

## Indian Punjab Since 1966 : An Analysis of Human Resources in the Context of Economic Growth.

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The general socio-economic scenario in the state of Punjab exhibits inextricably complex relationship between education, health and economic growth. The fact of the matter is that the state has been experiencing multiple imbalances between social sector and economic growth. The reasonably high level of state income coexist with relatively moderate level of human resources, when the latter have been measured in terms of educational and health standards. The manifold quantitative expansion in the state domestic product has not adequately been channelised to affect the desired changes in the quality of human resources. Every incremental increase in the state income has inadequately invoked the transfer of resources towards the improvement of the quality of human resources. The process of Green Revolution in the state within relatively short span of time resulted into higher growth in the agriculture sector with strong multiplier effects for the rest of the economy. The sustained high growth in the state over long period, much higher than the national average, has placed it with substantially higher level of per capita income not only from the national average but also from the good majority of the rest of the states in the country. The high growth occurrence has generated structural transformation with changes in the relative shares of different sectors in the state income .The state has acquired the distinction of being the typical model of

agrarian transformation not only within the country but also among the rest of the countries similarly placed. The lowest incidence of rural and urban poverty defined in terms of calorie intake provide further credence to this fact. The state has reasonably well developed industrial sector build upon the small and tiny units, though concentrated in few urban pockets. The state has been the beneficiary of foreign remittances repatriated by the non resident population of the state settled in advanced countries. This living connection in the form of family and kinship ties further manifested itself in the modernisation of production process and business organisation. The state attracts large number of migratory labourers from the non-Green Revolution cum non- industrialised states of the country. Actually, the state has sustained noticeable economic prosperity and distanced itself from the number of states of the country. The imbalance between social sector progress and economic growth has been the matter of great concern in the future development of the state keeping in view the globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation of the national economy. The ever increasing knowledge intensity of the production requires very high level of human resources to compete in the national and international market. Education and health are the key inputs in the development and upgradation of human resources. In view of the above, it becomes important to analyse the social sector progress of Punjab. For this, the social sector progress of the state has been examined both in the absolute and comparative sense. The central objective of the study is to highlight the state's

achievements, gaps and imbalances on the educational and health front from numerous respects. The state in its present form came into being with its reorganisation in 1966. Thus the attempt has been made to understand its course of development there onwards. The paper has been divided into four sections. The First Section deals with the educational and income level of the state in relation to other states of the union. The human resources development of the state has been compared with that of other states and countries. In Second Section, the critical educational and health indicators of the state has been compared with that of Kerala. It is to be noted that the state of Kerala has recorded the highest level of human resources in the country and has been considered as the best model of social development. The Third Section is concerned with the various dimensions of the educational spread in the state. The last section summaries the main findings as well as policy implications.

#### **I. Education, Human Resources and Income**

The record of the state in terms of social sector development is quite depressing when compared with

**TABLE 1**  
**RANK OF VARIOUS STATES IN TERMS OF**  
**LITERACY\*, PER-CAPITA REAL INCOME (1980-81**  
**PRICES)**

State	Literacy (1991)	Per-capita Income (1991-92)	Per-capita Income (1993-94)	Per-capita Income (1997-98)

1. Assam	53.42(17)	1575	1583	1673	
2. Arunachal Pradesh	41.22(22)	3012(6)	3058(6)	-	
3. Andhra Pradesh	45.11(20)	1788	1871	-	4.
Bihar	38.54(25)	1105	1019	1073	
5. Goa	76.96(3)	4786(2)	5497(2)	-	
6. Gujarat	60.91(10)	2386	2960	3976	
7. Haryana	55.31(16)	3499(4)	3498(5)	3997	
8. Jammu & Kashmir	— —	1775	1832	-	
9. Karnataka	55.98(15)	2262	2407	2761	
10. Kerala	90.59(1)	1826	2114	2444	
11. Madhya Pradesh	43.45(21)	1538	1731	-	
12. Maharashtra	63.05(7)	3399(5)	4110(3)	4791	
13. Mizoram	81.23(2)	—	—	-	
14. Himachal Pradesh	63.54(6)	2213	2315	2707	
15. Nagaland	61.30(8)	—	—	-	
16. Orissa	48.55(19)	1530	1543	1688	
17. Punjab	58.51(12)	3825(3)	4022(4)	4452	
18. Rajasthan	38.81(24)	1761	1790	2306	
19. Tamil Nadu	63.72(5)	2268	2551	3057	
20. Uttar Pradesh	41.71(23)	1627	1617	-	
21. West Bengal	57.72(13)	2267	2437	3002	
22. Manipur	60.96(9)	-	--	-	
23. Meghalaya	48.26(18)	1759	1698	-	
24. Tripura	60.39(11)	1681	-	-	
25. Sikkim	56.53(14)	-	-	-	
26. Delhi	75.29(4)	5788(1)	5630(1)	-	
<b>India</b>	52.21	2175	2334	-	

