Public-Private Schools and Universalization of Access to Secondary Education: Implications for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in India

Rashim Wadhwa & Shashiranjan Jha

ABSTRACT

Government of India under RMSA program has committed universal access to secondary education by 2017. However, this seems to be mere policy statement as secondary education in India is continued to be neglected policy area. There exist wide socio-economic differences in the level of participation at secondary level. The differential participation is likely to get intensified. There are two important reasons for that, a) public financing of secondary education in India is minimal (it received mere 16 percent of total plan expenditure on education) and b) the proliferation of private unaided schools. In this paper, we take up second reason in more detail. The proportion of private unaided schools at secondary level ranges between maximum of 88.4 in UP to minimum of 0 percent in West Bengal. The pattern of presence of private unaided schools presents the case of inequity and inequality as they have mostly proliferated in poor states. The issue is important since private cost of secondary education has been increasing while the public subsidy has been more or less stagnant. In this background paper examines the

a) *Growth pattern of Private unaided schools and rationale behind their proliferation*

b) *Pattern of distribution of financial support and their implications for the affordability*

c) *Household level determinants of participation in private unaided schools.*

This study utilizes selected educational statistics (MHRD), NSS 64th round Survey and household survey data from Punjab. This paper estimates private school choice using binary logistic regression.

Introduction

Educational landscape in India is in constant transition with increasing enrolment and completion rates at elementary level of schooling. The constrained capacity of secondary education to accommodate the *increasing number of elementary graduates*[1] has resulted in changing government priorities towards secondary education. The Government of India under the 11th plan set the *target of 75 percent gross enrolment ratio* by the year 2012. To achieve universal access to secondary education *Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) was introduced in 2009. RMSA is launched to attain universal access to secondary education by 2017 and universal retention by 2020 (Linden 2012). RMSA not only targets improved access and equity but also quality at secondary level.

Universalisation of access to secondary education is tough task given differences in participation of Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs and STs), girls, poor, and of Muslims. The situation is even more precarious at the secondary and higher secondary level. In India, level of participation varied vastly across states and it is worse in *BIMARU states* (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh). The central reasoning is that survival to the end of upper primary is very low and most of the population fail to acquire any secondary schooling[2] (Lewin 2011).

The differential participation at secondary level of education is likely to get intensified. There are two important reasons for that, a) public financing of secondary education in India is minimal (it received mere 16 percent of total plan expenditure on education) and b) the proliferation of private unaided schools. The proportion of private unaided schools at secondary level ranges between maximum of 88.4 in UP to minimum of 0 percent in West Bengal.

This paper seeks to understand whether private unaided schools could be the instrument of universalisation of secondary education through posing three questions. First, Growth pattern of Private unaided schools and rationale behind their proliferation. Second, Pattern of distribution of financial support and their implications for the affordability and third, household level determinants of participation in private unaided schools.

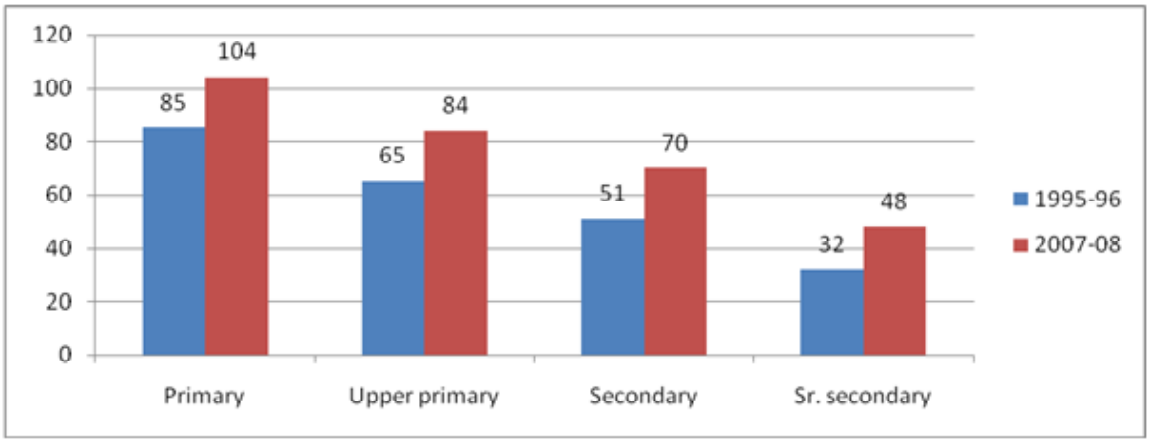
This paper draws on data from Selected Educational Statistics (MHRD), NSS 64th round Survey and household survey data from Punjab.

2.1. Secondary education participation trends

Selected Education Statistics (2007-08) shows that in 2007-08, more than 28.2 million students were enrolled at secondary level (grades IX and X) and 16.26 million in senior secondary level (grades XI and XII), thus a total of 44.46 million attending grades IX-XII (Shankar 2011). The overall GER in class IX-

XII is 45.81. At the lower secondary level the GER is 58.15 percent and at the higher secondary level it is 33.48 percent (Linden 2012).

