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SEX RATIO IN MIZORAM : A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY

- Lalrinmawia

Abstract : *The population of Mizoram form 0.09 percent of India in 2011 census with 555,339 females and 541867 males. The sex ratio in the state is 975 females per 1000 male which is higher than the national average. The aim of this paper is to study the variation and trends of sex ratio in Mizoram and suggest some possible measure for balancing the male- female population of the state. The study argued that low sex ratio in Mizoram is not the result of female discrimination but due to high incidence of infant mortality rate. It is suggested that medical facilities should be improved in all the districts of Mizoram.*

Keywords : *Sex ratio, Child sex ratio, Spatio-temporal pattern, Mizoram*

1. Introduction

Sex composition of population is a basic demographic characteristic that depend on incidence of birth, death and marriages. It is one of the important indices to comprehend women's health and position in any society. India has a distinction of having a deficit of females since long and still, sex ratio is in favour of men while the proportion of women has been declining continuously. Sex ratio is also one of the most significant demographic development indicators for determining the status of women in a region or country. Many socio-economic relationships are intimately related to the balance or disparity in between them (Barakade, 2012). Sex ratio varies greatly between countries and regions. The sex ratio of the population in the advance countries is in favour to women. In the United Kingdom the sex ratio is 98, in the United States it is 97 and in European countries taken as a whole it is 92. The

imbalance in the sex ratio may arise as a consequence of various factors like natural factors, poverty, war and gender selective. The Census of India data shows a consistent decline in sex ratio from 1901 to 2011. It shows a marginal improvement in 2011 which however was still much lower than the 1901 figure. There are 18 states and Union Territories that are below the national average.

Sex ratio is of the basic indicators of status of women in society. India's low sex ratio signifies the inferior position which women occupy in society (Mayer, 1999). A number of studies found that girls received less medical care than boys and that health dysfunctioning was tolerated more in the case of girls than boys (Bhattacharya, 2012). The census data from 1901 to 2011 shows a steep and consistent decline in the sex ratio of the Indian population. Maintaining a healthy sex ratio is important for the health of society. The reality is that women's labour contribution has become

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the backbone of the economy. They are critical workers in all the lead sectors in India. They constitute 40 per cent of the agricultural workforce. With social security schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) assuring decent wages, women's economic force is coming to the fore. Such schemes would make the contribution of women and girls to the family income visible and they would become an economic source, and not merely a social burden (Jagannathan, 2011)

In Mizoram, female population was higher than male population during 1901-1961. From 1971 onwards, the sex ratio for female has been unfavorable. Although there is an improvement in 2011 Census which recorded the highest sex ratio since 1971. But comparing to 1901-1996 data, the figure is still very low. If the child sex ratio consistently declines, it is bound to have its implications on the overall sex ratio figures which is then difficult to balance out. Mizoram has the highest child sex ratio in India with 971 girls per 1000 boys. This could be the reason for higher sex ratio as compared to other states of India.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the present study are

1. To study the changing pattern of sex ratio in Mizoram at district level
2. To explain the possible causes of the changing pattern of sex ratio and
3. To put forward suggestions that might help in resolving the issue of declining sex ratio in the state.

3. Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data such as Census of India and Statistical Abstract of Mizoram 2017. Sex ratio is taken as the number of females per 1000 males. Statistical methods such as Average, Standard Deviation (SD) and Coefficient of Variation (CV) have been employed and calculated across both districts and decadal censuses. To explain the temporal trend, figures are calculated by subtracting current census year from the preceding census year.

4. Results

4.1 Spatio-temporal distribution and variation

Table 1 shows that large inter-district variation is observed in 1971 while the coefficient of variation (CV) is the lowest in 2001 Census. Temporal data shows that during 1971-2011, the largest variation was found in Lunglei district followed by Siaha district. In 1971 and 1981, the sex ratio was very low in Lunglei district. From 1991 onwards, it shows an improvement till 2011. Other districts that have higher variations are Champhai, Lawngtlai, Aizawl and Kolasib districts. Districts which have reported the least variations in sex ratio are Serchhip and Mamit districts.

