

## CHAPTER - I

# INTRODUCTION

*"While growing up in South Asia is a perpetual struggle, to be a woman in this region is to be a non-person. Women bear the greatest burden of human deprivation in South Asia."*

Mahbub ul Haq

Punjab, the cradle of one of the oldest civilizations in the world, is a land of pirs, fakirs, sages and saints, of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind and Baba Farid, of Mai Bhago and Sada Kaur, of Ranjit Singh, Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh. Punjab presents a picture of pristine charm in its sleepy villages and graceful blue rivers winding their way through lush green fields, where hard working men and women "reap and sing" in the fields, where the ancient and the modern blend together. The story of Punjab is a story of heroic deeds, of challenges and adventures, of enthusiasm and excitement, of wars and victories, of perseverance and determination and of onwards march towards a better future.

Aryans, coming from Central Asia, named this area, comprising of seven rivers: Sindhu (Indus), Vitasta (Jhelum), Askini (Chenab), Purushini (Ravi), Vipasa (Beas), Shatadru (Satluj) and Saruri (Saraswati), as *Sapta Sindhva*- the land of the seven seas. Subsequently, with the advent of the Persians, it came to be known as *Hafta Hindva* (Persian for *Sapta Sindhva*). In the years that followed, Saraswati dried up and the territory shrunk into the area comprising the five rivers: Ravi, Beas, Jhelum, Chenab and Sutlej. The area came to be rechristened as *Pente Potamia* by the Greeks (*Pente* meaning five and *potamia* meaning rivers) and later Punjab by the Persians (*Panj* meaning five and *aab* meaning water).

The name 'Punjab' became popular during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.). The first mention of the name is made in the writings of Ibn-Batuta (1304-1378 A.D.) the Moorish traveller from Tangier who visited India in the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq (1325- 1351 A.D.)

Punjab has attracted travellers, traders and invaders from time immemorial. It was undoubtedly the seat of the earliest Aryan settlement. It was here that the Vedas, Shastras and Upanishads were written. Chanakya wrote the Arthashastra (a treatise on administration), Panini compiled the Ashtadhyaya (grammar of Sanskrit – the mother of most Indian languages). Balmiki wrote the Ramayana and the Bhagwad Gita found its roots here in this land of five rivers.

Ancient Punjab formed part of the vast Indo-Iranian region and witnessed the rise and fall of various dynasties such as the Mauryans, Bactrians, Greeks, Sahas, Kushanas and Guptas. It not only played an important role in the history of India, but presented a synthesis of many communities and cultures of Asia.

Medieval Punjab bore the worst brunt of all the Muslim invasions. The advent of Sikhism marked a watershed in the history of Punjab. Sikhism, which played a decisive role in the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State, was primarily a socio-religious reform movement, which came into being during a period of religious revival in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It acquired a militant character in the course of its evolution, and Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, founded the *Khalsa* (the pure). This order was basically opposed to superstition, idolatry and ritualism and sought to liberate "humanity from the despotism of those who, with their terror, had crushed the social and moral institutions completely."<sup>1</sup> The Sikhs challenged the power of the mighty Mughal rulers, first under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh and then under Banda Singh Bahadur; with the latter's death, the political influence of the Sikhs declined. So they organised themselves into *Misls* (Confederacies). Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780 – 1839 A.D.) popularly known as *Sher-e-Punjab*, consolidated these into a mighty kingdom of the Sikhs, extending from the river Sutlej to the Khyber Pass and Sulaiman Mountains. However, 'internal intrigues' and 'British mechanisations' led to its collapse after his death. Punjab was finally annexed by the British in 1849 A.D.

The spirit of Punjab, however, remained unvanquished, and Punjab became the sword-arm of India. Punjab and Punjabis played an important role in the freedom struggle. Notable are the 66 Kukas who were brutally blasted by canon in 1872. The names of towering Punjabi revolutionaries like S.Ajit Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai, Madan Lal Dhillon, Bhai Parmanand, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Uddham Singh, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru shall remain etched in the national consciousness for centuries to come. Nor did the women lag behind in the freedom struggle. Some outstanding women freedom fighters of Punjab were Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Gulab Kaur, Adarsh Kumari, Kishan Kaur, Amar Kaur, Dalip Kaur, Sushila Devi, Har Devi, Purani and Pushpa Gujral<sup>2</sup>. Notably, it was Lahore, the capital of pre-partition Punjab, that has the honour of being the city where the Resolution for complete independence was passed. Punjab and its people paid a heavy price for the partition that accompanied independence, both in terms of lives lost and people uprooted. Women were unashamedly sacrificed at the altar of 'family honour' and revenge.

Punjab's geographical boundaries at the time of its annexation by the British extended from Delhi to Peshawar. Jammu and Kashmir, which had been a part of the Sikh Kingdom, was carved into a separate native State. Punjab with its princely States had an area of 1,33,741 sq. miles, much larger than the British Isles. It comprised a tenth of the area of the British Indian empire.

Gradually, the process of trimming started. First, the areas north of Sindh were separated in 1901, which came to be known as North West Frontier Province (NWFP). This was followed by detaching Delhi and converting it into a capital of the country in place of Calcutta in 1911. With the partition of India, Punjab too was partitioned into East Punjab, which remained with India and West Punjab, which became a part of Pakistan.

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<sup>1</sup> Cookie Maini, "Flashback:13<sup>th</sup> April 1699, Birth of Khalsa", **The Pioneer**, April 14, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> See Harinder Kaur, "Women in Sikhism", **Seminar** 476, April 1999, pp, 33 – 36; Manmohan Kaur, **Women in India's Freedom Struggle**, Sterling, New Delhi, 1992.

The task of reorganization of the State continued after independence. Eight princely States of East Punjab were grouped together to form one single State called PEPSU – Patiala and the East Punjab State's Union with Patiala as its capital. PEPSU was formally absorbed into Punjab State on November 1, 1956. Punjab was again re-organized, this time on the basis of language in 1966, the non-hill Hindi speaking areas formed the State of Haryana and the hill areas were included in Himachal Pradesh. The rest of the area constitutes the Punjab of today.

Punjab lies between 29° 33' N and 32° 31' N latitude and between 73° 53' E and 76° 56' E longitude. Punjab of today has 50,362 sq. kms area, which is just about 1.5% of the total land area of the country. It supports a population of 24,358,999 (2001 Census), which is less than two percent of the total population of India. It is roughly triangular in shape with its apex towards the North. It is bounded on the north by Jammu and Kashmir, on the northeast by Himachal Pradesh, and on the south by Haryana and Rajasthan. On the west it shares an international boundary with Pakistan extending over three hundred kilometers. As such the State occupies a position of strategic significance.

Originally comprising of four administrative divisions and twelve districts, Punjab today has seventeen districts.

The State is geographically delimited into three regions: Malwa, Majha and Doaba, with the boundaries marked by the rivers. The Majha region has River Ravi in the West, River Beas in the east and River Sutlej in the South and comprises the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur. It is the smallest, but the most densely populated region of Punjab. Doaba or the Bist Doaba lies between the Rivers Beas and Sutlej and includes the districts of Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr, Kapurthala and parts of Fazilka, Jalandhar and Gurdaspur. It is a cultural buffer zone, where the influences of Malwa and Majha intermingle. The areas South of the River Sutlej is called Malwa. It constitutes 11 districts of the State of Punjab and is thus, the largest region of the State.

Economically, Punjab ranks among the most developed of India's States with high per capita income, high GDP and low levels of poverty. It is primarily an agrarian State and agriculture occupies the most prominent place in Punjab's economy. About 70% of the population is engaged in agriculture, and about 85% of its total land area is under cultivation as against an all India average of 51%. It has the highest per capita consumption of fertilizers in the country. It also makes the highest contribution in foodgrain procurement for the central pool.

Punjab does not lag behind in industrial production either. It has made great strides in different development sectors like small-scale industries, dairy development, etc. The main goods manufactured are textiles, sewing machines, sports goods, sugar, starch, fertilizers, bicycles, scientific instruments, electrical goods, machine tools and pine oil. So far as power is concerned Punjab had achieved the target of 100% electrification as early as May 1976.

Punjab, thus, is not only the sword arm, but also the granary of India and the birth place of the green and white revolutions, which went a long way in making India self-sufficient in foodgrains. It has

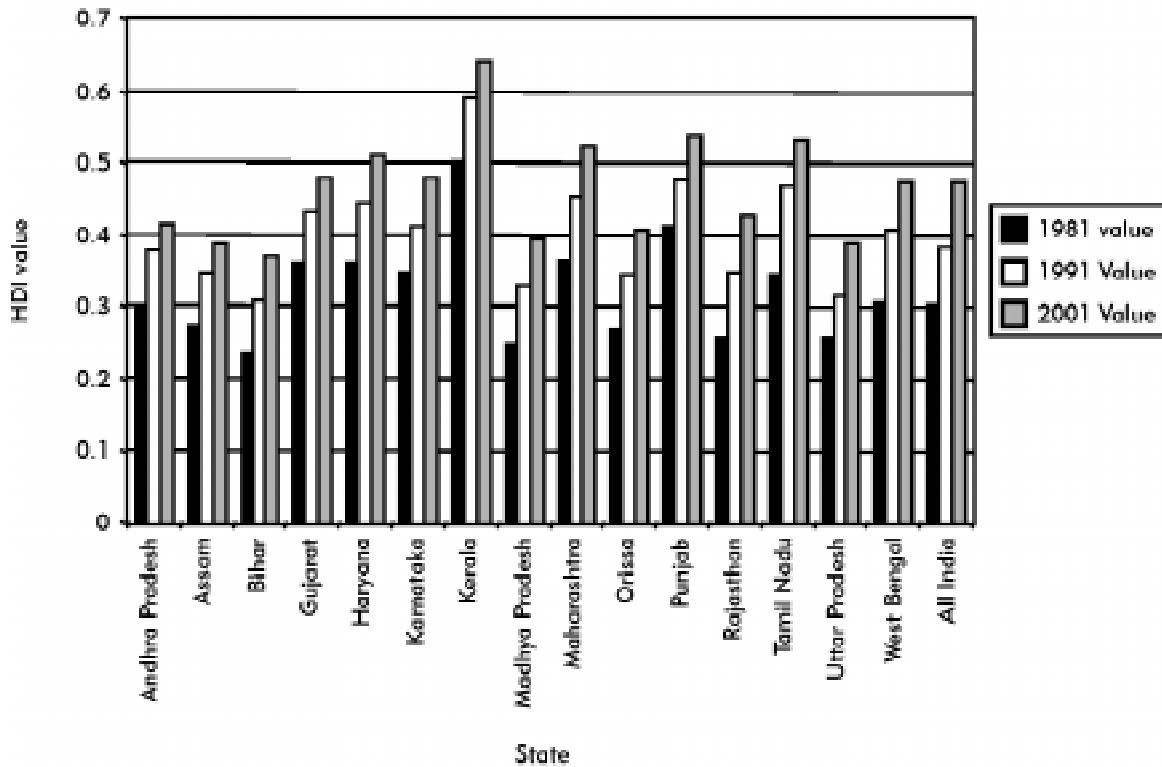
been in the forefront of the war against hunger and foreign aggression. This is amply illustrated by a look at Table 1.1 which reveals the Human Development Index for India and selected States. While Kerala has had the distinction of having the highest values in 1981, 1991 as well as 2001, Punjab has not lagged far behind and has been 2<sup>nd</sup> in all the three years. As against an all-India value of 0.472, Punjab has a much higher value of 0.537. Nevertheless a comparison with Kerala reveals Punjab to be lagging far behind it.

**Table 1.1**  
**Human Development Index for India**

States/UTs	1981 value	1981 Rank	1991 Value	1991 Rank	2001 Value	2001 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	0.360	4	0.431	6	0.479	6
Haryana	0.360	5	0.443	5	0.509	5
Karnataka	0.346	6	0.412	7	0.478	7
Kerala	0.500	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
All India	0.302		<b>0.381</b>		<b>0.472</b>	

Source: National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission , Government of India, March 2002

### Human Development in India



A look at Table 1.2 below reveals the progress made by Punjab in providing basic facilities to its citizens. Only 3.8 per cent of the households reside in kacha houses, while 43.9 per cent live in semi-pucca and 52.1 per cent in pucca houses. 95.5 per cent of households have the benefit of receiving electricity and only 4.5 per cent have to manage without this essential facility. Drinking water is available to 98.9 per cent of the households and 95.5 per cent are able to get drinking water in under 15 minutes. However, a mere 8.9 per cent of the households purify water through straining, by using alum, through water filter or any other method. The rest of the households do not purify water, which may either be due to the fact that they feel the water is already pure enough for drinking or are not aware of the need to purify it. It is equally significant that there is 100 per cent availability of sanitation facilities in the State.

However, one of the main factors impinging on women’s health is the type of fuel used for cooking and here the NFHS-II Survey points to the use of wood as fuel by as many as 47.3 per cent of the households, while only 31.7 per cent use liquefied petroleum gas. Of those using the latter as fuel, a vast majority reside in urban areas, while in rural areas wood and dung cakes are commonly used as fuel.

**Table 1.2**  
**Housing Characteristics**

**Percent Distribution Of Households By Housing Characteristic, According To Residence, Punjab, 1998-99**

<b>Housing Characteristic</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Electricity</b>			
Yes	99.7	93.6	95.5
No	0.3	6.4	4.5
Total Payment	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Source of Drinking water</b>			
Piped	69.5	21.7	36.7
Hand Pump	30.3	76.8	62.2
Well Water	0.2	1.3	1.0
Surface Water	0.0	0.1	0.0
Other	0.0	0.2	0.1
Total Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Time to get Drinking water</b>			
Percentage < 15 minutes	99.2	94.2	95.7
Median time (minutes)	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Method of drinking water purification</b>			
Strains water by cloth	1.0	0.4	0.6
Uses alum	0.1	0.3	0.2
Uses water filter	11.7	0.7	4.2
Boils water	7.3	2.3	3.8
Uses electronic purifier	2.3	0.1	0.7
Uses other method	0.1	0.1	0.1
Does not purify water	79.2	96.6	91.1
<b>Sanitation facility</b>			
Flush toilets	78.9	16.8	36.2
Pit toilet/latrine	14.0	15.6	15.1
Other	7.1	67.5	48.6
No facility	0.0	0.1	0.0

<b>Housing Characteristic</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Main type of fuel used for cooking</b>			
Wood	10.2	64.2	47.3
Crop residues	0.1	1.8	1.3
Dung cakes	1.6	16.8	12.0
Coal/coke/lignite/Charcoal	0.0	0.6	0.4
Kerosene	12.2	3.9	6.5
Electricity	0.5	0.1	0.2
Liquid petroleum gas	75.4	11.7	31.7
Biogas	0.0	0.5	0.3
Other	0.0	0.4	0.3
Total Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Type of house</b>			
Kachha	0.0	5.58	3.8
Semi-pucca	10.6	59.2	43.9
Pucca	88.9	35.3	52.1
Missing	0.5	0.0	0.1
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Persons per room</b>			
<3	86.2	71.5	76.1
3-4	9.1	18.9	15.2
5-6	3.8	8.5	7.0
7+	0.9	2.0	1.7
Missing	0.0	0.1	0.1
<b>Total percent</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mean number of persons per room</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Number of House Holds</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>2,037</b>	<b>2967)</b>

Totals may add to more than 100.0 because households may use more than one method of purification.  
Source: NFHS-II, 1998-99, Panjab

This historically progressive social scenario, however, veils a highly patriarchal and feudal society wherein women are regarded as inferior beings. Fifty years after independence, Punjabi women continue

to feel the burden of womanhood; deprived not only of access to basic facilities, but even the very basic right to be born. The deeply ingrained patriarchal ethos limits and confines women to subordinate roles. Punjab has emerged as the most developed, but least gender sensitive State of India. On the one hand, women are deified, put on a pedestal and worshipped. On the other, they are suppressed and subordinated, denied even the right to take birth.

The inherent subordination of women is reflected in the folk songs and popular culture of the region, which celebrate wife-beating<sup>3</sup>, oppression of women by women<sup>4</sup>, the birth of a son<sup>5</sup> and also legitimise female infanticide as well as discriminatory customs such as *chadar andazi* or *karewa* (wherein a woman whose husband has passed away is married to his younger brother. The custom does not preclude the younger brother from another marriage to a girl more his age.)

**Table 1.3**  
**Gender-Related Development Index for Indian States, 1991-2**

GDI Rank	State	GDI	Share of Earned Income (Per cent)		Life Expectancy at Birth (Years) 1990-92		Adult Literacy Rate (Per Cent)	
			Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
1	Kerala	0.565	12.4	87.6	74.4	68.8	80.6	91.7
2	Maharashtra	0.492	29.4	70.6	64.7	63.1	44.2	74.4
3.	Gujarat	0.437	26.8	73.2	61.3	59.1	41.8	70.4
4.	Himachal Pradesh	0.432	37.5	62.5	64.2	63.8	35.5	64.4
5.	Punjab	0.424	5.9	94.1	67.5	65.4	41.8	60.5
6.	Karnataka	0.417	25.4	74.6	63.6	60.0	37.7	65.3
7.	Tamil Nadu	0.402	21.4	78.6	63.2	61.0	35.8	65.0
8.	West Bengal	0.399	8.0	92.0	62.0	60.5	42.8	69.3
9.	Andhra Pradesh	0.371	27.2	72.8	61.5	59.0	27.3	52.4
10.	Haryana	0.370	7.0	93.0	63.6	62.2	27.0	64.3
11.	Assam	0.347	23.7	76.3	53.8	54.8	33.9	62.4
12.	Orissa	0.329	19.1	80.9	54.8	55.9	29.0	62.5
13.	Madhya Pradesh	0.312	25.4	74.6	53.5	54.1	24.3	56.6
14.	Rajasthan	0.309	23.0	77.0	57.8	57.6	17.5	52.7

<sup>3</sup> *Kar doon gaz wargi, je pher brabar boli* (I will thrash you if you dare speak in front of me)

<sup>4</sup> *Sasan kihne banayian, mere waheguru ne magar chadelan layian* (who made mothers-in-law, they are witches in the guise of women)

<sup>5</sup> *jad ghar janmiyan putt ve babula, hun daru di rutt ve babula, jad ghar janmi dhi ve babula, sochi pai gaye jee ve babula* (It is a time for celebrations, when a son is born, but when a daughter is born, it is time for sorrow)



GDI Rank	State	GDI	Share of Earned Income (Per cent)		Life Expectancy at Birth (Years) 1990-92		Adult Literacy Rate (Per Cent)	
			Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
15.	Bihar	0.306	21.8	78.2	58.3	60.4	18.2	55.3
16.	Uttar Pradesh	0.293	12.9	87.1	54.6	56.8	20.6	53.6
	<b>India</b>	0.388	23.2	76.8	59.4	59.0	33.9	62.4

Source: A K Shiva Kumar, "UNDP's Gender-Related Development Index: A Computation for Indian States, *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 6, 1996.

Table 1.3 reveals the Gender Related Development Index for selected Indian States. Punjab has a GDI value of merely 0.424 which shows a considerable gap between the HDI value and GDI value. It is also significant to note that although Punjab ranks at fifth place amongst the selected States, which would seem to show a better status of women in the State, yet this is due not to an improved status of women, but to shortcomings within the definition of GDI itself.

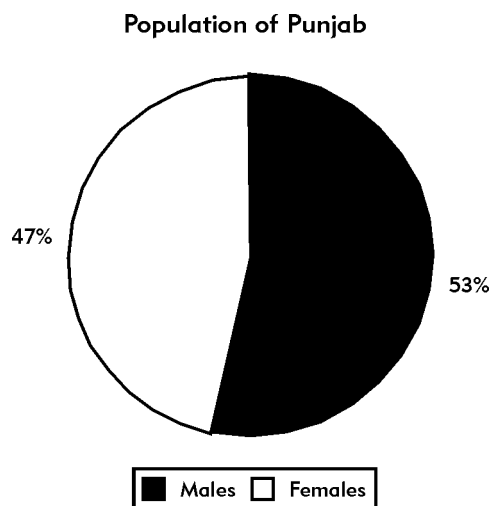
The large gap between Punjab's HDI value and GDI value reveals the fact that gender discrimination and differentials may be traced to factors other than poverty and low income. The inherent limitations of the GDI and HDI approach, however, reveal the necessity of focusing upon other indicators to assess the status of women in any area and it is to these that the present analysis now turns. The following chapters focus on various indicators, such as sex ratio, literacy, health, work participation, etc to objectively analyse the situation of women in Punjab.

## CHAPTER - II

### DEMOGRAPHIC CONCERNS

Demographic data is a sensitive indicator of the status of women in any society at a given point of time. Sex ratio, life expectancy, birth and death rates are impacted by as well as influence women's position in society. In Punjab, a decline in the birth, death and population growth rates, relatively higher age at marriage and declining total fertility rate, accompanied at the same time by a decline in sex ratio and drastic decline in child sex ratio are vitally important structural characteristics of the State's demographic map. The present chapter attempts to situate the Punjabi woman in the context of the demographic scenario.

First, a brief overview of Punjab's demographic profile. Punjab, with 1.5 per cent of the total land area of the country has 2.37% of its total population, ranking 15<sup>th</sup> amongst the States. It has a total population of 24,289,296, out of which males are 12,963,362 (53.37%) and females 11,325,934 (46.63%).



In terms of size of population, Punjab is bigger than at least 150 countries around the world. The population of Punjab in absolute terms has increased from 75.45 lakhs in 1901 to 242.89 lakhs in 2001. The decennial growth rate of Punjab is 19.76, which is 1.58% lower than the all India growth rate of 21.34% yet the decline in the growth rate of 1.05% is considerably lower than the all-India decline of 2.52 percentage points.

## Sex Ratio

Scholars, academicians and policy makers have noted the low and continuously declining proportion of women in India's population and the highly masculine sex ratio with concern. A highly masculine sex ratio has been one of the most significant characteristics of India throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even more noteworthy is the fact that this sex ratio has shown an almost continuous decline from 972 in 1901 to 927 in 1991. However, the last Census has brought in a ray of hope in as much as the sex ratio has increased by 6 points to 933. This, however, is offset by the decline in the sex ratio of children in the 0-6 age group, which portends the trend for the future, as will be seen in the next section.

It would not be out of context to mention that the sex ratio at birth should be somewhere between 943-952<sup>1</sup>. The better physiological strength of girl children, which ensures better survival chances should bring the sex ratio closer to unity. Yet this is not the case in India and the sex ratio in most of the Indian States is adverse to females. A look at Table 2.1 below reveals that Kerala is the only State in India, which has a sex ratio favouring females and Pondicherry is the only Union Territory which has a sex ratio above unity.

**Table 2.1**

**States and Union Territories Ranked by Sex Ratio, India-2001**

Rank By Sex-Ratio	States/Union Territories	Sex-Ratio	Rank By Sex-Ratio	States/Union Territories	Sex-Ratio
	<b>India</b>	<b>933</b>	18	Assam	932
1	Kerala	1058	19	Rajasthan	922
2	Pondicherry	1001	20	Maharashtra	922
3	Chhatisgarh	990	21	Bihar	921
4	Tamil Nadu	986	22	Gujarat	921
5	Manipur	978	23	Madhya Pradesh	920
6	Andhra Pradesh	978	24	Nagaland	909
7	Meghalaya	975	25	Arunachal Pradesh	901
8	Orissa	972	26	Jammu & Kashmir	900
9	Himachal Pradesh	970	27	Uttar Pradesh	898
10	Uttranchal	964	28	Sikkim	875
11	Karnataka	964	29	Punjab	874

<sup>1</sup> See Census of India, Series 1, 2001.

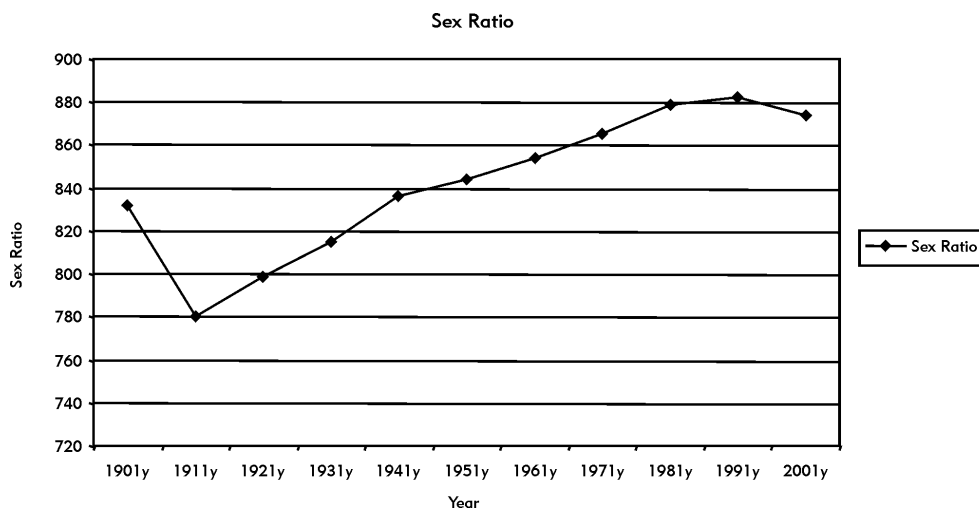
Rank By Sex-Ratio	States/Union Territories	Sex-Ratio	Rank By Sex-Ratio	States/Union Territories	Sex-Ratio
12	Goa	960	30	Haryana	861
13	Tripura	950	31	Andaman & Nicobar	847
14	Lakshadweep	947	32	Delhi	821
15	Jharkhand	941	33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	811
16	Mizoram	938	34	Chandigarh	773
17	West Bengal	934	35	Daman & Diu	709

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-4, Punjab (Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001)

In this context, Punjab has the dubious distinction of being a *dhi-maru* (killer of daughters) State and along with Haryana and Chandigarh has been christened as India's Bermuda Triangle, wherein girls vanish without a trace. This is evident from the sex ratio of Punjab; there has always been a preponderance of males over females. Punjab has stepped into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with 1637428 'deficit women'. With a sex ratio of 874, Punjab ranks second to last amongst the States with only Haryana having a lower sex ratio. On the whole, amongst the various States and Union Territories, it is ranked 29<sup>th</sup>. Table 2.2 further reveals that the sex-ratio of Punjab had been gradually inching upwards.. However, the 2001 Census reveals that Punjab has gone back to a pre-1981 status so far as sex ratio is concerned, indicating a case of one-step forward, two steps back.

