



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

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 understand the intrinsic relationship between masculinity, son preference and intimate partner violence in seven states# of India¹. Results across the states 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 Uttar Pradesh.

STATE PROFILE

With 199 million people, Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India and is home to about 16% of the total population of India². The sex ratio at birth (878 girls to 1,000 boys) in the state has increased just by one percentage point in the past years and it continues to be far lower than the national average of 909 (2011-13)³. The overall literacy rate for those ages seven and above has improved over the past decade in Uttar Pradesh but continues to be far below the national average of 74% (2011). The difference between the 77% literacy rate of men and the 57% rate of women in the state is high, when compared to the national average which for men is 82% and for women 65%².

Besides being a very populous state, Uttar Pradesh also has some of the poorest development indicators, especially with regard to the status of women and girls. The percentage of ever-married women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence is higher in Uttar Pradesh (42%) than in the entire country (37%)⁴. In the state, more than three-fifths of women (64%) who have only daughters have a desire for more children, compared to one-fourth of the women who already have two sons⁴. A high proportion of girls continue to get married before the legal age of 18. According to the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), 59% of 20 to 24-year-old women were married before their 18th birthday. Early marriage is more prevalent in rural areas

* Citation: Nanda Priya, Gautam Abhishek, Verma Ravi, Khanna Aarushi, Khan Nizamuddin, Brahme Dhanashri, Boyle Shobhana, Kumar Sanjay (2015). "Masculinity, Intimate Partner Violence and Son Preference in India - Findings from Uttar Pradesh". New Delhi, International Center for Research on Women.

Table 1: Demographics of Uttar Pradesh at a Glance

Indicators	Estimates (Year)	
Sex ratio at birth (SRB: girls per 1,000 boys) ³	877 (2006-08)	878 (2011-13)
Literacy rate ²	56 (2001)	68 (2011)
Male literacy rate ²	68 (2001)	77 (2011)
Female literacy rate ²	43 (2001)	57 (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 Census 2011, Office of Registrar General of India

³ Sample Registration System, 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



where 68% of women ages 20-24 had married before 18 and a third had married before 15 years of age. Only one-third of girls' ages 15-17 are in school and almost 72% of girls discontinue their schooling in rural areas as per NFHS-3. According to Census 2011, women's rate of participation in the Uttar Pradesh workforce is very low (17%) and varies widely across the districts².

These development indicators reflect the low status of women and girls in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Given this backdrop, the study aimed to understand men's attitudes and behaviors to recommend how men can be engaged in efforts to address gender inequality.

OBJECTIVE

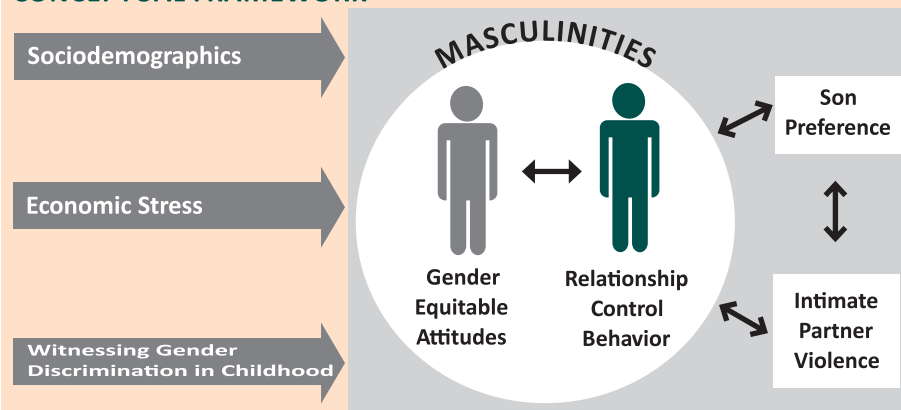
The primary objective of the study was to examine the dimensions and determinants of men's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on issues related to gender equality, son preference and IPV. The specific objectives were to:

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	Uttar Pradesh
Men	9,205	1,529
Women	3,158	526

