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Summary Report
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Pakistan

Gender gap in primary education: Balochistan province

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Gender Gap in Primary Education SUMMARY Balochistan Province

The first CIET cycle, *Gender gap in primary education*, was undertaken in Balochistan Province from December 1996 to May 1997, part of the Government of Pakistan-UNICEF country programme of cooperation 1996-1998. Nearly 4,500 households (31% urban, 69% in rural areas) in 36 sentinel communities including a population of about 29,071 were interviewed in December 1996. Information on 7,675 children between the ages of 5 and 12 (45% female, 55% male) contributed to the baseline data on enrollment, drop-out and associated household factors.

A review of 119 school records and facilities serving these households permitted linkage of household and institutional data, facilitating examination of institutional cases of drop-out. Interviews with 36 Pesh Imams (religious leaders), 20 Parent Teachers School Management Committees (PTSMCs) where these existed, and 36 Community Leaders brought their important perspectives to the discussion. In addition, all (255) teachers of the first two grades were interviewed. Focus groups, one each with mothers and fathers of children aged 5 to 12 years, were held in all sentinel communities.

The cycle was a follow up of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), sponsored by UNICEF in 1995. The sites selected for the MICS by the Federal Bureau of Statistics to be representative of the province were revisited for the *Gender gap in primary education* study. UNICEF asked that in-depth enquiry be undertaken in Kalat district so that recommended interventions and programmes could be piloted and monitored there prior to provincial-wide implementation. An additional ten sites in the focus district were selected in consultation with the UNICEF office in Quetta, the district's local administration, and a local partner NGO, Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan. The focus district information base includes 1,233 households (21% urban, 79% rural), 1,950 children aged 5 to 12 years, 25 boys' and girls' schools, and 44 teachers. Pesh Imams, Community Leaders and PTSMCs were also interviewed and separate focus group discussions with fathers and mothers were conducted in each community.

Based on household information from all sentinel communities, net school enrollment (weighted) across the province was 43%. The **gender gap** is prominent in both urban (68% boys to 54% girls) and rural areas (53% compared with 38%)

A child in a household where the **mother has a say in education** is twice as likely to be enrolled in school compared with a child in a household where the mother has no say. This effect is even greater when the fathers' opinion is against the girls' education. A girl whose mother has a say is then three times more likely to be currently enrolled in school compared with the girl whose mother has no say.

Mother's education is another key factor of better enrollment of girls in the school. The great majority of mothers (96%) in rural areas had no education (76% in urban areas). A girl whose

mother has received any education is three times more likely to be enrolled as compared with a child whose mother has no education. This effect is greater on the girls living in low income areas. A girl is then six times more likely to be enrolled in school than a girl whose mother has no education. If those mothers not educated at all were to receive education through adult literacy programmes, the enrollment rate of their daughters would increase by 33% (rural areas) and 23% (urban areas).

A young rural girl whose **mother is not in favour of sending her to school**, perhaps because she would do fewer chores and would not be able to use her education after her marriage, is twice as likely not to enroll in the school as compared with a rural girl whose mother is in favour.

The gender gap is wider in those rural communities where the **Pesh Imam is against girls' education**, mainly because of the local traditions: a boy is almost four times more likely to be enrolled than a girl (three times in urban areas). Considering only girls, a child in urban areas where the Pesh Imam is against the female education is twice likely not to enroll compared with one from the community where the Pesh Imam is in favour. If it were possible to change the opinion of the Pesh Imams, the proportion of a young girl (5-8 years) enrolling in school would increase by 17% (12% for the older one; 9-12 years).

Only one in five rural schools had any toilet at all. One in four had source of drinking water and half had a boundary wall on the day of the survey. In rural **communities where there are more than one toilet for every 150 pupils (girls)**, a girl is 3.5 times more likely to enrol than a girl from a community where there are fewer or no toilets. If it were possible to act on this issue, giving girls' schools more toilets in rural areas, the enrollment rate of those rural girls may increase by 31%.

Out of the 36 communities visited, 24 had a **separate school for girls**. A strong association between girls' enrollment and type of school existing in the community was found.. A girl from a community with separate schools is four times more likely to enrol compared with a girl from a community where such schools do not exist. This positive effect of separate schools for girls is greater when the mother is educated (seven times), and even greater when she has a say on sending her daughter to school (ten times). If it were possible to build separate schools for all girls, the enrollment rate might increase by 33%.

A child whose parents are not **satisfied with the teachers's attendance, punctuality, behavior and teaching** is 3.5 times more likely to drop-out than a child whose parents are satisfied. This effect is mainly found in those households sending their children to the government schools. Continuation of schooling by children would increase by 10% if the parents were to become satisfied.

A girl who has a male teacher is four times more likely to drop-out than a girl who has a **female teacher**. If it were possible to recruit female teachers, 7.5% more girls in each class would stay in school.

Only 40% of children between 5 and 12 were reported to **receive help with their homework**. Children living in rural areas are only one-half as likely to receive help than those living in urban areas. Among rural girls, a girl who does not have this support from the parents or the siblings is six times more likely to drop-out than a girls who is helped. If all girls currently not receiving this help were to receive it, 4% more girls would stay in schools from each year.

Only 10% of the children were reported as not **given homework** in the entire last academic year. A child who is not given homework is almost six times (eight times in rural areas) more likely to drop-out than a child who is given homework. If teachers were to be convinced of the benefits, 11% more girls would stay in schools.

The majority of the children (95% for girls and 93% for boys) are reported to **have a complete set of school books**. Parents whose children have a complete set of text books do better with their involvement in education and those children would stay longer in schools. A child who does not have a complete set of text books is four times more likely to drop out than one who has a complete set.

To promote girls enrollment in schools, according to the government policy all rural primary girls should **receive free text books**. Among households sending their children to government schools in rural areas, more than half still pay for the books in spite of the policy for free text books. This has a strong impact on children's drop-out: children not receiving free text books are 2.4 times more likely to drop-out than those benefiting from this incentive.

Parent-Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMCs) were recently established in the province to assist in school management and attendance of children. Nearly all households interviewed declared they did not know what a PTSMC was. Yet the presence of these committees in a community is associated with reduced drop-out. A child studying in a school without a PTSMC is three times more likely to drop-out than a child in the school having one. If it were possible to institute PTSMCs in all communities, 4% more children in each class would stay in the schools.

In March 1997, findings were presented in provincial and district analysis workshops attended by government line departments, concerned NGOs, UNICEF Quetta and Islamabad offices, UNDP, local Dutch project representatives, and officials from the Primary Education Directorate (PED). The objectives of the workshops were to discuss key findings and produce a proposal for an action plan at provincial and district levels.

Three of the nine proposed interventions--building toilets in the schools, establishing more PTSMCs, and changing mother's opinion about sending their daughters to school--were selected for immediate action. A communication strategy aimed at improving parental satisfaction with teachers and changing opinions of Pesh Imam about girls' education was elaborated. Two sub-committees formed of workshop participants were tasked with apprising government officials of survey findings and the strategy for action.

UNICEF has signed a project agreement for education development with the Kalat Deputy

Commissioner to begin piloting interventions recommended at the workshops. CIET's partner NGO, "Society", has initiated programmes to strengthen the role of PTSMCs and to explore the phenomenon of defunct schools in Balochistan. Building on the relevance of Cycle I findings to its work, the Primary Education Directorate asked that CIET conduct an evaluation of its new Kachi and Class I learning materials and a needs assessment in schools when returning to sentinel communities for Cycle II, *Community responses to sanitation risks*, scheduled to begin in August 1997.

For more information contact: cietpakistan@ciet.org