



MASCULINITY, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SON PREFERENCE IN INDIA – FINDINGS FROM RAJASTHAN*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, in-depth research on gender, power and masculinity has made it abundantly clear that men and boys must be an integral part of efforts to promote gender equality. Recent research suggests that men's attitudes and more broadly, masculinity, perpetuates son preference and to some extent, intimate partner violence (IPV) in India. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), in collaboration with UNFPA, adapted the International Men and Gender Equality Survey methodology to deeply understand the intrinsic relationship between masculinity, son preference and intimate partner violence in seven states# of India¹. The aggregate level results show that masculinity is a key determinant of IPV and son preference in India. This research brief presents and discusses the findings of this study for the state of Rajasthan.

STATE PROFILE

With 68.5 million people, Rajasthan is the eighth most populous state in India and contributes to 6% of the total population of the country³. Table 1 presents the key demographic indicators of Rajasthan. The sex ratio at birth (girls per 1,000 boys) has improved significantly by 23 percentage points between 2006-08 and 2011-13 but is low as compared to the national average of 909 (2011-13)². The overall literacy rate for the population ages seven and above has improved slightly in Rajasthan by six percentage points though continues to be lower than the overall national average of 74%. The female literacy rate of 48% is also much lower than the national average of 65% (2011 census).

Rajasthan lags behind not only in terms of these demographic indicators but also development indicators, especially with regard to the status of women. According to the 2005-2006 National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), the percentage of ever-married women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence is higher (46%) in Rajasthan than in any other state except Bihar⁴. A preference for sons is evidenced by the fact that two-thirds of women (67%) who have only daughters, desire more children, compared to 16% of women who already have two sons. Data on the age at marriage from last NFHS-3 reveals that as high as 65% of the women ages 20-24 years old were married before 18. The prevalence of child marriage is more in rural areas where a significant proportion of 20-24 year-old women were married before turning

Table 1: Demographics of Rajasthan at a Glance

Indicators	Estimates (Year)	
	2006-08	2011-13
Sex ratio at birth (SRB: girls per 1,000 boys) ²	870 (2006-08)	893 (2011-13)
Literacy rate ³	60 (2001)	66 (2011)
Male literacy rate ³	70 (2001)	79 (2011)
Female literacy rate ³	44 (2001)	48 (2011)

¹ Nanda P, Gautam A, Verma R, Khanna A, Khan N, Brahme D, Boyle S, Kumar S (2014). "Study on Masculinity, Intimate Partner Violence and Son Preference in India". New Delhi, International Center for Research on Women (Available at: www.icrw.org; india.unfpa.org)

² Sample Registration System, Office of Registrar General of India

³ Census 2011, Office of Registrar General of India

⁴ National Family Health Survey Round -2 and 3
Seven states: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra

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15 (46%) and 18 (76%). Only 23% of girls' ages 15-17 attend school in the state, where a majority of girls discontinued their schooling in rural areas (85%), as per NFHS-3. According to the 2011 Census, the female work participation rate in Rajasthan is low (35%) and varies widely across its districts.

Given the context of poor indicators of women's development, this study aimed to understand men's and women's attitudes and behavior around key indicators of gender equality to recommend how men and women can be engaged in efforts to improve gender norms, attitudes and behaviors.

OBJECTIVE

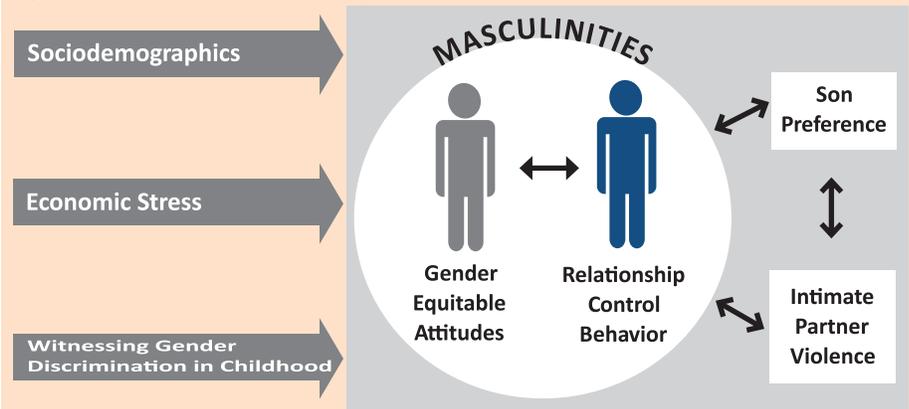
The primary objective of the study was to examine the dimensions and determinants of men's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on issues related to gender equality, son preference and IPV. The specific objectives were to:

1. Assess men's current behaviors and attitudes on intimate partner violence.
2. Assess men's knowledge and attitudes towards son preference and gender equality.
3. Explore contributing factors that can be attributed to men's attitudes and behaviors related to IPV and son preference.
4. Explore factors that may explain variation in men's behaviors in their family lives and intimate and sexual relationships, including childhood experiences of violence, gender norms in their family of origin, stress and unemployment, among others.

