



Educational Inequality in Haryana: A Study of Gender Differences in Learning

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ABSTRACT Literacy or education is an essential indicator to judge the societal, cultural, and fiscal advancement of the society to upgrade the quality of life at local, national and global level. It is mandatory for every citizen of the nation as defence from unawareness and backwardness. It performs as luminosity for all in a shadowy space. So, the significance of education for a human being has been continuously increasing. However it varies at different levels because of influence of an assortment of factors related to the society, religion, sex, caste, economic status. The present paper deals with the existing differences in educational attainment to the male-female population in Haryana based on secondary data obtained from the Census of India and Primary Census Abstract of Haryana 2001 and 2011. The gender disparity of literacy has been calculated by the disparity index. It has been found that there is a wide gender difference in literacy rate at the district level in the state. In more than half of the districts, the disparity index is high. The male literacy rate is found higher compared to females in all districts because of more opportunities, awareness as well as accessibility to schooling.

INTRODUCTION

Education always wishes for goodness to all and not only benefits to its achiever directly but also benefits the surroundings in a circuitous way due to its constructive externalities and brim over impacts (Thomas et al. 2001; Tilak 2008). It is one of the most responsive cursor of the socio-economic and cultural environment of humanity. It is the heart of basic education which determines the status of social decorum for everyone and ensures sustainable development (Sule and Barakade 2012). An appropriate process of learning not only empowers the society through the enhancement of knowledge, proficiency, dignity, the realization of liability towards constitutional rights and obligations but also communicate inner spirit to countenance repression, mortification and injustice. The old dictum “*Vidya Bihin Pashu*” in Sanskrit signifies that illiterate person is identical to an animal without horns and tail and burden on the earth (Naik 1979). As an important aspect of social develop-

ment, education is necessary for the generation of optimistic and gracious mutuality and liberally nurturing of the vital population phenomena (Chandna 2004). Undoubtedly, the level of education signifies to the social and economic advancement of any country which not only enhances to earning possibilities through the generation of better and more employments but also upgrades the living standards by tightening the gender-based nepotism. Universally, it is accepted the fact that ‘culture of equality’ can be brought only through education but when these rays of the knowledge are directed or preserved only for one slice of demography, then it nourishes to autocracy and dominance. Literacy is not only the course of acquiring knowledge but it is continuous processing of learning and forwarding it to next one so that a non-vicious and non-exploitative social and economic arrangement can be obtained (Sharma and Kavita 2019). It is also one of the main three components of the Human Development Index (HDI) and strongly affects the rest two, that is, life expectancy and per capita income. It helps in the obliteration of poverty and psychological seclusion with the cohesion of nonviolent and sociable relations in the entire communal structure. It has optimistic and close association with some vital events (low fertility, mortality, morbidity, improve-

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ment in health services) which are responsible for better shaping the life of either an individual or collective through the recognition of their own potential and qualities (Sharma and Kavita 2019; Akthar et al. 2014). Though education directly does not generate progression in society yet its lack can be a hindrance in the development process. In intercontinental usages, the capability of reading and lettering to a simple message in any vocabulary is termed as literacy. The UN Department of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2006) has defined it in a spacious sense in terms of the ability of identification, comprehending, interpretation, imagination, communiqué, multiplication and application of written or printed material associated with any verbal communication. In Indian context, the definition and measurement methods of literacy vary across various sources and organizations as National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), National Literacy Mission (NLM), National Family Health Survey (NFHS) and Census of India where the census definition is found extensively appropriate and most commonly cited (Dutta and Sivaramakrishnan 2013). The census enumeration explains that a person (above the age of seven years) who can read and write with understanding to a plain subsection written in any language is termed as literate. This is a permissive description of literacy where there is no compulsion of attaining ceremonial or certified education to be a literate. A visor person who can read *Braille* script is also treated as literate (Census of India 2011).

