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LITERACY DIFFERENTIALS IN AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract:

Literacy level and educational attainment are vital indicators of socio-economic development in a society and for changing women's position and status in the society. Literacy has been defined as, a person who can both read and write with understanding in any language is called as literate, as per 2001 Census.

The present paper intends to examine literacy differential in general and gender wise in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra. The Period selected for the present study is from 1991 to 2001. The present study is entirely based on secondary data which is collected from District Census Handbook, Socio-Economic Abstract of Ahmednagar District. Male-female and rural-urban literacy rate is calculated by using various literacy rate formulas. Present analysis reveals that the gender wise as well as rural-urban gap in literacy is decreased in the last decade with increasing literacy rate in the study region. But, there is still tahsilwise wide gap between male-female and rural-urban literacy rate.

KEY WORDS:

Gender, Differentials, Gap, Status.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy and educational attainment is one of the significant indicators of socio-economic development of the society, which affects demographic behavior related with marriage, fertility, mortality, migration and work participation rate. A high level of literacy rate is an important factor in the process of modernizations. Mass education and literacy rate are a hallmark of modern society (Sharma & Retherford, 1987). It is also reliable index of socio-economic development and an important precondition for rural development (Ramotra, 2008). According to 2001 census, Literacy has been define as "A person aged seven and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate". In India from 1991 onwards, population in the age group 0-6 years is excluded while calculating the literacy rate.

As per 2001 Census, overall literacy rate of Ahmednagar district is 75.82 per cent out of which 86.21 per cent are males and 64.88 per cent are females. Literacy rate is 72.9 per cent for rural and 84.7 per cent for urban areas. It shows that the gender wise as well as rural-urban differential in literacy is decreased in the last decade with increasing literacy rate in the study region. But, there is still tahsilwise wide gap between male-female and rural-urban literacy rate.

2.0 THE STUDY REGION

Ahmednagar district is selected for study purpose. Ahmednagar district is situated partly in the upper Godavari basin and partly in the Bhima basin occupying a somewhat central position in the

Maharashtra state. It lies between 180 2' and 190 9' north latitude and 730 9' and 750 5' east longitude. It is surrounded by Nashik and Aurangabad districts to the north, Beed and Osmanabad districts to the east, Solapur and Pune districts to the south and Pune and Thane districts to the west. Topographically the district can be divided in to three parts. i.e. The Sahyadry ranges, plateau region and Bhima, Godavari basins. Ahmednagar district is far away from the Arabian Sea. The climate of the district is generally hot and dry, except during south west monsoon season. The average annual rainfall in the district is 500 mm. The district mostly lies in the rain shadow to the east of the Sahyadry Mountain. The soil of study region can broadly classify into three groups such as, black, red and laterite soil.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To examine literacy differentials in general and gender wise at tahsil level.
2. To study the changes in general and gender wise literacy rate from 1991 to 2001.
3. To find out the gender wise literacy gaps from 1991 to 2001.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study tahsil has taken as a basic unit of investigation. The period selected for the present study is two decade (1991- 2001). The proposed study is entirely based on secondary data which is collected form Socio – Economic Review and District Statistical Abstract of Ahmednagar, Census of India, Census Handbook of Maharashtra and Ahmednagar District, District Gazetteer and also data have been collected from various published and unpublished thesis, articles and books etc.

Literacy rate is measured by using following formulas,

$$TLR = \frac{\text{Total Literate Population}}{\text{Total Population (aged 7 and above)}} \times 100$$

$$MLR = \frac{\text{Total Male Literate}}{\text{Total Male Population (aged 7 and above)}} \times 100$$

$$FLR = \frac{\text{Total Female Literate}}{\text{Total Female Population (aged 7 and above)}} \times 100$$

Where, TLR- Total Literacy Rate, MLR- Male Literacy Rate and FLR- Female Literacy Rate

5.0 IN GENERAL AND GENDER WISE LITERACY DIFFERENTIALS IN AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT (1991-2001)

5.1 In General Literacy Differentials (1991)

Present analysis shows (Table No.1) that wide regional literacy differential in general and gender wise in the study region. For the district as a whole, total literacy rate is 61.03 per cent. The literacy rate for males is much higher than that of females. As much as 75.30 per cent of the males are literates while females account only 45.99 per cent in 1991 Census.

