



# Sex ratio in India

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## Context:

The **sex ratio** in India, which measures the number of males per 100 females, has been a significant demographic concern, reflecting both gender imbalances and social issues.

## Current Sex Ratio in India (2024)

- **Total Population:** India's population stands at approximately **1.44 billion**, with **743.39 million males** and **698.29 million females**.
- **Sex Ratio:** The **sex ratio** is about **106 males per 100 females** (i.e., **1,020 females per 1,000 males**).
- **Regional Disparities:** There are significant variations:
- **Rural Areas:** The sex ratio is higher at **1,037 females per 1,000 males**.
- **Urban Areas:** The sex ratio is lower at **985 females per 1,000 males**.

## Sex Ratio at Birth

- **Recent Trends:** The **sex ratio at birth** has improved, reaching **933 females per 1,000 males** in **2022-23**, an increase from **918** in **2014-15**.
- **Historical Trends:** The **sex ratio at birth** in India has fluctuated over time, with an all-time low of **896 females per 1,000 males** in **2015-17**.

## Sex Ratio Projection for 2036

- **Growth Projection:** India's population is projected to reach **1.52 billion** by 2036.
- **Expected Improvement:** The **sex ratio** is expected to improve gradually from **943 females per 1,000 males** in **2011** to **952 females per 1,000 males** by **2036**.

## State-wise Variations

- **Kerala** stands out with the highest sex ratio, recording **1,084 females per 1,000 males**.
- Other states show varying degrees of imbalance, with some facing critical gender disparities.

## Child Sex Ratio (CSR)

- The **Child Sex Ratio (CSR)**, which measures the number of females per 1,000 males in the **0–6 years** age group, has shown a decline:
- **2001 Census:** CSR was **927 females per 1,000 males**.
- **2011 Census:** CSR declined to **918 females per 1,000 males**.
- The latest surveys suggest the **CSR** has slightly improved, but concerns remain over the gender imbalance in children.

## Key Factors Affecting Sex Ratio

### Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477** / Whatsapp : **09710729833**

1. **Gender Discrimination:** The imbalance is partly driven by socio-cultural preferences for male children, leading to sex-selective practices.
2. **Fertility and Education:** The fertility rate among women is declining, particularly among educated women, while those in rural or less-educated groups still experience higher fertility rates.
3. **Sex-Selective Practices:** The continued practice of **female foeticide** and selective gender-based abortions is a significant contributor to the skewed sex ratio.

### Types of Sex Ratio

1. **Primary Sex Ratio (PSR):** Measures the number of males to females at conception, including stillbirths and miscarriages.
2. **Secondary Sex Ratio (SSR):** Known as the natural sex ratio, this is measured at birth, and generally shows more males than females.
3. **Tertiary Sex Ratio (TSR):** Reflects the ratio in young adults in their 20s, where the number of males exceeds females.
4. **Quaternary Sex Ratio (QSR):** Refers to the adult sex ratio, focusing on those aged 60 and above.

### Key Findings from NFHS-5 (2020-21)

- According to the **NFHS-5**, India's sex ratio in 2023 was **1,020 females per 1,000 males**.
- The **rural sex ratio** is higher at **1,037 females per 1,000 males**, while the **urban sex ratio** is lower at **985 females per 1,000 males**.
- The **sex ratio at birth** improved to **933 females per 1,000 males** in **2022-23**, but still faces challenges in rural areas.

### Historical Trends

- India's sex ratio has fluctuated over time, with a long-term trend of declining gender balance since **1901**.
- **Sex Ratio in 1951: 946 females per 1,000 males.**
- **Sex Ratio in 2011: 943 females per 1,000 males.**
- **Child Sex Ratio in 2011: 918 females per 1,000 males.**

India continues to face challenges regarding gender balance, especially with a skewed sex ratio, which reflects broader social issues such as female foeticide and gender discrimination. However, the country's efforts in education, fertility regulation, and gender equality initiatives are expected to gradually improve the sex ratio by 2036, fostering greater gender parity.