Effect of Low Sex Ratio on Marriage Practices: A Study in Punjab

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PREFACE

The sex composition is considered as one of the most significant demography and important social indicator for measuring the status of male and female in a society. In India where the gender bias, deep rooted prejudice and discrimination against girl child have been there down the centuries, the sex ratio had always remained unfavourable to females. Existing practices of dowry, restrictive right over married daughters and belief of investment in girl child without any return for parents, make preference for sons inevitable. Existence of such discrimination against girl child and availability of sex determination techniques both together has accelerated the pace of decline in sex ratio during last two decades. Technologies originated to facilitate pre-natal diagnosis of any potential birth defects and associated conditions are being misused for sex detection of the unborn child and female foetuses are selectively aborted after such pre-natal sex determination. Evidence on misuse of sex determination tests finally led to the introduction of The Pre-Natal Diagnostics Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act in the country.

The magnitude of trend in declining sex ratio was evidently seen in 2001 census as child sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years has declined drastically, particularly in several states of North & West India and in major southern states also. Among the states with high imbalance in the male and female number Punjab has recorded the lowest child sex ratio in the country. The child sex ratio in Fatahgarh Sahib, Kapurthala, Gurdaspur and Patiala, has declined more than 100 points. The impact of this decline would be felt by younger generation to come specially, marriageable age group.

Realizing the magnitude of the problem which is perhaps social than medical, Government and non-government agencies have implemented various interventions through awareness campaign / programme /schemes for curbing the female foeticide and preventing society from its adverse effect. The present study therefore, could be a supplementation to the efforts already being made in this field as it has come up with useful findings and recommendations regarding the issue. The study also laid special attempt to bring forward various repercussions of declining sex ratio on marriage practices. In view of this, it is hoped that the findings and recommendations

would be helpful in developing suitable interventions under the programmes already being implemented for curbing female foeticide.

I appreciate the inputs provided by the members of Research Advisory Committee in finalizing research design of the study. I extend my sincere thanks to **Dr. S.P. Jain,** Ex Director NIRD and Ex Regional Director, NIPCCD, Regional Center, Lucknow; **Dr. Surendra Singh** Ex Professor and Head, Department of Social work and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Lucknow University, Pro Vice Chncellor, and Director, J.K. Institute of Sociology and Human Relations and Ex Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi; and **Dr. Aruna Narayan**, General Manager, NRHM, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh for their valuable suggestions at every stage of the study. I wish to place on record my appreciation to Mr. Sunil Kumar Incharge of the project for successfully completing the project in the stipulated time period. I also acknowledge the able assistance of Mrs. Smita Singh, Mr. Sanjay Tomar, Miss Ankita Tiwari, Mr. Abhishek Singh and Miss Prapti, project team members.

(Madhu Agarwal)
Regional Director

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(Sunil Kumar)

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Introduction

Every year, as millions of women marry, they dream of starting a family of having their homes filled with tiny cries and the happy laughter of gurgling babies. However, pregnancy is too often followed by the question of whether the unborn child is girl or a boy. One son is a cause for joy while two are seen as lifetime celebration, the traditional thinking being that if one dies, at least the other will live to take care of the parents. On the other side, girl child is seen as an economic burden as her marriage crushes the family under huge financial burden on account of dowry system. As a result, parents taking advantage of the sex detection facility which enables to know the sex of the foetus and aborting if happened to be girl. The widespread usage of this facility has resulted into declining sex ratio in some of the states in the country.

Female foeticide and infanticide are not unique to India; they are prevalent in some Latin American, Asian and African countries like China, Korea, Indonesia, Brazil etc. The ancient Greeks and Romans attached a high social premium to male and resorted to strange ways of determining the sex of the unborn child. After birth 'exposing' (abandoning in the open) unwanted infants was popular way of killing them and such instances, the decision was taken entirely but by the father. In pre-communist China, female infanticide was rather common. One proverb went, *"It is necessary to beat the iron rim on the wheel to keep it in shape. So with a women"* Even in Post-Cultural Revolution China, when a *'one child family'* norm was adopted in 1979, the phenomenon of millions of *'missing girls'* was recognized by early 1990s

All such instances are familiar in India even today, as legacy of the male child has been an old tradition. In our patriarchal society, the murder of female child is not new. The census of 1871-72 provided the first detailed account of systematic killing of female babies. Girl infants has

been known to be killed by rubbing poison on the mother's breast, by feeding infants with milk of errukam flower of oleander berries, by using sap of calotropis plant, paddy grains, giving sleeping tablets or by simply burying the girl infants alive. A book titled *'Shishu Hatya Tatha Narmedh Pratha'* written by *Shitla Sahai* and published about 75 years ago, states that in Varanasi there was tradition of killing female child in Rajput families. The latest advances in modern medical sciences, the tests like amniocentesis and ultrasonography are even being abused. These tests, which were originally designed, for detection of gender related congenital abnormalities of the foetus are now being abused particularly in India and Asian countries primarily to detect the sex of the foetus with the intention of getting it aborted if it happens to be that of a female.

The earlier efforts to eradicate female infanticide were made in the country during the British rule*. Kathiawar* and *Kutch* were the two places where the British initially tried to stem the social evil of female infanticide. In 1795, the Commissioner of Banaras (Varanasi) Sir Johnsher declared female infanticide a criminal offence. In 1839 Sir Montegomary, Collector of Allahabad, tried to prevent this inhuman tradition but could not succeed. Yet the abuse of girl child which is violation of her human right to life, continues to prevail not only in some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan & Gujarat but has been found in some districts of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra as well

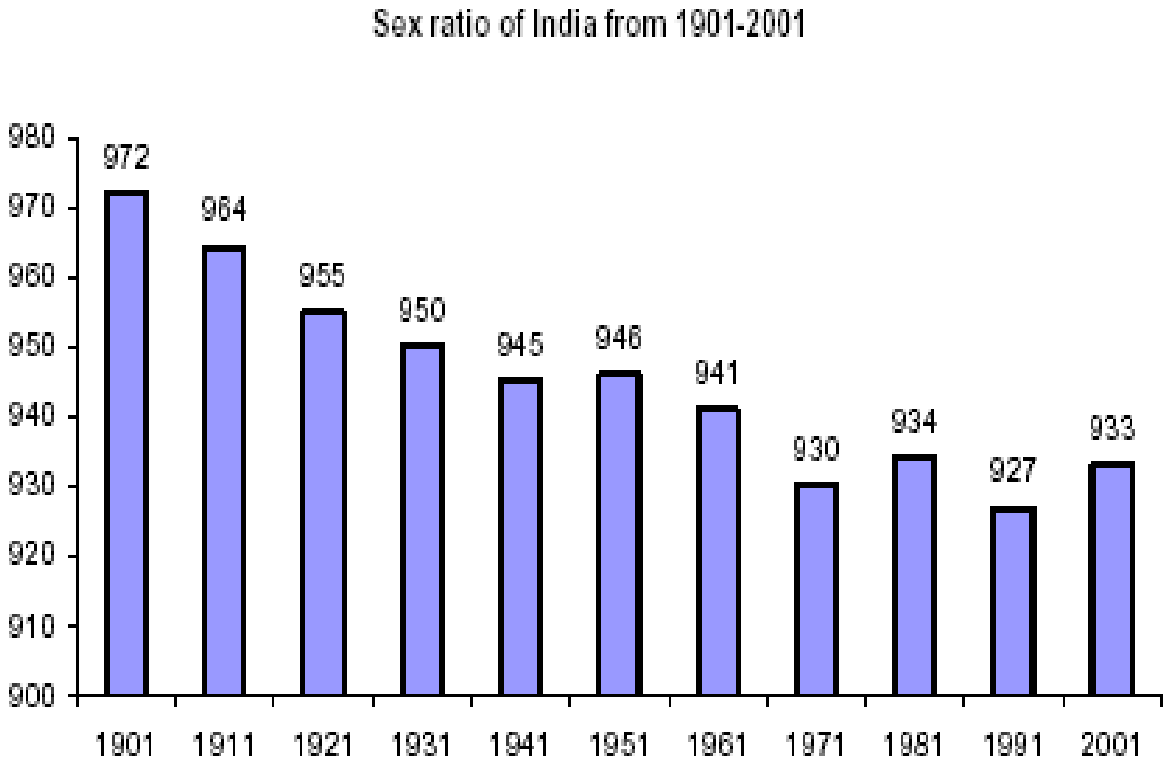
The provisional results of Census of India 2001 showed a substantial decline in the sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 (Child sex ratio). The 'Paper 1 of 2001 census, based on the provisional results of the 2001 Census highlighted this issue by devoting a full section on this subject. It set into motion serious debates which resulted into a series of action on several fronts to curb the menace of female foeticide in the concerned parts of the country. India's unfavourable sex ratio of 933 is claimant to women's

detrimental status. Moreover, states with high per capita income have registered decline sex ratio as compared to the other parts of the country. These states include Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi, Goa and Tamil Nadu. This situation indicates correlation between prosperity and misuse of advanced technology. Technology, primarily invented for the prenatal diagnosis is being blamed for the decline the sex ratio since they are readily accessible in the developed states, especially in Punjab & Haryana. At the same time one has to look factors motivating or forcing people to exploitation of modern technology.

SEX RATIO IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

The sex ratio is a composite indicator of women's status. It reveals the number of females per thousand males. Biologically, the natural sex ratio favours females by bringing into 105 females for every 100 men. This situation is well reflected in only few of the developing countries like in Sub-Saharan Africa (102:100) and South-East Asia (101:100). On the contrary, there are less than 93 females for every 100 males.

India's sex ratio throughout the 20th century and in the 21st century reflects a masculine sex ratio. Nevertheless, the sex ratio in India is more or less governed by a number of socio cultural practices in a traditional set up, which needs to be understood for an adequate appreciation of the problem The sex ratio declined steadily in the years 1901 to 1971 (with a negligible increase in 1951) to improve marginally to 934 and has hovered around 930. In 2001 it stands at 933 to affirm the presence of unfavourable conditions for women's survival. (Figure-1)



(Figure-1 Sex ratio of India from 1901 - 2001)

Similarly, the child sex ratio has declined across the country from 945 girls per 1,000 boys in 1991 to 927 girls per 1,000 boys in 2001. It was observed, more incredibly, in urban areas and the higher income groups. The urban child sex ratio is worst in the comparatively better off states such as Punjab (789); Haryana (809); Gujarat (827); Chandigarh (844); Himachal Pradesh (858) & Delhi (866).

SEX RATIO AND MARRIAGE

Marriage, as an universal institution maintains the population equilibrium in the society. A minute deviation in this balance is likely to disturb the entire one generation. Marriage in north India, especially in Punjab, can be categorized in to exogamy and endogamy types with an

existing practice of polygamy and polyandry among few families because of socio-cultural and economic reasons. This has been one of the causes of falling male to female ratio over the years in the state.

The current scenario of sex ratio in Punjab (874:1000) implies that there are only four women available for every five men. This also means that one of every five men will not have a local girl to marry in future. The need for women for productive and reproductive cause is being addressed through unconventional marriages. Men from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan are marrying women from West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. These unusual marriages are consequence of a combination of factors like adverse sex ratio, acute poverty and the desire of parents to escape dowry. Poor parents are being driven to marry their daughters hundreds of miles away from home. While men from low sex ratio states of Punjab, Haryana, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are 'importing, 'foreign' women from the eastern and southern states as marriage partners, women, too, may be choosing this as a migration strategy to move from poorer to more desirable location. Such marriages represent a hitherto undocumented type that cannot be explained adequately within the framework of categories available for understanding marriage and non-marriage transactions involving women, i.e., sexual trafficking, buying of women for marriage and bride price marriage.

Men, who are unable to find wives and need them for their domestic, sexual and reproductive services, buy women from poor families. The man pays the girl's parents to acquire a wife. These marriages are further differentiated from trafficking as the girl/wife is not passed on to others and is not one of several 'wives' thus acquired. More often, she makes a stable home with a particular man, fulfilling the role of wife, mother and farm labourers. Poor men who are unable to attract marriage proposals buy a

‘wife’ from another poor family, who sells their daughter for a monetary consideration. The persistence and spread of the poor sex ratio in Punjab state will logically keep up the demand for brides from elsewhere. Female migration for upward mobility is possibly another factor contributing to divert traditional marriage practices.

Reports in the local and national media have been highlighting the increasing incidents of “Sale of Girl” to the affluent but female deficient states of Punjab & Haryana. In these cases transaction girls are generally from poor families of West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and even the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. However the focus of these reports of sale and purchase of underage girls conceals the actual nature and range of marital and other transactions resulting from the poor sex ratio.

Chapter-2

Review of Literature

The imbalance sex ratio in India has become an issue of concern since last two decades. Various studies has been conducted to understand the magnitude of the problem and provided evidences that high female mortality rate and female foeticide are the main reasons for this imbalance. The focus is also given to understand the different dimensions of skewing sex ratio along with regional pattern. Except improvement in 1951, 1981 and 2001 the sex ratio continued to decline from 972 in 1901 to 933 in 2001. The census 2001 highlighted shocking statistics in case of child population. At national level the sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 declined from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 and in some state this declining figure reached to alarmingly point (Haryana 820 & Punjab 793). Studies conducted on the issue shows cultural set up and religious faiths for son preference are the main cause for opting sex selective abortions. Evidence on misuse of sex determination tests finally let to the introduction of the PNDT Act. The repercussion of this continued trend of declining sex ratio in terms of marriage would make women more vulnerable and lower their status in the society. The presented review of studies in an attempt to focus on trend of declining sex ratio and repercussions of skewing sex ratio concerning to marriage patterns.

2.1 Declining Sex Ratio

According to the *Census of India, 2001,* the sex ratio stands at 933 for the country as a whole. This is a welcome improvement from the 1991 Census, which had recorded 927 females for every 1000 males. Statement 18 and Figure 12 present the trend in sex ratio in India since 1901. The sex ratio in the country had always remained unfavourable to females.

Moreover, barring some hiccups, it has shown a long term declining trend. The sex ratio at the beginning of the twentieth century was 972 and thereafter showed continuous decline until 1941. In 1951 there was a marginal increase of one point, but thereafter it again dropped for two consecutive decades to reach 930 in 1971. In fact, between 1961-71, the country saw the sharpest decline of 11 points in the sex ratio. Thereafter, it has fluctuated marginally around 930 in successive censuses.

It is clear that the sex ratio in the age group 0-6 has decreased at a much faster pace than the overall sex ratio of the country after 1981. The decreasing sex ratio in this child population perhaps has a cascading effect on population over a period of time leading to diminishing sex ratio in the country. One thing is clear- the imbalance that has set in at this early age-group is difficult to be removed and would remain to haunt the population for a long time to come. To say the least, demographically the sex ratio of 927 of the population in the age group 0-6 does not appear to augur well for the future of the country.

Study conducted by *Sutapa Agarwal (1995)* investigating the sex selective discrimination in terms of active and passive elimination of girl child in different socio-economic conditions as life course approach in Haryana reveals that the ratio of female deaths over male was found to be less than 1, indicating more male deaths in the lower birth orders which increase to 1.8, indicating more deaths of female children in the higher birth order, suggesting that there is ignorance and neglect of female child in the higher birth order. Study further indicates that 19 percent women experienced death of female children who had no male children surviving, compared to 9 percent women having one or more male child surviving, which indicates that women not having a male child and preferring small family size might be ignoring female children more.

2.2 Sex Ratio and Birth Order

The sex ratio of first order births had been 871 female births for every 1000 live male births to the sample of women surveyed. For the second order births, if the previous child was a male, the sex ratio of the current birth was found to be 1102, indicating almost no variation between the number of male and female births. However, if the previous child had been a female, the sex ratio of the current second order birth was reported to be 759. A similar pattern was also observed in the third order birth. The sex ratio at birth of the second child declines significantly when the first child is a female irrespective of the religious affiliation of the household and with the increase in the level of education of the mother. Highest relative female infant and under 5 deaths are reported from the northern state of Punjab, followed by Rajasthan and the lowest for the group from the north east. *(Office of the Registrar General, India, 1998)*

2.3 Birth Order and Female Infanticide

Chunkath and Athreya (1997) in a study based on Sample Survey and Primary Health Centers in selective districts of Tamil Nadu shows that the practice of female infanticide is very widespread in Dharamapuri, Salem and Madurai districts. Study further reveals that, higher birth order females have higher risk of being a victim of infanticide when compared to the lower birth order females.

Gangopadhyay, Bhaswati and Das (1996) in a study conducted on 245 couples to elicit transition in terms of family size and sex preference in rural women of Delhi and also to study the behavioural mechanism of couples who choose both options – the preferred sex combination of children and the preference for a small family found bias for the male child was clearly evident among sterilized couples when the decision was taken

jointly by them, but when all couples were considered, the average family size came down to two children with an equal sex distribution. Study also reveals strong desire for sons and small family often compel couples to resort to sex determination test to ensure the birth of a male offspring.

D. Jayaraj (1999) analysed sex ratio at birth on the basis of NSSO & NFHS, 1992-1993. Sex ratio at birth among first born babies is the lowest compared to that for all other birth orders, confirming that the share of first order births in total birth was an important determinant of overall sex ratio at birth. Higher sex ratio at birth at birth was observed among women who were married to close relatives compared to that of women married to non-relatives.

2.4 Sex Ratio and Girl Child Mortality

George and Dahiya (1998) in a study conducted on Medical practitioner and 1022 women of Haryana found that there is no excess girl mortality in the early neonatal or late neonatal phase but there appears to be excess girl mortality in the post neonatal phase and girls are at risk of significantly greater mortality after the first year of life. The sex ratio at birth for all birth orders for recently born children are masculine, including the first order. Study also reveals that male babies are provided with more privileges by giving them safe hospital deliveries while female deliveries are confined to their homes.

2.5 Attitude towards Female Foeticie

Kaur, (1993) in a study aiming to understand the attitude of women towards female feticide and to know the underlying reasons for the practice in social perspective found nearly three–fourths of the women in the

suburban area knew about the sex determination test, and female feticide is favored both in rural and urban areas.

Walia (2005) in a study conducted on 240 respondents found that in Ludhiana 67.50 percent of farming respondents and half the sample of non-farming respondents gave a nod to female foeticide. Respondents argued that they could afford only one female child in the family. A woman could not afford to fill her courtyard with female children in such an inflationary environment. In the total sample taken from Ludhiana 27.50 percent expressed their dissent towards female foeticide. According to them, it was a heinous act and should be punished by law.

2.6 Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to the Declining Sex Ratio

Women are aware of the health problems resulting from such decisions but favor it for socio-economic reasons: a girl is considered as a liability on account of dowry, her education does not add anything to the income of her parental family. A son is preferred for social and economic reasons. The socio-economic pressures are such that even those who consider abortion to be a sin are prepared to abort a female foetus *(Kaur, 1993)*

Walia (2005) found that in Ludhiana 82.97 percent cited dowry as the main cause for female foeticide. For them marriage had become an expensive affair. The rise in the cost of living had compelled them think seriously about having daughters. They had to pay a huge dowry to their son-in-laws so that they would keep their daughters happy. The greater the number of daughters more was the economic burden on the parents. About 86 percent of those who gave a nod to female foeticide stated that girls failed to provide any kind of social security to parents. Parents could not expect their daughters to earn and feed them in old age. A negligible 3

percent of respondents even felt that female foeticide was a good way to check the growth of female population.

