



## Status of Women and Social Opportunities in Madhya Pradesh, India

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### ABSTRACT

*Over the past decade, gender equality and women's empowerment have been clearly recognized as key to social and economic development of the country. The promotion of gender equality and empowering of women is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Inequality in gender relations originates in the social, economic and power relationships between women and men that have been socially constructed over a very long period of time.*

*This paper strives to understand the demographic changes and gender inequality in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh from available data on education, health and employment of the state.*

*The methodology is based on secondary data taken from census of India 2011 reports and other published documents. This comparative study gives an overall demographic and gender inequality picture of Madhya Pradesh (M.P) to draw government's attention to the need and to bring down gender inequality.*

*We recommend that government should promote female literacy through planned interventions by block level studies, augment social infrastructure and lay special emphasis on health infrastructure, provide more employment to the workers in the industrial and tertiary sectors, and provide innovative forms of irrigation to marginal and small farmers and for improvement in their socio-economic status. Detailed studies are also suggested to tackle cover the children school drop-out and weaker sections of the society.*

**KEYWORDS :** Gender inequality, Madhya Pradesh, Census of India 2011, NFHS

### Introduction

Inequality between men and women is one of the most crucial disparities in many societies, and this is particularly so in India. Differences in female and male literacy rates are one aspect of this broader phenomenon of gender-based inequality in India. In much of the country, women tend in general to fare quite badly in relative terms compared with men, even within the same families. This is reflected not only in such matters as education and opportunity to develop talents, but also in the more elementary fields of nutrition, health, and survival.

Since independence, girl's education has been a prime agenda for national development. However, when India attained independence 60 years ago, it was an alarming challenge that the new government had to face. The national Female Literacy Rate was alarmingly low at 8.9 per cent; Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for girls was 24.8 per cent at primary level and 4.6 per cent at the upper primary level (in the 11 – 14 years age group). Social and cultural barriers to education of women and lack of access to organized schooling were the issues to be addressed immediately after independence.

Madhya Pradesh (MP) is one of the poorest states in India with over 37% of its total population of 60 million living below the poverty line. Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), two of the most marginalized groups, constitute 35% of the population and account for 60% of the poor. Gender-based discrimination is reflected in the unequal sex ratio (930/1,000) against an already worrying national average of 940/1,000 in 2011) and lower human development indicators for women.

Even though it is well known fact that the condition of women in the state is far from satisfactory, the state government is fully determined to improve their standard of life. Government is also taking steps to open up all the opportunities to women so that they are able to realize their potential.

The state is currently ruled by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). The Chief Minister is young and dynamic and has strong support from the central party leadership and from the state legislature. This increases the prospect of political stability. Elections to the state assembly are due in 2013. Despite progress in recent years, MP still has among the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality of all states in India. Total fertility rate and incidence of vector-borne and communicable dis-

eases are also much higher than average. Recently published national statistics (National Family Health Survey (NFHS 3) indicated that MP had the highest rates of under nourishment in children under 3 years (60%) in the country.

The devaluation of women and social domination of men still continues to prevail in India. Women are usually viewed as dowry burdens, the weaker gender, and worthy of a lower social status compared to men. This has led to social and economic problems. Other issues can include abuse of women's human rights and unequal opportunities given in education, employments or the rights to be born.

### Key Findings of NFHS

- The data from NFHS surveys clearly provide a strong evidence in the decline of sex ratio (females per 1,000 males).
- Sex selection of births is more common.
- Sterilized women show clearly that couples typically stop having children once they have the desired number of sons.
- The child mortality rate is 61% higher for girls than for boys.

### SON PREFERENCE

A fundamental indicator of gender inequality in India including in Madhya Pradesh is preference for sons. It is so strong that it is marked as limiting the birth and survival of girls. The 2011 census data for India revealed a sharp decline in the sex ratio for the population age 0-6, from 945 females in 1991 to 927 females per 1,000 males. The trend in the sex ratio of the under-seven population based on National Family Health Survey data for the period 1992-93 to 2005-06 also provides evidence of continued decline and shows that in 2005-06 the under-seven sex ratio had fallen further to 918 females per 1,000 males (Figure 1). The key factor driving gender inequality is the preference for boys. This is because boys are deemed to be more useful than girls. Boys are given the exclusive rights to inherit the family name and properties and they are viewed as additional status for their family. Not only that, they are also believed to have a higher economic utility as they can provide additional labor in agriculture. Another factor is that of religious practices, which can only be performed by males for their parents' afterlife. All these factors make sons more attractive. Moreover, expensive dowry of daughters further discourages parents from having daughters. Thus, a combination of factors has shaped the imbalanced view of sexes.

