



5. Education – Building People

Apart from its intrinsic value, the importance of education in contributing towards the development of human potential is well accepted, both at the national level and in Punjab. Education has been accorded a fair amount of centrality in policy initiatives. Since Independence, economic planners have grappled with education policies. Over the years, a vast network of schools and institutions for training teachers, for effective development of curriculum, publication of textbooks, etc., has been set up. A number of schemes and incentives have been launched to attract children, especially the girl child, to school. Special efforts have been taken to persuade parents to send their children to school. All these efforts have paid dividends.

A significant move towards universalising education in India was the formulation of the National Policy on Education (1986). The Policy sought to provide education for all and focused primarily on providing marginalised groups greater access to education. Promotion of education for women, as underlined in the Policy, became a priority area.

Internationally, the Jomtien World Conference (1990) was a major initiative in education. By being a signatory to the Conference declarations (See Box 5.1), the government reaffirmed its commitment to a dual approach of according equal importance to primary education and adult literacy.



Courtesy IDC

Education for development of human potential

It is the provision of greater access to education for all which demands attention. The quality of life of the learner will hardly improve if the manner, form and content of education is far removed from reality. The Jomtien Declaration, 1990, in this



Box 5.1: Jomtien Declaration, 1990

The Jomtien Declaration (1990) states that “Every person—child, youth and adult—shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise essential learning tools and basic learning content required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work with dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.”



context says that “Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development—for an individual or for society—depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e., whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values.”

Hence, the real emphasis needs to be on developing a curriculum that is not divorced from the realities faced by the respective learners.

The Declaration also marked the transition from an instrumental approach, where individual development was superseded and productivity of society was the key concern, to a more people-centred approach. Development of society became secondary and individual development through education became primary. This trend was a welcome one, especially in the case of women’s education. Women’s education was advocated chiefly to achieve greater productivity in society, whether it was as better informed wives and mothers or whether it was as effective participants in keeping down the birth and mortality rates.

The Declaration aimed to bring in far reaching changes. For the first time, women were recognised as individuals in their own right, with hopes and aspirations that were theirs alone. Being equal partners in the development process, they had the right to develop their individual lives. This was recognised and given due cognisance.

The role of the State was clearly outlined in the Jomtien Declaration. It stressed that the State was responsible for ensuring that everyone, minus discriminations, had access to education. Prior to the Declaration, the Constitution of India had provided a key role for the State. According to Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, the State must guarantee free and compulsory

schooling for children up to the age of 14 within a period of 10 years.

Yet the Directive Principle was perhaps a little too optimistic. In India, poor enrolments and high drop-out rate are often governed by various socio-economic reasons. State interference becomes imperative, even crucial, not just in providing a sound education policy and infrastructure, but also in tackling socio-economic impediments. It is only with this two-pronged attack that education can be used in the way intended by the World Declaration of 1990.

Education in Punjab: Present Scenario

The greatest concern in Punjab is that still few sections do not have access to education. Despite Punjab being economically progressive, it is yet short to universalise elementary education for all its children. Punjab has registered a literacy rate of 69.95 percent (Census 2001). It has an all India rank of 10 on the literacy scale among Indian states. If we also consider the union territories (UTs), Punjab slips down six places further. Nevertheless, the data given below highlights that the state has achieved some success in the field of education. The data presents the educational levels over several decades.

It can be noted from Table 5.1 that there has been a substantial increase in literacy rates over the years. These rates have shown an increase across the population, both male and female.

Table 5.1: Literacy Rates by Sex in Punjab (in percent)

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1971	34.12	42.23	24.65
1981	43.37	51.23	34.35
1991	58.51	65.66	50.41
2001	69.95	75.63	63.55

Source: Provisional Population totals, Census 2001.

Note: The rates for the years 1971-2001 relate to the population aged 7 years and above.



There has also been a substantial increase in the number of schools set up both at the primary and middle levels. The increase over the years (1966-2000) has been approximately 52 percent at the level of primary schooling facilities. Similarly, at middle school level, there has been an increase of 34 percent.

At the level of primary schooling, the percentage increase in the number of teachers was approximately 49 percent. For middle schools, the increase was a

mere 0.99 percent. This reveals the emphasis the government has placed on primary education.

Key indicators are overall literacy rates of the population, enrolment rates and dropout rates. In the following section we will try and highlight these through an analysis of secondary data from the Census (2000-2001), Registrar General of India. For the purpose of this report, 'literate' has been defined as any person who is able to read and write in any language.

Table 5.2: States and Union Territories Ranked by Literacy Rate, 2001

Rank	India/ State/ Union territory	Literacy rate (in percent)		
		Persons	Males	Females
	INDIA	65.38	75.85	54.16
1	Kerala	90.92	94.20	87.86
2	Mizoram	88.49	90.69	86.13
3	Lakshadweep	87.52	93.15	81.56
4	Goa	82.32	88.88	75.51
5	Delhi	81.82	87.37	75.00
6	Chandigarh	81.76	85.65	76.65
7	Pondicherry	81.49	88.89	74.13
8	Andaman & Nicobar Is.	81.18	86.07	75.29
9	Daman & Diu	81.09	88.40	70.37
10	Maharashtra	77.27	86.27	67.51
11	Himachal Pradesh	77.13	86.02	68.08
12	Tripura	73.66	81.47	65.41
13	Tamil Nadu	73.47	82.33	64.55
14	Uttaranchal	72.28	84.01	60.26
15	Gujarat	69.97	80.50	58.60
16	Punjab	69.95	75.63	63.55
17	Sikkim	69.68	76.73	61.46
18	West Bengal	69.22	77.58	60.22
19	Manipur	68.87	77.87	59.70
20	Haryana	68.59	79.25	56.31
21	Nagaland	67.11	71.77	61.92
22	Karnataka	67.04	76.29	57.45
23	Chhattisgarh	65.18	77.86	52.40
24	Assam	64.28	71.93	56.03
25	Madhya Pradesh	64.11	76.80	50.28
26	Orissa	63.61	75.95	50.97
27	Meghalaya	63.31	66.14	60.41
28	Andhra Pradesh	61.11	70.85	51.17
29	Rajasthan	61.03	76.46	44.34
30	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	60.03	73.32	42.99
31	Uttar Pradesh	57.36	70.23	42.98
32	Arunachal Pradesh	54.74	64.07	44.24
33	Jammu & Kashmir	54.46	65.75	41.82
34	Jharkhand	54.13	67.94	39.38
35	Bihar	47.53	60.32	33.57

Source : Census of India, 2001, Tables downloaded from Census website, Registrar General of India, New Delhi.