FRAMEWORK

The study was conceptualized to examine the role of masculinity as a determinant of son preference and IPV. It also looks at the underlying determinants of masculinity, particularly economic stress and experience of childhood discrimination, and the role that those factors play in understanding son preference and IPV.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Methodology: The study was carried out in the following seven states of India: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

These selected states were not only fairly large in terms of population and geographical spread but also had diverse sex ratio at birth. To achieve a representative sample at the state level the sample size was fixed at 1,500 men and 500 women, ages 18-49 in each state.

A multistage cluster sampling approach was adopted to select the samples. Each state was divided into regions and samples were allocated in proportion to the size of the regions. To have representation of both rural and urban areas, samples were further distributed in the ratio of 60 to 40, respectively between rural and urban primary sample units. The primary sampling unit in urban areas was census enumeration blocks and in rural areas it was villages or a group of villages (in case of small linked villages). Appropriate weights were calculated at the state and aggregate level and applied during analysis.

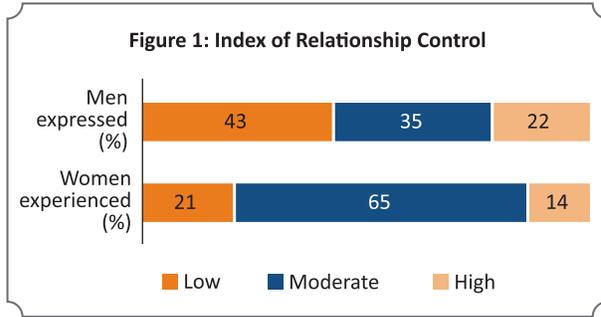
Sample Size	Total All State	Rajasthan
Men	9,205	1,515
Women	3,158	502

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS IN RAJASTHAN

The mean age of surveyed respondents for men was 30 whereas for women it was 31 in the Rajasthan study. Three-fifths (59%) of men and 62% of women in the sample were from rural areas. About two-fifths (41%) of the women in Rajasthan were illiterate while 4% of men were illiterate. Less than a quarter of respondents (20% of men and 11% of women) reported attaining higher education (graduation or above). Three in ten men (31%) and a little less than one-fifth of the women (15%) were not married at the time of the study. Among those who were married, almost all men (97%) and 81% percent of the women reported that their marriage was arranged and they agreed to marry willingly. A negligible proportion of married men and one out of ten women (9%) reported that their marriage was arranged and they had to agree.

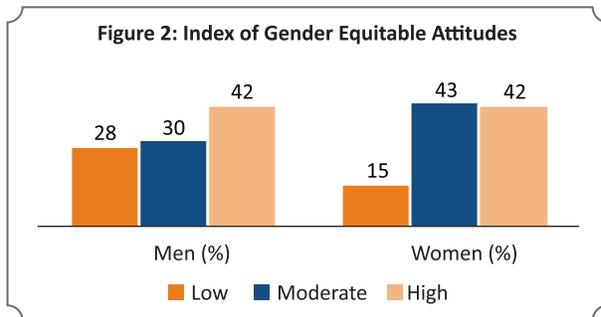
MASCULINITY

Masculinity is a set of socially constructed attributes, behaviors and roles generally associated with boys and men. It is influenced by a variety of social and cultural factors that create attributes of what it means to be “a real man”, although there are characteristics that may be similar across contexts. Women, too, possess attributes of masculinity, which tend to be expressed in their own attitudes towards gender equality as well as how much control is exerted over them - by an intimate partner or others - in their lives. For this study, it was defined by two aspects: “relationship control” as a behavioral dimension and “attitudes towards gender norms” as an underlying value. In terms of the former, men most commonly express power over their partners by controlling various aspects of their partners’ lives and behaviors. Nine statements such as, “I want to know where my wife/partner is all the time”; “My husband/partner won’t let me wear certain things”, capturing men’s expressions and women’s experiences of relationship control were combined and a summarized score was used to develop an index of relationship control. In Rajasthan, a small proportion of women (14%) reported experiencing high control in their relationship, while among men a higher proportion (22%) reported expressing high control over their intimate partners.



