

**UEE in Urban Area:
Special Focus on Education of Children from Urban Deprived Groups in
India**

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Abstract

The fast but uneven process of urbanization in India has left a large part of the population without essential facilities including education. Children belong to poor households particularly those stuck in the process of urbanization suffered the most without the basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education as well. Despite many educational policies and schemes, many children from urban areas were deprived of educational facilities. Although recent data indicates improvement in enrolment status of children in urban areas, a huge proportion of children belong to never enrolled or enrolled but currently not attending categories. Inequalities from gender perspective can also be seen in such urban deprived groups which often lead to drop out of girls from school particularly after the completion of primary education. The situation has worsened during pandemic period. In view of above, an attempt is made to find out the existing educational opportunities available for these children and the visible challenges they are facing in their schooling particularly in urban context.

Key words: urbanization, deprived groups, gender, dropout, educational opportunities, elementary education

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Introduction

Access to elementary education has become fundamental right for each and every child of 6-14 years of age after enforcement of 86th Educational Act by recent Constitutional Amendment. However, many children are still found 'out of school'. In addition, a large section of children although get enrolled in school but drop out before completion of their elementary education. These children also include the urban deprived children who along with their rural counterpart experience exclusion from schooling system to a large extent.

In today's world, globalization has resulted in substantial dependence on market economy that in turn has accelerated the process of industrialization and urbanization. India like other countries has witnessed steady increase in urbanization (Govinda, 1995). It has also witnessed fast growth of urban population but has also experienced an uneven growth of urbanization leaving large part of rural hinterland underdeveloped and devoid of any essential facilities including education. As a result of this, many people migrate into urban area for availing these facilities. Table 1 has provided the trend in urbanisation during post-independence period.

Table 1: Urban Population in India: Decadal Change

Year	Urban Population (millions)	Decadal increase	Urban to total Population (percentage)	Decadal urban growth (percentage)
1951	62.44	18.29	17.29	41.42
1961	78.94	13.50	17.97	26.41
1971	109.11	30.17	19.91	38.23
1981	159.46	50.35	23.34	46.14
1991	217.18	57.72	25.72	36.19
2001	286.12	68.98	27.82	31.47
2011	377.11	90.99	31.16	31.8

Source: Census of India, different years

Although on one hand, rapid urbanisation has benefited by the countries located in developed world, the developing countries including India have experienced considerable inequalities which has attributed to currently persisting rural urban dichotomy. According to the decadal census, the urban population in India has increased from 159 million in 1981 to 285 million in 2001 which accounted for around 30 per cent of total population in India. This has further increased to more than 377 million in 2011 constituting 31.16 per cent of the total population, showing 1.16 per cent increase from 2001 census. However, despite increase in population, the quality of life of many people in urban area is still far from satisfactory as there has been substantial increase in urban slums which are mostly devoid of basic facilities jeopardising the socio-economic equity in urban areas. This unequal situation has aggravated more during Covid pandemic period with a drastic influence on education of children particularly those already living in vulnerable situations. These children have faced more challenges and barriers to access learning opportunities.

India is home to the 19 per cent of total children of the world. According to 2011 census, India has 472 million children of 0-18 years old out of which 128.5 million children were living in

urban areas at the time of census which was 34percent of the total urban population. Out of these, 52.7percent are male and 47.3percent are female which is little less than national average (52.4 percentmales and 47.6percent females). The children in urban areas constitute 27.2 per cent of total child population of country, as per 2011 census. Altogether 26 percent of the total population in urban area belongs to the age group of 0-14 years while in rural India their population is 33percent.A huge proportion of children in rural as well as urban areas belong to poor households. As per a recent report "Nearly half (47.9 percent) of the Indian households that have more than five children been severely deprived of shelter, water, sanitation, health and education as compared to 7.8 per cent of poor families without children, according to the latest Indian Human Development Survey released on May 11, 2019" (Ali, 2019, para. 2). The report further states that "in rural areas, the poverty rate of households with children is 25 per cent and those without children is 10 per cent; in urban areas the difference is comparatively low: 13 per cent and 4 per cent respectively" (Ali, 2019, para. 10). So, it is a matter of concern that being poor, a large number of children in rural and urban areas both remain deprived of different basic needs including education though education has become a fundamental right for children of 6-14 years of age according to the Right to Education Act, 2009 which is being implemented in India since 2010.

Objectives of the paper

With the above backdrop, this paper (a) deals with the universalisation of elementary education in urban area with a special focus on education of children from urban deprived group. It (b) reflects on present status of elementary education in urban areas and what are different educational opportunities are available for children living in urban areas.In doing so, the paper (c) draws on recent data to map the access and participation rates of children in urban areas. The paper also (d) attempts to examine whether the schools in urban areas are equipped with essential physical and academic facilities to provide quality education and (e)the emerging challenges with respect to the universalisation of elementary education in urban areas.

Methodology

The paper starts with some discussions on earlier researches to reflect on basic issues that are involved in elementary education in urban area.For the purpose of writing this paper, different documents and reports have been used which are available in the websites as well as in the library. Apart from these documents, the existing educational opportunities for children from urban deprived group have been discussed with the help of available secondary data like NSSO, UDISE, etc.

Earlier Researches

It is evident from different studies and reports (Govinda& Bandyopadhyay, 2011a, 2019) that the enrolment in urban as well as in rural areas has increased rapidly but there is a substantial gap between primary and upper primary schooling even in urban area. Getting enrolled in a primary school does not guaranty poor child to complete his or her schooling. Increased enrolment is compromised by persistently high rates of dropout and poor attendance of children (Govinda& Bandyopadhyay, 2011b; Bandyopadhyay, 2019) although the situation is relatively better in

urban area as compared to rural areas. Like in rural areas, Girls constitute a large proportion of drop out and out of school children also in urban areas (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2011a; Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2011; Bandyopadhyay, 2019).

