

Literacy Patterns in Punjab: Rural- Urban Differentials

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Abstract: For the development of any nation, education is an essential prerequisite. It enables the people to know the world and their surroundings and also transforms the outlook of the society. Literacy levels are the vital indicators for the judgement of the progress of the country. In the present century, population who is well educated equipped with bundle of knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential. The present work is an attempt to study the trends and patterns and their differentials of males and females and rural and urban in terms of literacy. Punjab in the terms of education status presents a dismal picture with the literacy rate of 76.7% as per 2011 census. The rank of Punjab is slipped from 16th position 2001 to 21st position at all India ranking of literacy in the present census. In this paper the rural-urban differentials in literacy are worked out which shows the large gaps.

Keywords: Literacy Patterns, Literacy Differentials, Regional variations, Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Literacy plays an important role for social and economic development of a country. Literacy boosts the cultural and socio-economic development of the area. It helps in reducing ethnic divisions and poverty and improvement in the living standards of the people of that nation. Literacy improves the ability of a person to contribute much to build up a good society, good economic infrastructure and better interaction within the nation and the outside world. Good literacy rate always indicates the better society in comparison to the areas with less literacy rates that is underdeveloped. Literacy rate is used as the main indicator and measurement of the development in rural and urban areas. It is usually observed good literacy rates in urban areas as compare to the lesser literacy rates in rural areas. Access to literacy is a basic step towards achieving the general well being of people of that area. Literacy is necessary for the sustainable development. Hence, literacy is considered as a major tool in building a developed and peaceful society in the 21st Century. Educated society has the capability to bring the social and economic changes in the society. There are equal rights to both men and women in almost all the democratic countries including India. Primary education is now a fundamental right. According to the Census of India, person who can read and write with understanding in any language aged above six year considered as literate (Som & Mishra, 2014). ESCAP, 2010 observed that the Asia-Pacific region has three-quarter illiterate population of the world and it is also the biggest and most difficult issues in developing countries (Shafiqullah, 2011) of which India is a part, second largest populated country are characterized by great disparity between urban-rural, male-female and young-aged (Krishan & Shyam, 1978). India has effective literacy rate of 74.04 percent. It is to be noted that 82.14 percent male and 65.46 percent female are literate meaning thereby a large gender gap in literacy (Census of India, 2011).

The present study is dealing with one of the state of India i.e Punjab. Punjab is among the most developed states of India, rather the state enjoys the prosperity in terms of physiographic conditions, drainage system, economic conditions, agriculture and other resources. Beside this prosperity, the state has shown some serious concerns related to demographic issues and among these literacy rate is one of the important issue. In spite of all the great efforts by the state government and non government organisations the literacy rate of Punjab is still lag behind many other states of India. Also the literacy rate in the rural areas especially females and other weaker sections of the society is quite disturbing.

II. THE STUDY AREA

Punjab, also called the crown of India is the classic example of the fast growing economy. It enjoys the credit of ushering the green revolution in the country. The land of five rivers lies in the north-western part of the country. It is bordered by Pakistan from the western side and Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Himachal Pradesh in the north-east and Haryana and Rajasthan in the south. On the whole the state lies in the western part of the northern plains of India. The present Punjab occupies 1.54% of the total geographical area of the country and has the total area covered is 50,362 square kilometres.

Latitude Extent: 29°30'N-32°32'N

Longitude Extent: 73°55'E - 76°50'E

V. TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF LITERACY RATE IN PUNJAB

The main source of data regarding literacy is census of India. The data on literacy has been collected ever since the beginning of the census operations in 1872. Earlier up to the census of 1981, the literacy rate was counted by taking into account the total population of India but at the time of the census of 1991, it was decided that for the purpose to count literacy rate the sub population in the age group 0-6 is excluded from the total population to calculate literacy rate. The same concept is continued to perpetuate in all the censuses since 1991.

In spite of progress of literacy during the latest decades the state of Punjab presents a dismal picture with literacy rate of 76.68% as per census 2011 and rank 21st position at all India ranking of literacy in the present census. The male literacy is 80.40% whereas that of females' is 70.70% in 2011. The urban and rural literacy is recorded as 83.2% and 71.4% respectively. (2011).

