



The Study of the Literacy Pattern and its Differentials in Uttar Dinajpur District, West Bengal

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Abstract

Literacy is a significant qualitative indicator for both social and economic development of a society. It influences fertility, mortality, mobility and economic composition of the population of a region. Literacy pattern of an area is largely influenced by various factors, such as degree of urbanization, nature of economy, standard of living, cost of education, level of technological growth, level of transportation and communication development, religious background, status of females in society, biasness against the female literacy and mobility, political background, availability of educational institutions, public policies etc. This paper attempts to study the spatial pattern of literacy in Uttar Dinajpur district. It is one of the country's 250 most backward districts and has the lowest literacy in West Bengal. The present study is based on secondary data. Three indices namely Male-Female Differential Index, Rural-Urban Differential Index and Composite Differential Index have calculated to assess the level of development of literacy in the district. From the results it can be observed that Islampur Subdivision in the North lags behind Raiganj subdivision. Blockwise Hemtabad block is most developed whereas Goalpokhar-I block is least developed in literacy in the district.

Keywords : differential index, gender gap, literacy.

Introduction

Literacy is a significant qualitative indicator for both social and economic development of a society. While high literacy level accelerates the pace of development of a region its low rate is counter-productive. Thus, development and literacy has a positive correlation. It is also an index of human development and quality of life. Literacy influences fertility, mortality, mobility and economic composition of the population of a region. "Literacy skills are fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active and passive participation in local and global social community" (Stromquist,2005).

UNESCO documentation rightly says "Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. It is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy" (UNESCO 2010).The Indian census considers a person literate if he/she can both read and write a message with understanding in any language. Literacy rate in India is calculated ex-

cluding 0-6 years age group of population. Literacy pattern of an area is largely influenced by various factors, such as degree of urbanization, nature of economy, standard of living, cost of education, level of technological growth, level of transportation and communication development, religious background, status of females in society, biasness against the female literacy and mobility, political background, availability of educational institutions, public policies etc. According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of India is 74.0 percent. Now India is in the midst of its literacy transition. Elementary education is an important millennium development goal for the Indian government. To achieve it, "Right to Education Act" has been in force since 1st April, 2010 in the entire country. Though, a substantial progress has been made in attaining the goal of total literacy yet it is far from satisfactory. There are sharp differences in the literacy at the regional level and among different social groups. There also exists acute gender differential and disparity.

A lot of work has been done in the past by different researchers on different aspects of literacy. Some researchers have used literacy differentials to assess the spatial pattern of literacy development and have found glaring regional disparities across the various States and districts in India. (Chattoraj and Chand, 2005; Jain. and Jhariya, 2014; TaufEEK, Hashmi, 2017). Many others have tried to assess gender disparity in literacy at national and international levels(Katiyar, 2016; De. 2015; Kumar, et.al. 2016; Moss, et.al. 2016). Researchers have also tried to study the correlation between literacy particularly female literacy and different demographic parameters like birth rate, infant mortality, fertility, child spacing etc. These studies have shown that literacy has a positive impact on controlling these parameters(Shetty, and Shetty, 2014; Murthi., et.al. 1995)

West Bengal is among the more progres-

sive states in terms of literacy. According to 2011 census the overall literacy of the state is 77 percent and is ranked twentieth in the country. There is sharp regional variation in the literacy level among the different districts within the state. This paper attempts to study the spatial pattern of literacy and its differential in Uttar Dinajpur district, one of the country's 250 most backward districts with lowest literacy in West Bengal. The main objectives of this study are (a) To study the spatial distribution of literacy in the district at the block level and (b) To study literacy differentials between male-female, rural urban, SC and ST population at block level and analyze the pattern of literacy development in the district.

Study Area:

Uttar Dinajpur district was created on 1st April, 1992 by the division of erstwhile West Dinajpur district. The District lies between latitude 25°11'N to 26°49'N and longitude 87°49'E to 90°00'E occupying an area of 3,142 Sq. Km. It is bordered by Bangladesh in the East, Bihar in the West, Darjeeling & Jalpaiguri Districts in



Figure 1: Location of the study area

the North and Malda District in the South. The district comprises 2 sub-divisions and 9 blocks. Raiganj sub-division lies in the southern part of the district and includes Raiganj, Hemtabad, Kaliaganj and Itahar blocks. Islampur sub-division forms the northern part of the district and consists of Chopra, Islampur, Goalpokhar-I, Goalpokhar-II and Karandighi blocks. The total population of the district is 3,000,849, population density is 958 persons per sq. Km. and sex ratio 939 females per 1000 males.

Database and Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data. The data and information has been obtained from different sources, i.e. District Census Handbook 2001 and 2011, District Statistical Handbook 2014, District Human Development Report 2010, research articles and books. The data has been analyzed with the help of statistical tables and the disparity between male-female literacy and rural-urban literacy has been shown with the help of the following two differential indices -

1. MFDI= (MLR-FLR)/TLR
2. URDI = (ULR-RLR)/TLR

To measure the level of development in literacy a composite index has been developed

using the following formula :

Composite Inex = Total literacy Rate ÷ (MF Differential+ UR differential + Caste differential)

Where,

MFDI= Male Female Differential Index, URDI= Urban Rural Differential Index, MLR= Male Literacy Rate, FLR= Female Literacy Rate, TLR= Total Literacy Rate, ULR= Urban Literacy Rate, RLR= Rural literacy Rate.

