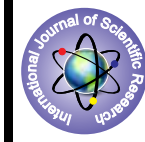


Declining Child Sex Ratio in Andhra Pradesh- a Study



Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The sex composition by age group especially the 0-6 years is vital for studying the demographic trends of child population. Though, the overall sex ratio has improved to 940 as compared to 933 in 2001, the child (0-6 years) sex ratio, i.e. the number of girl children per 1,000 male children has shown an unabated decline since 1961. It has declined from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011. The decreasing child sex ratio will have a cascading effect on population over a period of time leading to diminishing sex ratio in the state. The present paper examines the situation child sex ratio in Andhra Pradesh based on census data.

Introduction

India's population has reached 1.21 billion (121 crore), indicating a rise of 17.64 percent, or 181 million, in the last 10 years, according to preliminary results of the 15th census released on March 31, 2011. The population, comprising 623.7 million males and 586.5 million females, almost equals the combined population of the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Japan. However, the growth rate at 17.64 percent has dropped in the last decade. This is the first decade (2001-2011), with the exception of 1911-1921, that has actually added less population to the previous decade. But the child sex ratio (under-6 years) in 2011 is 914 females for every 1,000 males, indicating a continuing preference for male children over females. The female sex ratio was more favourable in the last census, at 927.

The sex composition by age group especially the 0-6 years is vital for studying the demographic trends of child population, its future patterns and particularly, the status of the girl child. The child sex ratio (under-6 years) in 2011 is 914 females for every 1,000 males, indicating a continuing preference for male children over females. The female sex ratio was more favourable in the last census, at 927. The child sex ratio in Haryana and Punjab is the lowest among the states. Haryana has 830 female children and Punjab 846, against 1,000 male children. The highest child sex ratio is in Mizoram (971 females against 1,000 males) and Meghalaya (970). Kerala and Pondicherry, which had improved their child sex ratios in 2001, have joined the rest of the country in a decline. Jammu and Kashmir has seen the most precipitous drop, 82 points, in its child sex ratio, with Maharashtra registering the next biggest fall among the major states. While, the overall sex ratio, which is the proportion of females to every 1,000 males across all ages, has increased from 933 females for every 1,000 males in 2001, to 940 in 2011, indicating that a girl child's chance at life greatly improves once she crosses the age of 6 years. At the Census 2011, sex ratio of the population in the age group 0-6 years is registered as 943, in Andhra Pradesh, declining from 961 of 2001 Census. The State level figures on child sex ratio for rural and urban areas recorded as 942 and 946 respectively are below their corresponding figures of 963 and 955 respectively of 2001. The decreasing sex ratio in this age group will have a cascading effect on population over a period of time leading to diminishing sex ratio in the state.

Girl child at risk

Though, the overall sex ratio has improved to 940 as compared to 933 in 2001, the child (0-6 years) sex ratio, i.e. the number of girl children per 1,000 male children has shown an unabated decline since 1961. It has declined from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011. The latest figures are the lowest since 1947. This is of grave concern as the country is already grappling with gender discrimination and female foeticide/infanticide. Punjab and Haryana continue to have the lowest child sex ratios in the country at 846 and 830 respectively. Other states which reveal appalling figures include Uttar Pradesh (899, down from 916), Maharashtra (883, down from 913), Chandigarh (867, down

from 845) and Jammu & Kashmir (859). It is noteworthy that the so-called rich states of Maharashtra, Punjab and UT Chandigarh have some of the lowest child sex ratios in the country. This hints at the on-going rampant misuse of technology in those states. Sex-selective abortions or female foeticides, attitudes towards the girl child and traditional social practices have been driving the skewed sex ratio in the country are the primary cause of the decline. While the government has been carrying long standing campaigns against abortion and sex selection, the ever diminishing numbers of girls show that little has changed. Experts worry about the repercussions on gender relations and violence when these children, with their skewed ratios, enter adolescence. It is also witnessed in Human Development Report (2011) on Gender inequality Index that India recorded 129th rank which shows the significance of gender discrimination.

