



CHAPTER-VI

STATE OF LITERACY OF RURAL-URBAN POPULATION

CHAPTER-VI

STATE OF LITERACY OF RURAL-URBAN POPULATION

Development of a society is reflected in its level of literacy and attainment of education. These are also key variables affecting other demographic characteristics of a society like fertility, mortality and to a certain extent migration. Their contribution for improving quality of life in our society is also of great importance.

Literates and Illiterates

2. Literacy was a Census question even in the very first census in the Country. At the time of canvassing of data in the present Census of 2011, it was made clear that 'all children of age below 7 years' should be treated as illiterates even if they are going to school and may have picked up reading and writing a few words. Thus the figures thrown up by Census 2011 show that, of the 33.39 million people in the State of Kerala, 3.32 million are infants and young children who are falling in the age group of 0-6. Therefore for any analysis of literacy data, it is necessary to exclude that population falling in the age group 0-6. The rate thus worked out by excluding the population of 0-6 from the total population taken in the denominator is termed as the effective literacy rate. The effective literacy rate for Kerala always stood above that of all India. In Census 1971, it was more than double that of all India (69.75% and 34.45% respectively). Among the states in India, Kerala had no close rival in the field of literacy. Among the Union Territories, only Lakshadweep and among the States, only Mizoram, are closer to the State in 2011.

3. In the State, at the time of Census 2001, of the total population of 31.84 million, 3.79 million were infants and young children below 7 years. The effective literacy rate thus worked out for Census 2001 for the State as a whole was 90.86 per cent with a split up of 94.24 per cent for males and 87.72 per cent for females. This showed that effective literacy rate was lower among females. The male and female gap in literacy rate was more than 7 percentage points then. The Census 2011 figures reveal that, of the 33.39 million population in the State, the number of illiterates who are 7 years of age or above has declined from 2.56 million in 2001 to 1.83 million. In absolute terms, the decline is 7,31,337. An increase of about 3 percentage points as compared to Census 2001 is seen in the rate of literacy which stood at 93.91 per cent. This shows an increasingly favourable scenario in the State in the arena of literacy. In tune with the increase in effective literacy rate at State level during 2001-2011, a corresponding increase in effective literacy rate has also been witnessed in respect of males from 94.24 per cent to 96.02 per cent and for females from 87.72 per cent to 91.98 per cent in the corresponding period. In Census 2011, the effective literacy rate among both sexes have gone beyond 90 per cent which is a sound indication of more and more females becoming literates and thus reducing male-female gap in literacy rate. It is further visible from the literacy figures of Census 2011 that the male-female gap in literacy has come down from seven points in 2001 to four points in 2011.

4. Let us analyse the trend of effective literacy rate at the level of rural and urban areas. In India, at the time of Census 2011 the rural area has reported a literacy rate of 68.9 per cent and the urban area, on the otherhand, registered a literacy rate of 85.0 per cent with a gap in literacy of 16 per cent points in favour of urban areas.

5. The total effective literacy rate for the State of Kerala in Census 2011 has been worked out to 93.91 per cent, which is much higher than the all-India total effective literacy rate at 74.04 per cent for the corresponding period. At the State level, the aggregate rural effective literacy rate stands at 92.92 per cent vis-à-vis 94.99 per cent literate population in urban areas.

6. The gender-wise segregation of data further reveals that for the State as a whole, 96.02 per cent males are literates and on the otherhand the female literacy rate is put at 91.98 per cent, which shows only a marginal gap of nearly 4 per cent in the distribution of male-female literates in the State. The corresponding gender gaps in rural and urban areas are 4.55 per cent and 3.50 per cent respectively. In the case of rural area, the gender gap in literacy rate is comparatively higher than the urban areas.

