

Research Papers



Regional and Gender Disparities of Literacy Rates in Karnataka – Evidence From Census 2001 And 2011

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Abstract

This article makes an attempt to analyze the progress of literacy rates across districts in Karnataka. Co-efficient of Variation is used to indicate the inter-district variations with regard to literacy rates. The analysis reveals that the female literacy has seen a positive gain to that of male literacy rates over the period 2001-2011. No doubt the percentage of regional and gender gap across districts over the period 2001-2011 has reduced, but the percentage of reduction is lesser. The inter-district variations in terms of gender and regional perspectives have seen a decline over the period 2001-2011. This article ends up with the conclusion that education in the state should be provided by the Government to more and more people irrespective of any gender, any region, any caste or creed or any religion with an objective of universalizing literacy rates.
Keywords: Literacy Rates, Regional Disparity, Gender Disparity and Inter-District Variation

Introduction:-

Karnataka state is growing at a faster pace and more and less its growth is largely dependent upon knowledge base of the society. It has given special prominence to education, which has been an integral part of economic planning. Investing on education development signifies the economic growth of a state. Right to Education has been recognized as one of the Fundamental Human Rights and only through universalization of primary education, it can be ensured. In addition to this, it also encompasses the obligation to wipe out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve quality. The progress of education development has to be viewed from the perspective of redressing the disparities and imbalances in the educational indicators. Further, the Eleventh Five-Year Plan encompasses the objective of achieving faster and inclusive growth. It also perceives that in the past few years, the disparities are wide spread across the states, regions within the states and across different sections of the community. All the sections of the people and all parts of the country are not benefitted in an equitable manner through the gains of rapid growth. This article tries to evaluate the progress achieved in education sector especially the literacy rate of the population in the age group of 7 years and above in Karnataka, with a special attention to regional and gender disparities across districts of Karnataka.

Progress of Literacy Rate in Karnataka:-

Literacy Rate is the common indicator used for educational development in any state. In Karnataka, the literacy rate of the population in the age group of 7 years and above has increased from 66.64 per cent in 2001 to that of 75.60 per cent in 2011, with an improvement of 8.96 per cent. Across rural areas, the literacy rate showed an improvement to the tune of 9.56 per cent over the period 2001-

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2011, while the literacy rate in urban areas improved by 5.61 per cent over the same period. The state has reduced the literacy gaps between urban and rural areas by 3.95 per cent over the period 2001-2011. Among male population, the rural-urban gap in literacy rate got reduced by 3.58 per cent and among female population, it was 3.99 per cent. The rural-urban gap in literacy rate that existed in the year 2001 was 21.30 per cent, which got decreased to 17.35 per cent points in the year 2011. (See table 1). Across male segments of population in the state, the literacy rate has shown an increase of 6.56 per cent over the period 2001-2011. Across rural areas in the state, the literacy rate among male population showed an increase of 7.42 per cent and across urban areas, it was 3.84 per cent. In the same way across female segments of population, the literacy rate improved by 10.68 per cent, showing a positive gain in female literacy in the state. The female literacy across rural areas improved by 11.60 per cent and across urban areas, it was 7.61 per cent. The gender gap in literacy rates in the state got declined by 4.12 percent over the period 2001-2011. Further, 4.18 per cent reduction was seen in rural areas and 3.77 per cent across urban areas. The gender gap in the literacy rates in the year 2001 was 18.84 percent, which got declined to 14.72 per cent points in the year 2011. (See table 1)

Table 1: Progress of literacy in Karnataka

	Literacy Rate (Percent)		Improvement (Points)
	2001	2011	2001-2011
Rural			
Male	70.50	77.92	7.42
Female	48.00	59.60	11.60
Total	59.30	68.86	9.56
Urban			
Male	86.70	90.54	3.84
Female	74.10	81.71	7.61
Total	80.60	86.21	5.61
Combined			
Male	76.29	82.85	6.56
Female	57.45	68.13	10.68
Total	66.64	75.60	8.96
Rural-Urban Gap			
Male	16.20	12.62	3.58
Female	26.10	22.11	3.99
Total	21.30	17.35	3.95
Gender Gap			
Rural	22.50	18.32	4.18
Urban	12.60	8.83	3.77
Total	18.84	14.72	4.12

