

CHAPTER 7

Summary and Conclusions

- The study has been focused on the system of primary schooling in Paschim Medinipur District.
- Private schools are well organized and better equipped in terms of teachers and people-teacher ratio. But when the question of teacher's training arose, the public primary schools are much ahead of the private ones. Generally, the private schools have appointed more female teachers than the public schools. The percentage of teachers in private school is relatively higher in the private schools than the government schools. In urban private schools the representation of teachers from Scheduled castes (SC)/Scheduled Tribes (ST) / Other Backward Classes (OBC) is much reduced.
- In the private primary schools the average enrolment is found to be much higher than in the public primary schools.
- Generally, the children of upper class and caste background are admitted in private schools.
- Percentage of girls in total enrolment of the private schools is higher than that in public primary schools. SC/ST /OBC students and girls' students are enrolled in small numbers in urban schools than in rural schools.
- Private schools have not been following any specific or particular standard or uniform curriculum. They offer a wide range of subjects – which made these schools more attractive to parents. Generally parents believe that children should study some “extra” subjects to get ready for building future academic careers.

- In the private schools the total number of working days of schools is found to be higher than in the public schools. In public schools the number of working days is between 233-242 days, while it is between 219-260 days in most of the private schools.
- Parents' satisfaction over the performances of the teachers is relatively higher in the case of private schools than in the case of teachers in government schools. In private schools with better pupil teacher ratio, the teachers could take individual care of the children and concerned with the academic as well as many non- academic activities. Yet in some of the schools, the teachers were reported to have neglected the children from the low backgrounds.
- The average annual cost of schooling per child in the public school is not as high as in the private school.
- More than sixty percent students take private tuition, but quality of teaching by the private tutor is not satisfactory, it is reported.
- Maximum parents found that the cost of private schooling is far behind their abilities but they prefer private schools for their children because they believe that the private schools deliver better quality of English education along with other attractive academic facilities to their children.
- A large section of the parents' opines that they would have used the public schools, only if the quality of education is assured.
- As regards the process of governance in the schooling system, the scope for parents' participation is found to be much higher in the government/ public schools.
- The study analyzes the position of schools in terms of overall Quality of Education Index (QEI) which is the average of three components, namely, quality of Teaching (QTI), School Infrastructure Index (SII) and Learning Achievement Index (LAI). 44% of schools are below average performers but all of those are not laggards, 75% of the rural private schools are suffering with very low Quality of Education Index (QEI).

▪ **Students' enrolment** : Determining factors

To identify the factors that affect the enrolment of the students in different schools, we developed linear multiple regression models. The results of all these models are presented in the thesis in detail. Here we are presenting only the best model. After exclusion of the variables that do not have significant effect on the dependent variable, and inclusion of some other variables that are found to have strong association with the dependent variable, and not suffering from the problem of strong multicollinearity, as far as practicable, we are left with the variables-such as LAS (Learning Achievement Scores of the student), QTI (Quality of Teaching Index), school infrastructure, female-teacher ratio, and availability of upper primary and / or secondary/ H.S Schools within a radius of 1 to 2 Kms of the school under consideration for enrolment of the students. Of these five explanatory variables considered a priori, these are found to be statistically significant. These three explanatory variables are: 1) School infrastructure 2) female- teacher ratio and 3) easy availability of upper primary and / or secondary / H.S schools. While female-teacher ratio is statistically significant at 0.3 percent probability level, the other two variables - easy availability of upper Primary / Secondary / H.S schools and school infrastructure are significant at 3.6 % probability and 5.6 % levels.

Interpretations of the results as obtained from the pooled regression model:

We present below the estimated pooled model for convenience of interpretation of the results.

Y (estimated value of enrolment) = -121.35 + 2.33 (Academic qualification of the parents) - 0.28 (School Fees) + 2.08 (School infrastructure) + 38.72 (Location) + 133.00 (Organization) + 0.42(female teacher) + + 40.82594 (Availability of upper primary / Madhyamik / HS school)

The estimated pooled regression model shows that the enrolment of students in the primary school depends on academic qualifications of the parents of the students. The higher the academic qualification of the parents, the enrolment of the students in the school increases. Locality, here urban, has very highly significant effect i.e., at 0.0% probability level. The variable – location (urban) is very significant at 0.0 % probability level. The parents prefer urban location of the school to the rural location. Infrastructure also plays a very important role. Because they believe that the schools located in urban areas enjoy some special advantages as compared to the schools in rural areas as well as good infrastructure facilities, sports ground, good library with books liked by the children below the age of 10/11 years. So they normally show greater tendency for urban schools and schools with good infrastructure for their children. Sex composition of teachers also is considered as a special and important factor in the Indian context as it is generally considered that the presence of female teachers in the schools helps increase attendance and retention student in the primary stage. This is particularly considered important in the rural areas where the attendance of girls is very poor. The regression result shows that the enrolment of the students in urban areas increases by about 38 more over the schools located in the rural areas.

