

# Gender Inequality in Educational Expenditure in India

Anindita Dey

Assistant Professor, SBSS Mahavidyalaya, Goaltore, West Bengal, India

Email: [aninditadey\[at\]sbssmahavidyalaya.ac.in](mailto:aninditadey[at]sbssmahavidyalaya.ac.in)

**Abstract:** *Gender inequality in educational expenditure by the household is a major problem in India as the perceived economic return from women's education is low. The present study tries to explore the nature of gender bias in terms of educational expenditure using 75<sup>th</sup> round National Sample Survey data. Coefficient of inequality values have been calculated to show inequality between the sexes. The study reveals that gender inequality is more in rural areas than urban areas and it is more prominent in terms of spending on private coaching. The spatial pattern shows that except Kerala in all other states households spend more on men's education than on women and the gender inequality is much higher in the north Indian states than the southern states.*

**Keywords:** Gender, inequality, coefficient of inequality, educational expenditure.

## 1. Introduction

Gender inequality in education is a long persisting problem in India. Over the time, enrolment of girls in different stages of education and in different courses of education has improved narrowing down the existing gender gap in participation but discrimination in terms of educational expenditure still exist. Expenditure on education is a social expenditure made in two ways: institutional and individual. Individual expenditure refers to the expenditure made by students or by their parents. It is also called as household expenditure. According to the *Constitution of India*, education is expected to be provided free to everyone irrespective of their caste, class, or religion. But it has been found that students and families in India spend huge amount of money for acquiring it because public expenditure in education is very limited in our country. "Even the poorer households are found to be feeling the compulsion to spend considerable amounts of their meagre income on education in terms of tuition and other fees, other payments to schools and other necessary expenditure on textbooks, stationary, uniforms transport etc" (Tilak, 2009).

In India, parents are reluctant to spend equal amount of money for their daughter's education as they spend for son's education as the perceived economic return to their education for the natal family is very low or nil. This is the reason why girls are less likely to be sent to private schools as it demands more investment (Dre`ze and Sen, 1995). G. Kingdom (2003) have examined the issue of the intra - household allocation of educational expenditure using the Human Development Survey data (2005) covering both rural and urban areas. Their analysis reveals that the gender bias increases with age and it is greater in middle school age group (10 - 14 years) than primary school age group (5 - 9 years) and still greater in secondary school age group (15 - 19 years). They also found that girls are generally sent to fee - free government schools and boys to free - charging private schools. This gender discrimination in household expenditure on education has also led to the underrepresentation of women in professional education. Thus, because of gender bias in parental expenditure on education, women education in India suffers both in rural and urban areas (Pandey and Talwar, 2022). The

present study seeks to analyse the nature and extend of gender inequality in educational expenditure in India.

## Objectives

The objectives of the present study are as follows –

- 1) To find out the extend of gender inequality in household expenditure on education by different levels of education.
- 2) To find out the rural - urban difference in terms of gender inequality in educational expenditure.
- 3) To find out the nature of gender inequality in educational expenditure by MPCE classes, social groups, and religious groups.
- 4) To find out the spatial pattern of gender inequality in educational expenditure.

## 2. Database and Methodology

The study is based on 75<sup>th</sup> round National Sample Survey data on 'Household Social Consumption of Education in India', 2017 - 18.

To show gender inequality in educational expenditure, Coefficient of inequality (C. I. E.) values have been calculated using the following formula,

$$C. I. E. = (E_m - E_f) / E_T$$

Where, C. I. E. represents coefficient of Inequality,  $E_m$  is mean annual expenditure on education for male,  $E_f$  means mean annual expenditure on education for female and  $E_T$  refers to the total mean annual expenditure on education.

## 3. Analysis

### Gender Inequality in education expenditure by level of education

Table 1 is showing gender inequality in educational expenditure in terms of coefficient of inequality values for both rural and urban areas by student's level of education. It reveals that irrespective of the level of education, households spend lesser amount of money in women's education than

men. In rural areas, the average annual spending per student is 4812 rupees for females while it is 5579 rupees for males. Similarly, in case of urban areas the average annual spending in 17123 rupees for males while it is 15282 for females.

