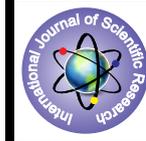


## Gender Disparity in the Literacy Rate in Andhra Pradesh: An Analysis of 2011 Census



### Social Sciences

**KEYWORDS :** Gender Disparity, Literacy, Census, Andhra Pradesh, India

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### ABSTRACT

*There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in Andhra Pradesh: effective literacy rates in 2011 were 75.56 per cent for men and 59.74 per cent for women and 67.66 per cent for total population (age 7 and above) and the gender gap in literacy rate is 15.82 per cent. Gender inequality in education can deprive women from the right to education which makes them unaware about their social responsibilities and duties. Thus, education of and among women is the most vital tool that can be used to combat discrimination on the basis of gender. The present paper discusses the male-female differentials in literacy level at districts level, and also examines number of districts with various level of gap in male-female literacy levels based on census data of 2011 in Andhra Pradesh.*

### Introduction:-

Literacy is a powerful element/tool for socio-economic progress, because, literacy affects economic development both directly and indirectly, and directly through productivity, employment, composition of labour force, division and mobility of labour etc., and indirectly through savings, limitation of the size of family and by inculcating the right kinds of attitudes and skills and by removing some of the obstacles to social change and progress. So, Literacy is an important indicator of development and status and it provides access to information necessary for growth and decent living. It also provides an account of the socio-economic condition of an individual and its family. On the other hand, illiteracy stands for ignorance, defeatism, frustration and lack of aspiration. Literacy and education generate hope, aspiration and ability to move forward. Thus, literacy is the key that unlocks the door to modernization, and it has become a means for acquiring knowledge and skills whereby people can begin to understand and analyze unequal relations and the structure of the poverty and exploitation in the society, so that they can collectively challenge the existing social reality. Literacy stands for the ability to read and write to function as a good citizen. There is no doubt that literacy is a feature of human dignity and good citizenship. Recognizing the relationship between literacy and the overall development of a person, the Indian Government has launched the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in the year 1988, and our 11th Five Year Plan document stated that, "literacy" is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the values of approach and methods. 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.

The Indian literacy rate grew to 74 per cent in 2011 from 12 per cent at the end of British rule in 1947. Although this was a more than six fold improvement, the level is well below the world average literacy rate of 84 per cent, and India currently has the largest illiterate population of any nation on earth. Despite government programmes, India's literacy rate increased only "sluggishly," and a recent study (2000) estimated that it would take until 2060 for India to achieve universal literacy at then-current rate of progress. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India, literacy rates in 2011 were 82.1 per cent for men and 65.4 per cent for women i. e. 16.68 per cent gender gap between male and female literacy. In the state of Andhra Pradesh also more or less the same situation is prevailing in literacy rates. Literacy is also widely recognized as the gateway to economic security and opportunity- particularly for girls and women. Lack of literacy has forced many women into the risky "informal" economy as street traders, domestic servants, home workers and seasonal laborers. This in turn reflects a continuing belief that there is little benefit in educating a girl when she could be working in the market place or fields. However, spread and diffusion of literacy is generally associated with essential traits of day-to-day events such as modernization, urbanization, industrialization, communication and

commerce. Generally, higher level of literacy leads to a greater awareness and also contributes in improvement of socio-economic and cultural conditions and it acts as a catalyst for social betterment and enhancing the people for self-reliance in solving their mal-adjustments.

As per 2011 censuses, there is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in Andhra Pradesh, the effective literacy rates is 75.56 per cent for men and 59.74 per cent for women and 67.66 per cent for total population (age 7 and above) and the gender gap in literacy rate is 15.82 per cent. The low female literacy rate has had a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilization in India. For the last four decades Andhra Pradesh continues to be an area of concern for educational planners. While India's average literacy rate is 65 percent, Andhra Pradesh continues to be occupying 28th position in 33 states and union territories. Of the 16 major states in India only Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are behind Andhra Pradesh in terms of literacy. Some recent studies have indicated that female literacy is a strong predictor of the use of contraception among married Indian couples, even when women do not otherwise have economic independence. Gender inequality in education can deprive women from the right to education which makes them unaware about their social responsibilities and duties. Therefore, female literacy is a key aspect in the process demographic change thereby lead to socio-economic development in India (Dharmalingam and Morgan, 1996). The world conference on Human Rights (1993) at Vienna has rightly elaborated the women equal access/opportunity to education. Thus, education of and among women is the most vital tool that can be used to combat discrimination on the basis of gender.

