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Educational Attainment in the Tribal Areas of Vadodara District, Gujarat: A Spatial Analysis

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Abstract

Education plays a crucial role in the social and economic transformation. The World Bank has also emphasized education as a medium of reducing poverty and attaining a sustained growth. Education also leads to develop mental and physical attributes of the population. Despite concerted efforts for over sixty years by Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies, a large segment of the population in India remains illiterate and uneducated. The map of India is marked with high social and spatial disparity in the levels of literacy and education. A larger section of the traditionally pre-literate tribal population inhabiting the hilly and forested areas and several other socially and economically deprived groups in different parts of the country lag much behind others in acquiring literacy skill and education. Although the tribal areas have received special attention of the planners and policy makers, in reality these have always remained the most lagging areas of the country.

It is in the above context, the present paper tries to analyze the problems of literacy and educational attainments in the tribal areas of Vadodara district of Gujarat.

Introduction

The term education can be defined as an experience that has tremendous influence on the mind, character and physical ability of an

individual. In its true sense, by imparting education, the society transmits its accumulated knowledge, skill and value from one generation to another. "Education can act as a powerful tool for reducing poverty and unemployment and increasing nutritional standard and achieving a sustaining human led growth" (World Bank, 2004, 111).

country greatly depends on the status of literacy and educational attainment of its population. The objective of education in any region is to develop mental and physical attributes for attaining overall well being although at times, because of the fast changing socio-economic circumstances, it often does not reach the masses.

Education is one of the mediums of socio-economic transformation of humanity (Bhole and Bhangale, 2006, 93). Education has been identified as an important indicator and instrument of socio-economic development. It is a significant factor that yields returns for the individual and the society over a long period (Schultz, 1961, 4). Education is the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values and thus, is the strongest force in the development and growth of a child in preparing him/her to be responsible, intelligent, strong and healthy citizen (Sharma et. al., 2007, 201).

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment means the achievement in education or the highest level of education a

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Table - 1 : Share of Tribal Population in the Districts of Gujarat and Talukas of Vadodara

Sr. No	Districts	% of Tribal Population to District Population	% of Tribal Population to State Tribal Population
1	Ahmedabad	1.00	0.77
2	Amreli	0.23	0.04
3	Anand	1.23	0.30
4	Banas Kantha	8.22	2.75
5	Bharuch	32.40	5.93
6	Bhavnagar	0.30	0.09
7	Dohad	72.26	15.80
8	Gandhinagar	1.32	0.23
9	Jamnagar	0.55	0.13
10	Junagadh	0.77	0.25
11	Kachchh	8.22	1.73
12	Kheda	1.60	0.43
13	Mahesana	0.49	0.11
14	Narmada	78.08	5.36
15	Navsari	48.08	7.90
16	Panch Mahals	27.45	7.50
17	Patan	1.07	0.16
18	Porbandar	1.20	0.08
19	Rajkot	0.42	0.17
20	Sabar Kantha	20.18	5.61
21	Surat	28.19	18.82
22	Surendranagar	0.95	0.19
23	The Dangs	93.76	2.34
24	Vadodara	26.56	12.93
25	Valsad	54.76	10.32
	Gujarat	14.76	100

Source: Census of India, 2001

person has achieved. It is a measure of a person's knowledge and skill level that specifies how likely one would succeed in the workforce. It reflects the skills that are useful to the society, the labour market and ultimately to the Nation. Educational attainment can be counted as a vital element of economic progress. Level of educational attainment has a strong effect on social outcomes such as child mortality, fertility, education of children and income distribution in the society. The educational attainment is also dependent upon education of the earlier generation and the facility for learning and environment at home (Shukla, 1994, in Aggarwal 2000, 4). A study by Kingdon (1998, 40) has shown that the family background and the school are both important influencing factors in educational attainment. Educational attainment is measured across the society and space with the help of various

indicators, such as, (a) literacy rate, (b) enrolment rates, (c) attendance rates (d) dropout rates (e) retention rates of the school going children or the girl child and, (f) the proportion of population having technical and higher qualifications.

It is in the above context, it is intended in the present paper to analyze the educational attainment in the tribal areas of Vadodara district. The study is based on both secondary as well as primary data sources. For the secondary data, District Census Abstract of Vadodara District, Census of India has been used. Primary data has been generated using household schedules along with informal discussions with the village elders, both male and female. Nine villages in the Kavant taluka were randomly selected for primary investigation, namely, Dhaniwara, Samalvant, Gojariya, Navalja, Hamirpura,

Table - 2 : Vadodara: Literacy Rate (2001)

Sl.No.	Taluka	% of Tribal Population to Taluka Population	% of Tribal Population to Tribal Population	Percentage of Literates to Total Population			Percentage of Schedule Tribe Literates to Total ST population		
				Total	M	F	Total	M	F
1	Savli	7.2	1.76	66.0	79.8	50.6	40.3	51.9	27.2
2	Vadodara	4.7	8.31	85.1	90.9	78.6	47.3	59.3	34.0
3	Vaghodia	28.8	3.99	65.8	79.2	51.3	45.6	59.1	31.0
4	Jetpur Pavi	77.6	18.10	48.9	64.1	32.8	43.8	59.3	27.5
5	Chhota Udepur	86.6	18.13	30.6	39.5	21.6	21.9	30.8	13.1
6	Kavant	92.5	16.30	33.4	45.8	20.5	29.9	42.5	17.0
7	Nasvadi	86.2	11.11	47.2	61.1	32.6	41.5	55.8	26.7
8	Sankheda	44.8	8.60	64.0	76.7	50.3	47.8	61.9	32.6
9	Dabhoi	31.8	6.01	68.9	78.8	58.1	44.8	58.2	30.4
10	Padra	3.3	0.81	72.7	83.9	60.3	39.9	51.7	26.5
11	Karjan	25.4	4.29	68.8	79.2	57.4	37.7	51.0	23.2
12	Sinor	36.2	2.59	67.0	76.8	56.5	41.8	54.3	28.1
	Vadodara	26.6	100	70.8	80.0	60.7	39.0	51.8	25.4

Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India, 2001.

Vajepur, Kadipani, Ambadungar and Hanfeshwar. For each of the villages selected, the levels of education were analyzed against different land size categories. Attainment of primary, secondary, higher secondary and post-school levels of education, percentage of illiterates and persons who discontinued studies at any level were analyzed for each of the land size category in every village and ultimately all nine villages were clubbed together before finally assessing the level of educational attainment in the study area.

