GENDER EQUALITY

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. 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 (in)separi 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 910-960 girls per 1,000 boys.
- 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.
- 56% of 15 to 19 year old adolescent women are anaemic (compared to 30% of boys).
- 27% of 20 to 24 year old women were married before 18.
- Only 12.7% of land holdings are in the names of women, even as 77.3% women rely on agriculture as their primary source of income.
- 39% of men, women think that it is sometimes or always justifiable for a man to beat his wife.

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:

- Health: Reducing excess female mortality under five and supporting equal care-seeking behaviour for girls and boys. (Example: frontline workers encourage families to take sick baby girls to the hospital immediately)
- Nutrition: 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)
- Education: Gender responsive support to enable out-of-school girls and boys to learn and enable 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)

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

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.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS