

# Gender issues in Veterinary Science: Strategies adopted to address them and lessons for fisheries science

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## World Veterinary Year

1761 - World's first veterinary school founded in Lyon, France

1764 - Alfort veterinary school, near Paris

Both were the initiative of French veterinarian Claude Bourgelat.

2011 will mark the 250<sup>th</sup> world anniversary of veterinary education and will also mark the 250<sup>th</sup> world anniversary of the veterinary profession.

Bourgelat's suggested that studying animal biology and pathology would help to improve our understanding of human biology and pathology. So 2011 will also mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the concept of comparative pathobiology, without which modern medicine would never have emerged.

Hence the entire world joined France in celebrating veterinary profession and the concept of declaring 2011 as world veterinary year was put forth..



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## International Women's Day

On March 8, 2011 we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of International Women's Day!

In 1910 in Copenhagen, a group of women in pursuit of equal employment opportunities came together at an International Conference of Working Women and created the idea of celebrating an international day for women.

The inaugural International Women's Day was then honored the following year, in 1911, in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

Drawing on the origins of this day, 2011's theme calls for 'equal access to education, training and technology: pathways to decent work for women'.



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# Global scenario of Gender Diversity in Veterinary Science



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Veterinary medicine, previously a male-dominated profession, has experienced a significant increase in the number of women studying at veterinary colleges and practising in all fields of the profession.

In Canada, and in the United States, women constitute approximately 80% of the veterinary college student population. Forty-three percent of practising veterinarians in Canada are now female, and women are predicted to represent the majority of the veterinary profession in years to come.



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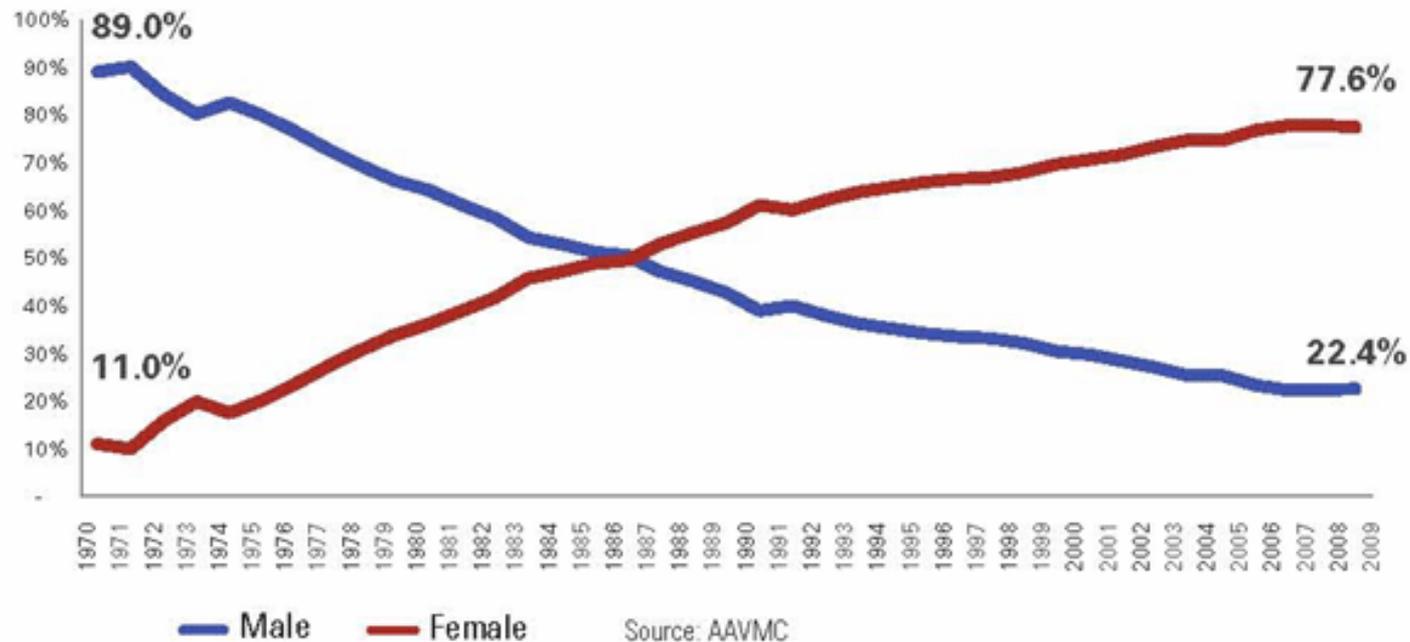
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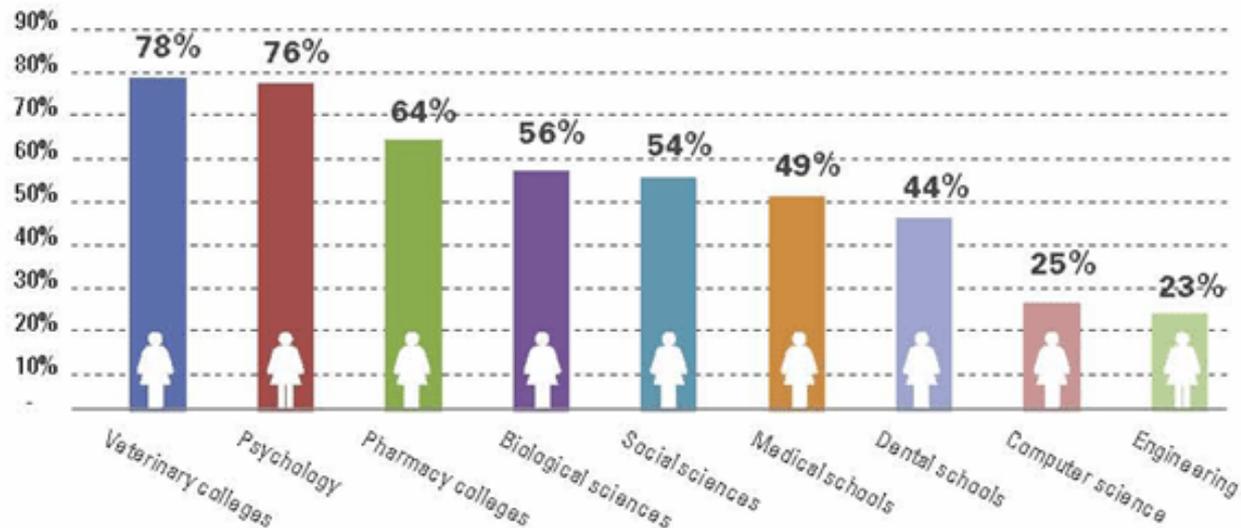
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## Enrollment by gender at U.S. veterinary colleges, 1970-2009