Table 5.3: Ranking of Districts by Literacy (in percent)

Districts	Literacy Rate	
	Persons	Rank
Amritsar	67.85	10
Bathinda	61.51	13
F. G. Sahib	74.10	7
Faridkot	63.34	12
Firozpur	61.42	14
Gurdaspur	74.19	6
Hoshiarpur	81.40	1
Jalandhar	77.91	3
Kapurthala	73.56	8
Ludhiana	76.54	5
Mansa	52.50	17
Moga	63.94	11
Mukatsar	58.67	16
Nawanshehar	76.86	4
Patiala	69.96	9
Rup Nagar	78.49	2
Sangrur	60.04	15
Punjab	69.95	

Source: Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001, Census of India.

Out of a total population of 24,289,296 in the state (Census 2001), 14,853,810 are literate. The provisional results show an overall literacy rate of

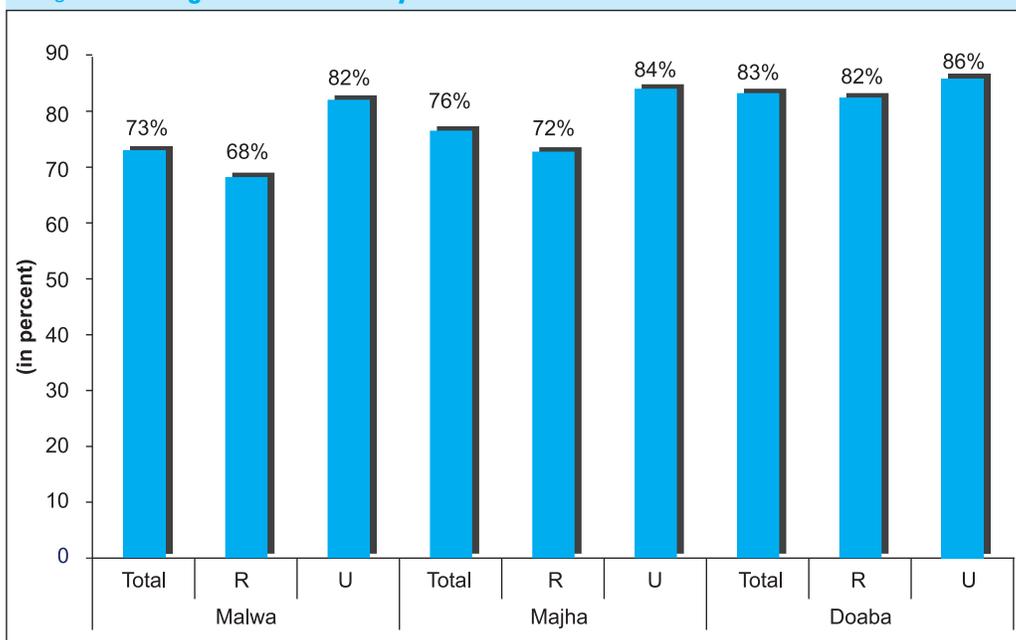
69.95 percent, which is slightly higher than the national average of 65.38 percent. However, in spite of a relatively high rate of literacy, there are 63.8 lakh illiterates in the state.

From Table 5.2 it is seen that among the states and UTs, Punjab ranks 16 in terms of literacy. Kerala has the highest literacy rate of 90.92 percent, while Bihar has the lowest literacy rate of 47.53 percent. Punjab has shown an impressive growth in the number of literates in the last decade. During the period 1991-2001, the percentage increase in the number of literates in the state has gone up by 49.55 points. However, the same for India has gone up by 56.81 points.

Intra-state comparisons throw up an interesting picture. Literacy rates for Punjab, disaggregated at the district level, are given in Table 5.3.

Hoshiarpur district has the highest literacy figures while Mansa has the lowest. It may be pointed out here that not only are Mansa's literacy levels much lower as compared to the all India figure of

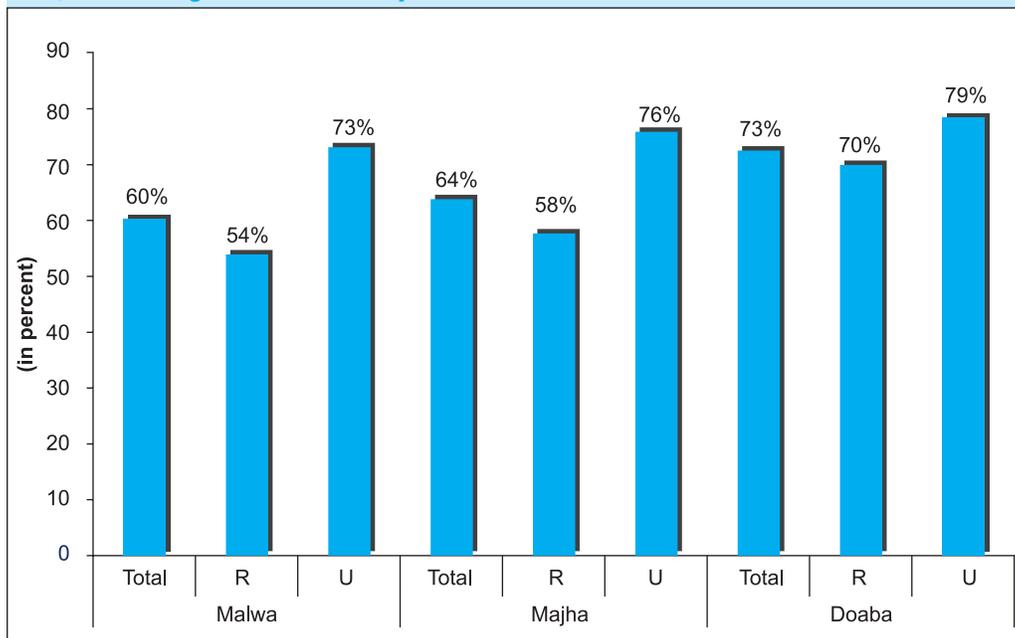
Figure 5.1: Region-wise Literacy Rate for Males



