Awareness of the Rural and Urban Women about Female Foeticide

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in purposely selected Bikaner panchayat samiti of Bikaner district (Rajasthan). For the selection of rural and urban respondents, Bikaner city was divided into four major parts i.e. east, west, north and south zone. Total eight wards and eight villages (two words and two villages from each zone) were selected randomly. A sample of 320 respondents comprising 160 respondents from rural area and 160 respondents from urban area were selected through proportionate allocation random sampling method. Findings revealed that overall majority of the rural respondents (70%) and urban respondents (75.62%) had medium awareness about female foeticide. Further results indicated that caste, mass media exposure and socio economic status had positive and significant association with awareness of rural and urban respondents about female foeticide and number of daughter and number of sons were negatively and significantly associated with awareness of rural and urban respondents. Education was positively and significantly associated with awareness of rural respondents whereas occupation and monthly income were positively and significantly associated with awareness of urban respondents. All the thirteen independent variables were responsible for 75.7 per cent of variation in awareness of rural respondents and 63.9 per cent of variation in awareness of urban respondents about female foeticide.

Keywords: *Female foeticide, awareness and independent variable.*

Gender discrimination is a complex phenomenon, occurring as it does at the interface of cultural attitudes, deep-rooted prejudices, socio-economic pressures and the spread and misuse of modern medical technology. Today modern medical facility allows for the determination of the sex of the foetus. These pre-natal diagnostic techniques are now being rampantly misused to determine the sex of the foetus and abort it if it is a female foetus. Female foeticide is emerging as major social problem, especially since the past one or two decades when these techniques became available and popular. In Rajasthan, for instance, the number of girls per 1000 boys has reduced to 922 against the national average of 933. There are various measures and laws formulated by the government to prevent this malaise but this practice is now spreading to the urban and rural area also due to lack of awareness about female foeticide. Some independent variables like age, education, occupation, caste etc may be affecting the awareness level of any target group. Therefore, the present study was conducted on association between awareness of the rural and urban women about female foeticide and independent variables.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Bikaner district of Rajasthan which was selected purposely. Further Bikaner panchayat samiti was selected purposely from five panchayat samities of Bikaner district for conducting this investigation. For the selection of rural and urban respondents, Bikaner city was divided into four major parts i.e. east, west, north and south zone. Total eight wards and eight villages (two words and two villages from each zone) were selected randomly. A sample of 320 respondents comprising 160 respondents from rural area and 160 respondents from urban area were selected through proportionate allocation random sampling method. Total thirteen independent variables were included in the present study i.e. age education, occupation, religion, caste, type of family, size of family, number of daughter, number of sons, monthly income, distance from sex determination clinic, mass media exposure and socio economic status.

In order to correlate the mass media interaction with other variables, an indicator of mass media profile was also developed. The variables showing mass media exposure were clubbed together to develop the profile. Personal interview method was used for data collection. The data were analyzed statistically to draw the conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Socio economic profile of the respondents : The data presented in Table 1 revealed that 59.38 per cent rural respondents and 61.25 per cent urban respondents were in the age group of 25 to 32 years and majority of the rural (58.13%) and urban (93.13%) respondents educated up to middle and above standards. Majority of the rural respondents (60.62%) had agriculture as their main occupation while 78.12 per cent urban respondents were housewives. Hindu religion was found in majority in both target groups. Majority of the rural (46.25%) and urban (43.13%) respondents belonged to middle caste and higher caste, respectively.