Women are the founder segment of the society and they not only participate themselves in the development process of a society or a nation but also help in intensifying the civilized milieu in whole. It is generally saying about the girl child that if we provide schooling opportunities to a female baby, she will educate several members of two families (her own and in-law's). A nation will progress only when the female is treated and educated equally as men (Sharma et al. 2018; Azim 2005). It is a general perception also that as compared to illiterate, a literate mother can ensure better prospects of her children (Sharma and Kumar 2018). The existing gender gap and discrepancy in learning point towards the socio-economic status of women. The high pervasiveness of female illiteracy in the society

shows the stern ignorance to this better half. No doubt, the gender biases in education exists everywhere, whether it is opportunities and affordability for school enrollment or attainment of any position in learning. As compared to males, females have fewer prospects of education from initial education to completion of any level. According to Tinker and Bramsen (1975), the negative cultural stances, fewer scopes and significance of girls' education in an established monetary arrangement of a nation and the ways of school teaching are three major identified fences that confine the educational availability and accessibility to females (Finn et al. 1980). Although education has been stated a fundamental right to everyone in context to India, several social and pecuniary determinants as well as to community and family stances entrenched in cultural standards have eternal control regarding the specification of female learning prospects (Desai et al. 2010).

Though as being the country of numerous religions, races, castes, cultures and population size, the attainment of the reputable level of literacy particularly in female population has always remained a challenge for India yet the nation's efforts to deal with this issue are admirable (Mcdougall 2000). Along with numerous ongoing plans and programmes, recently the Indian government has launched special camping with a title cum slogan of '*Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao*' with the motive of improvement in sex ratio and female literacy. Though in recent years, the male-female differentiation in literacy has been continuously tightening downward due to slow but sure disappearance of various stumbling blocks resistant to female literacy yet there is a long way ahead.

Objectives

The present work aims to look for the following objectives:

1. To examine the temporal progress of literacy in the state with a comparison of India from 1971 to 2011.
2. To inspect the existing gender-based inequalities in literacy at the district level in Haryana.
3. To identify the responsible factors behind the spatial variation of literacy rate in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data or information obtained from Primary Census Abstract, Haryana 2001 and 2011. The gender disparity has been calculated by using modified (Kundu and Rao 1986) Sopher's disparity index (1980):

$$\text{Sopher's method } D_s = \log \frac{x_2}{x_1} + \log \frac{100-x_1}{100-x_2}$$

$$\text{Sopher's method } D_s = \log \frac{x_2}{x_1} + \log \frac{200-x_1}{200-x_2}$$

Where D_s denotes gender disparity index, x_1 indicates the per cent of literate females where x_2 is the percentage of literate males.

Study Area

The state of Haryana is located in North-western part of India having a geographical ex-

tension of 27°40' to 29° 42' Northern latitudes and 74° 54' to 77° 40' Eastern longitudes. It came into existence on the 1st of November 1966. It covers an area of 44,212 square kilometres which comprises the 1.34 percent of the total area of the country (Fig. 1).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literacy Progress in India and Haryana

Education pays the highest profitable returns to the economy along with minimizing the poverty and if this educational investment is done for poor, deprived particularly, for females then it will assist to improve the social and financial scene of a household, region and a nation (World Bank 1998). Not only social and economic, but demography is also affected by the level of education as it is found that fertility rate is declined