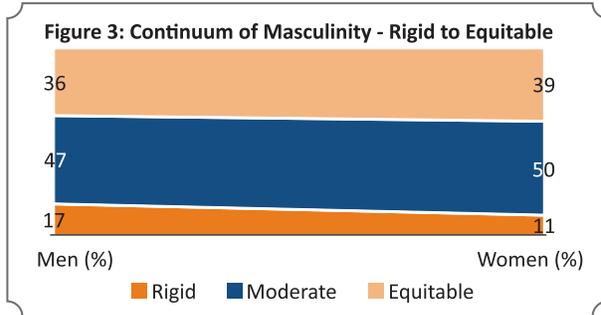
Index of Relationship Control: Average across the states		
Relationship Control Index	Men	Women
Low	30	37
Moderate	34	39
High	37	23

In terms of the attitudinal dimensions of masculinity, 27 attitudinal statements capturing perceptions and attitudes on some key gender norms were used to form an index of gender equitable attitudes. Among the statements were, for example, “Women’s most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family”; and “A woman should tolerate domestic violence in order to keep her family together.” Two-fifths of men (42%) and women (42%) held positive and equitable attitudes towards gender equality and others were either moderate or inequitable. In Rajasthan, the proportion of men and women with positive equitable attitudes was higher than the proportions of men and women with high equitable attitudes observed across states.



Index of Gender Equitable Attitude: Average across the states		
Gender Equitable Attitude	Men	Women
Low	38	39
Moderate	32	32
High	30	29

The combined scores of “relationship control” and “attitudes to gender equal norms” provided different categories of masculinity for men and women, which were further trichomatized into three categories – rigid, moderate and equitable. Rigid men are those who not only exercised excessive control in their intimate relationships but also believed that women and men are unequal and held negative attitudes about gender norms. On the other hand men who were less controlling in their intimate relationship and believed in gender equality, were considered as equitable. In our sample,



Continuum of Masculinity: Average across the states		
Masculinity Index	Men	Women
Rigid	32	21
Moderate	45	52
Equitable	23	27

Table 2: Odds of Equitable Men and Women		
Determinants	Odds for men	Odds for women
Type of residence		
Rural (R)		
Urban	1.14	0.62
Current age		
18-24 years (R)		
25-34 years	1.05	0.78
35-49 years	0.85	0.74
Level of education		
Up to Primary (0-5 class)(R)		
Up to higher secondary (6-12 class)	1.26	0.67
Graduate and above	2.50*	1.40
Type of family		
Nuclear (R)		
Non-Nuclear	1.36	0.99
Wealth Index		
Low (R)		
Middle	1.13	2.04
High	1.52	3.78*
Economic stress		
Yes (R)		
No	1.75*	
Decision making in family		
Father (R)		
Both Together	0.73	1.78
Witnessing male participation in household chores		
Yes (R)		
No	0.58**	0.37**
Witnessed/Experienced discrimination/harassment during childhood		
Yes (R)		
No	1.22	0.69

Note: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01

rigid masculinity was manifested and enacted by less than one-fifth of men (17%) in Rajasthan, while 47% were found to be moderately masculine. As compared to the overall average across states, Rajasthan had the lowest proportion of men with rigid masculinity. For women, it was about the type of relationship that they were living in and their own attitudes about gender equal norms. Among women in Rajasthan, over one third (39%) reported having equitable attitudes and were part of highly equitable relationship. Half of the women had moderately equitable relationships and attitudes and 11% were in rigidly masculine relationships. The proportion of women in rigidly controlling relationships, who also held low equitable attitudes, was much lower than those in other states.

The multivariate analysis to decide the key determinants of equitable men reveals that education is a significant predictor of masculinity. Men who have attained higher education are nearly 2.5 times more likely to have gender-equitable behaviors and attitudes compared to their counterparts. Among women, the results showed that there is a positive relationship between education, equitable behavior and attitudes but the findings were not statistically significant. Those who belonged to higher wealth strata were 3.8 times more likely to be in equitable relationships compared to those who were from a lower economic class. This may be due to the fact that more women in the wealthier class are likely to be working formally and able to negotiate new roles, mobility and rights for themselves. Men who are not economically stressed – for example, they have sufficient work and income - are 1.8 times more likely to be equitable compared to men who have less income or work or are unemployed. Both men and women who had witnessed men participating in household chores when they were growing up were more likely to be equitable than their counterparts.

