

Quadrant II – Notes

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POPULATION COMPOSITION IN INDIA

In this lesson we will study composition of Indian population along certain dimensions. Firstly, we would like to note the location and size of settlements in which people prefer to live and why they do so. This constitutes the rural and urban composition of population. Next we will find out if males and females are equal in number and more importantly in status. Age structure composition of Indian population and its implication would be yet another focal point of our inquiry. Then we would move away from purely demographic to socio-cultural dimensions of our population composition. This will help us to know the linguistic and religious composition of our society. Finally, we have a glance at scheduled caste and scheduled tribes with regard to their numbers, location and distribution. Last but not the least important focal point of our study would be the literacy rates of our society and its major social components. All these analytical aspects would help us to look at our population not only as mere numbers but as a human resources as well.

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- analyse the rural-urban, male-female (Sex ratio) and age composition of Indian population;
- establish the relationship between literacy rate and population growth rate;
- show the areas of tribal population on the outline map of India ;
- analyse the reasons for concentration of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes population in specific areas;
- explain the reasons for the high concentration of scheduled castes population

in the area of very low concentration of scheduled tribes and vice versa.

- describe the important features of religious and linguistic composition of population.

Population is divided into two parts-rural and urban on the basis of the size and occupation of settlements. The rural population consists of small sized settlements scattered over the countryside. Urban population is one that lives in large size settlements i.e. towns and cities. However, more importantly this division is based on occupational structure. In India, rural area is defined as one where three-fourths or more of its population is engaged in primary occupations such as farming, animal rearing, forestry, fishing, quarrying etc. On the other hand, urban area is one where three-fourths or above of its population is engaged in non-agricultural activities such as manufacturing, trade, transport, communication, banking and social services like health, education, administration etc.

Table 27.1 Rural and Urban Population in India (1901-2001)

Census year Percentage of total Population

Rural Urban

1901 89.2 10.8

1911 89.7 10.3

1921 88.8 11.2

1931 88.0 12.0

1941 86.1 13.9

1951 82.7 17.3

1961 82.0 18.0

1971 80.1 19.9

1981 76.7 23.3

1991 74.3 25.7

2001 72.2 27.8

Source : Census of India

The total population of India spreads over more than 5.8 lakhs of villages and 4,615 towns. India, proverbially, is considered to be a country of villages. Even today, about 72% of the total population of India lives in villages. But the proportion of rural population has been decreasing in each successive census (See Table No 27.1). Consequently the proportion of urban population to total population has been increasing slowly but steadily. It was as low as 10.8% in 1901 and rose to

27.8 by 2001. The question arises why is it so? It is because the rate of growth of urban population is higher than that of rural population. In contrast to an average growth rate of about 21.34% in 2001 the urban population has registered a growth rate of 31.13 percent. However all this growth is not a result of only the natural increase of population. Infact, much of the growth of urban population is due to high rate of migration of people from rural to urban areas. We have discussed in details about the various causes of rural to urban migration in the previous lesson. This also indicates a slow change in the occupations of people from primary to secondary and tertiary activities. Very often limits of municipal or city Corporation areas are extended to cover neighbouring villages or suburbs.

Fig. 27.1 India : Distribution of Metropolitan cities 2001

Half of the total urban population of India lives only in five states. These five states are Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Union Territory of

Delhi, have about 32 per cent of urban population of the country. Rest of the urban population (about 18%) is spread over the remaining states and Union Territories.

According to 2001 census, 35 cities have more than 1000000 population each. They are called the metro-politan or million plus cities. These 35 metropolitan cities alone account for 37.8% of the total population. If this trend continues, India will have more than 50 metropolitan cities in India at the time of 2011 and will have half of the urban population of the country. This highly rapid growth of metropolitan cities will bring several problems like supply of housing, electricity, water, school, dispensaries, ration shops etc.

Let us now find out the distribution of these metropolitan cities in India. All the 35 metropolitan cities are arranged in terms of descending orders of population. These are Greater Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat, Kanpur, Jaipur, Lucknow, Nagpur, Patna, Indore, Vadodara, Bhopal, Coimbatore, Ludhiana, Kochi, Vishakhapatnam, Agra, Varanasi, Madurai, Meerut, Nasik, Jabalpur, Jamshedpur, Asansol, Dhanbad, Faridabad, Allahabad, Amritsar, Vijaywada and Rajkot.

