

SOCIAL ISSUES IN MALAYSIA MUSLIM WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

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**SOCIAL ISSUES IN MALAYSIA:
MUSLIM WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES
(Work, Law, Politics And Education)**

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The Cost of Being Female: Estimation of Earnings Function by Family Background in Peninsular Malaysia

Latifah Mohd Nor

1 Introduction

Girls' education is one of the most effective development investments a country can make. When a country educates its girls, it raises the human capital and economic productivity, improves the health, well-being and educational prospects of the next generation, and reduces poverty.

In Islam, to acquire knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim, male and female (Reported by Ibn Majah). The Holy Prophet made it a point of duty for every father and mother to ensure that their children, both sons and daughters, obtain education. In particular, daughters should not be left out in acquiring knowledge because they would, after their marriage, play important roles as educators to their children. Research by Patrinos (1995) and Armitage and Sabot (1987) suggest that present or personal human productivities that an individual acquired at the point of entry in the job market are dependent on the characteristics of one's childhood family. In other words, family background and parents' education play an important role in determining the educational attainment and productivity characteristics of young men and women, which consequently have a positive impact on earnings.

In this paper, the relationship between gender educational attainment and earnings, and family background, is examined using the Malaysian Family Life Survey 1988 data. The purpose