



LITERACY DIFFERENTIAL IN PUNJAB: AN INTER-DISTRICTS ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Education is necessary for society growth and human emancipation. It encourages better health, increased output, increased income, human independence, competent living, and increased participation in social activities. Education, which is a crucial component of building an economically prosperous society, is the finest development investment there is. Long-term social and financial benefits of education are substantial. The socioeconomic characteristics of a person can be used to gauge an area's degree of development. The attainment of literacy is essential for the progress of any person, society, or nation. People are able to comprehend their environment because it changes the social mirror. The level of education attained is one of the most important indicators of society's development. In the twenty-first century, it is essential to have a well-educated populace with a diverse variety of knowledge, attitudes, and computer skills. The current essay aims to look at trends and differences in literacy rates across rural and urban regions. Punjab has a more encouraging image in terms of educational status, with a literacy rate of 76.68 percent according to the 2011 census. Punjab dropped from position 16 in 2001 to 21 in 2011's rankings of literacy in all of India.

Keywords: Urban, Rural, Literacy rate, Spatial differentials

Introduction

Literacy is the capacity to read, write, and at least comprehend a simple message in any language, according to international use (Hassan, 2005). An ethnicity, a country, or a community's socioeconomic and cultural structure can be shown in their level of literacy. It affects and determines both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of human resources as well as other population characteristics, such as fertility, mortality, age of marriage, and economic involvement of a population, with the ultimate goal of promoting societal welfare



(Sawant and Lewis, 2004). Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on female literacy in order to fulfil the aim of universalizing education, as demonstrated by the correlation between the income index and literacy rate (0.74) (Som & Mishra, 2014). The level of literacy significantly influences the social and economic growth of a society.

Education spending is a predictor of a nation's future growth. Formal education is a reliable indicator of the level of education in a population. The degree of literacy is the most fundamental minimal indicator of educational status. However, it is exceedingly challenging to determine the level of literacy in precise terms (Ghosh 1985).

Reading increases the socioeconomic and cultural development of the area. It encourages interethnic peace, reduces poverty, and improves living conditions in society. Literacy increases a person's capacity to make a substantial contribution to the creation of a just society, a strong economic basis, and enhanced internal and external communication. A high literacy rate always indicates a decent society, as opposed to regions that are less developed and have lower literacy rates.

The literacy rate serves as the main indicator and standard for both rural and urban development. Metropolitan areas are frequently assumed to have greater literacy rates compared to rural areas, which have lower rates. The approach to literacy is a crucial component in supporting the general wellbeing of individuals in every place. Literacy is essential to the sustainable development of society. As a result, it is clear that literacy is an essential tool for building a prosperous and peaceful society in the twenty-first century. Higher educated individuals have the ability to shape social and economic change. Almost all democracies, including India, grant men and women the same rights. A basic right under the Right to Information Act of 2005 is currently access to primary education.

According to the Census of India, a person is considered literate if they are over six years old and can read and write with understanding in any language (Census of India, 1991). In 2010, ESCAP observed that the Asia-Pacific area, which includes India, the second most populous country in the world, had a population that is 75% illiterate globally. In addition, the greatest and most challenging difficulties in developing countries, including India, are characterised by the stark differences between urban and rural areas, men and women, and young and elderly (Krishan & Shyam, 1978).

