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AN ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA) IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Despite the efforts to reduce regional disparities in education among the states through various measures, regional differences continue to persist. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the interventions which aim to address these differences at the elementary education level. While some of the factors responsible for these differences could be rooted in culture, having access to school and basic minimum facilities at the school are very important. With this premise, considerable amount of allocations are made under SSA to provide access and basic facilities. This paper examined the regional differences in the allocation of funds and the educational outcomes across different states in India. An attempt has made to find out the correlations between the expenditure on education and the outcomes. The paper is based on the secondary data published by MHRD. Based on the results it is observed that there is a positive correlation between the expenditure and the outcomes. Further, the regression result shows that among many variables only utilisation of educational funds strongly influences the disparities in educational outcomes of the states.

KEYWORDS

Utilization of education fund, Educational outcomes, Regional imbalance.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every child in India. Article 45 of the Indian Constitution has directed that 'the State shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the age group of 6-14 years, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution'. Unfortunately this dream has not been fulfilled even after six decades of the independence. Education had been a State subject in India till 1976. Under this arrangement a wider regional disparity in educational achievement (literacy) among the states was observed due to differences in the policies and the priority given to education by respective states. Widening regional disparities is a big hindrance to the economic development of the nation. Therefore, with the objective of reducing this Education had been shifted to the Concurrent list through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. Under this, the Central Government provides the national policy and guidelines and also a part of the financial assistance to the states and the implementation is done by the respective states. Since then the Central Government has been committed to achieve the regional equality in educational opportunity and the National goal of Universal Elementary Education (achieving 100 per cent enrolment in Elementary Education) was announced.

A number of educational programmes such as DPEP, Operation Black Board, MDM and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) were launched successively by Central Government to achieve the objective of 100 per cent enrolment. The Central government is providing special attention to educationally backward states to improve their educational performance. SSA is a national flagship programme of Government of India in partnership with the States/UTs Governments for operationalizing the project for universal elementary education in the country. It covers all districts in the country in order to ensure access, retention and quality improvement in elementary education.

The important objectives of SSA are

1. All children in school, Educational Guarantee centre, Alternative School, Back to School camp by 2003.
2. All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
3. All Children complete eight years of elementary schools by 2010.
4. Focus on Elementary Education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
5. Bridge all gender and social gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at the Elementary Education level by 2010.
6. Universal retention by 2010.

The sharing of expenditure between the Centre and the States during the Xth Plan was on 75:25 basis. The funding pattern has been revised during XIth plan and the sharing is 65:35 for the first two years of the Plan, 60:40 for the third year, 55:45 for the fourth year and 50:50 thereafter. In respect of eight North-Eastern States, the funding pattern is 90:10.

Despite the large amount of spending both by the Central and the State Governments, regional imbalances among states in terms of outcomes continue to persist. In this background it is important to analyse the linkages between the amount spent and the outcomes across the states and identify the contribution of funding on education to the attainment of UEE. The present study makes an attempt in this direction and examines the linkages between the Education expenditure and outcomes across different states. Recent studies on the linkages between the expenditure and educational outcome have thrown light on the importance of funding in reaching the objective of Universal Elementary Education (UEE). A cross country study on the linkages between the public spending, governance and outcomes (Rajkumar and Swaroop, 2008) has found that increasing public spending on primary education and good governance are likely to be more effective in raising primary education outcomes in selected countries including India. An empirical analysis of policy reform and financing of elementary education in India related to quality of service and outcomes (Pradhan and Singh, 2000) has observed that Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have shown good performance in educational outcomes through investing 50 per cent of their total budget expenditure on education. Tilak (2011) studied the growth, achievement and problems of elementary education in India and observed greater inequality in educational outcomes across all rural and urban areas.

OBJECTIVES

The important objective of the present paper is to examine the regional differences in the performance of SSA across different states and analyse the correlation between the allocations and the outcomes.

The objectives of the present paper are

1. To analyze the regional disparities in the allocations and expenditure on elementary education under SSA.

2. To analyze the regional disparities in the educational outcomes across the states.
3. To identify the factors responsible for the regional disparities in outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis is based on the secondary data collected from different sources like Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI and District Information and School Education (DISE) for the entire period of SSA starting from 2004-05. Data relating to the state wise allocation to elementary education, percentage of actual money utilized were analysed. Coefficient of variation was calculated to understand the variation. Performance is measured in terms of outcomes index developed by NUEPA.

