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IMPACT OF LITERACY ON DEMOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE AND POVERTY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF KERALA AND INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Higher literacy, improved demographic indices and minimum poverty are some of the development indicators. The general objective of this paper is to examine the role of literacy on demographic performance and poverty and thereby examine the role of literacy on economic development. The specific objectives are (1). to examine the association of literacy with mortality, fertility, sex ratio and life expectancy in Kerala and India (2). to examine the relationship between Literacy and poverty in Kerala and India. In this paper the researchers associate literacy with demographic indices and poverty rates. For the analysis, the literacy and demographic data for the 60 years (1951-2011), and the poverty rates for 40 years (1971-2011) were used. Hypothesis testing method is used for analysing data. The Pearson's correlation results says that literacy has significant positive correlation with sex ratio ($r = 0.701$) in Kerala. In India it is less significant negatively correlated, i.e., ($r = -0.363$). The association of literacy rate with Crude Birth Rate is ($r = -0.959$ & $r = -0.979$) respectively for Kerala and India. The correlation between literacy and Crude Death Rate (CDR) is ($r = -0.963$ & $r = -0.957$) respectively for Kerala and India and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) have negative significant association with literacy rates ($r = -0.987$ & $r = -0.943$) both in Kerala and India. The relation between literacy and average life span of Kerala and India are high positively associated with ($r = 0.992$ & $r = 0.937$). The literacy with poverty indices are high negatively associated with ($r = -0.985$ & $r = -0.991$) for Kerala and India respectively. All the correlation results, except (the association between literacy and sex ratio of India) are in favourable nature for economic development of both Kerala and India.

KEYWORDS

Crude birth rate, Crude death rate, Literacy, Poverty, Sex ratio.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is one of the prime indicators of the development status of economy. Literacy is not the simple reading of words or set of associated symbols and sounds, but an act of critical understanding of the situation in the world. Literacy leads to education and results in empowerment with the acquisition of the essential knowledge and skills. And use of these skills towards his own and his community leads to individual and community's development.

Hike in literacy rate enhances the demographic profile of the country. Better demographic profile further leads to improve country's human capital. Literacy also provides better employment opportunities and provides higher socio-economic status. Thus the improved literacy rate with favourable demographic indices is the necessary condition for economic development. Low poverty level is also considered as a development indicator. Literacy has a significant role in reducing poverty. One of the preconditions of employment is literacy. Therefore, literate people may engage in productive employment and earn money income to livelihood which further flourishes production and consumption level of the country and it will lead to economic development.

This paper presents an overview of the impact of literacy on the changes of some demographic indices and poverty rates of both Kerala and India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literacy rate plays a key role in economic growth of a country. Japan can be an example whereas economy has developed by excelling in human resources despite the deficiency of natural resources (Vaman.S Desai 2000). India is blessed with both human resource and natural resources. The effective utilization of the human resources becomes very crucial for the country's economic progress and thus literacy plays the key role in moulding suitable human resources for economic growth of India

Grossman (1972) assumes that individuals with more education are efficient producers of good health. Education increases the ability to understand the importance of avoiding unhealthy behaviour, the ability to communicate with health practitioners and understand instructions, and the ability to take advantage of the services available in the medical institutions.

Jaleel.P.M (1982), Identified that the incidence of child mortality is higher among illiterate class and lower among literate class.

Sharma and Retherford (1987), found that female literacy has an indirect effect on fertility through the age at marriage (literate women tend to marry later)

Mother's schooling emerges to be the prime determinant in the household production of health (Rosenzwing and Schultz 1982, Behrman and Wolfe 1987).

Bryant Robey (ed). (1990) used a multiple regression analysis to demonstrate the relation between female literacy and fertility and found that an increase of 10 percentage points in the female literacy rate would result in a fertility reduction of almost one-half child per woman.

Sharma and Retherford (1990) found that in the States where female literacy rates are high, fertility ratio typically are low. In those States where have low fertility rates, child mortality rates also are low.

Parent's education has dominant role in providing better health to their children. Among parents, mother's education has significant role on health of their children. Sandiford.P.et.al. (1995) observed in their study that, Child health has been widely found to be positively associated with mother's education level.

