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Research Article



The Evolution of Haryana: History Behind Its Formation and Development

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Abstract

This paper examines the historical formation, governance evolution, and multi-dimensional growth and development of the state of Haryana since its creation on November 1, 1966. Carved out of the erstwhile state of Punjab on linguistic grounds, Haryana emerged as one of India's most dynamic states, transforming from a predominantly agrarian economy to a modern, industrial and services-oriented state within six decades. Drawing on government data, economic surveys, and academic research up to 2026, this paper analyses key milestones in Haryana's political history, demographic transitions, agricultural revolution, industrial growth, infrastructure development, and human development indices. The findings indicate that despite early challenges of resource scarcity and political instability, Haryana has achieved remarkable socio-economic progress, contributing 3.6% of India's national GDP with less than 1.4% of its land area. The paper also addresses persistent challenges, including gender inequality, groundwater depletion, and regional disparities, and reviews projections for Haryana's potential development status by the late 2030s.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The formation of Haryana on November 1, 1966, as a consequence of the States Reorganisation movement based on linguistic and cultural identity, marked one of the most significant political events in post-independence India. Carved from the southeastern portion of Punjab, the new state encompassed the Haryanvi-speaking districts and regions that had long sought a distinct administrative identity. At the time of its creation, Haryana was considered an underdeveloped and agrarian region, lacking the industrial infrastructure and institutional framework necessary for rapid economic progress. Over the subsequent six decades, Haryana defied expectations and emerged as one of India's most economically vibrant states. Located in the strategically important National Capital Region (NCR), the state leveraged its geographic advantage to attract investment, industrialize rapidly, and develop world-class infrastructure. By 2025-26, Haryana's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) was projected at approximately Rs. 13,47,486 crore (US\$ 157.97 billion), reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.52% between 2015-16 and 2025-26. The objective of this research paper is to trace the historical trajectory of Haryana's formation and development across multiple dimensions — political, demographic, agricultural, industrial, and human development — from its founding in 1966 to 2026. The paper synthesises secondary data from government surveys, census reports, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), and peer-reviewed academic literature.

2. Historical Background and Formation

2.1 Pre-State History

The region that today constitutes Haryana has been at the crossroads of Indian civilisation for millennia. It is the land where the legendary Mahabharata war is believed to have been fought at Kurukshetra, and it witnessed several pivotal battles at Panipat — in 1526 (Babur vs. Lodis), 1556 (Akbar vs. Hem Chandra), and 1761 (Ahmad Shah Abdali vs. the Marathas) — which shaped the course of Indian history. During the colonial period, the region formed part of the Punjab Province under British India, administered through districts such as Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, and Ambala.

After Indian independence in 1947, voices for a separate Haryanvi state grew louder. The region's linguistic identity, rooted in Haryanvi dialects distinct from Punjabi, provided the cultural basis for separation. The Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966, following the recommendations of the Shah Commission, bifurcated Punjab into Punjab (Punjabi-speaking), Haryana (Hindi/Haryanvi-speaking), and the Union Territory of Chandigarh — which serves as the shared capital of both states.

2.2 Formation and Initial Conditions

When Haryana was established on November 1, 1966, it comprised 7 administrative districts and approximately 7.8 million people. The state faced immediate challenges: a skeletal administrative apparatus, a limited industrial base, an underdeveloped transport infrastructure, and significant dependence on rainfall for agriculture. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma

became the first Chief Minister, and the state government began the process of institution-building from scratch.

The state's initial economic profile was dominated by agriculture, which at the time of formation accounted for approximately 60.7% of Haryana's total output. Industrial activity was minimal, and the services sector contributed only about 21.7% of the state economy. However, the proximity to Delhi — which surrounds on three sides — and the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains provided a foundation for rapid development.

