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## **Literacy: A Study of South Indian Districts**

### **Abstract**

This study addresses itself to the variation in the literacy rates among the districts of Andhra Pradesh, Kamataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, sex differences in literacy rates, and share of females among literates in comparison with their share in total population. Some correlates of literacy were also examined. In general, the literacy rates increased in all the districts, the sex difference in literacy rates narrowed and the share of females among the literates increased. The proportion of Scheduled Castes tribes population and the percent of agricultural workers were found to be inversely related to literacy rates while percent of modern sector workers and urbanisation were positively related.

### **Introduction**

LITERACY measures the most basic level of educational attainment in any society. Even though literacy itself may not have all the advantages of education, literacy rate is a fairly reliable indicator of educational development in the different states of India (Reddy 1977). The Constitution of India had directed in 1950 that the state shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for those aged 6-14 years of age by 1960. This appeared at that time an attainable goal, even though considering the enormity of the problem the task the Government had set up for itself was no small one. The years that went by since then, complicated the situation further by continuously adding to the stock of illiterates.

In the Indian censuses, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write with understanding in any language. To be classified as a literate, a person need not necessarily have to undergo any formal education. It is self/respondent's assessment of literacy.

A quick look at the literacy map of India showed wide variations in the level of literacy in the different regions in the country. In 1981, among the major states (states with more than 10 million population), the literacy rates of the population aged seven years and above varied from 30 per cent in Rajasthan to almost 82 per cent in Kerala, and in 1991 the variation was from 38.5 per cent in Bihar to 90.6 per cent in Kerala (see ref. 1). Besides having inter-state differences, wide intra-state differences in literacy rates were also found.

### **Objectives and Hypotheses**

This study examines the variations in the literacy rates among the districts that are constituent parts of the four major South Indian states with special reference to inter-sex

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differences, influence of caste and tribe composition, occupational distribution and urbanisation of the districts. The relative position of literate women among total literate persons in comparison with the share of total women in total population would also be examined.

It is generally found that culture, attitude, life style etc. are important in deciding the literacy level/education of any population. Members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes are socially, economically and culturally different from the rest of the population (Kumar 1983). Being in the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder, a negative relationship between their literacy level and their proportion in population is expected.

Under occupation, only grouped categories are considered. Higher the proportion of the population engaged in agricultural and related activities, lower will be the level of literacy. Agriculture, as practised in India demands no formal education. Therefore, larger the availability of non-agricultural work opportunities particularly that of modern sector, higher would be the literacy level.

Compared to rural areas, urban areas have better infrastructural facilities for education and higher income for parents. Also the growth and diffusion of literacy is closely linked with growth and diffusion of an urban industrial civilization. Therefore, literacy rates should correlate highly and positively with urbanisation.

### **Methodology, Data Sources and Limitations**

The measure of literacy used here is the effective literacy rate defined as the percent of literates among population aged five years and above (hereafter referred to as 5+ population).

The male-female literacy difference is examined using masculinity ratio (males per 100 females) and the difference in male and female rates. The coefficient of equality is used to gauge the equality of women in comparison with their share in total population. This coefficient is a ratio of the proportion of literate females among literate population to the proportion of female population to the total population, expressed as percentage. An equal share is represented by a coefficient of 100.

The smallest units for which the required information are available are the districts. At the time of 1991 census, there were a total of 78 districts in the four states under consideration here: 23 in Andhra Pradesh; 20 in Karnataka; 14 in Kerala and 21 in Tamil Nadu. In 1981 the corresponding numbers of districts were 23, 19, 12, and 16. In order to enable a comparison of the 1991 and 1981 districts, some of them had to be combined and this has resulted in 68 units of analysis (see ref. 2)

Data from the two papers published so far (Paper 1 and 2 of 1991) will be used along with information from census of 1981. Since the 1991 age-wise data are not available yet, the literacy rates of 5+ population had to be estimated. It should be admitted here that no attempt is made to estimate the 5+ population using any sophisticated technique or birth and death related information. The proportion of 5+ population of 1981 was applied to the 1991 population to obtain the 5+ population of 1991. If the fertility has declined substantially in these districts during the 1981-1991 period, the literacy rate estimated may be a slightly inflated figure.

