

# **Gendercide Current Legacy of Demography Control: China and India**

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## **Abstract**

According to middle XX century prediction the world was heading for a Malthusian catastrophe., at least it was a grave issue for than named “developing world”. Too many people or “overpopulation” it was commonly used terminology these days. There were different ways to cope with the problem. From “soft” but money supported propaganda in India to brutal “one child policy” in China. China appeared to be more successful but also India’s birth rate has contracted astonishingly quickly. Nobody did expect the side effects that recently emerged as a serious threat for demography balance, causing social, economic and political concern. To name but two there were aging population and growing imbalance between male and female inhabitants. The last one acquired special terminology and is discussed in various academic, NGO and political circles. General term employed is GENDERCIDE and demonstrates itself as an inhuman termination of female fetuses or, in extreme way, through murdering newly born female infants. As a result, we observe imbalance between amount of girls and boys in countries like China and India. The article presents recent findings about the scope and sometimes brutal outcome of the phenomenon.

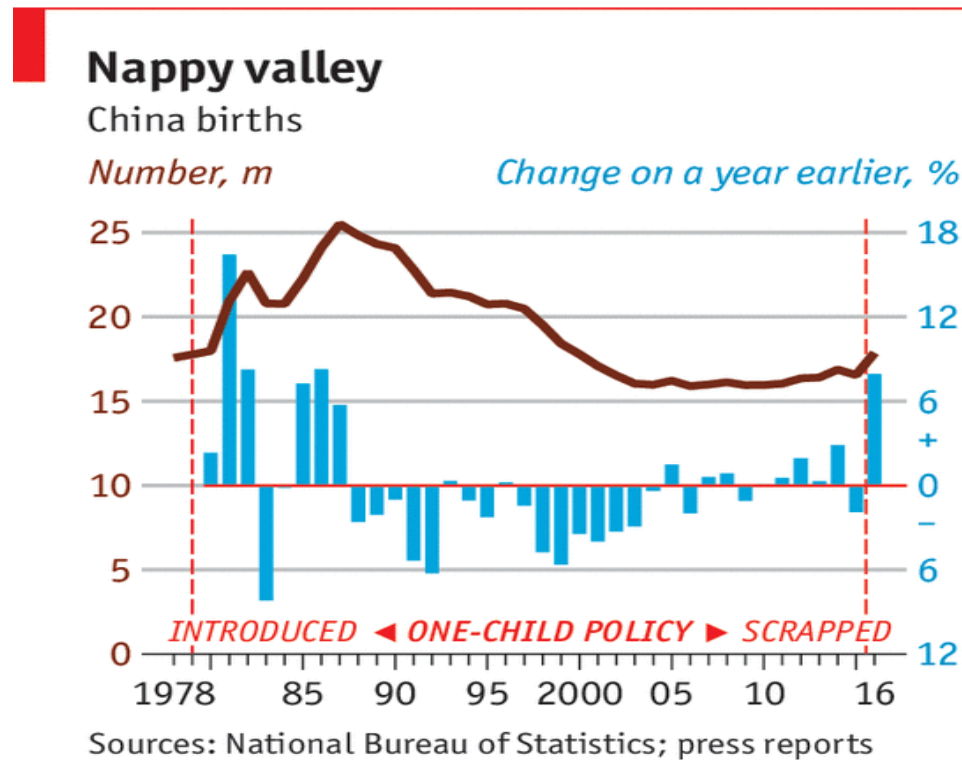
**Key words:** demography planning, overpopulation, aging population, fertility rate, birth control, gendercide, patrilocal tradition

## **DEALING WITH OVERPOPULATION**

China is 4th and India is 7th largest country in terms of area. But according to data available population growth (2013) of India is 1.2% while population growth of China is 0.5%. Fertility rate (2012) of India is 2.5 and of China is 1.7. Population density of India is 367 persons per square km compare to 142 of China. So, India is 2.58 times denser than China. In spite of differences both countries raised the problem and dealt with it seriously.

India started its demographic manipulation policy shortly after it obtained its independence in 1949. Even recently still the “overpopulation” issue is raised when poverty reduction or unemployment problems are discussed. But it was never in autocratic way imposed on citizens

In China, the authorities solved the problem in a ruthless way. With very few exceptions families were supposed to have only one child. The law introduced in late 1970s was supported by severe punishment such as losing significant job, not being able to enroll a child to the school and lost medical and other social benefits. As a result, the negative demographic growth was shown in the graph below.