4.2 Changing trend of Sex ratio

Table 2 reveals that the sex ratio in Mizoram has declined significantly during 1901 - 2011. Though there is improvement in some census year. During the census year of 1981 and 1991, the sex ratio is found to be lower than

Table 1. District-Wise Sex Ratio in Mizoram, 1971-2011

Year	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	Average	SD	CV
Mamit	878	867	891	896	924	891	22	2.42
Kolasib	984	901	918	908	956	933	35	3.79
Aizawl	954	921	919	952	1009	951	36	3.83
Champhai	1054	1003	971	944	981	991	41	4.17
Serchhip	960	1004	950	967	976	971	21	2.12
Lunglei	837	881	910	922	944	899	41	4.60
Lawngtlai	973	881	901	909	945	922	37	3.99
Siaha	1029	932	926	950	978	963	42	4.37
Average	959	924	923	931	964			
SD	72	54	26	26	27			
CV	7.50	5.81	2.82	2.75	2.79			

Table 2. Sex Ratio in Mizoram, 1901-2011

Year	Mizoram		India	
	Sex Ratio	Decadal Variation	Sex Ratio	Decadal Variation
1901	1113		972	
1911	1120	7	964	-8
1921	1109	-11	955	-9
1931	1102	-7	950	-5
1941	1069	-33	945	-5
1951	1041	-28	946	1
1961	1009	-32	941	-5
1971	946	-63	930	-11
1981	919	-27	934	4
1991	921	2	927	-7
2001	935	14	933	6
2011	975	40	943	10

