

Socio-Economic Status and Role of Women: Indian Scenario

Devender Singh

Department of Economics, M.D.University IGPGRC, Meerpur, Rewari, India

Email: hdevender@gmail.com

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, women's empowerment has been increasingly recognized as a crucial factor for any country's holistic and sustainable development. Policy makers have suggested that gender equity is very much interlinked with most of the development policy of a country and it is crucial for meeting the international development standard like, Human Development Index, Gender Empowerment Index, Millennium Development Goals, etc. It has been identified that gender inequality can constrain the outcomes of macroeconomic policies. For instance, economic reforms with decreased incentives can reduce women's output or restricted access to education or training can hamper women's ability to develop their human resources (World Bank, 1995). It is not only costly to women, but it is also costly to children and men. Women's empowerment can provide the possibility for all countries to have some combination of increased productivity, improved human resources, less stress and better overall education and health.

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Keywords: Care economy; dropout rate; gender disparity; literacy rate; time use survey; women's empowerment

Introduction

Gender inequalities have been recognized inefficient and costly to sustainable economic growth and full social development of a country (Elson, Diane 1999; Klasen, 1999; Hewitt and Mukhopadhyay, 2002). As compared to men, women tend to have a more deprived and subordinate status, in terms of access to resources, enjoyment of rights and freedoms. That is, women along with men should have to be an integral part of national development policies, strategies and programmes. In 1979, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This has profound implications for women's capability to conduct their autonomous lives in the society. Reduction in gender inequality tends to increase agriculture yields (Saito and Spurling, 1992). It has been argued that Gender equality can benefit the economy through efficiency gains. From the efficiency consideration, what is important is the social rate of return of investment in women, and in case, this can be greater than the corresponding rate for men.¹ That is why; to empower the women is now become a basic goal of most of the countries. There are various types of gender inequalities exist in India like in the sector of education, health, decision-making and political participation etc. The gender inequalities in access to education, health care and nutrition lead to capability deprivation. The census, 2001 data also indicated that the relative deprivation of women continues to be

significantly high in India. The ‘missing women’ approach given by ‘Amartya Sen’ showed the relative position of women in sex ratio that is acute in India. This ‘Missing Women’ approach does give some insight into the acuteness of the problem of gender inequality in matters of life and death. It also indicates the history of inequalities in morbidity and of unequal medical care. Literature indicates that such a situation affects the human development index, productivity, efficiency and economic development of a country. Therefore, to know about the existing gender situation in India is very important for designing appropriate remedial measures, interventions and policies. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to look for the profile of gender inequalities in education and health, work participation rate and their political participation (Role in Economy).

Gender Development Index (GDI) worldwide measures the gender inequalities. The GDI is a gender-sensitive adaptation of Human Development Index (HDI). Health and education sector inequalities covered under Gender Development Index. It adjusts the gender inequalities in life expectancy, educational attainment (gross enrolment ratio and literacy rate) and income. A lower value of GDI relative to that of HDI means that women not only have low overall achievements in human development, but their achievements are even lower than that of men. Low GDI reflects gender disparity in basic capabilities because of lack of education and health standards. However, it may be noted that India’s HDI has improved over the period from 0.437 in 1985 to 0.619 in 2005. However, its value is much lower than most of the developed and developing countries (Figure 1 and Appendix I). The state wise HDI value presented in Figure 2 and Appendix II crystal clear that there are wide variations across the states. Some states show improvement in their HDI whereas some show either constant or declining in their overall ranking.

A higher value of gender disparity index (GDI) indicates higher the women status in that particular state or a county. The gender disparity index of India is also improved during the period of 1981 to 1991 with wide variations across the states. Haryana is one of the best performing state in India in improving the gender disparity index. The GDI rank of Haryana was 13th in 1981 improved to 7th in 1991. Some other state has also improved its index (Figure 3 and Appendix III).

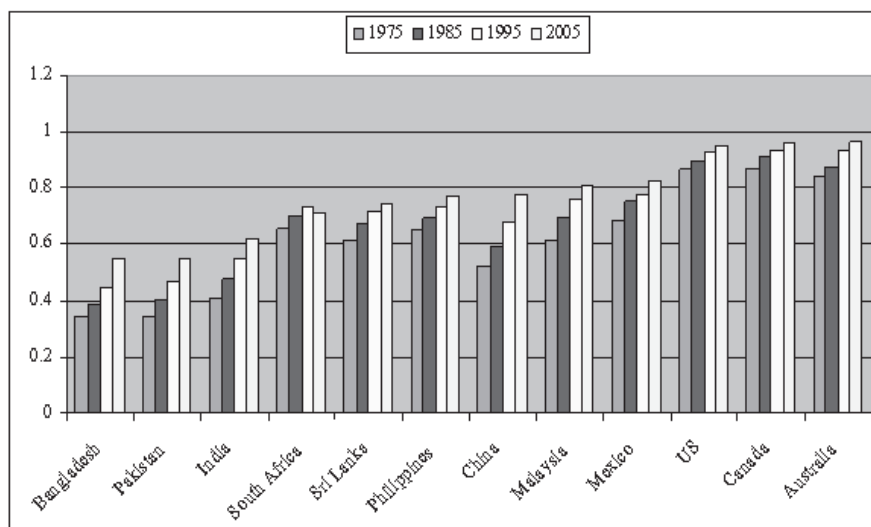


Figure 1: Trends in Human Development Index of Selected Countries

Source: Human Development Report, UNDP, 2006.