STATEMENT NO. VI.1

Literacy Rate in India and Kerala by Sex and Residence – 1961-2011

Year	India				Kerala			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1961	37.49	11.00	70.77	43.75	63.38	43.98	73.08	54.51
1971	42.98	16.86	74.64	52.54	76.06	61.22	82.50	69.33
1981	48.26	21.35	78.56	58.07	88.47	75.80	93.93	83.77
1991	56.96	30.17	81.09	64.05	92.91	85.12	95.58	89.06
2001	70.69	46.12	86.27	72.86	93.63	86.69	95.94	90.62
2011	78.57	58.75	89.67	79.92	95.29	90.74	96.83	93.33

Notes

1. Literacy rates for 1961 and 1971 censuses relates to population aged five years and above. The rates for 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 censuses relate to the population aged seven years and above.
2. The 1981 literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted. The 1991 Census literacy rates exclude Jammu and Kashmir.

7. This Statement provides a comparison between the literacy rates of India and Kerala for the period from 1961 to 2011, separately for males and females for rural and urban areas. Rural India could achieve a literacy rate of over 70 per cent among its male population in Census 2001, whereas the State of Kerala had already achieved the same by 1971. Female literacy rate in rural areas of India all along showed a dismal picture. Despite a steady increase in rural female literacy rate, all India level rural female literacy rate stands only at 58.75 per cent at present. The State of Kerala, on the other hand, could achieve a rural female literacy rate of 61.22 per cent as early as in 1971 ie, about 40 years ago which stands at 90.74 per cent at present. In Kerala, the decadal increase in rural female literacy rate was maximum (17 per cent points) during 1961-1971 and minimum during 1991-2001 (1.57 per cent points). In urban area, the scenario is little different. Urban India as well as urban Kerala had almost equal literacy rate among males in 1961. Of course, at the same point of time, a wide difference in urban female literacy rate was witnessed between the State and the Country as a whole. The State of Kerala had already achieved a higher urban female literacy rate of 83.77 per cent in 1981 than what the country could achieve by 2011 (79.92 per cent). The decadal variation in the female literacy rate in urban areas of the State had remained almost the same at about 15 per cent points during 1961-1971 and 1971-1981 and thereafter a declining trend in increase in rate is visible. The rate of decadal increase in urban female literacy rate always ranged between 5 to 9 points at all India level.

Statement No. VI.2

District-wise Number of Literates and Illiterates Among Population Aged 7 Years and Above by Residence in Kerala, 2011

Name of District	Literates				Illiterates			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kasaragod	3,18,764	3,10,344	1,98,267	2,08,914	23,599	56,430	9,838	27,164
Kannur	3,65,755	3,76,296	6,57,217	7,57,307	13,284	35,058	12,567	42,877
Wayanad	3,17,221	3,06,222	12,872	12,871	24,707	50,595	738	1,612
Kozhikode	4,18,093	4,38,811	8,58,291	9,19,298	11,080	36,045	20,764	63,650
Malappuram	8,91,510	9,49,951	7,16,719	7,70,478	47,245	98,409	23,582	60,291
Palakkad	8,38,755	8,28,963	2,80,605	2,83,867	80,265	1,63,973	13,495	32,603
Thrissur	4,19,581	4,49,195	8,66,560	9,53,893	17,086	38,460	23,010	53,416
Ernakulam	4,53,707	4,50,899	9,73,865	9,83,038	19,080	35,170	22,903	51,917
Idukki	4,52,640	4,31,048	22,348	22,738	25,156	51,412	668	1,336
Kottayam	6,19,658	6,36,510	2,39,380	2,50,146	12,815	23,769	12,174	16,369
Alappuzha	4,09,806	4,47,545	4,85,670	5,20,537	7,361	21,681	11,859	31,462
Pathanamthitta	4,47,493	5,04,415	55,678	62,534	10,817	19,973	1,050	2,076
Kollam	5,88,941	6,46,665	4,87,568	5,19,583	23,610	53,917	23,215	48,142
Thiruvananthapuram	6,16,503	6,60,436	7,42,421	7,75,835	37,506	73,764	39,993	70,165

8. This Table presents the absolute number of literates and illiterates among males and females aged 7 years and above for both rural and urban areas during Census 2011. Among the rural areas of various districts, male literates outnumber the female literates in five districts viz Kasaragod, Wayanad, Palakkad, Ernakulam and Idukki although the total number of females outnumber the males in all the districts of Kerala. The position in the urban area is much more encouraging. In all the districts, with the exception of Wayanad district, the female literates outnumber the male literates in the given context of positive sex ratio in urban areas of all districts. In the case of illiterates, the female illiterates outnumber male illiterates in all the districts both for rural and urban areas that too in the backdrop of prevailing positive sex ratio all across the State in both the sectors of urban and rural areas.

