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## **GENDERED PATHS TO PROSPERITY: ASSESSING EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL BALOCHISTAN**

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### ***Abstract***

*So as to assess the gendered paths to prosperity regarding education and economic opportunities in rural Balochistan this research was carried out. A simple random sampling technique was utilized to select 200 female respondents. Two districts like Quetta and Pishin were selected. SPSS was used to analyze the findings. Findings revealed that 26–35 age group was the most represented, peaking at 71 female respondents. Nearly half the sample (46%) having no formal schooling, participation levels steadily erode at every subsequent stage, with only 9% reaching higher education. A significant majority (71.5%) of respondents were believed an educated woman in a rural setting is significantly more empowered than an uneducated one. When including those who believe she was "somewhat" more empowered, the total cumulative percent to 92.5%. Financial incentives appear to have a strong positive impact on families' willingness to send daughters to school. Following recommendations was proposed. Skill development program for females regarding livestock management, garments, agriculture activities, tailored mastering, handicraft skills should be planned at village*

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*level in order to improve female socio-economic conditions within the cover of local norms and conditions.*

**Keywords:** *paths to prosperity, gender, rural Balochistan, economic opportunities*

### **1.1 Introduction:**

Although, around the world, it is common phenomena that economic empowerment and sustainable growth ultimately depends on the women human resources section. Female empowerment is part and parcel for development. Either they control over assets, capture the equal market square, economic decision, educational empowerment, home management dynamics and the like according to (UN Women, 2020).

However, worldwide female development and her welfare presently are lingering on educational and economic dynamics. In this connection, worldwide success is intimately related to the financial authorization of women (UN Women, 2020).

While, gender equality as regards to developing the equal environment whereby both genders gain the equal opportunities and chances toward common goals achieving and objectives, perhaps, to deny unfair means and promote equality with full potential (UNICEF, 2008). However, the basic feature of female empowerment is regarded as to obviate the systemic obstructions that might hamper female involvement in e-commerce, educational dynamics, as well as political affairs (Backhams, 2007).

Various studies have revealed that equality and empowerment are prime efficient factors so that the female has easy access to land resources, credit facilities, labor section and access to markets, which in turn drives economic growth (Morrison et al., 2007). On the other hand, gender inequality was also connected to inferior income for both genders (Kishor, 1997; Morris et al., 2007). Disparities related to females might imbalance the societal section (Rahman, 2013). Control over resources of male affects the female socio-economic condition (Rowland, 1997).

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## 1.2 Problem statement

Females were heavily involved in milking collection, feeding of domestic animals, animal. Despite being Pakistan's largest province by land, Balochistan faces a 'statistical illusion' of parity where slight increases in female literacy do not translate into economic autonomy. In rural areas, 86% of girls do not advance beyond grade 10 due to deep-seated tribal norms, mobility restrictions, and a lack of infrastructure. Current research was justified because it moves beyond mere determining the patriarchal norms, overrides formal laws, restricting women's mobility, economic independence, actual economic participation of females and the like, so as to explore the critical intersection of education and actual economic participation. However, current research provided a necessary framework for fostering inclusive female socio-economic development that overcomes these structural barriers (GoB, 2024; Zahra, 2024; Khan, et al., 2025; and Naseer & Hasan 2025). The Research gap was to address the specific multi-dimensional barriers like female economic empowerment hindrance and so on. Thus, current research has also investigated how the region's vast geographic expanse and systemic socio-economic challenges create unique barriers to the female (Arif et al., 2025).

## 1.3 Research objectives

- To explain the demographic statistics of the respondents.
- To assess the present inequalities of females regarding economic empowerment and educational access in study areas.
- To develop need-based recommendation for strategy inference.

