

Chapter II

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF INDIA'S POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE - 1951-81

Introduction

This chapter mainly focuses on the educational attainment of India's population and labour force during the first 30 years of planning. The educational attainment by sex, region and caste is also examined. The analysis of the educational attainment prior to the estimation of the stock of educational capital tells us about the general demand for education and the qualitative change both in population and labour force. The term 'educational attainment' referred here is the actual level of education completed by a person. It is superior to the enrolment ratios (as a proxy for educational attainment) especially for the measurement of the stock of human capital. This chapter is divided into four major sections. Section I is concerned with the educational attainment of population. In Section II we have analysed the educational attainment of population by sex and region. Section III is devoted to the educational attainment of labour force and in Section IV, we give conclusions.

Educational Attainment of Population

Since planning social demand for education has phenomenally increased in India. This can be seen from the educational attainment of population given in 1951, 1961, 1971, and 1981 Censuses. Population with formal schooling (excluding literate population) as a proportion of total population of 6 per cent in 1950-51 went up to around nine per cent in 1960-61. The corresponding proportions for 1971 and 1981 were 20 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. In absolute terms the population with educational attainment has increased by around 8 times from 22 millions in 1950-51, to 168 millions in 1981. As against this, the proportion of literate population to total population almost remained steady. As compared to the absolute number of literate population both in 1951 and 1961, which was higher than that of the population with formal education, in 1971 and 1981, it is the absolute number of population with formal schooling which has exceeded the literate population by more than two times.

The proportion of population with primary schooling has moved up from 3.6 per cent in 1951 to 7.0 per cent in 1961, to 10.5 per cent in 1971 and to 11.4 per cent in 1981. It is obvious that the pace of increase during 1971-81 has

Table : 2.I

Educational Attainment of Population 1951-1981						(in million)	
Level of Education	1951 ⁺	Per-centage	1961	Per-centage	1971	Per-centage	1981
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Illiterate	297.61	83.42	333.4	75.94	386.7	70.6	424.3
Literate	+ 37.28	10.44	66.4	15.12	52.8	9.6	74.0
Primary	12.92	3.62	30.84	7.0	57.7	10.5	75.9
Middle	5.2	1.46	-	-	29.0	5.3	42.4
Matriculation	2.15	0.60	8.23	1.87	17.7	3.2	37.8
Non-Technical Diploma	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.08	0.2
Technical Diploma	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.07	1.4
Degree and above	1.64	0.46	-	-	3.3	0.6	9.5
All	356.80	100.00	438.87	100.0	548.1	100.0	665.3

* Excluding Assam (8-9)

+ Census paper No.5, 1954. Literacy and Educational Standard Summary of Table D-VIII

Source : Various volumes of Census in India Part A and B-Table C-III
Registrar General of India, New Delhi.

3 slowed down indicating the high rate of drop out and stagnation at this level. The proportion of population with middle level of schooling has increased from 1.46 per cent in 1951 to 6.4 per cent in 1981, by five full per centage point. To make four Censuses comparable, we have to club two educational levels 'matriculation' and 'degree and above', since 1961 census does not provide the information separately. The growth in educational attainment of population for this level of education is very fast in comparison to what we have observed about the primary and middle levels of schooling. In 1951, of the total population, only 1.64 per cent had schooling above matriculation, whereas in 1961 it was 1.87 per cent. In 1971 and 1981 the respective proportions were 4 per cent and 7 per cent. This is but natural in view of the well known fact of the top heavy structure of our formal education. However, this growth rate can not be taken at its face value, as we have not allowed for such factors as 'death', 'retirement' and 'immigration'. A very crude way of considering these factors is to take net additions to these proportions.¹

 Regarding the factor 'death', we make below a few observations. As is evident, average life expectancy has improved during planning. Moreover the theory of human capital has stressed that investment in education contributes

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to non-market production over and above market production. The average life expectancy of educated persons is bound to be higher than that of the average person. Also, education and health being complementary forms of investment, educated persons are least likely to be prone to certain ailments. So the factor 'death' may not be that important in estimating the stock of educational capital as is supposed to be. With reference to the 'retirement' factor one can argue that in an economy where self-employment predominates and the average educational attainment of self employed not lagging behind that of the employees, even educated employees after retirement continue to be economically active as their health status is superior to others. Regarding immigration, there is no alternative, but to make adjustment in stock so estimated as it amounts to brain drain.