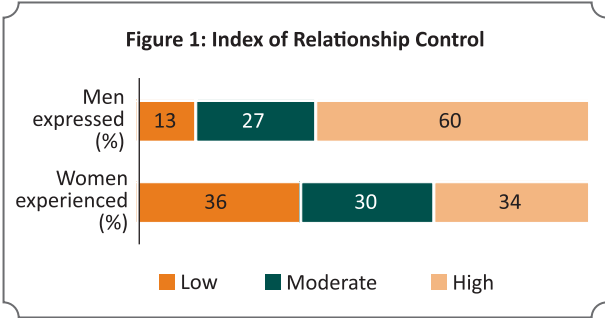
BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS IN UTTAR PRADESH

In Uttar Pradesh, the mean age of male respondents in the sample was 31 years and for females it was 29 years. Three-fifths (60%) of the men and women in the sample were from rural areas. More than one-third (35%) of women in the state were illiterate while 15% of the men did not have any education. A small proportion of respondents (14% of men and 9% of women) reported attaining higher education (graduation or above). Over one-fourth of the respondents were currently not married and more than three-fourths of the married men and women reported that their marriage was arranged to which they had agreed willingly. One in ten men (10%) reported that elders had arranged their marriages, and they had to agree; among women, this proportion was 16%.

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, masculinity was defined by two dimensions: “relationship control” as a behavioral dimension and “attitude towards gender norms” as an underlying value.

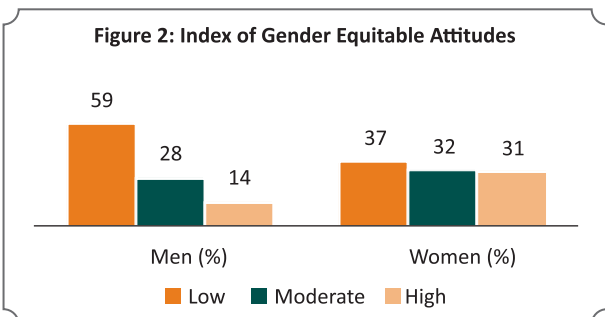
Nine statements such as “I want to know where my wife/partner is all the time” and “My husband/partner won’t let me wear certain things,” capturing men’s expressions and women’s experiences of relationship control were combined and a summarized score



was used to develop an index of relationship control. We found that three-fifths of men expressed excessive control over their partner/wife, whereas only 13% exercised low control. The proportion of men expressing high control was much greater in Uttar Pradesh compared to the average proportion of men with high control across all states. Among women, just over one-third (34%) reported experiencing high control by their partners whereas two-thirds said their partners’ behavior was less or moderately controlling.

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

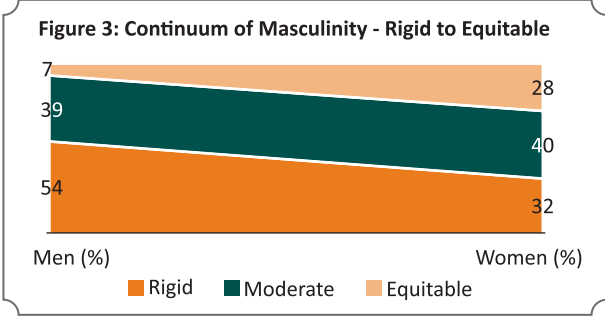
In terms of attitudinal dimension of masculinity, 27 attitudinal statements capturing perceptions and attitudes on some key gender norms were used to form an index of “gender equitable attitudes.” Statements included, for example, “Women’s most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family,” and “A woman should tolerate domestic violence in order to keep her family together.”



In Uttar Pradesh, only 14% of men and a little less than one-third of women (31%) held positive attitudes towards gender equality and others were either moderately or highly negative.

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 men and women, which were further trichomatized into three categories – rigid, moderate and equitable. Rigid men are defined as those who not only exercised excessive control in their intimate relationships but also held negative attitudes about gender norms. On the other hand, men who were less controlling in their intimate relationships and believed in gender equality were considered as equitable. In our sample, “rigid masculinity” was manifested and enacted



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	1.23	0.84
Current age		
18-24 years (R)		
25-34 years	0.57*	0.79
35-49 years	0.41**	0.69
Level of education		
Up to Primary (0-5 class)(R)		
Up to higher secondary (6-12 class)	2.66**	2.03*
Graduate and above	3.31**	5.98**
Type of family		
Nuclear (R)		
Non-Nuclear	0.92	1.00
Wealth Index		
Low (R)		
Middle	1.59*	1.32
High	2.51*	1.26
Economic stress		
Yes (R)		
No	0.82	
Decision making in family		
Father (R)		
Both Together	0.69	2.06*
Witnessing male participation in household chores		
Yes (R)		
No	1.09	0.86
Witnessed/Experienced discrimination/harassment during childhood		
Yes (R)		
No	8.23**	1.51

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

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

for each form of violence were taken into account and a composite variable for each form was created.

