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Changing Perspectives — Neo-liberal Policy Reforms and Education in India[#]

Kuldeep Mathur*

I consider it a great honour for being invited this year to speak at the Foundation Day of National University of Educational Planning and Administration. I had the privilege to be formally associated with it in its earlier avatar and therefore find this invitation as very special. On this occasion, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the Vice-Chancellor and his team of faculty and staff. I am confident that the pursuit for excellence will continue unabated and the University will rise to new heights.

During the last two decades we have been facing the challenge of transforming the way we govern ourselves. It is widely accepted that the traditional system has not fulfilled the expectations of our development, and we are now looking for transforming or changing it to a system that can stand up to our aspirations. On the one hand, this involves dismantling an institutional structure that is entrenched and has deep roots in our society. On the other hand, it is choosing an institutional structure that can replace it.

It is easy to dismantle but the challenge lies in making choices of new institutions and determining their relationship with state and society. A large number of decision-makers in our country have turned to neo-liberalism as the only framework in which these choices seem to lie. Globalization is a strong source of active influence in closing doors to all other alternatives. India has accepted the neo-liberal strategy of development and is an active participant in the globalized world. It is therefore important to understand this framework and particularly explore its consequences in determining public policies in the education sector.

What I intend to do in my presentation is draw upon the institutional consequences of the neo-liberal agenda and point to the direction of the kind of transformation that is taking place in the education sector. I try to argue that neoliberalism has introduced new modes of institutional management in higher education and these can be best understood by understanding its tenets of governance reform. The question is whether the issues that we

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* B-083, Belvedere Park, DLF City III, Gurgaon - 122002, Haryana.
Email: profkuldeepmathur@googlemail.com

are facing in education can be resolved by these new institutional arrangements. There does not appear to be an easy answer to this question. As a matter of fact contradictions and dilemmas are emerging which are leading further to uncertainties.

Broadly speaking neo-liberalism is a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating the individual entrepreneur's freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (see Harvey:2007) The core concepts in this theory are of holding individuals responsible and accountable for their own actions and well-being. This principle extends to designing institutions in the realm of welfare, education and health such that the individual expresses his own choices for his own welfare and becomes responsible for them. Together with this is the concept of competition. Individuals bring out the best when they compete with others and this is true for institutions as for individuals. Competition is a way to improve performance and giving opportunity to individuals and institutions to excel. Therefore the culture of competition is to be inculcated by the state and society. The role of state, in this theorizing, is clearly demarcated. It is to provide an institutional framework for neo-liberal practices to thrive.

The major concern that led to the adoption of neo-liberal strategy was frustration with the traditional system not being able to fulfill the promises held out. It was a reaction to the growth of inefficiencies in the role of state and its inability to be effective in generating and implementing public policies. In 1980s and 1990s, the search for efficiency led to the movement for limiting the scope of state activity. Conventionally, education including higher education was included as a public good and hence responsibility of state. With financial and bureaucratic deficiencies state did not seem to undertake its responsibilities fully. With wide acceptance of liberal ideas, the scope of state activities was redefined and higher education was claimed to be a private good allowing for the participation of the private sector in state endeavors.

Governance, the term given to the provisioning of institutional framework in the neo-liberal agenda, in which the role of state was clearly defined, had two very important implications. One was that the pursuit of good governance became essentially a pursuit of establishing such institutions and processes that would facilitate the functioning of markets. State began to be seen as a facilitator for non-state actors to operate and not an institution to intervene in society. Consequently, providing support for successful operation of business and civil society became the central theme of state's role and activity. The second implication flowing from the first was that business assumed greater power and influence than other segments of society. Large corporate houses began to see themselves as partners of state in development. Thus, good governance came to mean the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors became blurred. (Stoker, 1998:155) The new formulation underlined that political institutions no longer exercise a monopoly of the orchestration of governance. (Pierre, 2000:4) The concept of governance indicated a shift away from well-established notions of the way government sought to resolve social issues through top down approach.

In this formulation, the state itself was enjoined to generate public policies in conjunction with non-state actors. It was no more an independent entity intervening or guiding society. Thus, it must be emphasised that it gave up its perceived neutral role and was expected to work in collaboration with business and non-governmental sector.

Thus the new conceptualization of governance was based on the idea of network relationships of three actors – state, market and civil society. It is this concept of relationship that became core thrust of the idea of governance. Governance is seen as an interactive process where institutions work together to achieve results. What is significant in this conceptualization is that the role of government is considerably diluted to give space to private sector and civil society actors. The idea that public and private sectors are distinct is being subsumed by the idea of cooperation and working together.

In this new world view, the primary role of the government is not merely to direct the actions of the public through regulation and decree, nor is it merely to establish a set of rules and incentives through which people will be guided in the proper direction. Rather government becomes another player in the process of moving society in one direction or the other. Where traditionally government response to needs has been ‘yes, we can provide service’ or ‘no, we cannot’, governance mode would be a response like saying ‘yes, let us work together to figure out what we are going to do and then make it happen’.

Markets are relied upon for optimal solutions but markets need certain conditions to succeed. When these conditions do not prevail, markets fail. States could also fail in their obligations. Thus both failures of market and state can occur. Quest for establishing new institutions which could cope up with challenges from both state and market failures thus began. Public Private Partnerships offered new institutional arrangement that would mitigate the perverse effects of the state and market. In this normative formulation, PPPs are associated with desirable attributes of collaboration, trust, responsibility and participation. (Utting and Zammit, 2006:3)

The emphasis on public -private partnerships changed the pattern of governance, as well as adaptations in management practices and in perceptions regarding the role and responsibilities of different development actors in the context of globalization and liberalization. This transformation has also been termed as a pragmatic turn in official development practice and as pointed out 'approaches to development interventions, and in particular the role of the private sector, are said to be driven by “what works” and less by ideology.' (Utting and Zammit 2006:2)

PPPs appeared even more as a pragmatic turn because of the context where the financial circumstances of both the government and private sector were changing. Governments were suffering from financial crisis and fiscal deficits in the 1980s while the corporate sector was doing well with good returns and technological advancement. Government sought to tap these private resources for public good. Across the world partnership among the three actors – state, market and civil society began to be promoted as a strategy of good governance. The partnerships promise to avoid duplication of efforts and are seen to draw on their complementary resources and capabilities to design more effective problem solving mechanisms. They promise to increase responsiveness of policies and create accountability by including other actors- market and civil society- into decision-making processes. They are also presumed to improve compliance with and implementation of political decisions.

Public-Private Partnerships began with infrastructure projects as these demanded heavy investments which only the private sector could provide. Now they are being tried in the social sector. The Government is moving towards different forms of public-private partnerships at various education levels. There are frequent announcements that it is establishing more schools in this mode. Sometime back, an erstwhile HRD Minister announced that the Government was planning to set up over 2,500 model and 200 central

schools on public-private- partnership (PPP) basis in the country in next two years. (Indian Express, 29 August 2009). He added that the schools would be set up in public-private partnership as part of our efforts to strengthen the human resource base and then went on to ask the corporate houses to invest in a big way in the education sector emphasizing that developing human resources is key to success of any nation.

Other institutions and researchers have also joined in stressing the need of introducing PPPs in education sector for similar reasons and also for fulfilling the commitment of raising literacy levels. A World Bank study, (Jagannathan 2001) has explored the working of six NGOs that extend primary education to rural children in India. It is argued that these NGOs have demonstrated effective grassroots action to enhance the quality of basic education and have also influenced mainstreamed education through replication of their models and through policy dialogue with the Government. While suggesting that NGOs are best suited for small projects and micro-level interventions, the study strongly advocates sustainable and enduring partnership with the voluntary sector that will strengthen the Government's efforts to actualize the goal of universal elementary education. In their official documents both World Bank as well as Asian Development have been advocating the policy of 'pppisation'.

Centre for Civil Society launched a School Choice Campaign in 2007 arguing that what the poor need today 'is not just Right to Education, but the Right to Education of Choice.' It advocates public-private partnership through the use of voucher system. At a recent Conference in 2009, the speakers included representatives of the World Bank and the private sector and stressed the need of quality education by providing choices to the poor. This scheme was called as funding the students and not schools and giving choice to the students through a voucher system.

Ambani-Birla Committee appointed by Prime Minister's Council of Trade and Industry went on to recommend in its Report in the year 2000 that there needs to be greater association of the private sector in higher education. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has been holding summits in higher education from 2004. It has been organizing them as annual international events with the support of Ministry Human Resources Development and the Planning Commission, Government of India. For some time now, Ernst and Young has joined FICCI to prepare the background paper in these meetings. In the paper prepared for the 2009 summit, titled 'Leveraging Partnerships in India in Education Sector' the need for PPPs in higher education sector is underlined. This is necessary to meet the financial constraints of the government and to meet the demand of skilled persons of the industry. It identifies various types of partnerships and also recommends collaboration with foreign universities for research and student exchange.

Thus, the international donor agencies, corporate houses and some civil society organizations are demanding greater public-private partnership in the education sector. Government having articulated its commitment to provide education for all through the enactment of the Right to Education into law is also becoming receptive to these ideas. For it is facing resource crunch and lack of capacity to run a responsive and efficient educational system.

But Government having articulated its commitment to PPPs in education is still at the stage of experimentation. For one thing, the forms that partnerships can take in education are diverse. Government aid to schools is a form of partnership that has existed from a long time but does not fit into the current mould. In this partnership, a private entrepreneur or

trust provided the school buildings and infrastructure while the government paid for the salary of teachers and regulated the curriculum and quality of teaching. There are also alternatives where the government just provides the land and infrastructural facilities at varying rates of subsidy. There are now many other openings like financing of services like those of IT, underwriting mid-day meals or handing over of a school to the private sector to provide management services.

At the higher education level the forms it can take is in establishing research collaboration between government and industry, giving space to private entrepreneurs to enter the field and opening up for partnership with foreign universities. For quite sometime, large business has been a big player in the field of higher education like engineering and medical education. These institutions were primarily colleges affiliated to Universities which exercised control over their academic norms. These colleges were seen as a response to the market need of more professionals as doctors and technologists. By the mid-1990s, promoters of private colleges saw the regulatory control of the affiliating university and state governments as cumbersome, impeding the full utilization of the colleges' market potential. Thus, they wanted university status to wriggle out of control of state governments and the affiliating universities. This resulted in the proliferation of private universities and private deemed universities. Earlier, the deemed university provision that empowered an institution to award its own degree was sparingly used to allow leading institutions to offer programs at an advanced level in a particular field or specialization. The Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Delhi were the first two institutions to be declared deemed universities in 1958. This number increased to 29 in 1990/91 and 38 in 1998 and now stands at 122 as of 2017. Most of the post-1998 deemed universities are private. (Agarwal, 2007) The current Minister of HRD is soliciting partnerships with Universities in USA and UK to enhance the quality of education India.

It is the resource deficiency that is driving the government to seek partnership with private sector in the field of higher education but at the primary school level this is not the only reason. It is also inefficiencies in the delivery system. It is argued that the bureaucratic ways of delivery have led to leakages of various kinds where the citizens are ill-served. Thus, in both health and education, government is seeking partnership – at the local and grassroots level with the NGOs and at higher level with for profit private sector.

In Delhi the traditional mode of providing land and infrastructural facilities at subsidized rates has dominated the scene of school education. But within this sector primary schools have not been so attractive to the private sector. Therefore, this responsibility lies with the municipality and Delhi administration. After the passage of the Right to Education Act, the Supreme Court has made it mandatory for private unaided schools to admit 25% of its students from the economically weaker sections. Delhi administration has begun enforcing this mandate but has not been very successful. This insistence has met with reluctance as well as some form of resistance from many private managements of schools.

Within this mode of thinking of inviting private players to participate in generating and implementing public policy, other kinds of institutional arrangements have also emerged. These have taken the form creating either semi-autonomous agencies or contracting out services to the private sector. Ministries are being encouraged to apply the concept of such agencies to carry out specific executive functions.

The significant feature of these institutions, including public-private partnerships, is their flexibility and being out of the direct loop of ministerial accountability. They also

present the view that development is a technical process amenable only to expert decision making. JNURM, water user committees, implementation of mid-day meal schemes in schools, running ambulances are recent examples. Equally important dimension of this feature is that issues that are declared technical are simultaneously rendered as non-political. This notion is widely espoused in the new governance style as disenchantment with politics grows. Both the government as well as corporate sources join to voice the need to insulate economic reforms from politics.

One serious implication of this kind of thinking is dilution of public accountability of these institutions. Governance institutions are based on customer accountability and of those who are stakeholders in the endeavor. The larger public or panchayat, for example, does not fall into this domain of accountability. Constitutionally, the Comptroller and Auditor General has the responsibility to certify the legal and financial basis of public expenditure. However, in the case of partnerships, the CAG continues to grapple with ambiguities of scope of audit of PPPs. The guidelines issued for audit of PPPs state that the purpose of audit is not to audit private sector but to review the end results rather than the way they were achieved. The erstwhile Planning Commission insisted that only the public part of the PPP should be audited and not its component of private sector. The CAG insists that every rupee spent out of the public exchequer is within its purview. Despite the hesitation of government, the CAG has gone ahead and has submitted audit reports on some PPP projects including those of the construction of international airports at Delhi and Bengaluru and substantiated many comments of misdemeanor that were already in public domain. These related to many decisions that favoured private sector in face of public interest. Is PPP a public authority within the scope of public audit? Or is it a private institution?

The introduction of the Right to Information Act has further brought to the fore issues of transparency and accountability. It is welcome move in democracy that recognizes transparency as a key to accountability. However, information on this count is given hesitatingly. The Chief Information Commissioner insists that PPP is a public authority. However, the erstwhile Planning Commission questioned this by saying how a private concessionaire, a private firm, performs its job is not relevant from the RTI point of view.

In both cases of audit and right to information, there is hesitation to make the operations of PPPs public. It must be realized that there appears to be a trend in which transparency and openness in decision making is actively discouraged to the extent that violence against the information gatherers acts as a warning to dissuade others from seeking information. Parliament is another institution in our democracy that can seek information. But that is also not a success story. A recent survey of questions asked in Parliament showed that questions were few and rare and those that were, were in the form in which written replies were given. No debate has been raised. (For this see Mathur et.al. 2013)

A consequence of this understanding is that a crisis of redressal of grievances is growing. As these new institutions exist on the basis of contracts, legal basis has to be found to enforce the demands of public. This comes out clearly in case of schools which have been contracted out services or have been enjoined to provide some in return of what the government has assured. For parents in Delhi, remedy lies in court action if certain proportion of seats for weaker sections have to be filled or mid-day meals schemes have to be more effective. As a matter of fact, in a partnership in which a hospital was supposed to provide certain number of beds to the poor and the marginalized, it took the High Court to issue a notice to the hospital in response to a doctor's appeal.

As mentioned above, privatization in higher education went apace with greater adherence to the governance model laid out in the neo-liberal framework. Colleges providing professional education in engineering and medicine and schools at secondary and higher secondary levels multiplied in the private sector. Private sector was hesitant in entering primary schooling for it perceived that it did not give adequate dividends.

In the past four decades, the number of universities has grown more than six times. Out of 33,023 colleges, one-third was set-up only during past five years. The number of private institutions grew faster than public institutions. (Gupta 2016:360) Some of these institutions are now vigorously seeking alliance with foreign universities to enhance their credibility. The current government is actively encouraging this outreach for this provides the ladder to compete with international institutions and have a place in world rankings.

Privatization has also meant that these institutions are out of direct control of the government. For this reason they have been loosely regulated by it. In any case there are some regulatory bodies like the UGC and AICTE and some professional councils. Many professional institutions are directly under relevant Ministries that finance and regulate them.

For-profit organizations, however, have entered for personal gain introducing unscrupulous practices that seem to exploit the students and the community. These practices are not only related to what is taught and how but to financial misdemeanors. There are now capitation fee colleges which demand high admission fees and the students are asked to bear the costs of services that may be advertised but not provided. There is now increasing risk that financial costs and fees may be out reach of a vast number of students and may lead to restricting education to those who have the ability to pay. Economic deprivation may also result in educational deprivation.

Another equally important, if not more, is the fear that for-profit institutions and foreign collaborations may not fulfill India's quest of social equity. Broadening access may leave out the socially deprived segment of the population. Policies of affirmative action have been pursued in government institutions while private institutions are not mandated to do so. Such expansion in education may not fulfill social aspirations unless adequate steps are taken. Recent surveys and data alert us to what the future may hold.

Government has turned to establishing regulatory bodies that can play a more effective role in seeing that private institutions fulfill social goals and work in an ethical fashion. At the same time also allow them adequate autonomy to function well. But it is still struggling to develop an appropriate design. In 2010 then government had introduced several bills in Parliament to regulate higher educational institutions. Most of them lapsed with the coming of new government in 2014. These bills could not be passed due to stiff resistance from the votaries of both public and private sectors. In the meanwhile, government is going ahead attempting to open the education sector to privatization and international higher education institutions.

If 'partnerships' have to be equitable and accountable, they need an interventionist state which can or be willing to mediate and use its institutional, financial and regulatory resources to create a level playing field. However, if the state itself turns out to be the enabler of market only, such an interventionist role is doubtful. Partnerships by their very nature mean equality of partners but over the years it has emerged that the corporate houses have used their financial and managerial strength to leverage greater advantages for

themselves. Clearly the strength of the corporate sector lies in its ability to refuse to participate in a venture that is not profitable to it.

It appears that neo-liberal solutions privatization or partnerships may be creating more problems than one can foresee. In a country where backwardness is not defined by economic factors alone, the major goal of any public policy is equity and justice. This was recognized by our founders and incorporated into various dimensions of affirmative action. Goals of neo-liberalism and governance hold individual incentives and market values of efficiency in high esteem but it is questionable if they can tread the path of equity and justice.

Regulatory agencies are being proposed as mechanisms to keep educational institutions on track. Past experience has not been particularly a happy one and establishing new ones are already facing problems in their embryonic stage.