Statement No. VI.3

District-wise Literacy Rate by Residence in Kerala, 2001 and 2011

Name of District	Literacy Rate			
	2001		2011	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Kasaragod	83.61	88.55	88.71	91.67
Kannur	91.03	94.12	93.88	96.23
Wayanad	85.17	87.15	89.22	91.63
Kozhikode	91.45	93.51	94.79	95.47
Malappuram	89.44	91.18	92.67	94.66
Palakkad	83.56	89.25	87.23	92.45
Thrissur	91.50	94.23	93.99	95.97
Ernakulam	92.19	94.31	94.34	96.32
Idukki	88.46	92.92	92.03	95.74
Kottayam	95.80	95.92	97.17	94.49
Alappuzha	93.30	93.73	96.72	95.87
Pathanamthitta	94.78	95.37	96.87	97.42
Kollam	91.11	91.51	94.10	93.38
Thiruvananthapuram	87.87	92.00	91.98	93.24

9. The above Statement relates to district-wise literacy rates for rural and urban areas for 2001 and 2011 censuses. In Census 2001, Kottayam district was reported to have the highest literacy rate both in the rural (95.80 per cent) and urban (95.92 per cent) areas. In Census 2011, Kottayam district has retained the highest position in rural areas with a literacy rate of 97.17 per cent. However, Pathanamthitta district with 97.42 per cent has come out with flying colours in respect of urban literacy rate.

Statement No. VI.4

District-wise Rural-Urban Literacy Rate by Sex and Male-Female Gap in Kerala, 2001 and 2011

Name of District	Literacy Rate								Male- Female Gap in Literacy Rate			
	2001				2011				2001		2011	
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female				
Kasaragod	89.50	78.03	93.98	83.56	93.11	84.61	95.27	88.49	11.47	10.42	8.50	6.78
Kannur	95.17	87.20	97.09	91.50	96.50	91.48	98.12	94.64	7.97	5.59	5.02	3.48
Wayanad	89.70	80.64	91.62	82.68	92.77	85.82	94.58	88.87	9.06	8.94	6.95	5.71
Kozhikode	95.82	87.38	96.57	90.65	97.42	92.41	97.64	93.52	8.44	5.92	5.01	4.12
Malappuram	93.15	86.02	94.20	88.40	94.97	90.61	96.81	92.74	7.13	5.80	4.36	4.07
Palakkad	88.88	78.66	93.54	85.24	91.27	83.49	95.41	89.70	10.22	8.30	7.78	5.71
Thrissur	94.58	88.74	96.44	92.21	96.09	92.11	97.41	94.70	5.84	4.23	3.98	2.71
Ernakulam	95.10	89.35	96.60	92.10	95.96	92.76	97.70	94.98	5.75	4.50	3.20	2.72
Idukki	92.18	84.71	95.15	90.74	94.73	89.34	97.10	94.45	7.47	4.41	5.39	2.65
Kottayam	97.30	94.34	97.51	94.41	97.97	96.40	95.16	93.86	2.96	3.11	1.57	1.30
Alappuzha	96.11	90.75	96.67	91.00	98.24	95.38	97.62	94.30	5.36	5.67	2.86	3.32
Pathanamthitta	96.37	93.35	96.72	94.14	97.64	96.19	98.15	96.79	3.02	2.58	1.45	1.36
Kollam	94.50	88.00	94.12	89.03	96.15	92.30	95.46	91.52	6.50	5.09	3.85	3.94
Thiruvananthapuram	91.63	84.39	94.56	89.57	94.27	89.95	94.89	91.71	7.24	4.99	4.32	3.18

