International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development
Online ISSN: 2349-4182, Print ISSN: 2349-5979; Impact Factor: RJIF 5.72
Received: 02-08-2020; Accepted: 17-08-2020; Published: 03-09-2020
www.allsubjectjournal.com
Volume 7; Issue 9; 2020; Page No. 07-12

Distribution of free education in rural India

Dibya Jyoti Das
Department of Economics, University of Gauhati, Guwahati, Assam, India

Abstract
This paper attempted to analyse the disparities in the distribution of free education among different expenditure classes, social categories and gender. Such an analysis is important to see whether the distribution of free education is balanced or not after a decade of the implementation of the RTE Act, 2009. As per the Act, the government proposed to provide free and compulsory education to all the children in the age group of 6-14 years. But an analysis of NSSO data on "Social Consumption: Education" 2014-15 reveal that free education is still not universal in India and there is a large scale disparity in the distribution of it. Only 4 to 9 per cent of children from the lowest expenditure class receive education for free whereas this proportion rises to 34 to 52 per cent for children from the highest expenditure class. The proportion of children receiving free education from OBC and Others category is quite satisfactory across the country whereas it is abysmally low for SC and ST children in some states/UTs. Except for a few states/UTs, the gender gap in the rest of the states/UTs is very small.

Keywords: free education, distribution, rural house hold

1. Introduction
The distribution of free education is still not universal in India. Households still have to incur private expenditure to acquire primary education which is expected to be provided free to all by the government. As per the NSSO report (2015), nearly 60% of students attending government primary and upper primary schools received education for free. It means a sizeable number of students do not receive free primary education. Moreover, there prevail large scale disparities in the distribution of free education among the beneficiaries. As a result very less proportion of children from the low socio-economic background able to benefit from the government's free education policy. Although the Government of India proposes to meet all the expenditure at the elementary level and would provide it completely free to all citizen, the Economic Survey 2016-17 showed that the states and the union government together have been investing less than 3 per cent of country's GDP on education. It increases the household burden of education expenditure to the total expenditure. By free education, it means that no fees or charges of any kind i.e., tuition fees, examination fees, purchase of books, uniform, stationery etc. are to be levied on students. But it is found that households incur some additional expenditure on acquiring primary education. It has also been found that households from even low socioeconomic background spend a lot on acquiring education, especially primary education (Tilak; 1996b, 2000, 2002) [5, 6, 7, 8, 9]. Similarly, Bhattacharya (2012) [1]. has been observed that every household irrespective of receiving elementary education for free or not incur expenditures to acquire it. Thus it is observed that free education is still not equally accessible to all the strata of the society and the government is unable to reduce the household burden of education expenditure. This study has attempted to analyse the distribution of free education among different socio-economic categories of the society to see to what extent the government Ensured free education to its citizen.

2. Materials and methods
The data for the present study has been collected from NSSO 71st round survey on "Social Consumption: Education" 2014-15. The survey covered 65,926 households across the county with 55% (36,479) rural and 45% (29,447) urban households living in 4,577 rural villages and 3,720 urban blocks in the country. Out of 65,926 households, 12,012 rural households are considered for the present study. For the selection of the sample households, first selected those households that comprise students of lower primary and upper primary level. Then out of these selected households, only those households are taken into consideration who received education for free.
The socio-economic condition of people, implementation of government policies, the functioning of government machinery etc. in a state depend upon its geographical location also. Hence, to analyse the distribution of free education across the country, states are categorised into plain, hilly and union territories. Simple statistical tools like percentage, tabulation, graph etc. are used. To see the extent of free education among households of different expenditure class, expenditures are distributed into five quintile classes based on the Usual Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (UMPCE) as followed by NSSO. This quintile classes simply referred to as 1 (lowest quintile class), 2, 3, 4 and 5 (highest quintile class). The following table shows the lower and upper limits of these quintile classes.

