

In Search of Commonalities in the Determinants of Child Sex Ratios in India and People's of Republic of China

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Abstract : Child sex ratios pattern in the Asian Population is highly masculine mainly due to birth masculinity and gender bias in child mortality. The vast and the growing literature of female deficit in world population points out the diffusion of child sex ratio pattern in many Asian as well as neighboring European countries. However, little attention has been given to understand the common factors in different demographics in explaining child sex ratio pattern. Such a scholarship is extremely important as level of gender inequity is different in different country set up. Our paper tries to explain the major structural commonalities in the child masculinity pattern in two demographic billionaires - India and China. The analysis reveals that apart from geographical diffusion of sex selection technology, patrilocal social structure, as proxied by households with more than one generation in China and proportion of population aged 65 years and above in India, can explain significant variation of missing girl child in these two countries. Even after controlling for individual capacity building factors like educational attainment, or work force participation, the measure of social stratification is coming out to be the major determinant of child sex ratio variation. Other socio economic factors that perform much well are the agency building factors of the females, like changing pattern of marriage customs which is proxied by divorce and remarriage ratio for china and percentage of female marrying at or after the age of 20 years in India and the female workforce participation. Proportion of minorities in socio-religious composition of the population and gender bias in scholastic attainment in both these counties are also found to be significant in modeling child sex ratio variations. All these significant common factors associated with child sex ratio point toward the one single most important factor: the historical evolution of patriarchy and its contemporary perpetuation in both the countries. It seems that prohibition of sex selection might not be sufficient to combat the peculiar skewness of excessive maleness in child population in both these countries. Demand sided policies is therefore utmost important to root out the gender bias in child sex ratios.

Keywords : child sex ratios, gender bias, structural factors, prosperity, patrilocality

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