

FWF GENDER FACT SHEET – INDIA

FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 130 of 189 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Gender Inequality Index Rank: 127 of 160 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 108 of 149 countries (WEF 2018)
 - ‘Economic opportunity and participation’ sub index: 142 of 149
 - Made progress and ranked 72 on wage equality for similar work.
- India has the second-largest artificial intelligence (AI) workforce but one of the largest AI gender gaps, with only 22% of roles filled by women.
- Lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence: 29% of women
- Physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in the last 12 months: 22% of women
- Child Marriage: 27% of women
- The National Commission for Women received 716 complaints of sexual harassment in 2018, including sexual harassment at the workplace.
Note: These statistics do not reflect the sum-total of all sexual harassment matters being dealt with by corporate India, only complaints received by NCW.

General:

- Population: 1210.8 million people. 17.7% growth per decade (2011 Census)
- Urbanisation: 31% live in urban areas, 69% in rural (2011 Census)
- Sex ratio: 943 females per 1000 males (2011 Census)
- Estimated birth rate: 20.4 per 1000 people (2016)
- Death rate: 6.4 per 1000 people (2016)
- Infant mortality rate: 37 per 1000 live births (2015)
- Majority are Hindu (80%), largest minority of 172 million people are Muslim (14%) (2011)
- 22 major languages spoken in 13 different scripts. Hindi and English are the official languages used by government. Literacy rate is 84.1%

COUNTRY CONTEXT

While women’s rights and gender equality are officially recognised, women are de facto still largely discriminated. This is mainly due to the **persistence of patriarchal family structures**, especially in northern India. Women tend to be discriminated against from the outset within their families. In poor families, this means worse access to food and sanitation.

- **The societal importance given to boys** in India has translated into deep-rooted discriminatory practices against girls and women, with devastating effects on their status, health, and development, and an enormous pressure to produce sons.
- This is apparent in the **abortion of female foetuses**, leading to the numeric gender disparity in country (sex ratio of 942 females to 1000 males).
- In the context of declining family size, restrictive policies on reproduction and limited access to unregulated health services, this pressure can have severe consequences on women’s psychological and physical health. **India ranked third lowest in the world on health and survival of women. (WEF 2018)**
- **Less than two-thirds (63%) of currently married women participate in making decisions** about their own health care, major household purchases, and visits to their own family or relatives alone or jointly with their husband. (NFHS-4)

Gender-based violence:

- Central to the problem of **gender-based violence** in India is that Indian men and women have been socialised to believe that men’s dominance over women is normal and acts of violence against women are justified.
- Total **crimes committed against women** reported: 338,924 (2016) with similar figures for 2014 and 2015. The majority of cases were reported under ‘**cruelty by husband or his relatives**’ (32.6%), followed by ‘assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty’ (25.0%), ‘kidnaping & abduction of women’ (19.0%), and ‘rape’ (11.5%). (NCRB)

Employment:

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- **In education, some substantial progress has been made** at primary and secondary level. Also, in tertiary education the ratio of female-to-male enrolment (Gender Parity Index) is 0.9.
- However, India's **female labour force participation rate has declined** steadily over the past decade. Despite Indian reforms to liberalise the economy, the **economic development for women remains at the subsistence level**.
- Though labour legislation in India provides for safeguards to ensure respect for the rights of women at work, women are found in **precarious jobs requiring low skills and offering low and unequal wages**.
- Women employed as domestic workers and unorganised work are **often irregular migrants and unregistered women** operating in a poorly regulated labour market and usually considered the lowest of a social class.
- They become **easy targets for abusive employers**, who force them to work long hours in return for low salaries and often deduct amounts for leave days taken. Many are prevented from using the employer's sanitary facilities and are forced to defecate and bathe in public, and are **subjected to various forms of harassment and violence**. (UN Special Rapporteur)

LEGAL CONTEXT

National legislation:

- **Article 14, 15, 15(3), and 16 of the Constitution** include provisions related to gender equality, prohibition of discrimination based on sex, special provisions for women and children (scope for affirmative action for women), and equal opportunity in matters of public employment.
- **National laws and policies to prevent and respond to violence against women** in place include: the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prohibition, Prevention and Redressal) Act, 2013, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, among others.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2008** regulates maternity benefits available to women in factories, mines, circuses, plantations and shops or establishments employing 10 or more persons.
- **The National Commission for Women (NCW India)** was set up as statutory body under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to: review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women; recommend remedial legislative measures; facilitate redressal of grievances; and advise the government on all policy matters affecting women.

International legislation:

- India ratified the **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**.
- India ratified most international human rights conventions with the exceptions of the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Despite these positive developments, effective implementation of those laws and the allocation of financial resources to support their execution adequately is reportedly lacking in many instances.

SOURCES

- UNDP Human Development Report 2018 (UNDP), UN Special Rapporteur April 2014 Report, UN Women Report: 'Prevalence Data on Different Forms of Violence against Women' (UN Women), World Economic Forum 2018 Gender Gap Index (WEF).
- 2011 Census of India, National Commission for Women (NCW), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4).