Figure 1: Gross Attendance Rate (GAR): All India



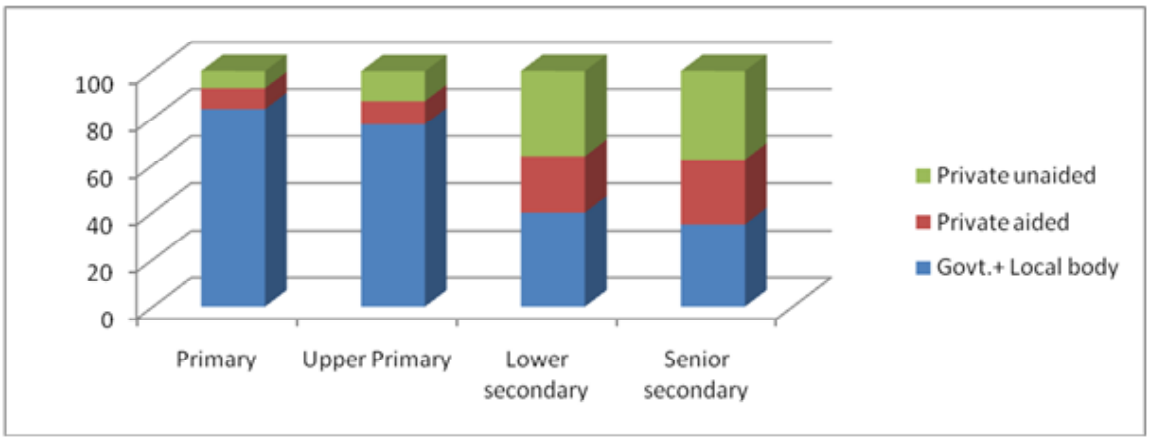
Source: Shankar 2011 (calculated from NSS 52nd (1995-96) and 64th round (2007-08)

The NSSO data gives the estimation of the number of children actually attending secondary education in the country. As per NSS 52nd round (1995-96), the estimated number of students attending lower secondary (grades IX and X) were around 17.7 million and higher secondary were 8.5 million and total students by combining both lower and higher secondary were around 26.2 million. An analysis of NSS 64th round data (2007-08) shows that around 50.6 million children were attending secondary grades (lower and higher secondary taken together) in 2007-08. There is an increase in participation by around 24.4 million children, as evident from a comparison with the secondary enrolments estimated using NSS 52nd and 64th round. Above figure 1 clearly indicates an improvement in participation in all levels of education from 1995-96 to 2007-08 in general and lesser participation in secondary education compared to primary and upper primary education in particular.

In order to meet the set target of universal access to secondary education by 2017, the provision of secondary schooling in India comprises three types of school categories: government and local body schools, private aided and private unaided schools. Government schools are run and managed by the government with no autonomy at the shool level. The category of private aided schools known as quasi government started out privately managed and funded but now receive government grants and thus losing most of their autonomy as a result (De et al. 2002). Private-aided schools are subject to state regulations regarding selection of teachers, admissions and fee levels (Sidhu 2010; Kingdon 2007).

Third category is of private unaided schools. Private unaided schools have complete autonomy in setting fee levels, hiring teachers and pedagogy and receive no government support (De et al. 2002; Siddhu 2010, Harma 2010). Majority of schools at the primary level are government schools, funded and managed entirely by the government, while by contrast the majority of schools at both lower and senior secondary levels are private unaided schools, fully funded and managed by private operators (Siddhu 2010).

Figure 2: Distribution of Schools in India by Type of School and Level of Education



Source: Statistics of school education 2010-11

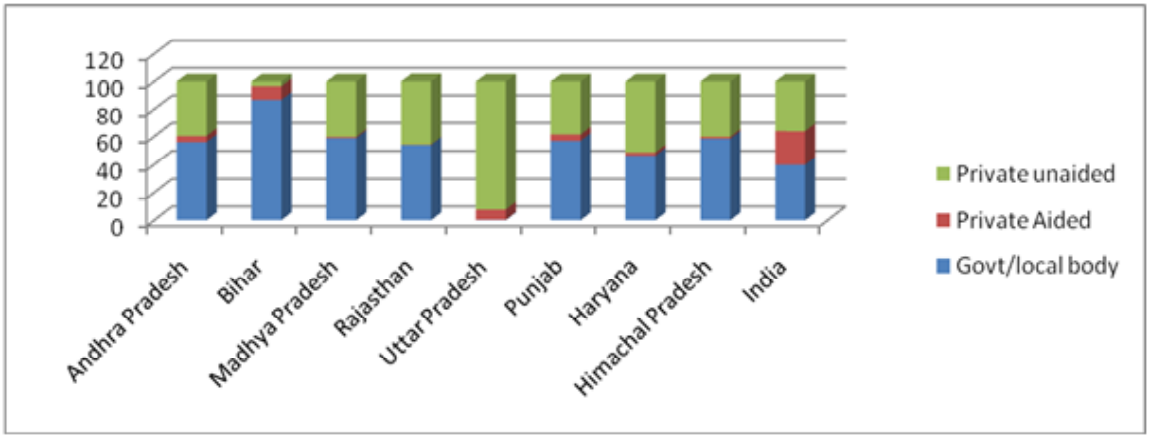
Figure 2 presents the share of different management type schools at each level of education in India. In the country as a whole, the share of government and local body schools as a percentage of total schools declines from 84 percent at the primary level to 77 percent at the upper primary level, 40 percent at the lower secondary level and 35 percent at the senior secondary level (Government of India 2012). Share of government and local body schools at the lower and senior secondary level in India is quite low whereas the share of private unaided schools at the lower and the senior secondary levels is 36 and 38 percent respectively (ibid.).

