



RESEARCH PAPER

The Role of Higher Education in the Socioeconomic Empowerment of Women in South Punjab, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the impact of higher education on socioeconomic empowerment of women in South Punjab, Pakistan. More specifically, the study focused on the perceptions of female students about the role of higher education institutions in the empowerment of women in economic and social aspects and analyzed the differences in perceptions according to some demographic variables. Empowerment of women is acknowledged as an essential ingredient in the realization of sustainable development, gender equality and inclusive socio-economic development. The role of higher education in improving employment opportunities, financial independence, leadership and decision making skills of women, and their social participation is very significant. Although higher education in Pakistan has been expanding, very little empirical evidence is available to draw conclusions on the role of higher education in the socioeconomic empowerment of women in south Punjab, thus the relevance of this investigation. This study was conducted using a quantitative research approach with descriptive survey research design. The students of female colleges of The Women University Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan and Emerson University Multan were selected as the target population. The number of respondents selected in the sample using random sampling is 377. A self-developed questionnaire comprising of demographic information and two dimensions of women empowerment – economic empowerment and social empowerment, was used to collect data. Data was analyzed using SPSS with descriptive statistics, regression analysis, independent-samples *t*-test and one way ANOVA. The results showed that the respondents strongly felt that higher education plays an important role in the socioeconomic empowerment of females. Higher education was seen to improve the employment prospects, economic independence, career progression, social position, leadership, self-confidence and legal and social awareness of women. Economic empowerment ($R^2 = .808$) and social empowerment ($R^2 = .807$) were found to be significant factors affecting women's socioeconomic empowerment using regression analysis. The study suggests that government authorities and universities should give opportunities to women to go to higher educational institutions by providing scholarships and financial support and adopting inclusive higher education policies especially in the areas of South Punjab which are not well served. Universities need to further reinforce their career counseling, leadership development, entrepreneurship and digital skills programmes to improve women's socioeconomic status.

Keywords: Higher Education, Women Empowerment, Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment, South Punjab, Pakistan

Introduction

The modern age has recognized higher education as one of the preconditions of sustainable development not only in the world but also in the academic performance of a nation. Gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development agenda in the societies where societies are still characterized by deep-rooted social inequalities and patriarchal

cultures that impact the opportunities of women. Similarly, socio-economic empowerment of women is a significant issue in Pakistan and it is an issue that is being subjected to extreme losses in socially conservative and geographically isolated areas like the South Punjab (Sikander, 2025). The South Punjab district is the amalgamation of the districts including Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan, which are agrarian economies with internalized social traditions (Abbas et al., 2025). Here the role of the higher education comes into the center not only in the ability of an individual but also in the social and economic change in general (Wahid et al., 2025).

The connection between higher education and socio-economic empowerment takes a leading stage in the modern development research. To women in nominal countries, particularly those in socially conservative, geographically remote areas such as South Punjab, Pakistan, higher education is not only a matter of academic success but also a test of highly patriarchal principles (Sikander, 2025). Southern Punjab that comprises Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan are very indicative of the structural limitation that women have to face in the post-colonial agrarian societies where lack of mobility, access to resources, as well as gender roles, continue to define life opportunities.

In South Punjab, there exists gender discrimination in terms of education despite of significant improvement in the past few decades. Although the number of female enrolment in the primary and secondary school institutions has gone up, there is a relatively low level of female enrolment at the tertiary level, especially in rural and less developed areas (Government of Pakistan, 2022). Women are usually deterred to further their education because of the pressure of culture associated with early marriage, limited movement, and household chores (Bari, 2000; Naz and Chaudhry, 2017). These inequalities are further worsened by economic challenges such as poverty and inaccessibility of scholarships. Therefore, the opportunities of higher education as a means of empowerment among women have not been fully utilized in most of the regions in the country.

