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MAP SERIES-II LITERACY IN PUNJAB AND HARYANA- 2001

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Indian census considers a person as literate if he/she can both read and write in any language. That is why, literacy rates in India are calculated excluding 0-6 age group of population. There is no denying the fact that India is still in the midst of its literacy transition. Consequently, the country is characterised by low but improving literacy rates. Accordingly only 64.8 per cent of the country's population could be classified as literate in 2001. The study region, however, had 68.8 per cent of its population as literate.

One notable feature of India's population is that the females lag far behind the males in term of literacy. While three out of every four males could read and write in the study area, the corresponding figure for the females was about two out of every four (Table 1). Such male- female differentials in literacy were the product of the country's history and its socio-economic-political milieu. Largely farm-based economic setup, general poverty, caste-based social structure, prejudices against female's mobility, education, and employment, limited facilities for schooling, poor infrastructure in schools, proxy teachers, high incidence of dropouts and child marriages are some of the factors that may have contributed to the slow pace of literacy transition in the country. Added to the list was one most prominent factor of high rate of natural increase of population that keeps on adding large number of illiterates every year.

Punjab-Haryana region constitutes one

of the most progressive areas in the country. Therefore, it is natural to expect this study region to have literacy rates better than the national averages. While 68.8 per cent of the region's population was recorded literate, the corresponding figures for males and females were 76.7 per cent and 59.9 per cent respectively. These were only marginally above the respective national averages. The literacy rates for the study region could have been much higher than the national averages but for the immigration of illiterate labourers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh etc. and out migration of literate population from the region to other regions of the country as well as Western countries in search of greener pastures.

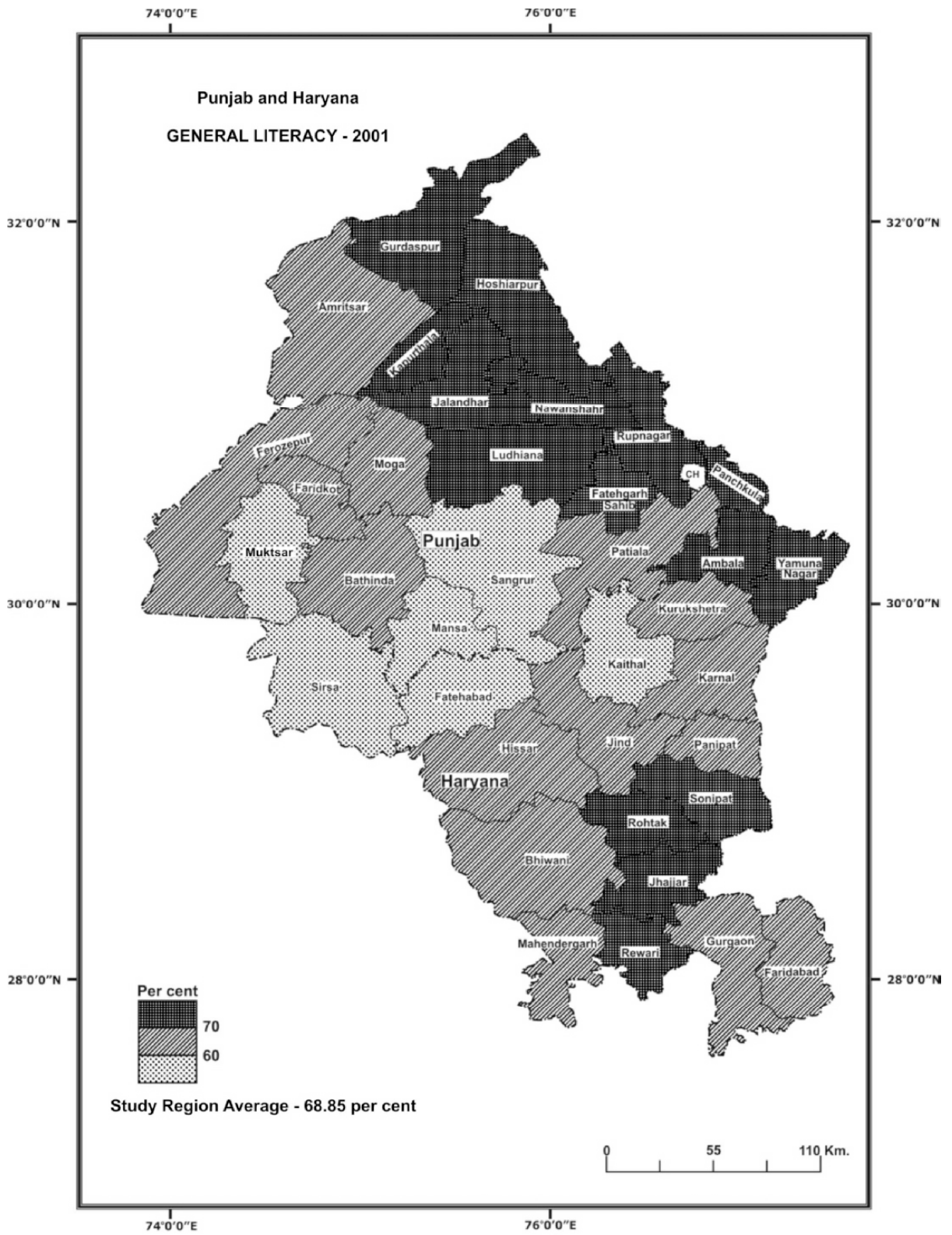
Similarly, while the general literacy in Punjab (69.65 per cent) was slightly higher than that in Haryana (67.91 per cent), the intra-regional variations in literacy (persons, males, females) in Haryana were far less than that encountered in Punjab. In case of Punjab, the highest literacy was 79.8 Per cent (Hoshiarpur district), and the lowest literacy was only 52.4 per cent (Mansa district)-a percentile difference of 27.4 per cent. By comparison, in case of Haryana, the highest literacy was 75.3 per cent (Ambala district) and the lowest literacy was 57.98 per cent (Fatehabad district)-a percentile difference of only 17.32 per cent, which was much less than that in Punjab (27.4 per cent). Haryana had for long been comparatively less developed part of the Punjab plains. But it seems that the socio-economic advancement in