The existing facts highlight that the private un-aided schools are mushrooming at a faster rate in India now a days. The World Bank Report (2009) highlights that the growth in the number of secondary schools over the last two decades has occurred primarily among private unaided schools, which now represent almost one out of three of India's secondary schools. Jointly, private aided and unaided schools make up 60 percent of all secondary schools. Most secondary students in private unaided schools are boys, and disproportionately from urban

areas and wealthier segments of the population (ibid). The private sector reaches 25 per cent of the children in elementary education, and more than 50 per cent of those in secondary and higher education (India infrastructure report 2012). Moreover the growth and nature of these private un-aided schools is not homogeneous but is highly heterogeneous and varies significantly in scope and quality (De et al. 2002; Harma 2010), encompassing the expensive and elite to the cheapest low fee private schools.

Scenario is even more diverse at the state level in the mix of government, private aided, and private unaided schools for secondary education as highlighted in figure 3.

Figure 3: Distribution of Schools in Selected States and India by Type of School at Lower Secondary Level of Education

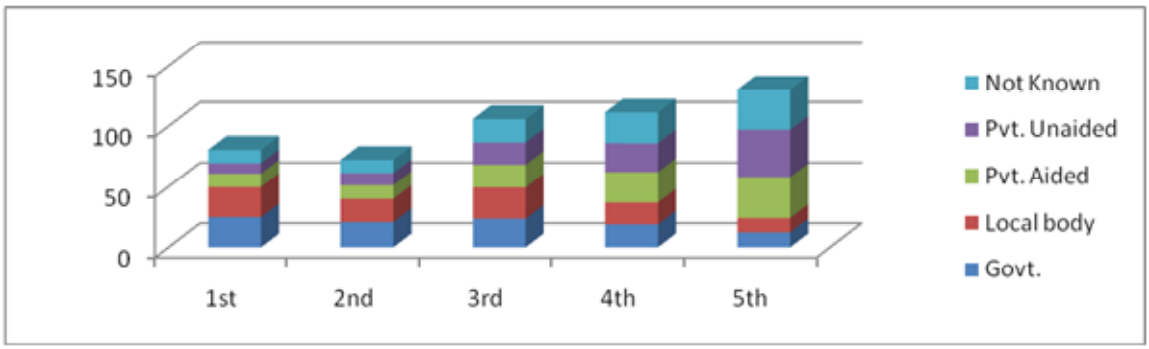


Source: Statistics of school education 2010-11

The proportion of private unaided schools at lower secondary level ranges between maximum of 92.4 percent in UP to minimum of 0 percent in West Bengal. After U.P. states like Haryana (51.4), Himachal Pradesh (40.3), Punjab (38.6), Rajasthan (45.9), shows significant presence of private unaided schools.

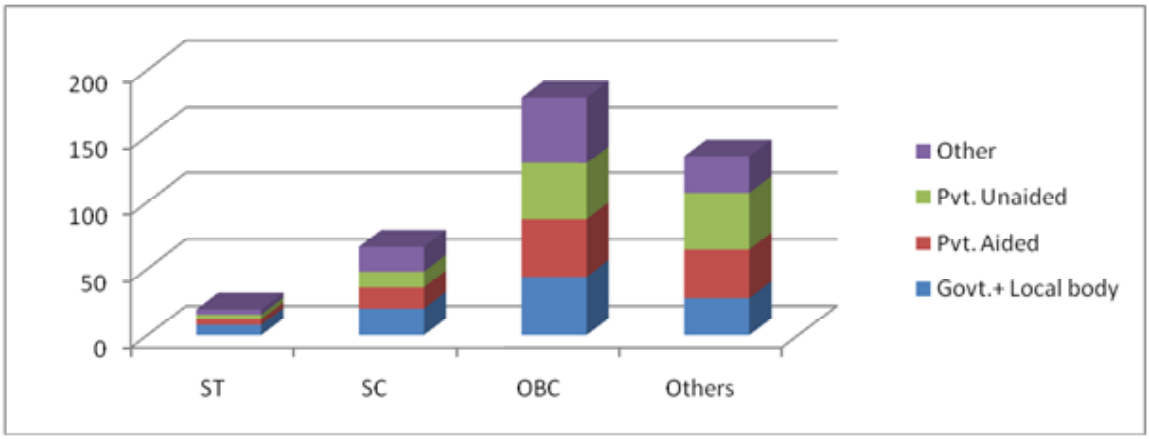
It is observed from figure 4 that the higher proportion of children belonging to bottom sixty percent are attending government and local body schools. In bottom twenty percent 50 percent of the children are attending these schools. In the fourth quitile almost fifty percent of the children are attending private aided and unaided schools. Whereas more than seventy percent of the children from top twenty percent are attending private aided and unaided schools. These private schools are generally run on the basis of full cost recovery mechanism and as a result majority of the children from higher income group have access to these schools.

Figure 4: Participation at Lower Secondary Level: Economic Group and Management of School



Source: Author's calculation from NSS 64th round data

Figure 5: Enrolment in Lower Secondary: Social Category and Management of Schools



Source: Authors calculation from NSS 64th round data

Figure 5 reveals that private schools have lower proportion of students from ST and SC backgrounds at lower secondary level of education. The share is especially low in private unaided schools. The share of ST background students is 7.9 percent in government/ local body schools, 3.5 percent in unaided schools and 4.3 percent in aided schools. The argument for their low presence in private unaided schools is that majority of these students are from lower income group and affordability of fees associated with these private unaided schools is difficult for them. This scenario of participation of students across different categories of students is having implication from the equity dimension (Linden 2012).

The gender gap is also significant at lower secondary level. The difference between boys and girls in terms of enrolment is 15 per cent in lower secondary (42.5 per cent for girls as against 57.5 percent for boys as highlighted in Shankar (2011). These gaps are also replicated at the state level, though there are a few states that have better participation rates for girls at the lower secondary level (Kerala, Mizoram, Goa, Pondicherry, Karnataka, Delhi and it should be noted that these are generally states with high overall rates) (Linden 2012).

