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Abstract Information

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Equality of Educational opportunities in Iran

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Abstract:
Introduction: Gender-based equality is a dimension of human development index. Most developing nations face challenges in this regard. We aimed to investigate educational opportunities for both genders regarding enrollment in schools of Iran. Methods: The male to female ratio in all 30 provinces of Iran in each stage (elementary, guidance and high school) for the year 2008 were used to assess equality of academic opportunities. The analysis was based on existing data of Ministry of Education and was available for urban and rural areas separately. Results: A total of 14,415,668 students (20.45% of Iranian population) were enrolled in Iranian schools in 2007-08. The overall male to female ratio was 1.06. This ratio varied from 0.99 to 1.18 in different provinces. The mean ratios for primary, guidance and high schools and were 1.06, 1.12 and 1.10, respectively. The gap among provinces regarding sex ratio of students enrolled for guidance school was wider than primary school. Generally, less developed provinces and rural areas had higher ratios. Some rural areas in primary and guidance stages had ratios as high as nearly twice the national mean. The range varied from 0.92 to 1.75 in different regions of the country. The male to female ratio in most provinces was generally higher than 1 in all stages. Nevertheless, the ratio inverted to 0.64 and 0.59 at the college and university level, respectively. Discussion: sex ratio of enrolled students varied throughout the country in rural/urban areas and developed/less developed provinces yet the overall ratio was similar to population sex ratio (1.05). Interestingly, female students who have the opportunity of enrolling for guidance school are more probable to continue to high school. In addition, females enjoy higher rates of continuing their educations after school.