Source: Based on Provisional Series 2 of Census of India, 2001.



Figure 5.2: **Region-wise Literacy Rate for Females**



Source: Based on Provisional Series 2 of Census of India, 2001.

65.38 percent; it is even lower than the state of Uttar Pradesh, which had a literacy rate of 57.4 percent and ranks 31st amongst all states and UTs.

Regional Variations

For the purpose of this report, Punjab has been divided into three cultural regions—Majha, Malwa and Doaba.

Educational differences among these regions are interesting. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 would help understand some of the literacy differences between the regions.

While education levels on a comparative basis are high for the Doaba region, they are moderate for the Majha region and low for the Malwa region. All the districts in the Doaba region have literacy rates higher than the overall figures for the state of Punjab. This applies to both male and female literacy rates. In the Majha region, while the figures for the district of Amritsar are slightly less than those of the state of Punjab, for the district of Gurdaspur, they are higher. So, overall the region is close to the state average. However, most of

the districts in the Malwa region lag behind the state average. Except for Rup Nagar, Ludhiana and F. G. Sahib, all other districts are far below the state average. Thus there are clear regional divides on literacy rates.

The graphs show clearly that Malwa region lags behind the other two regions. The most contrasting figures are for rural female literacy rates. In the whole of rural Doaba, female literacy rate is a little less than 70 percent; while the corresponding figure for the Malwa region is less than 54 percent. These regional differences could be due to the overwhelming existence of larger land holdings in the Malwa region, with agriculture being the primary occupation requiring little emphasis on education. Thus, women's education is even further neglected, a tendency compounded by the fact that communities in Malwa tend to be male-dominated, patriarchal and feudal.

In the Doaba region, education assumes greater importance because there is a high incidence of out-migration. There are instances of women's



Table 5.4: **District-wise Data on the Rural-Urban Divide and Percentage Decrease in Rural-Urban Differential**

(in percent)

Districts	R-U difference (2001)	R-U difference (1991)	Percentage decrease in Rural-Urban differential (1991-2001)
Amritsar	17.72	24.21	6.49
Bathinda	20.66	27.65	6.99
F. G. Sahib	8.51	13.79	5.28
Faridkot	14.13	23.12	8.99
Firozpur	21.47	27.42	5.95
Gurdaspur	12.47	15.25	2.78
Hoshiarpur	6.57	8.55	1.98
Jalandhar	7.33	15.06	7.73
Kapurthala	9.06	16.94	7.88
Ludhiana	6.54	9.43	2.89
Mansa	23.67	30.34	6.67
Moga	13.66	19.69	6.03
Mukatsar	17.83	26.10	8.27
Nawanshehar	6.27	8.41	2.14
Patiala	18.65	25.72	7.07
Rup Nagar	12.09	17.57	5.48
Sangrur	14.26	18.78	4.52
Punjab	13.97	19.39	5.42

Source: Based on Provisional Series 2, Census of India.

education being advocated for matrimonial purposes.

Rural-Urban Divide

Any understanding of literacy in Punjab remains incomplete without an analysis of the rural-urban divide.

An analysis of rural and urban literacy rates shows that Hoshiarpur tops again with 80.09 percent and 86.66 percent in the rural and urban literacy rates, respectively. Mansa is the least literate with only 47.56 percent rural literacy and 71.23 percent urban literacy.

Urban literacy rates are consistently higher than rural literacy rates for all 17 districts of Punjab. This is nothing unusual. However, except for the first five districts, that is, Hoshiarpur, Rup Nagar, Jalandhar, Nawanshehar and Ludhiana, there is a very clear rural-urban divide. Incidentally, these five districts ranked the first five in the overall literacy rates in 1991 as well as in 2001. Thus, these five

districts are clearly in a different category from the others. Again the last five districts were the same in both 1991 and 2001, implying that the pattern has not changed drastically.

Compared to the figures of 1991, Mansa has taken the lead with the highest growth in rural literacy rate, which is 15.34 percent, while the least growth is shown by Hoshiarpur district, with 9.48 percent growth. Nawanshehar has shown the highest urban literacy growth rate over 1991, with a growth rate of 10.95 percent, while Kapurthala has shown the lowest rate, at 3.79 percent.

Thus the highest rural-urban disparity occurs in Mansa at 23.67 percent, while in Nawanshehar, the rural and urban literacy gap has narrowed and there was a difference of only 6.27 percent.

