

Illiteracy Flagging India

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Abstract

India shares the highest proportion with more than one third of the world's illiterates along with one fourth illiterate population at the national level. Illiteracy is one of the important factors which negatively affect the socio-economic development of society. The illiterate population is isolated and excluded from mainstream society. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the pattern of illiteracy across the Indian states. The study is based on secondary data extracted from the Census of India 2011- applying the diagram and mapping to present status of illiteracy at a regional level. The analysis of the pattern of illiteracy reveals that illiteracy is the highest among rural females while it is lowest for urban males. The gap between male –female illiteracy indicates that there is heterogeneity in rural females and homogeneity in urban males. Moreover, there is a regional imbalance in educational as well as in empowerment efforts.

Keywords: *India, Illiteracy, Education, Development, Literacy.*

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.”

—Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General of the United Nations.

The problem of illiteracy continues to be a global issue and social problem, obstructing developmental efforts in the era of globalization. At the individual level, illiteracy blocks the overall development of an individual. It prevents people from imparting education to their children and more significantly, makes them lack self-esteem, which in turn leads them to isolation. At the societal level, they face difficulties in functioning effectively in the knowledge driven world, face difficulties in community involvement and civic participation. Moreover, illiteracy also causes an inferiority complex. Despite a number of policies and programmes being initiated by the Government of India and spending of huge financial

resources for removing illiteracy, the problem of illiteracy hasn't been solved. The present paper is an attempt to study the pattern of illiteracy in India in order to analyze the government policies for reducing the illiteracy by 2045. The paper primarily uses secondary data extracted from the Census of India 2011, along with some reports and government publications to supplement the analysis. For showing the regional pattern of illiteracy, the gap between male-female illiteracy has been plotted on map of India. Firstly, a simple illiteracy rate has been computed for trend analysis and spatial analysis in India. Secondly, gender gap has been plotted for analyzing the regional patterns of illiteracy. The paper provides a platform for debate on the issues of the effect of illiteracy on socio-economic development which makes a contribution for policy perspectives.

Conceptual Framework

UNESCO defines functional illiteracy as “measured by assessing reading, writing and mathematical skills in the various domains of social life which influence individual identity and insertion into society. From this perspective, literacy involves not only reading and writing but also the acquisition of the skills necessary for effective and productive performance within society”. Illiteracy means that a person cannot read and write at all. Of equal relevance is the concept of functional illiteracy, which means that an individual may have basic reading, writing and numerical skills but cannot apply them to accomplish tasks that are necessary to make informed choices and participate fully in everyday life. Poor literacy also limits a person's ability to engage in activities that require either critical thinking or a solid base in literacy and numeracy skills. Such activities may include: understanding government policies and voting in elections, calculating the cost and potential return of a financial investment, analyzing sophisticated media and advertising messages, and in particular, being able to detect getting rich quick scams and assisting children with homework.

Since its inception in 1946, UNESCO has been at the forefront of global literacy efforts and is concerned with keeping literacy high on the agenda regionally, nationally and internationally. ‘Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. A good quality basic education equips pupils with literacy skills for life and further learning; literate parents are more likely to send their children to school; literate people are better able to access continuing educational opportunities and literate societies are better geared to meet pressing development’. The first meeting of the World Congress of Education Ministers took place in Tehran, organized by UNESCO to discuss the problems of illiteracy at the international level on September 8, 1965. Since then this historic date has been observed as the International Literacy Day. Subsequently, the first international literacy day was celebrated on September 8, 1966. Therefore, this day has been celebrated each and every year. International Literacy Day 2013 was the 44th in the series. On the eve of International Literacy Day 2013, the Director General of UNESCO, emphasized that Literacy is much more than an educational priority-it is the ultimate investment in the future and the first step towards all the new forms of literacy required in the twenty first century.

The International Literacy Day focuses on the empowering role of literacy and its importance for participation, citizenship and social development. By the initiative of the UN, United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and its international activities were coordinated by UNESCO. By declaring the decade with the slogan of Literacy as Freedom, the international community recognized literacy as a human right to be actively promoted and defended. The decade addressed a renewed vision of literacy to encompass everyone's learning needs to improve literacy in all the contexts.

The government of India has made tremendous efforts to eradicate illiteracy from the nation by implementing Social Education, Gram Shikshan Mohim, Farmer's Functional Literacy Project, Non-Formal Education, Polyvalent Adult Education Centres, Education Commission (1964-66), Functional Literacy for Adult Women (FLAW), National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP), State Adult Education Programme (SAEP), Adult Education through Voluntary Agencies, National Literacy Mission (NLM) and Sakshar Bharat Mission (Government of India, New Delhi, 1998).

Overview of Literature

Literacy is the process of drive out and encourages rational thinking, responsible for molding individuals into accountable citizens (Rao & Gupta, 2006). Increased literacy is an indicator of better economic status, human capital, employment in a country (Desai, 2012). There are 90 million illiterates in the world; one third of them belong to India (Pareek, 2013). The consistent strategy for raising level of literacy could be sustained over a long period of time and be made a key preference area for educational development (Beard, 2011). Increasing literacy will remove inequalities and function as a means of improvement of status in the families (Pathak & Gupta, 2013).

Due to hierarchal social order of caste system in India, gender, caste, class and religion are crucial factors to determine to access the education (Deen, 2014). Customarily Indian society is driven by the caste system featuring the social exclusion and inequalities which is the backbone of the society (Deen, 2015). Women face a lot of discrimination at every level in Indian society, especially in rural areas, gender is significant factor for educating children. Usually, male children are preferred to educate, widening gender gap in education (Deen, 2015). The relationship between literacy and gender is reverse in the context of female. Furthermore, rural areas are unfavorable to female literacy (Katiyar, 2016). India will suffer more than a century to become free from illiteracy (Katiyar, 2015). To eliminate the existing gap between the education of men and women, there is need of serious efforts. (National Committee on Women's Education (1957-59). Female education should receive primary goal, not only on grounds of social justice, but also for accelerating social change (National Policy on Education, 1968). Thus, major emphasis should be laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels.

Addressing the nation on the eve of International Literacy Day in 2013, the President of India emphasized that, "Literacy is a crucial parameter of socioeconomic development. It positively runs deep. The time has come to put in renewed vigor and concerted efforts to improve our literacy rate. It has been envisaged

that by the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan period, we would achieve eighty percent literacy rate and also narrow the gender gap from sixteen to ten percentage points. Our ultimate objective should be to bring the literacy rate not only at par with the world average but at the levels attained by the leading nations. The existing gender disparity in literacy levels has to be bridged by turning our attention on girl child and women. Our attempts at achieving wide-spread literacy should be complemented by efforts at alleviating poverty, mitigating inequity owing to gender and social category and improving access to schooling. We have to gear up the machinery at all levels national, state, district, block and *Gram Panchayat* (village council). The implementation structure has to be strengthened by involving government agencies as well as reputed organizations in the non-government and private sectors. With the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders particularly literacy functionaries, I am confident that we will achieve these targets.”

