

Prevailing Gender Bias in Haryana: A Statistical Overview

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INTRODUCTION

The status of women in any society is a clear reflection of the social, political, cultural, economic, and religious position of the country. Women constitute a major part of the world's population, yet they are evidently discriminated against and denied equal opportunities and resources in society. The practice of gender discrimination and inequality can be widely observed throughout the world manifested in the form of deeply rooted cultural values and traditions in different societies. India is one of the largest democratic countries in the world where women constitute a significant proportion of the population, yet they are treated as a marginalized section of the society and have to face a variety of economic, legal and social constraints. According to Chakrapani & Kumar (1994), women in Indian society have been subjected to various social and economic disabilities and their low status can be traced back many centuries. The subordinated status of women in India is associated with age-old stereotypical beliefs and strong patriarchal framework of the society. The powerful foundation of male domination led to the growth of traditional customs and practices ensuring continued subordination of women in India. Since childhood, the lives of Indian women are strongly dictated by traditional values and customs which deprives them of

several opportunities by imposing constraints on their educational attainment, employment status, and independent decision-making.

The state of Haryana came into being on November 1, 1966 when it was separated from Punjab and became the 17th state of India. Haryana is in the northern part of India bound by Punjab in the west, Uttar Pradesh in the east, Rajasthan in the south and Himachal Pradesh in the north.

Haryana has been recorded as one of the states with the lowest sex ratio in the country along with witnessing a constant decline in the same for the past two decades. The increasing imbalance in sex ratio and child sex ratio (0-6 years of age) provides clear evidence of the gender disparity manifested in the state in many forms (Dewan & Khan, 2009). The number of men in Haryana surpasses the women population which may get worse in the future because of the adverse child sex ratio (Yadav, 2001). The discrimination against women in the form of strong son preference and selective fertility behaviors has existed in Haryana since time immemorial. Most of the population in the state is hesitant to invest in daughters because of the conventional traditional notions which label the girl child as "parayadhan" i.e., someone else's asset (Selvaraj et al., 2017). The age-old manifestation of patriarchal structure

in Haryana is a strong reason behind the deep-rooted prejudices against the girl child. The subjugation and subordination of women is attributed to several reasons which act as a hindrance to the desire of daughters such as the evil tradition of dowry, vulnerability of women to societal violence, inability to carry on the family name, insecurity at the old age, financial burden etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- **SEX RATIO**

The decline in female sex ratio in the population is the most obvious form of manifested gender disparity in an area. Sangwan & Kumari (2019) reported that Haryana has historically exhibited an unfavorable trend of sex ratio for women. The state has recorded the lowest child sex ratio in the country which has been declining even more sharply. A decline of 80 points can be observed in child sex ratio from the year 1961 to 2011. The study also provides that Mahendergarh district of Haryana recorded the maximum decrease of 40 points in child sex ratio in years 2001-2011 and exhibits strong evidence of son preference. The practice of gender bias and discrimination against women act as a major force behind poor health status of women, low education level of the state, inequalities in workforce participation rate and deteriorating condition of women.

Dewan & Khan (2009) in their study identified three main reasons behind the act of female feticide i.e., son preference, small family norm and the most powerful was found to be the stress of arranging the resources for the marriage of girl child in future. They also discovered that people were aware of the practice of sex determination

and female feticide taking place in their areas and sex detection was opted by the majority of the population regardless of their economic background. It was observed that the vulnerability involved in raising a girl child contributed to the preference for sons and was considered a greater reason behind elimination of females rather than dowry or other traditional beliefs.

Kumar et al. (2015) revealed that the majority of families in the state have a strong preference for a boy as their first child. The probability of trying for another child is relatively lesser in people with a first-born son than people with a first-born daughter. The study provides that the practice of female feticide is more prevalent in the northern and eastern part of Haryana which may be attributed to the easy availability of sex-selective technologies and greater economic development contributing to the skewed sex ratio in these regions. Several causes behind low child sex ratio in Haryana have also been highlighted such as low rate of literacy especially in rural areas, illegal use of sex-selection and elimination technologies, societal violence and insecurity against women, financial consideration associated with daughters, impact of population policies on sex ratio etc. Selvaraj et al. (2017) conducted a study to find out the gender differentials in social aspects, health care, nutrition, household etc. among children under the age of six in rural areas of Ballabgarh district of Haryana. They have attempted to discover the influence of gender discrimination taking place in various domains from childhood along with the impact of

parental discriminatory behavior on children beginning from an early age. Findings revealed the existence of gender disparity in all aspects such as health care facilities, nutrition, feeding patterns and social aspects. As per statistics, it was reported that households with dominant caste status, stable occupational stance and higher paternal literacy exhibited less gender disparity as compared to the other households.

