

Enrolment and Dropout Rate in School Education

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on people. Moreover, a focus on livelihoods was possible with the ILO, promoting capacity-building and training as well as the ideas for generating income and assets.¹⁵ In response to the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan the ILO partnered with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the All-China Women's Federation and local authorities to implement response to regenerate employment and address social security issues. Along with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the ILO launched the Emergency Start and Improve Your Business (E-SIVB) project, which helped to re-establish over a 1,000 destroyed businesses and create 700 new businesses for those people who had lost jobs.¹⁶ Though this number is too small to have any impact on China's economy, the concept of central planning is not bad.

In contrast, India has focused less on rebuilding livelihoods after a disaster although this may be changing to a degree.

For example, the Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences is organising a five-day training programme in December 2010 for regenerating and enhancing livelihoods after disasters.¹⁷ These types of training programmes are a good first step in shifting the focus to resiliency or the ability to recover after a disaster. Yet, India would do well to increase its efforts and look more closely at China's good practice in emphasising livelihoods regeneration post-disaster.

Not that India should go the China way: India is India and China is China. What is in India's interest is to be a bit more reflective on what it sets out to achieve, and what it is achieving on the ground to protect its economic growth.

NOTES

- 1 http://gov.in/ndma/impmsg/articles/Tamil_Merchants_Chamber_DM_Article1.pdf
- 2 <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/RAV/conf/ID-RiMo6/pres/krishna.pdf>

- 3 <http://www.undp.org/cpr/disred/documents/publications/corporatereport/asia/china.pdf>
- 4 <http://www.unisdr.org/we/d/intergov/official-doc/L-docs/Hyogo-framework-for-action-english.pdf>
- 5 <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/partner-netw.local-government/12-14Nov2008-China/ITCLO-Agenda-Chengdu.pdf>
- 6 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34321&Cr=quake&Cr1=>
- 7 <http://pragati.nationalinterest.in/2010/05/where-is-the-national-disaster-management-authority/>
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- 9 <http://drr.upeace.org/english/documents/References/Topic>
- 10 <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/RAV/conf/ID-RiMo6/pres/krishna.pdf>
- 11 <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN025880.pdf>
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- 15 <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/partner-netw.local-government/12-14Nov2008-China/ITCLO-Agenda-Chengdu.pdf>
- 16 <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/>
- 17 <http://www.tiss.edu/events/attachments/RegenerationEnhancementLivelihoods2010.pdf>

Enrolment and Dropout Rate in School Education

SATADRU SIKDAR, ANIT N MUKHERJEE

The disaggregated analysis of the unit level data of the 64th round of the National Sample Survey Office (2007-08) reveals that universal enrolment, retention and completion in both elementary and secondary education can only be achieved by improving quality and mitigating financial constraints, especially for the lower classes.

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The Government of India passed the Right to Education Act in 2010 which obliges the State to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six to 14 years. This is the culmination of various schemes of the union government over the last two decades to encourage children to get enrolled in schools and continue their studies in the secondary level. However, a large number of children are still unable to enrol and even if enrolled, unable to continue their education. In this article, our intention is to find the reasons behind the inability to enrol and for dropping out among the children of elementary school age (between five and 14 years) and secondary school age (between 15 and 18 years).

Current Scenario

A close look at the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 64th round survey on the participation and expenditure in education

(2007-08) data observes that within the elementary school age, 12.8% of rural children and 7.3% of urban children are never enrolled in school; 5.3% of rural children and 3.9% of urban children have dropped out within this age group. This data also depicts that, among the children in the secondary school age, almost 90% have enrolled into school but 50% are unable to continue studying. The proportions of dropouts are 42.8% in the rural sector and 33.3% in the urban sector in the secondary school age.

Enrolment and Dropouts

First, we have tried to trace the reasons behind not enrolling and not completing elementary school education and later turned to the reasons behind high dropouts at the secondary school age. In the survey questionnaire, 20 types of reasons have been specified. We have grouped these 20 reasons into eight categories, viz, (1) household atmosphere (parents not interested, no tradition in the community and education not considered necessary), (2) access and infrastructure of school (inadequate number of teachers, school is far away, timing of educational institute is not suitable, unfriendly atmosphere in school, non-availability of lady teachers

Table 1: Enrolment Status in India (in %)

