



REGIONAL INEQUALITY IN LITERACY ASPECTS IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Literacy forms an important input in overall development of individuals enabling them to comprehend their social, political and cultural environment better and respond to it appropriately. It acts as a catalyst for social upliftment enhancing the returns on investment made in almost every aspect of development effort, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, employment of weaker sections of the society. Literacy rate in India (Census of India, 2011) was found to be 74.04 percent. When compared to the adult literacy rate, the youth literacy rate was about 9 percent higher. During the last decade, the highest improvement in literacy rate was observed among rural females (24 percent). This paper is descriptive in nature and examines the regional inequality in literacy aspects in India based on 75th round of National Sample Survey data. This will be useful in decision support, frame policy measures to improve literacy rate among the regions.

Key Words

Literacy, Education, Region, Inequality, gender and Census of India

Introduction

Educational attainment is the first and foremost step towards improving quality of life, awareness level and also level of skill of people in the society. Considering the importance of education, India has enacted 'Right to Education Act, 2009' to ensure free and compulsory Education for children in the age group 6-14 years. Literacy and education are important indicators in a society and play a central role in human development that impacts overall social-economic development milieu. Higher levels of literacy and education lead to better attainment of health and nutritional status, economic growth, population control, empowerment of the weaker sections and community as a whole. Also, higher literacy rates improve

development indicators consistently. Census obtains information on literacy for every individual, as this is recognised as one of the most important social characteristics. In census, a person aged seven years and above who can both read and write in any language, is treated as ‘literate’. A person, who can only read but cannot write, is not considered as ‘literate’ (Census of India, 2011).

Literacy is the main foundation for social and economic growth. Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using 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 (UNESCO, 2018). Generally, literacy also encompasses numeracy, the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations. Literacy and education is also one of the main components of human development index (HDI), as it has direct impact on the per capita income, level of living and ultimately on life expectancy. There is a strong empirical co-relation between literacy and life expectancy (Khan, 2004). In international usages, literacy is defined as the ability to read write and at least a simple message in any language (Hassan, 2005). Education is the single best development investment and a powerful instrument to develop an economically prosperous society. The long term social and economic return from education is enormous. The level of development of any region or any area may be gauged through the socio-economic characteristics of people. Of the various elements of population characteristics, the level of literacy and education gives the best exposition of regional development because of its dual functions as cause and effect of modernization.

Review of literature

Gopala Krishan and Madhav Shyam (1978) describe and interpret the regional aspects of the urban-rural differential in literacy in India in relation to economic, society and educational history different of India on the basis of 1971 census data. Siddiqui Shafiqullah (2011) attempted to analyses the trends of differential in literacy rate, spatial patterns of urban-rural differential and the relationship between differential index and selected variables of development among the districts of Uttar Pradesh, India. Kalyan Sundar Som and Ramesh Prasad Mishra (2014) examined the literacy and their differential in West Bengal, India. Ghanshyam Prasad Jhariya and C.K.Jain (2014) attempted to study the trends and pattern and their differential (Male-female and urbanrural) of literacy in Madhya Pradesh. The male – female and rural – urban differential has been worked out. There are remarkable gaps between male and female and between rural and urban rates in the state. Jangra, Ravinder and Kaushik, Satya (2015) describe and interpret the regional aspects of the urban-rural differentials in female literacy during 1991, 2001 and 2011, identify the correlates of female literacy in an agro-based economy, the total female literacy rate has increased significantly during the study period, and there are wide gaps in urban-rural female literacy. Comparatively, the increase is more remarkable in rural areas and gap is narrowing down. Vachaspati Shukla and Udaya S

Mishra (2020) examined the progress in literacy among the Indian states are evaluated here from an age cohort perspective.

Objectives

1. To examine the inequality in literacy aspects in India, also its states and
2. To suggest measures to improve aspects of literacy

Method and Material

The paper is based on descriptive and data collected from 75th round of National Sample Survey conducted on Household Social Consumption: Education during 1st July 2017 to 30th June 2018. A stratified multi-stage design was adopted for the 75th round survey and covers whole of the Indian Union except the villages in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In this survey, total number of persons of age 3 to 35 years surveyed was 2, 86,456 (1, 73,397 in rural areas and 1, 13,059 in urban areas). Percentage of literates among persons of age 7 years and above has been defined as literacy rate.

