



## Alarming Child Sex Ratio in Andhra Pradesh: District wise Analysis

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**Abstract:** Andhra Pradesh, one of the states which registered low population growth rate, has been experiencing a peculiar situation at present regarding sex ratio. The overall sex ratio i.e., number of female population to 1000 male population is higher than the national average and Child sex ratio under five year age group is low in rural areas. As the district information is available for the first time, an attempt is made to observe the variations in child sex ratio among various districts of Andhra Pradesh. In this way, everyone should keep in mind that the success of a family, a state, a Nation depends on gender balance and equal participation of both male and female population. As the children are the future citizens, this paper appeals the entire society to live as human and let the girl child also to live in the society.

**Key words:** Amartyasen, Child Sex Ratio, equal participation, population,

### Introduction

Andhra Pradesh, the sunrise state, has set its targets to become one of the top three high performing states of India by 2022 and achieve the status of the best state in the country by 2029. The progress of any state is judged by the well-being of the population. Andhra Pradesh has 5.06 crores of population at the time of bifurcation. A thorough study of the structure of the population is needed as Amartyasen has rightly pointed out that success must ultimately be judged by promoting of capabilities and enhancing the well-being and freedom. Economic Development has no meaning if it has no touch of human value. The structure of population mainly consists of age and sex. Age and sex are the basic characteristics of any demographic group as they affect economic, political and social structures at present as well as the future. Age and sex are visible, indisputable and convenient indicators of social status, for they influence manpower planning in all aspects .

### Objectives of the study:

1. To observe the percentage of child population to total population in each district,
2. To study the sex ratio at birth for children born in last five years in various districts and observe rural wide variations,
3. To analyze the reasons for such variations,
4. To examine the consequences of decreasing girl population,
5. To suggest policy implications.

**Methodology:-** The present study is conceptual survey with exploratory cum descriptive in nature. It is based on the analysis of secondary data. The secondary data is availed from various Journals, internet, and books.

### Child sex ratio

The Census of 2011 attracted the attention of the entire nation towards child sex ratio by recording all-time low



record for the age group of 0-6 years. The CSR in Andhra Pradesh also registered a declining trend since 1991, though it is above national average. The CSR is 943:1000, i.e., 943 girls for 1000 boys in the age group of 0-6 years for undivided Andhra Pradesh. The National Family Health Survey-4 collected the data for (2015-16) and the report provided fact sheets for the states as well as for the districts on many health indicators. As the district information is given for the first time, there is more scope to observe the variations in child sex ratio and to analyze the factors thoroughly.

NFHS-4 Survey reveals the paradoxical results of overall sex ratio i.e., 1020:1000 and sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five year i.e.914:1000. Moreover variations are alarmingly found between rural and urban CSR. In Urban areas, the sex ratio of children under 5 is 1010:1000

whereas 880:1000 in rural areas. In this context, this paper tries to examine the variations in CSR at district level of Andhra Pradesh.

**Child population to the total population:**

The Population census 2011 has given the data of children for the age group of 0-6 years. The proportion of the child population to total population in Andhra Pradesh is 10.6 .Among districts the percentage varies from 9.6 in West Godavari to 12.5 in Kurnool. There are not much variations between districts as far as child population.

**CSR of rural and total districts:**

The NFHS-4 Survey calculated the sex ratio at birth for children for last five years. Table-I presents the sex ratio of children under five for rural and total children of various districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Table: 1 : Sex ratio of children under 5 years of age

S No.	District	Rural	Total
1	Ananthapur	1077	1196
2	Chittoor	1140	1168
3	East Godavari	968	1008
4	Guntur	552	637
5	Krishna	993	900
6	Kurnool	867	816
7	Prakasam	768	799
8	Nellore	1109	1156
9	Srikakulam	865	933
10	Visakhapatnam	1013	1097
11	Vizianagaram	917	864
12	West Godavari	755	834
13	YSR Cuddapah	604	675
	Andhra Pradesh	880	914

Source: National Family Health Survey-4

The CSR of children under 5 years is very low in 3 districts namely Guntur, YSR Cuddapah and Prakasam. The CSR in Guntur District needs utmost attention as it registered the very lowest figure both in rural and at total district level. The number



of girl children for 1000 boys in different districts is extremely at different levels and these variations among the districts are alarmingly ranging between less than 800 and more than 1000 in the following manner.

