Rural Urban Disparity of Literacy in Murshidabad District, WB, India

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Abstract

The present paper aims to study the rural urban disparity of literacy in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The research work is based on secondary sources of data collected from the District Census Hand Book (2001) and District Statistical Hand Book (2010 & 2011) of Murshadabad district. Literacy rate has been computed for the population above 6 year and Sopher's Disparity index (1974) modified by Kundu and Rao (1983) has been employed for measurement of male-female disparity in literacy. Our estimates revels that the total as well as male and female literacy rates are higher in urban area than rural area. The male female disparity in literacy is high rural area than urban area. Male rural urban disparity is lower than female population.

Keywords: Male-female literacy, rural-urban literacy, Male-female disparity index, rural-urban disparity, Male-female disparity.

Introduction

Literacy is an important indicator of human development of any region. Literacy developed the cultural, socio economic infrastructure of a nation. It reduces the ethnic division. Literacy plays an important role to abolish poverty and to build up human resources. Literacy is the key for the socialisation. Literacy generates patriotic air among the mass. Literacy provides one ability to give oneself own identity which contribute much to build up a good society. Literacy enables man to set up a good interaction in the society. It also enhances man's capability of building a good economic infrastructure. Literacy is also a good indicator of the backwardness or forwardness of development. Where there is good literacy rate it indicates that there is development and where there is less literacy rate indicates the underdevelopment. So literacy rate is used as the good indicator or measurement of the development in urban or rural area. Good literacy rate is seen in the urban areas and less literacy rate in rural areas. Prior to the advent of the skill of reading and writing, society could be classified as pre literate and literate. Literate society began somewhere during the 4th million B.C. through a gradual transmission from pictography to the use of an alphabet (Golden, 1968)[1]. Literacy refers ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals to develop their knowledge and potential and to participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO)[2].

Review of Literature: Chandna, R.C., in their study found that the literacy rate of urban population is significantly high in comparison to rural population in the developing country[3]. Ghosh (1985) told of his study that the most of basic minimum measurement of educational status is the degree of literacy[4]. But it is very difficult to measure the degree of literacy in accurate terms. Sawant and Lewis, (2004) found that literacy influences and determines qualitatively and quantitatively not only the human resources but also other population attributes like fertility, mortality, age of marriage and economic participation of a population ultimately, aiming towards welfare of the society[5]. Kumari, S, in their study found that the literacy is a cultural attribute of population. It acts as an index to judge the socio-economic development of an area[6].

Objectives: The main objectives of the present study are summed up as followings: i. To study a literacy disparity in rural urban areas. ii. To depict male-female literacy rate in both the areas. iii. To indicate male-female disparity in literacy in the rural and urban areas. iv. To differentiate the rural urban areas in terms of literacy.

Study Area: Murshidabad district located between 24°50'20" N to 23°43'30" N and 88°46'00" E to 87°49'17" E. The district surrounded by Bangladesh in the eastern part, Birbhum district and Jharkhand state in the western part, Malda in the north and Bardhaman and Nadia district in the southern part[7]. The area of the district is 5341sq.km. Murshidabad, being situated in the bank of river Ganga, experiences monsoonal moderate climatic features followed by heavy rainfall in the rainy season. Total population of the district is 5863717, among which 3004385 are males and 2859332 are females. The population density of the study area is 1101 per sq. km. Rural population is 5131374 there are 2210 villages including 285 uninhabited[8].

Methodology

The present paper aims to analysis the disparity of literacy of the rural and urban areas of the Murshidabad district according to the secondary data collect from District Census Hand Book,

Murshidabad. Literacy rate has been computed for the population above 6 year. For the measurement of male-female disparity in literacy, Sopher's Disparity Index (1974) modified by Kundu and Rao (1983) has been employed –

$$Ds = \log (x2/x1) + \log (100 - x1) / (100 - x2) \qquad (I)$$

Kundu and Rao's modified disparity index formula, as follows:

$$Ds = \log (x2/x1) + \log (200 - x1) / (200 - x2) \qquad (II)$$

x2 is considered for male and x1 is considered for female literacy rate.

Results and Discussion

Rural-Urban Disparity of Literacy: According to census 2011 the literacy rate of the Murshidabad district (67.53%) is below the national level (74.04%). The total literacy rate in rural area is 52.3% and in the urban areas is 68.3%. Our estimate reveals that rural and urban areas are varied from each other in respect of literacy rate.

