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Research Paper

Religious Groups and Child Sex Ratio in Rajasthan

Dr. Baljit Kaur
Assistant Professor,
Department of Geography,
Punjabi University, Patiala, India-147002

ABSTRACT:*The paper discusses the child sex ratio among the various religious groups of Rajasthan state of India. The study is based on secondary data for the census of 2011. The study focuses on spatial patterns of child sex ratio and factors responsible for the existing variations. Areas with relatively high socio-economic development emerged with relatively low child sex ratio. Highest child sex ratio has been recorded among the Muslims followed by the Christians, the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jains and the Sikhs during this decade. Socio-economic scenario seems to be key factor responsible for the gender norms of the various religious groups of the study area. The patriarchal customs of majority of the religious groups exholt the parents for son preference. Male child is considered superior to the female in terms of socio-economic security.*

KEYWORDS: *Child sex ratio, Religious groups, Patriarchal customs, Socio-economic development.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sex composition of human population is one of the basic demographic characteristics. Any change in sex composition of an area largely affects the socio-economic and cultural contours of the society. Child sex ratio is a paramount indicator to understand gender balance in 0-6 age group. It may be considered as one of the significant parameters for analysis of the socio-economic and cultural development in the society. It can be used as an indicator at the micro-level to reflect the desirability of female children and their survival rates in society. It makes a profound effect on the demographic structure of a region (Qazi, 2006, p.94). It furnishes additional means for analysing the regional landscapes (Trewartha, 1953, p.88). On the other hand, an adverse child sex ratio is a disturbing demographic anomaly in an area.

In south-Asian countries, the number of female children is comparatively less than that of males. In India and China, lower number of female children have been recorded than that of males. Historically, the patriarchal norms have become pervasive in these areas and as a result, an imbalance had emerged in the child sex ratio. Generally, women are not prominent features on the socio-economic landscape and their spatial distribution is usually unspectacularly to that of men (Gosal, 1961).

Many scholars like Bardhan (1982), Gupta (1987), Bumiller (1991), Clark (2000), Bose (2001), Premi (2001), Agnihotri (2003), Retherford and Roy (2004), Jha et al. (2006), Perwez et.al. (2012), Gill (2013), Larsen and Kaur (2013), Kaur (2015), etc. have contributed to the concerned literature by analysing the trends of the child sex ratio. Only a few studies have been done conducted to understand the gender gap among the children of different religious groups and its factors. At the national-level, Rajasthan recorded third place from the bottom in terms of child sex ratio by recording 888 female children per thousand male children (Census, 2011). In spite of socio-economic development in the state the child sex ratio is extremely low. Secondly, being a tribal state of India, Rajasthan reflects the different type of socio-cultural environment which draws the attention of scholars in this regard. So, it becomes necessary to examine the spatial variations in child sex ratio among the major religious groups of Rajasthan.

*Corresponding Author:Dr. Baljit Kaur197 | Page
Geography Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, India.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Districts are used as a spatial unit of the study to draw the micro-level picture of child sex ratio among the various religious groups. Data is collected from the Directorate of Economics & Statistics Department of Planning, Rajasthan to examine the socio-economic indicators in the study area. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation has been used to find out the relationship between child sex ratio and scheduled tribe population and different socio-economic indicators:

$$r = \frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2 \sum(y-\bar{y})^2}}$$

III. GENERAL PATTERNS OF CHILD SEX RATIO IN RAJASTHAN

The Hindus constitute 88.49 percent of population of the state as per the Census 2011. Other religious groups like the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Jains and the Buddhists have 9.07, 1.27, 0.14, 0.91 and 0.02 percent population respectively. The overall child sex ratio of the state is 888. It is quite low (26 points) as compared to the national average (914). As far as child sex ratio of scheduled caste population of the state is concerned it is 899 females per thousand males. But as in the case of scheduled tribes child sex ratio, is 921 which is 33 points higher than that of the state average. As far as the child sex ratio of major religious groups is concerned, it varies from one religious group to another (Figure 1). The Muslim community reported the highest child sex ratio (919) followed by the Christians (891), the Hindus (886), the Buddhists (878), the Jains (859) and the Sikhs (840). The Muslims are ahead in this regard in both types of areas i.e., urban (925) and rural (914). Out of all the *districts*, Banswara emerged with the highest (935) child sex ratio among the Hindus. On the other hand, lowest value has been observed in Jhunjhunun *district* (826) in this regard. Among the Muslims, Baran *district* showed the highest child sex ratio (963) whereas Ganganagar recorded the lowest (874) value (Table 1).