Analysis and Discussion

Literacy rate

Literacy and level of education are basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a society. Spread of literacy is generally associated with important traits of modern civilization such as modernization, urbanization, industrialization, communication and commerce. Literacy forms an important input in overall development of individuals enabling them to comprehend their social, political and cultural environment better and respond to it appropriately. Education is a human right. Education is essential for human emancipation and social development. It contributes to better health, higher productivity, greater income, human freedom, capability and esteemed living, increased participation in community life. Literacy is an important demographic element of human process. It is essential for human character, social and economic development. Education includes new ideas for a better building of the society and their personal life style. Table- 1 gives data on literacy rate (in per cent) among persons of age 7 years and above for different States and regions.

Table-1: Literacy rate (in per cent) among persons of age 7 years and above for different states and regions

State	Rural			Urban (in per cent)			Rural+Urban (in per cent)		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Jammu and Kashmir	84.9	66.0	75.8	88.5	75.7	82.6	85.7	68.0	77.3
Himachal Pradesh	92.3	79.2	85.6	97.8	93.0	95.5	92.9	80.5	86.6
Haryana	85.8	66.4	77.0	92.5	81.2	87.3	88.0	71.3	80.4
Punjab	85.5	74.0	80.0	93.8	86.7	90.5	88.5	78.5	83.7
Uttarakhand	93.1	79.0	86.1	97.4	85.9	92.0	94.3	80.7	87.6
Uttar Pradesh	80.5	60.4	70.8	86.8	74.9	81.2	81.8	63.4	73.0
Delhi	-	-	-	94.1	83.4	89.4	93.7	82.4	88.7
Rajasthan	77.6	52.6	65.5	91.1	74.6	83.5	80.8	57.6	69.7
North Region	85.7	68.2	77.3	92.8	81.9	87.8	88.2	72.8	80.9
Gujarat	85.7	68.0	77.0	95.2	86.3	91.1	89.5	74.8	82.4
Maharashtra	87.0	71.4	79.4	95.3	87.6	91.7	90.7	78.4	84.8
West Region	86.4	69.7	78.2	95.3	87.0	91.4	90.1	76.6	83.6
Chhattisgarh	84.0	65.6	75.0	91.8	82.3	87.2	85.4	68.7	77.3
Madhya Pradesh	77.9	61.0	69.8	91.4	79.5	85.8	81.2	65.5	73.7
Central Region	81.0	63.3	72.4	91.6	80.9	86.5	83.3	67.1	75.5
Bihar	78.6	58.7	69.5	89.3	75.9	83.1	79.7	60.5	70.9
Jharkhand	80.6	61.4	71.4	92.6	78.6	86.1	83.0	64.7	74.3
Odisha	82.0	67.3	74.9	94.4	85.9	90.2	84.0	70.3	77.3
West Bengal	82.0	72.6	77.4	91.4	84.7	88.1	84.8	76.1	80.5
East Region	80.8	65.0	73.3	92.0	81.3	86.9	82.9	67.9	75.8
Assam	89.4	79.9	84.9	96.1	91.4	93.8	90.1	81.2	85.9
Northeast Region	89.4	79.9	84.9	96.1	91.4	93.8	90.1	81.2	85.9
Andhra Pradesh	67.5	53.4	60.4	86.3	73.1	79.6	73.4	59.5	66.4
Telangana	70.6	53.7	62.1	91.7	79.0	85.5	80.5	65.1	72.8
Karnataka	78.2	63.1	71.0	92.5	83.7	88.3	83.4	70.5	77.2
Kerala	96.7	94.1	95.4	98.2	96.4	97.3	97.4	95.2	96.2
Tamil Nadu	84.2	70.8	77.5	92.3	85.9	89.0	87.9	77.9	82.9
South Region	79.4	67.0	73.3	92.2	83.6	87.9	84.5	73.6	79.1
All India	81.5	65.0	73.5	92.2	82.8	87.7	84.7	70.3	77.7

Note: Figures for rural Delhi is not presented separately. However, 'rural + urban' for Delhi includes, 'rural' also.
Source: NSS 75th Round, July 2017 – June 2018.

