

# Spatial Pattern of Literacy in Punjab: Rural – Urban Differential

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**Abstract – Educational attainment is essential for the development of any nation. It enables the persons to know their environments and also transforms the mirror of the society. Literacy rate is one of the vital indicators for the measurement of the development of the society. In the 21st century, society who is well educated equipped with bundle of information, attitudes and computer skills is essential. The present paper is an attempt to study the trends and patterns and their differentials of rural and urban in terms of literacy. Punjab in the terms of education status shows a better picture with the literacy rate of 76.68% as per 2011 census. The rank of Punjab is dropped down from 16th position 2001 to 21st position at all India ranking of literacy in 2011. In this paper the urban-rural differentials in literacy are measured out which shows the large differentials.**

**Keywords: Literacy, Rural, Urban, Literacy Differentials**

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## INTRODUCTION

Literacy creates a vital role for social and economic development of a society. Literacy enhances the cultural and socio-economic development of the region. It helps in developing bond ethnic and reducing poverty and improvement in the standards of living the society. Literacy improves the ability of a person to contribute much to build up a good society, good economic infrastructure and better interaction within the nation and the outside world. High literacy rate always indicates the good society in comparison to the areas with less literacy rates that is underdeveloped.

Literacy rate is considered as the main indicator and measurement for the development in rural and urban areas. It is generally considered high literacy rates in urban places as compare to the lesser literacy rates in rural areas. Approach to literacy is a basic step towards achieving the general wellbeing of people of any area. Literacy is essential for the sustainable development of the society. Thus, literacy is observed as a major tool in building a developed and peaceful society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Educated population have the potential to create the social and economic changes in the society. There are equal rights to both men and women in almost all the democratic countries including India. Under Right to Information Act, (2005), primary education is now a fundamental right. According to the Census of India, person who can read and write with understanding in any language aged above six year considered as literate (Census of India, 1991).

ESCAP, 2010 observed that the Asia-Pacific region has three quarter illiterate population of the world and it is also the biggest and most difficult issues in developing countries of which India is a part, second largest populated country are characterized by great disparity between urban-rural, male-female and young-aged (Krishan & Shyam, 1978).

India has effective literacy rate of 74.04%. It is to be noted that 82.14% male and 65.46% female are literate meaning thereby a large gender gap in literacy (Census of India, 2011). Punjab is one of among the most developed states of India; rather the state enjoys the prosperity in terms of physiographic conditions, drainage system, economic conditions, agriculture and other resources. Beside this prosperity, the state has shown some serious concerns related to demographic issues and among these literacy rate is one of the important issue.

## THE STUDY AREA

Punjab, also called the crown of India is the classic example of the fast growing economy. It enjoys the credit of ushering the green revolution in the country. The land of five rivers lies in the north-western part of the country. It is bordered by Pakistan from the western side and Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Himachal Pradesh in the north-east and Punjab and Rajasthan in the south. On the whole the state lies in the western part of the northern plains of India. The present Punjab occupies 1.54% of the total geographical area of the country and has the total area covered is 50,362

km<sup>2</sup>. It is predominantly an alluvial plain region having three major rivers that Sutlej, Beas and Ravi. These rivers are of great physiographic, economic and cultural importance. Study area experience continental monsoonal climate due to its interior location in the lower mid latitudes. According to the latest census report the total population of Punjab is 277 million i.e. 2.4% of the population of India. It constitutes 22 districts, 81 Tehsils, 146 blocks and 12673 villages (pbplanning.govt.in, 2012-13).

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the spatial patterns of literacy rate in Punjab at district level.
- To analyse the differences in rural and urban literacy rate in Punjab at district level.

## DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

In this paper, data have obtained from Census of India 1971, Social and Cultural Tables, Series 1, Part II- C, Census of India 1981, Social and Cultural Tables, Series (1), Part IV-A, Census of India 1991, Socio-Cultural Tables, Vol. – 2, Series (1), Part IV, A-C Series, and Census of India 2011, Social and Cultural Tables, Table C- 8. For measuring literacy trend and disparity between urban-rural literacy at district level in Punjab. Data have been collected and tabulated at district level as a unit of study. Maps have been making with the help of Arc GIS software.

## TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF LITERACY RATE IN PUNJAB

Punjab has recorded highest total literacy (38.69 %) in 1971. After 1971; the total literacy rate in Punjab was greater than India. In Punjab; literacy rate has increased almost 38%, from 38.69% in 1971 to 76.68% in 2011 while in India; it has increased almost 40%, from 34.45 % to 74.04% during 1971 to 2011. Urban literacy in India is remaining almost highest during the entire time period. After 1971; it is remaining almost same to Punjab. In India; it has increased almost 25%, from 60.22% to 84.98%. In Punjab; it has increased almost 23%, from 59.97% to 83.70%. In Punjab; it has increased almost 40%, from 32.02% to 72.45% while in India; it has increased 41%, from 27.89% to 68.91%. Differences between urban-rural literacy are remaining almost lowest in Punjab during the 1971 census but after this, it is remaining highest in India. In Punjab; it has decreased almost 16%, from 27.95% to 11.25 % while in India; it has decreased 16%, from 32.33% to 16.07%.

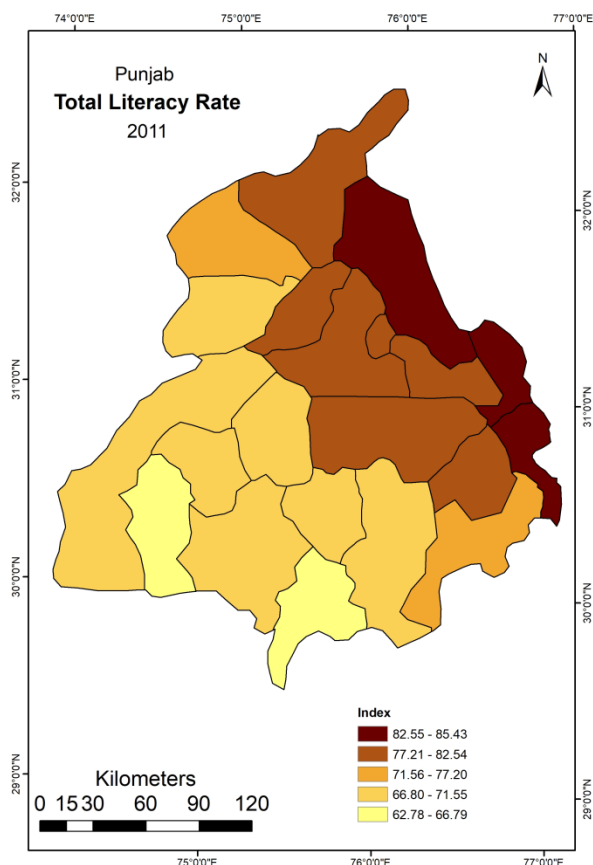
**Table 1.1**

State and Country	Literacy Rate & Differences by Residence	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
India	Total	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	74.04
	Urban	60.22	67.23	73.08	79.92	84.98
	Rural	27.89	36.01	44.69	58.74	68.91
	Differences between Urban-Rural Literacy Rate	32.33	31.28	28.39	21.18	16.07
		38.69	48.17	58.51	69.65	76.68
Punjab	Total	59.97	64.96	72.08	79.1	83.70
	Urban	32.02	41.73	52.77	64.72	72.45
	Rural					
	Differences between Urban-Rural Literacy Rate	27.95	23.23	19.31	14.38	11.25