10. Statement No.VI.4 above shows the literacy rates and gap in male-female literacy rates for the rural and urban areas separately with gender break up for 2001 and 2011 censuses. In Census 2001, Kottayam district was at the top among the districts of the State in literacy rate among both males and females of rural and urban areas. In Census 2011 the position has changed in the sense that the top position occupied by Kottayam district has now been shared by three districts, namely, Kottayam, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta. In the rural areas among males and females, the top position is shared by Alappuzha (98.24 per cent) and Kottayam (96.40 per cent) districts respectively, whereas in urban areas, Pathanamthitta district with 98.15 per cent male literacy rate and 96.79 per cent female literacy is at the top.

11. As regards to male-female gap in literacy rates, two districts, namely, Kasaragod (11.47 per cent) and Palakkad (10.22 per cent) were seen with higher male-female literacy gap in the rural areas in Census 2001. In all the other 12 districts, the male-female literacy gap was below 10 per cent then. In the urban areas, only Kasaragod district(10.42 per cent) had male-female gap in literacy above 10 per cent in 2001.Kasaragod district retains the position as the district with the highest gap in male-female literacy rate both in rural and urban areas in Census 2011 also.

12. At the State level gap in male-female literacy rate was 6.52 points in 2001. It has further reduced to 4.04 in 2011. Kerala is one of the three States in India with the lowest differential in literacy on the basis of gender in Census 2001 as well as in Census 2011. The other States are Mizoram (3.97) and Meghalaya (5.82). It is added that Kerala is also one of the 10 States/UTs which has achieved male-female gap in literacy rate of 10 percentage points or below, set by the Planning Commission to be achieved by year 2011-2012.

Statement No. VI.5

Distribution of Taluks by Range of Rural and Urban Persons, Males, Females Literacy Rate, 2001 and 2011

Range of Literacy Rate	2001		2011	
	<i>No. of Taluks</i>		<i>No. of Taluks</i>	
	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Persons				
Total	63	63	63	63
No Urban	0	14	0	10
0 - 40	0	0	0	0
40 - 50	0	0	0	0
50 - 60	0	0	0	0
60 - 70	0	0	0	0
70 - 80	1	0	0	0
80+	62	49	63	53
Males				
Total	63	63	63	63
No Urban	0	14	0	10
0 - 40	0	0	0	0
40 - 50	0	0	0	0
50 - 60	0	0	0	0
60 - 70	0	0	0	0
70 - 80	0	0	0	0
80+	63	49	63	53
Females				
Total	63	63	63	63
No Urban	0	14	0	10
0 - 40	0	0	0	0
40 - 50	0	0	0	0
50 - 60	0	0	0	0
60 - 70	1	0	0	0
70 - 80	6	1	2	0
80+	56	48	61	53

13. There are 63 taluks in the State. In Census 2001, there was only one taluk, named, Chittur having total rural literacy rate at 75.32 per cent. The rest of the taluks had returned total rural literacy rate above 80 per cent. As regards, rural male literacy rate, in all taluks rural male literacy rate was reported above 80 per cent. In the case of rural female literacy rate also, Chittur taluk had returned a lower literacy rate of 67.83 per cent which was the only taluk below 70 per cent mark. In six taluks, namely, Kasaragod (75.43 per cent), Mananthavady (79.79 per cent), Palakkad (76.77 per cent), Vythiri (79.72 per cent), Alathur (75.19 per cent) and Devikulam (75.42 per cent), the rural female literacy rate ranged between 70 and 80 per cent then. At the time of Census 2001, 14 taluks in the State had no urban areas. All the remaining 49 taluks had returned urban total literacy rate and urban male literacy rate above 80 per cent. The exception was Chittur taluk (79.01 per cent) which had returned urban female literacy rate below 80 per cent.

