

A Study of Gender Disparities among the Districts of Haryana

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ABSTRACT

*"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."-
Dr.B.R.Ambedkar*

India's demography is changing. At present, India is known worldwide for its demographic advantage on account of the young population at the time when world's population is rapidly aging. Different aspect of this demographic advantage is the gender disparity.

Women comprise almost half of the human population of the world. No development can be thought without their help and support. Manusmriti(the ancient legal text of Hinduism) says, "yatn naryasto pojyantay, ramantay tatra devta [3/56](where women are provided place of honor, gods are pleased and reside there in that household)"but in much of South Asia and particularly in India sons are preferred over daughters and both are raised differently for a number of financial, economic, religious and social reasons including property inheritance, old age security, dowry, family lineage, power and prestige, rituals and beliefs about religious duties and salvation. A report by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has revealed that the Indian girl child is the most vulnerable in world. Gender disparity is prevalent in different dimensions of life.

This paper is an attempt to study the inter district gender disparity in the Indian state of Haryana by examining the variables which have a bearing on gender and equity issues.

I INTRODUCTION

"Women do two-thirds of the world's work; receive ten percent of the world's income and own one percent of the means of production" (Robbins 1999: 354). Haryana is one of the richest states in India but is often criticized for its low sex ratio and large gender disparities which begin in the womb itself where female embryos are selectively aborted and continues as the girl child grows older in the form of smaller ration of food and nutrition available to her, fewer schooling and higher education opportunities and higher involvement of girls in household chores relatively to boys. This gender disparity goes on in the later stages of a female's life first in the labor market where they get fewer chances of employment and lower wages relative to their male counterparts and at home where they have a lesser say in major economic and financial decisions.

This paper focuses on inter district gender disparities in the areas of education, health, marriage and nutritional status in Haryana.

II ABOUT HARYANA

Haryana is a north Indian state came into existence in 1966 on 1st of November when it was separated from the state of Punjab on the grounds of different language. It stands 21st in terms of its area, which is spread about 44,212 km² (17,070 sq mi). It is bordered by Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the north and by Rajasthan to the west and south. Haryana shares its capital with Punjab. There are total 21 districts in Haryana out of which Gurgaon and Faridabad are among the fastest growing districts.

III OBJECTIVES

Objective of this research is to study the inter district gender disparity by using selected variables which have direct bearing on gender issues like sex composition, education, marriage and health status.

IV METHODOLOGY

Area of study- All 21 districts of Haryana

Data used- secondary data

Sources of data-National Family Health Survey 4 and Census of India 2011

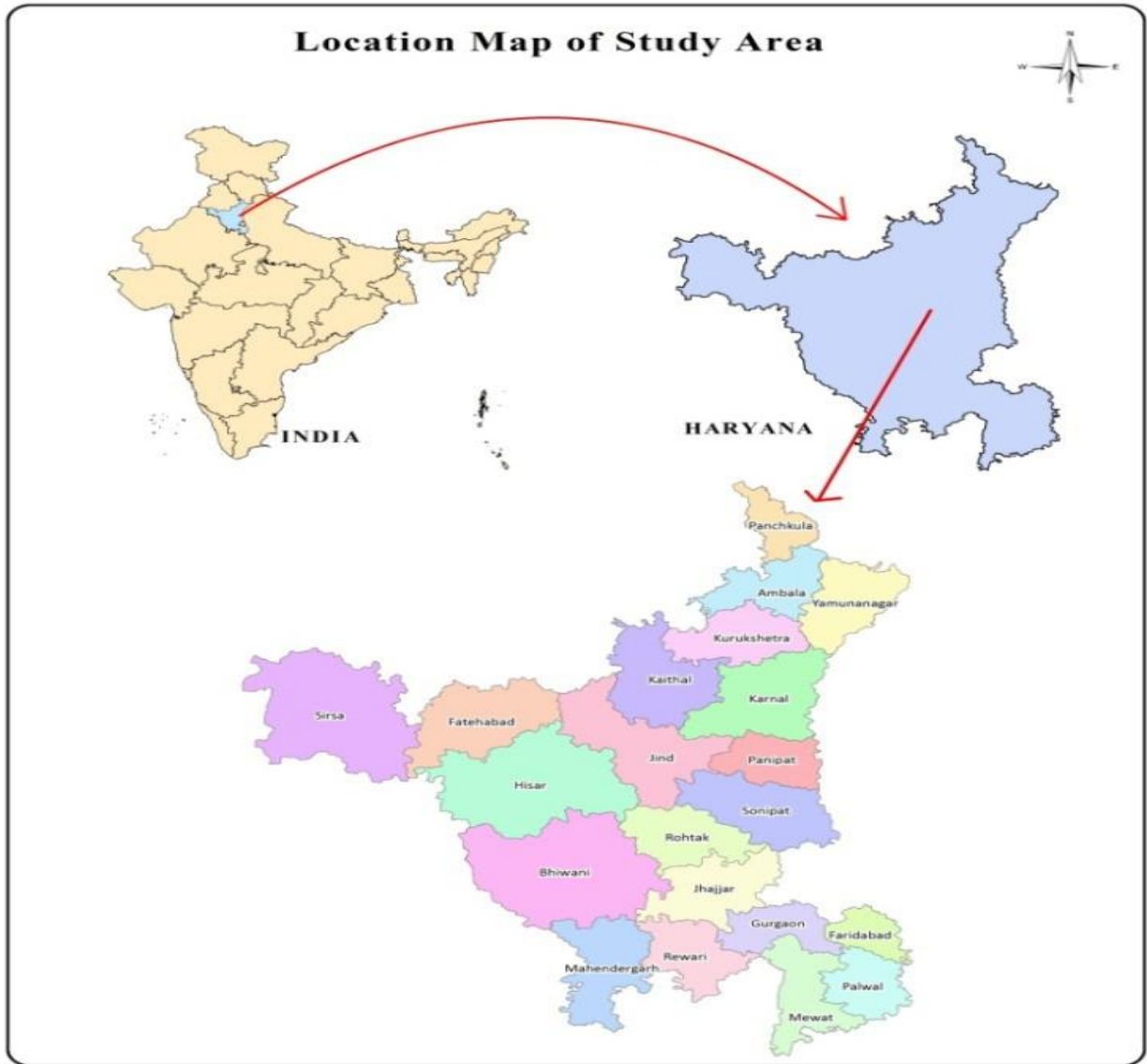


Figure 1

V DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

(A)SEX COMPOSITION

Sex composition is one of the major demographic characteristic to measure the degree of gender disparity and it is concluded from the discussion below that sex ratio and sex ratio at birth are not uniform across the 21 districts in Haryana.

