

Gender Disparity in Literacy: Districts Level Evidence from Selected States of India

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ABSTRACT

India is a country with high gender disparity in literacy. As per Census 2011, overall literacy rate of India is 74.04% whereas the male and female literacy rate is 82.14% and 65.46% respectively. Among all states, Kerala is on the top, where as the state Bihar is on the bottom. In addition, the northern states especially Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan also show a clear picture of gender disparity in literacy. In Haryana, male literacy rate is 84.06% and female literacy rate is 65.94% respectively. In Punjab, male literacy rate is 80.44% and female literacy rate is 70.73% respectively. Further, in Rajasthan male literacy rate is 79.11% and female literacy is 52.12% respectively. This shows the high gender disparity in literacy among these states. Despite the number of efforts made at national and state level, the gender disparity in literacy still exist in Indian society. The present study is an attempt to find out the gender disparity in literacy at district level. The study is based upon Sopher's method to calculate disparity in literacy. The study found leading and laggard districts in terms of gender disparity in education and suggests policy implications for centre and state governments.

Keywords: Literacy rate, gender disparity, male literacy, female literacy

Illiteracy continues to be a social problem in India. It is hindering all the development efforts even today. Literacy plays a significant role in the human development. Literacy is a key element to increase human capital. It removes inequalities from the society in almost all respect. It is the essential building block

and a crucial element for the development of a country. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations had quoted, "Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Literacy is the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential". Literacy is one of the foremost indicators of development in a society. It forms an important input in overall development of individuals

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enabling them to understand their social, economic, political, technological and cultural environment better and respond to it appropriately. Indeed, it is a multidimensional concept.

The Literacy enlightens in a variety of forms. For instance, Lipset's (1960) notion of working-class authoritarianism maintains that people are anti-democratic until they are socialized by learning institutions stressing democratic values. Stouffer (1955) highlights the relationship between education and forbearance, noting that literacy increases people's keenness to allow civil liberties for advocates of view-points with which they differ. Others have highlighted the role of literacy in reducing injustice and literacy as a mechanism for increasing rationality and reducing categorical thinking (Borhek, 1965). These perspectives share a general emphasis on the ability of education, through the knowledge and values it conveys, to promote intergroup harmony (Kane, 1995).

Literacy is one of the main fields where women have to face number of problems. Literacy affects welfare of present as well as the future generations through intergenerational communication and enhanced educated parents have more educated and healthier children (Dre`ze and Sen, 2002). Literacy also affects welfare of other members like male, female etc of the society because of the optimistic externalities that it generates (Tilak, 2008). Literacy creates new resources and improves social welfare exclusive of making anyone worse off (Thomas *et al.*, 2001).

Women Education in India: A Brief Summary

In India, women face prejudice at every level in society; they are not treated at par with men, socially, culturally, economically or politically, and as a result they go down far behind men in almost all spheres of life. The National Committee on Women's Education (1957–1959), chaired by Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh, and prepared a strong recommendation for the education of women. Stating that literacy should be a top priority, the report suggested that strong and determined efforts should be made to reduce the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible. The National Policy on Education, 1968 strongly recommended that the education of girls should receive priority, not only

on basis of social justice but also because this would be a way to step up social transformation.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 also said a special emphasis on the removal of disparities and make equal educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who had been deprived of equality so far. It further stressed the elimination of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their right of entry to education, elementary education, and women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. All these goals were outlined under the Programme of Action, National Policy on Education, 1986, which was afterwards modified in 1992 (Government of India, 1986). Promoting and empowering women was one of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals for gender equality which have recently been extended into the Sustainable Development Goals. It incorporated the equal participation of girls at the primary and secondary levels and literacy equality between young women and men.

The Government of India started the "Saakshar Bharat Mission (SBM)", a new plan of the National Literacy Mission on International Literacy day so that absolute literacy can be achieved (Day, 8 September 2009). This plan covered 365 districts in 26 states and UTs, all of which had adult female literacy rates less than 50% as per the census of 2001. The primary centre of attention of the mission was on women and its intention was to cover a total of 70 million adults for 15 years and above age. The scheme intended to reduce gender and other disparities by providing fundamental education in the country and having some fundamental objectives namely (1) to give fundamental literacy and numeracy to non-literate and non-numerate adults. (2) To give qualification equal to formal educational system and set up learning for neo-literates beyond fundamental literacy provide vocational education. (3) Imparting learners with appropriate skill development programmes (4) encourage a learning society by given opportunity to neo-literate adults for progressing education (Government of India, 1999). The women's illiteracy is directly connected to the problem of poverty and lack of resources hence there is a serious need to pay attention to economic and education factors

(Dighe, 1991). Literacy is an instrument to empower women against inequality and injustice in society (Patel & Dighe, 1997). Administrators and planners have to pay special attention to bridging the gap between the literacy of males and females in both rural and urban areas (Grover & Bhardwaj, 2002; Katiyar, 2016).

