

# Gender disparities in Punjab

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## Abstract

*No nation or community can hold its head high and claim to be the part of civilised world if it condones the practice of discrimination against one half of the community. India's population has been marked by a low and declining gender ratio ever since the beginning of Census operations in the country. This has been a matter of much investigation and speculation among researchers and policy makers. In Punjab, beside prosperity, the state has shown some serious cause of concern related to demographic issues. According to the Gender Statistics 2012 of Punjab female constitutes 47.23 percent of the total population of the state as compared to the 48.5 percent at national average. In spite of all the great efforts by the state government and non government organisations in Punjab, the sex ratio still lags behind the national average which was 941 in 1961 and 943 in 2011. Unfortunately the females are always the subject to neglect from the historical times. This type of treatment still persisted in the recent period but with varying amount. The researcher are trying to highlight those areas where the problem is becoming worse in last few years.*

## Introduction

The issue of gender disparity during the recent times has been subject of much concern especially in the developing nations. In most of the developed nations, the female population is usually equal to the number of males, in some cases it surpasses the number of males in these nations e.g In case of India the scenario is totally different, here the gender ratio is most imbalanced in the world. Gender Disparity is basically the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender and disparity in general refers to the inequalities in some quantity between two or more groups or lack of evenness or treating individuals unequally on the basis of gender. (Ghani Ezaz 2012) The study of gender issues is very important as it is the social indicator to measure the extent of prevailing equity between males and females in a society at a given point of time. Gender inequality is mainly the outcome of the interplay of sex differentials in mortality, sex selective migration, sex ratio at birth and at times the sex differentials in population enumeration. The declining sex ratio within any country, any area, any community automatically poses a question that why females are so much unwanted in the society?

In the country. India among the most populous countries in the world significantly shape the gender balance towards the skewed gender ratios which were tilted in favour of males. Such a demographic profile will necessarily have far reaching social consequences with widespread concern. According to 2011 census there are nearly 37.3 millions more men than women and it makes the overall gender composition unfavourable for females but the improvement in gender ratio in the last decade had given some confidence towards better social status to women in the country (Premi, 2012). It is believed that this has resulted to narrow down the gender disparity prevailing in India.

The state of Punjab reflects a very grim picture in Gender Related Development Index issues especially the sex ratio in the state. Such a trend of imbalanced gender ratio is a silent emergency but the crisis are real and its persistence has profound and frightening implications for society and the future of mankind. The effects of such a kind of imbalance are visible in the form of declining sex ratio at birth and overall adverse sex ratio. Although the gender ratio in Punjab has been consistently low, the situation was a little bit improving till 1991 but the census figures of 2001 was a great setback as the figures again show the downward trends but later in 2011 the situation is slightly showing some of improvement with 940 females per 1000 males, it may be because of long term efforts done by different organisations and government bodies. The consistently low sex ratio proves that in Punjab the boys are preferred over girls. Abortion of female foetus, sex determination tests, low status of the girls and women in rural areas and less attention in upbringing and health facilities to females are among the main reasons for the lower sex ratio in Punjab. Broadly seen that in the state the northern areas has high sex ratio as compare to the

southern districts, the low sex ratio in Ludhiana district is due to the presence of lakhs of migrants who left behind their families in their home state.(Manku,D.S.2002)

“**Gender**” term refers to the differentiation or varying attitudes between persons on the basis of their sex. There are two kinds of differences between men and women i.e. sex and gender. Sex signifies the physical and biological differences between females and males, which is the natural phenomenon. On the other hand gender refers to the socially constructed differences between men and women.

**Disparity** is a condition of being unequal and it is a noticeable difference and usually refers to the difference as well as discrimination that is unfair or **Discrimination** is associated with prejudice and regarded as objectionable. It may entail behaviour either to benefit an individual or harm the individual concerned. It refers to a belief in relation to gender of a person which may or may not carry legal consequences but is of social nature

## Study Area

Punjab is the classic example of fast growing economy. It enjoys the credit of ushering the green revolution in the country. The land of five rivers, Punjab lies in the North West corner of India. It is one of the world’s oldest civilisations that are the Indus Valley civilisation.