Table 1
Punjab and Haryana Literacy Rate – 2001
(Excluding 0-6 Age Group)

State/Dist.	Persons	Male	Female	State/Dist.	Persons	Male	Female
HARYANA	67.91	78.49	55.73	PUNJAB	69.65	75.23	63.36
Ambala	75.31	82.31	67.39	Hoshiarpur	79.81	85.69	73.74
Rewari	75.25	88.45	60.83	Jalandhar	78.04	82.49	73.08
Panchkula	74.00	80.87	65.65	Nawanshahr	76.43	82.86	69.52
Rohtak	73.72	83.23	62.59	Rupnagar	74.11	80.95	66.35
Sonapat	72.79	83.06	60.68	Kapurthala	73.93	79.02	68.29
Jhajjar	72.38	83.27	59.65	Gurdaspur	73.77	79.78	67.15
Yamunanagar	71.63	78.82	63.39	Fatehagarh Sahib	73.65	78.27	68.31
Faridabad	70.03	81.51	56.31	Ludhiana	72.64	77.87	66.75
Mahendragarh	69.89	84.72	54.08	Patiala	69.78	75.88	62.86
Kurukshetra	69.88	78.06	60.61	Amritsar	67.27	72.61	61.26
Panipat	69.17	78.50	57.97	Moga	63.52	68.01	58.52
Karnal	67.74	76.29	57.97	Faridkot	61.95	68.15	55.03
Bhiwani	67.45	80.26	53.00	Bathinda	61.18	67.78	53.70
Hisar	64.83	76.57	51.08	Ferozepur	60.69	68.73	51.72
Gurgaon	62.91	76.17	47.78	Sangrur	59.98	65.81	53.38
Jind	62.12	73.82	48.51	Muktsar	58.20	65.39	50.25
Sirsa	60.55	70.05	49.93	Mansa	52.41	58.90	45.18
Kaithal	59.02	69.15	47.31				
Fatehabad	57.98	68.22	46.53				

Study Region Average:
 Persons-68.8 Per cent, Male-76.73 Per cent, Female-59.90 Per cent

Source: Census of India (2001) State Primary Census Abstract of Total Population of Punjab and Haryana Table A-5



