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GENDER IMBALANCE IN HARYANA: A STUDY



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, chose Haryana to launch his nationwide campaign of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' in January this year. Unfortunately, it's not a feather in the cap as Haryana was chosen for this 'campaign for saving the girl child', for having one of the worst sex ratio and child sex ratio in the country. The census of 2011 recorded 827 females for every 1000 males in Haryana. The child sex ratio was equally saddening at 830 number of girls per 1000 boys between 0 to 6 years of age. What is even more alarming is the fact that Haryana is otherwise amongst the economically most progressive states. The persistently declining sex ratio in Haryana has reached the level of a crisis which will have far reaching social and economic consequences.

KEYWORDS

economically, social and economic consequences..

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INTRODUCTION :

The rising population in India has always shown a figure skewed in favor of male population but the latest census has coughed up even more alarming figures. Population census in 2011 showed the sex ratio of the country to be 940 which is only slightly better than 933 in 2001. The child sex ratio has gone down from 927 in 2001 to 919 in 2011 which is a cause of grave concern. The census figures indicate a strong preference by the society for a male child which is even more strongly evident in regions like Punjab and Haryana. The sex ratio of Punjab was only marginally better in 2001 at 874 when in Haryana it stood at 861. The shocking truth was further revealed in the figures of child sex ratio at 819. Both the figures have improved a decade later in Haryana with sex ratio at 879 and child sex ratio at 834. However, the truth prevails that it is one of the worst ratios in the country. The population of Haryana in 2011 census stands at 25,351,462 with 13,494,734 males and 11,856,728 females. In sheer numbers there are 16,38,006 more males than females. The males constitute 53.34% of total population of Haryana with females at 46.7%. The child sex ratio shows this trend to be further accentuated in the coming years as this population attains adulthood. The imbalance has already set in and it will have a devastating effect on the sex ratio in future.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This paper aims to study the trend in sex ratio and child sex ratio in the state of Haryana as compared to India.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY:

The study is mainly based on the secondary data as given in the Census of India and Statistical abstract of Haryana of various years. The data and information was also sourced from various books, newspapers, and journals.

The study mainly involves qualitative analysis of the secondary data available in the Census of India and Statistical Abstract of Haryana of various years.

HARYANA AND INDIA

In India sex ratio is measured in terms of number of females per 1000 males. Sex ratio reflects the gender composition of the population and its underlying socio-economic and cultural aspects. The declining value of sex ratio has been associated in many studies with the declining status of female in the society (Census of India, 2001, Gill & Madan, 2011). In India the sex ratio in 1951 stood at 946 which declined to 941 in the next decade and further went down to 930 in 1971. The gender ratio has shown some improvement after that from 1981 onwards and the latest value in 2011 stood at 940. In comparison, Haryana has much lower sex ratio. Even in 1961, when the entire India average was 941, Haryana had a ratio of 861 which is lower by 80 points from the national average. The trend has continued till the census of 2011 with Haryana consistently staying at a sex ratio lower by 60-70 points. These figures necessitate the need for understanding the reasons for dismal figures of sex ratio. Haryana has always been predominately an agrarian state. Therefore, the preference for son for doing agriculture has always been evident in this society. They prefer the land to be passed on to the sons as the social system requires the