There is mass illiteracy along with unemployment, low income and scarcity of resources, prevalent among Scheduled Castes (Sinha, 1981). The following factors are responsible for poor female literacy rates: gender based inequality, social discrimination and economic exploitation, occupation of girl child in domestic chores, low enrolment of girls in schools and low retention rate and high dropout rate (National Literacy Mission (1988). The disparity among the castes are more than the gender disparity in literacy as there is more distinction between non-scheduled and scheduled castes (Raju, 1988). The women’s illiteracy is direct product of poverty which needs a serious attention on the economic hurdles (Dighe, 1991). In order to increase literacy rates and eliminate drop outs, the children should be given free and compulsory education (Thangaraj, 1995). Literacy is a basic instrument for women empowerment against inequality and injustice in society (Patel & Dighe, 1997). The literacy programmes are an integral part of integrated rural development programme with a provision for vocational skill development and income generation programme because it has relation with societal needs and national development (Das & Singh, 2002). The policy makers and implementing authorities should focus on removing gap between male-female literacy in rural and urban areas (Grover & Bhardwaj, 2002). The education of Scheduled Castes is featuring low literacy, high dropout along with prevailing caste based discrimination (Thorat, 2009). UNESCO reveals that the income of a person with poor literacy stays about the same throughout their working life. It loses earnings and also limits employability avenues. The impact of illiteracy on personal income varies but it is clear that earning potential is very low. However, illiterate earn relatively less than their literate counterparts and donor have the literacy skills required to undertake further vocational education or training to improve their earning capacity (Anthony Cree, Andrew Kay & June Steward, 2012). The tribal society is unaware about the value of female education and hence devaluing of non-formal education reducing enrolment (Swamy, 2013).

Methodology

The present study is primarily based on secondary data extracted from the Census of India 2011. Further, some reports and government publications have been used to supplement our analysis. In the present study, two major statistical tools have been used for showing the regional pattern in illiteracy rate and gender gap between male-females illiteracy. Firstly, illiteracy has been computed for the trend analysis

and spatial analysis of the study. Secondly, gender gap has been applied for analyzing regional pattern of gender disparity in illiteracy across the Indian States/UTs.

Global Literacy

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the adult literacy rate is 84.1 percent. The UIS collects data on youth and adult literacy through its annual survey on literacy and educational attainment. Adult literacy rates concern the population groups aged 15 years and older, while youth literacy rates cover the populations between the ages of 15 to 24 years. The table 1 reveals that at the international level, 15.9 percent adults are illiterate comprising, 11.4 percent male adults and 20.1 percent female adults. The data reveals that more females are illiterate in comparison to males and this ratio is 1.79 times.

Table1: Global literacy rates for adults and youth, 2011

Parameter	Percentage/Population
Adult literacy rate, total	84.1%
Adult literacy rate, male	88.6%
Adult literacy rate, female	79.9%
Adult illiterate population, female share	63.8%
Youth literacy rate, total	89.5%
Youth literacy rate, male	92.2%
Youth literacy rate, female	86.8%
Youth illiterate population, female share	61.3%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Adult and Youth Literacy, UIS Fact Sheet, September 2013, No.26, p.1

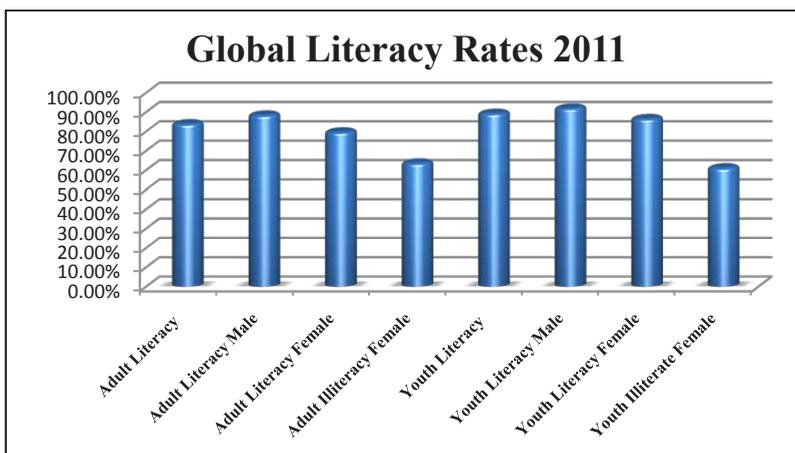


Fig. 1: Bar diagram representing global literacy rates

Total 773.5 million adults are illiterate in the whole world of which 63.8 percent females are illiterate. In total share, 36.2 percent males are illiterate. Regarding youth, 10.5 percent youth are illiterate at the international level comprising 7.8 percent youth males and 13.2 percent females. In absolute number, 123.2 million youth are illiterate at the world level in which 61.3 percent females are illiterate. Thus, 38.7 percent males are illiterate at the world level. Thus, the table concludes that illiteracy exists at the world level too. Consequently, one sixth adult population is still illiterate and the condition of females is even worse. Regarding youth, one tenth youth population is still illiterate. The share of females in adult illiterate population and youth population is 63.8 percent and 61.3 percent respectively. Thus it is established that the problem of illiteracy is a universal issue. There are 773.5 million illiterate adults at the global level.

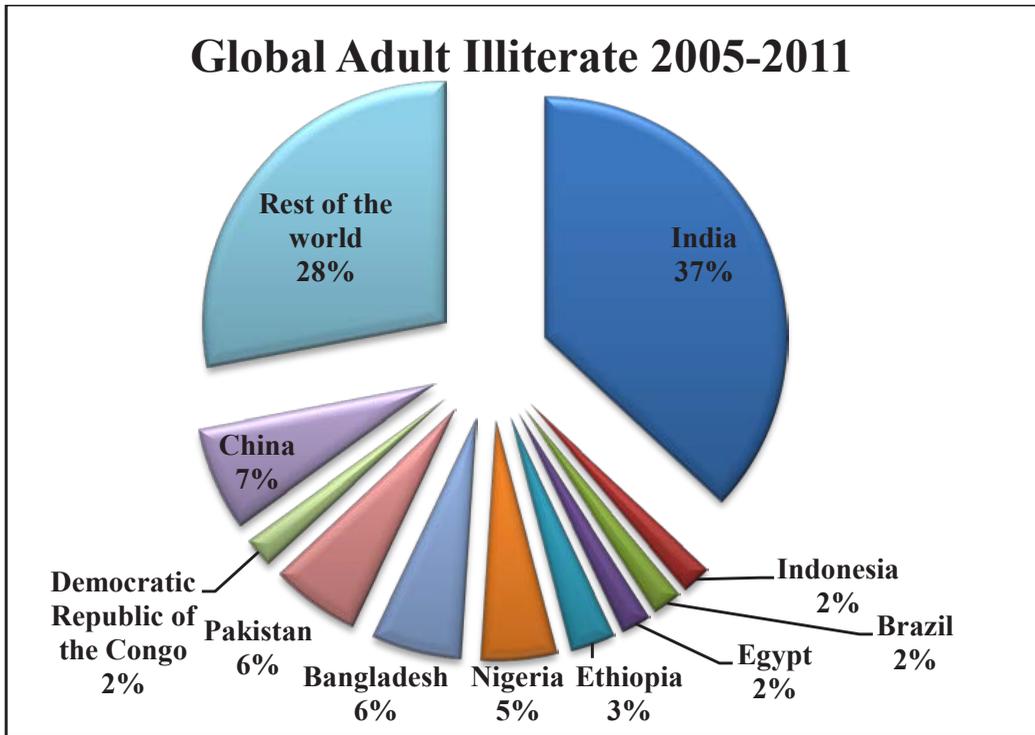


Figure2: Pie Diagram representing global adult illiterate population

The Table 2 reveals that 37 percent of the world’s illiterate adults live in India. The Pakistan has only 6 percent of the total illiterate population. Even China, which is the most populous country of the world, has only 7 percent of the world’s total illiterate persons. Thus, in India, there are more than 5 times illiterate persons than China. There is same 2 percent of the total illiterate population in 4 countries: Indonesia, Brazil, Egypt and Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is same 6 percent of the total illiterate population in 2 countries: Bangladesh and Pakistan and both have 12 percent of the total illiterate population. It is surprisingly shocking to note that 50 percent of the world’s illiterate

