

Quality of Secondary Education in Andhra Pradesh

***G. Siva Jyothi**, Ph.D Scholar, Department of Economics, Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa.

****Dr. T. Sudarsana Reddy**, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa.

ABSTRACT

In this paper, an attempt is made to examine the quality of secondary education in Andhra Pradesh. The quality of secondary education is measured in terms of students' pass percentages and grade wise GPAs. The students' pass rates in SSC examinations are very low in 1990s and satisfactory during 2000s. In recent decades the pass rate of students are very high (95%). The pass rate of students in majority government residential schools is higher than the students of non residential schools. The gender differences are negligible in the pass rates. Private school students perform higher pass rates than their counter parts of government schools. The pass rates of students belong Other Caste groups (OCs) are higher when compared to the SCs, STs and BCs.

1. Introduction

Education is the cornerstone for economic and social development of a country. The basic idea behind education is to impart skills, knowledge and information among the human beings. Hence Education is considered as the prime investment in human beings. Therefore, for the overall development of a country, educate population is the ultimate necessity. Education provides access to knowledge which enables a person to be able to understand the availability of various opportunities for his development. Therefore, it has been universally accepted that there is a strong relation between education and earning incomes. Secondary education is very important as it is a terminal level of school education and foundation for higher education.

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is a constitutional commitment in India. Government of Andhra Pradesh initiated a number of measures to increase the access of school education in the state. As a result, there is a substantial progress in the quantity of secondary education in Andhra Pradesh over a period of time in terms of number of schools, enrolment and number of teachers. However, while

one should appreciate the strides made in provision of secondary education in quantitative terms, our understanding of the quality parameters of secondary schooling is poor. It is not uncommon to blame quantitative expansion for the deterioration of quality, even though there seems to be no hard evidence to support this position. In this context this paper is made an attempt to examine the quality of secondary education in Andhra Pradesh.

Quality of education is, perhaps, the most difficult of all aspects of an educational institution to measure. Quality may have different connotations for different people. The professionals and academics have not yet agreed upon a common measurement of quality of educational process. This leads to some real practical problems not only in assessing the quality of an educational system but also in devising some sound strategies for quality improvement.

The obvious distinguishing feature of the empirical analysis presented in this chapter is its particular focus on the efficiency of government and private secondary schools. Here the quality of education in secondary schools has to be understood in terms of students' achievement in the SSC examination. Therefore, in this chapter, an attempt is made to analyze the students' performance in the SSC examinations during the last three decades in Andhra Pradesh.

Objectives

1. To examine the quality of secondary education in terms of students, performance in SSC Examinations in Andhra Pradesh.
2. To Compare the students' pass percentages between different government schools and private schools.
3. To analyze the students' performance among different residential schools.
4. To examine the students' pass percentages across different social groups.

Methodology

The present paper is based on secondary data only. The main data sources are commissioner and Director of school education, Hyderabad and A.P. Statistical Abstracts published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Amaravathi, Daily News papers like Saakshi, Eenadu. Statistical tools like percentages are used for the study. Data has been used during the period from 1990 to 2019.

Review of Literature

Protiva (2019) says that teacher is the most important factor that determines the quality of education. Teachers are facilitators of learning and are fundamental to the effective functioning of any school. The quality of teaching is determined by several factors, such as the qualifications of teachers, training, remuneration, overall working conditions, motivation and accountability.

New Education Policy – 2016 (Subramanyam Committee) opined that the element of quality in the educational system which now has been neglected totally but now is the time for the system to look at the so far neglected element called “quality”. It is of course an open question as to whether significant milestones have been reached in terms of both equity and access, or, indeed the issue of quality has been neglected. In reality disadvantaged sections do not have an equal opportunity to access school education with quality.

Quamar and Zahid (2000) reveal that on an average 49 percent of the private unaided school students pass out in first division while another 36% of the students pass out in the second division. Almost none of these students failed. Whereas in government and aided schools only 23 to 29 percent of the students passed in first division while another 29 to 33 percent in second division. But 13 percent of these students failed while another 8 to 10 percent get third division.

Vaidyanathan and Nair (1999) opined that the factors that underline the dismal performance of the school education sector in terms of quality are of three types viz., household related, Community related and School related. In general, government run schools admit poorer children and teach indifferently and produce poor results. They with the help of an empirical study disagreed with the prevailing notion in certain quarters that students with poor economic and academic backgrounds are poor in intelligence, analytical power and academic aspirations. They perform badly only because of the drabness of curriculum, indifferent teaching and inadequate facilities at home and school.

