

Women empowerment and gender imbalance among children (0-6 age group): A spatio-temporal study of Bhiwani district

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Abstract

Women empowerment is a burning issue all over the world. “Women empowerment” and “women equality with men” is a universal issue. The present paper is an attempt to show the gender imbalance among the children in the Bhiwani district of Haryana. Haryana typifies many north western states where female experience inferior health and uncertain survival, especially after the neonatal period. The gender imbalance is a disparity between males and females in a population. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time and place consider appropriate for men and women and boys and girls and the relationships between them. Gender defines and differentiates what women and men, and girls and boys are expected to be and do their roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations. In this present paper we define the Tehsil wise spatio-temporal study of gender imbalances in child sex ratio of Bhiwani district. Sex ratio is the number of males and females for every hundred females. The gap between male and female leads to gender imbalance. Sex ratio is an important social indicator to measure the extent of prevailing equity between male and females in a society at a given point of time. Changes in sex ratio largely reflect the underlying socio-cultural and economic patterns of society. The paper attempts to study the gender imbalance in terms of child sex-ratio of the given district. The issue is important and demands appropriate corrective actions.

Keywords: empowerment, gender, imbalance, literacy, discrimination

Introduction

Delivering multiple roles effortlessly every single day, women are undoubtedly the backbone of any society. Doting daughters, caring mothers, competent colleagues and a wide range of many other roles are played by women around us flawlessly and with grace.

Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women and to make them confident enough to claim their rights, such as freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity, have equal rights for social and economic justice, get equal opportunity for education and employment opportunity without and gender bias etc. However, they have also been an ignored fraction of the society in many parts of the world. This, in turn, has caused women at large to bear the burnt of inequality, oppression, financial dependability and other social evils. The present paper is attempt to show the gender imbalance among the 0-6 age group children of Bhiwani district Haryana.

Sex ratio is the number of males and females for every hundred females. The gap between males and females leads to gender imbalance. The gender imbalance is a disparity between males and female in a population. There are four types of sex ratio:-

- Primary sex ratio = Ratio at fertilization
- Secondary sex ratio= Ratio at Birth
- Tertiary sex ratio= Ratio at sexually active organisms
- Quaternary sex ration= Ratio in post reproductive organisms

Generally, sex ratio is defined as the relative number of males

per 100 females. This definition is followed all over the world. But situation is entirely different in case of India where sex ratio is usually defined as the number of females per 1000 males. The primary reason for measuring sex ratio differently in the former case is because of deficit of males and whereas in case of India is the decreasing proportion of female population in contrast to males.

The present study purposes to Spatio-temporal analysis of child sex ratio and trend, rural-urban difference at district, Tehsils in Bhiwani district (1991-2011). For the study, a vast literature has been scanned more of them are as follows.

Krishana and Chandana (1973) In their study have attributed a low sex ratio in the state to preponderance of males at birth and a higher rate of mortality among females particularly among children and child bearing age groups. They argue that sex ratio in the state would have been more imbalanced if there had not been male excessive out migration from the state.

Sopher (1980) Examined that the North –South difference in sex ratio is due to social institution having ecological basis. He has also analyzed the sex ratio of Hindu and Muslim population using state-wise data as a part of chapter, entitled ‘Cultural Pattern of India.’

Gosal (1981) Analyzed that the regional dimension of deficit of women in India’s population. He has attempted to examine the imbalance in the sex ratio in terms of migration, patriarchal system of resource base. He has also talked about North- South difference in the sex ratio pattern of country.

Hassan (2002) worked on “*Sex Ratio in Haryana’s Population: A Disaggregated Spatial Analysis,*” by using

block level data and examined the spatial pattern of sex composition in 0-6 year age group among scheduled castes and non-scheduled castes separately. He concluded that FMR among children is better among scheduled castes population than among non-scheduled castes population, and gender inequality and male child preference is more conspicuous among higher castes Hindus.

Sangwan and Sangwan (2009) [3] focused on rural urban differentials in sex ratio in India and explained trend from 1901 to 2001. The data has been taken from various publications of the census of India. They observed that the rural-urban differential is declining continuously but at varying rates in different areas. The increase in urban sex ratio and decline in rural sex ratio after 1961. The rural urban differential decreased by 27 points in 1961-1971, 19 points in 1971-1981 and 28 points in 1981-1991 and 1 point in 1991-2001. It can be inferred from trends that male-selective migration now a day's does not remain crucial in the circumstances. Beside, the factors of feminization of cities, commuting and family migration are playing an important role in reducing rural-urban differential in sex ratio.