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Educational Attainment by Sex and Region

In Table 2.II we have given the educational attainment of population by sex. And in Table 2.III coefficients of educational equality by educational level are presented.*

* Co-efficient of equality	=	$\frac{\text{Percentage share of illiterate/literate/educated/female/rural/SC/ST persons in total illiterate/literate/educated/population}}{\text{Percentage share of illiterate/literate/educated/male/urban/non-SC/ST persons in total illiterate/literate/educated population.}}$
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Table : 2.II
Educational Attainment of Population by Sex 1951-81

Level of Education	1951		1961		1971		1981	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2		3		4		5	
Illiterate	137.7 (75.13)	159.8 (92.18)	148.21 (65.54)	185.21 (87.04)	172.0 (60.56)	214.73 (81.32)	182.64 (53.10)	241.61 (75.2)
Literate	28.3 (15.44)	8.9 (5.13)	48.29 (21.35)	18.15 (8.53)	34.80 (12.25)	17.91 (6.78)	47.39 (13.78)	26.65 (8.29)
Primary	9.82 (5.37)	3.1 (1.79)	22.69 (10.03)	8.15 (3.83)	38.86 (13.68)	18.88 (7.15)	48.85 (14.20)	27.09 (8.43)
Middle	4.2 (2.29)	1.02 (0.59)	--	--	21.19 (7.41)	7.81 (2.96)	29.00 (8.43)	13.38 (4.16)
Matriculation	1.86 (1.01)	0.29 (0.16)	6.96 (3.07)	1.27 (0.60)	13.86 (4.88)	3.85 (1.46)	27.85 (18.09)	9.95 (3.09)
Non Technical Diploma	--	--	--	--	0.36 (0.13)	0.103 (0.03)	0.15 (0.04)	0.078 (0.02)
Technical Diploma	--	--	--	--	0.31 (0.11)	0.078 (0.03)	0.9 (0.26)	0.23 (0.07)
Degree & Above	1.4 (0.76)	0.24 (0.14)	--	--	2.65 (0.93)	0.65 (0.25)	7.13 (2.08)	2.36 (0.73)
All	183.28 (100.0)	173.35 (100.0)	226.15 (100.0)	212.78 (100.0)	284.03 (100.0)	264.07 (100.0)	343.92 (100.0)	321.74 (100.0)

Source : Same as in Table 1.I

(Figures in paranthesis show percentages)

Table : 2.III

Co-efficient of equality of education by Sex

..... Educational Level 1951 1961 1971 1981
..... 1 2 3 4 5
Illiterate	1.16	1.25	1.25	1.32
Literate	0.31	0.38	0.51	0.56
Primary	0.32	0.36	0.48	0.55
Middle	0.24	--	0.37	0.46
Matric and above	0.16	0.18	0.27	0.35
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Source : Derived from Main Table 2.II

The analysis of illiteracy by sex reveals the following :

The proportion of illiterate females in total population is higher than that of males. The trend in this regard as revealed by 1951, 1961, 1971 and 1981 censuses is interesting. In 1951, 92 per cent of females were illiterate as against 75 per cent males, giving the variation of 17 per cent in sex-wise incidence of illiteracy.

After three decades of development the incidence of illiteracy by sex has more or less remained unchanged i.e., the difference in their illiteracy rate has gone up by 5 per cent i.e., from 17 per cent to 22 per cent. So, in terms of illiteracy the relative position of females has not worsened. The co-efficient of illiteracy also confirms the above observation. In 1951 it was 1.16, in 1961 and in 1971 it was 1.25 whereas, in 1981 it was slightly higher at 1.32. This means as against one illiterate male there were more than one illiterate female (refer Table No.2.III). The literacy, co-efficient computed for this purpose suggests that it has improved in favour of females. The co-efficient for the four censuses years 1951, 1961, 1971 and 1981 were 0.31, 0.38, 0.51 and 0.56 respectively. This shows that as against $1/3$ literate female in 1951, $1/2$ female was literate in 1981. Co-efficient similarly worked out for primary level of education also lead us to the same conclusion. The respective co-efficients are 0.32, 0.36, 0.48 and 0.55, indicating a relative improvement in the educational status of females over time (Primary level of education). For middle level education also, the values of co-efficient of 0.24, 0.37, 0.46 for the years 1951, 1971 and 1981 respectively show improvement suggesting narrowing of educational distance by sex. No such coefficients are worked out for the year 1961 as relevant information was not given in 1961 census. The 1961 census as noted earlier, is also deficient in that it has not

