

Education Scenario: A Study of Malwa Region

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Abstract

In India, education is provided by the public sector as well as private sector, with control and funding at three levels: federal, state and local. Education in India falls under the control of both union government and the states, with some responsibilities lying with the union and the states having autonomy for others. Education has been made too easy for the students so that more and more students can enter into the scope of education system of the country. The announcements like abolishing compulsory CBSE board exams for Class 10th from session 2010-11, introduction of grading system, the passage of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, reservation policies etc. are a few efforts taken by the government. Now the question arises as to what extent such efforts in the field of education have succeeded in different states of the country. Punjab is served by several institutions of higher education, including 32 universities which provide undergraduate and postgraduate courses in all the major arts, humanities, science, engineering, law, medicine, veterinary science, and business. Primary and secondary education systems are mainly affiliated to Punjab School Education Board. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the population of Punjab is 27,704,236 (males 14,634,819 & females 13,069,417). The literacy rate is 75%, male literacy being 80.23% and female literacy 68.36%. The present paper is an attempt to study the literacy level of the male and female in the various districts of Malwa region of the Punjab. This paper concludes that literacy rate in Punjab increased to 76.7% as per 2011 census, out of which maximum literacy rate has been found in the district Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali) (83.8%) and the lowest in district of Mansa (62.8%) of Malwa region. Male-female literacy rate shows an improvement sign. Sex ratio improved in all the districts of Punjab but found to be maximum in the district of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshar) (95%).

Keywords: Education, Male, Female, Malwa Region

Introduction

Education is the only weapon by which a person could fight and overcome the battle of life. In historical perspective, education has been still a very important

part of every society of the world. There are two broad levels of education i.e. school and higher level. The role of school education is very important as it forms the foundation of the education system. At this level, one gets knowledge and cognitive skills and also develops attitude that helps him/her to become a responsible human being. But millions of children are out of school, with the number increasing annually. Government schools under-serve children from marginalised communities, student teacher ratios are unbalanced, and poor quality of education and school infrastructure prompts hundreds of thousands of children, especially girls, to annually drop out of school. In order keep up with the pace of neighboring states, Punjab government is concentrating on implementing special ideas such as establishment of portals for distance education, technical education in Punjab University and many more. Punjab government has confirmed to launch a comprehensive plan to provide technical education to students, for leading them to industrial opportunities. These well-devised plans are advancing education in Punjab to a newer level.

Hierarchy in the Education System of Punjab

- **Primary Education:** A strong education system supports Punjab's primary education, strengthening the base of general education of the masses. Punjab has 44281 fully functional primary schools, which are equipped with 118099 teachers and 4670695 students.
- **Secondary Education:** Secondary education in Punjab follows infrastructure of CBSE board, which is precisely developed to fulfil needs of the students. There are 5454 secondary schools, which follow the rules of CBSE board explicitly. These schools have more than 514304 students who are taught by 16538 teachers.
- **Pre-University/College:** The present number of colleges in Punjab is 382. 80 engineering colleges and 70 colleges of arts and science attract students.

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Colleges in Punjab are equipped with well-trained faculties to provide extensive knowledge to the students so that they can have great careers.

Objective of the Study

1. To study about the education level of the districts of Malwa Region of the Punjab
2. To know the trends in male and female literacy rate in rural and urban areas of Malwa districts of Punjab

Review of Literature

Upendranath (1991) opines that education, in general, and primary education, in particular, are essential inputs for the economic and social development of individuals as well as of nations.

World Bank (1998) reports that investment in education is not only productive but also yields increasing returns. Education plays a pioneer role in the creation of human capital and social progress which in turn determines the progress of the country. Thus education is an important factor of economic development. An educated man plays an important role in the progress of nation. If all the people of a nation are well-educated then there is no disturbance and friction in the way of economic growth and development.

Ministry of Education (1985) reports that elementary education is the most crucial stage of education as it lays the foundation for developing the personality, attitudes, confidence, habits, learning skills, and communicating capabilities of pupils. The basic skill of reading, writing and arithmetic are acquired at this stage. This is the stage when physical growth can be assisted, interest in sports and adventure roused and manual dexterity developed.

Saiydain (1997) argues that primary education is not concerned with any class or group, but deals with the entire population of the country. It touches life at every point and it has to do most with the formation of national ideology and character than any other single activity—social, political or educational.

Tilak (1996) mentions that primary education is crucial for spreading mass literacy, which is basic requirement for the effective functioning of democratic institutions, economic development and modernisation of the social structure. It also represents an indispensable first step

towards the provision of opportunity to all citizens of the country.

