

Residual Illiteracy and Uneven Development – I

Patterned Concentration of Literacy

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Literacy campaigns in India have found resistance from two regions – the urban areas of relatively high literacy and the rural areas within underdeveloped regions. This study analyses data to understand residual illiteracy in the context of uneven development. It is published in three parts.

The first part analyses the distribution of literacy across states and union territories of India and also across districts, and studies Maharashtra and Goa in depth. The second part studies literacy in the context of socio-demographic, health, socio-economic and educational characteristics. The last part reviews the trends in literacy campaigns – their successes, problems and strategies, and presents theoretical generalisations relevant to basic educational interventions in the context of uneven development.

I Introduction

THE account of contemporary literacy campaigns in India since 1989 is partly a story of voluntary people's participation and cultural awakening. It is in part a narrative of the resistance of two regions to the literacy campaign approach – the urban areas of relatively high literacy and the rural areas within underdeveloped regions, especially in the northern belt. This study attempts an understanding of the former scenario of residual illiteracy, locating the analysis within a larger context of uneven development. The analysis of residual illiteracy cannot remain unrelated to the latter regions of mass illiteracy.

It is ironical that literacy campaigns encountered a contextualised resistance from the areas that, on the surface, required them the least; as well as from parts of the country where the objective need for literacy was the most – at two ends of a spectrum of intervention, as it were. This suggests a need for a readjustment of the campaign style in a manner that is far more sensitive to the contexts of intervention.¹ The particular characteristics of the Kerala model of literacy campaign were never intended to be applied across the board throughout the nation. Yet there has been inadequate reflection on those aspects of a campaign that need to be finely tuned to contexts of uneven development. This study is a contribution in that direction.

There are several reports of problems faced by literacy campaigns in high literacy, urban areas. The case of Pondicherry, a high literacy region with four districts, serves as an illustration. Sundararaman (1991:19, 20) reports that the degree of participation in village committees was in

inverse proportion to their geographical distance from the seat of government. In Mahe, Yanam and Karaikal, both administrative and community support were forthcoming. In the outer low literacy blocks of Pondicherry the response was less, but in the nearer semi-urban areas and in urban Pondicherry proper it was the least. Political/administrative counterpressures at a later stage, the lower degree of a sense of community and consequent difficulties in evolving decentralised organisational forms with acceptable local leadership are stated as reasons for this phenomenon. Sustained outreach to subgroups through college students is suggested as a solution, especially in urban areas.

Banerjee (1992:449) in a survey of three districts in West Bengal – Burdwan, Birbhum and Bankura – identified a lack of response and sometimes a resistance to the literacy campaigns in the urban areas of these districts. Officials attributed this to a lack of interest and time among casual labourers, the indifference of the municipal councillors and the lumpenisation of sections of slum-dwelling workers. In addition, the author draws attention to the comparative lack of social cohesion among migrants to cities and towns, organisational difficulties with respect to workers in the informal sector and the alienation of the urban middle class from the issues that affect the poor.

Dighe (1995) in a study of women in a literacy project in a resettlement colony in south Delhi in 1991, found that mobilisation efforts had led to extensive enrolment and a high degree of motivation. However, only 16 per cent of the sample learners who had completed the three primers were able to attain the required

levels of literacy for various reasons, socio-economic, organisational and patriarchal.

In addition to these problems, the literacy situation in regions of residual illiteracy suggests an urgency to look beyond basic literacy. With the 1991 national literacy rate standing at 52.2 per cent and the probability of at least a 10 per cent increase in literacy over the decadal period by the turn of the century, several states and districts are likely to enter the high literacy bracket. What is the quality of this literacy? How functional is it in terms of economic entitlements? What are the means to sustain and enhance this level of basic education? These are major concerns. There is also the real possibility of a 'neo-illiteracy' being generated among the marginalised in the informal sector during the process of rapid urbanisation that is underway, contributed by a relapse from semi-literacy, inadequate access to a stretched primary education system and for lack of continuing educational facilities linked to employment generation.

Centres of urbanisation have become increasingly important nodal units mediating between their rural hinterland and unrestrained globalisation processes brought about by a revolution in technology, information and communication, and by the power of dominant economic systems. The marginalised require the enabling skills of literacy to cope with these hegemonic systems and to be able to offer a critique in favour of more equitable and democratic entitlements.

Defining the residual with reference to illiteracy and identifying regions of mass illiteracy calls for a process of categorisation of states/districts within the country. Categorisation is itself relative to context and has necessarily be specific to country

situation and the stage of development of literacy. Absolute cross-national norms, while perhaps being necessary for reasons of comparison, have a major limitation as regards interventional relevance.

For the purpose of this exercise we have arrived at a range of national level varia-

tions of literacy rate of 76.51 per cent, from the highest literacy rate district of Kottayam (95.8 per cent) in Kerala to the lowest Jhabua (19.01 per cent) in Madhya Pradesh. Dividing this range into three equal intervals of 25.57 per cent we get the following contextualised categories

applied to states and districts in the country, after rounding off the literacy percentages: 0-44 per cent literacy rate categorised as low literacy rate, 45-69 per cent as medium and 70 per cent and above as the high literacy category. States and districts within the country falling at or above the literacy

TABLE 1: INDIA (STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES): LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991 BY SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY

| (1) | (2) | Literacy Rate for 1981 (7+Age Group) | | | | | | | | Literacy Rate for 1991 (7+Age Group) | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|-------|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|-------|
| | | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total |
| | | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST | (10) | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST | (18) |
| | | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | |
| High Literacy Rate States (70 per cent +) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Kerala | 87.7 | 75.7 | 80.3 | 87.3 | 67.2 | 43.0 | 83.7 | 81.6 | 93.6 | 86.2 | 88.9 | 92.3 | 79.7 | 57.2 | 91.3 | 89.8 |
| 2 | Mizoram | 79.4 | 68.6 | 69.5 | 88.4 | 98.7 | 73.9 | 77.8 | 74.2 | 85.6 | 78.6 | 72.5 | 93.5 | 77.9 | 82.7 | 74.2 | 82.3 |
| 3 | Lakshadweep | 81.2 | 55.3 | 65.3 | 72.0 | | | 66.4 | 97.9 | 68.4 | 90.2 | 72.9 | 78.9 | 84.0 | 80.6 | 64.6 | 81.8 |
| 4 | Chandigarh | 78.9 | 69.3 | 54.7 | 76.2 | 47.1 | | 79.3 | 74.8 | 82.0 | 72.3 | 59.1 | 79.9 | 55.4 | | 82.0 | 77.8 |
| 5 | Goa | 76.0 | 55.2 | 61.7 | 74.0 | 47.4 | 35.5 | 66.4 | 65.7 | 83.6 | 67.1 | 72.3 | 80.1 | 58.7 | 42.9 | 75.9 | 75.5 |
| 6 | Delhi | 79.3 | 62.6 | 58.0 | 73.0 | 49.7 | | 76.8 | 71.9 | 82.0 | 67.0 | 66.9 | 76.2 | 57.6 | | 79.2 | 75.3 |
| 7 | Pondicherry | 77.1 | 53.0 | 57.2 | 72.2 | 41.6 | | 69.5 | 65.1 | 83.7 | 65.6 | 65.4 | 79.9 | 56.3 | | 78.3 | 74.7 |
| 8 | A and N Islands | 70.3 | 53.2 | 58.2 | 77.1 | | | 42.7 | 65.9 | 63.2 | 79.0 | 65.5 | 69.7 | 81.7 | 56.6 | 74.8 | 73.0 |
| 9 | Daman and Diu | 74.5 | 46.5 | | | | | | | 82.7 | 59.4 | 61.6 | 81.6 | 79.2 | 52.9 | 72.9 | 71.2 |
| | Mean | 85.1 | 72.3 | 78.5 | 79.4 | 58.7 | 60.0 | 81.7 | 78.8 | 89.9 | 81.0 | 86.8 | 83.8 | 70.9 | 73.6 | 87.8 | 85.5 |
| | Range | 17.4 | 29.2 | 25.6 | 16.4 | 57.1 | 38.4 | 32.0 | 18.4 | 14.6 | 26.8 | 29.8 | 17.3 | 24.3 | 39.8 | 26.7 | 18.6 |
| Medium Literacy Rate States (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Maharashtra | 69.7 | 41.0 | 46.8 | 72.5 | 44.2 | 30.9 | 59.5 | 55.8 | 76.6 | 52.3 | 55.5 | 79.2 | 56.5 | 36.8 | 69.1 | 64.9 |
| 11 | Himachal Pradesh | 64.3 | 37.7 | 49.1 | 76.1 | 40.2 | 34.6 | 56.1 | 51.2 | 75.4 | 52.1 | 61.9 | 84.2 | 53.2 | 47.1 | 68.6 | 63.9 |
| 12 | Tamil Nadu | 68.1 | 40.4 | 46.2 | 71.1 | 37.3 | 28.1 | 58.6 | 54.4 | 73.8 | 51.3 | 54.6 | 78.0 | 46.7 | 27.9 | 66.8 | 62.7 |
| 13 | Nagaland | 58.6 | 40.3 | 46.2 | 71.8 | | | 47.9 | 62.0 | 50.2 | 67.6 | 54.8 | 57.2 | 83.1 | 60.6 | 68.4 | 61.7 |
| 14 | Gujarat | 65.1 | 38.5 | 44.7 | 68.8 | 48.3 | 29.6 | 56.6 | 52.2 | 73.1 | 48.6 | 53.1 | 76.5 | 61.1 | 36.4 | 65.9 | 61.3 |
| 15 | Tripura | 61.5 | 38.0 | 46.2 | 81.7 | 41.1 | 31.1 | 61.9 | 50.1 | 70.6 | 49.7 | 56.1 | 83.1 | 56.7 | 40.4 | 72.9 | 60.4 |
| 16 | Manipur | 64.1 | 34.6 | 45.6 | 60.6 | 41.8 | 47.9 | 50.3 | 49.6 | 71.6 | 47.6 | 55.8 | 70.5 | 56.4 | 53.6 | 63.4 | 59.9 |
| 17 | Punjab | 55.6 | 39.7 | 42.5 | 62.9 | 31.2 | | 54.4 | 48.2 | 65.7 | 50.4 | 52.8 | 72.1 | 41.1 | | 65.1 | 58.5 |
| 18 | West Bengal | 59.9 | 36.1 | 40.9 | 70.5 | 32.2 | 21.0 | 55.9 | 48.7 | 67.8 | 46.6 | 50.5 | 75.3 | 42.2 | 27.8 | 65.0 | 57.7 |
| 19 | Sikkim | 53.0 | 27.4 | 37.6 | 62.4 | 35.6 | 40.6 | 42.3 | 41.6 | 65.7 | 46.7 | 54.4 | 80.9 | 51.0 | 59.0 | 57.4 | 56.9 |
| 20 | Karnataka | 58.7 | 33.2 | 38.8 | 64.4 | 28.3 | 27.8 | 50.7 | 46.2 | 67.3 | 44.3 | 47.7 | 74.2 | 38.1 | 36.0 | 60.6 | 56.0 |
| 21 | Haryana | 58.5 | 26.9 | 38.1 | 64.7 | 28.0 | | 47.7 | 43.9 | 69.1 | 40.5 | 49.9 | 73.7 | 39.2 | | 59.8 | 55.9 |
| 22 | Assam | | | | | | | | | 61.9 | 43.0 | 49.3 | 79.4 | 53.9 | 49.2 | 53.4 | 52.9 |
| 23 | Meghalaya | 46.6 | 37.2 | 35.5 | 72.1 | 33.8 | 39.6 | 53.0 | 42.1 | 53.1 | 44.9 | 41.1 | 81.7 | 44.3 | 46.7 | 62.9 | 49.1 |
| 24 | Orissa | 56.5 | 25.1 | 38.3 | 61.6 | 29.2 | 20.8 | 51.0 | 41.0 | 63.1 | 34.7 | 45.5 | 72.0 | 36.8 | 22.3 | 61.6 | 49.1 |
| | Mean | 62.7 | 36.3 | 42.8 | 69.1 | 37.8 | 31.1 | 54.1 | 50.0 | 70.2 | 47.3 | 51.6 | 76.6 | 45.4 | 35.3 | 64.7 | 59.1 |
| | Range | 23.1 | 15.9 | 13.6 | 21.1 | 20.3 | 27.1 | 19.7 | 14.8 | 23.5 | 20.1 | 20.8 | 13.7 | 24.3 | 38.3 | 19.5 | 15.8 |
| Low Literacy Rate States (0-44%) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | Madhya Pradesh | 48.4 | 19.0 | 27.5 | 60.3 | 25.3 | 17.0 | 42.4 | 34.2 | 58.4 | 28.9 | 35.9 | 70.8 | 35.1 | 21.5 | 54.5 | 44.2 |
| 26 | Andhra Pradesh | 46.8 | 24.2 | 29.0 | 57.8 | 23.5 | 13.6 | 39.7 | 35.7 | 55.1 | 32.7 | 35.7 | 66.4 | 31.6 | 17.2 | 48.6 | 44.1 |
| 27 | Arunachal Pradesh | 35.1 | 14.0 | 23.2 | 57.9 | 41.8 | 18.7 | 41.1 | 25.5 | 51.5 | 29.7 | 37.0 | 71.6 | 57.3 | 34.4 | 53.8 | 41.6 |
| 28 | Uttar Pradesh | 47.4 | 17.2 | 29.2 | 52.0 | 21.1 | 26.6 | 36.6 | 33.3 | 55.7 | 25.3 | 36.7 | 61.0 | 26.9 | 35.7 | 45.5 | 41.6 |
| 29 | D and N Haveli | 44.7 | 20.4 | 30.7 | 60.2 | 57.2 | 22.9 | 70.4 | 32.7 | 53.6 | 27.0 | 37.0 | 78.4 | 77.6 | 28.2 | 85.9 | 40.7 |
| 30 | Rajasthan | 44.8 | 14.0 | 23.7 | 54.1 | 19.7 | 16.0 | 35.0 | 30.1 | 55.0 | 20.4 | 30.4 | 65.3 | 26.3 | 19.4 | 44.8 | 38.6 |
| 31 | Bihar | 46.6 | 16.5 | 28.3 | 58.0 | 16.2 | 22.8 | 36.0 | 32.0 | 52.5 | 22.9 | 33.8 | 67.9 | 19.5 | 26.8 | 43.1 | 38.5 |
| 32 | J and K | 44.2 | 19.6 | 27.6 | 51.6 | 28.4 | | 33.1 | 32.7 | | | | | | | | |
| | Mean | 47.0 | 18.2 | 28.1 | 55.8 | 21.6 | 18.5 | 37.3 | 33.2 | 55.3 | 26.2 | 35.1 | 65.5 | 27.4 | 22.1 | 46.7 | 41.5 |
| | Range | 13.3 | 10.2 | 7.5 | 8.7 | 41.0 | 13.0 | 37.3 | 10.2 | 6.9 | 12.3 | 6.6 | 17.4 | 58.1 | 18.5 | 42.8 | 5.7 |
| | India Mean | 56.4 | 29.8 | 37.1 | 64.8 | 30.6 | 25.6 | 48.7 | 43.6 | 64.1 | 39.3 | 44.7 | 73.1 | 37.4 | 29.6 | 57.7 | 52.2 |
| | Range | 52.6 | 61.7 | 57.1 | 36.8 | 82.5 | 60.3 | 64.8 | 56.1 | 42.1 | 65.8 | 58.5 | 32.5 | 60.2 | 65.5 | 48.2 | 51.3 |

