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## Changing Scenario Of Literacy Rate After Independence In Rural And Urban India

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**Abstract:** According to Indian census, literacy is defined as the ability of people to read and write a simple message in any language with some understanding. The study examines the trend of urban and rural literacy and gap by residence after independence. The study also analysis the spatial pattern of literacy as well as disparity by residence at district level. The study reveals that after independence in India; a significant increase has recorded in literacy rate in both urban and rural areas. Urban literacy has risen rapidly than rural while 229.63 million illiterates are living in rural area of country which is 81.23 per cent of total illiterates. Gap between urban- rural increased with increase in literacy and recorded 32.33 per cent in 1971 however; after 1971 census, it is decreasing slowly yet it is high. Large part of Jammu & Kashmir, south Punjab, some districts of Haryana, northern part of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, almost part of Rajasthan, north part of Gujarat, western and northern district of Madhya Pradesh, southern districts of Odisha and Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, north-east part of Karnataka as well as border area of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu contain low literacy rate in both urban and rural areas.

**Key Words:** independence, spatial pattern, disparity, residence, significant, rural areas, Urban literacy.

**Introduction-** It is not mandatory that to be treated as a literate, a person should have received any formal education or acquired any minimum educational standard. Literacy status can be acquired through adult literacy classes or by attending any non-formal education system. Persons who are unfortunately blind and read in Braille are also treated as literates. From 1991 census, children below seven years are ignored when working out literacy rate in the country and the population aged seven years and above only would be classified as literate or illiterate. The proportion of literate persons in a population is known as literacy level and the process of dissemination of literacy among the people in a society known as literacy transition. Literacy is related to all type of development which prepares the individual for full participation in a rapidly changing social and economic order.

An overall progress in literacy is necessary in a country; equally important is its distributional spread in all its areas - towns and villages, social classes and the two sexes (Gosal, 1979) but India is suffering with low literacy rate as well as high disparity by residence.

**Study Area-** It is an all India Study. India is located in the northern and eastern hemispheres. It is extended from 60 45' north to 370 6' north latitudes and 680 7' east to 970 25' east longitudes. It has 28 states, 7 union territories and 640 districts at the time of census enumeration (2011).

**Objectives of the Study-** To examine the trend of urban and rural literacy rates (1951-2011). To represent spatial pattern of literacy at district level.

To identify disparity by residence in literacy at district level.

**Data and Methodology-** In this study, data have collected from Primary Census Abstract published by office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India as well as Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Methodology is central to any research work which helps in scientific description and explanations of reality. Absolute figures are converted into percentages as well as ratios and these percentages and ratios are processed for necessary cartographic representations and interpretation. Requisite maps have been drawn with the help of Arc GIS software. Sopher's Disparity Index (1980) modified by Kundu and Rao (1985) as given below, has been used to



compute disparity by residence in literacy at district level.

$D_s = \text{Log}(x_2/x_1) + \text{Log}(200-x_1/200-x_2)$  Here,

$D_s$  = Urban-Rural Disparity Index  $X_2$  = Urban Literacy Rate

$X_1$  = Rural Literacy Rate

**Table 1**

Urban and Rural Literacy Rate in India (in per cent)				
Year	Urban Literacy Rate	Rural Literacy Rate	Gap between Urban-Rural Literacy Rate	Ratio of Urban-Rural Literacy Rate
1951	34.59	12.10	22.49	2.86 : 1
1961	54.40	22.50	31.90	2.42 : 1
1971	60.22	27.89	32.33	2.16 : 1
1981	67.23	36.01	31.22	1.87 : 1
1991	73.08	44.69	28.39	1.64 : 1
2001	79.92	58.74	21.18	1.36 : 1
2011	84.11	67.77	16.34	1.24 : 1

**Source: Adopted and computed from-**

- \* Selected Educational Statistics (1999-2000), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- \* Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2001.
- \* Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2011.

**Note-** Literacy rates for 1951 census to 1971 census relate to population aged five year and above while the rates for the 1981 census to 2011 census, relate to the population aged seven year and above.

