

Aathwa Phera: Sri Ganganagar and Bharatpur

In Indian culture marriage is an important institutional and social contract between two individuals. The knot between them is also a symbol of strengthening the bond between their families and communities. The interplay between the belief systems of these individuals and the society at large can help to remove and/or reinforce certain norms and values in the society. Banking on this complex interplay of belief-system, *Sri-Ganganagar* and *Bharatpur* are involving the community to enhance the value of the girl child. It is by somewhat altering the promises couples make to each other while committing themselves to this institution.

In Hindu marriage ceremony, the couple has to commit to seven vows to each other which lay the foundation of equitable, respectful and loyal bond between them transcending seven lives. In *Samuhik Vivah*, *Sri Ganganagar* and *Bharatpur* have introduced the eighth vow for the couples tying the wedlock committing them to not opt sex selection for any of their child. Since the marriage transcends to the whole community, an oath ceremony was also convened for everyone to abide by this promise and discourage any couple around them who may wish to undergo for sex selection. 10,000 couples have participated in this.