Status of Female Literacy in Various Districts of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

A population's literacy skills have a bearing on how well a country performs economically. Moreover, the education of women plays a significant role in improving living standards in the state. Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community. The present study is conducted to explore the status of female literacy in various districts of Uttar Pradesh. The female literacy rate of all the districts have been categorized under five heads: 1. Very high, 2. High, 3. Average, 4.Low and 5. Very low. Female literacy rates were plotted on graph through monochromatic colour scheme to give a clear picture and understanding of female literacy. A very high regional variation with a declining trend regarding the female literacy was observed throughout the study area.

Keywords: female literacy, literacy trend, significance of female literacy

1. Introduction

A population's literacy skills have a bearing on how well a country performs economically. The world we live in today is vastly different from that of a generation ago. Technological change has transformed the way in which work is done; competition in many industries is global in nature; and the industrial structure of the Canadian labor market has rapidly evolved from a manufacturing and agricultural base to one based on services. These changes have, in turn, brought rising skill requirements. Countries that are successful in endowing their populations with strong skills are usually in a better position to meet the economic challenges of operating in a globalized information economy.

According to census 2011, "A person aged seven and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language is treated as literate. A person who can only read but cannot write is not literate".

Finally, having a population that has strong literacy skills also places a country in a better position to meet the complex social challenges that it faces. For example, strong literacy skills are linked to better health outcomes for individuals. A highly literate population will be better able to deal with issues of governance in a highly diverse society.

The female literacy situation in Uttar Pradesh is dismal at 42.98%. However, the male literacy rate is reasonably better at 70.23%. The overall literacy rate is still poor at 57.36% and much lower than the all India average. The State government has taken steps to make the population totally literate.

The education of women plays a significant role in improving living standards in the state. A higher women literacy rate improves the quality of life both at home and outside of home, by encouraging and promoting education of children, especially female children. Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community.

2. Rationale

The topic related to female literacy rate is selected here because it is one of the important aspects for the upliftment and empowerment of women in any country. India being a country with high traditional values and developing in nature, strives to achieve a higher female literacy rate and education, so as to increase the status of women in the country.

Low female literacy rate means an overall sluggish growth of country, as it impacts every arena of the development. India is struggling hard to stabilize its growing population through family planning programs. But if females are illiterate, then this has a direct and negative impact on these initiatives.

When a girl or a woman is not educated, it is not only she who suffers but the entire family has to bear the consequences of her illiteracy. It has been found out that illiterate women face more hardships in life than literate ones. They have high levels of fertility as well as mortality; they suffer from malnutrition and all other related health problems. In one of the surveys, it has been found out that infant mortality is inversely related to mother's educational level. In such a scenario not only women but their kids also go through the same conditions. She, who does not know the importance of

education in life, does not emphasize the same for her kids. This hampers the family as well as the nation's progress as a whole.

Lack of education, means lack of awareness. Illiterate women are not aware of their rights. They know nothing about initiatives taken by the government for their welfare. Illiterate women keep on struggling hard and bear harshness of life, family and even their husbands.

Females constitute about 50% of country's human resource but lack of education snatches their chance to be a part of the progress and development of India. This means our pace of progress is less than the required pace. Even if females do not use education to work, total illiteracy has a huge negative impact on our society.

There is a dramatic difference in the female literacy rate based on various regions in India and even within the state. Female literacy rate in urban areas is higher as compared to rural ones.

Bruke, F. (1983) had attempted to identify the geographical pattern of literacy levels of scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh. She had observed that there were disparities in the literacy between rural-urban areas as well as in males and females within the district. Finally she concluded that backwardness and literacy are strongly correlated and literacy and socio-economic development go together.

Mathur, B.B. (1988) in his study of "spatial pattern of literacy in Uttar Pradesh" had observed that the extent of rural literacy show a wide disparity. He found that north hilly region, Ganga-Yamuna doab and some part of eastern plain show high rates of rural literacy whereas the larger part of eastern plain and the southern plateaus show low literacy rates.

Singh, U. K. and Singh, A. K. (2005) have analyzed the level of literacy among the Tharus of Mihinpurwa block of Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh (India) and concluded that the level of literacy is very low among the Tharus in the studied block. The level of existing literacy was only up to primary stage. The study further shows that the level of literacy is higher in the village situated in the vicinity of Mihinpurwa town than that of the village situated in the remote areas. Poverty is the main cause of low literacy.

