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GENDER INEQUALITY IN DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS: AN ANALYSIS OF PANIPAT, HARYANA, INDIA

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Abstract- This study examines gender inequality in demographic and employment trends in Panipat, India, using census data from 1951 to 2011. The analysis reveals persistent gender disparities, with the male population consistently outnumbering females across all census years. The sex ratio (females per 1,000 males) declined from 866 in 1951 to a low of 829 in 2001, before slightly improving to 864 in 2011, indicating ongoing socio-cultural and economic challenges such as male preference, female infanticide, and male-dominated migration. Population growth in Panipat has been significant, with the highest decadal increase (38.58%) observed between 1991 and 2001, driven by industrialization and urbanization. However, this growth has not translated into gender equity, as evidenced by the widening gender gap in larger villages, where socio-economic factors like migration and cultural biases exacerbate disparities. The study also highlights gender inequality in workforce participation, with female employment remaining disproportionately low despite overall growth in workforce numbers. In 2011, females constituted only 15% of main workers in rural areas and 16% in urban areas, while the number of female non-workers increased significantly, particularly in rural regions. This underscores the barriers women face in accessing employment, including social norms, limited education, and fewer job opportunities. The findings emphasize the need for targeted policy interventions, such as skill development programs, employment incentives, and initiatives like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, to promote gender equality in both demographic and economic spheres. Addressing these issues is crucial for achieving a balanced and inclusive socio-economic structure in Panipat.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality remains one of the most pervasive social issues worldwide (Dastidar, 2018), impacting economic growth, social development, and human rights. It refers to the unequal treatment, opportunities, and perceptions of individuals based on their gender, often resulting in disparities across education, employment, political representation, and access to resources. Despite significant progress in recent decades, gender inequality persists in various forms, affecting both women and men, though women and girls are disproportionately impacted (Traylor et al., 2020).

The roots of gender inequality can be traced back to ancient societies, where patriarchal systems established male dominance in political, economic, and social spheres (Zhu & Chang, 2019). Historically, women were often relegated to domestic roles, while men controlled public life, including governance, trade, and education (Carmichael et al., 2014). Religious and cultural norms further reinforced these divisions, embedding gender roles into societal structures (Aboi, 2024). The Industrial Revolution marked a turning point, as women began entering the workforce in larger numbers, particularly in factories and low-paying jobs. However, this shift did not immediately translate into equality, as women were often paid less than men for the same work and excluded from leadership roles (Parker et al., 2022). The 20th century saw significant strides toward gender equality, with movements advocating for women's suffrage, reproductive rights, and equal pay (Sandua, 2023). Despite these advancements, deeply ingrained societal norms and systemic barriers continue to perpetuate gender disparities.

Gender inequality is a multifaceted issue driven by a combination of cultural (Mazzuca et al., 2020), economic, and institutional factors (Alam, 2022). One of the primary causes is the persistence of traditional gender roles, which dictate that men should be breadwinners and women should focus on caregiving and household duties (Kalpazidou Schmidt & Cacace, 2017). These stereotypes limit opportunities for both genders, confining women to lower-paying jobs and discouraging men from pursuing caregiving roles (Lundahl et al., 2024).

Economic factors also play a significant role. In many parts of the world, women have limited access to financial resources (Fletschner & Kenney, 2014), land ownership, and credit, which restricts their ability to start businesses or

invest in education (Eichelberger et al., 2017).

Institutional barriers further exacerbate gender inequality (Griffin, 2019). Laws and policies in some countries still discriminate against women, particularly in areas such as inheritance, marriage, and employment (Merrill et al., 2022). Political underrepresentation is another critical issue, as women remain underrepresented in decision-making roles, limiting their influence on policies that affect their lives (Ashenafi).

Cultural norms and practices, such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and son preference, also contribute to gender inequality (Greene & Stiefvater, 2019; Rose, 2023).

Economic empowerment is another critical solution . Governments and organizations should implement policies that promote equal pay, provide access to credit and financial resources for women, and support women entrepreneurs (O Grada et al., 2015). Expanding social protection programs, such as paid parental leave and affordable childcare, can also help balance caregiving responsibilities and enable women to participate more fully in the workforce (Benschop & Van den Brink, 2018).

Legal and policy reforms are essential to dismantle institutional barriers to gender equality . Governments must enact and enforce laws that protect women's rights, including those related to inheritance, property ownership, and workplace discrimination (Kalev & Deutsch, 2018). Quotas and affirmative action policies can help increase women's representation in politics and leadership roles, ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes (Flynn et al., 2017).

The findings of this study aim to provide insights into interpreting the status of gender inequality in Panipat while highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these disparities. By analysing demographic trends and workforce participation, this research underscores the importance of policy measures and societal changes to promote gender equity and inclusive development in the region.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study area:

The current study is focused on Panipat district, one of Haryana’s most historically and economically significant cities, which is located in the central-eastern part of the state (Figure 1). It is situated at a distance of approximately 90 kilometers north of

Delhi and is well connected by major highways, railways, and industrial corridors. The city has gained historical prominence due to the three significant battles fought here in 1526, 1556, and 1761, which shaped the destiny of the Indian subcontinent.

