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# Literacy Overview: A Case Study of Purulia District West Bengal

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## **Abstract**

*A comprehensive study of various facts and figures and diverse statistical variables pertaining to literacy reveals that the district of Purulia is constantly being one of the backward districts in terms of literacy in the whole of West Bengal. Over the last consecutive decades, literacy transition and developmental process in the district is not very encouraging. A wide and deep fissure is been visible in terms of literacy transformation among the various attributes of the population. Moreover, Purulia also highlights wide and varied regional disparity in its literacy morphology. As such this paper attempts to study and analyze the decadal literacy trends and its changing pattern in the district. Further, it also try to make a comprehensive and critical study of literacy trends at the lowest administrative level i.e CD Blocks/Municipalities with respect to various social-cultural attributes of the district, in order to highlight the actual overview of literacy and bring out the important salient features observed over the decade to throw some lights on its changing literate characteristics.*

**Key words:** 1.Census, 2.Demographic, 3.Disparity, 4.Gender, 5.HDI, 6.Literacy, 7.Metamorphosis, 8.Poverty.

## **Introduction**

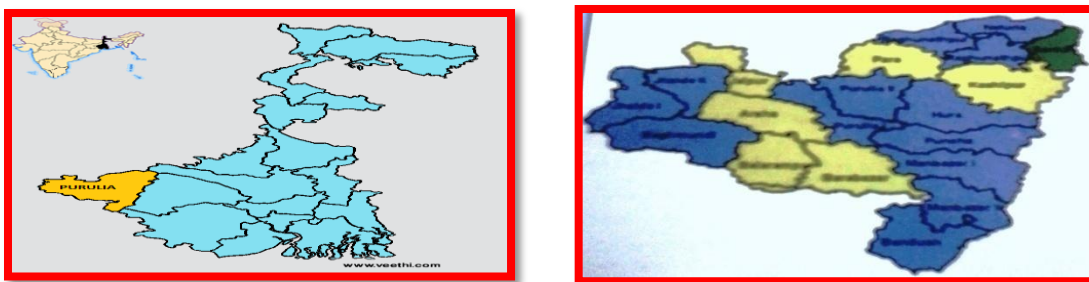
Literacy can be defines as acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and the ability to apply them to one's day-to-day life. Literacy is one of the very important parameter of Human Development Index (HDI) and greatly influences the various attributes of population like fertility, mortality, occupation pattern, mobility and so on. Notwithstanding, literacy acts like a mirage of the society, provides in-depth glimpse of quality of society and also makes crucial linkage for understanding the socio-economic and demographic structure of the society.

## **Study area**

The district of Purulia lies in the western part of the state of West Bengal between 22° 60'N-23° 50'N and 85° 75'E-86° 65'E. Geographically, the region is located on the eastern fringe of Chota Nagpur Plateau with an area of about 6259 sq km and experiences extreme climate with summer temperature soaring up to 52° C and dipping down as low as 4 °C during winter. The district is frequently hit by drought thus adversely affecting the agricultural sector. In 2006, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India inducted Purulia in the list of 250 most backward district of India.

Fig no. (I)

**Location of purulia district (Study area)**



**Objectives**

The main objectives of the study can be summarized in the following way:

1. To study the changing trend of literacy in the district.
2. To understand the literacy pattern and morphology of various attributes of population in the district.
3. To examine the impact of literacy on demographic structure of the society
4. To find out the reasons behind the poor literacy growth rate and its transitional process in Purulia.

**Methodology and database**

To make inclusive study and convalescent understanding of literacy scenario in the district, following database and methodology are being adopted:

1. To understand the detail disparity in literacy, secondary data from Census handbook, District Statistical handbook and Human Development Reports has been widely used and analyzed extensively.
2. Statistical variables and cartographic theme diagrams are applied to bring out the actual and realistic pictures of the literacy in the district.
3. Field trips to different villages with checklists make an important approach to have a close interaction with local people to understand the fundamental and basic issues of literacy.
4. Intensive study and appropriate analysis of various literacy programmes of the district is also carried on to get the glimpse of district’s literacy plans of both present and future and its resultant consequences.

**Analysis of litreacy trend at the district level**

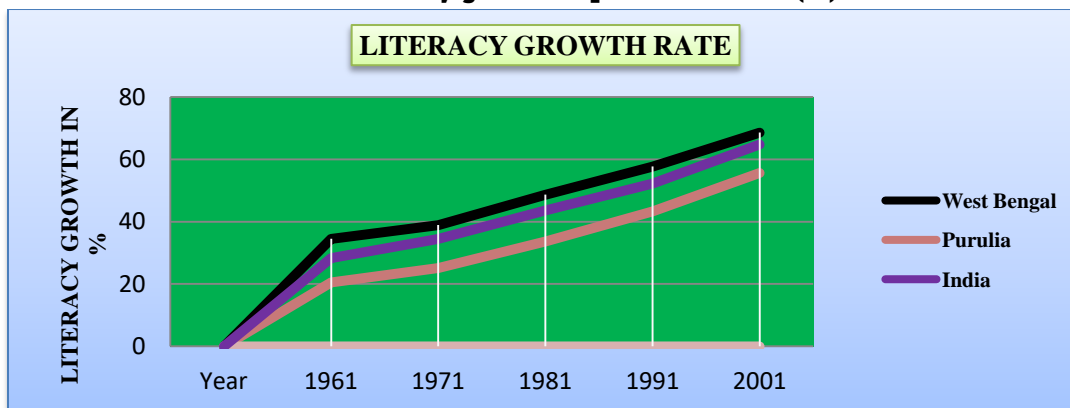
As per the Census of India 2011, the literacy of Purulia district was 64.48% against the National average of 74.05% and State average of 76.26%. It was 55.60% in 2001 and 44.30% in 1991. In 2001, the decadal growth rate was 14.02% from 1991 but it increased only to 15.52% in 2011, just an increase of 1.5%.

