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## REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN LITERACY RATES - A PROFILE OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study find out that the literacy has been recognised as a key factor in the process of economic development. It is also an established fact that investment in education is the most important component of investment in human capital. The importance of investment in human capital is aptly stressed by Schultz in the following words. "By some miracle, India or some other low income country like India were to acquire as it were, overnight a set of natural resources, equipment and structures, including techniques of production, what would they do with them given the existing skills and knowledge of the people? Surely the imbalance between the stock of human and non-human capital would be tremendous". As such, more efforts must be made to achieve education levels with a special focus on females in all the regions of the State as it is the pre-requisite for generating the skilled labour and to achieve balance between the stock of human and non-human capital. Then only the objectives of "sustainable development" and "inclusive growth" become more meaningful.*

**KEYWORDS**

literacy, investment in education.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Education is perhaps the single most important instrument through which human resource can be fully developed. It is very well said that knowledge is power. Education enables people to acquire basic skills and inculcate abilities, which are helpful in raising the social and economic status of the person. Women's education has assumed special significance in the context of planned development because the efforts of planned development are to bring all those in to the main stream who are left outside. However, female education is constrained by the socio-economic conditions.

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is constitutional commitment in India. The government of India initiated a number of programmes to achieve the goal of universalisation of Elementary education among which the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched in 2001, is the most recent one. It aimed at achieving universal primary education by 2007 and universal elementary education by 2010. For successful implementation of any educational programme, effective monitoring, coupled with efficient information system, is essential.

While monitoring framework under SSA is developed separately, concerned efforts have been made towards strengthening of educational management information system (EMS) in India.

A number of governmental and semi-governmental agencies like Department of Secondary and Higher Education Government of India, National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and semi-governmental agencies like the National sample survey organization, census of India, and the International Institute for Population Studies (National Family Health Survey), Indian Market Research Bureaus (IMRB) have collected information regarding the school related indicators, facilities in schools, enrolment, teacher-pupil ratio etc. Indian education system is one of the largest education systems in the world. National Policy on Education (1986) is a landmark in its approach to women's education. National literacy mission is another step towards eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15-35 years. Once illiteracy is removed, other venues of development get open automatically. By educating a woman of the house, one educates the whole family.

Education helps to capture not only economic opportunities by women, but leads to secure better health, hygiene and nutrition. All of them place women on the path of development in the nation building. For ensuring girls access at least to primary education strengthening of Non-formal education machinery is also necessary. By these children, who have been enrolled but have been dropped out, can be easily brought into the education system.

The progress made by India in the field of education after independence, is unprecedented in Asia. For the first time in the history of India, a National System of Education is established, there by the access to education is open to all students irrespective of caste, creed or sex. It is universally accepted that education is a significant instrument in improving the status of women. Federico Mayor, the director General of UNESCO, once said "Education is the key to create equitable environment and a democratic and peaceful society where women and men play equally important roles".

In the pre-independence era, the objective of education was to make women more capable of fulfilling family responsibilities. But in the post-independent era, a new dimension appeared due to the acceptance of equality of women and their need to play multiple roles in society. The constitution of India guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens irrespective of race, sex, caste and community and directs the state to endeavor to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years (Article 45). The Indian Education Commission in its report (1966) expressed unhappiness about the failure to achieve the target. In view of immense resources needed for this purpose, the commission recommended phasing programme. Even though enough emphasis was laid on the education of women, the delay in achieving the constitutional direction in respect of primary education has affected girls adversely.

The educational policy enunciated in 1968 provided a uniform system of education all over the country. The National Policy of Education (NPE) of 1986, updated in 1992, proposed a dual track approach, designed to promote simultaneously adult literacy and primary education, with the focus on girls. During the decade 1981-1991, female literacy increased at a faster rate than male literacy. Nonetheless, the rural-urban differential in literacy increased in 2001.

**OBJECTIVES**

In the light of account given above an attempt is made in this paper

1. To study the literacy rates in Indian in general during the period 1951 to 2011.
2. To analyse the regional variations in the literacy rates of males and females in the state of Andhra Pradesh during the period 1991 to 2011, and
3. To analyse the dropout rates of boys and girls at different levels of schooling in the state of Andhra Pradesh during the period 1991 to 2011.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to study the regional variations, the state of Andhra Pradesh is sub-divided into three regions for analytical convenience as follows:

1. North Coastal Andhra (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam)
2. South Coastal Andhra (East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna)
3. Rayalaseema (Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur, Kurnool).

The data are collected from secondary sources.

