

Male-Female Differentials of Literacy in Deoghar District (Jharkhand): A Geographical Analysis

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Abstract:

According to the census of India, “A person aged seven and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate- a person who can only read but cannot write, is not literate.” A person must be literate before he becomes educated. A higher level of education provides dynamism to society and helps in social upliftment. Literacy is a crucial indicator of socio-economic development and plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of individuals and communities. Education is one of the greatest needs of our time as it brings improvement in the quality of life and plays a pivotal role in social reconstruction. Literacy is the first indispensable step for achieving sustainable development in any area.

Being an important indicator of the Human Development Index, the literacy condition of any nation has always been a critical issue to be prioritized. India, like other developing countries, is always characterized by its low level of literacy and greater disparity among the huge masses of Indian people. In this paper attempt has been made to focus on the Deoghar district, we seek to identify disparities in literacy levels, understand the factors contributing to these differences, and propose recommendations for fostering educational equity. The present study aims to highlight the level of literacy among males-females of Deoghar District by using the census data of 1991,2001 & 2011.

Keywords: Literacy, Differential Index, Socio-economic Development, Deoghar District (Jharkhand), Gender Disparity, Sustainable development.

Introduction:

Literacy is a fundamental human right and a key driver of social and economic progress. Deoghar district, situated in [mention state/country], presents an interesting case for examining literacy disparities, especially among the Understanding literacy variations among different social groups are essential for crafting targeted interventions to bridge existing gaps. This study aims to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing literacy rates in Deoghar district.

Literacy and education are good indicators of the development of society. Spread and diffusion are generally associated with essential traits of today's civilization such as modernization, urbanization, industrialization, communication, and commerce. It forms an important input in the overall development of individuals enabling them to comprehend their social, political, and cultural environment better and respond to it appropriately. Higher levels of education and literacy lead to greater awareness and also contribute to the improvement of economic conditions. It acts as a catalyst for social upliftment enhancing

the return on an investment made in almost every aspect of development efforts, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, empowerment of women, and amelioration of workforce of the society. Improvements in literacy are also prerequisites for acquiring various skills (Provisional Census Report, 2011).

Literacy is one of the important social characteristics on which information is obtained from every individual in the census. For census, a person aged seven and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate.

A person, who can only read but cannot write, is not literate. In the census before 1991, children below five years of age were treated as illiterate. Earlier literacy had no direct bearing on the socio-economic and cultural system of the society because it did not have any important role in economic pursuits as the whole activities were primary and secondary in nature. But since last century and particularly after the independence, literacy has been considered one of the most essential needs of the society for its development and therefore in India, it received great emphasis in all five-year plans.

Study Area:

