

# Investigating the Association between Education and Observance of *Purdah* in Pakhtun Society: Linking Marital Status at Multivariate Level

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the study:** The study was designed to explore the perceptions of different stakeholders regarding the impact of education on the observance of *Purdah* concerning modernization.

**Methodology:** To examine the phenomena, the survey methodology was used for the investigation. The quantitative data was obtained through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire from different sampled groups i.e. intellectuals, lawyers, politicians, community leaders, and literary persons. Besides, bivariate and multivariate analyses were performed. The association between independent and dependent variables was measured through Chi-square, whereas multivariate analysis was employed.

**Findings:** The overall findings signposted a non-significant and positive relationship between increased schooling breaking down traditional values and norms, including family values, and change in observance of *Purdah*. Besides, a significant and positive relationship was identified between education as one of the important indicators of modernization in Pakhtun society and the dependent variable. Similarly, the relationship between modernization leads to the emergence of different types of education systems in Pakistan, and the observance of *Purdah* was noticed as significant and positive. The overall test statistics of the multivariate analysis revealed a highly significant, positive, and non-spurious relationship.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that although education has an impact on the practice of *Purdah*, however, there is no role for marital status concerning the pace of change.

**Keywords:** Swat Valley, Impact of Education, *Purdah* (veil), Change, Marital Status.

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## Introduction

The etymological context of the term *Purdah* reveals that it is initially derived from the Persian language wherein its literal meaning connotes i.e. a curtain in the shape of clothes; it denotes ‘*Chaadar*’ or ‘*Burqa*’ to cover the body of a female (Abid, 2009). The educated Muslims in the West who were in mindless mock of European customs and traditions encouraged the abolition or lessening of *Purdah* (Sultan, 1922). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women folk from middle-class families unveiled themselves posing it as a sign of gender equality. Similarly, mostly they unveiled due to their husband's insistence who regarded it as a sign of modernity. Ironically, middle-class women in the cities who had been exposed to Western culture began to leave their veils behind during this time (Hamel, 2002). It is very difficult to negate that *Purdah* was taken over as a stringent tenet by the orthodox and has thus inclined to limit the liberty and even education of Muslim womenfolk. Veiling (observance of *Purdah*) and isolation of women, in the severe form prevailing in Muslim cultures, is viewed as a shielding measure more than one intended by the urban. Education of females comes to be recognized as extremely needed though the paramount place for an educated female is still considered to be home-based; henceforth stress in the syllabus on subjects meant to make a noble spouse and an upright mother (Agha, 1974).

The Holy Quran states;

*“Tell believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty, that will make for greater purity for them and say to the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty and they should not display their beauty and ornament”* (Quran, XXIV:30, 31).

Boulter (2016) quoted the Surat al-Ahzab verse 59:

*“O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they should pull down upon them of their outer cloaks from their heads over their faces.”* (Quran, 33:59).

Anon (2007b) illustrated the case of Shukria Barakzai (Member of the Parliament for Kabul province, Afghanistan), she expressed her views about the observance of the *Purdah* (veil) that it is not a matter of concern for her if she dresses lesser veils as people who poll votes for her are educated, class...they belong to urban areas. Contrary to the point of view of Shukria Barakzai, a member of the Parliament from Takhar feels it is different in her case. The constituency from which she has been elected is mostly uneducated people and conservative. Keeping in view the aforementioned scenario, she has to pay care to the veils she wears. According to the binary logistic regression analysis's findings, a woman's choice to follow *purdah* is influenced by her caste, place of residence, religion, age, current employment situation, and educational background (Paul, 2020). In Northern Nigeria owing to a custom many of the females are directed to stay at home, leaving them uneducated (Salim, 1977). Coles and Mack (1991) comparatively examined the Muslim Hausa women wherein they depicted that in rural regions only wealthy farmers, religious teachers, and merchants can afford to segregate their partners. In urban areas, the notion of secluding educated women is not followed in some instances due to the compulsions imposed on women by employment necessities in the formal area.