The Gender Component

Women's education, as an effective tool for empowerment has been advocated for decades,



Table 5.5: District-wise Literacy Rates by Sex

(in percent)

Districts	Literacy rates (2001)					
	Persons	Rank	Males	Rank	Females	Rank
Amritsar	67.85	10	73.58	10	61.41	10
Bathinda	61.51	13	68.31	14	53.76	13
F. G. Sahib	74.10	7	78.85	7	68.60	6
Faridkot	63.34	12	68.92	12	57.09	12
Firozpur	61.42	14	69.55	11	52.33	15
Gurdaspur	74.19	6	80.44	5	67.31	8
Hoshiarpur	81.40	1	86.97	1	75.56	1
Jalandhar	77.91	3	82.37	4	72.93	2
Kapurthala	73.56	8	78.66	8	67.90	7
Ludhiana	76.54	5	80.19	6	72.11	3
Mansa	52.50	17	59.12	17	45.07	17
Moga	63.94	11	68.40	13	58.96	11
Mukatsar	58.67	16	65.94	16	50.59	16
Nawanshehar	76.86	4	83.67	3	69.52	5
Patiala	69.96	9	76.13	9	62.94	9
Rup Nagar	78.49	2	84.43	2	71.74	4
Sangrur	60.04	15	65.97	15	53.29	14
Punjab	69.95		75.63		63.55	

Source: Provisional Population Totals Paper 1 of 2001.

but was finally given international legitimacy at the Beijing World Conference on Women (1995). Earlier, the emphasis on education was designed to create better informed wives and mothers. However, at Beijing, the definition of women's education was given a revolutionary new meaning and education for women was advocated in order to enable them to have increased choices, take their own decisions and make improvements in their lives, all of which would lead to empowerment, the overall goal of the women's movement.

The UNDP, drawing from the lessons of the Beijing Conference, has stressed that no study that purports to measure the level of education of any

region can be considered complete if it does not take into account the literacy rates of women.

From Table 5.6 it is clear that there has been an increase in female literacy rates during 1991–2001. While for males there has been an increase of just 10 points, for females the increase has been over 13 points. A district wise analysis of the data shows that Hoshiarpur tops the list on female literacy with 75.56 percent, while Mansa is at the bottom with 45.07 percent (Table 5.5). However, while Mansa improved its position by 16.53 points between 1991 and 2001, the maximum in the state, Ludhiana showed the least increase of 10.87 points over the same years.

Table 5.6: Comparative Male-Female Literacy rates in Punjab

Years	Literacy Rate			M-F Differential	Rate of decline of M-F Differential
	Persons	Males	Females		
1971	34.12	42.23	24.65	17.58	—
1981	43.37	51.23	34.35	16.88	3.98
1991	58.51	65.66	50.41	15.25	9.66
2001	69.95	75.63	63.55	12.08	20.79

Source: Based on Provisional Series, Paper 1, Census of India, 2001.



For male literacy, Hoshiarpur tops with 86.97 percent. Mansa has the lowest male literacy rate of 59.12 percent.

However, the differences between male and female literacy rates do not correlate very well with overall literacy rates. For example, in a district like Nawanshehar, which stands 4th in the overall literacy rate, there is a glaring difference in male-female literacy. In fact, Nawanshehar would be ranked 14th if the districts were ranked by the male-female literacy differential.

An analysis of literacy rates of males and females reveals that the male-female differentials have been declining over decades. For example, the male-female difference rate was 17.58 percent in 1971; it fell to 16.88 percent in 1981 and further to 15.25 and 12.08 percent in 1991 and 2001, respectively. Punjab, with a male-female differential of 12.08 percent, compares well with the states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, which have male-female differentials of 22.94 and 17.94 respectively.

This fact is further reinforced once we look at the rate of decline of the male-female literacy gap. In 1981, the rate of decline was 3.98 percent while in 1991 it rose to 9.66 percent and further to 20.79 percent in 2001. This has only been possible because of a faster rate of growth of female literacy in the state. For example, male literacy rate increased by 33 percent from 1971 to 2001, while female literacy rate increased by 39 percent.

Gender in Urban and Rural Literacy

From Table 5.7, we see that urban males lead with 82.97 percent while rural females have the lowest literacy rate (57.91).

At the district level, a rural-urban literacy comparison of males and females shows that Hoshiarpur has the highest percentage of male literates in rural areas, 86.11 percent, whereas male rural literacy is lowest in the district of Mansa standing only at 54.27 percent. Among rural females, the highest percentage again is found in Hoshiarpur, at 73.87 percent, while the lowest rural female literacy rates are in Mansa (40.03 percent).

Table 5.7: District-wise Male and Female Literacy in Urban and Rural Areas, Punjab, 2001

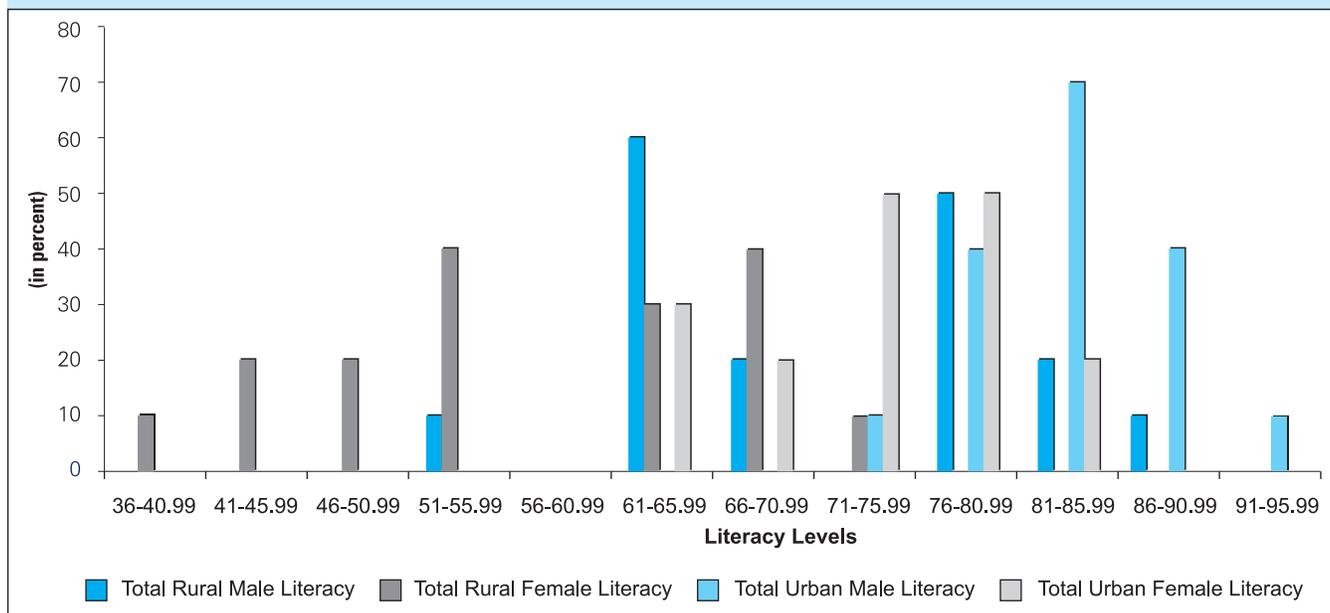
(in percent)

