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WOMEN-IS THEIR PERSPECTIVE REALLY CHANGED? (A RESEARCH PAPER BASED ON WOMEN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN)

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ABSTRACT

The present research is an attempt to analyze the influence of fundamental thinking being developed in our society regarding want of male baby and increasing trends towards female feticide. Although education has brought about much a change in women's style of thinking, still she is not free from the shackles of cynicism. She still is highly insecure from the other woman. Giving birth to female child is not much a matter of pleasure for her as compared to a baby boy. After a grueling day at work she has to handle all the dual responsibilities which have added to the miseries of her life, so much so that those who are earning a meager amount feel that if they were men their life would have been much better off. Howsoever, modernized she may become; still most of her decisions are dependent on either family or other male members. Efforts have been made to carry an in depth analysis of society through collection of primary data from its various female segments.

KEYWORDS

feticide, women perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.

--Diane Marie Child

Indian woman is just another name of sufferings and sacrifices. From the ages old, she is there to serve others in every manner possible, yet still struggling hard to attain her right to birth. The problems, challenges, apprehensions and all the ups and the downs that define the nuts and bolts of every family, moderately results in suppression of girl surviving in mother's fetus. Trapped between tradition and modernity, the educated woman has now raised her voice against this silent murder. Let's know to what extent this effort has become successful. Surely God created man before woman. But then you always make a rough draft before the final master piece.

The study mentioned is performed to find out the reasons behind decreasing female sex ratio in Haryana. Whether this reduction is society generated or women themselves are responsible for it? Has education become successful in bringing change in woman's ideology towards herself? To what extent status of women has improved? Is woman ready to own responsibilities of her owns?

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The study aims at concentrating those fundamental factors, which influence women's opinions and beliefs prevailing in the society. In this direction the following objectives have been framed.

- To study the extent of women's likings towards female baby
- To explore the present status of women in the society
- To examine whether education has broadened the freedom level of women

For this following hypothesis were prepared

H₀₁ Woman feels pride in being a woman

H₀₂ Second daughter is always warmly accepted in the family

H₀₃ Education has not changed woman's attitude towards problems

H₀₄ Woman keenly wants to shoulder her parent's responsibility

H₀₅ Being a female woman has missed nothing in her life

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study exploratory in nature was conducted with a random stratified sampling technique having a universe of 200 respondents. A survey was conducted, on the eve of women's day, in a girl's college of Haryana, where decreasing female sex ratio is becoming an alarming issue. The respondents included Principal, teaching faculty, non teaching staff members, forth class employees (including lady peons, sweepers etc.), female labor engaged in college on construction sites, management people and the most important category, students of the college. In short women from different walks of life were chosen for this survey. An attempt has been made to get more cognizant response of feelings of women through a questionnaire. The questions were related to the core information about woman, their perception about self, towards other women in life especially towards the girl child. The casual relationship between education level and thought process, financial structure and attitude towards life, urban/rural background and preference towards male child has been studied with the help of descriptive data consisting of suitable test statistics cross tabs and chi square test. To appraise the present scenario of women perspective in a lucid style, various aspects have been studied with the help of percentage analysis. There were many other questions asking their opinions about role of education in women upliftment and strengthening, the freedom enjoyed by a female in various decisions relating to her own life and social issues, her priorities in life and ultimately her satisfaction and feeling of proud, for being a woman.

Major classification of respondents was on the basis of their age, education level, financial structure & rural/urban background. 29% of respondents were between age group 18 to 25 years, 26% between 25 to 35 years, 30% between 35 to 45 years and 15% were above 45 years of age. Since there is direct positive correlation between education level and financial structure a merged group has been framed for analysis constituting 18% respondents under uneducated category entitled E₁, 22% studied up to 10th standard denoted as E₂, 35% pursuing for their graduate degree termed as E₃ and 25% post graduate and other known as E₄. 80% of total universe is urban belt and rest 20% belongs to rural background.