The paper has been divided into five sections. Section I introduces the paper with the meaning/conceptual clarifications regarding the concept of education and educational attainment. Section II deals with the available literature concerning educational attainment in general and the tribal regions in particular. Section III interlinks the

tribal people and education. Section IV follows with the profile of the study area with the help of secondary data. An attempt has been made in the Fifth Section towards developing an explanatory frame with the help of primary data so that the emerging scenario can be understood. The discussion has been concluded in the last Section of the paper.

Literature Review and Relevant Studies

A large number of literature concerned with literacy and educational attainment have accumulated during the last decades. Bhole and Bhangale (2006), Dash (2003), Schultz (1961), Sharma et. al. (2007) agree to the fact that education is indeed a medium for the social transformation of people and a tool for empowerment. Raza et. al. (1990) and Drèze and Sen (2002) have emphasized on the role of

Table - 3 : Taluka-Wise Basic Educational Characteristics- Vadodara District (2008-09)

Sl. No.	Taluka	% Share of Students				% Share of Institutes				% Share of Teachers			
		P	S	HS	HE	P	S	HS	HE	P	S	HS	HE
1	Vadodara	33.88	11.15	39.00	15.95	50.08	19.75	22.35	3.81	37.50	13.36	27.66	21.46
2	Savli	77.42	11.29	9.35	1.91	88.02	2.11	2.11	1.05	81.16	8.11	6.40	4.31
3	Vaghodia	79.27	7.57	6.77	6.37	89.58	1.04	1.04	3.12	85.29	5.58	4.37	4.73
4	Jetpur Pavi	79.04	7.26	10.54	3.14	91.91	2.69	2.69	0.67	84.87	5.95	7.68	1.48
5	Chhota Udepur	84.13	4.55	8.15	3.15	92.18	3.29	3.29	2.05	83.30	5.63	7.44	3.60
6	Kavant	87.86	4.63	7.49	0.00	94.88	1.86	1.86	0.00	88.66	5.54	5.79	0.00
7	Nasvadi	77.44	7.32	13.65	1.56	95.36	1.93	1.93	0.77	89.76	2.45	6.68	1.09
8	Sankheda	67.29	11.56	17.40	3.74	91.35	2.16	2.16	1.23	68.70	19.42	9.06	2.80
9	Dabhoi	56.58	10.34	18.93	14.13	84.36	3.79	3.79	1.89	71.26	10.69	13.91	4.12
10	Padra	69.41	15.20	14.14	1.23	81.50	3.46	3.46	1.73	78.35	11.91	8.05	1.67
11	Karjan	69.37	10.22	17.48	2.91	80.76	3.07	3.07	1.53	71.81	11.33	14.44	2.40
12	Sinor	62.36	8.55	24.61	4.46	80.70	5.26	5.26	1.75	66.08	12.11	19.03	2.76
	Vadodara District	57.14	11.07	23.20	8.73	81.87	9.89	6.41	1.83	64.16	10.81	15.51	9.51

P = Primary, S = Secondary, HS = Higher Secondary, HE = Higher Educational Institutes.

Source: (i) District Education Office Vadodara. (ii) District Primary Education Office, Jilla Panchayat, Vadodara.

education among tribal society. However, Dash (2003) and Agrawal (2008) assert that the affirmative role of education becomes questionable when it is associated with inequality. Many scholars have also attempted to study literacy and educational attainment amongst the tribal people. Sangeeta (1989), Ram and Dabral (1995), Sarma (1999) and Bhole and Bhangale (2006) have ascribed lower levels of literacy and education among the tribes to the difficult terrain conditions, remoteness and lesser accessibility, and lack of infrastructural facilities in their habitats. While recognizing the affirmative role of education, Ambasht (1999) and Midatala (2009) assert that, education being alien to the traditional culture of the tribes, its spread among them would require methods different from those adopted to the non-tribes. A few scholars like Swamy (2010), Dey and Rajput (2003), Drèze and Sen (2002) and Agrawal (2008) have studied the pattern of education among tribal people and

tried to bring out the associated factors behind it. Dey and Rajput (2003) and Agrawal (2008) have tried to summarize the Government policies targeting spread of education and enhancement of enrollment among tribes.

Interlinking Tribal People and Education

The Constitution of India has various provisions for the spread of education especially among the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and other deprived sections of the society. Unfortunately, however, many a times the Government fails to implement the prescribed policies in their correct perspective, which can convert 'these provisions' into reality. To spread education amongst the marginalized sections of the society, especially among the tribes, has been a difficult task. Generally, it is seen that the rights of the tribal people have been ignored in the field of education. These tribal communities are placed in an ironic situation-with exclusion and non-

Table - 4 Broad Profile of the Selected Villages (2001)

Sl. No.	Sample Village	Area (in Hect.)	Households		Population		% of PoP		% of Literates	
			Total	Sample(%)	Total	Sample(%)	S.C	S.T.	Total	Female
1	Dhaniwada	393.1	197	38(19.38)	1,092	250(22.89)	0.00	100	28.29	23.63
2	Samalvant	606.5	277	50(18.05)	1,813	330(18.20)	2.04	97.95	9.98	11.10
3	Gojariya	415.9	184	55(29.89)	1,029	400(38.87)	0.00	100	15.64	18.02
4	Navalja	337.3	294	38(12.92)	1,663	290(17.43)	0.00	100	28.44	23.68
5	Hamirpura	388.4	152	39(25.65)	852	232(27.23)	2.23	93.07	20.53	23.58
6	Vajepur	735.4	327	39(11.92)	1,809	210(11.60)	2.65	97.34	18.07	26.92
7	Kadipani	265.1	390	64(16.41)	1,888	378(20.02)	3.33	62.76	49.84	37.73
8	Ambadungar	1386.5	251	55(21.91)	1,562	335(21.44)	0.64	98.97	9.41	29.94
9	Hanfeshwar	4044.8	419	30(7.15)	2,345	174(7.42)	0.00	100	6.41	11.12
Kavant Taluka		8573	2491	408 (16.37)	1,70,524	2,599 (18.49)	2.41	92.50	27.18	30.26

Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India, 2001.

accommodation of their mother tongue in education.

As Midatala aptly observes, 'For any society, social progress, political development, cultural achievement and transformation can be possible after some kind of economic development' (2009, 139). As a result, in the society like that of the tribes, where the majority of the people are poor, the ways of spreading literacy and education become more difficult. Generally the tribal people are poor and their life is totally based on the environment i.e. nature's blessings. They collect fuel wood and fodder from forest and sale them in the local market to support their livelihood. Their region is less developed in terms of social amenities (Agarwal, 2008, 34). Being in the clutches of poverty, the tribes fail to understand the value of education and utilize the given opportunities.

