



A Study of Parental Perceptions of Factors Influencing Enrollment Trends in Public and Private Elementary Schools

Tithi Chakraborty

Email – tithichakraborty456@gmail.com

Abstract: *This present study investigated the parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level. In this study, a mixed-method research approach was adopted. The tool was developed and standardized by the researcher. 50 parents from government schools and 50 parents from private schools of the students were selected through a Simple Random Sampling procedure as a sample from selected Bagdah and Bongaon blocks of North 24 Parganas. The result shows that the enrolment trends in government elementary schools are declining daily because most parents prefer private schools for their children's better education. From statistical analysis through applying a t-test it has been found that the mean score of the level of parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas is significantly difference. Further applying ANOVA it has been concluded that there is a significant difference among the level of the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds.*

Key Words: *Parental perception, factors influencing enrolment trends, government and private schools, elementary education.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Education is a powerful driver of development. Education transforms lives creates peace, eradicates poverty, and drives sustainable development (UNESCO). Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascension and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific progress, national integration, and cultural preservation. Education in India covers different levels and forms of education, such as early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, higher education, and vocational education. Education in India is primarily administered by the state-run public education system, which falls under three levels of government: central, state, and local. The Government of India emphasizes primary education (Classes I-VIII) for children aged 6 to 14 years, also referred to as elementary education. When the Constitution was adopted in 1950, the goal was to achieve Universalization of Primary Education (UEE) within the next ten years. Under various Articles of the Indian Constitution and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, of 2009, free and compulsory education is a fundamental right for children aged 6 to 14 years. Despite these remarkable achievements, the goal of universal primary education remains elusive and a distant dream. The total number of government schools in India has an approximate ratio of 10:3 to private schools (Kingdon G, 2020). In India, the maximum enrolment (46.61%) at the primary level is in government schools and the lowest (9.03%) is in private-aided schools. Local bodies and private unaided schools are 29.40% and 14.96% of the total enrolment respectively (NCERT). According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012, 96.5% of all rural children aged 6-14 are enrolled in school. As a result, the number of students aged 6-14 who are not enrolled in school was 2.8% in Education 2018 (ASER 2018). As per the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report 2020-2021, the gross enrolment ratio of India at the elementary level is 100.1% and 108.5% is in West Bengal. As per the NSO survey (2017) the literacy rate in India is 77.7%, in West Bengal is 80.50%, and in North 24 Parganas is 84.06 %. Privatization of education in the 21st century has become important keeping in mind the large population and their concerns to reach for education. The demand for private schools has been increasing over the years (Kingdon G, 2020). After the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 was passed, private schools had to be 'government-recognized'. A private school will be eligible for government recognition if it fulfills certain conditions (Kingdon G, 2020). At the primary and secondary levels, India has a large private school system to



complement government-run schools, with 29% of students receiving private education between the ages of 6 and 14 (Joshua, Anita, 2014). Since independence, the government of India has been giving better education and the literacy rate has increased. In West Bengal, the Government is providing free education up to 8th standard with free uniforms, books, mid-day meals, and scholarships so that students can get a good education. Despite providing better education and so many facilities, admissions taking place in government schools are still declining year after year, and day by day enrolment rate in private schools is increasing. The parents of students are not interested in government schools and prefer private schools for the education of their children (Sharma et al, 2016). It is worth reading in this context the enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in North 24 Parganas of West Bengal. This study will help to know the enrolment status of government and private schools at the elementary level and the perception of parents about the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

A review of related studies offers a better perception of the gaps in knowledge and provides an opportunity to plan the intended study more precisely and meaningfully. A few researches have been conducted separately on the enrolment trends in government and private schools. A study conducted by Jeanette Wright Bryson (2005) demonstrates that enrolment theories state that it is not just one factor, but a combination of individual, system, academic, and social influences that influence decisions to enrol in a private school. A study conducted by Shatti (2011) explained that education provided by the private sector mostly meets the demands of parents, as they are more satisfied with their children's education and achievement. Parents believed that in the curriculum of government KG a number of areas, resulted in children being poorly prepared for primary school. Das M N (2015) found that privatization in education is growing rapidly all over the world, as well also in India and West Bengal. This has an immediate impact on the reduction in the number of students in government schools and poor quality of education in government primary schools increases the effect of privatization in elementary education. Sharma A. et al (2016) found that many factors like age of admission, physical and human resources, curriculum, teaching-learning process, and attitudes of parents are the reasons for increasing the enrolment rate in private schools at the elementary level. A study conducted by V.N Tripathi (2019), strongly supports the evidence that the main reason for low enrolment in government primary schools in Uttar Pradesh is a lack of physical and human educational resources, quality teachers, absenteeism of teachers, low interest of parents due to increase in their socio-economic/financial status. The majority of people have negative opinions about various aspects of public schools. Therefore, it is thought to find out the reasons why parents prefer private schools at the elementary level. Although a few researches have been conducted on the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents. Thus, in this study, the researchers seek to explore the parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level. The researchers believe that students, teachers, parents, curriculum developers, policymakers, and all educators will benefit from the findings of the study.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To find out the enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level.
- To find out the factors influencing enrolment trends in government schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents.
- To find out the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents.
- To find out the parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas.
- To find out the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION:

- What are the enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level?
- What are the factors influencing enrolment trends in government schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents?
- What are the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents?