Punjab is a classic example of fast growing economy. It enjoys the credit of ushering the green revolution in the country in 1965-66, that leads to further growth in all the sectors and awareness among the people. Since 1971 there is an increase in the literacy rates but at a slow pace. The literacy was increased by 9.25% during 1971 to 1981 and 15.14% by 1991 and 11.14% till 2001 and 7.03% by 2011. The data depicts that the rate of increase is decreasing in the present decades but there is a gradual increasing trend in the total literacy rate in Punjab. The literacy rate during 1971-2011 is increased to 42.56% in Punjab as compare to 39.59% in India. So the rate of increase in literacy rate of Punjab is more than the literacy rate in India in the post green revolution era except in the recent census year of 20

Table-1. Comparison of Literacy rates

Census Year	Punjab (literacy %)	India (literacy %)
1971	34.12	34.45
1981	43.37	43.57
1991	58.51	52.21
2001	69.65	64.83
2011	70.68	74.04

Fig-1.2

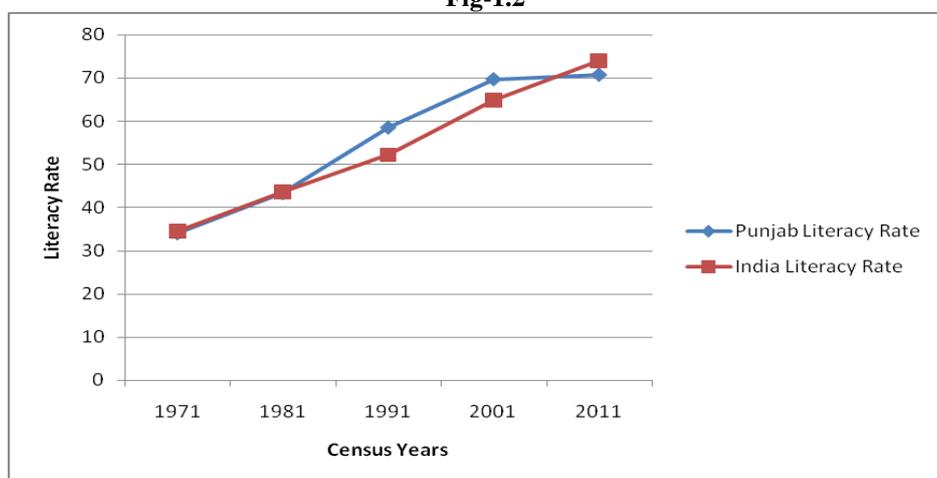


Table-2: Urban and rural Literacy Rate

District	Total literacy rate	Urban literacy rate	Rural literacy rate	Urban-Rural Differentials
Gurdaspur	81.1	85.9	78.3	0.11
Amritsar	77.2	81.2	68.8	0.20
TarnTaran	69.4	75.2	68.2	0.14
Kapurthala	80.2	84.6	77.1	0.11
Jalandhar	82.4	86.1	79.3	0.07
SBS Nagar	80.3	86.2	79.7	0.03
Hoshiarpur	85.4	89.9	84.6	0.05
Rupnagar	83.3	88.9	82.0	0.06
SAS Nagar	85.4	89.2	79.9	0.11
Ludhiana	82.5	86.3	79.3	0.06
Ferozepur	69.8	76.7	66.1	0.19

Faridkot	70.6	75.9	66.0	0.18
Muktsar	66.8	72.9	62.8	0.21
Moga	71.6	75.3	69.0	0.16
Bathinda	69.6	75.3	63.3	0.25
Mansa	62.8	68.4	59.0	0.28
Sangrur	68.9	74.2	65.8	0.14
Barnala	68.9	73.1	65.9	0.14
Patiala	76.3	81.4	70.1	0.19
Fatehgarh Sahib	80.3	84.3	78.6	0.07
Punjab	76.7	81.5	72.5	0.14

Spatial Patterns of Literacy Rate,2011

District wise pattern of literacy indicate that it varies largely from one district to another district of the state. For showing the spatial patterns of literacy in Punjab is divided into three main categories and each category is divided into five parts-(i) low (ii) moderate (iii) high (iv) Very high