Current Status of Literacy in India

Literacy is also major concern for India. In India, as per Census 2011, overall literacy rate is 74.04% whereas the male and female literacy rate is 82.14% and 65.46% respectively. Amongst all states, Kerala is on the top in overall literacy with 93.91%, whereas a male and female literacy rate is 96.11% and 92.02% respectively. In Kerala rural male and rural female literacy is 95.35% and 98.73% respectively. On the other hand urban male and female literacy is 96.95% and 102.99% respectively. This is quite impressive. In addition, the literacy rate among "Northern States of India" like Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Bihar is very low. Bihar is on the bottom with overall literacy rate of 63.82%. Haryana overall literacy rate is 75.55% with male literacy and female literacy rate is 84.06% and 65.94% respectively. Punjab overall literacy rate is 75.84%, male literacy and female literacy rate is 80.44% and 70.73% respectively. Further the state of Rajasthan overall literacy rate is 66.11%, male literacy rate is 79.11% and female literacy is 52.12% respectively.

In addition, a huge gap of "gender disparity in literacy in rural and urban area" also exists. In Haryana, overall "rural literacy" rate is 71.42%, rural male and female literacy rate is 81.55% and 51.96% respectively. The state of Punjab having overall "rural literacy" is 71.42% whereas rural male and female literacy is 76.62% and 58.99% respectively. The state of Rajasthan overall "rural literacy" is 61.44% whereas rural male and female literacy is 76.16% and 42.20% respectively. On the other hand, Haryana overall "urban literacy" rate is 83.14% where urban male and female literacy is 88.63% and 65.98% respectively. Punjab overall "urban literacy" rate is 83.18% and urban male and female literacy is 86.67% 68.29% correspondingly. Rajasthan overall "urban literacy" is 79.68%. Urban male literacy and female literacy is 87.91% and 63.81% respectively. The census of

2011 shows the huge gap of "gender disparity in literacy of rural and urban areas" among these states compared with state of Kerala (Census of India, 2011).

Education Disparity in India

In India, High gender disparity in literacy is the main concern in 21st century. According to IAEA Newsletter (2014) a large gap exists between the male and female population if you inspect their levels of literacy. As per Census 2011, the male female literacy gap is approximately 16%. The problem of illiteracy, in particular among women, is a huge area of concern not only in India but also across the world and it directly impacts development efforts (Katiyar, 2016). There are huge disparities in the economic, social, cultural and schooling opportunities available to men and women in India.

Gender disparities begin early in life, with female infants having a lower chance of continued existence than male infants, owing largely to parental ignore of female infants. The prejudice against the female continues as the child grows older –first in the form of smaller supplies of food and nutrition and later in the form of fewer schooling opportunities relative to boys (Sharma *et al.*, 2015). Literacy disparity matters for a number of reasons. A skewed allocation of education implies a huge social welfare losses resulting from underutilization of potential human capital (Thomas *et al.*, 2001).

Gender inequality differs from other kinds of inequality in important ways, so we cannot tacitly suppose that gender inequality traces the same path as other inequalities. Gender inequality exists when men (or women) like an unreasonably large share of some valued good such as political power or long life. Men and women can differ in any number of domains, so gender inequality intersects other kinds of inequality (like educational, economic, social, and political and so on). Women might be gaining on men in some domains and declining further behind in other domains. In a few domains, such as life expectancy, women have the benefit, so "declining gender inequality" in this example refers to men gaining on women (Dorius *et al.*, 2010).