**ANALYSIS**

**Literacy Rates in India:** The statistical data relating to the literacy rates of males and females are presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: LITERACY RATES IN INDIA**

| Year | Persons | Males | Females |
|------|---------|-------|---------|
| 1951 | 16.67   | 24.95 | 7.93    |
| 1961 | 24.02   | 34.44 | 12.96   |
| 1971 | 29.45   | 34.95 | 18.69   |
| 1981 | 43.67   | 56.50 | 29.85   |
| 1991 | 52.21   | 64.13 | 39.29   |
| 2001 | 65.38   | 75.85 | 54.16   |
| 2011 | 74.04   | 82.14 | 65.46   |

Source: Directorate of School Education, Andhra Pradesh.

As can be seen from the above table, the overall percentage of literacy has increased from 16.67 in 1951 to 74.04 in 2011. As far as the percentage of female literacy is concerned, the increase has been from 7.93 in 1951 to 65.46 in 2011. Though the ratio of female literacy in comparison to male literacy is lagging behind in all the census data, it is a matter of satisfaction that female literacy has increased almost by seven folds during the period 1951 to 2011.

But still many more miles to go to reach the status of complete literacy particularly in the case of females.

**Regional Variations in the Literacy Rates of Males and Females:** The statistical information relating to the literacy rates of males and females in the three regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh is shown in Table - 2.

**TABLE 2**

| S.No | Regional wise        | District      | Male  |       | Female |       | Total |       |
|------|----------------------|---------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|      |                      |               | 1991  | 2011  | 1991   | 2011  | 1991  | 2011  |
| 1    | North coastal Andhra | Srikakulam    | 49.14 | 71.61 | 23.52  | 52.08 | 36.22 | 61.74 |
|      |                      | Vizianagaram  | 45.93 | 68.15 | 22.47  | 49.87 | 34.19 | 58.89 |
|      |                      | Visakhapatnam | 56.13 | 74.56 | 34.60  | 59.34 | 45.51 | 66.91 |
| 2    | South Coastal Andhra | East Godavari | 55.32 | 74.10 | 42.26  | 66.95 | 48.79 | 70.50 |
|      |                      | West Godavari | 55.75 | 77.65 | 43.30  | 71.01 | 53.38 | 74.32 |
|      |                      | Krishna       | 60.55 | 78.30 | 45.54  | 69.18 | 53.16 | 73.74 |
|      |                      | Guntur        | 56.54 | 74.79 | 35.85  | 60.09 | 46.35 | 67.40 |
|      |                      | Prakasam      | 53.14 | 72.92 | 27.06  | 53.11 | 40.30 | 63.08 |
|      |                      | Nellore       | 58.04 | 75.74 | 36.99  | 61.99 | 47.61 | 68.90 |
| 3    | Rayalaseema          | Chittoor      | 62.61 | 79.83 | 36.44  | 63.28 | 49.75 | 71.53 |
|      |                      | Kadapa        | 63.14 | 77.78 | 32.35  | 56.77 | 48.12 | 67.30 |
|      |                      | Anantapur     | 55.92 | 73.02 | 27.61  | 53.97 | 42.18 | 63.57 |
|      |                      | Kurnool       | 53.24 | 70.10 | 26.04  | 49.78 | 39.97 | 59.97 |
|      | Andhra Pradesh       |               | 55.12 | 74.77 | 32.72  | 59.96 | 44.08 | 67.35 |

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011, Directorate of Census Operations, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

Note: Literacy excluded children in the age group of (0-6) years.

As can be seen from the table that out of the three districts grouped in the North coastal Andhra region, the two districts Viz., Srikakulam and Vizianagaram are found to be lagging behind the state average literacy rate of 55.12 in the case of males and 32.72 in the case of females in 1991.

It is disheartening to note that by 2011, all the three districts in the North Coastal Andhra region are lagging behind the respective state averages of males & females. In the case of south coastal Andhra region, with the exception of only Prakasam district, all the other five districts registered a literacy rate above the respective state averages of males and females in 1991. However, by 2011, while East Godavari slightly lagged behind the state average in the case of males, Prakasam District lagged behind both in the case of male literacy rates and female literacy rates when compared to the respective state averages.

Of the four districts grouped in the Rayalaseema region, only Kurnool lagged behind the state average in respect of males, while in the case of females Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool also lagged behind the female state average in 1991. It is disheartening to note that by 2011, Kurnool as well as Anantapur also lagged behind the state average of males, while in the case of female literacy rates Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool maintained the same status of lagging behind the female state average. Hence, some more special efforts must be made to improve the literacy rates in general and more particularly the female literacy rates in this region.

