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## Female Foeticide: A Death before Birth

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### ABSTRACT

*Some of the worst gender ratios, indicating gross violation of women's rights, are found in South and East Asian countries such as India and china. The determination of the sex of the foetus by ultrasound scanning, amniocentesis, and in vitro fertilization has aggravated this situation. No normal or ethical principal supports such a process for gender identification. The satiation is further worsened by a lack of awareness of women's rights and by the indifferent attitude of government and medical professional. In India, the available legislation for prevention of sex determination needs strict implementation alongside the launching of programmers aimed at altering attitudes, including those prevalent in the medical profession.*

**Keywords:** Foeticide, Women, Abortion, Female, Male.

### INTRODUCTION

The killing of women exists in various forms in societies the world over. However, Indian society displays some unique and particularly brutal versions, such as dowry death and sati. Female Foeticide is an extreme manifestation of violence against women. Female fetuses are selectively absorption, between 35 and 40 million girls and women are missing from the Indian population. In some parts of the country, the sex ratio of girls to boys has dropped to less than 800: 1,000. The Unite Nation expressed serious concern about the situation.

The sex ratio has altered consistently in favor of boys since the begging of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see table), and the effect has been most pronounced in the states of a Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi. It was these states that private fetal sex determination clinics were first established and the practice of selective abortion became popular from the late 1970s, worryingly, the trend is far stronger in urban rather than rural areas, and among literate rather than illiterate women, exploding the myth that growing affluence and spread of basic education along with result in the erosion of Gender bias.

Sex ratio (Female per 1000 males), India 1901-2001.

Year sex ratio sex ratio

In children (0-6 yr)

1901 972-

1911 964-

1921 955-

1931 950-

1941 945-

1951	946-	
1961	941	976
1971	930	964
1981	934	962
1991	929	945
2001	933	927

Source: Registrar General of India]

### ***Status of Indian Women.***

The adverse sex ratio has been linked with the low status of women Indian communities, both Hindu and Muslim. The status of women in a society can be determined by their education, health, economic role, presence in the profession and management and decision making power within the family. It is deeply influenced by the beliefs and value of society. Islam permits polygamy and gives women fewer rights than men. Among Hindus, preference for the male child is likewise deeply enshrined in belief and practice. The Ramayana and the Manusmriti (the Laws of Menu) represent the ideal women as obedient and submissive, and always needing the care of a male first father, then husband, then son.

The birth of the son is regarded as essential in Hinduism and many prayers and lavish offerings are made in temples in hope of having a male child. Modern Medical technology is used in the service of this religion driven devaluing of women and girls.

Religion operates alongside other cultural and economic factors in lowering the status of women. The practice of dowry has spread nationwide to communities and casts in which it has never been the custom, fuelled by consumerism and emulation of upper caste practices. In the majority of cases the legal system has no impact on the practice of dowry. It is estimated dower death occurs in India every 93 minutes.

The need for a dowry for girl children, and the ability to demand a dowry for boys exerts considerable economic pressure on families to use any means to avoid having girls who are seen as a liability. Sonalida Desai has reported that there are protesters in Bombay advertising sex determination tests the read, "it is better to pay five hundred rupees now than fifty thousand Rs (in dowry) later:

Women and developments in Reproductive Technology Abortion was legalized in India in 1971 (Medical Tradition of Pregnancy Act) to strengthen humanitarian values (pregnancy could be aborted if it is a result of sexual assault, contraceptive failure, if the baby severely handicapped, or if the mother is incapable of bearing a healthy child). Amniocentesis was introduced in 1975 to detect foetal abnormalities but it soon began to be used determining the sex of the baby. Ultrasound scanning being a noninvasive technique, quickly gained popularity and is now available in some of the most remote rural areas. Both techniques are now being used for sex determination with the intention of abortion of the foetus turns out to be female. These methods do not involve manipulation of genetic material to select the sex of the baby. Recent preconception gender selection (PGS), however, includes flow Cytometry, preimplantation gender determination of the embryo and in vitro fertilization to ensure the birth of the baby of the desire sex without under sex going abortion. In PGS, X and Y sperms are separated and the enriched sperms are used to fertilize the ovum. The method was intended to reduce the risk of diseases related to the X chromosome, which is for more likely to occur in boys than in girls (who have two X chromosome). Ironically it as being used in India to avoid giving birth to girl children.

