Supplementary File 2 - Gender-based discrimination and son preference in Punjabi-Canadian families: a community-based participatory qualitative research study.

Transcripts

MOTHER FOCUS GROUP

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<td>a)</td>
<td>How long have you been married?</td>
<td>-Came to Canada at age 21 (between 1995-2000*)</td>
<td>-From India</td>
<td>-20 month old daughter</td>
<td>-Came between 1995-2000*</td>
<td>-16 year old son and 9 year old D</td>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>How many children do you have? (birth order and sex of children)</td>
<td>-has an 18 yo son and 17 yo daughter</td>
<td>-5.5 yo daughter</td>
<td>-20 month old daughter</td>
<td>-Has 2 girls and 1 boy</td>
<td>-10 year old D, 7 yo son</td>
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<td>c)</td>
<td>Are you planning to have additional children? Why?</td>
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<td>-Came to Canada between 2005-2010*</td>
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<td>d)</td>
<td>Where is your family from in India? (rural vs. urban setting)</td>
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<td>Has an older sister and younger brother (hinted at the fact that her family had a son after having two daughters)</td>
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<td>e)</td>
<td>How long have you lived in Canada?</td>
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<td>-people (in-laws) told her having a baby will solve her marital problems because if she has a kid, she won’t want to leave</td>
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<td>-after getting married, having kids was the next step “as a family, you have to experience all different relationships”</td>
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1. Why are you / why did you decide to have children?
-Did you always want to have children?
-Why do you want children now?
-Why do you want to keep having children?

- "I do not regret having kids. I’m not a perfect mother or wife. When my kids happened, it just happened.”
- "My husband is the youngest of 3 girls so there was pressure. My parents didn’t prepare me for marriage. I had two kids by 25. I was not mentally prepared or financially stable. I was naive."
- "I thought about how many kids I wanted" - the relationship between our moms and our daughters is very different. We were scared of our mothers. Our daughters are comfortable with us.

Mother Focus Group

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### 2. To what extent are / were family members involved in family planning?

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<td>even know she was pregnant</td>
<td><strong>&quot;I didn’t have the time to talk to my husband, it happened so fast. I had a stroke of luck, son first and daughter next, so it was good&quot;</strong></td>
<td><strong>-did not feel pressure regarding gender (more focused on not caring about what others had to say about her baby’s gender)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-she was constantly asked by in laws if she knew the gender of her baby and she always said no</strong></td>
<td><strong>-no major comments were made when her first D was born</strong></td>
<td><strong>-her FIL said one is not enough and that she needs to have more</strong></td>
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**-she was unaware she was pregnant because she was ‘naive’**

**-was uncomfortable with her husband, can’t have candid conversations about her body with her affly**

**-uncomfortable with challenging her family (in laws)**

"my mom portrays that she’s really modern but deep down she’s old fashioned. My dad always jokes that there wasn’t a single"

**-checked the gender in order to prepare herself and do shopping etc. before the baby arrived**

**-ultrasound technician was not allowed to tell the sex of the baby to her so this angered the in laws even more**

**-mainly husband -MIL gave input; in laws wanted both kids to be boys**

"It would be nice to have two boys"

"There was no direct pressure, but there was social impact"

"I told myself if i have two D, I’ll stop there because everyone will think the reason iam trying for the third time is to have a boy"

"One son to the family is considered a miracle baby"
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<td></td>
<td>place in Punjab where she hasn’t gone to pray for a grandson”</td>
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<td>3. Is there one particular time that you remember having a conversation about family planning?</td>
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| 4. What is your understanding of Lohri?  
-Did you have a Lohri for your son?  
-How has this practice changed? |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| -had lohri for D but not for son  
-went to shop for so much stuff, was happy |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| “It’s for boys. Evne people who do it for girls do it because of pressure.  
“We did it for our son, should also do it for our D” |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| -believes its still for boys, those who do it for D so it doesn’t look like they care |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Have you heard of ”The Pink Ladoo Project” and “Lohri for Her”?  
-has heard of pink ladoo  
-does not think it’s equality |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| -has an issue with it...why pink ladoo for a girl? You are still giving the same message [of differentiation]  
“I think it still shows a difference, why pink & yellow? Why not just yellow ladoos?” |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| “We appreciate girls but we need boys” |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. Each of you has at least one daughter, how did you feel when you found out you were having her? |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| “Wasn’t aware of the social reality of how babies would be |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| “I was feeling that i got what i asked for from God” |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| “When it comes to your first daughter, no one says anything but when its about the second |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| -said people are very happy to have a girl after a boy |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| -she said family demanded for 2 boys. |   |   |   |   |   |   |
7. How did your family react when they found out you were having a daughter?

8. Is there a preference for sons in the community?
- Why does it exist?
- When did you first become aware?
- What is your opinion about son preference?
- Are daughters treated differently?
- When is having a son more important?

