



## TO STUDY THE ONLY GIRL CHILD PARENTS PERCEPTIVE IN BEED AND AURANGABAD DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA

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### Abstract

*Families without sons were sympathized. In rural areas in particular such families often felt hugely inferior and were often disliked (Das Gupta et al., 2003). The previous studies were focused on couples' preference for sons, primarily because of concerns over continuing the families' bloodline and the need to be looked after in their old age. Thus, it becomes necessary to understand the perceptions of couples with only daughters. Such an understanding can give deeper insights about the increasing preference for sons in Indian society.*

**Keywords:** Only girl child parents, Sex Ratio and Old age Security.



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### Introduction

Gender inequality is deep-rooted and is pervasive in several countries. The sex ratio at global level is 101 males to 100 women. Sex ratio at birth (SRB) is now in excess of 110 male births per 100 female births in many regions of Asia. A large surplus of men is building up in China and India the societal implications of which are, as yet, not determined (Guilmoto, 2009). India is the second most populous country. According to census figures, its population in 2011 was 1.2 billion. Census data from 1901 to 2011 show the declining sex ratio in India over the last 110 years. The deficit of females has progressively increased from 972 female per 1000 male in 1901 to 943 per 1000 in the 2011 census (The Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, 2011). The 1981 and 2011 censuses were the only two in which the ratio improved from 931 females to 934 females per 1000 males in 1981, and from 933 females to 940 females per 1000 males in 2011. Data from census 1991 showed the lowest sex ratio in Indian census history at just 929 females per 1000 males. The sex ratio recorded in 2011 was the highest since the census of 1961 but lower than that recorded in the 1951 census. However, child sex ratio the number of female children aged 0 – 6 years for 1000 male children remains

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an area of serious concern. From 914 girls per 1000 boys, it improved only marginally to 927 in the 2011 census.

### **Review of Literature:**

#### **History of female foeticide in India**

Caste-specific information in British records about female infanticide and present data on sex ratios for the same regions clearly show how long this practice has existed in certain communities (The Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India). The first reference to female infanticide among Jats in Punjab was found in an 1857 publication. Census data from the colonial period suggests that the Jats in Punjab had been practicing female infanticide for over 150 years. For the *lewa patidars* and *kanbis* of central Gujarat, the first mention of low female sex ratios goes back to 1847. These records show how deep-rooted the practice female foeticide is in India. Caste wise enumeration of female foeticide censuses was discontinued after independence (Tiwari, M. (2019)).

#### **Neglect of Girl Child**

In India today, the child mortality of girls exceeds that of boys by 43 percent. In the Northern states, this difference is 74%. Premi (2001) found high gender differentials in age-specific death rate (ASDR) in children aged 0 – 4 years. In the light of these findings, it is only to be expected that the child sex ratio in India would decline, especially in the Northern and north-western states of India. Excessive child mortality for girls (1 – 4 years) was more prevalent in the north of the country; but it is also high in the eastern and central regions of India (Arnold et al. 1998). In low son preference states, mortality rates of girl children are low. The probability of girls with older brothers having a higher mortality rate is more than those without brother (Arnold et al., 2002).

#### **Views on Families without Son**

Traditionally, families without sons were regarded as objects of pity. In rural areas, such families were often made to feel inferior and were even ostracised. Till recently, it was believed that families without sons were as good as childless because their family lineage could not continue. Such families would often desperately seek a son-in-law who would assume the role of a son (Das Gupta et al., 2003).

#### **Families Having Only Girl Child:**

Past studies have focused on the neglect of the girl child in the family, increasing girl infant mortality, below six-years mortality and the lower status of the girl child in the family. No study has been done on the perspectives couples who have only girl child the family. The

government of India introduced various incentive schemes to address the issue of “missing girl children”. The schemes include support for educating the daughter if she is the only child in the family. *Education is free in classes VI to XII in schools* affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The University Grants Commission (UGC) provides post-graduate scholarships for girls who are the only children in their families (The Hindu Friday, Sep 23, 2005). These initiatives are necessary and laudable. However, perceptions of parents With only one child, a daughter is not understood.