Districts	Punjab		Rural Punjab		Urban Punjab	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Amritsar	73.58	61.41	67.83	52.69	81.84	74.39
Bathinda	68.31	53.76	62.46	47.16	81.88	69.19
Faridkot	68.92	57.09	64.18	52.27	78.35	66.49
FG Sahib	78.85	68.60	76.86	65.83	83.87	75.87
Firozpur	69.55	52.33	64.78	45.78	82.58	71.03
Gurdaspur	80.44	67.31	77.70	63.58	88.16	78.11
Hoshiarpur	86.97	75.56	86.11	73.87	90.30	82.62
Jalandhar	82.37	72.93	80.14	68.17	84.73	78.29
Kapurthala	78.66	67.90	76.27	64.41	83.30	75.33
Ludhiana	80.19	72.11	78.32	66.73	81.58	76.66
Mansa	59.12	45.07	54.27	40.03	77.56	64.14
Moga	68.40	58.96	65.93	55.87	78.05	71.20
Muktsar	65.94	50.59	61.84	45.49	77.78	65.40
Nawanshehar	83.67	69.52	83.15	68.27	86.84	77.30
Patiala	76.13	62.94	70.40	55.29	86.52	76.84
Rup Nagar	84.43	71.74	81.39	66.71	90.63	82.01
Sangrur	65.97	53.29	61.93	48.98	75.67	63.76
Punjab	75.63	63.55	71.70	57.91	82.97	74.63

Source: Paper 1 for Punjab, Census of India 2001, Registrar General of India.



Figure 5.3: Distribution of Districts as per their Literacy Levels by Sex and Place of Residence



Source: Based on Provisional Series 2 of 2001, Census of India.

Inter-district literacy disparity becomes much more evident once we look at the gaps in literacy between these two districts. The gap between these two districts in the case of rural male literacy is 31.84 percent, while the gap between the districts is 33.84 in the case of rural female literacy rate. The differences are sharp for urban male and female literacy rates between the two districts.

Twelve out of the 17 districts of Punjab have rural female literacy rates that are less than 66 percent. Correspondingly, only three districts have less than 66 percent urban female literacy rate. In the case of males, seven districts have less than 66

percent male literacy rate in rural Punjab while no district in urban Punjab has a male literacy rate that is less than 66 percent. Only one district, Hoshiarpur, has a rural female literacy rate of more than 71 percent.

In contrast, in urban Punjab 12 districts have a female literacy rate of more than 71 percent (Figure 5.7). This points to the fact that women's education in the rural areas has perhaps not been given the same importance as in the urban areas.

Also, Punjab has managed to reduce the absolute total number of illiterates both in the case of males

Table 5.8: Decadal Decrease in Illiteracy Rates of Males and Females, 1991-2001

Illiteracy among Males					Illiteracy among Females				
Number of Male Illiterates		Decadal Decrease	Percentage Decrease	Percentage Contribution in Decrease to the country	Number of Female Illiterates		Decadal Decrease	Percentage Decrease	Percentage Contribution in Decrease to the country
1991	2001				1991	2001			
3095357	2743910	351447	11.35	1.64	3948251	3636084	312167	7.9	2.97

Source: Based on Provisional series, Paper 1 for Punjab, Census of India, 2001.



and females. This is supported by Table 5.8, which shows the percentage decrease in illiteracy figures for both males and females over 1991-2001. The percentage decrease in the case of males has been 11.35 percent, which is lesser than the all India level decrease of 16.34 percent.

The situation is different in case of female illiterates. The percentage decrease of 7.90 is more than the all India figure of 5.25 percentage points. The percent contribution of Punjab to the country as a whole, in decreasing female illiteracy is more than its contribution in the reduction of male illiteracy.

Enrolment and Dropouts

Enrolment and dropout rates are crucial indicators in the study of literacy levels. An analysis of these figures brings out the actual levels of learning at the primary stage. These figures are influenced and biased by the immediate socio-economic realities of the potential learner and interpretations should ideally take these into account.

As regards enrolment rates, female enrolment rates are higher for the state as a whole than male enrolment rates. The male enrolment rate for the state in the year 1999 was 66.95 percent, while it was 68.07 percent for females. For as many as 11 districts the female enrolment rate was higher than that of the male. Surprisingly, most of these districts belong to the Majha and Doaba belt. The highest male enrolment rate was in Hoshiarpur district, while the highest female enrolment rate was in Gurdaspur district. The lowest male and female enrolment rate was found in Ludhiana, at 57.03 and 58.72 percent.

The primary level dropout rate from 1995 to 1999 was 22.17 percent. For males the primary level dropout rate was 24.12 percent, while for females it was 19.99 percent. At the secondary level too, that is from class 6th to 10th, the dropout rate shows a similar trend. The dropout rate for boys is 21.43 percent while for the girls it is 14.22 percent. Also, the dropout rate decreases from the primary to the secondary level. At the primary level the dropout rate was 22.17 while at the secondary level it was 18.24 percent. The dropout rate falls more steeply for the females than for males from the primary to the secondary level.

