

Is Government Intervention in Education the Way Forward?

Tanusree Dash

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Kamala Nehru College, New Delhi, India

Email : dash.tanusree@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper analyses the justification of government intervention in improving the literacy rate and Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) of different states in India. According to 75th NSSO Report there is a visible variability in the achievement of the states in these education indicators. Delhi Model of education aims to bring government schools on par with private schools in quality, infrastructure and even in students strength. By increasing the public expenditure, it has improved the enrolment as well as attendance in schools. It has also led to a reduction in gender gap in education

Key Words: Government intervention, literacy rate, Gross Attendance Ratio, Market failure, National Education Policy (NEP).

1. INTRODUCTION:

According to Human capital theory, human capital acquired through education improves productivity the way physical capital enhances economic productivity. Education plays a vital role in economic development. The provision of school education is seen as an obligation of government. The economic argument is derived from the debate that education is a public good and the benefits of which are not only reaped by the students but by the society as whole.

1.1 Why government intervention is needed

It has been argued that in the real world, the private markets fail to produce the socially optimal quantities of goods and services. The public provisioning of education can be justified on three grounds.

- Market failure
- Equity
- Merit goods

1.1.1 Market failure

Various forms of market failures in education are:

- Capital market imperfections: The cost of education especially higher education, is beyond the means of many poor families. Though the budget constraints can be overcome by borrowing but banks would not accept the promise of future earnings as collateral and apart from this there are high risks involved in educational financing.
- Incomplete information: Households may not fully understand the benefit of education as it has a long gestation period. So this leads to underinvestment in education.
- Externalities: Some of the benefits from education accrue not only to its direct recipients but also to society at large. women's education for example has a myriad of social benefits like decrease in infant mortality reduction in fertility rate and improvement in health and nutritional status of children, so public provision will ensure that the economy reaps these benefits

1.1.2 Equity: Since people from lower economic strata can not afford the huge burden of education, the government therefore plays a role in promoting equality of opportunity. If education was provided under market conditions, only those who could afford to pay would be able to enrol.

1.1.3 Merit goods: Education is often considered a type of good with special merit that is not readily quantifiable and that might be under-supplied if left to the market.

Since public provisioning of education is justified on the above grounds now let us see the categories of government intervention

1.2 Types of government intervention in education

Government intervention can be mainly categorised into two different kinds that are aimed at improving education These are

- Interventions which focus on resources and infrastructure
- Interventions focusing on policy development and changing institutional cultures

1.2.1 Interventions which focus on resources and infrastructure:

Financial support

This include the government provision of stipends, scholarships, conditional cash transfers like Laadli Scheme to promote girls education and waiving or lower fees for students specially for girls.

Infrastructure

Under infrastructure government is establishing more schools specially in remote areas. Government is also providing electricity roads water to schools. For safety of girls students government is spending on erecting proper boundary walls and separate toiles for girls.

1.2.2 Intervention focussing on policy development

The government brings out new legislation with the policy development objectives which emphasizes on improving enrolment and reducing drop-out rates. Apart from this to reduce the gender gap in education government has introduced gender sensitive curricula and gender sensitive teaching materials and government is also employing more women teachers in schools as the studies have shown that increasing female teachers in schools at secondary levels increase the enrolment of girls

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Many studies have been done to assess the efficiency of public expenditure in education:

Donald B. Holsinger(2005)¹ worked on the education Gini coefficient and found that Vietnam has improved primary and lower secondary education through increase in public expenditure. Apart from this it has also expanded upper secondary education. With this increased efforts Vietnam was able to achieve gender equality in enrolment. R. Hamilton Lankford(1985)² found that external benefits from public education are large and it has a substantial redistributive effect. A study done by Bhanumurthy & Mohanty(2018)³ suggested good governance could yield better outcomes from public spending. Masino, Nino-Zarazua(2016)⁴ drivers of change for improving quality of education and performance can be categorised into three types -Supply side capability intervention, incentives & community management interventions. They said interventions are more successful when two or more drivers are combined and mere provision of physical and human resources are ineffective in improving education quality. According to Kingdon(2007)⁵ Primary school enrolment has come close to being universal but secondary school participation is still low and unequally distributed