As per details from Census 2011, Andhra Pradesh has population of 8.46 Crore, an increase from figure of 7.62 Crore in 2001 census. Total population of Andhra Pradesh as per 2011 census is 84,665,533 of which male and female are 42,509,881 and 42,155,652 respectively. The total population growth in this decade was 11.10 percent. The population of Andhra Pradesh forms 7.00 percent of India in 2011. Literacy rate in Andhra Pradesh has seen upward trend and is 67.66 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 75.56 percent while female literacy is at 59.74 percent. Total area of Andhra Pradesh is 275,045 sq. km. Density of Andhra Pradesh is 308 per sq km which is lower than national average 382 per sq km. Overall Sex Ratio in Andhra Pradesh is 992 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. The child sex ratio is 943, somewhat higher than Indian average as 914 in 2011 (Census of India, 2011).

Andhra Pradesh has no exception with regard to declining child sex ratio. The future demographic profile of the State looks bleak as the child sex ratio has fallen to 943 from 961 in 2001 census, according to data on Provisional Population - Andhra Pradesh 2011 (Census of India, 2011). The figures for rural (942) and urban (946) are way below their corresponding figures 963 and 955 respectively in 2001. The child sex ratio in two mandals -- Alampur (704) in Mahaboobnagar district and Chityal (528) in Nalgonda district -- is a cause for concern. Whereas in 2001 no Mandal was found in the range below 800. There has been a fall in the child population in both percentage as well as numbers. The percentage decadal growth rate of child population during 2001-2011 declined from -7.23 to -15.03 registering a decrease of 7.80. In numbers child population fell by 1,43,067 in Karimnagar, 1,28,337 in Warangal and 1,21,044 in East Godavari districts. The reasons for the fall could be many. It could be due to the success of the small family norm, or a result of migration. However, the fall could manifest itself as a major human resource crisis in future.

Table-1: District-wise sex ratio of Child population in the age group 0-6 by residence, Andhra Pradesh - 2001 & 2011

State / UT Code	State/ District	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 years) 2001			Child Sex Ratio (0-6 years) 2011		
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
28	Andhra Pradesh	961	963	955	943	942	946
01	Adilabad	962	970	939	942	946	928
02	Nizamabad	959	960	953	946	943	959
03	Karimnagar	962	965	948	937	935	942
04	Medak	964	966	954	954	953	957
05	Hyderabad	943	0	943	938	0	938
06	Rangareddy	959	969	95	947	945	949
07	Mahbubnagar	952	951	953	932	929	947
08	Nalgonda	952	951	955	921	915	950
09	Warangal	955	954	961	912	901	942
10	Khammam	971	973	958	958	961	947
11	Srikakulam	967	968	965	953	956	935
12	Vizianagaram	980	984	957	955	957	947
13	Visakhapatnam	976	990	952	961	965	956
14	East Godavari	978	976	985	969	969	969
15	West Godavari	970	968	978	970	969	976
16	Krishna	963	964	961	953	952	955
17	Guntur	959	958	962	948	944	955
18	Prakasam	955	955	956	932	929	944
19	Sri Potti Striramulu Nellore	954	953	957	945	942	954
20	Y.S.R.	951	949	957	919	917	923
21	Kurnool	958	957	960	937	938	935
22	Anantapur	959	956	967	927	928	925
23	Chittoor	955	957	945	931	933	927

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011.

It can be observed from table- 1 that in 2001 census, 13 districts have reported low child sex ratio than the state average. During the period in rural areas, 10 districts have reported low rural child sex ratio. While, in urban areas, 9 districts have reported lower urban child sex ratio than the state average. In the recent census of 2013, in 11 districts, the child sex ratios lower than the state average. The corresponding numbers of districts in rural and urban areas are 9 and 10 respectively.

In 2001 census, the least child sex ratios were recorded in Hyderabad (943), Y.S.R (951), Mahbubnagar(952), and Nalgonda(952). Rural child sex ratios were least in the districts of Mahbubnagar (951),Nalgonda(951) and Warangal(954). Urban child sex ratios were least in the districts of Ranga Reddy(95),Adilabad(939)and Chittoor(945). As per 2011 census, the least child sex ratios reported districts were Warangal (912), Nalgonda (921), and Y.S.R (919).Rural child sex ratios were least in these three districts. Urban child sex ratios were least in the districts of Y.Sy(923), Ananthapur(925)and Chittoor(927).

Table-2: Child Sex Ratio of top five and bottom five districts by residence - 2011 in Andhra Pradesh (RURAL)

Top five				Bottom five			
Code	Name	Child Sex Ratio	Rank	Code	Name	Child Sex Ratio	Rank
14	East Godavari	969	1	09	Warangal	901	1
15	West Godavari	969	1	08	Nalgonda	915	2
13	Visakhapatnam	965	2	20	Y.S.R.	917	3

10	Khammam	961	3	22	Anantapur	928	4
12	Vizianagaram	957	4	18	Prakasam	929	5

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011.