3 given separately sex wise educational attainment of population with 'matriculation' and 'degree' and above, whereas in three other censuses this information by sex is given separately. In our analysis we have combined this detailed information given in 1951, 1971 and 1981 censuses for comparison purpose. The co-efficients for 'matriculation and above' (included 'degree' and above) for the relevant census year are 0.16, 0.18, 0.27 and 0.35 indicating that the value of co-efficient has almost doubled in favour of females. (See Table 2.III).

In 1951, in absolute number the male population with 'matriculation and above' level was six times the female population. In 1961 it came down to 5.5 times. In 1971 it came down to 3.7 times and further reduced to less than 3 times in 1981. This again corroborates our above inference of narrowing educational distance by sex.

Rural/Urban Educational Attainment

Growth strategies followed by the Less Developed Countries (LDCS) almost all over the world are urban oriented. Reasons for the same are not far to seek. The development experience of the present day developed countries has shown that one of the favourable conditions for rapid economic growth is the movement of population away from rural (primary sector) to the urban (secondary sector) and

from that to the tertiary sector. This is because labour productivity in secondary and tertiary sectors is higher than that in the primary sector. Naturally, the expansion of education sector is likely to be more in urban areas relative to rural areas. However, this much acclaimed transformation even it has taken place, it has occurred at a snail's pace. This can be taken to mean that one should not underestimate the importance of rural sector in the years to come particularly agriculture and allied activities (including rural industrialization) should not be lost sight of.

The urban oriented growth has resulted into dualistic nature of Indian economy which is detrimental to the achievement of plan goals of reducing regional disparities. So, to modernise rural sector one has to speed up rural industrialization and bridge the gap between have (urban) and have nots (rural). Educational attainment of rural/urban population is given in Table 2.IV. Co-efficient of educational equality by region are presented in Table 2.V.

Table : 2.IV

Educational Attainment of Rural/Urban
Population (1961-1981)

Level of Education	(in million)			
	1961		1981	
1	2		4	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Illiterate	291.55 (80.98)	41.66 (52.80)	334.84 (76.31)	51.89 (47.34)
Literate	47.85 (13.29)	18.96 (23.91)	36.82 (8.39)	15.95 (14.55)
Primary	18.08 (5.02)	12.76 (16.09)	41.77 (9.52)	15.77 (14.38)
Middle	--	--	17.09 (3.80)	11.91 (10.86)
Matriculation	2.52 (0.7)	5.7 (7.19)	7.03 (1.60)	10.68 (9.74)
Non-Technical Diploma	--	--	0.405 (0.09)	0.59 (0.54)
Technical Diploma	--	--	0.13 (0.03)	0.257 (0.28)
Degree and above	--	--	0.74 (0.17)	2.56 (2.34)
All	360.0 (100.0)	79.28 (100.0)	438.8 (100.0)	109.6 (100.0)
			507.6 (100.0)	157.67 (100.0)

Source : Same as Table 1.I (Figures in paranthesis are percentages)

Table : 2.V

Co-efficient of Equality by Region

Level of Education	1961	1971	1981
1	2	3	4
Illiterate	6.96	6.45	5.32
Literate	2.52	2.31	2.57
Primary	1.42	2.65	2.16
Matric & Above	0.58	0.58	0.69

Source : Derived from Table 2.IV

In 1951 census, rural/urban break-up by level of education is ^{not} available. For 1961, 1971 and 1981 census years educational attainment of rural/urban population is given in Table 2.IV. Co-efficients of educational equality are presented in Table 2.V. The value of co-efficient for illiterate person in 1961 was 6.96 indicating that as against 7 illiterate rural persons there was one illiterate person in urban area. The corresponding value of co-efficients in 1971 were 6.45 and 5.32 in 1981. The value of co-efficient for literate rural/urban population during these two decades has virtually remained constant. It was 2.52 in 1961, 2.31 in 1971 and 2.57 in 1981. For the primary level of education the co-efficients have behaved

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in the following manner. It was 1.42 in 1961 and went upto 2.65 in 1971 and again was lower at 2.16 in 1981 though it was higher in comparison to 1961. Similarly, at the middle level of education it has slightly improved. At the 'matric and above' level of education after virtually remaining constant during the period 1961 to 1971 at 0.58, in 1981 it was higher at 0.69. Thus, as hypothesised, the relative educational attainment of rural population has improved during the plan period.

