

# Literacy in Scheduled Caste Population: An Inter-State Analysis

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**Abstract – Scheduled caste refers to caste falling in the scheduled category. Caste acquired a new meaning in India after Independence. With the introduction of reservation policy in 1950, a large number of caste groups were assigned the status of scheduled castes, done on the basis of a scheduling policy which has been evolving since 1950. The list of scheduled castes for various states and union territories notified under the provision of the Indian Constitution (Article 341) or supplemented from time to time. Scheduled caste, as defined by the Constitution in 1950, included all the people covered under the category of Sudras and other castes that too had suffered similar neglect in the past and had remained backward.**

**Key Words: Literacy, Scheduled Caste, Inter-State Analysis**

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## INTRODUCTION

The scheduled caste population, comprising of about one-sixth of the country's total population (16.63 per cent) lags behind the rest of the population in terms of literacy and education. The Census of 2011 is revealed that only 66.07 per cent scheduled caste population is literate. The relatively low rate of literacy in scheduled caste population have been the outcome of their age-old association with menial jobs, long history of their neglect, deprivations, social injustice, long spells of social and economic segregation in terms of residence, worship, education and occupation, poverty, lack of awareness, superstitions, long duration of cultural apathy towards their piousness, spiritual purity and cleanliness, adverse attitude of princely states towards their welfare and the age-old tradition of physical and residential isolation.

Almost 72 per cent of rural Scheduled Castes population resides in the seven states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The gender differences in literacy have still existed in all social classes. The literacy of females among SCs has been growing faster than that of STs. The backwardness of the states is also reflected in literacy levels. In states like Assam, Bihar, Kerala, and Uttarakhand, the literacy rates among Scheduled Castes are very close.

The distributions of Scheduled Castes population by percentage in India in 2011 stated that Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana are among the top five states in India. The

range of Scheduled Castes total population is 20 - 32 percent in these states. The bottom five states/UTs by the percentage of Scheduled Castes population are Mizoram, Meghalaya, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. The highest percentage of Scheduled Castes population is found in Punjab state (31.9 per cent), where nearly one-third of the total population belongs to Scheduled Castes communities and the lowest is in Mizoram (0.1 per cent).

In states Punjab has the highest percentage of Scheduled Castes (31.9 per cent) while in Union Territory Chandigarh recorded the highest percentage of Scheduled Castes population (17.5 per cent), Dadra Nagar and Haveli have the lowest percentage of Scheduled Castes population (1.9 per cent). In the state, Mizoram (0.03 per cent) has the lowest percentage of the population in India in 2011

Not only this, the ancient lawmakers had pleaded sharply against the education of the downtrodden. Apastamba, had clearly stated in Dharmasutra that 'Sudra' trying to hear the Vedic text should have his ears filled with molten tin or lac, if he recited the Veda, his tongue should be cut off and if he assumed a position of equality with twice-born men either in sitting, conversing or even going along the road, he should receive corporal punishment (Ghurya, 1957). Manu, in the Hindu

Codes of life had also stressed on the strict adherence of the four-fold division of society on the basis of occupation. They were not found eligible for education since they were required to do the menial jobs. The task of learning remained the

privilege of priestly and business classes for whom reading and writing was an occupational necessity (Gosal, 1964). These castes form an integral part of the social structure of the regions. Their habitation is dependent on the higher castes and with the advent of the agrarian mode of production, these caste groups, not only associated with agriculture as suppliers of labor but also became a phenomenon of the peasant society and therefore, a rural phenomenon.

Due to such a background that there exists a wide gap in the literacy rates of the scheduled caste and the population of all categories.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To represent the spatial pattern of literacy of Scheduled Caste population at the district level in India
2. To identify the gender disparities in Scheduled Caste population literacy rate in India

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, data have collected from Census of India 2001, Social and Cultural Tables, Table C- 8. Census of India 2011 for showing the trend of literacy and gap between urban-rural literacy as well as the spatial pattern of literacy and disparity between urban-rural literacy at the district level. Data have been collected and tabulated analysed keeping district as a unit of study. To show the spatial pattern maps have been prepared with the help of Arc GIS software.