Inequalities in education in urban area like rural area also interface with other forms of social inequality, notably caste, gender, ethnicity and religion. Girls from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Muslim minorities particularly constitute the population of out of school and dropout children in urban area (Bandyopadhyay, 2019). There are also considerable inter-state variations in terms of educational facilities in urban area with an impact on enrolment and drop out in great extent. In addition to different Government reports (NSSO, 2015 & 2019; IIPS & ICF, 2017), several studies (Sinha & Reddy, 2011; Aggarwal & Chugh, 2003; Chugh, 2021) have also found that the children in urban areas particularly from urban slums and poor households remain never enrolled and also drop out due to various reasons which have been discussed later. Many of them do not learn adequately and remain at the risk of dropout or they do not get any benefit of their education even after completion of five year of schooling.

Further, the distressed seasonal migration from the rural to urban is very common in India. This has a drastic effect on the quality of life and schooling of the children of these migrants. In addition, there may be a large section of people living in abject poverty in urban slums and education of children is not a priority for them at this moment. Several studies (Khasnabis & Chatterjee, 2007; Tsujita, 2009; Jha & Jhingran, 2002) point out that many urban deprived children living in slums remain deprived of quality education that impacts on their access as well as regular school participation. In addition, majority of urban deprived children are first generation learners and they have no proper environment in home that can encourage them to attend school. Many of them are enrolled in school but neither attends regularly nor learns effectively. Engagement of these children in wage labours to contribute to family income as well as hampers their study and deters them from attending school regularly.

During the last few decades, India has experienced significant increase in literacy rate. It is to be noted that, while the total literacy rate in 2011 is 84 per cent in urban area, it is around 68 per cent in rural area with around a gap of 16 percentage points. This gap was almost double just two decades back. The literacy rate has improved 9.21 during following decade of 2001-2011. The proportions of literate males and females both are much higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas and their proportions have increased steadily in every census. A spectacular increase is evident in case of literacy rate of urban female during the last twenty years resulting in narrowing down the gender gap in literacy rates in rural as well as urban areas. Similar trend is also visible in data presented by NSSO including the recent one of 2017-18 in which urban literacy rate has further increased to around 88 per cent which was 8 per cent in 2007. During the same period female literacy rate has shown an increase from 78 per cent to 83 per cent.

Other sources of data such as the NFHS III (2005-06) and NFHS IV (2015-16) also have shown a similar increasing trend in literacy of 15-49 age groups. When male literacy rate has increased from 88 per cent to 91 per cent, the female literacy rate has also become 91.4 per cent from 75 per cent during these periods between two NFHSs (IIPS & Marco International, 2007; IIPS & ICF, 2017). However, it is noticeable that, males are in more advantageous situation than females even there has been substantial improvement in their literacy rate. While the gap in literacy rate

between rural and urban males was only around 8 per cent, it is around 20 percentage points for females.

It is expected that, growth of literate population might have helped to fuel the demand for education for all children particularly girls living in rural as well as in urban areas. This in turn has resulted in increase in enrolment and retention of children not only at primary level but also at middle and above level.

Elementary Schooling in Urban Area

Along with improvements in literacy, as mentioned above, India has witnessed significant increase in primary as well as upper primary enrolments. The recent data suggest that, there has been considerable increase in participation of children in school because of increase in enrolment and decline in dropout rate over the years. This improvement could not take place without an enabling policy guidelines and schemes that have been introduced from time to time. It is worthwhile to mention the key suggestions of policy documents and schemes with respect to expansion of education in urban areas with a special focus on urban deprived groups.

Policy Interventions:

Historically speaking, all earlier policy documents including NPE 1986 have emphasised on gender and social equity in education right from the beginning of school education and several strategies were undertaken to bring these children within the education system. These strategies included formal as well as non-formal and special programmes like Janshala, Janbodh, National Child Labour Project, etc. Subsequently, different centrally sponsored schemes including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Samagra Shiksha, all have focused on urban deprived groups and special provisions are being made for their education. As it is, understandable that the right of these children has also been upheld by the RTE Act 2009 which facilitated inclusion of these children in formal education system. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, has included urban deprived groups within 'Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)' mentioning that the chances for these children remaining deprived of education is high because of their socio-economic conditions and these children include migrant communities, low-income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor.

Present Status of Access and Expansion of Schooling Facilities

Although the situation has improved more in urban area but still eight per cent (Table 2) people remain never enrolled at the time of 75th NSSO survey (GoI, 2019). The proportion of such persons is more than double i.e. around 16 per cent in rural area. It is also to be noted that despite improvement, 46.5 per cent urban respondents against 40 per cent in rural area reported that they were not attending their educational institutions though they were enrolled in the past academic year.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of persons of age 3 to 35 years by enrolment status all-India

	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Never Enrolled	12.6	19.3	15.7	7.1	9.6	8.3
Enrolled in the past academic year and currently not attending	40.9	39.7	40.3	45.8	47.4	46.5
Enrolled in the current academic year and currently not attending	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Currently attending	46.1	40.7	43.5	46.7	42.6	44.8
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India. NSS 75th Round: July, 2017- June, 2018, GoI, 2019

The situation was almost same at the time of 71st NSSO (GoI, 2015) according to which, “In rural areas the percentages of never enrolled in age group 5-29 years were approximately double than that of their urban counterparts” (p. 28).” Both surveys have provided different reasons that influenced enrolment in schools. Although, the age group of sample population is different in these 71st and 75th surveys but while comparing the proportion of persons remained never enrolled due to different reasons, one may see that there has been significant decline in proportion of students who remained never enrolled because of lack of interest in education, financial constraints, engagement in domestic chores, economic activities etc. both in rural as well as urban areas, but a considerable proportion of persons remained never enrolled because of distance of schools in urban areas according to 75th survey (see Table 3). Another important reason which determined enrolment in school has been absence of tradition of education in the community.