**Table 2.2**  
**Sex Ratio of Punjab, 1901- 2001**

State/District	Sex-Ratio										
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Punjab	832	780	799	815	836	844	854	865	879	882	874



**Table 2.3**  
**Ranking of Districts by Sex Ratio-Punjab: 1991 and 2001**

Rank in 2001			State/District	Sex Ratio (Number of females per 1000 males as per 2001)			Sex Ratio (Number of females per 1000 males as per 1991)			Rank in 1991		
T	R	U		T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U
			<b>PUNJAB</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>868</b>			
1	1	3	Hoshiarpur	935	947	888	924	932	890	1	1	4
2	2	1	Nawanshahr	913	914	911	900	898	914	3	5	1
3	5	8	Gurdaspur	888	895	868	903	905	895	2	4	3
4	7	4	Muktsar	886	888	883	880	877	888	11	11	6
5	3	15	Kapurthala	886	907	843	896	910	857	5	2	16
6	6	14	Firozpur	883	893	857	895	898	887	6	6	7
7	8	6	Moga	883	885	873	884	883	889	7	8	5
8	4	13	Jalandhar	882	904	859	897	907	883	4	3	9
9	11	2	Faridkot	881	876	892	883	882	884	9	9	8
10	12	5	Mansa	875	875	878	873	871	881	13	14	10
11	9	12	Amritsar	874	885	859	873	871	876	12	13	12
12	13	7	Rupnagar	870	869	871	870	870	870	16	15	15
13	14	10	Sangrur	868	869	864	870	866	881	15	17	11
14	15	11	Bathinda	865	868	860	884	888	873	8	7	14
15	16	9	Patiala	864	862	868	882	875	899	10	12	2
16	17	16	Fatehgarh Sahib	851	859	832	871	870	873	14	16	13
17	10	17	Ludhiana	824	877	784	844	880	812	17	10	17

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-4, Punjab (Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001)

The same grim picture of unfavourable sex ratio prevails at the district level. Table 2.3 reveals that only Hoshiarpur has a sex ratio, which is at least comparable with the national average and only two districts, viz. Hoshiarpur and Nawanshahr have a sex ratio above 900. All the other fifteen districts of the State have sex ratios lower than 900.

Diversities in sex ratio patterns occur along social, regional, cultural and even age group dimensions. Comparing the inter-district rankings it would be seen that although the top and bottom status of Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana remained unchanged, considerable shifting has taken place in district-wise

ranking between 1991 and 2001. Muktsar, for instance, has improved from 11<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> place, while Patiala has gone down from 10<sup>th</sup> place to 15<sup>th</sup>. Only Kapurthala, Ferozepur and Moga have shown no variation in ranks, continuing at 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> places respectively.

Significantly, only five districts have seen an improvement in sex ratio, with the highest increase in Nawanshahr of 13 points followed by Hoshiarpur (11), Muktsar (6), Mansa (2) and Amritsar (1). All others reveal a regression, the highest being in Ludhiana and Fatehgarh Sahib (20 points each).

An equally wide variation is noticed in the rural-urban scenario. The rural sex ratio is generally higher than the urban one. Vis-à-vis the districts, it is noteworthy that Hoshiarpur ranks at the top in respect of rural sex ratio, but 3<sup>rd</sup> in urban sex ratio. Nawanshahr is at the top in urban sex ratio. Paradoxically, Ludhiana is 17<sup>th</sup> in urban sex ratio, but 10<sup>th</sup> in rural sex ratio. (This would seem to justify the hypothesis of male migration as the cause of low sex ratio) But Fatehgarh Sahib is last in rural sex ratio and 16<sup>th</sup> in urban sex ratio. It is significant to note, further, that Faridkot, Mansa, Ropar and Patiala have better sex ratios in urban areas in contrast to the generally prevailing trend in Punjab, reflective, perhaps of greater son preference in rural areas particularly in districts with a lower level of urbanisation.

### Sex Ratio in 0-6 Age Group

It is, however, the 0-6 age group, which portrays the trend for the future for it is not impacted by extraneous factors such as male migration. Focus on the juvenile sex ratio is important, because as Agnihotri points out, "juvenile sex ratio is not affected by sex selective migration, a major 'noise' affecting the sex ratio data."<sup>2</sup> In this group, the situation is indeed ghastly (for want of a stronger word). Punjab has the lowest child sex ratio in the country (793). It has witnessed a decrease of 82 points, which is the highest vis-à-vis the other States, although almost all the States show some degree of regression. Only Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura, Lakshadweep and Kerala have witnessed some increase.

**Table 2.4**  
**Sex Ratio Of Total Population And Child Population In The**  
**Age Group 0-6 : 1991 And 2001, India and States**

State/UT Code	India/States/ Union territories*	Sex ratio (females per 1,000 males)					
		Total population		Child population in the age group 0-6		Population aged 7 and above	
		1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
	<b>INDIA</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>935</b>
1.	Jammu & Kashmir	N.A.	900	N.A.	937	N.A.	894

<sup>2</sup> Satish B. Agnihotri, **Sex Ratio Patterns in the Indian Population**, Sage, New Delhi, 2000, p.19.

State/UT Code	India/States/ Union territories*	Sex ratio (females per 1,000 males)					
		Total population		Child population in the age group 0-6		Population aged 7 and above	
		1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
2.	Himachal Pradesh	976	970	951	897	980	981
3.	Punjab	882	874	875	793	883	886
4.	Chandigarh *	790	773	899	845	772	763
5.	Uttaranchal	936	964	948	906	933	976
6.	Haryana	865	861	879	820	862	869
7.	Delhi *	827	821	915	865	810	813
8.	Rajasthan	910	922	916	909	908	925
9.	Uttar Pradesh	876	898	927	916	863	895
10.	Bihar	907	921	953	938	895	916
11.	Sikkim	878	875	965	986	860	858
12.	Arunachal Pradesh	859	901	982	961	829	888
13.	Nagaland	886	909	993	975	865	899
14.	Manipur	958	978	974	961	955	981
15.	Mizoram	921	938	969	971	911	932
16.	Tripura	945	950	967	975	940	947
17.	Meghalaya	955	975	986	975	947	974
18.	Assam	923	932	975	964	910	926
19.	West Bengal	917	934	967	963	907	929
20.	Jharkhand	922	941	979	966	908	936
21.	Orissa	971	972	967	950	972	976
22.	Chhatisgarh	985	990	984	975	986	992
23.	Madhya Pradesh	912	920	941	929	905	918
24.	Gujarat	934	921	928	878	936	927
25.	Daman & Diu	969	709	958	925	971	682
26.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	952	811	1013	973	937	779
27.	Maharashtra	934	922	946	917	931	923
28.	Andhra Pradesh	972	978	975	964	972	980

State/UT Code	India/States/ Union territories*	Sex ratio (females per 1,000 males)					
		Total population		Child population in the age group 0-6		Population aged 7 and above	
		1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
29.	Karnataka	960	964	960	949	960	966
30.	Goa	967	960	964	933	967	964
31.	Lakshadweep*	943	947	941	974	943	943
32.	Kerala	1036	1058	958	963	1049	1071
33.	Tamil Nadu	974	986	948	939	978	992
34.	Pondicherry*	979	1001	963	958	982	1007
35.	Andaman & Nico. Islands	818	846	973	965	790	830

Source: Census of India, Series 1, 2001.

It is, indeed, appalling that the 0-6 age group sex ratio has declined in all the districts of Punjab. A district-wise analysis reveals not only that there is no positive trend in any of the Districts, but that the lowest decline is to the extent of 51 points in Muktsar, while the highest is in Fatehgarh Sahib (120). The decline is over and above the State average in as many as nine districts. However, its extent and area varies. In some districts, the urban areas show a greater diversity in sex ratio, for instance Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Nawanshahr, Moga, and Bathinda. In all the other districts, the rural areas present a higher degree of decline. Dr. Sarala Gopalan and Dr Mira Shiva report that "Of the 55 districts in the country that have less than 900 girls per 1000 boys, 28 districts are in Haryana and Punjab"<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 2.5**  
**Sex Ratio 0-6 age Group, Punjab and its Districts**

State/District	Sex Ratio in 0-6 age group as per 1991			Sex Ratio in 0-6 age group as per 2001			Change in points		
	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U
<b>PUNJAB</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>-82</b>	<b>-83</b>	<b>-77</b>
Gurdaspur	878	881	868	775	789	729	-103	-92	-139
Amritsar	861	864	856	783	789	772	-78	-75	-84
Kapurthala	879	875	891	775	773	779	-104	-102	-112
Jalandhar	886	891	879	797	806	786	-89	-85	-93

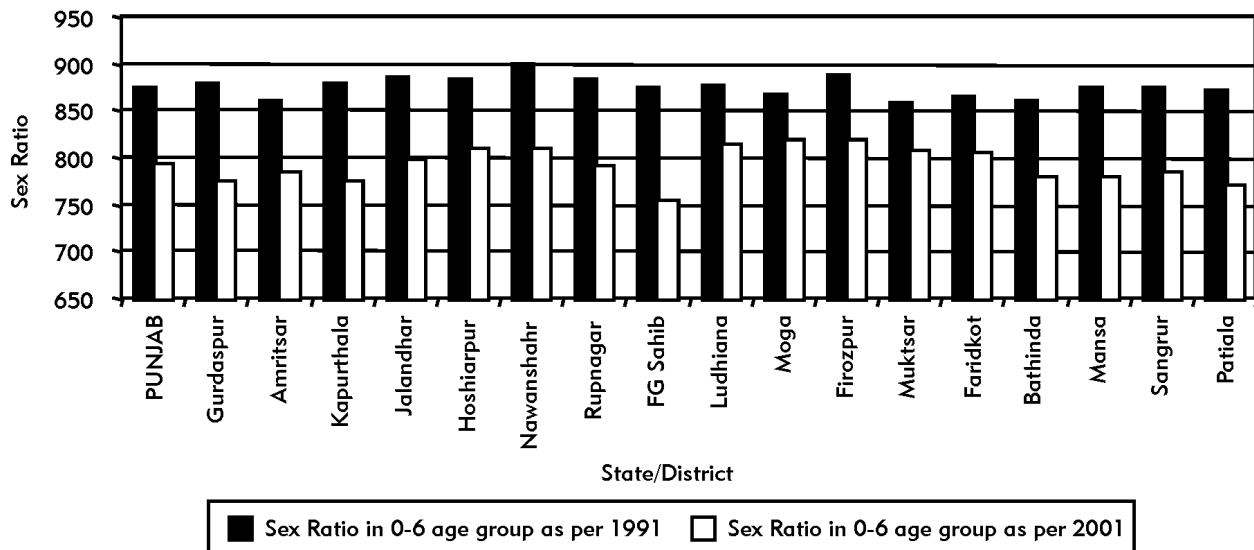
<sup>3</sup> Sarala Gopalan and Mira Shiva, **National Profile on Women, Health and Development**, VHA1 & WHO, 2000, p.19.



State/District	Sex Ratio in 0-6 age group as per 1991			Sex Ratio in 0-6 age group as per 2001			Change in points		
	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U
Hoshiarpur	884	887	873	810	813	800	-74	-74	-73
Nawanshahr	900	898	913	810	811	805	-90	-87	-108
Rupnagar	884	883	886	791	787	800	-93	-96	-86
FG Sahib	874	872	881	754	747	774	-120	-125	-107
Ludhiana	877	886	869	814	812	816	-63	-74	-53
Moga	867	867	866	819	820	811	-48	-47	-55
Firozpur	887	894	864	819	824	804	-68	-70	-60
Muktsar	858	864	839	807	810	798	-51	-54	-41
Faridkot	865	867	861	805	805	806	-60	-62	-55
Bathinda	860	866	844	779	789	756	-81	-77	-88
Mansa	873	883	814	779	780	775	-94	-103	-39
Sangrur	873	877	863	784	779	798	-89	-98	65
Patiala	871	870	872	770	764	786	-101	-106	-86

Source: Census of India 2001, Series-4, and Punjab

### SEX RATIO (0-6YEARS), 1991 & 2001



**Table 2.6**  
**Ranking of Districts by Sex Ratio of 0-6 Age Group**

	<b>PUNJAB</b>	<b>793</b>
1.	Moga	819
2.	Ferozpur	819
3.	Ludhiana	814
4.	Hoshiarpur	810
5.	Nawanshahr	810
6.	Muktsar	807
7.	Faridkot	805
8.	Jalandhar	797
9.	Rupnagar	791
10.	Sangrur	784
11.	Amritsar	783
12.	Bathinda	779
13.	Mansa	779
14.	Gurdaspur	775
15.	Kapurthala	775
16.	Patiala	770
17.	FG Sahib	754

Source: CENSUS OF INDIA 2001, Series-4, and Punjab

Interestingly, Ludhiana, which ranks at the bottom in respect to the general sex ratio ranks 3<sup>d</sup> in respect of sex ratio in the 0-6 age group. In contrast, Hoshiarpur is at 4<sup>th</sup> place. Moga and Ferozpur are at the top with a sex ratio of 819, while Fatehgarh Sahib ranks last with a sex ratio a mere 754.

The low juvenile sex ratio is one side of the picture. What is even more appalling is the fact that of the 10 districts in the country having the lowest child sex ratio, 7, viz. Fatehgarh Sahib, Patiala, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Bathinda, Mansa and Amritsar fall in Punjab, the other three in Haryana. In 1991, three of such districts fell in Punjab, the others belonged to Tamil Nadu (1), Madhya Pradesh (1), Rajasthan (1), Haryana (4). In 2001, it is indeed alarming that this proportion has increased from 3 to 7. Decline in sex ratio at birth from 946 in 1981 to 854 in 1991 is equally indicative of increasing foeticide.

**Table 2.7**  
**Districts with the lowest child sex ratio in India, 2001**

District	State	Sex Ratio
Ambala	Haryana	784
Amritsar	Punjab	783
Sonepat	Haryana	783
Bathinda	Punjab	779
Mansa	Punjab	779
Kapurthala	Punjab	775
Gurdaspur	Punjab	775
Kurukshetra	Haryana	770
Patiala	Punjab	770
Fatehgarh Sahib	Punjab	754

*Source: Presentation by Mr. Sunil Gulati, Director, Census Operations, Haryana at Regional Data Dissemination Workshop, Chandigarh, July 10, 2001*

What are the possible causes for such a state of affairs in a State where poverty, lack of education and lack of health facilities cannot be cited as causes? The reasons must be traced in the popular culture which regards a male as superior, as the norm, and the breadwinner. Females, on the other hand, are disregarded as being passive, submissive, docile and incapable of standing on their own in this society. "The declining sex ratio must be considered along with factors of improved life expectancy, greater availability of health services and declining female mortality. Lower female death rate and higher life expectancy, seen along with a declining sex ratio can only indicate the increasing incidence of female foeticide as well as negligence of the girl child. Sex determination clinics continue to proliferate all over the State and clearly advertise, in clear violation of the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prevention of Misuse) Act, "Pay Rs 500 now instead of Rs. 5 lakhs later"; there have been no convictions under the Act. Technology, developed to eliminate birth defects, is being used to nip innocent lives in the bud and the girl child is even denied the right to be born. True estimates of female foeticide/infanticide are difficult to get. But the juvenile sex ratio provides a broad picture of this" observes the Punjab Human Development Report. Pramod Gouri, director of Search, a government-financed civic-education outfit in Rohtak, offers two explanations "as to why Punjab and Haryana should be so egregiously prone to female foeticide: the region's social norms have proved remarkably immune to "modernity"; and the agricultural "green revolution" put enough money in local pockets to make sex-selection affordable. Abortion is far more prevalent among better-off, town-dwelling, higher-caste and literate women. Smaller families have, as in China, also further encouraged female abortion."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The Economist*, April 17, 2003, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

## Son Preference in Punjab

As repeatedly asserted above, one of the major factors impinging upon the sex ratio is the high level of son-preference, which led earlier to female infanticide and now, to female foeticide. This is effectively proved by Table 2.8 below. The Table below reveals a high percentage of women wanting more sons than daughters. In contrast, only a negligible percentage of women wanted more daughters than sons. Undoubtedly more than 76 per cent of the women wanted at least one daughter, but then more than 82 per cent in urban areas and 88 per cent in rural areas want at least one son.

**Table 2.8**  
**Indicators of Sex Preference**

*Mean ideal number of sons, daughters, and children of either sex for ever-married woman, percentage who want more sons than daughters, percentage who want more daughters than sons, percentage who want at least one son, and percentage who want at least one daughter by selected background characteristics, Punjab, 1998-89*

Background characteristic	Mean ideal number of			Percentage who want more sons than daughters	Percentage who wants more daughters than sons	Percentage who want at least one son	Percentage who want at least one daughter	Number of women
	Sons	Daughters	Either sex					
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	1.0	0.8	0.3	21.9	0.7	82.7	76.7	845
Rural	1.2	0.8	0.3	32.3	0.3	87.8	78.6	1,874
<b>Education</b>								
Illiterate	1.4	0.9	0.2	41.1	0.6	91.7	83.3	1,027
Literate < middle school complete	1.2	0.8	0.3	33.4	0.2	88.5	79.0	586
Middle school complete	1.0	0.8	0.4	19.9	0.0	83.4	74.1	289
High school complete and above	0.9	0.7	0.4	14.1	0.5	78.6	71.9	817

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab, 1998-99

There is a notable impact of literacy on the percentage of women who want more sons than daughters. The table above reveals that about 41 percent of the illiterate women want more sons than

daughters. This percentage declines with the level of education. However, it is equally significant to note that education does not have an impact on the percentage of women who want more daughters than sons, this percentage continues to be nil or negligible, indicating the continuing prevalence of son preference regardless of the level of education.

### **Mortality Rates**

The issue of declining sex ratio, it is generally assumed, implies high death rates for women. Punjab again presents a picture in contrasts with declining mortality rates, particularly of women.

**Table 2.9**  
**Age-specific Death Rates and Crude Death rates by Sex from NFHS-1, NFHS-2, and the SRS, Punjab**

Age	NFHS-1(1992-93)	NFHS-2(1998-99)			SRS (1997)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<5	14.9	11.8	20.4	15.6	12.6	17.6	14.9
5-14	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.3	1.2	0.7
15-49	2.4	4.6	2.7	3.7	3.6	1.9	2.8
50-59	8.1	7.5	8.2	7.9	13.7	11.0	12.5
60+	36.8	37.9	42.5	40.0	49.4	36.6	42.8
CDR	7.1	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.0	6.8	7.4

Source: NFHS-2, Punjab, 1998-99

Table 2.9 above reveals a few interesting facts. First the mortality rate for the under five age group seems to have increased between the period of NFHS-I and NFHS-II, while there is no difference in the statistics of SRS and NFHS-I. However, both NFHS-II and SRS reveal a higher female mortality in the under five age group as compared to male mortality. In contrast NFHS-II reveals a lower female mortality in the the next age group of 5-14 years of age; while the SRS continues to show a higher female mortality although the difference is smaller as compared to the difference in the under five age group. In the 15-49 age group, significantly, female mortality rates are lower than male mortality rates, while in the next two age groups of 50-59 and 60 + female mortality rates are higher than male mortality rates. The obvious inference is a neglect of the girl child in infancy, leading to higher mortality rates, which consequently adversely impacts the sex ratio.

These conclusions are further reinforced through a look at the infant mortality rates for Punjab. Table 2.10 below reveals the considerable difference in male and female mortality rates for infants and children below the age of five years. A look at the table reveals that as against 34.4 per cent of male children dying in the first month of life, 37.9 female children die in this period. This situation becomes even more grim when post neonatal mortality is considered. As against 15.3 per cent of male babies dying in the period between the first month of life but before the first birthday, 27.3 per cent of female

babies die in this period. Still more horrifying is the picture for infant mortality where the mortality differentials are 15.5 points. To make the portrait even more horrendous, the child mortality figures (probability of dying between the first and fifth birthdays) reveal a differential of nearly 18 points. On the whole, the under five mortality rate for males is 55.4 as compared to a gigantic 87.4 for females.

**Table 2.10**  
**Infant and Child Mortality, Punjab, 1998-99**

Sex	Neonatal Mortality	Post neonatal mortality	Infant mortality	Child mortality	Under five mortality
Male	34.4	15.3	49.7	5.9	55.4
Female	37.9	27.3	65.2	23.8	87.4

Source: NFHS-2, Punjab, 1998-99

### **Life Expectancy**

The declining sex ratio and higher mortality rates among women, notwithstanding, life expectancy at birth for both males and females has been increasing over the years. Significantly, the life expectancy for women surpasses that of men. While at the national level, women live almost an year longer than men, Punjab reveals a much better position with its females having a life expectancy of 71.4 years as against a male life expectancy of 68.4 years. Thus, in Punjab, life expectancy at birth records a female advantage of two years. Increased life expectancy indicates that the future will see an increasing number of aged women, many of whom will be widows (as male life expectancy is lower). This will obviously lead to grave issues of social security. As Preet Rustagi observes, "The absence of social security for them, on the one hand, and the declining support structures from family and society, on the other, point towards the need to address what will be a major problem, namely the feminisation of old age, exacerbated by low status and poverty."<sup>5</sup>

### **Age at Marriage**

Age at marriage is relatively high in Punjab. NFHS 1(Punjab) reports that a majority of women in Punjab are married after attaining the legal minimum age at marriage. The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) for females estimated by the National Family Health Survey (1993-Punjab) is 21.7 years in urban areas, 20.9 in rural areas and 21.1 years overall. On average, males marry almost four years later than females. Furthermore, the marriage ages have been rising over time. The SMAM for females has risen by three and a half years during the two decades from 17.5 years in 1961 to 21.1 years in 1981. The age at marriage has remained unchanged between 1981 and 1993.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Preet Rustagi, *op.cit*, p.18.

<sup>6</sup> National Family Health Survey, Punjab, 1993, p.49.

**Table 2.11**  
**Singulate Mean Age At Marriage By Sex From Selected Sources, Punjab, 1961-1999**

Source	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage		
	Male	Female	Difference
1961 Census	22.6	17.5	5.1
1971 Census	24.1	20.1	4.0
1981 Census	25.0	21.1	3.9
1991 Census	24.3	21.0	3.3
1993 NFHS – 1			
Urban	25.5	21.7	3.8
Rural	24.6	20.9	3.7
Total	24.8	21.1	3.7
1998-99 NFHS –2			
Urban	26.4	23.2	3.2
Rural	25.5	21.6	3.9
Total	25.7	22.1	3.7

Source: NFHS –2, 1998-1999

Between 1993 and 1998-99 (period between NFHS-I and NFHS-II), the Singulate Mean Age at Marriage for women has increased by almost one year. However, the difference between male and female age at marriage continues to be the same for both years of the survey.

### **Aged Women**

Increased life expectancy along with decline in death rates gives rise to another issue that of the aged and elderly. With females having a higher life expectancy, the future is likely to see more aged women, who may be widows as male life expectancy is lower. As the National Human Development Report 2001 notes, "The number of widows among the elderly is about three and a half times more than the number of widowers."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> National Human Development Report, 2001, Planning Commission, Govt. of India, March 2002, p.92

**Table 2.12**  
**Population Aged 60 and above**

States/UTs	Area	Male		Female		Persons	
		1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991
Punjab	Combined	8.28	8.07	7.25	7.58	7.80	7.84
	Rural	9.06	8.80	7.74	8.17	8.44	8.51
	Urban	6.25	6.34	5.96	6.15	6.12	6.25
All-India	Combined	6.40	6.69	6.58	6.71	6.49	6.70
	Rural	7.60	7.10	6.85	6.98	7.23	7.04
	Urban	5.08	5.51	5.69	5.91	5.37	5.70

Source: National Human Development Report, 2001.