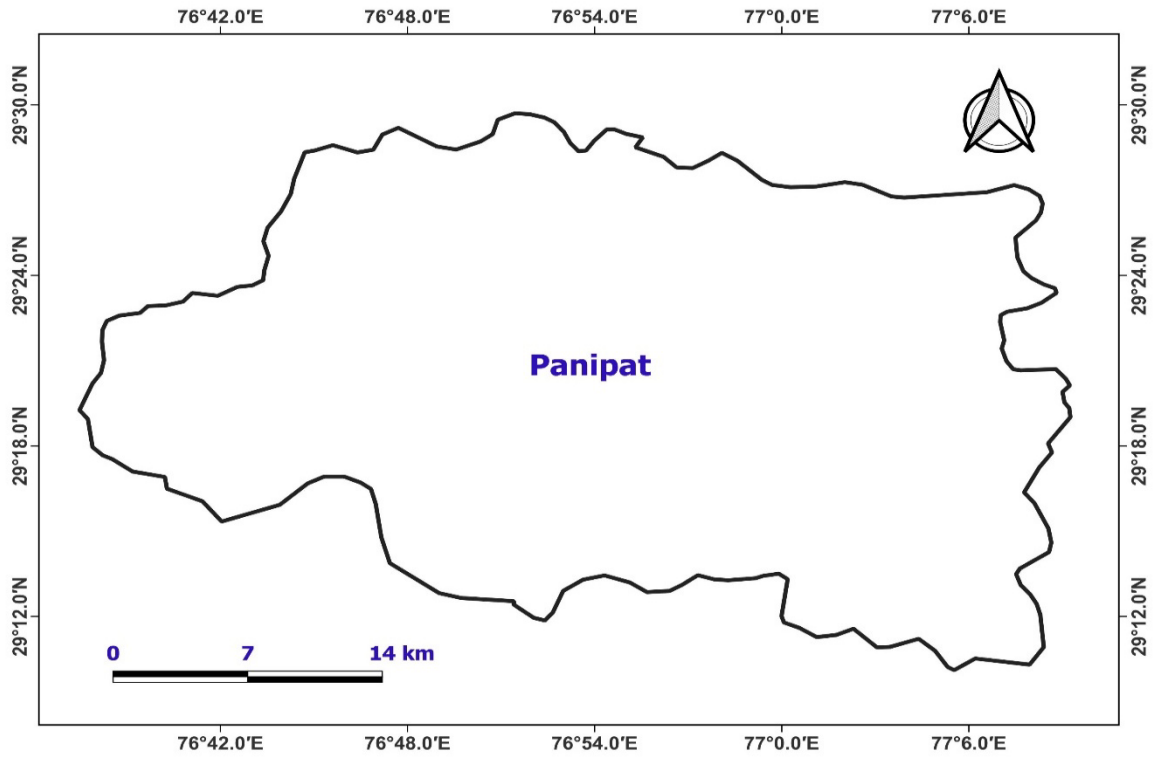

Figure 1: Map of the study site

2.2 Geographical and Climatic Features of Panipat:

Panipat is geographically positioned between latitude 29.39° N and longitude 76.97° E, covering an area of approximately 1,268 square kilometers. The region is largely a flat alluvial plain, characteristic of the larger Indo-Gangetic Plain, making it highly suitable for agriculture and urban settlements.

2.3 Methodology:

By studying the demographic patterns of Panipat, researchers can gain insights into urban expansion, labor mobility, and economic transformations within Haryana, making it a critical area for academic and policy-oriented research. This research relies entirely on secondary data sourced from various census reports published by the Government of India.

Moreover, this study aims to analyze gender inequality in the demographic status of Panipat using secondary data from the Census of India. The research follows a quantitative, descriptive, and analytical approach, relying on statistical indicators to assess

disparities between men and women in key demographic aspects.

The data is sourced from the Census of India (2011, 2001, and previous reports where relevant) and supplemented by reports from national statistical agencies. The study examines demographic indicators such as sex ratio, literacy rates, workforce participation, health parameters, and household decision-making patterns. Figure 2 & 3 has presented the process and evolution steps of this study.

Figure 2: Process of data extraction

The research follows a comparative and trend analysis approach, evaluating historical data to track changes in gender disparity over time. Descriptive statistics, including percentage distributions, ratios, and graphical representations, are employed to highlight patterns of inequality.

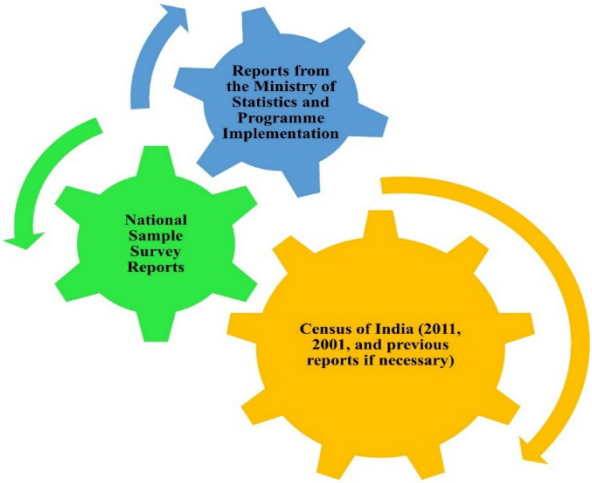

Figure 3: Process of data interpretation and evolution

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender inequality in demographic status is a critical aspect of socio-economic development, often reflected in population statistics such as sex ratio, population growth, and gender-based disparities. Table 1 provides demographic information

for Panipat across various census years, including total population, male and female population, and decadal variation in population. This tabulated data was compiled from Census India (https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/data/census-tables). The compiled data shows the decadal population variation in Panipat from 1951 to 2011, including the number of persons, males, and females. However, the Indian census tabulation on a decadal basis is available from the year 1901 to 2011, but for the Panipat district, no one value is available from 1901 to 1941. Therefore, this analysis examines gender inequality in Panipat's demographic trends across different census years (1951–2011).

Violence and gender inequality are deeply interconnected, forming a complex cycle where each perpetuates and reinforces the other . The dataset provides information on Panipat's population over seven census years, highlighting overall growth and gender distribution. The total population has consistently increased, but the trends in male and female population growth and sex ratios indicate gender disparities.

3.1 Population Growth Over Census Years

From 1951 to 2011, Panipat's population expanded significantly:

- **1951:** 238,834
- **1961:** 298,232 (Increase: 59,398)
- **1971:** 382,445 (Increase: 84,213)
- **1981:** 507,164 (Increase: 124,719)
- **1991:** 698,103 (Increase: 190,939)
- **2001:** 967,449 (Increase: 269,346)
- **2011:** 1,205,437 (Increase: 237,988)

The highest decadal growth occurred from 1991 to 2001, with a 38.58% increase, followed by a slightly lower but still significant 24.6% increase from 2001 to 2011. The rapid population rise suggests industrial and economic growth attracting migrants to Panipat.

3.2 Gender Composition and Growth Trends

The gender distribution of the population shows that the male population has consistently outnumbered females. The number of males and females in different census years is:

- **1951:** 127,978 males, 110,856 females
- **1961:** 160,601 males, 137,631 females
- **1971:** 206,550 males, 175,895 females
- **1981:** 274,331 males, 232,833 females
- **1991:** 376,991 males, 321,112 females

- **2001:** 528,860 males, 438,589 females
- **2011:** 646,857 males, 558,580 females

While both male and female populations have increased, the male population has always been higher, contributing to a declining sex ratio.

3.3 Analysis of Gender Inequality through Sex Ratio

The sex ratio (females per 1,000 males) is a critical indicator of gender inequality. The historical trends for Panipat are:

1951: 866, **1961:** 857, **1971:** 852, **1981:** 849, **1991:** 852, **2001:** 829 (Lowest)&**2011:** 864

The sex ratio saw a continuous decline from 1951 to 2001, reaching a low of 829 females per 1,000 males. This suggests gender disparity, possibly due to socio-cultural preferences for male children, female infanticide, migration patterns, and economic factors favoring male workers. However, a slight improvement was recorded in 2011 (864), indicating possible policy interventions or societal shifts.

3.4 Causes of Gender Disparity in Panipat

Several factors may contribute to the persistent gender imbalance:

I. **Preference for Male Children:** Cultural and social biases in India, including Panipat, often lead to a preference for male children, influencing birth rates and survival chances of female infants.

II. **Female Infanticide and Neglect:** Societal pressures and economic constraints sometimes result in lower survival rates for female children.

III. **Migration Trends:** Male-dominated labor migration to industrial hubs like Panipat may skew the male-female ratio.

IV. **Access to Healthcare and Nutrition:** Gender disparities in healthcare and nutrition affect female survival rates, particularly in early childhood.

3.5 Trends in Population Growth and Gender Imbalance

3.5.1 Decadal Growth and Gender Disparity:

The absolute and percentage variations in population across decades indicate rapid urbanization and industrialization in Panipat (Figure 4). However, the gender disparity in population growth remains evident and the male population has grown consistently at a faster rate than the female population. A declining sex ratio,

particularly between 1991 and 2001, suggests worsening gender imbalance during Panipat's peak industrial growth. Moreover, the improvement in the 2011 census may indicate a shift due to policy initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao or better socio-economic awareness.

3.4.2 Sex Ratio and Economic Development Correlation:

Population growth helps to expand the workforce, which can boost economic productivity and creativity when combined with proper resources and infrastructure . Therefore, the lowest sex ratio (829) in 2001 coincides with Panipat's economic expansion, possibly reflecting male labor migration and neglect of female welfare. A marginal recovery to 864 in 2011 suggests policy-driven improvements or demographic stabilization. However, human capital accumulation, which encompasses increases in health, education, and skills, improves the workforce's quality, which boosts productivity, advances technology, and advances the economy as a whole .

3.6 Strengthening Gender Equality Policies

Addressing gender imbalance in Panipat requires a multi-faceted approach that strengthens education, healthcare, legal protections, economic opportunities, and societal awareness.

Finally, continuous awareness campaigns, such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, are vital in reshaping societal attitudes and promoting gender equality at the grassroots level.

Table 1: Demographic Overview in Panipat District

Census Year	**Persons**	**Variation since the preceding census**		**Males**	**Females**
		Absolute	**Percentage**		
1951	2,38,834	N.A	N.A	1,27,978	1,10,856
1961	2,98,232	+59398	+24.87	1,60,601	1,37,631
1971	3,82,445	+84213	+28.24	2,06,550	1,75,895
1981	5,07,164	+124719	+32.61	2,74,331	2,32,833
1991	6,98,103	+190939	+37.65	3,76,991	3,21,112
2001	9,67,449	+269346	+38.58	5,28,860	4,38,589
2011	12,05,437	+237988	+24.60	6,46,857	5,58,580

(Source: Census Table of India)

Note: NA (Not Applicable)

