

GENDER EQUALITY: A PREREQUISITE FOR INDIA'S SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract - The socioeconomic classification of men and women—how cultures separate men and women and assign them different social roles—is referred to as "gender." The distinction between sex and gender was created to address the widespread propensity to blame women's subordination on their physical makeup. It has long been held that sex determines the various traits, roles, and statuses given to men and women in society and that these factors are natural and hence unchangeable. The duties and behaviors that are allocated to men and women depending on their sexual preferences are considered to be intimately tied to gender. Gendering begins in families and society as soon as a child is born. Sons receive more love, respect, better nourishment, and appropriate medical care at birth than daughters do, which is why the birth of a boy is celebrated whereas the delivery of a daughter is painful. Girls are taught to stay at home and be reserved, while boys are encouraged to be tough and social. These are all gender-based distinctions that society has produced. Therefore, gender inequality is a type of inequality that is unique from other types of socio-economic disparity.

Index Terms - India, Socio-economic Development, Gender, Equality.

India's policymakers, academics, researchers, and media should all seriously consider and analyze gender inequities in the nation. The Economic Survey (2011–12) noted that there is still considerable work to be done to close the gender gap. India is ranked number 114 out of 155 nations in the gender development index. As it slows down economic growth, gender disparity has a negative influence on development goals. Because preventing women from participating in social, political, and economic activities can have a negative impact on the entire society, it undermines overall wellbeing. There is a gender imbalance in education, work, and health in many emerging nations, including India. Girls and women frequently experience high death rates. The educational levels of the sexes vary greatly. Due to its socioeconomic and religious customs, which led to a significant disparity in the status of men and women in society, India has experienced gender inequality throughout its early history.

I. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The current study's goals are to:

- a) Define the term "gender equality";
- b) Analyze census of India 2011 data to determine the current state of gender equality in India; and
- c) Recommend actions to lessen gender inequality.

The current analysis is based on reports from official sources, survey data from the Census of India 2011, news articles about the Census of India 2011, demography data from various Censuses of India, various issues of "Economic and Political Weekly," Yajana, etc. The report clarifies several aspects of gender disparity in India. It will be useful for creating new policies or revising the ones that already exist.

II. FINDINGS FROM THE 2011 CENSUS ON THE COMPOSITION OF INDIA'S POPULATION

Beginning on April 1, 2010, the Indian Population Census 2011 was carried out in two stages. The population increased by more than 181 million between 2001 and 2011; significantly, the growth was slower for the first time in nine decades, according to the 15th Census data (provisional), released on March 31, 2011, in New Delhi by Union Home Secretary Shri G.K. Pillai, the Register General of India, and Census Commissioner Shri C. Chandramouli. The most populous state and union territory is Uttar Pradesh, which has 199 million residents, and the least populous is Lakshadweep, which has 64,429 residents. India is the second-most populous nation in the world, making up 17.5% of all people. According to the preliminary Census 2011 statistics, there are 1,21,01,93,422 people living in India, with 62,37,24,248 males and 58,64,69,174 females. The sex ratio is 940 females for every 1000 males, demonstrating a persistent preference for male offspring.

With 1,341 billion people, or 19.4% of the world's population, China holds the title of most populous nation. The cumulative population of countries including - United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Japan forms a sum of 1214.3

Table 1: A Quick Look at India's Population in 2011

Headings	Statistics as per Census
Total Population	1,21,01,93,422 (people)
Male Population	62,37,24,247
Female Population	58,64,69,175
Sex Ratio	940 females : 1000 males
Decadal Growth (2001-2011)	18,14,55,985 (17.64 percentage)
Population Density (per km2)	382 per km2
Literacy Rate (%)	Total: 74.04% Males: 82.14% Females: 65.46%
Rural Sex Ratio of India 947	Urban Sex Ratio of India 926

Data Source: [Census 2011 India](#)

which is virtually the same as India's population. Here (Table 3) are a few countries' sex ratios so that you may see the general pattern across the globe. China, the nation with the most people, has a somewhat worse sex ratio than India and Madhya Pradesh. However, compared to India, the sex ratio is better in the listed European, African, and American countries.