### **Problem Statement:**

The earlier studies the findings were focused on couples’ preference for sons, primarily because of concerns over continuing the families’ bloodline and the need to be looked after in their old age. Thus, it becomes necessary to understand the perceptions of couples with only daughters. Such an understanding can give deeper insights about the increasing preference for sons in Indian society. Not much is known about the perceptions of parents whose only child is a girl and who face peer pressures and are concerned about their security during old age.

### **Objective:**

The border objective of study is the perspectives of couples who have only girl children in Beed and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra.

### **Data Source:**

The primary data was collected for study from Beed and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra. Ashti and Pato blocks from Beed district and Sillod and Soyegaon block from Aurangabad districts selected for study area. The husband is respondent for the study sample. A sterilized and not sterilized couple whose younger child is between 8 to 10 years old, constitutes sample of the study. Sixty quantitative conducted to understand their perceptives. The child sex ratio is on a declining trend in Beed and Aurangabad districts. The fact that there are very few daughters only families in the two study districts. The parents identified for the survey were also hesitant to be interviewed because having only girl child.

### **Methodology:**

The analysis of the study done with the help of descriptive statistical method. SPSS software use for study analysis. The cross-tabulation method is use for understanding only girl child parents’ perspective.

**Table 1: Respondent Families with only girl children in Beed and Aurangabad districts**

<b>Table 1 Respondent Families with only girl children in Beed and Aurangabad districts</b>	
Block	N
Ashti	16
Patod	14
Sillod	15
Soyegaon	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

Table 1 shows that the number of couples/families with only daughters is almost equal in all the four blocks. It was mentioned earlier there are very few daughters-only families in the two study districts is reflection of this trend. The parents identified for the survey were also hesitant to be interviewed.

**Table 2: Block wise distribution of daughters-only parents in Beed and Aurangabad**  
**Table**

<b>Table 2. Block wise distribution of daughters-only parents in Beed and Aurangabad.</b>					
		Ashti	Patod	Sillod	Soyegaon
Caste of respondent	SC	3	7	3	
	ST	1	1	5	2
	OBC	6	3	1	10
	Open	6	3	6	3
Type of Locality	Urban	16		15	
	Rural		14		15
Type of family	Nuclear	13	8	11	8
	Joint	3	6	4	7
Husband Education	uneducated				
	primary	1			3
	higher secondary	13	13	11	11
	graduation	2	1	4	1
	post-graduation				
Husband Occupation	Farmer	2	7		2
	Gov. Job		2	4	
	Agri & Non Agri Labour	2		3	4
	Private job	11	4	4	5
	Business & Shop	1	1	4	4
0-5000		8			

Family Monthly Income	5001-10000	6	4	7	11
	10001-15000	2	2		3
	15001-20000		5	4	
	More than 20001		3	4	1
Household having agricultural land	Yes	15	13	7	9
	No	1	1	8	6
Total		16	14	15	15

The segregation of daughters-only sample according the socio-economic profiles of the respondent is shown in Table 2. Soyegaon block is predominantly tribal and hence there is less representation from other caste groups.

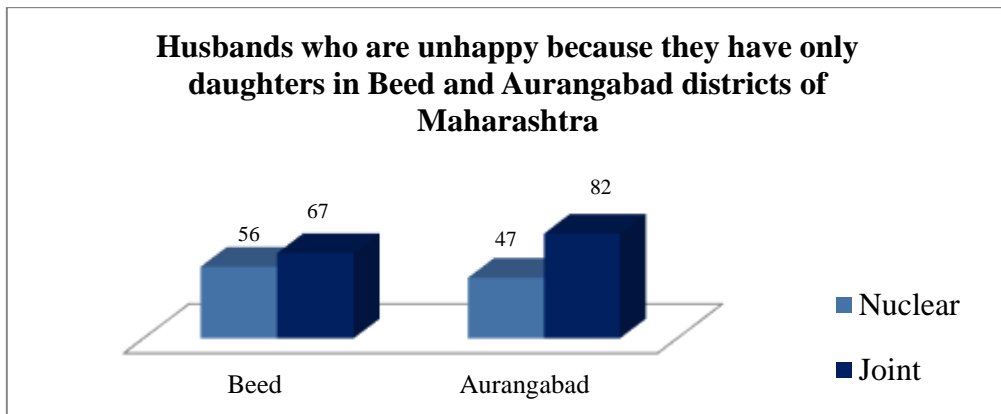
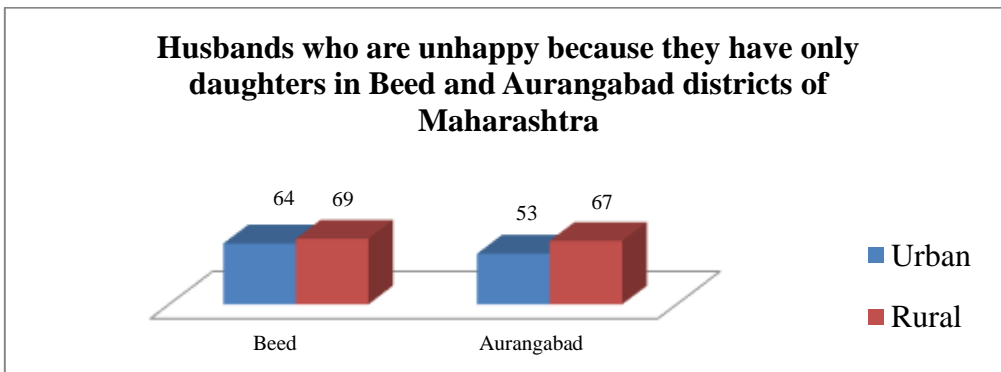
**Table 3: shows the spread of unhappiness or dissatisfaction of the husbands in the survey across various socio-economic characteristics.**