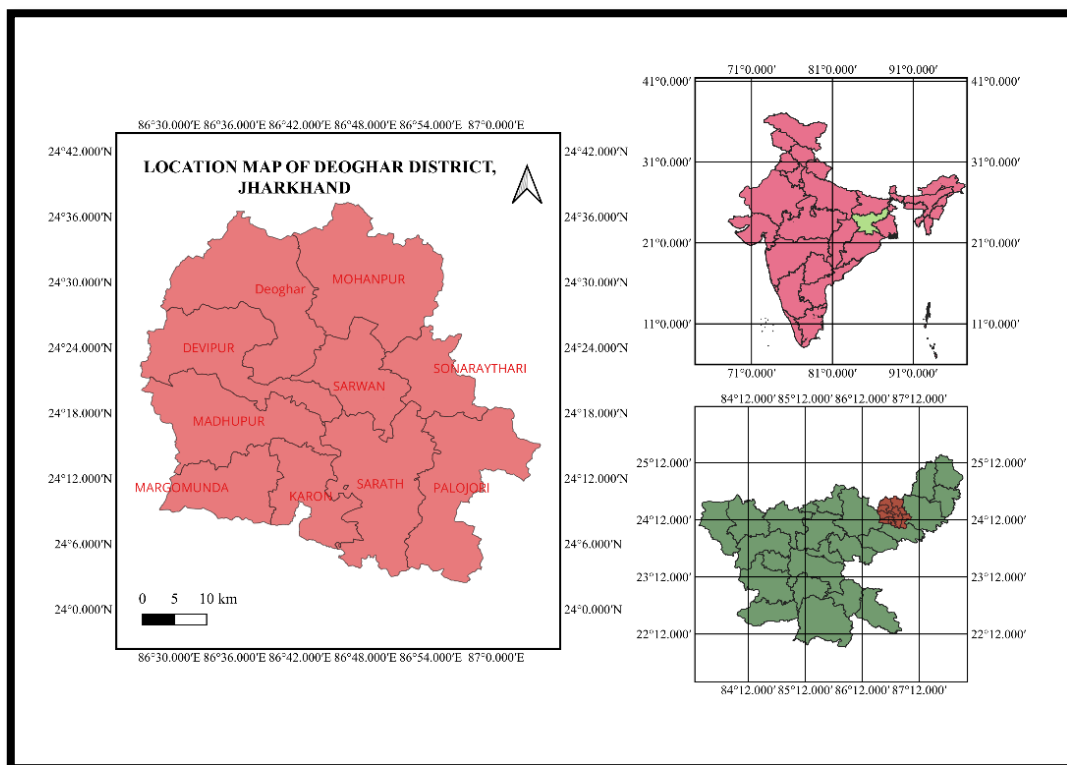


Fig:1 Location Map of the Study Area

Deoghar district is located between 24° 00'00" and 24° 40' 00" North latitude and 86° 20' 00" and 87° 04' 00" East longitudes. The average altitude of this district is 254 meters (833 feet). This district is part of the Santhal Pargana division. Deoghar district is located in the western portion of Santhal Parganas. It is bounded by the Bhagalpur district in the north, Dumka in south east, and Giridih in the west. Deoghar districts are spread over an area of 2479 sq km (245156 hectares). The landscape of Deoghar district is high, low, hilly, and damp. 28% of the land is very fertile. The name Deoghar seems to be of recent origin and probably dates from the erection of the great temple of Lord Baidyanth. Deoghar district is one of the

twenty-four districts of Jharkhand state in eastern India, and Deoghar town is the administrative headquarters of this district. this district is known for the Baidyanath Jyotirlinga shrine. (fig.1)

Objectives of the Study:

The primary goal of this research is to conduct a comprehensive geographical analysis of male-female differentials in literacy rates in the Deoghar District. The study aims to map the spatial distribution of literacy, identify areas with notable disparities, and uncover potential contributing factors.

There are ample literature and studies on literacy. Though several reports on the level of literacy are available it is not sufficient to formulate better planning policies. keeping this gap in mind, the present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To highlight the level of literacy and to examine the literacy differentials among male-female
- To find out the possible factors which affect the differentials of literacy in the study area.

Database & Methodology:

Data for this study is sourced from the census data (1991, 2001 & 2011) and educational surveys conducted in the Deoghar District. Variables such as literacy rates, socio-economic indicators, and geographic coordinates are utilized.

Geographic Information System (GIS) tools are employed to create maps illustrating the spatial distribution of male and female literacy rates. Spatial statistical techniques are applied to identify clusters and patterns.

For analysis purposes, the use of tables and maps has been done. Tables are generated with the help of Excel and maps are prepared with the help of QGIS software. The Methodology adopted for the present study covers the following steps.

$$\text{MFDI} = \frac{MLR - FLR}{TLR}$$

Where,
MFDI= Male- Female differential index
MLR= Male Literacy Rate
FLR= Female Literacy Rate
TLR= Total Literacy Rate

6.0 Literacy Rate in Deoghar District:

Table 1: Literacy Rate in Deoghar District

year	Male	Female	Persons	Male-Female Deference
1991	56.002	22.68	39.391	33.32
2001	61.91	24.88	43.27	37.03
2011	75.04	48.9	61.8	26.14

Source: Computed from census data of India, 1991-2011

Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among backward areas in India. Table;1 presents the literacy rates for the Deoghar district since 1991. The literacy rates for the Deoghar district as a whole in 2011 worked out to 61.80 for the population aged seven years and above. The corresponding figures for males and females are 75.04 Percent and 48.90 percent respectively. Thus, more than half and one-third of the female population aged seven years and above is literate in the study area today.