adults live only in three countries: India, China and Bangladesh. It is noteworthy that on one hand 72 percent of adult illiterate population of the world lives in 10 countries: India, Indonesia, Brazil, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and China while on the other hand 28 percent of the illiterate population lives in rest of the world. The above data reveals that for India, the situation is alarming.

Table 2: Global adult illiterate population by country, 2005-2011

World total illiterate	773.5 million
India	37%
Indonesia	2%
Brazil	2%
Egypt	2%
Ethiopia	3%
Nigeria	5%
Bangladesh	6%
Pakistan	6%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2%
China	7%
Rest of the world	28%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *UIS Statistics in brief, Global Literacy*

Profile 2011, p.1

Table 3: Literacy Rates of India: 1901-2011

Serial No.	Year	Age Group	Total Literacy Rates	Male Literacy Rates	Female Literacy Rates	Rural Literacy Rates	Urban Literacy Rates
1	1901	All Population	5.39	9.83	0.60	—	—
2	1911	All Population	5.92	10.56	1.05	—	—
3	1921	All Population	7.16	12.21	1.81	—	—
4	1931	All Population	9.50	15.59	2.93	—	—
5	1941	All Population	16.10	24.90	7.30	—	—
6	1951	5 and above	18.33	27.16	8.86	12.10	34.59
7	1961	5 and above	28.30	40.40	15.34	22.46	54.43

8	1971	5 and above	34.45	45.95	21.97	27.89	60.22
9	1981	7 and above	43.67	56.50	29.85	36.09	67.34
10	1991	7 and above	52.21	64.13	39.29	44.69	73.0
11	2001	7 and above	64.84	75.26	53.67	58.74	79.92
12	2011	7 and above	74.04	82.14	65.46	68.91	84.98

Source: *An Encyclopedia of Indian Adult education, 1999 & Census of India website, www.censusindia.gov.in*

Note: The 1981 literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted. The 1991 Census literacy rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir.

Table 4: Illiteracy Rates of India: 1901-2011(Prepared from the above table by X-Y Formula)

Serial No.	Year	Age Group	Total Illiteracy Rates	Male Illiteracy Rates	Female Illiteracy Rates	Rural Illiteracy Rates	Urban Illiteracy Rates
1	1901	All Population	94.61	90.17	99.40	—	—
2	1911	All Population	94.08	89.44	98.95	—	—
3	1921	All Population	92.84	87.79	98.19	—	—
4	1931	All Population	90.50	84.41	97.07	—	—
5	1941	All Population	83.90	75.10	92.70	—	—
6	1951	5 and above	81.67	72.84	91.14	87.90	65.41
7	1961	5 and above	71.70	59.60	84.66	77.54	45.57
8	1971	5 and above	65.55	54.05	78.03	72.11	39.78
9	1981	7 and above	56.33	43.50	70.15	63.91	32.66
10	1991	7 and above	47.79	35.87	60.71	55.31	27.00
11	2001	7 and above	35.16	24.74	46.33	41.26	20.08
12	2011	7 and above	25.96	17.86	34.54	31.09	15.02

Source: *An Encyclopedia of Indian Adult education, 1999 & Census of India website, www.censusindia.gov.in*

Note: The 1981 literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted. The 1991 Census literacy rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir.