Tripathi, R. S. (1993) had conducted a research on "Impact of urbanization on literacy and concentration of non-agricultural workers in rural areas of Bundelkhand (Uttar Pradesh)" and has examined the situation of literacy and the concentration of non-agricultural workers in rural areas of Bundelkhand with particular reference to the urbanization. He concluded that the higher degree of urbanization results in the higher level of literacy in rural areas and vice-versa.

Zaidi, A. N. (1986) had intended to analyze the disparities in educational development in different regions in India and particularly in various regions of the state of Uttar Pradesh on the basis of certain indicators of educational development. His study had pointed out the inter-state as well as the intra state inequalities in educational development.

3.   Objectives

The present research paper aims at:

3.1. Studying female literacy in various districts of Uttar Pradesh.

3.2. Finding out the districts with high and low female literacy in the state.
3.3. Finding out a pattern of female literacy in Uttar Pradesh.

4.   Study Area- Uttar Pradesh
Uttar Pradesh is between latitude 24°-31°N and longitude 77°-84°E. Area wise, it is the fourth largest state of India. The Gangetic Plain occupies three quarters of the state. The entire state, except for the northern region, has a tropical monsoon climate. In the plains, January temperatures range from 12.5°C-17.5°C and May records 27.5°-32.5°C, with a maximum of 45°C. Rainfall varies from 1,000-2,000 mm in the east to 600-1,000 mm in the west.
Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India. In the early 21st century it had an overall population density of more than twice the national average. The Gangetic Plain supports the overwhelming majority of the state's population.

It has multicultural, multiracial, fabulous wealth of nature-hills, valleys, rivers, forests, and vast plains. Viewed as the largest tourist destination in India, Uttar Pradesh boasts of 35 million domestic tourists. More than half of the foreign tourists, who visit India every year, make it a point to visit this state of Taj and Ganga. Agra itself receives around one million foreign tourists a year coupled with around twenty million domestic tourists.

Uttar Pradesh is studded with places of tourist attractions across a wide spectrum of interest to people of diverse interests. The seventh most populated state of the world, Uttar Pradesh can lay claim to be the oldest seat of India's culture and civilization. It has been characterized as the cradle of Indian civilization and culture because it is around the Ganga that the ancient cities and towns sprang up. It has played the most important part in India's freedom struggle also.

5. Methodology

The present study aims to enquire into the expansion of female literacy in various districts of Uttar Pradesh. Secondary statistical data pertaining to female literacy (census 2011), obtained from the "Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (Delhi)", are mainly used in this study. The raw data obtained was analyzed and summarized to obtain meaningful information from it.

The raw data regarding total number of female literates of all 71 districts of Uttar Pradesh was converted into their corresponding literacy rates using the given formula:

Female Literacy Rate = $\dfrac{\sum L_t}{\sum P_t} \times 100$

Where,

$\sum L_t =$ total number of female literates excluding age group 0-6

$\sum P_t =$ total number of female population excluding age group 0-6

In order to analyze the status of female literacy in all 71 districts of Uttar Pradesh, the processed statistical data was plotted on the latest administrative map of state through "Monochromatic Colour Scheme".

6. Analysis and Interpretation Of data

The raw score of literate females was converted into percentage score which depicts the female literacy rates of various districts. During the tabulation of data two striking districts were observed with highest and lowest female literacy rates of 90.23% and 37.07% respectively and on its basis a categorization of total female literacy was made by constructing five categories of very high, high, average (medium), low and very low female literacy rates. For the convenient analysis the range of female literacy rate has been categorized as below.

- ✓ Very high (65.51 to 81.42%)
- ✓ High (60.51 to 65.50%)
- ✓ Average (55.51 to 60.50%)
- ✓ Low (50.51 to 55.50%)
- ✓ Very low (37.07 to 50.50%)

Districtwise Female Literacy Rates (in %)