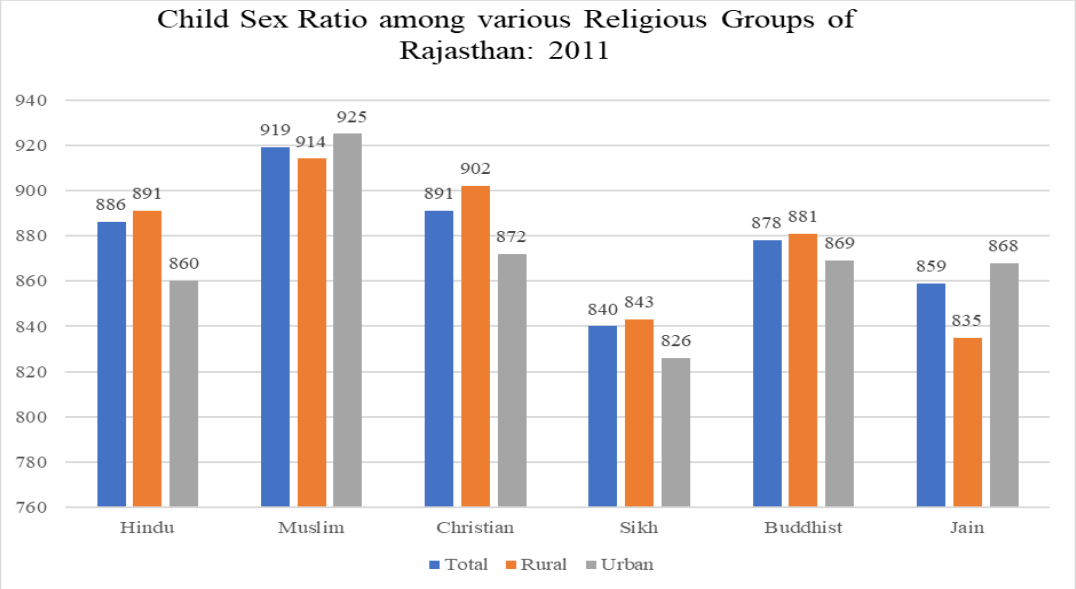

Figure: 1
Source: Census of India, *District Census Handbooks of Rajasthan, 2011.*

IV. SPATIAL PATTERNS OF CHILD SEX RATIO

On the basis of the child sex ratio of various religious groups, the state may be classified into following three categories;

i. Areas with relatively high child sex ratio (more than 920);
ii. Areas with moderate child sex ratio (between 880-920);
iii. Areas with relatively low child sex ratio (less than 880).

(i) Areas with relatively high child sex ratio (more than 920):

As far as the child sex ratio of the Hindu population is concerned, out of all the thirty-three *districts*, only five recorded relatively high child sex ratio. Out of these, Banswara *district* reported the highest Hindu child sex

ratio (935) in the stateclosely followed by Pratapgarh (934), Bhilwara (929), Udaipur (925) and Dungarpur (924).

