

STATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN PUNJAB

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Abstract: The present paper is an attempt to study state of primary education in Punjab. For this purpose, the paper considers the literacy rates for districts of Punjab (by sex) and also includes the analysis of number of primary schools in Punjab, number of primary school students, number of primary school teachers and teacher pupil ratio in Punjab for the years 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 2000, 2001 and 2011. This paper concludes that literacy rate in Punjab increased to 76.7% as per 2011 census, out of which maximum literacy rate has been found in the district of Hoshiarpur (84.4%) and the lowest in district of Mansa (62.8%). Male-female literacy rate shows an improvement sign. Sex ratio improved in all the districts of Punjab but found to be maximum in the district of Hoshiarpur (962). The percentage share of girl students in total students in primary schools of Punjab is almost stable over the considered years. The lower percentage of schools for girls confirmed the need to work out education policy, which pays more attention for better performance of girl's education in Punjab. The number of female teachers has been found to be higher than male teachers in primary schools but number of girl students showed opposite trend. Here, it is important to suggest that higher number of female teachers conveniently guide and encourage the families of girl students (especially mothers) for enrolling them in primary schools.

Keywords: Primary Education, Population, Literacy, Sex Ratio, Education Policy.

I. Introduction

Educations in general and primary education in particular, are essential inputs for the economic and social development of individuals as well as of nations (Upendranath, 1991). Investment in education is not only productive but also yields increasing returns. Education plays a pioneer role in the creation of human capital and social progress which in turn determines the progress of the country. Thus education is an important factor of economic development. An educated man plays an important role in the progress of nation. If all the people of a nation are well educated then is no disturbance and friction in the way of economic growth and development (World Bank, 1998).

Elementary education is the most crucial stage of education as it lays the foundation for developing the personality, attitudes, Confidence, habits, learning skill and communicating capabilities of pupils. The basic skill of reading, writing and arithmetic are acquired at this stage. This is the stage when physical growth can be assisted, interest in sports and adventure roused and manual dexterity developed (Ministry of Education, 1985). Primary education is not concerned with any class or group, but has deal with the entire population of the country. It touches life at every point and it has to do most with the formation of national ideology and character than any other single activity- social, political or educational (Saiydain, 1997).

Primary education is crucial for spreading mass literacy, which is basic requirement for the effective functioning of democratic institutions, economic development and modernization of the social structure. It also represents an indispensable first step towards the provision of opportunity to all citizens of the country (Tilak, 1996, 1997).

There is large scale inter-state variations in primary education even with in states fairing poorly even in states that are otherwise doing well and vice versa. There are also gaps between groups of children, with education outcomes different between girls and boys, between the poor and the better off and between the tribal and scheduled caste and between the rural and urban children's and others (Census, 2011 & statistical abstracts of Punjab, various issues).

In India primary education is the concurrent responsibility of the central government and states. To achieve national policy objectives in education, states need to improve their fiscal performance and devote more resources to primary education and at least in the medium term the central government will need to continue to support state efforts.

II. Data Base and Methodology

To study the state of primary education in Punjab, data have been taken for district wise population, district wise sex ratio, district wise literacy rates by sex and rural urban literate population (by sex). In addition to this, an attempt has been made to cover some important aspects by including data regarding number of primary schools in Punjab, number of students and school teachers in primary schools in Punjab and teacher pupil ratio is provided in the paper. Data has been primarily taken from following sources:-

- (1) Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (various issues) (2) CMIE reports (various issues)
- (3) Directorate of Education Punjab, Chandigarh (4) Economic Survey of Punjab (various issues)
- (5) Census 2001, India (6) Census 2011, India

III. District Wise Population Size and Sex Ratio of Punjab

Punjab is the richest state in India with highest per capita income. Population of Punjab as per census is approximately 2.77 crores. Male –female ratio has deteriorated in Punjab overtime, was declined from 882 in 1991, 874 in 2001 and 893 in 2011, which is significantly lower than national average of 940.

