



IAPPD Newsletter

A Quarterly Newsletter of Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

The 17th General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Development

August 23-25, 2014, Tehran (Iran)

With the objective to provide a valuable opportunity to share ideas, experiences and to adopt policies for the preparation of necessary grounds to motivate active regional partnership for global sustainability, the 17th General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Development was organized by APPCED, during August 23-25, 2014, in Tehran, Iran. The Conference was attended by 78 parliamentarians, experts and media persons representing 13 countries.



Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, presenting the country report during the Conference.

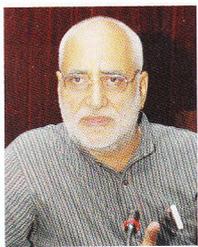
“Protection of the environment in which the present and future generations should pursue a progressive social life is considered a public duty; therefore, any economic or non-economic activity associated with the pollution of environment or irreparable damage thereof is forbidden.” These words – enshrined in Article 50 of Iran’s Constitution – were echoed by H.E. Ali Larijani, Speaker of the Islamic Parliament of Iran when he opened the General Assembly.

The conference aimed to seek connections between ensuring both sustainable development and environmental sustainability and solutions from parliamentarians to this end.

Speaking at the event, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Gary Lewis said “I would like to add my voice to the growing chorus arguing that climate change is the greatest collective challenge facing humankind – ever. It is certainly the greatest human security threat facing Iran.”

Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, India; and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, represented the country in the Conference. Mrs. Thakur also presented the Country Report of India. In her presentation she said, “the environment is where we live; and development is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable”. While talking on environmental issues in India, she informed the participants about various acts passed by the Government of India to safeguard the environment. She concluded her presentation by saying, “Environment protection and preservation of the planet is the responsibility of every individual and community on Earth. If we share any of environmental concerns, we must take action to reduce our personal and household adverse impact on the planet and to educate other members of our community on environmental issues”.

In the Tehran Declaration, the participants reiterated to economic and social development and poverty eradication as the first priority for the developing countries.



Population and Sustainable Development

The world over environmentalists and economists agree that efforts to protect the environment and to improve living standards can be closely linked and are mutually reinforcing. Slowing down the increase in population, especially in the face of rising per capita demand for natural resources, can take pressure off the environment and buy time to improve living standards on a sustainable basis. As population growth slows, countries can invest more in education, health care, employment and other improvements that help boost living standards. In turn, as individual income, savings, and investment rise, more resources become available that can boost productivity. This dynamic process has been identified as one of the key reasons that the economies of many Asian countries grew rapidly during last four decades. In recent years fertility has been falling in many developing countries and, as a result, annual world population growth has fallen to about 1.4 per cent per annum in 2000 compared with about 2 per cent in 1960. Still, at the current pace world population increases by about 1 billion every 13 years. World population surpassed 6 billion in 1999 and is projected to rise to over 8 billion by 2025. Globally, fertility has fallen by half since the 1960s, to about three children per woman. In 65 countries, including 9 in the developing world, fertility rates have fallen below replacement level of about two children per woman. Nonetheless, fertility is above replacement level in 123 countries, and in some countries it is substantially above replacement level. In these countries the population continues to increase rapidly. Almost all population growth is in the developing world. As a result of differences in population growth, Europe's population will decline from 13 per cent to 7 per cent of world population over the next quarter century, while that of sub-Saharan Africa will rise from 10 per cent to 17 per cent. The shares of other regions

are projected to remain about the same as today. As population and demand for natural resources continue to grow, environmental limits will become increasingly apparent. Water shortages are expected to affect nearly 3 billion people in 2025, including India with sub-Saharan Africa worst affected. Many countries could avoid environmental crises if they took steps now to conserve and manage supplies and demand better, while slowing population growth by providing families and individuals with information and services needed to make informed choices about reproductive health. Family planning programmes play a key role. When family planning information and services are widely available and accessible, couples are better able to achieve their fertility desires. "Even in adverse circumstance — low incomes, limited education, and few opportunities for women — family planning programmes have meant slower population growth and improved family welfare," the World Bank has noted. If every country made a commitment to population stabilization and resource conservation, the world would be better able to meet the challenges of sustainable development. Practicing sustainable development requires a combination of wise public investment, effective natural resource management, cleaner agricultural and industrial technologies, less pollution, and slower population growth.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Manmohan Sharma'.

