



Rethinking gender planning and development in context of skewed sex ratio and child sex ratio in the state of Haryana

Dr. Anil Yadav, Dr. Rajkumar Mehla

Associate Professor of Geography, Government College, Hisar, Haryana, India

Abstract

Beyond just fair economic growth and access to educational resources, gender inequality is a problem in India. Gender inequality is present in India in the form of socially constructed, predetermined gender roles that are established throughout the sociocultural fabric and extended history of the nation. Sociocultural influences have an impact on organizational people as well as the social and political environment. This unquestionable effect is nevertheless accepted as the norm by the cultural and familial periphery. Haryana is one of the states most affected by skewed gender relations. Numerous ways exist in which the patriarchal system and the societal ethos that favors men discriminate against women. The key reasons for the declining child sex ratio in India, particularly in regions like Haryana, are the pervasive practice of sex selective abortion and sex disparities in child mortality as a result of strong son preference. The Haryana state administration and the Union government have launched initiatives to protect and empower female children in order to equalize the sex ratio. Men and women are affected differently by development policies and programmes, which can either reinforce or challenge unequal power relations in institutional contexts and socio-cultural roles and identities. Without any gender intervention, inequalities could continue in ways that restrict women's access, involvement, influence and benefits from development.

Keywords: child sex ratio, gender inequality, gender planning, sex ratio, women's rights, Haryana

Introduction

In India, inclusive growth with a particular emphasis on gender issues has been regarded as a crucial national goal. Women lag far behind men in the majority of human development indicators, despite the fact that gender equality honours the equal value of men and women's responsibilities in society, which is essential for a nation's progress and development (Johnsson-Latham, 2007) [15]. Although male and female have equal ability, there is a wide spectrum of gender discrepancy because of unfair socio-cultural ties. From an early age, a woman must deal with various forms of discrimination (Heise, *et al.*, 2019) [13]. The declining child sex ratio is one of its examples; even there exists spatial neighbourhood impact of this declining child sex ratio. India is lagging a way behind in gross enrolment ratio than that of the world average (Tilak, 2015) [26]. Lack of equity not only damages the current generation but also sets up a dismal environment for the next generation (Gupta *et al.*, 2019) [10]. Since the rate of decline of Child Sex Ratio (CSR) is found to have been at its highest between 2001 and 2011, socio-cultural discrimination against women has been found to be a persistent social issue in India. While it varies across regions, female child disadvantage is found to be more severe in Northern states like Haryana, Punjab, UP, and Rajasthan (Diamond-Smith & Bishai, 2015) [8]. Although a decline in poverty, an increase in wealth, or a higher female literacy rate do not always improve the CSR, female labour force involvement significantly contributes to this improvement. Over time, Northern and Western states (including Rajasthan) are clustering around lower CSR values, whereas North-Eastern and some Eastern states are clustering around higher CSR values. These states are strongly influenced by the CSR of their neighbouring states.

Various constitutional laws and norms have already been implemented in order to end patriarchal mindset, discrimination against women, and societal ills; nevertheless, implementation of all these affirmative acts is found to be lacking (Jejeebhoy *et al.*, 2015) [14]. Although some legal rights and affirmative action initiatives have already been carried out, there is still much to be done. Prenatal sex determination and female foeticide are prohibited by the Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, which the Indian government passed in 1994. However, the authorities' lack of enforcement of the PCPNDT Act is evident from the rate at which CSR fell between 2001 and 2011. District-level CSR is negatively impacted by Northern states and districts, which are generally having lower average CSR, and is influenced by their neighbours. Northern-Eastern states and districts with relatively stronger CSR than the national average show a strong influence of space and the adjacent effect. To address this complicated, diverse dilemma and advance the status of women, policymakers and scholars are faced with a significant challenge as a result of this imbalance (Haq, 2013) [11].

At the sub-national level, gender inequality in education has been present throughout much of India (Pal, 2004) [22]. In northern states, gender disparity in educational outcomes is more prevalent. In light of this, the current study explores how gender has changed in Haryana, paying particular attention to the state's child sex ratio (Kumar and Singh, 2022) [18]. Haryana is considerably behind other states in terms of social change, although experiencing fast economic progress. Women are oppressed in every manner conceivable by the patriarchal structure that controls the society. This problem is manifested in the population as

having an abnormally large shortage of females. The study lays a special emphasis on the child sex ratio, which is a more reliable indicator of gender inequity because it is not altered by population migration.