14. In Census 2011, the position changed with the decline in the number of taluks having no urban area from 14 in 2001 to 10 in 2011. All the other taluks with urban area have returned literacy rate above 80 per cent for persons, males and females in all areas. In the rural area, all the 63 taluks have in fact, literacy rate above 80 per cent in respect of persons and males. However, in Chittur taluk (76.31 per cent) and Alathur taluk (75.76 per cent), the rural female literacy rate is below 80 per cent.

Statement No. VI.6

Distribution of Taluks by Range of Male-Female Gap in Literacy Rate in Kerala by Residence, 2001 and 2011

Range of Male-Female Gap in Literacy Rate	2001		2011	
	<i>No. of Taluks</i>		<i>No. of Taluks</i>	
	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Total	63	63	63	63
No Urban	-	14	-	10
0 - 5	14	27	46	43
5-10	41	20	16	10
10-15	7	2	1	0
15-20	1	0	0	0
20-25	0	0	0	0
25-30	0	0	0	0
30-35	0	0	0	0

15. At the State level, the male-female gap in literacy for Census 2001 stood at 6.52 whereas for Census 2011, it has reduced to 4.04. Kerala State has reported minimum differential in male-female gap in literacy in Census 2001 as well as in Census 2011 along with Meghalaya and Mizoram. Kerala even had the lowest differential next to Mizoram in Census 1991.

16. In this Statement, 63 taluks in the State are grouped according to the range of gender gap in literacy rate for rural and urban areas for Census 2001 and Census 2011. At the time of Census 2001, of the 63 taluks, rural areas of 8 taluks had male-female gap in literacy rate above 10 per cent. Rural area of Chittur taluk had the highest male-female literacy gap of 15.34 points due to the lowest female literacy rate of 67.83 per cent there. More than 87 per cent of the taluks had male-female gap in the literacy rate below 10 points in the rural areas. The number of taluks qualified for analysis of data in the urban area stood at 49 in 2001. About 95.92 per cent of taluks with urban area had male-female literacy gap less than 10 points and of these 55.10 per cent had even male-female gap 5 or below 5. Hosdurg taluk (11.52 per cent) and Chittur taluk (12.05 per cent) were the two taluks with urban area showing higher male-female literacy gap of 10-15 points in urban areas. In Census 2011, of the 63 taluks with rural areas, 98.4 per cent have male-female differential less than 10 per cent. Chittur taluk is unique with a higher literacy differential of 12.47 points. There are only 53 taluks with urban area in Census 2011 and all these taluks have returned male-female literacy gap below 10 points in urban areas.

Statement No. VI.7

Top Five and Bottom Five Districts Showing Highest and Lowest Rural and Urban Literacy Rate, 2011

Literacy Rate			
Rural		Urban	
Top Districts	Bottom Districts	Top Districts	Bottom Districts
Kottayam (97.17)	Palakkad (87.23)	Pathanamthitta(97.42)	Wayanad (91.63)
Pathanamthitta (96.87)	Kasaragod (88.71)	Ernakulam (96.32)	Kasaragod (91.67)
Alappuzha (96.72)	Wayanad (89.22)	Kannur (96.23)	Palakkad (92.45)
Kozhikode (94.79)	Thiruvananthapuram(91.98)	Thrissur (95.97)	Thiruvananthapuram(93.24)
Ernakulam (94.34)	Idukki (92.03)	Alappuzha (95.87)	Kollam (93.38)

17. The above Statement lists out the names of five top and five bottom districts with highest and lowest literacy rates respectively for the rural and urban areas of the State in respect of Census 2011. Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Ernakulam districts appear among the list of top five districts with highest literacy rate in both rural and urban areas. Similarly, Palakkad, Kasaragod, Wayanad and Thiruvananthapuram are the four districts with lower literacy rates listed in both rural and urban areas. On the other hand, Pathanamthitta district is at the top among the districts with high literacy rate in urban areas. Palakkad district is reported with the lowest literacy rate in rural area while Wayanad district is at the bottom among the districts with the lowest literacy rate in urban area.