Source: Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 2011, Paper 2, Volume 1 of 2011

Table 2 and Chart 1 provide the district wise progress achieved in the literacy rates in 2001 and 2011. It reveals that comparatively across districts, the highest gain in the literacy rate was seen in Koppal with increase of 13.18 per cent points in 2011. The literacy rate of this district increased from 54.10 per cent in 1991 to 67.28 per cent in 2011, which is noteworthy. It is then followed by Yadgir (12.46 per cent), Bagalkot (12.09 per cent) and so on. The lowest gain in literacy rate across districts was seen in Kodagu with increase of 4.53 per cent, which is then followed by Udupi (5.04 per cent), Dakshina Kannada (5.27 per cent) and so on.

There have been wide inter-district variations in the literacy rate, even though the variations over the years have reported a declining trend. Table 2 shows that the CV in the literacy rate among the districts in the state has declined from 15.83 per cent in 2001 to 11.25 per cent to 2011. In the year 2001, 13 out of 30 districts had the literacy rate above the state average of 66.64 per cent; Dakshina Kannada attained the highest literacy (83.35 per cent) and Yadgir had the lowest literacy (39.90 per cent) – indicating a gap of 43.45 percent. Further in 2011, the literacy rate improved in all the districts, but it varied from the highest rate of 88.62 per cent in Dakshina Kannada to the lowest rate of 52.36 per cent in Yadgir, with difference of 36.26 percentage points. No doubt the difference between the highest and lowest literacy rate across the districts declined by 7.19 per cent over the period 2001-2011, but inter-district variations still persists.

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Table 2: Total literacy rate across districts of Karnataka

Districts	2001	2011	Improvement
Belgaum	64.21	73.94	9.73
Bagalkot	57.30	69.39	12.09
Bijapur	57.01	67.20	10.19
Bidar	60.94	71.01	10.07
Raichur	48.81	60.46	11.65
Koppal	54.10	67.28	13.18
Gadag	66.11	75.18	9.07
Dharwad	71.61	80.30	8.69
Uttara Kannada	76.60	84.03	7.43
Haveri	67.79	77.60	9.81
Bellary	57.40	67.85	10.45
Chitradurga	64.45	73.82	9.37
Davangere	67.43	76.30	8.87
Shimoga	74.52	80.50	5.98
Udupi	81.25	86.29	5.04
Chikamagalur	72.20	79.24	7.04
Tumkur	67.01	74.32	7.31
Bangalore	82.96	88.48	5.52
Mandya	61.05	70.14	9.09
Hassan	68.63	75.89	7.26
Dakshina Kannada	83.35	88.62	5.27
Kodagu	77.99	82.52	4.53
Mysore	63.48	72.56	9.08
Chamarajanagar	50.87	61.12	10.25
Gulbarga	54.34	65.65	11.31
Yadgir	39.90	52.36	12.46
Kolar	65.84	74.33	8.49
Chikkaballapura	59.24	70.08	10.84
Bangalore Rural	69.59	78.29	8.70
Ramanagara	60.71	69.20	8.49
CV (%)	15.83	11.25	

Note: CV is the Co-efficient of variation among the districts

Source: Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 2011, Paper 2, Volume 1 of 2011

Regional Disparity in literacy rates:-

In Karnataka, the rural literacy rate has always been lower than the urban literacy rate across all the census periods, thereby widening the rural-urban gap in literacy rates. In fact the table 1 reveals that the rural areas have gained more in literacy rates than in urban areas. It has increased to the tune of 9.56 per cent, as compared to 5.61 per cent in urban areas over the period from 2001 to 2011. The state has been able to reduce the regional differentials to the tune of 3.95 per cent in literacy rates over the period 2001-2011.

Table 3 reveals that the rural-urban gap in literacy rate was quite larger in most of the districts in the year 2001, but in 2011 it has considerably reduced. In 2001, the highest rural-urban gap was recorded in Mysore district (30.96 per cent), while the lowest rural-urban gap was seen in Haveri district (9.07 per cent) - with a gap of 21.89 percentage points. Further, in 2011, no doubt that the rural-urban gap in literacy rate across districts got reduced to a considerable extent, but still it varied from the highest rural-urban gap of 25.51 per cent in Yadgir to the lowest rural-urban gap of 6.86 per cent in Dakshina Kannada, indicating a difference of 18.65 percentage points.

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The highest reduction in the rural-urban gap of literacy rate over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the district which had the highest rural-urban gap in literacy rate in the year 2001. Table 3 shows that comparatively across districts, the highest reduction of 8.67 per cent was seen in Mysore district. It was followed by Kolar (7.39 per cent), Bagalkot (6.28 per cent) and Chikkaballapur with 5.75 per cent. Similarly, the lowest reduction in the rural-urban gap over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the district which had the lowest rural-urban gap in the year 2001. In this regard, Haveri district has seen lowest reduction of 0.29 per cent comparatively across districts. It was followed by Bangalore rural (0.35 per cent), Ramanagara (0.89 per cent) and Udupi with 1.75 per cent.

The inter-district variation in rural and urban areas in terms of literacy rates seems to be declining over the period from 2001 to 2011. This is evident from the fact that the CV across district in both rural and urban areas is declining. In rural areas the CV across districts has declined from 17.91 per cent in 2001 to that of 12.45 per cent in 2011. In the similar way, the CV across districts in urban areas has seen decline from 8.69 per cent to 5.89 per cent over the same period. Chart 1 also provides the better picture of the reduction in the percentage points with regard to rural-urban gap of literacy rates across the districts of Karnataka.

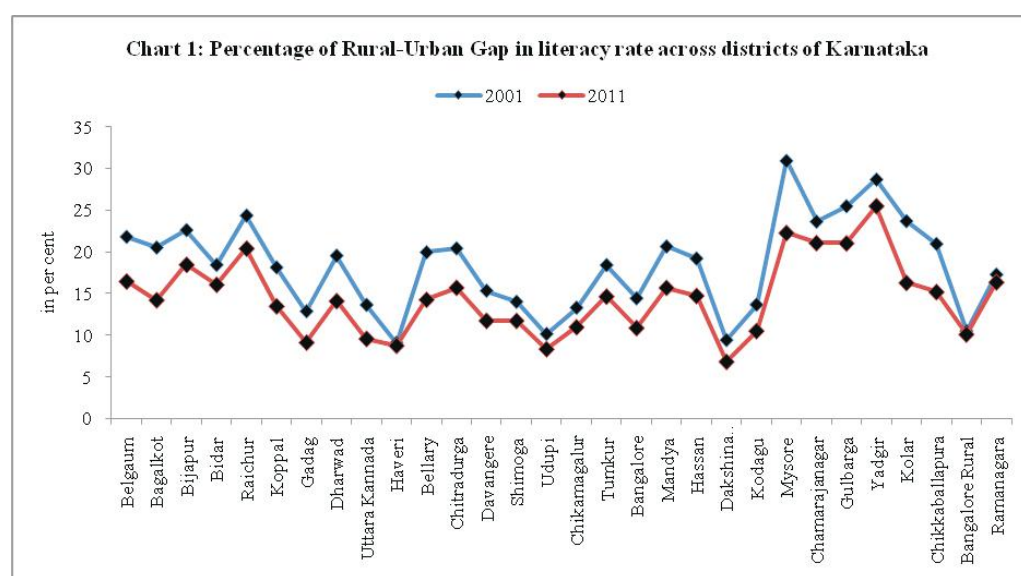
Table 3: Regional Disparity in literacy rate across districts of Karnataka (in per cent)