Manmohan Sharma
Executive Secretary, IAPPD

The 30th Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development: Addressing Population Issues from a Life Cycle Perspective with a Focus on the Youth and Elderly

November 27-28, 2014, Tokyo (Japan)



Mr. A.W. Rabi Bernard, MP and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, IAPPD, during the meeting.

With the objective to serve as a valuable platform to bring together the voices of parliamentarians from Asia and Pacific region, the 30th Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development: Addressing Population Issues from a Life Cycle Perspective with a Focus on the Youth and Elderly, was organized by the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), with support from JPEF, UNFPA and IIPF, during November 27-28, 2014, in Tokyo, Japan. Around 30 Members of Parliament representing 19 countries attended the meeting.

Mr. A.W. Rabi Bernard, MP and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended this meeting from India. Mr. Bernard chaired a discussion session.

Some of the important sessions like policy learning and transfer: Aging and Japan's experience for a vibrant society, demographic transition and aging population, parliamentarians' role, policies and measures in various stages of demographic transition, concrete measures for super aged society, healthy aging, etc. were discussed in the meeting.

A study visit was also organized on November 28, 2014 with the objective to provide the parliamentarians an opportunity to learn Japan's population and health policies as well as good practices and challenges are being faced by the aging society.



Group photo of the participants.

10th Women Ministers and Parliamentarians Conference on Progressing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) into Beijing +20

September 6-7, 2014, Manila (Philippines)

Nations all over the world enter a critical year where greater commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) is imperative to sustain progress achieved in the last 20 years of its implementation.

To discuss the future of the ICPD Programme of Action at the United Nation General Assembly Special Session on ICPD beyond 2014 in New York, about 50 ministers and parliamentarians from 21 Asia-Pacific countries and experts from UNFPA, CSOs, youth, media and other stakeholders met at the 10th Women Ministers and Parliamentarians Conference on Progressing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) on September 6-7, 2014, at Manila, Philippines.



Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, with other dignitaries during the media briefing.

The Conference was organized by AFPPD in collaboration with the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, with support from United Nations Population Fund and the Government of Japan, and hosted by the Committee on Women and Gender Equality, House of Representatives of the Philippines.

Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, and Ms. Bimla Kashyap, MP, represented the country in the Conference.

The objectives of the Conference were to foster concerted collaboration among women parliamentarians and ministers to formulate and advocate for a regional SRHR and gender-related policy agenda towards Beijing+20; define regional and country strategies to ensure a pronounced gender goal in the sustainable development goals (SDGs); and agree on effective advocacy mechanisms that mobilize women parliamentarians in pushing SRHR and related issues into Beijing+20 and post-2015.

The parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment towards full and effective implementation of the Beijing declaration. They also ensured that women and men parliamentarians will be informed and equally engaged in the regional and global partnership for sustainable development and effective partnership with civil society and the media.



Group photo of the participants.

Asian-African Parliamentarians' Capacity Development on the Integration of Population Issues into National Development Frameworks Part-III

September 24-27, 2014, Lusaka (Zambia)



Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP; and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, IAPPD, during the Conference.

To enhance the capacity of the parliamentarians in their efforts to address population and development issues the 'Asian-African Parliamentarians' Capacity Development on the Integration of Population Issues into National Development Frameworks Part-III' was organized during September 24-27 2014, at Lusaka, Zambia. The event was organized by the Asian Population and Development Association with Zambia All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development with support from the United Nations Population Fund and the Japan Trust Fund.

The project is in its final year of the three-year project that will reflect on theoretical and practical findings to guide parliamentarians on the integration of population issues into national development frameworks. The project also aimed to conclude with an assessment on the outcomes of the preceding Asian and African Parliamentarians' Capacity Building Project Part I-III that APDA organized in Tokyo, Japan, from 2009-2011, which entailed strategies to improve transparency, accountability and good governance for aid implementation on population and development issues.

The Conference was inaugurated by Hon. Mkhondo Danwood Lungu, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia and the Keynote Speech was delivered by Hon. Teruhiko Mashiko, MP; Vice Chair of Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population. Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP; and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, represented India in the Conference.

Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna participated in the Session on 'Taking Stock: Progress and Challenges for Transparency and Accountability for aid implementation'. In his presentation, Mr. Khanna stressed on the need for dissemination of aid to developing countries and fund utilization effectively towards the desired ends. He further said that transparency and accountability are the two pillars of good governance. Parliaments are responsible for ensuring accountability and openness of government through oversight of activities of the executive and its auxiliary bodies in order to curb corruption and effect good practices.



Group photo of the participants.



“The ‘environment’ is where we live; and development is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable”.

The unprecedented growth in world consumption and production is leading to environment stress through impacts that are both global and local. Some kinds of environmental degradation are truly of global concern, such as global warming and depletion of the ozone layer. Others are international – acid rain, the state of ocean, in several countries. Yet some are more localized like air pollution, water pollution, soil degradation, desertification and so on.

The seriousness of environmental concern during the past two decades has led several people to question the rising cost imposed on the environment through depletion of non-renewable natural resources. A question also arises whether poverty and environmental degradation are inter-related? What is the relation between environment and economic growth? The inter relationship between poverty, environment and development has also been recognized by the World Commission on Environment and Development Report as “poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problem.”

The world is divided into – under-developed countries, developing countries and developed countries. The environmental and development issues in each country depend upon their socio-economic and political development.

Developed countries try to put blame on developing countries in terms of population growth and poverty and developing countries try to put blame for environmental degradation on developed countries because of affluence or energy intensive consumption patterns.

The inter-relationship between the exploitation and degradation of environment and natural resources, on the one hand and development and poverty on the other is particularly relevant to the rural areas of developing countries.

The linkages between poverty and environment define a particular characteristic of environmental disruption. In rural areas, these linkages materialize through the over exploitation of resources.

Development is a process that enables people to better their well-being. Long-term development can only be achieved through sustainable management of various assets: financial, material, human, social and natural. Natural assets, including water, soils, plants and animals, underpin people’s livelihoods.

Today’s need is to keep balance between environment and development. We have to concentrate on how we can keep this balance. Environmental degradation is a result of social-economical, technological and institutional activities. Degradation occurs when Earth’s natural resources are depleted.

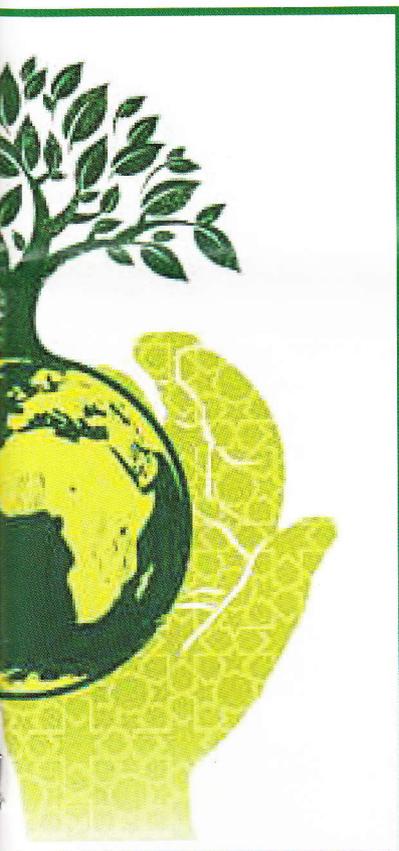


and Development

ur, MP, India*

Environmental Issues in India

Any country's environmental problems are related to the level of its economic development, the availability of natural resources and the lifestyle of its population. There are many environmental issues in India. Air pollution, water pollution, the problem of garbage disposal and resultant pollution of the natural environment are all major challenges for India. The situation was worse between 1947 through 1995. According to various environment assessment studies of World Bank, between 1995 through 2010, India has made one of the fastest progresses in the world in addressing its environmental issues and improving its environmental quality. Still, India has a long way to go to reach environmental quality similar to those enjoyed in developed economies. Pollution remains a major challenge for India.



In 1985, Indian government created the Ministry of Environment and Forests for regulating and ensuring environmental protection. India's population growth adds pressure to environmental issues and its resources, as it increases the demand for infrastructure, houses and food, etc.

