



Transformation of Literacy and Gender Disparity of Rural Women of Adampur Block

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the spatial-temporal transformations in the literacy and gender disparity of rural women in the Adampur Block. Changes in the literacy level of rural women serve as a significant indicator of the holistic development of rural society and of gender equality. This study is based on primary data (2026) as well as secondary data (1991, 2001 & 2011). Literacy rates at the village level have been calculated in accordance with the standards of the Census of India. To measure gender disparity in rural literacy levels, 'Sopher's Disparity Index'—developed by Kundu and Rao (1985)—has been utilized. Maps generated using a Geographic Information System (GIS) illustrate the spatial patterns of literacy rates and gender disparity at the village level. The map clearly indicates that the literacy rates are low in the villages to the east and north of Adampur Mandi; surprisingly, a higher degree of gender disparity in literacy has been recorded in the villages located in close proximity to Adampur Mandi. Foremost among the reasons behind these low literacy rates is the poor transportation connectivity between various villages and the city, the prevailing societal and familial attitudes towards girls and the patriarchal system.

Introduction: “Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope”. The axis of social development revolves around education. Education is the guiding light that propels the wheels of social, economic, and cultural



progress. The population of any society constitutes its most valuable resource, and education is the instrument through which knowledge and skills are cultivated within individuals. The level of literacy dictates the pace of a society's development—particularly, the literacy level of rural women. A significant observation is that in rural regions, gender disparity in literacy manifests in a stark and severe form; this is because social ills—such as conservatism, child marriage, and familial obligations—along with a lack of awareness regarding education within the family, as well as low economic status, play a predominant role in contributing to the low literacy levels among rural women. Equal access to education is a fundamental human right and should be equally available to all citizens, regardless of gender. However, a significant disparity still persists between men and women in the realm of education. In this context, the gap becomes even more pronounced between rural and urban women (**Kaur, 2017**). The development of a society and a nation depend on the level of literacy, as high literacy facilitates economic growth, whereas low literacy retards it. The existence of a gender gap in literacy—stemming from social, economic, and historical factors—is indicative of a backward society (**Priyanka et al, 2021**). Women's empowerment continues to face social challenges such as inequality in opportunities, a lack of education, and societal restrictions; it is under the influence of these very challenges that women lag behind in social, economic, and political spheres. Education serves as a powerful medium that provides direction for the holistic development of women (**Jaysawal et al, 2023**). Rural women are extremely hardworking and play a significant role within their families and communities. Various challenges—such as social traditions and cultural norms involving gender discrimination, limited employment opportunities, a lack of education, and inadequate healthcare services—act as obstacles to women's development and progress (**Ranjan et al, 2023**). In the context of this very framework of sociality, the present study investigates the spatial-temporal transformations of women's literacy levels and gender inequality in literacy at the village level.

Objectives:

- To analyze the literacy level in the study area (1991, 2001, 2011, 2026).
- To examine the gender disparity in education in the study area (1991, 2001, 2011, 2026).

Study Area:

Adampur Block is situated between 29°7'38" N to 29°23'21" N latitude and 75°19'39" E to 75°37'20" E longitude, covering a total geographical area of 32,189.00 hectares. Characterized by a flat terrain and a semi-arid climate, this block is located in western Haryana, bordering the



state of Rajasthan; Fatehabad lies to its north, while Agroha Block is situated to its east. Adampur Block is primarily characterized by sandy and loamy soils; furthermore, owing to the prevailing climatic conditions, the local soil is light-textured and possesses excellent drainage properties. With its blend of rural and semi-urban characteristics—coupled with an efficient transportation network—Adampur Block is well-connected to its surrounding regions, thereby ensuring the availability of all essential amenities within the area. The local economy is predominantly agrarian; however, alongside agriculture, various small-scale businesses also serve as sources of income, and there has been a notable increase in engagement in non-agricultural activities. According to the 2011 Census of India, Adampur Block has a total population of 111542, comprising 59015 males and 52527 females.