Table 1: Haryana — Key Indicators at Formation vs. 2024-26

Indicator	At Formation (1966-67)	2024-25 / 2025-26
Area	44,212 sq. km	44,212 sq. km (unchanged)
Population	~7.8 million	~31.2 million (est.)
No. of Districts	7	22
Agriculture Share in GSDP	~60.7%	~17-20%
Services Share in GSDP	~21.7%	~51.2%
GSDP (approx.)	Very low (base year)	Rs. 13,47,486 crores
Per Capita Income	Very low	Rs. 3,53,182 (est.)
Literacy Rate	~26% (est.)	~82% (est.)
Food Grain Production	25.92 lakh tonnes	208.8 lakh tonnes

3. Political and Administrative Evolution

3.1 Administrative Expansion

Haryana's administrative structure has grown substantially since its formation. From the original 7 districts in 1966, the state expanded to 21 districts by 2011 and further to 22 districts as of 2023, with the addition of Charkhi Dadri. The state is now divided into 6 administrative divisions: Ambala, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Hisar, Faridabad, and Karnal. As of 2024, Haryana comprises 72 subdivisions, 93 revenue tehsils, 50 sub-tehsils, 140 community development blocks, 154 cities and towns, and 7,356 villages.

3.2 Political Milestones

Haryana's political history has been marked by alternating periods of stable governance and political turbulence. Key political milestones include the emergency period of 1975-77 (during which Bansi Lal served as a key political figure nationally), the emergence of strong regional political dynasties, farmers' movements tied to Green Revolution prosperity, and the rise of caste-based political mobilisation. The Jat community, constituting 25-30% of the population, has historically dominated the political landscape, though other communities, including Scheduled Castes (21%) have increasingly asserted political representation.

The state has been governed by various parties, including the Indian National Congress and the Indian National Lok Dal, and the Bharatiya Janata Party, which formed the government after the 2014 and 2019 elections. Governance reforms, including digitization of land records, direct benefit transfers, and public service delivery mechanisms, have been important features of recent administrations.

4. Demographic Growth and Transitions

4.1 Population Growth

Haryana's population has grown more than fourfold since its formation. From approximately 7.8 million in 1966-67, the population reached 25.35 million in the 2011 Census — representing 2.09% of India's population. By 2026, the estimated population is approximately 31.2 million, reflecting a 23% increase from the 2011 figure. The state's population density stands at 573 persons per square kilometre, compared to the national average of 382.

Table 2: Population Growth of Haryana (1971-2026)

Census Year	Population (millions)	Growth Rate (%)	Sex Ratio (F/1000M)
1971	10.04	28.1	867
1981	12.92	28.7	870
1991	16.46	27.4	865
2001	21.14	28.1	861
2011	25.35	19.9	879
2024 (est.)	28.9	-	~915 (improved)
2026 (proj.)	31.2	-	~920 (proj.)

A notable demographic challenge has been the skewed sex ratio. In 2001, Haryana had the lowest sex ratio among major Indian states at 861 females per 1,000 males. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the daughter, Educate the daughter) scheme, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Panipat in January 2015, helped reverse this trend. The state recorded a child sex ratio crossing 900 for the first time in December 2015, and state health department data indicated a gender ratio of 903 by 2016, reflecting the impact of targeted policy interventions.

4.2 Urbanization

Haryana has experienced significant urban expansion. As per the 2011 Census, 34.88% of the state's population (approximately 8.84 million) lived in urban areas — up from 29.02% in 2001. By 2026, urban population share is estimated to have crossed 40%, driven primarily by the explosive growth of Gurugram (formerly Gurgaon) and Faridabad in the NCR belt. Gurugram has emerged as one of India's leading financial and technology hubs, attracting global corporations, fintech firms, and start-ups, fundamentally transforming Haryana's urban economic profile.

4.3 Literacy and Education

Educational attainment in Haryana has improved dramatically over the decades. The literacy rate rose from an estimated 26% at formation in 1966 to 67.91% in 2001 and 75.55% (or 76.64% per some official sources) in 2011 — above the national average of 74.04%. Male literacy stood at 84-85% while female literacy reached approximately 65-67%. By 2025, the overall literacy rate is estimated to have crossed 82%, reflecting continued investment in public education.

5. Agricultural Development and the Green Revolution

5.1 The Green Revolution

Haryana's agricultural transformation is one of the most remarkable stories in post-independence India. The state played a pivotal role in India's Green Revolution of the late 1960s and 1970s, helping the nation achieve food self-sufficiency. Food grain production increased from 25.92 lakh tonnes in 1966-67 to 208.8 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 — an eight-fold increase. Despite constituting only 1.5% of India's geographical area, Haryana contributes approximately 15% of the country's total agricultural produce, with 86% of its land area being arable and 75% under irrigation.

