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GENDER



The key findings of the State of World Population 2020 report entitled [Against My Will - Defying the practices that harm women and girls and undermine equality](#) (released in June 2020), published by the United Nations Population Fund, are as follows (please [click here](#) to access):

- The newly released UNFPA report focuses on how women and girls all over the world are treated and how they experience harmful practices, which brings about their physical and emotional deterioration and further deepens the deficits they already suffer in various fields.
- The report mainly covers three harmful practices, namely female genital mutilation, child marriage and the preference of sons over daughters/ girls within the family. Such gender-based discriminations that are usually exercised under the name of religion and culture often lead to denial of basic rights of equality and women’s safety and security, besides denial of access to sexual and reproductive health.
- In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) world governments called for universal sexual and reproductive health and decisively demanded an end to harmful practices, states the report.
- In India, son preference and child marriage are among the biggest societal challenges that were prominent historically and still continues even today.

Child Marriage

- In 2017, the entire South Asian region accounted for the highest number of child marriages each year, estimated at 4.1 million.
- In terms of proportion of girls who get married before 18 years of age, the worst situation was found in Bangladesh (59 percent) during the period 2005-2019, followed by Nepal (40 percent), India (27 percent), Bhutan (26 percent), Pakistan (18 percent), Sri Lanka (10 percent) and Maldives (2 percent).
- Child marriages occur as a result of excessive vulnerabilities, which are faced by the families of young girls, such as poverty, unequal access to quality education and denied employment opportunities that compel poor parents to get their daughters married at a younger age. Moreover, discriminations faced by women in patriarchal societies which highly value a girl’s virginity along with the fears connected to keeping her sexuality “intact”, plays a huge role in child marriages in most parts of South Asia, especially India.
- Based on a study carried out by UNICEF in 2019, the present study states that 51 percent of girls with no formal education, 47 percent with primary education, 29 percent of girls with secondary education and 4 percent with a post-secondary education qualification were married before the age of 18 years in the country.
- An analysis that uses child marriage data of the World Bank’s World Development Indicators shows that among girls married by age 18 in the country, 46 percent were also in the lowest income category.

What's Inside

Landmark Cases of Caste-based Sexual Violence from 1985-2020 (released on 14th September, 2021)

UNFPA State of World Population Report 2021 titled My Body is My Own (released in April, 2021)

Justice Denied: Sexual Violence and Intersectional Discrimination - Barriers to Accessing Justice for Dalit Women and Girls in Haryana (released in November 2020)

Against My Will - Defying the practices that harm women and girls and undermine equality (released in June 2020)

Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000 to 2017: Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, World Bank Group, UNFPA and the United Nations Population Division (released in September 2019)

Women and Men in India 2015

Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum (published in January 2015)

Women and Men in India 2014

The Law and Son Preference in India: A Reality Check

Gender Pay Gap in the Formal Sector: 2006-2013

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QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE EFFECT OF ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN ON EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA (2008 - 2015)



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- transparency

- Dowries are paid by a bride's family to the groom, nominally for the upkeep of the wife, and bride price is paid by the groom or his family to "purchase" the bride. Both these practices exist in the Indian society.
- Early pregnancy and childbirth increases the risk of maternal death and poor health of the child, besides leading to lower nutritional levels among both mother and child.
- In India, of women who had married before the age of 18, 60 percent had given birth before they reached 18 years of age, and 79 percent before the age of 20.
- In South Asia, the Maternal Mortality Ratio was the highest in Afghanistan (638), followed by Nepal (186), Bhutan (183), Bangladesh (173), India (145), Pakistan (140), Maldives (53), Sri Lanka (36) and China (29) in 2017. Maternal Mortality Ratio is defined as the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births during the same time period.
- One study shows that women in India who get married before the age of 18 years often face gender based violence. Among them, one-third of women (i.e. 32 percent), encounter physical assault by their spouses as compared to 17 percent who marry after the age of 18 years in states where child marriage is highly prevalent, such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.
- To meet the target to eliminate child marriage by 2030 in the Sustainable Development Goals, an investment of \$35 billion over ten years is required along with various other initiatives and programmes by countries for women's empowerment and wellbeing.

