# DRAWING LINKAGES BETWEEN ECONOMIC STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FROM ASER 2019

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Economic well-being affects a child's educational achievement through multiple pathways. Studies have shown that family's socioeconomic status positively contributes not only towards a child's educational attainment, but towards their academic performance as well.[1][2]  ASER Pakistan 2019 survey has further explored this relationship in the setting of rural areas across Pakistan and has collected information on multiple educational and household indicators. Using this data, an assets-based wealth index was generated through[3] Principal Component Analysis method which was then employed to disaggregate the national household level data into four wealth quartiles.
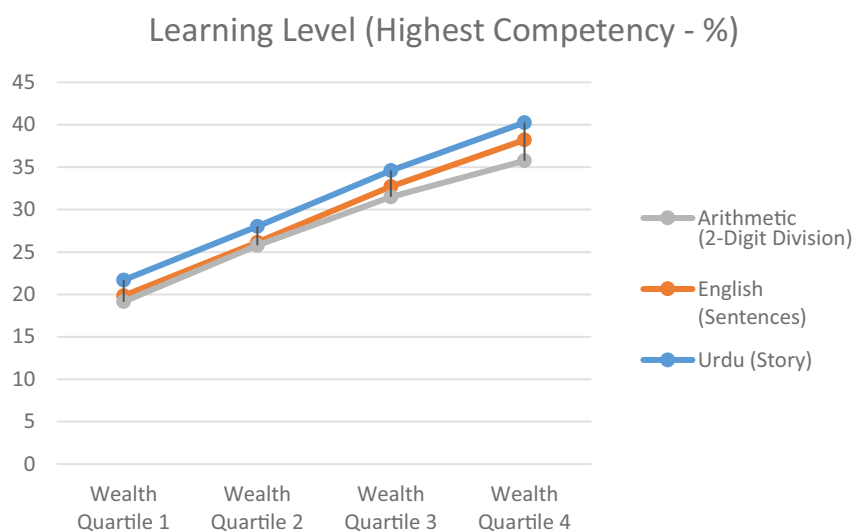


*Figure 1: Learning Levels (Highest Competency) by Wealth Status*

Figure 1 depicts that children from the highest wealth quartile i.e. Wealth Quartile 4 have outperformed children from the lower quartiles in all three subjects. The differences in the learning outcomes are more profound between the children from the richest households and the poorest households with 40.26% children (Wealth Quartile 4) and 21.7% children (Wealth Quartile 1)  being able to read Urdu story, 38.21% children (Wealth Quartile 4) and 19.85% children (Wealth Quartile 1) being able to read English sentences, and 35.76% children (Wealth Quartile 4) and 19.15% children (Wealth Quartile 1) being able to solve 2-digit division questions. Hence, learning achievement    increases as household's wealth status increases. Moreover, children from the same wealth quartile have been found to be performing better in the assessment of Urdu relative to the assessment of other subjects.

1. Li, Z., Qiu, Z. (2018). How does family background affect children's educational achievement? Evidence from Contemporary China. J. Chin. Sociol. 5, 13.
2. Ferguson, H.B., Bovaird, S. and Mueller, M.P. (2007). The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children. Paediatr Child Health. 12(8), 701-706.
3. Variables used in Wealth Index: Type of house (Kucha, Semi Pucca and Pucca), ownership status of the house, electricity connection, possession of a TV, possession of a mobile phone, availability of solar panel, availability of a personal computer and possession of at least 1 car or motorbike.

This trend continues for other higher-level competencies such as General Knowledge, Urdu Comprehension and Arithmetic Word Problems as well. More children from the households in wealth quartile 4 have answered all questions in respective domains correctly when compared with children from households in other quartiles: 31.06%, 29.51% and 29.02% children (Wealth Quartile 4) compared with 15.79%, 15.08% and 13.75% children (Wealth Quartile 1) for General Knowledge, Urdu Comprehension and Word Problem respectively. Figure 2 has captured this information.
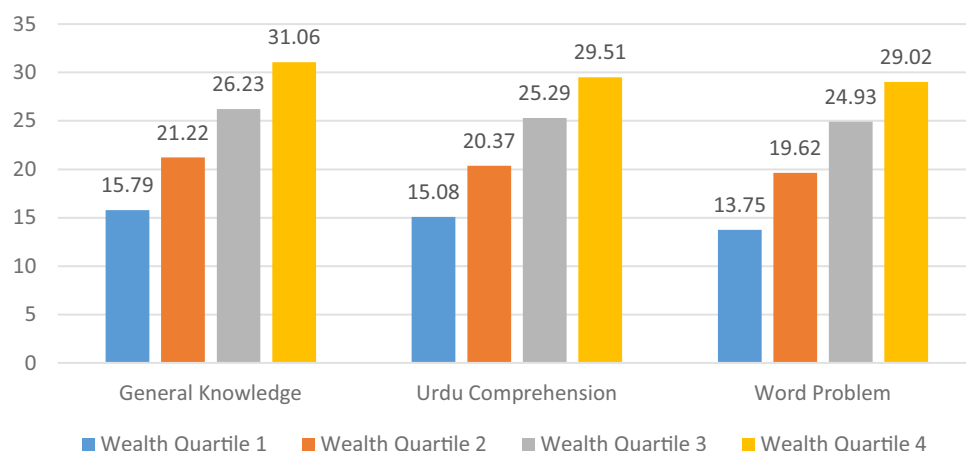