### Quantitate Analysis

Census of India adopted the formula for calculating the level of literacy rate is as under:

$$\text{Literacy Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Literate Population}}{\text{Total Population} - (0-6 \text{ aged groups})} * 100$$

To calculate urban-rural differential in literacy rate the formula of Krishna & Shyam (1978) has been used. The differential has been measured as under:

$$ID = \frac{U-R}{T}$$

Whereas,

ID = Index of urban-rural differential

U = Percent of literate in urban population

R = Percent of literate in rural population

T = Percent of literate in total population

Classes are based on Jenks method. Punjab average and standard deviation have also calculated to see the disparities within the state.

Note: Disparity is computed as the coefficient of variability

### Standard Deviation

$$\text{Coefficient of Variance (CV)} = \frac{\text{Standard Deviation}}{\text{Mean}} \times 100$$

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

In the 19th and 20th century, many philosophers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Mahatma Gandhi made serious efforts for the upliftment of the downtrodden of our society (Kuppuswami, 1984). During the post-Independence period, the growth of urbanization and industrialization, means of transportation and communication, made a humble beginning by breaking the social and cultural isolation.

The Untouchability Offence Act of 1955, successive constitutional safeguards (Articles, 15(2), 16, 17, 19, 156, 469, 330, and 345) and the Protective Discrimination Scheme (D'Souza, 1980) has also made a great contribution for the upliftment of downtrodden. Such measures provide special facilities as reservation of seats in the parliament, State legislation and local bodies, budget allocation for their social and economic progress

**Table 1.1**

India: Literacy Rate in Scheduled Caste Population (2011) (In Percent)				
Country/ State/Union Territory	Person	Male	Female	Value of Gender Disparity Index
India	66.07	75.17	56.46	0.18
<b>State</b>				
Mizoram	92.43	93.08	91.04	0.02
Tripura	89.45	92.78	85.98	0.06
Kerala	88.73	92.64	85.07	0.07
Goa	83.73	89.9	77.69	0.11
Maharashtra	79.66	87.18	71.89	0.14
Gujarat	79.18	87.87	69.87	0.16
Himachal Pradesh	78.92	86.23	71.46	0.13
Sikkim	77.54	82.8	72.04	0.10
Assam	76.99	83.17	70.45	0.12
Manipur	76.69	83.93	69.46	0.13
Uttarakhand	74.41	84.34	64.05	0.19
Tamil Nadu	73.26	80.94	65.64	0.14
Chhattisgarh	70.76	81.66	59.86	0.21
Jammu & Kashmir	70.16	78.79	60.67	0.17
West Bengal	69.43	77.22	61.23	0.15
Odisha	69.02	79.21	58.76	0.20
Meghalaya	68.57	74.89	61.43	0.13
Haryana	66.85	75.93	56.65	0.19
Madhya Pradesh	66.16	76.72	54.7	0.22
Karnataka	65.33	74.03	56.58	0.17
Punjab	64.81	70.66	58.39	0.12
Andhra Pradesh	62.28	70.23	54.44	0.16
Uttar Pradesh	60.89	71.77	48.87	0.24
Rajasthan	59.75	73.77	44.63	0.31
Jharkhand	55.89	66.94	44.2	0.25
Bihar	48.65	57.97	38.46	0.23
<b>Union Territory</b>				
Daman & Diu	92.56	96.79	88.09	0.08
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	89.42	93.11	85.03	0.07
Nct Of Delhi	78.89	86.77	70.01	0.15
Puducherry	77.9	85.22	71.05	0.13
Chandigarh	76.45	83.57	68.27	0.14

**Source:** Primary Census Abstract, Scheduled Caste Table, Census of India, 2011.

Literacy rate in scheduled caste population has remarkably increased after independence. It has increased six times during the last fifty years (Table 2.2) however; it is below almost seven per cent from all India average of all categories' population. When we analysis state-wise, we find that Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Lakshadweep, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands do not contain scheduled caste population, as well as 609 districts, contain scheduled caste population out of total 640 districts.