The above scenario of secondary education in India highlights that access to secondary education is highly inequitable, across income groups, gender, social groups, geography and states. Persons belonging to the scheduled caste, females, from low income group and rural area are more disadvantaged compared to their counterparts and their population is more dominated in government schools. Already the transition from elementary to lower secondary education is very low for children from schedule caste families, girls and poor income group.

The existing facts highlight that secondary attendance of the general population is 80 percent higher than that for STs, SCs and Muslims (World Bank Report 2009). The acute portion which successfully make this transition, it is difficult for them to continue due to low provision of government schools at this level and high cost of secondary education. Majority of the population in private schools are from high income group which can easily afford the increasing cost of secondary education. According to World Bank Report (2009), wealthier children are more than twice as likely to be enrolled in secondary education as poor children.

2.2. Rationale Behind the Proliferation of Private Unaided Schools

Given the limited public resources and rising demand for secondary education, the private sector has stepped in order to fill the void. During the last two decades the pace of growth of education in general and secondary education in particular have largely influenced by the private sector. Comparison of NSS 52nd and 64th round data highlights that the proportion of students in private schools has now crossed 50% at the primary, middle, secondary and higher secondary levels in urban areas which is a significant rise since 1995-96 (Times of India 2010). The picture is diverse across states regarding the growth of private unaided schools. In UP, approximately 60 percent of all secondary schools are private unaided (Sidhu 2010). The rationale behind the proliferation of private unaided schools as highlighted in different literatures are:

(i) There is ample public provision of primary education in India[3], however this provision significantly drops off after the primary level, and reduces sharply at the secondary level[4] (Mohanty and Ziadi 2012; De and Endow 2008). Only 1.2% of the GDP is spent on secondary education. In order

to fill the gap of demand and supply at secondary level, growth of private schools is taking place at larger pace.

(ii) Another pertinent rationale for proliferation of private schools is the quality education which has been highlighted in the school choice literature.

(iii) Private school attendance can improve academic achievement and may lead to higher educational attainment

(iv) Attending private schools provides significant economic advantages in terms of higher wages and higher probabilities of getting employment and thus an instrument to main class distinction (Ball, 1993; Ball Bowe et al., 1996; Ball, 1997; Whitty and Edwards, 1998)

With the proliferation of private schools at the lower secondary level, the burden on household has increased considerably. Households in India are spending substantial amount on providing lower secondary education to their children. The growth in expenditure on education is far in excess of the growth of average income. While annual household income in rural areas grew by 19% between 1995-96 and 2007-08, expenditure on education grew by 54%. In urban areas, while income grew by 27%, expenditure on education grew by 72%. Families now pay an average of Rs 1,413 annually per child in primary school, Rs. 2,088 in middle school, Rs. 4,351 in secondary school and Rs.7, 360 for higher education.

The variation in rural and urban areas is quite big. Families in urban areas spend more than twice what those in rural areas spend on primary, middle and secondary education. It is observed that households in the rural area on an average are spending 2427 and in Urban areas 6086 rupees for lower secondary education. In rural areas expenditure on fee (tuition, exam and other fee) constitutes 28 percent of total average annual expenditure on lower secondary and 42 percent in urban areas. It appears to be expected for urban areas because majority of the children are attending private aided and unaided schools. The analysis of two rounds of NSS data reveals substantial increase in household expenditure on lower secondary education.

Table 1: Average Annual Household Expenditure on Lower Secondary

Quintile	1995-96 (52nd Round)	2007-08 (64th Round)	Growth rate
Q1	693	1691	1.44012
Q2	858	1934	1.25408
Q3	1000	2361	1.36100
Q4	1278	3326	1.60250
Q5	1950	6866	2.52103

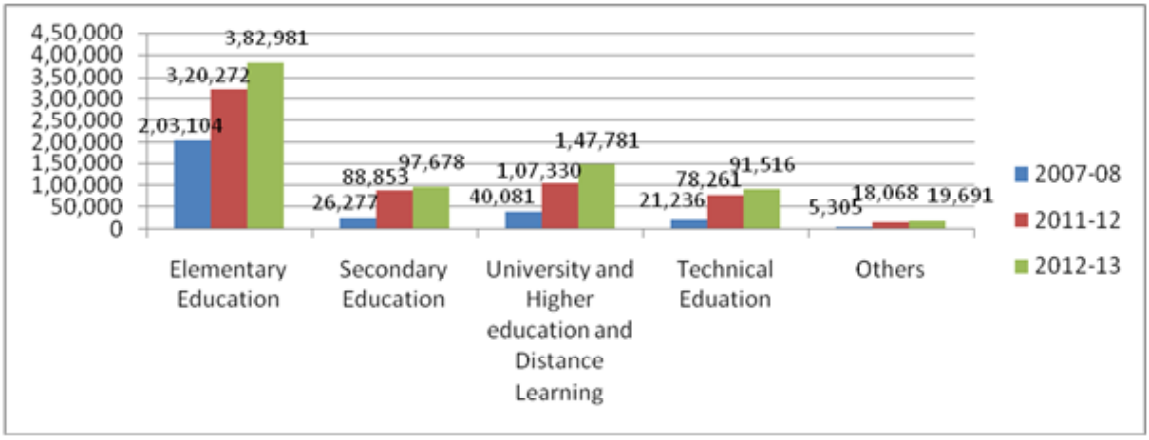
Source: Estimates based on NSS 52nd and 64th round data

It is observed from the table that even in the poorest quintile increase is considerable. There could be multiple reasons for such increase in the household expenditure on lower secondary education. First, Per capita income has increased; second, growth of lower secondary schools has largely taken place in the private sector; third, children completing elementary education have increased. The increase in the household expenditure on lower secondary education has greater impact on poor and reflects inequality in the system.