Notes: 1 For the state of Jammu and Kashmir census survey was not conducted for the year 1991 and for Assam in 1981.

2 Column 5-9: Data for literacy rates in the population 7 and above age group was not available castewise and regionwise for 1981. It is calculated considering the differences between net literacy rates in the population aged 7 and above and 5 and above for the total population for 1981 which is added to the net literacy rates for the population 5 and above by community and region for the same year.

3 Data for union territory of Daman and Diu is included in Goa state for the year 1981.

4 No castes were scheduled for the states of Lakshadweep, A and N Islands and Nagaland.

5 No tribes were scheduled for the states of Chandigarh, Delhi, Pondicherry, Punjab, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources: Cols 3 - 4 and 10: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, 1991, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1992, based on Census data.

Cols 5 - 6: Based on Census of India 1981, Primary Census Abstract, India, General Population Part II B (i).

Cols 7 - 9: Based on Census of India 1981, Primary Census Abstract, India, S.C. and S.T. Population Part II B (ii) (iii).

Cols 11 - 14 and 18: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, 1991, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1993, based on Census data.

Cols 15 - 17: Based on Census of India 1991, Final Population Tables, Series-1, Paper-1 of 1992.

rate cut-off point of 70 per cent for the age group of seven years and above would thus be termed regions of residual illiteracy for the purpose of this study.

A hypothesis of this article is that non-literate persons living within these areas experience-specific problems in their access to education and require literacy interventions that are suited to the contexts of relative development of these regions. Different criteria have been used in classifying states/districts according to literacy rate. Karkal (1991:232) classifies them on the basis of their being above and below the national mean. Bose (1991:9, 94) using provisional 1991 census data, arrives at three major categories that take into consideration a combination of male and female literacy rates. This results in eight sub-categories in all, ranging from districts that have both male and female literacy rates above 75 per cent to those that have both below 25 per cent. Jolly (1992:22), also using provisional 1991 census data, suggests a fivefold categorisation of districts ranging from those that have literacy rates of 65 per cent or more to those that fall below 20 per cent. Raju (1968) and Jolly (1992:15) point out that despite the spatial character of the disparity between male and female literacy rates, the two are highly correlated. There appears to be no special value in including female literacy rate as a separate element in the classification, considering the complexity of the exercise. The criteria for classification which one has adopted and which have been applied uniformly to states, union territories and districts, recommend themselves for their simplicity, contextuality and relevance.

This article is divided into nine sections. It begins with an analysis of literacy rates in 1981 and 1991, their growth over the period and differences across gender, region and community in Section II. The discussion is conducted for states, national level districts and—by way of more concrete illustration for regions of residual illiteracy—districts within the relatively high literacy states of Maharashtra and Goa in Sections III and IV. The need for comprehending literacy, and hence literacy interventions, within a complex system of structured uneven development is addressed in Sections V and VI. Literacy rates are seen in their relation to socio-demographic, health, socio-economic and formal elementary educational characteristics. These indicators have been selected on the basis of relevance and availability of such data approximating the status of the 1991 census. The data centred around 1991 may appear outdated. But it illustrates the

uneven developmental basis for subsequent interventions in basic education. The year 1991 offers a useful baseline for understanding the relation between literacy and uneven development for that was the approximate point for the take off of the literacy campaigns. The initiation of the new economic policies of privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation might also be dated from that period. Section VII discusses the impact of the literacy campaigns within a configuration of uneven developmental forces on the basis of official data from the internal monitoring systems of the campaigns. The conclusions from our own external evaluation studies of selected districts in Maharashtra and

Goa which are salient to constraints and strategies within regions of residual illiteracy are drawn upon in Section VIII. Limited data from other areas of intervention are also used to arrive at some theoretical generalisations in Section IX.

Throughout the text, the analysis is conducted as far as possible for gender, region (rural-urban) and community for 1981 and 1991, at the level of socio-temporal contextualisation; for states, countrywide districts and for districts in Maharashtra and Goa, to bring in the dimension of socio-relational space and levels of organisation/administration; and for the categories of high, medium and low literacy rate areas, taking into

TABLE 2: INDIA (STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES): INTRA SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY GROWTH IN LITERACY RATES FROM 1981 TO 1991

| States/UTs (1) | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total (9) |
|---|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| | Male (2) | Female (3) | Rural (4) | Urban (5) | SC (6) | ST (7) | Non-SC/ST (8) | |
| High Literacy Rate States (70 per cent +) | | | | | | | | |
| Kerala | 5.9 | 10.5 | 8.6 | 5.0 | 12.5 | 14.2 | 7.6 | 8.2 |
| Mizoram | 6.2 | 10.0 | 3.0 | 5.1 | -20.8 | 8.8 | -3.6 | 8.1 |
| Lakshadweep | 9.0 | 17.6 | 13.6 | 12.0 | | 14.2 | -33.3 | 13.4 |
| Chandigarh | 3.1 | 3.0 | 4.4 | 3.7 | 8.3 | | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| Goa | 7.6 | 11.9 | 10.6 | 6.1 | 11.3 | 7.4 | 9.5 | 9.8 |
| Delhi | 2.7 | 4.4 | 8.9 | 3.2 | 7.9 | | 2.4 | 3.4 |
| Pondicherry | 6.6 | 12.6 | 8.2 | 7.7 | 14.7 | | 8.8 | 9.6 |
| Andamand and Nicobar Islands | 8.7 | 12.3 | 11.5 | 4.6 | | 13.9 | 8.9 | 9.8 |
| Daman and Diu | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 4.8 | 8.8 | 8.3 | 4.4 | 12.2 | 13.6 | 6.1 | 6.7 |
| Range | 6.3 | 14.6 | 10.6 | 8.8 | 35.5 | 6.8 | 42.8 | 10.4 |
| Medium Literacy Rate States (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | |
| Maharashtra | 6.9 | 11.3 | 8.7 | 6.7 | 12.3 | 5.9 | 9.6 | 9.1 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 11.1 | 14.4 | 12.8 | 8.1 | 13.0 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 12.7 |
| Tamil Nadu | 5.7 | 10.9 | 8.4 | 6.9 | 9.4 | -0.2 | 8.2 | 8.3 |
| Nagaland | 9.0 | 14.5 | 11.0 | 11.3 | | 12.7 | 6.4 | 11.5 |
| Gujarat | 8.0 | 10.1 | 8.4 | 7.7 | 12.8 | 6.8 | 9.3 | 9.1 |
| Tripura | 9.1 | 11.7 | 9.9 | 1.4 | 15.6 | 9.3 | 11.0 | 10.3 |
| Manipur | 7.5 | 13.0 | 10.2 | 9.9 | 14.6 | 5.7 | 13.1 | 10.3 |
| Punjab | 10.1 | 10.7 | 10.3 | 9.2 | 9.9 | | 10.7 | 10.3 |
| West Bengal | 7.9 | 10.5 | 9.6 | 4.8 | 10.0 | 6.8 | 9.1 | 9.0 |
| Sikkim | 12.7 | 19.3 | 16.8 | 18.5 | 15.4 | 18.4 | 15.1 | 15.3 |
| Karnataka | 8.6 | 11.1 | 8.9 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 8.2 | 9.9 | 9.8 |
| Haryana | 10.6 | 13.6 | 11.8 | 9.0 | 11.2 | 12.1 | 12.0 | |
| Assam | | | | | | | | |
| Meghalaya | 6.5 | 7.7 | 5.6 | 9.6 | 10.5 | 7.1 | 9.9 | 7.0 |
| Orissa | 6.6 | 9.6 | 7.2 | 10.4 | 7.6 | 1.5 | 10.6 | 8.1 |
| Mean | 7.5 | 11.0 | 8.8 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 4.2 | 10.6 | 9.1 |
| Range | 7.0 | 11.6 | 11.2 | 17.1 | 8.0 | 18.6 | 8.7 | 8.3 |
| Low Literacy Rate States (0-44 per cent) | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 10.0 | 9.9 | 8.4 | 10.5 | 9.8 | 4.5 | 12.1 | 10.0 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 8.3 | 8.5 | 6.7 | 8.6 | 8.1 | 3.6 | 8.9 | 8.4 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 16.4 | 15.7 | 13.8 | 13.7 | 15.5 | 15.7 | 12.7 | 16.1 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 8.3 | 8.1 | 7.5 | 9.0 | 5.8 | 9.1 | 8.9 | 8.3 |
| Dadra and Nagar Haveli | 8.9 | 6.6 | 6.3 | 18.2 | 20.4 | 5.3 | 15.5 | 8.0 |
| Rajasthan | 10.2 | 6.4 | 6.7 | 11.2 | 6.6 | 3.4 | 9.8 | 8.5 |
| Bihar | 5.9 | 6.4 | 5.5 | 9.9 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 7.1 | 6.5 |
| Jammu and Kashmir | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 8.3 | 8.0 | 7.0 | 9.7 | 5.8 | 3.6 | 9.4 | 8.3 |
| Range | 10.5 | 9.3 | 8.3 | 9.6 | 17.1 | 12.3 | 8.4 | 9.6 |
| India Mean | 7.7 | 9.5 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 6.8 | 4.0 | 9.0 | 8.6 |
| Range | 13.7 | 16.3 | 13.8 | 17.1 | 41.2 | 18.6 | 48.8 | 13.1 |

Notes: Same as in Table 1.