The results thus obtained have been mapped using Arc GIS software.

Results and Discussion

Total Literacy

The present status of literacy in Uttar Dinajpur district is influenced by the administrative history of this district. From the time it was constituted till its bifurcation in 1992, the erstwhile district of West Dinajpur had traditionally been a low literacy district in West Bengal recording an overall literacy rate of 49.8 percent in 1991 and a female literacy rate of 39.3 percent, both much below the state average. After the bifurcation of West Dinajpur in 1992, all educationally backward areas came under the new district of Uttar Dinajpur and as a result the new district recorded an overall literacy

Table 1: Literacy Trends in Uttar Dinajpur District (1951-2011)

Year	Literacy Rate (in percent)		Decennial Change	
	West Bengal	Uttar Dinajpur	West Bengal	Uttar Dinajpur
1951	25	14.00	-	-
1961	34.5	20.70	9.5	6.7
1971	38.9	27.00	4.4	6.4
1981	46.3	31.10	7.5	4.0
1991	57.7	34.60	11.4	3.4
2001	68.6	47.90	10.9	13.3
2011	76.3	59.10	7.6	11.2

Source: District Census Handbook, 2011

of 47.9 percent and female literacy of 36.5 percent in 2001 which increased to 59.10 percent and 52.17 percent respectively in 2011. Table-1 and Figure- 2 shows the literacy trends of the district from 1951 to 2011. As can be observed from the table the literacy rate in the district has always been less than the State average for all census years since 1951. If we analyse the decennial changes than it can be seen that except for the years 2001 and 2011 the decennial change in literacy also has always been less than the state.

Block wise Literacy:

Table- 2 and figures 2 & 3 show block wise literacy rates and its change in Uttar Dinajpur from 1991 to 2011. Due to sharp inter-district differentiation, Uttar Dinajpur is ranked as the least literate district in West Bengal. There is a huge intra-district differentiation in literacy in Uttar Dinajpur. Inter-block variation in literacy varied from 42.26 percent in Goalpokhar-I block (least literate) to 67.88 percent in Hemtabad block (most literate) in 2011 census. Only Chopra block under Islampur subdivision(SD) had a literacy rate of 59.90 percent which is marginally higher than district average of 59.07 percent, rest other four blocks viz. Islampur,

Goalpokhar I & II and Karandighi have literacy much below the district average. On the other hand blocks under Raiganj SD are much better placed as compared to Islampur S D here literacy rate is around or more than district average of 59.07 percent. Similarly in 2001 census also all the blocks of Islampur SD had literacy rate much below the district average of 47.90 percent whereas in Raiganj SD except Itahar block all other blocks had literacy much above the district average.

Goalpokhar-I & II blocks have continued to be the least literate blocks for all the three decades under study whereas Hemtabad had the highest literacy in the district. If we analyse decadal change of literacy than it has been almost equal (approx. 15 percentage points) in all the blocks between 1991 and 2001 with maximum increase in Raiganj block (16.10 percentage points) and minimum increase in Goalpokhar-I block (14.00 percentage points). Between 2001 and 2011 the highest decadal change of literacy is observed in Chopra block (16.60 percentage points) followed by Karandighi (15.82 percentage points) and Islampur (15.13 percentage points) block. However lowest change is again recorded in

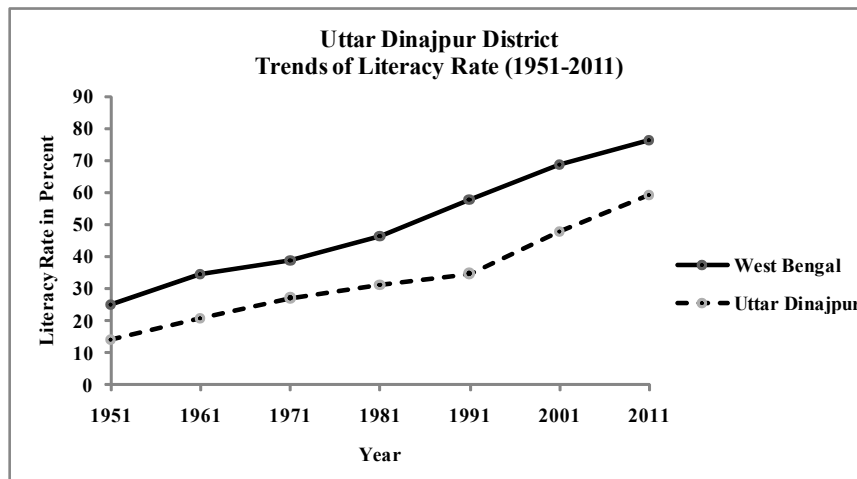


Figure 2: Trends of literacy

Table 2: Block wise Literacy Rate in Uttar Dinajpur District(1991-2011)