Age Group	Sector	Currently Not Enrolled						Enrolled and Currently Attending		
		Never Attended			Ever Attended But Currently Not Enrolled					
		Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Elementary school age (5-14 years)	Rural+Urban	11.07	9.77	12.56	4.84	4.58	5.14	84.10	85.66	82.3
	Rural	12.77	11.13	14.65	5.25	4.83	5.73	81.98	84.04	79.62
	Urban	7.27	6.76	7.87	3.92	4.01	3.81	88.81	89.23	88.32
Secondary school age (15-18 years)	Rural+Urban	10.28	7.89	13.07	39.47	39.12	39.89	50.25	52.99	47.04
	Rural	12.48	9.05	16.47	42.81	42.00	43.76	44.71	48.94	39.78
	Urban	6.19	5.72	6.75	33.27	33.77	32.68	60.54	60.51	60.57

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

Table 2: Reasons for Never Enrolling/Discontinuing/Dropping Out within Elementary School Ages (in %)

	Sector	Never Enrolled			Enrolled But Dropped Out		
		Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Household atmosphere	Rural + Urban	52.79	51.29	54.12	12.97	10.15	15.85
	Rural	54.64	52.82	56.23	14.16	10.78	17.43
	Urban	45.55	45.74	45.35	9.40	8.46	10.55
Access and infrastructure of school	Rural + Urban	2.41	2.45	2.37	3.37	2.83	3.91
	Rural	2.48	2.62	2.35	4.11	3.38	4.83
	Urban	2.15	1.85	2.45	1.14	1.38	0.84
Alternative source of work	Rural + Urban	1.51	1.70	1.34	5.99	8.16	3.77
	Rural	1.49	1.66	1.35	6.54	9.29	3.89
	Urban	1.59	1.85	1.33	4.37	5.18	3.38
Household duties	Rural + Urban	1.83	1.13	2.45	5.42	1.79	9.13
	Rural	1.98	1.30	2.57	5.77	2.21	9.22
	Urban	1.23	0.51	1.94	4.37	0.69	8.86
Financial constraints	Rural + Urban	20.26	20.80	19.77	24.74	26.47	22.96
	Rural	18.17	18.74	17.68	22.20	24.16	20.31
	Urban	28.40	28.31	28.50	32.29	32.64	31.86
Quality of education	Rural + Urban	1.06	1.26	0.89	40.07	44.17	35.86
	Rural	1.08	1.35	0.83	40.38	44.29	36.61
	Urban	1.02	0.92	1.12	39.13	43.87	33.33
Completed desired level/class	Rural + Urban	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.79	1.32	2.27
	Rural	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.56	1.17	1.94
	Urban	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.47	1.73	3.38
Other reasons	Rural + Urban	20.13	21.36	19.02	5.66	5.10	6.23
	Rural	20.14	21.51	18.96	5.26	4.74	5.77
	Urban	20.06	20.82	19.31	6.84	6.04	7.81

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

and non-availability of ladies' toilets), (3) alternative source of work (to work for wage and salary and for participating in other economic activities and for helping in household enterprises), (4) household duties (look after younger siblings and to attend to other domestic chores), (5) financial constraints, (6) quality of education (language/medium of instruction used unfamiliar, child not interested in studies and unable to cope or failure in studies), (7) completed desired level/class, and (8) other reasons.

Among the children not enrolling at the elementary school age, almost 53% are unable to do so due to household atmosphere and 20.3% are unable to enrol due to financial constraints. Financial constraint is reported by more households in the urban areas (28.4%) than in the rural areas

(18.2%). It has been observed that 5% of children in the elementary age group have dropped out. Among them 40% have blamed quality of education for their discontinuation of studies. Financial constraints and household atmosphere are major reasons for dropping out for 24.7% and 13% of children at the elementary school age. Household atmosphere is a vital reason for female children, to dropout especially in rural areas. In rural areas, 17.4% of female children among the female dropouts in elementary school age, are unable to continue their studies due to household atmosphere (Table 2).

Although alternative working opportunity seems to be an important reason for dropping out at the secondary school age, in elementary school age, this is not an important reason for not enrolling and for

dropouts. Among the children of elementary school age, less than 2% of children reported alternative working opportunity as a reason for never enrolling and only 6% children reported it as a reason for dropping out. We have tried to check what is the principal activity of the never enrolled and dropouts. Among the never enrolled children at the elementary school age, 72% reported their usual principal activity under "other reasons" and 12% reported attending domestic duties. This is applicable to 5.6% of the male children and 17.8% of the female children among these never enrolled children. Among the dropped out children within the same age group, 17.5% of the male children and 6.9% of the female children reported that they work as unpaid family workers in household enterprises. Sixty-two per cent of the female children attend to domestic duties and are also engaged in free collection of goods, sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc, for household use. Meanwhile, only 17% of male children work as casual wage labour.

