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Eunuch Statistics in India

According to surveys carried out by Salvation Of Oppressed Eunuchs (SOOE), the number of eunuchs in India is around 19 lakhs, as of March 1, 2011.¹



Standing up to be counted

¹ The figures are approximate, since eunuchs live in a secretive, shadowy world that they have created for themselves, away from the abuse and persecution of society in general. Here, the term 'eunuch' refers to only those people who wish to be treated as neither male nor female and embrace a lifestyle that is in conformity with their sexual divergence. This group does not include those intersex people who pretend to lead their lives as either males or females and embrace a normal lifestyle.

The process of estimation was not an easy task. Whenever the eunuchs were approached, in order to make an assessment of their numbers etc, the surveyors were usually turned away by them with the remark that they (eunuchs) were satisfied with their lot in life and did not wish interference by anyone else.

Arriving at these figures is achieved by:

1. Sampling their population in Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Panipat, Pune, Varanasi, Ajmer, Koovagam, Cochin and Belgaum.
2. After normalising the figures with *nayaks*, *gurus* and leaders of various groups, the numbers are extrapolated.
3. Based upon the strength present during festivals, social gatherings and other activities in each state and the sample representation from each region and group, estimates are made.

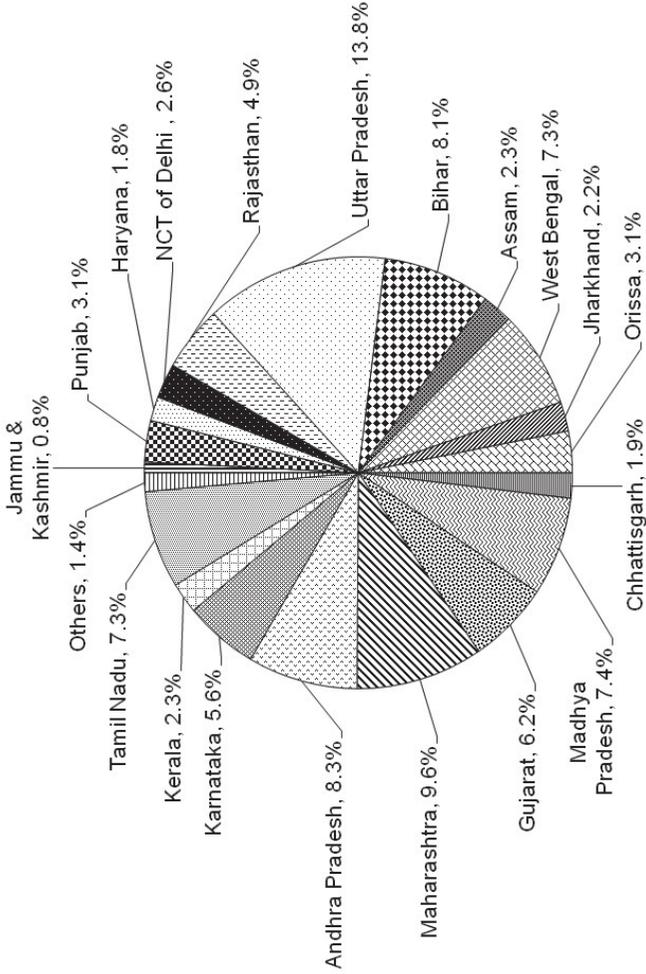
The charts (page 50-51) show the state wise population of India, as well as the state wise breakup of the total eunuch population, estimated at 19 lakhs.