CD Blocks	Literacy Rate (percent)			Decadal Change (Percent)		
	1991	2001	2011	1991-2001	2001-2011	1991-2011
Chopra	28.80	43.30	59.90	14.50	16.6	31.10
Islampur	23.20	38.40	53.53	15.20	15.13	30.33
Goalpokhar-I	17.60	31.60	42.26	14.00	10.66	24.66
Goalpokhar-II	18.40	34.10	46.07	15.70	11.97	27.67
Karandighi	23.30	37.60	53.42	14.30	15.82	30.12
Raiganj	35.40	51.50	63.52	16.10	12.02	28.12
Hemtabad	41.70	56.70	67.88	15	11.18	26.18
Kaliaganj	38.80	54.10	66.50	15.30	12.40	27.70
Itahar	32.10	47.40	58.95	15.30	11.55	26.85
District	34.60	42.9	59.07	10.90	7.7	7.7

Source: District Census Handbook, 2001 & 2011

Goalpokhar-I block (10.66 percentage points). Thus Islampur SD has lagged behind Raiganj SD in literacy in all the three census years under study. Thus Islampur SD has lagged behind Raiganj SD in literacy in all the three census years under study.

This could be mainly attributed to the large proportion of Muslim population residing in Islampur SD with very high incidence of illiteracy among them. Out of 10 least literate blocks of West Bengal (2001), 5 existed in Uttar Dinajpur district and all these 5 blocks were in

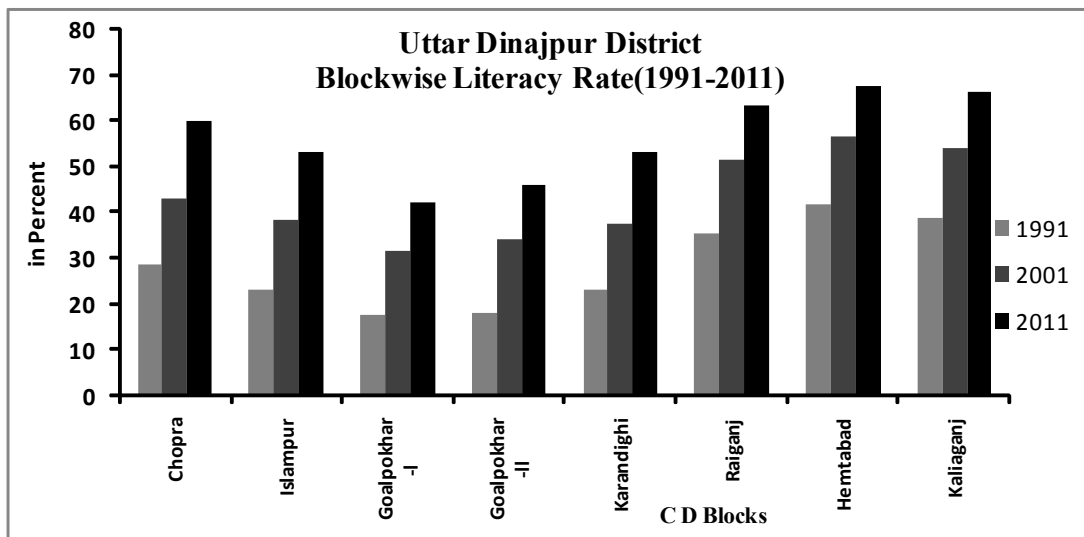


Figure 3: Block wise literacy

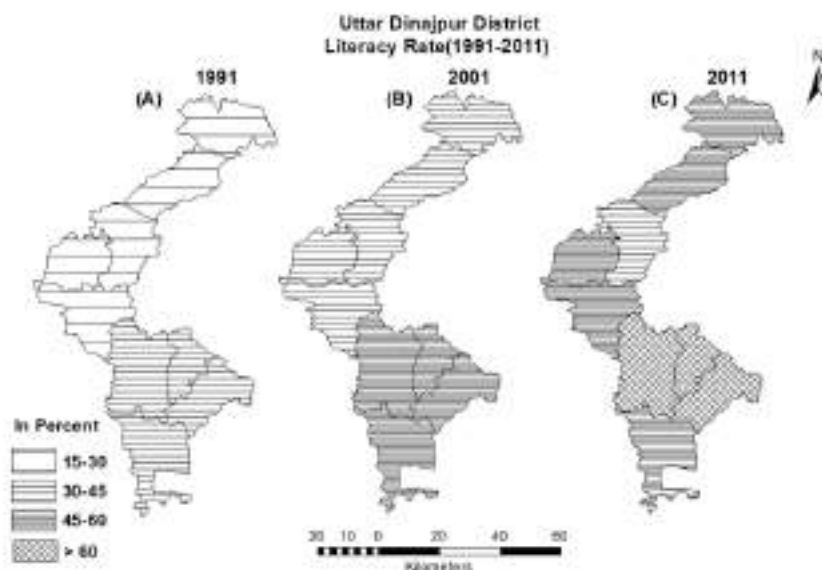


Figure 4: Spatio-temporal distribution of literacy

Islampur subdivision of the district. Goalpokhar-I, Goalpokhar-II, Karandighi and Islampur were the 4 blocks in respect of low magnitude of literacy rate as depicted in 2001 Census. In all the above 4 blocks, around three-fourth of the total number of females were illiterate.