3. What has government done till now in education sector ?

Education policy has played an extremely important role in the expansion of an educational system in India since independence. With the formulation of National Education Policy, India initiated a wide range of programmes for achieving the goal of Universal Elementary Education. Universalization of education till elementary level is a constitutional obligation. Article 21A of the Indian constitution states that the states shall endeavour to supply free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. Post-Independence, India has had three education policies. In 1968 the Government of India had formulated the National Policy on Education on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. This policy is seen as the first systematic effort to develop our education system. In this policy major emphasis was on compulsory education for children up to the age of 14. The second national policy was announced in 1986 and main emphasis was on elimination of disparity among various social groups. The new national policy on education which is was initiated in 2020 aims at universalisation of education, with a 100% gross enrolment ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.

To achieve the universalization of education, government had intensified its efforts through several programme interventions i.e. Operation Black Board, Shiksha Karmi Project, Mahila Samakhya, Lok Jumbish Project and teacher education etc. The main programme at present for providing elementary education to all children is a broad programme known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA). It is a partnership programme between the central and state government, which seeks to improve the performance of the school system. School Education has been considered as a whole in the Union Budget, 2018-19, instead of segregating the same between pre-nursery to Class 12. Further the Sarva Shikha Abhiyan Scheme has been subsumed in Samagra Shikha Abhiyan scheme in Union Budget 2018-19.

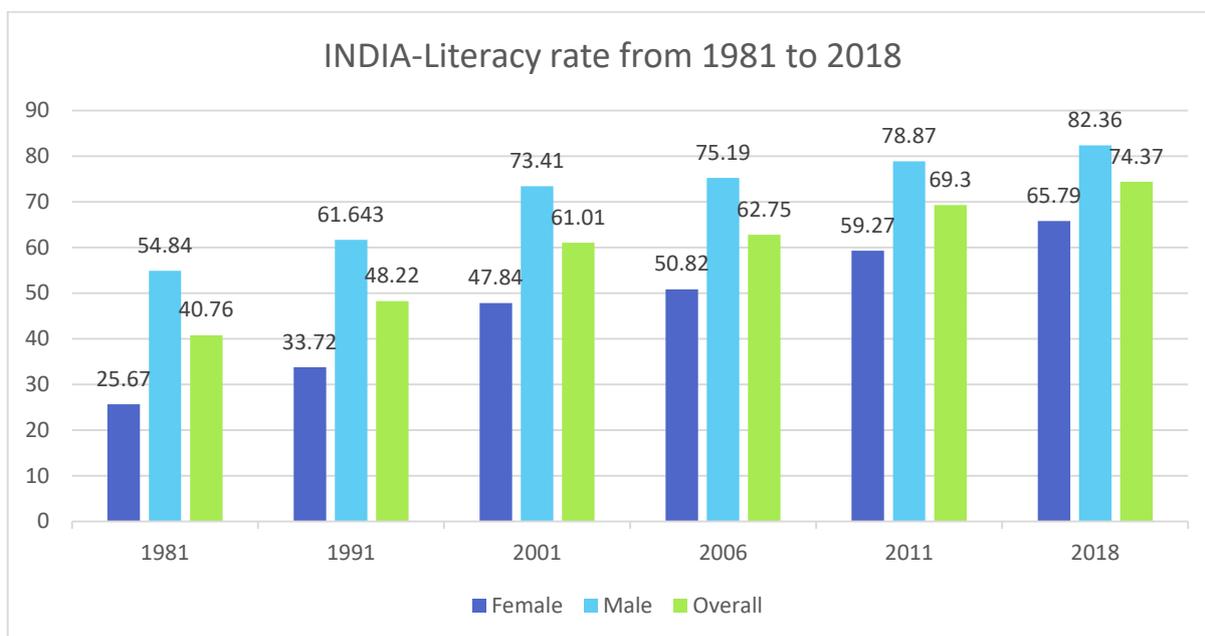
The Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan was formed by merging the following three schemes :

- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- Teacher Education(TE)

The Government of India launched the Samagra Sikhsa Abhiyan scheme under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This scheme was introduced with the aim to improve the effectiveness of schools in terms of equal opportunities for schooling along with equitable learning outcomes. The major objectives of the scheme is to provide support to the States for the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan was introduced to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to the senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal for Education.

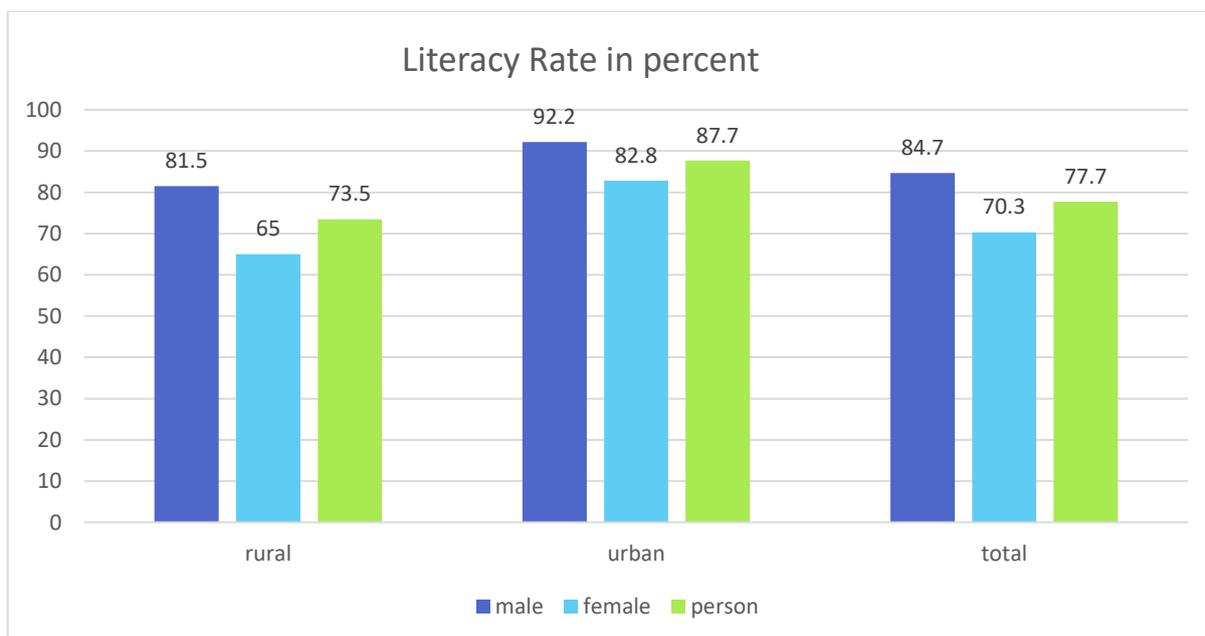
4. Trends in Literacy rate in India:

According to the world Bank Report (2019) there is an increasing trend in the overall literacy rate of India. There is a tremendous increase in the overall literacy rate which was just 40.76 % in the year 1981. Due to increased efforts of the government there is an increase in overall literacy rate. It has increased to 74.37% in 2018. In 2018 the female literacy is 65.79% whereas male literacy is 82.32. Still there is a visible gap between male and female literacy. This gender gap in education is a matter of huge concern for our economy



Source-World Bank

According to the recent 75th NSSO report the overall literacy rate is at 77.7% but it also indicating toward the gender gap in literacy Rate.