**Table no (I)  
Comparative decadal literacy rate (%)**

Years	India	West bengal	Purulia
1961	28.30	34.50	20.50
1971	34.50	38.90	25.10
1981	43.60	48.70	33.70
1991	52.20	57.70	43.30
2001	64.80	68.60	55.60
2011	74.08	76.26	64.48

Source: Census of india series

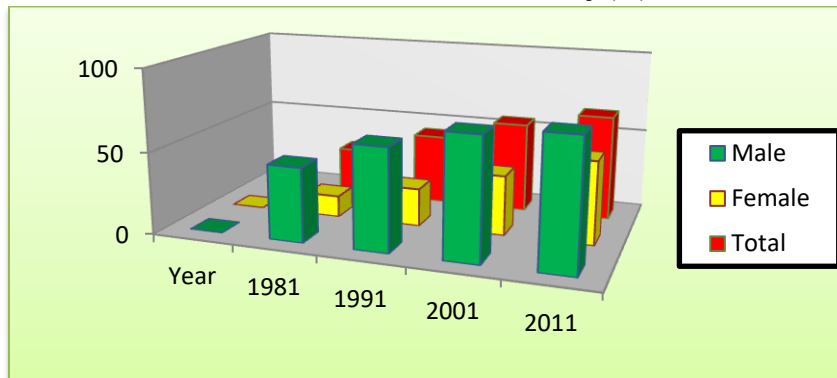
Fig no. (II)  
Decadal literacy growth of purulia district (%)



The comparative study of literacy of Purulia shows clear pictures of low literacy transition in the district. Over the last six decades, rate of growth of literacy is constantly below the national and state average. Only during the last two decades the number of literate exceeds the illiterate. Thus, the literacy is showing some sign of health growth.

In terms of male-female literacy enumeration, the district is far lacking with male registering 77.86% and female 50.52% in 2011, thus reflecting wide gender literacy gap which can be understood from the diagram below :

Fig no (III)  
Male-Female decadal literacy (%)



The statistics on literacy for male and female population over the last four decades reflects poor status of female in the society. The rate of increase of male literacy far exceeds the female counter part thus revealing social and ethical prejudices and value system against the female members in the society.

Table no. (II)  
Gender literacy disparity (%)

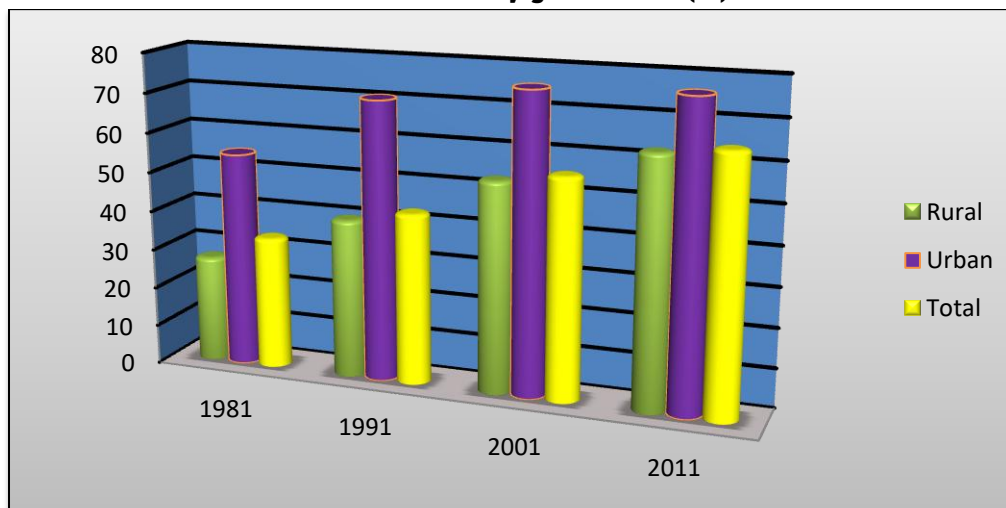
Year	Male	Female	Differences
1981	45.41	13.20	32.21
1991	62.20	23.20	39.00
2001	73.71	36.50	37.20
2011	77.86	50.52	22.34

Source: Census of India series

The above table clearly brings out the wide gap prevailing between the male-female literacy growth rates. Only in the recent year the differences has started decreasing gradually indicating the change in societal norms and tradition of the society towards the female.

According to census of 2011, out of 2,536,516 persons 2,281,090 are living in rural areas and 255,426 in urban areas respectively, which means Purulia district still have large rural population of about 90% mostly engaged in primary sectors, which in turn has adversely affected literacy transition process and created wide crevices between the urban and rural literacy. The district shows high urban literacy of 76.18% and low rural literacy of 62.73%. But however, it should be borne in mind that the Purulia has only three municipalities with small urban population while majority of them are predominantly rural in character.

Fig no (IV)  
Rural-Urban literacy growth rate (%)



Again when the growth rate of literacy between the rural-urban literacy is studied, a huge disparity is found between the magnitudes of literacy growth rate in these two spheres of the district.

Table no. (III)  
Rural-Urban literacy disparity (%)

Year	Rural	Urban	Differences
1981	27.22	54.57	27.55
1991	40.30	70.60	30.30
2001	53.20	75.40	22.22
2011	62.73	76.18	13.45

The above table shows how the differences between the rural-urban areas in terms of literacy have reduced over the last few decades. Notably, between 2001 and 2011 there has been considerable decrease in the literacy disparity but still more initiatives has to be taken to remove such disparity.

**Literacy trends at the cd blocks / Municipalities level**

In order to have a better understand of literacy in the district, a detail and in-depth study has been carried out at grass root level in order to find out the important aspects and features of literacy. A comprehensive literacy assessment and analysis is conducted at the lowest administrative level i.e Community Development Blocks and Municipalities to figure out the regional imbalance and regional morphology with regard to literacy and its growing prospective

Fig no. (V)  
Purulia district with community blocks



### Literacy trend 1981

The close and comprehensive study of the 1981 census data (Table no. iv) reveals the following salient features:

- In 1981, Purulia district was divided into 18 police stations to collect and process the data for census operation.
- The survey revealed that out of 18 PS, only 7 PS registered urban population leaving 11 PS with predominantly rural populations.
- The PS with highest literacy was Purulia (T) (56.56%), Kahipur(36.02%), Santaldih(33.60%) and Raghunathpur(33.33%). While lowest literacy was found in Bundwan(19.26%), Arsha(21.57%), Bagmundi(23.92%), and Barabazar(25.30%).
- With regard to male-female literacy, male literacy is in much better position while the female shows very poor and sluggish rate of growth. Highest is of just 44.55% in Purulia (T) while most of the PS are below 20% deeping well below 10% in many of the PS. Wide gender disparity prevails over the whole district wherein the average gap amount to about 30%, thus projecting poor female participation in education enrollment programme.
- Similar picture is also seen in terms of rural-urban literacy composition. Since the process of urbanization has not dismantled over the whole district, only few PS has registered urban literacy while large part shows low rural population. Due to such uneven and undulation urbanization transformation, very high regional imbalance can be seen in rural-urban literacy in the whole of district.
- Again, with in urban and rural areas, male-female literacy registration presents contrasting facts. In urban areas not much discrimination is found between male and female. But in rural areas, female literacy lags far behind with its counterpart. The reasons for such disparity lies deep inside the social and cultural set up of the society.

**Table no. (IV)**  
**Police station (ps) wise literacy, 1981**

Sl. No.	Police station	Male (%)	Rank	Female (%)	Rank	Gender Gap (%)	Rank	Urban (%)	Rank	Rural (%)	Rank
1.	Jhalda	44.98	9 <sup>th</sup>	10.06	13 <sup>th</sup>	34.38	5 <sup>th</sup>	51.64	5 <sup>th</sup>	26.02	11 <sup>th</sup>
2.	Joypur	40.85	15 <sup>th</sup>	7.41	16 <sup>th</sup>	33.44	9 <sup>th</sup>			24.02	14 <sup>th</sup>
3.	Arsha	37.03	17 <sup>th</sup>	5.68	17 <sup>th</sup>	31.35	12 <sup>th</sup>			24.69	13 <sup>th</sup>
4.	Bagmundi	44.01	10 <sup>th</sup>	7.79	15 <sup>th</sup>	36.22	2 <sup>nd</sup>			21.57	17 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Balarampur	42.74	12 <sup>th</sup>	11.10	10 <sup>th</sup>	31.64	11 <sup>th</sup>	43.31		23.92	15 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Barabazar	42.01	14 <sup>th</sup>	8.22	14 <sup>th</sup>	33.79	8 <sup>th</sup>			23.45	16 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Purulia (M)	45.22	8 <sup>th</sup>	10.11	12 <sup>th</sup>	35.11	3 <sup>rd</sup>			25.30	12 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Purulia (T)	67.54	1 <sup>st</sup>	44.55	1 <sup>st</sup>	22.99	18 <sup>th</sup>	56.56	4 <sup>th</sup>	28.10	8 <sup>th</sup>
9.	Para	48.88	5 <sup>th</sup>	14.91	4 <sup>th</sup>	33.97	6 <sup>th</sup>	63.66	2 <sup>nd</sup>	30.02	4 <sup>th</sup>
10.	Santaldih	51.21	3 <sup>rd</sup>	14.28	7 <sup>th</sup>	36.93	1 <sup>st</sup>	61.83	3 <sup>rd</sup>	28.81	5 <sup>th</sup>
11.	Raghunathpur	47.47	7 <sup>th</sup>	18.55	3 <sup>rd</sup>	28.86	14 <sup>th</sup>	45.86	6 <sup>th</sup>	29.94	7 <sup>th</sup>
12.	Neturia	39.23	16 <sup>th</sup>	12.3	9 <sup>th</sup>	26.93	17 <sup>th</sup>			26.51	10 <sup>th</sup>
13.	Santuri	43.40	11 <sup>th</sup>	14.60	5 <sup>th</sup>	28.80	15 <sup>th</sup>			29.39	6 <sup>th</sup>
14.	Kashipur	51.59	2 <sup>nd</sup>	20.44	2 <sup>nd</sup>	30.85	13 <sup>th</sup>	65.73	1 <sup>st</sup>	31.14	3 <sup>rd</sup>
15.	Hura	48.19	6 <sup>th</sup>	14.31	6 <sup>th</sup>	33.88	7 <sup>th</sup>			31.62	1 <sup>st</sup>
16.	Puncha	48.92	4 <sup>th</sup>	13.81	8 <sup>th</sup>	35.11	4 <sup>th</sup>			31.61	2 <sup>nd</sup>
17.	Manbazazr	42.63	13 <sup>th</sup>	10.22	11 <sup>th</sup>	32.41	10 <sup>th</sup>			26.68	9 <sup>th</sup>
18.	Bundwan	32.63	18 <sup>th</sup>	5.67	18 <sup>th</sup>	26.96	16 <sup>th</sup>			19.26	18 <sup>th</sup>