Literacy in India

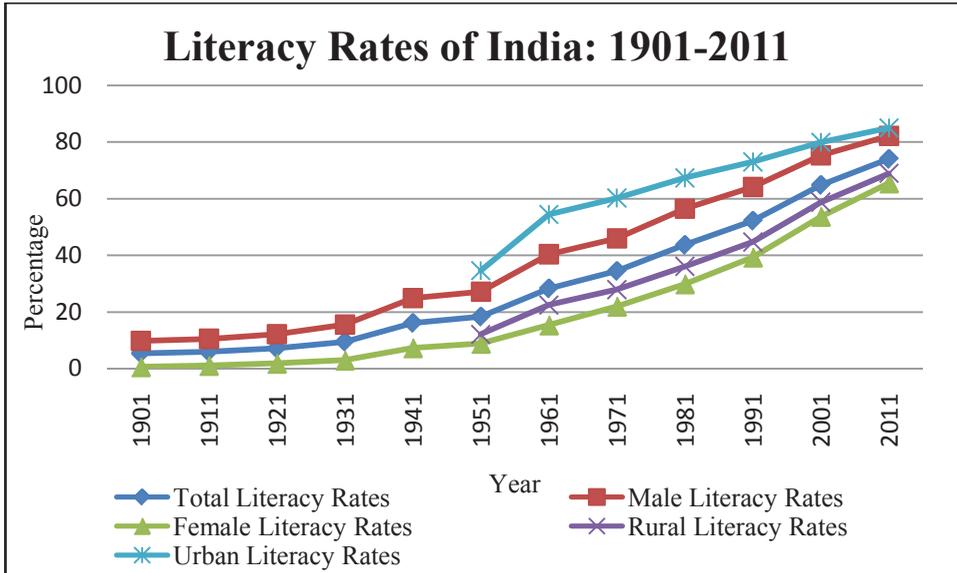


Fig. 3: Literacy rates during 1901-2011

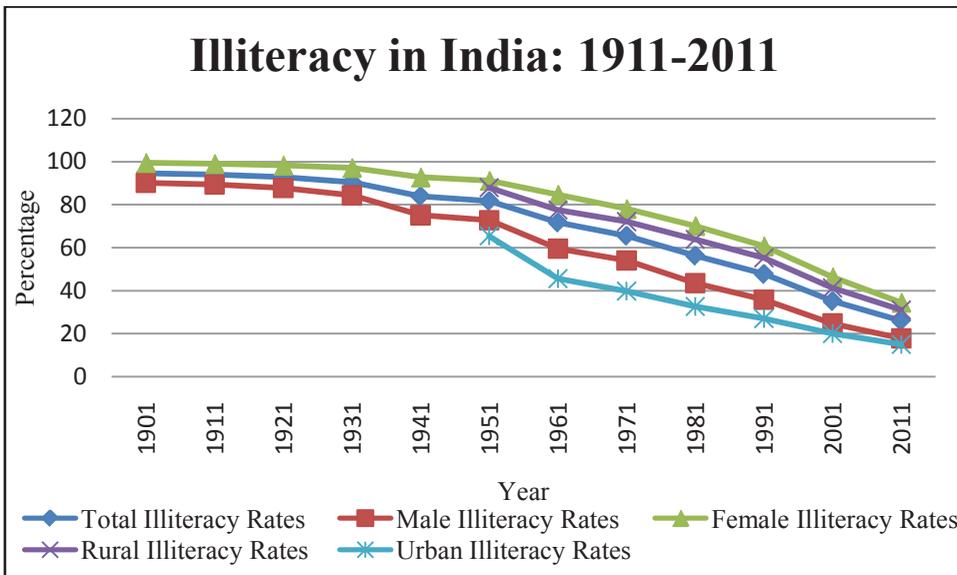


Fig. 4: Illiteracy rates during 1901-2011

The Table 4 reveals that the illiteracy rates have reduced from 1901 to 2011 continuously. The table further reveals that the illiteracy rates have reduced from 94.61 in 1901 to 25.96 in 2011 thus reduced to less one third. If we look at the rate of decrease of illiteracy rates for all persons, it is 6.24 times

per decade, for male, it is 6.57 times per decade and for female, it is 5.90 times annually. If we look at the geographical distribution, for rural areas the rate of decrease of illiteracy rates for the period, from 1951 to 2011, it is 9.5 times annual while for urban areas, it is 8.4 times annually.

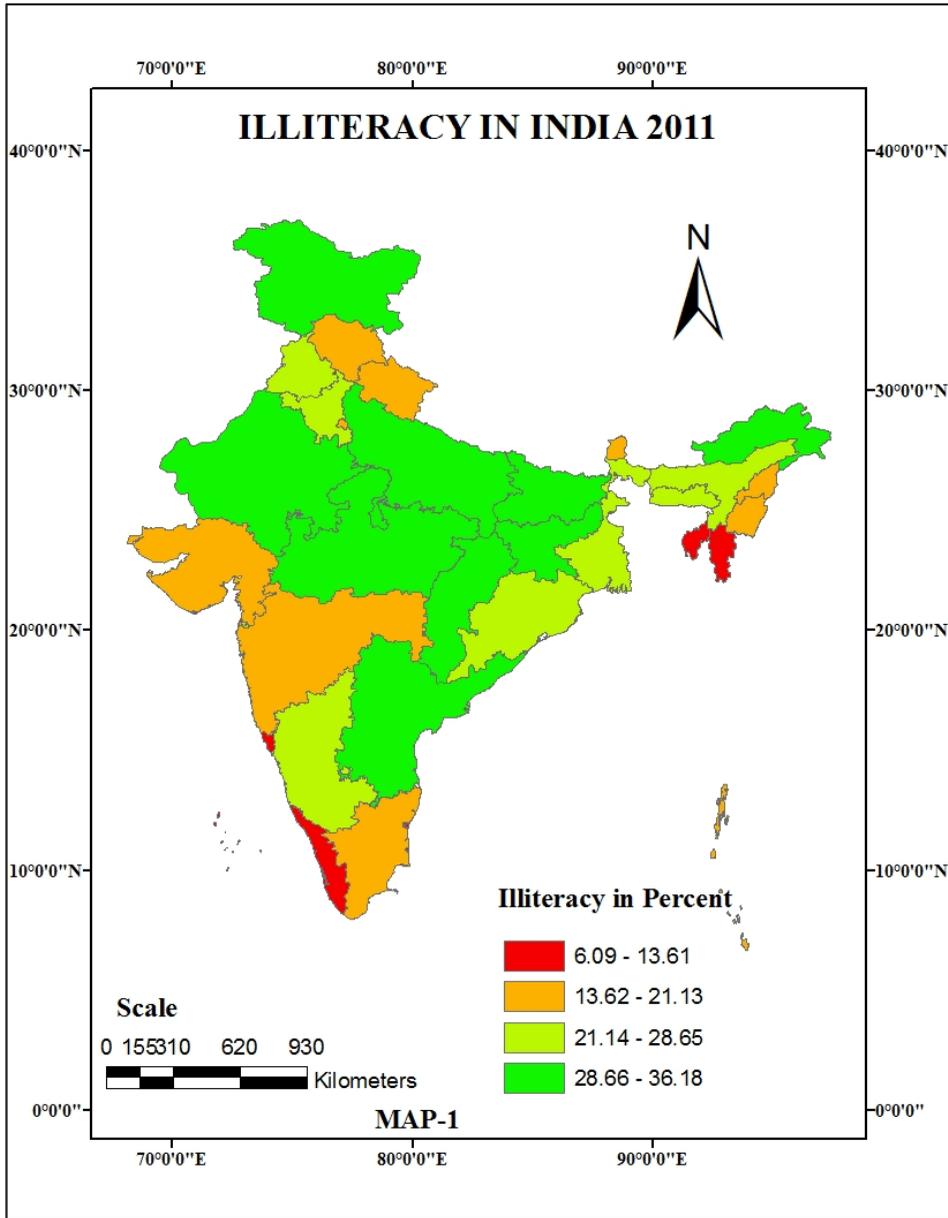


Figure 5: Spatial Distribution of Illiteracy in India, 2011

Table 5: Gender wise Illiteracy of India and States 2011

Serial No.	State/UTs	Total Illiteracy Rates	Male Illiteracy Rates	Female Illiteracy Rates
	India	25.96	17.86	34.54
01	Jammu & Kashmir	31.26	21.74	41.99
02	Himachal Pradesh	16.22	9.17	23.4
03	Punjab	23.32	18.52	28.66
04	Chandigarh #	13.57	9.46	18.62
05	Uttrakhand	20.37	11.67	29.3
06	Haryana	23.36	14.62	33.23
07	NCT of Delhi #	13.66	8.97	19.07
08	Rajasthan	32.94	19.49	47.34
09	Uttar Pradesh	30.28	20.76	40.74
10	Bihar	36.18	26.61	46.67
11	Sikkim	17.8	12.71	23.57
12	Arunachal Pradesh	33.05	26.31	40.43
13	Nagaland	19.89	16.71	23.31
14	Manipur	20.15	13.51	26.83
15	Mizoram	8.42	6.28	10.6
16	Tripura	12.25	7.82	16.85
17	Meghalaya	24.52	22.83	26.22
18	Assam	26.82	21.19	32.73
19	West Bengal	22.92	17.33	28.84
20	Jharkhand	32.37	21.55	43.79
21	Orissa	26.55	17.6	35.64
22	Chhattisgarh	28.96	18.55	39.41
23	Madhya Pradesh	29.37	19.47	39.98
24	Gujarat	20.69	12.77	29.27
25	Daman & Diu #	12.93	8.52	20.41
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli #	22.35	13.54	34.07
27	Maharashtra	17.09	10.18	24.52
28	Andhra Pradesh	32.34	24.44	40.26
29	Karnataka	24.4	17.15	31.87
30	Goa	12.6	7.19	18.16
31	Lakshadweep #	7.72	3.89	11.75
32	Kerala	6.09	3.98	8.02
33	Tamil Nadu	19.67	13.19	26.14
34	Puducherry #	13.45	7.88	18.78
35	A & N Islands #	13.73	9.89	18.16

Gender Gap

The Table 5 reveals that according to census of India, 2011, the national illiteracy rate is 25.96 percent which reveals that more than one fourth population of the country is still illiterate. Bihar has the highest illiteracy rate (36.18 percent) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (33.05 percent) and Rajasthan (32.94 percent). On the contrary, Kerala has the lowest illiteracy rate (6.09 percent) followed by Lakshadweep (7.72 percent) and Mizoram (8.42 percent). 24 states have illiteracy rate lower than national average (25.96) while 11 states have illiteracy rate above national average (25.96 percent).