## Female enrollment in U.S. professional or graduate programs in scientific fields, 2006



Sources: AAVMC, National Science Foundation, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, Association of American Medical Colleges, American Dental Association

## Women Veterinary Association

The Association for Women Veterinarians Foundation began in 1947 as the Women's Veterinary Medical Association.

Major objectives was to 'further the mutual advancement of women veterinarians in the science of veterinary medicine by bringing them together to share knowledge, support and friendship'.

Current vision of the association is 'Advocating for women and promoting leadership in the veterinary profession'.

In 2005, the AWVF decided to progress from a membership-based organization to a foundation focused on partnering with national organizations to advocate for gender equity in the veterinary profession.



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Explanations that have been put forward for the feminization of the veterinary profession include the following:

- (1) elimination of discrimination at admission based on gender;
- (2) improvement in chemical restraint for large animals;
- (3) an increase in the number of female role models, especially in physically challenging aspects of the profession; and
- (4) the caring image of veterinarians portrayed in books and on television

The decreased interest of men in veterinary medicine has been attributed to:

- (1) the reluctance of men to enter careers with low or stagnant incomes (the case in veterinary medicine for some time);
- (2) loss of autonomy in the profession (associated with the proliferation of corporate practices in the United States and a general decrease in the number of practice owners relative to employed veterinarians); and
- (3) a “trend effect” (as more women enter the veterinary profession, it decreases the profession prestige as a male occupation)



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# Indian scenario of Gender Diversity in Veterinary Science



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INSA report - DBT and ICMR are the best employers of women, both at scientific and technical levels, with 23.1 and 20.1 per cent of the employees being women.

Fraction in all other organisations is less than 15 per cent

There is a general preference among women for biological sciences, including medicine.

Interestingly, in the Indian context, the fractions of women's enrolment at the university level in the fields of

agriculture (14.3 per cent),

veterinary science (18 per cent) and

engineering and technology (16 per cent)

This suggests the proverbial 'glass ceiling' affecting the opportunities for academic advancement for women exists in the Indian context.



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Several other indicators of the 'glass ceiling' effect are in evidence. A leading biological sciences institute, with 30 per cent of women faculty members, did not have a single woman on its advisory committees.