Attending lower secondary requires household to bear considerable expenditure. On an average additional one thousand rupees would be required to attend lower secondary education[5]. Given the pattern of expansion of lower secondary schools, dominated by private aided and unaided schools, it will be difficult for the poor households to meet additional expenditure required. As ability to access private schooling is conditional on ability to pay which is having serious implications on equitable access to education.

In recent times, budgetary allocation and expenditure by the central government has increased significantly between 2007–08 and 2011–12 *(Mukherjee and Sikdar 2012)*. In case of elementary education, budgetary allocation has doubled and has risen by more than three times for secondary and higher education *(Mukherjee and Sikdar 2012)*. Particularly in the case of secondary education, the proportion of expenditure was 8.9 per cent of the total expenditure in 2007–08, and it has increased to 14.5 percent of total expenditure in 2011–12. Below figure 6 highlights the central expenditure in education during the 11th plan.

Figure 6: Central expenditure in Education during the 11th Plan (Rupees in millions)



Source: GoI (2011)

Though in absolute terms, the public expenditure on education has increased but in relative terms the expenditure on education has never crossed 15% of the total public expenditure during the last six decades *(Mohanty and Ziadi 2012)*. The expenditure has traditionally been skewed towards secondary education *(Tilak 1999)*. Central government's declared desire to increase education spending is barely reflected in the budgetary figures with the amount spent remaining a shockingly low proportion of the total public spending *(Ghosh 2011)*.

3.0 Household level determinants

3.1 Methodology

This section of the paper aims at understanding the household level determinants of participation in private unaided schools. There are certain factors which assumes critical role in shaping such decision like economic status, parental education. These factors are important because it reduces the utility of non schooling and are found to be positively associated with the educational choices. Other factors like role of school quality in shaping such decision has also gained importance in researches concerned with educational choices. However, despite of growing literature on this issue there is still lack of knowledge with respect to decision making of household involved while choosing public or private school for their children in Indian context. This study is based on the household survey conducted by the researchers. The household survey helped in collecting some of the information which is readily not available.

3.2 Sampling Process

The results and findings presented in this section are based on household survey which has been conducted in the Punjab State. India human development survey 2010 based on 41,554 households across India revealed that private enrolment in schools is 52 percent in Punjab which is highest for children aged between 6-14 years *(Ghosh 2011)*. Privatization of schooling is taking place at a faster place not only at the primary level but also at the secondary level in Punjab. The present situation highlights that it is worthy to investigate household level determinants of participation in private unaided schools. Household surveys is not only helpful to measure the impact of policies and interventions affecting access to schooling, but can also provide valuable information on the relative importance parents attach to public and private schools. In connection with this, survey of 480 households was made in the Ferozepur district of Punjab, India. The sampling process adopted was random sampling technique. Data was collected through questionnaire prepared for the head of the household. The questionnaire was dived in two parts first part included close ended questions,

to gather quantitative information (socioeconomic background and educational background of child) and second part included open ended question to seek qualitative information (household decision making process).

3.3 Empirical Strategy

Estimation of school choice of parents should ideal take three forms government schools, private schools (recognized or unrecognized) and no schooling. Estimation of this type of outcome variable can be performed under maximum likelihood method. However, in sample households very few households were observed to have third option that is no schooling. As a result the outcome variable turned out is binary in nature. In line with the limitations of linear regression models, binary logistic regression model was used to understand the factors influencing school choices of the parents. Majority of literature in this and the related area have used binary logistic regression *(Kingdon 1994, 1996; Dreze and Kingdon, 2001; Alderman et al., 1996; Rose and Al-Sammarai, 2001).*

Logistic regression employs binomial probability theory in which there is only two values to predict: that probability (p) is 1 rather than 0, i.e. the event/ person belongs to one group rather than the other. Logistic regression forms a best fitting equation or function using the maximum likelihood method, which maximizes the probability of classifying the observed data into the appropriate category given the regression coefficients. The functional form of binary logit model for school choice can be stated as follows

$$\ln(Y') = \ln\left(\frac{\pi(x)}{1-\pi(x)}\right) = \alpha + \left(\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \ldots \beta_p X_p\right)$$

In Y is the log odd of the likelihood of private school choice, X_i represents the set of independent variables, and $\hat{a}_{jk}$ are the logistic regression coefficients measuring the effect of variable X_i on In *Y*. For the simplicity of interpretation odd ratios are reported in this paper. In the context of the present paper odds ratio measures the relative change in the probability of private school choice given the relative change in the explanatory variable (explanatory factor are measured against a reference category for a binary or categorical variable, and in case of continuous variable it measures unit change).