Punjab, along with Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, has a high proportion of the elderly in its population. Punjab, in 1991, had a total proportion of 7.84 per cent of elderly population, which is about 1.24 percent higher than the national average. It is noteworthy that between 1981 and 1991, the proportion of male elderly in Punjab declined albeit by 0.21 per cent, while that of female elderly increased. However, in comparison to the all-India levels, the proportion of male elderly in Punjab is much higher than aged females.

*In sum*, women in Punjab wield the short end of the stick, so far as demographic indicators are concerned. There are a few positive indicators in so far as the age at marriage and declining birth and death rates are concerned. However, the declining sex ratio and the higher mortality rates for females reveal not only outright discrimination, but also the fact that women are left out when it comes to utilising the advantages which development has showered upon the State. The declining sex ratio brings into question the vital issue of right to life and *right to be born for the girl child*. Do women in Punjab fare any better when it comes to other indicators of status such as health, education, work, decision-making, violence etc. These would form the crux of the following chapters.



## **CHAPTER - III**

### **EDUCATION**

*"Education, in the present day context, is perhaps the single most important means for individuals to improve personal endowments, build capability levels, overcome constraints and, in the process, enlarge their available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in well-being. It is not only a means to enhance human capital, productivity and hence, the compensation to labour, but it is equally important for enabling the process of acquisition, assimilation and communication of information and knowledge, all of which augments a person's quality of life. Education is important not merely as means to other ends, but it is an attribute that is valued in itself, by most individuals. More importantly, it is a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion and a durable integration of people, particularly those 'excluded', from the mainstream of any society."*

**National Human Development Report, 2001**

Education provides a vital key to break open the vicious cycle of ignorance and exploitation; it is the key to empowerment. It leads to improvement in health and longevity, economic achievements, improves productivity and above all brings about a transformation in society towards equality, liberty and justice for all. "Education is therefore, the best social investment, given the synergies and the positive externalities that it generates for people in their well-being. It is also a priority for countries seeking to develop and sustain their level and pace of development."<sup>1</sup> The National Policy of Education, 1986, recognised education as a vital key to women's empowerment. Significant progress has been made in the field of education, yet vast gender gaps persist.

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<sup>1</sup> **National Human Development Report, 2001, p.49.**

**Female Literacy: Improvement and Gender Gaps**

**Table 3.1  
States and Union Territories Ranked by Literacy Rate India-2001**

Rank by Literacy Rate	States/Union Territory	Literacy Rate			Ranking by literacy Rate	
		Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
	India	65.38	75.85	54.16		
1	Kerala	90.92	94.20	87.86	1	1
2	Mizoram	88.49	90.69	86.13	3	2
3	Lakshadweep	87.52	93.15	81.56	2	3
4	Goa	82.32	88.88	75.51	5	5
5	Delhi	81.82	87.37	75.00	7	7
6	Chandigarh	81.76	85.65	76.65	11	4
7	Pondicherry	81.49	88.89	74.13	4	8
8	Andaman & Nicobar	81.18	86.07	75.29	9	6
9	Daman & Diu	81.09	88.40	70.37	6	9
10	Maharashtra	77.27	86.27	67.51	8	11
11	Himachal Pradesh	77.13	86.02	68.08	10	10
12	Tripura	73.66	81.47	65.41	14	12
13	Tamil Nadu	73.47	82.33	64.55	13	13
14	Uttaranchal	72.28	84.01	60.26	12	18
15	Gujarat	69.97	80.50	58.60	15	21
16	Punjab	69.95	75.63	63.55	25	14
17	Sikkim	69.68	76.73	61.46	21	16
18	West Bengal	69.22	77.58	60.22	19	19
19	Manipur	68.87	77.87	59.70	17	20
20	Haryana	68.59	79.25	53.31	16	23
21	Nagaland	67.11	71.77	61.92	28	15
22	Karnataka	67.04	76.29	57.45	23	22
23	Chhatisgarh	65.18	77.86	52.40	18	25
24	Assam	64.28	71.93	56.03	27	24

Rank by Literacy Rate	States/Union Territory	Literacy Rate			Ranking by literacy Rate	
		Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
25	Madhya Pradesh	64.11	76.80	50.28	20	28
26	Orissa	63.61	75.95	50.97	23	27
27	Meghalaya	63.31	66.14	60.41	32	17
28	Andhra Pradesh	61.11	70.85	51.17	29	26
29	Rajasthan	61.03	76.46	44.34	22	29
30	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	60.03	73.32	42.99	26	31
31	Uttar Pradesh	57.36	70.23	42.98	30	32
32	Arunachal Pradesh	54.74	64.07	44.24	34	30
33	Jammu & Kashmir	54.46	65.75	41.82	33	33
34	Jharkhand	54.13	67.94	39.38	31	34
35	Bihar	47.53	60.32	33.57	35	35

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-4, Punjab (Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001)

Punjab as may be seen from Table 3.1 ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in terms of literacy vis-à-vis the other Indian States and Union Territories. However, in terms of female literacy, it ranks 14<sup>th</sup>, and in terms of male literacy its rank is 25<sup>th</sup>. This could be indicative of the increased efforts to promote female education in the State. In comparison, a number of States have a female literacy rate which is almost half of that of male literacy rate. Jharkhand and Bihar, both at the bottom of the scale in the literacy field may be cited as cases in point.

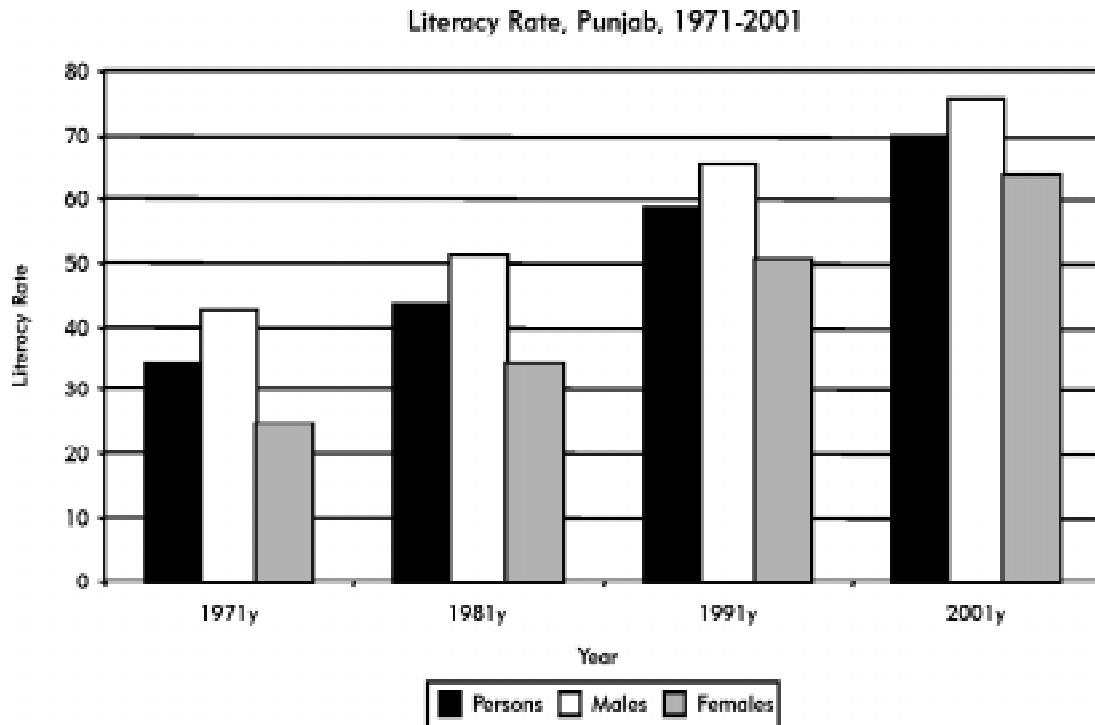
**Table 3.2**  
**Literacy Rate Punjab, 1971-2001**

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1971	34.12	42.23	24.65
1981	43.37	51.23	34.35
1991	58.51	65.66	50.41
2001	69.95	75.63	63.55

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-4, Punjab (Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001)

Table 3.2 above reveals that the overall literacy rate for Punjab has almost doubled in the last 40 years. Female literacy, it is significant to note has increased at a faster rate as compared to male literacy rate; increasing by almost three times in this span of time. More significant is the fact that

there has been a decline in the gender gap from 17.58% in 1971 to 12.08% in 2001, indicative of increasing availability as well as accessibility of educational facilities.



A district wise analysis reveals Hoshiarpur to be the most literate district with almost 4 out of every five persons having some sort of educational attainments. Mansa stands at the bottom rung of the ladder with only 52.50 % of literates. In respect to female literacy too, Hoshiarpur tops the list (75.56%) while Mansa is at the bottom (45.07%). Noteworthy is the fact that Mansa shows the highest increase in overall as well as female literacy in 2001 over 1991 (15.27 & 16.53), while Jalandhar and Ludhiana show the least in both these categories. (9.00 & 10.87)

It is generally believed that a greater degree of urbanisation would make the area more conducive to learning for women. This holds true only to a very limited extent in Punjab. Ludhiana, notwithstanding its high level of industrialisation and urbanisation, ranks at fifth place in literacy levels, while Hoshiarpur, where industrialization is relatively a new phenomenon ranks at the top.

**Table 3.3**  
**District wise literacy rate- Punjab: 2001**

State/District	Literacy Rate		
	Persons	Males	Females
PUNJAB	69.95	75.63	63.55
Gurdaspur	74.19	80.44	67.31

State/District	Literacy Rate		
	Persons	Males	Females
Amritsar	67.85	73.58	61.41
Kapurthala	73.56	78.66	67.90
Jalandhar	77.91	82.37	72.93
Hoshiarpur	81.40	86.97	75.56
Nawanshahr	76.86	83.67	69.52
Rupnagar	78.49	84.43	71.74
Fatehgarh Sahib	74.10	78.85	68.60
Ludhiana	76.54	80.19	72.11
Moga	63.94	68.40	58.96
Firozpur	61.42	69.55	52.33
Muktsar	58.67	65.94	50.59
Faridkot	63.34	68.92	57.09
Bathinda	61.51	68.31	53.76
Mansa	52.50	59.12	45.07
Sangrur	60.04	65.97	53.29
Patiala	69.96	76.13	62.94

Note\*: Literacy Rate is the percentage of literates to population aged 7 years and above.

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-4, Punjab (Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2001)

#### Gaps in Literacy Levels:

The gender gap in literacy levels is quite high for the State as a whole, even though it has declined considerably from 15.25 in 1991 to 12.08 in 2001. District-wise, Ludhiana District shows the minimum gap of 8.08 in 2001, while Ferozepur has the highest of 17.22 per cent. This gender gap in education has declined for the districts as well. The highest decline of 5.47% is witnessed in Hoshiarpur district, while the lowest is in Bathinda, a mere 1.41%.

**Table 3.4**  
**Gaps in Literacy Rates**

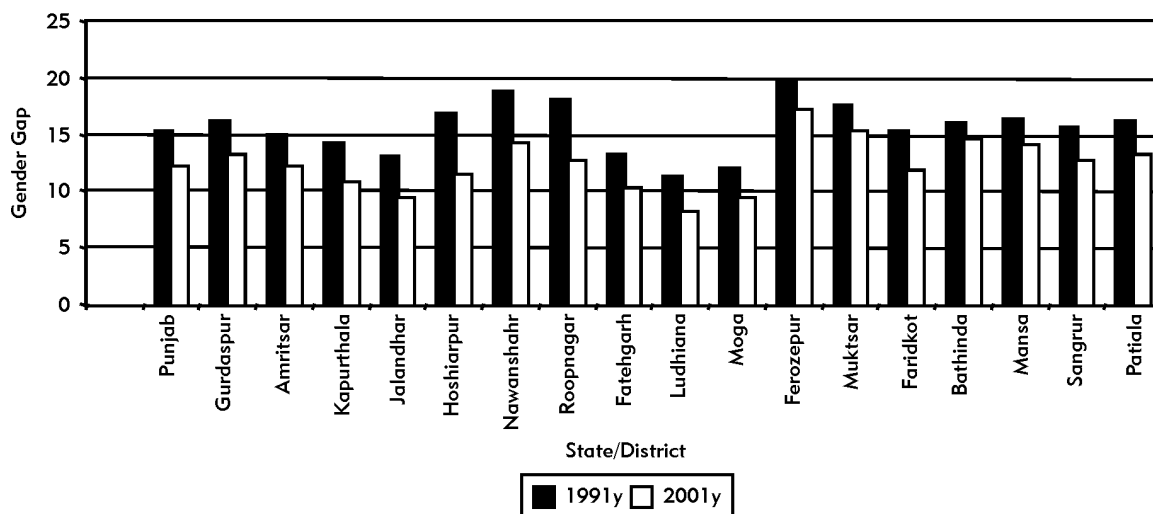
S.No.	State/District	1991	2001
	Punjab	15.25	12.08
1	Gurdaspur	16.22	13.13
2	Amritsar	14.97	12.17
3	Kapurthala	14.2	10.76
4	Jalandhar	13.06	9.44

S.No.	State/District	1991	2001
5	Hoshiarpur	16.88	11.41
6	Nawanshahr	18.74	14.15
7	Roopnagar	17.97	12.69
8	Fatehgarh	13.28	10.25
9	Ludhiana	11.21	8.08
10	Moga	11.96	9.44
11	Ferozepur	19.6	17.22
12	Muktsar	17.45	15.35
13	Faridkot	15.27	11.83
14	Bathinda	15.96	14.55
15	Mansa	16.27	14.05
16	Sangrur	15.55	12.68
17	Patiala	16.16	13.19

Source: Census of India, Series 1, Punjab

The Human Development in South Asia, 2000 report of Mahbub ul Haq Development Centre succinctly points out the causes for the prevailing gender gap: "Low female participation in the education system is primarily the outcome of two factors: low parental demand for girls' schooling; and the public and private sectors supply of educational services that do not respond to the communities' needs" The report also alludes to the "opportunity costs" of sending girls to school as they perform more chores at home as compared to boys.<sup>2</sup>

Gender gap in literacy levels



<sup>2</sup> p.116

The education system in India is also beset by the factor of low enrolment and high dropout rates. While various schemes of the national and State Governments aim at improving the enrolment rates, more often than not, these get nullified by high dropout rates. A look at the Enrolment and Dropout Rates for Punjab, reveals the status of women in this context.

**Enrolment and Dropout Rates:**

The number of years spent in school is a crucial factor in achieving de facto empowerment.

**Table 3.5**  
**Enrolment Ratio in Classes I-V and VI-VIII of Schools for General Education (All Students),**  
**1999-2000, Punjab and India**

State/India	Classes I-V (6-11) years			Classes VI-VIII( 11-14 years)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
India	104.08	85.18	94.9	67.15	49.66	58.79
Punjab	79.91	81.71	80.75	64.53	64.95	64.73

Source: Preet Rustagi, **Gender Biases and Discrimination against Women: What Do Different Indicators Say?**, UNIFEM, New Delhi, 2003

Table 3.5 above leads us to some interesting conclusions. First, the overall enrolment in Punjab is much lower than the all-India enrolment at the primary stage, while in the middle school stage, overall enrolment in Punjab is higher by almost 6 percentage points. Secondly, at the primary school stage, the gap for the all-India rates and Punjab enrolment ratio for males is much higher than that for females. In contrast at the middle school level, Punjab has a much higher level of female enrolment as compared to the national level. Male enrolment in Punjab continues to be lower than the national average for this category of enrolments. Thirdly, in both the stages, female enrolment in Punjab is higher than male enrolment. But the gap is lower at the middle school stage as compared to the primary stage.

Low enrolment of girls is compounded by higher dropout rates for girls. The causes are many, including inadequate facilities for girls in schools, absence of female teachers, insecurity, etc. However, Punjab is one of the few States of India which has a lower dropout rate for females as compared to males. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Punjab has one of the lowest dropout rates for girls in Classes I-X. It ranks seventh amongst the States and Union Territories of India, while Chandigarh, the joint Capital of Punjab and Haryana, has the lowest dropout rate for girls in Classes I-X. Table 3.4 further reveals that the dropout rate for girls in Punjab for Classes I-VIII is almost double the dropout rate for girls in Classes I-V. However, there is a difference of only 1.40 percentage points in the dropout rate for girls between Classes I-VIII and Classes I-X. In contrast at the all-India level, not only is the dropout rate for girls higher than that for boys, but it increases by 14-15 percentage points between the various categories.

**Table 3.6**  
**Gross Dropout Rates in Classes 1-VI, I-VIII, I-X, 2000-2001**

State/India	Classes I-V			Classes I-VIII			Classes I-X		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Punjab	21.97	18.53	20.36	40.14	37.44	38.89	40.40	38.84	39.67
India	39.71	41.90	41.67	50.33	57.95	53.67	66.41	71.51	68.58

Source: DWCD Annual Report, 2002-03, Ministry of HRD, GOI

### **School Attendance**

Another significant indicator of education, as against mere literacy is school attendance. The table below reveals a decline in school attendance with an increase in age for both boys and girls. While this decline exists for both boys and girls, it is much higher in the case of girls as compared to boys. Furthermore, an areawise analysis reveals that rural areas show a much lower percentage of persons, both male and female, attending schools as compared to urban areas. It is noteworthy that between the ages 6-10, there is no difference in the percentage of males and females attending schools. There is a gap of almost 5 percentage points between urban and rural attendance, but non whatsoever between males and females for this age group.

In the next age group of 11-14 years, in the urban areas, there are actually more females attending schools as compared to males. However, in rural areas the percentage of males attending school is higher by almost 8 percentage points as compared to females. Moreover the gap in school attendance between urban and rural females is quite high at almost 16 percentage points.

In the next age group of 15-17 years, it may be seen from the table below that in rural areas almost every second female is not attending school, while almost every third male is not attending school. In contrast in the urban areas, 82 per cent females and 83.4 per cent males are attending school. On the whole, between the ages of 6-17, in urban areas there seems to be a minimal gender gap in school attendance, while in rural areas there is a gap of about 6 per cent. The gap between the urban and rural females is also quite high at about 13 per cent.



**Table 3.7**  
**School Attendance**

**Percentage of the household age 6-17 years attending school by age, sex, and residence, Punjab, 1998-99**

Age	Male			Female			Total		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
6-10	97.5	92.7	94.1	97.7	92.7	94.1	97.6	92.7	94.1
11-14	93.7	87.0	89.1	95.5	79.6	84.9	94.5	83.7	87.2
15-17	83.4	64.3	69.7	82.0	51.4	61.6	82.7	58.5	65.9
6-14	95.8	90.3	91.9	96.6	87.0	90.0	96.2	88.8	91.1
6-17	93.0	84.1	86.7	92.7	78.1	82.7	92.8	81.5	84.9

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab , 1998-99

Some of the major reasons cited for not attending school are revealed in Table 3.8 below. It would be seen that for girls the major reasons are that they are required for household work or that education is not considered necessary, while for boys the major reasons are that it costs too much and that they are required to augment the family income. Further it would be seen that as compared to 44.2 per cent of the boys who are not interested in studies, only 26.8 per cent of the girls are not interested in studies.

**Table 3.8**  
**Reasons For Children Not Attending School**

*Percent distribution of children age 6-17 years who never attended school by the main reason for never attending school and percent distribution of children age 6-17 years who dropped out of school by the main reason for not currently attending school, according to residence and sex, Punjab, 1988-89.*

Reasons	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Main reason for not Attending the school <sup>1</sup></b>						
School too far away	*	*	0.0	3.0	0.0	2.7
Education not						
Considered necessary	*	*	3.4	14.7	3.1	13.9
Required for house						
Hold work	*	*	4.1	20.1	3.8	19.8
Required for work on farm/ family business	*	*	2.5	0.7	2.3	0.7
Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind	*	*	7.5	2.2	7.4	2.0

Reasons	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Costs too Much	*	*	20.7	18.5	21.2	21.2
No proper school facilities for girls	*	*	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.0
Required for care of siblings	*	*	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.0
Not interested in studies	*	*	44.2	26.8	42.0	25.4
Other	*	*	17.6	9.6	19.0	10.4
Don't Know/missing	*	*	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Children	13	13	129	145	142	160
<b>Main reason for not currently attending School <sup>2</sup></b>						
School too far away	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	6.3	0.0	5.2
Further education not Consider necessary	(5.1)	(9.1)	1.7	8.6	2.4	8.7
Required for House Hold work	(5.1)	(12.1)	6.7	16.8	6.4	24.2
Required for work on farm/ family business	(5.1)	(0.0)	9.2	0.0	8.3	0.0
Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind	(5.1)	(0.0)	7.6	0.0	7.1	0.0
Costs too much	(7.7)	(18.2)	10.0	11.9	9.5	13.0
No proper school facilities for girls	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.6
Not interested in Studies	(71.8)	(54.4)	61.5	38.5	63.7	41.3
Repeated failures	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.3
Got married	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.3
Other	(0.0)	(6.1)	2.5	3.2	2.0	3.7
Don't Know/missing	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of children	34	29	128	136	162	165

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab , 1998-99

( ) based on 25- 49 unweighted cases

\* percentage not shown ;based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases

<sup>1</sup> for children who never attended school

<sup>2</sup> for students who have dropped out of schools

## Sex Ratio and Literacy Levels: A Comparison

The relationship between educational attainment and overall improvement of health is established by a number of studies. However, comparing the literacy ranking with ranking in sex ratio presents an intriguing picture. Hoshiarpur is the only district which shows some correlation between higher literacy and sex ratio. Data for the other districts does not permit one to arrive at any general correlation. Muktsar which ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in terms of literacy is at 4<sup>th</sup> place in sex ratio. Paradoxically, Ropar, which is ranked second in literacy levels, is 12<sup>th</sup> in terms of sex ratio.

**Table 3.9**  
**Ranking of Districts by Sex Ratio and Literacy Levels**

District	Ranking by sex ratio		Ranking by literacy		
	Total	0-6 years	Total	Male	Female
Hoshiarpur	1	4	1	1	1
Roopnagar	12	9	2	2	4
Jalandhar	8	8	3	4	2
Nawanshahr	2	5	4	3	5
Ludhiana	17	3	5	6	3
Gurdaspur	3	14	6	5	8
Fatehgarh sahib	16	17	7	7	6
Kapurthala	5	15	8	8	7
Patiala	15	16	9	9	9
Amritsar	11	11	10	10	10
Moga	7	1	11	13	11
Faridkot	9	7	12	12	12
Bathinda	14	12	13	14	13
Ferozepur	6	2	14	11	15
Sangrur	13	10	15	15	14
Muktsar	4	6	16	16	16
Mansa	10	13	17	17	17

Source: Census of India, Series 4, Punjab, Provisional Population Totals

A comparison of the literacy rankings with sex ratio in the 0-6 years age group reveals further that Moga which ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in respect of both overall and female literacy ranks at the top in the 0-6 years sex ratio, and Ferozepur which is 15<sup>th</sup> in female literacy is 2<sup>nd</sup> in sex ratio in this age group. In contrast, Fatehgarh Sahib which ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in female literacy and 7<sup>th</sup> in overall literacy ranks at the

bottom in respect of 0-6 years sex ratio. The implications of this need to be assessed and analysed, for this effectively negates the assumption that improved literacy levels would positively impact sex ratios.

*In sum*, Punjab has made rapid strides in the field of education in general and female education in particular. Yet, the decline in sex ratio and increasing violence against women would seem to indicate that this education is limited more to the three r's and the approach is not a holistic awareness which would inculcate rationality and scientific thinking leading to an overall improvement in the status of women.

## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **HEALTH**

Inadequate access to health facilities was recognized along with education as one of the critical areas of concern at the Beijing Conference. The status of women's health in India is generally recognized as deplorable. Ignorance, inadequate health facilities, strong son preference, poverty and the like, contribute to neglect of female health. Punjab, however, is relatively better off in this respect as compared to other States such as Bihar. A study of variables such as availability of medical aid, nutritional status, immunization, sterilization, etc., reveal the status of female health in Punjab.

#### **Fertility Levels:**

Frequent child birth is one of the major causes for the low health status of women. Punjab, as seen from Chapter II has witnessed a demographic transition revealed in declining death rates as well as declining birth rates.

Corresponding to the decline in birth rates, the fertility rates too have come down from 5.2 in 1971 to 2.7 in 1997. The decline is slightly greater in rural areas at 2.6 as compared to urban areas (2.2), although the fertility rate for urban areas continues to be lower than that for rural areas.

Decline in fertility rates can have significant ramifications for women's health, leading to its overall improvement. The NFHS-2 estimate of the TFR for the State is 2.2 children per woman, which is the average number of children that would be born to a woman if hypothetically, she experienced current age-specific fertility rates as she lived through her reproductive years, age 15-49. Between 1989-91 and the next five years, TFR in Punjab declined from 2.9 to 2.2, a decline of 24 %.<sup>1</sup> NFHS 2 however reveals a faster decline in fertility in urban areas as compared to rural areas. It also reports that fertility in urban areas is about fifteen per cent below the replacement level, while in rural areas fertility is about fifteen per cent above the replacement level. The peak period of fertility, again revealed by NFHS 2 is in the age group of 20-29 years with a sharp decline after the age of 30 years.

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<sup>1</sup> NFHS-2 Punjab Preliminary Report.