ANALYSIS AT A GLANCE

Since education plays a deciding role, level of education has primarily been taken for in-depth investigations. Woman with the help of education has tried to take off her dreams into new heights. Although in male dominant society it is not an easy job. The very first question of survey was related to self appraisal. It stated "How do you feel being a woman?" 72% respondents on an average from all categories answered it as 'Great'; 18% chose the option 'Gender makes no difference' to their identity and 10% ladies reported their lives as 'miserable' the third option. But when asked if their daughters/sisters were supposed to live life like them, would they be happy, a big no came. All of them wanted a better life for their younger ones indicating the facts that they don't want that the

compromises and adjustments they did in their lives should ever come in the way of their younger ones. Further too cross examine the response when asked, Do you feel, if you were a man your life would have been better, the results were quite alarming. 60% of uneducated and 65% of respondents studied up to 10th opted for this option depicting the scenario that although these people have adjusted in their present lives yet they love the freedom, physical security and decision making rights enjoyed by the male members of society. They want to get rid of their miseries and enjoy their lives in the manner feeded in their subconscious regarding liberty of man.

TABLE 1.1: FEELINGS ABOUT BEING A WOMAN

Education level	Great	Average	Miserable
E ₁	57%	28%	15%
E ₂	75%	16%	9%
E ₃	79%	14%	7%
E ₄	80%	15%	5%

2nd & 3rd question of the study related to birth of girl child. Among 18 to 25 age group 90% girls showed a warm welcome to the birth of girl child including 100% of rural belt. Within 25 to 35 age group results were more or less the same. But results obtained from 35 to 45 age levels were quite shocking. More than 60% response (majority from urban belt) showed a special liking & priority of boy over girl, which is the major cause behind increasing imbalanced sex ratio. People of this age group need a good round of counseling to change their ideologies and to see a new way of thinking. Age group 45 and above again showed an overwhelming response for girl child giving an indication that coming grand mothers are having a broader vision resulting in welcome of girl child and control over female feticide. When cross checked, the amazing fact was that uneducated and low educated ladies and especially from rural background showed a positive response towards 2nd female child in the family. Yet more spread of education is needed to wipe out old myths, beliefs structured in their minds. Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at domestic and societal levels are some of other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in all part of country.

TABLE 1.2: 2ND DAUGHTER IN FAMILY

Education	Not required	Okay	Happy
E ₁	23%	69%	8%
E ₂	9%	75%	16%
E ₃	7%	45%	48%
E ₄	5%	47%	48%

Each & every woman surveyed admitted the importance of education in her life. Education makes a woman stronger & financially independent and awakens her for identity and recognition. Moreover an educated lady educates the generations and can contribute towards growth & welfare of society by nurturing good citizens for country. When women are supported & empowered, whole of society is benefited. Their families are healthier, more children go to school, and agricultural productivity improves resulting in increased income. In short communities become more resilient. Whether education helps a lady in planning her family is depicted with the help of table 1.3 which stated that on average 16% of respondents feel that it is just a myth that woman can have some decision in this regard. 8% have opinion that it is a male dominant society whereas 59% think that education had made women stronger and she actively and firmly plays a role in deciding size of her family although ratio is reduced to 30% in case of uneducated ladies whereas nearly 80% in case of highly educated ladies.

TABLE 1.3: ROLE OF EDUCATION IN FAMILY WAY

Education	MYTH	No change	Male dominance	Stronger woman
E ₁	25%	28%	17%	30%
E ₂	16%	30%	5%	49%
E ₃	10%	8%	5%	77%
E ₄	12%	5%	4%	79%

When asked about taking care of parents in their old age 16% respondents stated that society's trends don't allow parents to put any burden on daughters. 10%, on the other hand, narrated if brother was there, why they should opt for this responsibility? 13% expressed their inability due to non cooperation from their in-laws & family. 61% showed their keenness to shoulder responsibility of parents in their old age. It means girls themselves are coming forward to take this responsibility. This is a healthy sign of our society. Girls should be brought up in such a manner that they understand their responsibilities towards their parents who have brought them up in such a gorgeous manner bearing all discomforts and inconveniences at their own.

