



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Empowering Voices: Education's Role in Bridging Women's Domestic and Public Decision-Making Divide in Malakand Division, Pakistan

Umar Daraz

Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; email: dr.umar@uom.edu.pk

Farman Ali

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; email: aaleefarman@gmail.com

Muhammad Ashfaq Khan

Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; email: ashfaqkhalil@uom.edu.pk

Jahan-Ul-Mulk

Lecturer, Sociology, Riphah International, College Swat, Campus, Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; email: jahansocial@gmail.com

Zakir Hussain (Corresponding Author)

Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; email: zakir.hussain@uom.edu.pk

Abstract

Education plays a pivotal role in empowering women and fostering their development, acting as a catalyst for autonomy and self-sufficiency in decision-making across domestic and public spheres. Our study delves into the transformative impact of education on women's decisional empowerment, unraveling its essence within family and public settings. Conducted in the vibrant region of Malakand Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, where women's education has witnessed remarkable progress in recent years, the research sheds light on how education empowers women, leading to enhanced empowerment in various aspects of their lives. A sample of 384 participants was selected using stratified random sampling (proportionate method), and a questionnaire was employed as the primary tool for data collection. Employing a pure quantitative approach, the data was analyzed using SPSS (version 20). The findings strongly affirm that education stands as a powerful tool in fostering women's empowerment, significantly influencing their decision-making processes within both the home and the public domain.

Keywords: Education, Women Empowerment, Domestic Spheres, Public Domain.

Introduction

Education serves as a powerful tool for empowering women, enabling them to unlock their full potential, experience fulfillment, and achieve personal



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

satisfaction. Educated mothers play a crucial role in fostering the educational growth of their offspring, a task that fathers may find more challenging (Kim & Jung, 2023; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2023). Throughout history, education has been intrinsically linked to women's empowerment, as exemplified by the famous Indian maxim: "Give women what is women's and men what is men's, and you will create a community destined for progress. Educating a man benefits an individual, but educating a woman empowers an entire family and, by extension, the nation."

The necessity of women's education extends beyond personal gains, impacting the socio-economic status and overall development of a nation. Research by Reshi and Sudha (2023b) highlights that educated women tend to possess a deeper understanding of human rights, respect for differing opinions, and a commitment to societal norms. Moreover, they actively engage in conflict resolution, promoting peace and harmony within society. Educated women prove more adept at coping with crises and stressful family situations, which can alleviate mental tension for male members (Daraz et al.; Reshi et al., 2022). Furthermore, the work of Sudha and Reshi (2023) emphasizes that education fosters essential traits such as dependability, judgment, motivation, effort, trust, perseverance, and confidence in women, enhancing their decision-making abilities. With increased effort and problem-solving skills, educated women play pivotal roles in family decisions (Braverman-Bronstein et al., 2023; Daraz, Khan, et al., 2024). The impact of education on women's empowerment extends to both public and domestic spheres, wherein educated women can contribute significantly more than their uneducated counterparts. Notably, education enhances women's power and negotiation abilities within the household, affording them the freedom to make choices from the available options (Nguyen-Phung & Nthenya, 2023). By increasing decision-making power concerning children's socialization, health, and other critical aspects, education empowers women economically and politically. As a result, the power dynamics within families shift, reducing male dominance and fostering a more egalitarian society (Aboagye et al., 2023; Daraz et al., 2021; Jaysawal & Saha, 2023).

Education also plays a pivotal role in shaping the relationships and decision-making processes within marriages. As supported by Ejaz and Farooq (2019), educated women tend to under-report their decision-making power within households. In couples where both partners are educated, and the wife is employed, both individuals are significantly more likely to participate in the final decision-making process compared to couples with lower educational status or where the wife does not work for pay (Lu, 2023). The unequal distribution of decision-making power based on educational status relegates women to an inferior position in society, a notion that deserves correction (Daraz & Hussain, 2024; Rafiee, 2023).

Education empowers women to make decisions regarding their children's education, the selection of family members' life partners, and even their own well-being. Educated women can make informed choices about their health, employment, and political participation, making them more independent and autonomous within the family and society, leading to an elevated status (Daraz, Mulk, et al., 2024).

It has been concluded from the above discussion that education empowers



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

women, unlocking their potential and bringing fulfillment. Educated mothers play a vital role in their children's education. It has a profound impact on society, promoting peace and harmony. Educated women gain decision-making abilities and contribute more in both domestic and public spheres, leading to a more egalitarian society. Education also influences marriage dynamics, with educated women having more say in decision-making. Overall, education enables women to make informed choices, leading to greater independence and elevated status in society.

The Argument

In ancient times, women had restricted rights and influence in family decisions. Nevertheless, as time has progressed and education has become more widespread, women have risen to become essential decision-makers within the family (Sudha & Reshi, 2023; Sultana, 2011). In Pakistan, women's education has gained significant momentum in recent decades, leading to a transformation in their status both within the family and in the public sphere (Sudha & Reshi, 2023; Ullah et al., 2023). Education has empowered women to actively participate in decision-making processes, be knowledgeable about property rights, and assert their autonomy in mate selection. They now engage in fruitful negotiations with their husbands, fathers-in-law, and mothers-in-law. Educated women have also embraced the responsibility of educating and socializing their children, striving for a brighter future for them. They recognize that their own well-being directly impacts the overall well-being of their children, treating daughters and sons equally (Reshi et al., 2022; Sundaram et al., 2014).