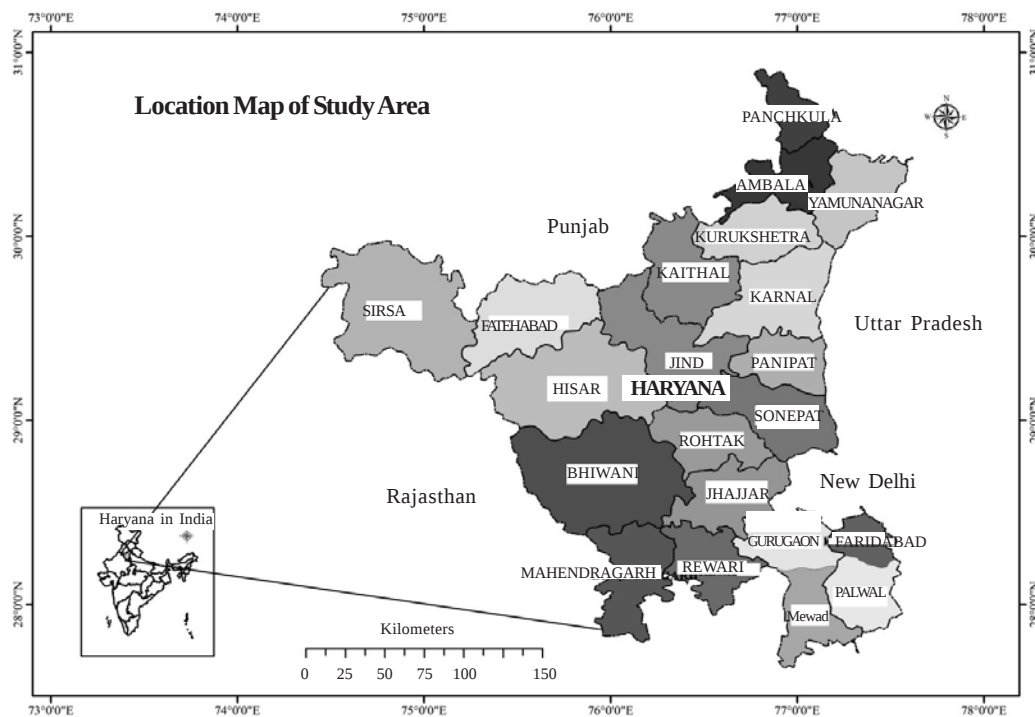


Fig. 1. Location map of study area

Source: Census of India, 2011

in case of Muslims because of rising in marriage age as a consequence of awareness which has come through education (Islam and Abedin 2001). In this way, education has generated self-respect, confidence and fearlessness among women (Stromquist 1997).

The sex-wise progress in literacy rate in India and Haryana has been shown in Table 1. The facts related to census 1971 show that only 34.45 percent of people were literate in the total population of India whereas in Haryana the literacy rate was 25.71 percent. In 1991, the overall literacy rate of the country and the state was registered 52.21 and 55.85 percent respectively with an improvement of 17.76 percent in India and 30.14 percent in Haryana as compared to 1971. The next census year also recorded a great proportion of literate people with an increase of 12.62 and 12.06 percent in India as well as Haryana. The documentation of census 2011 reveals that both at national and state level all categories (total, male and female) have registered a significant addition with respect to literate people. This survey has confirmed that 74.04 percent people (82.14% male and 65.46% female) are literate in India whereas the data for the state during the same period is 75.55 percent (84.05 % male and 65.94 % female).

The observation clearly shows that from 1971 to 2011 in both, country as well as state, the gender gap has continuously remained against the women. Though this gap has decreased from past to present poll as in 1971, male-female literacy gap was 23.99 percent and 28.58 percent in India and Haryana and in 2011 it has been listed as 16.68 and 18.11 percent in that order yet the pieces of evidence show that as compared to male, female literacy has remained

less progressive (Table 1). Though, education is the basic right of every human being yet it is highly affected by space, time, age and gender aspects. Azam and Kingdon (2011) revealed that gender difference in education is a result of learning expenditure which generally remains in favour of boys and it is more prevalent in rural as compared to the city.

District Wise Scene of Literacy: Status of Literacy in Haryana, 2001

Haryana has an economically modern society in terms of education and development in present time. In 2001, the overall 67.91 percent people were literate whereas literacy rate for males and females was traced 78.49 and 55.73 percent respectively with a gender gap of 22.76 percent.

The spatial analysis reveals that in two districts namely Faridabad and Gurgaon the literacy rate is high (more than 76%) in overall category. Out of 21 districts, the highest numbers of ten districts namely, Panchkula, Ambala, Yamuna Nagar, Kurukshetra, Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Mahendergarh and Rewari have literacy rate between 68 to 76 percent literacy.

The whole western part of the state falls in the low category of literacy rate except Fatehabad district where literacy rate is found very low followed by districts Kaithal, Mewat and Palwal. In context to male population for the same enumeration, highest fifteen districts (Panchkula, Ambala, Yamuna Nagar, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Mahendergarh, Rewari, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Bhiwani and Hisar) are placed in the group of high literacy rate whereas five districts (Sirsa, Fatehabad, Jind,

Table 1: Literacy rate in India and Haryana

Census year	India			Male-Female literacy gap	Haryana			Male-Female literacy gap
	Total	Male	Female		Total	Male	Female	
1971	34.45	45.96	21.79	24.17	25.71	38.90	10.32	28.58
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62	37.13	51.86	20.04	31.82
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84	55.85	69.1	40.47	28.63
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59	67.91	78.49	55.73	22.76
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68	75.55	84.05	65.94	18.11