In case of children at the secondary school age, apart from the quality of education and financial constraints, alternative sources of work especially for male children and household duties for females are the major reasons for dropping out. Among the dropped out children in secondary school ages, almost 36% blamed the quality of education and 25.3% named financial constraints for their discontinuation of studies. Alternative source of work

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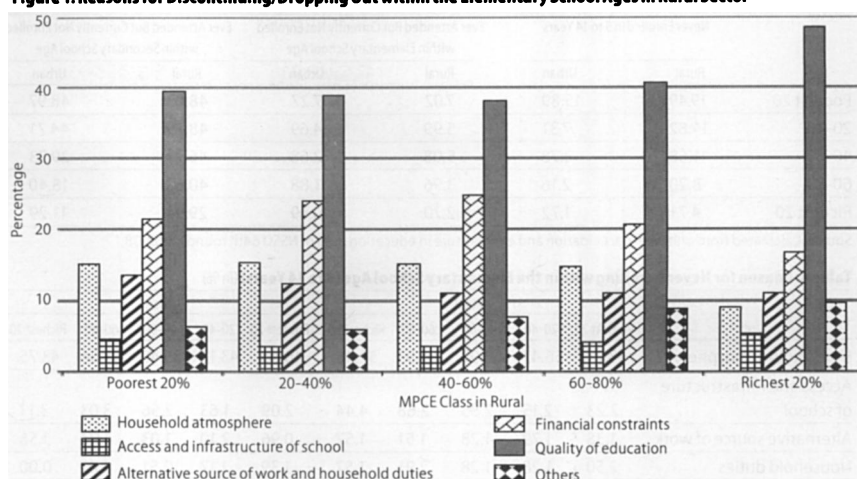
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has become the reason for dropping out for 18.7% of male children within the secondary school age. Among the dropped out female children within the same age group, 9.4% are unable to continue due to household duties and 13.5% due to household atmosphere. Only 5% of all dropped out children in secondary school age have reported that their reason for dropping out is due to completion of the desired level of education (Table 3).

Alternative working opportunity seems to be an important reason for dropping out by the children in the secondary school age. Among the dropped out male children, 39.4% in rural and 29.3% in urban areas reported working as casual wage labour in non-public works; and 16.1% work as regular salaried/wage employee in urban areas. Among the dropped out female children, 73.5% in urban areas and

Figure 1: Reasons for Discontinuing/Dropping Out within the Elementary School Ages in Rural Sector



Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

66.9% in rural areas attended to domestic duties and were also engaged in free collection of goods, sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc, for household use. Overall 28%

males and 10% females worked as unpaid family workers in household enterprises.

Economic Groups

As we have seen in the earlier section, financial constraints and household atmosphere are very important impediments for enrolment and continuation of studies. So, family income and looking for alternative work may be the major factor. To check this, we divided all the households into five groups, separate for rural and urban and tried to check the reasons by income group. By taking the average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) as a proxy of income, we have separated the households in five quintiles separately for rural and urban areas. In Table 4, we have given the frequency distribution of MPCE quintile-wise.

Among the households in the lowest quintile it appears that in the elementary school age, almost 19.5% rural and 15.9% urban children are unable to enrol. The enrolment percentage is impressively good for this age group in the urban sector among the entire income group except the lowest quintile. For the second lowest quintile, the proportion of children not enrolling is 14.8% for rural and 7.3% for urban areas (Table 5, p 30).

Almost 10% children within the secondary school age never enrolled in school and this figure is more than 16% for females in rural areas. Among the children within this age group 48% in rural and 49% in urban areas have dropped out. The dropout proportion among this age group is more than 40% within the lowest four

Table 3: Reason for Never Enrolling/Discontinuing/Dropping Out within Secondary School Age (in %)

