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## Gender disparity: Education and child sex ratio

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### Abstract

The last census was a centre of debate throughout the country and abroad among the sociologists and population demographers. The centre of the debate was enumeration of caste would interfere with the 'integrity' of the population count or raise the feeling of inequality. But what revealed from census 2011 provisional data was more shocking and unexpected. The child sex ratio (CSR) which has dropped from 927 girls per 1,000 boys in 2001 to an all-time low of 914 in 2011. Practices leading to fewer girls in the 0-6 age group have been spreading more thinly. The circle is widening in most of the states and union territories. It was shame for the humanity in the world of liberalization, multiculturalism and feminism. This is an important indicator for existing inequality between men and women and their low status in Indian society. Perhaps, no one pretend the murder of girl child in the country before and after they born, is on the rise. Census 2011 also reported the female gain in literacy more than men. Instead of increase in female literacy rate over two decades their social status is not increasing as desired. Moreover, with the increase in literacy, the child sex ratio declines. It seems that education has not brought wisdom. It seems that 'knowledge' has played evil by strengthening by patriarchy mindset in the Indian society.

**Keywords:** gender, sex ration, missing girl, education, and moral values

### 1. Introduction

According to the Census of 2011, India's population was 1210 million, 51.54% are male and 48.46% are female. This means India's sex ratio has increased from 933 in 2001 to 940 in 2011 census. Population increased by 17.64% between 2001 and 2011 and it led to the annual growth rate of 1.64%. This census has come up with many positives indicators like decline in the rate of population growth, a rise in literacy rate and also of the overall sex ratio of the number of women per 1,000 men. But the child sex ratio (CSR) which has dropped from 927 girls per 1000 boys in 2001 to an all-time low of 914 in 2011. Incidentally, the national average of 914 is also the worst India has had since Independence. This census reported more dangerous phenomena of murdering the girl child in the womb before they born. It also attracts the attention of the civil society, planners, and allied ministries to explore the reasons and to calling for "crusade" to curb crime against the girl child. Addressing bureaucrats and civil society at a function in New Delhi, Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh claimed Indian girls and women "have done us proud in classrooms, in boardrooms and on the sports field. They have broken existing barriers to prove their worth in almost every sphere". He added, vehemently that "the falling child sex ratio (as shown in the latest census data) is an indictment of our social values". It would not be wrong if put his words like, it is the social facts (values) are responsible for this social disorder in the society. Likely, Durkheim, a social positivist put it in his seminal work 'Suicide' which published in 1897 that the reasons of suicide lie outside the individual. In other words, it our socio-cultural condition of society, responsible for murdering of girl child. Moreover, it is the cultural constrain acts on the individual to opt for such crime. Therefore, I argue that the very socialization process which constructs the personality and values of every individual is dominated by patriarchy sentiments and our cultural ethos and eidos. In this process of socialization, we learn to devalue the women in the society, this attitude plays a positive role to eliminate the girl child from the society. The people of India are so diverse ethnically, culturally, linguistically, politically and economically that it is impossible to explain the phenomenon with single reasons of declining child sex ratio as it varies across various states and union territories. The paper argues 'how social condition and cultural belief manifest the murder of girl child in India'.

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The fact is that millions of women are “missing” in India and other parts of the world has received attention from policy makers, economists, scholars and governments because of its profound human and social implications. Though, India has banned the sex selective abortion considers being the one of the major factors responsible for declining child sex ratio. There is a debate that there is under count of female head in the household during the collection of data. But the two-research paper published by eminent demographers like Premi (2001) <sup>[1]</sup> and Bose (2001) <sup>[2, 5]</sup> differently showed that there is no statistical aberration in counting female child rather declining child sex ratio is a real phenomenon.

In reality, women status is low in Indian Society. It has been quite well-known fact that females are supposed lower status than male members in India, the country of all-powerful goddesses and political god mothers, the female has a much lower chance of survival than the male. It is somewhat less well-known that there are remarkable regional contrasts within India on the female differential chance of survival (Bardhan, 1982) <sup>[3]</sup>. About two thousand years ago, the position of women in the Hindu society was cogently enunciated in the Laws of Manu. In this book it was stated that "a woman should never be independent. Her father has authority over her in childhood, her husband has authority over her in youth, and in old age her son has authority over her" (Romila, 1963) <sup>[4]</sup>. While there has been some change in the status of women in post-independence India, and recently with growing economic development in India. This has been limited only to those who have had opportunities of education and employment. In practice, the older view point still prevails in both rural and urban areas where both the poorer and the better-off families adhere to the traditional norms of a woman's place in society. Moreover, this ideology of equal status did not inculcate and transcended by the large section of the people of India during the process of socialization from the childhood. On the above background I shall argue that i) why the child sex ratio is declining in India? What are the factors responsible for “missing girls” in India? Why the increase in literacy not able to contribute in increasing value of an individual and for larger society? Though there is large number of literature available in this issue but my paper uniquely questions the role of culture in declining child sex ratio? In other words, why there is hue and cry for a son and not for a boy in Indian society? I shall try to answer these questions within the domain of culture.