Deoghar district has continued its inexorable march in improving points from 39.39 percent in 1991 to 61.8 percent in 2011. The increase in male and female rates is 19.03 and 26.03 percent points respectively. Thus, the increase in the total male and female literacy during 1991-2011 has been recorded highest since 1991. The improvement in literacy rate augurs well for the country and needs not only to be sustained but requires a fillip, particularly in the case of the fairer sex.

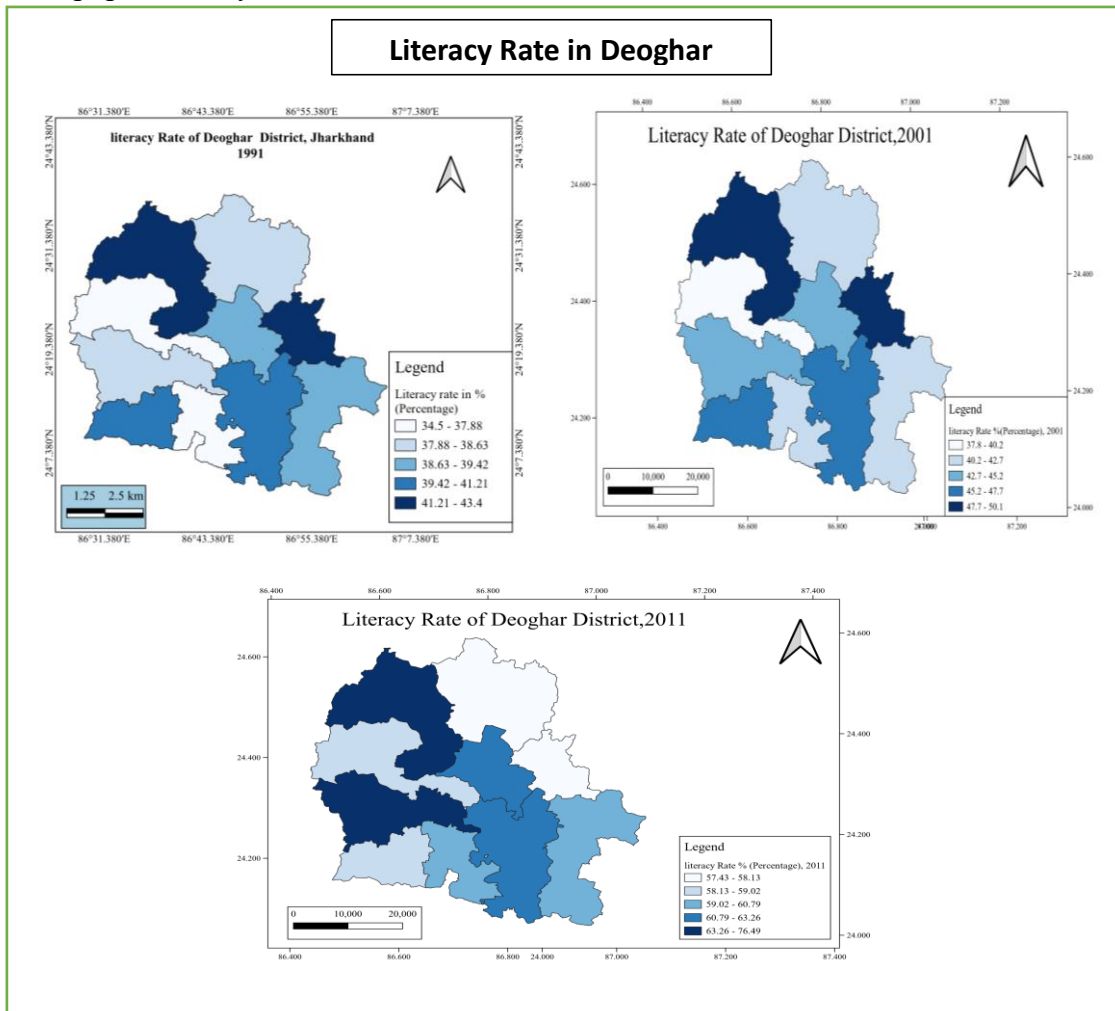


Fig 2

6.1 Male-Female Differential in Literacy:

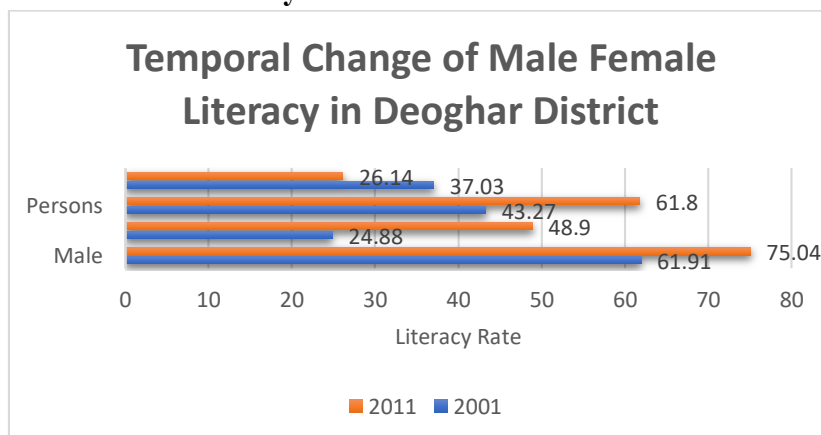


Fig:3

The male-female literacy was recorded at 33.32 percent in 1991 which increased to 37.03 percent in 2001 but there is a gradual sign of improvement. Thus, in 2011 this gap was marginally reduced to 26.14 percent. These declines are bound to be slow initially as a result of the counting past legacy of a large number of adult illiterate women. Although female literacy is relatively low both in rural and urban areas, it is much lower in rural areas than in urban areas. The lower literacy among females is the result of a long and continued prejudice against the education of women and their employment outside the home (Davis, 1951:151). It shows the extent to which the development of literacy has continued to be oriented to the individual's occupation. Another serious obstacle in the expansion of female education is early marriage, which causes girls to be taken away from school before they reach even the standard of primary school certificates.

Besides the Prevalence of the Parda system, the low rate of female Participation in outdoor activities decreases the spread of education among Females (Gosal, 1967:15). But now females' literacy is increasing faster than the male-female and therefore, the male-female differential has been narrowing gradually in the Deoghar District.

6.2 Spatial Pattern of Literacy Rate:

Sharp spatial variation in the literacy rate has been recorded in the Deoghar district. The inequalities exist among blocks and male-female are the most drastic in nature. The spatial and male-female inequalities in nature are the result of our country's old discriminatory social order and their natural adaptation. It is clear from (Table 2 & Fig;3) that in 1991, only 39.39 percent people of in the study area were reported as literate. In the decade 1991, three blocks had been found under the low category (below 38 %) of literacy. These blocks were Devipur, Mohanpur, and Karon. Three blocks Madhupur, Palojori, and Sarwan recorded moderate literacy rates (38-40 Percent). Four blocks namely Deoghar, Margo Munda, Sarath, and Sona Rai Thari had come under the high category (Above 40 Percent) of literacy.