**Note \* :** Excluding(0-6) years of age group. Figures in brackets indicate the rank.

**Source :** Statistical Abstract of Punjab , [1996], [1997] and [1999]

other states with lower or moderate levels of per capita incomes. Table 1 depict the literacy-wise and per capita real income-wise rank of Punjab in 1991. Among 26 states, the rank of Punjab from above was twelfth in literacy and third in per capita income. By excluding Delhi and Goa, due to their special situations, the per capita income of the state during that year turned out to be the highest. This position of highest per capita income infact had been enjoyed by the state for almost two decades. But, Maharashtra has crossed Punjab in terms of real per capita income in 1993-94, and has not only been maintaining but also widening the lead since then. The literacy attainments of Punjab by and large hovers around that of the national average (Table 2). It is important to note here that literacy is the extremely narrow measure of education. A person who can read and write with understanding in any language is taken as literate for the purpose of census. Literacy rate is defined as the percent of literate persons in the age group of seven years and above, to population in ages seven and above. In the absence of other measures of educational progress of the society as whole the natural choice is that of literacy. Since in India, the census has been conducted at the interval of ten years, hence the latest available data on literacy pertains to year 1991.

Similarly, the inter-state measurement and comparisons of human resource development reveal dismal performance of the state on social sector front. On all India basis, the state occupies the second

rank next to Kerala as per the yardstick of Human Development Index (HDI). Internationally, the state

**TABLE 2**  
**PROGRESS OF LITERACY RATE\* (PUNJAB; INDIA)**

	1971		1981		1991	
	Punjab	India	Punjab	India	Punjab	India
Person	33.67	34.45	40.86	43.67	58.51	52.21
Male	40.38	45.95	47.16	56.50	65.66	64.13
Female	25.90	21.97	33.69	29.85	50.41	39.29

\* **Note :** 7 years and above

**Source :** Statistical Abstract of Punjab , Chandigarh (1999).

falls in the category of countries having medium level of human resources and its rank is equivalent to Indonesia. Moreover, as per the criterion of Gender-related Development Indices (GDI) the state score fifth rank after Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Himachal-Pradesh (Kumar, 1991:2345 and Kumar, 1996:890-893). The rank of the state according to this index fall at 95th place internationally, and becomes equal to Madagascar. It reveals that by broadbasing the development indicators, the human resource development rank of the state declined. In the construction of human development indices, the per capita income level has been assigned one-third weight. The state derives its high score on HDI only because of this comparative advantage of high per capita income. But in the HDI construction the income distribution is not taken care of. The individual resource choice basically stems from

personal disposable income level. The inclusion of certain critical and large number of area specific social variables exert downward pressure on state's human resource ranking. Rural areas manifest low human resources ranking than that of their urban counterparts. The human resource development as per standard norms of health and education in the category of small and marginal farmers, agricultural and industrial labourers is extremely low.

## **II. Education and Health Indicators : Punjab Vs Kerala**

The social sector performance of Punjab against Kerala need deeper exploration. For this purpose, the available information on certain selected common variables have been compiled and presented in Tables 3 and 4. They present information on education and health sector of the two states separately. It must be noted at the outset that all these indicators are not strictly comparable because they have been taken from different sources. But they throw much light on the basic situation. Seven education specific and twelve health specific indicators have been used. Table 3 shows that Kerala has eradicated successfully the scourge of illiteracy in the state. In it, the overall literacy rate and that of adult literacy (15 years and above) was close to the mark of 90 per cent in 1991 with narrow gender gap (Between 7.45-11.10 per cent). In Punjab, the literacy rate and adult literacy rate in the same year had not touched the mark of 60 per cent, with wider gender gap (Between 15.25-18.70 per cent). The education