## 2. Research Objectives

The research objectives of this paper are following

- (a) The present study aims to analyze the gender disparity in Indian society by analyzing the pattern of child sex ratio
- (b) The relationship between education and moral values. This means how the level of education affects the killing of the girl child.

## 3. Methodology

The paper is primarily based on the secondary source. The census data of 2011 has been used to see the pattern of sex ratio in various Indian states and Union Territories. It also used the data of previous census 1991 and 2001 whenever required for comparison. It has analyzed the Child sex Ratio

and Literacy rate for 35 states including UTs and analyzed their interrelationship.

## 4. Child Sex Ratio

The provisional census 2011 has counted 623 crore male and 586 crore female which gives rise to sex ratio of 940 females per 1000 males; registering an improvement of seven points on the 2001 sex ratio of 933 females for every 1,000 males, which is a matter of some satisfaction. But a matter of deep concern is the decline in sex ratio of population in 0-6 age group (henceforth called child sex ratio) from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011. This time Child sex ratio decline by 13 points is the all-time low. This paper examines the reasons likely to be responsible for this decline.

For the first time census of India in 1991 tabulated the sex ratio for the age group 0-6 and 7 and above separately. An eminent demographer Mahendra K Premi went further and calculated child sex ratio for the year 1981 ‘from the single year age data by sex’ (Premi, 2006:1876). At the national level the ‘child sex ratio’ (CSR) declined from 962 in 1981 to 945 in 1991. A decline of 17 points in CSR between 1981 and 1991 is serious matter of concern. In addition, he found that the declining trend in CSR is onwards from 1961. He shows that ‘data tabulated from 1961 Census onward of CSR for the country and major states along with union territory of Delhi show that, at the national level, the same declined monotonically from 1961 onward’ (Premi, 2006: 1876). These raise a finger on the state and policy makers for not taking the issues on first hand. Also, the reasons for declining CSR are found in the society. It is the culture and customs which manifests our values to give death penalty to those unborn (foeticide) and just after born (infanticide).

## 5. Data Analysis

To begin the discussion of India’s Child Sex Ratio (CSR) pattern, table (1) has been compiled by drawing on both earlier and provisional figures made available in recent past. Differential CSR is quite vivid across all the states and UTs. Though the difference is quite positive in some states but the difference in 2001-1991 will guide us what is the real situation and change in a decade. There are many states reported lower CSR in 2011 than the 1991, but they are gaining. This implies that these states are still in position of shortage female child and lower than 1991. In other words, we should not perceive that those states are gaining is not a problem. To understand the better situation, one should look at the difference in 2001-1991. Some states show positive change are still not able to catch the CSR prevail in 1991. At the national level, the decline of 18 points in 2001 has now been followed by a further decline in 13 points in 2011. The child sex ratio is lowest in three decades starting from 1981 <sup>[1]</sup>.

There are ten states where the child sex ratio is on the lower end ranges from 830 to 899. The states in this range are Haryana (830), Punjab (846), Jammu & Kashmir (859), NCT of Delhi (866), Chandigarh (867), Rajasthan (883), Maharashtra (883), Uttarakhand (886), Gujarat (886) and Uttar Pradesh (899). More interesting is that all the states in this category has unique characteristics and known to the people of India like some for their historical importance, size of the states, and Gujrat, Punjab and Haryana are known as developed states. Though, the Haryana and Punjab happen to be the richest states in the country, child sex ratio is lowest in these states. But if we look on the

literacy status of these states their participation in the literacy rate is more visible. Among above 10 states the literacy rate in three states is lower than the national average whereas remaining 7 states have higher literacy rate than the national average. This result compels to formulate the hypothesis that higher education is negatively related with the child sex ratio or higher the literacy rate, higher will be the pattern violence against the girl. This means the practice of amniocentesis is highly prevalent among the educated people than the low educated people. The relation of education and literacy has been discussed in next section. Madhya Pradesh is the only state where the CSR is 912 i.e., 2 point less than the national average. In remaining 24 states/UTs the CSR is more than the national average. In these states the highest CSR prevails in Mizoram (971) and lowest in Goa with CSR of 920. Among the BIMARU states two states with CSR less than the national average. The states with lowest CSR are Haryana, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and the NCT of Delhi. The empirical study at micro level is required to understand the root causes of poor CSR in these states to formulate effective policy mechanism.