Gender planning and development

Men and women in India are both concerned about the complex subject of gender inequality. Some claim that certain gender equality initiatives disadvantage men (Batra & Reio 2016) ^[2]. However, when the population of India is looked at as a whole, women are disadvantaged in a number of significant ways. Male workforce involvement rates are 54.4% and female workforce participation rates are 21.9%, according to the National Sample survey report (2011–12). According to the India Country Report 2015 by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on the MDGs, the percentage share of females in wage development in the non-agricultural sector increased to 19.3% during 2011–12, which is higher than the 18.6% reported during 2009–10 by National Sample Survey Organization. Since independence, Indian society has made significant progress in identifying, understanding, and acknowledging gender inequities and their detrimental impact on women and the development process. In the society, gender inequalities have taken numerous forms and across a range of dimensions (Sinha, 2015) ^[25]. Equal involvement at all levels is still only a pipe dream. Women are an essential and vital component of society, and they are instrumental in transforming it. Understanding how gender inequalities are created and maintained in modern society is crucial because these gaps have serious social and economic repercussions and stand in the way of progress towards a just and equitable society. The value of long-term strategic perspectives for understanding the causes of gender disparities has recently gained more attention, but in order to examine and assess the changes in the significance of women and their place in the development process, it is essential to emphasise the strategies that have been used in the past (Heck *et al.*, 2021) ^[1]. The "Gender and Development" method, which was based on the theory that social, reproductive, and economic roles are related to gender inequality, gained traction in the 1980s and resulted in a thorough examination of the social, economic, and political aspects of development (Alar, 2010) ^[6]. The Third Global Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, highlighted the success of internationally mandated structural adjustment programmes and the ways that these neoliberal ideologies tend to exclude women in poor nations (Moghadam, 2005) ^[21]. "The uneven relationship between sexes inhibits the development process and participation of females in the same," the GAD acknowledged. Additionally, it aimed to "transform the structure of power into a long-term goal" in which all decision-making and development benefits are allocated equally on the basis of "gender neutrality." When the women's movement began in the 1970s with a larger breadth and power supported by women's organisations, the role of women in India that had been identified as "wives and mothers" throughout the 1950s and 1960s was transformed to a more radical and active one (Kazi, 2015) ^[16]. The same has been planned for in the five-year plans put in place by the Indian government. Through

"Social Welfare Programmes," the first through fourth Five Year Plans concentrated on the overall "welfare" of all the sections, including women. The "Women's Welfare and Development Bureau" was established under the Ministry of Social Welfare in response to the fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1978) in order to coordinate policy and launch initiatives for women's empowerment. This sparked a change in strategy from "welfare" to "development". In 1974, the "Status of Women's Committee" noted problems such the deteriorating sex ratio, increasing female mortality, and unfair personal laws affecting women. The "National Plan of Action for Women" was adopted in 1976 and served as a blueprint for creating policies. Women's exclusion from economic advancement was acknowledged and emphasized in the 1980s. The 1980 "First National Conference on Perspectives for Women's Liberation Movement in India" focused on integrating women into development while addressing the pervasive gender issues. The development method was fully implemented during the sixth Five Year Plan (1980–1985), and a surge for the advancement of women was started in various key industries. The "Department of Women and Child Development" was formed in 1985 as a part of the seventh Five Year Plan for the comprehensive and integrative development of women and children (1985–1990). During the course of this strategy, other beneficiary-focused initiatives were also started. In an effort to advance social justice and equity for all women, the Government of India published the "National Perspective Plan for Women" in 1988. In the 1990s, the call for public acceptance of women's rightful pace and their vertical and horizontal integration at all stages of growth gained prominence. The eighth Five Year Plan (1992–1997) saw a shift in emphasis from "women's empowerment" to "development." To protect women's rights and privileges, the National Commission for Women was founded in 1992. To improve the nutritional condition of women and adolescent girls, the "National Nutrition Policy" was developed in 1993. Women were given seats reserved in local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities under the 73rd and 74th Amendments of 1993. Local participation encouraged a democratic climate and resource allocation that was wise and gender-just. To empower women, the government rearranged its priorities. Women were acknowledged as "agents of social transformation and development" in the ninth Five Year Plan (1997–2002), and an unique strategy known as the "Women Component Plan" was created to assure the flow of benefits to women. The tenth Five Year Plan (2002–2007) stressed "Gender Justice" to eliminate all forms of discrimination and provide fundamental freedom in all sectors. It also called for sector-specific growth for social and economic development. Additionally, the 2001 "National Policy for the Empowerment of Women" acknowledged the manifestation of gender disparities in a variety of ways and across a variety of dimensions. Its goal was to create a favourable economic and social environment that would allow women to fully develop and have equal access to health care, education, participation, and decision-making. In 2005–2006, Gender Budgeting was implemented, and a separate Ministry of Women and Child Development was established with the aim of closing programme and policy gaps and