George & Dahiya (1998) made a systematic effort in their field study to explore the prevalence of female feticide in the rural population of Rohtak district in Haryana. The study aimed at uncovering the widespread misuse of modern prenatal diagnostic techniques for sex selection and elimination of the female fetus. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents were aware of the sex determination techniques and easy access to the tests and procedures for abortion was available. The families kept on trying for children till they attain a desired number of surviving sons after which nearly 50 percent of the women opted for sterilization. The ultrasonography technique is widely abused by the doctors in rural areas to determine the sex of the fetus and eliminate the girl child as per the convenience of the families.

- **FEMALE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION**

Sharma (2018) analyzed the participation of women in the workforce in Haryana and established that the proportion of female workers is less than male workers in the years under consideration in the study. The statistics also suggested that the women labor force participation rate was higher in rural areas of the state as

compared to urban areas and the majority of rural female workers were either involved in unpaid family labor or working on their own account. The participation of women in the labor force displayed a little improvement in the year 2004-05 but declined in the year 2011-12 in both urban and rural areas of Haryana.

Narayan (2016) in his study examined the patterns and trends of female participation in the workforce in urban and rural areas of Haryana. The study focused on the prevailing gender gap in the labor force at both district and state level. The findings reveal that female workforce participation rate in Haryana is even lesser than the national average and relatively low in comparison to other states. The number of rural women in the labor force was found to be much higher as compared to the urban areas of Haryana. However, women from urban areas were placed at a superior position in the labor market than rural women. A great variation can be observed in female workforce participation rate and gender disparity in labor force participation across various districts of the state.

Chowdhry (1993) has explored the impact of changes in agro-economic industry on the role and nature of women's work in Haryana. An attempt has been made to correlate different aspects of the state's economy with participation of women in the agricultural workforce. The results suggested that migration of male family workers to other areas has contributed to sustaining the involvement of women in agricultural family labor in rural areas of Haryana. The findings also revealed that considerable differences can be

observed in the wages of female and male agricultural laborers where men were paid more remuneration than women for the same nature of work performed.

Sharma (n.d.) discussed major determinants of female employment by using survey data collected through 298 employed women from different parts of Haryana. The survey disclosed that 56.04 percent of the respondents got employed because of the desire to achieve something in future, 38.59 percent reported financial crisis and low household income as the motivational factor, 18.12 percent stated independence and 12.08 percent regarded social prestige as a contributing factor to their employment. The study covered the obstacles faced by women in the course of their employment such as unequal wages, extended working hours, harassment by male colleagues, lack of technical capabilities and distant workplace. Women also faced difficulties in fulfilling their domestic and household responsibilities.

- **LITERACY LEVEL OF WOMEN**

Kavita & Parkash (2019) in their study used secondary data sources to highlight existing gender disparities in education level among the population of Haryana. The outcomes revealed widespread gender differences prevailing in literacy rate at district level. On comparing the statistics from the year 1971 to 2011, it was observed that the gender gap in literacy level has always remained against women. The literacy rate among males was noted much higher than females in all districts due to more awareness, better opportunities, and easy access to learning resources. Although a decline

was recorded in gender inequality in literacy from 2001 to 2011, yet wide differences existed in education at district level.

