

Vol 4 Issue 2 March 2014

ISSN No : 2230-7850

International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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VILLAGE LEVEL SPATIO-TEMPORAL ANALYSIS OF LITERACY IN SANGLI DISTRICT

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Abstract:-India, a developing country in the third world with agrarian economy, has 72.20 percent population living in 6,40,000 villages (2001 Census). In contrast, industrially developed state Maharashtra has 57.57 percent people living in 41,095 villages. The study area, Sangli district has 721 inhabited villages carrying 1,950,306 rural people (75.49%). The rural people has a lower literacy rate (74.14%) than the literacy rate of urban population (84.17%). There is a positive correlation between the degree of economic progress and the degree of literacy. Literacy is an indispensable means to acquire skills for improving economic and social well-being. The National Adult Education Programme, the first country-wide programme launched in 1978, viewed literacy as means to bring about fundamental change in socio-economic development. It is the key to both development and population control. Sex-wise (Gender) study of literacy pattern reveals that there is a striking difference in the literacy rates between males and females. Female literacy rate is comparatively lower than that of male. In India, despite our concerted efforts in over last 60 years, only 65.38 percent of the population was reported as literate in 2001 Census, whereas female literacy was 54.16 percent. In case of rural areas, their proportions are 59.40 percent and 46.70 percent respectively. As compared to Indian Scenario, Sangli district is a progressive district, with 74.14 percent people are literate in which female literacy percentage is 62.42. Keeping this in view, in the present paper apart from analysis (micro / village level) of literacy, a modest attempt has been made to identify the villages, that need attention for promotion of elementary / adult education especially for women in order to reduce or eliminate female literacy in rural areas of Sangli district.

Keywords: Literary, Illiteracy, Gender Disparity.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the advent of skills of reading and writing, society could be classified as being in the pre-literate cultural stage. The change from pre-literate to literate society is said to have begun somewhere during the fourth millennium B. C. though a gradual transition from pictography to the use of an alphabet (Golden Hilda)¹. Literacy brings about fundamental changes in socio-economic development. Disparity in literacy generates number of social, economic and political problems which may threaten the very foundation of development. Education is undoubtedly an area, which has to receive undivided attention from the Government. Therefore, it is imperative to identify regions (here villages) which are lagging behind not only in literacy but also the extent of gender disparity in literacy rate. The concept of literacy that varies from country to country, generally refers to the minimum level of literacy skills. Trewartha², considers the basis of length of schooling not a valid measurement of educational accomplishments. The Population Commission of United Nations considers, 'the ability to both read and write a simple message with understanding in any language a sufficient basis for classifying a person as literate.' The Indian Census has adopted this definition. According to 2001 Census of India³, 'a person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language has taken as literate.' Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relations and for promoting the free play of demographic processes (Chandna)⁴. Illiteracy, on the other hand, takes away man from his dignity, perpetuates ignorance, poverty and mental isolation, deters peaceful and friendly international relations and free demographic process and hampers social advancement, economic growth and political maturity. Above all, literacy influences other such attributes of population as marriage, fertility, mortality, mobility, occupation, etc. A certain level of literacy is, therefore, a basic requirement for people to get out of ignorance and

backwardness (Gosal and Chandna)⁵. In Population Geography Literacy is considered as a fairly reliable index of socio-cultural and economic advancement (Chandna and Sidhu)⁶. Thus, literacy is essential for economic development, social advancement and demographic growth of a country. Being extraordinarily, one has to shout loudly that, “India's destiny is shaped in her Classrooms.” The male-female differentials in literacy rate is called as gender disparity in literacy rate.

The literacy rates in any area were determined largely by a variety of historical, social and economic factors. Often it is not easy to prepare an exhaustive list of all such factors determining literacy due to complexity, of socio-economic set up. According to Ghosh⁷, literacy is influenced by as many as 15 different factors. He determines that there is a very high correlation between parental income and literacy rate.

STUDY AREA

The study area is a district i.e. “Sangli District” in the southern part of Maharashtra State of India (Fig.1). Its selection identifies and recognizes 'District' as basis of administrative system in India. According to Oxford Concise Dictionary, 'a district is defined as territory marked off for special administration purpose.' Sangli district lies between 16° 40' N and 17° 33' N latitudes; and 73° 42' E and 75° 40' E longitudes; and has an area of 8572 sq.km and population of 2,583,524 (1,950,306 rural and 633,218 urban) – spread over in 721 inhabited villages and 8 urban centres. Its rural density of population is 236 persons per sq.km and the rural sex ratio is 962 females per thousand males. Administratively the district is divided into 9 tahsils (2001). Of the 35 districts in Maharashtra State, Sangli occupies 21st rank in area and 15th rank in population.