A lower level of education among the tribes is mainly due to parental indifference and large-scale participation of children in the labour force (Drèze & Sen, 2002, 39). Non-attendance and drop-out, are also extremely high among the tribal children in the school going age, which is due to

lack of awareness among parents and children, and also due to alien curriculum and lingua franca, inactive classrooms, indifferent teachers and social discrimination in the classroom (Midatala, 2009, 140). Nevertheless, education is seen as the most vital input, essential for development and transformation of these marginalized groups of the society.

The present study confines itself to the state of Gujarat for addressing the issue of educational attainment in the tribal regions. Gujarat was carved out as a separate state on 1st May 1960 from the erstwhile state of Bombay. From the very beginning, Gujarat has been promoting industrialization in its various parts, which has helped it to maintain till date, a higher rate of growth among all the states of the country. Even in the context of literacy and education, Gujarat has retained its position above National average for the last five decades. The State registered around five point per cent (79.31%) higher rate of literacy at the 2011 Census than that of the National average (74.04%). This is despite the fact that the population of 60,383,628 persons in the State (2011) subsumes within itself significant

segments of the Scheduled Caste (SC) (6.74%) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) (14.76%) population.

With 91.76 per cent of them residing in villages, the ST population in Gujarat is predominantly rural. Among all the districts, The Dangs district has the highest share (93.8%) of the tribes in its population although its share in the total tribal population of the State is small (2.3%). Slightly less than half (47.7%) of the ST population in the State is literate, which is rather a bit higher than that of their National counterparts (47.1%). The tribal population of the State is highly clustered and concentrated in its eastern hilly regions, spread over Bharuch (32.40%), Dohad (72.26%), Narmada (78.05%), Navsari (48.05%), Panchmahal (27.45%), Sabarkantha (20.18%), Surat (28.19%), The Dangs (93.76%), Vadodara, (26.56%) and Valsad (28.19%) districts (Table-I). Bhils are the largest tribal community and constitute 46.0 per cent of the total tribal population of the State.

Vadodara ranks third in terms of population (3,641,802) and sixth in terms of population density (463 persons/sq.kms.) among the districts of Gujarat. The district has 1,553 villages spread over 12 talukas, of which four talukas (Kavant, Chhota Udepur, Nasvadi and Jetpur Pavi) have a predominant share of the tribal population in their total population. The population of the district consists of 9, 67,393 persons belonging to different tribal communities, which is 26.6 per cent in the total population of the district and 14.8 per cent of the total tribal population of the State. As stated earlier, the Bhil tribe is the largest tribal group in the State. Majority of the tribal population of the dominantly tribal talukas of the district, viz. Jetpur Pavi, Kavant, Chhota Udepur and Nasvadi, also belong to the Bhil community. The other dominant tribal community present in the study area is the Rathwa community. The villages covered for

Table - 5. Selected Villages: Educational Attainment by Land-Size Category

Land size Category (in Acs.)	Villages	Level of Ednl. Attainment (in %)				
		Illite-rates	Pri-mary	Seco-ndary	Higher Seco	Aggr-egated Drop-out
< 2	Dhaniwada	50	30	16	4	38
	Samalvant	57	32	9	2	18
	Gojariya	59	34	4	3	13
	Navalja	60	27	9	4	10
	Hamirpura	57	26	16	1	4
	Vajepur	48	34	9	9	31
	Kadipani	68	25	6	1	8
	Ambadungar	47	42	10	1	27
	Hanfeshwar	54	36	8	2	28
2 - 4	Dhaniwada	66	23	11	0	23
	Samalvant	62	30	7	1	13
	Gojariya	48	44	7	1	15
	Navalja	43	39	12	6	20
	Hamirpura	60	30	10	0	10
	Vajepur	45	45	8	2	30
	Kadipani	74	26	0	0	14
	Ambadungar	57	35	8	0	15
	Hanfeshwar	48	52	0	0	30
> 4	Dhaniwada	50	16	28	6	37
	Samalvant	70	15	15	0	5
	Gojariya	46	42	4	8	5
	Navalja	54	23	10	3	13
	Hamirpura	0	0	0	0	0
	Vajepur	56	24	13	7	8
	Kadipani	59	35	6	0	18
	Ambadungar	68	18	10	4	10
	Hanfeshwar	74	8	4	4	17

Source: Computed from primary data collected between October/November 2011.

primary investigation in the present study belong to Kavant taluka, which has the highest proportion (92.5%) of tribal population among all talukas of the district.

The district of Vadodara has always been the hallmark of formal education from the historical times of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III. He had an unparalleled vision for education and was very keen for the education of the citizens of the Baroda State. The Maharaja had launched several schemes and created the required infrastructure for the education of women and children in general and girls in particular (Dash and Kumar, 2010, 5). Despite his ventures, and post-Independence efforts of the Centre and the State, disparity in the levels of education across space and society, continue to persist. There are marked differences in literacy and educational attainment between talukas and social groups of the Vadodara district. While the non-tribal population of the district is almost entirely literate, their tribal counterparts lag strikingly behind.

The above table-2 shows the taluka-wise and gender-wise percentage of total literates and male-female literacy rates according to 2001 census. It is clear from the above table that among the twelve talukas of the District, the population of Vadodara (85.1%) and Padra (72.7%) talukas has attained the highest level of literacy among the total literates. Vadodara (47.3%) and Sankheda (47.8%) had attained highest literacy rate among scheduled tribe population. It may be noted that these talukas have the least proportion of tribal population and are the most urbanized talukas of the district. On the other end, the least urbanized, hilly, forested and tribal population dominated Chhota Udepur and Kavant talukas have only around one-third of the population which is literate and rank at the bottom of the ladder. In terms of female literacy, the performance of the two talukas is still worse, where only one out of every five females is literate.

The table indicates that around 34 per cent of the students enrolled in Vadodara taluka have attained education up to primary level; while the

proportion of their counterparts in Kavant taluka is very high (87.86%). Dropouts after the primary level are high in all the talukas, which becomes clearly evident from the very low percentage of enrollment at all levels above primary. However, the relative picture in the above context, places Vadodara taluka - housing the district headquarter, Vadodara city, which has attained the status of a million city since the 1991 Census, and is the most urbanized taluka of the district - at the top most position in terms of educational attainment. Perhaps migration from other parts of the district, as well as from outside for higher education is escalating the attainment level, particularly at higher secondary and above levels of the taluka. As compared to Vadodara taluka, Kavant taluka is at the other end, with the lowest share of students enrolled at the secondary and above levels.