Sources: Same as in Table 1.

account the value of scripted symbolic systems in varying degrees of density. It is thus that an investigation of literacy as a symbolical system of communication becomes also an interrogation of the categories of scientific discourse in its relation to literacy.

II Literacy across States

Table 1 presents a categorisation of the states and union territories (henceforward the term states includes union territories, as applicable) according to a descending order of literacy rates (1991 Census) depending on whether they are 'high' (70 per cent +), 'medium' (45-69 per cent), or 'low' (0-44 per cent). Literacy rate data for the states are provided according to sex, region and community for 1981 and 1991, and for the comparable age group of seven years and above.

The 1991 data for the relevant population (col 18) suggest that nine out of the 32 states fall in the high literacy category. The range is from Kerala with a literacy rate of 89.8 per cent to Daman and Diu with 71.2 per cent. These states could clearly be said to be confronting the issue of residual illiteracy within a band where literacy rates vary over a wide range of 18.6 per cent. The category of high literacy states/districts might be termed as the 'zone of residual illiteracy'. The range of variation is high as compared to that of the 25 medium literacy rate states (15.8 per cent) and especially the range of the eight low literacy rate ones (5.7 per cent). The latter eight states – Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Rajasthan, Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir, in that descending order of literacy rate – are faced with the daunting context of mass illiteracy and stand clustered towards the upper end of a category which might be described as the 'zone of mass illiteracy'. Given the literacy trends over the last census decade, however, they could well enter the medium category by the year 2001, just as the states of Haryana, Assam, Meghalaya and Orissa did in 1981. As regards the category of medium literacy rate states, one could expect about half the number of these states with literacy rates of 60 per cent and above in 1991 to move into the high category in the near future. With the additional efforts of the literacy campaigns and primary education initiatives, even those states with a literacy rate of 55 per cent and above are likely to do so. States/districts falling within this medium literacy category are characterised by the phenomenon of

'transitional illiteracy', given the highest growth rates of literacy within this category and the movement of states/districts into and out of it.

The probable scenario by the year 2001 is that two-thirds of the states in the country would fall within the category of high literacy rate with residual illiteracy, resulting in a polarisation with the states characterised by large population size and mass illiteracy; the latter states being additionally burdened with gender, regional and communal disparities in literacy. This tentative sketch will be more clearly manifest from the following analysis.

Some conclusions stand out from the 1991 Census data for the country as a whole: the very low mean female literacy rate (39.3 per cent) varying over a wide range (65.8 per cent); the comparatively high urban literacy rate (73.1 per cent) varying over a low range of state differences (32.5 per cent); and the extremely low rates for scheduled castes (SC: 37.4 per cent) and scheduled tribes (ST: 29.6 per cent), as compared to that of the general population of non-SC-ST (57.7 per cent). In the category of high literacy rate states, the mean literacy rate for rural areas is surprisingly slightly higher (86.8 per cent)

TABLE 3: INDIA (STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES): INTRA SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY DIFFERENTIALS IN LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991

| States/UTs (1) | Sex | | | Region | | | Community | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | 1981 (2) | 1991 (3) | Increase + (4) | 1981 (5) | 1991 (6) | Increase + (7) | 1981 (8) | 1991 (9) | Increase + (10) |
| High Literacy Rate States (70 per cent +) | | | | | | | | | |
| Kerala | 12.0 | 7.4 | -4.6 | 7.0 | 3.4 | -3.6 | 17.1 | 13.9 | -3.2 |
| Mizoram | 10.8 | 7.0 | -3.8 | 18.9 | 21.0 | +2.1 | -10.9 | -8.5 | +2.4 |
| Lakshadweep | 25.9 | 17.3 | -8.6 | 6.7 | 5.1 | -1.6 | 24.8 | -16.0 | -40.8 |
| Chandigarh | 9.6 | 9.7 | +0.1 | 21.5 | 20.8 | -0.7 | 29.3 | 26.5 | -2.8 |
| Goa | 20.8 | 16.5 | -4.3 | 12.3 | 7.8 | -4.5 | 17.8 | 17.3 | -0.5 |
| Delhi | 16.7 | 15.0 | -1.7 | 15.0 | 9.3 | -5.7 | 24.6 | 21.6 | -3.0 |
| Pondicherry | 24.1 | 18.1 | -6.0 | 15.0 | 9.3 | -5.7 | 24.6 | 21.6 | -3.0 |
| Andaman and Nicobar Islands | 17.1 | 13.5 | -3.6 | 18.9 | 12.0 | -6.9 | 21.8 | 18.2 | -3.6 |
| Daman and Diu | 28.0 | 23.3 | -4.7 | | | | | 13.5 | |
| Mean | 12.8 | 8.9 | -3.9 | 0.9 | -3.0 | -3.9 | 18.8 | 12.1 | -6.7 |
| Range | 18.4 | 16.3 | 8.7 | 14.8 | 17.6 | 9.0 | 40.2 | 42.5 | 43.2 |
| Medium Literacy Rate States (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | | |
| Maharashtra | 28.7 | 24.3 | -4.4 | 25.7 | 23.7 | -2.0 | 21.5 | 21.6 | +0.1 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 26.6 | 23.3 | -3.3 | 27.0 | 22.3 | -4.7 | 16.6 | 16.2 | -0.4 |
| Tamil Nadu | 27.7 | 22.5 | -5.2 | 24.9 | 23.4 | -1.5 | 20.6 | 21.0 | +0.4 |
| Nagaland | 18.3 | 12.8 | -5.5 | 25.6 | 25.9 | +0.3 | 7.7 | 7.8 | +0.1 |
| Gujarat | 26.6 | 24.5 | -2.1 | 24.1 | 23.4 | -0.7 | 19.6 | 21.2 | +1.6 |
| Tripura | 23.5 | 20.9 | -2.6 | 35.5 | 27.0 | -8.5 | 25.9 | 26.9 | +1.0 |
| Manipur | 29.5 | 24.0 | -5.5 | 15.0 | 14.7 | -0.3 | 1.1 | 9.6 | +8.5 |
| Punjab | 15.9 | 15.3 | -0.6 | 20.4 | 19.3 | -1.1 | 21.9 | 24.0 | +2.1 |
| West Bengal | 23.8 | 21.1 | -2.7 | 29.6 | 24.8 | -4.8 | 25.1 | 25.5 | +0.4 |
| Sikkim | 25.6 | 19.0 | -6.6 | 24.8 | 26.5 | +1.7 | 2.0 | 0.1 | +1.9 |
| Karnataka | 25.5 | 23.0 | -2.5 | 25.6 | 26.5 | +0.9 | 21.5 | 23.0 | +1.5 |
| Haryana | 31.6 | 28.6 | -3.0 | 26.6 | 23.8 | -2.8 | 18.8 | 20.6 | +1.8 |
| Assam | | | | | | | | 2.5 | |
| Meghalaya | 9.4 | 8.2 | -1.2 | 36.6 | 40.6 | +4.0 | 25.9 | 33.1 | +7.2 |
| Orissa | 31.4 | 28.4 | -3.0 | 23.3 | 26.5 | +3.2 | 8.7 | 16.2 | +7.5 |
| Mean | 26.4 | 22.9 | -3.5 | 26.3 | 25.0 | -1.3 | 16.9 | 18.0 | +1.1 |
| Range | 22.2 | 20.4 | 6.0 | 21.6 | 25.9 | 12.5 | 24.8 | 3.3 | 10.4 |
| Low Literacy Rate States (0-44 per cent) | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 29.4 | 29.5 | +0.1 | 32.8 | 34.9 | +2.1 | 21.5 | 27.7 | +6.2 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 22.6 | 22.4 | -0.2 | 28.8 | 30.7 | +1.9 | 18.0 | 21.1 | +3.1 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 21.1 | 21.8 | +0.7 | 34.7 | 34.6 | -0.1 | 20.4 | 19.2 | -1.2 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 30.2 | 30.4 | +0.2 | 22.8 | 24.3 | +1.5 | 14.7 | 18.5 | +3.8 |
| Dadra and Nagar Haveli | 24.3 | 26.6 | +2.3 | 29.5 | 41.4 | +11.9 | 43.4 | 56.4 | +13.0 |
| Rajasthan | 30.8 | 34.6 | +3.8 | 30.4 | 34.9 | +4.5 | 16.1 | 21.4 | +5.3 |
| Bihar | 30.1 | 29.6 | -0.5 | 29.7 | 34.1 | +4.4 | 16.4 | 21.0 | +4.6 |
| Jammu and Kashmir | | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 28.8 | 29.1 | +0.3 | 27.7 | 30.4 | +2.7 | 21.5 | 26.5 | +5.0 |
| Range | 9.7 | 12.8 | 4.3 | 11.9 | 17.1 | 12.0 | 39.1 | 56.4 | 14.2 |
| India Mean | 26.6 | 24.8 | -1.8 | 31.2 | 28.4 | -2.8 | 18.6 | 18.8 | +0.2 |
| Range | 22.2 | 27.6 | 12.4 | 29.9 | 38.0 | 20.4 | 42.3 | 56.4 | 53.8 |

Notes: 1 Same as in Table 1.

2 Differentials relating to community, i.e., cols. 8-10, relate to that between SC-ST and others.

3 Cols 8-10: Means are calculated using percentages instead of actual figures.

Source: Same as in Table 1.