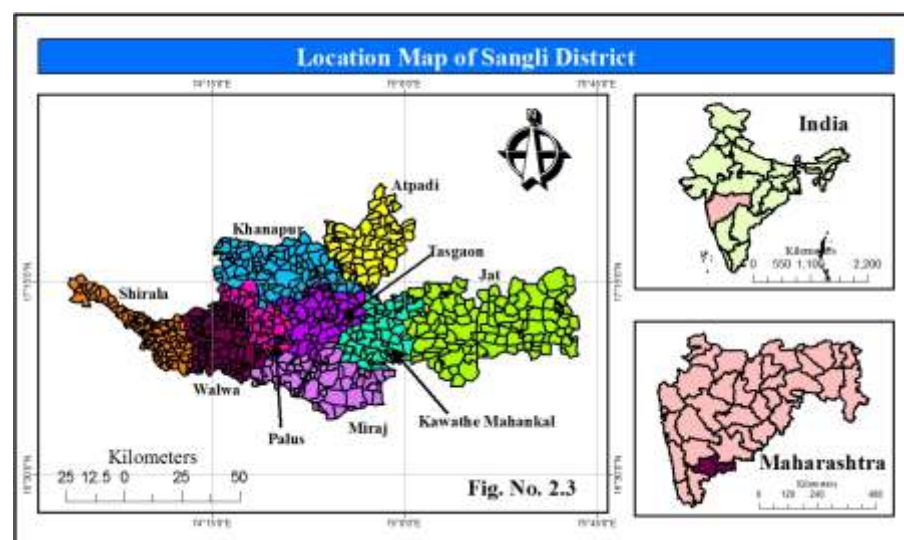


Fig. 1

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are to analyse the disparity in literacy at micro-level, i.e. the literacy differentials at village level and to identify the villages that need attention for promotion of elementary or adult education especially for women in order to reduce or eliminate female literacy in rural areas of Sangli District.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present paper is primarily based on secondary data. The data on sex-wise literacy (population aged 7+ years) and gender gap in literacy rate for the Census Year 2001 have been collected from Directorate of Census Operations, Mumbai, Maharashtra. There are found wide differences in literacy rates not only at village level but also at taluk level. According to literacy, the villages are classified into 5 categories, viz. Very low, Low, Moderate, High and Very High. The spatial disparities in literacy rates for the study area have shown by choropleth maps.

LITERACY IN VILLAGES (1991–2001)

India, a developing country in the third world with agrarian economy has 72.20 % population living in 640,000 villages (2001 Census). In contrast, industrially developed state Maharashtra has 57.57% people living in 41,095 villages. The study area, Sangli district has 721 inhabited villages carrying 1,950,306 (75.49%) rural people (2001 Census). The rural

people have a lower literacy rate than the literacy rate of urban population. The rural people do not get sufficient opportunities to get themselves educated in a formal way. There is a positive correlation between the degree of economic progress and the degree of literacy. There is also a high degree of positive correlation not only between the economic diversification and the pattern of literacy in a society but also between the proportion of workers engaged in agriculture and the literacy pattern. Literacy and economic progress go hand in hand. But literacy is mainly the product of the socio-economic milieu (Ghosh)⁷. These rural males who get educated have a tendency to migrate to urban areas in search of employment, particularly when there are no avenues in the countryside outside the agricultural sector.

Thus, rural-urban differential in literacy emanates from the differences in the type of economy, degree of concentration of educational institutions, status granted to the females and migratory patterns of two areas. Like the male-female differential in literacy, the rural-urban differential in literacy has been narrowing down largely due to the opening up of large number of schools in the countryside and also due to the increasing degree of socio-economic awakening among the rural masses. Attempts to diversity the economy of rural areas with a view to absorbing surplus farm labourers in the countryside itself have also stimulated rural males to seek education more willingly (Chandna)⁸.

Owing to above discussions village wise literacy rates have been computed into 5 categories for showing village wise variation in literacy in the rural areas of the study area (Table 1 & 2) during 1991 and 2001. In a similar way the Figs. 2 & 3 have been prepared to depict the same. Some of the striking features of these tables and figs. are as below:

I) Villages of Very Low Literacy Rate

In 1991 Census the villages with very low literacy rate are considered which have less than 40% literacy rate, whereas in 2001 Census it is less than 50%. In 1991 as many as 132 (18.26%) villages in the study area recorded very low literacy rate. It is hearty to note that the improvement in literacy of rural population declined the number of villages in this category to only 14 (1.94%) in 2001. Maximum number of villages are confined to Jat (70 in 1991 & 12 in 2001), Shirala (26 in 1991 & 2 in 2001) and Atpadi (21 in 1991 & 0 in 2001) tahsils. This is mainly on account of smallness in size and also due to inaccessibility of the villages. The most illiterate village in 1991 in the district was Nivale in Shirala tahsil whose literacy rate was less than 1 per cent (2% males & 0% females). While in 2001 the most illiterate village is Khundalpur in same tahsil, whose literacy rate is only 32.8 percent (46.9% males and 21.5% females). Both the villages are very small in size with only 156 and 381 people respectively. These *Dam Affected* Villages are located in the extreme western hilly and remote area of the district.

