



# Role of Education in Women's Relational Empowerment at School Level in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: A Quantitative Study

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**Abstract:** Education is essential to women's empowerment that helps in their progress in the society. In the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, this study examines how education moves women empowerment at the school level. The objective was to find out education contributes to women's relational empowerment at the school level in the study area is the key aim of the research. In a similar vein, the study purposes to determine how school instructors contribute to the relational empowerment of women in the research region. The study was quantitative in nature, and 360 female school teachers from the four districts of Bajawar, Kurram, Khyber, and Mohmmad Newly Merged Districts (NMD) were chosen using the Krejcie & Morgan, sample size determination table. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to examine the data that was taken from 360 primary, middle, and high school teachers using structured questionnaires. Tables and frequencies were used to display the investigated data. The examined data demonstrated that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's recently merged districts, education can actually promote women's relational empowerment. Results showed that higher educational attainment significantly predicts all six relational empowerment indicators after controlling for age, experience, and school type. Implications for policy and educational practice in post-conflict and culturally diverse settings are discussed.

**Key Words:** Women Relational Empowerment, School Teachers, School Level, Education, Pakistan

## Background/Introduction

Global development frameworks and national education policies have acknowledged women's empowerment is important goal. In general, empowerment states to a person's capability to get resources, make choices, and have an effect on the structural settings that impact their lives. Relational empowerment, under this more general framework, emphasizes on the degree and caliber of social connections, networks, communication, and public support that women cultivate within their social environments. The skill of women to engage in significant social interactions, communicate and negotiate social norms, skill information, participate in public spaces, manage multicultural situations, and influence collective discourse such as discussions about community health care are all included in the concept of relational empowerment. Many individuals believe that education is both a human right and a driving force behind empowerment. Women's self-sufficiency, mobility, financial engagement, and decision-making authority are all significantly correlated with educational attainment, according to empirical data from Pakistan and other low- and middle-income nations (Waseem & Khalid, 2025). Relational aspects of empowerment, such as social networking, public involvement, and communication about standards, have received less stress. These geographies are especially important for women working in schools, where their professional activities may overlap with community influence.

Social structures and cultural diversity offer special occasions and challenges for women teachers to use education as a platform for relational empowerment in Pakistan's lately merged districts, which were initially a part of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In Pakistan's mainstream provinces, women's education and empowerment enterprises have enhanced, but sociocultural barriers comprising as patriarchal traditions, restricted mobility, and limited involvement in

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public life continue to be obstacles (Abbas et al., 2021). In order to develop involvements that improve learning environments and gender equity in these historically marginalized areas, it is essential to comprehend how education especially adds to relational empowerment among women teachers in the Newly Merged Districts.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- I. To determine how education contributes to women's relational empowerment in the study region at the school level

### **Research Questions**

- I. What is the contribution of education in relational women empowerment?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Education and Women's Empowerment**

One of the best methods of women's empowerment, such as executive authority and participation in household choices, was formal education, according to a nationwide survey study led in Pakistan. Enhanced autonomy, economic participation, and public engagement are just a few of the multifaceted empowerment benefits for women that have been associated with education (Abbas et al., 2021). Educational achievement is also connected to augmented promptness, and financial involvement. It is emphasized that education does not persistence in a vacuum; physical complications and socio-cultural norms regularly mitigate its special effects. For example, the restoration of education into empowerment consequences may be vulnerable by urban-rural differences and deeply deep-rooted femininity (Waseem and Khalid, 2025).

#### **Education Increased Social Contact**

Educational settings logically help social linkages and interactions beyond familial situations. Strengthening social communication is a vital pre-requisite for enabling because it increases contact to assets, maintenance, and cooperative society. Teachers with higher qualified are more likely to contribute in skilled settings, cooperate with parents and public participants, and form greater social circles. Several empowerment prototypes highpoint social interacting as a central interpersonal essential, notwithstanding the scarcity of experimental study exactly estimating social communication as an empowerment result in Pakistan. Through a diversity of contacts in classrooms, peer groups, and cooperative activities, education extends people's social networks. According to research, education increases civic engagement and social capital, allowing students to form relationships outside of their immediate family and take an active part in community life (Contreras et al., 2025). Stronger social promises and mutual support are facilitated by these enlarged networks through information involvement, cooperative learning, and community involvement. Furthermore, research on interschool networks demonstrates how educational leaders create relationships that strengthen social communication and shared learning for the benefit of both students and societies (Brown et al., 2024).

