondents disagree with the statement. In their community, one's wife is married, so they do not remain economically dependent. Now that they (women) depend on the husband's home, women's leaving their parents' home after marriage and starting to live at their husband's home is a determinant factor for their education.

**Theme VIII: Education significance has got global recognition, especially female education; social and cultural changes shall be made in order to educate females.**

The respondent shared that education is also necessary for their women so that their women are educated too. It is important for women to educate girls. Women can also serve the country and the nation. Education is very important, especially for females. It is also very

important because some scholarships, especially for brilliant students, should be given by the government.

**Theme IX: To give a recommendation to remove socio-cultural hinderances in female education among the Suleman Khel Tribe of Gull Kuch District, South Waziristan Agency.**

The respondents shared that they think that they should have more than one school and an educated female teacher. Education is a fundamental right. We will focus on both male and female education. Our area has more schools, more female teachers, and more parents. Give more awareness to the parents. I recommend that the educated person open a private female school in our area and start a campaign in our area about female education. When some women get an education and are married, someone will invest in their education because they will make good doctors for any good job. Girls' schools and colleges will be set up in Suleman khel aria, i.e., in Gul Kuch, Zarmalan, and Khankot. A campaign should be launched regarding women's education, and the benefits of female education may be highlighted. Some educated families of Suleman Khel tribes are residing in D.I. Khan and Punjab; their females may be appointed as female teachers in their hometown so that it may be easy to get more and more girls to education. Our society has completely changed. It plays a very important role, especially in the promotion of women's rights in society. Due to an educated society, women get respect everywhere. Female education plays a vital role in the lives of their children. The conservative thinking of keeping women illiterate reduces day by day. Some voices are being raised for women; separate classes must be arranged for women; they must come forward to bring the people to light. The participation of the female segment of our society and the social taboos that education will spoil for women must be changed. The women should be empowered for the welfare of society. It is very difficult to catch up with advanced societies unless we restore women's education. "Education" is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world.

**Theme X: Educated, women can seek their property or inheritance share. Due to this reason, they are not educated.**

The respondents shared that they had the right to do according to tradition. Women can seek a high property or inheritance share, but due to this, they are not educated. The respondents disagree with the statement. Uneducated parents can share property among male and female children. It's not the main reason for a girl's education. There are many other reasons, such as that her parents want to keep her in home activities.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Education is a fundamental right for everyone, whether male or female. Educational opportunities should be equal for both genders. The major reason for females' low education is that there is a shortage of schools in that area. Most parents are uneducated and have not much awareness regarding women's education because they do not know about the importance of education. Tribal families mostly follow the traditions of their culture; they also strictly peruse the Purdah system and seldom allow their ladies to go outside. The extended and joint family system is the main reason for not getting female education. Elderly members or the head of the

family have been close to their kids since childhood and never show interest in sending their daughters to school due to family or cultural traditions; they think that a daughter's marriage is more important than getting an education. Another factor is that the majority of the males in traditional families think that when their females are educated, they feel power threats from their egos. Also, they keep in mind the right of heritance. When a girl is educated, she will know about all the rights she has from her family as well as her husband. Poverty is one of the other major reasons for the low rate of women's education in the Suleman Khel Tribe. Parents have a number of kids; they provide them with basic needs, and it is very difficult for a single breadwinner family member to afford the huge expenses of every child's education.

### **Recommendations**

- Education is the fundamental right of every human being, including females, so we must pay attention to it and try to improve the status of females' participation in education and their academic statuses and empower them with the basic rights.
- An educated lady can teach their kids good manners and then become a reason for a successful family.
- Distribute higher capital interest on women's education in tribal areas where parents have no money to pay their daughters at school.
- Rejuvenate existing stages for women's interest in education.
- Make the young girls amicable and safe in their schools.

**Muhammad Ayub:** Problem Identification and Model Devolvement,

**Sonia:** Supervision and Drafting

**Saif Ullah:** Literature search, Methodology,

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The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest in this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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