Historically, the region has been characterized by a feudal-patriarchal nexus that renders women mobile and free. But in the past decade the situation has been changed with the introduction of sub-campus and regional universities such as the Women University Multan, Bahaudin Zikrya University, Multan, University of Education and the growth of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, hence, female agency is changing its landscape. (Wahid et al., 2025),

South Punjab is referred as the periphery of the center. Although Central Punjab (Lahore, Faisalabad) has industrialized fast, South Punjab is the Cotton Belt. The area is characterized by its severe developmental imbalances with the central and northern areas of the province. The area has varied landscapes, with the historical Multan shrines to the Cholistan desert, the biggest in Bahawalpur (Abbas et al., 2025). The region is a major contributor to the GDP of Pakistan in terms of agricultural activities, but it does not get an equitable portion of the development funds (Abbas et al., 2025). South Punjab districts such as Rajanpur and Muzaffargarh are always at the lowest literacy rates compared to such urban centres as Lahore, which can be largely explained by inequalities caused by infrastructure as well as the lack of access to motorways (Hadier et al., 2025). Agriculture is one of the main sectors of the economy, and female workers are exposed to health problems and formal appreciation (Abbas et al., 2025). This economic neglect directly affects women, and families that are economically stressed and invest more in the education of a son instead of a daughter (Tabassum et al., 2024).

Educated women in South Punjab tends to inspire youth by serving as role models, and changing the perceptions of families regarding the status of women (Wahid et al., 2025). The "ripple effect" is a prime example of women education. Such evidence shows that when females gain education, its impacts spread within the societies. Even in rural areas, educated mothers are most likely to prioritize education for their kids because they knew the

importance of female education particularly for socio economic empowerment, thereby helps in reducing dropout rates and fostering a lifelong cycle of learning (Sikander, 2025).

In spite of its possible positive aspects, the path of higher education of women in South Punjab does not go without challenges. As one example, women in South Punjab have a difficult time accessing higher education. To start with, the barrier is early marriage, as well as the established family values that tend to favor education of sons over that of daughters (Jabeen et al., 2024; Wahid et al., 2025). Decisions are influenced by culture beliefs - learning by men perceived as being more useful. Besides, expensive education is also a significant factor; the fees, textbooks, and transportation are quickly accumulated. Many families just survive on a low budget, and college seems unaffordable. (Tabassum et al., 2024). The research conducted by Hadier et al. (2025) so-called PAK-IPPL survey demonstrates that opportunity is influenced by movement and physical confidence. Most of them do not go to campuses or workplaces without special transportation facilities designed to suit women. Education alone does not clear the path; getting there carries expenses - not just money, but reputation and time - that can cancel out gains. Abbas et al. (2025) point out these burdens quietly block progress, even after schooling ends.

Despite the establishment of higher education institutions in South Punjab, the achievement of the degree does not necessarily mean bringing socio-economic rewards. Not all women report better life achievements despite the higher education. The cultural norms tend to be an obstacle along with the barriers of finances and poor institutional support. These are the aspects that restrict employment and job advancement to many female graduates. There is need to study the role of higher education in women social economic empowerment and to determine the perceptions of students among various demographic groups. In order to address these problems, a multi-layered solution will be required, which would involve the changes in legislation, infrastructures, and the community-based sensitization to ensure that every woman in the region has an opportunity to transform her potential (Sikander, 2025).

Literature Review

The recent scholarly discourse helps to examine the relationship between higher education and women's socio-economic empowerment. The socioeconomic empowerment of women is not a single concept rather it is layered with an evolving process which is influenced by institutional, structural and individual factors. In this context, higher education emerges as a critical instrument that transforms women's economic participation in a society. Recent studies and related literature stresses that women's access to economic opportunities has been increased by the provision of higher education which equip them with relevant skills.

Women's Empowerment through Education

Higher education is a transformational instrument that can empower women to acquire an administrative skill and critical thinking required to play a significant role in the life of the family and society (Latif and Rasool, 2025). In the particular case of Pakistan, education has been identified as one of the main factors leading to national development, and structural and social factors remain as the main obstacles to gender equality in academic achievement (Pervez et al., 2023). Socioeconomic empowerment of women is a multidimensional process of enhancing decision-making skills, providing access to financial resources, and controlling life choices (Batoool and Afzal, 2023).

