

## **Conducting girls' education in rural Balochistan- Pakistan: problematising decentralization struggle**

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This paper is based on research that is exploring the status of girls' education in the schools of rural Balochistan in Pakistan by looking at the dimensions of access, enrolment and retention. Pakistan, as a post-colonial state, has adopted the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the country's national development goals, and established a dedicated federal support unit with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Simultaneously, the indicators of the status of girls' education in the schools of rural Balochistan remain a concern for the federal and provincial governments.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the connection between institutional and gender power relations in the struggle of decentralisation of education policy and practice in the light of post eighteenth constitutional amendment, in particular. The research investigates power relations, the development of knowledge and truth production in public education policy and practice by assembling governmentality, postcolonial theory and postcolonial feminism as a theoretical lens in a post-colonial situation. Using individual and focus group interviews, through the semi-structured technique, this research critically analyses the process of education decision making at various hierarchical levels in the public institutions. The research findings reveal that public institutions do not encourage women to participate in the decision-making forums due to the masculinity of the education apparatus and the way the patriarchy operates, which enable males from urban locations to decide education related matters pertaining to rural girls. I demonstrate that urban males neither have adequate knowledge nor properly understand the problems and challenges the girls face in rural locations. Finally, I suggest new ways to think about the challenges and opportunities by capitalising on the decentralisation of education to find prospects for enhancing girls' education in the rural locale of the province. I believe this paper makes significant contribution to the scholarship and provides a means to the public, private and development actors to think about the challenges and opportunities to achieving education goals pertaining to the problem of girls' education in rural location of the country.