9. To your knowledge, are there specific ways in which families within the community try to have sons (over daughters)?
- Are families with no sons treated differently?
- How are sons preferred over daughters?
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<td>10. To what extent should son preference change in the community?</td>
<td>- we have to focus on teaching our children there is no difference</td>
<td>“To one extent you have to fix the elders (in laws), they’ll live with you for at least 10-20 years. Your kids get influenced by them too.”</td>
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<td>“We have to accept this is a problem in our community”</td>
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<td>11. What is the most important thing that should/should not be done or said to create change about gender equity in Punjabi families?</td>
<td>“We are not proactive” “Awareness is the concrete step” “If we are living together we need to be on the same page” “Can’t fix my husband so let me fix my son”</td>
<td>“You need to address the issue with older generation because kids are still influenced by other people”</td>
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<td>“We need to have those discussions. More trainings available for when husbands feel trapped but don’t know how to talk about it.”</td>
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<td>12. Of all these suggestions, with a show of hands, which one do you think would be most successful?</td>
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<td>13. The research team is thinking of developing a brochure for the community which will incorporate your suggestions with the goal of changing the community’s mind about son preference.</td>
<td>“Whoever wants to learn, won’t do so by reading something” “Go to open houses at schools and reach families”</td>
<td>“Don’t focus on the MILs, focus on the husbands, they give these people power” -go to parks</td>
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<td>“Go to parks, where the grandmas go”</td>
<td>“Discussions are effective. Training is needed. Husbands feel trapped and don’t know how to communicate”</td>
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Mother Focus Group
14. Anything else to add?

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f) How long have you been married?  
-20 yo boy  
-15 yo girl

g) How many children do you have? (birth order and sex of children)  
-13 yo boy  
-9 yo girl

h) Are you planning to have additional children? Why?  
-13 yo girl  
-7 yo boy

i) Where is your family from in India? (rural vs. urban setting)  
-3 daughters  
-unexpected first pregnancy  
lack of communication with husband

j) How long have you lived in Canada?  
-in laws wanted boys  
(made her eat stuff to have boys and did prayers)

### 3. Why are you / why did you decide to have children?  
-Did you always want to have children?  
-Why do you want children now?  
-Why do you want to keep having children?

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- kids are more fun  
-Wanted to experience what our parents had when building a family  
“A little bit of pressure from the family is there”  
“When I got married, my daughter was not planned. I was married in October and had my baby in July”  
-says she is very naive and wants her daughter to  
-had kids due to expectations  
-was married in India and wanted to wait to have kids until she came to Canada 1 year later in laws started saying “why aren’t you having kids yet?”

-her daughter is very comfortable with her

**Mother Focus Group**
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<td>understand the reality of what marriage is -thinks girls should be careful regarding having children “There should be no rush. It should be planned” -In India, had baby. Mom stressed because sister-in-law had girls -Ultrasound happened doctor said “Don’t worry, it’s a good thing”. What she meant was the baby was a boy, chill but she did not have that relationship with her mother</td>
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<td>4. To what extent are / were family members involved in family planning?</td>
<td>-in laws wanted a boy “It was my in laws’ wish but no one said anything directly” -told her MIL closer to her due date that she thought it would be a girl and the MIL told her “no no, why are you thinking like this?” -in laws so happy to see a boy (their older son had all girls) -when a boy arrived, everyone was relieved -her mother told her, if you have a son, you’ll be well treated in your in laws’ house -never comforatable with family planning -first pregnancy was difficult, baby had complications -when talks about the 2nd baby happened, more planning happened -when she had a daughter, she felt pressure and disappointment &quot;It just happened. My daughter was a miracle baby, we never had any issues with boy or girl&quot; -husband wanted a healthy baby, didn’t care about gender</td>
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<td>Shared her story about having 2 daughters and was given medication by mother-in-law to have a son When she got pregnant for the third time, “my husband planned to send me to India. He used the excuse that he could not afford to keep me</td>
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Mother Focus Group
3. Is there one particular time that you remember having a conversation about family planning?

4. What is your understanding of Lohri?
   - Did you have a Lohri for your son?
   - How has this practice changed?

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<td>-they were alone in Canada when they had their first girl</td>
<td>and our two girls with him</td>
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<td>They (in-laws) wanted her to have an abortion in India</td>
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<td>&quot;my husband never directly said it to me but when I would hear things from other, I knew he wanted it&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I had my third daughter and it was not a good time for me&quot;</td>
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<td>She took care of her 2 older daughters alone for 7 years. At the moment, her husband doesn't live with her or her daughters</td>
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<td>She got emotional during the focus group</td>
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Mother Focus Group
5. Have you heard of “The Pink Ladoo Project” and “Lohri for Her”?

7. Each of you has at least one daughter, how did you feel when you found out you were having her?
   - Would you feel differently if you had a grandson instead?

   - My husband was very happy and when he told my MIL she wasn’t very happy
   - Husband loves her [daughter] more than my son
   - In laws weren’t happy
   - I was very happy! She was a miracle baby.
   - I have two daughters. My MIL wanted sons for me. She made me eat a lot of medication. My family was concerned
   - My husband was going to send me back to India for tests and abortion if I was going to have a girl. I lived away from my husband for 7 years

7. How did your family react when they found out you were having a daughter?

8. Is there a preference for sons in the community?
   - Why does it exist?
   - When did you first become aware?
   - What is your opinion about son preference?
   - Are daughters treated differently?
   - When is having a son more

   - Always knew boys got special treatment - specifically through the celebration

   - I never felt anything like that at my parents house but there was one lady who always told me that “the man is
   - Our society still thinks that sons will take care of us in old age
   - Educated family, her family in many ways equal and in may ways not
   - But daughters are those who continue the generation
   - “Our people love the whole concept of saying he’s so and so’s son”
   - There are many sons who don’t care about their parents but even