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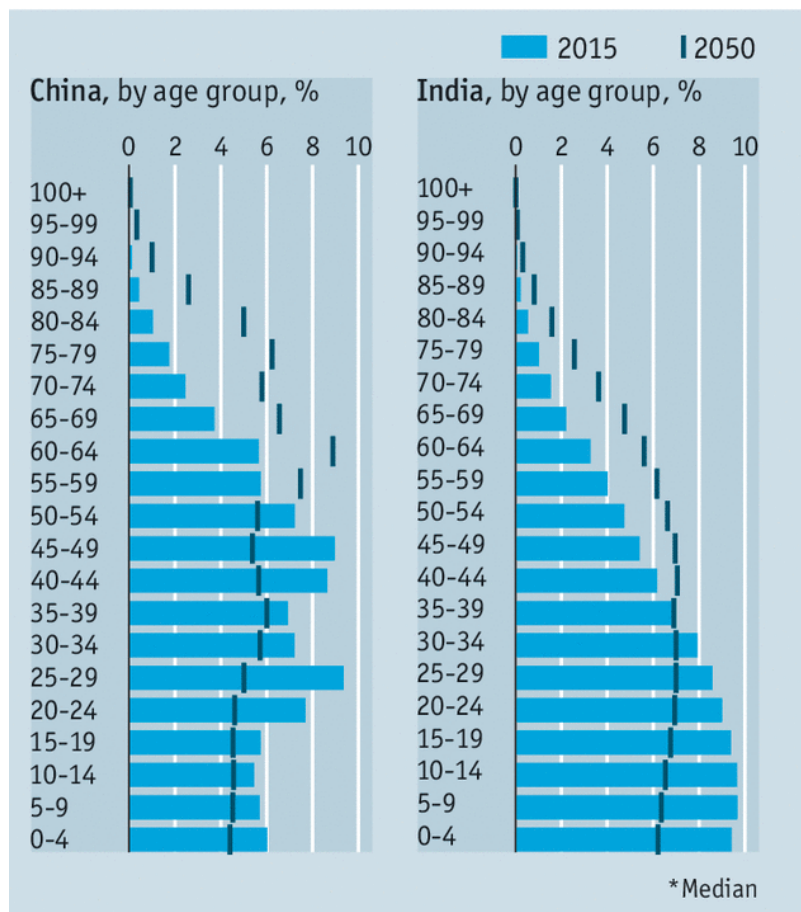
China's government changed its one-child policy in 2015, allowing all couples to have a second child, as fertility rate was below reasonable threshold.<sup>1</sup> Western demographers' still call the situation "demographic crisis" and feared that the relaxation was too little and too late. But the government claimed, the new approach would start to reverse the country's dramatic ageing. On January 22nd the National Health and Family Planning Commission revealed data that seemed to justify optimism: it said 18.5m babies had been born in Chinese hospitals in 2016. This was the highest number since 2000—an 11.5% increase over 2015. Of the new babies, 45% were second children, up from around 30% before 2013, suggesting the policy change had made a difference. At the moment, one in seven of the population is over 60. By 2050, the share will rise to more than one-third. China will need more than a change in the one-child policy to reverse the trend.

<sup>1</sup>The fertility rate is the number of children a woman can expect to have during her lifetime. A rate of 2.1 implies stability: the population is replacing itself. Demographers refer to rates of 1.4 or less as "ultra low".

In Asia’s three largest countries (China, India and Indonesia) family is now smaller than the ideal family in Britain or America. As a result the demographic pyramid is slowly reversing ( see graph below) and in about 2050 the cohort of population over 60 years old would achieve substantial share in China and will be significantly growing in India .

