

## Reasons and cause of the female feticide in Haryana

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### ABSTRACT

Female feticide is the termination of a female foetus from the womb of mother through abortion in illegal manner for some assumed cultural reasons. Female feticide is in practice in India from the time of advent of technological advancements in medical field like prenatal sex determination in the 1990s. However, earlier to this, female child were killing after their birth in many regions of the country. In the Indian society, female child are considered as the social and economic burden to their parents so they understand that it is better to kill them before birth. No one understands its negative aspect in the future. The female sex ratio in comparison to the males has been reduced to a great extent (8 males per one female). It is not easy to compensate the sex ratio even if we stop female feticide completely in the next few years. The study was conducted in the Haryana state. Rewari and Mahendergarh districts were selected purposively with having lowest sex ratio. On 120 rural women comprising 60 from Rewari and 60 from Mahendergarh district. Results indicate the main cause of the female feticide were son preference, poverty and the dowry.

**Key Words :** Female feticide, Poverty, Dowry, Education

### INTRODUCTION

The female crowds in rural area are deprived of minimum facilities of enlightenment and education. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life (Unisa, 2002). The Constitution of India guarantees equality to women. It empowers the states to adopt measures for affirmative discrimination in favour of women and impose a fundamental duty on its citizens to uphold the dignity of women but despite all this, India's deep-rooted "sons only" ethos continues and girls and women face inequity and inequality everywhere. They are devalued as human beings from the day they are born. However, what is worse is that they are even denied the right to be born, if their families do not wish them to be born. Basically, female foeticide is a practice of selective elimination of the female foetus after pre natal sex determination or sex pre selection, thus avoiding the birth of a girl child.

Legislation-wise, sex-determination of unborn child in India is banned under Pre-conception and pre natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994. Moreover, utilization of ultra-sonography, amniocentesis to determine and communicate the sex of an unborn is punishable under the law since January 1996. "You will find an ultrasound machine even in a village which has a road over which only a bullock cart can go, and electricity to run the machine and nothing else," said one ultrasonographer, as reported in THE HINDU, a national newspaper.

The number of girl child of age group 0-6 years was reduced to 945/1000 in 1991, 927/1000 in 2001 and 918/1000 in 2011. It was a high pitch alarming sign to the Indian government to tackle to it. There are around 100 districts with low CSR (child sex ratio) have been targeted to work first for better and positive effects of this campaign. Some of the districts of Haryana state with low CSR are Rewari, Bhiwani, Kurukshetra, Ambala, Mahendergarh, Sonapat, Jhajjar, Panipat, Karnal, Kaithal, Rohtak, and Yamuna Nagar. Currently, Haryana has the

ratio of 874:1000 (874 girls born for every 1000 boys), whereas in Jhajjar district it is 793 and Mahendergarh district it is 866 girls to every 1000 boys. The Child Sex Ratio (CSR), defined as the number of females per thousand males in the age group of 0-6 years, has been declining unabatedly since 1961. Figures of the more recent decades indicate an alarming decline from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 and to 918 in 2011. The issue of declining Child Sex Ratio is a major indicator of women disempowerment as the discrimination begins before birth, manifested in the form of gender-biased sex selection and elimination, and continues in various forms even after birth, wherein her health, nutrition and educational needs are neglected.

**Objective of the study :**

Opinion among rural women for reason and cause of the female feticide in Haryana

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study was carried out in the Haryana state. Rewari and Mahendergarh districts were selected purposively with having lowest sex ratio. From district Rewari and Mahendergarh two blocks (one from each district) Jatusana from Rewari and Kanina from Mahendergarh were selected purposively with having lowest sex ratio. From these two blocks Jatusana and

Kanina four villages (two from each block) Dahina and Maseet from Jatusana and Kakrala and Rambas from Kanina two villages were selected randomly

Matching sample of 30 rural women from four (Dahina, Maseet, Kakrala, Rambas) villages with same age group were selected. Therefore the total sample compared of 120 rural women.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 on general opinion of the respondents showed that in Dahina majority of respondents (93.3%) found the female feticide, preference for son and non-preference for girl child as the major reasons for the declining of the sex ratio. Also in village Maseet 90.0 per cent respondents was found the female feticide, preference for son and non-preference for girl child was the major reasons for declining of the sex ratio. In Dahina (96.7%) respondents found poverty as the main cause of female feticide followed by dowry (93.3%) and family pressure (53.3%) whereas in Maseet (93.3%) respondents found dowry was the main cause of female feticide followed by poverty (90.0%) and family pressure (63.3%).

