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## **Declining child sex ratio in Jalgaon district: A major threat to social health**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the present paper is to throw light on the declining child sex ratio in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. It also endeavors to suggest some recommendations over the issue. The data is obtained from 2001 and 2011 Primary Census abstracts of the districts. Child sex ratio is calculated for the age group of 0-60 years with simple formula. The results suggest decline in child sex ratio throughout the study region. The decline is higher in Erandol, Dharangaon and Pachora tehsils while it is the least in Bhusawal tehsil. Some serious measures are to be implemented to combat this burning problem otherwise it may be a serious social issue in future and its intensity will also be more. Certain suggestions are also listed at the end.

**Keywords:** Jalgaon, social health, child sex ratio

### **1. Introduction**

Human resources have been defined as 'energies, skills, talents and knowledge of the people which should be applied to the production of goods and rendering useful services. "Among various elements of population composition, sex composition, age composition and economic composition hold a prime place for population geographers." (Chandana, 2011) [2] The process of economic development of any country depends on the quality of its population. The composition of population to a certain extent throws light on the manpower of a country and is responsible for its progress. Sex ratio is one of the important components of population. It denotes number of females per thousand males in a population. If this ratio is higher, then the status of woman in the society is better, while lower sex ratio represents socio-economic backwardness or the other socio-economic factors which affect on the changing rate of sex ratio. Therefore, more focus is given on study of sex ratio. This is an important part of the present study.

### **2. Objectives**

1. To study spatio-temporal changes in child sex ratio in Jalgaon district.
2. To provide certain recommendations to deal with the problem of declining child sex ratio in the study region.

### **3. Material and Methodology**

#### **The study region**

The district is bounded by the state of Madhya Pradesh to the north. The rivers Anner and Panjhara form a boundary in the west between the region and the Dhule district. In the east, the district under study is bordered by Buldhana district.

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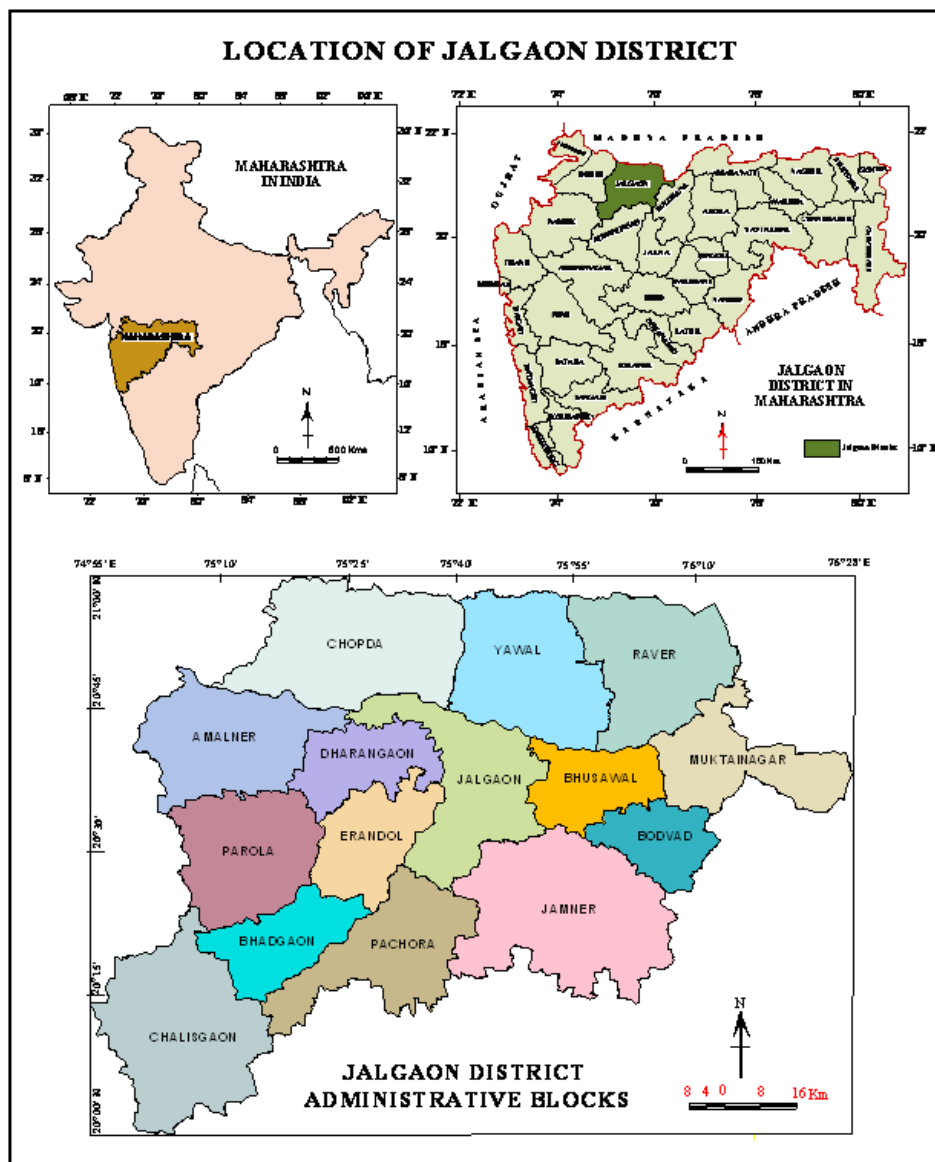