**Source:** District statistical hand book purulia, : Series-1981, 1986-89 (Compiled and Modified by author)

### Literacy trend 1991

After going through the detail analysis of literacy variables, the following salient features are being found and discussed below:

- For the administrative convenience and set up, in 1991 the whole of district was divided in to 20 blocks and 3 municipalities.
- Due to slow pace of urbanization and industrialization process, large rural population was enumerated.
- Top four high and low literacy blocks/municipalities are in Purulia(M)-61.12%, Jhalda (M)-55.81%, Raghunathpur(M) 55.40% and Kashipur-45.24%. On the other hand, lowest literacy is seen in Jhalda II-26.33%, Arsha-26.49%, Bundwan-27.47% and Bagmundi-28.45%. (Note: Purulia (M), Jhalda (M) and Raghunathpur (M) are municipality/UA).

**Table no. (V)**  
**Literacy density zone of purulia district (1991)**

Density zone	Name of the cd blocks/Municipalities	Total
<b>High (above 65%)</b>	Purulia (M)- UA	01
<b>Moderate (45-65%)</b>	Jhalda (M), Ragthunathpur (M)	02
<b>Low (below 45%)</b>	Arsha, Bagmundi, Balarampur, Barabazar, Jhalda II, Bandwan, Kashipur, Neturi, Para, Ragthunathpur I, Raghunathpur II, Santuri , Joypur, Jhalda I, Hura, Manbazazr I, Manbazazr II, Puncha, Purulia I, Purulia II	20

**Source:** Compiled by author

- With respect to composition of rural-urban literacy, Purulia district once again shows large part of it under low rural literacy. Lowest rural literacy is seen of 26.23% in Jhalda II, 26.49% in Arsha, 28.45% in Bagmundi etc. Whereas on an average the urban areas display literacy well above 60% both in male and female, highest being 72.94% in Para, 70.23% in Kashipur etc. Thus, in compare to literacy of 1981, not much transformation and growth is found in 1991, though definitely some positive sign are revealed.
- With in rural areas wide and varied gender disparity can be seen like that of 1981 census. Mostly, the male members in rural areas have literacy above 50% like 56.34% in Kashipur, 52.93% in Para and Purulia II, 51.79% in Raghunathpur I etc. But again the female situation is very critical wherein the highest is only 25.98% in Kashipur. In most of the blocks, female literacy is below 20%, lowest being 7.55% in Jhalda II, 8.84% in Arsha, 10.49% in Bagmundi, 10.82% in Jaipur etc.
- Male-Female literacy in the district presents contrasting pictures. The male literacy is once again extremely higher than its counterpart, thus revealing low status of woman. Male literacy of more than 60% is found in Purulia(M)-70.20%Jhalda(M)-67.05%, Raghunathpur(M)-66.34%, Barabazar-64.60% and so on. While highest female literacy is just of 42.12% in Bundwan, the average literacy is below 40%, and going much lower of 7.55% in Jhalda-II, 10.82% in Joypur, 11.3% in Balarampur and 12.30% in Bundwan.
- The district as a whole reveals high disparity both in gender and population composition.