Saini (2015) examined the intensity of gender disparities in literacy across various districts of Haryana along with the growth pattern of the education sector of Haryana. For this purpose, the study made use of various indicators such as literacy rate, enrolment of students, number of teachers and institutions etc. The findings confirmed the existence of gender gap in education across districts where Ambala, Panchkula, Gurgaon and Rewari logged lowest gender disparities whereas Sirsa, Fatehabad, Jind, Mewat and Palwal were reported to be lagging in performance with higher inequalities in literacy rate. Jangra & Kaushik (2016) analyzed the tehsil-wise trend of female literacy rate in Haryana and the study focused on urban-rural differentials in female literacy during the years 1991, 2001 and 2011. The results suggested an increase in female literacy rate during the period undertaken in the study, but high disparity could be observed in the same between rural and urban areas of the state. The changes in women literacy were found to be more positive in urban areas as compared to rural areas which was attributed to factors such as easy access to educational resources, availability of schools and teachers, safe surroundings, supportive home environment etc. The data collected from the tehsils indicated under-development of the regions with high Muslim population where female literacy was still considered a taboo and even the male literacy level was extremely low.

Sharma & Kumar (2020) studied the literacy status of Haryana with the help of percentage of overall male and female literacy rates of the state drawn from different censuses. Though statistics revealed a decline in gender disparity in education from 22.76 percent in 2001 to 18.11 percent in 2011, female literacy remained less progressive as compared to males in the state. A strong positive correlation was observed between literacy and urbanization due to enhanced and easy availability of educational resources in cities as compared to rural areas. Kumar & Yadav (2020) focused on the assessment of growth in literacy rate, gender disparity in education, decadal growth, and rural-urban differentials at district level in Haryana from the year 1971 to 2011. The results indicated continuous improvement in literacy rate in every census data recorded since the formation of the state and the rural-urban differences in literacy level also registered a decline in each census year. The year 1981 recorded the highest rate of gender disparity in education at 25.93 percent where male literacy rate was 48.2 percent and female literacy rate at mere 22.27 percent.

Kumar & Pal (2016) conducted a comparative study in Gurgaon and Mewat districts of Haryana to examine the literacy rate in these areas and to analyze the inter-district disparities in the level of education in the state. The outcomes disclosed that out of 21 districts of Haryana, Gurgaon recorded the highest male and female literacy rate whereas Mewat was the district with the lowest male and female literacy rate. Mewat is found to be the most backward and poorest district of the state where women are prohibited

from getting educated due to existing cultural values and traditions and a grim situation of higher education, access to resources and infrastructure can be observed.

- **CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN**

Dhingra (2020) conducted a comparative study in Punjab and Haryana to analyze the magnitude and nature of crime against women and to understand the relative status of both states concerning women security. The data was collected from the report of National Crimes Record Bureau, 2019, Govt. of India and the study concluded that Haryana was responsible for higher incidence of crime against women as compared to Punjab. The violence against women has been attributed to the patriarchal mindset which fuels a strong desire for sons and as a result, low sex ratio can be observed in these states which gives rise to these crimes. Chander et al. (2020) examined various facets of nature and extent of the evil tradition of dowry among rural women of Karnal district of Haryana. The outcomes revealed that the major reason behind demand for dowry was greed among other reasons such as tradition, educational expenses, satisfaction of needs etc. Along with this, findings stated physical, verbal, and psychological abuse consequently for failure to meet the demands for dowry.

Deswal (2019) revealed that most women who experienced any type of violence in the household were not educated or employed. The main objective of the study was to discover the prevalence of domestic violence against rural women in Gurugram district of Haryana and to extract the reasons behind tolerance for this kind

of act. A major reason found by the study behind this torture on women was the consumption of alcohol by their husbands routinely followed by physical violence. According to Sharma et al. (2018), a higher incidence of rape or sexual assault was found in only three districts of Haryana in 2001 which reached to nine in the year 2011. The eastern and south-eastern region of the state recorded a moderate degree of dowry related crime in 2001 whereas in the year 2011, various districts from western Haryana got enlisted in the same category. However, in 2011, a slight improvement was observed in the cases of dowry deaths in the state in comparison to the year 2001. The study also suggested a strong correlation between different crimes depending on their nature, for instance, rape or sexual abuse is closely linked with the crime of murder and riots.