It is evident from the above discussion that gender disparity in literacy is major problem for India. Thus, the present study investigates the gender disparity in literacy at district level in rural as well as urban areas of selected northern states namely Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Brief Facts about Haryana

Haryana is a state situated in the northern part of the country and has New Delhi as its neighbour in company with state of Punjab and state of Rajasthan. It comprises of 21 districts. The state is extending over an area of about 44000sq. km. making it the 20th major state in the country in terms of area. Chandigarh is the capital city of Haryana state. The language spoken in the Haryana includes Hindi and Haryanvi. Out of total population of the state, 34.88% persons live in urban regions. The urban population in the last 10 years has enlarged by 34.88%. Sex ratio in urban area of the state was 873 females per 1000 males. Standard Literacy rate in Haryana for Urban area was 83.14% in which males were 88.63% literate although female literacy stood at 65.98%. In Haryana, around 65.12% live in the villages of rural areas. In rural area of the state, female sex ratio per 1000 males was 882, literacy rate for males and female stood at 81.55% and 51.96% respectively. Average literacy rate recorded in Haryana state for rural areas was 71.42% (Census of India, 2011).

Haryana state is mainly rural and agrarian. The beginning of 'Green Revolution' and marvellous improvement of industrial front have certainly enlarged the state's total production in the farm sector and manufactured goods but there is no sign that these achievements have been able to reduce significantly the level of disparities in socioeconomic development among different districts. If the huge parts of the populations are left behind, even if only in relative terms, the feasibility of the sustainable development in the state might be threatened (World Bank, 2006). The state total population is approximate at 253.53 lacks with a density of 573 people per square km. The growth of population of Haryana from 2001 to 2011 is of order of 19.9 %. The gender ratio has enhanced from 819 in 2001 to 877 in 2011, an increase of 58 points. However, the situation is still most unpleasant in

comparison to the all India average of 940. Haryana has been successful in getting children into primary school. The literacy rate at the state has improved from 57.2 % in 2001 to 76.64 % in 2011 and is slightly above the all India level of 74 % (Ohlan, 2013). But when we look the current situation the problem is remaining the same. There is a huge gap between "gender disparity in literacy of rural and urban area". This is an obstacle in socio-economic growth of the state.

Brief Facts about Punjab

Punjab is unarguably one of the most amazing states in India with regards to the weather conditions. The state of Punjab is the maximum producer of Wheat in the country and a vast percentage of the country's armed forces are represented by the wonderful state of Punjab. The Population recorded according to the 2011 census stands at about 27 million, making Punjab the 15th most populated state among states in India. The state is extended over an area of about 50000 sq. km. making Punjab the 19th largest state in the India in terms of area. The density of population per sq. Km. is about 550 which is expected given the opportunities of growth and development in the state for achieving welfare of society. The literacy rate in the state is about 73% a figure that has enhanced extremely in the last few years due to the consistent efforts and proactive role of the government. Chandigarh is the capital city of Punjab state. The languages spoken in the Punjab includes Punjabi and Hindi. In total Punjab state comprises 20 districts. The ISOCODE given by International Organization for Standardization for Punjab state is PB. Total area of the state is 50,362 sq. km. Density of the state is 551 per sq km which is more than national average 382 per sq km.

In 2001, density of the state was 484 per sq km, although nation average in 2001 was 324 per sq km. of that; male literacy stands at 80.44% although female literacy is at 70.73%. In 2001, literacy rate in Punjab state stood at 69.65% of which male and female were 75.23% and 63.36% literate respectively. Sex ratio in Punjab is 895 female per 1000 male, which is under national average of 940 as per census 2011. In 2001, the sex ratio of female was 876 per 1000 males in the state. Out of

total population of the, 37.48% people reside in urban regions. Sex ratio in urban regions of the state was 875 females per 1000 males Average Literacy rate in the state of Punjab for Urban area was 83.18% in which males were 86.67% literate whereas female literacy stood at 68.2%. Out of the total population, around 62.52% live in the villages of rural areas. In rural area of the state, female sex ratio per 1000 males was 907, literacy rate for males and female stood at 76.62% and 58.99% respectively. Average literacy rate recorded in Punjab state for rural areas was 71.42% (Census of India, 2011).

Brief Facts about Rajasthan

Rajasthan is one of the most beautiful states in India. The pink city of Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan. The places in Rajasthan attract number of tourists every year. The Rajasthan is mostly a desert state; however it has made wonderful progress in recent time in agriculture and infrastructure fields. The population recorded according to the 2011 census stands about 68 million, making Rajasthan state 8th most populated state among all. The growth rate of the state recorded at about 21%, which is the 11th highest growth rate in India. The literacy rate of Rajasthan recorded 67%, which is a cause for concern. Authorities are to take notice of it and to take some effective actions. The Sex ratio of Rajasthan shows the facts that can be taken into consideration by government for its development. The language spoken in the Rajasthan includes Hindi, it comprises 33 districts and the ISOCODE given by International Organisation for Standardization for this state is RJ. The literacy rate in Rajasthan, as per 2011 census is about 66.11%, in which male literacy stands at 79.19% while female literacy stands at 52.12%.