Sector		Never Enrolled			Enrolled But Dropped Out		
		Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Household atmosphere	Rural + Urban	56.83	49.06	62.37	8.76	4.65	13.46
	Rural	58.37	50.31	63.62	9.48	5.56	13.87
	Urban	51.12	45.36	56.81	7.05	2.57	12.45
Access and infrastructure of school	Rural + Urban	1.65	1.01	2.11	3.22	1.47	5.22
	Rural	1.91	1.17	2.40	4.13	1.84	6.7
	Urban	0.66	0.53	0.79	1.04	0.63	1.53
Alternative source of work	Rural + Urban	6.06	10.74	2.73	12.22	18.71	4.78
	Rural	6.35	11.41	3.05	11.71	18.11	4.53
	Urban	5.01	8.75	1.31	13.45	20.1	5.41
Household duties	Rural + Urban	3.46	1.74	4.69	5.2	1.5	9.44
	Rural	3.79	1.80	5.10	5.55	1.74	9.81
	Urban	2.24	1.59	2.88	4.38	0.95	8.52
Financial constraints	Rural + Urban	24.73	30.34	20.73	25.26	26.92	23.36
	Rural	22.52	28.39	18.69	24.07	26.21	21.66
	Urban	32.94	36.07	29.84	28.11	28.55	27.58
Quality of education	Rural + Urban	0.11	0.20	0.05	35.89	40.99	30.05
	Rural	0.14	0.27	0.06	36.03	41.02	30.45
	Urban	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.55	40.92	29.06
Completed desired level/class	Rural + Urban	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.77	3.06	6.72
	Rural	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.58	3.09	6.24
	Urban	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.22	2.98	7.92
Others	Rural + Urban	7.15	6.91	7.32	4.68	2.69	6.96
	Rural	6.91	6.65	7.09	4.45	2.43	6.73
	Urban	8.04	7.69	8.38	5.22	3.3	7.54

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

Table 4: MPCE Quintile-wise Frequency Distribution for Rural and Urban India (2007-08)

Classes (%)	MPCE (in Rs)	Rural			MPCE (in Rs)	Urban		
		Total Number of Household	Number of Children within 5 to 14 Years	Number of Children within 15 to 18 Years		Total Number of Household	Number of Children within 5 to 14 Years	Number of Children within 15 to 18 Years
Poorest 20	Less than 400	10,677	15,309	4,340	Less than 620.69	5,715	7,313	2,684
20-40	400.50 to 513.33	11,434	13,289	4,630	621.00 to 857.14	6,448	5,919	2,554
40-60	513.60 to 642.50	12,325	12,234	4,467	857.50 to 1,142.86	7,271	5,185	2,379
60-80	642.85 to 849.11	13,306	10,675	4,695	1,143.57 to 1,663.67	7,921	4,635	2,381
Richest 20	850 and above	15,573	8,268	4,476	1,666.67 and above	9,908	3,849	2,165

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

Table 5: MPCE Quintile-wise Enrolment and Dropouts Scenario (in %)

	Never Enrolled in 5 to 14 Years		Ever Attended But Currently Not Enrolled within Elementary School Age		Ever Attended But Currently Not Enrolled within Secondary School Age	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Poorest 20	19.49	15.89	7.02	7.27	48.03	48.97
20-40	14.82	7.31	5.99	4.69	48.79	44.71
40-60	11.58	3.78	5.08	2.68	46.74	29.23
60-80	8.20	2.16	3.96	1.88	40.63	18.40
Richest 20	4.71	1.72	2.70	0.49	29.94	11.29

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

Table 6: Reason for Never Enrolling within the Elementary School Age (5 to 14 Years) (in %)

	Rural					Urban				
	Poorest 20	20-40	40-60	60-80	Richest 20	Poorest 20	20-40	40-60	60-80	Richest 20
Household atmosphere	53.71	56.47	53.92	56.93	52.48	46.48	43.12	39.49	55.56	43.75
Access and infrastructure of school	2.23	2.15	2.85	2.68	4.44	2.09	1.63	2.56	3.03	3.13
Alternative source of work	1.38	1.79	1.28	1.51	1.57	0.96	2.10	1.03	4.04	1.56
Household duties	2.50	1.28	1.28	2.91	1.57	1.39	1.17	0.51	1.01	0.00
Financial constraints	22.11	17.34	16.98	11.18	10.97	34.23	24.48	19.49	6.06	15.63
Quality of education	0.95	1.23	1.00	0.81	0.26	1.04	0.93	1.54	1.01	0.00
Others	17.12	19.69	22.68	23.98	28.72	13.73	26.57	35.38	29.29	35.94

Source: Calculated from the unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

quintile in the rural sector, only in case of the highest quintile the dropout rate is 29.9% within this (15-18 years) age group. So the reasons behind never enrolment within the poorest income group in rural and urban sector and the reasons for dropouts within secondary school age children for all income groups in rural sector and for the lowest three income groups in urban areas are a major concern.