Sriwastava, Dasgupta and Rai (2005) found that women welcome a girl child irrespective of their family type. But when it comes to welcome a girl child by the entire family, the attitude of the women is greatly influenced by the attitude of the male members in the family.

2.7 Son Preference and Family Planning

Raju and Bhat (1995) analyzed the sex composition of living children associated with socio-economic factors while studying their relative influence on the acceptance of family planning methods found that more than 85 percent of the women with atleast one son and daughter/s had accepted family planning methods. The most unfavourable sex composition of living children, for couples not accepting family planning methods, with no son and only daughters, or one son and no daughter.

2.8 Sex Selective Abortion

In a Study conducted by Arnold, Kishor and Roy (2001) aimed to present evidence on use of amniocentesis for sex selection of children, found that use of amniocentesis or ultrasound is varying according to sex composition of previous children. Couples with sons are more likely to have sex selective induced abortions. According to the study, there are 1.3 million induced abortions in India every year, of which over 1 lakh are sex selective abortions following an ultrasound/amniocentesis test.

The mean age of women who had underwent a sex selective abortion was 24.8 years. Sex selective abortion seekers were significantly more likely to come from joint families and were of better economic conditions. This may be due to their low autonomy and mobility, and were

less likely to play a major role in family decision making. All the 263 abortions that had taken place were not during the women's first pregnancy but in later stages. Sex selective abortions were preceded by a sex determination test and 97 percent of them took place in the private clinics *(Ganatra, Hirve and Rao, 2001)*

Perianayagam (2005) presented a paper based on NFHS I & II. The findings reveal that, the rise in sex ratio at birth was steeper in the northern region while the Western and Eastern regions showed moderate rise. The sex ratio at birth was higher in urban areas compared to rural areas in most of the Indian states. Sex ratio at last birth shows a steep rise in northern and western states and moderate to marginal increase in the remaining states, suggesting that modern technological tests such as sonogram, ultrasound and amniocentesis had been widely used for sex detection and consequent abortion of female foetuses. Study further found that the excess female child mortality was very high at ages 1-4, and was highest in Haryana (134%), followed by Punjab (81%) and Uttar Pradesh (70%) and a very high level of neglecting female children (25-45% shortfall compared to males) was observed in immunization coverage in most of the northern states.

2.9 Use of Sex Selection Techniques

Khanna (1995) based on the ethnographic enquiries among Jat women in the village, family members, midwives and doctors in a village of Delhi found that sex selective abortion following ultrasound is a common practice and is increasing in incidence in the study area. In the study village, ultra sonography test is more prevalent for sex determination.

Retherford and Roy (2003) analysis based on NFHS I (1992-93) and II (1998-99) found high use of ultrasound and amniocentesis in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Maharashtra.

2.10 Factors of Low Sex Ratio

The preference for sons was highest in the northern plains and central uplands of India, where the proportion of women who want more sons than daughters range from 50 percent to 64 percent. The proportion of women who wanted more boys than girls was substantially higher among those who reported their ideal family size in odd numbers, rather than in even numbers. Thus, over time, as the ideal family size falls, the preference for sons also tends to fall. Although the preference for sons decreases with the ideal family size, it does not completely disappear and girls constitute about 60 percent of the unwanted births in northern India, and the elimination of unwanted fertility had the potential to raise the sex ratio at birth to 130 boys per 100 girls. *(Bhat and Xavier, 2003)*

Sarna (2003) examined the trend and factors responsible for female feticide found factors responsible for female feticide are generally attributed to social security, evil of dowry, financial dependence of females on husbands or in-laws and certain cultural factors.

Female foeticide was found main reason for the decline in sex ratio. The other reasons included neglected of the girl child resulting in higher female mortality, maternal death, dowry death, female infanticide and male migration *(Ghosh, Goel and Balda, 2005)*

Mathur, Rajagopal and Bhargava (2004) on analysis of the relationship between livelihoods and childhood poverty and well being in the State of Rajasthan found that the practice of female infanticide, female foeticide are strong son preference in most communities were the factors contributing to the imbalance in the sex ratio.

A sizeable proportion of the respondents reported that they agreed with slogans by doctors- “better to spend Rs. 1000 now and save Rs. 10 lakhs later. Girls take dowry while sons bring in a substantial amount of

dowry. Girls were an unnecessary investment; even if they earned, parents had no right to that earning. It was shared by their in-laws *(Walia, 2005)*

2.11 Effect of Declining Sex Ratio

Walia (2005), in a study conducted on 240 respondents in Punjab reveals that in Ludhiana district an overwhelming majority of 87.50 percent of the respondents feared that they would face difficulty in finding match for their male children. The respondents from Bathinda district were unanimous with their Ludhiana counterparts regarding the repercussions of the declining sex ratio. A considerable 77.50 percent of farming respondents of Bathinda were slightly optimistic about the future state of affairs. They predicted that it might lead to increase in the status of women. In both Ludhiana and Bathinda a negligible percentage of respondents felt that decline in sex ratio would lead to decline in the practice of giving dowry and on the contrary the practice of bride price may start.

Guilmoto (2007) cited that in terms of marriage patterns, a shortage of potential brides may force men to delay their marriages. Marrying older is the first adjustment to adversely imbalanced sex ratios. But the effect of delayed marriages for one generation of men will then be felt on the younger generation, as they become adults. As in a queue, unmarried men will accumulate as new cohorts of bachelors reach marriageable age. This growing pool of unmarried men will create a bottleneck that is unlikely to be solved solely by delaying marriages. Single men reaching 25 in 2025 and entering the marriage market will not only exceed the number of young women of corresponding age, but will also have to compete with a larger than expected number of older men who are still single. As a result, many of these men will not be able to marry.

This means that not only will a significant share of men above 30 still be single, but also that many will never be able to marry at all. Of course, this assumes that marriage patterns do not undergo highly improbable

changes, such as earlier female marriages, generalized polyandry (wherein a woman takes multiple husbands), same-sex arrangements or extremely high levels of divorce and remarriage among women.9 While high proportions of unmarried men or women above age 40 have already been observed in many countries (post-war Ireland being a prime example of late marriage and high proportions of people never marrying), these marriage patterns are mostly unrelated to the marriage squeeze, resulting instead from deliberate behaviour.

Based on anthropological evidence *(Dube 1983)* mentioned that, it has been observed that societies with adverse female sex ratio have indicated the presence of customs like polyandry and abduction and purchase of women. It is strongly felt, that contrary to raising the status of women, adverse sex ratio would increase the incidence of rape, prostitution and violence against women.

Chapter- 3

Objectives of the Study and Research Methodology

3. Design of the Study

3.1 Rationale of the Study

An analysis of census of India of 1991 and 2001 has revealed a marginal improvement in the overall sex ratio i. e. from 927 to 933. Whereas the child sex ratio (0-6 age group) in the same period declined from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001. It has also revealed that the overall sex ratio after a decade would be far less then today. As stated, in earlier chapter the situation is Punjab where the sex ratio has come down to 874 dipping 08 point. The situation is highly alarming in case of child sex ratio (0-6 age group) which has come down to 793 in 2001 in few districts of Punjab. The deteriorating juvenile sex ratio has further aggravated the social status of marriageable women in Punjab resulting into an alteration in long-established set up of marriage patterns. As a result a number of questions are being raised. Some of these are how will communities handle the worsening shortage of women? What are the social implications of this shortage for both men and women? Will more men be forced to remain bachelor? Will they resort to capturing and abducting women as in China or importing them for marriage? Will we see a return to polyandry with one woman shared among several brothers? Will dowry decrease? Will spread of bride price and a rise in its value increase? Will women be valued more due to their scarcity or treated worse if they are imported. These questions can be tackled through appropriate social engineering towards restoration of a reasonable sex ratio.

Keeping such provocative questions in view, the institute undertook a study with an aim to examining various deviations in marriage pattern and social repercussions resulted by declining sex ratio in one each ICDS block of Ludhiana & Hoshiarpur districts of Punjab.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- examine the trend of declining sex ratio;
- study the impact of declining sex ratio on marriage pattern in the area; and
- highlight the social repercussion in emerging marriage patterns.

3.3 Scope of the Study

Based on census report 2001, Punjab is the state with one of the lowest sex ratio in the country. The child sex ratio in the state has declined alarmingly and it is lowest in the country. Ludhiana with lowest sex ratio and Hoshiarpur with highest sex ratio in the state were selected. The universe of the study has been restricted to an ICDS block with lowest sex ratio in Ludhiana and an ICDS block with highest sex ratio in Hoshiarpur.

3.4 Sampling Procedure of the Study

As mentioned earlier the selection of the State and Districts were made based on Census report 2001. However, reports of Census department Punjab has been referred for the selection of ICDS block with lowest sex ratio in Ludhiana and ICDS block with highest sex ratio in Hoshiarpur. Whereas, in the second stage random sampling techniques and purposive sampling method has been used for selection of Anganwadi centers and respondents. In all, 25 Anganwadi centres from each ICDS block have been selected for the purpose of data collection. The population covered by an Anganwadi centre has taken as sample area for random selection of respondents. Purposive sampling method has been used for selection of marriage bureau owners / marriage fixture and head of the local NGOs in selected ICDS blocks.

3.5 Sample of the Study

The sample of the study comprised 412 respondents (207 from ICDS block of Ludhiana and 205 from ICDS block of Talwada) from the universe of the study. Category wise sample size of the study in each block is given in table-1.

Table-1 Category wise sample size of the study.

S.no.	Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents from Ludhiana Block	No. of Respondents from Talwada Block
1.	Parents of Female Married in 1997	25	25
2.	Parents of Male Married in 1997	25	25
3.	Female Married in 1997	25	25
4.	Male Married in 1997	25	25
5.	Parents of Female Married in 2007	25	25
6.	Parents of Male Married in 2007	25	25
7.	Female Married in 2007	25	25
8.	Male Married in 2007	25	25
9.	Marriage bureau / Marriage Fixture	04	04
10	Head of the Local NGO	03	01
Total		**207**	**205**

3.6 Tools of the Study

In order to collect the required information from the respondents' Interview Schedules were devised for the study. Beside direct interviews, the observation and study of available records have also been used for gathering the required information. The respondents included **either parent**

of female married in 1997, either parent of male married in 1997, female married in 1997, male married in 1997, either parent of female married in 2007, either parent of male married in 2007, female married in 2007 and male married in 2007. On the whole 08 types of respondents have been interviewed from the area of each Anganwadi centre. M**arriage bureau owners / marriage fixture and head of the local NGOs** have also been interviewed to collect the information. In all 10 types of schedule (separate for each category) were designed to collect information regarding personal and occupational details; variation in actual age of marriage and possible causes in both male and female; effect of declining sex ratio on girl child education, bride purchase, dowry system and violence against women. Scheduled were also equipped to gather views of respondent about inter- state, inter-caste and inter religious marriages and return of polyandry system.

3.7 Field Testing

Tools used for the study were discussed by the Research Advisory Committee followed by field-testing in the ICDS block of Ludhiana district. Schedules were prepared in English by using different colors for options.

3.8 Manpower Planning

A four member research team consisting of one faculty member and three project staff (project assistant and two project investigators) were deployed to collect data from the selected ICDS blocks. The project staff members were given orientation in filling up the schedules and data collection from secondary sources. They were also given exposure in administrating tools to facilitate hassle free communication skills and developing confidence while interacting with the respondent.

3.9 Limitation of the Study

The research team came across a number of constraints during the data collection phase. Continuous rainfall and severely cold weather in the area affected the process of smooth data collection of the study. The local language (Punjabi) specially pronounced by rural and elderly respondents were found one of the obstacles during the field work.

Chapter- 4

Results and Discussions

4.1 Profile of the respondents

4.1.1 Block Wise Distribution of Respondents.

A total of 412 respondents have been interviewed in selected ICDS blocks. With the exception of “Head of the local NGOs” in each category, respondents were selected in equal numbers by using random method of sampling. The research team could find a single voluntary organization in Talwada who has taken up the issue in its working area. The block wise distribution of respondents is presented in **Table 2.**

Table 2- District wise distribution of Respondents

S.no.	Respondent	Ludhiana	Talwada
1.	Female Married in 1997	25	25
2.	Female Married in 2007	25	25
3.	Male Married in 1997	25	25
4.	Male Married in 2007	25	25
5.	Parents of Female Married in 1997	25	25
6.	Parents of Female Married in 2007	25	25
7.	Parents of Male Married in 1997	25	25
8.	Parents of Male Married in 2007	25	25
9.	Marriage bureau / Marriage Fixture	04	04
10	Head of the Local NGO	03	01
Total		**207**	**205**

4.1.2 Age Wise Distribution of Respondents.

The analysis of age wise distribution of respondents has signified noteworthy differences in the average age of respondents in the category of female married in 1997 & 2007. Similar is the case of married male in 1997 & 2007. The average age in these categories was found higher in respondents of Talwada block. (Table-3)

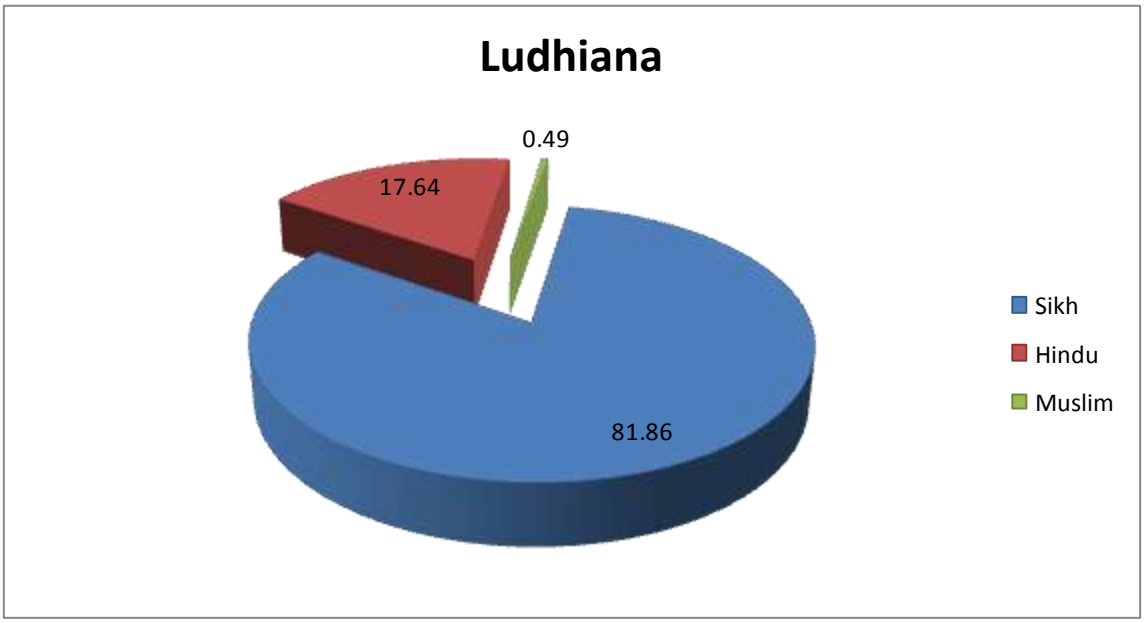
Table 3- Age wise distribution of respondents

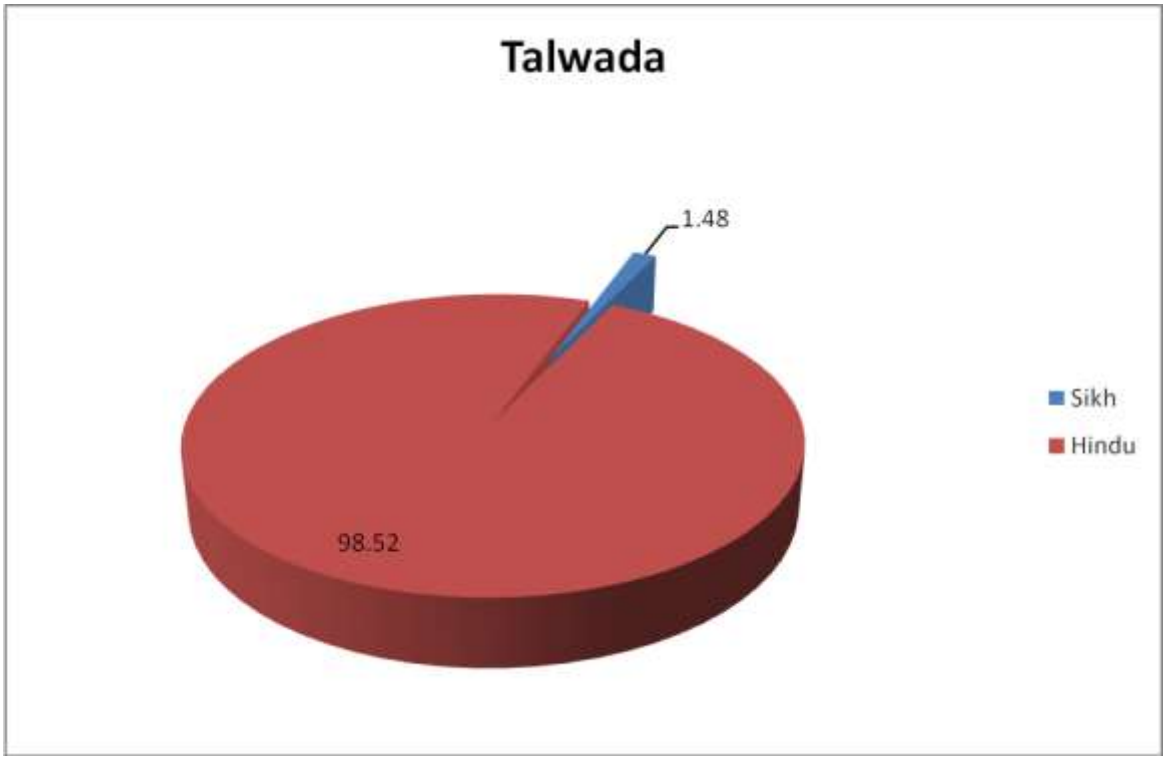
S.no.	Category of Respondents	Ludhiana		Talwada	
		n	Average Age	n	Average Age
1.	Female Married in 1997	25	**29.60**	25	**31.16**
2.	Female Married in 2007	25	**22.64**	25	**23.20**
3.	Male Married in 1997	25	**32.52**	25	**36.64**
4.	Male Married in 2007	25	**25.82**	25	**26.44**
5.	Parents of Female Married in 1997	25	**55.00**	25	**53.68**
6.	Parents of Female Married in 2007	25	**50.32**	25	**48.12**
7.	Parents of Male Married in 1997	25	**59.59**	25	**63.52**
8.	Parents of Male Married in 2007	25	**54.72**	25	**51.2**
9.	Marriage bureau / Marriage Fixture	04	**54.25**	04	**54.75**
10	Head of the Local NGO	03		01	

