



Educational Inequalities And Literacy Levels In Raichur District, Karnataka: A Census- Based Study

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Abstract:

This study examines the literacy pattern and spatial variation in Raichur District using Census data from 2001 and 2011. Literacy is an important indicator of socio-economic development and human resource progress. The study aims to analyze taluk-wise literacy rates and identify changes during the decade. It is based on secondary data collected from Census Handbooks, District Gazetteers, government reports, journals, books, and Survey of India maps. Quantitative and cartographic methods were used for analysis. The findings show that the overall literacy rate increased from 48.81 per cent in 2001 to 59.56 per cent in 2011, with an improvement of 10.75 percentage. Raichur taluk recorded the highest literacy, while Devadurga remained the least literate taluk. Rural literacy rose from 42.00 per cent to 53.68 percent, and urban literacy from 66.24 per cent to 74.56 percent. Although male literacy remained higher, female literacy showed greater improvement. The study highlights persistent regional and gender disparities in literacy development.

Keywords: Gender disparity, Literacy Rate, Educational Attainment, educational growth, regional disparities.

INTRODUCTION-

Literacy plays a vital role in the social, economic, and political development of a country. A low literacy level among the population slows down social and economic progress and limits political awareness and participation. Illiteracy, especially among adults, leads to technological stagnation, social and cultural backwardness, weak national security, and overall economic underdevelopment. According to Murthy (1970:412), illiteracy acts as a barrier to democratic processes and peaceful international relations.

In international terms, literacy is generally defined as the ability to read and write a simple message in any language. A person who possesses both reading and writing skills is considered literate, while the absence of these skills is referred to as illiteracy.

The primary objective of the Indian educational system is to provide free and basic elementary education to all citizens. However, achieving universal education continues to remain a major challenge in India, as in many developing nations. Since Independence, the Government of India has introduced several educational policies and programmes to improve literacy and educational access. The first National Education Policy was implemented in 1968, followed by the National Policy on Education in 1986, which emphasized universal enrolment, universal retention of children up to the age of 14 years, and improvement in the quality of education. Later, the modified education policy of 1992, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched in 2000, and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 further strengthened efforts toward achieving education for all.

In this context, the present study examines the literacy status among males and females and in rural and urban areas of Raichur District. The study also analyzes the taluk-wise spatial variation and distribution of literacy levels within the district.

OBJECTIVES:

to examine the taluk-wise literacy rates in Raichur District for the Census years 2001 and 2011.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data. Secondary data have been collected from Census records published by the Government of India. The other sources have been used, including the District Census Handbook of Karnataka and Raichur District, Raichur District at a glance, District Gazetteers and relevant information collected from various published theses, articles, books, journals, etc. The SOI topographical maps were used for the demarcation of the study area. The data thus collected will be processed, analysed, interpreted, and represented with the help of tables, charts, thematic maps and quantitative and cartographic techniques.

Literacy Rate has been calculated by using the Formula given below

$$1) \text{ Literacy Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Literate Population}}{\text{Total Population above 06 years}} \times 100$$

STUDY AREA

Raichur District is an important administrative district located in the northeastern part of Karnataka. Spread across 8,442 square kilometers, it ranks eighth in the state in terms of area. The district lies between 15°30' and 16°30' North latitude and 76°15' and 77°45' East longitude. It is situated in an upland basin with an average elevation of about 400 meters above sea level. The general slope of the land is from northwest to southeast. Raichur is bounded by the Krishna River in the north and the Tungabhadra River in the south. It also shares borders with Yadgir, Bijapur, Bagalkot, Koppal, Bellary, Jogulamba Gadwal, and Kurnool districts.

The district consists of seven taluks: Devadurga, Lingasugur, Manvi, Raichur, Sirwar, Maski, and Sindhanur. Raichur is well known for having the country's only gold manufacturing unit and one of India's most efficient thermal power plants.

Raichur experiences a hot and dry climate with temperatures ranging from 18°C to 45°C. Summer lasts from February to May, while the monsoon season extends from June to September. October and November are the retreating monsoon months, and December to mid-February is the coldest period.

According to the 2011 District Census Handbook, Raichur has a population of 1,928,812, including 964,511 males and 964,301 females. The district has a population density of 228 persons per square kilometer, a decadal growth rate of 15.5 percent, a sex ratio of 1,000 females per 1,000 males, and a literacy rate of 59.56 percent.

SHAPE AND SIZE OF THE STUDY AREA:

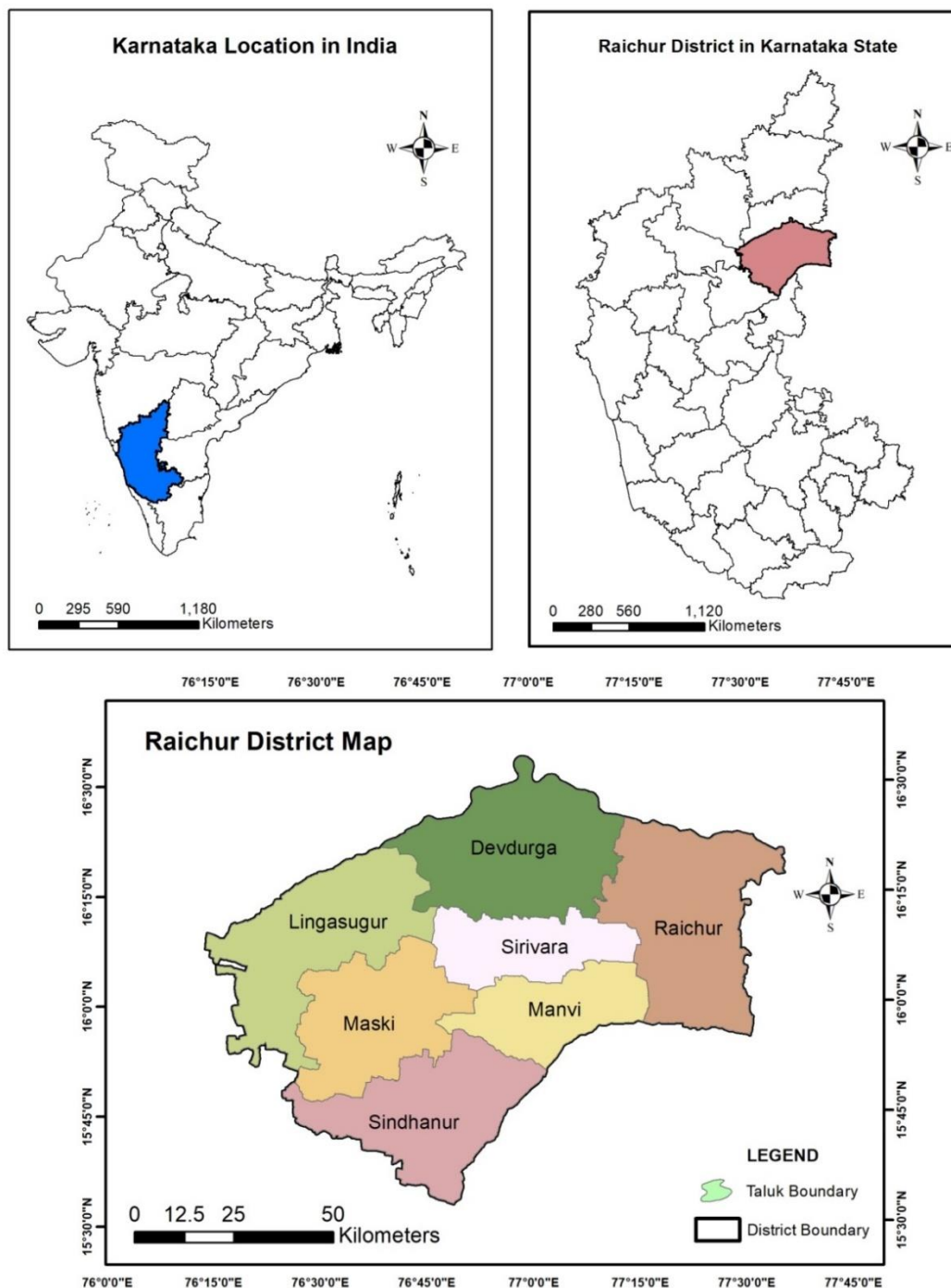
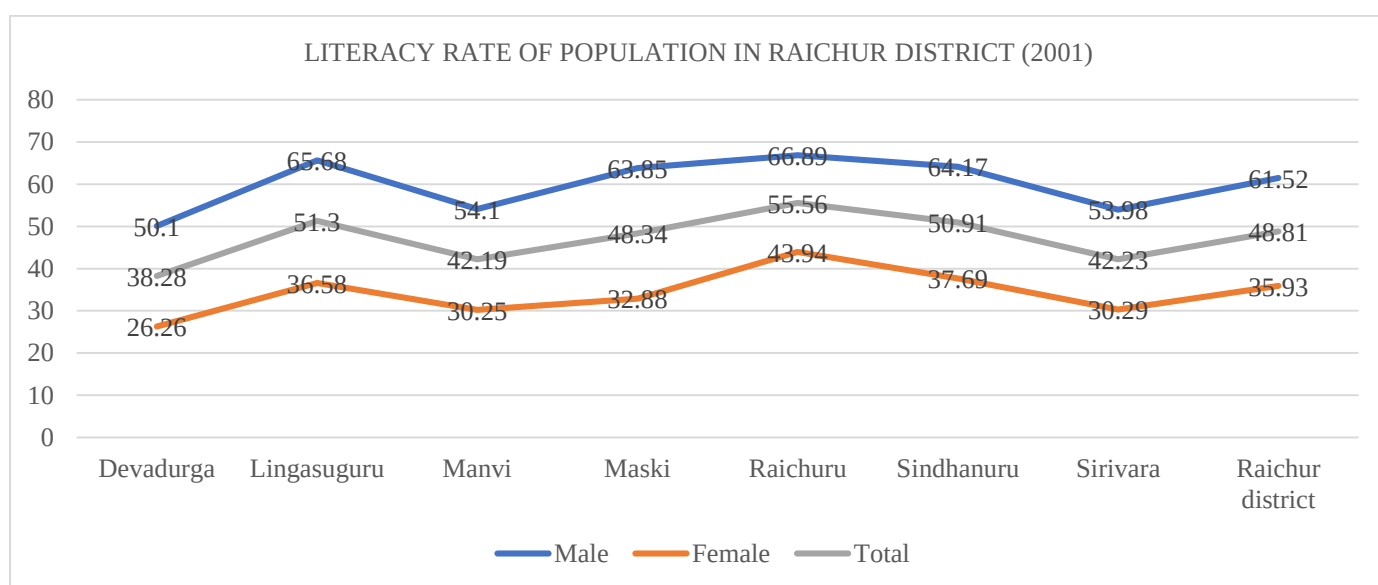


