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“SOCIO-ECONOMICS FACTORS INFLUENCING LITERACY IN THE WESTERN SATPURA REGION: A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY”

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Abstract:

Literacy is a dynamic process. The distribution of literacy is uneven in different parts of a region. The various geographical factors like the nature of relief, amount of rainfall, agricultural productivity, availability of water, accessibility etc. influence the distribution of population. The influence of these factors is clearly seen in the socio-economic development of the region. This socio-economic development directly and indirectly accelerates the rate of literacy. As the Western Satpura region is socio-economically less developed, therefore, the proportion of literate population is less and the rate of acceleration is also rather slow.

KEY WORDS:

Socio Economic, Literacy, Society, Region.

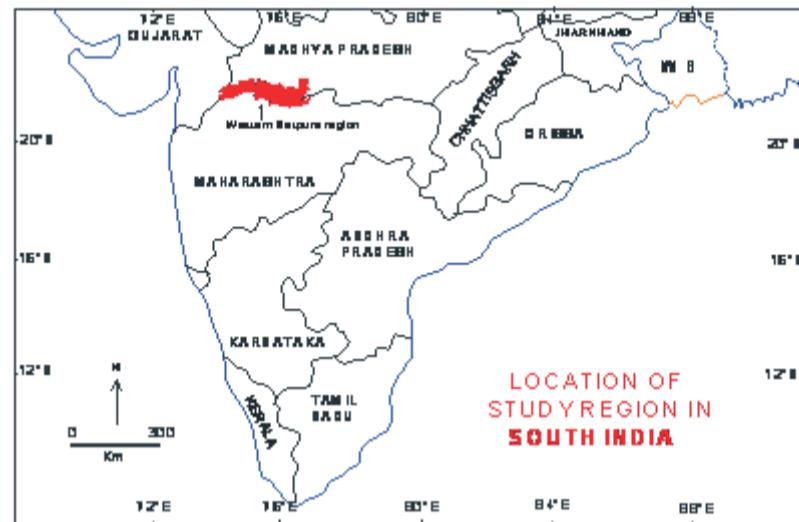
INTRODUCTION

The educational level of society determines the level of modernization of society. Literacy is at the very root of human civilization and progress. Level of literacy and education is uneven in our country. There are many factors which are responsible for this unevenness. These factors are physical and socio-cultural. Though the matter of literacy and education levels seems a study part of scholar of education, but as a part of human resource development it is also an integral part of human geography. Therefore, a geographical assessment of factors influencing levels of literacy is the study region forms subject matter of geography. In this context an attempt is made identify and evaluate the influence of socio-economic factors on the levels of literacy in the Western Satpura region.

THE STUDY REGION:

Western Satpura region is a mountainous region and mostly inhabited by tribals. This mountainous region is spread along the border of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It stretches from the Ashirgarh hills (from Burhanpure-Khandwa gap) in the east to the boundary of Gujarat in the west, up to Rajpipla hills and between Narmada valley in the north and Tapi valley in the south. It comprises area of Jalgaon, Dhule and Nandurbar districts of Maharashtra and Barwani and Khargone districts of Madhya Pradesh. The study region lies between 21° 16' N to 22° 05' N latitudes and 75° 45' east to 76° 10' east longitudes. The total area of the study region is totally tribal in character. The total area of the region is 5025.3 sq. kms. According to 2001 census, the total population of the study region was 12,38,378. Out of the total population more than 75 % were tribal.

Fig. No. 1: Location of the Western Satpura Region



OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this research work is to assess the impact of socio-economic factors on levels of literacy in tribal area of the Western Satpura region.

HYPOTHESIS:

“Levels of literacy in tribal area of the Western Satpura region are affected by socio-economic factors.”

DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present work is mainly depend on secondary data which is collected from the District Census handbooks of Barwani and Khargone districts of Madhya Pradesh and Dhule, Jalgaon and Nandurbar districts of Maharashtra. The effective literacy rate is calculated. The three categories of literacy levels as high, medium and low are decided as literacy rate more than 30 %, 30 to 15 % and less than 15 respectively. The data of socio-economic factors is taken from District Census Handbooks. The maps of these factors are superimposed on map of levels of literacy. The villages belonging to different literacy levels in different categories of socio-economic factors are counted and their proportions are calculated. These results are explained thoroughly to understand co-relation between socio-economic factors and levels of literacy.

