SEX RATIO PATTERNS VERSUS LITERACY RATE AND URBANIZATION IN PUNJAB

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Abstract

This paper attempts to identify any relation of sex ratio patterns with the literacy rate and urbanization in the Punjab from 1971 to 2011. It is usually assumed that the sex ratio patterns had some relation or link with urban/rural location and literacy rate of the people. This paper discussed both aspects in detail to find any connects. Most people believe that the urban and rural sex ratios had different patterns titled in favor of the urban sex ratio. It was also felt that more educated people did not commit the crime of female foeticide or they starts giving equal rights to boys and girls in all spheres of life. Same time our census record does not shows anything in favors of our assumptions.

Key words: Sex Ratio, Literacy Rate, Urbanization, Female Foeticide.

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Literacy and education are seen as reasonably good indicators of development in a society. For the purpose of Census, any person aged seven and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate. [1] It has been generally assumed that increase in literacy rate leads to an improved sex ratio, among other things. It is assumed that education helps in changing our mindset especially against social evils and definitely leads to convert customary thinking of 'son preference'. As the literacy rate in Punjab has more than doubled during 1971-2011 and the State is heading towards universal literacy and it might gives equal or double rights to girls child with boys. As per the 1971 Census, one out of every three persons (34.12%) was literate and this has increased to 76.70 % in the 2011 Census. The increase in female literacy in the corresponding period is almost three times from 24.65 % in 1971 to 71.30 percent in 2011. This increase in literacy rate has to show some increase in sex ratio patterns as assumed that education will help in improving sex ratio. This increase in literacy rate however, is not proportionate to the sex ratio patterns of the State as it was showed decrease of 53 points in child sex ratio from the census of 1971 to 2011.

The proportion of increase in the literary rate of the State is not proportionate to increase in the sex ratio as literacy rate in 1971 is 34.12% and in 2011 increased to 76.70% almost doubled in five decades. There is no doubt that in the census of 1981 child sex ratio showed an improvement of 9 points from 899 of 1971 to 908 in 1981. But from there onwards there is continuous decline in sex ratio as in the census of 1991 there were 875 girls and in 2001 Punjab recorded ever lowest child sex ratio of 798 girls but same time if we took literacy rate figures they are continuously showing an increase from the census of 1971 to 2001 with an increase of 35.58 percent almost doubled from the census of 1971 with 34.12 literacy rate. On other side in sex ratio patterns in 1971 there were 899 girls per 1000 males and it decreased to 846 with a decrease of 53 points still lacked 154 girls per 1000 boys. (See Table-1) It clearly shows that the impact of literacy rate is not as effective as it is assumed by us. May literacy rate or education impact other thing in society but in Punjab higher literacy rate failed to provide right to life to gild child and did not bring any change in customary thinking of 'son preference' in the mind of the people.

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[1] *Census of India 2011,* Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2011, Punjab, Series 4, Director of Census Operations, Punjab, 81.

Table-1

Literacy Rate and Child Sex Ratio in the Punjab 1971-2011

Year	Person	Males	Females	Child Sex Ratio
1971	34.12	42.23	24.65	899
1981	43.37	51.23	34.35	908
1991	58.51	65.66	50.41	875
2001	69.70	75.20	63.40	798
2011	76.70	81.50	71.30	846