**TABLE 3**  
**SELECTED INDICATORS OF SOCIAL SECTOR**  
**PROGRESS (PUNJAB VS KERALA)**

## (Education)

Indicator	Punjab	Kerala	Achievement gap
1.Literacy Rate, 1991, <b>Person</b> (7 years and above)per cent	58.51	90.59	32.08
<b>Male</b>	65.66	93.62	27.96
<b>Female</b>	50.41	86.17	35.76
<b>Gender gap</b>	15.25	07.45	-
2.Adult Literacy Rate, <b>Person</b> 1991,(15years and above)per cent	51.80	86.00	34.20
<b>Male</b>	60.50	91.70	31.20
<b>Female</b>	41.80	80.60	38.80
<b>Gender gap</b>	18.70	11.10	-
3.Gross Enrolment <b>Person</b> Ratio, <b>primary</b> ,1994,	90.70	98.40	07.70
<b>male</b>	92.00	99.80	07.80
<b>Female</b>	89.20	97.00	07.80
<b>Gender gap</b>	2.80	2.80	-
<b>Middle</b> <b>Person</b>	68.2	103.5	35.3
<b>(1994)</b> <b>male</b>		72.6	105.0 32.4
<b>Female</b>	63.3	102.1	38.8
<b>Gender gap</b>	9.3	2.9	-
4.Drop out Rate, primary, 1993, per cent	22.00	00.00	-
5.Retention Rate,(after class VIII) Female, per cent	57.22	99.43	42.21
6.Non-Enrolment Rate,	10.36	00.00	-



Female, per cent

(Table 3 Contd.)

7.Primary Education Completed

Population, 1992-93, per cent

<b>Male</b>	51.60	65.80	14.20
<b>Female</b>	41.00	60.50	19.50
<b>Gender gap</b>	10.60	05.30	—

**Note:**

1. Achievement gap indicates the gap between the two states.
2. Gender gap indicates the male and female achievement gap within the state.

**Source:**

Indicator 1 (see Table 1 and Table 2); Indicator 2 (Kumar, 1996: P. 889, Table No.1); Indicator 3 (SES, 1994-95); indicator 4 (World Bank, 1997, P.26, Table 1.3); Indicator 5 and 6 (Hirway, 1996); Indicator 7 (Seeta Prabhu, 1996, WS-73).

achievement-gap reveals too much. It indicates that Punjab's literacy level is two-third to that of Kerala. In 1994, at primary school level, the gross enrolment ratio in Punjab was around 8 per cent less than that of the nearly 100 per cent level of Kerala. However the gender gap (2.8 per cent) in it

was very thin in both the states. During the same year, at the middle school level, the gross enrolment ratio in Punjab stood at 68.2 per cent in overall with gender gap of 9.3 per cent. In Kerala the gross enrolment ratio is well above 100 per cent. It indicates the presence of

certain number of over-age and under-age students on that education stage. It may be noted that gross enrolment ratio is defined as the number of children enrolled in concerned classes (regardless of age) expressed as a percentage of population in relevant age cohort. The low level of gross enrolment ratio in the middle stage education in Punjab is corroborated by the fact of very high dropout rate of 22 per cent. While the corresponding figure for Kerala is zero. The dropout rate is the annual discontinuation rate of primary school age cohort children. The priority accorded by a state to female education can be best judged by the retention rate of girls after the middle level schooling. Strikingly, it is 99.43 per cent in Kerala and just 57.22 per cent in Punjab, indicating 42.21 Per cent of achievement gap. Moreover the non enrolment rate among females is 10.36 per cent in Punjab versus nil in Kerala. The completion of different stages of schooling reflect the educational level of society. In 1992-93, in Punjab, as many as 51.60 per cent of males and 41 per cent of females completed the primary education. For Kerala, the respective figures were 65.80 per cent and 60.50 per cent. On this score the gender gap in Punjab was exactly double than that of Kerala. The achievement gap between the two states differ considerably between 14.2 per cent in the case of males and 19.5 per cent in case of females. Hence Kerala is much ahead in each and every educational indicator.

