

Cultural Stereotypes and Household Behaviour for Girl Child Labour in India

Sanjeev Kumar*

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Shyam Lal College, University of Delhi

Abstract – To improve levels of girls' education, it is vital to widen the definition of child labour beyond wage employment. At present, there is little recognition of the economic contribution of girls to the economy and little effort has been made to get girls out of work and into school. There also remain long-standing stereotypes and norms that seek to discriminate against the girl child. However, the picture is not all bleak, for efforts at the grass roots level are afoot, wherein the NGOs have worked hand-in-hand with villagers to send their girls to school with very dramatic results.

Key words: Child labour, Education, Discrimination, Employment and Labour.

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INTRODUCTION

According to census data, the child sex ratio (0–6 years) in India was 927 girls per 1,000 boys in 2001, which dropped drastically to 919 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2011. A 2012 UNICEF report ranked India 41st among 195 countries.

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was introduced in October, 2014 to address the issue of declining child sex ratio (CSR). Smt. Menaka Gandhi awarded the Beti Bachao Beti Padoao Logo design winner with a citation and cash prize. The logo was designed by Mr. A. J. Raghavendra from Hyderabad. This is implemented through a national campaign and focused multi-sector action in 100 selected districts with low CSR, covering all States and UTs. It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Prime Minister Modi launched the programme on 22 January 2015. In August 2016, Olympics 2016 bronze medalist Sakshi Malik was made brand ambassador of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' initiative in Haryana.

The prime objective of this programme was to bring a change in people mindset towards girl child on or after her birth. Preventing determination of sex, female foeticide, ensuring safety of girls, their best possible care and providing quality education are integral part of this programme,

'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme implemented in 12 districts of Haryana namely Mahendergarh, Jhajjar, Sonapat, Rewari, Ambala, Kurukshetra,

Rohtak, Karnal, Yamunanagar, Kaithal, Bhiwani and Panipat which have the lower girl child sex ratio.

DECLINING CHILD SEX RATIO

Declining child sex ratio measured as number of females per 1000 males in the 0 to 6 years of age has not been a recent phenomenon as is evident from the data since 1901 census. A few reasons for neglect of girl child and low C.S.R. are preference for a son and the belief that only a son can perform the last rites, that lineage and inheritance runs through the male line, sons look after parents in old age; men are the bread winners etc. Exorbitant dowry demand can be another reason for female foeticide /infanticide.

All India Average Child Sex Ratio According to Census from 1901 to 2011

Year	CSRRR	Year	CSR	Year	CSR	Year	CSR
1901	972	1931	950	1961	941	1991	927
1911	964	1941	945	1971	930	2001	927
1921	955	1951	946	1981	934	2011	919

Between 2001 and 2011, while national average of CSR declined by 8 from 927 to 919 as many as 18 states and three UTs showed declined CSR ranging from 3 to 79 whereas 11 states and two UTs had improved CSR varying from 1 to 48. Puduchery did not show any change.

State-wise Child Sex Ratio According to Census 2001 & 2011 and Change thereof [0-6 years]

State	2001	2011	State	2001	2011	State	2001	2011
J&K	941	862	Odisha	953	841	Maharashtra	913	894
Himachal	896	909	West B	960	956	Goa	938	942
Punjab	798	846	Sikkim	963	957	Andhra	961	939
Chandigarh	845	880	Arunachal	964	972	Karnataka	946	948
Haryana	819	834	Nagaland	964	943	Kerala	960	964
Delhi	868	871	Manipur	957	936	Puduchery	967	967
Rajasthan	909	888	Mizoram	964	970	Tamil Nadu	942	843
UP	916	902	Tripura	966	957	Lakshadweep	959	911
Uttarakhand	908	890	Meghalaya	973	970	Andaman & Nicobar	957	968
MP	932	918	Assam	965	962	Rural	934	919
Chhattisgarh	975	969	Gujarat	883	890	Urban	903	902
Bihar	942	935	Daman & Diu	926	904			
Jharkhand	965	948	D&NH	979	926	All India	927	919