### **Findings**

India's literacy rate for males had gone up from 53.46 in 1981 to 60.62 in 1991 and for females, from 35.12 to 37.45. The corresponding combined figures for the four states were 59.40 to 66.63 and 38.64 to 47.78 respectively.

The growth rate of 5+ population and literates and the literacy rates for the four states are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: THE 1981-1991 GROWTH RATE OF 5+ POPULATION AND LITERATES AND THE LITERACY RATES FOR THE FOUR STATES.

State	Growth rate				Literacy rate			
	Population		Literate		Male		Female	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	1991	1981	1991	1981
Andhra Pradesh	24.09	23.74	47.94	70.57	53.19	44.61	32.05	23.26
Kamataka	20.76	20.58	39.58	62.39	64.32	55.66	42.67	31.68
Kerala	13.60	14.51	22.15	31.29	90.92	84.56	84.10	73.36
Tamil Nadu	15.23	14.63	26.63	38.86	72.06	59.40	50.54	41.72
Total	19.11	18.86	36.75	46.97	66.63	59.40	47.78	38.64

The growth rates of population and literates were highest in Andhra Pradesh and lowest in Kerala. Between the remaining two states Kamataka was on the higher growth rate side compared to Tamil Nadu.

The share of the four states in the total population, total literates and total illiterates of the country is given in Table 2.

TABLE 2 : PERCENT SHARE OF THE FOUR STATES IN THE TOTAL 5+ POPULATION, TOTAL LITERATES AND TOTAL ILLITERATES OF THE COUNTRY

State	Population				Literates				Illiterates			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981
AP	7.7	7.9	8.1	8.3	6.8	6.6	7.0	6.8	9.0	9.4	8.8	8.9
Kar	5.2	5.5	5.4	5.7	5.6	5.7	6.2	6.3	4.7	5.2	5.0	5.4
Ker	3.3	3.7	3.7	4.1	5.0	5.9	8.5	10.7	0.8	1.2	1.0	1.5
TN	6.5	7.2	6.9	7.6	7.8	8.9	9.4	11.1	4.6	5.3	5.4	6.2
Total	22.8	24.3	24.1	25.7	25.3	27.0	31.0	34.9	19.0	21.2	20.1	22.0

AP = Andhra Pradesh; Kar = Kamataka; Ker = Kerala; TN = Tamil Nadu.

In general, the share of population, literates and illiterates had come down for South India as a whole. Slightly over one fourth of the male literates and almost a third of the female literates of the country were from the South Indian states. Their share in 5+ population and that among illiterates was lower than their share in literates. Except Andhra Pradesh, this was true for all the states considered separately also.

Table 3 gives the 1991 and 1981 district-wise literacy rate for males and females separately, literate males per 100 females, and coefficient of equality.

