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The Role of Education in Fostering Political Empowerment among the Female School Teachers in Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Mahnaz Iqbal Yousafzai [1]   Hafiz Muhammad Irshadullah [2]   Muhammad Idris [3]

Abstract: *One of the fundamental institutions that exist in one form or another in every society on the planet is education. The present research focuses on how education supports women's political empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's newly merged districts. The study's main goal was to determine how education contributes to the political empowerment of female teachers in the targeted community. In a similar vein, the study's goal was to ascertain how teachers in the research area support women's political empowerment. The research was quantitative in nature, and 225 sample size (female teachers) were chosen from the three districts of Bajawar, Kurram, and Mohmmand using the Sekran sample size determination table. The data were collected through structured questionnaires from (Primary, Middle, and High) school teachers, which were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The analyzed data were then presented in the form of tables and frequencies. The researched data demonstrates that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's newly merged districts, education may promote women's political empowerment in the true sense. It is advised that training, seminars, and awareness-raising events on the value of education and how it gives women political power be required for both the general public and female teachers.*

Key Words: Education, Women's Empowerment, Women's Political Empowerment, School Teachers

Introduction

Education is a potent instrument for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. In order to halt the cycle of prejudice, empower women economically, develop leadership, and debunk gender stereotypes, it is essential. Education is a broad notion that deals with and guarantees the desired advancements in every aspect of human life. It is defined as the process by which individuals are influenced to modify their behavior in the desired ways. Education is a purposeful process with set goals, such as transferring knowledge or developing skills and character. The development of comprehension, reason, compassion, and honesty may be among these objectives (Duflo, 2012).

"Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world," said 2003 Nelson Mandela. The process of continuously imparting experiences to the next generation experiences necessary for their social, political, moral, and physical development is known as education. Education, as defined by Odera and Mulusa (2020), is the process of transferring and gaining knowledge and skills.

Every country's population see education as a fundamental right as well as a basic requirement. It's seen as a turning point in women's empowerment since it allows them the self-assurance to face challenges, challenge social standards, and transform their own lives. It is an effective strategy for improving women's standing in a certain community (Furuta & Salway, 2006). "If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (country)" is a widely held

[1] PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
[2] Associate Professor, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: drirshad@awkum.edu.pk
[3] Associate Professor, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: midrees@awkum.edu.pk

belief in Africa. The term "women's education" encompasses a wide range of intricate matters and discussions pertaining to education for females, namely in the domains of elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and health education (Suen, 2013).

Women's empowerment in the political sphere is defined as raising the capacity of women to make choices, engage in politics, be politically informed, lead, and hold political office. The only way for women to become change agents and ensure that their rights are upheld is by actively engaging in the freedom to vote, start campaigns, and run for public office. Economic dependency and decision-making help women become less dependent on other people, less exploited, and less subject to discriminatory laws and attitudes (Butt & Victor, 2014).

Empowerment on both a political and personal level enables one to take charge of one's life and refuse to let others do the same. The best approach to providing women with the knowledge, abilities, and self-assurance they need to participate actively in politics and the advancement of society is via education (Uwakwe et al., 2008). The ability to assess someone's personal life is more appealing to educated women (Stromquist, 2015).

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Statement of the Problem

In order for women to participate on an equal basis with men in all spheres of life politics, social concerns, the workplace, the home, and leisure education is a potent and necessary component. They are proving their worth in the courts, business world, civic society, and government functions (Fareeha, 2017). Education has the power to improve people's real-life experiences, which are crucial for reaching objectives. Women are valued members of society who, with the right education, have the ability to fundamentally change every area of it. History shows that women have ruled society and had a major role in its long-term development. The different research studies show that education has a significant role in women's empowerment. Given the wide variations in educational attainment among civilizations, this study examined the relationship between the amount of education and women's political empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were as follows:
1. To know about the role of education in fostering female school teachers' political empowerment in the study area
2. To find out the role of school teachers in the promotion of women's political empowerment in the study area

Research Question of the Study

1. What is the role of education in women's empowerment in society?
2. How does education play a role in fostering women's political empowerment?