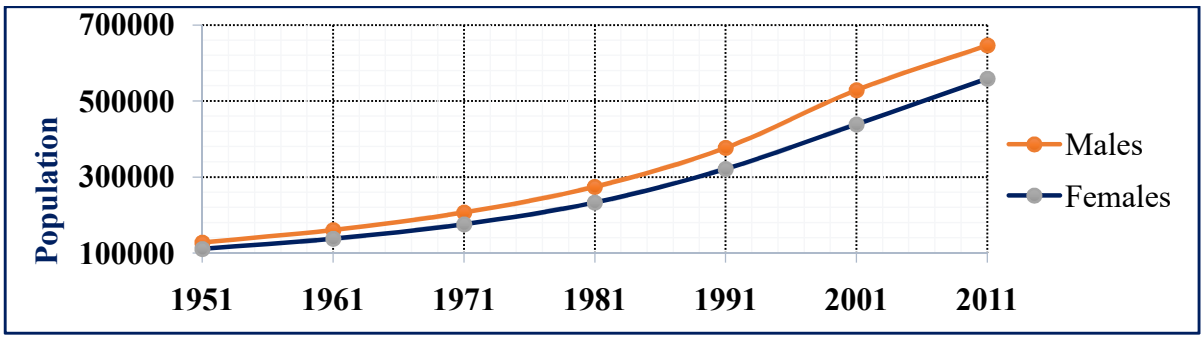

Figure 4: Decadal variation in male-female population since 1951 in Panipat

3.7 Gender Inequality Analysis Based on Rural Population

One of the most pressing issues in modern Indian society is the practice of the dowry system, which has led to the premature deaths of many young women in rural regions as well as in urban region . However, this investigation draws special attention to rural region gender distribution in the current study region; this attention has specifically been drawn to identify the overview of gender inequality (Figure 5). Table 2 is divided into two main sections: Panipat District and Panipat Sub-District.

Each section provides data on the total number of inhabited villages, the total rural population, and a breakdown of villages and populations by size classes. The population is further divided into males and females within each size class.

- **Panipat District**: The total rural population is 650,352, with 349,642 males and 300,710 females. This indicates a higher male population, with a gender ratio of approximately 116 males per 100 females.
- **Panipat Sub-District**: The total rural population is 276,259, with 148,063 males and 128,196 females, showing a similar trend with a gender ratio of about 115 males per 100 females.

3.7.1 Gender Interpretation by Village Size

In villages with less than 200 people (Figure 6), the data shows that both the Panipat District and the Panipat Sub-District have 3 villages each, with a total population of 217 people. The gender distribution in these smaller villages is nearly equal, with 110 males and 107 females in both the district and sub-district.

Figure 7, in villages with a population ranging from 200 to 499 people, the data reveals a noticeable

gender disparity. In the Panipat District, there are 4 villages with a combined population of 1,543 people, consisting of 831 males and 712 females. Similarly, in the Panipat Sub-District, there are 3 villages with a total population of 1,131 people, including 600 males and 531 females. In both cases, males outnumber females, but the disparity is more pronounced in the district compared to the sub-district. The district shows a higher absolute number of males and females, as well as a larger gap between the two genders, with 119 more males than females, whereas the sub-district has 69 more males than females.

In villages with a population ranging from 500 to 999 people, the gender gap becomes more evident as village size increases (Figure 8). In the Panipat District, there are 11 villages with a combined population of 8,048 people, comprising 4,325 males and 3,723 females. Similarly, in the Panipat Sub-District, there are 2 villages with a total population of 1,493 people, including 783 males and 710 females. In both cases, males significantly outnumber females, with the district showing a larger absolute disparity of 602 more males than females, while the sub-district has 73 more males than females.

In villages with a population ranging from 1,000 to 1,999 people, the data reveals a persistent and significant gender disparity, with males continuing to outnumber females (Figure 9). In the Panipat District, there are 38 villages with a combined population of 58,243 people, consisting of 31,221 males and 27,022 females. Similarly, in the Panipat Sub-District, there are 14 villages with a total population of 22,822 people, including 12,347 males and 10,475 females.

The male-to-female ratio remains higher in both the district and sub-district, with the district showing a disparity of 4,199 more males than females, and the sub-district having 1,872 more males than females. The persistent disparity could be attributed to various socio-economic and cultural factors, such as male-biased migration for employment opportunities, differential access to education and healthcare, or societal preferences that favor male children.

Table 2: Village by population size class with gender bifurcation

Area Name	Total number of inhabited villages	Total Rural population			less than 200			
					Number of Villages	Population		
		Persons	Males	Females		Persons	Males	Females
Panipat (DISTRICT)	176	650352	349642	300710	3	217	110	107
Panipat (SUB-DISTRICT)	75	276259	148063	128196	3	217	110	107

Continue (Table 2)

200-499				500-999				1000-1999			
Number of Villages	Population			Number of Villages	Population			Number of Villages	Population		
	Persons	Males	Females		Persons	Males	Females		Persons	Males	Females
4	1543	831	712	11	8048	4325	3723	38	58243	31221	27022
3	1131	600	531	2	1493	783	710	14	22822	12347	10475

Continue (Table 2)

2000-4999				5000-9999				10000 and above			
Number of Villages	Population			Number of Villages	Population			Number of Villages	Population		
	Persons	Males	Females		Persons	Males	Females		Persons	Males	Females
80	269382	145040	124342	34	239013	128559	110454	6	73906	39556	34350
36	120103	64239	55864	14	91044	48800	42244	3	39449	21184	18265

(Source: https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/data/census-tables)