Districts	2001			2011			Improvement 2001 Gap- 2011 Gap
	Rural	Urban	Gap	Rural	Urban	Gap	
Belgaum	58.85	80.66	21.81	69.68	86.16	16.48	5.33
Bagalkot	51.23	71.75	20.52	64.80	79.04	14.24	6.28
Bijapur	51.97	74.59	22.62	62.87	81.35	18.48	4.14
Bidar	56.71	75.14	18.43	67.00	83.09	16.09	2.34
Raichur	42.49	66.86	24.37	55.19	75.61	20.42	3.95
Koppal	51.01	69.14	18.13	64.98	78.49	13.51	4.62
Gadag	61.55	74.40	12.85	71.89	81.05	9.16	3.69
Dharwad	60.77	80.31	19.54	72.21	86.34	14.13	5.41
Uttara Kannada	72.65	86.27	13.62	81.22	90.83	9.61	4.01
Haveri	65.91	74.98	9.07	75.65	84.43	8.78	0.29
Bellary	50.29	70.24	19.95	62.60	76.89	14.29	5.66
Chitradurga	60.72	81.14	20.42	70.68	86.41	15.73	4.69
Davangere	62.75	78.08	15.33	72.49	84.26	11.77	3.56
Shimoga	69.61	83.60	13.99	76.31	88.07	11.76	2.23
Udupi	79.35	89.47	10.12	83.91	92.28	8.37	1.75
Chikamagalur	69.59	82.87	13.28	76.93	87.94	11.01	2.27
Tumkur	63.39	81.80	18.41	71.04	85.71	14.67	3.74
Bangalore	70.24	84.65	14.41	78.57	89.47	10.90	3.51
Mandya	57.74	78.39	20.65	67.48	83.20	15.72	4.93
Hassan	65.23	84.43	19.20	72.78	87.53	14.75	4.45
Dakshina Kannada	79.72	89.10	9.38	85.34	92.20	6.86	2.52
Kodagu	76.10	89.74	13.64	80.98	91.52	10.54	3.10
Mysore	51.84	82.80	30.96	63.29	85.58	22.29	8.67
Chamarajanagar	47.24	70.88	23.64	57.52	78.60	21.08	2.56
Gulbarga	46.14	71.64	25.50	58.77	79.82	21.05	4.45
Yadgir	34.88	63.59	28.71	47.47	72.98	25.51	3.20
Kolar	58.88	82.58	23.70	69.22	85.53	16.31	7.39
Chikkaballapura	55.20	76.16	20.96	66.73	81.94	15.21	5.75
Bangalore Rural	67.23	77.71	10.48	75.55	85.68	10.13	0.35
Ramanagara	57.15	74.42	17.27	65.22	81.60	16.38	0.89
CV (%)	17.91	8.69		12.45	5.89		

Note: CV is the Co-efficient of variation among the districts

Source: Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 2011, Paper 2, Volume 1 of 2011

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Gender Disparity in literacy rates:-

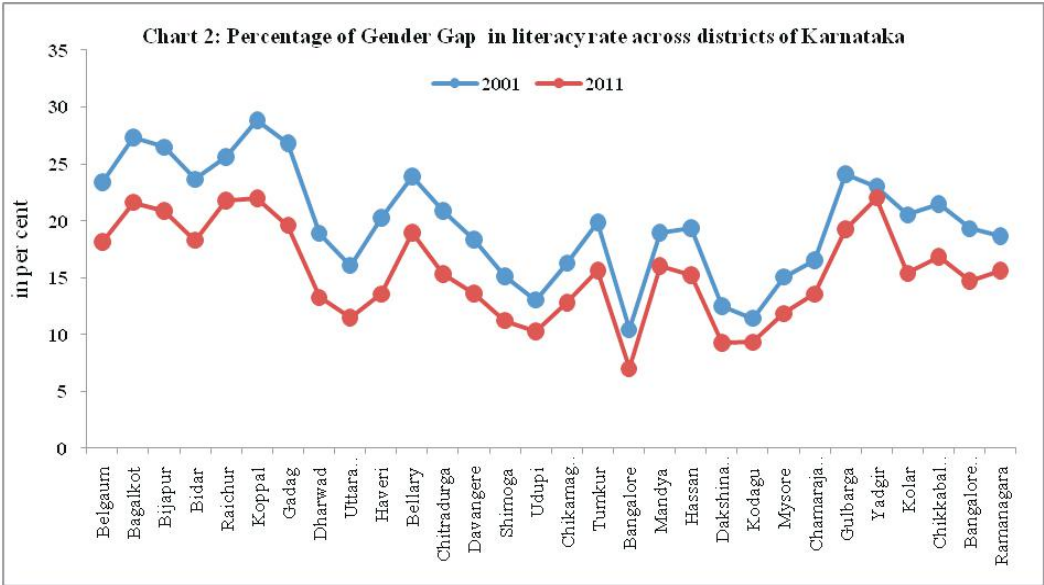
In Karnataka, the female literacy has always been lower than the male literacy across all the census years, thereby widening the gender disparity in the literacy rates. From the table 1, it may be noticed that no doubt the female literacy rate has always been lower, but it has gained more in literacy rates compared to male literacy rate. The females have recorded a literacy growth of 10.68 per cent as compared to 6.56 per cent improvement in male literacy over the period 2001 to 2011. The state has been able to reduce the gender differentials in literacy rates from 18.84 per cent to that of 14.72 per cent – a reduction of 4.12 per cent over the same period.