Nearly half of the men reported perpetrating and 45% of the women reported experiencing any form of violence in past 12 months. The highest prevalence of violence

by more than half of the men (54%) in Uttar Pradesh. The proportion of rigidly masculine men in this state was much higher compared to the average of rigidly masculine men across all study states. For women, it was about the type of relationship that they were living in and their own attitudes about gender norms. One-third of the women were in relationships dominated by rigid men and held gender unequal attitudes; whereas 28% were considered equitable, that is, they were in more gender-equitable partnerships and believed in gender equality. Averages across all states revealed that a higher proportion of women in Uttar Pradesh experience highly controlling relationships and exhibit more gender inequitable attitudes and behaviors.

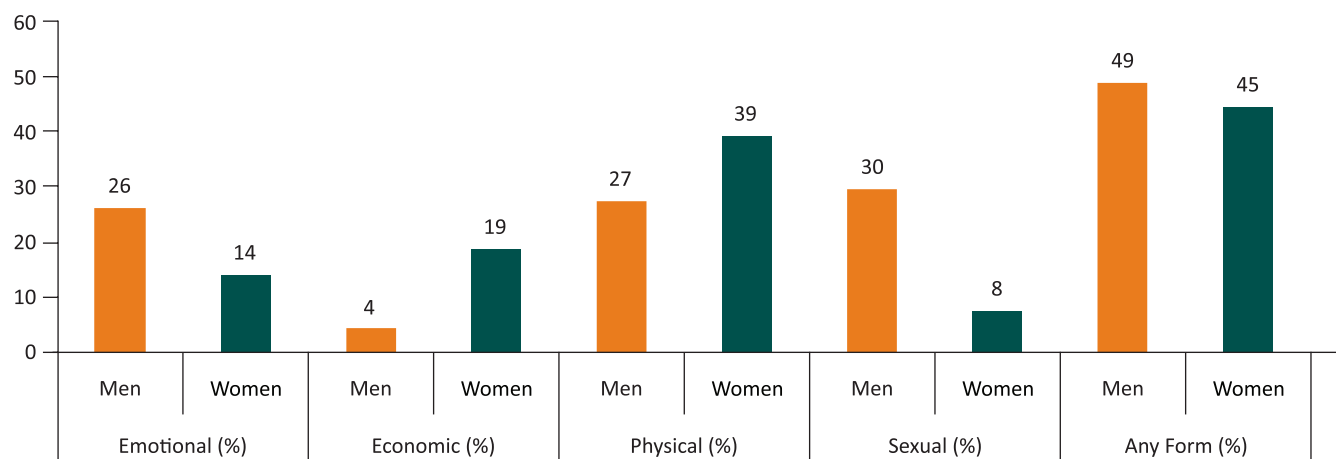
The multivariate analysis used to decide on key determinants of equitable men revealed that younger men are more equitable than older ones.

With increasing level of education and wealth, men were less likely to be rigidly masculine. Education also had a positive effect among women in terms of their notions of gender equality, but wealth did not. Meanwhile, women who had witnessed joint decision-making by their parents during childhood were more likely to experience less control by their spouse and have equitable gender attitudes. Witnessing or experiencing gender-stratified roles in a household during childhood has direct bearing on the creation of rigid masculinity for both men and women. In our sample, men who had not witnessed/experienced discrimination/harassment during childhood were nearly eight times more likely than the others to be equitable and less controlling in their relationships.