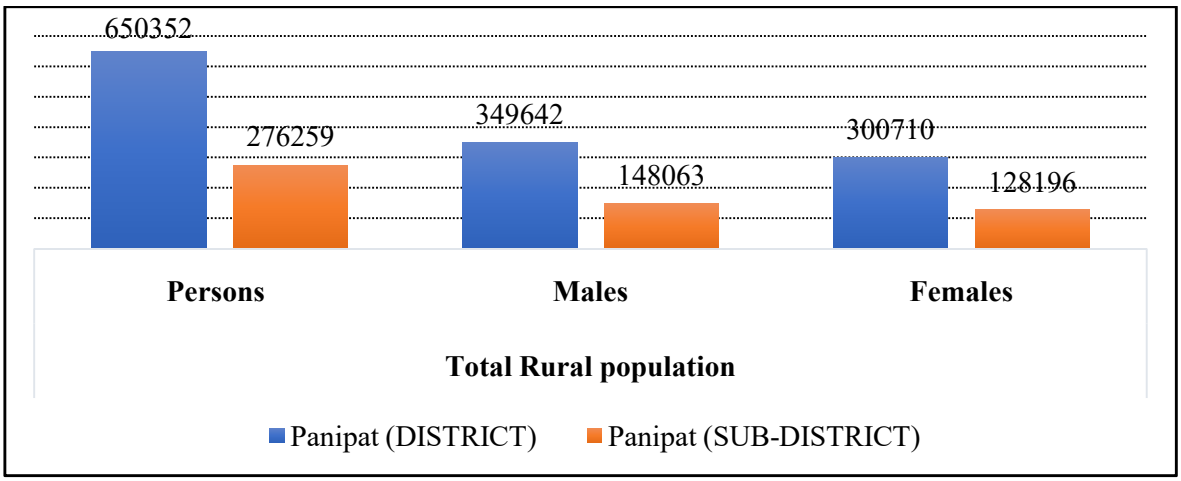

Figure 5: Distribution of total population between male-female in Panipat rural

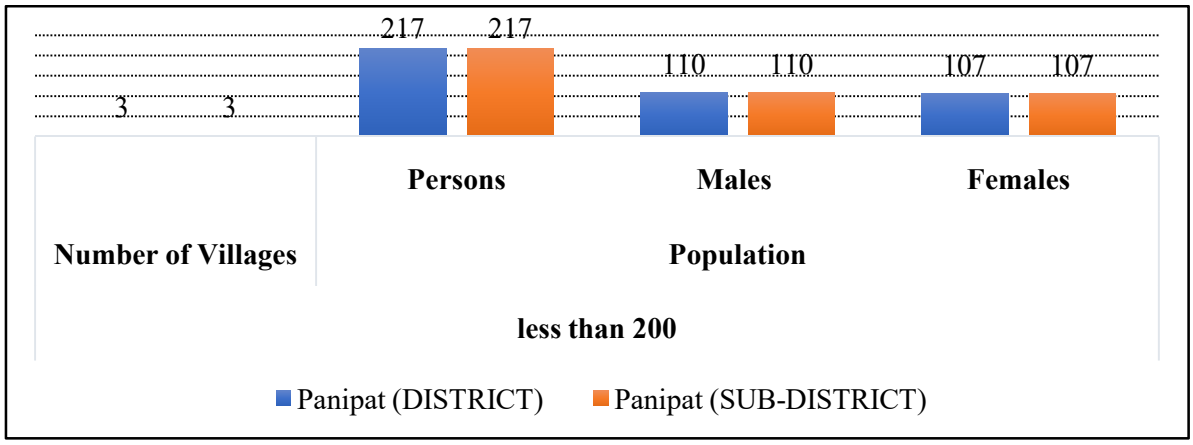

Figure 6: Gender distribution in less than 200 population village

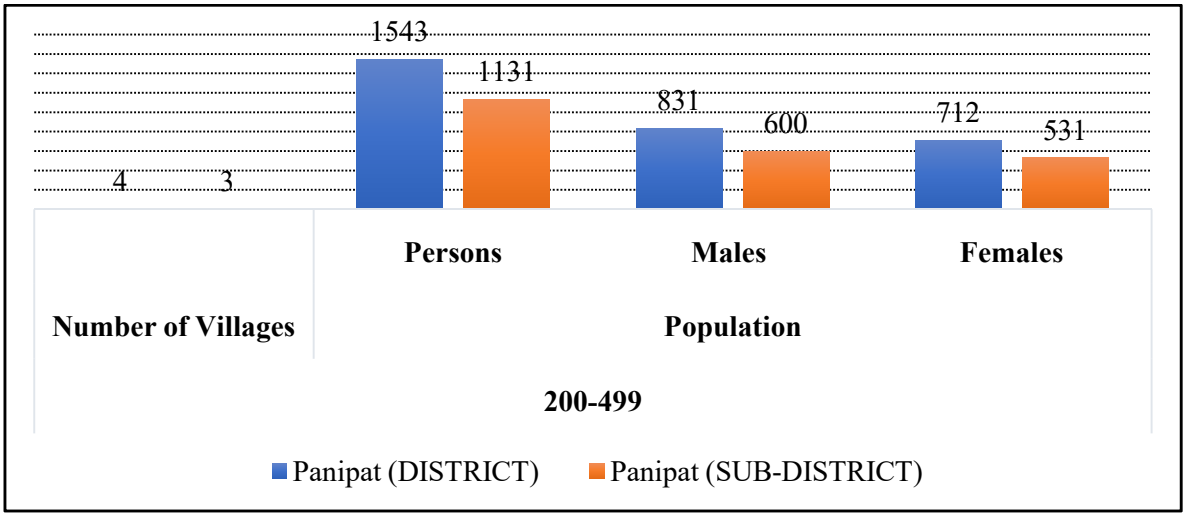

Figure 7: Gender distribution in 200-400 population village

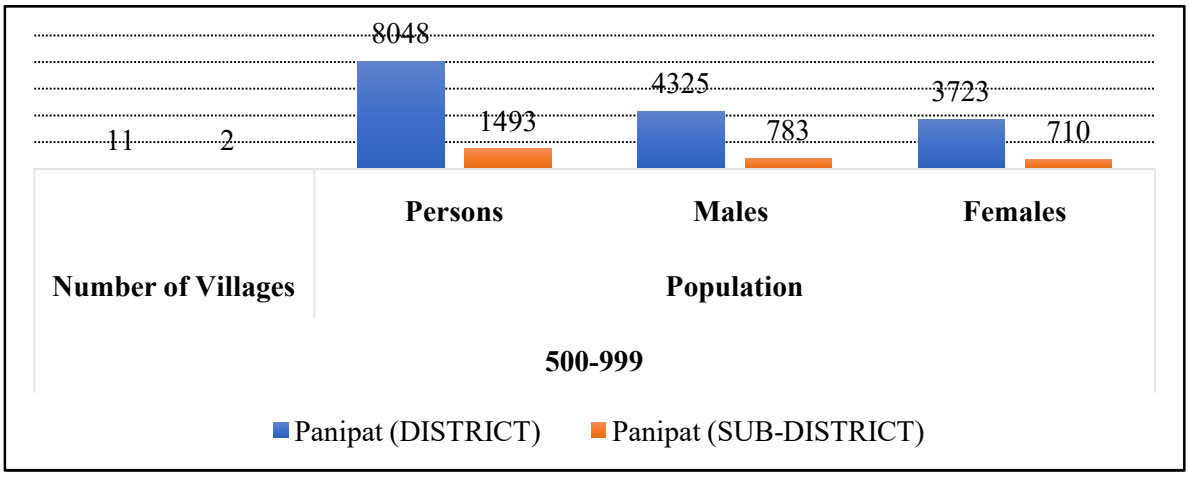

Figure 8: Gender distribution in 500-999 population village

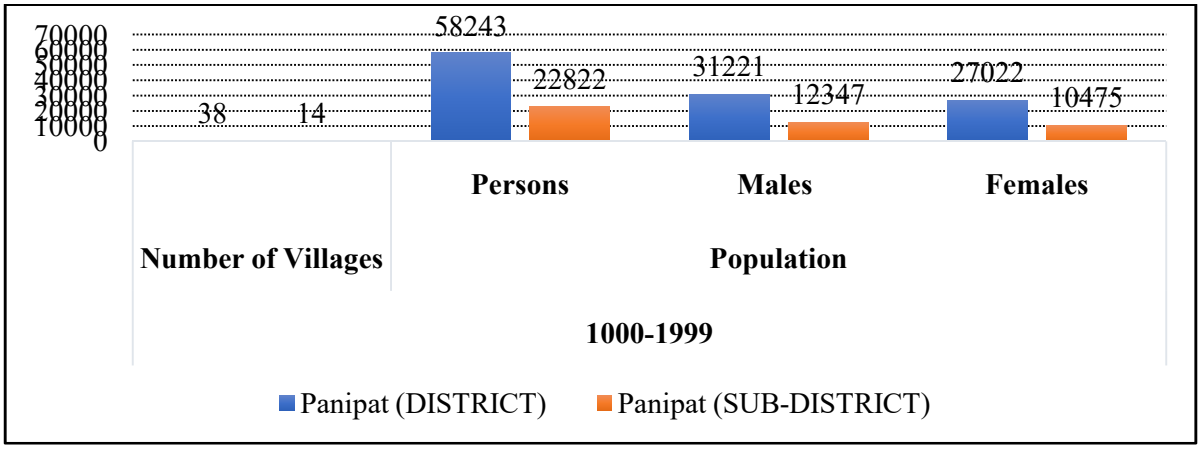

Figure 9: Gender distribution in 1000-1999 population village

Figure 10, villages with populations ranging from 2,000 to 4,999 people, the data reveals the highest population count across all categories, accompanied by a significant gender gap favoring males. The Panipat District includes 80 villages in this range, with a total population of 269,382 people, consisting of 145,040 males and 124,342 females. Similarly, the Panipat Sub-District comprises 36 villages with a combined population of 120,103 people, including 64,239 males and 55,864 females. In both the district and sub-district, males significantly outnumber females, with the district showing a disparity of 20,698 more males than females and the sub-district having 8,375 more males than females. In villages with populations ranging from 5,000 to 9,999 people, the gender disparity persists, with males continuing to outnumber females (Figure 11). The Panipat District includes 34 villages in this category, with a total

population of 239,013 people, consisting of 128,559 males and 110,454 females. Similarly, the Panipat Sub-District comprises 14 villages with a combined population of 91,044 people, including 48,800 males and 42,244 females. In both the district and sub-district, the male population exceeds the female population, with the district showing a disparity of 18,105 more males than females and the sub-district having 6,556 more males than females. This ongoing trend of male predominance in larger villages suggests that the factors contributing to gender inequality, such as male-centric migration patterns, unequal access to resources, or cultural biases favoring males, remain influential even in more populous and potentially more developed areas.

In villages with populations of 10,000 and above, the data reveals that the largest villages continue to exhibit a higher male population, further emphasizing the persistent gender disparity (Figure 12). The Panipat District includes 6 villages in this category, with a total population of 73,906 people, consisting of 39,556 males and 34,350 females. Similarly, the Panipat Sub-District comprises 3 villages with a combined population of 39,449 people, including 21,184 males and 18,265 females. In both the district and sub-district, males outnumber females, with the district showing a disparity of 5,206 more males than females and the sub-district having 2,919 more males than females. The consistent gender gap across all village sizes, including the largest, highlights the need for targeted interventions to address the root causes of gender inequality and promote a more balanced demographic structure in Panipat.