#### **Education enables in Communication about Norms**

The ability to express thoughts, question preventive behaviours, and exchange expectations among groups are all necessary for social norm communication. Language, critical thinking, and confidence are all enhanced by education and are necessary for successful normative communication. Research shows that educated women are more inclined to challenge prejudiced practices and speak up in community discussions, albeit these actions are frequently influenced by local cultural norms. According to recent research, education strengthens critical attentiveness and expressive capacity, which helps people especially women communicate effectively about social and gender norms. Hossain and Islam (2024) stated that education exposes students to human rights, egalitarian principles, and civic duties, which gives them the confidence to challenge and discuss restricted cultural practices. Furthermore, educated women are more likely to participate in conversations about norms in their homes and communities, which promotes social change and

empowerment over time. Discussions about social standards and group values are further encouraged by classroom interactions and sharing learning (Unterhalter et al., 2022).

### **Education Helps in Exchange of Information**

Higher educated instructors are more likely to serve as information brokers in community forums and informal networks in addition to school systems. Active involvement in the spreading of beneficial knowledge, whether on health, rights, education, or civic issues, is referred to as information exchange. Schools are frequently centres for the dissemination of information. By increasing mastery, communication skills, and entrance to awareness webs, education boosts data involvement. Public can successfully share concepts and skills in educational situations as they raise interaction, conversation, and collective learning (UNESCO, 2023). Research stated that, educated women aggressively share information about community, health, and educational tasks with their families and communities, raising wakefulness as a whole (World Bank, 2024). Additionally, education promotes digital literacy by increasing the sharing of knowledge via online platforms, especially in conditions where mobility is limited. In general, education promotes social learning and empowerment by strengthening the stream of information (Fan & Beh, 2024).

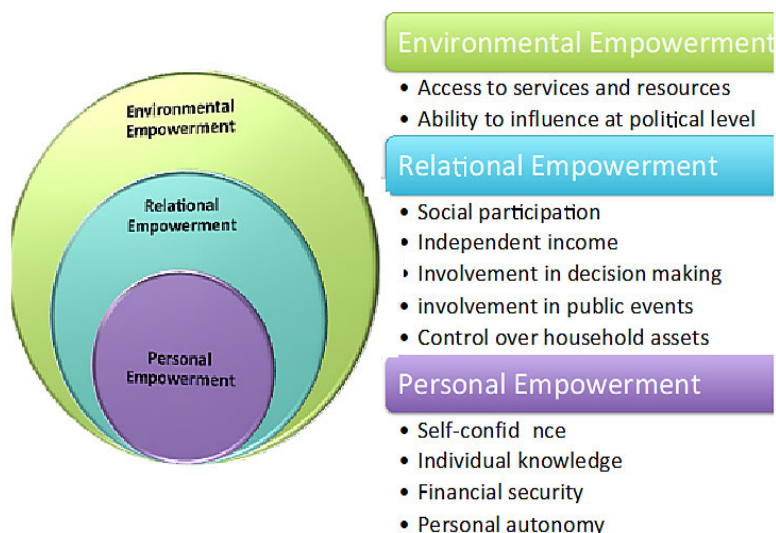
### **Education Assist in Public Participation**

Research indicates that education increases women's community engagement worldwide, yet problems including institutional exclusion and societal constraints might limit prospects for full contribution. A key result of empowerment is public participation, which reflects women's participation in civic life, debates, and community-affecting decisions. People, particularly women, can participate in public life, including local governance and community forums, thanks to education, which improves civic knowledge, self-confidence, and contribution (Kakar et al., 2025). Additionally, civic education increases knowledge and capabilities for public decision-making and political involvement (Wijaya & Amalia, 2024).

