

# HIGH FEES KEEP POOR CHILDREN AWAY FROM HIGHER EDUCATION

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As many as 13.6% of those in the age group of 3-35 are never enrolled.

High fees at the institutes of higher education push the poor and underprivileged out of the education system, the Economic Survey notes.

The comment comes at a time when a faction of students at Jawaharlal Nehru University have been opposing the fee increase arguing that it will force many poor students to quit studies.

Noting that the National Sample Survey 2017-2018 shows an increased participation in the education system in some indicators, the Survey says there are “challenges of affordability, quality, distribution of education infrastructure”.

“As many as 13.6% of those in the age group of 3-35 were never enrolled,” the Survey cites from the NSS. Those surveyed attributed “financial constraints” among the reasons for not pursuing education.

“The course fee, which is 50.8% at the all-India level (including tuition, examination, development fees and compulsory payments)... accounts for half of the average expenditure of a basic course,” says the Survey.

Further, the proportion of the course fee is high in rural and urban areas. This is followed by cost of books, stationery and uniform, wherein students in rural areas spend 10 percentage points more than urban residents.

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