The trends in the values of co-efficients of equality during 1951 to 1981 have clearly shown that the educational distance by sex and region has narrowed in favour of females and rural population.

Let us view the trends in above co-efficients showing reduction in educational equality by sex and region in the context of India's development experience. Few things about India's development experience, though known, are worth repeating.

- (1) Our actual trend growth rate of around 3.5 per cent per annum since planning is far below the target of 5 per cent growth rate.
- (2) It has also been claimed that this slow growth has failed to trickle down.
- (3) Whether rightly or wrongly, people have inferred

from the first two that income distribution in

India must have worsened or have become more skewed.

In drawing such an inference, people have more or less forgotten to bring into their analysis the above observed improvement in educational status of females and rural population. To us, it seems that this improvement has acted as an antidote to the presumed worsening of income inequality. Income inequality might not have reduced but it is too premature to assert that it has worsened. The observed reduction in educational inequality by sex and region owes much to the policy of positive discrimination followed by the government of India with reference to education. The detailed analysis of this aspect is given in Chapter VI on Distribution of Human Capital Stock.

Educational Attainment of SC/ST Population

In a caste ridden society like ours, the analysis of educational attainment of population looks incomplete if it ignores the educational attainment of population by caste. India's population is broadly classified into SC/ST population on the one hand as per our constitution, and the remaining population is considered as non-SC/ST population on the other. The SC/ST population accounts for a little more than 1/5th of the total population. It is this population that has suffered since centuries. To uplift this population to the level of non-SC/ST population the policy of positive discrimination has been

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followed for quite some time now in India. The SC/ST population is termed as less privileged or weaker section as against privileged non-SC/ST population. The basis of protection granted to this section of population seems to be on the line of 'infant industry argument' well known in international economics. They deserve protection against the privileged class till they acquire competitiveness required for the attainment of higher socio-economic status.

However, the Indian society is so inequitable that SC/ST population is not the only less privileged section. Recently few Other Backward Communities (OBC) which are also regarded as less privileged, are identified, and are given protection. A new class called Economically Backward Class (EBC) has also been recognised by various state governments for the purpose of subsidising their education. A complete analysis focusing on the equality of educational attainment covers these communities and the EBC over and above SC/ST population. ^{is worth undertaking} Unfortunately, our analysis confines only to SC/ST population as the relevant information is not available from the census.

It would not be out of place here, if we note a few striking features of SC/ST population :

The share of SC population in total population has been more than two times that of ST population & their respective shares in 1981 census - were 15.3 per cent and 7.4 per cent.

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This less privileged population has been mainly confined to rural areas of our economy though over time the urban SC/ST population has increased manifesting trend towards urbanisation. The urban SC population which was 10.7 per cent in 1961 was higher at 16 per cent in 1981. Similarly urban ST population which was 2.6 per cent in 1961 rose to 6.2 per cent in 1981. In Table No.2.VI educational attainment of SC/ST population relative to non-SC/ST population is given. Co-efficient of educational equality are given in table No.2.VII.

In 1961, proportion of illiterate SC/ST population was 25.3 per cent as against 74.5 per cent of non SC/ST population. In 1971 and 1981 the corresponding proportions gradually went up to 26.4 per cent and 28.5 per cent respectively. With respect to 'literate' SC/ST and non-SC/ST population the respective proportion in 1961 were 8.6 per cent and 91.4 per cent. The share of literate SC/ST population in 1971 and 1981 increased to 10.0 per cent and 14.1 per cent respectively indicating a tendency towards narrowing of educational distance among castes.

The value of co-efficient of educational equality by caste given in Table 2.VII shows that the value of co-efficient of literate SC/ST population has improved. In 1961 it was 0.09, in 1971 it was 0.11 and in 1981 it went upto 0.16, which confirms our observation i.e., the educational disparity has narrowed.