Table-1 depicts that higher literacy rate is found in the region of north-east followed west, north, central, east and south. Central and east region had lower literacy rate than all India level. Among the regions, lowest literacy rate registered Uttar Pradesh in north, Gujarat in west, Madhya Pradesh in Central, Bihar in East and Andhra Pradesh in South in order. In the regions and states, literacy rate was lower for females. The differentials in literacy rate in regions and states can be attributed to disparities in socio-economic, cultures, physical conditions, infrastructure facilities and education related policies.

Years of formal education

Number of years completed in formal education or levels of education and literacy lead to a greater awareness and also contributes in improvement of economic and social conditions. Also better literacy and educational level definitely have a positive impact on the health as well as other sectors that influences level of development. Data on average number of years completed in formal education among persons of age 15 years and above for different states and regions presented in table-2

Table-2: Average number of years completed in formal education among persons of age 15 years and above for different states and regions

State	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Jammu and Kashmir	9.9	9.3	9.6	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.1	9.7	9.9
Himachal Pradesh	10.3	10.0	10.1	12.6	11.7	12.2	10.6	10.2	10.4
Haryana	10.0	9.5	9.8	11.7	11.5	11.6	10.6	10.3	10.5
Punjab	9.4	9.2	9.3	11.0	11.1	11.1	10.0	10.0	10.0
Uttarakhand	10.4	9.7	10.0	12.5	11.7	12.1	11.0	10.2	10.6
Uttar Pradesh	9.6	9.2	9.5	11.2	11.0	11.1	10.0	9.7	9.9
Delhi	-	-	-	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.4
Rajasthan	9.3	8.5	9.0	11.1	10.5	10.9	9.8	9.1	9.6
North Region	9.8	9.3	9.6	11.5	11.2	11.4	10.4	10.1	10.3
Gujarat	8.9	8.0	8.6	10.8	10.2	10.5	9.8	9.0	9.4
Maharashtra	9.5	8.6	9.1	11.4	10.8	11.2	10.4	9.7	10.1
West Region	9.2	8.3	8.9	11.1	10.5	10.9	10.1	9.4	9.8
Chhattisgarh	8.9	8.0	8.5	11.1	10.6	10.9	9.4	8.7	9.1
Madhya Pradesh	8.7	7.8	8.4	10.9	10.4	10.6	9.4	8.6	9.1
Central Region	8.8	7.9	8.5	11.0	10.5	10.8	9.4	8.7	9.1
Bihar	9.1	8.2	8.8	11.1	10.2	10.7	9.4	8.5	9.0
Jharkhand	8.6	7.7	8.2	10.8	10.3	10.6	9.1	8.4	8.8
Odisha	8.5	8.0	8.3	11.1	10.4	10.8	9.0	8.5	8.8
West Bengal	8.3	7.8	8.1	10.3	9.8	10.1	9.0	8.5	8.7
East Region	8.6	7.9	8.4	10.8	10.2	10.6	9.1	8.5	8.8
Assam	9.1	8.3	8.7	11.5	10.6	11.1	9.4	8.6	9.0
Northeast Region	9.1	8.3	8.7	11.5	10.6	11.1	9.4	8.6	9.0
Andhra Pradesh	9.3	8.6	9.0	10.7	9.9	10.3	9.8	9.1	9.5
Telangana	9.8	9.1	9.5	11.9	11.3	11.7	11.0	10.4	10.7
Karnataka	9.2	8.7	9.0	11.8	11.0	11.4	10.3	9.7	10.1
Kerala	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.6	10.8	10.7	10.4	10.4	10.4
Tamil Nadu	9.6	9.0	9.3	11.0	10.2	10.6	10.3	9.7	10.0
South Region	9.6	9.1	9.4	11.2	10.6	10.9	10.4	9.9	10.1
All India	9.2	8.6	9.0	11.2	10.6	10.9	9.9	9.4	9.7

Note: Figures for rural Delhi is not presented separately. However, 'rural + urban' for Delhi includes, 'rural' also.
Source: NSS 75th Round, July 2017 – June 2018.

Table-2 reveals that the average number of years completed in formal education among persons of age 15 years and above has registered in region of north followed by south, west, north east, west and east region. Enteral and east regions registered lower literacy rate than national level. Among the regions, Uttar Pradesh in north, Andhra Pradesh in south, Gujarat in west, Madhya Pradesh in Central and West Bengal in east in order had lower average number of years completed in formal education among persons of age 15 years and above. Average number of years completed in formal education was lower for females. It is generally influenced by socio-economic status and cultural aspects along with parents' perception on importance of higher education.

Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR)

GAR is one of the important indices of literacy rate. For each level of education, GAR is the ratio of the number of persons attending in the level of education to the number persons in the corresponding official age-group. GAR is calculated as “ Number of persons attending in particular Classes/ estimated population in the respective classes’ age-group x100. Table-3 furnishes details of Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR).

Table-3: Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) at different levels of education for different States and region (rural+urban person)

State	Level of education					
	Primary level	Upper primary/ Middle level	Primary and Upper primary/ Middle level	Secondary level	Higher Secondary level	Post higher Secondary level
Jammu and Kashmir	101.9	96.9	100.2	115.7	77.0	33.1
Himachal Pradesh	99.3	92.1	96.1	100.9	110.0	34.1
Haryana	106.3	93.8	101.3	96.7	70.3	25.2
Punjab	101.5	94.9	99.1	95.4	79.4	22.8
Uttarakhand	99.8	111.6	104.0	80.7	98.7	32.8
Uttar Pradesh	98.9	88.8	95.4	64.0	60.4	20.8
Delhi	100.2	90.6	96.8	93.6	86.2	29.6
Rajasthan	110.5	87.0	101.6	82.4	70.1	28.9
North Region	102.3	94.5	99.3	91.2	81.5	28.4
Gujarat	106.0	89.1	99.1	88.3	59.2	15.3
Maharashtra	101.1	96.5	99.5	104.0	74.3	29.3
West Region	103.6	92.8	99.3	96.2	66.8	22.3
Chhattisgarh	102.4	100.4	101.6	90.3	66.9	16.2
Madhya Pradesh	95.3	97.5	96.1	83.9	59.9	17.3
Central Region	98.9	99.0	98.9	87.1	63.4	16.8
Bihar	97.2	98.4	97.6	82.0	65.7	16.2
Jharkhand	112.4	91.4	105.3	90.0	51.3	16.8
Odisha	103.4	91.3	98.8	87.2	53.4	14.5
West Bengal	101.6	105.2	103.0	92.4	59.3	18.7
East Region	103.7	96.6	101.2	87.9	57.4	16.6
Assam	103.6	104.7	104.0	86.6	56.0	16.5
Northeast Region	103.6	104.7	104.0	86.6	56.0	16.5
Andhra Pradesh	99.3	81.9	92.2	114.1	73.0	26.1
Telangana	92.8	106.1	97.7	109.0	96.8	28.9
Karnataka	104.4	90.1	99.3	92.3	73.4	21.7
Kerala	103.6	97.2	100.9	97.3	99.9	37.6

Tamil Nadu	103.2	96.4	100.4	89.8	91.9	35.4
South Region	100.7	94.3	98.1	100.5	87.0	29.9
All India	101.2	94.4	98.7	86.4	68.3	22.8

Note: Figures for rural Delhi is not presented separately. However, 'rural + urban' for Delhi includes, 'rural' also.
Source: NSS 75th Round, July 2017 – June 2018.

Table-3 reveals that the gross attendance ratio in primary level was lower in central region and southern than all India. In upper primary/ middle level, least GAR was recorded in west region. In primary and upper primary/middle level, least GAR recorded in south. In secondary level, least GAR recorded in north-east. In higher secondary level, least GAR recorded in east region. In post higher secondary level, least GAR recorded in east and central region. In primary level, Telangana of south region had least GAR. In Upper primary/Middle level, Rajasthan of north region had lowest GAR. In Primary and Upper primary/Middle level, Andhra Pradesh of south region had lowest GAR. In Secondary level, Uttar Pradesh of north region had lowest GAR. In higher secondary level, Jharkhand of east region had lowest GAR. In post higher Secondary level, Odisha of east region had recorded lowest GAR. Thus, differential in Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) at different levels of education for different States and region were recorded. It can be due to differential in socio-economic and cultural progress, access of education facilities and other factors.

Net Attendance Ratio (NAR)

Net Attendance Ratio is the better indicator than GAR and shows level progress in literacy rate .It is the ratio of the number of persons in the official age-group attending a particular level of education to the total number of persons in the age-group. NAR is calculated as “ Number of persons currently attending in particular Classes/ estimated population in the age-group in those particular classes x100.