Bhatnagar Prize, out of the 333 awards given between 1958 and 1998, women were selected only eight times.

The maximum recognition for women came in the area of medicine (7.6 per cent), whereas no woman has won the award in physics, earth science and engineering.

Of the 23 National Biosciences Awards given by the DBT, only two have gone to women.

In sum, the report points out that in the Indian context, retention within the career is a bigger problem compared to access.



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Considerable increase in women taking up veterinary profession in the last three decades.

The intake of female students in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes has increased especially in the southern states.

Women willing to take up jobs in the field (not restricting to teaching and research).

More women veterinarians have taken up clinical subjects and are leading private practitioners.

Women leaving for higher studies and research in foreign countries has seen a steep increase.



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# Gender changes in Veterinary Science in Tamilnadu

1. Education

2. Employment



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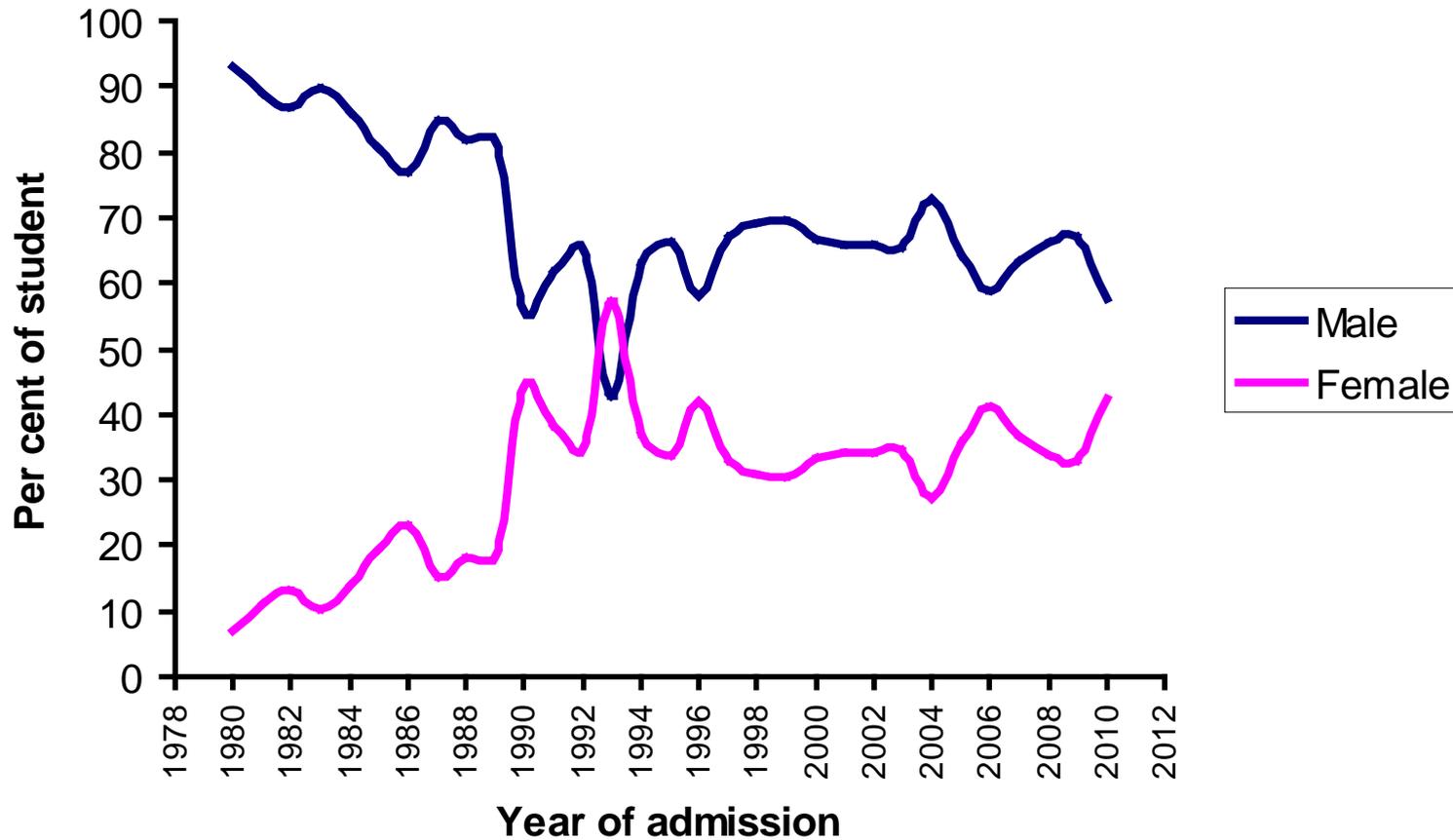
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# UG admission at MVC