On the other hand in 2001, literacy rate stood at 60.14% of which male and female literacy were 75.70% and 43.85% respectively. In 2011, the density of Rajasthan is 200 per sq km which is less than national average 382 per sq km where in 2001, it was 165 per sq km while nation average in 2001 was 324 per sq km. the Sex ratio recorded in 2011, stands at 92 for each 1000 male, which is below nation average of 940. On the other hand in 2011, its Sex ratio was 921 Per 1000 male. In Rajasthan, about 24.87% people live in urban area. The sex ratio

of urban area stands at 914 females per 1000 males. Average literacy rate was 79.68% in which male literacy were 87.91% and female literacy were 63.81% as per 2011 census. Further, 75.13% population of Rajasthan live in the villages of rural area. In rural area, the female sex ratio was 933 per 1000 male. Literacy rate for male and female stood 76.16 and 42.20% respectively. Average literacy rate in Rajasthan state for rural area was 61.44% (Census of India, 2011).

Rationale of the present study

It is evident from the above discussion that gender disparity in literacy is major problem for India. Unit level analysis is important for policy formulation and implementation. Thus, the present study investigates the gender disparity in literacy at district level in rural as well as urban areas of selected northern states namely Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. This study is unique in the scenes that it considers both rural as well as urban areas of three major northern states and tries to find out rural urban gender disparity gap at district level. The study helps in finding the leading and laggard districts in literacy index in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. The results of the study may be helpful for formulation and implementation of literacy programmes at district level in all three states.

Methodology of the Study

In the present study, Sopher's method (1974) was applied for finding the district level rural-urban gender disparity in literacy index for northern states namely Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. According to Sopher's method,

If X_1 and X_2 signify the respective percentage value of variables of groups 1 and 2, then the disparity index (D) can be calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Disparity Index (DI)} = \log (X_2/X_1) + \log [(Q-X_1)/(Q-X_2)]$$

$$\text{Where } X_2 > \text{ or } = X_1 \text{ and } Q = 100$$

This method reveals that the higher the value of Disparity Index (DI), the higher the extent of disparity and the lower the value of DI, the lower the extent of disparity. In case there is no disparity (perfect equality), the value of DI will be 0.

Table 1: Overall Gender Literacy Index Value (OGDLIV) and Ranks of Districts of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan

Districts of Haryana	OGDLIV	Rank	Districts of Punjab	OGDLIV	Rank	Districts of Rajasthan	OGDLIV	Rank
Yamunagar	0.318	1	Barnala	0.159	1	Alwar	0.274	1
Panchkula	0.327	2	Moga	0.167	2	Ganganagar	0.392	2
Sirsa	0.328	3	Amritsar	0.197	3	Hanumangarh	0.433	3
Kurukshetra	0.345	4	Mansa	0.215	4	Bikaner	0.442	4
Fatehabad	0.348	5	Faridkot	0.220	5	Kota	0.461	5
Karnal	0.349	6	Sangrur	0.220	6	Banswara	0.479	6
Ambala	0.350	7	Kapurthala	0.225	7	Pratapgarh	0.492	7
Kaithal	0.387	8	Ftehgarh	0.226	8	Dungarpur	0.496	8
Panipat	0.403	9	Taran Tarai	0.227	9	Udaiypur	0.498	9
Gurgaon	0.428	10	Jalandhar	0.232	10	Churu	0.499	10
Jind	0.435	11	Bathinda	0.238	11	Bhilwara	0.532	11
Faridabad	0.440	12	Ludhiyana	0.241	12	Jaipur	0.540	12
Rohtak	0.447	13	Muktsar	0.243	13	Jodhpur	0.542	13
Hisar	0.447	14	Patiala	0.244	14	Bundi	0.547	14
Sonipat	0.469	15	Gurdaspur	0.265	15	Sirohi	0.549	15
Bhiwani	0.535	16	Firozpur	0.280	16	Barmer	0.551	16
Jhajjar	0.539	17	Mohali	0.281	17	Dhaulpur	0.555	17
Palwal	0.605	18	Hoshiarpur	0.287	18	Pali	0.555	18
Mewat	0.605	19	Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar	0.315	19	Jhalawar	0.555	19
Rewari	0.670	20	Rupnagar	0.334	20	Nagaur	0.567	20
Mahendragarh	0.680	21				Ajmer	0.573	21
						Chittargarh	0.576	22
						Baran	0.578	23
						Jalor	0.586	24
						Jaisalmer	0.592	25
						Rajsamand	0.596	26
						Tonk	0.607	27
						Sikar	0.613	28
						Jhunjhunun	0.628	29
						Bharatpur	0.650	30
						Dausa	0.654	31
						Karauli	0.666	32
						Sawai Madhopur	0.688	33

