



GENDER DISPARITY IN SCHOOLING AND INTRA-HOUSEHOLD ALLOCATION OF EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE AMONG CHILDREN: A STUDY IN HAILAKANDI DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the gender disparity in schooling of children has been investigated. The two most important aspects of the said disparity is observed in school enrolment and in case of allocation of educational expenditure among the children. The study has been conducted in the Hailakandi district of Assam with the objectives of investigating the extent of gender disparity in school enrolment and understanding the familial allocation of educational expenditure. The study is based on primary sources of data and the Spohrer's disparity index has been redefined and used in this study to measure the extent of gender disparity. It has been found from the study that, in Hailakandi district gender disparity is prevalent in school enrolment of children with evidences of gender discrimination in allocation of educational expenditure where girls are in the disadvantageous position.

Keywords: Gender disparity, Intra household educational expenditure, Spohrer's disparity index

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender disparity in different aspects of human life is recognized as a vital issue which affects the overall social environment. In measuring the socio economic growth of a country like India, role of education is most vital as it is the base or foundation to form the human capital in the country. The significance of education in boosting economic growth and development has been accepted and recognized across the globe. Whenever investment in education is done, it leads to the improvement of human capital like efficiency, skill, knowledge, workability etc to give birth of human resource which is at the centre of overall development of the country. In fact it can be said that, education is not only beneficial to the individual level rather it is widely beneficial at the societal level to by providing positive spillover effects. During the present time, education is considered as a fundamental right of children across the world and especially in India with the implementation of Right to Education Act. This is because, education is the key instrument to exercise all kinds of rights and benefits derived from the day to day life. The Human Development Report, 1999 states that, gender disparities in schooling outcomes are very common in India which generally denies the education of girls. Now the question arises whether this gender biasness against the education of girls leads to the biasness in educational

expenditure for them at the familial level. One of the basic aspect on which the educational decision for children in the family is determined is expenditure on education. Considering the educational expenditure at the level of society as a whole, the most vital two sources from which such expenditure are derived are private expenditure bear by parents and government expenditure carried out by state and central government (Haq & Shahid, 2008). Parents of the children who are living in rural area generally do not allocate educational expenditure equally for their son and daughters. This certainly implies a bias against girls in connection with educational expenditure at the household level. As a result, the girls are discouraged both directly and indirectly to pursue education (Zheng, 2015). There is a difference in the boy girl ratio in school enrolment. The poor families could not prepare their children well equipped with all necessary ideas to enroll them in school. In this context, educational attainment of poor households has been found to be low. Moreover in such type of households' gender gap in education has been found to be very high (Autor et. Al, 2015). The average familial income has been found to be US \$ 1645 approximately. 91.9% girls were found enrolled in schools against 93.6% boys. There has been found significant gender disparity in school enrolment. Educational attainment of girls has been found to be positively associated with household assets. It implies that, with the increases in the assets of households, probability of girl's enrolment rises (Deng, Suo and others, 2012). There is evidence of gender bias in some states using the household level data. In many states, the direction of observed gender bias is opposite in the two decision viz, the decision to enroll in a school and the decision to how much to spend on education of children. This clearly provides additional insights into gender bias in intra household educational expenditure (Azam & Kingdon, 2011). According to intra household allocation theory, parents might consider their children's' education both as consumption and an investment good. Thus, the differences in educational attainment of boys and girls in the family might be due to differences in parents' preference for having educated sons and daughters (Mehtap, 2002). Many households are not willing to invest much on girl's education, but also be eager to see a quick return of the money they have already spent on the daughters before marriage. These beliefs guide some of the parents to invest less on daughters and bound them to do some jobs with good temporary earnings without long term carrier prospects (D.Li and Tsang, 2002). Differential treatment by parents depends upon two components i.e, share of educational expenditure with respect to food, health and education expenditure changes with more girls in the households and how food health expenditure with respect to total expenditure changes with more girls in the households (Kingdon, 2005). However there is significant difference of education expenditure between boys and girls for extra tuition costs. The belief of the parents regarding better education in private schools, boys are enrolled in more numbers than girls in private schools. The reason behind gender bias in education expenditure may be the deliberate spending on tuition fees by parents for boys (Himaz, 2009). If parents have different preferences for their sons and daughters level of schooling, then it will cause a gender specific demand function for schooling. The returns to schooling for women in Turkey might be lower, as they face discrimination in the private sector (Goksel, 2009). Since a long time, Indian families do not spend much on the education because it has been provided by the state and is almost free to everyone, or it has been highly subsidized (Tilak, 2021). Further, Indian households suffer the most as a result of the patriarchal culture. Due to gender differences in parents' education spending, women's education lags behind that of men across different states in rural and urban India (Pandey and Talwar, 2022). Women face discrimination in school, at home and workplace. It influences the sex ratio in India as well as the health, educational and economic status of women. The gender disparities in educational attainment are influenced by socioeconomic and cultural factors. In order to close the gender gap in education, economic development is a key factor (Emran et al., 2020). Presence of pro-male biases has been found in both the enrolment decision as well as the decision of how much to spend conditional on enrolment for children in the middle and secondary school ages (Aslam & Kingdon, 2008). Significantly strong evidence of gender difference has been found in favouring the male child at both the lower and upper stages of education (Mohanty, 2006). The budget share of education of child is likely to rise with the addition of male child than female child. In Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, casual labour and business class households have a higher likelihood of not enrolling due to the potential child labour earnings (Chaudhuri & Roy, 2006). It is found that, society gave more weightage to men for exercising power, will, position and resources. Advocates of social feminism argued that, unequal treatment of son and daughters still prevalent in the society. However, the cultural and religious involvement of women must be given importance to reduce gender difference in educational aspects (Carinci, S. & P. L. Wong, 2009).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To investigate the extent of gender disparity in schooling of children in terms of school enrolment.
- ii) To investigate the pattern of intra household allocation of educational expenditure among the school going children.

III. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary data collected from household survey in the Hailakandi district of Assam. For the purpose of data collection, a well-defined and pre-tested household survey schedule was prepared and data has been collected using the direct personal investigation method of data collection. Household has been selected as the study unit on the basis of purposive random sampling method where the target group of school going children from lower primary to higher secondary level of education in the age group of 5 to 18 years has been found. A sample of total 383 numbers of households has been selected comprising of 283 numbers of households from rural area and 100 numbers of households from three town area of Hailakandi district. Parents and school going children in the study area has been interviewed from the rural households of the revenue circles namely, Algapur, Hailakandi, Lala and Katlicherra circles and the urban households of Algapur, Hailakandi and Lala circles.

Methodology of the study is descriptive in nature but for the purpose of investigating the gender disparity in schooling of children in the study area, Sopher's disparity index has been used. This index is defined in the study as a sum total of logarithm values of the ratios of enrolment and non-enrolment of boys and girls (Chaubey & Chaubey, 1998) and redefined for the present study is given below-

$$Ds = \log\left(\frac{E2}{E1}\right) + \log\left(\frac{e1}{e2}\right)$$

Where, Ds = Sopher's Disparity Index

$$E1 = B1/F1$$

Where, $E1$ = Ratio of School enrolled Children in section S1 (here, Female Section)

$B1$ = Total number of Female child enrolled in schools

$F1$ = Total number of female children

$$E2 = B2/F2$$

$E2$ = Ratio of School enrolled Children in section S2 (here, male Section)

$B2$ = Total number of male child enrolled in schools

$F2$ = Total number of male children

$$ei = (1 - Ei) = \text{Number of children enrolled in section Si}$$

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender Disparity in School Enrolment: Analysis of Sopher's Disparity index

In order to investigate the gender disparity in schooling, enrolment of students in five different categories has been considered. These categories are- LP to HS level in overall context and specific Classes such as-LP, UP, Secondary and HS. The results of the Sopher's disparity is presented in the table 1.

Table-1: Result of Sopher's Index of Disparity

School Classes	Ds
L.P to H.S level (Overall)	0.30 (30.22)
L.P	1.74 (173.99)
U.P	2.02 (202.22)
Secondary	0.43 (42.74)
H.S	0.36 (36.32)

Source: Author's own calculation based on primary data, Figure in the parentheses indicate percentage to total

L.P- Lower Primary, U.P- Lower Primary, H.S- Higher Secondary

From the table 1, it is clearly seen that, the value of Ds indicates the extent of disparity in schooling of children in the Hailakandi district. Highest disparity has been found in the gender based enrolment of boys and girls in the Upper Primary classes as evident by Ds value of 2.02. It implies that, the extent of disparity is much wider in the enrolment of children in Upper Primary section which is further segmented in to classes VI, VIII and VIII. Again, the lowest disparity has been found in the enrolment of boys and girls in the Higher Secondary classes comprising of classes XI and XII. The extent of disparity in the LP level comprises of classes I, II, III, IV and V is also noteworthy as 1.74. It implies that, children are facing discrimination in school enrolment in the very beginning of their educational journey. It is noted that, the level of disparity has been found to decline from the UP level onwards which implies that, once the students are enrolled in the school, parents are not able to discriminate to enroll them on the basis of gender. However, it is seen in the table that, the overall disparity in school enrolment from LP to HS level is much lowest in comparison to any of the level. This indicates that, the extent of gender disparity in school enrolment is not uniform across the different classes in the study area. Parents and other stake holders are not at all conscious to enrol their children in the school with gender non-discriminating attitude.

Pattern of Intra-household Allocation of Educational Expenditure among Children

Intra Household allocation of educational expenditure refers to the distribution of educational expenditure between son and daughters in the familial level.