Source: Census 2001 & 2011

According to Census 2001, out of 29 states and six UTs, 20 states and four UTs had C.S.R. above national average [927] whereas as per census 2011, 18 states and three UTs recorded C.S.R. above national average [919]. Out of 24 states and UTs that had CSR above national average in 2001 two states [J&K and MP] and Lakshadweep showed lower CSR in 2011. The CSR is more skewed in the land rich and affluent states of Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Delhi. The 2011 Census data showed that the CSR in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Delhi was as low as 846, 834, 890 and 871 female for 1000 males respectively. Shockingly, in a recent survey in villages around Chandigarh, the number of boy outnumbered girls in every single village. The states having CSR above national average in 2001 and 2011 are Bihar, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu along with UTs of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar. However, 12 states among these have showed declined CSR in 2011 such as, Bihar [-7], Sikkim [-6], Nagaland [-21], Manipur [-21], Tripura [-9], Meghalaya (-3), Assam (-3), West Bengal (-4), Jharkhand (-17), Odisha (-12), Chhattisgarh (-6), and Andhra Pradesh (-22) along with UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli (-22) whereas six states have improved C.S.R. in 2011 such as, Arunachal Pradesh (+8), Mizoram (+6), Karnataka (+2), Goa (+4), Kerala (+4) and Tamil Nadu (+1) along with UT of Andaman & Nicobar (+11). Of those nine states having CSR below national average in 2001 and 2011, five states have improved CSR in 2011 such as, Himachal Pradesh (+13), Punjab (+48), Haryana (+15), Delhi (+3) and Gujarat (+7) along with UT of Chandigarh (+35) whereas four states have further shown declined CSR in 2011 such as Utrkhand (-18), Rajasthan (-21), U.P.(-14) and Maharashtra (-19) along with UT of Diu & Daman (-22).

CULTURAL FACTORS THAT CAUSE GENDER INEQUALITY

Patrilocality

Many cultures practice patrilocality whereby a married couple lives near or with the husband's parents. When a woman gets married, she essentially ceases to be a member of her birth family and joins her husband's family. Under this system, parents potentially reap more of the returns to investments in a son's health and education because he will remain a part of their family, whereas a daughter will physically and financially leave the household upon marriage. Co-residence of adult sons and elderly parents is much more common in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa than in Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and the America.

Within India, the northern region has a much stronger patrilocal (and patrilineal) system than the south, which is one explanation for why gender inequality is more pronounced in the north. For example, Chakraborty and Kim examine the 1901 Indian Census and find that the sex ratio was less male-skewed in the south, a pattern that continues to hold today. More generally, Ebenstein shows that the male-to-female sex ratio is positively correlated with the rate of co-residence between adult sons and their parents both across and within countries.

If parents fully internalized their daughters' returns to nutrition, health care, and schooling, then patrilocality would not necessarily cause gender gaps in these inputs. In practice, though, the longer duration that parents will co-reside and pool financial resources with their sons seems to cause them to invest disproportionately in sons. For example, parents are more likely to seek medical care for a sick son than sick daughter.

Old-age support from sons

Closely linked to patrilocality is the fact that sons traditionally provide old-age support for their parents in societies such as China and India. Ebenstein and Leung (2010) investigate this old-age support norm as a reason for the desire to have sons in China. When the Chinese government instituted the Rural Old-Age Pension Program, parents now had a better substitute for old-age support from sons, and thus their desire to have a son should have abated. The authors show several patterns in the data consistent with this hypothesized effect. Households without sons are more likely to participate in the pension program. In addition, having access to the pension program is associated with a less skewed sex ratio.

