

Comprehensive Modular Survey – Economy

NEWS: Recently, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the results of the Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education (CMS-E), April–June 2025, under the National Sample Survey.

Key Findings of CMS– Education Survey 2025

Dominant Enrolment in Government Schools

Government schools continue to serve as the backbone of India's education system, accounting for 55.9% of total enrolments nationwide. The dominance is especially visible in rural areas, where two out of every three children (66.0%) are enrolled in government institutions. In contrast, in urban areas, only 30.1% of students are enrolled in government schools, as private alternatives play a stronger role.

Private School Share

Private unaided (recognized) schools form the second-largest group, with 31.9% of enrolments across India. This reflects a steady trend of parents in urban and semi-urban areas opting for private schools despite higher costs, often due to perceptions of better teaching quality, infrastructure, and English-medium instruction.

Limited Fee Burden in Government Schools

Only 26.7% of students enrolled in government schools reported paying any form of course fees, underlining the affordability of public schooling. By contrast, the burden is nearly universal in the private sector: 95.7% of students in non-government schools reported paying fees, with the proportion rising to 98% in urban private unaided schools. This highlights stark affordability gaps between the two systems.

Household Expenditure Gap

Average household spending per student in government schools was estimated at ₹2,863 annually, while the expenditure in non-government schools was much higher at ₹25,002. This sharp contrast underscores the affordability advantage of government schools, though it may also reflect differences in the quality of facilities, extracurricular activities, and hidden costs.

Course Fees as the Largest Education Expense

When all school types are considered together, course fees account for the single largest share of education spending, averaging ₹7,111 per student. This is followed by textbooks and stationery (₹2,002). Urban households face a disproportionately higher burden, spending ₹15,143 on course fees compared to ₹3,979 in rural households, reinforcing the urban–rural cost divide in education.

Rise of Private Coaching

A significant proportion of students, nearly 27.0% nationwide, availed private coaching during the current academic year. This reflects both the demand for supplementary learning and concerns over gaps in formal schooling. The share was higher in urban areas (30.7%) than rural areas (25.5%). Expenditure on private coaching also tends to increase with higher levels of schooling, showing that exam pressure and competition drive the trend.

Households as the Major Funding Source

For 95% of students, education continues to be financed primarily by family members, pointing to a heavy reliance on household resources. Government support mechanisms remain limited in reach—only 1.2% of students reported government scholarships as their first source of funding. This indicates the need for expanding scholarship coverage, especially for disadvantaged groups.

Comprehensive Modular Survey (CMS– Education)

The Comprehensive Modular Survey

Education (CMS– E) forms part of the 80th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS). It is designed to capture household-level expenditure patterns on education with greater detail and disaggregation. Unlike earlier surveys, CMS:E classifies Anganwadi centres as part of pre-primary education and explicitly separates private coaching expenditure from general education costs, giving policymakers a clearer view of hidden expenses faced by families.

National Sample Survey (NSS)

The NSS, initiated in 1950, is India's largest and most reliable socio-economic survey system, created to produce representative data for planning, policy design, and welfare schemes. The nodal authority is the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), and it functions through the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The survey covers wide-ranging indicators such as employment, consumption, health, education, poverty, and social development, and its findings serve as inputs into poverty estimation, GDP calculation, and evaluation of government schemes.

Organisationally, the NSSO is divided into four divisions

1. Survey Design and Research Division (SDRD) – responsible for methodology and questionnaire design.
2. Field Operations Division (FOD) – conducts large-scale surveys across states and regions.
3. Data Processing Division (DPD) – handles compilation, cleaning, and validation of raw data.
4. Survey Coordination Division (SCD) – manages survey implementation and inter-agency coordination.

The 80th round survey (CMS-E) was conducted through Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), ensuring higher accuracy, consistency, and speed in data collection.

Scope and Coverage of CMS- Education

The survey drew responses from 52,085 households and 57,742 students across India, ensuring broad regional and socio-economic representation. The focus was on expenditure patterns related to school education and private coaching, highlighting both direct and hidden costs of education. Unlike earlier NSS rounds, CMS:E avoids misleading extrapolations by using survey totals only for calculating ratios and rates, not absolute population counts. This methodological improvement ensures more accurate interpretations.

Conclusion

The CMS- Education Survey 2025 reveals crucial trends in India's education system—continued reliance on government schools, high affordability differences between government and private schools, urban-rural disparities in education spending, and the growing role of private coaching. It also underlines structural issues such as low penetration of scholarships, which forces households to shoulder the financial burden of education. The survey provides evidence-based insights for policymakers to strengthen affordable quality schooling, expand scholarship schemes, and regulate the private coaching sector, thereby improving equity and access in India's education landscape.

Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2160863>