

Parents' Attitude Towards Birth and Early Marriage of Girls

K. A. Thakkar¹, and G. J. Patel²

INTRODUCTION

In western countries boys and girls are equally cared for. But in India, the conditions are altogether different. Sons are earnestly longed for, while daughters are not wanted. This feeling varies greatly in intensity. Among many communities, where large sums of money are to be paid in dowry, the female infants are commonly neglected to a greater or lesser degree. Sons are everywhere desired, not only among Hindus but almost equally so among other communities as well. So strong is indeed the prejudice against the birth of daughters that abortion is reported sometimes to be practised, if the child in the womb is said to be a girl.

OBJECTIVES

It is on this ground, the present study was planned. The specific objectives of the study were; (i) to know the parents' attitude towards birth of girls, (ii) to know the parents' attitude towards early marriage of girls, (iii) to ascertain the relationship between the personal characteristics of parents and their attitude towards birth and early marriage of girls, and (iv) to find out the reasons for early marriage of girls.

METHODOLOGY

Present study was conducted in the Banaskantha district of Gujarat State. Palanpur taluka was selected from the district randomly. Four villages were selected from the taluka at random. Early marriage of girls is in practice still among certain communities. Respondents were selected from that communities making a sample of 80 parents.

Developed scales were used for the measurement of attitudes. On the basis of pilot study, some reasons for early marriages of girls were sorted out and respondents were asked to record their response against each of reason by way of indicating 'Agree' or 'Disagree'.

FINDINGS

Parents' attitude towards birth of girls:

It is apparent from Table- 1 that majority of the male (75 per cent) and female (67.50 per cent) respondents expressed their favourable attitude towards girls. Unfavourably attitude was reported by 20 per cent fathers and 12.50 per cent mothers. The number of respondents having highly favourable attitude was found more among mothers (20 per cent)

1. Asso. Extn. Educationist, ASPEE College of Home Science, G.A.U., S.K.Nagar -385 506.

2. Asstt. Prof., ASPEE College of Home Science, G.A.U., S.K.Nagar -385 506.

Table 1 : Parents' attitude towards birth of girls.

(N=40)						
Sr. No.	Attitude	Father (n=40)		Mother (n=40)		'Z' value
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
1.	Unfavourable (Upto 27)	8	20.00	5	12.50	
2.	Favourable (28 to 37)	30	75.00	27	67.50	2.705**
3.	Highly favourable (above 37)	2	5.00	8	20.00	

** Significant at 1 per cent level.

as compared to fathers (5 per cent) respondents. This clearly indicates that mothers have more love and affection toward their girls as compared to fathers.

The calculated 'Z' value indicating the difference between the attitude of fathers and mothers was found to be significant leading to conclude that there was significant difference between the attitude of father and mother. Highly favourable attitude of the mothers might be due to the reason that being a female, mother may have higher experience about daughter's problem.

Parents' attitude toward early marriage of girls :

The data in this regard are depicted in Table-2. Table visualize that majority of the fathers (70 per cent) and mothers (57.50 per cent) were possessing favourable attitude toward early marriage of girls. Highly favourable attitude was observed among 25 per cent fathers and 10 per cent mothers. It is interesting to note that the percentage of respondents possessing unfavourable attitude was higher among mothers (32.50 per cent) as compared to fathers (5 per cent). This

Table 2 : Parents' attitude towards early marriage of girls.

(N=40)						
Sr. No.	Attitude	Father		Mother		'Z' value
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
1.	Highly favourable	10	25.00	4	10.00	
2.	Favourable	28	70.00	23	57.50	2.907**
3.	Unfavourable	2	5.00	13	32.50	

** Significant at 1 per cent level.

was further supported by the calculated 'Z' value indicating significant difference between the attitude of fathers and mothers. Higher percentage of mothers with unfavourable attitude might be due to the fact that being a women, she might be well aware of the consequences of early marriage.

Relational analysis :

Table-3 reveal that, personal characteristics namely; education, family education, family income and social participation were found positively and significantly related with parent's attitude, towards both birth of girls and early marriage of girls. Cosmopolitaness was found having positive and significant relationship with parent's attitude towards birth of girls while it has failed to

establish any significant relation with parent's attitude towards early marriage of girls. Remaining variables namely: family type and family size, could not exhibit any significant relation with the attitude. Thus, it can be inferred that those having higher education, high earnings and high social participation could not see any difference between girls and boys. To them, both boys and girls are equal. Also, they are in oppose to early marriage of girls.