**Table 4.1**  
**Age-Specific And Total Fertility Rates From NFHS-1, NFHS-2, And The SRS By Residence, Punjab**

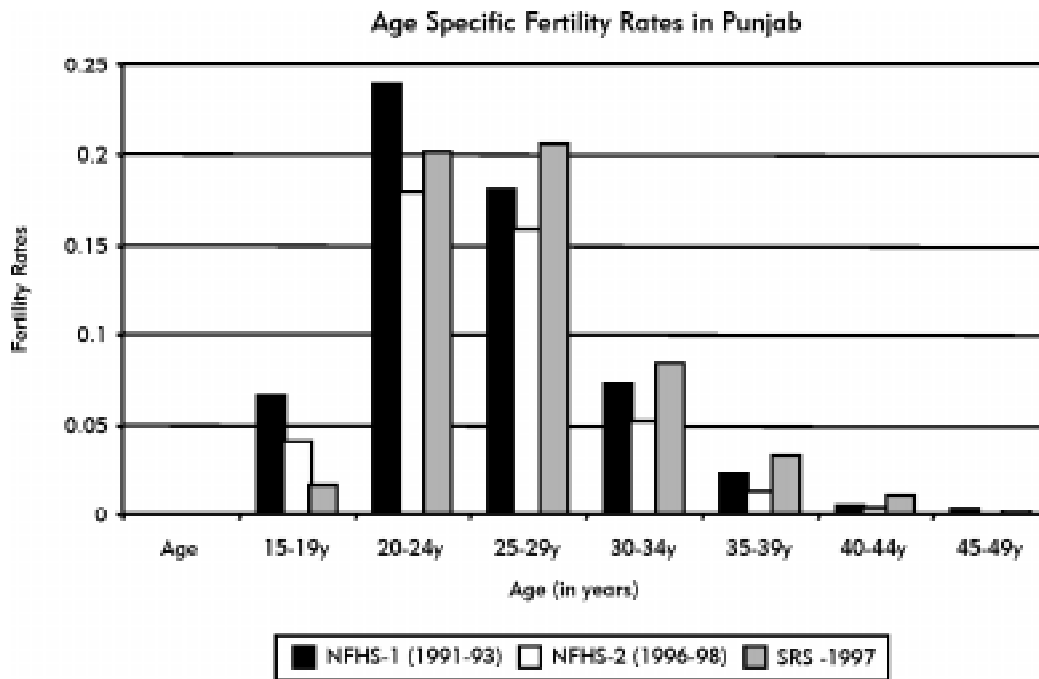
Age	NFHS-1 (1991-93)	NFHS-2 (1996-98)		SRS (1997)			
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
15-19	0.065	0.015	0.050	0.040	0.009	0.019	0.016
20-24	0.238	0.145	0.197	0.178	0.176	0.207	0.200
25-29	0.180	0.143	0.165	0.158	0.165	0.219	0.204
30-34	0.072	0.047	0.053	0.051	0.058	0.091	0.083
35-39	0.021	0.007	0.015	0.012	0.018	0.036	0.031
40-44	0.005	0.000	0.005	0.003	0.007	0.011	0.010
45-49	0.002	(0.000)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001
TFR 15-44	2.91	1.79	2.42	2.21	2.17	2.92	2.72
TFR15-49	2.92	1.79	2.42	2.21	2.17	2.92	2.73

Note: Rates From NFHS-1 and NFHS-2 are for the period 1-36 months preceding the survey. Rates for the age group 45-49 might be slightly biased due to truncation. Rates from the SRS are for one calendar year. Age-specific and total fertility rates are expressed per woman.

TFR: Total Fertility rate

Source for SRS: Office of the Registrar General. 1999a

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab



**Table 4.2**  
**Fertility Trends**

**Age Specific Fertility Rates for Five-Year Periods Preceding the Survey by Residence, Punjab, 1998-99**

Age	Years Preceding Survey			
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19
<b>URBAN:</b>				
15-19	0.016	0.045	0.062	0.074
20-24	0.166	0.235	0.280	0.260
25-29	0.139	0.166	0.209	0.245
30-34	0.043	0.052	0.113	[0.131]
35-39	0.015	0.028	[0.050]	U
40-44	0.001	[0.008]	U	U
45-49	{0.000}	U	U	U
<b>RURAL:</b>				
15-19	0.059	0.090	0.103	0.039
20-24	0.220	0.303	0.298	0.320
25-29	0.162	0.193	0.223	0.269
30-34	0.053	0.079	0.101	[1.178]
35-39	0.014	0.023	[0.041]	U
40-44	0.005	[0.010]	U	U
45-49	[0.000]	U	U	U
<b>TOTAL:</b>				
15-19	0.046	0.076	0.090	0.084
20-24	0.202	0.281	0.292	0.299
25-29	0.154	0.184	0.218	0.261
30-34	0.052	0.070	0.105	[0.162]
35-39	0.014	0.025	[0.044]	U
40-44	0.004	[0.009]	U	U
45-49	[0.000]	U	U	U

U - Unavailable

Source: NFHS-II

A look at the time-series analysis of fertility rates reveals the consistent decline in fertility rates over five year periods. The fall in fertility rates, is slightly higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

### **Nutrition:**

Women's health issues are generally defined in terms of reproductive health to the exclusion of the physical and mental consequences of heavy domestic work or the lack of an adequate diet, water or sanitation.

Levinson's study of Punjab shows that gender is the most significant determinant of nutritional status.<sup>2</sup> Another study of Punjab compared 'privileged' and 'under-privileged' sections and found that even in the privileged group 24 % of females were malnourished; in the under-privileged group this percentage increased to 74 %. These percentages for males were lower in both cases i.e. 14 % among the privileged and 67 % in the under-privileged group. This illustrates that not only are the girl children more likely to suffer from malnutrition, but that when they do the severity of their malnutrition is greater.<sup>3</sup>

The Human Development in South Asia Report, 2000 concludes that, "The gender biases in feeding practices continue into adulthood and result in chronic under-nutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies in girls and women. Failure to nourish girl children limits their capacity for healthy adulthood through stunting, for example, while an overarching reluctance to provide medical care compounds these problems."<sup>4</sup>

While poverty is a major contributing factor to the nutritional deficiencies, Punjab, with its rivers of milk and abundance of food grains presents a paradoxical picture, where abundance combines with a high level of chronic and acute under nutrition in children as reported by NFHS -1 (Punjab, 1993). It further reports that there is some evidence to indicate that female children are nutritionally disadvantaged in Punjab, although the sex differences are relatively small.

During pregnancy and lactation, when women fail to get the requisite special diet and the prevailing gender inequalities in the household makes it difficult for them to get it. This is substantiated by a World Bank Study conducted in Punjab.<sup>5</sup>

However, Punjabi women are relatively better off in respect to nutritional deficiencies, one indication of which is low levels of anaemia amongst women. NFHS 2 (India) survey results show that 41.4 % of women suffer from anaemia, 28.4% are mildly anaemic, 12.3% have moderate anaemia and

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<sup>2</sup> F.J. Levinson, Morinda: **An Economic Analysis of Malnutrition Among Young Children in Rural India**, Cornell-MIT, International Nutrition Policy Series, Cambridge, Mass., 1974.

<sup>3</sup> D. Das, J. Dhanoa and B. Cowan, "Letting them Live" in Meera Chatterjee, **A Report on Indian Women from Birth to Twenty**, NIPCCD, New Delhi, 1990, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> **Human Development in South Asia**, Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, OUP, Karachi, 2000, p.120.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p.125.



0.7% are severely anaemic. Only Kerala (22.7%), Delhi (40.5%) and Himachal Pradesh (40.5%) are better placed in this regard.

It becomes essential at this stage to point out that while a comparative picture shows Punjab in a much better light in so far as anaemia among women is concerned, at the same time it must be remembered that a little less than every second woman in Punjab is suffering from anaemia. Thus, a mere comparison with other states would usher in a false sense of complacency, which would divert attention from some of the significant issues at hand.

**Table 4.3**  
**Anaemia Among Women**

Background characteristic	Percentage of women with				Number of women
	Percentage of Women with any anaemia	Mild anaemia	Moderate anaemia	Severe anaemia	
<b>Age</b>					
15-19	53.1	37.2	15.9	0.0	81
20-24	43.9	29.2	14.2	0.5	410
25-29	44.0	30.7	12.4	1.0	537
30-34	41.3	28.2	12.5	0.6	513
35-39	38.3	26.3	11.2	0.7	1,073
<b>Marital Status</b>					
Currently married	41.4	28.3	12.4	0.7	2,502
Not Currently Married	40.7	30.2	9.8	0.7	112
<b>Residence</b>					
Urban	39.0	28.7	9.9	0.4	805
Rural	42.5	28.2	13.4	0.8	1,809
<b>Education</b>					
Illiterate	44.9	29.2	14.6	1.1	1,017
Literate, <Middle School Complete	40.6	27.5	12.5	0.6	551
Middle School Complete	40.4	28.3	12.1	0.0	287
High School Complete And above	37.6	28.0	9.1	0.5	759

Background characteristic	Percentage of women with				
	Percentage of Women with any anaemia	Mild anaemia	Moderate anaemia	Severe anaemia	Number of women
<b>Religion</b>					
Hindu	43.8	29.8	13.0	1.0	1,038
Muslim	51.2	33.0	16.5	1.7	60
Sikh	39.0	27.2	11.3	0.5	1,469
Others	(49.4)	(31.1)	(18.3)	(0.0)	45
<b>Caste/tribe</b>					
Scheduled Caste	47.7	29.1	17.7	1.0	744
Other Backward Class	42.1	31.3	10.5	0.3	412
Other	37.9	27.3	9.9	0.7	1,456
<b>Work Status</b>					
Working in Family Farm/ business	42.4	32.6	17.7	1.4	204
Employed by Someone else	(39.7)	(28.9)	(10.8)	(0.0)	26
Not worked In past 12 months	41.3	28.0	12.7	0.6	2,372
<b>Standard of Living Index</b>					
Low	53.4	30.6	22.9	0.0	105
Medium	46.5	30.4	14.9	1.2	929
High	37.6	27.3	9.9	0.4	1,567
<b>Pregnancy/Breastfeeding status</b>					
Pregnant	37.1	20.1	16.3	0.6	166
Breastfeeding (not pregnant)	51.2	33.3	16.3	1.5	484
Not pregnant/not breast feeding	39.4	27.9	11.0	0.5	1,964
<b>Height</b>					
≤ 145 cm	48.1	27.7	18.4	2.0	111
≥145 cm	41.1	28.4	12.1	0.6	2,506

Background characteristic	Percentage of women with				
	Percentage of Women with any anaemia	Mild anaemia	Moderate anaemia	Severe anaemia	Number of women
<b>Body mass Index</b>					
≤18.5 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	50.1	31.1	17.5	1.5	431
>18.5 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	39.7	27.9	11.3	0.5	2,181
<b>Fruit and vegetable Consumption</b>					
Fruits and vegetable	37.8	26.6	10.6	0.5	1,323
Vegetables only	45.2	30.3	14.1	0.8	1,274
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2,614</b>

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab, 1998-99

An age-wise analysis reveals that the highest percentage of anaemic women are found in the age group of 15-19 years, while the lowest are in the age group of 38.3 per cent. The women in this age group of 15-19 years also reveal the highest incidence of mild and moderate anaemia, while it is the women in the age group of 24-29 years who show the highest percentage of severe anaemia. Further, while marital status does not seem to have much impact on the degree of anaemia, residence definitely does. Thus more rural as compared to urban women are afflicted with any anaemia and rural women report higher incidence of moderate and severe anaemia, in comparison to urban women. The incidence of anaemia also declines with education; thus illiterate women have the highest per cent of anaemia, while those who have studied upto or beyond High School report the lowest level of anaemia. Surprisingly, Muslim women report the highest incidence of anaemia, while Sikhs the least. Also noteworthy is the fact that a higher percentage of women working in the family farm/business and those who have not worked in the past 12 months suffer from anaemia (42.4 % and 41.3 % respectively) as against a much lower percent of those women who work for somebody else (39.7 % ).

Significantly 37.1 per cent of the pregnant women and 51.2 per cent of lactating mothers were found to be anaemic. At the same time 39.4 per cent of women who were neither pregnant nor breast feeding were also anaemic.

### Children's Health

Punjab may be slightly better placed in regard to women's health, but the future does not look too rosy, for more than three-fourths of its children, its future citizens, are afflicted by some degree of anaemia. 80% of children were found to be anaemic. This is significantly higher than the all-India

average of 74.3% and is lower than only Haryana, Rajasthan and Bihar; even Uttar Pradesh and Orissa are better off in regard to anaemia in children.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 4.4**  
**Anaemia among Children**

Background characteristic	Percentage of children with				
	Percentage of Children with any anaemia	Mild anaemia	Moderate anaemia	Severe anaemia	Number of Children
<b>Age of child</b>					
6-11 months	66.2	22.5	40.7	3.0	109
12-23 months	87.3	14.9	67.1	5.3	231
24-35 months	79.3	17.6	54.2	7.5	268
<b>Sex of child</b>					
Male	82.2	15.8	61.5	5.0	314
Female	77.6	19.2	51.6	6.8	294

Source: NFHS-II, 1998-99

As many as 87.3 per cent of the children in the age group of 12-23 years suffer from any anaemia, while 79.3 per cent in the age group of 24-35 months and 66.2 per cent in the age group of 6-11 months suffer from anaemia. It is further noteworthy that 7.5 per cent of the children in the age group of 24-35 years suffer from severe anaemia.

A gender disaggregated analysis reveals a slightly positive picture in that the percentage of anaemia amongst girl children is lower by about 4.6 percentage points as compared to anaemia amongst boy children. However, at least 1.8 per cent more girls suffer from severe anaemia as compared to boys.

However, notwithstanding this slightly positive development so far as the girl child is concerned, she is again given short shrift in childhood vaccinations. A look at the table below reveals that the girl child is less likely to have received childhood vaccinations as against the boy child. This holds true for all types of vaccination, be it DPT, BCG, or Measles. It would be seen that as against 5.2 per cent of the boys who receive no childhood vaccination, 12.9 per cent of the girls receive no vaccination. The only exception to this trend is for Oral Polio drops which 15.9 per cent of the girls had received as against 7.4 per cent of the boys.

<sup>6</sup> NFHS 2, (1998-99), International Institute for Population Sciences, October 2000

**Table 4.5**  
**Childhood Vaccinations By Background Characteristics**

*Percentage of children age 12-23 months who received specific vaccinations at any time before the interview (according to the vaccination card or the mother) and percentage with a vaccination card that was shown to the interviewer by selected background characteristics, Punjab, 1998-99.*

Background Characteristic	BCG	Polio 0	DPT			Polio			Measles	All	None	Percentage showing Vaccination card	Numbre of children
			1	2	3	1	2	3					
<b>Sex of Child</b>													
Male	92.1	7.4	93.2	91.9	85.4	94.8	93.4	87.4	79.6	74.5	5.2	49.6	142
Female	84.5	15.9	82.5	81.6	77.9	85.3	82.6	78.9	72.7	69.2	12.9	34.9	116

Source: NFHS-II, 1998-99

**Maternal Health:**

The biological processes of conception and childbearing are some of the most significant factors impacting women's health. As a matter of fact, most studies on women's health focus on reproductive health matters to the exclusion of others. Millions of women face challenges to their health during the very natural process of childbirth. Maternal health indicators provide a significant gauge to assess the social and economic inequalities between women and men.

**Table 4.6**  
**Some Maternal Health Indicators of 15 Major States**

State	Pre-natal Care			Natal Care	Post-natal Care
	Number registered per 1000 pregnant women	Number received per 1000 pregnant women		Delivery in health institutions per 1000 deliveries	Number registered per 1000 mothers
		Two doses of Tetanus Toxoid	Iron and Folic Acid Tablets		
Andhra Pradesh	772 (3)	546 (5)	670 (3)	365 (5)	416 (5)
Assam	650 (6)	377 (11)	615 (7)	135 (12)	366 (6)
Bihar	99 (15)	231 (15)	125 (15)	95 (15)	74 (15)
Gujarat	644 (7)	474 (8)	629 (6)	332 (6)	419 (4)

State	Pre-natal Care			Natal Care	Post-natal Care
	Number registered per 1000 pregnant women	Number received per 1000 pregnant women		Delivery in health institutions per 1000 deliveries	Number registered per 1000 mothers
		Two doses of Tetanus Toxoid	Iron and Folic Acid Tablets		
Haryana	421 (11)	441 (10)	416 (11)	202 (9)	251 (11)
Karnataka	721 (5)	531 (6)	646 (5)	458 (4)	364 (7)
Kerala	874 (1)	644 (1)	783 (1)	924 (1)	495 (3)
Madhya Pradesh	417 (12)	270 (12)	399 (12)	164 (10)	304 (8)
Maharashtra	734 (4)	490 (7)	665 (4)	462 (3)	518 (2)
Orissa	489 (10)	453 (9)	520 (9)	131 (13)	277 (9)
Punjab	585 (9)	586 (3)	502 (10)	242 (8)	268 (10)
Rajasthan	270 (13)	234 (14)	289 (13)	147 (11)	120 (14)
Tamil Nadu	828 (2)	600 (2)	743 (2)	718 (2)	554 (1)
Uttar Pradesh	192 (4)	246 (13)	177 (14)	106 (14)	141 (13)
West Bengal	637 (8)	580 (4)	573 (14)	312 (7)	246 (12)
All India	455	381	424	254	271

Source: Sarvekshana, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Jan-March, 2000, Issue No. 82, NSS 52<sup>nd</sup> Round, July 1995-June 1996

Table 4.6 above reveals that Punjab ranks very low on the scale of maternal health indicators vis-à-vis other States. It ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in respect of number of registered pregnant women, 10<sup>th</sup> in terms of receiving Iron and Folic Acid tablets (IFA), 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of institutional delivery and 10<sup>th</sup> in terms of post-natal care. The only positive point may be seen in the number of women receiving two doses of Tetanus Toxoid, in which case Punjab is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>. In respect of IFA tablets, even Orissa is ranked better than Punjab. Considering the high level of availability of health services, the high level of development, per capita income and literacy levels, this indicates the inequalities between the sexes in the household.

Table 4.7 below reveals that 89.9 percent of the women received two or more tetanus toxoid vaccinations during pregnancy, while 2.4 per cent received only one TT vaccination and 7.8 per cent received none. 79.6 per cent of the women received iron and folic acid tablets. Of these 91.1 percent received three months supply and the same per cent consumed all the supply.

**Table 4.7**  
**Tetanus Toxoid Vaccination And Iron And Folic Acid Tablets Or Syrup**

*Percent distribution of birth during the three years preceding the survey by the number of tetanus toxoid injections received by the mother, percentage of births for which the mothers were given iron and folic acid (IFA) tablets or syrup during the pregnancy and among those who received iron and folic acid tablets or syrup, percentage who received enough for these months or longer and percentage who consumed all the supply given, according to selected background characteristics, Punjab , 1998-99*

Background characteristics	No. of tetanus toxoid injections				Percentage given iron and folic acid tablets	No. of births	Percentage who received supply for 3+ months	Percentage who consumed all the supply	No. of births with mothers received IFA
	None	One	Two or more	Total percentage					
<b>Mother's Age at Birth</b>									
< 20	6.2	2.2	91.7	100.0	80.3	100	76.4	89.8	80
20-34	8.0	2.3	89.7	100.0	79.7	780	80.9	92.0	621
<b>Birth order</b>									
1	2.2	1.5	96.3	100.0	86.1	285	84.4	92.2	246
2-3	8.0	3.1	88.9	100.0	80.2	448	80.1	91.8	359
4-5	17.7	0.8	81.5	100.0	68.0	134	72.9	91.0	91
6*	(12.6)	(6.7)	(80.7)	100.0	(61.9)	32	*	*	20
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	3.8	0.0	96.2	100.0	86.9	207	88.0	89.4	180
Rural	8.9	3.1	88.0	100.0	77.4	693	78.2	92.4	536
<b>Mother Education</b>									
Illiterate	17.7	3.6	78.7	100.0	66.3	358	74.3	92.9	237
Literate, < Middle School Complete	1.8	2.9	95.3	100.0	85.0	181	75.0	89.6	154
Middle School Complete	0.0	2.0	98.0	100.0	87.6	106	80.3	91.0	92
High School Complete And above	1.2	0.4	98.3	100.0	91.1	255	91.1	91.9	232

Background characteristics	No. of tetanus toxoid injections				Percentage given iron and folic acid tablets	No. of births	Percentage who received supply for 3+ months	Percentage who consumed all the supply	No. of births with mothers received IFA
	None	One	Two or more	Total percentage					
<b>Religion</b>									
Hindu	8.3	1.7	89.9	100.0	79.6	368	82.5	89.6	293
Muslim	(16.9)	(0.0)	(83.1)	100.0	(69.0)	30	*	*	21
Sikh	6.0	3.0	90.9	100.0	81.0	482	79.9	94.0	391
<b>Caste/tribe</b>									
Scheduled Caste	10.0	4.1	85.9	100.0	71.5	333	71.9	90.2	238
Other Backward Class	11.3	2.6	86.1	100.0	79.0	166	81.5	94.2	131
Other	4.2	0.8	95.0	100.0	86.7	400	86.3	91.7	347
<b>Standard of living Index</b>									
Low	24.9	9.6	65.6	100.0	67.3	56	(71.9)	(97.2)	38
Medium	12.2	3.2	84.6	100.0	72.2	398	72.1	89.4	288
High	1.6	0.7	97.6	100.0	88.1	441	87.9	92.6	388
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>80.7</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>716</b>

Note Table includes only the two most recent births during the three years preceding the survey. Total includes a small number of births to mothers belonging to other religions, scheduled-tribe mothers, and births with missing information on religion and the standard of living index, which are not shown separately.

( ) Based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

\* Percentage not shown; based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases.

1 Among births whose mothers received iron and toxic acid tablets or syrup.

2 Not belonging to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe, or an other backward class

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab



**Table 4.8**  
**Health Problems During Pregnancy**

*Among births during the three years preceding the survey, percentage of mothers experiencing specific health problems during pregnancy by residence, Punjab 1998-99.*

<b>Problems during pregnancy</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
Night blindness	1.3	0.6	0.8
Blurred vision	13.0	10.5	11.1
Convulsions not from			
Fever	2.5	2.2	2.2
Swelling of the legs, Body, or face	26.9	17.1	19.4
Excessive fatigue	44.3	34.7	36.9
Anaemia	31.8	21.8	24.1
Vaginal bleeding	1.3	0.8	0.9
<b>Number of births</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>900</b>

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab, 1998-99

Women may experience any number of problems during pregnancy. Ignoring these is one of the major causes of high maternal mortality rates in India. The table above reveals the problems most commonly reported during pregnancy. These are excessive fatigue (6.9 %); anaemia (24.1 %); swelling of body parts (19.4 %); blurred vision (11.1 percent). A small percentage also reports convulsions, not from fever; vaginal bleeding and night blindness in that order.

Apart from these problems, which are specific to pregnancy, women also suffer from a large number of reproductive health problems, which include abnormal vaginal discharge, itching, bad odour, lower abdominal pain, urinary tract infection among others. The table below reveals that quite a large percentage of ever-married and currently married women suffer from such problems.

**Table 4.9**  
**Symptoms Of Reproductive Health Problems**

**Percentage of ever-married women reporting abnormal vaginal discharge or symptoms of a urinary tract infection during the three months preceding the survey and percentage of currently married women reporting painful intercourse or bleeding after intercourse by background characteristics, Punjab 1998-99**

Background Characteristic	Ever married women									Currently married Women			
	Vaginal Discharge Accompanied by:												
	Any Abnormal Vaginal Discharge	Itching or irritation	Bad Odour	Severe Lower Abdomen Nt pain	Fever	Other Problem	Sympoms of a UTI	Any Abnormal Vaginal Discharge or UTI	No. of Ever Married Women	Pain Inter Course (Often)	Bleeding After Inter Course (ever)	Any Reproductive Health Problem	No of Currently Married women
<b>Standard Of Living Index</b>													
Low	26.6	19.8	16.9	23.7	1.9	3.8	8.6	28.5	113	8.9	0.0	29.6	109
Medium	23.9	15.6	13.8	11.5	1.2	3.0	9.3	26.5	989	6.1	1.0	29.7	935
High	23.0	16.7	12.2	12.1	1.1	4.5	7.8	25.4	1,681	5.2	1.0	27.4	1,618
<b>Work Status</b>													
Work In family farm business	(13.6)	(7.0)	(6.5)	(10.5)	(0.0)	(3.3)	(10.6)	(24.3)	(27)	*	*	*	20
Employed by some one else	25.3	18.5	14.2	11.9	2.7	6.4	10.4	26.4	224	6.3	0.5	30.0	196
Not work in past 12 months	23.5	16.4	13.0	12.4	1.0	3.7	8.2	25.9	2,533	5.5	0.9	28.2	2,448
<b>No. of children ever born</b>													
0	22.7	16.2	13.7	12.4	2.9	2.9	8.0	25.9	226	10.6	1.4	30.8	220
1	20.7	15.0	9.9	10.4	0.8	2.9	8.1	23.1	364	5.5	0.6	25.2	345
2-3	25.2	17.3	14.0	14.0	1.3	4.1	8.1	27.5	1,403	5.2	1.1	29.4	1,352
4-5	21.4	15.2	12.2	10.8	0.8	5.0	8.8	23.6	630	5.0	0.7	25.4	600
6+	23.6	17.2	12.5	9.8	0.0	2.1	9.7	27.7	173	5.0	0.7	33.2	157
<b>All ever-Married Women</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>2,796</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>All Currently Married Women</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>2,674</b>

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab

**Table 4.10**  
**Treatment of Reproductive Health Problems**

**Among women with a reproductive health problem, percentage who sought advice or treatment from specific providers by residence, Punjab 1998-99**

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Public Medical Sector</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>17.6</b>
Government Doctor	13.1	5.8	8.2
Public Health nurse	0.3	1.2	0.9
ANM/LHV	2.7	11.6	8.6
Male MPW/Supervisor	0.0	0.2	0.1
<b>Private Medical Sector</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>46.5</b>
Private Sector	43.2	34.7	37.5
Private Nurse	5.3	6.7	6.2
Vaidya/ Hakim/homeopath	0.3	0.4	0.4
Dai (TBA)	6.4	1.2	2.9
Traditional Healer	0.3	2.7	1.9
Other Pvt, Medical Sector	0.0	0.2	0.1
<b>Other</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>10.8</b>
<b>No of women</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>777</b>

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab

However, the general aversion to seeking medical advice is very much visible in this aspect. Even when they do seek medical advice, more often than not it is a private doctor or even a nurse. The table below reveals that 35.4 per cent of urban women and 43.4 per cent of rural women do not seek medical advice for reproductive health problems. 46.5 per cent of the women seek medical help from the private medical sector, while 17.6 percent seek help from the public medical sector. An areawise analysis reveals that a higher percentage of urban women take medical advice for reproductive health problems as compared to rural women.