Statement of the Problem

The child sex ratio is a powerful index to examine the social response on female children. Present sex composition of child population determines the future vital events such as marriage rate, labour force, age structure, birth and deaths, migration, and replacement etc. As per 2011 census, out of 21 district 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 Mahendragrah 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, Mahendragrah reports a markedly faster deterioration than state average. In 2011 census, Bhiwani district of Haryana has recorded 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 spatio-temporal dimensions of child sex ratio at macro, meso, and, micro levels. In our present study, we will concern on Bhiwani district in Haryana.

Importance of Study

The earlier studies on child sex ratio in Haryana were diverse in nature. In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the spatio-temporal dimensions of child sex ratio at macro, meso, and, micro levels in Bhiwani District of Haryana. Hence, this study attempts to provide vital clues for policy makers.

Methodology

Research methodology is a vital part of any research work. Research methodology deals with the research method and

takes into consideration the logic behind the methods researcher uses. It depends on the objectives of the research work. In research methodology, the researcher decides what type of tools he/she would be going to use in the study. Present study will be based on data drawn from secondary sources. Census will be the main secondary source of data. Statistical techniques will be applied to the analysis of the results obtained from secondary sources. The sex ratio has computed by applying formula used by Census of India.

$$\text{Sex Ratio} = \frac{\text{Female Population}}{\text{Male population}} \times 1000$$

Objectives

The present study revolves around the following main objectives.

- To analyze the Spatio-temporal pattern of child sex in Bhiwani District.
- To trace the spatial inequality in child sex ratio in study region.
- To find out the causes of declining child sex ratio in Study Area.

Factors responsible for Declining Child Sex Ratio:-

Gender equality is a core development objective in its own right. Greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation and make institutions more representative. Women now present 40% of the global labour force, 43% of the world's agricultural labour force, and more than half of the world's university students.

Several causes are attributed to decline in the number of girl-sex ratio at birth influenced by sex selective abortion, high mortality rate, son preference, female foeticide, cultural practices and neglect of the girl child. Today, sex selection has been greatly facilitated by the misuse of diagnostics procedures such as amniocentesis that can determine the sex of foetus. Numbers of studies have reported that the recent sharp decline in CSR in India is a result of the rapid spread in availability and misuse of ultrasound sonography for the sex determination.

Crimes against women

In some of the Indian states crimes against women are very common. Women more often become victims of high degree of eve-teasing, rape, acid burn, gang-rape, domestic violence and dowry related killing. The more appalling is that it take the prestige of victim's family on stake. This also discourages parents to have a daughter.

Son as a sole heir of father's property

Indian society is patrilineal at large. Thus, a son is a sole heir of the father's property. This has gone in favour of the thinking where daughters are seen as disadvantageous and sons are welcomed by the parents. This primarily due to socio-cultural taboos attached with preference for sons. In the Indian context, son is supposed to carry the family name, seen as a sole care giver to the parents in old age.

Daughter is treated as a member of other's family

In general, girl's family compromises on many of the above

parameter because parents want to perfume and sacred duty of Kanayadaaan ('Kanaya' means girl and 'daan' means donation) as soon as possible, another reason is that a daughter by birth is treated as a member of other's family.

Sex at Birth

Worldwide, the normal Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is about 105 male babies per 100 female babies. The normal sex ratios at birth are found to lie between 943 and 971 females per 1000 male. On this basis, the average figure worked out is 953 females per 1000 male children (Rutherford and Roy, 2003; United Nations, 1998; Arnold *et al.*, 2002). However, India measures the SRB in reverse of the usual standard, female births per 1000 male birth, and making 950 a normal sex ratio in India. It is declining due to sex selective pre-birth interventions.

Sex Determination Test

Most girls in India start their lives with disadvantage of being less welcome than boys. Each successive girl in the family is less welcome earlier one. Technological advances are quite often used to promote negative social conditions. Attitude against a girl child is exploited by the biomedical technologists for promoting techniques such as amniocentesis that can identify the sex of foetus. In recent years, amniocentesis has become common not only in all metropolitan cities but also among the rich in rural areas of many northern state of India. The best known case of this picture was found in Bombay in 1984, where 40000 female foetuses were aborted in that year (Devasia, 1991).

Status of Women

The most important factor responsible for decreasing child sex ratio is low status of Indian women coupled with traditional gender bias. The needs with regards to health, nutrition and education for girl have been neglected. However, with passage of time, the status underwent significant and sharp decline and they were looked down upon as "slaves of slaves, (Sachdeva, 1998). Studies report that woman southern India enjoys better status irrespective of their literacy in comparison to their northern Indian counterparts (Bose, 2006; and Baht, 2003).