This means that the total number of students enrolled in urban schools is 38 more than the total number of students enrolled in rural areas schools for the period from class I to class IV.

Organization or the school management plays a very important role. Organization of a school refers to whether it is a public school (i.e. state-aided or state run or managed or run and managed by local government) or a private school, i.e. whether it is funded and managed by some individuals with spirit of improving the quality of education and looking for the overall development of the students. Regression results show that the private schools attract the

students much more than the public school. The enrolment of the students in the private schools are higher than that other students in public school by a number of 133 students, and this increase is statistically significant at 0.0% probability level, i.e. significant at 100 percent confidence level.

School fees play a negative role. The higher is the school fee, lower is the tendency to get enrolled in the schools. The negative tendency as reflected in the estimate at the regression coefficient (-0.28) is statistically highly significant at 0.0% probability level, i.e. at 100 percent confidence level.

Here it may be noted that though school fees is a significant determinant to enrolment of students in the schools, mainly private schools, which charge higher school fees, the joint effect of all the variables (all variables other than school fees) are positive and statistically highly significant and the net value is positive, and very high and significant. The school infrastructure has positive and highly significant effect on the enrolment of the students. The positive effect of this variable means the enrolment of students relatively much higher in this school offering excellent or good infrastructure (as measured by or reflected in the higher infrastructural indices) than in the schools with low infrastructure facilities offered to the students. The level of significance of this effect is found to be 0.000 ($p = 0.000$).

Availability of upper primary and / or Madhyamik or HS schools also plays a very significant role. The estimate of the associated regression coefficient is obtained as 46.43, meaning thereby that the primary schools which exist in their close proximity (within one to two kms) upper primary and / or Madhyamik and/ or HS schools are very likely to get higher enrolment

of the students than those schools which do not have this facility. The coefficient of this variable is statistically significant at 0.000 % ($p = .000$) probability level.

The pooled regression model's goodness of fit is given by $R^2=0.8315$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.8105$. This means that as much as 83% of the variables in the enrolment of the students is explained jointly by these variables. All of them play very significant roles in explaining the variables in the enrolment of students.

▪ **Students' learning achievement scores** : Determining factors

As far as the factors determining the learning achievement scores of the students are concerned, the following findings are worth noting.

We carry out the regression analysis for all the students under consideration in our study and for the male and female students separately, for the urban and rural schools separately, and for the general caste and non-general caste students separately. The objective behind carrying out separate analyses for the students considered from various social and locational aspects such as gender, caste and location of the schools is to examine how the learning achievement scores of i) the male and female students ii) general and non-general caste students and iii) urban and rural school students are influenced by different types of social variables and to examine whether there are any special factors that explain the difference in their learning achievement scores between these three separate categories is having two groups (Categories: gender, location and caste ; Groups: 1. Male and female, 2. Urban and rural, and 3. General caste and Non-general caste).

Our regression results show that 1) school infrastructure in almost all the cases 2) the parents' academic qualification 3) location of the schools and 4) school attendance of the students in

most of cases are the factors that exercise significant positive influences on the students' learning achievement scores.

As regards another important factor – school management referring to private management and state government management – the private schools with private management are found to have played a very significant role in boosting the school enrolment of the students in comparison to the public schools. The likely reasons for the better performance of the private schools in attracting more students than the public schools are discussed earlier in Chapter 4.

Another interesting finding of our analyses of the students' enrolment and learning achievement scores is that some factors that are normally supposed to have significant effect on the above two variables of our interest such as private coaching of the students and income of the parents of the students are found to have insignificant effect. The most likely reasons in the case of private coaching may be 1) the variation in the number of the students given private coaching is too small to explain the wide variations in the enrollment of students in schools and learning achievement score of the students in schools; 2) coaching, when given to almost all, gives the same quantity and quality of inputs leading to very small variation in it.