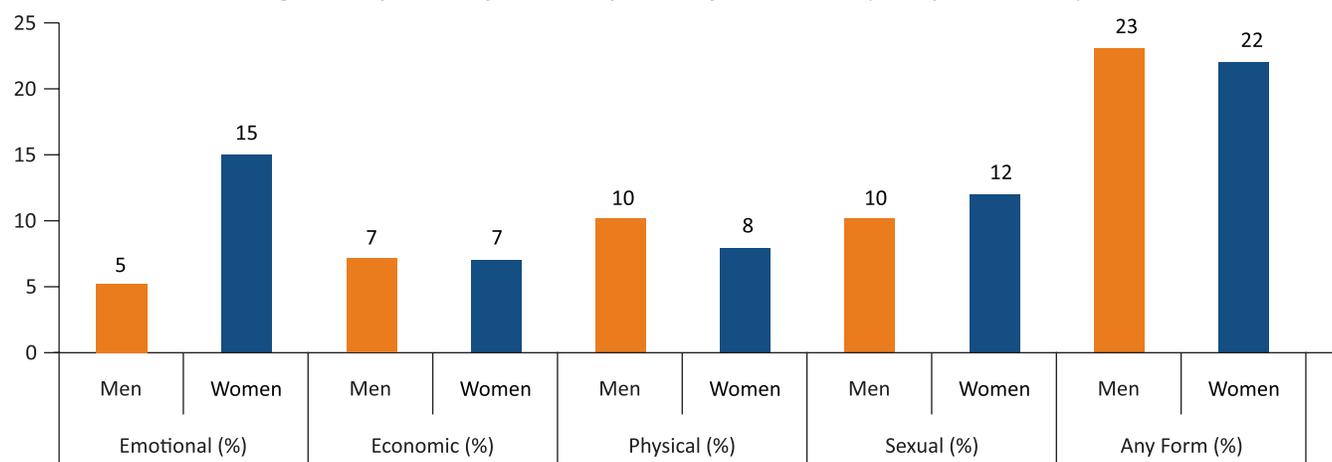
Interestingly, men and women's equitable behavior and attitudes in Rajasthan were not influenced by their childhood experiences of inequality.

Across the states men's perpetration of any form of violence in past 12 months is 34% while reported experience of any form of violence by women is 31%.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND MASCULINITY

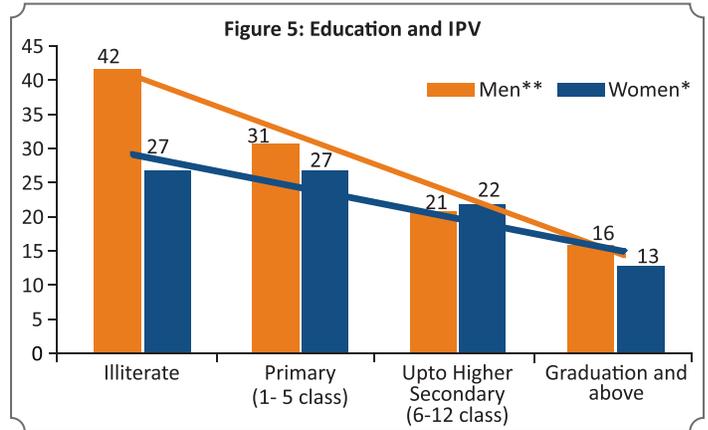
In the study, both men and women who have or ever had a spouse were asked a series of questions to assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence. The questions covered acts of emotional, economic, physical and sexual violence. The sample of men

Figure 4: Perpetration by Men and Experience by Women of IPV (in the past 12 months)

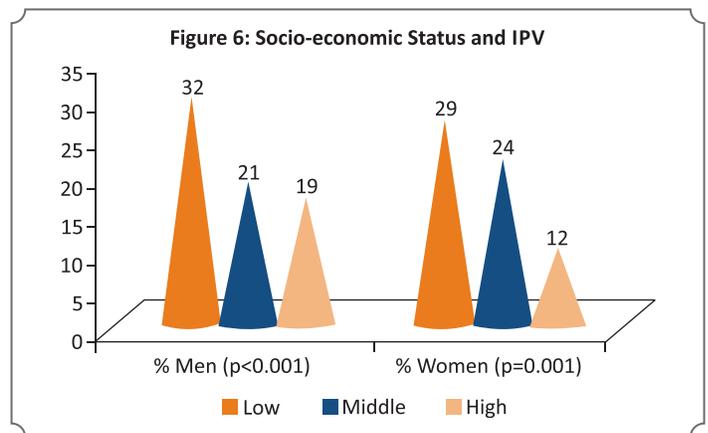


and women were independent of each other. The response to the series of questions for each form of violence was taken into account and a composite variable for each form of violence was created.

