

# 6

## Gender in Human Development



The promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to which India is a signatory. Including women's empowerment and gender equality in one MDG goal implicitly recognises that gender equality and women's empowerment are both equally relevant and importantly inter-linked. The concepts are multidimensional, resulting in a large number of potential indicators. Indicators of empowerment/disempowerment and gender equality/inequality are typically designed to compare the status of women and men on particular characteristics of interest and are not relative figures. In common parlance, the terms gender and sex are often used interchangeably; however, they are distinct concepts. Then again, sex of individuals is largely determined by biology while their gender is socially constructed and comprises of the roles, of rights, and obligations attached to them on the basis of their sex. Kishor (2006) identifies three important aspects of gender, namely:

- a) Gender is not value neutral. The roles, rights, and obligations assigned to each sex are not just different, but also unequal, with male roles and rights generally being valued more highly than that of females.
- b) Gender involves differences in power, both 'power to' and 'power over'. The concept of power encompasses legal and informal rights, access to resources, and pursuit of knowledge and personal goals. This cuts across most domains of human functioning, including familial, cultural and institutional domains. 'Power over' refers to control over societal and household resources, and decisions, cultural and religious ideology, and one's own and others' bodies. Importantly, men tend to have greater power than women, and, in some domains, even have power over women.
- c) Gender is neither static nor immutable. Being socially constructed, gender roles, rights, and expectations can change over time and across geographical space as societal needs, opportunities, and customs change.

The characteristics stated as (a) and (b) reflect inequalities based on gender, as also the disempowerment of females, which is pervasive in most patriarchal societies. Gender-based differences in power and resource access have consequences for quality of life of the population. The inequalities find expression in many ways—explicit and implicit. The explicit measures can be tracked and are revealed in statistics depicting differences in sex ratio, child

infanticide, literacy rates, health and nutrition indicators, wage differentials and ownership of land and property. Implicit measures are not visible and are embedded in power and culture. These intra-household inequalities result in unequal distribution of power, unequal control over resources and decision-making; and unfair, unequal distribution of work, drudgery and even food. Gender disaggregated data and indices are a tools that helps to identify genders inequalities, determine issues to be addressed, take steps to redress the inequalities, provide feedback on effectiveness of the actions and re-prioritise allocation of resources.

The development of any nation or area does not necessarily follow a uniform path. Also, the direction, pace or intensity of growth do not exhibit unique patterns (Kelley, 1991; Krishnaji, 1997; Rustagi, 2000). That is to say, any impetus or stimulant introduced into the existing state of affairs does not always lead to a predetermined outcome and even the path adopted to attain or reach the goal set out often varies from one case to another. This is because the trajectory of growth is a dynamic process. The presence and operation of these multiple factors, each of which can assume a different form with the slightest change occurring in any dimension, makes the process dynamic. The objective of gender development indicators is to be able to generate specific sets of information that can be usefully utilised for identification and intervention for improvement in the status of women.

The chapter seeks to address the following issues in separate sections.

- Comparisons based on Gender Inequality Index (GII).
- Status of women:
  - Sex ratio—adult and child—comparison and analysis *vis-à-vis* India and State.
  - Changes in ratio—favourable/adverse status of women.
- Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women:
  - Female literacy rate and gender gap.
  - Girls in higher education.
  - Female wages and WFPR (workforce participation rate).
  - Crimes and violence against women.
  - Political participation.
- Female-headed households:
  - Family size.

- Access to facilities—toilets, water, assets and credit.
- Gender-specific concerns and interventions at policy and programmatic levels, including legal provisions.

### Gender Inequality Index

The GII is designed to reveal the extent to which achievements in these aspects of human development are eroded by gender inequality, and to provide empirical foundations for policy analysis and advocacy efforts. Table 6.1 ranks the districts into better faring and poorly districts.

**Table 6.1**  
**GII Index: District-wise**

District	GII Index	
	Index	Rank
<b>Top 5 Districts</b>		
The Nilgiris	0.036	1
Virudhunagar	0.048	2
Vellore	0.051	3
Nammakkal	0.054	4
Perambalur	0.057	5
<b>Middle Districts</b>		
Erode	0.065	11
Kanyakumari	0.066	12
Karur	0.070	13
Tirupur	0.070	14
Dharmapuri	0.074	15
<b>Bottom 5 Districts</b>		
Chennai	0.111	28
Madurai	0.112	29
Villupuram	0.113	30
Sivagangai	0.114	31
Ariyalur	0.118	32

The GII of the State is best in the Nilgiris district where gender inequality is closest to zero (0.036), whereas inequality is highest in Ariyalur district whose index is 0.118. In Ariyalur district, most of the gender related indicators—female literacy rates, female agricultural wage rates, etc.—are low. A lower score in terms of indicators relating to capabilities, livelihood and empowerment has widened gender inequality in the district. Kanyakumari's health indicators appears favourable in terms of low MMR (Maternal Mortality Ratio) and high institutional deliveries, but due to other factors, its position has moved to the

middle level at rank 12 despite a high HDI (human development index). Kanyakumari's inequality is more due to the high differential in the livelihood indicator as one finds that female wage rates are half of the male's wage and their workforce participation rate is also considerably lower. Madurai is one of the districts which had high MMR and so the district has moved to the bottom five districts in GII. Virudhunagar had the highest female political representation, while Nilgiris had the lowest. Female agricultural wage as stated in the earlier section was the highest in Salem and lowest in Villupuram.

One of the key indicators that reflect the position of women in the society is sex ratio (SR), which is being dealt in the first section.

### Sex Ratio

A strong correlation exists between poor human development indicators and gender disparity. However, there are other forms of gender discrimination which are worse in places, where traditional human development indicators are good. It is more apparent in aversion towards daughters, also manifesting as 'son preference'. The intensity of this form of gender discrimination is evident from the worsening sex ratios, but is often not correlated with poor human development indicators.

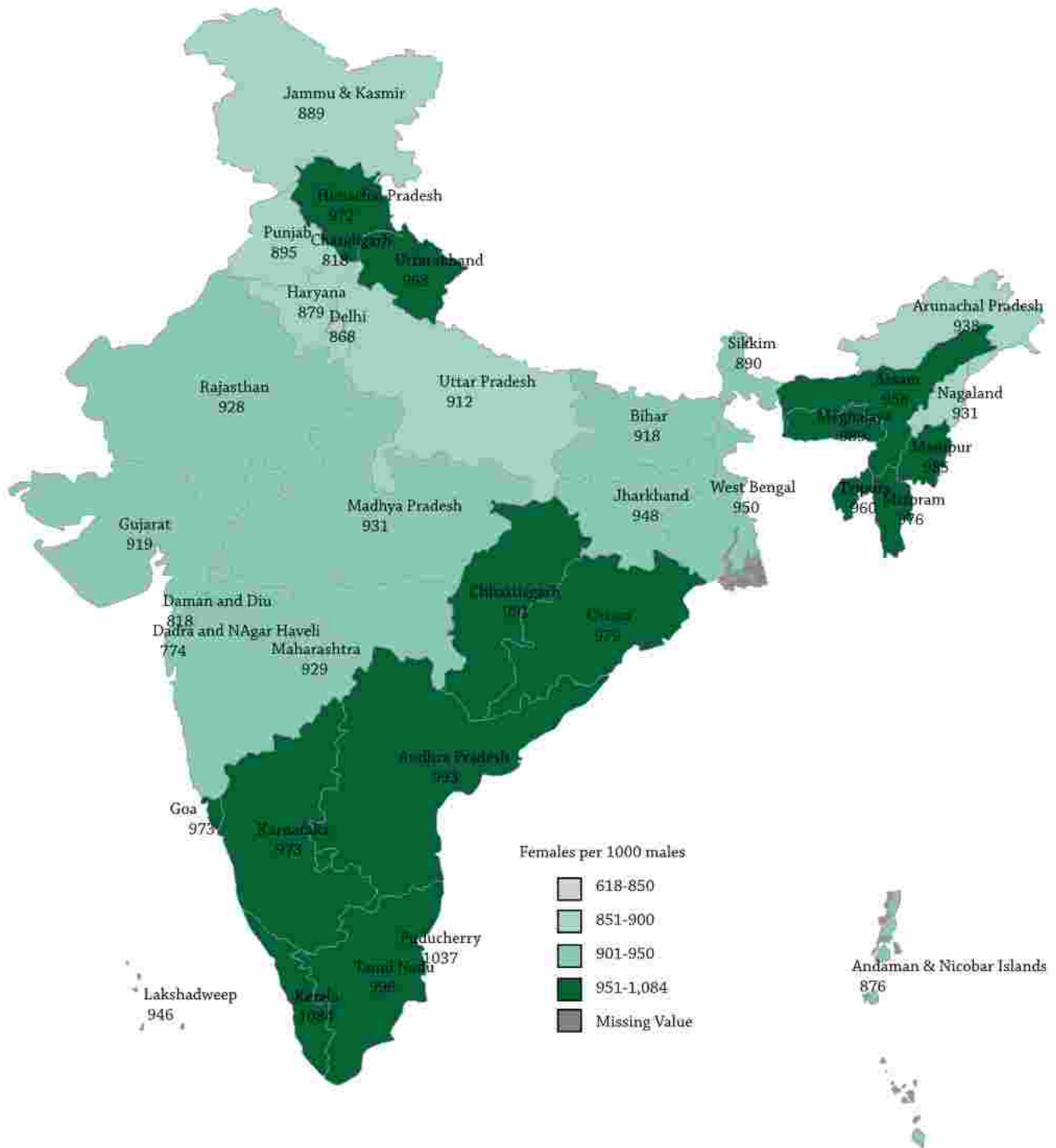
### Sex Ratio Differences in the Census Period

Figure 6.1 Indicates that the northern parts of India have reported far lower rates of sex ratio when compared to southern India. But even among the southern states there are marked differentials in the sex ratio.

The sex ratio of Tamil Nadu declined every census period until 1971 since 1901; but post-1991, there has been an increase (Figure 6.2). The State has in the 2011 census crossed the sex ratio that was recorded in 1961. Though the State's overall sex ratio has improved, there are inter-district disparities. Nilgiris district in the State has the highest sex ratio with 1041 and Dharmapuri with 946 has the lowest sex ratio (Table 6.2). Thoothukudi, which held the first rank in terms of sex ratio in the previous census, has now moved down to the fourth rank. Ramanathapuram, which was at the fourth rank in the previous census, is now among the bottom five districts with adverse sex ratio. In Tamil Nadu, a few districts with adverse sex ratio were identified and specific interventions were undertaken.

The changes in sex ratio in the last two censuses

**Figure 6.1**  
**India: Sex Ratio Map, 2011**

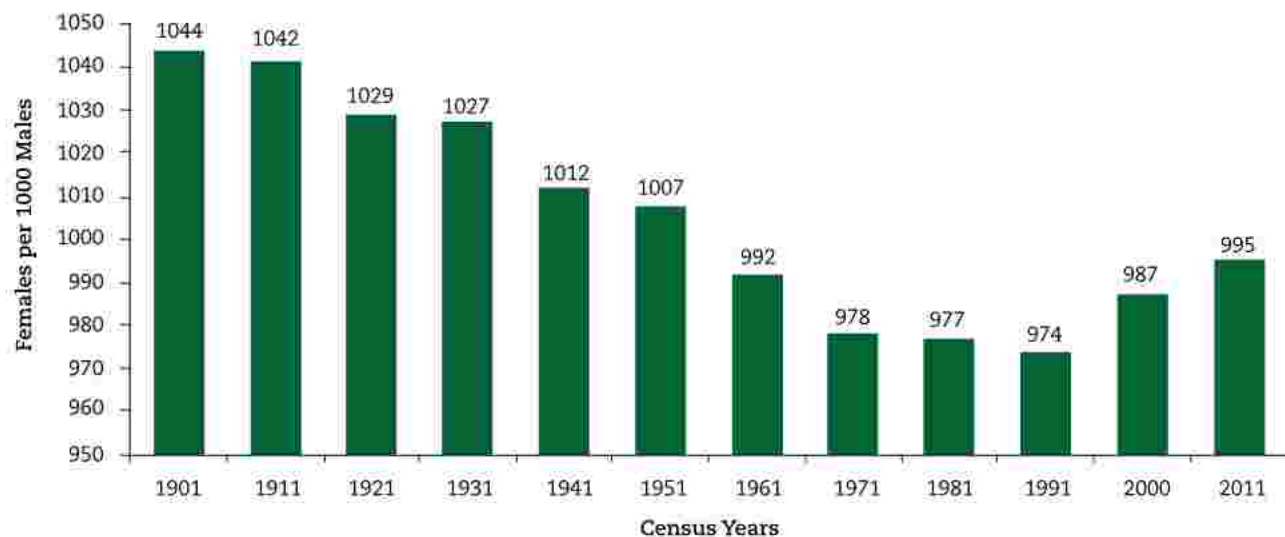


Note: The sex ratio map of India indicates sex ratio as per the 2011 Census. There are disparities in the sex ratio across States. Kerala has the highest sex ratio and Haryana has the lowest with 877. The Union Territories of Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Chandigarh and New Delhi fare worse than many States.

Source: Maps of India, 2011.

Figure 6.2

Tamil Nadu Sex Ratio, 1901-2011



Source: Census of India, 2011.

have been presented in Figure 6.3(a) for a clear understanding of the districts, in which there have been extreme changes. There has been a decline in 10 districts when compared to the previous census. The maximum differentials are mostly seen in the districts of Theni, Ramnathapuram, Sivaganga, Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli.

According to available data, the practice of female infanticide was prevalent in the districts of Dharmapuri, Salem, Namakkal, Theni, Madurai, Karur, Dindugul, Erode and Vellore, with occasional occurrence in others (Gender Profile of Tamil Nadu, NCW, 2004).

Table 6.2

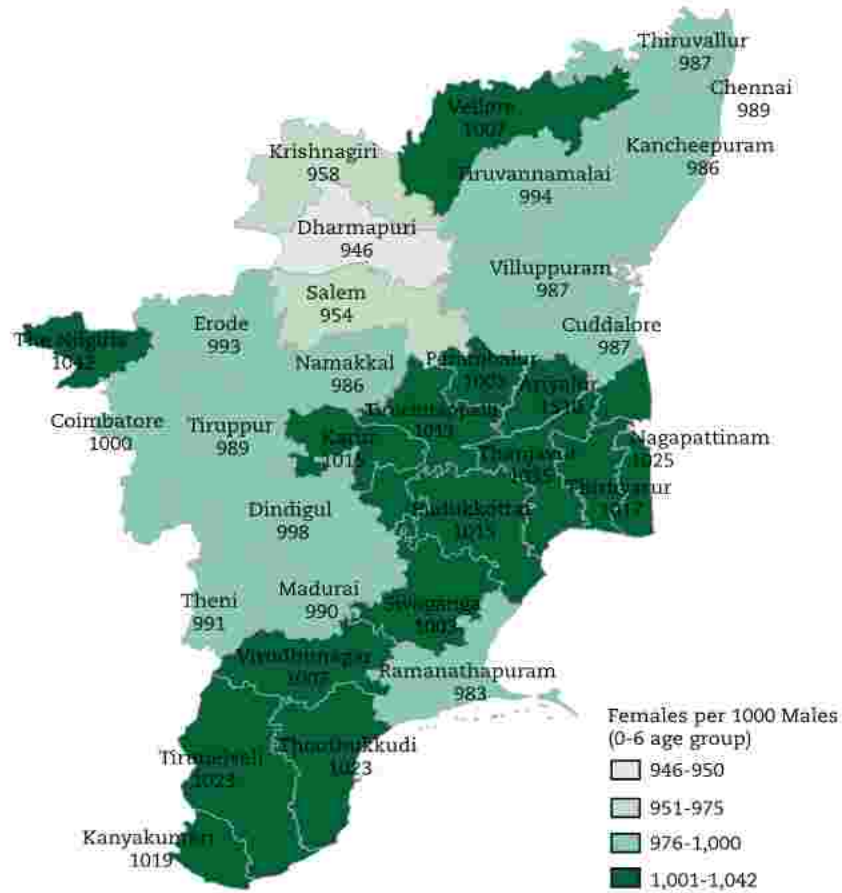
Changes in Sex Ratio in the Inter-Census Period (2001-2011)

State/District	2001	2011	Change in SR 2011-2001
Tamil Nadu	987	995	8
Thiruvallur	971	983	12
Chennai	957	986	29
Kancheepuram	975	985	10
Vellore	997	1004	7
Dharmapuri	932	946	14
Krishnagiri	944	956	12
Tiruvannamalai	995	993	-2

Vilupuram	984	985	1
Salem	929	954	25
Namakkal	966	986	20
Erode	968	992	24
The Nilgris	1014	1041	27
Coimbatore	968	1001	33
Tiruppur	963	988	25
Dindigul	986	998	12
Karur	1010	1015	5
Tiruchirappalli	1001	1013	12
Perambalur	1006	1006	0
Ariyalur	1006	1016	10
Cuddalore	986	984	-2
Nagappattinam	1014	1025	11
Thiruvarur	1014	1020	6
Thanjavur	1021	1013	-8
Pudukkottai	1015	1015	0
Sivaganga	1038	1000	-38
Madurai	978	990	12
Theni	978	900	-78
Virudhunagar	1012	1009	-3
Ramanathapuram	1036	997	-39
Thoothukkudi	1050	1024	-26
Tirunelveli	1042	1024	-18
Kanyakumari	1014	1010	-4

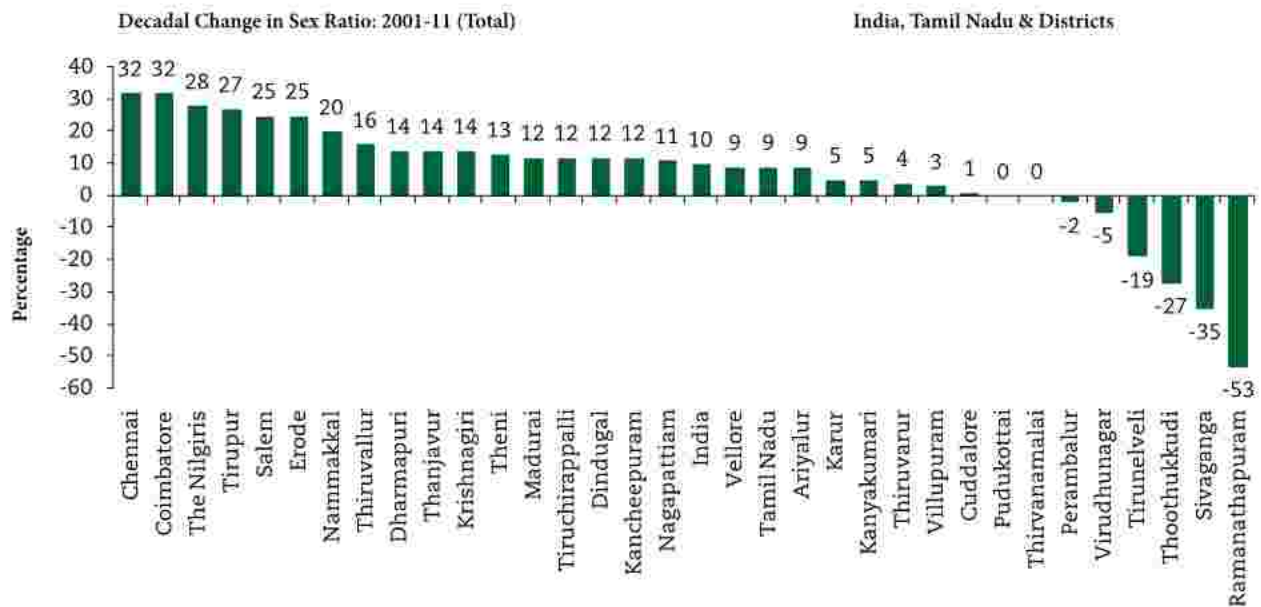
Source: Census of India, 2011.

**Figure 6.3**  
**Tamil Nadu Sex Ratio 2011**



Source: Census of India, 2011.

**Figure 6.3(a)**  
**Tamil Nadu: Change in Sex Ratio, 2001-2011**

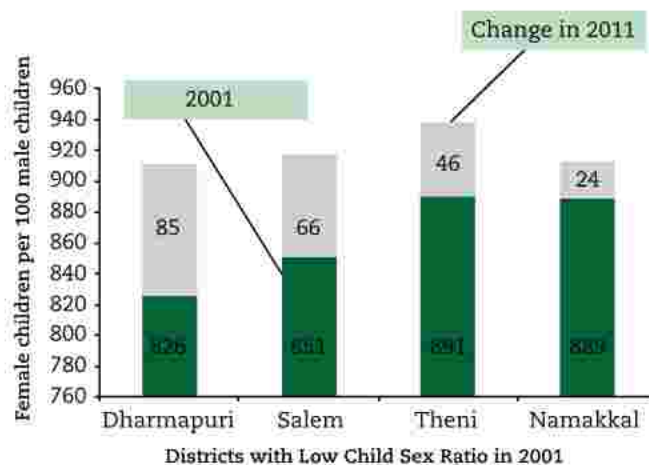


Note: Chennai district has been excluded as it is entirely urban.

Figure 6.4 presents the results of interventions and the corresponding rise in SR in the districts. The districts of Dharmapuri, Salem, Theni and Namakkal have shown improvement in the past two censuses. An increase by 85 points in Dharmapuri district was noted, where there was a campaign mode intervention through Kalajathas in order to address this adverse SR. Campaign against female infanticide has been successful with involvement of the government, community and leaders of the local bodies where it was launched with intensity, as in the case of Dharmapuri (Athreya and Chunkath, 2000).

Figure 6.4

## Improvements in Districts with History of Low Child Sex Ratio



Source: Department of Social Welfare.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan (FYP) of Tamil Nadu highlights this issue and discusses how reception centres were being opened in the above districts to address the same. The role of the State attains significance in preventing harm and protecting girls and women on one hand, and promoting women empowerment, gender equality and male transformation on the other.

The next section discusses child sex ratio in detail. Among the States/Union Territories, the highest child sex ratio (0-6 years) is reported by Mizoram (971), followed by Meghalaya (970), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (966), Puducherry (965) and Chhattisgarh (964).

### Child Sex Ratio

A critical and most powerful indicator of gender inequality in India is the strong preference for a son, which manifests itself as adverse sex ratio, limiting the birth and survival of girls. The decline over time

in the child sex ratio could be attributed to one or more of the three possible main causes: a decrease in the sex ratio at birth by using technologies that enable sex selection; an increase in the mortality of girl children when compared to that of boy children, suggesting intensification of the already documented discrimination against the former; or a systematic undercount of female children, compared with male children under the age of seven (Miller, 1981; Das Gupta, 1987; Kishor, 1993).

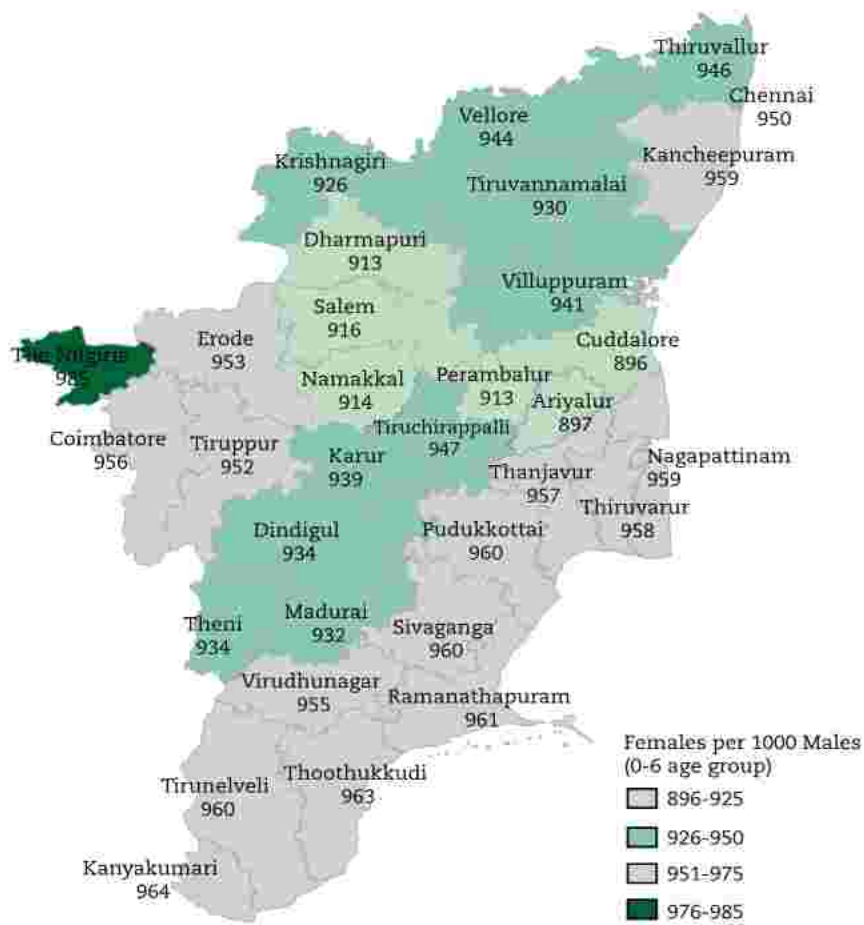
The population SR is inclusive of migration and hence it needs to be looked at along with the child sex ratio and particularly sex ratio at birth. The child sex ratio of the State as a whole has improved marginally from 942 in 2001 to 946 in 2011, while it declined from 927 to 919 in the same period for the nation as a whole. In 18 of the 29 States in India, the sex ratio at birth is below normal. Notably, all four of the southern States, including Kerala, have lower than normal sex ratios at birth. On the contrary, States and Union Territories which have reported lowest child sex ratio (0-6 years) are: Haryana (830), followed by Punjab (846), Jammu & Kashmir (859), NCT of Delhi (866) and Chandigarh (867).