Even though India's population is still growing, the rate of increase has actually dropped. Since independence, the percentage decadal growth between 2001 and 2011 has experienced the steepest dip, a drop of 3.90 percentage points. In contrast to the growth rate of 21.15 percent in 2001, it is 17.64 percent in 2011. With the exception of 1911–1921, the 2001–2011 period is the first decade in which population growth was less pronounced than in the decade before it. According to the statistics, there are now 158.8 million fewer children under the age of six than there were in 2001. It is not surprising that the total sex ratio—the proportion of women to men—has increased from 932.91 in 2001 to 943.27 in 2011. The difference between men and women, which was 21.59 percentage points in 2001, is currently only 16.68 points.

TABLE 2 LISTS THE TEN MOST POPULOUS NATIONS IN THE WORLD.

Name of the Country	Share in World Population (%)
China	19.4
India	17.5
USA	4.5
Indonesia	3.4
Brazil	2.8
Pakistan	2.7
Bangladesh	2.4
Nigeria	2.3
Russia Federal	2.0
Japan	1.9
Others	41.2

Data Source: Population Clock: World (census.gov)

TABLE 3 SHOWS INDIA'S SEX RATIO IN RELATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

NAME OF THE COUNTRY	SEX RATIO
WORLD	984
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	1165
FRANCE	1056
JAPAN	1054
GERMANY	1038
UNITED KINGDOM	1037
BRAZIL	1031
SOUTH AFRICA	1028
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	1026
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	1020
AUSTRALIA	1011
ETHIOPIA	1010
INDONESIA	1003
NIGERIA	995
MALAYSIA	970
IRAN	968
INDIA	940
CHINA	927
SAUDI ARAB	828

Data Source: [Countries by sex ratio 2021 - StatisticsTimes.com](https://www.statisticstimes.com)

This can be partially explained by the longer average lifespan of women and advancements in medical treatment throughout time. The top five states/union territories with the greatest sex ratio, according to the 2011 Census, are Kerala (1,084), Puducherry (1,038), Tamilnadu (995), Andhra Pradesh (992), and Chhattisgarh (991). (991). Daman & Diu (618), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (775), Chandigarh (818), NCT of Delhi (866), and Andaman & Nicobar Islands are the five states with the lowest sex ratio (878).

TABLE 4A SHOWS TOP TEN STATES/UTS BY SEX RATIO IN 2011

Sr.No	State / Union Territory (U.T.)	Sex Ratio 2011	Sex Ratio 2001	Change 2001 - 2011
1	Kerala	1,084	1,058	+26
2	Puducherry	1,038	1,001	+37
3	Tamil Nadu	995	986	+9
4	Andhra Pradesh	992	978	+14
5	Chhattisgarh	991	990	+1
6	Manipur	987	978	+9
7	Meghalaya	986	975	+11
8	Odisha	978	972	+6
9	Mizoram	975	938	+37
10	Himachal Pradesh	974	970	+4

Data Source: [Sex Ratio in India - Current Sex Ratio - Indian Sex Ratio Now\(indiaonlinepages.com\)](#)

TABLE 4B SHOWS TOP BOTTOM STATES/UTS BY SEX RATIO IN 2011

Sr.No	State / Union Territory (U.T.)	Sex Ratio 2011	Sex Ratio 2001	Change 2001 - 2011
1	Uttar Pradesh	908	898	+10
2	Punjab	893	874	+19
3	Sikkim	889	875	+14
4	Jammu and Kashmir	883	900	-17
5	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	878	846	+32
6	Haryana	877	861	+16
7	Delhi	866	821	+45
8	Chandigarh	818	773	+45
9	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	775	811	-36
10	Daman and Diu	618	709	-91

Data Source: [Sex Ratio in India - Current Sex Ratio - Indian Sex Ratio Now\(indiaonlinepages.com\)](#)