Gender Discrimination

The bias against females in India is grounded in cultural, economic and religious root. Son is expected to work in the field, provide greater income and look after parents in old age. In this way, sons are looked upon as a type of insurance. In addition, in a patriarchal society, son is responsible for "preservation" of the family name. Also, as per Hindu belief, lighting the funeral pyre by a son is considered necessary for salvation of the spirit (Bandyopadhyay, 2003). This strong preference for son which results in life-endangering deprivation of daughters is not considered abhorrent culturally and socially (Miller, 1981). In north India, girls currently constitute about 60 Percent of the unwanted births and elimination of unwanted fertility in this manner has the potential to raise the sex ratio at birth to 130 boys per 100 girls (IPS: 2000). Gender discrimination manifests itself in the form of delay in seeking medical care, seeking care from less qualified doctors and spending lesser money on medicines

when a daughter is sick (Chatterjee, 1990). The extreme disappointment of a mother as result of a daughter's birth can adversely affect her ability to breastfeed the girl child, to poor nutritional status. (Miller, 1981).

Mortality Differentials

Sex differentials in infant and child mortality reflect the child sex ratio in many states. In the country as a whole, female child mortality is 40 percent higher than male child mortality. The sex differentials in infant and child mortality suggest that a strong son preference and discrimination against female children. Biological female children have higher longevity, but at every stage of life, they are discriminated and neglected for basic nutrition, education, and living standard, which cause to mortality rate, thereby deficit in child sex ratio.

Spatial Pattern of Child Sex Ratio

In 2011 census, Haryana has been recorded improvement in child sex of 11 points from 819(2001) to 830(2011). Sex ratio also reveals a wide disparity across districts. The lowest sex ratio is found in Bhiwani district. Map no. 3. 1 gives a visual impression of inter-districts variations in sex ratio in the state. The range of child sex ratio divided into three categories, that is, (i) high, (ii) moderate, (iii) low.

High Child Sex Ratio

Out of 21, only 10 districts have high child sex ratio. The highest child sex ratio that is 903 found in Mewat followed by Palwal (862), Faridabad (842), Sirsa (852), Panchkula (850), and Hissar (849). Due to people are highly matured and discrimination against girl child is not strong in these districts, lesser accessibility and awareness about scanning centers may be the main reasons, which are responsible of high child sex ratio in these districts.

Moderate Child Sex Ratio

Moderate sex ratio has recorded in the districts of Jind (835), Panipat (833), Ambala (807), Kurukshetra (817), Rohtak (807), Bhiwani (831), Yamunanagar (825) and kaithal (821), Karnal (820). It is because of shortage of clinic, low literacy rate and not well transport system are the main reasons, which are responsible for moderate child sex ratio in these districts.

Low Child Sex Ratio

Low child sex ratio is found a contiguous zone consisting of Mahendergarh (778), Rewari (784), Jhajjar (774) and Sonapat (790) districts in southern part of Haryana. Due to the patriarchal system is very strong and the rapid growth of pre-natal diagnostic test center has added to decline of female child.

Child Sex Ratio in Bhiwani District: A Spatio-Temporal Analysis

The study shows the continuous decline in child sex ratio over the last five decades in country. The decline has been more rapid in last three decades. It is concluded that the decline is more conspicuous since 1980. Haryana has observed continuous decline in child sex ratio from 1961 (910) to 2001 (819). However an increase of 11 points from 819 (2001) to 830 (2011) has been recorded. However, it is still low when

compared to national average of 914. In Haryana all the districts have reported child sex ratio lower than national average of 914. In 2011 census reports, southern districts like Jhajjar (774), Mehandergrah (778), Rewari (784) and other like Sonipat (790), Bhiwani (831) have reported very low sex ratio i.e. below 800. In the present chapter, comparative analysis of child sex ratio, trend of child sex ratio in Haryana and Bhiwani district, trend of child sex ratio in rural- urban areas, the basic reasons for the declining of sex ratio in 7

tehsils of Bhiwani District have been studied.

Table 1: Bhiwani District: Child Sex Child (1991 to 2011)

Years	Child Sex Ratio	Change
1991	887	-
2001	841	46
2011	831	10

Source: - Census of India (1991-2011)

