

# Declining sex ratio in Jhajjar district, Haryana: - A Geographical Study

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## ABSTRACT

Daughters are viewed as asset of the family of procreation and not their own natal families; have to be dowered by movable and sometimes immovable assets, grinding poverty of the households, to be kept under constant surveillance to ward off from different types of crimes committed against them, are some common identified factors regarding declining sex ratio. Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Maharashtra are those states which are most affected by the phenomena of declining sex ratio with the technology i.e. ultrasound and amniocentesis has acquired family support (Rutherford and Roy, 2003). For combating this phenomena, and ensuring survival, protection, participation and overall growth of girl child the government of India has formulated the National Population Policy (2000). The aims of the policy is to rectify the gender imbalance of population and address issues of survival, maternal health and contraception by increasing the provision and outreach of crucial services related to sanitation, safe drinking water and housing besides empowering women and enhancing their employment opportunities. The social position of the women in the state seems to be better than that in the rest of the country. Women also play a major role which is visible every public sphere whether in Government jobs or in trading activities, which allows them to participate in decision making for more than states of India.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Independent India has witnessed mixed and paradoxical scenario regarding status of girls and women, as highlighted by some indicators. The status of girls and women in any society can be gauged with the help of indicators that include demography, educational, economic and other socio-culture aspects. Since, women and girls are not homogeneous category approach the country; their status varies across patriarchal and matriarchal belts of India. In connection with indicators that highlighted an incremental improvement in the overall status of girls and women is the enrollment and literacy rate. The literacy rate of women in India which was 8.86% in 1951 rose to 65.46% in 2011 in the context of enrollment the country has made significant progress. (For details see the 12<sup>th</sup> 5 year plan 2012- 2017; social sector)

While the educational scenario shows an incremental trend, the data of demographic highlights regressive scenario with regard to the overall well been of girls and women. The sex ratio, particularly child sex ratio highlights that the progress in the status of women has been relatively very slow if not retrograde. The adverse gender composition of the population, i.e. having lesser girls in 0-6 age group as compared to boys would imply the prevalence of socio-economic and cultural practices that may in future seriously impact the gender composition of the population having more boys as compared to girls. Some of the practices visibilized in studies are related to prevalence of forced marriages within and outside families and migration of women from states like

Assam and Jharkhand to states having low sex ratio and their exploitations and soon.

Thus across India, there is a variation regarding sex ratio with only three states having relatively a better ranking namely Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka. However the major issue of concern is the child sex ratio in the age group 0-6 years. The factors highlighted in several studies such as Bela and V.N. Rao (2001), and Bhat and Zavier (2003), depicts that the apathy towards the birth of the girl child is rooted in the socio-cultural ethos of the country.

Daughters are viewed as asset of the family of procreation and not their own natal families; have to be dowered by movable and sometimes immovable assets, grinding poverty of the households, to be kept under constant surveillance to ward off from different types of crimes committed against them, are some common identified factors regarding declining sex ratio.

Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Maharashtra are those states which are most affected by the phenomena of declining sex ratio with the technology i.e. ultrasound and amniocentesis has acquired family support (Rutherford and Roy, 2003).

For combating this phenomena, and ensuring survival, protection, participation and overall growth of girl child the government of India has formulated the National Population Policy (2000). The aims of the policy is to rectify the gender imbalance of population and address issues of survival, maternal health and contraception by increasing the provision and outreach of crucial services related to sanitation, safe

drinking water and housing besides empowering women and enhancing their employment opportunities.

The social position of the women in the state seems to be better than that in the rest of the country. Women also play a major role which is visible every public sphere whether in Government jobs or in trading activities, which allows them to participate in decision making for more than states of India. There is lack in these types of research work in population Geography and this research work will fulfill the need. Hence the present study tries to reveal the reason for such a low sex ratio in the state particularly in Jhajjar District.

## 2. STUDY AREA:

Jhajjar is one of the 21 districts of Haryana state, India. Jhajjar district came into existence on July 15, 1997. It was carved out of Rohtak district. The district lies between 28° 22' 28" 49' North latitudes and 76° 18' 76" 59' East longitudes. Total Geographical area of district is 1834 sq.km. Administratively, Rohtak division controls the district. It is divided into three tehsils namely Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh & Beri, and subdivided into 5 development blocks namely Jhajjar, Beri, Bahadurgarh, Matenhail and Salahwas. It is bounded by Rohtak district on north, Rewari and Gurgaon district in south, the National Capital of Delhi in east and Bhiwani district in the west. It is situated 65 km. away from Delhi.