Table 1: Quintile Class of UMPCE

Quintile class	Lower limit	Upper limit
1	500	3500
2	3500	5000
3	5000	6500
4	6500	9000
5	9000	86208

Source: NSSO

While analysing the distribution of free education among different quintile classes, it is necessary to see whether the distribution is favourable or not for different quintile classes of the same category states and same quintile classes of different category states. To see if there is any significant difference in the distribution of free education among the different quintile classes of the same category states or same quintile classes of different category states, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test has been used.

3. Distribution of free education by UMPCE class

UMPCE gives an idea of the standard of living of the people. To analyse the importance of education expenditure in estimating the standard of living, UMPCE class wise availability of free education and private expenditure has to be known. Availability of free education by different income class is presented in table 3.1. A look into the table 3.1, it is seen that among the plain states, in states like Punjab, Haryana, Kerala and Gujarat there is large scale disparity in the distribution of free education among the different expenditure class people. Only 4-9% of students from the lowest expenditure class (1st quintile) receives free education where this proportion is high for students from the highest expenditure class (5th quintile) ranges from 34% to 52%. Similar is the case for hilly states like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura where this proportion ranges from 5-9% for the lowest quintile to 29-47% for the highest quintile class. Such disparity prevails in UTs also where this proportion ranges from 6-17% to 29-60% for the respective expenditure classes. The higher income class people are economically, socially and educationally sound background people. So they are aware of their surroundings and able to grab various government schemes and facilities. However, the poorer section of the society is daily wage earners or other manual labours who are not so conscious about these. Since these people are economically not sound enough so they do not prefer to send their child to school due to the cost factor**.**

Table 2: Distribution of Free Education by Quintile Class

States (Plain)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Andhra Pradesh	12.01	19.04	21.63	27.91	19.41
Assam	23.66	29.89	19.57	17.85	9.03
Bihar	23.51	28.52	16.23	16.47	15.27
Chattisgarh	42.59	27.49	12.40	11.05	6.47
Goa	12.5	25	12.5	12.5	37.5
Gujarat	8.52	15.86	14.54	26.58	34.51
Haryana	4.89	20.11	14.13	21.74	39.13
Karnataka	12.21	27.16	22.32	22.32	16.00
Kerala	9.97	8.55	9.97	22.22	52.14
Madhya Pradesh	23.19	23.89	11.06	29.38	12.48
Maharastra	17	23.25	14.67	20.92	24.17
Odisha	42.46	29.86	12.60	8.09	7.00
Punjab	5.84	10.95	8.76	24.09	50.36
Rajasthan	15.71	16.79	11.07	23.57	32.86
Tamilnadu	13.98	19.69	19.69	25.20	21.46
Telangana	13.76	19.27	28.44	22.94	15.60
Uttar Pradesh	22.43	23.73	14.96	19.14	19.74
West Bengal	26.38	31.63	17.72	14.57	9.71
Average	18.37	22.26	15.68	20.36	23.49
States (Hill)					
Arunachal Pradesh	9.41	17.06	20	30	29.41
Himachal Pradesh	11.90	17.86	14.29	23.81	32.14
Jammu & Kashmir	12.83	16.58	14.44	26.20	29.95
Jharkhand	31.21	26.95	15.37	14.66	11.82
Manipur	11.11	18.22	20.89	18.22	31.56
Meghalaya	6.61	7.44	9.09	28.93	47.93
Mizoram	12.84	18.92	20.95	21.62	25.68
Nagaland	7.5	27.5	17.5	12.5	35
Sikkim	14.91	15.79	9.65	24.56	35.09
Tripura	5.84	18.02	16.50	23.60	36.04
Uttarakhand	23.53	31.37	6.86	24.51	13.73
Average	13.43	19.61	15.05	22.60	29.85
Union Territories					
A & N Island	7.69	7.69	16.92	33.85	33.85
Chandigarh	10.53	21.05	10.53	10.53	47.37
Delhi	0	25	0	25	50
Dadra & N. Haveli	17.65	26.47	8.82	17.65	29.41
Daman & Diu	0	6.67	20.00	33.33	40.00
Lakshadweep	7.41	14.81	14.81	25.93	40.74
Puducherry	6.67	13.33	6.67	13.33	60.00
Average	7.13	16.43	11.11	22.80	43.05

Source: Calculated from NSSO unit level data

The quintile wise average achievement of free education by all the three category states are presented in figure 3.1.

