Demographics and Their Implication on Indian Economy

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ABSTRACT

India's literacy journey has seen substantial improvements—from roughly 12 % in 1947 to 80.9 % among individuals aged seven and above in 2023–24—but stark disparities persist across states, genders, and urban–rural divides. Data from PLFS 2023–24 show national male literacy at 87.2 % and female literacy at 74.6 %, resulting in a persistent gender gap of 12.6 percentage points. The analysis underscores urban literacy of 88.9 % versus rural literacy of 77.5 %, highlighting an 11–14 point rural–urban divide in key states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. State-level findings reveal substantial heterogeneity: northeastern and smaller states like Mizoram (98.2 %), Lakshadweep (97.3 %), Kerala (95.3 %), Tripura (93.7 %), and Goa (93.6 %) lead literacy rankings, while populous states such as Bihar (74.3 %), Madhya Pradesh (75.2 %), and Rajasthan (75.8 %) continue to lag. Gender gaps exceed 20 points in laggard regions, while high-performing states record gaps of under 3–4 points. This study systematically analyzes long-term trends in literacy from 1951 to 2023–24—disaggregating by state, gender, and region and explores the role of major initiatives like ULLAS (New India Literacy Programme). Programmatic efforts such as ULLAS have been instrumental in achieving full literacy status in Mizoram, Tripura, and Goa, through a volunteer-driven, life-skills–based approach.

Key Words- Literacy, Urban Acceleration, Migration

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Introduction

India's journey in achieving universal literacy has been marked by remarkable progress alongside persistent inequalities. From a mere 12 % literacy rate at independence in 1947 to 80.9 % in 2023–24, the nation has traversed a dramatic arc. However, this progress masks uneven gains: urban literacy stands at 88.9 %, compared to 77.5 % in rural regions, while gender differences remain substantial—87.2 % male vs. 74.6 % female literacy. Several states—especially Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Tripura, and Goa—achieved literacy rates above 93 %, whereas Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh linger below 76 %.

Review of Literature

Decadal Literacy Trends & State-Level Variation

Census data reflect substantial gains over time: national literacy climbed from 52.2 % in 1991 to 74.0 % by 2011, with male literacy rising more slowly than female—narrowing the gender gap gradually. Yet disparities persist at the state level. For instance, Bihar's literacy rate grew from 61.8 % in 2011 to

approximately 74.3 % by 2025, with male literacy near 84.9 % and female at 73.9 %, still leaving an uncomfortable double-digit gender gap.

Gender Gaps in Literacy

The male–female literacy gap was 24.9 points in 1991, narrowing to 21.6 in 2001; by 2023–24, the gender differential had declined to around 12.6 points (87.2 % vs. 74.6 %). States such as Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Kerala exhibit minimal gender gaps (under 3 percentage points), while larger, more educationally backward states like Rajasthan and Bihar still record gaps over 16–20 points.

Urban vs. Rural Literacy Disparities

Urban areas have disproportionately higher literacy rates—typically 11–14 percentage points above rural rates. In 2023–24, rural literacy reached 77.5 %, but urban literacy stood at 88.9 %. Bihar illustrates this gap: rural literacy around 69.5 %, versus urban literacy at 83.1 %, with a notable gender gap especially among rural women (female rural reading/writing at 58.7 %).

Interventions & Quality Concerns

While enrollment surged after the Right to Education Act (2009), learning outcomes remain low—ASER (2011) found over half of Grade 5 students unable to read Grade 2 text, pointing to poor foundational literacy despite rising enrollment. Recent programs such as ULLAS, Padhna-Likhna Abhiyan, and FLNAT aim to bolster adult literacy and foundational skills, especially for rural women—with ULLAS enrolling over 2 crore learners by late 2024

Objectives

- To Analyze changes in literacy rates across Indian states/UTs from 1951 to 2011.
- To measure male–female literacy differences, tracking improvement or persistence of gender disparities.
- To Compare urban and rural literacy dynamics, focusing on states with consistent gaps
- To Discuss the role of initiatives like Right to Education (2009), ULLAS, foundational literacy programs in shaping outcomes.