Table3: Percentage of never-enrolment by reasons for non-enrolment

	for persons aged 5-29 years (71st NSSO)		For persons of age 3 to 35 years (75 th NSSO)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not interested in education	29.50	27.10	14.5	15.7
Financial constraints	32.80	30.00	19.4	16.5
Engaged in domestic activities	3.80	13.40	0.8	7.9
Engaged in economic activities	6.90	1.10	3.2	1.2
School is far off	0.40	1.70	14.5	15.7
Marriage*	-	0.40	-	0.5
No tradition in the community	2.20	6.30	1.7	6.4
Other reasons	24.30	20.00	59.1	50.4

*This reason was meant for females only

Source: NSSO 71st Round June 2014 and NSSO 75th Round 2017-18

Even according to 71st NSSO, higher proportion of households in rural as well as urban areas had better access to primary schools, while it was just opposite in case of upper primary schools. While 92.5 per cent households in urban areas and 94 per cent households in rural areas have primary schools within one km of distance but in case of upper primary schools, while 83 per cent of urban households had schooling facilities for upper primary education within 1 km of distance, only 66 per cent of rural households have access for upper primary education within 1 km of distance.

The increase in number of elementary schools continued during subsequent period as well. One can observe in Table 4 that, out of the total 14.3 lakh schools only around 15.96 per cent are located in urban areas and there has been no significant increase in this percentage during last three years. It is also to be noted that there are 1.25 million schools in rural areas and although around 86.9 per cent of these schools have primary section but only 42.1 per cent has upper primary sections in it. The situation with respect to availability of upper primary sections is much better in urban areas where out of 0.22 million schools, 63.9 per cent are functioning with upper primary sections. This makes much easier for children to transit from primary to upper primary schools in urban area and they have higher chances of retention for longer period of time and better attendance rate as compared to their counterparts in rural areas. So, it is understandable that, although proportion of schools in urban areas is much less as compared to rural areas, but urban areas have higher proportion of composite schools than rural areas, where higher proportion of primary and upper primary schools are stand-alone schools.

Table 4: Distribution of Primary and Upper Primary Schools in Rural and Urban Area

		Schools Have Primary Section	% Share	Schools have UP Section	% Share	All Schools have Primary & UP Sec.	% share
2019-20	Rural	1050203	86.88	509037	42.11	1208820	84.04
	Urban	202236	88.10	150481	65.56	229540	15.96
	Total	1252439	87.07	659518	45.85	1438360	1438360
2018-19	Rural	1055584	84.30	506550	40.45	1252137	84.74
	Urban	196471	87.14	144064	63.90	225459	15.26
	Total	1252055	84.74	650614	44.03	1477596	1477596
	Urban	197387	86.81	142965	62.87	227383	15.29
	Total	1258859	84.66	645382	43.40	1487000	1487000

Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE, 2019-20

There has been a considerable expansion of schooling space through composite or integrated schools. While, the proportion of composite schools which provide primary to higher secondary education is around 10.01 per cent in urban areas, the proportion of such schools is only 3.03 per cent in rural areas. It is also to be noted that, the proportion of composite elementary schools is also much higher in urban areas (11.83 per cent) than rural areas (3.72 per cent). One of the reasons of such disparity in schooling facilities may be prevalence of higher proportion of private schools in urban area which mostly provide education starting from early grade till higher secondary grades.

Expansion of educational facilities has considerably impacted on completion of elementary as well as whole school education. According to 75th NSSO data, there are still 31 per cent people in rural and 14 per cent people in urban areas are illiterate (Table 5). The proportion of person completed secondary and above levels becomes much higher in urban areas than rural areas indicating availability of better educational facilities in urban areas that facilitate more people to complete their schooling and continue higher education. It also reduces the chance of having high proportion of school dropouts and first-generation learners in schools.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of persons of age 15 years and above by highest level of education successfully completed

Highest level of education completed	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Not Literate	22.2	41.2	31.5	8.8	19.3	13.9
Literate up-to Primary	21.2	20.4	20.9	13.5	15.9	14.7
Middle	19.8	14.4	17.2	14.6	13.4	14.0
Secondary	17.3	12.5	15.0	20.4	17.9	19.2
Higher Secondary	12.0	7.6	9.9	18.1	15.1	16.6
Graduate and above	7.4	3.9	5.7	24.6	18.6	21.7

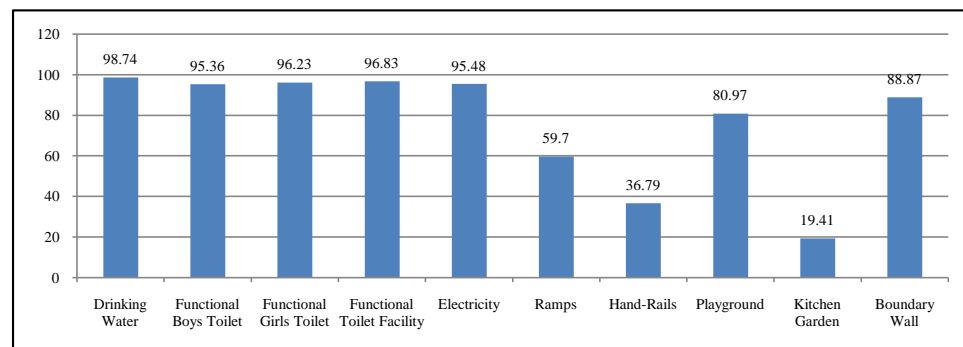
Source: Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India. NSS 75th Round: July, 2017- June, 2018, GoI, 2019

Above analysis reveals that urban areas have shown considerable improvement in enrollment that attributed to expansion of reach of primary and upper primary schooling facilities to its residents. It may be worthwhile to examine to what extent these schools have been provided with adequate physical facilities.

