



SEX SELECTION

The practice its causes and implications

Sex Ratio: Definitions



Sex ratio at birth

(Number of girls to 1000 boys at birth)

909 (SRS 2011-13)

Child sex ratio

(Number of girls to 1000 boys in 0-6 age group)

918 (Census 2011)

Population sex ratio

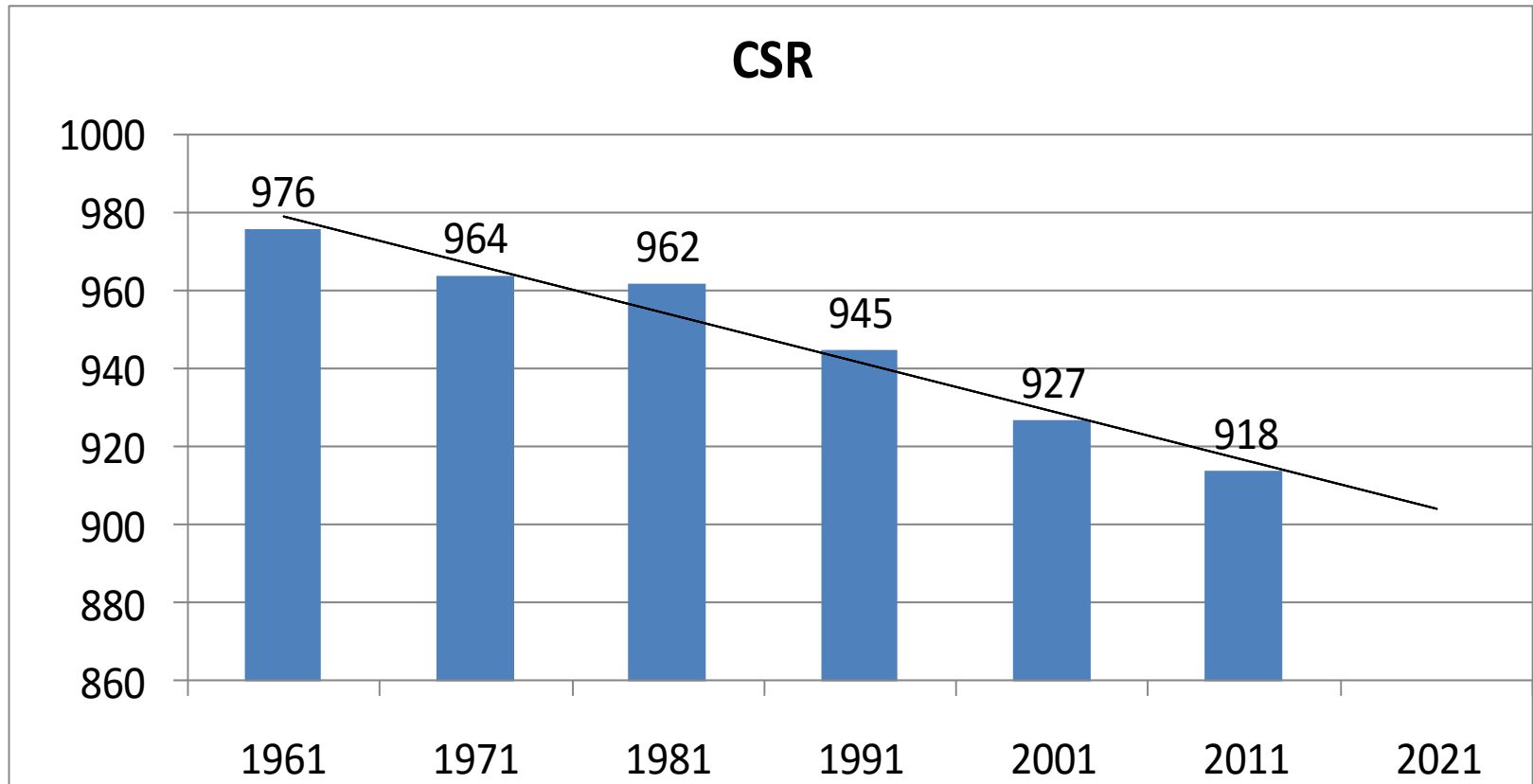
(Number of Females to 1000 males in general population)

940 (Census 2011)