Table 1. Socio- economic profile of the respondents
(N 1 = 160, N 2 = 160)

S. No.	Category	Rural		Urban	
		N 1	%age	N 2	%age
1.	*Age*				
	Up to 24 years	45	28.12	8	5.00
	25-32 years	95	59.38	98	61.25
	33-35 years	20	12.50	54	33.75
	Mean=28.10, σ = 4.21				
2.	*Education*				
	Illiterate	23	14.37	4	2.50
	Up to primary	44	27.50	7	4.37
	Middle and above	93	58.13	149	93.13
3.	*Occupation*				
	Housewife	20	12.50	125	78.12
	Labourer	36	22.50	-	-
	Agriculture	97	60.62	-	-
	Business	2	1.25	5	3.13
	Service	5	3.13	30	18.75
4.	*Religion*				
	Hindu	127	79.37	130	81.25
	Muslim	33	20.63	20	12.50
	Sikh	-	-	8	5.00
	Christian	-	-	2	1.25
5.	*Caste*				
	Lower caste (SC/ST)	28	17.50	35	21.87
	Middle caste (OBC)	74	46.25	56	35.00
	Higher caste (General)	58	36.25	69	43.13
6.	*Type of family*				
	Nuclear	62	38.75	134	83.75
	Joint	98	61.25	26	16.25
7.	*Size of family*				
	Small family (up to 5 members)	42	26.25	113	70.63
	Large family (above 5 members)	118	73.75	47	29.37
8.	*Number of daughter*				
	No daughter	45	28.13	56	41.25
	1-2	90	56.25	89	55.62
	3-4	18	11.25	5	3.13
	5-7	7	4.37	-	-
9.	*Number of sons*				
	No son	34	21.25	21	13.13
	1-2	97	60.63	135	84.37
	3-4	29	18.12	4	2.5
10.	*Monthly income*				
	Low (> Rs. 2472.19)	73	45.62	-	-
	Medium (2472.20-10640.31)	87	54.38	101	63.13
	High (< Rs. 10640.31)	-	-	59	36.87
	Mean = 6556.25, σ = 4084.06				
11.	*Distance from sex determination clinic*				
	Within 10 km	-	-	160	100
	10-20 km	80	50	-	-
	More than 20 km	80	50	-	-
12.	*Mass media exposure*				
	Indicator 1	13	8.13	4	2.5
	Indicator 2	37	23.12	31	19.38
	Indicator 3	57	35.62	55	34.37
	Indicator 4	53	33.13	70	43.75
13.	*Socio economic status*				
	Low (0-16.91)	27	16.87	9	5.63
	Medium (16.92-21.53)	120	75.0	125	78.12
	High (21.54-34)	13	8.13	26	16.25
	Mean= 19.22, σ = 2.31				

Further findings indicated that majority of the rural respondents belonged to joint (61.25%) and large family (73.75%) whereas majority of the urban respondents belonged to nuclear (83.75%) and small family (70.63). More than fifty per cent respondents had 1-2 daughter and 1-2 sons. Majority of the rural (54.38%) and urban (63.13%) respondents fell in medium income group. Fifty per cent rural respondents were at distance of 10-20 kilometers from any ultrasonography facility and other 50 per cent rural respondents were at distance of more than 20 kilometers from any centre offering pre-natal diagnostic service while cent per cent urban respondents were not more than 10 kilometer distance from any sex determination clinic. Majority of the rural respondents (35.62%) belonged to mass media indicator category '3' while 43.75 per cent urban respondents belonged to mass media indicator category '4'. Seventy five per cent rural respondents and 78.12 per cent urban respondents had medium socio economic status.

Table 2. Overall awareness about female foeticide

(N1 = 160, N2 = 160

S. No.	Category	Rural		Urban	
		N 1	%age	N 2	%age
1.	Low (0-16.86)	39	24.37	12	7.50
2.	Medium (16.87-28.63)	112	70.00	121	75.62
3.	High (28.64-56)	9	5.63	27	16.88

Mean = 22.74, s = 5.88

'Z' value = 6.77**

** Significant at 1% land 5% level of significance

2. *Awareness about female foeticide* : Table 2 depicted that most of the respondents (70% rural and 75.62% urban respondents) had medium awareness regarding female foeticide while 24.37 per cent rural respondents and 7.50 per cent urban respondents had low awareness level. Only 5.63 per cent rural respondents and 16.88 per cent urban respondents fell in the category of high awareness level about female foeticide. The findings are supported with the findings of *Naqvi (2006)*, who reported that majority of the respondents had medium level of knowledge about female foeticide followed by low and high.

