



SCHOOL SELECTION RIDDLE: A STUDY ON PARENTAL CHOICE

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Abstract

School selection is a major important phase in a student's life. All parents want to provide the best possible educational environment for their children. The selection of a school is a complicated process. Most of the time parents' decisions regarding the choice of school by social, cultural and economic reasons. The choice of the right school provides the right direction for the child's future. It lays the foundation of a child's life. So in this paper, we try to figure out what are the major factors that influence the parents' decision to choose the right school for their children. Stated differently, we try to understand the rationale behind the choice of schools by parents. The present study is quantitative in nature and the data is collected through survey of schools in Raebareli and Amethi district in Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: *Children, Choice, Education, Parents, School selection.*

Introduction

A nation, society, individual and community are not possible without education. Education is a lifelong, systematic and dynamic process that has the ability to development of society and individuals. Education has the power to modify human behavior. Durkheim saw the function of education as transferring the norms and values of society from one generation to another. Education provides the link between individual and society. He also talked about 'homogeneity'. Without a sufficient degree of homogeneity, society cannot survive. Durkheim's point of view, education teaches the necessary skills to the individual that is important for their future occupation (Durkheim, 1961).

The word education has come from the Latin words "Educare", "Educere", and "Educatum" which means 'to bring up, to rise, to nourish, to train or mould', 'to lead out', 'to draw out', 'to bring forth', 'act of training' or 'training'. When we focus on the Indian cultural context, we see the two Sanskrit words 'Shiksha' and 'vidya', Shiksha comes from 'shash' that means 'to discipline, to direct, to control, to order, to rule, etc. Term 'vidya' also known as 'vidh' that means 'to know'. The Standard English dictionary defines education as "bringing up or training of a child; instruction; and strengthening the powers of body and mind" (Pathak, 2018). Education plays an important role in a child's life. Every child has the power to his development but they need proper care and education. A child is like a plant that is brought up in the garden of the teacher. The teacher helps the child's in the nourishment and develops potential. A teacher performs the task of shaping a child and tries to mold them to the best of their abilities (Eduhutch, 2014).

In the direction of child development, the first step of parents is to choose the right school. School selection is a major important phase of life, and parents strive to provide the best educational environment for their children. It lays the foundation of a child's life. Most of the time parents' decisions are influenced by social, cultural and economic reasons. In our society there are mainly two types of schools are available. First is government or public school another is private school. Government or public schools funded and controlled by the central, state and local levels. Some institutes are autonomous too. Private schools are funded and operated by a person. It has different types of category and infrastructure, it may be aided or unaided, recognized or unrecognized.

After the Adaptation of education policy 1968, there has been a broad level expansion in educational facilities all over the country at all levels. Since 1992, more than 90 percent of rural areas of the country habitat the facility of schooling in the radius of one kilometer (NPE, 1986). After the Right to free and compulsory education Act 2009, our country has ensured that more than 98% of the children are getting education facilities through primary schools within the one-kilometer radius and 92% of children are getting upper primary education facilities in the radius of three kilometers from their residence.



Basically paper focuses on Uttar Pradesh, where there is growing concern about the low enrollment and importance in government schools in the society. In this paper, we try to find out how parents choose the school for their children and try to know which factor influences parents' decision for selecting the right school for their children. Also, want to know what are the actual requirements of parents for the school? Present Study conducted in two districts Raebareli and Amethi, Uttar Pradesh.

Review of Literature

In the way of parental choice of school selection, researchers also focused on some previous studies and tried to learn about the factors that most influence parents' decisions for school choice. Some authors reported that educational quality influenced parents' decisions more. Some conclude that non-academic factors influence parents' decisions. Some of the factors that influence parents' decisions in school selection are listed below.