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<td>neighbourhood and had a party”</td>
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Mother Focus Group
| important? | always right, you need to accept it” and that’s when I realized it “preference is evident in laws -reprimands daughters for being too loud...“are you going to do this at your in laws?” -parents also need someone after the daughters get married and leave -it ends your generation -training [of gendered roles?] started when she was little -you need to learn because girls won’t stay. Girls leave -kids also have picked up gender expectations “my father was educated. My education was always a priority but even then there are some things you are trained to do. You are always reminded that you will “go to someone’s house” and we don’t want to hear any complaints. That’s when I heart it/understood it” |
| 9. To your knowledge, are there specific ways in which families within the community try to have sons (over daughters)? -Are families with no sons treated differently within the community? | -training of gendered roles? started when she was little -you need to learn because girls won’t stay. Girls leave -kids also have picked up gender expectations “my father was educated. My education was always a priority but even then there are some things you are trained to do. You are always reminded that you will “go to someone’s house” and we don’t want to hear any complaints. That’s when I heart it/understood it” |
| 111: knew someone, who was made to take meds to have a boy "This has happened with me a lot. I was sent to Dubai for medication by my family. My MIL then sent me medication from India. They went to religious places to..." | then moms still worship that son”

Mother Focus Group
### 10. To what extent should son preference change in the community?

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<td><strong>“but people don’t want to listen. Older people will always tell us we are wrong”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“I’ve always faced lots of comments about boys are boys and I can’t compete with them. I can’t change my husband but I started teaching my son housework now and my MIL hates it”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Tell your kids there is no difference, you both have to respect each other”</strong></td>
<td>&quot;pray and get things for me to have a son but I still had a daughter”</td>
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### 11. What is the most important thing that should/should not be done or said to create change about gender equity in Punjabi families?

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<td>&quot;-I think communication gap is the biggest thing between MIL and DIL&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;-she feels people don’t listen and older generations have issues -can’t change older generations so start with younger ones&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;It [training] should be as a couple. MILs should be involved too” “Husbands always listen to their mothers and always ask us (wives) to overlook them”</td>
<td>&quot;i think communication gap is the biggest thing between MIL and DIL&quot;</td>
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### 12. Of all these suggestions, with a show of hands, which one do you think would be most successful?

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<td>&quot;Changes comes through community. If we start today, maybe in 10-20 years we will go somewhere” “Brochure is fine. Even if one person reads it, it&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Seniors club &quot;Couple discussions so we understand both views” “We need to learn how to communicate”</td>
<td>&quot;raise kids equally, respect each other as humans first&quot;</td>
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Mother Focus Group
Facilitator Notes:

Family planning:

- Most of the women agreed that planning is between husband and wife (everyone nodded their heads collectively when asked this question)
- They also generally agreed that their in-laws have opinions but don’t directly say it
- Most agreed that there is an internal pressure that I myself need to have a boy

When they were asked if there was pressure from their in laws or their own parents majority of them answered it was both

*5-year interval for duration in Canada or year of arrival provided to protect confidentiality
FATHER FOCUS GROUP NOTES

Section1- Demographics & Family Dynamics

P2 (202)
5 years married. 2 children, Twins M and F, no more children, Rural India, lived 3 years in India.

P3 (203)
7 years married, 1 child, daughter, more children yes, Urban, 13 years in Canada.

P4 (204)
18 years married, 1 child, daughter, no more children, Urban, 34 years in Canada.

P6 (206)
1.5 years married, 1 child, daughter, yes more children, Urban, 29 years in Canada.

1. To what extent are/were you involved with family planning and your wife’s pregnancy?
   - no discussion with wife
   - p6 “no planning”
   - no open discussion
   - P3- “wife didn’t want daughter, was pressured from her mother to abort it” “I wanted the daughter”
   - P4 “We had a discussion together, but had to filter out family member opinions. We just wanted baby, gender didn’t matter. Period of time where wife had two miscarriages.”
     - All men wanted children

2. To what extent are/were family members involved in family planning?
   - Family members: avg of 6 ppl per home
   - parents all lived with them
   - Pressure from family members
   - Different opinions vs expectations from family
     - Family members looking for boys
- P3 “wife listened to their parents. Have to listen to my parents”
- P3 “age gap between wife made it difficult to be on same page. (12 years)”
- Feeling of too much pressure
- Making other family members happy instead of themselves

Section 2

4. What is your understanding of Lohri?

-P4 “important for family members older generations”
-p6 “when boy is born”
-p3 don’t believe in it
-p2 yes at weddings

-Important now but won’t be in 5 years

5. Have you heard of “the pink ladoo project” and “lohri for her”?

-None have heard of it
-P2 “will start doing it”

-Events is a good idea

6. Each of you has at least one daughter, how did you feel when you found out?

-p6 “happy”

- p3 “I wore a pink shirt, I was happy”

- No one would have felt differently if they had a son.

7. How did your family react when they found out you were having a daughter?

- p3 “in laws were not happy”

- P2 “had twins so they were happy”

P6 “not happy at first but they eventually were “

- Can tell extended family members weren’t too happy
- Other family matters would say better luck next time
8. Is there a preference for sons in the community?