Recent empirical researches prove that higher education has a central role in promoting the economic condition of women by increasing their earnings capacity and chances of employment. (Sikander and Bashir, 2025). A study carried out in Pakistan shows that women who have achieved university education have a better chance of getting a stable

job and have higher earning capacities as compared to those who have attained lower levels of education. This augmented financial means can be seen to contribute to a shift in the household pattern with women starting to have more say in the financial decision making process (Lodhi & Shahzad, 2025; Jabeen et al., 2023).

However, higher education is a revolutionary tool of empowering women especially in the developing societies where gender differences are still ingrained in society. Recent research highlights the importance of access to education in enabling women to challenge traditional norms, increase agency and become more active participants in the economic and social realm. When applied to the context of Pakistan, it has been shown that education does not just enhance the employment opportunities of women, but also empowers them to negotiate in the patriarchal societies and redefine their position in the societies (Zulfiqar and Kuskoff, 2024; Khan et al., 2024). Moreover, modern evidence indicates that education helps in empowering because it leads to critical awareness, confidence, and the ability to make decisions, which are critical factors in achieving long-term socio-economic mobility and independence (Daraz et al., 2024; Al Jumhuri, 2023). Although higher education intends to empower women, as highlighted in the recent literatures, the relationship between education and women empowerment is complex and mediated by the socio-cultural and structural barriers. Research in Pakistan indicates that despite higher education increasing the potential of women, their potential is often hampered by factors like limited mobility, gender norms, and economic factors (Zulfiqar and Kuskoff, 2024; MDPI, 2024). Also, the studies show that empowerment is not a direct effect of education but a slow process that needs to be facilitated by supportive institutional structures and social acceptance to be fully achieved (Khan et al., 2024; Daraz et al., 2024). Thus, as much as education has been a significant avenue towards empowerment, its success is also determined by the overall socio-economic conditions under which women live.

Lastly, education enables women to engage in the democratic process and be able to champion their legal rights. Constitutional knowledge, including laws on inheritance and legislation on harassment at work, are a direct consequence of education level. Higher education equips women to be leaders in their community organizations and local governments so that their voices are heard in the halls of policy making that shape their lives (Lodhi and Shahzad, 2025). Finally, gender-specific empowerment of women as a result of their education is not only a gender-specific objective; it is a compulsory prerequisite of the comprehensive and sustainable development of any given society.

Material and Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design.

Population

The population consisted of female students enrolled in:

- Women University Multan
- Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan
- Emerson University Multan

Sample

A sample of 377 respondents was selected through random sampling.

Research Instrument

A self-developed questionnaire was used after an extensive review of relevant literature. The questionnaire comprised three sections:

- Demographic Information
- Economic Empowerment
- Social Empowerment

Table 1
Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach Alpha
Economic Empowerment	.734
Social Empowerment	.823

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Descriptive Statistics
- Regression Analysis
- Independent Sample t-test
- One-Way ANOVA

Results and Discussion

Table 2
Perceptions of students regarding the role of Higher Education in the Socioeconomic Empowerment of Women in South Punjab

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increases employment opportunities for women	376	4.79	.535
Better chances of earning higher income.	377	4.34	.591
Reduces women's financial dependence	376	4.52	.511
Helps women start their own businesses.	376	4.43	.512
Better manage household finances.	377	4.44	.508
Enables women to contribute financially	377	4.44	.517
Improves women's standard of living	377	4.47	.515
Make independent financial decisions.	377	4.41	.508
Better able to support their children's education financially.	377	4.44	.513
Capable of facing economic challenges and crises.	376	4.41	.508
Higher education improves women's access to professional and skilled jobs	377	4.43	.512
Higher education strengthens women's ability to plan their economic future.	377	4.48	.506
Higher education increases women's confidence in handling financial matters.	377	4.45	.519
Lead women towards better access to high-paying job opportunities.	377	4.48	.506
Helps women to achieve long-term financial stability.	377	4.46	.510
Improves women's social status	376	4.72	.555
Participate more actively in community development.	376	4.35	.599
Helps women resist social injustice and discrimination.	377	4.45	.539
More aware of health and family planning issues.	376	4.41	.514
Promotes leadership qualities among women.	376	4.45	.514
Improves women's knowledge and skills	376	4.41	.503
Increases women's self-confidence	376	4.41	.509
Helps women in making independent decisions.	377	4.45	.504
Awareness of legal and social rights.	377	4.46	.509
Contribute more positively to society.	377	4.41	.508
Receive more respect in society.	377	4.49	.511
Participate more actively in community and social activities.	377	4.44	.523