The tahsil wise total literacy rate shows that Nagar tahsil with 73.7 per cent literates and top of the list because of district head quarter and urban center , whereas Akola tahsil with only 49.7 per cent literacy rate and stands at bottom of the district. Due to its tribal nature, less developed tahsil and poor educational infrastructure. Out of 13 tahsils, only five tahsils are above the district average (61.03 per cent), including Nagar (73.7 per cent), Rahuri (62.8 per cent), Shrirampur (66.8 per cent), Sangamner (61.4 per cent), and Kopargaon (64.9 per cent) etc. It is because of all these tahsils having urban centers, industrially, economically agriculturally developed and easy availability of educational facilities. While, the tahsils

such as Nevasa (57.1 per cent), Shevgaon (54.8 per cent), Pathardi (54.0 per cent), Jamkhed (51.5 per cent), Karjat (53.4 per cent), Shrigonda (57.1 per cent), Parner (56.5 per cent) and Akola (49.7 per cent) indicates economically less developed, less urbanized and less irrigated having literacy rate is below the district average in 1991 census.

TABLE NO. 1
IN GENERAL AND GENDER WISE LITERACY DIFFERENTIALS IN AHMEDNAGAR
DISTRICT (1991-2001)

Sr. No.	Name of the Tahsil	1991				2001			
		Total	Male	Female	*M - F Gap	Total	Male	Female	*M - F Gap
1	Nagar	73.7	85.2	61.1	-24.0	84.6	91.8	76.8	-14.9
2	Rahuri	62.8	76.2	48.5	-27.7	75.6	85.5	65.1	-20.4
3	Shrirampur	66.8	79.0	53.8	-25.2	78.0	87.7	67.8	-19.9
4	Nevasa	57.1	72.1	41.2	-30.8	73.8	84.7	62.3	-22.4
5	Shevgaon	54.8	72.3	36.4	-35.9	70.0	83.1	56.5	-26.6
6	Pathardi	54.0	71.0	36.3	-34.7	70.4	83.3	57.1	-26.3
7	Jamkhed	51.5	67.7	34.7	-33.0	67.8	80.7	54.3	-26.4
8	Karjat	53.4	67.7	38.1	-29.6	71.2	82.2	59.5	-22.7
9	Shrigonda	58.3	72.3	43.5	-28.8	73.4	83.6	62.8	-20.9
10	Parner	56.5	72.7	40.7	-32.0	71.5	83.9	59.2	-24.7
11	Akola	49.7	65.4	33.9	-31.4	70.0	82.1	57.6	-24.5
12	Sangamner	61.4	75.6	46.5	-29.1	75.5	85.8	64.9	-20.9
13	Kopargaon	64.9	79.1	49.8	-29.3	74.6	85.2	63.3	-21.9
14	Rahata	-	-	-	-	78.2	87.5	68.5	-19.0
Dist.Total		61.0	75.3	46.0	-29.3	75.3	84.7	64.3	-20.4

Source: Census of India 2001, District Census Handbook of Ahmednagar 1991, 2001.

**Computed by Authors*

5.1 In General Literacy Differentials (2001)

For the district as a whole, total literacy rate is 75.3 per cent in 2001. The literacy rate for males is much higher than that of females. As much as 84.7 per cent of the males are literates while female are account only 64.3 per cent in 2001 Census.

The tahsil wise total literacy rate shows that Nagar tahsil with 84.6 per cent literates and top of the list because of district head quarter and urban center, whereas Jamkhed tahsil with only 67.8 per cent literacy rate and stands at bottom of the district. Due to drought prone region, less developed tahsil and poor educational infrastructure. Out of 14 tahsils, only five tahsils are above the district average (75.3 per cent), including Nagar (84.6 per cent), Rahuri (75.6 per cent), Shrirampur (78.0 per cent), Sangamner (75.5 per cent), and Rahata (78.2 per cent). It is because of all these tahsils having urban centers, industrially, economically agriculturally developed and easy availability of educational facilities. While, the tahsils

such as, Kopergaon (74.6 per cent), Nevasa (73.8per cent), Shevgaon (70.0 cent), Pathardi (70.4 per cent), Jamkhed (67.8 per cent), Karjat (71.2per cent), Shrigonda (73.4 per cent), Parner (71.5 per cent) and Akola (70.0 per cent) indicates economically less developed, less urbanized and less irrigated having literacy rate is below the district average in 2001 census.

6.0 GENDERWISE LITERACY DIFFERENTIALS AND GAPS (1991 AND 2001)

6.1 Gender wise Literacy differentials and Gaps (1991)

In 1991, the gender wise average literacy rate for district is 75.30 per cent for males and 46.0 per cent for females. According to 1991 census, it is observed that Nagar tahsil has the highest literacy rate for both males and females i.e. 85.2 per cent and 61.1 per cent respectively, while Akola tahsil has the lowest literacy rate, i.e. 65.4 per cent and 33.9 per cent for males and females respectively. All the tahsils of study region shows female literacy is variably lower than male literacy rate. Economically and agriculturally developed tahsils such as Nagar, Rahuri, Shrirampur, Sngamner, Kopergaon shows male and female literacy rate is above the district average i.e. 75.3 per cent, 45.99 per cent respectively.

Gender differences particularly marked especially in drought prone and tribal and less developed tahsils like as, Shevgaon, Pathardi, Jamkhed, Karjat, Shrigonda, Nevasa, Parner, and Akola all these tahsil shows female literacy below the district average.

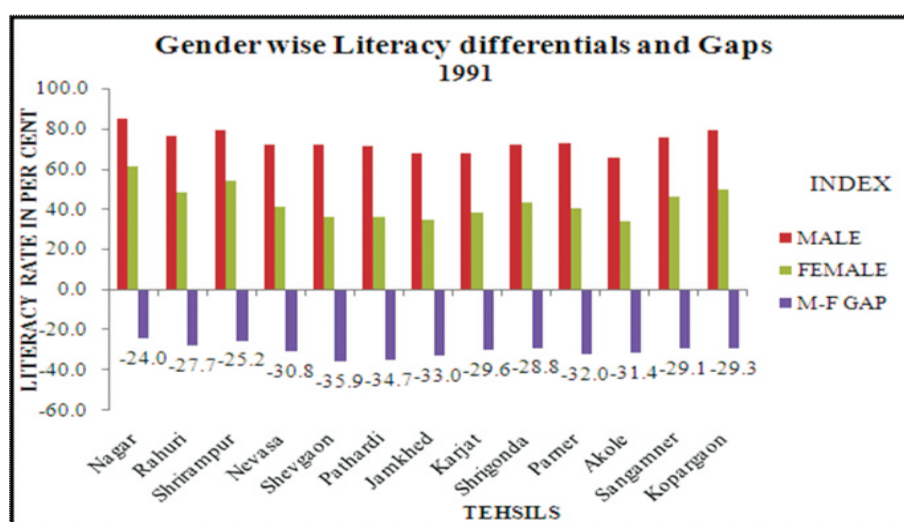
According to 1991 census, district average gender wise literacy gap is (29.3 per cent). Male female literacy gap is highest in shevgaon tahsil (35.9 per cent) while, lowest is in Nagar tahsil (24.0 per cent). Tahsils like Nagar, Rahuri, Shrirampur, Shrigonda, Sangamner and Kopergaon show gender wise literacy gap is below the district average. Male -female literacy gap is above the district average, it found in Karjat, Jamkhed, Pathardi, Shevgaon, Nevasa, Parner and Akole tahsil. (Fig. No. 1) clearly shows significant gap between gender wise literacy rates in 1991.

6.2 Gender wise Literacy differentials and Gaps (2001)

According to 2001 census, gender wise literacy rate for overall district is 84.7 per cent for males and 64.3 per cent for females. Nagar tahsil has the highest literacy rate for both males and females i.e. 91.8 per cent and 76.8 per cent respectively, while Jamkhed tahsil has the lowest literacy rate i.e. 80.7 per cent for males and 54.3 percent for females. Tahsils include Nagar, Rahuri, Shrirampur, Sangamner and Rahata shows Gender wise literacy rate is higher than the district average. Whereas remaining all nine tahsil shows low male-female literacy than the district average. In 2001, gender wise literacy differences decreased by increasing male-female literacy rate in the study region.

As per 2001 census, district average gender literacy gap is the 17.58 per cent. The gender wise literacy gap is the highest in Shevgaon tahsil (26.6 per cent) while, lowest literacy gap is 14.9 per cent observed in the Nagar tahsil (Fig. No.2). Only Nagar tahsil shows literacy gap is below the district average (17.58 per cent) and remaining all 13 tahsils show Gender wise literacy gap is above district average.

FIG. NO.1. GENDER WISE LITERACY DIFFERENTIALS AND GAPS IN 1991



It include, Rahuri, Shrirampur, Sangamner, Rahata, Kopargaon, Karjat, Jamkhed, Pathardi, Shevgaon, Shrigonda, Nevasa, Parner and Akola tahsil etc. It is evident that male-female literacy rate is in progress in 2001 census, but this progress is very slow in less developed drought prone tahsils than the developed tahsils. In other words females are lagging behind males in literacy in all the tahsils but the gender wise differential and gap is narrowing down in 2001 as compare to 1991.