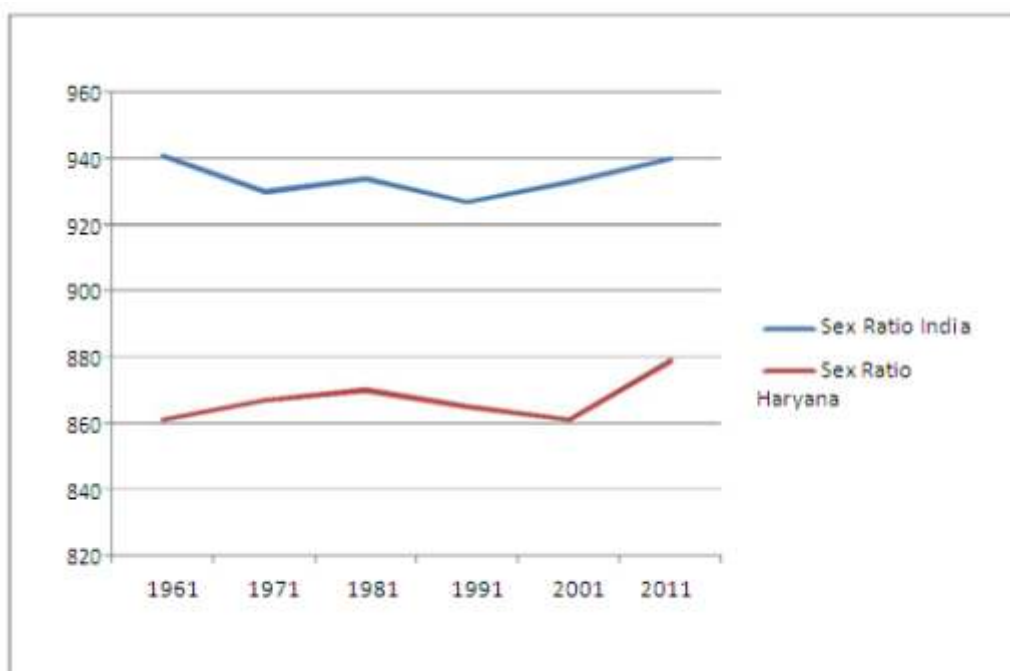
daughters to leave the parental house after marriage. The son is considered to be the future bread earner in the family and also a provider for old age whereas the daughters have to be provided with dowry. These factors reduce the desirability of a female child. Moreover, being a patriarchal society, the position of women in both her parental family and family of marriage has stayed vulnerable. The neglect over the years in terms of access to resources, medical facilities, nutrition and general care has resulted in high mortality rate amongst women leading to lower sex ratio.

Table-1
Comparison of Sex Ratio of India and Haryana

| Year | Sex Ratio India | Sex Ratio Haryana | Difference between the Sex Ratio of India and Haryana |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| 1961 | 941 | 861 | 80 |
| 1971 | 930 | 867 | 63 |
| 1981 | 934 | 870 | 64 |
| 1991 | 927 | 865 | 62 |
| 2001 | 933 | 861 | 72 |
| 2011 | 940 | 879 | 61 |

Source: Census of India for various years

Figure-1
Sex Ratio of India and Haryana



The Government of Haryana has initiated many schemes in the past to improve the status of women like the ladli scheme, and sable scheme. The general thought process behind most schemes has been to improve the level of literacy among women and hence their contribution to the 'earning capacity' and 'decision making' in a household. Amartya sen (1990) analyzed that the higher contribution of women to the economic growth of the family can counter the neglect of girls as they grow up. The data of census 2011 reveals that the level of literacy among women and their contribution to the economic activities has definitely increased. Sadly, this too has not lead to much improvement in the sex ratio.

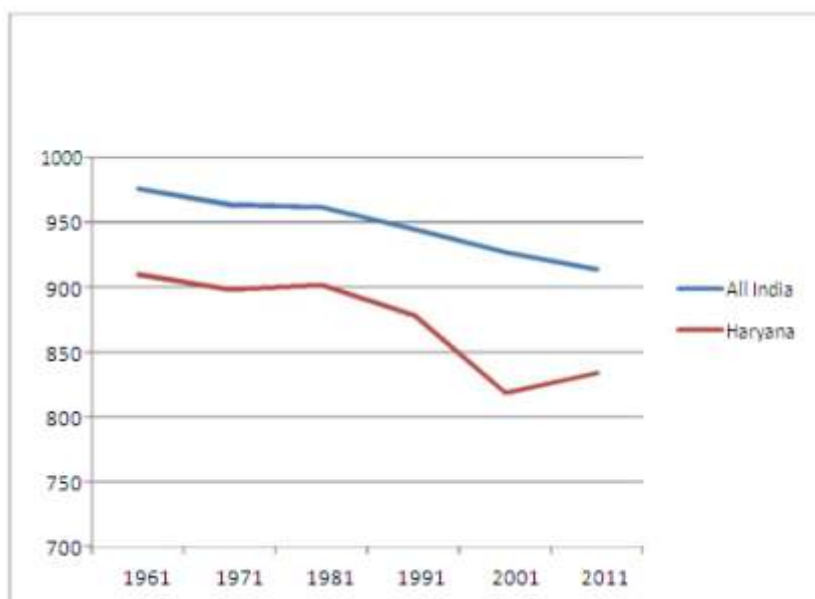
Besides the sex ratio, the child sex ratio (CSR) too has been continuously declining in Haryana except for some improvement in 2011.