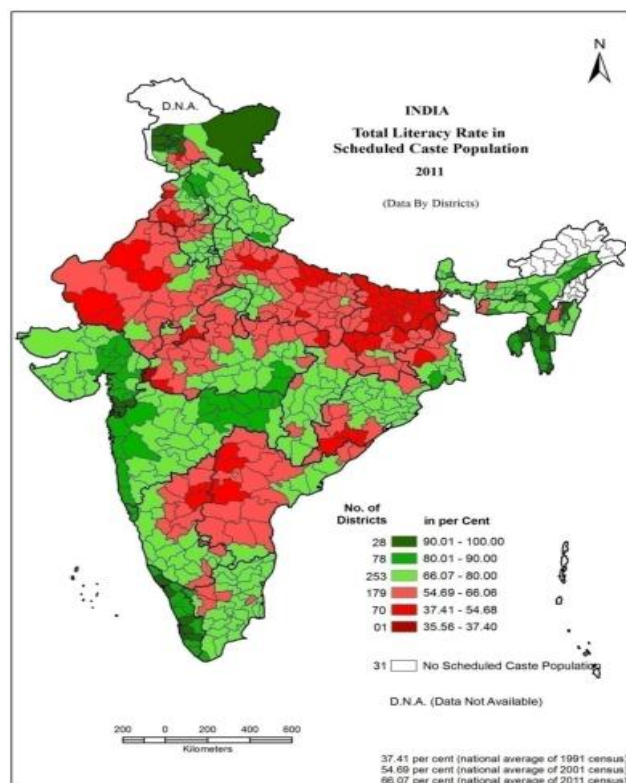
Mizoram with 92.43 per cent occupies the first position among the states, followed by Tripura (89.45 per cent), Kerala (88.73 per cent), Goa (83.73 per cent), Maharashtra (79.66 per cent), Gujarat (79.18 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (78.92 per cent) while Bihar (48.65 per cent), Jharkhand (55.89 per cent), Rajasthan (59.75 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (60.89 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (62.28 per cent) have low literacy rate. Among the union territories, the literacy rate is the highest in Daman & Diu (92.56 per cent) and lowest in Chandigarh (76.45 per cent).

The remarkable increase is recorded in some states during last decade such as Bihar (20.18 per cent), Jharkhand (18.33 per cent), Tripura (14.77 per cent),

Uttar Pradesh (14.62 per cent), Sikkim (14.50 per cent) and Odisha (13.49 per cent) while all India average is remaining 11.38 per cent during same decade. When we analysis district wise; Pulwama and Shupiyani districts of Jammu & Kashmir, Senapati district of Manipur and Serchhip district of Mizoram has recorded 100 per cent literacy rate. Other districts which have high literacy; are such as Kupwara (99.52 per cent), Bandipore (99.48 per cent), Baramula (98.11 per cent), Anantnag (98.79 per cent), Srinagar (98.76 per cent) and Badgam (96.99 per cent) districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

On the other hand; lowest literacy rate is found in Alirajpur district (35.56 per cent) of Madhya Pradesh followed by Madhepura (38.14 per cent), Saharsa (38.20 per cent), Sitamarhi (38.65 per cent), Sheohar (39.70 per cent), Nawada (40.02 per cent) and Purina (40.04 per cent) districts of Bihar, Balrampur district (40.41 per cent) of Uttar Pradesh, Araria district (40.58 per cent) of Bihar as well as Shrawasti district (40.92 per cent) of Uttar Pradesh.

