

Choice and Cost: The role of household decision making and expenditure on secondary education in rural Bihar

Funded by: India Growth Centre, Bihar

Background and overview: In the last ten years, the state of Bihar has made tremendous progress in universalizing elementary education and in encouraging students to continue to the secondary stage. In this decade, there has been a big expansion in the number of primary and upper primary schools, very large number of teachers have been appointed, and there has been an impressive drop in the number of children out of school. To encourage young people, especially girls to continue to secondary school, the government started incentive programs like the cycle scheme for girls, which have now become widely known.

Given this background, the objective of the study is to understand the educational choices that households make and expenditures they undertake for children going from upper primary school to secondary school in Bihar. In educational choices we will look at type of school as well as the type of tuition or coaching that students attend and the expenditure they incur for this. This study will feed into a larger understanding of the growing secondary education sector in Bihar – achievements, challenges and constraints.

The current study is located in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar state. The study has four parts. First is a desk review and analysis of the current data and research on secondary schooling in Bihar in which secondary data will be analyzed to study the macro picture of secondary education at the national level with special emphasis on Bihar. Our focus will be to understand the policy landscape, i.e. what policies have been implemented at the national and state level to encourage secondary education. We will also undertake trend analysis of allocation and expenditure toward secondary education. An attempt will be made to document the progress in access and participation through indicators such as enrollment, completion rates, etc. Second, we will focus on one block in the district - Sahebganj block. Here we will do a GPS mapping of all educational facilities (schools, colleges, training and tuition centres) in the block. Third, a census will be carried out of all households with children of the 13 to 18 age group in three gram panchayats (approximately 19 villages) in this block. This household survey will include detailed questionnaires about household characteristics as well as information about the young people who are at the core of this study. Fourth, we will visit, observe and survey all educational institutions (schools and coaching centres) that are being accessed by the young people in our study villages.

For more information contact: Ranajit Bhattacharyya, ranajit59@gmail.com

Update: October, 2014