



AWARENESS ON CHILD SEX RATIO AMONG RURAL COMMUNITY IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT – A STUDY

S.D.DINESHKUMAR

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Annamalai University,
Annamalainagar – 608 002, Tamilnadu.(Email: sddineshsoc2@gmail.com)
(Cell:9894545793)

Abstract

Child sex ratio of any country is not just a demographic variable but an important indicator of country's gender development index. An adverse child sex ratio reveals a lopsided social development and is a violation of human rights. Sex composition of the human population is one of the basic demographic characteristics, which is extremely vital for any meaningful demographic analysis. Declining child sex ratio is an issue of grave concern in India. Family and social pressures to produce a son are immense. Son preference has been one of the most evident manifestations of patriarchal society. In most regions, sons are desired for reasons related to kinship, inheritance, marriage, identity, status, economic security and lineage. A preference for boys cuts across caste and class lines and results in discrimination against girls even before they are born. In a gross misuse of the technology that facilitates pre-natal diagnosis of any potential birth defects and associated conditions, female fetuses are selectively aborted after such pre-natal sex determination. Hence the researcher has made an attempt to examine the plight of child sex ratio, its reliable causes and consequences in society with the application of suitable methodology and appropriate field data.

Key Words: Sex ratio, Child sex ratio, Son preference, female foeticide, Sex determination.

Background

India is one of the few countries in the world where males outnumber females. However, the high incidence of induced abortions and sharp decline in the child sex ratio in the last decade clearly proves the practice of female foeticide. The increasing incidence of female foeticide has led to a drastic decrease in the number of girls to boys in India in the 0-6 age group. The practice of eliminating female fetuses is believed to be one of the main reasons for the adverse child sex ratio. Pre-birth elimination of females (PBEF) seems to be more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas, but the gap is rapidly decreasing because of easy availability of sex determination tests in rural areas. The declining child sex ratio is a matter of great concern, as it will lead to serious demographic imbalances and adverse social consequences.

It is clear that the child sex ratio in the age group 0-6 has decreased at a much

faster pace than the overall sex ratio of the country after 1981. The decreasing sex ratio in this child population perhaps has a cascading effect on population over a period of time leading to diminishing sex ratio in the country. One thing is clear – the imbalance that has set in at this early age-group is difficult to be removed and would remain to haunt the population for a long time to come. To say the least, demographically the sex ratio of 914 of the population in the age group 0-6 does not appear to augur well for the future of the country.

Demographic Profile of children in India

Every year, an estimated 26 millions of children are born in India. There is a reduction of 5.05 millions in the population of children aged 0-6 years during the decade 2001-2011. The decline in male children is 2.06 million and in female children is 2.99 millions.

Census Year	Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio (0-6years)
1961	941	976
1971	930	964
1981	934	962
1991	927	945
2001	933	927
2011	940	914

Source: Census of India, 2011: 90-91.

The share of Children (0-6 years) in the total population has showed a decline of 2.8 points in 2011, compared to Census 2001. In 2011, the total number of children in the age-group 0-6 years is reported as 158.79 million which is down by 3.1% compared to the child population in 2001 of the order of 163.84 million. The share of children (0-6 years) to the total population is 13.1% in 2011 whereas the corresponding figures for male children and female children are 13.3% and 12.9% respectively. The decadal decline in population was more for female children (3.8%) than male children (2.4%) in the age group 0-6 years. Hence, the share of children to total population has been declined and the decline was sharper for female children than male children in the age group 0-6 years during 2001- 2011. This process has led to missing of nearly 3 million girl children compared to 2 million missing boy children in 2011, compared to 2001.

Missing daughters – a matter of grave concern

There are now 48 fewer girls per 1,000 boys than there were in 1981. Though, the overall sex ratio of the Country is showing a trend of improvement, the child sex ratio is showing a declining trend, which is a matter of concern. During the period 1991 -2011, child sex ratio declined from 945 to 914, whereas the overall sex ratio showed an improvement from 927 to 940. Compared to 2001, only 5 States /UTs showed decline in overall sex ratio in 2011, while 27 States /UTs showed decline in child sex ratio during this period. This opposite direction in the movement of sex ratios of children aged 0-6 years compared to the overall sex ratio suggests a shift in the demographic composition of the population. The decadal decline in child sex ratio

(number of girl children per 1000 male children in the age group 0-6 years), however, is less steep from that of the previous decade (1991 to 2001). In 1991, it was 945 and fell to 927 in 2001, a fall of 18 points (1.9%). In 2011, it has fallen to 914, a fall of 13 points (1.4%).