Variables Found Irrelevant

1. Impact of the school management

After scrutinizing the result presented in equations 6.2, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9, it may be concluded that the school management (i.e., whether the schools are private or public) has, not any significant impact on the learning achievement scores of the students whether they

are male or female, general caste or non-general caste students, and whether the schools are located in rural or urban areas.

2. **Private coaching :**

Against our general belief that private coaching of the primary students enhances the students' learning achievement score, our regression results show unequivocally that it has no significant impact on any of the following categories of the students – male or female, urban or rural students, general or non-general caste students. The likely reasons have been discussed above.

3. **Income:**

Income of the parents does not have any significant impact on the LAS of the students but classified into different categories as mentioned above. This variable may play an important role in the case of the students pursuing higher education. We used this variable as explanatory variable on the supposition that the parents which higher incomes may be more inclined to look after their children's performance in schools as they are logically expected to give their children higher education in future, and to be satisfied with good performance in school education from the very beginning. The important role of the household's income in influencing the learning achievement scores of their school-going children may be reasoned that the parents, particularly parents belonging to middle and high income groups, spend a very small fraction of their income on the education of their children. Even the parents earning more or less enough income to somehow maintain their families do not have to bother about spending on their primary school-going children in most of the cases, particularly in the public schools, the school fees are minimal. In the private schools, though

the school fees are quite high, the parents who send their children to these schools can well bear these expenses quite comfortably.

Policy Suggestions:

Our policy suggestions apply only two main aspects of our study – the students’ enrolment in schools and the students’ learning achievement scores.

As the school infrastructure is found to have significant role in the enhancement of enrolment of students in schools and in the students’ learning achievement scores, the schools must focus on the speedy development of school infrastructure. Many primary schools do not have, even today, concrete roof of the school buildings, many make do their normal activities even under thatched roofs or dilapidated concrete roofs with cracks here and there, rains in the rainy season pour down on the floor. Many do not even have blackboards, benches for the students to sit on, no toilets, no urinals, forget about the separate urinals for the girls and boys, no facilities for drinking water in many cases and no play ground for the students to play on.

Very many similar types of factors stand in the way of students’ enrolment as well as learning achievement scores of the students. The state government should pay due attention to the creation of these minimum infrastructural facilities. The private schools, however, as we have experienced and data collected from the schools corroborate our findings, offer most of these minimum civic facilities to the students. The private schools are not given permission to start a school until and unless the minimum infrastructural facilities are not available in the

schools. These facilities should not only be created, they should be improved and properly managed.

School attendance of the students that is found to have significantly contributed to the increase in enrolment of the students and enhancement of the students' achievement scores must be given top priority. In addition to its contribution to these two areas of pupils' educational development, it creates a sense of regularity, discipline and devotion to work.

Location of the schools is found to have significant positive impact on both these aspects of education under our consideration. The urban location of schools very expectedly attracts the students from the urban and rural areas. If the schools in the rural areas are facilitated with good infrastructure, and the permanent teachers and more female teachers, location may not be an important factor determining the students' enrolment or the students' learning achievement scores as it is found to-day with the current infrastructural conditions.

To conclude this section, if infrastructure development becomes the major issue and is, therefore, given top priority, then many problems relating to educational development of the small children can be effectively addressed. It may further be noted that school infrastructure also includes good village roads and transportation facilities for the children. The most important policy measure for removal of the apathy of the rural people towards their children's education lies in the rural economic development. There are still many rural areas which can be communicated from outside with a lot of difficulties. These problems should be addressed urgently. It should be kept in mind that slow progress of education slows down the social, economic and cultural development of the villages, towns and the country as a whole. Education provides us with wings to fly in the open sky, broadens our mind, our outlook and strengthens friendly relationship among people of different castes, cultures, religious and

views. Ensuring school attendance of the children has been successful to a larger extent, but the focus of the school authority and also the State/Local Government authorities should now shift from fulfilling the main objective of ensuring children's school attendance to that of making them attentive to their studies. Thus, the twin objectives of ensuring attendance and making the students attentive to their studies need to be fulfilled in all earnestness.

Limitations:

One important limitation of our work is the small sample size. However, though we could consider only 16 schools, our main focus was on the students which count 154.

Requisite data could be collected at huge hardship. However, the data that were collected and used for this study are reliable and conclusions could be drawn with high level of confidence. Many data, however, could not be collected. The schools either do not have records of many important information or are not interested in parting with them, partly because of their laziness and partly because false entry of many data in their ledgers and other record books.