The role of education particularly female education seems to have most powerful influence on demographic variables because educated women marry later which tends to have fewer children and are more likely to use effective methods of contraception and have greater means to for their economic livelihood, thereby slowing population growth (Zabeena Hameed -2007).

Monu Kumar (2013), in his study used the Speareman's correlation to test the association between female literacy and child sex ratio, found that child sex ratio and female literacy have moved opposite direction in Hariyana. The rank correlation value was -0.46.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this paper is to examine the role of literacy on demographic performance and poverty and thereby examine the role of literacy on economic development. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the association of literacy with mortality, fertility, sex ratio and life expectancy in Kerala and India
2. To examine the relationship between Literacy and poverty in Kerala and India

HYPOTHESES

1. No association between literacy and demographic indices
2. No association between literacy and poverty

METHODOLOGY

This study relies on empirical data of literacy, demographic profile and poverty from 1951 to 2011. To analyze the trend in literacy and demographic changes, the researchers relied on scatter plots. The hypotheses testing method is adopted to interpret the empirical results. The research hypotheses are stated and tested the association between variables with correlation measures, scatter diagrams, multiple bar diagrams and frequency tables. Literacy, demographic and poverty indices are constructed with the formula $\frac{Xi - \text{Min}(Xi)}{\text{Max}(Xi) - \text{Min}(Xi)}$

LITERACY OF KERALA: AN OVERVIEW

Kerala had got the fame of 100% literacy in 1991. Now, Kerala State is on the way of declaration of 100 per cent primary education. An analysis of literacy data reveals the fact that after a gap of 60 years, the literacy rate of the State has nearly been doubled in 2011 from 47.18% in 1951 to 93.91% in 2011 Census. The literacy rate of males has increased from 58.35% in 1951 to 96.02% in 2011 while that of females rose from 36.43% to 91.98%. The national figures (Persons 74.04%, Males 82.14%, and Females 65.46%) are far behind Kerala. A district wise comparison of literacy rate tells that Pathanamthitta district ranks first in literacy in 2011 Census with 96.93% and the lowest position goes to Palakkad district with 88.49%. In all districts, the literacy rate is above 88%. In eleven districts, the literacy rate is above 90%. The three districts with literacy rate above 96% are pathanamthitta (96.93%), Kottayam (96.40%) and Alapuzha (96.26%). The three districts with lower rates of literacy are Kasaragod (89.85%), Wayanad (89.33%) and Palakkad (88.49%).

The district wise classification of male and female literacy rate as per 2011 Census tells that, Alapuzha district register the highest male literacy with 97.90% and Palakkad district have the lower male literacy with 92.27%. Alapuzha, Pathanamthitta and Kozhikkode districts are the three districts with higher male literacy rate and Kasaragod, Wayanad and Palakkad districts have lower male literacy rate in a descending order.

The highest rate of female literacy is very important as far as a State in concerned as it measures the social upliftment of the female section of the society. The female literacy is considered as a social status indicator and progress. Better female literacy is a precondition for better demographic indicators. There is a remarkable improvement in the female literacy rate during 1981-2011 in the state. In 1981, the female literacy rate was 73.36% which has jumped to 91.98% in 2011. A district wise comparison reveals that Pathanamthitta (96.26%), Kottayam (95.67%) and Alapuzha (94.80%) are top in the list of female literacy rate. In 10 districts, the female literacy rate is above 90%.

DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA: AN OVERVIEW

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Kerala's population growth rate was 12% compared to 6% for India. A steady increase in growth rate has been observed from 1951 onwards and reaching the highest figure of 26.29% in 1971. The 1981 census showed a declining population growth rate and the population growth rate of Kerala for 2001 to 2011 is 4.86 which is less than the growth rate of 1991-2001. The growth of population during 2001-2011 has declined in all the districts of the State as compared to the growth rate in 1991-2001. Malappuram district has the highest growth rate during 2001-2011 with 13.39%.

