Gender Preference of Child among Married Women in Field Practice Area of Rohilkhand Medical College and Hospital, Bareilly

ABSTRACT

The underestimation of women is quite visible in our country through adverse sex ratio at birth for girls. The present study attempts to address the desired gender preferences of the child of couples in field practice areas of Rohilkhand Medical College and Hospital, Bareilly. Randomly selected 408 women were interviewed using a schedule. It was observed that 80.1% of the respondents had expressed their contentment with either gender choice. Of the remaining the majority had expressed their desire for a male child (13.5%) followed by a female child (6.4%).

Keywords:


INTRODUCTION

Undervaluation of women is quite visible in our country in terms of lower status of girl child, unwantenedness, practices as dowry, lower social status of parents of brides, lifelong responsibility of parents even after marriage, fear of sexual exploitation and abuse, disdain upon arrival of girl child.

Recent newspaper reports and raids have clearly brought out the rampant misuse of sonography for prenatal sex determination and the need to sensitize the community on the vital issue of skewed sex ratio and its consequent social impacts. The present study attempts to address the desired gender preferences of the child of couples in field practice areas of Rohilkhand Medical College and Hospital (RMCH), Bareilly.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To find out the gender preference of child among married women in field practice area of RMCH, Bareilly.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out in field practice area of RMCH, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh. This is a cross-sectional study of married women of reproductive age group in field practice area of RMCH and were enrolled in it. They were told about the purpose of the study. Informed consent was taken from each respondent before conducting the interview.

A total of 408 participants were taken and asked questions as per schedule. Data was entered and analyzed to find male child preference among women in field practice area of RMCH. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

RESULTS

The study was conducted in field practice area of RMCH (Graph 1). Among 408 participants, 26 (6.4%) participants had been found to have preference for a girl child, 55 (13.5%) for boy, but majority 327 (80.1%) wants to have child without preference for any gender (Table 1).

Graph 1: Bar diagram showing preference for a child (1: Girl; 2: Boy; 3: No gender preference)
DISCUSSION

The deficit of women in India and the possible factors responsible for it have aroused attention among demographers, social scientists, and women activists who have tried to understand the phenomenon in terms of under-enumeration of women in the census counts, sex-selective migration, and sex ratio at birth, as well as sex differentials in mortality.

The table of this study reveal quite a rosy picture as compared to earlier times when male child preferences were very strongly expressed. Yet it is hard to be believed. If gender neutrality does indeed prevail then why aren't girls visible? Why are they missing? Or perhaps this gender neutrality is a recent phenomenon? Time would tell. However, this does bring home one fact that the government activities are indeed sensitizing the people on this issue.

It is heartening to note that there are also respondents who opine a preference for a female child for reasons as considering a female child as the “Laxmi” of the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender preference of the child</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES