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POPULATION BALANCING THE SEXES

Why there are more men than women

There are more males than females in the world - 20 million more. Compared with the world's total population around 4,800 million - this difference is small. But while the numbers may be relative tiny, a variation in the sex balance can indicate significant differences between the social conditions in different countries - and throw light particularly on the status of women.

The situation varies a great deal from one region of the world to another. In the United States, the Soviet Union and in most of Europe there are considerably more females than males, while in most of the countries of Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia the numbers more or less balance out. Then in many parts of Asia and North Africa males strongly predominate.

Sexual imbalance is first introduced, however, for biological rather than social reasons - right at the point of conception. Twice as many male embryos are actually conceived. But female embryos are much more robust and more successful at surviving the hazards of the womb. So by the time of birth the proportion of boys will still be ahead - but only just. There are on average 105 boys born to every 100 girls.

Girls continue to be more robust after birth. It is usually thought that nature has designed the female to be inherently more resilient because the survival of subsequent generations depends most on

SEVA VANITHA

Several Women's NGO's have arisen recently. A government introduced NGO which is found in virtually every government institution is the Seva Vanitha, some of whose parallels and antecedents are found in the Dharma Vanitha of Indonesia. The organisation consists of essentially spouses of employees of the government institution, the wife of the head of the institution generally being the head of the Seva Vanitha of the institution. Seva Vanitha's activities have been largely in the nature of charity.

Its activities have been the subject of considerable comment by both local and foreign students of the Women's Movement.

However, two important initiatives of the movement have gained universal claim. The first is its efforts to provide creches for working mothers in their institutions. The second is its proposed legal aid scheme for women. If the considerable state patronage at its disposal is extended to these two activities, specially the latter one, Seva Vanitha would have done its job well.

female survival on women's fitness for pregnancy, childbirth and nurturing the newborn infant. But the survival of children is not left entirely to nature: social factors now start to play a part.

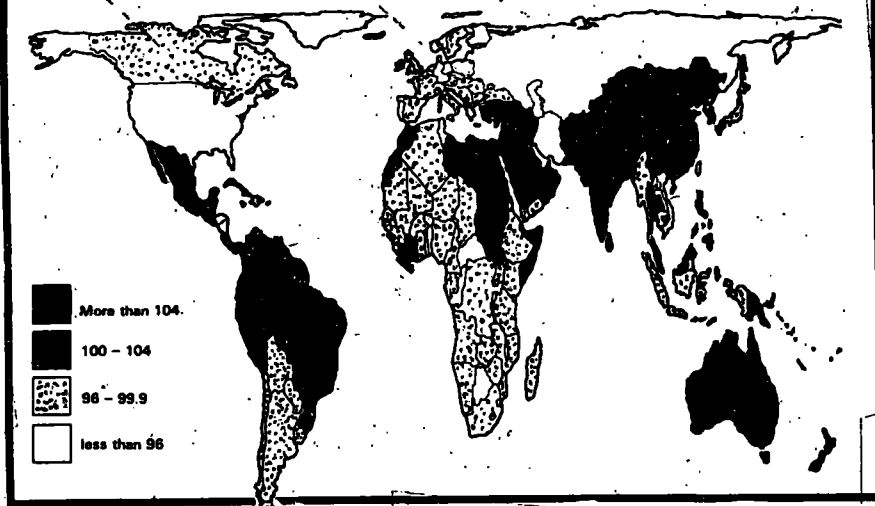
In Western countries there are more women than men but in highly populated areas of Asia and in the Middle East the balance is tipped in favour of men. Here it is the girls, as infants, toddlers and children, who die in greater numbers than boys. This is because sons can be exceptionally highly valued. It is sons who will carry on the family name, for example, and it is they who are expected to earn money for the family often at a very early age. So they may receive preferential treatment.

While all the family may be poor, less attention may be paid to the needs of young girls. It is they who are likely to suffer most from the lack of good and adequate food and from the lack of proper health care. In Bangladesh, for example, there are more girls under five who are malnourished than boys and girls are 21 per cent more likely than boys to die in the first year of life. And according to the World Health Organization, young girls in some countries are less likely to be taken to a health centre than young boys. So there may be more young girls dying even though nature has given them extra help.