Figure 3.8 shows that 250 districts out of 609 districts contain low literacy rate from the national average of 2011 census. Regional variation also exists. Southern part of Jammu & Kashmir, south Punjab, western Haryana, large area of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, western part of West Bengal, Rajasthan, northern and western districts of Madhya Pradesh, southern parts of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, north-east part of Karnataka as well as border area of Karnataka And Tamil Nadu contain low literacy.



## Inter-State and Intra-State disparity in Literacy

In 2011 Census, the inter-state disparity in literacy is found 14.38 per cent at the national level which was 19.90 per cent in 2001. In term of intra-state disparity, the highest disparity is found in Jammu & Kashmir (20.37 per cent) followed by Punjab (17.06 per cent), Manipur (14.26 per cent), Bihar (13.25 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (12.14 per cent).

**Table 1.2**

Inter-State and Intra-State Disparity in Literacy in Scheduled Caste Population: 2001-2011 (In Percent)			
Country/State/Union Territory	2001	2011	Reduction in Disparity 2001-11
India	19.90	14.38	5.52
<b>States</b>			
Manipur	30.20	14.26	15.95
Bihar	25.76	13.25	12.51
Punjab	25.35	17.06	08.30
Jharkhand	25.10	11.16	13.94
Jammu & Kashmir	25.08	20.37	04.71
Uttar Pradesh	19.55	11.57	07.97
Andhra Pradesh	17.04	10.81	06.23
Karnataka	16.38	11.61	04.77
Odisha	15.84	10.81	05.03
Madhya Pradesh	15.46	12.14	03.33
Meghalaya	15.43	9.43	06.00
West Bengal	14.99	11.62	03.37
Rajasthan	14.01	09.73	04.28
Haryana	13.95	08.83	05.12
Gujarat	12.98	08.74	04.24
Chhattisgarh	11.85	08.03	03.82
Tamil Nadu	11.60	08.54	03.06
Sikkim	10.66	06.10	04.56
Assam	09.86	07.85	02.01
Maharashtra	09.18	06.98	02.20
Uttarakhand	08.30	05.11	03.20
Himachal Pradesh	08.01	05.44	02.57
Mizoram	07.27	05.88	01.39
Kerala	07.27	04.31	02.95
Tripura	03.76	01.80	01.96
Goa	0.48	0.07	0.41
Arunachal Pradesh	15.58	-	-
Nagaland	-	-	-
<b>Union Territories</b>			
Puducherry	13.10	07.59	05.52
Daman & Diu	06.31	03.91	02.40
NCT of Delhi	02.87	02.40	0.46
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-
Chandigarh	-	-	-
Lakshadweep	-	-	-
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-

Source: Calculated from; Primary Census Abstract, Scheduled Caste Table, Census of India, 2001 and 2011.

On the other hand, the lowest disparity is recorded by Goa (0.07 per cent) followed by Tripura (1.8 per cent), Kerala (4.31 per cent), Uttarakhand (5.11 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (5.44 per cent) and Mizoram (5.88 per cent). Among the union territories, the lowest disparity is noticed in NCT of Delhi (2.40 per cent) while height disparity is found in Puducherry (7.59 per cent).

When we see the status from 2001 to 2011; the disparity is decreased by 5.52 per cent at the national level. Spatially, an impressive decline in

intra-state disparity is noticed in Manipur (15.95 per cent), Jharkhand (13.94 per cent), Bihar (12.51 per cent), Punjab (8.3 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (7.97 per cent).

## CONCLUSION

Scheduled caste populations have very little disparity in literacy level in Mizoram, Tripura and Kerala. Arunachal Pradesh had scheduled caste population in 2001 but there is no scheduled caste in 2011. The disparity in scheduled caste population have very in norther plain or Gangetic plain region such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and Jharkhand. In the northwestern region likewise Punjab, Haryana, and Jammu & Kashmir have moderate level disparity.

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