Further, to find out whether there existed difference among the two categories of respondents, the 'Z' test was applied. Table 2 showed that there was a significant difference among the awareness levels of urban and rural respondents. The 'Z' value (6.77) was significant at 0.01 level of significance.

3. *Association between awareness of the respondents about female foeticide and independent variables* : It could be observed from Table 3 that out of thirteen independent variables only four variables namely; education, caste, mass media exposure and socio economic status had positive and significant correlation with awareness of rural respondents about female foeticide whereas number of daughters and number of sons had negative and significant relationship with awareness of rural respondents about female foeticie. Other variables i.e. age, occupation, religion, type of family, size of family, monthly income, distance from sex determination clinic were found to be non significant.

Table 3. Association between awareness of the respondents about female foeticide and independent variables (N 1 = 160, N 2 = 160)

S. No.	Independent variable	Correlative 'r' value	
		Rural	Urban
1.	Age	-0.033	0.004
2.	Education	0.186*	0.124
3.	Occupation	0.083	0.159*
4.	Religion	-0.142	0.019
5.	Caste	0.809**	0.365**
6.	Type of family	-0.141	-0.036
7.	Size of family	-0.020	-0.116
8.	Number of daughters	-0.606**	-0.506**
9.	Number of sons	-0.333**	-0.345**
10.	Monthly income	0.055	0.161*
11.	Distance from sex determination clinic	0.009	0.026
12.	Mass media exposure	0.671**	0.596**
13.	Socio-economic status	0.660**	0.555**

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

**Significant at 0.1 level of significance

In case of urban respondents, out of same thirteen variables only five variables namely; occupation, caste, monthly income, mass media exposure and socio economic status had significant and positive correlation with their awareness about female foeticide while number of daughters and number of sons had negative and significant correlation with awareness about female

foeticide. Other variables i.e. age, education, religion, type of family, size of family, and distance from sex determination clinic were found to be non significant.

Educational status showed positive and significant association with the awareness of rural respondents towards female foeticide. Hence, the rural women with higher education would have high awareness about female foeticide but in urban respondents this relationship was not found.

Occupation was positively and significantly related with awareness of urban respondents. Hence, the urban respondents had service and business as their main occupation would have high awareness about female foeticide as compare to housewives while awareness of rural respondents about female foeticide was not found significant with occupation.

Caste showed positive and significant association with the awareness of both rural and urban respondents. Hence, the rural and urban respondents who belonged to higher caste had high level of awareness about female foeticide as compare to lower caste.

Number of daughters and number of sons had negative and significant relationship with awareness of rural and urban respondents about female foeticide. Hence, the respondents both rural and urban had not any daughter or son or less number of daughters or sons would have high awareness about female foeticide as compare to those who had more number of daughters or sons.

Monthly income showed positive and significant relationship with awareness of urban respondents about female foeticide. This might be due to the reason of that the urban respondents who belonged to high economic category had high awareness level whereas awareness of rural respondents was not showed significant relationship with this variable.

Mass media exposure was positively and significantly related with awareness of both rural and urban respondents. This might be due to the fact that the women with high mass media exposure would have utilized more number of mass media sources which might have resulted high level of awareness.