**Table no. (VI)**  
**CD Blocks/Municipalities wise literacy, 1991**

Sl. No	Block/ Municipality	Male (%)	Rank	Female (%)	Rank	Gender Gap (%)	Rank	Urban (%)	Rank	Rural (%)	Rank
1.	Hura	48.66	15 <sup>th</sup>	18.94	12 <sup>th</sup>	29.72	16 <sup>th</sup>			34.07	8 <sup>th</sup>
2.	Puncha	50.96	10 <sup>th</sup>	19.26	11 <sup>th</sup>	31.70	12 <sup>th</sup>			35.27	5 <sup>th</sup>
3	Manbazar I	48.74	14 <sup>th</sup>	16.95	14 <sup>th</sup>	31.79	11 <sup>th</sup>			33.16	11 <sup>th</sup>
4.	Manbazar II	44.65	20 <sup>th</sup>	13.00	17 <sup>th</sup>	31.65	13 <sup>th</sup>			29.33	15 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Bundwan	42.12	23 <sup>rd</sup>	12.30	18 <sup>th</sup>	29.82	15 <sup>th</sup>			27.47	18 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Purulia I	50.62	12 <sup>th</sup>	15.28	15 <sup>th</sup>	35.34	4 <sup>th</sup>			33.58	10 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Purulia II	52.93	8 <sup>th</sup>	17.69	13 <sup>th</sup>	35.24	5 <sup>th</sup>			33.88	9 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Purulia (M)	70.20	1 <sup>st</sup>	51.11	1 <sup>st</sup>	19.09	23 <sup>rd</sup>	61.12	4 <sup>th</sup>		
9.	Bagmundi	45.30	19 <sup>th</sup>	10.49	21 <sup>st</sup>	34.81	6 <sup>th</sup>			28.45	17 <sup>th</sup>
10.	Arsha	43.21	22 <sup>nd</sup>	8.84	22 <sup>nd</sup>	34.37	10 <sup>th</sup>			26.49	19 <sup>th</sup>
11.	Jhalda I	48.34	16 <sup>th</sup>	13.95	16 <sup>th</sup>	34.39	9 <sup>th</sup>			31.56	12 <sup>th</sup>
12.	Jhalda II	43.96	21 <sup>st</sup>	7.55	23 <sup>rd</sup>	36.38	2 <sup>nd</sup>			26.23	20 <sup>th</sup>
13.	Balarampur	46.78	17 <sup>th</sup>	11.31	19 <sup>th</sup>	35.47	3 <sup>rd</sup>	49.51	9 <sup>th</sup>	29.41	14 <sup>th</sup>
14.	Jaipur	45.34	18 <sup>th</sup>	10.82	20 <sup>th</sup>	34.52	8 <sup>th</sup>			28.82	16 <sup>th</sup>
15.	Barabazar	64.60	4 <sup>th</sup>	13.03	16 <sup>th</sup>	51.57	1 <sup>st</sup>			30.08	13 <sup>th</sup>
16.	Jhalda (M)	67.05	2 <sup>nd</sup>	43.20	4 <sup>th</sup>	23.85	21 <sup>st</sup>	55.81	5 <sup>th</sup>		
17.	Raghunathpur I	54.37	6 <sup>th</sup>	26.46	6 <sup>th</sup>	27.91	20 <sup>th</sup>	54.10	6 <sup>th</sup>	37.59	2 <sup>nd</sup>
18.	Raghunathpur II	52.77	9 <sup>th</sup>	21.42	7 <sup>th</sup>	31.35	14 <sup>th</sup>	64.07	3 <sup>rd</sup>	34.45	7 <sup>th</sup>
19.	Neturia	50.91	11 <sup>th</sup>	21.32	8 <sup>th</sup>	29.59	17 <sup>th</sup>	50.48	8 <sup>th</sup>	35.70	4 <sup>th</sup>
20.	Kashipur	59.22	5 <sup>th</sup>	30.55	5 <sup>th</sup>	28.67	18 <sup>th</sup>	70.23	2 <sup>nd</sup>	41.43	1 <sup>st</sup>
21.	Saturia	49.11	13 <sup>th</sup>	20.73	9 <sup>th</sup>	28.38	19 <sup>th</sup>			35.25	6 <sup>th</sup>
22.	Para	54.26	7 <sup>th</sup>	19.57	10 <sup>th</sup>	34.69	7 <sup>th</sup>	72.94	1 <sup>st</sup>	35.77	3 <sup>rd</sup>
23.	Rahunathpur (M)	66.34	3 <sup>rd</sup>	43.56	2 <sup>nd</sup>	22.78	22 <sup>nd</sup>	55.40	7 <sup>th</sup>		

**Source:** District statistical hand book purulia, 1995 (Compiled and modified by author)



### Literacy trend 2001

The study of overall spatial and temporal literacy landscape in the district as per 2001 census highlights the following important and salient features:

- In 2001, Purulia district was divided into 21 PS, 20 Blocks and 3 Municipalities. As such literacy data was collected as per the above said administrative units.
- The average literacy was 55.60% compare to 43.30% in 1991 showing good improvement and progressement in literacy growth rate. The blocks/Municipalities with highest literacy were Purulia (M)-77.10%, Raghunathpur (M)-69.00%, Kashipur-64.20% and Hura-59.00%. (Note: Purulia (M) and Raghunathpur (M) are urban while Kashipur and Hura are rural units.) The lowest literacy was found in Jhalda-II-43.08%, Arsha-46.00%, Bagmundi-46.90% and Bundwan-47.70%.

**Table no. (VII)**  
**Literacy density zone of purulia district (2001)**

Density zone	Name of the cd blocks/municipalities	Total
High (above 70%)	Purulia (M), Jhalda (M) Note: Both the administrative Units are Urban Agglomerations (UA)	02
Moderate (50-70%)	Kashipur, Neturi, Para, Ragthunathpur I, Raghunathpur II, Raghunathpur (M), Santuri , Joypur, Jhalda I, Hura, Manbazar I, Mnabazar II, Puncha, Puurlia I, Purulia II	15
Low (below 50%)	Arsha, Bagmundi, Balarampur, Barabazar, Jhalda II, Bandwan,	06

**Source:** Compiled by author

- With respect to urban-rural literacy, a great progress is seen with urban areas showing high literacy of 75.40% while rural areas has also made quantum jump of 53.20% thus, crossing the limit of 50% for the first time (table no. vii). Though it is quite late and slow in compare to other district in West Bengal but nevertheless, it sends a loud and clear message of l rural literal metamorphazation of the district. The highest urban literacy was recorded in Raghunathpur(I)-73.70%, Para-89.30%, Kashipur-81.40% and 77.10% in Purulia(M) on the other hand, highest rural literacy of 61.80% was found in Kashipur, 56.5% in Santuri and 59.00% in Hura. Lowest literacy was enrolled in Jhalda II in 43.80%, Balarampur-45.80%, Arsha-46.00% and Bagmundi-46.90%.
- The census of 2001 has once again revealed poor gender literacy ratio in the district. Male literacy stands at 73.77% while female is merely 36.50% thus compelled to think and make a comprehensive study of female societal and economic status in the district. With 85.60% Purulia (M) is at the top followed by Jhalda(M)-84.60%, Raghunathpur-80.40% and Kashipur-79.80%. Event the lowest literacy for male stands well above 67.40% in Arsha, Bagmundi-67.60%, Jhalda(ii)-68.00% and Joypur-71.30%. The other side, female member of the district has register only 67.80% of highest female literacy in Purulia(M) in the whole of district. Other blocks/Municipalities with some attractive figures are Jhalda(M)-61.00%, Ragunathpur(M)-58.70%, and Kahsipur-47.90%. But the lower female literacy is found over the large part of the district, lowest being just of 18.40% in Jhalda-(II), Arsha-23.60%, Bagmundi-25.10% and Joypur-26.90% thus sending a message of great concern and alarm.