Hence, from the above analysis, it may be inferred that literacy rates of both males and females are higher than the respective state average in the districts of West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Chittoor, both in 1991 and 2011. Thus from this it may be inferred that the districts which are prosperous are also the districts that experience higher rates of literacy in respect of both males and females. The most important observation from the above table is that all the regions of the state have been experiencing lower female literacy rates when compared to the corresponding male literacy rates both in 1991 and in 2011. As such, programmes have to be launched much more vigorously to boost up the literacy rates with special focus on female literacy rates in all the region of Andhra Pradesh.

**TABLE 3: DISTRICT WISE, RURAL AND URBAN WISE LITERATE POPULATION AND LITERACY RATE (2011 Census)**

| S.No | District       | Literacy Rate |       |       |         |       |       |
|------|----------------|---------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
|      |                | Males         |       |       | Females |       |       |
|      |                | Total         | Rural | Urban | Total   | Rural | Urban |
| 1    | Srikakulam     | 71.61         | 68.86 | 85.97 | 52.08   | 48.35 | 71.06 |
| 2    | Vizianagaram   | 68.15         | 63.73 | 84.85 | 49.87   | 44.00 | 71.51 |
| 3    | Visakhapatnam  | 74.56         | 62.96 | 86.88 | 59.34   | 44.74 | 75.51 |
| 4    | East Godavari  | 74.10         | 70.65 | 84.62 | 66.95   | 63.52 | 77.07 |
| 5    | West Godavari  | 77.65         | 75.17 | 87.52 | 71.01   | 68.58 | 80.32 |
| 6    | Krishna        | 78.30         | 73.71 | 84.96 | 69.18   | 63.56 | 77.30 |
| 7    | Guntur         | 74.79         | 70.14 | 83.97 | 60.09   | 53.77 | 72.25 |
| 8    | Prakasam       | 72.92         | 69.80 | 85.73 | 53.11   | 48.60 | 71.18 |
| 9    | Nellore        | 75.74         | 71.19 | 86.74 | 61.99   | 56.02 | 76.46 |
| 10   | Kadapa         | 77.78         | 74.72 | 83.72 | 56.77   | 51.49 | 66.94 |
| 11   | Kurnool        | 70.10         | 66.15 | 80.04 | 49.78   | 43.61 | 65.01 |
| 12   | Anantapuram    | 73.02         | 69.41 | 82.32 | 53.97   | 48.77 | 67.06 |
| 13   | Chittoor       | 79.83         | 76.34 | 88.12 | 63.28   | 57.72 | 76.45 |
|      | Andhra Pradesh | 74.77         | 70.48 | 85.00 | 59.96   | 54.25 | 73.42 |

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011, Directorate of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

Note: Literates exclude children in the age group of (0-6) years

As could be seen from the table that Andhra Pradesh literacy ratio is 67.35. Men literacy ratio is 74.77 and female literacy ratio is 56.99 percent, but excluding literacy in the age group of (0-6) years Total Andhra Pradesh. Literacy rate of men is 74.77 out of this 70.48 percent in rural and 85.00 percent in urban areas. Total female literacy rate is 59.96 but 54.25 percent in rural and 73.42 percent in urban.

Among different districts of Andhra Pradesh male literacy ratio is highest in Chittoor district, next place occupied by the Krishna district, later positions occupied by the Kadapa and West Godavari district. In rural literacy rate is also high in Chittoor district, later position occupied by the West Godavari district urban literacy rate is also highest in Chittoor and West Godavari districts.

To sum up Chittoor and West Godavari districts occupied first and second positions, because most of the educational institutions located in these areas and people were more aware about the society.

The lowest literacy rate occupied by Vijayanagaram, Kurnool and Srikakulam districts. To take rural literacy rate lowest position occupied by the Visakhapatnam, next position is Vijayanagaram because these are the places are hill areas and also lack of effective school facilities, in addition to that, most of the areas are tribal areas. Urban literacy ratio is also throughout in Chittoor and West Godavari districts.

To take female literacy rate of Andhra Pradesh is 59.96, 54.25 and 73.42 percent in rural and urban respectively. Among different districts of Andhra Pradesh female literacy rate is highest in West Godavari and Krishna districts lowest percentage occupied by the Kurnool and Vijayanagaram due to lack of awareness and facilities. To take rural female literacy rate highest in West Godavari and Krishna districts and lowest in Kurnool and Vijayanagaram. To take urban literacy rate highest in West and East Godavari districts, lowest by Kurnool and Kadapa districts.

#### DROP - OUT RATES

Now it is of interest to study the dropout rates in the regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The statistical data relating to the dropout rates at various levels of education are presented in table-4.