Methodology

Secondary data from Census (1951–2011) and NSO/NSSO household surveys. Descriptive statistics for literacy rates (overall, male, female, urban, rural). Gap analysis calculating male–female and urban–rural disparities. Trend analysis using line charts and state comparisons over decades. Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) Visualizations (histograms, box plots, scatterplots) to inspect distribution, outliers, and clustering among states. Regional Analysis Deep dive into select regions (e.g., North-East, BIMARU) to examine disparities and structural factors. Software & Tools use statistical packages (R, Python, or SPSS) to compute summary metrics and generate visualizations.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1, overall National Growth, 361 million to ~1.21 billion: India's population more than tripled between 1951 and 2011. The decadal growth rate dipped from a peak of ~24–25% (1971–1991) to 17.7% during 2001–2011, with annual rates shrinking from ~2.2% to ~1.6% . This trend reflects the demographic transition: fertility rates fell—India's Total Fertility Rate dropped from ~2.9 in 2005 to

~2.2 by 2017, contributing to slowed growth. Still, population momentum continues, meaning the absolute number of people is growing even as rates decrease; projections suggest India's population may peak in the 2040s–2050s.

TABLE 1: STATE-WISE TOTAL POPULATION (Thousands)

State/Union Territory	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	3100%	6400%	11500%	18900%	28100%	35600%	38100%
Andhra Pradesh	3111500%	3598300%	4350300%	5355100%	6650800%	7621000%	8458100%
Arunachal Pradesh	-	33700%	46800%	63200%	86500%	109800%	138400%
Assam	802900%	1083700%	1462500%	1804100%	2241400%	2665600%	3120600%
Bihar	2908500%	3484100%	4212600%	5230300%	6453100%	8299900%	10409900%
Chandigarh	2400%	12000%	25700%	45200%	64200%	90100%	105500%
Chhattisgarh	745700%	915400%	1163700%	1401000%	1761500%	2083400%	2554500%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	4200%	5800%	7400%	10400%	13800%	22000%	34400%
Daman & Diu	4900%	3700%	6300%	7900%	10200%	15800%	24300%
Delhi	174400%	265900%	406600%	622000%	942100%	1385100%	1678800%
Goa	54700%	59000%	79500%	100800%	117000%	134800%	145900%
Gujarat	1626300%	2063300%	2669700%	3408600%	4131000%	5067100%	6044000%
Haryana	567400%	759100%	1003600%	1292200%	1646400%	2114500%	2535100%
Himachal Pradesh	238600%	281200%	346000%	428100%	517100%	607800%	686500%
Jammu & Kashmir	325400%	356100%	461700%	598700%	783700%	1014400%	1254100%
Jharkhand	969700%	1160600%	1422700%	1761200%	2184400%	2694600%	3298800%
Karnataka	1940200%	2358700%	2929900%	3713600%	4497700%	5285100%	6109500%
Kerala	1354900%	1690400%	2134700%	2545400%	2909900%	3184100%	3340600%
Lakshadweep	2100%	2400%	3200%	4000%	5200%	6100%	6400%
Madhya Pradesh	1861500%	2321800%	3001700%	3816900%	4856600%	6034800%	7262700%
Maharashtra	3200300%	3955400%	5041200%	6278300%	7893700%	9687900%	11237400%
Manipur	57800%	78000%	107300%	142100%	183700%	229400%	285600%
Meghalaya	60600%	76900%	101200%	133600%	177500%	231900%	296700%
Mizoram	19600%	26600%	33200%	49400%	69000%	88900%	109700%
Nagaland	21300%	36900%	51600%	77500%	121000%	199000%	197900%
Odisha	1464600%	1754900%	2194500%	2637000%	3166000%	3680500%	4197400%
Puducherry	31700%	36900%	47200%	60400%	80800%	97400%	124800%
Punjab	916100%	1113500%	1355100%	1678900%	2028200%	2435900%	2774300%
Rajasthan	1597100%	2015600%	2576600%	3426200%	4400600%	5650700%	6854800%
Sikkim	13800%	16200%	21000%	31600%	40600%	54100%	61100%
Tamil Nadu	3011900%	3368700%	4119900%	4840800%	5585900%	6240600%	7214700%
Tripura	63900%	114200%	155600%	205300%	275700%	319900%	367400%

Uttar Pradesh	6027400%	7014400%	8384900%	10513700%	13206200%	16619800%	19981200%
Uttarakhand	294600%	361100%	449300%	572600%	705100%	848900%	1008600%
West Bengal	2630000%	3492600%	4431200%	5458100%	6807800%	8017600%	9127600%
ALL INDIA	36108800%	43923500%	54816000%	68332900%	84642100%	102873700%	121085500%
Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.							

