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Levels of disparity in literacy of scheduled tribes of Nandurbar district: A spatial analysis

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Abstract

Indian society suffers from gender disparity in literacy, health care and employment. Higher illiteracy among scheduled tribes particularly among ST females resulted higher gender disparity in literacy. Their knowledge about ecology, community cleanliness, raising children, managing households under unstable circumstances etc. amounted to nothing mainly because of their lack of literacy and education. Lack of education among tribes stands in the way of their employability. Hence, we find the importance of the study of literacy and education in the tribal dominated district like Nandurbar. This paper analyses the levels of disparity in literacy of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Nandurbar district, which is one of the tribal dominated districts of Maharashtra. Literacy plays a very crucial role in the social and economic development in a country. A low level of literacy in a population retards the progress along the path of social and economic development and political power. Illiteracy, particularly among female in a society, results in stagnation of technology, social and cultural lags weakness, national security and overall stagnation of the economic progress. The present paper, intends to study Total, Male and Female literacy rates among the scheduled tribes and disparity occurred in it during the last decade in Nandurbar district. The literacy rates for both the sexes are low as compared to the State and disparity occurred in these rates are also low. The study analyses the results using Sopher's disparity index. It is admirable that the literacy rates have shown considerable increase but the situation is not much satisfactory in tribal tehsils of the district.

Keywords: Disparity, Literacy, Scheduled Tribes.

1. Introduction

The term literacy is one of the very significant qualitative indicators of social development associated to the economic development. Even today education is the most intrinsic instrument for changing the socio-economic status of an individual and society as a whole. That is why there are number of studies on the literacy made by geographers. Literacy is essential for social reconstruction, improvement in quality of life and preparation of manpower for rapid development. Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relations and for permitting the free play of demographic process. Literacy influences such attributes of population as fertility, mortality, mobility, occupations etc. The developing countries like India are not only characterized not only by low literacy level but also by a great disparity in literacy level between rural and urban, between tribal and non-tribal, between males and females and between young and the aged. Therefore, the study of literacy pattern and trends is of immense significance.

The tribal people distinct by their own cultural, traditions and occupation and are scattered all over the world. The scheduled tribes form the most socially and economically backward sections of Indian society, illiterate, underdeveloped, primitive and predominantly concentrated in thick forested and hilly areas, which hampered interaction with outside world. The tribal are the economically backward ethnic group in India. They are food gatherers, hunters, forestland cultivators, and minor forest product collectors. They lived in isolation with near to nature hence, called son of soil. Tribes constituted separate socio-cultural groups having distinct customs, tradition, marriage, kinship, property inheritance system and living largely in agricultural and pre-agricultural level of technology. India is a home of number of tribes there are over 314 communities. Tribal society is defined as a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect,

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occupying a common territory. The word 'tribe' means a group of families, living in a contiguous region, speaking a common language and having a historical past. In this study, an attempt is made to analyse the level of disparity in literacy among the tribal population in Nandurbar district of Maharashtra during 2001-2011. The level of disparity in literacy of the tribal population would be necessary for understanding the cause of illiteracy, poverty and discrimination. The scheduled tribe in India mostly concentrated in hilly, forested area. The distribution of tribal population is closely related to the physical and economic resources of the region. In the area under study the tribal are settled very unevenly and concentrated in the areas having hilly, forested, where they find a favourable environment for their livelihood.

2. Objectives

- The specific objectives of the present research paper are
- i. To analyses the disparity of literacy in the district.
 - ii. To study the disparity of male, female literacy of tribal in the district.
 - iii. To highlight the disparity of literacy during 2001 and 2011.

3. Database and Research Methodology

The present study is mainly based on secondary data, which is collected from District Census Handbook, Census of Maharashtra and Statistical Abstract of Nandurbar district. 2001 and 2011 period is selected for the present study. An attempt has been made to tabulate process, analyze and interpret the data by applying suitable statistical and cartographic techniques. Tehsil wise spatial variation in literacy rates has been shown on maps by using GIS Arc. Literacy rate has been calculated by using the following formula:

$$Literacy\ in\ \% = \frac{Number\ of\ literates(above\ 6\ yrs)}{Total\ Population} \times 100$$

For the measurement of male and female disparity in literacy, Sopher's Disparity Index (1974) modified by Kundu and Rao (1983) has been employed:

$$Ds = \log (X2 / X1) + \log [(100 - X1) / (100 - X2)]$$

Kundu and Rao's modified disparity index formula, as follows:

$$Ds = \log (X2 / X1) + \log [(200 - X1) / (200 - X2)]$$

X2 is considered for male and X1 for female literacy rates.