THE 2011 CENSUS'S UNSETTLING FINDING ON GENDER INEQUALITY

The major flaw in the otherwise attractive 2011 Census of India is gender imbalance. According to data from the 2011 Census, the nation's child sex ratio has reached its lowest points since independence. The child sex ratio has significantly decreased, according to preliminary demographic figures. Since 1961, the sex ratio for children aged 0 to 6 has been falling, but the decline from 927.31 in 2001 to 914.23 in 2011 is the worst since independence. Only the fatal application of the great desire for sons over girls by sex-selective abortion, or female foeticide, can account for it. Legislation-enforced prohibitions on sex-determination tests made in an effort to combat female foeticide have mainly failed. The results of the 15th Census show a persistent preference

for male children over female offspring. In India, where female infanticide is still frequent, doctors are not allowed to disclose the gender of an unborn child. There is still a gender gap, despite the prohibition on sex determination testing based on ultrasound scans and sex selection abortion. The child sex ratio has significantly decreased over the most recent census period, despite rules designed to prevent female foeticide and initiatives to encourage couples to have girl children. In comparison to the female population, which increased by 18.12 percent to 586.5 million (58 crore), the male population increased by 17.19 percent to reach 623.7 million (62 crore). There are 158.8 million kids in the 0 to 6 age range overall (-5 million since 2001). Between 2001 and 2011, there was a decrease of 3.08 percent in the population (0 to 6 years), with a decrease of 2.42 percent for men and 3.80 percent for women. In comparison to 2001, 13.1 percent of children in the 0–6 age range make up the overall population. In 2001, that percentage was 15.9 percent. The decrease was 2.8 points in magnitude.

TABLE 5 SHOWS THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE 0–6 AGE RANGE BY SEX IN 2011.

Males	Females	Cumulative
82,952,135	75,837,152	158,789,287

Data Source: [Census 2011 India](#)

TABLE 6 SHOWS THE SEX RATIO FOR CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 6 AND 7 OR OLDER IN 2001 AND 2011.(FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES)

Population of children aged 0 to 6		0 to 6 year old child population	
2001	2011	2001	2011
927	914	934	944

Data Source: [Census 2011 India](#)

SEX RATIO IN INDIA: INTERESTING FACTS AND FIGURES

- I. According to the Census of India, Kerala has the greatest sex ratio at 1084 girls for every 1000 males.
- II. There are 818 females count in the union territory of Chandigarh agaisnt every 1000 males.
- III. Punjab's child sex ratio increased by +48 from 798 (in 2001) to 846 (in 2011).
- IV. Daman and Diu has the lowest female sex ratio among Indian Union Territories, whereas Pondicherry has the highest.
- V. The drop in the female ratio in India is partially due to gender bias, but in the last ten years, things have started to look up a bit.
- VI. Gender bias is a result of rural poverty and a lack of knowledge.
- VII. The reduction in the sex ratio in different states across the country is attributed to a widespread notion in Indian society that favours a male kid.
- VIII. The Census of India reports that India has one of the lowest child sex ratios (0–6 years), with the most recent figure being 918 girls for every 1000 boys in 2011.
- IX. The Government of India created the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save girl child, educate girl kid) programme to increase the effectiveness of social programmes for girls in India.
- X. For the first time in the previous 15 years, the state of Haryana recorded a child sex ratio (0–6 age group) of above 900 in 2015.

IMAGES OF GENDER INEQUALITY FROM VARIOUS STATES

- i. In comparison to Census 2001, when the overall sex ratio was 933, it has grown by 7 points to 940 in Census 2011. This sex ratio is somewhat lower than in 1961 and is the highest since the Census of 1971. In 29 states and UTs, there has been an increase in the sex ratio.
- ii. The sex ratio has decreased in three important states (J&K, Bihar, and Gujarat) when compared to Census 2001.
- iii. Daman and Diu have the lowest sex ratio at 618, followed by Puducherry with 1038 and Kerala with 1084.
- iv. Between 0 and 6 years of age, there are 914 children. In Punjab (846), Haryana (830), Himachal Pradesh (906), Gujarat (886), Tamil Nadu (946), Mizoram (971), and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the child sex ratio (0–6) is on the rise (966). The child sex ratio has decreased since the 2001 Census in each of the remaining 27 states and UTs.
- v. The greatest child sex ratio (0–6 years) is 971 in Mizoram, followed by 970 in Meghalaya. Punjab comes in second with a ratio of 846, while Haryana is last with a ratio of 830.