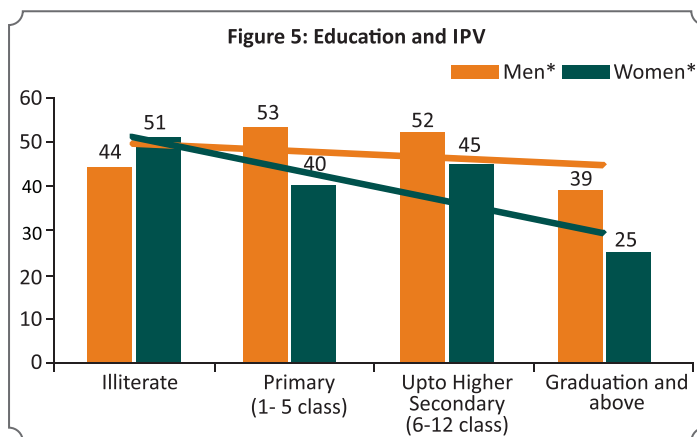
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND MASCULINITY

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 and women were independent of each other. The responses to the series of questions

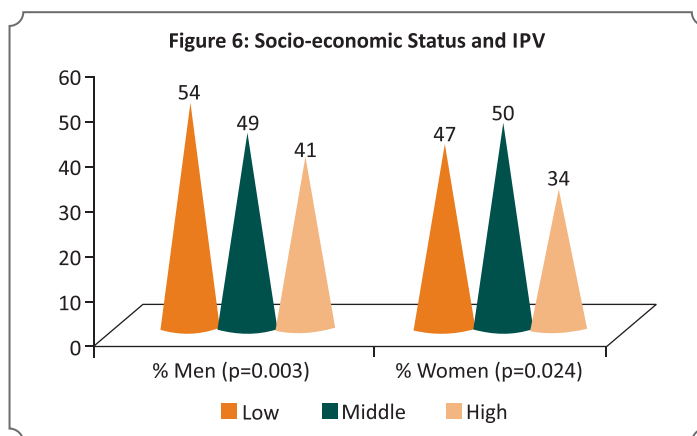
Figure 4: Perpetration by Men and Experience by Women of IPV (in the past 12 months)



reported by men and women in Uttar Pradesh was physical violence, where nearly two-fifths of the women (39%) said they had experienced it and just under one-third of the men (27%) said they had been physically violent against an intimate partner in the past year. Interestingly, a greater number of men reported perpetrating all forms of violence, except economic and physical, than the number of women’s reported experiences of these forms of violence. About 30% of the men said they had perpetrated sexual violence in an intimate relationship, while less than 10% women reported experiencing such violence. The difference in their reporting may be because of the stigma women might associate with sexual violence or a perception that non-consensual sex with a husband is not considered to be violence. The perpetration of any form of violence as well as reported experience by women in Uttar Pradesh was far higher than what was observed across other states in the study.



The key determinants of IPV include socio-economic characteristics, economic stress, experiences of inequality in childhood and masculinity. For women, education plays a strikingly significant role in reducing the prevalence of violence in their lives. A quarter of women (25%) in Uttar Pradesh who had graduated or attained a higher level of education reported experiencing violence compared to more than half who had primary (40%) or no education (51%). About 44% of the men who had no education reported perpetrating violence in comparison to 39% who had graduated or attained a higher level of education.



More than half of the men (54%) belonging to the low wealth strata reported that they had engaged in some form of IPV in the past 12 months, whereas 41% of men of higher wealth strata said the same (OR: 0.49; CI-0.32-0.76). The relationship between women’s economic status and their experience with violence was not significant, when controlled for other factors in multivariate analysis.

Often, violence and discrimination are construed as normal if children observe or experience them during their formative years. More than half of the men (56%) and women (56%) in Uttar Pradesh who had often witnessed or experienced discrimination or harassment during childhood had committed or experienced violence in past year. Interestingly, nearly one in three men who have never had such childhood experiences also reported perpetrating violence in the past 12 months.

In Uttar Pradesh, unlike other states, we found no significant association between masculinity and IPV. This is due to equally high prevalence of violence (around 49-54%) observed across the three category of masculinity. In UP a very high proportion of men are rigidly masculine (54%) compared to the reference category of equitable men (7%) yet the overall prevalence of violence is high across the groups.

