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Understanding the Registered Indian Gender Ratio in Canada: Missing Indigenous Men?

Severe local gender imbalances have long been associated with social challenges. Typically, gender imbalances have been identified either in the developing world or after periods of war. We believe we are the first to examine the existence of significant gender imbalances in the Registered Indian Community in Canada. Specifically, we document using Canadian Census microdata that the male-female gender ratio is significantly skewed in favor of women relative to the general population in the country as a whole. These "missing men" appear to be largely off-reserve and the skew in the gender ratio begins around the age of 20-25 and becomes larger at older age groups. Using data from the Indian Registrar we decompose the fraction of "missing men" into three sources 1) the amount attributable to institutionalization and other factors that result in undercounting in the Census, 2) premature mortality, and 3) sex selective registration. Finally, we document a significant skew in the gender ratio on-reserve in favor of men and suggest sex-selective migration off-reserve as a potential explanation.