Fig 1

To the south, Satmala, Ajantha and Chandor hills form a natural boundary between the study region and the districts of Nasik and Aurangabad. The Jalgaon district which is one of the 36 districts of Maharashtra lies between  $20^{\circ}$  N and  $21^{\circ}$  N latitudes and  $74^{\circ} 55'$  E and  $76^{\circ} 28'$  E longitudes. The total area of the district is 11765.0 sq. Km. According to 2011 Census, the total population of the region was 42, 29, 917. The district comprises 15 tehsils and 1475 villages.

#### Data and methodology

The data for the present work is collected from various secondary sources which includes District Census Handbook & CD ROM of Jalgaon district, maps, Census report, statistical reviews, Socio-economic Abstracts of Jalgaon district, research journals etc. The demographic aspects of the region are collected from the Census handbooks of 2001 and 2011. The age group of 0-06 years is considered as children and its data are available readily in the census reports. The child sex ratios for all the tehsils of Jalgaon district are calculated with the help of simple

formula which shows ratio of female children to per thousand male children. The results thus obtained are explained with the help of maps and charts.

#### 4. Results

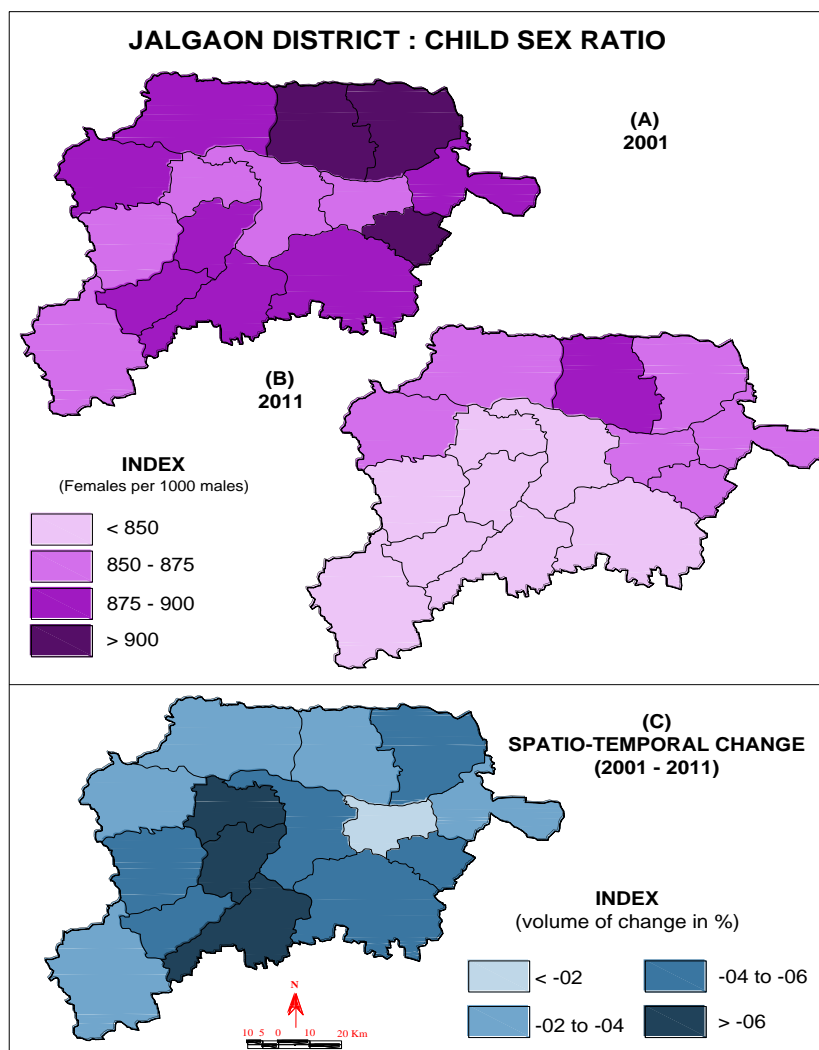
- Sex sex ratio for the age group 0 – 6 years is being calculated and shown in the table which also depicts the decadal change in it during the period 2001-11.
- In the year 2001, the highest child sex ratio was recorded in Yawal tehsil followed by Bodvad and Raver.
- Amalner, Chopda, Bhadgaon, Erandol, Pachora, Jamner and Muktanagar had child sex ratio ranging between 875 and 900 females/1000 males.
- Jalgaon tehsil had the least sex ratio followed by Chalisgaon, Parola, Bhusawal and Dharangaon.
- During the year 2011, average child sex ratio for the district is calculated as 842 girls/ 1000 boys against 880 girls/1000 boys during the year 2001.

