



punjab geographer

A JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
PUNJAB GEOGRAPHERS, INDIA

VOLUME 4

OCTOBER 2008



MAP SERIES-I
SPATIAL PATTERN OF SEX RATIO IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PUNJAB
(1998-2001)

R.C. Chandna

The region comprising Punjab and Haryana states (India) and Pakistan's Punjab together approximated Punjab of Pre-partition days. From the present volume onwards a New Map Series has been started with a view to reflecting upon the demographic patterns of this region comprising Pre-Independence Punjab. The present analysis of spatial pattern of sex ratio in the said region is the first in the series. Sex ratio here, however, refers to the number of females per thousand males- a concept in tune with the Indian Census. The present analysis of sex ratio in the Pre-partition Punjab has been taken up to find whether the cultural as well as the genetic differences of three major communities of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus get reflected in the spatial pattern of their sex ratio, which is the product of sex differentials at the time of birth, death and among the migrants.

Since the censuses of India and Pakistan do not synchronise temporally, their latest census of 2001 and 1998, respectively have been considered fairly close and comparable. Accordingly, India had a sex ratio of 933, while the corresponding figure for Pakistan was only 922, implying that paucity of females was common to both countries and was equally serious. However, it is intriguing to note that the problem of paucity of females was more severe in Pakistan where as Muslims in India displayed higher sex ratio (936) than their Hindu (931) counterparts. What makes the

Muslims in Pakistan to have low sex ratio in comparison to their counterparts in India shall have to be viewed in the contest of sex differentials at the time of death in both the countries. Other factors like under-enumeration of females in Pakistan as also higher female mortality rate in 15-35 age group (active reproductive period) in Pakistan also cannot be ignored.

The region under study had an average sex ratio of 908 females per thousand males. However, at sub-regional level, the sex ratio pattern of three sub-regions belies the above stated national scene – mainly because of the fact that Punjab and Haryana of India have the lowest sex ratio in the country. Thus while the Pakistan's Punjab had a sex ratio of 933, in India Haryana displayed a sex ratio of 861 and Punjab had a sex ratio of 876 (Table 1). Such a low sex ratio in Punjab and Haryana of India may have its explanation partly in some so for unknown genetic factor, particularly among Sikhs, and partly in growing incidence of female foeticide. It may be noted that child (0-6 age group) sex ratio was lowest in India's Punjab (798) which is one of the most prosperous states in the country. Haryana too was not far behind in this respect and displayed a child sex ratio of only 819. A strong desire to have a son in the family coupled with a strong desire to limit the family size in view of growing economic awareness may explain to some extent, the acute paucity of females in