Table - 2
Comparative CSR(0-6) of India & Haryana

| | All | | |
|------|-------|---------|-------------------|
| Year | India | Haryana | Difference in CSR |
| 1961 | 976 | 910 | 66 |
| 1971 | 964 | 898 | 66 |
| 1981 | 962 | 902 | 60 |
| 1991 | 945 | 879 | 66 |
| 2001 | 927 | 819 | 108 |
| 2011 | 914 | 834 | 80 |

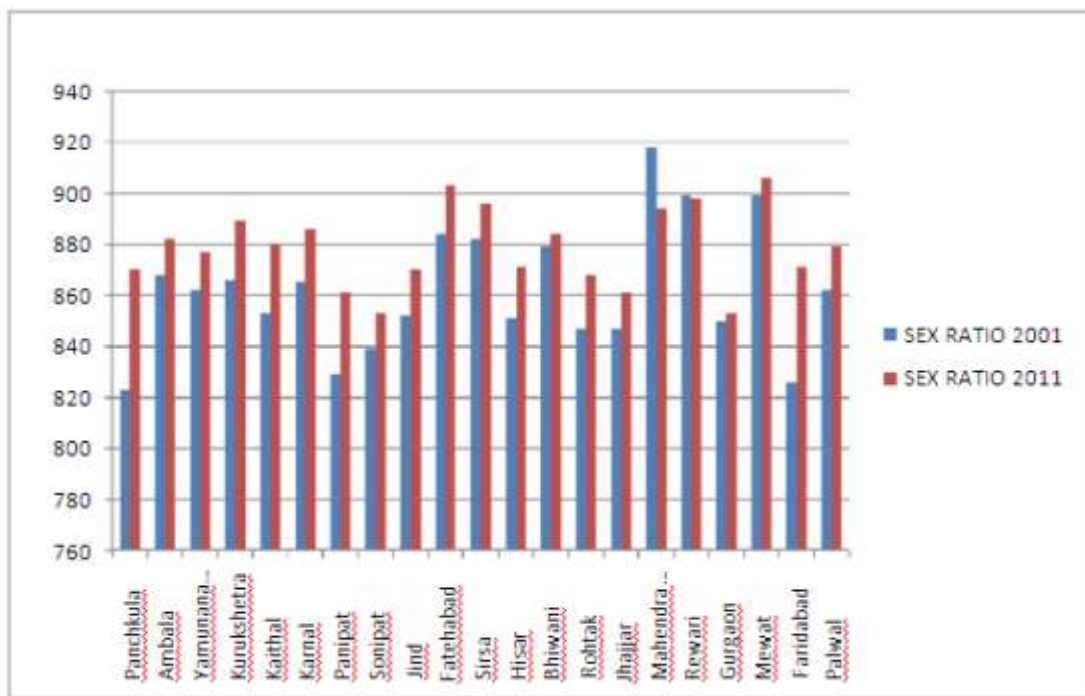
Source: Census of India of various years

Figure -2
Child Sex Ratio of India and Haryana



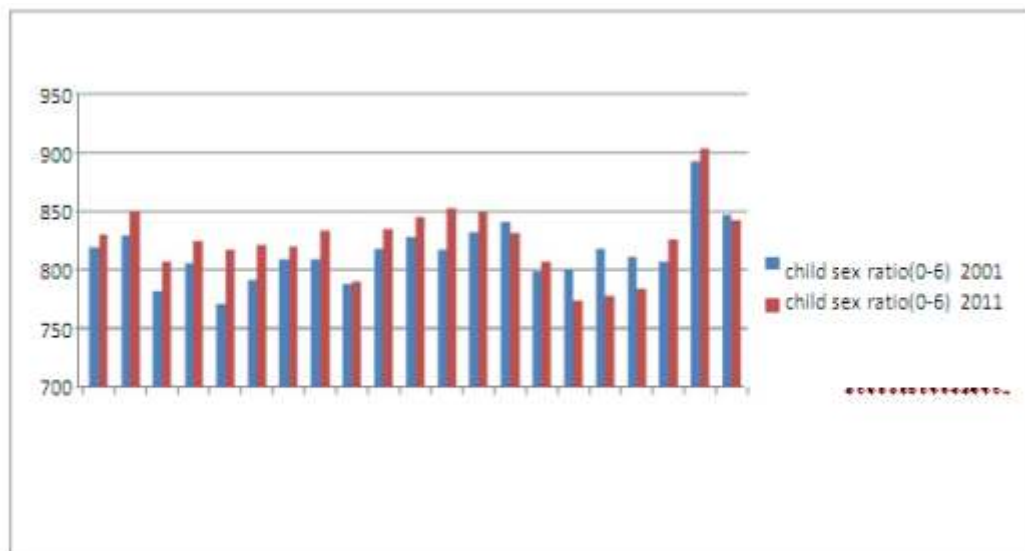
As far as the difference between the national average and Haryana in child sex ratio is concerned, the picture is very similar to sex ratio. At all times, Haryana is lagging behind by at least 60 points plunging a low of 108 in 2001. Overall, the figures have gone down (except for a little improvement in Haryana in 1981 & 2011) in case of both India and Haryana. If we look at the district level data in Haryana, there is lot of inter-district disparity too. In 2001 Mahendergarh was the only district to cross the 900 mark of sex ratio but it declined in the next decade. In 2011, only Fatehabad and Mewat were above 900 at 903 and 906 level and rest of the districts were at the lower ratio. Faridabad, Panipat and Panchkula have shown remarkable improvement over last census. Gurgaon, though economically the most progressive district, has the lowest sex ratio followed by sonipat and jhajjar. Overall, most of the districts have shown some improvement over the 2001 census.