Source: *Census of India 2011,* Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 2011, Punjab, Series 4, Director of Census Operations, Punjab, 81.
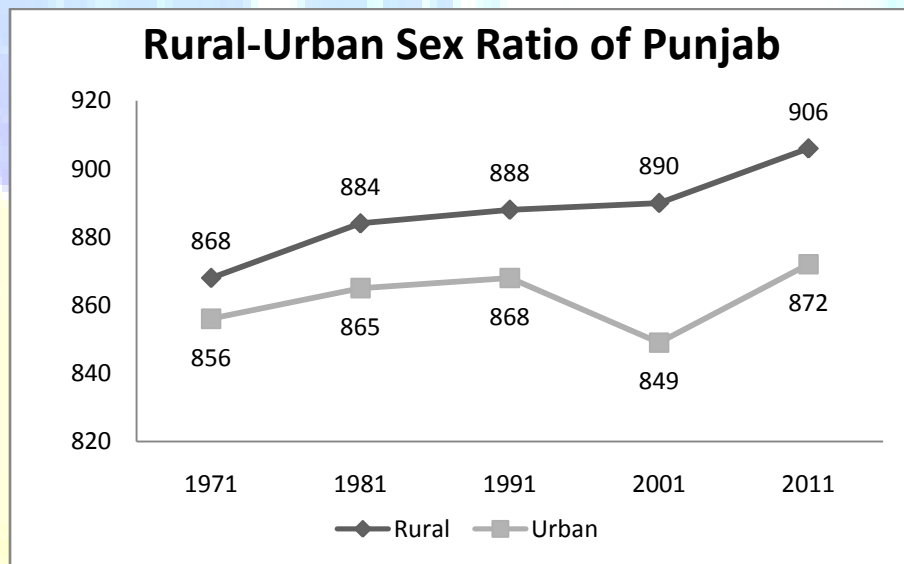
Further, a different type of picture emerges after analyzing the rural-urban sex ratio patterns of Punjab in the context of the literacy rates. In 2011, 83.70% people were literate in towns and cities, being higher than the 72.45% rural settlements. There is approximately a gap of 10 percent between the literacy rate of urban and rural people. The more literate people of urban areas must have more improved sex ratio than rural areas. But census records of 2011 was showed another thing that the rural population has more girls per boys as compared to urban proportions. This clearly indicates that the more educated people of urban Punjab prefer the birth of only sons and are more inclined towards sex-selective abortions.

If the literacy rates and sex ratio patterns of various districts of the Punjab are compared it is found that there is no correlation between these two indicators in the improvement of sex ratios. The only exception being the district of Hoshiarpur as it topped in both the highest literacy rate of 85.4 % as well as sex ratio of 962 female per 1000 males in the Punjab. The ten 'highest' literacy rate districts are Hoshiarpur (85.4%) S.A.S Nagar (84.9%), Rupnagar (83.3%) Ludhiana (82.5%) and Jalandhar (82.4%), Gurdaspur (81.1%), S.B.S Nagar (80.3%), Fatehgarh Sahib (80.3%), Kapurthala (80.2%) and Amritsar (77.2%) respectively. (See Table-3)

There is no doubt that out of these ten 'highest' literacy rate districts of Hoshiarpur (first with 962 females), Jalandhar (third with 913 females), Rupnagar (fourth with 913 females),

Kapurthala (fifth with 912 females) and Gurdaspur (eighth with 895 females) are also in top ten highest sex ratio districts. The other six districts in the top ten highest sex ratio districts do not figure in the ten highest literacy rate districts are S.B.S Nagar (second with 954 females), Tarn-Taran (sixth with 898 females), Muktsar (Seventh with 895 females) and Firozepur (ninth with 893 females) and last Moga (tenth with 893 females) all these districts have 890 plus overall sex ratio but they are not in top ten highest literate districts out of 20 districts of Punjab. Their literacy rate percentage has great variations as in case of Muktsar, only 66.8 % of literacy rate but it holds seventh position in sex ratio with 895 females. Same was the case with Tarn-Taran district there we have 898 females per 1000 males but there literacy rate is 69.4%. The reverse is also true. There are cases where the literacy rate (84.9%) in second in the state as in S.A.S Nagar, but its sex ratio is as low to 878 female's even below to the state average of 893.

Graph-1

Rural-Urban Sex Ratio of Punjab

It is assumed that urban areas have better access to education and health. In the overall sex ratio of rural-urban Punjab, the fact which emerges is that the sex ratio of rural Punjab is far better than that of urban areas. In the Census of 1971 rural Punjab had 868 females per 1000 males while in urban Punjab this proportion was 856. There was a gap of 12 points. From this point onwards this gap widened even more with each census enumeration. In the Census of 1981

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the difference was 19 points in 1991, 20 points and in 2001and 41 points more females in rural Punjab as compared to the urban population. It is only in the 2011 provisional tables of Punjab that a minor improvement in this gap is visible and it has now reduced to 34 points. A district wise comparison of rural and urban child sex ratio of the districts however, shows that in ten districts the urban sex ratio was lower than the rural child sex ratio while in seven districts the urban sex ratio was marginally higher than the rural sex ratio in the Census of 2001. The major difference was found in the districts of Ludhiana (-93), Kapurthala (-64), Hoshiarpur (-59) and Jalandhar (-45) all these districts have a significant by lower number of females in the urban areas as compared to their rural sex ratio. The highest urban sex ratio was found in Faridkot with 892 females, 16 more females than rural sex ratio of 876. A minor difference was found in Rupnagar (+2), Nawashahr (-3), Mansa (+3), Muktsar (-5) and in Sangrur (-5) sex ratio where the urban rural divide on sex ratio was of insignificance.

