

Students' Enrolment Patterns in Schools of a Telangana Town — A Sociological Analysis

Sreeramulu Gosikonda*

Abstract

The primary aim of a school is the socialisation of students. According to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, every child has the right to full-time free elementary education in a formal school. The Act further entails that 25 per cent of the seats in all private schools must be allotted to students belonging to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) families. In India, parents' preference for English medium private schools shows their growing aspirations towards the education of their children. One State witnessing such a trend is Telangana. The State is witnessing a mushrooming of private schools. Moreover, the enrolment rate in English medium schools in the State is increasing, while it is decreasing in Telugu and Urdu medium schools. With this backdrop, an empirical study was conducted in Huzurabad town of Karimnagar district in Telangana. The study aims to understand the pattern of students' enrolment in both government and private schools. This paper aims to find out the impact that social category and gender have on the schooling of children.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in the economic development and empowerment of both an individual, as well as, society. In India, education is placed under the concurrent list. However, due to neoliberal policies of both the Central and State governments, school education in

the country is greatly influenced by privatisation. As a result, India has been witnessing a surge in the number of low-fee private schools, which aim to provide quality education to poor students at lower costs. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 provides a choice to parents to educate their

* Assistant Professor, Loyola Academy Degree and PG College, Secunderabad, Telangana.

wards in private schools. According to the RTE Act, 25 per cent of the seats in all private schools must be allotted to students belonging to poor or Economically Weaker Section (EWS) families, where the government pays for their education.

The main parameters that parents, generally, consider while selecting a school for their wards are its infrastructural facilities, reputation, performance of its students in board exams, profile of the teachers and management, fee structure, distance from residence, transport facility, discipline among students, teaching communication skills in English, etc.

FACTORS CAUSING INCREASE IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The significant contribution of private schools in achieving 'education for all' in India cannot be ignored. Sunny (2011) argues that because of the Green Revolution wealthy farmers could now send their children to schools and colleges located in nearby towns and cities. The growth and popularity of private schools not only reflect the demand for imparting quality education to students but also the declining quality of education in government schools. Joshi (2008) points out that due to the lack of government schools providing quality education, parents prefer to enroll their children in private schools. Goyal and Pandey (2012) observe that poor quality of education in government

schools is the main reason for the rapid growth of private schools, which are perceived as providing both quality education and accountability.

RISING DEMAND FOR ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

Researchers argue that English in India is viewed as a tool for participating in the global economy. Neoliberal discourses and General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) have pushed for the privatisation of education. In India, according to Sarangapani and Winch (2010), English as a medium of instruction and social status are the main reasons behind the growth of private schools. Researches identify that the number of private schools in the country is increasing in response to the growing demand for English medium education from lower middle class and EWS families. Even State-run schools that have regional language as a medium of instruction have started English medium sections to meet the rising demand of parents. Gundemeda (2014a) observes that lack of transport and toilet facility adversely affect enrolment of girls in government schools. English is one of the significant factors, which influences the accessibility of IT education among students (Gundemeda, 2014b). He concludes that students, who completed education with Telugu as the medium of instruction, faced problems with English while pursuing higher education.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN SELECTING SCHOOLS

According to Hill, et al., (2011), most girls in Rajasthan were enrolled in government schools, while boys in private schools. Researches suggest that access to private schools is favoured to boys as they stay in the family due to patrilineal marriage practices in India. It is further observed that there is a pro-male gender bias in rural Low Fee Private (LFP) school enrolments. Chugh (2014) observes that parents' desire to educate their children is expressed in the expenditure incurred on their education against several odds. Harma (2009) argues that rise in the number of private schools leads to ghettoisation of government schools based on socio-economic status and gender.

STUDENT ENROLMENT PATTERNS IN TELANGANA SCHOOLS

Telangana is one of the States in the country that has been witnessing a mushrooming of private schools, particularly, English medium private schools. The official publications of the Government of Telangana, such as *Statistical Year Book 2015* and *Statistical Year Book 2016* reveal that in 2014–15, the number of government schools (including private aided) decreased by 515. On the other hand, the number of private unaided schools increased by 423. The trend continued in a few districts of the State, including Karimnagar, of which Huzurabad is a part.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Karimnagar district, one of the developed districts in Telangana, is witnessing a mushrooming of private schools and a decline in government schools. So far, most studies carried out in this area are on the functioning, status and problems faced by government and private schools. Some of these studies focus only on urban areas and cities in the country. Hence, the paper tries to address this gap in the existing literature on the functioning of both government and private schools with reference to enrolment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper tries to analyse the enrolment of students coming from diverse backgrounds in different types of school — government and private in Telangana. It also tries to evaluate how gender and social background of the students impact their schooling.

METHODOLOGY

On the basis of agricultural and educational development, the researcher identified a small town named Huzurabad in Karimnagar district and conducted an empirical study on parents' choice of schools. Based on the medium of instruction, the researcher identified a total of 16 government and 25 private schools in Huzurabad. The enrolment details of the students for the academic year 2014–15 was collected from all schools located in the town. Questionnaire

method was used for gathering the data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) technique was used for analysing the details collected.