Table 5.9: Estimated Enrolment Rates in Primary Schools in Punjab, 1999

District	Total	Male	Female
Amritsar	64.23	61.54	67.31
Bathinda	72.92	75.67	69.83
F. G. Sahib	67.60	65.50	70.05
Faridkot	73.53	74.78	72.12
Ferozpur	66.84	69.22	64.16
Gurdaspur	77.40	74.91	80.27
Hoshiarpur	78.36	78.08	78.67
Jalandhar	72.43	71.61	73.37
Kapurthala	64.79	63.75	65.95
Ludhiana	57.80	57.03	58.72
Mansa	66.20	67.40	64.87
Moga	67.18	66.84	67.57
Mukatsar	67.78	70.11	65.16
Nawanshehar	71.40	69.07	74.00
Patiala	63.65	63.48	63.85
Rup Nagar	70.05	68.67	71.61
Sangrur	61.81	61.86	61.75
Punjab	67.47	66.95	68.07

Source: Enrolment rates have been derived from data on enrolled children from the Directorate of Public Instruction (Schools) and estimated number of children in school going ages from Population Projections and age group based on Census of India 1991 and 2001.

School Infrastructure: Access and Provision

Punjab's achievements have been impressive in provision of schools. From just 6,820 primary schools in 1966-67, the number has gone up to 12,996, servicing nearly every habitation in the state. Table 5.10 shows that the greatest expansion of schooling facilities took place in the 1970s in Punjab, when the number of schools rose by two-thirds, covering the entire state.

There has also been a substantial increase in the number of teachers. The number of primary school teachers rose from nearly 23,000 in 1966-67 to nearly 47,000 in 2000. Again it was the 1970s which saw a massive increase in the number of school teachers.



Table 5.10: **Year-wise Provision of Schools**

Period	Primary Schools		Middle Schools		Primary School Teachers	
	Numbers	% Change over Previous Period	Numbers	% Change over Previous Period	Numbers	% Change over Previous Period
1966/67	6820		872		22713	
1970-71	7458	9.35	1060	21.56	22794	0.4
1980-81	12383	66.04	1498	41.32	47903	110.2
1990-91	12400	0.14	1421	-5.14	47974	0.1
1999/2000	12996	4.81	2534	78.33	46556	-3.0

Source: Directorate of Public Instructions (Schools), Punjab.

Today Punjab's educational infrastructure is third best in India. According to latest statistics¹, 96 percent of habitations were covered by a primary school within a distance of one kilometre. Only Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have a better coverage rate. The coverage of middle schools is, however, not as good: only 84 percent habitations have a middle school within three kilometres. In this, Punjab ranks sixth among all major states of India.

The 6th All India Education Survey provides information on the facilities available in schools. In 1995-96, the percentage of children in primary schools equipped with drinking water facilities was 89, but only 59 percent children had schools with a urinal, and just 29 percent schools were equipped with urinals for girls.

Table 5.11: **Teacher-Student Ratio at the Three Levels of Education**

Region / District	Teacher-Pupil Ratio		
	Primary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
Majha			
Amritsar	39	23	31
Gurdaspur	31	28	21
Doaba			
Hoshiarpur	34	25	23
Jalandhar	43	27	25
Kapurthala	34	22	19
Nawanshehar	47	30	23
Malwa			
Bathinda	48	28	20
F. G. Sahib	43	30	23
Faridkot	46	23	14
Firozpur	49	27	25
Ludhiana	40	25	21
Mansa	55	30	23
Moga	50	34	20
Mukatsar	52	27	23
Patiala	41	28	23
Rup Nagar	36	24	23
Sangrur	47	30	23
Punjab	41	26	23

Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2000.

¹ "Selected Educational Statistics 2000-2001", Government of India, New Delhi, 2002.



Teacher-Pupil Ratio

The number of teachers attending to a class of students is crucial to education. The norm in India, also adopted by Punjab, is 40 students per teacher for primary classes.

An analysis of the data shows that the teacher-pupil ratio for the state is 41 students per teacher at the primary level. At the district level, in Mansa district there are 55 students per teacher, which is the highest rate among the districts. Incidentally, Mansa is the least literate district in the state both in terms of male and female literacy. Also, Mansa is lowest in the enrolment rate. Minimum students per teacher are found in Gurdaspur district at 31 students per teacher. Gurdaspur is among the most literate districts of Punjab. Gurdaspur also has the highest female enrolment rate and one of the highest male enrolment rates. This affirms a possible positive correlation between literacy, enrolment and the teacher-student ratio, though this may not be true of all the districts where there could be other important factors affecting enrolment and literacy rates.

Higher Education

As we move from lower classes to higher classes, there is a sharp drop in the number of students enrolled. Taking the data of different classes and disciplines for the year 1999, we get an enrolment pyramid revealing huge numbers of drop-outs as children advance in education. In a state where

trends indicate that there is a movement away from agriculture and that children of agriculturists are shifting from their family occupation, such a large drop-out rate is a matter of concern.

In 1999, there were nearly 3.8 lakh children on an average per class from classes one to eight, but this dropped to 2.4 lakh in high school, and to just 57,000 per class in graduate classes (all disciplines included).

Table 5.12 shows that there are five universities in Punjab, nearly 200 arts and science colleges and about 22 institutions for engineering and medicine. In science and arts colleges, nearly 1.7 lakh students are enrolled in all classes, and 20,000 are enrolled in medical, engineering and other professional colleges.

Students should be encouraged to opt for professional courses, courses offering basic sciences as well as the liberal arts. While professional courses make students more employable, liberal education sustains a liberal environment in civil society.