What is needed is a re-evaluation of the role of the state in education. Government needs to strengthen its own commitment to education. Outlays in this sector have not kept pace with demand and have actually been falling in the last few years. But falling outlays is only one part of the problem and is magnified as the only problem. It is not the only culprit. Educational institutions are being allowed to decay due to mis-management and government's neglect of its responsibilities of taking timely action in appointments of teachers and heads of institutions and release of already budgeted funds. It appears that there is a deliberate effort to allow public institutions to fail and thus create a policy context for privatization and partnership with the private sector. State needs to rearrange its priorities, by strengthening its own public institutions and demonstrate that non-state actors only supplement state action and not replace it.

What I am trying to stress is that we are responding to the slow decline of public educational institutions as if it just happened because there is a resource crunch without realizing that it is embedded in a coherent philosophy of neo-liberalism. Its ideas have become so common place that we seldom recognize it as an ideology, a framework in which policies are determined. (Monibiot 2016)

Let me conclude by saying that government's commitment to education has shifted to looking at the private sector in fulfilling its ambitions and goals of raising the stature of India in the world of education. The process generated in the neo-liberal framework, represents education as an input-output model. Public-Private Partnerships or contracting out of services to private players rest on terms on what has to be achieved. A contract is signed in which objectives are clearly defined and quantitatively measured outputs are indicated. Much store is laid by, for example, on number of students passed, number of them recruited after graduation or expectation from faculty is on number of research papers published or seminars attended.

These measures of quantitative outputs are taken as indicators of excellence in institutions of higher learning. Much attention is paid on devising measuring indices that could rank these institutions and thus permit their evaluation. These rankings are seen as source of encouragement of competitive spirit among institutions and a spur for a competitive spirit as valued in neo-liberalism.

The whole concept of an institution of higher learning is being redefined in this input-output model. The opportunities of intellectual debate or quality of contribution to knowledge finds little space in this model. Notions of professional norms are not measurable and therefore not included in its evaluation. The traditional professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate has been replaced by institutional stress on performance as

measured by measurable indicators. (see Olssen and Peters 2010) The underlying ethos of higher education is a spirit of curiosity, a spirit of tolerance of differing views. What seems to be evolving in this framework is a narrowly instrumental educational system that closes horizons instead of broadening them.

How do you produce an argumentative Indian?

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Enrolment and Dropout in Schools in India — Evidence from NSSO Data[#]

Abhijit Ghosh*

Abstract

An earlier version of the paper was presented at the 53rd Annual Conference of Indian Econometric Society held at Bhubaneswar in 2016. Using the unit level data obtained from the NSSO 71st round, this paper studies the progress and constraints in school education in India. Two age groups are considered for the analysis: elementary school age group (5-14 years) and secondary school age group (15-18 years). An attempt has been made to trace the reasons of never enrolled and dropout. The Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) model has been used to examine how the socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds of households influence the different types of enrolment status --- Never attended, Ever attended but Currently not attending, Enrolled and currently attending. Some clear insights emerge from the analysis: (i) financial constraints and quality of education dominate the reasons for the never-enrolled and dropouts, (ii) Muslims and STs continue to be deprived in regard to completion of school education, (iii) the northern part of the country is still much behind other parts. Taking together both the age groups, the never-enrolled and dropouts amount to 61 million. This can be termed as the 'Missing Talent' that India loses.

An earlier version of the paper was presented at the 53rd Annual Conference of Indian Econometric Society held at Bhubaneswar in 2016.

* A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, North Gandhi Maidan, Patna - 800001, Bihar, India.
Email: abhijitghosh2007@rediffmail.com

Introduction

This is now a resolved agenda that the right to education of a child is a “societal non-negotiable” (Ramchandran, 2003). This is particularly relevant for school education because of its irreversible character. However, India took a long time to incorporate this natural motto into a policy for implementation even though it was enshrined in the Constitution. The labour productivity approach and the return to education approach dominated the policy framework (Mehrotra, 2005). Gradually, however, it was replaced by a rights based approach (Majumdar, 2006). The passage of “The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” or the Right to Education Act (RTE) in 2009 recognised this approach. The RTE Act commits to provide free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years. This has been in tune with the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act. The target was to bring all the children into the ambit of formal school system. The two mutually exclusive objectives set were: (i) enhancement of enrolment, and (ii) elimination of dropout.

However, before the enactment of the RTE Act, there had been several initiatives to boost the education system in India. Since 1993-94, the objective of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has been to expand the primary education system in India. Being operational in 2000-2001, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) endeavoured to achieve Universal Elementary Education (UEE). All these interventions substantially expanded the school infrastructure of India. This is reflected in the enhancement of enrolment and declining trend in the dropout rate. To cope with the enhanced retention rate in primary education and surge in the demand for secondary education, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was introduced in 2009. However, the process of universalisation of school education has been suffering from the lack of resources (Bhatty, 2014). The quality of enrolment and incidence of dropout is still a matter of concern. This continues to be block on the progress of the nation. This also leads to colossal economic and social losses to the country (ibid, 2006).

Dropout is a worldwide phenomenon (Choudhury, 2006). There is a vast body of literature on the issue. Several researches find that household atmosphere, particularly parental education, is an important determinant of the schooling of children (Behrman and Wolfe, 1983; Pandey, 1990; Deollikar, 1994). Apart from parental education, other household factors such as a household’s main occupation and income are associated with the schooling attainment (Hossain, 1990; Acharya, 1994; Alderman, et al 1997). The researches in India also suggest that household condition is a strong influential factor of dropout (Ramchandran and Saihjee, 2002). Sengupta and Guha (2002) assess different factors contributing to the enrolment, dropout in four villages and two urban wards of West Bengal. They found that parental schooling, especially mother’s schooling, father’s occupation, family income and location had a strong positive association with the schooling opportunities for girls and their attainments. Choudhary (2006) also reveals that household atmosphere, especially familial duties and parental bonding, influence the dropout in North-Eastern India. Mukesh and Srivastava (2015) identified socio-economic factors like caste, religion and household occupation as those affecting the dropout rates in rural India. School related factors also play significant role in regard to dropout. Sikdar and Mukherjee (2012) pointed out that apart from household factors the quality of education is also responsible for dropout. All these factors can be clubbed into: (i) household and socio-economic factors, (ii) school factors and

(iii) individual child factors. These factors are acknowledged worldwide as the reasons of dropout (Choudhury, 2006).

This paper is an attempt to study the progress and constraints in school education in India, and considers two basic indicators, namely, enrolment rate and dropout rate. This study considers not merely the enrolment but the quality of enrolment as well. The quality of enrolment constitutes of three kinds of educational attendance: Never attended, Ever attended but currently not attending, Enrolled and currently attending. The objective of this paper is to assess the quality of enrolment. Definitely, the third one is desirable. For this purpose, the unit level data from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) 71st round (conducted nationwide on 'Social Consumption: Education' during January to June 2014) have been used. This paper also attempts to diagnose the responsible factors behind the status of current educational attendance and dropout.

While the first section introduces the paper, the second section briefly discusses the analytical framework of the study. The third section of the paper presents the estimation of enrolment status and dropout rate, and also traces out the reasons of the changes on these two indicators. An effort has been made to show how socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds of households influence on different types of enrolment status by using Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) model in the Section Four. Section Five concludes the study with policy suggestions.

Analytical Framework and Data

School education of India is divided into different categories: Primary schools, upper primary schools, secondary and higher secondary schools. Primary schools include Class I to V, Upper primary, VI to VIII, and the last two categories, IX to XII. The first two categories are clubbed into elementary schooling, covering the 5 to 14 years age group. The secondary schooling covers the 15 to 18 years age group (Sikdar and Mukherjee, 2012).

Data

The unit level data of the 71st round of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) (conducted nationwide on 'Social Consumption: Education during January to June 2014) has been used for this study. The survey collected information on the 'participation of persons aged 5-29 years in pursuit of education in the country; the extent of use of educational infrastructure, facilities and incentives provided by the government and private sectors, and its impact on current attendance status of population in the educational institutions; private expenditure incurred by households on education and the extent of educational wastage in terms of dropping-out and discontinuance, and its causes.' A total of 4577 villages were surveyed in rural India while the number of urban blocks surveyed was 3720 as First-Stage Units (FSUs) at all-India level. The households were stratified on the basis of having any student of age 5-29 years receiving education. The total number of households was 36,479 and 29,447 in rural and urban India respectively. The major variables of the survey are related to: (a) Literacy rates, (b) Current attendance, (c) Participation in education, (d) Educational expenditure, (e) Dropouts and discontinuance, and (f) Access and ability to operate computers. As discussed in the first section, the objective is to assess the quality of enrolment through the nature of educational attendance --- Never attended, Ever attended

but currently not attending, Enrolled and currently attending. Using the said unit level data, enrolment and dropout rates have been estimated.

Enrolment and Dropout

Table 1 and Table 2 present the status of enrolment and dropout rates. Table 1 reveals that 7.2 per cent children of elementary school age group never attended schools. The corresponding figure is 6.4 per cent for the secondary school age group. Comparing roughly with the 2007-08 data (in Sikdar and Mukherjee 2012), it has declined from 11.07 per cent and 10.28 per cent for elementary and secondary school age groups respectively. There is also a rural-urban and male-female difference in the never-attended category. In both the age groups, performance in the rural areas is better than that of the urban areas. The number of girls in the never-attended category is higher than that of boys in both the age groups.

TABLE 1
Enrolment Status in India (in %)

Age Group	Sector	Never attended			Ever attended but currently not attending			Enrolled and currently attending		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Elementary School Age (5-14 Years)	Rural	7.9	7.2	8.8	2.9	2.7	3.1	89.2	90.0	88.2
	Urban	5.1	4.6	5.6	2.3	2.5	2.1	92.6	92.9	92.3
	Total	7.2	6.6	8.0	2.7	2.7	2.8	90.0	90.8	89.2
Secondary School Age (15-18 Years)	Rural	7.3	6.0	8.8	30.4	30.3	30.4	62.4	63.6	60.8
	Urban	4.0	3.7	4.4	23.3	24.6	21.8	72.7	71.7	73.8
	Total	6.4	5.4	7.6	28.4	28.8	28.0	65.2	65.8	64.4

Source: Author's estimation from unit level data of NSSO 71st round, 2013-14

The proportion of students in the ever attended but currently not attending in the elementary school age group is 2.7 per cent. However, male-female and locational differentials for this category are negligible. The most striking feature is that 28.4 per cent students of the secondary age group were enrolled but are not currently attending school. As many as 90 per cent children belonging to the elementary school age group are currently attending the school. In other words, it may be said that 10 per cent children of elementary school age group are still out of school. However, this means very little improvement, 5.9 percentage points, compared to 2007-08. For the secondary school age group, 65.2 per cent are currently attending school, an improvement of around 5 percentage point since 2007-08. Table 2 provides the dropout rates in India. Dropout rates are 17.3 and 34.7 per cent, respectively, for the two said age groups. The most important feature that emerges is that the dropout rate is just getting doubled during the transition from elementary school to secondary school level. The location (rural-urban) and gender disparity is more pronounced at the secondary school than at the elementary school level.

TABLE 2
Dropout Rate in India (in %)

<i>Elementary School Age (5-14 Years)</i>			
<i>Sector</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Rural	17.1	18.3	15.9
Urban	18.0	19.8	16.0
Total	17.3	18.6	15.9
<i>Secondary School Age (15-18 Years)</i>			
<i>Sector</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Rural	34.4	36.9	31.5
Urban	36.0	41.3	29.5
Total	34.7	37.8	31.1

Source: Same as Table 1

Reasons

There were 19 reasons considered in the NSSO survey design. Sikdar and Mukherjee (2012), while analysing the NSSO 64th round survey's data on the participation and expenditure in education (2007-08) clubbed 20 reasons into eight categories. Altering it a little, this study proposes seven categories:

1. Household Atmosphere: not interested in education, no tradition in the community, engaged in domestic activities
2. Access & Infrastructure of Schools: school being far-off, non-availability of female teachers, timings of educational institution not suitable, inadequate number of teachers, unfriendly atmosphere at school, non-availability of girls' toilets
3. Financial Constraints: engaged in economic activities
4. Quality of Education: quality of teachers not satisfactory, language/medium of instruction used unfamiliar, unable to cope up with studies, failure in studies,
5. Completed Desired Level of Education
6. Marriage
7. Others: preparation for competitive examination, etc.

These seven categories come, broadly, into three groups: (i) household and socio-economic factors, (ii) school factors and (iii) individual child factors. The finding is reported in Table 3 and 4 for the elementary and secondary school levels respectively.

For the elementary school age, other reasons dominate the group for the reasons of never enrolment. Quality of education (27.8 per cent) and financial constraints (15.5 per cent) also appear as the major contributing factor for the never enrolment. Also, these two reasons together constitute 80 per cent of the reasons for the dropout. This does not

considerably differ from the findings of Sikdar and Mukherjee (2012) which was carried out for the year 2007-2008 using the NSSO 64th round unit level data.

For the secondary school ages, household atmosphere, financial constraints and quality of education together contribute more than 80 per cent of the reasons for the never enrolment. These two reasons are also responsible for more than 90 per cent cases for dropout. Another important feature is that 5.6 per cent girl students dropped out for marriage. No one reported this reason for their never enrolment. A very negligible portion reported of having completed the desired level of education as the reason for dropout. This was one percentage point less in comparison to 2007-08 reported in Sikdar and Mukherjee (2012).

An interesting fact is that the reason, Access & Infrastructure of Schools, contributes very little to both cases --- never enrolled and enrolled but dropped out --- for both the levels. Two possible reasons may be put forward for this outcome. Firstly, it indicates that there has been an improvement in the physical infrastructure in elementary schools. Secondly, whatever infrastructure is available, children and their family do not think it as a constraint to getting enrolled.

TABLE 3

Reasons for Never Enrolling/Dropping Out within Elementary School Ages (in %)

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Never Enrolled</i>			<i>Enrolled but Dropped Out</i>		
		<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Household Atmosphere	Rural	9.2	6.8	11.5	10.8	1.8	20.9
	Urban	5.4	5.4	5.5	8.8	2.8	16.6
	Total	8.6	6.6	10.4	10.4	2.0	20.1
Access & Infrastructure of Schools	Rural	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.2	1.0	1.3
	Urban	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.1	1.5
	Total	1.8	2.0	1.7	1.1	0.8	1.4
Financial Constraints	Rural	12.7	12.8	12.6	26.6	31.4	21.3
	Urban	28.6	23.4	33.5	30.2	24.8	37.3
	Total	15.5	14.7	16.4	27.3	30.0	24.2
Quality of Education	Rural	29.2	29.6	28.8	54.2	61.9	45.5
	Urban	21.4	23.5	19.4	47.6	54.0	39.1
	Total	27.8	28.5	27.2	52.9	60.3	44.3
Others	Rural	46.8	48.6	45.1	7.2	3.9	11.0
	Urban	43.7	46.7	40.9	12.8	18.4	5.4
	Total	46.2	48.2	44.4	8.3	6.9	10.0

Source: Same as Table 1

TABLE 4

Reasons for Never Enrolling/Dropping Out within Secondary School Age Groups (in %)

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Never Enrolled</i>			<i>Enrolled but Dropped Out</i>		
		<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Household Atmosphere	Rural	26.6	13.6	37.4	11.8	3.2	23.2
	Urban	9.1	4.2	13.8	8.0	3.2	16.6
	Total	23.6	11.9	33.6	11.0	3.2	21.9
Access & Infrastructure of Schools	Rural	1.2	1.9	0.6	1.6	0.6	3.0
	Urban	0.1	0.0	0.2	1.7	1.1	2.7
	Total	1.0	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.7	2.9
Financial Constraints	Rural	31.2	41.8	22.2	32.5	40.7	21.7
	Urban	43.6	49.9	37.5	33.5	37.9	25.9
	Total	33.3	43.3	24.7	32.8	40.0	22.5
Quality of Education	Rural	28.5	31.1	26.3	47.7	52.5	41.3
	Urban	38.4	36.8	40.0	48.0	53.0	39.4
	Total	30.2	32.1	28.5	47.8	52.6	41.0
Completed Desired level of Education	Rural	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Urban	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Marriage	Rural	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	6.3
	Urban	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	4.5
	Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	5.9
Others	Rural	12.6	11.6	13.4	3.5	2.9	4.3
	Urban	8.8	9.1	8.4	7.0	4.8	10.9
	Total	11.9	11.1	12.6	4.3	3.4	5.6

Source: Same as Table 1

Predictions

The Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) model is usually used to predict the influence of an independent variable on the categorical dependent variable (Mukesh and Srivastava 2015). Here, MLR is applied to investigate how socio-economic and socio-cultural background of households influence the different types of enrolment status --- Never attended, Ever attended but currently not attending, Enrolled and currently attending. In using the MLR, 'Enrolled and currently attending' is considered as the reference category. Different sets of predictors, which are also categorical in nature, are taken into account to get an idea how these factors influence on the quality of the enrolment status. In order to model in which of categories a household is likely to fall, the following general MLR model is constructed:

$$\text{Logit}\left(\frac{p(y=k)}{p(y=j)}\right) = \alpha + \sum_{i=1}^m \beta_i X_i$$

where $k=1, 2, \dots, n-1$; $j \neq k$ = Reference category; n = Number of category of the response variable; X_i s are the predictors and β_i are the logistic regression coefficient associated with the predictors; m is the number of predictors.

The logistic regression coefficients, associated with each of the predictors, indicate the effect of a predictor on the likelihood of the response variable falling in a specific category. The left hand side of the model represents the logit or the log odds of an observation falling in one of the two categories ($k =$ Never Attended, Ever attended but currently not attending) compared to the third category (the reference category: $j =$ Enrolled and currently attending). For this case, two MLR will be obtained, one for Never attended and other one for Ever attended but currently not attending. Two sets of MLR will be run --- one for the elementary school age (5-14 years) and secondary school age (15-18 years).

Predictors

The set of predictors have been divided into four categories: locational characteristics, socio-cultural factors, economic factors and governance factors. The factors are listed as: Religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christianity and others), Region (Southern, Western, Eastern, North-East, Northern), Sex of the student (Males, Females), Social Group (ST, SC, OBC, Others), Size of the Household (Family Size 1 to 3, 4 to 5, 6 to 7, 7 to 9 and >9), and Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) divided into five quintiles. All these predictors have been used in both the MLR except the distance to the nearest secondary school. This variable is introduced in case of the MLR of Secondary School Age (15-18) as the data could not be segregated for the elementary school age group. The final model is presented in the Appendix.