TABLE 3 : DISTRICT WISE LITERACY RATES, MASCULINITY RATIO AND COEFFICIENT OF EQUALITY

District	State	Literacy Rate		Masculinity ratio (Literate)		Coefficient of equality			
		Male	Female	1991	1981	1991	1981		
Mahbubnagar	A.P	39.29	32.47	18.29	12.12	221	271	63.16	54.49
Medak	A.P	42.49	36.52	19.32	12.45	227	300	62.14	50.45
Abijabad	A.P	43.04	31.75	20.34	11.01	217	296	63.86	51.37
Vizianagaram	A.P	44.41	35.05	22.42	14.10	198	245	67.13	57.48
Nizamabad	A.P	45.26	36.32	21.56	13.34	206	269	64.71	53.95
Raichur	Kar	45.50	41.37	20.51	15.44	227	271	61.89	54.32
Srikakulam	A.P	47.66	37.35	23.71	14.82	197	245	66.66	57.15
Gulbarga	Kar	48.24	42.00	22.90	15.36	218	279	64.06	53.33
Khammam	A.P	48.28	37.86	29.72	20.38	170	196	75.76	69.38
Nalanda	A.P	48.54	36.14	24.46	14.94	207	251	66.53	58.08
Karimnagar	A.P	50.22	35.91	24.40	12.50	209	290	65.21	51.43
Warangal	A.P	51.07	37.77	26.36	15.66	203	253	67.57	57.89
Kumool	A.P	51.17	45.75	25.55	19.55	210	244	66.08	59.33
Prakasam	A.P	52.12	46.13	27.48	20.55	195	230	68.73	61.31
East Godavari	A.P	53.22	47.35	40.98	32.89	131	146	86.98	81.94
Anantapur	A.P	53.77	46.59	27.04	18.98	211	261	66.25	57.20
Mysore	Kar	54.23	44.71	36.59	26.21	156	180	80.19	73.47
Bidar	Kar	54.86	44.08	28.38	16.41	202	276	67.72	54.04
Beljarv	Kar	55.04	47.93	30.19	22.26	189	222	70.48	63.21
Dharmapuri	T.N	55.59	44.72	35.31	21.33	167	218	77.19	64.16
Guntur	A.P	55.65	50.84	36.06	30.00	159	175	78.39	73.99
Vishakhapatnam	A.P	55.74	41.39	33.92	21.55	167	196	75.54	68.29
Nellore	A.P	56.59	46.30	36.39	26.08	159	182	78.09	71.83
Mandva	Kar	57.34	46.01	36.13	22.82	166	212	76.91	65.68
West Godavari	A.P	57.46	49.43	45.66	35.88	127	139	88.52	83.98
Krishna	A.P	59.18	54.57	44.71	39.15	137	145	85.86	83.18
Rangareddi	A.P	59.34	45.22	36.78	22.32	171	212	75.99	65.57
Kolar	Kar	60.53	50.39	36.63	25.88	172	201	75.04	67.49
Chittoor	A.P	60.91	48.57	34.70	22.90	176	220	72.59	63.57
Cuddapah	A.P	61.66	49.58	31.87	20.10	203	258	67.65	57.14
Belgaum	Kar	62.93	55.42	37.11	27.52	177	211	73.77	65.85
Salem	T.N	63.10	55.46	41.64	30.99	162	187	78.98	71.18
Chitradurga	Kar	63.82	55.55	41.63	31.14	163	191	78.40	71.21
Timbur	Kar	64.53	54.88	40.71	28.60	165	200	77.00	68.18
Perivar	T.N	64.81	56.78	41.70	29.99	161	198	78.95	68.64
South Arcot	T.N	65.00	56.44	39.19	27.22	172	213	74.91	64.73
Bijapur	Kar	66.25	52.21	38.75	21.27	177	249	73.48	57.74
Hassan	Kar	66.47	55.09	43.81	30.08	152	186	79.43	70.53
Shimoga	Kar	68.18	60.92	49.45	39.40	144	164	83.78	78.12
Dharwad	Kar	68.28	62.26	43.18	34.26	167	192	76.98	69.47
Chikmagalur	Kar	68.35	59.38	49.77	38.50	140	162	84.11	78.20
Madurai	T.N	70.49	67.00	46.94	39.33	154	175	79.72	73.73
Pudukkollai	T.N	70.93	61.14	43.05	27.16	163	223	75.62	61.50
Hyderabad	A.P	71.21	75.56	57.61	56.47	135	147	89.02	84.89
Tiruchirappalli	Kar	72.15	65.41	47.81	36.43	153	182	79.59	71.38
Kodagu	Kar	72.60	63.77	59.62	49.14	123	140	90.07	86.80
Uttar Kannad	Kar	73.35	65.32	54.75	44.34	139	154	85.28	80.47

Table 3 (contd. on page 107)

Table 3 (contd. from page 106)