Sixty-six percent of men had perpetrated some form of violence in their lifetimes, while 50% of women in Rajasthan said they had experienced some form of violence in their lives. This makes Rajasthan the third highest state for lifetime IPV in the study, following Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. More than one-fifth of men (23%) reported perpetrating some form of violence and a similar proportion of women (22%) reported experiencing violence in past year. Emotional violence against women was most prevalent in Rajasthan, with 15% of the women saying they had experienced such abuse from men, while only 5% of the men said they had committed this form of violence. Interestingly, men’s reported perpetration of different forms of violence over the past 12 months was always less than that reported by women, except in the case of physical violence. While these patterns do vary across states, one constant is that emotional violence is more likely to be reported by women than men and physical violence by men, across states in the study.



The key determinants of IPV include socio-economic characteristics, economic stress, experience of inequalities in childhood and masculinity. The study found that education is significantly associated with violence among men and women in Rajasthan. With higher levels of education, men’s perpetration and women’s experience of IPV reduces significantly. The multivariate analysis showed that men who have higher education (graduation or above) are 0.3 times (CI: 0.13-0.59) less likely to commit any form of violence in the past 12 months. Among women, the difference was significant but not as strong as observed with men. This could possibly be a result of reporting bias that education brings with exposure to more gender equal norms. Socio-economic status has a significant relationship with perpetration of violence for men and experience of violence among women. Men and women belonging to higher wealth strata were less likely to report that they had perpetrated or experience violence. It is not possible to discern whether well-educated or wealthier men in Rajasthan are less likely to report violence or whether their environment has a more gender equitable influence.



Children may internalize violence and discrimination as normal if they observe or experience them during their formative years, and as an adult, are more likely to perpetrate such behaviors. One-fourth of men and women (25%) who had often witnessed or experienced discrimination or harassment during childhood said they had acted violently or experienced violence in the past 12 months. Among those who had never experienced or witnessed these behaviors, only 15% of men said they had been violent, while the proportion among women was negligible.

Across the study states it was observed that masculinity is a strong predictor of IPV. In Rajasthan no significant relationship was observed between masculinity and IPV. This may be due to the low proportion of men who are rigidly masculine and low prevalence of violence in Rajasthan.