3.4 Results

Table 2: Result of Logistic Regression from Field Level Data

School choice, Private School=1	Lower secondary level	
	B	Exp(B)
Education of father	.650**	1.915
Gender (Male=1)	.802**	2.229
Caste (Reference group= General Caste)		
SC	-.048	.953
OBC	2.971*	1.517
School record in family (if any family member studied in private school=1)	2.326*	1.240
Household Size	-.330	.718
Income Group (Poor=1)	-1.190*	.304
Medium of Instruction (English=1)	4.721*	1.380
Child's position among sibling	-1.133*	.322
Dependency Ratio	-.235	.791
Occupation (Reference group= Daily wage earner)		
Self Employed	1.239*	3.451
Regular wage employment	2.276*	9.679
Reason for choosing particular school (Reference=other)		
Academic Popularity	.090	1.030
School Infrastructure	1.547*	4.697
Fee	-.705	.494
Distance to nearest government school	2.273*	9.706
Motivation behind educating children (Reference category=Other reasons)		
Future security of child	2.520*	12.432
Status attainment	1.307*	3.695
Constant	-2.388	.092
-2 Log likelihood	154690.359	
Nagelkerke R Square	.700	

*Significant at 1%, **Significant at 5%

We estimated binary logistic regression at lower secondary level of education. We observe that there are several factors at play in influencing parental decision to choose private school. Often cited factors include parental educational level. The coefficient of father's educational level in the model is positive and statistically significant. This implies that relatively higher level of father's education is associated with higher chances of choosing private school at lower secondary level. Higher level of parental education is important because it reduces the utility of non schooling option and also indicates parental ability to choose better schooling path for their children. The affluent and aware parents have started sending their wards to private schools in search of quality education in Punjab *(Ghuman 2008)*.

Gender of the child is also found to be statistically significant, implying being male increases the likelihood of enrolment in private school. The coefficient for gender provides support the hypothesis that gender differences has important role in explaining the investment in human capital *(Becker 1975)*. A recent study conducted by Singh (2012) in Punjab state has also confirmed the prevalence of gender discrimination particularly on the choice of schooling. Result of gender is consistent with previous studies *(Dreze and Kingdon 2001; Kingdon 1996; Harma 2010)*

The variable of caste is observed to play significant role in determining school choice in India. It is observed that being scheduled caste and OBC children reduces the likelihood enrolment in private school compared to that of children belonging to general category. Similar results were also obtained in other researches. This finding of the present study is consistent with the existing literature *(Kingdon 1996; Dreze and Kingdon 2001; Schagen and Shamsan 2007; Harma 2011)*. The available literature about the primary education scenario in rural Punjab, have highlighted that the government primary schools have been largely catering to the needs of SC, OBC and other weaker section students *(Ghuman 2008)*.

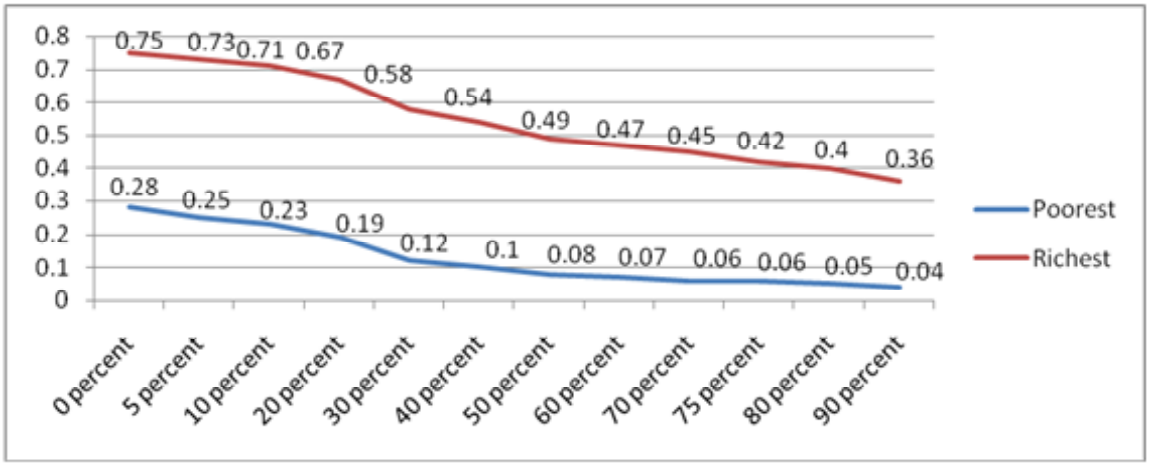
Household size was found to be negatively related to the private school enrolment. Increase in the size of the household reduces the likelihood of private school enrolment. Large household size would fewer resources available per child. For families with fewer resources private school enrolment would be financially constrained choice and these families would prefer to send their children to public school. Another interesting factor observed was private school record of the family. Private schooling of other family member also increases the likelihood.

English as medium of instruction has positive and significant effect and is associated with increased likelihood of private school enrolment. Nearly every family in Punjab's villages has relatives in the UK, Canada or Australia. Parents believe that only English medium schools can give their children the edge to

survive there *(The Economic Times 2010*). Similar results were also found in *(Nambissan, 2003; De et al., 2002).* The preference for English as medium of instruction is case of differential demand for education in general and of private schools in particular. Position of the child was found to be negatively associated with private school enrolment. This is consistent with the finding of *Harma (2011).*

The dependency ratio (measured as number of children age 15 or below to household size) is negatively associated with private school enrolment. Implying an increase in the dependency ratio is associated with reduced likelihood of private school enrolment. Occupation of father has positive influence on private school enrolment. Father being regular wage employ is associated with higher likelihood private school enrolment relative to that daily wage earning father.

Figure 7: Predicted Probability of Private School Attendance by Income Group



Source: Estimation Based on Field Level Data

It has been observed through logistic regression analysis that fee reduces the likelihood of private school enrolment. It suggests that private schools choice is subject of affordability. The above figure 7 highlights that how chances of private school attendance changes with increase in tuition fee level. It is observed from the figure that the chance of private school enrolment is very much responsive to level of tuition fee. It is observed that chance of enrolment in private school decreases with the increase in ratio of tuition fee household income. This is to be noted that even when the ratio is zero the chance of private school enrolment for poor is substantially low; 28 percent. *Psacharopoulos and Woodhull (1985)* highlight that even free education has opportunity costs for poor families, and that these families also tend to have more children, and

it is in the context of the families' entire circumstances that affordability of schooling should be assessed. Even in case of free education parents are required to spend on books, uniform and in some cases on transportation. These expenses should have effect on affordability of private schooling. Therefore, to say that low fee private schools are demand driven may not be appropriate, rather one could argue that low fee private schools are substitutes and largely are the outcome of differentiated demand.

