

Gender Disparity in literacy level among Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe Population – A case Study of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, India

Anindita Barman¹, Ranjan Roy²

Abstract

Literacy is an important indicator of socio-cultural development of any region. Male-female gap in literacy is an important indicator of literacy. Gender disparity in literacy affects in all aspects of lives of women. Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe peoples are always far behind in all social development aspects. The present paper aims to study the Gender disparity in literacy among schedule caste and scheduled tribe population in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The research work is based on secondary sources of data collected from the District Census Hand Book (2011) of Jalpaiguri district and State Statistical Handbook. Literacy rate has been computed for the population above 6 year and Sopher's Disparity index modified by Kundu and Rao (1983) has been employed for measurement of male-female disparity among SC and ST population in literacy. The male female disparity in literacy is high in rural area than urban area.

Keywords: Male-female literacy, disparity index, rural-urban disparity, Male-female disparity, spatial pattern.

Introduction

Literacy is a very important indicator of human development in any region. Literacy is an essential strategy for eradicating the poverty, control the population growth and over all societal development. 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 (UNESCO, 2004; 2017). Literacy is a good indicator to empower women, make them stronger to take decisions in their family. Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relations and for permitting the free play of demographic processes (Chadna, 1980). Male-female gap in literacy is an important indicator of literacy (Khullar, 1999). As per census 2011, a person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate. A person who can only read but cannot write, is not literate. India achieved only 74.04% literacy as per 2011 census. Of this male literacy accounted for 82.14 % and female literacy rate was 65.46%. West Bengal state as a whole accounted for 82.67% of male and 71.16 % of female literacy. Jalpaiguri district

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Cluny Women's College, Kalimpong

² Professor, Department of Geography & Applied Geography, University of North Bengal