

Original Article

Neoliberalism, School Affiliation Boards and Households' Educational Spending: An analysis of Secondary Education in Haryana

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Abstract

The neo-liberal economic reforms affect the education system and there is massive transformation in India and sub-national context i.e. Haryana also during the last three decades. These free market policies and deregulation reduced the government expenditure on education. The present study analysed private educational allocations for the secondary level education in the state of Haryana using the primary survey data collected in the academic session 2018-19. The study explained the variations in enrollment rural vis-a-vis urban regions in H.B.S.E (Haryana/ State Board) and C.B.S.E./Central Board schools. The study found that majority of the students attended government schools/State board schools while the proportion of students going to such schools is lower in urban areas. The household educational spending on secondary education exhibits that the parents incur a significant amount of Rs. 31,643 (per student per year) for this purpose, which constitutes a significant financial burden on the households. There are sizeable differences in the spending patterns of households; the per student annual expenditure made on central board school is 10.99 per cent of annual income of the household while the corresponding proportion in case of Haryana board schools is only 4.61 per cent annually. Further, the variations in the spending patterns are found by the gender, region and sub-levels of secondary education in Haryana.

Keywords: Secondary Education, Households' Educational Spending, Affiliation, Gender, Region, Haryana

Introduction

Education plays an important role in economic growth and development all over the world (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2010; Hussain, 2012). Education is considered an important component in promoting the skills and knowledge required for employment. This, in turn, results in an increase in production and prosperity and a reduction in poverty and hunger (Schultz, 1961, Tilak, 2007; Ansari and Khan, 2018). Various studies have discussed and investigated government and private educational spending on the levels, patterns, and factors that determine spending behavior. (Chakrabarti and Jogelkar, 2006; Imana, 2017; Gill, 2017, 2019; Choudhury and Kumar, 2021). Neo-liberal economic reforms have affected the education system, and there has been massive transformation in India and the sub-national context, that is, Haryana, during the last three decades. These free market policies and deregulation reduce government expenditures on education. Thus, the secondary education sector in Haryana was severely affected. As per an estimate, in 1980-81 the education budget of the Haryana state was more than 40%, which declined to 29.44 per cent in 2018-19.

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This decline in government spending has had a significant impact on the standards of education delivered by government schools (all the schools are affiliated with State/Haryana Board, i.e., H.B.S.E.). Personal interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with administrators and school teachers also established similar facts. As a result, a large number of secondary education students in the state shifted to the Central Board of School Education (C.B.S.E) private schools and other schools affiliated with other boards of school education, which are relatively expensive in nature. Under such circumstances, private investment in secondary-level education in Haryana is expected to significantly increase. In light of this, numerous questions may be asked in line with the study's objectives, such as: What is the magnitude of household outlays for secondary-level education in Haryana and how does it differ across state and central pattern schools? What are the patterns of household outlays on secondary-level education across state and central-pattern schools in rural and urban areas? How do the patterns of household outlays on secondary-level education for male and female children differ across schools in rural and

urban areas? This paper focuses on the descriptive analysis of levels and patterns of household outlays on secondary level education, taking into account the sub-divisions education (higher secondary and intermediate levels) of secondary, region, gender and affiliation of schools i.e. "H.B.S.E and C.B.S.E". Section II presents the results and discussion, and Section III presents the conclusions and suggestions.

Data and Methodology

This investigation is based on cross-sectional field survey data collected from the state of Haryana using a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique. For this, in the first stage, three districts were chosen: Rohtak (high literacy), Kurukshetra (medium literacy), and Fatehabad (lower literacy), each from the three strata: higher, medium, and lower literacy. Further, three blocks (rural sample) and three cities (urban sample) were selected: nine blocks and nine cities in total, two villages (i.e., one each falling in the higher literacy segment and lower literacy segment), and two municipality wards (i.e., one each falling in the higher literacy segment and lower literacy segment).