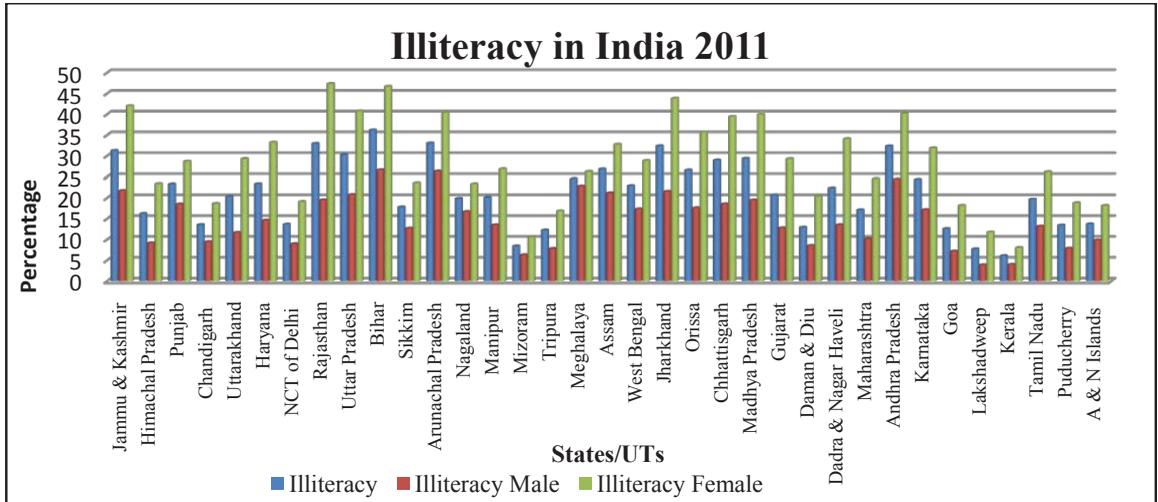


Fig. 6: State wise Illiteracy in India, 2011

Regarding male illiteracy rates, the national average is 17.86 percent which reveals that one sixth male population is still illiterate. Among various states, Bihar has the highest male illiteracy rate (26.61 percent) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (26.31 percent) and Meghalaya (22.83 percent). On the contrary, Lakshadweep has the lowest male illiteracy rate (3.89 percent) followed by Kerala (3.98 percent) and Mizoram (6.28 percent). Total 23 states have male illiteracy rate lower than national average (17.86 percent) while 12 states have illiteracy rate above national average (17.86 percent).

Table 6: Illiteracy of India and States (Rural):

Serial No.	State/UTs	Rural Illiteracy Rates	Rural Male Illiteracy	Rural Female Illiteracy
	India	31.09	21.43	41.25
01	Jammu & Kashmir	35.03	24.49	46.64
02	Himachal Pradesh	17.09	9.52	24.67
03	Punjab	27.55	22.08	33.53
04	Chandigarh #	18.31	13.32	25.83
05	Uttarakhand	22.89	12.37	33.21

06	Haryana	27.26	16.8	39.03
07	NCT of Delhi #	17.33	9.96	25.97
08	Rajasthan	37.66	22.51	53.75
09	Uttar Pradesh	32.45	21.52	44.39
10	Bihar	38.17	28.1	49.18
11	Sikkim	20.18	14.58	26.58
12	Arunachal Pradesh	38.41	31.21	46.22
13	Nagaland	24.14	20.51	27.99
14	Manipur	22.85	15.86	30.05
15	Mizoram	15.69	11.65	19.96
16	Tripura	14.42	9.14	19.94
17	Meghalaya	28.85	27.17	30.55
18	Assam	29.56	23.49	35.91
19	West Bengal	27.03	20.49	33.92
20	Jharkhand	37.6	25.43	50.25
21	Orissa	29.22	19.59	38.9
22	Chhattisgarh	33.24	21.8	44.6
23	Madhya Pradesh	34.71	23.36	46.8
24	Gujarat	27	16.9	37.59
25	Daman & Diu #	18.49	10.29	28.03
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli #	34.11	21.82	48.64
27	Maharashtra	22.91	13.61	32.62
28	Andhra Pradesh	38.86	29.76	47.95
29	Karnataka	31.14	22.08	40.4
30	Goa	15.74	8.29	23.16
31	Lakshadweep #	8.08	4.94	11.34
32	Kerala	7.08	4.71	9.26
33	Tamil Nadu	26.2	17.92	34.48
34	Puducherry #	18.98	11.51	26.18
35	A & N Islands #	15.61	11.47	20.42

Concerning female illiteracy rates, the national average is 34.54 percent which reveals that more than one third female population is still illiterate. Among various states, Rajasthan has the highest female illiteracy rate (47.34 percent) followed by Bihar (46.67 percent) and Jharkhand (43.79 percent). On the contrary, Kerala has the lowest female illiteracy rate (8.02 percent) followed by Mizoram (10.6 percent) and Lakshadweep (11.75 percent). Total 25 states have female illiteracy rate lower than national average (17.86 percent) while 10 states have illiteracy rate above national average (17.86 percent).

