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**GENDER
EQUALITY**



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India is one of the largest and fastest growing economies in the world. Yet, when it comes to gender equality, India ranks poorly on global indicators.¹ In spite of powerful Indian women voices across the world in diverse fields of work, women and girls in India do not enjoy many of their rights due to deeply-held notions of (lesser) female value and power. Manifestations of this include:

■	■	■	■	■	■
Sex ratio at birth decreased from 905 in 2001 to 899 girls born per 1,000 boys in 2011 (normal is 40-960 girls per 1,000 boys). ²	Under-five mortality rate for girls in India is 11% higher for girls whereas globally, the under-five mortality rate is 9% higher for boys, reflecting a 20% abnormality in the under-five mortality rate for girls. ³	56% of 15 to 19 year old girls are anaemic (compared to 30% of boys). ⁴	27% of 20 to 24 year old women were married before 18. ⁵	Only 12.7% of land holdings are in the names of women, even as 77% women rely on agriculture as their primary source of income. ⁶	39% of men, women think that it is sometimes or always justifiable for a man to beat his wife. ⁷

UNICEF's STRATEGY

UNICEF India’s 2018-2022 Country Programme has been developed in response to the identification of deprivations that Indian children face, including gender based deprivations in health, nutrition, education, WASH, rights protection and social protection. Each outcome is committed to a gender priority which is noted explicitly in its programme, budget and results. These include:

01	Health	02	Nutrition	03	Education
	Reducing excess female mortality under five and supporting equal care-seeking behaviour for girls and boys. (Example: front-line workers encourage families to take sick baby girls to the hospital immediately)		Improving nutrition of women and girls, especially by promoting more equitable eating practices (Example: women cooperatives develop and implement their own micro-plans for improved nutrition in their villages)		Gender responsive support to enable out-of-school girls and boys to learn and enabling more gender-responsive curricula and pedagogy (Example: implementing new strategies for identifying vulnerable out of school girls and boys, overhaul of textbooks so that the language, images and messages do not perpetuate gender stereotypes)

¹In lowest group of countries in the 2016 UNDP Human Development Gender Inequality Index, 108 out of 144 countries in 2017 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index, ²2017, Economic and Political Weekly, Update in Trends in Sex Ratio at Birth, ³UNIGME 2017 (for all countries except India), India: Sample Registration System 2016, ⁴National Family and Health Survey 4, 2015-2016, ⁵Ibid, ⁶Data on women land holdings is from the Agriculture Census (2010-11) which states that the percentage share of female operational holders has increased from 11.70 in 2005-06 to 12.78 in 2010-11 (both individual and jointly owned). Data on women in agric3ulture is from the Statistical Profile on Women; Ministry of Labour and Employment 2012-13, ⁷UN Women, 2012, Progress of World’s Women: Access to Justice

04	Child Protection	05	WASH	06	Social Policy	07	Disaster Risk Reduction
	Ending child and early marriage (Example: supporting panchayats to become “child-marriage free”, facilitating girls and boys clubs that teach girls sports, photography, journalism and other non-traditional activities)		Improving girls’ access to menstrual hygiene management, including through well-equipped separate toilets in schools (Example: developing gender guidelines from Swachh Bharat Mission, supporting states to implement MHM policy)		Supporting state governments to develop gender-responsive cash transfer programmes and supporting women’s leadership in local governance (Example: cash transfer programme in West Bengal to enable girls to stay in school, a Resource Centre for women panchayat leaders in Jharkhand)		Enabling greater gender disaggregation of information management for disaster risk reduction and more leadership and participation of women and girls (Example: greater women’s leadership and participation in Village Disaster Management Committees)

In addition, three cross-cutting themes will support all outcomes:

Joint C4D-Gender strategy:	Advocating for and promoting equal value of girls:	Increasing and improving girls’ and women’s safe mobility:
UNICEF’s Communications for Development team develops social and behaviour change communications to support each outcome. These communications prioritize efforts to change negative gender norms like unequal feeding, unequal investment in young girls and boys, harmful MHM practices and perpetuation of lower value of girls than boys through wedding dowry.	UNICEF’s Communications, Advocacy and Partnerships team works with media, influencers and gamechangers to advocate for UNICEF priorities, which, in the 2018-2022 programme, includes Equal Value of Girls and Boys.	UNICEF India has begun work in some states to work on new programmes with new partners to improve the ability and freedom of women and girls, including to access government services like schools and hospitals.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Key partners include the Ministry of Women and Child Development, especially its leadership of the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Programme, which UNICEF India is supporting at a federal level and also in states. Support to other ministries like Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is coordinated through relevant UNICEF sectoral teams. UNICEF India works closely with other UN agencies to support gender equality, especially with United Nations Population Fund and UN Women. Civil society organizations, including gender experts and activities are also key partners.