

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LITERACY RATE (1961-2001): A STUDY IN SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY (MITIHILA REGION)

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Abstract

The growth of female literacy has a great impact on the development of an area. Actually, the economic and social development is a function of female literacy change. If the female literacy is increasing, it means the area is going to be developed. Here, the efforts have been made to study the comparison of male and female literacy in Mithila region since the beginning of 20th century.

Key Word: LITERACY, SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY, MITIHILA REGION, FEMALE, COMPARATIVE STUDY etc.

The growth of female literacy has a great impact on the development of an area. Actually, the economic and social development is a function of female literacy change. If the female literacy is increasing, it means the area is going to be developed. Here, the efforts have been made to study the comparison of male and female literacy in Mithila region since the beginning of 20th century. Literacy in the Mithila region in the past has meant mainly male literacy. The proportion of females who could read and write was negligible regarding the incidence of literacy, O'Malley mentioned that 'the 1901 census indicated that only 1 female per mille could read and write. The percentage of literate males in 1901 was 7.1 as against 5.8 in 1891 and 3.3 in 1881. The incidence in Darbhanga district was lower than the state incidence where there were 10.4 males and 5 out of every one thousand literates.

TABLE – 1**Comparative study of male and female literacy in Mithila Region 1961-71**

Name of the Districts	Decadal increase of Male literacy rate (in%)	Decadal increase of Female literacy rate (in%)	Differences
Muzaffarpur	16.45	27.87	11.42
Darbhanga	24.03	44.38	20.35

(Source: Census of India 1991, part II Bihar population Abstracts of Bihar p.p. 58 – 69)

Table No.01 shows the comparative study of male and female literacy in the various districts falling under the study area precisely between the census years 1961-71. During this period study area comprised of only two districts Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga. Above figure reveals that in the district of Darbhanga decadal increase of female literacy was more i.e. as high as 44.38%. This district is followed by Muzaffarpur (27.87%). But highest differences in male and female literacy can be observed in Darbhanga (20.35) and it is followed by Muzaffarpur (11.42).

TABLE – 2**Comparative study of male and female literacy in study region (1971-81)**

Name of the Districts	Decadal increase of male literacy rate	Decadal increase of female literacy rate	Differences
Sitamarhi	54.1	94.02	39.92
Muzaffarpur	54.69	93.72	39.03
Vaishali	53.87	93.35	39.48
Samastipur	51.12	99.32	48.2
Darbhanga	51.83	98.72	36.89
Madhubani	50.94	97.85	46.91
Begusarai	49.1	92.98	43.88

Source: Govt. of India, Census of India, 1991, part II, Bihar p.p. 58 – 69

During the decade of 1971-81, the study region comprised of Sitamarhi, Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Samastipur, Darbhanga, Madhubani and Begusarai. Sheohar and Khagaria were the part of

Sitamarhi and Munger respectively. According to given table highest difference between male and female literacy could be observed in Samastipur (48.20%), Samastipur is followed by Madhubani (46.91%0, Begusarai (43.88%), Sitamarhi (39.92%), Vaishali (39.48%), Muzaffarpur (39.03%) and Darbhanga (36.89%).

TABLE – 3

Comparative study of male and female literacy in Study Area 1981-91

Name of the Districts	Decadal increase of male literacy rate	Decadal increase of female literacy rate	Differences
Vaishali	53.35	85.19	31.84
Madhubani	43.94	67	24.06
Samastipur	43.03	63.53	20.5
Muzaffarpur	48.79	61.12	12.33
Darbhanga	42.88	50.92	18.04
Sitamarhi	39.49	50.26	20.77
Khagaria	35.52	56.12	20.6
Begusarai	36.41	48.69	12.28

(Govt. of India, Census of India, 1991, part II, Bihar Population Abstracts of Bihar, p. 58-69)

According to table 24 during the decade of 1981-91 the study region comprised of all the eight districts except Sheohar because during those days, it was the part of Sitamarhi districts. It shows difference of decadal, increase of male and female literacy rate. Given table reveals that in the district of Vaishali difference of decadal increase of male and female literacy was maximum during the aforesaid decade i.e. as high as 31.84%, Vaishali is followed by Madhubani (24.06%), Sitamarhi (20.77%), Khagaria (20.60%), Samastipur (20.50%), Darbhanga (18.04), Muzaffarpur (12.33%) and Begusarai (12.28%).