The confidence, knowledge, and communication skills gained through education enable women to articulate their perspectives effectively and diplomatically, further strengthening their decision-making abilities (Engida, 2021). Educated women are sought after for advice and consultation on various household and community matters, enhancing their autonomy and independence (Nguyen-Phung, 2023; Ullah et al., 2024). The intergenerational effects of education are crucial for sustaining gains in women's empowerment. Educated women play a pivotal role in influencing the education of future generations, leading to improved family well-being and decision-making power, as well as economic autonomy (Billah, 2023; Daraz, Khan, et al., 2023).

The remarkable strides made in education within Pakistan, especially in Malakand Division, have had a profound impact on women's decision-making abilities across multiple spheres of life. From matters of mate selection and property rights to economic decisions, political participation, and health choices, education has played a crucial role in empowering women. In this paper, we delve into the transformative effects of education on women's decisional empowerment in the region, shining a light on the positive changes in their status within their families.

In conclusion, education has been a catalyst for empowering women in decision-making processes, leading to a more equitable and progressive society. As education continues to advance, its positive influence on women's roles within the family and society is likely to grow, fostering a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

Aim of the Study



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

This study aims to investigate how education empowers women in the decision-making processes within both the domestic and public spheres of life in Malakand Division, Pakistan. It seeks to understand the multifaceted impact of education on women's active involvement in partner selection, property rights assertion, inclusive child education, communication, autonomy, health awareness, and family planning at the domestic level. Simultaneously, it examines its influence on economic, political, and community engagement, conflict resolution, and societal progress at the public level.

Methodology

This research activity comprised of the following methodology:

Research Design: This study employs a powerful and efficient quantitative cross-sectional design, complemented by the survey method. By focusing on educated respondents, the survey questionnaire becomes the ideal tool to capture valuable insights. This approach allows us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of education on women's decision-making and empowerment in the captivating context of the Malakand Division, Pakistan. This methodology aligns with established research (Daraz, Hussain, et al., 2024; Longwe, 1998; Varghese, 2011) showcasing the effectiveness of quantitative cross-sectional designs and surveys in studying education's impact on women's decision-making empowerment.

Universe and Target Population: *Derived from a PhD thesis conducted in 2016 in Malakand Division, titled "Changing Status of Women's Education and its Impact on Women's Empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan," this study explores the impact of women's education on empowerment in 2023. Recognizing variations and changes over time, this research focuses on women holding MPhil degrees, employed at educational institutions within Malakand Division. The division comprises nine districts: Bajaur, Buner, Central Dir, Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral, Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Malakand, Shangla, and Swat. This study builds upon previous research (Daraz, Nawab, et al., 2023; Jan et al., 2018) which analyzed the evolving impact of women's education on empowerment in Malakand Division, emphasizing MPhil degree holders employed in educational institutions, thus contributing to a longitudinal perspective.*

Sampling Procedures

The target population for this study comprises women with MPhil degrees who are employed in educational institutions across the heterogeneous Malakand Division, which consists of 9 districts. To ensure representative samples from each district, the researchers employed a stratified random sampling technique, justifying its use due to the diverse nature of the population. The entire population was divided into 9 distinct strata, each representing one district. The sample size for each district was determined proportionately based on the Lawrence Neumann method. By using stratified random sampling, the researchers ensured that each district's unique characteristics and variations were adequately represented in the sample. This approach allowed for a more



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

comprehensive understanding of how education impacts women's decision-making empowerment in different regions of Malakand Division. The total sample size for the study was determined through this sampling technique, providing a logical and precise framework for data collection and analysis. This method aligns with established research practices (Johnson et al., 2019) utilizing stratified random sampling to ensure comprehensive representation across diverse districts. It contributes to a holistic understanding of education's impact on women's empowerment. To calculate the sample size using stratified random sampling with the proportionate method for the target population of 11,315, we need to use the following formula for each stratum (district):

$$n_i = N_i/N * n$$

Where:

n_i is the sample size for each stratum (district).

N_i is the population size of each stratum (district).

N is the total target population size.

n is the desired total sample size

Table 1: Sample Frame

S/N	Districts	Target Population	Sample Size	Method
1	District Malakand	2344	79	Stratified Random Sampling Proportionate Method
2	District Lower Dir	2142	73	
3	District Upper Dir	1232	42	
4	District Bajaur	544	18	
5	District Bunir	876	30	
6	District Swat	3677	125	
7	District Shangla	233	08	
8	District Upper Chitral	144	05	
9	District Lower Chitral	123	04	
Total		11315	384	

Tool of data Collection

In this study, the total sample size is 384, comprising highly educated respondents with MPhil degrees working in various educational institutions. To collect data from these respondents in a quantitative manner, the researchers employed a well-structured questionnaire with the application of the Likert Scale. The questionnaire was designed to record the responses of the participants, allowing for a systematic and standardized approach to gather valuable insights. Through the Likert Scale, respondents could express their opinions and perceptions on various aspects related to women's decision-making empowerment, education, and societal roles. To ensure accurate identification of respondents, the survey was administered using educational and employment records obtained from the Concern Quarter in the Malakand Division. This



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

approach guaranteed that the sample represented the target population of highly educated women with MPhil degrees working in the educational sector. By using a combination of a robust questionnaire and the Likert Scale, this study offers a comprehensive and quantifiable means of exploring the relationship between education and women's decision-making empowerment. The methodological approach employed here not only provides reliable data but also contributes to the overall validity and credibility of the research findings. Through this research design, the study aims to present valuable insights that can contribute to the understanding of the transformative role of education in empowering women within the Malakand Division, fostering a more equitable and progressive society. This methodology aligns with established research practices (Akhter & Naheed, 2014; Bushra & Wajiha, 2015) utilizing Likert Scale-based questionnaires to quantitatively study the relationship between education and women's decision-making empowerment among highly educated respondents in educational institutions. It enhances data reliability and overall research validity.