Elementary School Age (5-14 Years)

The result is presented in the Table A5 (Appendix). This shows that the social group and living status (MPCE quartile) are significantly contributing in both the categories, (i) never attended and (ii) ever attended but currently not attending. Strikingly, the odds of never attended and ever attended but currently not attending category increase by 103 and 104 per cent respectively for ST category with respect to the reference category. Though, the odds decrease for the SC and OBC students in both the categories, they are still substantially higher as compared to the reference category. The living status as usual significantly impacts on both the categories. The odd for the highest (top 20 per cent) quartile 82 and 86 per cent for never attended and ever attended but currently not attending category respectively, taking the lowest 20 per cent as reference category. The odd for never attended is 16 per cent higher for females students. However, the sex of the student is not significant for ever attended but currently not attending category.

Taking Hindu as the reference category, the odd of never attended category is increased by 98 per cent for the students of the Muslim community. But for Sikhism, it decreases by 69 per cent. One possible reason may be that people of the Sikh community dominate in Punjab which is an economically advanced state in India, leading lower proportion of never attended student in comparison to the Hindu community. The odd for ever attended but currently not attending is increased by 134 per cent for the students of the Muslim community. However, for others and for the Christian category, the odd is not significant.

In regard to regional dimensions, it is found that current educational attendance has significant regional variations for both the categories --- never attended and ever attended but currently not attending. The odds for never attended in the western region is 52 per cent

less against the north region while the corresponding figure for the southern, eastern and north-east is 75 per cent, 42 per cent and 62 per cent respectively less against the north region. In case of ever attended but currently not attending, the odds for the southern, eastern and north-east region is 53 per cent, 38 per cent, 58 per cent respectively, less against the north region. But the western region is not significant.

Household size has significant impact on never attendance except for the family size 8 to 9. As the family size decreases, the odd of never attendance in comparison to currently attending decreases. For example, for the family size 1 to 3, the odd of never attended is decreased by 36 per cent to the family size >9 category, while taking the family size >9 as the reference category. But the family size has no significant impact on ever attended but currently not attending category.

Secondary School Age (15-18 Years)

The result is presented in the Table A9 (Appendix). This shows that the sex of the student, social group, region and living status (MPCE quartile) are significantly contributing in both the categories --- never attended and ever attended but currently not attending.

Stunningly enough, the odd of never attended category increases by 259 per cent for ST category with respect to the reference category. The same figure is 200 and 104 for SC and OBC category respectively. The odd of ever attended but currently not attending category for ST student increases by 66 per cent. The corresponding figure for SC and OBC category increases by 71 and 28 per cent respectively.

In case of regional dimensions, the odd of never attended of western region is 56 per cent less against the north region and the corresponding figure for the southern, eastern and north-east is 75 per cent, 37 per cent and 69 per cent are, respectively, less with regards to the northern region. In case of ever attended but currently not attending, the odds for western, southern, eastern and north-east region is 20 per cent, 22 per cent, 13 per cent and 32 per cent less as respectively against the northern region.

In case of the living status, the odd for the highest (top 20 per cent) quartile 96 and 87 per cent less for never attended and ever attended but currently not attending category, respectively, taking the lowest 20 per cent as the reference category.

Taking Hindu as the reference category, the odd of never attended category is increased by 234 per cent for the students of the Muslim community. But for Christianity, it decreases by 47 per cent. One possible reason may be that people of the Christian community dominate in the southern and north-eastern part which is otherwise an advanced region in India, leading to a lower proportion of never attended student in comparison to the Hindu community. However, for others and for the Sikhism category, the odd is not significant. This contradicts with the findings of the elementary school age. The implication is that the improvement in secondary schooling could not cope with the improvement in elementary schooling in Punjab. The odd of ever attended but currently not attending is increased by 117 per cent for the students of the Muslim community. But for Christianity, it decreases by 24 per cent. For the other religions, the odd ratio is not significant.

Household size has a significant impact except on the last two categories of never attended category. For the family size 1 to 3, the odd of never attended is decreased by 68 per cent, taking the family size > 9 as the reference category.

The variable of distance (d) to the nearest school having secondary level classes bears significant impact on the never attended and ever attended but currently not attending. If a school exists within 1 to 2 km, the odd of never attended is less by 39 per cent. The same is 27 per cent less for ever attended but currently not attending category. But the last category is not significant against the reference category.

Concluding Remarks

Some clear insights are emerging from the analysis: (i) financial constraints and quality of education dominate reasons for the never enrolment and dropout, (ii) Muslims and STs continue to be deprived in regard to completion of school education compared to the other religions and social groups, (iii) the northern part of the country is still much behind other parts of the country. It is estimated that there are respectively 20 million and 6 million children never attended and currently not attending in the elementary school age respectively. The same figures for the secondary school age group are 5.7 million and 30 million for never attended and currently not attending category respectively. Taking together both the age groups, never enrolment and dropout amount to 61 million. This can be termed as the 'Missing Talent' that India loses. Had these children been brought back to the formal school system, this could positively contribute for the advancement of the country.

This suggests that an area specific education policy is required to mitigate the gap. Equity based principles are a better way to shrink the regional disparity. This study reveals that along with quantitative expansion, quality in terms of availability of teachers, syllabus framing, and ensuring friendly environment is crucial for the retention of the student. This requires a sufficient amount of funding. But a recent analysis shows that there has been a declining trend in public expenditure particularly in elementary schools (Dongre and Kapur, 2016).

It is the call of the time to achieve higher human development. Meaningful provision of school education is the most important and necessary step towards achieving this target. However, it could have been a more conclusive study if the analysis could be undertaken at the state level. If the different type of schools (public/private) had been considered, more concrete picture might have been appeared. This could be considered for future research.

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TABLE A1
Regional Classifications of the States

<i>Region</i>	<i>State</i>
Northern	Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Chandigarh, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
Eastern	Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh
Western	Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Daman & Diu, D & N Haveli, Maharashtra, Goa, Lakshadweep
South	Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, A & N Islands
North-Eastern	Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam

Multinomial Logistic Regression for Elementary School Age Group (5-14 Years)

TABLE A2
Case Processing Summary

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>No. of Observations</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Current Attending Status	Never Attended	3155	5.30
	Ever Attended but Currently not Attending	1278	2.20
	Currently Attending	54896	92.50
Sex	Females	27509	46.40
	Males	31820	53.60
Social Group	Scheduled Tribe	8720	14.70
	Scheduled Caste	10251	17.30
	Other Backward Classes	24403	41.10
	Others	15955	26.90
Religion	Others	1119	1.90
	Muslims	10180	17.20
	Christianity	3307	5.60
	Sikhism	849	1.40
	Hindu	43874	74.00
			contd...

Region	North-Eastern	7047	11.90
	Eastern	12615	21.30
	Southern	10218	17.20
	Western	10845	18.30
	Northern	18604	31.40
Household Size	1-3	3501	5.90
	4-5	27501	46.40
	6-7	17226	29.00
	8-9	6458	10.90
	>9	4643	7.80
MPCE Quartile	Top 20	10856	18.30
	20-40%	13316	22.40%
	40-60%	13872	23.40%
	60-80%	10031	16.90%
	Lowest 20%	11254	19.00

TABLE A3

Model Fitting Information

<i>Model</i>	<i>Model Fitting Criteria</i>		<i>Likelihood Ratio Tests</i>		
	<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
Intercept Only	10174.62				
Final	6995.407	3179.211	40	0	

TABLE A4

Likelihood Ratio Test

<i>Effect</i>	<i>Model Fitting Criteria</i>		<i>Likelihood Ratio Tests</i>		
	<i>-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
Intercept	6995.407	0	0	.	
Sex	7011.086	15.67899	2	0.00	
Social Group	7165.847	170.4396	6	0.00	
Religion	7354.507	359.1	8	0.00	
Region	7564.031	568.6235	8	0.00	
Household Size	7103.341	107.9337	8	0.00	
MPCE Quartile	7871.202	875.7948	8	0.00	

TABLE A5

MLR Logit Model: Estimation of Parameter

<i>Status of Current Educational Attendance</i>		β	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(β) (Odds Ratio)</i>
Intercept		-2.088	0.079	690.608	1	0	
Sex	Females	0.147	0.038	15.311	1	0	1.158
	Males*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
Social Group	Scheduled Tribe	0.709	0.072	97.651	1	0	2.032
	Scheduled Caste	0.582	0.065	79.307	1	0	1.79
	Other Backward Classes	0.407	0.053	58.774	1	0	1.502
	Others	0b	.	.	0	.	.
Religion	Others	0.278	0.152	3.335	1	0.068	1.321
	Muslims	0.685	0.047	212.874	1	0	1.983
	Christianity	0.01	0.128	0.006	1	0.94	1.01
	Sikhism	-1.167	0.283	16.955	1	0	0.311
	Hindus*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
Region	North-Eastern	-0.977	0.09	117.245	1	0	0.376
	Eastern	-0.549	0.048	129.401	1	0	0.577
	Southern	-1.368	0.086	252.302	1	0	0.255
	Western	-0.736	0.059	155.704	1	0	0.479
	Northern*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
Household Size	1-3	-0.442	0.12	13.635	1	0	0.643
	4-5	-0.544	0.064	72.409	1	0	0.58
	6-7	-0.234	0.061	14.651	1	0	0.791
	8-9	-0.093	0.069	1.8	1	0.18	0.912
	>9*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
Quartile	Top 20	-1.736	0.095	331.845	1	0	0.176
	20-40%	-0.339	0.047	52.727	1	0	0.713
	40-60%	-0.692	0.053	167.882	1	0	0.501
	60-80%	-1.272	0.076	280.984	1	0	0.28
	Lowest 20%*	0b	.	.	0	.	.

Contd...

Ever Attended but Currently not Attending	Intercept		-3.479	0.13	717.81	1	0	
	Sex	Females	0.048	0.057	0.691	1	0.406	1.049
		Males*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
	Social Group	Scheduled Tribe	0.711	0.104	46.316	1	0	2.036
		Scheduled Caste	0.567	0.1	31.959	1	0	1.763
		Other Backward Classes	0.322	0.08	15.999	1	0	1.38
		Others*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
	Religion	Others	-0.163	0.271	0.362	1	0.547	0.85
		Muslims	0.852	0.071	143.484	1	0	2.345
		Christianity	0.215	0.182	1.389	1	0.239	1.24
		Sikhism	-0.315	0.325	0.944	1	0.331	0.73
		Hindu*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
	Region	North-Eastern	-0.862	0.141	37.617	1	0	0.422
		Eastern	-0.474	0.08	35.373	1	0	0.623
		Southern	-0.744	0.112	43.871	1	0	0.475
		Western	0.065	0.078	0.692	1	0.406	1.067
		Northern*	0b	.	.	0	.	.
	Household Size	1-3	-0.079	0.18	0.192	1	0.661	0.924
		4-5	-0.127	0.104	1.495	1	0.222	0.881
		6-7	0.024	0.102	0.055	1	0.814	1.024
8-9		0.101	0.115	0.774	1	0.379	1.106	
>9*		0b	.	.	0	.	.	
Quartile	Top 20	-1.981	0.158	156.687	1	0	0.138	
	20-40%	-0.364	0.073	24.537	1	0	0.695	
	40-60%	-0.543	0.079	47.01	1	0	0.581	
	60-80%	-1.014	0.105	92.574	1	0	0.363	
	Lowest 20%*	0	.	.	0	.	.	

* Reference category

Source: Author's Derivation

Multinomial Logistic Regression for Secondary School Age Group (15-18 Years)

TABLE A6

Case Processing Summary

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>No. of Observations</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Status of Current Educational Attendance	Never Attended	1124	3.80
	Ever Attended but Currently not Attending	5948	20.10
	Currently Attending	22498	76.10
Sex	Females	13418	45.40
	Males	16152	54.60
Social Group	Scheduled Tribe	4028	13.60
	Scheduled Caste	5076	17.20
	Other Backward Classes	11992	40.60
	Others	8474	28.70
Religion	Others	592	2.00
	Muslims	4551	15.40
	Christianity	1684	5.70
	Sikhism	537	1.80
	Hindu	22206	75.10
Region	North-Eastern	3361	11.40
	Eastern	5853	19.80
	Southern	5399	18.30
	Western	5773	19.50
	Northern	9184	31.10
Household Size		2428	8.20
	4-5	14415	48.70
	6-7	8090	27.40
	8-9	2815	9.50
	>9	1822	6.20
Distance (d) to Nearest School Having Secondary Level Classes	d < 1 km	15089	51.00
	1 km d < 2 km	6462	21.90
	2 km d < 3 km	3653	12.40
	3 km d < 5 km	2019	6.80
	d ≥ 5 km	2347	7.90
MPCE Quartile	Top 20%	8229	27.80
	20-40%	5240	17.70
	40-60%	6450	21.80
	60-80%	5666	19.20
	Lowest 20%	3985	13.50

TABLE A7

Model Fitting Information

<i>Model</i>	<i>Model Fitting Criteria</i>	<i>Likelihood Ratio Tests</i>		
	<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Intercept Only	19601.49			
Final	14876.72	4724.772	48	0

TABLE A8

Likelihood Ratio Test

<i>Effect</i>	<i>Model Fitting Criteria</i>	<i>Likelihood Ratio Tests</i>		
	<i>-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Intercept	14876.72	0	0	.
Sex	14923.16	46.44443	2	0.0
Social Group	15116.82	240.101	6	0.0
Religion	15391.39	514.6678	8	0.0
Region	15154.83	278.1083	8	0.0
Household Size	15013.22	136.5034	8	0.0
Distance (d) to Nearest School Having Secondary Level Classes	14941.72	64.9981	8	0.0
MPCE Quartile	16953.92	2077.198	8	0.0

TABLE A9

MLR Logit Model: Estimation of Parameter

<i>Status of Current Educational Attendance</i>		β	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp (β) (Odds Ratio)</i>	
Never Attended	Intercept	-2.049	0.166	151.757	1	0		
	Sex	Females	0.396	0.064	37.846	1	0	1.485
		Males	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Social Group	Scheduled Tribe	1.278	0.126	103.305	1	0	3.589
		Scheduled Caste	1.099	0.115	91.04	1	0	3.001
		Other Backward Classes	0.71	0.096	55.283	1	0	2.035
		Others	0*	.	.	0	.	.
		Others	-0.206	0.278	0.549	1	0.459	0.814
	Religion	Muslims	1.205	0.081	220.958	1	0	3.337
		Christianity	-0.643	0.251	6.541	1	0.011	0.526
		Sikhism	0.287	0.28	1.051	1	0.305	1.333
	Region	Hindu	0*	.	.	0	.	.
		North-Eastern	-1.16	0.166	48.755	1	0	0.314
		Eastern	-0.464	0.081	33.059	1	0	0.628
		Southern	-1.39	0.147	89.836	1	0	0.249
		Western	-0.817	0.106	59.809	1	0	0.442
		Northern	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Household Size	1-3	0.516	0.161	10.316	1	0.001	1.675
		4-5	-0.431	0.115	13.958	1	0	0.65
		6-7	-0.098	0.109	0.8	1	0.371	0.907
		8-9	0.188	0.119	2.518	1	0.113	1.207
	Distance (d) to Nearest School Having Secondary Level Classes	>9	0*	.	.	0	.	.
		d < 1 km	-0.5	0.106	22.214	1	0	0.606
		1 km d < 2 km	-0.369	0.115	10.309	1	0.001	0.692
		2 km d < 3 km	-0.497	0.129	14.882	1	0	0.609
		3 km d < 5 km	-0.116	0.138	0.705	1	0.401	0.891
	Quartile	d \geq 5 km	0*	.	.	0	.	.
		Top 20%	-3.169	0.19	279.554	1	0	0.042
		20-40%	-0.403	0.08	25.647	1	0	0.668
		40-60%	-1.07	0.092	135.568	1	0	0.343
60-80%		-2.018	0.13	240.087	1	0	0.133	
	Lowest 20%*	0*	.	.	0	.	.	

Contd...

Ever Attended but Currently not Attending	Intercept	-0.826	0.09	84.637	1	0		
	Sex	Females	0.121	0.031	15.279	1	0	1.129
		Males	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Social Group	Scheduled Tribe	0.504	0.058	74.261	1	0	1.656
		Scheduled Caste	0.537	0.05	115.164	1	0	1.71
		Other Backward Classes	0.247	0.041	36.539	1	0	1.28
		Others	0*	.	.	0	.	.
		Others	-0.705	0.14	25.236	1	0	0.494
	Religion	Muslims	0.776	0.042	337.703	1	0	2.172
		Christianity	-0.268	0.093	8.357	1	0.004	0.765
		Sikhism	0.332	0.127	6.776	1	0.009	1.393
		Hindu	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Region	North-Eastern	-0.381	0.067	32.822	1	0	0.683
		Eastern	-0.137	0.044	9.629	1	0.002	0.872
		Southern	-0.247	0.051	23.76	1	0	0.781
		Western	0.186	0.045	16.971	1	0	1.204
		Northern	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Household Size	1-3	0.599	0.083	51.907	1	0	1.821
		4-5	0.099	0.065	2.294	1	0.13	1.104
		6-7	0.218	0.065	11.087	1	0.001	1.243
		8-9	0.277	0.074	14.044	1	0	1.319
		>9	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Distance (d) to nearest school having secondary level classes	d < 1 km	-0.309	0.056	30.681	1	0	0.734
		1 km d < 2 km	-0.17	0.06	8.015	1	0.005	0.844
		2 km d < 3 km	-0.121	0.065	3.499	1	0.061	0.886
		3 km d < 5 km	-0.09	0.074	1.483	1	0.223	0.914
		d ≥ 5 km	0*	.	.	0	.	.
	Quartile	Top 20%	-2.068	0.061	1150.00	1	0	0.126
20-40%		-0.32	0.047	46.327	1	0	0.726	
40-60%		-0.657	0.048	191.285	1	0	0.518	
60-80%		-1.188	0.054	493.039	1	0	0.305	
Lowest 20%*		0	.	.	0	.	.	