**Table 6.3. Husbands who are unhappy because they have only daughters.**

Total	Beed		Aurangabad		
	N	%	N	%	
		20		18	
Caste	SC	8	80.0	3	100.0
	ST	2	100.0	2	28.6
	OBC	5	55.6	7	63.6
	Open	5	55.6	6	66.7
Type of Locality	Urban	11	68.8	8	53.3
	Rural	9	64.3	10	66.7
Family Type	Nuclear	14	66.7	9	47.4
	Joint	6	66.7	9	81.8
Husband's Education	uneducated	0	0.0	0	0.0
	primary	0	0.0	2	66.7
	higher secondary	17	65.4	15	68.2
	graduation	3	100.0	1	20.0
	post-graduation	0	0.0	0	0.0
Husband's Occupation	Farmer	6	66.7	1	50.0
	Gov. Job	1	50.0	0	0.0
	Agri & Non Agri Labour	1	50.0	6	85.7
	Private job	12	80.0	8	88.9
	Business & Shop	0	0.0	3	37.5

**Table 6.3. Husbands who are unhappy because they have only daughters.**

Total	Beed		Aurangabad		
	N	%	N	%	
	20		18		
Family's Monthly Income	0-5000	0	0.0	0	0.0
	5001-10000	9	75.0	11	61.1
	10001-15000	7	87.5	3	100.0
	15001-20000	1	14.3	3	75.0
	More than 20001	3	100.0	1	20.0
Having agricultural land	Yes	18	64.3	10	62.5
	No	2	100.0	8	57.1



It is seen that there is only a small difference between the two districts. All ST husbands in Beed were unhappy. In Aurangabad, dissatisfaction was the highest among the SC. In comparison, dissatisfaction was less among the OBC and OPEN category husband in Beed, and the least among the ST husband in Aurangabad. The difference seen in the districts between SC and ST husbands. The SC population has domination in Beed district their SC husband is

happier and ST population has domination in Aurangabad their ST husband is happier. There was no significant difference between rural and urban blocks in the husband’s dissatisfaction over not having sons. The concern was over not having a son and the place of residence did not play any role in the husbands’ perceptions. Among the husbands it was observed that unhappiness with family size increases with age. In the case of women (the wives), the reverse was true they seemed less unhappy as they grew older. Family structure plays a crucial role in influencing attitudes.

As the Table 3 shows, unhappiness among the husband was more prevalent in joint families (81.8%) than in those from nuclear ones (47.8%) in Aurangabad. This difference is likely because, unlike in joint families, there is less pressure on husband in nuclear families to have male children. The study also found that those from the farming, agricultural and non-agricultural occupations were more unhappy than those working in government and private sector jobs. It is not that the latter group were entirely satisfied but their occupations and income were more stable and hence they did not regard the absence of a male child as a burden. The happiness is started at the stage of child birth. Those parents have not achieved desired sex composition obviously they were unhappy. To fulfil the need for a son, most couples increased the size of their families. It was in the families with only girl children that unhappiness and dissatisfaction was the most. While the husband is unhappy at not having got a son, the wife is unhappy because she considers herself and her daughter as burden on her family.

