

RURAL URBAN REGIONAL DISPARITIES PATTERN OF LITERACY IN RAJASTHAN STATE, INDIA

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Abstract: *Literacy is an important indicator of the socio economic development of an area. It acts as a catalyst for social upliftment enhancing the returns on investments made in almost every aspects of development effort, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, empowerment of women and weaker section of the society. The trends in literacy are indicative of the pace at which the life and economy of a particular society is being transformed. Rajasthan is predominantly a rural state where education continues to have little economic and social relevance. Female literacy is also low in urban areas as compared to male literacy because the cities and towns have a large number of male immigrants who are educated; towns and cities attract large number of male students. The male-female literacy difference is witness to be highly variable throughout the state. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the trends of differential in literacy rate, spatial patterns of urban-rural differential and the relationship between differential index and selected variables of development among the districts of Rajasthan.*

Keywords: Rural, Urban, Regional, Disparities, Literacy, Rajasthan state

Introduction

Literacy is one of the main components of socio-economic development of an area or country. It is also one of the main components of Human Development Index (HDI) with life expectancy and per capita income. There is a strong empirical correlation between literacy and life expectancy (Khan, 2004). In international usage, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write at least a simple message in any language (Hassan, 2005). There is no common definition of literacy in world; it varies from country to country on their historical background and social development. UNESCO defined literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute and use printed, use printed and written material associate with varying contracts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in inability individual to achieve their goal, to developed their knowledge and potential and to participate fully in their community and wider society". There is also change in the definition of literacy over time. But at present time, census of India defined literacy as "a person age above six year who can both read and write with understanding in any language is called literate". Children up to six year age are treated as illiterate in the country. Literacy is one of the important demographic elements, which is good measure of human process towards modernization. It is an important indicator of the socioeconomic development of an area. It acts as a catalyst for social upliftment enhancing the returns on investments made in almost every aspects of development efforts, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, empowerment of women and weaker sections of the society. Illiteracy, on the other hand takes away from man his dignity, perpetuates, ignorance, poverty and mental isolation, deters peaceful and friendly international relations and free democratic processes and hamper

social advancement, economic growth and political maturity. Above all, literacy influences other attributes of population such as fertility, mortality, sex-ratio and occupation etc. Literacy is one of the biggest and the most crucial issues that people in the developing countries are facing. The developing countries of the world, of which India is a part, are characterized not only by low literacy rates but also by a great disparity in the literacy rates between urban and rural, between male and females and between young and the aged, a disparity in consonance with differences in necessity, prosperity, and opportunity to become literate. Equally striking aspects are the regional disparities in literacy differentials itself.

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Patterns of literacy

Only 66.1 percent of Rajasthan was recorded as literate as per the 2011 census. The reasons for the prevailing illiteracy were a mix of historical, economic and cultural factors. Literacy has direct functional value for the traditional subsistence agricultural economy, since until recently rural life was largely self-contained and religious worship was primarily oral. Moreover, the urban and rural literacy rates (79.7 and 61.4 percent, respectively) also showed a wide gap; the differential was larger for females (urban 70.7 percent, rural 45.8 percent) than for males (urban 87.9 percent, rural 76.2 percent). Four basic main factors explain these disparities: (1) urban places are far better equipped with educational facilities (2) many educated realizes migrate to urban places in search of employment, (3) the need for an education is greater in urban places than in the agricultural countryside, and (4) urbanities are socially more aware and economically more capable of imparting education to their children.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between rural and urban literacy rate.
2. To describe the spatial distribution of differential in literacy in the districts of Rajasthan in 2011
3. To analyze the relationship between literacy rate and levels of development.

