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Inequality of sex ratio and child sex ratio among social groups in Jammu & Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The sex ratio is a powerful index of social health of any society. The declining sex ratio is an alarming social signal and reveals the play of deep rooted socio-cultural factors in determining female life chances. Jammu and Kashmir has seen the most abrupt drop of 79 points in Child Sex Ratio between 2001 and 2011 censuses and thus making it third worst states after Haryana and Punjab. This falling ratio reflects the increasing gender discrimination and gender partiality in the state. The present study examines the pattern of Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio among Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe population of the state and compares it with respective ratio of general category. Scheduled tribe is the only community which has observed the increase in sex ratio between 2001 and 2011 in all sectors. Though decline in Child sex ratio is observed in all categories of state during 2001-11 censuses, child sex ratio among scheduled tribe in Jammu & Kashmir is 912, doing better than the Child Sex Ratio of 853 among general population and 861 Child among Scheduled Castes.

Key Words : Gender discrimination, Scheduled caste, Sex ratio, Scheduled tribe, Population, mortality

INTRODUCTION

"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing" were the thoughts of one of the great socio-religious revolutionary saint, Swami Vivekananda. He considered men and women as two wings of a bird and there is no hope for the welfare of a nation unless the condition of women is improved. He stated that the best indicator to the progress of a nation is its treatment to its women. But through centuries, discrimination against women is a global phenomenon and is seen in all the strata of society on an unbelievable extent. The pattern of gender inequality has undergone a radical change as it shifted from mortality inequality (the female life expectancy at birth has now become higher than male life expectancy) to natality inequality (Sen, 2001).Natality inequality is perhaps one of the most dangerous form of

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discrimination where women are deprived of her most basic right i.e. 'the right to be born'.

Sex ratio is often considered as an expression of gender relations in a society. The declining sex ratio is an alarming social signal and is an indicator of low status of women depicting unequal treatment given to males and females in the society. Despite being one of the fastest growing economies in the world, India is still engrossed with the skewed sex ratio. The decline in the sexual ratio showed a clear indication of gender discrimination in India. Adverse population sex ratio has always been a matter of concern for India which will drain our social, emotional concern and human sensitivity for females unless we improve upon the sex ratio. There are many reasons estimated for imbalance sex ratio. Premi (1991) pointed that under enumeration of girls led to a worsening of the population sex ratio. Visvaria (1971) made the first major effort to understand the phenomenon of skewing sex ratio and established that high female mortality rates relative to male mortality rates was the principal cause of the masculinity of the population composition which in turn is the result of female infanticide, female foeticide, neglect of females and maternal mortality. He concluded that India's sex ratio cannot be attributed to the undercount of population. The sex ratio in India has been unfavourable to women not only in urban areas but also in rural parts ever since the beginning of Census operations in the country, though sex ratio in rural regions always stood higher than that in urban parts. It shows that the urbanization process in India has been unsuccessful to bring about desired social and attitudinal changes of a society towards women (Sharma, 2012). But decrease in rural sex ratio is a dreadful picture of rural parts of India and is a matter of grave concern (Sangwan and Sangwan, 2009).

While the overall sex ratio of the population has somewhat improved, the scenario for the future is grim because Child Sex Ratio(ages 0-6) of India has become more unbalanced over the last three decades than ever before which indicates that girls are increasingly being aborted, killed or otherwise dying. According to the census of India (2011), the Sex Ratio stands at 943 for the country as a whole. This is a welcome improvement from the census of 2001. However, the increase has been attributed to the inclusion of older women who are now living longer due to better health care facilities (Singh, 2012).The declining Child sex ratio is the most distressing factor reflecting low premium accorded to a girl child in India (Patel, 2003). In census 2011, child sex ratio has horrendously touched an all-time low. This sharp decline in the child sex ratio since the 1970s is now unequivocally linked to the widespread use of prenatal sex determination and selective abortions of girls.(Jha *et al.*, 2011).