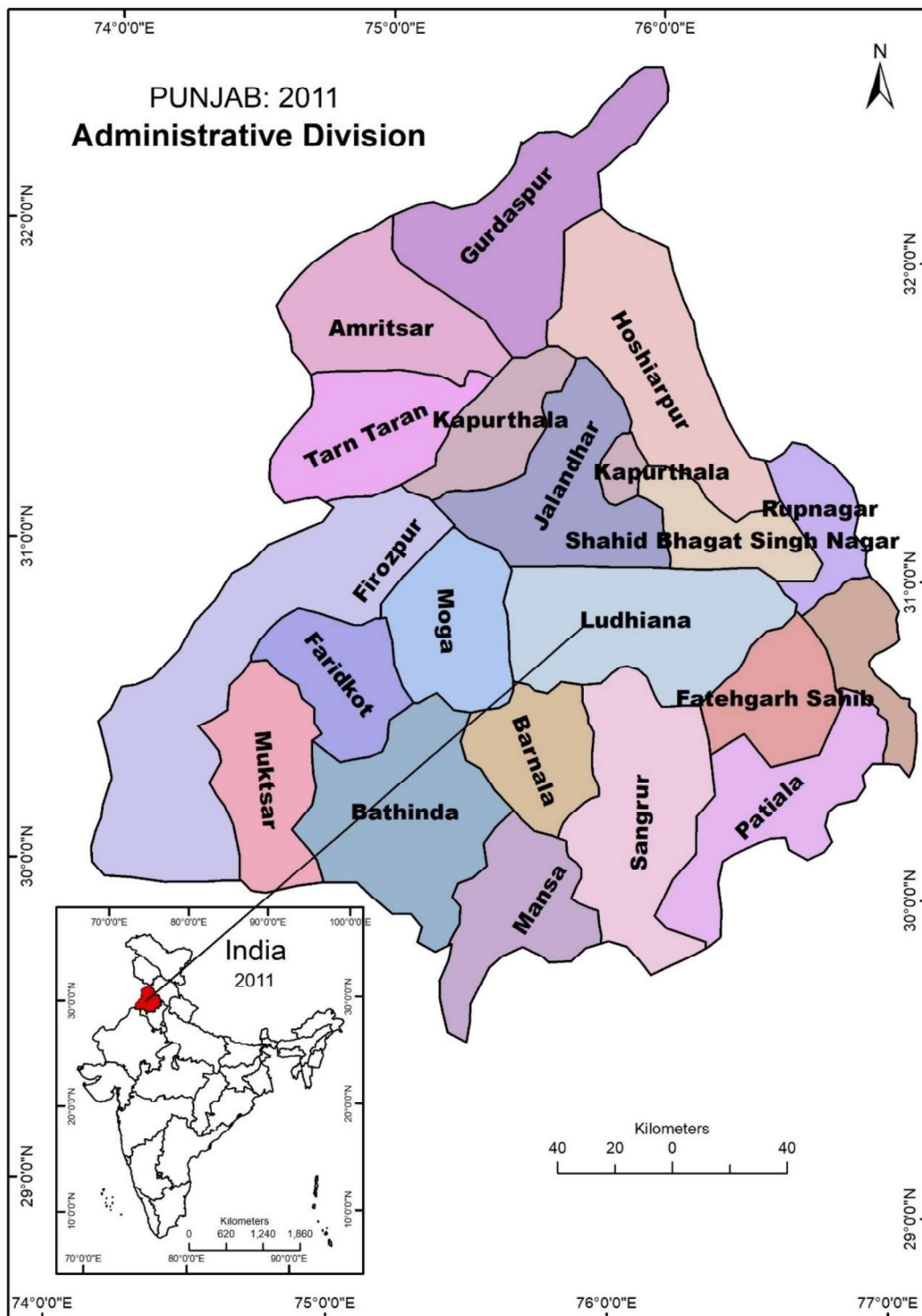


India has an effective literacy rate of 74.04 percent. The considerable gender gap in literacy should be highlighted, with 82.14 percent of males and 65.46 percent of women being literate (Census of India, 2011). Punjab is one of India's most developed states in terms of physiographic characteristics, drainage systems, economic conditions, agriculture, and other resources. The state has indicated serious demographic concerns despite its economic success, with the literacy rate at the top of the list. Mewat district in Haryana and Mansa district in Punjab are virtually completely illiterate, with Palwal, Kaithal, Fatehabad, and Sirsa districts in Haryana having poor literacy and nearly all of the western and southern districts of Punjab having poor literacy (Singh, 2017).

Study Area

The state of Punjab, frequently referred to as the crown of India, is a shining example of an economy that is growing quickly. It takes pride in having started the country's "*green revolution*". The "*land of five rivers*" is located in the nation's northwest. Its shared border with Pakistan is on the west; Jammu and Kashmir is on the north; Himachal Pradesh is on the east; and Punjab and Rajasthan are on the south. The state is mostly found in the western region of India's northern plains. The current size of Punjab is 50,362 km², or 1.54 percent of the country's total land area. The three principal rivers in this mostly alluvial plain area are Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi. These rivers have a major role in physiography, the economy, and culture. The studied region has a continental monsoonal climate as a result of its inner placement in the lower mid-latitudes. The most recent census estimate places Punjab's total population at 277 million, or 2.4 percent of India's total population. There are 81 tehsils, 146 blocks, 12,673 villages, and 22 districts within it (pbplanning.govt.in, 2012-13).