Fiona Goble, UNFPA

SEX RATIOS AROUND THE WORLD

The global average is of 100.9 males to every 100 females. But the figures can vary greatly from one region to another.



CONTRACEPTIVES

Contraceptive use has increased rapidly in Sri Lanka; the most popular methods being female sterilisation, followed by oral contraception. The use of Depo Provera (DMPA) the controversial injectable contraceptive (which has yet to be approved for use in the USA) has also increased by over 50% during the period 1979-1983.

Family planning programmes were introduced in Sri Lanka as part of a wider programme of population policy and not with an appreciation of an individual woman's right to reproductive freedom. Most of the family planning programmes focus on women, even though some of these methods of contraception carry health hazards. Their relative advantages and disadvantages of these methods have been discussed at length.

OLD PROVERBS....

A woman's brain cannot perceive anything further than the handle of a spoon.....Sri Lankan proverb

He who listens to the advice of a woman is a fool..... Sri Lankan proverb

An unmarried girl must obey her father, a married woman her husband, and a widow her children.....Japanese proverb

The best way to keep a woman is barefoot in the winter and pregnant in the summer.....American proverb

The thoughts of a woman are afterthoughts....Sri Lankan proverb

A woman's place is in the home.....American proverb

No matter how skilled a woman may be in mathematics, her judgement will always be second rate.....Sri Lankan proverb

Bringing up a daughter is like manuring and watering a plant for someone else's courtyard.....Teluga proverb

Do not tell your wife anything that cannot be said in public ...Ghanaian proverb

There are only two places for a woman, the house and the grave.....Pakistani proverb

Source: Women Using Media for Social Change IWTC-New York-1984 Sept.

.... AND THE NEW

Work is the liberator of women....Algeria (feminist slogan)

Where women are honored the gods are pleased...Arab

She must do twice as well as a man to be thought of as half as good. Fortunately, it's not too hard for a woman to be twice as good as man....Canda (Charlotte Whittler, Mayor of Ottawa, speaking of women in public life)

A man thinks he knows but a woman knows better.....China

A rich widow's tears soon dry.....Denmark

A poor woman has many troubles: weeping children, wet firewood, a leaking kettle, and a cross man.....Finland

Womanhood is awakening... "Jag Rahi Hai" .. India (chant by women demonstrators in Delhi, 1979)

A rich widow weeps with one eye and laughs with the other ...Portugal

She recognizes the reality of the society around her. She dedicates herself to its future. She sets alight the world with her talent. She acts with firmness and resolve. She works for the well-being of society. These truly are the five qualities of beauty that will make a new pancha Kalyani (beautiful woman)....Sri Lanka.

My dream is to ride the tempest, tame the waves, kill the sharks. I want to drive the enemy away to save our people. I will not accept the usual fate of women who bow their heads and become concubines..... Vietnam (Trieu Thi Trinh, 240 C.E.

Source: Sisterhood is Global Edited by Robin Morgan

MATERNITY LEAVE BENEFITS

1. Sweden	180-270 days	24 to 36 weeks	18. Greece	84 days	12 weeks
2. Italy	"	31 weeks (upto)	19. Turkey	"	12 weeks
3. Germany West	"	30 weeks	20. Japan	"	12 weeks
4. Germany East	"	26 weeks	21. India	"	12-16 weeks
5. South Africa	"	26 weeks	22. Nicaragua	"	12 weeks
6. France	"	16-26 weeks	23. Mexico	"	12 weeks
7. Poland	"	16-26 weeks	24. Brazil	"	12 weeks
8. Iran	"	24 weeks	25. Nigeria	"	12 weeks
9. Cuba	"	18-20 weeks	26. Israel	"	6-12 weeks
10. U.K.	"	18 weeks	27. Sri Lanka	"	12 weeks
11. U.S.S.R.	"	16-18 weeks	28. Thailand	30-90 days	4-13 weeks
12. Yugoslavia	105 days	15 weeks	29. China	56-70 days	8-9½ weeks
13. Egypt	100 days	14 weeks	30. Kenya	"	6 weeks
14. Canada	"	15 weeks	31. Philippjnes	45 days	6½ weeks
15. Algeria	"	14 weeks	32. Tunisia	"	4 weeks
16. Argentina	90 days	13 weeks	33. United States	Provided by some States	
17. Ireland	"	12 weeks			

Source: 1984 Britannica Book of the Year.