Demand- side determinants of girls' primary schooling in urban areas of Kokrajhar District in B.T.C. of Assam

Gitika Das
Research Scholar, Department Of Economics,
CMJ University, Meghalaya

Abstract:

Educating girls helps meet the economic growth and social development objectives. This paper aims to explain the importance of the main factors that affect the demand for girls primary education in Kokrajhar district based on a household survey. The paper will focus on three levels of inputs of household factors - household income, parental education and occupation that drive school attendance of girls at primary level. The main conclusion derived in this paper is that income growth and improvement in parents' education contribute positively to girls school attainment. Findings of the study generally entail the importance of improving household wellbeing to widen the opportunity of children's school enrollment.

 Key words: Demand for girls' primary schooling, Household characteristics.

Introduction:

Girls' education is crucial for the betterment of humanity. Among various levels of education, girls' primary education has a pervasive and influential impact on economic development In the developing world, today, data on the trends in the enrollment of girls at the primary level however shows that it was not commensurate with the growth of population in the relevant age-group (6-14years) despite the fact that universalisation of primary education has been the avowed objective of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).This needs an in depth understanding of the prevailing educational scenario, examining the ways in which community, economic status, parental attitudes and the cost of education affect the enrolment and drop-out behaviour of girls of different groups.

  Household characteristics are one of the important determinants of schooling decisions and outcomes. The household production function approach developed by Becker (1975) show that household characteristics such as income and levels of parental education determine whether a child enrolls in school, stays in school, learns and makes progress to higher levels of education (Al-Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998). According to Pereznieto and Jones (2006), despite allocating

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resources to expand access to schooling, parental decisions on children's schooling could prevent realization of the anticipated goals.

Study area:

The Kokrajhar District is less urbanized with only 4 urban areas, and economically backward with little or no industrialization. With poor work force participation, poverty is chronic in the district. Many questions that arise regarding girls primary education are motivated by the particular social and economic environment in the district. The literacy percentage of the Girls is much lower than boys in Kokrajhar district area, and rest of the Assam (rank 23).With female literacy rate being poor 59.54%, *(*2011-census), the   participation of girls in school at primary level is 45.0 percent which is indicative of the lower social status of girls and women and the poor status of primary education[1] in the districts. Is the role of family background variables such as income and parental education or are household factors affecting the demand for female education Therefore, this paper examines the household characteristics that affect schooling decisions of girls of age group(6-14) in primary level in the urban areas of Kokrajhar district of Assam only.

Review of related literature:

Lloyd et al (1998: 1-46) In Kenya found that girls are less likely to enroll than boys, and found that demand determinants (parents' education) have a greater effect on educational attainment than supply factors (school quality). Das, P. (2007) says that the poor patriarchal framework excludes women from taking economic decisions at the family as well as the village level contributing to girls' low educational participation. Sathar and Lloyd (1994) finds that children with educated parents and higher household consumption level attend primary school, Kurosaki, Ito, Fuwa , *et al*. (2006) highlighted the impact of parents illiteracy on their daughters education in ensuring girls participation. Lewis and Lock heeds (2007) argue that factors such as gender, ethnicity, race and poverty contribute to girls' low educational participation and they term this–multiple exclusion. Chishti and Lodhi (1988) and Mishra, 2005 reveal that the decision to attend school depends on the gender of the potential student, household income, parents' education, and ethnic background. Mulugeta and Amanuel in Ethiopia (2000) showed that the educational level of especially the mother contributes towards enrolment of their children. The

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[1] primary education in India is divided into two part:-lower primary-class 1-v; upper primary-class vi-viii

higher the educational level of parents, and mothers in specific, the more likely it is to have their children enrolled in school. Al-Samarrai and Peasgood (1998), studying the relationship between educational attainment and household characteristics, found a positive impact of a female headed household on educational achievement. The empirical research and literature in economics of education also demonstrated the importance of parents' education on educational attainment of the children.

Objectives of the study:

The objective of this paper is to establish the importance of demand-side factors that affect the decision of households for girls schooling of age between 6-14 years in urban areas of Kokrajhar district.Specifically, this paper attemptsto explain the relationship between household factors and girls primary schooling.

Research methodology and data base:

The present study is *mainly* based on the primary data. The primary data is collected by conducting a sample survey of urban households; assigned to the relevant school age girls of age 6-14 years. A well prepared, structured, questionnaire was designed and used for the collection of primary data. The sample size of the questionnaire is 99 households. For the secondary data source, the collection of information is based on the review of relevant literature, journals, research and survey conducted by various organizations, Public records and statistic, newspapers, magazines, websites and all such sources of acknowledged information was used for the study.

Conceptual framework of the study:

The educational production function shows the relationship between quantity and quality of inputs used in the educational process and the output of the process .The inputs of the education process are constituted by the school and non-school inputs. School inputs include human and physical resources. The non-school inputs are related to socio-economic background of the pupils, which are factors such as parental socio-economic levels, demography variables (race, gender) and community environment. The present study was based on only on household demand-side factors of primary education. The dependent variables used are the household decisions affecting current enrolment status of girls in 6-14 years. In the household characteristics, an important variable of analysis is the income of the household. Other variables

include parental education and gender of the head of the household. These estimates were for population above age 6 years -14 years.

Hypothesis:

The hypothesized model is that the demand for girls schooling enrolled at primary level is constrained by household socio- economic characteristics. The study will test the following hypothesis:

- Household income is an influential factor in the enrollment of the population of girls ages 6-14 at primary level.
- There exists a positive relationship between education level of household and the enrolment of the girl children in school.
- There exists a positive relationship between occupational status of households and demand for girls schooling.
- Female headed household are more inclined to enrolment of girls in school.