Duraisamy and Subramanian (1999) found that the students from private aided and unaided schools secure about 14 and 30 marks (out of 100) more than the students from the government schools. Such a difference due to school management is also observed in mathematics marks and corresponding difference between private aided and government

schools and between private unaided and government schools are 6 and 27 marks respectively.

Jimenez, et all (1995) concluded that private school students generally outperform government school students on standardized Mathematics and language tests. Again they stated that private school students come from more advantaged backgrounds than their government school counter parts.

Govinda and Varghese (1993) observed that the performance of students in private unaided schools is considerably better than students in private aided and government schools in Madhya Pradesh. According to them, there are several factors, which influence students' achievement. These factors are like time spent on teaching learning activities, detailed teaching plan for teachers, external supervision, regular homework etc. Among the family environment variables, the socio economic backgrounds of the parents seem to influence students' achievement scores.

2. Performance of Students in SSC Examinations

The SSC examination results can be considered as an important indicator for measuring the performance of secondary schools that include pass percentages and percentage of students passed in different divisions. The results of SSC examinations indicate that about one third of students (34.8%) passed in the SSC examinations. In other words about two thirds of students who have appeared for SSC examinations could not pass through the examination. After that, there is some improvement in the SSC results. The pass percentage increased to 55 percent by 2000 (Table 1). However, in recent years, the results are quite satisfactory. The pass percentages have been continuously increasing to 72.4 percent in 2005 and dramatically increased to 94.8 percent by 2019. It implies that almost all students passed.

The measures taken by the government like regular recruitment of teachers, appointment of special subject teachers for English and Physical Sciences, paying special attention to the schools whose results are low could be the main reasons for better results in the recent years. Another important reason is high percentage of students passed in private unaided schools and it is included in the average results. The girls' pass percentage in SSC examinations was relatively better than boys. But in some years, boys' pass percentage in SSC government examinations is better than girls. It is very difficult to draw any inference

about the factors that have contributed to the increase or decrease of pass rates between the boys and girls in different years.

The recent results raised fundamental doubts. Proliferation of passing percentage but falling down the standards in the educational institutions clearly indicates that the system is with defects and malfunctioning of the administration. The passing percentage in the 10th class public examinations are abnormally progressing where as the quality in the educational system remains stagnated the department of education is focusing tremendously on encouraging the passing percentage by any means the passing percentage during the year 2000 was 55.7% but to-day it reaches to 95%. In fact, indirectly the government is felicitating the facilities to establish private sector in the educational field to grab the crazy of the marks scoring.

Prior to 2000 the authorities were keen in maintain standards in the administration from top to bottom levels. There was no scope for irregularities in the administration. The state government opened gates for private schools and the corporate sector. In a result they started dominating the educational system. To enhance the admissions they have focused entirely on passing percentage and also evidenced unhealthy and filthy competition among the educational institutions. It shows managements manage all kinds of ways and means to get huge profits, so the education turns to boon for the corporate sector. Virtually to score better performance in 10th class, they have resorted to malpractices and mass copying.

Table : 1 Students' Pass Rate in SSC examination in A.P from 1990 to 2019 (%)

Month & Year	Boys	Girls	Total
March 1990	32.80	39.80	34.80
March 2000	55.50	55.10	55.10
March 2005	72.09	72.81	72.41
March 2014	88.62	89.33	87.96
March 2015	91.15	91.71	91.42
March 2016	94.29	94.77	94.52
March 2017	91.87	91.97	91.91
March 2018	94.41	94.55	94.48
March 2019	94.68	95.09	94.88

Source: Directorate of School Education, Hyderabad, A.P.