The hottest times of year are often in the middle of May and June. In the whole region, the temperature stays over 40 °C (104 °F) at this time. The greatest maximum temperature was recorded in Ludhiana at 46.1 °C (115.0 °F), followed by Patiala and Amritsar at 45.5 °C (113.9 °F). In Ludhiana, the summertime high temperature stays over 41 °C (106 °F) for an entire month and a half. In January, the lowest temperatures are recorded in these places. During these months, the sun's rays are oblique, and the chilly breezes regulate the midday temperature. One of India's most fertile regions is Punjab. Wheat can be grown here with great success. Additionally grown are rice, sugar cane, fruits, and vegetables.



Map: 1

The "Granary of India" or "India's bread-basket" is the Indian Punjab. It produces 10.26% of the cotton, 19.5% of the wheat, and 11% of the rice used in India. The state's major producers of wheat and rice are the Ferozpur and Fazilka Districts. In terms of global production, Indian Punjab is responsible for 2% of the world's cotton, 2% of its wheat, and 1% of its rice. The Punjab School Education Board is mostly connected with primary and secondary education. Numerous institutions of higher learning, including 23 universities, are available in Punjab. These universities provide undergraduate and graduate programmes in all of the main fields of the arts, humanities, sciences, engineering, law, medicine, and veterinary science.

Objectives

The study's primary objectives are:

- i. to investigate the district-level trends in Punjab's literacy rate.
- ii. to investigate at the district level the disparity in literacy between Punjab's rural and urban areas.

Database and Methodology

Data for this research paper were gathered from a variety of sources, including the Social and Cultural Tables, Series 1, Part II-C from the Indian Census of 1971, the Social and Cultural Tables, Series (1), Part IV-A from the Indian Census of 1981, the Socio-Cultural Tables, Volume 2, Series (1), Part IV, A-C Series from the Indian Census of 1991, and the Social and Cultural Tables, Table C-8 from the Indian Census of 2011. at the district level in Punjab to determine the distribution of literacy and the difference between urban and rural literacy rates. At the district level, data have been gathered and compiled as a study unit. Maps were created using Arc GIS software. Jenks method is the foundation of classes. To highlight the differences within the state, the standard deviation and average for Punjab have also been determined.

Statistical Analysis

The Census of India uses the following formula to determine the literacy rate:

$$\text{Literacy Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Literate Population}}{\text{Total Population} - (0-6 \text{ aged groups})} * 100$$

The formula of Krishna & Shyam (1978) has been used to calculate the literacy rate disparity between urban and rural areas. The difference has been calculated as follows:

$$ID = \frac{U-R}{T}$$

Whereas,

ID = Index of urban-rural differential

U = per cent of literate in urban population

R = per cent of literate in rural population

T = per cent of literate in total population

Results and Discussion

Trends in Punjab's Literacy Rate

In 1971, Punjab had the highest overall literacy rate (38.69%). After 1971, Punjab had a higher overall literacy rate than India. Throughout Punjab, the literacy rate climbed by over 38% between 1971 and 2011, going from 38.69% to 76.68%, while in India, it increased by almost 40% between 1971 and 2011, going from 34.45% to 74.04%. Throughout the whole time span, India has maintained practically its maximum level of urban literacy. After 1971, Punjab has remained essentially unchanged. In India, it went from 60.22 percent to 84.98 percent, an increase of approximately 25 percent. It went from 59.97% to 83.70% in Punjab, an increase of over 23%. Across Punjab, it rose from 32.02 to 72.45 percent, over 40% more than it was in India, where it rose from 27.89 to 68.91 percent, 41% higher. In Punjab, the difference between urban and rural literacy remained practically the lowest during the 1971 census, but after that, it continued to be the largest in India. It has dropped by approximately 16 in Punjab (See Fig. 1, 2 &3).

Table 1

State and Country	Literacy Rate & Differential by Residence	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
India	Total	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	74.04
	Urban	60.22	67.23	73.08	79.92	84.98
	Rural	27.89	36.01	44.69	58.74	68.91
	Differential between Urban-Rural Literacy Rate	32.33	31.28	28.39	21.18	16.07
Punjab	Total	38.69	48.17	58.51	69.65	76.68
	Urban	59.97	64.96	72.08	79.1	83.70
	Rural	32.02	41.73	52.77	64.72	72.45
	Differential between Urban-Rural Literacy Rate	27.95	23.23	19.31	14.38	11.25