Table-4: Net Attendance Ratio (GAR) at different levels of education for different States and regions (rural+urban person)

State	Level of education					
	Primary level	Upper primary/ Middle level	Primary and upper primary/ Middle level	Secondary level	Higher Secondary level	Post higher Secondary level
Jammu and Kashmir	88.1	78.4	91.3	69.6	46.1	29.5
Himachal Pradesh	90.1	80.6	90.7	68.2	67.5	28.1
Haryana	89.9	77.2	90.6	63.2	47.5	20.9
Punjab	88.8	78.1	90.9	65.3	49.7	19.8
Uttarakhand	87.1	80.8	94.0	54.3	56.5	29.2
Uttar Pradesh	79.2	59.7	84.0	38.7	33.1	17.2
Delhi	89.8	73.1	87.3	62.4	54.0	23.4
Rajasthan	89.5	69.1	88.2	48.2	37.8	24.2
North Region	87.8	74.6	89.6	58.7	49.0	24.0
Gujarat	93.7	77.6	91.0	62.9	40.6	13.7
Maharashtra	90.8	79.9	91.6	71.9	54.1	25.9
West Region	92.3	78.8	91.3	67.4	47.4	19.8

Chhattisgarh	91.6	82.1	93.5	64.9	46.6	13.1
Madhya Pradesh	81.6	72.9	86.6	54.1	36.3	13.5
Central Region	86.6	77.5	90.05	59.5	41.45	13.3
Bihar	81.9	70.3	87.8	54.2	35.7	13.2
Jharkhand	87.7	61.3	91.2	50.0	29.0	13.8
Odisha	91.2	77.0	91.5	67.6	37.4	12.0
West Bengal	88.4	77.8	91.9	60.2	36.3	15.8
East Region	87.3	71.6	90.6	58	34.6	13.7
Assam	88.8	77.0	93.0	57.3	36.8	15.2
Northeast Region	88.8	77.0	93.0	57.3	36.8	15.2
Andhra Pradesh	86.5	64.6	84.5	70.7	51.8	22.4
Telangana	82.2	75.8	91.0	76.8	75.2	25.2
Karnataka	95.3	80.7	94.5	75.8	56.5	20.2
Kerala	94.4	86.3	93.6	76.9	78.5	33.2
Tamil Nadu	89.5	81.3	92.3	66.7	61.8	30.4
South Region	89.6	77.7	91.2	73.4	64.8	26.3
All India	86.1	72.2	89.0	57.6	43.4	19.4
Note: Figures for rural Delhi is not presented separately. However, 'rural + urban' for Delhi includes, 'rural' also. Source: NSS 75th Round, July 2017 – June 2018.						

Table-4 reveals that in primary level, a difference in net attendance ratio was meager. However, Uttar Pradesh in North, Madhya Pradesh in Central, Bihar in east, and Telangana in south region recorded lowest net attendance ratio. In upper primary/middle level, lowest net attendance ratio observed in east region. In primary and upper primary/middle level, north region recorded lowest. In secondary level, net attendance ratio was lowest in north-east region. Lowest net attendance ratio found in east region in higher secondary level and central region in post higher secondary level. Among the states, except post higher Secondary level, Uttar Pradesh recorded lowest net attendance ratio.

Dropouts

In spite of huge expenditure spent by the national and states/UTs on education sector along with several education policies, dropout is still serious issue in India. Parent's attitudes, unwillingness of students, distance and lack of facilities, bad school environment and building are the few of causes for dropouts. A Study of Dropout rate of School Children in Punjab by Inderpreet Kaur (2018) highlights the alarming rate of school dropouts, find out the causes of students drop out rates and their impact on Indian economy also report that children within the rural areas drop out of school earlier than those in the urban areas. An ever-enrolled person was considered as dropped out if he/ she did not complete the last level of education for which he/she enrolled and currently not attending any educational institution for reasons other than 'completion of the desired level of education'.