Availability of Physical and Academic Facilities

It is interesting to see in Figure 1, that, there are still some schools are functioning in urban areas without adequate facilities which might have affected the teaching learning process. Many schools are found without boundary wall playground and electricity connections. Some schools are still functioning with single teacher and without library and computer facility. Following section discusses this situation.

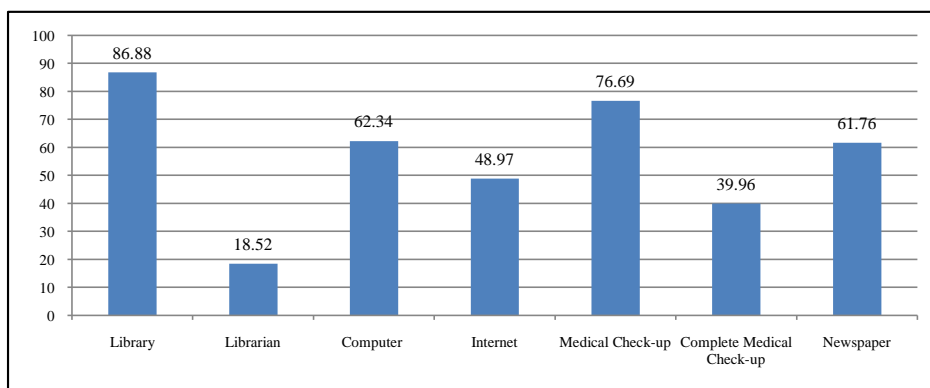
Figure 1: Availability of Essential Physical Facilities in Urban Area 2019-20



Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE, 2019-20

While almost all schools in urban area are approachable by all-weather roads and have essential facilities like drinking water and toilets, but altogether 19 per cent schools have not been provided with playground, 11 per cent schools are devoid of boundary wall, five per cent do not have electricity connection and around 40 per cent schools are functioning with without ramp. The situation is more alarming in case of availability of computer as well as internet facility and conducting of medical check-up (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of Schools with Essential Academic Facilities in Urban Areas 2019-20



Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE, 2019-20

Out of total schools (2,20184) located in urban area, as many as 67,440 or around 30 per cent schools have been established since 2002 (see Table 6). Out of these new schools, while around 92 per cent schools are in good condition, around 5 per cent need minor and only three per cent need major repair as highlighted in the DISE report of 2016-17 (NIEPA, 2018). The Table 6 also indicates that though around 2.8 per cent schools were functioning with single classroom but the proportion of such schools is around 12 per cent in case of those schools which have upper primary and secondary sections. However, a large number of schools did not receive school grants, TLM grants, were not visited by Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators and School Inspectors. In some schools, teachers were engaged in non-teaching activities.

Table 6: Percentage of Schools with Different Provisions and Its Utilisation in Urban Areas, 2016-17

Items	Primary only	Primary with UP	Primary with UP, Sec.& Hr. Sec	Upper Primary only	UP with Sec& Hr. Sec	Primary with UP& Sec	UP & Sec.	All Schools
Percentage of schools established Since 2002	29.20	37.75	20.99	28.8	10.60	33.35	28.67	30.63
Schools with Class	87.72	93.25	97.82	83.77	84.45	97.32	89.48	92.37

rooms in good condition								
schools having single classroom	4.49	0.50	0.55	1.15	3.57	0.64	12.94	2.83
Schools visited by CRC	46.59	36.69	21.40	45.59	43.70	22.64	37.82	38.49
Schools received School Grant	46.29	26.39	9.24	44.35	49.87	9.04	29.92	32.71
School Received TLM Grant	3.01	2.37	0.82	2.49	3.95	0.53	1.26	2.30
Schools utilised TLM Grants	93.94	91.03	88.49	99.51	93.21	85.28	93.17	92.22
Inspected during Previous Academic year	37.82	29.68	19.49	38.85	36.28	19.33	31.74	31.68
Residential Schools	2.99	5.34	6.18	6.74	6.47	5.33	5.36	4.65
Shift school	6.15	14.73	17.56	10.86	8.10	11.58	10.43	10.73
Average No. of Working days teachers spent on non-teaching tasks	16	20	22	15	16	19	11	19

Source: DISE, Analytical Report, Elementary Education in India, Urban Area. NIEPA, 2018

It is to be noted (Table 7) that average enrolment is lower in 'stand-alone' primary and upper primary schools than other integrated schools. There are still around two per cent schools with a single teacher and around one fifth of these schools have 50 and more enrolment. In addition to this, one can see in that there are many small schools in urban areas with fewer enrolment even less than 30. Although the proportion of such school is higher (29 per cent) in rural areas but around one fifth of primary schools in urban areas also have less than 30 children enrolled in it. On contrary, 17 per cent primary schools in urban areas have more than 200 students as against 5 per cent such schools functioning in rural areas.