## 1.4 Methodology and procedure

The methodology section is a vital component of any academic discipline. This research employed a triangulation approach to ensure comprehensive data analysis. A simple random sampling technique was utilized to select 200 female respondents, who

constituted the study's sample size (Creswell, 2012). A structured questionnaire was developed, consisting primarily of closed-ended questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). Two districts like Quetta and Pishin were selected. Data were gathered through field-level, face-to-face interviews to capture participants' perceptions of gender, education, and social empowerment. The raw data were processed using SPSS (Creswell, 1994) was applied to analyze the findings.

### 1.5 Research findings

#### Age distribution and analysis female respondents demo info

Biographic information of the female respondents was examined/ evaluated in order to identify the participation arrangements and different age struts. The study categorized the female participants into four distinct age groups: 18–25, 26–35, 36–45, and 46+.

**Table-1: Age composition of the female respondents**

<b>Age Category</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
18–25 years	62%
26–35 years	71%
36–45 years	46%
46+ years	21%

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The table was displayed four distinct age categories on the horizontal (x) axis, with the total number of female respondents for each group. The age categorization was given below:

- 18–25: 62% female respondents
- 26–35: 71% female respondents
- 36–45: 46% female respondents
- 46+: 21% female respondents

**Largest Group:** The 26–35 age group was the most represented, peaking at 71 female respondents.

**Smallest Group:** The 46+ age group was the least represented, with only 21 female respondents.

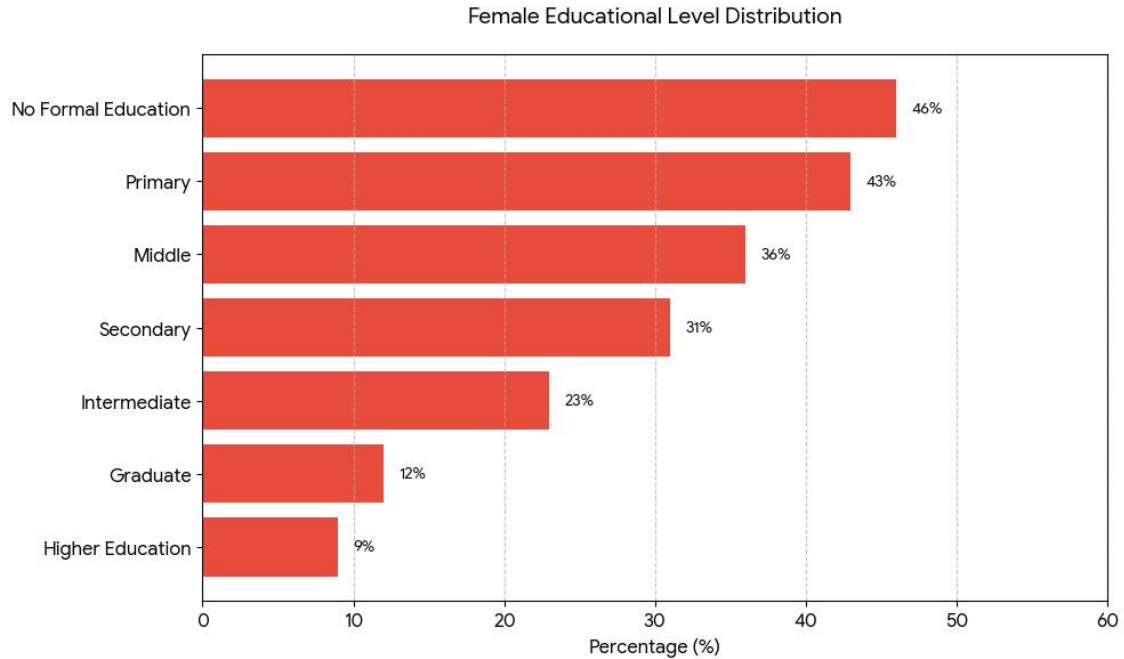
**Trend:** There was a general downward trend in participation as age increases beyond the 35-year-old mark.

The data was indicating that the highest concentration of female respondents (71%) falls within the 26–35 age bracket, followed closely by the 18–25 age group (62%). While, participation rates significantly decline in the older categories, with only 21% of respondents being aged 46 or above.