Regarding educational institutes also, Vadodara taluka tops the rank. Among all types of educational institutes in the taluka, about 50 per cent are primary schools, 24 per cent are secondary schools, 22 per cent are higher secondary schools and 4 per cent are higher educational institutes. The other talukas have a higher proportion of primary schools in their total number of institutions, which gradually declines as the levels go up. Kavant has no higher educational institute.

With reference to the share of teachers, the tribal talukas take a lead at primary level, but fail to maintain the same at post-primary levels. Nevertheless, the reverse is the case of non-tribal talukas like Vadodara, Padra, and Dabhoi. The scenario speaks of the level of educational attainment in different talukas. Kavant taluka has the highest proportion of tribal population and the second lowest literacy rate. Based on the other educational indicators, the taluka is at the lower end too. Interestingly, the 'Colwagi

Committee, 2004', formed in 2002 by the Government of Gujarat (Mehta, 2009, 62) had identified Kavant as the most backward taluka of the State based on the forty-four socio-economic parameters. It is aptly justified therefore, to undertake a detailed investigation of the educational attainment levels of the population of Kavant taluka.

For the purpose of the present study, primary investigation was conducted in a total number of 408 households selected randomly from nine villages of the taluka which constitutes about 16.37 per cent the total households in the taluka. The aggregate population surveyed was 2,599, accounting for one-fifth (18.49%) of the total taluka population (Table-4). The table presents the general profile of the villages selected for primary investigation, pertaining to area, total population, percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population, and total and female literacy rates. The taluka is devoid of any urban centre. Even the taluka headquarter, Kavant is registered as a rural settlement by the Census. All villages of the taluka, excepting Hanfeshwar village, have less than 2,000 persons. Physiographically, the taluka is a part of the Vindhyan escarpment covered with monsoonal forests. Most of the villages of the taluka have a predominance of the ST population in their total population. The SC population of the taluka has a nominal share in the population of the villages of their habitation. The villages selected for the present study also display similar social composition. Excepting for Kadipani village where the Fluorspar mining activity has attracted a good number of non-tribal population, all the selected villages have a dominant share of the ST population. Discussion with the village groups revealed that the SC households in some of the villages were never the original settlers, rather have migrated from nearby non-tribal areas and

settled a few generations back. The literacy rates in the villages are much below the District total (70.8 %) and female (60.7 %) literacy rates as well as the State total (69.14%) and female (57.80 %) literacy rates. This character particularly, makes it pertinent to undertake a detailed investigation of the educational attainment in this dominantly tribal region.

Level of Literacy and Education

A detailed investigation in these nine villages (Dhaniwara, Samalvant, Gojariya, Navalja, Hamirpura, Vajepur, Kadipani, Ambadungar and Hanfeshwar) has been undertaken to assess the level of literacy and education level. The required data has been generated using household schedule, personal observation, group discussion and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) methods. The schedule also contained questions pertaining to various socio-economic parameters of the target population, which were further enriched by conducting group discussions and RRA in each village. Broadly, the information generated covered aspects pertaining to the demographic, economic, social and psychological parameters of the target population, which were used to analyse their levels of literacy and educational attainment.

Agricultural land is the most important, and at times the only productive resource base in the rural areas of the country. Traditionally, although the tribes were depending more on the forests and its resources in comparison to agricultural land for their sustenance, contemporarily the situation has reversed, and access to land has acquired significance even in the tribal areas of the country. Today, tribal economies have been transformed to revolve around land as the only productive resource. Pathy emphasized that tribals are mostly (nearly 40%) dependent on the land for their livelihood, which is divergent to the common belief that they are landless. He

concluded that only around 4 per cent of the tribes are landless (Pathy, 1984, 111.) Thus, the sample household's access to land has been adopted as the basis of classifying the household level data of the study villages.

Proportion of population with different levels of educational attainment by land-size category in the study villages has been computed from primary data and presented in Table -5. The size of the agricultural plots is generally small in this hilly and undulating topography of the region. Besides, there are vast tracts of land under the Forest Department, where cultivation (legally) is not permitted. Under the circumstances, most households in the study villages possess small plots of land.

The various level of education is assessed through classifying the households by different land size categories. A few categories were later on clubbed for convenience. Across the various categories of land size, such as < 2 acres, 2-4 acres, >4 acres, percentages of illiterates, people attained primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels of education were analyzed. The highest level of education seen in all the nine villages was higher secondary. The dropouts ratio was clubbed together at the last and its reason were analyzed.

For all the land size categories, of all the nine villages, percentage of illiterates were between 45-70 per cent, which definitely do not display a happy picture as the district average rate is 29.2 per cent and the State average for illiteracy is 30.86 per cent. This means that more than 50 per cent of the population is illiterate. For primary, secondary, and higher secondary, in all land size categories, it is generally below 30 per cent with the exception of 1-2 villages. People with no land or less land are very poor, so poverty is the main factor for lower level of educational attainment.

As the land size of the people increases, people mainly tend to work in their field rather to go for higher education. For them, work gives them money, which education does not do. Thus, low levels of educational attainment with a high percentage of persons who discontinued at various levels of their studies are seen in the elderly and the adults. Over all, there is not much of difference among the population of different land size categories. One thing that can be squeezed out that in the land size category of more than four acres, the rate of those who discontinued their studies is lesser. This could perhaps be ascribed to the households' better economic condition that enables their children to continue education. Thus, persons who discontinued their studies were little lesser particularly in this category but high in other categories.

Group discussion with the target population i.e the school going children those who discontinued their studies as well and the RRA process also revealed clear linkages between attainment of education and socio-economic condition of the people in the area. People from all social and economic strata were made part the discussion process. Voice of concern raised in the discussion pertained mainly to the deprived social status of people in general and the women in particular. The tribal culture, custom and their way of interpretation of life also emerged as a matter of concern. The outcome of all these issues were summarized and made into different categories. The various reasons of low level of educational attainment with large mass who discontinued their studies found during the primary investigation were -

- Poor financial condition.
- Fear of failure.
- Work in agricultural field / construction nearby.

- Job in factories / security guards nearby.
- To look after the young siblings.
- Do not like to study.
- Household work.
- Family problem / conflicts.
- Distance factor.
- Non-tribal cultural context of the education imparted.

Interestingly, with the Government initiatives, which include mid-day meal, scholarship for both boys and girls, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and District Primary Education Programme and Tribal Education Plan etcetera, it was seen that the younger generation or the children in the school going age are on the way to school. Even after so much of efforts, the picture that emerges out is not so heartening. It is just a hope that children who are enrolled in school are retained but dropouts just happens anytime. The teachers in those villages revealed that education of tribal people and retention of those who attend school is very difficult.