**Table no. (VIII)**  
**CD Blocks/Municipalities wise literacy, 2001**

Sl. No	Block/ Municipality	Male (%)	Rank	Female (%)	Rank	Gender Gap (%)	Rank	Urban (%)	Rank	Rural (%)	Rank
1.	Arsha	67.40	22 <sup>nd</sup>	23.60	22 <sup>nd</sup>	43.80	3 <sup>rd</sup>			46.00	18 <sup>th</sup>
2.	Bagmundi	67.60	21 <sup>st</sup>	25.10	21 <sup>st</sup>	42.50	4 <sup>th</sup>			46.90	17 <sup>th</sup>
3	Balarampur	68.30	19 <sup>th</sup>	30.20	18 <sup>th</sup>	38.10	10 <sup>th</sup>	66.90	9 <sup>th</sup>	45.80	19 <sup>th</sup>
4.	Barabazar	72.70	15 <sup>th</sup>	32.00	17 <sup>th</sup>	40.70	5 <sup>th</sup>	76.30	3 <sup>rd</sup>	51.20	14 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Joypur	71.30	18 <sup>th</sup>	26.90	20 <sup>th</sup>	44.40	2 <sup>nd</sup>			50.10	15 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Jhalda-I	73.70	10 <sup>th</sup>	33.20	16 <sup>th</sup>	40.50	6 <sup>th</sup>			53.80	12 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Jhalda-II	68.00	20 <sup>th</sup>	18.40	23 <sup>rd</sup>	49.60	1 <sup>st</sup>			43.80	20 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Jhalda(M)	84.60	2 <sup>nd</sup>	61.80	2 <sup>nd</sup>	22.80	21 <sup>st</sup>	61.80	10 <sup>th</sup>		
9.	Bandwan	66.50	23 <sup>rd</sup>	28.50	19 <sup>th</sup>	38.00	12 <sup>th</sup>			47.70	16 <sup>th</sup>
10.	Hura	76.40	5 <sup>th</sup>	41.20	7 <sup>th</sup>	35.20	16 <sup>th</sup>			59.00	2 <sup>nd</sup>
11.	Manbazar-I	74.00	9 <sup>th</sup>	35.90	12 <sup>th</sup>	38.10	11 <sup>th</sup>			55.10	9 <sup>th</sup>
12.	Manbazar-II	73.00	13 <sup>th</sup>	33.40	15 <sup>th</sup>	39.60	9 <sup>th</sup>			53.50	13 <sup>th</sup>
13.	Puncha	75.30	8 <sup>th</sup>	39.10	9 <sup>th</sup>	36.20	14 <sup>th</sup>			57.30	3 <sup>rd</sup>
14.	Purulia-I	73.30	12 <sup>th</sup>	33.50	14 <sup>th</sup>	39.80	7 <sup>th</sup>			54.40	10 <sup>th</sup>
15.	Purulia-II	75.50	7 <sup>th</sup>	35.70	13 <sup>th</sup>	39.80	8 <sup>th</sup>			56.20	5 <sup>th</sup>
16.	Purulia(M)	85.60	1 <sup>st</sup>	67.80	1 <sup>st</sup>	17.80	23 <sup>rd</sup>	67.80	7 <sup>th</sup>		
17.	Kashipur	79.80	4 <sup>th</sup>	47.90	4 <sup>th</sup>	31.90	18 <sup>th</sup>	81.40	2 <sup>nd</sup>	61.80	1 <sup>st</sup>
18.	Neturia	73.00	14 <sup>th</sup>	41.30	6 <sup>th</sup>	31.10	19 <sup>th</sup>	69.50	5 <sup>th</sup>	55.80	6 <sup>th</sup>
19.	Para	76.40	6 <sup>th</sup>	38.50	10 <sup>th</sup>	37.90	13 <sup>th</sup>	89.30	1 <sup>st</sup>	55.60	7 <sup>th</sup>
20.	Ragunathpur-I	73.60	11 <sup>th</sup>	43.30	5 <sup>th</sup>	30.30	20 <sup>th</sup>	73.70	4 <sup>th</sup>	55.30	8 <sup>th</sup>
21.	Ragunathpur-II	72.20	16 <sup>th</sup>	36.50	11 <sup>th</sup>	35.70	15 <sup>th</sup>	67.80	7 <sup>th</sup>	54.00	11 <sup>th</sup>
22.	Ragunathpur(M)	80.40	3 <sup>rd</sup>	58.70	3 <sup>rd</sup>	21.70	22 <sup>th</sup>	69.00	6 <sup>th</sup>		
23.	Santuri	72.00	17 <sup>th</sup>	40.00	8 <sup>th</sup>	32.00	17 <sup>th</sup>			56.50	4 <sup>th</sup>

**Source:** District statistical hand book purulia, 2004 (Compiled and Modified by author)

## Findings

After going through the detail available literacy variables and data of Purulia district and its comprehensive study some important and key features has been found which are discussed below:

- On an average, the literacy of Purulia is growing steadily and strongly over the decades. In 2011, Purulia registered the highest decadal literacy growth rate in the whole of West Bengal. Though its literacy base is quite low compare to other district, but we must not forget that Purulia is considered as one of the economically distressed and worn district. But over the year, with target oriented educational programme both under state government and central assistance initiative, some changes has definitely been observed which can be seen in term of its decadal growth rate.