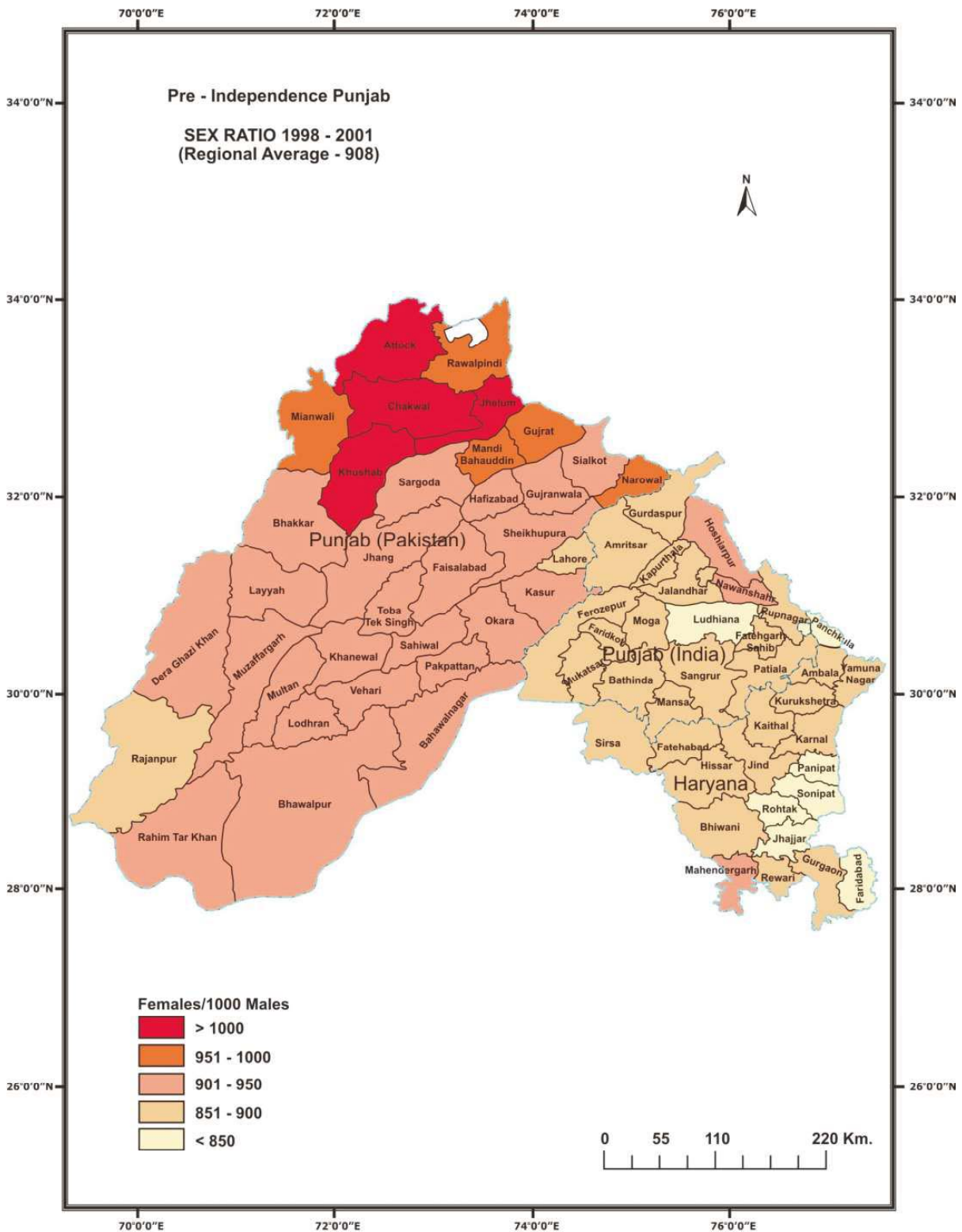


Table 1
Pre- Independence Punjab – Sex Ratio* 1998-2001

Punjab (Pakistan) District	Sex Ratio	Punjab (India) District	Sex Ratio	Haryana District	Sex Ratio
PAKISTAN	922	INDIA	933		
PUNJAB	933	PUNJAB	876	HARAYANA	861
Chakwal	1091	Hoshiarpur	935	Mahendragarh	918
Khushab	1006	Nawan Shehar	914	Rewari	899
Attock	1004	Muktsar	891	Fatehabad	884
Jhelum	1002	Gurdaspur	890	Sirsa	882
Gujrat	996	Kapurthala	888	Bhiwani	879
Mianwali	992	Jalandhar	887	Gurgaon	873
Narowal	988	Moga	887	Ambala	868
Mandi Bahauddin	953	Ferozpur	885	Kurukshetra	866
Rawalpindi	953	Faridkot	883	Karnal	865
Sialkot	950	Mansa	879	Yamunanagar	862
Toba Tek Singh	950	Amritsar	876	Kaithal	853
Sargodha	942	Rupnagar	871	Jind	852
Layyah	936	Sangrur	871	Hisar	851
Sahiwal	933	Bathinda	870	Rohtak	847
Bahawalnagar	931	Patiala	868	Jhajjar	847
Vehari	929	Fathegarh Sahib	854	Sonipat	839
Khanewal	928	Ludhiana	824	Faridabad	839
Pakpattan	926			Panipat	829
Dera Ghazi Khan	925			Panchkula	823
Jhang	923				
Lodhran	923				
Hafizabad	922				
Faislabad	921				
Gujranwala	921				
Sheikhupura	921				
Muzaffargarh	920				
Rahim Yar Khan	919				
Okara	913				
Kasur	910				
Multan	905				
Bhakkar	904				
Bahawalpur	903				
Rajanpur	900				
Lahore	898				