Outcomes Index is a composite index of

1. Gross Enrolment Ratio overall
2. Percentage of SC children enrolment
3. Percentage of ST children enrolment
4. Gender Parity index
5. Repetition rate
6. Dropout rate
7. Ratio of exit class I enrolment
8. Percentage of passed children to total enrolment
9. Percentage of appeared children passing with 60 per cent and more marks

Higher the index better the performance.

A regression model was used to identify the factors responsible for the regional disparities in the performance of the states in educational outcomes. The following is the model specified with five years average of the variables.

$EOI = f(PFU, AI)$

EOI = Educational Outcome Index

PFU = Percentage of funds utilized

AI = Access Index

TRENDS IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The concern on equality in economic development in general and education development in particular have been the focus of the government policies since planning era. The objective of Eleventh Plan, 'Inclusive growth' says that gains of the growth should trickle down to the needy section of the society as well as less developed regions of the country.

Allocation of sufficient funds is the first step in improving access to education. It also indicates the priority given to elementary education. In order to even out the influence of the size of the state, instead of absolute amount, the percentage of expenditure on elementary education to the total expenditure on education by respective states has been considered.

Percentage of funds allocated to elementary education in the total education expenditure of the respective states indicates the importance given to the elementary education. The data of Table-1 shows wider variations across the states. It varies from as low as 4.19 per cent in Lakshadweep in 2003-2004 to 70 per cent in Dadra & Nagar Haveli in 2008-09. The educationally backward states like Madhya Pradesh (M.P), Andaman & Nicobar (A & N), Dadar Nagar & Haveli, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam and Andhra Pradesh (A.P) have given higher priority to elementary education in their total expenditure on education. Though the mean percentage of expenditure on education has not improved much between 2003-04 and 2008-09 (around 30 per cent) there is a considerable improvement in some states. The changes in the share of money spent on elementary education can be grouped in to three categories. The first category of the states which are already spending more (Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra Nagar and Haveli, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Nagaland) continue to be spending the same amounts. The other categories are those states where the share of expenditure has increased. In states like U.P, Bihar, H.P there is an increase in the allocation. But in the case of the third category states, there is a reduction in the allocations. For example during the first year of the introduction of SSA (2003-04), Madhya Pradesh, which is educationally backward state, has spent 80 per cent of the education budget on elementary education. However, this share has decreased considerably from 2004-05 onwards and it is 66.52 per cent during 2008-09. Same is the case with Tripura and Assam etc., After the introduction of SSA, educationally backward states like M.P, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam and A.P have given greater priority to elementary education with around 50 per cent of the expenditure on elementary education.

It is disturbing to observe that out of the 35 States and Union Territories, 16 states have shown a decrease in share of expenditure on elementary education between 2003-04 and 2008-09. Six states have been maintaining same levels. There is an increase in thirteen states. The increase is considerable in states like ANDAMAN & NICOBAR, Bihar, Delhi, A.P, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Rajasthan and U.P. but it is maintained in rest of the states/UTs.

The regional disparity across the states in expenditure on elementary education can be judged by examining the Coefficient of Variation among the states. The CV decreased from 32.60 per cent in 2003-04 to 29.80 per cent in 2004-05 and it increased at 30.68 per cent in 2008-09. This implies that through there is a greater variations among the states in the initial year of the introduction of SSA, it decreased in subsequent years.

TABLE-1: PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN TOTAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (REVENUE ACCOUNT)