Table-1

District Wise Population Size and Sex Ratio of Punjab

DISTRICT	Population 2001	% of total population Of state	Sex ratio 2001	Population 2011	% of total population Of state	Sex ratio 2011
AMRITSAR	3074207	12.66	874	2490891	8.99	884
LUDHIANA	3030352	12.48	824	3487882	12.60	869
GURDASPUR	2096889	8.63	888	2299026	8.29	895
SANGRUR	1998464	8.23	868	1654408	5.97	883
JALANDHAR	1953508	8.04	882	2181753	7.86	913
PATIALA	1839056	7.57	864	1892282	6.83	888
FIROZEPUR	1744753	7.18	883	2026831	7.32	893
HOSHIARPUR	1478045	6.09	935	1582793	5.71	962
BATHINDA	1181236	4.86	865	1388859	5.01	865
RUPNAGAR	1110000	4.57	870	683349	2.47	913
MOGA	886313	3.65	883	992289	3.58	893
FIROZEPUR	776702	3.20	886	902702	3.26	895
MUKTSAR	752287	3.10	886	817668	2.96	912
MANSA	688630	2.83	875	768808	2.78	880
NAWANSAHAR	586637	2.42	913	614362	2.22	954
FARIDKOT	552466	2.27	881	618008	2.23	889

FATEHGARH SAHIB TARNTARAN S.A.S NAGAR BARNALA	539751	2.22	851	599814	2.17	871
				1120070	4.04	898
				986147	3.56	878
				596294	2.15	876
PUNJAB	24289296	100.00	874	27704236	100.00	893
PUNJAB	24289296	100.00	874	27704236	100.00	893

Source: (1). Statistical Abstracts of Punjab 2001, 2012 (2) CMIE Reports March-1997, 2003, 2012

The table-1 shows that there are wide variations in the size of population of districts. Ludhiana with a population of 34.88 lakhs is the most populated district as per 2011 census, whereas census 2001 shows that district of Amritsar registered highest population. The analysis of sex ratio shows that highest sex ratio is registered for the district of Hoshiarpur under 2001 census as well as 2011 census. The lowest sex ratio was recorded for district of Ludhiana for census 2001 and for district of Bathinda for the year 2011

Literacy Rate by Sex for State and Ranking:

The literacy rate in Punjab is 76.7% as per 2011 census, which is slightly higher than the national average of 74.04%. The districts of Jalandhar (913), Rupnagar 913), Muktsar (912), and Nawansahar (954) registered noticeable improvement in sex ratio according to census 2011.

TABLE-2

LITERACY RATE BY SEX FOR STATE AND RANKING

DISTRICT	PERSON S % (LAKHS) 2001	PERSON S % (LAKHS) 2011	LITERAC Y RATE MALE- 2001	LITERAC Y RATE MALE- 2011	LITERAC Y RATE FEMALE- 2001	LITERAC Y RATE FEMALE- 2011	RANK S 2001	RANK S 2011
GURDASPUR	74.19	81.1	80.44	85.90	67.31	75.7	6	6
AMRITSAR	67.85	77.2	73.58	81.2	61.41	72.8	10	10
KAPURTHAL	73.56	80.2	78.66	84.6	67.90	75.4	8	8
A	77.91	82.4	82.37	86.10	72.93	78.3	3	3
JALANDHAR	81.40	85.4	86.97	89.90	75.56	80.18	1	1
HOSHIARPUR	76.86	80.3	83.67	86.20	69.52	74.3	4	9
NAWANSAHAR	78.49	83.3	84.43	88.90	71.74	77.2	2	5
R	74.10	80.3	78.85	84.50	68.60	75.5	7	7
RUPNAGAR								
FATEHGARH	76.54	82.5	80.19	86.3	72.11	78.2	5	4
SAHIB	63.94	71.6	68.40	75.3	58.96	67.4	11	12
LUDHIANA	61.42	69.8	69.55	76.7	52.33	62.2	14	18
MOGA	58.67	66.8	65.94	72.9	50.59	60.0	16	19
FIROZEPUR	63.34	70.6	68.92	75.9	57.09	64.8	12	13
MUKTSAR	61.51	69.6	68.31	75.3	53.76	62.9	13	15
FARIDKOT	52.50	62.8	59.12	68.4	45.07	56.4	17	20
BATHINDA	60.04	68.9	65.97	74.2	53.29	62.9	15	16
MANSA	69.96	76.3	76.13	81.4	62.94	70.5	9	11
SANGRUR		69.4		75.4		62.9		17
PATIALA		84.9		89.2		80.0		2

TARNTARAN		68.9		73.1		64.1		14
S.A.S NAGAR								
BARNALA								

Source: (1). Statistical Abstracts of Punjab, 2001, 2012 (2) CMIE Reports March-1997, 2003, 2012

Table-2 gives information regarding literacy rate, male literacy rate and female literacy rate for various districts of Punjab based on Census 2001 and Census 2011. Hoshiarpur remains the most literate district in state of Punjab and also recorded highest male and female literacy rates. On the contrary, Mansa is placed at the bottom in terms of literacy rate as per Census 2001 and Census 2011. The maximum literacy rates were recorded as 86.97% and 89.90% as per Census 2001 and Census 2011. In 2011, the districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Nawansahar, Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Ludhaiana also recorded literacy rates, which were higher than 80%. The maximum literacy rates for female were recorded as 75.56% and 80.18% as per Census 2001 and Census 2011 respectively. In 2011, the districts of Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib, Ludhiana and SAS Nagar also registered female literacy rates, which were higher than 75%.