Figure-3
Sex Ratio at the District Level in Haryana



Source: Census of India 2001 and 2011

Figure-4
CSR at the District Level in Haryana



Source: Census of India 2001 & 2011

The CSR of the districts show very little improvement over the 2001 census and except Faridabad, the figures of CSR for all the districts are abysmally low. Mahendergarh, Rewari and Gurgaon have further deteriorated in the latest census with figures not even reaching the 800 mark. Jind is almost at the same level and below 800 for the past two decades.

Table- represents the bottom five districts in India in terms of CSR. Haryana has four districts in this category. Whereas in the census of 2001, Haryana had three districts in the bottom ten and only one in bottom five. The declining child sex ratio has more significance than the overall sex ratio as; the current levels of CSR will determine the gender composition of future. Looking at the current scenario, there is no guarantee of sustainability of the improvement in sex ratio.

Table - 3

Child Sex Ratio- Bottom five Districts in India(2011)

| District | CSR |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Jhajjar/Haryana | 774 |
| Mohindergarh/Haryana | 778 |
| Rewari/Haryana | 785 |
| Samba/Jammu & Kashmir | 787 |
| Sonepat/Haryana | 790 |

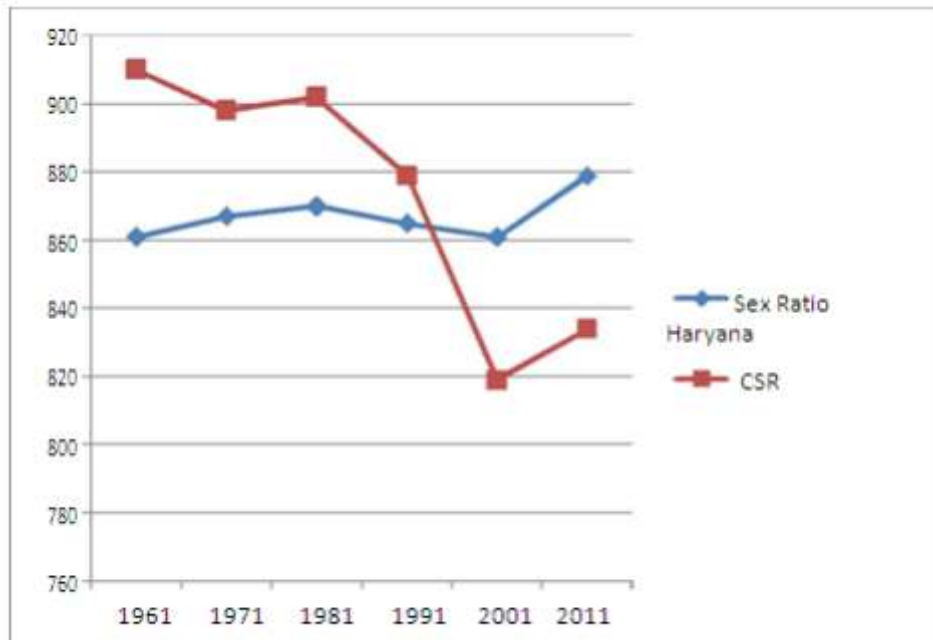
Census of India 2011 and Statistical Abstract of Haryana 2010-11.