As far as the age-sex structure of population of Kerala is considered, the sex ratio of Kerala is 1084 while the child sex ratio is 939 in 2011. The fertility status of Kerala shows that the Crude Birth Rate is 16.75, the general Fertility Rate is 59.94, while death rate is considered in 2011, Kerala has the lowest infant mortality rate of 7.53/1000 as compared to 44/1000 for all India. Kerala state has a very unique position in sex ratio. Despite it has a continuous increase from 1004 in 1901 Census, had shown a declining trend only in 1961 and 1971 censuses. As per 2001 Census, the State of Kerala has registered a sex ratio above the equality ratio with 1058 females per 1000 males. In 2011 Census also, the sex ratio of the state registered an increase of 26 points and thus achieved a sex of 1084 females per 1000 males.

POVERTY IN KERALA: AN OVERVIEW

The absolute poor are those who are unable to achieve basic facilities like food, safe drinking water and shelter, access to information, education, health care, social status, political power or even the opportunity to develop meaningful connections with other people in the society. Kerala's absolute poverty (urban + rural) has steeply declined from 61.4 percent to 12 percent in a period of 40 years from 1971 to 2011. A large number of factors can be identified behind this achievement. The successfully implemented agrarian reforms, the minimum wages act for several categories of labourers, the housing programme for the weaker sections of the society, the old-age pension for agricultural labourers, Pension scheme for handicapped, Kudumbashree Mission Programmes, Linkage Banking Programmes, Micro enterprises and Ashraya project etc are some of the projects supplemented for the poverty eradication of Kerala State.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

The trend of literacy and demographic development of Kerala and India can be seen from the table.1.

TABLE 1: LITERACY AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF KERALA AND INDIA (1951-2011)

year	Literacy rate		Sex Ratio		CBR		CDR		IMR		Lifespan	
	KERALA	INDIA	KERALA	INDIA	KERALA	INDIA	KERALA	INDIA	KERALA	INDIA	KERALA	INDIA
1951	47.18	16.7	1028	946	39.8	39.9	18	27.4	153	192	39.9	32.1
1961	55.08	24	1022	941	38.9	41.7	16.1	22.8	120	146	49	41.25
1971	69.75	29.3	1016	930	37	41.2	11	19	66	129	59.3	45.55
1981	78.85	36	1032	939	26	37.1	6.9	14.8	27	96	67	54.4
1991	89.81	52.1	1036	927	19.8	30.5	5.8	10.2	17	91	71.4	58.35
2001	90.86	64.5	1058	933	18.13	25.4	5.7	8.4	5.43	66	73.4	62.7
2011	93.91	74.04	1084	940	16.75	21.8	7.32	7.1	7.53	44	74	63

Sources:

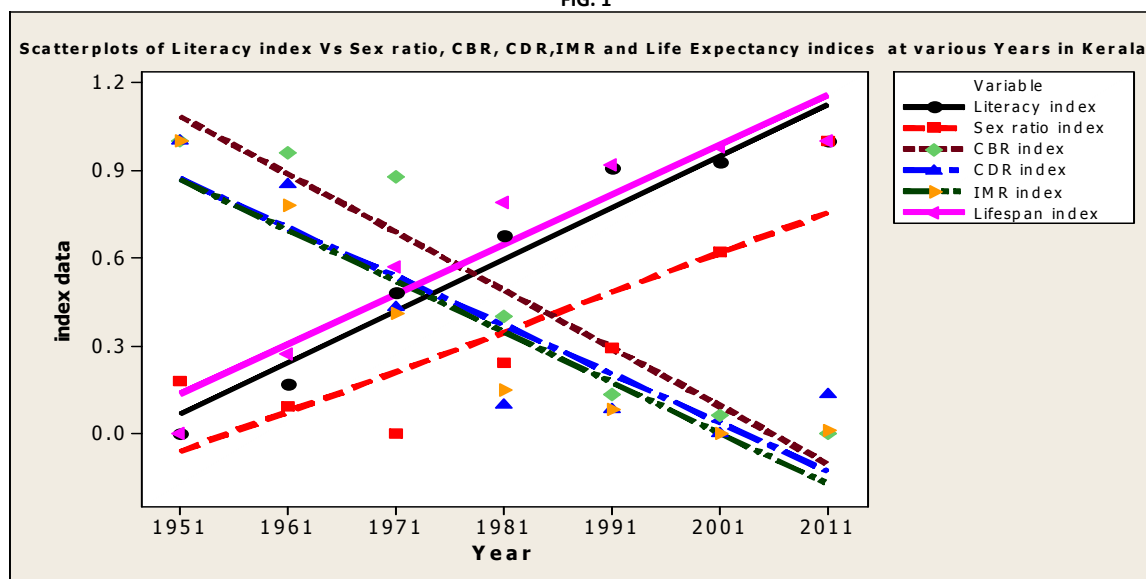
1. Census of India 2011: Provisional Population Totals –Kerala Series.
2. Annual Vital Statistics Report of Kerala 2011.