Source -NSSO 75th report

The State level Data of Literacy Rate from the 75th NSSO report for the year 2017-18 shows the variation between the different states in the level of literacy in the table below :

Table - 1 Literacy Rate of States in India

States	Literacy Rate (%)
Andhra Pradesh	66.4
Assam	85.9
Bihar	70.9
Chhattisgarh	77.3
Delhi	88.7
Gujarat	82.4
Haryana	80.4
Himachal Pradesh	86.6
Jammu & Kashmir	77.3
Jharkhand	74.3
Karnataka	77.2
Kerala	96.2
Madhya Pradesh	73.7
Maharashtra	84.8
Odisha	77.3
Punjab	83.7
Rajasthan	69.7
Tamil Nadu	82.9
Telangana	72.8
Uttarakhand	87.6
Uttar Pradesh	73.0
West Bengal	80.5
all-India	77.7

source- NSSO 75th report

The table shows the literacy rate of Kerala is 96%, where as Andhra Pradesh is at the bottom with 66.4% .This huge variation in literacy rate i.e. nearly 30% is a matter of huge concern for the economy.

Further the Gross Attendance Rate which is also taken from the 75th NSSO report for 2017-18 the State level data of primary/upper primary & middle school and the secondary and higher secondary levels are as per the table below:

Table-2 State Wise Gross Attendance Rate

States	primary and upper primary/middle level	secondary level	higher secondary level
(1)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Andhra Pradesh	92.2	114.1	73.0
Assam	104.0	86.6	56.0
Bihar	97.6	82.0	65.7
Chhattisgarh	101.6	90.3	66.9
Delhi	96.8	93.6	86.2
Gujarat	99.1	88.3	59.2
Haryana	101.3	96.7	70.3
Himachal Pradesh	96.1	100.9	110.0
Jammu & Kashmir	100.2	115.7	77.0
Jharkhand	105.3	90.0	51.3
Karnataka	99.3	92.3	73.4
Kerala	100.9	97.3	99.9

Madhya Pradesh	96.1	83.9	59.9
Maharashtra	99.5	104.0	74.3
Odisha	98.8	87.2	53.4
Punjab	99.1	95.4	79.4
Rajasthan	101.6	82.4	70.1
Tamil Nadu	100.4	89.8	91.9
Telangana	97.7	109.0	96.8
Uttarakhand	104.0	80.7	98.7
Uttar Pradesh	95.4	64.0	60.4
West Bengal	103.0	92.4	59.3
all-India	98.7	86.4	68.3

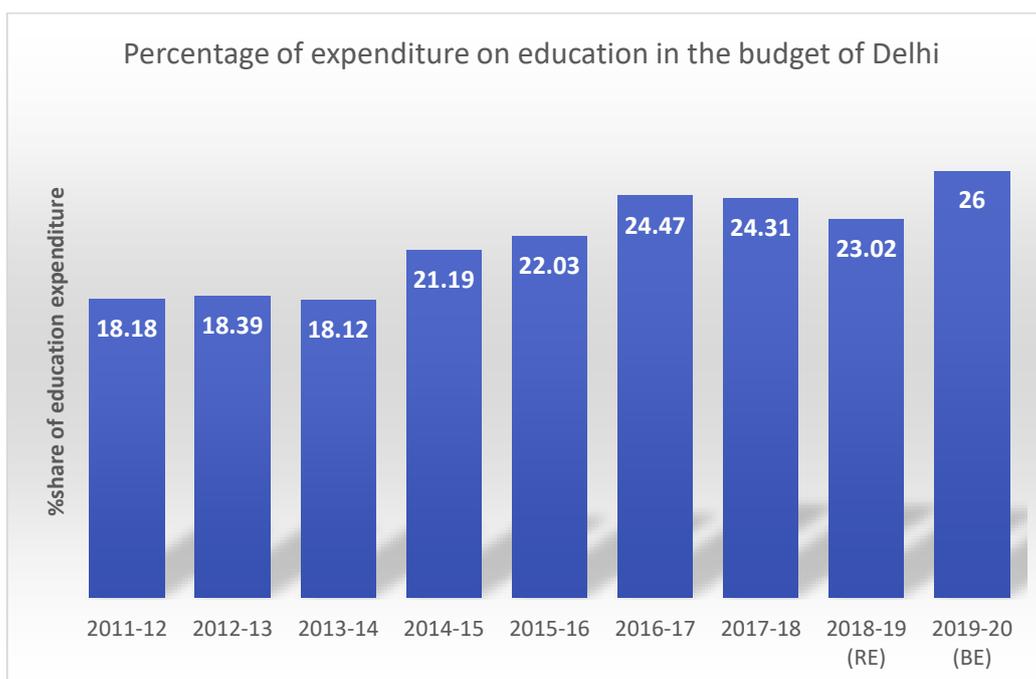
If we look at the Overall GAR of all the states carefully then interstate variation in the GAR among the students of secondary and higher secondary level is clearly visible. But the good news is that there no visible variation in GAR of different states at elementary level. Is it because of Constitutional provision of education till elementary level ?If this is true then we can improve the GAR of laggard states by increasing public provision of education.