Education in the tribal regions becomes further difficult because the Bhili (dialect of the Bhil tribe) and Rathwi (dialect of the Rathwa community) speaking children have less or no exposure to the medium of instruction (Gujarati, the State language) adopted for imparting education at school level. Since they live in a relatively isolated part of the district, they are less exposed to the language other than their own dialect. In the school, medium of instruction is generally Gujarati (the state language) which they find difficult to cope up with. This actually creates a feeling of inferiority among them, and about their language and culture. This problem is more if the teacher happens to be non-tribal or they attend a non-tribal school. Ambition

among the children of the Bhil community is also low because their older generation is also not educated. Many of these people fail to get a job even after attaining high school education, which discourages them from going for higher education. Some also consider formal education as alien to their traditional culture and hence a misfit to their society and culture. The active involvement of tribal children as a labour force in the agricultural pursuits also emerged as a strong cause for the lower attainment rate.

For combating the problem of dropouts, the Government of Gujarat has implemented a scheme of providing economic assistance to the tribal children in general and girl children in particular in 185 talukas of the State to increase the enrolment of the girls. Under this scheme, each girl student is given Rs.200/- and each family whose family are enrolled in school are given grains, saris and dhotis for ten months for increasing enrollment.

Conclusion

The educational attainment of tribal people is possible when all the above issues are addressed through proper planning. The need and culture of the tribal should be taken into consideration before planning for education among them which can include use of tribal language as the medium of instruction, making school environment more attractive, addressing the issue of teachers absenteeism, giving incentives to teachers, undertaking research to understand the problem of tribal education and bringing out relevant solutions, only then tribal education would have its correct meaning and significance. In the words of Swamy (2010, 32) 'We need to look the education of the tribal people in holistic manner and redefine our goals and delivery mechanism to suit the needs, culture, values and sensibilities of the people'.

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Spatial Patterns of Literacy in Gujarat

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Abstract

Attainment of literacy has become an essential skill in the contemporary society. For progress in any field of social and economic life, every section of the population in every spatial segment of a nation needs to achieve the skill of literacy. India, with varied geographical, social and economic character, displays an equally varied pattern of literacy achievement across society and space. Concerted efforts through planned measures are being made to bring down the socio-spatial imbalances in educational and literacy attainment. It is therefore, pertinent to assess the effects of these measures, particularly on the regions and societies which have traditionally lagged behind in this regard.

The state of Gujarat, like the Nation as a whole, encompasses within its administrative boundary, equally varied socio-geographical spaces. While central plain areas of the State accommodate societies that have experienced high level of cultural churning all through and have been adorned with education and literacy, societies in the ecologically weaker north and eastern hilly areas have led a secluded life and are getting exposed to modern ways of living only recently. Consequentially, there is considerable spatial variation in literacy attainment within the State.

The present paper tries to bring out such spatial variations in Gujarat and highlight upon the regional imbalances in the patterns of literacy attainment. For the purpose, Census of India data of the last two census years have been examined. The study reveals wide gap in the attainment of literacy between the areas that are ecologically weak and/or have dominance of traditionally pre-literate tribal population, and the areas that have experienced exposure, cultural churning, urbanization and industrialization.

Introduction:

Education is the basic requirement and Fundamental Right of the citizens of a nation.

While higher education is important, the elementary education system serves as the base of which super structure of the whole education is built up (Mukherjee, 2004, 2). Basic education

enables the population to achieve the basic skill of literacy, which has become an essential component of every aspect of life today. Attainment of basic education is essential because it has an impact on the living standards of the people and improvement of their capabilities. When people are able to read and write it leads to their empowerment, which in turn equips them for higher earnings and better living.

'Education has been identified as one of the most important determinants of economic growth. It is both an indicator and an instrument of development. It increases labour productivity in both urban and rural sectors and the economic return to investment in education are typically high' (Sengupta & Guha, 2002, 1621). With increased level of education, the economic output increases and poverty is reduced. Thus, education influences the development of the region, which leads to the overall development of the nation. The return from education is not only economic but also social. Education alters the way of thinking, behaviour, attitude, level of awareness, develops personality for development of the country and welfare for its people. Education is also said to be the solution to human, social and economic development obstacles.

The present paper attempts to analyze the scenario and disparities of literacy in the state of Gujarat with special reference to Vadodara district, which encompasses within its boundary a cross section of societies, both tribal and non-tribal, and areas that are highly prosperous, urbanized and industrialized as well as that are poverty stricken rural areas based on primary activities. Disparities have been calculated with

the help of Sopher's modified Disparity Index (1974) [$DS = \log (X2/X1) + \log [(200-X1)/(200-X2)]$, where $X2 > X1$], (Kundu and Rao, 1986, 441). The disparities have been grouped into five categories taking 25 per cent range from the respective regional average.

Spatial Patterns of Literacy in Gujarat:

The introduction of formal modern education in Gujarat dates back to about 1820, when the region came under the British rule. The period from 1850-1900 is considered as hallmark for education, more particularly for female education (Menon, 2004, 29). The present state of Gujarat came into being on 1st of May 1960, as the result of bifurcation of the former Bombay State. From the time of its inception, the State is better known as an industrialized state competing, earlier with West Bengal and later with Maharashtra.

After the formation of the new state, the main thrust of development was on agriculture and industry, and not much of attention was given to education and literacy. Nevertheless, literacy in Gujarat has always been ahead of the National average. The literacy and educational achievement of Gujarat for both male and female, even for the deprived segment of population, has been remarkable over the periods. Over the different census years, noteworthy improvement in the attainment of literacy and education is seen among all segments of the State population.

At the first Independent Indian Census of 1951, the literacy rate of India was only 17 per cent, while it was 52 per cent for Gujarat. Since its inception in 1960, the State has occupied a position above the National average

in terms of literacy. While the National average literacy rate touched the 72.92 per cent mark in 2011, the same for Gujarat remained almost five point per cent above this mark (78.03%).

The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) in Gujarat was started in 1990. The first phase of TLC covered the districts of Bhavnagar, Gandhi Nagar and The Dangs. It was made operative at three levels - district, *taluka* and the village. There were household surveys for the promotion of this mission. To raise the awareness among the people and about the benefits of learning, this Mission was spread by various means of communication (Parikh, 1997, 144), and achieved great success in activating people towards literacy and education. This approach has been one of the key strategies in the improvement of literacy in the state of Gujarat.