## POPULATION FORECAST

### CHINA - INDIA

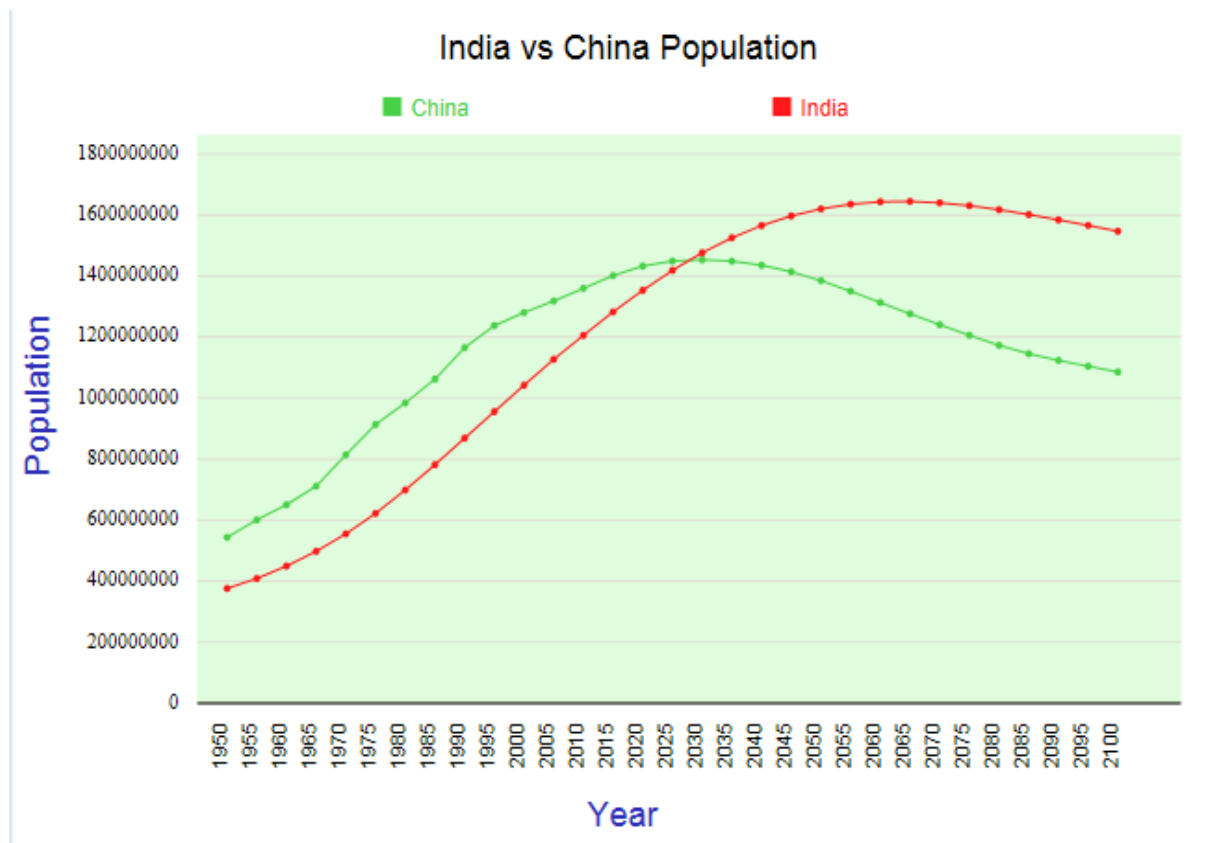


Source: The Economist; Jan.25,2017

CHINA is the most populous country in the world, but is also one of the fastest-ageing. So it was significant when the National Health and Family Planning Commission announced on January 22nd 2017 that the country’s birth rate shot up in 2016. Almost 18.5m babies were born last year, an annual jump of 11.5%.

The National Bureau of Statistics also announced its own figures around the same time: it said the number of births had risen 8% to almost 18m, the highest number since 2000, and the biggest annual increase in three decades. One in ten Chinese is now 65 or older. By 2050, pensioners will number around 370m and account for more than one-quarter of the population. This creates a huge financial burden on the cohort of workers who must support them.

According to population growth forecast India would take over China around 2020



The consequence of slowing population growth is, among others, decreasing number of children in family. When it comes to “one child policy” apparent result in countries as China and India is to have a boy-child.

### Missing women

The idea of “missing women” was first suggested by Amartya Sen,<sup>2</sup> one of the first scholars to study imbalanced sex ratios and their causes globally, in 1990. In order to illustrate the gravity of the situation, he calculated the number of women that were not alive because of sex-selective abortion or discriminatory practices. He found that there were 11 percent fewer women than there “should” have been, if China had the natural sex ratio. This figure, when combined with statistics from around the world, led to a finding of over 100 million missing

<sup>2</sup>Sen, Amartya. 2015. *The Country of First Boys: And Other Essays*. OUP India.

women. In other words, by the early 1990s, the number of missing women was “larger than the combined casualties of all famines in the twentieth century”.

This has led to particular concern due to a critical shortage of wives. In some rural areas, there is already a shortage of women, which is tied to migration into urban areas. Several decades have led to cross-cultural marriage between local men and foreign women from countries such as mainland China, Vietnam and the Philippines. However, sex-selective abortion is not the only cause of this phenomenon; it is also related to migration and declining fertility.

Sex ratios go out of whack when three things occur at once.

First, a large proportion of couples must fervently desire boys. That happens mostly in “patrilocal” societies, where a woman moves out of her parents’ home upon marriage and into her husband’s home, to dote on his parents and harvest his family’s crops.

