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## SOLAPUR DISTRICT URBAN LITERACY RATE : A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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### Abstract:-

*The trends in literacy are considered as an index of pace at which the socio-economic transformation of society is taking place. Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation, for cultivating peaceful and friendly relations and for promoting the free play of demographic processes. Illiteracy, on the other hand, takes away man from his dignity perpetuates ignorance, poverty and mental isolation; deter peaceful and friendly relations and free demographic process and hampers social advancement, economic growth and political maturity. The National Adult Education Programme launched in 1978, viewed literacy as means to bring about fundamental change in socio – economic development. From the demographic point of view also literacy and level of education attainment are regarded as key variable affecting fertility, mortality and migration. Thus, literacy is the key to both development and population control. Despite our concreted efforts in over the last 60 years only 63.0 percent of the population was reported as literate in 2001 census whereas female literacy was only 51.3 percent.*

*In the present paper an attempt has been made to analyze the magnitude of literacy in 10 urban centers of Solapur district (Maharashtra, India), as unit of study. Using the data of 2001 and 2011 census, the present study examines the spatial patterns of literacy of both male and female population and their gender disparities in literacy in the study area. This will serve a useful purpose in coordinated action in various fields, to interact the dynamics of socio-economic underdevelopment on the one hand and political institutional framework on the other.*

**Keywords:** Literacy, Illiteracy, Sex ratio, Gender gap, disparity, Infant, Fertility, Mortality, Mobility.

### INTRODUCTION

According to 2001 census a person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language has taken as literate. A person, who can neither read nor write or can only read but cannot write in any language, is treated as illiterate. All children of age 6 years or less, even if going to school and have picked up reading and writing, are treated as illiterate. Literacy is a qualitative attribute of population and a fairly reliable index of socio-economic development. It also helps for economic development, social advancement and even in controlling population. Chandana (2004)<sup>1</sup> has observed that “The trends in literacy is indicative of the space at which the life and economy of a particular society are getting transformed”. Literacy is also influences other such attributes of population as marriage, fertility, mortality, mobility, occupations etc.

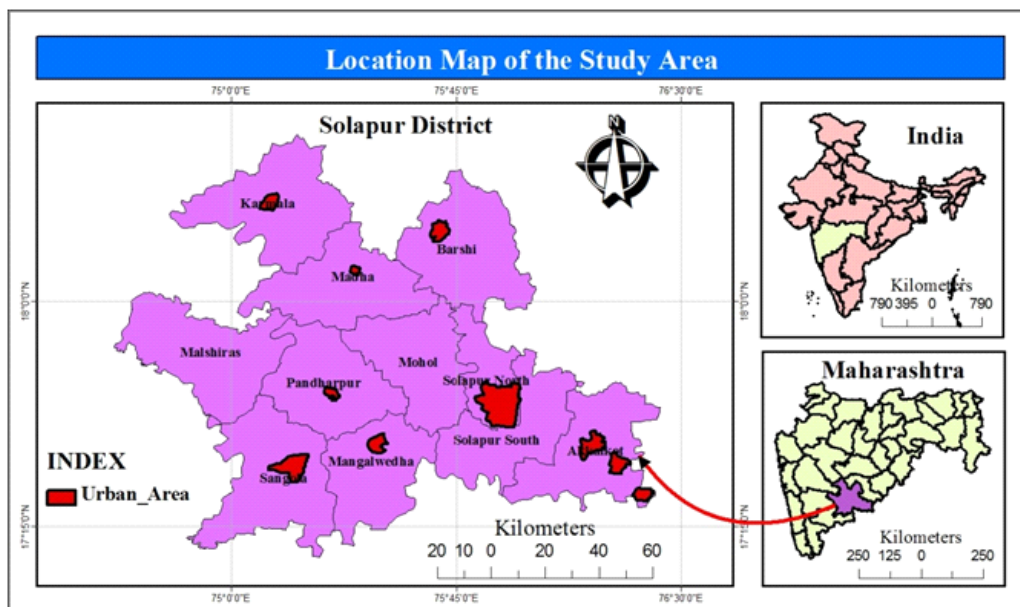
A certain level of literacy is, therefore, a basic requirement for people to get out of ignorance and backwardness (Gosal and Chandna)<sup>2</sup>. There is a clear negative relationship between literacy/educational level of women and their fertility. It also influences the age of female at marriage. Not only has this but also influenced the status of mother and infant mortality. Researchers have established that average age at marriage for currently married women was the highest for women having graduation; while it was the lowest for illiterate and semi-literate

women. These researches also show that there is a direct relationship between educational attainment of women and fertility on the one hand and family planning practices on the other. Even infant mortality rate was lower in the case of literate women. Thus, literacy is essential for economic development, social advancement and demographic growth of a country. Being extraordinarily, one has to shout loudly that “India’s *destiny is shaped in her classrooms*”(Bhasin, 1980)<sup>3</sup>.