* Reference category

Source: Author's estimation

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Distributive Responses to a Collective Responsibility — The Right to Education in India

Sanjeev Kumar Jha*

Abstract

In order to provide an equitable quality of education to all children in the age group 6-14 years, the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 has been implemented on 1st April 2010. The implementation of the RTE, undoubtedly, brings in a quantitative improvement in the infrastructural facilities and human resources in the elementary schools, though the degree of this improvement varies among states/UTs. Therefore, it is imperative to draw the school improvement trajectories of each state/UT, since the implementation of the RTE in 2010-11 to 2014-15. It is further aimed to understand the pace of improvement and present status of the schools as per the RTE norms. For this purpose, the 'Right to Education Development Index' (RTEDI) has been computed for the years 2010-11 and 2014-15. It used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) on the secondary data fetched from 'District Information System on Education' (DISE). It concludes that there is a significant improvement in mean RTEDI over the period of half years. Furthermore, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are at the top three positions and Meghalaya is at the bottom since the implementation of the RTE till 2014-15. A total 12 states/UTs have improved, seven states have maintained and 14 states dropped their respective RTEDI ranking in 2014-15 as compared to 2010-11. Furthermore, RTEDI was analysed in the light of National Achievement Survey (NAS) results and it was found that RTE Development Index do not have significant relationship with learning of the student and do not reflect upon the students' achievement.

* RMSA-Technical Support Group EdCIL (India) Limited (A Government of India Enterprise), 6th Floor, Vijaya Building, 17-Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001.
Email: krjhasanjeev03@gmail.com.

Introduction

India has one of the largest school education systems in the world. Presently, India has 1.44 million elementary schools and 7.9 million teachers imparting education to 192.52 million students (DISE, 2014-15). Furthermore, India has a diverse society in terms of caste, religion, language, etc. Thus, India has a gigantic school education system with a lots of diversity inherited in its schools. 'How to provide equitable quality of education to all?' is one of the serious challenges haunting for such a large system. It is a critical issue to think and deliberate upon, and to find a plausible solution in this regard.

Administrators, policy makers and academicians found 'Right to Education' (RTE) as one of the possible solutions to what can provide equitable quality of education for all. Therefore, the RTE is being considered as a panacea to improve in the elementary education, thereby adding it as a fundamental right. However, Sarangapani (2014) argued that "the RTE act is excessively input-focused, rather than outcome-oriented" (p. 412), and he further suggested "any act on education should start addressing the lack of learning outcomes" (p. 412). The argument seems appropriate as all the focus of the respective machinery is to fulfill a set of standard norms formulated under RTE. Moreover, the parameters related to learning are diluted somehow.

The educational development should not only be limited to expansion in terms of the number of schools and infrastructure within the schools, but it need to further focus quality of education that reflect in the learning of the students. As the National Curriculum Framework [NCF] (2000) highlighted that "the quality of a school or educational system, in a real sense, has to be defined in terms of the performance capabilities of its students" (p. 24). Thus, for qualitative improvement, 'learning out-come of the students' is one of the significant parameters.

Right to Education Act 2009

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (commonly called as Right to Education Act 2009) was enacted on 4th August 2009 and enforced on 1st April 2010 by the 86th Constitutional Amendment. The RTE empowers all children between age group 6 to 14 years with free and compulsory education and she/he cannot be denied for admission in the school even if she/he does not have her/his age proof. Moreover, it ensures 25 per cent of seats to be allotted to students belong to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS). It is imperative to mention that it applies to all the states and UTs in India except Jammu and Kashmir.

The RTE has been introduced as a collective responsibility to all the states but, the states/UTs have responded in distributive manner. According to Sarangapani (2014, 408), "the RTE act is the most substantive declaration of the government's commitment and responsibility towards education." The RTE act formulates a set of norms and standards in its 'part 2' to provide equitable quality of education to all the children across the length and breadth of the country.

Developing such a large school education system, on a set of norms and standards, has a strong financial implication. With this in mind, the financial commitment is provisioned as a share between central and state governments in the ratio 65:35, through the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme. However, in the case of states belongs to the North East region,

the fund sharing pattern is in the ratio of 90:10. The central government has a major responsibility as far as finance is concerned. At the same time state and local governments have major accountability to ensure the implementation of the Right to Education act in their respective territory. However, Patri (2015, 30) highlights that “the road to implement Right to the Education Act is not going to be easy.” For this purpose Uma (2013, 59) suggested that “the success and failure of RTE would largely depend on consistent political attention.” Moreover, RTE needs to be learning oriented, and not merely norms driven.

Now, it has been more than half a decade of the RTE enactment, though, it has made a provision that three years to develop essential infrastructure in the schools in order to match RTE norms. For this purpose, respective governments have invested a good amount of financial resources. Certainly, it brought a quantitative improvement in the schools infrastructure and the number of teachers. But, the degree of improvement varies among states. Therefore, it is imperative to draw infrastructural improvement trajectory of each state/UTs, since the enactment of the RTE to 2014-15. This will further help to understand the pace of improvement and present status as per RTE norms.

In order to draw improvement trajectory, the paper computes the Right to Education Development Index (RTEDI), by using key indicators defined in the act. The years 2010-11 and 2014-15 are selected for computation of the RTEDI. The year 2010-11 is selected as it is the year of enactment of the Right to Education, proposing it as the base year. It is important to access the status of RTEDI at the time of enactment. Again, 2014-15 was selected to analyse the relative change in the RTEDI ranking of the states over the period of five years of enactment, to understand the progress of the states/UTs after half a decade of RTE implementation.

Objectives of Study

- a) To compute the Right to Education Development Index (RTEDI) for each state/UT in years 2010-11 and 2014-15.
- b) To analyse the variations in Right to Education Development Index (RTEDI) across the states/UTs over the period of half a decade.
- c) To compare the mean Right to Education Development Index (RTEDI) between 2010-11 and 2014-15.
- d) To study the status of high and poor/lower rank states/UTs on key indicators.
- e) To study relationship between the RTEDI and students’ learning achievement.

Methodology

In order to calculate the RTEDI of each state/UT, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used.

Data Source

The study is based on the secondary data ‘District Information for School Education’ (DISE). The RTEDI is calculated by using DISE data for 2010-11 and 2014-15.

Further, for students’ learning achievement ‘National Achievement Survey’ (NAS) for class V (Cycle 4) -- 2015 was used. National Achievement Survey (NAS) is being regularly

conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) at class III, V, VIII and X in different school subjects. NAS reflects upon the students' achievement in different school subjects and it is a significant parameter to understand learning of students across the states/UTs.

Variables under Study

The variables to compute RTEDI was taken from **Part-2: The Schedule, at pp. 12-13 of the RTE Act**. It defines norms and standards for a school. The norms and standards under Part-2 of RTE have seven major parameters namely, (i). Number of teachers, (ii). Infrastructures (building with six sub parameters), (iii). Minimum number of working days/ instructional hours in an academic year, (iv). Number of working days, hours per week for the teacher, (v). Teaching-learning equipment, (vi). Library, and (vii). Recreational activities (play material, games and sports equipment). The data related to parameter (iv), (v) and (vii) is not available with the database used for the RTEDI computation. The RTE states about these parameters as per requirement. So, these were excluded for the computation. All the variables listed in Table1 were selected for the purpose of computation of indices for each state.

TABLE 1
List of Variables for Computation Index

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Association</i>
1.	Pupil teacher ratio	PTR	Negative
2.	Percent of schools with playground	SCH_PLAYGRD	Positive
3.	Percentage of schools with boundary wall	SCH_BWALL	Positive
4.	Percentage of schools with girls' toilets	SCH_GIRL_TOILETS	Positive
5.	Percentage of schools with boys' toilets	SCH_BOYS_TOILETS	Positive
6.	No. of classroom per teacher	CLASSROOM_PER_TEACHER	Positive
7.	Percentage of schools having ramp	SCH_RAMP	Positive
8.	Percentage of primary schools with less than 200 working days in last academic year	PSCH_LESSTHAN200_WORKING_DAYS	Negative
9.	Percentage of upper primary schools with less than 220 working days in last academic year	USCH_LESSTHAN220_WORKING_DAYS	Negative
10.	Percentage of schools having a library	LIB	Positive

Steps to compute the Right to Education Index (RTEDI)

There are three major steps to compute RTEDI.

Step 1: Normalisation of Data

In order to compute RTEDI, first the data were normalized. For this purpose following two formulas were used:

- 1) If the data is positively associated (i.e. the higher the value of variable better the status) then following transformation was used (e.g. percentage of schools with playground)

$$N_{Xij} = (X_{ij} - \text{Min}X_i) / (\text{Max}X_i - \text{Min}X_i) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

- 2) If the data is negatively associated (i.e. the higher the value of variable poorer the status) then following transformation was used (e.g. Pupil-teacher ratio)

$$N_{Xij} = (\text{Max}X_i - X_{ij}) / (\text{Max}X_i - \text{Min}X_i) \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

In equation (1) and (2) N_{Xij} stands for normalized value of i th variable for j th state, X_{ij} stands for actual value of i th variable for j th state, $\text{Max}X_i$ stands for maximum value of i th variable across the states and $\text{Min}X_i$ stands for the minimum value of i th variable across the states.

Step 2: Weight of Variables

The factor analysis was used to find out weight for each variable. The j th, F_j can be expressed as:

$$F_j = W_{j1}X_1 + W_{j2}X_2 + W_{j3}X_3 + \dots \dots \dots + W_{jp}X_p + \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

Where W_j 's are factor score coefficient, p is the number of variables and X is the score of individual variable on indicator 1.

Step 3: Computation of RTEDI

The weight of all the 10 selected variables was used, to compute a composite index for each state/UT. Furthermore, a rank is assigned to each state/UT as per its index.

Computation the Right to Education Index (RTEDI)

The computation of index by principal component analysis on all the 10 selected variables is explained as follows:

TABLE 2
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Year		2010-11	2014-15
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.745	.620
Approx. Chi-Square		133.121	165.435
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	36	45
	Sig.	.000	.000

The KMO statistics represents the ratio of the squared correlation between variables to the squared partial correlation between variables. The values KMO close to 1 indicates that pattern of correlations are relatively compact so component analysis will yield distinct and reliable factors. It is .745 and .620 for the year 2010-11 and 2014-15 respectively. Thus, this analysis yields distinct and reliable factors. The Bartlett's test of sphericity is highly significant and indicated that the variables are correlated highly enough to provide a reasonable base for use of principal component analysis (Hair, Babin, & Anderson, 2007).

TABLE 3
Components and Variance Explained

Component	2010-11			2014-15		
	Eigen Values	% of Variance	Cumulative % of variance	Eigen Values	% of Variance	Cumulative % of variance
1	3.661	40.683	40.683	3.690	36.898	36.898
2	2.041	22.675	63.358	2.189	21.891	58.788
3		*		1.104	11.037	69.826

*For year 2010-11, two factors have been identified.

The number of factors that were selected for which the component has Eigen value (Eigen value is the measure of the amount of variation in the total sample accounted for by the each factor) greater than 1. Thus, two and three factors were identified for the years 2010-11 and 2014-15 respectively.

Table 4
Components and Communalities

Variable	Component							
	2010-14			2014-15				
	1	2	Communalities	1	2	3	Communalities	
PTR	-.209	-.587	.389	-.008	-.865	.145	.770	
PSCH_LESSTHAN200_WORKING_DAYS	.323	.678	.564	.613	.320	.600	.839	
USCH_LESSTHAN220_WORKING_DAYS	.222	.807	.700	.401	.656	.254	.656	
SCH_PLAYGRD	.767	-.097	.598	.716	-.065	-.317	.617	
SCH_BWALL	.828	-.253	.749	.806	-.051	-.317	.753	
SCH_GIRL_TOILETS	.903	-.248	.877	.743	-.350	.038	.676	
SCH_BOYS_TOILETS	.837	-.345	.820	.826	-.295	.233	.823	
SCH_RAMP	.756	.128	.588	.427	.353	-.627	.700	
CLASSROOM_PER_TEACHER	.320	.561	.417	-.225	.729	.021	.582	
LIB			*	.724	.190	.090	.568	

* Data are not available.

The communalities after extraction are more than 0.5 for all variables for both the years except PTR and classroom per teacher in 2010-11. The 'Right to Education' Development Index (RTEDI) was computed for 2010-11 as well as 2014-15 with the help of component matrix.

TABLE 5
RTEDI for 2010-11 and 2014-15

Sl. No.	STATE	2010-11		Category	2014-15		Category	Status of Index	Rank Status
		Index	Rank		Index	Rank			
1.	Punjab	0.836	1	High	0.888	1	High	↑	↔
2.	Haryana	0.749	2	High	0.875	2	High	↑	↔
3.	Delhi	0.735	3	High	0.873	3	High	↑	↔
4.	Uttar Pradesh	0.734	4	High	0.794	10	Average	↑	↓
5.	Rajasthan	0.718	5	High	0.741	14	Average	↑	↓
6.	Gujarat	0.717	6	High	0.863	5	High	↑	↑
7.	Daman & Diu	0.711	7	High	0.762	12	Average	↑	↓
8.	Chandigarh	0.708	8	Average	0.867	4	High	↑	↑
9.	Maharashtra	0.704	9	Average	0.857	6	High	↑	↑
10.	Karnataka	0.701	10	Average	0.831	7	High	↑	↑
11.	Kerala	0.672	11	Average	0.637	26	Average	↓	↓
12.	Himachal Pradesh	0.672	12	Average	0.806	8	Average	↑	↑
13.	Tamil Nadu	0.654	13	Average	0.780	11	Average	↑	↑
14.	Uttarakhand	0.625	14	Average	0.805	9	Average	↑	↑
15.	Puducherry	0.621	15	Average	0.736	15	Average	↑	↔
16.	Goa	0.579	16	Low	0.685	18	Average	↑	↓
17.	Chhattisgarh	0.527	17	Low	0.695	17	Average	↑	↔
18.	Madhya Pradesh	0.512	18	Low	0.696	16	Average	↑	↑
19.	A & N Islands	0.505	19	Low	0.669	20	Average	↑	↓
20.	Jharkhand	0.498	20	Low	0.621	28	Average	↑	↓
21.	Andhra Pradesh	0.469	21	Low	0.649	24	Average	↑	↓
22.	Nagaland	0.449	22	Low	0.558	32	Average	↑	↓
23.	Lakshadweep Dadra & Nagar	0.441	23	Low	0.672	19	Average	↑	↑
24.	Haveli	0.433	24	Low	0.746	13	Average	↑	↑

Contd...

Distributive Responses to a Collective Responsibility

25.	Assam	0.425	25	Low	0.494	33	Low	↑	↓
26.	Tripura	0.412	26	Low	0.625	27	Average	↑	↓
27.	Odisha	0.400	27	Low	0.655	22	Average	↑	↑
28.	West Bengal	0.323	28	Low	0.649	23	Average	↑	↑
29.	Bihar	0.312	29	Low	0.441	34	Low	↑	↓
30.	Arunachal Pradesh	0.267	30	Low	0.588	30	Average	↑	↔
31.	Manipur	0.264	31	Low	0.572	31	Average	↑	↔
32.	Jammu & Kashmir*	0.258	32	Low	0.349	35	Low	↑	↓
33.	Meghalaya	0.236	33	Low	0.222	36	Low	↓	↓
34.	Sikkim	Data did not report			0.644	25	Average	-	-
35.	Mizoram	Data did not report			0.619	29	Average	-	-
36.	Telangana	State did not form			0.660	21	Average	-	-
		Mean	0.54			0.68			
		Standard Deviation (SD)	0.17			0.15			
		Coefficient of Variance (CV)	30.93			21.76			

* RTE is not applicable.

TABLE 6

Category of Index

Sl. No.	Category	Norm	2010-11	2014-15
			Mean=0.54, SD=0.17	Mean=0.68, SD=0.15
1	High	More than (M + SD)	0.71	0.83
2	Average	(M - SD) to (M+ SD)	0.37 to 0.71	0.53 to 0.83
3	Low	Less than (M - SD)	0.37	0.53

M: Mean; SD: standard deviation

The RTEDI across the states/UTs in 2010-11 and 2014-15

Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are at the top three positions whereas Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya are at the bottom two positions in both the years. The mean RTEDI and total RTEDI of all the states/UTs have been improved in the last five years. The improvement on RTED indices across the states/UTs is manifested in the improvement of infrastructural facility for the schools in all the states/UTs. The most contributing factors for this improvement in RTEDI are PTR, playground, boundary wall, toilets for boys and girls and ramp.

States Which Improved Their RTEDI Rank

The states like Gujarat, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Lakshadweep, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Odisha and West Bengal have improved their RTEDI ranking.

States Which Maintained Their RTEDI Rank

The states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Puducherry, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur have shown no significant shift their ranking.

States Which Declined in Their RTEDI Rank

The states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Daman & Diu, Kerala, Goa, A & N Island, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Tripura, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya have declined in their RTEDI ranking.

Variations in Right to Education Development Index (RTEDI) across the States

The top and the bottom ranking states have not changed over the period of last five years. The RTEDI of varies from .836 (Punjab) to .236 (Meghalaya) in the year 2010-11 and it varies from .888 (Punjab) to .222 (Meghalaya) in the year 2014-15. The coefficient of variance (CV) was 30.93 in 2010-11 and 21.76 in 2014-15. It shows a high variation within states/UTs in each year. However, the CV has decreased by nine points over the period of five years. Further, it implies that variance within states/UTs is reduced remarkably from 2010-11 to 2014-15. Moreover, it shows that the most of the states/UTs has done well and poorly performing states/UTs has improved remarkably well.

TABLE 7

States in Each Category of Index

	<i>High</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
2010-11	7	8	18
2014-15	7	25	4

Source: Table 5

The majority of states/UTs lie in the average RTEDI index category. In the year 2014-15, only four states/UTs were in the low category. Thus, there is a significant transition from low category to average category. However, number of state at high category is same in both the years but Chandigarh, Maharashtra and Karnataka improved their status from average to high category whereas same number of states (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Daman and Diu) gets down in average from high category.