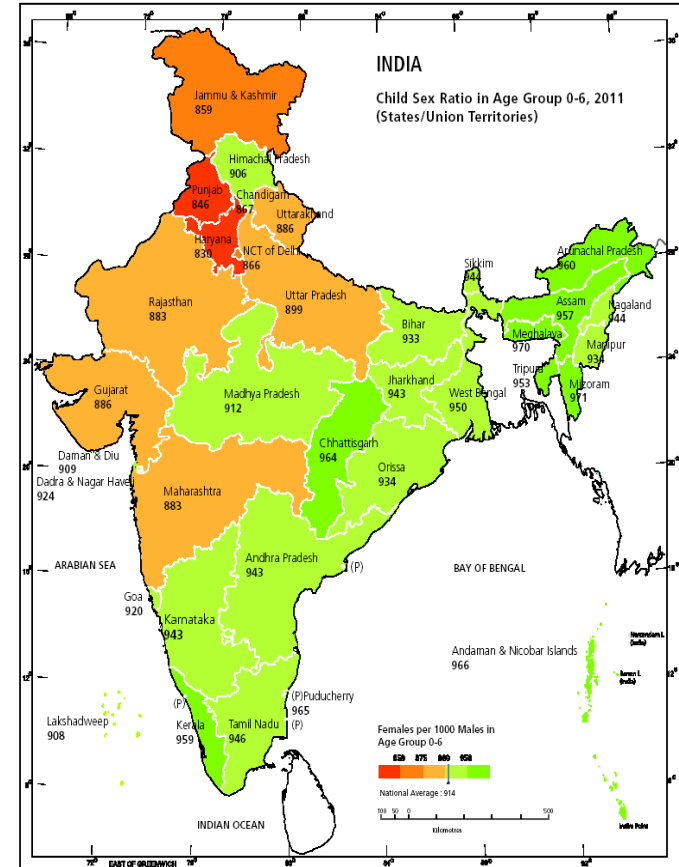
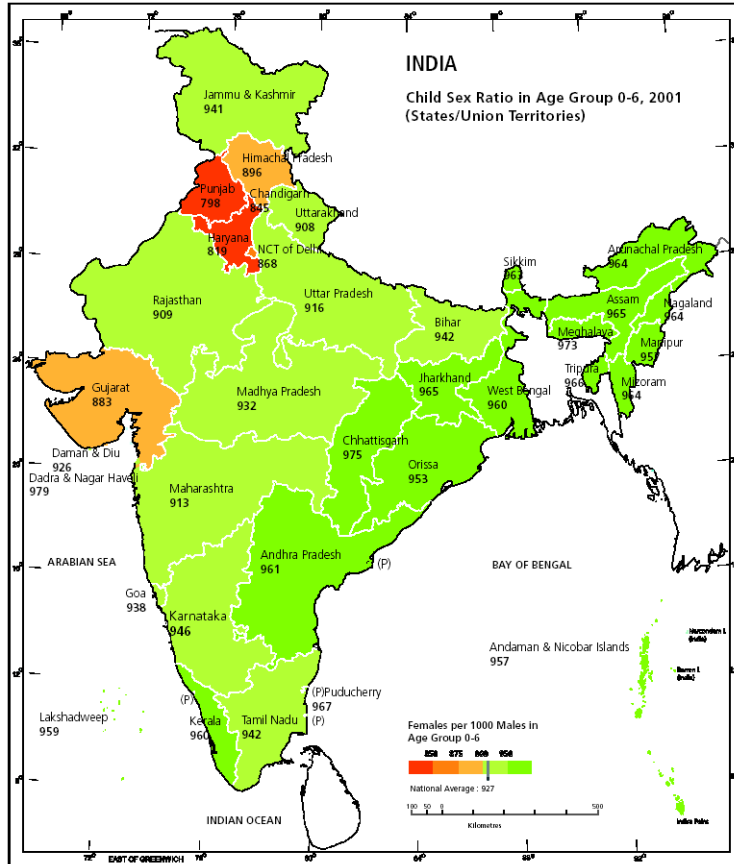
India's missing daughters : Data and Trends



Trends in Child Sex Ratio in India



Child Sex Ratio in India 2001-2011



Trends in CSR as per census 2011

- 24 out of the 35 States and UTs showed a decline in CSR between 2001-2011.
- 13 out of 35 States and UTs have CSR lower than the National average.
- CSR ranged from 972 in Arunachal Pradesh to 834 in Haryana.
- Punjab, Haryana, J&K, Delhi, Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Uttrakhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra have CSRs lower than 900.