SEX RATIO

Lower value of Sex ratio is a major indicator of women disempowerment. Census data and the different rounds of Sample Registration Surveys have revealed that the problem is acute in the economically progressive northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Gujarat.

Haryana is the state which lags behind the national average (943*). Sex ratio for almost every district of Haryana suggests the same. Out of 21 districts in Haryana, 20 districts are below 943 while Bhiwani is the

only district higher at 980. Panchkula which is second in women literacy rate(85.7) has the lowest sex ratio of 780 while Ambala which is at the top in women literacy (90percent) is among the six districts having the worst sex ratio. Contributing to the shock is the fact that Gurgaon often referred to as India's fastest growing city is the second district after Panchkula which has the worst sex ratio(812). While Mewat(35.6 percent women literacy rate) and Sirsa(70.3 percent women literacy rate) which are predominantly rural and less literate have higher sex ratios of 932 and 913 respectively. This correlation between sex ratio and literacy rate shows inverse relationship.

DISTRICT	SEX RATIO(arranged in descending order)	WOMEN LITERACY RATE
Bhiwani	980	76.2
Mewat	932	35.6
Rohtak	916	78
Sirsa	913	70.3
Fatehabad	908	71.8
Jhajjar	894	82.5
Rewari	894	77.6
Jind	893	77.2
Kurukshetra	892	80.4
Kaithal	889	73.1
Hisar	883	73.3
Karnal	881	78.4
Palwal	880	59.8
Mahendragarh	876	79
Yamunanagar	867	84.3
Ambala	846	90
Panipat	846	78.6
Sonapat	830	82.1
Faridabad	826	74.2
Gurgaon	812	74.6
Panchkula	780	85.7

