

Country Gender Profile - India

*All data as on December 2005

A. Human Development Indicators : Progress on the MDGs

Target Number/ Indicator Number	Series name	Data for Year 2004
3/6	Education enrolment ratio, net, primary level, both sexes (UNESCO)	89.7
3/6	Education enrolment ratio, net, primary level, girls (UNESCO)	87.0
3/6	Education enrolment ratio, net, primary level, boys (UNESCO)	92.2
3/8	Literacy rates, aged 15-24, both sexes, per cent (UNESCO)	76.4
3/8	Literacy rates, aged 15-24, women, per cent (UNESCO)	67.7
3/8	Literacy rates, aged 15-24, men, per cent (UNESCO)	84.2
5/14	Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births (UNICEF estimates)	62
6/16	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA)	540 (2000)
HDI Rank		GDI Rank
127 / 175		103 / 144
GEM Rank		

B. Women in Decision making roles - Gender disaggregated data

1) Legislature

	% of women	No. of women	Total No.
National	8.3 (2006)	45	545
State (Provincial)	5.8 (1999)	147	2497 ⁱ
Local Bodies(data maybe aggregated or indicative)	26.21	696313	2656461 ⁱⁱ

2) Executive

a) Government – Ministerial Positions

	% of women	No. of women	Total No.	Comment
National	10.8	8.0	74	
State (Provincial)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Local Bodies	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	

b) Top Bureaucracy

	% of women	No. of women	Total No.	Comment
National	8.4	N.A.	N.A.	
State (Provincial)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	

3) Judiciary

	No. of women	Total No.	Comments
Supreme Court	0	22	For year 2006 ⁱⁱⁱ
High Courts	15	503	3%

4) Political Parties

	% of women	No. of women	Total No.
Membership of men and	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

women				
Women in executive committees or equivalent decision making bodies in the party	9.09		18	198 ^{iv}
5) Trade Union				
		% of women		No. of women
Women in the governing bodies of major National Trade Unions				
Industry wise (as available in respective countries)		Industry		Male (%)
				Female (%)
Initiatives for gender equality in the trade unions				
a)				
b)				
c)				
d)				
6) Private and public corporate business				
		Male (%)		Female (%)
Top /middle management				
Women entrepreneurs				
7) Academic World				
		% of women	No. of women	Total No.
Top and middle academic positions				
C) Women in the workforce – Gender Disaggregated Data				
Formal Sector		Sector		Male (%)
				Female (%)
Informal Sector		% of women	No. of women	Total No.
		Women wage employment in non-agricultural sector as percentage of total non-agricultural employees (ILO)		
D) Policy framework for gender equality				
UN/ International Conventions ratified				
a) Ratification of Convention on the Rights of Child - India ratified this Convention in 1992 subject to the following:				
While fully subscribing to the objectives and purposes of the Convention, realising that certain of the				

rights of the child, namely those pertaining to the economic, social and cultural rights can only be progressively implemented in the developing countries, subject to the extent of available resources and within the framework of international co-operation; recognising that the child has to be protected from exploitation of all forms including economic exploitation; noting that for several reasons children of different ages do work in India; having prescribed minimum ages for employment in hazardous occupations and in certain other areas; having made regulatory provisions regarding hours and conditions of employment; and being aware that it is not practical immediately to prescribe minimum ages for admission to each and every area of employment in India - the Government of India undertakes to take measures to progressively implement the provisions of article 32, particularly paragraph 2(a), in accordance with its national legislation and relevant international instruments to which it is a State Party.

b) Ratification of CEDAW - India ratified CEDAW in 1993 but it was subject to the declarations and reservation presented below:

Declarations:

- ❖ With regard to articles 5(a) and 16(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Government of the Republic of India declares that it shall abide by and ensure these provisions in conformity with its policy of non-interference in the personal affairs of any Community without their initiative and consent.
- ❖ With regard to article 16(2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Government of the Republic of India declares that though in principle it fully supports the principle of compulsory registration of marriages, it is not practical in a vast country like India with its variety of customs, religions and level of literacy. .