Data on general opinion of the respondents in Mahendergarh district showed that in Kakrala and Rambas majority of respondents (90.0%) found the female feticide, preference for son and non-preference for girl

| Table 1 : Opinion of the respondents regarding female feticide in Rewari districts |   | (n=30)   |          |
|--|---|----------|----------|
| Sr. No.  | General opinion   | Dahina   | Maseet   |
|  |   | F (%)    | F (%)    |
| <b>1.</b>  | <b>Reasons for declining sex ratio</b>                  |          |          |
| A  | Female feticide   | 25(83.3) | 26(86.7) |
| B  | Preference for son                                      |          |          |
|  | (i) Preserves the tradition and value of family         | 26(86.7) | 26(87.7) |
|  | (ii) Will provide social security                       | 23(76.7) | 25(83.3) |
|  | (iii) Social and economical burden of daughter          | 19(63.3) | 19(63.3) |
| C  | Non- preference for girls                               |          |          |
|  | (i) Financial liability on their parents                | 17(56.7) | 17(56.7) |
|  | (ii) Don't earn for the family                          | 20(66.7) | 21(70.0) |
|  | (iii) Orthodox thoughts hampers the overall development | 25(83.3) | 23(76.7) |
|  | (iv) Can't perform the last rites                       | 20(66.7) | 19(63.3) |
| D  | All the above   | 28(93.3) | 27(90.0) |
| <b>2.</b>  | <b>Main causes for female foeticide</b>                 |          |          |
| A  | Poverty   | 29(96.7) | 27(90.0) |
| B  | Dowry   | 28(93.3) | 28(93.3) |
| C  | Family pressure   | 16(53.3) | 19(63.3) |

\*Multiple Response

| Table 2 : Opinion of the respondents regarding female feticide in Mahendergarh districts |   | (n=30)       |              |
|--|---|--------------|--------------|
|  |   | Kakrala      | Rambas       |
| Sr. No.  | General opinion                                     | Yes<br>F (%) | Yes<br>F (%) |
| <b>1.</b>  | <b>Reasons for declining sex ratio</b>              |              |              |
| A  | Female feticide                                     | 24(80.0)     | 21(70)       |
| B  | Preference for son                                  |              |              |
|  | (i) Preserves the tradition and value of family     | 28(93.3)     | 27(90)       |
|  | (ii) Will provide social security                   | 27(90.0)     | 25(83.3)     |
|  | (iii) Social and economical burden of daughter      | 21(70.0)     | 20(66.7)     |
| C  | Non- preference for girls                           |              |              |
|  | (i) Financial liability on their parents            | 19(63.3)     | 21(70.0)     |
|  | (ii) Don't earn for the family                      | 21(70.0)     | 19(63.3)     |
|  | (iii) Orthodox thoughts hampers overall development | 22(73.3)     | 22(73.3)     |
|  | (iv) Can't perform the last rites                   | 18(60)       | 21(70.0)     |
| D  | All the above                                       | 27(90.0)     | 27(90.0)     |
| <b>2.</b>  | <b>Main causes for female foeticide</b>             |              |              |
| A  | Poverty   | 26(86.7)     | 29(96.7)     |
| B  | Dowry   | 23(76.7)     | 26(87.7)     |
| C  | Family pressure                                     | 19(63.3)     | 19(63.3)     |

\*Multiple Response

child as the major reasons for declining of the sex ratio. In Kakrala (86.7%) respondents was found the poverty was the main cause of female feticide followed by dowry (76.7%) and family pressure (63.3%) whereas in Rambas (96.7%) respondents found the poverty as the main cause of female feticide followed by dowry (90.0%) and family pressure (63.3%) (Table 2).

### Discussion and conclusion:

In general opinion of the respondents regarding the female feticide majority of the respondents agreed with female feticide ,son preference; preserves the tradition and value of family, will provide social security, social and economical burden of daughter etc., and non-preference for girl child; financial liability on their parents and don't earn for the family, orthodox thoughts hampers the overall development, can't perform the last rites as the major reasons for the declining the sex ratio. The findings were supported by Manhas and Banoo (2013) they conducted a study on the perception of female

feticide among Muslim Doctors of Jammu and concluded that female feticide in Muslim community is due to son preference, lack of religious knowledge, family and social values.

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