FACTORS AFFECTING LITERACY LEVEL:

Literacy is a dynamic process. The distribution of literacy is uneven in different parts of a region. The various geographical factors like the nature of relief, amount of rainfall, agricultural productivity, availability of water, accessibility etc. influence the distribution of population. The influence of these factors is clearly seen in the socio-economic development of the region.

Net Sown Area and Literacy:

The level of literacy is also influenced indirectly with variations in the proportion of net sown area. Depending on the variations in this proportion, the Western Satpura region can be divided into three zones:

- (i) The west-central zone having the proportion of net sown area to total geographical area is less than 40 %.
- (ii) The western and central parts where the proportions are between 40 to 60 %.
- (iii) The eastern zone where net sown area to total geographical area is more than 60 %.

Table No. 1
Western Satpura Region: Net Sown Area and Levels of Literacy, 2001

Criteria Used	Categories	% of villages having High Literacy	% of villages having Medium Literacy	% of villages having Low Literacy	% of villages to total villages
% of net sown area to total geographical area	< 40%	6.94	22.92	70.14	14.91
	40 – 60 %	11.32	19.50	69.18	16.46
	> 60%	14.78	21.72	63.50	68.63

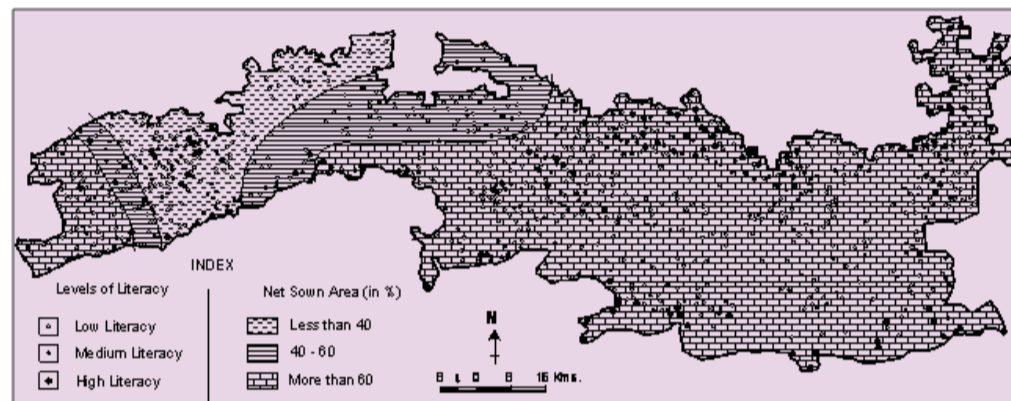


Fig. No. 2 – Western Satpura Region: Net Sown Area and levels of literacy, 2001

In 2001, the west-central region has the proportion of net sown area to total geographical area less than 40 %. The proportion of villages in this zone to the total villages in the study region was about 14.91 %. About 70.14 % villages belong to low literacy level, while the proportions of villages having high and medium literacy levels were 6.94 % and 22.92 % respectively. About 16.46 % villages of the total villages in the study region are found in the western and central parts where the proportion of net sown area was between 40 and 60 %. Again the proportion of villages having low literacy level is higher, i.e. 69.18 %. The proportions of villages having high and medium literacy levels were 13.45 % and 21.56 % respectively. The eastern part of the study region has the proportion of net sown area more than 60 %. The proportion of villages lying in this zone to total villages was 68.63 %. The proportions of villages having high and moderate literacy levels were 14.78 % and 21.72 % respectively, while the proportion of villages having low literacy level was as high as 63.5 %.

IRRIGATED AREA AND LITERACY:

The Western Satpura region can be broadly divided into three zones on the basis of the proportion of net irrigated area to net area sown.