### a. Geographical Set up:

The present Punjab occupies 1.54% of the total geographical area of the country and has the total area covered is 50,362 square kilometres

**Latitude Extent:** 29°30’N-32°32’N

**Longitude Extent:** 73°55’E - 76°50’E

The state is bordered by Pakistan from the western side and Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Himachal in the north east and Haryana and Rajasthan in the south. On the whole the state lies in the western part of northern plains of India.

### a. The administrative structure is concerned Punjab has:

Divisions	5
Districts	22
Sub divisions	81
Tehsils	81
Sub Tehsils	86
Blocks	146
Towns	143
Total villages	12673

Source – www.pbplanning.govt.in (2012-13)

### a. Demographic profile

Punjab is a small state having an area of 50362sq km. which is 1.56% of the total area of India. According to latest census reports there lived around 2.4% people of India in Punjab.

Description	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971
Population Growth	13.89%	19.76%	20.80	23.89	21.69
Density/km <sup>2</sup>	551	484	403	333	269
Area(Km <sup>2</sup> )	50,362	50,362	50362	50362	50376

Source: Economic and Statistical Organisation, Punjab, Director Census operations, Punjab

According to the census 2011, total population of Punjab is 2,77,43,338. The decadal change i.e increase in the population from 2001 to 2011 i.e 13.89%. The important feature is that the decadal growth is lowest since 1961.(www.punjabdata.com)

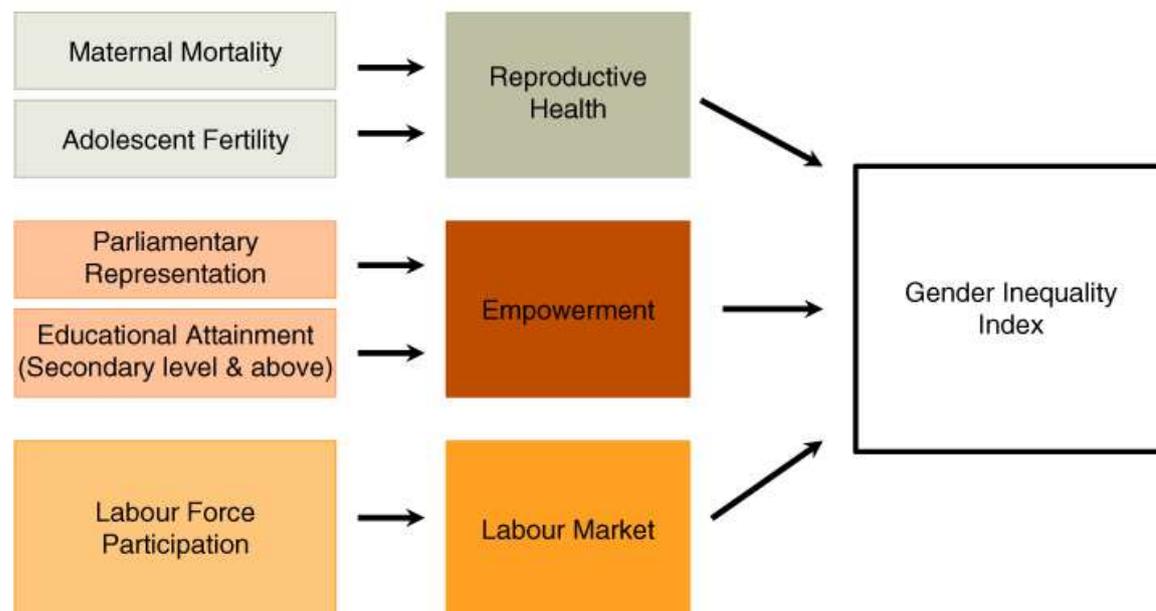
As far as the density of population is concerned, Punjab is one of the densely populated states of India i.e 551 as compare to national average of 382 persons per square kilometre. Among all the districts.

### .Database and Methodology

The present study is based on the secondary data obtained from the variety of authentic government sources. Some of the data is available in the published form while remaining is downloaded from the official websites of the government offices from the internet. The main sources of data are census publications, various books, research papers in the journals, Statistical Abstract of Punjab and Punjab-at-a-Glance, district wise.