Study Area

The north-western state of Rajasthan is the largest Indian state with an area of 3, 42,239 sq.km comprising of the 10.41 percent of the total geographical area of the country. This state has a type of rhomboid shape and stretches lengthwise 869 km. from west to east and 826 km. from north to south. Rajasthan, the largest state of India is located in the north-western part of the subcontinent. The southern part of the state is about 225 km. from the Gulf of Kutch and about 400 km from the Arabian Sea. Jaipur is the capital city and lies in the east-central part of the state. The tropic of Cancer passes through its southern tip in the Banswara district. The state has an area of 342,239 sq. km. In the west, Rajasthan is relatively dry and infertile; this area includes some of the Thar Desert, also known as the Great Indian Desert. In the southwestern part of the state, the land is wetter, hilly, and more fertile. The climate varies throughout Rajasthan. Winter temperatures range from 2° to 26° C and summer temperatures range from 24° to 48° C.

Database and Methodology

The study is mainly based on the secondary sources of data obtained from the office of the Registrar General of India and Census Commissioner, Government of India, New Delhi and State Planning Institute, Rajasthan, Jaipur. The district has been considered as the smallest unit of study. The study is based on 2011 census data and urban rural differential literacy rate is calculated by using the following formula (Krishna and Shyam, 1978).

$$ID = U - R/T$$

Where;

ID= Index of urban-rural differential in literacy

U= Percentage of literates in urban population

R= Percentage of literates in rural population

T= Percentage of literates in Total population.

For Rajasthan, this index would be= $79.7 - 61.4 / 66.1 = 0.276$

The discussion in this present paper is based on the index values obtained for districts of Rajasthan.

Result and Discussion

Trends of urban-rural differentials in literacy, 1991 to 2011

The analysis of literacy differentials by residence has not been possible for the pre-Independence period because of the non-availability of census data for this period. Hence, the data on growth of literacy have been provided for the post- Independence period from 1991-2011. Table No 1 reveals that the literacy rate improved from 38.55 percent in 1991 to 60.41 percent in 2001 and rose further to 66.10 percent in 2011. Similarly, the literacy rate for urban areas which was 65.3 percent in 1991 rises to 76.2 percent in 2001 and then increased further to 79.7 percent in 2011. In rural areas, the literacy rate which was only 30.4 percent in 1991 increased to 55.3 percent in 2001 and further improved to 61.4 percent in 2011 (Table 1). A considerable growth has taken place in literacy during 20th century, but it has not been satisfactory. It is however, well known that this progress is mainly concentrated in the urban areas, while the vast rural areas are far behind. An encroaching feature is that the growth rate of literacy in the decade ending 2011 has been higher in the rural areas. Despite these improvements, literacy in urban areas was 79.7 percent and that in rural areas, 61.4 percent. The most important reason behind the increase in literacy is the new definition and concept of literacy in the census of 1991 which excludes the population in the age- group of 0 to 6 years from the total population. In this way, the 1991 census uses the term "Literacy Rate" in relation to the age group of seven years and above (Census of India, 2011).

The urban-rural differential index in literacy rate in Rajasthan decreased continuously from 0.90 percent in 1991 to 0.27 percent in 2011. India has also made remarkable differences in literacy since independence. It has decreased during the same period from 0.54 percent in 1991 to 0.22 percent in 2011, the urban- rural differential index in Rajasthan has been decreasing continuously over the time since 1991, when it was sharper (0.90 percent), as there was only the rural literacy rate for nearly every two (1:2.1). This disparity ratio has declined from 2.1 in 1991 to 1.29 in 2011. The rural literacy had, nonetheless, registered as gradual increase from 30.4 percent in 1991 to 61.4 percent in 2011 and differential index narrowed down gradually from 0.90 in 1991 to 0.27 in 2011. From 2001 to 2011, the urban rural difference index fell sharply to 0.27 and 0.22 points in the state and country, respectively. If progress is noted at the same rate in the coming decades as well, then it would be possible to remove illiteracy by 2040 AD. The narrowing down of the urban-rural differential index as well as disparity ratio was associated with increasing degree of urban rural interaction, increasing socio economic functional value of education in the country side, improving standards of living, and increasing facilities for schooling in the countryside.