TABLE 01: Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001-2011)

Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001-2011)										
		2001 Census			2011 Census			Volume of change		
SL.NO	Taluks	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Devadurga	50.10	26.26	38.28	60.47	38.62	49.49	10.37	12.36	11.21
2	Lingasuguru	65.68	36.58	51.3	72.81	49.15	61.04	7.13	12.57	9.74
3	Manvi	54.10	30.25	42.19	65.86	45.18	55.4	11.76	14.93	13.21
4	Maski	63.85	32.88	48.34	72.71	47.18	59.9	8.86	14.3	11.56
5	Raichuru	66.89	43.94	55.56	75.26	55.16	65.18	8.37	11.22	9.62
6	Sindhanuru	64.17	37.69	50.91	73.37	52.18	62.71	9.20	14.49	11.8
7	Sirivara	53.98	30.29	42.23	63.77	43.19	53.35	9.79	12.9	11.12
8	Total	61.52	35.93	48.81	70.47	48.73	59.56	8.95	12.8	10.75

Source: 1. Raichur District census handbook, 2001 and 2011.

**Fig 01.**

Source: Computed by Researcher

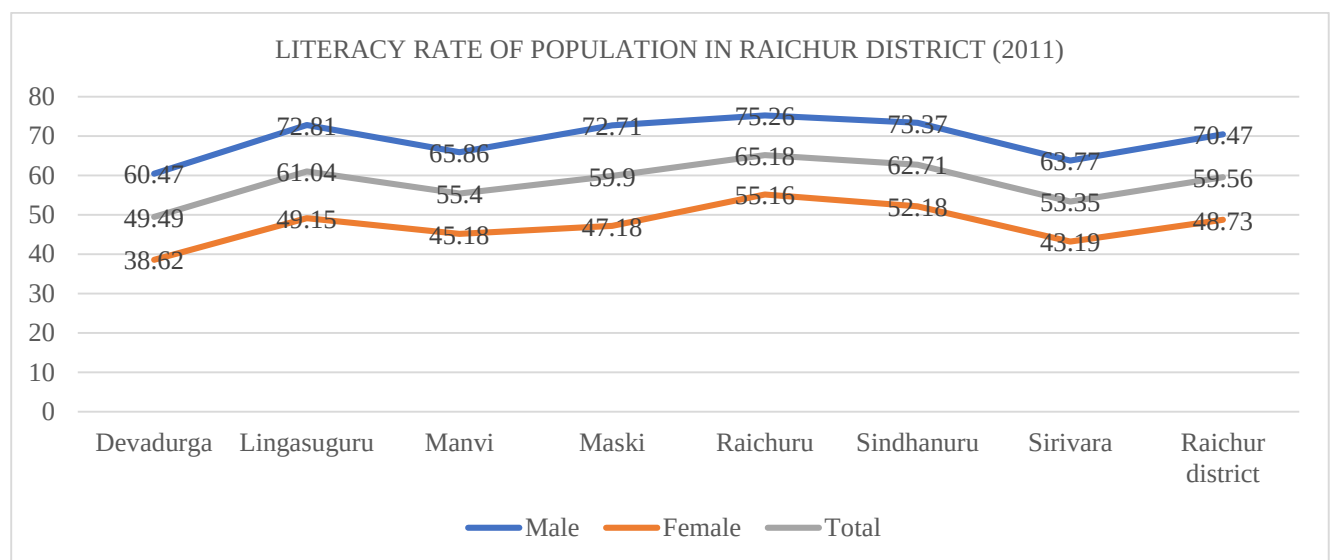


Fig 02.

Source: Computed by Researcher

Literacy Pattern in Raichur District (2001–2011)

Literacy is an important indicator of socio-economic development, reflecting the educational status and human resource potential of a region. The literacy pattern of Raichur district between 2001 and 2011 shows moderate but significant progress. According to the Census data, the overall literacy rate of the district increased from 48.81 percent in 2001 to 59.56 percent in 2011, registering an improvement of about 10.75 percentage points. Despite this progress, the district continued to remain below the state and national literacy averages, indicating the persistence of educational backwardness.

In 2001, the population above six years of age in Raichur district was 13,86,694 persons, of which 9,97,141 lived in rural areas and 3,89,553 in urban areas. The predominance of rural population significantly influenced educational development, as rural areas generally faced problems such as poverty, agricultural dependency, lack of infrastructure, and limited educational facilities. Male population accounted for 6,97,743 persons, while females constituted 6,88,951 persons.

A taluk-wise analysis reveals considerable disparities in literacy levels. In 2001, Raichur taluk recorded the highest literacy rate of 55.56 percent, followed by Lingasugur (51.30%), Sindhanur (50.91%), and Maski (48.34%). On the other hand, Sirivara (42.23%), Manvi (42.19%), and Devadurga (38.28%) recorded comparatively lower literacy rates. The higher literacy level in Raichur taluk can be attributed to better urban influence, educational institutions, and administrative importance, whereas the lower literacy in Devadurga and Manvi reflected rural isolation and socio-economic disadvantages.

By 2011, literacy levels improved in all taluks due to the expansion of educational facilities and government programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Raichur taluk continued to rank first with 65.18 percent literacy, followed by Sindhanur (62.71%), Lingasugur (61.04%), and Maski (59.90%). Manvi (55.40%), Sirivara (53.35%), and Devadurga (49.49%) also showed noticeable improvement, although Devadurga remained the least literate taluk.

For analytical purposes, literacy levels may be classified into low, medium, and high categories. In 2001, Devadurga, Manvi, and Sirivara fell under the low literacy category, while Maski, Sindhanur, Lingasugur, and Raichur belonged to the medium category. No taluk recorded high literacy in 2001. However, by 2011, Maski, Lingasugur, Sindhanur, and Raichur entered the high literacy category, reflecting significant educational progress.

The male literacy rate in the district increased from 61.52 percent in 2001 to 70.47 percent in 2011. Raichur taluk recorded the highest male literacy in both years, while Devadurga remained the lowest. Female literacy also improved considerably, rising from 35.93 percent in 2001 to 48.73 percent in 2011.

Raichur taluk again recorded the highest female literacy, whereas Devadurga had the lowest. Although female literacy showed improvement, the gender gap remained significant, especially in rural taluks.

Overall, the literacy pattern of Raichur district indicates steady educational progress during 2001–2011. However, regional disparities and gender inequalities continued to persist. Taluks with better urban connectivity and educational infrastructure performed relatively better, while rural and economically backward taluks lagged behind. Therefore, focused policies promoting female education, rural educational infrastructure, and equal access to schooling are necessary to achieve balanced literacy development across the district.

TABLE 02: Rural Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001-2011)

Rural Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001-2011)										
SL.NO	Taluks	2001 Census			2011 Census			Volume of change		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Devadurga	36.60	48.70	24.35	47.17	58.44	36.05	10.58	9.73	11.70
	Lingasuguru	44.16	59.63	28.49	55.06	68.05	41.96	10.90	8.43	13.47
	Manvi	38.02	50.54	25.61	51.04	62.49	39.91	13.02	11.95	14.31
	Maski	46.33	62.21	30.54	58.37	71.64	45.19	12.04	9.43	14.64
	Raichuru	38.33	51.72	24.79	52.16	64.65	39.89	13.83	12.92	15.10
	Sindhanuru	47.96	61.88	34.26	59.42	70.82	48.20	11.46	8.94	13.94
	Sirivara	40.63	52.45	28.66	51.54	62.11	41.21	10.91	9.66	12.55
	Total	42.00	55.64	28.33	53.68	65.65	41.85	11.68	10.01	13.52

Source: 1. Raichur District census handbook, 2001 and 2011.

Rural Literacy Pattern in Raichur District (2001–2011)

Table 02 and Figure 03 present the rural literacy rates of Raichur district taluks for 2001 and 2011 and highlight the spatio-temporal changes in literacy during the decade. The analysis shows a steady improvement in rural literacy across all taluks, reflecting gradual rural transformation and educational development in the district.

In 2001, rural literacy rates ranged from 36.60 percent in Devadurga taluk to 47.96 percent in Sindhanur taluk. Five taluks—Devadurga, Manvi, Raichur, Sirivara, and Lingasugur—recorded low literacy levels below 44.21 percent. Maski (46.33%) and Sindhanur (47.96%) fell under the medium literacy category, while no taluk recorded high literacy during this period.

By 2011, literacy levels improved significantly in all taluks. Rural literacy ranged from 47.17 percent in Devadurga to 59.42 percent in Sindhanur. Devadurga, Manvi, and Sirivara moved into the medium literacy category, whereas Raichur, Lingasugur, Maski, and Sindhanur entered the high literacy category.

The overall rural literacy rate of the district increased by 11.68 percent during 2001–2011. Raichur and Manvi recorded the highest growth, while Devadurga showed the lowest improvement. Although literacy improved considerably, regional disparities among taluks still persist.