Source : Table 1

Fig. 1

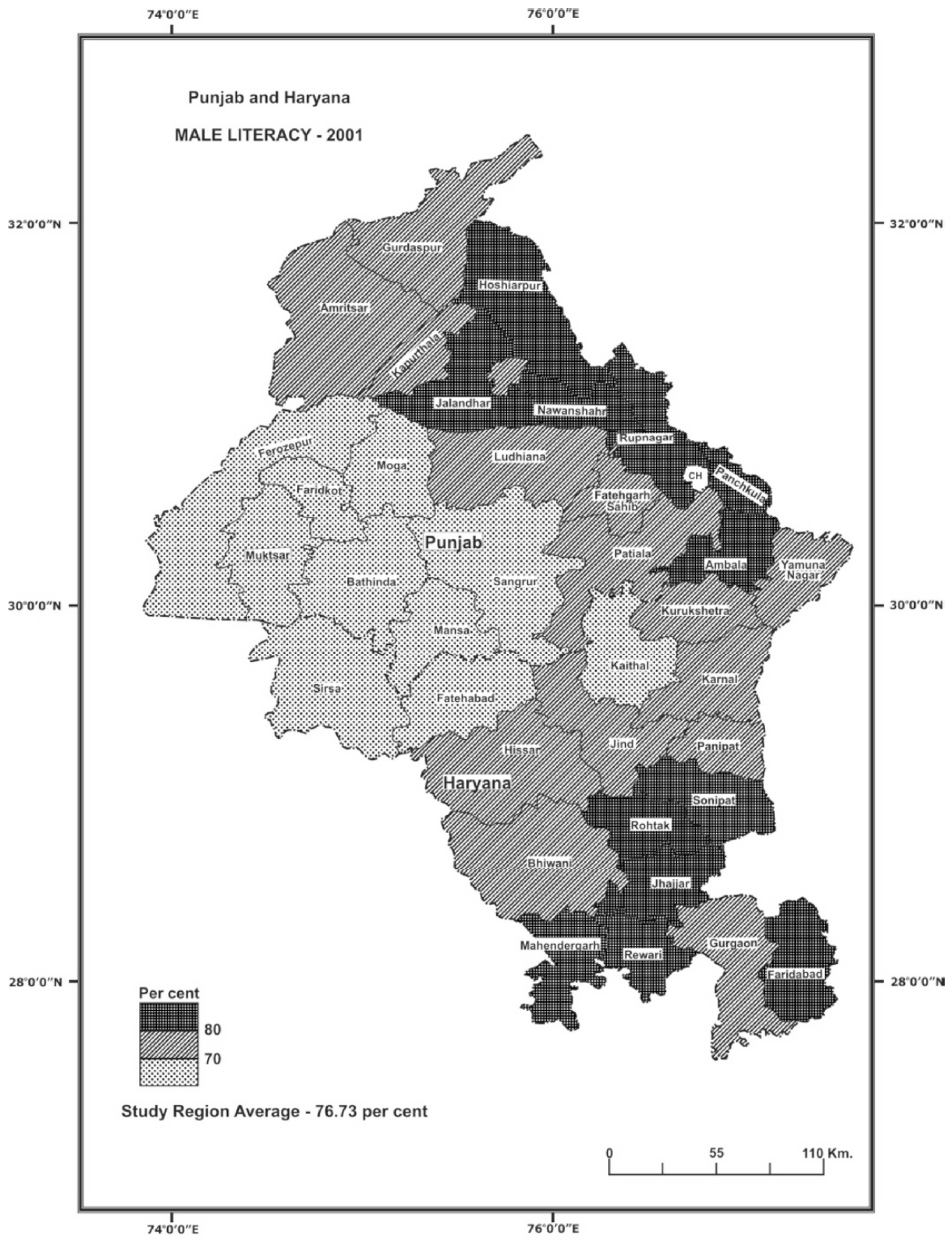


Fig. 2

Source : Table 1

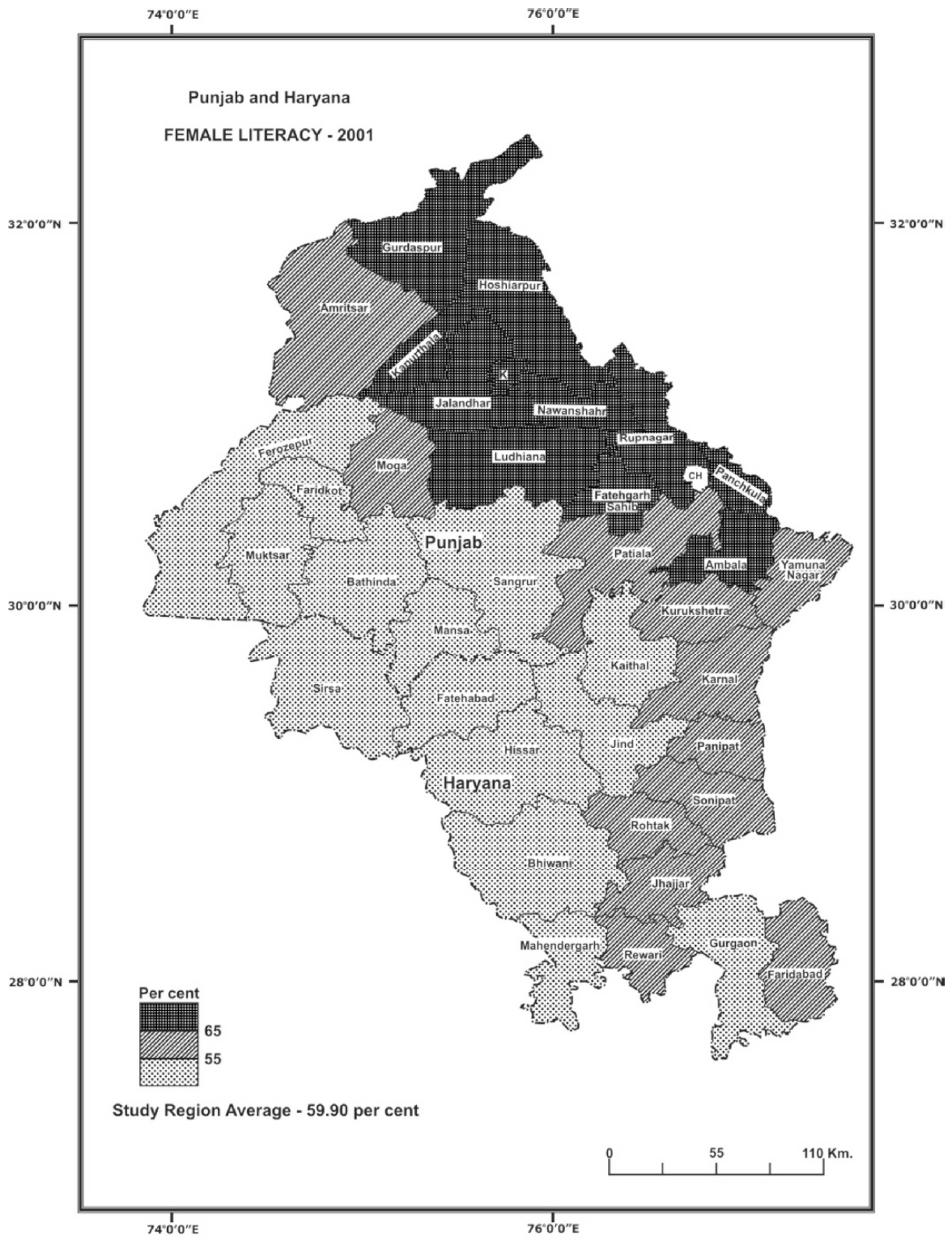


Fig. 3

Source : Table 1

recent decades in Haryana has been responsible for the state's improving literacy rates and squeezing spatial variations in literacy. By contrast, in case of Punjab the typical migration pattern mentioned earlier has contributed to the state's slow progress on the literacy front as well as to the widening of regional differences in literacy within the state.

Three maps included here depict the spatial pattern of general literacy (Map 1), male literacy (Map 2), and female literacy (Map 3) in the study region. The most obvious observation from these maps is that south-west to north-east and west to east gradient in literacy levels is too vivid on all the three maps but most prominent is in case of female literacy. As one moves from west to east or from south-west to north-east, the literacy levels improve gradually-being lowest in the west and south-west and highest in the east and north-east. Bist-Doab in Punjab has had a long time tradition for immigration to the Western countries and has not only been but also continues to be the most literate part of the state. Aspirations for moving to the wonderlands of the West have been nurtured for too long in case of Bist-Doab area, though the other regions of the state have also started looking towards the West recently. Similarly, areas on the eastern margins of the study region all along the National Highway No 1, which have recently emerged as areas of concentration of non-agricultural economic activity, too show high literacy rates. So has been the case with such districts of Haryana that lie within the National Capital Region and thus have benefited from their proximity to the national capital. The city of Chandigarh in the north-east that has emerged as an educational centre of international repute apart from being

the administrative headquarters of three political units namely Punjab and Haryana states and the union territory of Chandigarh, too has served as the catalytic agent in promoting literacy within its close proximity.

However it may be of some interest to note that while in Haryana the low male literacy was confined to Kaithal, Fatehabad and Sirsa districts, in case of Punjab the low male literacy levels were much more widespread covering all the districts in south-west Punjab. By comparison, low female literacy areas were equally widespread both in Punjab and Haryana- covering south-west halves of both the states. However, female literacy was comparatively higher in Punjab. The general gradient of literacy in the study region, thus, seems to be the product of the spatial pattern of female literacy in the region.

Finally, the tradition of long term emigration, the tradition of service in armed forces, proximity to national capital, emergence of Chandigarh as administrative and educational centre of great importance, increasing concentration of industrial activity all along the National Highway No 1, progressive policies of the governments for promoting female literacy, differences in the status of the two sexes, poor infrastructure in schools, proxy teachers, incidence of child marriage etc. have made their own contribution to the literacy levels as well as their spatial patterns prevailing in the study region.

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