Source: Census of India

Table 2: Literacy rate and gender disparity in Haryana, 2001-2011

S. No.	Districts/State	2001			2011			2001	2011
		Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Gender disparity index	Gender disparity index
1	Ambala	75.31	82.31	67.39	81.75	87.34	75.50	0.139	0.107
2	Bhiwani	67.45	80.26	53.00	75.21	85.65	63.54	0.269	0.206
3	Faridabad	76.29	85.14	65.63	81.70	88.61	73.84	0.181	0.133
4	Fatehabad	57.98	68.22	46.53	67.92	76.14	58.87	0.232	0.168
5	Gurgaon	78.51	87.97	67.49	84.70	90.46	77.98	0.188	0.111
6	Hisar	64.83	76.57	51.08	72.89	82.20	62.25	0.257	0.189
7	Jhajjar	72.38	83.27	59.65	80.65	89.31	70.73	0.225	0.169
8	Jind	62.12	73.82	48.51	71.44	80.81	60.76	0.262	0.191
9	Kaithal	59.02	69.15	47.31	69.15	77.98	59.24	0.232	0.181
10	Karnal	67.74	76.29	57.97	74.73	81.82	66.82	0.179	0.140
11	Kurukshetra	69.88	78.06	60.61	76.31	83.02	68.84	0.168	0.131
12	Mahendragarh	69.89	84.72	54.08	77.72	89.72	64.57	0.297	0.232
13	Mewat	43.51	61.18	23.89	54.08	69.94	36.60	0.512	0.380
14	Palwal	59.19	75.10	40.76	69.32	82.66	54.23	0.371	0.277
15	Panchkula	74.00	80.87	65.65	81.88	87.04	75.99	0.143	0.099
16	Panipat	69.17	78.50	57.91	75.94	83.71	67.00	0.200	0.155
17	Rewari	75.25	88.45	60.83	80.99	91.44	69.57	0.259	0.198
18	Rohtak	73.72	83.23	62.59	80.22	87.65	71.72	0.194	0.145
19	Sirsa	60.55	70.05	49.93	68.82	76.43	60.40	0.210	0.155
20	Sonipat	72.79	83.06	60.68	79.12	87.18	69.80	0.212	0.159
21	Yamunanagar	71.63	78.82	63.39	77.99	83.84	71.38	0.147	0.114
	Haryana	67.91	78.49	55.73	75.55	84.05	65.94	0.223	0.168

Source: Calculated from Primary Census Abstract, Haryana 2001 and 2011

Kaithal and Palwal) are in moderate class. Only in Mewat district, the literacy rate is found low. Where not a single district is found having a very low literacy rate concerning the male population, the scene of female literacy is quite opposite to this and entire state falls in the low or very low category. A cluster of twelve districts (Sirsa, Fatehabad, Jind, Kaithal, Hisar, Bhiwani, Karnal, Panipat, Jhajjar, Mahendragarh, Palwal and Mewat) comprising western, south-western and north-western Haryana have rolled with very low literacy rate whereas the remaining nine districts have a low percentage of female literacy (Fig. 2).

Status of Literacy in Haryana, 2011

Figure 3 shows that the average literacy of the state has been recorded at 75.55 percent during the census 2011. Only one district namely Mewat lays in the category of very low literacy rate of below 60 percent whereas the adjoining Fatehabad district has 60-68 percent literate population. The eight districts specifically, Kaithal,

Karnal, Panipat, Jind, Sirsa, Hisar, Bhiwani and Palwal have registered a literacy rate of 68-76 percent and highest literacy rate of above 76 percent has been recorded in Panchkula, Ambala, Yamuna Nagar, Kurukshetra, Sonipat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Mahendragarh, Rewari, Gurgaon and Faridabad districts. In the case of male literacy, except Mewat district (moderate literacy) entire Haryana has registered high literacy. An improvement has been also noticed to female literacy in 2011 as compared to 2001. The district Gurgaon is placed in high literacy group followed by a set of nine districts (Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Sonipat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Rewari and Faridabad) having moderate literate population.

