

Changing Scenario of Education in Educationally Backward Areas of Punjab

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ABSTRACT: For any nation education plays an important role for the development. If the literacy rate in the particular area is high that clearly depicts the prosperity in terms of economic conditions, labour productivity, health and culture. Improvement in education has a very long term effects on the welfare of the nation. It should always be very important for all the policymakers that improvement in the education sector and every community of the society and each part of the region should be benefitted; no caste or no gender should be given priority. Education is the basic necessity so it should be affordable to all. Equalization at education levels removes all the barriers of regional inequalities and gender discrimination. From the last few decades, with all the efforts of government and nongovernmental organisations there is an improvements in education levels as well as literacy rates but some regions of India are still deprived. For the recognition of those particular areas, the educationally backward districts were recognised and further for the implementation of the policies in a proper manner, Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) were recognised in 2007 on the basis of census records of 2001. The researcher is trying to find out the improvements in the EBB'S of one of the prosperous state of Punjab where 21 blocks were recognised as backward in education. In these areas extra attention was paid by the government agencies to upgrade the grim situation. The researcher is trying to find out the improvements in this situation by considering the census records of census 2011. The study of the investigator is based on the secondary data from the various sources to study the education scenario in Punjab.

KEYWORDS: Education, Backward, Literacy

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I. INTRODUCTION

The education system in India has gone through a long journey and the traditions from the past few years have undergone a new enhancement. Government of India is aiming for many rigorous and determined efforts in this field of education so that the target of inclusive growth can be reached as soon as possible by it. A great procurement of the Indian Government is a shoot up in the literacy rate from 18.3% in 1950-51 to 74.04% in 2010-11. Such an attainment is the result of a lot of efforts by the Indian government in the education sector. Education contributes to the well being of each citizen of the country and the overall development of the country. Education is not only a medium to improve productivity and growth but is also an effective tool of enlarging and raising the participation in democracy and reforming the society. (Goel, 2008). Thus, the role of education is very important in every nation.

While speaking about education, the father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi said, "By education, I mean an all round drawing out of the best in the child and man- body, mind and spirit". On the other hand, Swami Dayananda Saraswati viewed education as, "formulator of the character". Nelson Mandela, the South African Noble Laureate once stated that, "education is the most powerful weapon to change the world". It is a universal remedy of all the problems as it plays significant role in a country's economic growth and motivating political and socio-cultural changes.

A person who is able to read and write with understanding in any language is recorded as literate. Literacy is the best possible barometer to judge the level of educational awareness in a state, leading to a minimum capacity for self-learning. In Punjab, the literacy rate has been rising. It was 58.51 per cent in 1991 and increased to 69.95 per cent in 2001, an increase of 11.44 per cent points during the last 10 years and 76.7 according to the census of 2011. Education is a core sector for achieving the objective of employment, human resource development and bringing about much needed change in social environment, leading to overall progress through efficient use of resources. An appropriate education system cultivates knowledge, skill, positive attitude, awareness and sense of responsibility towards rights and duties and imparts inner strength to face oppression, humiliation and inequality. (Ninth Five Year Plan, 1997-2002)

At all India level, The Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) are executing various other schemes for the purpose of the main focus on the areas which are fall behind in case of education. For this educationally backward districts are identified on the basis of gross enrolment ratio (includes all enrolled in

higher education proportionate to population in 18-23 age group), 374 districts in all over India have been identified as Educationally Backward districts (EBD)(Sunita Sanghi-Arthepedia page, May 2,2015). Later the concept of educationally backward block (EBB) was given by Registrar General of India and Census Commissioner, India (RGI).

A Block is an intermediate geographical cluster between village and a district whereas Educationally Backward block (EBB) is where

- The level of rural female literacy is less than the national average.
- The gender gap in literacy being above the national average

(Source-mhrd.gov.in)

The number of Educationally Backward blocks initially were 3073. These were identified all over the Indian states which were the part of programme of Sarv Shiksha abhiyan. The list was later on expanded to 3479 EBB with the inclusion of a 406 more blocks under this programme.

In Punjab, besides the prosperity, the state has shown some serious concerns related to demographic issues and among these literacy rate is one of the important issue. In spite of all the great efforts by the state government and non government organisations the literacy rate of Punjab is still lag behind many other states of India especially the south western parts of Punjab. Out of the total 146 blocks 21 blocks were recognised as educationally backward. Also the literacy rate among the females and other weaker sections of the society is quite disturbing. Unfortunately they are always subject to neglect from the historical times and this type of unequal treatment still persisted in the recent period but with the varying amount in many of the areas of Punjab.

The rank of Punjab in literacy slipped from 16th position in 2001 to 21st position at all India ranking of literacy rates in 2011 census. The various data shows that there is growth of educational institutions at all levels, tremendous development has taken place in terms of number of new schools, colleges and universities in Punjab, but In spite of all these facilities, there is lesser improvement in the levels of literacy rate ranking of Punjab at all India level. Another disturbing feature is that overall in Punjab the literacy rate among males was found higher i.e 81.5% in comparison to the females' i.e 71.3%. Inter-district literacy as per the 2011 census, the Hoshiarpur district remained at the top with 85.4% followed by SAS Nagar with 84.9 %. The literacy rate is found lowest in Mansa with 62.8% and Muktsar with 66.6%. There is a geographical dimension with north and north-east districts performing much better than the districts in South and south-west.

The Study Area

Punjab is the classic example of fast growing economy. It enjoys the credit of ushering the green revolution in the country. The land of five rivers, Punjab lies in the North West corner of India. It is one of the world's oldest civilisations that are the Indus Valley civilisation.

Geographical Set up:

The present Punjab occupies 1.54% of the total geographical area of the country and has the total area covered is 50,362 square kilometres

Latitude Extent: 29°30'N-32°32'N

Longitude Extent: 73°55'E - 76°50'E

The state is bordered by Pakistan from the western side and Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Himachal in the north east and Haryana and Rajasthan in the south. On the whole the state lies in the western part of northern plains of India. It is predominantly an alluvial plain region having three major rivers that Sutlej, Beas and Ravi. These rivers are of great physiographic, economic and cultural importance. Punjab is a small state having an area of 50362sq km. which is 1.56% of the total area of India. According to latest census reports there lived around 2.4% people of India in Punjab.



Objective of the Study-

The main objective of the study is:

1. To identify EBB in Punjab in present scenario of 2011 census records.

II. DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the secondary data obtained from the variety of authentic government sources. Some of the data is available in the published form while remaining is downloaded from the official websites of the government offices from the internet. The main sources of data are census publications, various books, research papers in the journals, Statistical Abstract of Punjab and Punjab-at-a-Glance, district wise. The data has been analysed with the help of the statistical tables and choropleth techniques for showing the disparity patterns of literacy.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sampa Barman, Sushanta Pal (2015) discussed the educational backwardness among schedule caste and schedule tribes of the country. The paper discussed the reservation policy for backward classes in education. The author stressed the problem in the Indian society in which education was the right of the socially privileged class before independence but after that the education facilities were available for all without discrimination of caste, creed and colour. The paper provides the constitutional provisions for backward class for educational problems and solutions.

Jaswinder Singh Brar (2014) in his paper about critical evaluation of educational development focuses upon various facets of educational growth in the state of Punjab. Attempt is to build by the author about the educational growth story of the state. Education growth is compared across all the regions, sub regions, sexes, locations, age cohorts and other relevant social and economic categories. The analysis of all these education growth parameters demands far more serious policy attention in order to improve the status of education in the state.

Sakshi Jain and Meenakshi Mittal (2011) in their paper examines the effectiveness of Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan and focus on assessing the awareness and satisfaction levels of different stakeholders regarding this programme. The study reveals that despite many problems in the programme and its implementation, it is very effective in mainstreaming and retention of children in the school, moreover the universalisation of education will be powerful equaliser in the society.

Distribution of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB):

At all India level, Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) is executing various schemes with the purpose of focusing on the areas which fall behind in case of education. For this purpose, educationally backward districts are identified on the basis of gross enrolment ratio, which includes all enrolled in higher education proportionate to population in 18-23 age groups. Considering this 374 districts in all over India have been identified as Educationally Backward Districts (Sanghi,2015). Additionally, the delineation of educationally backward blocks were undertaken to identify the blocks which were low at educational development. Educationally Backward Block (EBB) is identified where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and gender gap in literacy being above the national average (MHRD, 2007).