More than 7.2 billion people exist in the world today with half the global population residing in just six countries, United Nations data show, China and India have some of the biggest populations with more than 1 billion people each.

This is true that population growth may contribute to environmental degradation, but its effect can be modified by economic growth and modern technology. Research in environmental economics has uncovered a relationship between environmental quality, measures by ambient concentrations of air pollutants and per capita income. The key requirement, for this to be true, is continued adoption of technology and scientific management of resources, continued increases in productivity in every economic sector, entrepreneurial innovation and economic expansion.

In 2003, India set up a National Forest Commission to review and assess India's policy and law, its effect on India's forests, its impact of local forest communities, and to make recommendations to achieve sustainable forest and ecological security in India.

Environmental protection and preservation of the planet is the responsibility of every individual and community on Earth. If you share any of the environmental concerns, you must take action to reduce your personal and household adverse impact on the planet and to educate other members of your community on environmental issues.

**Excerpts of the speech of Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, at the The 17th General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Development, August 23-25, 2014, Tehran, Iran*

The First Meeting of AFPPD Task Force on Transparency, Accountability and Governance

October 21, 2014, Bangkok (Thailand)

The Task Force on Transparency, Accountability and Governance, aids to strengthen transparency and accountability through well-established governance mechanisms and ensures urgent implementation of the recommendations of the governance and other reviews, through meetings, regular monitoring and follow-up. The Task Force will have a two year term. Once the system is in place, the Task Force will play an oversight role of monitoring the progress and impact of the implementation. The first meeting of the Task Force was organized by AFPPD on October 21, 2014, in Bangkok, Thailand. Prof. P.J. Kurien, MP and Vice Chair, AFPPD and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended the meeting.



Prof. P.J. Kurien, MP and Vice Chair, AFPPD, during the meeting.

Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended the meeting.

The decisions arrived at in the meeting include ToR for AFPPD Task Force, recruitment of Special Advisor for governance and management, work plan of Task Force and status of Secretary General position.

The 76th Executive Committee Meeting of AFPPD

October 22, 2014, Bangkok (Thailand)

The AFPPD was established in 1981 with the aim to raise awareness and involvement of members of national legislatures on issues related to population and development, notably the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and to generate their support for legislative actions and resource mobilization for population programmes. Over a period of thirty years, AFPPD has expanded into a coordinating body of 27 national committees of parliamentarians on population and development that address issues related to these topics in their countries. Working with these committees and full time offices in more than a dozen Asian countries, AFPPD seeks to inform and motivate parliamentarians about the linkages between changes in population and such issues as reproductive health, gender equality, youth issues, socio-economic policies and sustainable development. The meeting was attended by Prof. P.J. Kurien, MP and Vice Chair, AFPPD and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD.

The agenda of the meeting include status of the position of the Secretary General and treasurer of AFPPD, report of the first meeting of Task Force on Transparency, Accountability and Governance; AFPPD multi-years programme development and other key issues.



Group photo of the participants.

Regional Parliamentarians Meeting on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (PVAWG)

October 24-25, 2014, Siem Reap (Cambodia)

In 2009, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) established a Standing Committee on the Status of Women and a Standing Committee of Male Parliamentarians on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (PVAWG). As a follow up to the 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee of Male Parliamentarians on PVAWG, the AFPPD has initiated a project with the support of the Australian Government's Australian Aid – 'Mobilizing Parliamentarians for EAW in Asia-Pacific'. This project encompasses examining different forms of violence that are highly prevalent in specific sub-regions and subsequently developing research agenda and policy advocacy strategies to support PVAWG. The focus of the project is on trafficking in south-east Asia and child marriage in South Asia.

Parliamentarians from 19 countries from the Asia-Pacific region, gathered together during October 24-25, 2014 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, to continue the work of the AFPPD.

Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP; and Mr. Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu, MP, from India, attended the Conference. Mr. Rapolu also participated in the session on 'Policy development on prevention and responses to violence against women and girls'.

The conference presented findings of the research on violence against women in South East Asia and South Asia. This two-day event aimed to inspire parliamentarians to take further actions to prevent violence against women and girls. This regional meeting also aimed to:

- improve parliamentarians' understanding of violence against women and girls, especially on trafficking and child marriage issues and its linkages with population and development;
- increase knowledge and understanding of the different national perspectives and experiences of eliminating violence against women and girls among parliamentarians;
- encourage evidence-based policy making; and
- review outcomes of the action plans, examine the usefulness of the efforts, and plan future programmes and activities of the Standing Committee of Male Parliamentarians on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls.