Table 2: Block-wise literacy rate in Deoghar District

Blocks	1991			2001			2011		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
DEOGHAR	42.66	60.02	25.3	49.15	68.2	30.1	76.49	85.17	67.32
MADHUPUR	38.45	54.3	22.6	43.1	61	25.2	65.12	77.08	53.17
MARGOMUNDA	40.85	54.3	27.4	47.1	63.5	30.7	58.15	71.18	44.48
DEVIPUR	34.5	50.3	18.7	37.75	57.4	20.1	58.78	73.09	44.45
SARATH	40.2	55.6	24.8	46.25	64.7	27.8	62.09	48.48	75.7
SONARAI TARAHI	43.4	61.4	25.4	50.13	66.23	34.03	57.43	72.58	42.29
MOHANPUR	37.9	55.9	19.9	42.25	60.5	24	58.07	71.17	44.98
SARWAN	38.75	57.2	20.3	43	61.7	24.3	62.79	75.87	49.71
PALJORI	38.9	56.1	21.7	42.5	61.4	23.6	59.93	74.66	45.2
KARON	37.8	54.9	20.7	42.2	60.4	24	59.18	73.34	45.03
TOTAL	39.341	56.002	22.68	44.343	62.503	26.383	61.803	72.262	51.233

Sources; Computed from Census of India, 1991-2011

The educational conditions improved with time and consequently literacy in the Deoghar District rose to 43.27 Percent in 2001 but the spatial inequalities remained intact at the block level (Tabl;2). In the year 2001, there was only one block namely Devipur (37.75) consisting of a low category (below 40 percent) Literacy rate. The moderate category (40-50 Percent) comprised 8 Blocks namely Deoghar, Madhupur, Margo Munda, Sarath, Mahanpur, Sarwan, Palojori, and Karon. Only one block that is Sona Rai Thari was found in the High category (above 50 percent) of literacy rate in 2001.

In the 2011 census, six blocks of, Margo Munda, Devipur, Sarath, Sona Rai Thari, and Palojori Karon formed a low category (Below 60 Percent) of literacy. Many factors behind low literacy in these blocks are low road density, low productivity, low educational facilities, and poor economic conditions of people forcing the people to their less interest in education. Three blocks formed the moderate category (60-70 percent). These blocks are Madhupur, Sarath, and Sarwan which have moderate levels of cropping intensity and educational facilities. Only one block Deoghar falls under the category of high (Above 70 percent) literacy rate. The high literacy rate is the result of the availability of good educational facilities, road networks, and better economic conditions. This block is one of the strong economic source's roots for attractive pilgrimage, and also this block is the district headquarters of Deoghar District. So, all are administrative facilities occupied in this block.

Table 3: Male-Female Differential in Literacy of Deoghar District.

Blocks	Differential Index		
	1991	2001	2011
DEOGHAR	0.813	0.77	0.23
MADHUPUR	0.82	0.83	0.37
MARGOMUNDA	0.65	0.696	0.48
DEVIPUR	0.915	0.98	0.48
SARATH	0.76	0.79	0.43
SONA RAI THARI	0.82	0.64	0.52
MOHANPUR	0.94	0.86	0.45
SARWAN	0.95	0.86	0.416
PALJORI	0.95	0.88	0.49
KARON	0.9	0.86	0.47
Deoghar District	0.8518	0.8166	0.4376