- • About 27.2% of the total population of India lives in urban areas.
- • The proportion of urban population to the total has been increasing steadily at a faster pace.
- • The rate of growth of urban population in the country is higher than the rate of growth of rural population.
- • The cities which have a population of more than 1,000,000 each are called metropolitan cities. There are 35 metropolitan cities as per 2001 census.

1. Fill in the blanks with suitable words from those given in the bracket (secondary and tertiary, increasing, 35, lower, primary)

- (a) The growth rate of rural population is _____ than the growth rate of urban population in India.
- (b) The rural population is mainly engaged in _____ activities whereas the urban population is primarily engaged in _____ activities.
- (c) Proportion of urban population has been _____ since 1921.
- (d) Altogether there are _____ “million cities” in India according to Census of India, 2001

Sex Ratio refers to the number of females per thousand males of an area. According to the Census of India 2001, there are only 933 females per thousand males. So sex composition in India is unfavourable. It means there are less number of females than the number of males. When the number of females is more than the males it is said to be favourable. As far as states are concerned only Kerala has favourable sex ratio (1058). It has the highest sex ratio in the country. The lowest sex ratio among states is found in Haryana (861). Among the Union Territories, Pondicherry has the highest sex ratio in the country with (1001) females per thousand males, whereas the lowest sex ratio is found in Daman and Diu where there was 709 females per thousand males. The significant trend with regard to the sex ratio in the country is that it has been a steadily declining except some marginal increases in the 1951, 1981 and now in 2001 censuses (see Table 27.2)

Table 27.2 Sex Ratio in India (Female per 1000 Males 1901 - 2001)

Year Sex Ratio

1901 972
1911 964
1921 955
1931 950
1941 945
1951 946
1961 941
1971 930
1981 934
1991 927
2001 933

Source : Census of India

District Level Pattern

An overview of the district level data reveal that, out of 593 districts in the country, 324 districts record sex ratio above the national average i.e. 933 and 4 districts have the sex ratio equal to the national average. In other words, there are 55% of the total districts recorded sex ratio above the national average. Out of these 324 districts, there are as many as 78 districts spread over sixteen States/Union Territories have recorded sex ratio above unity. Unity means Females are more than thousand per thousand males. The largest number of such districts are from Tamil Nadu (15) followed by Kerala (13) and Uttarakhand (8) while Chhatisgarh and Orissa have 7 districts each. Mahe in pondichery recorded highest sex ratio (1148) in the country followed by Almora in Uttarakhand (1147) and Ratnagiri in Maharashtra (1135). If we look at their spatial distribution, it has been observed that there are three regions where sex ratio is favourable. First region is southern India consisting of majority districts of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, almost all the districts of Kerala and a few coastal districts of Karnataka. The second region is hills and plateau region of adjoining Orissa, Chhatisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh dominated by tribals. The Third region is the Hill states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

Fig. 27.2 India : Sex Ratio 1901-2001

On the contrary, there are 265 districts where sex ratio is below national average. Out of these 265 districts, there are 42 districts where sex ratio is below 850.

Where are these districts located? Uttar Pradesh and National Capital Territory of Delhi has 8 districts each followed by Haryana (6). But within these 42 districts 10 districts are located in major cities 8 in NCT Delhi, 1 in Maharashtra i.e. Mumbai and the other one is Union Territory of Chandigarh. The very low sex ratio in these cities may be due to the inflow of male migrant seeking work in the industrial, commercial, construction, informal and unorganised sectors of the economy. But the lowest sex ratio in terms of district is recorded in Daman district (591) followed by West Kameng (749) in Arunachal Pradesh and North districts (752) in Sikkim.

Why is there a decline in the sex ratio in India? The major reasons for the declining sex ratio in India are the higher rate of maternal mortality and a high child mortality among the female children. These two causes are related to the comparatively lower status of the women in our society. Apart from this our socioreligious values and beliefs like male preference in our society are responsible for the declining sex ratio. The female mortality rate is likely to be reversed with the

improving status of the women and also due to better medicare facilities and education particularly of the females. The improved medicare facilities have helped in checking the rate of child mortality and the deaths of mothers during child birth.

- • The Sex ratio in India is unfavourable. On an average there are 933 females per thousand males in the country. The highest sex ratio of 1058 females per one thousand males is in Kerala and the lowest of 709 females per one thousand males is in Daman and Diu.

- • The major reasons for the declining of sex ratio in India are high child mortality among the female children and low status of women in our society.