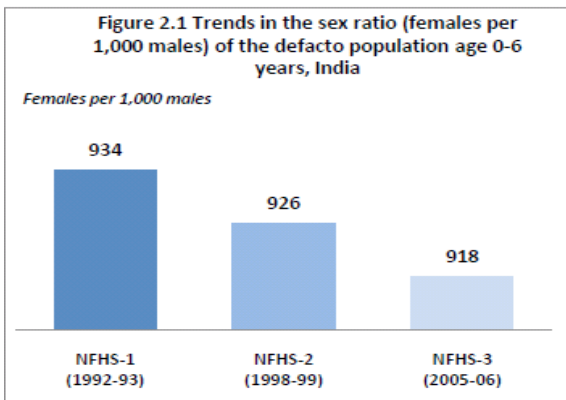


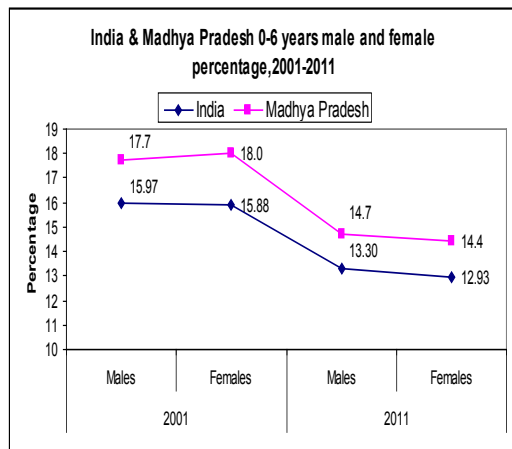
Fig.1.trends in the sex ratio of India (age0-6)

**Demography:**

Female population of the state is 48 % of total population of the state. The life expectancy of women is 55.2 years, which lower than that of the males. The All India life expectancy for the period 1998-2002 for male is 61.6 years and female is 63.3years , whereas the life expectancy for the same period for Madhya Pradesh for male is 57 and for female it is 56.7years. (Source: RGI). This one fact is enough to explain the status of health of women in Madhya Pradesh. This actually indicates towards the deeper malaise responsible for the worse situation of women.

**Sex ratio-overall**

The gender ratio of the new state of MP has improved in 2001 (920) since the last decade(912), for the second time since 1901. The gender ratio of new Madhya Pradesh is well below the national average of 933. Although there has been an improvement in the overall gender ratio in 2011, 14 districts of the total 50 districts in the State record sex ratio less than 900.



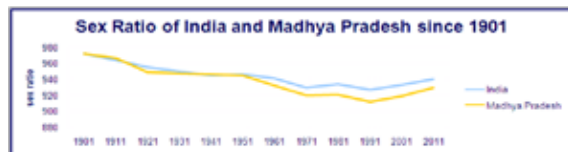
	Census 2001		Census 2011 ( Provisional)	
	Population	Proportion (in %)	Population	Proportion (in %)
<b>India</b>				
Males	53,22,23,090	51.5	62,37,24,248	51.5
Females	49,65,14,346	48.5	58,64,66,174	48.5
<b>Sex Ratio</b>	<b>933</b>		<b>940</b>	
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>				
Males	3,14,43,652	52.1	3,76,12,920	51.8
Females	2,89,04,371	47.9	3,49,84,645	48.2
<b>Sex Ratio</b>	<b>919</b>		<b>930</b>	

Table&Graph. Showing male and female % of India and M.P

**Madhya Pradesh:**

- Sex ratio at the State level has increased by 11 points since Census 2001 to reach 930 at Census 2011
- This is the highest Sex Ratio recorded since Census 1971 and a shade lower than 1961
- Increase in Sex Ratio is observed in 29 Districts
- **Sex ratio : India & Madhya Pradesh**
- It is continuously declined until 1971 and thereafter a slightly increasing trend is reflected in subsequent censuses except in 1991 Census. Madhya Pradesh is fourth lowest among these states.