Table 4 reveals the gender disparity across the districts in Karnataka over the period 2001 to 2011. It shows that the gender gap in literacy rate was quite larger in most of the districts in the year 2001, but in 2011 it has considerably reduced. In 2001, the highest gender gap was recorded in Koppal district (28.81 per cent), while the lowest gender gap was seen in Bangalore district (10.44 per cent) - with a gap of 18.37 percentage points. Further, in 2011, no doubt that the gender gap in literacy rate across districts got reduced to a considerable extent, but still it varied from the highest gap of 22.02 per cent in Yadgir district to the lowest gap of 7.02 per cent in Bangalore district, with a difference of 15 percentage points. The highest reduction in the gender gap of literacy rate over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the Gadag district with 7.20 per cent. It was followed by Koppal (6.82 per cent), Haveri (6.67 per cent) and Bagalkot with 5.71 per cent. Similarly, the lowest reduction in the gender gap over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the Yadgir district with just 1.01 per cent. It also stood first with respect to higher gender gap across all the districts in 2011. The other districts that followed lowest percentage of reduction in gender gap of literacy rate were Kodagu (2.11 per cent), Udupi (2.76 per cent) and Mandya district with 2.93 per cent. The inter-district variation among male and female literacy rates seems to be declining over the period from 2001 to 2011. This is evident from the fact that the CV across districts for both male and female literacy rates is declining. the CV across districts with regard to male literacy rate has declined from 11.61 per cent in 2001 to that of 8.29 per cent in 2011. In the similar way, the CV across districts for female literacy rates has seen a decline from 22.29 per cent to 15.28 per cent over the same period. Chart 2 also provides the better picture of the reduction in the percentage points with regard to gender gap of literacy rates across the districts of Karnataka.

Table 4: Gender Disparity in literacy rate across districts of Karnataka (in per cent)

Districts	2001			2011			Improvement
	Male	Female	Gap	Male	Female	Gap	2001Gap-2011Gap
Belgaum	75.70	52.32	23.38	82.90	64.74	18.16	5.22
Bagalkot	70.88	43.56	27.32	80.16	58.55	21.61	5.71
Bijapur	69.94	43.47	26.47	77.41	56.54	20.87	5.60
Bidar	72.46	48.81	23.65	79.94	61.66	18.28	5.37
Raichur	61.52	35.93	25.59	71.35	49.56	21.79	3.80
Koppal	68.42	39.61	28.81	78.21	56.22	21.99	6.82
Gadag	79.32	52.52	26.80	84.89	65.29	19.60	7.20
Dharwad	80.82	61.92	18.90	86.83	73.57	13.26	5.64
Uttara Kannada	84.53	68.47	16.06	89.72	78.21	11.51	4.55
Haveri	77.61	57.37	20.24	84.22	70.65	13.57	6.67
Bellary	69.20	45.28	23.92	77.24	58.28	18.96	4.96
Chitradurga	74.66	53.78	20.88	81.37	66.05	15.32	5.56
Davangere	76.37	58.04	18.33	83.02	69.39	13.63	4.70
Shimoga	82.01	66.88	15.13	86.11	74.89	11.22	3.91
Udupi	88.23	75.19	13.04	91.69	81.41	10.28	2.76
Chikamagalur	80.29	64.01	16.28	85.66	72.88	12.78	3.50
Tumkur	76.78	56.94	19.84	82.05	66.45	15.60	4.24
Bangalore	87.92	77.48	10.44	91.82	84.80	7.02	3.42
Mandya	70.50	51.53	18.97	78.14	62.10	16.04	2.93
Hassan	78.37	59.00	19.37	83.55	68.30	15.25	4.12
Dakshina Kannada	89.70	77.21	12.49	93.31	84.04	9.27	3.22
Kodagu	83.70	72.26	11.44	87.24	77.91	9.33	2.11
Mysore	70.88	55.81	15.07	78.44	66.59	11.85	3.22
Chamarajanagar	59.03	42.48	16.55	67.88	54.32	13.56	2.99
Gulbarga	66.18	42.06	24.12	75.11	55.87	19.24	4.88
Yadgir	51.35	28.32	23.03	63.33	41.31	22.02	1.01
Kolar	75.99	55.46	20.53	81.94	66.56	15.38	5.15
Chikkaballapura	69.80	48.33	21.47	78.36	61.55	16.81	4.66
Bangalore Rural	78.99	59.67	19.32	85.44	70.73	14.71	4.61
Ramanagara	69.88	51.22	18.66	76.92	61.30	15.62	3.04
CV (%)	11.61	22.29		8.29	15.28		