5. Case study - Delhi Model of Education

Government of NCT of Delhi, through huge public investment in Education has been applauded by many countries and international organisations, It has been successful in improving the infrastructure of government schools to a great extent. Many schemes were launched to bring students up to grade-level learning. A host of learning initiatives like Mission Buniyaad, the Happiness Curriculum, and the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum were launched to improve learning outcomes. Chunauti 2018 is one of them, which aimed at bridging the gaps of foundational learning for Grades 6 and 8, Another notable example is the well-known Happiness Curriculum to improve concentration and mental peace. As the ability to concentrate increases, students become more creative and imaginative with how they approach their work.

The share of expenditure on Education to the total budget of the Delhi Govt.is 26% in 2019-20. In fact Delhi earmarking 25.3% of it’s budget estimates during 2019-20 bagged the top position followed by Assam with 20.7%. The table below tabulates the share of expenditure on education by a few states total aggregate expenditure during the last six years:-

Expenditure on Education as Percentage of GSDP of Delhi (In Crore)



Source-Budget documents and DES
 Economic survey of Delhi,2019-20

The expenditure on education as a percentage to the Gross State Domestic Product of Delhi has increased from 1.40 in 2012-13 to 1.82 per cent in 2019-20

Table-3 Percentage expenditure on education to GSDP

Sl. No.	Years	% age share of Expenditure on education in total budget	% age exp on Education to GSDP of Delhi
1	2011-12	18.18	1.40
2	2012-13	18.39	1.40
3	2013-14	18.12	1.39
4	2014-15	21.19	1.32
5	2015-16	22.03	1.41
6	2016-17	24.47	1.48
7	2017-18	24.31	1.45
8	2018-19 (RE)	23.02	1.49
9	2019-20 (BE)	26.00	1.82

Source: - Budget Documents and DES

Due to this increased efforts, the net attendance ratio of Delhi is above the national figures at all levels of education. At secondary level in Delhi it is 65 where as at national level it is 52. At higher secondary level there is significant difference in NAR of Delhi and the NAR at national level

Table-4 Net Attendance Ratio of Delhi and All India

Level of Education	Delhi	All India
Primary	86	83
Upper Primary	80	63
Primary & Upper Primary	84	-
Secondary	65	52
Higher Secondary	58	38
Secondary & Higher Secondary	61	-
Post Higher Secondary	22	12

Source: Economic Survey of Delhi 2019-20

6. CONCLUSION:

Based on the above analysis the government provisioning of education is a better strategy to improve the education indicators of our economy. Government provisioning of education will also lead to equity in educational opportunities due to subsidization of fees as compared to private provisioning. In order to improve the educational indicators there needs to be governmental support and with the increased efforts of government India will be able to go up in the ladder of educationally advanced countries.

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