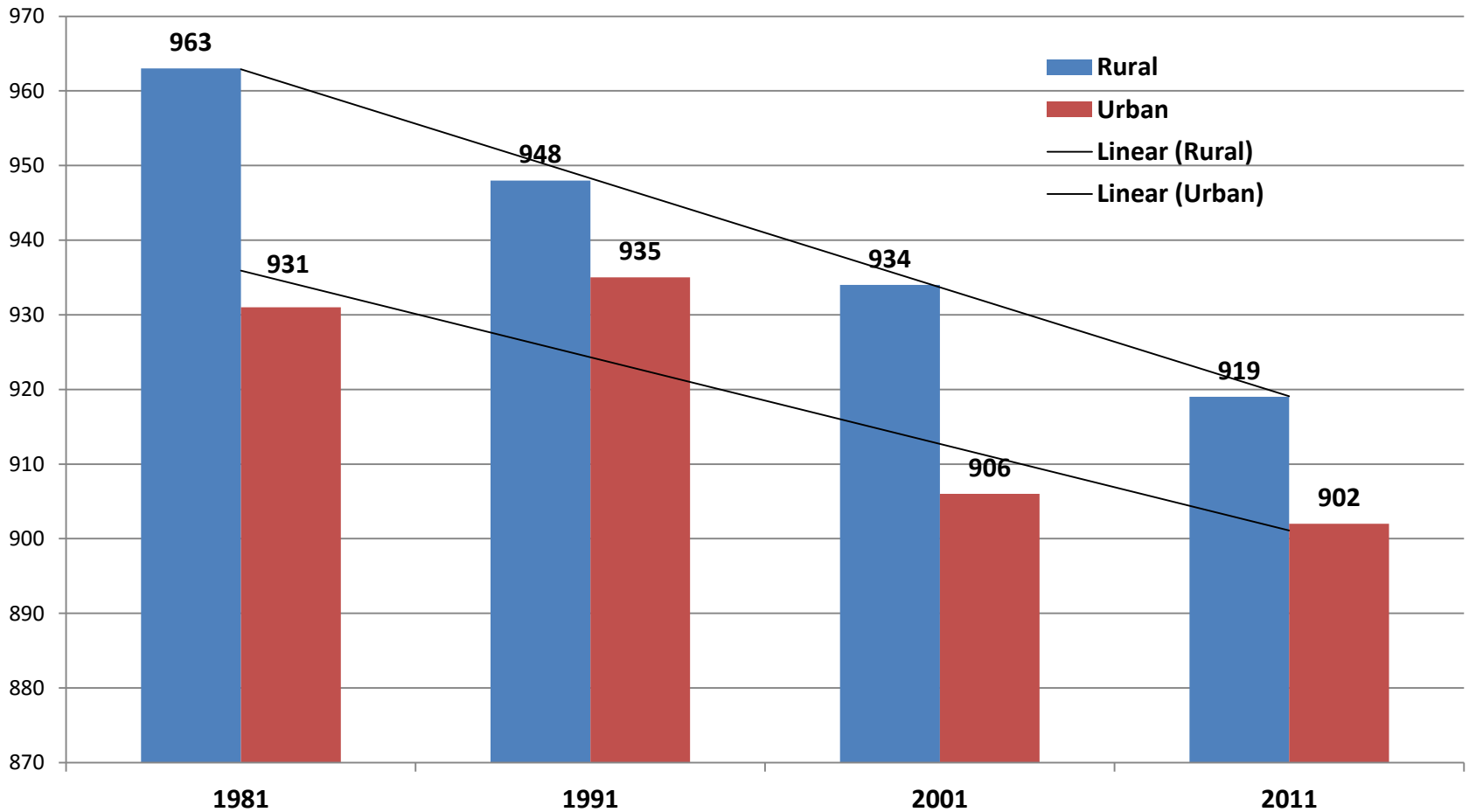
Trends in CSR as per census 2011... Contd

- 26 Districts recorded more than a 50 point decline in CSR in last decade
- 16 Districts witnessed a decline of 40-49 points in CSR.
- 36 Districts experienced a decline of 30-39 points in CSR.
- Declining trends have spread from urban areas to rural and tribal areas.
- There has been a spread around areas of low sex ratios.

CSR and variations by socio- economic indicators

- Urban areas have worse child sex ratios than rural areas.
- Prosperous regions have worse sex ratios. Wealthier households tend to sex select more.
- Women with no education have better sex ratios. Women with some education generally tend to favour boys. (Guilmoto, 2009)
- CSRs are normal where women have an important and visible role in the economy.

Sex ratio by residential status



Estimates of missing girls per year

India- 4.56 Lakhs an year over twelve years. (SRS data)

3.6% of female births out of total female births did not occur due to GBSS.