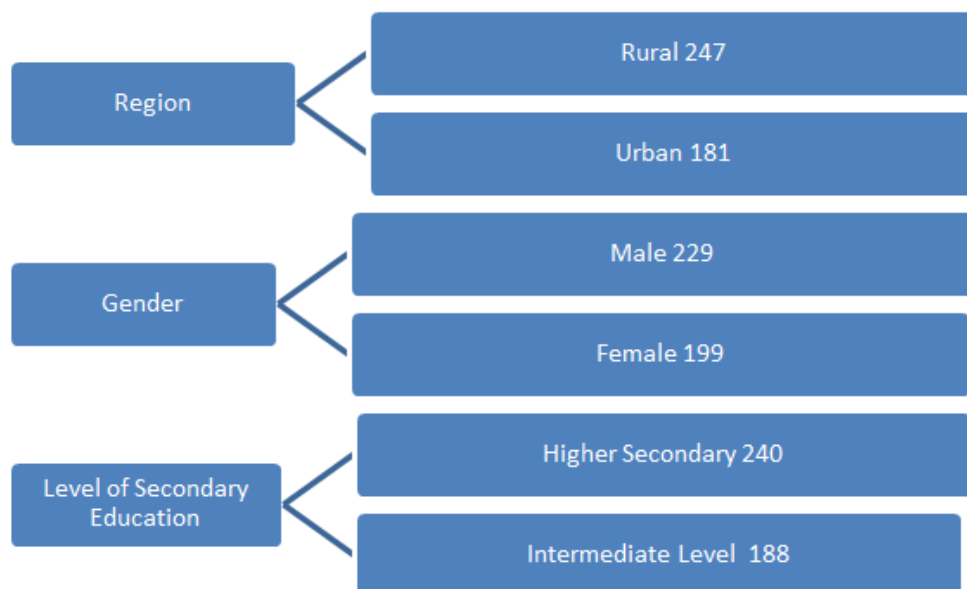


Figure: 1 Distribution of students in the sample by Region, Gender and Levels of School Education in Haryana

Finally, 180 households from rural areas and 120 households from urban areas were sampled based on the proportionate-to-size method. Thus, the information was collected using a semi-

structured interview schedule from 428 secondary school students (i.e., from the 300 sampled households). Figure 1 provides an elaborate description of the sample. The table shows that approximately 58 per cent of the students were

chosen from rural areas, while approximately 42 per cent were urban counterparts. The proportion of male students was 53.5%, while the parallel share of female students was around 46 per cent. The sample comprised 240 (56.1 per cent) students with higher secondary education and 188 (43.9 per cent) students with intermediate sublevels of secondary schooling. The main intent of the present study is examining the differences in private spending of across gender, region and level of secondary education considering the affiliation of school i.e. "C.B.S.E and H.B.S.E". Therefore, descriptive analysis was used considering the three dimensions of gender, region, and level of secondary education across the "C.B.S.E and H.B.S.E" schools.

Results and Discussion

Household expenditure on education is determined by various factors, such as household income, social norms, culture, government incentives and programs, cost and quality of education, and labor market outcomes (Qian and

Smyth, 2011). In the present study, the size and patterns of household outlays are analyzed at overall secondary education levels as well as its sub-levels, such as higher secondary vis-à-vis intermediate levels of secondary education in the state of Haryana. Table 1 explains that households pay a significant amount of Rs. 31,643 as a proportion of income 7.22 per cent. It shows a significant burden of secondary education on households for one child only; such a burden will be enhanced depending on the number of children in the household. Rural households spent a lower amount of Rs. 27,495 compared to their urban counterparts who paid Rs. 37,304, and the variations are also found in the proportionate share of household income; the rural household incurs 6.56 per cent of annual income, while the corresponding proportion of urban counterparts is 8.12 per cent. There are two reasons for this difference. First, it is due to the expectations and parental aspirations and other cost differences of rural versus urban areas.