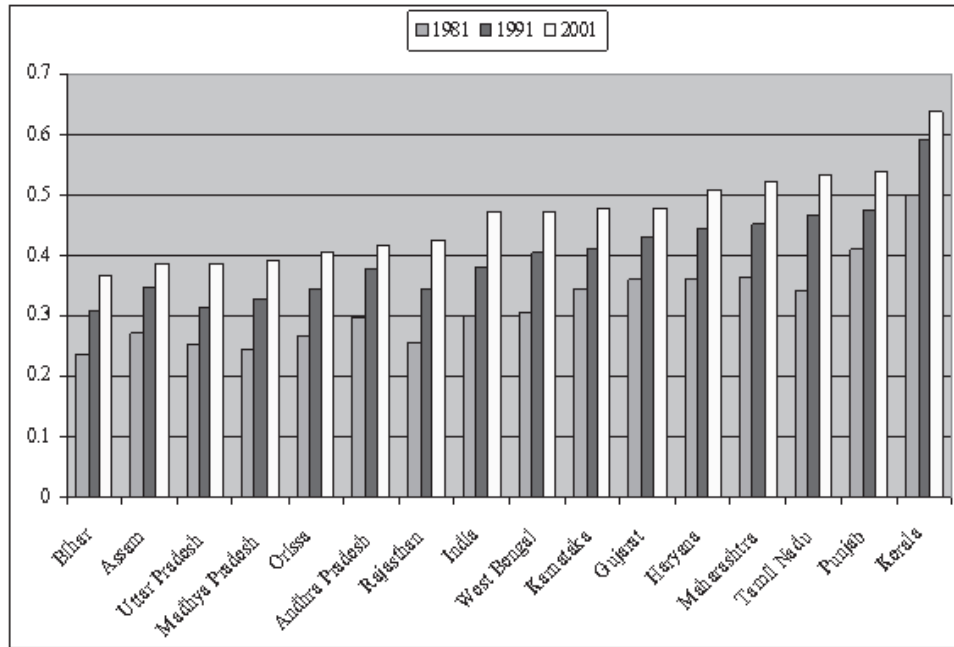


Figure 2: Selected State-wise Human Development Index (HDI) in India
 Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, Government of India

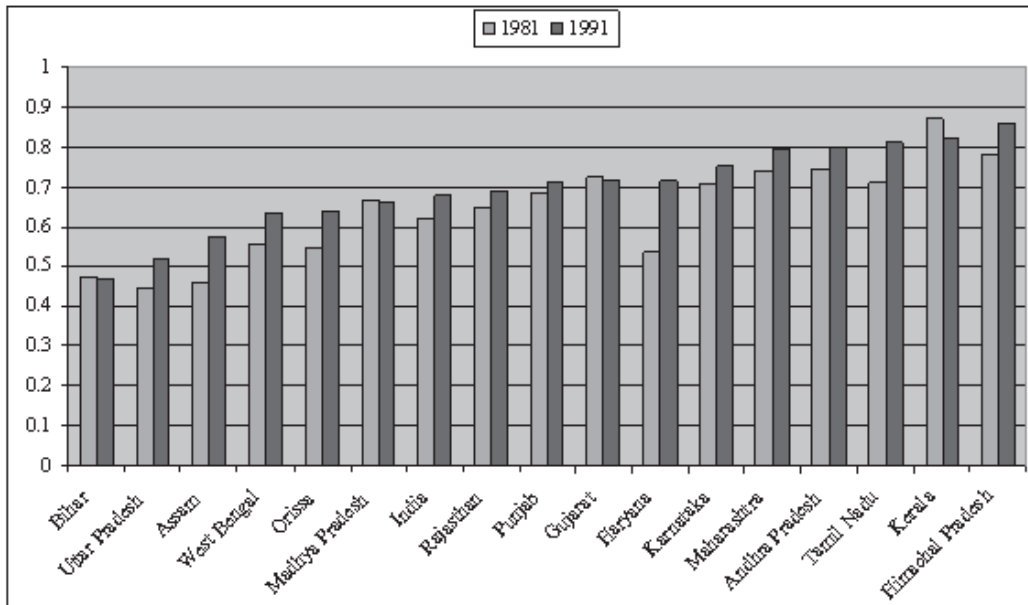


Figure 3: Selected State-wise Gender Disparity Index in India
 Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, Government of India

However, to know about the gender inequalities in detail different sector wise analysis is important. Therefore, in the next section, paper will focus on gender inequalities in the area of education attainment, health, their work participation rate and political participation across the states.

Education Status

Education has been recognized as an essential agent of social change and development in any society. The likelihood of children being enrolled in school goes up with their mother’s educational level, and mother’s extra income has more impact that is positive on household investments in nutrition, health and education of children than extra income accruing to fathers (World Bank, 1995). Hence, to think of harmonious without educating women is impossible. Further, it has been rightly said that to educate a women is to educate the whole family and whole nation in broader sense of the word. That is why the emphasis with regard to women’s education should be to equip her for the multiple roles as citizens, housewives, mothers, contributors to family income and builders of the new society. To understand the importance of education in general and the need for equality in opportunities for the intellectual development of men and women, successive five-year plans have regularly placed special emphasis on the acceleration of women’s education. This has had a significant impact on the progress of women’s education in India. The women’s status in terms of education attainment can be workout from various indicators like female enrolment ratio at different level of education, drop out rate, and overall literacy rate. In India, the female enrolment ratio is low as compare to other Asian, developed and developing countries. However, the literacy rate has improved over the period from 29.7

Table 1: State-wise Literacy Rate in India

(In Percent)

States	1981			1991			2001		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
Andhra Pradesh	46.83	24.16	35.66	55.13	32.72	44.09	70.85	51.17	61.11
Assam	-	-	-	61.87	43.03	52.89	71.93	56.03	64.28
Bihar	46.6	16.52	32.05	52.49	22.89	38.48	60.32	33.57	47.53
Gujarat	65.14	38.46	52.21	73.13	48.64	61.29	76.46	55.61	66.43
Haryana	58.51	26.93	43.88	69.1	40.47	55.85	79.25	56.31	68.59
Himachal Pradesh	64.27	37.72	51.18	75.36	52.13	63.86	84.57	67.08	75.91
Karnataka	58.73	33.17	46.21	67.26	44.34	56.04	76.29	57.45	67.04
Kerala	87.73	75.65	81.56	93.62	86.13	89.81	94.2	87.86	90.92
Madhya Pradesh	48.42	23.97	36.63	58.42	28.85	44.2	76.5	50.55	64.08
Maharashtra	69.65	41.01	55.83	76.56	52.32	64.87	86.27	67.51	77.27
Orissa	56.45	25.14	40.97	63.09	34.68	49.09	75.95	50.97	63.61
Punjab	55.56	39.7	48.17	65.66	50.41	58.51	75.63	63.55	69.95
Rajasthan	44.77	14	30.11	54.99	20.44	38.55	76.46	44.34	61.03
Tamil Nadu	68.05	40.43	54.39	73.75	51.33	62.66	82.33	64.55	73.47
Uttar Pradesh	47.45	17.19	33.35	55.73	25.31	41.6	70.23	42.97	57.36
West Bengal	59.93	36.07	48.65	67.81	46.56	57.7	77.58	60.22	69.22
India	56.38	29.76	43.57	64.13	39.29	52.21	75.64	54.03	65.2

Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, Government of India

percent in 1981 to 54.03 percent in 2001. This indicates a better sign for gender empowerment. The variations across the states in female literacy ratio are high in India (Table 2).