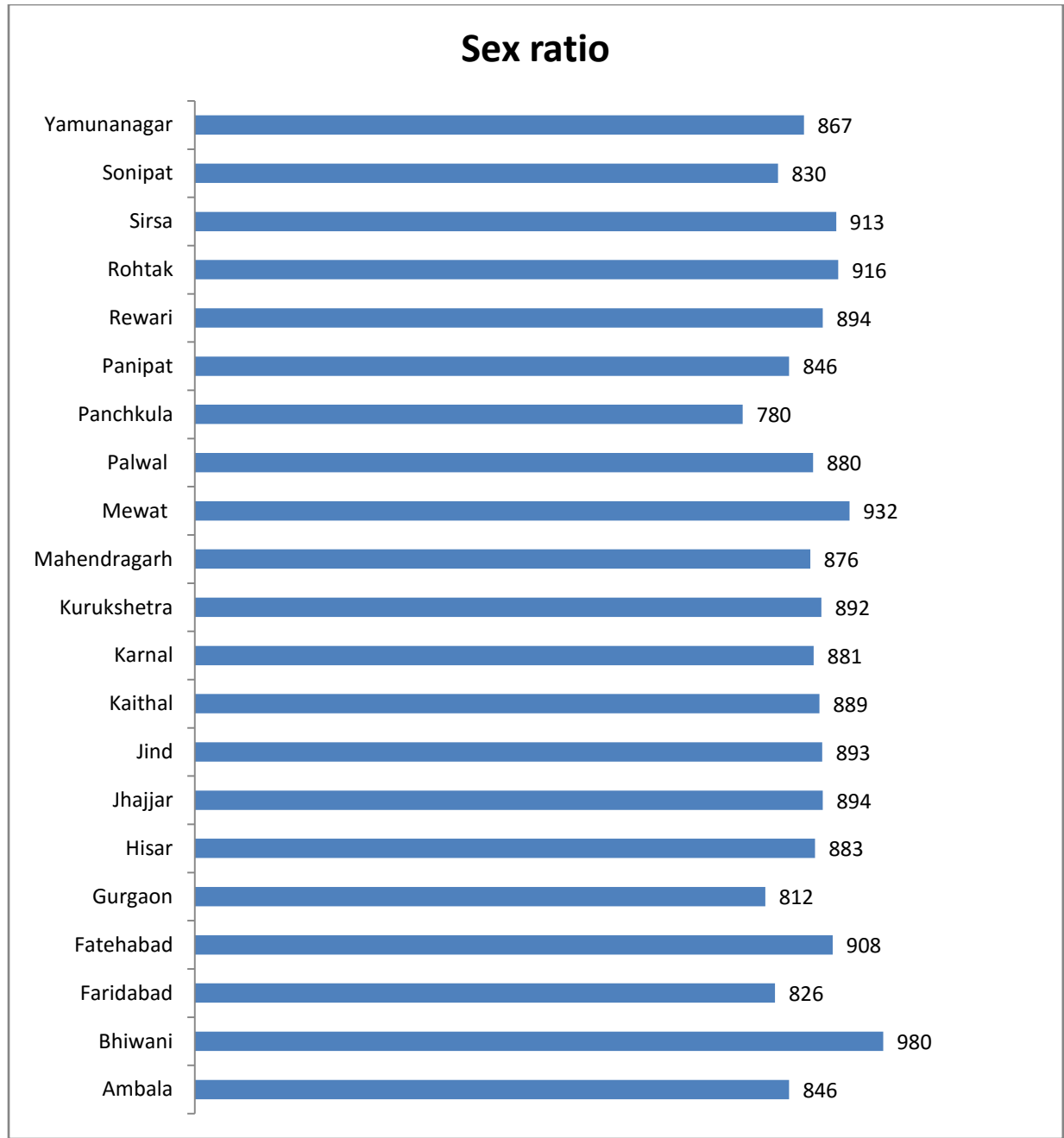


Chart 1

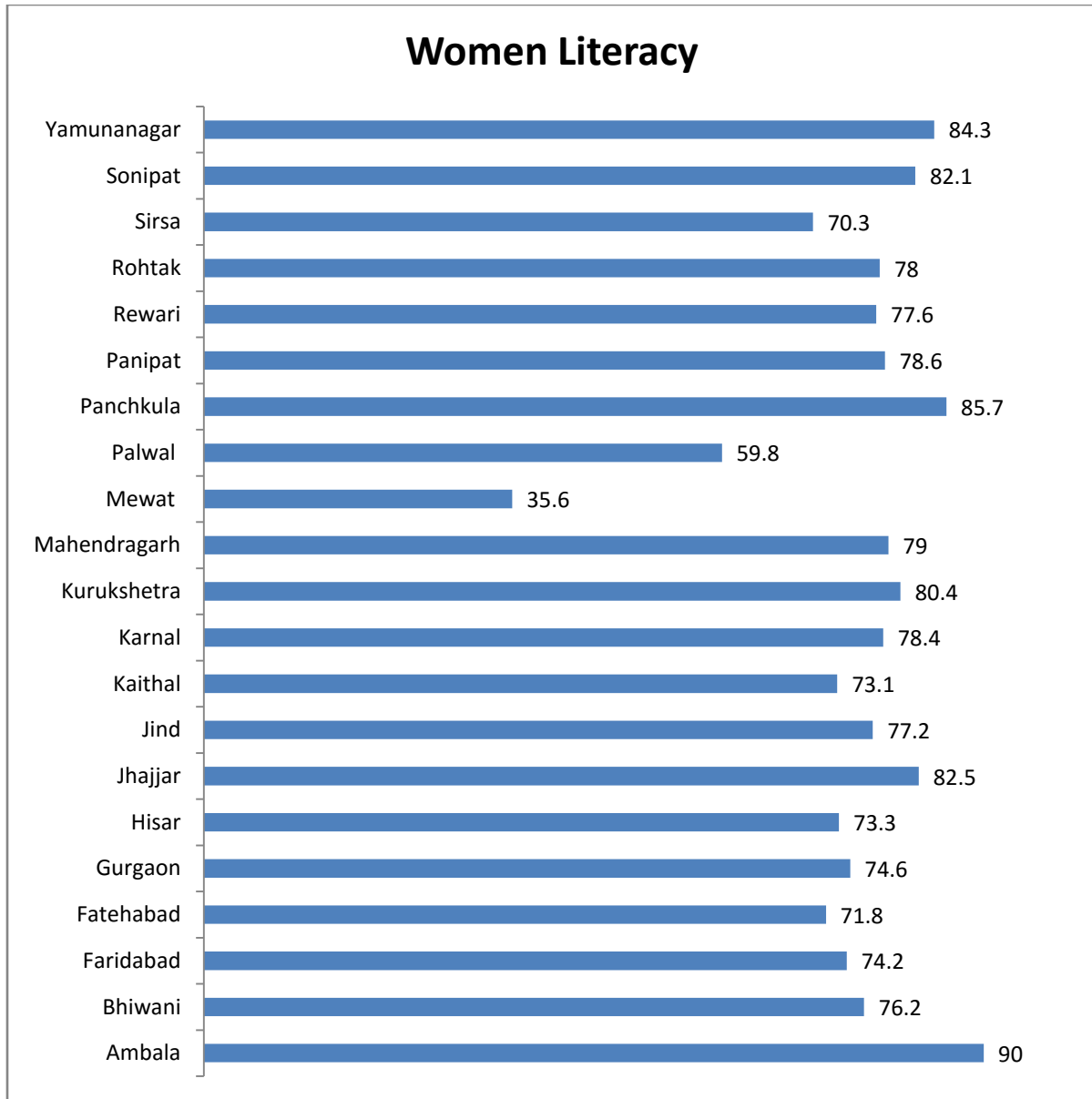


Chart 2

SEX RATIO AT BIRTH

In case of sex ratio at birth also, situation is not very different. Panchkula and Ambala which top the list in women literacy rate are among the six states having the worst sex ratio at birth. Faridabad which is the largest district (its population is almost the double of next most populated city Gurgaon) of Haryana and has almost the same women literacy rate (74.2 percent) as Gurgaon (74.6) falters on sex ratio at birth front. Out of 21 districts only 9 districts (Bhiwani Fatehabad, Gurgaon, jind, kaithal, Palwal) have the values of sex ratios at birth more than their sex ratio. If we assume the effect of fertility, mortality and migration constant, the higher values of sex ratio at birth when compared with the sex ratio will affect the sex ratio positively in these nine districts in future. But in the remaining 12 districts sex ratio at birth is alarming and it is below the sex ratio (except Karnal where both the ratios are almost equal) which can again distort the sex ratio in times to come.