Table 1: Household Outlays on Secondary (IX-XII) Education in Haryana by gender, region and affiliation of school

Region	Gender	H.B.S.E.	Expenditure (% of annual income)	C.B.S.E.	Expenditure (%) of annual income)	Total	Expenditure (% of annual income)
Rural	Male	16,185	(4.79)	56,036	(10.82)	30,148	(6.90)
	Female	11,196	(3.62)	47,851	(10.70)	24,192	(6.13)
	Persons	13,971	(4.27)	52,367	(10.76)	27,495	(6.56)
Urban	Male	25,229	(5.87)	56,468	(11.11)	40,848	(8.49)
	Female	18,425	(4.54)	50,666	(11.32)	33,640	(7.74)
	Persons	21,790	(5.20)	53,699	(11.21)	37,304	(8.12)
Persons	Male	19,267	(5.16)	56,248	(10.96)	34,447	(7.54)
	Female	14,075	(3.99)	49,311	(11.02)	28,417	(6.85)
	Persons	16,845	(4.61)	53,037	(10.99)	31,643	(7.22)

Source: Primary Survey

Furthermore, these differences are intense in the comparative analysis of H.B.S.E. and C.B.S.E. affiliated schools. For instance, the per student expenditure is approximately 11 per cent in the case of later category schools, while the relative share in household income of former category schools is only 4.61 per cent. Thus, Haryana board schools are relatively low-cost compared to other schools. Figure 1 shows that 40.9% of students were attending BSE schools compared to 59.1 per cent

who were attending H.B.S.E. schools. Thus, a significant proportion is preferred by government schools affiliated with the Haryana Board. However, the comparative analyses of rural and urban areas are different. Figure 2 shows that 64.78% of rural students were attending government schools, while Figure 3 explains that 51.38 per cent urban students were attending Haryana board schools.

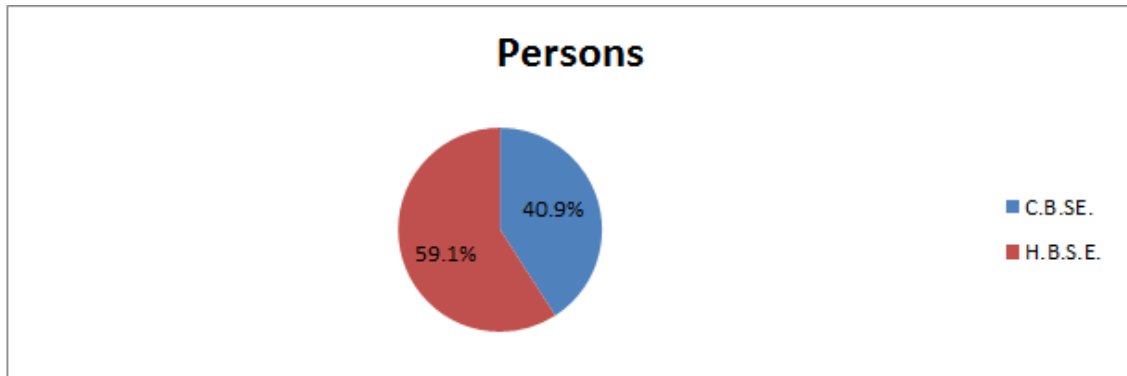


Figure 2: Distribution of students (male and female) by affiliation of school

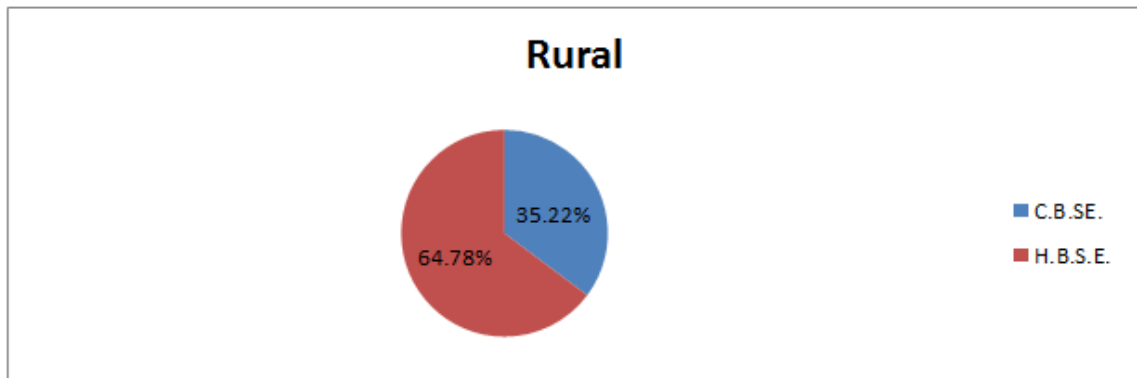


Figure 3: Distribution of rural (male and female) students by affiliation of school