Descriptive statistics and empirical results:

The incidence of households sending their girl child   to school is analyzed below from the household survey data:

(1)Household income:

Income is one of the major determinants of enrollment at primary school level as the resourceful households are in a better position to provide education to their children. The total income earned by the adult member in the household in the age cohort above 14yers is taken into consideration. The table 1 shows that the percentage of sending girls to school is lowest at the lowest income group of 34%, and the households with the highest income group shows a higher 52% of sending girls to school. The other variable of households of not sending at least one of their girl child to school is lowest at the higher income group, depicting a negative relationship between household income and parents decision of not sending at least one of their girl child. This supports our hypothesis that household income is positively related to girls demand for schooling.

Table-1(a)

Distribution of households sending their girl children to school (6-14) years of age to school by household income.

Total income of the households Per month	Total number of households falling in category		Households with all girl children in school		Households with at least one girl child not in school	
(Rs)	No	%	No.	%	No	%
<5000	25	100	15	34	10	66
5001-10000	53	100	25	45	8	55
10001-16000	23	100	20	50	3	52
>16000	18	100	17	52	1	48
Total	99	100	77	45.25	22	54.75

However the household income is not a reliable income as households' size modifies the effect of income. The impact of per capita income monthly is therefore analyzed on demand for girls schooling. Table 1b) shows that the highest per capita income group has the highest percentage of 62% of sending girls to school and the proportion of households not sending one girl child is highest,69% in the lowest per capita income of households per month. The higher the per capita income group, higher is the enrolment of girl child.

Table-1(b)

Distribution of households sending their girl children to school(6-14) years of age to school by per capita income per month.

Per Capita Income Of The Households Per Month	Total Number Of Households Falling In Category		Households With All Girl Children In School		Households With At Least One Girl Child Not In School	
In Rs	No	%	No.	%	No	%
<150	25	100	15	31	10	69
150-250	53	100	26	44	7	56
251-350	26	100	22	53	4	47
>351	15	100	14	62	1	38
Total	99	100	77	47.5	22	52.5

2) Educational level of households:

Education of parents has a positive impact on income generating activities and is biased towards children's education. Table (2) shows that the percentage of households with all children in school increase with 31 % from the illiterate level to61% where the educational level of the household is the highest. This supports our hypothesis that educational level of household heads; is positively related to girls demand for schooling.

Table-(2)

Distribution of households sending their girl children to school(6-14)years of age to school by educational level of households.

Educational level of households	Total number of households falling in category		Households with all girl children in school		Households with at least one girl child not in school	
	No	%	No.	%	No	%
Illiterate	36	100	25	31	11	69
Literate	23	100	17	39	6	61
Primary	17	100	14	42	3	58
Secondary	11	100	10	53	1	47
University	9	100	9	61	0	27
Others	3	100	2	60	1	40
Total	99	100	77	49.7	22	50.3

(3) Occupation of households heads:

Occupation of the household head reflects their level of education and income as well as social status. The stability of source of income also affects the demand for girls schooling. The higher the stability, the higher the demand for girls' primary schooling. The occupation of the household is ranked according to value judgment. The government employee is ranked highest followed by the self employed, private employees the laborers. The value judgment is not given to undefined occupational status. Table 3 shows that the percentage of households with all children in school decreases, with a change in the occupational status from government employee to laborers; and increases with at least one of their children to school. This supports hypothesis that educational level of household heads is positively related to girls demand for schooling.

Table-(3)

Distribution of households sending their girl children to school(6-14)years of age to school by households heads occupation.

Households Heads Occupation	Total number of households falling in category		Households with all girl children in school		Households with at least one girl child not in school	
	No	%	No.	%	No	%
Government employee	18	100	14	61	4	39
Self employed	16	100	13	46	3	54
Private employee	25	100	2o	35	5	65
Laborers	20	100	16	22	4	78
Others	7	100	5	45	2	27
Employed at home	13	100	9	22	4	78
Total	99	100	77	43.2	22	56.8

(4) Gender of household head:

The head of a household has a greater power in decision -making. The table below shows that among female- headed households, 51% send all girls children to school while males headed households send only 42%. A higher percentage of the male headed households, 58 % are inclined not to send at least one girl child to school. This suggests that female headed households are more inclined to send their girl child to school.

Table-(4)

Distribution of households sending their girl children to school (6-14) years of age to school by gender of household head.

Gender of household head	Total number of households falling in category		Households with all girl children in school		Households with at least one girl child not sent to school	
	No	%	No.	%	No	%
Male	70	100	53	42	17	58
Female	29	100	24	51	5	49
Total	99	100	77	46.5	22	53.5

From the analysis, it is inferred that households are disposed towards enrolment of their girls in primary school if they are richer, headed by a female head with a smaller family size , and the household head have more education in the urban areas of the study area.

Conclusion- findings and suggestions:

The present paper, has attempted to estimate the determinants of household schooling decisions in terms of enrolling or not enrolling on one hand of school -going girls. The findings are consistent with other studies done in very different parts of the world. The present study demonstrates that household characteristics -income, female headship, education of head of household had a positive influence on enrolment status of girls in the urban areas of Kokrajhar district. Thus low income of households and low- level of households' education play an important role in constraining the demand for girls schooling. Findings of the study generally entail the importance of improving household wellbeing to widen the opportunity of girls' school enrollment in the urban areas of Kokrajhar district of Assam.

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