Rural-Urban Literate Population of Punjab:

Table-3

Rural-Urban Literate Population of Punjab

	Literate population of Punjab(in lakhs) 2001	Literate population Of Punjab(in lakhs) 2011
URBAN	57.66	77.93
MALE	32.52	43.35
FEMALE	25.08	34.58
RURAL	90.87	111.95
MALE	52.56	62.92
FEMALE	38.31	49.03
TOTAL	148.53	189.88

Source: CMIE Reports 1997, 2003, 2012

Table 3, shows that in the year 2001, total literate population (with seven years and above) was 148.53 lakhs out of which 38.82% (57.66 lakhs) literate were living in urban areas, whereas 61.17% (90.87 lakhs) literate were living in rural areas. In the year 2011, number of literate persons increased to 189.88 lakhs, out of which 41.04% (77.93 lakhs) belong to urban areas, whereas 58.95% (111.95 lakhs) belong to rural areas. In both rural and urban areas, the male population recorded higher number of literate as compare to female population.

Number of Primary Schools in Punjab:

Table 4 gives information regarding number of primary schools in Punjab. In the year 1979, the number of primary schools were 12392 of which 12200 (98.5%) were of boys and 192(1.5%) of girls schools. The percentage of girls school was at its lowest i.e., 0.8% for the year 2011. It is a matter of concern as our society already biased and prefers to send girls to girl schools only.

Table-4

Number of primary schools in Punjab

YEAR	Boy's Schools (in numbers)	Boy's Schools (in percentage)	Girl's Schools (in numbers)	Girl's Schools (in percentage)	Total Schools
1979	12200	98.5	192	1.5	12392
1984	12174	98.7	159	1.3	12333
1989	12207	98.6	165	1.4	12372
1994	12326	98.5	183	1.5	12509
1999	11808	98.6	163	1.4	11971
2000	12894	98.9	182	1.1	13026
2001	12892	98.6	182	1.4	13074
2011	15611	99.20	127	0.8	15738

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (Various issues).

In the year 1999, total number of primary schools was 11971 of which 98.6% schools were of boys and 1.4% schools were of girl. In 2011, total number of schools increased to 15738 of which 99.20% schools were of boys and only 0.80% schools were of girl. Thus, a large number of schools do exist in Punjab, but many of them are lacking various infrastructural facilities. Moreover, percentage of girl's schools is at very low level. According to Punjab Development Report 2012, from independence till the sixties, most children in Punjab studying in schools run by government and the number of private schools was rather small. Recently there has been expansion in the number of private schools also.

Number of Primary School Students in Punjab:

Table 5 explains about number of primary school students in Punjab. Total number of students in primary schools of Punjab was 2067 thousands for the year 1979, out of which 55.1% were boys and 44.9% were girls. The number of primary school students in Punjab declined to 1382 thousand for the year 2011, out of which only 46.89% were girl students.

Table-5

Number of Primary Schools Students in Punjab

YEAR	BOYS (in Thousands)	BOYS (Percentage)	GIRLS (in Thousands)	GIRLS (Percentage)	TOTAL (in Thousands)
1979	1140	55.1	927	44.9	2067
1984	1088	54.9	897	45.1	1985
1989	1108	53.9	947	46.1	2056
1994	974	52.8	871	47.2	1845
1999	880	52.0	812	48.0	1692
2000	970	52.4	880	47.6	1850
2001	948	52.3	863	47.7	1811
2011	734	53.11	648	46.89	1382

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (Various issues).

Lower percentage of girl students as compared to boy students is not only due to lower level of sex ratio, but also due to non preference of parents to educate their girl child. The percentage of girl students fluctuated from 44% to 48%, whereas percentage of boy students fluctuated from 52% to 55% for the considered years. The higher percentage of boys than the girls in schools for all the years is an indicator of gender inequality, so there is a need for such educational facilities and policies which raise the proportion of girl students. Besides this, the social set up is the other main cause of decline in number of primary school and primary school children is due to upgradation of many primary schools as middle and higher levels. Moreover, people prefer private schools over the government schools for their children.

Number of Primary Schools Teachers in Punjab:

Table 6 shows the number of primary school teacher in Punjab. In the year 1979, total numbers of primary teachers were 40627 out of which 46.7% were male teachers and 53.3% were female teachers.