- Yes

- males are bread winners

- Daughters leave the house

- Males are an investment (will take care of parents when they get old)

- Parents benefit

- p6 “growing up I would be treated better than my sister”

- Males allowed to do certain things, daughters are not

- Honour can be shamed with daughters

- Gender roles

9. Specific ways in which families within the community try to have sons?

- Prayers

- Superstitions

- Going to gurus or babas

- Food choices

- Herbal medicines

P2 “back home ppl use tech to abort babies if they are not boys”

10. To what extent should son preference change in the community?

- Media

- Education awareness

- TV programs

11. What should be done to create change about gender equity?

- p4 “show positive woman as role models”
- p6 “grandmothers play role in decisions”

- p4 “fathers need to take a stand”

- religious leaders to speak out

- Social bigot for people who do these things

- akal takht- hukamnama- says daughters and woman need to be treated with respect and not be killed

12. Which one do you think would be most successful in creating change?

- Religious

- media awareness on tv

13. Brochure effecting?

- different approach in temples

- need to have a social movement

- Brochure not effective because culturally not a reading or writing people

14. Anything to add?

- systemic issue

- Government and community needs to do more

- show woman in positive light

- teach young boys early on woman

- it hoped thing will change
**GRANDMOTHER FOCUS GROUP 1**

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<td>a) How many children and grandchildren do you have?</td>
<td>- came between 1991-1995*</td>
<td>- has 2 sons and 2 grandchildren (2 grandsons and 1 granddaughter)</td>
<td>- came to Canada between 1970-1975*</td>
<td>- has 1 son and two grandkids (girl and boy)</td>
<td>- came to Canada between 1990-1995*</td>
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<td>b) Where is your family from in India? (rural vs. urban setting)</td>
<td>- has 2 sons (1 in Canada and 1 in India)</td>
<td>- has a daughter but did not mention her until much later in the discussion</td>
<td>- younger son was born here and older son and daughter were born in India</td>
<td>- &quot;we are a very happy family&quot;</td>
<td>- first lived in Africa</td>
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<td>c) How long have you lived in Canada?</td>
<td>- daughter in law from India</td>
<td>- is a great grandmother</td>
<td>- she is a great grandmother</td>
<td>- she has three granddaughters and 2 grandsons</td>
<td>- 5 grandkids</td>
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<td>d) Who do you live with in Canada now?</td>
<td>- came from Jalandhar, Punjab</td>
<td>- has 3 granddaughters and 2 grandsons</td>
<td>- younger son has two daughters</td>
<td>- &quot;we aren't even allowed to think about our wedding/marriage&quot;</td>
<td>- 3 granddaughters and 2 grandsons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- living with son &amp; daughter in law</td>
<td>- &quot;both my daughters-in-law are very nice&quot;</td>
<td>- &quot;my grandfather did not want girls to study but my parents said girls need to study at least until grade 10&quot;</td>
<td>- did not tell that she was getting married. She was taken to the temple where her future in-laws saw and agreed for the union.</td>
<td>- doesn't live with her sons</td>
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1. Thinking back to when you had children - tell us about your pregnancy and family planning experiences.
   - Did you feel like you had a choice?
   - Did any members of your family have an influence?

   - Had 2 brothers & 4 sisters and her uncles were against girls going to school but father was in the army and modern "my dad even bought me a bike to go to school on"
   - "My husband was more qualified than me. My mother in law was so backwards. I had to cover my face and head with a veil even though I had a job"
   - "Back then we didn't know about kids"
   - "no one was happy when she had her daughter"
   - "she then lost one son and had another and everyone was happy"
   - "her daughter now works at a hospital here"
   - "she was 15 years old when she was married"
   - "in laws never had any demands about gender"
   - "I didn't even know how to hold my son when he was born, I was so young. My mother and mother-in-law basically raised him"
   - "both my daughters-in-law are very nice"
   - "my grandfather did not want girls to study but my parents said girls need to study at least until grade 10"
   - "she got a job against her parents' wishes and was not told that she was getting married. She was taken to the temple where her future in-laws saw and agreed for the union."
   - "we weren't even allowed to think about our wedding/marriage" - in 1965- her mother told her after her marriage that at her married at 16 - "my brothers in law have 3 daughters and 1 son each but my mother in law never said anything about me. She only said "just say happy"
   - "her son had a child 6 years after being married"
   - "I wanted my first granddaughter to be a girl because I didn't have a daughter"
   - "her kids only wanted one child each but her grandson started asking"
   - "she was 20 when she got married"
   - "had 3 sons and really wanted a daughter"
   - "when my first granddaughter was born, I was so happy"
   - "no pressure from mom in law when she was pregnant"
   - "she didn't live with her in laws after getting married"
   - "didn't know anything about family planning"
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| - "My mother in law would say to me “you better give me a grandson” so I would pray to God that I need a son or she wont talk to my child. I had a son and everyone was so happy! - Ended up giving birth to two sons and was given so much attention and pampering afterwards -her older SIL had all girls so she was the first in the family to have a son in the family. | time there was no family planning but now the government has introduced family planning - "My mother in law never pointed out anything about gender" - “my mother in law told me that at her time, there was no way to stop having kids so someone advised her to drink kohl mixed in water to have an abortion but she still ended up giving birth to a really dark baby. -lived in Delhi so had knowledge about family planning because of geographical location “when i was born, my grandmother didn’t eat/make food for two days. this still haunts me today” | for a sibling to play with so they had a girl.
2. To what extent were you involved in family planning in your daughter-in-law’s or daughter’s family?
- Did they ask you for advice?
- Did you speak to your son/son-in-law?
- How did they react?
- Did you attend any medical appointments?