**Table 4: Husbands who are unhappy because of the lack of security in their old age (because of not having sons)**

<b>Table 4. Husbands who are unhappy because of the lack of security in their old age (because of not having sons)</b>					
		N	%	N	%
Total		17		16	
Caste	SC	6	75.0	3	100.0
	ST	2	100.0	1	50.0
	OBC	4	80.0	6	85.7
	Open	5	100.0	6	100.0
Type of Locality	Urban	11	100.0	8	100.0
	Rural	6	66.7	8	80.0
Type of family	Nuclear	14	100.0	9	100.0
	Joint	3	50.0	7	77.8
Husband’s Education	uneducated	0	0.0	0	0.0
	primary	0	0.0	2	100.0

	higher secondary	14	82.4	13	86.7
	graduation	3	100.0	1	100.0
	post-graduation	0	0.0	0	0.0
Husband's Occupation	Farmer	6	100.0	1	100.0
	Gov. Job	1	100.0	0	0.0
	Agri & Non Agri Labour	1	100.0	6	100.0
	Private job	9	75.0	6	75.0
	Business & Shop	0	0.0	3	100.0
		0-5000	0	0.0	0
Family's Monthly Income	5001-10000	9	100.0	11	100.0
	10001-15000	6	85.7	2	66.7
	15001-20000	1	100.0	3	100.0
	More than 20001	1	33.3	0	0.0
		Yes	16	88.9	10
Owning agricultural land	No	1	50.0	6	75.0
	6.1-20	0	0.0	0	0.0

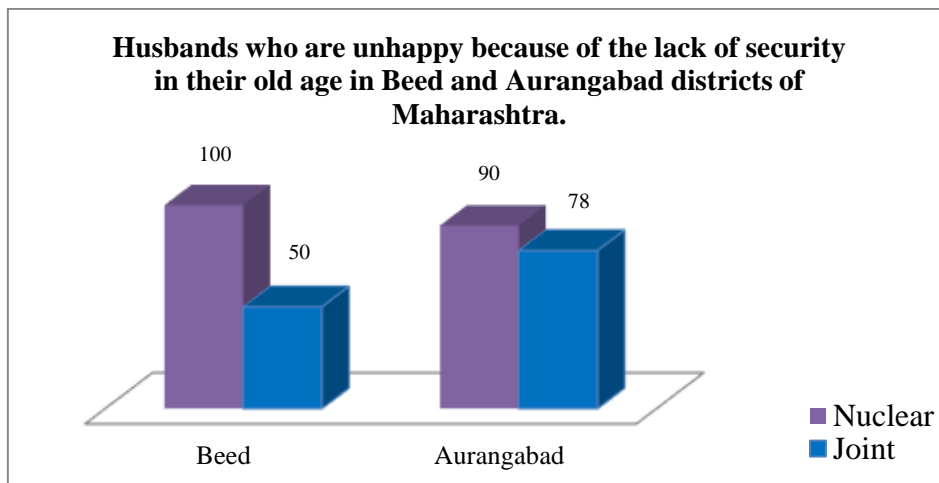


Table 4 shows that, besides the unhappiness at having only daughters, the families had concerns over security and care during their old age if there were no sons. It is seen that all the husband from nuclear families in the survey were more worried because they did not have sons. There was less concern among rural couples because most of them lived in joint families and thus, there would be a male member who would ensure care and security if there were no sons. Couples from working class families were less worried than those from agricultural and non-