*Figure 2: Percentage of Children who have answered all questions correctly*

With regards to the enrolment status, a higher percentage of children belonging to the households from wealth quartile 4 (79.6%) was reported to be currently enrolled in an educational institution in comparison to the 67.52% children from wealth quartile 1, 70.93% children from wealth quartile 2 and 75.41% children from wealth quartile 3. Likewise, households from wealth quartile 4 had a lower number of out of school children relative to other households. Furthermore, children from lower wealth quartiles (1 & 2) are more likely to be out of school than those from upper wealth quartiles (3 & 4). When asked about the reason for a child not enrolled in a school (never enrolled or dropped out), 57.35% of OOSC from wealth quartile 1 and 53.84% of OOSC from wealth quartile 2 were reported to be out of school due to poverty. This shows the impact that economic status has on enrolment decisions for children.
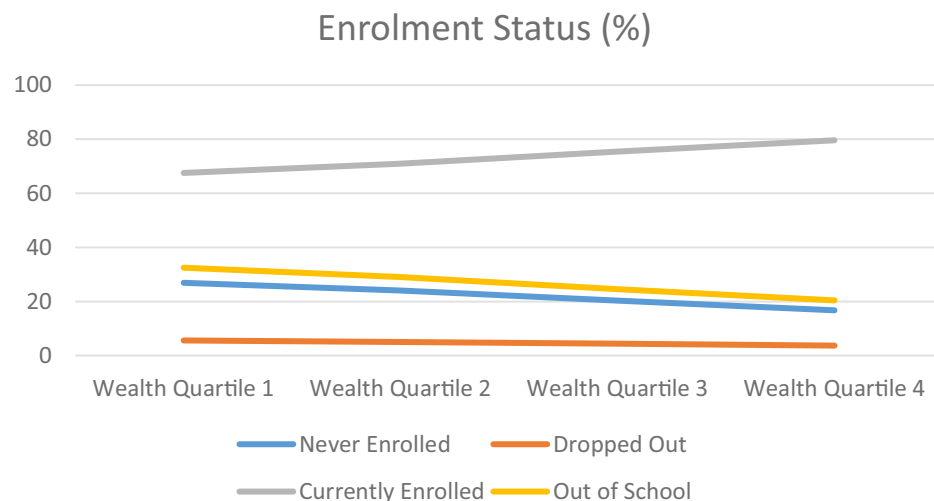


*Figure 3: Enrolment Status by Wealth Status*

Lastly, the breakdown of enrolled children by institute type reveals that as the wealth status of a household improves, private schools are preferred over the government ones. Nonetheless, majority of the students from all wealth quartiles are still enrolled in a government school: 81.73% (Wealth Quartile 1), 77.08% (Wealth Quartile 2), 71.05% (Wealth Quartile 3) and 66.52% (Wealth Quartile 4).
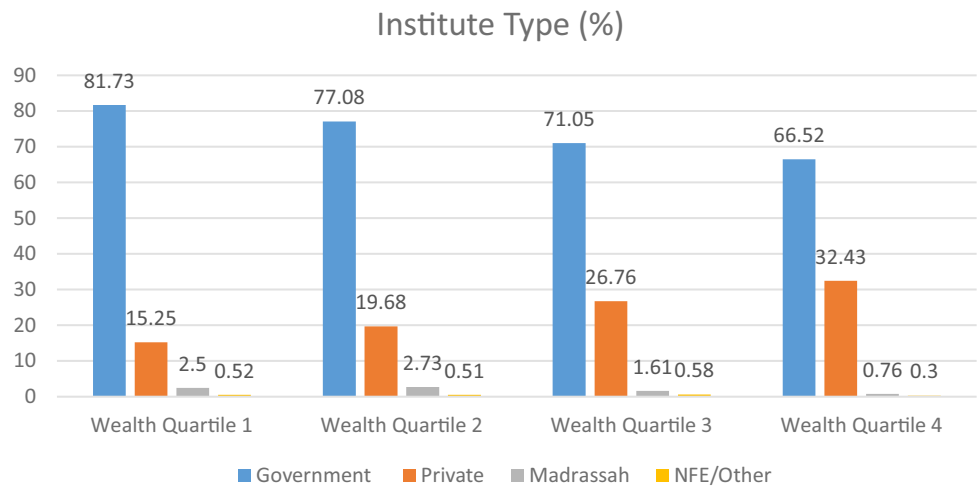
## Institute Type (%)



*Figure 4: Institute Type for Currently Enrolled Children by Wealth Status*

To summarize, the data from ASER 2019 survey lends support to the existing literature on the positive impact that economic status has towards the educational outcomes of children. Therefore, while education is a channel through which a level-playing field can be provided for all children, getting a quality education may not be possible without adequate resources at the household level. In this regard, the government can focus on devising targeted social security programs as a mechanism for facilitating equitable, quality and inclusive education for "All" children.