Pattern of Male-Female Literacy

Table- 3 presents block wise pattern of male and female literacy rate in Uttar Dinajpur from 1991 to 2011. As can be observed from table - 3 male literacy has been higher than female literacy in all the years under study, however as far as change in pattern of literacy is concern then there has been a substantial improvement in literacy among both males and females but the change is more in case of female literacy as compared to male literacy. Whereas the female literacy has increased between 28 and 36 percent in 2011 over 1991 the corresponding figure for male literacy has been between 18 to 26 percent during the same period.

Male Literacy: Uttar Dinajpur is at the bot-

tom in West Bengal in terms of male literacy. According to 2011 male literacy in the district was 65.52 percent as against the state average of 81.69 percent. Likewise in 2001 it was 58.50 percent as against the state average of 68.64 percent. From Table -3 it can be seen that the highest male literacy was found in Hemtabad block (55 percent and 67.10 percent respectively) in 1991 and 2001 census however in 2011 census Kaliaganj block surpassed Hemtabad block with 74.58 percent male literacy. Goalpokhar-I block on the other hand has been the least male literate block for all the three years under study. Region wise Islampur subdivision in the north lags much behind the Raiganj subdivision in the south in male literacy (Figure-5A,B,C) for all the three census years under study. As far as change in the male literacy rate is concern there has been a positive increase between 1991-2001 and 2001-2011 decades. However a higher rate of increase was observed between to 2001-2011. An analysis of change in Literacy rate between 1991-2011

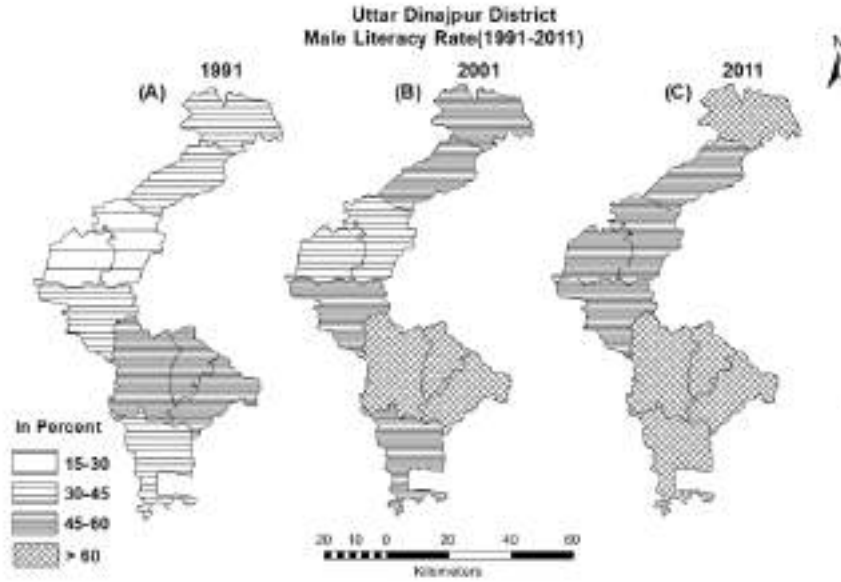


Figure 5: Spatio-temporal distribution of male literacy

Table 3: Pattern of Male & Female Literacy in Uttar Dinajpur (1991 - 2011)

Blocks	Literacy Rate (in percent)						Change in Literacy Rate					
	1991		2001		2011		1991-2001		2001-2011		1991-2011	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Chopra	41.39	14.95	55.90	29.70	67.38	51.85	14.51	14.75	11.48	22.15	25.99	36.9
Islampur	34.47	10.54	50.30	25.70	61.13	45.41	15.83	15.16	10.83	19.71	26.66	34.87
Goalpokhar-I	26.00	6.75	42.60	19.80	48.80	35.08	16.6	13.05	6.20	15.28	22.80	28.33
Goalpokhar-II	28.67	9.73	44.00	23.60	52.46	39.24	15.33	13.87	8.46	15.64	23.79	29.51
Karandighi	32.20	10.10	48.90	25.50	60.43	46.08	16.70	15.40	11.53	20.58	28.33	35.98
Raiganj	46.18	21.11	63.00	39.10	70.23	56.37	16.82	17.99	7.23	17.27	24.05	35.26
Hemtabad	55.00	27.21	67.10	45.70	73.61	61.89	12.1	18.49	6.51	16.19	18.61	34.68
Kaliaganj	52.52	23.85	66.40	41.10	74.58	57.95	13.88	17.25	8.18	16.85	22.05	34.1
Itahar	43.611	20.03	57.80	36.50	64.68	52.90	14.18	16.47	6.88	16.40	21.06	32.87
District			77.02	59.68	82.67	71.16						

Source: District Census Handbook, 2001 & 2011, Literacy rate in 1991 calculated from 1991 census data.

shows that Karandighi block had the highest increase of 28.33 percent followed by Islampur (26.66 percent) and Chopra (25.99 percent) blocks. Region wise Islampur Subdivision has

faired slightly better as compared to Raiganj Subdivision as far as increase in male literacy is concerned(Figure-7A)

