CHAPTER VII

LITERACY

The quality of a population and its attitudes towards economic and social advancement are associated with the standards of literacy and education that it has achieved.

In 1961, the literacy percentage of 19.4% among the total population of this region was lower than the national average of 24% and was the highest among Himalayan areas from Arunachal in the east to Kashmir in the west, with the exception of Uttar Pradesh mountainous districts where it reached 21%.

Likewise the literacy percentage of 16% in the countryside was the highest of all Himalayan rural areas, with the exception of 19.5% of Uttar Pradesh mountainous districts and was lower than 19% at the national level.

By excluding the children between the ages of 0-9 years who are either attending school or are not fully literate, the rural literacy percentage rises to 23% in the region as a whole. If on the other hand, the frequently reported relapse of ruralites into illiteracy is kept in mind, this figure does not stand for the added significance that it suggests.

Despite a low level of literacy among rural folk, the decade 1961-61 witnessed more than 300% increase (from 5 to 16%) in the proportion of literate persons and an increase in their total numbers was more than three times (from 50,000 to 1,55,000).

1 In 1971, literacy percentage was 29% at national level, 31.3% in Himachal Pradesh, 30.4% in Mandi, 18.5% in Chamba, 37% in Kangra, 24% in Kulu and 27% in Lahaul, the parts of last five areas included in this region.
The school education has been expanding considerably as the proportion of literates in 5-14 years period was found to be 33-50% more than the general literacy percentage in various parts of the region in 1961. In 1961, there were very large number of rural tracts where it was difficult to find a person who could read and write, or the number was insignificant. At the same time, despite the great improvement in rural literacy in 1951-61 and an impressive rise in its percentage, the absolute number of rural illiterates has increased by 0.05 millions in this period thanks to rapid population growth in recent years.

It is characteristic of this region that as soon as one travels into the mountain-locked villages of higher Himalayas, besides simple constraints imposed by illiteracy on sectors of modern development, the mental barriers dividing their illiterates even from the relatively advanced people of its low Himalayan valleys become well-marked.

Undoubtedly the decade 1951-61 has been the golden period in the history of literacy drive and educational expansion in the region. Still enormous gaps in its achievement are readily recognized on seeing lower proportion of literate females, ruralites, scheduled castes and tribes as compared to their corresponding counterparts.

RURAL - URBAN DIFFERENTIAL:

A glance at Table 23 shows that the literacy among town dwellers was 55% in 1961 (56% in Himachal Pradesh) recording a rise of 17% in the period 1951-61.
Table 23

Decennial Changes in Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tahsils</th>
<th>Literates as Per Cent of Rural Population</th>
<th>Literates as Per Cent of Urban Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karsog</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichrot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogindermagar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churah</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pangi</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaddiyat</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmar</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palampur</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu-Seraj</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region as Whole</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Computed from the data given in District Census Handbooks of 1951 and 1961.

The rural-urban gap in literacy rates which was 36% in 1951 rose to 43% in 1961 in the region as a whole with the result that, unlike rural areas, the number of illiterates did decrease by about eight thousand in the towns.

Towns again showed a distinction by recording 30% of literate females and 53% of literate males in 1951 rising respectively to 42 and 63% in 1961 (Himachal Pradesh's figures being 44 and 63%). By 1961, there were six times more literate females and two and a half times of literate males in urban areas of the region as compared to its countryside.
These figures are clearly indicative of the greater achievements in towns and backwardness of rural areas in all matters of literacy drive. This was because of the initial lead of towns and lesser attention paid to the education of rural people before 1951 living as they were away from the district or state headquarters.

Massive illiteracy was thus the heritage of rural people as a result of general neglect suffered by the hill dwellers and the stark indifference towards people's education by the rulers of hill states in this region.

One can understand that "without drawing a wedge between the village and the towns, in a country like India, where 82% of the total population lives in countryside, achievement in the field of literacy can be better measured in rural areas. In fact, the success of towns as centres of diffusion of modern traits of civilization can be judged objectively from the attainment of villages."²

The large rural-urban differential suggests that our campaigns for modern development of the region are yet in embryonic stage.