In Pakistan, statistics regarding the practice of *Purdah* shows that in urban areas 82% of female follows the customs of *Purdah* whereas in rural the case is 47% respectively which can be labeled as the captivity of females to living accommodations distinct from those of males and the wearing of a *chador* or *burqa* in public. Males, unconnected to the females occupying the *zenana*, are not permitted to cross the edge. Womenfolk leave the boundaries of the *zenana* only when needed, and then generally when shielded by a *burqa*, or some kind of curtain that safeguards the female's physique from strange gentlemen's stares (Shah, 1981; Imran et al. 2020). The practice of *Purdah* in Pakistani society is attributed to both social and cultural ones (Imran and Iqbal, 2019). Females in Pakistan experience specific obstacles to becoming businesspersons: socio-cultural barricades (*Purdah and Izzat*), fences to capital (socio-economic), and

obstructions to the development of business capability (education and training). Owing to modern societal demands, the impact of media, and a lack of cognizance about Islamic responsibilities, an enormous bulk of females do not use "Purdah" particularly in the top class of city areas or among womenfolk with relatively advanced education. On the other hand, owing to undesirable Western conduct and changing situations in the Islamic World under the effect of Islamic Movements, the number of veiled girls, particularly students, has been significantly augmented (Arshad et al., 2012).

Veiling of a body and modest behavior is recognized by Muslims as Islamic commands to comply as a share of their belief—in what way a female's physique to be veiled is left to explanation and traditional practice. In Pakistan, the command to curtain is followed in countless means and is controlled by a family's class, level of education, and ethnicity, among other aspects (Riaz, 2012). Stereotyping of women's education and the job of educated females is equal to shattering the practice of *Purdah* (Muhammad and Askar, 2009). The notion of the family's class is also indicated by Imran et al. (2010) that its practice and understanding are not uniform in different classes of Pakistani society.

A research study carried out by Awan et al., (2011) to ascertain the approach of university students regarding the observance of *Purdah* (veiling) veiling or not discloses that certain students were not in favor of adopting the veil but due to some reasons they were taking the utmost care when they comment on it. On the other side, the study further elaborated that family pressure, personal preferences, religious obligations, and societal values were regarded as the central factors behind the practice of veiling.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To probe the impact of education on the observance of *Purdah* in the study area.
2. To examine the role of marital status (background variable) in the impact of education on the observance of *Purdah*.

### **Research Questions**

1. Whether education has an impact on the observance of *Purdah* in the target area?
2. Is there any role of marital status concerning the impact of education on the observance of *Purdah*?

### **Methodological Approach**

As the study was quantitative, therefore, the data was collected by using the stratified random sampling technique (Creswell, 2014). On the analogy delineated by Roscoe (1975), a total of 250 potential respondents were selected by quota sampling from different stakeholders of 07 tehsils in the locale i.e. community leaders, intellectuals, politicians, lawyers, and literary persons. From all these Tehsils, the requisite information was obtained from the study respondents through a multistage sampling technique encompassing quota sampling, purposive sampling, and stratified random sampling. The required data was collected by using a comprehensive and balanced questionnaire to get the factual data. In addition, ethical considerations were kept on top priority as highlighted by Hoyle et al., (2002), Fouka & Mantzorou (2011) Bahn (2012); Resnick (2015), and Beauchemin (2022) to achieve the research goal more transparently and scientifically. Moreover, the assessment of the internal consistency of the scale was done by using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) whereas the reliability analysis indicated a 0.834 value of  $\alpha$ . Subsequently, the bivariate, and multivariate level analyses were executed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) of the indexed data revealing the results of the Chi-square test, Fishers' Exact test, Gamma and Tau-C test statistics utilizing the below-stated formulas.

Percentage of a data class =  $f/N * 100$  Where  $f$  = frequency of data class &  $N$  = number of observations in the data set. (Kothari, 2004).

$$\chi^2 = \sum_i \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \quad \text{-----( Chaudhry, 1996)}$$

$$\text{Fisher exact test} = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{N! a! b! c! d!} \text{----- (Baily, 1982)}$$

$$\text{Kendall's Tau-c} = T^c = \frac{2(n_c - n_d)}{n^2 \frac{(m-1)}{m}}$$

$$\text{Cronbach's Alpha } (\alpha) = \frac{N \cdot \bar{C}}{(\bar{V} + (N-1) \cdot \bar{C})} \text{ (Cronbach, 1951)}$$

## Findings and Discussion

Based on the collected data and subsequent analyses, the results coupled with the relevant discussion are stated below.

