

JINDAL INSTITUTE OF HARYANA STUDIES



Haveli Lala Chajjmal and Pibbumal, Sahukar Ambala aur Sonipat, Sonipat.
Clicked by Prof Sukanya Sharma.



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NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

RELEASE OF THE SONIPAT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2026

8 January 2026



Hon'ble CM of Haryana releasing the Sonipat HDR with Prof (Dr) C Raj Kumar, Prof (Dr) Raj Nehru, Prof (Dr) Mrinalini Jha, Prof (Dr) Nitesh Bansal, and Prof (Dr) Naveen Thomas.

The Institute marked a significant milestone with the official release of the **Sonipat Human Development Report** by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana.

This landmark report represents Haryana's **first district-level Human Development Report**, offering a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of development across Sonipat. Developed through extensive research, stakeholder consultations, field visits, focus group discussions, and data analysis, the report provides a granular understanding of the district's progress and challenges.

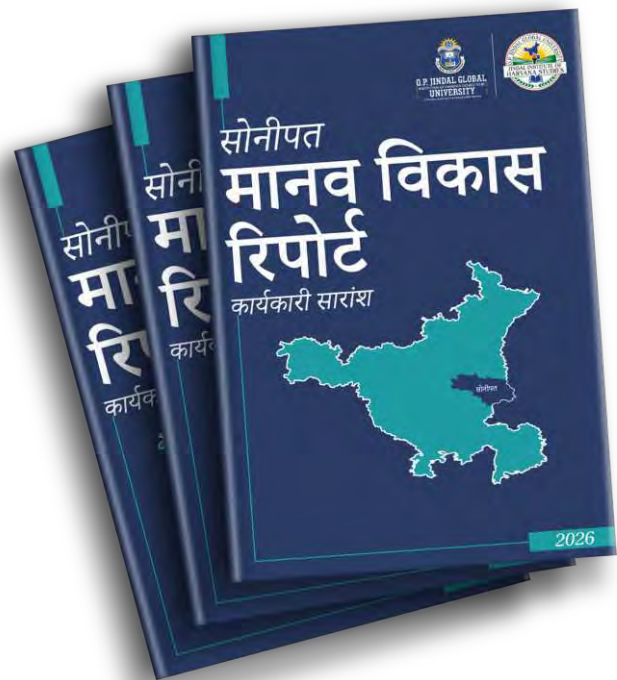
The report examines key dimensions of human development, including **education, health, livelihoods, environment, governance, spatial transformation, and basic service delivery**. It brings together both quantitative indicators and qualitative insights to highlight disparities across gender, rural–urban divides, and socio-economic groups.

A central strength of the report lies in its emphasis on **policy usability**. Designed as a baseline document, it aims to support **data-driven decision-making at the district level**, enabling policymakers to better target interventions and monitor progress over time.

The release event brought together representatives from government, academia, and the development sector, underscoring the importance of collaborative knowledge production. The Hon'ble Chief Minister highlighted the role of such district-level reports in strengthening governance and ensuring inclusive and locally grounded development.

The Sonipat Human Development Report is envisioned not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a replicable model for other districts in Haryana.

The full report, executive summary in English, and executive summary in Hindi are available on our website.



Read more [here](#).



JIHS team engaging with the Hon'ble CM of Haryana. Director JIHS, Prof (Dr) Mrinalini Jha, describing the key findings of the Sonipat HDR

PANEL DISCUSSION AT NATIONAL CONVENTION ON WOMEN

9 March 2026

We marked **International Women's Day 2026** at the National Convention on Women in India with a panel on “**Access, Agency, and Mobility: Pathways to Better Economic and Social Outcomes for Women in Haryana**”. The discussion brought together Dr Neerja Ahlawat, Dr Neetha N, Dr Neethi Rao, and Ms Manisha Sharma, moderated and presented by the JIHS team of Prof (Dr) Mrinalini Jha and Prof (Dr) Nutan Shashi Tigga.

Prof Jha opened by tracing the historical roots of women's seclusion, referencing असूर्यम्पश्या from Panini's अष्टाध्यायी, and linking it to how rising social status can tighten patriarchal restrictions on women's mobility.

Building on this, Dr Ahlawat highlighted how kinship, caste norms, and institutions like khap panchayats continue to shape women's movement and choices in Haryana – urging a shift “from protection to trust. From permission to autonomy. From supervision to citizenship”.

Dr Neetha focused on women's work, noting that despite education, many remain confined to informal and unpaid roles, limiting financial independence and decision-making power.

Dr Rao examined mobility as a determinant of health, showing how everyday barriers – like distant clinics or lack of sanitation – restrict access to care.




All panellists along with Prof R Sudarshan, Prof (Dr) Mrinalini Jha, and Prof (Dr) Nutan Shashi Tigga.

Ms Sharma described women's mobility as “negotiated autonomy”, shaped by social norms and responsibilities, with transport systems often failing to reflect women's complex travel patterns.

The panel underscored a central insight: **mobility is not just about movement – it is about agency, opportunity, and the right to occupy public space.**

Panellists emphasised the importance of **intersectional approaches**, recognising how gender intersects with caste, class, and geography in shaping outcomes. The session highlighted the role of **evidence-based policymaking and community engagement** in advancing gender-responsive governance.

Our students, Shalini Praveen, Archisa Dalal, and Suhani Agarwal provided excellent rapporteuring for the event.

Read more [here](#) 



Dr Neetha N



Dr Neethi Rao



Dr Neerja Ahlawat



Ms Manisha Sharma

FROM NARROW LANES TO DIGITAL FRONTIERS: *Historic Bazaars of Sonipat*

Over the past eight months, the Historic Bazaars of Sonipat project has evolved from an ambitious proposal into a rich, multi-layered digital and archival record. Moving beyond the initial historical surveys, the team has been deep in the trenches – and the alleyways – capturing the rhythmic pulse of the city's oldest commercial hubs.

This progress is fueled by the dedicated efforts of our student researchers – Suhaani Singhal, Harshul Mahajan, Yash Mittal, and Deepanshi – who have meticulously documented the bazaar's physical and social architecture. Their work represents a sophisticated blend of traditional conservation methods and cutting-edge technology.

MILESTONES IN MOTION

The team has successfully processed half a year's worth of on-site data, transforming raw observations into a comprehensive narrative. Key achievements include:

Immersive Documentation: The creation of a **360° virtual tour**, allowing viewers to

navigate the vibrant lanes and traditional storefronts from a digital perspective.

Precision Mapping: Detailed on-site mapping that records building heights, ages, and land use, alongside a specialized layer identifying historical landmarks and iconic, multi-generational shops.

The Human Element: Through **21 in-depth interviews**, the team has engaged with diverse stakeholders, uncovering the deep-rooted emotional associations shopkeepers hold with their ancestral spaces.

Archival Discovery: The recovery of rare, old photographs that offer a poignant "then and now" look at the city's economic evolution.

Living Heritage

Findings of the project reveal a remarkable resilience: many businesses have been transferred through generations, maintaining a lineage of trade that defies modern commercial trends. While there is a palpable pride in this continuity, the project's upcoming report also highlights critical areas for improvement, advocating for a built environment that supports these historic communities while addressing modern infrastructure needs.



Merging heritage (Kos Minar) with tech—a glimpse into the digital mapping process.

PUBLICATION FEATURE

PROSPERITY WITHOUT PARITY: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN HARYANA

“ **THE INDIA FORUM**
A JOURNAL-MAGAZINE ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES



Prosperity Without Parity: Economic Growth and Women Empowerment in Haryana


Haryana shows that growth does not automatically ensure gender equity. Districts closer to Delhi or highways are wealthier, yet they do not always demonstrate better outcomes for women. Without focused public policy, rising incomes may not automatically dismantle entrenched patriarchal norms.

MRINALINI JHA, JITENDRA SINGH

Prof (Dr) Mrinalini Jha and Prof (Dr) Jitendra Singh examine the paradox of **high economic growth alongside persistent gender disparities** in Haryana.

The article analyses how economic progress has not translated into proportional gains in **women's empowerment**, particularly in workforce participation and agency. It highlights structural and cultural barriers that continue to limit gender parity.