## 3. HYPOTHESIS:

As per 2011 census, out of 21 districts of Haryana, 16 districts have male improvement in child sex ratio. There are five districts in which sex ratio of child population has decreased from census 2001. These are Mahendragh 818 in 2001 to 778 in 2011 registering a fall of (40 points), Rewari 811 to 784 (27 points), Bhiwani 841 to 831 (10 points), Faridabad 847 to 842 (5 points) and Jhajjar 801 to 774 (27 points). Sex ratio among children in the age group 0-6 years (CSR) also, Jhajjar reports a markedly faster deterioration than state average. In 2011 census, Jhajjar district of Haryana has recorded lowest child sex ratio 774 girls/per 1000 boys. Therefore, deficit in girl child population, leads to serious demographic imbalance and adverse social consequences. Therefore, efforts are needed to solve the issue thereby create equal regard and affection for the girl child. Otherwise, the child population will become skewed leading to a host of several societal problems. So, in the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the spatiotemporal dimensions of child sex ratio at macro, meso levels. Jhajjar district of Haryana has chosen as case study.

## 4. POPULATION STRUCTURE OF JHAJJAR DISTRICT

Jhajjar district having a population of 958,405 consists of 514,667 male population and 443,788 female population. Decadal growth rate of 8.9 per cent in the district during 2001-2011 period. It is the minimum in Haryana State.

The density of population in the district has gone up to 523 persons per square kilometer in 2011 as against 480 persons in 2001. As per Census 2011 in Haryana the rank of density is 14th out of 21 districts of Haryana.

The literacy rate of the district is 80.6 per cent as compared to the State literacy rate of 75.6 per cent and it is ranking 6th among the districts of the State. The literacy rate is higher in urban area as compared to rural area. It is 84.3 per cent in urban area and 79.4 per cent in rural area. The male literacy rate (89.3) is also higher than that of female literacy rate (70.7). The gap between male and female literacy rate is of 18.6 points during 2011. In female literacy the district ranks at 7th position.

Out of a total population of 958,405 in the district, 715,066 persons live in rural area whereas 243,339 persons live in urban area. About 25.4 per cent of the total population of the district lives in urban area but accounts for 2.8 per cent of the total urban population of the state in 2011. The decadal growth of population in the district is 8.9 per cent during 2001-2011 and it is 4.4 per cent in rural area and 24.7 per cent in urban area.

## 5. SEX RATIO IN JHAJJAR DISTRICT

Sex Ratio is defined as number of females per 1000 males. It is surprising that the sex ratio in all the districts of Haryana is below the National Average (943) in 2011 Census. For the State as a whole, the sex ratio was 867 in 1901, 871 in 1951, 865 in 1991, 861 in 2001 and 879 in 2011, but Jhajjar district has recorded sex ratio varying from 861 in 1991 to 847 in 2001 and 862 in 2011. As per Census 2011 the rank of Jhajjar District in respect of sex ratio is 610 out of 640 districts which speak of its poor performance on this front. If we talk about tahsil sex ratio in 2011, Beri tahsil possesses a sex ratio of 868, Bahadurgarh tahsil possesses a sex ratio of 848, Jhajjar tahsil possesses a sex ratio of 883 and it is 859 in Matenhail.

The strength of population in 0-6 age group in Jhajjar district has decreased to 120,051 in 2011 from 131,740 in 2001 and the proportion of population in 0-6 age group is 12.53 per cent in 2011. The child sex ratio of the district is 782 in 2011 as compared to 801 of 2001. The child sex ratio in Beri tahsil is 777 and 774 in Bahadurgarh tahsil. The child sex ratio in Jhajjar tahsil is 793 and 789 in Matenhail tahsil.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Sex composition refers to the balance between males and females in any population. Sex composition not only affects the demographic processes, but also determines the socioeconomic relationship within a community. The balance between males and females in the total population as well in various age groups can have considerable impact on social and economic situation both in the present as well as future context. Therefore, an analysis of the same becomes a very important tool for various types of planning.