The Right to Education Development Index (RTEDI) between 2010-2011 and 2014-2015

TABLE 8
Comparison of RTEDI

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>	<i>t ratio</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>
2014-2015	.68	34	.15	.026	9.31	33	**
2010-2011	.54	34	.17	.030			

** Significant at .01 level ($p < 0.01$)

At the time of RTE enactment in 2010, the overall mean RTEDI was 0.53 which became 0.68 in 2014. The t-test test is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, there is a significant improvement in the overall RTEDI index from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015. The RTE is a constitutional obligation for the center and the state governments. Thus, the respective government has increased resources in the elementary education. Now, elementary schools have better infrastructure and pupil teacher ratio.

Status of high and Low Ranked States/ UTs on Key Indicators

The index viz-a-viz ranking depends upon the key indicators stated in table 1. If a state has a high index viz-a-viz ranking then the state has more cumulative investment in the key indicators. Thus, the major reason for high index is more cumulative investment in the parameters stated in table 1 and vice versa.

Since the enactment of RTE in 2010, each state has upgraded their schools, as per RTE norms and standards. Each state has improved impressively. The RTED index of each state/UT manifests on the status of key indicators in the state/UTs. Thus, it is important to discuss status of states in each key indicator. Table 9 reflect that each top and bottom ranking states/UTs has improved its status on each key indicator. Out of top ranking states/UTs Uttar Pradesh could not keep pace with the improvement in RTEDI from 2010-11 to 2014-15. It came down to the 10th position from the 4th position.

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)

It is interesting to note that bottom ranking states except Bihar have better PTR than top ranking states. Bihar has poorest PTR in both the years. However, it improved its PTR from 58 in 2010-11 to 49 in 2014-15.

Number of Classroom per Teacher

Each teacher should have a classroom in the school as per the RTE norms. As per the RTE norms number of teachers increased during the last five years but the construction of number of classrooms could not match this pace. In 2010-11, all the top ranking state/UT have more than one classroom per teacher in their schools. But, it reduced to less than one in

TABLE 9

Status of the Top and Bottom ranked States/ UTs

Year	State/ UT	PTR	No. of classroom per teacher	Percent of Schools with									
				playground	boundary wall	girls toilets	boys toilets	Ramp	less than 200 working days	less than 220 working days	library		
2010-2011	Top ranking states/ UT	Punjab	21	1.25	73	95	89.35	54.05	63.18	2.62	18.32	Data is not available	
		Haryana	26	1.01	76	96	81.87	65.07	58.86	2.02	76.42		
		Delhi	36	1.05	80	98	77.08	76.14	57.20	6.36	96.15		
		Uttar Pradesh	44	1.20	76	54	75.71	50.26	76.62	0.72	16.92		
		Rajasthan	29	1.15	47	76	88.17	58.78	49.69	5.06	29.16		
		Bihar	58	0.71	31	45	29.84	16.62	35.92	21.1	38.92		
		Bottom ranking states/ UT	Arunachal Pradesh	18	0.97	30	30	19.11	11.18	2.57	37.16		57.65
			Manipur	19	0.89	56	30	8.54	6.69	4.25	32.64		72.27
			Jammu & Kashmir*	13	0.84	38	31	10.08	6.42	5.77	18.48		75.45
			Meghalaya	16	0.91	36	19	20.83	18.28	15.92	57.33		91.28
2014-2015	Top ranking states/ UT	Punjab	17	0.7	95.39	98.62	97.21	99.68	85.5	0.04	0.56	95.62	
		Haryana	20	0.8	83.39	98.18	96.38	98.71	90.14	0.08	0.73	97.59	
		Delhi	23	0.6	85.80	99.90	100	100	100	0.17	14.15	97.96	
		Chandigarh	19	0.5	92.89	100	100	100	87.64	0	15.93	99.49	
		Gujarat	29	1.0	76.26	94	98.54	99.85	90.62	0.03	4.63	93.62	
		Nagaland	12	0.7	40.72	70.33	94.77	99.56	71.63	32.41	76	33.07	
		Assam	20	0.7	54.35	27.81	53.92	79.68	90.24	4.76	10.51	56.15	
		Bottom ranking states/ UT	Bihar	49	0.9	35	53.84	71.23	79.77	66.33	15.56	48.17	68.80
			Jammu & Kashmir*	12	0.9	36.37	33.38	66.94	83.83	32.47	47.57	71.22	58.04
			Meghalaya	18	0.9	32.77	18.98	60.48	68.40	69.84	55.50	70.92	10.19

DISE 2010-11 and 2014-15

year 2014-15 except in Gujarat. The trend for this indicator is similar for both the top and the bottom ranking states/UTs.

Schools with Playground, Boundary Wall, Girls & Boys Toilets and Ramp

There is a positive associate of RTEDI with the percentage of schools with these indicators. Top ranking states/UTs have higher percentage of schools with these indicators than bottom ranking states/UTs.

Schools with the Library

Library has an important role in teaching-learning exchange of the students. It is a serious concern for the bottom ranking states. Meghalaya, which is at the bottom of the ranking list, has just 10 per cent schools with library, whereas top ranking states have more than 90 per cent of schools with library.

Percentage of Schools with the Number of Working Days as per the RTE Norms (200 for Primary and 220 for Upper Primary Schools)

It is one of the major contributors, which negatively influence ranking of the states/UTs. The bottom ranking states/UTs fail function for the required number of working days. Jammu and Kashmir has the highest percentages of schools which do not meet this criterion for primary and upper primary schools. It is well understood as the region has political and climatic challenges to deal with.

RTEDI and Student's Learning Achievement (Reading Comprehension, Mathematics and Environmental Science)

The states/UTs ranked are based upon their mean achievement scores in Reading Comprehension, Mathematics and Environmental Science.

TABLE 10

Learning Achievement of the Students

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>State/ Union Territory</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>EVS</i>	<i>RTEDI Rank</i>	<i>Rank Reading</i>	<i>Rank Math</i>	<i>Rank EVS</i>
	<i>Source</i>	<i>NAS Class V Cycle (4)</i>			<i>Table 5</i>	<i>Calculation depending NAS Class V Cycle (4)</i>		
1	Andhra Pradesh	237	235	238	30	12	10.5	13.5
2	Arunachal Pradesh	227	224	232	30	5.5	4.5	7
3	Assam	243	256	252	33	16.5	27	25
4	Bihar	208	235	226	34	1	10.5	5
5	Chhattisgarh	216	208	212	17	2	1	2

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6	Delhi	227	223	223	3	5.5	3	4
7	Goa	254	227	239	18	28	7	15.5
8	Gujarat	243	250	247	5	16.5	25	20.5
9	Haryana	239	245	239	2	14.5	19.5	15.5
10	Himachal Pradesh	248	246	246	8	22	22	19
11	J & K	239	249	251	35	14.5	24	23.5
12	Jharkhand	228	257	237	28	7	28.5	12
13	Karnataka	251	260	262	7	26	30.5	31
14	Kerala	259	230	240	26	31.5	9	17.5
15	Madhya Pradesh	229	236	238	16	8	12	13.5
16	Maharashtra	248	237	235	6	22	13.5	8.5
17	Manipur	256	260	257	31	29	30.5	27.5
18	Meghalaya	226	228	236	36	4	8	10.5
19	Mizoram	257	224	253	29	30	4.5	26
20	Nagaland	246	240	240	32	20	16.5	17.5
21	Odisha	232	237	236	22	9	13.5	10.5
22	Punjab	249	238	249	1	24.5	15	22
23	Rajasthan	233	246	235	14	10	22	8.5
24	Sikkim	245	240	247	25	19	16.5	20.5
25	Tamil Nadu	259	264	267	11	31.5	33	33
26	Tripura	253	245	257	27	27	19.5	27.5
27	Uttar Pradesh	248	257	260	10	22	28.5	30
28	Uttarakhand	223	222	221	9	3	2	3
29	West Bengal	244	241	143	23	18	18	1
30	A&N Islands	249	253	259	20	24.5	26	29
31	Chandigarh	236	226	227	17	11	6	6
32	Puducherry	238	246	251	15	13	22	23.5
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	260	261	265	13	33.5	32	32
34	Daman & Diu	260	273	268	12	33.5	34	34

Table 11 tabulated with the analysis of relationship between RTEDI and learning achievement of the students for the year 2015.

TABLE 11

RTEDI and Learning Achievement

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Achievement</i>		
	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>EVS</i>
Spearman's rho RTEDI	-.168	-.132	-.075
p (Sig. (2 tailed))	.342 (NS)	.458 (NS)	.675 (NS)
Number	34	34	34

NS not significant

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated between RTEDI and achievement subjects Reading, Math and EVS. There is no significant relationship between RTEDI and learning achievement of students in Reading Comprehension (-.168), Mathematics (-.132) and Environmental Science (-.075) across the states/UTs.

Thus, RTEDI do not have any significant association with students' achievement. The improvement in 10 parameters (Table 1) as per RTE act does not lead to a significant improvement in the learning of the students. The statement has a uniform implication across all the states and UTs.

Conclusions

The enactment of RTE has a positive impact on the quantitative growth of the elementary education system. The overall RTED index has significantly improved from 2010-11 to 2014-15. Also there is an improvement in the RTEDI of all the states during five years. Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are at top first three positions and Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya are at the bottom two positions in both the years. It is imperative to mention here that RTE is not applicable to Jammu and Kashmir, still, it has improved its RTED index. Furthermore, the top and the bottom ranking states have not changed over the period of last five years. A total 12 states/UTs has improved, seven states maintained and 14 states declined their RTEDI ranking from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

The mean RTEDI and RTEDI of all the states/UTs have been improved in five years. The improvement on RTED indices across the states/UTs is manifested in the improvement of infrastructural facility for the schools in all the states/UTs. The most contributing factors for this improvement in RTEDI are PTR, playground, boundary wall, toilets for boys and girls and ramp.

The coefficient of variance (CV) was 30.93 in 2010-11 and 21.76 in 2014-15. It shows a high variation within states/UTs in each year. However, the CV decreased by nine points over the period of five years, so, variation is decreased in the last five years. Moreover, it shows that the most of the states/UTs has done well and poorly performing states/UTs has improved remarkably well.

Each top and bottom ranking states/UTs has improved its status on each key indicator. Out of top ranking states/UTs Uttar Pradesh could not keep pace with the improvement in RTEDI. It is interesting to note that bottom ranking states except Bihar have a better PTR than top ranking states. During the last five years, the number of teachers has increased, but

the construction of a number of classrooms could not match with this pace. In 2010-11, all the top ranking state/UT have more than one classroom per teacher in their schools. But, it reduced to less than one in year 2014-15 except in Gujarat. The trend for this indicator is similar for both the top and the bottom ranking states/UTs. Furthermore, there is a positive association of RTEDI with the percentage of schools with the key indicators. Top ranking states/UTs have a higher percentage of schools with the key indicators than bottom ranking states/UTs. It is one of the major contributors, which negatively influence ranking of the states/UTs. The bottom ranking states/UTs fail function for the required number of working days. The bottom ranking states/UTs fail to deliver when it comes to functional working days that has contextual rational to argue upon.

There is a gap in the policy framework with respect to RTE and its expected outcomes of students' learning performance as mentioned in NCF (2000). Infrastructural changes alone cannot lead to the expected outcomes as aspired at the inception of RTE act 2009.

Policy Implications

Each state has put its endeavor to improve the infrastructure in the school and develop its school with norms at par with RTE. Uma (2013, 59) concluded that "the consistent monitoring and intention of the political will is a must to make it successful." Therefore, development of a monitoring mechanism and political will are important for the effective implementation of the RTE. The specific policy implications are as follows:

- a) Learning in the school is 'The central focus.' There is an immediate need to address and include learning related parameters in RTE.
- b) The centre need to focus, more and extend its support to poorly performing states in relation to the RTEDI, thereby establishing special centre, state collaboration.
- c) Best practices can be identified from the high performing states in relation to RTEDI and try to replicate these practices in poorly performing states in relation to RTEDI.
- d) Learning outcome related indicator should also be included as part of the RTE.
- e) Reward and appreciation should be a part of policy initiative for both efforts and achievements.

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Elementary Schooling in Rural Punjab

— A Comparative Analysis of Quality of Education in Government and Private Schools

Satvinderpal Kaur*

Abstract

This paper focuses on elementary schooling in rural Punjab. It tries to understand the comparative status and quality of education of rural children in both government and private schools at elementary level. The evidence presented here is based on primary data collected through an empirical study conducted on both government and private unrecognised rural schools of two districts, namely, Sangrur and Mansa, in the state of Punjab. Here, quality of rural elementary education has been seen through the prism of two major parameters; one is the academic performance of children in three major school subjects and the other is school-related inputs in terms of physical and teaching-related measures. Findings of the study reveal that the quality of education in both private and government schools in rural Punjab is far from satisfactory. Children studying in both government and private schools showed dismal academic performance, irrespective of the type of school. The comparative analysis reflects that neither the government nor private schools have the infrastructure of a comparable quality. In rural areas privately run schools are no better than government schools in terms of academic performance of children and school quality indicators. The evidence presented here increasingly points out that on the one hand the shift from cost free education in government schools to cost paid private schools is experienced but, on the other hand, not much is being added in terms of academic performance and quality of education imparted in such private schools.

* Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh.
Email: satvinder2002@gmail.com

Introduction

The quality of education which, in turn, leads to good learning outcomes is vital for inclusive growth and development. Since the inception of independence, the provision of good quality school education has remained as an agenda of educational discourse. A number of policies, official resolutions and pronounced judgements insist on ensuring quality education for all. After the 1970s, when education was brought under the concurrent list, national goals were set for education in India: the National Policy in 1986, which was revised in 1992, programmes like the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act (2009), all laid stress on access to good quality education. The gross enrolment ratio (GER), which was 82.4 in 2001, increased to 95 in 2014, with 13 per cent increase at elementary level. The dropout rate that was 53.7 per cent in 2000-2001 was reduced to 36.3 per cent in 2013-14 (MHRD, 2014). Clearly, in the last few decades, the Indian education system has witnessed a huge quantitative expansion while the major focus of planners and policy makers continued to be on opening new schools and increasing the enrolment figures. But despite the progress made in terms of enrolment and retention, the quality of education remains a formidable challenge and serious concern for the academia as well as policy makers.

A lot of literature has been written to elucidate the social, economic and political importance of elementary education. Quality of education which, in turn, leads to good learning outcomes, is vital for inclusive growth. It is more pertinent in rural areas where a vast majority of children encounter the constraints like parental illiteracy, poverty, dismal facilities and lack of parental support. Being born and brought up in the deprived rural setup and that too in disadvantaged families, rural children bear double deprivation in terms of access to good quality education and learning outcomes. Many children, being the first generation learners and crippled with rural poverty and lack of parental involvement, are unable to perform comparably to their urban and affluent counterparts.

For rural children, constraints in educational attainment are not only complex in nature and magnitude, but deeply ingrained in the socio-cultural fabric. Several factors start to play a role even before their entry in formal school system. Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2011) argued that poverty acts as a constraint in educational achievement and results in non-participation of the poor children in educational process. Lack of quality education, in turn, leads to many among them grow up as illiterates or turning out to semi-illiterate adults. It is well articulated that poverty, illiteracy and social factors have a bearing on the learning achievement of children. In a study in Punjab, Kaur (2012, 2017) found that poverty in family, non-availability of good schooling, discrimination and poor academic performance are significant factors which lead to school dropout and educational exclusion of rural children. The ASER (2015), too, has illustrated the dismal state of learning outcomes in rural India. The report indicated that children in private schools have better learning outcomes than those of their peers in government schools. Sen and Dreze (1995) argued that the quality of school education imparted in rural and backward regions in India is not satisfactory. Researchers including Shukla (1994) and Mohanty (2009) pointed out that school related inputs are determinants of academic achievement of school students.

Thus, working conditions of the schools, methodology of teaching and active involvement of teacher in learning of child are key factors responsible to create conducive learning environment in school. While explaining the cause of educational deprivation in rural India, Dreze (1999) asserted that school participation, household resources, parental education and school quality measures are key determinants. Exploring educational performance of rural children, Desai (2008) found that

performance of private school students is not consistently higher than government school students in many states of India. Muralidharan (2006) found that the quality of learning outcomes in private schools is better as compared to government schools. On the iniquitous system of school education, Johl (2011) affirmed that standards of education and educational performance differ across class, caste and region. Child's gender, economic status, location etc. largely have a bearing on the type of education (s)he gets, the kind of experiences (s)he will have in school and the benefits (s)he will get from being 'educated' in such a school system.

Dichotomy of Government and Private Schools

In India, private schools offering elementary education have grown rapidly after 1991. Between 2010-11 and 2015-16, the number of private schools grew by 35 per cent i.e. from 0.22 million in 2010-11 to 0.30 million in 2015-16, while the number of government schools grew by only 1 per cent, i.e. from 1.03 million to 1.04 million (ASER, 2016). The poor quality of education in government schools, along with the changing policies of the state, played a major role in the rapid growth of private schools.

The access to quality education is increasingly become class-based, where people belonging to the upper and middle classes send their children to high-fee charging private unaided schools, and a vast majority of parents belonging to the lower socio-economic strata have to remain content with the government schools. In the last few decades the increasing number of private schools has widened the divide among the children. Amidst this marked divide, a recent trend has emerged where the lower income group families are sending their children to low-fee private unrecognised schools with the belief that good quality education is being imparted in such private schools. Kumar (2005) argued that the association of 'quality' with the inclusive capacity of a system becomes all the more relevant when we notice the parallel growth of privatisation. Privately run institutions thrive on the popular assumption that whatever is not under state control must be of some quality.

Evidence on the comparative quality of public and private schools has led to a strong policy debate on the provisions of school education. It is also established that the picture of low cost private schools to provide quality education is fragmentary. Private schools are no better than government schools in terms of learning outcomes and quality of education (Nambissan, 2012; Karopady, 2014). It is acknowledged that a significant proportion of children, especially those from the underprivileged backgrounds, and girls either drop out before they reach grade VIII or, even if they continue to attend school, they learn very little. Arguably the meaning of eight years of schooling carries vast difference among children across region, class, caste and other social groups.