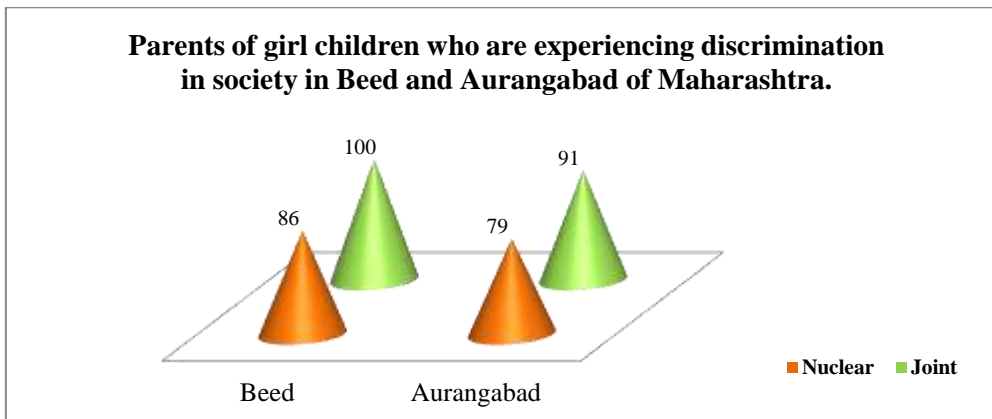
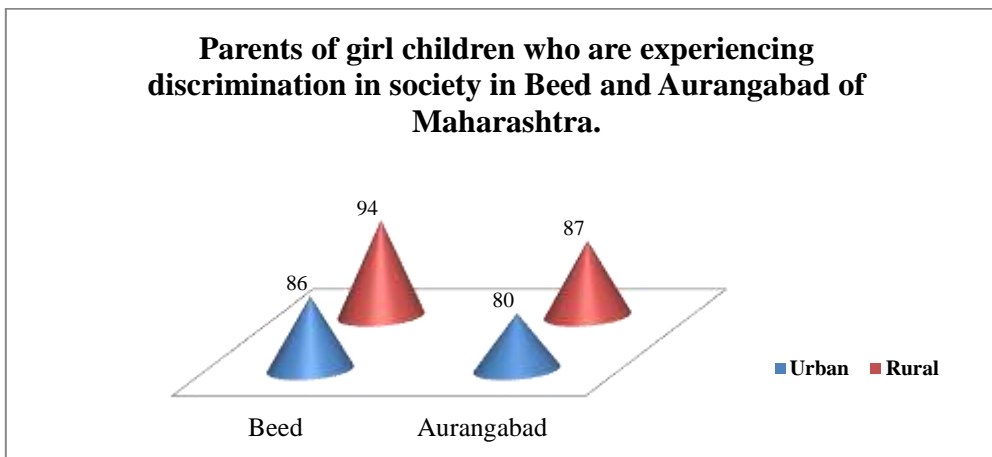
agricultural occupations because there was some degree of financial security in their occupations.

The responses show persistence of the belief that it is only the responsibility of the son to look after his parents and thus, having a son is a necessity. This view is held even in families that believe that there is no difference between boys and girls. Everyone expects that they will be looked after in their old age and thus, they must have a son. Couples without sons will find it very difficult to live on their own without support. In fact, they may even face problems in getting proper nutrition. Such problems are more common in rural areas and small towns. Living alone in old age is a challenge, especially when there are health concerns and there is no financial support. It is for this reason that parents expect to be cared for by their children, especially the sons. For those who have only daughters, the couples feel that they cannot have such expectations: it is up to their daughters, and their families, to provide the care that is needed. Further, it is not common in Indian society that a daughter looks after her parents.

**Table 5: Shows the prevalence of discrimination against couples who have only daughters.**

<b>Table 5. Parents of female children who are experiencing discrimination in society in Beed and Aurangabad of Maharashtra.</b>					
		N	%	N	%
Total		27		25	
Caste	SC	10	100.0	3	100.0
	ST	2	100.0	7	100.0
	OBC	9	100.0	8	72.7
	Open	6	66.7	7	77.8
Type of Locality	Urban	15	93.8	12	80.0
	Rural	12	85.7	13	86.7
Type of family	Nuclear	18	85.7	15	78.9
	Joint	9	100.0	10	90.9
Husband's Education	Uneducated	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Primary	0	0.0	2	66.7
	Higher Secondary	24	92.3	18	81.8
	Graduate	3	100.0	5	100.0
	Post-graduate	0	0.0	0	0.0
Husband's Occupation	Farmer	7	77.8	1	50.0
	Gov. Job	2	100.0	4	100.0

	Agri & Non Agri Labour	1	50.0	6	85.7
	Private job	15	100.0	9	100.0
	Business & Shop	2	100.0	5	62.5
Family Income	0-5000	0	0.0	0	0.0
	5001-10000	11	91.7	13	72.2
	10001-15000	8	100.0	3	100.0
	15001-20000	5	71.4	4	100.0
	More than 20001	3	100.0	5	100.0
Having Agricultural land	Yes	25	89.3	11	68.8
	No	2	100.0	14	100.0