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<td>- daughter in law said she only wants one kid, regardless of boy or girl and she had a girl</td>
<td>- she had grandsons first and wanted a girl</td>
<td>- celebrated the birth of her granddaughters</td>
<td>- son took a long time to have a kid and she wanted him to have a daughter because she wanted to give daughters opportunities</td>
<td>- her father said if there are no daughters in the family, we have no servants</td>
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<td>- &quot;I was very happy that I had a granddaughter, even today I have a special bond with that girl&quot;</td>
<td>- her daughters in law were pissed because they gave birth to girls</td>
<td>- said our culture sets it up so that we have to have boys</td>
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<td>- &quot;our traditions pressure us to have boys&quot;</td>
<td>- but she brought home cake, balloons and decor when they first came home with the baby girl</td>
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<td>- traditions revolve around boys</td>
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3. Is there one particular time that you remember having a conversation about family planning with your daughter-in-law or daughter?
- When during the marriage?

4. What is your understanding of Lohri?
- Did you have a Lohri for your son?
- How has this practice changed?

Grandmothers 1

| 3 |

5. Have you heard of "The Pink Ladoo Project" and "Lohri for Her"?

6. Each of you has at least one granddaughter, how did you feel when you found out you were having a granddaughter? Would you feel differently if you had a grandson instead?

7. How did other family members and friends react when they found out you were having a granddaughter?

8. Is there a preference for sons in the community?
- Why does it exist?
- When did you first become aware?
- What is your opinion about son preference?
- Are daughters treated differently?
- When is having a son more important?

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<tr>
<td>5. Have you heard of &quot;The Pink Ladoo Project&quot; and &quot;Lohri for Her&quot;?</td>
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<td>6. Each of you has at least one granddaughter, how did you feel when you found out you were having a granddaughter? Would you feel differently if you had a grandson instead?</td>
<td>&quot;we had lohri when she was born&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;my husband had a prayer when my daughter was born&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;my dad used to say, &quot;If you don’t have a daughter, you don’t have knowledge&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. How did other family members and friends react when they found out you were having a granddaughter?</td>
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</table>
| 8. Is there a preference for sons in the community?
- Why does it exist?
- When did you first become aware?
- What is your opinion about son preference?
- Are daughters treated differently?
- When is having a son more important? | - Mentioned that gender preference just exists; that just happens to be the case when we have traditions where sons are needed. When a girl gets married, the brother goes with her to drop her off. When my granddaughter got married this summer, I felt a little bit that she should have had a brother. "daughters love parents more" | - Traditionally because of land issues. She doesn't believe it happens here girls were differentiated because of property before" (doesn't believe it happens anymore) | "I only have two sons and never wanted a daughter because my daughter in law is so great!" | | | "it’s about traditions and celebrations, weddings or “rakhdi” (trying of a sentimental thread on the brother). It’s how our culture is. The girl has her own place and the son has his own place" |
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<th>9. To your knowledge, are there specific ways in which families within the community try to have sons (over daughters)?</th>
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<td>- Are families with no sons treated differently within the community?</td>
<td>- first said she has never heard of abortion taking place here \ -she didn’t know abortion was legal in Canada - then changed her mind and said she accompanied her grandniece to a hospital in India for treatment once but clarified that it was “scientific” -also had heard about peacock feather and sugar cane</td>
<td>- Has heard about methods involving peacock feather with jaggery (sweet made from sugar cane)</td>
<td>- first she said she has only seen newspaper ads - she then opened up a little bit more and said she has been/heard of a woman who took a bath with a bucket of water in the middle of an intersection in Malton so she would have a son - also heard and tried eating a coconut with a flower in it in order to have boys (she did have a boy) -had not heard about abortion either; perception that “poor” people are doing this -peacock feather and sugar cane to have a son</td>
<td>- she also knows someone who took a bath in the middle of an intersection with a bucket to have a son - also heard about the peacock methods</td>
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<th>10. To what extent should son preference change in the community?</th>
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<td>- we can’t change it “my granddaughter had her second daughter and her FIL had an issue with it even though he’s been in Canada for so long”</td>
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<td>- even people who are educated have preferences - awareness is key - believe in joint family. She lives with her daughter in law’s family</td>
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<th>11. What is the most important thing that should/should not be done or said to create change about gender equity in Punjabi</th>
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<td>- moms need to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“It is important to teach the husband and wife”</td>
<td>“awareness. It’s not about being uneducated. Even people who are</td>
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Grandmothers 1
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<tr>
<th>Families?</th>
<th>-Who should be involved?</th>
<th>-What would be the effect?</th>
<th>-How would this take place?</th>
<th>-What would the impact be?</th>
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-believes that boys don’t talk or stand up because their wives threaten to divorce them or call the police

educated think like this. It’s about awareness. I think a son should spread awareness to his parents. In my house, my daughter in law’s parents live with us too. My son sat us all down and told us we all have an equal role in the home and the minute there is a problem, sit down and talk about it. And we are living very happily as a joint family”

12. Of all these suggestions, with a show of hands, which one do you think would be most successful?

13. The research team is thinking of developing a brochure for the community which will incorporate your suggestions with the goal of changing the community’s mind about son preference.

-Is a brochure effective? Other methods?

-Any suggestions on delivery?