Table 1: Literacy Rate and Differential Index, Rajasthan, 1991-2011

| Census Year | Age-Group | Rajasthan | | | | India | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| | | Total Areas | Urban Area | Rural Area | Urban- rural differential index | Total Areas | Urban Area | Rural Area | Urban- rural differential index |
| 1991 | 7 and above | 38.55 | 65.3 | 30.4 | 0.90 | 52.2 | 73.1 | 44.7 | 0.54 |
| 2001 | 7 and above | 60.41 | 76.2 | 55.3 | 0.34 | 64.8 | 79.9 | 58.7 | 0.33 |
| 2011 | 7 and above | 66.10 | 79.7 | 61.4 | 0.27 | 74.04 | 84.98 | 68.91 | 0.22 |

Source: Computed from Census books, 1991, 2011

Rural urban disparities of Literacy

The urban –rural differential in literacy is marked with notable variation in its distribution among the districts of Rajasthan state. It varies from 0.57 in Pratapgarh to 0.04 in Jhunjhunu district with a state average of 0.27 in 2011 (Table no. 2). These variations may be conveniently grouped into five categories. Nine districts of the state fall under very high grade (>0.40) comprising the district Banswara (0.56), Barmer (0.42), Bhilwara (0.41), Chittaurgarh (0.42), Dungarpur (0.45), Jaisalmer (0.42), Pratapgarh (0.57), Sirohi (0.53), Udaipur (0.53) in the Southern and South Western part of the state. These districts have very differential index which is more than double of the state average (0.27). The reasons for these differentials are the low level of urbanization, primarily traditional agricultural economy and high concentration of socio-economically backward sections of the society, inadequate educational infrastructure and late start of educational in rural areas. Only seven districts have high differential index of 0.30 to 0.40 percent namely Ajmer (0.36), Bikaner (0.30), Bundi (0.33), Jalore (0.33), Jhalawar (0.38), Jodhpur (0.31), Rajsamand (0.36). The urban-rural differential has been reducing continuously due to faster increase in rural literacy in recent decade. Five districts namely Alwar (0.22), Baran (0.22), Pali (0.28), Sawai Madhopur (0.26), Tonk (0.26) which are very close to the state urban-rural literacy differential average (0.27 percent) ranging from 0.20 to 0.30 are found to be grouped into a number of regions of which the most important regions. The urban-rural gap in terms of literacy is minimizing continuously due to increasing educational facilities in rural areas and the rural population is more aware about the benefit of literacy. Nine district of the state fall under the category of 0.10 to 0.20 percent (low). These districts namely are Bharatpur (0.16), Churu (0.13), Dausa (0.19), Ganganagar (0.18), Hanumangarh (0.19), Jaipur (0.19), Karauli (0.12), Kota (0.17) and Nagaur (0.16). The category of very low differential index (0.10 and below) encompasses only three district of the

state that are Dhaulpur (0.06), Jhunjhunu (0.04), Sikar (0.06 percent). The main reason of very low differential index here is high rural literacy rate then the urban literacy rate.

