Mapping Marginalisation of gendered spaces in Mumbai and its peri urban areas

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"I am a citizen of the world." ~ Sylvia Beach
"When I discover who I am, I'll be free." ~ Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

I.   Introduction:

What is gender? Gender is comprised of three components: physical sex, gender expression, and gender identity (Butler 1992, Mikkola 2008, Serano 2007). Physical sex is the shape and functioning of various organs in the body in a typical manner. The presence of chromosomes, hormones and the related development of secondary sex characteristics help us to identify humans as 'males' and 'females'. The identity of the 'transgender' is still a debatable question in many countries of the world. In spite of natural characteristics of being male and being female, presence of a mixed behavioural pattern may be observed among men and women leading to confusion about their gender.

Gender expression is a set of social roles, cultural practices and behaviours which the society assigns to males and females. More or less gender roles are homogenous all over the world.

Gender identity is a person's internal sense of being a man or a woman or other gender (Butler, 1992). However, identity in itself is a very complex term because it is concerned with the psychological sense of self, its relations to others-deeply rooted personal and social phenomena that moulds individual and collective behaviour (Warf, B 2006). In a patriarchal society like India, the identity of a woman is also a complex feature because invariably since early age a girl's identity is associated with her relationship with the male members in the family. So with reference to family relations she grows up as a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother, a mother-in-law and/or as a grandmother. With reference to marital status, she is single or married or a widow or a divorcee or a wife deserted by her husband. And these identities play a very significant role in the life of an Indian woman when it comes to interactions with the society.
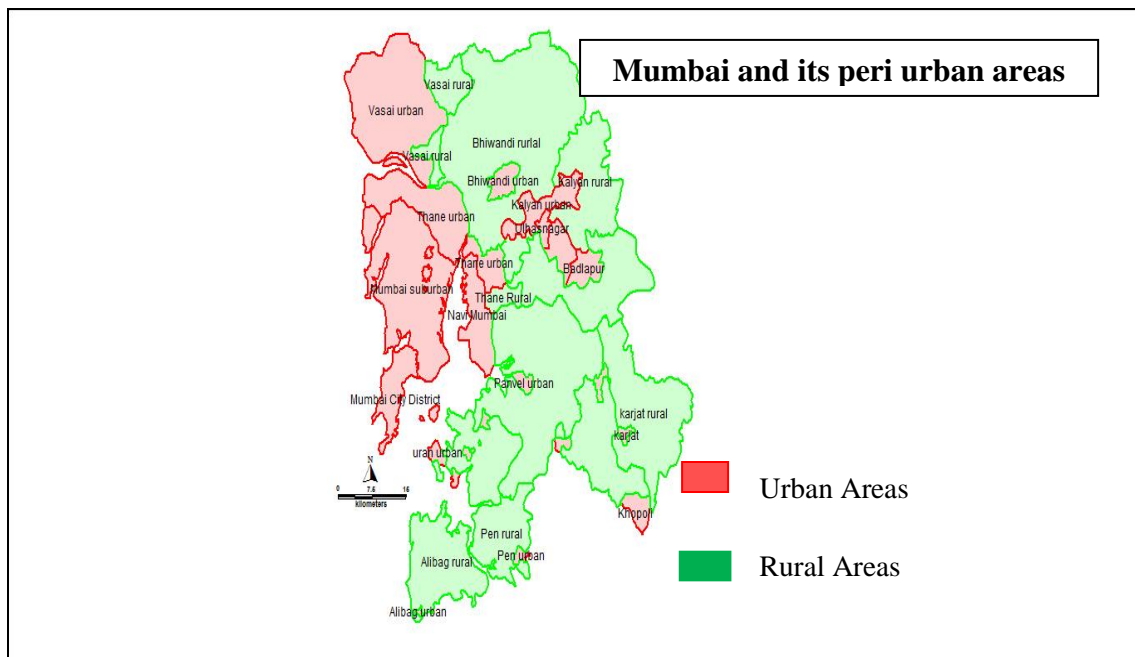
The Study area:

Mumbai is located on the west coast in Konkan region of Maharashtra state. An archival metamorphosis of this city from a group of seven islands (in the pre-British times); to a textile hub to a gentrified commercial capital has made Mumbai a hotspot on the map of India. Under the sway of global restructuration processes, planners and bureaucrats have been designing the built environment of Mumbai to suit the needs of a global city. The make-over of Mumbai began with the mushrooming fly-overs, expressways-freeways, the Mono and Metro Rail projects and the proliferating development of real estate in the city and in the distant suburbs and adjoining rural areas. Impact of these urban renewal schemes is visible in the process of cultural transformation too. The cultural transformation is superficial as people especially from the low income group are being marginalised. It is also noteworthy to study and understand the processes and politics associated with provisions and policies related to female education, employment, nutrition, health and security because women also has been a marginalised group since ages under the reign of patriarchy.