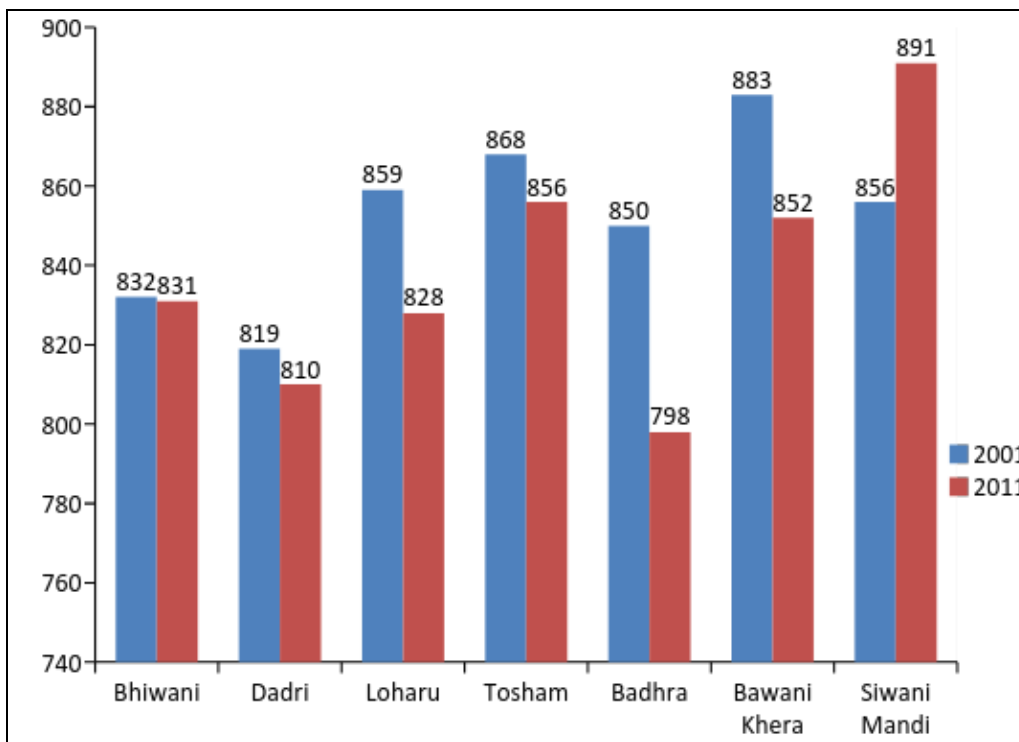


Fig 1

The present studies show the decadal change in Child Sex Ratio Tehsil wise from 2001 to 2011. The data shows the positive and negative growth in some tehsils. Only one tehsil, Siwani Mandi had positive growth in CSR that is 35 points (856 in 2001 and 891 in 2011). The other tehsils shows the decline in CSR. The highest was found in Badhra that was 52 points. Then followed by Bawani Khera 31 points, Loharu 31 points, Tosham 12 points, Dadri 9 points and Bhiwani only 1 points.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The present study shows that continuous decline in child sex ratio over the last two decades in the district. The decline has been more rapid during last two decades. For instance, from 1991 to 2001 (over a period of 10 years) the decline is 40 points (887 to 841 girls/1000 boys). On the other hand; from 2001 to 2011 the decline is as much as 10 points. In other words, it is concluded that the decline is more conspicuous since 1991.

Bhiwani is one of the most developing district of Haryana witnessing more growth than state average in health, income and social indicators. In spite of all these good indicators of development, Bhiwani is not doing well in gender and the

adverse sex ratio in 0-6 years is matter of concern. Bhiwani district has reported one of the lowest child sex ratio in India (Census of India, 2011).

A comparative analysis of overall sex ratio in Bhiwani district shows that overall sex ratio skewed continuous decline from 2001 to 2011, the decline is (941 to 931) 10 points. It means sex selective abortion and son preference have spread like an epidemic in last one decades and infant mortality rate is comparatively higher for female children than male children.

Spatial trend in child sex ratio areas and urban areas shows that in Bhiwani child sex ratio is less in rural areas than urban areas. This shows that the practice of sex selective termination of pregnancy is even more prevalent in rural areas thereby contributing to decline in child sex ratio.

An examination of spatial pattern of child sex ratio produced clear-cut picture in village about the disparity between male and female babies. Migration does not affect child sex ratio, as migration in this age group normally occurs along with their families. The child sex ratio of the study area has continuously decline over last few decades.

Suggestions

The decline in child sex ratio suggests that marked

improvements in the economy and literacy rates do not seem to have much positive impact on this aspect. The following measures, based on the finding of this study are suggested which can help in improving the child sex ratio. The following suggestive measures should be taken by the government and the people to eradicate the problem of declining sex ratio.

- The first and foremost need is a change in mindset of the society toward the girl child. Unless the citizens of country themselves wake up to the evil of female foeticide these malpractices targeting the girl children shall not be done away with.
- It is required that every girl child gets the right to be born and is extended the same love and affection as the boys, provided tender care and nourishment without any discrimination and given equal opportunities for education as the boys.
- Registering and monitoring of all pregnancies from the 6th week onward and not from the 12th week.
- The state should initiate to modify the two-child norm with the combination of one son and one daughter, so that imbalance in the child sex ratio could be removed.
- People should be motivated to perform rituals by daughter over son at parent's cremation and at every death anniversary thereafter.
- Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao Yojana (Should be implemented effectively).
- Ladli Pariyojana in Haryana (Should implemented in other states also)

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