Second, birth rates must be low. A couple who intend to have five or six children (as Nigerians do today, for example) will almost certainly get a boy just by the law of averages, whereas a couple who would like one or two children are more likely to try to tip the odds.

Third, there must be an accessible, tolerated way of getting rid of superfluous girls. Today, that is usually abortion.

In China, north India and other parts of Asia, ever more girls were being destroyed by their parents. Many were detected *in utero* by ultrasound scans and aborted; others died young as a result of neglect; some were murdered.

Gendercide happens where families are small and the desire for sons is overwhelming. In places where women are expected to move out of their parents’ homes upon marriage and into their husbands’ households, raising a girl can seem like an act of pure charity. So many parents have avoided it that, by one careful estimate, at least 130m girls and women are missing worldwide

### Widening of the gender social gap

In poor areas, large families tend to have more problems with resource allocation such as education, health care and important, a dowry. Than daughters often receive fewer resources than sons, thus the is relationship between family size and childhood “quality.” Therefore, if families with daughters continue to be predominantly large, it is likely that the social gap between genders will widen due to traditional cultural discrimination

The growing imbalance of sex ratios in numerous countries have created a gender gap – shortage of girls – in the 0–19 age group.

### What is Gendercide

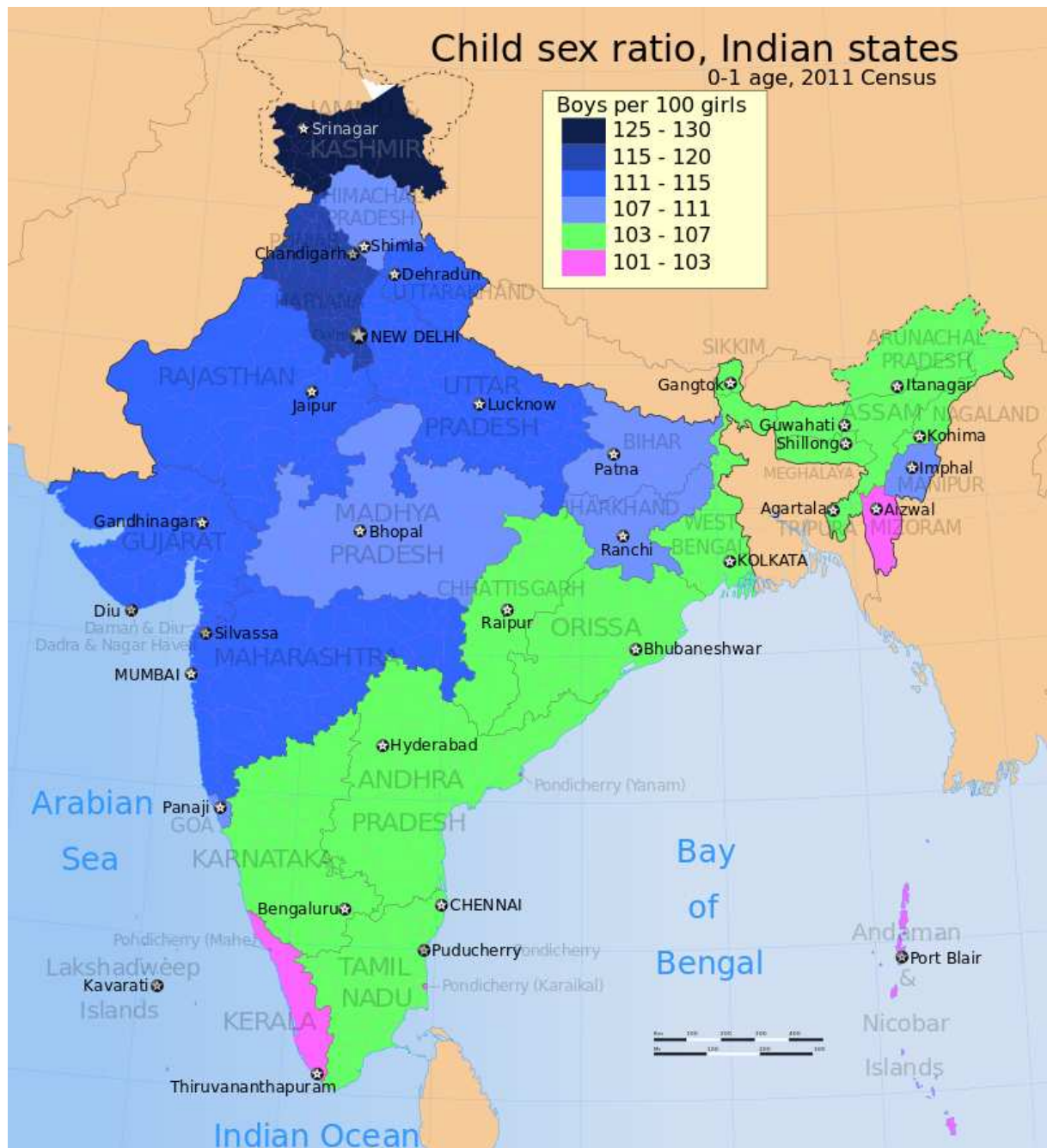
- Gendercide is to kill a certain member of a specific sex and in this case it is specifically girls. Gendercide can be performed many ways such as abortion, neglect, abuse, and ultimately death.