Haryana ranks number one nationally in per capita availability of milk at 1,182 grams per day (against a national average of 232 grams), earning the state the sobriquet 'Land of Milk and Curd.' The state hosts the National Dairy Research Institute at Karnal and the Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes at Hisar, both of which have driven dairy productivity improvements. Milk production grew from 19.5 lakh tonnes annually at the time of formation to 122.2 lakh tonnes by 2024.

Table 3: Agricultural Growth Indicators (1966-67 to 2023-24)

Agricultural Indicator	1966-67	2000-01	2023-24
Food Grain Production (lakh tonnes)	25.92	~100	208.8
Milk Production (lakh tonnes)	19.5	~60	122.2
Irrigated Area (% of cultivated)	~40%	~70%	~75%
Agri Share in GSDP	~60.7%	~30%	~17-20%
Haryana's Share in India's Basmati Export	negligible	~40%	~60%

Despite this success, agriculture in Haryana faces significant challenges by the 2020s: severe groundwater depletion (extraction stage reaching 136% in Haryana), stubble burning causing severe air pollution in the Indo-Gangetic plain, and soil degradation from intensive cropping patterns. The state government, in partnership with the World Bank through the Haryana Clean Air Project for Sustainable Development (approved November 2024 with Rs. 3,600 crore), is working to address these environmental issues.

6. Industrial Development and Economic Growth

6.1 Early Industrialization (1966-1990)

Industrial development in Haryana gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, aided by proximity to Delhi, availability of skilled labour, and government policy incentives. The state became a major hub for automobile manufacturing — a distinction it retains to this day. Key industries established during this period included textiles, agro-processing, small-scale manufacturing, and scientific instruments. Faridabad emerged as a major industrial centre, hosting large-scale companies including JCB India, Escorts Group, and Orient fans.

6.2 Post-Liberalisation Growth (1991-2010)

India's economic liberalisation in 1991 provided a major boost to Haryana's industrial growth. The state attracted significant private investment, particularly in the automobile and ancillary sector. Maruti Suzuki (formerly Maruti Udyog Limited), headquartered in Gurugram, became the country's largest passenger car manufacturer. Haryana's automobile sector achieved a dominant position: by the 2000s, the state was producing two-thirds of India's passenger cars, 60% of motorcycles, 50% of tractors, and 50% of refrigerators. Additionally, Hero MotoCorp, Honda Motorcycles, and hundreds of auto-component firms established operations in the state.

6.3 IT, Services, and Modern Industries (2010-2026)

The most transformative development in Haryana's economic landscape has been the spectacular rise of Gurugram as India's premier corporate and technology hub. As of 2023-24, IT exports from the state reached Rs. 2,75,245 crores, with Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) in Gurugram alone contributing Rs. 52,932 crores. Four software technology parks host over 450 companies, generating direct employment for 2.5-3 lakh individuals and indirect employment for 8-9 lakh more. Haryana ranked as the seventh-largest state for start-ups, with over 9,100 DPIIT-recognised entities as of 2025, spanning fintech, logistics, and technology sectors. The state's Haryana IT/ITeS Policy 2024 and initiatives like the IT Saksham Yuva Scheme aim to enhance skill development and employment. Panipat has simultaneously grown into the world's largest hub for textile recycling and the second-largest producer of recycled fibre, employing 8-10 lakh people.

Table 4: Key Industrial & Economic Sectors of Haryana (2024-25)

Sector	Key Contribution	Value / Share (2024-25)
Automobiles & Components	2/3 of passenger cars, 60% motorcycles, 50% tractors	Major national share
IT / ITeS	IT exports, Gurugram 'Cyber City'	Rs. 2,75,245 crore (2023-24)
Textile & Recycling	Panipat - world's largest recycling hub	8-10 lakh employed
Agriculture &	15% of India's agri produce	208.8 lakh tonnes

Sector	Key Contribution	Value / Share (2024-25)
Dairy		food grains
Real Estate & Construction	NCR expansion	Major FDI recipient
Pharmaceuticals	Emerging sector	Growing rapidly
FDI Inflows	Cumulative FDI (Oct 2019 - Dec 2024)	Rs. 99,225 crores

7. Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and Economic Performance

Haryana's economic performance has been consistently strong. The share of the state's GSDP in India's national GDP stood at 3.4% in 2011-12 and increased to 3.6% per advance estimates of 2024-25 — remarkable for a state with only 1.4% of India's land and 2.1% of its population. The state also contributes 7.1% of national GST collections annually.