Table 2: Rural urban disparities of Literacy in Rajasthan, 2011

| Sr. No | Districts | All Area | Urban Area | Rural Area | Differential Index |
|--------|--------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Ajmer | 69.3 | 85.05 | 60.22 | 0.36 |
| 2 | Alwar | 70.7 | 84.25 | 68.83 | 0.22 |
| 3 | Banswara | 56.3 | 86.58 | 54.78 | 0.56 |
| 4 | Baran | 66.7 | 78.86 | 64.29 | 0.22 |
| 5 | Barmer | 56.5 | 79.52 | 55.72 | 0.42 |
| 6 | Bharatpur | 70.1 | 80.19 | 68.87 | 0.16 |
| 7 | Bhilwara | 61.4 | 82.63 | 57.17 | 0.41 |
| 8 | Bikaner | 65.1 | 78.65 | 58.95 | 0.30 |
| 9 | Bundi | 61.5 | 78.67 | 58.13 | 0.33 |
| 10 | Chittaurgarh | 61.7 | 83.60 | 57.63 | 0.42 |
| 11 | Churu | 66.8 | 73.63 | 64.98 | 0.13 |
| 12 | Dausa | 68.2 | 81.04 | 67.43 | 0.19 |
| 13 | Dhaulpur | 69.1 | 73.64 | 69.20 | 0.06 |
| 14 | Dungarpur | 59.5 | 85.79 | 58.95 | 0.45 |
| 15 | Ganganagar | 69.6 | 79.43 | 66.76 | 0.18 |
| 16 | Hanumangarh | 67.1 | 78.78 | 65.79 | 0.19 |
| 17 | Jaipur | 75.5 | 83.48 | 68.43 | 0.19 |
| 18 | Jaisalmer | 57.2 | 78.91 | 54.61 | 0.42 |
| 19 | Jalor | 54.9 | 71.97 | 54.05 | 0.33 |
| 20 | Jhalawar | 61.5 | 81.82 | 58.24 | 0.38 |
| 21 | Jhunjhunu | 74.1 | 77.33 | 73.95 | 0.04 |
| 22 | Jodhpur | 65.9 | 80.23 | 59.79 | 0.31 |
| 23 | Karauli | 66.2 | 73.93 | 66.15 | 0.12 |
| 24 | Kota | 76.6 | 82.61 | 69.54 | 0.17 |
| 25 | Nagaur | 62.8 | 72.11 | 62.16 | 0.16 |
| 26 | Pali | 62.4 | 76.78 | 59.21 | 0.28 |
| 27 | Pratapgarh | 56.0 | 85.46 | 53.50 | 0.57 |
| 28 | Rajsamand | 63.1 | 82.71 | 60.23 | 0.36 |
| 29 | S. Madhopur | 65.4 | 79.96 | 62.68 | 0.26 |
| 30 | Sikar | 71.9 | 76.64 | 71.83 | 0.06 |
| 31 | Sirohi | 55.3 | 79.24 | 49.77 | 0.53 |
| 32 | Tonk | 61.6 | 74.78 | 58.86 | 0.26 |
| 33 | Udaipur | 61.8 | 88.45 | 55.85 | 0.53 |
| | Rajasthan | 66.1 | 79.7 | 61.4 | 0.27 |

Source: Computed from Census books, 1991, 2011

Table 3: Rural urban disparities of Literacy in Rajasthan, 2011

| Category | Name of District | No. of District | Districts (percent) |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| Very low(< 0.10) | Dhaulpur, Jhunjhunu, Sikar | 3 | 9.10 |
| Low(0.10-0.20) | Bharatpur, Churu, Dausa, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jaipur, Karauli, Kota, Nagaur | 9 | 27.27 |
| Medium(0.20-0.30) | Alwar, Baran, Pali, S. Madhopur, Tonk | 5 | 15.15 |
| High(0.30-0.40) | Ajmer, Bikaner, Bundi, Jalore, Jhalawar, Jodhpur, Rajsamand | 7 | 21.21 |
| Very High(>0.40) | Banswara, Barmer, Bhilwara, Chittaurgarh, Dungarpur, Jaisalmer, Pratapgarh, Sirohi, Udaipur | 9 | 27.27 |
| Total | | 33 | 100 |

Source: Calculated from census of Rajasthan, 2011

Conclusion

The analysis clearly indicates that there is a wide range of variations in rural-urban differential in literacy among the district of Rajasthan. The study further adds that the urban-rural differential indices in the western and southern districts are relatively high and very high as compared to the eastern and northern districts of the Rajasthan. The statistical analysis reveals that low urban-rural differential in literacy is characteristics of areas marked by relatively high degree of urbanization, literacy rate, educational facilities, medical facilities, commercialization of agriculture and dense road network. The districts having low level of development should be given top priority so that they may come up at par with developed districts, and the concept of planning with social justice proves successful.

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