**Table 1: Child Sex Ratio and Trend in Three Decade**

State/UTs	1991	2001	Difference 2001-1991	2011	Difference 2011-2001
India	945	927	-18	914	-13
Punjab	875	798	-77	846	48
Chandigarh	899	845	-54	867	22
Haryana	879	819	-60	830	11
Himachal Pradesh	951	896	-55	906	10
Andaman & Nicobar Island#	973	957	-16	966	9
Mizoram	969	964	-5	971	7
Tamil Nadu	948	942	-6	946	4
Gujrat	928	883	-45	886	3
Kerala	958	960	2	959	-1
NCT of Delhi	915	868	-47	866	-2
Puducherry#	958	967	9	965	-2
Meghalaya	975	973	-2	970	-3
Karnataka	960	946	-14	943	-3
Arunachal Pradesh	961	964	3	960	-4
Assam	964	965	1	957	-8
Bihar	959	942	-17	933	-9
West Bengal	967	960	-7	950	-10
Chattisgarh	975	975	0	964	-11
Tripura	975	966	-9	953	-13
Uttar Pradesh	928	916	-12	899	-17
Daman & Diu*	925	926	1	909	-17
Andhra Pradesh	975	961	-14	943	-18
Goa	964	938	-26	920	-18
Sikkim	986	963	-23	944	-19
Orrisa	967	953	-14	934	-19
Nagaland	993	964	-29	944	-20
Madhya Pradesh	952	932	-20	912	-20
Uttarakhand/Uttaranchal	906	908	2	886	-22
Jharkhand	966	965	-1	943	-22
Manipur	961	957	-4	934	-23
Rajasthan	916	909	-7	883	-26
Maharashtra	946	913	-33	883	-30
Lakshadweep#	974	959	-15	908	-51
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	973	979	6	924	-55
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	941		859	-82

**Source:** Census of India (1991, 2001, 2011)

At national level again the CSR is declining. Only eight states including union territories for Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and

Andaman and Nicobar Islands have reported an increasing trend in CSR, all other 27 states and Union territories, the child sex ratio shows a decline over 2001 census. Declining CSR in states like Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra has got demographers and Social Scientists thinking. For example, in Karnataka sex ratio (females per 1,000 male) is highest in 90 years, the child sex ratio (0-6 years) is the lowest (943) in six decades. While Jammu & Kashmir, is thought to be India's paradise on earth is no more a heavenly place for a girl child. The state has recorded the single largest decline in sex ratio in the country with 82 fewer girls in the state per 1,000 boys. Also, Maharashtra has recorded a dismal child sex ratio of 883. This led to a gap of 30 girls between 2001 and 2011. It has a lower ratio than states that are traditionally considered backward, like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Haryana though gain in CSR from 819 in 2001 to 830 in 2011 but it has the lowest CSR among all the states and union territories. The situation in all states is same for one reason or the other. In summary, this data reveals us that instead of economic and educational development in few states, it reported major decline in CSR. It is difficult to locate the single reasons of this social disorder and need details in depth ethnographic studies to come out with more.

## 6. Shifting Pattern (Decadal Shift)

Now take look at shifting pattern in child sex ratio in a three decade. Starting from the higher slab of CSR (1050+), there is no state. Second slab ranges (950-1000), there are 23 states in 1991, but after this it declines continuously. In 2001 it contains 28 states but the major decline occurred in 2011. Third slab (900-949) shows that the no of states including Union territories is increasing from 8, 11 and 15 in 1991, 2001 and 2011 consecutively. This is the unfavourable trend for CSR in India. In other words, it is clearly visible as the number of females per 1000 increases the no of states decreases.