### Bivariate Analysis

Table 1: Association between the Impact of Education and Change in Observance of Purdah

S.#	Attributes / Statement	Response	Change in Observance of Purdah		Total	Test Statistic $\chi^2$ (P-Value), Kendall's tau-c ( $T^c$ )
			High Change	Less Change		
1.	Increased schooling breaks down traditional values and norms, including family values.	Strongly Disagree	0(0.0)	4(100)	4(100)	$\chi^2=6.498$ P=0.165 $\gamma = 0.053$
		Disagree	1(12.5)	7(87.5)	8(100)	
		Neutral	2(6.5)	29(93.5)	31(100)	
		Agree	5(4.1)	118(95.9)	123(100)	
		Strongly Agree	0(0.0)	84(100)	84(100)	
2.	Education is one of the important indicators of modernization in Pakhtun society.	Strongly Disagree	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	3(100)	$\chi^2=11.185$ P=0.025 $\gamma = 0.044$
		Disagree	0(100)	1(100)	1(100)	
		Neutral	1(8.3)	11(91.7)	12(100)	
		Agree	5(3.5)	138(96.5)	143(100)	
		Strongly Agree	1(1.1)	90(98.9)	91(100)	
3.	Modernization led to the emergence of different types of education systems in Pakistan.	Strongly Disagree	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	3(100)	$\chi^2=10.311$ P=0.035 $\gamma = 0.038$
		Disagree	0(0.0)	2(100)	2(100)	
		Neutral	1(4)	24(96)	25(100)	
		Agree	5(3.8)	126(96.2)	131(100)	
		Strongly Agree	1(1.1)	88(98.9)	89(100)	
4.	Education equipped people with the use of modern technologies.	Strongly Disagree	0(0.0)	4(100)	4(100)	$\chi^2=6.777$ P=0.148 $\gamma = 0.023$
		Disagree	1(25)	3(75)	4(100)	
		Neutral	2(4.4)	43(95.6)	45(100)	
		Agree	3(2.6)	112(97.4)	115(100)	
		Strongly Agree	2(2.4)	80(97.6)	82(100)	

Table 1 depicts the association between the impacts of education and observance of *Purdah* in Pakhtun society. The response of the respondents regarding the statement that ‘increased schooling breaks down traditional values and norms, including family values’ was observed as agree i.e. 5(4.1 percent) to high change and 118(95.9 percent) to less change occurred in observance of *Purdah*. Similarly, among those who strongly agree, among those, the response of 0(0.0 percent) respondents strongly agreed toward high change, while 84(100 percent) respondents strongly agreed with accepting the impacts of education as less change. The inferential statistics indicated a significant association ( $P=0.0165$ ) between the above-mentioned variables in a positive direction as reflected by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.053$ ).

Likewise, answering to another statement that ‘education is one of the important indicators of modernization in Pakhtun society’ was treated as agree i.e. 5(3.5 percent) to high change and 138(96.5 percent) to less change occurred in the observance of *Purdah*. Similarly, among those who strongly agree, among those, the response of 1(1.1 percent) respondents strongly agreed in favor of the high change, while 88(98.9 percent) respondents strongly in favor of accepting the impacts of modernization as a less change. The inferential statistics indicated a significant association ( $P=0.025$ ) between the aforesaid variables in a positive direction as divulged by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.044$ ).

Subsequently, the view of the respondents toward another statement that ‘modernization leads to the emergence of different types of education systems in Pakistan.’ was detected as agree i.e. 5(3.8 percent) to high change and 126(96.2 percent) to less change occurred in the observance of *Purdah*. Successively, those who strongly agree, among those 1(1.1 percent) respondents responded as strongly agreeing toward high change, whereas 88(98.9 percent) respondents opined as strongly agreeing toward accepting the impacts of education as less change. The inferential statistics unveiled a significant association ( $P=0.035$ ) between the aforesaid variables in a positive direction as reflected by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.038$ ).

Moreover, concerning another statement i.e. ‘education equipped people with the use of modern technologies,’ the response was noticed as agree i.e. 3(2.6 percent) to high change and 112(97.4 percent) to high change occurred in the observance of *Purdah*. Along with this, those who strongly agree, those 2(2.4 percent) respondents replied strongly agree toward high change, while 80(97.6 percent) respondents disclosed strongly agree toward accepting the impacts of education as high change. The inferential statistics have shown a significant association ( $P=0.023$ ) between the aforementioned variables in a positive trend as revealed by the Gamma value ( $\gamma = 0.023$ ).