Discrimination begins in the family. The husband's parents blame their daughter-in-law for not giving birth to a son. The teasing progresses to abuse, often verbal but sometimes even physical. Even the husband is not spared. What use is a man if he cannot have a son to continue the family's bloodline? Harassment of the husband and discrimination is rare, but it is not unknown. Often, the husband is pressured to marry again. The discriminations does not end with the household; it extends to other relations, friends and the larger community. Transfer

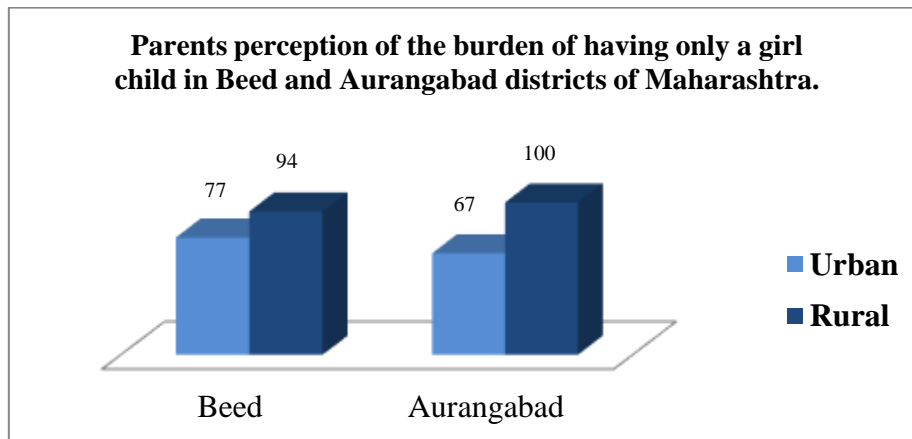
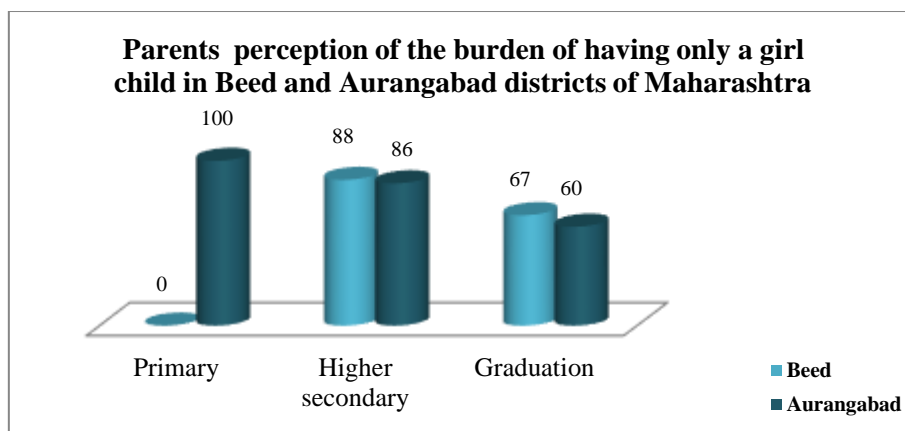
of property is a major cause of anxiety in families that do not have male children. Although the law provides for equal rights to property by the sons and daughters, the reality is that it is not effectively implemented. It is the son who inherits his parents' property and wealth. It is only when there is no male heir that the daughter inherits her parents' wealth. Eventually, her husband will also have a claim on this property. Therefore, to many couples, paying a doctor to abort a pregnancy is preferable to having a son. However, the constant taunts over not bearing a son affects the women psychologically and over time, they lose their optimism and self-confidence. They face some kind of fall-back in the life and this fall-back feeling always stay behind of everybody to them.

