

Migration, Social Interaction and Mothers' Preference for Sons in India

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Abstract: According to the 2011 Census, about 450 million people out of 1.2 billion population migrated within the country. Such movements expose the migrants to new cultures and livelihoods, and consequently evolve their behavioural choice sets. The objective of the paper is to understand the effect of modernisation on the preference for sons, among the rural to urban migrated families. The paper uses the IHDS-II (2011-12) data, to explain the difference in son preferential behaviour among the native urban women and the migrant women in urban areas. Using logit on stated son preference of women, the paper summarises that the migrant women from villages have a higher probability of exhibiting son preference than the urban native women. Migrants in urban areas, settled for more than 20 years have a higher probability of exhibiting son preference compared to migrants who settled recently. Social interaction with religious groups or caste associations significantly increases son preference among migrants of urban India.

Keywords: Son Preference, Migration, Social Interaction, Urban, India

Introduction

In India, internal migration is a common phenomenon, due to the skewed economic growth among rural areas and the urban areas and cities in the last few decades. Employment opportunities concentrated in metropolitan cities only aggravated the pace of rural to urban migration, a rational process as suggested by Todaro (1969). According to the NSS 2007-08 survey, out of 1000 households in urban areas, 33 are migrant families. 56.8 percent of the migrant families come from rural areas, 42.8 percent come from other urban localities and only 0.3 percent of migrant families have come from another country.

Most of the studies on migration focus on individual labour migration and have rarely explored family migration, especially in the Indian context. Limited literature available suggests that migration of an individual is initiated by the collective decision of the family under the agreement of financial support through remittances (Banerjee, 1981; Ballard, 1990; De Haan, 1997). A detailed study by Banerjee (1981) on the importance of families in the migration process indicates that migrated individuals or even families never weaken ties with their extended kin, however, migrants with plans to settle in the new society send back only moderate remittances.

Family migration generally involves individual men accompanied by their immediate families, and occasionally it is an initial individual movement followed by spouse and children. However, the incidence and effects of women migration, independently or along with family, were underexplored for a long time. Recent studies suggest migrated women have improved freedom of movement and access to education or labour participation (Martin, 2004; Rao, 2012; Rao, 2014). In India, however, marriage migration is more common among women. Moreover, since women

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are in general less educated, they are more likely to get employed in the unorganised labour work such as care work or domestic work in urban areas (Ghosh, 2009), with eventually low remunerations (Rao, 2012). Thus, migrated women end up with little financial independence and more work burden, adding up other domestic responsibilities (Rao, 2012; Singh, 2019). Note, in patriarchal Indian society, women are most likely not the decision-makers of the household, not even the educated migrant women with a handsome earning (Kabeer, 2000).

This paper is based on two critical propositions. Firstly, migration, which is mostly associated with changes in culture, standards of living, peer groups and neighbourhood, are expected to change migrant's lifestyle, especially when moving from a rural to a metropolitan setup. Here I would want to introduce the term 'acculturation' which is a frequently used concept in psychology. Acculturation is a process where an individual or a group of individuals from one cultural context adapt and re-establish their lives in another culture as they migrate. John W. Berry (1997) says that the psychological acculturation process, after migration, is influenced by many factors including group-level factors in the region of settlement and the socio-cultural characteristics of the society of origin. It also depends on how well an individual or the group of individuals can adapt themselves to the new society, as well as the willingness of the dominant community to accommodate. Innumerable research has been conducted to examine the steps of stress, coping, acculturation and finally psychological adaptation (Kuo, 2013; Noh and Kaspar, 2003).

