Gender Disparities in Education

Between promise and progress

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Outline

- Why is gender equality important?
- How do we measure gender parity?
- Gender disparities in:
  - Out of school children
  - Primary education
  - Secondary education
  - Tertiary education
  - Teachers
Why is gender equality important?

- Education is a human right for women and men
- Education is a cornerstone of economic development and has benefits for national health, social and political stability, democracy, etc.
- Education is crucial for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in health, education, social equality, etc...
EFA and MDGs: Gender related promises

- **Education for All (EFA) Goal 5**: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

  *Dakar Framework for Action (2000)*

- **Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Goal 3**: Promote gender equality and empower women
  
  Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

  *Millennium Summit*
How do we measure gender parity or disparity?

- **The gender parity index (GPI)**

  The GPI is a measure used to assess gender differences in education. It is defined as the value of a given indicator for girls divided by that for boys.

  - GPI = 0.97 to 1.03  -> Parity achieved
  - GPI > 1.03         -> Female’s advantage
  - GPI < 0.97         -> Male’s advantage
How do we measure gender parity or disparity?

- **The gross enrolment ratio**
  The GER is the number of pupils or students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education.

- The GER is an indicator that not only measures participation in education, but also a country’s capacity to accommodate all of the relevant school age population.

- **Example: Gender parity index of the primary gross enrolment ratio**

  \[
  \frac{♀♀♀♀♀♀♀♀}{♂♂♂♂♂♂♂♂♂} \quad 80 \% \\
  \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad = \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad = \quad 0.80
  \]

  (boys’ advantage)
Primary education

Gender Disparities in Education

- National monitoring of primary education as part of broader development initiatives has helped to increase participation in primary education.
- Disparities may favour boys or girls depending on the indicator.
Out-of-school primary age children, 2008

Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools, as a proportion of the school age population.
Out-of-school primary age children, 2008

Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools, as a proportion of the school age population

- **35% of Caribbean girls are out-of-school**
- **37% of Caribbean boys are out-of-school**
Out-of-school primary age children, 2008

Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools, as a proportion of the school age population.

Graph showing the percentage of out-of-school children by region and gender for the year 2008.
Out-of-school primary age children, 2008

Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools, as a proportion of the school age population.

- 10% of Caribbean girls
- 11% of Caribbean boys
Gender Disparities in Primary Education - GER

The graph shows the Gender Expense Ratio (GER) for boys and girls in various countries. The x-axis represents the GER for girls, while the y-axis represents the GER for boys. Countries are plotted on the graph according to their GER values for both genders, with countries like Belize and Cayman Islands having higher GER values for boys compared to girls, indicating a gender disparity in education expenditure.

Some of the countries included in the graph are: Turks and Caicos Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Netherlands Antilles, Montserrat, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Belize.
Gender Disparities in Primary Education - NER

The chart illustrates gender disparities in primary education across various countries, using the net enrollment rate (NER) for girls and boys. Each country is marked with a diamond, and the x-axis represents the NER for girls, while the y-axis represents the NER for boys. The countries included in the chart are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

The data points show a general trend where the NER for girls is lower than that for boys in most countries, indicating a gender disparity in primary education. The chart highlights the importance of addressing these disparities to ensure equal access to education for girls.
Do girls or boys repeat primary education more?

Percentage of repeaters by gender in primary education, 2008
Gender and the compounding effects of disadvantage

While gender is related to disadvantage in educational opportunities, other factors can compound disadvantage including:

- Socio-economic status
- Ethnicity
- Geographic location
- Conflict
Secondary education

- Stronger disparities often exist in many countries at the secondary level, however in many countries girls are catching up.
- Gender disparity is greater at upper secondary education compared to lower secondary.
Secondary gross enrolment ratio, 2009 or more recent
Gender Disparities in Secondary Education

Gender parity index of gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, 2008

[Map showing gender parity index across different regions, with legend:
- Males favoured
- Gender parity achieved
- Females favoured]
Tertiary education

- It is at the tertiary education level where female enrolments have seen the greatest increases in almost all regions.
- Long-term trends show more regions switching from an enrolment in favour of males to one in favour of females.
Gender disparities in tertiary education

Gender parity index of gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, 2008
Gender disparities in tertiary education

What are the global trends in gender disparities for tertiary education?

Adjusted gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education by region, 1970 to 2008
Teachers and gender disparity

- Teachers are typically considered the most significant factor influencing the quality of education.
- More than one million teachers in sub-Saharan Africa need to be recruited to achieve universal primary education.
- Given the large need for teachers and girls lack of access to education, recruitment policies which address gender are important.
Do women teachers promote girls’ enrolment?
Percentage of female teachers (primary) vs gross enrolment (secondary), 2008
Do women teachers promote girls’ enrolment?
Percentage of female teachers (primary) vs gross enrolment (secondary), 2008
Do women teachers promote girls’ enrolment?
Percentage of female teachers (primary) vs gross enrolment (secondary), 2008
How has the gender balance in teaching forces changed over time?

Percentage of teachers in primary education, 1990 and 2008
Summary

- Gender disparity against females is decreasing at the primary level partly due to national efforts and monitoring.
- Disparity at the secondary level is more complex and often more pronounced, but females are catching up.
- In tertiary education, females are playing a much stronger role and disparity is increasingly favouring women.
- Literacy rates among women are growing faster than that of males, however the global proportion of illiterates that are female has not changed in 20 years.
- The teaching profession is increasingly favouring women, however several regions still have a high need for more women teachers; targets for the hiring of additional women are unclear except that more females needed in a variety of countries.
Links

- Global Education Digest
- http://www.uis.unesco.org
- Gender and Education for All: The leap to Equality