Moreover, gender inequality is higher in rural areas than urban areas. For example, in case of rural area the value of C. I. E. is 0.15 which is 0.11 for urban areas.

**Table 1:** Gender Inequality in education expenditure per student pursuing general course by level of education and location

Level of Education	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	C. I. E.	Male	Female	C. I. E.
Pre - primary	5879	5378	0.09	15370	13433	0.13
Primary	3780	3250	0.15	14000	12878	0.08
Upper Primary/ Middle	4267	3570	0.18	15986	14537	0.09
Secondary	6154	5479	0.12	18548	16210	0.13
Higher Secondary	9943	8106	0.20	25887	21081	0.20
Diploma below graduate	8017	9228	- 0.14	35785	10189	1.15
Graduate and above (including diploma graduate and above level)	12196	12371	- 0.01	19447	18147	0.07
All (incl. n. r.)	5579	4812	0.15	17123	15282	0.11

Source: Calculated from 75<sup>th</sup> round NSS data, 2017 - 18.

A further look into the level wise educational expenditure shows that at school level the inequality is highest for higher secondary level in both rural and urban area and there is not much rural urban difference. At higher secondary level students had to choose the stream of study where boys are mostly encouraged for science despite demanding higher investment especially in terms of books, laboratory requirements and private tuitions. On the other hand, to avoid economic burden, girls are encouraged to opt arts where expenditure on books, stationary and private tuitions are relatively lower. This is the reason why at higher secondary level gender inequality is higher. However, surprisingly for diploma education below graduate level and for graduate level education gender inequality is in favour of girls.

### Gender inequality in educational expenditure by type of expenditure

Expenditure on education by type of expenditure reveals more about the gender - bias in expenditure on education. Table 2 shows that in rural areas there is large gap in spending in terms of course fee, books and stationery, and transport. This may be because in rural areas, parents are sending their male child to the newly mushrooming distant private schools while girls are mostly attending neighbourhood government schools.

**Table 2:** Gender inequality in average annual educational expenditure per student pursuing general course by the type of expenditure

Type of expenditure	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	C. I. E.	Male	Female	C. I. E.
Course fee	2447	1996	0.20	9847	8759	0.12
Books, stationary, uniform	1414	1280	0.10	2574	2425	0.06
Transport	758	674	0.12	1741	1673	0.04
Private coaching	619	547	0.12	2203	1764	0.22
Other expenditure	340	316	0.07	759	661	0.14
Total expenditure	5579	4812	0.15	17123	15282	0.11

Source: Calculated from 75<sup>th</sup> round NSS data, 2017 - 18.

Gender bias in educational expenditure is highest in terms of private coaching in case of urban areas which means in urban areas parents spend much more for private coaching of sons than of daughters.

### Gender inequality in expenditure on education by socio - economic characteristics

Table 3 represents MPCE class wise expenditure of education for both males and females and coefficient of inequality values for both rural and urban areas. In case of rural areas, gender bias is more prominent among middle income group people while in case of urban areas gender bias increases as household income increases.

**Table 3:** Gender inequality in educational expenditure by MPCE class

UMPCE class	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	C. I. E.	Male	Female	C. I. E.
0 - 20	2720	2, 406	0.12	7158	6582	0.08
20 - 40	3786	3292	0.14	10461	9762	0.07
40 - 60	4638	3960	0.16	14827	13330	0.11
60 - 80	6233	5331	0.15	22058	19580	0.12
80 - 100	11103	9890	0.11	36888	11765	0.71

Source: Calculated from 75<sup>th</sup> round NSS data, 2017 - 18.

Social group wise household expenditure on education (Table 4) reveals that gender inequality is highest among scheduled tribe people as the value of coefficient of inequality is highest (0.232) than all the other social groups. However, in case of urban areas the gender bias is highest among 'others' and lowest among scheduled caste people.