SEX RATIO AND SEX RATIO AT BIRTH

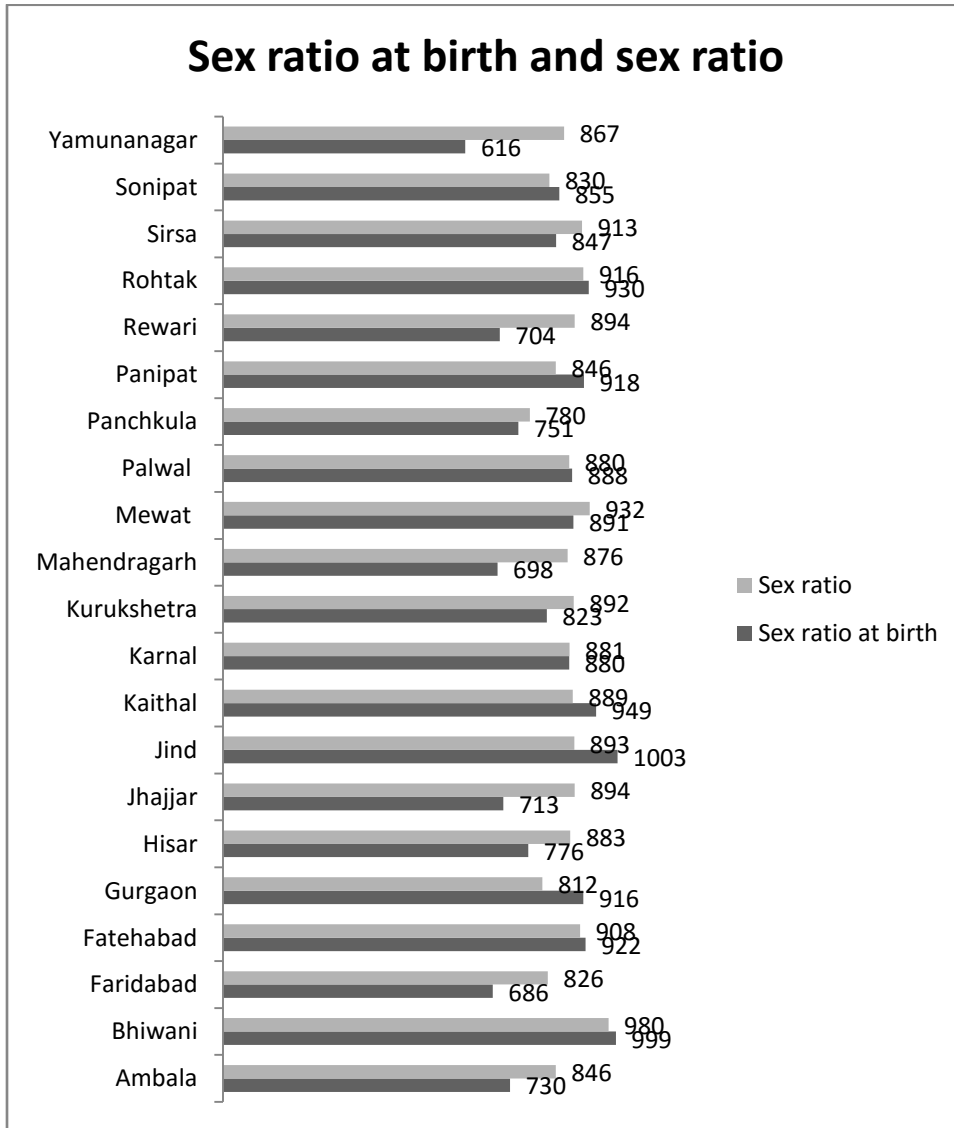


Chart 3

(B) EDUCATION

Literacy is one of the main components of human development index. It is the component of gender inequality index also which was introduced in 2010 in Human Development Report by United Nations Development Programme.

COMPARISON OF WOMEN AND MEN LITERACY

Disparity in male and female literacy rate is a major indicator of gender based inequality. Ambala is the district having the highest women literacy (90 percent) and Mewat has the minimum women literacy rate (35.6 percent).

There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in the districts of Haryana though disparity as a whole has decreased in 2015-16. Mewat has the maximum disparity and Ambala has the minimum disparity in women and men literacy.

SURVEY	Male	Female	Maximum disparity in literacy	Minimum disparity in literacy
NFHS-4	90.6	75.4	Mewat	Ambala

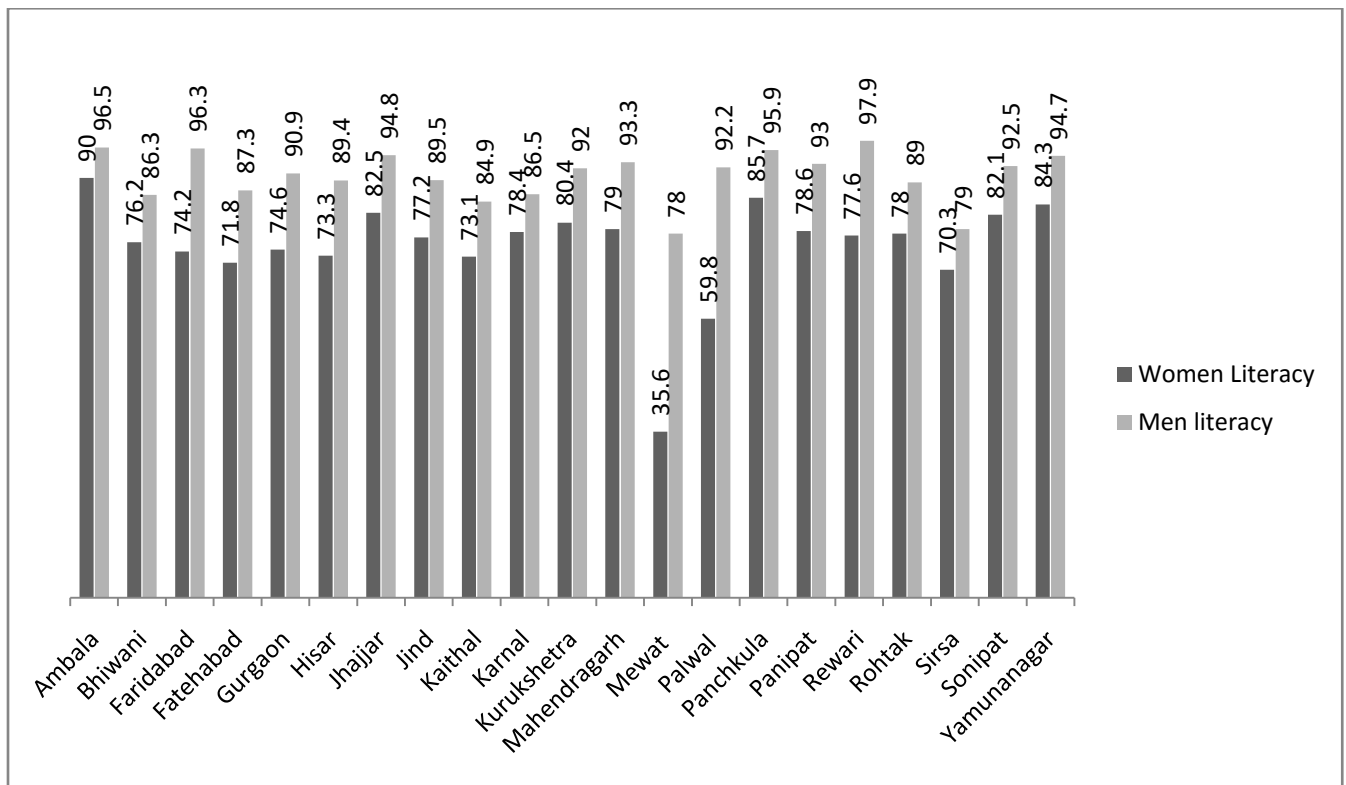


Chart 4

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WITH 10 OR MORE YEARS OF SCHOOLING-

Panchkula has the highest percentage of women with 10 or more years of schooling (67%) while Mewat has the lowest percentage (12.7%).