**Urban Literacy Rate-** There were 49.01 million illiterates in urban area of country at the time of 1991 census enumeration which was 14.90 per cent of total illiterates. The urban illiterates increased 4.06 million after 1991 and recorded.

53.07 million in 2011 census which is 18.77 per cent of total illiterates. Urban literacy rate in India is increased rapidly. According to 1951 census; it was 34.59 per cent which increased up to 67.23 per cent in 1981. During 2001 census it was 79.92 per cent and now in 2011 census; it has recorded 84.11 per cent. Occupational necessity, better educational facilities, socially and economically capability to get education, less prejudices against female's mobility and education, better health condition, better situation of law and order, migration of educated rural people to urban areas are the major causes of high literacy in urban area.

When we examine state wise; the highest urban literacy is found in Mizoram (97.63 per cent) followed by Kerala (95.11 per cent), Tripura (93.47 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (91.10 per cent) and Meghalaya (90.79 per cent). All Union Territories contain literacy rates above 86 per cent. On the other hand, lowest literacy rate is found in Uttar Pradesh (75.14 per cent) followed by Bihar (76.86 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir (77.12 per cent), Rajasthan (79.68 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (80.09 per cent).

When we analysis district level, it varies from 56 per cent in Rampur district of Madhya Pradesh to 98.27 per cent in Aizawl district of Mizoram. Figure 2 shows that 344 districts out of 637 contain low literacy from the national average. Regional variation also exists.



**Table 2**

<b>Urban and Rural Literacy Rate (2011)</b> (in per cent)			
State/Union Territory	Urban Literacy Rate	Rural Literacy Rate	Gap by Res in Literacy Rate
Mizoram	97.63	84.10	13.53
Kerala	95.11	92.98	2.12
Tripura	93.47	84.90	8.57
Himachal Pradesh	91.10	81.85	9.25
Meghalaya	90.79	69.92	20.87
Goa	89.95	86.65	3.30
Nagaland	89.62	75.35	14.28
Sikkim	88.71	78.95	9.76
Maharashtra	88.69	77.01	11.68
Assam	88.47	69.34	19.13
Tamil Nadu	87.04	73.54	13.50
Gujarat	86.31	71.71	14.60
Karnataka	85.78	68.73	17.04
Odisha	85.75	70.22	15.53
Manipur	85.38	73.40	11.98
West Bengal	84.78	72.13	12.65
Uttarakhand	84.45	76.31	8.14
Chhattisgarh	84.05	65.99	18.06
Punjab	83.18	71.42	11.76
Haryana	83.14	71.42	11.73
Arunachal Pradesh	82.93	59.94	22.99
Madhya Pradesh	82.85	63.94	18.91
Jharkhand	82.26	61.11	21.14
Andhra Pradesh	80.09	60.45	19.64
Rajasthan	79.68	61.44	18.24
Jammu & Kashmir	77.12	63.18	13.94
Bihar	76.86	59.78	17.08
Uttar Pradesh	75.14	65.46	9.68
<b>Union Territories</b>			
Lakshadweep	91.92	91.58	0.34
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	90.10	84.50	5.60
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	89.79	64.12	25.66
Daman & Diu	88.96	81.36	7.59
Puducherry	88.49	80.10	8.40
NCT of Delhi	86.32	81.86	4.46
Chandigarh	86.19	80.75	5.45
<b>India</b>	<b>84.11</b>	<b>67.77</b>	<b>16.34</b>

**Source: Calculated from-**

Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2011.

**Note-** Population in age group 0-6 is ignored.

When we examine state wise; it is found highest in Kerala (92.98 per cent) followed by Goa (86.65 per cent), Tripura (84.90 per cent), Mizoram (84.10 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (81.85 per cent). Dadra & Nagar Haveli contains low literacy rate (64.12 per cent) while rest union territories contain literacy rates above 80 per cent. On the other hand, lowest literacy rate is found in Bihar (59.78 per cent) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (59.94 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (60.45 per cent), Jharkhand (61.11 per cent) and Rajasthan (61.44 per cent).