Son Preference

- Son preference practiced in the Indian society leads to giving negative value to women, girls and daughters, and it furthers gender inequality. There exists several malpractices in our society that reflects gender discrimination, such as abortion of female foetuses, denial of access to quality education and shorter breastfeeding time for girls, which leads to lower nutritional levels and health of most daughters. Girls face a higher mortality rate than boys as a result of gender-based discriminatory practices.
- In the entire South Asia, Sex Ratio at Birth was the worst in China (1.143), followed by India (1.098), Nepal (1.073), Maldives (1.066), Pakistan (1.064), Afghanistan (1.059), Bangladesh (1.055), Bhutan (1.051) and Sri Lanka (1.039) in 2017. Sex Ratio at Birth is defined as the number of live male births per live female birth.
- As compared to countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal and Pakistan, India had the highest rate of excess female deaths, 13.5 per 1,000 female births in 2012, which indicates that an estimated one out of nine deaths of females below the age of 5 years may be attributed to postnatal sex selection.
- Between 2013 and 2017, roughly 4.6 lakh girls in the country were "missing" at birth each year i.e. they were simply not allowed to take birth. One analysis shows that gender-biased sex selection accounts for about two-thirds of the total missing girls, and post-birth female mortality accounts for nearly one-third.
- China and India together accounted for the majority of the world's missing female births, which is almost 95.7 percent of 1.2 million missing female births annually (averaged over the five year period 2013-2017).
- A study shows that China and India together accounted for about 90 percent to 95 percent of the estimated 1.2 million to 1.5 million missing female births annually worldwide due to gender-biased (prenatal) sex selection.
- In 2020, China and India accounted for nearly 50.7 percent (72.3 million) and 32.1 percent (45.8 million) of total "missing females" in the world (142.6 million), respectively. Missing females are females missing in the population due to postnatal (after birth) and prenatal (before birth, i.e. during pregnancy) sex selection. Gender-biased (prenatal) sex selection gets reflected in sex ratio imbalances at birth.
- In 2020, China and India accounted for roughly 36.3 percent (0.62 million) and 21.1 percent (0.36 million) of total excess female deaths in the world (1.71 million), respectively. Excess female deaths are the number of female deaths arising from postnatal sex selection.
- In 2020, China and India accounted for about 48.7 percent (0.73 million) and 39.3 percent (0.59 million) of total missing female births in the world (1.5 million), i.e. the number of female births prevented due to gender-biased prenatal sex selection.
- National averages do not clearly reflect the skewed sex ratios at birth that are found in specific regions of the country. Variations in Sex Ratios at Birth could be found between rural and urban areas or between southern and northern parts of the country.
- In India, Sex Ratios at Birth are generally higher in urban areas vis-à-vis rural areas.
- Although gender-biased sex selection tends to be initially higher among wealthier classes, over time the malpractice reaches lower-income families because technologies that facilitate sex selection often become more accessible and affordable.
- Son preference in India has led to drastic changes in the sex ratio, i.e. there are more men as compared to women. This demographic imbalance has an inevitable impact on the marriage systems in the country. It is worth mentioning that the male population below 35 years of age is 11 percent more than the female population below 35 years of age.
- The above-mentioned demographic imbalance leads to the phenomenon known as 'marriage squeeze' where the prospective grooms exceed the prospective brides. As a consequence, many men may altogether forgo or delay marriage. Sex ratio imbalance may also result in more child marriages.

Other indicators

- Life expectancy at birth is defined as the number of years new-born children would live if subject to the mortality risks prevailing for the cross section of population at the time of their birth. For the year 2020, life expectancy at birth is estimated to be the highest in Maldives (79 years), followed by China and Sri Lanka (77 years each), Bangladesh (73 years), Bhutan (72 years), Nepal (71 years), India (70 years), Pakistan (67 years) and Afghanistan (65 years).