implementing women-specific strategic initiatives. The eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–2012) called for strategic, multifaceted interventions in support of women through the provision of fundamental rights, the creation of an environment free from violence, adequate participation in the formulation of public policy, and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms. The twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) put a lot of emphasis on important strategies and regenerative development initiatives for infrastructure development, involvement in government, inclusion of disadvantaged women, and engendering of policies and programmes. The Beijing Platform for Action's goals for fostering gender equality were strengthened by the deliberate inclusion of the Millennium Development Goals in the formulation of policy.

Since 1992, the Directorate of Women and Child Development has served as the state of Haryana's nodal office for coordinating the implementation of policies and programmes with the federal government and international organisations. The main goals have been to increase social welfare generally and to empower women. The directorate also oversees the Haryana Women Development Corporation and the Haryana State Commission for Women. The department also makes sure that laws like "The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace," "Dowry Prohibition Act," and "Domestic Violence Act" are effectively implemented in the state. By giving them money and launching programmes like Apni Beti Apna Dhan, Ch. Devilal Rashtriya UttamAavam Parivar Kalyan Yojna "Devi Rupak," Ladli Scheme, Ladli Social Security Allowance Scheme, etc., the Haryana government has been making significant efforts to promote women's empowerment. Women face numerous obstacles in every profession, and they are at a significant disadvantage to men in terms of participation in education and the workforce as well as violence against women. The state's gender gaps exist in a variety of areas, including the labour force, education, skill development, decision-making, employment possibilities, etc. The state's social and economic metrics have experienced remarkable growth (Kumar, 2021). The Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP), which guarantees sustainable employment and income production for marginalised and asset-less rural and urban poor women across the nation, is one of the programmes that has been put in place to address such gender inequities. Microfinance services were provided by Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to promote socioeconomic improvement. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) aims to increase the systemic mechanisms that support women's holistic development.

Evidences of perpetual gender inequality in Haryana

However, compared to other parts of the country, the status of women in Haryana is not better (Kumar & Priyanka, 2021) [17, 19]. According to the 2011 census, Haryana has a depressing gender ratio of 879 women for every 1000 men. The girl child is not valued in the state's societal framework. If raised, a girl's chances for education, health, and nutrition are typically less favourable than those of the family's male member. This disparity in opportunities is directly related to

how people view women. In Haryana, women's participation in household decision-making has decreased from 83.3 to 76.7%. (NFHS-4).

Table 1: Trends of Sex Ratio in Haryana (1971-2011)

Census Year	Sex Ratio		
	Total	Rural	Urban
1971	867	853	870
1981	870	849	876
1991	865	868	864
2001	861	847	866
2011	879	873	882

Source: Census of India, 1901-11

During 1971, Haryana had a total sex ratio of 867 where rural areas had much lower sex ratio of 853 as compared to urban areas that exhibited a sex ratio of 870. In the following Census time period (1981), the sex ratio in the state noted a marginal increase to 870. However, the rural areas noted a decline in sex ratio to 849 whereas the urban areas recorded an increase in sex ratio to 876. During 1991, the sex ratio in the state declined to 865. Interestingly, during this time period the rural areas had noted an increase in sex ratio (868) whereas the urban areas noted a decline in sex ratio to 864. Since, 2001 the sex ratio in the state has noted an increased to 861 during 2001 and 879 during 2011. At the same time, the urban areas have noted considerable improvements in sex ratio to 866 in 2001 and 882 in 2011. The sex ratio in the rural areas declined to 847 in 2001 but noted considerable improvements to 873 during 2011.