India/State/District	Hindu			Muslim			Christian		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
India	**913**	**919**	**894**	**943**	**944**	**940**	**957**	**957**	**958**
Rajasthan	**886**	**891**	**860**	**919**	**914**	**925**	**891**	**902**	**872**
Ganganagar	862	871	839	874	837	957	837	797	1216
Hanumangarh	880	889	841	907	900	920	929	975	824
Bikaner	906	909	899	930	917	943	852	553	1059
Churu	896	902	874	941	938	942	1076	1036	1105
Jhunjhunun	826	826	827	909	913	906	887	1000	778
Alwar	852	853	848	908	909	882	776	754	825
Bharatpur	858	960	852	911	913	858	765	750	833
Dhaulpur	855	859	829	893	915	881	1000	1192	865
Karauli	847	848	841	928	909	946	860	1148	522
Sawai Madhopur	863	866	844	918	910	933	625	630	615
Dausa	864	867	834	912	886	942	528	391	769
Jaipur	853	867	835	923	928	923	820	824	820
Sikar	836	839	821	919	899	929	1000	1022	969
Nagaur	891	893	882	928	917	937	850	910	723
Jodhpur	887	891	874	916	904	929	967	1037	947
Jaisalmer	851	847	879	935	937	883	922	1077	680
Barmer	899	900	887	937	936	990	820	975	400
Jalor	894	895	888	919	914	952	915	894	1000
Sirohi	897	904	858	885	881	888	778	684	829
Pali	899	907	865	905	879	939	753	923	559
Ajmer	903	910	888	904	895	921	931	966	924
Tonk	890	896	854	904	906	904	837	1278	581
Bundi	891	893	877	932	949	921	1481	1692	1286
Bhilwara	929	934	901	921	924	918	800	804	797
Rajasmand	902	904	890	919	920	918	895	1250	500
Dungarpur	924	926	847	921	972	900	944	805	1385
Banswara	935	938	853	936	975	915	922	916	1191
Chittaurgarh	914	917	889	900	905	895	903	933	881
Kota	896	912	882	922	913	924	844	882	831
Baran	908	913	883	963	950	971	840	873	739
Jhalawar	913	917	886	902	916	890	800	778	842
Udaipur	925	934	854	936	989	920	940	912	1015
Pratapgarh	934	937	880	929	895	983	1400	1400	1400

Table: 1
Child Sex Ratio among the Major Religious Groups of Rajasthan: 2011
Source: Census of India, *District Census Handbooks of Rajasthan, 2011.*
N.A* stands for data not available.

It is interesting to note that the child sex ratio among the Hindus was 27 points less than that of the national average (913). In terms of rural-urban difference, six *districts* of the state recorded relatively high child sex ratio among the rural Hindus, whereas among the urban Hindus, not even a single *district* reported relatively high child sex ratio (Table 1). It has been observed that the rural-urban disparity in child sex ratio among the Hindus was very high.

The Muslim population of the state recorded 24 points less child sex ratio (919) than that of the national average (943). Out of all, fifteen *districts* of Rajasthan, in case of the Muslims, observed relatively high child sex ratio (more than 920 females per thousand males). It is significant to mention here that only one *district* namely, Baran emerged with higher value (963) than the national average (943) closely followed by Churu (941), Barmer (937), Banswara (936), Udaipur (936), Jaisalmer (935), Bundi (932), Bikaner (930), Pratapgarh (929), Karauli (928), Nagaur (928), Jaipur (923), Kota (922), Bhilwara and Dungarpur (921) (Table 1). It is believed that the socio-religious norms of the Muslims are the main contributors for relatively high child sex ratio. Ten *districts* of Rajasthan have emerged with relatively high rural Muslim child sex ratio. Udaipur *district* occupies the highest