Jammu & Kashmir has one of the worst sex ratios in the country. According to 2011 census, female sex ratio has fallen to 889 from 900 in 2001 census. The state sex ratio is far below the national average of 943.Jammu & Kashmir recorded the highest decline in child sex ratio i.e 79 points in the county and thus making it count among the five states with the poorest Child sex ratio.In the state of Jammu & Kashmir, the decline in rural areas was steeper than in urban areas by a drastic 92 points.Regardless of the common belief that education will improve attitude to female children, 2011 census data of India on least social groups *i.e.* Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes showed that the trend of Scheduled tribes has the best Sex ratios and Scheduled castes doing better than general/ overall population. These least educated social groups are those with better sex ratios. These groups experienced economic impoverishment and material destitutions as well as social bias from the mainstream

Hindus (Mitra, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

The data used for the present study has been taken from census of India, 2011.Graphs are used for explaining the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is argued that male – dominated culture is more conspicuous among the upper caste Hindus than the other social segments. The scheduled tribes enjoy a somewhat more equitable gender relations than in general population. The scheduled castes come somewhere in between (Agnihotri, 1995).Basu (1993) noted that as compared to the general population, there appears to be a more even distribution of men and women among the Scheduled Tribes. Dewan and Khan (2009) in their study found that the menace of female foeticide is much more prevalent among upper caste landed households compared to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Miller (1981) noted that acute son preference is more rampant in North India than in south and east and that it is more customary among upper castes and classes than lower castes and classes. Socio economically backward castes such as scheduled caste and tribe groups are acknowledged for less bias and neglect of women. These groups, by virtue of their di?erence from long-established traditional upper-caste Hindu society, su?er less from rigid dowry norms and other practices which limits women's autonomy.

Sex ratio and child sex ratio pattern among schedules castes and scheduled tribes in Jammu & Kashmir :

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups recognized by the constitution of India. The lists containing the name of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Jammu & Kashmir state are given below:

Scheduled castes:

1. Barwala 2.Basith 3. Batwal 4. Chamar or Ramdasia 5. Chura 6. Dhyar 7. Doom or Mahasha 8. Gardi 9. Jolaha 10. Megh or Kabirpanthi 11. Ratal 12. Saryara 13. Watal

Scheduled tribes:

1.Bakarwal 2. Balti 3. Beda 4. Bot 5.Brokpa 6.Changpa 7.Gaddi 8.Garra 9.Gujjar 10.Mon 11.Purigpa 12.Sippi

The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of Jammu & Kashmir is 9, 24,991 which constitute 7.6 per cent of the total population of the state. The scheduled castes in the state are predominantly rural, as 81.2 per cent of them live in villages. The Scheduled Castes are mainly concentrated in the Jammu region. Districtwise distribution of the population shows that they are mainly concentrated in the districts of Samba(28.8 %), Udhampur(25 %), Jammu (24.7 %), Kathua (22.9 %), Doda (13 %) and Reasi (12 %). The districts of Kashmir have returned a meagre population of Scheduled caste.

There are 13 scheduled Castes notified in the states of Jammu & Kashmir. Out of them, Megh, Chamar, Doom and Batwal constitute majority *i.e.* 87 per cent of the total SC population in the state.

Fig. 1 shows Sex Ratio among Scheduled Castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2011 census by residence- Total, rural and urban:

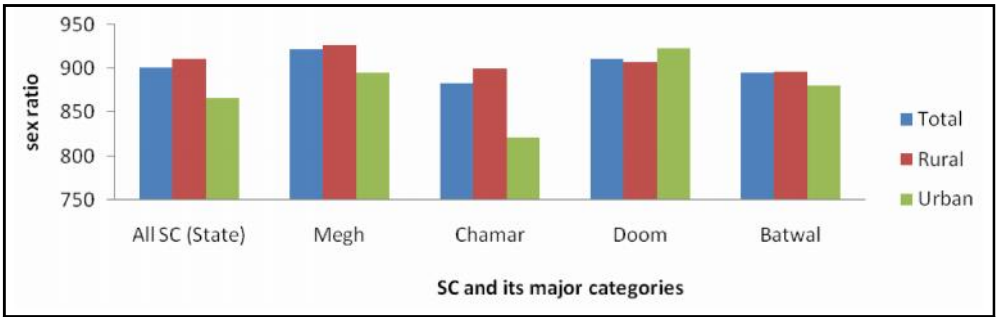

Fig. 1 : Sex ratio among scheduled castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir (2011) by residence