FINDINGS

According to Census 2011, the total population of Huzurabad town is 37,665 with 51 per cent male and 49 per cent female. The literacy rate in the town is 75.71 per cent (male 83.99 and female 67.16 per cent). The enrolment patterns of the students for the academic year 2014–15 in both government and private schools with reference to gender, social category (caste) and medium of instruction are as follows.

Enrolment patterns in all schools

The study finds that around 85 per cent of the students in Huzurabad town are enrolled in private schools, whereas, only 15 per cent study in government schools. It indicates that private schools have a majority of enrolment, which reflects parents' preference for private school education for their wards.

Table 1 shows that around 53 per cent of the enrolled students are boys and 47 per cent girls. The data reveal that there is a difference in the enrolment of boys and girls. The data further reveal that girls' enrolment is more in government schools, whereas, boys are mostly admitted in private ones.

Table 1: Gender-wise enrolment in schools

Schools	Gender		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Government	666	847	1,513
	44.1%	55.9%	100%
Private	4,628	3,795	8,423
	54.9%	45.1%	100%
Total	5,294	4,642	9,936
	53.3%	46.7%	100%

Table 2: Medium-wise enrolment in schools

Management	Medium			Total
	Telugu	Urdu	English	
Government	1,068	122	323	1,513
	70.5%	8.0%	21.3%	100%
Private	1,067	0	7,356	8,423
	12.6%	0%	87.3%	100%
Total	2,135	122	7,679	9,936
	21.4%	1.2%	77.2%	100%

Table 2 shows that around 77 per cent of the enrolled students study in English medium schools, whereas, only 21.4 per cent study in Telugu medium schools. Only around 1 per cent of the students are enrolled in Urdu medium schools. The data reveal that English medium school education is increasing compared with Telugu and Urdu mediums.

Regarding government schools, the data suggest that most students are enrolled in Telugu medium schools, followed by English medium. Around 8 per cent of the students are enrolled in Urdu medium

schools. However, in private setups, 87.3 per cent children have been enrolled in English medium schools, whereas, the remaining 12.6 per cent study in Telugu medium schools. It needs to be noted here that no private school provides education in Urdu medium. The data indicate that private schools have more students studying in the English medium, whereas, government schools have more students in the Telugu medium.

Table 3 shows that majority of the students (65 per cent) enrolled in all schools of Huzurabad town belong to the BC category. Students belonging to the BC category are also more in government and private schools. The data further reveal that the enrolment of BC students in both government and private schools is followed by those belonging to the general category.

Table 4 shows that among the enrolled children in all government

Table 3: Social category-wise enrolment in schools

Management	Social category				Total
	General	Backward Class (BC)	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	
Government	85	902	492	34	1,513
	5.6%	59.6%	32.5%	2.2%	100%
Private	1,724	5,560	1021	118	8,423
	20.4%	66.1%	12.1%	1.4%	100%
Total	1,809	6,462	1,513	152	9,936
	18.2%	65.0%	15.2%	1.5%	100%

Table 4: Gender-wise enrolment in schools as per social category

Management	Government		Private		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
General	33	52	892	832	1,809
	1.8%	2.8%	49.3%	46.1%	100%
BC	402	500	3,085	2,475	6,462
	6.2%	7.7%	47.7%	38.3%	100%
SC	218	274	580	441	1,513
	14.4%	18.1%	38.3%	29.1%	100%
ST	13	21	71	47	152
	8.5%	13.8%	46.7%	30.9%	100%
Total	666	847	4,628	3,795	9,936
	6.7%	8.5%	46.5%	38.1%	100%

schools, girls are more than boys irrespective of the social category. It indicates that parents are choosing government schools for educating their daughters across social categories.

Within private schools, the enrolment of boys is more than girls across social categories. The data indicate that parents discriminate against their daughters by sending them to government schools. It is further found that most parents prefer private schools for their wards irrespective of the social category they come from.

Enrolment patterns in all government schools

At the time the field survey was conducted, 11 Telugu, three Urdu and two English medium schools were under the management of the government. The study finds that the enrolment of girls (55 per cent) is more than boys (45 per cent) in government

Telugu medium schools. In government Urdu medium schools, significant gap is observed in the enrolment of girls (81 per cent) and boys (19 per cent). In government English medium schools, the enrolment of boys and girls is almost equal. It indicates that gender discrimination exists in the enrolment of students in government Telugu and Urdu medium schools.

Table 5 shows that the enrolment of girls is more than boys in government Telugu medium schools irrespective of the social category. Government Urdu medium schools have students from BC and general categories, and the number of girls is more than boys. Government English medium schools have more girls than boys across all social categories, except BCs. The data indicate that more number of girls is enrolled in government Telugu and Urdu medium schools against boys, while the number of boys is slightly more in government English medium schools than girls. In other

Table 5: Social category and gender-wise enrolment in government schools

Social Category	Telugu medium		Urdu medium		English medium		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
General	23	36	1	4	9	12	85
	27%	42%	1%	4.7%	10.5%	14.1%	100%
BC	269	313	22	95	111	92	902
	29.8%	34.7%	2.43%	10.5%	12.3%	10.1%	100%
SC	177	222	0	0	41	52	492
	35.9%	45.1%	0	0	8.3%	10.5%	100%
ST	10	18	0	0	3	3	34
	29.4%	52.9%	0	0	8.8%	8.8%	100%
Total	479	589	23	99	164	159	1,513
	31.6%	38.9%	1.5%	6.5%	10.8%	10.5%	100%

words, in government schools, girls' enrolment is more than boys in all mediums across social categories.