Day *et al.* (2007) found that there is no systematic links between effectiveness and age, life phase, or gender. Commitment and resilience were found to be characteristics of effective teachers, while the quality of school leadership and professional development addressed the needs and concerns of teachers and opportunities for collaboration with peers were keys to retaining positive attitudes through the professional life phases.

Ong *et al.* (2010) carried out the study to determine the factors associated with poor academic achievement among urban primary school children in Malaysia through across-sectional study. Data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews from 1470 students from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. Achievement was taken as marks obtained by the students in the core subjects of the primary examination. All students underwent the Raven's standard progressive matrices test as a general measure of cognitive ability. The results showed low cognitive ability was detrimental to academic achievement.

Naderi *et al.* (2010) examined if a relationship exists between intelligence and academic achievement and if the relationship differs between males and females. 153 participants comprising 105 males and 48 females completed the creativity test. Cumulative grade point average was used to select the participants. Intelligence was measured using the Cattell's culture fair intelligence test. The findings indicated that intelligence was not related to academic achievement for both males and females.

Shah (1976) found in his study on parents attitudes towards secondary education in Khasi district that educated parents had more favourable attitude towards Secondary Education than the less educated ones. Sex had no influence on parental attitude. Parental attitude had a negative relation with their age. Rural parents had less favourable attitude than urban ones. Parents with smaller family size had more favourable attitude than those of larger family.

Research Methodology

To study the state of education in Malwa region of Punjab, data have been taken for district wise population, district wise sex ratio, district wise literacy rates by sex. Data

have been primarily taken from following sources:

- (1) Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (various issues)
- (2) CMIE reports (various issues)
- (3) Directorate of Education Punjab, Chandigarh
- (4) Economic Survey of Punjab (various issues)
- (5) Census 2001, India
- (6) Census 2011, India

District Wise Population Size and Sex Ratio of Punjab

Punjab is the richest state in India with highest per capita income. Population of Punjab as per census

is approximately 2.77 crores. Male-female ratio has deteriorated in Punjab over time; it declined from 882 in 1991 to 874 in 2001 and 893 in 2011, which is significantly lower than national average of 940.

Table 1 shows that there are wide variations in the size of population of districts. Ludhiana with a population of 34.88 lakhs is the most populated district as per 2011 Census. The analysis of sex ratio shows that highest sex ratio is registered for the district of Nawanshar under 2001 Census as well as 2011 Census. The lowest sex ratio was recorded for Ludhiana in Census 2001 and for Bathinda in 2011.

Table 2 gives information regarding literacy rate, male literacy rate, and female literacy rate for various districts

Table 1: Population of Different Districts in 2001 and 2011

District	Population 2001	Sex Ratio 2001	Population 2011	Sex Ratio 2011
Ludhiana	3032831	824	3498739	873
Ferozepur	1746107	885	2029074	893
Patiala	1584780	875	1895686	891
Sangrur	1473242	870	1655169	885
Bhatinda	1183295	870	1388525	868
Moga	894793	887	995746	893
Muktsar	777493	891	901896	896
Mohali	746987	842	994628	879
Mansa	688758	880	769751	883
Rupnagar	628846	889	684621	915
Nawanshar	587468	914	612310	954
Faridkot	550892	883	617508	890
Fatehgarh Sahib	538470	854	600163	871
Barnala	526931	872	595527	876

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab 2001, 2012; www.censuspunjab2001.com

Table 2: Literacy Rate by Sex for Districts of Malwa Region

District	Persons% Lakhs 2001	Persons% Lakhs 2011	Literacy Rate Male-2001	Literacy Rate Male-2011	Literacy Rate -Female-2001	Literacy Rate Female-2011
Ludhiana	61.42	69.8	80.30	85.98	71.9	77.88
Ferozepur	63.34	70.6	68.7	75.44	51.7	61.69
Patiala		84.9	75.3	80.20	62.50	69.8
Sangrur		69.4	66.00	73.18	53.00	62.17
Bhatinda	60.04	68.9	67.80	73.79	53.70	61.94
Moga	58.67	66.8	68.00	74.44	58.50	66.48
Muktsar	61.51	69.6	65.4	71.76	50.30	59.24
SAS Nagar (Mohali)			83.4	87.89	71.50	79.18

District	Persons% Lakhs 2001	Persons% Lakhs 2011	Literacy Rate Male-2001	Literacy Rate Male-2011	Literacy Rate -Female-2001	Literacy Rate Female-2011
Mansa	69.96	76.3	58.90	67.31	45.20	55.68
Rupnagar			82.70	87.50	68.70	76.42
Nawanshar			82.90	85.41	69.50	73.93
Faridkot	52.50	62.8	68.10	74.60	55.00	63.91
Fatehgarh Sahib	76.54	82.5	78.30	83.33	68.30	74.80
Barnala			65.40	71.57	54.50	63.57