Conclusion

An attempt in this paper has been made to understand the growth pattern of private unaided schools at the lower secondary level and factors determining private school attendance at the household level. It has been found that proliferation of private sector is taking place at a greater pace not only at the elementary level but also at the secondary level. As we move up on the educational ladder, burden on the households increased. Analysis of NSS data highlights that access to secondary education is highly inequitable, across income groups, gender, social groups, geography, and states. The evidences from NSSO data suggest that the access to secondary education is still a daunting task in-front of the policy makers. With the increase of elementary graduates and expansion of private schooling, access seems to be elusive at lower secondary level particularly for children belonging to socially disadvantaged section of the society. Analysis of the field level data offered significant insights largely in conformity with the previous researches. This paper also contributes to the growing body of literature by presenting evidence on school choice in Indian context. School choice literature has found that selection of private school depends on household's socioeconomic condition and recent works have emphasized on the importance of school quality.

The analysis in this paper leads to three principle conclusion, first, private schools are attended by children from relatively better off families; Second, children from poor families and lower caste background are less likely to be enrolled in private schools at lower secondary level; third, private school options should not be considered as an instrument of expanding access to school education.

There are certain policy implications of the analysis presented in this paper for RMSA. In the time when Government of India through its RMSA proposes to enhance access to secondary education with equity and equality, the pattern of expansion in some key states like Uttar Pradesh is likely to act as an obstacle. Despite the practical relevance of affordability in broadening access to secondary education, consequences of expansion in private unaided schools have surprisingly got little focus. Expansion of private unaided schools would simply imply of shift financial burden from state to households. The recent years have noted

significant increase in the household expenditure on secondary education (Table 1). The growth in household expenditure on secondary education is supportive of the view that private unaided schools are becoming more important than ever before.

One could argue that private unaided schools have offered ways to access quality secondary education in the context of dwindling state support and failing quality of government schools. Results presented in the study also confirm that even low income households are opting for private unaided schools. However, reasons of participation vary considerably across income levels and are believed to be influenced by derived demand. Therefore, one could argue that if reasons of participation vary then it may have far reaching consequences for the goal of Universalisation of secondary education.

The findings of this paper will be of interest to secondary education policy in India. It is highly likely that increasing cost of secondary education and private institutions in particular will put burden on low income households (Table 1). Given the unpredictability in the labour market and imperfections in the capital market there is greater need of state involvement in secondary education expansion. It is reasonable to suggest that if it is not the case then it may lead to a situation of constrained access to secondary education.

Therefore, an important area under RMSA would be enhancing the affordability of low income households. The structural shift in financing of secondary education has shifted the major burden of financing on students and family. Connection between family income and access to secondary education can explain only short term constraints. Problem of access to secondary education is largely affected by long term factors like prevailing inequalities in terms of family income and parental education. A combination of state subsidy through scholarship and access to private unaided schools would bring equality of opportunity. However, it would not be entirely fair since scholarships are given to student with merit and on certain conditions and access to secondary education is largely subject to affordability. Expanding secondary education through private unaided schools in some way would enhance equality in access, but in all likelihood it would not be as effective as government schools especially in the context of low income households. For, students belonging to poor income group in particular the financial needs are more important in accessing higher education. Therefore, to promote equity in access to secondary education a framework for target based subsidy and quality enhancement of government schools is needed under RMSA. Increasing reliance on private unaided schools would only meet part of demand for secondary education in segments like urban area, high and middle income group.

It is imperative to create ways to increase the public trust in government provision of secondary education by; first, schools in state sector should be equipped to meet the differentiated demand for schooling. For example, we observed that English as medium of instruction significantly improves the private school enrolment. Second, quality of government schools needs to be improved. This is important as we observe that a large fraction of children from poor families attend government schools. Improved quality of government schools can be avenues of levels playing field for poor.

Third, given the understanding the equity effect of private provision of secondary education is negative and system of accountability need to be established. This study has shown that private schools are largely attended by traditionally privileged groups of India. In other words being girl and belonging to lower caste reduces the likelihood of private school enrolment. Last but not the least, access to private school is a matter of affordability relative to the income of households. Therefore it is reasonable to argue that quality of school must be improved to help children from poor households to overcome their deprivation. This simply implies that children of low caste, first generation, landless, poor and girls at some point are likely to hit invisible barrier and which will prevent their upward mobility, if the standard of government schools are not improved. The idea of equality of opportunity will remain an elusive target if growth of low fee private schools are favoured and supported for promoting under privileged children's access to education.

Fourth, currently private unaided schools constitute 36% of all schools at lower secondary level and in the absence of clear cut framework fee, private unaided schools are free to charge fee higher than that of government schools which is understandable. However there is a need to set upper cap on the fee level that private unaided schools may charge so that it does not create inequality in quality of education received by different sections of the society. This off-course needs to be accompanied by improvement in the quality of government schools. Moreover, the quality of government and government aided schools needs to be improved to lower the disadvantages by ensuring meaningful learning opportunities.

Fifth, the target of Universalisation of secondary education under RMSA needs to be dealt differently for the different states as well as along with different social and income group.