## DETERMINANTS OF LITERACY

The literacy rates in any area are determined largely by a variety of historical, social and economic factors. Often, it is not easy to prepare an exhaustive list of all such factors. However, Chandna(2004)<sup>4</sup> could include (i) cost of education, (ii) political background, (iii) type of economy, (iv) standard of living, (v) degree of urbanization, (vi) stage of technological advancement, (vii) degree of development of means of transportation and communication, (viii) religious background, (ix) medium of instruction, (x) status of woman in the society, (xi) prejudices against the female mobility and education, (xii) availability of educational institutions, (xiii) general value system and (xiv) public policies. According to Ghosh (1985)<sup>5</sup> literacy is influenced by as many as 15 different factors.

## STUDY AREA



The study area is a district, i.e. “*Solapur District*” in Maharashtra state of India. Its selection identifies and recognizes District as basis of the administrative system in India. *A district is defined as territory marked off for a special administrative purpose (Oxford)<sup>6</sup> and District Administration defined by Khera (1972)<sup>7</sup>, is the management of public affairs within a territory marked off such purpose.* It is the most important of all the units in area administration. In this district 11 talshil and 10 urban centres. Hence it is medium area and sized in population

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study the urban centrewise temporal changes in the Literacy of the Solapur district.
2. To analyse spatial inequalities in the Literacy of all the 8 urban centres in Solapur district.
3. To find out the reasons of these inequalities.

## DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present paper is entirely based on secondary data. The secondary data on sex wise literacy (population aged 7+ years) have been gathered from Directorate of Census Operations, Maharashtra, Mumbai (2001 & 2011). All the urban centres are classified according to their literacy rates into three categories, viz. high, moderate and low. The spatial disparities in literacy rates of all the urban centres have been shown by choropleth maps.

## LITERACY IN URBAN CENTRES (2001-11)

Literacy undoubtedly indicates the level of development. Generally, urban areas have comparatively higher percentage of literacy than the rural areas. In Solapur district, there are 8 urban centres (Table 1 and 2). The impact of improved educational facilities and higher degree of urbanization as well as industrialization are reflected in urban areas of Solapur district. Migration of educated persons from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment and better standard of living increases the literacy rate of urban centres. All the urban centres in the study area do not exhibit the equal rate of literacy. They differ in their literacy rates.

There exists a positive correlation between literacy rate and the degree of urbanization. The type of economy set up in urban areas is such that the literacy skills have greater functional utility, while in the countryside various occupations do not expect literacy to be pre-requisite. In the urban centres of the study area also, the differences among the literacy rates are striking. These differentials are generally related to the location of that urban centre, population composition, size, their functions, along with the literacy patterns of areas in which they are located. Urban centres with industrial base or with a prominence of administrative and educational services stand out distinct with regard to high literacy rates.

The smallest town in the study area is **Maindurgi & Dudhani** in Akkalkot tahsil. **Maindurgi** has the lowest (69.54 per cent in 2001 and 67.83 per cent in 2011) literacy rate among all the towns in the district. **Dudhani**, *an another small town in* Akkalkot tahsil, has the Second lowest (68.72% in 2001 & 69.78% in 2011) Literacy rate all the town in the district. Gender disparity in literacy rate is also maximum **Maindurgi** (27.39 per cent and 20.44 % & Dudhani 28.82 per cent & respectively) in this towns because of very high number of females are illiterate. In 2001 the female literacy rate of this town was only **Maindurgi** 55.52 per cent which was slightly increased up to 57.40 per cent & **Dudhani** 54.01% which was slightly increased 59.70%. The reasons behind overall illiteracy are less rainfall, surrounded by rigid topography, less developed agriculture, no industrialization, lack of transport and communication facilities, out migratory movements of people, etc.