### Sex Ratio Differences in the Census Period

In 27 States and Union Territories, including Delhi, the child SR has declined. "The rate of decline ranges from normal to alarming" as per Census of India reports. It can be estimated that 2 million women in the country go "missing" every year; 12 per cent disappear at birth due to sex selective infanticide or abortion and 25 per cent die in childhood, predominantly due to lack of access to the same level of healthcare and nutrition available to their male counterparts. The rural sex ratio of 947 in 2011 has witnessed a decline of 32 points from 1901 to 2011, with the maximum figure of 979 being recorded in 1901. The urban sex ratio of 926 females per thousand males has shown an upward trend by recording an increase of 16 points from 1901 to 2011, where the highest figure of 926 has been recorded in 2011. The changes in the child sex ratio over the last two censuses, 2001 and 2011, in Tamil Nadu has been represented in Figure 6.5. Figure 6.5(a) indicates that at least in 2 districts, Ariyalur and Cuddalore, there has been a sharp decline of 25 points and more, and the child sex ratio was below 925. The adverse changes in child SR indicate a strong case of son preference in the State.

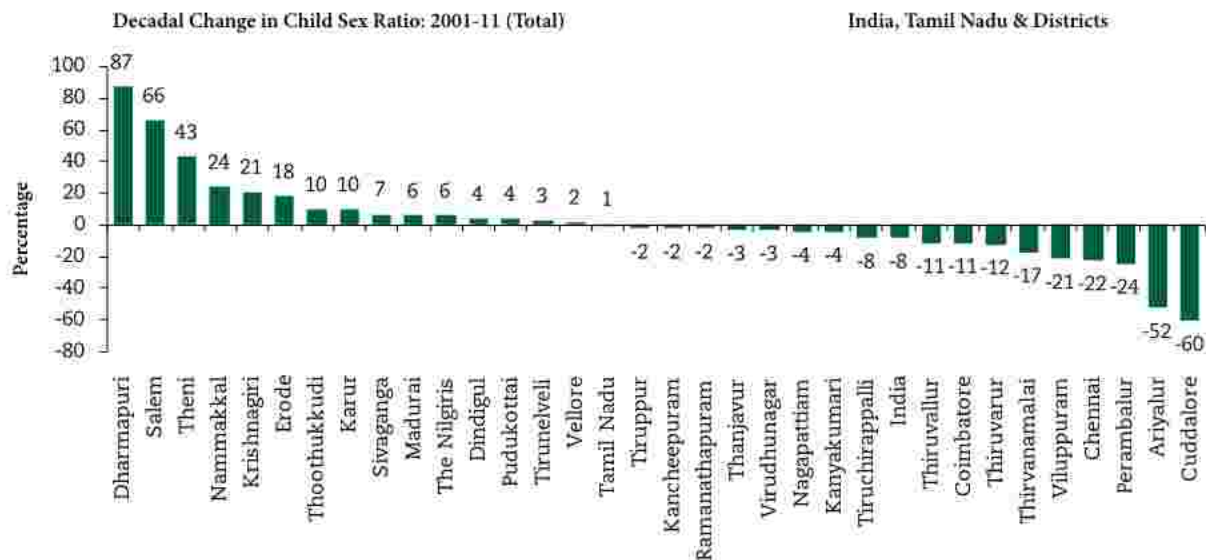


**Figure 6.5**  
**Tamil Nadu Child Sex Ratio 2011**



Source: Census of India, Maps.

**Figure 6.5a**  
**Tamil Nadu: District-wise Changes in Child Sex Ratio 2011**



Note: Chennai district has been excluded as it is entirely urban.

Looking at Figure 6.6, one can see that six districts have sex ratios lower than the all-India average: Ariyalur, Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Namakkal Salem and Perambalur. Cuddalore, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Villupuram and Tiruvanamalai show sharp decline in child sex ratio in the recent census. This is indicative of the fact that the process of sex selection is not confined to the traditional female infanticide areas, but has moved to other backward districts as well. These districts require immediate attention.

There are eight districts between the State average and the all-India average. On the whole, nearly 14 districts indicate adverse sex ratios that are lower than the State average. Although overall child sex ratios are falling for the country, recent analysis of the 2011 census by Diamond-Smith and Bishai (2014) suggests that the States and districts that have historically had the lowest child sex ratios are beginning to show signs of improvement (the corresponding ratios are becoming less skewed, or slowing down in their rate of decline).

It is necessary to reiterate that any efforts to address adverse sex ratio needs to be adopted across the State. There are newer districts showing adverse sex ratio and more urban and literate areas seem to exhibit declining sex ratios, thereby indicating that patriarchal system in combination with small family norms may have contributed to this phenomenon.

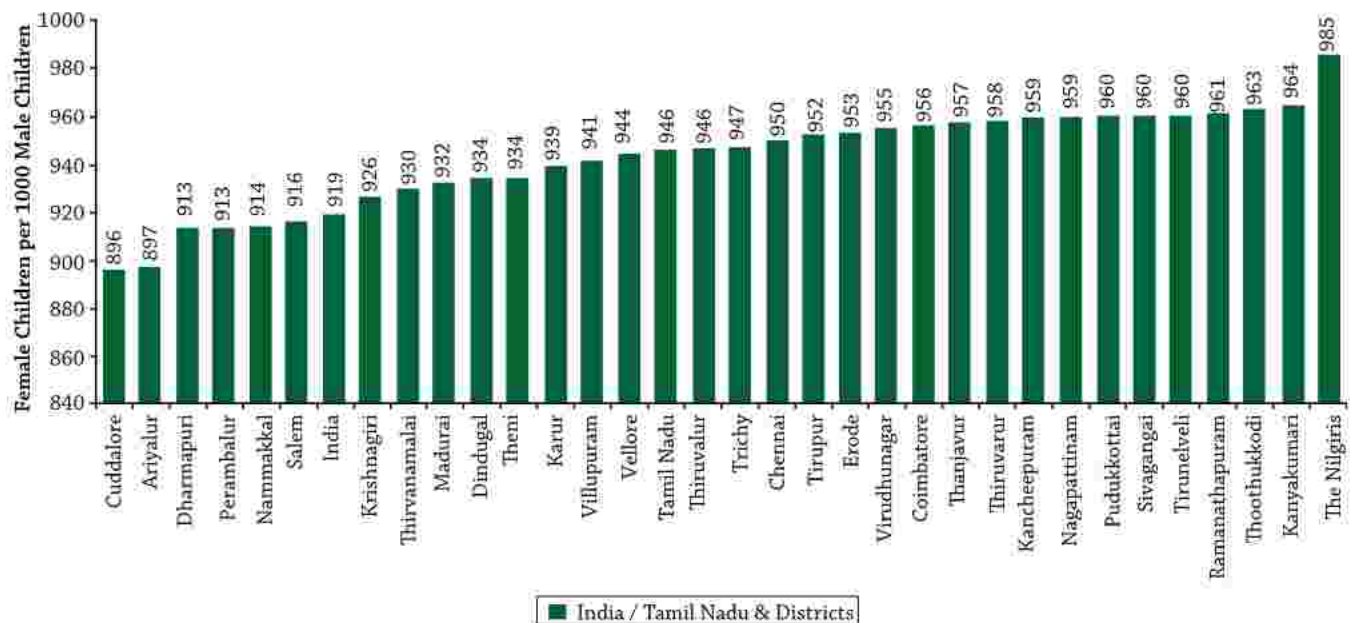
Son preference and devaluation of girls cannot be attributed to one single factor in Tamil Nadu. An economic cost-benefit analysis of having sons versus daughters may play an important role among impoverished families, but should not affect affluent families who can afford to equally invest in their sons' and daughters' education and well-being. Additionally, there has been a decline in dowry payments among educated, affluent families (Mitra, 2014). Yet, there is a persistence of son preference among both the rich and the poor, educated and illiterate families. Deep-rooted culture and traditions, coupled with patriarchal kinship patterns and lower status of women in different parts of the State are still contributing to this trend. The sex ratio is particularly low among couples whose first born is a daughter, compared to those who have a boy as their first born (Jha *et al.*, 2011).

The Cradle Baby scheme launched by the state government had played an important role in addressing adverse sex ratios. Under the scheme, cradles were placed in important places, such as hospitals, primary health centres, and children homes, in order to rescue the female children abandoned by their biological parents due to various social circumstances. As Figure 6.7 shows, this scheme has had a substantial number of beneficiaries over the years.

More importantly, as Table 6.3 shows, the sex ratio has improved in all the districts where the scheme was implemented.

Figure 6.6

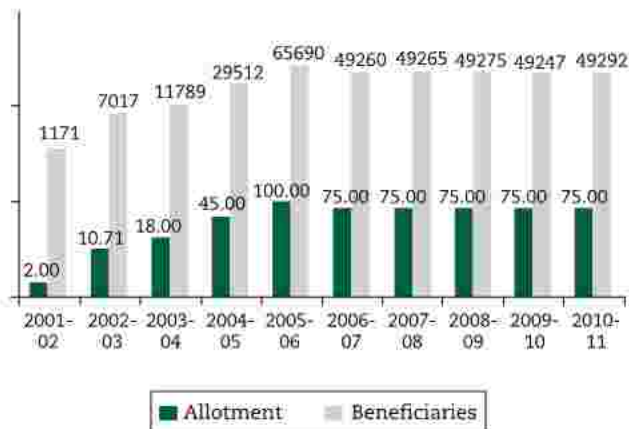
India, Tamil Nadu and Districts: Child Sex Ratio 2011



Source: Census of India, 2011.

Figure 6.7

Cradle Baby Scheme: Allotment and Beneficiaries



Source: Department of Social Welfare, Chennai.

Table 6.3

Cradle Baby Scheme: Improvement in Sex Ratio, District-wise

Name of the Districts	2001 Census Child Sex Ratio (per 1000 males)	2011 Census Child Sex Ratio (per 1000 males)
Salem	851	917
Madurai	926	939
Theni	891	937
Dindigul	930	942
Dharmapuri	826	911

Source: Department of Social Welfare, Chennai.

### Women and Literacy

Eliminating gender differences in access to education and educational attainment are key elements on the path to attaining gender equality and restraining the disempowerment of women. At the national level, pace of increase in female literacy rate was perceptibly higher in rural areas. It has increased from 46.13 per cent in 2001 to 58.75 per cent in 2011. Gender gap in literacy rate narrowed down considerably over the censuses, but continues to be high (19.81). This gap is largest in Rajasthan (31.2 points). The gender gap in literacy as per the 2011 census is presented in the map with different colour shades.

The literacy rate for Tamil Nadu in 2011 has increased to 80.33 per cent from 73.45 per cent in the 2001 census. Among the males, 86.81 per cent were literates, whereas among the females, the rate is 73.86 per cent. The corresponding rates in 2001 were 82.42 per cent for males and 64.43 per cent for females. It

may be observed that more than three-fourth of the population is literate among males in all the districts (except Dharmapuri), while more than two-third of the population is literate among females in all districts, except eight; namely Dharmapuri (60.03), Krishnagiri (64.86), Tiruvannamalai (65.71), Villupuram (63.51), Salem (65.43), Erode (65.07), Perambalur (66.11) and Ariyalur (62.22). Among the districts, Kanyakumari district has reported the highest literacy rate of 92.14 per cent, while Dharmapuri district accounts for the lowest rate of 64.71 per cent.

The female literacy map for the two census periods in Figure 6.8 indicate that although the number of districts in the highest quintile have remained more or less the same, the number in the second lowest quintile has moved to the second highest quintile.

Figure 6.9 is the graphical representation of female literacy rates in the districts. Six districts of the State—Salem, Erode, Krishnagiri, Villupuram, Ariyalur and Dharmapuri—had literacy rates lower than the national average. Twelve districts have female literacy rates lower than the State average, but above national average. Only 14 districts have female literacy rates above the State average (73.86%). Differential between Kanyakumari with the highest female literacy rate and Dharmapuri with the lowest literacy rate is quite high (nearly 30 percentage points).