Reservation

- ❖ With regard to Article 29 of the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Government of the Republic of India declares that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1 of this article".

c) Ratification of ILO Conventions

India has ratified 37 ILO Conventions which regulate the environment of work for all workers. Some of them are specifically related to women workers, for instance:

- ❖ No. 89 Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948
- ❖ No.100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
- ❖ No. 118 Equality of Treatment (Social Security)

International Events/ Instruments since 1975

- ❖ UN First World Conference on Women, Mexico – 1975
- ❖ Establishment of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the UN - 1979.
- ❖ World Conference for the Decade for Women – Copenhagen – 1980 (Second World conference)
- ❖ Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women – 1985. (Third World conference)
- ❖ World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, 1980
- ❖ World Summit for Children, New York – 1992
- ❖ International Conference on Nutrition, Rome - 1992
- ❖ Un Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro – 1992
- ❖ The World Conference on Human Rights – Vienna – 1993
- ❖ International Conference on Population and Development, (IPCD) Cairo – 1994
- ❖ International Conference on Primary Health Care
- ❖ International Year of the Family
- ❖ United Nations' Year for Tolerance
- ❖ Geneva Declaration for Rural Women
- ❖ Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- ❖ World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen – 1995
- ❖ UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing - 1995

National policies/ plans for gender equality/mainstreaming

- a) 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, 1992: providing for one-third reservation of positions for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions
- b) National Nutrition Policy 1983
- c) National Health Policy 1983
- d) National Policy on Education 1986
- e) National Policy on the Empowerment of Women 2000
- f) National Plan of Action for Women, 1976
- g) National Perspective Plan for Women 1988 – 2000
- h) National Plan of Action for the Girl Child 1991 – 2000

More information about these plans and others, kindly visit the following websites:

- a) National Resources Centre for Women: <http://nrcw.nic.in/>
- b) National Commission for Women: <http://ncw.nic.in/home.htm>

E) Institutional Mechanisms

Role and functioning of statutory bodies

For information related to role and functioning of statutory bodies, kindly visit the following websites:
National Commission for Women: <http://ncw.nic.in/home.htm>
And State Commission for Women for various States.

Parliamentary Committees

- a) Committee On Empowerment Of Women: For information, kindly visit the following website: http://www.parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/intro/committee_on_empowerment.htm

Other	
F) Legal Equality	
Landmark legislation for gender equality in the last 25 years A list of Legislation related to women can be looked up at National Resources Centre for Women: http://nrcw.nic.in/index2.asp?sublinkid=464	
Discriminatory laws/ policies/practices a) There is no uniform civil code applicable to all women and men. Personal laws based on religion are still in practice. This is a very contentious issue and no consensus on the same exists amongst women's movement or in the political arena. b) At times though legal provisions are progressive, practices discriminate against women due to regressive social norms and customary practices.	
G) Affirmative Action Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotas (Kindly refer Country Quota Profile for India) • Incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In most of the states/ provinces, rebates on Stamp Duty while registering for property is levied ➤ Rebate on income tax • Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some state governments have quotas in jobs for women. 	
H) Women's Movement in the country	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief history <p>Several strands of thought and activism merged to create the contemporary women's movement in India. The spark was provided by the Declaration of the UN Year of Women in 1975 and the release at the end of that year of the Status of Women Committee Report, a voluminous compilation of data, that blew apart the myth that post-Independence Indian women were gradually 'progressing'. Faced with stark facts on the abysmal status of the mass of Indian women, who suffered from poverty, illiteracy and ill health as well as discrimination in both the domestic and the public spheres, middle class women in the metros began to campaign against the worst manifestations of sexism and patriarchy.</p> <p>Opinion on these issues built up gradually during the Emergency period and in 1977, when the Emergency was lifted, women began to organise themselves into small feminist groups. They represented different sections of the society -- left leaning political groupings in academia, students' unions, trade unions, peasant groups and ordinary middle class women.</p> <p>The movement energised older associations such as the Young Women's Christian</p>	

Association, the All India Women's Conference and the National Federation of Indian Women and in turn drew strength from their experience in organising. The emergence of the magazine *Manushi* and other feminist publications signified this ferment in women's minds.

- **Main issues and achievements**

Early feminist activism questioned the practice of dowry and protested the deaths of many young women by holding *dharnas* in front of police stations and the houses where the women were burned to death. One of the first national level issues that brought the women's groups together was the Mathura rape case. Four lawyers wrote to the Supreme Court to protest against the acquittal of policemen accused of raping Mathura, a young girl in a police station. The barrage of protests in 1979-1980, widely covered in the national media, forced the government to amend the Evidence Act, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Penal Code and introduce the category of custodial rape.

Incidents of *Sati* led to questioning of the links between patriarchy, religion and culture and the demand for stringent action against communities that encourage and deify the practice of *sati*. In recent years, female infanticide has become a major issue after amniocentesis tests enabled the detection of the sex of the foetus in the mother's womb.

Another issue that was addressed was sexism in media, particularly films and advertising. Large scale poster campaigns and public protests were organised.

A coercive population policy and the government's repeated moves to introduce hi-tech hormonal contraceptives such as injectables and implants led to many campaigns against hazardous trials of these contraceptive devices. Women are an intrinsic part of pro-people health activism in the country.