Source: Computed from census of India 1991-20013

6.3 Male-Female Literacy Differential Index:

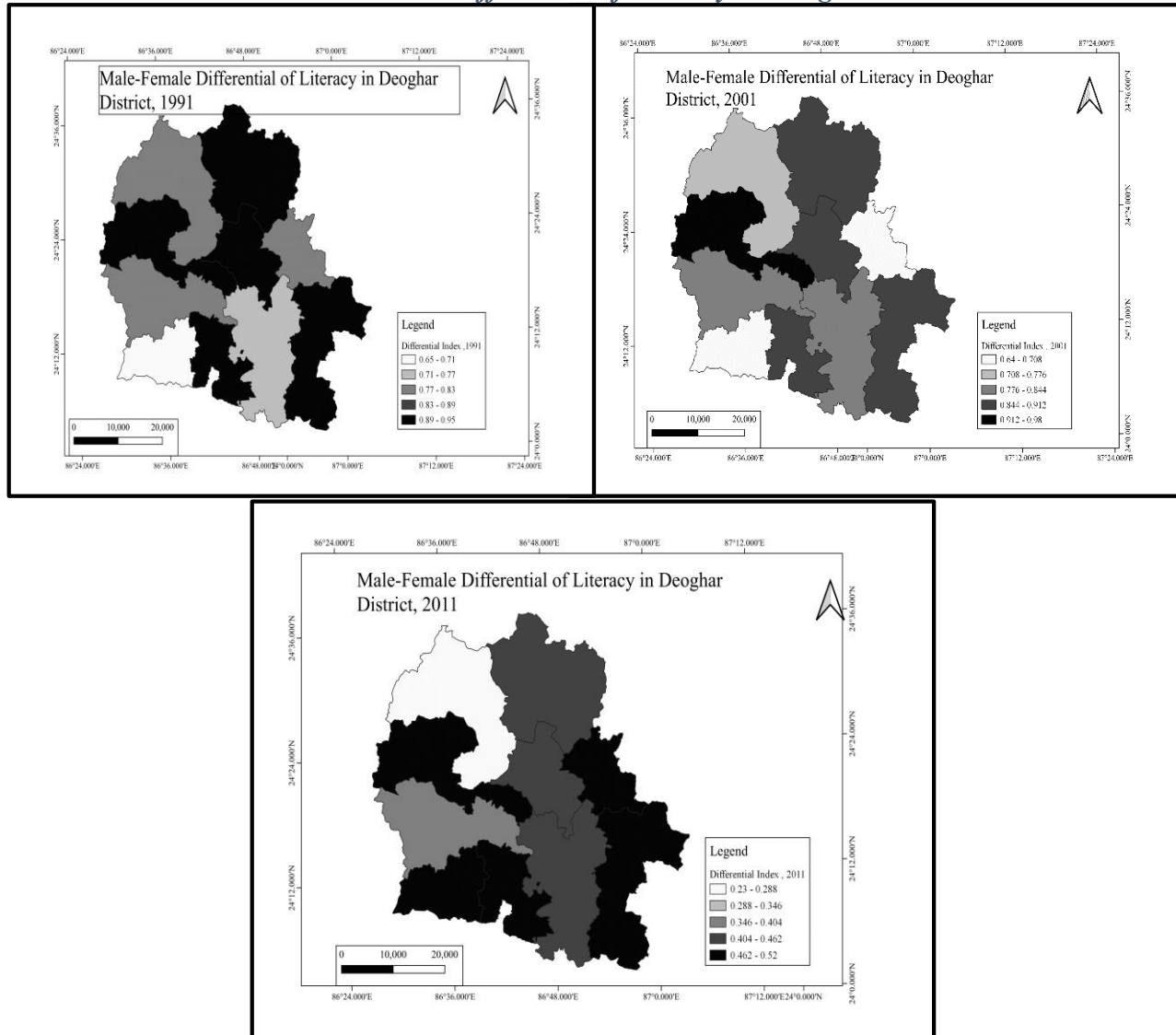
The male-female differential index is associated with the gap between male and female literacy rates. In the area under study, the gender gap in literacy was very wide in the past. For instance, this gap was 0.85 in 1991 which narrowed down to 0.43 in 2011. Literacy in the Deoghar district in the past was meant mainly for males.

The proportion of females who could read and write was negligible. However, in recent decades the gender gap in literacy has decreased sharply. The literacy among females was the product of socio-cultural and economic factors. There is traditionally been a general prejudice against female education and employment. Females were meant essentially for the household activity for which literacy was not a functional necessity (Krishna and Shyam, 1973).