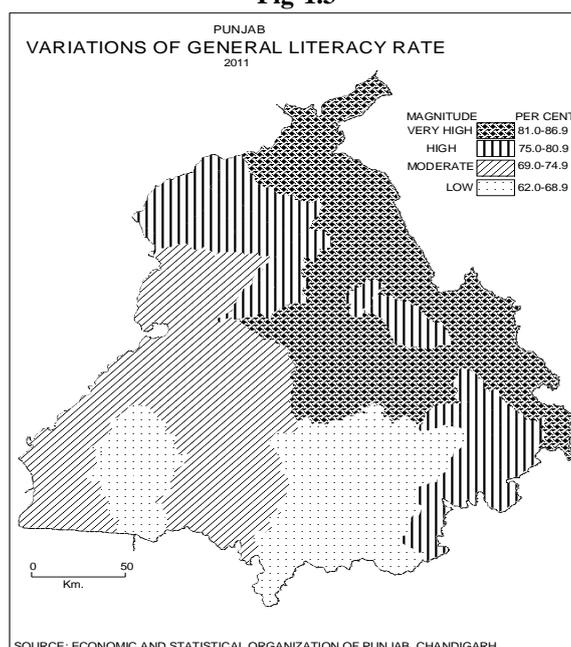
1. Spatial Patterns of general literacy rate

The district wise distribution of literacy rate in Punjab is not uniform. It varies from 85.4% in Hoshiarpur to 62.8% in Mansa district, the state average literacy rate is 76.7% and national average literacy is 74.04%. The spatial variations of the state have been divided into four main categories.

Table-3, Variations of general literacy rate in Punjab, 2011

Categories of General literacy rate	Number of Districts	Name of the Districts
Low (62.1%-68.9%)	4	Muktsar, Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala
Moderate (69.1%-74.9%)	5	Tarn-Taran, Ferozepur, Faridkot, Moga, Bathinda
High (75.1%-80.9%)	5	Amritsar, Kapurthala, SBS Nagar, Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib
Very High (81.1%-86.9%)	6	Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Rupnagar, SAS Nagar, Ludhiana