Although there are stark inter-district variations across districts, the gender gap in literacy is narrowing down and is evident from Figure 6.10.

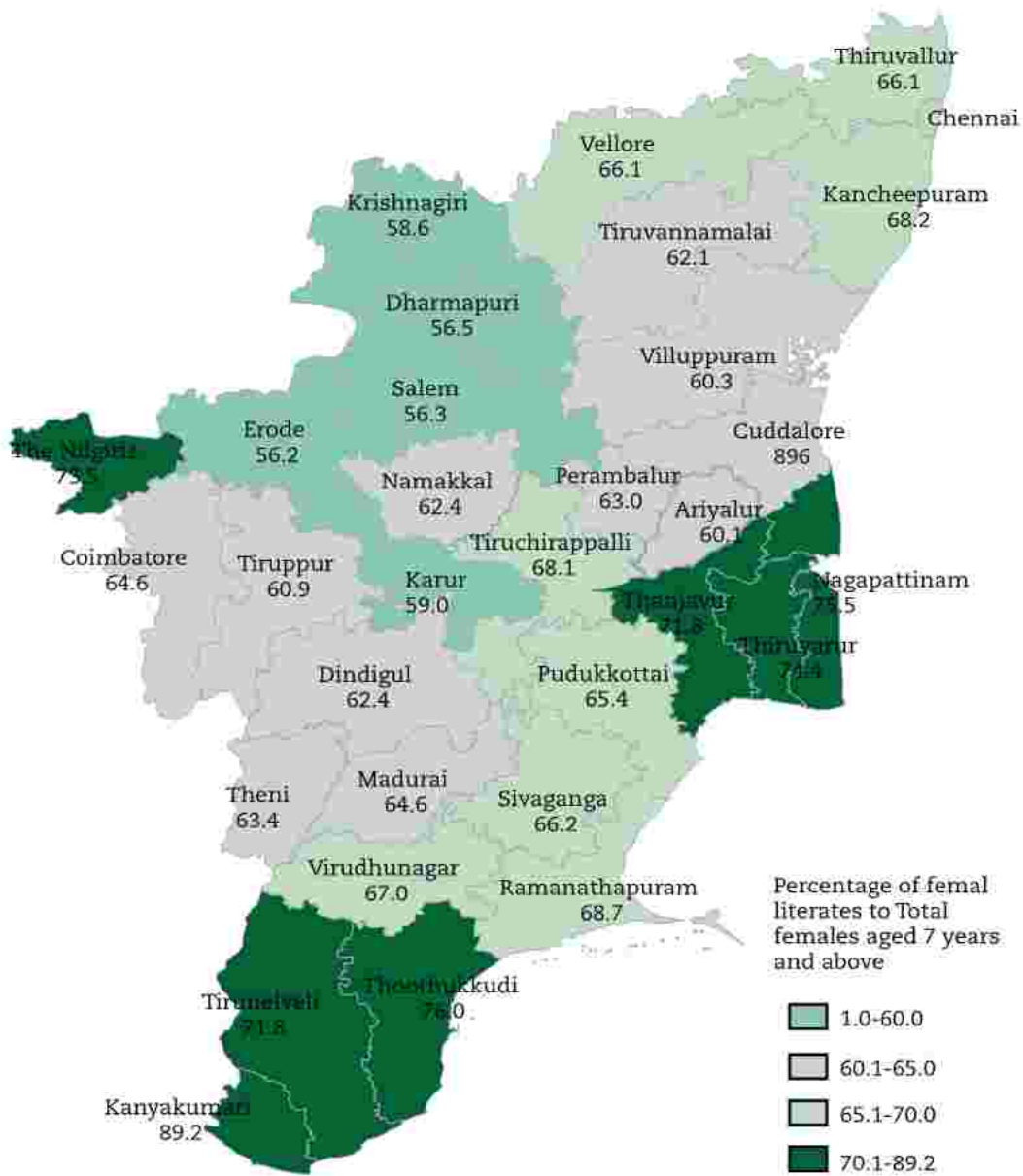
Five districts have a gender gap less than 10. Fourteen districts have a gender gap in literacy between 10 and 15 percentage points. The remaining districts have greater than 15 percentage points.

In terms of school enrolment and access to schools across gender, there was near equal access in the primary and upper primary levels. However, as girls move above middle school, a sizeable proportion drop out, thus increasing the gender gap in higher education. Graphical representation of the district-wise enrolment in high schools is presented in Figure 6.11. It shows that overall in the State, nearly 50 per cent of the girls are in schools. Ensuring that girls continue their education for a longer time has the twin benefits, in terms of knowledge attainment and also delaying the age of marriage.

Moving onto gender differences in enrolment at the high school level, the highest percentage of girls enrolled in high school is in Thoothukudi (67.2) and

Figure 6.8

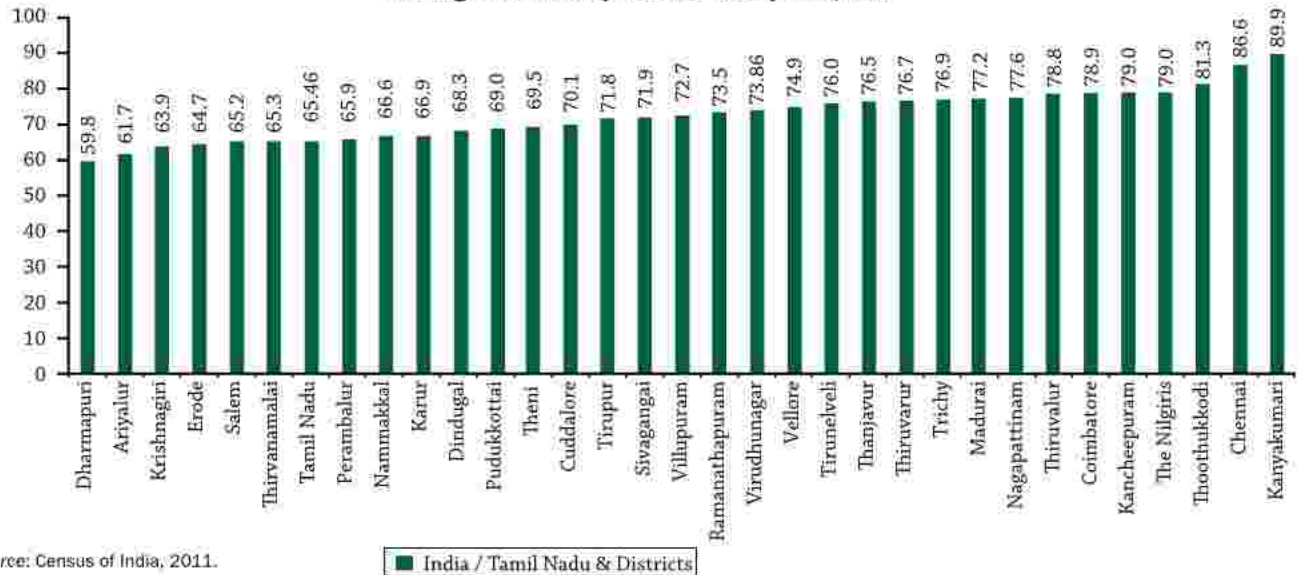
Tamil Nadu: Female Literacy Rate (Rural), 2011



Source: Census of India, 2011.

Figure 6.9

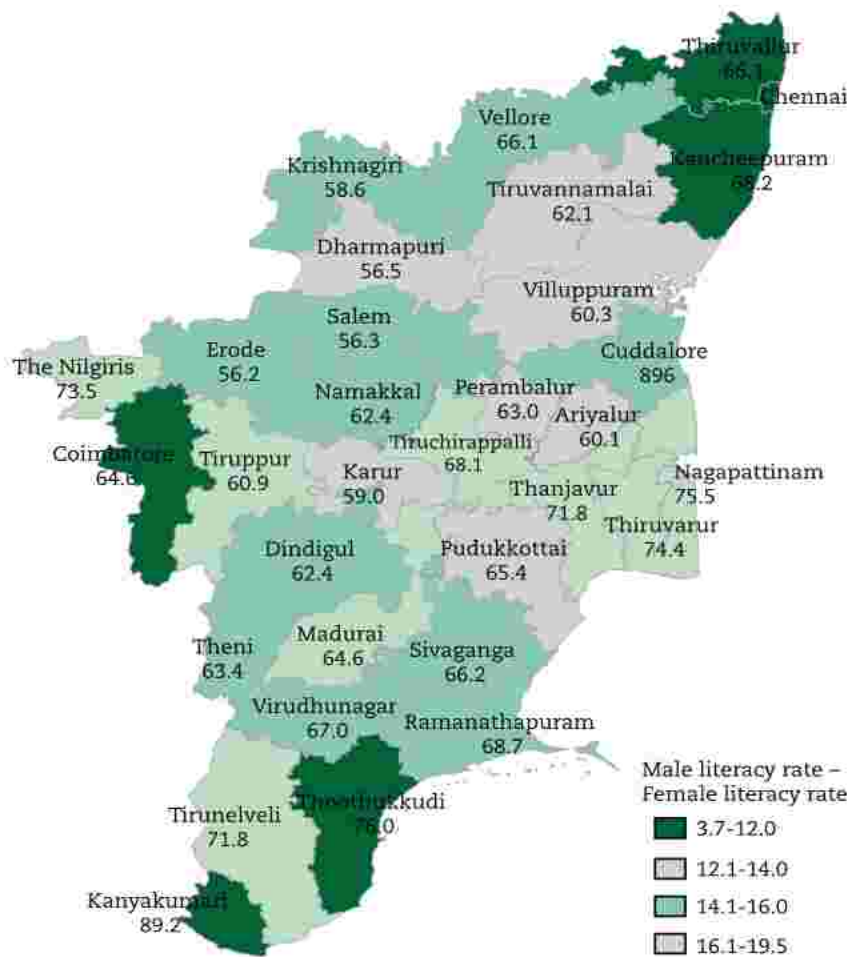
Ranking of Districts by Female Literacy Rate, 2011



Source: Census of India, 2011.

Figure 6.10

Tamil Nadu: Gender Gap in Literacy, 2011



Source: Census of India, 2011.

the lowest is in Madurai district (45.9). The high school enrolment gap between the highest and the lowest is therefore nearly 18 percentage points and is an issue that needs to be addressed in earnest.

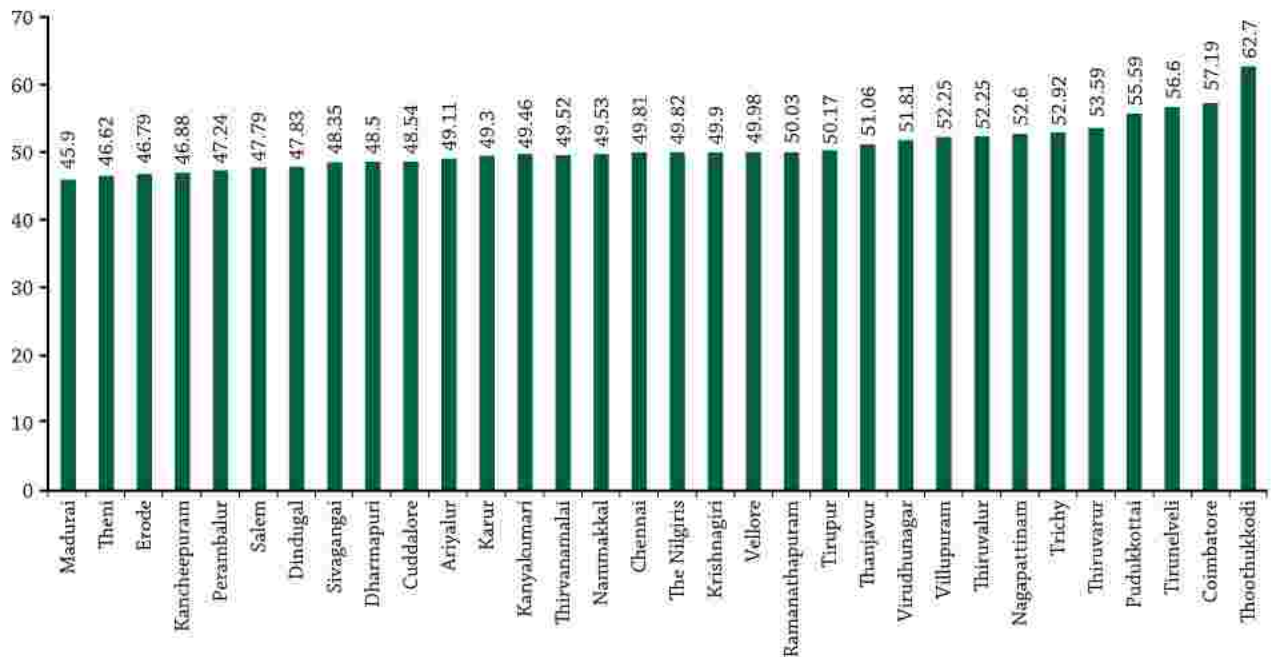
It would also be interesting to look at the higher education pattern of women and their educational choices. A CII-Deloitte study conducted on higher education highlights that the number of women who enrol for M.Phil is higher than that of the males (Figure 6.12). It was also evident that in professional

PG diploma, male enrolment was higher. Enrolment of women was the highest for certificate courses.