In 2001, in the western, central and southeastern parts the proportion of area under irrigation was less than 10 %. The proportion of villages lying in this zone is 68.87 %. Out of the total villages lying in this zone, about 9.44 % villages had high literacy level, while proportion of villages having medium literacy level was 19.66 %. The proportion of villages having low literacy level was as high as 70.9 %. The eastern and northeastern parts had the proportion of area under irrigation between 10 and 20 %. About 23.9 % villages are located in this zone. The proportion of villages having low literacy level to total villages in this zone

Table No. 2
Western Satpura Region: Irrigation and Levels of Literacy, 2001

Criteria Used	Categories	% of villages having High Literacy	% of villages having Medium Literacy	% of villages having Low Literacy	% of villages to total villages
% of net irrigated area to net sown area	< 10%	9.44	19.66	70.90	66.87
	10 – 20 %	16.02	24.24	59.74	23.91
	> 20%	31.46	28.09	40.45	9.21

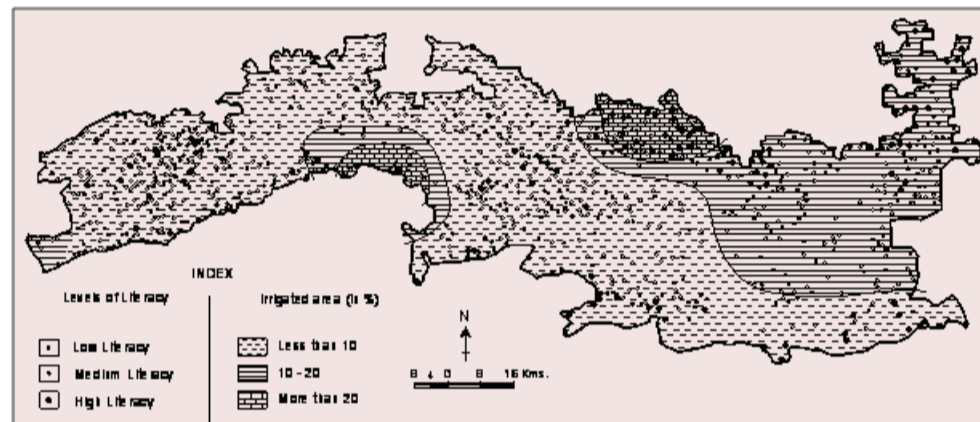


Fig. No. 3 – Western Satpura Region: Irrigation and levels of literacy, 2001

Was about 59.74 %, whereas the proportions of villages having high and medium literacy level were 16.02 % and 24.24 % respectively. In the central and south-central parts, the proportion of irrigated area was more than 20 %. The proportion of villages located in this zone is about 9.21 %. Out of the total villages located in this zone, 31.46 % villages have high level of literacy and the proportions of medium and low literacy levels are 28.09 % and 40.45 % respectively.

ACCESSIBILITY AND LITERACY:

Depending on the degree of accessibility, the Western Satpura region can be divided into three zones as shown in the table No. 3.

Table No. 3
Western Satpura Region: Accessibility and Levels of Literacy, 2001

Criteria Used	Categories	% of villages having High Literacy	% of villages having Medium Literacy	% of villages having Low Literacy	% of villages to total villages
Distance from major routes of transportation	< 05 km.	16.70	25.04	58.26	59.22
	05 to 10 km.	13.56	22.03	64.41	24.30
	> 10 km.	4.38	20.00	75.63	16.48

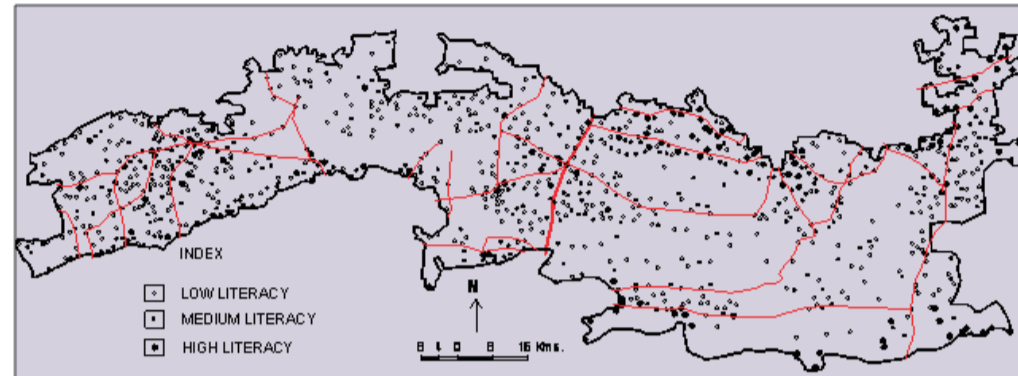


Fig. No. 4 – Western Satpura Region: Accessibility and levels of literacy, 2001

In the study region, about 59.22 % villages are located within the distance of 5 km. from a major transport route, where as 24.30 % villages are located in the area between 5 and 10 km. and about 16.48 % villages are located beyond 10 km.

