



Sex Ratio and India

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Why in News

According to the **2018 report** on “vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System”, **Arunachal Pradesh** recorded the **best sex ratio at birth** in the country while **Manipur** recorded the **worst sex ratio at birth**.

- The report was published by the **Registrar General of India**.
- **Sex ratio at birth** is number of females born per thousand males. It is an **important indicator to map the gender gap of a population**.

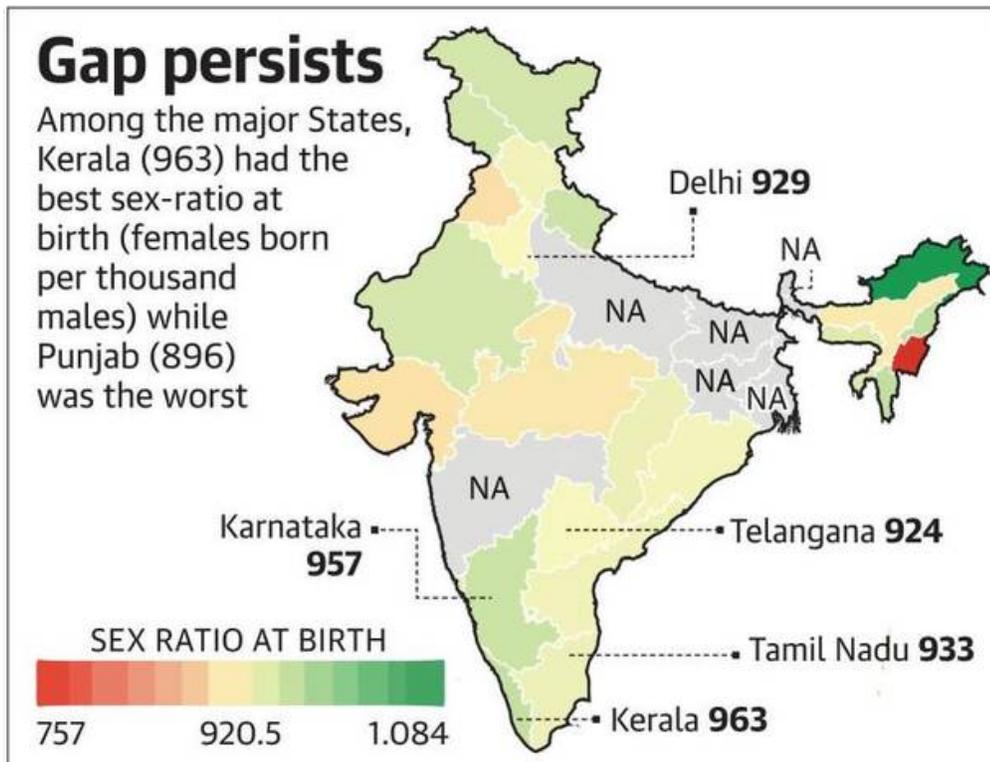
Registrar General of India

- Registrar General of India was founded in 1961 by the Government of India under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- It arranges, conducts and analyses the results of the demographic surveys of India including **Census of India** and Linguistic Survey of India.
- The position of Registrar is usually held by a civil servant holding the rank of Joint Secretary.
- **Civil Registration System (CRS)** in India is the unified process of continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the vital events (births, deaths, stillbirths) and characteristics thereof. The data generated through a complete and up-to-date CRS is essential for socio-economic planning.

Key Points

- **Arunachal Pradesh** recorded **1,084 females** born per thousand males, followed by Nagaland (965), Mizoram (964), Kerala (963).
- The **worst sex ratio was reported in Manipur** (757), Lakshadweep (839) and Daman & Diu (877), Punjab (896) and Gujarat (896).

- Delhi recorded a sex ratio of 929, Haryana - 914.
 - The ratio was **determined on the basis of data provided by 30 States and Union Territories** as the requisite **information** from six States namely **Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal is not available**.
 - **Major states** are states with populations 10 million and above as per the 2011 Census.
- The **Sample Registration System (SRS)** Report 2018 shows that **sex ratio at birth in India**, declined marginally from **906 in 2011 to 899 in 2018**.
 - Contrary to popular perception, **India's sex ratio at birth declined even as per capita income increased nearly 10 times over the last 65 years**, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of government data.
 - This could be because rising income, which results in increased literacy, makes it easier for families to access sex-selective procedures.
- **Issues Related to Lower Sex Ratio at Birth:**
 - **Gender-imbalance:**
 - **Prof. Amartya Kumar Sen**, in his world famous article "**Missing Women**" has statistically proved that during the last century, 100 million women have been missing in south Asia.
 - This is due to discrimination leading to death, experienced by them **from womb to tomb in their life cycles**.
 - An adverse child sex ratio is also reflected in the distorted gender makeup of the entire population.
 - **Distortion in the Marriage System:**
 - Adverse ratio results in a gross imbalance in the number of men and women and its inevitable impact on marriage systems as well as other harms to women.
 - In India, some villages in Haryana and Punjab have such poor sex ratios that men "**import**" **brides** from other States. This is often accompanied by the exploitation of these brides.
 - There are concerns that skewed sex ratios lead to more violence against both men and women, as well as human-trafficking.



Way Forward

- **Bringing Behavioural Change:**

Increasing female education and economic prosperity help to improve the ratio. In this pursuit, the government's **Beti-Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign** has achieved remarkable success in bringing behavioural change in the society.

- **Sensitizing Youth:**

- There is an urgent need to reach young people for reproductive health education and services as well as to cultivate gender equity norms.
- For this, the services of **Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)** can be leveraged, especially in rural areas.

- **Stringent Enforcement of Law:**

- India must implement the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994** more stringently and dedicate more resources to fighting the preference for boys.
- In this context, the **Drugs Technical Advisory Board decision** to include ultrasound machines in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 is a step in the right direction.

Source: TH