



LIGHT OF TRUTH

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In Search of the "70 Million Missing Women" Sex Ratio Imbalance and Its Alarming Consequences

Just like the advent of life, the arrival of sex is an important milestone in the long path of evolutionary development. In the past, much less now, most religions and cultures had a dim and dismal view on sex, fencing it off with taboos and admonitions – most of them with no evidential foundation. But today evolutionary science considers sex an important player in the development of living beings. Genetic diversity that adds colour and beauty to the different species, a high level of natural disease resistance, speeding up of the evolutionary process, etc., are some of the recognized benefits arising from sexual difference among living beings. However, it is important to note that these benefits can lead to a healthy and wholesome world only if there is a harmonious balance between the two sexes. The sad fact today



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or at least minimize, the fallout.

THE PROBLEM

Two important concepts in this context are 'sex ratio at birth' and 'population sex ratio,' the first being the number of male births for every 100 female births, and the latter the number of males for every 100 females. Some estimates put the sex ratio at birth approximately at 105. The small excess of males is wisely planned by nature since males are more vulnerable to disease and death at the earlier stages. The population sex ratio also initially kept the same harmonious balance, being between 98 and 100. Under these circumstances the human race enjoyed happy and harmonious life and development. The alarming deviation from this

men will be forced to remain bachelors, particularly in India and China. A study of Valerie Hudson and Andrea Den Boer in 2005 projects that by 2020 India will have a surplus of 28 to 32 million men in the age-group of 15-35. Christopher Guilmo's study of 2012 gives 40 million single men in India by 2080. A similar predicament he foresees for China as well. The writing on wall is unmistakable: This sex imbalance is a time bomb just waiting to explode, particularly in India and China!

SOME CAUSES

Any interference with the normal smooth functioning of Mother Nature always leads to disastrous consequences. Selfishness and short-sightedness seem to be the root cause of this menace of sex ratio imbalance.

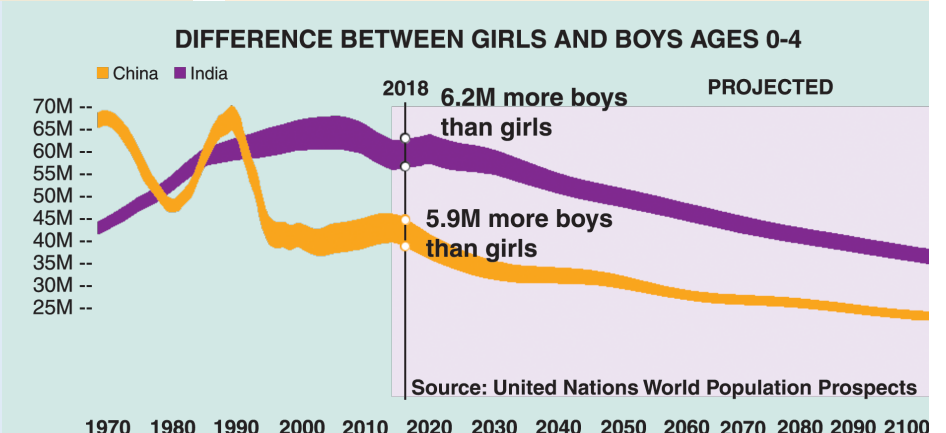
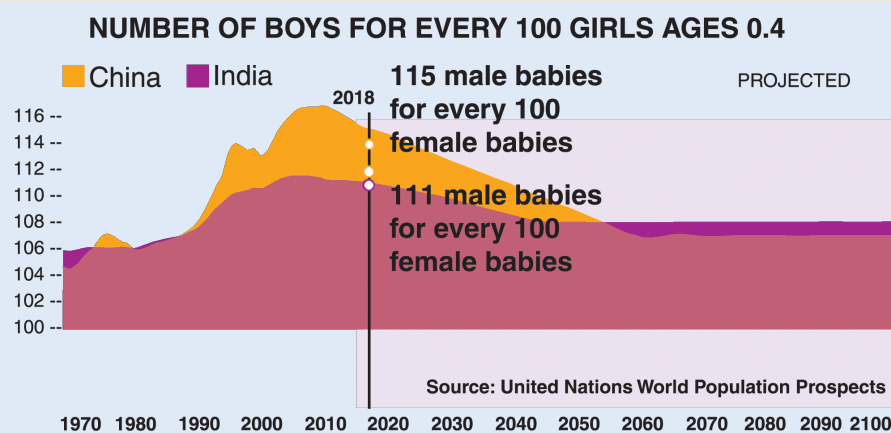
The Impending Problems of the Sex-Ratio Imbalance