The above figure depicts that the overall number of females per 1,000 males of Scheduled caste for the state as a whole works out to 902.From amongst the four major categories of Scheduled castes, the state average is exceeded by Megh and Doom scheduled castes with corresponding sex ratio of 922 and 911, respectively; the lowest number of females has been returned by chamar at 883.

In rural areas, the highest number of females per 1,000 males has been recorded by Megh Scheduled castes standing at 927. In the remaining categories of scheduled castes, the sex ratio is below the state average (911).

As regards urban sector, the state average (866) is less as compared to overall and rural areas as well. Category wise statistics reveals that only doom scheduled castes have returned higher urban sex ratio (923) as compared to its corresponding ratios of rural/total. Barring Chamar, all the remaining categories are above the state average of urban areas.

Fig. 2 indicates Child Sex Ratio among SC and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2011 census by residence- Total, rural and urban:

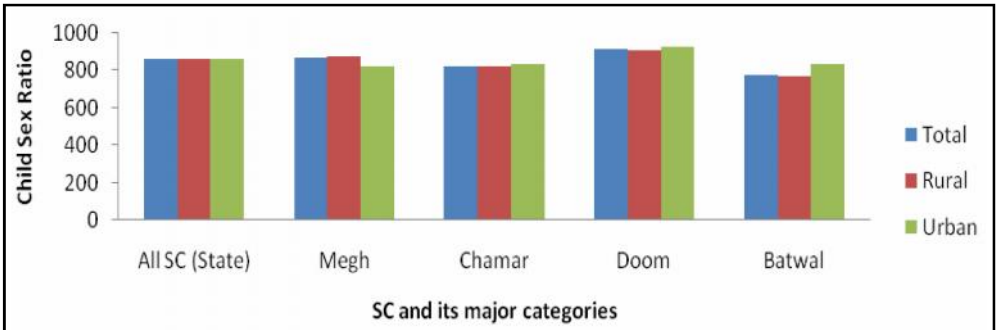

Fig. 2 : Child sex ratio among scheduled castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir (2011) by residence

The above figure depicts that the number of females per thousand males under 0- 6 age groups pertaining to state as a whole depicts that urban sector has claimed higher ratio(862). Interestingly the overall and rural Child sex ratio among Scheduled Caste population is same being 861 each. Category wise data reveals that Doom scheduled castes have returned the highest number of females per thousand males in total (913), rural (911) and urban (925) areas. Batwal category of scheduled castes is conspicuous for having returned the lowest sex ratio in total (776) and rural (767).

The data further depicts that sex ratio of Megh and Doom scheduled castes are comparatively better than the corresponding ratios of the state .Barring Megh, all other sc categories' Sex ratio in urban areas is better than rural areas.

Fig. 3 gives Sex Ratio among SC and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses

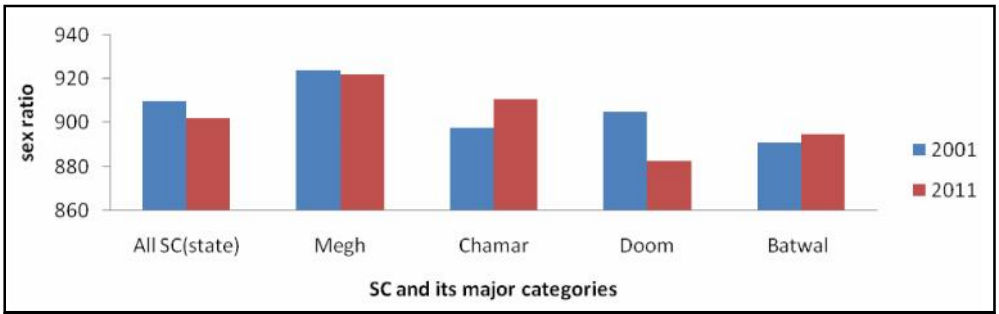

Fig. 3 : Sex Ratio among Scheduled Castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses

The above figure portrays Sex ratio among Scheduled castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses. The above figure shows that overall sex ratio in the states has declined to 902 in 2011from 910 in 2001. Similar is the position in so far as the number of females per thousand males pertaining to Megh and Doom scheduled castes are concerned.

Fig. 4 portrays Sex Ratio among Scheduled Castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses

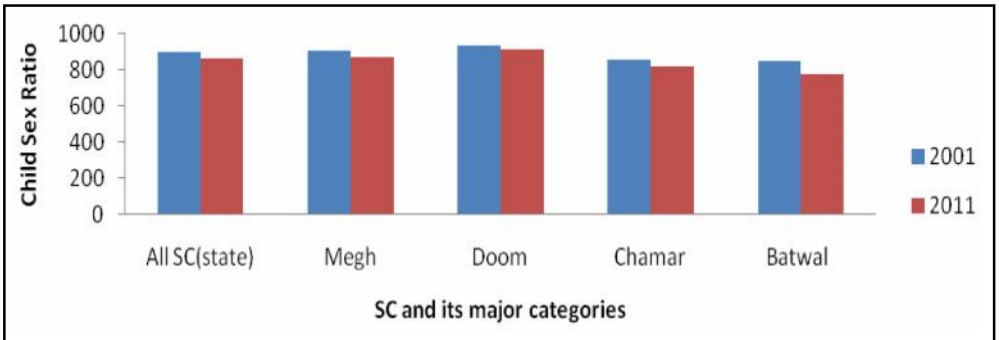

Fig. 4 : Sex Ratio among Scheduled Castes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses

The above figure depicts Child Sex ratio among Scheduled cast and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses. Amazingly, the Child Sex Ratio during 2011 census has declined all over the state and among all the four categories of scheduled castes. The highest decline has been observed among Batwal at 72. Whereas, the lowest has been returned by only Doom at 22.

The Scheduled Tribe population of Jammu & Kashmir is 14, 93,299 which form 11.9 per cent of total population of the state. The Scheduled Tribes are predominantly rural as 94.2 per cent of them, live in villages. Districtwise distribution of the Scheduled Tribes population shows that they are mainly concentrated in the districts of Kargil (86.9 %), Leh (79.8 %),Punch (36.9), Rajouri (36.2 %), Reasi (28.1 %), Gaderbal (20.5) and Bandipore (19.2 %).

Out of twelve notified scheduled Tribes in Jammu & Kashmir, Gujjar, Bot, Bakarwal, Balti, Purigpa and Gaddi account for 91.8 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribe Population.

Fig. 5 shows Sex Ratio among Scheduled Tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2011 census by residence – Total, rural and Urban.

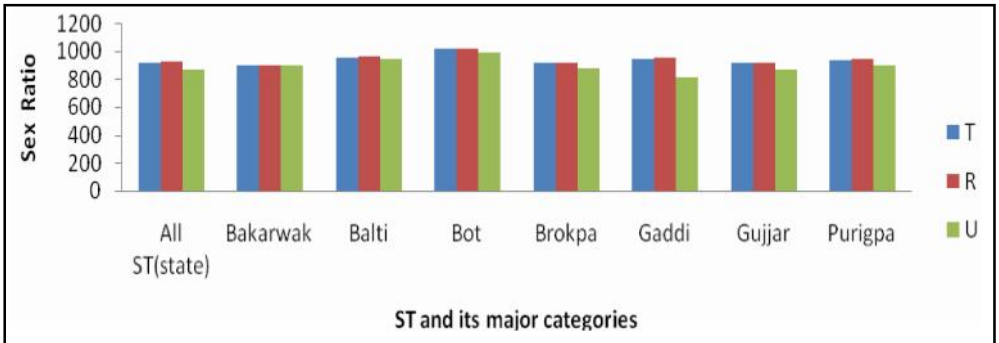

Fig. 5 : Sex ratio among scheduled tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir (2011) by residence