Increases women's confidence in expressing their opinions.	377	4.41	.502
Enables women to challenge traditional and cultural restrictions.	377	4.45	.509
Make independent decisions about marriage and family life.	377	4.48	.516

Descriptive statistics revealed respondents' strong perceptions on the economic empowerment of women through higher education. The mean scores for most statements were high and these ranged from 4.34 to 4.79 and indicated a high level of agreement by the respondents. There was strong consensus ($M = 4.79$, $SD = .435$) among participants for the statement, "Higher education leads to increased employment opportunities for women." In addition, the low standard deviation values indicated consistency of responses.

Table 3
Regression Analysis of Economic Empowerment

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.899 ^a	.808	.808	.06305

a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic

The economic empowerment and women's socioeconomic empowerment have a high positive correlation with an R value of .899 indicated in the Model Summary table. The R square value is 0.808, meaning that economic empowerment has a significant role in the empowerment of women. The model is also stable and reliable with an Adjusted R Square value of .808. Also, the Standard Error of the Estimate (.06305) is low indicating the good fit of the regression model. Results indicate that economic empowerment plays major role in improving the socioeconomic empowerment of women in South Punjab.

Table 4
ANOVA for Economic Empowerment Regression Model

ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	6.280	1	6.280	1580.072	.000 ^b
	Residual	1.491	375	.004		
	Total	7.771	376			

a. Dependent Variable: SOCIOEMP

b. Predictors: (Constant), Economic

The results show that the regression model is statistically significant as the Regression Sum of Squares is 6.280, which represents 6.28% of the Total Sum of Squares of 7.771, indicating that a large portion of the variation in socioeconomic empowerment is explained by economic empowerment. Hence the results indicate that economic empowerment plays a significant role in the socioeconomic empowerment of women and the regression model is well fitted to the data.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients for Economic Empowerment

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.856	.091	9.442	.000
	Economic	.807	.020	.899	39.750

a. Dependent Variable: SOCIOEMP

The results of the table reveal that economic empowerment has a strong positive impact on the socioeconomic empowerment of women and significantly enhance the overall

socioeconomic status of women. The regression analysis showed that women's economic empowerment significantly and positively explained their socioeconomic empowerment. The model was statistically significant, $F(1,375)=1580.072$, $p < .001$. An R square value of .808 showed that 80.8% of the variance in socioeconomic empowerment was accounted for by economic empowerment. Besides, there was a significant positive relationship between economic empowerment and socioeconomic empowerment ($\beta = .899$, $p < .001$).

Table 6
Regression Analysis of Social Empowerment

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.898 ^a	.807	.807	.06322

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social

A high R (0.898) shows that there is a strong positive correlation between social empowerment and women's socioeconomic empowerment as shown in the Model Summary table. The R square value of .807 scored by this equation means that, 80.7% of the variation in socioeconomic empowerment can be explained by social empowerment, contributing to a significant extent from social factors toward empowering women. Furthermore the Adjusted R Square value of .807 further indicates stability and reliability of the model. Also, the Standard Error of the Estimate (.06322) is low, indicating a good fit of the regression model. Overall, the results show that social empowerment is one of the strongest variables that can positively contribute to the socioeconomic empowerment of women in South Punjab.