Female Literacy: The scenario of female

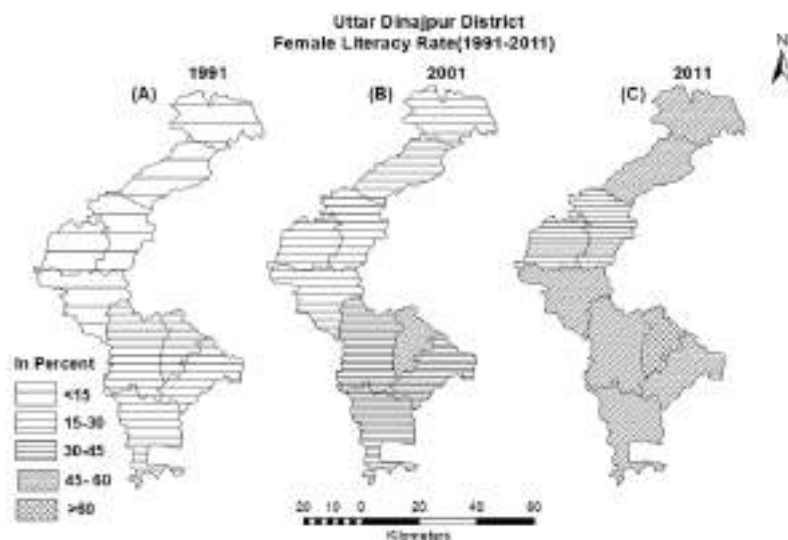


Figure 6: Spatio-temporal distribution of female literacy

literacy in Uttar Dinajpur district is deplorable. In 2001 census the district had a female literacy of 36.5 percent which in 2011 rose to 52.17 percent thus making it the second lowest female literate district in West Bengal. Like general literacy distributional pattern, female literacy is

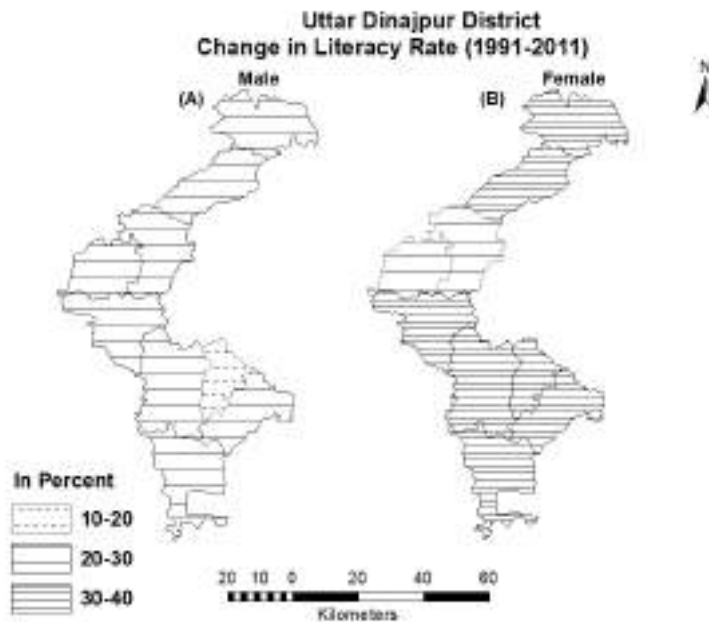


Figure 7: Change in literacy

slightly higher in Raiganj sub-division than Islampur Subdivision (Figure 6 A,B,C). Those blocks where general literacy is high, female literacy is also high and vice-versa. Female literacy has a positive correlation with the status of women in the society. Muslim societies, which grant very low status to the females, display the lowest female literacy rates in the world (Chanda, 2005). This situation is also found in Islampur sub-division where there is high concentration of Muslim population. Goalpokhar-I block is the least female literate block in all the three years under study. In 1991 female literacy in the block was a mere 6.75 percent which increased to 19.80 percent in 2001 census and further to 35.08 percent in 2011 census. Not only is this block least literate, it also has witnessed the lowest change in female literacy. Hemtabad block on the other hand had the highest female literacy rate for the same period. In 1991 it was 27 percent which increased to 45.70 percent in 2001 and 61.89 percent in 2011. In terms of change in female literacy Chopra block has re-

corded the highest change (36.15 percent) followed by Karandighi (35.9 percent) and Raiganj (35.2 percent) between 1991 and 2011. At the sub division level blocks under Raiganj Subdivision witnessed higher percentage of change ranging from 32 to 35 percent as compared to Islampur Subdivision between 1991 and 2011 (Table-3 & Figure-7B).

Pattern of Rural-Urban Literacy

Table-5 and Figure-8 show blockwise pattern of rural literacy in West Dinajpur District. The overall rural literacy in the district was 27.8 percent in 1991 which increased to 30.8 percent in 2001 and 55.99 percent in 2011. Thus in two decades between 1991 and 2011 rural literacy has improved by 28.19 percent. However it is far from satisfactory when compared with the State and all India averages. West Dinajpur continues to languish behind all other districts within West Bengal and lies at the bottom. Block wise Hemtabad block had highest literacy rate in all the three periods under study whereas

