



Original Research Article

## **Factors Influencing Son Preference and Daughter Non Preference among Married Women in Urban and Rural Areas of Ahmedabad District: A Cross-Sectional Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The uneven distribution of any one of the sexes can disturb the basic equilibrium within the society. In fact the present scenario is found to have contribution of various factors like social, economic, education and religious nature of people which also goes with technology innovation. So the present study was done to find socio-demographic factors associated with sex preference and reasons for the preferences.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was carried out in UHTC Girdharnagar and Sanathal PHC areas of Ahmedabad district which were selected randomly. 415 women were interviewed with assumption that 50% prefer son. A pre-designed and pre-tested proforma was used to collect data by house to house visits.

**Results:** Out of 415 respondents, 204 were from Urban area and 211 from Rural area. The present study shows that in urban area 91.18% women prefer son while in rural area 84.36% women gave son preference.

**Conclusion:** Majority of women preferred son in Urban and Rural areas.

**Key Words:** Son Preference, daughter Non-preference, Married Women

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sex ratio is an important social indicator measuring extent of prevailing equity between males and females in society. Changes in sex ratio reflect underlying socioeconomic, cultural patterns of a society. <sup>[1]</sup> The uneven distribution of any one of the sexes can disturb the basic equilibrium within the society. The Indian society is highly masculine and continues to remain like that with minor changes in the

percent of females. <sup>[2]</sup> According to UNICEF, 12 million girls are born in India every year. Out of which 25 percent do not survive the 5th year. <sup>[3]</sup> The child sex ratio captures a part of this discrimination against females. The net deficit of females was 9.9 million in 1951, which has now widened to 37 million in 2011. The sex ratio of India gets influenced by many factors. In fact the present scenario is found to have contribution of various factors like social,

economic, education and religious nature of people which also goes with technology innovation. [4]

Sons are preferred because

1. They have a higher wage-earning capacity, especially in agrarian economies,
2. They continue the family line,
3. They are generally recipients of inheritance. [5]

Girls are often considered an economic burden because of

1. The dowry system;
2. After marriage they typically become members of the husband's family,
3. Ceasing to have responsibility for their parents in illness and old age. [6]

Therefore, the current study was carried out to find out socio-demographic factors associated with sex preference and reasons for the preferences.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study design:** Cross sectional study

**Study period:** March, 2013 to April, 2014

**Study area:** In urban area, study was conducted in field practice area of Girdharnagar UHTC which was randomly selected. Rural area of Ahmedabad has ten blocks. Out of which Sanand block selected randomly. Study was conducted in Sanathal PHC area which was randomly selected. Simple random sampling method was used for random selection.

**Sample size:** Sample size is calculated with assumption that 50 % women will prefer son and 50% to daughter. So Sample size is calculated using the formula,

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{4PQ}{L^2}$$

Where L is allowable error 10%, So estimated sample size is 400.

**Study method:** A pre-designed and pre-tested proforma was used to collect baseline data by house to house visits. Informed consent was taken from each woman before the initiation of survey. Data was compiled & Analysis was done in Microsoft excel 2007 and Epi info version 7.

## RESULTS

**Table-1: Association between Socio-Economic status and Son Preference.**

Characteristics	Son preference		$\chi^2$ value	P value
	Yes (N=364)	No (N=51)		
<b>Residence</b>				
Urban (N=204)	186(91.18%)	18(8.82%)	4.47	<0.05
Rural (N=211)	178(84.36%)	33(15.64%)		
<b>Socio economic class</b>				
Class I and II (N=78)	72 (92.3%)	6 (7.7%)	1.88	>0.05
Class III, IV, V(N=337)	292(86.65%)	45 (13.35%)		
<b>Religion</b>				
Hindu(N=394)	343(87.05%)	51 (12.94%)	-	-
Jain(N=3)	3(100%)	0(0%)		
Muslim(n=18)	18(100%)	0(0%)		
<b>Caste</b>				
OPEN (N=138)	124(89.85%)	14(10.15%)	13.24	<0.01
OBC (N=111)	106(95.5%)	5 (4.5%)		
SC (N=21)	18 (85.71%)	3 (14.29%)		
ST(N=145)	116(80%)	29 (20%)		
<b>Education</b>				
Illiterate (N=126)	107(84.92%)	19(15.08%)	-	-
Primary (N=200)	179(89.5%)	21 (10.5%)		
Secondary (N=44)	33(75%)	11(25%)		
Higher secondary (N=23)	23(100%)	0(0%)		
Graduate (N=22)	22(100%)	0(0%)		