TABLE 4: INDIA – CLASSIFICATION OF DISTRICTS IN STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES ACCORDING TO LITERACY RATE (LR), URBAN, SCHEDULED CASTE (SC) AND SCHEDULED TRIBES (ST) CONCENTRATIONS, 1991

| States/UTs | Literacy Rates | Non-Lits 7+ Age (in 000's) | High LR (70 per cent+) Districts | | | Medium LR (45-69) Districts | | | Low LR (0-44) Districts | | | Districts by Region, Community | | | Absolute Total Districts |
|---|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | Urban | SC | ST | Urban | SC | ST | Urban | SC | ST | Urban | SC | ST | |
| High Literacy Rate States (70 per cent+) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kerala | 89.8 | 2574 | 6 (42.9) | 1 (7.1) | 14 (100.0) | | | | | | 6 (42.9) | 1 (7.1) | 14 (100.0) | | |
| Mizoram | 82.3 | 100 | 2 (100.0) | 2 (100.0) | 2 (66.7) | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (33.3) | | | 2 (66.7) | 3 (100.0) | 3 (100.0) | | |
| Lakshadweep | 81.8 | 9 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | | | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | |
| Chandigarh | 77.8 | 121 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | | | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | |
| Goa | 75.5 | 253 | 2 (100.0) | | 2 (100.0) | | | | | | 2 (100.0) | | 2 (100.0) | | |
| Delhi | 75.3 | 1931 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | | | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | |
| Pondicherry | 74.7 | 176 | 4 (100.0) | 3 (75.0) | 4 (100.0) | | | | | | 4 (100.0) | 3 (75.0) | 4 (100.0) | | |
| Andaman and Nicobar Islands | 73.0 | 63 | 1 (100.0) | | 1 (50.0) | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (50.0) | | | 1 (50.0) | 1 (50.0) | 2 (100.0) | | |
| Daman and Diu | 71.2 | 25 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (50.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (50.0) | | | 2 (100.0) | 1 (50.0) | 2 (100.0) | | |
| Total/Mean | 85.5 | 5252 | 19 (1.6) | 5 (70.4) | 27 (18.5) | 1 (18.5) | 2 (100.0) | 3 (33.3) | 10 (66.7) | 3 (100.0) | 20 (16.0) | 5 (2.4) | 7 (4.2) | 30 (23.3) | 3 (4.2) |
| Medium Literacy Rate States (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maharashtra | 64.9 | 22985 | 6 (85.7) | 2 (28.6) | 4 (57.1) | 7 (23.3) | 7 (31.8) | 8 (18.2) | 22 (36.4) | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (3.3) | 13 (43.3) | 6 (20.0) | 13 (43.3) |
| Himachal Pradesh | 63.9 | 1566 | | 3 (100.0) | 3 (25.0) | | | 8 (88.9) | 3 (33.3) | 9 (75.0) | | | 11 (91.7) | 3 (25.0) | 12 (100.0) |
| Tamil Nadu | 62.7 | 18075 | 3 (75.0) | 2 (50.0) | 4 (19.0) | 9 (52.9) | 13 (76.5) | 17 (81.0) | | | 12 (57.1) | 15 (71.4) | 21 (100.0) | | |
| Nagaland | 61.7 | 385 | | 2 (100.0) | 2 (28.6) | 1 (25.0) | 4 (100.0) | 4 (57.1) | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (14.3) | 7 (14.3) | 7 (100.0) | 7 (100.0) |
| Gujarat | 61.3 | 13348 | 2 (100.0) | | 2 (10.5) | 8 (53.3) | 6 (40.0) | 15 (78.9) | | | 1 (50.0) | 2 (10.5) | 10 (52.6) | 7 (36.8) | 19 (100.0) |
| Tripura | 60.4 | 893 | | | | 1 (33.3) | 3 (100.0) | 3 (100.0) | | | | | 1 (33.3) | 3 (100.0) | 3 (100.0) |
| Manipur | 59.9 | 614 | 1 (100.0) | | 1 (12.5) | 2 (28.6) | 5 (71.4) | 7 (87.5) | | | 3 (37.5) | | 5 (62.5) | 8 (100.0) | 8 (100.0) |
| Punjab | 58.5 | 7043 | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (8.3) | 5 (50.0) | 10 (100.0) | 10 (83.3) | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (8.3) | 5 (41.7) | 12 (100.0) | 12 (100.0) |
| West Bengal | 57.7 | 23907 | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (5.9) | 5 (41.7) | 9 (75.0) | 12 (41.7) | | | 3 (75.0) | 1 (25.0) | 4 (23.5) | 6 (35.3) | 17 (100.0) |
| Sikkim | 56.9 | 141 | | | | | 4 (100.0) | 4 (100.0) | | | | | 4 (100.0) | 4 (100.0) | 4 (100.0) |
| Karnataka | 56.0 | 16487 | 2 (100.0) | | 2 (100.0) | 5 (31.3) | 11 (68.8) | 16 (25.0) | | | 2 (100.0) | 2 (10.0) | 7 (35.0) | 13 (65.0) | 20 (100.0) |
| Haryana | 55.9 | 5889 | | | | 5 (33.3) | 12 (80.0) | 15 (93.8) | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (6.3) | 5 (31.3) | 13 (81.3) | 16 (100.0) |
| Assam | 52.9 | 8477 | | | | 1 (5.3) | 10 (52.6) | 19 (82.6) | | | 4 (100.0) | 4 (17.4) | 1 (4.3) | 14 (60.9) | 23 (100.0) |
| Meghalaya | 49.1 | 13397 | | | | 1 (33.3) | 3 (100.0) | 3 (60.0) | | | 2 (100.0) | 2 (40.0) | 1 (20.0) | 5 (100.0) | 5 (100.0) |
| Orissa | 49.1 | 703 | | | | 1 (14.3) | 3 (42.9) | 4 (57.1) | 7 (53.8) | | 3 (50.0) | 6 (100.0) | 6 (46.2) | 1 (7.7) | 10 (76.9) |
| Total/Mean | 59.1 | 133910 | 15 (40.7) | 8 (65.2) | 6 (34.8) | 23 (26.1) | 50 (30.7) | 71 (43.6) | 163 (36.2) | 100 (100.0) | 10 (41.7) | 16 (66.7) | 65 (100.0) | 89 (31.8) | 81 (42.4) |
| Low Literacy Rat States (0-44 per cent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 44.2 | 29625 | | | | 9 (45.0) | 9 (45.0) | 14 (70.0) | 20 (44.4) | 2 (8.0) | 13 (52.0) | 18 (72.0) | 25 (55.6) | 11 (24.4) | 22 (48.9) |
| Andhra Pradesh | 44.1 | 31057 | 1 (100.0) | | 1 (4.3) | 4 (44.4) | 6 (66.7) | 2 (22.2) | 9 (39.1) | 1 (7.7) | 8 (61.5) | 5 (38.5) | 13 (56.5) | 6 (26.1) | 14 (60.9) |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 41.6 | 398 | | | | | 4 (100.0) | 4 (36.4) | | | 7 (100.0) | 7 (63.6) | | 11 (100.0) | 11 (100.0) |
| Uttar Pradesh | 41.6 | 64769 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | 1 (1.6) | 11 (44.0) | 19 (76.0) | 1 (4.0) | 25 (39.7) | 2 (5.4) | 31 (83.8) | 37 (58.7) | 14 (20.6) | 50 (79.4) | 2 (1.6) |
| D and N Haveli | 40.7 | 65 | | | | | | | | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) | | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0) |

(Contd)

TABLE 4 (Contd)

| States/UTs | Literacy Rates (in 000's) | Non-Lits 7+ Age Urban | High LR (70 per cent+) Districts | | | Medium LR (45-69) Districts | | | | Low LR (0-44) Districts | | | Districts by Region, Community | | | Absolute Total Districts | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | SC | ST | Total | Urban | SC | ST | Total | Urban | SC | ST | Total | Urban | SC | | ST | |
| Rajasthan | 38.6 | 21597 | | | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 15 | 11 | 23 | 6 | 17 | 14 | 27 | |
| Bihar | 38.5 | 42206 | | | | (75.0) | (50.0) | (75.0) | (14.8) | (13.0) | (65.2) | (47.8) | (85.2) | (22.2) | (63.0) | (51.9) | (100.0) | |
| Jammu and Kashmir | | | | | | 4 | 4 | 2 | 9 | | 7 | 11 | 33 | 4 | 11 | 13 | 42 | |
| Total/Mean | 41.5 | 189717 (57.7) | 2 (100.0) | 1 (50.0) | 2 (100.0) | 31 (43.7) | 40 (56.3) | 26 (36.6) | 71 (100.0) | 8 (5.8) | 74 (53.2) | 53 (38.1) | 139 (100.0) | 41 (18.9) | 114 (53.8) | 80 (37.3) | 212 (100.0) | |
| India Total/Mean | 52.2 | 328879 (100.0) | 36 (69.3) | 13 (25.0) | 11 (21.2) | 52 (100.0) | 82 (34.6) | 111 (46.8) | 87 (36.7) | 237 (100.0) | 8 (4.9) | 84 (51.5) | 69 (42.3) | 163 (100.0) | 126 (27.7) | 208 (46.0) | 168 (36.9) | 452 (100.0) |
| | | | | | | (11.5) | | | (52.4) | | | | (36.1) | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) | (100.0) |

Notes: 1 Districts are classified as urban, SC or ST on the basis of the percentage of respective population being higher than the national percentages, ie, Urban: 25.7, SC 16.5, ST 8.1.

2 Census was not carried out in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991.

3 The horizontal percentages of districts classified as urban, SC, ST are worked out to the total number of districts within each literacy category (high, medium, low) for each state. The classified district percentages do not amount to 100 per cent in some cases because of some districts falling in more than one category or because of some districts not falling in this classification. The total districts in each literacy category (high, medium, low) within each state are absolute totals and are worked out as a percentage of the absolute total districts in that state.

Source: Based on NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, Final Population and Literacy, Vol II, New Delhi, 1993, based on Census data.

than that for urban areas (83.8 per cent), the mean data being skewed to the higher side by the comparatively large rural population of Kerala. The mean literacy rate for this belt of states is also slightly higher for the ST population (73.6 per cent) as compared to the SC (70.9 per cent). In contrast, the low literacy states are confronted with the problems of gender, region and SC-ST community, which are mutually reinforcing in a deprivational sense, the literacy rates being as low as: female 26.2 per cent, rural 35.1 per cent, SC 27.4 per cent and ST 22.1 per cent. The mean literacy rate for the high category of states was as high as 85.5 per cent in 1991, as compared to 59.1 per cent in the medium and only 41.5 per cent in the low category. It may be pointed out that while there were only about 5.2 million non-literates in the nine states falling in the high literacy category, there were about 134 million and 190 million non-literates in the medium and low literacy states, respectively. The massive task ahead is clearly that of enabling access to literacy in the latter two categories of states and enhancing learning while confronting residual illiteracy in the relatively urbanised areas of the high literacy states and partly in the medium literacy ones.

Table 2 indicates growth in literacy rates from 1981 to 1991 within the categorised states. At the national level the highest growth rate in literacy was among women (9.5 per cent), even higher than the national mean (8.6 per cent) for the period. Even though it is largely attributable to female growth rates in literacy in the medium category of states, this phenomenon is a positive sign for the future, given that women are the largest absolute category with the greatest need. However, the rest

of the data suggest that the growth rates favour the non-SC/ST and the urban areas as against the rural areas and the SC and ST, thus acting as a drag on the possibilities for change. Examining the categories of states classified according to literacy rate in greater detail, one finds that the high literacy states demonstrate a reversal of the above-mentioned trend with the ST, SC population, the females and the rural areas having the highest growth rates in that order. Clearly, these states have reached what might be termed as a 'saturation' point with respect to literacy within the opposite sections of society and are addressing themselves to sections that are in the greatest need of literacy. The contrasting gender, regional and communitarian characteristics of literacy are brought sharply into focus when one considers that in the low literacy states precisely the reverse is true: comparative growth rates in literacy favour urban areas, non-SC, ST and males in that order. Both, the polarisational trends in national level literacy as well as the saturational effects in high literacy areas, referred to earlier in the analysis of the previous table, are revealed by the literacy growth rate data. The literacy growth rate of 6.7 per cent for the high literacy states indicates a tapering off into a plateau as compared to 9.1 per cent for the medium and 8.3 per cent for the low literacy states. Incidentally, Chandigarh in the high belt had the lowest growth rate in literacy (3 per cent) as compared to Arunachal Pradesh, with the highest overall growth rate (16.1 per cent), but in the low belt.

Table 3 portrays the inter-sex, region and community differentials in literacy rates for 1981 and 1991 for the different states. At the mean national level, the

differentials are greatest for region (28.4 per cent), sex (24.8 per cent) and community (18.8 per cent), in that descending order for 1991. While there is a decrease in the differences with respect to the former two categories, there is a slight but disturbing increase in inequalities as regards access to literacy between the SC-ST and others for the period 1981-91. The range of increase or decrease in differences is also sharpest in the community category, from a healthy -40.8 per cent in Lakshadweep to an alarming +13 per cent increase in the tribal pocket of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The impending polarisation and disparities in literacy become all the more evident when one considers that the belt of high literacy states has shown an overall decrease in mean differentials over the 10 year period, with the sharpest decrease being that between SC-ST and others; while the low literacy rate states have in contrast performed poorly, with a slight increase in mean differentials with respect to sex (+0.3 per cent), an increase in urban-rural disparities (+2.7 per cent), and an even sharper increase in disparities between SC-ST and the general population (+5 per cent). Even the data for medium-literacy states suggest an increase in the differentials for community (+1.1 per cent). All the 15 states in the medium literacy category have shown an increase in the differentials between the SC-ST and the others as regards literacy rate for the period 1981-91, except Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim. In the low literacy belt the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Rajasthan demonstrate an increase in literacy differentials as regards all the three categories of gender, region, and community; whereas in Bihar the increase

in differentials is with respect to the last two categories.