Upadhyay (2020) highlighted the prevalence of a serious crime in Haryana i.e., Bride Trafficking where young women are kidnapped and lured in the name of marriage with the purpose of selling, reselling, or marrying them off without their consent. These women are subject to physical, psychological, verbal, and emotional abuse at the hands of the people who bought them. A few factors have been listed by the author which contribute to the increasing incidence of bride trafficking in the state such as poverty, religious practices and rituals, illiteracy, cheap labor for the family, lack of parenthood etc. Chowdhry (2012) conducted an extensive field study to analyze the impact of economic independence and property ownership on the reduction in violence, especially spousal or

domestic violence in rural Haryana. The findings suggested that the three aspects i.e., employment, property and education are interlinked with violence against women in a complex manner. The transition of women's role in the household from a beneficiary to being a provider for the family can facilitate her power of decision making and guarantee her respect in the household which ultimately reduces the scope for violence to some extent.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to determine the status of women in Haryana by taking certain parameters. The position of women is also the cumulative result of past and present situations of women in the society and, therefore an attempt has been made to study their status in spatio-temporal dimensions in the state by making use of data across various time periods.

The paper is essentially based on secondary sources of data collected by various researchers, government organizations and third-party sources along with information derived from newspapers, magazines, and journals. The study has been derived through indicators such as sex ratio, child sex ratio, literacy rate, gender gap in literacy, female workforce participation rate and the magnitude of crime against women to examine the overall status of women in Haryana.

FINDINGS

Unfavorable Pattern of Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio

The sex ratio of a state directly reflects the position and status of women in that area. The unfavorable pattern of sex ratio is the clear evidence of gender discrimination prevailing in the

state (Sangwan & Kumari, 2019). The sex ratio in Haryana was recorded at 877 females per thousand males where Mewat had the highest sex ratio of 906 and the district with the lowest sex ratio was Sonipat at 853 (Singh, 2019). In the historical context, the sex ratio in Haryana has shown an unfavorable trend (Sangwan & Kumari, 2019). It was 867 during 1901 which remained the same during 1971 but a sharp decline was observed from 1981 to 2001. During 1981, the sex ratio in Haryana was 870 females per thousand males which declined to 865 in 1991 and a further steep decline was observed during the decade 1991-2001 where the sex ratio accounted for a mere figure of 819 in the year 2001 (Singh, 2019).

A same trend can be observed in child sex ratio in Haryana during 1991 and 2011 as it went down by 45 points i.e., from 879 to 830 and a continuous decline was recorded in the districts of Mahendragarh, Jhajjar, Rewari, Bhiwani and Faridabad (Kumar et al., 2015). The child sex ratio in Haryana has constantly remained below the national average and the lowest figure was recorded in 2001 i.e., 818 females per thousand males, however it rose by 11 points in 2011 and reached to 930 females per thousand males. This pattern of decreasing child sex ratio has the tendency to adversely affect the forthcoming population at large which can cause an imbalance in the society (Sangwan & Kumari, 2019). Among 21 districts of Haryana, 11 were found to be having child sex ratio below the state average of which Jhajjar recorded the lowest of 774 females per 1000 male children (Singh, 2019). The sound financial condition of people in these areas grants them easy access to

illegal sex-selective technologies which results in the prevalence of practice of female foeticide. Other major reasons responsible for low child sex ratio in these districts are proximity to capital cities like Chandigarh and New Delhi, high maternal mortality rate, high infant mortality rate and premature deliveries caused by malnutrition (Kumar et al., 2015). The data reveals that of all the areas in Haryana, not even a single district has recorded the child sex ratio above the national average i.e., 914 females per thousand male children. However, 10 districts have reported child sex ratio above the state average among which Mewat stood the highest with 903 females over 1000 male children (Lakshman & Haragopal, 2014). Mewat is the most backward district of Haryana with lowest literacy rate but highest Muslim population in the state. The low literacy rate is the result of domination by Neo-Muslim society promoting social conservatism in the district which contributed to rigid religious attitudes among people, ultimately restricting them to adopt family planning measures. The adjoining districts of Mewat i.e. Palwal and Faridabad have also recorded the child sex ratio higher than the state's average (Kumar et al., 2015).