Table-6

No. of primary school teachers in Punjab

YEAR	Men	Percentage	Women	Percentage	Total
1979	23664	46.7	27008	53.3	40627
1984	22793	44.0	28993	56.0	51786
1989	23014	43.6	29825	56.4	52839
1994	20342	43.1	26879	56.9	47221
1999	15399	36.8	26474	63.2	41873
2000	15543	35.6	28103	64.4	43646
2001	14482	35.3	26495	64.7	40972
2011	14777	36.2	25991	63.8	40768

Source: - Statistical Abstract of Punjab (Various issues).

Total number of primary teachers increased to 52839 (44% male teachers and 56% female teacher) for the year 1989, but declined to 40768 (36.2% male teacher and 63.8% female teacher) during the year 2011. The higher percentage of female teachers in primary schools is due to preference of teaching as an occupation for women in Indian society.

Teacher Pupil Ratio:

Table 7 gives information regarding teacher pupil ratio. The teacher pupil ratio in Punjab at primary school level in 1979 was 1; 40 i.e., one teacher handle 40 student at a time, which slightly improved in 2011 (i.e., 1:38).

Table-7

Teacher Pupil Ratio

Year	Ratio
1979	1:40
1984	1:42
1989	1:38
1994	1:42
2000	1:42
2001	1:44
2011	1:38

Source: - Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (Various issues).

Moreover, Dropout rates also confirm the lower teacher pupil ratio. Dropout rates reveal the extent of continuation in study by students at various levels. The gender wise dropout rates depict the strength of economic and social taboos working against the weaker sections of society. The dropout rate at the primary level of education in Punjab declined from

29.39% in 1988-89 to 20.36% in 2000-01 and it is less than national level (42.39%) in 1998-99 (Statistical Abstract of Punjab). According to the figures released by Ministry of Human Resource Development, the drop out rates, as determined in 2011, ranged between 44% and 48% in higher classes and from 23% to 25% in primary classes in Punjab schools.

Policies Regarding Primary Education in Punjab:

All programs aimed at the education of young people, must spring from the philosophy of education, the philosophy which provides for learner's total growth and development. The policies regarding primary education in Punjab realize that (a) Every Child has a fundamental right to receive education of good quality. (b) Education should be directed for all round development of human personality. (c) There is a need for decentralization of the educational system of the state. Following are the various efforts made in Punjab to promote primary education.

- (1) In 1919, Punjab Primary education Act was formed. This act demanded that the local boards should give to provincial govt. a complete picture for making primary education compulsory and free for boys between 6 to 11 years of age.
- (2) By 1930 about 2580 rural areas and 50 municipalities had introduced compulsion regarding making primary education free of cost (Singh, 1998).
- (3) The year 1960 was a landmark in the history of Punjab education when Punjab Education Act was passed to provide free and compulsory primary education from 1st April, 1961. The Salient features of the act were (a) Primary Education will be compulsory for the age group 6-11 and it shall be free. (b) It is the responsibility of the parents to send their child to attend the school. (c) There should be responsible excuse for non attendance. (d) Children are not be employed so as to prevent them from attending school. (e) There will be special school for physical and mentally deficient children. (Aggarwal, 1996).
- (4) Operation Black Board was started in 1986 by all states of India, it includes (a) Teachers Equipment, (b) Classroom Teaching materials, (c) Play Materials and Toys, (d) Game Equipments, (e) Primary Science Kit, (f) Mini Tool Kit, (g) Two in One Audio Equipment, (h) Book for Library, (i) School Bell, (j) Musical Instrument, (k) Black Boards, (l) Chalks and Dusters and (m) Water Facility. According to, Elementary Policy 1986 in Punjab which is a part of National Policy on Education, "Efforts should be made to fulfill the constitutional directive of making education free and compulsory upto the age of 14" (Walia, 1995).
- (5) In order to improve enrollment, retention and reduce drop out rate of students in primary classes and also to improve the nutritional status of primary school students, Government, of India, launched a countrywide scheme, NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT TO PRIMARY EDUCATION (MID-DAY-MEAL SCHEME) on 2-10-1995 (effective from 15th august 1995). Under this Scheme, students of primary classes were to be provided wheat at Rs. 3 K.G. per student per month (for 10 months in a year) subject to 80% attendance and later on the status were to switch over to cooked meal scheme within two years but like many other states, Punjab did not switch over to cooked meal scheme due to shortage of funds involved in the conversion of food grains to cooked meal. However, cooked mid day meal was provided to children of primary classes in one block in every district of Punjab during the year 2012-13 and the cost of meal was Rs.6.50 per child per day.
- (6) Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an Indian government programmed aimed at the universalisation of elementary education. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan has been operational since 2000-2001; when district primary education was launched over several phases covered 272 districts in 18 states of country. The expenditure shared by central government (55%) and state government (15%). Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful elementary education of satisfactory level for all by 2010, bringing all the social and gender gaps with active participants of local community in the affairs of the school and effective decentralization down to the school level. The thrust of Scheme is to achieve zero drops out by 2010.