Significance of the Study

Since education is one of the fundamental institutions of society and a key determinant of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) research is essential. All forms of growth, but particularly national and individual political development, depend on education. Curriculum developers, teachers, legislators, planners, and researchers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the country should all take note of this research study.

Review of Literature

Education is a vital instrument for empowering women in society. It is essential not only for the development of an individual's personality but also for women's growth in the political and social spheres. It is essential to women's cultural and social growth, which in turn ensures the advancement of the state and society. Empowering women is essential to every society, state, or country that takes the lead. Women need access to education in order to become so strong that they can overcome obstacles, question social norms, and take charge of their own lives (Shetty & Hans, 2015).

According to Bhasin (1992), education for women is a kind of knowledge given to them in order to increase their feeling of dignity and self-worth as well as to help them become self-sufficient and economically independent. Women need the kind of education that will help them acquire new knowledge and abilities as well as help them develop moral values like justice, equality, honesty, and solidarity. Furthermore, it helps women acquire a scientific perspective on the world they live in and an analytical, curious mind. It equips women with the information and self-assurance they need to defend their rights.

According to Bhat (2015), women who have an education that empowers them are better able to engage in politics and society on a more active basis. In every area of life, including politics, the job, inheritance, marriage, and education, women and men should be treated equally. The 1973 National Constitution does not discriminate between men and women, yet despite this, society has denied women a number of basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The process by which women get knowledge and abilities, get past barriers, and take charge of resources such as work, education, and real estate, as well as human capital that may enhance their decision-making abilities, is known as women's empowerment. Education gives women more power to take charge of their own lives and use their right to self-determination. It is widely understood that educating girls may improve social, cultural, and political development results, in addition to acting as a catalyst for the advancement of true gender equality (Engida, 2021).

According to Kesby (2005), education has a significant role in a woman's personal growth. Gender awareness, autonomous rights, and self-determination are the results of this dynamic growth. The assertion made by Somani (2017), that women's access to high-quality education is a basic national right and that achieving social, economic, and political goals is closely related to it has been confirmed. Depending on a culture's level of development and education, women's status in society varies greatly. It is an indisputable fact that women in society have more power, autonomy, and quality of life when they have more education.

According to Bennett (2002), women's autonomy is the ability to think critically, gather knowledge, and come to wise judgments on their own affairs. It is that powerful capacity that, by wise choices, governs and affects one's surroundings. It is the outcome of a methodical process that modifies the power dynamics in social interactions and societal institutions according to the values of impartiality and equality. Based on educational skills and judgments, education has the capacity to bestow resources and provide access to control over such methods and resources. According to Gervais (2011), educated women and girls may use their own voices, decisions, and ideas regarding human rights in a setting that is safe and encouraging. It also helps them feel secure and valuable even when they are living in a society where patriarchal forces have restricted their human rights.

According to Mercy and Rani (2019), empowering women with information and skills consistently increases their self-confidence. By education, they facilitate their social mobility. Education must change, particularly the curriculum, to allow for collective identity and to meet each student's requirements in regard to their families, communities, and cultures (relational empowerment). The catalyst for women's empowerment is education (Stromquist, 2002). According to Khatri (2016), women's political and personal empowerment has resulted in the development of a political system that encourages their participation in and authority over politics and government. More information and education have encouraged women to go beyond the four walls of the house. Many women actively supported and contributed to the nationalist movement, securing prominent roles in politics and the administration. Women are becoming more influential in politics and are crucial in swaying public opinion in favour of raising the position of women in society.

According to Ibrahim (2012), women who have an education are granted political independence, which in turn gives them the ability to vote, participate in politics, and express their thoughts freely. Education has an impact on women's roles in the home. Women in Pakistan have more obstacles in obtaining property rights, appropriate legal protection for their rights, and political participation due to the patriarchal nature of Pakistani culture.