How migration affects women's fertility preferences, family planning and child outcomes during the process of adaptation and assimilation, have been explored in earlier studies. Different parts of the world have documented a higher acceptance of fertility control methods among the migrated women compared to non-migrant women (Chattopadhyay et al. 2006). As evident in Mumbai, prenatal healthcare patterns of urban natives are imitated by the migrants, but not the utilisation of institutions for deliveries (Stephenson and Matthews, 2004). Brouckerhoff (1994) studied the Demographic and Health Survey data for 17 developing countries to examine the survival chances of children of migrated mothers. He finds that the survival chances of children who have to accompany their mother decrease sharply, but children born after the settlement process have experienced better survival chances. Gender differentials in child health and education outcomes are hardly different among the rural-urban migrants and the urban non-migrants (Mansuri, 2006; Goodburn, 2014). However, imitation is not always easy for the migrated families. Stephenson, Matthews and McDonald (2003) indicated significantly higher mortality among children of rural-urban migrants than the urban non-migrants, citing the poor economic state of the former families as the cause. However, the other proposition is that an individual's association with socio-cultural groups or organisations are expected to influence their behavioural patterns and choices (Granovetter, 1973; Pool and Kochen, 1978; Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982). Bongaarts and Watkins (1996) suggest that women's social interaction influences their fertility behaviour. Madhavan, Adams and Simon (2003) found that women's network significantly affects their fertility decisions. According to a study in Mali, women's participation in credit schemes, and a higher proportion of network members living outside the village, are associated with lower fertility rates. In India, however, little work has been done to understand the social network effect on women's fertility behaviour. Pathak (2013) and Pathak et al, (2014) shows that the family size of the network members does positively associate with the fertility behaviour of women in rural

Uttar Pradesh. Another recent research by Sinha (2020) suggests that a woman's usage of contraceptive methods is positively associated with same-caste and same-religion network women.

Now, the objective of this paper is to determine how the social interaction of migrant women and families influence their son-preferential fertility behaviour. The paper examines the stated preference for the gender composition of children among the migrants and compares it to that of the native urban residents', controlling for individual, household characteristics and the individual's interaction with social groups. In India, the son preferential fertility choices worsened the child sex ratio over the period (dropped to 914 according to the 2011 census report, recorded lowest since independence). Families' strong preference for sons coupled with the easy access to sex-determining technologies and sex-selective abortions have contributed to a distorted sex ratio at birth (Das Gupta and Bhat, 1997; Arnold, Kishor and Roy, 2002; Retherford and Roy, 2003; Bhat and Zavier, 2007). Although the literature on son preference had their focus on rural India, because of their pronounced patrilineal culture (Miller, 1987; Das Gupta, 1987; Bardhan, 1988; Pande, 2003; Pande and Astone, 2007), none explored the expected behavioural transformation of the rural migrants in an urban set-up.

This paper analyses the individual-level IHDS-II (2011-12) data, and the findings of the paper can be summarised as follows: (1) the migrant women from villages have a 2.3 percentage point higher probability of exhibiting son preference than the urban native women, whereas migrant women from towns are not significantly different from the urban native women; (2) urban migrant women in place of settlement for more than 20 years have 5.2 percentage point higher probability of exhibiting son preference compared to urban migrant women who have settled recently; and finally (3) social interaction with a religious group or caste association increases the probability of son preference by 3.6 percentage points among the urban migrant women whereas, association with other financial group, women's group or political organisation fails to significantly affect son preferential behaviour.

The remainder of the paper follows with a theoretical framework, a brief descriptive analysis and subsequently the results for the logit estimates. Finally, the paper ends with a discussion of the results and implications.

Theoretical Framework

The initial hypothesis is that the prevalence of son preference is more persistent in rural India than in urban, as the traditional kinship structure is still practiced in rural India (Gould, 1961). To test the hypothesis, the proportion of women with a preference for sons (ideally want more sons than daughters) has been compared for the two sample groups, i.e., the rural and the urban women. Hence, the null hypothesis states that the sample proportion of women with son preference is not different in rural and urban India (i.e., $H_0: p_r - p_u = 0$) and consequently alternative hypothesis can be represented as $H_a: p_r - p_u > 0$. The results for the two-sample proportion test has been presented in Table 1. The p-value suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected and the proportion of women with son preference is significantly higher in rural India than in urban India.

Table 1: Sample proportion test comparing women with son preference in rural and urban India

Region (Native)	Women who prefer more sons	Sample size	Sample Proportion
Rural	4,771	19,777	0.24
Urban	1,148	7,073	0.16

Source: IHDS-II data

Difference = $p_r - p_u$

Estimate for difference: 0.079

95 percent CI for difference: (0.068, 0.089)

Test for difference=0 (vs $\neq 0$): $z = 13.74$ P-Value = 0.000

So, the argument is that if the rural population has significantly more preference for sons than the urban population, then what happens to the migrants who move from a village to an urban area. The study is based on Berry's (1992, 1997, 2005) concept of acculturation and adaptation, and the transition in preference for sons among the women in migrated families. According to the acculturation framework, coping or adapting to the new cultural environment of a migrant would depend on 1) their pre-existing individual characteristics and 2) their willingness and exposure to the host culture. If the subject can equally balance the endorsement of the culture in the accommodating city and conservation of her native values, she attains successful adaptation otherwise she suffers from acculturative stress.

