
Research Papers



DECLINING CHILD SEX-RATIO - A DANGEROUS SYMPTOM

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Abstract

The population census (2001-2011) is released recently and this provides much needed information for planning, for promoting socio-economic development of India. The present brief write-up attempts to capture the demographic changes that has been taken place and the declining child sex-ratio during 2001-2011 with reference to available data and the analysis of declining child sex-ratio is made with reference to India. However much attention is paid to the strategies for controlling the declining child sex-ratio.

1. Introduction:

The population census (2001-2011) is released recently and this provides much needed information for planning, for promoting socio-economic development of India. The present brief write-up attempts to capture the demographic changes that has been taken place and the declining child sex-ratio during 2001-2011 with reference to available data and the analysis of declining child sex-ratio is made with reference to India. However much attention is paid to the strategies for controlling the declining child sex-ratio.

India's population during 2001-2011 has grown to 18 crores. It was 102 crores in 2001, which has risen to 120 crores in 2011. However even though the growing population declined slowly, India still stands second largest populous country, next to china. India contributes 17.5 percent to the world population, while China contributes 19 %. It is very interesting and striking

that the country's head count is almost equal to combined population of the USA, Brazil, Pakistan, Indonesia, Japan and Bangladesh. It shows that how the other countries have become successful in controlling the population size. For example Uttarpradesh continuous to be most populous state and 20% of India's population resides in the Uttarpradesh. Thus, focus should be given on the family planning, especially concentrating on identifiable high fertility regions.

2. The Gender Sex-ratio- The present situation:

The gender sex-ratio has increased from 933 to 940 during the decade, there are 940 female population to 1000 male in India. However the dangerous symptom is that child sex-ratio (0-6 yrs) population decreased to 914 females to 1000 males in 2011 from 927 females to 1000 males in 2001.

This suggests that female children (0-6yrs) are less born and shows our preference for male babies as compared to female children. This is

particularly identified in states like Punjab, Haryana etc. where the child sex-ratio is below 830.

3. Main reasons for the Gender bias:

There may be many reasons however; the main reason is female infanticide where females are not allowed to be born given the misunderstanding that females are looked upon as a burden by the parents.

This is very alarming and what is needed is overall social attitude transformations, where girls are seen as ASSET than LIABILITY. However, this is a long term objective what is urgently required is to make change in the mindsets of the parents through sustained Information Education and Communication (IEC). The urgent need to tighten the existing legislations like PNDT Act, which aims at preventing female infanticide. The NGO's which aim at women empowerment should take this important issue on their agenda and as a part of their many interventions, should bring pressure on the concerned governments to implement the legislations so that child sex-ratio cannot be adverse.

In addition to this, the chance of sex selective are higher in urban area, which is a major cause for decline of child sex-ratio. This is referred to as "high-tech sexism" by the great economist Amartya Sen.

4. Strategies for controlling the declining child sex-ratio:

Following strategies were suggested for controlling the declining child sex-ratio:

a. There is an urgent need for social attitude transformation among women, specially in urban and rural areas where women illiteracy level is high.

b. The attitude transformation can be undertaken through sustained Information Education and Communication (IEC) interventions for changing the mind sets of women.

c. The existing PNDT Act, which aims at preventing female infanticide,

must be implemented very strictly, judiciously and rigorously.

d. The NGO's, which work for women empowerment should take this serious issue on their agenda and give priority in their many interventions.

e. The women Self Help Groups (SHG's) should take active lead in educating their SHG members and others in the society through organizing the social campaigns aggressively like-

- "SAVE THE BABY GIRL CAMPAIGNS"
- SHG'S AND NGO'S TIE-UP for educating and attitudinal change among the women on the baby girl.

f. "KILL THE BABY GIRL" campaign is going on very fastly in all over India. So, a strict legal action on this is the need of the hour in India today.

g. The District collectors should take legal action and if possible punish, those "sonography centres" who are not ready to implement "SILENT OBSERVER".

h. Promoting the "SAVE THE BABY GIRL CAMPAIGNS" with the help of schools, colleges (particularly women's colleges) through NSS and other programs. Creating the awareness among college girls who are in the age group i.e. 18-22 yrs through Saksharta Abhiyan. (through poster and banner exhibition in the colleges)

i. Keeping watch and taking action like cancelling medical practice registration, on those private doctors, who are involved in "KILL THE BABY GIRL" campaign in majority of urban, rural and rural areas of India.

j. Giving following motivational incentives to those couples who stop their issues after "ONE/TWO" baby girl issues-

- Reservation in school and college admission.

- Reservation in government jobs (State and central)

- Housing loan with concessional interest rate to the couples with "ONE/TWO" baby girl issues.

- Free education to the girls up to graduation.

5. Conclusion:

The demographic scenario as presented during 2001-2011 shows increasing population. It has grown to 18 crores. It was 102 crores in 2001, which has risen to 120 crores in 2011.

However, the most worrying factor is that the child sex-ratio (0-6yrs) has dropped down sharply in India. This suggests that female babies are born less as compared to male children. The strategies given above, are implemented sincerely, then it will help to control the declining child sex-ratio. Therefore, the health planners and demographers should take this serious issue into their account in years to come.

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