The next important dimension of social sector progress is health. Good health is the prerequisite for ones active participation in varied life domains. Health being wider concept embraces the influence of diverse type

of health services ranging from preventive to curative in nature. Table 4 shows the health related indicators of

**TABLE 4**  
**SELECTED INDICATORS OF SOCIAL SECTOR**  
**PROGRESS (PUNJAB VS KERALA)**

(Health)

Indicator	Punjab	Kerala	Achievement gap
1. Crude Birth Rate(a), 1990-92,			
<b>Overall</b>	27.50	18.50	09
<b>Rural</b>	28.40	18.40	10
<b>Urban</b>	25.10	18.70	6.4
2. Crude Death Rate(a), 1990-92,			
<b>Overall</b>	07.90	06.10	1.8
<b>Rural</b>	08.60	06.10	2.5
<b>Urban</b>	06.00	05.90	0.1
3. Infant Mortality Rate(b),			
1990-92			
<b>Overall</b>	57.00	17.00	40
<b>Rural</b>	61.00	17.00	44
<b>Urban</b>	42.00	15.00	27
4. Sex Ratio	89.00	104	15
5. Life Expectancy, 1988-91			
<b>Overall</b>	65.46	70.76	5.30
<b>Male</b>	65.61	67.60	1.99
<b>Female</b>	65.30	73.80	8.50
6. Decadal Population Growth,			
(1981-91)	20.26	14.06	6.20

(Table 4 Contd.)

7. Maternal Mortality Rate(c),

1982-86	435	234	201
8.Couples using contraception, 1992-93, per cent	69.00	80.00	11.00
9. Total Fertility Rate (d) 1992-93	02.90	2.0	0.9
10.Annual Exponential population growth Rate, 1981-91	01.89	01.34	0.55
11.Percentage share of (0-6 years)aged population in total population	16.30	13.19	3.11
12.Replacement Fertility (years)	(2006-11)	(1986-91)	

**Note:**

- a:** Crude Birth Rate and Death Rate represent respectively the number of live births and deaths per thousand of mid year (respectively) population;
- b:** Number of infant Deaths per one thousand live births;
- c:** represent per lakh live births;
- d:** live births per thousand women (15-49 years).

**Source:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Indicators 1-6 (Economic and political weekly 1994, Vol XXIX, No.21); Indicator 7 [Hirway (1996)]; Indicator 8-9 (World Bank, 1997, P.271; Indicator 10-11 (Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1999); Indicator 12 (Dyson, T. etal. 2000).

Punjab and Kerala in comparative manner. The indicators are the end product of the entire system of health care and

associated development patterns. They reflect the whole gamut of the spread, access and coverage of health services. Family planning, child and mother care are the hallmark of any sound health policy. It has strong bearing on sex ratio, life expectancy and fertility behaviour, etc. A perusal of the table unambiguously demonstrates the unmatched achievements of Kerala on this front. In the year (1990-92), the overall (rural and urban) crude birth rate in Kerala (18.5 per thousand) was remarkably lower than Punjab (27.5 per thousand). It connotes huge achievement gap of 9 points between the two states. The achievement gap was higher in rural than the urban counter parts.

The overall crude death rate in Punjab (7.9 per thousand) stood higher than that of Kerala (6.1 per thousand). On this account the overall inter state achievement gap of 1.8 percent points stood higher in rural than the urban areas. Kerala has achieved the exceptionally lower level of infant mortality rate (17 per thousand, in overall) as compared to 57 per thousand of Punjab. In this way connoting 40 points of achievement gap in overall, while 44 points in rural and 27 points in urban areas. The difference in the two states on account of maternal mortality rate, life expectancy, sex ratio and fertility rate is extremely sharp. The maternal mortality rate (per lakh live births) stood at 435 in Punjab as compared to 234 in Kerala in 1982-86, indicating achievement gap of 201 points. Similarly, the sex ratio (women per hundred males) in Kerala is women friendly. It stood at 89 in Punjab against 104 of Kerala. It indicates the neglect of girl child,

pitiable situation of ante and post natal facilities and adverse impact of sex-determination tests in the Punjab. It is worthwhile to state that the recent survey of health department of the state indicate that the sex ratio in the rural areas of some districts of the state has declined to the alarmingly lower levels. The statistical indicator in the form of the life expectancy provide more than sufficient ground to test the quality of life. The life expectancy in Kerala stood at 70.76 years in general (males plus females), with 67.60 years for males and 73.80 years for females in 1988-91, for Punjab the corresponding figures are 65.46, 65.61 and 65.30 years respectively. It establishes the poor performance of state in overall, particularly in life expectancy of females. In Punjab, 69 per cent of couples were found to use contraceptives as against 80 per cent of Kerala. The next important indicator of health status is the total fertility rate. It refers to the average number of live births per thousand of women in the age bracket between 15-49 years. In 1992-93, Kerala reported the total fertility rate of 2 while that of Punjab stood at 2.9. The good level of health services on sustained basis ultimately culminates in population growth rate changes. The population growth witnessed sharp decline in Kerala over Punjab on decadal (1981-91) basis. It grew by 14.06 per cent in Kerala and 20.26 per cent in Punjab. On annual exponential basis, the population in Kerala recorded the growth rate of 1.34 per cent against 1.89 per cent of Punjab. This development further reflected itself in the declining proportion of children in the population of Kerala. The proportion of children (below 6 years of