Variables Affecting the Child Sex Ratio (CSR)

Juvenile sex ratio (0-6years) is most sensitive to the gender discriminatory practices. The discrimination takes place either in form of unequal distribution of resources in the household or through sex selective abortion. The practice of female infanticide has also been one of the causes for the low CSR in certain regions. This practice however has been curtailed through the implementation of stringent law. But for India, due to discriminatory practices like infanticide, sex selective abortion and neglect of female infants their survival is at a stake.

Regional differences and CSR: The regional differences in India, in terms of northern and southern regions, and distinguished them based on their patterns of cultivation, kinship and family systems and its impact on gender relations. In India, more than half of missing girl child (0-6 years) belonged to north/ northwest region, and one third in central & western region. South and east/northeast regions shared relatively low proportion of missing female child population.

Literacy and CSR: Although literacy is often seen as an indicator of modernisation, urbanisation, and empowerment of the nation, in terms of CSR it has been proved otherwise. Families with high level of literacy are better aware of New Reproductive Technologies (NRTs) and other services, which enables them easy access to these technologies. Based on the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reports that the numbers of missing girls at birth are higher in families where the women have education above Std. X compared to their illiterate counterparts.

Religion & Caste and CSR: Religious values are assumed to influence the reproductive behaviour and decisions regarding family type and family size. It should be noted that Jains and Sikhs are both numerically small but economically developed and affluent communities. Similarly caste status also determines the decisions regarding son-preference and daughter aversion in the family. Studies so far point out that the CSR in Scheduled Caste (SCs) and Scheduled Tribe (STs) is better than the upper caste families.

Economic Status and CSR: Prosperity and high per capita income are generally seen as an indicator of higher social status. However evidence show that it does not hold true in terms of social status of a girl child. The CSR varies inversely with the rising economic status. National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) reports show that there is negative co-relation between declining CSR and per capita income (PCI) and per capita expenditure (PCE) i.e. as you go higher in income group the CSR tends to become more masculine. On the other hand poverty-which is seen as a major factor contributing to neglect of girl child and unequal distribution of resources between the genders does not contribute to the decline in sex ratio.

Birth Order and CSR: The birth order and the sex of the previous child affect the CSR to a great extent. Having a daughter in the first order has a very different and

adverse repercussion on the CSR of the second order birth i.e. fewer female are born as the second or third child to families who do not have a son as yet.

Sex Determination Tests: Abortion services estimated that nearly six millions have performed every year outside the ambit of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act in 1972. With the introduction of ultrasonography, sex determination has spread like an epidemic in many towns and villages. These have encouraged prospective parents to abort female fetuses in order to avoid future dowry expenses.

Literature Review

Reviews of existing studies in the area of investigation enable the researcher to familiar with the trends of the present research practices.

UNICEF (1998), Girls in India are discriminated against in other ways as well – fewer months of breastfeeding, less nurturing and play, less medical treatment if they fall ill, less special food, less prenatal attention. As a result, girls are far more susceptible than boys to disease and infections, leading to poor health and a shorter lifespan. It is this lifelong discrimination in nurturing and care that is the real killer of girls, less visible and less dramatic, but as unequivocally lethal as female foeticide and infanticide.

Tinnari (2002), son preference was strongest among the middle income group. Reasons for son preference were that they perpetuate the family name and inherit property; they are providers in old age and to perform the last rites.

Yadav and Badri (1997), the reason for wanting a son is to attain moksha and also power, prestige, to perform the last rites and to continue the family lineage.

Nayar (1995), the various reasons for not wanting daughters were: dowry, forbidding wedding expenses, long requirement of giving gifts and money, lack of availability of girls to look parents after marriage, domestic violence, ill treatment by husbands, ill treatment of women after they give birth to a girl child, and not wanting to go through the same fate as them.

Anand (1998), the strong patriarchal family system gradually rises the practice of ancestral worship, resulting in a strong preference for sons. These have now become institutionalized values. These traditions stress the importance of perpetuating the family lineage through sons. These values provided the justification for female infanticide in the past and female foeticide during contemporary times.