The social network, school visits, and talks with teachers were the main factor for school choice. In Alberta, most of the parents choose private schools for their children. She also revealed that parents prefer religious value and school location (Bosetti, 2004). Nambissan (2009) focused on maternal work, education, and proficiency in English which provide social benefits in children's school success. Indian middle class and working class want to provide education for their children in a private English medium school. Narayanan (2013) revealed in her study, parents prefer infrastructure and other specific attributes compare to the management of the schools. Father education was one of the major factors in school selection but the mother has more educated to father than she prefers a private school. Children of scheduled caste are less in private school but Muslims are less in the government school. Casual workers in the non-agriculture sector were sent to their children in a government school. The ecology of schooling in the village matter also increases the probability of a child attends the private school.

The social and cultural factors which affect the choosing public or private school. Elite families send their children to a school of varying quality because it affects their future earnings or life. It has an impact on social mobility on a large scale (Bhattacharya et. al., 2015). Mousumi&Kusakabe (2017) conducted their study on low-income parents who lived in Ocala and Badarpur in Delhi. In Ocala and Badarpur colonies did not have the availability of government schools, so parents chose the private school for their children at the primary level. Once they reach in 5 or 6 standards then parents withdraw them from private schools and send them in government schools. Fees of private schools affect the daily lives of parents. The study revealed that parents are happy with the teachers of private schools due to the care of their children but not very happy about school fees, teachers' credentials, and ways of teaching.

Methodology

The research was conducted in 'Raebareli' and 'Amethi' district, Uttar Pradesh as the area of the study. There were different types of schools are available i.e. Private and Public schools, different boards i.e. State board, CBSE board, ICSE/ISC board, and also available different types of range of fee structure. The researcher selected five schools of these districts through simple random sampling which has two private, two government and one faith-based school. The researcher has included all three types of the educational board in their study.

The study conducted a quantitative research style and collected data through primary resources. Primary data collected through the interview-schedule & questionnaire. The research was carried out via the structural self-administered closed-ended question of schedule. In the first section of the schedule, the researcher consists of the basic information regarding parents and corresponding children. Parents' demographics were in the second section of the schedule. The third section of the schedule refers to the type of board preferred by the parents. The fourth section of the schedule focuses on the ways and steps through which they selected schools for their children. Further, some specific set of questions were asked to be more specific in data like questions on "Does the school prefer any particular religion". Finally, one set of questions was framed in the context of knowing the importance of some factors that played a major role in selecting a school. The researcher used the Likert scale questions in the questionnaire. The researcher interviewed 83 families along with questionnaires which include 16 different types



of multiple and subjective questions. After collecting the data, present a statistical analysis of the collected primary data. After that, data present in Microsoft Excel and tabulated form.

Results and Findings

The responses were collected & compiled together. Since answers to all the questions were analysed by the way of percentage method and weighted mean method. The results are as follows:

A. Parent’s Demographics

After visiting 5 schools, we were able to take an interview-schedule of 83 people. (Refer to Table 1)

Sr. No.	Respondent	No. of people
1	Mother or elder sister of the child	46
2	Father or elder brother of child	37

Table: 1

A.1. Educational Qualification of the Father/Guardian

When we focused on the parents' education, we observed that 32.5% 10th pass, 27.7% 12th pass, 16% graduate, 12.04% postgraduate, and 10.84% illiterate.

A.2. Total Monthly Household Income

The respondents were mainly in the range of 10k to 40k with almost 70% of the population lies in this range. Whereas only a small proportion of 4.84% was having a high income of more than 60k (Figure, 1).