**Table 2: No of Districts according to Child Sex Ratio**

CSR (0-6 years)	No of Districts		
	1991	2001	2011
1050+	-	-	-
950-1000	23	18	10
900-949	8	11	15
850-899	3	3	8
800-849	-	2	2
Less than 800	-	1	-

**Source:** Tabulated by Author from census 1991, 2001 and 2011

The third slab category states are the daughter killers. Asish Bose used the 'acronym is DEMARU where 'd' stands for daughter, 'e' for eliminating, m for male, 'a' for aspiring, 'r' for rage and 'u' for ultrasound, that is to say: daughter eliminating male aspiring rage for ultrasound. The second slab category states/UTs are indeed the blackholes, in India's demographic transition and a symptom of the collapse of the civilisation' (Bose, 2001) <sup>[2, 5]</sup>.

## 7. Education and Child Sex Ratio

Education is one of the strong agents to bring about change in the society. It is hoped that female education is directly related to their decision-making process, increase age at marriage and economic dependency. The relation of literacy and sex ratio is complex. It is assumed that higher education

leads to lesser discrimination across boys and girls. But the census data shows that there is no relation between these two variables and if it is need to determine. The census revealed the fact that states with higher literacy is not come with favourable child sex ratio.

From table (3) & (4) it is clear Kerala occupied the first position among all the Indian states and UTs with 93.91% of literacy rate with 959 CSR. But the highest CSR of 971 is

seen in Mizoram with literacy rate 91.58%. Whereas Haryana with literacy rate of 77% shows CSR of 830 which is the lowest among all the Indian states. In contrary, Bihar with lowest literacy rate of 64% having higher CSR of 933 as compare to other states with higher literacy rate but lower CSR than Bihar. These above relations between education and CSR prove that there is no vivid relationship between education and happening of CSR.

**Table 3:** Literacy Wise Distribution of CSR in India

Literacy	No of State	CSR Range	Name of State/UTs
90-100	3	950+	Mizoram (971), Kerala (959)
		900-949	Lakshadweep (908)
		850-899	
		800-849	
80-89	12	950+	Tripura (953), Puducherry (965), Andaman & Nicobar Is (966)
		900-949	Daman & Diu (909), Goa (920), HP(906), Sikkim (944), TN (946), Nagaland (944)
		850-899	Chandigarh (867), NCT of Delhi (866), Maharashtra (883),
		800-849	
70-79	13	950+	Meghalaya (970), WB (950), Assam (957), Chattisgarh (964)
		900-949	Dadra & Nagar Haveli (924), Karnataka (943), Orissa (934), MP (912)
		850-899	Uttarkhand & Gujrat (866),
		800-849	Punjab (846), Haryana (830),
60-69	7	950+	Arunachal Pradesh (960)
		900-949	Andhra Pradesh & Jharkhand (943), Bihar (933)
		850-899	UP (899), Rajasthan (883), J & K (859)
		800-849	

**Table 4:** Literacy and Child Sex Ratio

State/Uts	Literacy	CSR
India	74.04	914
Haryana	76.64	830
Punjab	76.68	846
Jammu & Kashmir	68.74	859
NCT of Delhi	86.34	866
Chandigarh#	86.43	867
Rajasthan	67.06	883
Maharashtra	82.91	883
Uttarakhand	79.63	886
Gujarat	79.31	886
Uttar Pradesh	69.72	899
Himachal Pradesh	83.78	906
Lakshadweep#	92.28	908
Daman & Diu #	87.07	909
Madhya Pradesh	70.63	912
Goa	87.4	920
Dadra & Nagar Haveli #	77.65	924
Bihar	63.82	933
Manipur	79.85	934
Orissa	73.45	934
Jharkhand	67.63	943
Andhra Pradesh	67.66	943
Karnataka	75.6	943
Sikkim	82.2	944
Nagaland	80.11	944
Tamil Nadu	80.33	946
West Bengal	77.08	950
Tripura	87.75	953
Assam	73.18	957
Kerala	93.91	959
Arunachal Pradesh	66.95	960
Chhattisgarh	71.04	964
Puducherry #	86.55	965
Andaman & Nicobar Islands #	86.27	966
Meghalaya	75.48	970
Mizoram	91.58	971

The increase in literacy rate at national level and in the states seems to have taken a toll on the unborn girl child. And, if the 2011 Census data are to be believed, then the states, which have made substantial gains in literacy rate have also registered a sharp decline in the CSR. It could be concluded that this implies that the sex determination technology and female foeticide is reaching at a faster rate to the people, as they are becoming literate. We could also see how change in literacy rate influence change in the CSR for better understanding of the relation between education and CSR. Thus, 'neither education nor affluence have brought about any significant change in attitudes towards and value of women' (Patel, 2004: 887) [6].