Table 2: State-wise Gross Enrolment Ratio in Classes I-V and VI-VIII for General Education in India (As on 30.09.2005)

States	Classes I-V (6-11 years)			Classes VI-VIII (11-14 years)			Classes IX-XII (14-18 years)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra Pradesh	94.39	95.35	94.87	75.49	72.26	73.91	86.94	86.3	86.63
Assam	94.41	95.12	94.76	71.31	66.08	68.76	85.66	84.21	84.95
Bihar	99.21	74.36	87.2	41.28	26.48	34.27	77.77	57.08	67.84
Gujarat	127.24	110.63	119.44	81.12	66.45	74.24	109.72	93.89	102.29
Haryana	78.21	81.29	79.61	74.93	74.7	74.83	76.95	78.78	77.79
Himachal Pradesh	108.53	109.29	108.89	109.19	106.37	107.84	108.78	108.15	108.48
Karnataka	107.35	104.99	106.19	86.07	83.14	84.64	99.11	96.58	97.87
Kerala	93.7	94.01	93.85	100.29	95.5	97.94	96.17	94.57	95.39
Madhya Pradesh	146.65	140.49	143.67	97.51	85.26	91.67	128.26	120.14	124.35
Maharashtra	111.68	109.62	110.69	84.01	84.11	84.05	101.14	100.02	100.6
Orissa	109.99	108.3	109.17	66.75	58.79	62.85	93.43	89.23	91.38
Punjab	74.92	80.58	77.46	66.16	69.19	67.53	71.48	76.06	73.54
Rajasthan	124.69	118.4	121.69	87.27	59.45	74.12	110.8	96.72	104.11
Tamil Nadu	120.59	119.53	120.07	108.49	105.04	106.81	115.87	113.86	114.89
Uttar Pradesh	114.2	106.61	110.57	58.74	46.56	53.02	93.14	84.3	88.94
West Bengal	106.38	98.28	102.39	70.97	62.22	66.71	92.7	84.53	88.7
India	111.67	104.86	108.39	73.84	64.9	69.57	97.27	89.82	93.69

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

India's constitution guarantees free primary school education for both boys and girls up to age 14. In 1990, India signed on the declaration of 'Education for All by 2000'. The objective of the declaration was to reach the education for all children and reduce the gap between girls and boys. Even then, female are lagging behind the male in their education standard. Census 2001 indicates that only 54% women are literate as compared to 76% men (female literacy was 39 per cent in Census 1991). Female literacy is highest in Kerala (88%) and lowest in Bihar (33%). The Adult Literacy rate of females (aged 15 years and above) is 48% in 2001 against 73.4% for adult males (Table 1). It may be because of different socio-economic and cultural factors or low priority given by the state and central government in their budget.

The education status can also be measured by Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and drop out rate of girls. These standards are measured at four stages like, primary (I-V), upper primary (VI-VIII), secondary (X-XII) and higher education (degree onwards). These indicators are the basic indicators to gauge the gender gaps in access and utilisation of education in a country.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio tends to present an exaggerated picture of the extent to which children are getting educated, a distortion that seems to be greater for girls than for boys.² This distortion in data is acute in certain states because of the differences in the dropout rates between boys and girls (Figures 4 and 5). For

instance, the GER in Haryana, UP and Bihar state is quite low. In Kerala, the GER is high and this ratio at secondary level (across gender) is greater than that of primary level. The adult literacy rate across the states is higher for men than women and acute in low developing states. In spite of the strong commitment of the government of India towards 'Education for All' nearly half of the Indian women continue to be illiterate.