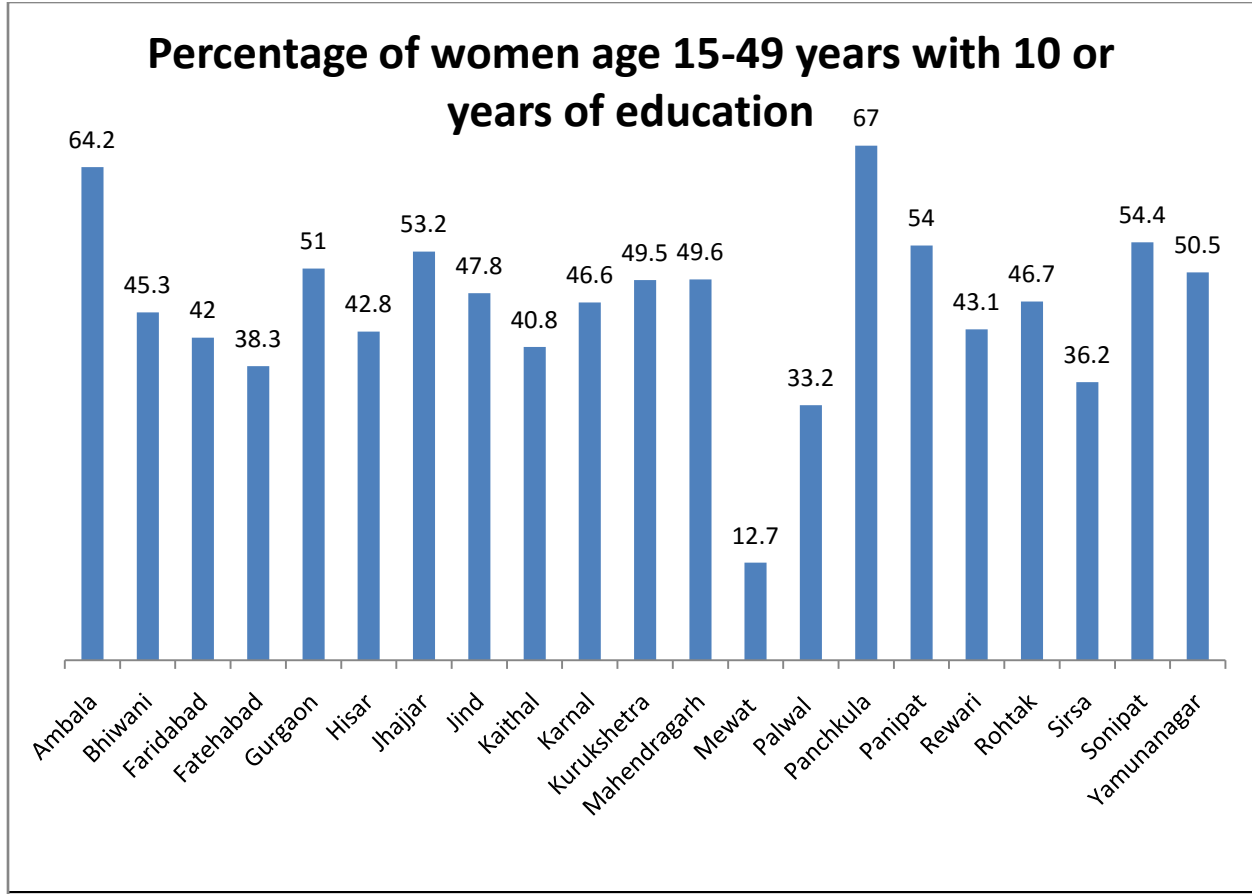


Chart 5

(C) MARRIAGE AND PREGNANCY

Early marriage cut shorts the childhood and compromise the fundamental rights of a child.

In 2006, "The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006" was passed to prohibit solemnization of child marriages in India. This law states that men must be at least 21 years of age and women must but be at least 18 years of age to marry. Practice of early marriages in Haryana is widespread for both the genders but the percentage of men age 25-29 years married before 21 years is greater than the percentage of women age 20-24 years married before 18 years for each district.

District with maximum and minimum percentage of women age 20-24 years married before 18 years are Mewat(37.6%) and Yamunanagar (6.9%) respectively. For men maximum and minimum percentage of 25-29 years married before 21 years is found in Mewat (70.4%) and Ambala(14.5%) respectively. Highest disparity is found in Hisar where 15.5% of women age 20-24 years are married before 18 years and 48.6 % of men age 25-29 years married before 21 years. Lowest disparity is in Fatehabad where almost the same percentage of women age 20-24 years married before 18 years and men age 25-29 years married before 21 years is found.