III. GENDER INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION: LACKING ELEMENTS FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

What factor could be more essential to inclusive growth than universal access to education? Socio-economic development can be duly met by means of right education. It is crucial to encourage education among all disadvantaged groups that have lagged behind the national average in the area of education if society is to move horizontally and vertically. Because the educated and competent person stands to benefit the most from the employment opportunities provided by growth, a well-educated populace is not only required to sustain economic progress but also a prerequisite for inclusive growth. Education creates chances for both individual and group entitlements, gainful work, and involvement in a variety of social activities. All in all, education sparks social transformations and spurs economic expansion. Education for all is acknowledged by the international community as a key Millennium Development Goal, and India is actively moving forward with its mission to remodel and restructure education in order to promote inclusivity.

Women who have more education have more opportunities in the political, social, and economic spheres. Although the gender gap in schooling has been decreasing over time, there is still a sizable imbalance that has to be closed (Table 8). According to the publicly available data, the literacy rate increased by 9.21% points from 64.83 percent in 2001 to 74.04% in 2011. The population aged seven and older is made up of 74% literate people and 26% illiterate people. The percentage increase in literacy from 2001 to 2011 is 38.82; for men, it is 31.98%, and for women, it is 49.10%. While male literacy increased from 75.26% to 82.14%, or a 6.9-point rise, it increased by 11.8 points among females from 53.67% to 65.46%, or an 11.8-point gain. Women exceed men (110,069,001) in the number of additional literates (107,631,940). The difference between men and women, which was 21.59 percentage points in 2001, is currently only 16.68 points. The whole census data, which will be made public in 2013, should give decision-makers a thorough picture of where India stands on important socioeconomic development metrics, with the aim of fostering a more egalitarian and just society.

TABLE 7 SHOWS THE GENDERED LITERACY GAP (PERCENTAGE)

Year	Male	Female	Total	Gendered Literacy Gap
1951	27.16	8.86	18.33	18.30
1961	34.44	12.95	24.02	21.49
1971	39.45	18.70	29.45	20.75
1981	46.89	24.82	36.23	22.07
1991	64.10	39.30	39.30	24.80
2001	75.30	53.70	64.80	21.60
2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	16.68

Data Source: Census 2011 India

The population issue may be primarily caused by poverty and illiteracy rather than gender inequity. India has closed the wealth gap with industrialized nations in recent years because to its strong growth, but it still lags far behind in terms of gender equality. In States like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, which are among the wealthier Indian States, the sex ratio has declined extremely dramatically. Bihar outperforms the national average, whereas Uttar Pradesh has a lower child sex ratio than Maharashtra and Gujarat (Census, 2011). Compared to urban regions, where there were 905 girls for every 1,000 boys under four, rural areas had 918 females (2008 Sample Registration System). According to the most recent census data, the literacy rate is now 74.04 percent, up 9.2 percent over the previous ten years, while the child sex ratio has dropped significantly. Maharashtra has a child sex ratio of 883 and an almost 83% literacy rate, while Chhattisgarh has a child sex ratio of 964 and only a 71% literacy rate.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IS MORE PREVALENT, ACCORDING TO THE GENDER EQUALITY INDEX.

A new indicator for measuring gender inequality is the Gender Equality Index (GEI). This index employs three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation—to represent the loss of success caused by gender disparity within a nation. India has a 0.748 index score and is ranked 122 out of 168 nations in the 2008 global gender equality index. With values ranging from 0 (perfect equality) to 1, the GEI measures the loss in accomplishment caused by gender gaps in the domains of reproductive health, empowerment, and labour force participation (total inequality). According to the Economic Survey 2010–11, India has a higher level of gender discrimination than nations like China (GEI index value: 0.748) and Sri Lanka (GEI index value: 0.599). Another statistic for measuring the gender gap in education is the Gender Parity Index (GPI). The GPI compares the number of girls enrolled in school to the number of boys. Boys and girls have equal access to education when the value is 1. The gender gap in schooling has been narrowing over time, although a sizable difference still exists (Table 10).

