



Literacy Rate in India

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Abstract:

India demographics occupy 2nd rank among the world's populated countries. With a population of 1.21 billion and growth rate of 1.41 % the population will only grow more enormous in size. However when age structure of the India is considered , 65 % of India's population is of the age group 15-64 and 30 % of population being under the age of 15, it can be inferred that India's population is very young. When literacy rate of India is considered, it stand at 74.04% as per 2011 census. India's literacy rate at the time of independence was mere 14% , over the years literacy rate has been increasing but with varied rates in different states with some state like kerala and Mizoram well above national average and bihar with a dismal rate of 63.8%. This paper is focus on basic concepts of Literates, illiterates, crude literacy rate and effective literacy rate with their formula. Paper also focus on Crude Literacy Rate in India by Sex : 1901-2011, Literacy rate in India: 1951 to 2011, Literacy rate in different states of India from 1901 to 2011 and Steps taken by government in acceleratbing Education planning in India.

1. Introduction:

There is a significant relationship between literacy and Development. Literacy benefits both individuals & communities. It transforms people, communities & the entire social structure and is a key for socio-economic development. In its earliest uses, the term 'literacy' referred solely to the ability to read and write; one either could or could not. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) define literacy as the "Ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society." Literate societies interact & contribute in development. Literacy level and educational attainment are vital indicators of development in a society. Attainment of universal primary education is one of the Millennium Development goals of the United Nations to be achieved by the year 2015. Planning Commission of India has also targeted in the eleventh Five Years plan to increase Literacy rate of person f age 7 years or more to 85% and reducing gender gap in Literacy to 10 percentage points by 2011-12. Literacy rate and educational development are considered to be key variables affecting demographics indicators like fertility, mortality, rate and migration. It greatly contributes in improving quality of life, particularly with regard to life expectancy, infant mortality, learning level and nutritional levels of children. Higher level of Literacy and educational development lead to greater awareness on the hand and help people in acquiring new skills on the other. This paper focus on basic concepts of Literates, illiterates, crude literacy rate and effective literacy rate.

2. Literates and illiterates

The numbers of literates and illiterates aged seven and above in India as per the provisional population totals of census 2011 is 778, 454, 120 and 272, 950, 015 respectively. There has been a marked improvement in the proportion of literates in the last decade. Literates in 2011 constitute 74 percent of the total population aged seven and above as compared to 65 percent in 2001. On the other hand, illiterates form 26 percent of the total population in 2011 as compared to 35 percent in 200. A significant milestone reached in census 2011, is that the total number of

illiterates has come down from 304, 146, 862 in 2001 to 272, 950, 015 – a decline of 31, 196, 847 person.

3. Literates and illiterates concepts

Information on literacy is canvassed regarding every individual in the census. For the purpose of census a person aged seven and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any languages, is treated as literate. A person, who can only read but cannot write, they are not literate. In the census prior to 1991, children below five years of age were necessarily treated as illiterates.

4. Literacy Rate-Definition

Earlier Census up to 1981, it was customary to work out the literacy rate taking into account the total population. Since literacy rate is more meaningful if the sub-population in the age group 0-6 is excluded from the total population, it was decided in 1991 to calculate literacy rate for the population seven years and above. The same concept has been retained in all.

5. Censuses since 1991

The literacy rate taking into account the total population in the denominator has now been termed as crude literacy rate, while the literacy rate calculated taking into account the seven and above population in the denominator is called the effective literacy rate. The formula for computing crude literacy rate and effective literacy rate are as follows.

Crude Literacy Rate = Number of literate person x 100 / Total population

Effective Literacy Rate = Number of Literate persons aged 7 and above x 100 / population aged 7 and above.