Table 7: Status of School Indicators

	Primary Only	P With UP	P With UP and Sec. and Hr. Sec.	Upper Primary Only	UP with Sec. And Hr. Sec.	P with UP and Sec.	UP with Sec.	All Schools
Average enrolment	128	229	554	128	328	331	147	208
Percentage of enrolment in Single teachers Schools	4.85	1.23	0.32	7.12	0.22	1.07	1.43	1.91
Schools with 50 and more enrolment	34.41	13.30	4.16	26.69	11.28	6.12	26.38	21.11

Source: DISE, Analytical Report, Elementary Education in India, Urban Area NIEPA, 2018

Another important aspect of these schools is availability of classrooms for accommodating students. It is wondering to see that around three per cent schools in urban areas are functioning with single class room. Though around 4.5 per cent primary schools fall under this category but around 13 per cent schools providing upper primary and secondary education are also operating with single room. There are 32 per cent primary schools where SCR is more than 30 and

similarly it is more than 35 in 30 per cent upper primary schools indicating these schools are overcrowded. The data reveals that, 63.8 per cent children are enrolled in primary schools with SCR more than 30 and 56.81 per cent students are enrolled in upper primary schools where SCR is above 35.

The above analysis indicates the extent of unevenness in schooling facilities in terms of physical facilities like building, classrooms, boundary wall, playground etc.; basic facilities like drinking water, toilets etc. It has also revealed that the distribution of some academic facilities like computer, internet etc is much skewed across the country.

Availability of School Heads and Teachers

Provisioning of head teachers and qualified as well as trained teachers in schools is one of the important factors of school effectiveness. However, majority of the composite schools functioning with higher grades above primary have a school head to manage the schools on daily basis. It is to be noted that there is a considerable gap in availability of head teachers or principals in schools located in urban areas as there are only 53 per cent primary schools with 150 enrolments and 60 per cent upper primary schools with 100 enrolments have Head Masters/Principal indicating absence of leadership in these schools with high enrolment.

It is noticeable from Table 8 that, teachers working in primary schools account for the highest proportion to total teachers in rural areas but in urban areas, it is the composite schools where majority of teachers are employed. The highest proportions of teachers in urban area are posted in the composite schools which have primary to higher secondary sections in same school campus. The proportion of such schools is much higher in urban than rural areas where majority of teachers are recruited in stand-alone primary schools.

Table 8: Distribution of Teachers in Different Categories of Schools, 2018-19

Location	Primary Only	Primary with Upper Primary	P with UP Sec And H Sec	P with UP and Sec Only	Upper Primary Only	UP and Sec	UP,Sec and Higher Sec	All Schools Having Pr and Upper Pr Sec
Rural	35.69	25.57	10.41	8.40	7.33	5.36	7.24	6363912
Urban	16.59	24.77	27.35	16.19	1.99	4.25	8.85	2408978
Total	30.38	25.33	15.16	10.57	5.85	5.05	7.66	8816550

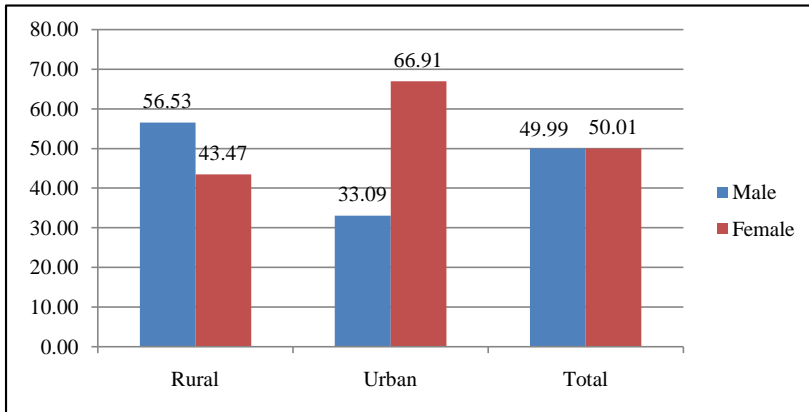
Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE 2018-19

Teachers by Nature of Appointment in Urban Area

Around 16.59 per cent of teachers work in 'only primary' schools in urban areas which include around 10 per cent single teacher schools. The proportion of regular teachers is also lowest in these schools. It has already been discussed that the overall teacher pupil ratio (22) is not that adverse in urban areas. While 87 per cent teachers are working as regular teacher, around 12 percent are contract and 1 percent is part time teachers. It is to be noted that contract teachers and

part time teachers account for highest proportion in the integrated schools as per recent UDISE data.

Figure 3: Gender Wise Distribution of Teachers in Rural and Urban Areas

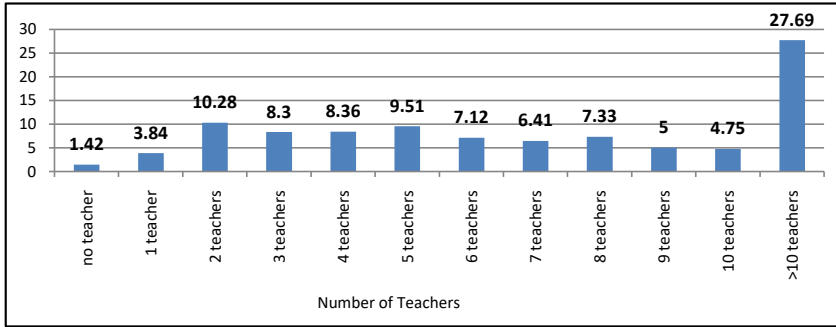


Source: UDISE+, MoE, 2018-19

The recent data reveals (Figure 3) that the proportion of female teachers is much higher in urban areas than rural areas which depends on availability of qualified female teachers. It is also to be noted that while the proportion of female teachers (see Figure 3) is less than male teachers in all stand alone and composite types of schools in rural areas, in urban areas, the proportion of female teachers is much higher than their male counterparts. In urban areas, although the overall proportion of female teachers is around 66 per cent, but in the primary schools their proportion is more than 70 per cent. However, their proportion declines considerably in schools which are providing higher level of education. It is noticeable that their proportion is only 54 per cent in schools providing upper primary education and 56 per cent in those which include upper primary along with secondary level and 54 per cent in schools providing upper primary, secondary and higher secondary education.