### **Family Planning**

Knowledge of and correct usage of contraception can positively impact the lives of women. Women often have very little say in decisions concerning family planning. The last word lies with the husband. Moreover, the husband decides whether and what form of contraception to use. Amongst the methods of contraception used in Punjab, female sterilization (tubectomy) is the most popular contraceptive

method (29%) followed by condoms (14%), rhythm/ safe period and withdrawal (6%), pill (3%) and male sterilisation (vasectomy, 2%).<sup>7</sup> The fact of a much higher prevalence of tubectomies against vasectomies is again indicative of gender bias in decision-making regarding family planning and contraception. The Statistical Abstract, 2000 too reveals that in 1999-2000, there were 1,24,261 tubectomies as compared to merely 1800 vasectomies.

### **Access to Medical Aid**

Availability of medical aid in Punjab is fairly good, relative to other States of India. The delivery of health services is governed mainly by the National Health Policy, which placed a major emphasis on ensuring primary health care to all by the Year 2000. Some of the major goals under this were: reduction of infant mortality rate to less than 40 per thousand live births; reduction of 1-4 years mortality rate to less than 10 by 2000 A.D.; reduction of vaccine preventable diseases; enhancement of the use of ORT; reduction of mortality rates due to acute respiratory infection among children under 5 years by 40% from the present level; to reduce by 50 % the pre natal and neonatal mortality from the 1990 level. Better availability of health facilities is reflected in the fall in birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate and increase in life expectancy. The Statistical Abstract of Punjab 2000 reveals that in 1999 out of a total of 4,63,679 indoor patients, 2,28,985 were men and 2,34,694 were women and out of 115,64,164 outdoor patients, again a majority (60,31,473) were women as compared to 55,32,691 men.

In conclusion, it must be reiterated that Punjab has made formidable advances in the field of health care and infrastructure. Yet a lot more remains to be done, for here the comparison must not be between Punjab and Bihar, but between Punjab and Kerala or with some of the more developed States of the world. A comparison with undeveloped States would lead to a false sense of complacency and would prevent the State from making further progress. Further, it must be emphasised that although the State has come far, yet a gender gap continues to persist and must be eliminated before the State can make any claims to having achieved its health goals.

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<sup>7</sup> NFHS-2 op.cit

## **CHAPTER - V**

# **EMPLOYMENT**

Women's education is strongly linked to improvement in earning potential and economic empowerment. It is generally accepted that women who work for wages, earn and contribute to the family's income are generally more empowered. However, the empowering effects of employment are determined by the type of work, its continuity and the wages accruing therein.

Economic discrimination as evidenced by low workforce participation rate reinforces other discriminations and perpetuates the subordination of women. The causes of women's low participation rate are traced by the Human Development in South Asia, 2000, Report as, "The invisibility of women's work, domestic chores and other tasks, are part of a cultural/traditional attitude which views man as the primary bread-winner. Indeed women report themselves as non-workers because they tend to regard their labour, as 'domestic responsibilities' and therefore outside market related or remunerated work"<sup>1</sup>

Gender blindness in data collection-its lack of ability to accurately depict women's contribution to the economy results in under-enumeration of women's work. This fact was emphatically recognised in Shramshakti, which declared, "Although women work for longer hours and contribute substantially to the family income, they are not perceived as workers by either the women themselves or the data collecting agencies and the Government as all of them do not recognise the multidimensional functions of women which include their productive and reproductive labour. Women quite often are the major earners for their families. This also goes unrecognised."<sup>2</sup>

Women play a significant role in economic development. However, due to various social, cultural and psychological barriers and societal expectations here primary role is defined as a wife, a mother and a homemaker. Any other work that a women does as agricultural worker or an artisan for family enterprise or for supplementing family income receives little weightage. Her primary role is further reinforced by the general lack of employable skills in women on account of their low literacy and lack of training.

Broad trends in the employment pattern of women workers clearly indicate that the economic development process has not as yet brought the desired changes in their economic life, e.g. more than

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<sup>1</sup> **Human Development in South Asia**, Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, OUP, Karachi, 2000, p.55

<sup>2</sup> Shramshakti, p.7

65 percent of the women in developing countries are engaged in agriculture and only 16 to 17 per cent in industry or services. Moreover, many empirical studies have concluded that women's work and contributions in economically productive activities are invisible and severely devalued. The forces which have adversely affected the role of women, in the Indian economy are: increase of poverty in rural areas, illiteracy, traditional means of livelihood, prevailing gender stereotypes, general decline of handicrafts, development of modern industry with its increasing technological advancement, etc.

A macro analysis reveals that women's economic participation has been declining since 1921 both the percentage of women workers to total population and their percentage to total labour force. While the total number of women workers declined from 41.8 million in 1911 to 31.2 million in 1971, their percentage to total labour force declined from 34.44 per cent to 11.86 per cent in the same period. In 1981, the percentage of female workers to total population was 13.99%.

Statistical invisibility of women in the workforce is particularly pervasive in Punjab; women are reduced to economic non-entities. Notwithstanding the high level of development and educational attainments, Punjab has the lowest female workforce participation rate in the country. Majority of the women are included in the category of non-workers, a conclusive evidence of invisibility of women's work. Table 5.1 reveals that the general workforce participation rates for Punjab are considerably lower than the national level. As compared to a national workforce participation rate of 39.3 per cent, Punjab has a workforce participation rate of 37.6 per cent, ranking 24<sup>th</sup> amongst States and Union Territories of India. Its male workforce participation rates are higher than the national rate, while female workforce participation rates are much lower. While in the former Punjab ranks 14<sup>th</sup>, in the latter, its ranking drops down to 26<sup>th</sup>. However, at the same time, it must be pointed out that while Punjab ranks quite low in this respect, yet it has shown remarkable progress in its ranking, which has improved from 35<sup>th</sup> in the last Census to 26 in the current one.

**Table 5.1**  
**Ranking of States/UTs by Work Participation Rate: 2001**

India/State/UT	Work Participation Rate							
	Total		Males			Females		
	WPR	Rank	India/State/UT	WPR	Rank	India/State/UT	WPR	Rank
India	39.3		India	51.9		India	25.9	
Mizoram	52.7	1	Daman & Diu	65.6	1	Mizoram	47.6	1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	51.8	2	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	62.4	2	Himachal Pradesh	43.7	2
Himachal Pradesh	49.3	3	Tamil Nadu	58.1	3	Manipur	40.5	3
Sikkim	48.7	4	Sikkim	57.6	4	Chhatisgarh	40.0	4
Chhatisgarh	46.5	5	Mizoram	57.5	5	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	38.7	5
Daman & Diu	46.0	6	Karnataka	56.9	6	Sikkim	38.6	6
Andhra Pradesh	45.8	7	And. & Nic. Islands	56.7	7	Nagaland	38.3	7

India/State/UT	Work Participation Rate								
	Total		Males			Females			
	WPR	Rank	India/State/UT	WPR	Rank	India/State/UT	WPR	Rank	
Manipur	44.8	8	Andhra Pradesh	56.4	8	Arunachal Pradesh	36.5	8	
Tamil Nadu	44.8	9	Chandigarh	56.1	9	Meghalaya	35.0	9	
Karnataka	44.6	10	Gujarat	55.0	10	Andhra Pradesh	34.9	10	
Arunachal Pradesh	44.0	11	Goa	54.9	11	Rajasthan	33.5	11	
Maharashtra	43.5	12	Himachal Pradesh	54.7	12	Madhya Pradesh	33.1	12	
Madhya Pradesh	42.7	13	West Bengal	54.2	13	Maharashtra	32.6	13	
Nagaland	42.7	14	Punjab	54.1	14	Karnataka	31.9	14	
Rajasthan	42.1	15	Maharashtra	53.5	15	Tamil Nadu	31.3	15	
Gurjarat	42.1	16	Pondicherry	53.3	16	Gujarat	28.0	16	
Meghalaya	41.5	17	Chattisgarh	53.0	17	Haryana	27.3	17	
Haryana	39.8	18	Orissa	52.8	18	Uttaranchal	27.1	18	
Orissa	38.9	19	Delhi	52.2	19	Jharkahand	26.4	19	
Goa	38.9	20	Madhya Pradesh	51.6	20	Orissa	24.6	20	
And. & Nic. Islands	38.3	21	Tripura	50.8	21	Goa	22.2	21	
Jharkand	37.6	22	Arunachal Pradesh	50.7	22	J & K	22.0	22	
Chandigarh	37.6	23	Haryana	50.5	23	Tripura	21.0	23	
Punjab	37.6	24	Kerala	50.4	24	Assam	20.8	24	
Uttaranchal	36.9	25	Rajasthan	50.1	25	Bihar	18.8	25	
West Bengal	36.8	26	Assam	49.9	26	Punjab	18.7	26	
J&K	36.6	27	J & K	49.8	27	Daman & Diu	18.3	27	
Tripura	36.3	28	Manipur	48.9	28	West Bengal	18.1	28	
Assam	35.9	29	Jharkhand	48.2	29	Pondicherry	17.4	29	
Pndicherry	35.1	30	Meghalaya	47.8	30	And. & Nic. Islands	16.4	30	
Bihar	33.9	31	Bihar	47.7	31	Uttar Pradesh	16.3	31	
Delhi	32.8	32	Uttar Pradesh	47.3	32	Kerala	15.3	32	
Uttar Pradesh	32.6	33	Nagaland	46.8	33	Chandigarh	13.7	33	
Kerala	32.3	34	Uttaranchal	46.4	34	Delhi	9.1	34	
Lakshadweep	25.3	35	Lakshadweep	42.5	35	Lakshadweep	7.2	35	

Source: Census of India, 2001

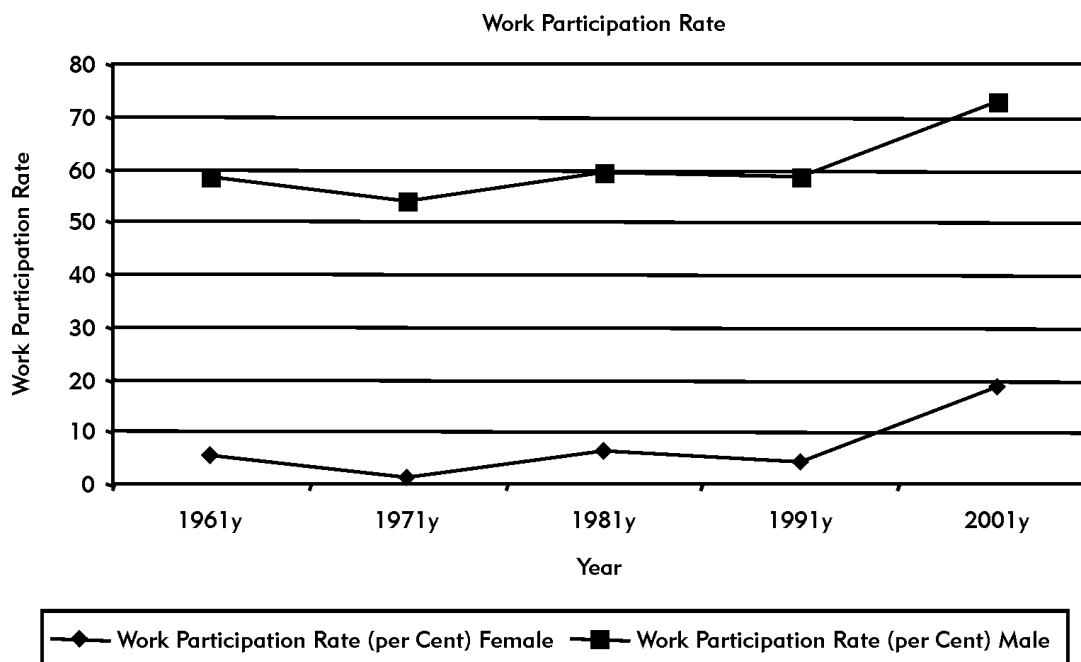
The invisibility of the female in the labour force of Punjab is revealed by Table 5.2 below. The female workforce participation rate, which was 5.5 in 1961 declined to a mere 1.2 in the next Census. It rose to 6.2 in 1981, only to fall once again in 1991 to a mere 4.4, taking Punjab to the bottom

of the scale in the national statistics. The current Census reveals a slightly more positive image in that the female workforce participation rates have increased from 4.4 to 18.7 per cent. In contrast, male workforce participation rates have always exceeded the magical figure of 50 per cent.

**Table 5.2**  
**Work Participation Rate by Sex: Punjab 1961-2001**

Year	Work Participation Rate (per Cent)		
	Total	Female	Male
1961	31.1	5.5	53.0
1971	28.9	1.2	52.8
1981	29.4	6.2	53.2
1991	30.9	4.4	54.2
2001	37.6	18.7	54.1

Source: Census of India, Punjab Series, 2001



It may be mentioned that a Worker in the Census of India is classified into two broad categories, viz. main worker and marginal worker. Main worker is defined as a person whose main activity is participation in any economically productive activity, (may be physical or mental) or unpaid work on farm or family enterprise. Those who had worked for more than six months in a year are termed as main workers. Those who had worked less than six months (183 days) in the year are termed as



“marginal worker”. In addition, a person who has not worked any time at all in the year preceding the date of enumeration is considered as a non-worker.

A deeper analysis reveals further that a majority of the male workers are in the main worker category, only a minimal percentage fall in the marginal worker category. In contrast, a large majority of the females are regarded as non-workers. Out of the total female workers, a substantial proportion comes in the category of marginal workers. It is further noteworthy, that female marginal workers have always exceeded the percentage of male marginal workers.

Further, an areawise analysis reveals a considerably higher proportion of female work participation rate in rural areas as compared to urban areas. However, there is a larger difference between the percentage of main and marginal female workers in urban areas as compared to rural areas. In urban areas, as against 7.9 per cent main workers, there are only 1.9 per cent marginal workers. In rural areas, on the contrary, there are 13.9 per cent female workers in the main worker category, while 9.2 per cent female workers fall in the marginal worker category.

**Table 5.3**  
**Percentage of total workers, main workers, marginal workers and non-workers to total population by residence and sex, Punjab: 1981-2001**

Total/ Rural/ Urban	Persons/ Males/ Females	Percentage to total population											
		Workers									Non-workers		
		Total Workers			Main Workers			Marginal Workers					
		1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Total	Persons	31.5	30.9	37.6	29.4	30.1	32.2	2.2	0.8	5.4	68.5	69.1	62.4
	Males	53.8	54.2	54.1	53.2	54.1	50.0	0.6	0.1	4.1	46.2	45.8	45.9
	Females	6.2	4.4	18.7	2.3	2.8	11.9	3.9	1.6	6.8	93.8	95.6	81.3
Rural	Persons	32.1	31.2	39.7	29.3	30.1	32.7	2.9	1.1	7.0	67.9	68.8	60.3
	Males	54.5	55.0	54.5	53.7	54.9	49.3	0.8	0.1	5.1	45.6	45.0	45.5
	Females	6.9	4.4	23.2	1.7	2.2	13.9	5.2	2.2	9.2	93.1	95.6	76.8
Urban	Persons	29.8	30.1	33.4	29.5	30.0	31.3	0.3	0.1	2.1	70.2	69.9	66.6
	Males	52.0	52.3	53.4	51.8	52.2	51.1	0.2	0.0	2.3	48.0	47.7	46.6
	Females	4.2	4.5	9.7	3.7	4.3	7.9	0.5	0.2	1.9	95.8	95.5	90.3

Source: Census of India, Punjab Series 2001

The total working population is further subdivided into four categories: those of cultivators, agricultural labourers, workers in Household Industry and Other Workers. Table 5.4 below reveals that inspite of the large involvement of women in the agricultural sector, they are not regarded as cultivators. Thus the percentage of male cultivators surpasses the percentage of female cultivators. As against this, the Table below reveals that women are more predominant in the categories of agricultural labourer, workers in Household Industry and even other workers. It is noteworthy that while the percentage of women as agricultural labourer and other worker has decreased between the last Census and the present one, it has increased in the category of cultivator and as worker in Household Industry, indicative of greater efforts to reduce the invisibility of women.

**Table 5.4**  
**Percentage Distribution Of Workers By Category-Punjab 1981-2001**

Total/ Rural/ Urban	Persons/ Males/ Females	Percentage to total population (Main + Marginal Workers)											
		Cultivators			Agri Lab			Workers in HHI			Other Workers		
		1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
Total	Persons	35.9	31.4	23.0	22.2	23.8	16.4	2.6	1.3	3.4	39.4	43.6	57.3
	Males	37.0	32.5	26.0	22.1	23.8	15.9	2.5	1.3	2.3	38.5	42.5	35.8
	Females	5.9	8.7	13.0	25.3	24.4	17.9	4.9	3.2	7.0	64.0	63.8	62.0
Rural	Persons	47.7	42.8	31.5	28.5	30.8	22.0	2.3	1.2	3.1	21.5	25.3	43.4
	Males	48.8	43.8	37.6	28.1	30.4	22.5	2.2	1.1	1.8	20.9	24.8	38.2
	Females	9.7	15.0	15.4	42.6	41.5	20.8	5.7	3.4	6.7	42.0	40.1	57.1
Urban	Persons	5.1	4.2	3.2	5.7	7.2	3.4	3.4	1.7	3.9	85.8	86.9	89.5
	Males	5.3	4.4	3.4	5.8	7.5	3.3	3.4	1.6	3.2	85.5	86.5	90.1
	Females	1.2	1.1	1.8	4.1	3.6	4.3	3.8	2.9	8.5	90.9	92.4	85.4

Source: Census of India, Punjab Series, 2001

The tables below reveal that Nawanshahr had the highest total work participation rate in 2001. It improved from its 15<sup>th</sup> rank in the last Census to emerge at the top in the current census. Gurdaspur, however, had the lowest total work participation rate, both in 1991 and in 2001. Nawanshahr also had the highest female work participation rate, while Jalandhar took the place of Gurdaspur at the lower end of the scale in this context. Gurdaspur moved up one rung in the ladder. In respect of male work participation rates, however, Nawanshahr moved down the scale and Faridkot takes its place at the top. Gurdaspur maintains its 16<sup>th</sup> position, while Hoshiarpur moved to the bottom.

**Table 5.5**  
**Ranking of Districts by Work Participation Rate: 1991 and 2001**

Rank in 2001	State/District	Work Participation Rate		Rank in 1991
		2001	1991	
	Punjab	37.6	30.9	-
1	Nawanshahr	44.6	29.8	15
2	Faridkot	42.4	32.8	3
3	Bathinda	42.2	32.8	4
4	Mansa	40.7	34.3	1
5	Sangrur	40.6	32.3	5
6	Moga	40.1	31.4	7
7	Muktsar	39.7	33.5	2
8	Rupnagar	39.3	30.1	14
9	Fatehgarh Sahib	38.2	30.2	11
10	Ludhiana	37.8	31.3	8
11	Patiala	37.2	30.2	12
12	Ferozpur	37.1	32.3	6
13	Amritsar	36.0	30.7	10
14	Kapurthala	35.0	31.2	9
15	Hoshiarpur	34.7	28.6	16
16	Jalandhar	34.5	30.1	13
17	Gurdaspur	33.4	28.1	17

Source: Census of India, 2001 Punjab Series

**Table 5.6**  
**Ranking of Districts by Female Work Participation Rate: 1991 and 2001**

Rank in 2001	State/District	Work Participation Rate		Rank in 1991
		2001	1991	
	Punjab	18.7	4.4	-
1	Nawanshahr	33.0	4.0	13
2	Bathinda	27.0	7.01	3
3	Mansa	25.1	7.5	1
4	Moga	24.2	4.5	11

Rank in 2001	State/District	Work Participation Rate		Rank in 1991
		2001	1991	
5	Sangrur	24.1	4.7	7
6	Rupnagar	23.8	4.6	9
7	Faridkot	23.0	6.8	5
8	Muktsar	22.3	7.1	4
9	Firozpur	18.5	7.4	2
10	Fatehgarh Sahib	18.3	2.1	17
11	Patiala	17.6	4.1	12
12	Hoshiarpur	17.3	4.7	8
13	Amritsar	16.3	2.7	14
14	Ludhiana	15.7	2.6	15
15	Kapurthala	14.1	5.8	6
16	Gurdaspur	12.1	2.4	16
17	Jalandhar	12.3	4.6	10

Source: Census of India, Punjab Series, 2001

**Table 5.7**  
**Ranking of Districts by Male Work Participation Rate: 1991 and 2001**

Rank in 2001	State/District	Work Participation Rate		Rank in 1991
		2001	1991	
	Punjab	54.1	54.2	-
1	Faridkot	59.5	55.7	4
2	Ludhiana	55.9	55.5	5
3	Nawanshahr	55.6	53.0	13
4	Bathinda	55.4	55.5	6
5	Muktsar	55.2	56.8	2
6	Fatehgarh Sahib	55.1	54.7	9
7	Sangrur	54.9	56.3	3
8	Mansa	54.4	57.6	1
9	Moga	54.3	55.1	7
10	Jalandhar	54.1	53.0	14
11	Patiala	54.1	53.2	12

Rank in 2001	State/District	Work Participation Rate		Rank in 1991
		2001	1991	
12	Firozpur	53.6	54.5	10
13	Kapurthala	53.4	54.0	11
14	Amritsar	53.2	55.0	8
15	Rupnagar	52.8	52.2	15
16	Gurdaspur	51.9	51.3	16
17	Hoshiarpur	51.0	50.6	17

Source: Census of India, Punjab Series, 2001

The NFHS-II survey, however, reveals that only 9.0 per cent of the women were currently working; another 0.4 percent had worked in the past 12 months but were not currently working. However, 90.6 per cent of the women had not worked in the past 12 months. The rural women surpassed the urban women in the last category by at least 8 percentage points.

70.5 per cent of those working had some continuity of employment, while 27.5 per cent were working seasonally. At least 82.9 per cent were paid in cash only, while 12 per cent were paid in both cash and kind. Significantly 9.6 per cent of the women were making almost no contribution to the total family earnings, while 44.2 per cent were contributing less than half. As many as 11.9 per cent of the women were supporting the entire family on their earnings.

**Table 5.8**  
**Percent Distribution Of Ever Married Women Age 15-49 By Employment Characteristics,**  
**According To Residence, 1998-99**

Employment characteristic	Urban	Rural	Total
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Currently working	14.7	6.4	9.0
Worked in past 12 months (not currently working)	0.3	0.5	0.4
Not worked in past 12 months	85.0	93.1	90.6
<b>Continuity of Employment</b>			
Throughout the year	84.5	57.0	70.5
Seasonally/part of the year	15.5	39.1	27.5
Once in a while	0.0	4.0	2.0

Employment characteristic	Urban	Rural	Total
<b>Type of Earning</b>			
Cash only	93.3	72.7	82.9
Cash and Kind	5.3	18.5	12.0
Kind only	0.0	5.6	2.9
Not paid	1.4	3.1	2.3

Source: NFHS 2, Punjab, p.43.