III Literacy across Districts

The foregoing analysis suggests that certain demographic characteristics of the population in the states are closely related to the extent of literacy. Urban literacy rates tend to be higher than rural. Literacy rates tend to be lower among the SC and ST as compared to the general population. Table 4 confirms the picture of the regional and communitarian characteristics of literacy, while presenting a 1991 statewide distribution of the then 452 districts of the country according to their literacy rate, regional and community characteristics.

Districts are classified as urban, SC and ST according to whether the proportions of populations in those districts are higher than the respective national percentages which are 25.7 per cent, 16.5 per cent and 8.1 per cent, respectively.

Only 1.6 per cent of the total 329 million non-literates in the country, numbering about 5.3 million, are found within the 30 (6.6 per cent) districts of the high literacy category of states. The 210 (46.5 per cent) districts falling in the medium category states have a share of 40.7 per cent, numbering approximately 134 million, and the 212 (46.9 per cent) districts in the low literacy states hold the largest proportion of 57.7 per cent of the non-literates, who amount to about 189.7 million in these

districts. Of the total districts in the country, 27.7 per cent may be termed 'urban' and 46 per cent and 36.9 per cent have substantial concentrations of SC and ST, respectively.

Only 52 (11.5 per cent) districts of the total number of districts, irrespective of the category of states in which they are to be found, are characterised by high literacy rates. A good 27 of these districts are concentrated in the high literacy states, forming 90 per cent of the districts in these states. A major proportion of the districts (52.4 per cent) numbering 237 scattered across the country have a medium literacy rate. Of these, 163 fall in the category of medium literacy states and constitute 77.6 per cent of the districts

TABLE 5: INDIA – SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF DISTRICTS CATEGORISED ACCORDING TO LITERACY RATE, 1991

| SN | Districts | No of Districts | Literacy Rate 7+ Age | Non-Literates 7 + Age (000's) | Total Population (000's) | Per Cent of Urbanisation | Per Cent of SC Population | Per Cent of ST Population |
|-----|---|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 1 | High literacy rate districts (70 per cent +) | 52 (11.3) | 79.6 | 18,117 (5.5) | 103,430 (12.3) | 57.9 | 11.5 | 3.7 |
| 2 | Medium literacy rate districts (45-69 per cent) | 237 (52.4) | 56.2 | 157,266 (47.8) | 434,204 (51.8) | 26.3 | 17.3 | 7.5 |
| 3 | Low literacy rate districts (0-44 per cent) | 163 (36.3) | 36.2 | 153,485 (46.7) | 300,950 (35.9) | 13.8 | 17.0 | 10.4 |
| | India mean/total | 452 (100.0) | 52.2 | 328,868 (100.0) | 838,584 (100.0) | 25.7 | 16.5 | 8.1 |

Note: Data excludes districts in the state of Jammu and Kashmir where Census was not conducted in 1991.

Sources: Cols 4 - 5 : NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, 1991, Vol II, New Delhi, 1993, based on Census data.

Cols 6 - 8 : Census of India 1991, Final Population Totals, India, Vol II, Series-1, Paper - 1 of 1992.

TABLE 6: INDIA – LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991 FOR DISTRICTS CATEGORISED ACCORDING TO LITERACY RATE

| SN | Districts | No of Districts 1991 | Per Cent of Literacy Rate for 1981 (7+ Age Group) | | | Literacy Rate for 1991 (7+ Age Group) | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------|---|------|--------|---------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| | | | Urbanisation | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| 1 | High literacy rate districts (70 per cent+) | 52 | 57.9 | 80.3 | 63.5 | 72.3 | 85.7 | 72.9 | 79.6 |
| 2 | Medium literacy rate districts (45-69per cent) | 237 | 26.3 | 60.3 | 32.1 | 46.7 | 68.4 | 43.1 | 56.2 |
| 3 | Low literacy rate districts (0-44per cent) | 163 | 13.8 | 42.0 | 14.0 | 28.5 | 50.0 | 21.1 | 36.2 |
| | India Mean/Total | 452 | 25.7 | 56.5 | 29.9 | 43.7 | 64.1 | 39.3 | 52.2 |
| | Range | 185 | 44.1 | 38.3 | 49.5 | 43.8 | 35.7 | 51.8 | 43.4 |

Notes: 1 Data for 1991 excludes districts in the state of Jammu and Kashmir where Census was not conducted in 1991.

2 Data for 1981 excludes districts in the state of Assam where Census was not conducted in 1981.

3 41 additional districts were formed through sub-division between 1981 and 1991. The data for the two points of time are based on all existing districts, except those in notes 1 and 2.

Sources: Col 4: Census of India 1991, Final Population Totals, India, Vol II, Series - 1, Paper - 1 of 1992.

Cols 5-7 : NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, Vol I, New Delhi, 1992, based on Census data.

Cols 8-10: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, Vol II, New Delhi, 1993, based on Census data.

TABLE 7: INDIA – GROWTH AND INTER SEX DIFFERENTIALS IN LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991 FOR DISTRICTS CATEGORISED ACCORDING TO LITERACY RATE

| SN | Districts | No of Districts | Per Cent of Urbanisation | Literacy Rate 7+Age | Growth in Literacy Rate 1981-91 | | | Inter Sex Differentials in Literacy Rate | | |
|-----|--|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-------|--|------|----------------------|
| | | | | | Male | Female | Total | 1981 | 1991 | Increase+ Decrease - |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| 1 | High literacy rate districts (70per cent+) | 52 | 57.9 | 79.6 | 5.4 | 9.4 | 7.3 | 16.8 | 12.8 | -4.0 |
| 2 | Medium literacy rate districts (45-69per cent) | 237 | 26.3 | 56.2 | 8.1 | 11.0 | 9.5 | 28.2 | 25.3 | -2.9 |
| 3 | Low literacy rate districts (0-44per cent) | 163 | 13.8 | 36.2 | 8.0 | 7.1 | 7.7 | 28.0 | 28.9 | +0.9 |
| | India Mean/Total | 452 | 25.7 | 52.2 | 7.6 | 9.4 | 8.5 | 26.6 | 24.8 | -1.8 |

Notes: Same as in Table 6.

Sources: Same as in Table 6.

in this category. A major area of focus for literacy efforts would have to be the 163 districts which constitute 36.1 per cent of the districts of the country and are characterised by mass illiteracy. About 134 million persons, forming 40.7 per cent of the non-literates in the country, are found in these districts. Of these, 139 districts are concentrated in the zone of low literacy states. The fact that these districts form 65.6 per cent of the total number of the districts in the low literacy states suggests a defining characteristic.

The foregoing data indicate that whereas there is a scatter of districts with high literacy rates over the 'high' and 'medium' categories of states and, to a lesser extent, a dispersal of the districts with relatively medium literacy rates over the 'medium' and 'low' zones; the districts with low literacy rates remain largely concentrated to an extent of 85.3 per cent of these districts in the eight states that fall in the sphere of mass illiteracy. In other words, the spread of literacy throughout the country suggests a trend: a growing spread of literacy over the states

that have a transitional medium literacy character, most of which will soon have residual illiteracy; but a massive polarisation with respect to the states that are weighed down by illiteracy and where access to literacy remains a monopoly of a few.

Maintaining the literacy categories and classifying the then 452 districts of the country irrespective of the category of state to which they belong, one gets a more comprehensive and perhaps a more accurate picture of certain demographic characteristics of literacy in the country

TABLE 8: MAHARASHTRA (DISTRICTS): LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991 BY SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY

| SN | Districts | Literacy Rate for 1981 (7+ Age Group) | | | | | | | | Literacy Rate for 1991 (7+ Age Group) | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|-------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-------|--|
| | | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total | Sex | | Region | | Community | | Total | |
| | | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST | | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | | |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | |
| High literacy rate districts (70 per cent +) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Greater Bombay | 83.5 | 70.3 | - | 77.8 | 60.2 | 58.7 | 78.9 | 77.8 | 87.8 | 75.8 | - | 82.5 | 71.6 | 68.2 | 82.5 | |
| 2 | Sindhudurg | 86.2 | 66.9 | 74.8 | 87.8 | 69.7 | 62.5 | 75.8 | 64.5 | 81.8 | 64.7 | 61.7 | 80.9 | 71.1 | 62.2 | 73.6 | |
| 3 | Nagpur | 75.3 | 52.8 | 51.3 | 74.5 | 56.2 | 52.5 | 67.3 | 63.2 | 81.6 | 59.8 | 60.8 | 80.8 | 59.5 | 44.3 | 71.1 | |
| 4 | Pune | 76.5 | 49.1 | 51.9 | 75.8 | 50.9 | 37.0 | 65.4 | 61.7 | 78.4 | 61.1 | 65.0 | 80.4 | 61.6 | 44.6 | 70.1 | |
| 5 | Amaravati | 72.0 | 50.7 | 57.6 | 71.7 | 51.4 | 35.6 | 66.7 | 61.7 | 78.4 | 61.1 | 65.0 | 80.4 | 61.6 | 44.6 | 70.1 | |
| 6 | Wardha | 72.2 | 47.9 | 55.7 | 74.8 | 52.1 | 44.2 | 63.9 | 60.4 | 78.3 | 61.0 | 65.4 | 82.3 | 68.6 | 55.4 | 70.0 | |
| 7 | Thane | 69.9 | 47.5 | 47.6 | 74.5 | 52.7 | 23.4 | 70.1 | 59.5 | 77.6 | 60.3 | 50.2 | 79.9 | 65.1 | 25.8 | 69.5 | |
| | Mean | 77.7 | 57.2 | 52.4 | 76.7 | 55.3 | 36.2 | 71.9 | 68.4 | 82.9 | 66.4 | 61.1 | 81.5 | 68.9 | 42.1 | 75.2 | |
| | Range | 13.6 | 22.8 | 10.0 | 6.1 | 9.3 | 35.3 | 15.0 | 18.3 | 10.2 | 16.0 | 24.6 | 7.9 | 12.1 | 42.4 | 13.0 | |
| Medium literacy rate districts (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Kolhapur | 69.6 | 35.5 | 47.2 | 69.7 | 42.4 | 41.8 | 54.4 | 52.8 | 80.3 | 53.1 | 62.5 | 79.3 | 54.3 | 61.1 | 66.9 | |
| 9 | Satara | 73.8 | 41.4 | 54.2 | 75.2 | 48.4 | 38.5 | 57.6 | 56.9 | 80.6 | 53.4 | 64.6 | 80.5 | 57.8 | 52.4 | 66.7 | |
| 10 | Akola | 71.6 | 42.5 | 53.9 | 68.4 | 44.1 | 43.3 | 59.4 | 57.5 | 77.6 | 53.3 | 61.3 | 77.0 | 55.5 | 51.0 | 65.8 | |
| 11 | Bhandara | 70.0 | 35.0 | 49.7 | 71.4 | 56.9 | 41.7 | 54.3 | 52.5 | 78.8 | 50.4 | 62.1 | 81.5 | 69.3 | 51.9 | 64.7 | |
| 12 | Jalgaon | 73.6 | 41.0 | 54.0 | 69.0 | 44.2 | 29.6 | 61.3 | 57.7 | 77.5 | 50.3 | 59.7 | 76.2 | 52.4 | 34.7 | 64.3 | |
| 13 | Raigad | 68.8 | 40.4 | 50.8 | 74.6 | 55.0 | 25.1 | 58.5 | 54.2 | 75.9 | 52.2 | 60.5 | 79.4 | 64.8 | 25.7 | 64.0 | |
| 14 | Ratnagiri | 71.5 | 43.8 | 54.0 | 77.7 | 46.9 | 18.5 | 56.7 | 55.9 | 76.6 | 51.6 | 60.6 | 83.9 | 63.5 | 32.2 | 62.7 | |
| 15 | Sangli | 70.4 | 39.1 | 51.1 | 68.5 | 45.5 | 48.2 | 56.2 | 54.9 | 74.8 | 49.9 | 59.2 | 74.2 | 54.1 | 54.1 | 62.6 | |
| 16 | Nasik | 67.7 | 38.0 | 45.5 | 70.4 | 50.8 | 25.6 | 62.7 | 53.3 | 74.0 | 49.9 | 53.3 | 78.4 | 60.6 | 29.8 | 62.3 | |
| 17 | Buldana | 71.0 | 36.0 | 50.4 | 69.7 | 41.0 | 36.5 | 55.7 | 53.9 | 76.5 | 46.1 | 58.2 | 75.0 | 50.1 | 41.4 | 61.7 | |
| 18 | Ahmadnagar | 67.1 | 34.2 | 47.9 | 71.4 | 43.2 | 24.7 | 54.2 | 51.0 | 75.3 | 46.0 | 57.8 | 77.7 | 51.9 | 30.1 | 61.0 | |
| 19 | Chandrapur | 56.2 | 26.6 | 38.3 | 65.1 | 40.2 | 29.3 | 46.8 | 41.7 | 71.3 | 46.8 | 53.0 | 75.7 | 62.9 | 47.3 | 59.4 | |
| 20 | Yavatmal | 61.9 | 32.4 | 43.7 | 68.8 | 42.0 | 32.6 | 52.2 | 47.5 | 70.5 | 44.8 | 53.7 | 77.8 | 57.6 | 41.4 | 58.0 | |
| 21 | Aurangabad | 61.6 | 23.9 | 37.7 | 63.0 | 31.4 | 24.4 | 44.8 | 43.3 | 72.9 | 39.6 | 47.8 | 75.4 | 50.3 | 32.9 | 57.0 | |
| 22 | Solapur | 63.8 | 31.8 | 42.5 | 62.1 | 37.4 | 39.2 | 50.4 | 48.3 | 70.1 | 41.7 | 51.2 | 69.0 | 46.5 | 47.7 | 56.4 | |
| 23 | Latur | 70.5 | 39.7 | 51.6 | 70.9 | 43.9 | 43.1 | 55.6 | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | Osmanabad | 58.8 | 25.4 | 39.5 | 58.9 | 31.2 | 30.3 | 44.9 | 42.5 | 68.4 | 39.2 | 51.2 | 71.1 | 43.5 | 39.5 | 54.3 | |
| 25 | Dhule | 59.1 | 31.4 | 40.4 | 66.7 | 45.2 | 23.3 | 61.8 | 45.5 | 63.1 | 38.8 | 44.8 | 75.7 | 55.7 | 23.6 | 51.2 | |
| 26 | Bid | 54.9 | 20.4 | 34.4 | 57.7 | 27.4 | 23.9 | 39.5 | 38.0 | 66.3 | 32.3 | 45.2 | 70.9 | 41.7 | 38.4 | 49.8 | |
| 27 | Nanded | 52.8 | 18.8 | 31.8 | 55.3 | 26.4 | 26.9 | 38.8 | 36.2 | 64.4 | 31.0 | 42.5 | 68.0 | 40.5 | 36.1 | 48.2 | |
| 28 | Parbhani | 53.9 | 18.6 | 32.5 | 54.4 | 25.3 | 23.1 | 38.0 | 36.6 | 64.9 | 29.4 | 42.2 | 65.8 | 37.8 | 33.8 | 47.6 | |
| 29 | Jalna | 64.4 | 27.3 | 42.0 | 66.8 | 35.9 | 32.1 | 46.3 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Mean | 65.2 | 33.2 | 45.1 | 66.5 | 40.1 | 28.4 | 52.7 | 49.3 | 73.0 | 44.9 | 54.5 | 75.1 | 51.1 | 34.7 | 59.2 | |
| | Range | 21.0 | 25.2 | 22.4 | 23.3 | 31.6 | 29.7 | 24.7 | 21.5 | 17.5 | 26.1 | 22.6 | 18.1 | 33.4 | 37.5 | 20.6 | |
| Low literacy rate districts (0-44 per cent) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | Gadchiroli | 56.6 | 28.9 | 40.2 | 71.9 | 53.4 | 30.0 | 42.9 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Maharashtra mean | 69.7 | 41.0 | 46.8 | 72.5 | 44.2 | 30.9 | 59.5 | 55.8 | 76.6 | 52.3 | 55.5 | 79.2 | 56.5 | 36.8 | 64.9 | |
| | Range | 30.7 | 51.7 | 25.8 | 23.4 | 34.9 | 40.2 | 40.9 | 41.6 | 31.2 | 48.5 | 32.8 | 22.0 | 35.7 | 44.6 | 39.6 | |
| | India mean | 56.4 | 29.8 | 37.1 | 64.8 | 30.6 | 25.6 | 48.7 | 43.6 | 64.1 | 39.3 | 44.7 | 73.1 | 37.4 | 29.6 | 52.2 | |
| | Range | 52.6 | 61.7 | 57.1 | 36.8 | 82.5 | 60.3 | 64.8 | 56.1 | 42.1 | 65.8 | 58.6 | 32.5 | 60.2 | 65.5 | 51.3 | |

Notes: 1 Districts Sindhudurg, Jalna, Latur and Gadchiroli were carved out of Ratnagiri, Aurangabad, Osmanabad and Chandrapur districts, respectively, in 1982. Thus separate data are not available for 1981.

2 Cols 5-9: Data on literacy rates in the population age 7 and above was not available community and regionwise for 1981. It is calculated considering the differences between literacy rates in the population age 7 and above and age 5 and above for the total population for 1981 which is added to the literacy rates for the population age 5 and above by community and region for the same year.

Sources: Cols 3-4 and 10: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, 1991, Vol-I, New Delhi, 1992, based on Census data.
Cols 5-9: Based on Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Govt. of Maharashtra, Statistical Abstract of Maharashtra State, 1986-87, Bombay, 1991.

Cols 11-14 and 17: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, 1991, Vol II, New Delhi, 1993, based on Census data.

Cols 15-16: Directorate of Education, Maharashtra State, Education at a Glance 1992-93, Pune, Jan. 1994.

in 1991, as in Table 5. Fifty two districts constituting 11.3 per cent of the 452 districts of the country, bearing 12.3 per cent of the population, fall in the high literacy rate category. The mean literacy rate of these districts is a good 79.6 per cent. The 18 million non-literates in these districts form 5.5 per cent of the 329 million non-literates in the country. Illiteracy is definitely a residual phenomenon in these districts, though the quality of literacy is debatable. It is noteworthy that the percentage of urbanisation in these districts is as high as 57.9, twice the national rate of 25.7. The percentage of SC population is 11.5, lower than the national 16.5. Even lower is the percentage of ST population at 3.7 as compared to the national 8.1 per cent. A concentration of the deprived is not a characteristic of these regions which stand out as pockets of high urbanisation and accompanying commercialisation within the country. As indicated earlier, these districts are predominantly found within the category of high literacy states.

In contrast, the 163 districts – concentrated mainly in the low literacy states – which form 36.3 per cent of the districts in the country hold 35.9 per cent of the population. Their mean literacy rate is as low as 36.2 per cent. 153 million non-literates forming 46.7 per cent of such persons in the country are concentrated within these districts. The percentage of urbanisation is merely 13.8. 17 per cent of the population in these districts belongs to the SC, and more importantly 10.4 per cent belongs to the ST. These districts are major areas of concentration of tribal populations when one considers that the national mean is 8.1 per cent. Illiteracy, distance from urban centres and the deprived status of sections of the population appear to be factors that reinforce each other within these regions.

The 237 medium literacy districts form the major proportion (52.4 per cent) of the districts in the country, bearing about half the population of the country. Their share of the nation's non-literates is slightly higher (47.8 per cent) than that of the low literacy districts, due to the significantly larger number of districts that fall within the former category. The percentage of urbanisation at 26.3 per cent is close to the national mean, as also the mean literacy rate (56.2 per cent) and the percentage of ST population (7.5 per cent), especially when compared to the other two categories of districts.

Discounting for the impact of ethnic strife on the conduct of the census and for the enthusiasm of state governments to create new districts, certain important

trends are evident from the gender distribution of literacy in the categorised districts for 1981 and 1991, as seen in Table 6. The range of difference in mean literacy rates for the high and low-literacy districts has decreased in the case of the males whereas it has increased with respect to the females. This trend as regards the neglect of female literacy, especially in the low-literacy districts, has resulted in the total range of difference in literacy rates being about the same over the period of time. Polarisation of literacy rates, in a context of uneven development, continues. Mean female literacy in the low literacy districts was as low as 21.1 per cent as compared to 72.9 per cent in the high literacy districts.

Table 7 suggests that whereas the growth rate of female literacy (9.4 per cent) was higher than that of the males (7.6 per cent)

for the period 1981 to 1991 at the national level, this was contributed primarily by the medium and high literacy districts. In the low literacy districts, the growth rates present a reverse picture with that for females being lower than that for males. The inter-sex differentials in literacy rates decreased overall, with the highest decrease being for the high literacy districts. The depressing scenario of female literacy in the 163 low literacy districts of the country is revealed by the fact that inter-sex differentials were not only the highest (28.9 per cent) for 1991 but had also increased by 0.9 per cent during the period 1981 to 1991. In addition to the issue of female literacy in the low literacy districts, the table highlights the 'saturation effect' of literacy in high literacy districts with growth rates tapering off at 7.3 per cent

TABLE 9: MAHARASHTRA (DISTRICTS): INTRA SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY GROWTH IN LITERACY RATE FROM 1981 TO 1991