Relational and political empowerment of women assesses the amount of women's access to authority, decision-making, and attaining membership and affiliation with political parties. Women's groups encourage women to run for office and take an active role in politics. According to Tabassum, Afzal, and Tabassum (2015), women's political engagement and empowerment differ depending on the culture. Depending on their educational attainment, women are firmly ingrained in the sociocultural milieu and local customs.

Studies show that increased social engagement between female programme participants, locals, and leaders seems to enhance communication, encourage information exchange, and produce notable changes in behaviour and attitude (Vakis et al., 2011). Women who have an education are more equipped to defend their rights, engage in politics, and attend meetings. There are also many examples of capable women in undeveloped countries benefiting from political campaigns. An educated woman may fit in with any class or culture, express her thoughts freely, and promote social progress in her neighbor-hood. Democratic administrations are more common in nations where women have received an education (Chandra, 2018).

According to Magaji (2014), relational empowerment gives women the freedom to exercise their rights and obligations as members of society and to decide whether or not to participate in politics or make personal decisions. In developing countries, women have a greater social position based on education than in developing countries (Butt & Victor, 2014). According to Engida (2021), women's education fosters social progress and may increase people's political awareness and involvement. Women with more education are better equipped to lead moral lives and hold respectable positions in society. According to Chandra (2018), educated women are more likely to attend events where qualified women from underdeveloped countries have benefited from political campaigns and to become involved in political action. Bari (2005), said that women's exclusion from and their involvement in political realms are determined by both internal and external influences. According to Asif (2013), social, cultural, and religious factors have a major and advantageous influence on women's political empowerment. Social class, gender-based discrimination has obstructed women's advancement in society. The surprising reality is that women in underdeveloped nations are denied the opportunity to be empowered in both politics and relationships (Hanif et al., 2009).

Patriarchy, a discriminatory social framework, and the Pashtun wali are only a few of the many sociocultural obstacles that prevent women in Pashtun culture from achieving political participation. There are well-defined paths to high-quality education in Pashtun codes. Women's political empowerment has improved as a result of the media's positive impact. Kreager et al. (2013) stated that educated women tend to be more confident and independent in social situations, which protects and reduces their susceptibility to emotional and physical abuse in the home.

Nature of the Study

Every research study must follow a certain set of methodological guidelines. While the present research is quantitative, a descriptive approach has been used to characterize the whole scenario precisely and methodically.

Sampling and Sampling Frame

A smaller representation of the whole population makes up the sample. The researcher used a simple random sample procedure for this research study. In contrast, 225 female teachers (primary, middle, and high) schools from the three targeted districts' (Bajawar, Kurram, and Mohmand) were chosen using the Sekran sample size determination table. The researcher then selects an equal sample from each segment and district to ensure that each segment and district is equally represented. The sample frame is shown below;

Table 1

District	PST	Middle	High	Total
Bajawar	38	19	18	
Kurram	38	19	18	
Mohmand	38	19	18	225
Total	114	57	54	

Tools of Data Collection

The most technical task during a research activity is development of the tools. A structured questionnaire was used by the researcher as a study instrument in this research study.

Analysis of the Data

Data analysis is the act of gathering raw data and translating it into information that users can use to make decisions (Wickham & Wickham, 2016). For this research activity, the researcher analyzed the data through Uni-Variate and Bi-Variate analysis by applying the chi-square test for the association between dependent and independent variables.

