

Female Foeticide, Infanticide, and Trafficking –A Evil to Society

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Abstract—*Women are the backbone of society. She play a very important role in development. But in India a most brutal form of killing females takes place regularly, even before they have the opportunity to be born. Female foeticide--the selective abortion of female fetuses--is killing upwards of one million females in India annually with far-ranging and tragic consequences. In some areas, the sex ratio of females to males has dropped to less than 8000:1000. Females not only face inequality in this culture, they are even denied the right to be born. Aborting female fetuses is both practical and socially acceptable in India. Female foeticide is driven by many factors, but primarily due to different reason like to pay a dowry, poverty. But In the era of science and technology people are being remedied from rarest of rare diseases by medical science this boon of medical science is being misused in carrying out abortion knowing the female sex by ultra-sonography, amniocentesis and other techniques. While abortion is legal in India, it is a crime to abort a pregnancy solely because the fetus is female. Strict laws and penalties are in place for violators. Consequently, the cases of female foeticide and infanticide are increasing fast in the several part of India. Moreover, if the baby girl takes birth, she is deprived of love and affection of the parents as she is abandoned to die on canals, coverts and footpath. This has been the reason that sex ratio is 1000:914 among 0-6 year old boys and girls which is declining day by day. Sex selective abortions and increase in the number of female infanticide cases have become a significant social phenomenon in several parts of India. It transcends all castes, class and communities and even the North South dichotomy. The girl children become target of attack even before they are born .Female foeticide is an act of destruction that causes death of a foetus. Female foeticide and infanticide are intentional killing of girls. Killing of a girl within the womb of mother is female foeticide and Killing of a girl after birth is called female infanticide.*

Keywords: *Foeticide; Infanticide; Ultra-sonography; sex selective abortion.*

1. INTRODUCTION

India is growing dynamically in every field. Taking birth as a woman in the Indian society can be said as curse for the women. Women in India face lots of social issues and problems all through the life which are big struggle for them right from their beginning of life. In the developing world, millions of girls are denied their basic human rights, simply because they're girls. Indian women, who fought as an equal to men in the nationalist struggle, were not given that free

public space anymore. They became homemakers, and were mainly meant to build a strong home to support their men who were to build the new Independent country. Female foeticide is an act of destruction that causes death of a foetus. Female foeticide and infanticide are intentional killing of girls. Killing of a girl within the womb of mother is female foeticide and Killing of a girl after birth is called female infanticide.

Child trafficking, according to UNICEF is defined as “any person under 18 who is recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purpose of exploitation, either within or outside a country”. There have been many cases where children just disappear overnight, as many as one every eight minutes, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. The United Nations Children’s Fund, estimated that up to 50 million girls and women are ‘missing’ from India’s population because of termination of the female foetus or high mortality of the girl child due to lack of proper care at some levels like dowry, crimes like rape, sexual harassment at office or public places, and molestation, eve-teasing, even after over sixty years of independence women are still exploited, which is the shameful side of our country. Girl Child is the pride and dignity of our nation. The right and prompt opportunity to be born, chance to grow in a safe and secure environment, opportunity to develop own full potential are some of the major issues concerning the girl children in India.

Some of the reasons of female foeticide.

The cultural legacy of strong son preference, the practice of dowry, the perception of girls’ being a paraaya-dhan, problems related to the safety and marriage of a girl child, moksha, the patrilineal necessity of waaris (heir) etc.

Girl Child is being widely selected for trafficking over male child for various grave reasons: As sex workers, as domestic servants, as construction workers, for labour purposes, for begging, and for sexual exploitation etc.

Problems faced by trafficked girls:

During the trafficking process, traffickers violate an extensive array of human rights. The trafficked are subjected to physical, psychological and sexual violence, their movement is

restricted. There is just no safe and healthy working environment, their wages are confiscated and they are generally subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, forced labour, slavery-like practices or slavery. They are increasingly affected by ill health, insults and humiliation and a life of uncertainty and risks. They have no access to their families.