3. Kerala Economy Four Decades of Development of P.P.Pillai, published by Institute of planning and applied economic research, Jhon Mathai Foundation. The literacy rate of both Kerala and India is in an increasing trend from 1951. Kerala had achieved a near 50% literacy at the time of independence. This early achievements in literacy is due to the non-formal education in the form of 'kudipallikudams' existed in all the three regions- Travancore, Cochin and Malabar of Kerala. The Christian Missionaries, Princely States, community Leaders, Reforms movements and foreign remittances also have significant role in the better status of literacy of Kerala. In 1951, the literacy rate of Kerala was 47.18 while it was only 16.7 for all India. From 1951, the annual average growth of literacy of Kerala is 7.79 per cent, but it is 9.55 per cent for all India. The sex ratio of Kerala was more than 1000 in all the census year from 1951, but it was

concentrated around 940 during the same period in India. The Crude Birth Rate (CBR), Crude Death Rate (CDR), and Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) of both Kerala and India are in a declining trend. The Life Expectancy at Birth of both Kerala and India are in an upward trend.

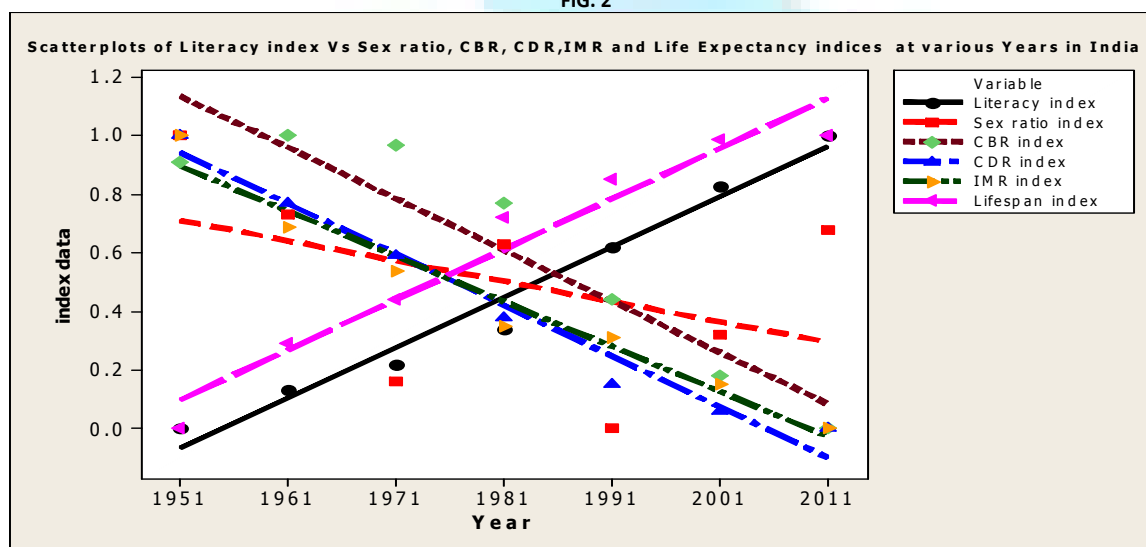
The Scatter Plots of literacy index with demographic indices will be helpful in analysing the role literacy in improved demographic indices.