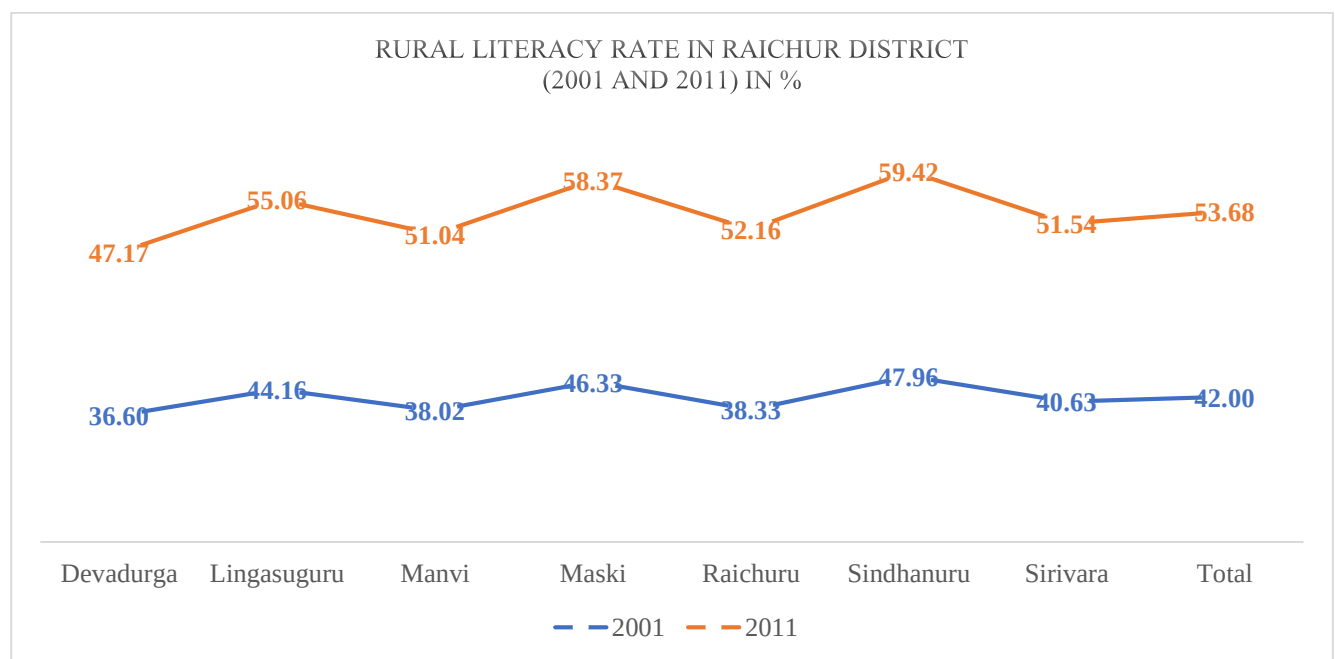


Fig: 03.

Source: Computed by Researcher

Rural Male Literacy Rate

The rural male literacy rate in Raichur district increased from 55.64 percent in 2001 to 65.65 percent in 2011, showing steady improvement in male educational attainment. In 2001, Maski taluk recorded the highest male literacy rate (62.21%), followed by Sindhanur (61.88%) and Lingasugur (59.63%), all above the district average. In contrast, Devadurga (48.70%), Manvi (50.54%), Raichur (51.72%), and Sirivara (52.45%) remained below the district average. By 2011, literacy levels improved across all taluks. Maski again recorded the highest literacy rate (71.64%), followed by Sindhanur (70.82%) and Lingasugur (68.05%). However, Devadurga, Manvi, Sirivara, and Raichur continued to remain below the district average, indicating uneven progress. The district average increase in rural male literacy during 2001–2011 was 10.01 percent. Raichur and Manvi recorded above-average growth, while the remaining taluks showed comparatively lower increases.

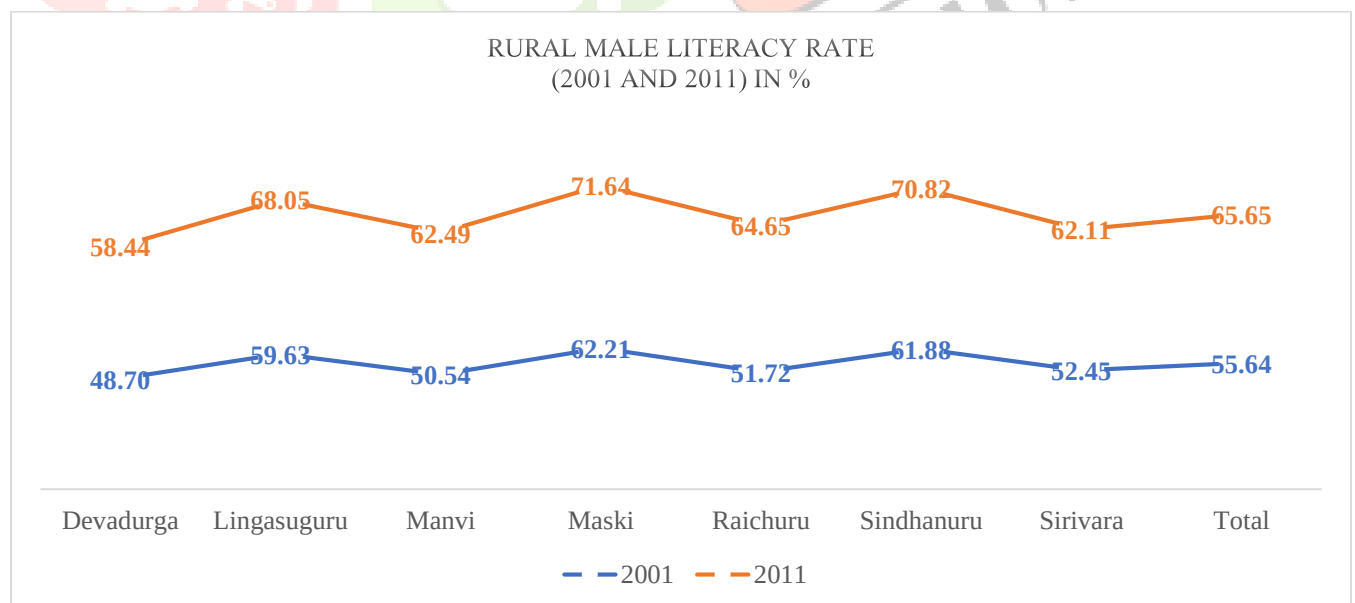


Fig: 04.