During the last decade (2001-2011), the growth of literacy has been remarkable in the state of Gujarat. A close look at the district level data (Table-I) reveals that, a group of seven districts of the State had around three-fourth of their population registered as literates at the 2001 Census. These were Ahmadabad (79.5%), Surat (77.60%), Navsari (75.83%), Bharuch (74.41%), Rajkot (74.41%), Gandhinagar (76.59%) and Vadodara (70.46%). At the 2011 Census too, by and large the same set of districts have retained their respective positions. A few districts have shown a noteworthy improvement in their position of literacy rate. The top six districts with this regard at the 2011 Census in Gujarat were, Surat (85.53%), Ahmadabad (85.31%), Navsari (83.81%), Gandhinagar (84.16%), Bharuch (81.51%), Rajkot (80.96%) and Vadodara

(78.92%). During the decade 2001-2011, Ahmadabad had an improvement of 5.81 percentage points. However, a remarkable increase of 7.93 percentage point in literacy rate has been observed in case of Surat district. Consequentially, the district reached the top position in 2011 from the second position a decade back.

It is worth noting that out of the 26 districts of the State, 15 or more than fifty per cent of the districts have literacy rate below the State average of 78.03 per cent. All these districts have a peripheral location in the State, and lie in three distinct pockets outside the urban-industrial belt of the State. While Kachchh (70.59%), Banaskantha (65.32%), Patan (72.30%), Sabarkantha (75.79%) and Surendranagar (72.13%) districts with smaller proportion of ST population in the total district population lie in the industrially less developed and semi-arid north, Jamnagar (73.65%), Porbandar (75.78%), Junagarh (75.80%), Amreli (74.25%) and Bhavnagar (75.52%) districts occupy the saline and agriculturally less productive coastal tracts in the west, and Panchmahals (70.99%), Dahod (58.82%), Narmada (72.31%), The Dangs (75.16%) and Tapi (68.26%) districts mark the eastern border of the State. The last group of districts have very high share of ST population and the districts in the group are the least urbanized and industrialized districts of the State. All the districts with literacy rate higher than the State average are located in the central and southern part of the State which is highly urbanized and industrialized. This pattern clearly vindicates the influence of urbanization and industrialization as

well as of social composition of the population on the progress of literacy attainment.

Table – I: District-Wise Literacy Rate of Gujarat by Residence (2001 and 2011)

Sr. No.	District	2001				2011				Point % Increase		
		Total	Rural	Urban	U-R	Total	Rural	Urban	U-R	Total	Rural	Urban
1	Kachchh	59.79	53.47	73.97	20.50	70.59	64.92	80.83	15.91	10.80	11.45	6.86
2	B. kantha	50.97	47.91	74.55	26.64	65.32	62.91	80.38	17.47	14.35	15.00	5.83
3	Patan	60.36	55.85	77.41	21.56	72.30	69.33	83.15	13.82	11.94	13.48	5.74
4	Mehsana	75.22	72.65	83.85	11.20	83.61	81.97	88.37	6.40	8.39	9.32	4.52
5	S.kantha	66.65	64.85	81.00	16.15	75.79	74.19	84.58	10.39	9.14	9.34	3.58
6	G.Nagar	76.59	72.05	84.78	12.73	84.16	81.57	87.53	5.96	7.57	9.52	2.75
7	Ahmadabad	79.50	62.30	83.57	21.27	85.31	71.05	87.93	16.88	5.81	8.75	4.36
8	S.nagar	61.61	55.85	76.78	20.93	72.13	67.95	82.30	14.35	10.52	12.10	5.52
9	Rajkot	74.16	66.13	81.60	15.47	80.96	74.65	85.44	10.79	6.80	8.52	3.84
10	Jamnagar	66.48	60.36	74.12	13.76	73.65	69.03	79.23	10.20	7.17	8.67	5.11
11	P.bandar	68.62	60.11	77.38	17.27	75.78	69.39	82.37	12.98	7.16	9.28	4.99
12	Junagarh	67.78	63.67	77.57	13.90	75.80	72.61	82.21	9.60	8.02	8.94	4.64
13	Amreli	66.09	62.83	77.19	14.36	74.25	71.77	81.42	9.65	8.16	8.94	4.23
14	B.nagar	66.20	58.72	78.00	19.28	75.52	70.70	82.26	11.56	9.32	11.98	4.26
15	Anand	74.51	71.55	82.13	10.58	84.37	82.68	88.16	5.48	9.86	11.13	6.03
16	Kheda	71.96	69.18	82.60	13.42	82.65	81.42	86.72	5.30	10.69	12.24	4.12
17	P.mahals	60.92	57.53	83.71	26.18	70.99	68.36	86.65	18.29	10.07	10.83	2.94
18	Dohad	45.15	41.42	77.87	36.45	58.82	56.36	82.09	25.73	13.67	14.94	4.22
19	Vadodara	70.76	57.62	85.08	27.46	78.92	67.84	89.74	21.90	8.16	10.22	4.66
20	Narmada	59.86	56.62	86.77	30.15	72.31	70.46	87.48	17.02	12.45	13.84	0.71
21	Bharuch	74.41	70.44	85.64	15.20	81.51	77.99	88.33	10.34	7.10	7.55	2.69
22	The Dangs	59.65	59.65	-	-	75.16	73.42	88.32	14.90	15.51	13.77	-
23	Navsari	75.83	72.32	85.08	12.76	83.88	81.65	88.92	7.27	8.05	9.33	3.84
24	Valsad	69.15	62.57	86.40	23.83	78.55	72.32	88.84	16.52	9.40	9.75	2.44
25	Surat	77.60	66.40	82.80	16.40	85.53	76.92	87.74	10.82	7.93	10.52	4.94
26	Tapi	57.00	54.50	80.10	25.60	68.26	66.47	84.67	18.20	11.26	11.97	4.57
	Gujarat	69.14	61.29	81.84	20.55	78.03	71.71	86.31	14.60	8.89	10.42	4.47

Source: Census of India 2001 and 2011; (U-R = Urban – Rural).