Most of those in the medical profession, being part of the same gender based society, are steeped in the same attitudes concerning women. It is scarcely surprising that they are happy to fulfill the demands prospective parents, Medical Mal practice in this area is flourishing and bans can gender selection, for example in Maharashtra, have had little effect.

### ***Consequences of female foeticide***

Given the lower value placed on women in Indian society prenatal sex determination with the intention of preventing female births must be viewed as a manifestation of violence against women. A violation of their human rights. The pregnant women, though often equally anxious to have a boy, is frequently pressurized to undergo such procedures, many women suffer from psychological trauma as a result of forcibly undergoing repeated abortion. More generally, demographers warn that in the next 2 years there will be a shortage of brides

in the marriage market mainly because of the adverse juvenile sex ratio, combined with an overall decline in the fertility. While fertility is declining more rapidly in urban and educated families, nevertheless the preference for male children's fertility. While fertility is declining more rapidly in urban and educated families, nevertheless the preference for male children's remains strong. For these families, modern medical technologies are within easy reach. The selective abortion and sex selection are becoming more common.

In rural areas, as a number of marriageable women declines, men would tend to marry younger women, leading to a rise in fertility rates and thus a high rate of population growth. The abduction of girls in an associated phenomenon. The Hindustan Times recently reported that young girls from Assam and West Bengal are kidnapped and sold into marriage in neighboring Haryana.

The impact on society should not be underestimated. According to Chinese estimates by 2020 there are likely to be 40 million unmarried young men, called Guang guan are "bare branches" in China, because of the adverse sex ratio> a society with a preponderance of unmarried young men is prone to particular dangers. More women are likely to be exploited as sex workers. Increase in molestation and rape are an obvious result. The sharp rising sex crimes in Delhi have been attributed to the sex ratio.

### ***Prevention of sex Determination***

In 1994 the Government of India passed the Pre-conception and pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of sex Selection) Act with the aim of preventing female Foeticide. The implementation of this Act was slow. It was later amended in 2002 by the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuses) Act without ever having been properly implemented.

The Act as a central and state level Supervisory Board, and Appropriate Authority, and supporting Advisory Committee.

### ***Preventing Female Foeticide***

The removal of this practice in India society is a serious challenge. It must involve:

1. A move away from religious teaching and the advocacy of a scientific, rational, and humanist approach.
2. The empowerment of women and strengthening of women's rights through campaigning against practices such as dowry, and ensuring strict implementation of existing legislation.
3. Ensuring the development of and access to good health care services.
4. Inculcating a strong ethical code of conduct among medical professional, beginning with their training as under graduates.
5. Simple methods of complaints registration, accessible to the poorest and most vulnerable women.
6. Wide publication in the media of the scale and seriousness of the practice. NGOs should take a key role in educating the public on this matter.
7. Regular assessment of indicators of status of women in society, such as sex ration and female mortality, literacy and economic participation.

It is only by a combination of monitoring, education campaigns, and effective legal implementation that the deep seated attitudes and practices against women's and girls' can be eroded.

### ***Factors Promoting the Female Foeticide***

- The preference for male patriarchal society is so strong and that forced to abort whether than give to birth to girl child.
- Advent of technology and misuse of sex detection.
- There is also religious belief that parents want a son because a soon perform the last rights for their parents
- Practice like Tradition of giving dowry (gifts by father of bride in cash or property to the groom).

### ***Implications***

- Girls being married at younger age
- Increased numbers of child brides further contribute to the poor statue of women, as they are less likely to finish school or develop job skills before marriage,
- Young brides and their children are more likely to suffer from increased morbidity and mortality associated with early childbirth.

**About PDNT Act**

- To combat the situation govt. of India had enacted Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (registration & Prevention of Misuse) Act 1994 to provide for the regulation for the PNDT.
- Sec 6 of the said Act, clearly says about determination of sex is prohibited.
- Sec 22 prohibits advertisement relating to prenatal determination of sex and punishment for contravention.

Any medical practitioner applying PNDT on any pregnant women for proposes other than those specified, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term of 3 years and a fine of Rs 10000 which may extend to 5 years imprisonment and with a fine RS 50000 also.

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