4.1.3 Religion of the Respondents.

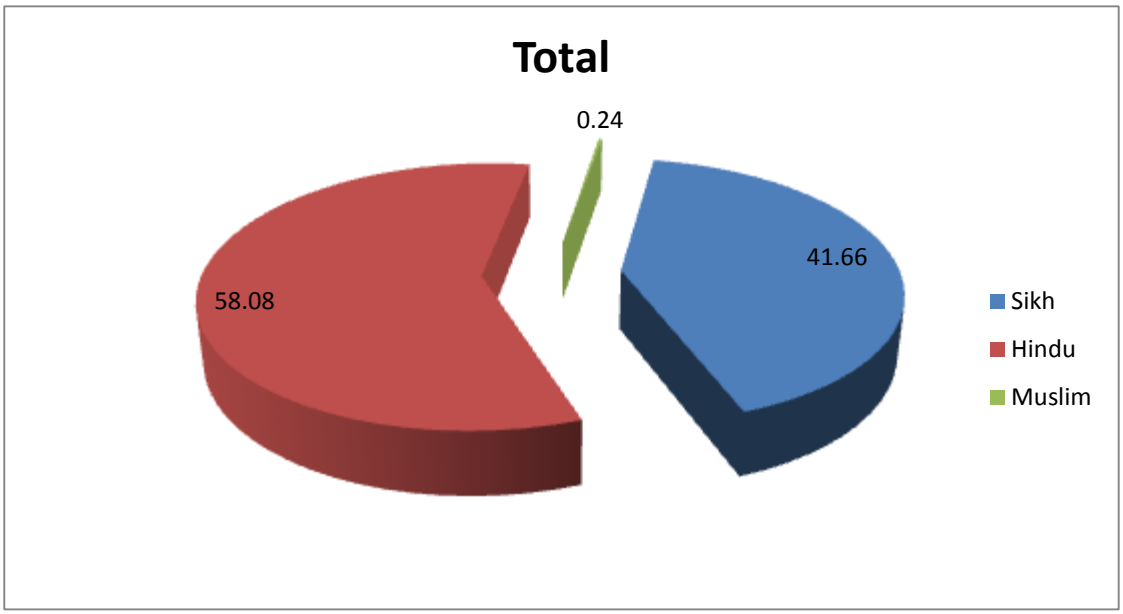
The religious background of the respondents in Ludhiana and Talwada blocks and as a whole respectively is shown in figure-2 & 3. The data shows that a majority of respondents from Ludhiana block were from Sikh religion (81.86%) vis-à-vis in Talwada block it was only 1.48 %. likewise, 17.64% of respondents of Ludhiana block following Hindu religion, conversely, it was 98.52% in Talwada block.

Figure-2 District wise distributions of respondents by religion (Block wise)





Figur-3 Distribution of respondents by religion (Overall)



The overall data from both the blocks shows that, 58.08% respondents are from Hindu religion, 41.66% from Sikh religion and only 0.24% are from Muslim religion.

4.1.4 Educational Status of Respondents

The Educational status of the respondents is shown below in two different tables. It may be seen from the data given in Table-4, that the overall educational status of respondents from Talwada block is significantly superior then the respondents from Ludhiana block especially in the case of female respondents. The data has also indicated qualitative improvement in educational status in last decade. In Ludhiana block, 92% female respondents of 2007 have completed their High school. Whereas, it was only 24% in 1997. Correspondingly, in Talwada block 92% female respondents completed their High in 2007 as it was only 40% in 1997.

It is important to mention that the educational status of male respondents in Ludhiana block has declined significantly in last ten years. The percentage of high school achievers has decreased from 52% in 1997 to 20% in 2007. However, data obtained from Talwada block indicated marginal increased in high school achievers. The percentage was found 48 in the category of male respondents married in 2007, as it was 44% in male respondents married in 1997. The data has also revealed improvement in the status of achieving higher education. The percentage of graduate & post graduate achievers in the category was found very low. In Ludhiana block 4% respondents in the category of female and male married in 2007 have completed their graduation. Similarly, the data from Talwada does not also indicate significant augment in High school achievers. It has enhanced from 44% in 1997 to 48% in 2007. The data has also shown negligible improvement in the status of higher educational. The percentage of graduate & post-graduate achievers in the category was also found very low. The table also indicates a decline in post graduate achievers in category of female married in 2007 in Ludhiana block.

Table 4- Educational Status Female & Male married in 1997 and 2007

Educational Status	Ludhiana				Talwada			
	Female Married in 1997	Female Married in 2007	Male Married in 1997	Male Married in 2007	Female Married in 1997	Female Married in 2007	Male Married in 1997	Male Married in 2007
	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25
Illiterate	07 (28%)	----	03 (12%)	01 (04%)	----	----	----	----
Primary	05 (20%)	----	01 (04%)	05 (20%)	01 (04%)	----	03 (12%)	----
Middle schooling	05 (20%)	----	04 (16%)	07 (28%)	10 (40%)	----	03 (12%)	02 (08%)
High School	06 (24%)	23 (92%)	13 (52%)	05 (20%)	10 (40%)	23 (92%)	11 (44%)	12 (48%)
Intermediate	01 (04%)	01 (04%)	04 (16%)	05 (20%)	03 (13%)	01 (04%)	06 (24%)	10 (40%)
Graduation	----	01 (04%)	----	01 (04%)	01 (04%)	01 (04%)		01 (04%)
Post Graduate & above	01 (04%)	----	----	01 (04%)	----		01 (04%)	----

It is heartening to note that the educational status of parents married their daughter or son in 2007 is better then parents of 1997 in both the blocks. The data of Ludhiana block presented in Table-5 revealed a significant decline of illiteracy rate among parents married their daughters. It has come down to 44% in 2007 as compared to 56% in 1997. Likewise, the illiteracy rate has also lowered in parents of male married their son in 2007 (40%) as compare to parents of male married their son in 1997 (68%).

The data has revealed similar situation in Talwada also; the illiteracy rate is found less in parents of female & male married in 2007. It was 36% in parents of female and 56% in parents of male married in 1997 has declined to 24% and 32% in parents married their son / daughter in 2007 respectively.

Table 5- Educational Status of Parents of Female & Male married in 1997 and 2007

Educational Status	**Ludhiana**				**Talwada**			
	Parents of Female Married in 1997	Parents of Female Married in 2007	Parents of Male Married in 1997	Parents of Male Married in 2007	Parents of Female Married in 1997	Parents of Female Married in 2007	Parents of Male Married in 1997	Parents of Male Married in 2007
	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25	n=25
Illiterate	14 (56%)	11 (44%)	17 (68%)	10 (40%)	09 (36%)	06 (24%)	14 (56%)	08 (32%)
Primary	09 (36%)	09 (36%	04 (16%)	05 (20%)	07 (28%)	07 (28%)	05 (20%)	11 (44%)
Middle schooling	01 (04%)	03 (12%)	02 (08%)	03 (12%)	03 (12%)	05 (20%)	01 (04%)	04 (16%)
High School	01 (04%)		01 (04%)	05 (20%)	05 (20%)	05 (20%)		02 (08%)
Intermediate	----	----	01 (04%)	----	01 (04%)	01 (04%)	01 (04%)	----
Graduation	----	----	----	02 (08%)	----	----	----	
Post Graduate & above	----	----	----	----	----	01 (04%)	----	

4.1.5 Occupational Status of Respondents

The data on occupational status of the females married in 1997 & 2007 in both the blocks has revealed that 90% respondents are house wives (Figure-4). It is heartening that 7% females are perusing their higher education even after marriage. Meagrely, 1% of them are involved in daily labour, 1% in private job and 1% are also involved in their self employment activities.

The figure has also revealed comparison between both blocks (Figure-5). The situation of female in Talwada block was found slightly better than Ludhiana block. In spite of industries around 94% females are house wife in Ludhiana. This has also indicated intensity of insecurity in low sex ratio area towards females. Talwada, where large number of population is depending upon agriculture has 86% house wives. The data has also depicted impact of low sex ratio on education. In high sex ratio block (Talwada) 12% females are able to pursue their education even after marriage. On the contrary, in low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) only 4% females has pursued education after their marriage.

Figure- 4 Distribution of Respondents by Occupational Status (Female married in 1997 & 2007)

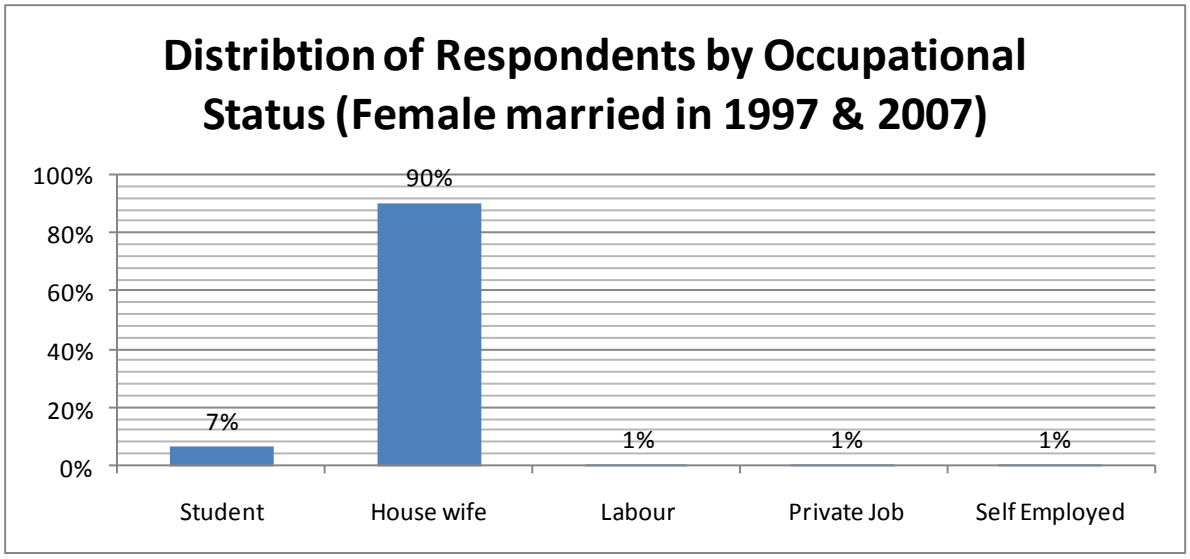
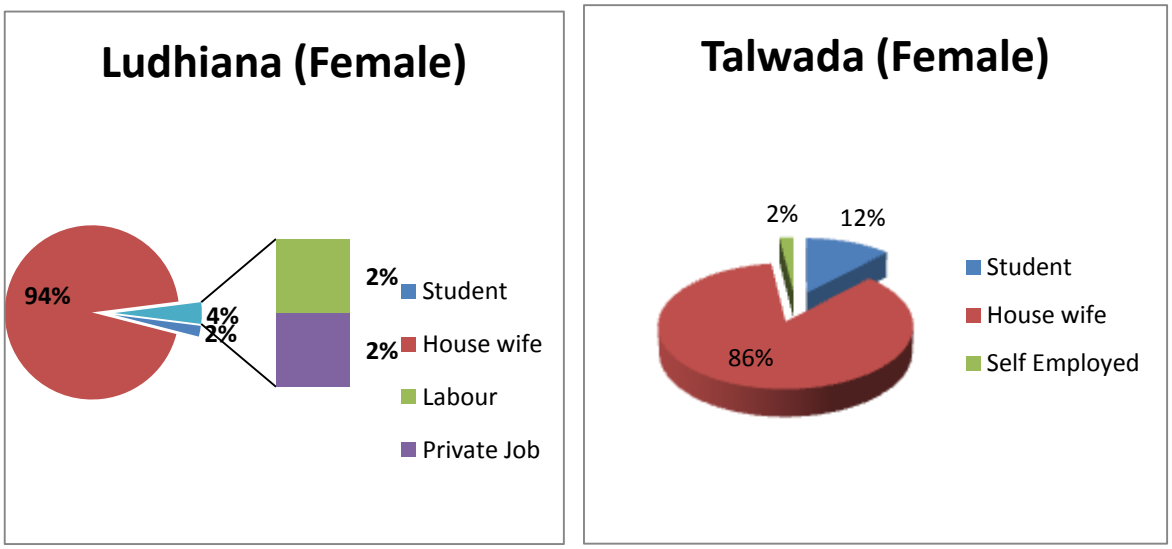
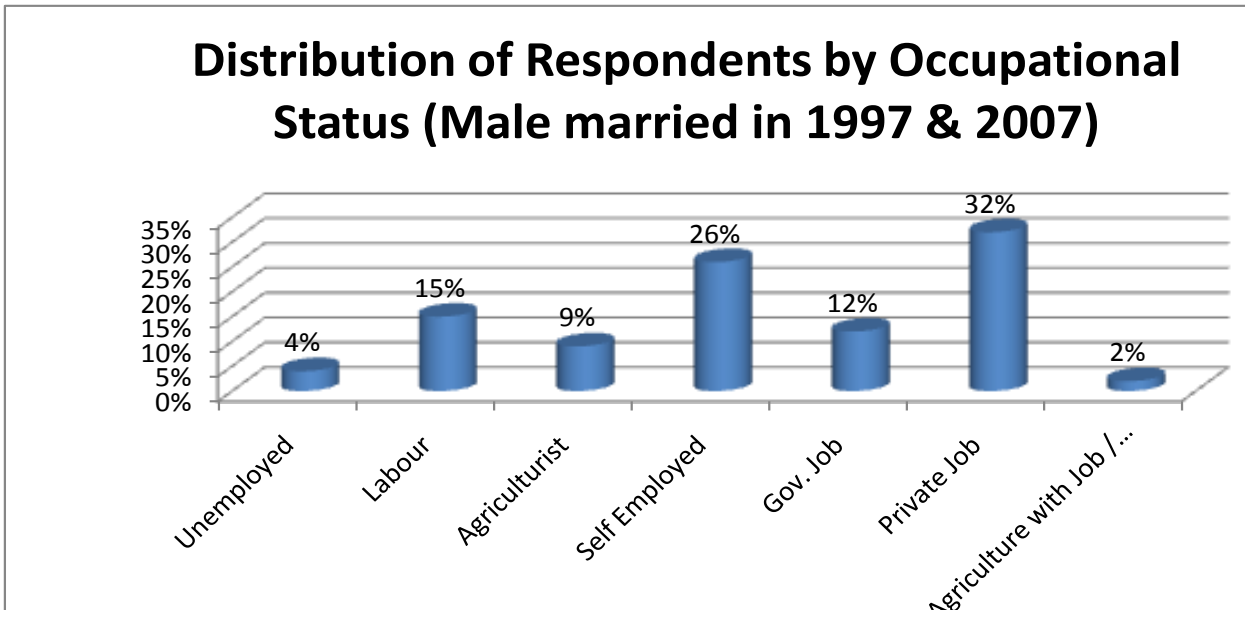


Figure- 5 Distribution of Respondents by Occupational Status (Female married in 1997 & 2007, Block wise)



The data presented in Figure-6 has revealed the occupational status of male respondents married in 1997 & 2007 in both low & high sex ratio blocks. The highest number of respondents (32%) are involved in Private job followed by self employed (26%), Labour (15%), Govt. Job (12%), and in agriculture work (9%). It is also significant to be mentioned that around 4% respondents are unemployed.

Figure -6 Distribution of Respondents by Occupational Status (Male married in 1997 & 2007)



The Block wise occupational status of Male married in 1997 & 2007 (Figure-7) has revealed that most of the respondents are involved self employed occupational activities (30% in Ludhiana block & 22% in Talwada block) however, in Talwada block 36% respondents has opted private jobs more than any other occupation. The 4% respondents in both blocks are unemployed. The percentages of labourer respondents are near to same (14% in Ludhiana and 16% in Talwada). In spite of well known industry place 16% of respondents are engaged in agricultural activities in Ludhiana whereas, an only 2% respondent has chosen agriculture as their occupation. Only 4% of respondents are engaged in business activities in Ludhiana block.