The above data indicates Sex Ratio among ST and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir (2011) by residence. It is indicated from the figure that Bot Scheduled tribes have recorded the highest sex ratio in overall (1020)/rural (1026).urban areas (999) as compared to the corresponding ratios of the state and all the remaining categories of Scheduled tribes followed by Balti where the corresponding number of females for overall, rural and urban areas works out to 961, 963 and 953, respectively. Bakarwal community is notable for having returned the lowest sex ratio for total and rural areas; being 899 and 898, respectively. As regards urban sector, the lowest number of females per thousand has been witnessed by Gaddi Scheduled tribes at 818.

Fig. 6 portrays Child Sex Ratio among Scheduled Tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2011 census by residence- Total, rural and urban:

The above figure shows Child Sex Ratio among Scheduled Tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir (2011) by residence. The data depicts that among the state and the remaining categories of Scheduled tribes, Balti and Purigpa , have jointly claimed the highest overall Child sex ratio being 971 each. In the remaining categories of scheduled tribes, the corresponding number of females per thousand males varies from 892 of Bakerwal to 957 of

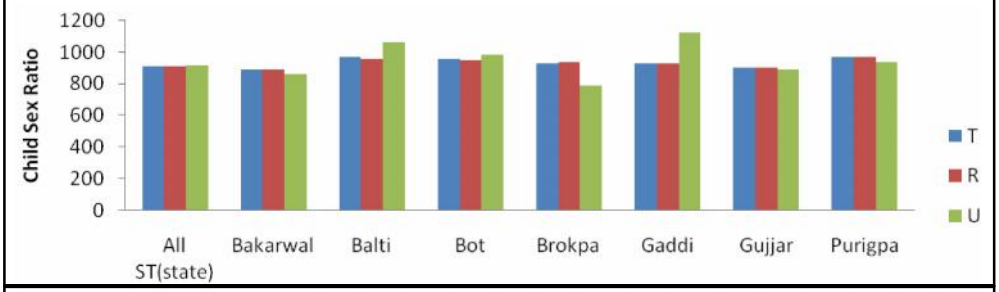

Fig. 6 : Child sex ratio among scheduled tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir (2011) by residence

Bot. In rural areas, barring Bakerwals and Gujjar Scheduled tribe, the sex ratios of state(911) is exceeded by al the remaining five scheduled tribes community ranging between 974 of Purigpa and 933 of Gaddi.

The given Fig. 7 depicts Sex Ratio among Scheduled Tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses.

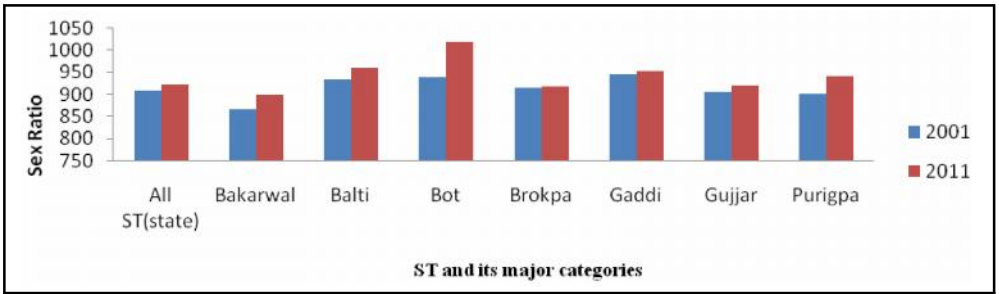

Fig. 7 : Sex ratio among scheduled tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses

The data shows that the Sex ratio during 2001 and 2011 censuses has increased among all Scheduled tribes over state and among seven major categories of scheduled tribes in the state. Sex ratio among all Scheduled tribes at state level has increased by 14 points. The highest increased has been observed among Bot category at 79 points. Whereas, the lowest increase has been returned by Brokpa at 3 points.