MALE-FEMALE DIFFERENTIAL:

In rural areas, the number of literate males was four times that of females in the region as a whole; the corresponding excess reaching as high as 14 times in Chamba part of it.

### Table 24

**Male-Female Literacy : 1961**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tahsil</th>
<th>Literate Males</th>
<th>Literate Females</th>
<th>Literate Males</th>
<th>Literate Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palampur</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichhot</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karsog</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaginnagar</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahamour</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattiyat</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fangi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churah</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region as a Whole</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE : District Census Handbooks of 1961.**

In 1951, only 1.1% of rural females were literate while the ratio was 8% among their male counterparts. By 1961, the rural female literacy increased to 7% (it was 8.5% at national level) although in absolute numbers it was only 26,500 in the whole region. In its different parts, it was distressingly low as compared to its levels achieved among male population particularly in rural areas where its percentage was already insignificantly low.

Still it was higher than 4.6% of Himachal Pradesh, hardly 2% of Jammu-Kashmir and 4% of Uttar Pradesh mountainous areas.
Thus the region under consideration shared the inheritance as well as a relatively poorer progress of all Himalayan areas in the expansion of female education.

**CASTE-TRIBE DIFFERENTIAL**

Generally the sons of indigenous craftsmen and shepherds belong to low-caste and tribal families and their work continues to be significant among non-agricultural occupations in the rural world. The literacy percentage among these groups in larger part of the region is less than half as compared with others.  

Forming 29% of region's total population, as low as 7.4% of literacy percentage among scheduled castes and the tribes keeps them an educationally backward section of society. Illiteracy is far greater among these people chiefly because of the emphasis on achieving three R's in our literacy campaign, making little efforts of linking it with the improvement of their means of living.

The traditional association of high-castes with education remained another great obstacle for long. It did not create only an undeniable social indifference towards the education of low-caste people, but even where a person belonging to them achieved certain educational standards largely as a result of the efforts of state, the society refused to reconcile to the social change accompanying them. Instances were reported in

---

3 In two rural areas of Chamba and Mandi, for instance, 13 and 24% of people were found to be literate among high-caste and non-tribal population against only 5 to 7% among the low-castes and tribals.
early years of 1951-61 period when the entire strength of high-caste children in a school was withdrawn by their parents if the teacher happened to be a scheduled caste.

In areas carrying a preponderant proportion of scheduled classes, the difference between the literacy achieved by general population and by these sections was little. For an instance, in strongholds of 'Koli' scheduled castes (who do not follow any degraded profession and are treated as such just because of the course of historical events) inhabiting the eastern part of this region, the level of literacy was as high as among the high-castes.

It clearly points out the age-old discrimination on grounds of numbers and caste, the educational and economic backwardness of already backward people assuming greater proportions in tracts with their lower numerical strength.

But the literacy drive made by the free India's welfare state could minimise this great gap by adopting special measures for the education of scheduled tribes, many of whom are seasonally migratory. The highest proportion of scheduled castes are literate in Kangra-Palampur areas (comprising 10% of their population) against only 5-10% in the rest of the region. The highest percentage of literacy among scheduled tribes is observed in Lahaul (having 20% of literates), 10% in Brahmour, the strongholds of Lahaulis and the Gaddis respectively, and 4-7% in other parts of the region.
Besides the commonly recognised factors responsible for a large number of illiterates in India as a whole, a few peculiar to this region are as follows.