TABLE 8 THE GENDER PARITY INDEX FROM 1951 TO 2001

Gender Disparity Index			
Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Elementary
1951	0.49	0.69	0.49
1961	0.43	0.52	0.42
1971	0.32	0.42	0.33
1981	0.29	0.35	0.30
1991	0.25	0.31	0.26
2001	0.17	0.18	0.16

Data Source: Harza,2009

According to the World Bank's 2012 collection of gender statistics, the following table compares population-wide data for the two sexes on several statistical metrics of inequality.

Statistic Measure of Gender	Females (India)	Males (India)	Females (World)	Males (World)
Ratio of females to males in primary and secondary education (%)	0.98	1.0	0.97	1.0
Account at a formal financial institution, (% of each gender, age 15+)	26.5	43.7	46.6	54.5
Deposits in a typical month, (% with an account, age 15+)	11.2	13.4	13.0	12.8
Withdrawals in a typical month, (% with an account, age 15+)	18.6	12.7	15.5	12.8
Loan from a financial institution in the past year, (% age 15+)	6.7	8.6	8.1	10.0
Outstanding loan from banks for health or emergencies, (% age 15+)	12.6	15.7	10.3	11.6
Outstanding loan from banks to purchase a home, (% age 15+)	2.26	2.35	6.6	7.4
Unemployment, (% of labour force, ILO method)	4	3.1		
Unemployment, youth (% of labour force ages 15–24, ILO method)	10.6	9.4	15.1	13.0
Ratio of females to males youth unemployment rate (% ages 15–24, ILO method)	1.13	1.0	1.14	1.0
Employees in agriculture, (% of total labour)	59.8	43		
Employees in industry, (% of total labour)	20.7	26		
Self-employed, (% employed)	85.5	80.6		

Data Source: [Gender Statistics | DataBank \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org/indicators)

IV. POLICIES AND LAWS TO COMBAT GENDER INEQUALITY

The Indian Constitution guarantees gender equality as a fundamental right in the preamble and gives the state the authority to implement positive discrimination measures in favour of women through laws and policies. To ensure the equal rights of women, India has also ratified a number of international treaties and human rights forums, such as the 1993 agreement on the abolition of all kinds of discrimination against women. A step toward ending gender discrimination was taken in 1994 with the passage of the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technology Act. In an effort to reduce sex- determination testing and female foeticide, this Act prohibits doctors from performing certain treatments with the specific goal of determining the sex of the foetus.

In order to promote women's advancement, development, and empowerment, the government also unveiled the National Policy for Women's Empowerment in 2001. A draught National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, which outlines the government's approach to addressing issues of gender discrimination, has also been developed by the government. A National Mission for Female Literacy has also been started by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, with an emphasis on minorities, SCs, STs, and other underrepresented groups. Out of the 2573 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) approved during the 2010–11 school year, 427 KGBVs were approved in rural and urban Muslim concentration areas. The effects of development initiatives cannot be completely realized without socioeconomic equality for women in India's underdeveloped areas. India must view women as assets rather than liabilities in its human resource pool. Socioeconomic advancement can improve the Indian economy while also empowering women. Employment justice is needed for women. The capacity of Indian women to participate in the economy in a productive way would expand with more education, vocational training, and skill development. A national strategy for workforce development should take into account the requirements of women in India's underdeveloped areas. According to Jacobs & Hawley (2003), workforce development in the United States is the coordination of policies and initiatives that "give people the chance to realize a sustainable livelihood and organizations the opportunity to achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the history, culture, and goals of the social context" (p. 1017). Systems for workforce development were described by Naquin (2002) as a way to meet the demands of businesses, communities, and countries. India has a complicated social structure, so meeting the urgent needs of women in the country's underdeveloped areas would require numerous integrated methods from both the public and private sectors.

V. CONCLUSIONS

As gender inequities persist, we must reconsider concepts and techniques for enhancing women's dignity and rights. There is a need for new institutions that incorporate new norms and standards that promote fair and just relationships between men and women. As sex detection is done within the doctor-patient relationship confidentially, enforcing the legislation is becoming exceedingly difficult.

The only foolproof way to end this crime of pre-birth sex selection is for people's attitudes to change. Today, the problem has grown to such epic dimensions that a multi-pronged effort aimed solely at balancing the sex ratio is required. This is not a problem that can be solved by a few people; it requires a broad movement

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