TABLE 1.4: SHOULDERING OF PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY

Education	Society trends	In-laws disliking	Brother will own	I am ready
E ₁	27%	14%	14%	45%
E ₂	18%	21%	8%	53%
E ₃	13%	10%	10%	67%
E ₄	6%	5%	8%	81%

Response for being a girl what they have missed, was full of pains. It is the increasing physical insecurity which has created terror in the minds of this segment of society. Rapid increase in crime rate, defective law & order scenario has ruined their freedom and liberty which was just born after a long struggle. One poor lady explained her unfortunate story of being sold as commodity in present times which really is a stigma & curse to modern educated society.

TABLE 1.5: THINGS MISSED BEING A WOMAN

Education	Love of parents	Freedom	Decision making	Nothing
E ₁	14%	38%	42%	6%
E ₂	20%	54%	22%	4%
E ₃	8%	26%	51%	15%
E ₄	4%	20%	40%	36%

FINDINGS

Results derived by applying chi square tests from data observed are mix of sugar and spice. Null hypothesis that woman herself enjoys & feels pride in being a woman is accepted as values observed are 12.44 which are within 5% and 1% level of significance. The basic reason behind this acceptance is that most of women are self contended and not much ambitious about their lives when taken personally. They are satisfied with their present status in society. The results drawn from percentages also confirm this fact. The second null hypothesis that 2nd daughter is warmly accepted in family is strongly rejected with values 88.533 at 5% and 1% level of significance. The results obtained show cruel and naked face of society which very proudly accepts the alternate hypothesis that male baby is strongly desired in majority of families in spite of increasing education level, good financial structure and urban background. The third null hypothesis is also rejected (56.672) giving strength to the fact that spread of education has changed women's vision towards problems and challenges faced in the society. The null hypothesis that woman wants to shoulder her parents responsibilities is also rejected with chi square values 24.552. Although while going through percentage study we find that ratio of shouldering responsibilities of parents by woman has increased in highly educated group yet most of the low educated and uneducated women are not seen much interested in this issue. They make themselves free from this responsibility, by taking excuse either of social norms or

communicating it as accountability of brother. This is very surprising that woman take shield of her husband's and in-laws disliking in this issue but on the contrary she is very much ready to have equal rights in parents properties as well as in other matters. This dual standard is quite unfortunate. Female segment has to emerge as a strengthening power and role model of society. If she is escaping from her responsibilities, this is not a healthy sign. Being a woman, female has missed nothing in society is again absolutely rejected with values 84.295. The freedom, space and liberty enjoyed by males have always been a big dream for the lady. She is yet to discover her identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is basically focused on acceptance of female child in family. But the results found hereby show that situation is not very enthusiastic. Ladies themselves have strong desire to have male child in family. Woman herself is yet enemy of another woman. Female child is accepted warmly only after arrival of male baby. And the paradox is that it is the mother, grandmother, aunt and other female members who strongly desire male baby. May be the torture and exploitation faced by themselves and lack of personal space & financial liberty are the reasons behind this approach. But this issue needs a great concern and awareness from society. **A positive social and political approach in this regard can bring improvement to a larger extent. Spread of education can play a vital role in awakening our souls and improving the whole scenario as education has the capability to enlighten every nook and corner of a human.** Examples of successful daughters of India such as **Kalpna Chawla, Chanda Kochhar, Indira Nooie, Saina Nehwal** etc should be cited so that society could be motivated and image of a new strengthened & powerful woman could be emerged. Women can also be motivated by using **inspirational quotes related to girl child and by condemning evil job of aborting daughters using excerpts from religious books** wherever necessary. As women are highly motivated and influenced by religious norms and rituals.