The primary survey and FDGs with the parents show that the Haryana board schools are relatively low-cost schools, but the quality of education is not good in such schools. Moreover, there are numerous problems explained by parents, such as lack of teachers, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of study environment, and many more. However, irrespective of such a problem, 60 per cent of the students attend these schools. The students who prefer Haryana board schools are

from deprived households engaged in low-income occupations, such as daily wage workers, agricultural seasonal workers, and reserved category households. The proportion of such households in rural areas was found during the study. On the other hand, the students who attend the C.B.S.E. schools are generally from higher socio-economic strata, such as salaried classes, businessmen, landlords, etc., whose proportion is higher in urban areas.

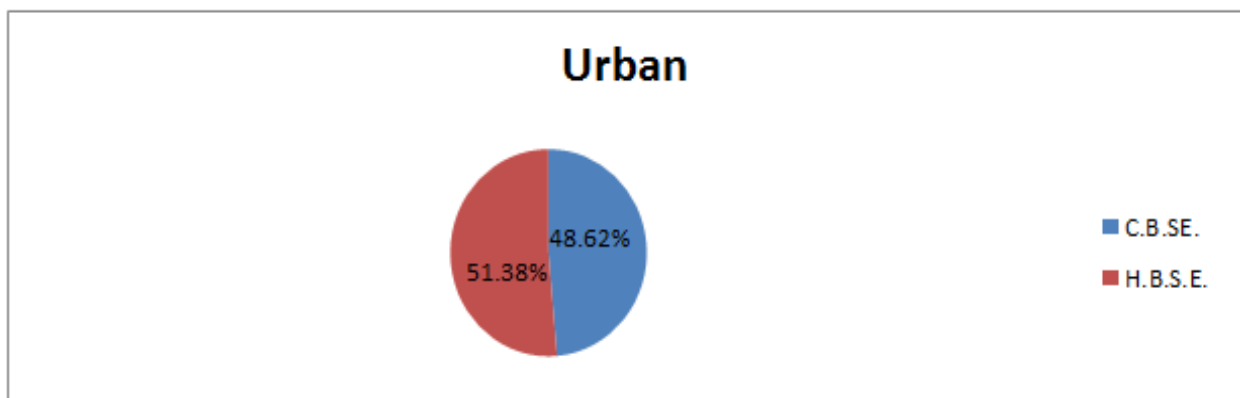


Figure 4: Distribution of urban students (male and female) by affiliation of schools

Table 2: Household Expenditure on Higher Secondary (IX-X) Education in Haryana by gender, region and affiliation of school

Region	Gender	H.B.S.E.	Expenditure (% of annual income)	C.B.S.E.	Expenditure (% of annual income)	Total	Expenditure (% of annual income)
Rural	Male	15,516	(4.74)	52,692	(10.38)	29,163	(6.81)
	Female	8,048	(2.47)	43,976	(10.43)	22,875	(5.76)
	Persons	12,340	(3.78)	48,572	(10.41)	26,373	(6.35)
Urban	Male	22,363	(5.20)	52,588	(11.27)	41,182	(8.98)
	Female	17,952	(4.52)	48,615	(11.71)	33,624	(8.19)
	Persons	20,053	(4.84)	50,957	(11.45)	37,712	(8.62)
Persons	Male	17,472	(4.87)	52,637	(10.86)	33,989	(7.68)
	Female	11,741	(3.23)	46,154	(11.03)	27,354	(6.77)
	Persons	14,851	(4.12)	49,775	(10.93)	31,003	(7.27)