It could be clearly reviewed that the studies have explored different dimensions of declining child sex ratio and its causes and impact in the present existing social situations.

Statement of the Problem

Declining child sex ratio is a complex phenomenon which is an outcome several factors at play and needs to be responded to sensitively. The declining child sex ratio in the country has sent shockwaves across all sections of society. It seems that the socio-cultural factors have influenced in the mind of the people for the sake of social superiority. Based on that have traditionally undervalued daughters compared to sons. It is not poverty alone that kills girl child– the choices made by her parents and family have a greater role to play in curtailing her life. Son preference has been

one of the most evident manifestations of patriarchal society. It has worked against the female sex particularly in their infancy and early childhood. Today, with the technological advancement in medical diagnosis this discrimination begins even before her birth. The reasons behind the discrimination of girls crosses the spectrum of Indian regions, economic classes, and castes and are due to a complex mix of economic, social and cultural factors. Declining child sex ratio has now been increasingly recognized as a complex and an urgent problem and needs to be addressed head on.

Focus of the Study

Hence, the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the trend of declining child sex ratio and its causes and consequences with the help of appropriate objectives in the selected village panchayat in Cuddalore District. The present study focuses on Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in the age group of 0-6 years specifically because it is the most effective tool to understand the real picture of gender discrimination an affected by other demographic factors.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been formulated for the present study that is, (a) to study the socio-economic status of the respondents; (b) to understand the awareness of the respondents on child sex ratio; (c) to know the attitude of the respondents towards male and female children; (d) to identify the reasons for sex preferences among the respondents; and (e) to explore the treating practices towards male and female children by the respondents.

Methodology

The researcher has adopted descriptive research design for the present study to describe the research problem more effectively. The Arunmozhidevan village panchayat has been selected as a study area in the present research in order to collect the primary data. The selected panchayat comes under Parangipettai Block, Bhuvanagiri Taluk in Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu. The researcher has adopted the non-portability sampling method, so that, he has selected the respondents by the application of purposive sampling procedure. The universe of this study is all the married male and female who reside in the selected study panchayat. The researcher has purposively selected sixty (60) persons as the necessary respondents among the universe to collect primary data in the study.

A structured interview schedule has been administrated by the researcher for the collection of primary data. The tool has constructed keeping in view of the objectives of the study. It has been finalized based on the pilot study and pretest that have been undertaken before the commencement of the data collection from the selected respondents. The interview schedule has been consisted of close-ended questions which have been divided into five major parts such as, socio-economic status, awareness on sex determination, attitude towards children, reasons for sex preferences, and treating practices of children. A two-point and three-point rating scale have only been used to measure the opinion on their child sex ratio. After the data collection, the data have been classified, tabulated, and interpreted in terms of

simple percentage calculations to know more about the results of the study. Only 60 married people in Arunmozhidevan panchayat have been covered in the present study. Hence, the conclusion may not be generalized to other areas which are the scope and limitations of the study.

Major Findings

The collected primary data have been interpreted by way of systematic procedure to know the trend and plight of child sex ratio in Cuddalore District.

Socio-Economic Profile

Table-1: Distribution of the Respondents by their Socio-Economic Profile

N=60

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	23	38.3
	Female	37	61.7
Age	20-30	09	15.0
	30-40	21	35.0
	40-50	18	30.0
	50-60	12	20.0
Caste	Most Backward Caste	24	40.0
	Scheduled Castes	36	60.0
Education	Illiterate	12	20.0
	Primary	35	58.3
	Secondary	09	15.0
	Higher Secondary	04	6.7
Primary Occupation	Agricultural labour	46	76.7
	Non-farm workers	14	23.3
Monthly Income (Rs.)	3000 – 5000	30	50.0
	5000 – 7000	20	33.3
	7000 – 9000	10	16.7
Type of Family	Joint family	10	16.7
	Nuclear family	50	83.3
Type of House	Pucca	26	43.3
	Tiled	13	21.7
	Kutchha	21	35.0
Land Ownership	Yes	22	36.7
	No	38	63.3