Dowry system

Dowry is a payment that a bride's parents make to the couple at the time of marriage. Dowry has

disappeared in many societies, notably in Europe, but it has persisted in, for example, South Asia. In fact, over the past several decades, the prevalence of dowry has increased in Bangladesh, and the real value of dowry payments has risen considerably in India. In addition, the property rights to dowry as practiced today differ from those seen historically in Europe.

In ancient Rome and medieval Western Europe, the bride held the rights to the dowry; it was her pre-mortem inheritance from her parents. In this formulation, the dowry system was intended to improve the financial well-being of females. However, in societies where dowry is used today, the groom typically controls the money - dowry is the price of a groom. Dowry is thus a financial cost to parents of having daughters. Evidence on the impacts of the dowry system on women's welfare is mostly anecdotal. This anecdotal evidence points to the dowry system causing pro-male bias. The prospect of paying dowry is often cited as a key factor in parents' desire to have sons rather than daughters in India, for example. The financial burden of dowry indeed seems to loom large in prospective parents' minds.

Patrilineality

In a patrilineal system, names and property pass to the next generation through male descendants. This system puts sons on a higher footing than daughters, and the specific feature of land inheritance is especially likely to have effects on gender gaps. For example, in India because widows traditionally do not inherit their husbands' ancestral property, they rely on their sons as their conduit for holding onto the family property and maintaining their standard of living in widowhood. This consideration might be one reason that the desire to have sons is often not appreciably different between women and men.

Role of sons in religious rituals

In certain belief systems, such as Confucianism in China and Hinduism in India, sons play a special role. Confucianism encourages the patrilineal and patrilocal system in place in China, Vietnam, and elsewhere. But another part of the special role of sons is in rituals. Ancestor worship within Confucianism involves rituals where a son plays an essential part. Similarly, son preference is mentioned in the Vedas, the ancient Hindu texts. In addition, in Hindu societies, it is supposed to be a son who lights a deceased person's funeral pyre and brings him or her salvation. Hindu kinship norms are adhered to more strictly among upper castes than lower castes (Mandelbaum, 1970), and Chakraborty and Kim (2010), in their analysis of the 1901 Indian Census, find a more skewed sex ratio for upper castes than lower castes.

The funeral-pyre underpinning of son preference specifically generates a strong desire for one son. Other reasons for son preference such as wanting someone to carry on the family name or widows wanting to retain family land also make the first son especially valuable. Consistent with this idea, Jayachandran (2014) finds that parents in India strongly want to have one son and, once they have one son, prefer a balanced gender ratio, more or less.

Desire to protect female safety and "purity"

Concern for women's and girls' safety and "purity" constrains their physical mobility in many developing countries. It is difficult to say how much of the limited mobility is out of genuine concern for women's welfare, aimed at protecting them from harassment and sexual violence, and how much is simply a way to stifle female autonomy. In a cross country study of mate preferences, men put more weight on their spouse's sexual inexperience at marriage than on physical appearance in India, China, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Iran.

One reason parents cite for not educating their daughters is the distance to school. Burde and Linden (2013) evaluate a school-building initiative in Afghanistan and find that having a school located within one's village itself matters much more for girls' enrollment; a village school essentially closes the otherwise-large gender gap in enrollment. Muralidharan and Prakash (2013) show that a program that gave girls bicycles to travel to school in India similarly had a sizable impact on girls' school participation. These results suggest that better infrastructure, which comes with economic development, could offset some of the effect that social constraints on girls' mobility have on their education