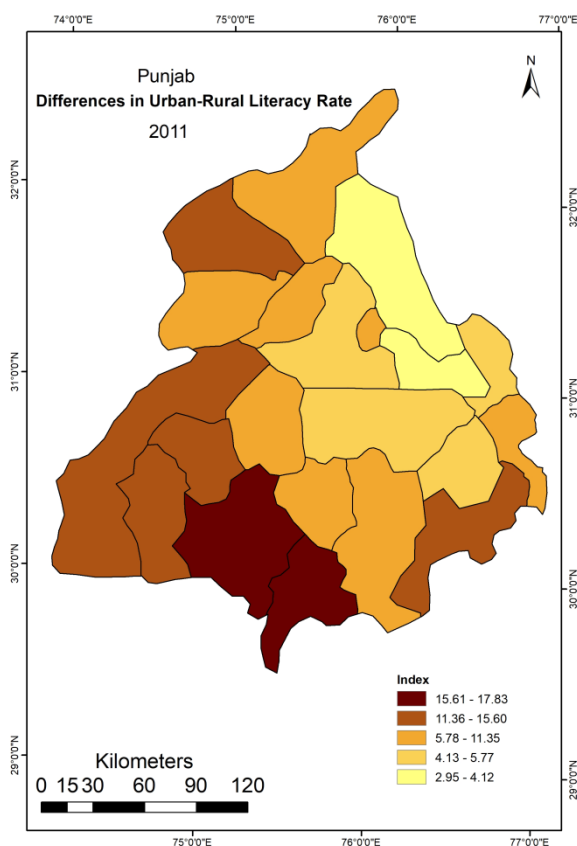
Source: Computed by Author from Census of India

## Spatial Patterns of Literacy Rate, 2011

Literacy rate shows that it varies largely from one district to another district of the state. The spatial variations of the state have been divided into four main categories. (i) Low, (ii) Moderate, (iii) High, (iv) Very high spatial patterns of general literacy rate. The distribution of literacy rate in Punjab is not uniform. It varies from 85.43% in Hoshiarpur to 62.8% in Mansa district, the state average literacy rate is higher 76.7% than national average literacy is 74.04%. It is observed from the (table 1.2, fig.1.1) that the four districts of Punjab are having a very low literacy rate that is even below 70%. All these districts are in the south western part of the state. The five districts having the moderate literacy rate that varies 70% to 79% are also in south-western and southern parts of Punjab. The districts having high and very high literacy rate are in the northern, eastern and southern parts of Punjab. The reasons for high literacy in these two categories are higher awareness about literacy among the people and higher rate of urbanisation. The four major cities of Punjab – Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala come under in this category and are having good educational accessibility in these areas.



**Figure 1.1**



**Figure 1.2**

## DIFFERENCES IN RURAL AND URBAN LITERACY

In Punjab, Literacy rate is noticed by wide urban-rural differentials. The average urban-rural index analysed in the state is 11.25%. This differential is highly pronounced in Ferozepur (13.69%), Faridkot (13.34%), Muktsar (14.2%), Bathinda (17.49%), Mansa (15.05%) and Patiala (15.05%). On the other hand the rural urban differentials in literacy are recorded to be lowest in Gurdaspur (2.25%), Kapurthala (4.72%), and Rupnagar (5.09%) (Table 1.2, fig. 1.4).

**Table 1.2**

Districts	Literacy Rate and Disparity in Literacy by Residence in Punjab: 2011			
	Total	Urban	Rural	Differences
Gurdaspur	81.06	88.00	78.25	9.75
Kapurthala	80.18	85.82	77.13	8.69
Jalandhar	82.40	85.10	79.33	5.77
Hoshiarpur	85.43	88.67	84.55	4.12
S.B.S.Nagar	80.33	82.74	79.79	2.95
Fatehgarh Sahib	80.33	84.33	78.56	5.77
Ludhiana	82.54	84.83	79.26	5.57
Moga	71.55	80.39	69.04	11.35
Firozpur	69.85	79.77	66.08	13.69
Muktsar	66.79	77.02	62.82	14.20
Faridkot	70.65	79.29	65.95	13.34
Bathinda	69.57	80.80	63.31	17.49
Mansa	62.78	76.82	58.99	17.83
Patiala	76.26	85.19	70.14	15.05
Amritsar	77.20	84.36	68.76	15.60
Tarn Taran	69.43	78.12	68.16	9.96
Rupnagar	83.28	87.04	81.95	5.09
S.A.S.Nagar	84.87	88.90	79.91	8.99
Sangrur	68.88	88.90	79.91	8.99
Barnala	68.90	75.39	65.89	9.50
<b>Punjab</b>	<b>76.68</b>	<b>83.70</b>	<b>72.45</b>	<b>11.25</b>