Reasons for early marriage of girls :

Various reasons for early marriage of girls is presented in Table-4.

The important reason for early marriage of girls as stated by 77.50 per cent fathers and 70 per cent mothers was "Early marriage is a social custom." The

Table 3 : Relationship between the personal characteristics of respondents and their attitude towards girls.

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Co-efficient of correlation 'r'			
		Birth of Girls		Early Marriage	
		Father	Mother	Father	Mother
1.	Education	0.6367*	0.6118*	0.5358*	0.6361*
2.	Family education	0.5635*	0.6622*	0.4891*	0.5466*
3.	Family type	0.2759	0.2297	0.3189	0.2867
4.	Family size	0.1753	0.0486	0.2089	0.1038
5.	Occupation	0.3598*	0.0589	0.2338	0.2981
6.	Family income	0.5089*	0.4643*	0.6338*	0.4089*
7.	Social participation	0.5978*	0.5181*	0.4803*	0.5089*
8.	Cosmopolitaness	0.4480*	0.5644*	0.3089	0.2981

* Significant at 5 per cent level.

Table 4 : Reasons for early marriage of girls.**(N=40)**

Parents' Attitude Towards...

Sr. No.	Reasons	Number of respondents agree with					
		Father (n=40)			Mother		
		Number	Percentage	Rank	Number	Percentage	Rank
1.	Early marriage is a social custom	31	77.50	I	28	70.00	I
2.	Unmarried daughter is a target of social scrutiny	30	75.00	II	27	67.50	II
3.	Reduction in marriage expenditure due to the marriage of younger daughter alongwith elder one.	29	72.50	3.5	20	50.00	V
4.	To take care of young unmarried daughter is a burden now a days	29	72.50	3.5	17	42.50	VI
5.	Due to exchange (SATA) system, boy's marriage is possible only, if the girl is also married	27	67.50	V	22	55.00	3.5
6.	To be free of social responsibility	24	60.00	VI	10	25.00	IX
7.	The girl gets adjusted to her family early	22	55.00	VII	22	55.00	3.5
8.	It helps in selection of better life partner for the girl	18	45.00	VIII	16	40.00	VII
9.	It increase the soical status of parent	14	35.00	IX	14	35.00	VIII
10.	Pressure from the groom's family	10	25.00	X	5	12.50	XI
11.	To keep the groom up daughter unmarried is a sin	8	20.00	XI	8	20.00	X
12.	Earlier the marriage earlier will be the birth of children so no difficulties at old age	3	7.50	XII	2	5.00	XII

second important reason as reported by both fathers (75 per cent) and mothers (67.50 per cent) was, "Unmarried daughter is a target of social scrutiny". So far as other reasons were concerned, both type of respondents was found to differ with each other. "Reduction in marriage expenditure due to the marriage of younger daughter alongwith elder one" and "To take care of young unmarried daughter is a burden now a day" (ranked 3.5th each) were the next important reasons as stated by fathers. To mothers, on the other hand; "Due to exchange system (SATA), boy's marriage is possible only if the girl is also married" and "The girls gets adjusted to her family early" were the next important reasons and ranked 3.5th each. Fathers assigned Vth rank to the reason of due to exchange system (SATA), boys marriage is possible, only if the girl is also married" whereas, Vth ranked reason according to mother was, "Reduction in marriage expenditure due to the marriage of younger daughter alongwith elder one." "To be free of social responsibility", "The girl gets adjusted to her family early" and "It helps in selection of better life partner for girl" were given VI, VII and VIII respectively by the father while mother assigned V VII and VIII to the reason "To take care of young unmarried daughter is a burden now a days", "It

helps in selection of better life partner for the girl" and "It increase the social status of parents," respectively.

The least important reasons as stated by both male and female respondents were, "Pressure from groom's family (ranked Xth by fathers and XIth by mothers), "To keep the groom up daughter unmarried is a sin" (ranked XIth by fathers and Xth by mothers) and "Earlier the marriage, earlier will be birth of children so no difficulties at old age" (ranked XIIth by both the group).

IMPLICATIONS

The present study clearly indicated that majority parents expressed favourable attitude towards birth and early marriage of girls. The percentage of the parents possessing highly favourable attitude is next in number. Attitude which make parents look upon girls as a burden needs to be changed. They need to be make aware of the consequences of early marriage of girls. The main reason for early marriage of girls in many caste is a social custom and every body in the caste has to follow it willingly or unwillingly. Creating social awareness and motivating the societal leader to bring about desirable changes in their present custom is also necessary.