The region has mountainous terrain and mutually isolated valleys where most of the people live. Notwithstanding the apathy of the old rulers and absence of consciousness towards education among the rural people, there were no or few good means of communication to reach different valleys. Even within a single valley, the entirely different spatial structure of the hill village consisting of a countless number of dispersed hamlets made it a difficult task to spread education. The general size of such village units in respect of their population is also very small, 70% having less than 200 persons. The low and scattered distribution of population in small hamlets scattered all along the hill sides made it difficult for schools to reach the people. On the one hand, the schools were too few and on the other, those which were opened suffered from lack of enrolment and of attendance in many parts of the region. A school having a good-sized student population is itself a force to attract people towards the education of their children. If the village community is scattered, the minimum of social services prove difficult to reach it unless the bare transport and economic facilities are first provided.
In many cases, parents were frightfully afraid of sending their kids to a nearby school as there was an unmanageable ravine or a difficult hill slope to cross. The number of schools opened bears a direct relation with the achievement of literacy, in turn dependent upon their location and the nature of surrounding terrain. Where the distance between villages was short and they could be approachable by a road in the vicinity, despite lower number of schools, the progress of literacy went high as was found in Mandi with 92% villages without schools in 1961. In difficult areas with greater distance between villages, the number of scholars per school and per sq. mile of area was generally lower. It resulted in a greater fall in literacy even though the number of school-less villages was relatively lower, keeping between 72 to 77% of their total number.

Besides the geographical isolation of mountain-locked areas standing in the way of a faster provision of schools, seasonal family migrations of the tribals and prevalent subsistence type of family-farming have slackened the campaign for expansion of school education and the drive for achieving an effective literacy could hardly be matched to the task. In such an economy, the living depends upon the labour contributions of each member of the family and even children can’t help accepting a share in this division of labour as soon as they are nearing their teens. It was a genuine handicap of the people in such areas in sparing their children for school education at the cost of eking out their living. It was—
It resulted in thin, irregular attendance, ultimate drop-outs and the rise in per cent of waste and stagnation by taking a much longer time even in completing their primary schooling. The parents introduced to adult education programmes rapidly relapsed into illiteracy on this account.

The rapid development of roads since 1951 has opened out the valleys to external influence and has encouraged a slow diversification of rural economy. Wherever this achievement has been relatively faster, the efforts of the state in narrowing down the spatial and sectional gaps in levels of bare literacy have succeeded.

Despite the State's stupendous efforts in directly accepting its responsibility towards the goal of universal literacy and elementary education by spending much in post-independence period, the rapid growth of population (with school-going children forming 41% of it) varying patterns of its distribution and density, leave little chance of conveniently balancing the total number of students, teachers and schools in an individual area. The schools had to be provided in areas with difficult terrain irrespective of the size of population in villages located there. Thus the Government's investment in raising the proportion of literates from pre-1951 level became far greater, as compared to the returns it got.
DHULA DHAR-PIR PANJAL
REGION
LITERATES AS PERCENT
OF TOTAL POPULATION IN
RURAL AND URBAN
AREAS: 1961
DATA BY REVENUE CIRCLES

FIG 28

LITERATE FEMALES AS
PERCENT OF FEMALE
POPULATION IN RURAL
AND URBAN AREAS
1961
DATA BY REVENUE CIRCLES

FIG 29
Not any single factor but a long range of factors have together given rise to islands of high literacy as well as long-persisting breeding grounds of large-scale illiteracy.

SPATIAL VARIATIONS IN LITERACY:

The discussion about areal variations of literacy patterns is based on two choropleth maps (Figs. 29 and 30) which have been prepared by working out the relevant census data of 1961. The maps portray contrasting types of broad areas of literacy showing the proportion of literate persons in total population and the levels achieved in female literacy.

As the data of population falling in 0-9 years age-group of normally illiterate children is not available for local levels, it could not be possible to plot literacy ratios exclusive of it in order to make them more realistic.

Broadly, the low Himalayan part of the region to the south of Dhaura Dhar range has emerged with numerous tracts having above regional average of literacy percentage, with the exception of Lahaul in inner zone sharing this distinction. The interior valleys in south-eastern part from Kulu to Karsog and whole of Chamba zone to the north of Dhaura Dhar have appeared as relatively backward areas on the rural literacy map of this region.