#### **Analysis of educational level of female respondents**

Female respondents regarding educational backgrounds were divided into seven distinct categories, ranging from no formal education to higher education, including primary, middle, secondary, intermediate, and graduate levels.

#### **Figure-1: Educational level of the female respondents**



The educational profile of the 200 female respondents from the Pishin and Quetta districts revealed a stark and persistent downward trend as education levels increase. This data shows a concerning picture of educational attrition, reflecting the high dropout rates that characterize the broader Balochistan region. Nearly half the sample (46%) having no formal schooling, participation levels steadily erode at every subsequent stage, with only 9% reaching higher education, as illustrated in figure-1.

### Respondent distribution by education level

Based on the provided percentages, there was the breakdown of the 200 respondents:

- **No formal-education (46percent):** 92 female respondents. This group signified the leading section, underlining important aspects of the research like lack of rudimentary literacy among female respondents.

- **Primary (43%):** 86 females. Less than half of the female respondents got this primary educational level, but contribution started to decline approximately afterward.
- **Middle (36%):** 72 females. A 7percent of the female respondents drop from the primary level schooling that specified initial schooling system (distortion) means need improvement.
- **Secondary (31%):** 62 females. Under one-third of the female respondents finished her secondary schooling. These trends reflected reliable and steady existence in the secondary schooling system at districts despite the barriers like domestic duties or easy marriage.
- **Intermediate (23%):** 46 females. According to data, the thin numbers of the female respondents were continuing and access to college education became more limited.
- **Graduate (12%):** 24 females. At graduation level a piercing decline was observed regarding female graduate educational level, on the other hand just only around one to eight females had reached university level.
- **Higher educational level (9%):** eighteen female respondents. The minimum cluster, on behalf of those who had followed postgraduate or professional degrees at university level.

Based on the data provided, there was a strong consensus that education correlates with empowerment as shown in table-2.

**Table-2: Female educational empowered**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, significantly	143	71.5%	71.5%	71.5%



<b>Somewhat</b>	42	21.0%	21.0%	92.5%
<b>Not at all</b>	15	7.5%	7.5%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

A significant majority (71.5%) of respondents were believed an educated woman in a rural setting is significantly more empowered than an uneducated one. When including those who believe she was "somewhat" more empowered, the total cumulative percent to 92.5%.

Only a small fraction (7.5%) respondents felt that education makes no difference in her decision-making power. Analysis was further shown that of specific factors (like financial independence or social standing) that drive these empowerment dynamics.

Based on the data provided in table-3, financial incentives appear to have a strong positive impact on families' willingness to send daughters to school.

**Table-3: Financial incentives for female**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Yes, definitely	87	43.5%	43.5%	43.5%
Yes, but only for a short time	71	35.5%	35.5%	79.0%
No, money is not the main issue	41	20.5%	20.5%	99.5%
Other/Invalid	1	0.5%	0.5%	100.0%



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<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
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There was a breakdown of the results:

- Strong support: 43.5% of respondents (87 out of 200) was believed that incentives "definitely" make families more willing to send their daughters to school.
- Moderate/short-term Support: 35.5% feel the effect exists but was only temporary.
- Total positive outlook: Combined, 79% of the female participants was believed money has at least some impact on enrollment decisions.
- Incredulity: Most (20.5percen) of the female respondents was agreed that money was not a problem. On the other hand, the vast majority of the female respondents said that the financial barriers were an important issue.

The information was signifying that the cash transfers as well as scholarships remained a major factor for educational attainment and socio-economic development. In this context, financial assistance remained a major and key dynamic. On the other hand, survey results portrayed that the financial incentives make the household families enthusiastic to send her daughters toward school.

### **Recommendations**

Following recommendations was proposed. Skill development program for females regarding livestock management, garments, agriculture activities, tailored mastering, handicraft skills should be planned at village level in order to improve female socio-economic conditions within the cover of local norms and conditions.



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