Ensure Reliability and Validity of the Tool using SPSS

The questionnaire with the Likert Scale was used to collect data from 384 highly educated respondents in SPSS. Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha (>0.70). Validity was assessed through factor analysis and CFA, showing good fit. Convergent and discriminant validity were verified. The tool's statistical analyses ensured accurate and consistent data for the study. This methodology aligns with established research standards (Hair et al., 2019) that utilize SPSS for questionnaire-based data collection, demonstrating reliability through Cronbach's alpha and confirming validity through factor analysis and CFA, thus ensuring data accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

The study is limited to women participants, and to ensure their involvement and comfort, a team of educated women was used to locate respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured to protect participants' privacy and identities. Additionally, informed consent was obtained, indicating that participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and procedures. While these ethical considerations are essential, researchers should also address other aspects such as data security, risk minimization, and obtaining institutional review board approval to uphold ethical standards in the study.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS, employing a combination of statistical techniques including the chi-square test and correlation analysis to explore the associations and relationships between education and women's empowerment in decision-making within both the domestic and public spheres in Malakand Division, Pakistan. Additionally, regression analysis was utilized to assess the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable, facilitating evidence-based conclusions and inferences from the data. This method aligns with established research practices (KHAN, 2010), ensuring a rigorous and comprehensive examination of the data to provide valuable insights for the study.



Limitations and Overcoming of the Limitations

One limitation of the above methodology is the potential for selection bias in using a team of educated women to locate respondents. This approach may inadvertently exclude certain groups of women who might not be easily accessible or may not have connections with the team members. This could result in a less diverse sample, limiting the generalizability of the study's findings to a broader population of women.

To address this limitation, future research could consider employing a more diverse and inclusive recruitment strategy. This might involve collaborating with a broader range of community organizations, educational institutions, or using random sampling methods to ensure a more representative sample of women. Additionally, researchers should be mindful of the potential biases introduced by their recruitment approach and make efforts to mitigate these biases in data analysis and interpretation.

Results

Table-2 presents a cross-tabulation of education and women's decision empowerment at the domestic level. The table indicates that education significantly influences women's empowerment across various aspects, such as partner selection, property rights, child education, family discussions, autonomy, awareness of rights, health, financial literacy, and gender awareness, as evidenced by very low p-values (all 0.000).

Table 2: Cross Tabulation of Education and Women Decision Empowerment at Domestic Level

Themes/Indicators	Yes	No	χ^2	P-Value	Total
Educated women engage actively in selecting and negotiating partners	381	03	373.45	0.000	384
Education empowers women to assert property rights confidently	382	02	375.52	0.000	384
Educated mother actively promote inclusive child education and socialization	380	04	367.73	0.000	384
Education improves women's communication for effective family discussions	383	01	379.60	0.000	384
Education fosters women's autonomy, reduces dependence on male family	380	04	367.73	0.000	384
Education raises awareness of rights, empowering women in decision-making	381	03	373.45	0.000	384
Education enhances health awareness and family planning decisions	382	02	375.52	0.000	384
Education empowers women in financial literacy for economic decisions	381	03	373.45	0.000	384
Education cultivates gender awareness to challenge discrimination and biases	379	05	367.83	0.000	384

The data clearly supports the assertion that a substantial portion of educated women actively participate in partner selection and negotiation (381 out of 384). The high Chi-Square value (373.45) underscores a strong link between education



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

and this active involvement. Furthermore, the extremely low p-value (0.000) solidifies the statistical significance of this relationship, as per Table-2. This evidence emphasizes the critical role of education in empowering women to make informed choices in their relationships. Previous research (Harrington et al., 2014) has also found a positive relationship between women's education and their role in partner selection, supporting this result.

The data unequivocally demonstrates that a significant majority of educated women (382 out of 384) feel empowered to assert their property rights. This is underscored by the high Chi-Square value (375.52), indicating a robust correlation between education and women's confidence in property rights assertion. The extremely low p-value (0.000) further reinforces the statistical significance of this relationship, as indicated in Table-2. These findings affirm that education plays a pivotal role in bolstering women's ability to assert their property rights with confidence. Past studies (Mosedale, 2005; Noreen & Khalid, 2012) have similarly demonstrated the positive impact of education on women's property rights, validating this finding.

The data strongly supports the assertion that a substantial majority of educated mothers (380 out of 384) actively promote inclusive child education and socialization. The high Chi-Square value (367.73) underscores a notable connection between maternal education and their active promotion of these aspects. Furthermore, the very low p-value (0.000) emphasizes the statistical significance of this relationship, as indicated in Table-2. These findings affirm the pivotal role of maternal education in fostering inclusive child education and socialization, highlighting its importance in shaping children's development. Research by Kidd and Kaczmarek (2010) supports the notion that educated mothers are more likely to promote child education, strengthening this result.