FIG. 1



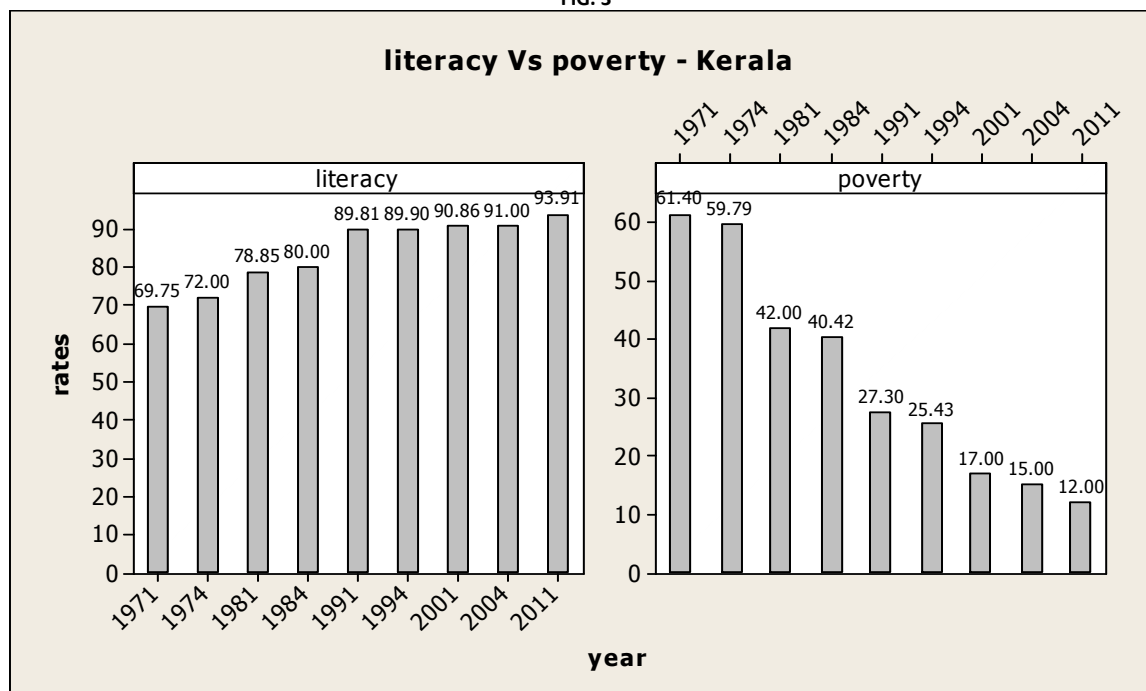
The scatter plots of literacy index versus demographic indices of Kerala reveals that literacy make positive impacts on lifespan and sex ratio. It is a favourable effect of literacy. The literacy index versus CBR, CDR and IMR shows a negative relation, but their effects are also make positive impact on the society. The scatter plots of literacy versus demographic indices of India show that literacy is positively related only with lifespan. The negative relation between literacy and sex ratio is not favourable. All other demographic indicators have negatively related with literacy is favourable effect of literacy.

