

CHAPTER-7

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter discusses the major findings of the present research work along with some suggestions which can be helpful to policy makers in order to solve the problem of declining sex ratio particularly in Gujarat state and India in general. The findings are as follows:

- 1) Dowry, modern sex determination tests and techniques, female foeticide, family planning methods and practices, migration, religion, son preference and poverty were found to be factors responsible for the existing problem of declining sex ratio in Mahesana in particular and Gujarat in general.
- 2) Many of the respondents in the study showed a greater preference for son child by highlighting various advantages of having a son in the family. Like, economic advantage of son child including economic support to the parents in old age; brining up of dowry in the family by son etc. Socio-cultural advantages of having a son or male child included continuation of family line; increase in the status of the parents in the society; care taker of the parental property etc. Religious advantages of having a son child included parent's attaining heaven after death if they had a son; performing of funeral rites of the parents etc.
- 3) Six reasons were highlighted and accepted by the respondents in the study for having a female child in families. These reasons included assisting in household chores; continuation of family line; essential during certain festivities; "kanyadan"; assist parents in old age when son does not support; and lastly to work at farm.

- 4) Various reasons or factors were revealed by the respondents (parents) for not wanting a girl or female child in the family. These reasons included economic insecurity and economic liability if they had a girl or female child; wasteful expenditure on girls as they could not provide financial support in near future at times of emergency. Socio-cultural factors like low status symbol for parents if they had a girl or female child; social insecurity and problem of dowry were also mentioned. Religious factors like girl not performing funeral rites of their parents and psychological factors like parents concern about the future of their girl child. All these reasons explain the negative mentality of the respondents in the study towards a girl child.
- 5) Many important repercussions are discussed and highlighted by the respondents in the study with regard to the declining number of girls in their area and community. These reasons included changing in marriage norms, increase in the polyandrous marriages, increase in sexual crimes against girls, increase in involuntary bachelorhood for men, increase in more social stratification, decrease in status of women and lastly public insecurity.
- 6) It was found that a relationship existed between caste as a variable and modern technology of sex determination test and female foeticide as an important responsible factor for the declining sex ratio.
- 7) It was found that a relationship existed between education as a variable and modern technology of sex determination test and female foeticide, family planning methods and practices, migration, religion, son preference and poverty as important responsible factors for declining sex ratio.
- 8) It was found that a relationship existed between family type as a variable and factors of declining sex ratio which included modern technology of

sex determination and female foeticide, family planning methods and practices, migration, and religion.

- 9) This study found an existing relationship between income as variable and dowry, modern technology of sex determination test and female foeticide, family planning methods and practices, migration, religion, son preference and poverty as important factors for the declining sex ratio.
- 10) This study found an existing relationship between occupation as variable and various factors for declining sex ratio like dowry, modern technology of sex determination test and female foeticide, migration, and poverty.
- 11) All 100% respondents in the study were found to be aware about the concept of family size and family composition. Husband, mother-in-law and father-in-law were found to be important decision makers with regard to family size and composition. A positive type of response was found from the respondents with regard to the ideal family size one boy and one girl child but in reality this situation was found reverse. It has also found in the study that all respondents were found to be aware about family planning and practices. Condoms, IUD, oral pills and sterilization were some of the methods of family planning as highlighted by the respondents.
- 12) All 200 respondents were found to be aware about the practice of dowry and agreed over dowry being a responsible factor for the declining sex ratio. Majority of the respondents underlined dowry as a social problem that resulted in harassment of women. Nearly half of the respondents accepted that they practice dowry in their community. Efforts like strict implementation of anti-dowry laws, expansion of literacy, creating awareness about ill effects of dowry were some of the measures suggested by respondents in order to curb the problem of dowry.

- 13) All respondents were found to be sensitized about abortion and underlined illegal abortions as an important factor for declining sex ratio in Mahesana. 31.5% respondents accepted that they underwent abortion and in majority of such cases husbands had taken the decision for abortions. The main reasons for such abortions were found to be not wanting a girl child and to avoid the problem of dowry.
- 14) Other than these cases, in general the respondents underlined the factors such as limiting family size, not wanting a girl child, and dowry system as responsible for abortions. All the respondents were found to be aware about sex determination techniques. Awareness with regard to ultrasound technique of sex determination was found to be common among majority of the respondents. Respondents accepted that they came to know about these techniques of sex determination from doctors and friends. To detect any problem in an unborn baby, to view the position of unborn baby and to discover sex of an unborn baby were found to be important reasons among respondents for sex determination tests.
- 15) All (100%) of the respondents highlighted and accepted migration as a factor responsible for the declining sex ratio. Employment opportunity, business and education were found to be the important reasons for migration in families and communities which in turn affected the sex ratio of that region.
- 16) This study revealed that respondents, such as father-in-law, mother-in-law, father and mother were found to be happier at the time of the birth of a male child in the family than on the birth of a female child.
- 17) 70.5% of the respondents have confirmed their belief in the religious rituals for begetting a son or male child. Performing of pujas, observing of fast, mannat (Badha) and visiting sacred places were found to be important ways which were followed by the respondents in order to get son child in their family.