These findings clearly indicate the invisibility of women's work inspite of their significant contribution to the State economy. Various studies have shown that the dual productive role of women as paid workers in the outside market and as unpaid workers in the household leads to significant contribution in real terms to the production system. In human resource development also the role of a woman is significant in her services for child bearing and rearing. Due to its unskilled nature, women's role in economic development is unusually under-estimated . It is argued that a reliable technique should be evolved to quantify the economic contribution of women and particularly their non-monetary contribution. As Satish Agnihotri asserts, "There is a unanimity of opinion in the literature that high FLP ratios are associated with high FMRs although the converse is not necessarily true (see e.g.Kishwer, 1993, Murthi et al, 1995). High FLP increases the value of the females at the societal level and of the female child in the household. Bardhan (1974) hypothesises a link between low FLP, wheat growing regions in the north-west and the low sex ratios observed therein. In the rice-growing south east, female participation in agriculture is higher and females are valued more as a consequence. This 'work' as a determinant of 'worth' line has been advocated by Miller (1981), Rosenzweig and Schulz (1982) and recently Murthi et al (1995)<sup>3</sup>

Thus these trends further corroborate the fact that female work force participation rates are highly correlated to poverty and landlessness. Many studies have concluded that in areas where household income goes up women tend to withdraw from the labor market, due to improved income effect. Of course, it is also likely that women do not learn new skills and techniques associated with the new agricultural technology because they are primarily engaged in low skilled jobs. Moreover, there are also bias and cultural barriers against their learning new skills. This prevents them from participating in productive tasks on the farm with changes in technology.

*In sum*, female work participation in Punjab is characterized by low participation, is distributed largely in sectoral categories that provide for secondary jobs; brings poor remuneration and offers little scope for upward mobility. Women's present work participation is largely a function of the nature of development process in Punjab in consonance with the existing socio-cultural gender work definitions.

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<sup>3</sup> Satish B.Agnihotri, **Sex Ratio Patterns in the Indian Population**, Sage, New Delhi, 2000, p.34.

## CHAPTER - VI

# WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING

The political empowerment of women and their full participation in power structures and decision-making institutions are critical elements in the struggle for achievement of women's human rights and equitable and sustainable development. Women's rights advocates have been pleading for space for women to bring their vision and leadership, knowledge, skills, views and aspirations on the development agenda from the grassroots to the international level. Yet women remain absent, invisible and unheard in decision-making bodies. A gendered analysis of decision-making exposes the reality and severity of women's subordination. Feminists have started challenging the legitimacy of existing governance structures and institutions and their functioning in ways that perpetuate gender based discrimination. It is asserted that "only by feminisation of politics and bringing a critical mass of women into politics can a politics that is both 'transformed' and 'transformational' be brought about. Only the entry of women into the political mainstream can achieve a politics based on participatory, consensus-oriented approach, wherein the government is accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and inclusive. In short, a transformative and gender sensitive political system ensuring human rights of all, be it women and children or the marginalised and downtrodden people, becomes the hallmark of a system based on good governance."<sup>1</sup>

The dawning of the realisation that women's entry into politics broadens and redefines the political agenda and transforms the very nature of politics, led to the increasing assertion of the demand for 33 per cent reservation for women at all levels of the political system by the women's movement. In response to this demand, the Indian Parliament enacted the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution of India, which provided for reservations for women at the grassroots level of politics, that is in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies, a step that has been termed as the 'greatest social experiment of our time.' This first step in enabling the participation of women, taken by the Indian State, ensured the entry of several thousand women into the political sphere at the grassroots level for the first time and made India the very first state worldwide to have taken such affirmative action for political empowerment of women, thereby enabling millions of women at the grassroots to enter decision-making bodies and become the key agents for building a 'new India'. This 'silent revolution' opened more avenues for the meaningful participation and representation of women

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<sup>1</sup> **Breaking the Boundaries**, Report of a Seminar on Women Sarpanch and Transformative Politics, organised by the Centre for Women's Studies and Development, Panjab University, Chandigarh, January 2002

as also facilitated the women not only to get their first experiences in politics, but also to be more directly involved with the needs of women.”<sup>2</sup>

Absence of women in decision-making is reflected in the marginalisation of women’s needs and priorities on the national agenda. (Most of the women politicians have confirmed to the patriarchal mould, be it Indira Gandhi, Jayalalitha or Mamata Bannerjee. Indira Gandhi was credited with being ‘the only man in her cabinet’)

Punjab is delimited into thirteen constituencies for the elections to the Lok Sabha, the Lower House of Parliament. However, a look at women’s representation (See Table 6.1) in the Lok Sabha from Punjab reveals a few very disturbing features. First, the number of women contestants has remained very low, not exceeding 8 until 1996, when surprisingly 16 women contested the elections. Secondly, the number of women winners is insignificant. Only two women contestants (12.5%) emerged successful in 1996. As a matter of fact, there have been four general elections when Punjab failed to elect even a single woman to the Lok Sabha.

**Table 6.1**  
**Representation of Women in Lok Sabha from Punjab 1952-1998**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total No. M.P. of seats</b>	<b>Total No. of contestants</b>	<b>No. of Women Contestants</b>	<b>No. of seats won</b>	<b>Percentage of women</b>
1952	14	101	2	Nil	—
1957	17	78	1	1	5.88
1962	22	112	Nil	Nil	—
1967	13	75	3	2	15.38
1971	13	83	1	Nil	—
1977	13	79	1	Nil	—
1980	13	146	3	2	15.38
1985	13	74	5	1	7.69
1989	13	227	8	3	23.07
1992	13	81	4	2	15.38
1996	13	259	17	2	15.38
1998	13	102	9	1	7.69

Source: State Election Commission Records, Punjab, Chandigarh

A study conducted by the Centre for Women’s Studies and Development, Panjab University, Chandigarh revealed that in Punjab most of the political parties sidelined women in granting tickets

<sup>2</sup> ibid.



for the elections, notwithstanding the promises made in their election manifestoes of reservation of 33 per cent seats for women at the national and state level.

Punjab has drawn a blank so far as female representation in the Upper House is concerned. As a matter of fact, only once did Punjab have a woman representative in the Rajya Sabha (Bibi Nirlep Kaur).

This dismal scenario is equally replicated in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab (See Table 6.2). In the State Legislative Assembly, the representation of women has never exceeded 7.43%, way back in 1957. It is noteworthy that the 1969 Assembly was "Men Only". There was not a single woman representative.

**Table 6.2**  
**Representation Of Women In State Legislative Assembly Of Punjab 1952-1997**

Year	Total No. of seats	Total No. of contestants	No. of women contestants	No. of seats won	% of women M.LA.'s
1952	154	830	13	5	3.24
1957	12	606	17	9	7.43
1962	154	749	13	7	4.54
1967	104	602	6	2	1.92
1969	104	470	6	Nil	—
1972	104	469	11	7	6.73
1977	117	681	16	3	2.56
1980	117	720	15	6	5.12
1985	117	862	22	4	3.43
1992	117	569	22	6	5.12
1997	117	693	52	7	5.98

Source: State Election Commission Records, Punjab, Chandigarh

The minimal number of female representatives is further replicated in an absence of women ministers in the Council of Ministers. Further where women are included in the Ministry, the portfolios allocated to them reveal a stereotyped understanding of women and gender. The women ministers thus in most cases, remain concentrated in social affairs / social development portfolios such as social services and welfare, health, education and women's affairs and are rarely assigned responsibilities in areas such as finance, industrial development, agriculture, transport and communication, due to prevailing hierarchical gender relations in the society.

**Table 6.3**  
**Number and Percentage of Electors and Voters in Punjab in 1996**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Electorate	76,34,481(52.69%)	68,55,344(47.31%)	1,44,89,825(100%)
Total Votes Polled	48,29,957	41,89,345	90,19,302
Percentage (Male & Female votes polled to total votes polled)	53.55	46.45	100.00%

Source: *Statistical Abstract, 1997*

Apart from women's representation in Parliament/Legislative Assemblies, a notable indicator of political participation is the voting behaviour. The right to vote, a crucial right in a democratic setup, is rarely exercised independently by women; it is usually exercised under the influence of the male members of the family, be it father, brother, husband or even son. Even in matters of casting their vote, females remain sidelined. Polling percentage, overall in 1996 as seen from Table 30 was quite low, but it was even lower for females.

Punjab was the first state to go in for co-opted women members in the local bodies. The Punjab Municipal Act, 1911, provided for co-opting of two women members if there were no women elected to the grass-root bodies. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments provided the basis for empowering women at the grass-root level, by providing for 33% reservation for women. One-third seats of Sarpanches or heads of local bodies were to be reserved for women by rotation. This ensured the entry of thousands of women into politics at least at the grass-roots level.

**Table 6.4**  
**Corporators in Punjab as on 1.11.97**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Ludhiana	70	47	23
Jalandhar	55	38	17
Amritsar	60	43	17
Total	185	128	57
Percentage	100%	69.2%	30.8%

The number of women in representative institutions is a significant yardstick in measuring the status and empowerment of women. On this scale, the status of women in Punjab would seem to be very low, considering the fact that their representation in decision making bodies is very low. Furthermore, it is observed that the criterion for selecting women candidates is not the calibre of the contestant, rather her family connections. This particular factor is a significant one so far as empowerment of

women is concerned, for their own merits do not count. Even the reservation granted at the grassroots level present a deceptive picture for in most cases the decision-makers behind the women panches and sarpanches are the father, husbands or sons. There is thus an urgent need for the political education of women, so as to improve their status.

### Household Decision-making

Women, in Punjab, thus, remain outside the corridors of power and their voice is rarely if ever, heard in the public sphere. Yet the Punjabi woman has been valorised as brave, hardworking and innovative and a number of folk songs celebrate the valiant woman of Punjab as in *Balle ni Punjab diye sher bachchiye*. Yet, a look at some statistics collected by the NFHS-II for participation in household decision-making reveals that many women of Punjab continue to be sidelined in participation in decision-making in even the private sphere, decision-making in the public sphere is a far cry.

NFHS-II data reveals that at an all India level, 9.4 per cent of the women are not involved in any decision-making in the household. The highest per cent of women not involved in any decision-making is in Uttar Pradesh (16.4 %), while the lowest is in Nagaland (0.4%).

The Table below reveals that only 82.8 per cent of the women can make decisions by themselves on what items to cook. 54.0 per cent of the women can decide how the money they earn will be used while 45.6 per cent can make decisions on obtaining health care for herself. Low as these percentages are, a look at the percentage of women involved in decision-making on purchasing jewellery or other major household items and going and staying with her parents or siblings reveals an astounding fact; only 4.7 percent and 8.7 per cent of women respectively can make decisions on their own in respect of these two categories.

**Table 6.5**  
**Household Decision-making**

Per cent Distribution of ever-married women by person who makes specific household decisions, according to residence, Punjab 1998-99

House hold Decision	Respondent only	Husband only	Respondent with husband	Others in household only	Respondent with others in household	Total percent
URBAN						
What items to cook	81.1	0.2	1.6	3.3	13.8	100.0
Obtaining health care for herself	44.6	24.9	18.2	1.9	10.4	100.0
Purchasing jewellery or other major household items	5.1	14.8	46.3	5.6	28.2	100.0

House hold Decision	Respondent only	Husband only	Respondent with husband	Others in household only	Respondent with others in household	Total percent
Going and staying with her parents or siblings	9.8	27.4	39.1	3.9	19.7	100.0
How the money she earns will be used*	50.2	6.8	40.2	0.0	2.8	100.0
RURAL						
What items to cook	83.5	0.4	1.4	2.8	11.8	100.0
Obtaining health care for herself	46.1	15.9	22.1	3.3	12.6	100.0
Purchasing jewellery or other major household items	4.5	20.1	38.7	6.5	30.2	100.0
Going and staying with her parents or siblings	8.2	27.8	34.1	5.0	24.9	100.0
How the money she earns will be used*	57.9	9.6	27.3	0.0	5.2	100.0
TOTAL						
What items to cook	82.8	0.4	1.5	3.0	12.4	100.0
Obtaining health care for herself	45.6	18.6	20.9	2.9	11.9	100.0
Purchasing jewellery or other major household items	4.7	18.5	41.0	6.2	29.6	100.0
Going and staying with her parents or siblings	8.7	27.7	35.7	4.7	23.3	100.0
How the money she earns will be used*	54.0	8.2	33.9	0.0	3.9	100.0

Source; NFHS -2, 1998-99

An age-wise analysis reveals that women in the age group of 15-19 years form the highest component of the percentage not involved in any decision-making; while those in the age groups of 40-49 seem to be actively involved in household decision-making. Education does not seem to make much difference as actually the middle school pass women form the highest component of those not involved in any decision-making, while only 0.8 per cent of the illiterate women report that they are not involved in any decision-making.

**Table 6.6**  
**Women's autonomy**

**Percentage of ever-married women involved in household decision making, percentage of movement and percentage with access to money by selected background characteristics, Punjab, 1998-99**

Background characteristic	Percentage not involved in any decision making	Percentage involved in decision making on:				Percentage who do not need permission to:		
		What to cook	Own health care	Purchasing jewellery, etc.	Staying with her parents/siblings	Go to the market	Visit friends/relatives	Percentage with access to money
<b>Age</b>								
15-19	7.0	90.5	74.4	74.1	62.2	30.0	11.1	63.5
20-24	1.8	93.4	77.4	74.7	67.8	36.0	21.5	73.2
25-29	1.7	95.5	74.0	73.4	64.8	43.2	22.9	76.6
30-34	0.2	98.7	78.6	73.4	66.6	54.2	29.2	78.4
35-39	0.9	97.6	79.1	72.7	67.2	53.5	30.7	80.6
40-44	0.0	98.5	81.6	79.2	70.3	57.9	32.1	81.5
45-49	0.0	97.9	85.0	82.9	73.8	68.4	40.8	86.2
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	1.0	96.5	73.2	79.7	68.6	55.1	35.2	88.7
Rural	1.1	96.7	80.9	73.3	67.1	47.9	24.8	73.7
<b>Education</b>								
Illiterate	0.8	97.6	80.3	71.2	64.7	48.4	25.4	69.4
Literate, <middle school complete	1.2	96.8	77.5	76.3	66.6	50.7	29.6	79.2
Middle school complete	2.0	93.5	80.0	78.2	69.3	44.6	26.5	77.4
High school complete and above	0.9	96.5	76.3	78.8	71.5	54.1	30.7	89.9
<b>Religion</b>								
Hindu	1.1	96.5	78.0	74.6	65.8	53.0	30.2	80.1
Muslim	0.0	100.0	84.5	90.7	82.2	39.1	33.1	86.5
Sikh	1.1	96.5	78.7	75.0	68.4	48.3	26.5	76.5
Other	(0.0)	(98.1)	(78.9)	(81.2)	(63.2)	(62.4)	(18.3)	(86.2)

Background characteristic	Percentage not involved in any decision making	Percentage involved in decision making on:				Percentage who do not need permission to:		
		What to cook	Own health care	Purchasing jewellery, etc.	Staying with her parents/siblings	Go to the market	Visit friends/relatives	Percentage with access to money
<b>Caste/Tribe</b>								
Scheduled Caste	0.9	96.4	76.9	70.8	62.2	48.7	25.6	71.4
Other Backward class	0.7	97.8	79.3	75.6	67.9	48.1	25.4	76.5
Other*	1.2	96.5	79.0	77.4	70.2	51.5	29.9	82.5
<b>Cash employment</b>								
Working for cash	0.7	96.7	80.8	81.7	76.8	69.8	53.4	85.7
Not worked in past 12 months	1.1	96.6	78.2	74.6	66.7	48.1	25.3	77.7
<b>Standard of Living Index</b>								
Low	0.0	100.0	77.2	63.5	58.6	44.3	20.7	58.5
Medium	1.1	97.3	78.8	69.4	62.4	51.2	28.2	71.6
High	1.1	96.1	78.5	79.6	71.4	50.1	28.4	83.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>78.5</b>	<b>75.3</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>78.3</b>

\* Not belonging to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe or an other backward class.

Source: NFHS-2, 1998-99

Summing up, it can be stated that women in Punjab continue to be left out of decision-making whether in the public sphere or the private sphere. When the interests and voices of half of humanity are not reflected in decision-making processes, the very legitimacy of the institutions, legislative and executive, becomes questionable. Women are marginalised in the political process through co-optation, repression, socialisation and sabotage. Women have been unable to find or create a space for themselves in the sphere of electoral politics. The level of participation of women in decision-making in any society acts as a reliable barometer of the health of its system; when the numbers are low, it is clear that there is a systemic dis-ease.

Bringing women into power is not only a matter of equity, of correcting an unjust and unrepresentative system, but is a means of addressing wider social issues of poverty eradication, employment, health and like, in short facilitating a just, peaceful and humane social order. It is not an end in itself, but a means to effectuate a change in the system.

## CHAPTER - VII

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

"Any act – that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" is how the Beijing PFA defines violence against women; violence clearly constitutes a violation of women's right to live with dignity and self-respect. Violence may be both overt and covert. Thus women being deprived in terms of access to facilities and resources and even life constitutes violence as much as physical acts of aggression.

While the BPFA recognizes both mental and physical violence, it must be remembered that mental violence is non-quantifiable, hence it is possible only to present some analysis of physical violence. It is also essential to mention that the various situations which result in marginalisation and deprivation of women including foeticide, infanticide, lack of access to education, lack of opportunities as well as neglect in health care are equally instances of violence against women. The foregoing chapters clearly reveal the deprivation and discrimination faced by Punjabi women in the matter of health, education, nutrition, earning, inheritance, empowerment, even life itself which clearly constitutes one aspect of violence against women. These not only constitute as well as perpetuate deprivation and discrimination against women but equally lead to enhanced atrocities on women. The present chapter seeks to analyse the more overt aspects of this gendered violence and it focuses especially on cognizable crimes against women and domestic violence.

Punjab, the land of the Green and White revolutions, the sword arm and granary of India, is no exception to atrocities perpetrated upon women. It was the worst affected by the partition, an event of no less shattering consequences for the nation as a whole. Not only were parents separated from children, brothers from sisters, husbands from wives, the entire country side was bathed in blood, here of Muslims, there of Sikhs and Hindus. The tragedy lay not so much in the partition of geographical boundaries, but in the transformation of perfectly normal human beings to wild animals for whom nothing is sacred. The official estimate of lives lost is placed at half a million, but the number of those destituted was much higher. Girls were raped and killed either by the 'other' community or by their own kith and kin to protect the 'honour' of their families. Many committed suicide to escape a "fate worse than death". The name of the village Thao Khalsa where 90 women jumped into a well to save their honour is still remembered with horror. Trains of refugees were massacred enroute, hundreds of thousands of girls were abducted. Rita Menon and Kamla Bhasin (1998 : 69) report that between

December 1947 and July 1948 the number of women recovered was 9,362 in India and 5,510 in Pakistan. Women thus were made the target as well as the symbol of male honour and prestige.

Independence brought little relief to women, who continued to be subjected to all kinds of violence, physical as well as mental. However, it must be stressed that the reported instances of violence are merely a tip of the iceberg, because for every one reported case, there are many which go unreported. Thus the cases registered with the police are not a true index of the crimes against women. Second, many of the crimes / atrocities may not be overt acts, for instance, browbeating or physically intimidating the wife or resorting to pressure tactics or even depriving the women the use of health, education, employment and other opportunities. Third, the deprivation and discriminations faced by women, on the one hand, constitute covert violence and on the other, perpetuate barbaric acts of physical violence, such as rape, sexual assault, even infanticide and foeticide.

Comparison of the incidence and rate of crimes committed against women with other States shows Punjab to be a low risk State. For instance, in 1996, Punjab's percentage contribution to the all-India total was 0.8. It was ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in criminality with Delhi at the top and Lakshadweep at the bottom. However, its rank rose in 1998 to 26<sup>th</sup> and to 25<sup>th</sup> in 1999. The table below reveals that its percentage contribution to the all India total of crimes against women has increased to 1.6 and its rank has gone up to 22<sup>nd</sup>. In comparison to other States Punjab continues to be relatively better off in regard to the reported crimes against women, yet it must be asserted that the reported instances of crimes against women are increasing with every successive year and Punjab's contribution to the all-India total has doubled between 1996 and 2001.

**Table 7.1**  
**Incidence & Rate Of Crime Committed Against Women In States And UTs During 2001**

Sl. No.	State/UT	Incidence	Percentage Contribution To All-India Total	Population@ (In Lakhs)	Rate of Total Cognizable Crimes	Rank *	Rank **
1	Andhra Pradesh	16477	11.5	757.3	21.8	2	2
2	Arun Pradesh	180	0.1	10.9	16.5	8	23
3	Assam	4243	3.0	266.4	15.9	12	13
4	Bihar	5356	3.7	828.8	6.5	28	12
5	Chhattisgarh	3989	2.8	208.0	19.2	4	14
6	Goa	83	0.1	13.4	6.2	30	28
7	Gujarat	5805	4.0	506.0	11.5	20	9
8	Haryana	3393	2.4	210.8	16.1	11	15
9	Himachal Pradesh	890	0.6	60.8	14.6	13	20
10	J & K	1656	1.2	100.7	16.4	9	19
11	Jharkhand	2229	1.6	269.1	8.3	26	18



Sl. No.	State/UT	Incidence	Percentage Contribution To All-India Total	Population@ (In Lakhs)	Rate of Total Cognizable Crimes	Rank *	Rank **
12	Karnataka	6002	4.2	527.3	11.4	21	8
13	Kerala	5450	3.8	318.4	17.1	5	10
14	Madhya Pradesh	14549	10.1	603.9	24.1	1	3
15	Maharashtra	12524	8.7	967.5	12.9	17	4
16	Manipur	112	0.1	23.9	4.7	31	27
17	Meghalaya	66	0.0	23.1	2.9	33	29
18	Mizoram	126	0.1	8.9	14.1	15	25
19	Nagaland	30	0.0	19.9	1.5	34	31
20	Orissa	5357	3.7	367.1	14.6	14	11
21	Punjab	2361	1.6	242.9	9.7	22	16
22	Rajasthan	12175	8.5	564.7	21.6	3	5
23	Sikkim	24	0.0	5.4	4.4	32	32
24	Tamil Nadu	10111	7.0	621.1	16.3	10	6
25	Tripura	438	0.3	31.9	13.7	16	22
26	Uttar Pradesh	20227	14.1	1660.5	12.2	19	1
27	Uttaranchal	749	0.5	84.8	8.8	24	21
28	West Bengal	6570	4.6	802.2	8.2	27	7
	<b>Total (States)</b>	<b>141172</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>10105.62</b>	<b>14.0</b>		
29	A & N Islands	34	0.0	3.6	9.6	23	30
30	Chandigarh	150	0.1	9.0	16.6	6	24
31	D & N Haveli	19	0.0	2.2	8.6	25	33
32	Daman & Diu	10	0.0	1.6	6.3	29	34
33	Delhi	2291	1.6	137.8	16.6	7	17
34	Lakshadweep	0	0.0	0.6	0.0	—	—
35	Pondicherry	119	0.1	9.7	12.2	18	26
	<b>Total (Uts)</b>	<b>2623</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>164.53</b>	<b>15.9</b>		
	<b>Total (All-India)</b>	<b>143795</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10270.15</b>	<b>14.0</b>		

@ Actual based on 2001 census

Source: Crime in India, 2001, <http://ncrb.nic.in>

Table 7.2 reveals that in the 10 year period from 1988 to 1998, cases of murder have doubled, reported incidences of dowry death have increased five times from 44 to 212, that of suicide has increased from 37 to 120, rape from 47 to 186, kidnapping from 99 to 227, molestation from 33 to 108 and dowry cases from 62 to 384. The said table also reveals a very marked increase in cases of dowry death, suicide, rape, kidnapping and dowry cases in 1998 over 1997.

This it may be seen takes note of only the reported crimes against women. However for every one reported crime there are many which go unreported as can be seen from Table 73. There is a clear dichotomy between reported and unreported cases making the violence clearly invisible. Therefore visibility is not a proper yardstick to provide gender justice.

**Table 7.2  
CRIME AGAINST WOMEN IN PUNJAB FOR THE PERIOD 1988 TO 1998**

Year	Murder 302/IPC	Dowry Death 304-B/IPC	Suicide 306/IPC	Rape 376/IPC	Kidnapping 363/366/ IPC	Molestation 354/IPC	Eveteasing 294/IPC	Dowry Cases 498A/IPC
1988	56	44	37	47	99	33	-	62
1989	50	61	35	40	101	38	-	87
1990	57	85	40	48	112	24	1	7
1991	19	50	20	35	40	7	-	11
1992	44	104	25	43	53	18	2	18
1993	39	128	33	62	80	12	1	37
1994	60	103	36	80	99	30	2	63
1995	48	139	45	69	111	52	3	91
1996	66	164	57	148	164	92	4	201
1997	109	182	69	161	176	129	5	220
1998	110	212	120	186	227	108	10	384

**Table 7.3  
Unreported Crime for the Sample Survey in Punjab for the Year 1994**

Wife beating	536
Dowry Death	46
Dowry Demand	312
Rape	76
Eve-Teasing	462
Molestation	167

Source : I.D.C. Field Survey; Punjab in Prosperity and Violence.

The above table shows the number of unreported crimes against women for the year 1994 which are much higher than the incidence of reported crime.