5. HYPOTHESIS:

H₀ 1- There is no significant difference between the level of parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas.

H₀ 2 - There is no significant difference among the level of the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

6. METHOD:

6.1. Study Approach – The mixed method research approach is used due to its applicability to the purpose of the study and its capability to achieve its objectives.

6.2. Variables:

- ❖ **Independent variable** - Parental perception.
- ❖ **Dependent variable** - Factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level.

6.3. Population: In this study, the parents of the students who study in government and private elementary schools in North 24 Parganas have been considered as population. The researcher considered the government and private elementary schools in North 24 Parganas for the selection of the sample because it would bring variety to the sample.

6.4. Procedure for Selecting of Sample:

West Bengal consists of 30 districts. Out of these districts North 24 Parganas was selected purposively. From these selected districts two blocks namely Bagda and Bongaon were selected randomly. 5 government schools and 5 private schools were selected randomly from each block. Some of these schools are located in town and village areas. 50 parents from government schools and 50 parents from private schools of the students were selected through a Simple Random Sampling procedure. Some of them are financially weak and financially active.

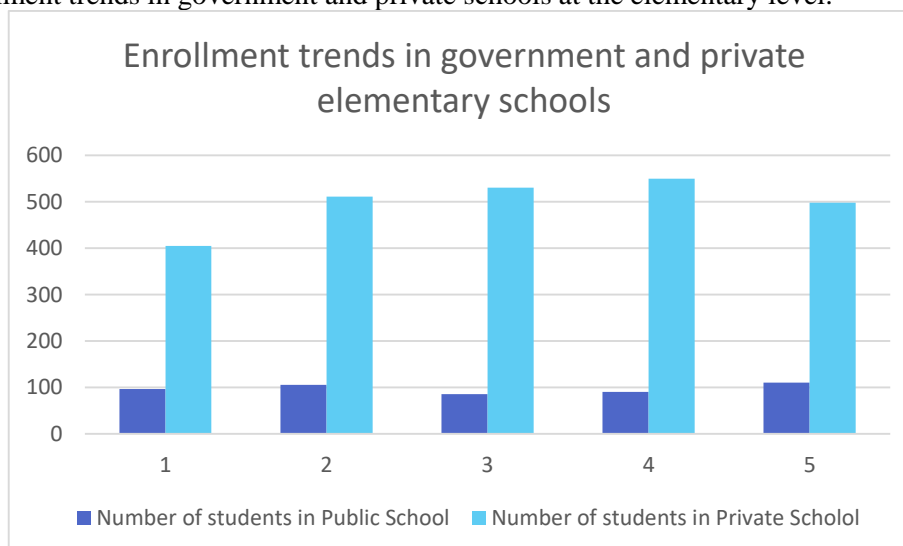
6.5. Tool of the study: The tools used in this study were developed and standardized by the researchers. Tools used in the study- A self-made open-ended questionnaire with 12 questions has been used to collect qualitative data from the parents of the students studying in government and private schools. And a self-made close-ended questionnaire with 20 questions has been used to collect quantitative data from the parents of the students studying in government and private schools. The questionnaire has been developed on the basis of an in-depth study of researchers done in this area. The tool has been validated by two experts. Besides, some statistical data has been collected as secondary sources from various research papers, journals, websites, etc.

7. DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION:

7.1. Qualitative data analysis:

Analysis of Objective 1 - To find out the enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level.

Figure 1: The enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level.





- **Interpretation:** Chart 1 shows that the number of students enrolled in selected 5 government and 5 private schools in 2022-2023. There are a large number of children from selected areas enrolled in private elementary school.

Analysis of Objective 2 - To find out the factors influencing enrolment trends in government schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents.

Table 1: Factors influencing enrolment trends in government schools as perceived by parents

Information received	Responses of parents of the government schools	
	Number	Percentage
Weak financial condition of parents	40	80
Free educational resources	32	72
Equal opportunity for all	22	44
Government required certificate	16	32
Good infrastructure	4	8
Lack of private schools in the locality	2	4

- **Interpretation:** Table 1 shows that 80% of parents from government schools revealed that they enrolled their children in government schools because of their weak financial condition. 72% of them choose government schools for free educational resources. 44% of exposed that their children get equal opportunity in public school so they choose public school. 32% of parents sent their children to public school for government-required certificates. 8% and 4% considered good infrastructure and lack of private schools in their locality.

Analysis of Objective 3 - To find out the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents.

Table 2: Factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools as perceived by parents.