## World's scenario of gender inequalities:

In the world there is no country with perfect gender equality, all countries suffer from some loss of human development due to gender inequalities. The gender inequality in a country can be measured by Gender Inequality Index (GII). It was introduced in 2010 Human Development Report by UNDP i.e United Nations Development Programme after a lot of criticisms. It ranks countries according to their gender gaps. The ten highest ranked countries according to human development report 2011 are all European countries i.e Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Germany, Slovenia, France and Iceland. The lowest ranked countries in these terms are Yemen, Afghanistan, Niger Saudi Arabia and Congo. According to UNDP, this index is a composite measure which captures the loss of achievement within a country due to gender inequality. It uses three dimensions: Reproductive health, Empowerment and Labour market participation.



Source-UNDP Human Development Report 2013

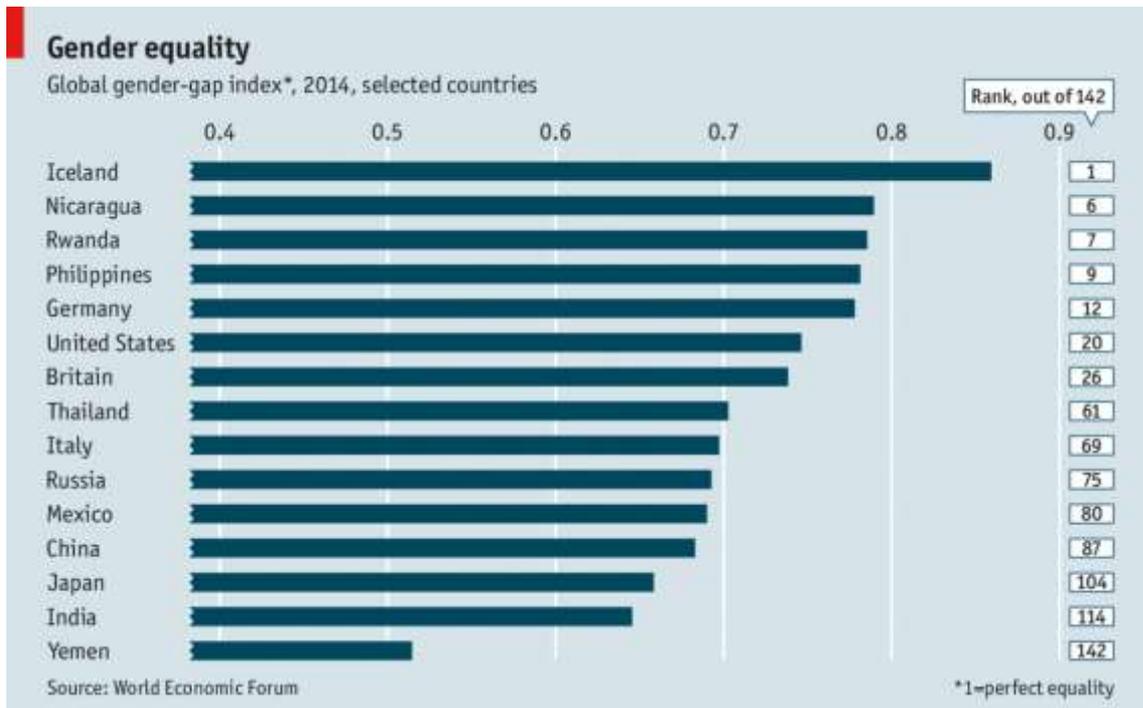
## Indian scenario of gender inequalities:

India's poor rank in various global gender indices reflects clearly its picture in gender inequality. According to UNDP Gender inequality index, India's ranking is 127 out of 152 countries in the list. World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index 2014, India's ranks 114 in the list of 142 countries of the world. In both GII and GGGI the India is far behind the developed nations of the world.

The index examines the gender gap in four major areas and India's positions on these indicators are:

- Economic participation and opportunity - ranked 134
- Educational achievements – ranked 126
- Health and life expectancy- ranked 141
- Political empowerment- ranked 15

The above global indices show the sorry state of affairs for India except in the case of political empowerment.



### Punjab scenario of gender inequalities:

#### Sex Ratio-

Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousands females. Females constitute 47.23% of total population of the state as compared to 48.5% at national level. Although sex ratio has improved from 854 in 1961 to 895 in 2011 in the state yet it still lagged behind the national average which was 941 in 1961 and 943 in 2011.

