**RURAL URBAN LITERACY STATUS OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN
MAHARASTRA**

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Abstract

India is known as multi-religious country, in which number of religious groups live together e.g. Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, and Jains, among them Muslims are largest minority of the country. According to census 2001, out of the total population of India (1029 million) constitutes about 138 million (14%) are Muslims. This makes them not only the second largest religious group after the Hindus and the first major minority in the country as a whole. According to Census of India 2001, 64.8% of India's population is literate. Literacy level is higher in males i.e. (75.3%) than females (53.7%). Literacy is also higher in urban areas (79%) than in rural areas (58%). In Maharashtra (76.88%) population is literate, so it reveals that Maharashtra's literacy level is higher than national literacy level (64.8%). Gender gap in literacy is quite significant. About (85.97%) males and (67.03%) females are literate. The total literacy rate of Muslims was about 78 %. And the rural literacy rate was noticed about 73% and in urban was about 80%.

Key words: Religion, Muslim, Community, Literacy, Rural, Urban

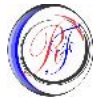
INTRODUCTION

Muslims are geographically scattered all over India. In Jammu and Kashmir and in Lakshadweep they constitute a majority but also highly noticeable in the entire length and width of the country. As considerable evidence exists, a process of marginalization of minority communities exists in almost all societies and there is nothing warrants that the same is not true of Muslims in India to a greater or a lesser degree (Ahmed, 2007). Muslims have negligible influence on the process of economic development (Beg, 1989). There is widely held belief that Muslims have remained largely unaffected by the process of economic development and social change that have been taking place in the country and their general economic condition has been deteriorating progressively (Ahmed, 1975).

This largest minority community has been relegated to the lowest socio-economic stratum in the post-independent India. Though India in recent year has achieved economic development but influence of this economic development is not uniformly distributed across the religious community and across region. It has been observed that Muslims have been experiencing higher population growth rates than the Hindus. Demographers have observed that the higher growth rate among Muslims is mainly due to their higher fertility rate that can, to some extent, be associated with their lower socio-economic status.

According to Marxian theory economy is an important factor which influence on the other factor and education. Education is both an indicators and an instrument of development. Education plays a crucial role in increasing labour productivity in both urban and rural areas. Muslims are educationally most backward, economically poor and politically a powerless community of the country.

This social economic and educational backwardness of Muslims is not merely confirmed by the individual researchers and surveys of voluntary organizations but also by



committees of Government. The High Power Panel under the chairmanship of Dr. Gopal Singh, set up by the ministry of Home Affairs in the early 1980 to enquire into social and economic conditions of the Indian minorities, they found Muslims are backward (GOI, 1983).After 25 years,again this is evident from the findings of the prime minister`s High Level Committee under the chairmanship to Justice Rajinder Sachar, constituted to enquire into socio-economic and educational status of Muslims (Sachar, 2006).Even where Muslims constitute more than half of the district population they are educationally most backward community .The reports also identified the failure of the state to provide adequate educational infrastructure in Muslim dominated areas as a supply side constraint to improving educational status of Muslims.

STUDY AREA

For the present paper, the entire state of Maharashtra is selected, to look into the literacy status of Muslim population. At present Maharashtra is one of the developed state in country in terms of social – cultural & in economic.

From the location point of view the state lies between 15⁰ 45’ N to 22⁰ N and 72⁰ 45’ E to 80⁰ 45’ E. It is covers 307713 km² of area and contains 9687862 population`s .Thus the population density in the state is 314 persons per sq.km. Out of its total population 50400596 (52.02) are male and 46478031 (47.98) are female .Hence the average sex ratio of the state is 922.

OBJECTIVES

To examine the literacy and educational status of Muslim population in Maharashtra state

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study intends to analysis the religion wise gender differences in their literacy and also rural urban Muslim literacy status in the year 2001 .It is mainly based on the secondary source of data collected from the census of India.