### Definition of Literacy and Literate:-

UNESCO defines, literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

The National Literacy Mission defines, literacy as acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and the ability to apply them to one's day-to-day life.

### Literate:-

According to Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (R.G.C.C.I) 2001, literate means a person aged seven and above, who can able to both read and write with understanding in any language. The same criterion has also been retained in the 2011 census.

### Importance of the study:-

Literacy is a tool whereby one can access to information, knowledge and thereby empowerment becomes possible, the best example is Kerala state in India, because they had achieved cent per cent literacy rate for both male and female. The present paper discusses the gender differentials in literacy level of Andhra Pradesh and its districts, and also examines the top and bottom ten districts in terms of male-female gap in literacy rates. This crucial information is very much useful for policy-makers and

administrators at state as well as district gross root level to achieve cent per cent literacy in Andhra Pradesh.

### Methodology

The study is based on secondary source. The data for the present study have been taken from provisional totals of 2011 census (R.G.C.C.I, 2011). Based on provisional totals/data of Andhra Pradesh, the analysis was carried out to 23 districts on gender differentials in literacy rates.

### Literacy rate and Gap between Genders-

The data on differentials in literacy rates by gender among the districts will help to plan at micro level to improve the literacy level. The information on gap between male-female literacy among the districts will be useful to handle the issue at district level. Data on literacy rates and gap between genders in Andhra Pradesh and its districts, 2011 are furnished in table-1.

**Table-1 District-wise Literacy rates and Gap between Genders in Andhra Pradesh-2011**

S.No	State/ Districts	Literacy rate (%)				S.No	State/ Districts	Literacy rate (%)			
		Total	Male	Female	Gap			Total	Male	Female	Gap
1	Adilabad	61.55	71.22	51.99	19.23	14	East Godavari	71.35	74.91	67.82	7.09
2	Nizamabad	62.25	72.66	52.33	20.33	15	West Godavari	74.32	77.63	71.05	6.58
3	Karimnagar	64.87	74.72	55.18	19.54	16	Krishna	74.37	79.13	69.62	9.51
4	Medak	62.53	72.50	52.49	20.01	17	Guntur	67.99	75.40	60.64	14.76
5	Hyderabad	80.96	83.85	78.42	5.43	18	Prakasam	63.53	73.53	53.40	20.13
6	Rangareddy	78.05	84.00	71.82	12.18	19	Nellore	69.15	75.93	62.30	13.63
7	Mahabubnagar	56.06	66.27	45.65	20.62	20	Kadapa	67.88	78.41	57.26	21.15
8	Nalgonda	65.05	74.93	55.05	19.88	21	Kurnool	61.13	71.36	50.81	20.55
9	Warangal	66.16	75.91	56.45	19.46	22	Anantapur	64.28	74.09	54.31	19.78
10	Khammam	65.46	73.20	57.85	15.35	23	Chittoor	72.36	81.15	63.65	17.50
11	Srikakulam	62.30	72.25	52.56	19.69	24	A.P	67.66	75.56	59.74	15.82
12	Vizianagaram	54.49	69.04	50.16	18.88	25	INDIA	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68
13	Vishakapatnam	67.70	75.47	60.00	15.47						

Source: R.G.C.C.I; 2011: Census of India, 2011; Provisional Population Totals.

The data reveals that the literacy rate of Andhra Pradesh and male-female literacy rate is lower (total, 67.63; males, 75.56 and females, 59.74) than the Indian average (total, 74.04; males, 82.14 and females, 65.46). Moreover, the literacy rates by gender are significantly vary among the districts in Andhra Pradesh. The highest literacy rates are recorded in state capital Hyderabad, followed by Rangareddy, Krishna, and West Godavari and Chittoor districts. While lowest literacy rates are noticed in districts like, Vizianagaram, Mahabubnagar, Kurnool, Adilabad and Nizamabad.