The Figure 4 reveals that, it is only 27 per cent schools in urban area which have more than 10 teachers to teach. However, majority of such schools are integrated Schools providing primary to higher secondary education and these which are providing upper primary to higher secondary grade. On contrary, altogether only seven per cent ‘only primary’ Schools have more than 10 teachers in it. It is also to be noted while seven per cent primary schools have single teachers and two per cent have two teachers. The proportion of such schools is negligible small in case of composite schools. It is disheartening to see around seven per cent upper primary schools are single teacher schools with 11 per cent and 16 per cent more are functioning with two and three teachers respectively. It is mentioned worthy that upper primary school needs subject specific teachers for which data are not available.

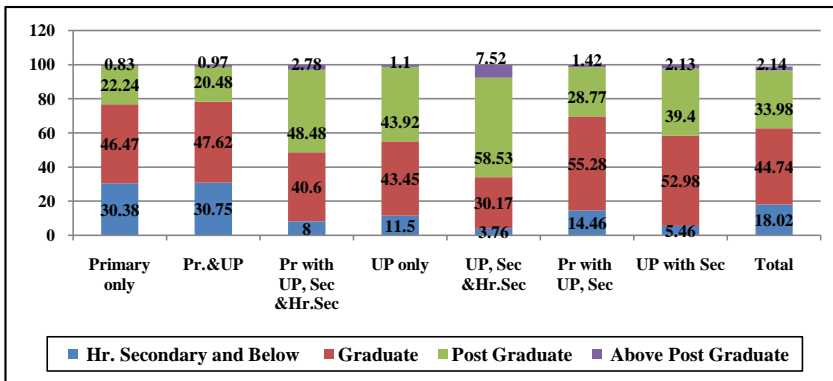
Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Schools by Number of Teachers



Source: DISE, Analytical Report, Elementary Education in India, Urban Area NIEPA, 2018

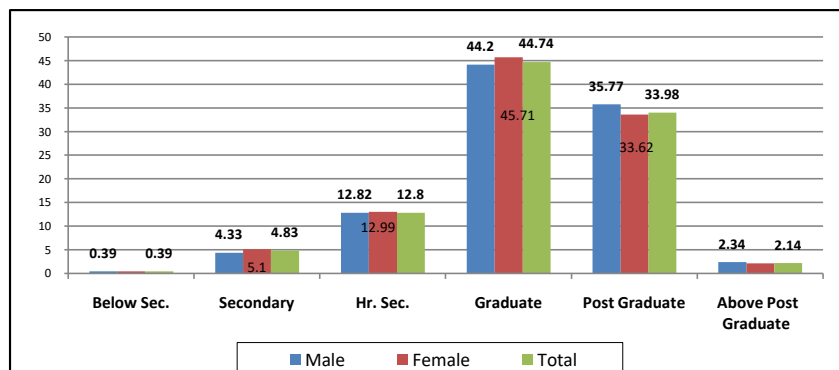
There has been considerable variation with respect to distribution of qualified and trained teachers among different types of schools (see Figure 5). While primary and elementary schools have around 30 per cent of low qualified teachers who have qualification of higher secondary and below, the proportion of such teachers in composite schools teaching students of higher grades is considerably low. These schools have been provided with higher proportion of graduate and postgraduate teachers. Similar observation can be made regarding the distribution of trained teachers. Figure 6 shows that quite a substantial proportion of female teachers pose higher qualification as 45 percent female teachers are graduates and 34 percent are post graduates. The proportion of male teachers is little higher in case of post graduate teachers.

Figure 5: Distribution of Teachers in Different Types of Schools by their Academic Qualification



Source: DISE, Analytical Report, Elementary Education in India, Urban Area. NIEPA, 2016-17

Figure 6: Distribution of Male and Female Teachers by their Academic Qualification



Source: DISE, Analytical Report, Elementary Education in India, Urban Area. NIEPA, 2016-17

One of the important issues has been rapid privatization of school education particularly in urban areas. The Table 9 indicates that there has been a declining trend in share of government schools, its enrolment and proportion of teachers in urban areas. Although similar trend is also visible in case of overall situation but the situation is more in favour of privatisation in urban areas.

Table 9: Management Wise Distribution of Schools, Enrolment and Teachers in Urban and Total Areas in 2018-19

		Number of Schools with Elementary Sections	Percentage	Number of Enrolments in Elementary Schools	Percentage	Number of Teachers in Schools with Elementary Sections	Percentage
Urban	All Govt.	77832	34.52	12427184	25.25	635767	26.39
	Govt. Aided	21813	9.68	6235480	12.67	277141	11.50
	All Pvt.	111671	49.53	28700182	58.31	1400145	58.12
	Others	14130	6.27	1857588	3.77	95925	3.98
	Total (N=100)	225446	225446	49220434	49220434	2408978	2408978
All Areas	All Govt.	1053733	71.32	102671176	55.65	4690223	53.20
	Govt. Aided	69816	4.73	13657431	7.40	676819	7.68
	All Pvt.	299115	20.24	61152890	33.15	3102095	35.18
	Others	54818	3.71	7015699	3.80	347413	3.94
	Total (N=100)	1477482	1477482	184497196	184497196	8816550	8816550

Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE, 2018-19

Gender and Social Equity in Enrolment

It has already been mentioned that, urban areas have witnessed considerable improvement in educational access accompanied by increase in number of schools and enrolment. However,

despite this improvement, many children from poor and socially disadvantaged groups especially girls still remain deprived of education as shown in the Table 10 and 11. The proportion of girls is much lower in case of composite schools covering from first grade to secondary and higher secondary grades (see Table 10) as compared to other 'stand-alone' schools, though over the years, girls' proportion has shown slight increasing trend in these schools. The situation regarding girls' education is quite alarming as revealed by Table 11 and their proportion is only 46 percent among general category population indicating substantial gender gap.