Project Work

Select 20 households in your neighbourhood. Visit each household and note down total number of males and females in each household. After visiting all the 20 households, add all the male and female members. (1) If the ratio is 1:1 then the sex ratio is balanced. (2) If female ratio is more than one then sex ratio is favourable and vice-versa. (3) Try to find out the reasons for favourable or unfavourable sex ratio by interviewing the families concerned.

Age-sex pyramid refers to the composition of population in terms of the age and sex of people. It gives an indication regarding the growth rate of population and the nature of population in terms of working and non-working sections. As per the census of India 2001, children up to 14 years of age account for 35.3% of the total population. The age group of 15-59 years accounts for 56.9% of total population and the age group of 60 years and above for 7.4% of population. The age structure has been undergoing some gradual changes during the recent decades. One of the trends is that proportion of the younger population i.e. in the age group of 0-14 years is declining and the percentage of persons on the working age group, i.e. 15 to 59 age group as well as old age population i.e. 60 years and above is increasing. But in 2001 Census, the percentage of persons in the age group of 15-59 declined from 57.7% in 1991 to 56.9% in 2001 Census. However, the proportion of people in old age group has increased from 6.6% in 1991 to 7.4% in 2001 census. The proportion of young population i.e. 0-14 years declined from 36.5% in 1991 to 35.3% in 2001 census.

Table 27.3: Percentage-wise Distribution of Total

India has also great deal of linguistic diversity like physical environment. The languages spoken and their dialects number is in hundreds. In 1961 census, 1652 languages were listed as mother tongues in India. Out of these only 23 languages together accounted for 97% of total population of the country. Out of these 23 numerically major languages, Constitution of India recognizes only 18 languages besides English in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. These languages are Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Oriya, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sanskrit, Konkani, Sindhi, Nepali, Manipuri, Urdu. Out of these above mentioned 18 languages, Hindi is spoken by most of the people whereas Sanskrit is spoken by the least. The languages also vary slightly in terms of the meaning of different words and their pronunciation. Thus the people speaking one particular language speak it with some difference in vocabulary and pronunciation from one place to the other. Such variations in the way of speaking of a language lead to emergence of dialects of language. Thus, a dialect is something

akin to a part of some language and they can be thought as regional language also. Some of the examples of the dialects of Hindi Rajasthani, Harayanavi, Bhojpuri or Poorvi dialects etc.

Language is an important constituent of culture and various languages and their dialects are spoken in different parts of India. It makes Indian culture rich and diversified. Also, the languages have an almost complete regional identity in the country and the distribution of major languages has been considered as a basis for re-organization of states after independence. On the basis of numerical strength, India can be divided into twelve principal linguistic regions. So linguistic region is an area in which most of the people speak a common language. The languages forming linguistic regions in India are; Kashmiri, Punjabi, Hindi/Urdu, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

CLASSIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

Though all the languages spoken in India seem to be different from each other, they can be grouped into four Linguistic families on the basis of their roots and genesis. The four linguistic families are : Austric Family (Nishada), Dravidian Family (Dravida); Sino-Tibetan Family (Kirata) and Indo-European Family (Arya).

The speeches of the Austric family are spoken by tribal people in Maghalaya, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and in parts of Central Indian tribal belt, especially in the districts of Santhal Praganas, Ranchi and Mayurbhanj. The languages and dialects of Sino-Tibetan family are spoken by tribal people in North-Eastern region of the country and in the Sub-Himalayan region in the north and north west. These languages are spoken by people living in Ladakh (Jammu & Kashmir), parts of Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim also.

The speakers of the languages of Dravidian family are more numerous in southern part of India. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala are the states where these languages are spoken by the majority of population. A large number of tribals living in peninsular plateau region also speak speeches of this family.

The speaker of the languages of Indo-Aryan family are concentrated more in northern part of the country and also in central parts. The entire north Indian plain is inhabited by the speakers of this family. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh also have large population of speakers of these languages.

The proportion of the speakers of languages of different families in the total population varies significantly. While the Aryans (Indo-European Family) languages are spoken by more than 70% of the people, the Sino-Tibetan languages are spoken by only about 0.85 percent of the population and Dravidian languages are spoken by about 20 percent of the people.

- Languages spoken in India belong to four major linguistic families. These families are *Austric family*, *Dravidian Family*, *Sino-Tibetan Family*, and *Indo-European Family*.