India/State/District	Sikh			Buddhist			Jain		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
India	**828**	**827**	**830**	**932**	**938**	**924**	**889**	**868**	**895**
Rajasthan	**840**	**843**	**826**	**878**	**881**	**869**	**859**	**835**	**868**
Ganganagar	825	827	807	1032	870	1500	854	560	949
Hanumangarh	839	840	828	550	533	600	808	600	873
Bikaner	856	892	757	556	308	786	884	877	885
Churu	966	826	1500	923	1400	625	864	1000	859
Jhunjhunun	1000	2000	667	667	500	1000	688	571	778
Alwar	901	924	827	813	816	750	864	960	836
Bharatpur	863	871	836	714	732	500	910	968	884
Dhaulpur	769	621	857	500	250	2000	827	725	861
Karauli	448	235	750	556	333	1000	886	905	875
Sawai Madhopur	1294	1625	1192	1133	1222	1000	855	951	810
Dausa	630	900	471	2750	3000	2000	784	750	808
Jaipur	785	842	783	698	875	673	834	879	830
Sikar	750	1000	583	2000	2222	1667	825	824	826
Nagaur	1118	583	2400	600	571	625	926	824	976
Jodhpur	973	1188	938	1438	1235	1667	926	916	928
Jaisalmer	1126	1043	1471	1375	1667	1200	935	946	875
Barmer	886	1048	643	842	929	600	877	860	888
Jalor	636	769	444	688	688	N.A*	800	762	870
Sirohi	861	1000	815	1222	800	1750	962	766	1090
Pali	963	1143	935	857	1667	636	918	748	953
Ajmer	842	1200	832	462	1125	290	808	864	799
Tonk	792	1286	588	3000	2500	4000	861	927	830
Bundi	868	877	821	867	1182	0	876	840	910
Bhilwara	1038	722	1129	895	1000	667	901	900	901
Rajasmand	923	500	1600	5000	3500	8000	842	913	813
Dungarpur	1167	1600	857	833	1154	0	771	708	868
Banswara	964	889	1100	917	727	3000	838	832	847
Chittaurgarh	757	957	667	1231	1167	1286	896	827	960
Kota	844	682	885	1385	857	2000	847	568	870
Baran	776	814	556	333	1000	200	835	765	860
Jhalawar	979	533	1182	2000	4000	1000	832	773	870
Udaipur	986	1108	961	1500	5000	333	848	802	864
Pratapgarh	0	0	0	500	500	N.A*	851	830	872

Table:2

Child Sex Ratio among the Major Religious Groups of Rajasthan: 2011

Source: Census of India, *District Census Handbooks of Rajasthan, 2011.*

N.A* stands for data not available.

(989) spot in this regard. On the other hand, twenty-one *districts* of the state recorded relatively high child sex ratio among the urban Muslims. This phenomenon among the Muslims is entirely different from the Hindus.

The Christians recorded 891 females per thousand males during this decade. It is 66 points less than the national average (957). Almost one-third *districts* of the study area showed relatively high child sex ratio (more than 920) among the Christians. It is worthwhile to mention here that the Bundi *district* emerged with a very high Christian child sex ratio (1481) followed by Pratapgarh (1400), Churu (1076), Dhaulpur and Sikar (1000). As for as the rural and urban Rajasthan is concerned, about fifty percent *districts* emerged with relatively high Christian rural child sex ratio than that of the urban Christians (12 *districts*).

In thirteen *districts* of the state, the Sikhs showed relatively high child sex ratio. Out of these, Sawai Madhopur recorded the highest value (1294) in this regard, followed by Dungarpur (1167), Jaisalmer (1126), Nagaur (1118), Bhilwara (1038) and Jhunjhunun (1000). It is significant to note that average state value for child sex ratio of the Sikhs is lowest among all the major religious groups. Child sex ratio of the Sikhs is 48 points less

India/State/District	Child Sex Ratio	Percentage of Scheduled Tribe Population	
Rajasthan	**888**	**13.5**	**Correlation= 0.5**
Ganganagar	854	0.7	
Hanumangarh	869	0.8	
Bikaner	902	0.3	
Churu	896	0.6	

Jhunjhunun	831	1.9
Alwar	861	7.9
Bharatpur	863	2.1
Dhaulpur	854	4.9
Karauli	844	22.3
Sawai Madhopur	865	21.4
Dausa	859	26.5
Jaipur	859	8.0
Sikar	841	2.8
Nagaur	888	0.3
Jodhpur	890	3.2
Jaisalmer	868	6.3
Barmer	899	6.8
Jalor	891	9.8
Sirohi	890	28.2
Pali	895	7.1
Ajmer	893	2.5
Tonk	882	12.5
Bundi	886	20.6
Bhilwara	916	9.5
Rajasmand	891	13.9
Dungarpur	916	70.8
Banswara	925	76.4
Chittaurgarh	903	13.1
Kota	889	9.4
Baran	902	22.6
Jhalawar	905	12.9
Udaipur	920	49.7
Pratapgarh	926	63.4

Table: 3
Child Sex Ratio and Scheduled Tribe Population in Rajasthan: 2011
Source: Census of India, *District Census Handbooks of Rajasthan, 2011.*

than that of the state average (888). As far as rural and urban child sex ratio among the Sikhs is concerned, fourteen and eleven *districts* respectively reported relatively high child sex ratio (more than 920).