Source: Authors' own calculations

Data Sources and Indicators for the Present Study

The present study is primarily based on secondary data and district level data is extracted from the Census of India 2011. The present study includes nine indicators namely (a) Total literacy (b) Male literacy (c) Female literacy (d) Total literacy in rural area (e) Male literacy in rural area (f) Female literacy in rural area (g) Total urban literacy (h) Urban male literacy (i) Urban female literacy, related to gender disparity in literacy in both rural and urban areas of selected states.

Empirical Results and Discussion

Table 1 reveals the overall gender disparity index values (OGDIV) and ranks of districts of state Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan. The districts Yamuna Nagar, Panchkula, Sirsa are on the top having index value 0.318, 0.327 and 0.328 respectively. On the other hand, districts Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Palwal, Mewat, Rewari and Mahendragarh are on the bottom and showing the huge gap in index value. The district Yamuna Nagar ranked 1st followed by districts Panchkula and Sirsa. In addition, districts of Mahendragarh ranked 21st amongst all districts followed by Rewari, Mewat, Palwal, Jhajjar, and Bhiwani. The results of the study clearly show that the government of Haryana should focus on the districts Mahendragarh, Rewari, Mewat, Palwal, Jhajjar, and Bhiwani to eliminate the gap of overall literacy among these districts.

The state of Punjab consists of 20 districts. The district Barnala is on the top with index value 0.159 and followed by districts Moga and Aritsar with index value 0.167 and 0.197 respectively. Moreover, the districts Rupnagar, Hoshiarpur and Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar are on the bottom. The district Rupnagar stood on the last with index value 0.334 and followed by Hoshiarpur and Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar with index value 0.287 and 0.315 respectively. In addition, district Barnala stood on the top with 1st rank and districts Moga and Aritsar on 2nd and 3rd place respectively. District Rupnagar ranked 20th shows the low overall gender disparity index value. Hence, the government of Punjab should take appropriate actions to raise the level of OGDIV of these districts like Rupnagar, Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar and Hoshiarpur.

The state of Rajasthan consists of 33 districts. The district Alwar hold 1st rank with index value 0.274 followed by Ganganagar and Hanumangarh with rank 2nd and 3rd rank with index value 0.392 and 0.433 respectively. Whereas, the districts Madhopur ranked last i.e. 33th with 0.688 OGDIV followed by Karauli sawai, Dausa, Bharatpur, Jhunjhunun, Sikar, Tonk districts with having OGDIV more than 0.600. This shows the huge gap of overall literacy in Rajasthan.

Table 2 shows the Urban Disparity Literacy Index Value (UDLIV) of all Districts of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. In Haryana, the district Hisar ranked 1st with UDLIV 0.000 and followed by district Yamunanagar, Fatehabad respectively. On the other hand, Mahendragarh district is on the bottom with rank 21st and followed by districts Rewari and Mewat respectively. In Punjab, the district Moga having 1st rank amongst all districts with UDLIV 0.179 followed by Barnala, Amritsar respectively. On the other hand, district Gurdaspur is on the bottom followed by Bhatinda, Mohali and Rupnagar respectively. In Rajasthan, the district Ganganagar ranked 1st with UDLIV 0.368 followed by Hanumangarh, Dhaulpur and Bikaner respectively. On the other hand, district Dausa ranked 33th followed by Madhopur, Sawai, Sirohi respectively.