Table- 2: Intra Household Allocation of Educational Expenditure

(Annual in Rupees)

Classes	No. of Children enrolled		Total Educational Expenditure		Average Per Capita Educational Expenditure	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
L.P	124	137	689040	727665	5556.77	5311.42
U.P	161	127	1598511	1033673	9928.64	8139.16
Secondary	126	104	1678466	1214264	13321.16	11675.62
H.S	93	75	1905419	1305341	20488.38	17404.55

Source: Field Survey

L.P- Lower Primary, U.P- Lower Primary, H.S- Higher Secondary

Table 2 deals with the allocation pattern of education expenditure within the family. It is seen from the table that, with the increase in the level of enrolment of boys and girls, total as well per capita education expenditure

also increases. In the lower primary section, a sum total of Rs. 689040 has been spent for boys by parents annually and a sum total of Rs. 727665 has been spent for girls annually. In terms of per capita educational expenditure, boys have received Rs. 5556.77 and girls have received Rs. 5311.42. There is a difference in the amount of money spent for education of both boys and girls. In the Upper primary section, a sum of Rs. 1598511 has been spent for boys annually and a sum of Rs. 1033673 has been spent for girls annually. If we compare the per capita educational expenditure for boys and girls, we see that, boys have received Rs. 9928.64 annually and girls have received Rs. 8139.16 annually. This clearly indicates the discrimination in allocation of educational expenditure for both the genders. In the secondary section, annual per capita educational expenditure has been found to be Rs. 13321.16 for boys and Rs. 11675.62 for girls. Moreover, in the higher secondary section, annual per capita educational expenditure has been found to be Rs. 20488.38 for boys and Rs. 17404.55 for girls. This once again clearly reveals discrimination in educational expenditure for both the genders within the family. It is to be noted that, the difference in the per capita educational expenditure has been increased with the higher level classes. It is seen that, difference between boys -girl's annual per capita educational expenditure is lowest in case of lower primary section and highest in case of higher secondary section. This indicates the fact that, more education expenditure is incurred by parents on higher level classes. It is found from the table that, girls are being discriminated in terms per capita education expenditure in all classes from primary to higher secondary level.

**Table- 3: Gender wise and Age group wise Share of Educational Expenditure
(Annual Educational Expenditure)**

Age Group (Gender Wise)	Children as a proportion of all Household Members (in %)	Share of Education Expenditure within each age Group (in %)
5-10 Year (Boys)	8.96	50.50
5-10 Year (Girls)	8.87	49.50
11-13 Year (Boys)	6.77	66.46
11-13 Year (Girls)	4.68	33.54
14-16 Year (Boys)	7.40	54.61
14-16 Year (Girls)	7.94	45.39
17-18 Year (Boys)	3.70	66.64
17-18 Year (Girls)	3.41	33.36

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 depicts the Status of Gender wise and Age group wise Share of education expenditure in the study area for the children of the age group of 5 to 18 years of age. It is seen discrimination is very less in share of education expenditure between boys and girls in the age group of 5 to 10 years of age. However, discrimination is found to be highest in share of education expenditure at the familial level between boys and girls in the age groups of 11 to 13 and 17 to 18 years of age. As depicted by the table, boys and girls students of the age group of 5 to 10 years as a proportion of total households' members are highest i.e. 8.96% and 8.87% and their shares of education expenditure are 50.50% and 49.50%. Regarding the age group 11 to 13 years, boys and girls as proportion of all households members are 6.77% and 4.68% respectively and their share of educational expenditures are 66.46% and 33.54% respectively. In the age group of 14 to 16 years it is found that, percentage of boys and girls are 7.40% and 7.94% but the share of educational expenditure for boy's is 54.61% and for girl's it is 45.39%. In the highest age group of 17 to 18 years though the proportion of boys and girls are approximately same but girls have been discriminated in allocation of 33.36% share against 66.64% share of educational expenditure for boys. Thus it is evident from the table that, the pattern of intra household allocation of educational expenditure is gender discriminatory with lowest discrimination in the lowest age group and highest discrimination in the highest age group of children.

V. CONCLUSION

In this study the evidence of gender disparity in school enrolment has been found throughout the schooling duration of children from lower primary level to higher secondary level of education. In investigating the

issue of gender disparity, the Sopher's disparity index revealed that, highest disparity has been found in the gender based enrolment of boys and girls in the Upper Primary classes and the lowest disparity has been found in the enrolment of boys and girls in the Higher Secondary classes comprising of classes XI and XII. The overall disparity in school enrolment from LP to HS level is much lowest in comparison to any of the level which implies that, the extent of gender disparity in school enrolment is not uniform across the different classes in the study area. In case of allocation of educational expenditure within the family, it is found that, with the increase in the level of enrolment of boys and girls, total as well per capita education expenditure also increases. Disparity in boys -girl's annual per capita educational expenditure is lowest in case of lower primary section and highest in case of higher secondary section. This indicates the fact that, more education expenditure is incurred by parents in higher classes. It is found from the table that, girls are being discriminated in terms per capita education expenditure in all classes from primary to higher secondary level. Hence it is suggested that, parents must change their attitude towards enrolment of children in school without any bias in allocation of educational expenditure. The gender disparity in education can be reduced when parents will treat both son and daughters as equal and provide them quality education with a gender neutral attitude.

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