By and large around three-fourth of the urban population in the districts of the State had attained literacy at the 2001 Census count. After a gap of ten years, their share has crossed the 80 per cent mark in every district of the State. The districts with high share of urban population

like, Mehsana, Anand, Gandhinagar, Ahmadabad, Rajkot, Kheda, Vadodara and Surat, as well as some of the districts with low share of urban population like, Narmada, Bharuch, The Dangs, Navsari, Valsad and Tapi display almost around 90 per cent urban literacy rates. As compared to the 2001 Census, the difference between urban and rural literacy rates

has reduced substantially in every district at the 2011 Census. However, difference remains above the State average of 14.60 per cent in most of the South Gujarat districts mentioned earlier under the third group (Table – I), where the ST share in the district total population is substantially high and most of this population is rural by residence. Two districts, namely, Kachchh and Banaskantha from among the districts in the semi-arid North Gujarat, also registered urban-rural literacy difference higher than the State average. The status of Ahmadabad district being equal to these less developed districts of the State, with urban-rural literacy difference of 16.88 per cent, however, looks very surprising.

However, it is heartening to note that decadal increase of urban literacy in terms of point percentage is above the State average (8.89) in most of the districts with relatively lower levels of literacy (Table I). It is an indication that more and more people in the urban areas of the districts with the lower level of literacy are attaining literacy. It may also not be wrong to postulate an accelerated migration trend of the educated and literates from the rural areas of these districts to the urban areas in search of employment during the last decade. It is interesting to observe the highest level of rural-urban literacy disparity in the district of Vadodara. Despite having the least share of tribal population in its total population among all the districts of South Gujarat, this situation of Vadodara district implies lop-sided progress of literacy and education in the district. The least urbanized and industrialized, hilly, forested and predominantly tribal eastern *talukas* of the district have remained much behind in terms of literacy.

Male total literacy level was above 70 per cent in all but Tapi (66.20%) and Dohad (58.88%) districts of the State at the 2001 Census. The State as a whole registered around 80 per cent (79.66%) male total literacy at the same census count. Female total literacy was however, much below the 50 per cent mark in many districts of the State. The semi-arid districts in the north namely, Kachchh (48.59%), Banaskantha (34.40%), Patan (46.33) and Surendranagar (48.10%), and the districts of Panchmahals (44.94%), Dohad (31.28%), Narmada (46.61%), The Dangs (48.51%), and Tapi (47.90%) in the eastern tribal tracts of the State, were the most lagging districts of the State at the 2001 Census in terms of female literacy. During the decade that followed, relatively higher progress in terms of point percentage was recorded in the female literacy rate (11.88%) in comparison to the same increase among the males (6.09%) in the State as a whole.

It is heartening to note that progress of female literacy was above or closer to the State average of 11.88 point per cent in most of the districts of the semi-arid north, Bhavnagar in the saline and agriculturally less productive coastal tract in the west, and majority of the districts with very high share of ST population in the eastern border of the State. The predominantly tribal district of The Dangs in this tract has in fact, recorded the highest point percentage increase (18.87%) in female literacy during the last decade. Interestingly male-female literacy disparities are relatively higher in the predominantly non-tribal districts. Rather, the predominantly tribal districts of the State, excepting the district of Narmada, have recorded lower male-female literacy disparities

ranging between Very Low to Medium categories at the 2011 Census . This may be due to the traditional absence of discrimination between the two genders in the tribal society.

The fact is that the reality of literacy pattern is suppressed unless the unit of reference is lower than the district, say a *taluka*, *tahsil* or *anchal*. Hence, an attempt is made here to analyze the literacy patterns at the lower levels of analysis taking Vadodara district as a case. The logic of selecting the district lies in the fact that, it is like a microcosm of the State in its physical and cultural characteristics.

Spatial Patterns of Literacy in Vadodara District:

The plain land Vadodara has a strong history of education, particularly since the Gaekwad period. Through the concerted efforts of Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the king of the erstwhile Baroda State, during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first half of 20th century, Vadodara city emerged as an educational hub of Gujarat in particular and India in general. He is considered a great visionary and creator of several infrastructural facilities, including educational. He had even made education compulsory for both boys and girls (Dash and Kumar, 2010, 5).

Located in the industrial belt of Central Gujarat, Vadodara is marked not only with great diversity in its physical characteristics but also in its social composition. While the plains in the western part of the district witnessed a great deal of cultural churning since pre-historic times, the eastern hilly portion, being a part of the traditional central Indian tribal belt, remained bereft of these processes. Even the initiatives of

the Gaekwad rulers, did not disseminate any impulse into the eastern tribal areas of the district. It is only through the post-Independence initiation of planned interventions into these areas, changes are becoming evident in the pre-literate tribal societies which are the dominant and traditional inhabitants of these areas.

The tribal people have had their own method of learning the art of living in close association with nature. Modern method of attaining literacy and education through formal training was not only alien to but also of any value for the tribes. Thus, majority of the tribal population continued to remain preliterate until recently. Recent exposures of the tribes to the modern world and its way of living, institutional efforts to transform them from preliterate to literate societies and decreased dependence on the milieu with the loss of its natural bounties and supplies etcetera have drawn the tribes towards formal education. But, the gradual spread of formal education among the tribes in the recent decades is marked with lack of interest in formal education (Swamy, 2010, 31), low enrollment (Sengupta and Ghosh, 2012, 79; Midatala, 2009, 220), absenteeism (Midatala, 2009, 176), poor understanding of issues, concepts contained in the curriculum that are external to their world view (Padhi, 2013, 219), inferior or poor quality educational infrastructure (Pant, 2007, 172), and lack of employment opportunities (Talesra, 1989, 154) etcetera. These along with other deterrents have been keeping the pace of spread of education among the traditionally preliterate populations. For example, with reference to absenteeism, it is widely observed that the enrolled children give more importance to the festivals and celebrations

of their society, which are not only numerous but also spread over the entire year, and abstain from school to participate in these festivals (Midatala, 2009, 250). Consequentially, these predominantly tribal regions of Vadodara district with a large share of preliterate societies display low literacy and educational attainment rates.

Out of the twelve *talukas* of Vadodara district, the tribes are in absolute dominance in *talukas* of Jetpur Pavi, Chhota Udepur, Kavant and Nasvadi. Other than Sankheda *taluka*, where their share is almost 50 per cent, they are also in substantial proportion ranging between 25 to 33 per cent, in another four *talukas*. All these *talukas* of the district are either fully or partially characterized by hilly, forested and undulating topography, and have been the traditional abode of the tribes.

As is evident from the populations in these eastern *talukas* of the district with higher proportion of tribal population have the least literacy rates. The four *talukas* with absolute dominance of the tribes have been the least literate *talukas* despite registering much higher increase than the district average in terms of point percentage growth of literates between the latest two census counts. While the literacy rate at the 2001 census in these *talukas* was below the fifty per cent mark and much below the levels in the *talukas* where the tribes are proportionately less, it has just crossed this mark in case of Jetpur Pavi and Nasvadi, and has come closer to it in case of Chhota Udepur and Kavant *talukas* during the next ten years. As majority of the population in these *talukas* are rural by residence, there is not much of difference in the total and rural literacy rates. The limited number of urban population in the *talukas* is mostly

literate does not necessarily mean that urban tribes are mostly literate. It is quite probable that the literate non-tribal migrant professionals account for a substantial proportion of the population of the urban centers in the *talukas*.