UTTAR PRADESH			59.26		
SAHARANPUR	63.30	LALITPUR	52.26	MEERUT	65.69
MUZAFFARNAGAR	60.00	HAMIRPUR	57.19	BAGHPAT	61.22
BIJNOR	61.45	MAHOBA	54.65	GHAZIABAD	81.42
MORADABAD	49.63	BANDA	54.95	GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR	72.78
RAMPUR	46.19	CHITRAKOOT	54.03	BULANDSHAHAR	56.60
FAIZABAD	60.72	FATEHPUR	57.76	KANSHIRAM NAGAR	50.20
KANPUR DEHAT	68.48	ETAH	61.72	SIDDHARTHNAGAR	49.61
MATHURA	58.93	BAHRAICH	40.76	PRATAPGARH	60.99
AGRA	59.16	SHRAWASTI	37.07	KAUSHAMBI	50.76
FIROZABAD	64.80	BALRAMPUR	40.92	ALLAHABAD	62.67
MAINPURI	68.35	GONDA	49.13	BARABANKI	54.10
BADAUN	41.76	ALIGARH	57.48	AMBEDKAR NAGAR	64.62
BAREILLY	50.35	BASTI	58.35	SULTANPUR	60.17
PILIBHIT	52.43	JHANSI	64.88	UNNAO	58.54
SHAHJAHANPUR	51.73	MAHRAJGANJ	50.14	LUCKNOW	73.88
KHERI	52.62	GORAKHPUR	61.54	RAE BARELI	58.06
SITAPUR	52.80	KUSHINAGAR	54.74	FARRUKHABAD	60.51
HARDOI	59.17	DEORIA	61.34	KANNAUJ	64.46
BALLIA	61.72	AZAMGARH	62.65	ETAWAH	71.16
JAUNPUR	61.70	MAU	65.59	AURAIYA	71.97
GHAZIPUR	62.29	MIRZAPUR	58.77	MAHAMAYA NAGAR	60.79
CHANDAULI	63.07	SONBHADRA	54.11	JYOTIBA PHULE NAGAR	53.77
VARANASI	68.20	JALAUN	63.88	KANPUR NAGAR	76.89
SANT RAVIDAS NAGAR(BHADOHI)			57.79	SANT KABIR NAGAR	56.99

Source: Census of India 2011

6.1. Very High Female Literacy Rate

A High female literacy is a healthy phenomenon for the society and the state. The very high female literacy is categorized under the range of 65.51 to 81.42% and it was observed on the basis of data that there is very high regional variation in the female literacy throughout the study area.

The highest female literacy was found in the industrially advanced district of Ghaziabad recording 81.42% of literacy. Kanpur Nagar (76.89%), Lucknow (73.88%), Gautam Buddha Nagar (72.78%), Auraiya (71.97%), Etawah (71.16%), Kanpur Dehat (68.48%), Mainpuri (68.35%), Varanasi (68.20%), Meerut (65.69%), and Mau (65.59%) are the other districts followed by it. High economic growth and urban atmosphere are the major causes of very high female literacy in these districts.
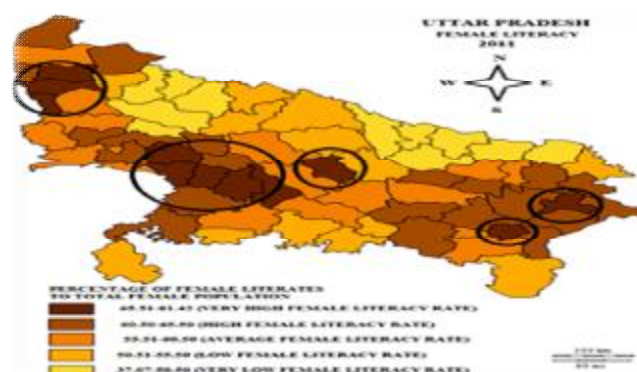
6.2. High Female Literacy

The districts said to be having a high female literacy are distinguished according to the range of 60.50 to 65.50%. Most part of study area belongs to high female literacy covering about 21 districts itself. A patch of female literacy is formed in the eastern region by the districts of Faizabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Ballia, Pratapgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Ghazipur and Chandauli.

A continuous range of districts with high female literacy is observed in the western part of state formed by the districts of Saharanpur, Bijnor, Baghpat, Mahamaya Nagar, Etah,
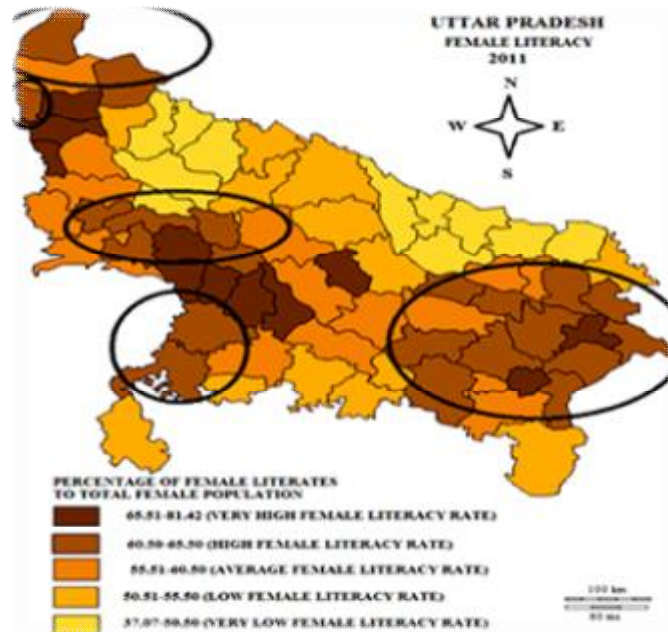
Firozabad, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Jalaun, and Jhansi. All these districts are mostly located near the regions having very high female literacy. This shows that an urge and need for education is spread from the highly literate areas to the areas in lower hierarchy.