### 8. Factors influence Child Sex Ratio

There are many biological and demographic core reasons of declining child sex ratio in South Asia or South East Asia. In India, to name biological reasons Baruch Blumberg in his 1976 Nobel Prize lecture mentioned that some studies indicated that women infected with hepatitis B virus give birth to male children in higher proportions than the norm. Also, communicable and non-communicable disease is caused more female mortality than males in uterus or in early childhood (Gupta, 2005) [7]. The demographical factors like differential under count, sex differential in mortality, differential in child and infant mortality, sex ratio at birth have huge influence in determination of child sex ratio. But studies found that these factors though important but not the sole threat to the death of girl child in Indian society (Premi, 2001) [1]. Because after the development of medical technology we have controlled over many diseases. India has also achieved better health condition for female and gain in the life expectancy of female than male members.

Recent development in the medical technology and allied fields it has become possible to put a control on the death rate and consequently increase in the life expectancy of the population. It is evident in recent years the life expectancy at birth has become favourable to females and female death rates have become lower than the male death rates. Though it may be led to the improvement in the overall sex ratio in favours of females. Sex ratio at birth becoming more favourable to males has, however, influenced the overall sex ratio in the opposite direction, which is reflected in the adverse child sex ratio. In contrary, the infant mortality rate and child mortality rate has still not favours the female child. The reasons behind this unfavourable condition of the girl child are the foeticide and infanticide (Premi, 2001, Bose, 2001, NFHS-3, Patel, 2007) [1, 2, 5]. On this above background, the phenomenon of declining child sex ratio should look beyond the demographic factors. In this section it tried to look into how these demographic factors and practice of foeticide and infanticide has been manifested within the domain of cultural ethos and eidos. How the culture transmits and transcend the values to the society at large. Why we are still not able to look our girls in the society with equality?

### 9. Sex-Selection Abortion

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1998, the Italian press gave the news of the discovery of a new method to determine the sex of a new baby with 90% accuracy in a sensational term: 'a little boy or a little girl? Soon children by order!' (Benagiano & Paola, 1999). Then we should ask a simple question is new to going to harm the individual(s) to whom it is to be

applied and is it going to be harmed a country, a community, or humanity at large. This is because still we are believed in moral imperatives. But people went beyond morality and opt for a life of murdering their own kin. The close examination of effects of demographic and socio-economic factors in 17 states based on NFHS data proved that 'on an average, there is not much sex selective abortion in India as a whole, although the trend is upward' (Retherford & Roy, 2003: 71) [8]. Though this pattern is varied state- wise, most vulnerable states practiced sex selective abortion are Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. This pattern is also supported by prevailing low CSR in these states shown above. The evidence of sex selective abortion in above mentioned states (Arnold et al, 2002) [9] including other regions of the country could not be excluded. Now it is suggested that the necessary to stop the practice of crusade against the girl child if we want the future of females in India equally with the male members in the society. Commenting on sex selective abortions and female infanticide, Agnihotri says: "The rise in sex selective abortions and emergence of female infanticide in various parts of the country are two serious aspects of excess child mortality" (Agnihotri 2000: 302) [10].

### 10. Son Preferences

The assumption underlying such policies is that a strong cultural preference for sons is driving the imbalance in sex ratios. The literature relates son preference to a variety of social and economic factors in these regions, which interact to make females less valuable to their families: people are pressured to bear sons while limiting the number of daughters in order to conserve scarce household resources. Households have variously resorted to female infanticide and postnatal withholding of health care; and since the mid-1980s, when technology permitting fairly low-cost determination of the sex of fetuses became available; there has been a shift toward prenatal sex selection by means of induced abortion. And because cases of female infanticide are often not reported as live births, they can be hard to distinguish from the consequences of prenatal sex selection in the reported sex ratio of births.

There is a misconception that the son preference has declined in past decades. In contrary, Satish B A Agnihotri went to the extent and conclude that 'son preference had not declined, rather daughter unwantedness or dislike had increased. In the unfavourable predisposition to the daughter and her disappearance from the womb, he invoked the analogy of 'chakravyuh' that predestined death to the foetus' (Patel, 2004) [6].