II) Villages With Low Literacy Rate

This category of literacy rate ranges 41 to 50 in 1991 and 51 to 60 in 2001. It is seen that 96 (13.28%) villages in 1991 and 76 (10.54%) villages in 2001 are included in this category, largest again being in Jat tahsil (35 & 46 villages respectively). Atpadi (12 & 17), Kavathe Mahankal (10 & 8) and Shirala (26 & 4) are the other tahsils in the district representing this category. Here again the reasons for low literacy rate are the smallness in size and inaccessibility of the villages. Walwa, Palus, Khanapur and Tasgaon tahsils have no villages with below 60% literacy rate in 2001.

Table 6.7
Sangli District : Literacy Rate * in Villages (1991)

Sr. No.	Literacy rate → Tahsil ↓	Number and Percentage of Villages					
		Less than 40	41 -50	51 -60	61 -70	Above 71	Total
1.	Shirala	26	22	35	17	03	103
		25.24	21.36	33.98	16.50	2.92	100 %
2.	Miraj	02	03	18	32	09	64
		3.12	4.69	28.12	50.00	14.07	100%
3.	Tasgaon	01	03	25	59	16	104
		0.96	2.88	24.04	56.73	15.39	100%
4.	Khanapur	02	05	48	59	06	120
		1.67	4.17	40.00	49.16	5.00	100%
5.	Kavathe Mahankal	10	12	18	19	01	60
		16.67	20.00	30.00	31.67	1.66	100%
6.	Jat	70	35	11	02	-	118
		59.32	29.66	9.32	1.70	-	100%
7.	Atpadi	21	12	20	07	-	60
		35.00	20.00	33.33	11.67	-	100%
8.	Walwa	-	04	20	56	14	94
		-	4.26	21.28	59.57	14.89	100%
	Sangli District	132	96	195	251	49	723
		18.26	13.28	26.97	34.72	6.77	100%

*Literacy Rate is the Percentage to Population aged 7 years and above.
Source : Computed by author with the help of 1991 Census of Sangli Dist.

Table 6.8 Sangli District : Literacy Rate* in Villages (2001)

Sr. No.	Literacy rate Tahsil	Number and Percentage of Villages					
		Less than 50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	Total
1)	Shirala	2	4	28	53	7	94
		2.13	4.26	29.78	56.38	7.45	100%
2)	Walwa	-	-	-	60	36	96
					62.5	37.50	100%
3)	Palus	-	-	4	30	18	52
				7.69	57.69	34.62	100%
4)	Khanapur	-	-	24	74	9	107
				22.43	69.16	8.41	100%
5)	Atpadi	-	17	34	8	1	60
			28.23	56.67	13.33	1.67	100%
6)	Tasgaon	-	-	5	48	11	64
				7.81	75.0	17.19	100%
7)	Miraj	-	1	10	29	23	63
			1.59	15.87	46.03	36.51	100%
8)	Kavathe Mahantal	-	8	17	29	6	60
			13.33	28.35	48.34	10.0	100%
9)	Jat	12	46	57	7	3	125
		9.6	36.8	45.6	5.6	2.4	100%
10)	Sangli District	14	76	179	398	114	721
		1.94	10.54	24.83	46.88	15.81	100%

* Literacy Rate is the Percentage of literate to population aged 7 years and above.
Source: Computed by author with the help of 2001 Census of Sangli Dist.