TABLE – 4**Comparative study of male and female Literacy in Study Area, 1991-2001**

Name of the Districts	Decadal increase of male literacy rate	Decadal increase of female literacy rate	Differences
Madhubani	115.2	178.44	63.24
Samastipur	45.31	95.6	50.29
Muzaffarpur	56.46	106.26	49.8
Darbhanga	55.83	103.48	47.65
Khagaria	54.2	96.97	42.77
Sitamarhi	68.01	133.56	65.55
Vaishali	48.67	105.5	56.83
Begusarai	54.2	96.97	41.77
Sheohar	52.32	126.07	73.75

(Source: Govt. of India, Census of India, 1991, part II, Bihar population Abstracts of Bihar, p.p. 58 – 69)

Table No. 4. shows the decadal increase in rate of literacy in the various districts falling under the study area precisely between the census years 1971-81. The figure also reveals difference in male and female literacy which is highest in Sheohar with maximum percentage of 73.75 and it is followed by Sitamarhi (65.55%), Madhubani (63.24%), Vaishali (56.83%), Samastipur (50.29%), Muzaffarpur (49.80%), Darbhanga (47.65%), Khagaria (42.77%) and Begusarai (41.77%).

TABLE – 5**Comparative study of male and female of Literacy in Study Region, 1961-2001**

Name of the Districts	Decadal increase of total literacy rate (%)	Decadal increase of male literacy rate (%)	Decadal increase of female literacy rate (%)	Differences
Madhubani	548.34	253.38	760.45	507.07
Samastipur	501.39	264.49	801.34	536.85
Muzaffarpur	406.21	313.75	755.71	441.96
Darbhanga	508.13	263.68	799.27	535.59
Khagaria	360.43	268.64	640.38	371.74
Sitamarhi	386.41	314.84	702.32	387.48
Vaishali	401.34	304.89	756.32	451.43
Begusarai	344.84	269.64	680.39	410.75
Sheohar	391.38	312.68	714.84	402.16

(Source census of India, 2001, Series II, Bihar part II, p.p. 12-15)

Table 5. aptly depict the percentage increase of male and female literacy and as well as it their differences during the last four decade from 1961 to 2001 which present a clear cut comparative study of the Mithila region. Highest disparity of male-female literacy could be observed in Samastipur (536.85) due to very high decadal growth of literacy among females whereas among males the growth recorded was not as high as female counter parts.

Besides this, percentage increase of total literacy is also high in Samastipur. In 2001, there were 1309 primary schools in Samastipur which comprised 3.50% of the total primary schools in Bihar. All these factors led to high decadal increase of total literacy which is the main reason of disparity in male and female literacy. After Samastipur disparity could be observed in Darbhanga (535.59%), Madhubani (507.07%), Vaishali (451.43%), Muzaffarpur (441.96%), Begusarai (410.75%), Sheohar (402.16%), Sitamarhi (387.48%) and Khagaria (371.74%).

Lowest disparity of decadal increase of male female literacy could be observed in Khagaria due to comparatively low decadal growth of literacy among females. Percentage increase of total literacy is also comparatively lower.

TABLE – 6

Literacy rates by sex for study region (1991-2001)

Name of the Districts	Literacy rates in percentage					
	Males		Difference	Females		Difference
	1991	2001		1991	2001	
Sheohar	36.36	45.54	9.18	14.34	27.43	13.09
Sitamarhi	39.86	57.02	11.16	15.49	26.35	10.86
Madhubani	48.49	57.26	8.77	16.75	26.56	9.81
Darbhangha	48.31	57.18	8.87	20.09	30.35	10.26
Muzaffarpur	48.44	60.19	11.75	22.33	35.2	12.87
Vaishali	55.62	64	8.38	24.08	38.14	14.06

Samastipur	50.39	57.83	7.44	21.17	32.69	11.52
Begusarai	48.66	59.71	11.05	23.52	36.21	13.69
Khagaria	42.97	52.02	10.05	19.79	29.62	9.83

(Source: Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001, Census of India 2001, Series II, Bihar)

Table no. 6 shows variation in male and female literacy which is an important factor. The sex wise break-up of the literacy rate clearly indicates that females have outnumbered males so far as decadal increase in literacy percentage is concerned. While the increase in percentage literacy among females varied between 14.06% (Vaishali districts) and 9.81 percent (Madhubani), the rise in percentage literacy among males have been observed to vary between 11.75 percent (Muzaffarpur) and 7.44 percent (Samastipur). According to 2001 census, highest female literacy found in Vaishali (38.14%) which is followed by Begusarai (36.21%), Muzaffarpur (35.20%), Samastipur (32.69%), Darbhanga (30.35%), Khagaria (29.62%), Sheohar (27.43%), Madhubani (26.56%) and Sitamarhi (26.35%).

Since Vaishali is adjacent district of Patna therefore its total literacy is high and that is why differences in literacy rates by sex is also high. In case of Sitamarhi where differences in literacy rate is minimum due to lack of social consciousness.