State-by-State Patterns

Rapid Growth (2001–2011)

Dadra & Nagar Haveli (56%) and **Daman & Diu** (54%) ranked highest—driven by small base populations. Among larger areas, **Arunachal Pradesh** (+26%), **Meghalaya** (+28%), **Bihar** (+25%), and **Chhattisgarh** (+23%) registered strong growth—all exceeding or matching national averages

Slower or Negative Growth

Nagaland decreased slightly (~–0.5%) in 2001–2011—the **lowest state growth rate**. Southern states including **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka** experienced lower growth, reflecting earlier fertility decline with Total Fertility Rates below replacement (<2.1)

Mega-States & Regional Dynamics

Uttar Pradesh remained the most populated state (~200 million), contributing **16%** to national population. **Bihar** doubled its population (~29 → 104 million), also outpacing national growth, yet remains among highest fertility states (TFR ~3.9). **Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka** all surpassed significant population thresholds, reflecting their socio-economic diversity.

Urbanization & Migration

Delhi's population surged from 9.4 million in 1991 to 16.8 million by 2011, driven by rural-to-urban migration and economic concentration. States like **Maharashtra**, **Gujarat**, and **Haryana** similarly attracted high migrant inflows—Maharashtra saw 2.3 million migrants, and Delhi about 1.7 million between 1991–2001. This urban shift is anticipated to grow: by 2036, urban population will increase by ~57%, rural population share expected to drop from 69% to 61%.

Table 2, This table tracks the **percentage growth of population over each decade** from **1951 to 2011** across Indian states and union territories. Here's a detailed interpretation:

All-India Trends:

The **national growth rate** peaked in **1961–1971 (24.80%)** and then **gradually declined** each decade, reaching **17.70% in 2001–2011**. This indicates **slowing population growth** over time, largely due to improved family planning, education, and awareness.

Highest Growth Observed:

Chandigarh (1951–1961): Exceptionally high growth (394.13%) likely due to **in-migration** as it was newly established post-independence. **Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Nagaland, Sikkim**—several small states/UTs show fluctuating high growth, likely due to **migration and better census coverage**.

TABLE 2: STATE-WISE DECADAL GROWTH RATE OF POPULATION (Per cent)

State/Union Territory	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001	2001-2011
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	10519%	8117%	6393%	4870%	2690%	686%
Andhra Pradesh	1565%	2090%	2310%	2420%	1459%	1098%
Arunachal Pradesh	-	3891%	3515%	3683%	2700%	2603%
Assam	3498%	3495%	2336%	2424%	1892%	1707%
Bihar	1979%	2091%	2416%	2338%	2862%	2542%
Chandigarh	39413%	11459%	7555%	4216%	4028%	1709%
Chhattisgarh	2277%	2712%	2039%	2573%	1827%	2261%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3956%	2796%	3978%	3357%	5922%	5588%
Daman & Diu	-2456%	7085%	2607%	2862%	5573%	5376%
Delhi	5244%	5293%	5300%	5145%	4702%	2121%
Goa	777%	3477%	2674%	1608%	1521%	823%
Gujarat	2688%	2939%	2767%	2119%	2266%	1928%
Haryana	3379%	3222%	2875%	2741%	2843%	1990%
Himachal Pradesh	1787%	2304%	2371%	2079%	1754%	1294%
Jammu & Kashmir	944%	2965%	2969%	3089%	2943%	2364%
Jharkhand	1969%	2258%	2379%	2403%	2336%	2242%
Karnataka	2157%	2422%	2675%	2112%	1751%	1560%
Kerala	2476%	2629%	1924%	1432%	943%	491%
Lakshadweep	1461%	3195%	2653%	2847%	1730%	630%
Madhya Pradesh	2473%	2928%	2716%	2724%	2426%	2035%
Maharashtra	2360%	2745%	2454%	2573%	2273%	1599%
Manipur	3504%	3753%	3246%	2929%	2486%	2450%
Meghalaya	2703%	3150%	3204%	3286%	3065%	2795%
Mizoram	3561%	2493%	4855%	3970%	2882%	2348%
Nagaland	1407%	3988%	5005%	5608%	6453%	-58%
Odisha	1982%	2505%	2017%	2006%	1625%	1405%