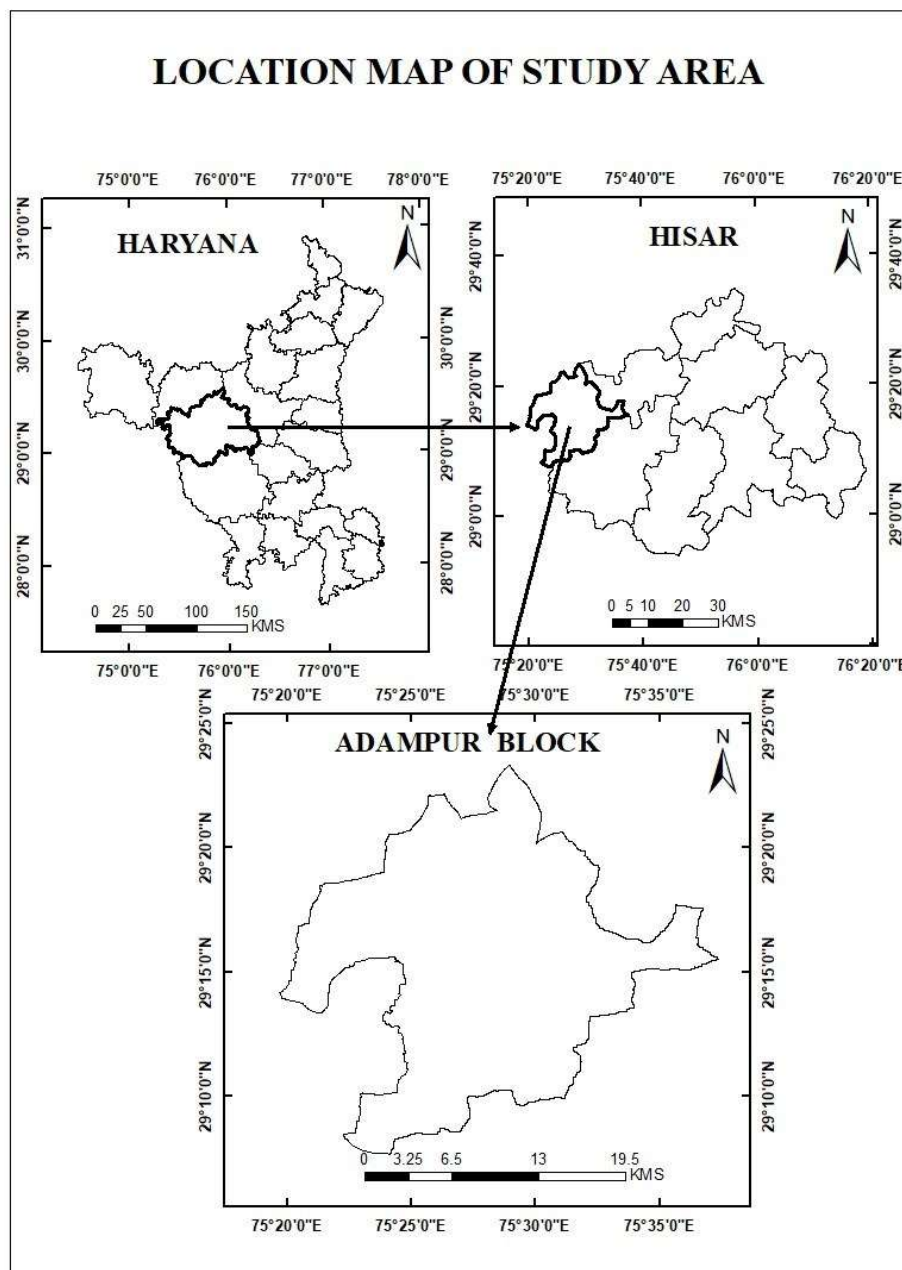


Figure 1

Methodology: To complete the present research, both primary and secondary data were utilized. Secondary data (from 1991, 2001 and 2011) was obtained from the Census of India, government reports and policies, research papers, books, journals, and internet sources. Primary data was collected through interviews, questionnaires and observation methods. The 'Stratified Random Sampling' method was employed for sample selection. Following an analysis of selected indicators based on secondary data—namely, female population distribution, literacy rates, gender disparity in literacy, and distance from Adampur Town—the villages of Sadalpur, Kutia Kheri, and Chuli Khurd were selected from the Adampur Block for primary data collection. The sample size consisted of 96 rural households, covering 232 women. Sample selection was conducted while taking into account various age groups, social categories (SC/OBC/General) and economic strata. Data mapping was carried out using a 'Geographic Information System' (GIS).