Result and Discussion

Table 2

Responses of school teachers on women's political participation

Items	Respondents	*SA %	A %	UD %	DA %	SDA %	**X^2	P-value
a. Education enables women to participate in politics.	PST	37 32.5	61 53.5	14 12.3	01 0.9	01 0.9	117.93	0.000
	MST	21 36.84	26 45.36	08 14.03	01 1.75	01 1.75	50.10	
	HST	16 29.6	27 50	06 11.11	02 3.70	03 5.55	41.74	
b. Education enhances women by increasing their decision-making power	PST	38 33.3	60 52.6	13 11.4	02 1.8	01 0.9	114.89	0.000
	MST	18 31.57	30 52.63	07 12.28	01 1.75	01 1.75	54.84	
	HST	15 27.77	28 51.85	07 12.96	03 5.55	01 1.85	44.88	
c. Education enables her to vote at her own choice.	PST	43 37.7	61 53.5	08 7.0	01 0.9	01 0.9	133.19	0.000
	MST	16 28.07	30 52.63	08 14.03	02 3.50	01 1.75	50.45	
	HST	15 27.77	30 55.55	07 12.9	01 1.85	01 1.85	54.88	
d. Education increases her mobility in society.	PST	33 28.9	60 52.6	18 15.8	02 1.8	01 0.9	106.08	0.000
	MST	20 35.08	28 49.12	07 12.28	01 1.75	01 1.75	51.33	
	HST	16 29.6	33 61.1	03 5.55	01 1.85	01 1.85	71.55	
e. Education helps in developing their self-confidence	PST	41 36.0	58 50.9	12 10.5	02 1.8	01 0.9	113.80	0.000
	MST	20 35.08	30 52.63	05 8.77	01 1.75	01 1.75	59.40	
	HST	17 31.48	28 51.85	06 11.11	01 1.85	02 3.70	49.14	

Chi-square (X^2) table value at 0.05= 9.49

** Significant *Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), undecided (UD), Disagreed (DA) and strongly disagreed (SDA).

Education Enables Her to Participate in Politics

Data on the contribution of education to women's political empowerment are shown in the above table 2 (a). Respondents were asked whether education plays a role in enabling women to engage in politics. Of those primary teachers answered, 32.5 percent chose strongly agreed, 53.5 percent chose agreed, 12.3 percent chose undecided, 0.9 percent chose disagreed, and 0.9 percent chose strongly disagreed. The result of the chi-square test was 117.93. A similar question was posed to 57 middle school teachers. That being said, 36.84 percent of teachers chose strongly agreed, 45.36 percent chose agreed, 14.03 percent chose undecided, 1.75 percent chose disagreed, and 1.75 percent chose strongly disagreed in response to that statement. 50.10 was the chi-square test result. In addition, a statement from 54 high school teachers was requested. Thus, among instructors, 29.6 percent chose strongly agreed, 50 percent chose agreed, 11.11 percent chose undecided, 3.70 percent chose disagreed, and 5.55 percent chose strongly disagreed. The result of the chi-square test was 41.74. The table value was 9.49 at 0.05. The findings indicated that her degree gives her the ability to engage in politics. These results are supported by the work of (Uwakwe et al., 2008).

Education Empowers Women by giving them More Influence over Decisions Making Power

Table 2 (b) demonstrates that 114 primary school teachers were requested statement. 33.3 percent of teachers responded strongly agreed, 52.6 percent agreed, 11.4 percent were undecided, 1.8 percent disagreed, and 0.9 percent severely disagreed. The result of the chi-square test was 114.89. In a similar vein, when the same proposition was posed to 57 middle school teachers, 31.57 percent of teachers were strongly agreed, 52.63 percent of them agreed with it, 12.28 percent undecided, while 1.75 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. 54.84 was the Chi-Square test result. Additionally, data from 54 high school teachers revealed that the statement was agreed with by 27.77 percent of teachers, strongly agreed upon by 51.85 percent of teachers agreed, undecided by 12.96 percent of teachers, disagreed upon by 5.55 percent of teachers, and strongly disagreed upon 1.85 percent of teachers. The chi-square test result of 44.88 is larger than the table value. The findings demonstrated that women benefit from education by having more decision-making authority (Stromquist, 2015).