Table 1. Crude Literacy Rate in India by Sex : 1901-2011

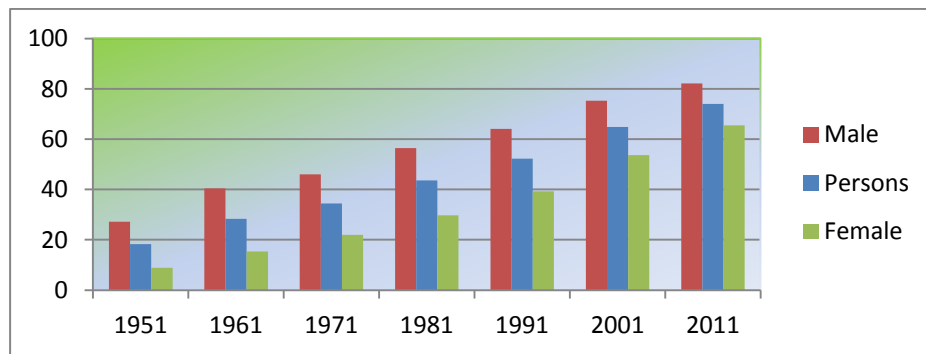
Census Year	Persons	Male	Female
1901	5.35	9.83	0.60
1911	5.29	10.56	1.05
1921	7.16	12.11	1.81
1931	9.5	15.59	2.93
1941	16.1	24.9	7.30
1951	16.67	24.95	7.93
1961	24.02	34.44	12.95
1971	29.45	39.45	18.69
1981	36.23	46.39	24.82
1991	42.84	52.74	32.17
2001	54.51	63.24	45.15
2011	64.32	71.22	56.99

Table 1 shows that crude literacy rate of India by sex during 1901-2011. The improvement in crude literacy rate has been phenomenal in post independent India. The corresponding increase in case of males has been of 46.32 percentage points and among female it is 49.69 percentage points. The crude literacy rate has increased by almost 10 percentage points during the last decade.

Table 2. Literacy rate in India: 1951 to 2011

Census Year	Persons	Male	Female	Male-Female gap in literacy rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.3	40.4	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.08
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.21	24.84
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Registrar of Census, provisional population table



The Information of table 2 state that the growth rate of literacy rate from since 1951 are constantly increased. Lowest literacy growth rate reflect in above information between 1961 to 1971. Especially after 1991 decade difference of literacy rate between 1991 to 2001 is that near about 12 percent that is highest among all decade from 1951 to 2011, the highest growth rate.

Table 3. State-wise Literacy Rates (1951-2011)

(At percent)

Sr.	States/Union Territories	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	A & N Island	30.30	40.07	51.15	63.19	73.02	81.30	86.27
2	Andhra Pradesh	-	21.19	24.57	35.66	44.08	60.47	67.66
3	Arunachal Pradesh	N.A.	7.13	11.29	25.55	41.59	54.34	66.95
4	Assam	18.53	32.95	33.94	-	52.89	63.25	73.18
5	Bihar	13.49	21.95	23.17	32.32	37.49	47.00	63.82
6	Chandigarh	-	N.A.	70.43	74.80	77.81	81.94	86.43
7	Chhatisgarh	9.41	18.14	24.08	32.63	42.91	64.66	71.04
8	Dadra & N. Haveli	-	-	18.13	32.90	40.71	57.63	77.65
9	Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	71.20	78.18	87.07
10	Delhi	NA	61.95	65.08	71.94	75.29	81.67	86.34
11	Goa	23.48	35.41	51.96	65.71	75.51	82.01	87.40
12	Gujarat	21.82	31.47	36.95	44.92	61.29	69.14	79.31
13	Haryana	-	-	25.71	37.13	55.85	67.91	76.64
14	Himachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	63.86	76.48	83.78
15	Jammu & Kashmir	-	12.95	21.71	30.64	N.A.	55.52	68.74
16	Jharkhand	12.93	21.14	23.87	35.03	41.39	53.56	67.63
17	Kamataka	-	29.80	36.83	46.21	56.04	66.64	75.60
18	Kerala	47.18	55.08	69.75	78.85	89.81	90.86	93.91
19	Lakshadweep	15.23	27.15	51.76	68.42	81.78	86.66	92.28
20	Madhya Pradesh	13.16	21.41	27.27	38.63	44.67	63.74	70.63