Table 10: Percentage of Girls' Enrolment to Total Enrolment by School Category

Urban	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
PS (I-V)	48.69	48.86	48.64	48.65	48.64
UPS (I-VIII)	46.83	46.80	46.63	46.57	46.58
HSS (I-XII)	45.30	45.61	45.64	45.71	45.78
UPS (VI-VIII)	52.78	52.57	52.46	52.35	52.59
HSS (VI-XII)	47.91	48.36	49.06	48.94	48.87
SS (I-X)	43.75	44.83	44.78	45.30	45.55
SS (VI-X)	49.67	50.52	50.12	50.31	50.32
SS (IX-X)	49.14	51.25	51.25	51.60	51.26
HSS (IX-XII)	47.62	48.06	48.14	48.54	49.52
HSS (XI-XII)	47.75	48.60	47.78	48.91	49.94
Total	47.16	47.24	47.14	47.21	47.30

Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE

Table 11: Percentage of Total Enrolment Social Category

		General	OBC	SC	ST
Primary	Total	40.87	40.14	14.74	4.25
	Girls	46.40	46.93	47.65	46.78
Upper Primary	Total	40.53	39.81	14.98	4.68
	Girls	46.37	47.57	48.59	47.73
Elementary	Total	40.74	40.02	14.83	4.41
	Girls	46.39	47.17	48.00	47.16

Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE 2018-19

As Table 12 indicates the proportion of enrolment of SC and ST students is much higher in government schools than private schools at the upper primary level but it is just reverse in case of primary schools. Non-availability of upper primary private schools in nearby area also may be another reason for abrupt decline in proportion of these children in private schools as it requires their parents to spend money on transportation to schools.

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Table 12: Percentage of SC and SC Enrolment in Schools by Management

Urban	SC Enrolment				ST Enrolment			
	Primary Classes		Upper Primary Classes		Primary Classes		Upper Primary Classes	
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.
2016-17	37.10	48.50	42.32	35.18	36.11	49.89	42.66	38.73
2017-18	35.17	50.30	41.44	36.45	34.61	50.68	42.57	38.41
2018-19	35.81	49.98	41.38	36.43	33.09	49.98	41.08	39.63

Source: UDISE+, Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE

Trend and Reasons of Dropout

It is widely acknowledged that dropout of learners has been an important reason for not achieving the universalisation of elementary education in rural as well as urban areas. The UDISE provides average annual dropout rate which indicates that currently the average annual dropout rate in urban areas for all children is only 2.21 per cent and for girls it is 2.32 per cent at the primary level but it was only 0.29 per cent one year back. It is to be noted that the average annual dropout rate has increased substantially from around 8 per cent in 2014-15 to 13 per cent in 2016-17 at the secondary level. This rate is 12.52 per cent for girls and 13.66 per cent for boys indicating boys are more at the risk of dropout in urban areas.

According to recent 75th NSSO, altogether 42.1 per cent respondents under the age group of 3 to 35 years who got enrolled in the past academic year were not attending school at the time of survey. The share of boys is slightly higher among such persons i.e. 42.3 per cent as compared to girls i.e. 41.8 per cent. It is to be noted that a considerable proportion of sample respondents reported that they had to discontinue their education even before entering secondary schools and proportion of such people is quite high in urban area though it is much less as compared to rural area. Similarly, as informed by NFHS IV 2015-16, around 95.2 per cent boys in the age group of 6-10 years old were attending school while the percentage share of school going boys declined to 89 per cent in case of 11-14 years age group. The proportion of school going girls has been little lower than boys in case of both age groups, for 6-10 years age group, it is 95 per cent (only 2 per cent less than boys) and in case of 11-14 years age group it is 87.5 per cent. This indicates, many children, girls as well as boys do not continue their study after primary education. These proportions further decline in case of children of 15-17 years old indicating more dropout after completion of elementary education.

Major reasons for not attending schools both for boys and girls in rural as well as in urban area are lack of interest in studies which affected the education of boys more than girls. Apart from this, higher costs, engagement in work on farm and family business and also for payment in cash/kind while reasons like engagement in household chores, marriage, sibling care etc. have prevented more girls than boys from attending their schools in rural and urban areas both. Many of these children actually could not afford to avail school due to poverty which compelled them to work in home or outside rather than going to school. It is to be noted that there are several school or system related reasons which also have excluded some children from schools. These are, lack of proper schooling facilities, lack of safety, absence of female teachers, repeated failures, not getting admission etc. and out of these, apart from 'repeated failure' all other

reasons affected more girls than boys. These issues need to be addressed by education system in order to promote an inclusive school education in rural as well as urban areas.

Child Labour and their Education

The children who are engaged in different wage labour activities are most likely belonging to the urban poor section and as mentioned above, economic reasons along with other factors deter these children from attending schools. As per the Census 2011, the total child population in India in the age group (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Of these, 10.1 million (3.9percent of total child population) are working, either as ‘main worker’ or as ‘marginal worker’. However, the incidence of child labour has decreased in India by 2.6 million between 2001 and 2011 which might have been possible because of reduction in poverty and increase in awareness of people. It is understandable that, most of these working children whether they are living in rural or urban areas remain deprived of education. In 2001, around 1.79 percent (1020600) working children were found not attending any education while 0.53 percent (300824) working children were enrolled in an educational institution. In addition, there are some children specially girls who are not being able to attend any education due to various other reasons including sibling care. Lack of child care facilities in urban area affects poor children’ education drastically because in most cases their both parents work and cannot afford to avail the costly child care facility, available in private organizations. According to the DISE data coverage of pre-school education is very low at present. In urban area, around 39.4 per cent schools currently are providing pre-school education. Moreover, the proportion of pre-primary education is comparatively low in government schools than private schools making it more difficult for elder sibling from poor family attend the schools as poor are more likely to avail government provided institutions. Less enrolment in pre-school section also affects primary education to some extent.