Table-5: Percentage of persons dropped out among ever enrolled persons of age 3 to 35 years for different States

State	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Jammu and Kashmir	10.4	13.9	11.9	7.9	10.2	8.9	9.8	13.1	11.3
Himachal Pradesh	5.4	4.8	5.1	3.8	3.9	3.8	5.2	4.7	5.0
Haryana	11.0	10.8	10.9	5.2	4.5	4.9	9.1	8.7	8.9
Punjab	5.3	3.0	4.2	4.6	2.5	3.7	5.0	2.8	4.0
Uttarakhand	3.4	3.2	3.3	4.7	2.4	3.7	3.7	3.0	3.4
Uttar Pradesh	6.8	6.7	6.8	6.1	4.6	5.4	6.7	6.3	6.5
Delhi	-	-	-	6.5	6.1	6.4	6.5	6.0	6.3
Rajasthan	12.3	16.0	13.9	10.0	11.4	10.6	11.7	14.9	13.1
North Region	7.8	8.3	8.0	6.1	5.7	5.9	7.2	7.4	7.3
Gujarat	21.3	19.5	20.5	13.7	13.9	13.8	18.2	17.3	17.8
Maharashtra	16.8	19.9	18.2	12.2	11.6	11.9	14.7	16.1	15.3
West Region	19.1	19.7	19.4	13.0	12.8	12.9	16.5	16.7	16.6
Chhattisgarh	11.3	13.2	12.2	7.7	9.4	8.5	10.7	12.4	11.5
Madhya Pradesh	14.6	14.3	14.5	8.9	10.3	9.5	13.1	13.3	13.2
Central Region	13.0	13.8	13.4	8.3	9.9	9.0	11.9	12.9	12.4
Bihar	9.1	13.1	10.7	4.6	7.3	5.8	8.6	12.4	10.2
Jharkhand	13.5	16.3	14.7	8.7	8.4	8.6	12.5	14.7	13.5
Odisha	22.5	23.5	23.0	10.4	14.1	12.2	20.6	21.9	21.2
West Bengal	24.9	24.7	24.8	19.9	20.4	20.1	23.5	23.5	23.5
East Region	17.5	19.4	18.3	10.9	12.6	11.7	16.3	18.1	17.1
Assam	18.6	23.8	21.0	13.0	15.9	14.3	18.0	23.0	20.3
Northeast Region	18.6	23.8	21.0	13.0	15.9	14.3	18.0	23.0	20.3
Andhra Pradesh	14.4	14.6	14.5	10.4	11.3	10.8	13.1	13.5	13.3
Telangana	11.2	13.9	12.4	6.5	6.3	6.4	8.9	10.3	9.5
Karnataka	15.0	18.4	16.5	7.9	9.2	8.5	12.3	14.7	13.3
Kerala	14.6	14.5	14.5	13.1	11.9	12.5	13.9	13.3	13.6
Tamil Nadu	10.8	9.4	10.1	6.9	6.6	6.7	8.1	9.0	8.5
South Region	13.2	14.2	13.6	9.0	9.1	9.0	11.3	12.2	11.6
All India	13.2	14.7	13.8	9.5	9.7	9.6	12.1	13.2	12.6

Note: Figures for rural Delhi is not presented separately. However, 'rural + urban' for Delhi includes, 'rural' also.
Source: NSS 75th Round, July 2017 – June 2018.

Table-5 shows that percentage of persons dropped out among ever enrolled persons of age 3 to 35 years was east and west region. Rural of all regions recorded higher dropped out in rural than urban and higher for females than males. This clearly reveals some of the hurdles like poverty and social norms access to education in rural and for females. In northern region, highest dropout recorded in Rajasthan. Similarly, Gujarat in west region, Madhya Pradesh in central region, West Bengal in east, Assam in north east, and Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh states in south recorded higher dropouts. Thus, significant differential in dropouts recorded among the regions, states, rural-urban areas and by gender.

Summary and policy implications

Among the regional and states, inequality in literacy rate, years of formal education, gross attendance ratio, net attendance ratio and dropped out among ever enrolled persons of age 3 to 35 years was found. Hence, tackle the inequality in examined literacy aspects, emphases should be given to special educations of New Education policy 2020 apart from strict implementation of free and compulsory education as per Right to Education Act, 2009 by considering the level of literacy, influencing obstacles such as geographical, socio-economic and cultural apart from other aspects that prevails at regional and states level.

Measures to improve Literacy Rate

- Encouraging every female to study
- Teaching in mother tongue
- Develop love for reading
- Use of technology in teaching and learning
- Encourage learning by doing
- Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR)
- Social Responsibility of every educated and employed citizen

Every citizen should be given a compulsory task to educate children in their own neighbourhoods. Local Governing bodies can target the area to analyse and formulate plan to cover up the population in bringing up the rate of literacy in India.

Limitation

The main limitation of the study is that for north-east region, data related to education aspects available for Assam state only.

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