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## Demographic Features of Women in India

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### Abstract

In India it is often heard that large number of females were lasting their breath before they enter in to this world. There are several causes for such situation. The most important among them are dowry system, cultural factors, weak social security system etc. This is in turn resulting high difference in sex ratios. A close examination of last two census (2001 and 2011) makes it clear that in 22 States/Union territories the child sex ratio showing downward trends. In case of general sex ratio only 6 States/Union Territories registered negative growth rates. But, with regard to female literacy there is a considerable improvement in all States/Union Territories. The present makes a clear analysis of the demographic status of women in all states during the last 2 census figures.

**Keywords:** census, sex ratio, literacy rate, gender, lowest.

### Introduction

With independence, women were granted equal status with men. The government made an all out effort to raise the status of women in the various fields through legislation. Compulsory education, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, raising of marriageable age, the Adoption Act, 1956, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and legalizing of abortion are all in favour of women. But the law alone is not enough to bring about a radical change. With rapid urbanization and industrialization of the century, exploitation of women in recent years has been a serious menace to our society.

Notwithstanding the multiplication of legislation on various fields, with a view to improve the social, political and economic conditions and status of women, even the ancient forms of victimization, child marriage and premature consummation resulting in early and dangerous pregnancies *sati*, female infanticide, illegal abortions, dowry deaths, rape, eve-teasing and various other forms of molestation of women still continue. In fact, since the passing of the Dowry Prohibition Act and even after several amendments to the I.P.C., Cr. P.C. and the Evidence Act, dowry deaths are on the increase. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 and the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 securing for women the right to divorce and property have not automatically given women rights. Under the Hindu Succession Act, parents make will depriving daughters. Though, bigamy is an offence, the rate of desertion by Hindu husbands and illegal second marriage is higher than "Talaq" rate of the Muslims.

The advancement of reproduction technology has brought in the new phenomenon of female foeticide. One study revealed that nearly 100 percent of the aborted fetuses were females.

Women's health is given consideration only in terms of maternity, leaving women beyond the reproductive age, young, unmarried girls and widows outside health and nutrition schemes. The government's family planning programmes have a heavy gender bias.

The condition of elderly women is also not satisfactory especially those of widows. She has to earn as also run the house and raise her children. If she does not earn, her condition is even worse. If the widow has no issues, she has to work hard as a maid servant in her husband's joint family or relations who might have taken her in and is totally dependent, for all her needs, on others. She has neither economic security nor a say in decisions concerning her and her children. Families still believe that once a daughter is given away in marriage, she cannot be given away again to another person. Hence, widow remarriage, though sanctioned by Hindu Widows Remarriage Act of 1856, seldom takes place and is discouraged.

Thus, we see that the condition of Indian woman is very much shocking. The life of woman in India is still surrounded by violence, neglect and exploitation. What is the price fixed for a woman's services day and night within the household.

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Love is the reward, but where the reward of the husband and the in-laws is don't appreciate the bride's services. Perhaps nowhere, except the fire on her clothes and her body. This is happening everywhere in our country these days and the number is increasing alarmingly. Even the educated urban and well informed women are exposed to such events. *The Committee on the Status of Women in India* rightly concludes that "the entire exercise of our committees has indicated that in certain important areas and for certain sections of the female population there has been repression from the normative attitudes developed during the freedom movement. Large section of women has suffered a decline of economic status. Even after the promulgation of these laws (legal measures), the protection enjoyed by the large masses of women from exploitation and injustice is negligible. Though women don't numerically constitute a

minority, they are beginning to acquire the features of a minority community by the recognized dimensions of inequality of class, economic situation, status (social position) and political power. The chasm between the values of a new social order proclaimed by the constitution and the realities of contemporary Indian society as far as women's rights are concerned remains as great as at the time of independence.

### Sex Ratio in India

Sex ratio is used to describe the number of females per 1000 of males. Sex ratio is a valuable source for finding the population of women in India and what is the ratio of women to that of men in India. Table 1 furnishes all such details.