Table 3 demonstrates that Rural Disparity Literacy Index Value (RDLIV) of all Districts of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. In Haryana, the district Yamunanagar ranked 1st with RDLIV 0.342 followed by districts Sirsa, Panchkula and Kurukshetra respectively. On the other hand, the district Rewari is poorly ranked, followed by districts Mahendragarh, Palwal and Mewat respectively. In Punjab, the district Ferozpur ranked 1st with RDLIV 0.001, followed by districts Barnala, Moga, Amritsar respectively. On the other hand, the district Rupnagar is on the bottom, followed by districts Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar, Hoshiarpur respectively. In Rajasthan, the district Ganganagar ranked 1st with RDLIV 0.406, followed by districts Hanumangarh, Bikaner respectively. On the other hand, the district Madhopur is poorly ranked, followed by Karawali Sawai, Bhartapur, and Tonk respectively.

Table 2: Urban Disparity Literacy Index Value (UDLIV) of all Districts of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan

Districts of Haryana	UDLIV	Rank	Districts of Punjab	UDLIV	Rank	Districts of Rajasthan	UDLIV	Rank
Hisar	0.000	1	Moga	0.179	1	Ganganagar	0.368	1
Yamunagar	0.263	2	Barnala	0.181	2	Hanumangarh	0.395	2
Fatehabad	0.271	3	Amritsar	0.192	3	Dhaulpur	0.408	3
Sirsa	0.288	4	Taran Tarai	0.202	4	Bikaner	0.418	4
Kurukshetra	0.288	5	Jalandhar	0.216	5	Jodhpur	0.422	5
Gurgaon	0.296	6	Fteharh	0.223	6	Tonk	0.423	6
Panchkula	0.305	7	Sangrur	0.229	7	Banswara	0.423	7
Karnal	0.305	8	Hoshiarpur	0.230	8	Jaipur	0.438	8
Ambala	0.321	9	Kapurthala	0.234	9	Kota	0.456	9
Panipat	0.351	10	Ludhiyana	0.238	10	Ajmer	0.484	10
Rohtak	0.371	11	Firozpur	0.240	11	Dungarpur	0.498	11
Kaithal	0.379	12	Patiala	0.245	12	Nagaur	0.500	12
Bhiwani	0.411	13	Mansa	0.252	13	Bhilwara	0.504	13
Jind	0.415	14	Faridkot	0.258	14	Churu	0.506	14
Faridabad	0.429	15	Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar	0.265	15	Udaiyapur	0.514	15
Sonipat	0.429	16	Muktsar	0.266	16	Jhalawar	0.520	16
Jhajjar	0.440	17	Rupnagar	0.267	17	Sikar	0.526	17
Palwal	0.458	18	Mohali	0.271	18	Bharatpur	0.526	18
Mewat	0.469	19	Bathinda	0.278	19	Chittargarh	0.534	19
Rewari	0.509	20	Gurdaspur	0.288	20	Alwar	0.536	20
Mahendragarh	0.534	21				Bundi	0.537	21
						Baran	0.539	22
						Pratapgarh	0.544	23
						Karauli	0.548	24
						Jaisalmer	0.551	25
						Jhunjhunun	0.571	26
						Pali	0.582	27
						Barmer	0.591	28
						Rajsamand	0.593	29
						Jalor	0.604	30
						Sirohi	0.616	31
						Sawai Madhopur	0.631	32
						Dausa	0.648	33

Source: Authors' own calculations

Table 3: Rural Disparity Literacy Index Value (RDLIV) of all Districts of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan

Districts of Haryana	RDLIV	Rank	Districts of Punjab	RDLIV	Rank	Districts of Rajasthan	RDLIV	Rank
Yamunagar	0.342	1	Firozpur	0.001	1	Ganganagar	0.406	1
Sirsa	0.350	2	Barnala	0.151	2	Hanumangarh	0.445	2
Panchkula	0.361	3	Moga	0.166	3	Bikaner	0.480	3
Kurukshetra	0.364	4	Amritsar	0.206	4	Banswara	0.496	4
Fatehabad	0.367	5	Faridkot	0.208	5	Churu	0.504	5
Ambala	0.371	6	Mansa	0.214	6	Dungarpur	0.505	6
Karnal	0.389	7	Kapurthala	0.219	7	Pratapgarh	0.507	7
Kaithal	0.394	8	Sangrur	0.219	8	Udaipur	0.540	8
Panipat	0.445	9	Ftegharh	0.226	9	Barmer	0.559	9
Hisar	0.453	10	Taran Tarai	0.231	10	Pali	0.560	10
Jind	0.453	11	Bathinda	0.232	11	Bhilwara	0.561	11
Rohtak	0.499	12	Jalandhar	0.240	12	Bundi	0.572	12
Sonipat	0.500	13	Muktsar	0.241	13	Sirohi	0.576	13
Bhiwani	0.559	14	Ludhiyana	0.243	14	Jhalawar	0.581	14
Jhajjar	0.569	15	Patiala	0.253	15	Nagaur	0.586	15
Faridabad	0.577	16	Gurdaspur	0.257	16	Jalor	0.590	16
Gurgaon	0.607	17	Mohali	0.298	17	Dhaulpur	0.594	17
Mewat	0.632	18	Hoshiarpur	0.298	18	Kota	0.596	18
Palwal	0.649	19	Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar	0.325	19	Baran	0.597	19
Mahendragarh	0.702	20	Rupnagar	0.353	20	Chittargarh	0.609	20
Rewari	0.719	21				Rajsamand	0.614	21
						Jaisalmer	0.615	22
						Jodhpur	0.622	23
						Alwar	0.623	24
						Sikar	0.639	25
						Jaipur	0.643	26
						Jhunjhunun	0.644	27
						Dausa	0.664	28
						Ajmer	0.664	29
						Tonk	0.670	30
						Bharatpur	0.682	31
						Karauli	0.688	32
						Sawai Madhopur	0.719	33

Source: Authors' own calculations

Government Schemes and Right to Education in India

In order to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), the Government of India has taken major initiatives to improve the education system in India. The government has started various centrally sponsored schemes, in keeping with principles of the National Policy on Education, to make sure that the education of equitable quality for all. The key objectives are to uplift quality of education and to promote equity among all. "Sarva Shiksha Abhiman" (SSA) started in 2001; its ultimate goal is bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education, and achieving important enrichment in learning levels of children. Under partnership SSA and the State Governments reached out to 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations across the country. Central Government has approved 2,31,233 crore for functioning of the joint RTE-SSA programme for the five year period of 2010-11 to 2014-15. Under this scheme, extraordinary focus is on girls, children belonging to SC/ST Communities, other weaker Sections, Minorities and urban deprived children. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme is for residential upper primary schools for girls from SC, ST, OBC and Muslim communities. KGBVs key focus upon teenager girls who are incapable to go to regular schools etc.

Under this scheme minimum reservation of 75% seats for girls from SC/ST/OBC and minorities communities and 25% to girls who live below the poverty line are given. In 2009-10, there were only 2570 KGBVs working in India, After the RTE Act came into existence, an additional 1030 KGBVs were approved, now at present total numbers of KGBVs are 3600 which are actively working in the country. Government also implemented National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) scheme for educationally backward blocks (EBB) and addresses the desires of girls who are "in" as well as "out" of school. NPEGEL also focused those girls who are enrolled in school, but do not attend school regularly. It emphasizes the accountability of teachers to identify weak girls and pay special attention to bring them out of their condition of weakness and prevent them from dropping out. Mid-Day Meal Scheme

(MDMS), the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched in 1995 to lift the level of nutrition of children and facilitate them to develop in a healthy manner. This was expected to improve enrolment, attendance of children in schools as well as improving their nutritional levels. In 2010-11, MDMS covered 7.18 crore children and 3.36 crore children in primary school and upper primary school respectively. As per the Annual Work Plan and Budget of the States/UTs for 2012-13, the district-wise performance of the MDMS in all the States/UTs has been analysed and the poor performing districts (144) have been identified for focused attention.

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was launched in 2009-10. The key objectives of the RMSA are to raise the minimum level of education to class X and to secondary education, make sure good-quality secondary education with focus on Science, Mathematics and English, to reduce the gender, social, cultural and regional gaps in enrolments and dropouts. The scheme for Setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level was launched in 2008-09 and is being implemented from 2009-10. The key objectives are to have at least one high-quality senior secondary school in every block, to try out modern curriculum, to be a model in infrastructure, curriculum, evaluation and school governance. The scheme has two modes of functioning (a) 3500 model schools are to be set up in educationally backward blocks under the State/UT government (b) 2500 model schools are to be set up under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode in the blocks which are not educationally backward. Currently, only 3500 model schools in EBBS under State/UT Governments is operational and remaining 2500 model schools under PPP mode will be operational in 12th Five Year Plan.