- 18) This study revealed the difference in the attitude of the parents towards celebration of the birth of a male and female child. More joy and celebration was found among the respondents on the birth of son child in the family.
- 19) There was equality among husbands and wives over decision making process especially in issues like buying of clothes, taking children to hospital etc.
- 20) Almost majority of the respondents were found to be aware and sensitized about various laws like abortion is illegal, dowry is illegal, and violence against women is punishable and Hindu law permits equal share in ancestral property for males and females.
- 21) Respondents highlighted and suggested some of the measures for solving the problem of declining sex ratio. These measures included giving benefits to those parents who had at least one female child in the family, providing free education to girls, creating awareness about MTP and PNDT Act, imposing ban on clinics which carry out sex determination tests and sex selective abortions, creating positive value towards girl child in society and ignoring patriarchal values were some of the suggested measures by the respondents in order to solve the problem of declining sex ratio particular in Mahesana and Gujarat and India in general.
- 22) In all four FGDs were conducted in this study. Results of all these FGD's have shown common similarities in terms of responses and answers which were collected through interview schedules. This provided a strong justifiable base for the data or information collected from the respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

In the light of the above findings and results of the study, following suggestions are made in order to solve the problem of declining sex ratio in Gujarat state in particular, and India in general.

- 1) Present research has shown a high level of sensitivity among the people towards the problem of declining sex ratio in their area, along with its severe negative consequences. The present research has made a small attempt to uncover the burning issue of declining sex ratio in Gujarat state. However, now there is an urgent need and concern to take up the issue seriously at all levels by making collective efforts and actions in order to address the problem and try to solve the problem of declining sex ratio at various levels in Gujarat state.

- 2) Parents have to play a key role in removing the existing problem. Parents have to change their mind set towards male child and female child by giving up various practices of gender discrimination and giving equal importance to both the sexes in all respects. The parents have to accept happily the birth of a child irrespective of its sex, treating both the sexes equally with regard to education, care, health, affection, love etc.

- 3) There is a need whereby women and girls should be accepted in society completely in such a manner that they don't consider themselves as inferior, subordinates or unequal to their male counterparts. This can only be achieved when women and girls are allowed to share responsibilities with their male counterparts. Here again, parents have to play a crucial role in the early socialization of their girl child by inculcating the ideas of equality in them. This will definitely boost their confidence level and will make them self reliant and independent.

- 4) Continuous updating of the data with regard to male female ratio which is available at different health agencies should be initiated at regular intervals under proper supervision of the concern authorities. This, in turn, can help the government and other agencies to implement various programmes and actions in the light of available data so as to get fruitful results towards solving the problem of declining sex ratio.
- 5) Areas, where sex ratio is the worst, should be identified and should be kept under vigilance along with various strategies and programmes so as to improve the sex ratio in such areas.
- 6) Different stakeholders like various health functionaries, NGOs, self-help groups etc. who are really concerned about the problem of declining sex ratio have to collectively initiate campaigns with positive commitment; and have to ensure satisfactory performance of their roles at different levels.
- 7) Stringent reimplementation of laws related to issues such as dowry, sex determination tests and female foeticide is required. Strict punishment should be given to the violators of such laws. Legislative laws will be more effective if every individual accepts them seriously with rationale mind set.
- 8) Government and other agencies should felicitate those parents and youths who set example for the society by not taking and not giving the dowry. Such recognition will definitely motivate others towards the abolition of dowry system.
- 9) Education for girls is already made free and compulsory by the government. What is required here is to motivate the girls for education by highlighting its advantages and opportunities. This is possible only when

parents at large will allow and inspire their girl or female children to go for primary and higher education. This will make the girls more independent and self reliant whereby to some extent they can change their negative gender bias image which at present considers them as wasteful expenditure, economic liability, and low status for parents etc.

- 10) Central and state governments through various schemes should provide economic and other benefits and incentives to those parents and families which are having at least one girl. Such incentives and benefits will encourage the other parents especially poor parents to have a girl or female child in their family.
- 11) Increased participation of mass media and various NGOs is required at larger societal level where they can sensitize and create awareness in the society among the masses about the ill effects of the declining sex ratio, dowry, female foeticide and other gender bias issues through various means such as dramas, advertisements, group-discussions etc. Efforts of these agents of socialization will definitely bring positive changes in the mindset of the peoples towards the girl child.
- 12) All those clinics should be fined, banned and their registration should be cancelled which undertake sex determination tests and practice female foeticide. Harsh punishments should be given to those health personnel who are directly or indirectly associated with such practices.
- 13) MTP and PNDT Acts should be implement strictly and only those abortions should be permitted which are been approved by the concerned authority. Violation of such laws should involve strict punishment to the violators.
- 14) Ignoring of patriarchal and gender bias values, providing job opportunities to girls, fighting against domestic violence are some of the other ways

through which we can directly or indirectly solve the problem of the declining sex ratio.