In his presentation on 'Costing Violence: Gender Resource Budgeting on VAWG', Mr. Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu,

MP, said that strength of the society reflects on level of empowerment of weaker gender. If empowerment is looked upon in terms of ability to make choices: to be disempowered therefore, implies to be denied choice. The notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability.



Group photo of the participants.

Standing Committee Meeting of IAPPD

July 31, 2014 at India International Centre, New Delhi

A meeting of Standing Committee of IAPPD consisting of new and old Members of Parliament (MPs) from different political parties was held on July 31, 2014 at the India International Centre, New Delhi. The meeting was presided over by Prof. P.J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha and Chairman, IAPPD. A total number of 23 members consisting of 17 Members of Parliament from different parties and six subject experts attended the meeting.

Welcoming the dignitaries, Shri Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, apprised about the purpose of the meeting. Prof. P.J. Kurien said that population stabilization is very important for the National development and for achieving population stabilization, maternal and child-health are important issues to be considered. He further said that if we compare MMR/IMR/TFR, it is lower in the southern States (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh), as compared to other States of India. We must try to motivate the states having higher MMR to reduce the same at par with southern States. ERs should also be involved in the implementation of schemes in rural areas.

In his presentation on Maternal Health – MDG-5, Dr. Himansu Bhushan, Dy. Commissioner, Maternal Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, said that maternal health has direct link with Family planning. If we want to achieve the MDG-5 target of MMR 109 in 2015, we have to focus on maternal health. One of the important measure to reduce the MMR is to improve delivery systems by skill-birth attendants. There is a need to increase funds on health sector which is at present around 2.5% of the total funds.



son-preference in various states of the country, female foeticide, violence against women and girls, sex ratio, maternal and child health, etc.

It was stressed by the group that Panchayat Samities should be strengthened at grass root level. The group also emphasized to educate the MPs about various schemes being implemented by the Government. ERs must be aware about all schemes being implemented in rural areas. The ERs have to rise above vote bank politics and implement national agenda on Population and Health issues.



Prof. P.J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha and Chairman, IAPPD, presiding the meeting. Also seen from left, Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, and Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP.



During the discussion, several questions were raised by the Members of Parliament regarding different programmes and policies implemented by the government at various levels. The group also discussed about



Six out of 10 Indian men admit violence against wives: UN study

Six out of 10 men in India admit to having perpetrated violence against their wives or partners, with men who experienced discrimination as children or faced financial stresses more likely to be abusive, said a study released on Monday.

The report, by the United Nations World Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Washington-based International Center for Research on Women, polled 9,205 men, aged 18 to 49, across seven states to understand their views on masculinity, partner violence and son preference.

Violence was defined as emotional such as insults, intimidation and threats, or physical and sexual such as pushing, punching and rape. It also included economic abuse in which a man did not permit his wife or partner to work or took her earnings against her will.



“Many men in India act in a manner that is fairly predetermined by their gendered roles and expectations, socio-economic characteristics and childhood experiences,” said the ‘Masculinity, Intimate Partner Violence and Son Preference’ report.

“Men who experience economic stress were more likely to have perpetrated violence ever or in the past 12 months. This may be because of norms related to masculinity, which reinforce the expectation that men are primary economic providers for their households.”

The study - across the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra - found that men who had experienced discrimination as children were four times more likely to be violent towards their partners. The highest reports of violence came from Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, said the report, with more than 70% of men in these regions admitting to being abusive towards their wives and partners.

More than 38% of all crimes committed against women in India in 2013 were those registered under the charge of cruelty by husband or his relatives, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Such crimes make up the largest proportion of crimes against women in the country - with 118,866 cases of cruelty by husband or his family reported from a total of 309,546, says the NCRB.

The study, which also polled 3,158 women, said more than half (52%) of women said they had experienced some form of violence during their lifetime. Physical abuse such as being kicked, slapped, choked and burned was the most commonly reported, with 38% of women saying they had faced such abuse. This was followed by emotional, sexual and economic violence respectively.