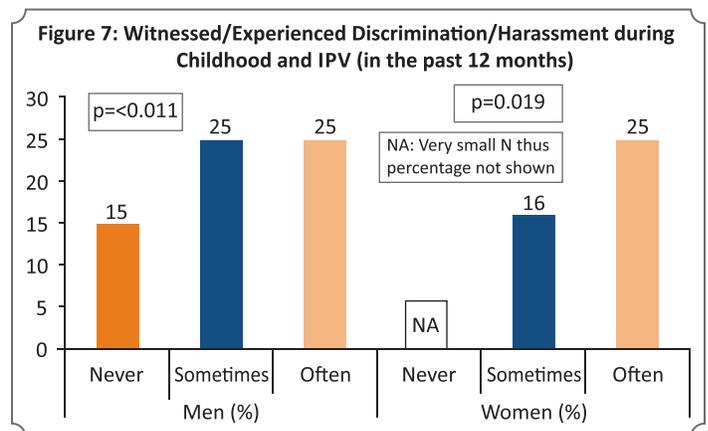
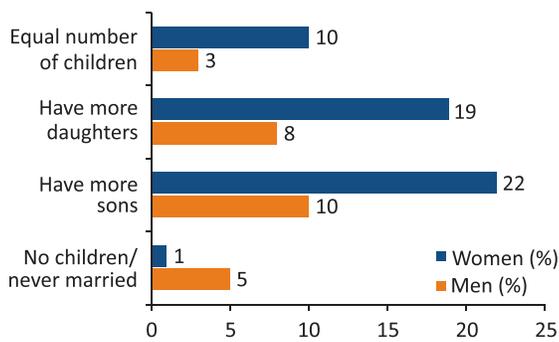
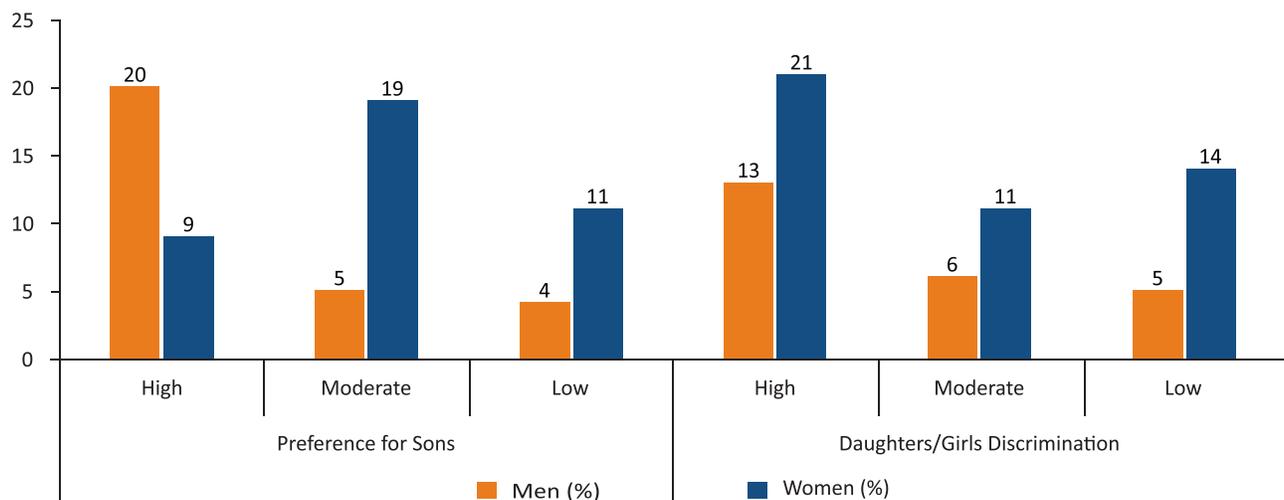


Figure 8: Actual Family Size and High Desire for Sons

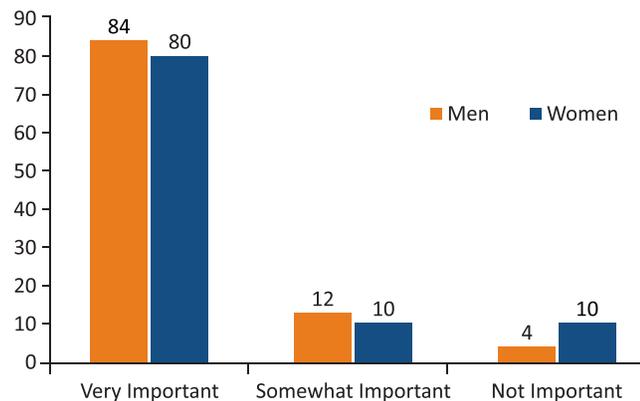
SON PREFERENCE AND MASCULINITY

Son preference is strongly correlated with the actual number of sons a couple has as observed across the state. In Rajasthan, more than one-fifth of men (22%) who already have more sons than daughters, wanted additional sons, while among women under the same scenario, only 10%, desired more sons. Among men and women who have more daughters in their family, a higher proportion of women (19%) desired more sons while only 8% of men had the same wish. Among those men and women who have an equal number of sons and daughters a fairly low proportion (men-3%, women-10%) showed a desire for sons, although the proportion of women was higher.

In the study we also used attitudinal statements to measure preference for sons among men and women, as well as assessed the attitude of men and women towards daughters. Different sets of statements were used to measure son-preferring attitudes and discriminatory attitudes towards daughters.

Figure 9: Attitude towards Preference for Sons and Discrimination against Daughters/Girls

One-fifth of men (20%) and 9% of women had attitudes that showed a high preference for sons, while 13% of men and one-fifth of women (21%) exhibited highly discriminatory attitudes towards daughters/girls. Interestingly, women expressed greater discriminatory attitudes towards daughters/girls as compared to men.

Figure 10: Importance of having at least One Son

IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AT LEAST ONE SON

The majority of men (84%) and women (80%) in Rajasthan considered it very important to have at least one son in their family. Men and women were also asked how important it was to have at least one daughter. Similar to the importance for sons, eight out of ten men (82%) said it is very important, while seven out of ten women (72%) thought this to be true.