From the investigation, the table-1 revealed that more than half (61.7%) of the respondents are female category and 65 per cent of them belong to the age group between 30–50 years. In respect of caste, most (60%) of the respondents belong to Scheduled Castes (SCs), followed by 40 per cent of them belong to Most Backward Caste (MBC). Regarding educational status, the notable strength (58.3%) of the respondents have attained primary level education only, followed by 20 per cent of them are illiterates. In terms of occupation, three-fourth (76.7%) of the respondents have involved in agricultural activities as their primary occupation and they are being

as agricultural labourers. It is continued that the significant strength (63.3%) of the respondents have not possessed any form of own agricultural land for their survival benefits. In respect of income, the half (50%) of the respondents have earned Rs.3000-5000 as their monthly income for family survival, followed by 33.3 per cent of them belong to Rs.5000-7000 income category per month. Majority (83.3%) of the respondents have adopted nuclear type of family system, and 43.3 per cent of the respondents live in pucca houses, followed by 35 per cent of them have kutcha houses in the study area.

Awareness on Child Sex Ratio

Table-2: Distribution of the Respondents by their Awareness on Weaker Sex

N=60

Sl.No	Awareness	Number of Respondents			
		Yes	%	No	%
1.	Female as a weaker sex	39	65.0	21	35.0
2.	Sex determination	56	93.3	04	6.7
3.	Sex ratio	03	5.0	57	95.0
4.	Child sex ratio	20	33.3	40	66.7
5.	Know about female foeticide	58	96.7	02	3.3
6.	Abortion for female fetus	52	86.7	08	13.3
7.	Knowledge on Existing Acts	13	21.7	47	78.3

Based on the field data, the table-2 inferred that the majority (65% and 93.3%) of the respondents have aware promptly that female as a weaker sex in the society and also existing causes for sex determination in the present day situations respectively. It is continued that most (95% and 66.7%) of the respondents do not have proper knowledge about sex ratio and child sex ratio at enough level respectively. Even though, 96.7 per cent of the respondents have enough knowledge about the incidence of female foeticide. In respect of large scale abortion, the notable number (86.7%) of the respondents opined that the incidence of large scale abortions have severely occurred only for elimination of female fetus. Regarding the existing Acts, nearly three-fourth (78.3%) of the respondents do not have sufficient knowledge about the existing Acts related to female child such as Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act,1994 (PNDT Act-1994), Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act,1971 (MTP Act-1971), and Dowry Prohibition Act,1961 in the study area.

Table-3: Distribution of the Respondents by Opinion on Preference of Gender

N=60

Sl.No	Category	Number of Respondents		
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Both (%)
1.	Do you like more	32 (53.3)	16 (26.7%)	12 (20.0)
2.	Prefered sex at the time of birth	41 (68.3)	12 (20.0)	07 (11.7)
3.	Express more love	38 (63.3)	22 (36.7)	-
4.	Feel about rearing	06 (10.0)	50 (83.3)	04 (6.7)
5.	Rearing more strictly	07 (11.7)	51 (85.0)	02 (3.3)

Based on the survey, the table-3 explored that nearly half (53.3%) of the respondents are like male child more, followed by 26.7 per cent of them are like female child more. In terms of preferred gender, the two-third (68.3%) of the respondents have preferred male child at the time of birth, followed by 20.0 per cent of them have wanted female gender. It is continued that most (63.3%) of the respondents have expressed more love and affection towards their male child only. Regarding the feel about rearing, the majority (83.3%) of the respondents have worried about rearing of female child in the existing social conditions. In respect of rearing strictly, the significant strength (85%) of the respondents opined that the girl child should be rear more strictly than the male child because the girl child have considered as a honour and value of the particular family according to Indian culture.

Table-4: Distribution of the Respondents by Reason for Declining Child Sex Ratio

N=60

Sl.No	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reason for Decline	Female foeticide	21	35.0
	Son preference	32	53.3
	Male dominant society	07	11.7
Encouraging People	Educated	08	13.3
	Uneducated	18	30.1
	Rich people	11	18.3
	Poor people	23	38.3
Prime Pressure	Husband	32	53.3
	Neighbourhood	28	46.7

On the basis of field data, the table-4 explained that nearly half (53.3%) of the respondents opined that son preference is the prime responsible factor for declining child sex ratio at severe level, followed by 35 per cent of them blamed female foeticide activities, and 11.7 per cent of them felt towards male dominant society in the present day situation. The study also identified that nearly one-third (38.3%) of the respondents opined that the economically poor people encourage female foeticide at high frequency, followed by 30.1 per cent of them opined that the uneducated people motivate the female foeticide more in their family. The remaining 18.3 per cent and 13.3 per cent of the respondents blamed on economically rich people and the educated people for frequently committed female foeticide respectively. In terms of prime pressure, nearly half (53.3%) of the respondents opined that the prime pressure to committing female foeticide has mostly given by their husbands only and the rest 46.7 per cent of them opined that neighbourhood sources have given pressure to female foeticide in the study area.