Table 4. Multiple regression value showing influence of independent variables on awareness about female foeticide of the respondents

S. No.	Independent variables	Rural respondents (N1 = 160)			Urban respondents (N2 = 160)		
		b-value (R.cof)	S Error of b	't' value for b	b-value (R.cof)	S Error of b	't' value for b
1.	Age	-1.781	0.050	-0.358	-4.827	0.086	-0.564
2.	Education	3.112	0.304	0.010	0.601	0.804	0.747
3.	Occupation	0.131	0.251	0.522	-2.928	0.220	-0.133
4.	Religion	-0.143	0.496	-0.289	-0.708	0.481	-1.471
5.	Caste	3.014	0.481	6.264**	1.022	0.428	2.389*
6.	Type of family	-0.642	0.523	-1.229	0.177	0.906	0.196
7.	Size of family	0.260	0.548	0.476	4.705	0.706	0.067
8.	Number of daughters	-0.874	0.311	-2.813**	-2.684	0.532	-5.048**
9.	Number of sons	-0.383	0.276	-1.385	-0.150	0.882	-0.170
10.	Monthly income	4.404	0.002	2.791**	1.059	0.001	0.782
11.	Distance from sex determination clinic	0.145	0.469	0.309	4.257	3.783	1.125
12.	Mass media exposure	1.224	0.319	3.843**	3.404	0.441	7.713**
13.	Socio economic status	2.037	0.541	3.764**	4.192	0.730	5.741**

Rural respondents	Urban respondents
a = 0.870	a = 0.800
R2 = 0.757	R2 = 0.639
F = 34.989**	F = 19.901**

* Significant at 5 per cent level of probability

** Significant at 1 per cent level of probability

Socio economic status showed positive and significant relationship with awareness of both rural and urban respondents about female foeticide. Hence, the women who belonged to high socio economic status had high awareness level as compare to low socio economic status.

The above findings are in line with the results of research conducted by *Ghosh (2003)*, who reported that monthly income, mass media contact, education and number of sons had significant correlation with knowledge of rural couples about female foeticide.

4. *Multiple regression analysis of awareness of the respondents about female foeticide on independent variables :* Multiple regression technique was used to determine the overall and individual inference of the selected independent variables (X1 to X13) over awareness of respondents about female foeticide (dependent variable Y1). All selected variables were put with awareness of respondents in multiple regression equation. The findings were incorporated in Table 4.

Data in Table 4 indicate that all thirteen independent variables were responsible for 75.7 per cent of variation in awareness of rural respondents and 63.9 per cent of variation in awareness of urban respondents about female foeticide. The respective 'F' value was also 34.989 and 19.901 at 13 and 146 degree of freedom for awareness of rural and urban respondents, respectively, which was significant at 1 per cent level of significance. Thus, the result implied that all thirteen independent variables had accounted significant for the awareness of rural and urban respondents about female foeticide.

Further test of significance ('t' value) indicated that the coefficient of regression ('b' value) was found to be positively and significantly related for mass media exposure (X12) and socio economic status (X13), while number of daughters (X8) was negatively and significantly associated with awareness of both rural and urban respondents at 1 per cent level of probability. The 't' value for caste (X5) was positively and significantly associated at 1 per cent level of probability with awareness of rural respondents and 5 per cent level of probability with awareness of urban respondents. While monthly income (X10) was positively and significantly associated with awareness of rural respondents at 1 per cent level of probability.

Table also depicted that regression coefficient was non significant for age (X1), education (X2), occupation (X3), religion (X4), type of family (X6), size of family (X7), number of sons (X9) and distance from sex determination clinic (X11) with awareness of both rural and urban respondents about female foeticide. Whereas monthly income (X10) was found to be non significant with only awareness of urban respondents about female foeticide.

CONCLUSION

It may be deduced from above narration that overall majority of the rural and urban respondents had medium level of awareness about female foeticide. Independent variables caste, number of daughters, number of sons, mass media exposure and socio economic status were significantly associated with awareness of rural and urban respondents while education was associated with awareness of rural respondents and occupation and monthly income were associated with awareness of urban respondents.

The depth analysis of the relationship between dependent and independent variables portrays that mass media exposure, socio economic status and number of daughters were the most important variables among thirteen variables selected in the study whose contribution was maximum in awareness of both rural and urban respondents about female foeticide. Independent variable, monthly income was also important factor for the awareness of rural respondents.

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