Out of 415 respondents, 204 women were from Urban area and 211 women from Rural area. In the present study it shows that in urban area 91.18% women were prefer son while in rural area 84.36% women gave son preference. It was observed that 92.3% of women of class I and II gave son preference while in class III, IV, V had also son preference in 86.65%. According to religion, most of the women prefer son. 95.5% of the women of OBC category prefer son and the difference was significant statistically. It was observed that highly educated (100%) women prefer son more than low educated or illiterate (approx. 85%) women. (Table 1)

**Table-2: Distribution of Women by Reasons for Son preference**

Characteristics	Urban(N=186) (100%)*	Rural(N=178) (100%)*	Z test
Old age security`	123 (66.13%)	163(91.57%)	6.28
Income purpose	126(67.74%)	159(89.33%)	5.35
Keeping family line	135(72.58%)	73(41.01%)	6.40
Demand of in laws	27(14.52%)	20(11.24%)	0.93
Social status	21(11.29%)	10(5.61%)	1.96
To perform last rite	81(43.55%)	28(15.73%)	6.11

\*Due to multiple responses , total may exceed 100 percent

In the study it was found that Old age security (91.57%) and income purpose (89.33%) were main reason for son preference in rural area while in urban area keeping family line (72.58%) was the main reason for preference for son. (Table 2)

**Table-3: Distribution of Women by Reasons for Daughter Non-Preference**

Characteristics	Urban(N=186) (100%)*	Rural(N=178) (100%)*	Z test
Dowry problems	27(14.52%)	153(85.95%)	19.47
Marriage related problems	90(48.39%)	13(7.3%)	9.89
Difficulty to rear up	6(3.23%)	4(2.24%)	0.58
Not staying with parents	75(40.32%)	26(14.6%)	5.75
Lack of safety	27(14.52%)	143(80.33%)	16.68

\*Due to multiple responses , total may exceed 100 percent

In the study it shows that Dowry problem was main reason (85.95%) in rural area for non preference of daughter while in urban area marriage related problems (48.39%) and daughters not staying with parents for the life time (40.32%) were main reason for non preference of daughters. (Table 3)

## DISCUSSION

In present study it was observed, 91.18% women in urban and 84.36% women in rural area have son preference. Similar results were observed in study by Mallika et al [7] with 80.73% women in urban and 94.30% women in rural area had son preference. In present study, Son preference was seen higher, 89.85%, in General category respondents while in study by Mallika et al study [7] Son preference was seen higher, 96.15%, in ST category respondents.

Most common reasons for Son preference was old age security (66.13% - Urban area, 91.57% - Rural), Income purpose (67.74% - Urban area, 89.33% - Rural) while in the study by Mallika et al [7] keeping family line (42.14%) was the main reason. Most common reasons for non preference of daughters were dowry (85.95%) and lack of safety of daughter (80.33%) in rural area and marriage related problems (48.39%) and not staying with parents after the marriage (40.32%) in urban area. Similar results were observed in study by Mallika et al, [7] with not staying with parents (50.45%) as the main reason.

## CONCLUSION

Majority of women were prefer son in Urban and Rural area. Most common reasons for son preference were old age security, income purpose and keeping family

line. Most common reasons for daughter non preference were dowry problem, lack of safety of daughter, not staying with parents.

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