14. Anything else to add?

Grandmothers 1

6
e) How many children and grandchildren do you have?
- came here between 2005-2010*
- has 3 sons
- older son has two daughters and younger son has two daughters as well

f) Where is your family from in India? (rural vs. urban setting)

- has 3 daughters and 1 son
- "my daughters are all in their own homes"
- son has 1 son and 2 daughters
- older daughter has 1 daughter and 2 sons
- youngest daughter has 2 sons

3. Thinking back to when you had children - tell us about your pregnancy and family planning experiences.

- Did you feel like you had a choice?
- Did any members of your family have an influence?

- I have always loved/wanted girls
- "I was the only girl in my family"
- she was also the only child
- "I was so happy when I had my first granddaughter"
- Chose names for her granddaughters and celebrated with pink ladoo
- "My mother in law never said anything to me about my kids (3 daughters and son)
- "When I was pregnant, my husband said all he wants is a healthy baby and we had a girl but this pinched my mother in law and when I had my second daughter, my mother in law cried so much. My husband told me not to worry. They are both our children. But people would come over and cry and console us! I told them to stop coming over. When I had my son, everyone was so happy. They would come over and ask him "why didn’t you arrive earlier?! We have been waiting for"
- got married in 1974
- "my in-laws wanted sons for me"
- I wanted a son too only because I grew up with sisters and then I wanted a daughter which I also got"
4. To what extent were you involved in family planning in your daughter-in-law’s or daughter’s family?
- Did they ask you for advice?
- Did you speak to your son/son in law?
- How did they react?
- Did you attend any medical appointments?
- “don’t have to talk to daughter in law about kids”
- lost her daughter so she wanted a granddaughter
- always wished for daughters because they take care of you
- “Daughters don’t ask opinions
- Tradition: boys have to be around to manage land

3. Is there one particular time that you remember having a conversation about family planning with your daughter-in-law or daughter?
- When during the marriage?

4. What is your understanding of Lohri?
- Did you have a Lohri for your son?
- How has this practice changed?

5. Have you heard of “The Pink

---

Grandmothers 1

8
7. Each of you has at least one granddaughter, how did you feel when you found out you were having a granddaughter?  
- Would you feel differently if you had a grandson instead?

- She lost her daughter when she was young and until today “I wish I had another daughter. When I had my granddaughter, I felt my daughter came back.”

7. How did other family members and friends react when they found out you were having a granddaughter?

8. Is there a preference for sons in the community?  
- Why does it exist?  
- When did you first become aware?  
- What is your opinion about son preference?  
- Are daughters treated differently?  
- When is having a son more important?

- “Daughters take care of moms like no other. Daughters in law just want us for their babysitting. Who knows what’s going to happen to us in the future?”

- “Our culture calls for it. She thinks it still exists because of traditions not because of preference. “I never stopped my daughters from doing anything they wanted. If I stop them, they’ll get scared and then they’ll lose confidence”

- “Sometimes if you have only daughters, in the future, your son-in-law can come in and compete for “land/property” so if there is a brother in the picture, sometimes, this can be avoided”

9. To your knowledge, are there specific ways in which families within the community try to have sons (over daughters)?

- “Nowadays, it doesn’t happen. People just want healthy children”

- Knows of people who ordered meds to have sons
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Are families with no sons treated differently within the community?</td>
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<td>- does mention that hospitals here don’t tell brown pregnant parents the gender of their children</td>
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<td>- did not think abortions were legal here</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>To what extent should son preference change in the community?</td>
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<td>- Education is key</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<td>- Believes people who are uneducated are the problem</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>What is the most important thing that should/should not be done or said to create change about gender equity in Punjabi families?</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sex education is important in schools</td>
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<td>13.</td>
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<td>&quot;we can only tell them (as in those who are part taking in son preference)&quot;</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Of all these suggestions, with a show of hands, which one do you think would be most successful?</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>The research team is thinking of developing a brochure for the community which will incorporate your suggestions with the goal of changing the community’s mind</td>
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<td>17.</td>
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<td>they don’t like reading</td>
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<td>18.</td>
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<td>&quot;people will not watch videos on this</td>
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Grandmothers 1

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<td>about son preference.</td>
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<td>topic, they aren’t interested*</td>
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<td>-Is a brochure effective? Other methods?</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Any suggestions on delivery?</td>
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<td>14. Anything else to add?</td>
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*S-year interval for duration in Canada or year of arrival provided to protect confidentiality*

General Notes from Facilitators:

- Majority of the participants agreed that education doesn’t have anything to do with son preference
- When they were asked if their DIL consult them or talk to them about having children, all of them agreed that no, they do not consult them and they themselves don’t say anything to them
- Even though they all agreed that the community has a son preference, they didn’t admit whether or not them themselves had this preference or not
- **None of them live with their daughters**
- Question: Were you happy when your granddaughter was born?
  - Majority of the participants answered: very happy
  - Did people have an opinion when she (Granddaughter) was born? Majority of them said/nodded no
- **None of them knew abortion was legal in Canada**
- They all also agreed that it’s the mothers and fathers who need education.*
- Majority of women believed their sons are run by their wives and they said they threaten them by saying they will leave/divorce them
- Prem asked if it would be more effective if one man to explain this to another man?
  - They all agreed

Reflections:

- No last name/ family lineage was mentioned in regards to son preference
- Women were hesitant to talk about measures taken to prevent having daughters completely denied knowing of any methods first but then started sharing and had a lot to say