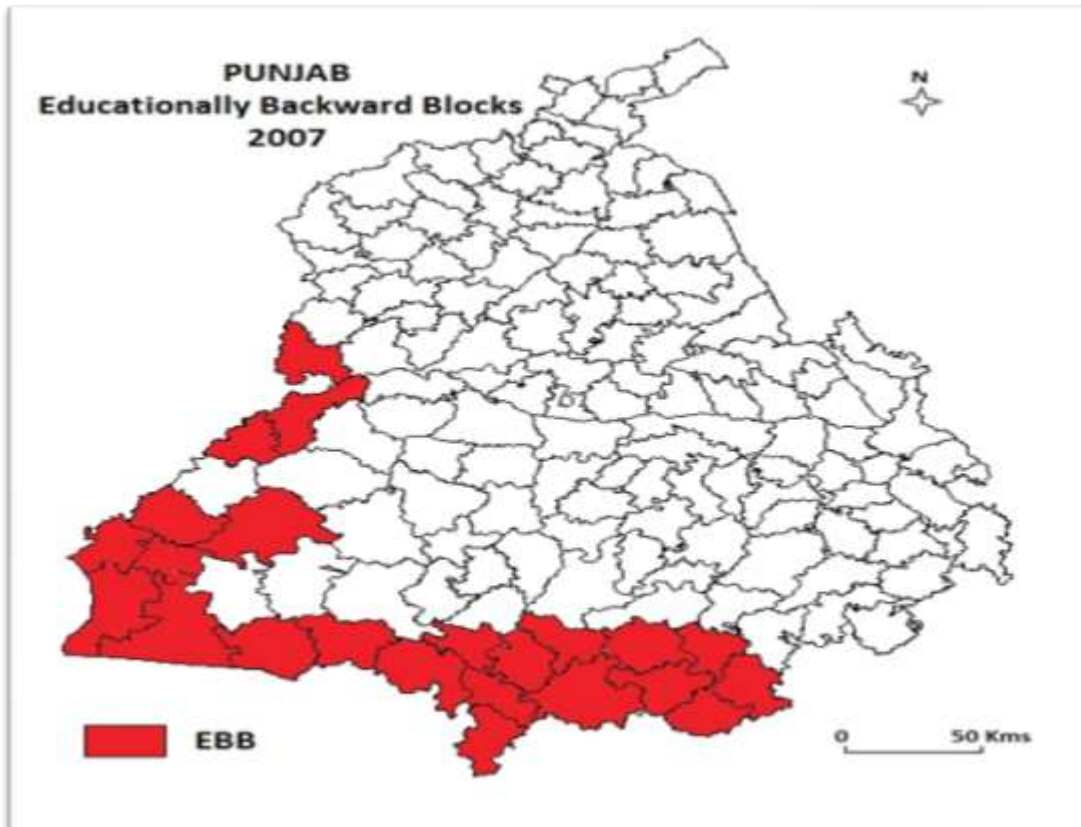
Initially the number of EBB was 3073, which were identified all over the Indian states which were the part of Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan programme. The list was later on expanded to 3479 EBB with the inclusion of a 406 more blocks under this programme. In case of Punjab, out of total 142 blocks, 21 blocks have been categorized as educationally backward blocks, which are listed in the Table below.

Table-3 Educationally Backward Blocks of Punjab (census 2001)

District	Name of the EBB
Bathinda	Maur, Sangat, Talwandi
Ferozepur	Abohar, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Jalalabad, Khuiann Sarwar, Mamdot
Mansa	Bhiki, Budhlada, Jhunir, Mansa, Sardulgarh
Muktsar	Lambi, Muktsar
Patiala	Patran
TarnTaran	Valtoha
Sangrur	Andana, Lehragaga, Sunam

Source: Ministry of Human Resource and Development, 2007.

Table 3 depicts that all the identified blocks fall in the Malwa region of Punjab. It is the largest cultural region of Punjab that covers around two-third area of the state. To identify a problem in such a huge area and implementation of any policy for getting positive results seems to be the difficult task for the government. Secondly, the whole Malwa region is a vast plain region with physiographical variations, the extreme south western areas, which were studded with sand dunes earlier, and are having semi-arid conditions and most of these areas are backward. Thirdly, the areas of Malwa region bordering Rajasthan have shown a grim picture in literacy rate as this state always ranks lower in the literacy figures at national level. Fourthly, except district Ludhiana all districts of Malwa have preponderance of rural population, having low inclination towards education and more interested in the primary occupation of agriculture. On average, Malwa region is in the line with Punjab in number of literates, but this figure is still very low as compared to other districts of other folk regions. Map 1 clearly depicts all the educationally backward blocks of Punjab, which are located in Malwa region, except valtoha which is in Tarn Taran district of Majha region. Most of these blocks have either international border with Pakistan or state borders with Rajasthan and Haryana, and all have semi-arid conditions, economically backward and socially not so advanced and having more proportion of rural populations.



Source: Mapped from MHRD, 2007 data.