Puducherry	1634%	2781%	2815%	3364%	2062%	2808%
Punjab	2156%	2170%	2389%	2081%	2010%	1389%
Rajasthan	2620%	2783%	3297%	2844%	2841%	2131%
Sikkim	1776%	2938%	5077%	2847%	3306%	1289%
Tamil Nadu	1185%	2230%	1750%	1539%	1172%	1561%
Tripura	7871%	3628%	3192%	3430%	1603%	1484%
Uttar Pradesh	1638%	1954%	2539%	2561%	2585%	2023%
Uttarakhand	2257%	2442%	2745%	2313%	2041%	1881%
West Bengal	3280%	2687%	2317%	2473%	1777%	1384%
ALL INDIA	2151%	2480%	2466%	2387%	2154%	1770%
Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.						

Lowest or Negative Growth: Nagaland (2001–2011): Negative growth (-0.58%)—possibly due to **out-migration**, **data discrepancies**, or **declining birth rates** .**Daman & Diu (1951–1961):** Negative (-24.56%)—likely a **recording anomaly** or **post-colonial transition** effect (Portuguese to Indian administration).

TABLE 3: STATE-WISE POPULATION IN URBAN AREA (Thousands)

State/Union Territory	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	800%	1400%	2600%	5000%	7500%	11600%	14300%
Andhra Pradesh	542000%	627500%	840300%	1248800%	1788700%	2080900%	2821900%
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	1700%	4100%	11100%	22800%	31700%
Assam	34500%	78100%	128900%	178200%	248800%	343900%	439900%
Bihar	186600%	258100%	335600%	514500%	671200%	868200%	1175800%
Chandigarh	-	9900%	23300%	42300%	57600%	80900%	102600%
Chhattisgarh	36400%	76300%	120800%	205800%	306500%	418600%	593700%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	700%	1200%	5000%	16100%
Daman & Diu	1800%	1300%	2400%	2900%	4800%	5700%	18300%
Delhi	143700%	235900%	364700%	576800%	847200%	1290600%	1636900%
Goa	7100%	8700%	20300%	32300%	48000%	67100%	90700%
Gujarat	442800%	531700%	749700%	1060200%	1424600%	1893000%	2574500%
Haryana	96800%	130800%	177300%	282700%	405500%	611500%	884200%
Himachal Pradesh	15400%	17800%	24200%	32600%	44900%	59600%	68900%
Jammu & Kashmir	45700%	59300%	85800%	126000%	179400%	251700%	343300%

Jharkhand	76000%	133300%	227800%	357400%	464100%	599400%	793300%
Karnataka	445300%	526600%	712200%	1073000%	1390800%	1796200%	2362600%
Kerala	182600%	255400%	346600%	477100%	768000%	826700%	1593500%
Lakshadweep	-	-	-	1900%	2900%	2700%	5000%
Madhya Pradesh	276900%	386500%	557700%	852800%	1227400%	1596700%	2006900%
Maharashtra	920100%	1116300%	1571100%	2199400%	3054200%	4110100%	5081800%
Manipur	300%	6800%	14100%	37500%	50600%	57600%	83400%
Meghalaya	5900%	11700%	14700%	24100%	33000%	45400%	59500%
Mizoram	700%	1400%	3800%	12200%	31800%	44100%	57200%
Nagaland	400%	1900%	5100%	12000%	20800%	34300%	57100%
Odisha	59400%	111000%	184500%	311000%	423500%	551700%	700400%
Puducherry	-	8900%	19800%	31600%	51700%	64900%	85300%
Punjab	198900%	256700%	321600%	464800%	599300%	826300%	1039900%
Rajasthan	295500%	328100%	454400%	721100%	1006700%	1321400%	1704800%
Sikkim	300%	700%	2000%	5100%	3700%	6000%	15400%
Tamil Nadu	733400%	899100%	1246500%	1595200%	1907800%	2748400%	3491700%
Tripura	4300%	10300%	16200%	22600%	42200%	54600%	96100%
Uttar Pradesh	822500%	898400%	1165400%	1875000%	2597200%	3454000%	4449500%
Uttarakhand	40100%	49600%	73500%	114900%	163400%	217900%	304900%
West Bengal	628200%	854100%	1096700%	1444700%	1870800%	2242700%	2909300%
ALL INDIA	6244400%	7893700%	10911400%	15946300%	21756600%	28612000%	37710600%
Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.							