It is evident from the above data, that the highest gap in literacy rates of males and females are recorded in districts of Kadapa, Mahabubnagar, Kurnool, Nizamabad, Prakasam and Medak. Whereas, very low gender gap in literacy rates is found in the districts of Hyderabad, West Godavari, East Godavari and Krishna.

### Gap in Literacy rate in Top ten and Bottom districts

Gender gap i.e., male-female differentials in literacy rate among top ten and bottom ten districts in Andhra Pradesh will show the severity/gravity of problem.

**Table-2: Top and Bottom ten districts with literacy Rate and Gender Gap in A.P- 2011.**

S. NO	Top ten districts with literacy Rate (%)			S. NO	Bottom ten districts with literacy Rate (%)		
	Districts	Lit-eracy rate	Gap		Districts	Lit-eracy rate	Gap
1	Hyderabad	80.96	5.43	1	Vizianagaram	54.49	18.88
2	Rangareddy	78.05	12.18	2	Mahubnagar	56.06	20.62
3	Krishna	74.37	9.51	3	Kurnool	61.13	20.55
4	WestGodavari	74.32	6.58	4	Adilabad	61.55	19.23
5	Chittoor	72.36	17.50	5	Nizamabad	62.25	20.33
6	EastGodavari	71.35	7.09	6	Srikakulam	62.30	19.69
7	Nellore	69.15	13.63	7	Medak	62.53	20.01
8	Guntur	67.99	14.76	8	Prakasam	63.53	20.13
9	Kadapa	67.88	21.15	9	Anantapur	64.28	19.78
10	Vishakapatnam	67.70	15.42	10	Karimnagar	64.87	19.54

Source: R.G.C.C.I; 2011: Census of India, 2011; Provisional Population Totals.

As per data, it is quite surprising to note that among the top ten and bottom ten districts with literacy rate, Kadapa district (it is a top ten district) had the highest male-female gap (21.15%) in literacy than bottom ten districts and district Hyderabad had lowest gender gap (5.43%). The present results clearly indicate that most of the districts have concentrating on overall literacy rate than gender literacy particularly female literacy, so, majority of districts are having lower female literacy rate than their counter-parts. If observes region-wise districts, among three regions, Rayalaseema and Telengana region districts had lowest female literacy and highest gender gap than Coastal Andhra region districts. Out of four Rayalaseema districts, three districts, viz., Kadapa, Kurnool and Anantapur districts and out of ten Telengana districts, five districts viz., Mahubnagar, Adilabad, Nizamabad, Medak and Karimnagar districts had lowest female literacy rates and wider gender literacy gap than Coastal Andhra region districts, whereas among nine coastal districts, only two districts viz., Prakasam and Vizianagaram had lowest female literacy rates and wider gender literacy gap.

### Range of literacy rate

Analysis of districts with ranges of literacy rate by gender will furnish information on number of districts by various ranges with literacy levels.

**Table-3: No. of districts with range literacy rate by gender in A.P-2011.**

S. NO	Range of literacy rate (%)	M.L.R	F.L.R	M-F
1	≤ 50	-	1	-1
2	51-60	-	14	-14
3	61-70	2	5	-3
4	71-80	18	3	+15
5	81 and above	3		+3
6	Total	23	23	00

Source: R.G.C.C.I; 2011: Census of India, 2011; Provisional Population Totals.

Out of twenty-three districts in Andhra Pradesh, fifteen districts had laid in lower female literacy ranges (≤ 60 per cent), on the

contrast, male literacy levels (71 and above per cent) are higher in twenty-one districts.

**Ranges of gap**

The study of districts by ranges of gap in literacy rate can find that the number of districts with severity of the problem with low range. Data regarding these aspects are furnished in table-4.

**Table-4: Ranges of Gender Gap in Literacy rate among Districts in A.P-2011**

Gap range	Number of Districts	Percent to total number of Districts
≤10	4	17.4
11-15	3	13.0
16-20	10	43.5
21 and Above	6	26.1
Total	23	100.0

Source: R.G.C.C.I.; 2011: Census of India, 2011; Provisional Population Totals

In A.P, six districts had high ranges of gap i.e., 21 and above per cent in literacy rates, whereas, ten districts had 16-20 per cent of gap ranges and another three districts had 11-15 per cent of gap in literacy rates and only four districts had less than 10 per cent of gap in male- female literacy rates. This clearly shows higher differentials in male-female literacy rates in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

**Districts with below and above average literacy rates**

Number of districts with below and above average literacy rates than the state and national, provides information on districts which are laid in these categories. Data relates these are put in table-5.