The State and Education

The state government is the largest and most important provider of education, more importantly it is the largest regulator of the quality of education. An analysis of government programmes is therefore essential.

Table 5.12: Graduate and Post Graduate Education Institutions in Punjab

Year	University	Arts, Science, Commerce and Home Science colleges	Engineering, Technology and Architecture college	Medical Colleges (Allopathic only)	Teachers Training College (B.Ed.)
1971*	3	122	2	4	17
1980	3	162	3	5	18
1990	3	171	3	5	18
2000	5	204	16	6	22
2001	5	205	16	6	23

* Information relates to 31 March

Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2002.



Programmes for Universalisation of Elementary Education

Free and Compulsory Education

The Government of Punjab provides free educational opportunities to all children in the age group of 6-14 years under the Free and Compulsory Education Scheme. The steps taken under this initiative include efforts to increase the retention of students in classes, increase enrolment rates, improving existing infrastructure and providing it wherever required, promoting innovative approaches in schools and introducing decentralised planning in education. Also the government must ensure that all communities get access to and take advantage of educational facilities.

As part of its strategy to improve primary education, the initiative states that mobilising community support in villages where a large percentage of the illiterate population resides, is imperative. Pockets with poor levels of literacy have been identified, namely the districts of Firozpur, Mansa, Sangrur and Bathinda. Within these, the pockets inhabited by the Scheduled Castes and the economically backward population have been identified. In these pockets, incentives such as free residential school for day-scholars, non-formal education, stipends and scholarships, free books and mid-day meals for children are provided in the hope that these will improve attendance and boost overall literacy of these regions.

Total Literacy Campaigns

In improving literacy levels, the large backlog of adults (described as those above the age of 15 years) who have not had the benefit of education in their early years, must also be considered. Punjab has been running literacy programmes for these un-lettered adults, primarily through the Total Literacy Scheme, which includes total literacy campaigns, post-literacy campaigns and continuing education for neo-literate adults.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Jan Sampark Abhiyan

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is operational in Punjab and is designed to fill the gaps in the government's education agenda. It was launched with the support of the Government of India. This programme selects educationally backward districts, involves local communities and tries to reach out to educationally deprived children by providing them with a teacher and a school.

The aim of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to ensure that no child aged 6-14 remains out of school. SSA provides grants for construction and repair of school buildings, setting up of Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Centres, free books to SC students and girls, training to teachers, training to parent-teacher associations, etc.

Practical decisions and decisions on the amount of money to be spent are taken by Village Education Development Committees. The same committees are responsible for giving contracts to families or social service agencies in the villages to prepare mid-day meals and distribute these to all primary school children.

The state government has adopted the concept of Jan Sampark Abhiyan. In this programme, officials have fanned out to all 216 educational blocks of the state to monitor the implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and other programmes. The Jan Sampark Abhiyan tries to ensure that there is genuine community participation.



Teachers' Training

State Council of Education Research & Training (SCERT)

Established in 1981, various units of SCERT have been focusing on pre-service and in-service teacher training, as envisaged in the National Policy of Education. There are 13 District Institutes of Education and Training and JBT schools that impart pre-service training to primary teachers. To provide in-service training to working secondary teachers, 12 in-service training centres are functioning at various district headquarters. In addition, the State Institute of Science Education imparts in-service training to science/maths teachers. To impart training in the latest /advanced educational technology, SCERT organises seminars for teachers through their educational technology cell. SCERT also stores comparative data in their Data Processing Unit to assess rates of success. The Evaluation Unit of the SCERT is also working on examination reforms. The Educational and Vocational Guidance Bureau motivates students and teachers to appreciate dignity of labour and self-employment and try and prevent frustration resulting from unemployment.

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)

There are 17 DIETs in the state, one in each district. Twelve of these have been approved by the NCERT. There are approximately 100 seats per DIET. Recently, the number of seats was increased in areas where the density of population is high. Fifty percent of the seats in each of the DIETs are reserved for women. The training imparted at the DIET is known as Elementary Teachers' Training and lasts for two years. The minimum qualification required for this training is 10+2 with at least 50 percent marks and the job securing age for an ETT teacher is 18-35 years.

The State government has also provided for In-service training. There are 12 In-service Training Centres in the state, which are responsible for

training and updating working ETT teachers in accordance with recommendations of the State Education Policy.

Every year about 8,000 primary school teachers and the same number of secondary school teachers are given training through these centres.

Upgrading infrastructure

Punjab's major achievement has been to provide a primary school in every village with a "minimum enrolment of 50 students". To ensure that children from Scheduled Caste communities (who may not have the same access to schools situated in non-SC areas) and children living in remote hilly areas where a population of 50 school-going children is not always available, schools have also been opened for 'less than 50 children'. Since the aim is to improve accessibility to education, schools have been opened in sub-mountainous areas in the Kandi region. The state education administration is also trying to provide drinking water and toilets in all schools. The sixth All India Education Survey shows that 11 percent of primary schools did not have drinking water facilities, 41 percent needed a urinal, while nearly 71 percent of schools needed a separate urinal for girls. Efforts are being made to rectify the situation. For example, the state annual plan for 2000-2001 provides Rs. 5 crore for toilets for boys and girls. It aims to provide this facility to each government primary school. Similarly, Rs. 4.5 crore have been planned for handpumps to schools without adequate drinking water facilities, at an average of Rs. 15,000 per hand pump. The aim is to install 3,000 handpumps. The state government is also making constant efforts to improve school infrastructure.

Other efforts include providing "innovative, imaginative and interesting teaching and learning equipment like books, blackboards, maps, colourful charts, models, globes, etc.", and promoting extra-curricular activities.