Figure- 7 Distribution of Respondents by Occupational Status (Male married in 1997 & 2007 Block wise)

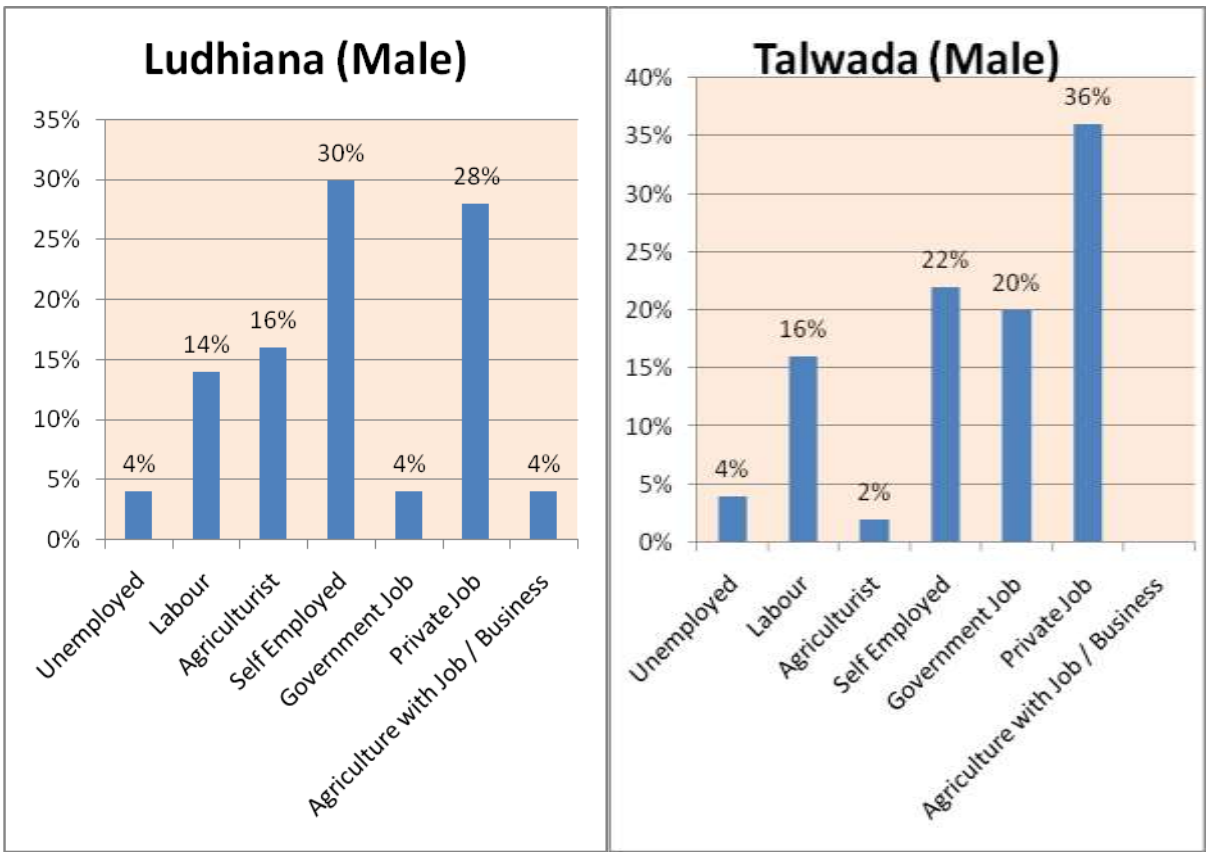
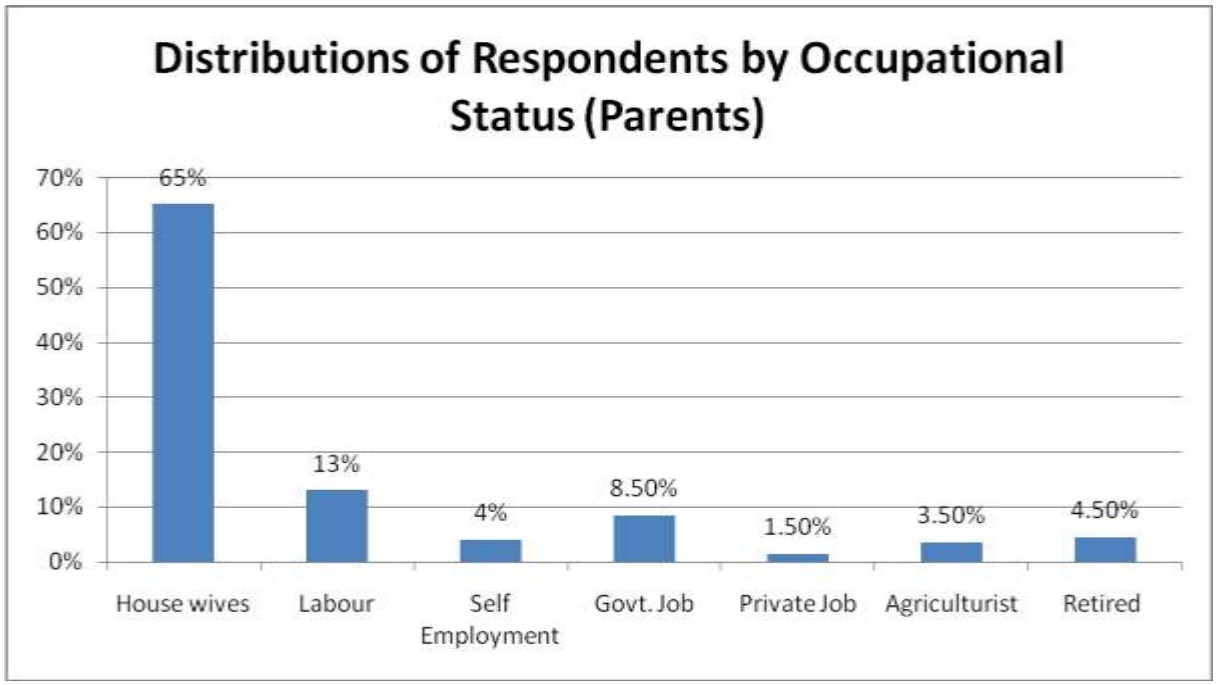
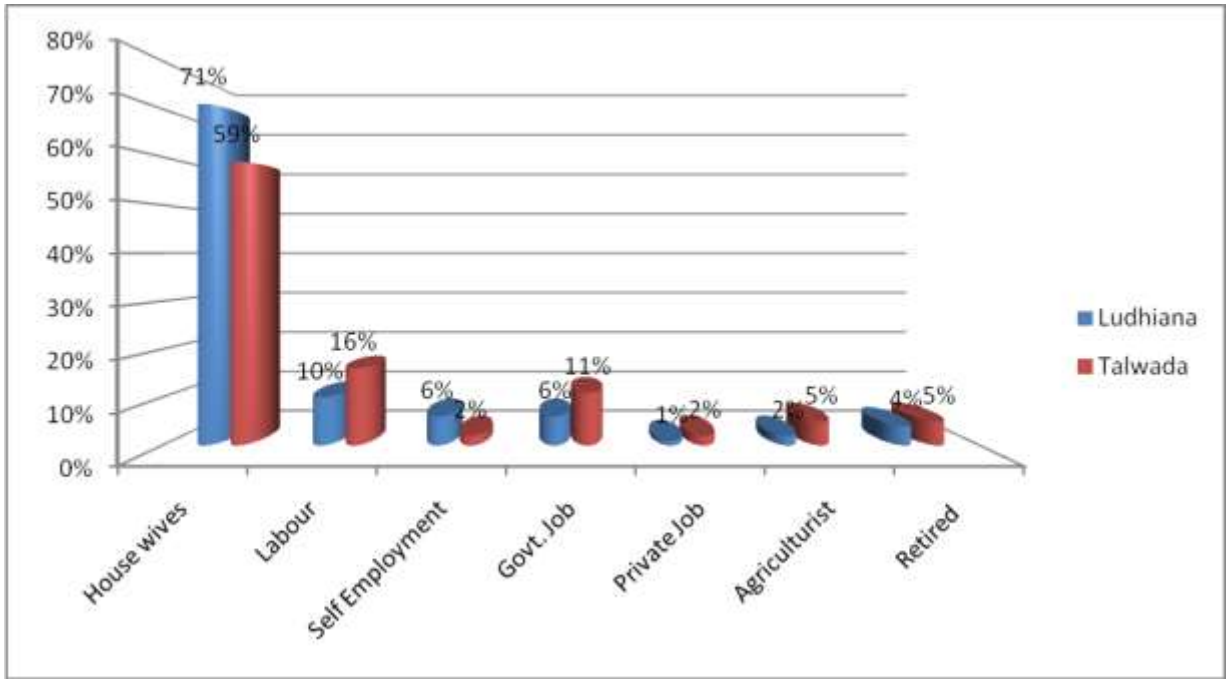


Figure-8 presents the occupational status of parents as overall. 65% respondents in the category are house wives (71% in Ludhiana & 59% in Talwada). A 13% respondent has been engaged as Labourer (10% in Ludhiana & 16% in Talwada), 4% has been self employed (6% in Ludhiana & 2% in Talwada), 8.5% are in Government Job (6% in Ludhiana & 11% in Talwada), 1.5% in private job (1% in Ludhiana & 2% in Talwada) and 4.5% respondents were retired from their jobs (4% in Ludhiana & 5% in Talwada). As a whole only 3.5% respondents are also depended upon Agriculture (2% in Ludhiana & 5% in Talwada). It is significant to be mentioned that the percentage of employment was greater in respondent of Talwada than Ludhiana.

Figure- 8 Distributions of Respondents by Occupational Status (Parents, overall)





4.1.6 Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Table- 6 contains data of the respondents by their monthly income. It is seen from table, 51.25% respondents has monthly income <5000 per month, 31.5% respondents are from the income group of 5001 to 10,000 per month. 11.25 % respondents has monthly income between 10001-15000. Only 2 respondents (1%) has income between 15000-20,000 per month. Only 5% respondents has revealed that their income is more then 20,000/- per month.

Table-6 Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Income Group	**Female Married in 1997 & 2007**	**Male Married in 1997 & 2007**	**Parents**	**Total Percentage**
	n=100	n=100	n=200	n=400
< 5000	51	50	104	51.25%
5,001-10,000	28	37	61	31.5%
10,001-15000	14	10	21	11.25%
15,001-20,000	2	----	2	1%
20,001-25,000	3	2	7	3%
25,000>	2	1	5	2%

4.2 Age of Marriage (Female)

4.2.1 Average age for marriage proposals

Marriage is a universal institution to maintain the population equilibrium in the society. The decline in sex ratio can have adverse impact. The present analysis is an attempt to understand the marriage patterns in the light of low sex ratio.

Data given in Table-7 shows the responses regarding the age when their parents started searching groom for them. It also shows the pattern of change between Talwada Block (With sex ratio of 1006 females on 1000 males) and Ludhiana block (with sex ratio of 854 female on 1000 males). The data has revealed significant decline in average age of Ludhiana block during last one decade. It is further seen that the average age for searching groom for females has dropped from 20.13 years in 1997 to 18.92 years in 2007. On the contrary, the average age in Talwada block has increased from 19.70 years in 1997 to 21.60 years in 2007.

Table-7 Average age of the respondent when parents stared searching groom (In Years)

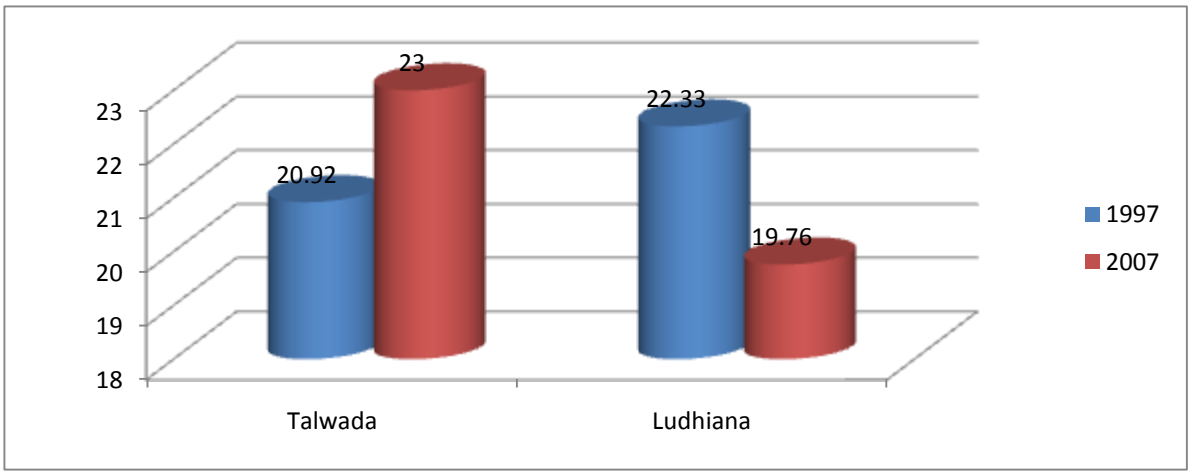
Talwada Block					**Ludhiana Block**			
1997			2007		**1997**		**2007**	
n	Average value		n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value
25	19.70		25	21.60	25	20.13	25	18.92

It is observed from Table-8 that the average age of females at the time of marriage has declined significantly in low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) from 22.33 years in 1997 to 19.76 years in 2007. It has increased to 23 years from 20.92 years in Talwada block in the same period (Also see Figure-9)

Table-8 Average age of the respondents during marriage (In Years)

Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value
25	20.92	25	23	25	22.33	25	19.76

Figure- 9 Average age of the respondents during the marriage



4.2.2 Average age of Marriage

To the question-when the parents started looking for suitable groom for their daughters, responses have been summarized in Table-9. It is inferred from the data from Ludhiana has depicted the parent's perspective regarding marriage process of their daughter. The impact of declining sex ratio is evident from the fact that parent's attitude is now shifting for the early marriage of their daughters. During 1997 the average age for initiating the marriage process was 20.70 years and declined to 19.64 years in 2007.

Whereas in Talwada block the data reveals an upward increase in age of marriage process and support more freedom to the daughters. The average age of initiating marriage process in the block has gone up to 21.72 years in 2007 as compared to 20.58 years in 1997.

Table-9 Average age of daughter when groom search started (In Years)

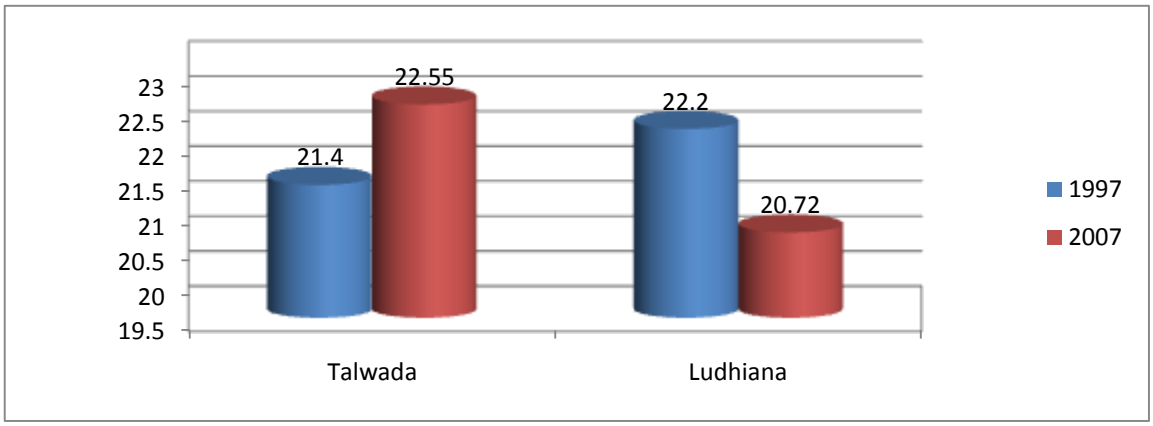
Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average age	n	Average age	n	Average age	n	Average age
25	20.58	25	21.72	25	20.70	25	19.64

The data presented in Table-10 also supports the earlier findings. It is apparent that parents are opting an option of early marriage for their daughters because of various reasons. Moreover, the data obtained from the parents group viewed a significant decline in the average age of marriage of a female in the block of low sex ratio (22.20 year in 1997 to 20.72 years in 2007). As against this, the age of female has increased from 21.40 years in 1997 to 22.55 years in 2007 in Talwada block (also see Figure-10)

Table-10 Average age of daughter at the time of marriage (In years)

Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average age	n	Average age	n	Average age	n	Average age
25	21.40	25	22.55	25	22.20	25	20.72

Figure- 10 Parents response regarding average age of their daughter at the time of marriage



The foregoing analysis clearly a noteworthy decline of female's age at the time of marriage in low sex ratio block. If continued in the same way the practice of girl child marriage would be seen more frequently.

4.2.3 Perception about Early Marriage

Views of parents regarding whether their daughter's marriage was early? is presented in Table-11. The data do not show any change in their views on the issue in the high sex ratio block (Talwada). 16% parents (1997 & 2007) agreed that their daughter's marriage was early.

The data specify an upward change among the parents of low sex ratio block (Ludhiana). Only 08% parents who had married their daughters in 1997 accepted that their daughter had early marriage. Whereas, 16% who parents married their daughters in 2007 have admitted that it was early marriage. This has also revealed that further decline in sex ratio may result into more marriages of girl child in the area.

Table-11 Parents Views about Early Marriage of Daughter

Early Marriage of daughter	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	04	16	04	16	02	08	04	16
No	21	84	21	84	23	92	21	84

4.3 Age of Marriage (Male)

4.3.1 Average age of Marriage proposal

The data obtained from the male respondents regarding receiving marriage proposal for their marriage and age at the time of marriage is presented in Table-12. The analysis of the data reveals trifling raise in the average age of respondents from high sex ratio block (Talwada) from 25.20 years in 1997 to 25.24 years in 2007. On the other side, the average age of receiving proposals in low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) has gone up significantly from 21.72 years in 1997 to 23.28 years in 2007.

Table-12 Average age of the respondent when his parents received first marriage proposal

Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value
25	25.20	25	25.24	25	21.72	25	23.28

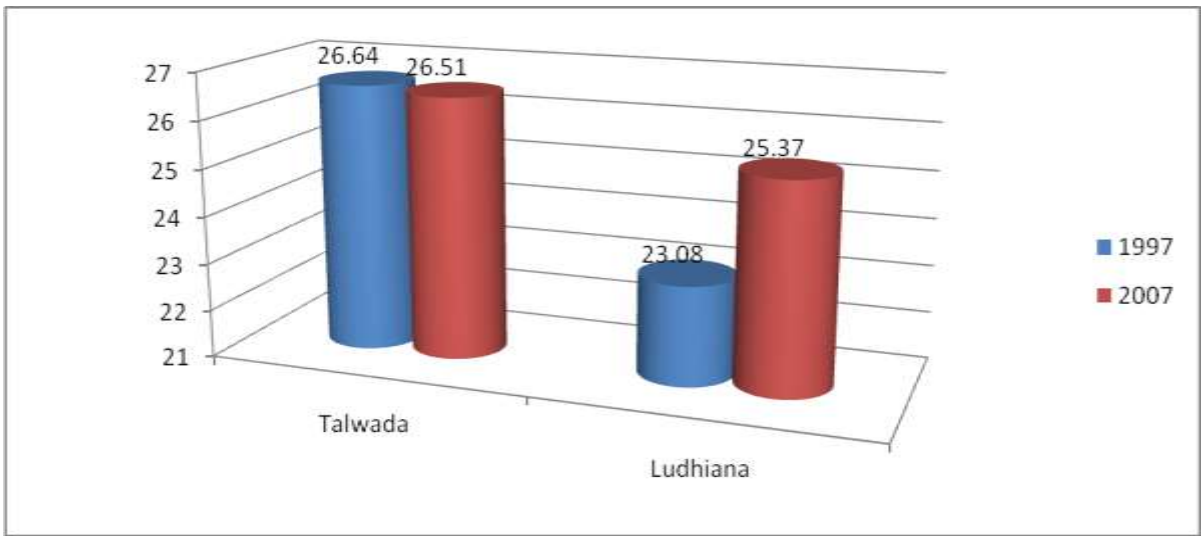
4.3.2 Average age of Marriage

Data obtained on age of respondents during marriage presented in Table-13 endorse the findings on receiving first marriage proposal (Table-12). Similar to that, the average age of respondents from high sex ratio block (Talwada) do not much exhibit (26.64 years in 1997 to 26.51 in 2007). As against this the average has increased notably from 23.08 years in 1997 to 25.37 years in 2007 in respect of the respondents from low sex ratio block (Ludhiana). This may be because of difficulty in finding suitable match or lack of proposals for the marriage (also see figure-11)

Table-13 Average age of the respondents during marriage

Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value
25	26.64	25	26.51	25	23.08	25	25.37

Figure- 11 Average age at marriage (Male)



The data obtained from the parents regarding the age of their son at the time of receiving first marriage proposal also support findings obtained from the male respondents (Table 14).

