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Literacy disparity, a block wise analysis of Paschim Medinipur, District of West Bengal

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Abstract

Economical development of a society is strongly dependent on few socio-economic factors. Among them literacy most probably the most indispensable one. Developed countries are become developed because of their high literacy rate among both male and female and in case of underdeveloped countries the situation is vice-versa. Therefore, literacy is the decisive factor for development and population control and inequality in literacy leads to various socio-economic problems. Despite our governments trying to erase the disparity in literacy between male and female, women are still far behind and there exist a large gender bias in the study area. Hence, through the present paper we have tried to evaluate the literacy disparity between male and female.

To analyse the gender-disparity rate of 21 block of Paschim Medinipur, we consider the total literacy rate of the study area during 2001 to 2011. The gender disparity in the levels of literacy has been found with the help of Gender Disparity Index (after David Sopher, 1980). We have observed the blocks namely-Pingla, Sabang, Chandrakona-I Daspur-I, Daspur-II (2001) has lower rate of literacy disparity, where the others show either medium or high literacy disparity. We also calculated the changing rate of literacy disparity during 2001 to 2011. We also tried to find out the major findings from the survey and reasons behind the literacy disparity.

Keywords: Literacy, socio-economic, underdeveloped countries, gender-disparity, literacy disparity

Introduction

The HDI considers three indicators of human development, namely-life expectancy, education and per capita income. As we all know education is a fundamental right of human being, such as food, shelter and cloth. As a part of education literacy plays prominent role to eradicating poverty, controlling population growth rate and accentuate the economical development of a country is strongly dependent on the rate of literacy of this country. But literacy disparity weakens every sector (economic, socio-cultural, science and technology) of this country. Many researchers, policy makers and academicians believe that literacy is the starting point for development (Pattison 1982, Street-1984).

As per details, census of India-2011, India achieved only 74.04% literacy rate, where male literacy rate was 82.14% and female literacy rate was 65.46%. As a state of India total literacy rate of West Bengal (2011) was 76.26%, where male and female literacy rate was 81.69% and 70.54% respectively. Among the districts of West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur stands seventh (76.26%) in which male and female literacy rate was 81.69% and 70.54% respectively.

A family surrounds around a woman and a woman leads a family to either on the way to development or to the way of destruction. So, it is necessary to literate every woman along with man to make our life and our country's bright future.

Location

Undivided Medinipur was the largest district in West Bengal and one of the largest districts of India spanning 14,081 sq. kms. The district was divided into two-Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur on 1st January, 2002. The Paschim Medinipur district was further divided into two-Paschim Medinipur and Jhargram on the 4th April, 2017. The latitudinal extension of Paschim Medinipur is 24° 47' N to 23° 00' N and longitudinal extension is 86° 40' E to 87° 52' E. Presently the total area of the district is 6,308 sq. kms. and a population of over 51.93 lakh (Census-2011). It is located in the South-West part of West Bengal.

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It is surrounded by Bankura in the North, State of Odissa in the South, Howrah, Hoogly and Purba Medinipur in the East and Jhargram in the West.

Objectives

1. To find out the literacy disparity between male and female.
2. To explore the change of literacy disparity between 2001 and 2011.
3. To find out the reasons behind the literacy disparity.

Data base and research methodology

Our research work is exclusively based on secondary data. The secondary data has been derived from Census of India-2001 and 2011 and relevant information that we collected from various magazine and district statistical handbooks of Paschim Medinipur, articles etc.

The gender disparity rate has been calculated with the help of the following method (after David Sopher-1980).

$$GDI = \text{Log} \frac{X_2}{X_1} + \text{Log} \frac{200-X_1}{200-X_2}$$

Where, $X_2 > X_1$.

GDI = Gender Disparity Index.

X_2 = % of male literacy.

X_1 = % of female literacy.

Here X_2 implies as female literacy rate where X_1 as male literacy rate, because male literacy rate is generally more than that of the female literacy rate. And Log used to reducing the levelling of effect. The value of GDI is always remains between +1 and -1. At the ideal case the value of index should be 0 and it is value negative then there has no disparity and vice-versa.

Result and Discussion

Literacy disparity is one of the major socio-economic issues of the world that is also found in the major portion of our country. Our study area is no exception, Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal is also suffer from literacy disparity. As our society is patriarchal, womens' education is not given special importance here. However, our governments has launched various programmes and policies to increase womens' education.

From the Table No. 1 we found that total literacy rate was 69.83% in the 2001, which increase to 78.44% (12.33%) in 2011. And the growth rate of male literacy rate was 5.29% (2001-2011). But the most interesting fact is that during the last decade (2001-2011) female literacy rate was increased significantly 15.68% (2001-2011). Accordingly the disparity was 0.1642 in the year 2001 and in 2011 it came down to 0.1221.