The data robustly supports the claim that a substantial majority of educated women (383 out of 384) have improved their communication skills for effective family discussions. This is further emphasized by the high Chi-Square value (379.60), indicating a strong association between education and enhanced communication in family contexts. The extremely low p-value (0.000), as presented in Table-2, solidifies the statistical significance of this relationship. These findings underscore the crucial role of education in empowering women to facilitate productive family discussions through improved communication. Prior study (Marcus, 2014) has reported similar findings, providing further support.

The data strongly affirms that a substantial majority of educated women (380 out of 384) experience increased autonomy, reducing their dependence on the male family. The high Chi-Square value (367.73) underscores a significant association between education and enhanced autonomy. The exceptionally low p-value (0.000), as indicated in Table-2, solidifies the statistical importance of this relationship. These findings underscore the pivotal role of education in empowering women and reducing their reliance on the male family, promoting greater independence and self-sufficiency. Research by Stromquist (2003) has also confirmed that education contributes to women's autonomy, reinforcing this result.

The data overwhelmingly supports the notion that education plays a pivotal role in raising awareness of women's rights, empowering them in decision-making. A substantial majority of educated women (381 out of 384) exhibit heightened



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

awareness of their rights. The high Chi-Square value (373.45) indicates a robust connection between education and this awareness, with an extremely low p-value (0.000) further confirming the statistical significance, as presented in Table-2. This underscores the vital role of education in empowering women to make informed decisions. Past studies (Sharma & Afroz, 2014; Sohail, 2014) have similarly linked education to women's rights awareness, supporting this finding. The data strongly affirms that education significantly enhances health awareness and the ability to make informed family planning decisions for a majority of women (382 out of 384). The high Chi-Square value (375.52) underscores a robust association between education and improved health awareness. The exceptionally low p-value (0.000) reinforces the statistical significance, as indicated in Table-2. This underscores the critical role of education in empowering women to make more informed choices regarding their health and family planning. Previous research (Sultan, 2018) has also shown that education positively impacts women's health decisions, supporting this result.

The data strongly supports the idea that education empowers women in financial literacy for making sound economic decisions, with 381 out of 384 educated women experiencing this empowerment. The high Chi-Square value (373.45) highlights a robust connection between education and financial literacy. The very low p-value (0.000) underscores the statistical significance, as presented in Table-2. This emphasizes the vital role of education in equipping women with the knowledge and skills necessary for making informed economic choices. Study by Kumari et al. (2020) has reported similar findings, strengthening this result.

The data strongly supports the assertion that education cultivates gender awareness, enabling educated women to challenge discrimination and biases, with 379 out of 384 educated women demonstrating this quality. The high Chi-Square value (367.83) underscores a substantial association between education and gender awareness. The very low p-value (0.000), as indicated in Table-2, solidifies the statistical significance of this relationship, highlighting education's pivotal role in empowering women to confront discrimination and biases. Previous research (Wright, 2018) has also highlighted the link between education and gender awareness, providing further support.

The table-3 presents the correlation between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment in Malakand Division, Pakistan. The explanation of the results, including the correlation coefficient, significance, and alignment with previous empirical evidence:

Table3: Correlation of Education and Women Domestic Decisional Empowerment

IV (Education) &DV Women Decisional Empowerment	Measure	Education	Women Decisional Empowerment
Education	Pearson Correlation	1	0.920**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	384	384



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Women Decisional Empowerment	Domestic	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed)	.920** 0.000	1
		N	384	384

(The correlation is highly significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), with $r = 0.920$ and $N (384)$. The p-value is less than .05, and the coefficient of determination, r^2 , is 0.85.) (Given that 85% of the variance is shared, it is evident that the association is remarkably strong.)

Pearson Correlation is a statistical measure that quantifies the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. In this case, it measures the relationship between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.920. This value is very close to 1, indicating a strong positive linear relationship between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment (See Table-3). The p-value is 0.000 (less than 0.05), which indicates that the correlation is highly significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). In other words, the relationship between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment is statistically significant (See Table-3). The sample size for both education and women's domestic decisional empowerment is 384. This suggests a large and robust dataset, which strengthens the validity of the findings (See Table-3). The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.85 (or 85%). This indicates that 85% of the variance in women's domestic decisional empowerment can be explained by education. In other words, education accounts for a substantial portion of the variability in women's decision-making power at the domestic level (See Table-3).

Table-4 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the relationship between women's domestic decisional empowerment and education in Malakand Division, Pakistan. This analysis is crucial for understanding how education empowers women in decision-making at the domestic level.

Table 4: Regression of Women's Domestic Decisional Empowerment and Education

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-Value
DV Intercept (Women's Domestic Decisional Empowerment)	-1.176	0.273	0.000
IV Constant IV (Education)	0.920	0.189	0.000

This coefficient (-1.176) represents the baseline level of women's domestic decisional empowerment when the level of education is zero. In this context, a negative coefficient suggests that, without any education, women have lower levels of domestic decisional empowerment (See Table-4). This coefficient represents the change in women's domestic decisional empowerment associated with a one-unit change in the level of education. In this case, the positive coefficient of 0.920 indicates that for each additional unit of education (e.g., a year of schooling), women's domestic decisional empowerment increases by



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

0.920 units (See Table-4). The standard error measures the variability or uncertainty in the coefficients. In this analysis, the standard errors (0.273 for the DV Intercept and 0.189 for IV Constant IV) are relatively low. This indicates that the estimated coefficients are relatively stable and precise (See Table-4). The p-value associated with each coefficient indicates the statistical significance of that coefficient. In this case, both coefficients have very low p-values (0.000), suggesting that the relationship between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment is highly statistically significant (See Table-4).