Country / State	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
India	972	984	985	950	945	948	941	930	934	927	933	940
Madhya Pradesh	972	967	948	947	946	945	932	920	921	912	919	930



**Source**



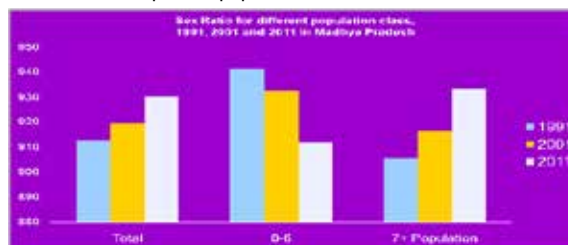
Table&Graph showing the sex ratio of India and Madhya Pradesh

- Looking at the trend of sex ratio more than 1000 at the district level, 4 in 2011. These districts are Balaghat (1021), followed by Alirajpur (1009), Mandla (1005), Dindori (1004).

Top Five Districts		Bottom Five Districts	
District	Sex Ratio	District	Sex Ratio
Balaghat	1,021	Rhind	838
Alirajpur	1,009	Morena	839
Mandla	1,005	Gwalior	862
Dindori	1,004	Datia	875
Jhabua	989	Shivpuri	877

\* Sex Ratio is defined as the Number of females per 1000 males

- Number of districts below the state average has increased from 22 in 2001 to 24 in 2011.
- The remaining districts are above the state average.
- The districts above state average, which are 26 in numbers, constitute 46.06 percent population



**Division wise growth rate**

- Highest growth rate during 1991-2001 was observed in Bhopal

Division while in 2001-2011 it is observed in Indore Division.

- Lowest growth rate during 1991-2001 was in Jabalpur Division while in 2001-2011 is in Narmadapuram Division.
- Highest fall in the growth rate observed in Rewa Division (7.70 points) followed by Ujjain Division (7.60 points).
- The lowest fall in the growth rate observed in Shahdol Division (0.10 points) followed by Chambal Division (0.50 points)

**Nutrition:**

If extent of under-nourishment of children under five is taken as an indicator of the quality of life for the future population, Madhya Pradesh draws a dismal picture as it has the highest percentage (51%) of children chronically undernourished.

**Health and Family Welfare**

A look at the key survival indicators reveals extremely high levels of mortality. Comparing the transition over the last decade, one does notice a little improvement. Prevalence of high mortality rates are a serious cause of concern. Deaths due to pregnancy and deliveries are common among women in the reproductive age groups. Reduction of mortality of women has been an area of concern and Government had set time bound targets to achieve it.

**Progress made by the state**

Census of India 2011 indicates that the gender gap in literacy has come down for the country from 24.8 percentage points in 1991 to 21.7 percentage points in 2001. Now the male literacy is 76.0 per cent and female literacy is 54.3. The gender gap in literacy is as low as 6.3 percentage points in Kerala and as high as 32.1 percentage points in Rajasthan. There appears to exist a strong inverse relationship between the gender gap in literacy and the status of women insociety.

Indicator <sup>1</sup>	1988-1990 (Unless otherwise stated)	2001 (Census) (Unless otherwise stated)	2006 (SRS, Oct. 2005) (Unless otherwise stated)
Life Expectancy at Birth	NA	55.2 years (92-96 - SRS) 53.7 - Rural, 63.0 - Urban	56.9 years (98-02, RGI, India) 57 - Male, 56.7 - Female
Total Fertility Rate	4.8 ('90 - SRS) 5.1 - Rural 3.4 - Urban	3.31 ('98 - NFHS-III) 3.56 - Rural 2.62 - Urban	3.1 ('05-06 - NFHS-III) 2.58 - Rural 3.14 - Urban
Infant Mortality Rate	111 ('90 - SRS) 120 - Rural 61 - Urban	86 92 - Rural 53 - Urban	76 - Total 80 - Rural 54 - Urban
Maternal Mortality Rate	N.A.	498 ('97 - SRS)	365 ('97-03) - SRS

The indicators are for the undivided M.P.

**Women related key indicators of M.P**

As is clear from the above table, there is no considerable change in the key survival indicators in the last ten years. Still Madhya Pradesh has the highest Infant Mortality rate among Indian states.

**Total Fertility Rate:**

It is estimated that the state of MP would attain the replacement level TFR of 2.1 in about three to four decades at the present annualized rate of decline in the TFR. The figure below shows that the Total Fertility Rate has declined at a rate much lower than that of the rate of decline for the nation in the initial years but in last decade Madhya Pradesh has tried to catch up the national average and in 2005 TFR (MP) is 3.12 (NFHS-III) and TFR (India) is 3, marginally less than that of Madhya Pradesh.

**Age at Marriage:**

The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1978 has set the minimum age for marriage for girls at 18 years. According to the 1998-99 NFHS data, age at marriage is steadily increasing in the State, but all the same the percent of women marrying below 18 years of age is high. NFHS-2 records that 75 percent of all women, 84 percent of rural women and 52 percent of urban Women married before 18 years.