Education Allows Women to Cast her Own Vote

The data was collected from 114 primary school teachers regarding the statement in table 2 (c). Thus, in response to that statement, 37.7 percent of teachers were strongly agreed, 53.5 percent of teachers chose agreed, 7.0 percent chose undecided, 0.9 percent chose disagreed and strongly disagreed among teachers respectively. The result of the chi-square test was 133.19. A similar question was posed to 57 middle school teachers. Teachers' choices were as follows: 28.07 percent chose strongly agreed, 52.63 percent chose agreed, 14.03 percent chose undecided, 3.50 percent chose disagreed, and 1.75 percent chose strongly disagreed. 50.45 was the chi-square test result. Additionally, statements from 54 high school teachers were requested. 27.77 percent of teachers chose Strongly agreed, 55.55 percent selected for agreed, 12.9 percent opted for uncertain, 1.85 percent opted for disagreed, and 1.85 percent opted for strongly disagreed. The result of the chi-square test was 54.88. 9.49 was the observed table value at 0.05. Findings indicated that the computed value is higher than the table value, indicating that her education gives her the freedom to cast any kind of Ballot. These results were supported by the work of (Uwakwe et al., 2008).

Education Improves her Social Mobility

A survey of 114 primary school teachers was conducted in table 2 (d) to find out whether education improves her social mobility. 28.9 percent of primary teachers responded in favor of strongly agreed, 52.6 percent opted for agreed, 15.8 percent selected for undecided, 1.8 percent opted for disagreed and 0.9 percent opted for strongly disagreed. The result of the chi-square test was 106.08. A similar question was posed to 57 middle school teachers. As a consequence, of that statement, 35.08 percent of instructors selected for Strongly Agreed, 49.12 percent opted for Agreed, 12.28 percent opted for Undecided, 1.75 percent opted for disagreed and 1.75 percent opted for strongly disagreed. 51.33 was the chi-square test result. In addition, a statement from 54 high school teachers was requested. 29.06 percent of instructors

voted for Strongly Agreed, 61.1 percent selected for Agreed, 5.55 percent opted for undecided, 1.85 percent chose for disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The result of the chi-square test came out to be 71.55. The computed value is bigger than Table value 9.49 at 0.05, according to the results. These results are supported by the work of (Khatri, 2016).

## Education Aids in the Growth of Self-confidence

Table 2 (e) demonstrates that 36.0 percent of the 114 primary school teachers who participated in the survey chose to strongly agree, 50.9 percent chose to agree, 10.5 percent chose undecided, 1.8 percent chose to disagree, and 0.9 percent chose to strongly disagree. The result of the chi-square test was 113.80. A similar question was posed to 57 middle school teachers. Accordingly, 35.08 percent chose strongly agreed, 52.63 percent chose agreed, 8.77 percent chose undecided, 1.75 percent chose disagreed, and 1.75 percent chose strongly disagreed in response to that statement. The result of the chi-square test was 59.40. In addition, a statement from 54 high school teachers was requested. 31.48 percent of teachers chose strongly disagreed, 51.85 percent chose agreed, 11.11 percent chose undecided, 1.85 percent chose disagreed, and 3.70 percent chose strongly agreed. The result of the chi-square test was 49.14. 9.49 was the observed table value at 0.05. The computed values are higher than the table value, according to the results, indicating that education fosters the growth of self-confidence. These primary data are supported by the work of (Uwakwe et al., 2008).