**Table 6: Parents' perception of the burden of having only a girl child in Beed and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra.**

<b>Table 6.7. Parents' perception of the burden of having only a girl child in Beed and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra.</b>					
		N	%	N	%
Total		26		25	row %
Caste	SC	10	100.0	3	100.0
	ST	2	100.0	5	71.4
	OBC	9	100.0	10	90.9
	Open	5	55.6	7	77.8
Type of Locality	Urban	15	93.8	10	66.7
	Rural	11	78.6	15	100.0
Type of family	Nuclear	17	81.0	14	73.7
	Joint	9	100.0	11	100.0
Husband's Education	Uneducated	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Primary	0	0.0	3	100.0
	Higher Secondary	23	88.5	19	86.4
	Graduate	3	66.5	3	60.0
	Post-Graduate	0	0.0	0	0.0
Husband's Occupation	Farmer	6	66.7	2	100.0
	Gov. Job	2	100.0	2	50.0
	Agri & Non Agri Labour	1	50.0	7	100.0
	Private job	15	100.0	9	100.0
	Business & Shop	2	100.0	5	62.5
Family's Monthly Income	0-5000	0	0.0	0	0.0
	5001-10000	11	91.7	15	83.3

**Table 6.7. Parents' perception of the burden of having only a girl child in Beed and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra.**

Total		N	%	N	%
			26		25
	10001-15000	8	100.0	3	100.0
	15001-20000	4	57.1	4	100.0
	More than 20001	3	100.0	3	60.0
Having Agricultural land	Yes	24	85.7	13	81.3
	No	2	100.0	12	85.7

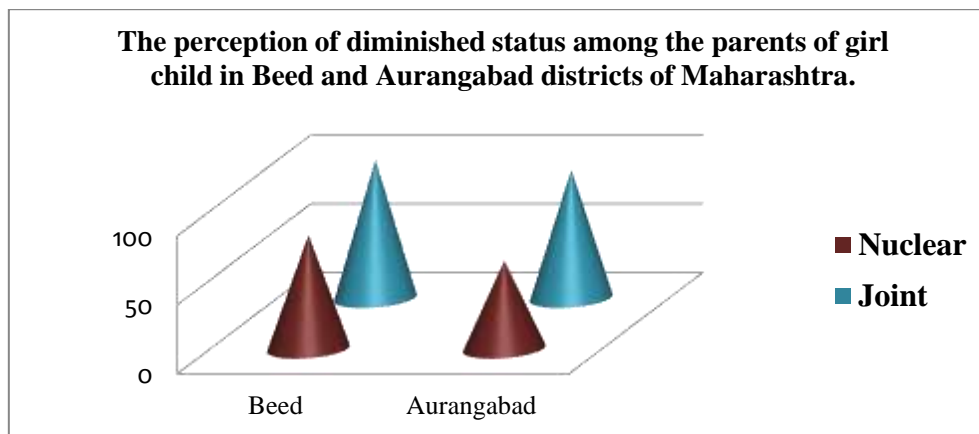
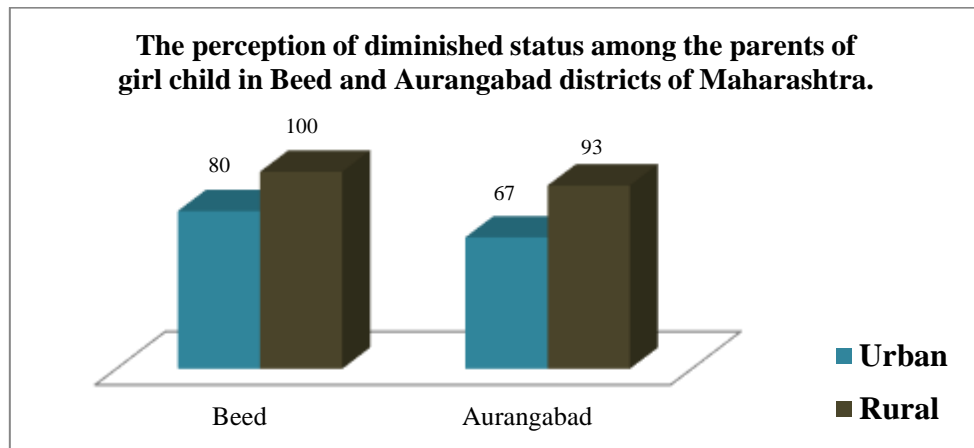


It can be seen in Table 6. that the perception of girl children as a burden on the family is relatively less in the open caste category. A higher percentage of respondent couples in Beed than Aurangabad seen girls as a burden. The table also shows that such a perception is more widespread in rural areas than urban ones. Joint families tend to feel that girls are burdens to a greater extent than nuclear families. Education has a positive impact with higher education levels, the perception of girls as burdens reduced significantly. Except government worker all other occupational worker has perceived girl child as burden in the family. Higher family

income tend to regard their daughters as less of a burden than do lower family income. The possession of assets also helps as is seen that a higher proportion of those having agricultural land felt that their daughters were not a burden than those who were landless. This is primarily because the landless do not earn much and their income is irregular.