**Table no. (IX)**  
**Comparison of purulia district with other 19 Districts of west bengal**

Parameter	Value	Rank
HDI	0.45	16
Gender Development Index	0.40	16
Education Index	0.55	14
Health Index	0.61	12
Income Index	0.18	17
Per capita DDP (Rs) at the current price	13044.67	17

**Source:** Human development profile 2007, West bengal, Undp, Planning commission govt. of india hdrcc, Development planning, GOVT. Of west Bengal

- From the above table one can see the poor status and position of Purulia in the whole of State. Only over the last decades, Purulia has shown some improvement in terms of Health and Education. As such the district has a long way to go to achieve 100% literacy and that can be possible when the other sphere of social and economic sector of the district will progress.
- Another salient features observed during the study is wide regional disparity of literacy among various the blocks. In fact such variation can be attributed due to deprivation of basic educational facilities to the poor people which in turn have developed ignorant attitudes of the rural people towards the educational programmes and have thus led to wide crevices in both spatial and temporal literacy variation.

**Table no. (X)**  
**Block wise educational deprivation in purulia district**

Sl no.	Blocks Municipality	% Illiterate people	% OF OOSC Children (5-13) Years	Knowledge deprivation index	Rank
1.	Arsha	61.03	14.42	0.45	18 <sup>th</sup>
2.	Bagmundi	62.04	17.12	0.47	20 <sup>th</sup>
3.	Balarampur	58.10	8.08	0.41	14 <sup>th</sup>
4.	Barabazar	54.38	13.80	0.41	13 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Joypur	57.85	20.73	0.45	17 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Jhalda I	54.94	15.52	0.42	15 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Jhalda II	63.47	14.14	0.47	19 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Bundwan	58.90	17.47	0.45	16 <sup>th</sup>
9.	Hura	49.25	16.24	0.38	4 <sup>th</sup>
10.	Manbazar I	52.41	10.13	0.38	5 <sup>th</sup>
11.	Manbazar II	53.21	8.55	0.38	6 <sup>th</sup>
12.	Puncha	50.11	10.58	0.37	2 <sup>nd</sup>
13.	Purulia I	53.93	14.01	0.41	12 <sup>th</sup>
14.	Purulia II	52.24	13.06	0.39	9 <sup>th</sup>
15.	Kashipur	46.65	4.46	0.33	1 <sup>st</sup>
16.	Neturia	50.25	16.00	0.39	7 <sup>th</sup>
17.	Para	50.77	16.01	0.39	10 <sup>th</sup>

18.	Raghunathpur I	49.11	15.62	0.38	3 <sup>rd</sup>
19.	Raghunathpur II	53.44	9.71	0.39	8 <sup>th</sup>
20.	Santuri	51.09	15.51	0.39	11 <sup>th</sup>
21.	Purulia (M)	31.62	8.81	0.24	
22.	Raghunathpur (M)	38.95	5.76	0.28	
23.	Jhalda (M)	36.38	2.29	0.25	

Source: SSA Purulia

- You can see the huge rural illiteracy combined with low educational index resulting into far and wide spread of regional imbalance in literacy transition in the district. Most of the blocks has large illiterate population mostly product of poor educational infrastructures and facilities in the villages.
- If one goes through the district and block level literacy discussion, it can be observed that the female literacy is consistently low and slow in compare to male counterpart in the district. High gender literacy disparity can be seen and found throughout the district. Though the gap is narrowing which can be understood with the 2001 census gender gap data from table-vi, but it becomes very crucial and important to find out the reasons for such misery.

**Table no. (XI)**  
**District report card 2008**

Parameter	Country Score	State Score	District Score	Blocks	
				Below average	Above average
Educational Development Index	0.67	0.65	0.45	10	13
Enrollment Index	0.64	0.53	0.51	12	11
Literacy Index	0.91	0.99	0.41	10	13
Completion rate in primary stage (%)	63.00	60.00	78.70	10	13
Gender gap in literacy (%)	22.00	18.00	37.60	14	9
Female literacy (%)	54.00	60.00	37.50	10	13
Enrollment ratio on primary stage (%)	64.00	50.00	91.90	13	10
Dropout rate in primary stage (%)	30.30	31.50	14.30	11	12

