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Title: Social, Economic and Cultural Differential in Sex Ratio in Haryana: A Geographical Analysis

ABSTRACT

Sharp sex ratio imbalance in Haryana is a social and demographic problem that has persisted from time immemorial. This geographical analysis explores causes of this abnormally low sex ratio in the state in terms of social, cultural (religious), economic and terms at tahsil level on the basis of secondary data and at the household level on the basis of primary data.

The proportions of the caste Hindus and the scheduled castes in the total population, the overall literacy rate, female work participate rate and per cent of urban population in the tahsils are found to have a negative influence, while the proportion of the Muslim population has a positive bearing on the sex ratio of the total population.

In the case of rural population scheduled castes and female agricultural workers are found to have a positive influence on the sex ratio, while the proportion of urban population, income, percentage of female cultivators and the percentage of caste Hindus and other religious groups have a negative role in shaping low sex ratio. In urban areas as well, female work participation rate, level of women and overall education depress the sex ratio, while other religious groups improve the sex ratio.

At household level, examination of sex ratio tabulated against family size, median household age, religion, income and dowry reveals that the sex ratio in smaller families is the highest, while it is the lowest in the case of large families as extended ones. It is also true of rural sample, but in urban sample, though the highest sex ratio is associated with smaller

families, but the lowest one with medium sized families (transitional ones). The sex ratio by age does not show a clear trend in all sample groups. In terms of religion, caste Hindus show the highest sex ratio, while Muslims show low sex ratio in total sample while in rural sample Muslims show the highest sex ratio, but in urban areas their sex ratio is low. Income is observed to have a strong negative impact on sex ratio in all samples. So is true in the case of dowry. The households, in which no marriage of daughters has taken place, show the highest sex ratio, otherwise the lower amount of dowry has a positive impact on the sex ratio and vice versa.

The stepwise regression analysis of household sex ratio returns the dowry, as the single most important negative factor that lowers the sex ratio in households, that is followed the median age of the members of the household and family size in that order in all samples.

The findings of this analysis lead that low sex ration in Haryana is continuity of the savage tradition and no amount of women emancipation is going to improve it. Only a change in mindset can bring some relief to the unborn girl child.