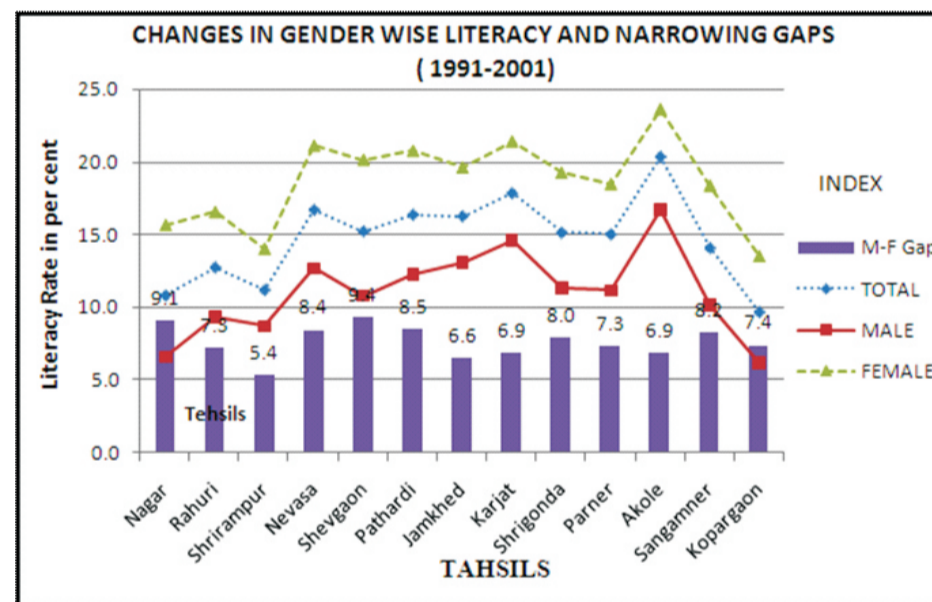
7.0 CHANGES IN GENERAL AND GENDER WISE LITERACY (1991-2001)

It is observed that, from 1991 to 2001 census, positive change in general as well as gender wise literacy rate (Table. No.1). Overall district literacy rate change is about 14.3 per cent. Gender wise changes show that female literacy rate increases twicely than the male literacy rate i.e. 9.4 per cent change for male and 18.3 per cent change for female literacy rate. Male-female literacy gap is also narrowing & i.e. 8.9 per cent. It indicates that increase in literacy rate and improvement in status of female.

The highest positive change in total literacy is observed in Akola tahsil (20.3 per cent), whereas the lowest positive change exists in Kopargaon tahsil (9.7 per cent). Maximum positive change in male-female literacy rate observed in Akola Tahsil i.e. 16.7, 23.6 per cent respectively, while gender wise lowest Positive change found in Kopargaon tahsil with 6.2 per cent for males and 13.5 per cent for females.

Gender wise literacy gap is declined and the highest increase in female literacy than male is found 9.4 per cent in per cent in Shevgaon tahsil, while lowest increase is 5.4 per cent exist in Shrirampur tahsil. It is interesting to note that entire all the tahsils shows gender wise literacy gap fastly decreasing, because larger increase in genderwise literacy rate in last decade. Fig. no. 3, clearly shows that in general and specific literacy rate increases very rapidly in tribal and drought prone area, especially in Akola, Nevasa, Shevgaon, Pathardi, Jamkhed, Karjat & Parner tahsils.

FIG.NO.3 CHANGES IN GENDER WISE LITERACY AND NARROWING GAPS (1991-2001)



8.0 CONCLUSION

It is concluded that literacy transition in the study region is fast approaching the advanced stage. But, there still exists a significant gap in literacy rates in general and gender wise and also in rural and urban area. Gender differences particularly marked in drought prone, tribal and backward tahsils like as, Shevgaon, Pathardi, Jamkhed, Karjat, Shrigonda, Nevasa, Parner, and Akola all these tahsil shows female literacy below the district average. So, Govt. should be concentrated for improving the education and school enrolment level in backward tahsils.

Further, although gender differential in literacy rate continues to exist, female literacy has recorded a much larger increase as compared to that in male literacy from 1991 to 2001. As a result of it, the gap between male and female literacy rates has significantly narrowed down during the 2001. Present

analysis reveals that with overall development in various social and economic fields, literacy rate in the study region began increasing. The gender wise as well as rural-urban gap in literacy is decreased in the last decade with increasing literacy rate in the study region. But, there is still tahsilwise wide gap between male-female and rural-urban literacy rate.

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