

**Title:** Female Circumcision and Education: Rethinking Gender Parity in the Post-2015 Era

**Sub-theme:** Gender and Education

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**Aims:**

This paper analyzes progress in attaining gender equality for different educational levels with the following aims:

1. To discuss the tools that have been used to eliminate gender disparity in access to education in the 1990-2015 period
2. To explicate the relationship between female circumcision and education
3. To postulate how addressing patriarchy within cultural traditions will advance gender parity beyond 2015

**Content:**

Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals lists the intention to promote gender equality, with the target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

According to the 2014 UNDP report, this goal has not yet been achieved, as girls in sub-Saharan Africa still "face barriers to entering both primary and secondary school."

Cultural traditions that esteem the education of male children over female children impede access to education. One such tradition - female circumcision - has been identified as a barrier to educational access for girls, especially among communities where it is deemed a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. Conversely, education has been encouraged as a tool for discouraging female circumcision, and hence ensuring gender equality.

**Conclusion:**

Using female circumcision as a thinking model, the paper discusses educational models used to address patriarchy within female circumcision. It argues that such models can also be applied to tackling gender disparities within mainstream education. Such an approach may not only enhance girls' voices within the classroom, but also increase overall educational outcomes for girls post-2015.