There are low proportions of literate female in Karnal, Panipat, Jind, Sirsa, Hisar, Bhiwani and Mahendragarh districts whereas Fatehabad, Kaithal, Mewat and Palwal districts are placed in very low literacy class. The spatial pattern reflects that eleven districts of the state out of twenty one, fall in the category of high literacy rate and cover the north-eastern surrounding

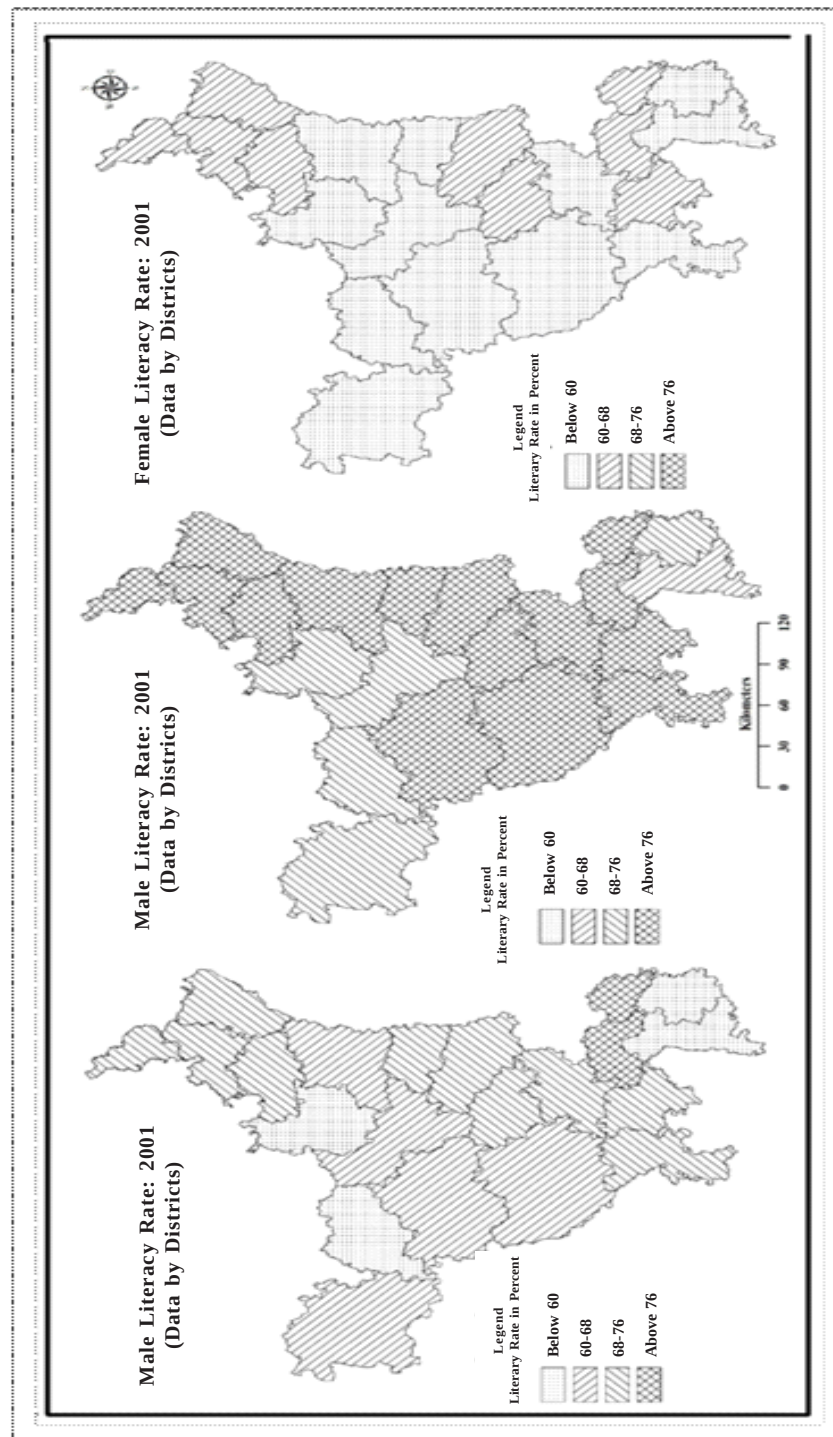


Fig. 2. Pattern of literacy in Haryana 2001
Source: Based on Census of India, 2001