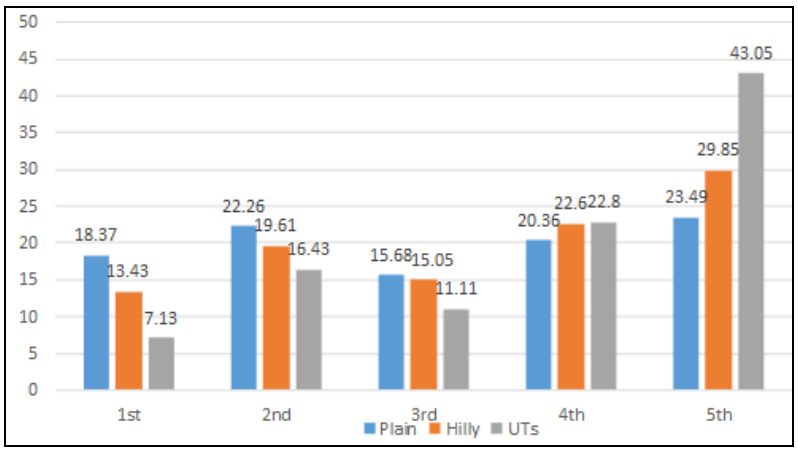

Fig 1: Quintile wise average percentage of households receiving free education

It is clear from figure 3.1 that students from the highest income class in all the three category states receive the highest proportion of free education followed by the second-highest income category students. The 1st quintile and 3rd quintile class received less proportion in this regard. In the case of 1st quintile class, parents may unwilling to send their children to school or they may not be aware of the necessity of education of their children and keep them engaged in household works. Again, in case of 3rd quintile class which is relatively richer than the 1st quintile, it can be said that as income increases people may prefer private institution than the government one which lowers their enrolment ratio, so thus the proportion. In figure 3.1, the case is opposite for 2nd quintile and 3rd quintile classes. The proportion of 2nd quintile class (relatively poorer) is higher than the 3rd quintile class (relatively richer). Moreover, the proportion of beneficiaries of 2nd quintile and 4th quintile class are almost the same. There is no such huge difference among them. This may be because of a higher number of children from the poorer section goes to government schools than the richer sections which increase their proportion. Hence, to see whether or not there is any significant difference among the different income classes of the same category state or same income classes of the different category states, a statistical test is run. The result of the test is present in Table 3.2.

Table 2: ANOVA for Intra Quintile Class of different states

Umpc	State Category	Plain	Hilly	ut	F Statistic
1	Plain	-	0.347	0.026**	3.88
	Hilly	0.347	-	0.352	
	UT	0.026**	0.352	-	
2	Plain	-	0.606	0.151	1.91
	Hilly	0.606	-	0.575	
	UT	0.151	0.575	-	
3	Plain	-	0.294	0.15	1.89
	Hilly	0.294	-	0.949	
	UT	0.15	0.294	-	
4	Plain	-	0.998	0.683	.566
	Hilly	0.998	-	0.648	
	UT	0.683	0.648	-	
5	Plain	-	0.089	0.004***	6.18
	Hilly	0.089	-	0.39	
	UT	0.004***	0.39	-	

Source: Author's calculation based on NSSO unit level data
Note: ** - significant at 5% level *** - significant at 1% level

Table 3.2 shows that there is a significant difference among plain and UTs of the 1st quintile class as well as 5th quintile class. Being the same income class, the proportion of students receiving free education in plain states is higher than that of UTs. This may be due to the cost factor or lack of awareness or unwillingness to send their children to school. Such a low proportion in UTs also maybe because of the poor quality of government schools. As a result, households prefer private schools than government schools and enrolment in government schools are low, so thus the proportion.