### 11. Two child Family Norm

If we see the educated and rich family in our neighbourhood we can observe they are very much well versed with the norm of "hum do, hamara do" slangs of Family Planning Programme in India, but more fascinating that the sex ratio of those household is very much balance unlike the national average of disturbing figure. And if the first birth is girl then there is a gap in the second child if not happen to be son in natural way. Again, it is the government intervention that encourages masses to go for foeticide in well-arranged manner. Though, difficult to establish some reservations were expressed about the motivational role of family planning measures role in the use of sex determination tests and female foeticide.

## 12. Cultural manifestations

The social cultural bias against the girl child might have been possibly aggravated by recent medical support in terms of sex determination tests and requires further field investigation (Bose 2001) [2, 5]. The most comprehensive study of juvenile sex ratio (JSR) for the age group 0-9 years was done by Satish Agnihotri (2000) [10], based on 1961 and 1981 Census data. Nevertheless, his simulation exercise does lead him to the right conclusion that sex selection abortion is practiced largely in Indian states. Largely, it is the culture of Indian society which is responsible for the lower status of the girl child in the family or in the larger society.

The verdict is now passed not on whether the elimination on the basis of sex is acceptable or otherwise but on which method is more acceptable sex selective abortion or infanticide. The technological alternative gets legitimized in comparison with infanticide while sanctifying the idea of elimination of the child on the basis of sex. In other words, those parents go for sex selection abortion is given clean chit by the society and they did not break the underlying accepted norms of the society. But the culture has been in question when the elimination of girl child made through the process of infanticide. This in turn spreads the practice of infanticide further among those who do not have access to the facility, or those who cannot afford it, eg, rural poor. Notwithstanding the spread in the 'facilities' for prenatal selection, it will continue to remain beyond the reach of a large number of people in foreseeable future. The two processes will therefore, feed on each other (Ibid, 2000: 303). Though, partially Agnihotri was rightly foresee the situation but it is reported that now the mobile sex determination technique is available and now the people in the countryside is largely practice pre-natal sex selection. Though the way of life i.e., culture differs region wise but the culture of dis-preference is spreading largely among the masses.

To quote Tulsi Patel's (2014) ethnographic work in length is necessary as it provides the cultural explanation of the murder of girl child in the mother womb. She writes "the unfavourable, solemn and outright rejection of mothers giving births to daughters, barring the first daughter in some cases. The tendency is increasing among the prospering middle and lower castes in several districts in UP and MP. These castes, including the OBCs, emulate the higher caste customary practices (sanskritisation), which clearly work more adversely for women's status in and outside the household. The exceedingly greater care and vigilance in raising daughters and in protecting their sexuality, in arranging for grooms, dowry, and lifelong presentations and gifts, are conducive in making girls an avoidable proposition".

Thus, the numerous ritual and secular occasions when daughter's parents encounter embarrassments. These are the cultural notions of our society. In the contrary son is indispensable for performing certain rituals and ceremonies among Hindus. Though, other religious groups encourage sons for moral, cultural or for at least they are the responsible for continuing the future generation of the family. It is also stressed the study of religion in constituting gender relations, especially when the larger socio-political fabric of the society is becoming more and more religious.

The practice of dowry is all India phenomenon. But this practice is more prevalent in North and North-West India

(particularly among the propertied). But this practice which is a notion of our culture is imbibe in every corner of the society though few tribes and communities are not practice it. But it is accepted fact that the practice of dowry is rampant in Indian society and as a result the daily newspaper flourished with the news of dowry deaths and bride torture. This proves the notion of lower value of women in Indian society and strong reason for not having girl child. Because parents thought girl child is a liability. If we take a close look of the data then it is clear that in Eastern part of the country the child sex ratio is better than the Northern states lead us to conclude that the status of women in this region is far better than the north-western region. The high costs women have to pay for not conforming to the social expectations coexist with the society's pressure on the authoritarian male to prove his masculinity. This arise the serious question what men want from women? The serious problem of individual versus society remains. The question of agency and choice in abortion and rights over one's body remain vexed in social research.