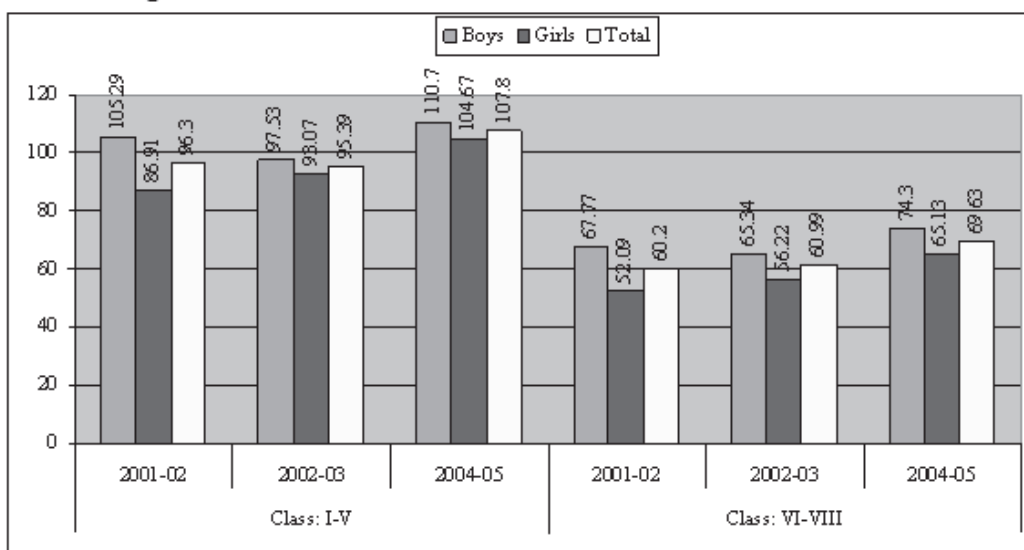


Figure 4: Gross Enrolment Ratio in School Education in India

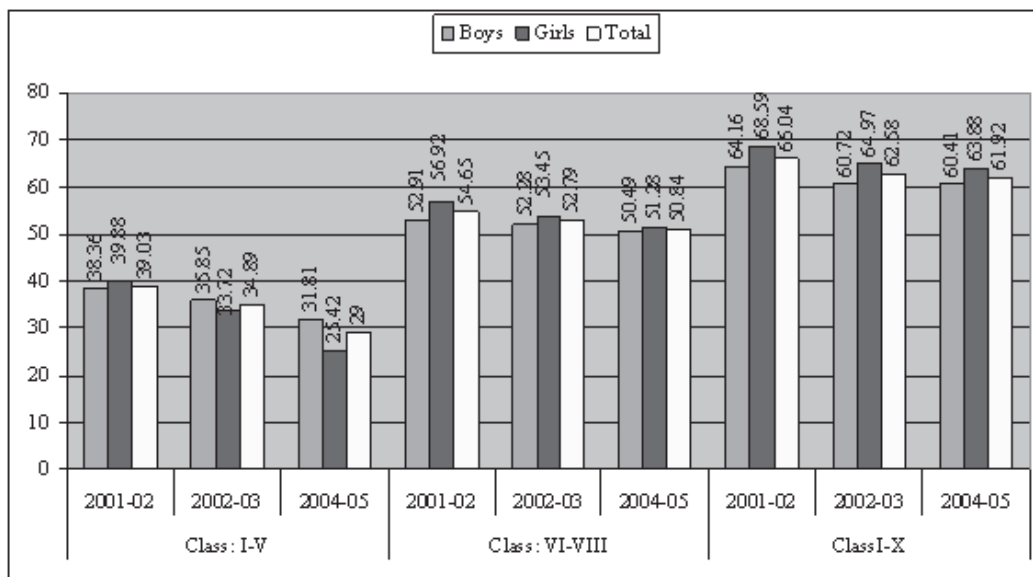


Figure 5: Dropout Rates in School Education in India

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

The dropout rate is higher in India and its values vary across the states³ (Table 3). There are various reasons to drop out of girls from educational system. For instance, marriage may be one of the reason that force girls in this age group to discontinue further formal education. Economic problem is another reason, which forces some girls to drop out and seek jobs, with a view to supporting their families.

The drops out rate of girls at the primary and secondary levels are higher than that of boys. At primary level, the dropout rate of girls, however, has declined from 38.36 in 2001-02 to 31.81 in 2004-05. The dropout rate is high and increasing over the education standard (Figure 5), which indicates low utilisation of higher education facilities by women. Moreover, girls and women in India have not been able to take full advantage of the available opportunities and facilities for intellectual development. The low level of educational attainment for females in India is primarily because of both demand and supply side constraints. Demand side constraints include the negative parental attitude towards investing in girl's education and educational costs. The poorer families find it difficult to bear the direct and opportunity costs of investing in female education. Supply constraints include inadequate infrastructure at school such as not enough classrooms, no water and sanitary facilities. Shortage of single-sex schools and female teachers sometimes act as inhibiting factors. School location can be important as it is found that greater the distance, lesser the female participation in education. Child labour and a girl's work burden in the care economy may be the principal barriers in achieving universal primary education.

Table 3: State-wise Dropout Rates in Classes I-V, I-VIII and I-X in India (2005-2006)

(in Percent)

States/UTs	Classes I-V			Classes I-VIII			Classes I-X		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra Pradesh	24.64	24.87	24.75	57.81	60.4	59.07	62.24	65.2	63.67
Assam	54.54	50.44	52.64	72.6	74.6	73.48	76.97	76.26	76.66
Bihar	47.37	45.25	46.55	72.3	75	73.37	80.73	84.61	82.26
Gujarat	39.62	17.81	31.58	42.57	51.45	46.41	58.57	62.59	60.27
Haryana	7.27	3.14	5.4	7.8	13.79	10.63	41.21	43.77	42.37
Himachal Pradesh	10.03	11.4	10.69	8.7	13.02	10.82	25.68	32.47	29
Karnataka	16.65	14.25	15.5	44.34	45.37	44.83	61.58	60.04	60.86
Kerala	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.44	2.42	4.98
Madhya Pradesh			0.29	40.64	41.19	40.88	60.52	68.68	64.02
Maharashtra	14.46	14.91	14.67	38.82	39.25	39.03	53.46	53.93	53.68
Orissa	41.66	27.44	35.66	64.83	59.49	62.63	67.87	60.85	65.03
Punjab	25.71	21.33	23.66	31.42	34.71	32.98	45.82	46.25	46.02
Rajasthan	57.2	45.94	52.84	55.72	64.64	59.47	71.36	81.8	75.73
Tamil Nadu	0	0	0	20.84	23.45	22.11	43.6	41.2	42.45
Uttar Pradesh	20.15	-7.42	9.76	42.99	38.53	41.25	39.05	47.36	42.26
West Bengal	37.58	42.94	40.18	61.16	63.88	62.45	72.82	77.68	75.12
India	29.52	22.5	26.45	49.64	50.36	49.95	60.41	63.44	61.74

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

It has been argued that the low level of female educational attainment results in women is low earning potential, low nutritional status, high level of mortality and low financial and functional autonomy within households. Women's education has a positive impact on the health and well-being of not only women but of children as well. Educated mothers provide nutritious diet; ensure more effective diagnosis of diseases and

timely health care. Empirical evidences show that mother’s education level is a significant determinant of low infant and child mortality rates.

Health Status

Improvement in health status of the population across gender and across states is helpful in achieving the national (11th plan) and international Millennium Development Goals. However, India is not performing well and lagging far behind in achieving the goals even like ‘Health for All by 2000’. However, life expectancy of female is higher than the men. It happened not because of government awareness towards health facilities but it has been argued that women tend to live longer than men because of biological advantage of survival of females over males across the world. The life expectancy at birth varies across the Indian states (Table 4).

Table 4: State-wise Life Expectancy at Birth across the State in India

(Year)

States/UTs	1992-96		1996-01		2001-06	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	60.8	63	61.5	63.7	62.8	65
Assam	56.1	56.6	57.3	58.8	59	60.9
Bihar	60.2	58.2	63.6	62.1	65.7	64.8
Gujarat	60.5	62.5	61.5	62.8	63.1	64.1
Haryana	63.4	64.3	63.9	67.4	64.6	69.3
Himachal Pradesh	64.4	65	NA	NA	-	-
Karnataka	61.1	64.5	61.7	65.4	62.4	66.4
Kerala	70.2	75.8	70.7	75	71.7	75
Madhya Pradesh	55.1	54.7	56.8	57.2	59.2	58
Maharashtra	63.8	66.2	65.3	68.1	66.8	69.8
Orissa	56.9	56.6	58.5	58.1	60.1	59.7
Punjab	66.4	68.6	68.4	71.4	69.8	72
Rajasthan	58.6	59.6	60.3	61.4	62.2	62.8
Tamil Nadu	62.8	64.8	65.2	67.6	67	69.8
Uttar Pradesh	57.7	56.4	61.2	61.1	63.5	64.1
West Bengal	61.8	63.1	64.5	67.2	66.1	69.3
India	60.1	61.4	62.4	63.4	64.1	65.4

Source: Health Information of India, 2002 & Ministry of Health & Family welfare, Government of India, various years.

The most commonly used indicators for women development are sex ratio and ‘missing women’. The sex ratio in India is low and declining over the period and varies across the states because of social, cultural, economic and political factors. However, this ratio improved in census 2001 compared to that of 1991. However, between the age group 0-6 years it declines. The declining sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years has become a matter of serious concern. The sex ratio (0-6) in Punjab and Haryana has declined from 875 and 879 in 1991 to 793 and 820 in 2001 (Table 5).

Table 5: State-wise Sex Ratio of Total Population and Population Age 0-6 Years in India
(Females per Thousand Males)

States	Sex Ratio					
	1981		1991		2001	
	Overall Population	Population 0-6 Years	Overall Population	Overall Population	Population 0-6 Years	Population 0-6 Years
Andhra Pradesh	975	992	972	974	978	964
Bihar	946	981	911	959	921	939
Delhi	808	926	827	915	821	865
Gujarat	942	947	934	928	921	878
Haryana	870	902	865	879	861	820
Karnataka	963	975	960	960	964	949
Kerala	1032	970	1036	958	1058	962
Madhya Pradesh	941	978	931	952	920	929
Maharashtra	937	956	934	946	922	917
Orissa	981	995	971	967	972	950
Punjab	879	908	882	875	874	793
Rajasthan	919	954	910	916	922	909
Tamil Nadu	977	967	974	948	986	939
Uttar Pradesh	885	935	879	928	898	916
West Bengal	911	981	917	967	934	963
India	935	962	927	945	933	927

Source: Census of India, Registrar General of India, 2001.

The disadvantage of female mortality is most pronounced in the reproductive years of life. The maternal mortality rate in India is as high as 400-500 per 100,000 live births as compared to six per 100,000 births in Norway. The maternal mortality rate, which was 424 deaths per one lakh live birth in 1991-92 (NFHS-1), has increased to 540 in 2000 (NFHS-2). This deterioration is mainly due to the lack of timely health care for pregnant and post-partum women. Moreover, this deterioration is because of low proportions of birth attended by medical professional and inadequate antenatal care. According to NFHS-2, only 37 percent of births are delivered in a medical institution and only about 42 deliveries are assisted by a health professional with a high variations across the states. However, institutional delivery in Kerala is 94 percent and low in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh about 15. The infections, hypertensive disorder, continuous abortions and anemia are the prime reasons behind maternal death in India. It has been argued that maternal mortality can be prevented with better access to medical care with more trained professionals to attend birth and better antenatal care including immunization programmes.

Table 6: State-wise Infant Mortality Rate by Sex in India

(Per 1000 lives birth)

States	2001			2005		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Andhra Pradesh	65	68	66	56	58	57
Assam	69	80	74	66	69	68
Bihar	57	68	62	60	62	61
Gujarat	61	60	60	52	55	54
Haryana	63	70	66	51	70	60
Karnataka	59	58	58	48	51	50
Kerala	14	9	11	14	15	14
Madhya Pradesh	83	89	86	72	79	76
Maharashtra	43	48	45	34	37	36
Orissa	90	93	91	74	77	75
Punjab	43	63	52	41	48	44
Rajasthan	78	82	80	64	72	68
Tamil Nadu	45	54	49	35	39	37
Uttar Pradesh	82	84	83	71	75	73
West Bengal	53	49	51	38	39	38
India	64	68	66	56	61	58

Source: Sample Registration System (SRS) Bulletin, Registrar General of India, Various issues.

The infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate are also high in India with enormous difference between states. The IMR in Kerala is as low as 15 for girls and 14 for boys, whereas, it is 77 and 75 in Orissa (See table 6). It has been argued that a low income state (like Kerala) can perform well in improving the health indicators with appropriate policies and co-existence of private and public sector institutions and can ensure a better health status of the population.

Role of Women

It may be noted that the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) captures the gender inequalities in the key areas of economic, political and decision-making participation. It differs from GDI in that it focuses on women’s opportunities rather than on gender inequalities in basic capabilities. The GEM is constructed based on the percentage share of men and women in parliament; in administrative, managerial positions, professional and in technical jobs; and it adjusted GDP per capita. The closer the value of GEM is to zero, indicate lack of women empowerment. The value of GEM near to one indicates high levels of empowerment of women. The India’s GEM value is 0.24, reveals the fact that women in India lag much behind in gaining access to economic and political opportunities (Figure 6).

