

A study on status of girl child in Punjab, India

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ABSTRACT

A sample of 50 adolescent girls who were attending schools were drawn from the villages of three agroclimatic zones of Punjab State namely submountain undulating region (Sub-mountain undulating region). Central plain region (central plan region) and flood plain region (flood plain region). A multi stage random sampling method was employed for the selection of sample. Focus group discussion were conducted with the girls in the age range of 16-18 years, studying in 10th, 11th and 12th class standard and data were pooled in percentages. The existing levels of schooling status, economic and social aspects, household responsibilities, upbringing practices, work pattern, existing level of knowledge of legal aspects, health aspects and puberty were studied. Results revealed that schooling status of girls in district Ludhiana of Sub-mountain undulating region is better than other zones and girls of this district are aware of vocational facilities, bank transactions. In this district girls do not go out for field work. Girls emphasized that main criteria for mate selection is that their life partner should not be under the influence of any drug addiction

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The girl child in India, like in many parts of the world, is born and raised in an environment, which brings negative values towards her. The scriptures have given a high place to women in Indian society, but parents always pray for a son. This perhaps is attitude all over India with a few exceptions. The preference for boys is deep rooted in psyche of the people and ingrained in their social, cultural and economic thinking through centuries (Mathur, 1984). The compelling reasons to prefer a son than a daughter in Indian families are that a son brings happiness and hopes since he continues the family line, offers "Shradha" to his ancestors for their spiritual benefits and supports parents in their old age. The girl child is also neglected in feeding and health care. This discrimination begins soon after birth. The female children are breast fed for a shorter duration as compared to the male children. This discrimination in feeding continues throughout her life leading to a high degree of malnutrition (Sinha, 1996 and Ghosh, 1990). The scenario with regard to education is depressing one too. India's ranking on female education has been put only 50.4% in a global study. Every nation today is concerned with welfare of women. For that various strategies and measures are being adopted (Behl, 1996). The mass media both print and electronic, opportunities for higher education for women, urbanization and industrialization have contributed tremendously towards the commencement of a new era with women attaining new heights thus, removing gender bias and developing positive attitude towards girls in the society.

METHODOLOGY

A multi-stage random sampling method was employed for the selection of the sample. A sample of 50 adolescent girls who were attending school were drawn from the villages of three agroclimatic zones of Punjab state namely, sub-mountain undulating region (Zone-I), central plain region (Zone-III) and flood plain region (Zone VI). The demarcation of zones in Punjab State being studied on the basis of pattern given by Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. From each selected agro climatic zones, two districts at the most and from each selected districts-two blocks and from each block three villages were studied. From sub-mountain undulating region (Zone-I)-District Hoshiarpur, Flood plain region (Zone VI)-District Ropar (only one district falls in Zone VI), from Central plain region-District Patiala and District Ludhiana (being large two districts were selected) and. Focus group discussion was conducted with the girls in the age range of 16-18 years, studying in 10th 11th and 12th class standard and data were pooled in percentages. The schematic presentation is shown below:

STATE
AGROCLIMATIC ZONES
BLOCK (2 from each district)
DISTRICTS
(Min 2 from each zone)
VILLAGES (2-4 from each block)
GROUP OF GIRLS FROM EACH VILAGE

Focus group discussion was conducted with the girls