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Empowerment of women and Inclusive Growth:
In Case of Punjab

By-

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Introduction

India is amongst the fastest growing countries in the world today, with a GDP of 8% during the 11th plan period. This high level of growth can however be sustained only when all sections of the society specially women become equal partners in the development process. Gender equality and empowerment would thus need to be a core development goal if the growth planned in the twelfth Plan has to be achieved.

The Indian growth story has been one of the high gross domestic product (GDP) growth but primarily driven by the growth in services sector. Not all sectors have grown at the same pace as is reflected in the relatively low agricultural growth rate, low quality employment, poor education, inadequate healthcare services, rural urban divide, social inequalities and regional disparities.

The present buzzword for India's development strategy is 'Inclusive Growth', where growth emphasizes a more equitable distribution of income as well as building capabilities for attaining better health and education. Inclusive Growth refers to both pace and pattern of growth, which are considered interlinked and therefore in need to be addressed together. Inclusiveness involves four attributes:

Opportunity: Is the economy generating more and varied ways for people to earn a living and increase their incomes over time?

Capability: Is the economy providing the means for people to create or enhance their capabilities in order to exploit available opportunities?

Access: Is the economy providing the means to bring opportunities and capabilities together?

Security: Is the economy providing the means for people to protect themselves against a temporary or permanent loss of livelihood?

Thus '**Inclusive Growth'** is a process in which economic growth measured by a sustained expansion in GDP, contributes to an enlargement of the scale and scope of all four dimensions.

Case of Punjab

Taking up the particular case of Punjab, Men are dominating in every sphere in Punjab, be it economy or society. Therefore, it is leading to discriminatory Growth. Tracing the history of Punjab, right from the times of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Punjab has witnessed the discrimination against women. In present also women is lagging behind in all the attributes of inclusive growth.

A. **Capability: Education**

Achieving gender equality in capabilities such as education and health is a viable avenue to improving women's access to opportunity and children's well-being, and eventually to economic growth.

Now an important social item like education / literacy status which has many influences on many fields such as social taboos, injustice, and health condition and so on. Here an attempt is made to analyze the main theme of the paper in the light of literary status of females. It is defined as the number of literate population per hundred eligible populations. The gender differential in literacy is measured by the Index of dissimilarity between male-female literacy rates. The index of dissimilarity is 0.15 in Punjab. Highest dissimilarity is found in district Firozpur i.e. 0.23.

There is great gap between male and female literacy rates. Females are lagging behind males in each district as shown in Table-1 .But the state has a reason to smile for doing well in the field of female education, registering 71.3 per cent literacy rate. In last ten years, male literacy rate has increased by 6.3 percent, while female literacy rate has gone up by 7.9 percent. The literacy rate among males increased from 75.2 per cent to 81.5 per cent in ten years. However, the rate among females rose to 71.3 per cent from 63.4 percent. So there is a sign of relief that the female population in Punjab has overshadowed their counterpart in literacy rate.

LITERACY RATES IN PUNJAB AND ITS DISTRICTS 2001-2011(Table-1)

State/ District code	Districts	Males		Females		INDEX of DISSIMILARITY in 2011	
		2001	2011	2001	2011	Rx(M/F)	ΣRx-1
3	PUNJAB	75.2	81.5	63.4	71.3		
1	Gurdaspur	79.8	85.9	67.1	75.7	1.134742	0.1347
2	Kapurthala	79	84.6	68.3	75.4	1.122016	0.122
3	Jalandhar	82.5	86.1	73.1	78.3	1.099617	0.0996
4	Hoshiarpur	86.4	89.9	75.3	80.8	1.112624	0.1126
5	Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar	82.9	86.2	69.5	74.3	1.160162	0.1602