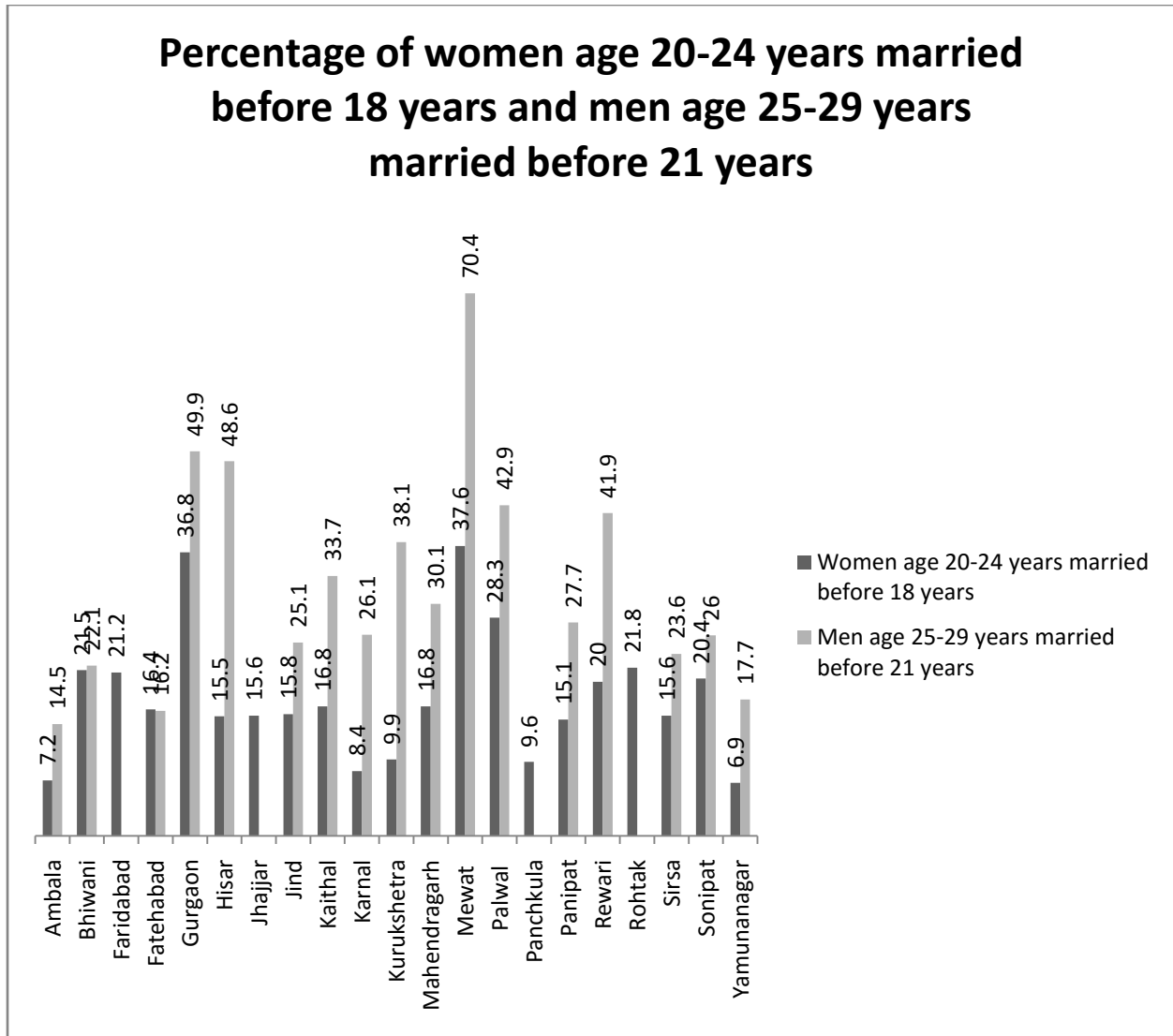


Chart 6

PREGNANCY

Medical, economic and psychological impact of early childbearing can be significant for a women. Mewat (14.2%) has the maximum percentage of women age 15-19 years who were already mother or pregnant at the time of NFHS-4 survey while Panchkula (1.2%) has the lowest percentage of such women. Other districts with high percentage of women age 15-19 years who were already mother or pregnant at the time of NFHS-4 survey are Palwal (12.5%), Rewari (10.8%) and Rohtak(10.2%).

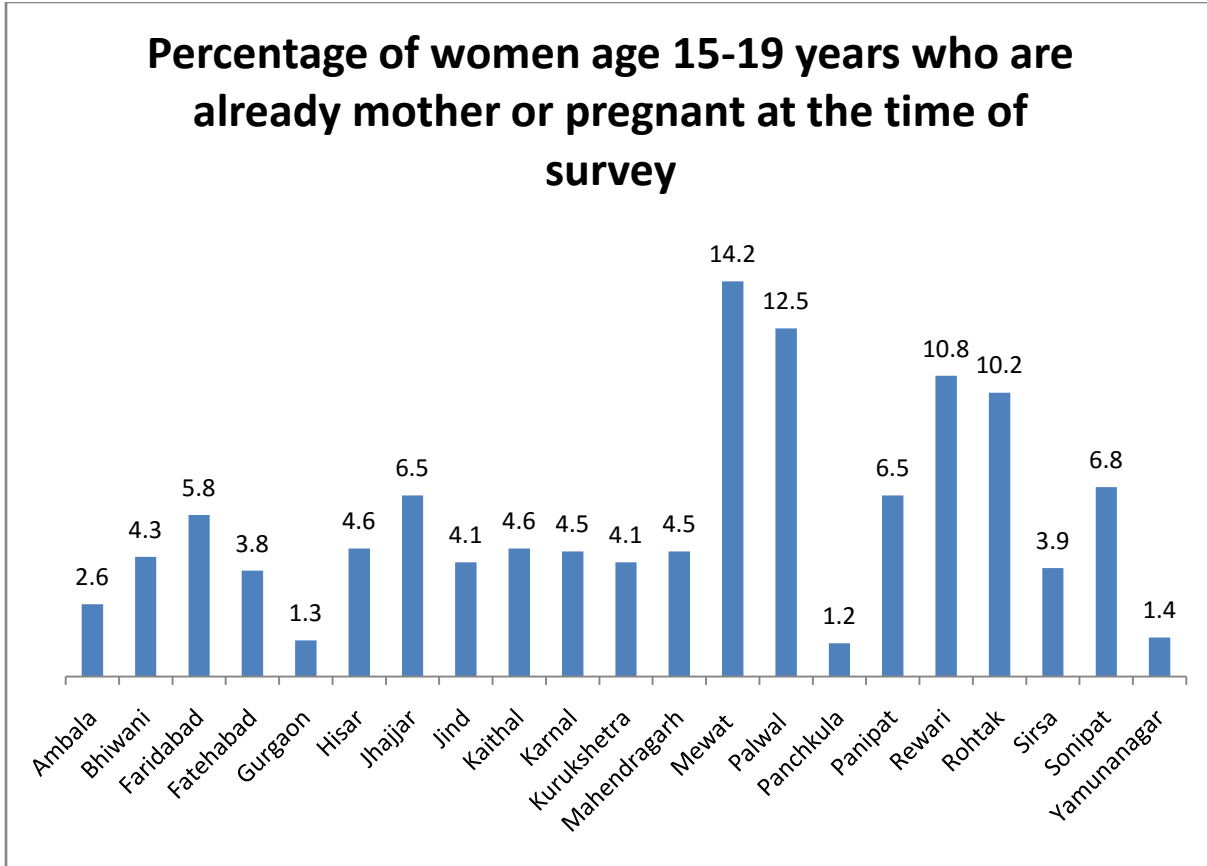


Chart 7

(D) NUTRITIONAL DISPARITIES

Adequate nutrition, a fundamental cornerstone of any individual's health, is especially critical for women because inadequate nutrition wreaks havoc not only on women's own health but also on the health of their children(Elizabeth I. Ransom and Leslie K. Elder)

BODY MASS INDEX(BMI)

The BMI is an attempt to quantify the amount of tissue mass (muscle, fat, and bone) in an individual, and then categorize that person as *underweight*, *normal weight*, *overweight*, or *obese* based on that value. Commonly accepted BMI ranges are underweight: under 18.5 kg/m², normal weight: 18.5 to 25, overweight: 25 to 30, obese: over 30.