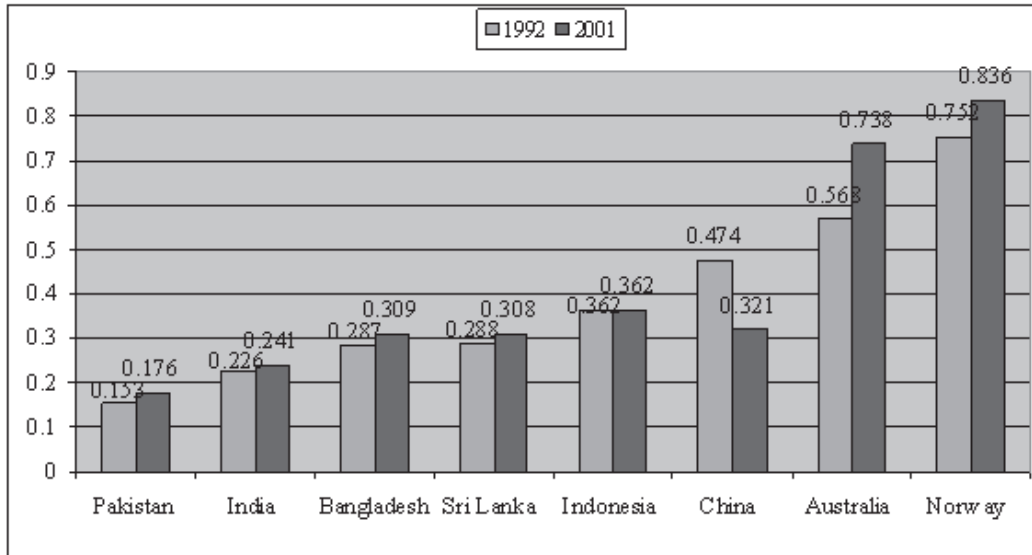


Figure 6: Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Index of some Countries

Source: Lahiri, A. et al., 2003

Moreover, the contribution of women and their participation in the economy is measured in terms of economic and political participation. The economic participations are measured in terms of Time Use in economic activities particularly in organized and unorganized sectors. The political participation includes the participation of women in decision-making and share of women in parliament. Therefore, it is important to analyze the changes in female work participation rates and political participation rate over a period to assess the impact of various programmes on female employment and political awareness in the country.

Table 7: State wise Workforce Participation Rate by Rural-Urban

State	1993-94				1999-2000				2004-05			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Andhra Pradesh	63.1	52.1	54.4	19.9	61.1	48	53.2	18.4	60.5	48.3	56	22.4
Assam	51.6	15.9	52.8	9.2	54.6	16.1	56.5	13.8	55.1	20.9	55.1	10.9
Bihar	51.1	17.2	43.9	6.9	50.3	17.4	46.6	8.2	47.7	13.8	45.2	6.5
Gujarat	57.4	39.6	53.5	14.2	58.7	41.3	54.7	13.8	59.3	42.7	57.8	15.1
Haryana	46.3	27.1	51.9	15.2	48.1	20.2	52	10.1	52.2	31.7	51.1	13.2
Himachal Pradesh	59	52	48.8	20.1	54.6	47.4	53.3	14.2	55.5	50.6	61.9	24.1
Karnataka	60.4	43	54.2	18.1	60.1	38.1	56.2	18.6	62.3	45.9	57.6	18.1
Kerala	53.7	23.8	55.9	20.3	58.7	27.3	59.1	25.4	55.9	25.6	54.7	20
Madhya Pradesh	57.2	41	47.1	14.2	54	38.3	50.9	13.6	54.4	36.6	52.5	15.4
Maharashtra	55.1	47.7	52.6	16.9	54.2	43.7	56.3	14.6	56.6	47.4	56	19
Orissa	56.6	31.7	51	15.1	56.4	30.2	51.1	15.3	58.6	32.2	50.4	14.8

Contd.

State	1993-94				1999-2000				2004-05			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Punjab	54.6	22	55.3	9.3	54.3	28.2	56.5	12.8	54.9	32.2	57.2	13.3
Rajasthan	54	45.7	49	16.3	50.3	38.9	49.9	14.1	51	40.7	50.8	18.2
Tamil Nadu	60.2	47.8	57.5	23	61	43.4	58.5	22.7	59.7	46.1	59.3	24.1
Uttar Pradesh	52.2	21.9	48.2	10.2	48.6	20.1	51.2	9.7	49.6	24	52.4	11.7
West Bengal	55.7	18.5	55	14.3	54.9	16.5	61.2	12.9	57.4	17.8	59.5	15.5
India	55.3	32.8	52.1	15.5	54	30.2	54.2	14.7	53.8	32.7	54.9	16.6

Note: M tends to male and F tends to female.

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India

It has been argued that with the long term economic development and macroeconomic changes associated with structural adjustment the work participation rate can decrease or increase. The structural adjustment and external liberalization have led to feminization/defeminization of labour in some countries.⁴ The work participation rate of male and female in the economic activities have been provided by the Census of India and National Sample Survey estimates. It may be noted that there are some inconsistency in the existing data on women contribution to the economy across these data sources in India. The estimate according to the longitudinal information on work force participation provided by Census is lower than that of NSS estimates. The NSS estimates reveal a sharp decrease in the work participation rate across gender in rural and urban India between the two 50th and 55th NSS rounds. However, it increases in the 62nd round, particularly in urban area (Table 7).

The Census data shows that the work participation rate for female has started increasing (after 1971) in recent years. It increased from 14.2 percent in 1971 to 22.3 percent in 1991. The work participation rate presented by the Ministry of labour in 2000-01 is shown in table 8. The Table shows that female work participation rate in Haryana is low. Total population of workers was 92.28 million in urban area, of which only 16.10 million were females (Census, 2001). In rural area, out of 310 million, 111 million were females. About 42.95% of the rural female population is involved in agricultural labour (not in cultivation). Women constitute 90 per cent of the total marginal workers of the country. As per National Sample Survey Organization, in 2004-05, the workforce participation rate of female in rural sector was 32.7 while that for male was 54.6. In Urban sector, it was 16.6 for female and 54.9 for male. According to Quarterly Employment review, Ministry of Labour, the total employment of women in organized sector was only 18.7% in 2004.

Table 8: Categorization of States/UTs According to Levels of Female Work Participation Rates

10-20%	20-30%	30-40%
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Daman & Diu	Andhra Pradesh
Bihar	Goa	Arunachal Pradesh
Chandigarh	Gujarat	Himachal Pradesh
Haryana	Karnataka	Madhya Pradesh
Kerala	Orissa	Maharashtra
Pondicherry	Rajasthan	Meghalaya
Tripura		Manipur
Uttar Pradesh		Nagaland
West Bengal		Tamil Nadu
Other States/UTs: Less than 10%		

Source: Annual Report 2000-2001, Ministry of Labour, Government of India.