Elementary education for all

Direct initiatives are being undertaken to ensure better school attendance by children of disadvantaged groups and increase retention rates. The state pays attendance incentive scholarship of Rs. 50 per month to Scheduled Caste girl students if they manage 80 percent attendance. A scholarship of Rs. 30 per month is given to Vimukt Jati students. The Punjab School Education Board also provides free textbooks to all the Scheduled Caste students at the primary level.

The mid-day meal scheme has been introduced in 40 blocks, selected on the basis of lowest female literacy rates (1991 rates) in the state. These blocks are located in nine districts Patiala, Firozpur, Mukatsar, Mansa, Faridkot, Amritsar, Bathinda, Sangrur and Moga. Under the scheme, 3 kg of grain is given to each student.

Quality of Education

Gaining access to a school, passing examinations and being enumerated as literate are the major indicators of assessing education. However, these

figures hide certain central questions in education in Punjab today.

Quality of Teaching

Much is written and said about quality of teaching, which greatly depends on the quality of textbooks. Many school teachers across different primary schools have spoken about the fact that school texts are badly written and do not attempt to be interesting or exciting for a child.²

Prof. Yashpal in the report, "Learning without Burden", wrote in the preface that "I and my colleagues.... are convinced that the more pernicious burden is that of non-comprehension. In fact, a significant fraction of children who drop out may be those who refuse to compromise with non-comprehension – they are potentially superior to those who just memorise and do well in examinations, without comprehending very much!"

There is an urgent need to make textbooks readable, exciting for children and written in a manner that makes learning fun.

² These discussions were held with school teachers during visits to rural government schools by Project Team.



Equally crucial is the teacher-pupil ratio. How effective is the 40 students per teacher formula which has been laid down as the national norm? Further, in innumerable cases where the teacher-pupil ratio is more than 40 to one, the burden on the teacher becomes enormous.

Given the wide variations in conditions, perhaps it is difficult to establish a fixed number to the teacher-student ratio. In discussions, many primary school teachers confessed to being more comfortable with numbers of students closer to 30 rather than 40. As soon as student numbers begin to exceed 40 per teacher, education suffers.

The challenge is not only to take education to every child, however backward and marginalised, but also to maintain the quality of education. Given the demand on the states' resources, it might be difficult to increase the number of teachers in government schools. However, there are many innovative community-based mechanisms available to increase the number of teachers for schools, such as making use of responsible literate mothers as part-time teachers.

Private Education

Private schools have mushroomed across the state, from nursery to high schools. These enclaves of relatively better but high-cost education provide alternatives to the state system but also create certain problems.

The advantages are easy to see—better educated children, varied activities and so on. The problems are more complex. Private schooling creates pockets of quality education, leaving children educated in government schools burdened with low quality education. Thus a dual system of education develops, in which private schools become associated with quality and government schools with large quantities.

Building Years, from Ages Three to Six

The child's growing years from birth up to the age of six are a critical phase in a child's development, since over 60 percent of a person's learning takes place in this time period. Those families aware of this, as well as influenced by peer pressure in cities and towns, send their children to some sort of school from the age of three or four. On the other hand, most rural children, children in slums, and children from poorer backgrounds do not enter a school till the age of six or seven or even eight years of age. Thus, the mental development of these children tends to fall behind that of those who have attended some sort of school from a much younger age.

The constitutional amendment which gives the right of education to every child aged 6-14 years, misses out on the earlier crucial years.

In Punjab, there are opportunities for pioneering efforts in this age group and the state could devise innovative community-based ways to educate children of ages below six years. Many child care programmes, child care centres and child care facilities are available in most villages and all smaller urban locations. These could be effectively used and run with local representatives.

Future Challenges

The most important challenge that faces the state government today is to implement within 10 years, Article 45 of the Directive Principles of the Constitution of India. Most of the states in India, including Punjab, have not been able to fulfil this Directive Principle. It is still virtually impossible for many children to gain access to primary schools.

The increasing privatisation of education, especially at the stage of primary education, whilst providing good and quality education to many children, has created a social divide. Privatisation of schools has



ensured that students who have the resources to pay for their education, can now gain access to better educational facilities. This has created elites at the level of primary schooling. In contrast, government schools have fallen behind in the crucial areas of infrastructure and quality of teachers, resulting in relatively poor students and unmotivated teachers. Nor can government schools compete with the few model schools known as the Navodya Vidyalayas or Adarsh Schools. These institutions, like their private counterparts, siphon off students belonging to more affluent sections, leaving overcrowded government schools sunk in gloom, burdened with inadequate teachers and poor facilities.

Privatisation of schooling has intensified class differences and led to the commercialisation of education. The government needs a policy which can effectively address these social divisions.

The main aim must be delivering quality education in public schools and ensuring that all children receive a similar quality of education up to at least primary and secondary levels. Government schools should not become bywords for bad students. Basic infrastructure, which the state is trying to ensure, trained and motivated teachers, a curriculum and textbooks that excite children, must be put in place. Most assessments of government standard books across India have shown them to be poor in quality and often severely uninteresting for children.

Curriculum should be made relevant to the needs of the 21st century. This is an area that needs urgent and maximum attention. Uniformity in education should also be ensured in the universities. Financial management is also important. A format should be prepared on how educational institutions should submit financial requirements for infrastructure development, procurement of equipment, etc.

The state government should also work out a policy that ensures greater co-ordination between education at school and college levels. Education must be job-oriented, geared towards finding employment opportunities and encouraging students towards self-employment.

Accountability of institutions needs to be strengthened. Decentralisation, granting greater autonomy to certain institutions, forging linkages with the private sector with a view to raising funds and keeping costs down need to be explored.

State education institutions must work to make curriculum more relevant, create interesting textbooks, work on teachers' training and motivation and on basic issues of school management. The Panchayat system in Punjab has not yet become as vibrant as it is in other states and in the absence of this, user committees of parents and other community leaders must be given a role in school management. Stakeholder involvement is critical to ensure accountability of teachers and primary school managers.