Attitude towards Female Children

Table-5: Distribution of the Respondents by their Attitude on Female Child

N=60

Sl.No	Particulars	Number of Respondents			
		Yes	%	No	%
1.	Both the children equal	22	36.7	38	63.3
2.	Female not give better service to parent	38	63.3	22	36.7
3.	Property distribution to female like son	16	26.7	44	73.3
4.	Freedom to female to develop carrier in any field	35	58.3	25	41.7
5.	Female carrier creates difficult to search spouse	60	100	-	-
6.	Dowry as a great burden	60	100	-	-

From the investigation, the table-5 revealed that the notable number (63.3%) of the respondents have not treated their children equally irrespective of their gender identity. But, the remaining 36.7 per cent of them have considered equally. It is continued that most (63.3%) of the respondents negatively felt that the female children do not give better service to their parent during their life time than the male children and the rest 36.7 per cent of them opined that both the children provide better service to their parent. In terms of property distribution, nearly two-third (73.3%) of the respondents are not willing to distribute the parental properties to female children as like their male children and the remaining 26.7 per cent of them are wish to divide their property equally for both the children. It is inferred from the study that the significant strength (58.3%) of the respondents opined that they have not given freedom to female child to develop her carrier in any of the field, at the same time the remaining 41.7 per cent of them have ready to give freedom to females to choose her carrier in her life. In terms of selecting spouse, all (100%) the respondents felt that the carrier of the female at high level has created severe difficulty to search her spouse by parent in the society. Apart from the above reasons, it is heartening to note that all (100%) the respondents felt that the practice of giving dowry to the female is a great burden to parent now a day.

Reason for Gender Preferences

Table-6: Distribution of the Respondents by Causes for Preference to Male Child

N=60

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reason for Male	Preserve tradition of family	16	26.7
	Provide old age support	09	15.0
	Bring up easier economically	05	8.3
	Funeral purpose	30	50.0
Reason for Female	Poverty	26	43.3
	Dowry	34	56.7

Treated for Male	Respectful	30	50.0
	Honour	09	15.0
	Social recognition	14	23.3
	Feel of proud	07	11.7
Treated for Female	Disrespect	12	20.0
	Inhonour	48	80.0

On the basis of field survey, the table-6 detailed that half (50%) of the respondents have given preferences to male child for performing funeral purpose, followed by 26.7 per cent of them opined that son is required to preserve the tradition and value of the family. The remaining 15 per cent and 8.3 per cent of the respondents have more confident that son will provide old age support to parent and bring up a male child is easier in economic aspects respectively. Further, the study noted that most (56.7%) of the respondents opined that the existing dowry practice is the prime responsible factor for neglecting female child by parent, followed by 43.3 per cent of them opined that the prevailing poverty condition is the major determining factor for refusing female child in the present day society. Further, the data inferred that half (50%) of the respondents opined that they have treated at respectful manner in the society for having male child, followed by 23.3 per cent of them have received proper social recognition in society while having male child. The remaining 15 per cent and 11.7 per cent of the respondents have more honour and feel of proud in society for having male child respectively. It is continued that the majority (80%) of the respondents opined that they have treated at inhonour manner by the society for having female child, followed by 20 per cent of them have faced some sort of disrespect in society while having female child in the present day situation.