Among the entire MPCE groups in the rural sector, household atmosphere is the main reason of never enrolment for over half of the never enrolled children within the elementary school age; while in the urban sector this is the main reason for over 40% of the never enrolled children within the same age group. Financial constraints are reported to be another main reason for not enrolling, though the proportion of reporting financial constraints as the main reason is decreasing from the lowest quintile to the richest quintile, but the proportion is 22.1% to 11% for the rural and 34.2% to 15.6% for the urban sector (Table 6).

The dropouts after enrolment within elementary school age are less than 3% for the top three quintiles in the urban and top quintile in the rural sector (Table 5). Among the lowest three MPCE quintiles in the rural and lowest two MPCE quintiles in the urban areas, almost 5% to 7% of children within elementary school ages are discontinuing their studies after enrolment. Almost 60% in the rural sector and 70% in the urban sector of these dropped out

children in the elementary school age have blamed quality of education and financial constraints as the main reasons for discontinuation of studies (Figure 1, p 29 and Figure 2, p 31). Household atmosphere is another main reason for dropouts and this proportion is increasing in the urban sector from the lowest quintile to the richest quintile.

As we have discussed earlier the dropout rates are 44.7% in the rural and 60.5% in the urban sectors within the secondary school age (Table 1, p 28). While looking for the reason behind the high dropout rate among children in this age group, it

has been observed that the proportional distribution of reasons is different in the rural and urban sectors, but within the same sector this distribution of reasons is more or less similar for all the five MPCE groups.

Figures 3 and 4 (p 31) show that almost 60% of dropout children within the secondary school age in rural areas discontinue their studies due to quality of education and financial constraints among all the MPCE groups. In urban areas among the lowest four MPCE quintiles 62% to 65% of dropped out children within secondary school age have reported discontinuing their studies due to these two factors. Alternative source of work is the main reason for 13% to 14% of the dropped out children within the same age group in urban areas and this proportion is the highest for top MPCE quintile in urban. Unfriendly household atmosphere becomes a reason for dropping out for 5% to 7% of the children within secondary school age in the urban sector and 8% to 12% in the rural sector. Among the secondary school age children, household duties are the reason for dropping out almost 10% females in the urban and rural areas. In urban areas this proportion is in between 7% and 13%, which is increasing from the lowest MPCE quintile to the highest quintile and in rural areas it is between 8% and 11%. So it can be concluded that the