Table- 14 Average age of son when bride search started (In Years)

Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value
25	24.86	25	25.12	25	22.14	25	22.80

The data shows similar results as in the case of male group in both blocks. The average age of searching bride for their son in low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) has increased from 22.14 years in 1997 to 22.80 years in

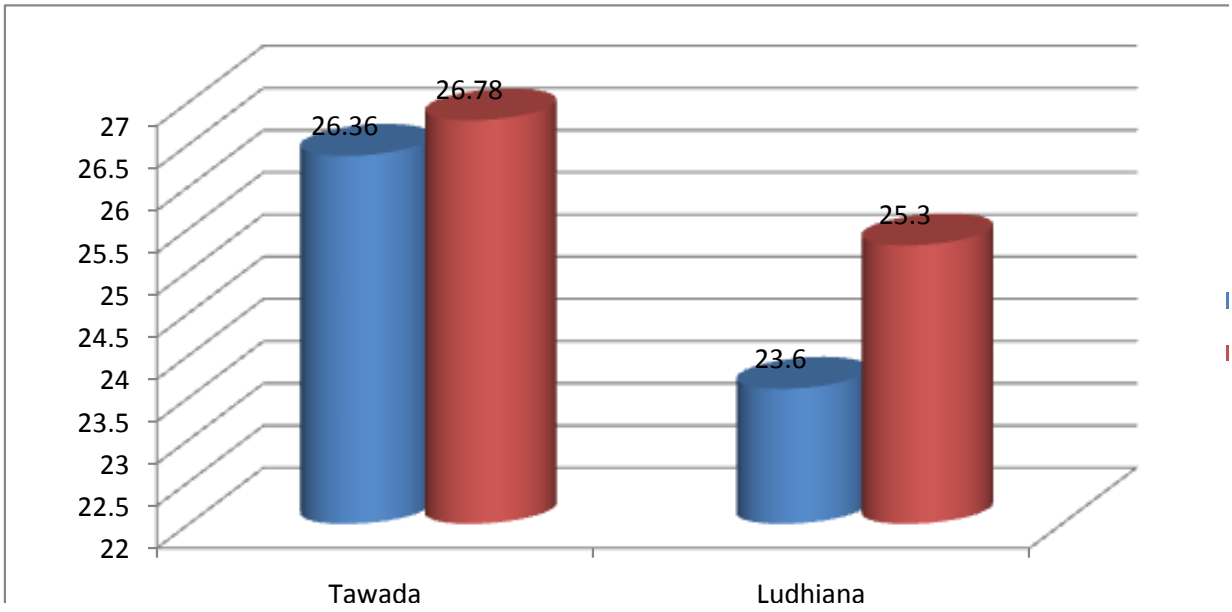
2007. Similarly to this, minor changes have also occurred in high sex ratio block (Talwada) 24.86 years in 1997 to 25.12 years in 2007.

An intra -table analysis between Table 14 & 15 also reveals the period utilized by parents for the final settlement of their son's marriage. It shows an increase in Ludhiana from 1.46 years in 1997 to 2.50 years in 2007. However, data also indicate an upward change in Talwada which is, as a whole, insignificant in comparison to the situation in Ludhiana block. (1.50 years in 1997 to 1.66 years in 2007).

Table-15 Average age of son at marriage (In years)

Talwada				Ludhiana			
1997		2007		1997		2007	
n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value	n	Average value
25	26.36	25	26.78	25	23.6	25	25.30

Figure- 12 Respondents by average age of their son's marriage



4.3.3 Perception about Late marriage

The data presented in Table-16 indicate views of parents who had married their sons in 1997 & 2007 regarding, late marriage of their sons.

The data of parent of high sex ratio block (Talwada) has revealed no change in their perception. 16% parents married their son in 1997 while an equal number (16% parents) who married their son in 2007 opined that their son's marriage was late.

The perceptions of the respondents in low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) show a significant change. 8% parents who had married their son in 1997 has opined that marriage of their son was late. This percentage has increased upto 32% among the parents who had married their son in 2007.

Table-16 **Parents Views about Late Marriage of their Son**

Son had Late marriage	**Talwada**				**Ludhiana**			
	1997		**2007**		**1997**		**2007**	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	04	16	04	16	02	08	08	32
No	21	84	21	84	23	92	17	68

4.4 Marriage proposals (Male)

4.4.1 Perception about marriage proposals

Table-17 provides views of parents of male regarding receiving proposals for their son's marriage. It is apparent that 54% parents from low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) have agreed that there is decline in receiving adequate number of marriage proposals. As many as 42% parents from high sex ratio block (Talwada) have also opined in the same way. However, 34% respondents of Ludhiana & 46% respondents of Talwada believe that there is no change in the pattern of receiving proposals for male. 12% respondents from both the blocks have preferred to say nothing on the issue.

Table-17 Views about proposals for marriage of male

Is there a declination in proposal's for marriage of males	Talwada n=50		Ludhiana n=50	
Yes	21	42%	27	54%
No	23	46%	17	34%
Don't Know	06	12%	06	12%

4.4.2 Perception about reasons of decline in proposals

A large number of respondents (74.07% in Ludhiana block & 71.42% in Talwada block) have opined that because of low sex ratio aspiring men are not getting proposals for the their marriage (Table 18). 9.52% Parents of Talwada block and 3.70% parents of Ludhiana block perceived low education status of men's in the area as major reason for not getting adequate number of proposals. 9.52% respondents of Talwada block felt that higher education among the girls may also be a reason for decline in marriage proposals for men. 11.11% respondents' of Ludhiana block and

4.76% respondents of Talwada block considered unemployment as the second highest reason. Surprisingly, 4.76 % respondents of Talwada felt Government policies are also responsible for this. 3.70% respondents of Ludhiana block has also revealed that decline in proposals is caste related problem as they are not getting proposals from their own community. Surprisingly, only 3.70% respondents from Ludhiana has perceived dowry as one of the reason for decline in proposals. 3.70% also understand that economic condition of male can also influence the number of proposals for the marriage.

Table 18 Reasons for declination of proposals for male's marriage

	Talwada		Ludhiana	
	n=21	%	n=27	%
Low Sex Ratio	15	71.42	20	74.07
Less educated boys	02	9.52	01	3.70
Unemployment	01	4.76	03	11.11
Girls are more Educated	02	9.52	00	------
Government Policies	01	4.76	00	------
Dowry	00	------	01	3.70
Boys not successful	00	------	01	3.70
No girls in Caste	00	------	01	3.70

4.4.3 Status of marriage proposals

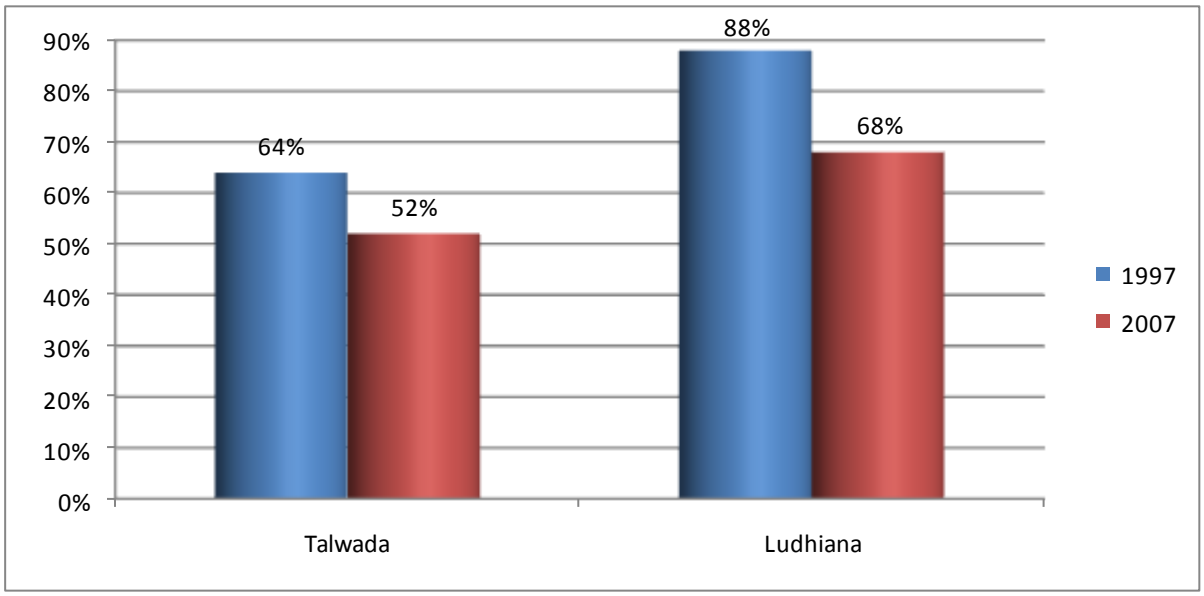
Table 19, attempts to explore the effect on marriage proposals for aspiring males. According to the available data, there is significant decline in number of proposals for son's marriage in both blocks. Surprisingly, about 48% respondents of Talwada who married their son in 2007 did not get proposals from female side as against 36% in 1997. Though, only 32% respondents of Ludhiana (2007) accepted that they did not receive any

marriage proposals for their son yet it is noteworthy as it was only 12% in 1997 (also see Figure-13)

Table-19 Proposals for son's marriage

Proposals received for son's marriage	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	16	64	13	52	22	88	17	68
No	09	36	12	48	03	12	08	32

Figure- 13 Distribution of respondents by receive proposals



4.5 Marriage Proposals (Female)

4.5.1 Perception about marriage proposals

To understand the nature and severity of decline in the marriage proposals, views of parents were also obtained by keeping in view of their daughter's marriage proposals conducted in 1997 & 2007. The data presented in Table-20 signifies that the parents of low sex ration block (Ludhiana) have experienced drastic change regarding receiving proposals for their daughters. Data has depicted that 66% respondents from Ludhiana reported an increase in receiving marriage proposals for their daughters. Contradictory to this, 26% parents from the same block also disagree with this view and said no change has occurred in this process of marriage. However, 08% parents were neutral by saying that they have not ever thought about this.

While focusing on data received from Talwada, even number of respondents (46%) agrees & disagrees regarding increase in proposals for daughters' marriage. Similar to Ludhiana 08% parents were also dispassionate about the observation.

Table- 20 Distribution of respondents according to marriage proposals for girls

Is there increase in no. of marriage proposals	Talwada		Ludhiana	
	n=50	%	n=50	%
Yes	23	46	33	66
No	23	46	13	26
Don't know	04	08	04	08

4.5.2 Perception about Reasons for increase in proposals

More than three forth (78.78%) respondents in Ludhiana block agreed that the change they are observing in proposals for females are due to low sex ratio of the area. About 12.12 % respondents felt so because of

low education status of males. Generally the parents do not get any offer from girl's side for uneducated or less educated boy. Consequently, they are sending proposals to the parents of females. 3.03% parents have also mentioned unemployment as reason for increase in proposals for girls. Astonishingly, 3.03% respondents relate it to the educational status of females. They opined that high educated girls are more in demand as they can help boys to migrate to other countries. A small number of parents (3.03%) connected it with the fate of girls.

Similar results were found in Talwada block also. An overwhelming number of parents (65.21%) viewed it as an outcome of declining sex ratio. Parents also correlate this situation with the educational status of male & females. About 17.39% respondents agreed that parents of less educated boys find it difficult to get suitable proposals. A small number of parents (13.04%) parents agreed that a girl with high education qualification is considered as an asset for facilitating migration of boys to other countries. Therefore, they receive more proposals for marriage. As in Ludhiana, 4.34% respondents connected it with individual fortune of girls (See Table-21)

Table- 21 Reason for increased number of proposals for girls

Reason	**Talwada**		**Ludhiana**	
	n=23	%	n=33	%
Low Sex Ratio	15	65.21	26	78.78
Low education status of males	04	17.39	04	12.12
Unemployment	00	----	01	3.03
Girls are more Educated	03	13.04	01	3.03
Girls get proposals by luck	01	4.34	00	-----
Economic Status	00	----	01	3.03

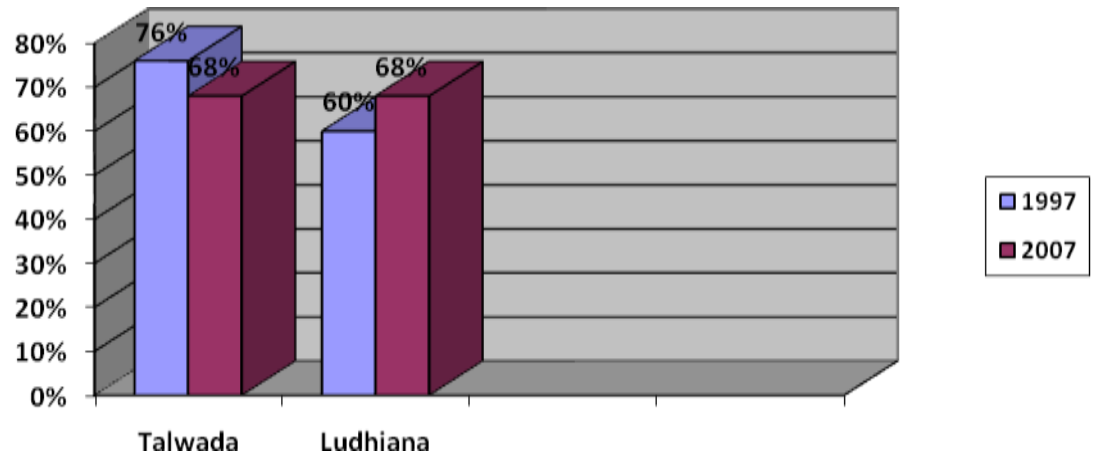
4.5.3 Status of Marriage proposals

Table-22 provides views of parents regarding effect on marriage proposals for girls because of low sex ratio. In Ludhiana block, for instance it is revealed that daughters who got married in 2007 received more proposals for their marriage then those married in 1997. 60% parents married their daughters in 1997 received proposals whereas, 68% parents received proposals for daughter married her in 2007. As against this parents of high sex ratio block (Talwada) have observed decline in receiving proposals for their daughters from 76% in 1997 to 68% in 2007 (also see Figure-14)

Table-22 Distribution of Respondents (Proposal received for daughter's marriage)

Received proposals for girl marriage?	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	19	76	17	68	15	60	17	68
No	06	24	08	32	10	40	08	32

Figure – 14 Distribution of Respondents (proposal received for daughters)



4.6 Difficulties in Arranging Marriages (Male)

4.6.1 Difficulties Faced by Parents in Arranging Marriages.

Finding and selecting suitable match by the parents for their sons/daughters is one of the initial stages of marriage process in India. Selection of matches is dependent on prevailing economic and cultural norms.

Data regarding difficulties faced by parents in arranging suitable groom for boys married in 1997 and 2007 is given in Table-23. It reveals that parents who had married their son during 1997 in both low sex ratio and high sex ratio blocks did not face any difficulties in searching or getting proposals for marriage.

Contrary to above, 12% parents in Talwada block and 44% parents in Ludhiana block had faced problems in searching / getting proposals for marriage for their son.

Table-23 Distribution of Respondents by Any difficulty faced in arranging/finding bride for their son

Did you face any difficulty in Arranging / finding brides for your son?	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	00	00	03	12	00	00	11	44
No	25	100	22	88	25	100	14	56

4.6.2 Types of difficulties Faced

In high sex ratio block (Talwada) data has depicted “lack of good source of earning of son” as the only reason for not receiving proposals for marriage.

In low sex ratio block 63.63% parents admitted that they did not receive any proposals for the marriage of their son. While 9.09% stated that they did not receive suitable match in their caste. An equal number (9.09%) of parents accepted their son’s bad character as a factor for not receiving marriage proposals. (Table-24)

Table-24 Distribution of Respondents by type of difficulty faced (Parents of Male)

Types of Difficulty faced	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=nil	%	n=03	%	n=nil	%	n=11	%
Kundali not matching	----	----	00	00	----	----	01	9.09
Son didn't had good job	----	----	03	100	----	----	00	00
No good proposals due to bad conduct of son	----	----	00	00	----	----	01	9.09
No proposals	----	----	00	00	----	----	07	63.63
No good proposals in same caste/religion	----	----	00	00	----	----	01	9.09
Girls are more educated than boys	----	----			----	----	01	9.09

4.7 Difficulties in Arranging Marriages (Female)

4.7.1 Difficulty Faced by Parents in Arranging Marriages

The data presented in Table-25 has illustrated that, problems are also being faced by parents of girls in finding suitable match for them. Nearly one third (32%) parents who had married their daughters in 2007 have faced difficulty in finding suitable match. Whereas, it was only 8% for the parents married their daughters in 1997. No problem in receiving / finding suitable match was faced by the parents of Talwada block who had married their daughters in 2007.

Table-25 Distribution of Respondents by Any difficulty faced in arranging/finding groom for their daughter.

Arranging / finding brides are difficult	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	02	08	00	00	02	08	08	32
No	23	92	25	100	23	92	17	68

4.7.2 Types of difficulties Faced

The data presented in Table-26 reveals the natures of difficulties faced by the parents of girls are different from the parents of boys. The maximum variant in the data is found from the parents of Ludhiana who had married their daughters in 2007. One forth (25%) of the parents have revealed that they have faced difficulties in finding suitable match for their daughters. While equal number of girls (25%) wanted to settle abroad after marriage. Drug addiction is found to be a common among the boys. As a result 12.5% parents considered it as one of the main reasons for rejecting

marriage proposals for their daughters. Unemployment (25%) and education status of male (12.5%) were also cited as reasons for the parents for rejecting marriage proposals.

Table-26 Distribution of Respondents by type of difficulty faced (Parents of Female)

Difficulties faced in finding Groom	**Talwada**				**Ludhiana**			
	1997		**2007**		**1997**		**2007**	
	n=2	%	n	%	n=2	%	n=8	%
No appropriate proposals	02	100	----	----	01	50	02	25
Not well educated match	00	00	----	----	00	00	01	12.5
Financial problem	00	00	----	----	01	50	00	----
Unemployment	00	00	----	----	00	00	02	25
Girl want to go abroad	00	00	----	----	00	00	02	25
Drug addiction	00	00	----	----	00	00	01	12.5

4.8 Sources of Finding a Match

4.8.1 Status of finding match (Male)

In marriage process mediators play an important role for match making. Generally, parents contact their relatives, neighbours or friends for match making. To understand the magnitude of changes occurred in low sex ratio and in high sex ratio blocks during the last decade, parents were asked to state the source they had utilized for arranging marriage for their sons/daughters.

In high sex ratio block (Talwada) parents are reported by still relying on traditional method for selection of suitable matches. On comparing between 1997 & 2007 slight changes are observed, though negligible. This may because of uncontrolled variables such as change in life pattern in last one decade. Astonishingly, data show no use of current facilities such as marriage bureau, and matrimonial advertisements in newspapers.