Educational Schemes and Policies of the Government:

A great progress can be seen in India’s Education System in last two decades. A variety of programmes were initiated by the government to get rid of the problem of illiteracy in both rural and urban India, some of the important schemes initiated during this period are:

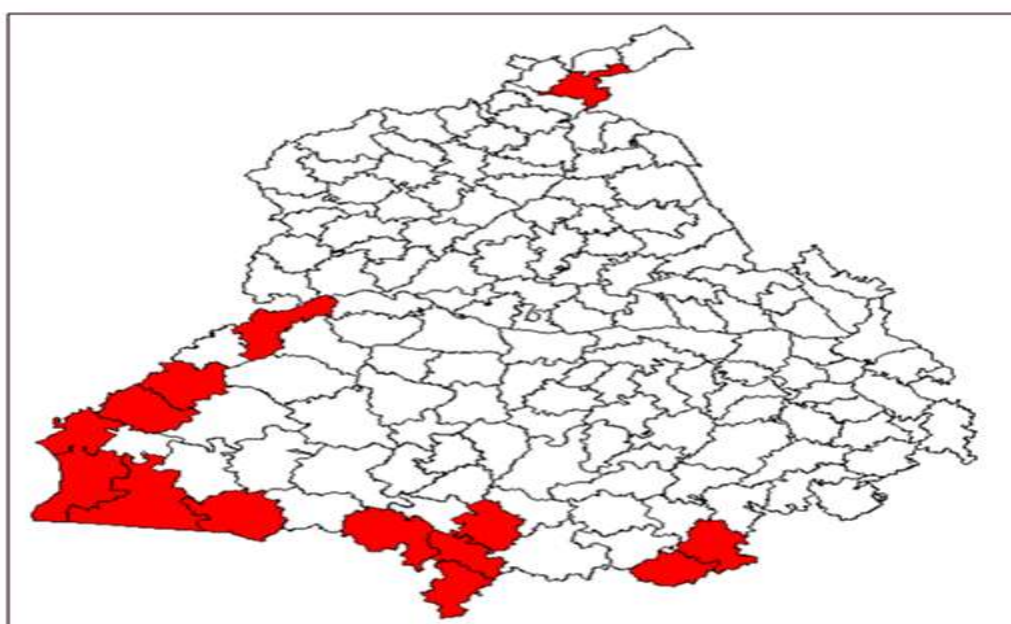
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched for achievement of UEE in 2001-2002.
- To give impetus to girl’s education two programme, namely National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Bal Vidyalaya (KGBV) were initiated in 2003.
- Scheme for Setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block level was started in 2008-09
- Right to Free and Compulsory Education for Children Act has come into force from April 1, 2010.

As per census records of 2011 the rural female literacy rate at national level is 68.91% as compare to the 58.74% in census 2001. In 2011 the gender gap at national level is 16.68% and in 2001 it was 21.59%. The rural female literacy and the gender gap are the two attributes were taken by MHRD in 2007. The census records of Punjab in 2011 shows the data of the blocks in the same districts as under:

District	EBB	Rural Female Literacy Rate	Gender Gap
Ferozepur	Ferozepur	41.13	17.75
Fazilka	Abohar	39.95	20.11
	Fazilka	41.49	17.94
	Jalalabad	41.70	16.66
	Khuiann Sarwar	40.38	19.23
Muktsar	Lambi	41.42	17.16
Bathinda	Talwandi Sabo	36.47	27.05
Mansa	Jhunir	40.46	19.08
	Mansa	41.60	16.80
	Sardulgarh	41.46	19.94
Sangrur	Andana	41.03	17.94
Pathankot	Pathankot	45.09	18.11
Patiala	Patran	41.65	16.70

Table-3 Educationally Backward Blocks of Punjab (census 2011)

District	Name of EBB
Bathinda	Talwandi Sabo
Ferozepur	Ferozepur
Fazilka	Fazilka, Abohar, Jalalabad, Khuiann Sarwar
Mansa	Jhunir, Mansa, Sardulgarh
Muktsar	Lambi
Patiala	Patran
Sangrur	Andana
Pathankot	Pathankot



Map : Punjab: Educationally Backward blocks 2011

According to the census records of 2011, thirteen blocks are identified as Educationally Backward, one new district and its block that is Pathankot is added to the list of EBB. Maur and Sangat in Bathinda, and Mamdot and block in Fazilka district, Bhikhi and Budhlada blocks in district Mansa, Lehragaga and Sunam in District Sangrur and Muktsar block in Muktsar district are no longer be the part of EBB. They are identified as

backward in terms of literacy rate especially the females and the education gap between the males and females has become narrower because of the different and suitable policies implemented by centre and state government.

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