Source: Primary Survey

Further, the study explains the variations in household expenditure at sub-levels of secondary education viz. higher secondary and intermediate level. Table 2 explains that a household incurs Rs. 49,775 to send their offspring to C.B.S.E. affiliated schools, while the households that send their ward to Haryana board schools incur only Rs. 14, 851 at higher secondary levels of secondary education. Furthermore, rural households spend less time than their urban counterparts. Moreover, gender-based differences are observed in rural areas vis-à-vis

urban households. For example, rural households spend only 2.47 per cent of their annual income compared with their male counterparts (4.74%). Gender-based variations are also present in urban areas, but the magnitude of gender differentiation is less in urban areas (1.15 times expenditure on male children) than in rural households (1.92 times expenditure on male children). These findings are consistent with those of previous studies on gender-based inequalities (Gill, 2019; Singh et.al, 2023; Lancaster et. al., 2008; Saha, 2013; Khanal, 2018).

Table 3: Household Expenditure on Intermediate (IX-X) level of Secondary Education in Haryana by gender, region and affiliation of school

Region	Gender	H.B.S.E.	Expenditure (% of annual income)	C.B.S.E.	Expenditure (% of annual income)	Total	Expenditure (% of annual income)
Rural	Male	17,043	(4.85)	61,141	(11.47)	31,489	(7.02)
	Female	14,621	(4.87)	55,600	(11.22)	25,956	(6.63)
	Persons	15,915	(4.86)	58,890	(11.37)	29,012	(6.84)
Urban	Male	27,433	(6.38)	66,317	(10.68)	40,394	(7.81)
	Female	18,840	(4.56)	53,148	(10.86)	33,655	(7.28)
	Persons	23,221	(5.49)	58,498	(10.79)	36,822	(7.53)
Persons	Male	21,199	(5.46)	63,243	(11.15)	35,069	(7.34)
	Female	16,409	(4.74)	54,144	(11.01)	29,679	(6.94)
	Persons	18,920	(5.12)	58,694	(11.08)	32,460	(7.15)

Table 3 shows that the rural-urban and male-female difference in household expenditure is less in the case of intermediate secondary education compared to higher secondary education (explained earlier). Rural households spend almost the same proportion of their annual income on the intermediate education of their wards irrespective

of the gender and affiliation of school, while a low degree of gender discrimination is found in spending patterns of urban households if male and female wards were attending schools affiliated with H.B.S.E. (Rs. 27,433 for male children and Rs. 18,840 for female children). However, the relative share of female children in C.B.S.E. schools was marginally

higher (10.68 per cent) than that of male children (10.68 per cent). Moreover, the gender gap is universal if absolute household expenditure is taken into consideration, irrespective of the region and affiliation of the school board.

Summary and conclusions

The foregoing examination of the data on household educational spending on secondary education shows that parents incur a significant amount of Rs. 31,643 (per student per year) for this purpose, which constitutes a significant financial burden on households. Further, these differences are intense in the case of comparative analysis of the Haryana board and central board-affiliated schools. Thus, the per student expenditure is approximately 11 percent in the case of the later category schools, while the relative share in household income of the former category schools is only 4.61 per cent. Moreover, the findings also establish that 40.9% of students were attending central board schools as compared to 59.1 per cent who were going to H.B.S.E. schools. The study further finds that Haryana board schools are relatively lower-cost schools, but the quality of education is not good in such schools and suffers from issues such as lack of adequate teachers, lack of infrastructure facilities, and lack of a study environment. The students enrolled in Haryana board schools are from deprived households engaged in low- income occupations, such as daily wage workers, agricultural seasonal workers, and reserved category households. On the other hand, the students who attend central board schools are generally from higher socio-economic strata, such as salaried classes, businessmen, landlords, etc., whose proportion is higher in urban areas. Thus, it is imperative for policymakers to improve the quality of Haryana board schools, which will provide the economy with a better workforce fostering economic growth and development of the country along with social cohesion.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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