1. **Areas with High Literacy Rates**: (More than 20% of total population being literate)

   (1) A fraction of this region carries the distinction of having the highest percentage of literacy with more than 30% of its total population consisting of literate persons. A
majority of such areas comprise the towns scattered in outer and middle parts of low Himalayas. Among rural areas, there are only six individual tracts marked as islands of highest literacy along southern peripheries of the region. The highest proportion of literates among rural folk is observed around the town of Mandi in the east and that of Bakloh cantonment in the west. The extension of non-agricultural activities and the impact of urbanization are two major causes for 41-50% literates found in Mandi tract. Bakloh is a small Gorkha cantonment along outer spurs of Dhaura Bhar and the villages around it have 51-60% of rural literates who were able to read and write in 1961. At least 20% of working population was found engaged in non-agricultural occupations. In hill interiors, it is commonly noticed that the population residing around nuclei of commercial and military settlements develops a sense of awareness for attaining minimum educational standards. The average villager has well-based expectation that their male wards may get subordinate jobs in these establishments on receiving some education. The other three small tracts having achieved 31-40% literacy are situated in south-eastern rural countryside of Mandi and the fourth forms southern part of Palampur. In the two central valley tracts having about 1/3 of the settled area under cultivation and 1/3 of the latter under irrigation, spacing of schools could be better for promoting literacy, other things being equal. The relatively bigger and more compact villages in extreme south-east and south of Palampur area were also favourable towards this end.
In the last one, the number of persons serving in the armed forces is the largest who prove instrumental in making the people realise the benefits of education.

It needs a casual mentioning that, because of greater degree of accessibility and of economic development, Kangra district as part of undivided Punjab, had 75 and 50% of literate males and females respectively in towns, 40 and 12% in its rural area in 1961 in contrast with 65 and 43% of corresponding ratios in urban and 31 and 10% in rural parts of Punjab.

The per cent of literate females varies between 12 and 30% of their total population in four out of these six rural tracts. The increase in the number of educated females has generally accompanied the rise in literacy as these women-folk hold prospects for getting jobs. Below 10% proportion of literates in 1951 has increased by about four to six times in 1961.

In towns the literacy percentage went over 40 and only a small place of Jogindernagar kept behind the regional average in male and female literacy. Generally in all urban areas, because of few taboos standing in the way of women education and the existence of colleges for higher education, one third of the females were found literate. A 12-25% rise in literacy with 50% in the case of Palampur was observed during 1951-61, the corresponding increase in female literacy being 6-30% in its various parts.
(ii) The high literacy areas with 21 to 30% of literates are split up into two parts, one forming parts of outlying Lahaul in the north and two, a great many tracts of the southern low Himalayan zone.

Larger areas of the southern zone from south-east to north-west have got a number of rural tracts of greater continuity carrying higher than the regional average of 10% rural literacy. Towards north-west, they tend to form a few scattered blocks. Many of them are centrally-situated valley tracts or run along a road with better accessibility and spacing of schools. A sizable hill block in Chichist hills of Mandi recording equally high proportion of literacy is an exception and needs an explanation. Amidst these hills, there are flatter tracts in a number of small valleys along upper reaches of streams. Due to locally lesser scattering of population, closely-spaced schools have been able to draw school-going children in large numbers from surrounding parts. It is noteworthy that 'Koli' scheduled-castes form 25-50% of local population and still literacy is fairly high. As already referred, Kolis living in these parts of the region have been included among low-castes under the influence of social history of the area. Like the general body of scheduled castes, these are not landless people, economically they are equally well-off and educationally conscious to respond to the efforts made by the state Government in this direction. This instance goes to support the contention that group efforts in encouraging
the school-going habit has been singularly fruitful in achieving higher literacy by overpowering difficulties of terrain, social taboos and historical prejudices.

A correlation of literacy map with the map showing spatial distribution of non-agricultural workers' holding brings out an important result. Within a large area of this zone, the proportion of workers engaged in various non-agricultural activities, mostly of commercial and service character, ranges from 10-20% rising to an average of 47% in localized pockets marked conspicuously in the vicinity of Dharamsala, Dalhousie, Bakloch and the towns of Kangra, Palampur, Jogindernagar and Mandi. In many of these tracts, heavier rural population subsisting on increasingly fragmented holdings suffers from economic strains. For this reason education is looked upon as a redeemer from the viewpoint of employment opportunities. Even females, many of whom are young widows or near relatives of war heroes, are going in for education to help themselves and their families through this situation. Although there is predominance of male literacy, the number of literate females varying between 6-20% of their total population is observed in a large number of tracts.