Sr.	States/Union Territories	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
21	Maharashtra	27.91	35.08	45.77	57.24	64.87	76.88	82.91
22	Manipur	12.57	36.04	38.47	49.66	59.89	70.53	79.85
23	Meghalaya	N.A.	26.92	29.49	42.05	49.10	62.56	75.48
24	Mizoram	31.14	44.01	53.80	59.88	82.26	88.80	91.58
25	Nagaland	10.52	21.95	33.78	50.28	61.65	66.59	80.11
26	Orissa	15.80	21.66	26.18	33.62	49.09	63.08	73.45
27	Pondicherry	-	43.65	53.38	65.14	74.74	81.24	86.55
28	Punjab	-	N.A.	34.12	43.37	58.51	69.65	76.68
29	Rajasthan	8.50	18.12	22.57	30.11	38.55	60.41	67.06
30	Sikkim	-	-	17.74	34.05	56.94	68.81	82.20
31	Tamil Nadu	-	36.39	45.40	54.39	62.66	73.45	80.33
32	Tripura	N.A	20.024	30.98	50.10	60.44	73.19	87.75
33	Uttar Pradesh	12.02	20.87	23.99	32.65	40.71	56.27	69.72
34	Uttrakhand	18.93	18.05	33.26	46.06	57.75	71.62	79.63
35	West Bengal	24.61	34.46	38.86	48.65	57.70	68.64	77.08
	All India ²	18.33	28.30	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	74.04

Source : Economic Survey, 2012-13; Office of the Registrar General " 2012 India. M/Home Affairs

6. Literacy during British Rule

Literacy in India grew very slowly until independence in 1947. An acceleration in the rate of literacy growth occurred in the 1991-2001 period. Prior to the British era, education in Indian commenced under the supervision of a guru in traditional schools called Gurukuls. The Gurukuls were supported by public donation and were one of the earliest forms of public school offices. In the colonial era, the Gurukul system began to decline as the system promoted by the British began to gradually take over. Between 1881-82 and 1946-47, the number of English primary schools grew from 82,916 to 134,866 and the number of students in English schools grew from 2,061,541 to 10,525,943. Literacy rates in accordance to British in India rose from 3.2 per cent in 1881 to 7.2 per cent in 1931 and 12.2 per cent in 1947.

7. Literacy after Independence

The provision of universal and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6-15 was a cherished national ideal and had been given overriding priority by incorporation as a directive policy in the constitution but it is still to be achieved more than half a century since the Constitution was adopted in 1949. Parliament has passed the Constitution 86th Amendment Act-2002, to make elementary education fundamental rights for children in the age group of 6-14 years. In order to provide more funds for education, an education cess of 2 per cent has been imposed on all direct and indirect central taxes through the Finance Act, 2004. The literacy rate grew from 18.33 per cent in 1951, to 28.30 per cent in 1961, 34.45 per cent in 1971, 43.57 per cent in 1981, 52.21 per cent in 1991, 64.84 per cent in 2001 and 74.04 per cent in 2011. During the same period, the population grew from 361 million to 1,210 million.

8. Steps taken by government in accelerating Education planning in India

The central as well as the state governments have been emphasizing on the growth of education at all levels. Moreover there are District Literacy Societies or Zilla Saksharta Samiti who also plays the most pivotal role in the pursuance of adult education.

The first step taken by the Indian government is to initiate measures for universal elementary education among all. The other significant steps taken on the Education Planning in India are-

1. To increase the number of institutions teachers and elementary level.
2. To provide for incentives like textbooks, free uniforms and scholarship.

3. To offer centrally Sponsored Programme of Nutritional Support to primary Education.
4. To launch the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme.
5. To provide free and compulsory education for children.
6. To initiate the District elementary Education Plan.
7. To launch the National Literacy Mission for providing functional literacy to the non-literates between the age group of 15 and 35.
8. To improve the Industrial Training Institute, Boards of Technical Education and Engineering Colleges, and poly-technology and Apprenticeship school.
9. To upgrade the Indian Institute of Technology and Institute of Management.
10. To progress in new technology based areas like biotechnology, bioinformatics, and Nano-technology.
11. Free education programs poor to people living in villages and towns
12. Setting up of new school and colleges at district and state levels.
13. Several committees have been formed to ensure proper utilization of funds allotted to improve literacy rate.

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