Table 5: Blockwise Rural Literacy Rate in Uttar Dinajpur District

Blocks	Literacy Rate(Percent)									Two Decade Change 1991-2011		
	1991			2001			2011			Total	Male	Female
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
Chopra	41.39	14.95	28.81	55.9	29.7	43.3	67.24	51.62	59.71	30.9	25.85	36.67
Islampur	34.47	10.54	23.22	50.3	25.7	38.4	61.13	45.41	53.53	30.31	26.66	34.87
Goalpokhar-I	26.00	6.75	16.81	42.6	19.8	31.6	48.39	34.62	41.82	25.01	22.39	27.87
Goalpokhar-II	28.67	9.73	19.61	44.0	23.5	34.1	52.46	39.24	46.07	26.46	23.79	29.51
Karandighi	32.20	10.10	21.58	47.4	23.9	36.0	60.43	46.08	53.42	31.84	28.23	35.98
Raiganj	46.18	21.11	34.25	62.0	37.7	50.3	69.59	55.54	62.78	28.53	23.41	34.43
Hemtabad	55.00	27.21	41.70	67.1	45.7	56.7	73.61	61.89	67.88	26.18	18.61	34.68
Kaliaganj	52.52	23.85	38.80	66.4	41.1	54.1	74.58	57.95	66.5	27.7	22.06	34.1
Itahar	43.61	20.03	32.17	57.8	36.5	47.4	64.33	52.45	58.55	26.38	20.719	32.42
District	39.1	15.4	27.8	42.9	54.2	30.8	62.82	48.72	55.99			

Source: District Census Handbook, 2001 & 2011

Goalpokhar I block was at the bottom. In 1991 four blocks Goalpokhar I, Goalpokhar II, Karandighi and Islampur blocks had literacy below the district average of 27 percent. Similarly in 2011 also these four blocks had literacy rate below the district average of 55.99 percent. As far as male and female literacy is concerned female literacy has lagged behind the male literacy in all the blocks but the gap between the two has progressively narrowed down. If we look at literacy change between 1991-2011 female literacy rate has experienced a much higher positive change as compared to male literacy rate. For example female literacy has increased between 34 and 36 percent in all blocks except Goalpokhar I and Goalpokhar II whereas male literacy has increased between 20 and 29 percent during the same period (Table-5).

West Dinajpur is predominantly a rural district with very small proportion of urban population. According to 2001 and 2011 census only 12 percent of the district population was urban. As far as urban literacy rate is concerned it has

increased from 74.5 percent in 1991 to 80.5 percent in 2001 but marginally declined to 80.3 percent in 2011. Blockwise in 1991 and 2001 urban population was found only in four blocks Islampur, Karandighi, Raiganj and Kaliaganj. However in 2011 it spread into three new blocks Chopra, Goalpokhar-I and Itahar (Table-6). If we analyse the change in urban literacy it ranged from as low as 3.48 percent increase in Raiganj to 14.98 percent increase in Islampur. However this variation can be attributed to the fact that Raiganj as compared to Islampur had higher literacy rate in 1991.

Literacy Pattern among SC and ST Population

Social group wise Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute an important component of the district population. According to 2011 census the total SC and ST population of the district were 807950 and 162816 persons respectively. They accounted for 26.85 percent and 5.41 percent of the total population of the

Table 6: Blockwise Urban Literacy Rate in Uttar Dinajpur District

Blocks	Literacy Rate(Percent)									Change in Literacy Rate (1991-2011)		
	1991			2001			2011			Male	Female	Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
Chopra	-	-	-	-	-	-	73.9	62.92	68.64	-	-	-
Islampur	74.14	55.04	65.42	78.24	65.98	72.56	85.62	75.37	80.69	11.48	20.33	14.98
Goalpokhar-I	-	-	-	-	-	-	71.01	58.39	64.85	-	-	-
Goalpokhar-II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Karandighi	66.46	47.89	57.71	76.58	60.01	68.86	73.49	61.31	67.67	7.03	13.42	10.06
Raiganj	82.25	73.45	78.21	85.43	79.00	83.9	84.42	78.65	81.69	2.17	5.20	3.48
Hemtabad	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kaliaganj	80.88	65.71	73.59	85.53	72.50	79.23	89.77	81.95	85.95	8.89	16.24	12.36
Itahar	-	-	-	-	-	-	81.76	73.75	77.73	-	-	-
District												