Table : 2.VI

Educational Attainment of Population by Caste

Year	Illiterate		Total	Literate		Total	Grand Total
	SC/ST	Non-SC/ST		SC/ST	Non-SC/ST		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1961	85 (25.5)	248.42 (74.5)	333.42 (100.0)	9 (8.6)	97.06 (91.4)	106.06 (100.0)	439
1971	102 (26.4)	284.73 (73.61)	386.73 (100.0)	16 (10.0)	145.27 (90.0)	161.27 (100.0)	548
1981	122 (28.46)	302.25 (71.24)	424.25 (100.0)	34 (14.1)	206.92 (85.9)	240.92 (100.0)	665.17

Source : Census of India Vol. 1961-1971 and 1981

* 'Literate' includes the person with formal education also.

Table : 2.VII

Coefficients of equality of Education by Caste

Year	1961	1971	1981
Illiterate	0.34	0.36	0.40
Literate	0.09	0.11	0.16

Source : Derived from Table 2.VI

III

Educational Attainment of Labour Force - 1961-1981

As is found in the case of total population the incidence of illiteracy is quite high in case of labour force also. According to 1981 census around 60 per cent of India's labour force is illiterate. Thus, around 2/5th of our labour force is literate. If we take out the share of labour force which is literate (around 9 per cent) from total educated labour force, then around 1/3rd of our labour force seems to have invested in education. This proportion of labour force with educational attainment (excluding literate labour force) is higher than the 1/4th proportion

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of total population with educational attainment. The proportion of educated labour force which was 10 per cent in 1961 moved up to 27 per cent in 1971 and to around 32 per cent in 1981. This gives a three fold increase in the proportion of educated labour force. This compares favourably with the growth of educated population during this period (1961-81) (Table 2.VIII).

The analysis of educational attainment of India's labour force by level of education further confirms the top heavy character of the educational system. The proportion of labour force with primary education was 7 per cent in 1961. In 1971 and 1981 it almost remained steady at a little higher than 13 per cent. The proportion of labour force with middle level schooling similarly shows a marginal increase from 6.9 per cent in 1971 to 7.6 per cent in 1981. Unlike this, the proportion of labour force with 'matriculation and above' which was just 2.4 per cent in 1961 was higher at 6.8 per cent in 1971 and approximately 11 per cent in 1981. This gives a fivefold increase in the proportion of labour force with 'matriculation and above.'

Table : 2.VIII

Educational Attainment of Labour Force 1961-81

Level of Education	(In Millions)			
	1961	Percentage	1971	Percentage
1	2	3	4	
Illiterate	137.45	73.10	113.43	62.72
Literate	32.28	17.17	17.88	9.88
Primary	13.75	7.31	24.64	13.62
Middle			12.44	6.88
Matriculation	5.07	2.41	9.2	5.08
Non-Technical Diploma			0.32	0.17
Technical Diploma			0.29	0.16
Degree & above			2.66	1.47
All	188.55	100.00	180.86	100.00
			244.5	100.00

Source : Same as in Table No.2.I

Educational Attainment of Labour Force : by Sex

The educational attainment of labour force by sex has to be studied to get an idea of educational distance between male and female labour force. This distance may throw light on the formation of human capital through investment in education by sex. Firstly, the proportion of illiterate female labour force is much higher than that of male. The sex-wise gap in illiteracy which was 50 per cent in 1961 went upto 53 per cent in 1971 and further to 71 per cent in 1981. Thus, in comparison to males in our labour force more females are illiterate. (See Table 2.IX).

According to 1961 census, the proportion of male literate population to total population was 23.39 per cent and that of female literate population was 3.5 per cent. In comparison, the proportion of male labour force with investment in formal schooling was 13.8 and that of female labour force was 1.8 per cent. Unlike this, according to 1971 and 1981 censuses, the proportion of labour force by sex with investment in formal schooling was substantially higher than that of literate labour force by sex. The respective proportions for 1971 census were 31.44 per cent (educated male labour force) and 8 per cent (educated female labour force). The corresponding proportions for male and female literate labour force were 11.3 per cent and 3.3 per cent respectively in 1971. Similarly, in 1981 as against

39 per cent of educated male labour force the educated female labour force was just 10.2 per cent. The literate male labour force of 10.4 per cent was quite high than that of 4 per cent literate female labour force (Table No. 2.IX).