Table-1
Male- Female Disparity of Literacy of Rural-Urban areas in Murshidabad District

Blocks	Literacy Rate			Male-Female Disparity Index
	Male	Female	Total	
RURAL LITERACY				
Farakka	57.0	37.5	47.5	0.197
Samserganj	50.1	30.0	40.1	0.238
Suti - I	52.9	35.6	44.4	0.187
Suti - II	52.6	32.5	42.6	0.224
Raghunathganj - I	58.2	42.0	50.1	0.157
Raghunathganj - II	56.5	40.0	48.0	0.165
Sagardighi	58.8	46.2	52.6	0.120
Lalgola	55.2	45.8	50.6	0.096
Bhagawangola - I	53.4	46.7	50.1	0.073
Bhagawangola - II	49.6	44.5	47.2	0.062
Murshidabad Jiaganj	59.7	46.9	53.5	0.120
Nabagram	66.5	48.9	57.9	0.150
Khargram	62.70	43.20	53.20	0.178
Burwan	68.30	49.20	59.10	0.159
Kandi	62.10	42.20	52.50	0.184
Bharatpur - I	58.70	42.90	51.10	0.152
Bharatpur - II	61.20	46.80	54.10	0.132
Beldanga - I	61.00	50.10	55.80	0.101
Beldanga - II	57.80	45.20	51.80	0.122
Nowda	56.10	50.40	53.30	0.062
Hariharpara	59.00	52.30	55.80	0.068
Berhampore	69.40	57.50	63.70	0.098
Domkal	54.70	48.20	51.50	0.070
Jalangi	60.40	50.90	55.80	0.090
Raninagar - I	57.10	49.10	53.20	0.081
Raninagar – II	54.40	45.60	50.10	0.092
Total Rural	58.5	45.7	52.3	0.123
URBAN LITERACY				
Dhuliyan	58.6	37.6	48.1	0.208
Jangipur	80.1	66.2	73.3	0.101
Murshidabad	80.6	68.5	74.7	0.088
Jiaganj-Azimganj	81.8	69.5	75.7	0.089
Kandi	81.70	68.60	75.40	0.094
Beldanga	81.90	70.00	76.20	0.086
Berhampore	89.80	81.60	85.80	0.060
Total Urban	75.7	60.7	68.3	0.113
Total Urban+Rural	60.70	47.60	54.30	0.121

Source: District Census Hand Book, Murshidabad District, 2001

The literacy rate is low in rural area comparison to urban area. Samserganj block is lowest literacy rate among the rural area and the percentage is 40.1%. The maximum literacy rate of rural area is Berhampore block and the percentage is 63.70%. Maximum literacy rate in urban area is Berhampore (M) and the percentage is 85.80% while minimum literacy rate in urban area is Dhuliyan (M), percentage is 48.1%.

Table-2
Rural-Urban Disparity in Literacy of Murshidabad District

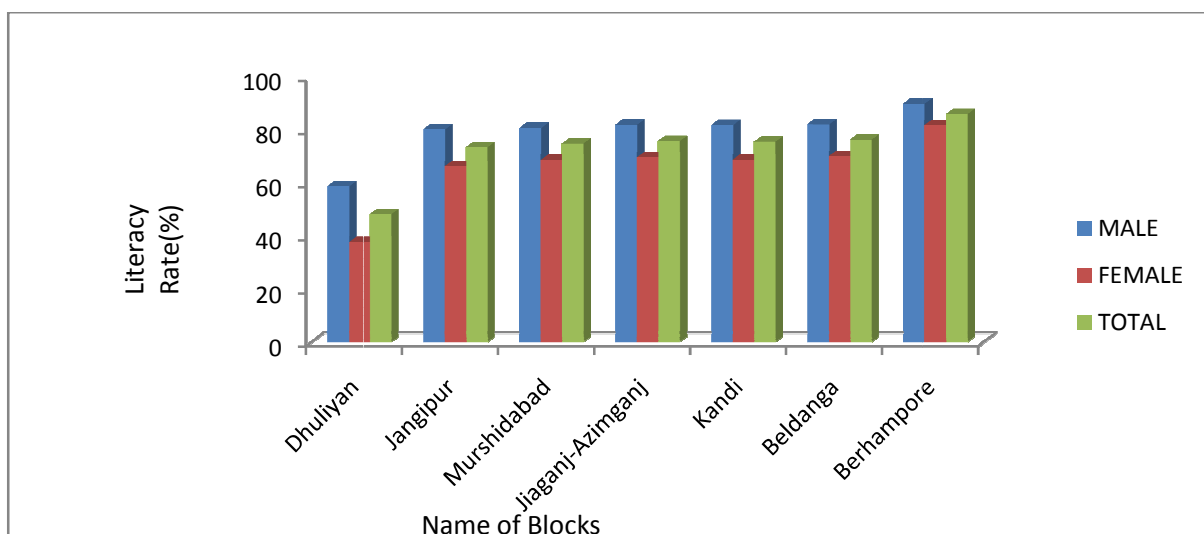| Gender	Literacy Rate (%)			
	Total	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural-Urban Disparity**
Male	60.70	58.5	75.7	17.20
Female	47.60	45.7	60.7	15.00
Total	54.30	52.3	68.3	16.00