Source: Computed by Author from Census of India, 1971 to 2011

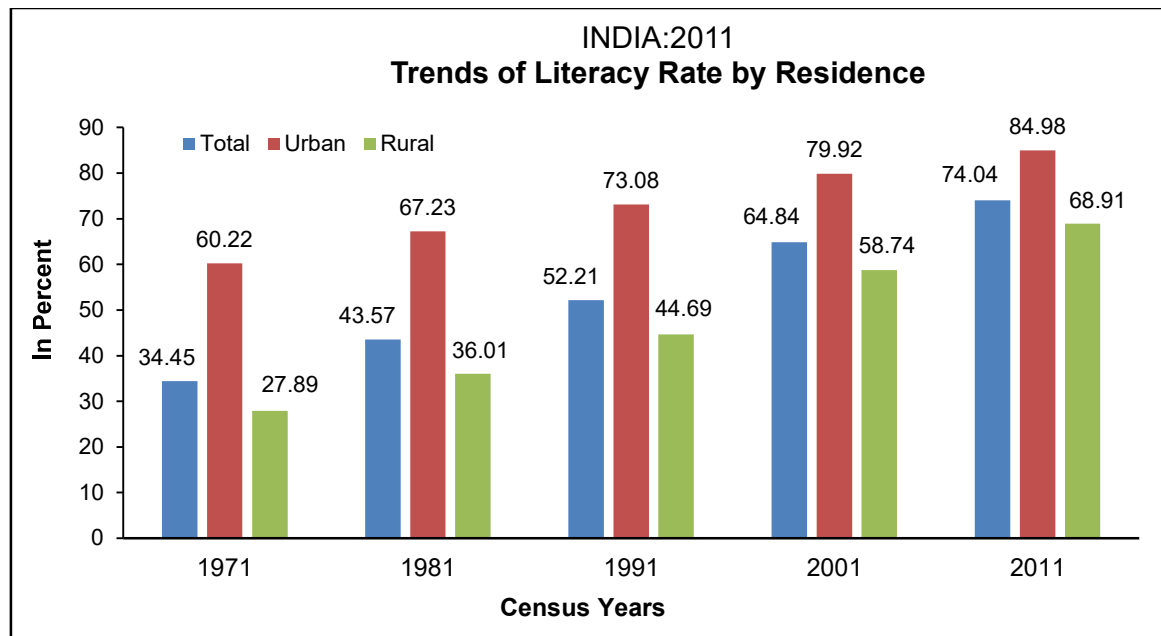


Fig. 1

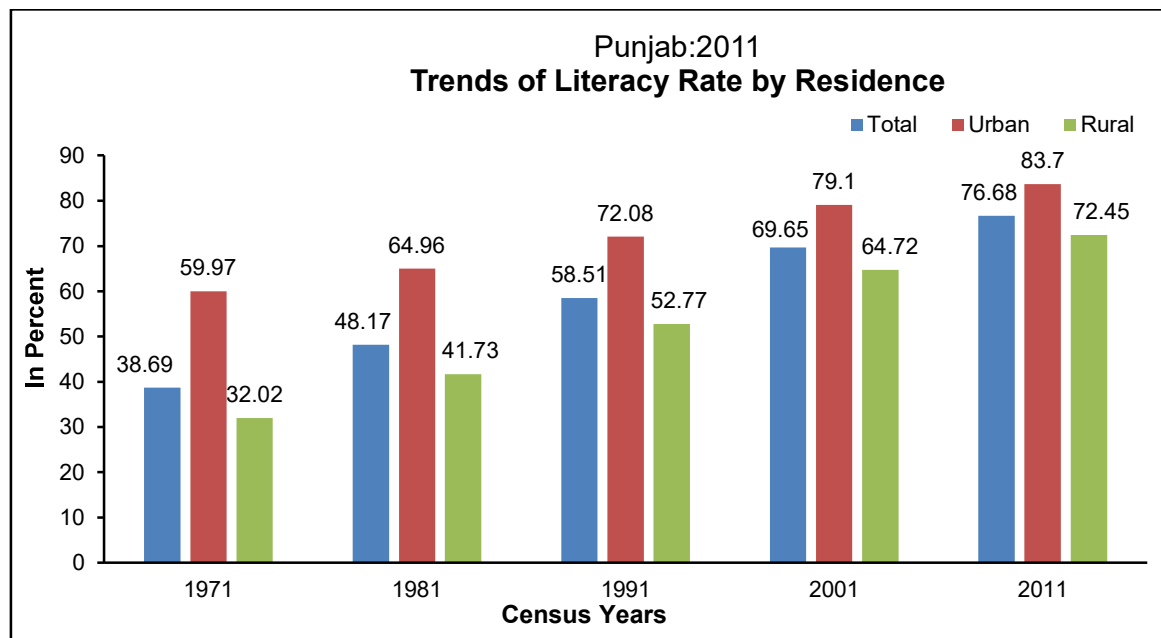


Fig. 2

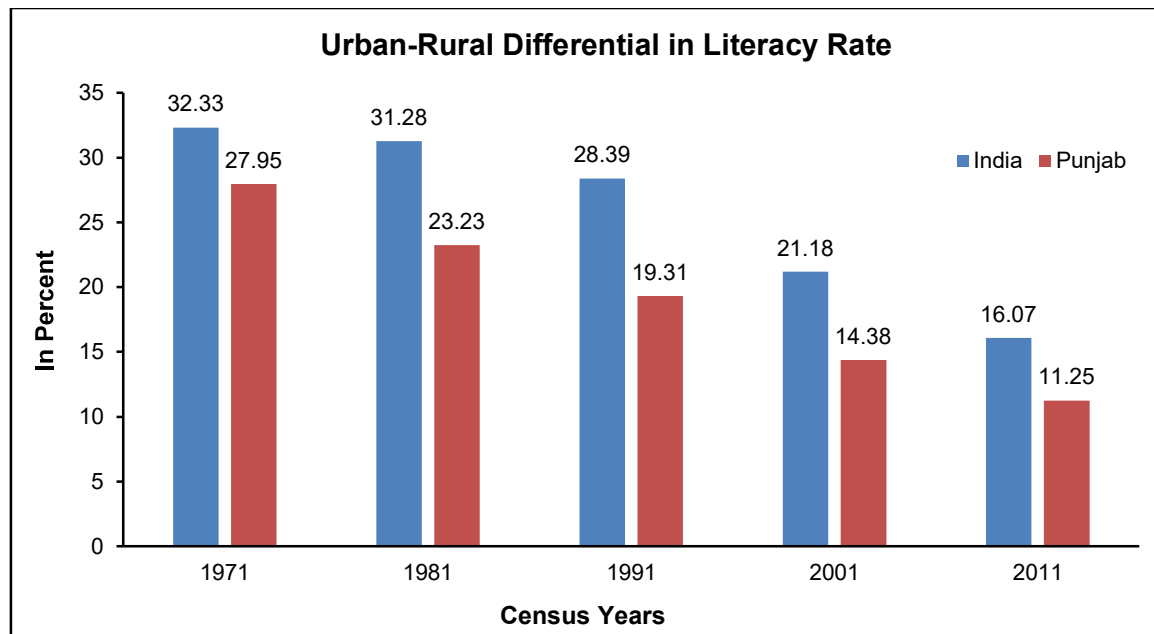


Fig. 3

Patterns of Literacy Rate, 2011

The literacy rate reveals that there are significant regional differences within the state. The state's geographic differences have been broken down into four major groups. General literacy rate geographical patterns include (i) Low, (ii) Moderate, (iii) High, and (iv) Very High. In Punjab, the literacy rate is not evenly distributed. The state average literacy rate is higher at 76.7 percent than the national average literacy rate of 74.04 percent, ranging from 85.43 percent in Hoshiarpur to 62.8% in Mansa district.

The four districts of Punjab have an extremely low literacy rate that is even lower than 70%, as can be shown in (Table 2, fig. 4). These districts are all located in the state's southwest. The five districts with a moderate literacy rate, which ranges from 70% to 79 percent, are located in Punjab's south-western and southern regions. The northern, eastern, and southern regions of Punjab have the districts with high and extremely high literacy rates. Higher rates of urbanisation and more public awareness of literacy are the causes of the high levels of literacy in these two groups. This group includes the four major cities of Punjab: Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, and Patiala. These cities have strong educational accessibility.

Urban-Rural Literacy Rate Disparity

Wide disparities between urban and rural areas and literacy rates are seen in Punjab. In the state, an average urban-rural index of 11.25 percent has been calculated. This difference is most noticeable in Ferozepur (13.69%), Faridkot (13.34%), Muktsar (14.2%), Bathinda (17.49%), Mansa (15.05%), and Patiala (15.05 per cent). On the other side, Gurdaspur (2.25%), Kapurthala (4.72%), and Rupnagar (5.09%) are the places with the lowest rural-urban literacy disparities (Table 2, Map 4).