District	State	Literacy Rate				Masculinity ratio (Literates)		Coefficient of equality	
		Male		Female		1991	1981	1991	1981
North Arcot <sup>2</sup>	T.N.	74.83	61.17	44.50	32.16	157	194	70.63	68.63
Ramnalhapuram <sup>3</sup>	T.N.	74.85	67.31	48.71	36.31'	151	180	79.02	70.40
Coimbatore	T.N.	75.22	70.34	57.28	45.77	144	162	85.94	78.42
Thanjavur	T.N.	75.43	70.10	53.52	42.46	142	167	82.97	75.31
Chengalp	T.N.	75.46	67.60	54.43	40.68	146	175	83.48	69.54
Bangalore <sup>4</sup>	Kar	75.60	67.33	59.73	48.22	140	154	87.76	82.82
Thirunelveli <sup>5</sup>	T.N.	77.15	71.76	56.47	46.57	130	146	84.84	79.15
Nilgiris Dakshin Kannad	T.N.	80.31	75.17	61.15	49.88	134	158	86.34	79.35
	Kar.	82.07	70.51	61.89	50.91	115	129	86.85	84.29
Palghat	Kerala	84.43	73.59	73.71	58.01	107	119	93.44	88.52
Kanyakumari	T.N.	84.89	77.26	77.81	66.69	110	118	95.63	92.58
Wayanad	Kerala	85.00	73.79	75.43	58.91	117	133	93.93	88.62
Madras	T.N.	85.97	83.74	74.77	67.63	124	133	92.78	88.99
Malappuram	Kerala	87.18	77.14	80.07	63.88	102	113	95.89	90.91
Trivandrum	Kerala	90.10	83.85	83.65	72.20	103	111	96.37	93.16
Trichur	Kerala	91.06	86.23	84.80	77.20	97	100	96.61	94.74
Cannanpre <sup>6</sup>	Kerala	91.40	82.46	82.71	67.46	105	117	95.14	90.18
Idukki	Kerala	92.69	87.55	87.30	78.60	101	108	97.07	94.67
Kozhikode	Kerala	93.14	86.34	84.88	71.51	106	118	95.43	90.71
Emakulam	Kerala	93.55	89.22	87.65	80.21	106	111	96.75	94.72
Kottayam	Kerala	95.16	92.37	92.10	86.93	102	106	98.37	97.01

<sup>1</sup>Madurai = Madurai + Dindigal - Quaid - E - Milleth<sup>2</sup>North Arcot = North Arcot + Tiruvannamali - Sambuvarayar<sup>3</sup>Ramnalhapuram = Ramnalhapuram + Pasumpon Thevar + Thiramagon + Kamarajar<sup>4</sup>Bangalore^Bangalore + Bangalore rural<sup>5</sup>Thirunelveli = Thirunelveli + Chidambaranar<sup>6</sup>Cannanore = Cannanore + Kasargod<sup>7</sup>Idukki = Idukki + Alleppey + Quilon + Pathanamthitta

A.P. - Andhra Pradesh; kar - Kamalaka; T.N. - Tamil Nadu

## Discussion

### (i) Literacy Rate

Literacy rates had improved for both the sexes over the period of study. The range of variation between the districts had slightly declined from 61 to 53 while improving the overall literacy rates.

The literacy level of females compared to males was low in all the districts. The female literacy rate ranged from an exiguous 11.01 in Adilabad to 86.93 in Kottayam in 1981, and from 18.29 in Mahbubnagar to 92.10 in Kottayam in 1991. There was hardly any change with consolation that the gap had not widened during the ten year period and that there was a seven percentage point increase at the lower level.

TABLE 4 : INTRA-STATE RANGE IN LITERACY RATES

State	Range	Male		Female	
		1991	1981	1991	1981
Andhra Pradesh	<i>Lowest</i>				
	District Rate	Mahbubnagar 39.29	Adilabad 31.75	Mahbubnagar 18.29	Adilabad 11.01
	<i>Highest</i>				
	District Rate	Hyderabad 71.21	Hyderabad 75.56	Hyderabad 57.61	Hyderabad 56.47
Karnataka	<i>Lowest</i>				
	District Rate	Raichur 45.50	Raichur 41.37	Raichur 20.51	Gulbarga 15.38
	<i>Highest</i>				
	District Rate	Dakshin Kannada 82.07	Dakshin Kannada 70.51	Dakshin Kannada 61.89	Dakshin Kannada 50.91
Kerala	<i>Lowest</i>				
	District Rate	Palohat 83.43	Palohat 73.59	Palohat 73.71	Palohat 58.11
	<i>Highest</i>				
	District Rate	Kottayam 95.16	Kottayam 92.37	Kottayam 92.10	Kottayam 86.93
Tamil Nadu	<i>Lowest</i>				
	District Rate	Dharmaburi 55.59	Dharmaburi 44.72	Dharmaburi 35.31	Dharmaburi 21.33
	<i>Highest</i>				
	District Rate	Madras 85.97	Madras 83.74	Kanvakumari 77.81	Madras 67.63

The intra-state range in literacy rates are given in Table 4. The table reveals that the intra-state differences had reduced over the ten year period except in the case of males in Karnataka.

*(ii) Intra-district Sex Differentials in Literacy*

The sex-wise differences in literacy rates in 1991 were less than that in 1981 in almost all the districts. The lowest difference in both the years was found in Kottayam, 5.44 in 1981 and 3.06 in 1991.