The proportion of rural literates in 1961 was largely under 10% rising to 20% only in small pockets. It has increased to 20-30% by 1961, many tracts starting almost from a scratch.
In higher Himalayas, the valleys of Lahaul situated in the inner inaccessible parts of the region, have emerged as an exception in achieving high standard of rural literacy. In the village of Tandi, 45% of males were literate in 1961 and 90% of its school-going children were attending schools. The different reasons attributed to it are as follows:

1) The preponderance of Buddhist population (along with Spiti having the largest percentage of more than 60% Buddhists in 1971) where there are no caste taboos or occupational stratification and learning of 'Phoṭia language' is universally adopted for religious purposes by the elderly people.

2) The people by not depending solely upon cultivation and by moving out in transport and trade, have greater will, need and money to read and write. They have been sending their children in greater number to schools since 1961. Before that, persons from all sections of society sent many youngsters to join the 'monastic life' compulsorily, eliminating the necessity of receiving education for modern living. With the loss in hold of monasteries, the number of school-going youngsters has been rising with a view to get preference in state services, ultimately.

3) The proportion of non-agricultural workers is between 20-35% on an average in larger areas of high literacy ratios. However, a part of eastern Lahaul where this proportion rose to over 60% does not have such a higher rural literacy because these workers mostly consisted of temporary imported labour engaged in road construction. Despite greater literacy among the males, 6-9% of the females are also found able at least to read and write in some tracts of this region.
The increase from an average of 12 to 25% in these tracts in 1951–61 period is an impressive achievement for this difficult region. It is a clear instance of how the cultural traits, social structure and religious composition of the people is capable of going a long way in overcoming the geographical constraints and raising the scale of universal literacy.

2. **Areas with Moderate Literacy Rates: (10–20%)**

The regional average of 16% falls in this category occupying a large area along mountain margins and foothills in the outer zone and in the interior valleys of Kulu-Chamba in high-hill zone of habitations. A larger part of the populous Chamba and Kulu valleys inclusive of high Himalayan Pangi and adjoining Lahaul fall into this category. In low Himalayas, south-eastern Kangra, hilly and mountainous fringes of Jogindernagar-Mandi away from the valley-flats could not achieve more than an average literacy.

The decennial increase has been equally great, 2–3 times the rates prevailing in 1951 in individual tracts. But in a large number of cases, the frequencies tend to be towards the lower margin of regional average.

These areas provide the only examples where there is very little impact of Kulu, Chamba and two towns of Kangra (with about 50% of literate population and 24–46% of literate females), on the surrounding rural world.

One does not fail to note that the proportion of rural literacy is not more than 16% even close to the towns having
more than three times the literate persons in their population. Despite 30 to over 65% of inhabited area under cultivation, pressure of population relatively lower or as high as in outer Kangra-Palampur, the literacy percentage remains uniformly average. The female literacy is very low with only 6-7% of them being literate in a few tracts of the two valleys of Kulu and Chamba. Firstly, the rural people in these interior parts are far less prone to accept any external influence through education. The indifference of the masses towards modernisation of economy and adoption of even slightly changing ways by the women folk keeps them sticking to the compulsions of subsistence cultivation and literally agrarian outlook of conservative hill peasants. Even in the vicinity of towns, the changed attitudes of educated town dwellers are not taken easily by the ruralites. Because of the mental barriers imposed by traditional hold of caste, blind faith in local cults and conditioning of people by their long exploitation, the aura of apathy towards literacy and to the improvement of their living has been very slow to vanish.

Even where the number of persons engaged in non-agricultural occupations elsewhere in these valleys rises from 6 to 20 and occasionally to the maximum of 60% in a few small strips, the percentage of rural literates undergoes little change. Firstly, most of the non-agricultural workers belong to the category of household industrial workers or those engaged in forest occupations. These occupations are not truly non-agricultural in the sense that they remain the
adjuncts of strictly subsistence type of farm economy in these parts. The people have to spend a long time and money in producing food and other needs for themselves. It is observed that with a large increase in development of fruit orchards, the change in rural economy and in the economic lot of general mass of people is likely to affect favourably the improvement in literacy and education in post-1961 period.