As the distance from a major transport route increases, the proportion of villages having low literacy level also increases. On the other hand, proportion of villages having high literacy level decreases with increasing distance from a main transport route. This is clear by the fact that, out of the total number of villages having high literacy located in the region, 94.8 % villages are located within 10 km., while only 5.2 % villages lie beyond 10 km.. Similarly, out of the total number of villages located beyond 10 km., only 4.4 % villages have high literacy level, whereas the proportion of villages having low literacy level is more than 75%.

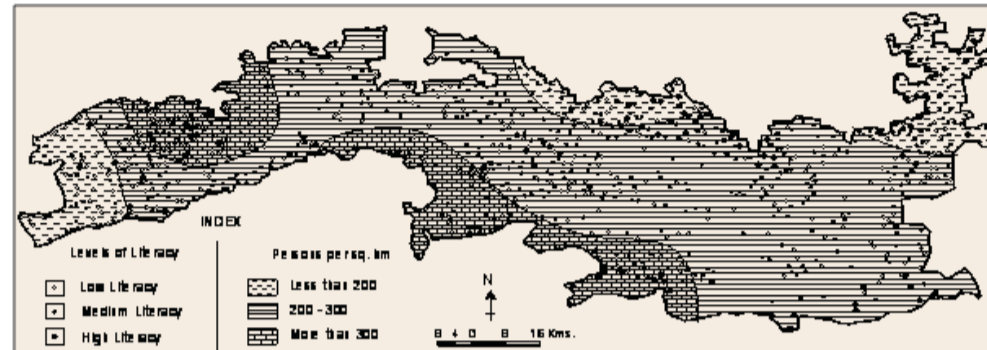
POPULATION DENSITY AND LITERACY:

The region can be broadly divided into three major zones on the basis of tribal population density in 2001.

The western, north-central and north eastern parts were having low density of population. Of the total number of villages, about 18.29 % villages are found in this zone. Out of the total villages located in this zone, about 19.1 villages have high literacy level, while the proportions of villages having medium and low literacy levels are 23.03 % and 57.87 % respectively. Another zone includes the areas with population density between 150 and 200 persons per sq. km. The highest proportion (61.7 %) of villages is found in this belt. In this zone the proportion of villages having high literacy level is 11.41 %. The proportions of villages having medium and low literacy levels are 19.3 % and 69.3 % respectively. The belt running from north-central to east and the area along the southern border of the region had high density. About 19.88 % villages are found in this zone. The proportion of villages having high literacy level is about 12.5 %, while the proportions of villages having medium and low literacy levels are 27.08 % and 60.42 % respectively.

**Table No. 4
Western Satpura Region: Density of Population and Levels of Literacy, 2001**

Criteria Used	Categories	% of villages having High Literacy	% of villages having Medium Literacy	% of villages having Low Literacy	% of villages to total villages
Density of population, 2001 (person per sq.km)	< 200	19.10	23.03	57.87	18.43
	200 to 300	11.41	19.30	69.30	61.70
	> 300	12.50	27.08	60.42	19.88



f Population and levels of literacy, 2001

CONCLUSION:

The distribution of literacy is uneven in different parts of a region. The various socio-economic factors like net sown area, irrigated area, population density, accessibility etc. influence the distribution of population. The influence of these factors is clearly seen in the socio-economic development of the region. This socio-economic development directly and indirectly accelerates the rate of literacy.

The proportions of villages having higher literacy level increases with increasing proportions of net sown area to total geographical area, while proportions of villages having low literacy level decreases with increasing proportions of net sown area. It shows the positive relationship between level of literacy and proportion of net sown area. The distribution of villages according to their literacy level is not much influenced by variations in proportion of area under irrigation. Availability of water for irrigation, however, has resulted in higher proportions of villages having high and medium literacy levels. As the distance from a major transport route increases, the proportion of villages having low literacy level also increases. On the other hand, proportion of villages having high literacy level decreases with increasing distance from a main transport route.

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