The largest difference in 1981 was in Pudukottai, 34 percentage points, and in 1991 this position had gone to North Arcot, with a difference of 30.33 percentage points.

Of the 68 comparisons made, 10 were in the 'no change' category (less than one percentage point). They are: Bellary, Dakshin Kannada, Kolar, Mysore, Raichur, Nellore, Cuddapah, Anantapur, Kurnool and Rangareddy. Of these, the first five are from Kamataka and the remaining from Andhra Pradesh.

The sex difference in literacy rates had widened in 1991 compared to that in 1981 in the following districts: North Arcot, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Vishakhapatanam, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda. Except the first district which is in Tamil Nadu, all other districts are in north and north-eastern Andhra Pradesh.

The intra-state range of male-female difference in literacy rate is given in Table 5.

TABLE 5 : INTRA-STATE RANGE OF MALE-FEMALE DIFFERENCE IN LITERACY RATE

<i>State</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1981</i>
Andhra Pradesh	<i>Lowest</i>		
	District	West Godavari	West Godavari
	Difference	11.80	13.55
	<i>Highest</i>		
Kamalaka	District	Cuddapah	Cuddapah
	Difference	29.79	29.48
	<i>Lowest</i>		
	District	Kodagu	Kodagu
Kerala	Difference	13.07	14.63
	<i>Highest</i>		
	District	Biiapur	Biiapur
	Difference	27.50	30.94
Tamil Nadu	<i>Lowest</i>		
	District	Kottayam	Kottayam
	Difference	3.06	5.44
	<i>Highest</i>		
Karnataka	District	Palghat	Palghat
	Difference	10.72	15.58
	<i>Lowest</i>		
	District	Kanyakumari	Kanyakumari
Andhra Pradesh	Difference	7.08	10.57
	<i>Highest</i>		
	District	North Arcot	Thanjavur
	Difference	30.33	33.98

The difference between the highest and the lowest of the sex-wise gap in literacy rate had narrowed in the case of Kerala and Kamataka; it remained almost the same in Tamil Nadu and slightly widened in the case of Andhra Pradesh.

Of the 68 districts, the number of districts with less than state and national average literacy rates for males and females are given in Table 6.

TABLE 6 : NUMBER OF DISTRICTS WITH LESS THAN STATE AND NATIONAL AVERAGE LITERACY RATE

State	Total Districts	1991				1981			
		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N
Andhra Pradesh	23	12	20	14	19	11	21	17	20
Karnataka	19	9	7	11	8	12	8	12	13
Kerala	10	4	0	5	0	5	0	6	0
Tamil Nadu	16	6	1	9	1	7	1	9	6

S = State; N = National.

The masculinity ratio of literates shows a drastic decline from the highest ratio of 300 in Medak in 1981 to 227 in the same district in 1991. The lowest ratio was in Trichur for both the years with 1 : 1 ratio in 1981 and almost the same in 1991.

The intra-state range in masculinity ratio is given in Table 7.

TABLE 7 : INTRA-STATE RANGE IN MASCULINITY RATIO

State	Range	1991	1981
Andhra Pradesh	Lowest District Masculinity Ratio	West Godavari 127	West Godavari 139
	Highest District Masculinity Ratio	Medak 227	Medak 300
Karnataka	Lowest District Masculinity Ratio	Dak shin Kannada 115	Dakshin Kannada 129
	Highest District Masculinity Ratio	Raichur 227	Gulbarga 279
Kerala	Lowest District Masculinity Ratio	Trichur 97	Trichur 100
	Highest District Masculinity Ratio	Wavanad 117	Wavanad 133
Tamil Nadu	Lowest District Masculinity Ratio	Karftokumari 110	Kanyakumari 118
	Highest District Masculinity Ratio	South Arcot 172	Pudukottai 223

(iii) *Coefficient of Equality of Female Literacy*

Treating the coefficient of 95 percent or more as having an equal share in both population and literacy, the coefficient of equality shows that with the exception of two districts in Kerala, other districts performed badly. In 1991, all the districts had improved their situation in this regard. Kerala's performance with the exception of Wayand and Palghat was exemplary.

The only district outside Kerala which had near equality was Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu which incidentally was a part of the native state of Travancore (which later formed part of Kerala).