STATES & UTs	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
A & N	47.95	49.35	48.34	49.66	49.78	51.61
Andhra Pradesh	45.31	45.87	48.22	45.81	46.36	44.75
Arunachal Pradesh	64.02	64.36	63.46	67.41	68.18	65.28
Assam	60.44	60.96	63.38	57.03	60.06	54.99
Bihar	62.37	67.65	63.65	59.82	62.84	70.37
Chandigarh	26.75	35.82	29.43	26.38	26.96	26.93
Chhattisgarh	66.31	65.29	64.81	69.17	65.11	64.09
Dadar & N. Haveli	69.21	72.77	69.63	68.13	68.52	69.85
Diu & Daman	43.00	59.97	41.01	42.28	42.3	41.06
Delhi	18.22	33.12	26.53	30.89	32.93	29.31
Goa	20.4	20.44	21.58	18.61	20.08	20.91
Gujarat	52.02	55.13	55.14	56.38	54.17	53.64
Haryana	47.76	48.06	50.31	47.62	45.63	47.55
Himachal Pradesh	55.46	56.27	53.68	60.23	64.24	63.57
J & K	48.23	47.02	46.36	38.48	55.29	47.24
Jharkhand	68.72	71.28	64.77	67.94	69.17	66.39
Karnataka	55.01	57.8	56.33	55.48	54.16	55.2
Kerala	42.45	43.09	41.19	42.42	41.34	38.9
Lakshadweep	4.19	2.67	3.1	2.21	5.25	8.77
M.P	80.66	67.38	68.96	68.69	64.14	66.52
Maharashtra	43.74	45.9	42.2	44.86	43.94	43.22
Manipur	45.91	43.34	45.5	43.28	44.22	44.4
Meghalaya	54.41	51.13	54.06	51.13	50.36	50.36
Mizoram	52.88	55.49	55.49	52.36	51.63	50.58
Nagaland	57.93	62.97	61.41	63.88	64.18	64.98
Orissa	58.21	57.93	55.12	55.18	58.25	57.34
Pondicherry	38.43	39.81	39.04	37.81	36.48	36.9
Punjab	24.96	25.13	25.17	22.82	21.73	23.51
Rajasthan	56.65	57.59	60.34	58.92	59.94	60.28
Sikkim	49.14	48.25	47.32	47.93	47.63	46.34
Tamil Nadu	42.64	42.22	40.86	44.00	42.99	43.59
Tripura	57.31	56.54	52.86	43.08	41.33	40.23
Uttaranchal	46.77	42.34	43.39	45.46	45.79	48.01
Uttar Pradesh	57.76	56.62	58.12	56.49	61.89	61.25
West Bengal	33.36	37.37	38.73	37.21	36.74	36.37
Mean	48.53	49.91	48.56	47.97	48.67	48.41
C.V	32.59	29.79	30.29	31.76	30.94	30.68

SOURCE: VARIOUS REPORTS OF BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN INDIA, MHRD

UTILIZATION OF FUND UNDER SSA

Allocations under SSA are made to different states/UTs based on the norms prescribed under the programme and they are expected to utilize the funds as programmed. Though the norms are uniform, there are large variations across the states/UTs in the utilizations. The actual amount of money spent on elementary education is more important than the allocation itself because that is the amount which has actually reached the target group. Percentage of money actually spent in the total allocation indicates this. The percentage of funds utilized has been calculated for the allocations under SSA. It covers three important components such as Sarva Shiksha Abiyan (SSA), NPEGL (National Programme for Education of Girls in Elementary Level) and KGBY (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Yojana).

The table-2 shows the percentage of utilization of education fund under SSA across the various states. It indicates that there has been a substantial inter-state variation in utilization of education fund. It varies from 16.38 per cent to 92.0 per cent in 2005-06, 3.49 per cent to 98.78 per cent in 2006-07 and 41.20 per cent to 97.22 per cent in 2009-10. However, the States like Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, T.N, Tripura, U.P, Uttarkhand, Karnataka, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh have reported substantially higher utilization than the average utilization during all the periods. On the other hand Lakshadweep which utilized only 17.12 per cent in 2005-06 improved to 82.08 per cent by 2009-10. The data shows that there is a continuous increase in the utilization of funds in subsequent years compared to the initial year of SSA. Most of the States/UTs have reached above 60per cent utilization except A & N, Bihar, HP and Manipur. In the state of Bihar only 50 per cent of the allocated funds are utilized during 2009-10 though utilization has improved from 24 per cent during 2005-06. In the case of A & N, there was a sudden increase in the utilization during 2008-09 but declined to 41per cent during 2009-10. Himachal Pradesh is another State where the funds utilization was good during the initial years (82 per cent during 2005-06), but declined to 50 per cent during 2009-10. Same is the case with Manipur. Utilization of funds improved during the second and third years of implementation of SSA, but declined sharply from 2008-09 onwards. Manipur is the only state with 20 per cent of utilization.

