

FUTURE TRENDS IN SEX-DIFFERENTIAL OF EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH IN INDIA*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In most of the Western countries it has been observed that the expectation of life at birth for females is higher than for males, and the difference is increasing over time. This phenomenon has also been observed in some of the 'ECAFE' countries, viz., Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia etc. (Table 1.1). Besides the countries mentioned above, Latin American countries are also having a similar trend of the expectation of life at birth (Table 1.2). But in the case of India, Pakistan and Ceylon this phenomenon is not true (Table 1.3). For India, it has been observed that since 1931, the expectation of life at birth for males has been higher than that for females. According to the report on the population projections worked out under the guidance of the Expert Committee¹ set up by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of the Registrar General of India, for more than two decades, the expectation of life at birth for males will remain higher than that for females by a constant difference of 1.3 years. The all-India projections of population by sex have been worked out for the years 1951 through 1986.

The projections made by the Expert Committee are based upon the assumptions that mortality has declined considerably in the recent years and is still declining. The decline in mortality is due to

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¹ Government of India, "Report on the Population Projections worked out under the guidance of the Expert Committee set up by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of the Registrar General, India", Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, India, New Delhi, July 17, 1968, pp. 6-10, 27-29.