Literacy Rate is calculated by using following formula:

$$\text{Literacy Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Literate population of the State}}{\text{Total population above 6 Age}} \times 100$$

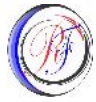
For the graphical presentation, thematic mapping technique based on GIS Arc view

(version 3.2)

The Discussion

Literacy has been defined as the ability to read and write with understanding. Literacy reflects the socio-economic and cultural setup of a nation, ethnic group or community. Literacy is essential not only for the eradication of poverty, but also for mental isolation for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relations and for permitting the free play of demographic processes as well. (Husain)

Higher level of literacy brings social change, cultural advancement and economic development. Since independence India has been growing in terms of education. But the benefits of educational development haven’t reached to the poorest of the poor. So this growing intergroup educational disparity is one of the major problems. In 1980 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India established high powered panel under the head of Dr.



Gopal Singh, to look into the conditions of the minorities, schedule castes and schedule tribes. That time two religious groups of the country that is Muslims and Neo-Buddhists are found most educationally backward.

After 18 years Prime Minister’s high Level Committee proved that Muslims are still found to be the most educationally backward community of the country. This committee shows, “that Muslims are at a double disadvantage with low levels of education combined with low quality education; their deprivation increases manifold as the level of education rises. In some instances, the relative share for Muslims is lower than even the SCs who are victims of a long standing caste system. Such relative deprivation calls for a significant policy shift, in the recognition of the problem and in devising corrective measures, as well as in the allocation of resources” (GOI, 2006).

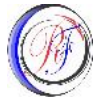
According to Census of India 2001, 64.8% of India’s population is literate. Literacy level is higher in males i.e. (75.3%) than females (53.7%). Literacy is also higher in urban areas (79%) than in rural areas (58%).In Maharashtra (76.88%) population is literate, so it reveals that Maharashtra’s literacy level is higher than national literacy level (64.8%). Gender gap in literacy is quite significant. About (85.97%) males and (67.03%) females are literate. Thus there is a gap of (18.94%) points in literacy level of males and females which are lesser than the gap of national level i.e. (22%) points.

Table 1
Religion wise gender differentials in literacy rate in Maharashtra, 2001

| Sr. no | Religion | Total (%) | Male (%) | Female (%) | Gender gap (%) |
|--------|---------------|-----------|----------|------------|----------------|
| 1 | All Religions | 76.88 | 85.97 | 67.03 | 18.94 |
| 2 | Hindu | 76.24 | 85.78 | 65.92 | 19.85 |
| 3 | Muslims | 78.12 | 84.54 | 70.80 | 13.74 |
| 4 | Christians | 91.05 | 94.64 | 87.44 | 7.20 |
| 5 | Sikhs | 88.87 | 92.48 | 84.51 | 7.97 |
| 6 | Buddhists | 76.17 | 86.73 | 65.22 | 21.51 |
| 7 | Jains | 95.38 | 98.28 | 92.33 | 5.96 |
| 8 | Others | 73.21 | 81.55 | 64.83 | 16.72 |

Source: Census of India 2001.

In Maharashtra there is a disparity in literacy level by religious communities. Here among four religious communities literacy level is higher than state’s average as well as national average literacy level. In Maharashtra highest literacy found among Jains (95.38%) whereas Christians (91.05%), Sikhs (88.87%) and Muslims (78.12%) which occupy second, third, and fourth highest position among seven religious communities. Both Hindus and Buddhists have (76%) literacy level; which is equals to that of state average. So above table reveals that Jains have the highest literacy rates for both males (98.28%) and females (92.33%). In second place Christians have (94.64%) males and (84.44%) for females. Sikhs



occupies third position, male literacy rate is (92.48%) and female (84.51%). In the case of Hindus, the male literacy rate (85.78%) is slightly below the state average of (85.97%) whereas the female literacy rate (65.92%) which is lesser than state’s average (67.03%).