Table 13: Distribution of working children by type of work in 2011

Area of work	Total Numbers (in millions)	Percentage	Rural (per cent)	Urban (per cent)
Cultivators	2.63	26.0	31.5	5.5
Agricultural labourers	3.33	32.9	39.9	4.9
Household industry workers	0.52	5.2	4.7	7.2
Other workers	3.62	35.8	23.9	83.4
Total (N=100)	10.1	-	8.1	2.0

Source: Census of India 2011

Does Poverty Influence Schooling of Children in Urban Areas?

Many scholars have already explained that educational access and participation is considerably linked with poverty and it is not an exception for children residing in urban areas specially those who are living in urban slums. It has already been mentioned above that, many children remained never enrolled and had to drop-out because of financial constraints as they could not afford to get education or they had to get engaged in wage labour or family occupation instead of attending school. According to NFHS IV (GoI, 2017), “Educational attainment increases with household wealth. However, females in poorer households face more deprivation and exclusion from educational opportunities as compared to their male counterparts. Females in the lowest

wealth quintile have completed a median of 0 years of schooling, compared with a median of 9.1 years for females in the highest wealth quintile. The median number of years of schooling was 2.9 years among males in the lowest wealth quintile and 9.9 years among those in the highest quintile.” NFHS has not provided data for rural and urban area separately but 71st NSSO has provided such data.

Table 14: Gross and NET Attendance Ratio (per cent) for different levels of education for each quintile class of UMPCE

quintile class of UMPCE	GAR				NAR			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
1	100	88	101	77	78	56	77	52
2	102	89	101	89	85	64	85	63
3	105	100	105	94	88	68	87	70
4	106	93	102	100	90	73	88	74
5	101	96	102	91	89	76	89	70
All	102	93	102	88	85	67	84	64

Source: NSS Report No. 575: Education in India, Round 71, 2014, MSPI, pp. A-108

There has been considerable gap in current attendance and enrolment status of persons across the quintile class of UMPCE (Monthly Per Capita Expenditure) in urban areas which has been highlighted in following Table 14. It is visible that, the proportion of currently not attending population in the age group of 5-29 year is also higher in case of bottom quintile class than the highest one both in rural and urban areas. The situation of class and gender wise attendance becomes more prominent in terms of GAR and NAR for each quintile class of UMPCE. It is clearly visible that there has been considerable gender gap in GAR and NAR in urban areas. While the GAR at the primary stage for urban males is above 100, at the upper primary level, it is 93. Similar declining trend is noticed in case of GAR of females from higher to bottom quintile class of UMPCE particularly in case of upper primary level. Although, NAR is much lower than the GAR but the trend is almost similar in case of NAR too, indicating considerable gender disparity at the primary and upper primary levels even in urban areas.

Impact on Education during Pandemic

The novel corona-virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has left the urban poor in India poorer, hungrier and with less nutrition with considerable impact on their health. The closure of schools during pandemic severely impacted the schooling of children particularly from vulnerable groups like urban slums resulted in a huge gap in their learning. Many children started working and child marriage also was rampant during this period. These children lost the most in terms of educational needs particularly because of no access to digital devices which forces them to discontinue their study (Cerna, Rutigliano&Mezzanotte 2020). According to ASER (2021) only 8% of children in rural areas and 25% of children in urban areas studied online regularly. Even those who were online found it difficult to follow the curriculum and had connectivity issues. It

was also revealed by the survey that 65.4% teachers flagged the problem of children being “unable to catch up” as one of their biggest challenges.

Conclusion

The above analysis reveals that the educational facilities in urban area are quite unevenly distributed. Government schools in urban area cater to more students from poorer background but these schools are not always well equipped. This may affect poor and marginal groups to educate their children. Proper planning for each city as well as small towns is the need of the hour. All measures to remove the rural urban dichotomy have to be taken up with more seriousness. At the same time, child tracking system, which have been taken up by some states can also be introduced particularly for urban children since many children reportedly remain never enrolled and some drop out before the completion of elementary education and these children are mostly those who are living in difficult circumstances in urban area. There is a strong association between poverty and schooling in urban area as majority of dropout and never-enrolled children belong to low-income group and are already engaged in labour-force which is one of the major reasons for not attending school. The facilities like child care and preschool education are to be provided in the urban area where both parents work and remain away from home for longer hour to earn a meager amount.

Education of these poor children, who belong to urban deprived group, cannot be seen in isolated manner and coordination among different departments to improve the quality of life of children needs to be considered. Their right to education and other social services should be addressed accordingly. It is important to take appropriate actions to fulfill the dreams and aspiration of poor children and their parents living in urban area as well. For example, it is required to take up some community-based activities even in urban area. The Ward Committees are to be developed and activated with more attention on their capacity building. Since these children are most likely to bear the brunt of urban development and many of them are not in position to protect themselves from various evil practices like rigorous child labour, trafficking, engagement in begging, sexual exploitations etc. which affect their physical and emotional wellbeing, special provisions are to be made for safe and secured hostel facilities. It is more needed to address the challenges because of covid pandemic. In addition, provisioning of access to quality education in urban area cannot be neglected any more. Although the schools are better equipped in urban areas as compared to schools located in rural area but above analysis has indicated that the situation is far from satisfactory. Following NEP 2020 policy guidelines, more proactive and coordinated actions are to be taken by involving different actors, responsible for holistic development of children.

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