**Table 1. Solapur District : Literacy Rates in Urban Centres ( 2001)**

Sr. No.	Name of Urban Centre	Persons	Males	Females	Gender Gap @
1.	Karmala	82.34	90.30	73.90	16.04
2.	Kuruduvadi	83.81	92.06	75.24	16.82
3.	Barshi	81.49	89.80	72.84	16.96
4.	Solapur	76.76	86.64	66.55	20.09
5.	Pandharpur	80.99	88.93	72.53	16.04
6.	Sangola	78.52	86.86	96.66	17.02
7.	Mangalwedha	77.76	86.97	67.41	19.56
8.	Akkalkot	73.36	85.22	61.18	24.04
9.	<b>Maindurgi</b>	<b>69.04</b>	<b>82.91</b>	<b>55.52</b>	<b>27.39</b>
10.	<b>Dudhani</b>	<b>68.72</b>	<b>82.83</b>	<b>54.01</b>	<b>28.82</b>

\*Literacy Rate is the Percentage of Literates to Population aged 7 years and above. Source : Census of Solapur Dist. 2001. @Computed by author.

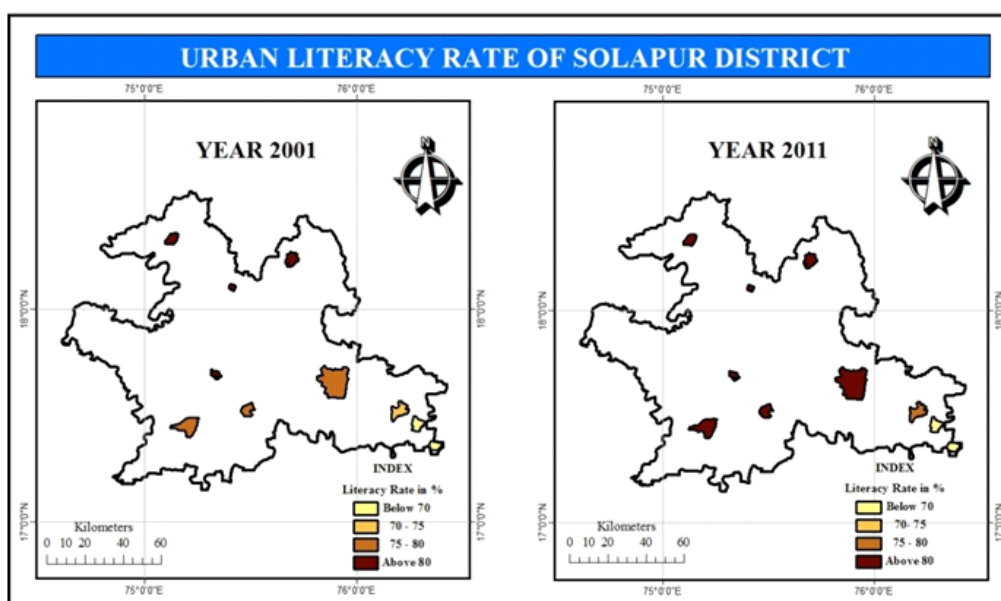
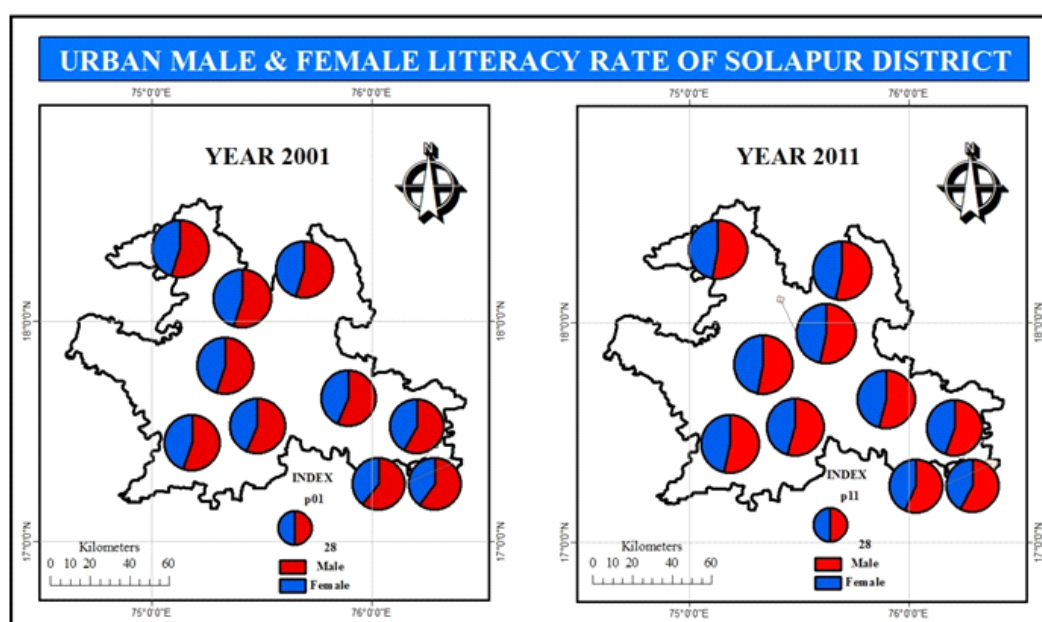