Table 2: Trends of Child Sex Ratio in Haryana (1971-2011)

Census Year	Child Sex Ratio		
	Total	Rural	Urban
1971	898	899	897
1981	902	899	912
1991	879	878	884
2001	819	823	808
2011	830	835	832

Source: Census of India, 1961-2011

On the other hand, the child sex ratio in the state of Haryana has declined dramatically between 1971 and 2011. During 1971, the child sex ratio in the state was 898 whereby the rural areas exhibited child sex ratio of 899 and the urban areas had a child sex ratio of 897. It noted a marginal improvement during 1981 when the child sex ratio in Haryana improved to 902 where rural areas had a child sex ratio of 899 and urban areas had a child sex ratio of 912. During 1991, the child sex ratio significantly declined to 879 where rural areas noted the largest fall in sex ratio to 878 and urban areas also noted a decline in child sex ratio to 884. CSR in the state further declined to 819 in 2001 being the lowest in recent times. It was found to be particularly low in the urban areas where the child sex ratio was 808 as compared to rural areas where the child sex ratio was 823. Child sex ratio noted some improvements as per the Census of India, 2011 when the state of Haryana recorded improvement in child sex ratio to 830. The rural areas with a child sex ratio of 830 had comparatively better improvement in child sex ratio as compared to urban areas where the child sex ratio was 832.

Table 3: Districts wise Trends in Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio in Haryana (2001 & 2011)

State/District	Sex Ratio		Child Sex Ratio	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Panchkula	823	870	829	850
Ambala	868	882	782	807
Kurukshetra	866	889	771	817
Yamunanagar	862	877	806	825
Kaithal	853	880	791	821
Karnal	865	886	809	820
Panipat	829	861	809	833
Sonepat	839	853	788	790
Jind	852	870	818	835
Fatehabad	884	903	828	845
Sirsa	882	896	817	852
Hisar	851	871	832	849
Bhiwani	879	884	841	831
Rohtak	847	868	799	807
Jhajjar	847	861	801	774
Mahendgarh	918	894	818	778
Rewari	899	898	811	784
Gurgaon	850	853	807	842
Faridabad	826	871	847	842
Mewat	899	906	894	906
Palwal	862	879	854	862
Haryana	861	877	819	830

Source: Census of India, 2001-201

During 2001, seven districts in the state (Panchkula, anipat, Sonepat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Gurgaon) had comparatively lower sex ratio that was less than 850 whereas only four districts (Fatehabad, Sirsa, Rewari and Mewat) had sex ratio above 880. Mahendragarh district had the highest sex ratio of 918 during 2001. The child sex ratio during the same period was found to be less than 800 in five districts (Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Sonepat and Rohtak). Fourteen districts in the state exhibited child sex ratio less than 850. Only two districts of Mewat and Palwal had sex ratio above 850 during 2001. Sex ratio and Child sex ratio in the state has noted marginal improvements according to Census of India, 2011. In this time period, two districts of Mewat and Fatehabad noted sex ratio more than 900 and also the number of districts with sex ratio more than 880 increased to eight. At the same time, child sex ratio in the state was found to be more than 900 only in Mewat noting improvement as compared to previous Census time period. Four districts of Jhajjar, Mahendragarh, Rewari and Sonepat noted child sex ratio less than 800. Mewat noted the highest child sex ratio along with districts of Panchkula, Sirsa and Palwal that had comparatively higher child sex ratio and only districts with more than 850 child sex ratio. Conclusively, it is noted that the sex ratio and child sex ratio continue to be low in the state. Particularly, child sex ratio continues to be appalling in the state where only one district had CSR above 900. Most of the districts continue to present a highly imbalanced child sex ratio that have serious implications for holistic socio-economic development in the state.

Need for renewed focus in gender planning and development with particular emphasis on child sex ratio

Achieving gender equality involves a long-term commitment and significant adjustments to society's social, political, and economic philosophies. Gender equality is a crucial component of the development process (Sachs *et al.*,

2019) [23]. It is essential to many different types of development outcomes. In addition to equally increasing everyone's capabilities, it's critical to offer equal opportunities and a collaborative development atmosphere. The goal is changed from attaining gender equality as a target to achieving gender equality as a goal through incorporating gender equality into the development process. Due to the historical foundations of gender relations and the fact that progress need not always result in a development process that promotes gender equality, it is a continual process that calls for long-term strategic interventions and dedication.