**Table 4:** Gender inequality in educational expenditure per student pursuing general course by social group

Social Groups	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	C. I. E.	Male	Female	C. I. E.
ST	3570	2819	0.232	11248	10771	0.043
SC	4450	3898	0.132	10392	10004	0.038
OBC	5424	4727	0.136	14428	13075	0.098
Others	8227	7133	0.141	23671	20627	0.136

Source: Calculated from 75<sup>th</sup> round NSS data, 2017 - 18.

Religious group wise data on educational expenditure reveals that in rural areas gender bias is highest among Hindu people while it is lowest among Muslims. In case of urban areas, gender bias it highest among Muslims followed by Hindus. However, among Christian people in urban areas gender bias in educational expenditure is in favour of girls.

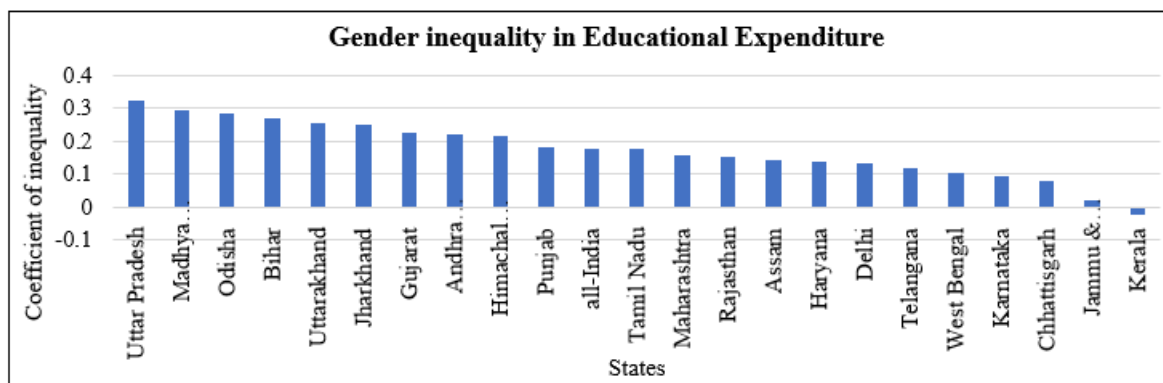
**Table 5:** Gender inequality in educational expenditure per student pursuing general course by social group

Religions	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	C. I. E.	Male	Female	C. I. E.
Hinduism	5567	4726	0.162	18063	16091	0.115
Islam	4305	4214	0.021	11911	10392	0.135
Christianity	6519	6096	0.067	16833	17146	- 0.018
Sikhism	14017	12415	0.120	28061	26203	0.068
All	5579	4812	0.146	17123	15282	0.113

Source: Calculated from 75<sup>th</sup> round NSS data, 2017 - 18.

### Spatial pattern of gender inequality in educational expenditure for students pursuing any course

Figure 1 represents state wise values of coefficient of inequality showing gender difference in educational expenditure. It reveals that gender inequality is very high in most of the EAG states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand etc. On the other hand, gender inequality is low in West Bengal, Karnataka, Telangana, Jammu and Kashmir etc. Kerala is the only state where expenditure on girls' education more than boys.

**Figure 1**

## 4. Conclusion

Gender bias in educational expenditure is a pertinent problem in India. The paper reveals that gender bias in educational expenditure irrespective of levels of education is higher in rural areas. While in rural areas, households spend more on books, stationary, and transport for boys, urban households spend more on private coaching for boys. Among social groups, gender bias is highest among scheduled tribe people in rural areas and it is lowest among schedule caste people in case of urban areas. Spatial pattern in educational expenditure shows that majority of north Indian states especially the EAG states have higher gender inequality than other states which mean that like other forms of discrimination against women, north Indian states are lagging behind in terms of gender inequality in educational expenditure as well. The study, therefore, suggests that type of expenditure and regions specific intervention is needed from the Government to eliminate gender inequality in educational expenditure.

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