Main component of the scheme are given as:

- a) Enrollment of all the out school children and dropout by 2003.
- b) Complete five years of primary education by 2007.

- c) Complete eight years of Education by 2010 (Gupta, 2004)
- (7) Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009(RTE Act)

Free education for all children between the ages of 6-14 years has been made a fundamental right under the RTE Act 2009, with effect from 1 April 2010. The Ministry of Human Resources Development had set up a committee to identify Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) norms that require to be brought conformity with RTE norms and standards, including, for example, pupil-teacher ratio and teacher-classroom ratio. On the basis of the recommendation of this committee, SSA norms have been modified to align them with the requirement of the RTE Act 2009. The main changes made in the norms are related to the, (a) opening of new primary schools and upper primary schools as per neighborhood norms, (b) up gradation of all alternate schooling facilities provided through centers under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), (c) revised pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) norms, (d) provision of special training for out-of-school and drop out children to facilitate age- appropriate admission, (e) provision of grant and teaching learning equipment to facilitate state to merge classes Vth and VIIIth in primary and upper primary cycle stage and, (f) approval of additional 1073 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) for educationally backward blocks (EBBs). (Economic Survey 2010-11)

(8) **Some other programs for improving primary education:**

- (a) **Improvement in science Education:** In order to promote and strengthen the teaching of science, a state institute of science education was established in the state in the year 1968. The teaching of science starts right from the primary stage of education.
- (b) **Regional Institute of English:** There is a regional institute of English at Chandigarh, which caters to Punjab and Haryana. The aim of this institute is to organize orientation courses for teachers teaching English at the elementary school stage. This had helped a great deal in improving the standard of English in our schools.
- (c) **State Institution of Education:** Punjab does not have a separate state institute of education. The state institute of education at Chandigarh is responsible for imparting in service training to personnel in Punjab and Haryana. Some primary schools have also been attached with this institution for the purpose of extension work.
- (d) **In Service Training Centre:** A number of in service training program have been organized by these in-service training centers for different categories of personnel such as heads of institutions, district Education officers, Block Education Officers, Social Education workers and Primary school teachers.
- (e) **Pre-Service Teacher Training Program:** It is the function of the Education Department to set up junior Basic Training Centers for training of primary school teachers, the duration of such training is two years. Prior to 1972 such centers were opened independently, while a few units were attached with the high schools.
- (f) **Audio Visual Education:** The Punjab Education Department maintains a film library under the charge of an officer. The film library is enriched from time to time by adding new films and film strips.
- (g) **Children Book Trust:** A children Book Trust has been established in the state for producing suitable literature and catering to the needs of the children of different age groups.

Conclusion

The present paper concludes that overall population of Punjab has been increased about 34.14 lakh according to 2011 census as compared to 2001 census. Overall sex ratio of Punjab has been also increased from 874 during 2001 to 893 during the year 2011. District of Hoshiarpur and Nawashahar showed sex ratio higher than 950 under census 2011. The literacy rate of Punjab was 76.7% during 2011, which is slightly higher than the literacy rate of nation (74.04%). District wise highest and lowest literacy rate were for the districts of Hoshiarpur and Mansa respectively. Number of primary schools was increased during the year 2011, but the number of students was declined in these schools. The reason behind this is that some primary schools were merged in middle schools on the behalf of government policy. Number of primary

school teachers in Punjab was also decreased during the year 2011, because of excess retirements of old teachers and non-recruitment of new teachers. On the other hand, the new policy of government to improve the level of primary education is based on low teacher-pupil ratio. Many policies and programs for qualitative improvement of primary education in Punjab are started, such as operation black board, improvement in Science Education, Regional Institute of English, State Institution of Education, Audio Visual Education, etc. The number of female teachers is more as compared to male teachers in primary schools of Punjab, whereas the number of girl students at primary school level shows totally an opposite position. Thus, the higher number of female primary teachers could be helpful in promoting girls students enrollment in primary schools, through creating awareness among families (especially mothers) of girl students. Further, female teacher can conveniently guide and inspire the girls and their families by giving their own example that they are working as government teachers and earning money as well as social status because of education only.

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