age) in the total population of Kerala is now 13.19 per cent, and in the case of Punjab it is 16.30 per cent. Further, Kerala has achieved the replacement level of fertility as early as during the years (1986-91) as against Punjab which is expected to achieve the level of fertility replacement about twenty years later to Kerala, i.e., years (2006-11). Thus, Kerala's health sector has performed better and made its presence felt. Hence all these indicators of education and health establishes in unequivocal terms the far superior level of social sector performance of Kerala over Punjab, though the latter has substantially higher level of income than the former. In 1997-98, the per capita real income of Punjab was 1.82 times more than that of Kerala, i.e. Rs. 4452 and 2444 respectively.

### **III. Progress of Literacy in Punjab**

The educational scenario in the state is very dismal. Even, a casual look at literacy numbers brings out the fact that education has remained away from the top priorities of the state. Table 5 depict the literacy levels of the state during the last three Census separately for rural and urban areas and for males and females also. It may be seen that during the twenty years

**TABLE 5**  
**PROGRESS IN RURAL AND URBAN LITERACY IN**  
**PUNJAB**

(1971, 1981, 1991)

1971	1981	1991
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**a. Rural Literacy**

Person	27.60	35.20	52.77
Male	34.55	41.91	60.73
Female	19.58	27.63	43.85

**b, Urban Literacy**

Person	48.10	55.63	72.08
Male	54.40	60.73	77.26
Female	40.80	49.72	66.13

**Note:** 7 years and above

**Source:** Statistical Abstract of Punjab, Chandigarh, (1999).

from 1971 to 1991 the literacy tempo has not gained the desired momentum. In all of the six categories mentioned in the table, no where the literacy level is up to mark. Moreover, the literacy progress is highly uneven at all levels. Rural females comprise the least literate group while the urban males the most literate. Moreover, there is huge difference between the literacy levels of these two categories. It can also be stated that the urban males represent the concentration of literacy. In 1991, overall rural literacy (52.77 percent) was substantially lower than the overall urban literacy (72.08 per cent). Among rural males, 60.73 per cent were literate as compared to 77.26 per cent of urban males. The corresponding figures in case of female are 43.85 per cent and 66.13 percent. In this way the literacy patterns are quite unique exhibiting the overall power structure of the society.

Table 6 demonstrate the glaring level of inter-district variations in literacy. As per 1991 Census,



Hoshiarpur and Mansa districts respectively represent the upper and lower stratum of the education ladder. Hoshiarpur district has the highest literacy level measured in terms of four categories of literacy, i.e. persons literacy (72.08 per cent), males literacy (80.22 per cent), females literacy (63.34 per cent) and rural literacy (70.61 per cent). The corresponding figures for Mansa are 37.21, 44.81, 28.50 and 32.67 per cent. Urban literacy is highest in Rupnagar (81.15 per cent) and lowest in Sangrur (60.42 per cent). In each and every district of the state, huge gap exist in rural and urban literacy, males and females literacy. The literacy level of as many as nine districts i.e. Amritsar, Ferozepur, Faridkot, Muktsar, Moga, Bathinda, Mansa, Sangrur and Patiala is below the state average in terms of persons

**TABLE 6**  
**DISTRICT WISE LITERACY IN PUNJAB (1991)**

<b>District</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
Gurdaspur	61.84	69.55	53.33	58.44	73.69
Amritsar	58.08	65.07	50.10	49.74	73.93
Kapurthala	63.31	70.03	55.83	58.90	75.84
Jalandhar	69.93	75.11	62.05	61.48	76.54
Nawanshehar	64.42	73.30	54.55	63.18	74.44
Hoshiarpur	72.08	80.22	63.34	70.61	79.16
Rupnagar	68.15	76.49	58.52	63.59	81.15
Ludhiana	67.34	72.45	61.25	62.28	71.71
Ferozepur(R)	48.03	56.89	38.13	41.62	68.16
Faridkot	49.97	57.13	41.88	42.33	65.45
Muktsar(R)	46.18	54.25	37.05	40.24	66.34
Moga	52.24	57.91	45.84	47.89	67.86