Table 2
MAHARASHTRA MUSLIM LITERACY RATE- 2001

| Sr. no | District | Total | Rural | Urban |
|-------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Nandurbar * | 82.61 | 82.75 | 82.54 |
| 2 | Dhule | 78.12 | 75.92 | 78.86 |
| 3 | Jalgaon | 71.24 | 67.4 | 75.5 |
| 4 | Buldhana | 73.85 | 71.51 | 76.84 |
| 5 | Akola | 80.05 | 79.64 | 80.29 |
| 6 | Washim * | 74.98 | 71.1 | 78.66 |
| 7 | Amravati | 84.7 | 83.59 | 85.43 |
| 8 | Wardha | 84.24 | 80.56 | 87.24 |
| 9 | Nagpur | 87.28 | 84.23 | 87.58 |
| 10 | Bhandara | 91.01 | 88.92 | 92.68 |
| 11 | Gondiya * | 86.99 | 84.34 | 89.90 |
| 12 | Gadchiroli | 84.86 | 81.58 | 90.5 |
| 13 | Chandrapur | 83.33 | 77.26 | 85.48 |
| 14 | Yavatmal | 80.64 | 77.38 | 84.6 |
| 15 | Nanded | 70.19 | 64.47 | 74.88 |
| 16 | Hingoli * | 68.4 | 64.41 | 72.28 |
| 17 | Parbhani | 66.91 | 57.98 | 70.39 |
| 18 | Jalana | 65.85 | 61.41 | 72.65 |
| 19 | Aurangabad | 72.64 | 63.85 | 79.2 |
| 20 | Nashik | 79.77 | 75.62 | 80.34 |
| 21 | Thane | 80.17 | 82.95 | 79.97 |
| 22 | Mumbai (Suburban) * | 80.53 | 0 | 80.53 |
| 23 | Mumbai | 80.54 | 0 | 80.54 |
| 24 | Raigarh | 89.39 | 90.91 | 87.26 |
| 25 | Pune | 82.00 | 75.88 | 83.27 |
| 26 | Ahmadnagar | 79.22 | 75.71 | 83.70 |
| 27 | Bid | 71.69 | 68.41 | 75.54 |
| 28 | Latur | 69.14 | 64.46 | 75.03 |
| 29 | Osmanabad | 69.74 | 65.82 | 76.64 |
| 30 | Solapur | 73.21 | 70.36 | 75.23 |
| 31 | Satara | 83.13 | 80.83 | 86.79 |
| 32 | Ratnagiri | 86.67 | 86.43 | 87.39 |
| 33 | Sindhudurg | 81.34 | 78.76 | 88.6 |
| 34 | Kolhapur | 82.33 | 79.71 | 84.59 |
| 35 | Sangli | 81.62 | 78.45 | 84.53 |
| Maharashtra | | 78.12 | 72.94 | 80.30 |

Source: Census of India 2001

The average gap of male-female literacy rates in Maharashtra is (18.94%) points. The gap of male-female literacy rates is the lowest among Jains which is only (5.96%) points against the state gender literacy gap of (18.94%). Among Christians and Sikhs also has the gap as low as

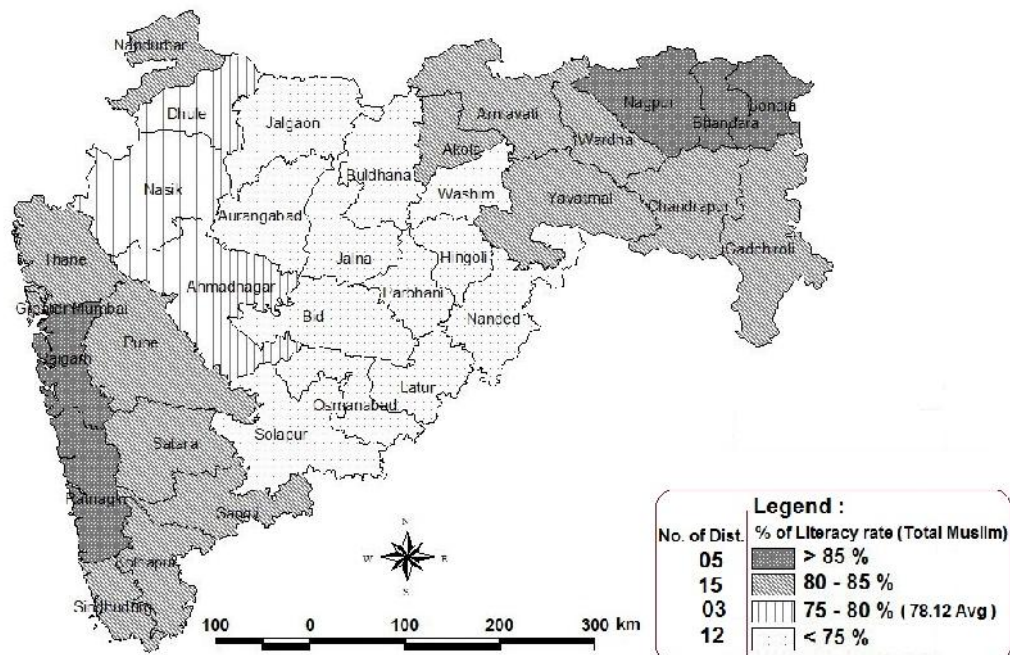
7.20 and 7.97 percentage point respectively. The biggest gap is found against Hindus 19.85 percentage point followed by other religions as 16.72 percentage point.