Table 3.3 shows that there is also significant difference exist among different quintiles of the hilly states and UTs. In both the state, achievement in 1st, 2nd and 3rd quintiles is significantly differed from 4th and 5th quintile. This difference is less significant for plain states.

Table 3: ANOVA for Inter Quintile Class of same category States

State Category	UMPC	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	F Statistic
Plain	1st	-	0.713	0.906	0.966	0.461	2.04
	2nd	0.713	-	0.214	0.972	0.995	
	3rd	0.906	0.214	-	0.552	0.092	
	4th	0.966	0.972	0.552	-	0.847	
	5th	0.461	0.995	0.092	0.847	-	
Hill	1st	-	0.231	0.981	0.023**	.000***	11.32
	2nd	0.231	-	0.53	0.844	0.002** *	
	3rd	0.981	0.53	-	0.09	.000***	
	4th	0.023**	0.844	0.09	-	0.037**	
	5th	.000***	0.002** *	.000** *	0.037**	-	
UT	1st	-	0.183	0.866	0.005** *	.000***	18.24
	2nd	0.183	-	0.692	0.535	.000***	
	3rd	0.866	0.692	-	0.056	.000***	
	4th	0.005** *	0.535	0.056	-	0.003** *	
	5th	.000***	.000***	.000** *	0.003** *	-	

Source: *Author's calculation based on NSSO unit level data Note: ** - significant at 5% level *** - significant at 1% level*

4. Distribution of free education by social group

To analyse the equal distribution of free education in the society, it is important to know whether all people

irrespective of caste, creed etc. avail the benefits or not. A look into the distribution of free education among different social groups, it is seen that there are wide inter-state and inter-caste variations in the provision of free education. It is also seen that only in Lakshadweep, all the 100% OBC students receive free education. Although the proportion of OBC and OTHERS category students are satisfactory in almost all the three category states, the proportion of ST and SC category students are not satisfactory, especially in states like Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Punjab, Tamilnadu, UP, Nagaland, Sikkim and Uttarakhand, the condition of ST students is pathetic. Zero per cent in the table refers non-availability of households of that category in that respective states.

Table 4: Distribution of Free Education by Social Category

States (Plain)	ST	SC	OBC	OTHERS
Andhra Pradesh	9.43	20.15	43.99	26.43
Assam	21.08	5.59	26.88	46.45
Bihar	1.91	19.81	59.07	19.21
Chattisgarh	46.90	12.40	37.20	3.50
Goa	0	12.5	87.5	0
Gujarat	25.70	9.40	42.88	22.03
Haryana	1.63	28.26	33.70	36.41
Karnataka	10.11	16.84	44.21	28.84
Kerala	1.14	13.68	51.85	33.33
Madhya Pradesh	35.93	12.57	38.67	12.83
Maharastra	16.92	14.33	40.67	28.58
Odisha	28.62	18.82	35.15	11.98
Punjab	0.73	40.88	17.52	40.88
Rajasthan	18.57	22.86	42.86	15.71
Tamilnadu	1.77	27.17	70.08	0.98
Telangana	10.55	22.02	56.88	10.55
Uttar Pradesh	2.29	26.42	49.25	22.03
West Bengal	10.24	28.61	17.85	43.31
Average	13.53	19.57	44.23	22.39
States (Hill)				
Arunachal Pradesh	5.29	21.18	52.94	20.59
Himachal Pradesh	14.29	23.81	21.43	52.38
Jammu & Kashmir	17.11	8.56	9.63	64.71
Jharkhand	32.15	13.00	45.86	8.98
Manipur	8.44	13.78	48.00	29.78
Meghalaya	4.13	3.31	61.16	31.40
Mizoram	7.43	27.70	50.68	14.19
Nagaland	0.00	20	55	25
Sikkim	1.75	14.91	53.51	29.82
Tripura	14.21	13.20	48.48	24.11
Uttarakhand	1.96	13.73	16.67	67.65
Average	9.71	15.74	42.12	33.51
Union Territories				
A & N Island	0.00	7.69	81.54	10.77
Chandigarh	0.00	21.05	52.63	26.32
Delhi	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00
Dadra & N. Haveli	11.76	14.71	32.35	41.18
Daman & Diu	6.67	6.67	33.33	53.33
Lakshadweep	0.00	0.00	100	0
Puducherry	0.00	0.00	73.33	26.67
Average	2.63	7.16	56.88	33.32