Source: Calculation based on table-1

In Murshidabad district the Nabagram(57.9%), Burwan (59.10%), Beldanga – I (55.80%), Hariharpara (55.80%), Berhampore (63.70%) and Jalangi blocks (55.80%) are above the district average literacy rate (54.30%) and rest of the blocks in rural area are below the district average literacy rate.
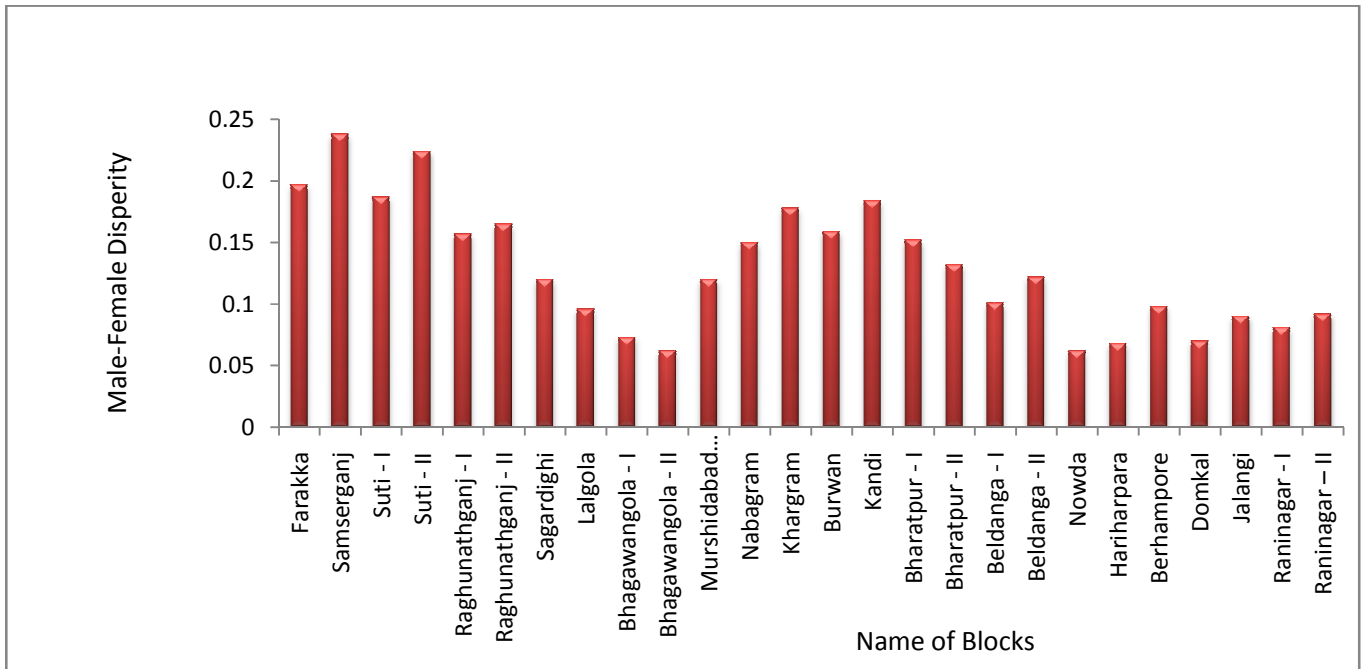
Male literacy rate is higher in urban population (75.7%) than rural (60.7%). Male literacy in rural area is highest in Berhampore block (69.40%) and lowest in Samserganj block (50.1%). Male literacy rate of urban area is highest Berhampore block (89.80%) and lowest in Dhuliyan (58.6%). Average male literacy of Murshidabad district in rural area is 58.5%. Sagardighi (58.8%), Murshidabad Jiaganj (59.7%), Nabagram (66.5%), Khargram (62.70%), Burwan (68.30%), Kandi (62.10%), Bharatpur – I (58.70%), Bharatpur – II (61.20%), Beldanga – I (61.00%), Hariharpara (59.00%), Berhampore (69.40%) and Jalangi blocks (60.40%) are higher in district average male rural literacy rate (58.5%) and rest of the blocks are lower in average male literacy rate.