LITERACY RATE OF MUSLIMS

Though the literacy rate of Muslims is less than among six religious group and below the national average but in Maharashtra situation is different than country. Muslims have recorded fourth position in literacy rate (78.12%) which shows that literacy rate of Muslim's is higher than state average (76.88%). It means in Maharashtra Muslims are well educated. They are taking education because their awareness about education. It is also happened due to government facilities, like minority scholarship, EBC facility, etc. So almost all the Muslim students are getting education, within Muslim community about (84.54%) literacy rate found among males and (70.80%) in females. Female literacy level is lesser than male literacy level so the gap of male -female literacy rates is (13.74%) point which is below the state average (18.94).

Literacy level of Muslims differs from one district to another. Fig.... show Muslims literacy. 5 districts fall in very high (above 85%) category, namely Ratnagiri (86.67%), Gondia (86.99%), Nagpur (87.28%), Raigarh (89.39%), Bhandara (91.01%). The districts of high level (80-85%) of Muslim literacy rate are observed in 15 districts. There are 3 districts in the medium level Muslim literacy these are Dhule (78.12%), Ahmadnagar (79.22%) and Nashik (79.77%). The low level (below 75%) of Muslim literacy rate is observed in 12 districts these are Jalna (65.85%), Parbhani (66.91%), Hingoli (68.40%), Latur (69.14%), Osmanabad (69.74%), Nanded (70.19%), Jalgaon (71.24%), Bid (71.69%), Aurangabad (72.64%), Solapur (73.21%) Buldhana (73.85%) and Washim (74.98%)