Source: *Calculated from NSSO unit level data*

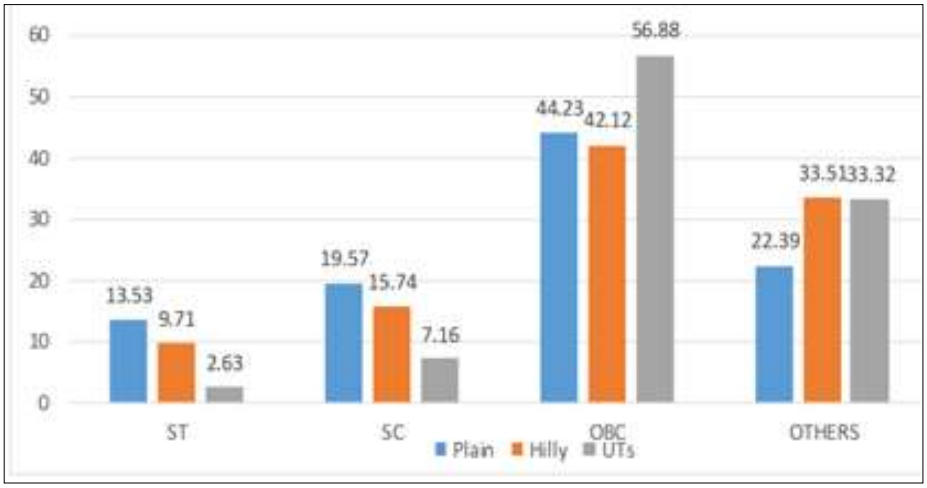

Fig 2: Caste wise average percentage of HHs receiving free education

The comparison of average achievement of free education by each social category in the three category states is presented in figure 4.1. From figure 4.1 it is clear that OBC students receive the highest percentage of free education in rural areas of all the three category states followed by OTHERS. In this case, UTs recorded the highest proportion of OBC students getting the education for free followed by plain and hilly states. Due to the meagre population of STs and SCs in rural UTs, its performance is low compared to plain and hilly states. But students of ST and SC are abysmally deprived of getting a free education in plain and hilly states. This may be due to social discrimination or unwillingness to send their children to school or maybe because of a lack of awareness or economic problems which prevent them from access to such facilities.

5. Distribution of free education by gender

While discussing the right to education, it is necessary to know whether this right is availed by all children or not irrespective of their gender. Generally, it is heard that parents and society discriminate between boys and girls so far as the issue of educating their child concerned. To see whether such allegation prevails or not, the distribution of free education among boys and girls is presented in table 5.1.

Table 1: Distribution of Free Education by Gender

States (Plain)	Boys	Girls
Andhra Pradesh	57.21	42.79
Assam	55.38	44.62
Bihar	51.96	48.04
Chattisgarh	47.07	52.93
Goa	50	50
Gujarat	46.91	53.09
Haryana	54.79	45.21
Karnataka	51.34	48.66
Kerala	48.44	51.56
Madhya Pradesh	53.16	46.84
Maharastra	53.77	46.23
Odisha	51.09	48.91
Punjab	56.69	43.31
Rajasthan	48.92	51.08
Tamilnadu	53.42	46.58
Telangana	50.63	49.37
Uttar Pradesh	51.96	49.04
West Bengal	55.06	44.94
Average	52.10	47.96
States (Hill)		
Arunachal Pradesh	50.58	49.42
Himachal Pradesh	53.57	46.43
Jammu & Kashmir	53.65	46.35
Jharkhand	56.69	43.31
Manipur	56.44	43.56
Meghalaya	52.07	47.93
Mizoram	50.67	49.33
Nagaland	47.5	52.5