**Correlates of Literacy**

Data from 1991 census are not yet available in this respect and, therefore, we rely only on data from census of 1981.

Districts, grouped on the basis of literacy rates and the value of the selected correlated for each of these groups are provided in Table 8 for males and females. The last two rows of each male and female segments in this table show the values of the correlation coefficient between the specified column variable and male/female literacy rate including and excluding the districts of Kerala state.

TABLE 8 : SELECTED CORRELATES OF LITERACY BY LITERACY LEVEL, 1981

Sex	Literacy Group	No. of units rate	Average literacy	Percent SC&ST	Percent Modern Sector Worker	Percent agricul. workers	Percent urban
Male	30-39.99	10	35.72	24.66	3.48	73.94	11.98
	40-49.99	17	45.90	20.92	4.99	71.91	18.46
	50-59.99	12	54.57	20.61	5.60	70.08	18.84
	60-69.99	11	65.10	18.76	8.62	60.89	24.16
	70-79.99	10	72.73	15.65	9.66	49.31	28.57
	80-99.99	10	86.30	10.60	16.25	31.56	33.41
	r <sub>1</sub>				-0.3376 (p=.002) - 0.3099	0.6605 (p=.000) - 0.6315	-0.7314 (p=.000) - 0.6499
r <sub>2</sub>				(p=.009)	(p=.000)	(p=.000)	(p=.001)
Female	10-19.99	14	14.87	24.33	3.80	73.48	15.13
	20-29.99	17	24.49	22.63	5.16	72.27	17.19
	30-39.99	14	34.71	18.67	5.60	59.28	22.60
	40-49.99	8	45.09	19.97	10.05	50.20	34.33
	50-60.00	9	61.25	11.59	14.43	40.88	40.48
	70-89.99	8	77.71	10.71	13.55	36.27	19.92
	r <sub>3</sub>				-0.3017 (p=.006)	0.6512 (p=.000)	-0.7204 (p=.000)
r <sub>4</sub>				-0.2745 (p=.019)	0.6570 (p=.000)	-0.6578 (p=.000)	0.4159 (p=.001)

- r<sub>1</sub> : Correlation coefficient between specified column variable and male literacy rate including Kerala.  
r<sub>2</sub> : Correlation coefficient between specified column variable and male literacy rate excluding Kerala.  
r<sub>3</sub> : Correlation coefficient between specified column variable and female literacy rate including Kerala.  
r<sub>4</sub> : Correlation coefficient between specified column variable and female literacy rate excluding Kerala.

The relationship between literacy rates and other factors in respect of males are in the expected direction. In the case of females also, the general pattern was more or less the same, the exceptions being the relation with modern sector worker and the level of urbanisation. Upto the last but one category for females the relationships were all as expected. It is important to note here that the last category included only districts from Kerala.

For both males and females there was a strong negative correlation between the ratio of agricultural workers to total workers and the literacy rates. A strong positive correlation was observed between literacy rates of both sexes and ratio of workers in modern sector occupations to total workers. The relationship between literacy rate and percentage of urban population and that between percentage of Scheduled Caste/Tribe population was as hypothesized, though weak.

When the correlation analysis was repeated excluding the districts in Kerala, the change in coefficients was very noticeable. The relationship between female literacy rate and modern sector employment hardly changed. The relationship between percent urban and literacy rate had improved its significance level considerably.

### Summary

In a majority of districts in the southern states of India the literacy rate had increased during the 1981-91 period for both males and females. The male-female differences in literacy rate in all the districts declined over the period. The masculinity ratio declined over the ten year period indicating the increasing tendency to improve female literacy level.

Andhra Pradesh is the most backward state as far as literacy rates are concerned, and within Andhra Pradesh the north and north-eastern districts were the worst.

In all the states, the districts with low rates in 1981 were more or less the same in 1991 also, indicating that special efforts are to be made to raise their literacy level. The negative relationship with Scheduled Caste/Tribe composition reflects that all the preferential policies adopted by the governments to improve their educational position have not been very fruitful. More direct interventional policies may be required to rescue them from their present plight. Though the modern sector employment and urbanisation proved to have a direct relation with literacy, the experience of Kerala reveals that some other factors also could contribute to higher levels of literacy. Furthermore, literacy per se appears to be important in Kerala for reasons which are traceable but are not examined in this paper.

### References

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