6.3. Average Female Literacy

A reasonable part of the study area belongs to medium level of female literacy which is experienced by the districts of Muzaffanagar, Bulandshahar, Aligarh, Mathura, and Agra in western region. Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Barely, and Sultanpur together form a belt in the central Uttar Pradesh. Hamirpur and Fatehpur in continuation represented average female literacy in the south western part of the state. Basti and Sant Kabir Nagar in the east while Sant Ravidas Nagar (Bhadohi) and Mirzapur in the south east region also come under average female literate regions. All the above districts possess the literacy rate in between 55.51 to 60.50%. The average female literacy of the state also lies in this range i.e. of 59.26%.
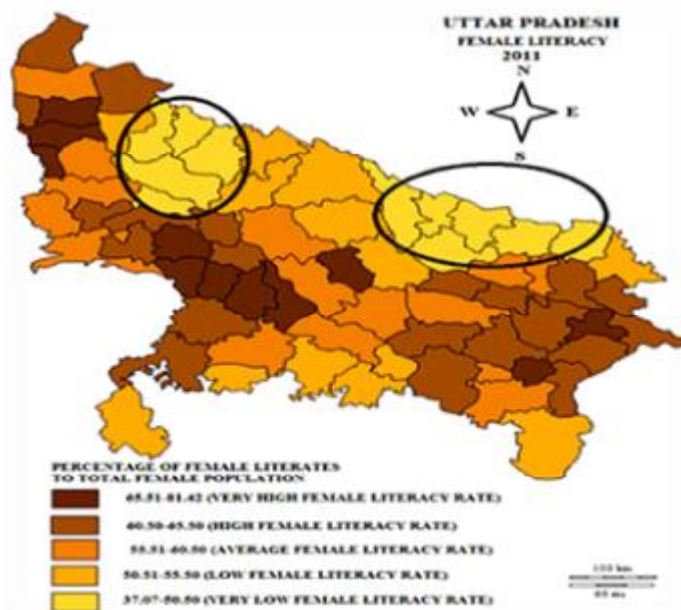
6.4. Low Female Literacy

Low female literacy is spread over the districts of Pilibhit, Kheri, Shahjahanpur, and Jyotibaphule nagar in the north and north western parts of state. Sitapur and Barabanki forming the central part of Uttar Pradesh are also included in this category.

Mahoba, Banda, Chitrakoot and Kaushambi lie in the southern part whereas districts of Kushinagar, Sonbhadra and Lalitpur suffering from low female literacy represents the north eastern, south eastern and south western extremes of the state respectively. All these districts lie in between 50.51 to 55.50% of female literacy rate.
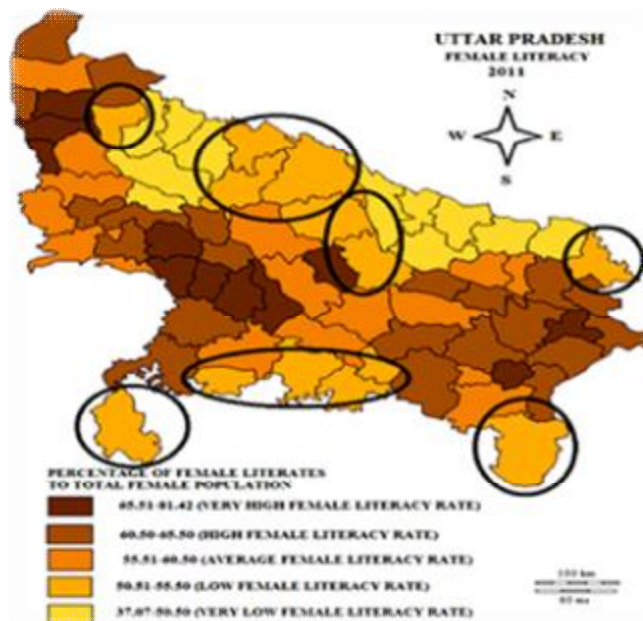
6.5 Very Low Female Literacy

As far as very low female literacy is concerned it is defined under the range of 37.07 to 50.50% and it was observed that two compact pockets are formed by the very low female literate districts.