The objective of the paper is to ask if the conservative attitude favouring the sons, weaken over time by coming in contact with the more modernised urban culture or does it get worse? Hence, the research questions are 1) how does son preferential attitude differ among the rural and urban residents and the migrants in urban areas; 2) what is the role of place of origin (village/town), years of stay in urban areas and interaction with socio-economic groups in shaping the behavioural change among migrants if any.

Data and Variables

A multivariate analysis is conducted on a sub-sample from the India Human Development Survey (IHDS-II), 2011- 12, data. The data covers all the states and union territories of India (except Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands). The data provides information on 42,152 urban and rural households. Additionally, it collected information on 2,04,568 individuals on their health history, marital and fertility details, education and employment, and social relations. Since, the objective is to study the gender preference in women's fertility choices, a sub-sample, i.e., ever-married women of reproductive age group 15-49 years, termed as 'eligible women', has been used.

Furthermore, a sub-sample of 9,547 eligible women residing in urban area, comprising 6,633 native women and 2,914 migrant women has been used. The data also provides detailed information on the family's years of stay at the place of residence and some brief knowledge about the place of origin of the migrants, such as if they have come from a village or a town. So, the study analyses how does the son preferential behaviour be different among the migrants and the non-migrants in an urban area, further among the migrants is it a different cultural adaptability process if the type of the place of their origin is different, i.e., is it different for families migrating from a village from those of a town(urban/semi-urban). Additionally, it investigates if the time of

stay in the place of residence after migration makes any further difference in the process of adaptability. The data also tells if the household is directly or indirectly a member or have linkage with any socio-economic or political organization, giving a brief knowledge about their social interactions in place of residence.

To assess women's ideal number of children, IHDS-II asked women the number of children they would like to have if they could start over again. Women with no children were asked, 'If you could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many would that be?' Those who gave a numerical response to the above question were then further asked how many of these children they would like to be boys, how many they would like to be girls. Responses were entered as the number of sons and daughters. Based on the answer, the principal dependent variable has been coded as *Son Preference* which is one when a respondent reported wanting a higher number of sons than daughters and is coded as zero when a respondent reported wanting equal numbers of sons and daughters or a higher number of daughters than sons. It is often considered a competent proxy to determine family's sex preference for child composition (Clark, 2000; Pande and Astone, 2007; Robitaille, 2013).

Among the independent variables, I have three sets of variables. The first set of variables are individual and household characteristics. It includes the age of the respondent, their completed years of education categorised as *Uneducated*, *Primary Education* (Class I to V), *Secondary Education* (Class VI to XII) and *Higher Education* (college education or more). It also includes their exposure to media i.e. whether they listen to a radio, reads a newspaper or watches television, as their working status (whether employed or not at the time of the survey). Respondent's household characteristics comprise the wealth quintile of the household, which has been categorized into five quintiles, and the social group she belongs to (*Brahmin*, *OBC*, *SC*, *ST*, *Muslim* and *Others*).

The second set is specific to the migrants, which includes variables on the migration history. IHDS-II asks households how many years ago their family came to their current place of residence. If a native their response was coded as '90'. This variable gives a proxy for time to adaptability in the present society and has been categorised as *0 to 5 years*, *6 to 10 years*, *11 to 20 years*, and *21 years and more*. They were further enquired about the type of their place of origin, i.e., whether it was a village or a town. Since the study is based on first-generation migrants, only women who migrated after birth have been considered.

The third set of variables assesses the interaction of households with interest groups in the society at the current place of residence. It has been grouped as *Financial group*, if anyone from the family is part of a union/business/professional group or a credit savings group, *Socio-religious group*, if a member of a religious group or a social group or a caste association, *Women's group* if a female member is part of a Mahila Mandal or a self-help group and *Political group* if anyone from the household is a political or panchayat member or attends public meetings. A few other control variables have been added. It is often argued that when households are enquired about their ideal child composition it is usual for them to prompt their actual child composition. So, controls for the household's current child sex composition has been added. Lastly, state dummies are there to capture state fixed effects.