The gender disparity among infants and children below 6 years of age can be reflected in the utilization of health care services, immunization of the child and feeding patterns (Selvaraj et al., 2017). A major reason behind low child sex ratio is sex selective abortions and violence against female fetuses (UNFPA, 2003). The determination of sex in mother's womb and the process of sex selection through available modern techniques

has made the elimination of girl fetuses possible (Dewan & Khan, 2009). According to a study, the data on sex-selective abortions in Haryana accounted for 81% of the total abortions in the country (UNFPA, 2003). The practice of sex-selective abortions is not characterized by illiteracy or backwardness as it is exercised at a wider scale by literates in urban areas as compared to the illiterate people in rural areas (UNFPA, 2003). It can be widely witnessed in developed areas due to power and resources exercised by the financially sound population (Bose, 2001). The increased awareness and use of sex identification and abortion facilities along with their privatization and commercialization has led to the increase in the practice of female foeticide (Dewan & Khan, 2009).

Gender Gap in Literacy Rate

Another important parameter to examine the existing gender disparity in an area is the rate of literacy. The level of education imparted in a state is closely related with its social development, economic prosperity, and is a significant indicator for analyzing women's status, autonomy, and progression in the society (Jangra & Kaushik, 2016). Traditionally, men have always been given better opportunities and prospects for education as compared to women as their chances at getting education have always been negatively influenced by the age-old cultural notions and beliefs (Kavita & Parkash, 2019).

The number of women in Haryana is scarcer than other prosperous states of the country due to which an increase in gender gap in literacy between men and women can be observed (Yadav, 2001). India recorded an overall

literacy rate of 52.21 percent in 1991 and 55.85 percent was recorded for the same year in Haryana with the gender disparity rate registered at 28.63 percent. The overall literacy rate in the state rose to 67.91 percent in 2001 where female literacy rate was recorded at 55.73 percent while the male literacy rate was at 78.49 percent and gender disparity in literacy rate also came down to 22.76 percent (Sharma & Kumar, 2020). In comparison to the year 2001, the statistics reflect an improvement in overall literacy rate at 76.6 percent for the year 2011 in Haryana with male literacy rate at 84 percent and female literacy rate at 65.9 percent (Saini, 2015). A great variation was observed in female literacy rate in the state at inter-district level as Gurugram stood at the first position with 77.98 percent followed by Panchkula (75.99 percent), Ambala (75.50 percent), Faridabad (73.84 percent) and the district at the bottom was Mewat with 36.6 percent trailed by Palwal (54.23 percent), Fatehabad (58.87 percent) and Kaithal (59.24 percent) (Sharma & Kumar, 2020). The gender gap in literacy rate in 2011 remained against women although an improvement was observed from the year 2001 and was recorded at 18.11 percent. Mewat and Palwal were the only two districts concerned with the highest gender disparity in literacy rate in 2011 and the analysis revealed that despite reduction in the gender gap from the year 2001, these two districts remained at the bottom two positions in the disparity index. On the other hand, Panchkula stood at the top position with the lowest gender disparity in literacy rate along with Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Karnal,

Rohtak, Gurugram and Faridabad (Kavita & Parkash, 2019).

The north-eastern and south-eastern region of the state (except Mewat and Palwal) have recorded a high rate of literacy which may be attributed to the availability of resources and access to better educational facilities whereas the north-western region, being an agricultural belt has registered a low literacy rate. The southernmost districts i.e., Mewat and Palwal, dominated by the Muslim population were found in a poor condition in terms of literacy due to societal resistances and lack of economic and social development in the area (Sharma & Kumar, 2020). Mewat is the most backward district of the state with the lowest rate of literacy and highest gender disparity in education. The traditional ethos of the area denies the right of education to women and the enrolment of girls is found to be declining with increasing level of education, hence causing a decline in the female literacy rate. Even the male literacy rate in the district is the lowest as compared to the rest of the state (Kumar & Pal, 2016).

The literacy rate in Haryana was found to be having a strong positive correlation with urbanization due to easy and higher availability of means to education in cities, as compared to the rural areas. Though the statistics have revealed an improvement in the level of female literacy in the state, there exists a wide gap in female literacy rate between rural and urban areas (Jangra & Kaushik, 2016). Women in rural areas are constrained by unnecessary socio-cultural barriers in receiving education at a greater level as compared to the urban areas. Most poor rural families are unaware of the

necessity for women's education and thus, they prefer to marry the girl child at an early age rather than schooling them. The walls of customs and traditions have confined the prospects of education and opportunities for women, especially in rural areas where they are forced to engage in unskilled agricultural labor or domestic chores for which education is not a necessity (Sharma & Kumar, 2020). The accelerated rate of female literacy in the eastern region of Haryana is the outcome of high degree of commercialization, improved communication, dense transport facilities, urbanization, accessibility to educational resources, awareness of opportunities etc. On the other hand, western region of Haryana is dominated by the Muslim population where resistance from educational programmes can be clearly observed, especially in the case of female literacy due to lack of social and economic development in the area (Jangra & Kaushik, 2016).