The Figl. 8 portrays Sex Ratio among ST and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses.

The data depicts that Child Sex Ratio during the decade 2001-2011 among all Scheduled tribes over the state has declined by (-) 67 points. Similar is the position among all the seven major categories of ST. The maximum decline has been witnessed in gujjar from the child sex ratio of 985 in 2001 census to 904 in 2011 census. Whereas minimum fall was jointly maintained by Bot and Brokpa scheduled tribes where Child Sex Ratio was declined by (-) 8 each.

The Fig. 9 indicates Sex Ratio pertaining to SC/ST/ General population by residences-Total, rural and urban; 2001 and 2011 censuses.

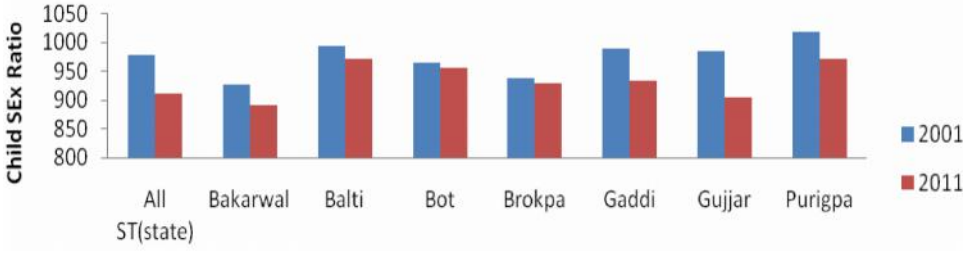

Fig. 8 : Child sex ratio among scheduled tribes and its major categories in Jammu & Kashmir during 2001 and 2011 censuses

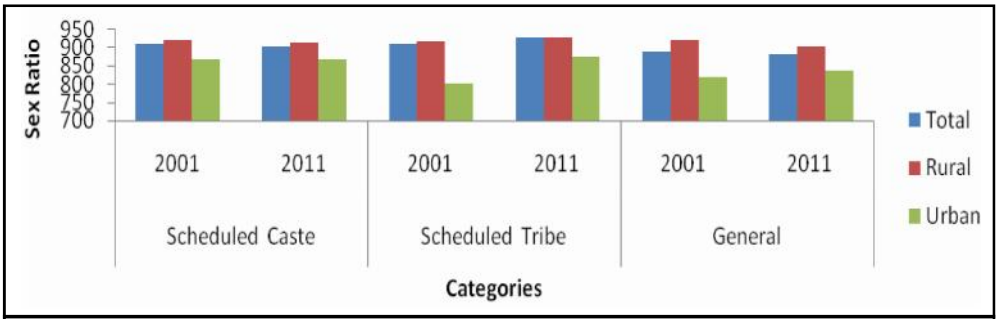

Fig. 9 : Sex Ratio pertaining to SC/ST/ General population by residences in Jammu & Kashmir, 2001 and 2011 censuses

It is evident from the data contained in the above figure that sex ratio among Scheduled tribes is the highest in total/rural/urban areas of the state as compared to that of the scheduled castes and general population; standing at 924, 927 and 872, respectively. Moreover, the increase in sex ratio between 2001 and 2011is also found among scheduled tribes in all sectors. Interestingly the said increase in its urban sector is as high as 73 points. Further sex ratio in respect of scheduled castes in urban areas has remained stagnant during 2011 census, being 866.

The Fig. 10 indicates Child Sex Ratio pertaining to SC/ST/ General population by residences – Total, rural and urban; 2001 and 2011 censuses.