As noted earlier, as against 13.4 per cent of educated male labour force only 2 per cent female labour force was educated in 1961 - the former proportion was more than 6 times the later. However, both according to 1971 and 1981 censuses the male educated labour force was around 4 times the female educated labour force. This reflects the narrowing of educational distance by sex.

The observed narrowing of educational distance in terms of years of schooling between sex may not necessarily reflect the reduction in equality in investment in education. If for the same level of educational attainment (in terms of years of schooling), an average male spends more on his education than female, the quality of human capital in two is bound to be different.² This is a relevant issue in case an increasing proportion of female labour force participates in the productive activities. Even if a smaller proportion of educated female labour force is engaged in productive activities, their contribution to non-market (household) production should not be ignored. From this standpoint, the narrowing of educational distance between male and female

Table : 2.IX

Educational Attainment of Labour Force by Sex 1961-1981

Level of Education	(Million)			
	1961		1971	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2		3	
4				
Illiterate	81.13 (62.87)	56.32 (94.62)	85.6 (57.27)	27.83 (88.65)
Literate	30.19 (23.39)	2.09 (3.51)	16.86 (11.28)	1.02 (3.25)
Primary	12.96 (10.04)	0.79 (1.33)	23.43 (15.67)	1.21 (3.85)
Middle			12.02 (8.04)	4.42 (1.34)
Matriculation	4.64 (3.60)	0.23 (0.39)	8.68 (5.80)	0.52 (1.66)
Non-Technical Diploma			0.27 (0.18)	0.053 (0.16)
Technical Diploma			0.24 (0.16)	0.05 (0.16)
Degree and above	0.11 (0.08)	0.09 (0.15)	2.37 (1.58)	0.29 (0.89)
All	129.03 (100.0)	59.52 (100.0)	149.47 (100.0)	31.39 (100.0)
			181.05 (100.0)	

Source : Various Census of India.

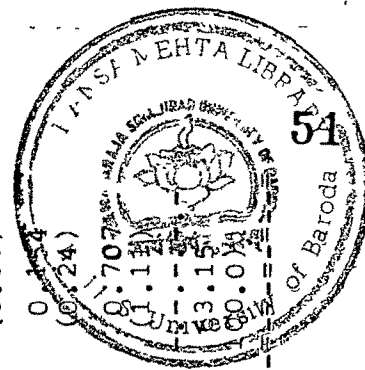


Table : 2.X

Educational Attainment of Labour Force
1961-81 by Region

Level of Education	1961		1971		1981	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1	2		3		4	
Illiterate	126.31 (77.85)	11.14 (42.37)	102.2 (68.84)	11.23 (34.66)	130.82 (66.31)	14.67 (31.01)
Literate	25.17 (15.51)	7.11 (27.04)	14.29 (9.62)	3.59 (11.08)	17.54 (8.91)	3.86 (8.16)
Primary	9.09 (5.60)	4.66 (17.72)	19.20 (12.93)	5.44 (16.79)	24.72 (12.53)	7.72 (16.32)
Middle	--	--	7.96 (5.36)	4.48 (13.83)	12.36 (6.26)	6.18 (13.06)
Matriculation	1.69 (1.04)	3.38 (12.86)	3.93 (2.65)	5.27 (16.26)	9.6 (4.87)	9.89 (20.9)
Non-Technical Diploma			0.28 (0.19)	0.04 (0.12)	0.093 (0.04)	0.05 (0.11)
Technical Diploma			0.09 (0.06)	0.20 (0.62)	0.297 (0.20)	0.484 (1.02)
Degree and above			0.51 (0.34)	2.15 (6.64)	1.75 (0.88)	4.45 (9.4)
All	162.24 (100.0)	26.29 (100.0)	148.46 (100.0)	32.4 (100.0)	197.28 (100.0)	47.3 (100.0)

Source : Various volumes of Census of India.

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labour force is important. Thus, in any estimate of the stock of human capital, the qualitative aspect of stock must be taken into account.

Narrowing of educational distance between male and female workers may also be studied by estimating co-efficient of educational equality. For the literate labour force by sex the value has changed as follows. It was 0.074 in 1961, 0.06 in 1971 and 0.14 in 1981. The improvement in the value suggests the spread of literacy in favour of female labour force.