Empirical Methodology

Since the variable, *Son Preference*, is a binary variable, a logit model is used for the analysis. The initial logit estimates son preference on the urban population, comprising both the natives and the migrants. The distribution of *Son Preference* (Y_i) can be described as in equation (1)

$$\Pr(Y_i) = e^{X_i\beta} / (1 + e^{X_i\beta}) \quad (1)$$

where X_i is a vector of explanatory variables comprising the individual characteristics (women's age, education, media access, working status), the household characteristics (household wealth and social group) and the migration status, i.e, whether the household is a native or a migrant, from a village or a town. The coefficient on the categorical variable for household migration status is the variable of concern in this section. However, subsequent two logit estimates are particularly on the sub-sample of just the migrant households. These two estimates have two more variables specifically to understand migration history, one controls for the years of stay in the current residence and the second, to understand how social interactions with particular groups contribute to reshaping the norms around gender preferences for children.

Results

The result section has three sub-sections. The first sub-section presents brief descriptive statistics comparing urban migrant women and the native women of urban areas. The second sub-section presents the logit estimates to understand the difference in son preference between the urban migrant women (from village/town) and the urban native women. The last sub-section presents the determinants of son preference among the urban migrant women, where the principal factors are her type of place of origin, years of stay in the place of settlement and the role of networks with socio-political groups.

Descriptive analysis

Table 2 provides brief statistics of the study sub-sample, i.e., of eligible women currently residing in urban areas categorised as non-migrants, migrants from village and migrants from town. The percentage of women who prefer a greater number of sons than daughters is highest among the migrants from villages (about 18.32 percent) followed by non-migrants (16.23 percent) and then migrants from town (14.12 percent). Note, migrant women in an urban area whose place of origin is a village, have the lowest mean age at marriage and a greater percentage of uneducated or primary educated women, on the other hand, the migrant women from town has a higher mean age at marriage, the highest percentage of women with higher education, better exposure to media sources and the wealth distribution is more skewed towards the rich than the other two sub-groups. However, the percentage of employed women is highest among the non-migrants (26.31 percent), followed by the migrant women from villages (24.03 percent) and least participation among women migrated from towns (21.93 percent).

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Table 2: Summary Statistics of 15-49-year-old ever-married urban women by migration status, IHDS-II (2011-12)

Variable	Urban Non-migrant	Migrant (from villages)	Migrant (from towns)
<i>Son Preference (N, %)</i>	1,148 (16.23)	452 (18.32)	245 (14.12)
<i>Age at marriage (Mean, SD)</i>	19.15 (3.71)	18.69 (3.58)	19.50 (3.84)
<i>Education (N, %)</i>			
No education	1,744 (20.80)	659 (23.29)	337 (16.31)
Primary Education	1,158 (13.81)	426 (15.05)	228 (11.04)
Secondary/Higher Secondary Education	4,281 (51.06)	1,415 (50.00)	1,101 (53.29)
Higher Education	1,202 (14.34)	330 (11.66)	400 (19.36)
<i>Media Exposure (N, %)</i>			
Listens to Radio	2,047 (24.53)	629 (22.33)	558 (27.07)
Reads Newspaper	4,361 (52.25)	1,474 (52.34)	1,279 (62.12)
Watch Television	7,913 (94.71)	2,708 (95.99)	1,996 (96.85)
<i>Working status (N, %)</i>			
Employed	2,206 (26.31)	680 (24.03)	453 (21.93)
<i>Wealth Quintile (N, %)</i>			
Poorest	367 (4.38)	78 (2.76)	31 (1.50)
Poorer	931 (11.11)	263 (9.30)	126 (6.10)
Middle	1,812 (21.62)	561 (19.83)	299 (14.48)
Richer	2,585 (30.84)	953 (33.69)	710 (34.38)
Richest	2,687 (32.06)	974 (34.43)	899 (43.54)
<i>Socio-religious Group (N, %)</i>			
Brahmin	519 (6.19)	236 (8.35)	173 (8.37)
OBC	2,552 (30.45)	927 (32.78)	619 (29.96)
SC	1,658 (19.78)	543 (19.20)	328 (15.88)
ST	263 (3.14)	94 (3.32)	58 (2.81)
Muslim	1,529 (18.24)	274 (9.69)	296 (14.33)
Others	1,861 (22.20)	754 (26.66)	592 (28.65)
<i>Years of stay in residence (N, %)</i>			
0 to 5 years		140 (4.95)	224 (10.84)
5 to 10		271 (9.58)	293 (14.18)
10 to 20		806 (28.48)	653 (31.61)
21 or more		1,613 (57.00)	896 (43.37)
<i>Social Interaction (N, %)</i>			
Member of Financial Group		567 (20.08)	428 (20.73)
Member of Religious Group		475 (16.82)	336 (16.27)
Member of Women Group		525 (18.59)	409 (19.81)
Member of Political Group		716 (25.65)	484 (23.95)