In 1988, the government of India launched a scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education which provides for diversification of educational opportunities so as to improve person employability, reduce the disparity between demand and supply of skilled manpower and give an alternative for those pursuing advanced learning. In December 2004, government of India started "the Information and Communication Technology in School Scheme" to give an opportunity

to students for creating the skills of ICT. It also supports to establish ICT infrastructure for secondary and higher secondary school. Further, it aims to setup elegant school in KVs and Navodaya Vidyalayas. (Centre Government schemes for school education, 2013).

The government launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) "Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in 2013. RUSA key role is to provide strategy funding to eligible state education institution. In addition, RUSA improves the overall quality of state institution by ensuring compliance to given norms and adopt official approval, to create institutional structure for planning and monitoring at state level, to ensure reforms in academics, affiliation and examination system, to ensure adequate availability of qualitative faculty etc. The Government also has taken some initiatives for "Eleventh Plan" to establish central universities under Central Universities Act 2009, in each such States which did not have a Central University. The Indira Gandhi Tribal University (IGNTU), M.P, has been established under an act of Parliament for facilitating and promoting avenue of higher education, and to provide facilities for the tribal population of India. Further, The Central Government proposed to establish 14 innovation Universities in identified cities to improve quality of education and aiming at world class standards to facilitate the knowledge in the universities. The MHRD has decided to set up Model College in those districts which are educationally backward, where Gross Enrolment Ratio is less than the national average. In a survey, 374 districts have been identified to establishment of such college and proposals are awaited from the respective State government.

The constitution of India emphasised the importance of elementary education. It is useful to note here that the apex court decreed, in *J.P. Unnikrishnan versus State of Andhra Pradesh* (1993, 1 SCC 645) that free education up to 14 years of age is a right in accordance with the Article 21 (Right to Life and personal liberty) of the Constitution. In former case also, *Mohini Jain versus State of Karnataka* (1992, 3 SCC 666), the court said that 'the right to education flows straight from the right of life'. It is extremely clear that the right to education has been included within the ambit of

Article 21 of Indian Constitution. In addition, the 86th Amendment Act of the Constitution of India is intended at the universalisation of elementary education and making it a fundamental right. The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, seeks to make the following key changes in the Constitution: Indian Constitution, Part III ('Fundamental Rights') inserts the following new article: 21A. Right to Education: "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine." Further in Part IV ('Directive Principles of State Policy') replaces the existing Article 45 with the following: "Provision for Early Childhood care and Education to Children below the age of Six Years- the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years" and in Article 51A, it is mentioned that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years (Jha 2007).

Conclusion

The article presents empirical analysis of gender disparity in literacy among Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. It observes that these states are facing problem of gender disparity in literacy. The result of OGDIV of this study highlights that, in Haryana, the district Mahendergarh is on the bottom, followed by Rewari, Mewat, Palwal, Jhajjar and Bhiwani respectively. In Punjab, the district Rupnagar is ranked last followed by Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar and Hoshiarpur respectively. In Rajasthan, the district Madhopur ranked last followed by Karauli Sawai, Dausa, Bharatpur, Jhunjhunun, Sikar, Tonk respectively. The result of UDLIV shows that, in Haryana, the district Mahendergarh is on the bottom, followed by districts Rewari and Mewat respectively. In Punjab, the district Gurdaspur ranked last, followed by Bhatinda, Mohali and Rupnagar respectively. In Rajasthan, district Dausa ranked last followed by Madhopur, Sawai, Sirohi respectively. The result of RDLIV shows that, in Haryana, the district Rewari is poorly ranked followed by districts Mahendergarh, Palwal and Mewat respectively. In Punjab, the district Rupnagar is on the bottom, followed

by districts Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar, Hoshiarpur respectively. In Rajasthan, the district Madhopur is poorly ranked, followed by Karawali Sawai, Bhartapur, and Tonk respectively.

On the basis of the above results, an interpretation may be taken that, despite number of education policies, plans, schemes and law made at national and international level, the gender disparity in literacy still exists in India at huge level. The state government of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan have started number of scheme to uplift the literacy level, but still some districts among these states can be seen with high gender disparity in literacy. The government of India and the state government should focus on these above mentioned districts to eliminate disparity in literacy. The government should also take some proactive actions to raise the level of literacy at all level so that welfare of society may be achieved.

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