While 1961-61 period was of tremendous consequence in rapidly improving the literacy ratios in outer valleys of this region, the next decade (for which data are not yet available) will be more fruitful in this respect in these interior parts.

As for the mountain-hill margins of Kangra and Mandi, the difficult terrain, sparsity of good means of inter-village and inter-tract communications lending a longer lease of life to socio-religious taboos, have made people sceptic of the value of modern secular education. This situation has provided little incentives to teachers mostly coming from outside these tracts to stay on and serve the cause of education for an effective period. The frequent shifting of teachers has itself been a brake in faster expansion of school education, resulting in hardly more than an average literacy.

3. **Areas with Low Literacy Rates**: (Less than 10%)

A large block of rural areas with less than 10% of literacy in 1961 formed a conspicuously marked central part of the region. Together, such tracts are located in upper parts of Chamba-Churah valleys, fairly large parts of Pangi-
Brahmour, Bara-Banghal, slice of territories along eastern mountains of Kulu and in the depth of mountains bordering Kulu and Mandi areas. These parts virtually comprise the outlying portions of main habitation zone and are the most backward in matters of achieving the 3 R's. The literacy percentage remains under 10 both in 1951 and 1961, the addition to actual number of literates is of little significance, but percentage rise is at least two to three times.

The causes responsible for such a low proportion of literate persons are manifold. These areas are in extremely inaccessible parts of the region forming most outlying hill terrain even within main valleys. Greater scattering of hamlets on the one hand and joint-family structure requiring every member to contribute to the family-labour pool, apart from numerous misplaced beliefs as well as non-functional literacy drive, have been common hurdles, on the other hand. The people, have, till recently, remained completely insulated from external influences, even from the little of the changes in social economy observed elsewhere in parts of this region. The villages are not served by any reliable means of communication, many of the schools are approached by foot-tracks along rough slopes and deep torrents. Production of food for local consumption is laborious. People's pre-occupation with it, along with general poverty, leaves little time or awareness to read and write. To give a singular instance from the village of Bara Banghal situated in the vacant area between Kulu and Brahmour, upto 1967, 2 boys passed VIII class, 1 passed VII
and 3 passed V class. This is an index of poorest literacy from a village with barely 400 people amongst whom only 112 were school-going children. The Government built a hostel-cum-primary school at the cost of Rs. 25,000/- outside the area at Bir village where the school shifts for the winter months making a provision of Rs. 25/- each for 25 students from Bara Banghal village. The completely snowbound conditions do not allow the residents to stay there during winter months. Despite these facilities, the school education has not been popular and there appears to be a century gap between Baijnath, nearest motorable point at 60 miles distance and these villages. The two blocks of Pangl in the north west and Brahmour in the centre of literacy map are the strongholds of scheduled tribes. Despite the special attention given to these people, the compulsions of physical setting, difficult living under snowbound winter conditions and of seasonal migrations have kept them generally below the regional level of literacy. The scattering of village community in these thinly populated parts is immeasurably uneven and gets separated by vast inhabited wasteland.

It makes the favourable spacing of schools extremely difficult. Even where the proportion of non-agricultural workers reaches to an average of 35%, the achievement of literacy remains unaffected as most of these occupations are not divorced from the strains of traditional hill farming.
The cause of low female literacy in all low literacy areas particularly in interior parts is not due to any such discrimination against women on grounds of sex, intelligence or their ability. The plain fact one usually notices is that even if a woman is educated, she has little means to become economically mobile by moving out of the domestic chores, going upwards in society or becoming an active member of it. For her, marrying someone who is likely to be socially higher and mobile is better capable of raising her status. It is thus taken for granted that only socially mobile members, which are predominantly the males, require education for occupational purposes. The migratory 'gaddis' of Brahmour and 'Gujjars' of Churah and Chamba have presented baffling problems as far as education of the aged and elementary schooling of their youngsters are concerned. The compulsion of moving in family groups up and down the mountain pastures over long distances have interrupted the education of their children and the literacy campaign among the adults has faced big challenges. Of all the scheduled tribes, Muslim Gujjars resist secular education the most under the influence of religious divines. In one Gujjar village in Chamba, out of its 250 people, only 3 were found to be literate in 1961, not more than 5 students were attending the primary school daily and even they belonged to the families of its Hindu residents.