One of the compact regions lies in the upper northern belt sharing the border of Uttarakhand formed by the districts of Moradabad, Rampur, Barelly, Badaun and Kanshiram Nagar. The other pocket also lies in the same belt sharing the Nepal border. These districts include Bahraich, Balrampur, Siddhartha Nagar, Maharajganj, and Gonda. Sharawasti, the district with lowest female literacy rate 0f 37.07% also lays in this region. Economic backwardness and enlightenment towards education is the major cause of very low level of female literacy in these districts.
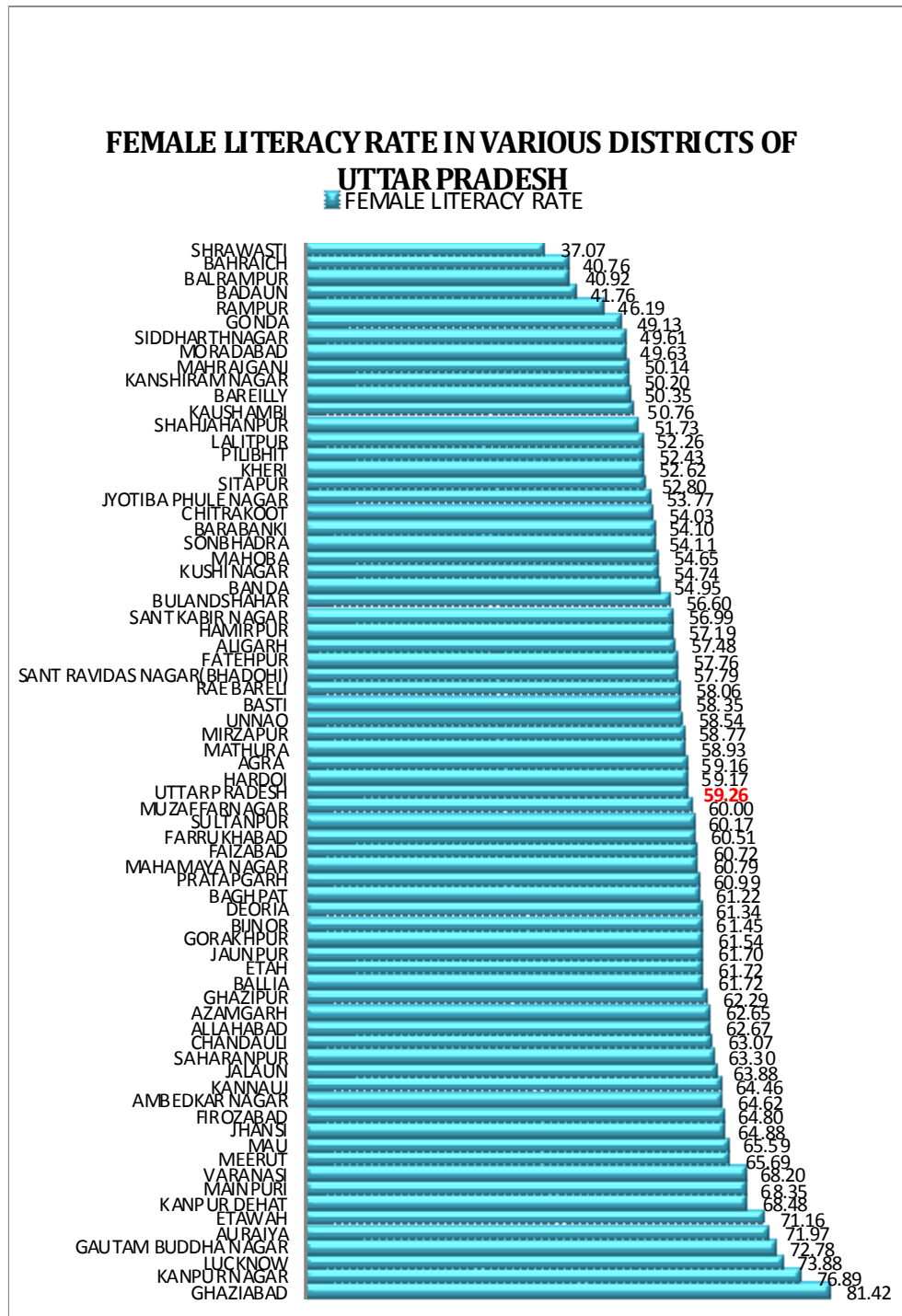
7. Findings and Discussion