**Table 7.4**  
**District wise no. of crime cases against women**

Sl.No.	Distt	Murder				Dowry Death				Suicide			
		1996	1997	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	Gurdaspur	3	9	18	15	22	11	3	2	3	6	6	9
2	Amritsar	15	25	22	12	30	15	29	23	5	11	19	10
3	Kapurthala	1	0	7	7	8	4	3	4	1	4	6	3
4	Jalandhar	13	18	12	24	21	7	10	9	5	4	9	4
5	Nawanshahr	0	2	7	2	3	3	1	2	3	0	3	4
6	Hoshiarpur	0	2	9	13	12	11	2	3	11	9	9	6
7	Rupnagar	2	6	9	12	5	7	6	1	4	4	6	3
8	Ludhiana	8	16	26	24	23	17	9	11	4	6	12	6
9	Firozpur	7	6	10	11	17	7	15	11	1	5	11	4
10	Faridkot	3	1	4	4	5	1	0	2	3	3	1	2
11	Muktsar	0	3	2	6	7	2	2	2	1	0	2	2
12	Moga	0	2	1	7	6	5	3	3	0	1	5	3
13	Bathinda	5	4	6	6	10	6	6	8	2	2	9	9
14	Mansa	0	1	3	4	6	1	3	3	0	3	0	2
15	Sangrur	3	7	12	19	13	8	8	4	4	4	5	8
16	Patiala	4	4	11	16	17	15	9	3	5	7	14	8
17	Fatehgarh	2	2	3	2	5	5	1	0	3	4	3	3
18	GRP Patia	0	1	2	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
19	Punjab	66	109	164	182	212	127	110	91	57	68	120	86

Sl.No.	Distt	Rape				Kidnapping				Molestation			
		1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	Gurdaspur	12	23	21	15	17	18	9	5	10	12	9	7
2	Amritsar	17	19	26	23	25	22	35	27	13	14	26	29
3	Kapurthala	11	9	10	5	14	4	9	11	7	12	7	4

Sl.No.	Distt	Rape				Kidnapping				Molestation			
		1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999
4	Jalandhar	12	13	17	5	25	23	37	11	4	13	0	0
5	Nawanshahr	4	4	0	7	4	6	6	2	1	0	2	3
6	Hoshiarpur	20	13	13	6	19	12	12	7	18	9	8	6
7	Rupnagar	5	6	6	8	4	6	8	5	1	9	3	5
8	Ludhiana	26	16	24	28	26	39	31	39	3	12	6	2
9	Firozpur	9	13	16	21	5	13	18	8	9	4	14	14
10	Faridkot	1	10	1	2	1	1	0	2	5	5	2	0
11	Muktsar	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
12	Moga	5	1	4	1	2	8	8	6	1	1	3	1
13	Bathinda	8	8	8	6	0	2	5	4	6	12	8	6
14	Mansa	0	3	6	7	0	1	2	0	0	4	3	5
15	Sangrur	8	11	13	7	9	9	16	15	5	11	7	11
16	Patiala	6	10	14	22	12	12	23	19	8	9	3	24
17	Fatehgarh	3	0	3	4	0	0	6	2	0	0	3	2
18	GRP Patia	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	2
19	Punjab	148	161	186	168	164	176	226	163	92	128	108	121

Sl.No.	Distt	Eve teasing				Dowry cases			
		1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	Gurdaspur	0	0	2	0	11	13	22	16
2	Amritsar	1	2	6	2	37	26	36	49
3	Kapurthala	0	0	0	0	14	16	14	8
4	Jalandhar	0	0	0	0	14	15	35	24
5	Nawanshahr	1	0	0	0	2	2	5	8
6	Hoshiarpur	2	0	0	0	30	14	26	11
7	Rupnagar	0	0	0	1	6	7	18	11
8	Ludhiana	0	0	0	0	37	53	103	125
9	Firozpur	0	0	0	0	12	13	26	17
10	Faridkot	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	6

Sl.No.	Distt	Eve teasing				Dowry cases			
		1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999
11	Muktsar	0	0	0	0	4	0	11	12
12	Moga	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	1
13	Bathinda	0	0	0	0	7	9	16	13
14	Mansa	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	1
15	Sangrur	0	1	2	2	6	24	22	17
16	Patiala	0	0	0	0	11	9	23	66
17	Fatehgarh	0	0	0	0	10	3	7	6
18	GRP Patia	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Punjab	4	5	10	5	201	220	384	391

Source: ADGP Crimes, PUNJAB

The above table reveals the total number of reported crimes against women during the period 1996-99. It may be seen that the number of murders has increased substantially over this period. Dowry deaths, on the other hand show a decline. A question comes to mind: Is this the real picture, or a fact of underreporting of such cases? Suicides, which had almost doubled between 1997-98, registered a fall in 1999. Likewise, the number of reported rape and kidnapping cases declined between 98-99, but dowry cases, as distinct from dowry deaths, increased. Vis-à-vis the districts, Ludhiana and Jalandhar rank at the top in murder cases, Amritsar in dowry deaths, suicides and molestation, Ludhiana in rape, kidnapping and over and above all the other districts in dowry cases.

Eve-teasing, which may be said to include everything from a comment or whistle to bodily touch, paradoxically has the least number of reported cases. This, it is noteworthy, is the most common crime against women and the figures given here reveal the extent of under reportage in CAW.

85 dowry deaths were reported in the first six months of the year 2000. There had been 169 reported dowry deaths in 1999. Dowry cases as distinct from dowry deaths, too have registered a steep rise from 384 in 1998 to 558 in 1999 and 337 in the first half of 2000. Other crimes against women too have shown an upward trend. There have been 248 kidnappings in 2000 compared to 206 during the same period last year and 136 rape cases.<sup>1</sup> Crimes against women seem to have an inversely proportional linkage with sex ratio. Increase in the former results in decline in the latter.

<sup>1</sup> The Times of India, July 5, 2000

### **Violence women face over the life cycle:**

#### *Foetus*

- Sex selection
- Female infanticide

#### *Infant*

- Infanticide
- Malnutrition

#### *<5 girls*

- Neglect of medical care and education
- Sexual abuse
- Physical violence

#### *Adolescence and Adulthood*

- Early marriage
- Early pregnancy
- Sexual violence
- Domestic violence
- Dowry harassment
- Infertility/failure to produce sons
- Desertion
- Witch hunt
- High maternal mortality

#### *Older women and widows*

- Desertion
- Neglect-Emotional, Financial, Social

Source: *National Profile on Women, Health and Development-India, VHAI & WHO, April 2000, p.222.*

### **Domestic Violence**

It is a tragedy of women's lives that they are safe neither within the household, nor outside its boundaries. As one woman MLA from Punjab stated, "*Kudiyān nu ghar de andar chuhe kha jaande hain, Bahar kaan kha jande hain*", (Girls, inside the house are molested by rates, outside by crows). However, battery of women within the household has always been considered a private family affair, where outside intervention is taboo. It is only recently that the social and economic impact of domestic violence has merited public concern and it has become a vital issue for the women's movement. Domestic violence encompasses a range of behaviours employed to hurt, intimidate, coerce, isolate, control or humiliate a partner or dependent.

The very subordinated status of women, on the one hand, perpetuates domestic violence, which is legitimized through the folk culture of Punjab, and on the other domestic violence has the impact of keeping women in a subordinated state. It all ends up in a vicious circle which is difficult to break. Further the very privacy of the affair leads to its non-reporting and thus accurate figures and statistics are difficult to come by. Domestic violence is underreported due to feelings of shame or fear, and also because women do not view it as violence and physical mistreatment.

NFHS-II Survey for Punjab reports that "at least 1 in 7 ever-married woman in Punjab has experienced domestic violence since age 15 and at least 1 in 16 has experienced domestic violence in the 12 months preceding the survey." Overall 13.1 per cent of the women have been beaten or physically mistreated since age 15 by husband or family members or others. The highest percentage of maltreated women fall in the age group of 30 – 39 years. Further it is those who are not currently married, who report the highest percentage of beatings or mistreatment. Significantly, the highest percentage of beatings or physical mistreatment is suffered at the hands of the husband, followed by other persons. In-laws come last in this category.

**Table 7.5**  
**Women's Experience With Beatings Or Physical Mistreatment**

**Percentage of ever-married women who have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husband, in-laws, or other persons since age 15, according to selected background characteristics, Punjab 1998-99.**

Background Characteristic	Percentage Beaten or physically Mistreated Since age 15	Percentage Beaten or Physically Mistreated Since age 15 by			Number of women
		Husband	In-laws	Other persons	
<b>Age</b>					
15-19	7.3	5.0	0.0	3.5	85
20-29	13.5	11.2	1.2	4.3	1,014
30-39	15.5	13.4	1.2	4.5	1,024
40-49	12.1	10.6	1.9	4.5	673
<b>Marital Duration (in years)</b>					
<5	9.2	6.9	0.0	4.3	656
5-9	15.6	12.8	2.1	5.5	442
10 or more	14.6	13.0	1.3	4.1	1,576
Not currently married	19.9	17.4	6.5	5.1	122

Background Characteristic	Percentage Beaten or physically Mistreated Since age 15	Percentage Beaten or Physically Mistreated Since age 15 by			Number of women
		Husband	In-laws	Other persons	
<b>Residence</b>					
Urban	10.7	8.1	1.4	5.2	862
Rural	15.1	13.3	1.3	4.1	1,934
<b>Education</b>					
Illiterate	17.0	15.8	0.9	4.0	1,084
Literate, < middle					
School Complete	17.3	14.9	2.2	5.2	593
Middle School complete	13.3	11.2	2.6	5.9	294
High school complete And above	7.0	4.3	0.9	3.7	826
<b>Religion</b>					
Hindu	12.4	10.8	1.3	3.6	1,125
Muslim	11.0	11.0	5.3	5.7	66
Sikh	14.6	12.3	1.3	4.7	1,556
<b>Caste/tribe</b>					
Scheduled caste	15.9	14.2	1.2	4.3	781
Other backward class	15.6	12.5	2.1	4.3	453
Other	12.1	10.2	1.2	4.5	1,560
<b>Household type</b>					
Nuclear house Hold	15.9	14.3	1.6	3.7	1,262
Non-nuclear Household	11.9	9.6	1.1	4.9	1,534
<b>Cash Employment</b>					
Working For cash	21.5	18.2	1.9	6.9	250
Not Worked in Past 12 Months	12.8	10.9	1.3	4.1	2,553
<b>Standard Of living Index</b>					
Low	20.8	19.0	0.9	1.9	113
Medium	18.6	16.9	1.4	4.9	989
High	10.4	8.2	1.4	4.3	1,681



Background Characteristic	Percentage Beaten or physically Mistreated Since age 15	Percentage Beaten or Physically Mistreated Since age 15 by			Number of women
		Husband	In-laws	Other persons	
<b>Living children</b>					
No living children	8.6	5.0	1.3	4.4	247
Only daughters	12.3	10.8	0.7	2.9	288
Only sons	14.5	11.2	1.9	5.3	608
Both daughters					
And sons	14.4	13.1	1.3	4.3	1,653
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>2,796</b>

**Note** :Total includes 2 scheduled –tribe women, 14 women who work but not earn cash, and 2 and 13 women were missing information on religion and the standard of living index, respectively, who are not shown separately

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab

However, the same survey also shows the frequency of beatings or physical mistreatment and the Table below shows a slightly paradoxical conclusion that only about 53 per cent of the women report not having been beaten in the past 12 months. 19.5 per cent report that they were beaten or physically mistreated at least once, 17.8 per cent report a few times, while 9.0 per cent report that they were beaten or physically mistreated many times in the 12 months preceding the survey. Significantly marital duration does not seem to make much impact and the percentage declines only for women married for more than 10 years. Nor does education seem to have the impact of liberating from a life of domestic violence. Table 7.6 reveals that as against 23.4 per cent of the illiterate women who were beaten at least once, 17 per cent of the high school and above women were beaten or mistreated in this duration at least once. Even more intriguing is the fact that of the women who reported having been beaten a few times there is very little difference in the percentages between women with different levels of education.

**Table 7.6**  
**Frequency of Beatings or Physical mistreatment**

Percent distribution of ever-married women who report being beaten or physically mistreated since age 15 by frequency of beating or physical mistreatment in the 12 months preceding the survey according to selected background characteristics Punjab 1998-99.

Background Characteristic	Beaten or physically mistreated in Past 12 months				Total percentage	Number of Women
	Many times	A few Times	Once	Not beaten		
<b>Age</b>						
20-29	13.0	21.7	23.0	42.3	100.0	137
30-39	7.4	19.6	19.8	53.2	100.0	159
40-49	6.3	6.3	13.2	74.2	100.0	82
<b>Marital Duration (in years)</b>						
<5	7.3	27.3	24.6	40.8	100.0	60
5-9	11.5	18.3	24.1	46.1	100.0	69
10 or more	9.7	16.2	18.8	55.3	100.0	230
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	8.5	17.1	14.0	60.5	100.0	92
Rural	9.2	18.0	21.2	51.5	100.0	292
<b>Education</b>						
Illiterate	11.4	19.5	23.4	45.7	100.0	184
Literate, < middle School Complete	8.0	13.4	18.5	60.1	100.0	102
Middle school complete	(9.8)	(21.9)	(7.2)	(61.1)	100.0	39
High school complete and above	3.0	17.2	17.0	62.7	100.0	58
<b>Religion</b>						
Hindu	9.5	13.1	18.8	58.6	100.0	140
Sikh	9.4	19.8	20.0	50.9	100.0	227
<b>Caste/tribe</b>						
Scheduled caste	8.2	26.2	20.4	45.3	100.0	124
Other backward class	18.0	11.9	21.1	49.0	100.0	71
Other	6.3	14.4	18.3	61.0	100.0	189

Background Characteristic	Beaten or physically mistreated in Past 12 months				Total percentage	Number of Women
	Many times	A few Times	Once	Not beaten		
<b>Household type</b>						
Nuclear house						
Hold	12.1	18.1	14.1	55.7	100.0	201
Non-nuclear Household	5.7	17.4	25.4	51.5	100.0	183
Cash Employment Working For cash	11.0	13.8	16.4	58.8	100.0	54
Not Worked in Past 12 Months	8.8	18.5	19.6	53.0	100.0	325
<b>Standard of living Index</b>						
Medium	11.2	20.4	21.5	46.9	100.0	184
High	5.2	14.5	17.1	63.1	100.0	175
<b>Living children</b>						
Only daughters	(8.6)	(21.3)	(27.1)	(43.0)	100.0	36
Only sons	10.8	21.1	13.0	55.1	100.0	88
Both daughters and sons	8.9	16.9	19.4	54.8	100.0	239
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>384</b>

**Note :** Total includes 6 women from age group 15-19, 24 women not currently married, 7 Muslim Women, 9 women belonging to 'other' religion, 5 working but not for cash, 24 women with allow standard of living, 21 women having no living children, and 2 women with missing information on the standard of living index, who are not shown separately.

( ) Based on 25-49 unweighted cases

Not belonging to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe, or an other backward class.

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab

What are the probable causes? Wife beating was justified on various grounds. It was found that some of the major reasons given for justifying a husband beating his wife include a suspicion that the wife is unfaithful, natal family does not give expected money or other items; wife shows disrespect to in-laws, wife goes out without telling her husband, she neglects the house or children, does not cook food properly. The table below reveals that 21.9 per cent of the women agreed with at least one reason. The highest percentage viz. 16.3 per cent of the women justified wife beating on grounds of a wife's unfaithfulness. Second reason in order of importance was neglect of house or children followed by wife going out without telling her husband. Next was showing disrespect to in-laws, followed by not cooking food properly. Significantly none of the women justify wife beating on grounds of not receiving gifts of money from natal family.

**Table 7.7**  
**Reasons Given for Justifying A Husband Beating His Wife**

Percentage of ever married women who agree with specific reasons for justifying a husband beating his wife by selected background characteristics, Punjab, 1998-99

Backgrounds Characteristic	Percentage who Agree with at least one reason	Percentage who agree with specific reasons						Number of Women
		Husband suspects wife is unfaithful	Natal Family does not give expected money or other items	Wife shows disrespect for in-laws	Wife goes out without telling husband	Wife neglects house or children	Wife Does Not Cook Food properly	
<b>Age</b>								
15-19	12.4	8.6	0.0	2.5	5.1	1.2	1.3	85
20-29	23.7	18.4	0.0	4.9	3.5	4.9	1.6	1,014
30-39	24.2	17.4	0.0	5.5	6.5	6.4	2.5	1,024
40-49	16.9	12.3	0.0	2.4	3.8	3.9	1.0	673
<b>Marital Duration (in years)</b>								
<5	21.4	15.4	0.0	4.9	3.7	4.8	1.5	656
5-9	23.2	19.4	0.0	4.2	4.1	4.4	1.9	442
10 or more	22.0	15.9	0.0	4.3	5.3	5.6	2.0	1,576
Not currently married	18.7	14.6	0.0	4.2	4.4	3.3	0.0	122
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	16.1	10.5	0.0	2.8	4.6	4.3	1.2	862
Rural	24.5	18.9	0.0	5.2	4.7	5.5	2.0	1,934
<b>Education</b>								
Illiterate	26.4	20.0	0.0	5.3	5.9	5.4	2.5	1,084
Literate, < middle School Complete	25.4	19.0	0.0	5.1	4.2	5.6	1.9	593
Middle school complete	15.9	12.5	0.0	4.2	4.6	4.8	1.3	294
High school complete and above	15.6	10.8	0.0	3.0	3.5	4.5	0.9	826

Backgrounds Characteristic	Percentage who Agree with at least one reason	Percentage who agree with specific reasons						Number of Women
		Husband suspects wife is unfaithful	Natal Family does not give expected money or other items	Wife shows disrespect for in-laws	Wife goes out without telling husband	Wife neglects house or children	Wife Does Not Cook Food properly	
<b>Religion</b>								
Hindu	17.9	12.4	0.0	3.8	5.0	4.5	1.8	1,125
Muslim	17.8	10.4	0.0	4.6	9.9	1.6	1.6	66
Sikh	25.1	19.3	0.0	5.0	4.5	5.7	1.8	1,556
<b>Caste/tribe</b>								
Scheduled caste	24.5	18.9	0.0	4.9	5.6	5.5	2.8	781
Other backward class	20.2	15.2	0.0	2.5	5.4	4.4	1.2	453
Other	21.1	15.3	0.0	4.8	4.1	5.2	1.5	1,560
<b>Cash employment</b>								
Working for cash	17.7	13.0	0.0	3.2	4.9	3.7	0.8	250
Not worked in past 12 months	22.3	16.6	0.0	4.6	4.7	5.3	1.9	2,533
<b>Standard of living index</b>								
Low	28.2	21.6	0.0	5.5	6.5	7.5	5.7	113
Medium	25.7	19.6	0.0	5.0	5.9	5.2	2.4	989
High	19.3	14.0	0.0	4.1	3.9	5.0	1.2	1,681
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2,796</b>

**Note :** Total includes 7 women belonging to other religions. 2 women belonging to scheduled tribes, and 2 and 18 women with missing information on religion and the standard of living index respectively, who are not shown separately.

Not belonging to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe, or an other backward class

Source: NFHS-II, Punjab

Punjab thus continues to have a highly patriarchal ethos which perpetuates the suppression and subordination of women. Women continue to be regarded as the symbol of masculine honour and thus become the targets of violence. Interventions for gender equality must take into account all these aspects.

At the end, it must be stated that violence against women is not an issue that a woman faces personally. It is a structural issue at a societal level, and is largely due to the unequal relationship between men and women that exists the world over. Indisputably, violence perpetuates and institutionalises the subordination of women and is a violation of their dignity, integrity and humanity. Violence needs to be addressed at two levels. At a personal level, it needs to be focused on its manifestations within the family and interpersonal relationships. At the societal level, violence needs to be addressed within a larger framework of economic policies, health and education policies, legal and judicial instruments and cultural norms and attitudes.

The crimes against women which are listed under Indian Penal Code are:

- i. Rape (Section 376 IPC)
- ii. Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes (Section 363-373 IPC)
- iii. Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Section 302, 304-B, IPC)
- iv. Torture, both mental and physical (Section 498-A IPC)
- v. Molestation (Section 354 IPC)
- vi. Sexual Harassment (Section 354 IPC)
- vii. Importation of Girls (up to 21 years of age) (Section 366-B IPC)

## CHAPTER - VIII

# GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

The Beijing Platform for Action urged all the State parties to draw up their national plans of action and formulate specific strategies to eliminate gender disparities in all the fields of women's subordination. Yet the goal of gender equality remains elusive. The preceding pages clearly reveal that the Punjabi woman has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century encumbered with the shackles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Clearly, there is a need for gender specific development paradigms which incorporate awareness of the "implications of gender into all areas of policy-making and planning so that women's needs can be met, their capabilities enhanced and their opportunities enlarged."<sup>1</sup>

Various programmes and schemes aiming at the upliftment of women are being run both under central assistance and by the state government. These schemes basically provide financial assistance and aim at employment and income generation.

A State Policy for Women was formulated in 1996, focusing on various critical areas of concern ranging from gender justice, access to education and skill and resource development, to promoting entrepreneurship and empowering women not only as individuals but also collectively through women's groups.

The **Punjab State Commission for Women** was constituted on the pattern of National Commission for Women on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 1994. Initially, it was a non-statutory body; it was made statutory only in 2001. The guidelines of the Commission require it to work for the redressal of women's grievances and protection of their legal and constitutional rights. Most of the cases, which come to the commission, are related to harassment for dowry, extra-marital affairs, property cases, sexual harassment etc.

A number of schemes have been initiated by the **Department of Social Security and Women and Child Development**, which focus on women, girl-children as well as aged persons.

As early as 1969, the State government introduced a scheme of **financial assistance to widows and destitute women**, to provide social security to those women who are deprived of their husband's support due to death, physical/mental disability or prolonged absence from home or due to some other reasons. Under this scheme, financial assistance of Rs. 200/- p.m. is granted to the beneficiary provided her income from all the sources is less than Rs. 1000 p.m. This scheme is extended for the

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<sup>1</sup> **Human Development in South Asia**, Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, OUP, Karachi, 2000,p.168

unmarried destitute woman above the age of 30 years, provided her income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 1000/- p.m.

**National Maternity Benefit Scheme**, which provides for a specific sum to pregnant women under the poverty line for additional nutrition; Vocational Rehabilitation Centre; Homes for Widows and Destitute Women, in Jalandhar, Kapurthala and a Women's Ashram in Hoshiarpur, Observation Homes in 7 districts for delinquent girls are also being run by the Department of Women and Child Development. Other schemes aiming specifically at the girl child include, Kanya Jagriti Jyoti Scheme, Girl Child Development Scheme, Indira Mahila Yojana and free transport facilities.

In order to improve the social status of the **girl child**, the State Government also announced a new scheme under which the girl-child born on or after 26.1.1996 will be benefited. The State Government invests Rs. 5,000/- for each beneficiary under this scheme with Life Insurance Corporation of India(LIC). According to the scheme, a child starts getting a scholarship of Rs. 1200 per annum at the age of 6 years upto the age of 12 years which is then increased to Rs. 2400/- per annum upto the age of 18/21 year. On termination the beneficiary would be paid Rs. 5000/- plus bonus provided the child passes at least Matric.

The **Punjab State Social Welfare Advisory Board** is equally active in the field of women's empowerment. The Projects of the Board focus upon welfare, extension, demonstration projects and family and child related programmes.

The National Policy of Education envisages that education should be used as a strategy for achievement of a basic change of the status of women and it should play a positive and interventionist role in the empowerment of women. Keeping in view the above objective the Board has started a **scheme of condensed courses of education for women**, which aims at facilitating social and economic empowerment of women by providing them with education and relevant skills. The scheme is designed specially to help dropouts and failed candidates to complete their school education.

The Board also provides assistance to organizations having the requisite capability, experience and infrastructure to provide vocational training to needy women of the age groups of 15 years and above. The main aspects which are taken into consideration are: the marketability of the skills and the capability of the applicant institutions.

Grants are provided by the Board to organizations to conduct **Awareness Generation Camps** on issues relating to women. Though the focus of the scheme is to raise awareness of women in the community on issues relating to their status, rights and problems, yet it is envisaged that the programme will be used to build consciousness regarding women's issues among the community at large especially among men.

The Board also gives grants to women's organizations and other voluntary social welfare organizations engaged in work relating to women's issues for setting up **Family Counselling Centres** (FCCs). FCCs are



supported to provide counselling, referral and if possible rehabilitative services to women victims of atrocities in the family and society and also to others affected by family and social problems and disputes.

It also provides financial assistance to organizations to set up **crèche units** for the children of working and ailing mothers belonging to the lower income groups. Children of the age group of 0-5 years can be covered under the scheme.

Broad based women's organizations can avail of grants from the Board to assist women beneficiaries to set up agro based units like dairy, poultry, piggery, goatery etc. and also utilize the Board's assistance to set up production units where women will be employed in large numbers.

Programmes to promote women's welfare and development have been evolved separately for **rural areas**. Apart from some general programmes of the centre there are other meant for specific groups of women. **Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)** was specifically designed to provide support for poor women in rural areas by the Government of India. It was a sub-component of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The primary objective of DWCRA was to provide income-generating activities to women and also provide an organizational support in terms of a receiving system for the assisted women so that they can become effective recipients of goods and services available in the area.