Table 7
ANOVA for Social Empowerment Regression Model

ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	6.272	1	6.272	1569.553	.000 ^b
	Residual	1.499	375	.004		
	Total	7.771	376			

a. Dependent Variable: SOCIOEMP

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test reveals that the model of regression is statistically significant in predicting women's socioeconomic empowerment. The obtained F value was 1569.553 and p value was .000. The regression model is significant and provides validation supporting the significant role of social empowerment towards women's socioeconomic empowerment in South Punjab

Table 8
Regression Coefficients for Social Empowerment

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.859	.091		9.445	.000
	Social	.809	.020	.898	39.618	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SOCIOEMP

Coefficients table shows the power of the social empowerment in predicting the socioeconomic empowerment of women. The constant value ($B = .859$) represents the baseline level of socioeconomic empowerment. The regression coefficient for social empowerment ($B = .809$) shows that socioeconomic empowerment increases by .809 units for each unit increase in social empowerment. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = .898$) also

shows very strong positive relationship between social empowerment and socioeconomic empowerment. Moreover, the effect is statistically significant ($t = 39.618, p = .000$). Based on this, it could be concluded that social empowerment is a good predictor of socioeconomic empowerment and it contributes significantly to socioeconomic empowerment of the women of South Punjab.

The regression analysis showed that social empowerment was a significant predictor of the socioeconomic empowerment among women. The model was statistically significant, $F(1,375)=1569.553, p < .001$. With the R-square value of 0.807, it was revealed that 80.7% of the variations in socioeconomic empowerment was explained by social empowerment. Furthermore, the positive effect of social empowerment was significant and very strong for socioeconomic empowerment ($\beta = .898, p < .001$).

Table 9
Independent Samples t-Test Based on Residence

Residence of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rural	68	4.4570	.17735
Urban	309	4.4590	.13560
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Residence of Respondents	-.102	376	.919

To compare perceptions on socioeconomic empowerment in rural and urban area, an independent sample t-test was used. The findings indicated no statistically significant difference between rural respondents ($M = 4.45, SD = .177$) and urban respondents ($M = 4.45, SD = .135$), $t(376) = -.102, p = .919$. Thus, there was no significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of women's socioeconomic empowerment as influenced by their place of residence.

Table 10
Independent Samples t-Test Based on Marital Status

Marital status of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Single	138	4.4505	.14576
Married	24	4.4444	.09564
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital Status of Respondents	.196	160	.845

An independent sample t-test was used to test the differences in perceptions between married and unmarried individuals. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between single respondents ($M = 4.45, SD = .145$) and married respondents ($M = 4.44, SD = .095$), $t(160) = .196, p = .845$. So marital status was not significant in affecting perceptions on women's socioeconomic empowerment.

Table 11
One-Way ANOVA for Age-wise Differences in Socioeconomic Empowerment

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.200	3	.067	2.499	.039
Within Groups	9.932	373	.027		
Total	10.132	376			

The one-way ANOVA was used to assess if there were any differences in perceptions of socioeconomic empowerment between age groups of respondents. Results showed that this difference was statistically significant across respondents of different age groups, $F(3,373)=2.499, p=.039$. Thus, the age shows a significant difference among respondents' attitudes on the role of higher education in women's socioeconomic empowerment.

Table 12
One-Way ANOVA for Educational Qualification-wise Differences in Socioeconomic Empowerment

ANOVA					
SOCIOEMP					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.359	2	.180	6.875	.001
Within Groups	9.772	374	.026		
Total	10.132	376			

A one-way ANOVA was performed to test for differences between the perceptions of socioeconomic empowerment by education level. The findings showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the respondents of the different educational qualification groups, $F(2,374)=6.875$, $p=.001$. Thus, the educational qualification played a significant role in shaping respondents' views on the role of higher education in socioeconomic empowerment of women.

Findings

The demographic analysis revealed that most respondents belonged to the age group of 21–25 years (50.4%). The majority were single (87.5%), urban residents (82%), and enrolled in BS programs (48%).

The findings demonstrated strong agreement regarding the role of higher education in women's empowerment. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement:

"Higher education increases employment opportunities for women" (M=4.79, SD=.535).

Similarly, respondents strongly agreed that higher education improves women's social status (M=4.72, SD=.555), strengthens economic planning abilities (M=4.48), and enhances awareness regarding legal and social rights (M=4.46).