The difference in the enrolment and completion rates at the higher education levels is quite evident. This is also an indicator of the fact that the percentage of women qualified for higher paid professional jobs is comparatively lower. In addition, the number of professionally qualified women who are able to manage both family and career become rather limited. This is evident from data available on women taking

Figure 6.11

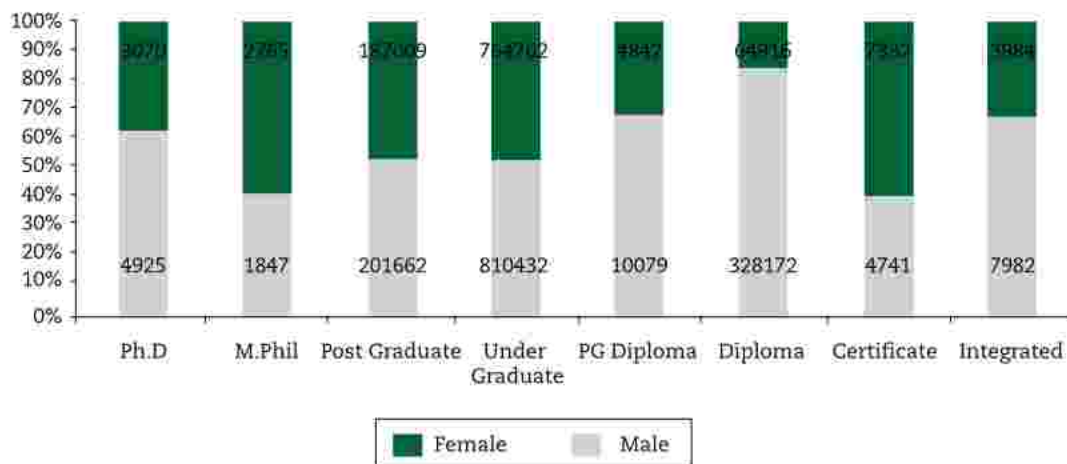
Percentage of Female Students in High School



Source: Department of Education, 2011.

Figure 6.12

State-wise Enrolment through Regular Mode of Various Levels: Tamil Nadu



Source: CII-Deloitte study report.

up lower paid jobs and also very few being posted at high paid professional jobs.

Access to education is the most powerful instrument to improve women's position in society. Education also brings about reduction in inequalities and also acts as a means to improve their status within the family. In order to encourage education of women at all levels and to dilute gender bias in the provision of education; schools, colleges and even universities were established exclusively for women in the State. To bring in more girl children, especially from marginalised BPL (below poverty line) families into mainstream education, the government provides a package of concessions in the form of free supply of books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing, mid-day meals, scholarships, free bicycles and so on. Scholarships, laptops and bicycles are all given free of cost in order to encourage girl children to pursue their education.

### Female Workforce Participation Rate

Along with education, women's employment is a critical factor in their progression towards economic independence and is also considered as an indicator of their overall status in society (Mammen and Paxson, 2008). Women's contribution to the economy remains significantly invisible in national accounts. Although a certain degree of statistical invisibility of women in the economy is a global phenomenon, it is particularly predominant in India and other South Asian nations due to the orthodox socio-cultural milieu.

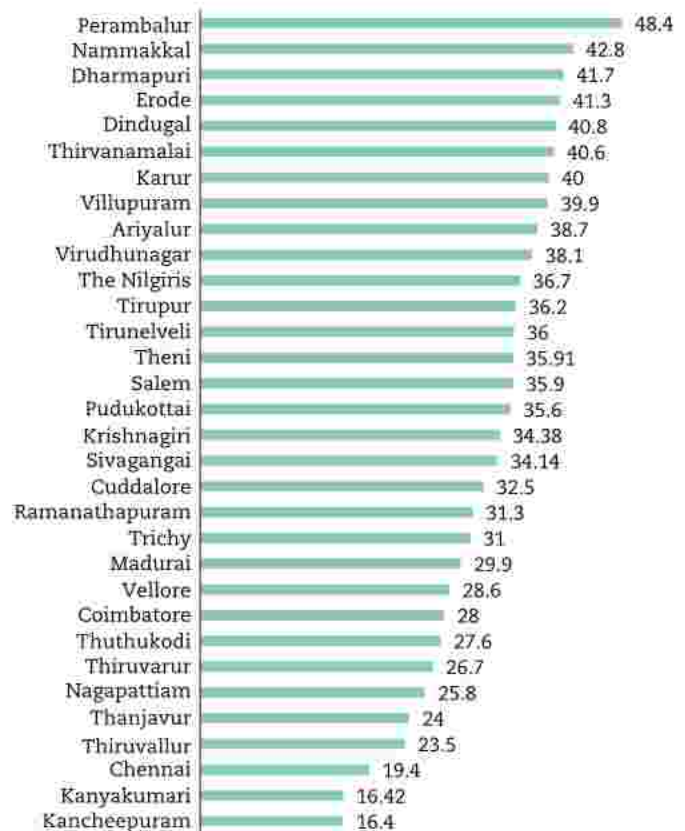
While the female workforce participation rate declined marginally at the all-India level between the 2001 and 2011 censuses (from 25.6 to 25.5), Tamil Nadu has witnessed a slight increase, from 31.5 to 31.8 during this period. Figure 6.13 on female workforce participation rate across the districts in the state reveals that Perambalur had the highest percentage in the labour market, while both Kancheepuram and Kanyakumari had low workforce participation rate. The WFPR may not be reflective of the lower status of women. Many studies indicate that when family income goes up to a certain extent, women prefer leisure to work and withdraw from the labour market. A U-shaped relationship has been noticed in several studies on economic development and women's economic activity. (Goldin, 1994; Tansel, 2002; Fatima and Sultana, 2009; Kottis, 1990). Female labour force participation is noticed to decline initially with economic development, and then form a plateau before rising again, giving it the U-shape. This has been argued as being reflective of structural shifts in the economy, changing influence of income and

substitution effects, and a increasing education levels of women in the population (Goldin, 1994).

Analysing National Sample Survey (NSS) data for 1993-94, Das and Desai (2003) find that educated women in India are less likely to be employed, which is attributed to a lack of employment opportunities rather than social norms restricting their movement. Klasen and Pieters (2012) argue that women with low-levels of education are forced to work in order to contribute towards household income; whereas women with very high levels of education are attracted towards the labour market due to high wages. Based on ILO's research, explanations include increasing educational enrolment, improvement in earnings of male workers that discourages women's economic participation, and the lack of employment opportunities at certain level of skills and qualifications discouraging women to seek work. (ILO, 2014)

Figure 6.13

Female WPR



Source: Census of India, 2011.

Occupational structure of female work participation indicates that a greater share of women workers are still engaged in primary sector in India. Indian women

workers are heavily concentrated in this low productive work. Globalisation had and continues to have different impacts on men and women (Basu, 1995). The following section deals with the gender differences in wages taking agricultural wages as a proxy.

### Average Female Agricultural Wages

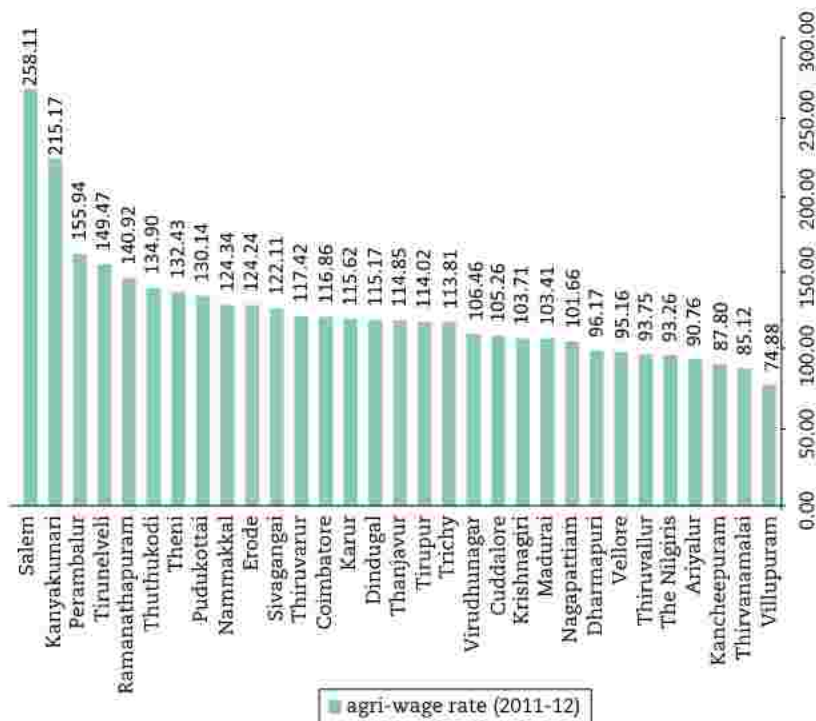
Most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, but a significant portion of their work has not been documented or accounted for in official statistics. Since there are strong gender barriers in India for women to access jobs in the formal sector, the informal sector is particularly important for them as a means of employment. There are estimates that over 90 per cent of the working women are involved in the informal sector. Bulk of the women are employed in the agricultural sector, which has in fact witnessed a growing feminisation of employment in India. Other informal jobs include self-employment of various kinds, particularly vending, domestic help, small traders or artisanal work. Clearly, most of these jobs are unskilled and low paying, and do not provide social security benefits to the worker. Tamil Nadu, however, has instituted a range of schemes addressed at marginalised women as highlighted in the chapter on social security.

Apart from gender-based segmentation across sectors, segmentation has been observed even within sectors and within same jobs. Considering levels and male-female differences in agricultural wage rates in the State, Salem and Kanyakumari have the highest average female agricultural wage of ₹258.11 and ₹215.17 respectively. The higher wage rate in these two districts can be attributed to the availability of non-farm employment, which offers a decent alternative. Villupuram has the lowest average agricultural wage rate of ₹74.88. This has been presented in Figure 6.14.

Proponents of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme believe that the wages provided ensures an alternative source of income, raising the reservation wage (the fall-back position if a bargain is not struck) of all workers and implicitly offering them better bargaining power. This must be seen as a positive development, as the Indian labour market, due to inequitable social and power dynamics, has suppressed wages far below the competitive wages for the rural labour force.

It will also be worthwhile to study the inter-district wage differentials between male and female agricultural wages as presented in Table 6.4. It was found that in almost all districts, there were variations

Figure 6.14  
Agri-Wage Rate (2011-12)





in wage rates, with the male agricultural wage being higher. The maximum wage differentials were noted in Kanyakumari district with ₹347.79. Minimum wage differentials were noted in Salem, which incidentally has the highest female agricultural wage rate.

**Table 6.4**  
**Male and Female Agricultural Wage Rates**

Districts	Male Agricultural Wage rate	Female Agricultural Wage rate	Differential in wages (male wages- female wages)
Salem	305.05	258.11	46.95
Ramanathapuram	198.71	140.92	57.79
Karur	199.94	115.62	84.32
Dindugal	204.97	115.17	89.80
Vellore	187.90	95.16	92.74
Thiruvallur	189.13	93.75	95.38
Kancheepuram	188.54	87.80	100.74
The Nilgiris	197.75	93.26	104.48
Perambalur	263.49	155.94	107.55
Thuthukodi	248.36	134.90	113.46
Nammakkal	245.18	124.34	120.84
Trichy	247.36	113.81	133.55
Cuddalore	238.93	105.26	133.67
Tirupur	248.36	114.02	134.34
Thanjavur	251.79	114.85	136.94
Virudhunagar	244.23	106.46	137.77
Thiruvarur	260.94	117.42	143.52
Madurai	247.33	103.41	143.92
Dharmapuri	244.58	96.17	148.40
Villupuram	230.07	74.88	155.19
Erode	283.65	124.24	159.41
Nagapattiam	262.08	101.66	160.42
Theni	307.44	132.43	175.01
Krishnagiri	280.61	103.71	176.90
Thirvanamalai	267.85	85.12	182.73
Pudukottai	315.57	130.14	185.43
Tirunelveli	340.06	149.47	190.59
Coimbatore	324.24	116.86	207.38
Ariyalur	328.68	90.76	237.92
Sivagangai	464.86	122.11	342.75
Kanyakumari	562.96	215.17	347.79

Source: Season and crop report of agriculture department, 2011-12.