Bathinda(R)	46.48	53.98	38.04	38.97	66.62
Mansa(R)	37.21	44.81	28.50	32.67	63.52
Sangrur	45.99	56.21	37.67	41.25	60.42
Patiala	57.27	64.64	48.94	49.50	75.21
Fatehgarsahib	63.25	69.45	56.13	60.31	73.85
Punjab	58.51	65.66	50.41	52.77	72.08

R: Revised

**Source:** Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1999.

literacy, male literacy, female literacy and rural literacy. However, among these nine districts, the urban literacy recorded its higher level in two districts, i.e. Patiala (75.21 per cent) and Amritsar (73.93 per cent). The Doaba region along with Ludhiana, Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Gurdaspur districts comprise the relatively high literacy zone by experiencing the literacy levels between 60-71 per cent in terms of persons literacy.

The literacy levels of the Scheduled Castes (SC) population is very low as compared to the non-SC population. Table 7 depict the literacy level of SC population and non-SC population for nine categories of the literacy in the year 1991. In all literacy categories, SC population has substantially lower level of literacy than the non-SC population. At state level, the literacy rate of SC population was very low in terms of persons literacy (41.09 per cent), male literacy (49.82 per cent) and female literacy (31.03 per cent). The corresponding figures for non- SC population were 67.90, 74.66 and 60.26 per cent.

This table reveals that the gap in literacy between the SC and non-SC population is maximum in the case of urban females. In this literacy category of urban females, the literacy level of SC population (38.14 per cent) is exactly half than the non-SC population (76.02 per cent). In rural areas, the gap between the SC and non

**TABLE 7**  
**LITERACY RATE OF SCHEDULED CASTES VS**  
**NON-SCHEDULED CASTES IN PUNJAB**

	SC population (1991)	Non-SC population (1991)	Gap
<b>A. Punjab:</b>			
Persons	41.09	67.90	26.18
Male	49.82	74.66	24.84
Female	31.03	60.26	29.23
<b>B. Rural:</b>			
Persons	39.55	61.20	21.65
Male	48.54	68.89	20.35
Female	29.20	52.60	23.40
<b>C. Urban:</b>			
Persons	47.04	81.45	34.41
Male	54.76	86.15	31.39
Female	38.14	76.02	37.88

**Source :** Census of India , (Punjab,1999) Series 20, General Population Table and Primary Census Abstract, Statement No.5,P. 394., September 1995.

SC population on account of persons literacy is 21.65 percent. The gap in literacy levels in rural areas is less than that of urban areas. This is mainly due to the comparatively low level of literacy even among the non-SC population in rural areas vis-a-vis their counter part in urban areas. So far persons literacy is concerned, its level among the non-SC population in the rural areas is 61.20 per cent as against 81.45 per cent in urban areas. By going one step deeper, the table reveals that the literacy level is maximum in case of 'non-SC urban males' (86.15 percent) and minimum in 'SC rural females' (29.20 per cent). There are considerable inter-district variations in the literacy levels among the SC-population. Table 8 depicts the literacy levels among the SC-population for nine categories of literacy. It is clear that the district of Hoshiarpur recorded the highest level of literacy among the SC population in all literacy categories, except urban females. Rupnagar has the highest level of urban female literacy (54.20 per cent). Bathinda has the lowest level of literacy among the SC population in all categories except the three categories associated with the urban areas. Sangrur has the lowest level of literacy in terms of urban persons, (31.87 per cent), urban males (39.95 per cent) and urban females (22.59 per cent). The table helps in ascertaining the least literate unit. It is observed in the case of 'SC-rural females' in Bathinda district with literacy level of just 10.20 per cent. The literacy level among the males and females in the SC population in rural area is very low in Amritsar, Ferozepur, Faridkot, Bathinda and Sangrur Districts.