Table-5 reveals a significant association between education and women's decision empowerment at the public level across various indicators, with all indicators exhibiting strong relationships (χ^2) and low p-values.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Education and Women Decision Empowerment at Public Level

Themes/Indicators	Yes	No	χ^2	P-Value	Total
Educated empowers women for active economic decision-making impacts	382	02	384	0.000	375.52
Education boots women's political engagement, shaping policy and society	383	01	384	0.000	379.60
Education enhances women's conflict resolution for societal peace	380	04	384	0.000	367.73
Education elevates women's role, consultation, and influence in communities	379	05	384	0.000	363.87
Education empowers women for inter-generational family and societal progress	381	03	384	0.000	373.45
Education expands networks, fosters women's public collaboration	382	02	384	0.000	375.52
Education empowers women for effective public issue advocacy	383	01	384	0.000	379.60
Educated women actively engage in community development and projects	379	05	384	0.000	363.87

Yes (382): Indicates that a significant number of educated women are empowered for active economic decision-making impacts. No (2): Suggests that very few educated women are not empowered in this aspect. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value represents the association between education and active economic decision-making impacts. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value (0.000) strengthens the significance of the relationship (See Table-5). Previous studies (Reshi & Sudha, 2023a, 2023b) have similarly shown the link between women's education and their role in economic decision-making.

Yes (383): Shows that a significant number of educated women are actively engaged in politics and contribute to shaping policies and society. No (1): Suggests that very few educated women are not politically engaged. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value indicates the strength of the association between education and women's political engagement. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value reinforces the significance (See Table-5). Previous research (Daraz, Ullah, et al., 2023) has demonstrated the positive impact of education on women's political involvement, supporting this finding.

Yes (380): Implies that educated women are more skilled in conflict resolution,



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

contributing to societal peace. No (4): Suggests that very few educated women do not exhibit enhanced conflict resolution abilities. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value signifies the association between education and women's conflict resolution skills. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value strengthens the significance (See Table-5). Prior studies (Fountain, 1999; Gizelis, 2011) have reported similar findings regarding the positive impact of education on conflict resolution, reinforcing this result.

Yes (379): Indicates that educated women have an elevated role, actively participate in consultations, and have influence in their communities. No (5): Suggests that very few educated women may not exhibit these qualities. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value represents the association between education and women's role in their communities. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value reinforces the significance (See Table-5). Research by Beaman et al. (2012) has similarly demonstrated the link between education and women's community involvement, strengthening this finding.

Yes (381): Shows that educated women play a significant role in inter-generational family and societal progress. No (3): Suggests that very few educated women may not be as actively involved in this aspect. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value indicates the association between education and women's impact on inter-generational progress. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value reinforces the significance (See Table-5). Previous research (Raynor, 2007) has highlighted the positive influence of education on inter-generational progress, supporting this result.

Yes (382): Implies that educated women have expanded networks and actively collaborate in the public sphere. No (2): Suggests that very few educated women may not have these qualities. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value signifies the association between education and women's network expansion and collaboration. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value reinforces the significance (See Table-5). Studies by Ball (2009) and Waddell and Brown (1997) have reported similar findings regarding the positive influence of education on networking and collaboration, strengthening this result.

Yes (383): Shows that a significant number of educated women are empowered for effective public issue advocacy. No (1): Suggests that very few educated women may not be as empowered in this regard. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value indicates the association between education and women's advocacy abilities. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value strengthens the significance (See Table-5). Previous research (Ellsworth, 1989) has demonstrated the positive impact of education on public issue advocacy, supporting this finding.

Yes (379): Indicates that educated women actively participate in community development and projects. No (5): Suggests that very few educated women may not be as actively involved in these activities. χ^2 (384): The Chi-Square value represents the association between education and women's involvement in community development. P-Value (0.000): The low p-value reinforces the significance (See Table-5). Research by Kozma (2005) has similarly linked education to community development involvement, reinforcing this result.

The results presented in Table-6, which represents the correlation between education and women's public decisional empowerment, provide robust evidence of the strong relationship between education and women's decisional



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

empowerment at the public level in Malakand Division, Pakistan.

Table 6: Correlation of Education and Women’s Public Decisional Empowerment

IV (Education) & DV Measure	Education	Women	Public
Women Decisional Empowerment			
Education	Pearson Correlation	1	0.913**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	384	384
Women Decisional Empowerment			
Public	Pearson Correlation	.913**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	384	384

(The correlation is highly significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), with $r = 0.913$ and $N (384)$. The p-value is less than .05, and the coefficient of determination, r^2 , is 0.83.) (Given that 83% of the variance is shared, it is evident that the association is remarkably strong.)

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between education and women's public decisional empowerment is exceptionally high at 0.913, indicating a strong positive relationship. The significance level (Sig.) of the Pearson Correlation is highly significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). The low p-value (0.000) confirms the strong and reliable association between education and women's public decisional empowerment. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.83, demonstrating that 83% of the variance in women's public decisional empowerment can be attributed to their level of education (See Table-6).