Source: Human development report purulia 2012

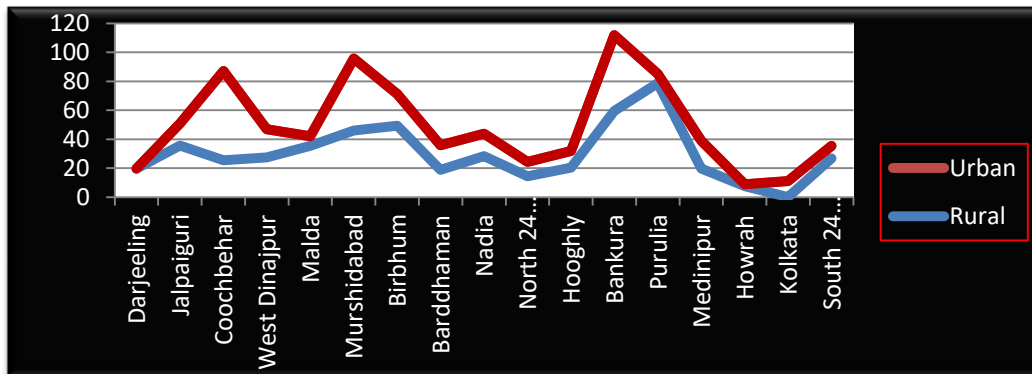
From the above table it can be seen that the average female literacy is just 37.50% against the 54.00% of India and 60.00% of West Bengal. Most of the blocks have literacy below average indicating clear pictures of female prejudice in the district.

The village level survey (Example Lagda village, Ramnagar village in Purulia-I) and census 2011( 2<sup>nd</sup> largest district in terms of Tribal population) reveals that since Purulia has a large tribal population of diverse tribal groups endowed with traditional orthodox customs and primitive ideas, the female status has always been low in the society. Early marriage, restriction in female mobility outside the community, early engagement in family occupation etc has been the steep hurdles for low female to participation in educational process.

- Another very important feature of Purulia district is of large rural population which has created tremendous obstruction towards achieving higher literacy both among male-female component of the district. Fig no (vi) clearly shows the highest rural population of Purulia district.

Fig no. (VI)

District wise households living below poverty line in rural and urban areas (%): 1999-2000



Source: Wbhdr 2004

Since rural areas provide fewer opportunities for adequate educational amenities, the process of literacy transition gets delayed and brings paramount impact on the social-economic development of the district. The finding reveals that in most of the rural villages, education is still seen as the secondary priority rather an instrument of development. Again the economic condition is not in health position to promote educational campaign. It can be seen from table no. (ix) that per capita income of the district stands at 17<sup>th</sup> place out of 19 districts in the state.

Table no. (XII)

Cd block and Municipalities wise human poverty index (HPI)

S1 no.	Blocks/ Municipality	Knowledge deprivation index	Provisioning deprivation index	Health deprivation index	HPI	Rank
1.	Arsha	0.46	0.0.68	0.81	0.68	19 <sup>th</sup>
2.	Bagmundi	0.0.47	0.65	0.55	0.57	12 <sup>th</sup>
3.	Balarampur	0.41	0.61	0.36	0.49	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4.	Barabazar	0.41	0.66	0.49	0.54	11 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Joypur	0.46	0.65	0.74	0.64	18 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Jhalda I	0.42	0.61	0.50	0.52	8 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Jhalda II	0.47	0.64	0.61	0.58	14 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Bundwan	0.45	0.67	0.37	0.53	9 <sup>th</sup>
9.	Hura	0.38	0.61	0.47	0.51	5 <sup>th</sup>
10.	Manbazar I	0.38	0.64	0.38	0.50	4 <sup>th</sup>
11.	Manbazar II	0.38	0.68	0.45	0.54	10 <sup>th</sup>
12.	Puncha	0.37	0.64	0.68	0.60	15 <sup>th</sup>
13.	Purulia I	0.41	0.62	0.74	0.62	17 <sup>th</sup>
14.	Purulia II	0.39	0.61	0.72	0.60	16 <sup>th</sup>
15.	Kashipur	0.33	0.53	0.49	0.46	1 <sup>st</sup>
16.	Neturia	0.39	0.51	0.50	0.47	2 <sup>nd</sup>

17	Para	0.39	0.55	0.69	0.57	13 <sup>th</sup>
18.	Raghunathpur I	0.38	0.52	1.00	0.74	20 <sup>th</sup>
19.	Raghunathpur II	0.39	0.58	0.54	0.52	7 <sup>th</sup>
20.	Santuri	0.39	0.58	0.54	0.51	6 <sup>th</sup>
21.	Purulia (M)	0.24	0.27			
22.	Raghunathpur (M)	0.28	0.27			
23.	Jhalda (M)	0.25	0.25			
	District Rural	0.40	0.63	0.44	0.41	

**Source:** census 2001

The study of table no. (xii) clearly highlights the poverty and livelihood backwardness of the region. Most of the blocks are under going through high economic stress and rupture. The burden of poverty triggered by socio-cultural ignorant attitudes towards educational programmes has greatly hindered the literacy transition and development process in the district.

- Maoist insurgency is another important factor for slow and sluggish literacy growth rate. For more than a decade, the district was under active Maoist so called social revolt. The blocks like Bundwan, Arsha, Bagmundi, Barabazar etc, shows extremely low and poor literacy figures for consecutive decades, because these comprises the Jungle Mahal corridor, which for a long period of time were affected by the Maoism. Young male and females were recruited in militant outfit to fulfill the Maoist dream of so called socio-equal society. Over the decades, neither the government nor the industrial entrepreneurs invested in this region due to the fear of Maoism. Thus, due to such circumstances, not only these regions, the whole of Purulia district were deprived of economic and educational initiatives.

## Conclusion

Literacy growth and economic growth goes hand in hand. As such after studying and analyzing the available literacy data and interaction with local people; in the conclusion part it can be said that the district desperately need new economic ventures and investments which will helps to raise the per capita income of the people and subsequently they will send their children to schools and colleges for higher studies and in turn will increase not only the rate but also the overall literacy in the whole of Purulia District.

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