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab 2001, 2012; www.censuspunjab2001.com

of Punjab based on Census 2001 and Census 2011. SAS Nagar remains the most literate district in state of Punjab and also recorded highest male and female literacy rates. On the contrary, Mansa is placed at the bottom in terms of literacy rate as per Census 2001 and Census 2011. The maximum literacy rates were recorded as 82.90% and 87.50% as per Census 2001 and Census 2011. In 2011, the districts of Nawanshar, Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Ludhiana also recorded literacy rates higher than 80%. The maximum literacy rates for female were recorded as 71.50% and 79.18% as per Census 2001 and Census 2011, respectively. In 2011, the districts of Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Ludhiana also registered female literacy rates higher than 75%.

Table 3 shows that SAS Nagar (Mohali) district has the maximum male and female literacy rate (90.90% and 84.25% respectively) in urban area. But if we analyse

rural areas of the district it is found that Rupnagar district has highest male and female literacy ratio.

If we analyse the table we find that although the population of Ludhiana is maximum in all the districts of Malwa region but Nawanshar has the highest sex ratio. It means that female foeticide cases in this district are low. If we talk about the literacy ratio SAS Nagar (Mohali) has the maximum male and female literacy rate. It shows that government is continuously taking action to improve the education level of the population. Government has made many programmes in this regard. All programmes aimed at the education of young people, must spring from the philosophy of education, the philosophy which provides for learner's total growth and development. The policies regarding education in Punjab realise that

- Every child has a fundamental right to receive education of good quality.

Table 3: Literacy Rate of Males and Females: Rural and Urban Area Wise (2011)

District	Urban Male literacy% 2011	Urban Female literacy% 2011	Rural Male literacy %2011	Rural Female Literacy % 2011 Rate Male-2011
Ludhiana	88.16	81.16	82.77	73.31
Ferozepur	83.18	73.98	74.4	57.12
Patiala	87.88	80.48	74.91	62.49
Sangrur	79.75	69.90	70.22	58.70
Bhatinda	84.29	73.89	67.89	55.37
Moga	82.18	75.34	72.15	63.87
Muktsar	81.53	70.51	67.97	54.90
SAS Nagar (Mohali)	90.90	84.25	84.26	72.94
Mansa	80.77	70.16	63.70	51.74
Rupnagar	89.61	82.34	86.74	74.35
Nawanshar	86.99	78.43	84.99	72.81
Faridkot	83.34	73.34	67.97	54.90
Fatehgarh Sahib	86.69	79.59	81.79	72.75
Barnala	78.14	70.20	68.48	60.52

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab 2001, 2012; www.censuspunjab2001.com

- (b) Education should be directed for all round development of human personality.
- (c) There is a need for decentralisation of the educational system of the state.

Following are the various efforts made in Punjab to promote education.

- (1) In 1919, Punjab Primary Education Act was formed. This act demanded that the local boards should give to provincial govt. a complete picture for making primary education compulsory and free for boys between 6 to 11 years of age.
- (2) By 1930 about 2580 rural areas and 50 municipalities had introduced compulsion regarding making primary education free of cost (Singh, 1998).
- (3) The year 1960 was a landmark in the history of Punjab education when Punjab Education Act was passed to provide free and compulsory primary education from 1st April, 1961. The salient features of the act were
 - (a) Primary education will be compulsory for the age group 6-11 and it shall be free.
 - (b) It is the responsibility of the parents to send their child to attend the school.
 - (c) There should be responsible excuse for non-attendance.
 - (d) Children are not to be employed so as to prevent them from attending school.
 - (e) There will be special school for physical and mentally deficient children (Aggarwal, 1996).
- (4) Operation Black Board was started in 1986 by all states of India, which includes (a) teachers equipment, (b) classroom teaching materials, (c) play materials and toys, (d) game equipment, (e) primary science kit, (f) mini tool kit, (g) two-in-one audio equipment, (h) books for library, (i) school bell, (j) musical instrument, (k) blackboards, (l) chalks and dusters, and (m) water facility. According to Elementary Policy, 1986 in Punjab which is a part of National Policy on Education, "efforts should be made to fulfil the constitutional directive of making education free and compulsory upto the age of 14" (Walia, 1995).
- (5) In order to improve enrolment, student retention, and reduce drop out rate of students in primary classes and also to improve the nutritional status of primary

school students, Government of India launched a countrywide scheme, National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day-Meal Scheme)' on 2-10-1995 (effective from 15th august 1995). Under this scheme, students of primary classes were to be provided wheat at Rs. 3 per Kg per student per month (for 10 months in a year) subject to 80% attendance. Later on, the status switched over to cooked meal scheme within two years but like many other states, Punjab did not switch over to cooked meal scheme due to shortage of funds involved in the conversion of food grains to cooked meal. However, cooked mid-day meal was provided to children of primary classes in one block in every district of Punjab during the year 2012-13 and the cost of meal was Rs. 6.50 per child per day.