- · Languages belonging to different families have their major concentrations in different parts of the country. Austric Family in the North-Eastern part, Dravidian Family in the southern parts, Sino-Tibetan in the Sub-Himalayan region and Indo-European Family in the Northern and Central part of the country.

- · The language of Indo-Aryan Family are spoken by the largest number of people in India. The languages of Sino-Tibetan Family have the smallest

number of speakers. More than 70 percent of the people in India speak languages and dialects of Indo-Aryan Family.

Indian society is divided into a large number of religious communities. But, broadly there are seven major religions. The majority of people follow one of these seven major religions. These are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Zoroastrians. Hindus are the largest religious community in India. According to 2001 census, 80.5% percentage of population follow this religion. Followers of this religion are more concentrated in the northern plains and the northern parts of the plateau region. However they are sufficiently numerous in all parts of the country except a few north-eastern states and union territory of Lakshadweep. But the distribution of the other religious communities is less continuous and there are only some pockets in which they have larger concentration.

The largest number of muslim population is in Uttar Pradesh followed by West Bengal and Bihar. But the muslim population make a large proportion of the total population in Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Apart from these above mentioned states and Union Territory, other states where muslims have significant presence (more than national average) are Assam and Kerala. If

we look at spatial distribution, then it is observed that most of these states stretch over northern great plains except Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir.

The largest concentration of Christians is found in the state of Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. But if we look at the proportion to total population, then it is found in some of the north eastern states namely Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland. As far as Sikhs are concerned more than ¾th Sikh population are found in Punjab alone. Besides Punjab, neighbouring districts of Haryana and Rajasthan also have concentration of Sikh population. Apart from these states, Terai region of Uttarakhand and National Capital Territory of Delhi have significant number of sikh population.

As far as Buddhists and Jains are concerned, Maharashtra has the largest number of population belong to both the religion. Apart from Maharashtra, traditional pockets of Buddhists are Ladakh area of Jammu and Kashmir, Dharamsala (McLeodganj) and surrounding districts of Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. Similarly, besides Maharashtra, Jains have significant presence in the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Zoroastrians are as such very few in numbers and most of them are found in and around Mumbai in Maharashtra.

Table 27.4 Population by Religion in 2001

Religious Groups % to total population

Hindus 80.5

Muslims 13.6

Christians 2.33

Sikhs 0.86

Buddhists 0.76

Jains 0.40

Others 0.53

• • There are seven major religions and to which most of the Indians subscribe.

Hindus are the largest group followed by Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.

Concentration of different religions occur in various parts of the country

The Constitution of India recognises a number of castes and tribal groups. These castes and tribes are called Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) respectively. They are the major constituents of the population of India. According to the census of India 2001 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute 16% and 8.2% respectively. Their distribution is very uneven throughout the country.

(A) Scheduled Castes

Numerically they have the largest concentration in Uttar Pradesh followed by West Bengal and Bihar. Mizoram has the least SC population i.e. 272 person (in terms of percentage it is almost negligible). The state of Nagaland and Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands do not have any notified SC Population. In terms of the proportion of the total population of a state they are most numerous in Punjab where they account for more than 28.85% percent of its total population followed by Himachal Pradesh (24.7%) and West Bengal (23.3%). The Scheduled Castes are by and large landless agricultural labourers, cultivators with small land holdings and small commodity producers or artisans. Due to the association with agricultural activities, their main concentrations are found in the alluvial and coastal plains of the country. That is why, the major concentrations are found in the states like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar. On the other hand the hilly and forested tracts and the tribal belt of the central and north east India have only a small population of the Scheduled Castes.

The analysis at districts level pattern leads to the identification of the following three zones.

(i) Areas of High Concentration: There are two major areas with high concentration of Scheduled Castes. They are Indo-Ganga plain and the eastern coastal plain. Both these plains are endowed with fertile soil, adequate water supply and climate suited to the cultivation of a large variety of crops. These opportunities help to develop intensive agriculture which supports a large population.

(ii) Areas of Medium Concentration : The Scheduled Castes are moderately concentrated in the districts adjoining the zone of high concentration which has already been discussed above.

(iii) Areas of Low Concentration: Low concentration of Scheduled Castes is found in the central Vindhyas, Chhotanagpur region, the western dry region of Rajasthan, the hilly tracts of the North-East and the coastal parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra.