The existing system of school education reflects economic and social inequalities. As per the NSSO (2014), Net Attendance figures, 89 per cent of children of the richest fifth of population, both rural and urban, attend primary schools. The percentage drops by 10 points (78 per cent) for the poorest fifth of population in rural areas and 79 per cent for urban areas. Exclusivity prevails in such a manner that only the privileged could manage to gain access to good quality education. Social and income disparities continue to reflect gaps in learning outcomes of children. Children of the disadvantaged and weaker sections of society exhibit lower learning outcomes and greater dropout rates due to poor numeracy and literacy skills. The government and private school dichotomy further aggravated the situation.

Scenario of School Education in Punjab

Punjab has a long history of formal and non-formal education with a strong colonial legacy, when access to education was limited to the upper strata of the society and to the urban areas. After independence, the state government paid special attention to the expansion of education, particularly in the rural areas. The state and central governments provided liberal financial assistance to open new educational institutions in the state. It brought about a rapid expansion of education, particularly in rural areas.

However, though a large number of schools were opened, educational development remained stratified, skewed and exclusive. At present, on the basis of ownership and financial support, school system is stratified into the state and the private sectors. The schools run by the central and state governments comprise the government sector¹, while the private sector includes different categories of schools. The first category is of the aided schools, which receive government aid; these are about to collapse due to apathy of the state in the last two decades.² The second category is of private schools that are generally situated in urban areas and fulfil some specified norms laid down by the government for recognition. Clearly, these are high-fee chargers and are out of reach of the majority of state population. The third category comprises unrecognised schools that are popularly known as 'English Medium' schools³ and are believed to be low-cost private schools. The government run schools in the rural sector are perceived as schools of the have-nots, and therefore the gap left by them is filled by the unregulated growth of third category of schools in both rural and semi-urban areas of Punjab.

Thus the wider proliferation of private schools has perpetuated the myth that they offer English medium, sound pedagogy and good quality education. In the last few decades, parents are being seen to increasingly approach the private schools due to the neglect of government schools, which is a direct outcome of the changing policies of the state. It has resulted in a discernible trend in a shift of children from government to private schools. At present in Punjab more than 50 per cent of children in the 6-14 age group go to private schools (ASER 2014).

It is thus only a small percentage of people, who are economically well off, who have good quality urban schools within reach. Poor rural parents pay private school fee with much difficulty, because of their scarce or negligible resources, with the only dream of somehow ensuring good quality education for their wards.

But at the same time, the growing popularity of private schools in rural areas has raised many questions about the learning outcomes of children and quality of education imparted in rural schools. Due to the quantitative expansion of school education in the last few decades, the enrolment figures have increased substantially. At present the Gross Enrolment ratio (GER) figures at primary and upper primary level are 111.2 and 96.7, respectively, which are comparable

¹ Adarsh schools, opened by state under the PPP, model could not bring about positive results and are facing many challenges. The PPP project launched by Punjab government in 2011 to impart quality education to rural children is stood abandoned midway leaving students in lurch, *Hindustan Times*, December 10, 2015.

² As the state government imposed a ban on teacher recruitments in 2003, at present the government aided schools are facing financial problems due to delay in the release of and frequent cuts in the grant-in-aid. According to the data coming from the Directorate of School Education of the Punjab Government, out of 9,468 sanctioned posts of teachers, nearly 6,000 are lying vacant.

³ Though these are popularly called 'English medium' schools by rural people, only a few of them use English as the medium of instruction.

with national figures (NUEPA, 2013). However, these figures do not convey the true picture of the state of education. It remains to be seen whether all those enrolled have access to quality education or are getting benefits of the expansion of educational sector, irrespective of their gender, location, caste and class.

Rationale

In our country elementary level of education is the most crucial stage of education, spanning the first eight years of schooling. It lays the foundation for development of personality, attitude, confidence, habits and communication capabilities of the child. The basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic acquired at this stage constitute the foundation for the building structure of higher education. Reading, writing and arithmetic skills learned by the child create achievement motivation and interest. The early experiences of home and school, which ultimately determine the position of a child in society, need to be focussed well. Rural education at elementary level is continuously facing neglect by policies, pedagogic discourse as well as educational research. This paper seeks to contribute to the existing literature by presenting an argument based on a study primarily conducted to explore the quality of rural schools and demonstrate how rural identity determines the quality of learning experiences of children. Quality of schools is gauged through academic performance of children and school related inputs. The study also attempted to understand the status of education imparted in both private (unrecognised) and government schools through physical infrastructure facilities and teaching learning measures.

Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to examine and compare the quality of education in rural areas imparted in the government and private schools in Punjab, on indicators like the academic performance of children and the school quality.

Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- A) Is the quality of education in private schools at elementary level better than the government schools in rural Punjab?
- B) Why do rural parents prefer private schools for their Children?

Sample and Methodology

This study was conducted on the rural schools in two districts, namely, Sangrur and Mansa, of Punjab. In these districts, a total of 150 schools including 75 government and 75 private unrecognised schools were selected through proportionate random sampling. 700 children of class VII, including 350 from the government and 350 from the private schools, were taken. Only those children were included in the samples who were not taking any private tuition so that the academic performance of children based on classroom teaching and school inputs might be fairly evaluated. Villages located at a distance of at least 5 kilometres from the main road were taken randomly.

Academic performance of children was studied in three main school subjects (Punjabi, Science and Mathematics) through standardised achievement tests of 100 marks each.⁴ Data were collected at the end of the session, in February 2015, to ensure fair measurement of the learning outcomes of children. Detailed notes regarding infrastructural and teaching-related measures, interviews and focus group discussions with teachers and parents were prepared to get deeper insights regarding the quality of education.

Results and Discussion

Comparison of academic performance of children in government and private schools

As mentioned earlier, the extent of learning performance of children was evaluated through performance tests separately in each subject. Academic performance scores of both government and private school children in all the three subjects are presented in Table 1. The mean academic score below 40 per cent achieved by all children depicts the dismal state of learning outcome of children in all three subjects. Government and private school children achieved almost the same scores. Comparison of mean scores through t-test (t-value not being significant) indicates no significant difference in achievement scores between the government and private school children. The academic performance of children studying in both kinds of schools in rural areas does not show any significant difference in all three subjects. One can sense the gravity of the situation that even in Punjabi, the native language, children could not score well.

TABLE 1

Academic Performance Scores of Government and Private School Children

Type of School	<i>Punjabi</i>			<i>Mathematics</i>			<i>Science</i>			
	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Mean	SD	t-value	Mean	SD	t-value
Government	350	40.2	10.3	0.8*	30.8	8.9	0.96*	37.2	8.9	1.10*
Private	350	38.4	9.8		31.7	9.5		39.1	9.9	

Source: Author's own calculations based on primary survey.

* Represents not significant

To further explore the range of academic scores, children were categorised into three groups as per their achievement score. Table 2 shows the academic performance of children in different range scores, which again does not present any encouraging scene. A majority of children got marks below 40 per cent in both kinds of schools in all three subjects. Less than 40 per cent of

⁴ Achievement tests were constructed out of the prescribed syllabus in the selected subjects, viz. Maths, Science and Punjabi. Samples were standardised with adequate validity and reliability tests while strictly following the criteria of achievement tool construction. In this regard help rendered by school teachers is duly acknowledged.

children could achieve scores between the ranges of 40 to 60 per cent in all three subjects. Nearly equal and fairly small percentage of children had score above 60 per cent. Hence on the basis of academic achievement aspect of school quality, children studying in both kinds of schools stand at the same level of learning outcome.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Children in Different Range of Academic Achievement Scores

Group	Government School (Children in %)			Private School (Children in %)		
	Punjabi language	Science	Mathematics	Punjabi language	Science	Mathematics
Percentage of Children Scoring > 60%	16	11	7	23	12	11
Percentage of Children between 40-60 %	29	35	36	21	37	35
Percentage of Children Scoring < 40 per cent	55	54	57	56	51	54

Source: Author's own calculation based on primary survey

The quality of education presents a dismal state in terms of learning outcomes of children. Poor rural people shifted children from cost free government schools to cost paid private schools with the hope of ensuring good education for their wards. But the inference drawn here clearly indicates that their preference for private schools could add nothing to their wards' achievements. Private schools seem no better than government schools in rural areas. However, a contrary view is presented by Tooley (2009): that budget schools are a panacea and provides for quality education at low cost for poor families because private schools run at low costs, with the minimum of infrastructure and resources, and their teachers are paid a fraction of the salaries which their counterparts in government schools draw.

The results of this study are also validated through the State Board Matriculation Examination results of 2017. In Punjab, the rural students have pass percentage 57.2 per cent means 43.8 per cent students could not cross the Matric level of education. Also, the government schools with pass percentage 54.6 per cent did not perform better than the government run rural schools which showed the pass percentage 52.8 in Board Examinations at Matric level.⁵ This shows the overall quality of rural education is pathetic and needs serious concern.

One cannot deny the fact that the dismal academic performance at elementary stage is the footing of exclusion from the arena of educational mainstream. For, ill-equipped children certainly grow as unskilled adults with buried potentials and lack of employment opportunities. Poor academic performance not only results in a child having low self-esteem, but also reinforces poverty, unemployment and exclusion. The desolate situation of quality of education in rural schools of Punjab, reflected through poor academic performance by children, depicts the status of elementary education in rural areas.

⁵ Punjab School Education Board Results, 2017

Other quality indicators of government and private schools

Apart from academic performance, school quality measures are other inputs which determine the school success of a child. The non-availability of data base which could provide explicit information on general features of government and private un-recognised rural schools in Punjab prompted the investigator to search through primary survey. Table 3 presents the physical facilities and teaching-related inputs in both government and private schools. About 86 per cent of the government and 83 per cent of private schools have a school boundary while rest are open without any boundary wall. 66 per cent of government and 51 per cent of private schools are situated at a distance of 2 kilometres from the village. About 45 per cent of government and 52 per cent of private schools have one to three classrooms, whereas almost the same number of both kinds of schools have four to six classrooms. Mere 3 per cent of the sampled government schools and 3 per cent of private schools have filtered drinking water facility for children whereas a vast majority (81 per cent) of government and 79 per cent of private schools provide groundwater to children. About 17 per cent government and an equal percentage of private schools have municipal water supply but due to its availability for a limited time in a day children have to drink groundwater again. It was noticed that in schools where water filters were available many were donated by community members and some were found to be dysfunctional. It is very disconcerting that groundwater of the surveyed areas has been declared unfit for drinking purposes due to high salt and metal content.

TABLE 3

Physical and Infrastructural Indicators in Government and Private Schools

<i>General features of school</i>	<i>Government school (in %)</i>	<i>Private School (in %)</i>
I. School surrounding quite	84	46
II. Proper School Boundary	86	83
III. Distance of school from village		
(a) > 1 km	26	38
(b) Between 1-2 km	66	51
(c) < 2 km	8	11
IV. No. of rooms		
(a) 1-3	45.00	52.00
(b) 4-6	31.00	33.00
(c) More than 6	24.00	15.00
V. Drinking Water		
(a) Groundwater	81	79
(b) Municipal tap	17	17
(c) Filtered Water	2	4
VI. Functional separate toilets for boys and girls	99.2	98.5
VII. Playground	39	11
VIII. Medical facility (first aid box, medicine)	6	2
IX. Electricity generator	2	3

Source: Primary survey

Almost similar number (99 per cent) of private and government schools have functional toilets separate for boys and girls but a proper playground was available to only 36 per cent of government and 8 per cent of private schools. Similarly, 6 per cent of government and 2 per cent of private schools keep temporary medical facilities in the form of first-aid kit. Only 2 per cent of government and 3 per cent private schools had generators at hand. Discussions with teachers working in the surveyed government schools revealed that headmasters in some schools took initiative to purchase the generators out of the amalgamated funds⁶, while in some schools generators were donated by community members. Even where generators were available, the schools could not bear the running cost such as purchase of diesel and maintenance. As a result, generators were lying dysfunctional. The government does not provide funds for generators or their maintenance and, therefore, children have to face long power cuts in hot summer days. In a few schools, some socially active teachers are working with commitment and make efforts to generate funds by taking along community members for maintenance of minimum facilities in schools. However, such teachers are very few in number. When an attempt was made to discuss the physical and infrastructural facilities with private school teachers, they refrained from any detailed discussion, saying that it lay in the domain of the management.

TABLE 4

Indicators Related to Teaching Learning Process in Government and Private School

	<i>Government Schools (in %)</i>	<i>Private Schools (in %)</i>
I. Usable library with books and seating arrangements	6	4
II. Percentage of children using library on the day of visit.	1.1	3.5
III. Audio-Visual Aids (Functional)		
(a) Film projector	0	0
(b) Maps/charts	81	72
(c) TV/Edusat	No	5
IV. Percentage of Untrained Teachers	1.2	69
V. Pupil teacher ratio (PTR)	48	39
VI. Percentage of Para- Teachers	43	97

Source: Primary Survey

Table 4 demonstrates school-related inputs in varied forms. Evidently, in a small percentage of government (5 per cent) and private (4 per cent) schools, usable library was available whereas only a marginal percentage (1.1 and 3.5 per cent respectively) of children were found using the library during the day of visit in both government and private schools. In some schools, books

⁶ These are the funds which government schools collect from children. These are utilised in the schools for various purposes.

were available but were kept in the almirahs. Teaching material in the form of audio-visual aids were negligible and, wherever present, they were lying unused in storerooms.

Regarding the qualification of faculty, in most of the government schools, 98.8 per cent of teachers are trained whereas in private schools, 69 per cent of teachers are untrained. About 53 per cent of teachers in government schools are para-teachers. But the same figure is 97 per cent in case of private un-recognised schools⁷.

Similarly, the government schools under survey have pupil: teacher ratio (PTR) as 48 but the PTR for private schools is 39. Neither government nor private schools fulfil the PTR condition stipulated by RTE (2010). Previous researches also proved that the Punjab government has failed to implement the RTE stipulated norms in private schools. A study found that 48 per cent of teachers in private (both recognised and unrecognised) schools are under-qualified. A majority of private teachers are getting salary in the range of Rs 2500 to Rs 5000, which is less than what the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 stipulates. Private schools in the state are neither following a uniform curriculum nor have physical infrastructure as per the RTE⁸. The evidence presented here indicates that unrecognised private schools have a substantial percentage of unqualified teachers and poor infrastructure, revealing inadequate attention of the government towards rural education at elementary level.

Preference for Private Schools

The other question that needed to be explored were the reasons underlying poor parents' preference to send children to private schools when these schools were no better alternative to government schools.

Focus group discussions lend clues to develop some probable potential explanation behind the choice of private schools for these parents. A mother whose both children were studying in a private school held the view that it is only children of the poor who are studying in government schools these days. Government schools do not provide good quality education. Another said that the children of her relatives were studying in private schools and that it was difficult for her to pay the private school fee but yet she enrolled her child in a private school due to the pressure coming from relatives. A few parents simply stated that children look smart in private school uniform and also that government schools have no facilities or and discipline. The father of a boy studying in class VI of a private school complained that there is never any adequate number of teachers in government schools. One small farmer who shifted his son from government to private school a year back expressed that they as parents are illiterate, but yet they still want their child to somehow get good education. He further shared that it is difficult to pay the private school fee as there is no income from agriculture in these days. He held the view that it is the future of child that is to them most important.

⁷ These are teachers appointed under varying service conditions in terms of salary, qualifications etc and also under different labels like contractual: state appointed teachers on basic salary for a period of three years on contract, education providers, Sikkhya Karmi etc, and also being appointed under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RAMSA) and other centrally sponsored schemes. They get lesser emoluments as compared to regular teachers. In private unrecognised schools a big majority of teachers are appointed on temporary and contractual basis --- on an emolument range of Rs 2000 to Rs 5000, without any other service benefits.

⁸ See Kainth (2014) below.

Such discussions with parents were highly illuminating. A fairly large number of parents were of the view that children learn better in private schools and quality of education in government schools is much worse than in private schools.

English as the medium of instruction in the schools run by private providers tempt people to enrol wards in private schools. Parents also viewed that sending children to a private school is a symbol of their social status as government schools generally labelled as 'schools for poor' deal with marginalised children only.

During the whole visit it was felt that most rural parents are unaware about the quality of education imparted in private schools; many of them innocently stated that the child is learning very well. It is also observed that the hype created by local media about the poor quality of education in government schools and the extensive advertisement by private providers affect the choices of parents. Despite having financial hardships, they somehow manage resources to put their children in private schools. It is another matter that some government schools are doing really well.

Further, the prevailing social discrimination against the girl child also results in rural parents preferring sons and not daughters to be put in private schools. People want to invest more on the education of boys. More boys and more children from upper castes were found in private schools, whereas the majority in government schools are the children of Dalit families and girls. Clearly, government schools are for the poor and private unrecognised schools are for not-so-poor in rural areas. In both kinds of schools, the girl count is found less as compared to boys, reflecting the highly skewed sex ratio (883) in the district. Undoubtedly gender inequality and discrimination is deeply ingrained in Indian society, but the long-term answer lies in the educational development of all sections.

Discussions with a teacher working in a village school and also with members of the DTF⁹, a teachers' organisation, validated the information that government schools are totally neglected by the state. The evaluation and monitoring processes are not fair. There is a shortage of teachers even in major subjects like Science, Mathematics and English. Among other reasons, the shortage of teachers has also severely affected the quality of education. The inference drawn from the above discussion clearly refutes the taller claims of the state regarding provisions of adequate facilities in rural schools.

Rural Punjab is traditionally an agricultural economy, which is facing an acute agrarian crisis for the last two decades. The surveyed districts are the most affected districts of Malwa region of Punjab, facing an agrarian crisis. Arguably, the agrarian crisis has deeply affected the life of rural people in varied forms. Also, under the policies of liberalisation, the Punjab government has reduced the expenditure on education and health and, consequently, the fragile rural economy was deeply affected. In such a scenario, rural children are bearing the brunt of family distress, low socio-economic status and apathy of the state to provide quality education comparable to urban counterparts.

