

## Awareness of educational and health services among rural and urban consumers of Ludhiana district

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### ABSTRACT

Health and education are defining sectors for equitable human development and sustainable and inclusive economic growth for India. The paper emphasizes the awareness level of both rural and urban consumers of Ludhiana district regarding educational and health services. For rural sample two villages were randomly selected from block one and for urban sample, two localities were randomly selected from Ludhiana city. Sixty respondents each from rural and urban areas were taken, thus making the total sample size of 120. Data were collected through interview schedule. Result revealed that for educational services, urban respondents were more aware of services like free tuition fee for girls up to 10 +2, scholarship for SCs and OBCs students and library facility. Regarding health services, awareness level for urban respondents was more for services like provision of health camps for eye, ear and diabetes etc. and incentives to mothers for delivery in government hospital up to two live births for SC/ST/BPL.

### INTRODUCTION

Education and health are the two primary factors which direct the growth of the nation. A well educated and healthy population is an asset to a country. A number of services started by government of India such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Programme, ICDS, National Rural Health Mission, RCH etc. are working to improve the educational and health status of the citizen. The government has decided to increase the total Government expenditure on the health sector to 2.5 per cent of the GDP by the end of the coming twelfth plan period, from the current level of around 1.4 per cent of the GDP (Sunderarajan, 2012). The University Grants Commission (UGC) has also chalked out several plans to increase gross enrolment ratio (GER) of students in higher education from the present 20 per cent to 30 per cent during the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-17) (Prabhu, 2012). But one cannot deny the fact that India has fared quite poorly in a number of health indicators for women and children as per the report of UNICEF of 2011 (Khyati, 2011). The condition of education sector is also abysmal

(Anonymous, 2008). There may have been lots of reasons for the poor health and educational conditions in India such as corruption, lack of awareness among consumers about their rights and responsibilities, loopholes in the policies etc. Lack of awareness is the major factor as it hinders the accessibility of consumers to the services and consumers can also not complain if they are not aware of their rights and responsibilities. So, an attempt has been made in this paper to find out the awareness level of consumers in Ludhiana district for educational and health services.

### METHODS

The study was conducted in rural and urban areas of Ludhiana district in 2010. A multistage random sampling technique was followed. While selecting respondents from rural area one block of Ludhiana district was chosen *i.e.* block I. Two villages *i.e.* Pamal and Bhanour were selected from this block. Thirty respondents were selected from each of these villages. For the selection of urban respondents, two localities

from Ludhiana city were chosen *i.e.* Jawahar Nagar and Haibowal Khurd. Thirty respondents from each of these localities were selected, thus making the total sample size of 120. The data were collected through Interview schedule and the contents of services for making interview schedule were obtained from the concerned authority. The data were analyzed using percentages and z-test.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads:

### Awareness of the respondents for educational services:

The data pertaining to awareness of urban and rural respondents are given in table 1. The data showed 71.67 per cent urban respondents and 33.33 per cent rural respondents knew about 'Free tuition fee for girl's education up to 10+2'. Thus, z value was highly significant ( $z=4.20^{***}$ ). Difference between urban and rural respondents for the service

'Scholarship per month for SCs students on income (family income less than Rs. one lakh per annum) cum merit basis' was highly significant ( $z=3.29^{***}$ ) as 63.33 per cent urban respondents and 33.33 per cent rural respondents were aware of this service.

It is also evident from the data that no significant difference was found for the service 'Free coaching for competitive exams' ( $z=1.32$ ) and 'Provision of sports facility' ( $z=1.43$ ). All the respondents were fully aware of the services like 'Free books up to 8<sup>th</sup> standard', 'Free tuition fee for children from 6 to 14 years', 'Computer lab facility', 'Separate toilets for girls' and 'Mid Day Meal scheme'.

### Awareness of the respondents for health services:

A glance at the data presented in Table 2 reveal highly significant difference in the awareness of services 'Free medical operations for yellow card holders, Punjab government employees, under trial prisoners, under emergencies, natural calamities, ex and present MLAs.' ( $z=3.85^{***}$ ) as 71.67 per cent urban respondents were aware against 36.67 per cent

Services	Rural		Urban		Z value
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	
Free tuition fee for girls up to 10 +2	20	33.33	43	71.67	4.20***
Free books up to 8th standard	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Free coaching for competitive exams	19	31.67	26	43.33	1.32
Free tuition fee for children (6-14 years)	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Scholarship for SCs students	20	33.33	38	63.33	3.29***
Scholarship for OBCs students	16	26.67	32	53.33	2.98***
Merit scholarship	48	80.00	54	90.00	1.53
Library facility	54	90.00	60	100.00	2.51**
Sports facility	58	96.67	60	100.00	1.43
Computer labs facility	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Separate toilet for girls	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Mid day meal scheme	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA

\*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

Services	Rural		Urban		Z value
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	
Free medicines	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Free diagnostic analysis	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Free medical operations *	22	36.67	43	71.67	3.85***
Free vaccination for children	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Free delivery service including transport charges	40	66.67	49	81.67	1.87
Provision of dental, emergency, laboratory test facilities	60	100.00	60	100.00	NA
Health camps	34	56.67	49	81.67	2.97***
Incentives to mothers for delivery in government hospital up to two live births (SC/ST/BPL)	38	63.33	45	75.00	1.38***

\*Yellow card holders, Punjab Government employees, under trial prisoners, under emergencies, natural calamities, ex and present MLAs.

\*\*\* 1% level of significance

awareness among rural respondents. It is also clear from the data that 81.67 per cent of urban respondents and 56.67 per cent rural respondents were aware for the service 'Health camps conducted for eye, dental, heart, diabetes etc. ( $z=2.97^{***}$ ). The  $z$  value found to be significant ( $z=1.38^{***}$ ) for the scheme 'Janani Surksha Yojna' in which Rs. 700 is provided to mothers belonging to SC/ST/BPL families for delivery in government hospital up to two live births. 75.00 per cent urban respondents and 63.33 per cent rural respondents were aware about this service.

The data are in agreement with the findings of a study conducted by Anonymous (2012) and found that in addition to poor socio-economic condition of rural people, another major cause of their sufferings is lack of education and public awareness facilitates the growth of the nation and development of its people.

A further probe of data shows that all the respondents were aware about other services like provision of free medicine and diagnostic analysis, vaccination facilities for children like polio, DPT, TB, BCG, Hepatitis B2, measles etc. and provision of dental, emergency and laboratory tests.

#### Conclusion:

Education and health facilitate the growth of the nation

and development of its people. But lack of awareness of educational and health care services among consumers especially rural consumers is hindering the growth of the nation. So, there is a great need to make an effort in this direction.

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