Table 2: Literacy Rate and Differential in Literacy by Residence in Punjab: 2011

Districts	Total	Urban	Rural	Differential
Amritsar	77.20	84.36	68.76	15.60
Barnala	68.90	75.39	65.89	09.50
Bathinda	69.57	80.80	63.31	17.49
Faridkot	70.65	79.29	65.95	13.34
Fatehgarh Sahib	80.33	84.33	78.56	05.77
Firozpur	69.85	79.77	66.08	13.69
Gurdaspur	81.06	88.00	78.25	09.75
Hoshiarpur	85.43	88.67	84.55	04.12
Jalandhar	82.40	85.10	79.33	05.77
Kapurthala	80.18	85.82	77.13	08.69
Ludhiana	82.54	84.83	79.26	05.57
Mansa	62.78	76.82	58.99	17.83
Moga	71.55	80.39	69.04	11.35
Muktsar	66.79	77.02	62.82	14.20
Patiala	76.26	85.19	70.14	15.05
Punjab	76.68	83.70	72.45	11.25
Rupnagar	83.28	87.04	81.95	05.09
S.A.S.Nagar	84.87	88.90	79.91	08.99
S.B.S.Nagar	80.33	82.74	79.79	02.95
Sangrur	68.88	88.90	79.91	08.99
Tarn Taran	69.43	78.12	68.16	09.96

Source: Computed by Author.