In Ludhiana, the picture is entire different. The parents are more focusing on substitution of traditional sources. Data depicts that nearly three forth (76%) of parents have relied on relatives for selection the matches in 1997. This percentage has come down significantly in 2007 to 52%. Similarly, the neighbours / friends sources too declined from 16% in 1997 to 08% in 2007. The focus of the parents is now shifting towards the professionals and or commercial agencies such as marriage bureau, marriage fixers and matrimonial advertisements. Surprisingly, the local marriages fixers have been busier in 2007 then 1997. Data revealed only 8% parents in the area had utilized services of marriage fixers for finding bride for their son in 1997. This percentage has gone up to 24% in 2007. Data has also revealed that parents who married their son in 2007 have utilized other professional sources. Around 08% make use of services of

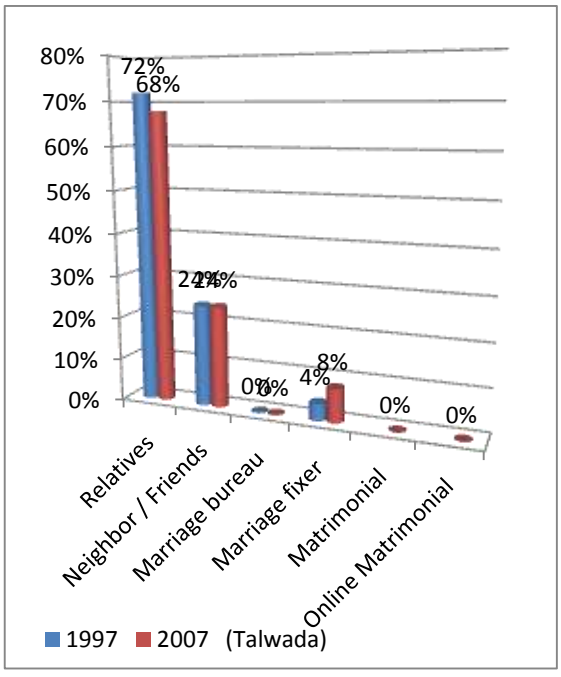
marriage bureau; equally 08 % has also utilized services of media (Matrimonial advertisement in newspapers).

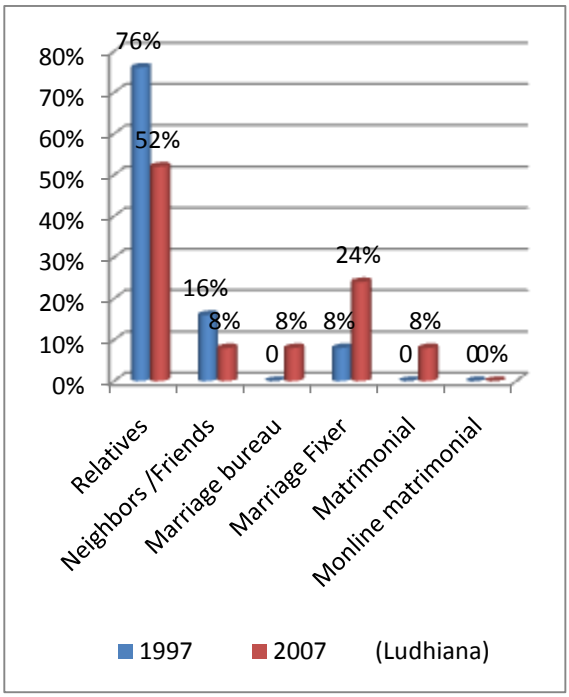
The change in source of match making indicated the difficulty of parents in finding brides for their sons through traditional sources. Consequently, they are shifting towards the other sources (See Table-27 & Figure-15)

Table-27 **Sources Utilized for suitable match**

Sources	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Relative	18	72	17	68	19	76	13	52
Neighbours/ Friend	06	24	06	24	04	16	02	08
Marriage Bureau	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	08
Marriage Fixer	01	04	02	08	02	08	06	24
Matrimonial in Newspaper	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	08
Online Matrimonial	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00

Figure- 15 **Sources utilized for match making (Male)**





4.8.2 Status of finding match (Female)

The analysis of data obtained from parents who had married their daughters in 1997 & 2007 reveals that they were able to arrange matches through traditional & reliable sources. (Table-28)

In Talwada, most of the parents relied upon relatives and neighbours / friends and married their daughters through these sources only. Although, dependency of parents on relatives declined from 84% in 1997 to 68% in 2007. However, this change has inclined towards the neighbours / friends (16% in 1997 to 27% in 2007). At the same time, use of other sources such as marriage bureau, marriage fixer, matrimonial advertisements in newspaper and use of online matrimonial process was almost nil.

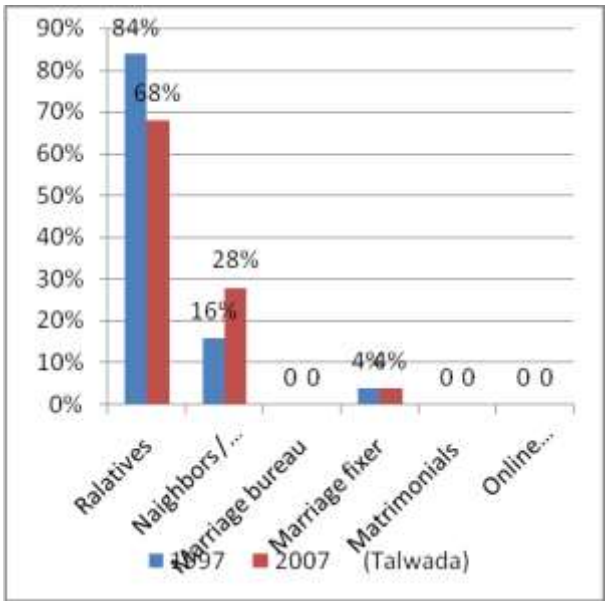
A similar situation is found more or less in the case of Ludhiana. Here also, decline on match making through relatives (76% in 1997 to 68% in 2007) has been found. Contrary to parents of 1997, parents of 2007 also utilized services of marriage fixer (8%) marriage bureau (4%), and matrimonial (4%)

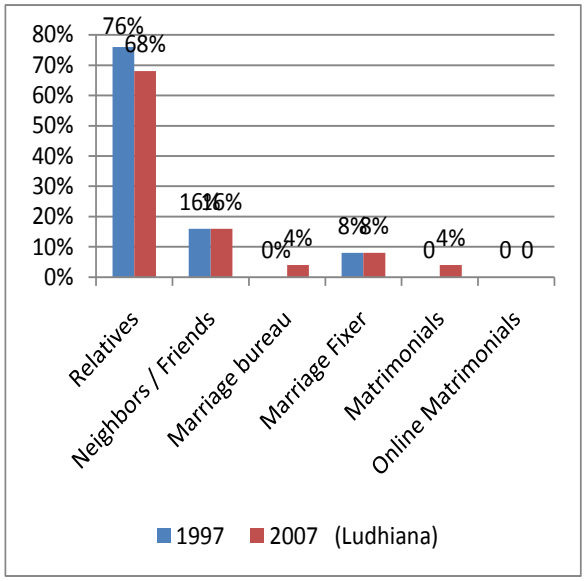
As a whole it was found that parents of girls in Talwada are still giving importance to the traditional methods and they have more choices. Whereas, significant change has been observed for finding suitable match for males in Ludhiana (Figure-16)

Table-28 Sources Utilized for suitable match

Sources	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Relatives	21	84	17	68	19	76	17	68
Neighbours /Friends	04	16	07	28	04	16	04	16
Marriage bureau	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	04
Marriage Fixer	01	04	01	04	02	08	02	08
Matrimonial in newspaper	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	04
Online Matrimonial	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00

Figure- 16 Sources for matches





4.9 Spouse Age Gap

The term spouse age gap is used here for the typical India tradition where in higher age of the groom than the bride is considered suitable for marriage. The data shown below indicates average age difference between the spouses.

Shortage of potential brides is likely to force boys to delay their marriages. Marrying an older female partner is the first adjustment in adversely imbalanced sex ratio. The effect of delayed marriages for one generation of men will then be felt on the younger generation, as they become adults. As in a queue, the number of unmarried men gets accumulated as new cohort of bachelors reach marriageable age. The data presented in Table- 29 indicates the beginning of such situations.

The available data from the locale of the study indicates two different kind of scenario. The Talwada region with high sex ratio shows diminution in the average age gap between the spouses; the average age gap was found 4.35 years in 1997 and it reduced to 3.46 years in 2007. Since all of these districts exhibit little geographic variations, this may be effect of language controlling for geographic effects. At the same time one can correlate it with the education, change in structure of societies and sex ratio favouring females.

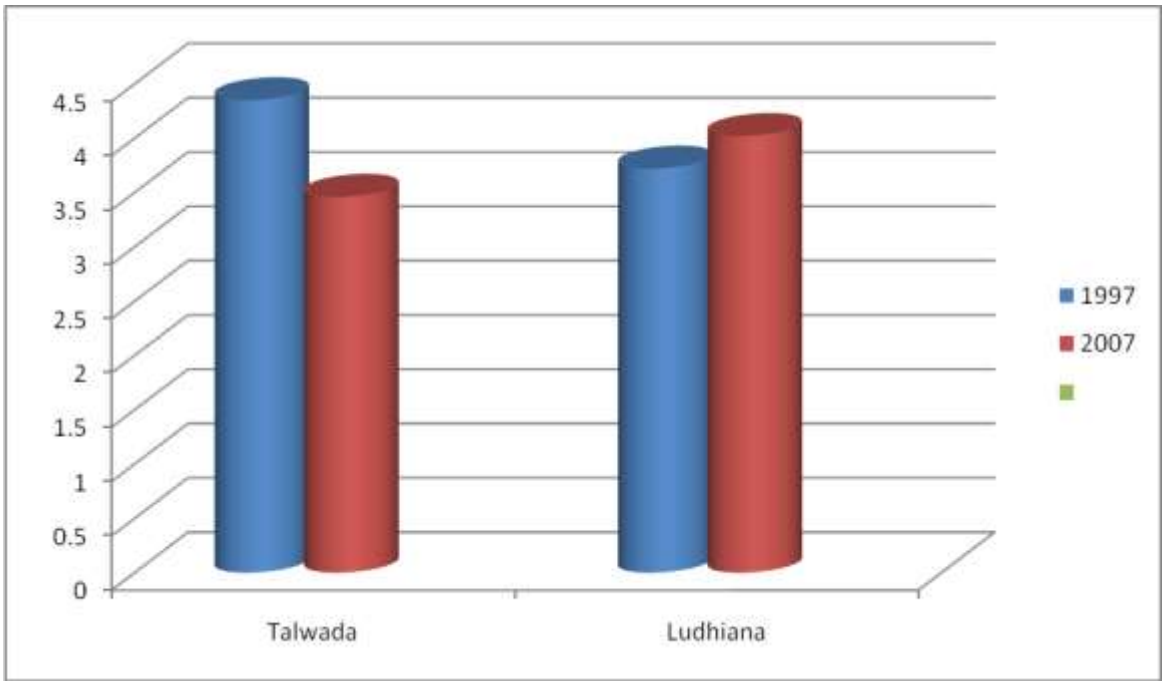
The collected data from Ludhiana block has shown an increasing manner of spousal age gap. Though, the gap appears insignificant in numerical term however, one should not ignore its escalating nature. The data shows average age gap between spouses was 3.72 years in 1997. This gap has increased up to 4.02 years in 2007. This means that if the sex ratio of the area continues to decline in the same manner the spousal age gap would increase further and a significant share of men above 30 years

of age will remain single. Many of them with low economic status might not be able to marry at all (also see Figure-17)

Table 29 Average age gap between spouses

	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=100		n=100		n=100		n=100	
Average age gap between spouse (in years)	4.35		3.46		3.72		4.02	

Figure - 17 Average Age Gap between spouses



4.10.1 Status of the parents.

One of the major finding of this study is decline in marriageable age of female. This connotes unfavourable effect on education of girl child. The family which often determines the rights of women brings to an end to a girl's dream to achieve higher education. In typical Indian condition, a girl is after marriage expected to live with her husband and his family and follow the customs and rules of the new family. Her wish to continue further education certainly depends upon permission of husband or in-laws, who may or may not agree to support her in this regard,

Data presented in Table-30 show the impact of decline in age during marriage and a significant correlation with the education of girl child. An analysis of both the blocks indicates adverse impact in low sex area. Around 40% girls of Ludhiana block were studying in 2007 when their parents decided to marry them. At the same time, this parentage was only 8% in Talwada.

Table -30 Daughters studying at the time of initiating Marriage process

Education Status	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	02	08	02	08	05	20	10	40
No	23	92	23	92	20	80	15	60

As many as 50% (20% below high school, 30% in high school) respondents of Ludhiana married their daughters in 2007 replied that girls didn't even complete their high school during the starting of their marriage process (Table-31). This also indicates that these girls would have been less than 18 years of age at that time. One can assume the interruption in

education because of such process. Table has also depicted that 20% girls were in intermediate, 10% were doing graduation and 10% were doing some or other professional training.

Table-31 Educational Status of the daughters at the time of marriage.

Education status	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=2	%	n=2	%	n=5	%	n=10	%
Below High School	00	00	00	00	01	20	02	20
High School	00	00	00	00	02	40	03	30
Diploma after High school	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	10
Intermediate	01	50	01	50	01	20	02	20
Graduation	00	00	01	50	01	20	01	10
Post Graduation & above	01	50	00	00	00	00	00	00
Professional training	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	10

Table-32 reveals whether it was Talwada or Ludhiana, girls wanted to continue their education further before getting marriage. However, they could not do so as family wanted to get them marry as soon as possible. This also indicates their level of freedom regarding opting higher education.

Table-32 Daughters wanted to continue Education before getting marriage.

Interest studying further	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	02	100	02	100	04	80	09	90
No	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Don’t know	00	00	00	00	01	20	01	10

Data presented in Table-33 shows that daughters married in Talwada (1997 &2007) could continue their further education even after marriage. The finding from Ludhiana has indicated marriage as barrier for them in

pursuing further education. Around 60% girls could not continue their education after marriage.

Table-33 Females wanted to continue study after marriage.

Did she continue her study	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=2	%	n=2	%	n=5	%	n=10	%
Yes	02	100	02	100	01	20	04	40
No	00	00	00	00	04	80	06	60

Permission of in-laws was found one of the main reasons for discontinuing further education (Table-34). As high as 83.33% respondents admitted that their daughter could not continue her further education after marriage because of unwillingness of In-laws. This unwillingness may be because of cultural rigidity, social insecurity, or even fear to lose bride also.

Table-34 Reason for discontinuing education

Reason for discontinuation	**Talwada**				**Ludhiana**			
	1997		**2007**		**1997**		**2007**	
					n=4	%	n=6	%
Job	----	----	----	----	01	25	00	00
In-law's didn't allow	----	----	----	----	03	75	05	83.33
House Hold Work	----	----	----	----	00	00	01	16.66

4.10.2 Status of Married Female

Decline in age of marriage of girls has a strong bearing on the education of aspiring girls. The data presented in Table-35 has confirmed this hypothesis while the situation of Talwada has remained unchanged during last decade. None of the respondents in Ludhiana married in 1997

were continuing their education. On the contrary, 20% of girls married in 2007 were pursuing their education at the time of marriage.

Table-35 Respondents studying at the time of marriage.

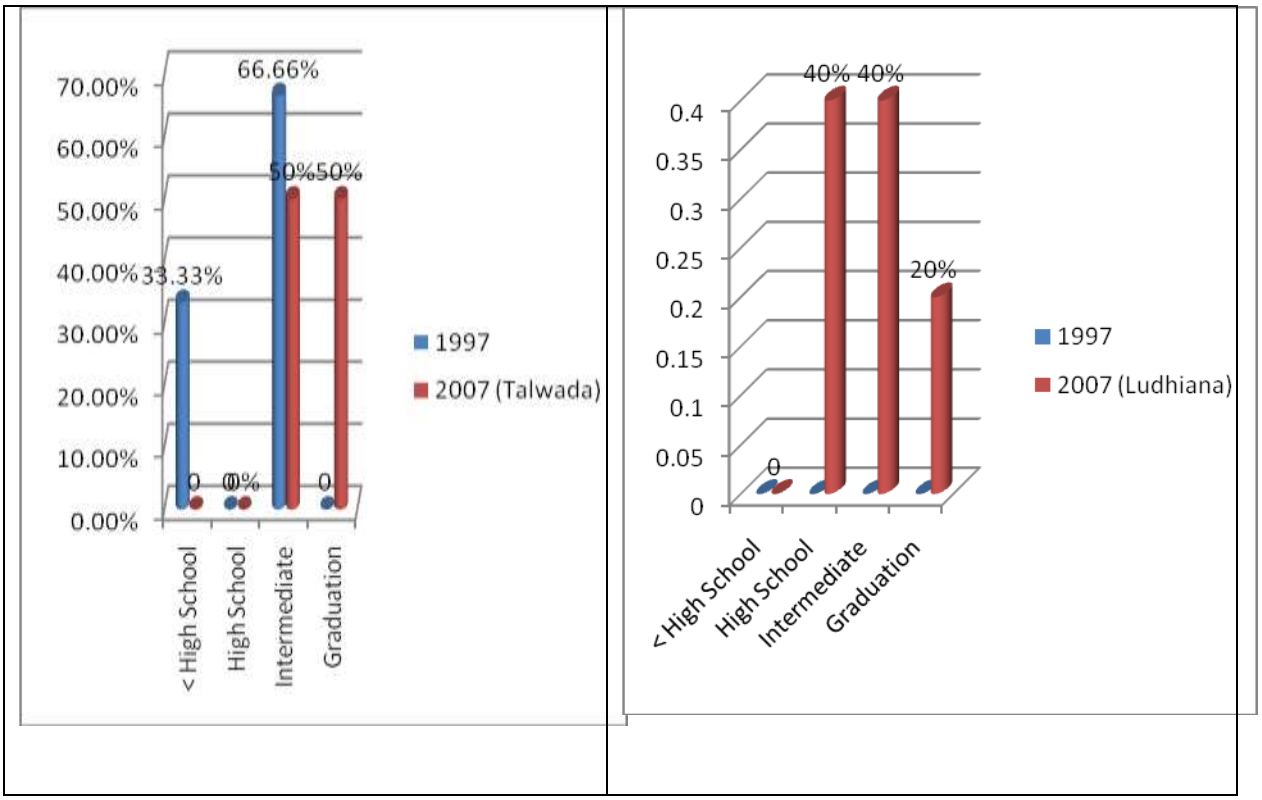
	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	03	12	02	08	00	00	05	20
No	22	88	23	92	25	100	20	80

Table-36 indicates the educational status of respondents at the time of marriage. A sizeable proportion of respondents (66.66%) were pursuing graduation in 1997 & decline to 50% in 2007. In Ludhiana block, 40% of respondents were pursuing their high school and 40% were in intermediate. In such cases, one can easily guess the age of the respondents. The dream of achieving higher education of these girls would then be dependent upon the attitude of the husband and in-laws attitude (also see Figure-18)

Table-36 Educational Status of Respondents at the time of marriage.

Education status	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=3	%	n=2	%	n=0	%	n=5	%
Below High School	01	33.33	00	00	00	00	00	00
High School	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	40
Intermediate	00	00	01	50	00	00	02	40
Graduation	02	66.66	01	50	00	00	01	20
Post Graduation & above	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00

Figure-18 **Educational status at the time of marriage**



Data presented in Table-37, reveals the desire of the girl to continue their education before getting marriage. Except one respondent from Talwada who was married in 1997 all others wanted to continue their education further before getting married.