The work participation rate of female worker in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors showed that more than 85 percent of female workers are engaged in the agricultural (primary) sector in rural India. However, this ratio declined from 88 percent to 85 percent between the 53rd and 55th NSSO rounds. In urban area, the female work participation in tertiary sector is high and increased significantly from 37 percent in 1983 to 52.9 percent 1999-2000. The higher share of female work participation in tertiary sector by urban women indicates that they have been able to take advantage of increased employment opportunities than rural women.

Women's work is undervalued and unrecognized. Women work longer hours than men work, and carry the major share of household and community work that is unpaid and invisible. There are far fewer women in the paid workforce than there are men. Women generally earn lower wage than men doing the same work do.

Table 9: State-wise Time Spent on Paid and Unpaid Activities in India: (1998-1999)

States	Male			Female			Total		
	Paid	% Time On Unpaid Activities	Unpaid	Paid	Unpaid	% Time On Unpaid Activities	Paid	Unpaid	% Time On Unpaid Activities
Haryana	33.09	18.12	35.38	4.13	25.34	85.99	20.06	21.37	51.58
Madhya Pradesh	29.41	23.34	44.25	14.31	15.75	52.4	22.99	20.12	46.67
Gujarat	44.37	14.17	24.21	17.18	13.87	44.67	33.26	14.05	29.7
Orissa	31.25	22.42	41.77	8	18.18	69.44	20.55	20.47	49.9
Tamil Nadu	41.42	13.36	24.39	21.48	10.13	32.45	32.74	12.04	26.89
Meghalaya	17.34	35.39	67.12	7.83	25.34	76.39	12.65	30.44	70.64
Combined States	36.54	18.12	33.15	14.87	15.18	50.52	27.16	16.85	38.29

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.

The contribution of women to the economy can be measured by including the activities of unpaid work of women in care economy.⁵ Time Use Surveys (TUS) are increasingly accepted for getting better statistics on the size of the labour force of a country, as well as the contribution of women to the economy. This can be understood by calculating the total time spend (i.e. Time Use) in economic activities both for paid and unpaid work. Time Use Surveys (TUS) are increasingly accepted for getting better statistics on the size of the labour force of a country, as well as the contribution of women to the economy.⁶ Therefore, the Time Use Survey has been conducted at macro-level in six major states viz., Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa and Tamil Nadu during July 1998 to June 1999 by Central Statistical Organisation in India. This large-scale survey covered 18591 households across the states in India. It gives a better understanding of how time is allocated across gender in the economy and provides some insight into the extent of statistical invisibility of women's work in India. A major finding of the Time Use Survey is that the unpaid activities of women are higher than that of men (Table 9).

Table 10: State-wise Elected Women Members in Three Tier of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India
(in number)

States	Number of elected women												women as percent of total representatives					
	Gram Panchayats		Panchayats Samities		Zilla Parishads		Gram Panchayats		Panchayats Samities		Zilla Parishads		2001		2006			
	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006		
Andhra Pradesh	78000	68736	5420	4919	363	364	33.8	33.0	37.0	33.7	33.2	33.2	33.2	33.2	33.2	33.2		
Assam	5469	8977	669	791		135	18.0	38.3	26.1	36.8	34.6	34.6	34.6	34.6	34.6	34.6		
Bihar		64152		5671		577	0.0	54.6	0.0	48.8	49.7	49.7	49.7	49.7	49.7	49.7		
Gujarat	21351	36403	1275	1394	254	274	17.3	33.3	33.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4		
Haryana	16704	23897	858	962	182	135	27.8	36.1	33.9	39.6	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0		
Himachal Pradesh	6015	8483	858	559	84	86	72.8	33.5	51.7	33.7	34.3	34.3	34.3	34.3	34.3	34.3		
Karnataka	35305	39318	1343	1519	335	373	43.8	43.0	40.2	70.3	63.1	63.1	63.1	63.1	63.1	63.1		
Kerala		6020		748		125	0.0	37.3		74.1	61.9	61.9	61.9	61.9	61.9	61.9		
Madhya Pradesh	160077	131671	3169	2393	338	304	33.7	33.9	34.8	55.7	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6		
Maharashtra	101182	75148	1174	1317	587	653	36.6	33.6	33.3	45.8	45.9	45.9	45.9	45.9	45.9	45.9		
Orissa	27036	33602	1754	2188	284	296	33.4	35.8	33.3	35.1	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7		
Punjab	26939	30875		922		103	34.1	35.0		55.3	54.2	54.2	54.2	54.2	54.2	54.2		
Rajasthan	33566	40044	1740	2108	33	391	29.7	35.2	31.7	40.1	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8		
Tamil Nadu	31548	36824	2295	2319	22	227	25.1	33.7	35.3	48.3	47.0	47.0	47.0	47.0	47.0	47.0		
Uttar Pradesh	120591	273229	13865	24673	634	1122	15.1	38.8	23.1	74.1	83.9	83.9	83.9	83.9	83.9	83.9		
West Bengal	17883	18150	2997	2953	243	246	28.8	36.6	35.2	44.4	43.4	43.4	43.4	43.4	43.4	43.4		

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

The participation of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, which were considered the most effective instrument for realizing the goal of economic betterment and social justice for the least privileged, was felt essential. Their participations in PRI have been recognized as a step towards equality. An analysis with particular references to the participation of women in lower level of politics shows a mixed picture. Their percentage in political participation has increased over the period in most of the states (Table 10). The increase in women's political participation strengthens the institutional structure of democracy.

Concluding Remarks

It is concluded that there are various types of gender inequalities in key sectors like economic, social, and political are exist in India. The women are considered disadvantaged relative to men. It may be noted that the literacy among girls and women has improved from 1981 to 2001. However, gender gap in literacy has persisted over the years. So, to bridge the literacy gap government should spend a sufficient amount on education. However, along with the allocation to this sector health, IT etc. should also to take into account. Therefore, there is need to increase the budgetary spending on social services particularly on education and health services etc. Secondly, the social problems and social change, however, cannot be brought about merely by the strength of law or through government allocation alone. A necessary and essential condition is the existence of a suitable environment in terms of heightened community awareness & willingness to identify and accept such problems. With this, it is also necessary to take affirmative action in finding solutions both in terms of isolating the law breakers and assisting law enforcers.