Table 1: Gender Disparity index (GDI) in literacy rate and changing rate of literacy disparity during 2001 to 2011

Blocks	% of Literacy to the total Population of Paschim Medinipur-2001				% of Literacy to the total Population of Paschim Medinipur-2011				Changing rate of GDI (in%)
	Total Literacy Rate (in %)	Male Literacy Rate (%) X_2	Female Literacy Rate (%) X_1	Gender disparity index (GDI)	Total Literacy Rate (in %)	Male Literacy Rate (%) X_2	Female Literacy Rate (%) X_1	Gender disparity index (GDI)	
Dantan-i	66.25	78.80	53.70	0.1900	73.57	82.02	64.82	0.1231	35.21
Dantan-ii	73.40	84.80	62.70	0.1507	82.45	89.07	75.48	0.0890	40.94
Pingla	78.45	88.00	68.40	0.1354	83.57	90.22	76.57	0.0896	33.82
Kharagpur-i	66.45	78.20	54.70	0.1778	77.06	84.91	61.87	0.1618	10.00
Kharagpur-ii	67.20	78.90	55.50	0.1756	76.08	83.71	59.63	0.1718	02.16
Sabang	78.30	87.30	67.30	0.1478	86.84	93.16	80.15	0.0835	43.50
Mohonpur	74.95	85.90	64.00	0.1518	80.51	87.65	72.95	0.0986	35.04
Narayangarh	70.35	81.70	59.00	0.1646	78.18	85.84	62.36	0.1636	00.61
Keshiari	66.95	78.70	55.20	0.1774	76.78	84.39	68.98	0.1064	40.02
Debra	73.00	83.90	62.10	0.1540	81.64	88.34	74.79	0.0902	41.42
Medinipur	59.75	71.70	47.80	0.1970	70.48	78.43	62.24	0.1187	39.75
Garhbeta-i	63.95	74.90	53.00	0.1712	72.21	78.8	65.35	0.0974	43.11
Garhbeta-ii	66.35	78.80	54.00	0.1869	75.87	84.14	67.41	0.1161	37.88
Garhbeta-iii	64.95	75.90	54.00	0.1691	73.42	80.03	58.25	0.1602	5.26
Keshpur	66.70	78.90	54.50	0.1839	77.88	83.97	60.86	0.1639	10.88
Salboni	64.75	77.30	52.20	0.1935	74.87	82.89	66.70	0.1135	41.44
Chandrakona-i	70.40	80.30	60.50	0.1441	78.93	85.00	72.53	0.0851	40.94
Chandrakona-ii	66.30	76.30	56.30	0.1523	76.96	83.09	70.49	0.0874	42.61
Daspur-i	74.80	85.10	64.50	0.1433	83.99	90.74	68.25	0.1494	-4.26
Daspur-ii	79.95	89.20	70.70	0.1234	85.62	91.71	70.99	0.1360	-11.02
Ghatal	73.40	84.70	62.10	0.1588	81.08	88.16	64.71	0.1598	-0.63
Mean Value	69.83	81.00	58.67	0.1642	78.44	85.53	67.87	0.1221	25.17

Source: Census of India

Table 2: Categorisation of literacy rate, Paschim Medinipur-2001

GDI Range	Name of Blocks	Total Number of Blocks
Low (<0.1479)	Pingla, Sabang, Chandrakona-I, Daspur-I, Daspur-II	5
Medium (0.1479-0.1724)	Dantan-II, Mohanpur, Narayangarh, Debra, Garhbeta-I, Garhbeta-III, Ghatal, Chandrakona-II	8
High (>0.1724)	Dantan-I, Kharagpur-I, Kharagpur-II, Keshiyari, Medinipur, Garhbeta-III, Keshpur, Salboni	8

Table 3: Categorisation of literacy rate, Paschim Medinipur-2011

GDI Range	Name Of Blocks	Total Number of Blocks
Low (<0.1112)	Dantan-ii, Pingla, Sabang, Mohanpur, Keshiyari, Debra, Garhbeta-i, Chandrakona-i, Chandrakona-ii	9
Medium (0.1112-0.1389)	Dantan-I, Medinipur, Garhbeta-ii, Salboni, Daspur-ii	5
High (>0.1389)	Kharagpur-i, Kharagpur-ii, Narayangarh, Keshpur, Garhbeta-iii, Daspur-i, Ghatal	7

A. Blocks of high disparity

From Table No. 1 we have come to know that every block of Paschim Medinipur has a considerable amount of literacy desparity. And from Table No. 2 and 3 we identified that in the year 2001 total number of 8 blocks belonged to high disparity (>0.1724) rate. These blocks are Dantan-[, Kharagpur-[, Kharagpur-IL, Keshiyari, Medinipur, Garhbeta -II, Keshpur, Salboni. And in 2011 there were seven blocks which detained as a high disparity (>0.1389) blocks. Blocks like Kharagpur-[, Kharagpur-II, Narayangarh, Garhbeta-III, Keshpur, Daspur-[, Ghatal etc.

B. Blocks of medium disparity

From both Table No. 2 and Table No. 3 we findout medium gender disparity. In 2001 we identified eight blocks of

medium gender disparity, these are like-Dantan-II, Mohanpur, Narayangarh, Debra, Garhbeta-[, Garhbeta-II, Chandrakona-II, Ghatal are belongs to medium gender disparity. And in 2001 we also detained five districts of medium gender disparity, which are-Dantan-I, Midnapur, Garhbeta-II, Salboni and Daspur.