This variation of urban-rural child sex ratio in various districts reveals that it does not follow any particular pattern. On the whole, we can say that the female deficit seems higher in urban areas, as we have ten districts out of 17 districts in the Census of 2001 recording fewer females in urban areas as compared to rural areas. This disparity however, is not substantial to suggest any urban/rural divide on the issue of sex ratio among children. It is a phenomenon that is prevalent in all part of the State in varying degree. This rural-urban variation is usually explained by the fact that urban areas have a number of migrants' males in search of means of livelihood, thereby swelling the proportion of males in the towns and cities.[2] In any case the gap is not significant and has been narrowing over time.

With all these variations it becomes clearly evident that gender disparity or low sex ratio in any particular area cannot be changed with literacy alone. There is no direct connection

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[2] Punjab is another state with interesting migration profile. Though the total number of migrants from outside the state and outside the country are 0.81 million and 0.02 million respectively, there is significant out-migration from the state (0.5 million). The number of male outmigrants is less than female out-migrants. As a result, the net migrant in to Punjab is only 0.33 million, the sex ratio stacked highly in favour of males (313 females per 1000 females). States from where sizeable number of in-migrants came to Punjab are: Uttar Pradesh (0.24 million); Haryana (0.11 million) and Bihar (0.14 million). Male in-migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar cited 'Work/Employment' as the main reason for migration (72.1% and 82.2% respectively). *Census of India 2001,* Data Highlights, Migration Tables, (D1, D1 (Appendix), D2 and D3 Tables).

between the literacy rate and the skewed sex ratio, to any appreciable level. The districts with low literacy rate have a higher sex ratio as in cases of Muktsar and Tarn-Taran districts. On other hand districts with higher literacy rate showing lower sex ratio for example in case of S.A.S Nagar as it has 84.9 % second highest in State and in sex ratio patterns it stood sixth from below out of 20 districts with 878 females. No direct link between literacy rate and sex ratio can be discerned. So there are other things or aspects present in our society those are curbing the right to born and right to life of the girl child in the Punjab. It is also clear that by improving education alone we are not able to save our girl child.

Table-2

Rural/ Urban Overall Sex Ratio in Punjab Districts in 2001

Districts	Total	Rural	Urban	Difference
Ludhiana	824	877	784	-93
Kapurthala	886	907	843	-64
Hoshiarpur	935	947	888	-59
Jalandhar	882	904	859	-45
Firozepur	883	893	857	-36
Fatehgarh Sahib	851	859	832	-27
Gurdaspur	888	895	868	-27
Amritsar	874	885	859	-26
Moga	883	885	873	-12
Bathinda	865	868	860	-8
Sangrur	868	869	864	-5
Muktsar	886	888	883	-5
Nawashahr	913	914	911	-3
Rupnagar	870	869	871	+2
Mansa	875	875	878	+3
Patiala	864	862	868	+6

Faridkot	881	876	892	+16

Source: *Census of India, Punjab, 2001.*

Table-3

Punjab State and its Districts with Literacy Rate and Overall Sex Ratio

State/Districts	Literacy Rate (%)	Overall Sex Ratio
Punjab	76.7	893
Hoshiarpur	85.4	962
S.A.S Nagar	84.9	878
Rupnagar	83.3	913
Ludhiana	82.5	869
Jalandhar	82.4	913
Gurdaspur	81.1	895
S.B.S Nagar	80.3	954
Fatehgarh Sahib	80.3	871
Kapurthala	80.2	912
Amritsar	77.2	884
Patiala	76.3	888
Moga	71.6	893
Faridkot	70.6	889
Firozepur	69.8	893
Bathinda	69.6	865
Tarn-Taran	69.4	898
Sangrur	68.9	883
Barnala	68.9	876
Muktsar	66.8	895
Mansa	62.8	880

Source: Seema Jain, *Census of India 2011*, Provisional Population Totals Punjab, Director of Census Operations, Punjab.