Only six districts have less than ₹100 wage differential between the male and female agricultural wage rate, indicating that wage parity in the agricultural sector

is yet to be achieved. In addition to farm employment, non-farm employment opportunities are also available, including self-employment that is encouraged by the Women Development Corporation, Pudhu Vazhu Project etc., through the SHG (self-help group) concept.

### Women and Political Participation

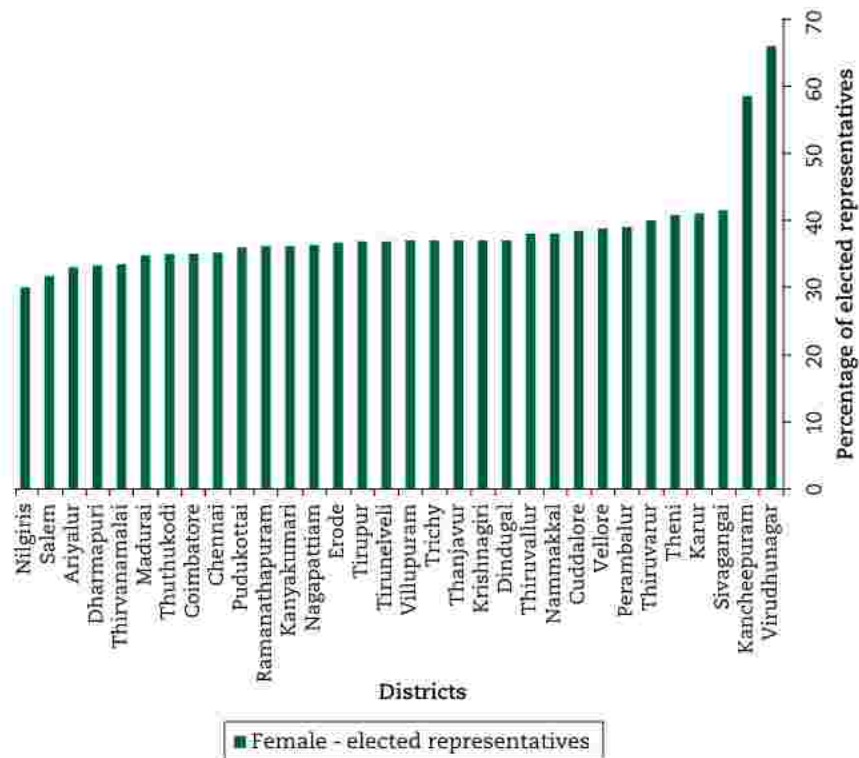
Political equality regardless of birth, sex, colour, etc., is one of the basic premise of democracy. Political equality includes not only equal right to franchise, but also more importantly, the right to access institutionalised centres of power. Thus, political participation of women means not only using the right to vote, but also power sharing, co-decision-making and co-policymaking at all levels. The active participation of women in political sphere is integral to their empowerment. Women's political empowerment has three fundamental and non-negotiable principles: (a) the equality between women and men; (b) women's right to complete development of their potential; and (c) women's right to self-representation and self-determination.

Political empowerment on a standard basis is assessed by the number of female elected representatives. Although there are reservations for women as per the 33 per cent seats under reserved category in the State, only in some *panchayats*, women exert considerable influence and are able to exercise their powers. The mere presence of women can initiate change, but cannot ensure that priorities set by patriarchal frameworks are transformed. Redefining of the democratic space of the *panchayats* also requires policy changes by way of defining a focus and creating operational guidelines to prioritise and support this outcome. Social indicators of gender equality are matters of concern today, and engagement of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) on strategic gender issues cannot be left to chance. Any development that is bereft of equality and justice loses its meaning. The district-wise female elected representatives in the *panchayats* is presented in Figure 6.15. The lowest count is in Nilgiris and the highest number of elected representatives is in Virudhunagar district.

Women are moving into leadership positions in both reserved and unreserved seats and many perceive positive outcomes due to being in the position of a *panchayat* member, including increased self-confidence and improved status in the family and community. But women often face number of barriers, such as low education attainment, poor preparatory training, high household work burden and negative attitude faced by them while holding public office, that constrain their

Figure 6.15

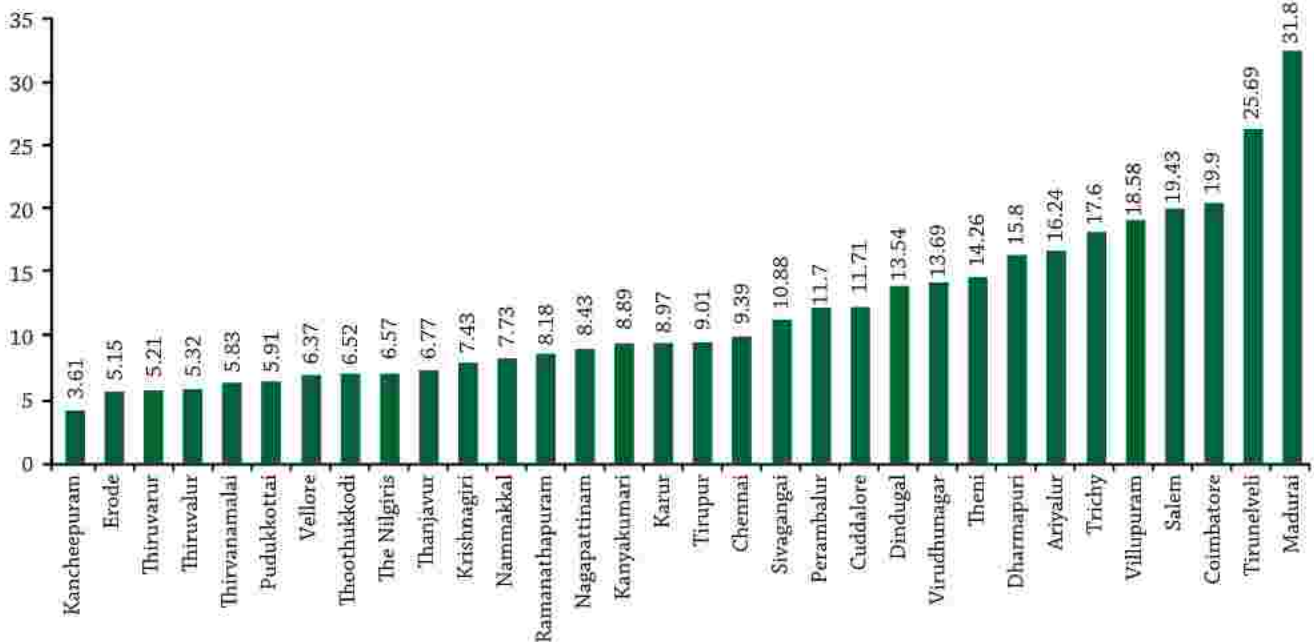
District-Level Female Elected Representatives



Source: Data provided by State Planning Commission.

Figure 6.16

Rate of Crimes Against Women, 2011



Source: Crime Records Bureau, 2011.

ability to function effectively or which makes them unlikely to re-contest. However, Panchayats' mandate on development concerns like water, sanitation, transportation and eligibility for social schemes is all important for meeting a number of women's practical needs.

In the previous section, we were able to assess the economic and political aspects in the empowerment of women. However, empowerment is constrained by the safety and security in work and public places too. It is essential to take into account the conditions of women's safety and security.

### Safety and Security of Women

Tamil Nadu is the first Indian State to set up "all women police stations" to deal with crimes against women. After the infamous rape and death incident in Delhi in 2012, the Tamil Nadu government unveiled a 13-point action plan in 2013, which includes installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) in all public buildings and booking offenders under the Goondas Act of 1982 that gives non-bailable detention up to one year. The Acts under which cases are filed for protection of women include Indecent Representation of Women Act, Child Marriage Restraint Act, Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women (Amended) Act 2002, Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Sexual Harassment of Women Act 2000, and Dowry Prohibition Act. However, there are variations across districts in the crimes reported against women.

Analysis of district-wise crimes against women data maintained by the police department reveals that the highest incidence of crimes committed against women occurred in Chennai City (not marked separately) (Figure 6.16). Most cases reported in the city were against sexual harassment. Kidnapping and molestation was found to be highest in Villupuram.

The State as a whole has recorded highest crime incidence under cruelty by husband and his relatives. However, when one looks at the data of reporting, it should be understood in the larger context of gender relations, which socialises women to accept such treatment meted out by relatives, particularly husbands, in silence. In other words, reporting does not quite correspond to the actual extent of violence against women and may be indicative of the awareness and ability of women to seek judicial action against the same. The following discussion on domestic violence substantiates the argument to a large extent.

Domestic violence is not just a violation of the human rights of women, but has significant economic costs. These include the loss of women's labour hours, as well as an increased need for healthcare investments at both the household and societal levels. Further, a growing body of research points to both short- and long-term detrimental effects of domestic violence on the health and welfare of women and their children (Garcia-Moreno *et al.*, 2006; Hindin, Kishor, and Ansara, 2007; Kishor and Johnson 2006; 2004). In addition to other costs, experiencing and living with the constant threat of domestic violence is a source of disempowerment for women.

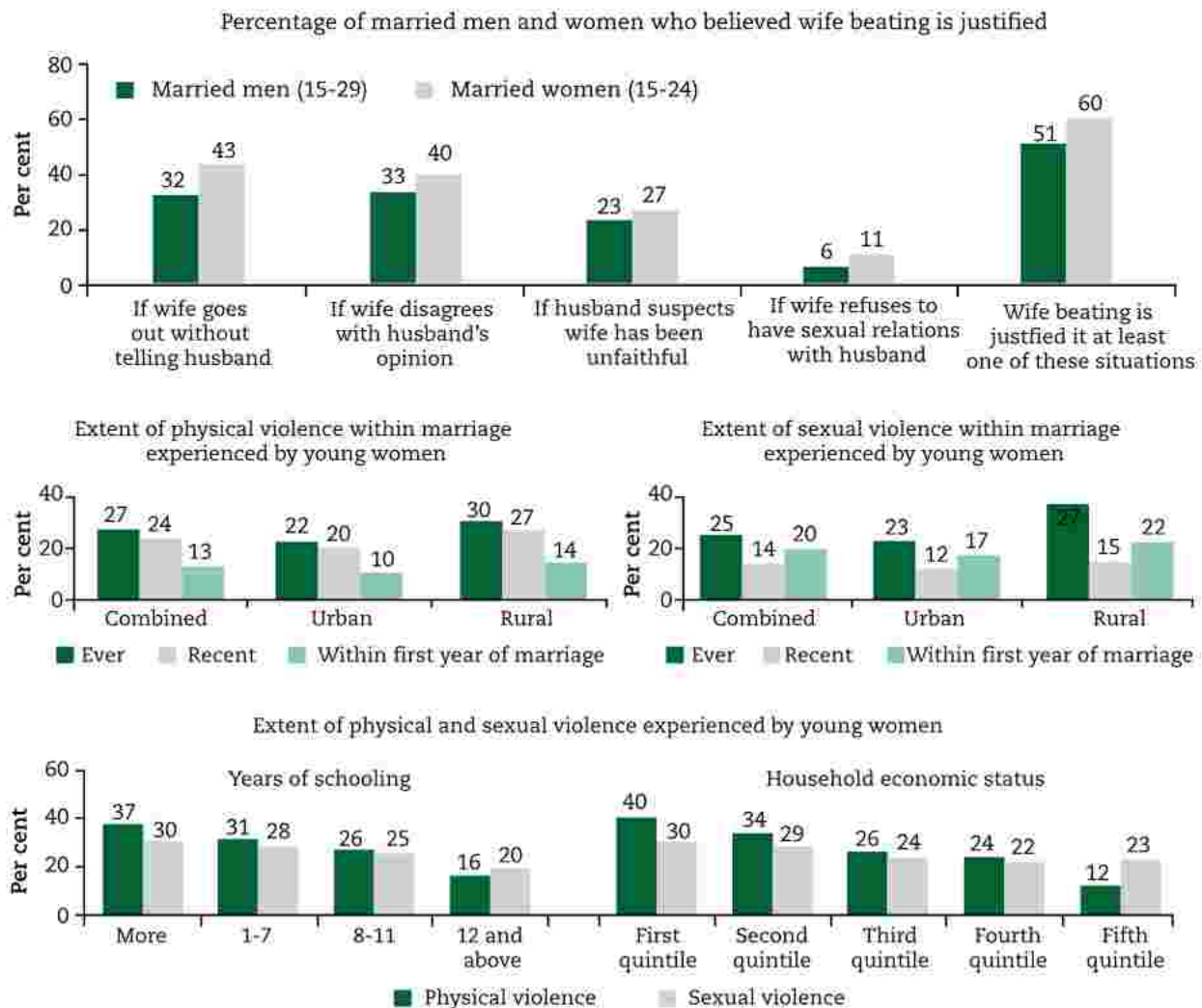
Surprisingly, as Figure 6.17 reveals, women who experienced domestic violence have been socialised to believe that their acts or lack of appropriate responses have warranted the act of violence. Population Council's recent report on "Violence within marriage among young people in Tamil Nadu" reinforces the observations made by other studies in the past. The majority believe that wife beating is justified; and 34 per cent of men admitted to have beaten their wives.