**Jalgaon District: Child Sex Ratio, 2001-2011**

Sr. No.	Tehsils	Child Sex Ratio (Girls per thousand Boys)		Volume of change in %
		2001	2011	
1	Chopda	899	877	-2.36
2	Yawal	915	888	-2.86
3	Raver	905	861	-4.83
4	Muktainagar	889	869	-2.30
5	Bodvad	908	867	-4.54
6	Bhusawal	872	855	-1.95
7	Jalgaon	851	807	-5.14
8	Erandol	898	838	-6.75
9	Dharangaon	873	813	-6.85
10	Amalner	878	854	-2.72
11	Parola	868	817	-5.90
12	Bhadgaon	878	840	-4.26
13	Chalisgaon	865	836	-3.31
14	Pachora	887	828	-6.67
15	Jamner	882	832	-5.61
Jalgaon District		880	842	-4.37

*Source:* District Census Handbooks of Jalgaon District, 2001 & 2011.

- There are eight tehsils of the study area mainly located to the south and southwestern parts of the district having child sex ratio below 850 girls/1000 boys.
- The lowest child sex ratio is recorded as 807 girls/1000 boys in Jalgaon tehsil. There are six tehsils of the study area having child sex ratio ranging between 850 and 875 girls/1000 boys in the year 2011.
- During the decade of 2001-11 the child sex ratio has declined by 4.37 percent.
- All fifteen tehsils of the district have recorded decline in child sex ratio.
- It is observed that Dharangaon tehsil has recorded the maximum decline followed by Erandol and Pachora.
- Bhusawal tehsil has recorded the least decline.



**Fig 2**

## 5. Discussion

- The growing menace of female foeticide in the study region in recent years perhaps is the product of growing stress especially among the economically and socially more awakened segments of Indian society to limit their family size to the minimum and also not to forego their preference for a son.
- The whole process seems to have been facilitated by increasing access to pre-birth sex determination tests.
- Ironically, while the ultrasonic tests are essential to keep a watch on the health of the prospective mother as well as the child in womb, yet a strict vigil by the government on these tests with a view to arresting female foeticide may lead to many health hazards for the females in general.
- Many ultrasonic tests centres which were held accused in pre-birth sex determination tests are sealed by the government. Therefore, it is proved that such centres and tests are responsible for decreasing number of girl children in the study region.

## 6. Recommendations

- Women should also be socialized from early childhood to consider themselves equal to men.
- Women should be encouraged to assume all those responsibilities, which are normally considered to belong to the male domain. This would have a positive influence on future generations, as today's girls would be tomorrow's mothers, as well as, mothers-in-law.
- The data on the child sex ratio available with *Anganwadis* should be updated continuously which provides valuable information for action by the convergence of services of all sectors under one roof.
- Collective action plans could be evolved to save the girl child and provide her adequate nutrition at home, balanced development in the village environment through appropriate household actions and health programme.
- The legislative measures, such as the Prohibition of Dowry Act, PNDT Act etc., should be stringently implemented. The defaulters must be punished and set many examples which may lead for positive change.
- Government departments should popularize schemes in operation in the study region through economic benefits that could accrue to those families having a girl child, similar to the *Shagun* scheme launched by the Governments of Punjab and Haryana, *Apni beti apna dhan*, *Balika samriddhi yojana*, *Beti Bachav Beti Padhav*, etc. (NIPCCD, 2008)
- Awareness about the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, MTP, anti-dowry act. Etc. needs to be created.
- Sensitization programmes on prevention of female foeticide and infanticide for the functionaries of voluntary organizations and elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions should be organized.

## 7. Acknowledgement

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