The number of children trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million. Approximately 1,50000 women and children are trafficked from South Asia every year and for most of them India acts as a country of origin and destination. It is estimated that nearly 5000 to 7000 Nepalese girls are trafficked into India annually for sexual exploitation.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bandewar (2003) found that 64 per cent of the abortion service providers were against sex selective abortions; 10 per cent said they were against it but had to do it and the rest about 24 per cent approved the practice of sex selective abortions. Although there was not much variation among service providers working in public/private health care facilities or rural/urban location but difference was found among men and women service providers. About 28 per cent men approved of sex selective abortion practice whereas it was only 17 per cent in case of women providers. Thus it was higher percentage of women providers (68 per cent) compared to men (61 per cent) who were against such a practice.

Eminent economist, Amartya Sen in 1990 supposed that about 100 million girl children have been aborted before birth, killed after birth or neglected to death. But the sharp decline in the juvenile sex ratio in 1991, 2001 and 2011 census is definitely the outcome of the practice of female foeticide as prenatal diagnostic techniques became popular in India during 80s and continuing still now with advancement in the technology.

Many talked of compulsions that women have at their ends to go for sex selection abortions. These arise either out of social norms fostering son preference or because their lives are put at stake in case they do not produce a son. Some also said that unwanted girls ran the risk of severe ill treatment at their natal homes causing them emotional and mental trauma. Hence the service providers empathized with the woman's social needs for sex selective abortions (**Economic and Political Weekly, 2003**).

In Tamil Nadu, the overall juvenile sex ratio has fallen down sharply from 948 in 1991 to 939 in 2001 (**Census of India 2001**). **Sen (1989)** estimated that about 30 million women were missing from the Indian population. Such violent criminal acts have attacked the dignity of women as human beings and have left them more vulnerable.

Table 1: Sex Ratio Between 0-6 years old children in different states (Female per 1000 Male)

State's	Year 1991	Year 2001	Year 2011
Uttar Pradesh	927	916	899
Punjab	823	798	846
Delhi	915	868	866
Haryana	879	819	830
Maharashtra	946	913	883
Chandigarh	899	845	867
Jammu and Kashmir	-	941	859
Uttarakhand	948	908	886
Rajasthan	916	926	909
Himachal Pradesh	951	896	906
Madhya Pradesh	941	932	912
Gujarat	928	883	886

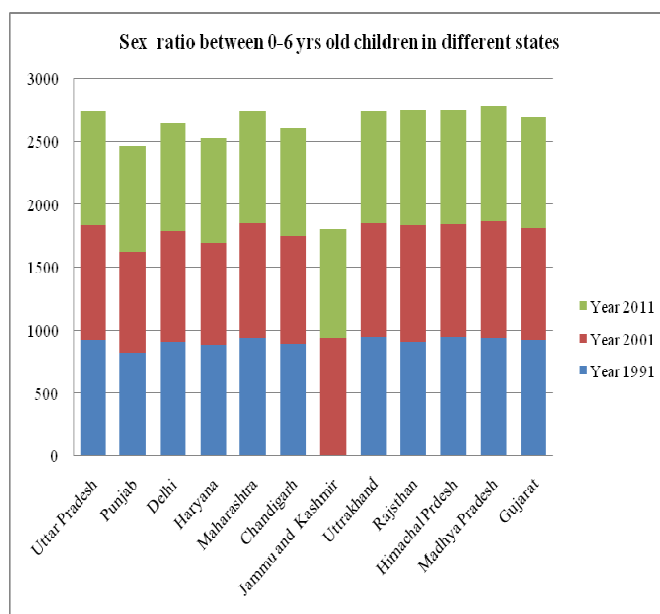


Table 2: Incidence (I) Percentage Contribution to All India (P) of Crimes Committed Against Children during 2000 (State and UT-Wise)

Sl. NO.	State/UT	Foeticide		Infanticide	
		I	P	I	P
	STATES				
1	Andhra Pradesh	8	8.8	8	7.7
2	Assam	0	0.0	4	3.8
3	Bihar	1	1.1	4	3.8
4	Gujarat	0	0.0	4	3.8
5	Haryana	13	14.3	1	1.0
6	Jammu & Kashmir	0	0.0	1	1.0
7	Karnataka	1	1.1	2	1.9
8	Kerala	0	0.0	2	1.9
9	Madhya Pradesh	14	15.4	31	29.8
10	Maharashtra	41	45.1	20	19.2
11	Orissa	1	1.1	0	0.0
12	Punjab	0	0.0	6	5.8
13	Rajasthan	9	9.9	5	4.8
14	Sikkim	0	0.0	3	2.9

15	Tamil Nadu	0	0.0	8	7.7
16	West Bangal	0	0.0	2	1.9
	UNION TERRITORIES				
17	Chandigarh	1	1.1	0	0.0
18	Delhi	2	2.2	2	1.9

Source: Crime in India 2000, p. 216.