SON PREFERENCE AND MASCULINITY

The result of our study across the states reveals that son preference is strongly correlated with the actual number of sons a couple has. In Uttar Pradesh too, men having more sons in the family continued to express strong desire for sons: more than two-fifths (43%) of men who had more sons than daughters expressed a desire for additional sons compared to 26% of men who had more daughters. This is contrary to women, as the desire for sons was stronger among those who

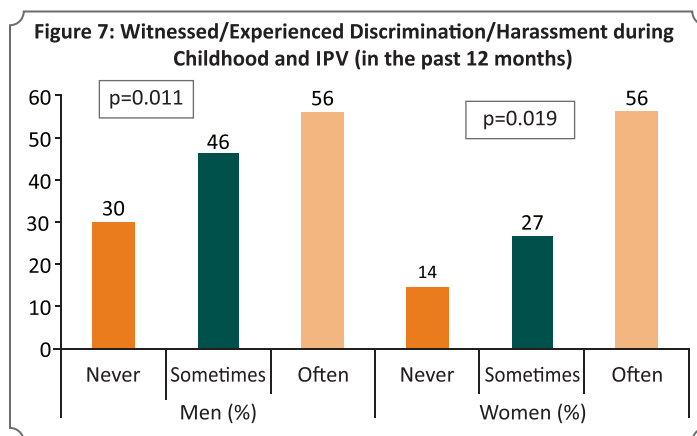
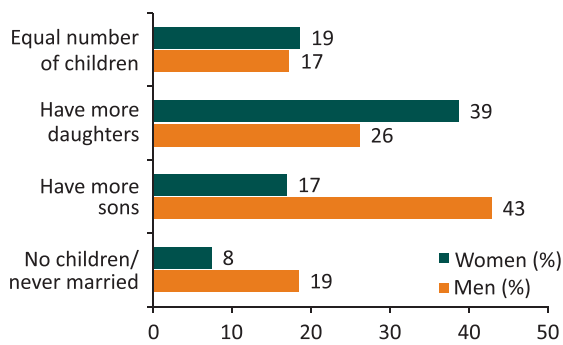


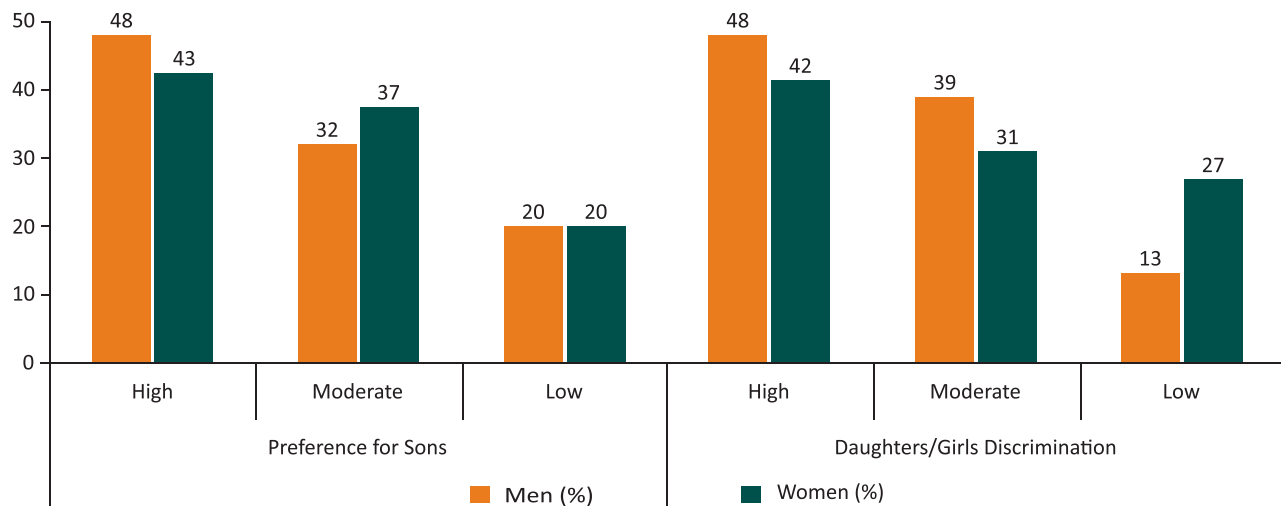
Figure 8: Actual Family Size and High Desire for Sons

already had more daughters (39%) as opposed to those who had more sons and still wanted even more (17%). Women with an equal number of sons and daughters showed a slightly higher desire for sons than that which was reported by men.