Table 1	
List of Indicator	
Secondary data base	Primary data base
Population: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total • Male • Female 	Age & Sex
	Education Status
	Occupation
	Income
	Gender Disparity
Literacy: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total • Male • Female 	Assets & Basic Facility Available at home
	Status of women
	Women enjoy equal rights within the family and society
	Instances of domestic violence or Discrimination against women exist
	Availability of educational institutions within or near the village
Gender Disparity in Literacy	Social and cultural norms influence women's education

Result & Discussion:

Spatial-temporal transformation of literacy:

The maps clearly indicate the transformation of female literacy in the villages of Adampur Block. However, spatio-temporal disparities in female literacy have been observed. According to 1991 data, out of a total of 23 villages in Adampur Block, only two villages (Khara Barwala and Siswal) recorded very high and high levels of female literacy. Most villages were categorized under moderate and low levels of literacy, while Sadalpur village fell into the 'very low' category in terms of literacy levels.

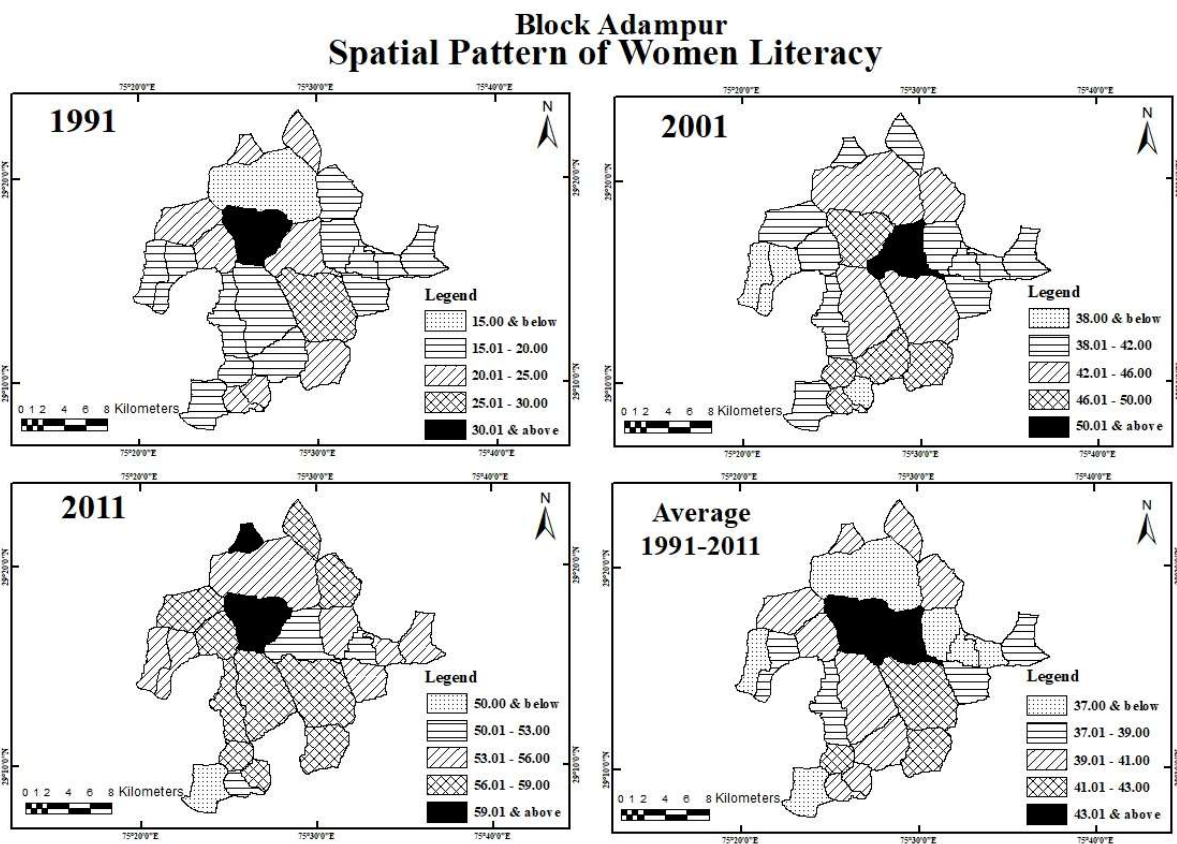


Figure 2

Compared to 1991, the map for 2001 reveals a radical shift in the spatial patterns of literacy. Adampur recorded a 'very high' level, while villages situated along the southern boundary of the block recorded 'high' levels of literacy. Villages located along the western boundary of the block recorded 'very low' levels of literacy. Notably, while the 1991 data included only two villages in the 'very high' and 'high'