Source: District Census Handbook, 2001 & 2011

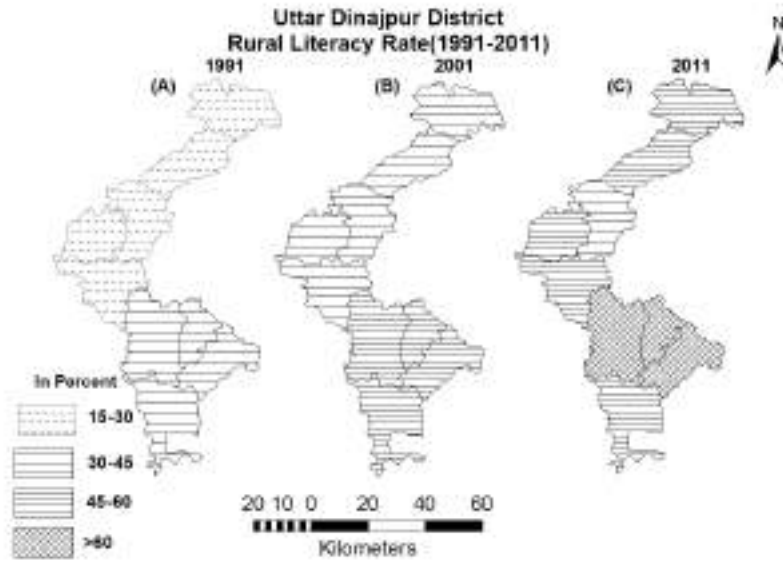


Figure 8: Spatio-temporal distribution of rural literacy

Table 7: Blockwise Literacy Rate among SC Population in Uttar Dinajpur District

Blocks	Literacy Rate (Percent))						Change in Literacy Rate (2001-2011)		
	2001			2011					
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Chopra	68.1	36.3	52.7	76.02	57.95	67.28	7.92	21.65	14.58
Islampur	69.0	39.4	54.8	76.99	58.68	68.30	7.99	19.28	13.5
Goalpokhar-I	63.7	36.7	50.7	67.28	51.75	59.94	3.58	15.05	9.24
Goalpokhar-II	55.5	33.4	44.8	63.34	47.06	55.59	7.84	13.66	10.79
Karandighi	58.4	28.0	43.7	68.20	48.14	58.52	9.8	20.14	14.82
Raiganj	63.0	34.4	49.2	71.02	53.57	62.60	8.02	19.17	13.4
Hemtabad	65.2	36.9	51.4	71.22	54.30	62.92	6.02	17.4	11.52
Kaliaganj	62.9	33.6	48.6	72.46	52.87	62.96	9.56	19.27	14.36
Itahar	59.3	30.4	45.2	65.57	47.53	56.85	6.27	17.13	11.65
Total	62.2	33.5	48.3	70.20	52.06	61.45	8	18.56	13.15

Source: District Census Handbook, 2001 & 2011

district. Together they accounted for 32.28 percent of the district population.

Tables-7 & 8 show block wise the pattern of literacy among the SC and ST population in

the district for the decades 2001 and 2011. From Table-7 it can be seen that the literacy rate among SC population for the district as a whole was 48.3 percent. Karandighi block with 43.7 percent had the lowest literacy rate whereas Islampur block had the highest literacy rate at 54.8 percent. The male literacy rate ranged between 55 and 69 percent whereas the female literacy was almost half of that of male literacy for all the blocks. It ranged from a low of 28 percent in in Karandighi block to 39.4 percent(highest) in Islampur block. The overall SC male literacy for the district was 62.2 percent as against the female literacy of 33.5 percent.

In 2011 there has been a significant improvement in literacy among SC population in the district. Female literacy rate has increased by almost 3 times more than the increase in male literacy rate. Whereas the male literacy rate has improved by 7 to 9 percentage points female literacy has improved by 15 to 20 percentage

points. Overall three blocks Chopra, Karandighi and Kaliaganj have shown maximum increase by 14 percentage points whereas Goalpokhar I block has had the least improvement by 9.24 percentage points.

Table-8 shows blockwise pattern of literacy among ST population. In 2001 the overall literacy was 27.8 percent whereas for the male and female population it was 38.7 and 16.7 percent respectively. In 2011 it increased to 43.26 percent(Total), 51.50 percent(male) and 34.93 percent (female) respectively. Blockwise Kaliaganj had the highest overall literacy of 38.7 percent and 55.94 percent in 2001 and 2011 whereas Goalpokhar-I had the lowest overall literacy of 17.9 percent and 28.94 percent respectively. In terms of male and female literacy again Kaliaganj led all other blocks both in 2001 and 2011 whereas Goalpokhar-I lay at the bottom. As far as change is concern there has been improvement in literacy in 2011 as compared to 2001 but the overall status is very

Table 8: Blockwise Literacy Rate among ST Population in Uttar Dinajpur District

Blocks	Literacy Rate (Percent)						Change in Literacy Rate (2001-2011)		
	2001			2011					
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Chopra	41.2	16.2	28.9	53.24	36.59	45.03	12.04	20.39	16.13
Islampur	40.5	13.8	27.4	50.44	32.82	41.67	9.94	19.02	14.27
Goalpokhar-I	27.5	8.3	17.9	35.66	21.95	28.94	8.16	13.65	11.04
Goalpokhar-II	34.5	17.2	26.1	40.48	26.81	33.70	5.98	9.61	7.6
Karandighi	33.0	13.0	23.0	51.38	32.85	42.15	18.38	19.85	19.15
Raiganj	46.2	23.3	34.8	57.80	42.03	49.90	11.6	18.73	15.1
Hemtabad	39.4	17.8	28.7	56.40	40.63	48.62	17	22.83	19.92
Kaliaganj	50.2	27.1	38.7	65.69	46.03	55.94	15.49	18.93	17.24
Itahar	38.0	14.1	26.1	50.21	33.13	41.63	12.21	19.03	15.53
Total	38.7	16.7	27.8	51.50	34.93	43.26	12.8	18.23	15.46

Source: District Census Handbook, 2001 & 2011

unsatisfactory. The female literacy rate still languishes between 20 and 45 percent whereas male literacy is between 35 and 65 percent in the district.