I= Incidence,

P= Percentage Contribution to All India

Table 3: State with highest decrease in child sex ration in India 2001-2011

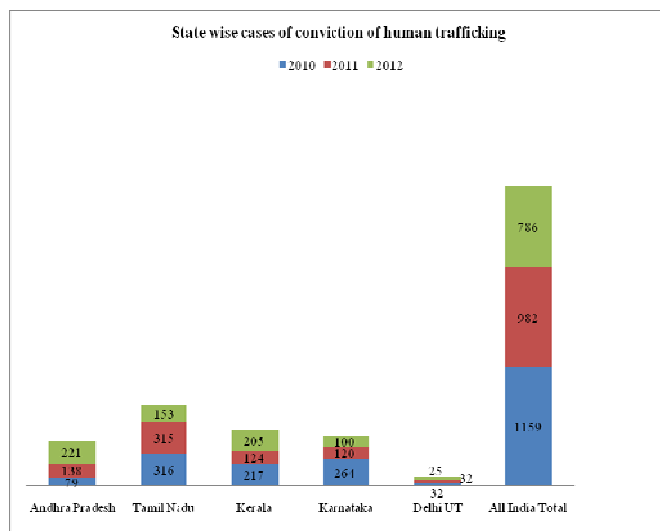
States with highest dowry deaths	Dowry deaths per day (2005-2010)	Child sex ratio 2001	Child sex ratio 2001	Decrease / increase in child sex ratio in a decade
Jammu & Kashmir	0	941	859	-82
Maharashtra	0.8	913	883	-30
Rajasthan	1.1	909	883	-26
Jharkhand	0.7	965	943	-22
Uttarakhand	0.2	908	886	-22
All- India	46,606	927	914	-13

Source- Lok- Sabha

Table 4: State wise cases of conviction of human trafficking

State/UT	2010	2011	2012
Andhra Pradesh	79	138	221
Tamil Nadu	316	315	153
Kerala	217	124	205
Karnataka	264	120	100
Delhi UT	32	25	32
All India Total	1159	982	786

Source- NCRB



3. CONCLUSION

At last it is concluded that Girl Children are the most vulnerable section of society. They are physically, mentally and socially immature and depend on others for survival. The vulnerability and dependency has been a matter of universal concern. Their development is threatened by several dangers including exploitation, abuse, ignorance, material want and social and political intrigue. In order to protect girl children from these the government and the civil society have been playing a vital role. Fundamental rights and Directive Principles of state policies are related with children, they state that everyone entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth therein without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, birth or other status. Further, it states that girl child needs special care and legal protection before and after birth. Respect of rights of all individuals in the society is the foundation of liberty, justice, development and peace in the world. Empowering Girl Child needs to be incorporated as one of the important agenda in political dialogue and policy discussion. Real Empowerment of girl child and women can only happen if we redefine the status and role of women in the family and society in order to strengthen the entire nation and that can make a big difference. Even though the law is a powerful instrument of change yet law alone cannot root out this social problem. The girls are devalued not only because of the economic considerations but also because of socio-cultural factors, such as, the belief that son extends the lineage, enlarges the family tree, provides protection safety and security to the family and is necessary for salvation as he alone can light the funeral pyre and perform other death related rites and rituals. Evidence indicates that the problem of female foeticide and infanticide is more prevalent in orthodox families (see Srivastava, 2001). It is, therefore, essential that these socio-cultural factors be tackled by changing the thought process through awareness generation, mass appeal and social action. In addition to this all concerned i.e. the religious and social leaders, voluntary organizations, women's groups, socially responsible media, the doctors; the Medical Council/Association (by enforcing medical ethics and penalties on deviant doctors) and the law enforcement personnel should work in a coordinated way.

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