



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on education for young girls including accessibility

A report issued in March 2017 by the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of the preceding year points out that:

“The constitution mandates compulsory education provided free by the government to all children between the ages of five and 16. Government schools often charged parents for books, uniforms, and other materials. Parents of lower economic means sometimes chose to send children to madrassahs, where they received free room and board, or to NGO-operated schools. The most significant barrier to girls' education was the lack of access. Public schools, particularly beyond the primary grades, were not available in many rural areas, and those that existed were often too far for a girl to travel unaccompanied. Despite cultural beliefs that boys and girls should be educated separately after primary school, the government often failed to take measures to provide separate restroom facilities or separate classrooms, and there were more government schools for boys than for girls. The attendance rates for girls in primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools were lower than for boys. Additionally, certain tribal and cultural beliefs often prevented girls from attending schools” (United States Department of State (3 March 2017) *2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan*).

In March 2017 *Human Rights Watch* states that:

“General insecurity and violence aimed at education compounds other barriers that keep children, especially girls, from going to school. Attacks on education disproportionately affect women and girls” (Human Rights Watch (25 March 2017) *“Dreams Turned into Nightmares”, Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan*, p.4).

This report also states:

“Pakistan has a huge gender disparity problem. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2016, Pakistan ranks 143 out of 144 countries in the gender inequality index...Government figures showed that in 2014 only 47 percent of the women in Pakistan were literate, compared to 70 percent of men...At least 53 percent of girls are out of school as compared to 43 percent of boys...Discriminatory policies and conservative cultural and social practices contribute to impeding equal access to education for women and girls. Parents often have a lower threshold for pulling their daughters out of school than boys, given greater social restrictions on girls' movements and concerns about sexual harassment and violence. This exacerbates an already dire situation where only 35 percent of schools accept girls...In addition, women and girls in Pakistan bear the brunt of the attacks on education, exacerbating other barriers that keep girls from going to school” (ibid, p.25).

A publication issued in April 2017 by the *Coalition for Alternate Report on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* states that:

“Insufficient domestic financing for education has been a major and detrimental issue to make the Right to Education an enforceable right which has resulted in wide inequalities. Factors such as urban-rural placement, gender and poverty converge to result in dire inequalities. According to some estimates, poor girls belonging to rural areas face the worse inequality with only 15% of girls likely to complete school as opposed to 40% of poor rural boys...” (Coalition for Alternate Report on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (April 2017) *The State of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Pakistan: A Joint Civil Society Shadow Report On Economic Social and Cultural Rights*, p.42).

A document published in April 2017 by the *Coalition of Education* states:

“Pakistan faces enormous education challenges. After Nigeria, Pakistan has the world’s second highest out of school population. Figures on the total number of out of school children range between 8.8 million and 25 million” (Coalition of Education (April 2017) *Privatised Education in Pakistan and the Right to Education: A right out of reach?*, p.7).

This document also notes that:

“The majority of children who have never been to school are most likely to be poor girls belonging from rural areas...” (ibid, p.8).

In June 2017 the *United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* notes:

“The very low net enrolment rates at all levels of education, including pre-school, primary and secondary levels, with large disparities between girls and boys, children in urban and rural areas, and children from high-income and low-income families...” (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (23 June 2017) *Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan [E/C.12/PAK/CO/1]*, p.12).

A publication issued in August 2017 by *Aser* states:

“...the fact remains that far fewer girls continue to enrol in schools in the country as compared to boys” (Aser (2 August 2017) *Annual Status of Education Report*, p.12).

References

Aser (2 August 2017) *Annual Status of Education Report*

<http://aserpakistan.org/document/asere/2016/reports/national/Annual-Status-of-Education-Report-ASER-2016.pdf>

Attachment not included due to IT limitations

Accessed Thursday 3 August 2017

Coalition for Alternate Report on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (April 2017) *The State of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Pakistan: A Joint Civil Society Shadow Report On Economic Social and Cultural Rights*

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This is a subscription database

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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