Though private schooling may provide a short-term solution to the educational needs of children in India today but in the longer term it is unlikely to be the best means of providing education for all children in ways that respect equity principles (Dixon 2012). Private providers will not contribute significantly in to achieving Millennium Development Goals. With the expansion of private

schools, the beneficiaries are selective with respect to gender, location and income level. It is only the government that can help the poorest because private schools will not help those who cannot afford the fees.

Footnote

1. The proportion of children completing primary and upper primary education continues to rise, albeit slowly — from 73.7 per cent to 75 per cent between 2004–05 and 2010–11 (Linden 2012). The transition rate from grade 8 to grade 9 was 88% after adjusting the repeaters as per NSS 64th round data (Shankar 2010).
2. Overall in India as a whole, though initial enrolments rates in the first grade are generally high, about 30% of children fail to complete Grade V (primary), about 50% drop out before completing Grade VIII (upper primary), and 60% do not finish Grade X (lower secondary) (Lewin 2011).
3. The elementary education takes away half of the education budget i.e. 50% and a significant proportion is taken by higher education i.e. 33 % including university and technical education and only 14% is for secondary education.
4. India spends around 62% of its planned education budget on elementary education, secondary education receives only about 16% of this budget (2008/09, BE).
5. Calculated from NSS 64th round

References

1. Alderman, H., Orazem, P., & Paterno, E. (2001), School quality, school cost and the public/private school choices of low income households in Pakistan, *Journal of Human Resources*, *36*(2), 304–326.
2. Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). 2005. 'Universalization of secondary Education'. Report of the Central Advisory Board.
3. De, A. & Endow, T. (2008), Public expenditure on education in India: Recent trends and outcomes, RECOUP working Paper No.18, Retrieved from http:// recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/ publications/WP18-ADfin.pdf
4. De, A., Majumdar, M., Samson, M. & Noronha, C. (2002), Private schools and universal elementary education, in: R. Govinda (Ed.) India education report: a profile of basic education (Oxford and New Delhi, Oxford University Press), pp. 131–150.
5. Dreze, J. and Kingdon, G. G. (2001), School Participation in Rural India, Review of Development Economics, 5(1), pp. 1-33.
6. Duraisamy, P. (2002), Changes in Returns to education in India, 1983-94: by gender, age-cohort and location, *Economics of Education Review,* 21(6), pp. 609-622.
7. Härmä, J. (2010), *School choice for the poor? The limits of marketisation of primary education in rural India.* CREATE Research Monograph 23, University of Sussex, Brighton.

8. India infrastructure report 2012, Retrieved from http://www.idfc.com/pdf/report/IIR-2012.pdf
9. Kingdon, G., (2005), Private and public schooling: the Indian experience. Retrieved from http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/events/MPSPE/PEPG-0515geeta.pdf accessed 023.06.08
10. Kingdon, G., (2007), The progress of school education in India. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 23 (2), pp. 168–195.
11. Lewin, K. M. (2007), *Improving Access, Equity and Transitions in Education: Creating a Research Agenda* Pathways to Access Research Monograph No 1. Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity. Centre for International Education University of Sussex.
12. Linden, T. (2012), Secondary Education in India infrastructure report, Retrieved from http://www.idfc.com/pdf/report/IIR-2012.pdf
13. Mukhrjee, A.N. & Sikdar, S. (2012), Public expenditure on education in India by the Union government and roadmap for the future.
14. Nambissan, G. B. (2003), Educational deprivation and primary school provision: a study of providers in the city of Calcutta, IDS Working Paper 187 (Brighton, Institute of Development Studies).
15. NCERT (2008), *Report of the Seventh All India Educational Survey, 2002*. New Delhi.
16. NSSO (2010), *Education in India: 2007-08 – Participation and Expenditure*. 64th Round of Education Committee.
17. Sankar, D. (2011), Participation in India: An Analysis of the NSS 64th Round Data. Report No. 33, Discussion Paper Series, South Asia Human Development Unit, World Bank.
18. Schagen, I. & Shamsan, Y. (2007), *Analysis of Hyderabad data from 'Jolly Phonics' Initiative to Investigate its Impact on Pupil Progress in reading and Spelling - India*. Slough: NFER.
19. Singh, D.P. (2012), elementary education in Punjab: Profiling the Gender Gap, Learning Community: an international journal of educational and Social development, 2(3), pp. 395-403.
20. Srivastava, P. (2007), For Philanthropy or Profit? The Management and Operation of Low-fee Private Schools in India. In: P. Srivastava & G. Walford (Eds.) Private Schooling in Less Economically Developed Countries. Oxford: Symposium Books.
21. Statistics of school education 2010-11, retrieved from http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SES-School_201011_0.pdf
22. The economic times 2010, Retrieved from articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-10-16/news/27608104_1_english-medium-schools-english-medium-urdu-schools.
23. Tilak, J.B.G. (2001), *Building Human Capital: What Others Can Learn*, World Bank Institute Working Paper, World Bank, Washington, D.C.

24. World Bank (2003), *Secondary Education in India.* Discussion Paper Series, South Asia Human Development Sector, Washington, DC.

25. World Bank (2005*), Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young People: A New Agenda for Secondary Education***.** World Bank, Washington DC.

26. World Bank (2009), *Secondary Education in India: Universalizing Opportunity*. Human

27. Development Unit, South Asia Region, Delhi.

28. World Bank (2011). *More and Better Jobs in South Asia.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

29. World Bank (2011). *Public Private Partnerships in Secondary School Education in India.* Washington, DC: World Bank.