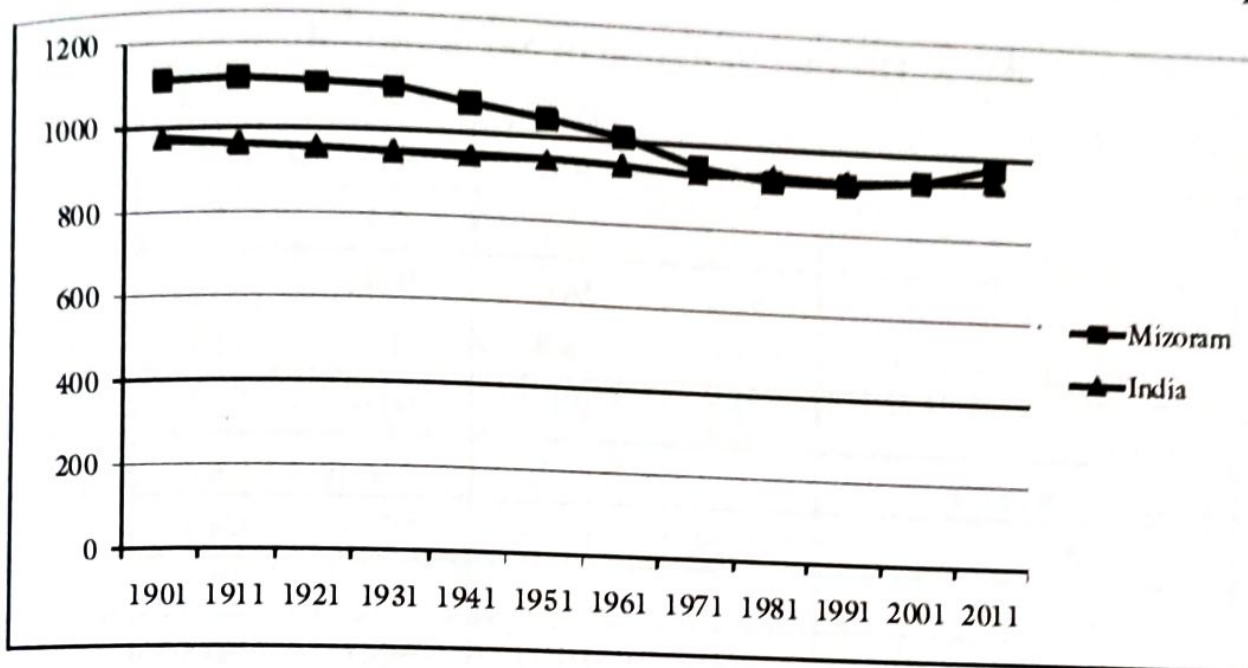


Fig. 1. Sex Ratio in Mizoram, 1901-2011

the national average. From 1971 onward (Table 2) sex ratio in Mizoram declined till 2001. A marginal improvement was found in 2011. In 1971 the sex ratio declined to 946 females per thousand males with decadal variation of -63 from 1009 (-32) in 1961. This may be attributed due to insurgency movement that took place in 1966 when a demand was made by the Mizo National Front (MNF) for creating a sovereign state of Greater Mizoram. During this period, a number of Mizo males volunteered and went underground. However, what is important to note is that the sex ratio in the state has improved from 921 in 1991 and then made a gradual turnaround on an upward path to reach 975 in 2011 Census 2011. This is a healthy sign as far as the status of women in the state is concerned.

District-wise pattern shows that in 1981 census except Lunglei and Serchhip

district, all other district shows a negative growth. The highest is Siaha district (-97) followed by Lawngtlai district. In 1991 census, there is a decline in sex ratio in Aizawl, Champhai, Serchhip and Siaha districts. In 2001 census there is an upward improvement in sex ratio except in Kolasib and Champhai district. During this census, there is also an increase in the overall sex ratio of Mizoram. In 2001 census, it is surprising to note that Serchhip district has the highest sex ratio (967). The Table also shows that the sex ratio in all the districts has increases in 2011 census. Among the districts in the state, only Aizawl district have more females than male (1009). Districts like Mamit, Lunglei, Siaha and Lawngtlai have experienced low sex ratio consistently during 1971-2011 which has contributed to the overall deterioration in sex ratio of the state. In Mamit, the sex ratio kept fluctuating in a narrow band

Table 3. Decadal Variation of Sex Ratio, Mizoram

District	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Mamit	878	867	891	896	924
Decadal variation		-11	24	5	24
Kolasib	984	901	918	908	956
Decadal variation		-83	17	-10	48
Aizawl	954	921	919	952	1009
Decadal variation		-33	-2	33	57
Champhai	1054	1003	971	944	981
Decadal variation		-51	-32	-27	37
Serchhip	960	1004	950	967	976
Decadal variation		44	-54	17	9
Lunglei	837	881	910	922	944
Decadal variation		44	29	12	22
Lawngtlai	973	881	901	909	945
Decadal variation		-92	20	8	36
Siaha	1029	932	926	950	978
Decadal variation		-97	-6	24	28
Mizoram	946	919	921	935	975
Decadal variation		-27	2	14	40

and always remained at a low level. Aizawl, Champhai and Serchhip are the districts where the sex ratio has remained more or less stagnant.

4.3 Child Sex ratio

The overall child sex ratio in Mizoram is 971 in 2011 census. Table 4 shows district-wise distribution of child sex ratio (CSR). It is the highest in Kolasib district (987) followed by Aizawl and Mamit districts. The lowest child sex ratio is found in Serchhip district (926).

According to the National Family Health Survey-4, the infant mortality rate in Mizoram is estimated at 40 deaths before the age of one year per 1,000 live births. In the first five years after birth, girls have a higher mortality rate than boys at all ages. Indian Council of

Medical Research (ICMR) regional research centre during preliminary investigation in March, 2015 highlighted issues around meningitis, pneumonia, and septicemia as the probable causes of infant deaths. The report of this inquiry also mentioned about poor environmental hygiene and highlighted lack of skilled health care staff at Saiha district hospital.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Women in India are historically subjected to neglect, violence and discrimination. In many parts of India, a 'son' is the preferred choice of many households as the returns of investment in male children is considered much higher than in female. Further, there is concern about the right of a married