In rural areas, top five districts that have reported rural child sex ratio are East Godavari, West Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Khammam, and Vizianagaram in between 969-957. While, Warangal, Nalgonda, YSR, Anantapur and Prakasam Districts are at the bottom five positions with rural child sex ratio between 901 and 929.

Table-3: Child Sex Ratio of top five and bottom five districts by residence - 2011 in Andhra Pradesh (URBAN)

Top five				Bottom five			
Code	Name	Child Sex Ratio	Rank	Code	Name	Child Sex Ratio	Rank
15	West Godavari	976	1	20	Y.S.R.	923	1
14	East Godavari	969	2	22	Anantapur	925	2
02	Nizamabad	959	3	23	Chittoor	927	3
04	Medak	957	4	01	Adilabad	928	4
13	Visakhapatnam	956	5	21	Kurnool	935	5

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011.

In urban, 9 districts have urban child sex ratio below the state average of 946 in 2011 Census(Census of India, 2011). The districts of West Godavari, East Godavari, Nizamabad, Medak and Visakhapatnam are at the top five positions with urban child sex ratio between 976 and 956. On the other hand, Y.S.R and Anantapur, Chittoor, Adilabad and Kurnool find place in the bottom five districts of urban child sex ratio in between 923 and 935. At mandal level, the child sex ratio is worsened over 2001 census position. Child sex ratio in two mandals viz. Alampur (704) in Mahbubnagar district and Chityal (528) in Nalgonda district is in the range of less than 800, whereas, in 2001 no mandal is found in this range. In the range of 901-950, 564 mandals are found followed by 380 mandals in the range of 951-1000. Sex ratio above 1000 is registered in 62 mandals only as against 111 in 2001. In rural areas, 15 mandals registered child sex ratio in the range of 850 or below as against nil record in 2001 Census. In urban area the number of mandals in this range is increased to 13 against single mandal Nagarkurnool (847) in Mahbubnagar district in 2001.(Census of India, 2001) Mandals registered sex ratio above 1000 are 74 in rural areas and 15 in urban areas against their corresponding figures of 120 and 17 in 2001 Census.

Table-4: Distribution of Mandals by range of Child Sex Ratio and by residence - 2001 - 2011 Andhra Pradesh

Sex Ratio Range	2001			2011		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
< OR = 800	0	0	0	2	2	3
801-850	0	0	1	12	13	10
851-900	12	14	12	108	123	22
901-950	361	357	15	564	522	135
951-1000	625	609	97	380	364	107
1001-1050	107	113	15	57	67	10
1051-1100	4	7	1	3	5	3
1101-1150	0	0	1	0	0	1
1151-1200	0	0	0	1	1	1
> OR = 1200	0	0	0	1	1	0

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011.

Conclusion

The child sex ratio has fallen to 943 in 2011 from 961 in 2001 census. Differentials in child sex ratio is across the state by regions, Mandals and rural as well as urban areas This steep decline in child sex ratio is dangerous sign of the girl child deficit. Further, it has shown an alarming signs of gender inequality in child population. The deficit in girl child population, leads to serious demographic imbalance and adverse social consequences.

Efforts of Government

The than Chief minister Dr. Rajasekhara Reddy stressed the need to bridge the gender gap. He said the Government had initiated measures to give due importance to women. The present Child and Disabled Welfare Minister V. Sunitha Laxma Reddy said the Government was committed to eradicating sex selective abortions through effective implementation of PCPNDT Act. Launching the statewide campaign 'Join hand-in-hand to protect girl child' organized by Action Aid, a voluntary organisation here, she said programmes akin to the one on eradication of polio would be initiated to save the girl child in the State. The launch of the campaign started with a rally. Around 500 persons, mostly women and children, from 11 districts (Warangal, Nalgonda, Medak, Mahabubnagar, Chittoor, Prakasam, Visakhapatnam, Nellore, Anantapur, Ranga Reddy besides the city) participated in it. The rally was flagged off by a woman who had escaped from forced abortion, left her in-laws' house and preferred divorce, in Chittoor district. Placards carried by women had slogans such as 'Sex determination and selection is a crime', and 'Say no to discrimination of girl child'. Ajay Sahney, Principal Secretary, Medical and Health, promised stringent action against violators of the PCPNDT Act.

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