As far as the child sex ratio of the Buddhists and the Jains is concerned, out of all the *districts* of the study area, fourteen and only four *districts* recorded relatively high child sex ratio among the Buddhists and the Jains respectively. The state average of child sex ratio among the Buddhists and the Jains was 878 and 859 respectively. Eighteen *districts* in case of the Buddhists and only six *districts* in case of the Jains recorded relatively high rural child sex ratio, whereas among the urban Buddhists and Jains, sixteen and six *districts* respectively showed relatively high child sex ratio (Table 2).

High child sex ratio and percentage of tribal population are positively correlated. Southern and south-eastern areas of the state recorded relatively high proportion of tribal population and this relationship is quite obvious in these districts. Table 3 reveals that the state recorded a positive correlation (0.5) between its child sex ratio and tribal population. It can be correlated with the relatively high social status of females prevailing among the tribal population. Probably the traditional cultural norms and the mindsets of tribal people about gender equality have cultivated favourable conditions regarding child sex ratio. That's why the discrimination against female children in the tribal population is comparatively less than the non-tribal population. For instance, daughters of the *Bhil* tribe engage in agriculture along with household work. Tribal females do many types of work including manuring, sowing, irrigating, harvesting, taking care of cattle, etc. (Chakravarti and Mathur, 1990, p.83). Their girls contribute equally as the boys to all social and economic activities. Consequently, females enjoy the higher social status than males among the tribes which ultimately leads to high child sex ratio. Secondly, the practice of dowry is almost absent among the tribal population.

Similarly, the tradition of bride price from the groom's side to the bride's side is prominent in the tribal society. In simple words, the value of a girl child is considerably high among the *Bhils*, because the parents value her more since she brings a considerable amount of bride price (*dapu*) to her parents (Kerketta and Sharma, 2006, p.91). Consequently, due to socio-economic security of girls in the tribal society, the child sex ratio is considerably very high. In addition to it, tribal areas have relatively less exposure to information about the latest technology of sex selection i.e. ultrasound and abortions which ultimately leads to high child sex ratio.

The data shows that the Muslims have relatively high child sex ratio as compared to the other religious groups. Relatively low gender disparities have been identified among the Muslims than that of the Hindus

(Klingorova and Havlicek, 2013, p.9). In addition to it, all types of areas i.e. rural and urban, reflected the same behaviour in this regard. Additionally, strict religious beliefs of the Muslims are also highly contributing in this respect. The Muslims do not practice heinous customs like female infanticide and foeticide due to their strict religious beliefs because they consider it as a sin in the Muslim community. Likewise, there is a clear-cut ban on prenatal and postnatal sex-selection (foeticide and infanticide) among the Muslims which protects the birth of a girl child. No doubt the Muslims tend to bear children in the absence of a son but they do not use abortion for son preference which ultimately leads to high child sex ratio (Almond et al., 2013, p.77). Broadly speaking, the Muslims have gender-sensitive attitudes due to their strict religious ethos which is a key factor responsible in this regard.

(ii) Areas with moderate child sex ratio (between 880-920):

Out of all the thirty-three *districts* of the study area, seventeen *districts* recorded moderate child sex ratio among the Hindus. Out of these, Chittaurgarh *district* (914) occupies the top position closely followed by Jhalawar (913), Baran (908), Bikaner (906), Ajmer (903) and Rajasmand (902) in this regard. Within the rural as well as urban areas, seventeen and twelve *districts* respectively lie in this moderate category.

Similarly, about fifty percent *districts* of Rajasthan recorded moderate child sex ratio within the Muslim population. Table 1 reveals that the top position was occupied by Sikar, Jalor and Rajasmand *districts* by recording 919 female children per thousand male children. In terms of rural-urban difference, twenty-one *districts* recorded moderate rural child sex ratio and fourteen *districts* recorded moderate urban child sex ratio among the Muslims.

Only four *districts* of the state reported moderate child sex ratio in case of the Christians. Jalor *district* (915) tops the list in this regard followed by Chittaurgarh (903), Rajasmand (895) and Jhunjhunun (887). The rural-urban disparity in child sex ratio has also been observed. Five *districts* of the study area recorded moderate child sex ratio among the rural Christians, whereas not even a single *district* of the state reported moderate child sex ratio in case of the urban Christians (Table 1).

As far as moderate child sex ratio among the Sikhs is concerned, only two *districts* of the state recorded moderate child sex ratio. Alwar (901) possessed the highest rank in this regard followed by Barmer (886). On the other hand, among the rural and urban Sikhs, three *districts* and five *districts* respectively come under this category (Table 2).

In case of the Buddhists and the Jains, only two and six *districts* respectively recorded moderate child sex ratio. Banswara (917) occupies the top position in terms of child sex ratio among the Buddhists followed by Bhilwara (895). On the other hand, in terms of child sex ratio among the Jains, the top position was occupied by Pali *district* (918) closely followed by Bharatpur (910) and Chhitaurgarh (896) (Table 2). In terms of rural-urban differentials, not even a single *district* of the study area recorded moderate rural as well as urban child sex ratio among the Buddhists and the Jains.

It has been noted that the Muslims and the Hindus recorded moderate child sex ratio in most of the districts of state followed by the Jains, the Christians, the Sikhs and the Buddhists. On the other hand, most of the areas of this category were located in the interior of Rajasthan and mainly covered the entire Thar Desert. Gender gap in child sex ratio persists in these areas due to relatively low female autonomy and their lesser participation in the workforce (Census of India, 2011). In addition to it, opportunities of female education are limited and the literacy rate is relatively low in these areas as compared to other parts of the study area which ultimately leads to low child sex ratio (Kaur, B. 2015, p.84).

(iii) Areas with relatively low child sex ratio (less than 880):

Among the Hindus, eleven *districts* of the study area recorded relatively low child sex ratio. Out of these, Jhunjhunun recorded the lowest value (826) in this regard. On the other hand, ten and twenty-one *districts* of the state showed relatively low child sex ratio among the rural and urban Hindus respectively. In both types of areas gender gap is higher among the Hindu population than that of the Muslims (Table 1).

In case of the Muslims, only one *district* (Ganganagar) of the state recorded relatively low child sex ratio (874). In terms of rural-urban disparity, two *districts* (Ganganagar and Pali) of the state reported relatively very low (837 and 879) rural child sex ratio, whereas Bharatpur*district* recorded relatively very low (858) child sex ratio among the urban Muslims (Table 1).

In case of the Christians seventeen *districts* of the study area have emerged with higher differentials. Dausa *district* reflects the lowest (528) Christian child sex ratio in the state.

Among the Sikhs, the child sex ratio is relatively low in seventeen *districts* in rural Rajasthan whereas in case of the urban areas this number is twenty-two.

One eye opening fact during the analysis has been observed that there were only 333 females per thousand males in case of the Buddhists of Baran *district*. Whereas among the Jains, the lowest child sex ratio (688) was reported in Jhunjhunun *district*. This is because these areas have very low population of Buddhists and Jains.

It has been observed that the Sikhs recorded the lowest child sex ratio in the study area followed by the Jains, the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Christians and the Muslims respectively. No doubt every religion unambiguously preaches gender equality, but some patriarchal and religious laws and customs are responsible for the subordination of females in society e.g., son preference is relatively high among the Hindus due to their old-age security, family lineages, their role in funeral rituals of the parents and carrying out certain religious rites (Gupta, 2003, p.194). Most of the parents stop producing more children after having a son as their first offspring. But if their first child is a girl, they continue producing more children till having at least one son. The preference for sons in the Hindu community can be easily traced to some patriarchal religious family customs and laws. There is a strong belief, especially among the Hindus, that a man achieves salvation when his last rites are performed by his *Putra* (son), who rescues him from the hell (Bahadur 1961, p.167). It ultimately leads to high son preference among the Hindus. In addition to it, they neglect girl child because of their social insecurity in the society i.e., their less economic importance and high economic burden on parents for the entire life. This insecurity of a daughter's future is felt to be far higher both while raising a daughter and after marrying her off; which ultimately leads the Hindu society to low child sex ratio (Patel, as cited in Sekhar and Hatti, 2010, p.30).