The impact is manifold. First, the socio-economic status of family plays a substantial role as children raised in poverty have more chances of getting excluded from the opportunities of life. Secondly, poor learning outcome and lack of skill further push them too early into labour market. In an overall sense, the prevalent teaching-learning process is inadequate, which in many subtle ways reinforces the continuous economic and social marginalisation of rural children. When the

⁹ DTF (Democratic Teachers Front) is a teachers' organisation working for the cause of improving education in government schools.

children are not given the opportunity to receive good quality education, the chances of a better life naturally become dismal. Educational exclusion is thus the worst form of exclusion as it has the potential of excluding people from all walks of life when it is without a vision.

Further, in Punjab, the percentage of Scheduled Caste population is the highest (31.94 per cent) among all the states of the country. Out of this SC population, 73.33 per cent live in rural areas. In the surveyed districts, more than 30 per cent of population is of Scheduled Castes (Census of India, 2011). In some villages, 50 per cent of the population is of Dalit communities. The surveyed districts are educationally backward with low male and female literacy rates in the state. More than 80 per cent of children in rural government schools belong to Dalit families while the non-Dalits are from economically weaker sections. Parents of more than 50 per cent of them are illiterate or have received education up to the primary or elementary level only. The future of such children depends more on school inputs.

The inferences drawn here indicate that already underprivileged are getting poor quality elementary education in rural schools. Poor academic performance and weak school quality inputs depict the severity of issue and point that rural education needs immediate attention. In fact, neglect of rural education is further marginalising the already marginalised.

The evidence presented here clearly indicates that the privatisation and commercialisation of education is jeopardising the future of rural children and youth. In fact, the hype against government-run schools is orchestrated deliberately to divert attention and downsize public education. This paradigm shift from government to private schools has been to mislead and misguide the poor rural people. It seems that powerful financial interests are involved in the growth of private ill-equipped schools in rural areas of the state, indicating the dire need to make well-organised efforts to curb this practice and influence policy makers to improve quality of government schools. Due to deterioration in the quality of school education, the chances of rural children to get educated, attain employment, and achieve social and economic security are becoming dim. In India where social inequalities are deeply entrenched, education is largely seen as a leveller and as a means of the marginalised to achieve social mobility. So, strong and sustained efforts are required to build the system of schooling for the development of all sections of the society.

Poor quality of education paves the ways for silent exclusion and a colossal waste of human resources. The provisions of education of bleak quality are not more than increasing the literacy figures. In this regard Kumar (2017) stressed that by providing poor quality education to the masses we are distorting the concept of education, and underutilising the potential of education for creating citizenry which is thoughtful, imaginative and which is capable of exercising choice. If we judge the level of education by increase in enrolment and literacy figures, we are wasting investment and opportunity. The quality of education in terms of learning achievements and conducive work environment is of utmost importance.

Suggestions and Policy Implications

There is strong evidence to suggest that teacher quality is the most important school factor in raising student achievement. The role of teacher cannot be overlooked as a majority of the teachers in government schools are trained and are getting decent remuneration as compared to private school counterparts. Aggravating the situation in the last decade, the mushrooming growth of private teacher education institutions in the state played a key role in producing teachers with poor quality teaching and pedagogical skills. Undoubtedly, a qualified, committed and competent

teacher could probably be an effective educator with fewer resources than untrained, poorly educated, and inexperienced teachers growing body of research shows that in rural schools, the social distance between teacher and student significantly matters in children's academic achievement. The lack of accountability on the part of teachers and also the absence of monitoring mechanism of state run schools are also responsible for the situation. At present, there is no reliable system of concurrent monitoring and evaluation. In private unrecognised schools the remuneration being given to teachers is very low, even below the wages daily labourers were getting in some states, thus effectively demoralising teachers, resulting in their low efficiency. This is in fact due to the lack of monitoring mechanisms.

Thus a suitable educational policy is urgently required to address the issue of poor quality education in rural Punjab. Raising the quality of education in rural schools is essential, and a nationwide dialogue is necessary for charting the way ahead. Thirty thousand posts of teachers are lying vacant in the state. Information gathered from district education offices of both the districts reveals that out of the total sanctioned posts more than 60 per cent of Science, 44 per cent of Mathematics and 15 per cent of Language teachers' positions are vacant there. The number of vacant positions of teachers is more in rural schools as compared to schools in urban areas.

Policy makers also need to learn that issues such as disparities, socio-economic stratifications, class and caste hierarchies, identities, patriarchy and regional imbalances have a decisive impact on the process of school education. In addition to increasing the enrolment figures, policies must address the issue of quality in education by knowing the structural complexity of different factors and how these factors mediate pedagogic, curricular and learning processes. Poor academic performance should not be viewed as the 'symptom' but as the mirror of larger underlying pertinent issues.

Also, social organisations and civil society should take these issues seriously and address within the relevant context. The Government should develop clear and specific plans to address quality of rural education, which today seems beyond repair. Instead of allowing the mushrooming growth of private, ill-equipped, profit oriented, poor quality teaching shops to mislead the rural population, there is urgent need to strengthen the government and government-aided schools in the state. In the dwindling rural economy, it is a belief of the people that education will be the road out of a scrimped and precarious livelihood on the farm. Inspired by this hope, rural parents prefer to send the child in the fee pay schools and invest heavily; letting their children Most of them are first-generation learners.

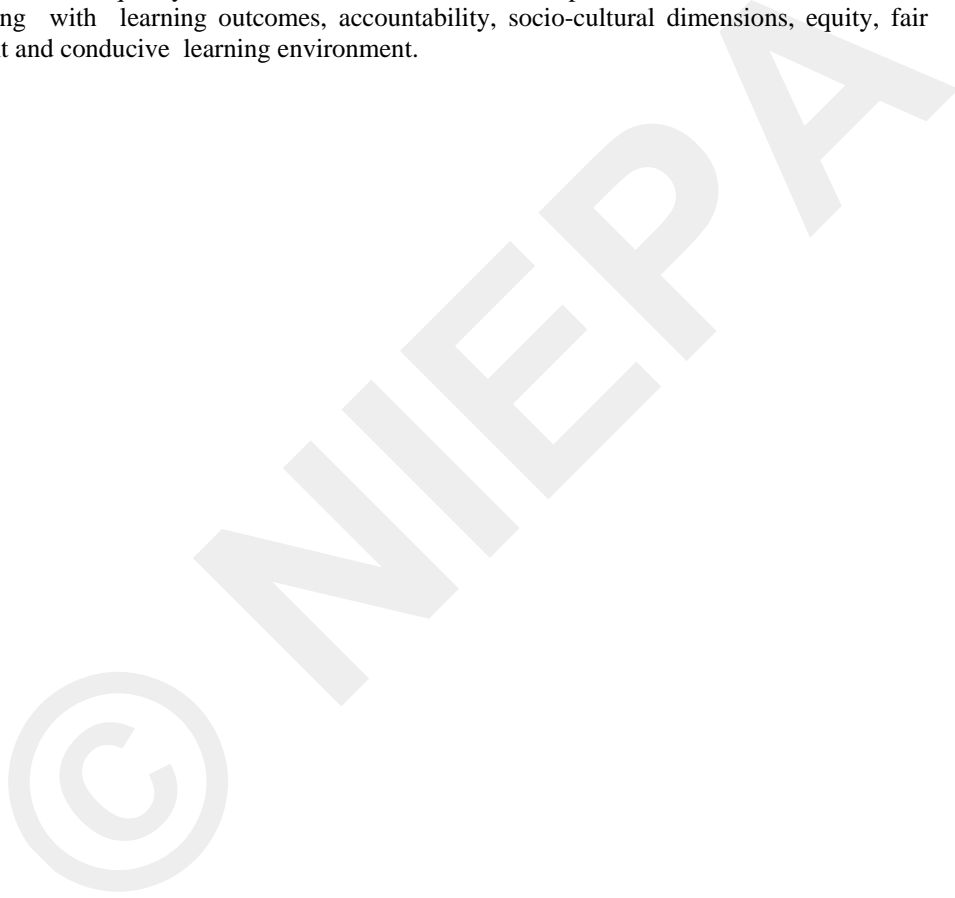
When it comes time to look for employment, what are young people trained in such poor quality schools going to find? How are they going to cover the learning deficits that have accumulated from years of attending low-quality rural schools? These are the questions which mend attention of the policy makers and administrators. Further, to address the dwindling rural economy of the state, investment in human resources is mandatory to augment assets of people through skill development and employment generation.

Concluding Remarks

The findings of this study strongly point out that in rural sector there is no difference in the quality of education being imparted in government and private schools. The quality of education in both private and government schools in rural Punjab is far from satisfactory. Evidently, on the one hand, the shift from cost free education in government schools to cost paid private schools is

being experienced. But, on the other hand, nothing is being added in learning outcomes and quality of education imparted in such private schools.

The evidence presented here clearly indicates that due to neglect of government and government-aided schools, the unregulated growth of private schools is increasingly unchecked. The situation is compounded by the growth of multiple schooling systems and emerging segregation of children. There is urgent need to develop rural education sector. Moreover, the meaning of the word 'quality' in education should not be 'corporatised,' but should be taken as by integrating with learning outcomes, accountability, socio-cultural dimensions, equity, fair management and conducive learning environment.



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JOURNAL OF INDIAN SCHOOL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

Editor: **V.S. Chitre**

JOURNAL OF INDIAN SCHOOL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY is devoted to a study of the Indian Economy, Polity and Society. Emphasis is primarily on reviewing developments since Independence with roots in the British administration where relevant. However, papers with a similar focus but not necessarily reviewing developments since Independence will also be considered. When a review is based on statistical data, full statistical base data are presented as far as possible.

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An Examination of Determinants of India's Intra-Industry Trade L.G. Burange and Hemangi K. Kelkar

Trends and Patterns of Bilateral Merchandise Trade between India and Japan Neha N. Karnik and L.G. Burange

DOCUMENTATION

1. Report of the India-Japan Joint Study Group, June 2006.
2. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Japan and the Republic of India.
3. Annex 1, Schedules in relation to Article 19. Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3.

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Book Reviews

SUHIB, Munir, RAHMAN, Shukran Abd; and YUNUS, Aida Suraya Md. (ed) (2012): *Development of Higher Education and its Futures*, Page 213, ; ISBN: 978-967-0225-34-0, Second Print (2012), Co-published with Higher Education Research Institute of Malaysia and Iium Press, Selangor, Malaysia.

Higher education has expanded and evolved with new technologies and demands, but is not immune from newer problems. The knowledge transfer from the Global North to the Global South has also brought about newer models of higher education in the South, which came with attributes of the dominant West. However, Global South has its own values, knowledge bases and context specific problems to deal with. There are the problems of rapid growth of economy; increase in per capita income; more and newer types of student body; multiplying number of universities, and concerns over quality --- to name only a few. In this backdrop, there is a growing consensus that there should be a discriminatory approach to adopting the modes of the dominant hemisphere and, in the process, revaluing the local knowledge and identity.

The challenges to successfully design and implement this new proposition are, however, manifold. Starting from the development of suitable models to debates over the process of the development in the midst of growing concerns over quality and accountability, and over the dwindling public funding in the post-economic crisis era, are some of them.

The book *Development of Higher Education and Its Futures*, edited by Suhib, Abdur-Rahman and Yunus, is an attempt to understand the different characteristics of higher education institutes and their models in different regions, and to highlight the associated debates. This timely publication is an effort to discuss the ways in which higher education institutions in the South may develop their respective systems, considering their peculiarities and challenges.

To elucidate, the book is spread over several chapters which can be classified into two broad sections. The first section deals with the current scenario of higher education, its issues, challenges and evolving models in the Arab world. The following section deals with the international issues and with the issues specific to other countries of the Global South. It is felt that the international overview or that of the Global South, as the first set of chapters, would provide the reader a broader perspective to begin with. From there, a deeper look at the specific regions, countries and higher education institutes could facilitate to contextualise the issues discussed in the book in a sequential way. Nevertheless, the nine chapters and the conclusion of the book successfully highlight the issues pertinent to the higher education in the Global South.

The first chapter on the current situation of higher education in the Arab world and the future scenarios is by Faisal A. Elhag. It provides a chronological overview of the development of higher education (HE) in the Arab countries and discusses the pertinent

issues such as quality assurance, scientific research and finances. Based on the discussion, the chapter attempts to systematically predict the future trends, demands and challenges associated with different scenarios, which further focuses on expansion and massification; development of information communication technologies; community and research oriented universities and, finally, the borderless or the open university. This chapter serves as a background chapter for the next chapters, which go deeper into the context specific discussions of higher education.

Penned by Abdulhalem A Mazi and Abdul-Rahman M. Abouammoh, the chapter titled "Development of Higher Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Trends and Strategies" addresses the issue of massification of HE and the challenges it brings, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia. Followed by a rather unregulated expansion of HE in Saudi Arabia, the focus is now on improving the quality and internationalisation. The chapter provides a detailed review of the efforts made by different entities, which is informative. However, a critical policy analysis and associated discussion would have helped in improving the review of the initiatives.

From an overall regional understanding to the context of a particular country, the first two chapters systematically draw attention to particular context specific issues.

The third chapter, "Toward Excellence in Higher Education: The King Saud University Experience," by Abdullah Al-Othman and Salem S. Alqhtani, follows the trend set by the previous chapter and narrows down the focus on a particular university. The chapter provides us a picture of the evolution of the King Saud University (KSU) as a response to the knowledge based society. With an account of the global changes, and its influence on the Saudi economy, society and education, the chapter explains the process of evolution with sufficient data, analytical inputs and theoretical understandings. Although the section on "envisaged impacts" on the future directions of change could have been more analytical, there is no denying that this chapter provides a vivid picture of the KSU.

Chapter 4 by Faisal I. Iskanderani and Ali M. Al-Bahi is titled "A Case Study in Preparing for ABET Accreditation at King Abdulaziz University." It presents a case study wherein the University is seeking accreditation for its engineering programmes. The meticulous description of the process covers the major share of the chapter. However, it remains only a descriptive reporting, without much analytical inputs for the readers.

The second section of the book starts with the Chapter 5, which looks outside the Arab World to other countries of the Global South. Unlike the other chapters, it does not provide an abstract for the reader to get an overview. The chapter titled "Regional Higher Education Hubs: New Actors in the Knowledge Economy" by Jane Knight focuses on three countries of the Middle East and there from Asia. It discusses different models of internationalisation of higher education, with their potential and challenges in each context.

Chapter 6 on international higher education focuses on the East, specifically on Japan. Lrong Lim, the author of the chapter, highlights the issues of English language teaching in Japanese higher education and its consequences for the improvement of quality in the national higher education. Japan's policies of internationalisation and model of adoption of foreign language explores how it is re-focusing on English as a medium of instruction and welcoming foreign academics in the hope of improving the quality of higher education further.

From language to finance, and from a country to the world, the book shifts its focus once again in Chapter 7, which is on higher education in the period of global economic crisis and is penned by N. V. Varghese. The chapter critically examines the national responses of the recent global economic crisis on higher education. The discussion revealed that in the post-2008 period, higher education as a sector witnessed both increase and decrease of public funding in several countries, whereas in some instances, countries kept the funding unchanged. However, in the midst of this economic turmoil, the responses of higher education institutions during the crisis period show a rather interesting trend of expansion, which fulfilled the high demand of higher education from the households. Varghese delineates three salient points, viz. recognition of the role of higher education in development; the changing funding pattern which shifts the financial burden from the state to the households; and increasing household income and commitment to invest in higher education with the hope of improving the life conditions. These have resulted in the expansion of higher education during the global economic crisis.

Next, Chapter 8 by Anwar Ali also situates the recent economic crisis as a backdrop of discussion. Ali emphasises on the changing nature of North-South collaboration in the time of crisis and presented the Malaysian perspectives in this regard. The analysis shows that the partnerships expanded with a growing focus on industry-academia linkages; however, it has not been devoid of complexities. Instead, the paper argues for a better and more sustainable collaboration of the South-South countries, which are based on common interests and comparable economic development pathways.

James Campbell, in Chapter 9, also discusses the case of Malaysia. He, however, provides an alternative perspective with the case study of University Sains Malaysia (USM). The discussion provides a detailed analysis of the programme, termed as APEX --- its strategies, challenges and how it is aiming towards a 'governed independence' and becoming an active player in the globalising higher education in the country.

Overall, the book *Development of Higher Education and Its Futures* provides a glimpse of several issues, focusing on the trends, needs, and inclinations of countries and regions from the Global South on the road towards higher education reforms. Policies, plans and changing circumstances are also discussed, where the underlying argument is to create a unique model of internationalisation which may take clues from the popular Western models, or those of the Global North, but should not be a repackaging of the same. This instances and suggestions indicate a collaborative approach, which could help the countries of the South to be proactive members and entities of the competitive global educational reforms. The case studies and analytical insights provide accounts of the specificities of some of the countries and their higher education institutions, whereas the discussion on broader global perspectives set the base of discussion.

There is no doubt that this book is an excellent addition, especially in the time of rapid massification and internationalisation of higher education all over the world in general and in the South in particular, with its peculiarities.

Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education,
National Institute of Educational Planning and
Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi - 110016

Syantana Mandal
s.mandal@niepa.org

WHITTY, Geoff and FURLONG, John (ed) (2017): *Knowledge and the Study of Education: An International Exploration*, Symposium Books, 288 pages, £42.00, Paperback, ISBN 978-1-873927-97-7

THE book is the outcome of a project which inspired the contributors to map an alternative model for the study of education. Drawing insights from seven countries (“jurisdictions”) by using intensive interviews, the book tries to present a comprehensive picture of the models for educational studies. It elucidates the argument into four sections, each with a set of papers from various countries. These four sections of the book comprise, respectively, the Introduction, Case Studies, Conceptual Framework, and Precise Summary, indicating the future prospects for educational studies in universities. All the contributors in the book are well known scholars who have been pondering all through on the theme of educational studies. The intensive insight received from each “jurisdiction” raises very fundamental questions for researchers of education, for example: Does the study of education have different meanings in different countries? Whether the tradition of educational studies varies between jurisdictions (countries)?