GIRL CHILD LABOUR, ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There have been many cases where children just disappear overnight, as many as one every eight minutes, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. Children are taken from their homes to be bought and sold in the market. In India, there is a large number of children trafficked for various reasons such as labour, begging, and sexual exploitation. In most of the cases it is the girl child that became serious victim of trafficking. Girl Child is being widely selected for trafficking over male child for various grave reasons. Children are traded off as sex workers, domestic servants, construction workers, labourers in shops, on farms etc. During the trafficking process, traffickers violate an extensive array of human rights. They are subjected to physical, psychological and sexual violence, their movement is restricted. There is just no safe and healthy working environment, their wages are

confiscated and they are generally subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, forced labour, slavery-like practices or slavery. They are increasingly affected by ill health, insults and humiliation and a life of uncertainty and risks. They have no access to their families. The number of children trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million. Approximately 1,50,000 women and children are trafficked from South Asia every year and for most of them India acts as a country of origin and destination. In some of the cases, women and girls are trafficked to other countries via India. It is estimated that nearly 5000 to 7000 Nepalese girls are trafficked into India annually for sexual exploitation. National Human Rights Commission estimated that almost half of the children trafficked within India are between the ages of 11-14. Thus, trafficking is a global problem which is done mainly for sexual exploitation of women and children. Of these, majority are children especially girl children. Therefore, to provide the girl children a safe and secure environment to grow and prosper in life, serious measures have to be implemented at all level of governance.

Apart from various reasons for girl child being trafficked, Child Labour has got serious implication and it is one of the prime reasons of trafficking. Trafficking children for domestic slavery is a relatively new development that pose grave threat for empowerment of girl child. Focus with regards to abuse has generally been more in the public domain such as child labour, prostitution, marriage and illegal activities. Mal-treatment of girl child by the care givers has the potential to emotionally and mentally harm children to a very different degree. In most of the cases when a child is being exploited it is mainly for labour, domestic works and sexual abuse. Worse is the condition of the girl child. She has to start working in the household and in the fields in the rural areas. Neglect of the girl child is so much that forty lakh of the one crore. Twenty lakh born every year die before they are fifteen. The fate of children in almost all the Third World countries is the same. According to a report of International Labour Organization (ILO) 200 million children below 15 have to earn their livelihood. The ILO report tells that 80 per cent of Pakistani carpets are made by children who also work in India, Nepal and Afghanistan to make rugs. The same report says they cut diamonds in slums in Gujarat and Mumbai, cut cocoa beans, make T-shirts in Bangladesh, handbags in Thailand. They work with dangerous chemicals in Moroccan tanneries, wash earth and gravel to separate gold in Peruvian rain forests and work in jasmine fields in Egypt. In most of the cases girl child is much affected than male child physically and mentally.

CONCLUSION

Girl Children are the most vulnerable section of society. They are physically, mentally and socially immature and depend on others for survival. The

vulnerability and dependency has been a matter of universal concern. Their development is threatened by several dangers including exploitation, abuse, ignorance, material want and social and political intrigue. In order to protect girl children from these the government and the civil society have been playing a vital role. It seeks to protect children everywhere against exploitation, neglect and abuse. Fundamental rights and Directive principles of state policies are related with children, they state that everyone entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth therein without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, birth or other status. Further, it states that girl child needs special care and legal protection before and after birth. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Respect of rights of all individuals in the society is the foundation of liberty, justice, development and peace in the world. The success of programs and policies for empowering girl child such as BBBP Yojana depend upon a large number of stakeholders including civil society. Empowering Girl Child needs to be incorporated as one of the important agenda in political dialogue and policy discussion. Real Empowerment of girl child and women can only happen if we redefine the status and role of women in the country and that can make a big difference.

Each and every citizen is responsible for this crime "Child Labour" either those who are taking benefit of labour work for less pay or those who are ignoring working children. Until we all shall not understand the harmful and dangerous effects of child labour, we cannot get rid of this. Firstly, parents should change their thinking about importance of education that how much is this important for their kids. We all should avoid child labour in our domestic area or work area and if we find this crime happening somewhere, we should take necessary steps to stop this. "There is a power in Unity" we should follow this rule in order to make our children happy, healthy and educated.

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Corresponding Author

Sanjeev Kumar*

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics,
Shyam Lal College, University of Delhi

E-Mail – sanjeev0144@yahoo.com