As a part of a nation-wide survey, a sub-national study in Tamil Nadu, was put together with responses from 7,996 young men and women, including 1,322 married men and 2,007 married women. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-III done in 2005-06 reported that 35 per cent of women in the country had experienced physical or sexual violence. It also pegged Tamil Nadu in the top slot with States that have 40 per cent or higher prevalence of spousal physical/sexual violence, along with Tripura, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh (UP), West Bengal, and Assam.

As shown in Figure 6.18, a substantial share of women respondents felt justified in being at the receiving end of violence. The extent of physical and sexual violence was quite high and more so in the rural areas. It can also be observed that education levels of women did not have much impact on the incidence of domestic violence and in fact, in the case of educated women, sexual violence dominated. The State has enacted laws for seeking redressal in case of domestic violence and provides more rights to women to curb the issue. Further, it was found that many of the victims of domestic violence have either refused to name the perpetrator of the assault or attributed the injuries to other reasons (Daga *et al.*, 1999).

As it is a phenomenon deep rooted in widely accepted socio-cultural practices with both the perpetrators as well as victims taking it as 'normal', there is a strong

**Figure 6.17**  
**Domestic Violence in Tamil Nadu**

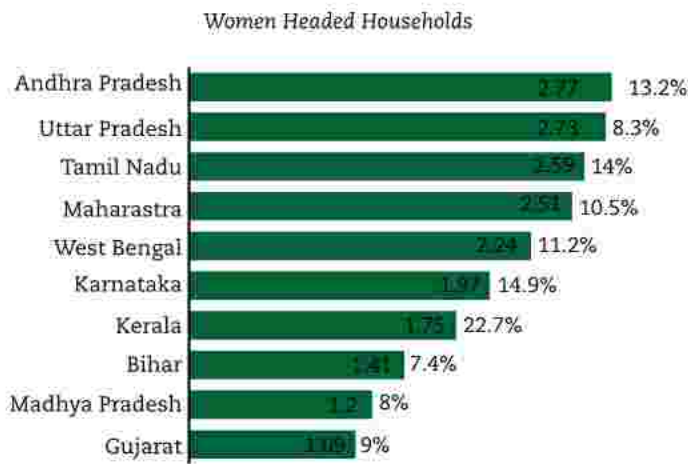


Source: Population Council of India.

need for major public and civil society interventions to alter such perceptions. In order to address the problem, social norms and values towards gender roles should be transformed to facilitate the implementation of appropriate and meaningful responses to domestic violence and ultimately to prevent the occurrence altogether (Strategic Management Group analysed multiple government sources and surveys to generate the Well Being Index and Female Security Index for India 2013). It was found that two clusters—Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh; and Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh topped the Well Being Index. On the Female Security Index (FSI), Hyderabad

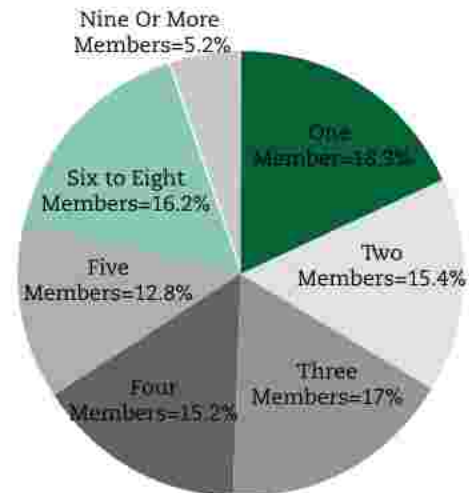
and Delhi were the lowest-ranked amongst the urban agglomerations (UAs) while Chennai and Bengaluru were at the top. Southern States, Gujarat and most north-eastern States emerged as the most secure for women while Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi and Rajasthan had the lowest FSI ranking. Social parameters consisting of gender ratio in the 0-6 year age group, dowry deaths, rape and other crimes against women were used to create the FSI ranking of all the districts. Tata Strategic used FSI to measure the safety of women in Indian society. Tamil Nadu has been listed among the better States with greater security for women.

**Figure 6.18**  
**Women Headed Households**



Note: Figures in million; Percentage figures=As % of all households.  
Source: Census 2011.

Women Headed Households in India



Source: Census 2011.

### Female-Headed Households

It is for the first time in the history of Census that a separate category, Female-headed Households has been included and data has been collected accordingly. She is generally the person who bears the chief responsibility for maintenance of the household and takes decisions on behalf of the households as per Census of India Guidelines, 2011.

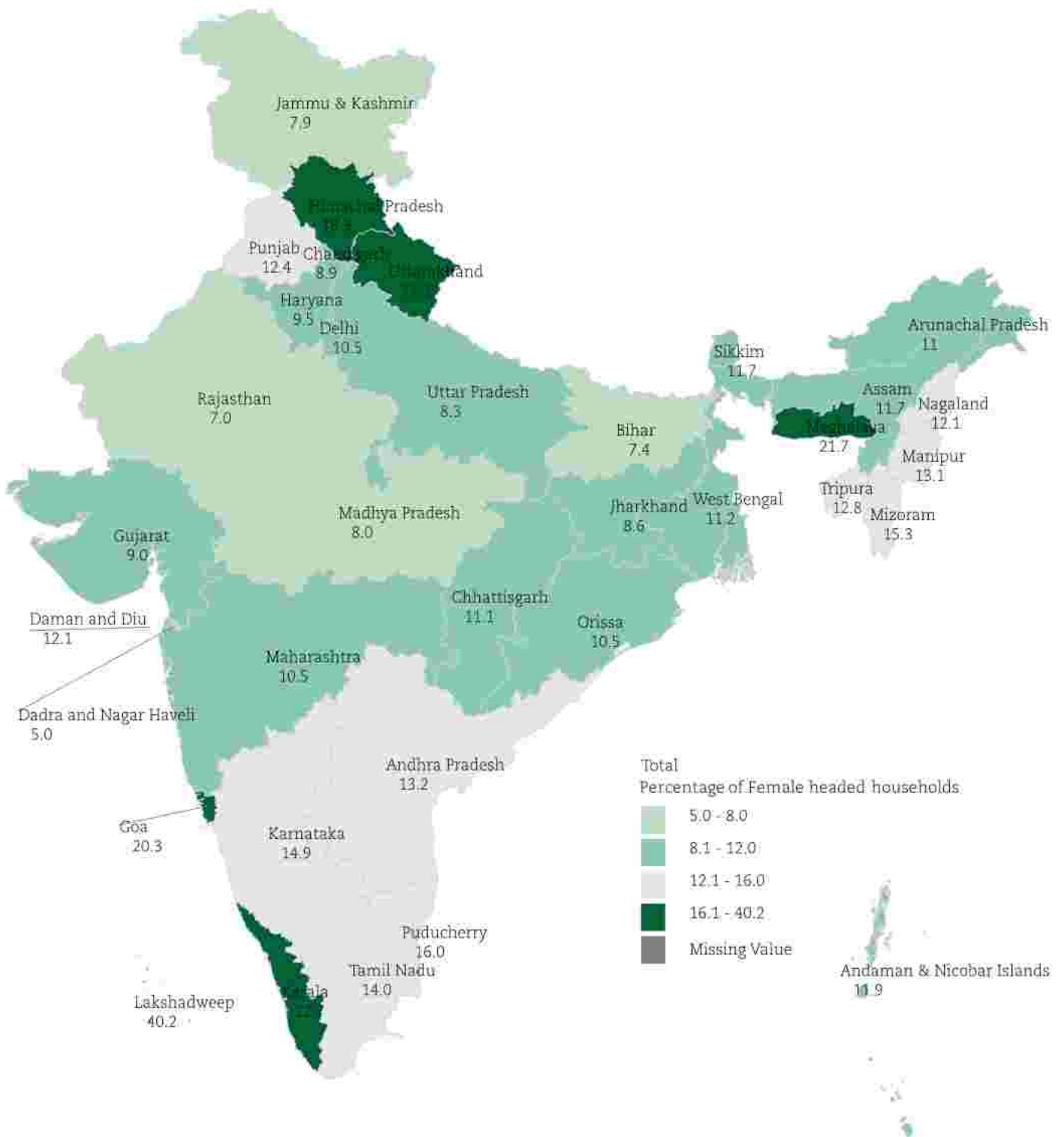
- The broad range of domestic situations typically characterized by the absence of a resident male head, viz., widowhood, divorce, separation and desertion.
- Migration of male members for long periods.
- Loss of economic function by resident males due to severe unemployment, disability, illness and male reluctance to accept jobs seen as status reducing, etc.
- Households with no mature sons.
- Sons residing in independent nuclear units.

The female-headed households distributed across the States are presented in Figure 6.19

Figure 6.18 indicates that 14 per cent of the total households are female headed in Tamil Nadu. It is also evident from the graph that in absolute numbers, the State nearly has 2.59 million female-headed households, the third largest in the country. In terms of percentage to total households also, Tamil Nadu has 14 per cent households and stands third, next to Kerala and Karnataka. A study of the family size in a woman-headed household indicates that nearly 18.3 per cent of these are single-member households. This has a larger social policy implication since the State has to ensure a safety net for social services of these single women.

The female-headed households' distribution across the country is presented as per 2011 census in Figure 6.19. The percentage of women-headed households is more in the southern districts of India. Central and northern parts of the State have lower percentage of female-headed households. There are about 27 million female-headed households in the country. They constitute 10.9 per cent of the total households present. In seven major States, the proportion of single-member female-headed HH (households) is more than 20 per cent. Chhattisgarh (29.9%), Madhya Pradesh (24.9%), and Tamil Nadu (26.1%), Andhra Pradesh (27.1%), Maharashtra (22.2%), Odisha (22.1%) and Gujarat (20.4%)

**Figure 6.19**  
**India: Female Headed Households (Total), 2011**



Source: Census of India.

A larger proportion of female-headed households live in 'no exclusive room' and in 'one room' dwelling units compared to male-headed households. The size of houses in case of female-headed households tend to be smaller than the male-headed ones. The proportion of households possessing different assets are lower in case of female-headed HHs in relation to the male-headed HHs.

The analysis of asset position of the female-headed households across the country suggests that there were large number of female-headed households with no assets. A matter of particular concern is vulnerability of the SC (Scheduled Caste) and ST (Scheduled Tribe) population that are female headed and are without any particular assets to support them during economic crisis. Such multiple deprivations need to be considered for appropriate policy interventions.

Wealth inequality is an integral aspect of economic inequality at a given point in time, evident across generations. Disparities in wealth can also translate into the same in economic security. For a substantial portion of the Indian population that is dependent on agriculture, land is the major source of livelihood. Inequalities in quantity and fertility of the land owned are a significant determinant of economic inequality among households.

Figure 6.20 indicates that ST female-headed households that have no assets are more in number in the central and western parts of India. In States like Tamil Nadu, the number of female-headed households without any assets is lower. Even among the SC and ST population, States like Tamil Nadu show a better status of women.

The all-India average of women-headed households that availed banking services was 58.4 per cent. Figure 6.21 indicates that the Tamil Nadu average was considerably lower than the all-India average. The average access percentage was 40.74 and it was the 6<sup>th</sup> State from the bottom, thus giving scope for improvement. It is essential for the State to ensure that the households' access to credit for this group and bank linkages are enhanced through the SHG movement and other welfare schemes.

The discussion so far has centred on the differential access of women in the State. It would now be worthwhile to look at some of the policies and programmes implemented by the State.

#### *Livelihood Interventions: MahalirThittam and PudhuVazhvuThittam*

Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW) implements Mahalir Thittam, a scheme for empowerment of women. TNCDW became the focal point for women empowerment activities in the State due to its key role in spearheading the SHG movement therein. Mahalir Thittam is implemented in partnership with NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and community-based organisations, such as Panchayat Level Federations (PLFs), which are affiliated to TNCDW and who extend support in the formation of SHGs, capacity-building activities and in guiding and monitoring. As on February 2012, there were 5.35 lakh SHGs functioning with 82.85 lakh members. The total savings was ₹3,225 crore. The number of SHGs that were credit linked was 476,854 and total credit worked out to ₹15,015 crore.