Enrolment Patterns in all private schools

At the time the survey was conducted, seven Telugu and 18 English medium schools were functioning under private management. It was found that the enrolment of boys and girls was almost the same in private Telugu medium schools, whereas, more boys were enrolled in private English medium schools than girls. This indicates that in private schools, parents preferred English medium for sons.

Table 6 shows that private Telugu medium schools have more girls than boys among general and BC categories, whereas, more boys study in such schools in SC and ST categories. However, private English medium schools have more enrolment of boys than girls irrespective of the

social category. The data indicate that the number of boys is more in private English medium schools across social categories.

CONCLUSION

The study finds that gender discrimination exists among all communities as regards to the selection of schools. Girls are being sent to government schools, whereas, boys to private schools. Private schools have more students in English medium, while government schools have more in Telugu medium. Government schools have more students from BC and SC categories. On the contrary, private schools have more students from BC and general categories.

The study also observes that 11 Telugu, three Urdu and two English medium schools are functioning in the area under government management, whereas, seven Telugu and 18 English medium

Table 6: Social category and gender-wise enrolment in all private schools

Social Category	Telugu Medium		English Medium		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
General	65	73	827	759	1,724
	3.7%	4.2%	47.9%	44.0%	100%
BC	387	408	2,698	2,067	5,560
	6.9%	7.3%	48.5%	37.1%	100%
SC	61	56	519	385	1021
	5.9%	5.4%	50.8%	37.7%	100%
ST	13	4	58	43	118
	11.0%	3.3%	49.1%	36.4%	100%
Total	526	541	4,102	3,254	8,423
	6.2%	6.4%	48.6%	38.6%	100%

schools are functioning under private management. Enrolment of boys is more in private English medium schools across social categories.

The study finds that private schools are attracting more students than government schools. According to Bourdieu (1986), 'cultural capital' of the family is crucial in the selection of a school. The enrolment of children from weaker sections of the society including girls, is more in government Telugu and Urdu medium schools. The proportion of enrolment of children belonging to the general

category is more in private English medium schools. The study concludes that English medium under private management is dominating in Huzurabad.

Appropriate steps need to be taken to increase enrolment in government Telugu and Urdu medium schools and also private Telugu medium schools. The government should also conduct awareness drives to eradicate gender bias in school selection. A 'common school' system may also be thought of, where students from different backgrounds can learn together.

REFERENCES

- BOURDIEU, P. 1986. Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.). *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Greenwood. New York, USA.
- CENSUS OF INDIA. 2011. *District Census Handbook: Karimnagar Part XII-B*, pp. 44–45
- CHUGH, SUNITA. 2014. Schooling of Children Living in Slum Areas — An Analysis of Selected Households from Hyderabad and Ludhiana. *Indian Educational Review*. NCERT. New Delhi, India. Vol. 52. No. 2, pp. 31–52.
- GOYAL, SANGEETA AND PRIYANKA PANDEY. 2012. How do Government and Private Schools Differ? *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. XLVII. No. 22, pp. 67–76.
- GUNDEMEDA, NAGARAJU. 2014a. Vulnerability and Education — A Study of the Patterns of Discrimination in Government Schools in Andhra Pradesh. *Social Action*. Vol. 64, pp. 48–62.
- . 2014. Education and Hegemony — *Social Construction of Knowledge in India in the Era of Globalisation*. Cambridge Scholars. India.
- HARMA, JOANNA. 2009. Can Choice Promote Education for All? Evidence from Growth in Private Primary Schooling in India. *Compare*. Vol. 39. No.2, pp. 151–165.
- HILL, ELIZABETH, ET AL. 2011. Expanding the School Market in India — Parental Choice and Reproduction of Social Inequality. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 46. No. 35, pp. 98–105.
- JOSHI, SHRUTI. 2008. *Private Budget Schools in Hyderabad City, India*. Gray Matters Capital. Atlanta, USA.
- NAMBISSAN, GEETHA. 13 October 2012. Private Schools for the Poor: Business as Usual? *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. XLVII. No.41, pp. 51–58.

- SARANGAPANI, PADMA. M AND CHRISTOPHER WINCH. 2010. In Tooley, Dixon and Gomathi on Private Education in Hyderabad — A Reply. *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 499–515.
- SPRING, JOEL. 2008. Research on Globalization and Education. *Review of Educational Research*. Vol. 78. No. 2, pp. 330–363.
- SUNNY, YEMUNA. 2011. The Teacher, Society and Modern School. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. XLVI. No. 17, pp. 26–31

© NCERT
not to be republished