With increasing checks on the movement of these graziers in general, and with more provision of educational and employment facilities for scheduled tribes, allurement of schooling has increased.
The rural economy in these areas no longer remains strictly intra-zonal. This change is expected to exercise a greater control over the achievement of the goal of universal literacy in the long run.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

In 1961, 16% among ruralites and 53% of the town dwellers were literate in the region. During 1961-81, the percentage of rural literacy rose from 5 to 16 and that of urban from 41 to 63.

Despite great achievements since 1961, the number of rural illiterates rose by 0.06 millions while urban illiterates decreased by about 8000 people. The rural-urban differential presents a depressing picture if the attainment of literacy in villages (wherein reside 94% of population) is considered as the criterion of measuring educational expansion.

Among rural males 26% were literates in 1961 while it was only 7% in the case of females. On the other hand, in urban areas, 42% of females and 63% of males were literates in 1961.

The percentage of literacy among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was only 7.4% although they constituted about 30% of total regional population. In areas where they formed local concentrations and have been economically well-off, as much as high-caste people, caste discrimination has not stood in the way and little difference was found in the literacy achieved by general population and by these sections of society.
Thus the age-old discrimination, a neglect or continuing legacy of educational backwardness on grounds of caste, sex and the location of areas is observed.

Among the other chief causes responsible for general low levels of literacy peculiar to this region, the hilly terrain, difficulty of communication in rural countryside, scattered character of population, social values, agricultural prosperity, stage and mode of subsistence, one leading to another, are most important.

There is a direct relation between achievements in literacy, the location and distance between villages. The number of scholars per school and per square mile is lower with a greater fall in literacy if the number of school-less villages rises. On the other hand, where the distance between villages is short and easy, despite low number of schools, the progress of literacy goes high.

The seasonal migratory groups living in snow-bound areas have presented a peculiar set of problems to promote the cause of literacy among their families. The rapid growth of population, 41% of youngsters in school-going age, the areally varying patterns of distribution and densities of population leave little chance of proportionately balancing the total number of students, teachers and required number of schools in an individual rural area. The investment in raising the proportion of literates even to this level has been far greater as compared to the returns.
In pockets with higher than average achievements, a trend towards urbanisation, relatively earlier start of schooling, return of people to their villages after seeing active army life or progressive tracts outside the region, have acted together to provide a push for the expansion of education.

But in the absence of social preferences permitting people to accept secular functions and benefits of modern education, even the successful operation of all favourable factors led to disappointing results.

To conclude, in areas of greater geographical isolation, there has been a longer survival of caste-biases, exploitation of backward sections of society, ignorance of low-caste illiterates, and an accepted association of high-castes with education and the profession of teaching.

The subsistence of people on joint-family labour, its group-values and blind belief in prevailing cults of outliving utility have failed to create a social atmosphere for encouraging a school-going habit. Away in the interior, little could be done in removing people's scepticism of the benefits of modern secular education especially because the 'non-functional literacy drive' proved far less suited in such areas. Although environmental difficulties stood in the way of educational expansion, yet much of the explanation of low or high literacy is to be sought in group values of local society allowing or disallowing the push towards its goals.
Wherever the influence in opening out the valleys for easier communication, diversification or prosperity of rural economy and ancestry whether favouring education out of compulsive circumstances or traditions existed, the achievement has been relatively faster. It has been capable of removing inter-caste, rural-urban, male-female and intra-regional differences in fighting illiteracy.

While 1951-61 period ushered in an era of rapidly expanding educational provisions and considerable increase in the number of literates in outer low Himalayan valleys, the next decade (1961-71) seems to be of consequence in achieving substantial results in interior areas of high Himalayas.