(B) Scheduled Tribes

The tribal people have a number of distinct characteristics which set them apart from the rest of the people. Generally, they live in isolation in the forested and hilly regions and they profess very old religious beliefs. Most of these groups are illiterate and do not have script of their languages. Most of them believe in super natural powers and super natural beings.

The Scheduled Tribes are not uniformly distributed all over the country. There are three main regions in which most of their population lives. These regions are (i) the Central Indian belt comprising parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, (ii) the North-Eastern region comprising the hilly areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh and (iii) the southern region comprising the hilly tracts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Island.

It is evident from the above discussion and also from the map that the tribal population of India is more concentrated in a few specific regions. It will also be clear after a close study of the map that most of the tribal people live in the forested and hilly regions and areas of lower agricultural productivity. Most of these areas suffer from natural difficulties like rough terrain and climatic difficulties and the level of economic development in all these regions is very low. The natural resources have not been developed much and there is little development of means of transport and communication and this factor is also responsible for the low levels of development.

Some times it is thought that the levels of economic development in areas of tribal population is low because these areas are inhabited by the tribal people. This, however, is not true. These areas suffer from lower levels of development partly due to in hospitable life in these regions is difficult and therefore these areas are occupied by the tribal people.

In fact the tribal people originally did not settle in these areas of harsh environmental conditions by their own choice. They were rather pushed by the expanding modern civilization into these areas. Under the pressure of the successive invaders and the migrants, the earlier settlers of the country who could not fight with new powerful comers had to migrate into remote areas to save their cultural identify.

District Level Pattern

Like Scheduled Castes, district level analysis of Scheduled Tribes reveals that there are different levels of concentration. These levels can be grouped into three categories. They are (i) areas of high concentration; (ii) areas of medium concentration and (iii) areas of low concentration.

(i) Areas of High Concentration: There are 40 districts in the country where Scheduled Tribes hold a dominant position. In these 40 districts the share of Scheduled Tribes population to total population ranges from 75.01% to 98.09%. Among them, eight districts are in Mizoram, seven each in Nagaland and Meghalaya, six in Arunachal Pradesh and five in Manipur and the rest seven districts are spread over four states i.e. Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh. Serchhip district of Mizoram have highest concentration of tribal population in the country i.e. 98.09% followed by West Khasi hills of Meghalaya having 98.02% of tribal population.

(ii) Areas of Moderate Concentration : In these regions the share of tribal population varies between 25.01% to 75.00% of total population. This include 85 districts belonging to 17 states and Union Territories of the country. Spatially, the major occupancy is constituted by the districts from the states of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa (14 each), Chhatisgarh (10), Jharkhand (8) and Arunachal Pradesh and Gujarat (7 each).

(iii) Areas of low concentration : In this region the proportion of tribal population varies from 5.00-25.00 percent. This holds the highest number of 140 districts in the country. These districts are distributed among 18 States/ Union Territories. The spatial pattern of districts in this region may be seen in Madhya Pradesh (18), Maharashtra and Rajasthan (17 each), Karnataka (14), Assam (13), Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa (10 each), Jharkhand (8), Jammu and Kashmir (6) and Chhatisgarh (5). Remainng are scattered in Gujarat and Sikkim (3 each) Uttarakhand (2), and Manipur, Kerala, Daman and Diu, and Bihar (One each).

Apart from this there are as many as 143 districts spread over 18 States and Union Territories where tribal population are found whose range varies between

0.5% to 5.00%.

Literacy is generally defined as a person's ability to read, write and able to understand as well as to do some simple calculation. Despite this liberal definition, the rate of literacy in India is not very high. According to the Census of India 2001, the average literacy rate in India is 65.38 percent. This percentage does not include the population below 7 years of age-group.

The rate of literacy varies a great deal from one part of the country to the other. On the one hand, it is the state of Kerala having literacy rate as high as the 90.92 percent and on the other extreme is the state of Bihar, where this rate is only 47.53 percent. In the Union Territories, Lakshadweep has the highest rate of literacy where it is 87.52 percent and the lowest rate is in Dadra & Nagar Haveli (60.03 percent).

The rate of literacy varies between males and females also. The average rate of literacy among the males in India is 75.85 percent which is higher than the females (54.16). Kerala has the distinction of highest literacy among both, males and females (94.20 and 87.86 percent respectively), whereas Bihar has the lowest literacy rate among both males and females (60.32 and 33.57 percent respectively). From the literacy point of view of rural-urban population there is a huge difference between rural and urban area. The literacy rate in urban areas is 73.01 percent where as in rural areas it is as low as 44.54 percent.