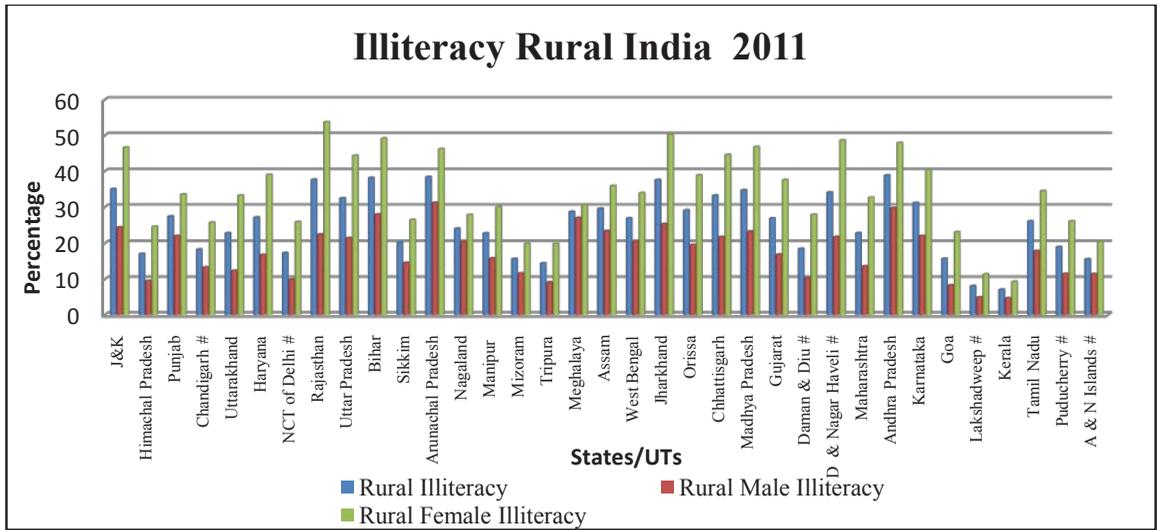


Figure 7: Rural Illiteracy in rural India 2011

The Table 6 reveals that according to census of India, 2011, approximately one third rural population of the country (31.09 percent), is still illiterate. Andhra Pradesh has the highest illiteracy rate (38.86 percent) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (38.41 percent) and Bihar (38.17 percent). On the contrary, Kerala has the lowest illiteracy rate (7.08 percent) followed by Lakshadweep (8.08 percent) and Tripura (14.42 percent). Total 24 states have illiteracy rate lower than national average (31.09 percent) while 11 states have illiteracy rate above national average (31.09 percent). Approximately one fifth rural male population (21.43 percent) is still illiterate. Arunachal Pradesh has the highest rural male illiteracy rate (31.21 percent) followed by Andhra Pradesh (29.76 percent) and Meghalaya (27.17 percent). On the contrary, Kerala has the lowest rural female illiteracy rate (4.71 percent) followed by Lakshadweep (4.94 percent) and Goa (8.29 percent). 22 states have male illiteracy rate lower than national average (21.43 percent) while 13 states have illiteracy rate above national average (21.43 percent). Approximately two fifth female populations (41.45 percent) are still illiterate. Rajasthan has the highest female illiteracy rate (53.75 percent) followed by Jharkhand (50.25 percent) and Bihar (49.18 percent). On the contrary, Kerala has the lowest female illiteracy rate (9.26 percent) followed by Lakshadweep (11.34 percent) and Tripura (19.94 percent). Total 25 states have female illiteracy rate lower than national average (41.45 percent) while 10 states have illiteracy rate above national average (41.45 percent).

Table 7: Illiteracy of India and States (Urban)

Serial No.	State/UTs	Urban Illiteracy Rates	Urban Male Illiteracy	Urban Female Illiteracy
	India	15.02	10.33	20.08
01	Jammu & Kashmir	21.81	15.1	29.81

02	Himachal Pradesh	8.61	6.28	11.34
03	Punjab	16.3	12.72	20.38
04	Chandigarh #	13.44	9.35	18.45
05	Uttarakhand	14.8	10.22	19.98
06	Haryana	16.17	10.63	22.49
07	NCT of Delhi #	13.57	8.95	18.9
08	Rajasthan	19.27	10.84	28.47
09	Uttar Pradesh	22.99	18.25	28.32
10	Bihar	21.25	15.58	27.64
11	Sikkim	10.74	7.06	14.81
12	Arunachal Pradesh	15.43	10.55	20.96
13	Nagaland	9.79	7.89	11.9
14	Manipur	14.02	7.95	19.79
15	Mizoram	1.9	1.33	2.46
16	Tripura	6.39	4.2	8.62
17	Meghalaya	8.67	6.83	10.51
18	Assam	11.12	8.16	14.29
19	West Bengal	14.46	10.85	18.3
20	Jharkhand	16.7	10.22	23.83
21	Orissa	13.55	8.17	19.3
22	Chhattisgarh	15.21	8.37	22.35
23	Madhya Pradesh	15.91	9.76	22.61
24	Gujarat	12.42	7.56	17.92
25	Daman & Diu #	11.13	8.05	17.06
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli #	9.14	5.19	15.14
27	Maharashtra	10.16	6.21	14.56
28	Andhra Pradesh	19.46	14.01	24.98
29	Karnataka	13.79	9.46	18.29
30	Goa	10.69	6.53	15.04
31	Lakshadweep #	7.62	3.6	11.87
32	Kerala	5.01	3.17	6.67
33	Tamil Nadu	12.76	8.18	17.33
34	Puducherry #	10.91	6.2	15.4
35	A & N Islands #	10.4	7.04	14.21

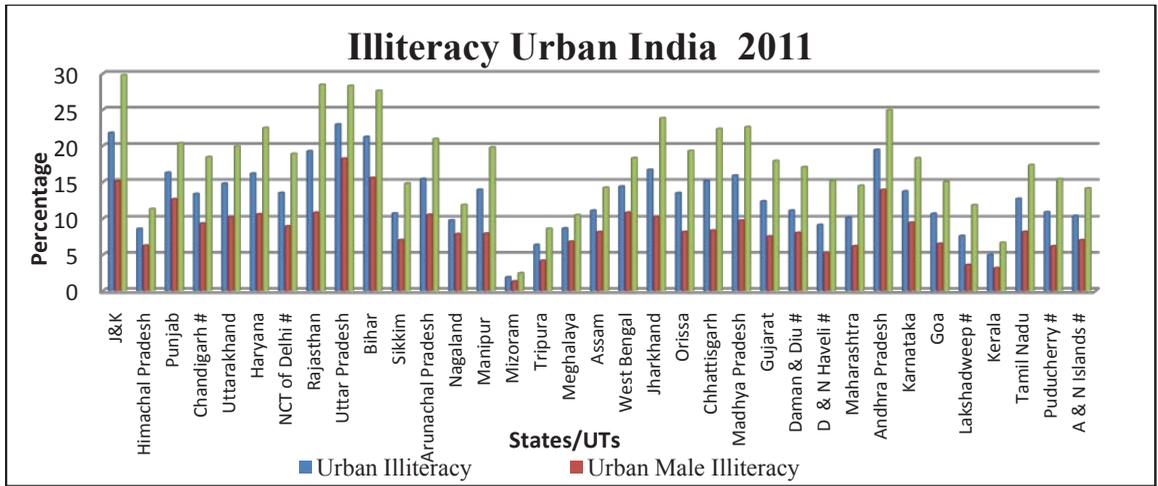


Fig. 8: Urban Illiteracy in urban India 2011

The Table 7 divulges that according to census of India, 2011, approximately one sixth urban population (15.02 percent) of the country is still illiterate. Uttar Pradesh has the highest illiteracy with 22.99 percent followed by Jammu & Kashmir (21.81 percent) and Bihar (21.25 percent). On the contrary, Mizoram has the lowest illiteracy rate (1.9 percent) followed by Kerala (5.01 percent) and Tripura (6.39 percent). 26 states have illiteracy rate lower than national average (15.02 percent) while 9 states have illiteracy rate above national average (15.02 percent). Approximately one tenth urban male population (10.33 percent) is still illiterate. Uttar Pradesh has the highest urban male illiteracy rate (18.25 percent) followed by Bihar (15.58 percent) and Punjab (12.72 percent). On the contrary, Mizoram has the lowest urban male illiteracy rate (1.33 percent) followed by Kerala (3.17 percent) and Lakshadweep (3.6 percent). 26 states have male illiteracy rate lower than national average (10.33 percent) while 9 states have illiteracy rate above national average (10.33 percent). Nearly one fifth female population (20.08 percent) is still illiterate. Jammu & Kashmir has the highest female illiteracy rate (29.81 percent) followed by Rajasthan (28.47 percent) and Uttar Pradesh (28.32 percent), while Mizoram has the lowest female illiteracy rate (2.46 percent) followed by Kerala (6.67 percent) and Tripura (8.62 percent). Total 24 states have female illiteracy rate lower than national average (20.08 percent) while 11 states have illiteracy rate above national average (20.08 percent).