3.1. Study Region

Nandurbar district was separated from Dhule district on 1st July 1998. It lies between 21° 00' 00" N to 22°00'30" N Latitude and 73°31'00" E to 74°45'30" E Longitude. The district covers a total geographical area of 5955.00 sq. km. It is bounded by Dhule district in the south and east, Gujarat

State in the west and Madhya Pradesh State in the north. Nandurbar district is included in Nashik division. It has 9 towns and 943 villages spread over Akkalkuwa (190), Akrani (Dhadgaon) (162), Talode (93), Shahade (184), Nandurbar (153) and Nawapur (161). According to 2011 Census, the population of Nandurbar district is 1648295 and the population density is 277 persons per sq. km. It has sex ratio favouring in males i.e. 978.

The proportion of scheduled tribe's population to the total population of the district is 69.28 percentages. Majority of the population belongs to tribal communities. The northern and southern tehsils namely Akkalkuwa, Akrani (Dhadgaon) and Nawapur have higher proportion of population belonging to the tribal communities which is 85.25 (Akkalkuwa) and 95.94 (Akrani), 85.52 (Nawapur) percentages respectively (Table No.1). The lower proportion of scheduled tribe population to total population found in Shahade and Nandurbar tehsils which is 54.2 and 45.57 percentages respectively. Nandurbar is one of the least urbanized districts, having 16.7 percent of its population in urban areas where as 45.2 percent of the State Population lives in urban areas. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. The literacy rate of the district is 64.38 percent and scheduled tribes literacy is 55.03 percent which is comparatively lower than the district. The low literacy rates among tribal is common phenomenon. Therefore, the region is selected for the study of literacy rate and disparity occurred in it during the last decade.

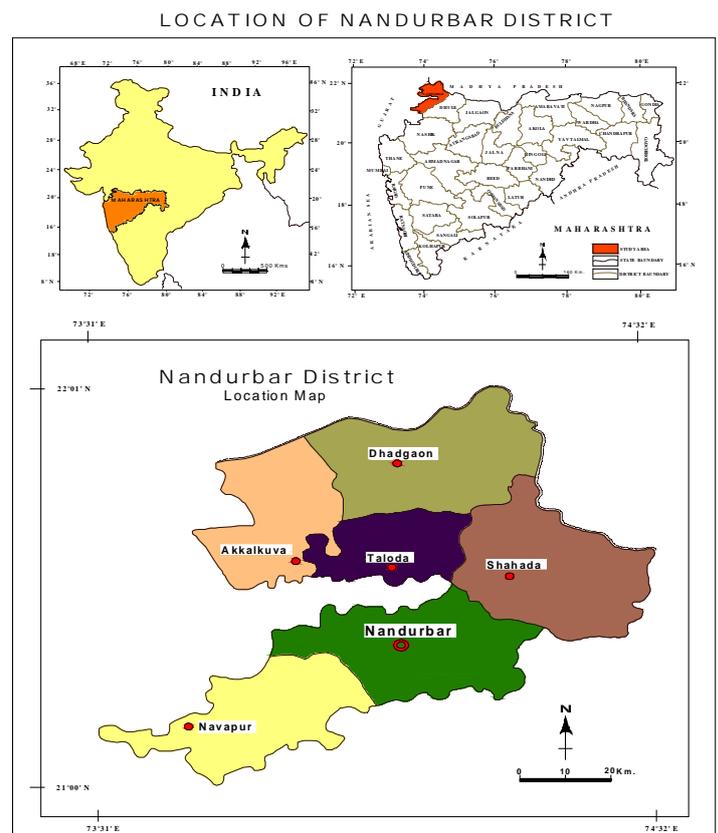


Fig 1: Location map of Nandurbar district.