Source: Computed by

Researcher

Rural Female Literacy Rate

The rural female literacy rate in Raichur district was considerably lower than male literacy in both census years, reflecting persistent gender disparities. The district average increased from 28.33 percent in 2001 to 41.85 percent in 2011. In 2001, Sindhanur recorded the highest female literacy rate (34.26%), while Devadurga recorded the lowest (24.35%). By 2011, Sindhanur continued to lead with 48.20 percent, followed by Maski (45.19%) and Lingasugur (41.96%). Taluks such as Devadurga, Raichur, Manvi, and Sirivara remained below the district average. The decadal growth in female literacy was 13.52 percent, with Raichur, Maski, Manvi, and Sindhanur recording above-average improvement.

RURAL FEMALE LITERACY RATE
(2001 AND 2011) IN %

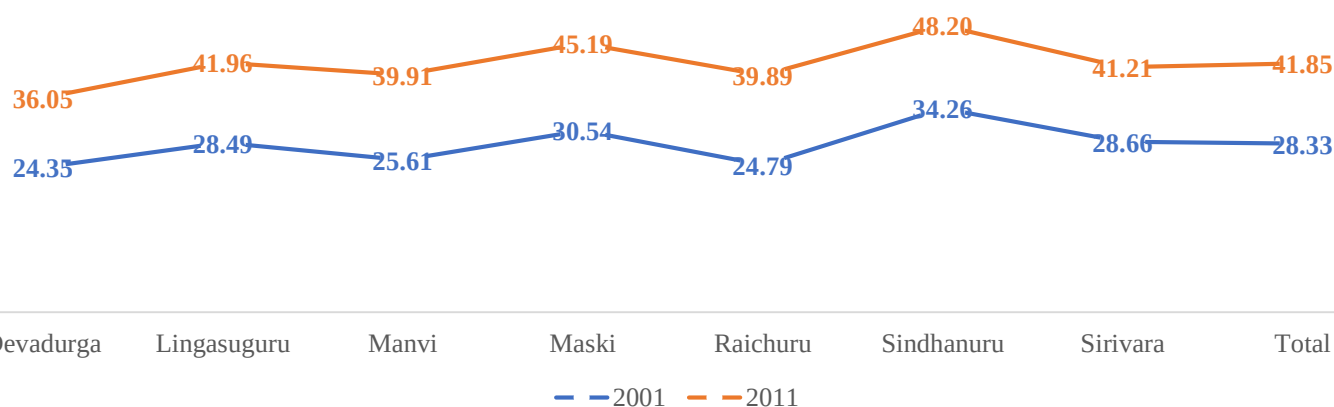


Fig 05.

Source: Computed by Researcher

TABLE. 03 Urban Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001-2011)

Urban Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001-2011)										
SL.NO	Taluk	2001 Census			2011 Census			Volume of change		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Devadurga	62.61	44.06	53.58	77.72	61.14	69.49	15.12	17.07	15.91
	Lingasuguru	79.43	55.55	67.76	83.91	66.03	75.02	4.47	10.48	7.27
	Manvi	65.07	45.21	55.31	75.18	60.10	67.62	10.11	14.89	12.31
	Maski	75.90	50.35	63.22	80.28	61.13	70.63	4.38	10.78	7.42
	Raichuru	80.10	61.11	70.79	85.20	69.79	77.51	5.10	8.68	6.72
	Sindhanuru	72.79	51.46	62.39	81.98	65.84	73.92	9.19	14.37	11.53
	Sirivara	64.68	41.80	53.40	74.34	55.70	64.88	9.66	13.91	11.48
	Total	76.31	55.76	66.24	82.67	66.42	74.56	6.37	10.66	8.32

Source: 1. Raichur District census handbook, 2001 and 2011.

Urban Literacy Rate of Population in Raichur District (2001–2011)

Table 03 and Figure 06 present the urban literacy rates of Raichur district taluks for 2001 and 2011 along with the decadal variation. The analysis of urban literacy reveals significant improvement across the district during the decade, reflecting the impact of urban development and expansion of educational facilities.

In 2001, urban literacy rates ranged from 53.40 percent in Sirivara taluk to 70.79 percent in Raichur taluk. Sirivara, Devadurga, and Manvi recorded low literacy levels below 61.45 percent. Sindhanur, Maski, and Lingasugur fell under the medium literacy category, while Raichur was the only taluk in the high literacy category.

By 2011, literacy levels improved considerably in all taluks. Urban literacy ranged from 64.88 percent in Sirivara to 77.51 percent in Raichur. Sirivara, Manvi, and Devadurga were classified under the medium literacy category, whereas Raichur, Lingasugur, Sindhanur, and Maski entered the high literacy category, indicating substantial educational progress.

During 2001–2011, the overall urban literacy rate of the district increased by 8.32 percent. Devadurga recorded the highest growth, followed by Manvi and Sindhanur, while Raichur registered the lowest increase. Although urban literacy improved significantly, spatial disparities among taluks still persisted, highlighting the need for balanced educational development.