Lastly, the gender budget initiative is a significant first step towards a larger strategy of integrating gender perspective into economic policies and mainstreaming for achieving gender equality. A gender responsive budget would create a virtuous circle in which the policy itself contributes to the reduction of gender inequality, and hence reduce the gender constraints in successful macroeconomic outcomes. The result is the simultaneous improvement of economic growth and human development performance in ways that also empower women.

Endnotes

¹ See Chakraborty, Lekha S. (2003) and Stotsky, (2006).

²Gross enrolment ratio (GER) measures the percentage of the total population in the relevant age-group is being covered by the various educational programmes being run in the country. There are two stages of enrolment ratio i.e., primary (Classes I-V), age-group for this stage is 6-10 years and middle (Classes VI-VIII), age-group for this stage is 11-13 years.

The GER for (I-V) = [(Total Enrolment in Classes I-V) / (Total population in the age group 6-11 years)]*100.

While interpreting these figures it should be noted that there may be many students outside the age-group 6-11 enrolled in classes' I-V. Therefore, enrolment ratios in some age groups can be more than 100.

³Dropout at primary stage during a given year is defined as the ratio of the difference of enrolment in class I in the fourth year preceding and the enrolment in class V during the year to the enrolment in the class I in the fourth year preceding. In mathematical terms,

Dropout rates at Primary (I-V) stage during the year 1991-92 defined as: = [(Enrolment in class I preceding four years (i.e.1987-88) minus Enrolment in class V during the Year (1991-92)] / ({Enrolment in class I preceding four years (i.e.1987-88)})]*100.

Similarly, the dropout rate of other classes can also be calculated.

⁴ The feminization of labour phenomenon defined as: women being pulled into the labour force because of their cheap wage and flexibility, and substituting men in the work place are known as feminization of labour. It is because of their 'comparative advantage'. As workers in export-oriented industries or export processing zone, with labour intensive production, requiring little or no formal training. The process of defeminisation resulting from the

adoption of techniques that require more skilled labour or greater mechanization, however, can also reverse the feminization of labour force associated with reform and an open trade regime.

⁵The care economy represents domestic (reproductive) work together with voluntary community work

⁶A major finding of TUS across the globe is that women carry a disproportionately greater burden of work than men.

Since women are responsible for a greater share of non-SNA work in the care economy, they enter the labour market already overburdened with work. This dual work burden or unequal sharing of work borne by women is neither recognized in the data nor considered adequately in socio-economic policy making.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Trends in Human Development Index of Selected Countries

Human Development Index Rank	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2002	2005
High Human Development								
Australia	0.847	0.864	0.877	0.892	932	0.942	0.946	0.962
Canada	0.869	0.885	0.908	0.928	0.933	0.939	0.943	0.961
United States	0.866	0.886	0.899	0.914	0.926	0.935	0.939	0.951
Mexico	0.688	0.734	0.753	0.761	0.776	0.8	0.802	0.829
Medium Human Development								
Malaysia	0.614	0.657	0.693	0.72	0.759	0.789	0.793	0.811
Thailand	0.613	0.651	0.676	0.707	0.742	-	0.768	0.781
Philippines	0.653	0.686	0.692	0.719	0.735	-	0.753	0.771
China	0.523	0.557	0.593	0.627	0.683	0.721	0.745	0.777
Sri Lanka	0.613	0.648	0.674	0.698	0.719	-	0.74	0.743
South Africa	0.655	0.672	0.697	0.729	0.735	0.69	0.666	0.71
India	0.411	0.437	0.476	0.514	0.548	0.579	0.595	0.619
Ghana	0.439	0.467	0.481	0.511	0.532	0.56	0.568	0.553
Myanmar	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.551	0.583
Bangladesh	0.345	0.363	0.388	0.417	0.445	0.497	0.509	0.547
Nepal	0.291	0.33	0.372	0.418	0.455	0.488	0.504	0.534
Low Human Development								
Pakistan	0.346	0.373	0.405	0.444	0.473	-	0.497	0.551

Source: Human Development Report, UNDP, 2006.

Appendix II: Selected State-wise Human Development Index (HDI) in India

State	1981		1991		2001	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Andhra Pradesh	0.298	9	0.377	9	0.416	10
Assam	0.272	10	0.348	10	0.386	14
Bihar	0.237	15	0.308	15	0.367	15
Gujarat	0.36	4	0.431	6	0.479	6
Haryana	0.36	5	0.443	5	0.509	5
Karnataka	0.346	6	0.412	7	0.478	7
Kerala	0.5	1	0.591	1	0.638	1
Madhya Pradesh	0.245	14	0.328	13	0.394	12
Maharashtra	0.363	3	0.452	4	0.523	4
Orissa	0.267	11	0.345	12	0.404	11
Punjab	0.411	2	0.475	2	0.537	2
Rajasthan	0.256	12	0.347	11	0.424	9
Tamil Nadu	0.343	7	0.466	3	0.531	3
Uttar Pradesh	0.255	13	0.314	14	0.388	13
West Bengal	0.305	8	0.404	8	0.472	8
India	0.302		0.381		0.472	

Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, Government of India

Appendix III: State-wise Gender Disparity Index

State	1981		1991	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Andhra Pradesh	0.744	3	0.801	4
Assam	0.462	15	0.575	14
Bihar	0.471	14	0.469	16
Gujarat	0.723	5	0.714	8
Haryana	0.536	13	0.714	7
Himachal Pradesh	0.783	2	0.858	1
Karnataka	0.707	7	0.753	6
Kerala	0.872	1	0.825	2
Madhya Pradesh	0.664	9	0.662	11
Maharashtra	0.74	4	0.793	5
Orissa	0.547	12	0.639	12
Punjab	0.688	8	0.71	9
Rajasthan	0.65	10	0.692	10
Tamil Nadu	0.71	6	0.813	3
Uttar Pradesh	0.447	16	0.52	15
West Bengal	0.556	11	0.631	13
India	0.62		0.676	

Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, Government of India