The Pudhu Vazhvu Thittam has been implemented in 16 districts with a total outlay of ₹717 crore, benefitting 5.8 lakh households for a period up to September 2014. With additional financing, the project expanded its operations to 10 more districts for a period of 3 years until September 2014 with an outlay of ₹950 crore benefitting 3.8 lakh target poor households. The project design is based on a CDD (community-driven development) approach to empower poorest of the poor through promotion of strong CBOs (community-based organisations), thereby providing a voice for rural poor, especially women in community decision-making and in shaping developmental endeavours. Both the above programmes contribute to improved livelihood security and access to credit for women.

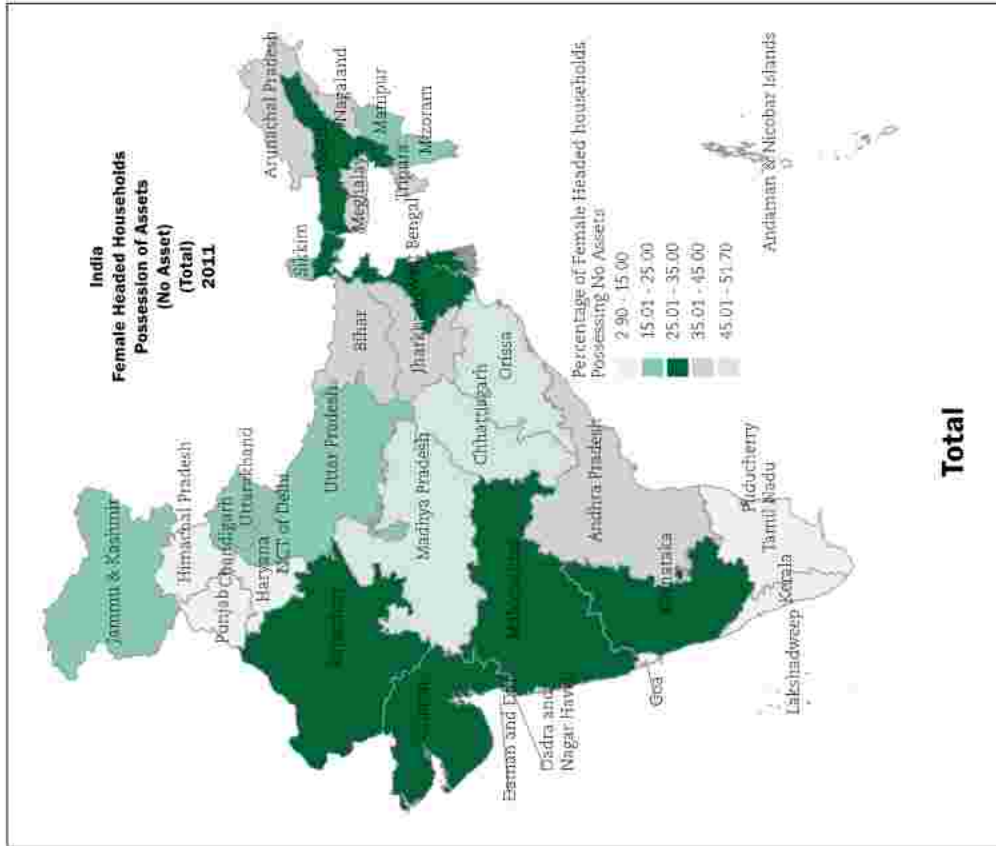
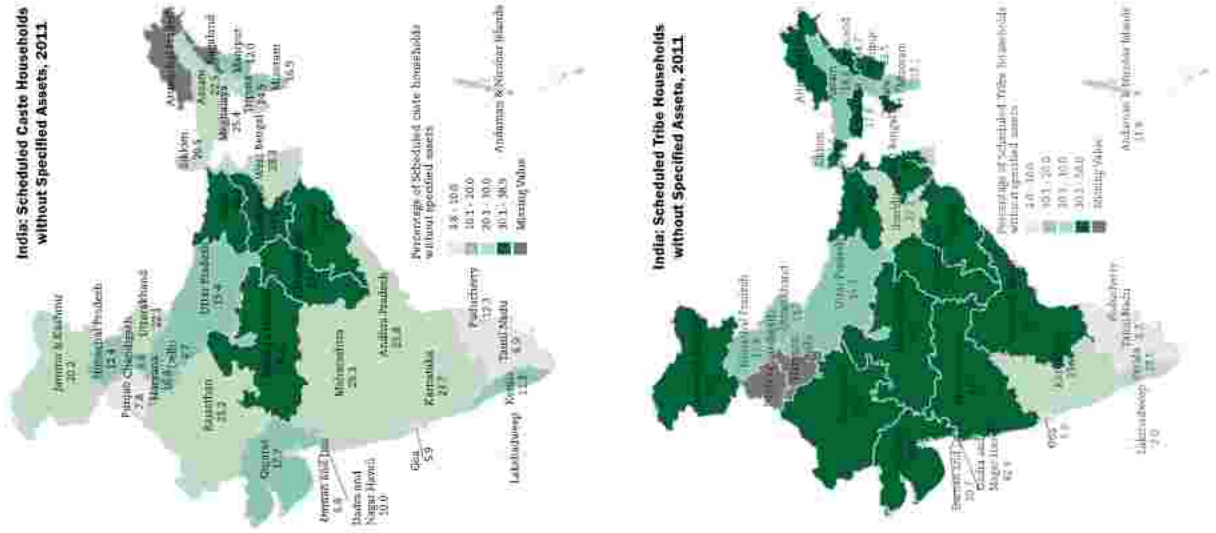
#### *Marriage Assistance Schemes and Girl Child Protection Schemes*

The scheme of giving 4 grams of 22 carat gold coin (1/2 sovereign) for making Thirumangalyam, in addition to the financial assistance, through existing marriage assistance schemes to mitigate the hardships faced by these below poverty line parents to get their educated daughters married. This has been implemented since 2011-12 and has been discussed in detail in the chapter on social security. The financial assistance has been increased to ₹50,000 for graduates/diploma holders.

#### *Girl Child Protection Scheme*

Tamil Nadu has enhanced the monetary incentive under the Girl Child Protection Scheme from ₹22,200 to ₹50,000, in the case of the parents undergoing

Figure 6.20  
Possession of Assets

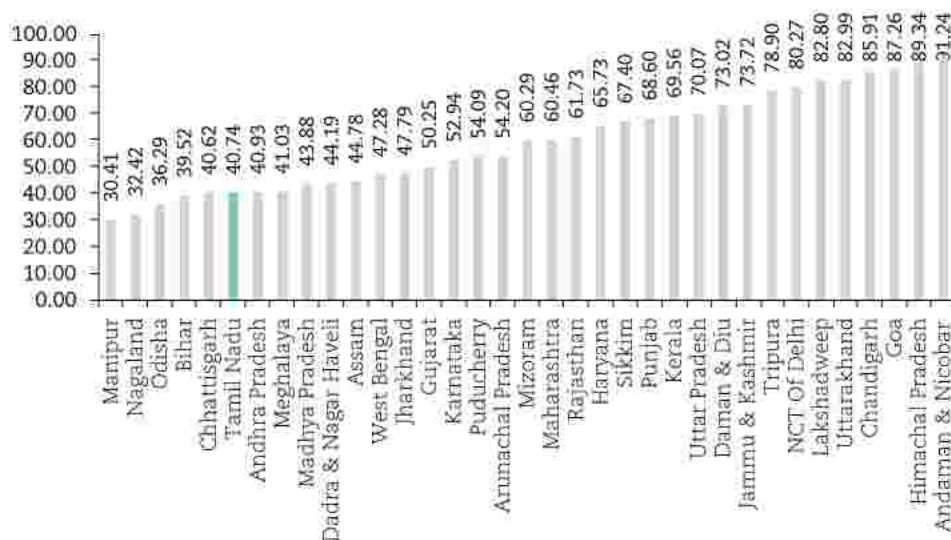


Source: Census of India.



Figure 6.21

## Availing Banking Services in India (Female-headed HH in %)



Source: Census of India.

family planning surgery after the first girl child; and from ₹15,200 to ₹25,000 for each child in the event of the parents undergoing family planning surgery after the second girl child.

#### Legislative Provisions for Social Security

The legislative provisions for social security have been enacted to provide sufficient security for the vulnerable sections of women and children. Some of the best practices adopted by the State are:

- Stakeholders training.
- Training of Medical Officers (MOs).
- Good linkage with the judiciary.
- Counseling under Section 14 ordered by the courts.
- Issue of interim orders.
- Issue of handbooks published by Lawyers Collective to all the Protection Officers (POs), Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) and 100 Magistrates.
- Provision of bare act in local language to all the POs.
- Ensure stock of Printed DIR Application-12, Form III Affidavit in green sheet and supplied to all the POs.

#### Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

This Act formally recognises a woman's right to live in a violence-free home. The issues are low awareness, indifferent attitude of police personnel and ineffective free legal aid. This may be addressed through application of the act in simplified manner, training the stakeholders and providing free legal aid with competent and experienced gender-sensitive judges.

#### Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

This law is framed to combat the evils of dowry. The issues are misinformation about the act, lack of gender perspective and low level of legal literacy. Village level women's committees are to be set up exclusively for dealing with these cases. Members of the committees are to be trained by experts and linked up with police stations and protection officers within the district. The committees are to provide support to the women in terms of mobility and child care, receive complaints, and assist them while filing the complaints.

#### Pre-conception (PC) and Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (Prohibition of Sex Selection Act) Act, 1994 (PC and PNDT Act)

Even though the Act has been implemented effectively, it has to be thoroughly reviewed in order to evaluate its progress and monitoring mechanism. Frequent inspections without prior notice are to be conducted in the districts with the worst child sex ratio.

### Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956

Rehabilitation homes have been established with enabling environments, coupled with facilities for alternative livelihood training.

### Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place

This Act has not been enacted, but the bill has been tabled in the Parliament. Action has been taken based on the Supreme Court Guidelines.

### Tamil Nadu Women Harassment Act, 2000

The target population is not adequately aware of the act and its provisions. Provisions of the act should be disseminated through various communication strategies to all schools and colleges, orphanages, shelter homes, work places, and among all stakeholders.

Tamil Nadu is one of the States that have enacted various statutory provisions for the protection of women. Various capacity-building initiatives and State-level sensitisation workshops for stakeholders such as women, police officials, lawyers, judges, etc., have been held. In the Twelfth Plan, the Department of Social Work proposes to create awareness about legal rights and remedies. Formation of village level women's committees to deal with legal issues, training of PLFs and preparation of manual for training of federation members is being proposed in coordination with TNCDW. Many of the central Acts (the first six) have a State-based implementation unit and the POs and Social Welfare department closely monitor the fallout.

### Tamil Nadu Hostels and Homes for Women and Children (Regulation) Act, 2014

The Act mandates compulsory registration and licensing of all hostels and homes with the District Collector and also follow certain basic guidelines prescribed by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

### Way Forward and Areas for Policy Intervention

- Declining child sex ratios necessitates that the specialised girl child protection schemes be extended across all districts and throughout the State. Various programmes to check foeticide and female infanticide were devised

with focus on ante-natal care including special surveillance to check foeticide which won a national award for excellence in public administration. Such interventions can be replicated and scaled up across the State to increase Sex ratio.

- Female literacy requires some attention as gender gap in literacy needs to be reduced. Literacy circles in MGNREGA sites, etc., could be a good option
- Domestic violence figures indicate scope for improvement and need to use SHGs and apply peer pressure for local community-based interventions. There is a need for improving the projection of the status of women in media and for adopting a rights-based approach to safety and security.
- Social security net needs to be improved for female-headed households who are responsible for children as well as geriatric population as they are the most vulnerable.

The process of gender budgeting that has been under planning process is yet to take off in the State. The classification of all programmes for women under the gamut of TNCDW reduces the reach of different sectoral schemes. There are several departments that do not have specific programmes to address the specific development requirements of women. There is a need for specialised gender cells that can conduct research, document and draw the attention of policy planners to the emerging needs and issues of women.

Working towards development that also encompasses women, it is necessary to focus on women in the context of policies and various developmental programmes. This is a paradigm shift from the welfare approach that relegates women to become mere recipients of various beneficiary projects, often under the assumption that some of the benefits would eventually trickle down to them. The patriarchal structures aid the prevalence and perpetuation of gender inequalities, despite the constitutional provision of equality. Equality refers to equal opportunities in terms of access to sources of livelihood, health, and education, as well as to social, economic and political participation without discrimination. It is expected that the State would continue and gear up its policies to tackle the issues of women and promote an engendered development.

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