Literacy rates by sex also display wide variation across the *talukas* of the district. While respectively more than three-fourth and half of the males and females of the *talukas* dominated by the non-tribal populations were literate at the 2001 census, their counterparts in predominantly tribal *talukas* lagged much behind. Despite noteworthy improvement at the last census, their performances remain much behind the district average in either case. Particularly the females of the four most predominantly tribal *talukas* are yet to achieve fifty per cent literacy level. In case of Chhota Udepur and Kavant *talukas*, only around a third of the females have returned themselves as literates at the 2011 census.

Perusal of literacy disparity indices also indicate relatively greater gaps between the rural-urban and male-female populations in the predominantly tribal *talukas* of the district. Five of the twelve *talukas* of the district did not have any urban center by 2001, including three of the four predominantly tribal *talukas*. However, the lone *taluka* of Chhota Udepur recorded a very high disparity at this census. At the 2011 census, the rural-urban literacy disparities in all the four predominantly tribal *talukas* were much higher than such disparity in the predominantly non-tribal *talukas*. The increase of rural-urban literacy disparity at the district level from 0.20 at the 2001 census to 0.26 at the 2011 census is perhaps due to this high level of disparity in the new urban centers of the predominantly tribal *talukas* where a high level of rural-urban literacy

disparity is recorded. It is however, heartening to notice that the disparity level has decreased substantially by 0.22 points between 2001 and 2011 censuses in Chhota Udepur *taluka*, which was the only predominantly tribal *taluka* with urban population at the 2001 census, This decrease is also relatively much higher a decrease in comparison to the predominantly non-tribal *talukas* of the district.

Male-female literacy disparities have remained invariably higher in all excepting the most urbanized Vadodara *taluka*. But again, at both the census years, the highest levels of male-female literacy disparities are recorded only in the four predominantly tribal *talukas* of the district. While this disparity was almost double than that of the non-tribal *talukas* at the 2001 census, it has reduced to around one and half at the last census. Higher decrease of male-female literacy disparities in these tribal *talukas* of course, is an indication of gradual increase in female enrollment rates. A relatively higher point percentage growth of female literates in 2011 over 2001 census in these *talukas* also substantiates this view. Nevertheless, wide gap between the tribal and non-tribal *talukas* in terms of both male and female literacy rates, and higher male-female literacy disparities within the tribal *talukas* even after almost 70 years of Independence and 60 years after the formation of the State, remains a matter of great concern and deserves special attention and concerted planning measures.

Conclusion:

The analysis of spatial patterns of literacy in Gujarat with reference to the all-India scenario as well as inter-district and at micro-level has made some significant revelations.

The state of Gujarat, despite being one of the leading urbanized and industrialized states of the country, stands fourteenth among all the states of the country in terms of literacy level. The relatively higher proportion of socially and economically deprived sections of the population in the State total population may be contributing towards this lower rank. Literacy rates in the State by residence or by gender however, remain above the National averages. Rural-urban literacy disparity is low in the State and the decrease in this disparity between the last two census counts has also been higher than the National average level of rural-urban literacy disparity decrease. However, the State has recorded a medium level of male-female literacy disparity and the decrease is by and large at par with the National average decrease.

At the district level there is significant variation in the levels of literacy. While the most urbanized and industrialized districts are the most literate in the State, the performance of the peripheral districts in literacy achievement has been relatively poor. Such districts can be grouped under three spatial categories, such as, (i) districts with smaller proportion of ST population, lying in the industrially less developed and semiarid north; (ii) districts of the saline and agriculturally less productive coastal tracts in the west; and (iii) the eastern districts with a higher share of ST population and with least urbanization and industrialization.

All the districts with literacy rate higher than the State average are located in the central and southern part of the State which is highly urbanized and industrialized. The spatial pattern at the district level vindicates the influence of urbanization and industrialization as well as

social composition of the population on the progress of literacy attainment.

During the last decade, the difference between rural-urban literacy rates in the districts of the State has decreased substantially. Urban literacy rates touch the 90 per cent mark in both highly and less urbanized districts of the State. However, the rural-urban difference remains higher than the State average difference in the less urbanized and predominantly tribal districts. Relatively higher decadal increase in the urban literacy in most of the districts with lower literacy rates is an indication that either more and more people in the urban areas of these districts are attaining literacy, or there is an accelerated rural to urban migration for employment of the educated and literate population from the rural areas of these districts or from elsewhere.

Although male literacy is invariably high in most of the districts of the State, female literacy has remained miserably low in the peripheral districts in the semi-arid north and eastern tribal belt. It is however heartening to note the significant decadal progress in the female literacy rate in almost all districts. The predominantly tribal district of The Dangs in the south-eastern tip of the State has recorded the highest point percentage increase in female literacy during the last decade.

Besides, male-female literacy disparity is relatively lower in majority of the predominantly tribal districts, may be due to absence of gender discrimination in tribal societies.

A detailed study of Vadodara district with a mixed composition of general and ST population reveals that despite having a strong tradition of education, the district presents an extremely poor picture of literacy scenario in its

eastern *talukas* dominated by the ST population. There is not much of difference between the total and rural literacy rates in these *talukas*, as majority of the population of these *talukas* are rural by residence. The significantly higher urban literacy rates in these predominantly tribal *talukas* however, do not necessarily mean that urban tribes are mostly literate. Rather, this could be due to migration of the literate non-tribal professionals accounting for a substantial proportion of the population of the urban centers in these *talukas*.

Literacy rates by gender display wide variation across the *talukas* of the district with the non-tribal population dominated *talukas* in the lead. Both males and females of the predominantly tribal *talukas* have performed very poorly in comparison to their counterparts in other *talukas*. Particularly, the females of the four most predominantly tribal *talukas* are yet to achieve fifty per cent literacy level. Rather, in case of Chhota Udepur and Kavant *talukas*, only around a third of the females have returned themselves as literates at the 2011 census.

Analysis of literacy rates at village level for the predominantly tribal Kavant *taluka*, reveals the regional imbalance in the spread of literacy in the State. It would not be wrong to conclude that the corrective measures towards the spread of literacy and education in the State have not been perceptively impressive, and need to be considered seriously.

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