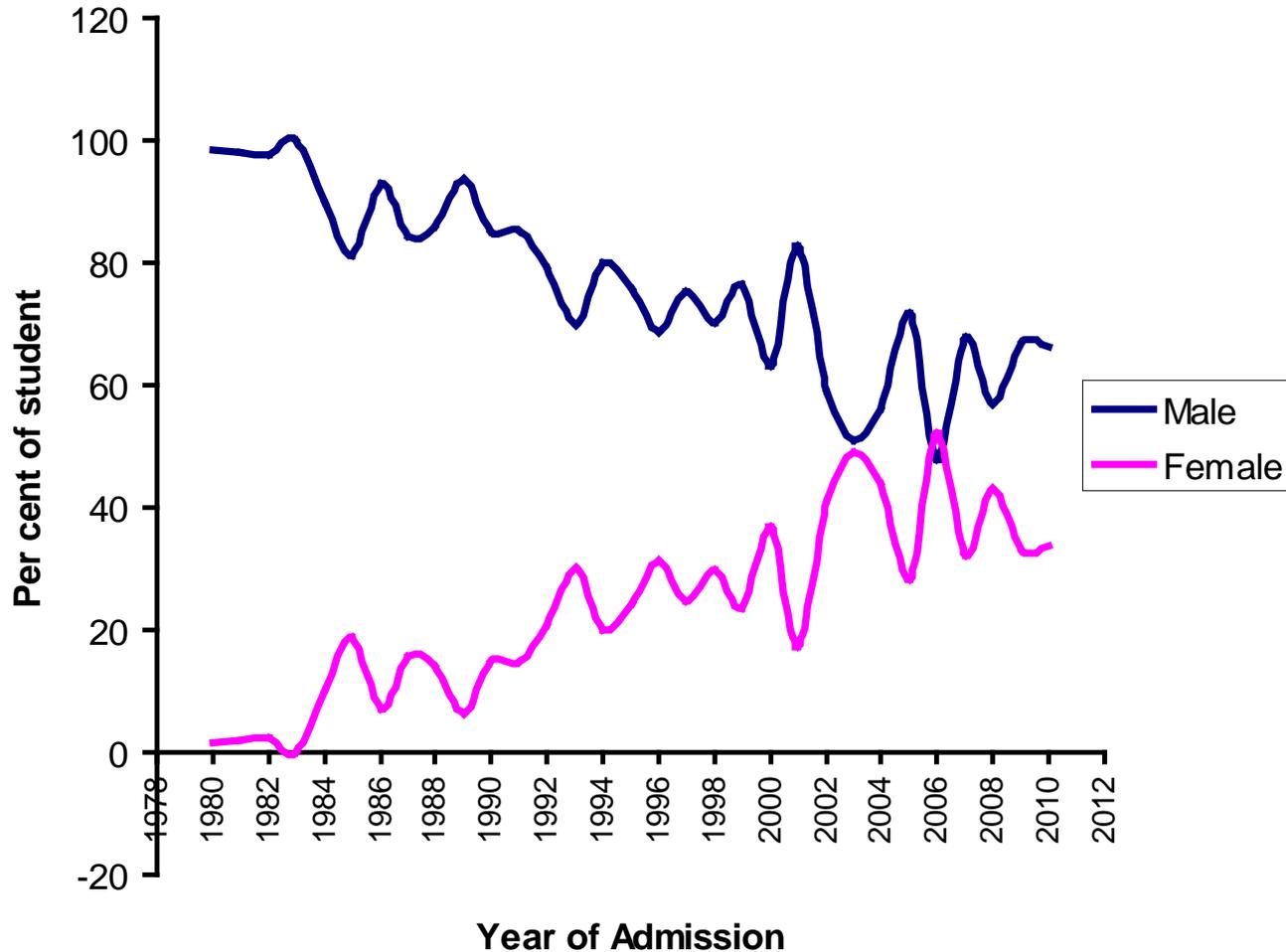
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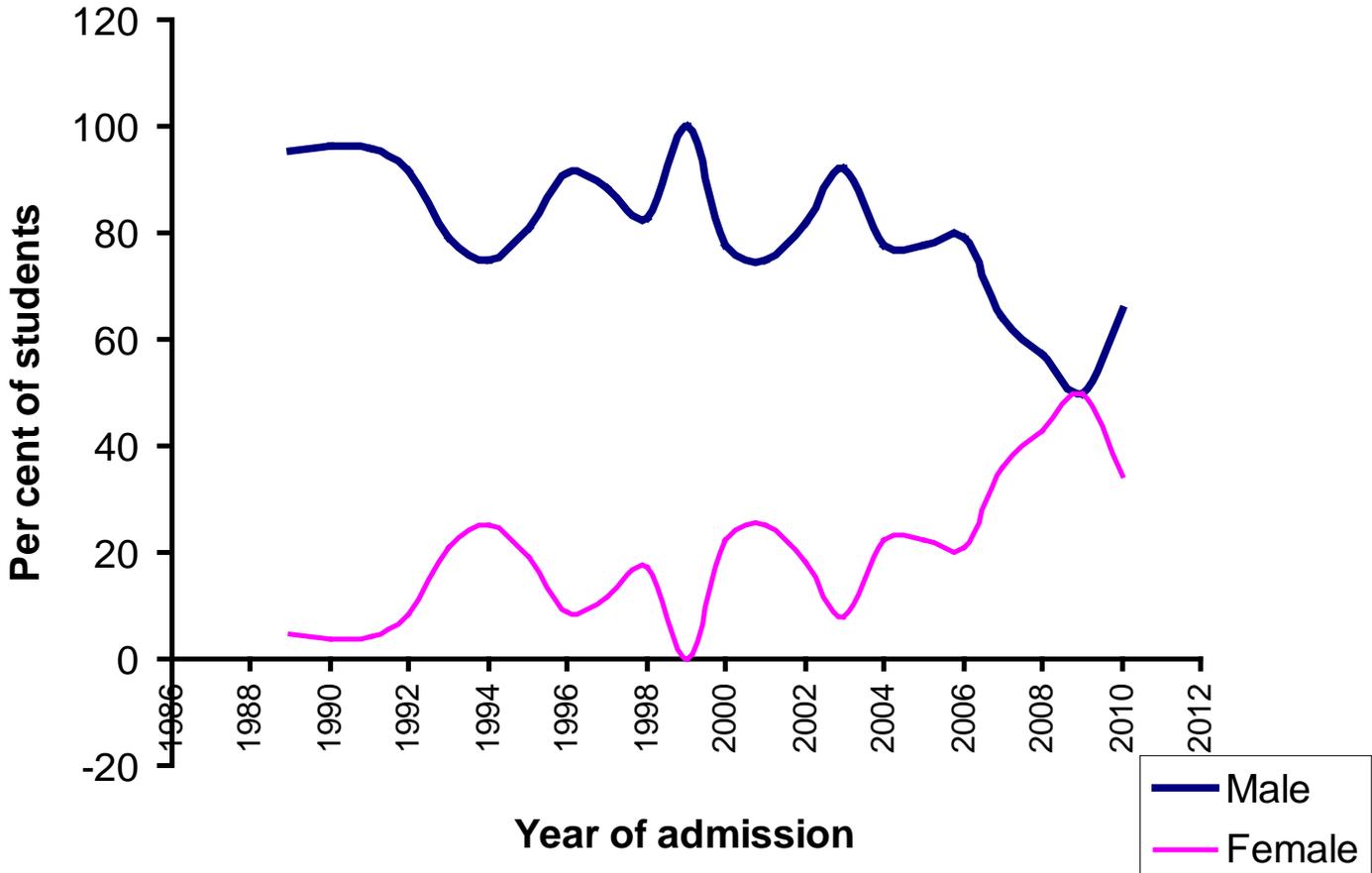
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# PG admission at MVC



# Ph.D. admission at MVC



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## UG Students sent for training at Michigan State University

Female 10

Male 10

## UG Students sent for training at Virginia

Female 10

Male 5

## Prizes and Medals won by female students



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# Employment

Willing to take up all types of posts – VAS including Extension VAS

IVPM – Originally a place for female veterinarians – now not so

Clinical practice – Exclusive practitioners  
Canine Infertility clinic – first of its kind  
Cataract and ophthalmology in canine

## Teachers at Madras Veterinary College

1980 - 6 female veterinary teaching staff out of 120 teaching veterinary staff (5%)

2010 – 45 female veterinary teaching staff out of 160 teaching veterinary staff (28%)



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# Possible reasons for change

More awareness about the course

No restriction on the number of female student intake

Female veterinarians have preferred to be career women

Phenomenal change in the outlook about the profession among general public.



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THANK YOU



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