Fig-1.3

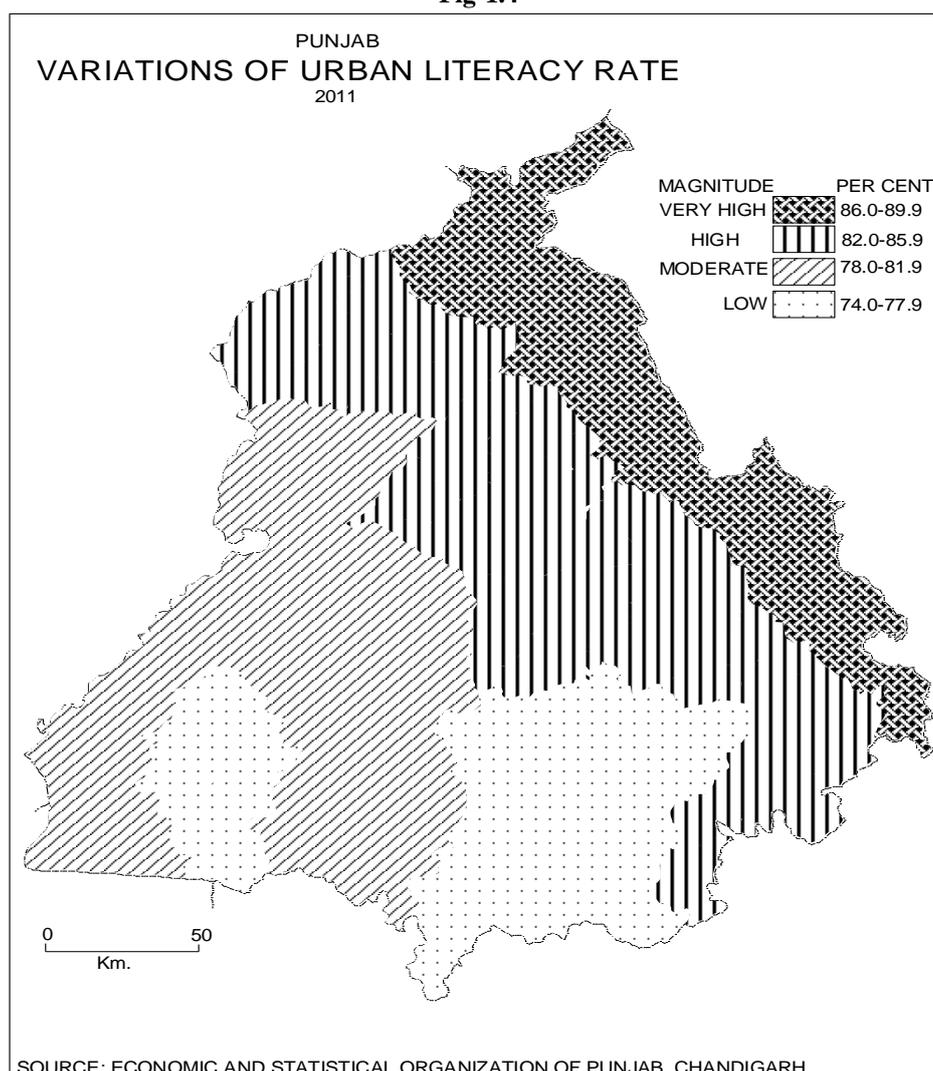


It is observed from the above table that the four districts of Punjab are having a very low literacy rate that is even below 69 percent. All these districts are in the south western part of the state. The five districts having the moderate literacy rate that varies 69 percent to 74.9 percent are also in south-western and southern parts of Punjab. The districts having high and very high literacy rate are in the northern, eastern and southern parts of Punjab. The reasons for high literacy in these two categories are higher awareness about literacy among the people and higher rate of urbanisation. The four major cities of Punjab – Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala falls in this category and are having better educational facilities in these areas. Spatial Patterns of Male and Female literacy rate in Punjab .The state of Punjab is having 81.5% male literacy rate and 71.3% female literacy rate showing the gap of around

Table 4- Variations in Urban literacy rate in Punjab, 2011

Categories of General literacy rate	Number of Districts	Name of the Districts
Low (74.1%-77.9%)	4	Muksar, Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala
Moderate (78.1%-81.9%)	5	Tarn-Taran, Ferozepur, Faridkot, Moga, Bathinda,
High (82.1%-85.9%)	7	Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Patiala, SBS Nagar, Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib
Very High (86.1%-89.9%)	4	Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Rupnagar, SAS Nagar,

Fig-1.4



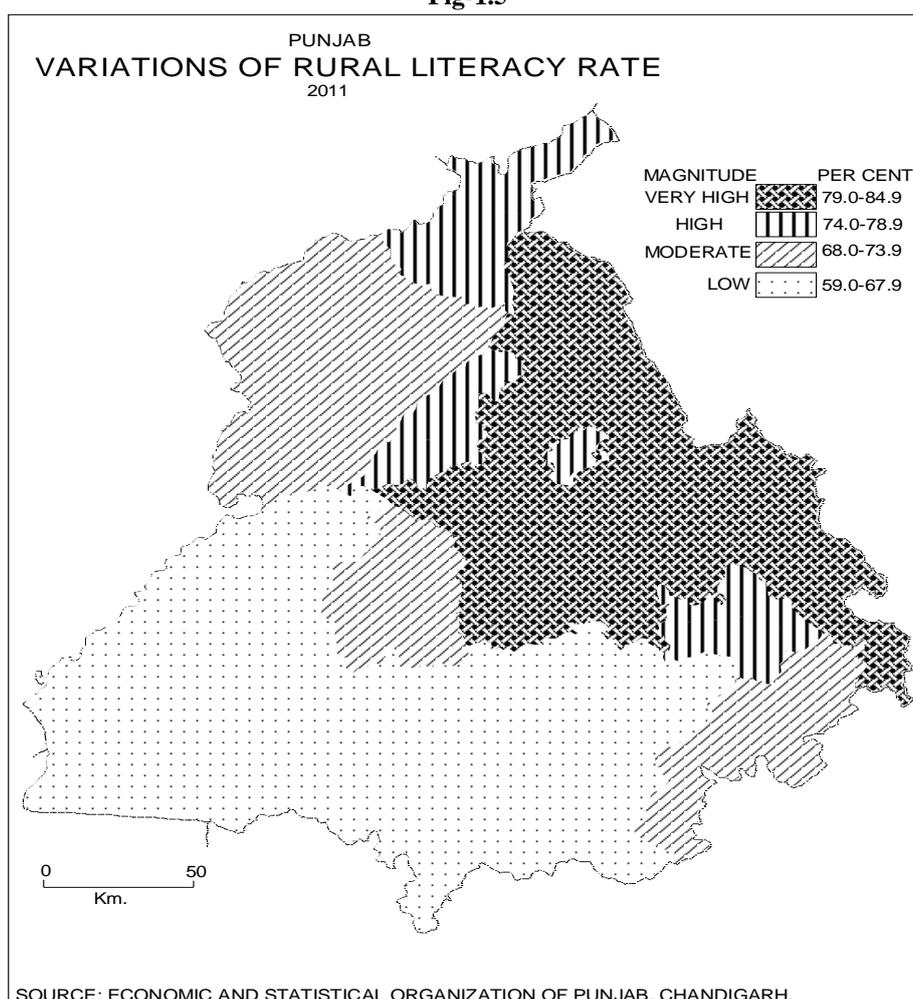
In Punjab, the total literacy rate is 76.7% and the urban literacy rate is 83.7. The highest urban literacy rate is in Hoshiarpur followed by Rupnagar and SAS Nagar. Approximately thirteen districts in the state are having more urban literacy rate than the state average of urban literacy. The four districts experiencing low literacy rate are also having low urban literacy rate, these districts are Mansa, Muktsar, Barnala and Sangrur.