Table 3, Nationwide Urban Boom

Urban India grew from **62 million** in 1951 to **377 million** in 2011—a more than **6-fold increase**. Proportionally, urban dwellers rose from roughly **17% in 1951** to about **31% in 2011**

Decadal Trends & Urban Acceleration

Largest absolute increases occurred between **1971–1981** and **1991–2001**, reflecting peaks in job-led migration and expansion of census towns. Growth then moderated; while the 2001–2011 decade still saw a sizable jump (from ~286 m to ~377 m), its **annual growth rate dropped** to around **2.8%**.

Migration & Census Reclassification

The surge isn't solely due to birth rates—**rural-to-urban migration** and a formal transformation of villages into **census towns** significantly drove numbers. India added nearly **3,000 new towns** between 2001 and 2011.

Urban Growth vs Decline Patterns

While **mega-cities** continued robust growth, **growth rates in smaller towns slowed**, with some towns even declining—a shift from "explosive" growth to **stabilization**. This urban consolidation means existing cities rather than a proliferation of new ones now drive trends.

Nationwide Rural Rise

India's rural population grew from **298.6 million in 1951** to **833.7 million in 2011**, nearly a **threefold increase**. However, the **rural share of total population declined** from roughly **83% in 1951** to **~69% in 2011**, reflecting increasing urban migration and urban expansion.

Decadal Growth Patterns

Each decade saw **substantial absolute increases**, but the **percentage share** of rural dwellers gradually declined as urban growth accelerated, especially post-1980. Notably, **2001–2011** added **~91 million urban** and **~90.5 million rural** residents—marking the first decade when urban and rural absolute increases were nearly equal.

State-Level Insights

Absolute Growth Leaders: **Uttar Pradesh**: from 52 m → 155 m, **Bihar**: from 27 m → 92 m, **West Bengal**: from 20 m → 62 m. These populous states contributed most heavily to rural increases. **Smaller Jurisdictions** (e.g., Chandigarh, Lakshadweep) saw minor or volatile changes, sometimes due to administrative shifts or migration. **Kerala's unique drop** in rural population between 2001 (23.6 m) and 2011 (17.5 m): possibly due to **reclassification** of rural areas as urban, besides out-migration

TABLE 4: STATE-WISE POPULATION IN RURAL AREA (Thousands)

State/Union Territory	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	2300%	4900%	8900%	13900%	20600%	24000%	23700%
Andhra Pradesh	2569500%	2970900%	3510000%	4106300%	4862100%	5540100%	5636200%
Arunachal Pradesh	-	33700%	45000%	59000%	75400%	87000%	106600%
Assam	768400%	1005600%	1333600%	1625900%	1992700%	2321600%	2680700%
Bihar	2721900%	3226100%	3877000%	4715800%	5781900%	7431700%	9234100%
Chandigarh	2400%	2100%	2400%	2900%	6600%	9200%	2900%
Chhattisgarh	709300%	839200%	1043000%	1195200%	1455000%	1664800%	1960800%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	4200%	5800%	7400%	9700%	12700%	17000%	18300%
Daman & Diu	3000%	2300%	3900%	5000%	5400%	10100%	6000%
Delhi	30700%	29900%	41900%	45200%	94900%	94500%	41900%
Goa	47700%	50300%	59200%	68500%	69000%	67700%	55200%
Gujarat	1183500%	1531700%	1920100%	2348400%	2706400%	3174100%	3469500%
Haryana	470500%	628300%	826300%	1009500%	1240900%	1502900%	1650900%
Himachal Pradesh	223200%	263400%	321900%	395500%	472200%	548200%	617600%
Jammu & Kashmir	279700%	296800%	375800%	472700%	604300%	762700%	910800%
Jharkhand	893700%	1027300%	1195000%	1403800%	1720300%	2095200%	2505500%