Highest percentage of women as well as men age 15-49 years whose BMI is below normal is in Mewat(27.1% women and 30.4% men)but it is lesser in case of women. Panchkula(6.8%) has the lowest percentage of women whose BMI is below normal while Sonipat(4.3%)has least percentage of men with below normal BMI. Ambala, Kaithal and Mewat are the only districts where percentage of men with lower BMI is more than the percentage of such women. In restof the districts percentage of women with below normal BMI is more than the men and the highest disparity is in Sirsa where percentage of women and men with below normal BMI are 20.6 % and 10.9 % respectively.

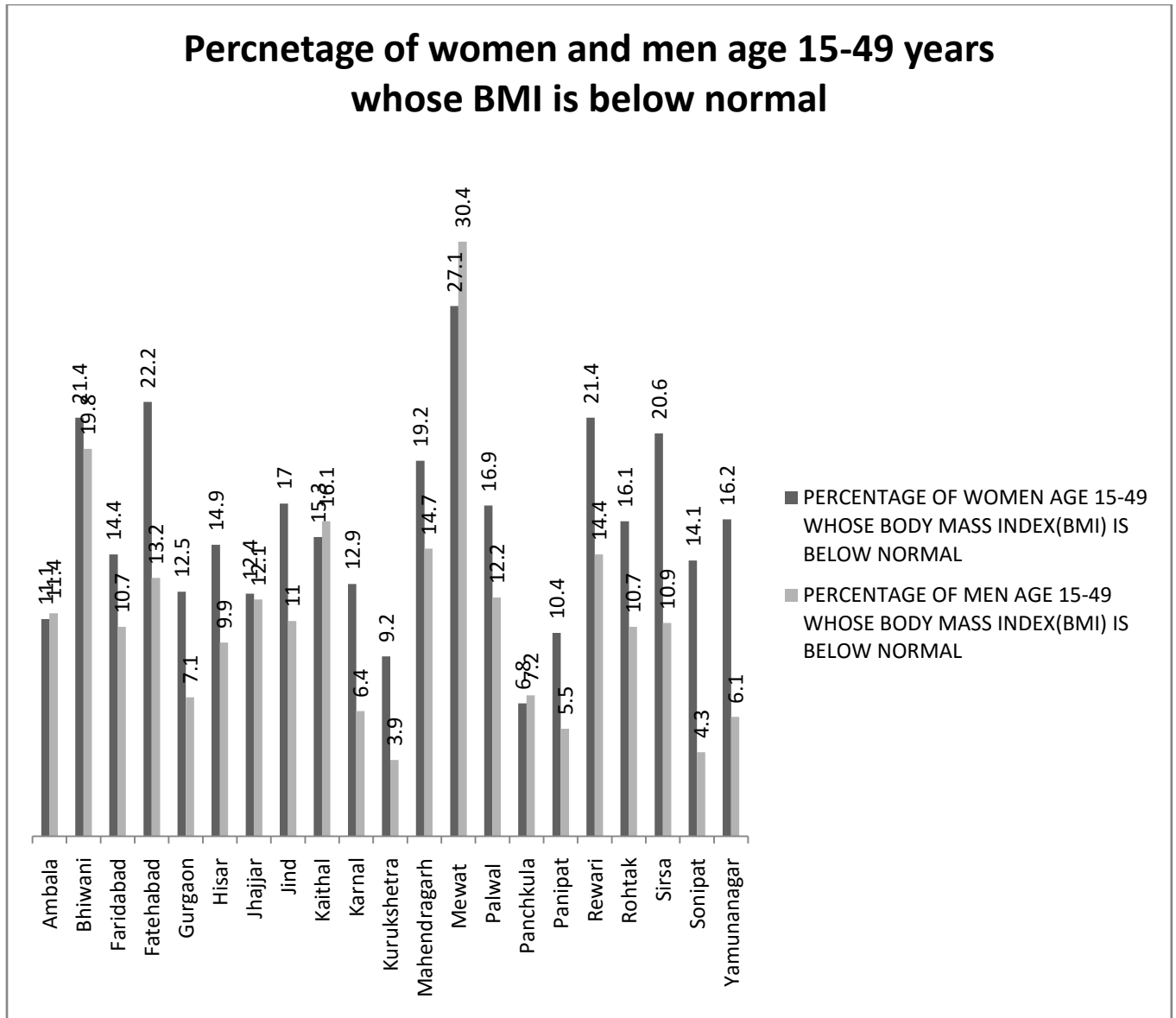


Chart 8

ANAEMIA-

Nutritional disparity is clearly visible when comparing the percentage of anaemic women and men across the districts of Haryana. For women the highest percentage of anaemic women is 73.2% found in Gurgaon. The lowest percentage of anaemic women is in Faridabad (54.1%) which is even greater than the highest percentage of anaemic men found in Yamunanagar (33.7%). Across all the districts of Haryana percentage of anaemic women is more than the percentage of anaemic men.