The piece calls for a shift toward **inclusive growth models** supported by gender-sensitive policies and institutional reforms.

Article available [here](#) 

MAPPING DEVELOPMENT, UNCOVERING INEQUITIES

Editors of the Sonipat Human Development Report, Prof (Dr) Mrinalini Jha and Prof (Dr) Namesh Killemssetty wrote for the Hindustan Times highlighting the importance of continued relevance of Human Development Report, and the indispensability of granular, district-level data in understanding development.

They argue that aggregate indicators often mask disparities, making it difficult to design targeted interventions. The article advocates for localised and disaggregated analyses to uncover hidden inequities and strengthen policymaking.

Article available [here](#) 

Mapping development, uncovering inequities

To design robust and effective policies at the decentralised level, data availability and analysis at that same level naturally remain the strongest tools

Published on: Mar 09, 2026 10:00 PM IST

By Mrinalini Jha, Namesh Killemssetty



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

PREPARATION FOR KURUKSHETRA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Building on the successful release of the Sonipat Human Development Report, JIHS has initiated preparatory work for the **Kurukshetra Human Development Report (HDR)** – the next district-level report in Haryana.

Initial consultations and scoping discussions have been undertaken to identify key thematic areas and data requirements. The

forthcoming report will continue the HDR approach of combining **quantitative indicators with field-based insights and administrative data**, ensuring a nuanced understanding of development.

This initiative reflects JIHS's commitment to **scaling district-level human development assessments** and strengthening data-driven policy frameworks across the state.

COMING THIS APRIL: EXHIBITION AT JGU

~ A Journey Through Sonipat's Historic Bazaars ~

We are thrilled to announce that the project will culminate in a specialised exhibition this April on the JGU premises. This showcase will bring the bazaars to life through various different mediums. We look forward to seeing you there as we celebrate the enduring legacy of Sonipat's vibrant marketplace.

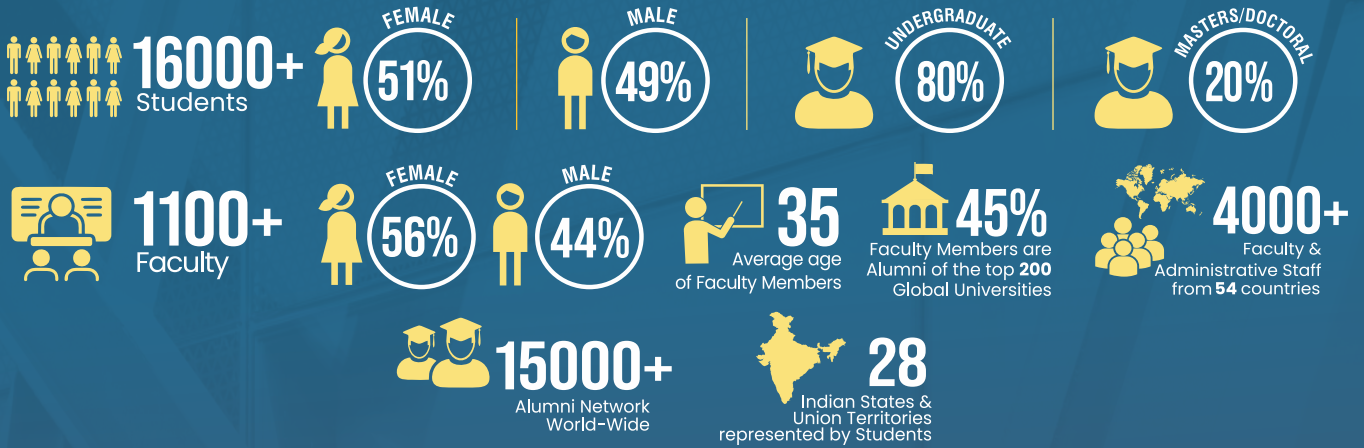


Capturing the lived experience—the team on-site at Old British Tehsil - Swarnaprastha Museum in Sonipat.



Student rapporteurs for the Women's Day Panel with the moderator and presenter for the panel."

JGU at a GLANCE



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