2001-2006 - 5.83 Lakhs per year; 2007-2012 3.29 Lakhs per year

Conditional sex ratios



- There is no significant difference in SRB for first child.
- If first born is a girl, SRB declines dramatically for the second child to 836. If first two are girls it falls to 768 for third child.
- If first born is a boy, SRB for second child remains close to normal average.
- This phenomenon is more predominant in educated and rich people.

Why do daughters go missing?



Understanding the practice

Gender is a social construct

Norms, expectations, behaviors, roles for men and women in society are prescribed

Women have less access to productive resources, assets, decision-making, mobility

Unequal power relations between men and women

Subordinate status for women making them vulnerable

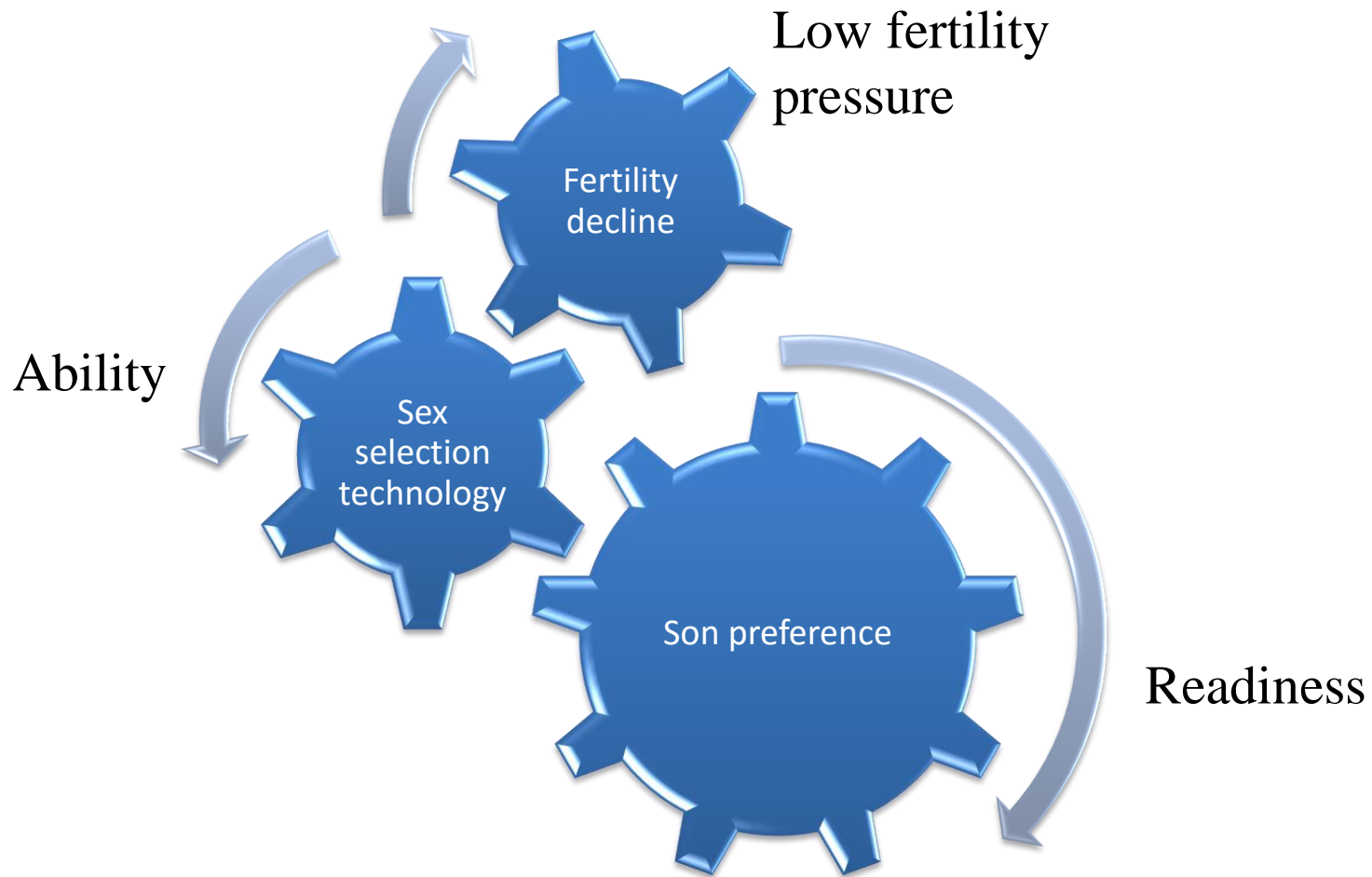
Unequal treatment, discrimination, denial of rights in education health inheritance etc.