Regression analysis revealed that economic empowerment significantly predicted socioeconomic empowerment:

- $R^2 = .808$
- $\beta = .899$
- $p < .001$

Similarly, social empowerment significantly predicted socioeconomic empowerment:

- $R^2 = .807$
- $\beta = .898$
- $p < .001$

One-way ANOVA indicated significant differences among age groups regarding perceptions of women's socioeconomic empowerment:

- $F(3,373)=2.499$

- $p=.039$

Educational qualification also showed significant differences:

- $F(2,374)=6.875$
- $p=.001$

However, residence and marital status did not produce meaningful differences in perceptions.

Discussion

The findings indicate that higher education plays a vital role in promoting women's socioeconomic empowerment in South Punjab. Respondents strongly agreed that higher education enhances employment opportunities, financial independence, and social participation. These findings are consistent with Awan (2016), who reported that education significantly contributes to women's empowerment and socioeconomic mobility.

The significant relationship between economic empowerment and socioeconomic empowerment supports the findings of Jehan and Khan (2019), who concluded that educated women demonstrate higher levels of financial independence and economic participation. Similarly, Ali et al. (2023) emphasized that education strengthens women's financial literacy and decision-making abilities.

The findings further revealed that higher education enhances women's social status, leadership abilities, and awareness of rights. These results support the conclusions of Sikander (2025) and Latif and Rasool (2025), who found that higher education improves women's confidence, social recognition, and civic participation.

Age and educational qualification significantly influenced respondents' perceptions regarding empowerment. These findings suggest that educational experiences and maturity levels shape perceptions of women's empowerment. Similar observations were reported by Pervez et al. (2023) and Jabeen et al. (2024).

Overall, the findings support the argument that higher education serves as a powerful mechanism for reducing gender inequalities and promoting women's participation in socioeconomic development.

Conclusion

The results show that higher education is important in enhancing the socioeconomic empowerment of the female population of South Punjab. The participants were very positive about the role of higher education in improving employment opportunities, financial independence and social participation. The results are consistent with the result of Awan (2016) which found that education plays a significant role in women's empowerment and socioeconomic mobility.

The findings obtained from the significant relationship between economic empowerment and socioeconomic empowerment are supported by the findings of Jehan and Khan (2019) that educated women have high financial independence and economic participation. In the same way, Ali et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of education on enhancing women's financial literacy and decision-making capabilities.

The results also indicated that, there was an improvement in women's social status, leadership and rights awareness due to higher education. The findings are in line with the

findings of Sikander (2025) and Latif and Rasool (2025) which highlighted that higher education increases women's self-confidence, social recognition and civic participation.

Education level and age had significant effects on respondents' perceptions in relation to empowerment. These results indicate that experiences in education and maturity influence perceptions of women empowerment. Pervez et al. (2023) and Jabeen et al. (2024) came to the same conclusion.

The overall conclusions indicate that higher education is an important tool in combating gender inequalities and facilitating women's involvement in socio-economic development.

The study concluded that high education is very important in socioeconomic empowerment of women in South Punjab. Higher education provides great opportunities for employment, earning power, career growth and living standards. It also increases the social status, confidence, leadership, rights awareness, and involvement of women in community development.

The results showed that higher education plays positive role in both economic and social empowerment aspects. For women, having an education is a significant strength when they make choices, engage in economic activity or seek to break down social barriers that hinder their development and growth.

Hence, higher education must be regarded as a strategic instrument to attain gender equality, women empowerment and sustainable socio-economic development of South Punjab.

Recommendations

- The government should invest more in higher education institutions to enhance educational opportunities for women.
- There should be financial support initiatives to help address the economic hurdles to higher education.
- Career counseling centers and professional development centers for female students should be established in universities.
- A need is that awareness creation programme should be organised to raise awareness about the importance of higher education for women empowerment.
- There is a need to implement leadership development, entrepreneurship and digital literacy programmes in universities.
- Educational institutions need to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for female students.
- Women need to be encouraged to engage in research, innovation, policymaking and leadership activities.
- Women from the rural and less resourced areas should receive special attention in the above.

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