literacy categories, this number rose to six in 2001. The map based on 2011 data displays a peculiar pattern, as Adampur village—which enjoys the advantage of being situated close to the town—recorded a 'low' level of literacy. A 'moderate' literacy pattern was observed in the villages situated to the east of Adampur Town. 'High' levels of literacy were recorded in the villages located to the south and west of Adampur Town. Chudhriwali village occupied the lowest position in terms of literacy levels.

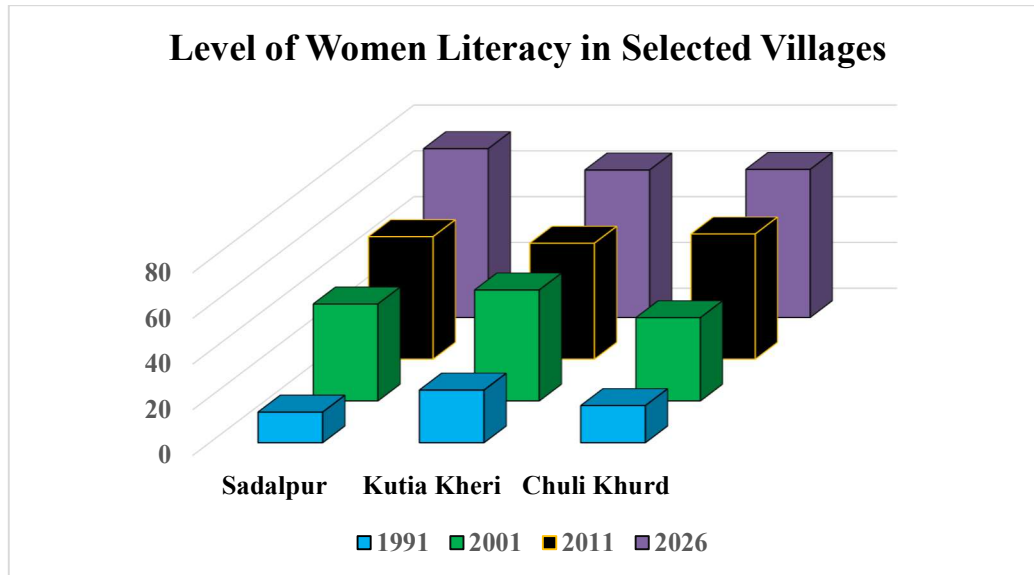


Figure 3

A temporal analysis of female literacy in the selected villages clearly reveals an approximately fourfold increase over the past 35 years. In 1991, the female literacy rate in Sadalpur village stood at a mere 13.38 percent, which rose to 73.74 percent in 2026. Similarly, in 1991, the female literacy rates in Kutia Kheri and Chuli Khurd were 23.02 percent and 16.23 percent, respectively; by 2026, these figures had climbed to 64.44 percent and 64.7 percent, respectively.

Gender Disparity in Literacy:

The map (Figure 4) clearly depicts the transformation of gender disparity in literacy within the study area. A startling observation from the 1991 data is that the very two villages—Khara Barwala and Siswal—that exhibited 'very high' and 'high' levels of female literacy also recorded the highest levels of gender disparity in literacy. It is also noteworthy that the villages situated to the east and north, adjacent to Adampur town, recorded the lowest levels of gender disparity in literacy. Out of the total 23 villages in the block, more than half fall under the category of 'moderate' gender disparity in literacy.