Sources:

(i) Census of 1998, Census Organization of Pakistan, Islamabad- Govt. of Pakistan.

(ii) Census of India (2001) Primary Census Abstract, Total Population – Table A 5. pp. 34-48 and 51-60.

* Sex Ratio refers to females per thousand males.

India's Punjab and Haryana. The desire to have a son may not be that strong in case of Muslim community both in Pakistan and India.

It has been observed that out of 34 districts in Punjab (Pakistan) four districts had an excess of females over males as their sex ratio was more than one thousand. These included Chakwal (1091), Khushab (1006), Attock (1004) and Jhelum (1002). These districts may have been experiencing male-selective out-migration for employment purpose since long, due to their proximity to Rawalpindi. In comparison, the vast majority of districts in Pakistan's Punjab display an average sex ratio ranging between 900 and 950 (Map1). Rajanpur district in the southwest had the lowest sex ratio of 900 females per thousand males which could be the product of under-enumeration of females in this district with a poor resource base. The districts of Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin and Mianwali had a sex ratio ranging between 950 and 1000.

A perusal of accompanying map reveals that Ludhiana district in Punjab was the only district to have low sex ratio of less than 850, while in Haryana Panchkula, Sonapat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Faridabad had low sex ratio of less than 850. Ludhiana's rich and expanding economic base, Panchkula's nearness to capital city of Chandigarh, and location of remaining districts of Haryana (mentioned above) in the National Capital Region (NCR) with close proximity to Delhi may go a long way in explaining their extremely low sex ratio due to male-selective in-migration into these districts with a view to taking advantage of rapidly expanding economic base of Delhi. The districts located in close proximity of National Capital do provide reasonably affordable accommodation even to those who work in Delhi and commuting does not pose any problem due to efficient rail and road connectivity within the National Capital

Region (NCR). At the other end of the scale are the districts of Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr in Punjab and Rewari and Mahendragarh in Haryana which displayed relatively higher sex ratio ranging between 900 and 950 mainly due to male-selective out-migration for employment purpose due to poor local resource base. The remaining part of Punjab and Haryana had an average sex ratio of 850 to 900 females per thousand males.

In sum, (i) deficit of females was common to both the countries of India and Pakistan at national level and more so in the respective parts of the present study region; (ii) Pakistan's Punjab, however, displayed relatively higher sex ratio within the study region despite some incidence of under-enumeration of females in Pakistan; (iii) extremely low sex ratio in India's Punjab and Haryana could largely be attributed to growing incidence of female foeticide due to strong desire to have a son in the family and also a strong desire to limit the family size as a consequence of growing economic awakening; (iv) there were at least four district in Pakistan's Punjab which displayed marginal excess of females over males in their population due to male-selective out-migration for employment purposes; (v) there was no district in Punjab and Haryana of India with females out-numbering males; (vi) instead there were as many as seven districts (one on Punjab and six in Haryana) which had extremely low sex ratio of less than 850 associated largely with male-selective in-migration for employment purposes; and (vii) the genetic factors, if any, associated with comparatively high sex ratio of Muslims and low sex ratio of Sikhs, however, need to be pursued by those in the field of genetics.

**Dr. R.C. Chandna, Professor (Retd.),
Dept of Geography, Panjab University,
Chandigarh (India)**