The percentage of eunuchs compared to that of the normal population in any state or area depends upon the following factors:

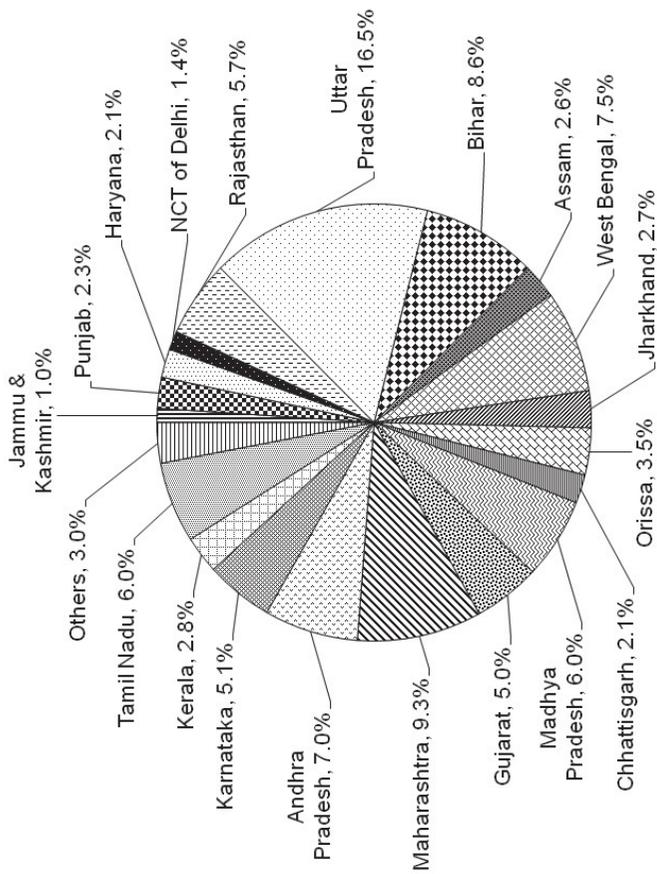
1. Birth ratio

The ratio of eunuch children to normally gendered ones is higher in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Eunuchs believe that the inhabitants of these regions have indulged in sinful activities in the past and hence, these lands

State Wise Eunuch Population



State Wise Total Population



have been cursed with the birth of a much higher ratio of eunuchs.

2. Social acceptance and tolerance

Acceptance of eunuchs by the general populace is much lower in societies with feudal structures, like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. Even female children are routinely killed in these parts. Obviously, eunuch children do not have much hope of survival in these places.

3. Earning potential

Eunuchs do not have family ties, so they prefer to migrate to places where they get better livelihood. *Gurus* also trade them off to places where earnings are higher. Therefore, they throng to Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai and other big cities.

4. Transitory population

In places like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, they are in demand during festivals etc for their blessings, so they also migrate to these places, especially at such times of high demand.

The variance between the official estimate for the number of eunuchs in India (to be announced on 31 March 2012), likely to be around 5 lakhs and SOOE's estimate is due to the following reasons, as mentioned by many *gurus* and enumerators:

- 1) The parents of most eunuch children prefer to identify them as male, due to the stigma attached, until the children move in with eunuchs later on.
- 2) Many eunuchs come to know the truth about their gender only around puberty; hence those who are still young are listed in male/female category.

- 3) The 'other' category has been introduced for the first time for census in India. When enumerators come across people of nebulous gender, they often exclude them from the list and move on to the next person/household or list them as male/female.²
- 4) The census is undertaken primarily with the aim of classifying the population, based on twenty nine parameters, whereas SOOE has focussed solely on eunuchs. SOOE urges that a fresh survey in areas with eunuch concentrations may be undertaken in coordination with the authorities, so that the magnitude of the problem may be realised.

As the book goes to press, the provisional population estimates of the 2011 census of India (http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/prov_results_paper1_india.html) are as given below:

India/State/ Union Territory#	Total Population			Sex ratio (female)
	Persons	Males	Females	
2	3	4	5	6
INDIA	1,210,193,422	623,724,248	586,469,174	940

Understandably, eunuchs have been included in either category at this stage. If we presume that our extrapolated figure of 19 lakhs for eunuchs is primarily included in the male category and deducted accordingly, then the sex ratio goes up from 940 to 946. However, this is the most extreme interpretation and is not representative.

² In order to prove the veracity of the figures mentioned in this book, an actual count of the gender-wise population in any sample area, in coordination with SOOE and government authorities should suffice.