The 2001 map prompts reflection on the fact that, in 1991, only two villages fell into the 'very high' category and two into the 'high' category of gender disparity in literacy; by 2001, these numbers had risen to four (Chuli Khurd, Khara Barwala, Adampur, and Kabrel) in the 'very high' category, and to seven in the 'high' category. An increasing trend in gender disparity in literacy was observed across various villages of the Adampur block during the period between 1991 and 2001.

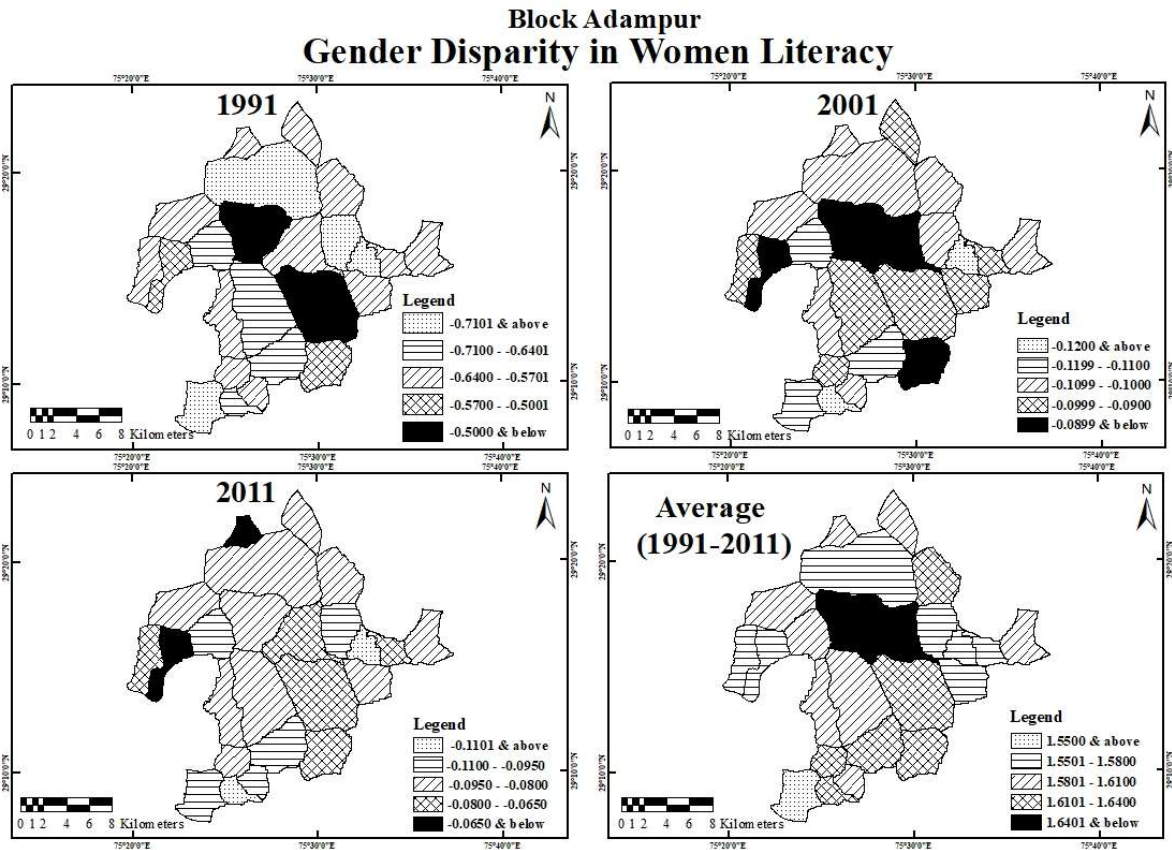


Figure 4

The 2011 map illustrates a trend of spatial transformation: the 'very high' level of gender disparity in literacy—which between 1991 and 2001 was confined to Adampur town and its immediate vicinity—shifted by 2011 to two villages (Chuli Khurd and Chabbarwal) located at a greater distance from the town. Numerically speaking, while 11 villages in the block fell into the 'very high' and 'high' categories of gender disparity in literacy in 2001, this number declined to seven in 2011. The majority of the block's villages—particularly those situated in the northern region, with the exception of Chabbarwal—were listed under the category of 'moderate' gender disparity in literacy.