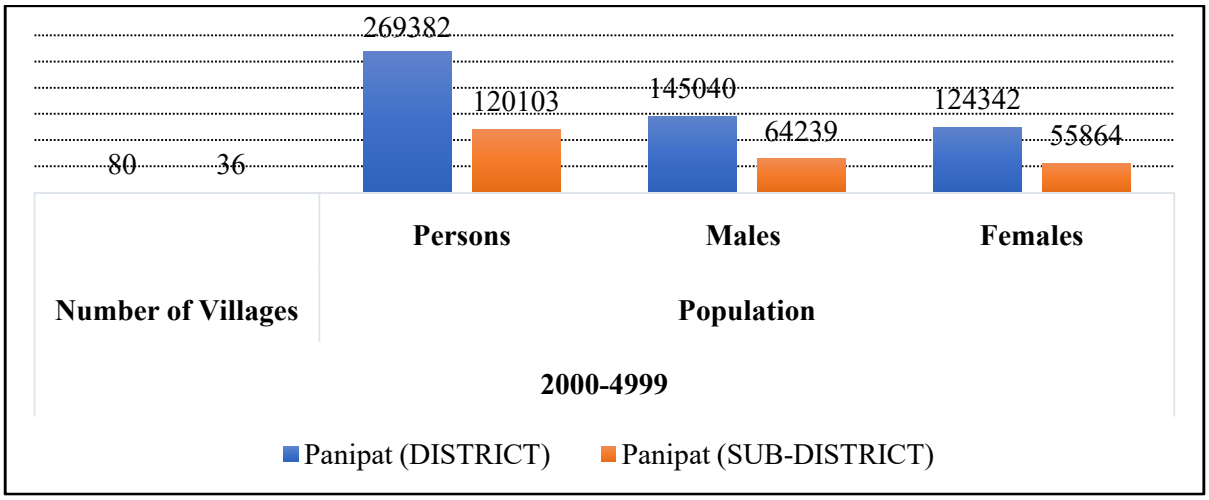

Figure 10: Gender distribution in 2000-4999 population village

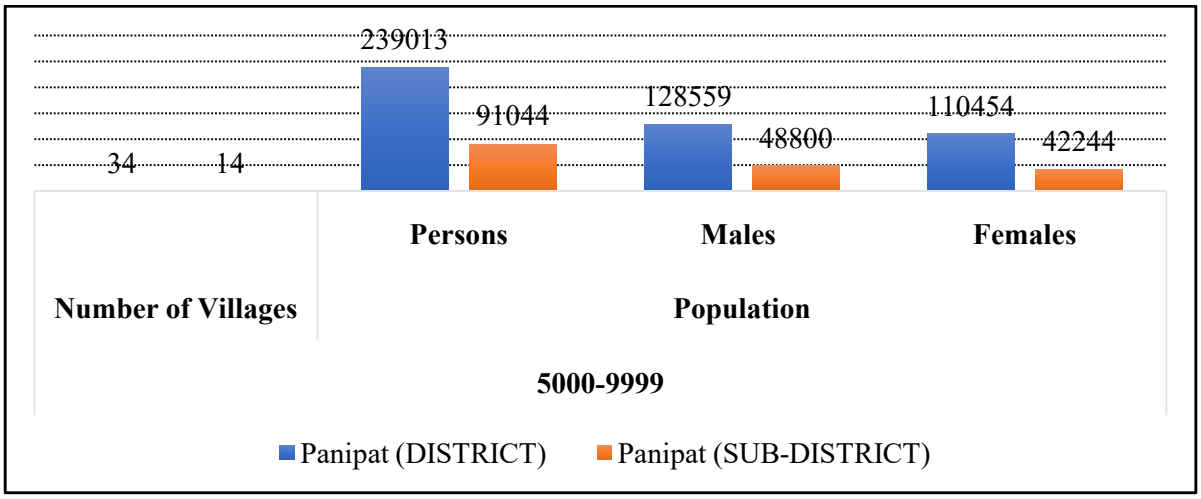

Figure 11: Gender distribution in 5000-9999 population village

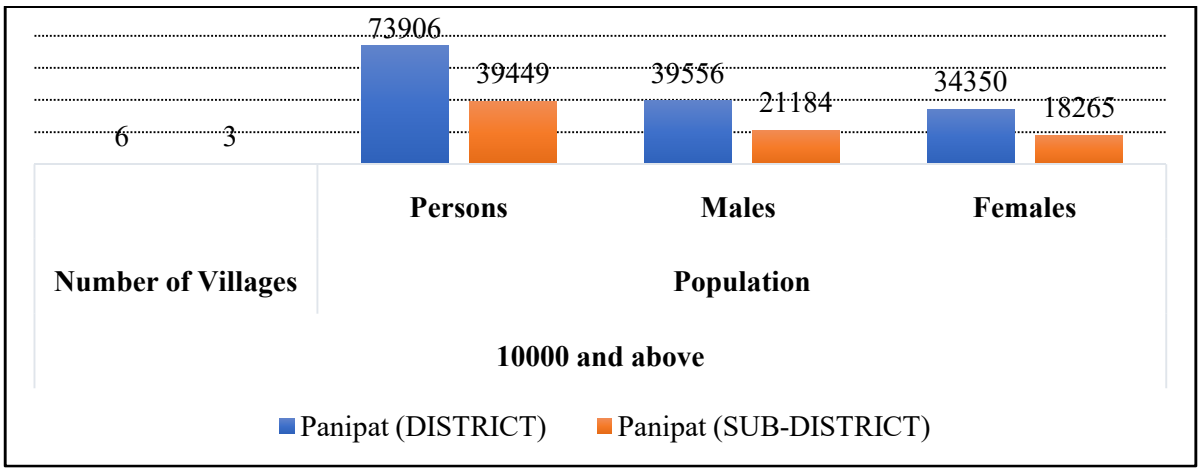

Figure 12: Gender distribution in 10000 and above population village

3.8 Analysis of Gender Inequality Based on Above Findings

a) **Consistent Male Dominance**: Across all village size classes, the male population consistently outnumbers the female population. This trend is evident in both the district and sub-district data, suggesting a systemic issue of gender imbalance in Panipat.