Table 8: Matrix of Illiteracy Rates, Rural & Urban Illiteracy Rates (%)

Serial No.	Description	National Average	States above national average	States below national average
1	Total Illiteracy Rates	25.96	11	24
2	Male Illiteracy Rates	17.86	12	23
3	Female Illiteracy Rates	34.54	10	25
4	Total Rural Illiteracy Rates	31.09%	11	24

5	Male Rural Illiteracy Rates	21.43%	13	22
6	Female Rural Illiteracy Rates	41.45%	10	25
7	Total Urban Illiteracy Rates	15.02%	9	26
8	Male Urban Illiteracy Rates	10.33%	9	26
9	Female Urban Illiteracy Rates	20.08%	11	24

The Table 8 shows that there is a difference of 8.10 percent points' between total and male illiteracy rates and 16.68 percent points' between male and female illiteracy rates. The difference between female illiteracy rates and total illiteracy rates is 9.56 percent points. The relationship between total rural illiteracy and male rural illiteracy and female rural illiteracy and male rural illiteracy is double. The difference between total rural illiteracy and male rural illiteracy is 10.06 percent points while the difference between female rural illiteracy and male rural illiteracy is 20.03 percent points. The difference between female rural illiteracy rates and total rural illiteracy rates is 10.36 percent points. The relationship between total urban illiteracy and male urban illiteracy and female urban illiteracy and male urban illiteracy is double. The difference between total urban illiteracy and male urban illiteracy is 4.69 percent points while difference between female urban illiteracy and male urban illiteracy is 9.75 percent points. The difference between female urban illiteracy rates and total urban illiteracy rates is 5.06 percent points.

Table 9: Matrix of Differences in Illiteracy Rates (%)

Serial No.	Description	Differences
1	Total illiteracy rates and male illiteracy rates	8.10%
2	Male illiteracy rates and female illiteracy rates	16.68%
3	Female illiteracy rates and total illiteracy rates	8.58%
4	Total rural illiteracy and male rural illiteracy rates	9.66%
5	Female rural illiteracy and male rural illiteracy rates	20.03%
6	Female rural illiteracy rates and total rural illiteracy rates	10.36%
7	Total urban illiteracy and male urban illiteracy rates	4.69%
8	Female urban illiteracy and male urban illiteracy rates	9.75%
9	Female urban illiteracy rates and total urban illiteracy rates	5.06%

Table 10: Frequency Distribution of States in respect of their Illiteracy Rates by Areas and Sex-2011 (Based on X-Y Formula)

Illiteracy Rates (%)	Persons	All Areas		Rural Areas			Urban Areas		
		Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
National Average	25.96	17.86	34.54	31.09	21.43	41.25	15.02	10.33	20.08
Highest Illiteracy rate	36.18	26.61	47.34	38.86	31.21	53.75	22.99	18.25	29.81

Lowest Illiteracy rate	6.09	3.89	8.02	7.08	4.71	9.26	1.9	1.33	2.46
Range (Highest-Lowest Illiteracy rates)	30.09	22.72	39.32	31.78	26.50	44.49	21.09	16.92	27.35
Most Illiterate State	Bihar	Bihar	Rajasthan	Andhra Pradesh	Arunachal Pradesh	Rajasthan	Uttar Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	Jammu & Kashmir
Least Illiterate State	Kerala	Lakshadweep	Kerala	Kerala	Kerala	Kerala	Mizoram	Mizoram	Mizoram
States above national average	11	12	10	11	13	10	9	9	11
States below national average	24	23	25	24	22	25	26	26	24

Table 11: Household wise distribution of illiterates (Census 2011)

Area Name	Number of households	Number of illiterates	Average number of illiterates per household
India	246692667	447071056	1.77
Rural	167826730	350809908	2.09
Urban	78865937	96261148	1.22

Table 12: Outlay and expenditure on education in Centre, States and UTs in Five Year Plans (Rs. in crore)

Plan Period	Centre	Outlay			Expenditure		
		State/UT's	Total	Centre	State/UT's	Total	
First Five Year Plan (1951-1956)	1241.00	828.00	2069.00*	706.00	1245.00	1960.00	
Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961)	2559.12	2240.88	4800.00	2535.00	2115.00	4673.00	
Third Five Year Plan (1961-1966)	3600.00	3900.00	7500.00	4212.00	4227.00	8577.00	
Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974)	8870.00	7031.47	15901.47	7826.00	7675.00	15779.00	
Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1979)	19954.10	18899.14	38853.24@	18755.00	20015.00	39426.00	
Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985)	47250.00	50250.00	97500.00	57825.00	49485.00	109292.00	
Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990)	95534.00	84466.00	180000.00	127520.00	87492.00	218730.00	

Eight Five Year Plan (1992-1997)**	247865.00	186235.00	434100.00	328906.00	188449.00	527012.00
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	489361.00	369839.00	859200.00	406687.00	299131.00	705818.00
Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007)	893183.00	632456.00	1525639.00	636317.00	613005.00	1249322.00
Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)	2156572.00	1488147.00	3644719.00	1167884.06	1694145.00	2862029.00
Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017)	4333739.00	3716384.96	8050123.96	N.A	N.A	N.A

Source: Planning Commission & <https://data.gov.in/resources/five-year-plans-plan-outlay-and-expenditure-centre-states-and-union-territories/download>

Notes: * 1952 Original plan provision, @ Excludes Rs. 450 crores for Hill and Tribal Areas Outlays are at prices at base year of plan, ** Eighth Plan expenditure is based on 1992-93 (Actuals), 1993-94 (Actuals), 1994-95 RE, 1995-96 RE and 1996-97 BE.

The Table 9 shows that there is almost same difference between total illiteracy rates and male illiteracy rates and total rural illiteracy, male rural illiteracy rates and female rural illiteracy rates and total rural illiteracy rates and total urban illiteracy rates and male urban illiteracy rates and female urban illiteracy rates and total urban illiteracy rates. The maximum difference of 20.03 percent points is between female rural illiteracy rates and male rural illiteracy rates. The minimum difference of 4.69 percent points is between total urban illiteracy rates and male urban illiteracy rates.