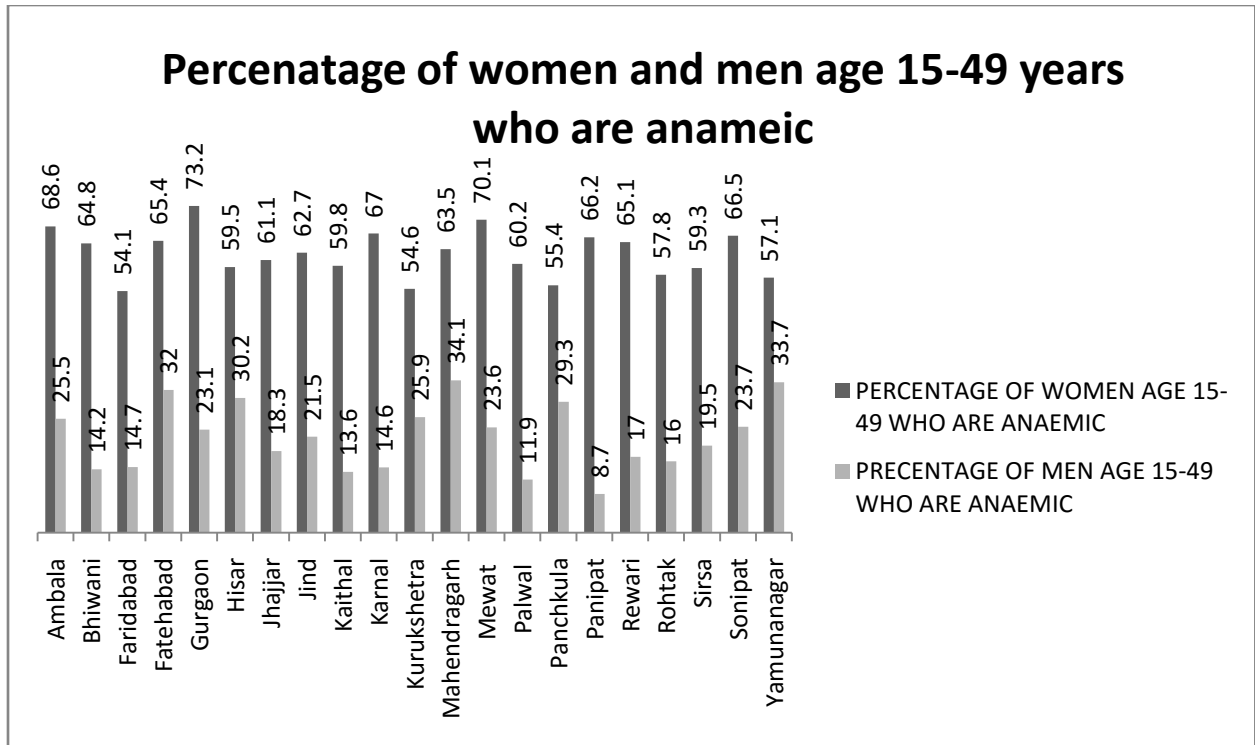


Chart 9

Since anemia develops during pregnancy, Comparison of anemic men with non pregnant anemic women was again done but the results didn't very much.

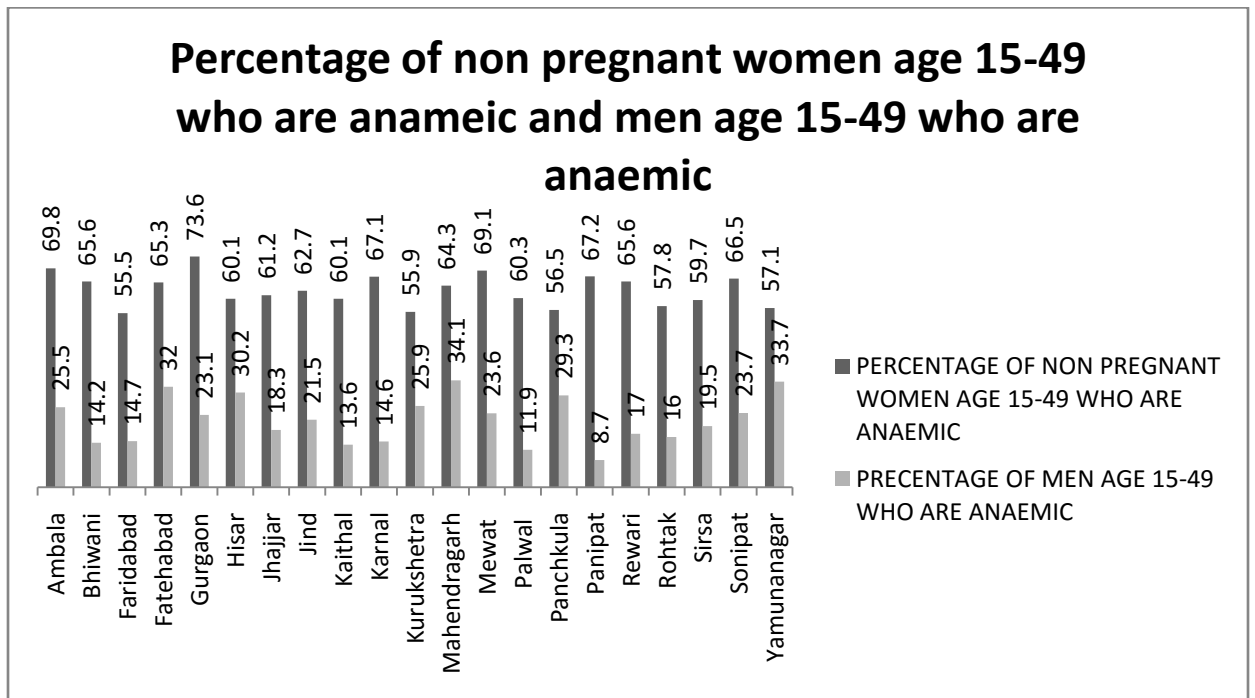


Chart 10

VI CONCLUSION

This paper found regional disparities in gender equality. It is found that sex ratio is low in Gurgaon, Faridabad and Panchkula districts where the migration rate is high due to industrial development and their proximity to Delhi or to Chandigarh. Since the women's education helps in averting child marriage and early pregnancy, Mewat tops in both due to least female literacy and highest gender disparity in literacy rate among all the districts of Haryana. Regional disparities are also found in nutritional status of females and males. Compared with males, females are at higher risk of below normal BMI and anemia.

Females in Mewat district have the worst nutrition status but few more developed districts like Gurgaon and Faridabad also falter with high percentage of anemic women relatively to men.

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