Table-37 **Views of respondents about continuing education further.**

Interest studying further	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=3	%	n=2	%	n=0	%	n=5	%
Yes	02	66.66	02	100	00	00	05	100
No	01	33.33	00	00	00	00	00	00

It is heartrending to know from the data presented in Table-38 that none of the respondents from Ludhiana was allowed to continue their education further despite their willingness to do so. However one respondent from Talwada married in 1997 could do so.

Table-38 Respondents allowed by husband to continue education after marriage

	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=2	%	n=2	%	n=0	%	n=5	%
Yes	1	50	00	00	00	00	00	00
No	1	50	2	100	00	00	05	100

Reasons of discontinuing education after marriage have been found to be similar to as those of the parents. Table-39 reveals that all (100%) girls married in 1997 & 2007 at Talwada could not continue their education as they were given house hold work in-stead of getting education. In Ludhiana block, of the girls married in 2007, 20 percent blamed poverty, 40% to house hold work and 40% non acceptance from their in-laws.

Table-39 Reasons for not allowing further Education

Reasons for not allowing further Education	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=1	%	n=2	%	n=0	%	n=5	%
School very far	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Due to poverty	00	00	0	00	00	00	01	20
House Hold work	01	100	02	100	00	00	02	40
In-laws didn't allow	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	40

4.11.1 Perception of Parents (Female)

Dowry normally means gifts given during the marriage to the son–in –law or his parents either in cash or kind. From the point of view of women's status, however, dowry has to be looked at as constituting what is given to the bride, and is often settled before hand. The gifts, though given to the bride, may not be regarded as exclusively her property, but includes what is given to the bridegroom before and after marriage; and what is presented to the in-laws of the girl. The practice of giving dowry is meant to assist a newlywed couple to start their life together with ease. However, now it has degenerated into a sordid commercial transaction in which monetary considerations receive priority over the personal merits of the bride.

Data presented in Table-40 provides an understanding of the views of parents (married their daughters in 1997 & 2007) regarding the prevalence and magnitude of dowry in the area. Whether it is Talwada or Ludhiana it was found that dowry is being practiced widely throughout the region irrespective of economy status, religion or caste. In Talwada, only 14% people agreed that the dowry is declining in the area. 38% preferred not responding either way. A large number of respondents (48%) disagreed with this and said the trend of dowry has not decreased so far.

In Ludhiana, data indicates that dowry is practiced even more widely. 58% believed that it has not declined so far, but has infact increased over the years correlated it with wealth of people. A noticeable percentage of respondents (28%) denied this & stated that the trend has decreased since the people are more sensitive about the issue. Around 14% respondents prefer not to say anything about it.

Table-40 Parents views on trend of dowry in the area.

	Talwada		Ludhiana	
	n=50	%	n=50	%
Yes	07	14	14	28
No	24	48	29	58
Don't know	19	38	07	14

In order to understand the reasons for declining in dowry, the respondents were asked to indicate their views. The data given in Table-41 shows that 71.43% respondent in Talwada believe people are now against of this trend. Around 28.57% also pointed out girl's independency in opting groom of their choice is as one of the reason. Interestingly, no one related it with the skewing sex ratio of the state.

Contrary to above, most of the respondents (71.43%) in Ludhiana correlated it with low sex ratio of the area and pointed out biggest reason in decline in dowry trend. However, 21.43% considered education as the reason for declination. 7.14% also gave credit to Government policy as a reason for decline in dowry.

Table-41 Respondents view on Reasons for declining dowry

Reason for yes	Talwada		Ludhiana	
	n=7	%	n=14	%
People are against dowry	05	71.43	00	00
Girls are opting grooms of their choice	02	28.57	**00**	00
People are more educated	00	00	03	21.43
Low Sex Ratio	00	00	10	71.43
Government is strict	00	00	01	07.14

Table-42 presents the views of parents on reasons for not declining dowry. In Talwada 50% respondents believed that it is for the future security of daughter. The dowry may be used in difficult circumstances. 25% respondents also believed that it as a trend being followed by centuries & people follow it as an important ritual during marriage. A significant number of respondents (20.83%) believed that these practices are made by rich people and others try to copy them. Interestingly, keeping in view of present scenario 4.16% respondent blamed daughters for promoting these practices. They stated that their own girl also expect large amount of dowry from them.

Table-42 Respondents view on Reasons for not declining dowry (parents)

Reason for no	**Talwada**		**Ludhiana**	
	n=24	%	n=29	%
Daughter's security	12	50	08	27.58
People give dowry as a trend	06	25	03	10.34
Rich people give more dowry and other follow it as a fashion	05	20.83	16	55.17
Girl expect more dowry to be given in their marriage	01	4.16	01	3.44
Give dowry so that girls can't claim for property latter on	00	00	01	3.44

Table-43 has provides information about attitudes of female's parents regarding dowry. In Talwada block, slight decline in dowry pattern has been observed. 72% parents who had married their daughter in 1997 admitted that they had given dowry for their daughter(s). Whereas, it has been found 60% with the parents married their daughter in 2007. 28% parents married

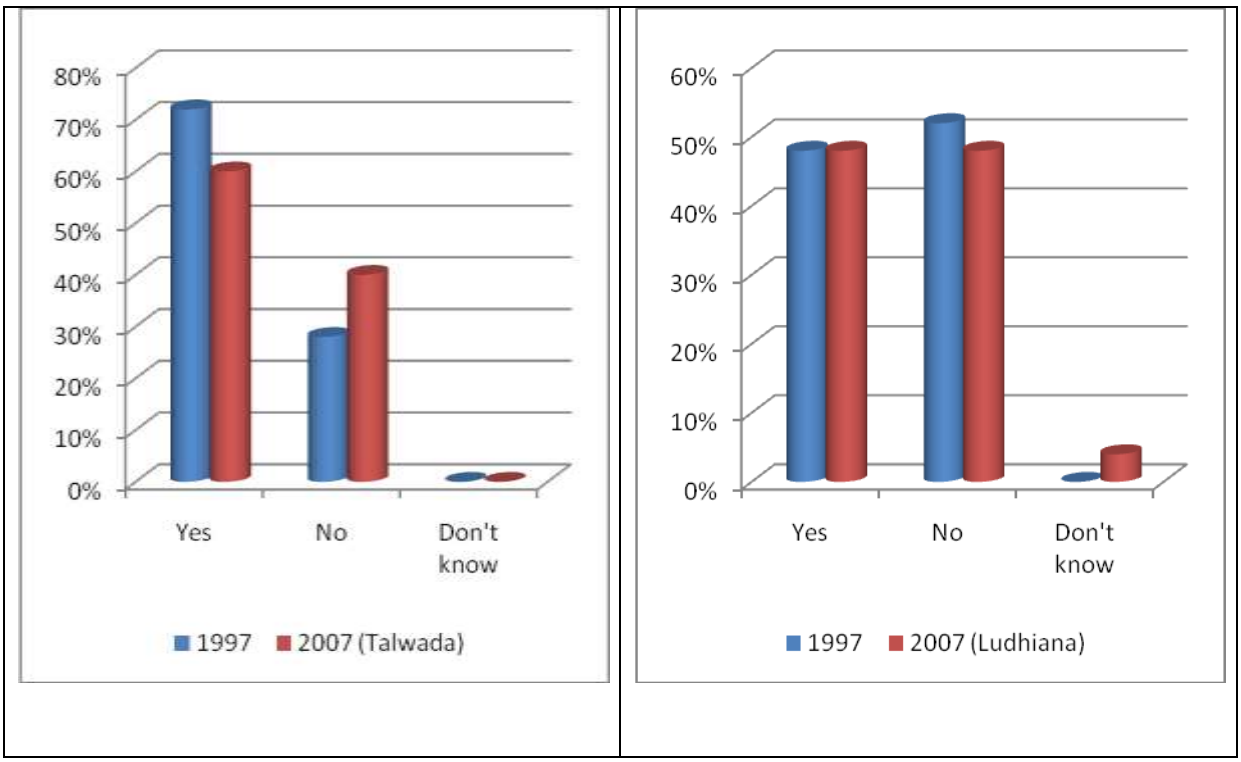
their daughter in 1997 % and 40% married daughter in 2007 has accepted that they did not give any dowry for daughter.

The scenario in Ludhiana has not changed much. 48% respondents married daughter in 1997 and even number of 2007 has admitted that they had given dowry in their daughter's marriage. However, slight decline has been observed (52% in 1997 to 48% 2007) in the trend while comparing between the respondents of 1997 & 2007 (also see Figure-19)

Table-43 Respondents given dowry in daughter's marriage

Given dowry in daughter's marriage?	**Talwada**				**Ludhiana**			
	1997		**2007**		**1997**		**2007**	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	18	72	15	60	12	48	12	48
No	07	28	10	40	13	52	12	48
Don't Know	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	04

Figure- 19 Respondents given dowry in daughter's marriage



4.11.2 Reverse Dowry

The impact on men as a result of delayed marriage would probably not only reduce the dowry but in fact, it might force them to marry without dowry or even paying back to bride side. This practice is probably occurring more for older boys, though such practices are not seen frequently. Since the issue is related to prestige and dignity of the people, parents of boys are opting new methods by not paying directly to the bridal side in fact, offering to marrying without dowry and bearing the entire expenditure of marriage. Such practices are more prevalent where the bride belongs to poor family.

Data given in Table-44 shows that such practices are happening in Ludhiana. Around 8% parents of male (2007) confessed that they have taken care the entire expenditure of bridal side. It is important to note that such practices were not seen in Talwada and Ludhiana married their son in 1997.

Table-44 Marriage expenditure bearded

Expenditure was taken care by groom side?	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	08
No	25	100	25	100	25	100	23	92

Data presented in Table-45 reveals that 4% respondents did not want to disclose the reasons for such practice. However, 4% indicated poor economic condition of bridal side forced them to do so.

Table-45 Reasons for bearing marriage expenditure of bridal side

Reason	Talwada				Ludhiana			
	1997		2007		1997		2007	
	n=0	%	n=0	%	n=0	%	n=2	%
Didn't want to tell	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	50
Poverty	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	50

Table-46 provides view of the number of proposals received by local marriage fixers for arranging marriage by giving reverse dowry during one year of period. In Talwada no such practice was found. However, 25% respondents of Ludhiana block admitted that they received such proposals.

Table-46 Proposals received by local marriage fixers for reverse dowry

	Talwada		Ludhiana	
	n=4	%	n=4	%
Yes	00	00	01	25
No	04	100	03	75

Table-47 has revealed the number of proposals received by marriage bureau for arranging marriage by giving reverse dowry during one year of period. As no marriage bureau was found in Talwada block. The data given in the Table shows Ludhiana Block only. Around 33.3% marriage bureau agreed there is change is occurring in dowry system. They are now receiving proposal from male to marry without dowry or even paying back to bridal side in the form of bearing entire financial burden occurring on marriage process.

Table-47 Proposals received by marriage bureau for reverse dowry

	Ludhiana	
	n=3	%
Yes = 1	01	33.3
No =2	02	66.7

4.12 Polyandry

Thadu tribe of Jaunsar Bhabar in Uttarakhand and tribal in Kinnaur District of Himachal Pradesh are few peoples who practice polyandry, the marriage of multiple brothers to a single woman. The Anthropologist have identified several reasons for this practice such as biological fitness in offspring, the abundance of available marriageable men compared to women, polyandry's economic benefits within the society.

Existence of such practices in a state like Punjab does not have any reason mentioned above. Nevertheless, it could be due to shortage of women in the area. Due to various reasons these marriages are performed secretly without any rituals. The intimate relations are maintained behind the closed door to avoid any quarrel with neighbours and society. The data presented in Table-48 in some way indicating the return of polyandry in a state like Punjab. It was revealed by a respondent from Ludhiana (4%) that she has received such proposal. This may be seen as beginning of this practice in quite open way.

Table-48 Proposals received by female for polyandry marriage.

	Talwada				**Ludhiana**			
	1997		**2007**		**1997**		**2007**	
	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%	n=25	%
Yes	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	04
No	25	100	25	100	25	100	24	96

4.13 Sex Ratio in Punjab: Situational Analysis

The sex ratio is defined as number of females per 1000 males in a particular population. The ratio is not merely figures, but it is one of the main indicators to understand the social equity between both sexes in a society. Statistics given in Table-49 provide information regarding trend of sex ratio in India during last 100 years. Excluding a rise of few points in 1951, 1981 and 2001, the sex ratio has declined significantly from 972 in 1901 to 933 in 2001. The decline trend was rapid from 1901 to 1941, the pre-independence era. During this period, the sex ratio skewed 27 points. In comparison to this, the decline was only 13 points from 1951 to 2001, the post-independence era. After independence, the sharpest decline was found during the census of 1991, slanted 7 points in comparison to 1981. In 1961 sex ratio of 7 states (Bihar 1005, Chhattisgarh 1008, Goa 1066, Kerala 1022, Manipur 1009, and Orissa 1001) in the country were favouring females. 1971 onwards, Kerala is the only state where sex ratio favours females. However, in 2001 the sex ratio has increased 5 points to 933, but one should not overlook the child sex ratio during the same period which has skewed significantly and the impact of it might be noticeable during the census of 2011.

The analysis of data further reveals that there are 13 states having sex ratio below the national average. The situation in Haryana, Punjab, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh required immediate attention as sex ratio in these states has gone down below the 900 marks. The statistics of Union Territories intensify situation furthers. The sex ratio in Daman & Diu has declined 160 to 709 in 2001, where it was 969 in 1991. Except Lakshadweep and Pondicherry, the other union territory has sex ratio below the national average.

The statistics on sex ratio of Punjab shows remarkable improvement from 780 in 1911 to 882 in 1991 and decline 8 point to 874 in 2001 which is significantly lower than the national average. Similar to Punjab, the statistics of adjoining states Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and union territory Chandigarh have also skewed significantly during the last decade. States where sex ratio was below the Punjab in 1991 were Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim. In 2001, the sex ratio in Arunachal Pradesh has improved markedly (42 points) and similar to this, in Uttar Pradesh also sex ratio has improved 22 points. Contrary to this, sex ratio in Punjab declined from 882 in 1991 to 872 in 2001.

Table-49 Sex ratio India, States & UTs (1901-2001)

	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
India	**972**	**964**	**955**	**950**	**945**	**946**	**941**	**930**	**934**	**927**	**933**
Andhra Pradesh	985	992	993	987	980	986	981	977	975	972	978
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	894	861	862	859	901
Assam	919	915	896	874	875	868	869	896	910	923	932
Bihar	1061	1051	1020	995	1002	1000	1005	957	948	907	921
Chhattisgarh	1046	1039	1041	1043	1032	1024	1008	998	996	985	990
Goa	1091	1108	1120	1088	1084	1128	1066	981	975	967	960
Gujarat	954	946	944	945	941	952	940	934	942	934	921
Haryana	867	835	844	844	869	871	868	867	870	865	861
Himachal Pradesh	884	889	890	897	890	912	938	958	973	976	970
Jammu & Kashmir	882	876	870	865	869	873	878	878	892	896	900
Jharkhand	1032	1021	1002	989	978	961	960	945	940	922	941
Karnataka	983	981	969	965	960	966	959	957	963	960	964
Kerala	1004	1008	1011	1022	1027	1028	1022	1016	1032	1036	1058
Madhya Pradesh	972	967	949	947	946	945	932	920	921	912	920
Maharashtra	978	966	950	947	949	941	936	930	937	934	922
Manipur	1037	1029	1041	1065	1055	1036	1015	980	971	958	978
Meghalaya	1036	1013	1000	971	966	949	937	942	954	955	975
Mizoram	1113	1120	1109	1102	1069	1041	1009	946	919	921	938
Nagaland	973	993	992	997	1021	999	933	871	863	886	909
Orissa	1037	1056	1086	1067	1053	1022	1001	988	981	971	972
Punjab	832	780	799	815	836	844	854	865	879	882	874
Rajasthan	905	908	896	907	906	921	908	911	919	910	922
Sikkim	916	951	970	967	920	907	904	863	835	878	875
Tamil Nadu	1044	1042	1029	1027	1012	1007	992	978	977	974	986
Tripura	874	885	885	885	886	904	932	943	946	945	950
Uttar Pradesh	938	916	908	903	907	998	907	876	882	876	898
Uttaranchal	918	907	916	913	907	940	947	940	936	936	964
West Bengal	945	925	905	890	852	865	878	891	911	917	934

Union Territories											
Andaman & Nicobar	318	352	303	495	574	625	617	644	760	818	846
Chandigarh	771	720	743	751	763	781	652	749	769	790	773
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	960	967	940	911	925	946	963	1007	974	952	811
Daman & Diu	995	1040	1143	1088	1080	1125	1169	1099	1062	969	709
Delhi	862	793	733	722	715	768	785	801	808	827	821
Lakshadweep	1063	987	1027	994	1080	1043	1020	978	975	943	947
Pondicherry	NA	1058	1053	NA	NA	1030	1013	989	985	979	1001

Source: Census of India

4.13.1 Child sex ratio (0-6 years) during 1991 & 2001 State/UT-wise

Data on child sex ratio of 0-06 years presented in Table-50 shows even more alarming trend when compared to the sex ratio of total population, which has improved 06 point. The child sex ratio has shown a sharp decline apart from Kerala (+2). No other state shows improvement in child sex ratio. However, it has improved significantly in Lakshadweep and Pondicherry (Union territories). The trend of declining sex ratio among the States ranged from -77 in Punjab to +2 in Kerala. It would be significant to note that, this decline phenomenon could be cause of anxiety in western & north western states ranging from -40 in Uttrakhand to -77 in Punjab. At the census of 1991 Punjab, Haryana and Union Territory Chandigarh, which capital of both states shows sex ratio below the 900 marks. This group was joined by Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Uttrakhand at the census of 2001. These states share similar pattern of decline in Child sex ratio also. The drastic decline certainly supports the findings that skewed sex ratio at birth is primarily due to sex selective abortion and practice is relatively more among well-off states.