REASONS FOR HAVING AT LEAST ONE SON

Both men and women agreed that the two most important reasons to have a son were the need to carry on the family name and to provide support in their old age. More men than women thought lineage (92%) and old age support (74%) were important. The third most important reason to have sons was for their role in performing last rites (72% of men and 32% of women), followed by sharing in household work, as reported by 23% of men and 22% of women. In terms

of daughters’ worth, men and women said the most important reason to have daughters was for performing rituals such as *kanyadan/rakshabandhan/tika* (86% men and 49% women). For men, the next important reason was because of the belief that girls bring prosperity, according to 79% of the men, but only 26% of the women. For 34% of the women, the second most important reason to have a daughter was to care for sick parents.

DETERMINANTS OF HIGH SON-PREFERRING ATTITUDES

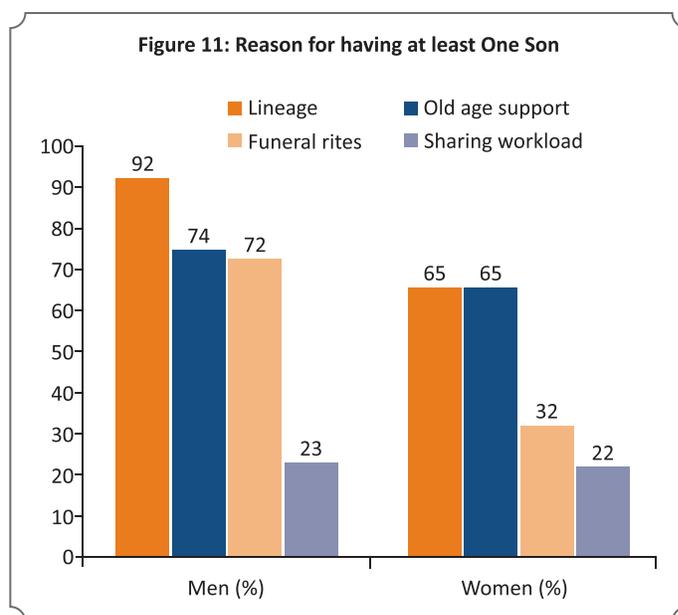
Education is a strong and significant predictor of son-preferring attitudes in Rajasthan, where more than one-fifth of men (21%) with no education had a high preference for sons compared to 6% men who had graduated or attained higher education. Education was a strong predictor of son preference among women: nearly one-third of women (32%) who were illiterate had a high preference for sons. This preference decreased as with more education, specifically only 13% women who had graduated or attained higher education had son-preferring attitudes.

Among other determinants, men’s place of residence did not show any significant difference but for women the difference was evident and significant, with 30% of women in rural areas showing high son-preferring attitudes versus 22% of women living in urban settings. Lower-income men (19%) and women (32%) had high son-preferring attitudes, compared to 11% men and 19% women in the higher wealth strata; this effect is significant. Meanwhile, the multivariate analysis showed that rigidly masculine men, that is, men who don’t believe in gender equality, are 14 times (CI: 7.7 - 28.6) more likely to prefer sons. The difference was also evident in the bivariate analysis, as 35% of men who were rigid had a high preference for sons, compared to only 5% of men considered equitable. Similar patterns were observed among women, where 31% who are less equitable and who experience controlling relationships, had a greater preference for sons versus 15% of women with a gender-equitable outlook and who experience less control in their relationships. The multivariate results show that women with low equitable attitudes who experience rigid control from men, were 11 times (CI-2.67-25.14) more likely to have high son-preferring attitudes than other women.

REFLECTIONS

Findings for Rajasthan indicate that the proportion of men and women with gender equitable attitudes was far greater than the number of men and women in the same category across the study states. Rajasthan, in comparison, is different as lower proportions of men have displayed extreme levels of rigid masculinity (17%) in contrast to an average across states of 32% and the highest percentage of men are moderately masculine (47%).