TABLE-2: STATE-WISE UTILIZATION OF FUNDS UNDER SSA

States/UTs	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
A & N	47.90	40.59	30.11	80.36	41.20
Andhra Pradesh	67.70	45.53	36.54	60.20	63.30
Arunachal Pradesh	84.49	85.01	74.46	93.00	76.09
Assam	56.55	42.15	88.15	89.46	83.34
Bihar	24.24	33.23	58.48	61.78	50.53
Chandigarh	39.44	53.87	67.31	56.35	74.84
Chhattisgarh	77.07	79.62	87.57	91.38	61.11
Dadar & Nagar Haveli	51.62	37.48	36.15	56.42	54.07
Diu & Daman	16.38	11.58	51.35	63.42	69.17
Delhi	28.20	47.62	56.81	63.98	61.64
Goa	40.61	52.10	75.59	76.27	69.03
Gujarat	78.58	71.99	73.43	68.15	72.27
Haryana	67.42	75.29	64.79	70.19	76.29
Himachal Pradesh	82.05	86.00	89.80	85.40	49.99
J & K	48.07	55.88	84.16	53.56	72.05
Jharkhand	34.21	48.33	64.78	73.28	76.65
Karnataka	82.04	70.84	99.41	92.41	78.40
Kerala	58.70	58.29	89.21	93.82	90.44
Lakshadweep	17.12	3.49	45.99	66.10	82.08
Madhya Pradesh	60.06	71.97	68.42	83.06	87.28
Maharashtra	72.16	96.44	85.72	89.98	90.36
Manipur	25.52	34.55	39.65	19.91	19.78
Meghalaya	58.93	53.76	69.29	65.47	60.94
Mizoram	63.28	98.79	98.63	77.82	97.22
Nagaland	85.01	61.97	89.10	56.02	87.21
Orissa	56.79	67.85	75.94	80.47	80.73
Pondicherry	43.64	42.85	67.05	86.92	90.23
Punjab	52.41	67.74	68.80	98.46	89.30
Rajasthan	88.42	84.36	85.59	90.50	92.20
Sikkim	48.39	34.28	36.32	78.75	83.08
Tamil Nadu	83.63	56.86	78.70	93.56	90.77
Tripura	92.02	84.73	89.60	92.89	80.49
Uttar Pradesh	84.72	76.91	86.52	88.41	74.02
Uttaranchal	86.91	76.12	74.20	80.98	81.51
West Bengal	46.09	63.66	71.03	71.58	75.48
Average	61.29	59.26	70.25	75.72	73.28
C.V	45.2	37.28	26.97	21.71	22.23

SOURCE: WWW.SSA.EDUCATON.NIC.IN

Due to improvement in the utilization of funds in subsequent years, the variation among the states in terms of utilization has decreased sharply. Coefficient of variation declined from 45.2 per cent in 2005-06 to 22.23 per cent in 2009-10.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Educational outcome is a most appropriate tool to evaluate the performance of education development of the states. Based on the Outcome Index between 2005-06 and 2009-10, the states are ranked and the data is presented in table-3. The data shows that the performance is not uniform across the states. During the period from the introduction of SSA to 2009-10, some states have gained in their rank while some have lost. For example, Tamil Nadu which was ranking one, slipped to three in primary education and two in upper primary education. Same is the case with other three ranks. Himachal Pradesh slipped from 2nd to 7th, Karnataka from 3rd to 4th and A.P from 4th to 6th. Kerala is maintaining its status of 5th rank throughout. Uttaranchal is another state which lost considerably from 10th rank to 26th rank in primary education.

The data shows that compared to 2005-06, states like T.N, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh & Kerala have shown good performance. They have reached top five ranks. But in 2009-10 all states except Kerala slipped one or two ranks below compared to 2005-06 period. While Goa, Haryana, Lakshadweep, Diu & Daman and Bihar have shown least performance during 2005-06, they have significantly improved their ranks over the period. Lakshadweep shows remarkable changes. Its rank improved from 32nd in 2005-06 to 1st in 2009-10.

In the case of upper primary education Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Pondicherry ranked top five positions during 2005-06. Except Kerala and Pondicherry, remaining three states slipped in their ranks. On the other hand Haryana, Goa, Bihar, Punjab and Lakshadweep which were in the lowest bottom have shown an improvement 2009-10, except Bihar. Both in primary and upper primary education Lakshadweep, which is the Union Territory, shows dramatic improvement. It ranked first position in 2009-10 from its 32nd position in 2005-06. One of the important reasons for this is improvement in its utilization of education fund. Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Punjab are the other states which have slipped considerable ranks between 2005-06 and 2009-10. Madhya Pradesh slipped from 12th rank to 23rd rank in primary education and 16th to 27th rank in upper primary education. On the other hand, there are gainers. Pondicherry, ranking 11th reached 2nd in 2009-10 in primary education and from 5th to 3rd rank in upper primary education. The other gainers in both primary and upper educations are Andaman & Nicobar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Diu and Daman, Goa, Haryana and Mizoram and Assam in primary education only.