FIG. 2



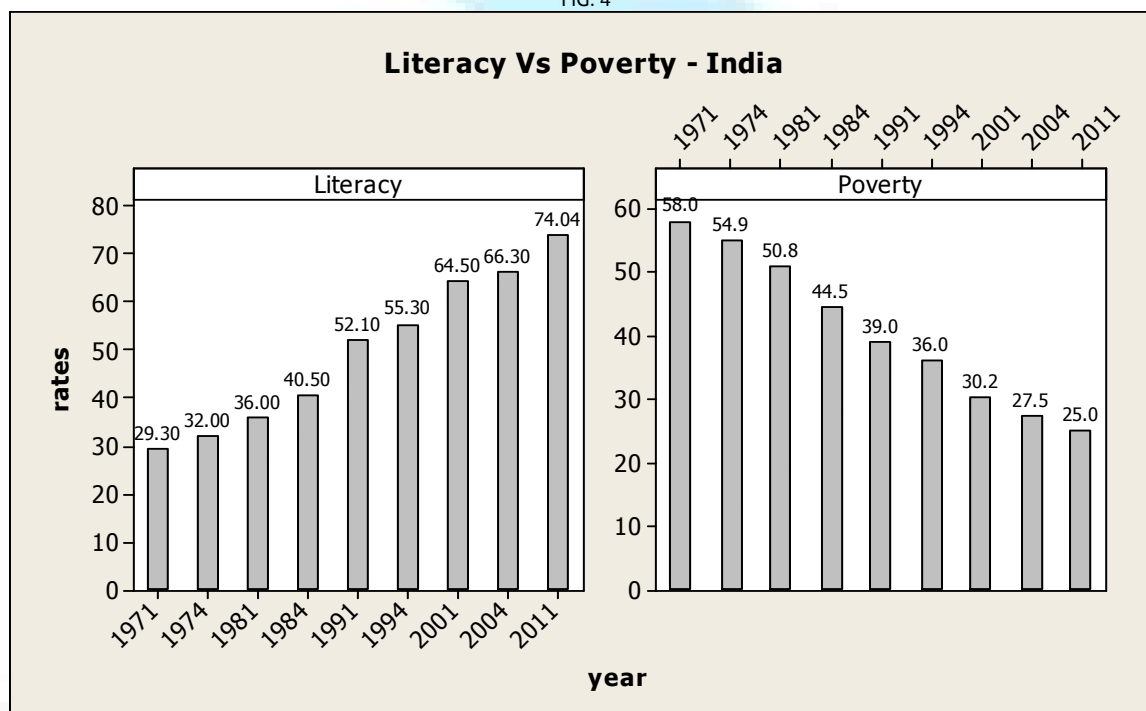
The association between literacy and poverty rates of both Kerala and India is examined by considering the poverty rates from 1971 to 2011.

FIG. 3



Source: Computed from Census of India 2011: Provisional Population Totals –Kerala Series and Economic Survey 2011-12, government of India.

FIG. 4



Source: Computed from Census of India 2011: Provisional Population Totals –Kerala Series and Economic Survey 2011-12, government of India

The total poverty ratio (both urban and rural) with literacy rate of Kerala, (Fig.3) is exhibiting an upward ward trend of literacy and a down ward trend of poverty. In 1951, the literacy rate of Kerala was 47.18% which has improved to 93.91% in 2011. The poverty ratio in 1971 was 61.4% and it had come down to 12% in 2011.

The literacy rate of India, (Fig.4) also is exhibiting an upward trend. In 1951, the literacy rate was 16.7% which has improved to 74.04% in 2011. The poverty ratio has a downward trend. In 1971, the poverty of India was 58% and it had come down to 25% in 2011.

The magnitude of the relation among literacy, demographic indicators and poverty of Kerala and India can be seen from the following correlation table

CORRELATION VALUES OF LITERACY WITH DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS AND POVERTY

KERALA						
	Sex ratio	CBR	CDR	IMR	Lifespan	Poverty
Literacy	0.701	-0.959	-0.963	-0.987	0.992	-0.985
INDIA						
	Sex ratio	CBR	CDR	IMR	Lifespan	Poverty
Literacy	-0.363	-0.979	-0.957	-0.943	0.937	-0.991

The correlation results show that there is association between literacy with demographic and poverty indices both in Kerala and India. Therefore reject the research hypotheses and accept the alternative hypotheses.

CONCLUSION

Literacy, demographic indicators and poverty are the three development indicators among other indices. This study examines the association of literacy with demographic indices and poverty ratios. Literacy has a significant positive relation with sex ratio in Kerala, but poor negative correlation in India. Literacy has a significant negative correlation with Crude Birth Rate (CBR), Crude death Rate (CDR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) both in Kerala and India. Literacy has a significant positive association with Life Expectancy both in Kerala and India. And finally, the correlation results show a significant negative association between literacy and poverty. All the test results, except (the association between literacy and sex ratio of India) are favourable nature of economic development of both Kerala and India.

RECOMENDATION

The study results show that both vital rates and poverty rates are improved with level of literacy. Therefore it is highly recommend that the central and state governments has to give maximum thrust for an extensive educational development for better social and economic development of the nation.

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