### **Education Supports in Cultural Blending and Public Debates on Health**

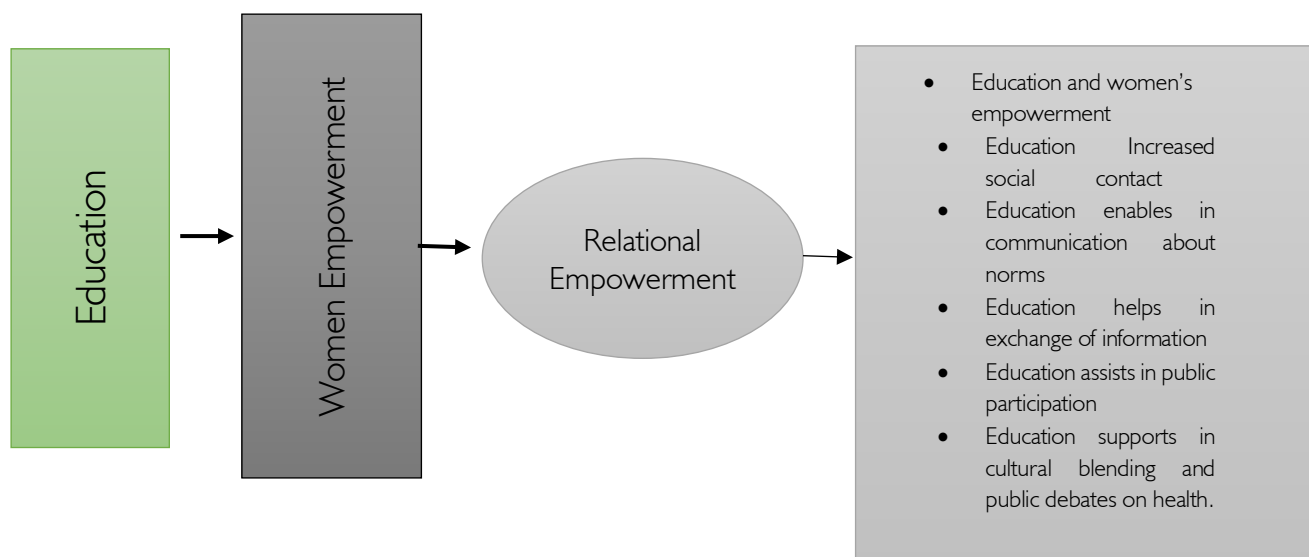
Education can help comprehensive discussions and improve cultural competency. Due to the cultural diversity of Pakistan's recently merged districts, women must negotiate a variety of cultural settlements. Public negotiations about health care, mostly those pertaining to women, such as caring services and reproductive health, require not only knowledge but also public speaking confidence, which is frequently established by educational experiences. By exposing students to a variety of viewpoints and encouraging intercultural understanding in learning environments, education promotes cultural mixing (Futaba, 2016). Additionally, it smooths public health discussions by providing people with the information and communication abilities needed to address health concerns in cultural settings. Education promotes cultural competence, which improves cross-cultural health communication and fosters more inclusive public health discussions (Pohan, 2024).

Figure 1



Conceptual Model

Figure 2



## Methodology

### Research Design

This was quantitative cross-sectional study. In order to probe the association between educational achievement and relational women empowerment indicators among female school teachers in the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### Population and Sample

Female educators employed in elementary, middle, and high schools in five recently merged districts made up the target demographic. To guarantee coverage across geographical regions and school levels, a random sampling technique was employed. There were 360 responders in the final sample.

### Instrument Development

A structured questionnaire was developed based on existing empowerment scales and adapted to the relational dimensions of interest. The survey included: All question items used 5-points Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

## Data Collection

Information were together in person by trained research assistants between March and June 2024. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant university ethics committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants.

## Data Analysis

**Table 1**

*Description of the participants*

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
PST	180	50%
MST	92	25.83%
HST	88	24.17%

Source: Author, 2025

In the above table designation of the responders is displayed. Regarding this, 25.83% of teachers were middle, 24.17% were high, and 50% of respondents were primary school teachers respectively.

**Table 2**

*District of the Participants*

V	Frequency	Percentage
Khyber	90	25%
Mohmand	90	25%
Bajor	90	25%
Kuram	90	25%
	360	100%

Source: Author, 2025

Data were scrutinized by means of **SPSS**. Descriptive statistics were calculated to illustrate the sample.

**Table 3**

*Role of Education in Women Relational Empowerment*

Teachers declaration	Frequencies & Percentages					Total
	SD	D	UD	A	SA	
Education and women's empowerment	58 16.1%	63 17.5%	52 14.4%	72 20%	115 31.9%	360 100%
Education Increased social contact	86 23.9%	76 21.1%	68 18.9%	59 16.4%	71 19.7%	360 100%
Education enables in communication about norms	99 27.5%	47 13.1%	67 18.6%	51 14.2%	96 26.7%	360 100%
Education helps in exchange of information	53 14.7%	101 28.1%	90 25.0%	39 10.8%	77 21.4%	360 100%
Education assist in public participation	27 7.5%	61 16.9%	55 15.3%	98 27.2%	119 33.1%	360 100%
Education supports in cultural blending and public debates on health.	41 11.4%	62 17.2%	57 15.8%	80 22.2%	119 33.1%	360 100%

The above table demonstrates that 16.1% of respondents chose strongly disagree, 17.5% of the participants indicated disagreement, 14.4% of applicants chosen of undecided decision, 20% of the respondents agreed and 31.9% of the applicants strongly agreed that education helps in women's empowerment. It was determined, that education empowers individuals in society to increase their social contact (Waseem & Khalid, 2025; Abbas et al., 2021)

Education increased social contact was asked this statement from teachers. The responses showed that 23.9% of educators favor strongly disagree, 21.1% of the teachers disagreed and a lot number of instructors, 18.9% of teachers chosen undecided, 16.4% of respondents preferred the choice agree and 19.7% of teachers favored strongly agree i.e. The result depicts, that education is a source of communication about the norms of society. The investigated data is supported by Contreras et al. (2025) and Brown et al. (2024).