7.1.   The mean literacy rate of females in Uttar Pradesh is 59.26%.
7.2.   The highest literacy of females was traced in Ghaziabad district (81.42%).
7.3.   The lowest literacy of females was observed in the Shrawasti district (37.07%).
7.4.   15.49% of districts in state possess a very high female literacy.
7.5.   Almost 29.57% of districts are blessed with the high female literacy.
7.6.   Average female literacy is observed in the 21.12% districts in the state.
7.7.   18.30% of districts in the state are exposed to the low female literacy status.
7.8.   The percentage of districts suffering from the very low female literacy is also 15.49%, equivalent to that of having very high female literacy.

The status of female literacy has shown a remarkable melioration in Uttar Pradesh over the last decade (2001-2011), according to the provisional Census data 2011. In actual, the rate of female literacy has been enhanced over by 59 % with a jump of 17 % as compared to 42 % of female literacy rate during 2001.

The study has unwrapped the literacy status of females in the state revealing Ghaziabad with highest literacy rate of 81.42 % followed by the districts of Kanpur Nagar, Lucknow, Auraiya, Etawah, Kanpur Dehat, Mainpuri, Varanasi, Meerut and Mau.

Among the low female literacy areas Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly, Badaun and Kanshiram Nagar forms a compact region in the northern Uttar Pradesh. Along with these Bahraich, Balrampur, Siddhartha Nagar, Maharajganj, Gonda and Sharawasti form a pocket sharing the Nepal border. Sharawasti was found to be having 37.07% female literacy rate which is lowest of all.

A very high regional variation with a declining trend regarding the female literacy was observed throughout the study area.

FEMALE LITERACY RATE IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS OF UTTAR PRADESH

FEMALE LITERACY RATE

District	Female Literacy Rate
SHRAWASTI	37.07
BAHRAICH	40.76
BALRAMPUR	40.92
BADAUN	41.76
RAMPUR	46.19
GONDA	49.13
SIDDHARTHNAGAR	49.61
MORADABAD	49.63
MAHRAJGANJ	50.14
KANSHIRAM NAGAR	50.20
BAREILLY	50.35
KAUSHAMBI	50.76
SHAHJAHANPUR	51.73
LALITPUR	52.26
PILIBHIT	52.43
KHERI	52.62
SITAPUR	52.80
JYOTIBA PHULE NAGAR	53.77
CHITRAKOOT	54.03
BARABANKI	54.10
SONBHADRA	54.11
MAHOBA	54.65
KUSHI NAGAR	54.74
BANDA	54.95
BULANDSHAHAR	56.60
SANT KABIR NAGAR	56.99
HAMIRPUR	57.19
ALIGARH	57.48
FATEHPUR	57.76
SANT RAVIDAS NAGAR (BHADOHI)	57.79
RAE BARELI	58.06
BASTI	58.35
UNNAO	58.54
MIRZAPUR	58.77
MATHURA	58.93
AGRA	59.16
HARDOI	59.17
UTTAR PRADESH	59.26
MUZAFFARNAGAR	60.00
SULTANPUR	60.17
FARRUKHABAD	60.51
FAIZABAD	60.72
MAHAMAYA NAGAR	60.79
PRATAPGARH	60.99
BAGHPAT	61.22
DEORIA	61.34
BIJNOR	61.45
GORAKHPUR	61.54
JAUNPUR	61.70
ETAH	61.72
BALLIA	61.72
GHAZIPUR	62.29
AZAMGARH	62.65
ALLAHABAD	62.67
CHANDAULI	63.07
SAHARANPUR	63.30
JALAUN	63.88
KANNAUJ	64.46
AMBEDKAR NAGAR	64.62
FIROZABAD	64.80
JHANSI	64.88
MAU	65.59
MEERUT	65.69
VARANASI	68.20
MAINPURI	68.35
KANPUR DEHAT	68.48
ETAWAH	71.16
AURAIYA	71.97
GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR	72.78
LUCKNOW	73.88
KANPUR NAGAR	76.89
GHAZIABAD	81.42

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