URBAN TOTAL LITERACY RATE
(2001 AND 2011)

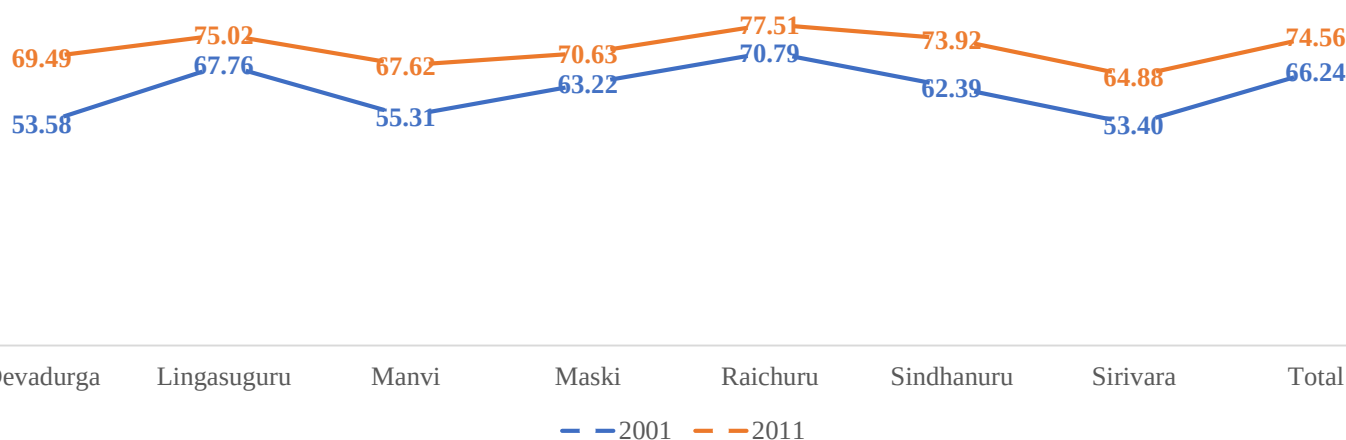


Fig 06.

Source: Computed by Researcher

Urban Male Literacy Rate

The urban male literacy rate in Raichur district increased from 76.31 percent in 2001 to 82.67 percent in 2011, indicating steady progress in male educational attainment during the decade. In 2001, Raichur taluk recorded the highest literacy rate (80.10%), followed by Lingasugur (79.43%), both of which were above the district average. In contrast, Devadurga (62.61%) recorded the lowest literacy rate, while Sirivara (64.68%), Manvi (65.07%), Sindhanur (72.79%), and Maski (75.90%) remained below the district average.

By 2011, urban male literacy improved across all taluks. Raichur continued to occupy the first position with 85.20 percent, followed by Lingasugur (83.91%), both exceeding the district average. However, Sindhanur (81.98%), Maski (80.28%), Devadurga (77.72%), Manvi (75.18%), and Sirivara (74.34%) remained below the district average, indicating uneven spatial progress.

The decadal variation shows that urban male literacy in the district increased by 6.37 percent. Devadurga recorded the highest growth, while Raichur registered the lowest increase during the study period.

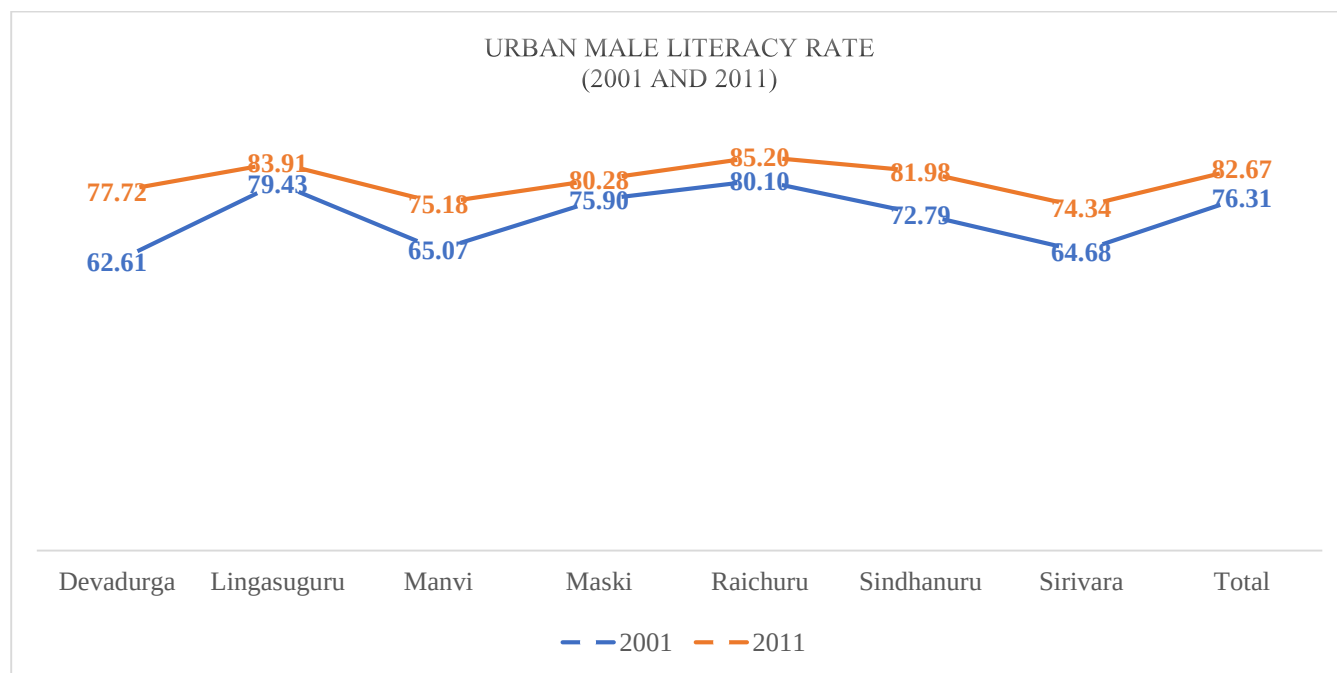


Fig 07.

