



**CONSUMPTION PATTERN OF STUDENTS AT
UNDER GRADUATE LEVEL IN ASSAM**



Dr. Mausumi Saha Kalita

Associate Professor, Dept. of Economics
Kharupetia College

ABSTRACT

Consumption pattern of individuals has been observed to differ widely. It differs by community, sex, place of residence, economic status, occupations etc. It is one of the most important macro variables that determines the aggregate demand for goods and services in the economy. On the other way, in the recent days consumption pattern of the individuals is also observed to be influenced by the market policy of an economy. The present study intends to highlight the consumption pattern of the students at under graduate level in the state of Assam. The study finds that the expenditure of the student and their parental incomes are positively related while there is marginal difference in the consumption pattern of the students of the rural and urban colleges.

KEYWORDS

Students, consumption, income, expenditures, entertainment

RESEARCH PAPER

1. Introduction:

The concept of consumption is one that varies between academic community, governments and between individuals. Consumption is, or shall be defined to be, the total quantity of goods and services that people in the economy wish to purchase for the purpose of immediate consumption. As such, it is one of the main determinants of economy's aggregate demand (that is, the sum of all planned expenditures in an economy). Such studies highlight actual expenditure as reported by the sampling of students, and the extent of the practice of the influence of parental income on students' expenses and their personnel choices and preferences. Several studies (Bekkering 1971, Allan and Suchar 1973) in this area, however, provide little assistance in this instance. But, more importantly in these studies the expenses were reported by institutions not students. However, the study of Haven and Horch (1972) adequately summarizes students reported data. Apart from this, some empirical studies have shown that the changes in the consumption habit of a community is highly influenced by the development of the technology, economic policies, cultural changes and fashion etc.

In this context, we have made an attempt to capture the pattern of the expenditure of the students community in four colleges of Assam namely, Cotton college, and Pandu college from Guwahati and Kharupetia college from Darrang and Koliabor college from Koliabor.

2. Objectives:

- The study has been done with the following objectives.
- To investigate the present consumption trends of students.
- To analyze the impact of their family financial status on the expenditure pattern of the students.
- To study the differences in consumption pattern between boys and girls students by residence

2.1 Methodology and Data source:

Keeping the above objectives in mind, the data analysis of the present study has been divided into two parts, Part –A and part-B. In this study, Part –A explains the impact of their family financial status on the expenditure pattern of the respondents. For this, we have first categorized the students by residence (i.e., students staying with parents or relative and students staying in hostel or others). Second categorization of the respondents has been made into three groups on the basis of parental annual income like, low Income group (below Rs. 2 lakhs); Middle Income group (RS. 2 lakhs to Rs. 8 lakhs) and High Income group (above 8

lakh). Finally, we adopted the simple average method (mean and median) for assessing the average expenditure pattern of the respondents. In Part-B, a percentile comparison of consumption pattern on some selected items has been made between boys and girls students by residence.

The data analysis of the present study is based on the primary data. For this a well structured questionnaire has been set up to collect the data through direct interview method.

2.2 Sample design

A simple random sample of college students at degree level relevant to this study has been drawn purposively from both rural and urban colleges. The total size of the sample of the present study is restricted to 400. Out of 400 students, 200 samples respondents have been drawn from two urban city colleges (100 each from Cotton College and Pandu College) and 200 samples from two rural colleges (100 each from Kharupetia College and Koliabor College). Total sample of 400 students has been equally drawn purposively by sex.

3. Result analysis

Table-1 summarizes the self-reported monthly average expenses for 400 students. Two measures of central tendency, the mean (arithmetic average) and median (point below which 50 percent of cases fall) are presented. It is reasonable that the mean is greater than the median as it is influenced by the higher expense amount of the cases while, the median represents the point which falls below 50 percent of the cases and is not influenced by the extreme amounts.

Table-1
Students reported expense (in Rs) by where student live at college

Expenditure heads	With Parents/Relatives		Hostel/Others	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Tuition fees	996	803	1080	973
Books	285	275	285	264
Boarding fees	453	324	1262	1133
Medical	120	97	104	73
Transportation	350	265	235	162
Total	2194	2664	2966	2605
Other items				
Clothing	270	218	242	194
Entertainment	110	87	155	132
Personal care *	95	81	107	98
Beverages, Snacks (Tiffin/food)	121	96	118	89
Other costs	132	63	123	74
Total	728	545	745	587
Grand total	2932	2291	3711	3192

Source: Field survey of the present study.

Note :* includes expenditure on saloon /beauty parlour, cosmetics etc.

As one may expect, expenses for students living with parents or relatives (usually defined as commuters) are substantially lower than the students living in hostels and rented house. A comparison of median totals reveals a difference of approximately Rs. 2300 to Rs. 3200. These differences are apparently similar with the differences between the hostel boarders and the commuters.

A common rule of thumb is used to add Rs 1000 to Rs 870 to tuition fees, books and boarding expenses when preparing standard budgets. This appears to be supported by the data. Rs 1000 figure appears appropriate for the hostel students while Rs 870 amount seems reasonable for the commuters. Approximately Rs 100 to Rs 130 additional transportation costs are incurred by the later group of students. More than half of these Rs 1000 to Rs 870 figure consist of other or miscellaneous expenses, of which clothing is the largest component. Surprisingly, a small amount is reported by students as expenditures for entertainment, beverages, or snacks.