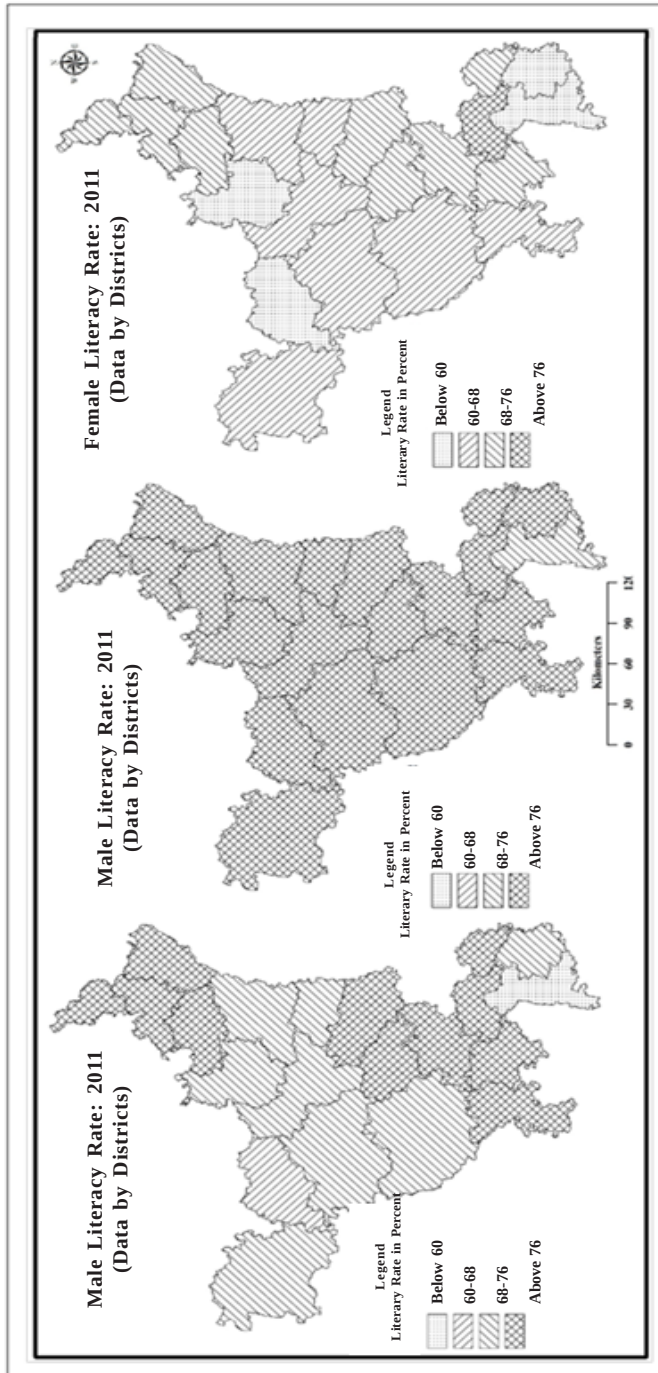


Fig. 3 Pattern of Literacy in Haryana 2011
 Source: Based on Census of India, 2011

the state capital Chandigarh, South-eastern region (except two districts Mewat and Palwal) has been found having the high literacy rate (Fig. 3). The availability of better education facilities as well as awareness for further opportunities clarify this fact whereas the northwestern region has low literacy rate as being an agriculture belt as well as resistance of education from particular segment of society. The southernmost region of districts Mewat and Palwal dominated by Muslim population is far behind from rest of the state in literacy rate due to lack of social and economic development. So there is a need to ensure the maximum participation of the people in education-related programmes.

Spatial Analysis of Disparity Index

Generally disparity means to dissimilarities in the outcome under consideration which is resulted by practice of caring less of a particular group than others regarding socio-economic categories, sexual characteristics, religious basis (Husain 2010). It is observed that after being

the availability of learning conveniences, females in rural area experience more from unnecessary socio-cultural barriers as compared to urban (Mehta 1990). The gender disparity in the process of learning has always remained an issue of concern as usually in most of the parts of the world, girl child receive less opportunities and attention in case of education.