b) **Increasing Disparity with Village Size**: The gender gap tends to widen as the village size increases. For instance, in villages with less than 200 people, the gender ratio is nearly equal, but in larger villages (2,000-4,999 and above), the male population significantly exceeds the female population. This could indicate that larger villages may have more pronounced socio-economic factors contributing to gender inequality.

c) **Sub-District vs. District**: The sub-district data mirrors the district trends but with smaller absolute numbers.

d) **Potential Socio-Economic Factors**: The higher male population in larger villages could be attributed to factors such as migration patterns, where males might move to larger villages for better employment opportunities, leaving behind a smaller female population.

3.9 Interpretation of Gender Inequality in Panipat Based on Working Trends (2011 vs. 2001)

The comparison of Census data from 2011 and 2001 reveals significant trends in gender inequality in employment in Panipat (Table 3 & 4). The analysis focuses on the classification of main workers and non-workers by age group (15-59 years) across rural and urban areas.

3.9.1 Increase in Workforce Participation (Main Workers):

A notable increase in the number of main workers is observed from 2001 to 2011 across both rural and urban sectors.

3.9.1 Rural Areas

- In 2001, the total number of main workers (15-59 age group) was 23,258, which increased to 152,111 in 2011.
- Male workers rose from 18,296 to 129,285, while female workers increased from 4,962 to 22,826.
- This suggests that both male and female workforce participation increased, but the rise was much higher for males compared to females.

3.9.2 Urban Areas

- The number of main workers in urban Panipat rose from 12,041 in 2001 to 158,021 in 2011.
- Male workers increased from 9,737 to 133,133, while female workers rose from 2,304 to 24,888.

3.9.3 Persistent Gender Disparity in Workforce Participation:

Despite the overall increase in workforce participation, the data indicates that females remain significantly underrepresented in the workforce compared to males.

- In 2011, females accounted for only 15% of the total main workers in rural areas and approximately 16% in urban areas.
- While the absolute number of female workers increased over the decade, the gender gap remains wide, indicating persistent societal and economic barriers to female employment.

- Factors contributing to this disparity may include social norms restricting women's employment, lack of access to education, domestic responsibilities, and fewer employment opportunities for women.

3.9.4 Growth in Non-Workers and Gender Divide

The number of non-workers has also increased between 2001 and 2011, but the gender gap is stark.

3.9.4.1 Rural Areas

- In 2001, the number of non-workers was 15,885, which increased to 188,095 in 2011.
- Among these, female non-workers increased significantly from 10,685 to 136,222, reinforcing gender inequality in employment.

3.9.4.2 Urban Areas

- Non-workers rose from 9,696 in 2001 to 177,798 in 2011.
- Female non-workers increased from 7,088 to 133,847, making up the majority of the non-working population.

The increase in female non-workers suggests that despite economic growth, women continue to face significant barriers to employment, leading to their exclusion from the formal workforce.

3.10 Rural vs. Urban Disparities in Gendered Employment Trends

In both census years, urban areas exhibited a slightly higher female workforce participation rate compared to rural areas; however, the overall gender gap in employment remained substantial.

Moreover, between 2001 and 2011, workforce participation saw a significant increase; however, gender inequality remains a persistent issue. Males continue to dominate the workforce, while female participation remains disproportionately low. This disparity is even more pronounced in rural areas, where gender inequality in employment is higher than in urban regions, highlighting the urgent need for targeted employment programs to enhance rural women's workforce participation.

Table 3: Panipat main workers, non-workers classified by age and sex (Census year 2011)

Rural/Urban	**Age-Group**	**Main workers**			**Non-workers (Total)**		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Rural	**15-59**	152111	129285	22826	188095	51873	136222

Urban	**15-59**	158021	133133	24888	177798	43951	133847

Table 4: Panipat main workers, non-workers classified by age and sex (Census year 2001)

Rural/Urban	**Age Group**	**Main workers**			**Non-workers (Total)**		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Rural	15-59	23258	18296	4962	15885	5200	10685
Urban	15-59	12041	9737	2304	9696	2608	7088

IV. CONCLUSION

The demographic analysis of Panipat from 1951 to 2011 reveals significant gender inequality, reflected in a declining sex ratio and persistent male dominance in population distribution. While economic growth has contributed to overall population increases, it has also exacerbated gender disparities due to migration patterns and socio-cultural factors. The decline in the sex ratio, particularly from 1951 to 2001, highlights the need for stronger policy interventions. The slight recovery in 2011 suggests some improvements, but continuous efforts are necessary to bridge the gender gap. Future policies should focus on education, healthcare, legal enforcement, and economic empowerment of women to ensure a balanced and equitable demographic structure in Panipat.

Moreover, the rural-based investigation highlights that the data reveals a clear pattern of gender inequality in Panipat, with males consistently outnumbering females across all village-size classes. This disparity becomes more pronounced in larger villages, indicating potential socio-economic and cultural factors at play. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address gender imbalance and promote equitable demographic development in the region.

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