Female literacy rate is higher in urban population (60.7%) than rural (45.7%). Female literacy in rural area is highest in Berhampore block (57.50%) and lowest in Samserganj block (30.0%). Female literacy rate of urban area is highest Berhampore (81.60%) and lowest in Dhuliyan (37.6%) (Table 1). Table-1 represent that male and female literacy are much higher in urban areas than rural areas in every blocks of this district.

The male-female disparity in literacy has been presented by Sopher's Disparity Index. The male-female disparity in literacy of the district is 0.121 while in rural area it is 0.123 and in urban area it is 0.113. Our estimate reveals that, male-female disparity in rural area is higher than urban area everywhere. Male-Female disparity of literacy in rural area is highest in Samserganj block (0.238) and lowest in Bhagawangola – II and Nowda block (0.062). Male-Female disparity of literacy in urban area is highest Dhuliyan (0.208) and lowest in Berhampore (0.060) (Table 1). There are thirteen blocks namely Farakka, Samserganj, Suti – I, Suti – II, Raghunathganj – I, Raghunathganj – II, Nabagram, Khargram, Burwan, Kandi, Bharatpur – I, Bharatpur – II and Beldanga – II blocks having higher male-female disparity index than the district level (0.121). While rest blocks have low male-female disparity index than the district level (table-1).
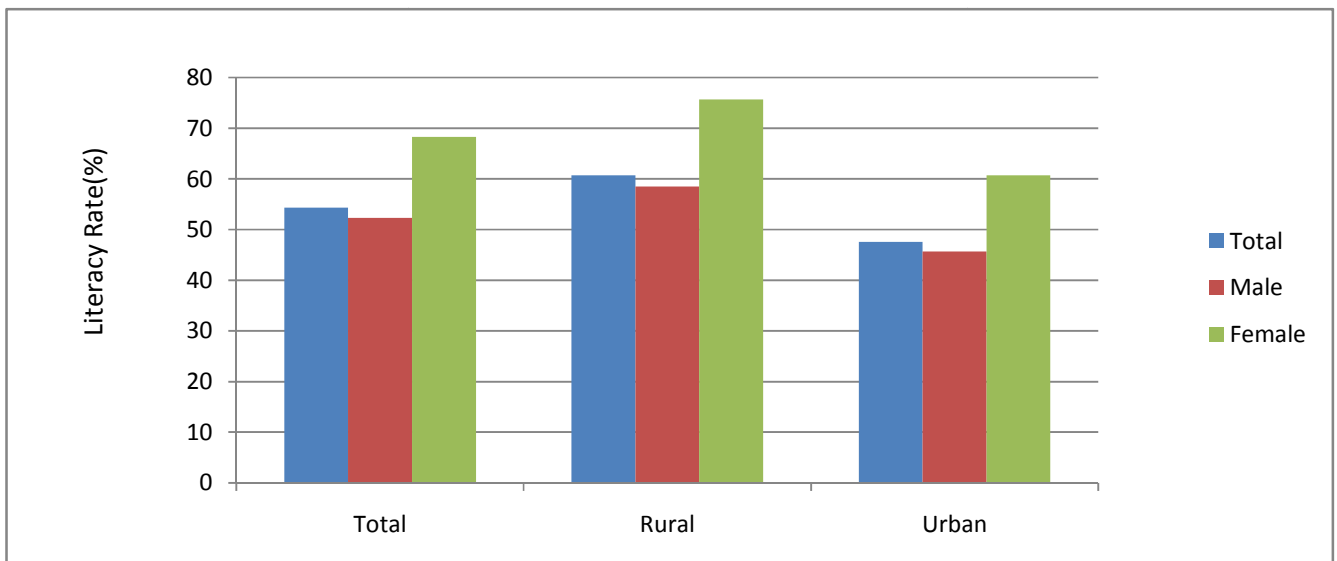
The rural-urban disparity in literacy of Murshidabad district is showing in percentage. The rural-urban disparity in literacy of the district is 16.00 whereas male rural-urban disparity is 17.20 and female rural-urban disparity is 15.00 (table-2). The table 2 represent that the male rural-urban disparity in literacy is much higher than the female.

Figure–1
Spatial Pattern of Literacy in Urban Population, Murshidabad District

Figure–2
Block Wise Disparity of Literacy in Rural area of Murshidabad District

Figure–3
Rural urban Disparity of Literacy in Murshidabad District

Conclusion

The present study exposes that the total literacy rate including male and female is below the national standard literacy rate level. In the rural areas the literacy rate is lower where as in the urban areas higher. There is a good disparity in literacy rate of the rural and urban areas. The male rural urban disparity is lower than that of female. Male female disparity reflects the socio-economic set up of the both areas.

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