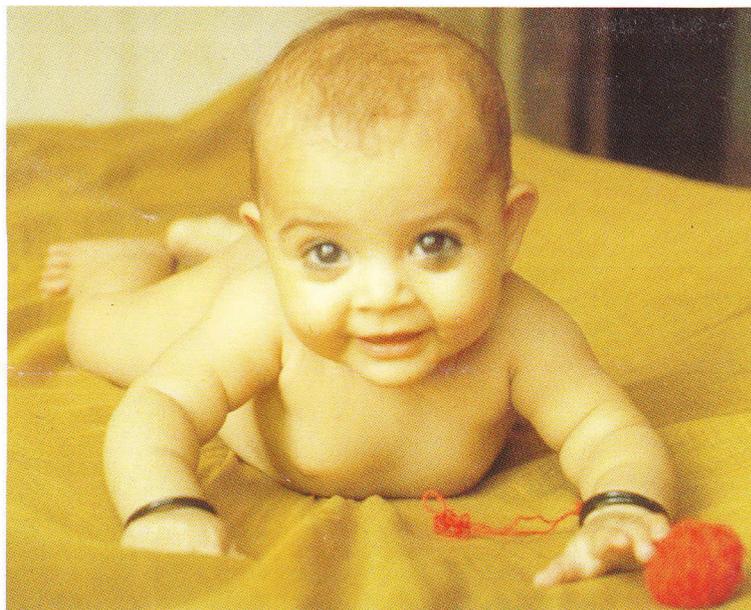
Women who were discriminated against as children were three to six times more likely to experience violence. “Women who experienced and observed discrimination or violence growing up are more likely to justify it as adults and may therefore not resist circumstances that may trigger intimate partner violence,” the report said.

Source: Reuters, New Delhi, appeared in Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 11.11.2014.

Delhi's sex ratio up, but still among the worst

The capital's sex ratio inched upwards last year but it was still among the worst in the country, the government's birth and death registration report for 2013 shows. After all the fuss over Delhi's dismal sex ratio—866 females to 1,000 males—recorded in the Census of 2011, the ratio improved very slightly to 895:1,000 last year. The average for the whole country was 940:1,000 in 2011.

The significant gap in the number of males and females in the city points to widespread female feticide, experts say. Various studies by voluntary organizations have also shown the preference for a male child in many parts of the city.



Although the report released on Friday shows a marginal increase in the sex ratio, from 886:1,000 in 2012, between 2007 and 2011 it had fallen sharply. From 2001 to 2013, the only time when Delhi's sex ratio increased significantly was in 2008 when it went from 848:1,000 in 2007 to 1,004:1,000. The report attributes this "unprecedented" increase to the implementation of the Ladli scheme for girls in 2008 that assured a financial grant for every girl child whose birth was registered. The registration of old births is cited as a probable reason for the number of females exceeding the number of males that year.

But in 2009, the sex ratio dipped to 915:1,000 and went down further to 901:1,000 in 2010. The next year, while the census data drew attention to the capital's dismal sex ratio, the state's own registration data showed the ratio had fallen to 893:1,000. Although then chief minister Sheila Dikshit expressed concern and promised many awareness drives, the downward trend continued in 2012 when the ratio was 886:1,000.

In view of Delhi's poor sex ratio right from 2001, when it was 809:1,000, the state has been carrying out monthly monitoring of institutional births since 2004. Data is collected from 50 major hospitals that account for 51% of the total births in 2013. The sex ratio of institutional births on the basis of these 50 hospitals was also 895:1,000 last year.

Officials say this helps to review the sex ratio at the highest level in the shortest possible time. Efforts are on to increase the coverage of health institutions under the monthly monitoring system to make the exercise truly representative of the ground reality.

The report also includes countrywide data of the Civil Registration System 2011 that shows Delhi is among the 10 worst states and union territories in terms of sex ratio. A comparison between the district-wise break-up of the census data of 2001 and 2011 reflects the downward trend in Delhi. For instance, Southwest district recorded the lowest sex ratio of 836:1,000 in 2011—even lower than the 846:1,000 it recorded in 2001.

Source: Ambika Pandit, Times of India, 23.8.2014.



The IAPPD Newsletter

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