Literacy Differentials and Level of Development

Table-9 and Figure- show the block wise Differential Index and Composite Index of literacy calculated through the formulae outlined in the methodology above. Here the differentials have been considered only for two decades 2001 and 2011 as the literacy figures among SC and ST population group were not available for the year 1991. If we look at the differential value for male and female population across the blocks than Goalpokhar-I block lay at the bottom with maximum differential value for both 2001 and 2011 whereas Hemtabad block remained on top with minimum differential index. As far as rural-urban differential is concerned it is confined only to specific blocks due to lack of urban population in all the blocks. For instance in 2001 urban population was found only in four blocks viz. Islampur, Karandighi, Raiganj and Kaliaganj. In 2011 it spread to three new blocks

viz. Chopra, Goalpokhar-I and Itahar in addition to the four blocks of 2001. In 2001 Karandighi Block had the maximum rural-urban differential whereas in 2011 Golapokhar-I Block had maximum rural urban differential. In case of SC population Karandighi block had the maximum differential index both in 2001 and 2011 whereas Goalpokhar-II in 2001 and Goalpokhar-I in 2011 had the minimum differential index values. In the overall development of literacy arrived at by dividing the total literacy rate of each block by the summation of the four differential index values for 2001 and 2011 it can be seen that Goalpokhar-I CD block is the least developed in both 2001 and 2011 whereas Hemtabad block led all other blocks in literacy development in the district in both the decades.

in all the blocks of the district were either in low or moderate level of development of literacy. Sub Division wise Islampur block lay behind Raiganj Sub Division as all the blocks of the former had low level of literacy development (Figure-). In 2011 because of the narrowing of the literacy gap the relative position of the blocks improved and the blocks which were earlier in

Table-9 Literacy Differential Index Uttar Dinajpur District

Blocks	Male-Female		Rural-Urban		SC		ST		Composite Index	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Chopra	0.605	0.259	-	0.15	0.603	0.130	0.865	0.370	73.04	231.92
Islampur	0.641	0.294	0.76	0.47	0.540	0.127	0.974	0.423	62.18	183.09
Goalpokhar-I	0.722	0.325	-	0.54	0.533	0.122	1.073	0.474	45.37	131.17
Goalpokhar-II	0.598	0.287	-	-	0.493	0.139	0.663	0.406	58.18	161.07
Karandighi	0.622	0.269	0.87	0.26	0.696	0.165	0.870	0.440	62.89	199.45
Raiganj	0.464	0.218	0.54	0.27	0.581	0.135	0.658	0.316	112.77	292.10
Hemtabad	0.377	0.173	-	-	0.551	0.132	0.753	0.324	151.70	392.83
Kaliaganj	0.468	0.250	0.42	0.28	0.603	0.151	0.597	0.351	117.22	266.78
Itahar	0.449	0.200	-	0.33	0.639	0.153	0.916	0.410	107.04	295.89

Source: Calculated by the Authors

low category moved to moderate category of development Only one block Chopra Block got elevated from category of low development in 2001 to category of high development in 2011. In the same way all the blocks that were in moderate category of literacy development in 2001 got elevated to category of high level of development in 2011 with Hemtabad block registering very high development with highest Composite Score of 392. There has not been any change in the position of the Subdivisions and Raiganj Sub Division again excelled Islampur Sub Division in 2011.

Conclusion

Literacy Rate in Uttar Dinajpur is very unsatisfactory. The district lies at the bottom of the districts in terms of literacy. The average literacy rate of the district at 59 percent in is well below the Sate Average of 76 percent in 2011, the latest census year. There is a vast regional difference in literacy at the block level. Blocks under Islampur Subdivision lag far behind the blocks in Raiganj Subdivision. All the

five blocks under Islampur Subdivision are among the least literate blocks of West Bengal. The poorest situation is of Goalpokhar-I block in Islampuer Subdivision which has remained at the bottom of all blocks in all the three census years under study. The situation of female literacy is much worst than male literacy causing a huge gap between male and female literacy. The main reason for this pathetic situation is the socio-economic backwardness of the people of this region. However improvement in female literacy is visible in 2011 that has reduced the literacy gap in all the blocks but the situation is far from satisfactory when compared with other districts of the State.

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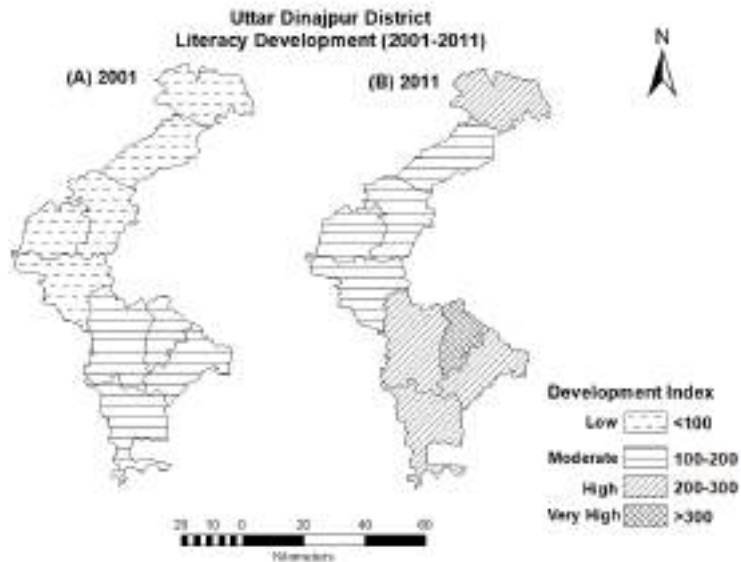


Figure 9: Spatio-temporal distribution of literacy

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