Description	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971
Sex Ratio	895	876	882	879	865
Child Sex Ratio	846	798	875	962	875

Source: Economic and Statistical Organisation, Punjab, Director, Census operations, Punjab

On the other hand, sex ratio in 0-6 year’s age group has decreased from 901 in 1961 to 846 in 2011 which is a serious cause of concern. At the national level also, this ratio declined from 976 in 1961 to 914 in 2011

**Inter-District sex ratio in Punjab:**

District	Sex Ratio
Ludhiana	873
Amritsar	889
Gurdaspur	895
Jalandhar	915
Ferozepur	893
Patiala	891
Sangrur	885
Hoshiarpur	961
Bathinda	868
Tarn Taran	900
Moga	893
Mohali	879
Muktsar	896
Kapurthala	912
Mansa	883
Rupnagar	915
Faridkot	890
SBS Nagar	954
Fatehgarh Sahib	871
Barnala	876

Source: Economic and Statistical Organisation, Punjab, Director, Census operations, Punjab

Among districts in the State, Hoshiarpur has the highest sex ratio i.e. 961(2011 census) which is comparable to Tamil Nadu (996). Doaba region (Jalandhar, Hosiarpur, Kapurthala and partial Rupnagar districts) of the state are the top ranking districts in terms of sex ratio where range of Sex Ratio is between 912 to 961. The district with lowest sex ratio was Bathinda (868) which is close to sex ratio of Delhi (866).Sex ratio in the 0-6 age group as per 2011 census was highest (885) in SBS Nagar followed by Jalandhar (874). It was lowest in district Tarn Taran (820)and Gurdaspur (821)

**Literacy:**

Differences in female and male literacy rates are one aspect of this broader phenomenon of gender-based inequality in Punjab. As per 2011 Population census, the literacy rate in Punjab is 75.8% which is higher than the literacy rate of 69.95% in 2001. In 2011, only 70.7% of females in Punjab were literate compared to 80.4% of men. The male and female literacy rates were 75.6% and 63.55% respectively in 2001. Inter- District Analysis reveals that female literacy is highest in Hoshiarpur district (80.3%) which is comparable to Delhi (80.8%) whereas lowest literacy rate was in Mansa district (55.7%) which was comparable to Jharkhand (55.4%). Gap in literacy rate of male & female in Punjab has also decreased over the years. During 2001 and 2011, the literacy gap came down from 11.9% to 9.7% respectively. It is observed that female literacy rate is continuously increasing. It may be due to government rules & policies.

Description	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971
Literacy	75.84 %	69.65 %	58.51	40.86	33.67
Male Literacy	80.44 %	75.23 %	65.66	47.16	40.4
Female Literacy	70.70 %	63.36 %	50.41	33.69	25.9
Total Literate	18,707,137	14,756,970	9,248,757	6,860,349	4,562,123
Male Literate	10,436,056	8,442,293	5,739,194	4,214,878	2,934,281
Female Literate	8,271,081	6,314,677	3,751,266	2,645,471	1,627,842

Source: Economic and Statistical Organisation,Punjab,Director,Census operations,Punjab.

### Inter District disparities of literacy rate in Punjab

District	Literacy Rate
Ludhiana	82.20
Amritsar	76.27
Gurdaspur	79.95
Jalandhar	82.48
Ferozepur	68.92
Patiala	75.28
Sangrur	67.99
Hoshiarpur	84.59
Bathinda	68.28
Tarn Taran	67.81
Moga	70.68
Mohali	83.8
Muktsar	65.81
Kapurthala	79.07
Mansa	61.83
Rupnagar	82.19
Faridkot	69.55
SBS Nagar	79.98
Fatehgarh Sahib	79.35
Barnala	67.82

Source: Economic and Statistical Organisation, Punjab, Director, Census operations, Punjab.

As per the table The districts which are more literate Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Mohali and Rupnagar and the districts having least literacy are Mansa, Muktsar, Bathinda, TarnTaran and Sangrur. All these districts are showing literacy rate less than seventy percent as per the census records of 2011.

It is concluded from the results that gender disparity is higher in some of the districts, but in some developed districts of Punjab, there is successive decrease in gender disparity as compared to Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, by enforcement of government rules, policies and along with that general awareness of people can reduce this difference. Literacy rate and sex ratio are two most important aspect of any society or country as they determine the development stage of society or country. The area having low sex ratio and low literacy rate are considered as backward or undeveloped area of the world. Literacy is one of the important aspects of demography and considered as a fairly reliable index of socio-cultural and economic advancement

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