Similarly, at the elementary level of education also the value of co-efficient has changed from 0.051 in 1961 to 0.08 in 1971 and further to 0.09 in 1981. For the 'matriculation and above' level of education, the value was 0.072 in 1961, which rose to 0.078 in 1971. In 1981, it rose to 0.092 which was higher than that in 1961. (Table 2.XI).

Educational Attainment of Labour Force : by Region

The region-wise analysis of educational attainment of labour force reveals an identical picture of the reduction in disparity in educational attainment. In case of rural literate labour force the value of ^{coefficient of} equality was 4.54 in 1981, which was higher than both in 1961 and 1971 (Table 2.XII). In case of workers with elementary level of education the corresponding value of co-efficient has persistently shown an increase suggesting thereby the

Table : 2.XI

Co-efficient of equality by Sex (Labour Force)

Level of Education	1961	1971	1981
1	2	3	4
Illiterate	0.69	0.32	0.59
Literate	0.07	0.06	0.14
Elementary	0.06	0.08	0.09
Matric & above	0.07	0.08	0.09

Table : 2.XII

Co-efficient of Equality by Region (Rural/Urban)

Level of Education	1961	1971	1981
1	2	3	4
Illiterate	11.34	9	8.9
Literate	3.54	4	4.54
Elementary	1.95	2.73	2.67
Matric & above	0.49	0.63	0.80

Source : Derived from Table 2.IX and 2.X

24 narrowing of educational distance between the rural and urban labour force. With respect to workers 'matriculation and above', the said value of co-efficient has improved from 0.49 in 1961 to 0.80 in 1981. However, its value of 0.80 in 1981 was the lowest in comparison to that of literate workers (4.54) and workers with elementary schooling (2.67). This is obviously so because of the urban orientation of secondary and higher education.

IV

Conclusions

We outline below in brief the main conclusions of the analysis of educational attainment of India's population and labour force by sex, region and caste.

- (1) The proportion of 'literate' population to total population during plan period has declined whereas the proportion of educated population to total has increased. This can be taken as the evidence of increasing proportion of population with formal schooling. We have also seen that the proportion of educated population to total population has increased much faster at the higher levels of education (matriculation and above) than that at the elementary levels of education. This is but natural in view of the well known fact of the top heavy structure of our formal education. This stock of educated persons (with formal schooling only) has gone up from 6 per cent in 1961 to around 25 per cent in 1981. This observed increase in the stock of educated persons implies the corresponding increase in the supply of skill in our economy.
- (2) The ratio of educated male to educated female at the elementary level of education shows that over time

it has improved in favour of females. As against one educated male in the beginning of the plan period only 0.29 females were educated. After three decades of planning, more than 1/2 females were educated (1:0.52). At the higher level of education also the ratio improved from 1:0.16 in 1961 to 1:0.35 in 1981.

- (3) The educational attainment by region also reveals that there is a tendency towards narrowing of educational distance between rural and urban population. This holds true by level of education also.
- (4) By caste, the distinction between 'literate' and 'educated' persons could not be pursued for the entire period because of the non availability of relevant information from respective census volumes. The ratio of non-SC/ST to SC/ST literate persons of around 11:1 in 1961 came down to 6:1 in 1981. This shows that comparative literacy among SC/ST population has increased at a faster rate.
- (5) The proportion of educated labour force to total labour force is higher than the proportion of educated population. The former was 1/3rd of the total labour force whereas the latter was 1/4th of the total population.
- (6) The educational attainment of the labour force by sex reveals that over time the proportion of educated

female labour force to total has increased faster than that of male educated labour force. In 1961, this proportion of educated male labour force was seven times the female educated labour force. In 1981, it was around 4 times. Thus, within the labour force also we observe the narrowing of educational disparity by sex. Similarly region-wise (rural/urban) analysis of educational attainment of labour force reveals the reduction in disparity in educational attainment.

- (7) The narrowing of educational distance by sex, region and caste, in terms of attainment of education may not necessarily imply the trend towards the equality of investment in education. It is possible that males both in rural and urban areas and by caste spend more on education than females in each of the above category. To the extent quality of education and the consequent formation of human capital depends on the expenditure incurred on education, the quality of the stock of human capital by sex, region and caste certainly tends to differ.

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