- (6) Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an Indian government programme aimed at the universalisation of elementary education. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan has been operational since 2000-2001; when district primary education was launched over several phases covering 272 districts in 18 states of country. The expenditure shared by central government was 55% while share of state government was 15%. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful elementary education of satisfactory level for all by 2010, bringing all the social and gender gaps with active participants of local community in the affairs of the school and effective decentralisation down to the school level. The thrust of scheme is to achieve zero drop outs by 2010. Main components of the scheme are given as: a) enrolment of all the out school children and dropout by 2003, b) complete five years of primary education by 2007, and c) Complete eight years of education by 2010 (Gupta, 2004).
- (7) Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act): Free education for all children between the ages of 6-14 years has been made a fundamental right under the RTE Act 2009, with effect from 1 April 2010.

The Ministry of Human Resources Development had set up a committee to identify Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) norms that require to be brought conformity with RTE norms and standards, including, for example, pupil-teacher ratio and teacher-classroom ratio. On the basis of the recommendation of this committee, SSA norms have been modified to align them with the requirement of the

RTE Act 2009. The main changes made in the norms are related to the, (a) opening of new primary schools and upper primary schools as per neighbourhood norms, (b) up gradation of all alternate schooling facilities provided through centres under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), (c) revised pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) norms, (d) provision of special training for out-of-school and drop out children to facilitate age- appropriate admission, (e) provision of grant and teaching learning equipment to facilitate state to merge classes Vth and VIIIth in primary and upper primary cycle stage and, (f) approval of additional 1073 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) for educationally backward blocks (EBBs) (Economic Survey 2010-11).

- (8) Some other programmes for improving primary education include
- (a) **Improvement in Science education:** in order to promote and strengthen the teaching of science, a state institute of science education was established in the state in the year 1968. The teaching of Science starts right from the primary stage of education.
 - (b) **Regional Institute of English:** There is a regional institute of English at Chandigarh, which caters to Punjab and Haryana. The aim of this institute is to organise orientation courses for teachers teaching English at the elementary school stage. This had helped a great deal in improving the standard of English in our schools.
 - (c) **State Institution of Education:** Punjab does not have a separate state institute of education. The state institute of education at Chandigarh is responsible for imparting in service training to personnel in Punjab and Haryana. Some primary schools have also been attached with this institution for the purpose of extension work.
 - (d) **In-Service Training Centre:** A number of in-service training programme have been organised by these in-service training centres for different categories of personnel such as heads of institutions, district education officers, block education officers, social education workers, and primary school teachers.
 - (e) **Pre-Service Teacher Training Programme:** It is the function of the Education Department to set up junior basic training centres for training of primary school teachers, the duration of such training is two

years. Prior to 1972 such centres were opened independently, while a few units were attached with the high schools.

- (f) **Audio Visual Education:** The Punjab Education Department maintains a film library under the charge of an officer. The film library is enriched from time to time by adding new films and film strips.
- (g) **Children Book Trust:** A Children Book Trust has been established in the state for producing suitable literature and catering to the needs of the children of different age groups.

Conclusion

The present paper concludes that overall population of Punjab has been increased about 34.14 lakh according to 2011 census as compared to 2001 census. Overall sex ratio of Punjab has also increased from 874 during 2001 to 893 during the year 2011. District Nawashahar showed sex ratio higher than 954 under Census 2011. The literacy rate of Punjab was 76.7% during 2011, which is slightly higher than the literacy rate of nation (74.04%). District wise highest and lowest literacy rates were for the districts of SAS Nagar (Mohali) and Mansa respectively. Number of primary schools increased during the year 2011, but the number of students declined in these schools. The reason behind this is that some primary schools were merged with middle schools on behalf of government policy. School teachers in Punjab also decreased during the year 2011, because of retirement of old teachers and non-recruitment of new teachers. Many policies and programmes for qualitative improvement of education in Punjab have started, such as operation black board, improvement in Science education, regional institutes of English, state institution of education, audio visual education, etc. The number of female teachers is more as compared to male teachers in schools of Punjab, whereas the number of girl students at primary school level shows totally an opposite position. Thus, the higher number of female primary teachers could be helpful in promoting girls students enrolment in primary schools, through creating awareness among families (especially mothers) of girl students. Further, female teacher can conveniently guide and inspire the girls and their families by giving their own example that they are working as government teachers and earning money as well as social status because of education.

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