Table 1: Number and percentage of Scheduled Tribes population in Nandurbar District, 2011

Sr.No.	Name of Tehsils	Total/Rural/Urban	Total population	Total scheduled tribes population	Percentage of scheduled tribes population to total population
1	Akkalkuwa	Total	245861	209586	85.25
		Rural	215974	205810	95.29
		Urban	29887	3776	12.63
2	Akrani	Total	195754	187806	95.94
		Rural	189661	184930	97.51
		Urban	6093	2876	47.2
3	Talode	Total	159654	123634	77.44
		Rural	133291	115378	86.56
		Urban	26363	8256	31.32
4	Shahade	Total	407728	220975	54.2
		Rural	346352	213203	61.56
		Urban	61376	7772	12.66
5	Nandurbar	Total	367446	167431	45.57
		Rural	256409	153774	59.97
		Urban	111037	13657	12.3
6	Nawapur	Total	271852	232501	85.52
		Rural	231134	221207	95.71
		Urban	40718	11294	27.74
District		Total	1648295	1141933	69.28
		Rural	1372821	1094302	79.71
		Urban	275474	47631	17.29

Source: Primary Census Handbooks of Nandurbar District, 2011.

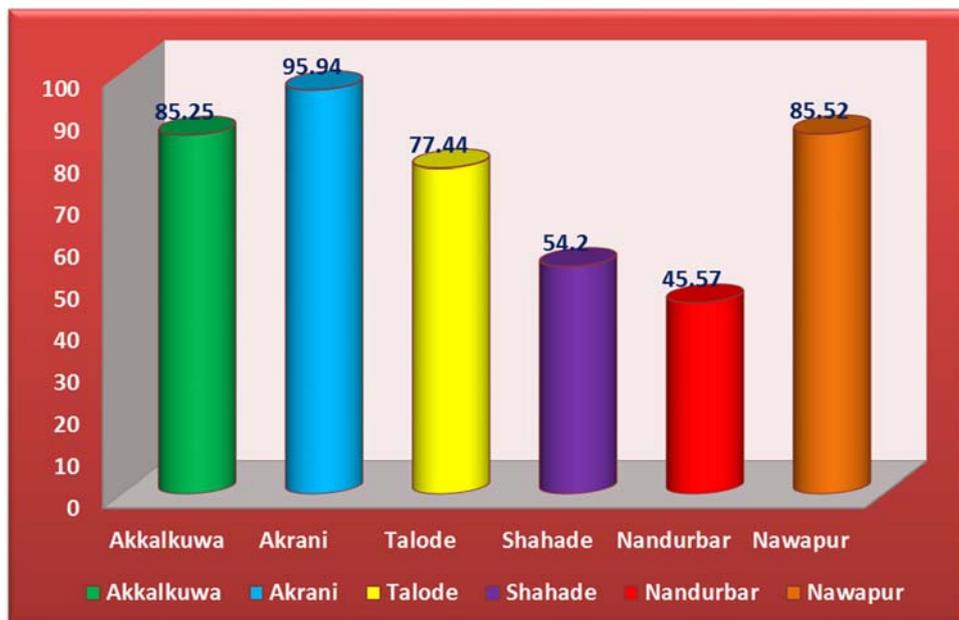


Fig 2: Proportion of Scheduled Tribe population to total population in Nandurbar district, 2011

4. Result and Discussion

Without any analysis of literacy pattern a study of the population of a region is not complete. As per the 2011 Census, the Scheduled Tribes constitute 69.28 percent of the total population of district.

4.1. Trends in Literacy Rate since 2001

The Table No. 2 shows the trends of literacy pattern of the district since 2001. It has been noted that the literacy rate of the scheduled tribe of the total population has been 41.9 percent in 2001, and has further increased up to 55.03 percent during 2011. Similarly, in 2001, 52.3 percent of STs

Males and 31.7 percent of STs Females were found to be literates, which have increased to 63.16 percent and 47.04 percent respectively in 2011. Thus, the literacy pattern shows an increasing trend of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes. This was possible because of the 'national literacy mission' and 'Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan' drive launched by the Government of India, which has created a new scope of immediate awareness to supply the energy for rapid growth of literacy in the country as a whole. However, it is quite surprising to note that, though the literacy rate of the total population is comparatively higher than that of the Scheduled Tribes during the reference period of 2001- 2011,

yet the percentage increase in the growth of literacy rate has been always higher among the Scheduled Tribes population. This could be because of the “**Reservation Policy**” introduced by **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**, which might have provided several opportunities to these socially backward classes in the field of education.