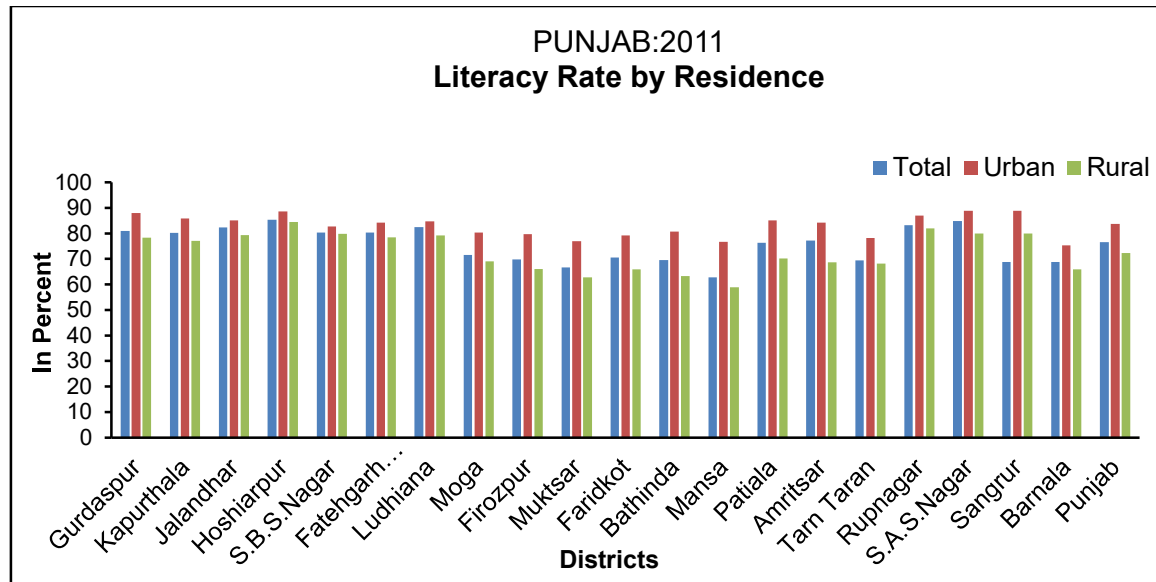


Fig. 4

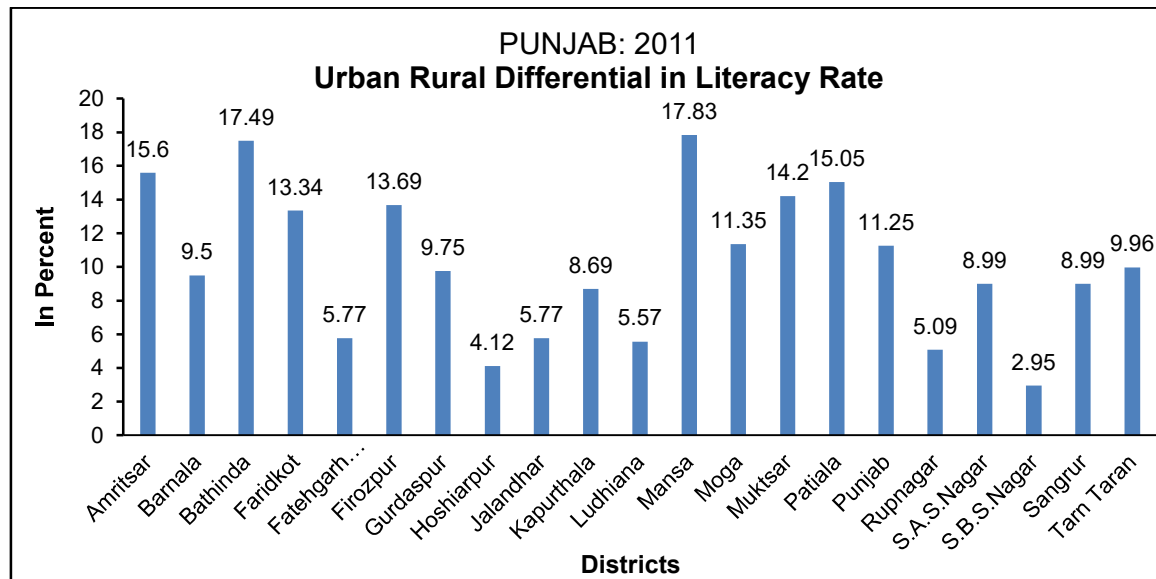


Fig. 5

Conclusion

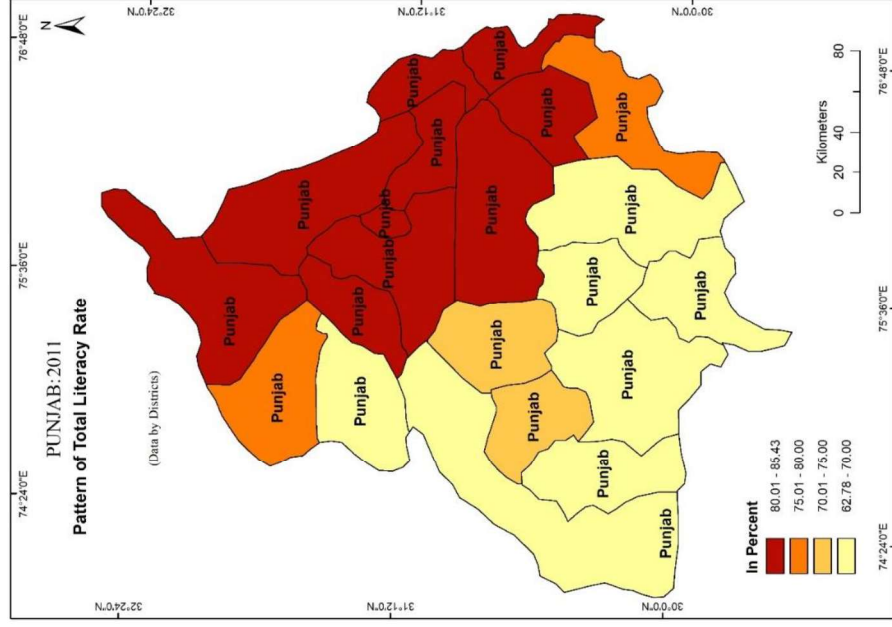
As we might infer from the 1971 census data, Punjab's literacy rate rose following the green revolution. The Punjabi government asserted that the education industry has received more focus. In several of the districts, there is a significant disparity in literacy rates between urban and rural areas. Both the impoverished labour and the immigrants from other states do not



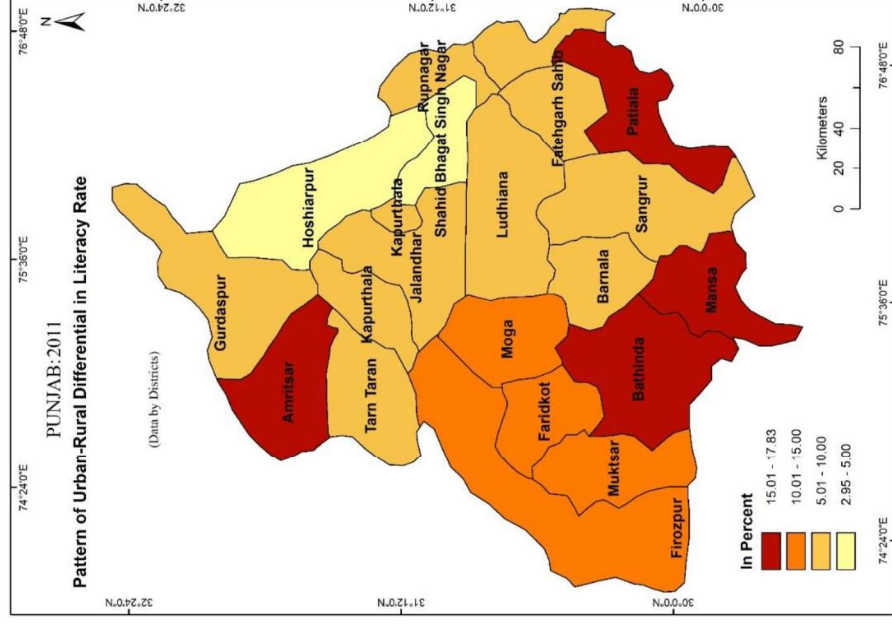
bother to send their kids to school. The high cost of living and poverty in metropolitan regions force parents to put their kids to work for daily pay rather than to school. Another factor is that the parents themselves lack literacy and do not see the long-term value of education.