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The sex ratio in China and India is very tilted that millions of men will not get a wife in their lives. What are the repercussions that the society will have to face, it is eugenic issue that is affecting the world at large how should the world cope with it? Out of China's population of 1.4 billion, there are nearly 34 million more males than females – the equivalent of almost the entire population of California, or Poland, who will never find wives and only rarely have sex. China's official one-child policy, in effect from 1979 to 2015, was a huge factor in creating this imbalance, as millions of couples were determined that their child should be a son. Eugenic activities are played by couples as well as governments, how do you evaluate these types of eugenics?

The term eugenics comes from Greek εὐγενής-eugenes which means "well-born" or "good-race." Sociologists understand genetics to mean "people-selection" through genetic modifications. In the field of medicine, it is defined in terms of genome editing in two ways: (i) positive eugenics aiming at reproduction of a genetically advantaged intelligent, healthy and superior race and (ii) negative eugenics targeting to eliminate the physically, mentally and socially undesired people. A vivid but unfortunate example is the Nazi move-



is that this carefully cultivated happy balance has been upset through human selfishness and short-sightedness and, the world's two most populous nations – China and India – are left with over "70 million missing women," thereby creating a huge gender imbalance, with formidable repercussions in the years ahead. This short paper is an attempt to highlight some of the issues involved due to this serious imbalance, and some suggestions to forestall,

harmonious balance came to the notice of the world community through the pioneering work of the Indian Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen in his 1990 essay in The New York Review of Books, where he called attention to the "100 million missing women." The exact number is hard to fix, but the all-important message is loud and clear: There is a frightening excess of male population in the world with all its unwelcome consequences. Millions of

This malaise takes the form of son-preference, prenatal sex determination tests for destroying female foetuses, postnatal wilful neglect of baby girls, infanticide, etc. Certain government policies also contributed to this tragedy. The one-child policy of China and the two-child norm of India are well known examples. The practice of dowry, although illegal in many states, is another contributing factor.

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ment that sought to eliminate certain sections of people and select a superior race. The purposes for creating an intelligent and superior race could vary: (i) from halting humanity from perish at inner conflicts and problems (ii) to increase abilities of humanity (a) on aesthetic grounds to achieve perfection, (b) on hedonic reasons for greater pleasure and fulfillment, (c) on moral grounds to allow more desired good actions and (d) on the theological grounds that the creator wanted humanity to be co-creators. All these grounds are however countered with plausible arguments: eugenics goes against the facts of human contingency and attempt "to play God;" eugenics appears to be a privilege of elites who attempt to eliminate the weaker sections of the society. It simply goes against the given human nature and the intrinsic human dignity.

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The Impending Problems of the Sex-Ratio Imbalance

Genetically modified superhumans would create more inequalities among humans.

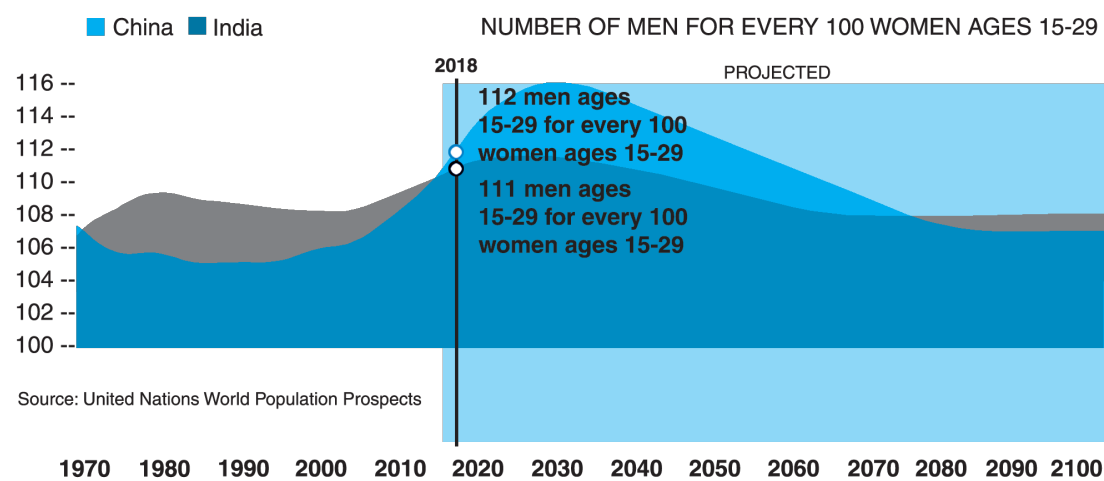
The question of preference of a son that creates a situation of more males than females is a not only a social but a serious moral problem. Without procreation any species would end up in self-extinction. New human beings must come into existence through procreation if the human species is to continue. The normal way of procreation occurs when a man and a woman engage themselves in sexual act morally and legally within a marriage. Women play a greater role in procreation since a baby can only grow in a uterus. Nature has mysteriously kept the balance in the number of males and females, although males would outnumber slightly (for example, about 105 males to 100 females). The past history informs us that such outnumbering with a few more males did not create any serious sex-ratio social problem since men are at a higher risk of dying in accidents, injuries, war, etc. Culturally people found different solutions to the problems of outnumbering of males or females here and there.