### ***Multivariate Analysis***

This section covers the multivariate analyses of the Independent Variable i.e. Impact of Education and Dependent Variable i.e. Change in Observance of *Purdah* while controlling the background variable i.e. Marital Status.

Table 2: Association between the Impact of Education and Change in Observance of *Purdah* while Controlling Marital Status as a Background Variable.

Marital Status	Impact of Education	Change in Observance of <i>Purdah</i>		Total	Test Statistics $\chi^2$ (P-Value), Kendall's tau-c ( $T^c$ )	Level of Significance for Entire Table
		High Change	Less Change			
Married	No Impact of Education	2(25)	3(75)	5(100)	$\chi^2= 27.232$ $P= 0.000$ $T^c = 0.052$	$\chi^2= 7.557$ $P= 0.023$ $T^c = 0.039$
	Moderate Impact of Education	1 (1.8)	55(98.2)	56 (100)		
	High Impact of Education	0 (0.0)	53 (100)	53 (100)		
	<b>Total</b>	2 (1.8)	109 (98.2)	114 (100)		

<b>Unmarried</b>	No Impact of Education	1(1.8)	2(98.2)	3(100)	$\chi^2= 1.047$ $P= 0.593$ $T^c = 0.031$
	Moderate Impact of Education	4 (6.3)	59 (93.7)	63 (100)	
	High Impact of Education	2 (2.9)	68 (97.1)	70 (100)	
	<b>Total</b>	6 (4.4)	129(95.6)	136 (100)	

Table 2 reveals the multivariate results which portray the association between the impact of education and change in observance of *Purdah* while controlling marital status as a background variable of the study. The nature of change has been measured in different levels like high change in observance of *Purdah* and less change in observance of *Purdah* about no impact of education, the moderate impact of education, and the high impact of education. Further, it is evident from the above table-2 that out of the total 250(100 percent) respondents; 114 were married whereas out of 114 respondents, 55(98.2 percent) agreed that there is a moderate impact of education on *Purdah* which resulted in less change in Observance of *Purdah*, followed by 53(100 percent) who believed in the high impact of education and high change in observance of *Purdah* in *Pakhtun* society. Subsequently, the Test Statistics i.e.  $\chi^2= 27.232$  &  $P= 0.000$  depicted a highly significant and positive relationship. On another hand, out of the total 250(100 percent) respondents, 136 respondents were unmarried whereas out of 136 respondents, 59(93.7 percent) showed agreement that there is a moderate impact of education on *Purdah* which resulted in less change in observance of *Purdah*, followed by 68(97.1 percent) who believed in the high impact of education and high change in observance of *Purdah*. In addition, the Test Statistics i.e.  $\chi^2= 1.047$  &  $P= 0.593$  showed a non-significant and positive relationship. Similarly, the overall test statistics of the above table-2 indicated a significant, positive, and non-spurious relationship. It is to be noted that although education has a positive and significant impact on the observance of *Purdah*, however the background variable (Marital Status) has no role in defining the speed of change as both are under the influence of change due to education.

## Conclusion

Education is one of the important indicators bringing multifaceted change in society including observance of *Purdah* in *Pakhtun* society. While exploring the phenomenon of change in the practice of *Purdah*, at the bivariate level, the inferential statistics indicated a significant association between the 'increased schooling breaks down traditional values and norms, including family values' and observance of *Purdah* in *Pakhtun* society in a positive direction. Further, a significant association was found between 'education is one of the important indicators of modernization in *Pakhtun* society' and the observance of *Purdah* in a positive direction. Likewise, a significant and positive association was detected between 'modernization leads to the emergence of different types of education systems in Pakistan' and the observance of *Purdah*. Also, the inferential statistics have further shown a significant association between the 'education equipped people with the use of modern technologies' in a positive inclination. Similarly, at the multivariate level, the overall test statistics posed a significant, positive, and non-spurious relationship. Further elaborating the argument, it has been revealed that there is no role of marital status in signifying the pace of change.

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