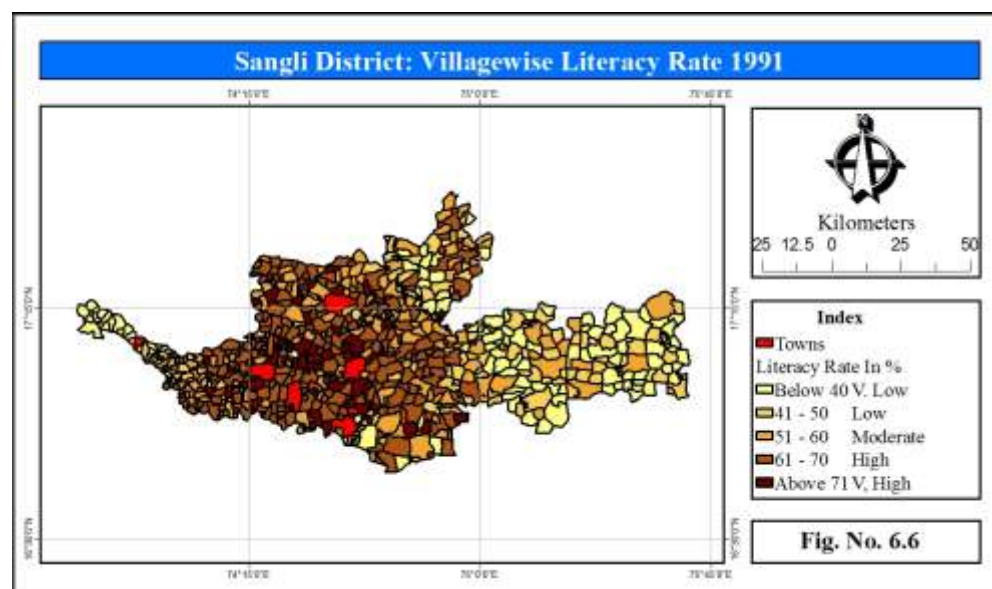


Fig. 2

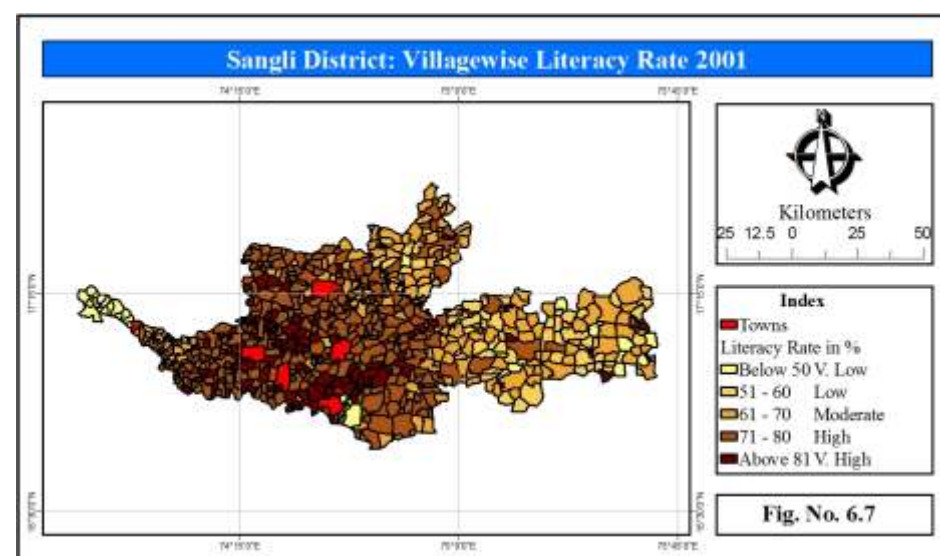


Fig. 3

I) Villages With Moderate Literacy Rate

Moderate range of literacy rate in villages of Sangli district in 1991 is 51 to 60 and 61 to 70 in 2001. About one fourth villages in the study area depict moderate literacy rates during both the Censuses. The dominating tahsils in this category are Khanapur (48 & 24), Shirala (35 & 28), Tasgaon (25 & 5), Jat (20 & 57), and Atpadi (20 & 34). Only 4 villages from Palus tahsil record the moderate literacy rate ; while not a single village in Walwa tahsil comes under this category at the beginning of new century.

II) Villages With High Literacy Rate

It is hearty to note that maximum number of villages in the study area (251 in 1991 and 398 in 2001) depict high literacy rate ranging between 61 & 70 in 1991 and 71 & 80 in 2001. Though the villages from all the tahsils come under this category, tahsil Khanapur ranks first among them with 59 (49.16%) villages in 1991 and 74 (69.16%) villages in 2001, it is followed by Walwa tahsil with 56 (59.57%) in 1991 and 60 (62.5%) villages in 2001. Lowest number of villages i.e. only 2 in 1991 and 7 (5.6%) in 2001 are found in Jat tahsil. Jat, Atpadi, and Kavathe Mahankal tahsils of the district are under drought prone condition , exhibit low economic development and low literacy rate.