The huge sex-ratio imbalance thus seems to be a modern phenomenon and has become a serious moral issue that creates other social problems, too. It is largely a human made problem. It is true that a huge sex-ratio imbalance could deprive many men of finding wives. Social eugenic activities to select sons by couples and governments is a serious attack on humanity itself. Even ordinary people would say: "if we play against the nature, the nature would play against us." Eugenics of gender selection through technologies of in vitro fertilization, pre-implantation diagnosis and prenatal diagnosis that might eventually lead to female foeticide is a systematic gender injustice against women. Such unjust situations can further create competitions due to scarcity to win a woman for marriage and sexual violence against women.

The one-child policy of China would affect China for a long time in future. Though the abortion law of India Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971 was passed as a health measure to provide the rapeutic abortions to large number of women who were taking recourse to illegal abortions, abortions are unfortunately used as a means for fertility regulation, population control and gender selection in India. Female foeticide is a common phenomenon in India despite the enactment of the legislation in 1994 on prohibition of sex selection through prenatal diagnostic techniques to determine the sex of the foetus. It is unfortunate that immoral acts of sterilization and abortions are used as means to implement such policies. Sense

of morality and ethics of such acts are missing in our political discourses and respect for the fundamental right to human life is missing in ethical discussions in India. Female foeticide does not only create a sex-ratio imbalance, it is primarily a killing of human beings. Should we select future humans by killing present humans and thereby put the future generations at risk? Selection of males is a traditional prejudice based on economic and social reasons. Women can also inherit and carry forward the generations of a particular family.

In the two countries, 50 million excess males are under age 20; what are implications of such



compulsory bachelorate on men in the society? How would such famine of sex affect the society? India is a nation of 1.3 billion, males outnumber females by 37 million. This conservative part of northern India has 7,000 villages with as many as 150 to 200 surplus single men each, one study said. In a country all too familiar with crimes against women, packs of men, fuelled by cheap local liquor, often take to the street to chase and women. Out of boredom and frustration, many take to harassing young women, does it worry you? The worst boy-girl ratios in Haryana, an economically strong but socially backward state which itself has the worst gender ratio of new borns to age 6 in the country. Crimes against women have risen in the state by 127% in the last decade. Do you think the sex crime in India is also related with this issue of sex ratio?

I am deeply disturbed by the prevailing situations of sex crimes in India. In Germany, at the Universities, at the Parishes and in the Conferences, colleagues often wonder, "why is there so much of sexual violence against women in a deeply religious India?" Rapes in India, particularly of minors, and of late 8-years old Asifa of Kathua of Jammu-Kashmir, are shocking, shameful and worrying factors.

Sex-ratio imbalance cannot be said to be a direct justifi-

cation for sex crimes such as rape. Yet it could be related, since mostly the frustrated and alcoholic addicted men indulge in such immoral acts. There are also married men as well as holy sages who are involved in such immoral acts. Therefore, the imbalance in sex-ratio with more men and less women indicates indirectly that it could lead the idle, boredom, jobless, aimless men to harassing young women. There is no doubt that a male dominated population might lead to increased aggression towards women and a reversal of equality efforts.

The strong preference for sons under patriarchal traditions and the availability of inexpen-

than that of the marriageable males. This will lead to the disappearance of the dowry problem and the old practice of giving and taking a bride price will come back into vogue. Polyandry (a woman having more than one husband at a time) may also emerge. Since monogamy is the ideal in India, many men may be required to embrace celibacy. The imbalance in sex ratio may increase violence, including rape, against women. With many men remaining unmarried, prostitution will increase substantially (P. Sundaramma, "Does Abortion Law abet Female Foeticide?" The Hindu (May 27, 2012).

