



## Declining child sex ratio and gender specific violation of human rights in India

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### ABSTRACT

Females have an innate biological advantage over males. Female babies out survive male babies and women live longer than men. This is a female advantage which increases linearly with development in the absence of very marked preference for males. However, India is one of the few exceptional countries where sex ratio has been unfavourable to females. The recently released 2011 Census data paints a grim picture of sex ratio among children (0-6 years) which has touched an all time low. Every census shows a reduction in the proportion of girl child compared with the previous one. In the case of female children in womb of expectant mothers, they are not only denied the right to live, but are robbed of their right even to born, as revealed by their declining numbers. It is in this context, the present study attempts to highlight the phenomenon of failing child sex ratio in India as a sheer manifestation of violence against women, a violation of their human rights

The 4<sup>th</sup> U.N.Conference on Women states that equality between men and women is a matter of human rights and a condition of social justice and also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace. The Indian constitution is firmly grounded on the principles of equality and justice. Its preamble promises to all its people socio-economic and political justice and affirms equality before the law. More particularly, Article 21 of the constitution on 'protection of life and personal liberty' states "no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." However, the reality speaks of different situation in India. In the case of female children in the womb of expectant mother, they are not only denied the right to live but are robbed of their right even to be born.

The Universal declaration of Human Rights proclaims equality for all irrespective of sex, but in our country, half of its human resource pool is still considered unworthy of being born and they are denied the right to life. As independent India is moving ahead, the attitude towards the girl child has, as the latest census reveals, regressed to the dark ages. It is in this context the present study attempts to highlight the phenomenon of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in India as a sheer manifestation of violence against women, a violation of

their human rights.

Females have an innate biological advantage over males. Unless they are radically discriminated against, female babies out survive male babies and women live longer than men. This is a female advantage which increases linearly with development in the absence of very marked preference for males. However, India is one of the few exceptional countries where sex ratio is unfavourable to females. The ratio which as high as 972 in 1901 Census fell to all time low of 927 in 1991 census. However, the overall sex ratio presents slightly encouraging trend across the country in the last two censuses. Though the change is marginal but appreciable, but 2011 census paints a grim picture of CSR which has touched an all time low. It has declined to 914 female children for every 1000 male compared to 933 in 2001 census. Every census shows a reduction in the girl child compared with the previous one.

Table 1 presents the sex ratio of the total population and child population and child population (0-6 years) from 1961 to 2011. Table 1 reveals that after 1991, there has been consistent rise in overall sex ratio. On the other hand, fall in CSR has been unabated since 1961. This is not 'census specific', but more a recurring and continuing trend. Boys continue to be preferred and daughters remain unwanted. The technological