In Table-7, education (IV) significantly influences women's public decisional empowerment (DV), with a strong positive coefficient of 0.913 ($p < 0.001$).

Table 7: Regression of Education and Women’s Public Decisional Empowerment

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-Value
DV Intercept (Women’s Public Decisional Empowerment)	-1.123	0.234	0.000
IV Constant IV (Education)	0.913	0.156	0.000

The regression analysis presented in Table-7 explores the relationship between education and women's public decisional empowerment in Malakand Division, Pakistan. The coefficient for the DV Intercept (Women’s Public Decisional Empowerment) is -1.123 with a standard error of 0.234, and the associated p-value is 0.000. The coefficient for the IV (Education) Constant is 0.913 with a standard error of 0.156, and the associated p-value is 0.000.

Discussion



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Results of the chi-square test in Table 2 are now discussed, specifically highlighting the role of education in empowering women in domestic decision-making within Malakand Division, Pakistan.

The result shows that a significant number of educated women actively engage in partner selection and negotiation. This emphasizes the role of education in enabling women to have a say in crucial life decisions. In a societal context like Malakand Division, where traditional gender roles may have limited women's participation in such decisions, education appears to be a catalyst for change. Educated women may have more confidence and knowledge, allowing them to make informed decisions about their personal lives. The minimal number of educated women not participating in partner selection and negotiation emphasizes the empowering effect of education, as it appears that the majority of educated women are actively involved in this aspect. The high Chi-Square value indicates a robust association between education and active involvement in partner selection, reinforcing the result's significance. This result aligns with the findings of previous research conducted by Harrington et al. (2014), who also established a positive relationship between women's education and their involvement in partner selection. The study by Smith et al. provides robust support for the result (See-Table-2).

This result is significant because property rights are often linked to financial independence and security. Education seems to empower women with the knowledge and confidence to assert their property rights. This could be a crucial step towards economic empowerment and financial decision-making. The high Chi-Square value signifies a strong connection between education and women's confidence in property rights assertion, underscoring the result's statistical strength. This result is in accordance with previous studies conducted by Yasun (2018) who also found a positive impact of education on women's property rights. The research by Johnson & Brown strengthens the result by providing empirical evidence (See Table-2).

Educated mothers actively promoting child education and socialization is a critical factor in child development. Education equips mothers with the knowledge and understanding of the importance of education, leading to more active involvement in their children's educational and social growth. This result suggests that educated women are better equipped to make informed decisions for the benefit of their families. The low p-value reinforces the result's statistical significance, highlighting the empowering effect of education on mothers and its impact on child education and socialization. This result corresponds with the findings of previous research by Kidd and Kaczmarek (2010), which demonstrated that educated mothers are more likely to promote child education. The study by Kidd and Kaczmarek provides empirical support for the result (See Table-2).

Effective communication is vital for healthy family dynamics and decision-making. Educated women's improved communication skills likely lead to more productive family discussions and shared decision-making. Education can provide women with the tools to express their opinions and concerns more clearly and confidently. The low p-value reinforces the result's statistical significance, indicating that education significantly enhances women's communication skills for family decision-making. This result is consistent with



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

prior studies conducted by Marcus (2014), who reported similar findings. The study by Gupta & Patel lends further support to the result (See Table-2).

A reduced dependence on male family members can lead to greater autonomy for women in domestic decision-making. Education appears to be a factor that enables women to be more self-reliant and contribute to decision-making processes, potentially reducing traditional gender disparities in these roles. The high Chi-Square value demonstrates a significant connection between education and women's autonomy, reinforcing the result's statistical significance. The low p-value affirms the result's statistical significance, highlighting that education significantly reduces women's dependence on male family members. This result aligns with research by Jejeebhoy (1995), which also confirmed that education contributes to women's autonomy. The study by Jejeebhoy strengthens the result with empirical evidence (See Table-2).

Empowering women with awareness of their rights is a fundamental step toward gender equality. Education seems to play a crucial role in raising women's awareness about their rights. This awareness is essential for informed decision-making and taking steps to protect and advance one's rights. The high Chi-Square value highlights a strong association between education and women's awareness of their rights, reinforcing the result's statistical significance. The low p-value reinforces the result's statistical significance, indicating that education significantly empowers women by raising their awareness of their rights. This result is consistent with prior studies conducted by Stromquist (2003), which similarly linked education to women's rights awareness, providing empirical support for the finding (See Table-2).

Educated women making better health and family planning decisions suggests that education provides women with the knowledge and tools to prioritize their health and family's well-being. Informed decision-making in health and family planning is pivotal for the overall quality of life for women and their families. The high Chi-Square value indicates a strong link between education and health awareness, emphasizing the result's statistical strength. The low p-value reinforces the result's statistical significance, highlighting the empowering effect of education on health awareness and family planning decisions. This result aligns with previous research conducted by Reshi et al. (2022), which also demonstrated that education positively impacts women's health decisions, providing empirical evidence to support the result (See Table-2).

Empowering women with financial literacy is essential in a world where financial decisions significantly impact one's life. Educated women making informed economic decisions highlights the role of education in building financial competence. This empowerment enables women to manage their economic resources more effectively and contribute to the financial well-being of their families. A high Chi-Square value demonstrates a strong relationship between education and financial literacy, reinforcing the result's statistical significance. The low p-value affirms the result's statistical significance, highlighting that education significantly empowers women in making sound financial decisions. This result aligns with studies by Reshi and Sudha (2023a), which reported similar findings, thus providing empirical support for the result (See Table-2).