Rajasthan’s has had a long history of interventions that have effectively addressed varying dimensions of women’s empowerment. Center sponsored women development programs such as the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and the Integrated Child Development Scheme have effectively been potent drivers of change in Rajasthan. Additionally other schemes such as self-help groups, Zila Mahila Sahayita Samiti and the Integrated Women’s Empowerment Program have helped develop knowledge and skills and facilitated active participation in planning and decision-making in Rajasthan. These programs may have worked to effectively promote gender equitable attitudes among men and women. Nonetheless,



Socio-Demographic Factors	Men (%)	Women (%)
Education		
Illiterate	20.6	32.4
1-5 standard	19.3	25.3
6-12 standard	14.5	24.7
13+ standard	5.5	12.5
p-value	<0.001	<0.001
Residence		
Rural	14.7	30.1
Urban	12.6	21.6
p-value	0.400	0.006
Wealth Index		
Low	18.6	31.8
Middle	13.6	31.1
High	11.1	19.0
p-value	<0.001	0.004
Masculinity Index (Gender Attitude and Relationship Control)		
Equitable	4.7	14.9
Moderate	13.8	36.1
Rigid	35.0	31.3
p-value	<0.001	<0.001

High	Uttar Pradesh
Son Preference, Intimate Partner Violence and Masculinity	Odisha
	Madhya Pradesh
	Punjab and Haryana
	Maharashtra
Low	Rajasthan

Note: The states are arranged based on the aggregate ranking on prevalence of masculinity, son preference and intimate partner violence for both men and women combined.

there is an immense potential to build upon these in Rajasthan to continue challenging rigid gender norms and create new roles and aspirations for women and girls as many other statistics around gender equality continue to be lower than other states.

The results of intimate partner violence in Rajasthan indicate that more than two-third of the men and half of the women reported perpetration and experience of violence in their lifetime. In contrast lesser proportion of men (23%) and women (22%) reported perpetrating and experiencing any form of violence in the past 12 months. In comparison to other states men in Rajasthan have been less violent towards their intimate partners in the past 12 months. Women's reporting of emotional violence is higher than men but for other forms, men's reporting is at par with women's experience of it. The lower overall prevalence is closely aligned with the data on masculinity and could be as a result of the gender and empowerment programs long standing in the state.

Yet there is a need to broaden the understanding of violence which includes emotional, economic and sexual abuse, as under reporting is often a result of lack of knowledge about the various forms of IPV and attitudes that contributes to gender inequality.

Also, higher wealth strata in Rajasthan reported low on perpetration and experience of violence. This suggests that men and women belonging to higher wealth strata may be under reporting IPV. The reasons for this could be because at higher wealth levels, men may be

more educated, more aware of the law and thus less likely to report IPV. To that end, more programs and interventions are needed for men and women in different socio economic categories to make them aware of women's rights and entitlements.

An overall finding in the study was that men with rigid masculinity and women who experienced rigid masculine control showed a significantly greater desire for sons than those with more moderate or equitable attitudes. Rajasthan results demonstrated that men in the state have the lowest son preference compared to the other sample states. Men and women prefer to have sons for almost similar reasons, and overall, they do not reflect a high preference for sons. However, both groups, especially women, do express great discriminatory attitudes towards daughters/girls. This is indicative of the possible increased focus on avoidance of daughters at any cost as opposed to ensuring sons, which is reflective in the skewed sex ratio in the state.

We found that women highly valued their sons and viewed them as a way for women/mothers to achieve greater respect socially. This study shows that women in Rajasthan view daughters as practical assets – caregivers to aging or ill parents – while men associate larger values with them – bringing prosperity. It is therefore important to develop programs that work with women to impart new meanings about their agency, value and status in society. Shifting the understanding of expectations and responsibilities by gender, and teaching both girls and boys to engage in household care work, are important to improving girls' status in families. Creating state-specific public educational campaigns that focus on redefining men and women's role in the family should thus be strongly considered in Rajasthan.

Programs can also be designed using men as a stakeholder group through which skills and perspectives can be built to dismantle attitudes and beliefs that come in the way of gender equality. Men who are highly or moderately equitable, that is a large proportion in this state, especially those in positions of authority, can be addressed to pave the way for newer definitions of masculinity that do not subscribe to patriarchal norms. This can have a positive effect on those men who are rigidly masculine in their behavior but not in their attitudes towards gender equality.

To continue the gains of gender equality, enhancing access to quality education and school completion should continue to be at top priority, and within school settings it is imperative to carry out reflective learning programs on gender equality to reach young boys and men early in their lives. To that end, scaling up programs such as ICRW's Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) in different institutional settings would also be beneficial. GEMS' approach of engaging young boys and girls in collective, critical self-reflection through group education activities that allow them to recognize and challenge inequitable gender norms and the use of violence has been proven to shift gender unequal norms.

Finally, in every effort aimed at eliminating son preference and intimate partner violence, it is essential to bring men and women together in a strategic manner, across different programs and sectors to create spaces where traditional gender roles are confronted and challenged.

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