**TABLE 8**  
**LITERACY OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN PUNJAB**  
**(1991)**  
**(Overall, District Wise)**

District	Persons	Overall		Persons	Rural	
		Male	Female		Male	Female
Gurdaspur	47.60	56.89	37.10	46.32	55.98	
	35.39	52.71		60.52		
	43.97					
Amritsar	33.71	42.12	23.91	31.01	39.74	
	20.83	42.60		50.00		
	34.01					
Kapurthala	47.82	56.84	37.63	46.16	55.50	
	35.66	54.42		62.14		
	45.53					
Jalandhar	56.16	65.52	46.50	56.26	65.91	
	45.37	57.55		64.48		
	49.61					
Hoshiarpur	63.82	74.48	51.90	63.82	74.74	
	51.60	63.83		72.74		
	54.15					
Rupnagar	57.38	68.09	44.86	56.21	67.62	
	42.86	62.84		70.29		
	54.20					
Ludhiana	50.48	59.52	39.83	51.40	61.33	
	39.77	48.20		55.06		
	39.98					

Ferozepur	24.40	32.49	15.08	21.68	29.57
	12.55	34.83		43.85	
	24.69				
Faridkot	24.27	31.59	15.77	21.91	28.99
	13.67	34.71		43.19	
	24.99				
Bathinda	20.68	27.42	12.84	17.61	24.01
	10.20	35.81		44.29	
	25.93				
Sangrur	27.15	35.82	17.02	26.18	34.99
	15.85	31.87		39.95	
	22.59				
Patiala	38.53	48.38	27.14	36.83	46.87
	25.16	48.07		56.90	
	38.05				
Punjab	41.09	49.82	31.03	39.55	48.54
	29.20	47.04		54.76	
	38.14				

Source : Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1999, and Census of India (Punjab, 1991) Series 20,

General Population Table and Primary Census Abstract, Statement No. 5, p. 394. Sept.1995. The inter comparison of the tables establish that in each and every district the SC as group are at disadvantage position in terms of literacy than the non-SC population. The lowest step and the highest step of the literacy ladder of the state can now be more vigorously established. It ranges from 'SC rural females' in Bathinda district (10.20 per

cent) to 'urban males' of Rupnagar district (81.15 per cent). It is to be noted that the SC population comprises the substantial proportion of the total population of the state. Its share was 28.31 per cent in 1991. Thus the low level of literacy among the SC population means that a significant section of the population has not gained from the educational growth.

#### **IV. Summary and policy Implication**

The above analysis clearly establishes that on social sector front the record of the state is quite dismal keeping in view its high income level. The comparison of educational and health indicators of Punjab with that of Kerala unequivocally establish that the former is far behind than the latter in fulfilling the educational and health needs of the society. The spread of education in the state is quite tardy and uneven with huge gaps in terms of regions, sexes, districts, classes, rural-urban areas etc. The females in general and rural females in particular and more so the rural females from the weaker sections comprise the least literate group of society. The state is far behind in meeting the target of universalisation of the elementary education. The drop out rate and non enrolment rate are quite high with low rate of retention in case of females. The birth rate, infant and maternal mortality rates too are very high with strong implications for the population growth.

This dismal situation of education and health has been the result of long period neglect of these two crucial sectors in the development planning of the state. The fact

of the matter is that the state has never accorded the place of priority to these sectors and actually always treated them as residual category in terms of public spending and policy formulation. The lack of administrative and political will, faulty perspective of the elite, structure and organisation of the education and health system has jeopardised the whole environment of their operational effectiveness. The social sector networking of all types and all stages is in the situation of multiple crisis. The inspection and monitoring system has become totally dysfunctional. The multiple schooling with different affiliations has disturbed the equilibrium of the system. The influential sections of the society have withdrawn themselves from the government operated education and health institutions. As a consequence, they have no interest in improving their functioning. In fact under the guise of new economic policy the state has started withdrawing itself even from the social sector also. The public sector institutions are in the situation of severe resource crunch. The educational and health budgets have actually turned out to be salary-budgets with little money for plan and capital account spending. This situation requires very active involvement of the state in the social sector by increasing the budgets to this sector along with radical overhauling of the public policy by decentralisation of the decision making process to ensure the participation of the people. The state must cut down its ever increasing and already higher level of non-developmental expenditure in order to strengthen the social sector infrastructure. The policy makers must realise that



only by upgrading the quality of human resources through the medium of education and health sector improvements the state can maintain its place in the next century, i.e. the century of knowledge.

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