Though the rate of literacy in India is low, it is increasing in each successive census. In 1911 it was less than 6 percent and it could rise to only about 16.7 percent by 1951. The most noteworthy progress in this regard has been made after 1951 census. In 1961, the literacy rate was about 24 percent which rose to 65.38 percent by 2001. The most significant development in this regard has been the rate of increase in female literacy. The proportion of literate among the females was only 1.1 percent in 1911 which has increased to 54.66 percent in 2001. To a great extent, this is a result of the policies of the government, emphasising upon the universalisation of Elementary Education. The extended facilities of schools in the rural areas have helped considerably in raising the literacy rate in the country, especially among the females.

Though the literacy rate is increasing percentage wise in successive censuses, the number of illiterate is also increasing in absolute number in each successive census. For the first time in 2001 census, there is a decline in number of illiterates in comparison to previous census i.e. 1991. However their number is still very high. To solve this problem, Government has taken up various programmes like National Literacy Mission, Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, etc.

District level Pattern

District level pattern analysis of literacy reveals that the literacy rates vary between 96.64 percent in Aizwal districts of Mizoram to 30.01 percent in Dantewara districts of Chhatisgarh. Out of 591 districts in India, 59 districts have literacy rate of more than 80 percent. Majority of these districts are located in southern parts of India. It includes all the 14 districts of Kerala, 4 districts in Tamil Nadu, 3 districts of Pondicherry, 2 districts in Karnataka and one district each in Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Apart from southern India, north-eastern region has 10 districts. Out of these 10 districts, 7 districts are in Mizoram, 2 districts in Nagaland and 1 district in Manipur. In western part, there are 11 districts out of which 9 districts are in the state of Maharashtra. In the northern part of India,

there are also 11 districts, out of which six districts are in National Capital Territory of Delhi. The remaining 3 districts are in Himachal Pradesh and one each in Chandigarh and Uttarakhand. Eastern India has only two districts, one each in West Bengal and Orissa. The Central part of India has not got a single district in this category.

On the contrary there are 26 districts in the country where literacy rate is below 40%. These districts are scattered in seven states. Of these 26 districts, 11 are in Bihar, 5 in Uttar Pradesh, 4 in Orissa, 3 in Jharkhand and one each in Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

- • A person who can read and write with an understanding in any one language is called literate.
- • According to 2001 census the rate of literacy in India is 65.38 per cent.
- • The highest rate of literacy is in Kerala (90.92%) and the lowest rate is in Bihar (47.53%).
- • The rate of literacy is higher among the males than among the females and in Urban areas than the rural areas.
- • The rate of literacy is rising rapidly in India since independence.

The development of a country depends upon both quality and quantity of the human resources. The quality of human resource depends upon the population composition. They are rural - urban, sex - age, linguistic, religious, scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe, literate-non literate composition. India is proverbially known as the country of villages. Till today more than 72 percent of people live in rural areas. The rate of urbanisation is however increasing. The growth rate of urban population is higher than the average growth rate in the country. This is mainly due to migration of people from rural to urban areas. There are 35 metropolitan cities in India having population more than 10,00,000.

On the other hand, sex ratio in India is unfavourable. The highest number of females per one thousand males in Karala (1058) whereas it is lowest in Haryana (861). If we take Union Territory into account then the lowest sex ratio in the country is in Daman and Diu (709). The sex ratio has been gradually decreasing in each successive censuses except some marginal increase in the 1951, 1981 and 2001 census. You will know about the status of sex ratio in your area by conducting the project work.

The rate of literacy in India is not very high (65.38%). It is the highest in Kerala where the literacy rate is as high as 90.92% and on the other extreme is the state of Bihar where literacy is as low as 47.53% percent.

India is a land of great social diversity. It is the home of people belonging to different racial stocks, languages and religions. The tribal people are the nearest relations of some of the original racial stocks. The Schedule Castes are intermixture of various racial stocks. According to 2001 census, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute 16.00% and 8.20% respectively of the total population. The concentration of these population are found in the plain areas due to their profession. Whereas Scheduled Tribes generally live in isolated forested and hilly tracts. They are pre-industrial stage of development and believe in super-natural powers. • India is a unique country in terms of language and religion. Here all the major religions of the world are found. There are 18 major languages and hundreds of dialects are spoken in the country.