Grandmothers 1
## GRANDMOTHER FOCUS GROUP 2

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>How many children and grandchildren do you have?</td>
<td>Older daughter has 3 kids</td>
<td>-35-40 years in Canada</td>
<td>Only has 1 son and he has a daughter</td>
<td>- From Punjab</td>
<td>- One son</td>
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<td>b) Where is your family from in India? (rural vs. urban setting)</td>
<td>Younger daughter has 1 son</td>
<td>2 sons 1 girl</td>
<td>-15-20* years in Canada</td>
<td>Has two sons and 2 daughters</td>
<td>- Came to Canada between 1990-1995*</td>
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<td>c) How long have you lived in Canada?</td>
<td>Both sons live together with her</td>
<td>1 son has a daughter, 1 son in unmarried</td>
<td>- Granddaughter is in grade 12</td>
<td>- Grandson and granddaughter (older son)</td>
<td>- Son has 3 daughters</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Who do you live with in Canada now?</td>
<td>One has two sons and one has 1 girl and 1 boy</td>
<td>- lived in Canada for 25-30 years*</td>
<td>- Came to Canada 15-20* years ago</td>
<td>- 2 sons and 3 daughters</td>
<td>(one of them in married)</td>
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### 1. Thinking back to when you had children - tell us about your experiences of

- **Husband had surgery to not have anymore kids**
- **When my 6th sister was born, my whole family was crying. Even people who came to visit would hug my parents and cry. My**
- **"There used to be pressure in those days to have a son. Not anymore. The pressure was from both**
- **"there was no planning at our time"**
- **"I wanted 4 kids though but the generation after us**
- **"no planning"**
- **"no planning"**
- **The boy should be there for special days/festivals like "rakhri"**
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<td></td>
<td><strong>pregnancy and having a family</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Did you feel like you had a choice?</td>
<td>- Did any members of your family have an influence?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- generation won’t go further without a boy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- she cried when she found out she had a daughter.</td>
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<td>- She realized that one day she will leave her (get married)</td>
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<td>- mom cried when my daughter was born.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I had my son (first child) but my mother would have been sad,</td>
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<td>- if I had my daughter first.</td>
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<td>- the in-laws and your own family</td>
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<td>- became all about 2 kids”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- There was awareness at our time but not during our time because</td>
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<td>- My mom took my sister to get an “operation” after she had three</td>
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<td>- She thinks people can’t be changed. Girls are being killed by</td>
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<td>- We don’t have a big Indian community where I live</td>
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<td>- “kids these days are smart enough” people with education,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- educate their daughters. All about how educated you are</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- No</td>
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<td>- They had kids before I came to Canada</td>
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<td>- kids these days believe what they got is form God</td>
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2. **What is the role of grandmothers when their daughters or daughters-in-law are planning a family?**
- Common rituals undertaken?
- Did they ask you for advice?
- Did you speak to your son/son in law?
- How did they react?

- no
dauhter in law had kid after 6-7 years of marriage. She spent time getting settled/finding jobs
  - She thinks people can’t be changed. Girls are being killed by people situated in Canada
  - We don’t have a big Indian community where I live
- no
- “kids these days are smart enough” people with education, educate their daughters. All about how educated you are
- No
- They had kids before I came to Canada
- kids these days believe what they got is form God
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<td>-Did you attend any medical appointments?</td>
<td>- They didn’t care about gender</td>
<td>- A lot of people say that they don’t want to celebrate for a daughter/grand daughter</td>
<td>- nothing to do with sons</td>
<td>- it’s about harvest season</td>
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<td>3. What is your understanding of Lohri? -Did you have a Lohri for your son? -How has this practice changed?</td>
<td>- I did it for my granddaughter</td>
<td>- I did it for both (grandchildren)</td>
<td>- She was a bit hesitant about saying whether it should be both or not</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- There is no actual purpose of it</td>
<td>- You hear it a lot about girls Lohri happening in Brampton</td>
<td>- Families that don’t have a boy, will always feel a void</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I did it for my granddaughter</td>
<td>- a lot of people say that they don’t want to celebrate for a daughter/grand daughter</td>
<td>- nothing to do with sons</td>
<td>- it’s about harvest season</td>
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<td>4. Have you heard of “The Pink Ladoo Project” and “Lohri for Her”?</td>
<td>- no</td>
<td>- no</td>
<td>- no</td>
<td>- no</td>
<td>- no</td>
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<td>5. When a granddaughter is born, what do the parents, grandparents or extended family do?</td>
<td>- Parents don’t mind (the birth of a daughter) but the neighbors and relatives are more bothered by it</td>
<td>- if you have girls, grandmother will feel unsatisfied; you need a boy Because it was her daughter’s daughter, if it’s a boy, and then a girl, it’s a different thing</td>
<td>- my sister-in-law would always be happier that she had more sons than me (Her sister in law had 4 sons and 2 girls while she had 4 girls and 2 sons)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- The reason we fear the birth of girls is because of what their future may hold (in laws, life after marriage, dowry etc)</td>
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GRANDMOTHERS 2