Figure 4 represents that the state has improved itself in reduction of gender biases concerning education yet the condition is not saying well in present. In 2001, highest disparity (above 0.250) has been observed in seven districts namely Jind, Hisar, Bhiwani, Mahendergarh, Rewari, Mewat and Palwal followed by moderate value (0.150-0.250) in cluster of eleven districts (Sirsa, Fatehabad, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Gurgaon and Faridabad). Only three districts as Panchkula (0.143), Ambala (0.139) and Yamunanagar (0.147) have registered low gender gap in literacy (Table 2). During the opinion poll of 2011, it has been found that high gender unfairness is concerned only with two districts, Mewat and

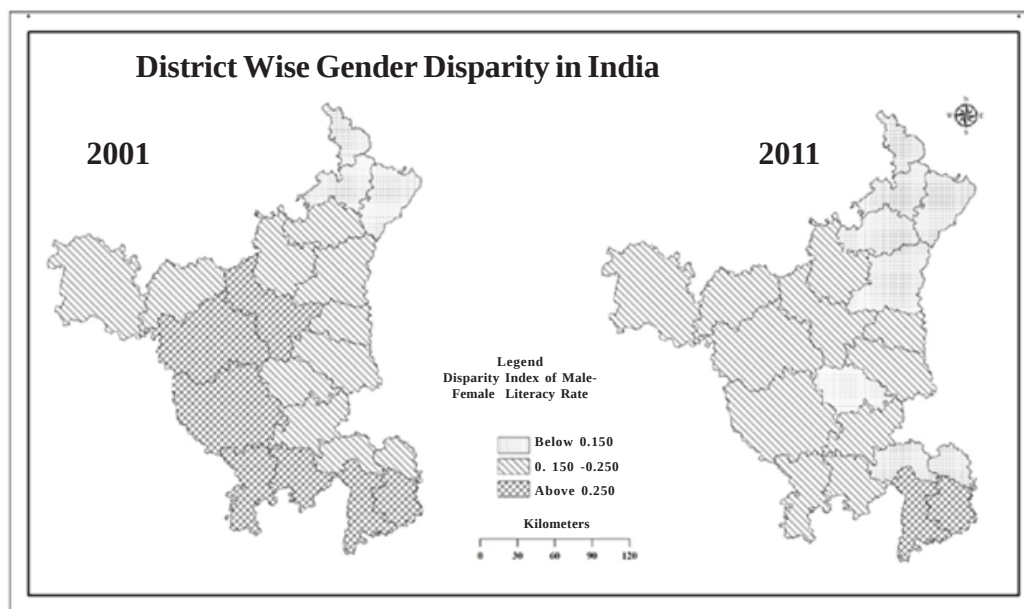


Fig. 4. Gender disparity in literacy of Haryana
Source: Based on table 2

Palwal. The moderate disparity has been documented in total eleven districts in which the five districts specifically Jind, Hisar, Bhiwani, Mahendergarh, Rewari have improved their position in 2011 than previous census. The districts Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Faridabad have recorded low differences in male-female education.

The overall analysis exposes that districts Mewat (Muslim dominated) and Palwal have reduced the differences in male-female education but received no changes in ranking of disparity index and positioned at first and second respectively from the bottom in 2011 as same in 2001 whereas ironically, Panchkula, a district of lowest sex ratio, is graded with the first position in case of inequality index which may be a tribute to the fact that as being adjacent to state's capital, the district has better availability of educational centres for females as well as convenience and ability to meet the expense of schooling.

CONCLUSION

The gender inequality in learning is coupled to discrimination in other spheres of female's lives. Definitely, the spatial variation in male-female education can be blamed to availability, accessibility and affordability of education and educational institutions in socially and economically backward regions. The concluding remarks of the study are:

- ♦ There is no qualm that recently the state has made considerable improvement (25.71% in 1971 to 75.55% in 2011) in overall literacy yet female literacy (65.94%) is lagging as compared to male literacy (84.05%).
- ♦ There is large scale inter-district variation in the state where district Gurgaon is at top with highest female literacy of 77.98 percent whereas Mewat is on bottom where the proportion of literate female population is less than half of highest (36.60%).
- ♦ It has been observed that importantly gender inequality in literacy, declined sharply from 2001 (0.223) to 2011 (0.168) yet there are major differences at district level and found that entire Haryana comes in the category of moderate to high gender disparity in learning (except eight districts (Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Rohtak,

Gurgaon and Faridabad) and the condition is worse in districts Mewat and Palwal.

So overall it is concluded that undoubtedly, the progress in literacy is positive sign of development yet female literacy requires more attention and priority to cope this advancement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus it has been stated that there is a need to remove sex-based disproportion in process of learning as several studies have revealed that female education has direct relationship with various other socio-cultural and economic phenomena and through effective and precise decisions, an educated woman is more proficient to stop nepotism against girls on various arenas and to melee with social ordeals, evils and clap-trap fences of the society.

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