Education enables in communication about norms was asked by the instructors. In this strain, 27.5% of teachers favored strongly disagree, 13.1% of the tutors disagreed, 18.6% of favored undecided, 14.2% of instructors chosen the decision agree and 26.75% of instructors strongly agreed. Result shows that education has a contributory role in communication of the women in study area, due to cultural sensitivity is parallel to studies (Hossain & Islam, 2024; Unterhalter et al., 2022).

Education aids in exchange of information. In this setting, 14.7% instructors selected strongly disagree, 28.1% disagreed, 25% undecided, 10.8% agreed and 21.4% of the study teachers strongly agreed. It is decided that education helps in operational exchange of evidence in newly merged districts (Fan & Beh, 2024).

Education assist in public participation in this regards, 7.5% teachers elected in support of disagree, 16.9% disagreed, 15.3% could not decide as they were confused, 27.2% agreed with the declaration and, 33.1% of study applicants responded in service of strongly agree, , and. It is concluded from the above data that education increases the ability to participate in community. Participation, and social involvement of female teachers, can bring change in women personal and social empowerment (Kakar et al., 2023; Wijaya & Amalia, 2024).

Education ropes in cultural blending and public debates on health. 11.4% teachers strongly disagreed, 17.2% disagreed, 15.8% were confused, while 22.2% elected in service of agreeing with the declaration and 33.1% of the study respondent strongly agreed. From result it is concluded that academic qualification prepares individuals, about other cultures of society. In this regard, Nieto (2008) shared that educated individual learns more and more about the proper cultural values, behavior and norms because of education, a person can adjust in any culture of the community (Pohan, 2024).

## Results Discussion

### Education and Women Empowerment

The study showed education has a transformative force in women's empowerment, particularly in socially and culturally conservative contexts such as the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Education arises not only as a means of attaining knowledge but also as a catalyst for improving women's assistance, autonomy, and participation in both private and public spheres. The outcomes demonstrate that educated women are more self-confident, capable of decisions taking, and responsive of their rights. Theories of empowerment that opinion education as a dynamic tool that empowers women to question femininity norms and re-balance power diminuendos in homes and cultures. Women can swift their opinions, take part in meeting and public activities, and engage in negotiation by developing critical thinking and communication skills through education. These concerns are important in circumstances where women's voices have habitually been under-represented.

### Education Increased Social Contact

The results show that women's social interaction is increased by their level of learning. According to empowerment models, that stress social capital as a dynamic means in women's life-sphere, women with high qualification stated having high professional and societal linkages. This consequence is parallel with extensive research that links education to greater links and participation in community lifespan.

### Education Enables in Communication about Norms

Greater confidence, good communication skills, and frequency in discussion of the societal norms were significantly related with high educational ranks. This infers that education can bring change in critical thinking as conversational agency, allowing her to contribute in negotiations that question constrictive customs and settlements.

### **Education Helps in Exchange of Information**

Women with high academic qualification, reported distribution health, rights, and community-focused evidence more often. The strong relation between education and information exchange shows the role of schools and educated women as information places.

### **Education Assist in Public Participation**

Relational empowerment consequence that education predicted was public participation. This may be due to learning's impact on social skills, self-assurance, and community rightfulness, which empowers women to participate actively in parent associations, school agencies, and local progress settings.

### **Education supports in cultural blending on health**

In culturally diverse environments like the NMDs, where many norms collide, education also predicted women's ability to convey cultural variety and take part in public discussions on health care concerns. Educated women achieved better on tests of cultural blending and participation in health debates, signifying that education promotes both agency and tolerance.

### **Conclusion**

This study reveals that in the recently merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, education is essential to women's relational empowerment at the school level. When there is increase in social communication, successful norm communication, fruitful evidence sharing, public involvement, enriched cultural socializing, and take part in health care were also co-related with high education.

### **Implications**

Significant concerns for women empowerment strategies and educational-policy in post-conflict zones. Increasing girls' academic qualification and professional training create chances for female teacher can to increase relational empowerment and result in more extensive societal changetoo. In addition to educational and structural limitations including gender norms and a lack of institutional maintenance must be talked.



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