Sikkim	50	50
Tripura	53.04	46.96
Uttarakhand	45.45	54.55
Average	51.79	48.21
Union Territories		
A & N Island	56.92	43.08
Chandigarh	63.15	36.85
Dadra & N. Haveli	67.64	32.36
Daman & Diu	80	20
Delhi	50	50
Lakshadweep	67.85	32.15
Puducherry	57.14	42.86
Average	63.24	36.76

Source: Calculated from NSSO unit level data

It is seen that in most of the plain and hilly states, the difference between the average proportion of boys and girls receiving free education in the rural area is small. In plain states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and hilly states like Jharkhand, Manipur this difference is quite big. However, Goa and Sikkim have a different picture. Boys and girls enjoy equal opportunities in both the state. The difference is quite large in almost all the UTs except A & N Island and Delhi. In Delhi, there is no difference between boys and girls. Less proportion of girls simply indicates low enrolment rates of girls in the school. But zero proportion in Daman & Diu means no sample data of girl. Low enrolment of girl child in the school may be caused because of less interest of parents about their education, social restrictions etc.

6. Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is seen that free education is still not universal in India. Families irrespective of the socio-economic background are not able to access it freely. Such poor performance of rural India may be due to several reasons and one such reason might be the geographic location of rural areas. Geographically isolated or remote areas people are generally less conscious about education and allied services. To reach those people and make them aware of various government facilities, the government should take necessary initiatives. Moreover, non-accessibility of free education in equal proportion may be due to authority's distributive lope hole at ground level. So the government should set up monitoring agencies at the local level for the proper functioning of the system. It is also noticed that very less proportion of socially and economically backward category students getting free education across the nation. To increase the proportion of beneficiaries among these deprive groups, the government should initiate proper identification measures based on social category, income class etc. through household surveys conducted at some regular intervals nationwide or other relevant feasible measures. Another reason for such poor performance may be the poor quality of government education system, because of which households even from lower socio-economic background prefer private schools than the government one. Therefore, the government have to take care of the school quality also by providing adequate infrastructure facilities, appointing trained teachers, proving training to untrained teachers etc. Moreover to reduce the gender gap government should increase awareness among the people regarding the importance of education for girl child through advertisement, social awareness campaign and providing more incentives for the girl child to increase the enrolment rates. Most of the parents do not send their girl to school due to non-availability of separate ladies toilet and other such facilities. Thus the government should ensure all of its citizen true free and compulsory education make it equally accessible to all for the balanced development of the society.

7. References

1. Bhattacharya Ruchira. Comparative analysis of the extent of free education and average private expenditure on education in India, Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences. 2020; 37:277-295.
2. Chandrasekhar S, Mukhopadhyay Abhiroop. Primary Education as a Fundamental Right: Cost Implications, Economic and Political Weekly. 2016; 41(35):3797-3804.
3. NCAER. Non-Enrolment, Drop-Out and Private Expenditure on Elementary Education: A Comparison across States and Population Groups, September, 1994, New Delhi
4. NSSO. Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India-Education, 71st round, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, 2015.
5. Tilak JBG. How Free Is 'Free' Primary Education in India?, Economic and Political Weekly. 1996; 31(5):275+277-282.
6. Tilak JBG. How Free Is 'Free' Primary Education in India?, Economic and Political Weekly, 1996; 31(6):355-366.
7. Tilak JBG. Household Expenditure on Education in India – A Preliminary Examination of the 52nd Round of National Sample Survey, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, 2000.
8. Tilak JBG. Determinants of Household Expenditure on Education in Rural India, Working Paper Series No.88, National Council of Applied Economic Research, July, 2002, New Delhi
9. Tilak JBG. Household Expenditure on Education and Implications for Redefining the Poverty Line in India, Background Paper, Planning Commission, 2009.