Table 2 SolapurDistrict : Literacy Rates\* in Urban Centres (20011)

Urban Literacy Rate of Solapur District Literacy Rate in % 2011					
Sr. No.	Name	Year 2011			
		person	Male	Female	Gender gap
1	Karmala (M CI)	86.96	92.30	81.41	10.46
2	Kurduvadi (M CI)	87.67	93.48	81.69	11.79
3	Barshi (M CI)	85.77	91.64	79.71	11.93
4	Solapur (M Corp.)	82.80	89.62	75.88	13.74
5	Pandharpur (M CI)	86.65	91.78	81.32	10.46
6	Sangole (M CI)	83.00	88.17	77.54	12.63
7	Mangalvedhe (M CI)	81.79	88.82	74.55	13.97
8	Akkalkot (M CI)	76.09	84.58	67.70	16.88
9	Maindargi (M CI)	67.83	78.24	57.40	20.84
10	Dudhani (M CI)	69.78	79.33	59.70	19.57

\*: Literacy rate is the percentage of literates to population age 7 years and above.



Sangola, Mangalwedha & Akkalkot, an another small towns in Solapur District, also prevails low literacy rate of Sangola 69.66 per cent and Mangalwedha 67.41 per cent & Akkalkot 61.11 per cent respectively. Here again female literacy is very low. The gender gap in Sangola 12.36 Mangalwedha 13.97 per cent & Akkalkot literacy rate is reduced from in 2001 to 2011. This urban centre is surrounded by agriculture with some agro-based industries .

The district headquarter *Solapur* towns have same literacy rates of about 76.76 (2001 & 82.80 in 2011 per cent) Solapur Town and some adjacent rural areas. Administrative headquarter, various kinds of industries, well established and advanced educational institutions, developed transport and communication facilities, trade and commerce, situated in central plain river basin zone, etc. are the characteristics of this standered urban area which enhanced the literacy rate. The gender gap in literacy rate is also very low (14) in this urban unit. Like other urban centres, this area also shows deficiency in female literacy rate than that of males. The male literacy rate is about 89.62 per cent as against 76 per cent in females constituting 82.80 per cent in total.(2011).

Karmala, Kurduwadi, Barshi, and Pandharpur towns has high literacy rate compare to other district towns. In this towns female literacy rate and very low gender gape compare to other towns in solapur district.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The attribute of literacy has immense social, economic, political and cultural significance. It reflects socio-economic status of population. The study area, Solapur district, exhibits high percentage of urbanliteracy (83.81%) than the district average (77.23%) during 2001. Striking disparities in the rate and pattern of literacy are found in various urban centres in the study area, affected by sex, residence and occupation. The empirical evidences of the present study indicate that there exists spatial inequalities in the literacy rates. Urban centres like Karmala, Kurduwadi, Barshi and Pandharpur display high literacy rates in 2001 and 2011. The smallest town in the study area is Maindurgi in Akkalkot tahsil has the lowest ( 69.04 per cent in 2001 and 67.83 per cent in 2011) literacy rate among all the towns in the district. Reaming two tahsils e.g. Malshiras and Mohol tahsil are no urban centres in study area. Some improvement in the quality of education being imparted to school children especially girl students in the area. In accordance various literacy promotion schemes like adult education and others should be imparted to reduce or eliminate illiteracy in the study area.

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