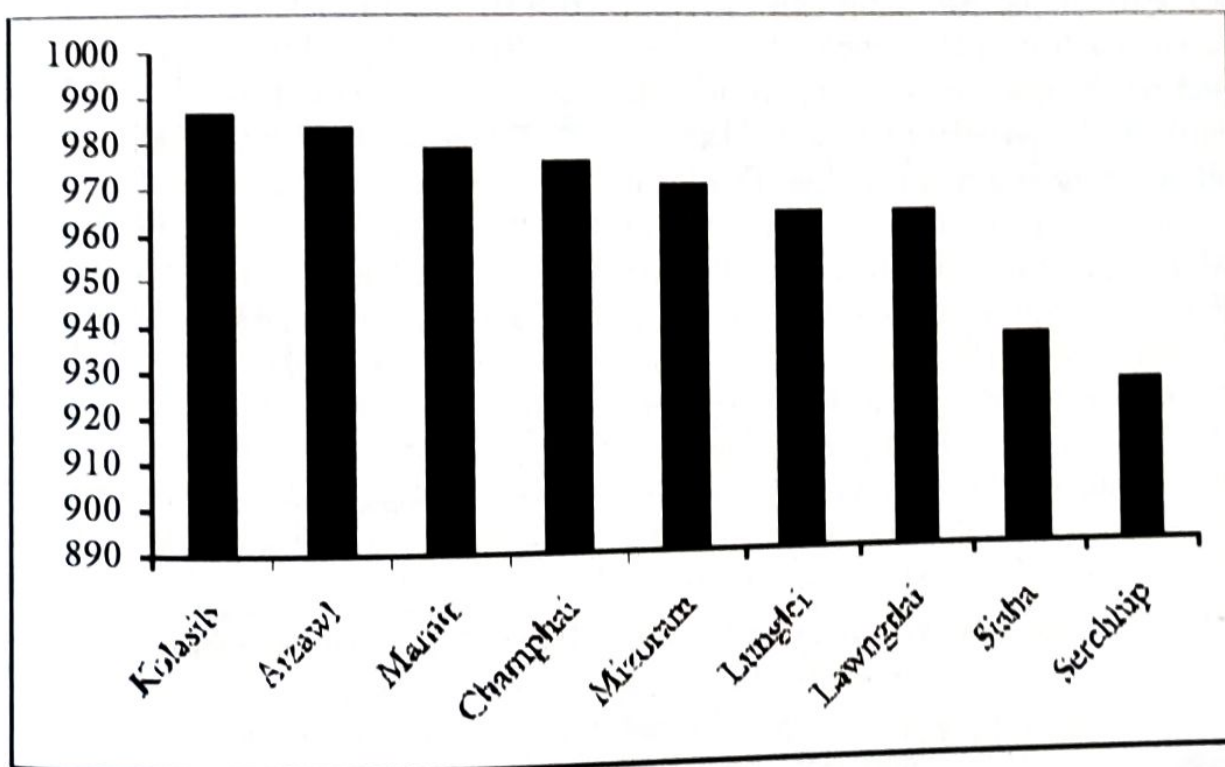


Fig. 2. Child Sex ratio in Mizoram, 2011

daughter to share in the family property, apart from dowry, which leaves the parents with little or no savings. But this is not the case in Mizoram. Mizo society is also basically a patriarchal in nature and man is considered as head of the family. With regard to birth, both male and female children are treated equally. Birth of female child brought much happiness because female child made herself available to parents and assist them. Woman today are self reliant and contributes much to the political, social and economic upliftment of the society.

In Mizoram, more urbanized districts show a large decline in females over the past decades. This may be the result of significant male migration into the city during the past decades. Secondly, the adoption of a small family norm often leads to couples stopping child bearing as soon as they beget one or two males and one female, the proportion of male birth in the population may increase to some extent as a result of this. Thirdly, it is also observed that low sex ratio in Mizoram is not the result of female foeticide but possibly due to high incidence of female infant mortality rate. To reduce female infant mortality rate, there is a need to introduce Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in the peripheral regions of

Mizoram. Better antenatal and post-natal care facilities like institutional deliveries, mission Indradhanush to drive toward full immunization coverage and allocation of more funds to pregnant women for nutrition purpose have to be made in the state. There is a need for carrying out activities for generating awareness through rallies, wall writing campaigns, poster competitions, street plays, mass media both electronic and print etc. among the people about the decline in sex ratio and its dire consequences on the society at large.

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