



RURAL URBAN DISPARITY IN ACCESS TO PRIVATE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

BENHUR RUQSANA

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI- 110067

ABSTRACT

People are of different views regarding privatization of education. Some consider it as a boon as it helps in increasing accessibility of educational services, while others consider it as a bane since it causes inequality among different sections of the society. Keeping this in mind, this paper looks at the rural urban disparity of private enrollment in elementary education in India. Taking the data from the website of District Information System for Education for the years 2005-06 to 2015-16, this paper shows that private enrollment of elementary education is mainly concentrated in the urban areas. It is the government schools which provide elementary education to major proportion of rural population. However it can also be seen that private enrollment in rural areas is increasing and with time, private schools are becoming more and more involved in providing educational facilities to the rural regions as well.

KEYWORDS : District Information System for Education (DISE), elementary education, enrollment, privatization, rural urban divide.

I. INTRODUCTION

Post independence, India has been struggling with the objective of access to education to all children. Several constitutional amendments were made in this respect to ensure universalization of elementary education. To boost the enrollment ratios, private sector was encouraged in education at the elementary level along with the government sector. However, this raised a lot of issues relating to equality in terms of access to education and quality of education. This paper takes up one aspect of privatization in India which is disparity in rural and urban areas. Indian population is still primarily concentrated in the rural areas; therefore, special attention is required in these regions. However, it is of interest to know whether private sector actually caters to the needs of the society and bring parity between rural and urban India.

II. METHODOLOGY

All data are collected from the website of District Information System for Education, State Report Card, <http://udise.in/> (as accessed on 10.04.2017) for the years 2005-06 to 2015-16. In this paper, only elementary education is looked at which includes children from class I to class VIII. The total enrollment in elementary education includes the data in only primary, primary with upper primary, primary with upper primary secondary/ higher secondary, upper primary only, upper primary with secondary/ higher secondary, primary with upper primary secondary and upper primary with secondary schools.

III. RISE IN PRIVATE EDUCATION

Private sector has no doubt contributed in raising the total enrollment. As is evident from Table 1, enrollment in private schools has increased at a growth rate of 5.59% from 2005-06 to 2015-16. In the same period it is seen that enrollment in government schools has actually decreased.

Table 1: Enrollment in Elementary Schools by Management

Years	Government		Private	
	Enrollment	As a Percentage of Total	Enrollment	As a Percentage of Total
2005-06	125651778	74.78	42385165	25.22
2006-07	129453684	72.12	50045952	27.88
2007-08	133952918	72.39	51090375	27.61
2008-09	133208706	70.98	54455996	29.02
2009-10	130718171	69.58	57154825	30.42
2010-11	130101641	68.76	59118176	31.24
2011-12	129846020	66.72	64756856	33.28
2012-13	125059229	64.20	69747073	35.80
2013-14	121960862	63.13	71231728	36.87

2014-15	118973934	61.80	73555385	38.20
2015-16	116921077	61.03	74649104	38.97
Growth Rate	-1.01%		5.59%	

Source: Author's own calculation.

However, the percentage of total enrollment in government schools is way higher than the percentage in private schools. As in 2015-16, 61.03% of children going to elementary schools are enrolled in government schools as compared to a mealy 38.97% in private schools. Therefore, government schools still provide the bulk of elementary education in India. It is also true that the elementary enrollments in private schools are increasing and increasing at a high rate.

IV. RURAL URBAN DIVIDE IN PRIVATE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The question now arises whether this rise in the enrollment in the private schools is equally distributed among the urban and rural areas or not. In order to answer this, this paper looks at the composition of government and private enrollment in rural and urban areas and to whether private schools are equally accessible to the mass of the population in India. Table 2 gives the composition of government and private enrollment in all India level in rural and urban areas.

Table 2: Composition of Rural and Urban Elementary Enrollment by Management

	Percentage composition of Government Enrollment		Percentage composition of Private Enrollment	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
2005-06	88.75	11.25	56.03	43.97
2006-07	88.74	11.26	56.34	43.66
2007-08	88.88	11.12	55.21	44.79
2008-09	88.86	11.14	55.06	44.94
2009-10	88.59	11.41	54.50	45.50
2010-11	88.56	11.44	54.41	45.59
2011-12	88.45	11.55	54.05	45.95
2012-13	88.08	11.92	54.20	45.80
2013-14	88.11	11.89	54.00	46.00
2014-15	88.00	12.00	54.11	45.89
2015-16	87.95	12.05	53.77	46.23

Source: Author's own calculation.

We see that as far as the government enrollment is concerned, it is mainly concentrated in the rural areas. As on 2015-16, 87.95% of government enrollment is in rural areas and for private enrollment, the number stands at 53.77%. As per census 2011, around 70 per

cent of the population is concentrated in the rural areas. Therefore, it can be safely accepted that government enrollment distribution is at par with the rural urban distribution of population. It can also be seen from Table 2 that the composition of government enrollment in rural areas has fallen by 0.8% point since 2005-06. On the other hand, the composition for enrollment in rural areas for the private schools has fallen by 2.26% points. Considering the fact that enrollment in private schools has been rising at a rate of 5.59% for the same period it can be said that private schools have been ignoring the rural areas. Since the ratio of rural urban population is 70:30, the ratio for rural urban enrollment should also move towards that ratio in each sector (government as well as private). However, the ratio for the private sector seems to moving away from the ideal ratio.

V. ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Lastly, Table 3 provides the respective contribution of the government and private sector in enrolling rural children. In 2005-06, the government sector enrolled 82.44% of rural children in elementary education. However, with time this percentage declined steadily to 71.93% for the year 2015-16. Simultaneously, the private sector enrolled only 17.56% of rural children in elementary education and the percentage of rural enrollment increased with years reaching 28.07% by 2015-16. This shows that it is the government sector which has taken up responsibility to enroll children from the rural areas. Although the role of private sector is also increasing in this region, it could however be attributed to the increasing trend of the private enrollment rather than a shift from urban to rural enrollment.

Table 3: Rural Enrollment in Elementary Education by Management

Years	Total	Government	Private
2005-06	135266609	82.44%	17.56%
2006-07	143065964	80.29%	19.71%
2007-08	147269002	80.85%	19.15%
2008-09	148353436	79.79%	20.21%
2009-10	146957190	78.80%	21.20%
2010-11	147384218	78.17%	21.83%
2011-12	149851936	76.64%	23.36%
2012-13	147960167	74.45%	25.55%
2013-14	145917483	73.64%	26.36%
2014-15	144497800	72.46%	27.54%
2015-16	142962042	71.93%	28.07%

Source: Author's own calculation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Increasing privatization in the field of education has been justified in a resource crunch economy since it can provide additional resources and make more educational facilities available to the children. However, private sector has biased focus when it comes to providing educational services. This paper shows that even though the total elementary enrollment under private schools is increasing at a rate of 5.59%, private schools are concentrated mainly in the urban areas (in 2015-16, private schools enrolled only 28.07% of rural children). This, one can safely assume is because of higher expected yield to the schools from urban areas as compared to the rural areas (since per capita income of urban areas are higher than the rural areas). Therefore, while increasing accessibility in education, private sector is also creating a rural urban divide. This causes difference in educational quality between the two regions. However, we can see that rural enrollment in private schools is increasing over the time which shows that more and more households are leaning towards private education and in time the rural urban divide might eliminate. Still, before making such a statement, several other aspects are to be kept in mind such as difference in quality of education in a government and a private school in terms of infrastructure and teachers.

VII. REFERENCES

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