A great indicator to look at how society reacts to female children is the child sex ratio (Arokiasamy & Goli, 2012) [1]. Future crucial events like the marriage rate, labour force, age structure, births and deaths, migration, and replacement, etc. are determined by the sex composition of the kid population today. Therefore, a lack of female children results in a major demographic imbalance and negative societal effects. The decrease in the number of females is ascribed to a number of factors, including sex discriminatory abortions, son preference, high death rates, female foeticide, cultural customs, and neglect of the girl child. Today's misuse of diagnostic techniques like amniocentesis, which can reveal the sex of the foetus, has substantially aided sex-selective abortions. Although science and technology are meant to advance civilization, they were formerly utilised to determine a foetus' gender, and now, sadly, many sex-selective abortions are performed. According to a study by Dasgupta (2005) [6], there has been a strong desire for sons, and the sex ratio is closely tied to the sex makeup of the family's already-born children. People are under pressure to have fewer daughters and more males in order to conserve the limited household resources (Sen, 1990; Coale, 1991) [24, 4]. Numerous studies have indisputably shown a link between wealth and low sex ratios, highlighting the deadly role played by technology in escalating the missing girl phenomenon. It is fairly obvious

that technology is enabling "sex-preference," which is why girls are being eliminated out even before they are born.

Men are typically ranked higher than women in "hierarchical gender relations," which devalues women solely on the basis of their sex. The lack of a level playing field for the female sections of society is a result of this hierarchy, which is "manifested in family relationships, inheritance laws and customs, valuations of women's work and its general visibility and the power to take decisions in the society, the family, the workplace, religious and other cultural institutions" (Mikkola and Miles 2007) [20]. In order to establish a set of social expectations that define how differently men and women are able to access rights, resources, and power in society, society analyses the biological differences between men and women (Dea, 2016) [7]. These expectations lead to social imbalances that manifest as gender inequities, however these imbalances may differ from one civilization to another. The resulting ideals and expectations are typically defended by citing "culture and customs," and women are denied access to essential opportunities, chances, and resources as a result of these notions. This unequal access provided to men and women serves as the foundation for discrimination in many aspects of life. Thus, gender differences are a result of discrimination on all levels. These gender differences pose significant development-related obstacles. As they prevent women from "participating in social, political, and economic activities," they "adversely impact development goals and hinder women's overall well-being" (Das and Pathak 2012) [5]. Inequalities between men and women have increased as a result of the biased development process in terms of wages, educational attainment, access to resources, employment opportunities, etc. The son-preference in Indian culture has also had a detrimental impact on the advancement of the female section of society. It was anticipated that the reforms and systematic planning would lessen these discrepancies, but the growth process's knock-on consequences have resulted in unequal development across various industries, professions, and genders. According to Dilli *et al.* (2019) [9], women have not even attained equality in terms of "institutional treatment or well-being results," and social norms and laws keep them out of the mainstream of progress. Understanding the inefficiencies brought on by limited possibilities for women and girls is the main goal.

Conclusion

In the state of Haryana, gender discrepancies are multidimensional, and gaps between the categories suggest that the development of capabilities has not even begun, and that opportunities are not equally accessible to men and women. In terms of utilising the opportunities that economic progress offers, women have lagged substantially behind men. In Haryana's patriarchal society, men are prioritised over women. Haryana has a strong predilection towards sons. Through different central and state level programmes, the Indian government periodically develops plans to ensure the survival and development of girls. These programmes strive to implement structural changes that are both realistic and transformative in order to address various socioeconomic inequities. Such plans, which emphasise the financial gains associated with the birth of girls, aim to change the gender ratio and eventually appeal to the general

populace. The diminishing sex ratio may eventually be balanced as a result, making the uncounted girls count.

To raise awareness about the diminishing sex ratio and its detrimental effects on society as a whole among various stakeholders and the community at large, a number of activities will be planned. It is also clear that enforcing any rule without community support is challenging. It is likewise unrealistic to believe that any incentive- or punitive-based programme can produce long-term solutions. These efforts need to be backed up by persistent and proactive actions. However, supporting free and compulsory education for girls, postponing the marriageable age, and encouraging economic independence can all be useful strategies. These interventions could have the potential to produce slow, steady results with long-term solutions.

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