- During the period 2014-2019, roughly four-fifth (i.e. 81 percent) of total births were attended by skilled health personnel (i.e. doctor, nurse or midwife) in India.
- Among the South Asian countries, Afghanistan (59 percent), Pakistan (69 percent), Nepal (58 percent), Myanmar (60 percent) and Bangladesh (53 percent) performed worse with respect to India during 2014-2019 in terms of the proportion of total births that were attended by skilled health personnel. As opposed to that, China (100 percent), Sri Lanka (100 percent), Maldives (100 percent) and Bhutan (96 percent) fared better than India.
- In 2019, the percentage of laws and regulations that guaranteed access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education was 73 percent for the entire world, while the same stood at 84 percent for the more developed regions, 69 percent for the less developed regions, and 71 percent for the least developed countries.
- As compared to the least developed countries (71 percent), the performance of Afghanistan (54 percent), Maldives (45 percent), Nepal (48 percent) and Pakistan (65 percent) during 2019 was relatively poor in terms of the percentage of laws and regulations that guaranteed access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education. However, Sri Lanka (89 percent) and Myanmar (82 percent) performed relatively better vis-à-vis the least developed countries.
- During the period 2003-2018, the adolescent birth rate in India was 11. During the same period, the South Asian countries, such as Sri Lanka (21), Afghanistan (62), Pakistan (46), Nepal (88), Myanmar (28), Bhutan (28), and Bangladesh (74) had adolescent birth rates higher than that of India. Maldives and China (9 each) had lower adolescent birth rates as compared to that of India. Adolescent birth rate is the number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years.
- In 2020, the adolescent birth rate in the world is estimated to be 41. In the least developed countries, the adolescent birth rate is 91, whereas the same are 45 and 12 in less developed regions and more developed regions, respectively.
- The adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education for males pertaining to Bhutan was 89 percent, India was 97 percent, Maldives was 94 percent, Myanmar was 90 percent, Pakistan was 74 percent and Sri Lanka was 98 percent in the period 2009-2019. Adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education means the proportion of children of the official primary age group who are enrolled in primary or secondary education.
- The adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education for females pertaining to Bhutan was 91 percent, India was 99 percent, Maldives was 96 percent, Myanmar was 88 percent, Pakistan was 62 percent and Sri Lanka was 97 percent in the period 2009-2019.
- Globally, the adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education was 91 percent for males and 89 percent for females in 2018.
- During the period 2009-2019, India, Bhutan and Maldives (1.02 each) had Gender Parity Index (GPI) in primary education above 1.0. The GPI in primary education was below 1.0 for Pakistan (0.84), Myanmar (0.99) and Sri Lanka (0.98) in 2009-2019. Gender Parity Index at primary education is the ratio of female to male values of adjusted primary school net enrolment ratio. A GPI that varies between 0 and 1 means a disparity which is in favour of males, whereas a GPI more than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of females.
- In 2018, Gender Parity Index for primary education was 0.98 for the entire world, while the same was estimated to be 1.00 for the more developed regions, 0.97 for the less developed regions and 0.95 for the least developed countries.
- The net enrolment rate in secondary education for males pertaining to Afghanistan was 63 percent, Bangladesh was 61 percent, Bhutan was 64 percent, India was 61 percent, Myanmar was 61 percent, Nepal was 61 percent, Pakistan was 40 percent and Sri Lanka was 90 percent in the period 2009-2019. Net enrolment ratio in secondary education means the proportion of children of the official secondary age group who are enrolled in secondary education.
- The net enrolment rate in secondary education for females pertaining to Afghanistan was 37 percent, Bangladesh was 72 percent, Bhutan was 77 percent, India was 62 percent, Myanmar was 67 percent, Nepal was 63 percent, Pakistan was 34 percent and Sri Lanka was 92 percent in the period 2009-2019.
- Globally, the net enrolment rate in secondary education was 66 percent for both males and females in 2018.
- During the period 2009-2019, India (1.02), Bangladesh (1.18), Bhutan (1.19), Nepal (1.03), Myanmar (1.08), and Sri Lanka (1.03) had Gender Parity Index (GPI) in secondary education above 1.0. The GPI in secondary education was below 1.0 for Afghanistan (0.58) and Pakistan (0.85) in 2009-2019. Gender Parity Index at secondary education is the ratio of female to male values of secondary school net enrolment ratio.
- In 2018, Gender Parity Index for secondary education was 1.00 for the entire world, whereas the same for the least developed countries was 0.89, the less developed regions was 1.00 and the more developed regions was 1.01.
- In 2020, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) per woman is estimated to be 4.2 for Afghanistan, 2.0 for Bangladesh, 1.9 for Bhutan, 1.7 for China, 2.2 for India, 1.8 for Maldives, 2.1 for Myanmar, 1.8 for Nepal, 3.4 for Pakistan and 2.2 for Sri Lanka. Total Fertility Rate is the number of children who would be born per woman if she lived to the end of her childbearing years and bore children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates.
- The Total Fertility Rate per woman globally is estimated to be 2.4 in 2020.

[Sakhi Arun Jagdale and Meghana Myadam, who are doing their MA in Development Studies (1st year) from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, assisted the Inclusive Media for Change team in preparing the summary of the report by United Nations Population Fund. They did this work as part of their summer internship at the Inclusive Media for Change project in July 2020.]



Rural Expert

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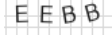
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