4.2. Literacy Rate: Tehsil Level Patterns (2001-2011)

In 2001, the literacy rate among the scheduled Tribe population for Nandurbar district stood around 41.9 percent. As per 2001 census, the literacy rate among the scheduled Tribe population is as high as 47.4 percent in the Nawapur tehsil and as low as 37.1 percent in Shahade tehsil. In fact, the Table No: 2 shows that most of the tehsils of Nandurbar district, e.g. Talode and Nandurbar tehsils have recorded literacy rate higher than the district average which have 44.8 percent and 43.8 percent respectively. On the other hand, the tehsils like Akkalkuwa and Akrani have shown literacy rate lower than the district average, ranging from 37.5 percent to 40 percent, in case of scheduled tribe population.

There has been always a notable gap between male and female literacy rates of STs in the Nation and the State. The study region is also not apart from that. As expected the literacy rate among STs male is higher than the literacy rate

of females. The male literacy rate for the region in 2001 was 52.3 percent. There were spatial variations in different tehsils. During the year 2011, this literacy rate was 63.16 percent for the male. Except Akkalkuwa, Talode, Nandurbar and Nawapur tehsils, the study region has reported male literacy more than 60 percent. Akrani and Shahade tehsils have male literacy rates 59.17 percent and 58.96 percent respectively.

The low female literacy rate is a crucial problem in the country and it is more crucial in the study region. The proportion of STs females literates to total ST population in the year 2001 was only 31.7 percent. It was less than 30 percent in Akkalkuwa and Shahade tehsil while more than 30 percent STs females literacy was found in Nandurbar, Talode, Akrani and Nawapur tehsils. The female literacy rate is 47.04 percent in the year 2011. Despite of many efforts taken by the governmental and nongovernment agencies, the proportion of female literate is only 39.33 percent in Shahade tehsils. It suggests that more than half of the total females in the population can read and write. Akkalkuwa tehsil has high female literacy while Akrani, Talode, Nandurbar and Nawapur tehsils have female literacy rates between 40 and 50 percent.

Table 2: Males and females Disparity Index of scheduled tribes (2001-2011)

Sr. No	Name of Tehsils	Percentages of Literates						Males & Females Disparity Index	
		2001			2011			2001	2011
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females		
1	Akkalkuwa	37.5	46.7	28.5	58.15	64.93	51.41	0.34	0.24
2	Akrani	40	46.0	34.0	52.49	59.17	45.85	0.22	0.23
3	Talode	44.8	56.0	33.7	59.19	67.59	51.01	0.40	0.30
4	Shahade	37.1	49.6	24.5	49.07	58.96	39.33	0.48	0.35
5	Nandurbar	43.8	56.5	31.5	54.45	63.95	45.23	0.45	0.33
6	Nawapur	47.4	57.7	37.2	55.38	63.54	47.44	0.36	0.29
District		41.9	52.3	31.7	55.03	63.16	47.04	0.37	0.29

Source: Primary Census Handbooks of Nandurbar District, 2001 & 2011.

4.3. Spatial Analysis of Disparity Index (2001-2011)

The existence of literacy gap among the scheduled tribe population in Nandurbar district as envisaged in Table No: 2, triggers the need to study the extent of male-female disparity in literacy level.

4.4. Male-Female Disparity (2001-2011)

The most pronounced differentiation in educational opportunity in Indian society is probably ‘sex’ (Gore, 2004) [3]. This is because the Indian society is mainly characterized by male chauvinism; where the females are not only degraded but also deprived of the right of study (Romatar, 1988)[5]. In fact, both the scheduled as well as the non-scheduled population in India have witnessed wide gender disparity in terms of literacy rate. The disparity in male-female literacy rate has been grouped into three categories i.e. high, moderate and low disparity index.

i) High Disparity in Male-Female Literacy (Above 0.40 Disparity Index)

As per 2001 census, only the Nandurbar and Shahde tehsils have shown high level of gender disparity index among the scheduled tribe literacy, ranging from 0.45 to 0.48. During 2011, high level of male-female disparity index in literacy is not observed in the tehsils of Nandurbar district. It is great sign of improving in gender literacy rate of the district.

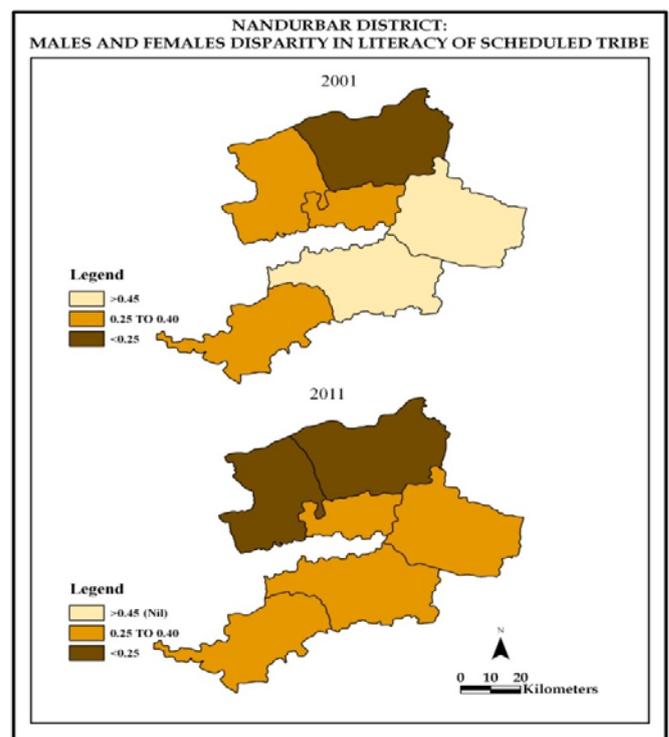


Fig 3: Males and females disparity index of scheduled tribes in Nandurbar district

ii) Moderate Disparity in Male-Female Literacy (0.25-0.40 Disparity Index)

In 2001, the Akkalkuwa (0.34), Talode (0.40) and Nawapur (0.36) tehsils have reported moderate level of gender disparity in literacy rate for the scheduled tribe population. During 2011, the Talode (0.30), Shahade (0.35), Nandurbar (0.33) and Nawapur (0.29) tehsils have been also added to acquire this category.

iii) Low Disparity in Male-Female Literacy (Less than 0.25 Disparity Index)

During 2001, the Akrani tehsil (0.22) have shown low sex-disparity in literacy rate among the scheduled tribe population. In 2011, the Akkalkuwa (0.24) and Akrani (0.23) were added to this category. Therefore, the Fig No. 3 clearly depicts that, the gender disparity in literacy rate has narrowed down over the time period of 2001-2011, for the scheduled tribe population. The study shows that in 2001, majority of the tehsils in Nandurbar district have shown high gender disparity in literacy among the scheduled tribe population. Moreover, the study shows that, apart from a few exceptions, the male-female disparity ratio in literacy rate is always higher among the scheduled tribe population. This is probably because the female members of these socially backward and tribal classes are mostly engaged in the traditional works like daily household activities, looking after their children and other family members etc. from very early ages which do not require any sort of formal education. The main problems faced by the females of the scheduled tribe population are absence of women teachers of their own community, in-conducive socio-economic environment, early marriage, prejudices against their mobility, excessive involvement in the household chores, inadequate transport facilities and toilet facilities etc thereby accentuating the gender disparity in literacy rate among the scheduled tribe population (Karlekar, 1983)^[4].

5. Conclusion

Thus this paper provides an insight into the existing pattern of the literacy rate and the levels of disparity, both male-female among the scheduled tribe population of Nandurbar district. The analysis depicts that the proportion of literates among the scheduled tribe population has been showing an increasing trend over the past two decades. In fact, though the literacy gaps have declined from 2001 to 2011. The low literacy rate among the scheduled tribe in the study region is the result of physiographical and socio-economic peculiar character of the study region. The region is mountainous and thus has limited accessibility. This retards socio-economic development of the society. And finally, it has resulted in low literacy rate. However, some increase has been reported during the last decade in the total literacy of the region. Low female literacy is crucial problem in the study region. But, the last decade has shown considerable increase. It is a good sign. The increase is more appreciable in Akkalkuwa and Akrani tehsils which is more tribal in character. Literacy rate of scheduled tribe is very low and it is more so among scheduled tribe females. The disparity in literacy is more among the scheduled tribe. The gender disparity between literacy of males and females is also very high.

Suggestions

Therefore, it is suggested that the government has to take special measures like opening of schools in each habitations in remote rural and tribal areas, provision of incentives

schemes for scheduled tribe girls, appointment of teachers in schools having without teachers.

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