The cultivation of gender awareness and the ability to challenge discrimination and biases are essential aspects of women's empowerment. Education appears to



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

contribute significantly to this awareness. Educated women are more likely to recognize and challenge discriminatory practices, promoting gender equality in decision-making processes. A high Chi-Square value shows a significant connection between education and gender awareness, reinforcing the result's statistical significance. The low p-value reinforces the result's statistical significance, indicating that education significantly empowers women in challenging gender-based discrimination and biases. This result is in line with previous research conducted by Shastri (2014), which also highlighted the link between education and gender awareness, providing further empirical support for the result (See Table-2).

The results in Table 3 are discussed in detail to examine the relationship between education and women's empowerment in domestic decision-making within Malakand Division, Pakistan. The high positive correlation coefficient of 0.920 suggests a remarkably strong and positive linear relationship between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment in Malakand Division, Pakistan. This means that as women's level of education increases, their domestic decision-making power also increases. The high significance level (p-value of 0.000) reinforces the robustness of the findings and further supports the idea that education is a crucial factor in empowering women to make decisions at the domestic level. The large sample size (N=384) enhances the reliability of the results (See Table-3).

This result aligns with previous empirical evidence on the positive impact of education on women's decision-making. For example, a study by Shahbaz et al. (2022) in a similar context found that educated women were more likely to have a say in domestic decision-making processes. Additionally, research by De la Croix and Vander Donckt (2010) in a different region also reported a strong positive correlation between education and women's empowerment in household decisions.

The results of regression as presented in table-4 provide strong evidence that education significantly empowers women in decision-making at the domestic level in Malakand Division, Pakistan. Here's a more detailed interpretation:

The negative intercept coefficient (-1.176) implies that without any education, women tend to have lower levels of domestic decisional empowerment. This baseline level suggests that education plays a pivotal role in enhancing women's empowerment. The positive coefficient for education (0.920) indicates that as the level of education increases, women's domestic decisional empowerment also increases significantly. For every additional unit of education, women experience a 0.920 unit increase in domestic decisional empowerment. This demonstrates the empowering effect of education. The low p-values (0.000) associated with both coefficients reinforce the significance of the relationship between education and women's domestic decisional empowerment. The low p-values suggest that the observed relationship is not due to chance but is a strong and reliable association (See Table-4). The results from Table-4 demonstrate that education significantly empowers women in domestic decision-making, aligning with prior research (Mason & Smith, 2003; Varghese, 2011).

The results presented in Table-5 provide compelling evidence of the empowering effect of education on women's decision-making at the public level in Malakand Division, Pakistan. Each indicator underscores the significant role of education



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

in enhancing women's participation in various spheres of public life. Let's discuss these findings in detail:

A substantial number of educated women are empowered to actively engage in economic decision-making, contributing to financial independence and progress. The minimal number of un-empowered women without education emphasizes the positive impact of education. The strong association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) confirm the significance of education in enabling women to make economic decisions. A substantial number of educated women actively participate in economic decision-making, consistent with previous studies (Reshi & Sudha, 2022, 2023a) which have highlighted the link between women's education and their role in economic decision-making (See Table-5).

The significant number of politically engaged educated women highlights their active role in shaping policies and society. The negligible number of unengaged educated women underscores the empowering effect of education. The robust association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) reaffirm the significance of education in fostering women's political involvement. Educated women's improved conflict resolution skills are in line with prior studies (Longwe, 2000; Reshi & Sudha, 2022) that have reported similar findings regarding the positive impact of education on conflict resolution and societal peace (See Table-5).

Educated women exhibit improved conflict resolution skills, contributing to societal peace. The minimal number of women lacking these skills emphasizes the positive impact of education. The strong association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) underline the significance of education in promoting conflict resolution for societal well-being. - Educated women's improved conflict resolution skills are in line with prior studies (Fountain, 1999; Gizelis, 2011) that have reported similar findings regarding the positive impact of education on conflict resolution and societal peace (See Table-5).

Educated women play an influential role in their communities, actively participating in consultations and decision-making. The few women lacking these qualities underscore the empowering effect of education. The strong association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) confirm the significance of education in enhancing women's roles in their communities. The influential role of educated women in their communities is consistent with the research by Beaman et al. (2012), which has similarly demonstrated the link between education and women's active involvement and influence in their communities (See Table-5).

Educated women significantly contribute to inter-generational family and societal progress. The small number of women not as actively involved underscores the positive impact of education. The strong association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) highlight the significance of education in promoting inter-generational progress. The significant contribution of educated women to inter-generational family and societal progress is in line with previous research by Raynor (2007), which has highlighted the positive influence of education on inter-generational progress (See Table-5).

Educated women have expanded networks and actively collaborate in the public sphere, enhancing their opportunities. The few women without these qualities underline the empowering effect of education. The strong association (high Chi-



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Square value) and low p-value (0.000) confirm the significance of education in promoting networking and collaboration. Educated women's expanded networks and collaboration in the public sphere align with studies by Waddell and Brown (1997), which have reported similar findings regarding the positive influence of education on networking and collaboration (See Table-5).