In Punjab DWCRA was introduced in two districts of Bathinda and Gurdaspur in 1984-85; it was extended to Ferozepur in 1986-87 to Sangrur in 1990-91 and Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur in 1991-92. Since the inception of the programme up to 1997-98, approximately 7000 groups had been formed in all the districts of Punjab. It has since been discontinued and merged with other programmes.

Another programme focusing upon women and girl-child was the **Composite Programme for Women and Pre-school Children**, which was started in Punjab State from the year 1974-75. The main objective of this scheme was to impart training to rural women and girls in tailoring and embroidery etc. through crafts centre. Under this scheme, assistance of Rs. 1000 was provided to each craft centre in each block for purchase and repair of sewing machine etc.

On the occasion of Republic Day i.e. 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1999, two welfare insurance policies for women named **Raj Rajeshwari Mahila Kalyan Yojna** and **Shri Bal Bhalai Policy** were launched in Punjab. Under the former, female persons in the age group of 10 to 75 would have to pay an annual premium of Rs. 23 per head. Every woman under the scheme would be entitled to Rs. 2500 as compensation of becoming blind and handicapped. In case of loss of an eye, she would be allowed compensation amounting to Rs. 12,500/-.

A review of the policies would be incomplete without a mention of the **Swaran Jayanti Shahiri Rozgar Yojana**, which aims at poverty alleviation through self help groups. The scheme reserves 30 per cent of the funds for women. Under the scheme 10 women can come together to form a self help

group and can avail of credit upto Rs.2.5 lakhs and they would get a subsidy of 50 per cent on the borrowed amount.

A critical review of the strategies adopted to uplift the status of women indicates two trends. Firstly, there is a shift in the emphasis from welfare approach to the alleviation of poverty and women's empowerment. Secondly, there is a shift from just providing basic minimum needs like health, education etc. to improving the quality of life. Their success, however, is dependent on various factors ranging from their design and formulation to their management and delivery mechanism. Women specific development schemes reveal a typical traditional household bias and women's traditional roles. Women's concerns and issues are seldom integrated into mainstream policies, and women continue to remain invisible in development planning.

#### **Goals of the Punjab State Policy for Women, 1996**

1. To sensitise the community to issues relating to gender justice and women's development by making visible the functioning of the gender system.
2. To aim about a change in the awareness, knowledge and attitude of society particularly to provide women with qualitative access to education, skills, health and property resources.
3. To ensure for women's productive participation in employment, decision making developmental activities and to promote entrepreneurship among them.
4. To sensitize society and to mobilize woman, NGOs and other activists t checking atrocities against women and ensuring gender justice.
5. To establish local women's groups to act as catalysts to empowering women.
6. Provision for the needs of the specially disadvantaged women.
7. To build a gender data bank and utilize the media to reach out to a larger population.
8. To make the delivery system prompt, accessible and efficient.
9. To monitor, evaluate and review the implementation.

## **CHAPTER - IX**

### **CONCLUSION**

'So kyoon manda aakhiyen jis janmiyen rajan', declares the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Book of the Sikhs, which is accorded the status of a Guru in the Sikh religion. At the same time, the popular culture of Punjab legitimises numerous practices derogatory to women. Women continue to be worshipped as *kanya devi*, and regarded as the key component of the system of *vartan bhanji*, ; yet they also continue to be subordinated, suppressed and discriminated against in every day life.

This is particularly evident in the declining sex ratio of Punjab, and more so in the sex ratio for the 0-6 years age group. Female infanticide, which was earlier the norm (as a matter of fact, it is often said that some communities did not let a girl child live at all, even if she were the first born), has been replaced by female foeticide. "Let a girl child not take birth at all" seems to have become the norm. Female foeticide continues, notwithstanding the PNDT Act. Incidentally, even female foeticide is rapidly becoming an outdated concept, for pre-conception sex selection is rapidly gaining ground as a means to beget a male child.

The demographic scenario of Punjab is at the same time characterised by declining birth and death rates, low fertility rates, high age at marriage and a higher female life expectancy. However, it is significant to note that the mortality rate among female children is higher than among male children, indicating neglect as a possible cause for this.

The decline in sex ratio, when considered along with other factors such as declining birth and death rates and a higher female life expectancy at birth alludes to a deep rooted malaise which afflicts Punjabi society and which requires more than mere legal action to eliminate.

The reasons for this abysmal state of affairs can be traced to a culture which legitimises son preference and devalues the girl child as a burden. While male migration and lack of literacy are often stated to be the causes, the foregoing chapters reveal the fallacy of these assumptions. Hence, the need is to go in for a holistic approach, which generates awareness, rather than mere literacy, for literacy alone will not help.

This is evident from the fact that Punjab has done quite well on the literacy front and both male and female literacy have improved and the gender gap in literacy rates has declined. Further it has been seen that the districts doing well in overall and female literacy rank quite low in the matter of sex ratio, while the districts which are at the bottom of the literacy ladder are relatively higher on the sex ratio front.

Declining birth and death rates and a decline in total fertility apart, the state of women's health in Punjab is also indicative of her overall status. Although relatively better of than most states of India in respect of nutritional anaemia, yet more than 40 per cent of its women continue to be anaemic. The factor is compounded by the high degree of prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia among its citizens, which can have a detrimental impact upon the growth of its future citizens. The girl child, notwithstanding the availability of resources and free vaccinations is also given a backseat in getting many life saving vaccinations including DPT and BCG. Further, Punjab is ranked quite low in so far as many of the maternal health indicators are concerned, a fact which is revealed in its high maternal mortality rates.

Women's subordinated status is further evident from the statistics relating to workforce participation rates. Uptill 1991, female workforce participation rate in Punjab was the lowest in the country, notwithstanding the fact that women are, more often than not, the dominant force in household industry and also in numerous agricultural activities such as cotton picking and rice transplantation. The position is slightly improved in the 2001 Census which reveals an 18.7 per cent work participation rate for females in Punjab. Nevertheless 82.3 per cent of its women continue to be considered as non-workers.

Disillusioning and disheartening as these figures are, the picture for women's representation in decision-making at the national and State level is even more dismal. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution of India have definitely brought in a large number of women into local and village level governance, yet these women for the most part are politically illiterate and unaware and thus become mere rubber stamps for their husbands, who continue to rule the roost behind the scenes.

Nor is decision-making in the private sphere any better for women. As the foregoing chapter reveals, women in Punjab do not have the liberty even to manage their personal affairs on their own. They would need permission to visit friends and relatives, to purchase jewellery or for any other matter. The only province where they may be said to dominate is the kitchen where about 97 per cent of the women can decide on what to cook. Yet even here 3 per cent of the women do not have liberty.

The only slightly rosy side to this gloomy picture is presented by the statistics on violence against women, where Punjab is revealed to rank 22<sup>nd</sup> amongst the States and Union Territories of India. Yet, even here, it is seen that not only are crimes against women increasing at a rapid pace, but Punjab's percentage contribution to the all-India total too is increasing and Punjab is rapidly becoming a high risk state. It must be remembered that these facts and figures stand for only the reported crimes against women, which are merely the tip of the iceberg.

What are the implications of these gloomy statistics? What does the future hold for the brave, valiant and hardworking woman of Punjab? Undoubtedly, numerous plans and policies have been brought in to improve the status of women in the State. These include policies aimed at improving the sex ratio, at reducing the dropout rate, promoting enrolment, improving the health, particularly maternal

health of women etc. The strategies adopted to uplift the status of women indicate a shift in emphasis from mere welfare to women's development. Thus, it is not the policies that are lacking. The difficulty, probably lies in the implementation, for the implementers are as much steeped in the colours of patriarchy as the people the policies are aimed at. Their success is contingent upon a number of factors ranging from design to delivery and implementation.

On the whole, the State continues to be steeped in a patriarchal ethos, which binds the women, keeping them confined like birds in a cage. Fifty years after independence, Punjabi women continue to feel the burden of womanhood; deprived not only of access to basic facilities, but even the very basic right to be born. The deeply ingrained patriarchal ethos limits and confines women to subordinate roles. Punjab has emerged as the most developed, but least gender sensitive state of India. Thus Punjabi women continue to be shackled by their womanhood; their situation remains one of the bleakest faced by women anywhere in India.

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## **NGO CONSULTATION ON STATUS OF WOMEN IN PUNJAB AUGUST 9, 2004**

Punjab, the land of five rivers, a place of sages and saints, peers and fakirs, one of the most highly developed States of India, the birthplace of the Green and White revolutions, is at the same time a part of the 'murderous trio', India's Bermuda triangle<sup>1</sup> and is known as *dhimaru* state. Punjab ranks quite high on all the human development indicators. Thus it has a high level of income, high rate of literacy and enrolment ratios as well as a high life expectancy. At the same time the gender discriminations are equally evident and prominent. Thus, its high level of Human Development is countered by a low level of gender development.

The reasons are not far to seek. One of the primary factors in this State of affairs is the socio-cultural ethos of the State, where son preference and a devaluation of daughters and women is the norm. This is evident from the language, the folk songs as well as the popular culture all of which legitimize and celebrate the devaluation and subordination of women, their objectification and commodification as well as the oppression of women by women.

The poignant situation of women in the State is evident from the statistics relating to sex ratio, work participation rates, political participation as well as dropout rates and gender gap in literacy rates and infant mortality rates. Statistics, however, can be used both to hide as well as present reality and as Benjamin Disraeli once said, "there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics". Hence the need was felt to have an input from the ground level into the actual situation of women in this highly prosperous leading State of India. 15 of the 17 districts of Punjab were represented by various kinds of NGOs. Some of the key points relating to various issues which emerged from this meeting are mentioned herewith:

### **Key Issues**

#### **Sex Ratio and Female Foeticide**

- ❖ Punjab has the second lowest sex ratio amongst the States of India.
- ❖ It has the dubious distinction of having the lowest child sex ratio in India.

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<sup>1</sup> Punjab, along with Haryana and Chandigarh is known so because of the trend of female foeticide and its abysmal sex ratio.



- ❖ It also has the highest decline of 82 points in the 0-6 sex ratio.
- ❖ 7 of the 10 districts with the lowest child sex ratio in India fall in this State.
- ❖ It is generally assumed that decline in sex ratio would be stemmed if the technology used for sex determination is targeted. This, it was opined is not and cannot be the case.
- ❖ Mention was made of a case of female foeticide. The woman was forced to undergo three abortions because the test revealed the foetus to be female. The fourth time the doctor warned of dire consequences. As the husband was a Government employee, he could not get married a second time. So the wife was declared insane, and he managed to get married to her sister.
- ❖ One reason of declining sex ratio is female foeticide. Another is infanticide.
- ❖ Nursing home, Joga Nursing Home, which is carrying on female foeticide under the garb of Government approved abortion clinic was mentioned. The name of the Doctor is Dr. Harminderjit Kaur Joga.

### **Violence Against Women**

- ❖ Violence against women is increasing.
- ❖ Many instances of rape were highlighted by the NGOs: A few may be mentioned here:
  - A girl was raped while going for admission to a B.Ed college. The result was that the entire village decided not to let their girls go for higher education.
  - Two tenth class students were sent to Kashmir, a few years back at the behest of the Principal of their school with some boys. There was no news of their whereabouts for many days and when these girls came back after nearly a month, they reported that they had been kept in a drugged State through injections. One even claimed sexual harassment. However, nothing was done.
  - A 12-13 year old slum girl was raped. Her mental state was such that whenever, she saw a male walking past her hospital bed, she would hide under it.
  - Mention was made of cases of sexual harassment of girl students by University Professors.
  - 2 girls in a college in Faridkot were continuously raped. No case was filed.
- ❖ Mention was made of a *Mandi* in Mansa District where girls trafficked from other States are sold. Somebody quoted Amrita Pritam as having said, "*Sadiya mandiyān vich kanak vikdi hai, jawar vikdi hai, ate aurat vikdi hai*" (Wheat is sold in our markets, jawar is sold and woman is sold here)
- ❖ The issue of forced prostitution was also highlighted. A small motherless child was taken away by a woman who pimped off to bigtime customers. The child was drugged and sent off to these customers everyday for more than two months.

- ❖ Honour killings, a phenomena generally highlighted in Pakistan, is also prevalent here.
- ❖ Women are denied the very right to life through dowry killings and violence.
- ❖ The amount of dowry is increasing day by day.
- ❖ Punjab has a high rate of prevalence of dowry deaths.
- ❖ The attitude of the police was not very helpful and they generally favoured the powerful.
- ❖ Difficulty in filing of FIRs by the police at police stations.
- ❖ Mahila Police Stations and women's Cells are in bad condition.
- ❖ Girls, also it was alleged do not carry forward the cases to their conclusion and generally withdraw due to social and familial pressures.
- ❖ A case of domestic violence was highlighted. The woman was married at the age of 13 to a man of 35. For the past 40 years he has been beating her everyday and she has been bearing it.
- ❖ Marriage registration is not compulsory.
- ❖ There are a number of instances of women married to NRIs being deserted and abandoned, and faced with violence.
- ❖ Even the religious places are not safe from crimes against women, such as rape.

#### **Economic Problems**

- ❖ The economic situation of women, particularly in the districtis of Mansa, Bathinda, Faridkot, Muktsar and Moga is very bad.
- ❖ Mention was made of a woman who said they have taken to distilling country liquor and selling it. When asked why, when she knew that it was their menfolk who would consume it and the repercussions would be felt by the entire family, she said there was no option as there was no source of income.
- ❖ Unemployment has increased.
- ❖ Rural women have been left out of the benefits of the development process.
- ❖ Devaluation of women's work.
- ❖ In the agriculture sector, a large number of women are working, but they are left out of the training process. Likewise in Dairying and Animal Husbandry.
- ❖ It was emphasized that most of the programmes such as DWCRA are not successful because the basic requirements cannot be fulfilled by women alone.
- ❖ There are few women workers in organized sector.
- ❖ Sexual harassment committees do not exist in many of the industries.
- ❖ These women working in the private sector are not granted full maternity leave. As against six months in the Government sector they are given merely three months.

- ❖ For the unorganized sector, Dr.Advani has sought a report from the SCW on the condition of women therein.
- ❖ Closure of three factories in Mansa District due to WTO has led to selling of women.

### **Social Welfare**

- ❖ The condition of Anganwari workers is very bad.
- ❖ There are only a few Nari Niketans in Punjab. Jalandhar has 2, Amritsar has one and Ludhiana has none.
- ❖ State Commission for Women is still not fully formed.

### **Law**

- ❖ Mahila Lok Adalats exist only in Chandigarh and Patiala. At other places in Punjab people have not even heard of these.
- ❖ There are no family courts in Punjab.

### **Health**

- ❖ There is a lack of knowledge about contraception and family planning.
- ❖ Unsafe abortions
- ❖ Lack of knowledge of reproductive rights which include right to abortion and to contraception.
- ❖ Health of a woman was emphasized as being of prime importance in her social well-being.
- ❖ Another issue highlighted related to the mental health of women. The problem lay in too many expectations from women.
- ❖ Primary health Centres are in a bad condition.
- ❖ Doctors and medicines are not available in government Hospitals/PHCs. Doctors are "letting out" their duties to untrained personnel by paying them a meager amount and are engaged in running their own private clinics.

### **Dubious Role of Media**

- ❖ An increased element of vulgarity has crept into Punjabi songs, even the songs which go by the name of folk songs are picturised on half naked persons.
- ❖ The media programmes are vulgar to say the least and are responsible for a lot of ills that have crept into our society.

### **Education**

- ❖ Cuts have been imposed on the budget of the social sector , particularly education.
- ❖ A delegate from Mansa district highlighted the lack of literacy as the major problems. (It may be noted that Mansa has the lowest female literacy rate in the State).

- ❖ There is a high dropout rate.
- ❖ Too many vacancies in schools were highlighted.
- ❖ Some schools have not teachers at all, while others have one teacher for five classes.
- ❖ Contractual employment of teachers, it was emphasized may lead to a worse situation.

### **Property Rights**

- ❖ While property rights for women are guaranteed by the law, yet the socio-cultural ethos prevents their utilizing this right and demanding a share of their parental property.

### **Lack of Awareness of Functionaries**

- ❖ None of the NGOs present were aware about the Dowry Prohibition Officer or about the person appointed to prevent female foeticide in this District of Ludhiana.

### **Women in Prisons**

Women in prisons have a number of unique problems. Their problems were highlighted.

- ❖ Of about 14,000 persons in jails, 800 (approximately) are women. 70 per cent of these are undertrials.
- ❖ A number of recommendations and reforms for women prisoners such as separate quarters and separate approach roads as well as segregation of various categories of women prisoners have been put into effect. However, the control of the prisons continues to be in the hands of males.
- ❖ There are 9-10 prisons in Punjab which house women prisoners. However, except for Ludhiana, none of these have any programme for vocational training of these prisoners, which could help in their rehabilitation.
- ❖ There are also instances of abuse and exploitation of women prisoners.
- ❖ Women prisoners with small children have additional problems.

### **Political Empowerment**

- ❖ Very few women have come forward to participate in the political process. At the moment there are only two women representatives from Punjab in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ Women have entered the grassroots institutions in large numbers, thanks to the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments. However, they have yet to play an effective role. They are still functioning as husband's proxies.
- ❖ In a number of instances, the husband continues to work as the Sarpanch or Panch and the woman merely appends her signature where she is required to.
- ❖ However, women are increasingly asserting themselves and taking up significant issues.

- ❖ Obstacles are encountered by women. Primary obstacles highlighted were: culture, childcare, cash and confidence.
- ❖ Criminalisation of politics was another one of the obstacles highlighted.
- ❖ They also face character assassination.

### **Social Problems**

- ❖ A number of social problems which ultimately impact women were highlighted. These include:
  - Alcohol
  - Drug addiction

### **Suggestions**

- ❖ Awareness and gender sensitization campaigns have to be launched for both men and women.
- ❖ The need for Family Courts in Punjab were emphasized.
- ❖ Need for amendment of rape laws.
- ❖ Prison laws can be amended to provide for reduction of sentences of women prisoners with small children, if they are well-behaved.
- ❖ There should be special arrangements for women prisoners suffering from problems such as mental depression, etc.
- ❖ There is a need to go into the causes of discrimination and find means of removing these. Three primary causes which were highlighted were: illiteracy, poverty and growing population. NFHS-II Survey reveals a decline in domestic violence with increase in education.
- ❖ Some control should be imposed on the media, particularly the audio-visual media.
- ❖ Many delegates emphasized the need to go to the backward districts to assess the real status of women and even invited the Commission to their places, so that they could show them the reality.
- ❖ Laws are there. Their implementation should be made more effective.
- ❖ The role of NGOs was stressed.
- ❖ Women should be economically independent and have control over resources.
- ❖ Women should be given skill training, training in marketing techniques.
- ❖ Phulkari work, agricultural training, dairy development were emphasized as some of the appropriate areas for this.
- ❖ Emphasis was also laid on formation of self-help groups.
- ❖ Need for training for Political Empowerment
- ❖ Gender Budgeting training.

**A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS  
OF  
WOMEN IN PUNJAB**

**BY  
PAM RAJPUT**



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
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## FOREWORD

The existential pathos of a woman's life has been inimitably captured by the great Hindi poet, Shri Maithilisharan Gupta, in a memorable couplet which says, "Alas, woman! Thy destiny is eternal sacrifice, eternal suffering!"

Despite the exalted position given to women in some of India's religious texts and the exceptional attainments of individual women in fields as diverse as philosophy, statecraft and even warfare, the profile of the average woman through the ages has been that of a perpetually poor, perpetually pregnant and perpetually powerless being.

Independent India has tried to redeem the situation by proclaiming equality of the sexes as a Fundamental Right under the Constitution and directing state policy towards removing the various disabilities that thwart women in realising their potential. Five decades of Independence have also seen a plethora of laws passed by the State and Federal Governments to protect women from violence and discrimination and to strengthen their entitlements in the social and economic fields. Numerous committees and commissions have x-rayed the position of women, the advances made by them and the obstacles faced by them, and they have made umpteen recommendations to improve the situation. Scores of schemes have been floated by various Ministries of the Government to address women's problems, particularly those relating to education, health, nutrition, livelihood and personal laws. In the institutional area, independent administrative departments to give undivided attention to women's problems have sprung up at the Centre as well as in the States. Development corporations were an innovation of the Eighties to energise economic benefit schemes. The Nineties saw the setting up of the National Commission for Women (NCW) and State Commissions in various States to inquire into the working of various legal and constitutional provisions concerning women, to investigate cases of violation of women's rights and generally to advise on the socio-economic policy framework in order to mainstream women's concerns. In recent years, the Governments, Central and State, have also articulated comprehensive policies for the empowerment of women through



a variety of instruments and approaches focusing on an explicit vision of equal partnership of women in all walks of life.

Credit must also be given to a robust women's movement which has often given forceful expression to women's aspirations and joined issue with all the organs of state — legislative, executive and judicial — for reviewing the age-old prescriptions of a patriarchal society. Often they have networked effectively with the international community and fora in the quest for worldwide solidarity on issues affecting women. These interactions have often times changed the idiom of discourse on women's right to justice and development.

The half-century of struggle and reform has undoubtedly had considerable impact on women's world. Some of the key indicators of development have perked up significantly; women's life expectancy has risen; education levels have improved; economic participation has grown. But there are areas of darkness too; crimes against women, both at home and outside, continue unabated; traditional economic occupations have withered in the face of global competition; there is increasing commodification of women's persona and vulgarisation of their image in the media's marketplace. The new economic regime, where Sensex swamps sensibility, has meant the precipitate withdrawal of the state from many fields leaving the weak, including women, in the cold. Similarly laws change; minds don't. Therefore between progressive legislation and sensitive enforcement falls a long shadow. Critics also point out that whatever advances have been made remain confined to urban India and the vast hinterland resists change obstinately.

The overall picture is thus a mixed one leaving the profile of the average Indian woman not substantially altered. But in this vast country there is no average Indian woman. As in all other matters, diversity marks the Indian woman's picture too. How society and economy are coping with the forces of modernisation differs substantially from region to region. The geography of a state provides its own constraints and opportunities; history gives its own moorings to values and momentum to change. Thus the regional profile is superimposed on the national profile. The NCW has therefore commissioned these studies to gauge how women's life has been changing or not changing in different States of the country, and to situate these studies in the historical and geographical context of each region or State so that progress can be measured across time and across space. Such spatial comparisons can highlight what lessons there are to be learnt from the 'leading' areas and equally they help in focusing the attention on the 'lagging' areas. Regionally disaggregated data helps in benchmarking progress of different regions, areas or districts, and can be used for improving performance by attempting to raise the performance levels of the laggards to the average of the State and then matching the State's average to the national average. Interesting insights can also be gleaned from the experience of implementing agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, in dealing with different problems. Some of these may be rooted in the soil of the region and may not lend themselves

to replication but many others can be useful examples to emulate. That is how Best Practices become common practices.

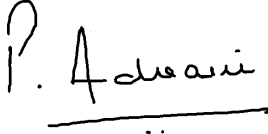
These studies have been carried out by different research groups having special knowledge and interest in the area — its people, its history, its administration, its cultural ambience etc. They have interacted with official agencies as well as with leading NGOs working with women in the respective areas. The NCW has given a helping hand by providing information from its own database where available and also by interacting with the government of the State to set the stage for these exercises. The result is in your hands.

The research effort in respect of Punjab was anchored by Prof. Pam Rajput while the NCW team comprising **Dr. Poornima Advani**, Chairperson; **Mrs. Nafisa Hussain**, Member and Mr. A.L. Narula, Project Co-ordinator & Ms. Nandini Thock, Project Co-ordinator facilitated the dialogue with the Punjab Administration.

It is our hope that this effort will eventually result in the compilation of a comprehensive index of gender development focusing on the key issues in women's lives thus enabling comparisons of achievements and gaps regionally and nationally. This will help scholars and administrators alike.

Place : New Delhi

Dated : 7.12.2004

  
**(POORNIMA ADVANI)**

## AREA PROFILE

Number of Households	4,348,580	Household Size	5.6
Population Total	24,358,999	Proportion of Urban Population	33.9
Population Rural	16,096,488	Sex Ratio	87.6
Population Urban	8,262,511	Sex Ratio (0-6 Years)	798
Population (0-6 Years)	3,171,829	Sex Ratio SC	892
SC Population	7,028,729	Sex Ratio ST	0
ST Population	0	Proportion of SC	29.9
Literates	14,756,970	Proportion of ST	0.0
Illiterates	9,602,029	Literacy Rate	69.7
Total Workers	9,127,474	Illiteracy Rate	45.3
Main Workers	7,835,732	Work Participation Rate	37.5
Marginal Workers	1,291,742	% of Main Workers	32.2
Non- Workers	15,231,525	% of Marginal Workers	5.3
CL(Main + Marginal)	2,065,067	% of Non- Workers	62.5
AL(Main+ Marginal )	1,489,861	Proportion CL(%)	22.6
HHI (Main+ Marginal )	333,770	Proportion AL(%)	16.3
OW (Main+ Marginal )	5,238,776	Proportion HHI (%)	3.7
		Proportion OW (%)	57.4



\*K - Kapurthala