From Table 10, we see that illiteracy among females is almost double the male's illiteracy in all the three sectors: all areas, rural as well as urban areas. Illiteracy rates among rural is double than urban areas. On comparison of highest illiteracy rates of all the areas, males and females in both rural as well as urban areas, it is found that it is maximum 53.75 percent points for rural females while it is minimum 18.25 percent points for urban males. On comparison of lowest illiteracy rates of all the areas, males and females in both rural as well as urban areas, it is found that it is maximum 9.26 percent points for rural females while it is minimum 1.33 percent points for urban males. If we compare the range of illiteracy rates, it is maximum 44.49 for rural females and it is minimum 16.92 for urban males which reveal that there is heterogeneity in rural females and homogeneity in urban males. Bihar is the most illiterate state for all persons and males while for females it is Rajasthan. In rural areas, for all persons the most illiterate state is Andhra Pradesh, for males it is Arunachal Pradesh and for females it is Rajasthan. In urban areas, the most illiterate state for all persons and males both, it is Uttar Pradesh while for females; it is Jammu & Kashmir. Regarding the least illiterate state, it is Kerala for all persons and females both while it is Lakshadweep for males. In rural areas, it is Kerala for all the three categories: all persons, males and females. In urban areas, it is Mizoram for all the three categories: all persons, males and females. Regarding states above national average in illiteracy, there

is equal number 11 for all persons, for persons in rural areas and for urban female’s categories. There are 10 states for females of all person category and rural female category. There are 9 states for urban persons and urban male’s category. Regarding states below national average in illiteracy rates, there are 24 states for all persons, rural persons and urban female category. There are 25 states for all person females and rural female category. There are 26 states for urban persons and urban male category. The Table 14 reveals that there are on an average 1.77 illiterates per household in the country. If we look at the geographic distribution, it is found that on an average, there are 2.09 illiterates per household in the rural areas while 1.22 illiterates per household in the urban areas.

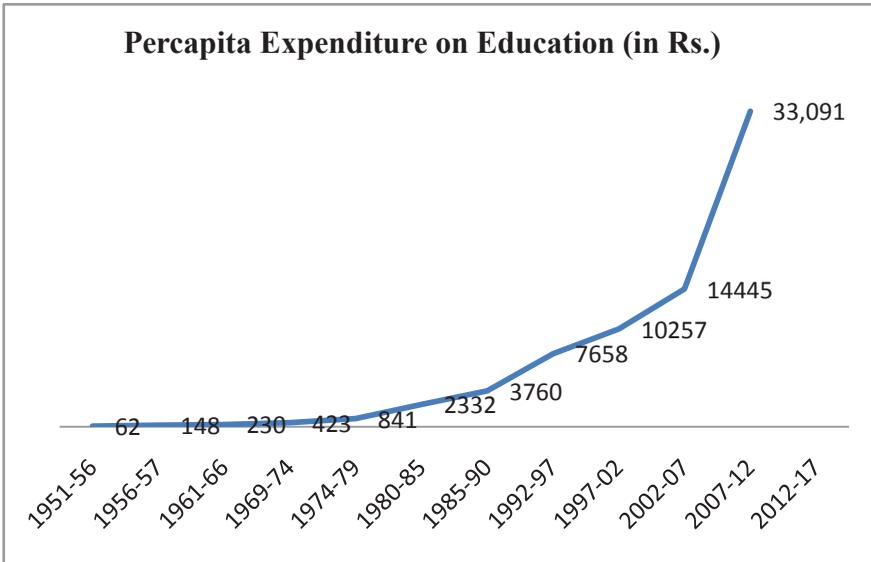


Fig. 9: Per Capita Expenditure on Education

The Figure 9 shows that after Independence in 1947, the expenditure on education was minimal during first plan to seventh plan because Indian economy was engaged in fulfilling the basic need of its citizens. After post liberalization Indian economy, per capita total expenditure per five year plan shows an increasing trend of financial expenses for education through different government policies and programmes for reducing illiteracy in order to achieve the Millennium development Goals. Most importantly, 9-11 five year plan expenditure on education has rapidly increased from Rs.7000 to Rs. 33000 per person. Resultantly, it has positive impact on increasing literacy against prevailing mass illiteracy in order to its elimination. Evidentially the literacy has been increased from 52 percent in 1991 (Census of India, 1991) to 74 percent literacy in 2011(Census of India, 2011).

Discussion

India is home to more than one third of world’s total illiterates. More than one fourth of the Indian population comprising one sixth males and one third females are illiterate. In rural India, approximately one third of the population, comprising one fifth males and two fifth females are illiterate. Regarding

urban India, approximately one sixth comprising one tenth males and one fifth females are illiterate. There are on an average 1.77 illiterates per household in general, 2.09 illiterates per household in the rural areas and 1.22 illiterates per household in the urban areas. On comparison of highest illiteracy rates of all the areas, males and females in both rural as well as urban areas, it is maximum 53.75 percent for rural females while it is minimum 18.25 percent for urban males. On comparison of lowest illiteracy rates of all the areas, males and females in both rural as well as urban areas, it is maximum 9.26 percent for rural females while it is minimum 1.33 percent for urban males. If we compare the range of illiteracy rates, it is maximum 44.49 for rural females and it is minimum 16.92 for urban males which reveal that there is heterogeneity in rural females and homogeneity in urban males. Bihar is the most illiterate state for all persons and males while for females it is Rajasthan.

Illiteracy retards the rational decision making process. It also hampers the benefits to be accrued from various facets like reading, writing and numeracy. Illiteracy is also an obstacle for persons trying to become independent. It prevents awareness that can be created by reading newspapers. Through awareness, illiterate persons can become aware about various landmarks like the right to free and compulsory education, right to information and several such others. Illiteracy is also a threat to learning various skills and also prevents refinement in natural skills. Illiteracy in women is more dangerous in comparison to that in men as women are more concerned with a child's education, health and social well-being. With the prevalence of illiteracy, women are not capable of addressing the challenges faced by their children. Illiteracy hinders the power of self-decision making in women. Moreover, illiterate women are less interested in sending their children to school. Illiteracy nullifies the benefits of various welfare schemes, policies and programmes. Presently, there are lots of such welfare schemes, policies and programmes being run by central/state governments; do not reach the right people because of illiteracy. Reading skills enable the illiterate persons to read letters, road symbols, and expiry dates of medicines thereby boosting their confidence. Writing skills enable the illiterate persons to write letters, makes signatures on various applications, banks, and post-offices and also in parent teacher meetings. Numeracy skills enable people to administer an appropriate quantity of medicine to sick children, an appropriate quantity of medicine, water, seed and pesticides to crops. The process of making illiterate persons literate helps them in making appropriate decisions keeping in mind the available resources and it is also helpful in running the business effectively.

Conclusion

India has the largest illiterate population in the world, which is one of the biggest hurdles in the socio-economic progress of society. Though the rate of illiteracy has been continuously decreasing since Independence in 1947. At this rate, it will take more than a century for India to be free from illiteracy. The analysis in this paper reveals that there is a variation in the illiteracy rate between the states, and also indicates that lesser the variation in illiteracy, the lower the literacy in the respective states. The study identifies key areas as follows: a) to focus on the heterogeneity in illiteracy rates in different states, b) amongst women and c) in rural areas, through the literacy drives that aim to push the process of development. Illiteracy demoralizes the efforts to annihilate the social evils i.e. poverty, unemployment

etc. Likewise, due to the presence of such huge illiteracy in India, the goal of inclusive socio-economic development seems to be only a day dream for the country. It is a great threat to efforts initiated by the United Nations and other organizations as well. Illiteracy is a risk to accomplishing the country's Millennium Development Goals.

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