TABLE 4

| S. No | District       | Classes (I-V) |       |       | Classes (I-VII) |       |       | Classes (I-X) |       |       |
|-------|----------------|---------------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|
|       |                | Boys          | Girls | Total | Boys            | Girls | Total | Boys          | Girls | Total |
| 1     | Srikakulam     | 8.35          | 6.04  | 7.24  | 14.78           | 12.20 | 13.53 | 17.64         | 16.77 | 17.21 |
| 2     | Vizianagaram   | 9.22          | 9.40  | 9.31  | 23.91           | 21.60 | 22.79 | 33.76         | 33.71 | 33.74 |
| 3     | Visakhapatnam  | 4.25          | 4.22  | 4.24  | 6.70            | 14.65 | 10.69 | 13.43         | 18.22 | 15.84 |
| 4     | East Godavari  | 2.38          | 0.94  | 1.69  | 5.69            | 3.57  | 4.64  | 15.54         | 12.07 | 13.39 |
| 5     | West Godavari  | -3.67         | -5.20 | -4.42 | 2.86            | 1.83  | 2.35  | 11.95         | 9.43  | 10.68 |
| 6     | Krishna        | -4.67         | -4.48 | -4.58 | 5.97            | 7.60  | 6.82  | 12.38         | 15.81 | 14.09 |
| 7     | Guntur         | -9.10         | -8.76 | -8.93 | -1.60           | 6.62  | 2.52  | 18.86         | 25.87 | 22.37 |
| 8     | Prakasam       | 8.52          | 8.42  | 8.47  | 26.77           | 28.81 | 27.78 | 36.62         | 38.61 | 37.60 |
| 9     | Nellore        | 3.32          | 3.74  | 3.53  | 18.32           | 19.62 | 18.95 | 28.80         | 29.43 | 29.11 |
| 10    | Kadapa         | 15.06         | 13.28 | 14.21 | 30.38           | 27.09 | 28.80 | 40.82         | 37.01 | 38.98 |
| 11    | Kurnool        | 11.87         | 12.73 | 12.29 | 27.93           | 36.58 | 32.17 | 37.17         | 44.79 | 40.90 |
| 12    | Anantapuram    | 10.86         | 9.41  | 10.17 | 21.91           | 20.31 | 21.13 | 32.04         | 31.23 | 31.64 |
| 13    | Chittoor       | 5.51          | 5.61  | 5.56  | 10.81           | 12.01 | 11.40 | 19.20         | 20.49 | 19.83 |
|       | Andhra Pradesh | 4.88          | 4.30  | 4.60  | 14.91           | 16.59 | 15.74 | 24.54         | 25.93 | 25.23 |

As could be furnished from the table that Dropout rates in different districts of Andhra Pradesh, that can be classified into three categories, i.e., I - V, I - VII, and I - X. Total Dropout rate in Andhra Pradesh from I - V is 4.60% out of that 4.88% for Boys and 4.30% for Girls. Total Dropouts are highest in Kadapa and Kurnool districts. Total Kadapa district dropouts are 14.21, out of that 15.06% for Boys and 13.28% for Girls, Kurnool district total Dropouts are 12.29% out of that 11.87% and 12.73% Boys and Girls respectively. Main reason for these two districts lack of sufficient rainfall therefore people are migrated from native place to other places.

To take dropout rate from I - VII, Total Dropouts of Andhra Pradesh from 15.74% out of that 14.91%, 16.59% Boys and Girls respectively. Highest positions occupied by the Kurnool and Kadapa districts.

To take Dropout rate from I - X, total dropout rate is 25.23%, out of that 24.54, 25.93% for Boys and Girls respectively, Kurnool and Kadapa districts occupied first and second positions.

To sum up Dropout rates in 2014-15 Girls rate is higher than Boys due to migration, lack of facilities, lack of awareness. One of the greatest economist Prof. Amartya Kumar Sen stated that most of the parents treated as their children as assets in rural areas, but in the urban area they treated as liabilities. Kurnool and Kadapa districts are having most of the rural areas.

#### CONCLUSION

Literacy has been recognised as a key factor in the process of economic development. It is also an established fact that investment in education is the most important component of investment in human capital. The importance of investment in human capital is aptly stressed by Schultz in the following words. "By some miracle, India or some other low income country like India were to acquire as it were, overnight a set of natural resources, equipment and structures, including techniques of production, what would they do with them given the existing skills and knowledge of the people? Surely the imbalance between the stock of human and non-human capital would be tremendous".

As such, more efforts must be made to achieve education levels with a special focus on females in all the regions of the State as it is the pre-requisite for generating the skilled labour and to achieve balance between the stock of human and non-human capital. Then only the objectives of "sustainable development" and "inclusive growth" become more meaningful.

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