All forms of discrimination to maintain imbalance

Causes for sex selection

- Patriarchal mindsets that prefer boys over girls
 - Dowry
 - Family lineage
 - Old-age support
 - Last rites
 - Patrilocal marriages
- Desire to have small families but not without sons
- Two child norm imposed by certain State Governments combined with strong son preference
- Easy accessibility to technology for sex determination at affordable prices.

Three preconditions of modern sex selection



In a desperate attempt to have a son



After the accidental death of her only child, an 18-year-old son, Shweta was desperate for another one. On the advice of a 'baba', she had a concoction of peacock feathers, gold ash and other such ingredients known to be laced with unhealthy arsenic levels. She did have a son, but due to a fusion deformity he was stillborn.

In a desperate attempt to have a son



Bani has conceived 11 times till date. While five of these ended in miscarriages, six of her daughters are alive. Feeling she is too poor to opt for any sex-selective techniques, she continues to try for a male child even though she has been medically advised against it.

Breaking the myth – do sons really care for parents in old age



- Phoolwati and Dharam had celebrated the birth of their sons with grandeur, relieved that *burapa me sahara hoga*. - Even though both their sons live in the same village, neither have looked in on them in the last 20 years. They have now resigned to the unthinkable future of living in their daughters house

Consequences of declining sex ratios



Implications of sex ratio decline

- Increase in violence against women and sex related crimes. (rape, polyandry, abduction and bride trafficking)
- Impacts health of women –physical, mental and reproductive.
- Increase in sexual exploitation of women.
- Marriage squeeze and increase in male bachelorhood

Implications visible over generations and across geographical locations

Polyandry- *All in the family*



In Dang district, Gujarat-Rajasthan border, 8 brothers of the same family are married to Sarup, in the centre. Getting a wife is extremely difficult in this region— Sept. 2001, India Today

Trafficking- *Courting luckless lady*



20-year old Chandni's neighbours brought her 11 months ago from Orissa to 'help' her settle in Delhi. Instead, she was married off to Jabbar, a 70-year old widower with six daughters who lives in a village in Haryana with his 60-year old bachelor brother. Already seven months pregnant, Chandni is being treated well for now, as her husband has found out that she is carrying a son.

Physical and mental violence- *Street Spirit*



After six daughters, when Kalpa got pregnant for the seventh time, her husband threw her out of the house on the grounds of her being a girl-bearing wretch. She gave birth to her seventh daughter on the streets, who died soon after. Kalpa now shares quarters with mentally unstable women at a short-stay shelter. Her husband has remarried since then.

Addressing gender biased sex selection



The Law

- Maharashtra first State to enact Maharashtra regulation of PNDT Act-1987
- PNDT Act was passed in 1994
- Act was amended in 2003 to include Pre conception techniques (PCPNDT Act)



Government action

- Enforcement of law
- Support to NGOs
- Medical and social audit



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India

Civil society action

- Monitoring and inspection of clinics
- Community mobilization
- Campaigns and advocacy
- Policy influencing



UN action- UNFPA Interventions

- Capacity building for Act Implementation
 - Implementing Authorities- AAs, Members of Advisory Committees, Inspection and monitoring committees, etc
 - Judicial Officers and Prosecutors
 - Medical professionals
- Policy advocacy
- Undertaking studies
- Encouraging media to write on the issue.
- Building partnerships and coalitions

What can you as individuals do

- Value and celebrate the girl child in your family and community.
- Uphold gender equality by helping implementation of gender related laws.
- Draw linkages of sex selection to other gender related laws - Dowry Prohibition Act, laws of inheritance, laws enforcing the two child norm, etc.
- Interpret the law in the broader context of how the issue impacts social and cultural fabric of the country and with the intention of preventing gender discrimination.
- Speedy redressal of cases

Drawing linkages- Son preference and other Laws

- **Dowry Prohibition Act-** Practice of dowry leads to discrimination against daughters and makes them vulnerable to violence. Dowry both a cause and consequence of son preference.
- **Inheritance Laws-** Women denied equal rights of succession in tenancy rights. Likely to inadvertently promote son preference.
- **Two child Norm-** Against human rights and rights of vulnerable especially women. Advances son preference and daughter aversion
- **Rape and sexual Assault-** Compromises a safe and enabling environment for women and girls leading to daughter unwantedness.

Thanks