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BMJ Open 2023; 13:e074276. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-074276
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<td>or say?</td>
<td>-Would they have reacted differently if it had been a grandson?</td>
<td>-Are there different reactions based on whether a grandson or granddaughter is born?</td>
<td>-How did you feel when you had your first granddaughter?</td>
<td>-The rest of the world does it</td>
<td>-The mother has to go through the same pain to give birth to a boy or a girl, so it doesn’t matter</td>
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<td>6. How does the community react when granddaughters are born?</td>
<td>-Does community react differently when grandsons are born?</td>
<td>-Shared a story about a pundit from BC who</td>
<td>-it happens here more I feel</td>
<td>-People are still sent to various</td>
<td>-very happy for granddaughters</td>
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<td>7. To your knowledge, are there specific ways</td>
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<td>-there’s a lot in newspapers</td>
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<td><strong>in which families within the community try to have sons (over daughters)?</strong>&lt;br&gt;-Cultural or spiritual practices?&lt;br&gt;-Medications or traditional remedies?&lt;br&gt;-Medical practices or technologies?</td>
<td>asked for $1500 to make sure woman can give birth to a son. He would give her a amulet to wear which ensured she would have a son&lt;br&gt;-&quot;I went with someone to the clinic once and I didn’t know she was going for an abortion. She already had two girls. I waited in the waiting area and when she came out she was walking slowly but she didn’t admit anything then. She told me a week later that her husband was pressuring her to abort the baby because they already had two</td>
<td>pundits/gurus to have sons&lt;br&gt;- 25% of the community still does it&lt;br&gt;- 75% is now educated and doesn’t care&lt;br&gt;- people send their girls to India to get abortions</td>
<td>- but believes it’s more in India</td>
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8. **Is there a preference for sons in the community?**<br>-What is the value of sons vs. daughters?<br>-We need daughters so much. My daughter who lives in Dubai still calls me 4 times a day.<br>-They had a party when her youngest daughter | “there are moments when I do feel boys are important because there is no son at various celebrations<br>“it’s not easy to live in a daughter’s house. You can call your son to take care of you when you need it. It’s his responsibility. I can’t expect my daughter to | The main think is “generation”<br>- We have changed but have more to do | |

GRANDMOTHERS 2
was born. The hospital her daughter was born in, there were 16 boys born there the same night. “I felt we were the lucky ones” -Parents don’t freak out when the girls are born but more when it comes to getting them married (there are demands from the guy’s family).

her daughter in law had a child 6 years after marriage and when they would go to visit India, everyone would ask questions/look at her suspiciously like “why isn’t she getting pregnant” and I would tell them, these things are in our “control” now, there is no need to rush anymore -for funerals you need a boy “to press the

was very hesitant to answer any question come in and take care of me” for funerals you need a son (As per Hindu traditions) - Believes girls are equal to boys - this still happens (son preference) in rural areas. It happens where there is illiteracy cousins but not the same thing” -the son is the “diya” (the light of the family) “we hear so many stories in India and here, that really scare us about what can potentially happen to our daughters”
9. Should son preference change in the community?

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| - She didn’t answer the question directly  
- “Why should we have expectations from our sons? In reality, we will all go to old age homes”  
- we all wish that our sons take care of us  
- We need to change it  
- Culturally we have this in our minds  
- I’m not depending on my son  
- Awareness  
- Do workshops in community centers  
- Educate people  
- We don’t want to interfere in our daughters home because their in law are now in charge  
- There is no difference  
- Educate your girls |

10. What should be done or said to change son preference in the Punjabi community?

- When I had my first granddaughter, we celebrated her first birthday at the Gurudwara
- people shouldn’t go to Gurus/pundits to get various meds or amulets to have sons  
- father needs to be educated. He needs to be strong and not be swayed by others opinions.  
- only participant in the group who knew the gender of the baby come from the men  
- “people need to be able to stand up for their own daughter”  
- women create the children so the power is in their hands. She says that families need to stand up to others.  
- Husbands need to be included  
- Son in law as well (needs to be included) but we can’t tell him, his parents can. Same with our daughters in law  
- Grandmothers need to be educated  
- Do workshops with all family members  
- She had a lot of saying that been used when a woman gave birth to girls  
- “She gave birth to rocks (stones which can’t take the family name forward)”  
- “She’s filled a porch/veranda with only girls”
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<td>impact be?</td>
<td>Who cares about their opinions anyways?</td>
<td>- When the family is strong and stands together, how can anyone else dare say anything</td>
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<td>- husbands and fathers need to be prepared for the possibility of having girls. Not to bother others. Old generation needs to be changed?</td>
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11. Of all these suggestions, with a show of hands, which one do you think would be most successful?

- "keep it in religious institutions in different languages"
- it'll change but only a bit

- "it won't just be words that change anything. Show solutions and real life examples. Have community meetings."
- Suggested workshops at the smaller scale
- Most important is grandparents (both paternal and maternal)

- if someone reads, it needs to be in Punjabi or different languages
- videos, plays
- you can change our views only to a certain extent
- change takes time

Make a video, make plays, gatherings. She believes things can change. Gave examples
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<td>-Is a brochure effective? Other methods?</td>
<td>-Any suggestions on delivery?</td>
<td>of inter-caste marriages taking place now</td>
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<td><strong>13. Anything else to add?</strong></td>
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*5-year interval for duration in Canada or year of arrival provided to protect confidentiality

**General Facilitator Notes:**

- 314, 311, 315, 312, 316 all agreed that the diya keeps glowing with a son in the family
- no one knew abortion was legal in Canada*
- *they all mutually agreed that you can’t really change the way one thinks*
- there was a sense of elitism with these women
- they found “them” (those women who do take part in son preference) as orthodox, unlike them
- Torontonians vs. Brampton/Malton (Urban vs. rural)