Preferences of Education and Health

Table-7: Distribution of the Respondents by their Opinion on Preferences of Education and Health Aspects

N=60

Variable	Sub Group	Number of Respondents	
		Male (%)	Female (%)
Imparting Level of Education	School level only	04 (6.7)	36 (60.0)
	College level	56 (93.3)	24 (40.0)
Wish to Educate Children	School education only	-	40 (66.7)
	Any degree	27 (45.0)	03 (5.0)
	Teacher	05 (8.3)	16 (26.6)
	Medicine	07 (11.7)	01 (1.7)
	Engineering	16 (26.7)	-
	Police	05 (8.3)	-
Type of Hospital	Government	28 (46.7)	40 (66.7)
	Private	32 (53.3)	20 (33.3)
Importance to Decision Making	Yes	51 (85.0)	09 (15.0)
	No	09 (15.0)	51 (85.0)

Based on the field survey the table-7 indicated that the significant strength (93.3%) of the respondents wish to educate their male child up to college level education. It is continued that 60 per cent of the respondents want to impart school level education only to their female child and the rest 40 per cent of them want to college education to female child. Further, the study noted that 45 per cent of the respondents wish to pursue any degree for male child, followed by 26.7 per cent of them want to study engineering courses. In respect of female child, 66.7 per cent of the respondents wish to give school level education only to female child, followed by 26.6 per cent of them desire to become as a teacher. Further, the data observed that nearly half (53.3%) of the respondents wish to provide medical treatment in private hospitals for their male child, followed by 46.7 per cent of them go to Government hospital for male child. It is continued that most (66.7%) of the respondents have given medical treatment to their female child only in Government hospital and the rest 33.3 per cent of them have preferred private hospitals to female child. In terms of decision making, the survey noted that the majority (85%) of the respondents have given more importance to male child while taking decisions about family issues and the rest 15 per cent of them have provided importance to female child for decision making in family.

Table-8: Distribution of the Respondents by their Reason for Imparting Higher Level of Education to Male Child

N=60

	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reason for High Level Education to Male	Future Prosperous	37	61.6
	Responsibility	04	6.7
	Earning for family	19	31.7
Not Imparting to Female Child	Ignorance	14	23.3
	Marriage	37	61.7
	Waste of money	09	15.0

From the survey data, the tale-8 revealed that the notable strength (61.6%) of the respondents opined that the imparting higher level of education to male child is future prosperous life for them as well as their family, followed by 31.7 per cent of them felt that the earning for family is an important reason for higher education to male child. It is inferred from the survey that the majority (61.7%) of the respondents opined that the reason for marriage is the major influencing factor for not imparting higher level of education properly to female child as their wish, followed by 23.3 per cent and 15 per cent of them felt that ignorance level and waste of money are the causes for not giving higher level of education to female child respectively.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher has taken this study in order to understand the factors which influence on declining child sex ratio in the selected district. The logical conclusion derived from the study, it found that the notable strength of the people consider that female as a weaker sex and huge number of them do not have proper knowledge on

sex ratio and child sex ratio at enough level. From the analysis, it clearly understood that son preference is the prime factor for declining child sex ratio at severe level in the present day scenario and most of the economically poor people and uneducated segments have encouraged female foeticide at high frequency. Based on the discussion of the data, the parents have not treated their children equally irrespective of gender identity, followed by the significant strength negatively felt that they are not willing to distribute the parental properties to female child as like their male child in the family. Most of the parents worried on the education and carrier of the female at high level that has created severe difficulty to search her life partner.

From the analysis, the study identified that the people have given preferences to male child for funeral purpose than other reasons in the family and majority of the people accepted that the existing dowry practice as well as poverty condition are the major dominating factors for neglecting female child by parents in the society. Most of the parents have treated at respectful manner in the society for having male child, at the same time those who are having female child, they have treated at inhonour manner by the society. It is heartening to note that the huge number of people felt that the prime pressure to female foeticide has mostly given by their husbands only in the study region. In respect of educational aspect, the study explored that the people wish to educate their male child up to college level and female child up to school level only due to marriage purpose. In terms of health aspect, the result noted that the people wish to provide medical treatment to male child in private hospitals as well as to female child in Government hospital. It is continued that most of them have provided more importance to male child while taking decisions related to family issues.

Hence, the study found from the present research that the factors contributing to declining child sex ratio are many and complex, and require urgent redressal using multi-pronged strategies. The distorted child sex ratio in society is increasing sexual and social crimes against women in future at severe level. If unchecked now, the present trend of declining child sex ratio is sure to lead to serious demographic imbalances and adverse social consequences at all levels of the society. Only a strong public awareness can curb the evil practice of female foeticide. Strengthening the implementation of the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, which prohibits determination and disclosure of the sex of the foetus, is need of the hour.

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