**Education:** Though it is gradually rising, the female literacy rate in the state is lower than the male literacy rate. Compared to boys, far fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. According to the National Sample Survey Data of 1997, only the states of Kerala and Mizoram have approached universal female literacy

rates. According to majority of the scholars, the major factor behind the improved social and economic status of women in Kerala is literacy. It is due to poor distribution of resources and opportunities. Other measures such as attendance rate and Gender Equality in Education Index (GEEI) are also developed to further capture the quality of education. However, Census 2011 records a major leap in the literacy rate in the State. From 29.4 in 1991 literacy rate moved to 60.0 percent while it is 80% in male.

**Literacy status: Madhya Pradesh- Census 2011**

Total population - 7,25,97,565  
Literate persons - 4,38,27,193

Decadal variation in Literacy rate: Madhya Pradesh 1981-2011			
Year	Literacy Rate		
	Person	Male	Female
1981	28.3	39.7	16.0
1991	44.7	58.6	29.4
2001	63.7	76.1	50.3
2011	70.6	80.5	60.0

Literates Males - 2,58,48,137  
Literates Females - 1,79,79,056

**Literacy Rate - Census 2011 and Census 2001**

	2011	2001	Increase
Literates Rate Persons -	70.6	63.7	6.9
Literates Rate Males -	80.5	76.1	4.4
Literates Rate Females -	60.0	50.3	9.7

Number of Literates and Illiterates among population aged 7 years and above and their change (2001 and 2011)			
	Persons	Males	Females
<b>Literates</b>			
2001	3,95,92,348	1,96,72,374	1,99,20,000
2011	4,38,27,193	2,34,48,137	1,79,79,056
Increase in 2011 over 2001	4,22,34,850	41,75,863	60,58,767
<b>Illiterates</b>			
2001	1,79,76,266	81,92,881	1,17,83,718
2011	2,85,72,077	82,67,828	2,49,78,253
Increase in 2011 over 2001	2,06,85,811	56,275	1,96,53,566

Decadal variation in Literacy Rate : India, Madhya Pradesh and neighboring States (1971-2011)					
India/State	Literacy rate(Person)				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Bihar	29.45	43.56	52.23	65.38	74.04
Madhya Pradesh	27.27	38.63	44.67	64.13	70.63
Uttar Pradesh	23.99	32.65	40.73	57.36	69.72
Maharashtra	39.18	55.83	64.87	77.27	82.91
Gujarat	35.79	52.21	61.29	69.97	79.31
Chhattisgarh	24.28	41.38	47.91	65.18	71.64
Rajasthan	19.07	30.08	38.55	41.05	47.04

**District level analysis:**

- Considering the literacy rate by sex,
- Indore district has the highest male literacy rate (82.2%)
- Bhopal district has the highest female literacy rate (76.6%).
- Alirajpur district has the lowest male literacy rate (43.6%) as well as female literacy rate (31.0%).
- population aged seven years and above and the absolute number of literates in 2001, and their absolute decadal and percentage difference between 2001 and 2011.
- The percentage decadal increase in population aged seven years and above during 2001-2011 is 25.19
- Corresponding increase in the number of literates is 38.73.

**District level analysis: Illiterates:**

- Although the total number of illiterates in the state has increased during the decade, there are 26 districts where absolute number of illiterates has declined. The highest contribution in this decline is from Sagar district, where the number of illiterates decreased by 77,588.
- In remaining 24 districts, the number of illiterates has increased.
- The maximum increase in the number of illiterates has taken place in West Nimar with an increase of 1,11,896.

**District level analysis:**

- The gap between male and female literacy rates was 25.7 point

in Census 2001 which has now reduced to 21.5 point in census 2011.

- The gap between male and female literacy rate is highest in Neemuch district
- whereas it is lowest in Bhopal district.
- In 2001 Census,
- 39 districts reported literacy rates less than seventy per cent and had a share of 73.6 per cent of state's population
- whereas in 2011 Census, the number of districts with literacy rates less than seventy per cent has reduced to 23.
- In 2001 Census,
- 11 districts reported literacy rates of seventy per cent or more
- whereas in 2011 Census, the number of districts with literacy rates seventy per cent or more has gone up to 27.

### Economic Profile

Women's contribution to the economy of the nation continues to be under-reported largely because of under estimation of the role of women in various sectors of economy. Besides, the continual differences in men's and women's pay, unequal access to stable employment, the maintenance and sometimes the stress of job etc. found as in other parts of the country.

In Madhya Pradesh, a large percent of population is dependent on agriculture, as cultivators and agricultural labourers. Further, studies have shown that women as cultivators, labourers or unpaid labourers in their own farm land do the quantum of work in agriculture sector which is much higher and more tedious than that of men. Women play significant role in sowing, weeding, harvesting and maintenance of the harvest while other supportive tasks like transportation and marketing are exclusively performed by men.

### Responses of State Government:

Gender development and mainstreaming requires gender responsive policy interventions. Government recognized that women are equal players in economy whether they participated directly as workers or indirectly as members of care economy. State government gives very high priority to women related issues. State focus is not only restricted to conventional issues like education, health but it also involves other areas of public expenditure, revenue and policy with a gender perspective. The government intends to make women self-reliant and economically strong through formulating schemes, policy and legal provisions helpful in every walk of life. The state government has demonstrated its efforts towards empowerment of women through various initiatives, some of them are as follows:

### The state government initiatives:

#### Governance:

- Organized "Mahila Panchayat" (a mega event to recognize the voice of women at state level) on 30/07/2009 under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister of the state. CM announced many schemes for the welfare of women.
- The historic bill to give women candidates a 50% reservation in Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies was passed by the legislative assembly.
- Decision to reserve 50% posts for women in Van Samities was taken. The decision that a woman candidate must hold the position of either chairman or vice chairman was also taken.
- The state government is well aware that women can play an effective role in matters concerning society if provided opportunities. Water and sanitation is main concern of each rural woman, state government has constituted the village level women exclusive committees as nodal implementing agency for water and sanitation work. Till Jan. 2010 all the villages are having ad-hoc committees in MP. Orientation and training is provided by Department of Panchayat and Rural Development to all members of the committee.
- 33% of all the government jobs are reserved for women except very few exceptions.

### Focus on Gender in Delivery of Services:

Government of Madhya Pradesh has started some effective schemes and interventions for the welfare of women, these schemes have got tremendous response from the women of M.P.

### The schemes that are focusing gender sensitivity are as under:

1. Janani Suraksha Yojana
2. Usha Kiran Scheme
3. Ladli Laxmi Scheme
4. Project Shaktiman
5. Mukhya-Mantri Kanyadan Yojana
6. Development of Special Education Zone for Women
7. Mangal Divas
8. Prasooti Sahayata Yojana
9. Gaon Ki Beti Yojana
10. Swayam Sidha Yojana
11. Nai Swarnim Yojana
12. Kanya Shiksha Pratsahan Yojana
13. Kanya Utkarshatha Shiksha Kendra Yojana
14. Free Bicycle Yojana
15. Rastriya Maternity Benefit Yojana
16. Swadhar Yojana
17. Legal Support to Women
18. Rehabilitation Training Programme for Vulnerable Women
19. Kanya Shiksha Parisar
20. Ashram Shala
21. SC/ST Rahat Yojana
22. Kisan Didi Training Programme
23. Housing Scheme for the Working Women
24. Deendayal Small Loan Yojana
25. Fruit Preservation Training to Women
26. Vivah Sahayata Yojana
27. Mahila Samridhi Yojana

### Gender Budgeting in Madhya Pradesh

Gender System was one of the most important inclusions in annual plans since 2007-08. Madhya Pradesh is the first state to implement gender-based budgeting in the country. State has started the gender budgeting in the 2007-08; many of departments of the government. Gender budget analysis provides women with an indicator of government's commitment to address women's specific needs and rights to health care, education and employment. It shows how revenue collection and changes in tax structure can impact women differently from men, especially in the case of single mothers and women in the unorganized sector. There is a separate provision for the empowerment of women plan in two categories of scheme:

Schemes under Category (I) – Schemes with 100% budgetary provision for women or girl child only.

Scheme under Category (II) – Schemes with minimum 30% budgetary provision for women or girl child.

For Annual plan 2010-11, 25 departments have under taken exercise of gender budgeting.

Women component in total budget accounts for around 38 % in 2010-11. These departments are Scheduled Tribe Welfare Department, Scheduled Caste Welfare Department, Woman and Child Development, Social Justice, Higher Education, Village Industries, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, Health and family welfare, Horticulture, Aviation, Rural Development, Other Backward Class, Industry, Agriculture, Urban Administration, School Education, Sports and Youth Welfare, Panchayat, Food, Medical Education, Ayush, Land Records, Technical Education and Craftsmen Training.

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