The states which are ranking very low (Bihar, Meghalaya, Sikkim and West Bengal) in the initial years of SSA continue to be at lower ranking even after four years.

TABLE-3: RANKING OF THE STATES AND UTS ACCORDING TO OUTCOMES

States & UTs	Primary Education		Upper Primary Education	
	2005-06	2009-10	2005-06	2009-10
Andaman & Nicobar	28	20	32	12
Andhra Pradesh	4	6	2	7
Arunachal Pradesh	29	35	29	13
Assam	31	17	13	24
Bihar	30	31	33	35
Chandigarh	16	33	15	26
Chhattisgarh	8	11	9	11
Dadar Nagar & N. Haveli	24	9	28	23
Diu & Daman	33	27	24	18
Delhi	17	15	27	17
Goa	35	24	34	22
Gujarat	15	16	10	25
Haryana	34	18	35	16
Himachal Pradesh	2	7	7	5
J & K	7	8	12	14
Jharkhand	22	30	22	15
Karnataka	3	4	3	10
Kerala	5	5	4	4
Lakshadweep	32	1	30	1
Madhya Pradesh	12	23	16	27
Maharashtra	6	10	6	9
Manipur	20	28	20	20
Meghalaya	27	29	17	21
Mizoram	19	13	11	8
Nagaland	25	19	21	19
Orissa	9	14	26	33
Pondicherry	11	2	5	3
Punjab	23	34	31	28
Rajasthan	13	32	19	32
Sikkim	21	21	25	34
Tamil Nadu	1	3	1	2
Tripura	14	12	18	30
Uttar Pradesh	18	22	14	29
Uttaranchal	10	26	8	6
West Bengal	26	25	23	31

SOURCE: VARIOUS REPORTS OF DISE FLASH STATISTICS

CORRELATION BETWEEN UTILIZATION OF EDUCATION FUND AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In order to understand the association between utilization of education fund and educational outcomes of the States Spearman Rank Correlation between the ranks of utilization of funds and the Outcome Index was calculated. Ranks are assigned in each year based on the performance. The result shows positive correlation between utilization of education fund and outcomes in primary education. The correlation value is 0.393 and it is significant at five per cent. On the other hand correlation between utilization of education fund and upper primary educational outcomes also confirms positive correlation (0.24 per cent) but it is less than the primary education. The correlation results supported the theoretical expectation of increasing utilization of education fund improves the educational outcomes.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In order to understand how much variation in educational outcomes can be attributed to the utilization of funds and the other factors, the outcome index is regressed over several independent variables namely the economic status of the state measured by the NSDP, percentage of funds utilized, Access index, infrastructure index and teacher index. None of the variables appear to be influencing except utilization of funds. In the final model, only two variables, access to education index and utilization of funds is considered as independent variables. The results are presented below Table 4.

TABLE 4: REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	Standardize Coefficients	't' value	significance
Constant	--	1.056	0.299
Access	0.049	0.350	0.729
Utilization of funds	0.605	4.277	0.000*
$R^2 = 0.38$			

NOTE: '**' INDICATES SIGNIFICANT AT ONE PER CENT LEVEL.

The model explained 38 per cent of the variation in the education outcomes among the states. Out of the two variables, utilization of funds came out as significant at one per cent level indicating that utilization of funds is extremely important for the improving the educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed the regional disparities in the performance of SSA and the correlation between public expenditure on elementary education and educational outcomes. In terms of utilization of education fund, the decreasing coefficient of variation suggested that the regional imbalance among the States/UTs has been coming down over a period of time. At the same time it was found that still some states like Bihar, M.P, Rajasthan and other educationally backward states have been lagging behind; their performance is lesser than the educationally developed states.

On the one hand the correlation results proved that the utilization of education fund is positively associated with the education outcomes. Moreover among the many variables only utilisation of educational funds was found to be influencing education outcomes. Based on the analysis it can be concluded that that the public expenditure is a necessary condition for improving the outcomes of the elementary education and reducing regional imbalance, but it is not a sufficient condition.

ABBREVIATIONS

DISE	District Information and School Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
MDM	Mid Day Meals programme
KGBY	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Yojana
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NPEGEL	National Programme for Education of Girls in Elementary Level
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abiyan
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UF	Utilization of Fund
SC	Schedule Caste
ST	Schedule Tribe
UTs	Union Territories

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