6	Fatehgarh Sahib	78.3	84.5	68.3	75.5	1.119205	0.1192
7	Ludhiana	80.3	86.3	71.9	78.2	1.103581	0.1036
8	Moga	68	75.3	58.5	67.4	1.117211	0.1172
9	Firozpur	68.7	76.7	51.7	62.2	1.233119	0.2331
10	Muktsar	65.4	72.9	50.3	60	1.215	0.215
11	Faridkot	68.1	75.9	55	64.8	1.171296	0.1713
12	Bathinda	67.8	75.3	53.7	62.9	1.197138	0.1971
13	Mansa	58.9	68.4	45.2	56.4	1.212766	0.2128
14	Patiala	75.3	81.4	62.5	70.5	1.15461	0.1546
15	Amritsar	75.1	81.2	65.2	72.8	1.115385	0.1154
16	Tarn-Taran	66.7	75.4	52.3	62.9	1.198728	0.1987
17	Rupnagar	82.7	88.9	68.7	77.2	1.151554	0.1516
18	Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar	83.4	89.2	71.5	80	1.115	0.115
19	Sangrur	66	74.2	53	62.9	1.17965	0.1797
20	Barnala	65.4	73.1	54.5	64.1	1.140406	0.1404
TOTAL							3.0538
Index of Dissimilarity in Punjab						$\Sigma(Rx-1)/n=0.15$	

B. Security

Inspite of gains in education, longevity and income for some groups of women, Punjab remains the heart land of pre-natal sex selections and post-natal gender discrimination, in the country. Punjab state has topped the list in number of female foeticide cases. According to figures released by the National Crime Records Bureau, in Punjab, 81 cases were registered for female foeticide while for Rajasthan the corresponding number was 51; M.P. registered 21 cases, Haryana 18 and Chattisgarh 24. Gender differential in population size is measured by examining the male-female ratios of the absolute size of the population over the year. Apart from this, an Index of dissimilarity has been prepared to know the population differentials.

The sex ration in Punjab has been skewed since 1901 as is evident from the census figures that the sex ratio in the state has been consistently lower than the national average ever since. The gap in female-male ratio has been ranging from 45 in 1991 to 184 points in 1911. The basic reasons for such an adverse situation, lies in the socio-cultural fabric of the society. The birth of a son is preferred over that of a daughter since ancient times. Being a patriarchal and patrilineal

society, the sons are charged with the responsibility to carry on the family name. They have to support their parents during the old age. And after death they are assigned the duty to perform funeral rites. The daughter cannot do this because after marriage, they live and become a part of the groom's family. The prosperity is Punjab has, in fact, increased the peoples' aspiration for a son.

It is observed from Table-2 the gaps in absolute sizes between male and female populations have decreased slightly in all the districts of Punjab. Sex- ratio in Punjab has increased from 876 in 2001 to 893 in 2011. The lowest sex ratio is found in Bathinda i.e. 865 and highest in Hoshiarpur i.e. 962.This is lower than the national average sex-ratio i.e. 940 .This shows that status of women in Punjab is still very low. The index of dissimilarity indicates more male-female gap in absolute size of the population in all the districts of Punjab. Highest dissimilarity is found in Bathinda and Ludhiana i.e. 0.16 and 0.15 respectively, which shows approximately 16% gap between Male and Female. In Punjab index of dissimilarity has been found 0.12.

SEX- RATIO IN PUNJAB AND ITS DISTRICTS 2001-2011, (Table-2)

State/ District code	State /District	Sex-Ratio (females per1000 males)		Rx M/F	ΣRx-1
		2001	2011		
3	PUNJAB	876	893	……..	……
1	Gurdaspur	890	895	1.1169064	0.116906
2	Kapurthala	888	912	1.0965362	0.096536
3	Jalandhar	887	913	1.0953874	0.095387
4	Hoshiarpur	935	962	1.0400182	0.040018
5	Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar	914	954	1.0482352	0.048235
6	Fatehgarh Sahib	854	871	1.1482463	0.148246
7	Ludhiana	824	869	1.1507845	0.150784
8	Moga	887	893	1.1202756	0.120276
9	Firozpur	885	893	1.120074	0.120074
10	Muktsar	891	895	1.117021	0.117021
11	Faridkot	883	889	1.1245638	0.124564
12	Bathinda	870	865	1.1566669	0.156667
13	Mansa	880	880	1.1362483	0.136248