Despite indicating an improvement in the rate of literacy, Haryana is still continuously lagging in female literacy along with wider gender disparity in education. Out of 21 districts of the state, sixteen have been listed under low gender disparity index of which Fatehabad, Hisar, Jhajjar, Jind, Kaithal, Panipat, Sirsa and Sonapat are on the verge of becoming the districts with high gender disparity. Bhiwani, Mahendragarh and Rewari are the districts in a satisfactory condition whereas Mewat and Palwal fall in the category of highest gender gap in literacy rate (Sharma & Kumar, 2020). The state comprises eight states having female literacy rate lower than the state average, namely Mewat, Palwal,

Fatehabad, Jind, Sirsa, Kaithal, Hisar and Bhiwani. Though the gender discrimination in education in Haryana has represented a declining trend yet the improvement in female literacy rate has been lethargic and significant inter-district disparities can be observed on various fronts (Saini, 2015).

Low Female WorkForce Participation Rate

Another important benchmark for determining the status of women and the degree of gender disparity in a particular area is the number of women in the workforce in comparison to men (Sharma, 2018). The rate of participation of women in the labor market varies across several facets such as fertility rates, education levels, childcare facilities, economic development, social norms etc. (Narayan, 2016). Due to the prevalence of gendered economy in Haryana, a large-scale segregation exists between men and women as women being underprivileged and less educated are subject to easy exploitation at the hands of men. The women labor force participation in Haryana has shown a declining trend in recent years and a wide gap can be observed between female and male work participation ratio. The share of women in Haryana is 46.77 percent of the total population of the state and female workforce participation rate was recorded at mere 17.8 percent in 2011 which stood at 27.2 percent in 2001 (Sharma, 2018). The women labor force participation rate in Haryana is found to be significantly lower than the national average. The statistics reveal that in the year 2009-10, women occupied only 4.11 percent of the directly employed workers in the state against the national average of 19.8 percent. The

state slipped from 18th position in the year 2001 to 27th position in 2011 on the female labor participation index and exhibited more fluctuations than male labor force participation rate (Narayan, 2016). The participation of rural women in the workforce in 2011 stood at 20.8 percent which was significantly higher than women from the urban areas at 12.11 percent (Narayan, 2016). However, studies reveal that most women laborers in the rural sector are casually employed and engaged in either unpaid family labor or own account employment whereas the maximum number of female workers in urban areas fall under the category of salaried or wage workers. It has also been observed that no female worker in rural areas fall under the category of employer due to the prevalence of strong feudalistic and patriarchal values in the rural sector of the state (Sharma, 2018).

The number of man-days operated by women in Haryana also illustrates a great disparity when compared to the figures at national level. The man-days worked by women in the state account for only 3.94 percent against the nationwide statistics of 18.38 percent i.e., almost 4.66 times more than Haryana. In addition to this, a significant difference can be observed in the male-female wage rate per man-day worked for directly employed laborers. The difference in the average salaries for men and women was recorded at 38.2 percent for the year 1999-2000 which however, declined to 17.8 percent in the year 2009-10. The women labor participation rate and gender gap in workforce participation rate display a significant variation across various districts of Haryana. According to the statistics from the

year 2001, a higher female labor participation rate can be observed in south and south-western districts such as Mahendergarh, Sirsa, Fatehabad, Rewari, Jind, Hisar and Bhiwani as compared to the northern and eastern region of the state which fell under the red zone indicating high gender gap in work participation rate. However, numbers from the year 2011 indicated improved performance of northern districts both in terms of female work participation rate and gender disparity in the labor rates (Narayan, 2016).