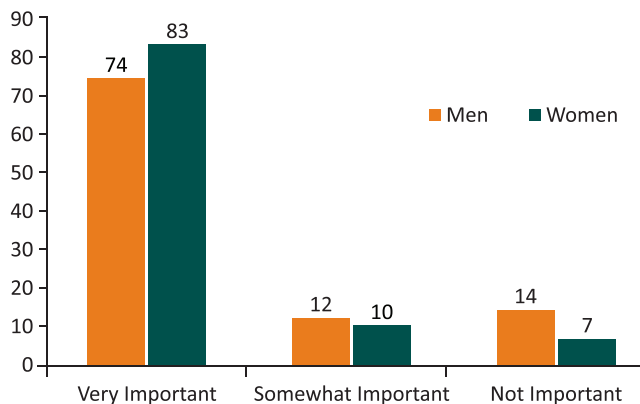
In the study we also used attitudinal statements to measure men and women's preference for sons and to assess their attitudes toward daughters. Different statements were used to measure preferential attitudes towards sons and discriminatory attitudes against daughters.

Nearly half of the men showed a high preference for sons and almost the same proportion exhibited highly discriminatory attitudes against daughters/girls. Forty-three percent of women expressed a greater preference for sons and a similar percentage showed significant discrimination against daughters.

From the results and comparative analysis, we found that men and women in Uttar Pradesh are equal in their strong preference for sons and significant discriminatory attitudes against daughters/girls.

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

At the aggregate level, 37% of men and 34% of women had high preference for sons and a similar proportion – 33% of men and 38% of women – held high discriminatory attitudes against daughters/girls. Uttar Pradesh has a much greater proportion of men and women who have high preference for sons and discriminatory attitudes towards daughters/girls compared to the average across study states.

Figure 10: Importance of having at least One Son

IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AT LEAST ONE SON

The overwhelming majority of men and women considered it very important to have at least one son in their family; only a small proportion of both sexes did not feel it to be important. In fact, more women (83%) than men (74%) felt it was very important to have a son. At the aggregate level, the proportion of men and women who said it was important to have at least one son was not very different (76% men and 81% women). The importance of daughters was also assessed in the study. Interestingly, at the aggregate level, more than three-fifths of men (68%) and nearly three-fourths (74%) of women considered it very important to have at least one daughter. However, in Uttar Pradesh, 54% of men and 70% of women felt this to be important.

REASONS FOR HAVING AT LEAST ONE SON

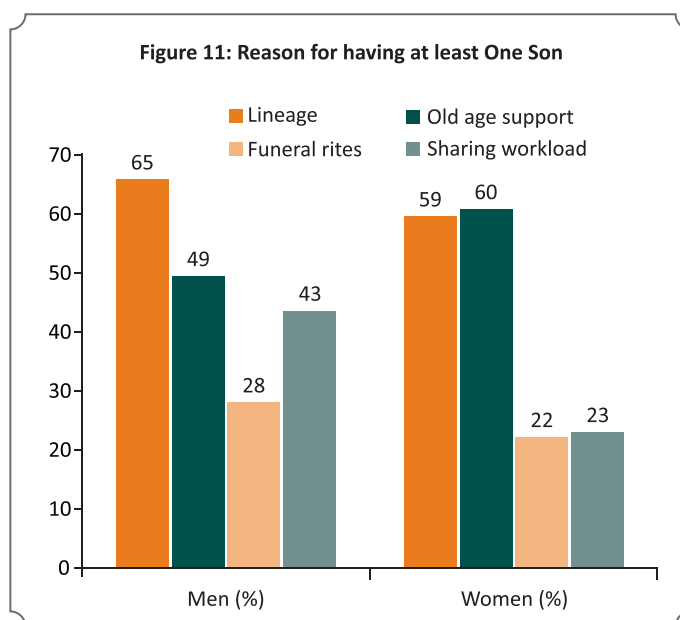
Men and women in Uttar Pradesh agreed that the two most important reasons for having a son were to carry on the family name and to provide support to parents in their old age, although the proportion of men citing lineage as a reason was far greater than that of women. The third most important reason to have sons was for their role in the performance of funeral rites (28% of men and 22% of women). Another reason for having son was to share responsibilities of work, according to 43% of men and 23% of women. Meanwhile, the top reason that men wanted at least one daughter was for emotional support followed by rituals such as *kanyadan/rakshabandhan* while women thought it was important to have a daughter to share domestic workload and take care of parents when they are sick.