Remarkable increase has recorded by some states and union territories during the last decade such as Bihar (15.86 per cent) followed by Jharkhand (15.37 per cent), Tripura (15.18 per cent), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (14.78 per cent), Meghalaya (13.63 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir (13.40 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (12.93 per cent), Nagaland (12.55 per cent), Sikkim (12.12 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (12.11 per cent) while at national level it is remaining 9.02 per cent during same decade.



When we analysis district level; literacy rate varies from 32.08 per cent in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh to 97.59 per cent in Serchhip district of Mizoram.

Figure 3 shows that districts which are located in western, southern and north-eastern part of country as well as socio-economically developed small states such as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Haryana contain high literacy rate due to coastal location, high degree of urbanization, more diversified economy, modern agricultural system, considerable proportion of Christian population, early start of modern education under state patronage, greater allocation of funds for the development of education.

**Rural Literacy Rate-** When we see the status of illiterates; we found that there were 279.82 million illiterates in rural area of country at the time of 1991 census enumeration which was 85.10 per cent of total illiterates. The rural illiterates decreased 50.19 million after 1991 and recorded 229.63 million in 2011 census which is 81.23 per cent of total illiterates Rural literacy rate has increased slowly.

According to 1951 census; it was only 12.10 per cent which increased up to 36.01 per cent in 1981 and now in 2011 census; it has recorded 67.77 per cent. On the other hand; low literacy rates are found in Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, southern districts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha as well as Andhra Pradesh due to subsistence economy, low role of private sector, history of native rule, prejudice against females, high proportion of peoples which are backward (Muslim, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes). However; intra-state variation also exists in these states.

**Urban-Rural Disparity in Literacy-** Urban-rural disparity in literacy is existing continue. In 1951; the gap between urban-rural literacy rates was 22.49 per cent at national level which increased with increase in literacy and recorded 32.33 per cent in 1971 however; after 1971 census, it is decreasing slowly. During 2001 census, it recorded 21.18 per cent and now in 2011 census, it is 16.34 per cent which is high.

Here, urban-rural disparity in literacy has also calculated by Sopher's Disparity Index (1980) modified by Kundu and Rao (1985). Score of disparity index is found 0.15 at national level. When we examine state wise; the highest score of disparity index is found in Arunachal Pradesh (0.22) followed by Jharkhand (0.20), Meghalaya and Andhra Pradesh (0.19), Madhya Pradesh (0.18) and Assam (0.17). On the other hand; Kerala (0.02), Goa (0.03), Uttarakhand (0.07), Tripura and Himachal Pradesh (0.08) as well as Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh (0.09) contain low disparity.

Among the union territories; Dadra & Nagar Haveli contains highest disparity (0.24) while rest union territories contain low disparity.

**Conclusion-** After independence in India; a significant increase has recorded in literacy rate in both urban and rural areas. Urban literacy has risen rapidly than rural while 229.63 million illiterates are living in rural area of country which is 81.23 per cent of total illiterates.

Gap between urban-rural increased with increase in literacy and recorded 32.33 per cent in 1971 however; after 1971 census, it is decreasing slowly yet it is high.

Large part of Jammu & Kashmir, south Punjab, some districts of Haryana, northern part of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, almost part of Rajasthan, north part of Gujarat, western and northern districts of Madhya Pradesh, southern districts of Odisha and Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, north-east part of Karnataka as well as border area of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu contain low literacy rate in both urban and rural areas. Patriarchal society and low status of female, teaching other than mother tongue, minor role of private sector, engagement the school age children in economic activities, little functional value of education for deprived section of society, less diversified economy, unequal distribution of resources, poverty, low health condition, backward agriculture system, low level of infrastructure facilities, low level of urbanization and industrialization, terror and naxalite activities are the major causes of low literacy in these areas.



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