Figure 1
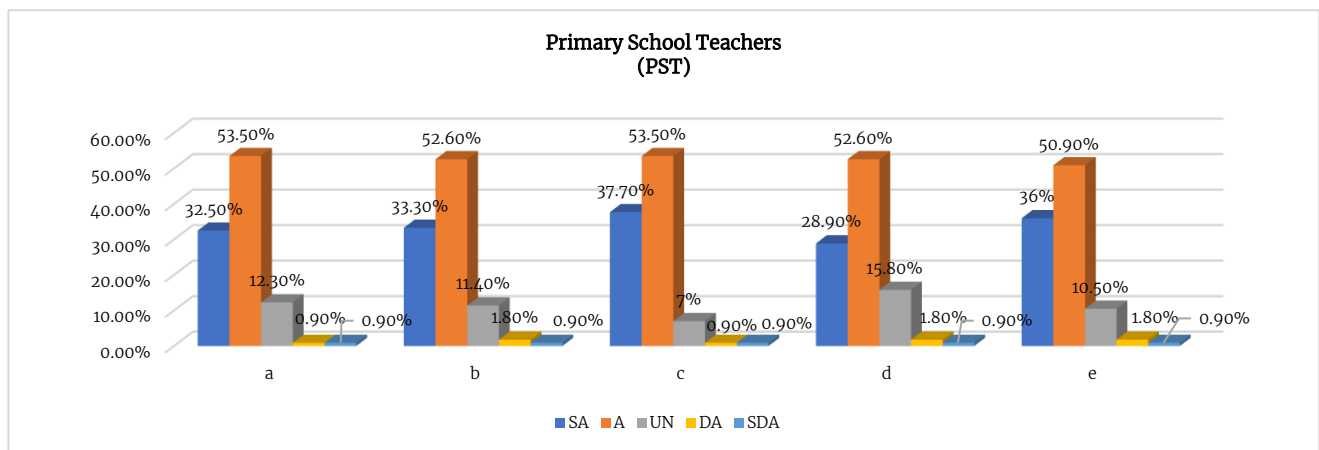
The above graph shows the graphical data of primary school teachers (PST) in percentages. The a-e variables show the questions in the above-mentioned table, whereas the different color shows different percentages of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), undecided (UD), Disagreed (DA) and Strongly Disagreed (SDA) in the graph.

Figure 2
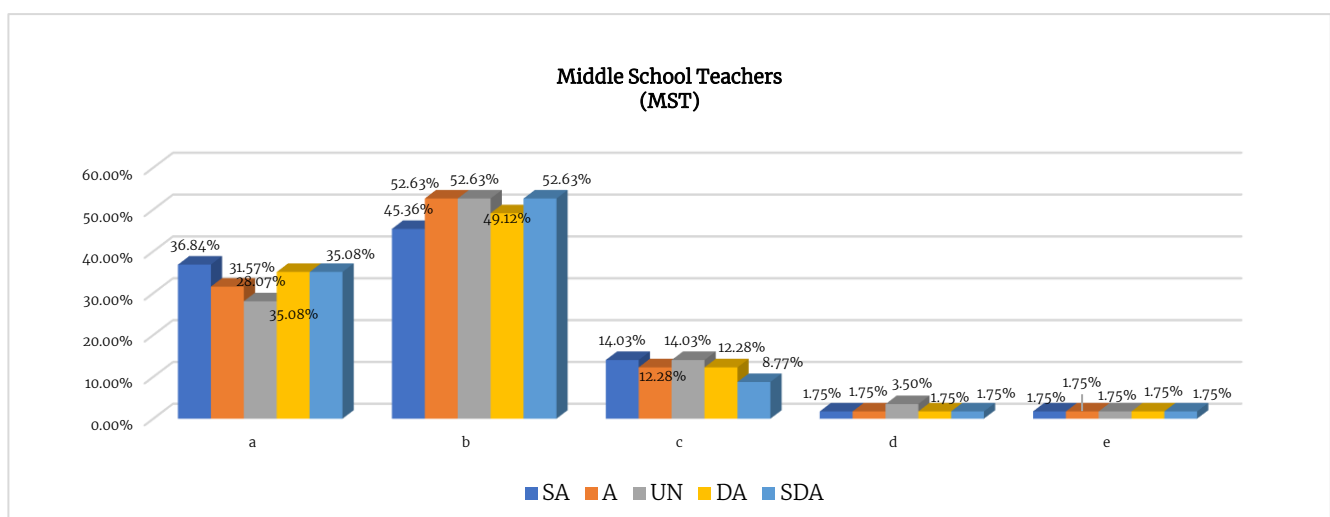
The above graph shows the graphical data of middle school teachers (MST) in percentages. The a-e variables show the questions in the above-mentioned table, whereas the different color shows different percentages of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), undecided (UD), Disagreed (DA) and Strongly Disagreed (SDA) in the graph.