Additionally, some Hindu religious laws and customs have also contributed to widening this gender gap. In Hindu ancient text *Manusmriti*, Manu writes: "Her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth and her sons protect her in old age; a women is never fit for independence" (Muller and Buhler as cited in Halder and Jaishankar, 2008-09, p.663). Moreover, the practice of dowry is deeply entrenched in the Hindu community in the form of *stridhan* (women's property) that came from marriage gifts from the bride's side to the groom's family as compared to the other communities. This dowry practice pressurises the parents to neglect the girl child. Consequently, due to many responsibilities of the son and relatively huge dowry on daughter's marriage in the Hindu society contribute to extremely low child sex ratio.

Sr.	Socio-Economic Indicators	Correlation (in Points)
1	Literacy Rate	-0.6
2	Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	-0.2
3	Per-Capita Income	-0.1

Table: 4
Correlation of Child Sex Ratio with Socio-Economic Indicators in Rajasthan: 2011
Source: *Directorate of Economics & Statistics Department of Planning, Rajasthan, Jaipur, 2011-12.*

Due to socio-economic improvement, the level of awareness increases. Under its impact the middle-class families afford the course of sex-selection which ultimately effects the child sex ratio negatively (Table 4). Apart from religious point of view, the state has witnessed the different scenario of child sex ratio. It is worthwhile to mention here that the areas with high socio-economic development emerged with low child sex ratio. It emerges from the analysis that the socio-economic indicators and child sex ratio are negatively correlated in the state (Table 4). With the increase of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Per-Capita Income and Literacy rate the child sex ratio decreases. It indicates that the people from economically prosperous areas have relatively high affordability of sex-selective abortions, especially among the urbanites. Secondly, due to the demand of sex-selective abortions in these areas, the illegal abortion centres have slowly mushroomed across the study area. This came to light in 2006 when a sting operation carried out by the Sahara Television channel captured on camera over a hundred doctors across the twenty-two *districts* of Rajasthan violating the law by practicing illegal abortions (Mathur and Rajagopal, 2011, p.24). Additionally, it is quite obvious from the analysis that the educated, well-to-do people of the state are going for sex-selective abortions to have at least one son. Areas having high literacy rates recorded relatively low child sex ratio in the state. It is well established fact that the educated, literate and well-settled societies of the urban areas have norms of small family size for the sake of proper utilisation of the family resources. It ultimately leads the literate society of the study area to high son preference and low child sex ratio.

On the other hand, most of the areas with low child sex ratio of various religious groups are located along the inter-state border with Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. These states have also experienced extremely low child sex ratio in the country. These hotspot regions in terms of child sex ratio play an important role to share the information about latest technologies of abortion in adjoining areas; which ultimately effects the child sex ratio of Rajasthan.

V. SUMMING UP

The child sex ratio varies notably among the various religious groups of Rajasthan. It has been observed that the areas with tribal population recorded high child sex ratio. It has been noted that the child sex ratio was relatively low in Ganganagar *district* among all the major religious groups. The study yields some interesting findings that the child sex ratio among the Muslims is relatively high as compared to the other major

religious groups of Rajasthan. One bitter truth that comes out of the analysis is that among the Hindus and the Sikhs child sex ratio was extremely low because of prevalence of their religious customs and laws which has had adversely affected the child sex ratio. Their patriarchal culture and religious customs are responsible for widening this gap. The age-old mindset of the people having at least one son boosts up the level of patriarchy and small family size norms in the society. It ultimately ends in gender imbalance in child sex ratio among the various religious groups of the state. Besides, it has also been observed that the areas with relatively high socio-economic development emerged with relatively low child sex ratios in the state. Similarly, the study found that those areas of Rajasthan where the tribal population is relatively high are reported relatively high child sex ratio. It has been suggested that for balancing the gender gap in child sex ratio among various religious groups equal opportunities to boys and girls should be given in social, economic and cultural fields. Keeping in mind the welfare of the society in totality. The policy makers should focus on to minimise the gender gap in the society, so that sustainability can be achieved in this regard.

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