Table 5: GSDP and Per Capita Income Trends (2011-2026)

Year	GSDP (approx., current prices)	Per Capita Income (Rs.)	GSDP Growth Rate
2011-12	Rs. ~3.5 lakh crore	~1,02,000	Base year
2014-15	Rs. ~4.5 lakh crore	1,47,382	~12-13%
2019-20	Rs. ~7.0 lakh crore	~2,00,000	~10%
2021-22	Rs. ~8.5 lakh crore	~2,40,000 (recovery)	Strong post-COVID
2022-23	Rs. ~10 lakh crore	~2,80,000	~12%
2023-24	Rs. ~11.5 lakh crore	~3,10,000	~11%
2024-25 (Adv. Est.)	Rs. ~12.5 lakh crore	3,53,182	3.6% (real)
2025-26 (Proj.)	Rs. 13,47,486 crore (US\$ 158 bn)	~3,80,000 (proj.)	~8-10%

The structural transformation of the economy is clearly visible in sectoral composition. Agriculture's share in GSDP declined from 60.7% in 1969-70 to approximately 17-20% by 2024-25, while the Services sector expanded from 21.7% to 51.2% during the same period. The GSDP grew at a CAGR of 12.96% between 2012-17 and 10.52% between 2015-16 and 2025-26, consistently outperforming the national average. Haryana has also maintained strong fiscal discipline, as evidenced by a Credit-Deposit ratio of 83% (September 2023) and a Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) of Rs. 1,36,668 crores in 2022-23 — a 14.3% growth year-on-year.

8. Infrastructure Development

8.1 Transport and Connectivity

Infrastructure development has been a cornerstone of Haryana's growth strategy. The state's road network has expanded from a

modest base in 1966 to an extensive grid of national and state highways by 2026. Key infrastructure milestones include the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway, the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Western Peripheral Expressway, the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) segments through Haryana, and the proposed Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor covering 121 km across Gurugram, Faridabad, Jhajjar, and Sonipat.

As of March 2025, Haryana had a total installed power generation capacity of 14,153.33 MW comprising 7,476.42 MW under private utilities, 2,929.30 MW under state utilities, and 3,747.61 MW under central utilities. This compares to near-zero generation capacity at the time of state formation.

8.2 Digital Infrastructure

The digital transformation of Haryana has been swift. As of June 2025, the state had 30.74 million internet subscribers, with 35.78 million wireless connections and 1.18 million wireline subscribers according to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). In 2011, only 5.26% of the population had internet access; by 2025, the state has near-universal mobile connectivity. The state has also developed 32 Special Economic Zones (SEZs), mainly along major industrial corridors.

9. Human Development

9.1 Human Development Index

Haryana ranks 11th among Indian states in the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI value stands at 0.696 as of 2022, showing an average annual growth of 1.23% — reflecting sustained improvements in health, education, and living standards. Niti Aayog's Social Development Goals (SDG) score for Haryana is 72, though the state faces challenges in gender equality, climate action, and decent work opportunities.

9.2 Health

Healthcare infrastructure has expanded considerably, with the state government allocating 5.9% of its budget expenditure to health in 2025-26. Life expectancy has improved substantially. However, challenges in maternal health, gender-based healthcare access, and the burden of non-communicable diseases continue to require policy attention.