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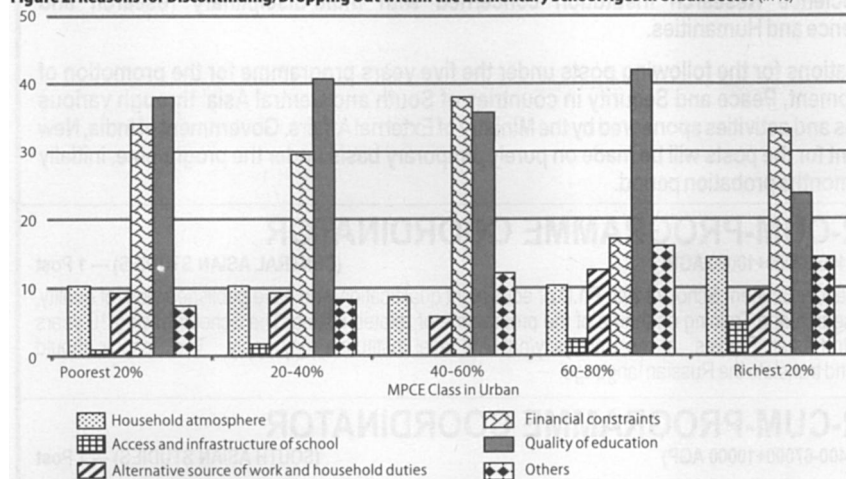
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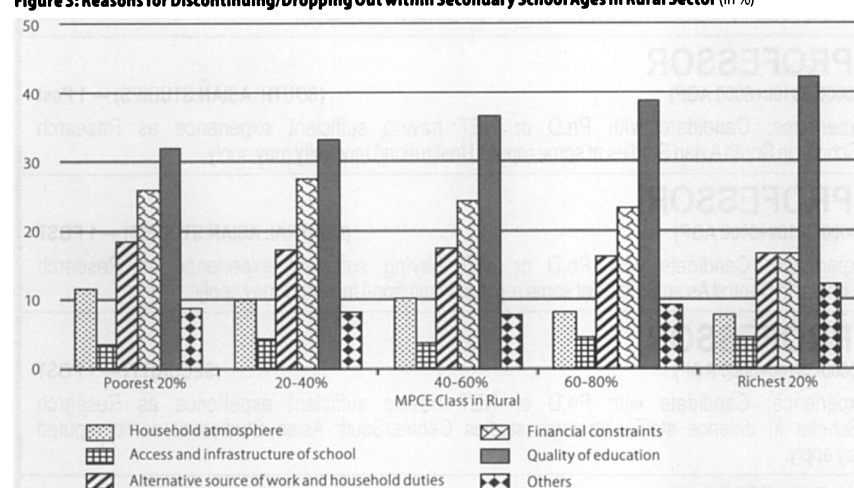
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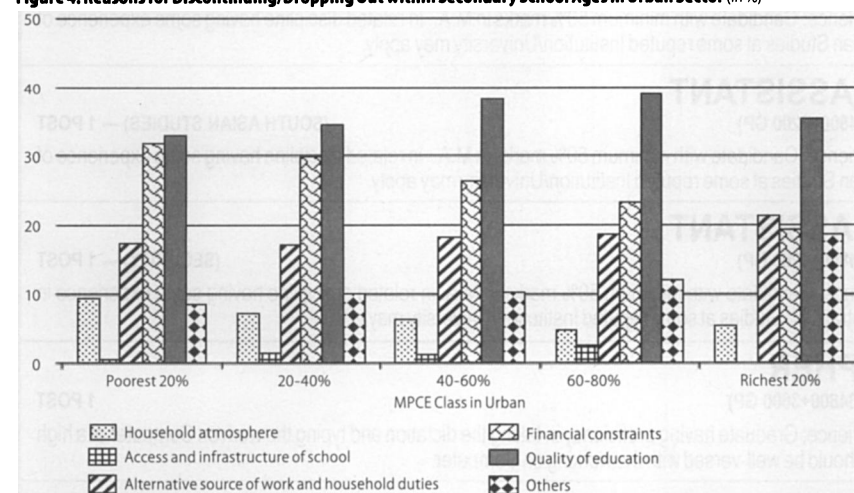
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Figure 2: Reasons for Discontinuing/Dropping Out within the Elementary School Ages in Urban Sector (in %)

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

Figure 3: Reasons for Discontinuing/Dropping Out within Secondary School Ages in Rural Sector (in %)

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

Figure 4: Reasons for Discontinuing/Dropping Out within Secondary School Ages in Urban Sector (in %)

Source: Calculated from unit level participation and expenditure in education data of NSSO 64th round, 2007-08.

income of the family is not the major reason for dropouts or discontinuation of studies – the problem lies in the lack of quality of education, particularly at the secondary stage.

Conclusions

Although India has made significant progress in improving access, especially in elementary education, there are significant challenges in moving towards

universal enrolment and completion. This is particularly true of secondary education. Analysis of the unit level data of 64th round of the National Sample Survey (2007-08) clearly brings out this picture. In the elementary school age (5-14 years), nearly 15% of the children are enrolled but currently not attending educational institutions. Out of them, 11% have never attended school. Therefore, even after nearly a decade of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, universal enrolment and completion of elementary education have not been achieved yet. The situation is worse at the secondary stage (15-18 years) – almost half of that age group are enrolled, but currently not attending secondary school. The percentage of never-enrolled children in secondary school is, however, similar to elementary education. This points to the fact that the dropout rate in the secondary stage is very high, and should be addressed without any further delay.

The reason for dropping out varies between the rural and urban sectors and across economic classes. Three principal reasons in the rural areas are household atmosphere, financial constraints and quality of education. Interestingly, quality of education is the main reason for drop-out in all the economic classes in the rural areas – access being the least important. Therefore, the policy focus needs to change from access to quality to achieve the goal of universal elementary education.

In the secondary stage, the impact of alternative sources of work and household duties becomes a more important determinant for dropping out of school. However, the two principal reasons for dropping out remain quality and financial constraints. Lower income quintiles find it harder to pay for secondary education – both public and private. This creates significant hurdles in the completion of secondary education, especially in rural areas.

This study draws attention to the present and future challenges before school education in India. A disaggregated analysis shows that universal enrolment, retention and completion in both elementary and secondary education can only be achieved by improving quality and mitigating financial constraints, especially for the lower income classes in both urban and rural areas.