An analysis of secondary data (1991–2011) from the selected villages within the study area clearly indicates a decline in gender disparity in literacy. A noteworthy observation, however, is that an increase

in gender disparity in literacy was recorded in the primary data collected from all three villages. In 1991, the gender disparity in literacy in Sadalpur village stood at -0.7516; this figure decreased to -0.0903 in 2011, but subsequently rose to -0.1497 in 2026. Similarly, in 1991, the gender disparity in literacy for Kutia Kheri and Chuli Khurd was

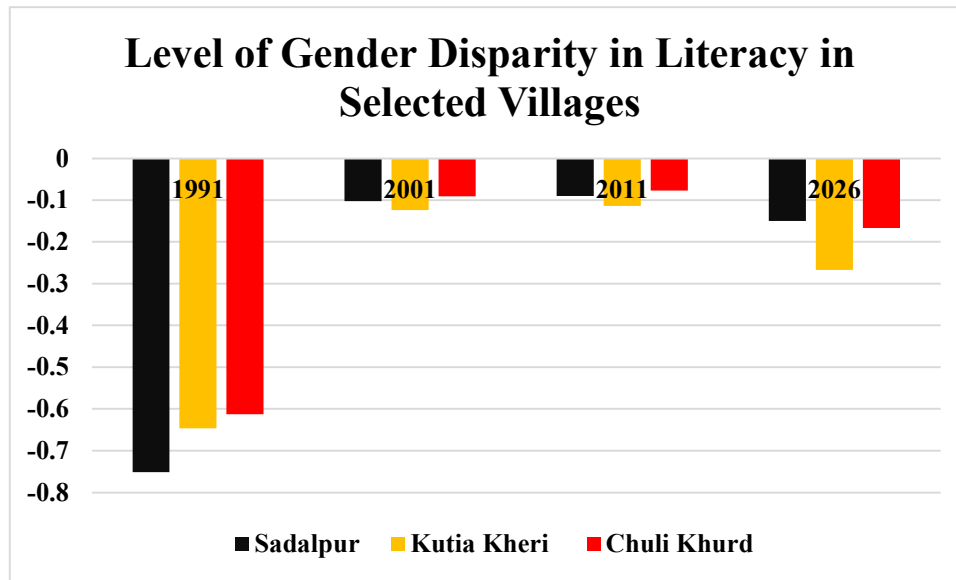


Figure 5

-0.6467 and -0.6131, respectively; these figures declined to -0.1135 and -0.0771 in 2011, before rising again to -0.2674 and -0.1668, respectively.

Conclusion:

The roots of female literacy and gender inequality date back to ancient times. Even after so many years of independence, the issue of female literacy and gender inequality remains unresolved; the statistics from 2011 bear witness to this fact, revealing that in the Adampur block, the female literacy rate in none of the twenty-three villages exceeds sixty percent. Social norms, a lack of educational infrastructure, societal and familial attitudes toward education, a scarcity of transport facilities—which hinders women's access to educational institutions—and the high cost of education are the primary factors responsible for the state of female literacy and the resulting gender disparity. Nevertheless, an increasing trend in female literacy has been observed in the villages of the Adampur block. Specifically, distinct patterns of "very high" and "high" levels of female literacy have emerged in the areas to the west and south of Adampur town. However, a noteworthy observation is that the data from the sample villages recorded an increase in gender disparity in literacy. Furthermore, a startling fact has emerged: in those villages where female



literacy is high, gender disparity in literacy is also high. This indicates that significant effort is required in the realm of educational infrastructure to ensure 100 percent literacy at all levels—encompassing regions, towns, and villages; social classes; and, most importantly, males and females.

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