**Table 7: The perception of diminished status among the husbands in Beed and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra.**

		N	%	N	%
Total		23		20	
Caste	SC	10	100.0	3	100.0
	ST	2	100.0	5	100.0
	OBC	6	66.7	8	80.0
	Open	5	100.0	4	57.1
Type of Locality	Urban	12	80.0	10	100.0
	Rural	11	100.0	10	66.7
Type of family	Nuclear	14	82.4	13	92.9
	Joint	9	100.0	7	63.6
Husband's Education	Uneducated	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Primary	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Higher Secondary	20	87.0	17	89.5
	graduation	3	100.0	3	100.0
	Post-graduation	0	0.0	0	0.0
Husband's Occupation	Farmer	6	100.0	2	100.0
	Govt Job	2	100.0	2	100.0
	Agri & Non Agri Labour	1	100.0	3	42.9
	Private job	12	80.0	8	88.9
	Business & Shop	2	100.0	5	100.0
Family's Monthly Income	0-5000	0	0.0	0	0.0
	5001-10000	9	81.8	10	66.7
	10001-15000	7	87.5	3	100.0
	15001-20000	4	100.0	4	100.0
	More than 20001	3	100.0	3	100.0
Having Agricultural land	Yes	21	87.5	8	61.5
	No	2	100.0	12	100.0



Overall, it is seen that more husbands in Beed than Aurangabad feel a loss of status because of having only daughter (or daughters). In Beed, except in the OBC category, all the husband from all other caste groups had this feeling. In Aurangabad, the feeling of diminished social status was observed only among the SC and ST husband, while it was not seen among the open and OBC categories. The feeling of low social status was seen in all the SC and ST respondents from both districts. With increasing acceptance of two-child norms, the feeling of inadequacy becomes more intense when they compare themselves with husband from other caste groups who have sons.

Place of residence does not have a significant influence in the husband's perceptions. The percentage of husband from urban areas, who feel that their social status has diminished is slightly less than those from the rural areas. However, on comparison of the two districts, a higher proportion of urban respondents from Beed than Aurangabad had the feeling that their social status was lowered. In the rural areas all respondents held this view. One explanation for this may lie in the fact that in rural areas, social connections are stronger, and people often know each other well. Thus, discussions and comparisons on such issues are unavoidable.

Nuclear families tend to feel less about the absence of a male child as compared with joint families. There is not much family pressure on the husbands to have sons. But it is not the same in joint families. The feeling of lowered social status is made worse by taunts by the family and the pressure to have another child who, hopefully, would be a son. The feeling of reduced status becomes less with rising income. However, parents of girl children are more conscious about their status and hence are more willing to terminate pregnancies in case the foetus is not of the desired sex. A higher percentage of respondents who own agricultural land in Beed (87.5%) as compared to Aurangabad (61.5%) felt that their status was reduced because they did not have a son. All of those who did not own any land also felt a diminished sense of social status.

### **Conclusion**

Most respondents who have only daughters feel that their lives have been affected negatively. They also receive less respect in society as compared to couples with sons. Within their families, they are under pressure to have another child who would, hopefully, be a son. The absence of sons in the family also strained relations between husband and wife. Verbal and physical abuse of the wife have been reported. For the unfortunate girl child, she faces an uncertain future because her parents will not invest in educating her to lead a productive life. The parents' only concern is to get her married as early as possible. The government has started some of scheme for only girl child, especially for the education but this scheme is not much active in gross route level. Therefore, girl education is not done proper of only girl child parents. The future of only girl child parent is not very bright is because parent not much concern about their girl child. Our society can play very significant role in this salutation. Our study finding show that only girl child parents is facing discrimination in the society because of having only girl. The society should stop this discrimination and government also finish this misbehaviour. The only girl child parents accept the present reality and enjoy their life and give proper nourishment to the girl child.

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