**Table-5: Districts with below and above State and National Averages in A.P-2011.**

State/Country Literacy rate (per cent)	Below Average				Above Average			
	Total	Male	Female	Differences (M-F)	Total	Male	Female	Differences (M-F)
A.P- T-67.66, M-75.56, F-59.74*	13	15	14	1	10	8	9	-1
INDIA- T-74.04, M-82.14, F-65.46*	19	21	18	3	4	2	5	-3

\*T=Total, M= Male, F=Female.

Source: R.G.C.C.I.; 2011: Census of India, 2011; Provisional Population Totals.

It can be observed from the above data, that the number of districts with below and above state and national average literacy rates in A.P by gender is significantly varied. More than half of the districts (13) are below state average (67.66%) and the remaining 10 districts are in above state average. However, when compared to national average, nineteen districts out of twenty-three districts in A.P, are in below national average in literacy rates. Gender-wise data reveals that in fourteen districts, female literacy rate is below state average (59.74%) and in eighteen districts it is below national average (65.46%). Whereas for male literacy rate, in fifteen districts it is below state average (75.56%) and in twenty-one districts it is below national average (82.14%).

**Summary:-**

Literacy enables a person to think rationally, to be understanding, to be more responsible and to make his/her own deci-

sions. A literate person is aware of all his fundamental rights and duties. Literacy is the ultimate solution to fight problems like communalism, terrorism and under development. Illiteracy can bring down even the most powerful nations down, so if we are to become a developed nation, the government should first remove the problem of illiteracy by introducing effective programs with proper implementation and budget. It is ironical that even today, our leaders and people's representatives give literacy a very low priority, pitting poverty alleviation, food, clothing, shelter, work, health etc. above it. They fail to perceive literacy as part of the development process, as an endeavour to improve the quality of life, as the process of building awareness among the weaker sections, as part of democratization of political power, as the arrangement to give their due, to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. They are unable to appreciate the relevance of literacy in matters like infant mortality, immunization, children's participation in primary schools, population growth, family planning, women's emancipation, and social evils like child marriage, dowry, and bride burning and so on. Neglecting the issue of illiteracy can hurt the development of India very badly.

The literacy rates are significantly varied by gender among the districts in Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, high range of male-female gap in literacy rate is existing in most of the districts. The highest gap is recorded in top ten district of Kadapa. As per the data of 2011 Census, the state and district administrations are mainly concentrated only on male literacy than female literacy; hence, most of the districts had higher gender gap in literacy rates. The absence of adequate school infrastructure like improper facilities, particularly for girls and inefficient teaching staff is one of the main factors affecting literacy in Andhra Pradesh. Based on the results it can suggested that gross root level plans are needed to reduced the gender differentials among districts, which recorded high gap in literacy rates.

**Suggestions**

1. Gender equality in literacy is necessary, as it is a most powerful factor in the development of a human being. However, the literacy level among women is lower than men. To improve the women literacy, need commitment to implement 'Akshara Bharati' literacy programme, this is concentrating more on women literacy.
2. Literacy is an indicator of a nation's progress, thus, total literacy campaigns should be viewed as a peoples programme and all sections of the community should be involved in the programme. The panchayat Raj institutions such as block, Mandal and village level organizations should own the programme and mobilize all the sections of community to contribute for the success in terms of providing volunteers, physical facilities, monitoring and evaluation.
3. Illiteracy stunts the growth of people mind and leads to apathy, thus, through Mass media create a good environment for implementing the literacy programmes, to speed the message of literacy to the nook and end corners of the districts.
4. Regular trainings should be needed to up-date important strategies for the cadres like district level officers, Supervisors, coordinators, volunteers, etc. Training should be more specific on strategies/methods to implement literacy programmes at grass root level, type of motivation needed, and how to encourage people's participation in the literacy programmes.
5. Not only the government, but every literate citizen should contribute in battling with the demon of illiteracy, though "each one teaches one".

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