- In India, China and many other parts of the world today, girls are killed, aborted and abandoned simply because they are girls.
- Girls who survive infancy are often subject to neglect, and many grow up to face extreme violence and even death at the hands of their own husbands or other family members.
- 100-125 million females are missing globally according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The United Nations estimates as many as 200 million girls are missing in the world today because of this so-called “gendercide”.

- The number of women missing in a country can be measured in two ways – as either absolute numbers or as a percentage of the female population. In absolute terms, the world’s two most populous countries have the greatest number of missing women – 62 million missing in China and 43 million missing in India.<sup>15</sup>
- When we look at percentages, it is evident that China, with 9.5 percent of its women missing, eliminates a higher percentage of its females than any other country in the world. India follows next, with 7.4 percent missing.
- In a few countries the imbalance is unnaturally high. At the last census, in 2011, India had 109 boys aged 0-6 for every 100 girls; in Punjab, a wealthy northern state, the ratio was 118 to 100. China had 119 boys aged 0-4 for every 100 girls in 2010.

The sex ratio among China’s children, which had risen steadily for decades, did not budge between 2000 and 2010. In India, the excess of boys over girls worsened slightly between 2001 and 2011. But more girls were counted in the states where sex selection had been most common, such as Haryana and Punjab.(see picture below)



Why are girls so unwanted?

In these societies, where there is little or no social security, parents look to their sons to support them in old age. Daughters generally leave their parents to live with their husbands' families. The result of this "patrilocal" tradition is that daughters do not care for their own parents, but rather their husbands' parents. China's "one child only" policy has intensified the desire for that one child to be a son.

In addition, the cost of marrying a daughter can be prohibitive. In India, for example, the cost of a dowry and a wedding can add up to several years of family income. Viewed this way, the birth of a daughter is an economic catastrophe

### Situation in India for example

- An estimated 50 million females have gone missing in India.
- Dowry's are paid every year after a girl is wed and if it is not paid the females are often beaten, tortured, or even burned to death.
- Sex selection abortions are more common in the rich than the poor.
- In India there is a ratio of 914 girls for every 1,000 boys.
- Every 12 seconds a baby girl is being aborted in India
- According to a study in the March, 2011 Canadian Medical Association Journal, India will see a 10% to 20% excess of young men in the next 20 years, creating a societal imbalance that will also greatly emotionally impact the lives of males.
- with the rich, only 770 girls are being born to every 1000 boys, due to them being able to afford a sonogram machine.
- Sex selection tests and abortion on the basis of gender have been banned for 15 years in India
- daughters in India create an exponential loss, where as boys help bring in money.
- Many people in India think it is only a minor sin or no sin at all to abort a baby girl.

### **What happens when men greatly outnumber women?**

- For Women: Sex trafficking in Asia, girls are kidnapped, lured or sold into prostitution, with local governments making little effort to stop it. Often, local police protect the sex traders and frequent the brothels. In addition, an unsavory trade in “brides” sells women to buyers in an arrangement indistinguishable from slavery. In certain cases, a poor family may buy a girl to serve as “bride” to all the men in the household.
- For Brides: One might think that when men compete for a limited number of women, women’s power and prestige increases. However, the opposite is true. Because women are scarce, bachelors turn to ever younger girls as brides. Young girls are married off to much older men, sometimes even before the girls reach puberty. Once married, these girls have no time for education or paid work. Their older husbands and in-laws, eager for heirs, press them into childbearing as soon as possible. These girls give birth before their bodies are ready, resulting in high rates of maternal death and injury.
- For Bachelors: A surplus population of young men, mainly lower class, develops. These involuntary bachelors never marry, have families, or become part of society. The Chinese call them “bare branches” or “floaters.” In China, these men suffer from higher rates of depression, loneliness, alcoholism, and suicide. While the life expectancy of a married Chinese man today is 75 years, for an unmarried man it is just 68 years.