Information received	Responses of parents of the private schools	
	Number	Percentage
Higher socioeconomic status	38	76
Reputation of schools	16	32
High-quality infrastructure	44	88
Better teacher-parents interaction	30	60
Individual care of the students	42	84
Lack of teachers and bad quality of public schools	40	80

- **Interpretation:** Table 2 shows that 76% of parents from private schools revealed that they enrolled their children in private schools for their higher socioeconomic status. 32% and 88% of parents considered private schools for reputation and high-quality infrastructure. 60% of them choose private schools for better teacher-parent interaction. 84% considered that private schools took individual care of the students. 80% of them exposed there was a lack of teachers and bad quality of public schools.

Quantitative data analysis: Inferential- t-test and ANOVA were applied by using the computer software named Microsoft Excel.

Analysis of objective 4 - To find out the parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas.

H0 1 - There is no significant difference between the level of parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas.

Table 3: Representing the result of the t-test

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Variable 1	Variable 2



Mean	4.34	1.2
Variance	3.0044898	1.428571429
Observations	50	50
Pearson Correlation	-0.03349242	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	49	
t Stat	10.3841103	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.8376E-14	
t Critical one-tail	1.67655089	
P(T<=t) two-tail	5.6753E-14	
t Critical two-tail	2.00957524	

➤ **Interpretation:** Table 3, shows the result of the t-test for comparing the means of the level of parental perception on the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas. We can see that the p-value is 2.8729E-14 ($P < 0.05$), so the null hypothesis is rejected which means variances are unequal. So we reject the null hypothesis, which says that the parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas are significantly different.

Analysis of objective 5- To find out the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

H0 There is no significant difference among the level of the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Table 4: Representing the result of ANOVA

Anova: Single Factor						
Summary						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Column 1	35	191	5.4571429	2.0201681		
Column 2	33	104	3.1515152	2.2575758		
Column 3	32	18	0.5625	1.9959677		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	400.5068615	2	200.25343	95.780484	1.09E-23	3.090187
Within Groups	202.8031385	97	2.090754			
Total	603.31	99				

➤ **Interpretation:** The analysis in Table 4 shows that in the case of the ANOVA test between and within groups, the F value is 95.780 and $P=1.09E-23$ ($P < 0.05$) for the variation of low, middle, and high socioeconomic backgrounds. So H02 is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference among the level of the factors influencing enrolment trends in private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

8. CONCLUSION:

This study has been conducted to find out the parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level. At the end of the study, we found that the enrolment rate in government schools is declining daily. We found that weak financial condition is a broad factor that affects parents to



enroll their child in public school because government schools provide free education, resources, and mid-day meals. Some parents enroll their children in public schools for government school pass certificates. Many parents considered private schools for their children's better education, school's superior infrastructure and a high quality of education. In private primary schools, teachers interact with parents more continually than in public schools. Parents enroll their children in private primary schools because private schools take Individual care of the students. Financially well-off parents enroll their children in private primary schools as they easily afford private schools. An increase in parents' socio-economic status is a reason to choose private schools. School reputation, the lack of teachers in public schools, and the bad quality of public schools are the factors influenced parents to choose private schools. So it can be concluded that most parents believe that private primary schools provide a better quality of education compared to government primary schools. From the result, we found that there is a significant difference between the level of parental perception of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level in urban and rural areas. In rural areas, enrolment trends in government primary schools are higher than in urban areas. We found that there is a significant difference among the level of the factors influencing enrolment trends in government and private schools at the elementary level as perceived by parents who belong to different socioeconomic backgrounds. Parents with lower middle-class socio-economic status prefer government primary schools more than parents with high-class socio-economic status. The result of the present study is supported by research, which highlights the quality of government primary schools is declining day by day which is why more parents decided to enrol their children in private schools. As a result, government and government-aided primary schools will have to struggle for survival in the future. So in this context, the government, policymakers, and teachers must take responsibility for improving the quality of primary education.

REFERENCES:

1. Kingdon, G. G. (2 October 2020). The Private Schooling Phenomenon in India: A Review. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 56 (10): 1795–1817.
2. Joshua, A. (16 January 2014). Over a quarter of enrolments in rural India are in Private schools. *The Hindu*.
3. Sharma, A. (2016). FACTORS AFFECTING ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS AND PARENTS. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4/27, 3189-3198.
4. Bryson, J. W. (2005). *Factors Influencing Enrolment Trends in Seventh Day Adventist Boarding Schools in North America*. Andrews University.
5. Shatti, H. H. (2011). Parents' Perspectives of Government & Private Kindergarten Systems of Kuwait. *ARECLS*, 8, 1- 24.
6. Das, M. N. (2015). Quality of public primary education & the extension of private schooling: an assessment in West Bengal. *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(3B): 695-700.
7. Tripathi, V. N. (2019). Causes of Low Learning Outcome and Low Enrolment in Government Primary School of Uttar Pradesh: A Study. *JETIR*, 6(6), 342- 346.

Web References

- <https://www.unesco.org/en/education>
- <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2020.1715943>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_India
- www.asercentre.org