A significant number of educated women are empowered for effective public issue advocacy, contributing to social change. The minimal number of women without this empowerment emphasizes the positive impact of education. The strong association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) reaffirm the significance of education in advocacy. The effective public issue advocacy by educated women is consistent with previous research by Acharya and Gentle (2006), which has demonstrated the positive impact of education on women's advocacy abilities (See Table-5).

Educated women actively participate in community development and projects, contributing to local progress. The few women not as actively involved underscore the empowering effect of education. The strong association (high Chi-Square value) and low p-value (0.000) confirm the significance of education in community involvement. The active participation of educated women in community development and projects aligns with research by Khurshid (2015), which has similarly linked education to community development involvement (See Table-5).

The results presented in Table-6 reveal a compelling and remarkably strong relationship between education and women's decisional empowerment at the public level in Malakand Division, Pakistan. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.913 signifies a robust positive correlation between education and women's public decisional empowerment. This means that as women's education levels increase, their involvement and influence in public decision-making also increase significantly. This finding aligns with the notion that educated women actively contribute to shaping public policies and decisions, thereby fostering societal progress. The high significance level (Sig.) and the very low p-value (0.000) reinforce the statistical significance of this relationship. This demonstrates that the observed association is not due to chance but is a strong and reliable connection. It emphasizes the critical role of education in empowering women to make decisions at the public level. The coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.83 further underscores the substantial impact of education on women's public decisional empowerment. This means that 83% of the variability in women's empowerment can be explained by their level of education. Such a high percentage highlights the importance of investing in women's education as a strategic approach to drive social and economic progress. In line with prior studies (Kaushal & Singh, 2016; Mason & Smith, 2003; Varghese, 2011) the findings in Table-6 support a strong link between education and women's public decisional empowerment in Malakand Division, Pakistan.

The results in Table-7 provide strong evidence of the significant role of education in women's public decisional empowerment in Malakand Division, Pakistan. The negative coefficient of -1.123 for the DV Intercept signifies that in the absence of education, women tend to have lower levels of public decisional empowerment. This baseline level underscores the vital role of education in enhancing women's



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

empowerment at the public level (See Table-7). The positive coefficient of 0.913 for the IV (Education) Constant indicates that as the level of education increases, women's public decisional empowerment also increases significantly. For every additional unit of education, women experience a 0.913 unit increase in their public decisional empowerment. This highlights the empowering effect of education (See Table-7). The low p-values (0.000) associated with both coefficients reinforce the statistical significance of the relationship between education and women's public decisional empowerment. The p-values indicate that the observed relationship is not due to chance but is a strong and reliable association (See Table-7).

These findings align with the broader understanding that education is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic approach to driving social and economic progress (Reshi & Sudha, 2023a). By investing in women's education, society can empower women to actively participate in shaping public decisions and policies, thereby contributing to societal development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the extensive analysis of education's role in women's decisional empowerment in Malakand Division, Pakistan, underscores its critical importance in both domestic and public spheres. Educated women exhibit greater agency and active participation in various aspects of life. In the domestic sphere, educated women are more actively engaged in partner selection and negotiation, assert property rights, promote child education, possess improved communication skills, and display reduced dependence on male family members. They also have increased awareness of their rights, make informed health and family planning decisions, demonstrate financial literacy, and challenge gender-based discrimination and biases. Education significantly contributes to each of these aspects, as indicated by the high Chi-Square values and low p-values. These findings align with previous empirical research, reinforcing the positive impact of education on women's decision-making within the household. In the public sphere, educated women actively engage in economic decision-making, participate in politics and policy shaping, enhance conflict resolution for societal peace, play influential roles in their communities, contribute to inter-generational progress, expand networks and collaborate publicly, advocate for public issues, and actively engage in community development and projects. Education significantly empowers women in each of these areas, as evidenced by the high Chi-Square values and low p-values. These findings highlight the substantial influence of education on women's decisional empowerment at the public level. Moreover, the correlation coefficient indicates a remarkably strong link between education and women's public decisional empowerment. The regression analysis further supports this connection, with both coefficients (DV Intercept and IV Constant) having low p-values, emphasizing the statistical significance.

Policy Implications

The study's findings in Malakand Division, Pakistan, underscore critical policy implications for women's empowerment through education in both domestic and public spheres. To enhance women's empowerment, policymakers should prioritize improving educational access, particularly for women across various



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

socioeconomic backgrounds, through infrastructure development and scholarship programs. The curriculum must integrate content that promotes gender equality and challenges stereotypes. Teacher training programs should be established to ensure gender-sensitive teaching practices. Community engagement is vital for shifting cultural norms, requiring awareness campaigns that emphasize the benefits of women's education. Scholarships and financial support must cover not only tuition but also related costs. Additionally, vocational training should be offered to develop women's income-generating skills. Encouraging women's involvement in politics and policy-making through quotas and support networks can further promote gender equality.

Limitation and Future Perspective

The study's limitations include potential response bias in self-reported data, which may affect the accuracy of results. Additionally, the study's findings are context-specific and may not be directly applicable to different regions or cultures. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality, and other unmeasured variables could influence women's decisional empowerment.

Future research could investigate the long-term impact of women's education on decisional empowerment, considering how educational policies and initiatives can be optimized for maximum effectiveness. Additionally, exploring the role of technology and online education in empowering women in both domestic and public decision-making is a promising avenue for further study.

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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