Source: Computed by Researcher

Urban Female Literacy Rate

The urban female literacy rate in Raichur district remained considerably lower than male literacy in both census years, reflecting persistent gender disparities in education. In 2001, the district's urban female literacy rate was 55.76 percent. Raichur taluk recorded the highest literacy rate (61.11%) and was the only taluk above the district average. In contrast, Sirivara recorded the lowest literacy rate (41.80%), while Lingasugur, Sindhanur, Maski, Manvi, and Devadurga also remained below the district average.

By 2011, urban female literacy improved significantly, increasing to 66.42 percent at the district level. Raichur continued to record the highest literacy rate (69.79%) and remained the only taluk above the district average. However, Lingasugur (66.03%), Sindhanur (65.84%), Devadurga (61.14%), Maski (61.13%), Manvi (60.10%), and Sirivara (55.70%) continued to remain below the district average, indicating continued spatial and gender disparities.

The decadal variation shows that urban female literacy in the district increased by 10.66 percent. Devadurga recorded the highest growth, while Raichur registered the lowest increase during the study period.

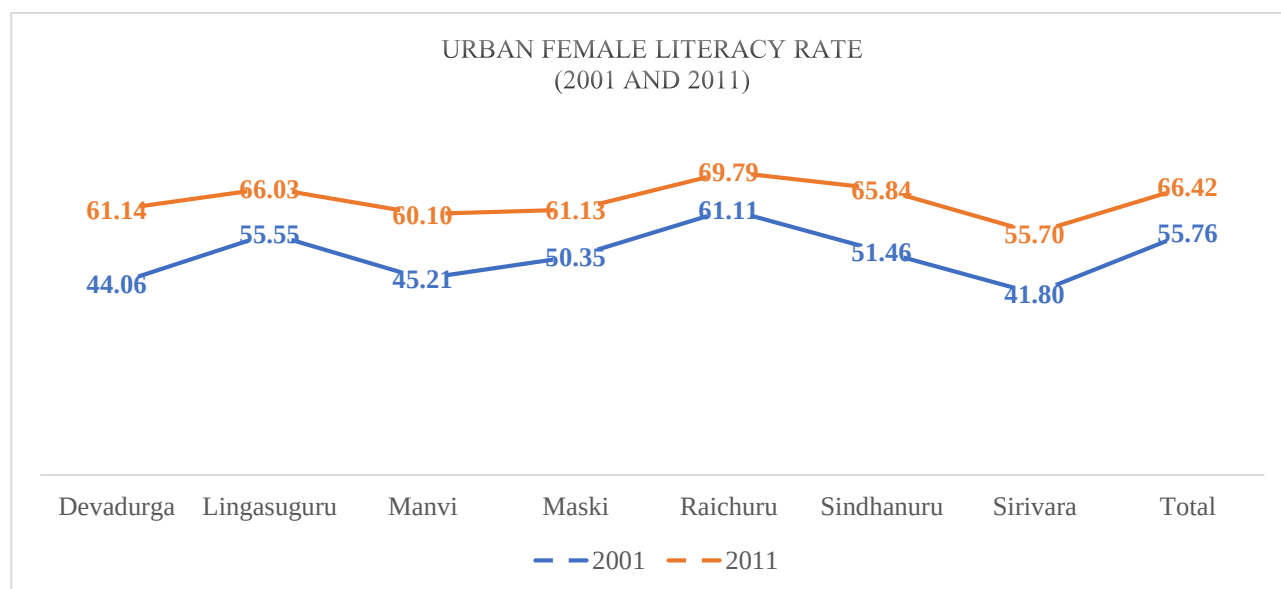


Fig 08.

Source: Computed by Researcher

CONCLUSION

The study of literacy patterns in Raichur District during 2001–2011 shows significant improvement in the educational status of the district. The overall literacy rate increased considerably due to government educational programmes, expansion of schools, and increasing awareness about education. Both rural and urban areas recorded progress, while male and female literacy rates also improved during the decade.

Despite this progress, notable regional and gender disparities continued to exist. Raichur taluk recorded the highest literacy levels because of better urbanization, infrastructure, and educational facilities, whereas Devadurga, Manvi, and Sirivara lagged behind due to poverty, rural backwardness, and inadequate educational opportunities. Female literacy remained lower than male literacy in all taluks, although female literacy showed comparatively higher growth. Rural literacy also remained lower than urban literacy, indicating unequal educational development.

The study concludes that literacy development in the district has been progressive but uneven, requiring focused efforts to improve educational infrastructure and reduce regional and gender inequalities.

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