At the outset, a typical woman from Mumbai appears to be liberal, outgoing and bold. This image is typically of a working woman. Migrant women do claim that this city is comparatively safer than many other cities and towns in India. This possibly could be because of Maharashtra's history of social reforms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and also because a large number of women in the city are a part of the urban workforce (Phadke, S 2007). Maharashtra has had a rich heritage of social reforms since the pre-independence time period. People like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Maharishi Karve, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, and many such notable radical reformers have sacrificed their lives for upliftment of the

marginalised groups and specially women. Maharashtra also has a record of being the first state in India to formulate a comprehensive policy for women which was implemented in 1994 and later on ammended in 2001 and 2013. In spite of these historical roots of social reforms and the impact of globalisation has there been any change in the status of women or they still continue to remain a marginalised group?

The present study therefore tries to understand these processes and their impact on the status of women in Mumbai and its peri-urban areas.

Map 1: The Study Area

II.   Methodology:

For the present study, data has been obtained from the Census of India 1971 to 2011 censuses. This data was tabulated and then utilised for calculation of various parameters like sex ratio, literacy rate etc. Mapping was done with the help of Map Info 6.0 version. The scheme of classification used in mapping is the Quartile Method. Definitions of sex ratio, proportion of female population, literacy rate were used from the census data itself.

Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males.
Definition of literate:
A person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language has been taken as literate. It is not necessary for a person to have received any formal education or passed any minimum educational standard for being treated as literate. People who were blind and could read in Braille are treated to be literates.
A person, who can neither read nor write or can only read but cannot write in any language, is treated as illiterate. All children of age 6 years or less, even if going to school and have picked up reading and writing, are treated as illiterate.
Literacy rate of population is defined as the percentage of literates to the total population age 7 years and above.

$$\text{Literacy Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Literates}}{\text{Population aged 7+}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Proportion of female population} = \frac{(\text{Population of present year} - \text{Population of past year}) \times 100}{\text{Population of past year}}$$

Highlights of development and empowerment policies on the status of women:

As mentioned earlier, Maharashtra state has had nurtured a rich heritage in social reforms in the pre-independence and to some extent in the post-independence period. Women were active partners in the freedom struggle movement and also have led in other social reform movements. Be it the movement against caste system or farmer's movement or movement of workers or even in industrial and commercial manufacturing, women have been key players. Maharashtra government started taking concerted efforts on various issues of women specially after 1975 which was celebrated as International Women's Year and the decade was declared as United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) by the United Nations Organisation (UNO). The efforts taken by the government can be classified into three stages- welfare, development and empowerment. In the first stage from 1975-1994 welfare policies were undertaken. From 1994 to 2001, the approach shifted from welfare to development of women and 2001 onwards, it has been focusing on empowerment of women. These alterations have been brought by Maharashtra government in conjunction with the Central government.

An independent Department of Women and Child Development was set up in the State in June 1993. This department has been the nodal agency for formulating the State Women's Policy. 1993 was also the year when the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments provided 33% reservation for women in the local self-government institutions. A large movement of women's self-help groups started arising during this time period which also gave a boost up for unity and active participation of women in the struggle against male dominance.

It has been the first state in India to formulate a comprehensive policy for women. The objective of this policy was to ensure improvements in the physical, mental and emotional quality of women's lives in the State. The goal was to make them economically independent and self-reliant. Certain areas were identified as relevant and basic to the development of women and were proposed initially to focus on those areas.

Common objectives related to development and empowerment of women since 1994 policy:

➢ To cultivate progressive approach for the overall development and empowerment of women in Maharashtra and to lay emphasis on changing patriarchal mindset; to make efforts to nurture healthy and amicable environment among men and women, to make resources available to women so that they can achieve their goals and to provide them with equal opportunities in all fields so that women can live their life as per their choice.

➢ To adopt effective measures to prevent decline in the number of birth of girl child by initiating a strict control over sex determination tests.

➢ Special efforts to increase female literacy;

➢ To change the traditional image of woman and to make necessary efforts to establish new image of self-reliant woman.

➢ To make efforts to increase participation of women in decision-making process and planning in the interest of welfare of women from all sections of the society.
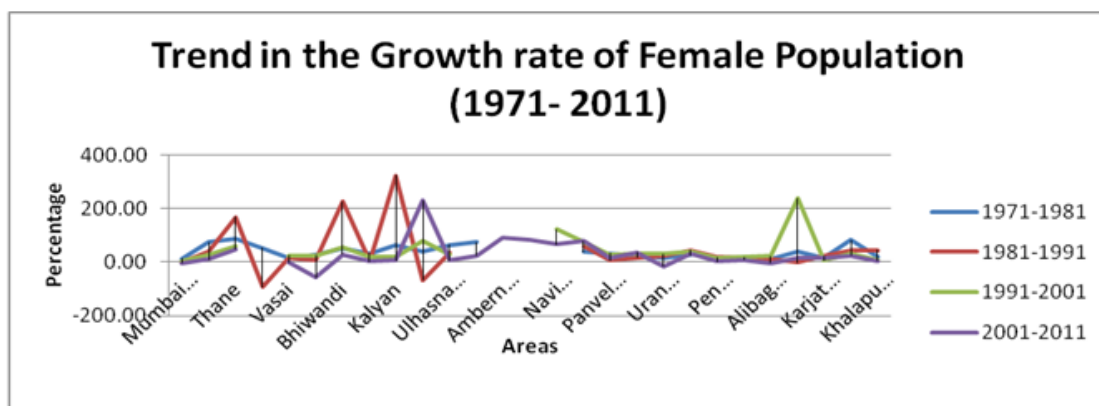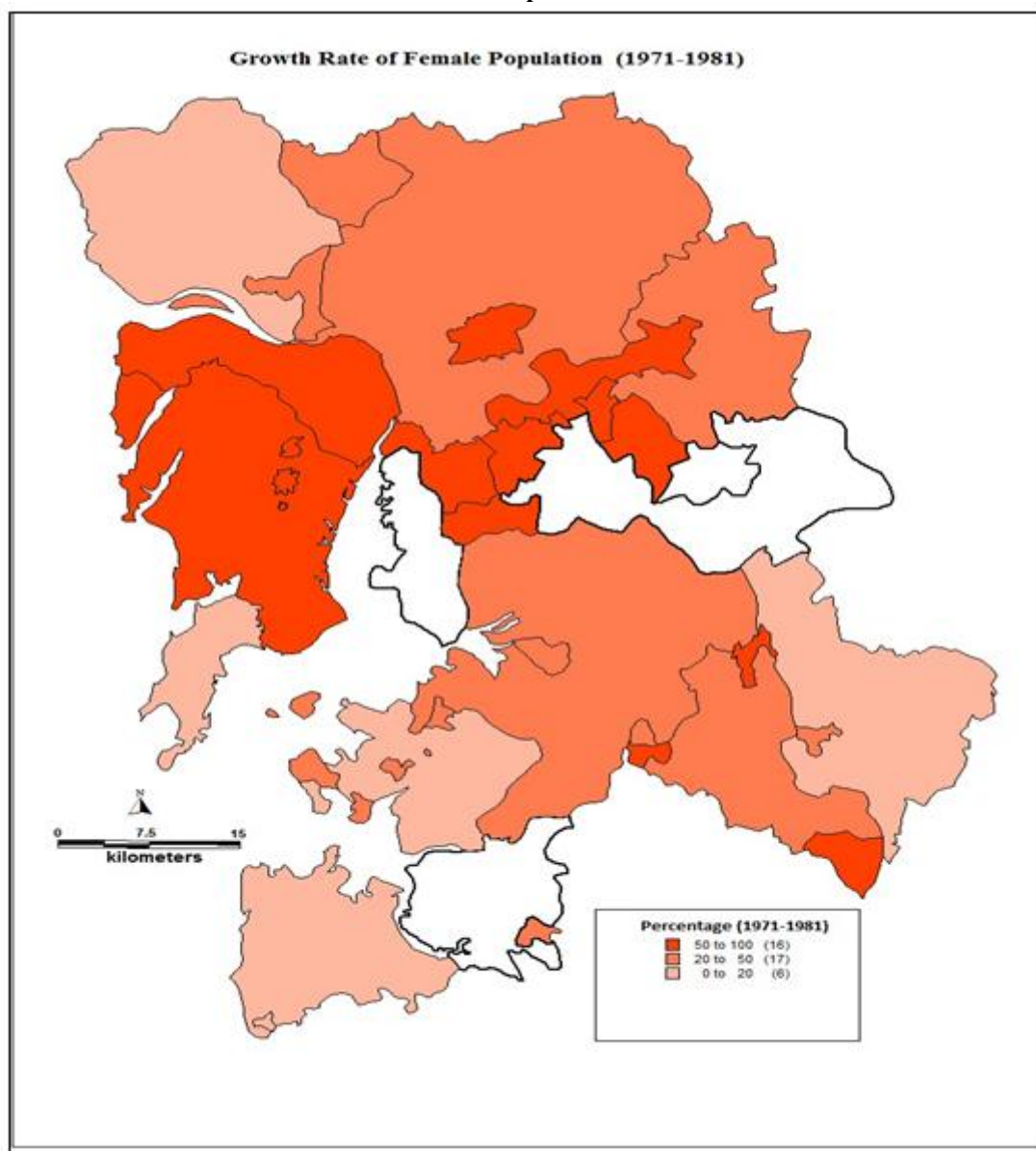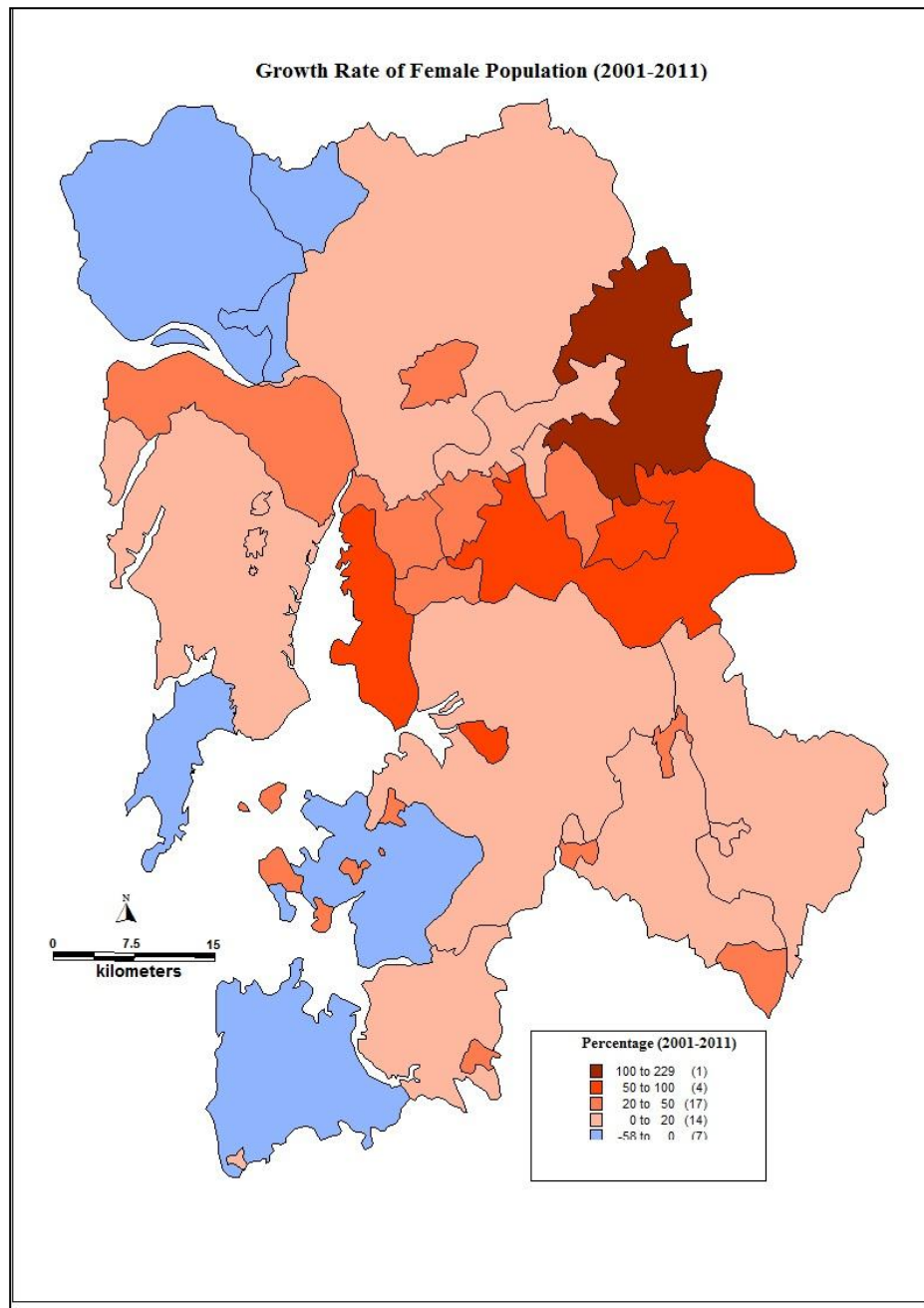
III. Observations:

Fig. 1:

Map 2:

Growth Rate of Female Population (1971-1981)

Percentage (1971-1981)
- 50 to 100 (16)
- 20 to 50 (17)
- 0 to 20 (6)

1971-1981(pre-globalisation era) map shows a positive growth rate of the female population with more than 50% of growth in Mumbai Suburban district, Thane, Kalyan-Dombivli, Bhiwandi, Mathern, Khopoli and Khalapur.

Map 3:

Growth Rate of Female Population (2001-2011)

Percentage (2001-2011)

100 to 229	(1)
50 to 100	(4)
20 to 50	(17)
0 to 20	(14)
-58 to 0	(7)

By 2001-2011 (post-globalisation era)there has been a drastic variation in the growth rate of female population with rural areas in Kalyan-Dombivli, Navi Mumbai, Ambernath and Badlapur indicating a positive growth rate of more than 50%. However, the areas of concern are those which are indicating a negative growth rate like Mumbai City district, Vasai-Virar, Uran and Alibag.
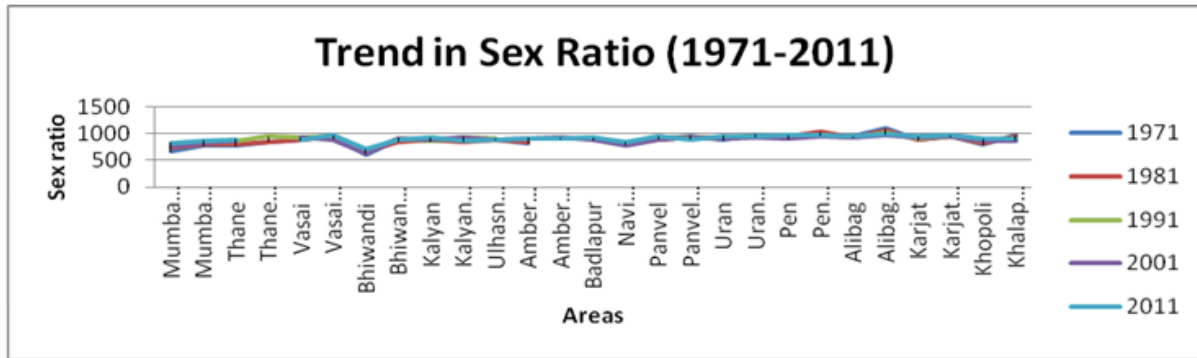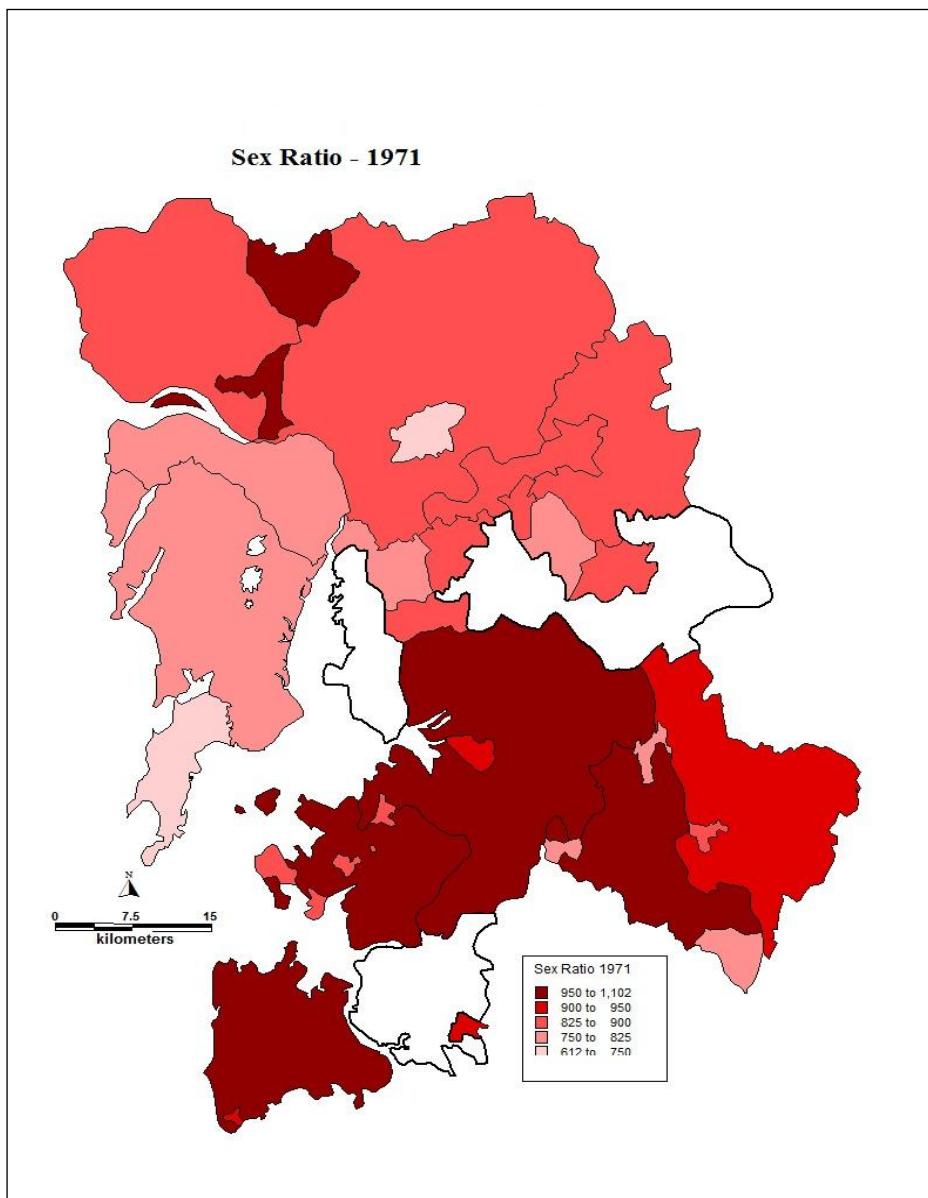
Fig. 2

Map 4:

Areas of concern: 1971 map shows that Mumbai city and Mumbai suburban districts, Thane, Ambernath, Matheran, Khopoli have recorded a sex ratio of less than 825 females per thousand males. While Vasai-Virar, Panvel, Pen, Alibag and Khalapur have a sex ratio of more than 950 females per thousand males. A higher sex

ratio in these peri-urban areas of Mumbai is an evidence of the fact that there has been out-migration of males from these areas possibly to Mumbai and the neighbouring suburban areas of Mumbai.

Map 5:
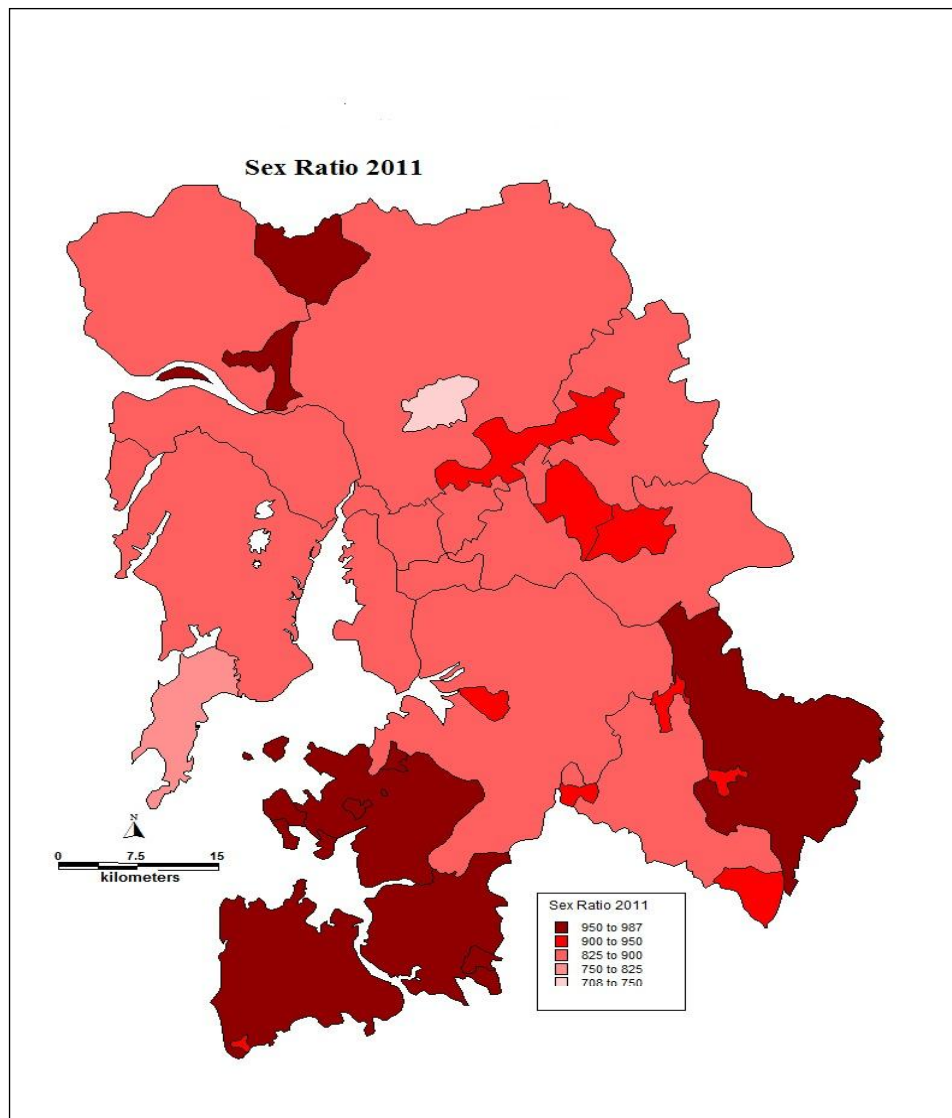
Areas of Concern: 2011 map shows that Mumbai city district and Bhiwandi have recorded a lower sex ratio of less than 825 females per thousand males. While Vasai-Virar, Karjat, Uran, Pen and Alibag record a higher sex ratio of more than 950 females per thousand males. The pattern that urban areas have more male population and out-migration of males from the neighbouring suburban and rural areas continues to remain same.
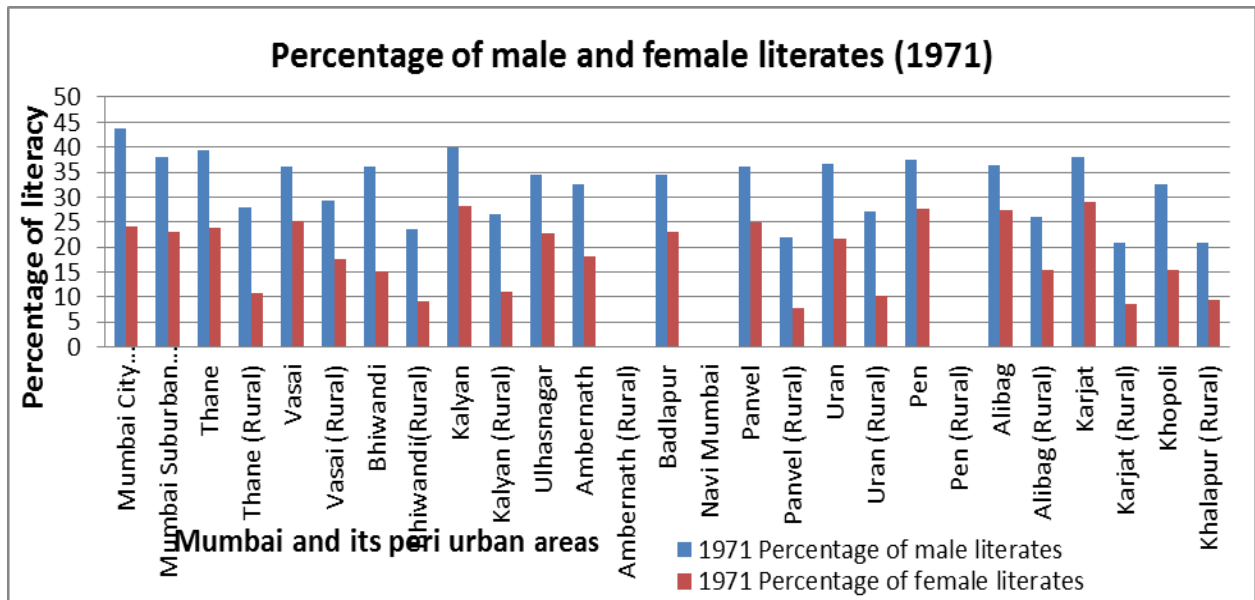
Fig. 3:

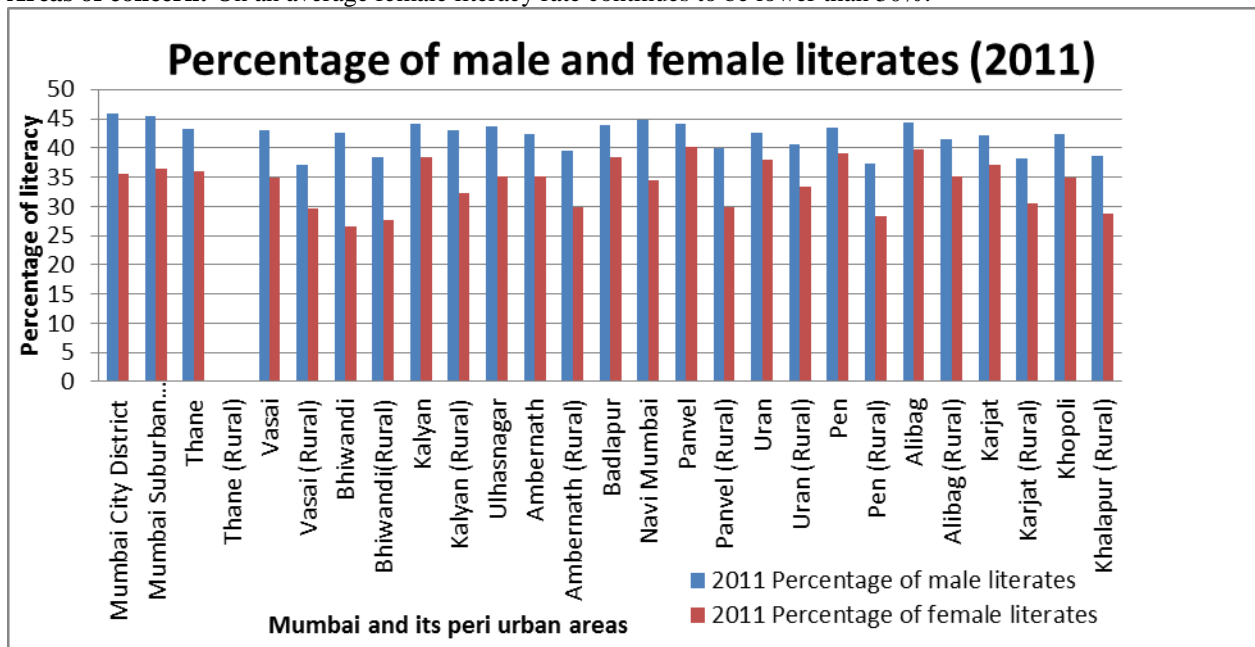**Areas of concern:** On an average female literacy rate continues to be lower than 30%.

Fig. 4:

Areas of Concern: By 2011, literacy rate among females overall has increased as compared to 1971 census but still it is on an average less that 40%. Areas of concern are places like Vasai, Bhiwandi, Pen, Khalapur, Ambernath and Panvel where it is still less than 30%.

IV.   Concluding remarks:

Maharashtra state supposedly one of the progressive states in india not only in terms of industrial and commercial development but also in terms of social reforms movement reflects a very poor scenario with reference to the socio-economic status of women. Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra and one of the leading metropolitan urban areas in India also shows a poor performance with respect to the basic conditions for development of women.

It has been more than 20 years since the first policy for development of women was introduced in the state. Some of the common objectives listed in the first policy like increasing the growth rate of female population by protecting the birth of a girl child which can be possible by eliminating the sex determination tests, or increasing the literacy rate among women, etc still have not achieved remarkable success. Literacy can

not only strengthen the character of a person in terms of developing self-confidence, rational and logical thinking, removal of orthodox ideas but it can also equip an individual in decision making be it at an individual level or at community level.

The policies also lack in identifying and strongly propogating the concept of adequate opportunities for the 'genders' as it is a challenge to the patriarchal system. The willingness on the part of planners, bureaucrats and policy makers to change this biased system also will decide the destiny of 'development' and 'empowerment' of women.

In conclusion it can be perceived that development still continues to be a distant dream especially for women and before achieving development empowerment is not possible.

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