Magnitude of Crime Against Women

The incidence and magnitude of crime against women in a state adequately reflects the extent of gender inequalities existing in that area. As per a report by National Crime Record Bureau, the share of women in the state comprises 2.07 percent of the entire female population of the country and accounts for 3.6 percent of the crimes committed in India. Violence against women can take many forms such as physical violence which includes slapping, kicking, hitting, and beating, sexual violence including forced intercourse and other sexual abuses and psychological violence covers acts like torture, intimidation, humiliation, isolation from friends and family, monitoring and control over movements etc. (Deswal, 2019). A continuous surge in crimes against women such as rape, torture, dowry deaths, molestation, domestic violence, and sexual harassment has been observed in the state (Chander et al., 2020). Haryana accounted for 3.77 percent of the total crimes committed against women under IPC in the country in the year 2018-19 (Dhingra, 2020).

Among all kinds of violence against women, rape or attempt to rape has been proven to be the most heinous crime (Dhingra, 2020). The statistics reveal that in 2001, the incidence of rape was mainly reported in only three districts of Haryana i.e., Panipat, Karnal and Faridabad but widened to nine districts i.e., Rohtak, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Bhiwani, Jind, Ambala, Panipat, Karnal and Palwal till the year 2011 (Sharma et al., 2018). Haryana constituted 3.81 percent of the aggregate rape cases of the country whereas the share of state in attempt to rape cases of the entire nation was 4.23 percent. Several cases of kidnapping or abduction of women for the purpose of sexual abuse or human trafficking can also be witnessed in Haryana. The state has registered 4.58 percent of the total abduction cases against women in India for the year 2018-19 (Dhingra, 2020).

A type of violence against women widespread in Indian society and Haryana is bride-burning or dowry deaths. The evil tradition of dowry has a significant impact on women's life which often results in socio-psychological, medical, and financial concerns (Chander et al., 2020). The statistics reveal a high rate of dowry deaths in Hisar and Bhiwani districts in the year 2001 which were replaced by Sonipat and Gurgaon in 2011. In 2011, the districts with high incidences of dowry deaths in Haryana were Panchkula, Ambala, Rewari, Kurukshetra and Fatehabad. However, in comparison to the year 2001, a slight decrease was observed in the number of dowry-related deaths in 2011 (Sharma et al., 2018). The state recorded 2.97 percent of the aggregate

dowry related crimes in the country in the year 2018-19 (Dhingra, 2020).

Another form of crime against women is domestic violence which can be commonly observed in the country and the study area. A major reason behind this act is the patriarchal mindset of the society where women are considered emotionally and physically weaker than men along with their financial dependence on males (Deswal, 2019). Haryana accounted for 0.34 percent of the entire domestic violence cases of India in the year 2018-19 (Dhingra, 2020). The incidence of domestic violence has severe implications on the life of affected women and increases their chances of suffering from physical and psychological problems such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and suicide (Deswal, 2019).

The illegal trafficking of women from other states and marrying them off without their consent is another intense crime taking place in Haryana. Bride trafficking basically involves kidnapping or abduction of women for the purpose of selling or reselling them in the name of marriage. The consequences of this atrocious act include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at the hands of the people who purchased them. The practice of female foeticide has been held as a major reason behind trafficking of brides from other areas as due to low sex ratio, there is a lack of marriageable girls in the state which forces people to buy brides from outside (Upadhyay, 2020). Haryana registered 3.44 percent of the aggregate cases for immoral trafficking of women of India in the year 2018-19 (Dhingra, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The discrimination against girl children in the state is manifested in every aspect such as malnutrition, health care services, feeding patterns etc. and the statistics provide clear evidence of prevailing gender disparity in Haryana. The son preference over daughters is attributed to the traditional patriarchal mindset which contributes to sustenance of gender disparity and inequality. There are several reasons behind the deeply rooted gender bias and son preference in Haryana such as for ensuring financial security, providing old-age support, performing the last rites to help in the salvation of souls, carrying the family name etc. The statistics across the time periods indicate an unfavorable pattern of sex ratio in the state and significant variations were noted in the female labor force participation. Though, an improving nature of literacy rate in the state can be observed, yet it is evident that female literacy has been less progressive and the issue of gender disparity in education has remained a matter of great concern constantly. Haryana is a prosperous agrarian state of India with high per capita income and state domestic product, yet it occupies the highest position on the index of crimes committed against women across all the states of the country. The overall status of women in the state as obtained through above parameters reveal women being in a vulnerable position in the state of Haryana.

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