**Table 1:** Sex Ratio in India -2001 and 2011 Census

S. No	State	2011 Census		2001 Census	
		Sex Ratio	Child Sex ratio	Sex Ratio	Child Sex ratio
	India	943	919	933	927
1	Kerala	1084	964	1058	960
2	Pondicherry	1037	967	1001	967
3	Tamil Nadu	996	943	987	942
4	Andhra Pradesh	993	939	978	961
5	Chhattisgarh	991	969	989	975
6	Meghalaya	989	970	972	973
7	Manipur	985	930	974	957
8	Orissa	979	941	972	953
9	Mizoram	976	970	935	964
10	Goa	973	942	961	938
11	Karnataka	973	948	965	946
12	Himachal Pradesh	972	909	968	896
13	Uttarakhand	963	890	962	908
14	Tripura	960	957	948	966
15	Assam	958	962	935	965
16	West Bengal	950	956	934	960
17	Jharkhand	948	948	941	965
18	Lakshadweep	946	911	948	959
19	Arunachal Pradesh	938	972	893	964
20	Nagaland	931	943	900	964
21	Madhya Pradesh	931	918	919	932
22	Maharashtra	929	894	922	913
23	Rajasthan	928	888	921	909
24	Gujarat	919	890	920	883
25	Bihar	918	935	919	942
26	Uttar Pradesh	912	902	898	916
27	Punjab	895	846	876	798
28	Sikkim	890	957	875	963
29	Jammu and Kashmir	889	862	892	941
30	Haryana	879	834	861	819
31	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	876	968	846	957
32	Delhi	868	871	821	868
33	Chandigarh	818	880	777	845
34	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	774	926	812	979
35	Daman and Diu	618	904	710	926

**Source:** Office of the Registrar General, India.

In the Population Census of 2011 it was revealed that the population ratio in India 2011 is 940 females per 1000 of males. The Sex Ratio 2011 shows an upward trend from the census 2001 data. Census 2001 revealed that there were 933 females to that of 1000 males. Since decades India has seen a decrease in the sex ratio 2011, but since the last two of the decades there has been in slight increase in the sex ratio. Since the last five decades the sex ratio has been moving around 930 of females to that of 1000 of males.

The major cause of the decrease of the female birth ratio in India is considered to be the violent treatments meted out to the girl child at the time of the birth. The Sex Ratio in India

was almost normal during the phase of the years of independence, but thereafter it started showing gradual signs of decrease. Though the Sex Ratio in India has gone through commendable signs of improvement in the past 10 years, there are still some states where the sex ratio is still low and is a cause of concern for the NGO organizations. One of the states which is showing a decreasing trend in the population of women 2011 and is a cause of concern is Haryana. The state of Haryana has the lowest rate of sex ratio in India and the figure shows a number of 877 of females to that of 1000 of males.

There are also states such as Pondicherry and Kerala where the number of women is more than the number of men. Kerala houses a number of 1084 females to that of 1000 males. While Pondicherry and Kerala are the only two states where the number of female is more than the number of men, there are also states in India like that of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra where the sex ratio 2011 is showing considerable signs of improvement. Some facts related to the Sex Ratio in India follows, the main cause of the decline of the sex ration in India is due to the biased attitude which is meted out to the women. The main cause of this gender bias is inadequate education. Pondicherry and Kerala houses the maximum number of female while the regions of Daman and Diu and Haryana have the lowest density of female population.

### Literacy in India

In a country like India, literacy is the main foundation for social and economic growth. When the British rule ended in India in the year 1947 the literacy rate was just 12%. Over the years, India has changed socially, economically, and globally. After the 2011 census, literacy rate India 2011 was found to be 74.04%. Compared to the adult literacy rate here the youth literacy rate is about 9% higher. Though this

seems like a very great accomplishment, it is still a matter of concern that still so many people in India cannot even read and write. The numbers of children who do not get education especially in the rural areas are still high. Though the government has made a law that every child under the age of 14 should get free education, the problem of illiteracy is still at large.