Sex composition is expressed in terms of a ratio between the numerical strengths of males and females in the total

population. The most common measure, which is used to represent the sex composition of a population, is sex ratio. Sex ratio in the Indian context may be defined as the 'number of females per 1000 males'. But, sex ratio at birth is defined as 'number of males per 100 females' at the time of birth. Thus, sex ratio can be calculated for a population as a whole or for different age groups, or for different caste or social groups, or for rural and urban areas separately. A low and declining sex ratio is often viewed as a threat to social as well as family stability.

The present study is an attempt to examine the spatial temporal changes in sex composition of population and reasons for decline sex ratio in rural Haryana, in Jhajjar district and block level data. The time period selected for the study covers two decades from 1911-2011. A particular emphasis has been on the child sex ratio in the age group 0-6 years. It may be noted that most of the studies on sex composition of population are confined to the aggregate level scenario taking total population into account. However, the factor affecting the balance between males and females in the population differ markedly from one social group to another. The status of females varies from one social group to another. Similarly, migration plays a very important role in affecting sex ratio at regional level. Migration is a sex selective phenomenon particularly when induced by economic reasons. Thus, the regional variation in sex ratio of the total population does not reveal the spatial variation in gender inequality. Sex ratio among children is not affected by population migration. However, there has not been any effort on the part of researcher in the field of geography to examine the spatial dimension of gender relations using data on child sex ratio. In the present study, therefore, an attempt has been made to examine the reasons and suggestions of the surveyed population for female foeticide. Attempt was also made to examine the socio economic correlates of sex composition of population. Although, initial discussion pertains to the overall scenario in the district, the main analysis was mainly confined to the rural area. Further special focus was laid on female status, reasons of female foeticide and decline in sex ratio.

The status of women, which was one of the highest in time of Rigveda, became miserably low thereafter. Seclusion of women, purdah early marriage, female infanticide, illiterately and polyandry have prevailed since then. Women work more than men, but their low status has led to strong son preference, (utmost desire to get son) which, in turn, has led to the practice of female foeticide.

The last fifty years has brought a remarkable change on economic front. Green revolution, increased availability of electricity, improvement in road transport network, spread of tubewells and/ canal irrigation, industrialization, white

revolution etc. have all changed the situation drastically. But the castesridden rural society, overwhelmingly under the control of panchayats has not changed the social custom and cultural value. The rural women is still under veil, the low sex ratio, lower status of women, polyandry, bride purchase, wife beating, female foeticide are part and parcel of the culture of rural Haryana.

In terms of sex ratio, Haryana not only occupies one of the lowest positions in the country, but has also witnessed a constant decline in the same during the last two decades. An abnormally low sex ratio in the state has usually been attributed to a relatively large excess of males over females at birth, and higher death rate among females than males in all age group. Another distinguishing feature of sex composition of Haryana's population is its rural-urban differentials. In the wake of sex selective migration from rural to urban areas, the urban centres, generally report a larger deficit of females than that in the countryside. However, at least on three occasions rural areas in the state have exhibited lower female-male ratio than the urban areas. It can be inferred that overall sex ratio in Haryana remained very low because of low sex ratio in the adult population. This could be attributed to a very high rate of mortality among adult females, particularly in reproductive age span. Whenever the determinants of sex differentials in adult mortality were harsh on women, sex ratio used to dip down and vice-versa. As contrary to this the present day low and declining overall sex ratio in the state owes much to a rapid depletion of sex ratio among children. Hence the most disturbing feature with respect to sex composition of Haryana's population that emerges is a rapid decline in sex ratio among children during the recent past. Trends in sex ratio in the age group 0-6 years during the last few decades have, therefore, occupied the centre stage of discussion. The pace of decline in child sex ratio in Haryana has been even more conspicuous since 1981. Between 1981 and 2001, child sex ratio in the state has gone down from 902 to 819, a decline by 83 points. In 2011 child sex ratio increased by 15 points i.e. 834. Further the decline has been more rapid in the latter decade, and demographers have attributed this to increase in male-female ratio at birth. As per the 'Sample Registration System' sex ratio at birth (SRB) in Haryana during the period 1987-90 to 1996-98, has risen from 115.0 to 123.3. Such a faster growth in male preponderance at birth is undoubtedly an indicative of the prevalence of the practice of female foeticide in the state. It is also true that with improvement in health care facilities, the loss of male fetuses have undergone decline leading, in part, to a rise in masculinity at birth.

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