Source: IHDS-II data

Among the urban migrants from villages, about 60 percent of them are settled in the current settlement for more than 20 years and only 15 percent are recent migrants (migrated in less than 10 years). However, among the urban migrants from town, there are more of the recent migrants (about 25 percent) and about 40 percent of them have migrated and settled more than 20 years back. The migrant families, both from villages and towns, are more commonly found to be

associated with political groups followed by financial groups and about 19 percent of the migrant women are also part of women groups.

From Table 2 it is clear that in urban areas the proportion of women with a desire for more sons is highest among the ones who migrated from a village, moderate among the native women and lowest among the women who migrated from another town. Table 3 further shows the change in preference for sons over the time of stay in an urban area for households who had migrated. It appears from the basic tabulation that the proportion of women with want for more sons than daughters increases among the migrants with more years of stay in an urban area and the trend is more prominent among those who migrate from villages compared to women from another town.

Table 3: Percentage of 15-49 years old ever-married urban migrant women who want more sons than daughters, by variation in their type of Place of Origin and Years of Migration

Migrant's years of stay at present residence	Percentage of household who prefer boy child to girl child	
	From Village	From Town
Less than or equal to 5 years	13.45	11.48
6 to 10 years	14.86	13.81
10 to 20 years	19.67	15.68
More than 20 years	18.59	13.75

Source: IHDS-II data

Son Preference among Urban Native and Urban Migrant Women

The results from logit estimates had been divided into two sections. The first section has the result for logit estimates on the whole sample of eligible women of urban India with a variable on her migration status, i.e., whether the household is a native (non-migrant) or migrant from village or migrant from town, to understand if there is a significant difference in son preference between the three after controlling for individual and household characteristics. The second section exclusively focuses on the migrant households of urban India to explore the individual and the household factors contributing to their son preferential attitude, along with their migration history i.e., type of place of origin (village/town), the time (in years) they have spent in urban setup after migration and the type of organisations they are associated with. The initial individual and household characteristics are expected to present her predisposition towards son preference, whereas the type of origin presents what she has inherited from her society of origin and the latter two variables define what she has acquired from the urban society of settlement.

Son Preference among the Migrant and the Native Women in Urban India

Table 4 reports the results for the logit model on *Son Preference* of both native and migrant ever-married women aged 15 to 49 years, living in an urban area at the time of the survey. The first column lists the explanatory variables and the second column lists the marginal effects of the explanatory variables. Most of the variables here are categorical variables except the *Age of the respondent* which is a discrete variable. For the categorical variables, the base or reference category is indicated in the first column in parenthesis. The coefficients, marginal effects of

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categorical variables, can be interpreted as the change in probability of son preference to change in the independent variables from zero to one.

Table 4: Logit estimates of Son Preference for urban women, IHDS-II (2011-12)

VARIABLES	Marginal Coefficients
Individual characteristics	
Age of the respondent	0.004*** (0.001)
<i>Respondent's Education</i> (No Education)	
Primary Education	-0.043** (0.013)
Secondary Education	-0.085*** (0.012)
Higher Education	-0.102*** (0.017)
<i>Respondent's exposure to media</i>	
Listens to Radio (No Radio)	0.004 (0.009)
Reads Newspaper (No Newspaper)	-0.010 (0.009)
Watches Television (No Television)	-0.021 (0.017)
Working Status (Unemployed)	-0.010 (0.009)
Household Characteristics	
<i>Wealth Quintile</i> (Poorest)	
Poorer	0.005 (0.021)
Middle	0.010 (0.021)
Richer	-0.011 (0.022)
Richest	-0.042* (0.022)
<i>Social group</i> (Brahmin)	
OBC	-0.024 (0.017)
SC	-0.013 (0.018)
ST	-0.035 (0.026)
Muslim	0.027 (0.019)
Others	-0.046** (0.017)
<i>Child Sex Composition</i> (Equal sons and daughters)	
Sons<Daughters	0.055*** (0.009)
Sons>Daughters	0.123*** (0.009)
<i>Migrant Status</i> (Non-Migrant)	
Migrant from village	0.023** (0.009)
Migrant from town	-0.003 (0.010)
Observations	9,547