Now, if we consider female literacy rate in India, then it is lower than the male literacy rate as many parents do not allow their female children to go to schools. They get married off at a young age instead. Though child marriage has been lowered to very low levels, it still happens. Many families, especially in rural areas believe that having a male child is better than having a baby girl. So the male child gets all the benefits. Today, the female literacy levels according to the Literacy Rate 2011 census are 65.46% where the male literacy rate is over 80%. The literacy rate in India has always been a matter of concern but many NGO initiatives and government ads, campaigns and programs are being held to spread awareness amongst people about the importance of literacy. Also the government has made strict rules for female equality rights. India literacy rate has shown significant rise in the past 10 years. Table 2 gives clear picture.

**Table 2:** Male Female literacy Rates

S. No	State	Literacy	Male	Female	% Change
	India	74.04	82.14	65.46	8.66
1	Kerala	94.00	96.11	92.07	3.14
2	Lakshadweep	91.85	95.56	87.95	5.19
3	Mizoram	91.33	93.35	89.27	2.53
4	Goa	88.70	92.65	84.66	6.69
5	Tripura	87.22	91.53	82.73	14.03
6	Daman and Diu	87.10	91.54	79.55	8.92
7	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	86.63	90.27	82.43	5.33
8	Delhi	86.21	90.94	80.76	4.54
9	Chandigarh	86.05	89.99	81.19	4.11
10	Pondicherry	85.85	91.26	80.67	4.61
11	Himachal Pradesh	82.80	89.53	75.93	6.32
12	Maharashtra	82.34	88.38	75.87	5.46
13	Sikkim	81.42	86.55	75.61	12.61
14	Tamil Nadu	80.09	86.77	73.44	6.64
15	Nagaland	79.55	82.75	76.11	12.96
16	Uttarakhand	78.82	87.40	70.01	7.2
17	Gujarat	78.03	85.75	69.68	8.89
18	Manipur	76.94	83.58	70.26	10.33
19	West Bengal	76.26	81.69	70.54	7.62
20	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	76.24	85.17	64.32	18.61
21	Punjab	75.84	80.44	70.73	6.19
22	Haryana	75.55	84.06	65.94	7.64
23	Karnataka	75.36	82.47	68.08	8.72
24	Meghalaya	74.43	75.95	72.89	11.87
25	Orissa	72.87	81.59	64.01	9.79
26	Assam	72.19	77.85	66.27	8.94
27	Chhattisgarh	70.28	80.27	60.24	5.62
28	Madhya Pradesh	69.32	78.73	59.24	5.58
29	Uttar Pradesh	67.68	77.28	57.18	11.41
30	Jammu and Kashmir	67.16	76.75	56.43	11.64
31	Andhra Pradesh	67.02	74.88	59.15	6.55
32	Jharkhand	66.41	76.84	55.42	12.85
33	Rajasthan	66.11	79.19	52.12	5.7
34	Arunachal Pradesh	65.38	72.55	57.70	11.04
35	Bihar	61.80	71.20	51.50	14.8

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India.

Here are some facts about different states literacy rate, Kerala is the only state in India to have 100% literacy rate. It is followed by Goa, Tripura, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra, Sikkim. The lowest literacy rate in India is seen in the state of Bihar. We also need to think why is the literacy rate is low here in India compared to other developed countries. Basically the population in India is very high. Being the 7th largest country its population stands 2nd in the world after China. There are over 1 billion people in India. The number of schools and educational centers especially in rural areas is less. Even today many people are below the poverty line. Also people aren't aware that children should get free education according to the law. Here are some facts about different states literacy rate, Kerala is the only state in India to have 100% literacy rate. It is followed by Goa, Tripura, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra, Sikkim. The lowest literacy rate in India is seen in the state of Bihar. We also need to think why is the literacy rate is low here in India compared to other developed countries. Basically the population in India is very high. Being the 7th largest country its population stands 2nd in the world after China. There are over 1 billion people in India. The number of schools and educational centers especially in rural areas is less. Even today many people are below the poverty line. Also people aren't aware that children should get free education according to the law.

#### Gender Wise Literacy Rate

Table 3 gives the details of literacy rate of males and females during 1951 to 2011.

**Table 3:** Literacy Rate by Sex - India: 1951 To 2011

Census Year	Persons	Males	Females
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

**Source:** Office of the Registrar General, India.

It is evident from table 3.3 that the literacy rate of females is growing expeditiously from 1991 onwards than the males over different census years. According to 1991 census the female literacy rate is 39.29, which registered 9.53 per cent growth compared to previous census. During the same period the male literacy rate increased 7.75 per cent. In 2001 and 2011 the growth in female literacy rate is 14.38 per cent and 11.79 per cent respectively. On the other hand the male literacy rate during the same period i.e. 2001 and 2011 census is 11.13 per cent and 6.88 per cent respectively. It can be concluded that gender disparity in the literacy rate in India is slowly reducing.

It is further evident from the above table that as per 2011 census, the overall literacy rate in India has shown improvement of nearly 9.20 per cent. It has gone up to 74.04 per cent in 2011 from 64.84 per cent in 2001, this registering an increase of over 9 per cent in the last 10 years.

#### State Wise Literacy Rate

The State wise male and female literacy rates as per 2011 census are presented in table 3.4.

**Table 4:** Literacy Rate in India by States as Per 2011 Census

Sl. No.	State/Union Territory	Male Literacy Rate	Female Literacy Rate	Total
	States			
1	Andhra Pradesh	75.6	59.7	67.7
2	Arunachal Pradesh	73.7	59.6	67.0
3	Assam	78.8	67.3	73.2
4	Bihar	73.5	53.3	63.8
5	Chhattisgarh	81.5	60.6	71.0
6	Delhi	91.0	80.9	86.3
7	Goa	92.8	81.8	87.4
8	Gujarat	87.2	70.7	79.3
9	Haryana	85.4	66.8	76.6
10	Himachal Pradesh	90.8	76.6	83.8
11	Jammu & Kashmir	78.3	58.0	68.7
12	Jharkhand	78.5	56.2	67.6
13	Karnataka	82.8	68.1	75.6
14	Kerala	96.0	92.0	93.9
15	Madhya Pradesh	80.5	60.0	70.6
16	Maharashtra	89.8	75.5	82.9
17	Manipur	86.5	73.2	79.8
18	Meghalaya	77.2	73.8	75.5
19	Mizoram	93.7	89.4	91.6
20	Nagaland	83.3	76.7	80.1
21	Orissa	82.4	64.4	73.5
22	Punjab	81.5	71.3	76.7
23	Rajasthan	80.5	52.7	67.1
24	Sikkim	87.3	76.4	82.2
25	Tamil Nadu	86.8	73.9	80.3
26	Tripura	92.2	83.1	87.8
27	Uttarakhand	88.3	70.7	79.6
28	Uttar Pradesh	79.2	59.3	69.7
29	West Bengal	82.7	71.2	77.1
	Union Territories			
30	A & N Islands	90.1	81.8	86.3
31	Chandigarh	90.5	81.4	86.4
32	D & N Haveli	86.5	65.9	77.7
33	Daman & Diu	91.5	79.6	87.1
34	Lakshadweep	96.1	88.2	92.3
35	Puducherry	92.1	81.2	86.5
	All-India	82.14	65.46	74.04

**Source:** Office of the Registrar General, India

The data in table 4 shows that with regard to highest female literacy rate Kerala stood at the top of ladder with 92 per cent of literates. With regard to female literacy rate the second and third places were occupied by Mizoram (89.4 percent) and Lakshadweep (88.2 percent). Highest male literacy rate is registered in Lakshadweep (96.1 percent) and it is followed by Karnataka (96 percent) and Mizoram (93.7 percent) States in second and third places respectively.

With regard to lowest male literacy rate Bihar (73.5 percent) occupies first place in the country. Arunachal Pradesh (73.7 percent) and Andhra Pradesh (75.6 percent) occupies second and third places with regard to low male literacy rates. Lowest female literacy rate is registered in the State of Rajasthan (52.7 percent). It is followed by Bihar (53.3 percent) Ad Jharkhand (56.2 percent) in that order. In 14 out of 29 State the male literacy rate is lower than average male literacy rate of the country. On the other hand, in case of female literacy rate 10 States have registered less than national average literacy rate. The total literacy rate of 11 States in India is less than national average literacy rate of 74.04 per cent.

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