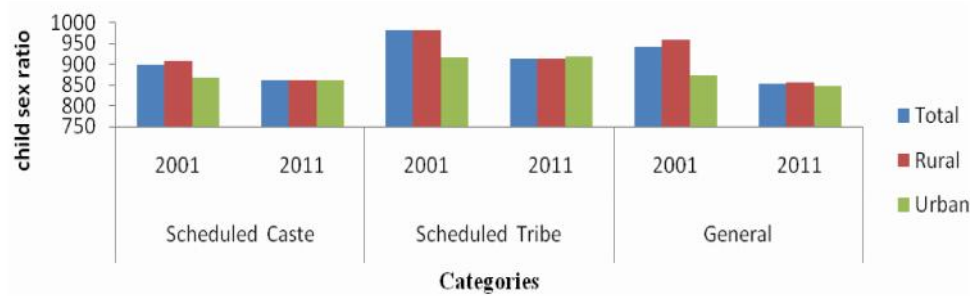

Fig. 10 : Child sex ratio pertaining to SC/ST/ General population by residences in Jammu & Kashmir, 2001 and 2011 censuses

The above data reflects that the highest decline in overall general child sex ratio is witnessed in over all areas of the states standing at (-) 86 points. Further among Scheduled Tribe, the number of females per thousand males in overall and rural areas of the state had decreased tremendously during 2011 being of the order of -67 and -70 in overall and rural areas, respectively. No doubt, the said ratio in overall/rural/urban areas during 2011census is also better in respect of Scheduled Tribe. Amazingly, there is also decline in Child Sex ratio among Scheduled Caste in overall/ rural/urban areas of the state, being (-)38, (-)44 and (-)5 points, respectively. However, the worst affected is Child sex ratio of general category.

Conclusion:

Sex Ratio is a fundamental parameter that measures the extent of equity between males and females in a society but child Sex Ratio is the most sensible instrument for measuring the status of a girl child as it is very unlikely undermined by Sex selective migration trends.As per 2011 census, Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a decline of 79 points in its Child Sex Ratio which is highest decline among all the states in the country.

The sex ratio of Scheduled caste for Jammu & Kashmir as a whole is 902.From amongst the four major categories of Scheduled castes, Megh and Doom scheduled castes with sex ratios of 922 and 911, respectively have higher sex ratio than the state average ; the lowest number of sex ratio is found among chamar standing at 883. Child sex ratio among Scheduled Caste population is 861. Category wise data reveals that Doom scheduled castes have highest number of females per thousand males at 913 whereas Batwal category of scheduled castes is having the lowest Child sex ratio (776). The Scheduled Tribe population of Jammu & Kashmir is 14, 93,299 where majority of them live in rural parts of the state. Bot Scheduled tribes(1020) have recorded the highest sex ratio as compared to the corresponding ratios of the remaining categories of Scheduled tribes whereas Bakarwal community have returned the lowest sex ratio at 899. Among the major categories of Scheduled tribes, Balti and Purigpa , have jointly claimed the highest overall Child sex ratio being 971 each. While lowest Child sex ratio is 892 of Bakerwal community. Scheduled tribes have witnessed highest Sex ratio as compared to that of the scheduled castes and general population. Moreover, scheduled tribe is the only community which has observed the increase in sex ratio between 2001 and 2011 in all sectors. Though decline in Child sex ratio is observed in all categories of state during 2001-11 censuses, child sex ratio among scheduled tribe in Jammu & Kashmir is 912, doing better than the Child Sex Ratio of 853 among general population and 861 Child among Scheduled Castes. Sex inequality is found to be prevalent particularly among upper caste.

The issue of skewed sex ratio is not just the case of discrimination against women, but basically it is an issue of human dignity and human rights. Though a number of laws were adopted to address this issue. Effective implementation of these policies is needed as there is a big gap between the law on paper and its execution which lead to unsatisfactory results. But even before that, a change in the mindset of people is required.

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