3. Students' Performance under Different managements

With regard to the pass percentage of SSC examinations under different management schools, the performances of private schools have been absolutely phenomenal as compared to State Government, Zilla Parishad and Municipal schools (Table 2). The pass percentage in the private schools was 72.5 in 1999-00, whereas it was 52.5 in state government schools, 61.2 in the Z.P schools and only 44.7 percent in the Municipal schools. However in recent years, there has been much progress in the SSC results of government schools. There are several reasons for high pass rates in private schools. Firstly, in the recent past, there has been a lot of competition among private unaided schools with respect to obtaining top ranks, more number of students passing through in the examinations etc. So the managements provide good infrastructural facilities, and hold extra classes on holidays etc. for better results. Secondly, the level of motivation of the students in private unaided schools will be more because of the encouragement and appreciative attitude of the teachers. Thirdly, the non-school factors that determine the superior academic achievement of students like family background, tradition of education in the family and income level of the parents also play an important role.

The debate over the question whether the private unaided school students perform better than the students of government schools is fueled by controversy over methodology, interpretation and data. The private schools have wider option to enroll students of superior academic competence. In fact, this is the secret of their high performance at the government examinations. The superior academic competence is determined at the time of admission on the basis of non-school factors like social status of the parents, characteristics of the family, educational background of the family, religion and caste. The most important methodological issue is the difficulty of attributing the differences in the cognitive abilities of students in government and private aided versus private unaided schools to school inputs, since a number of non-school factors such as the socio-economic background of students, innate abilities of students and individual motivation of students also affect achievement. These non-school factors also affect school choices by the parents.

Table. : 2 Students' Pass Rates in SSC Examination under Different Management Schools (%)

Management	1999-00	2004-05	2014-15	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
State Government	52.5	57.6	79.96	84.17	90.77	89.95
Zilla Parishad	61.2	68.1	85.95	89.23	95.57	93.21
Municipal	44.7	56.7	80.36	86.66	90.40	90.35
Private Aided	NA	NA	81.37	86.46	87.97	87.16
Private Unaided	72.5	81.5	93.04	97.24	98.11	98.09
All	55.1	72.4	91.42	91.92	94.48	94.88

Source: i) Eenadu, 9th September 2001.

ii) Sakshi 5th March, 2019

iii) Commissioner & Director of School Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Note: NA indicate data is not available.

4. Students' Pass Rates in Different Government Residential Institutions

The pass percentage in SSC examinations is relatively better in the residential schools compared to state average. In Andhra Pradesh, there are five types of residential schools viz., (i) Andhra Pradesh Residential Educational Institutions Society (APREIS); and (ii) A.P. Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (APSWREIS), A.P. Tribal Welfare Residential Schools (APTWRS), AP Model Schools and KGBV Schools. The pass percentages of these two types of residential schools are better than other government day schools. The average pass percentage of state was 55.1 percent while the APREIS pass percentage was 93.3 and APSWREIS was 79.8 percent (Table 3). Further, the pass percentage of students studying in these two types of schools is higher than other schools and also state average. This is mainly due to the fact that children are devoting all their time for studies. Since the children's education is completely under the supervision of teachers and special attention is paid by the teachers to improve the performance of children. Hence, the children's progress is better. However, in recent years there is no much gap among the schools. Among the residential schools the pass rates of students in APREIS and Model schools is better than all other types of residential schools mainly because of the differences in background of the students. Children admitted to APREIS and model schools have better academic and family background than children admitted to other schools. The children to these schools are selected on the basis of performance in the entrance examination and they also come from all social categories. But APSWREIS and APTWRS meant for particular

social category children. For example, APSWREIS admit the children of mainly SC community children and APTWRS give admission to only ST children.

Table : 3. Students' Passed in SSC Examinations under different Government Residential Institutions in Andhra Pradesh

Year	A.P State as a whole	APREIS	AP SWREIS	APTWRS	Model Schools	KGBV Schools
1999-00	55.1	93.31	79.88	-	-	-
2004-05	72.4	99.07	91.68	-	-	-
2014-15	88.62	95.41	91.26	80.27	91.91	90.00
2016-17	91.92	96.36	93.53	82.02	94.34	91.00
2017-18	94.48	97.10	93.91	91.32	97.38	95.52
2018-19	94.88	98.24	95.41	94.35	97.17	95.66

Source: Selected education statistics, Directorate of School Education, A.P.