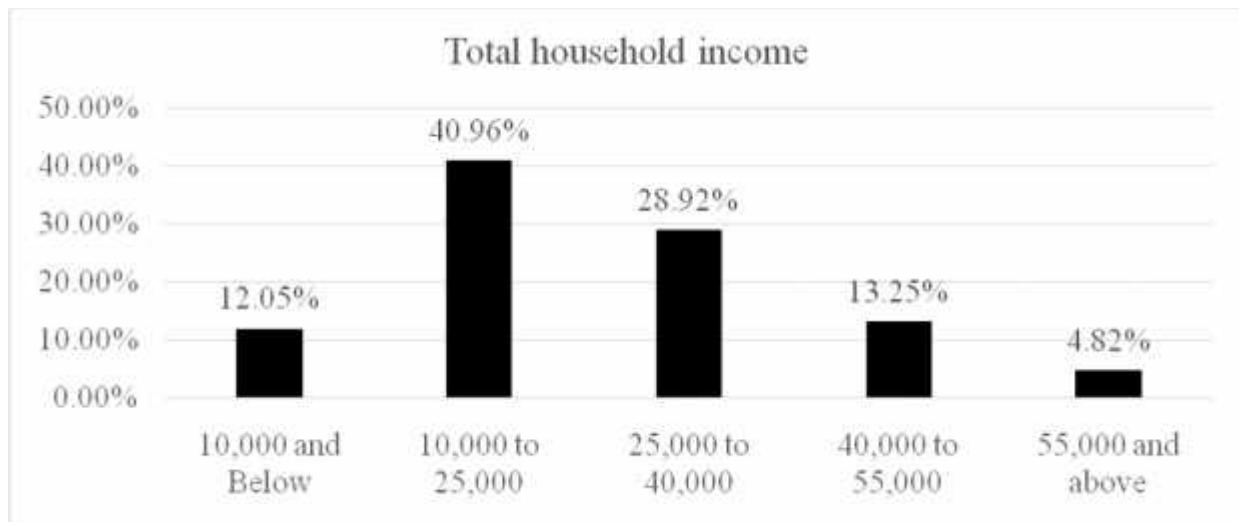


Figure: 1

B. Children Demographics: Refer to Table 2.

Sr. No.	Respondent	No. of People
1	Male child	54
2	Female child	29

Table: 2

C. Parents Preference

The reasons which the parents gave for choosing private schools mainly included the progressive style of education (46 people), good pupil care (45 people) and activity-based learning (37 people). Other reasons mostly include having brothers or sisters at the same school (15 people) and satisfied with the existing fee structure (9 people). (Figure, 2)



The majority of the respondents said that they prefer the ICSE board (44.58%, 35 people) whereas the CBSE board was preferred by (42.17%, 37 people). Only a minority of people preferred state board (13.25%, 11 people). (Figure, 3).

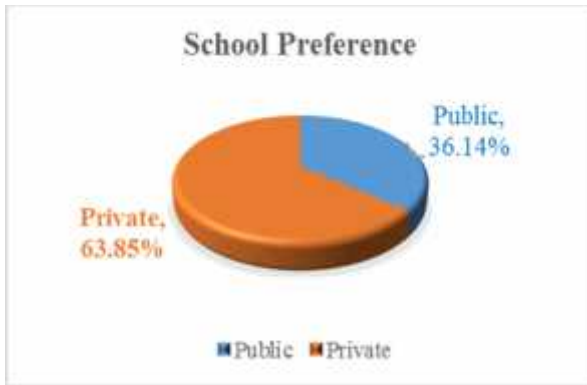


Figure: 2

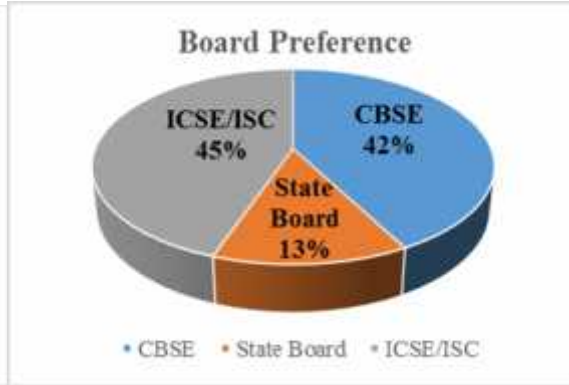


Figure: 3

D. Religion Based School

Two out of the five schools surveyed follow Christianity. When the respondents were asked if they are (or will be) bothered by sending their child to a school that is not secular, 93.98 % (78 people) of them replied that they are not at all bothered by it. Some parents even went on to say that they prefer convent schools because of their good quality of education. (Refer to Table 3)

Sr. No.	Parents prefer religious school	No. of people	Percentage
1	Yes	24	28.92%
2	No	59	71.08%

Table: 3

E. Income-based Classification of Factors

Some of the factors which displayed unique trends have been analyzed further. One of them was the effect of income. People with different incomes had different views about the importance of factors like distance, school fees, the reputation of the school, and computer education in school and discipline in school.