| SN (1) | Districts (2) | Sex | | Region | | Community | | Total (9) |
|--|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| | | Male (3) | Female (4) | Rural (5) | Urban (6) | SC (7) | ST (8) | |
| High literacy rate districts (70 per cent +) | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Greater Bombay | 4.3 | 5.5 | - | 4.7 | 11.4 | 9.5 | 4.7 |
| 2 | Sindhudurg | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Nagpur | 6.5 | 11.9 | 10.4 | 6.4 | 14.9 | 9.7 | 9.1 |
| 4 | Pune | 5.1 | 10.7 | 8.9 | 5.0 | 8.6 | 7.3 | 7.9 |
| 5 | Amaravati | 6.4 | 10.4 | 7.4 | 8.7 | 10.2 | 9.0 | 8.4 |
| 6 | Wardha | 6.1 | 13.1 | 9.8 | 7.5 | 16.5 | 11.3 | 9.6 |
| 7 | Thane | 7.7 | 12.8 | 2.6 | 5.4 | 12.4 | 2.4 | 10.0 |
| | Mean | 5.2 | 9.2 | 8.7 | 4.8 | 13.6 | 5.9 | 6.8 |
| | Range | 3.4 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 4.0 | 7.9 | 8.9 | 5.3 |
| Medium literacy rate districts (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Kolhapur | 10.7 | 17.6 | 15.3 | 9.6 | 11.9 | 19.3 | 14.1 |
| 9 | Satara | 6.8 | 12.0 | 10.4 | 5.3 | 9.4 | 13.9 | 9.8 |
| 10 | Akola | 6.0 | 10.8 | 7.4 | 8.6 | 11.4 | 7.7 | 8.3 |
| 11 | Bhandara | 8.8 | 15.4 | 12.4 | 10.1 | 12.4 | 10.2 | 12.2 |
| 12 | Jalgaon | 3.9 | 9.3 | 5.7 | 7.2 | 8.2 | 5.1 | 6.6 |
| 13 | Raigad | 7.1 | 11.8 | 9.7 | 4.8 | 9.8 | 0.6 | 9.8 |
| 14 | Ratnagiri | 5.1 | 7.8 | 6.7 | 6.3 | 16.7 | 13.8 | 6.8 |
| 15 | Sangli | 4.4 | 10.8 | 8.1 | 5.7 | 8.6 | 5.9 | 7.7 |
| 16 | Nasik | 6.3 | 11.9 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 9.8 | 4.2 | 9.0 |
| 17 | Buldana | 5.5 | 10.1 | 7.8 | 5.3 | 9.1 | 4.9 | 7.8 |
| 18 | Ahmadnagar | 8.2 | 11.8 | 9.9 | 6.3 | 8.7 | 5.4 | 10.0 |
| 19 | Chandrapur | 15.1 | 20.2 | 14.7 | 10.6 | 22.7 | 18.0 | 17.7 |
| 20 | Yavatmal | 8.6 | 12.4 | 10.0 | 9.0 | 15.6 | 8.8 | 10.5 |
| 21 | Aurangabad | 11.3 | 15.7 | 10.1 | 12.4 | 18.9 | 8.5 | 13.7 |
| 22 | Solapur | 6.3 | 9.9 | 8.7 | 6.8 | 9.1 | 8.5 | 8.1 |
| 23 | Latur | | | | | | | |
| 24 | Osmanabad | 9.6 | 13.8 | 11.7 | 12.2 | 12.3 | 9.2 | 11.8 |
| 25 | Dhule | 4.0 | 7.4 | 4.4 | 9.0 | 10.5 | 0.3 | 5.7 |
| 26 | Bid | 11.4 | 11.9 | 10.8 | 13.2 | 14.3 | 14.5 | 11.8 |
| 27 | Nanded | 11.6 | 12.2 | 10.7 | 12.7 | 14.1 | 9.2 | 12.0 |
| 28 | Parbhani | 11.0 | 10.8 | 9.7 | 11.4 | 12.5 | 10.7 | 11.0 |
| 29 | Jalna | | | | | | | |
| | Mean | 7.8 | 11.6 | 9.4 | 8.6 | 11.0 | 6.3 | 9.9 |
| | Range | 11.2 | 12.8 | 10.9 | 8.4 | 14.5 | 19.0 | 12.0 |
| Low literacy rate districts (0-44 per cent) | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | Gadchiroli | | | | | | | |
| | Maharashtra mean | 6.9 | 11.3 | 8.7 | 6.7 | 12.3 | 5.9 | 9.1 |
| | Range | 11.2 | 14.7 | 12.7 | 8.5 | 14.5 | 19.7 | 13.0 |
| | India mean | 7.7 | 9.5 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 6.8 | 4.0 | 8.6 |
| | Range | 13.7 | 16.3 | 13.8 | 17.1 | 41.2 | 18.6 | 13.1 |

Note: Same as in Table 8.

Source: Same as in Table 8.

and residual illiteracy, as also the gains in literacy rate, being primarily among the females. In contrast, the low literacy districts depict the problems of 'take off' from a low socio-economic base reinforced by illiteracy and the low status of women. The greatest gains in terms of literacy for the period were made by the medium literacy districts with a 9.5 per cent growth rate in literacy for the total population and 11 per cent among women.

IV Maharashtra and Goa

Two states with whose contemporary literacy campaigns one has had some degree of familiarity – Maharashtra and Goa – have been selected for more intensive districtwise analysis of the data. The former with a literacy rate of 64.9 per cent heads the medium literacy category in 1991. It is very likely to enter the high literacy one by 2001. Goa, with a literacy rate of 75.5 per cent already falls within the category of high literacy states and, together with some districts in Maharashtra, serves as a good illustration of the problems of enhancing the quality of literacy and confronting residual illiteracy in these regions.

Table 8 presents a categorisation of the districts in Maharashtra according to a descending order of literacy rates in 1991. Literacy rate data, as in the earlier tables for the national level statewide data, are provided according to sex, region and community for 1981 and 1991 for the comparable age group of seven years and above.

The 1991 census data (col 17) suggest that seven districts – Greater Bombay, Sindhudurg, Nagpur, Pune, Amravati, Wardha, Thane – of the then 30 districts in the state fall in the high literacy category, ranging from Greater Bombay with a literacy rate of 82.5 per cent to Thane with 69.5 per cent. The mean literacy rate in these districts is 75.2 per cent and the range of variation in literacy rates across these districts is quite low (13 per cent) compared to the 22 medium literacy rate districts which have a mean literacy rate of 59.2 per cent and a range of variation of 20.6 per cent.

Among the high literacy districts, Greater Bombay is an industrial and commercial centre of the country, with an increasingly expanding service sector. Thane district is a region of sharp contrasts: a tribal economy and a predominantly oral culture in its northern and eastern parts; whereas its southern and western belts are dotted with major urban centres of industry and commerce and with centres of agricultural/horticultural trade, respectively. Sindhudurg in the Konkan region and Wardha in Vidarbha are reported to have crossed the 90 per cent literacy mark in the age group 15-35, thanks to their literacy campaigns. Nagpur, Amravati and Pune are administrative divisional headquarters and cultural centres. Only Gadchiroli district with a literacy rate of 42.9 per cent, an area of tribal concentration (38.8 per cent), falls in the low literacy category among the 30 districts in the state.

Given the trends in the literacy rates over the previous decade, one could expect about half the 22 districts in the medium category to enter the sphere of high literacy rate by the time of the Census of 2001. Thanks to the additional efforts of the literacy campaigns and other primary educational programmes, one could well see about 23 of the 30 districts in the state

in 1991 with literacy rates of 55 per cent and above falling in the high literacy category. The remaining seven districts would continue to be in the medium category. The likely scenario appears to be that five of these seven medium literacy districts would stand marginalised in the Marathwada region: Osmanabad, Bid, Nanded, Parbhani, Jalna; the other two being Dhule and Gadchiroli, areas of tribal concentration.

The 1991 census data for the state suggest comparatively low female (52.3 per cent), rural (55.5 per cent) and ST (36.8 per cent) literacy rates. The marked difference with respect to literacy rates between the high and medium literacy districts is that with respect to females, SC and ST, in that order of importance. Similar to the situation at the national level, one finds that gender,

TABLE 10: MAHARASHTRA (DISTRICTS): INTER SEX, AND REGION DIFFERENTIALS IN LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991

| SN | Districts | Sex | | Region | | Community | | Total Decadal Growth |
|--|------------------|------|------|------------------------|------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | | 1981 | 1991 | Increase+ Decrease- | 1981 | 1991 | Increase+ Decrease- | |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| High Literacy Rate Districts (70 per cent +) | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Greater Bombay | 13.2 | 12.0 | -1.2 | 4.7 | | | |
| 2 | Sindhudurg | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Nagpur | 22.5 | 17.1 | -5.4 | 23.2 | 19.2 | -4.0 | 9.1 |
| 4 | Pune | 27.4 | 21.8 | -5.6 | 23.9 | 20.0 | -3.9 | 7.9 |
| 5 | Amravati | 21.3 | 17.3 | -4.0 | 14.1 | 15.4 | +1.3 | 8.4 |
| 6 | Wardha | 24.3 | 17.3 | -7.0 | 19.1 | 16.9 | -2.2 | 9.6 |
| 7 | Thane | 22.4 | 17.3 | -5.1 | 26.9 | 29.7 | +2.8 | 10.0 |
| | Mean | 20.5 | 16.5 | -4.0 | 24.3 | 20.4 | -3.9 | 6.8 |
| | Range | 9.2 | 9.8 | 5.8 | 12.8 | 14.3 | 6.8 | 5.3 |
| Medium Literacy Rate Districts (45-69 per cent) | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Kolhapur | 34.1 | 27.2 | -6.9 | 22.5 | 16.8 | -5.7 | 14.1 |
| 9 | Satara | 32.4 | 27.2 | -5.2 | 21.0 | 15.9 | -5.1 | 9.8 |
| 10 | Akola | 29.1 | 24.3 | -4.8 | 14.5 | 15.7 | +1.2 | 8.3 |
| 11 | Bhandara | 35.0 | 28.4 | -6.6 | 21.7 | 19.4 | -2.3 | 12.2 |
| 12 | Jalgaon | 32.6 | 27.2 | -5.4 | 15.0 | 16.5 | +1.5 | 6.6 |
| 13 | Raigad | 28.4 | 23.7 | -4.7 | 23.8 | 18.9 | -4.9 | 9.8 |
| 14 | Ratnagiri | 27.7 | 25.0 | -2.7 | 23.7 | 23.3 | -0.4 | 6.8 |
| 15 | Sangli | 31.3 | 24.9 | -6.4 | 17.4 | 15.0 | -2.4 | 7.7 |
| 16 | Nasik | 29.7 | 24.1 | -5.6 | 24.9 | 25.1 | +0.2 | 9.0 |
| 17 | Buldana | 35.0 | 30.4 | -4.6 | 19.3 | 16.8 | -2.5 | 7.8 |
| 18 | Ahmadnagar | 32.9 | 29.3 | -3.6 | 23.5 | 19.9 | -3.6 | 10.0 |
| 19 | Chandrapur | 29.6 | 24.5 | -5.1 | 26.8 | 22.7 | -4.1 | 17.7 |
| 20 | Yavatmal | 29.5 | 25.7 | -3.8 | 25.1 | 24.1 | -1.0 | 10.5 |
| 21 | Aurangabad | 37.7 | 33.3 | -4.4 | 25.3 | 27.6 | +2.3 | 13.7 |
| 22 | Solapur | 32.0 | 28.4 | -3.6 | 19.6 | 17.8 | -1.8 | 8.1 |
| 23 | Latur | | | | | | | |
| 24 | Osmanabad | 33.4 | 29.2 | -4.2 | 19.4 | 19.9 | +0.5 | 11.8 |
| 25 | Dhule | 27.7 | 24.3 | -3.4 | 26.3 | 30.9 | +4.6 | 5.7 |
| 26 | Bid | 34.5 | 34.0 | -0.5 | 23.3 | 25.7 | +2.4 | 11.8 |
| 27 | Nanded | 34.0 | 33.4 | -0.6 | 23.5 | 25.5 | +2.0 | 12.0 |
| 28 | Parbhani | 35.3 | 35.5 | +0.2 | 21.9 | 23.6 | +1.7 | 11.0 |
| 29 | Jalna | | | | | | | |
| | Mean | 32.0 | 28.1 | -3.9 | 21.4 | 20.6 | -0.8 | 9.9 |
| | Range | 10.0 | 11.8 | 7.1 | 12.3 | 15.9 | 10.3 | 12.0 |
| Low literacy rate districts (0-44 per cent) | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | Gadchiroli | | | | | | | |
| | Maharashtra Mean | 28.7 | 24.3 | -4.4 | 25.7 | 23.7 | -2.0 | 9.1 |
| | Range | 24.5 | 23.5 | -7.2 | 12.8 | 15.9 | 10.3 | 13.0 |
| | India Mean | 26.6 | 24.8 | -1.8 | 31.2 | 28.4 | -2.8 | 8.6 |
| | Range | 22.2 | 27.6 | 12.4 | 29.9 | 38.0 | 20.4 | 13.1 |

Notes: Same as in Table 8.

Sources: Same as in Table 8.

community, and interior semi-arid regions falling in rain shadows or in forested hilly areas reinforce each other in a vortex of deprivation. However, with respect to each of the categories of gender, region and community one finds that even the medium literacy districts in Maharashtra have a mean literacy rate that is higher than that of the respective categories at the national level. The state appears to be in a comparatively healthy literacy situation, but with a likely polarisation with respect to regions of concentration of deprived communities because of a neglect of their female and tribal literacy, in particular.