Karnataka	1494800%	1832000%	2217700%	2640600%	3106900%	3488900%	3746900%
Kerala	1172300%	1435000%	1788100%	2068200%	2141800%	2357400%	1747100%
Lakshadweep	2100%	2400%	3200%	2200%	2300%	3400%	1400%
Madhya Pradesh	1584600%	1935300%	2444000%	2964000%	3629200%	4438100%	5255700%
Maharashtra	2280200%	2839100%	3470100%	4078900%	4839600%	5577800%	6155600%
Manipur	57500%	71200%	93100%	104500%	133200%	171800%	202200%
Meghalaya	54700%	65200%	86500%	109400%	144500%	186500%	237100%
Mizoram	18900%	25200%	29500%	37200%	37200%	44800%	52500%
Nagaland	20900%	35000%	46500%	65500%	100100%	164700%	140800%
Odisha	1405200%	1643900%	2009900%	2326000%	2742500%	3128700%	3497100%
Puducherry	31700%	28000%	27300%	28800%	29100%	32600%	39500%
Punjab	717100%	856800%	1033500%	1214100%	1428900%	1609600%	1734400%
Rajasthan	1301500%	1687400%	2122200%	2705100%	3393900%	4329300%	5150000%
Sikkim	13500%	15500%	19000%	26500%	36900%	48100%	45700%
Tamil Nadu	2278600%	2469600%	2873400%	3245600%	3678100%	3492200%	3723000%
Tripura	59600%	103900%	139400%	182700%	233500%	265300%	271200%
Uttar Pradesh	5204900%	6116000%	7219500%	8638700%	10609000%	13165800%	15531700%
Uttarakhand	254500%	311500%	375800%	457700%	541700%	631000%	703700%
West Bengal	2001800%	2638500%	3334500%	4013400%	4937000%	5774900%	6218300%
ALL INDIA	29864400%	36029800%	43904600%	52386700%	62885600%	74261800%	83374900%

Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

Rural-to-Urban Transition

The data mirror a shift from agrarian to urban livelihoods: while rural numbers rose, the **rate of rural population growth was slower** than urban growth. This underscores India's broader **rural-to-urban demographic shift**—from nearly **72% rural in 2001** to **69% by 2011**. The slowdown in rural expansion, combined with robust urban growth, is a clear indicator of **urbanization trends**.

TABLE 5: STATE-WISE SEX RATIO (Females per Thousand Males)							
State/Union Territory	**1951**	**1961**	**1971**	**1981**	**1991**	**2001**	**2011**
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	62500%	61700%	64400%	76000%	81800%	84600%	87600%
Andhra Pradesh	98600%	98100%	97700%	97500%	97200%	97800%	99300%
Arunachal Pradesh	-	89400%	86100%	86200%	85900%	89300%	93800%
Assam	86800%	86900%	89600%	91000%	92300%	93500%	95800%
Bihar	100000%	100500%	95700%	94800%	90700%	91900%	91800%
Chandigarh	78100%	65200%	74900%	76900%	79000%	77700%	81800%
Chhattisgarh	102400%	100800%	99800%	99600%	98500%	98900%	99100%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	94600%	96300%	100700%	97400%	95200%	81200%	77400%
Daman & Diu	112500%	116900%	109900%	106200%	96800%	71000%	61800%
Delhi	76800%	78500%	80100%	80800%	82700%	82100%	86800%
Goa	112800%	106600%	98100%	97500%	96700%	96100%	97300%
Gujarat	95200%	94000%	93400%	94200%	93400%	92000%	91900%
Haryana	87100%	86800%	86700%	87000%	86500%	86100%	87900%
Himachal Pradesh	91200%	93800%	95800%	97300%	97600%	96800%	97200%
Jammu & Kashmir	87300%	87800%	87800%	89200%	89600%	89200%	88900%
Jharkhand	96100%	96000%	94500%	94000%	92200%	94100%	94800%
Karnataka	96600%	95900%	95700%	96300%	96000%	96500%	97300%
Kerala	102800%	102200%	101600%	103200%	103600%	105800%	108400%
Lakshadweep	104300%	102000%	97800%	97500%	94300%	94800%	94700%
Madhya Pradesh	94500%	93200%	92000%	92100%	91200%	91900%	93100%
Maharashtra	94100%	93600%	93000%	93700%	93400%	92200%	92900%
Manipur	103600%	101500%	98000%	97100%	95800%	97800%	99200%
Meghalaya	94900%	93700%	94200%	95400%	95500%	97200%	98900%
Mizoram	104100%	100900%	94600%	91900%	92100%	93500%	97600%
Nagaland	99900%	93300%	87100%	86300%	88600%	90000%	93100%
Odisha	102200%	100100%	98800%	98100%	97100%	97200%	97900%
Puducherry	103000%	101300%	98900%	98500%	97900%	100100%	103700%
Punjab	84400%	85400%	86500%	87900%	88200%	87600%	89500%
Rajasthan	92100%	90800%	91100%	91900%	91000%	92100%	92800%
Sikkim	90700%	90400%	86300%	83500%	87800%	87500%	89000%