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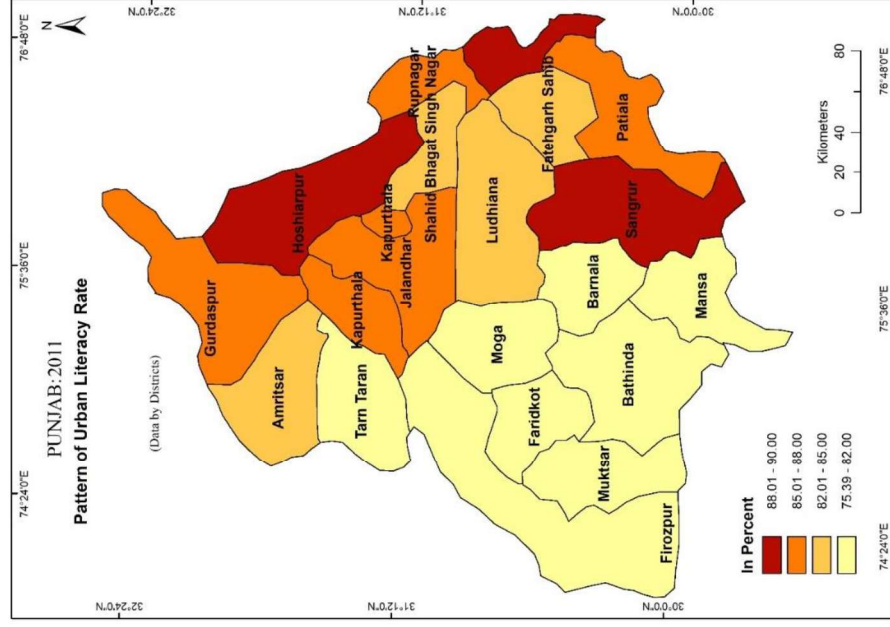
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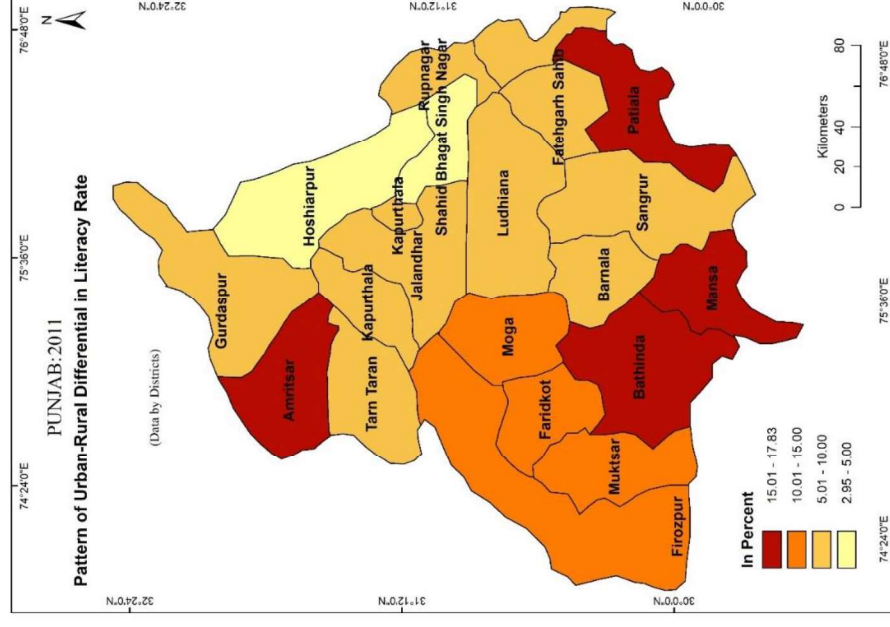
Map: 2



Map: 3



Map: 4



Map: 5