Table-50 Child Sex Ratio India, States & UTs (1991-2001)

India and State/Union Territory		Child Sex Ratio (0-6 years)		
		1991	2001	Change
1.	INDIA	945	927	-18
2.	Punjab	875	798	-77
3.	Haryana	879	819	-60
4.	Chandigarh	899	845	-54
5.	Delhi	915	868	-47
6.	Gujarat	928	883	-45
7.	Himachal Pradesh	951	896	-55
8.	Uttaranchal	948	908	-40

9.	Rajasthan	916	909	-7
10.	Maharashtra	946	913	-33
11.	Uttar Pradesh	927	916	-11
12.	Daman & Diu	958	926	-32
13.	Madhya Pradesh	941	932	-9
14.	Goa	964	938	-26
15.	Jammu & Kashmir	NA	941	NA
16.	Bihar	953	942	-11
17.	Tamil Nadu	948	942	-6
18.	Karnataka	960	946	-14
19.	Orissa	967	953	-14
20.	Manipur	974	957	-17
21.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	973	957	-16
22.	Lakshadweep	941	959	+18
23.	West Bengal	967	960	-7
24.	Kerala	958	960	+2
25.	Andhra Pradesh	975	961	-14
26.	Sikkim	965	963	-2
27.	Arunachal Pradesh	982	964	-18
28.	Nagaland	993	964	-29
29.	Mizoram	969	964	-5
30.	Assam	975	965	-10
31.	Jharkhand	979	965	-14
32.	Tripura	967	966	-1
33.	Pondicherry	963	967	+4
34.	Meghalaya	986	973	-13
35.	Chhattisgarh	974	975	-1
36.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1013	979	-34

Source: Census of India 1991 & 2001

4.13.2 SEX RATIO IN PUNJAB- AN OVERVIEW

A look on census report 2001 reveals that, Punjab has a long history of doing away with newborn girls. The preferred method today is foeticide after a sex determination test, but centuries ago, the practice was to bury them. This tradition perhaps goes back to the days of repeated invasions by Muslim armies from the northwest, which used to carry off girls as booty for their own pleasure or to be sold in the slave markets of the Middle East. After Independence, and the passing of the Hindu Code Bill giving equal rights to inherit ancestral property to sons and daughters, things again took a turn for the worse, with the killing of newborn girls gaining momentum, especially in propertied families. With the advancement of science, the sex of the child can be detected in the womb and this practice became more widespread, resulting in a situation today where ratio of females to males in Punjab is lowest in the country.

The adverse sex ratio in Punjab is not recent, In fact, from the time census figures are available, i.e. 1901, Punjab has had the dubious distinction of being the only state with the most negative sex ratio until 1981, and continued to be among the states with a high imbalance in male and female numbers. Though, the sex ratio of Punjab has been gradually inching upwards, but the 2001 Census reveals that Punjab has gone back to a pre-1981 status, indicating thereby a case of one-step forward and two steps back.

Likewise, the 2001 Census also highlighted the drastic decline in the child sex ratio in Punjab. The Table-51 reveals that not any of the districts in Punjab had reported enhanced child sex ratio from 1991 to 2001. Fatahgarh Sahib, Kapurthala, Gurdaspur, and Patiala districts recorded a declining trend in the child sex ratio from 1991 to 2001 with difference of points in the range of 120 to 101 respectively. District Ludhiana where the sex ratio is lowest in the state has recorded a decline of 20 points in overall sex ratio in the decade.

Table- 51 District wise Sex ratio and Child Sex ratio (0-6 age Group) in Punjab 1991 and 2001.

S.no.	State / Distt.	Sex Ratio (Overall)		Change in points	Sex Ratio in 0-6 age group		Change in points
		1991	2001		1991	2001	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Punjab	**882**	**874**	**-8**	**875**	**793**	**-82**
1	**Gurdaspur**	**903**	**888**	**-15**	**878**	**775**	**-103**
2	Amritsar	873	874	+01	861	783	-78
3	**Kapurthala**	**896**	**886**	**-10**	**879**	**775**	**-104**
4	Jalandhar	897	882	-15	886	797	-89
5	Hoshiarpur	924	935	+11	884	810	-74
6	Nawanshahr	900	913	+13	900	810	-90
7	Rupnagar	870	870	-	884	791	-93
8	**Fatehgarh Sahib**	**871**	**851**	**-20**	**874**	**754**	**-120**
9	**Ludhiana**	**844**	**824**	**-20**	**877**	**814**	**-63**
10	Moga	884	883	-01	867	819	-48
11	Firozpur	895	883	-12	887	819	-68
12	Muktsar	880	886	+06	858	807	-51
13	Faridkot	883	881	-02	865	805	-60
14	Bathinda	884	865	-19	860	779	-81
15	Mansa	873	875	+02	873	779	-94
16	Sangrur	870	868	-02	873	784	-89
17	**Patiala**	**882**	**864**	**-18**	**871**	**770**	**-101**

4.13.3 Sex Ratio at Birth

Table- 52 classifies the ICDS blocks of Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana districts according to sex ratio observed under ICDS covered area in 2006-07. The data is based on birth registration at Anganwadi Centers which is compiled monthly at village, block and district level.

In Hoshiarpur, it may be noted that average sex ratio in Dasuya (776.91), Mukerian (786.5) and Tanda (791.75) blocks is below the average child sex ratio (0-6 years) of the state. The highest sex ratio 888.16 was observed in Hoshiarpur-I block which indeed significantly below than national average. It may be seen from Table that the average sex ratio during 2006-07 in most of the blocks was observed above the average child sex ratio of the district at 2001. The average sex ratio of entire district during the year was observed 836, which is marginally above the mark of 810 (District's child sex ratio, 2001) However, the figure is intended to decline further, due to high mortality rate in girl child.

Data of Ludhiana district has a different story. While comparing with the child sex ratio of district which was 814 at 2001 census, most of the ICDS blocks have observed improved sex ratio. The highest sex ratio at birth 983 was recorded in Delhon block which is even better than National child sex ratio. Similar to this, Sudhar (945), Ludhiana-1 (925), Machhiwar (920) and Ludhiana-U (901) has also recorded sex ratio above 900 marks. However, situation in Pakhowal (788) and Sidhawan Bet (767) still found pathetic as sex ratio in these blocks has not shown any improvement.

The overall average sex ratio of the year was observed 864 which is significantly above the child sex ratio of district at 2001 census. Perhaps, the improvement is due to efforts made by state government by implementing various scheme for favouring girl child and their family.

Table-52 Sex-ratio (under ICDS covered area) for the year 2006-07

S.No.	Name of the District	Name of the Block	Sex ratio April, 2006	Sex ratio May, 2006	Sex ratio June, 2006	Sex ratio July, 2006	Sex ratio Aug., 2006	Sex ratio Sep., 2006	Sex ratio Oct., 2006	Sex ratio Nov., 2006	Sex ratio Dec., 2006	Sex ratio Jan., 2007	Sex ratio Feb., 2007	Sex ratio March, 2007	Total	Average (total/12)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	**HOSHIARPUR**	Bhunga	844	955	1000	880	718	863	968	868	815	821	915	903	10,550	879.17
		Dasuya	500	743	559	558	1297	812	788	782	789	768	921	806	9,323	776.92
		Garhshankar	781	732	686	942	934	991	707	891	737	891	763	1021	10,076	839.67
		Hajipur	538	875	1040	808	755	552	1020	980	941	863	940	1103	10,415	867.92
		Hoshiarpur-I	775	673	888	753	976	875	1062	897	915	895	1046	903	10,658	888.17
		Hoshiarpur-II	437	687	638	773	951	912	1162	988	800	987	1143	606	10,084	840.33
		Mahalpur	767	348	933	1000	783	747	860	778	1343	842	938	1204	10,543	878.58
		Mukerian	1147	696	644	587	821	829	835	929	927	836	580	607	9,438	786.50
		Talwara	1030	780	587	800	846	794	821	968	933	940	592	714	9,805	817.08
		Tanda	929	555	489	639	815	843	687	679	1555	758	825	727	9,501	791.75
																836.69
2	**LUDHIANA**	Delhon	1000	1250	1230	647	875	1241	1014	897	1048	786	932	879	11799	983.25
		Doraha	889	1167	702	572	851	763	848	1233	844	737	436	846	9888	824.00
		Jagraon	574	963	693	850	1028	831	885	868	967	830	895	745	10129	844.08
		Khanna	778	1250	655	702	826	735	859	1000	887	708	1043	907	10350	862.50
		Ludhiana (U)	1250	829	703	1333	750	923	660	1043	646	919	795	968	10819	901.58
		Ludhiana (U-II)	442	824	675	804	1307	948	1060	773	805	1000	822	844	10304	858.67
		Ludhiana-I (R)	940	1105	1000	778	821	769	940	1080	879	1022	849	925	11108	925.67
		Machhiwar	714	700	1100	896	925	918	847	941	1023	854	1060	1069	11047	920.58
		Mangat	1311	697	649	500	1187	641	798	1268	833	917	788	818	10407	867.25
		Pakhowal	1385	755	674	750	732	725	700	671	841	663	661	907	9464	788.67
		Riakot												765	765	765.00
		Samrala	1000	947	448	712	1087	1055	549	613	941	710	1206	920	10188	849.00
		Sidhwan Bet	692	632	605	711	783	727	750	920	689	1062	872	767	9210	767.50
		Sudhar	846	956	889	912	937	833	900	1283	963	618	1209	1000	11346	945.50
																864.51

Chapter-5

Conclusions

Profile of the Respondents

- The educational status of female respondents of both the blocks has improved quantitatively and qualitatively. The percentage of high school achievers was 92% of both the blocks in 2007, whereas it was just 24% in Ludhiana and 40% in Talwada during 1997

- Significantly the educational status of male respondents was found much below the expectations. In fact, the percentage of high school achiever has dropped from 52% in 1997 to 20% in 2007. Drug addiction and emerging practice of marrying a girl with good educational qualifications appears to be the reason for the decline in the education status. *Under this practice, the families of groom not only agree to marry their son without dowry but also bear the entire expenditure of marriage incurred from bridal side. Thus, education qualification of a girl is seen as a facilitating the migration of groom and his family members to other countries.* Correspondingly, the data from Talwada does not also indicate any significant increase in High school achievers. It enhanced from 44% in 1997 to 48% in 2007.

- Inspite of quantitative and qualitative increase in educational status, the occupational status of female in both areas has not improved much during the last decade. As high as 90% females married in 1997 were house wives. Similarly, 90% females married in 2007 were also found house wives.

Marriageable age

- The study revealed sharp decline in average age of starting marriage process for girls in Low Sex area (Ludhiana) during last one decade. It

has come down from 20.13 years in 1997 to 18.92 years. Further decline, in sex ratio would promote child marriage practices.

The trend was found reverse in High sex area (Talwada) where the average age of initiating marriage process has gone up from 19.7 years in 1997 to 21.60 years in 2007.

- The average age of females at the time of marriage has declined significantly in low sex ratio block (Ludhiana) from 22.33 years in 1997 to 20.72 years in 2007. This may be due to availability of early and attractive marriage proposals for their daughters.

  The trend was found upward in high sex ratio area (Talwada). It has increased to 23 years in 2007 from 20.92 years in 1997.

- A significant increase in marriageable age of male respondents from low sex area (Ludhiana) has been found. The average in the area has increased from 23.08 years in 1997 to 25.37 years in 2007. The reason was shortage of potential brides which forced men to delay their marriages. Effect of delayed marriages may not be observed during present generation. However, it will be felt by anyone entering in marriage market 5-10 year later. The present unmarried males and the younger generation would create a pool leaving many males unmarried in future.

  Though, the average marriageable age was found more in high sex ratio area (Talwada) in comparison with low sex ratio area (Ludhiana). However, slight decline in marriageable age was noticed (26.64 years in 1997 to 26.51 in 2007)

Marriage proposal

- The study indicates significant decline in number of proposals for son's marriage in both blocks. However, the trend of decline was found more in low sex ratio area in last decade. A majority of respondents (74.07% in Ludhiana & 71.42% in Talwada) believed that because of low sex ratio aspiring males are not getting proposals for their marriage.
  Respondents also opined that low education status of male in the area, higher education for girls, unemployment among boys, Government policies, and trend of dowry is also influencing marriage proposals for the son's marriage.

- The study finds raise in patterns of receiving proposals for daughter's marriage in low sex ratio area. Around **79**% respondents of the area agree that the change they are observing in pattern of proposals for females are because of low sex ratio of the area.

- 63.63% percent respondents among the parents faced difficulties in arranging brides for their sons in low sex area. It revealed that they did not receive adequate number of proposal for their son's marriage.

- Difficulties faced by the parents of female were found entirely different from the parents of male. Due to reverse pattern in proposals in low sex area the girls were found more selective in choosing their life partner. Proposals from abroad or certainly of migration after marriage are given preference. Drug addiction, unemployment, and low education status of aspiring males were the other reasons for rejecting the proposals.

Sources of matches

- The study reveals no change in sources of matches in high sex ratio area during last decade. Parents are still relying on traditional method for suitable matches. While comparing the trends between 1997 & 2007 negligible changes have been noted. This may be because of uncontrolled variables such as change in life pattern in last one decade. Data do not show much use of modern sources like marriage bureau, and matrimonial advertisements in newspapers. This may be because of easily available of matches and traditional beliefs.

  In low sex ratio area, parents were found focusing on substitution of traditional sources. During last decade they were found shifting from traditional patterns to commercial agencies such as marriage bureau, marriage fixers, matrimonial advertisement in news papers and local marriage fixers. The change in source of match making somewhere indicated the difficulty of parents in finding brides for their son through traditional sources. Consequently, they are shifting towards the other sources.

Spouse Age Gap

- The study points increase in spouse age gap in low sex area (3.72 years in 1997 to 4.02 years in 2007) Shortage of potential brides may force men to delay their marriages. Marrying older is the first adjustment to adversely imbalanced sex ratios. The effect of delayed marriages for one generation of men will then be felt by the younger generation, as they become adults. As in a queue, unmarried men will accumulate as new cohorts of bachelors reach marriageable age. This means that if the

sex ratio of the area continues to decline in the same manner the spousal age gap would increase further and a significant share of men above 30 years of age will remain single. Many of them with low economic status might not be able to marry at all.

Effect on Girl Child Education

- As mentioned earlier, one of the major finding of this study is decline in marriageable age of female. This connotes unfavourable effect on education of girl child. Study shows 50% girls of low sex area in 2007 did not even completed their intermediate at the time of their marriage. This also indicates that these girls would definitely be less than 18 years of age at that time. In a typical Indian condition, where girl is expected to live with her husband and his family and follow the customs and rules of new family, her wish to continue further education after marriage certainly depends upon the permission of husband or in-laws.
- 90% girls from low sex ratio area were interested to continue their study before getting married.
- Only 40% of above were allowed to continue their education after marriage by her husband/in-laws.
- Allotment of house hold work by husband/in-law has been described as one of the major reason for discontinuing education after marriage.
- 20% females married in 2007 of low sex ratio area given poverty as a reason for discontinuing education.

Dowry

- The study has revealed that the practice of dowry is used widely in high sex ratio (Talwada) and as well as in low sex ratio (Ludhiana). It hardly influences factors like region, economy status, religion or caste. Around 58% respondents from low sex ratio area (Ludhiana) and 48% respondents from high sex ratio area (Talwada) stated that the trend of dowry remain unchanged or increased in last decade. They have linked it with prosperity as people with more money give more dowries and setting a trend to be followed by others also.

- 28% respondents of low sex ratio area and 14% of high sex ratio area do believe that the trend of dowry is declining. They have mentioned low sex ratio as a major cause for this decline

- The study has observed trend of reverse dowry in low sex ratio area. Since the subject is related to prestige and dignity, people are opting new methods by not paying directly to the bridal side. The parents of male are offering marrying without dowry and also bearing the entire expenditure of marriage. Such practices are more prevalent where the bride belongs to poor family.

Polyandry

- The study indicates signs of return of polyandry in a state like Punjab. It was revealed by one respondent of low sex ratio area that she has received proposal for such type of marriage. This may be seen as a beginning of this practice in quite open way.

Sex Ratio in Punjab: Situational Analysis

- The average sex ratio at birth of Hishiarpur district (Under ICDS covered area) was observed 836.69 for the year 2006-2007.

- The sex ratio at birth in Dasuya (776), Mukerian (786) and Tanda (791) ICDS blocks of Hoshiarpur district during 2006-07 was found significant below than average child sex ratio (0-6 years) of district & state which is 810 and 793 respectively.

- The overall average sex ratio at birth (Under ICDS covered area) during 2006-07 was observed 864 which is significantly above the child sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years of district at 2001 census.

- The highest sex ratio at birth 983 was recorded in Delhon block which is even better than National child sex ratio. Similar to this, Sudhar (945), Ludhiana-1 (925), Machhiwar (920) and Ludhiana-U (901) has also recorded sex ratio above 900 marks.

Chapter-6

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations emerge from the study.

- The Pre-Natal Diagnostics Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, in its amended form, is clear and self explanatory, in nature. However, some of the recent reports on child sex ratio indicated further decline in child sex ratio. These reports clearly point out the loopholes in the implementation of PNDT Act. In order to curb the higher incidence of female feoticide, there is an urgent need for not only strengthening the provisions of Act in aspect such as inspection and monitoring, performance of advisory committees, awareness generation among the people about the provisions of the Act and the expected role of social organizations.

- Intensive awareness regarding Laws relating to equal rights as regarding heritance of parental property needs to be generated. This will ensure legal support to female and social stigma of liability attached to girlhood and womanhood could be eradicated.

- As a police to encourage birth of girl child the Government should extend financial support to voluntary organizations, women's group and Self Help Groups (SHGs) to popularize and convey a positive message about girl child in all states, in general, and Punjab and Haryana in particular. All available means of communication such as media, public lectures, poster campaigns, exhibitions, films and publications needs to be utilized.

  Along side reforms in legal and medical fields for preventing the ever-growing phenomenon of female feticide are also needed.

- Medical professionals, on account of their position of strength and repute, should be made responsible to counsel their patients and families on the importance of the girl child and the impact of the skewed sex ratio in the society.

- Registration of Births and Deaths is the single most important way of keeping track of the trends relating to sex ratio. Thus, strengthening and enforcing the registration of births and deaths can play a vital role in curbing female foeticide.

- At village level, health functionaries such as Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) should to be involved in preventive strategies of female foeticide. As these stakeholders who can maintain relevant demographic records and close association with local people can act as a crucial link in the implementation of the schemes meant to curb the evil.

- The study has revealed pathetic situation of women regarding occupational aspects. Empowerment of Women through reservation in jobs in public as well as in private would increase their status in society. This would also increase their decision making skills and can oppose the family demand of sex selection related abortions.

- Schemes promoting vocational training for skill development, employment and income generating activities such as *Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women* (**STEP)** may be implemented more rigorously in the area. This would help in improving the financial and decision making process in the family.

- The economic empowerment and their independence in decision making would definitely make women less susceptible to dowry demand. Further, the Dowry Prohibition Act should be implemented more rigorously and stringently to ensure change in the attitude of the parents whereby daughters are not considered a liability in the family.

- The gender issues specifying effect of sex ratio imbalance should be included as subject in curriculums of schools and colleges. This would increase knowledge and sensitivity about the subject in upcoming generation.

- Government should introduce schemes to promote free higher education for women along with stipend. Special focus is required to promote education for females willing to continue education even after marriage.

- Continuous collection of data regarding child sex ratio on year basis is an urgent need. For this purpose, structure of ICDS can be used as Aanganwadi Worker is the first stakeholder to interact with pregnant and families of new born babies. Efforts should be made to analyze the data so collected in all the districts and States of India to facilitate appropriate interventions by the policy makers on the basis of scientific analysis. The collection of data on yearly basis would also help to identify pockets of low sex ratio, trends of declination and possible reasons.

- Longitudinal studies may be conducted in different parts with diverse socio-cultural background to assess further repercussions of low sex ratio in the community.

- Case studies should be done for the families opted to go inter-state marriage due to skewed sex ratio particularly in their caste & community.

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Annexure-I

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