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## Extent of pressure women in Nepal face during pregnancy to ensure the birth of a son: Findings from a longitudinal study

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In Nepal, patriarchal values often force women to take all possible measures to ensure that their next-born child is a son. This paper is based from a longitudinal study conducted by the authors in 2016-17 among 360 pregnant women attending routine antenatal clinics (ANC) at public sector clinics. It discusses the “stage” during a woman’s pregnancy where discriminatory norms and practice is introduced to ensure the birth of a son and how these practices affect the mother’s life and the survival and development of a girl child. Pregnant women were interviewed four times; at 4-6 months’ gestation; 8-9 month; one week post-partum, and 45 days post-partum. We performed statistical tests (Chi-square tests and Fisher Exact tests) for three sets of independent variables viz., women’s parity (number of surviving children), women’s education and sex composition of surviving child/children of the women, to examine the observed differences on the desired sex of the currently pregnancy. The finds shows, desire for a son from current pregnancy was very high among women having two or more daughters (89%), women who had no son (84%) and women with just one daughter (73%) 9(P<0.001). Comparatively, women who had only a daughter or two or more daughters but no son from their previous pregnancies were relatively under greater pressure to bear a son. Son preference and the practice of gender biased sex selection and discrimination of girl infants will continue to persist unabated in Nepal unless there are coordinated and consolidated efforts to safeguard the rights of the girl child and introduce social and economic measures such as conditional case transfer schemes to ensure that every girl child born in our society are valued.

### Biography

Anand Tamang holds M.Phil Degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (1980). He is the founder Director of the Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Kathmandu, Nepal. He has over 36 years of professional research experience in the field of population, reproductive and sexual health and rights, including abortion and gender based violence. He has 12 published articles as the lead author. He has served as Steering Committee/Thematic Panel member for World Health Organization, Geneva; SEARO, New Delhi; Asia Safe Abortion Partners; Asian Population Association and as National Coordinator for Girls Not Brides, Nepal. Mr Tamang has also served as a reviewer of manuscripts submitted to international peer-reviewed journals.

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