In the first part of the volume, the editors argue that the knowledge construction in educational studies has remained contested, which is very useful for knowledge formation and settlement. There are probably three overlapping clusters of knowledge traditions which include Academic, Practical and Integrated knowledge traditions. The contestation among these three knowledge traditions has defined the boundaries of educational studies in all the jurisdictions. The development of education as a discipline is also marked by varying contexts and trajectories. Education Studies have remained, in the main, institutionally and intellectually fragmented, and in most of the countries they have flourished on the pre-existing disciplines (like psychology, sociology, economics, philosophy, etc.), unlike in the Anglophone countries where the major emphasis has been on the training of school teachers. The authors argue that knowledge traditions have an epistemological basis but they also have institutional arrangements whereby they are preserved. They have also a political life and are a part of the social setup. There are ranges of social sites (for example, academic institutions, national regulatory frameworks, and academic/professional networks) with a distinctive approach within each jurisdiction to condition the educational approaches.

The second part of the book puts together case studies from selected jurisdictions. All the case studies highlight the historical specificity of each jurisdiction and the ways in which it has determined the nature of educational studies. For example, in France the interest in ‘experimental pedagogy’ brought The Sciences de l’Éducation much closer to the university, which remained confined mainly to scientific, moral and political goals. It could successfully combine itself with knowledge from psychology and sociology. No doubt the demand for teacher’s professional training, too, had a major impact on the “disciplinarianisation” of education. “The specificity of the development of the Sciences de l’Éducation in France perhaps lies in its relative distance, compared with other European countries, from teacher’s education --- from which it emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century, but from which it distanced itself as it moved into the university” (pp. 71).

On the same lines, if we take the case of Germany, the institutionalisation of education studies did not follow the utilitarian view, rather it relied more on the political and social contexts. German education system was, at that time, reflective of the structures of a hierarchical and fragmented society. Though the intellectual tradition of educational thought has been under stress because of the large scale empirical educational researches, educational studies at the university level continued to reinvent themselves through scholarly contributions and by locating themselves mainly in the philosophical and intellectual discourses. During the long transformative process until the 1980s, the teacher training colleges and non-university level education academies were promoted to the university level, and thereby they constituted large departments of education studies. The most prominent style of theory for education studies, however, remained philosophical cum hermeneutical. This tradition forcefully ousted the other traditions like experimental pedagogy, sociological and psychological styles, etc. From the mid-1950s onward till the mid-1990s, one can see a higher degree of continuity of this discourse. But later developments witnessed the impact of psychology and other social sciences on education studies, and the corresponding changes in research approaches. This subtle transformation of educational studies brought in elements of knowledge which became challenging for a reintegration of teacher education. Therefore the knowledge components thought to constitute teacher education have been considerably altered over the past few decades. The knowledge components for teacher education developed more in the framework of state examinations and of internship of probationary teachers under the supervision of a headmaster, so as to develop and refine their teaching skills. This pattern was formally adopted for all teacher categories.

As against the German case, the educational policy governing teacher education in Australia believes that "learning how to teach" is a practical venture and does not require a knowledge of what lies behind the teaching practice (pp. 123). Of course this idea has been the site of contestation and is the reflection of global policy moves in education studies.

The case study from US draws our attention to the fact that the nature of educational research informing the profession of education is undergoing transformation in the USA vis-à-vis teaching as an act and also as a profession. The scientific research in education is underrated and lacks rigour, and therefore many universities in the US have abolished their schools and departments of education. The teacher training schools have long been seen as weak. In most of the universities, importance has been given to professional education courses which are not directly connected with the day-to-day teaching practices. The attacks from outside on teacher education are based on the assumption that schools of education have grown out of touch with and ineffective in addressing the needs of schools (pp. 174). This has been instrumental in bringing new approaches to teachers' preparation so as to help the pre-service teachers learn by analysing and then developing the core practices of teaching. Under this intense pressure, teacher education has been profoundly shaped by alternatives to the approaches that imagine the preparation of teachers as appropriately a university based practice.

The third part of the book seeks to comprehend the nature of educational studies by providing some conceptual framework. This section points in a very forceful manner the problems which the foundational disciplines pose for a unified conceptualisation of the educational studies. "The contrast in structure, purposes, and practices and grammaticality

across these foundations inhibits any form of coherence in educational studies, whatever the benefits of the diverse disciplinary perspectives this engenders” (pp. 201). The nature of relationship between education studies and disciplinarity, which is likely to continue, is contested. There is a need for serious research to deepen our understanding through cross-cultural engagements.

The last part of the book is a reflective essay on the variations in the education knowledge production in the various jurisdictions highlighted in the book. “The global field of educational research is a complex mix of nationally distinctive forms of knowledge and sites of knowledge production” (pp. 278), and therefore, national case studies showed distinctive context as well as variations in the organisational setup of educational research. Apart from the problem of organising educational knowledge with variations across nations, the author raises one more question, viz. “what social goals education should serve?” The rush towards consensus has created the rush for a radical form of social utilitarianisms, which has severely undermined the social goals of education and thereby confined the educational knowledge to the development of applied knowledge for an economic educational vision.

This is a must-read book for those who are inquisitive about the epistemological dimensions of the educational studies. The book does so by taking into account the intellectual traditions and practices from various countries. It also points out the disjunction between contributions made by the universities and officially sanctioned definitions of legitimate educational knowledge, particularly in relation to teacher education. This disjunction exists much more sharply in the Anglophone countries where the training of school teachers is more important for politicians and also constitutes the officially sanctioned definition of legitimate educational knowledge. The book is a great contribution and would nudge the boundaries of educational perspectives. However, it has a limited methodological approach, confined as it is to interviews, and overlooks the nuanced social processes that usually underline the individual experiences and assumptions.

Department of Educational Policy,
National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
(NIEPA), New Delhi - 110016

Naresh Kumar
nareshlibran@gmail.com

MALLI, Gandhi and LALITHA, Vakulabharanam (2014): *Educating Tribal Children: Issues, Concerns and Remedies*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, pp 317, ISBN: 9788183876612

Understanding the nature and direction of tribal societies is among the core interests of social scientists in general and of anthropologists in particular. Though several studies on tribes deal with the socio-cultural traditions, modes of production and consumption, etc, there are few studies focusing on the educational conditions and aspirations of tribal children and their parents. The book under review primarily brings out the educational issues, challenges and the educational achievements of tribal children in India.

The book is broadly divided into five parts.

The first part of the book is titled "Problems Associated with Education of Scheduled Tribe Children." This part introduces the objectives, methodology, and sample of the districts selected for the study. The objectives of the study are to study the tribal sub-plan and find out the status of education among the tribal students, teachers and parents, to study the present status of enrolment, retention and dropout of Savara tribal children in the selected schools, to assess the performance level of Savara tribal children at primary and secondary level, to assess the performance level of Savara tribal girl children, to analyse the school related factors that cause the hindrance in learning the achievement levels among Savara tribal children, to develop modular material for improving the reading, listening, writing and speaking skills and abilities of the Savara tribal children, and to prepare and tryout a package for assessing the effectiveness of the modular material by orientating the teachers from the selected tribal schools.

Chapter Two of the first part provides the profile of selected mandals such as Gummalakshmipuram, Kurupam, Jiyammavalas, Parvathipuram, Makuva, Salur, and Pachipenta mandals of Vijayanagaram district. This chapter ends with a brief overview of tribal education there.

Chapter Three deals with methodology while Chapter Four provides an analysis and interpretation of the data. The focus of this chapter is on highlighting the nature of tribal education, enrolment, dropout and retention, facilities, school health, teaching learning materials, curriculum, staff, admission, inspection, teacher, teacher incentives, teachers' problems, characteristics of tribal students, language problems facing the tribal children and also the parents of the school-going tribal children, cattle rearing, fairs and festivals, lack of foresightedness among tribal parents, geographical factors, defects in the education committees, education gaps, ill health, students' performance at primarily level, the performance of Savara tribal students, achievement level, gender-wise performance, teachers' views on tribal students, etc. It ends with its reflections of a few selected teachers and the MEO on educational issues vis-à-vis tribal children.

Chapter Five is about the implications with reference to the wide gap between the curriculum and pedagogy on the one hand, and the world of tribal children and their parents on the other. The chapter suggests that there is need to develop an alternative education for wider accessibility.

Part Two, titled "Culture Specific Co-Curricular Activities for Tribal Children," consists of six chapters. Chapter Six presents what is the basic idea of education from the perspective of Gandhi, Nehru, John Dewey and Kothari commission --- the idea of education as a tool for the making of the global citizenship, for nation building, and application of education for transformation of tribal lives in India. This chapter highlights the significance of basic education, its potential for empowerment of the poor, the role of schools in assimilation or preservation of cultural values. Chapters Seven and Eight provide descriptive accounts of Adilabad district and the methodological protocols of the study. Chapters Nine and Ten highlight the gap between culture specific co-curricular activities prescribed for tribal children and the failure of schools in implementing the prescribed procedures. Chapter Eleven presents the discussion on the issues and everyday problems that discourage parents and children to attend the schools it advocates for facilitating emotional development and

formation of a desirable personality for tribal children to identify the means of learning practices and own the schools.

Part Three of the book, titled "Monitoring of Learning Achievement in Tribal Schools," is organised in four chapters. The twelfth chapter provides the social context of educational learning and achievement from the perspective of what is nature and character of academic learning and role of monitoring in schools. An interesting part of this chapter is the tackling of the problems of academic monitoring of students from the viewpoint of teachers, poor dormitory accommodation, parental role, the role of the hostel warden and that of the supervisor/manager of the system. Chapter Thirteen maps out the profile of Vizag district and the cultural aspects of the scheduled tribes there, whereas Chapter Fourteen deals with the training package on monitoring of learning achievement in tribal schools. It highlights the significant role of diverse training programmes developed on the basis of the social and language contexts of the tribal children. This chapter is concerned about community participation in school activities such as learning, spread of education movement among the tribal children in agency areas.

Part Four is titled "Mother Tongue Education in Tribal Schools" and is organised into five chapters. Chapter Sixteen deals with the question of mother tongue education for tribal children in tribal schools. Chapter Seventeen highlights the issues, challenges and prospects related to the tribal schools. How to transact the curriculum in tribal dialects and how to develop glossary in the tribal dialects --- this is the core focus of Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen. The study argues that in order to develop such a glossary, educationalists have to collect the vocabulary used by the tribals, keeping in mind the need to find out equivalent tribal dialectal words to the Telugu words used in the Telugu textbooks, and also the need to help the primary school teachers working in tribal areas to understand the tribal dialects.

Part Five is titled "Incorporating Socio-Cultural Aspects in Tribal Education," and consists of four chapters. The primary objective of these chapters is to highlight the learning gaps and suggest some corrective measures in order to improve the effective schooling in tribal schools. The study argues that in addition to the changes in curricular and co-curricular aspects of the teaching-learning process, there is a need to use the tribal dialects, reform the tribal teacher education and make a wider use of the available audio-visual materials or to develop new ones according to the specific requirements. The book highlights the following for the educational development of tribal children: the need for reformed pedagogy, especially TLM; and the need to recognise the unique cultural and social context of tribal groups along with other marginalised sections; contextualisation of textbooks and textbook materials, and the functional reforms in the organisational management of residential and Ashrama schools. These are very much necessary for expanding the educational horizon of the tribal children of India in general and those of Andhra Pradesh in particular.

The best part of the book is that it chooses five broad themes. These are about confronting the educational alienation, deprivation and hurdles of educational achievement for tribal children in the mainstream schools and tribal/Ashrama schools in the tribal regions of the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The book highlights the fundamental issues that have a bearing upon access, retention, learning, completion of schooling and continuity in the preparation for higher education, etc. The book argues that lack of proper school building, physical and academic infrastructure, in addition to the wide

gap between the culture of tribes and the content of curriculum and context of pedagogy, are some of the key reasons for alienation of tribal children from the mainstream schools. The study also highlights that the continuation of unqualified teachers, those without teacher training, is also responsible for the poor quality of education in tribal schools. Thus, the book presents the problems about tribal schooling and suggests possible solutions for better quality of education for tribal children.

This book is very much useful for the scholars working in the field of anthropology/sociology, education and cultural studies. A major limitation of the book is the lack of focus on the gendered dimension of schooling and pedagogy. Overall, the book is a good addition to the existing studies on education and tribal studies.

Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad, Telangana -- 500046

Nagaraju Gundemeda
nagarajuhcu@gmail.com

BLOSSFELD, Hans-Peter; BUCHHOLZ, Sandra; SKOPEK, Jan and TRIVENTI, Moris (ed) (2016): *Models of Secondary Education and Social Inequality: An International Comparison*, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, price: \$ 150.69, Hardbound, pages 419, ISBN 978-1-78536-725-0

The book, a collection of papers, is a part of the eduLIFE Lifelong Learning Series that emerged from the international comparative research project 'eduLIFE: Education as a Lifelong Process – Comparing Educational Trajectories in Modern Societies.' This is the third volume in the series and focuses on secondary schooling careers as well as the consequences of different models of secondary education on social inequalities. The previous two volumes focused on adult learning and the transition from school to work. Taking a cross-national comparative point of view, the authors explore how secondary school systems influence the school careers of children from different backgrounds and, thereby, affect inequalities of educational opportunities and attainment.

One important aspect that sets apart this book from others is that the authors have adopted a longitudinal perspective to understand the dynamics of inequalities in secondary education. Apart from this, an international comparative perspective has also been undertaken to understand the inequalities in different countries. Thus, a cross-national study was conducted, involving in-depth quantitative analyses, of the role of educational differentiation in 17 countries.

The authors have attempted to address three sets of questions:

- 1) How are pupils sorted into different types of lower and upper secondary education and, to what extent is allocation to various forms of secondary education related to family background?
- 2) To which extent do pupils switch between types of secondary education and why?

3) What are the consequences of educational differentiation and sorting in secondary schooling for social inequalities in subsequent educational trajectories?

Based on the set of these questions, the book is meticulously divided into seven parts and twenty two chapters.

The first part comprising two chapters outlines the conceptual framework wherein the authors classify forms of differentiation in secondary education as external and internal differentiation; and formal and informal differentiation (p. 11). The authors argue that these different types of differentiation are not mutually exclusive but can co-exist within the same educational system. The second part gives a cross-national analysis of cognitive competencies and related social inequalities. The contributor in one chapter argues that when an education system becomes more integrated by socio-economic background, the socio-economically disadvantaged and low performing students benefit whereas there would be no consistent negative effect for students from socio-economically advantaged families or for high performers (p. 65).

What follows the first two parts is the presentation of a set of seventeen country specific case studies based on longitudinal data. Thus, the longer-term educational outcomes were explored through the students' subsequent educational trajectories. The unique feature of the book lies in the fact that the authors aim to consider the institutional and organisational heterogeneity of secondary school systems from a broader perspective by including both formal and 'hidden' forms of differentiation. Each country specific chapter has relied on the available national longitudinal datasets providing detailed information on pupils' social background, pre-sorting academic achievement, educational environment, trajectories in secondary education, and school transitions. Every country-specific case study also provides a qualitatively rich description of the respective secondary schooling systems. Moreover, each chapter has adopted the definition of social backgrounds best suited to the study of the context under scrutiny. Most chapters, however, have relied on parental education as the main indicators of social background.

Rich in empirical data, the chapters put forth different types of models like 'the early tracking model' for countries like Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, 'the Nordic inclusive model' that comprises Northern European countries such as Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, 'the individual choice model' covering Australia, England, Ireland, Scotland, and the United States, and 'the mixed tracking model' like in Estonia, France, Israel, Italy and Russia to understand differentiation in secondary education, which in turn, might produce and reproduce social inequalities in educational opportunities and attainment. In a nutshell, the authors argue that differentiation in secondary education might be a crucial vehicle for the reproduction of social inequalities in educational outcomes.

The authors highlight the fact that social background relates positively to enrolment in the academic track (Continental, Southern, and Northern European countries), enrolment in prestigious schools (Australia and Russia), placement in high-ability groups (Sweden and United States), and the choice of academic or more prestigious subjects within flexible curricula (England, Ireland, Scotland, and the United States) (p. 382). In all the countries studied in this book, it was found that apart from social background, previous academic performance is an important predictor of educational mobility between tracks.

Several chapters in this book investigate how far the type of secondary education is related to pupils' subsequent trajectories out of upper secondary education. The chapters

also explore whether prior school achievement and social background still play a role at these stages in the educational career. The authors argue that the type of track attended in secondary education has strong implications for the pupils' subsequent educational trajectories. This holds not only in educational systems with formal tracks (e.g. France, Italy, Russia and Switzerland), but also in those systems in which informal forms of differentiation are prominent (e.g. Australia, Ireland, Scotland, and the United States).

The empirical results suggest that inequalities during the transition to different types of secondary education are strongly driven by the primary effect of social origin. Another important observation is that the ways in which differentiation in secondary education manifests itself, clearly vary across contemporary societies. It cannot be captured by a simple and static dichotomy distinguishing between tracked and non-tracked systems. Another major finding of the research study is that individuals' secondary schooling careers are not necessarily as fixed as current research implicitly suggests. Apart from these three major findings, the authors also argue that formal stratification and early tracking do not necessarily imply that education systems are rigid as long as they allow a correction of the initial and early allocation of children to different types of secondary education.

The consequences, both short term and long term, of differentiation in secondary education depend on pupil's type of secondary education. Irrespective of whether an education system is formally tracked or whether it applies informal and more 'hidden' forms of differentiation, children entering the more promising and prestigious routes of secondary education are also better off later on (p. 397).

The volume is a rich portrayal of the ways in which different families may take advantage of particular features of the education system to foster their child's success. It also examines how specific school arrangements may contribute to alleviating social disparities in educational outcomes. This book undoubtedly fills a gap that was left by the earlier studies which adopted a narrow definition of tracking or used macro level indicators capturing only external formal tracking.

On the whole, the book is worth reading so as to understand the differentiations in secondary education. Every chapter dealing with the country specific case studies provides a qualitatively rich description of the respective secondary schooling systems and the major institutional changes they have undergone in recent decades. This book will definitely be of great interest to researchers, policy makers and students working in the area of secondary education

Department of Educational Administration
National Institute of Educational Planning and
Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi - 110016

V. Sucharita
sucharita.v@gmail.com