The index value of literacy differential between males and females varies widely in different parts of the study area. From the perusal of Table;3, it appears that the literacy differential between men and women in 1991 was quite high in all blocks of the Deoghar district. The high literacy differentials (Above 0.9) were registered in Karon (0.9), Palojori (0.95), Sarwan (0.95), and Devipur (0.915) blocks. The literacy differential is comparatively lower (Below 0.7) in blocks of

Margomunda (0.65) rest of the blocks consist of moderate categories (0.7 to 0.9), which are Deoghar (0.81), Madhupur (0.82), Sarath (0.76), Sona Rai Thari (0.82) Blocks.

Male-Female Differential of Literacy in Deoghar District



In the 2001 census, the condition of education among women was again found poor with only a slight increase in literacy in all blocks of the study area. The lowest differential index (Below 0.7) of literacy was found in two blocks Margo Munda and Sonarai Thari which maintained almost the same pattern of literacy differentials with only a slight reduction from the 1991 level. The seven blocks such as Deoghar, Madhupur, Sarath, Mohanpur, Sarwan, Palojori, and Karon recorded medium (0.7 to 0.9) male-female literacy differential index. In this year only one block namely Devipur had recorded a high male-female differential index (above 9.0). The female literacy picked up the pace from that decade and improved a lot but the differential of literacy remained quite high which indicates our differential social behavior. The initiation of several Government and non-government efforts during 1980 brought fruits to us in the form of rapid enhancement in literacy levels in the preceding censuses but the male-female difference in literacy

remained intact and did not receive the fruits properly. The condition of women can easily be assessed with consistently high literacy differential for the consecutive three decades.

In 2011, all the blocks made some reduction in the differential index compared to the 2001 level but the inequalities persisted to the same level. Sona Rai Thari is the only block in which the literacy differential value is highest (above 0.5) other than all blocks in the Deoghar District. six blocks namely Margo Munda, Devipur, Sarath, Sona Rai Thari, Mohanpur, Sarwan, Palojori, and o found moderately differential index (0.4 to 0.5) categories, and two blocks such as Deoghar and Madhupur Found very low differential index (below 0.4). The low male-female differential in rural literacy is characterized by the high female literacy, better education facilities, developed transport networks, commercial agriculture, and a high proportion of non-agricultural workers. Thus, it becomes imperative to pay more attention to those blocks where the male-female differential index in literacy is Higher.

7.0 Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study focused on analyzing literacy differentials, particularly the male-female disparities, in the Deoghar district of Jharkhand, India. The findings revealed a positive trend in overall literacy rates, with significant improvements from 1991 to 2011. However, gender disparities persisted, although there was a gradual reduction in the male-female differential index over the years.

The spatial analysis highlighted varying literacy rates among different blocks in the Deoghar district, indicating the influence of socio-economic factors, educational facilities, and infrastructure on educational outcomes. Some blocks consistently exhibited low literacy rates, necessitating targeted interventions to address the underlying challenges.

The male-female differential index indicated a historical bias towards male education, with higher differentials in the past gradually decreasing over the years. Despite overall improvements in female literacy, certain blocks continued to experience higher differentials, emphasizing the need for targeted efforts to bridge the gender gap in education.

To address these challenges and promote educational equity, the study recommends focused initiatives in areas with persistently low literacy rates and high male-female differentials. These initiatives should include improving educational infrastructure, increasing awareness about the importance of female education, and addressing socio-cultural factors that hinder female participation in education.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of interventions and adjust strategies accordingly. Collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities is crucial for the success of these initiatives.

Recommendations:

In summary, while the Deoghar district has made commendable progress in enhancing overall literacy rates, addressing lingering disparities, especially gender-based, requires targeted and sustained efforts. The findings of this study contribute valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to formulate effective strategies for achieving educational equity and fostering sustainable development in the region.

Limitations and Future Research:

This section will acknowledge any limitations in the study and propose directions for future research to build upon the findings of this comparative study.

Note: Ensure to customize the content based on the specific details and context of the Deoghar district and the region in question.

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