III)Villages With Very High Literacy Rate

Very high range of literacy rate in 1991 was more than 71, whereas it is more than 81 in 2001. Only 49 (6.77%) villages in 1991 reported with very high literacy rate and this number in increased to 114 (15.18%) in 2001. This is the good sign as far as literacy rate in rural habitat is concerned. Majority of the villages in this category are in economically developed tahsils of Miraj (9 & 23), Walwa (14 & 36) and Palus(18). Large sized villages in all tahsils exhibit very high literacy rate. It is also important to note that in 2001, 9 villages (1.25%) in the district have more than 91% of their population is literate, constituting 5 villages in Walwa tahsil and 4 villages in Palus tahsil.

Village *Kavaji Khotwadi* (in 1991) in Miraj tahsil and village *Dhotrewadi* (in 2001) in Walwa tahsil have the highest (89.03% & 99.4% respectively) literate people in the district. *Dhotrewadi* is the unique village in the district having 100% male literacy as against 98.8% female literacy rate in 2001.

6.5.1 IDENTIFICATION OF LOW LITERACY VILLAGES

According to 2001 Census Reports there are about 90 villages in Sangli district having low (76) to very low (14) literacy rate. The tahsilwise list of the villages is as under :

i)Jat :- Nawalwadi, Bevnur, Gulvanchi, Pratapur, Birnal, Bagewadi, Baj Belunki, Kanthi, Mirwad, Jirgyal, Shelakewadi, Singanhalli, Khairao, Tonewadi, Kosari, Lakdewadi, Ambyachiwadi, Kunikonur, Sanmadi, Gholeshwar, Karajangi, Kolgiri, Rajobawadi, Vhaspeth, Asangi, Tilyal, Shedyal, Nigadi Bk., Sonalgi, Suslad, Balgaon, Kulalwadi, Girgaon, Gondhalewadi, Bhivargi, Morbgi, Karewadi, Motewadi, Konbgi, Karewadi (Ko), Pardhi Vasti, Khandnal, Daribadchi, Siddhanath, Jalyal Kh. Pandharewadi, Motewadi, Kargani, Asangi Turk, Rampur, Mallal, Yeldari, Salmalgewadi, Khilarwadi, Gugwad, Umarani and Sindur. (58 villages).

ii)Atpadi :- Pujarwadi, Sherewadi, Gavalewadi, Nimbavade, Mitki, Banpuri, Lengarewadi, Gulewadi, Kurundwadi, Parekarwadi, Jambhulni, Mudhewadi, Walwan, Chinchale, Balewadi, Manewadi and Talewadi. (17 villages).

iii)Kawathe Mahankal :- Nimaj, Ghorpadi, Dudhebhavi, Chorochoi, Jambhulwadi, Chudekhindi, Moghamwadi and Basappawadi. (8 villages).

iv)Shirala :- Beradwadi, Bhashtewadi, Gudhe, Khundlapur, Shirsatwadi and Sawantwadi. (6 villages).

v)Miraj :- Sheri Kawathe. (1 village).

If we look at the names of the above villages it is found that more than 30% villages have their suffixes with wadi. In Maharashtra such villages are determined as very small villages. In fact, all the above mentioned 90 villages in the study area are very small in their size.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The empirical evidences of the present study indicates that there exist spatial inequalities in the literacy rates of male and female population. Sangli, one of the progressive districts of Maharashtra has higher literacy rates both in male (85.86%) and female (62.42%) as far as rural population is concerned. The gender gap in literacy rate is 23.44. Higher the gender disparity means lower the female literates than the males and vice-versa. It varies from tahsil to tahsil and village to village. Agro-economically developed tahsils like Walwa, Palus and Miraj have low, moderately developed tahsils like Khanapur and Tasgaon have moderate, while drought-prone plateau tahsils like Jat, Kavathe Mahankal, Atpadi and Western hilly tahsil, Shirala have high gender gap in literacy rate. It is evident from the analysis that there is a positive correlation between economic development and female literacy. Micro-analysis study at village level results that only 5.42% villages in the study area have very low gender gap in literacy rate. It means the female literacy rate is considerably high. As may as 65 (9.02%) villages in the study area are identified as very high gender gap villages, because in these villages the female literacy rate is very low than that of male. Keeping in view the complexities of socio-cultural and economic scene and the spatial variations in the study area, it should strive for universalization of at least elementary education at the earliest possible. There is an urgent need to pay attention towards the female literacy at all ages and at all levels. In order to achieve this objective, the minimum our state Government can do so to raise the budgetary provision for education, immediately. Therefore, the task of ensuring universal and quality education for all the sections of the society is very formidable. The main challenge before the planners, educationists, administrators and policy makes is the education of the girl child. Only then the area can look forward to “Education for All”.

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