It is more the structure of Indian society and family responsible for existing gender inequality in India. There are hardly any society exists in total reality without any bias against the girl child as unfavourable CSR is not the Indian phenomenon only. The social system of patriarchy, with males as the primary authority figures, is central to the organisation of much of Indian society. Patriarchy manifests itself in social, religious, legal, political and economic organisation of society. It continues to strongly influence Indian society, despite the Constitution's attempt to bring about an egalitarian social order. Patriarchal societies in most parts of India have translated their prejudice and bigotry into a compulsive preference for boys and discrimination against the girl child. Critically, the older female members of the family and from larger society are first to urge for son rather than male members (emphasis added). They have also spawned practices such as female infanticide, dowry, bride-burning and sati. They have led to the neglect of nutrition, health care, education, and employment for girls. Women's work is also socially devalued with limited autonomy in decision-making. The intersections of caste, class and gender worsen the situation. Despite its social construction, patriarchal culture, reinforced by the major religions in the country, maintains its stranglehold on gender inequality. The prevalent patriarchal framework places an ideological bar on the discussion of alternative approaches to achieve gender justice (Jacob, 2011) [11].

The recent study conducted by the Centre for Social Research reported that the increasing violence towards women in public spaces has contributed to an increase in female foeticide as many would be parents fear security of a girl child. Parents think that it would be much easier for them to leave a boy alone at home as compared to a girl, (Jacob, 2011) [11]. Also, in villages, too, it is believed that though dowry is a one-time payment, the burden of 'maintaining chastity' is immense. It was found that apart from violence in public spaces, a woman who had only daughters was also more likely to be the target of domestic violence both by the men and women member of the family.

## 13. Pre-Natal Act

Thanks to the intervention of the Supreme Court, the government of India is coming out of its inertia but the law

which bans prenatal sex selection tests is totally ineffective. It may be recalled that the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques, (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act came into force from January 1, 1996. The Supreme Court of India in its order of May 4, 2001 on the writ petition filed by an NGO called CEHAT and others against the Union of India ordered: "Prima facie, it appears that despite the PNDT Act being enacted by the parliament five years back, neither the state government nor the central government has taken appropriate actions for its implementation". The Supreme Court gave detailed directions to the central government, the Central Supervisory Board (CSB), state governments/ UTs administration and other appropriate authorities. Now after the declaration of provisional census 2011 data the state and civil society has woken up to curb this crusade and independent and joint initiative has raided many illegal sex determination shop and fertility clinics in various parts of the country. Moreover, improper governance and lack of monitoring of the law as major concerns.

The Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, enacted in 1994, outlaws sex determining ultrasound scans, and first-time offenders can face imprisonment of three years, as well as a fine of Rs 10,000. Yet, the law is neither followed nor enforced. According to a 2007 handbook released by the ministry of health and family welfare, only 384 cases had been registered under the Act in India.

#### 14. Conclusion

The above discussion shows that more and more people irrespective of caste, income group, education and religion are now going for female foeticide. Even more disturbing is the fact the 'girl deficit' is more prominent among educated families. The use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques, sex selection techniques and against their misuse should be brought under the existing law, Pre-conception & Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 (PC & PNDT Act). But Manmohan Singh said this couldn't be improved by merely strict compliance with the existing laws. "What is more important is how we view and value the girl child in our society, he said. There is a need to review the policies.

At a social level, religious and civil societies must mobilise their collective energy to raise collective consciousness against this barbaric practice. Also, need to assure strategy to remove the prejudice against the girl child. The trend is disturbing and there are urgent needs to undertake quantitative and ethnographic research to find out the root causes of discrimination towards girls towards achieving an egalitarian society.

Close monitoring of the clinics engaged in ultra sound and abortion of female fetus and they should be booked under stringent law. Instead of the increase in the literacy rate of the country the violence against girls before their birth lead us to paint with a single colour that the morality is lacking among the people which need to be addressed through media, government and civil society. This questions the relationship between social development and sex ratio. There are qualitative and sensitive issues behind this trend that need serious investigation. The problem is not merely statistical, but also of individual perceptions and nuances. This issue requires sociological, anthropological and historical perspectives to better diagnose and understand this virus.

Studies have also documented correlations of low sex ratios at birth with higher education, social class and economic status (Jacob, 2011) <sup>[11]</sup>. This study also found the declining CSR with higher level of literacy. In fact, the availability of new technology and its easy access for the urban, wealthy and the educated have worsened the trend and harmed the status of women in Indian society

In a national consultancy on declining sex ratio (female foeticide), it was recommended that a debate on different religions from gender perspective needs to be organized. Secondly, the government should set targets for correcting the declining child sex ratio. Thirdly, the sex ratio at birth and gender differentials in infant mortality rate (IMR) should be included as health and gender parity indicators.

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