Figure 3
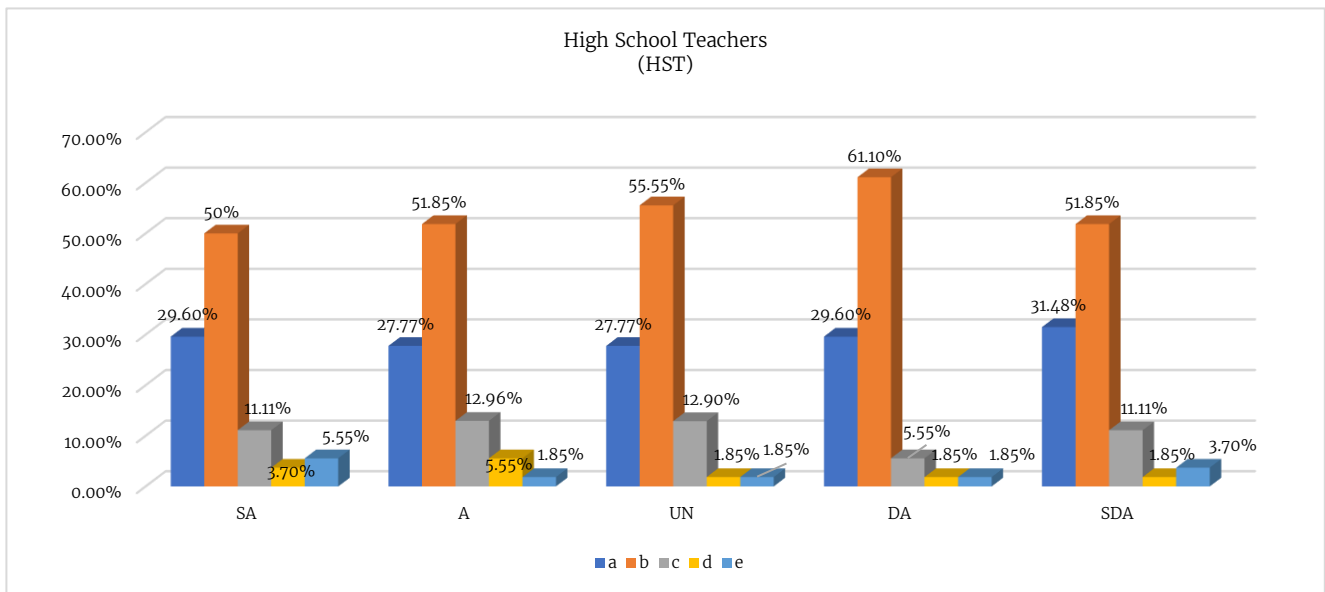
The graph above displays the percentage-based graphical statistics for high school teachers (HST). The items in the above-mentioned table are represented by the a-e variables, while the graph's various colors correspond to the percentages of respondents who are Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), uncertain (UD), Disagreed (DA), and Strongly Disagreed (SDA).

Findings

The study's conclusions demonstrated that 45.36 percent of the women said that their education allows them to engage in politics. Women's lives are improved by education because it increases their decision-making power, according to 52.63 percent of teachers surveyed. 52.63 percent of participants said that they thought education allowed women to vote whenever they wanted. Similarly, 49.12 percent thought that education boosted a woman's social mobility. 52.63 percent of the respondents believed that education aids in the development of one's sense of self-confidence.

Conclusion

The present research focuses on how education helps female teachers in newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa become more politically empowered. The study's main goal was to learn more about the perspectives of female teachers and how education promotes women's empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's newly merged districts. The study's findings demonstrated that women are drawn to political participation, including voting, running for office, making decisions, and taking on leadership roles. Education is the reason why women are so involved in and actively participate in political activities. Education is what makes people aware of the significance of women in politics.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been initiated in light of the research findings;
- In the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, awareness workshops and seminars on the value and function of education and how it promotes female school teachers' empowerment are recommended.

- It is recommended that KP local government act training and awareness seminars be organized for female school teachers in the newly merged district, with a focus on how the act empowers women politically.
- It is advised that women be encouraged to run for office, cast votes, and make decisions about their own lives. Policy, culture, and religion should all support this kind of encouragement.

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