

Business Standard, 17 May 2016

77 percent Indian parents expect to live with sons in old age (Special to IANS)

Almost 77 percent of Indian parents expect to live with their sons in old age while seven percent want to live with their daughters, according to the [India](#) Human Development Survey (IHDS), conducted jointly by researchers from University of Maryland and National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi.

These are the findings from the IHDS-2 (2011-12) data-set, covering a representative sample of 41,554 households across 33 states and union territories in both rural and urban areas.

In Haryana, the state with India's lowest child sex ratio (834 females per 1,000 males), 90 percent of respondents said they would prefer to live with their sons in old age rather than their daughters.

Maharashtra was next, with 85 percent of parents saying they expected support from sons.

Sons vs daughters: Many Indians want at least one daughter

While 73 percent of the people surveyed said they should ideally have one daughter, 11 percent said they should ideally have two daughters.

While as many as 60 percent said they ideally wanted one son, 26 percent said they wanted two sons.

While more people (73 percent) want at least one daughter, when asked preferences for an extra child, only six said they wanted daughters.

The survey was based on indirect questions to test people's attitudes. Some questions asked: How many sons or daughters would they ideally prefer to have? If they were to have an extra child, what sex would they prefer?

IndiaSpend plotted the preference for sons as the extra child with the sex ratio across Indian states.

Maharashtra has a low child sex ratio (894 females per 1,000 males) and a high preference for a son (39 percent) for an extra child.

Sons as support for the declining years

The main reason Indian parents prefer sons is that Indians expect to depend on them in their old age.

More than three-fourths (77 percent) of the respondents said they expect to live with their sons when old. Only 16 percent Indians said they would consider living with their daughters.

States in the south see higher percentages than the national average.

Tripura has the highest percentage of parents (72 percent) preferring to live with daughters in their old age, followed by Tamil Nadu (17 percent).

The perception that parents can live with daughters has improved over the last seven years: Asked if they would consider living with daughters, 14 percent said yes during a survey in 2004-05; 16 percent said yes in 2011-12.

Can't ask daughters for money

As many as 74 percent of Indians expect sons to support them financially during old age. Only 18 percent said they may consider taking money from daughters in old age.

(In arrangement with IndiaSpend.org, a data-driven, non-profit, public interest journalism platform, with which Prachi Salve and Saumya Tiwari are analysts. The views expressed are those of IndiaSpend. The authors can be contacted at respond@indiaspend.org)

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