Communalism became a major issue for the women's movement with the Muslim Women's Bill.

An interesting fallout of the literacy campaigns initiated by the central government was the sparking of an anti-arrack movement in rural Andhra Pradesh after some women read a literacy lesson that encouraged protest against liquor. This remarkable movement has been documented in several books and in documentary films like *When Women Unite*. The state government, which enjoys substantial revenues from the sale of arrack and other liquor, strongly opposed the movement but for some years was unable to stop the attacks on arrack vendors and protest at auction sites. It was forced to impose a ban on the sale of arrack but withdrew it subsequently. Anti-liquor campaigns have been successful in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and other states but have invariably faced suppression from mafia, police and government. The government's excise policy is regrettably geared to actively promoting liquor, at the expense of women and families.

Struggles have been initiated for protection of the forests, notably the Chipko movement, and for rights to land and water. Ideologues such as Vandana Shiva have built a strong case for environmentalism and campaigned against the World Trade Order.

Strengthened by the ideological legitimacy given to women's participation in political struggles, a few women have emerged as leaders of local movements. Among them are Aruna Roy who heads the Right to Information Campaign emanating from rural Rajasthan and Medha Patkar who leads the powerful Narmada Bachao Andolan. In a different mould are women like Ela Bhatt who leads the unique Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union of women in the unorganised sector.

During the early 1980s, the larger, national level women's organisations had come together in a loose alliance and become known as the "seven sisters". The autonomous groups held conferences biannually to discuss movement issues and strategies. The Indian Association for Women's Studies provided activists and academics a forum to meet and confer.

The 1990s saw the consolidation of the women's movement. Grants from foreign donor agencies enabled the formation of new non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Money was available for research on women's issues and for some forms of activism. Today autonomous women's collectives are the exception, the majority of groups are NGOs identified with one or other individual. Many such NGOs have become part of the 'delivery' mechanism of the government as they provide services such as reproductive health care to women, or gender training to government functionaries and panchayats.

As the number of new women's groups, NGOs and organisations grew throughout the country, they felt the need for representation at the national level. The United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, provided an opportunity. UN and donor funding enabled the formation of a Coordination Unit to hold preparatory meetings in different parts of the country. Post-Beijing, these groups formed the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO) that played an active role in the Beijing Plus Five meetings held in New York. Women were also organised through a Task Force set up with donor support for the Plus Five process.

Source: <http://www.infochangeindia.org/WomenIbp.jsp#top>

I) Issues in the country that need immediate attention for gender justice

- a) Declining sex ratio
- b) Implementation of laws
- c) Data Gaps
- d)

J) Enabling factors in the country for gender justice

- a) Women in politics- first step – representation in local bodies
- b) Education / Health
- c) Pro-active judiciary
- d)

K) Main Challenges/deterrents

a) Gender discrimination in India is ingrained in the patriarchal system which limits and confines women to subordinate roles. Men and women both hold gender biases. This can be seen clearly in the invisibility of women in the economy and in governance structures and in decision making bodies. Women are mainly in the low paid jobs and sectors -mainly in the unorganized or informal sector having no social security.

b) Educational indicators of women in the India, though showing improvement, are amongst the lowest in the world, specially at technical and higher levels.

c) In the last two decades India has gone through several economic reform programs. However their impact on employment generation and human development has been negligible. The worst affected are small producers and small scale units which are the most labour intensive. The rights of workers though enshrined in the country's constitution and supported by laws and legislation, are not protected across the board specially in case of women employed mainly in the informal sectors.

d) Enforcement of constitutional laws, affirmative action, making women's contribution visible and engendering policies and programmes are challenges, which need to be addressed.

L) Comments and regional comparisons

<i>Countries</i>	<i>HDI Rank</i>	<i>GDI Rank</i>	<i>GEM Rank</i>
Bangladesh	137	102	67
India	126	96	...
Nepal	138	106	...
Pakistan	134	105	66
Sri Lanka	93	68	69
Total	177	136	75

Source: Human Development Report 2006

ⁱ Does not include all the states.

ⁱⁱ This includes three levels of Panchayat. This is an indicative figure as some states did not had elections. And this doesnot include members from Urban local bodies.

ⁱⁱⁱ http://supremecourtofindia.nic.in/new_s/judge.htm

^{iv} Refers to 5 major national level political parties only.

Other Sources:

http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp

Human Development Report 2004, 2005, 2006

Human Development in South Asia, 2000 and 2003

Towards Equality – The Unfinished Agenda, Status of Women in India 2001 by National Commission for Women, India.