Table 9 presents the growth in literacy rates between 1981 and 1991 for the districts in Maharashtra. At the state level, the highest growth rates were for the SC (12.3 per cent) and the females (11.3 per cent), even higher than the mean growth rate for the state (9.1 per cent) for the 10-year period. A 'saturation effect' for the state is suggested by the comparatively low growth rates for males (6.9 per cent) and urban areas (6.7 per cent), accompanied by a neglect of the tribal regions, which showed the lowest growth rate of 5.9 per cent. This saturation effect and tapering off of literacy rates is further confirmed by a comparison of the literacy rates for each subset for the high and medium districts. The lowest growth rate (4.8 per cent) in literacy is demonstrated by the urban areas in the high literacy districts, interestingly close to the lowest growth rate in the state experienced by the totally urban district of Greater Bombay. In each of the sectors one finds a higher growth rate in the medium literacy districts except for the category of SC in the high literacy zone where this section demonstrates the highest growth rate in literacy (13.6 per cent). The scheduled castes appear to have taken advantage of the opportunity structures and to have responded to the demands for symbolical communication within regions of high urbanisation and commercialisation.

The paradoxical situation of the tribals in Maharashtra is illustrated by the following data: Dhule district with the highest tribal concentration (40.9 per cent) has the lowest growth rate (5.7 per cent) in the state after Bombay, as regards the literacy of its total population; primarily due to the fact that the increase in the literacy rate of its tribal population was only 0.3 per cent. On the other hand Chandrapur, another district with a sizeable tribal population of 19.7 per cent in 1991, demonstrates the highest increase in its literacy rate in the state by 17.7 per cent, thanks to the increase in the literacy rates of its female, SC and ST populations, but largely facilitated in a statistical manner by the carving out from it in 1982 of the Gadchiroli district with a concentration of 38.8 per cent ST population. Other districts where the tribals are in a sizeable minority – Thane 18.1 per cent, Nashik 24.2 per cent and Raigarh 12.7 per cent – demonstrate a neglect of tribal literacy as seen from the slow increase in their literacy rates.

The overall picture that emerges is the marginalisation of the tribals within the broader developmental scenario of the state. It is ironical that the two sectors that show the least growth rates in literacy – the urban and the tribal – within a state that is well on the way of a commercialised, industrialised and urbanised trajectory of development are those that stand polarised at the extremes of a continuum. The stagnation in literacy within the former category reflects the limits and saturation effects of education/culture within a particular political economy of development. The stalemate within the section of the tribals is a reflection of the marginalisation and the exploitation of the human and natural resources of these peripheral regions. The wider significance of this polarisation is that it is a fair reflection of the distribution of literacy within states at the national level, with the added element of gender insensitivity.

Table 10 depicts the inter-sex and regional differences in literacy rates

TABLE 12: GOA (DISTRICTS): INTRA SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY GROWTH IN LITERACY RATE FROM 1981 TO 1991

| SN | Districts | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total |
|-----|------------|------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST | |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| | Goa Mean | 7.6 | 11.9 | 10.6 | 6.1 | 11.3 | 7.4 | 9.5 | 9.8 |
| | India Mean | 7.7 | 9.5 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 6.8 | 4.0 | 9.0 | 8.6 |
| | Range | 13.7 | 16.3 | 13.8 | 17.1 | 41.2 | 18.6 | 48.8 | 13.1 |

Note: Same as in Table 11.

Source: Same as in Table 11.

TABLE 13: GOA (DISTRICTS) INTER SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY DIFFERENTIALS IN LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991

| SN | Districts | Sex | | | Region | | | Community | | |
|-----|------------|------|------|------------------------|--------|------|------------------------|-----------|------|------------------------|
| | | 1981 | 1991 | Increase+ Decrease- | 1981 | 1991 | Increase+ Decrease- | 1981 | 1991 | Increase+ Decrease- |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| | Goa Mean | 20.8 | 16.5 | -4.3 | 12.3 | 7.8 | -4.5 | 17.8 | 17.3 | -0.5 |
| | India Mean | 26.6 | 24.8 | -1.8 | 31.2 | 28.4 | -2.8 | 18.6 | 18.8 | +0.2 |
| | Range | 22.2 | 27.6 | 12.4 | 29.9 | 38.0 | 20.4 | 42.3 | 56.4 | 53.8 |

Note: Same as in Table 11.

Differentials relating to community cols 9-11 relate to that between SC, ST and others.

Source: Same as in Table 11.

TABLE 11: GOA (DISTRICTS) LITERACY RATES FOR 1981 AND 1991 BY SEX, REGION AND COMMUNITY

| SN | Districts | Literacy Rate for 1981 (7+ Age Group) | | | | | | | | Literacy Rate for 1991 (7+ Age Group) | | | | | | | |
|-----|------------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|-------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----------|-------|
| | | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total | Sex | | Region | | Community | | | Total |
| | | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST | (10) | Male | Female | Rural | Urban | SC | ST | Non-SC/ST | (18) |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) | |
| 1 | North Goa | | | | | | | | 86.2 | 68.9 | 75.5 | 81.9 | | | | | 77.7 |
| 2 | South Goa | | | | | | | | 80.3 | 64.8 | 66.6 | 78.5 | | | | | 72.6 |
| | Goa Mean | 76.0 | 55.2 | 61.7 | 74.0 | 47.4 | 35.5 | 66.4 | 65.7 | 83.6 | 67.1 | 72.3 | 80.1 | 58.7 | 42.9 | 75.9 | 75.5 |
| | Range | | | | | | | | | 5.9 | 4.1 | 8.9 | 3.4 | | | | 5.1 |
| | India Mean | 56.4 | 29.8 | 37.1 | 64.8 | 30.6 | 25.6 | 48.7 | 43.6 | 64.1 | 39.3 | 44.7 | 73.1 | 37.4 | 29.6 | 57.7 | 52.2 |
| | Range | 52.6 | 61.7 | 57.1 | 36.8 | 82.5 | 60.3 | 64.8 | 56.1 | 42.1 | 65.8 | 58.5 | 32.5 | 60.2 | 65.5 | 48.2 | 51.3 |

Note: Separate data are not available for 1981 for North Goa and South Goa Districts.

Source: Cols 3-10: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, 1991, Vol 1, New Delhi, 1992, based on Census data.

Cols 11-18: NIAE, Statistical Database for Literacy, Final Population and Literacy, Vol 2, New Delhi, 1993, based on Census data.

for 1981 and 1991 for the districts in Maharashtra. Comparable data are not possible for community due to present non-availability of separate data for non-SC/ST for 1991 for the age group 7 and above. At the aggregate state level in 1991, the differentials for sex are slightly greater than those for region, as also the decrease in the differentials over the decade. The reverse is true at the national level. Urban-rural regional differences in literacy are fairly sharp within the country as compared to the generally more urbanised Maharashtra state. It might be said with a fair degree of generalisation that states, and districts within states like Maharashtra, that are comparatively more developed are also characterised by sharp decreases in aggregate female non-literacy. For example, the inequalities in literacy rate with respect to gender (16.5 per cent) are less than those with respect to region (20.4 per cent) in 1991 in the high literacy districts. A reverse picture is evident in the medium literacy districts where differentials with respect to sex (28.1 per cent) are greater than those with respect to region (20.6 per cent). The positive feature is that the decline in differentials in literacy rate as regards sex (-3.9 per cent) is greater than that for region (-0.8 per cent) for the decadal period in the medium literacy districts. One also observes a generally increasing trend in the gender differences in 1991 literacy rates as one moves down the rank ordered districts from high to low literacy rates. The decrease in gender differentials in literacy rates is also generally reduced over this range of districts for the 10-year period, till we come to Parbhani district which in fact reveals a +0.2 per cent increase in differences.

An analysis of the increase in rural-urban differences in districtwise literacy rates offers some further pointers to the trajectory of inequitous development within this comparatively high literacy, high urban state. All five districts at the lowest end of literacy rate – Osmanabad, Dhule, Bid, Nanded and Parbhani – for which data are available, reveal an increase in urban-rural inequalities with respect to literacy rate. It is in these districts that the slow pace of reduction in gender inequalities as regards literacy compounds the problem. In addition, one also observes the growth of a few satellite urban and commercial centres within the periphery of the metropolis of Bombay that also have increasing urban-rural differentials as regards literacy – Pune and Thane in the high literacy category; and Akola, Jalgaon, Nasik and

Aurangabad in the medium literacy belt. These urban subcentres serve as further extensions of the process of surplus extraction from their respective rural hinterlands.

Table 11 presents the literacy scenario in the two districts of Goa – a high literacy state – according to sex, region and community for 1981 and 1991, with all the limitations of availability of data. The data for literacy rates, growth and differentials are for an ex-colonial state of the Portuguese whose contemporary rates of literacy (75.5 per cent) and urbanisation (41 per cent) are comparatively high and whose trajectory of development is led by tourism, the urban middle class service sector and agro-industries, with increasing manufacturing and extraction of natural resources. The 1991 census data suggest that literacy rates for rural areas, for females and for the SC/ST are relatively low compared to their respective obverse categories, in that descending order. The northern district which had a greater degree of colonial and church influence with their extension of basic schooling systems has a higher literacy rate (77.7 per cent) as compared to that of the southern district (72.6 per cent). The latter has a higher percentage of urbanisation (50.4 per cent) as compared to the north (33.9 per cent), as a result of the development of mineral extraction, communications by way of shipping, air and rail, and increasing tourism. The data relating to literacy within the state would appear more unequal if the western coastal and eastern interior zones were to be contrasted. The north-south division of districts obliterates some of these differences.

Table 12 presents the growth in literacy rates between 1981 and 1991 for Goa. The highest growth rates were for the female (11.9 per cent), the SC (11.3 per cent) and the rural areas (10.6 per cent), in that descending order of growth rates that are higher than the mean growth in literacy for the state (9.8 per cent) for the 10-year period. The picture is broadly similar to that in Maharashtra, the 'saturation effect' being visible from the comparatively lower growth rates for the male (7.6 per cent), the ST (7.4 per cent) and for the urban areas (6.1 per cent). Goa has a very small 0.1 per cent tribal population. Literacy among the males and in the urban areas appears to be reaching a plateau, these being the only two categories where growth rates are lower than the national mean. Literacy among female in the rural areas of the interior eastern belt of the state continues to be a resistant residue.

Table 13 depicts the inter-sex, region and community differences in literacy rates for 1981 and 1991 for this high literacy state. Differences in all three areas have decreased over the decade and present a more positive picture as compared to the country as a whole. However, the differentials with respect to the non-SC/ST and these deprived communities show the least and a minor decrease of only -0.5 per cent.

Note

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1 The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched on May 5, 1988. The initial inspiration for a mass approach to illiteracy emerged from the voluntary, non-government experiences of the People's Science Movements (PSM) and in particular that of the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP). The campaign approach may thus be seen to have a grass roots basis of organised social transformation-social action that was wider than and inclusive of literacy and education. This approach acquired legitimacy at the centre, primarily among administrative and academic circles and to a limited extent among the political parties. It was then selectively applied in a decentralised manner, initially in a few high literacy regions. The campaign approach might be briefly described as a concerted effort involving various social resources, with a high degree of voluntary commitment to addressing the problem of illiteracy, in a defined region and within a limited period of time. The major steps during the preparatory phase of the campaign are: planning meetings to identify individuals and organisations that could serve as resources, creating an environment for literacy through cultural mobilisation and the use of folk cultural forms, the organisation of committees at the level of the district, blocks and villages/wards, conducting a survey to identify learners and instructors, the preparation and acquisition of instructional material, training programmes for instruction at various levels; all of which constitute a mobilisation that lasts for about six months to be followed by the teaching-learning phase, its monitoring and evaluation lasting about a year. The post-literacy phase is expected to last another two years. In May 1993 the trend in sanctions shifted from high literacy rate districts to low literacy rate ones within the northern Hindi-speaking belt. During 1993-94, of the 107 projects sanctioned by NLM, 53 were in the four states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. This trend continued.

(To be Continued)