If female foeticide must be tackled, then the Preconception

sive prenatal diagnostic testing have resulted in illegal female foeticides. Even economic and religious reasons are not convincing for the preference of males. There is nothing morally wrong if the daughters inherit the ancestral properties. The Sraddha, a ritual for the ancestors, can be also done by daughters, as the Hindu scriptures also allude to the fact that females can perform the necessary rituals for the departed parents. Modern Hindu religious leaders consider the use of abortion for sex selection usually used to secure male children to be immoral. Progeny is the chief aim of marriage, yet there is no strict opposition to birth control in scriptural Hinduism. Similar to the Catholic position, the Suśruta Samhita (3-4 century CE) mentions that only in an unavoidable situation or in extreme cases of a medical problem where the mothers' life was in danger and the life of the mother had to be weighed against that of the foetus, an induced abortion or removal of the foetus was permitted. Abortion was thus permissible only as a last resort to save the life of the mother. Bhrunahatya (abortion) is a moral evil and thus condemnable.

The highly uneven sex ratios in many regions indicate the scarring reality of female fetuses being aborted annually. Speaking on possible implications of female foeticide, Sundaramma says:

If the decline in CSR (child sex ratio) continues for another 20-30 years, the number of marriageable females will be far less

and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques [PC&PNDT] (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act 1994 and the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 must be effectively enforced and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971 must be abolished. People must be taught of natural family planning and respect of female gender must be inculcated.

Tens of thousands of foreign women are flocking to China for marriage, pushed by poverty at home and sucked in by China's shortage of women. Chinese men surf websites that offer foreign brides (from Cambodia), and may wind up paying upwards of \$8,000 for marriage tours to find a wife. For the brides, it's a huge gamble: They are lured with promises of work, and some are effectively trapped and trafficked into marriage. In their new families, daughters-in-law often occupy the lowest status. Does this lead to a new slave trade?

Every human being, male or female, is a creation and gift of God. Everyone is endowed with human dignity. God has created each one with a purpose. No one should be used merely as a means. The pathetic situation of China that forces men to purchase poor women as commodities from Cambodia is a regretful affair. Marriage means trust. Here the Chinese men may cheat the Cambodian women. The aspect of love and commitment are missing in the face of money.

Commodification of women in exchange of money for marriage and instrumentalization of human bodies through prostitution and sexual violence are morally condemnable. It is degrading the human dignity. Women are priceless humans with intrinsic dignity and not exchangeable or purchasable things. Gender oppression is a dehumanizing act. The most fundamental good of human life is body itself. The human body is sacred and sacrosanct. It is only in and through a body that a human can exist. Violation of women's body is an attack on the creator God Himself. In Tamil, there is a saying: "thaayilum sirandathoru kovilumillai," which means there is no greater temple than the mother. A woman is depicted as a temple of God because of her inbuilt capacity with the womb to give birth to new lives. From a sociological point of view, such trafficking into marriage would lead to a new form of slavery, although the women can be empowered to fight against such situations. But definitely, in a foreign land, women will be all the more weaker and at times would succumb to suicidal tendencies.

After the horrific experience of the 20th century with eugenics and genocide, could any country call for creation of a genetically "superior" population without immediate and massive international censure? But for the past decade reputable scientists, bioethicists, and others have been actively promoting a revival of eugenic sensibilities and practices. In a world that is far from overcoming its propensity for racism, xenophobia, and warfare, is this more than worrisome?

The 20th century has left a deep scar and a painful history behind. Europe and other nations are still struggling to understand the sad history of Nazi eugenics. Even the 21st century has not learned the lesson. There has been genocide in many countries. There is absolutely no justifiable reason to promote a genetically superior population. Such efforts should be morally condemned since they violate the fundamental right to life. The international human rights associations have to work diligently to oppose immoral acts and political manipulations. A sensible human society would not massacre humans for sake of social, ethnic, cultural or political gains. Burying of thousands of humans in Sri Lanka, killings of thousands of people in Syria and shootings or terror acts under the disguise of racism, xenophobia and warfare are a great worry and raise the question what it means to be a human. The fundamental problem is that other is seen as alien rather than equal brother or sister of a single humanity despite differences of cultures, nations and genders.