C. Blocks of low disparity

In 2001, low gender disparity (< 0.1479) was observed mainly-Pingla, Sabang, Chandrakona, Daspur-[, Daspur-II blocks only.

And in 2011, we also find out nine blocks which belongs to low gender disparity fate. These blocks are-Dantan-II, Pingla, Sabang, Mohanpur, Keshiyari, Debra, Garhbeta-[, Chadrakona-I, Chandrakona-II, etc.

Table 4: Changing rate of literacy disparity during-2001-2011

Changing rate of Literacy Disparity	Name of Blocks	Total Number of Blocks
Low (< 20%)	Kharagpur-i, Kharagpur-ii, Narayangarh, Garhbeta-iii, Keshpur, Daspur-i, Daspur-ii, Ghatal	8
Medium (20%-40%)	Dantan-i, Pingla, Mohanpur, Midnapur, Garhbeta-ii	5
High (> 40%)	Dantan-IL, Sabang, Keshiyari, Debra, Garhbeta-I, Salboni, Chandrakona-I, Chandrakona-II.	8

Table No. 4 shows the changing rate of literacy disparity during 2001 to 2011. The overall changing rate of literacy disparity is 25.17 from 2001 to 2011. We have tried to explain the changing literacy disparity rate on the basis of three groups. These are-

1. Lower changing rate of literacy disparity (< 20%)

In these category there has total eight blocks in which five blocks shows negative change in literacy disparity and remaining three blocks uphold positive change in literacy disparity. The blocks which recorded as decrease in literacy disparity is Kharagpur-[, Kharagpur-II, Narayangarh, Garhbeta-III, Keshpur, etc. And the blocks which recorded as increase in literacy disparity is Daspur-[, Daspur-I, Ghatal. It is a serious concern to the government and population geographer to the increasing rate of population disparity rate.

2. Medium changing rate of literacy disparity-(20%-40%)

Table No. 4 shows the medium changing literacy disparity during 2001 to 2011. There are five blocks which are-Dantan-[, Pingla, Mohanpur, Midnapur, Garhbeta-II. These blocks shows a decreasing rate of literacy disparity, which provides a level of satisfaction to the government and population geographers.

3. High changing rate of literacy disparity-> 40%)

Remaining eight community development blocks of Paschim Medinipur district has demarcated as the higher decrease rate of literacy disparity during 2001 to 2011. These blocks are-Dantan-I[, Sabang, Keshiyari, Debra, Garhbeta-[, Salboni, Chandrakona-[, Chandrakona-II. This

trend of change seems to indicate that in the near future the literacy disparity will completely faded away.

The above analysis reveals that

1. The literacy rate in Paschim Medinipur district recorded a quantum jump during 2001-2011.
2. The change incase of female literacy rates was much more pronounced than those incase of male literacy rate.
3. There were block to block variation in the quantum of change in literacy rates.
4. The most backward blocks like-Kharagpur-[, Kharagpur-II, Daspur-[, Daspur-II, Keshpur, Narayangarh, Garhbeta-III and Salboni either recorded as the highest male-female literacy disparity rate or higher decrease rate of literacy disparity or both.
5. It is more satisfying to find that the block to block disparities in literacy rate has narrowed down during 2001 to 2011.
6. We found that the female literacy rates had improved significantly in almost all blocks of Paschim Medinipur.
7. However, three blocks of Paschim Medinipur districts namely-Daspur-[, Daspur-II and Ghatal shows the reverse trend of Gender Disparity Index.

Reasons behind gender disparity in literacy

1. **Gender based inequality:** Our patriarchal society trace more importance on male literacy than women. They thought that women are only good for housework.
2. **Social discrimination and economic exploitation:** It is another reason for literally backwardness of females of this district.
3. **The occupation of girl child in domestic chores:** It is a tradition of this district that the girl child will work in

domestic chores, so they don't have a need for education.

4. **The low enrollment of girls in school:** From various survey it is found that the enrollment rate of girls in schools are lower than boys.
5. **Low retention rate and high dropout rate:** For various socio-economic reasons retention rate of girl students is lower than boys and their dropout rate is also higher than boys.
6. **Child marriage:** Child marriage is another reason for lower literacy rate of girls than boys.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that our study area witnessed increase in literacy rate from 69.83% (2001) to 78.44% (2011). But we observed that there has a wide gap between the literacy rate of male and female. In 2001 the total literacy rate of Paschim Medinipur was 69.83%, which increase 78.44% in 2011. There has a positive correlation between literacy and the socio-economic condition of the study area, but we also observed a negative correlation between the literacy disparity and socio-economic condition.

Higher the literacy disparity lower the socio-economic development and lower the literacy disparity higher the socio-economic development.

We also observed that literacy rate of female growing faster than male literacy rate, which narrowed the gap between male and female literacy rate. This is a good sign for socio-economic development of the area.

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