Note: CV is the Co-efficient of variation among the districts
Source: Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 2011, Paper 2, Volume 1 of 2011



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Conclusion and Suggestions:-

The state is fastly moving towards universalization of literacy rates, with female literacy rate increasing at a faster rate than the male literacy rate. This article has evaluated the progress achieved in literacy rate of the population in the age group of 7 years and above in Karnataka over the period 2001-2011, with a special focus on regional and gender disparities across districts of Karnataka. Co-efficient of variation has been used to analyze the regional and gender variations in literacy rates across the districts of Karnataka. The analysis reveals the following important findings:-

1. In Karnataka state, the female literacy rate has increased comparatively more than the male literacy rate not only in the state as a whole, but also across rural areas, the female literacy has seen a positive gain to that of male literacy rates over the period 2001-2011.
2. No doubt the rural literacy rate is lesser than the urban literacy rate, but the gains in rural literacy rate are higher when compared to gains achieved in urban literacy rates over the period 2001-2011.
3. The rural-urban gap in literacy rates is reduced from 2001 census period to 2011 census period, but the percentage of rural-urban gap is lessened by just 3.95 percent. In the similar way, the gender gap in literacy rates is reduced by lesser extent i.e., by 4.12 per cent over the same period.
4. The highest reduction in the rural-urban gap of literacy rate over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the district which had the highest rural-urban gap in literacy rate in the year 2001 i.e., in Mysore district. Similarly, the lowest reduction in the rural-urban gap over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the district which had the lowest rural-urban gap in the year 2001 i.e., in Haveri district.
5. The lowest reduction in the gender gap over the period 2001-2011 was seen in the Yadgir district with just 1.01 per cent. It also stood first with respect to higher gender gap across all the districts in 2011.
6. The inter-district variations in terms of gender and regional perspectives have seen a decline over the period 2001-2011, which is evident from the fact that the co-efficient of variation across districts with regard to gender and regional perspectives has reduced over the period 2001-2011.

With regard to the findings listed above, the following suggestions deserve attention in a focused manner:-

Firstly, in order to reduce the gender gap in literacy rates, the state should drive its attention towards enhancing the retention rates of females in higher primary stage and also the school completion ratio for females has to be improved. Only then the female literacy in the state (which is 68.13 per cent in 2011) can be increased to the level of male literacy rate in the state.

Secondly in order to address the rural-urban disparities in literacy rates, the infrastructure across rural schools should be well-developed and numbers of rural schools has to be increased with easy accessibility for better enrolment rates.

Thirdly, better synergies and positive externalities has to be developed for the people living in rural people with an objective of bringing equality in literacy attainments in the state and also to address the rural-urban disparity in literacy rate.

Lastly to conclude is that education in the state should be provided by the Government to more and more people irrespective of any gender, any region, any caste or creed or any religion with an objective of universalizing literacy rates.

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