9.3 Budget Allocations (2025-26)

Table 6: Haryana Budget Allocations by Sector (2025-26)

Sector	Budget Allocation (% of Expenditure)
Education	12.9%
Health	5.9%
Agriculture	5.4%
Rural Development	4.5%
Urban Development	3.8%
Roads and Bridges	2.3%

10. Persistent Challenges

Despite remarkable progress, Haryana faces several structural and developmental challenges that require sustained policy attention:

Gender Inequality: The state's sex ratio, although improving, remains a concern. Female workforce participation rates are among the lowest in India, partly reflecting social norms. Educated unemployment is disproportionately high, particularly among women. The SDG score on gender equality remains sub-optimal.

Groundwater Crisis: Intensive agricultural practices, particularly paddy cultivation, have pushed groundwater extraction to 136% of recharge capacity — one of the highest in the world. Without systemic crop diversification and smart irrigation, this poses an existential threat to long-term agricultural sustainability.

Regional Disparities: Development in Haryana has been highly uneven. Districts in the NCR belt (Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonipat) are highly industrialized with high per-capita incomes, while districts in southern and eastern Haryana (Nuh, Sirsa, Fatehabad) lag significantly on development indicators. Nuh (formerly Mewat) has the lowest literacy rate at 54.1% and faces acute socio-economic deprivation.

Environmental Pollution: Stubble burning in Haryana and Punjab is a major source of air pollution in the Delhi NCR region, creating a seasonal public health emergency. Industrial pollution in Faridabad-Gurugram industrial corridors also poses ecological challenges.

Educated Unemployment: Despite high literacy rates, Haryana faces a paradox of high youth unemployment among educated graduates. The state's HDI is pulled down by 'decent work' indicators, and the informal sector remains large.

11. Future Outlook (2026-2040)

NITI Aayog's study 'Policy Perspectives for a Developed Haryana' projects that the state could achieve the status of a developed economy by the late 2030s — significantly ahead of India's national target of 2047. This projection, based on the Solow Growth Accounting Framework, estimates that with targeted reforms, Haryana could attain high-income status by 2038-39 and an HDI of 0.85 by 2039. The state has demonstrated a consistent economic expansion averaging nearly 7% annual growth between 1990-91 and 2024-25.

Key enablers for this trajectory include: the continued growth of Gurugram as a global business hub, the development of the Amritsar-Delhi-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (ADKIC) and DMIC through Haryana, Maruti Suzuki's new Rs. 7,410 crore manufacturing plant at Kharkhoda (announced March 2025), the Hisar Airport development as a cargo hub, the Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor, and the World Bank-funded Haryana Clean Air Project. The state's start-up ecosystem, with over

9,100 DPIIT-recognised entities, also provides a strong foundation for knowledge-economy growth.

However, sustaining this trajectory requires proactive policy to address gender equity, groundwater conservation, balanced regional development through industrial clusters in Tier-2 cities, shift in agriculture toward high-value crops and smart farming, and enhancement of Total Factor Productivity across all sectors.

12. CONCLUSION

The story of Haryana's growth and development over six decades is a compelling study in state-building, economic transformation, and institutional resilience. From a nascent agrarian state carved out of Punjab in 1966 with minimal industrial base, Haryana has evolved into one of India's most economically significant states — contributing disproportionately to national GDP, automobile production, agricultural output, IT services, and GST revenues. The journey from 25.92 lakh tonnes of food grain production and a literacy rate of around 26% in 1966-67 to 208.8 lakh tonnes of production and a literacy rate exceeding 82% by 2025 captures the state's developmental arc across multiple dimensions.

The transformation has been driven by a combination of geographic advantage (proximity to Delhi), policy innovation (Green Revolution adoption, industrial policy), human capital development, and private sector dynamism. The GSDP projected at Rs. 13,47,486 crore in 2025-26 — reflecting a CAGR of over 10% for the preceding decade — and per capita income of Rs. 3,53,182 (176.8% of the national average in 2023-24) testify to this progress.

Yet the state must confront persistent challenges: groundwater depletion, gender inequality, educated unemployment, environmental degradation, and regional economic disparities. Sustaining the development trajectory toward NITI Aayog's projection of achieved developed-economy status by the late 2030s requires that these challenges be addressed with the same urgency and policy creativity that drove the state's foundational successes. As Haryana enters its seventh decade as a state, its experience offers both a model and a cautionary tale for balanced, inclusive, and sustainable development in rapidly growing regions.

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