

Chapter 5

INTER-TEMPORAL PATTERN OF GENDER BIAS IN INFANT MORTALITY IN INDIA: EVIDENCE FROM NFHS AND SRS DATA

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ABSTRACT

Health being one of the most basic capabilities, the removal of gender bias in child health can go a long way in achieving gender parity in many other dimensions of human development. The present study examines the inter-temporal pattern of gender bias in infant mortality for sixteen major states in India. It calculates state-wise infant mortality rate (IMR) for both the sexes from three rounds of unit level National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data. These rates are compared with the published data based on Sample Registration System (SRS). Children under age one year are the unit of the analysis. The study found that any consistently robust state-wise pattern of gender bias against girls in infant mortality is not present among all the sixteen major Indian states over the three rounds of NFHS and SRS. However, there is a strong inter-temporal pattern exists in girl children's mortality status. By the Rawlsian theory of justice, to reduce gender bias in infant mortality, the policy makers should try to raise health achievement of girl children more attentively in the states with high IMR for girls.

Keywords: Gender bias, infant mortality rate, National Family Health Survey, Sample Registration System, India.

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