Source: IHDS-II data

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The difference in son preferential attitude among the non-migrants and the migrants are provided by the variable *Migrant status* in Table 5. The probability of exhibiting son preference is higher among the migrant women from villages in comparison to women who are natives of urban areas by 2.3 percentage points, and the difference is statistically significant. On the other hand, the negative marginal effect of migrant women from town implies a lower probability of son preference among them compared to native women, although it is not statistically significant. The other factors related to a significantly higher probability of son preference among urban women, both natives and migrants are the age of the respondent, respondent's education, the

women who belong to the richest wealth quintile and women who hail from ‘other’ caste category. The positive coefficient of the age of respondents implies that the probability of expressing son preference rises by 0.4 percentage points with each year of ageing of women in urban India. The education level of women is also a very significant factor in determining child composition in fertility choices. Women who completed primary level education has a 4.3 percentage point lower chance of son preference than uneducated women. Women who completed higher secondary education has further lower chances, about 8.5 percentage point lower than uneducated women. Consequently, women who have higher education has a 10.2 percentage point lower probability of expressing son preference. Note, higher the women move up the education ladder, the lower is the chance of exhibiting son preferential response. Oddly, women’s exposure to media and their employment status does not significantly explain any difference in the degree of exhibiting son preference among women in urban areas. Even the household wealth is not significant except for the richest quintile, where the women significantly express lower son preference than that of the poorest category, by 4.2 percentage points. The social group has been so categorized such as women of Brahmin caste is the reference category and the logit estimate tells that women who belong to ‘other’ caste categories (other than OBC, SC, ST and Muslims) have a significantly lower likelihood of asserting son preference compared to that of Brahmin women, by 4.6 percentage points.

Son Preference, Origin and Social Interaction among the Migrant Women in Urban India

Table 5 presents the results of the logit estimates on Son Preference for only migrant women staying in urban areas at the time of the survey. Similar to Table 5, Table 6 has explanatory variables listed in the first column and the marginal effects of corresponding variables in column 2.

One of the variables of interest in this section is a binary variable on the place of origin, where migrants who have originated from a village is the reference category. The coefficient on the variable suggests that the probability of expressing son preference is 2.1 percentage points lower among the migrants arriving from a town than those from villages, although the coefficient is not statistically significant. The variable controlling for years of stay in present residence (after migration) has four categories, with less than 5 years of stay, as a base variable. Women who have stayed for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years in the current place of residence after migration have positive marginal coefficients implying a greater probability of exhibiting son preference than the recent migrants however the coefficients are not statistically significant. Nonetheless, women who have stayed for more than 20 years in the migrated place turns out to be about 5.2 percentage points more prone to be biased for sons than women who have recently migrated. Note that the estimate has simultaneously controlled for the age of the respondent. So, the empirical analysis suggests, with long years of stay at the new modern urban society, migrants, irrespective of origin or age, tend to further embrace the traditional perspective regarding the socio-economic worth of sons over daughters and as a consequence, they have higher son preference than they had in their initial years of migration. With more years of stay in a modern and multicultural society, the migrants tend to their traditional roots.

Table 5: Logit estimates of Son Preference for migrant women residing in the urban area, IHDS-II (2011-12)

VARIABLES	Marginal Coefficients
Individual Characteristics	
Age of the respondent	0.004*** (0.001)
<i>Respondent's Education</i> (No Education)	
Primary Education	-0.073** (0.023)
Secondary Education	-0.094*** (0.021)
Higher Education	-0.097** (0.031)
<i>Respondent's exposure to media</i>	
Listens to Radio (No Radio)	0.035** (0.017)
Reads Newspaper (No Newspaper)	-0.033** (0.017)
Watches Television (No Television)	-0.039 (0.037)
Working Status (Unemployed)	-0.023 (0.016)
<i>Wealth Quintile</i> (Poorest)	
Poorer	0.025 (0.052)
Middle	0.017 (0.050)
Richer	0.003 (0.050)
Richest	-0.033 (0.051)
<i>Social Group</i> (Brahmin)	
OBC	-0.003 (0.028)
SC	0.028 (0.030)
ST	-0.008 (0.046)
Muslim	0.072** (0.033)
Others	-0.038 (0.028)
<i>Child Sex Composition</i> (Equal sons and daughters)	
Sons<Daughters	0.051** (0.016)
Sons>Daughters	0.138*** (0.016)
Migration History	
<i>Place of Origin</i> (Village)	
Town	-0.021 (0.014)
<i>Years of migration</i> (1 to 5 years)	
6 to 10 years	0.009 (0.028)
11 to 20 years	0.038 (0.025)
Greater than 21 years	0.052* (0.027)
<i>Social Interactions</i>	
Member of Financial Group (Not member of Financial Group)	-0.006 (0.020)
Member of Religious/Caste Group (Not member of Religious/Caste Group)	0.036* (0.021)
Member of Women Group (Not member of Women Group)	-0.016 (0.019)
Member of Political Group (Not member of Political Group)	-0.001 (0.017)
Observations	2,914