Tamil Nadu	100700%	99200%	97800%	97700%	97400%	98700%	99600%
Tripura	90400%	93200%	94300%	94600%	94500%	94800%	96000%
Uttar Pradesh	90800%	90700%	87600%	88200%	87600%	89800%	91200%
Uttarakhand	94000%	94700%	94000%	93600%	93600%	96200%	96300%
West Bengal	86500%	87800%	89100%	91100%	91700%	93400%	95000%
ALL INDIA	94600%	94100%	93000%	93400%	92700%	93300%	94300%
Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.							

Tabel 5, Nationwide Snapshot

The **all-India sex ratio** shows a U-shaped trend: declining from **946 in 1951** to **927 in 1991**, then modestly improving to **943 in 2011**—reflecting persistent gender imbalance, especially in rural regions. In 2011, **urban areas** had a lower ratio (≈ 929) compared to **rural areas** (≈ 949).

Leading & Lagging States (2011 Census)

Kerala (1,084), **Puducherry (1,037)**, and **Tamil Nadu (996)** had the **most favorable sex ratios**, well above the national average. **Lowest ratios** appeared in **Daman & Diu (618)**, **Dadra & Nagar Haveli (774)**, **Chandigarh (818)**, **Haryana (879)**, and **Delhi (868)** .

Regional Patterns & Cultural Factors

Southern and northeastern states (e.g., Kerala, Assam, Mizoram) tended to cluster near or above the national average, suggesting relatively **egalitarian gender norms**. **Northern and western states (Haryana, Punjab, Delhi)** exhibited consistently **skewed sex ratios**, especially at birth, due to **sex-selective abortion and son preference**.

Birth Sex Ratio & Missing Girls

A stark disparity exists in **child sex ratios (0–6 years)**: states like **Haryana (120 boys/100 girls)** and **Punjab (118)** far exceed the natural range (~105 boys/100 girls, or ~950 girls/1,000 boys). Between 2000–2019, an estimated **9 million female fetuses were aborted** due to gender bias. The skew has begun normalizing nationally (~110 boys/100 girls around 2010; ~108 by 2020).

Tabel 6, **National Progress**

Overall literacy in India soared from **18.33% in 1951** to **72.99% by 2011**—showcasing a monumental expansion in educational outreach. According to the 2011 Census, **male literacy was 80.9%** and **female literacy 64.6%**, reflecting a decadal growth of ~16% for women versus ~9% for men.

Leading States by 2011

Kerala (94.0%) stood highest, a testament to its sustained public investment in education since the mid-20th century. Other top performers include **Lakshadweep (91.85%)**, **Mizoram (91.33%)**, **Goa (88.70%)**, and **Tripura (87.22%)** . States like **Chandigarh**, **Delhi**, and **Puducherry** surpassed 85%, aligning with their urbanized and high-resource contexts .

Low-Literacy Regions

Bihar (61.8%), **Arunachal Pradesh (65.39%)**, **Uttar Pradesh (67.68%)**, **Andhra Pradesh (67.02%)**, and **Rajasthan (66.11%)** fell below the national average. In the **BIMARU** group (Bihar-Jharkhand-MP-Rajasthan-UP), basic literacy remains entrenched in the low 60s or early 70s by 2011.