14	Patiala	875	888	1.1257535	0.125754
15	Amritsar	871	884	1.131147	0.131147
16	Tarn-Taran	887	898	1.1140137	0.114014
17	Rupnagar	889	913	1.0956226	0.095623
18	Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar	842	878	1.1384146	0.138415
19	Sangrur	870	883	1.1325737	0.132574
20	Barnala	872	876	1.1415068	0.141507
			TOTAL		2.349996
		Index of Dissimilarity In Punjab		ΣRx-1/n=0.1175	

Source-Census of India 2011

Case registered in 2011

Dowry Deaths	Dowry Cases	Female Foeticide	Rape376 IPC	Molestation394 IPC
304-B IPC	498-A IPC			
104	669	14	393	249

Source Punjab state commission for women2011

Concluding Remarks

Individuals, e.g., male and female are considered two biological categories of population. However, the third category such as eunuchs or inter sexed persons may not fit in either male or female category. But third sex category in the census is ruled out on the ground that male and female are expected to fulfill various roles like father or mother, husband or wife essentially linked to the institution of marriage and family (Bhagat 2005). In Indian Census, eunuchs are counted as males (RG 1991). However, most of the persons belonging to third sex category present themselves in feminine appearance and wish to be regarded as women. In the west, there is a practice of assimilating the inter sexed persons into the female sex due to the advancement of medical science (Lal 1999). Thus the inclusion of eunuchs in male category in Indian census may be partially responsible for the male-female ratio in favour of the male. However, it is observed that the male-female ratio is marginally improved during the last decade in favour of female.

Neglect of female child especially in age-groups, 0-4 & 5-9 has been increased over the years. Social customs especially son preference and differential treatment for male babies in terms of food, medical treatment may be responsible for widening the gap in spite of several measures to prevent discrimination towards female babies. High male-female ratio at birth is

prevalent mainly due to female foeticide in spite of the Governmental enforcement of Pre Natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act (PNDT) in 1994. The government has amended this PNDT act in 2003 to remove its loopholes. Several studies in India confined female foeticide (George and Dahiya 1998, Premi 2001, Agnihotri 2002, Unisa et al 2003, Ghatak 2006).

Infant mortality rate among females is marginally higher in comparison with males supporting the neglect of female babies over the years and is associated with old age preference of son. The most important item of social development is the literacy. Here male-female literacy gap is declining over the years but the gap is still very wide in spite of the several drives by the Government to educate its people such as through Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Continued Education Programme (CEP), Non-Formal Education, etc. apart from formal schooling of children to achieve education for all as early as possible. Special efforts are needed to educate women folks especially in rural areas.

The important indicator of development of females is the work force participation of females in economic activities. Male-female work force participation ratio is always in favour of male over the years and is more in urban areas than in rural areas. Work, in general, is defined as the engagement in any economically productive activity including physical or mental in nature.

Students, housewives, pensioners, renters, sick and unemployed persons are considered as non-workers. Women are generally engaged in household activities such as bearing and rearing of children and in the production of goods and services for self household consumption. Therefore, women's work at home remains unrecognized unless it produces something for sale. Therefore, the work participation for female is a myth rather than reality. In recent census, women considered as worker who make significant contribution in the agricultural operations like sowing, harvesting, transplantation, tending cattle and even cooking and delivering food to the farm during the agriculture operation. Therefore, work force participation rate in agricultural and related works has been increased. Even through Punjab claims to be most prosperous state of India and several measures have been initiated through legislation and formation of various action groups but the progress is very slow in the area of health, education and work participation especially for vulnerable groups.

In sum, along with efforts at removing cultural and social obstacles through public awareness, enhancing economic development and improving women's capabilities as well as their access to economic opportunity appear to be the key to enhancing progress toward gender equality, and ultimately to inclusive growth.

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