- For Society: Historically in China and India, when famine struck regions with surplus males, the young men organized and rebelled, throwing off their overlords and taking their lands.
- There is a hypothesis that when the proportion of males throughout the world is greater, there is likely to be more violence and war.
- In China, such uprisings led to the establishment and overthrow of the Ming dynasty

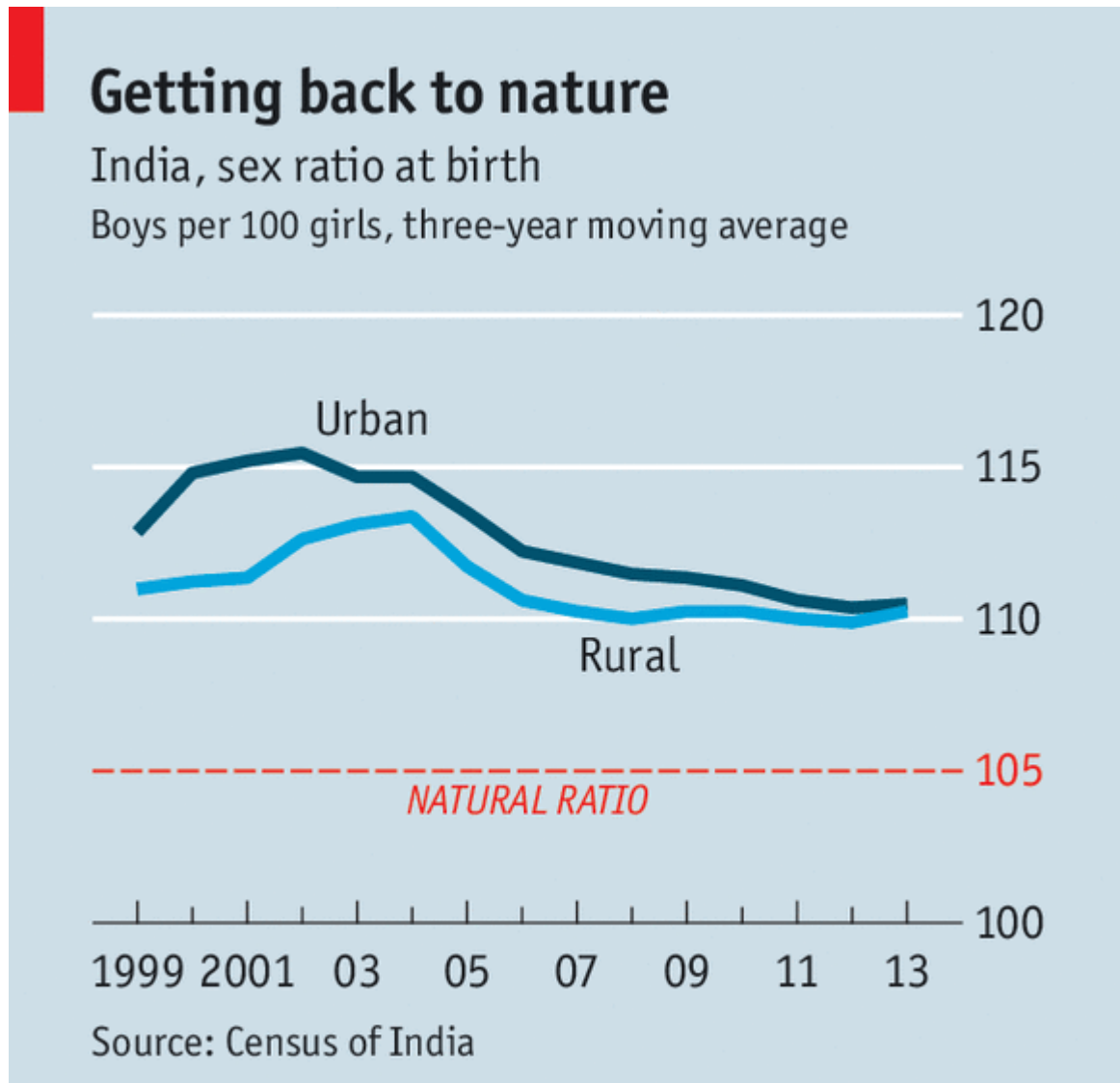
Gendercide will leave an awful legacy. Today's problem is a shortage of girls; tomorrow's will be an excess of young men.