CONCLUSION

Man and woman are different, neither better nor worse. The only thing they have in common is that they belong to same species. They live in different worlds with different values and with different sets of rules. Every one knows it but very few are willing to accept it. The wheel of change always turns in the direction of what we put into our minds. This is the right time to bring change in our thought process to sustain our future generations. Let's not try to disturb nature's laws and abide by the rules made by God to run this universe.

May Almighty enlighten our path with the candle of knowledge!

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

PERSONAL COLUMN

(PLEASE TICK THE RIGHT OPTION)

Name: _____

Educational Qualifications:

- a) Uneducated
- b) Up to 10th
- c) Up to Grad.
- d) P.G. & above

Age:

- a) 18-25
- b) 25-35
- c) 35-45
- d) 45 and above

Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

Income: (Per Month)

- a) Dependent
- b) Upto 5,000
- c) 5,000-10,000
- d) 10,000-25,000
- e) 25,000-above

Marital Status:

- Married
- Unmarried

Background

- A) Urban
- Rural

(Please tick the right choice)

Q 1: How do you feel being a woman?

- a) Great
- b) Gender makes no difference
- c) Miserable
- d) Any other (Please specify) _____

Q 2: Do you think your daughter / sister should lead life just like you or there exist some dissatisfaction in your life due to a woman. Kindly explain?

Q 3: If you are expecting a Female daughter second time, honestly what will be your reaction in your heart?

- a) Hey Bhagwan Kya Ho Gaya
- b) Ishwar Ki Marzi, Jo Bhi De De Par Ek Beta Hota To Accha Tha
- c) Maza Aa Gaya Ab Ghar Me Meri Majority Hogi. Raj Kareng.
- d) Any other (Please specify) _____

Q 4: Do you think educated woman is to some extent more independent in giving birth to Female child.

- a) No, it's a Myth.
- b) Woman herself wants a male baby.
- c) It's a male dominant society. No personal wish.

- d) Yes, education has made women stronger.
e) Any other (Please specify) _____
- Q 5: Normally in a family a woman is the biggest enemy of another woman. What do you think about it?
a) Very right.
b) Right to some extent.
c) Totally disagree.
- Q 6: In normal families son is supposed to be care taker of his parents in their old age. Being a lady do you find yourself capable enough to shoulder this responsibility?
a) Society's trends don't allow parents to put any burden on daughters.
b) My husband and in-laws do not like this.
c) When brother is there, it's his responsibility.
d) Parents have brought me up in a gorgeous manner. I am and will, fulfill my responsibilities towards them, come what may.
e) Any other (Please specify) _____
- Q 7: Do you think education is must for a woman because-
a) Woman educates generations.
b) Recognition and self identification.
c) Good standard of living due to Job availability.
d) Contribution to Society.
e) All above.
- Q 8: Being a girl have you ever missed
a) Love of your parents towards you.
b) Freedom and rights given to your brother.
c) Independent decision making.
d) Any other (Please specify) _____
- Q 9: If your parents want you to get married at an early age what would be your reaction?
a) You will oppose, as you want to first settle in your life.
b) Okay, it has to happen one day.
c) Parents are not your enemy.
d) Any other (Please specify) _____
- Q 10: Should a woman stop dreaming about herself, her career and her ambitions after marriage, as family is her sole priority?
a) No, she should nurture her own dreams.
b) Husband and kids are always on top priority.
c) Always compromising with the situations.
- Q 11: If woman gets a chance to take any initiative for the welfare and development of society what should she do?
a) Move at her own to do what she feels right.
b) Seek acceptance of family to move further.
c) Communicate things to male members and ask them to do so.
- Q 12: Do you feel if you had been a man your life would have been better?
a) Yes, I would be out from the miseries of my life.
b) No, I am very much happy and contended with what I am.

THANK YOU

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