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Hidden Barriers to Girls Education: Gendered Educational Exclusion in Rural Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper explores the hidden social, cultural and institutional barriers that continue to limit girl's educational participation in rural Bangladesh, despite progress in enrolment, stipend programmers and gender policy. Drawing on survey responses and qualitative interviews with education practitioners, the study examines how gendered expectations, family honor, safety concerns, early marriage pressure, poverty, curriculum messages and community attitudes shape girl's educational experiences. The paper argues that exclusion is not always visible through dropout statistics alone; it is often produced through everyday restrictions on mobility, silence around menstruation and safety, unequal household labor, and the belief that girl's education is secondary to marriage. The study also considers the role of NGOs such as BRAC and gender-sensitive schooling in challenging these barriers. By connecting lived experiences with wider debates on gender equality and inclusive education, the paper shows that policy success depends not only on access to school but also on transforming the social attitudes that shape girl's futures. The paper contributes to gender and education studies by highlighting how rural Bangladeshi girls negotiate education within family, community and institutional constraints.

Keywords: Girl's education, Gender exclusion, Rural Bangladesh, Curriculum, Early marriage, Gender equality