- Less than 800 --- 3 Districts (Guntur, YSR Cuddapah and Prakasam)
- 800 to 1000 --- 5 Districts ( Krishna, Kurnool, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram & West Godavari)
- More than 1000--- 5 Districts (Ananthapur, Chittoor, East Godavari, Nellore, Visakhapatnam)

The survey has given the data about rural urban variations for certain Districts where the difference is more than 200 shown in Table – 2.

Table: 2: sex ratio of children under 5 years of age

S.N	District	Rural	Urban
1	Guntur	552	790
2	Krishna	993	756
3	Visakhapatnam	1013	1231
4	YSR Cuddapah	604	829
	Andhra Pradesh	880	1010

Source: National Family Health Survey-4

The ratio of girl population to boys registered the lowest figure in rural Guntur and the highest in Urban Visakhapatnam .

#### **Factors Attributed To Low CSR:**

The national population policy which aimed at reduction of fertility rate, brought change in the attitudes of the people to believe that " small family is Happy Family". Small family may be defined as the family with 2 children i.e. 2 boys, 2 girls,1 boy and 1 girl. This type of phenomenon makes the parents to prefer son to the daughter. They accept 2 boys or 1 boy and 1 girl but not 2 girls. It may be due to following reasons:

- a. Increase in marriage age of girls made the parents to spend on girls for some more years.
- b. Increasing expenditure on children education.

c. Male dominating society prevents parents to send their daughters to distant places for education or for employment.

d. High dowries and post marriage formalities made daughters marriage more expensive.

e. Reluctance of parents to stay with daughters in their old age as they feel that it is against the tradition.

f. The custom of performing post death rituals only by sons.

g. Women have no freedom in decision making even regarding the family size though they have to bear the pregnancy burden.

h. Technology gives chance to know the sex of the foetus in advance.

i. Decreasing moral values ethical values to ruin the female foetus.



j. No botheration of mother health while aborting with son preference.

k. Last but not least, misuse of medical termination of pregnancy.

Widespread prevalence of sex selective abortions in North India has already alerted the Government to take strenuous measures. Enactment of PC&PNDT Act, Compulsory Registration of scanning centres, punishments imposed on such parents and doctors who indulge in such practices etc. are some of the measures. It is proved that these measures alone cannot bring changes in the attitudes of the people. Moreover it believed that the lack of social development but not the economic development is the reason behind such practice. However, it is also proved wrong in Andhra Pradesh districts. If the same trend is continued, persistent decline of girl children may lead to several social disorders in near future.

❖ Men may remain unmarried due to non-availability of suitable bride.

❖ Mass kidnap of teenage girls may be intensified as women trafficking is a major issue in Rajasthan.

❖ Surrogate mother culture may become common

❖ Protection of girl child becomes as serious problem which intensifies the issue and prevents the parents to give birth to girl child.

❖ Women Empowerment might be replaced by women protection and may impose serious law order problem

❖ Unless it is checked, some castes may disappear in the future or lose their identity.

#### **Findings and Suggestions:**

This paper tries to focus on various factors responsible for low CSR in Guntur district.

NFHS-4 revealed the following facts

A. Guntur district registered nearly half of the births delivered by caesarean section.

B. Only 22.3% of rural women is with 10 or more years of schooling

C. Nearly 40% women age 20-24 years married before the age of 18 years

D. More than 75% of children in the age of 6-59 months are anaemic.

Based on the above facts, some policy measures may be suggested to positively implement Janani Suraksha Yojana, Kalyana Lakshmi, Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana under Beti Bachaavo, Beti Padhaavo"andso on. On the other hand, strict implementation and widespread propaganda of PC & PNDT Act in regional languages, compulsory registration of scanning centre along with active tracking system attachment to scanning machine with a centralised location, considering female foeticide at par with murder case, setting up "Fast Track Courts" for speedy prosecution of such cases may help to curtail sex selective abortions.

However NGOs and Voluntary organisations role is utmost needed to bring change in the mindset of the people. Now a days daughters started supporting and looking after their parents. This must be propagated as legitimate issue. Institutional support to elderly people by running old age homes, old age pensions, free medical aid may help to overcome son preference. Ultimately, everyone should keep in mind that the success of a family, a state, a Nation depends on gender



balance and equal participation of both male and female population. As the children are the future citizens, this paper appeals the entire society to live as human and let the girl child also to live in the society.

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