People with less income felt that the distance of the school, school fees, and computer education are important factors for the selection of a school for their child whereas people with high income felt that the reputation of the school and the discipline in school are more important factors for the selection of school. (Figure, 4)

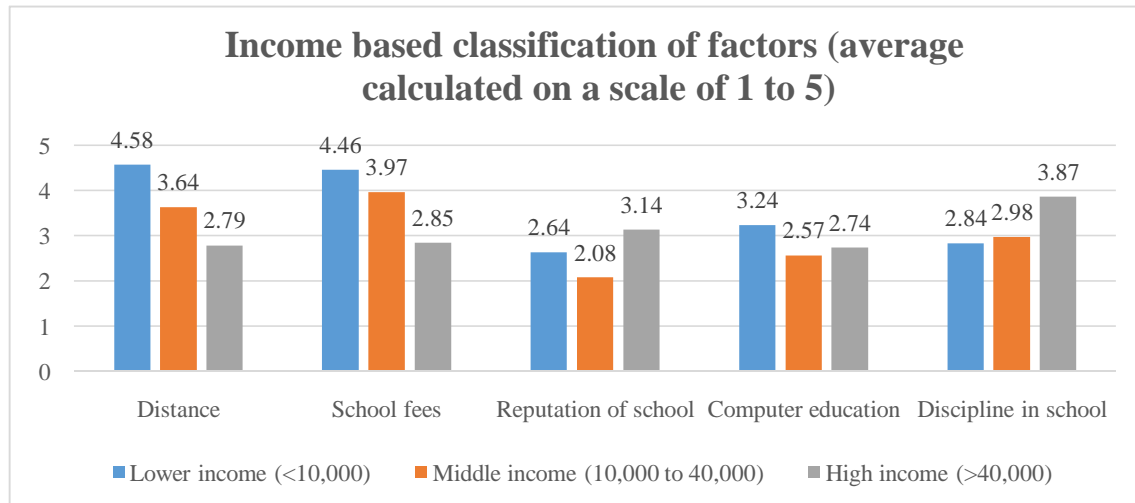


Figure: 4

Discussion

This research was an attempt to analyse factors that affect parents' decision to choose a school for their children. As we know, children are the future of our society. If they get quality education then it leaves a good impact on their lives as well as society. Which ultimately manipulates the efficiency of production of human resources. In the whole process of research, it has been observed that 'none of the students competed from equal grounds' i.e. every individual belongs to different family backgrounds and it has had different communication and intellectual skills. Some have the opportunity for getting an education but some have not. The future of many bright students' lives in the dark due to a lack of resources and their unpublished background. Currently, we can see easily, there is rapid growth in private schools or sectors. People are choosing private schools rather than in government schools. In the choice of the school board, we observe that most of the parents prefer the ICSE board for their child education. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) also stated, 28% of boys and 23% of girls in India were enrolled in the private school in 2011, who were 7-10 years old (ASER, 2011).

We also able to analyse the parents' perception about religion based school and we find out the majority of parents prefer to send their children to non-religion based school but some prefer to send their children to a convent (religious) school because of quality education.

In this research, we are able to find out the 'reputation of school' is more important for elite people compare to middle and lower-class people. We are also able to find that lower-class people give more preference to 'computer education' because of future aspirations. In the way of 'discipline of school', mostly elite class people actively participated.

In this research, the 'quality of education' is also the main factor. It influenced the parents' decision to select school for their children. For quality education, parents try to provide all types of facilities related to the education of their children and they also choose a school based on the quality of education. At the elementary level, most of the parents prefer the best and nearest school for their children but at that time the 'fee structure' of schools plays an important role in school selection. As we know elite people don't think about the school fee, they prefer the best school for their children but lower-middle-class people think about all perspectives then take the decision. Lower middle-class people also want to provide the best possible education to their children. In this research, we find out 'basic amenities' is also one of the main components in this study. Parents like to send their children there where basic amenities are available.



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