Source: IHDS-II data

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Other than individual and household characteristics, another important factor that the paper tries to examine is the interaction of families with different kinds of organizations. Various category of organisations has been classified into four groups, financial group, religious/caste group, women's group and political group. Not being a member of any of the categories of each particular group is considered to be a reference category for the respective variable. Other than religious/caste groups, all other groups have no significant impact on the son preferential attitude of the migrants, oddly enough not even association to any women's group. Nonetheless, women from migrant families who are associated with either a religious group, a social group, a festival society or a caste association have 3.6 percentage points of higher probability of expressing son preference than migrant women who are not associated with any such religious/caste group.

Other individual characteristics that are exclusively responsible for son preference among the migrant women are similar to women as a whole in urban areas (presented in the previous section), such as the age of the respondent and education. The difference in causality factors among the migrant women and all the women in urban areas is, (1) exposure to media such as listening to the radio and reading the newspaper are significant among the migrant women, though insignificant when all of the urban women are considered. However, among the migrants listening to the radio tend to intensify the son preferential attitude and reading a newspaper reduces son preference. (2) household wealth quintile has no significant effect on the son preferential attitude of migrant women and (3) among the migrants, the Muslim women have 7.2 percentage points more probability of exhibiting son preference than the Brahmin women.

Discussion

Implications of female migration on intra-household gender preferences in fertility preferences or child outcomes have been hardly explored, especially using empirical tools. The objective of the paper was to explore how rural to urban migration modifies migrant women's traditional prejudice for sons over daughters and how well does social participation assist in any behavioural change, which has been barely explored. Using individual-level data on urban migrant women and the urban native women, from the IHDS-II (2011-12) data, the paper examined the degree of adaptation encompassing son preferential attitude.

Women's desire for more sons are significantly different among rural natives, urban natives and urban migrants. Women who out-migrate from villages to an urban area have significantly higher son preference than the urban natives, however, migrants from another town are not significantly different to the urban natives. The migrant's transition in the preferential pattern if mapped over time is evident to get more rigid in the perseverance of their traditional values. The widening of gender preferences in fertility choices between the rural-urban migrants and the urban natives' over time, suggests a sudden spike in affinity towards its traditional roots. The incidence of socio-cultural introversion among first-generation migrants, however, is not uncommon (Inbanathan, 1988; Kabeer, 2000). Further note, urban migrant women with a higher level of education and better exposure to print media are associated with a lower preference for sons. Note the prevalence of uneducated women are higher among migrants, although households are wealthier than the average urban native households.

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Even though social participation is fairly high among the migrants (50 percent of migrants are part of one or the other social or political group), they have been unable to successfully accelerate the process of adaptation among the migrants. Unfortunately, participation in a women's self-help group or a Mahila Mandal as well has no significant impact on the urban migrant women's gender preference for a child. However, participation in religious organisations or involvement in any form of caste association implies a 3.6 percentage point higher chance of believing in the need to have more sons.

India has a diversified culture across states and the socio-cultural adaptation process of internal migrants are not uniform and lack proper investigation. The need for a profound understanding of factors associated with gender preference in child composition is essential to reduce son targeting high fertility rates and hence maternal health. Furthermore, adverse gender binaries in the household, have emerged to be both the reason and the cause of gender differentials in child outcomes. Migrant families, as also suggested by the analysis, are more of concern since migrant families are at greater risk due to the absence of family and social support, and there is evidence of association of higher girl child disadvantage, in nutrition and wellbeing, to exogenous shocks (Behrman and Deolalikar, 1990; Rose, 1999). The findings emphasise the need to target migrant women within urban areas, especially families moving in from rural areas, apart from rural natives through awareness programs like that of the Central Government's flagship programme, *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, highlighting the value of girls.

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