Table 5- Variations in Rural literacy rate in Punjab, 2011

Categories of General literacy rate	Number of Districts	Name of the Districts
Low (59.1%-67.9%)	7	Ferozepur, Faridkot, Muktsar, Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala , Bathinda
Moderate (68.1%-73.9%)	4	Tarn-Taran, Amritsar, Moga, Patiala,
High (74.1%-78.9%)	3	Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Fatehgarh Sahib
Very High (79.1%-84.9%)	6	Jalandhar, SBS Nagar, Hoshiarpur, Rupnagar, SAS Nagar, Ludhiana

The total rural literacy rate in Punjab is 72.5%. There are nine districts in Punjab which are having low rural literacy than the average rural literacy rate of the state. The eleven districts like Ferozepur, Faridkot, Muktsar, Mansa, Tarn-Taran, Amritsar, Patiala, Sangrur, Barnala and Bathinda and Moga are experiencing low to moderate rural literacy rate. Another nine districts are showing high to very high rural literacy rate. The two districts Hoshiarpur and Rupnagar are having rural literacy rate more than 80%. The eastern part of Punjab is having more rural literacy rate than the western parts.

Fig-1.5



Rural and urban Literacy Differentials-

Literacy rate in Punjab is marked by wide rural- urban differentials. The average rural-urban index analysed in the state is 0.14 points. This differentials is highly pronounced in Amritsar, Ferozepur, Faridkot, Muktsar, Moga, Bathinda, Mansa and Patiala. On the other hand the rural urban differentials in literacy are recorded to be lowest in Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, SBS Nagar, Hoshiarpur, Rupnagar, SAS Nagar, Ludhiana and Fatehgarh Sahib. The areas where differential index is recorded equal to the state average index are Tarn-Taran, Sangrur and Barnala

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It may be conclude that there is increase in the literacy rate in Punjab after the green revolution period that is the 1971 census period. The state government authorities claimed that greater attention has been given to the education sector during the past few years, but the state has failed to match up with the progress showed by other states and union territories. There are wide gaps between urban and rural literacy rates in some of the districts. The main reasons for that in some of the rural areas of Punjab, parents prefer to educate the boys and discriminate against girls to send them to schools for education; the immigrants from the other states as well as the poor labour do not bother to send their wards to school. In urban areas, high cost of living and poverty compels them to send their children to work at daily wages instead of to schools. In spite of all the free educational facilities, they prefer to work. Another reason is that the parents themselves are illiterate and they do not understand the importance of education in the long run. Therefore in order to achieve the universalisation of education, more stress should be given to improvement in literacy in urban as well rural areas. Extra financial assistance should be given to the weaker sections of the society and backward areas. The voluntary organisations, the local bodies and NGO's should take the initiatives in this regard. It is the responsibility of the each citizen to improve the present scenario of the literacy. Moreover the South-western part of Punjab should be given more attention and special attention should be given to rural areas to narrow down the present literacy gap.

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