In contrast, Haryana has shown the highest per capita income in the latest surveys. In terms of literacy, Haryana had 76.65% of literate population. The literacy rate amongst females and males in urban areas in census 2011 was 65.98% and 88.63% respectively. In rural areas these figures stood at 51.96% and 81.95%. The literacy levels are definitely higher in the urban areas giving rise to the expectation of better sex ratios. However, sex ratio is even lower in the urban sector. The sex ratio in the rural and urban sector in 2001 census was 866 and 847. In the year 2011 this ratio came to 882 and 873 in rural and urban areas, which though an improvement over the last census, is still very low. The CSR is still lower at 835 and 832 in the rural and urban sector respectively in 2011. In spite of being ahead in terms of both female and male literacy the urban areas have shown lower CSR as compared to the rural areas.

Under the circumstances, it seems difficult to arrive at some general conclusions about reasons for declining sex ratio. Taking in to consideration the factors of improved health services, lower death rate among females, higher life expectancy, better literacy and awareness among women about their health care, the declining sex ratio and child sex ratio point towards female foeticide and infanticide as one of the emerging reason. George & Dhaiya(1998) through their intensive study in six villages in district Rohtak affirmed the abuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for sex selection. Their study identified that the parents have a tendency to be selective about the sex of the next child, taking into consideration the sex sequence of previous children and number of sons.

Hindustan Times, Rohtak featured a report in February, 2015 on a recent survey carried out by district health authorities on the gender ratio of the second child. Of the 149 villages, in which the survey was conducted, 38 villages were marked as critical areas where people are suspected of indulging in rampant female foeticide by making use of sex diagnostic technique. The few initial figures reported in the newspaper are a cause of alarm. In Bhalot village, the CSR of the first born child was 826/1000 and for the second child the ratio reported is 66/1000. In Sanghi, the ratio for the first born is 1115/ 1000 and 607/1000 on the second child. Sex selective abortions using modern diagnostic techniques are rampant and are being provided by both registered and unregistered practitioners. The availability of technology and improved economic status has paved way for easy determination and elimination of female child.

Figure - 5
Comparison of Sex Ratio and CSR in Haryana



Singh & Singh (2014) in their study on female foeticide in Punjab and Haryana concluded that the idea of son preference is still deep rooted in these societies leading to the practice of female foeticide. The policy of Family Planning propagated by the Government of India to limit the growth of population too has been counterproductive with regard to sex ratio especially in Haryana. Most couples aim for small families with desired sex of the children. The easily available technology coupled with almost nil conviction rates in cases of female foeticide has created an imbalance in the CSR. The graph comparing the overall sex ratio in Haryana to the child sex ratio gives a clear indication of drastic fall in CSR with the advent of sex determination techniques in mid 80's and especially after 1991 when these techniques became easily available. A 'socio-cultural study on declining child sex ratio in Delhi & Haryana' published in 2008 by

National Institute of Public Co-operation and child development reflects that "determinants of changes in sex ratio vary from sex differentials in mortality, sex selective migration, sex ratio at birth and at times on sex differentials in population enumeration. However the high incidence of induced abortions and a sharp decline in child sex ratio in the last decade clearly proves the practice of female foeticide." Another study conducted by Khichi & Bir (2012) in Rewari district of Haryana based on perception of Accredited Social Health Activists identified three major reasons for declining CSR. The major reason was son preference while dowry and poor implementation of laws for prevention of crime against women took second and third position. In the light of above observations, it seems safe to arrive at the conclusion that there seems to be an unfortunate use of modern technology by the people still caught in the traditional mindset of preference for a son. The fact is that there is deliberate and illegal engagement by the people, irrespective of the caste and income group, across the state in the practice of sex selection. The practice of female deselection is ultimately related to the socio-cultural factors. There is a need to change the mindset of the people so that daughters are not considered a burden. Unless people understand the reason to change, they will not change. They need to understand the serious consequences of 'missing females'. It's

even more crucial for the women to understand the need for change and resist the pressure from family and society to undergo the sex determination test. A most crucial requirement is for the Government to pay serious attention to the increasing instances of sexual and physical violence against women. The fear of violence against females is another deciding factor for parents especially mothers for 'son preference'. There is an urgent need of political will to actually implement in practice the laws framed for the protection of women against any kind of violence. A 'Highly Visible and Vocal' statewide campaign needs to be launched to spell out the disastrous consequences of demographic imbalance.

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