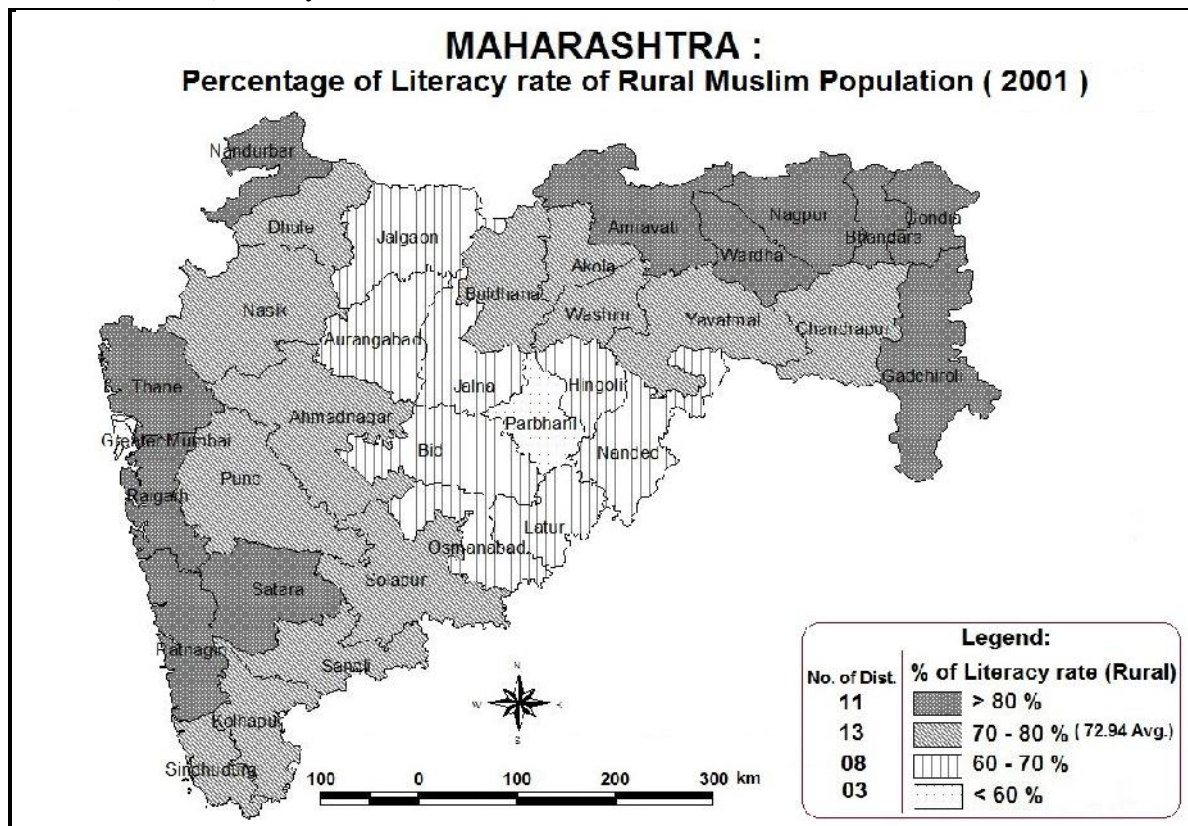
MAHARASHTRA : Percentage of Literacy rate of Total Muslim Population (2001)



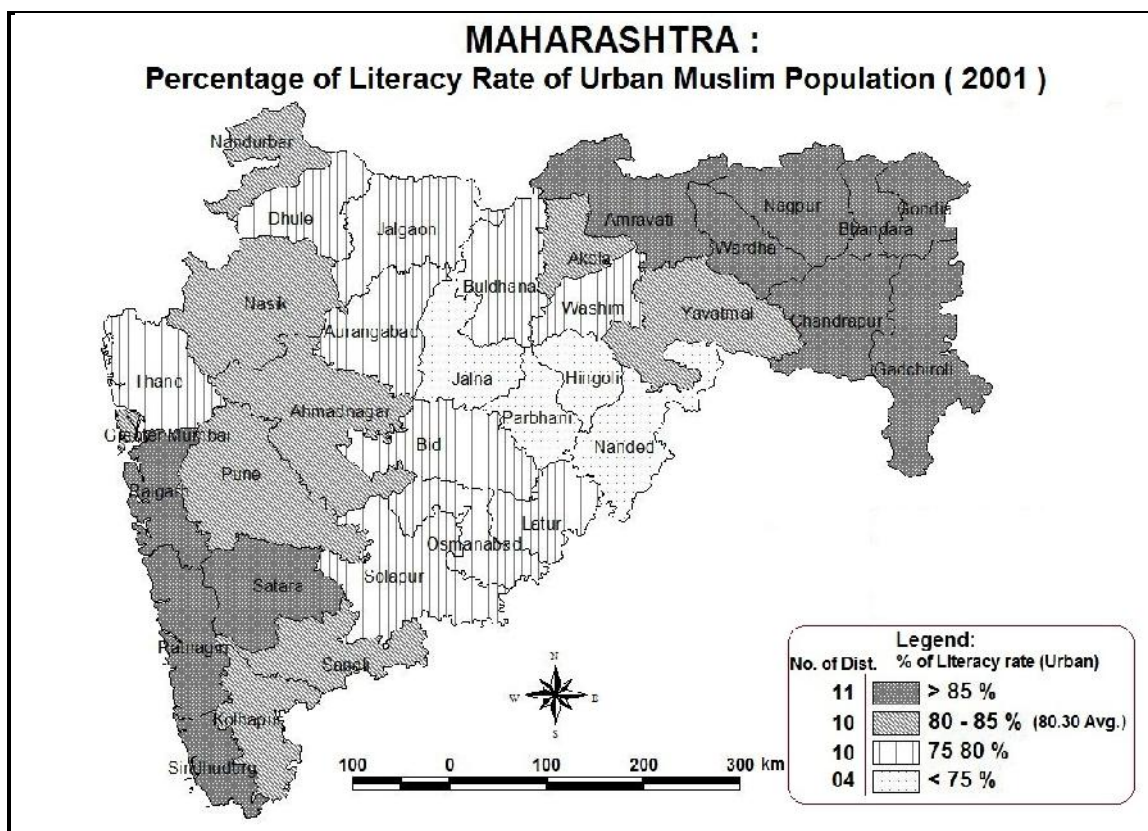
Above table also shows that there are 23 districts have higher literacy level than average state literacy level. Thus except Mumbai, Mumbai (sub urban), Ratnagiri and Akola it shows that the higher the concentration of Muslim population the lower their literacy level. Some phenomenon has been observed by Ahmed (1981) who has analyzed literacy figures. He says that, “an interesting feature of the data is that literacy rates are particularly low in districts with a high concentration of Muslim population.”