Source: Computed by Author from census of India

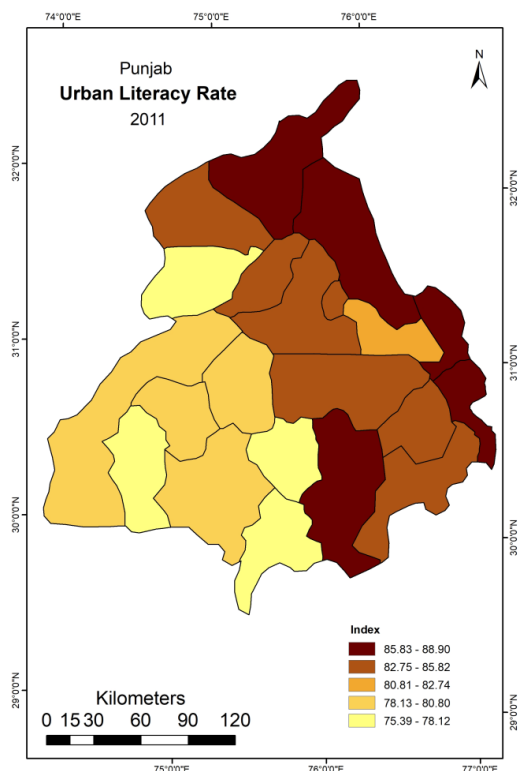


Figure 1.3

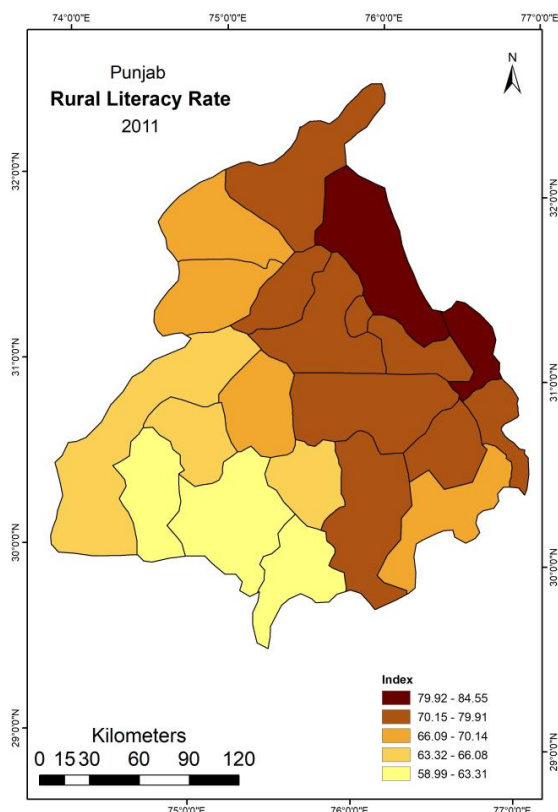


Figure 1.4

## CONCLUSION

Literacy rate in Punjab increased after the green revolution period that is the 1971 census period. The

Punjab government claimed that greater attention has been given to the education sector. There are large differences between urban and rural literacy rates in some of the districts. The immigrants from the other states as well as the poor labour do not bother to send their children to school. In urban areas, high cost of living and poverty compels them to send their children to work at daily wages instead of to schools.. Another reason is that the parents themselves are illiterate and they do not understand the importance of education in the long run. Therefore in order to achieve the universalisation of education, more stress should be given to improvement in literacy in urban as well rural areas.

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