As cohort after cohort of young Asians reach marriageable age, all of them containing too few women, a huge number of men will struggle to find partners. Some will import foreign brides, thereby unbalancing the sex ratio in other, poorer countries. A great many will remain single. Some women will benefit from being more in demand. But the consequences are bad for societies as a whole, because young, single, sex-starved men are dangerous. Stable relationships calm them down. Some studies suggest that more unattached men mean more crime, more rape and more chance of political violence. The worst-affected districts will be poor, rural ones, because eligible women will leave them to find husbands in the cities. Parts of Asia could come to resemble America's Wild West. (Many polygamous societies already do: think of Sudan or northern Nigeria, where rich men marry several women and leave poor men with none.)

Fortunately, girl-saving propaganda and economic growth have started to reverse the terrible trend. Now that women are more likely than before to earn good money, parents see girls as more valuable. And the craving for boys has diminished as parents realize that they will be hard to marry off (since there are too few brides to go around). So the imbalance between girls and boys at birth is diminishing in several countries, including China and India. In South Korea, where a highly unnatural 115 boys were being born for every 100 girls two decades ago, there is no longer any evidence of sex selection—and some that parents prefer girls. Annual data on births, which are less authoritative than census figures on children but more up-to-date, suggest the tide has turned. India's sex ratio at birth has become more normal over the past decade, especially in cities. In China—where, admittedly, official figures of all kinds are fishy—the sex ratio at birth has fallen from a peak of 121 boys per 100 girls in 2004 to 114 in 2015.

Urbanization is a specific engine for change. A city-dwelling couple might be teased by neighbors for having only girls, but that is nothing compared with the pressure imposed on villagers by clan patriarchs and matriarchs. And young city-dwellers tend to live apart from their parents, which removes one reason for preferring sons. Now that children tend to support

their parents by sending money, daughters are just as good. Urbanites have access to the latest medical technology, but they seem less keen on using it.



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As urban women grow more independent and more valuable to their parents, rural men are struggling. Years of skewed sex ratios mean there are already too many would-be grooms for every village bride. Worse, the women they might marry often head for cities, where they can find better husbands.

Rural Chinese men increasingly look like burdens on their parents. Research shows that parents of sons in districts with high sex imbalances tend to save large amounts of money, fearing that they will have to spend on houses, consumer goods and weddings if they are to attract a local girl. This effect is so strong, that it may explain about half the increase in China's household savings rate between 1990 and 2007.

## **Laws and Initiatives Against Sex Selective Abortion**

Foreseeing potential social catastrophe, governments have tried to change people's attitudes in away as prizing girls by putting up posters or even offering them money. They might have changed a few minds. But officials have often confused their message. Under China's one-child policy, for example, couples who gave birth to a girl were often allowed to have a second child, implying that the state felt sorry for those who had failed to produce a boy. But where governments have been confused and half-hearted about the worth of girls, popular culture has been loud and insistent

Actually, there are no easy answers. Historians note that rulers used to deal with surpluses of young men by sending them off to war, but such a cure would obviously be worse than the disease. Some say governments should tolerate a larger sex industry. Prostitution is often lawless and exploitative, but it would be less so if governments legalized and regulated it. One Chinese academic has suggested allowing polyandry (ie, letting women take more than one husband). In the most unbalanced areas something like this may happen, regardless of the law.

## **China**

China's government has increasingly recognized its role in a revert of the imbalanced sex ratio. As a result, since 2005, it has sponsored a "boys and girls are equal" campaign. For example, in 2000, the Chinese government began the "Care for Girls" Initiative. Furthermore, several levels of government have been modified to protect the "political, economic, cultural, and social" rights of women. Finally, the Chinese government has enacted policies and interventions to help reduce the sex ratio at birth. In 2005, sex-selective abortion was made illegal in China. This came in response to the ever-increasing imbalance and a desire to try to detract from it and reach a more normal ratio. The sex ratio among firstborn children in urban areas from 2000 to 2005 didn't change at all, so there is hope that this movement is taking hold across the nation.

UNICEF and UNFPA have partnered with the Chinese government and grassroots-level women's groups such as All China Women's Federation to promote gender equality in policy and practice, as well engage various social campaigns to help lower birth sex ratio and to reduce excess female child mortality rates.

## **India**

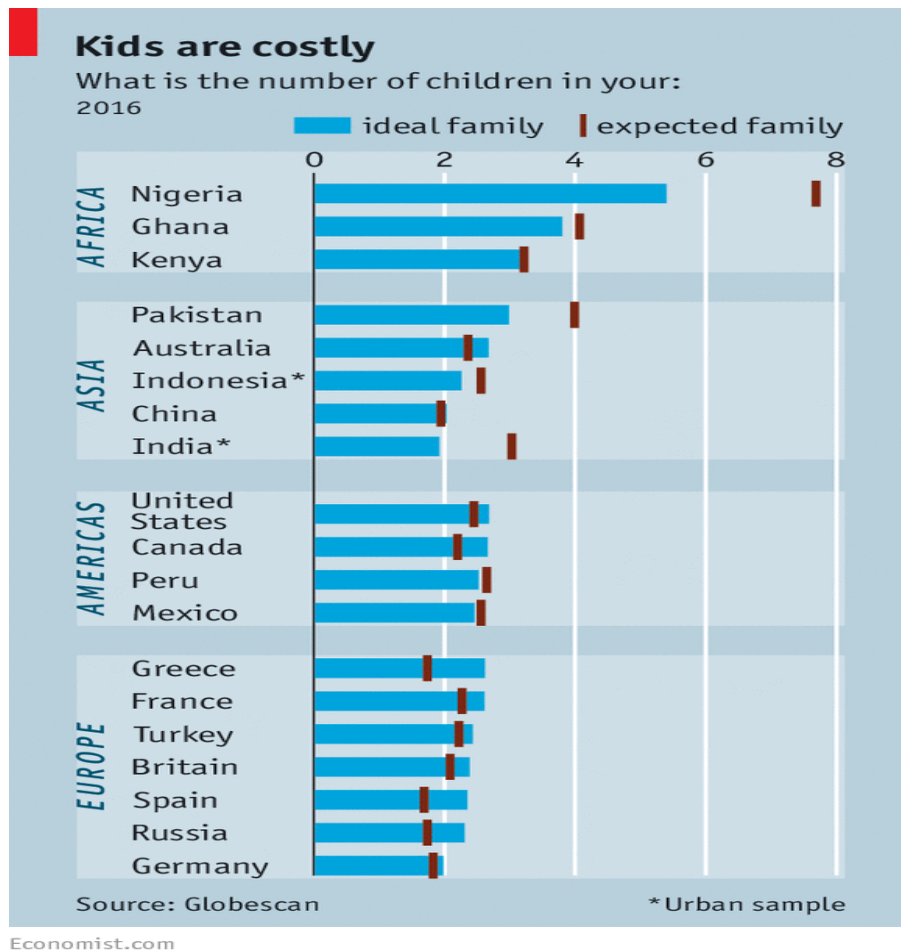
In India, Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT Act) was highly publicized by NGOs and the government. Many of the ads used depicted abortion as violent, creating fear of abortion itself within the population. The ads focused on the religious and moral shame associated with abortion. This media campaign was not effective because some perceived this as an attack on sensitive matters that did not open a dialogue about the issue. This emphasis on

morality, increased fear and shame associated with all abortions, leading to an increase in unsafe abortions in India

The government of India, report, has begun better education of all partners interested in PCPNDT laws. In its communication campaigns, it is clearing up public misconceptions by emphasizing that sex determination is illegal, but abortion is legal for certain medical conditions in India. The government is also supporting implementation of programs and initiatives that seek to reduce gender discrimination, including media campaign to address the underlying social causes of sex selection.

Other recent policy initiatives adopted by numerous states of India, attempt to address the assumed economic disadvantage of girls by offering support to girls and their parents. These policies provide conditional cash transfer and scholarships only available to girls, where payments to a girl and her parents are linked to each stage of her life, such as when she is born, completion of her childhood immunization, her joining school at grade 1, her completing school grades 6, 9 and 12, her marriage past age. Some states are offering higher pension benefits to parents who raise one or two girls. Different states of India have been experimenting with various innovations in their girl-driven welfare policies. For example, the state of Delhi adopted a pro-girl policy initiative (locally called *Laadli scheme*), which initial data suggests may be lowering the birth sex ratio in the state.

Survey by The Economist shows that reducing population policy provide a change in social attitudes and shows that model of “ideal family” appears in accordance with “expected family” size only in China. The bigger family the less problem with gender imbalance. Is it really good solution when it comes to Africa? (see graph below)



Kids are costly, girls are even more costly, at least in some countries. The reason for intensifying sex-selection abortion in China and India can be seen through history and cultural background. Generally, before the information era, male babies were preferred because they provided manual labor and continuation of the family lineage. Labor is still important in developing nations as China and India, but when it comes to family lineage, it is of great importance. The most populated states of the world try to reverse the side effect of their demographic policies but the process would take time and the results of previous actions are still frightening.

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