RURAL MUSLIM LITERACY RATE

In India about 70% people are living in rural areas and remaining lives in urban areas. Rural people are backward in terms of education, economy, social status, etc. than urban people. So there is also found disparity in rural and urban literacy level. In country and state as well as in all seven religious communities rural literacy rate is lesser than urban literacy rate. Likewise in Maharashtra literacy rate of rural Muslim is low (72.94%) than urban Muslim (80.30%) literacy rate.



There are 11 districts fall under very high category (above 80%), these are Wardha (80.56%), districts i.e. Mumbai (suburban) (0.00%), Mumbai (0.00%), Parbhani (57.98%) falls under low category. In Mumbai (suburban) and Mumbai there is no rural area so, rural population is not documented. There are 21 districts have higher literacy level than average state rural literacy level.

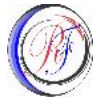


URBAN MUSLIM LITERACY RATE

As mentioned above, the urban literacy level is high in Maharashtra, i.e. (80.30%). About 11 districts fall under the very high category (above 85%) namely Amravati (85.43%), Chandrapur (85.48%), Satara (86.79%), Wardha (87.24%), Raigarh (87.26%), Ratnagiri (87.39%), Nagpur (87.58%), Sindhudurg (88.60%), Gondiya (89.90%), Gadchiroli (90.50%), and Bhandara (92.68%). The districts of high level (80 to 85%) of urban Muslim literacy rate are observed in 10 districts; these are Akola (80.29%), Nashik (80.34%), Mumbai (suburban) (80.53%), Mumbai (80.54%), Nandurbar (82.54%), Pune (83.27%), Ahmadnagar (83.70%), Sangli (84.53%), Kolhapur (84.59%), and Yavatmal (84.60%). In 4 districts, the urban Muslim literacy rate is below 75%; these are Parbhani (70.39%), Hingoli (72.28%), Jalana (72.65%), and Nanded (74.88%). There are 20 districts that have a higher literacy level than the average state urban literacy level. As compared to the rural literacy among Muslims in the state, the urban Muslim literacy was better due to the facilities being good in cities and awareness is also well as compared to the rural.

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that Maharashtra is a well-developed state in the country where, socially, economically, and educationally, upliftment is better than other states. As per the Muslim population, the literacy rate was 78.21 per cent in the 2001 census. Moreover, when compared between the rural and urban literacy rates, the rural and urban literacy rates are better than other religions. The rural Muslim literacy rate was 72.94 per cent and 80.30 per cent in urban.



Muslim literacy. This literacy rate is explicitly says that, this segment of population is better in position. As per the religion wise literacy rate depicts that, the average literacy rate was about 76.88 per cent. The highest literacy rate was found in Christianity religion e.g. 91.05 percent and minimum was 73.21 per cent in other religion. Religion wise male-female disparity was very minor in the state. The Muslim male literacy rate was 80.54 per cent, and 70.80 per cent was of female literacy rate was found it means that the absolute gap was measured was about 13.74 percent

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