TABLE 6: STATE-WISE LITERACY RATE (Per cent)

State/Union Territory	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	3030%	4007%	5115%	6319%	7302%	8130%	8663%
Andhra Pradesh	-	2119%	2457%	3566%	4408%	6047%	6702%
Arunachal Pradesh	-	713%	1129%	2555%	4159%	5434%	6539%
Assam	1853%	3295%	3394%	-	5289%	6325%	7219%
Bihar	1349%	2195%	2317%	3232%	3749%	4700%	6180%
Chandigarh	-	-	7043%	7480%	7781%	8194%	8605%
Chhattisgarh	941%	1814%	2408%	3263%	4291%	6466%	7028%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	1813%	3290%	4071%	5763%	7624%
Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	7120%	7818%	8710%
Delhi	-	6195%	6508%	7194%	7529%	8167%	8621%
Goa	2348%	3541%	5196%	6571%	7551%	8201%	8870%
Gujarat	2182%	3147%	3695%	4492%	6129%	6914%	7803%
Haryana	-	-	2571%	3713%	5585%	6791%	7555%
Himachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	6386%	7648%	8280%
Jammu & Kashmir	-	1295%	2171%	3064%	-	5552%	6716%
Jharkhand	1293%	2114%	2387%	3503%	4139%	5356%	6641%
Karnataka	-	2980%	3683%	4621%	5604%	6660%	7537%
Kerala	4718%	5508%	6975%	7885%	8981%	9086%	9400%
Lakshadweep	1523%	2715%	5176%	6842%	8178%	8666%	9185%
Madhya Pradesh	1316%	2141%	2727%	3863%	4467%	6374%	6932%

Maharashtra	2791%	3508%	4577%	5724%	6487%	7688%	8234%
Manipur	1257%	3604%	3847%	4966%	5989%	7050%	7920%
Meghalaya	-	2692%	2949%	4205%	4910%	6256%	7443%
Mizoram	3114%	4401%	5380%	5988%	8226%	8880%	9133%
Nagaland	1052%	2195%	3378%	5028%	6165%	6659%	7960%
Odisha	1580%	2166%	2618%	3362%	4909%	6308%	7289%
Puducherry	-	4365%	5338%	6514%	7474%	8124%	8585%
Punjab	-	-	3412%	4337%	5851%	6965%	7584%
Rajasthan	850%	1812%	2257%	3011%	3855%	6041%	6611%
Sikkim	-	-	1774%	3405%	5694%	6881%	8142%
Tamil Nadu	-	3639%	4540%	5439%	6266%	7345%	8009%
Tripura	-	2024%	3098%	5010%	6044%	7319%	8722%
Uttar Pradesh	1202%	2087%	2399%	3265%	4071%	5627%	6768%
Uttarakhand	1893%	1805%	3326%	4606%	5775%	7162%	7882%
West Bengal	2461%	3446%	3886%	4865%	5770%	6864%	7626%
ALL INDIA	1833%	2830%	3445%	4357%	5221%	6484%	7299%
Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.							

Educational Takeaways

Kerala's dominance stems from its early emphasis on universal schooling, women's education, and strong public infrastructure . The **BIMARU states** lag due to systemic challenges—lack of infrastructure, teacher shortages, high dropout rates—particularly among girls. Rising adult literacy (via FLNAT, ULLAS) and functional education programs are bridging gaps, especially in underserved regions.

CONCLUSION

India's demographic journey is a tale of contrasts rapid progress in some regions, persistent challenges in others. Literacy, gender equity, and urbanization are not just social indicators but economic levers. The document makes a compelling case for targeted interventions, especially in lagging states, to unlock India's full demographic dividend.

As India approaches its population peak, the focus must shift from numbers to quality—education, health, and gender empowerment. Only then can the country harness its demographic potential for inclusive and sustained economic growth.

India stands at a demographic crossroads. The choices made today will shape the nation's economic destiny for decades. The demographic dividend is a fleeting opportunity—it must be seized with urgency, vision, and inclusivity. Literacy, gender equity, and urban planning are not peripheral concerns; they are central to India's growth story.

The document's rich analysis reminds us that behind every statistic is a human story—a child learning to read, a woman migrating for work, a village transforming into a town. These stories, when nurtured, become the foundation of a resilient, equitable, and prosperous India.

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