Table 2
Students reported average expenditure (in Rs) by category of parental annual income

	Low income group (below Rs.2 lakhs)		Middle income group (Rs.2 lakhs- Rs 8lakhs)		Higher income group (Rs 8 lakhs and above)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Tuition	600	542	820	543	837	642
Books	184	162	197	154	183	177
Boarding fees	325	206	582	466	682	634
Medical	115	95	127	86	130	113
Transportation	343	246	368	198	352	277
Total	1567	1251	2094	1447	2184	1843
Other items (1-5)						
Clothing	214	165	253	233	272	248
Entertainment	112	76	135	82	152	114
Personal care	95	72	97	67	109	98
(Tiffin/food)	110	82	123	95	97	92
Other costs	123	64	134	68	121	76
Total	654	459	742	545	751	628
Grand Total	2221	1710	2836	1992	2935	2471

Source: Field survey of the present study.

Table-2 summarizes students reported expenses for college students indicating the different categories of parental income. Both mean and median figures are given for each expense category and for the total category. The traditional costs differences among different

categories of income are self reported. As expected, these differences can be traced to large differential in tuition fees and boarding expenses among different categories of income.

Section-B

Consumption pattern as a whole depends upon the socio-economic and cultural background of the society or community or class to which the individuals belong to. But, the ever growing consumerism in the age of globalization has brought a remarkable change in the attitude and taste and preferences of the people across the world, students' community is no exception to that. Application of modern technology and devices has catered the various consumer goods at the door step of the people. Advanced technology with high tech information has minimized the rural- urban cultural difference with respect to consumerism.

Table-3
Monthly Percentage Expenditure on Some Important Items.

Expenditures heads	With Parents / Relatives		Hostel / Others	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Books	9.7	7.2	7.5	6.5
Journal/newspaper	2.0	1.2	4.1	2.1
Pvt.Tuition	10.0	6.0	6.0	2.35
Study materials	3.2	3.0	3.5	3.1
Saloon/ parlour	4.8	8.2	2.2	5.6
Cosmetics	4.0	12.0	3.3	7.9
Clothing	8.0	13.0	5.9	11.2
Other apparels	4.8	7.3	3.3	6.2
Sports/Gym	5.6	1.13	--	--
Mobile phone	8.3	4.1	6.9	5.1
Internet	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.5
Entertainment	4.6	3.2	2.9	1.2
Transportation	20.	9.8	10.1	4.6
Other celebrations [@]	2.42	1.35	2.3	2.56

Source: field survey of the present study

@:Other celebrations include Restaurant expenses and expenses incurred on birthday parties etc. .

Table-3 exhibits that an easy access to internet surfing in recent days irrespective of place of residence (rural/urban) for accessing information and study materials and entertainment amongst the college students may be interpreted as one of the major reasons for a comparatively lower expenditure on books and journals and news papers. The study also reveals the fact that compared to the girl students boy students incurred more expenditure on mobile phone as it serves as the easy means to communication and socialization in recent

days. In contrast to this, girl students are more inclined to spend on items like cosmetics, beauty parlours and clothing.

Transportation expenditures being marked as the highest expenditure amongst the listed items in our study (including expenditures on fuel for own private vehicles, particularly two wheelers other than the Bus fares). However, it is found to be higher amongst the boys compared to their girls counter parts. This finding of the present study supports the general accepted fact that the boys have more mobility compared to the girls. Moreover, the percentage of users of vehicle like, motor cycle, scooter or scooty both in rural and urban areas are observed to be higher amongst the boy students than that of the girl students. It is also observed that expenditures on transportation of the male boarders are almost half of that of the male non borders.

4. Conclusion:

From the above analysis it may be concluded that the wave of consumerism has influenced the consumption pattern of the youth irrespective of place of residence and as such the role of entertainment industries has become very vital in our day to day lives. Present study shows that there is no basic difference in the consumption pattern of the students of the rural and urban colleges. Expenditure incurred by the students on certain heads, (other than tuition fees, books and study materials), like entertainment, transportation, internet surfing and mobile phone occupied a reasonable share to the total expenditures. However, the money expenditures have been found to vary positively with the parental financial status. Girls are more inclined to spend more on personal cares like cosmetics, clothing and beauty parlours irrespective of rural- urban and hostel boarders and non- boarders.

REFERENCES

- Allen.B and Suchar. E.W., 1973, 'Students expenses at post Secondary institution, 1973-74', New York, college Entrance examination Board, 1973.
- Bekkering. J.R, 1971, 'A Study of Education Related Expenses incurred by Full time College students attending Representative Colleges and Universities in Michigan, 1971-72'.
- Haven, Elizabeth. Wand. Horch, Dwight. H, 1972, 'How College students Finance Their Education', College Entrance Examination Board, 1973.
- Keith, J. Jepsen, James, E.Maxey and Joe, B.Henry, 1973' Students Expenditure pattern', The journal of Student Financial Aid, Vol.III, No.3.