DETERMINANTS OF HIGH SON-PREFERRING ATTITUDES

Education is a strong and significant predictor of son-preferring attitudes. In Uttar Pradesh, we found that 55% of men with no education have a high preference for sons compared to 39% of men with graduation or higher education. For women, too, the association was significant, with half of the uneducated women (50%) expressing a high preference for sons versus 23% of the graduates. There was no significant difference by type of residence in both the groups. Among those who are poor, almost half of men and women (52%) had high son-preferring attitudes, compared to 39% of men and 36% of women in the state’s higher wealth tertile. Men who have rigid masculinity, that is, they hold highly inequitable attitudes and behavior, were more likely to have a high preference for sons (68%) than men (8%) considered to be gender equitable. This pattern was true for women respondents as well.

REFLECTIONS

Uttar Pradesh fares poorly on many indicators of gender equality including early marriage and crimes against women. The results from this study have indicated that in comparison to all sample states Uttar Pradesh has the largest proportion of men reporting high control over their intimate partners and similarly the lowest proportion of men displaying gender equitable attitudes. Childhood experiences of violence are also high for men and women in the study sample. Whereas in other states moderately masculine men were the average, Uttar Pradesh results indicate a much graver situation with half of the men manifesting rigid masculinity. Programs, policies and organizations that work to redefine what masculinity means are required to create change in the state. It is critical to develop programs that focus on engaging boys at an early age to instill in them values of equality as well as new ideas of what are appropriate roles for men and women in society. Such programs should also foster in boys the skills and agency to question how older generations behave. Indeed, the study results show that younger men are more equitable in their behavior and attitudes compared to their older counterparts. This reinforces the need to give young men the ability to maintain their gender equitable attitudes in the face of the values of older generations – values that often affect their marriage decisions and how their wives are integrated into joint families.



Socio-Demographic Factors	Men (%)	Women (%)
Education		
Illiterate	54.7	50.3
1-5 standard	42.0	47.7
6-12 standard	51.3	38.5
13+ standard	38.8	23.4
p-value	<0.001	<0.010
Residence		
Rural	48.9	44.1
Urban	47.8	40.8
p-value	0.720	0.027
Wealth Index		
Low	52.3	52.0
Middle	51.4	38.2
High	39.2	36.4
p-value	<0.001	<0.001
Masculinity Index (Gender Attitude and Relationship Control)		
Equitable	8.3	10.7
Moderate	33.6	47.4
Rigid	68.2	70.4
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
<p>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.</p>	

The study shows that men report perpetrating violence to a higher degree than women report experiencing it. This demonstrates a need to design programs that focus on developing skills of self-reflection, communication and negotiation among women to help them gain the ability to overcome shame and self-blame in reporting and experiencing violence at the hands of men. This is especially key in the case of sexual violence; our study shows that there is a large gap between women's reporting and experiencing of sexual violence and men's higher perpetration of such violence. Uttar Pradesh is also a state where there is lot of activity around women's collectivization into self-help groups for poverty alleviation. This can be used as a platform to engage women in skill and perspective building around core issues of gender equal norms as well as rights and entitlements. Other women who can act as change makers include the front line workers in the health and women and child development sectors as well as women members of panchayats.

In the context of Uttar Pradesh, study results show that economic considerations are not as valid in causing or preventing intimate partner violence as it is in other states. There is not much difference in the reporting of violence perpetration between men of lower and higher wealth strata, which indicates that programs need to target men across all wealth strata's to bring down prevalence of violence against women.

Our study indicates that Uttar Pradesh has a much higher proportion of men and women who have a high preference for sons and discriminatory attitude towards daughters/girls as compared to the average across study states. The state policies need to regulate the misuse of technology for sex selection and counter the poor sex ratio in the state. These measures can also act as a means to address the negative values men and women of Uttar Pradesh place on daughters.

Creating state-specific public educational campaigns that focus on redefining men and women's role in the family should be strongly considered in Uttar Pradesh. With such poor indicators of gender equality, high prevalence of IPV and son preference, there is an immense potential to work on creating messages, campaigns and community outreach around redefining gender norms. Campaign messages must recast norms about what it means to be "a real man" and discourage intimate partner violence as well as attitudes that support gender inequality. 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 early in their lives. Educational interventions also need to focus on young men and their potential in influencing thinking and perceptions within family and community. Men occupying influential positions in the community settings such as in the panchayat can act as stakeholders in reaching out to peers and elders in promoting gender equitable attitudes. Finally, in every effort aimed at eliminating son preference and IPV, 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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