5. Students' Achievements: Grade Point Average (GPA)

Until now, we have discussed that the pass percentage is the most important indicator for the quality of secondary education in Andhra Pradesh. But pass percentage alone does not give a idea of the present condition of the quality of educations. Any student who scores more than 35 marks out of 100 is considered to be passed. Hence whosoever scores 35 marks are considered pass in the SSC examination but 35 marks only account to 35% of the marks which is very low. Moreover, in order to increase the pass percentage many schools and students are adopting malpractices such as copying from others or getting slips to the examinations etc. Many government officials do support these kinds of activities so as to show off their achievements and also to cover up their inefficiencies. Recently, the Andhra Pradesh government has implemented grading system for the SSC Examination where 10 points are the highest points awarded for scoring 91 marks and above and the least points awarded are 4 for scoring 35 to 40 marks. This grading although does not show the actual number of marks scored but indicates the level of students' performance. Therefore, it is important to analyze the students' performance in terms of securing 10/10 GPA.

The empirical data regarding Grade Point Average (GPA) in SSC Examinations in Andhra Pradesh from 2016-17 to 2018-19 indicate that a very small percentage of students secured 10/10 GPA. In 2016-17, the total number of students passed is 5, 14, 704 out of which only

3.54% (18,225) secured 10/10 GPA. Whereas in 2017-18, only 5.23% (29,921) out of 5, 71, 175 passed students scored 10/10 GPA and it is 5.77% (33,972) out of 5, 87, 765 passed students in 2018-19 (Table 4). The pass percentage in all these three years is in between 90 to 95 percent whereas students who secured 10/10 GPA accounted for not more than 5 percent. This shows that there is no high quality of education at secondary level in Andhra Pradesh. When comparing between government and private managements, a very high percentage of students who secured 10/10 GPA are from private schools. In the year 2016-17, 94.5% of students who secured 10 points are from private schools and the remaining 5.5% are from government schools whereas in the year 2018-19, it is 85.4% of students from private schools and the remaining 14.6% from government schools (Table 5). It implies that quality of secondary education in government schools is very poor in the state.

Table :4 Students' Passed with 10 GPA in SSC Examinations in Andhra Pradesh

Year	Total Passed	10/10 GPA	Percent
2016-17	5,14,704	18225	3.54
2017-18	5,71,175	29921	5.23
2018-19	5,87,765	33972	5.77

Source: 1. Sakshi 30th April,2018

2. Selected education statistics, Directorate of School Education, Hyderabad.

Table: 5 Students' Passed with 10 GPA in SSC Examinations in Andhra Pradesh

Year	Government Schools	Private Schools	All
2016-17	5.5	94.5	100 (18225)
2017-18	11.5	88.5	100 (29921)
2018-19	14.6	85.4	100 (33972)

Source: 1. Sakshi 30th April,2018

2. Selected education statistics, Directorate of School Education, Hyderabad.

Note : Figures in brackets indicate total number of students secured 10/10 GPA

6. Students' Pass Rates in SSC Examinations by Social Groups

Students' performance differs among various social groups. Caste is one of the important factors in determining the students' achievement. It is found that the upper social category students (Other Caste) perform higher when compared to socially disadvantaged groups of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Communities. This is clearly evidenced in the table that the percentage of students of Other castes is 95.4 percent while it is lower

among the socially disadvantaged groups like the Scheduled Castes (88.1%), the Scheduled Tribes (83.7%) and the Backward Castes (92.3%) (Table 6). The low socio-economic status and illiteracy of parents may be the main reasons for low pass rate among these social groups.

Table: 6 Students Passed in SSC Examination in AP- Caste Wise -2016-17

Social Group	Pass %
Schedule Castes	88.18
Schedule Tribess	83.78
Backward Caste	92.38
Other Castes	95.47
All	91.92

7. Conclusion

The analysis of students' pass rates in SSC examination during the last three decades in Andhra Pradesh shows that the pass rate is very low during the 1990s. There after the pass rates are quite satisfactory and pass rates have been continuously increasing. In recent years the pass rates are touched about 95 percent. It concludes that before 2000 the officials of school education department were keen in maintain standards in the administration of secondary education. There was no scope for irregularities in the conduct of SSC examinations and evaluating the papers. But in recent the system is diluting and liberal valuation of papers leads to high pass rates in the state. The pass rates are very high in private unaided schools as compared to state government, Zilla Parishad and Municipal schools. However, the pass percentage in SSC examinations is relatively better in the government residential schools compared to state average. Though the pass rates are very high in the state a very small percentage of students secured 10/10 GPA. It is almost less than five percent. The pass rates are very low among the socially disadvantaged castes like SCs and STs.

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