
Female Foeticide in Haryana

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Abstract: *The present paper deals with the problem of the female foeticide in the society. The sex selection techniques are providing ample opportunity to the female foeticide and socio-economic problems are providing opportunity of female infanticide. Even though the law is a powerful instrument of social change yet law alone cannot root out this social problem. The real challenge before us and government authorities is to remove loopholes in the present laws. It is a responsibility of women's group, NGO's, the mass media educationist and medical professionals have to play their important role to curbing problem. It is pertaining to note that until and unless this menace is controlled, the country is heading for a catastrophic gender imbalance, which in turn would affect the nation's economic progress.*

Keywords: Foeticide, Socio-Economic Problems, Loopholes, Gender Imbalance.

Introduction:

“A Woman is one of GOD’S greatest and complex creations”

Women who constitute half a human population have been discriminated, harassed and exploited irrespective of the country to which they belong, unmindful of the religion which they profess and oblivious of the timeframe in which they live. Everywhere women are confronted with many challenges. Female foeticide is perhaps one of the worst forms of violence against women where a woman is denied her most basic and fundamental right i.e “the right to life”. The phenomenon of female foeticide in India is not new, where female embryos or fetuses are selectively eliminated after pre-natal sex determination, thus eliminating girl child even before they

are born. In Indian society, female foeticide has emerged as a burning social problem during the last few years¹.

It is the disgrace for the Indian society, which considers the birth of a girl child as a bad investment in future. She is considered to be a consumer rather than a producer and this narrow viewpoint of the Indian patriarchal society has led to horrid practices like female infanticide and female foeticide².

Female foeticide cuts across all sections of Indian society – with no regard to caste, religion, or geography. It is practiced by the wealthy, the middle classes and the poor, in urban areas and now spreading into rural regions.³The term “foeticide” is a combination of the Latin words *fetus* and *caedo* which means to kill an

unborn child. The practice of female foeticide involves the detection of the sex of the unborn child in the womb of the mother and the decision to abort it if the sex of the child is detected as a girl⁴.

Reasons of Female Foeticide:

One of the major reasons, extended for the existence of this practice among the several castes and tribes, mentioned above, was the prevalence of hypergamousⁱ marriages, a custom which forbids the marriage of a woman with a person of lower social standing. This invariably led to the giving of large dowry to secure a bridegroom of high social status. The financial burden of marrying off a daughter, and the social stigma of having an unmarried daughter at home, forced people to kill infant girls at birth. There were also certain superstitious beliefs which lent credence to the prevalence of female infanticide⁵. A common belief was that if you kill a female child, the next one is sure to be a male. Another belief was that female children bring ill luck to the family, and could bring possible disgrace to the family honour because of their youthful exuberances. Similarly, the Khonds believed that the souls of girl children, killed as a result of

Position of Women in Haryana:

The sex ratio in Haryana has fallen so low that men are unable to find brides. According to a media report, around 13.5% of Haryana's young men between the age group of 25 and 29 were unmarried in 2010, primarily due to lack of brides.⁶ Unmarried men in Jind district (which had 871 females per 1,000 males) have even formed "*Jind Kunwara Union*" (Jind Bachelors Union) and demanded "brides" in lieu of their votes ahead of the Parliamentary election of May 2014.⁷ As a result, women including minor girls are being bought and

infanticide, would not be born again and hence the number of female children would decrease in their society. Besides, the following are few other reasons of female foeticide specifically in Haryana⁶.

Crime Against Women:

In Haryana, crimes cases against females are more and administration is not able to put control on such incidences in last few years.

Lack of Political Will:

The state and local governments had lack of will to take serious steps to control Female foeticide. Only after reaching at alarming state, government has now taking serious steps.

Small Size Family:

For the sake of small families, parents do not want more daughters and hence abortions of female foetus preferred.

Problem of Security of Girls:

As girls are more prone to crimes, therefore, security problem of girls is also main cause for Female foeticide.

Traditional Thought:

Females only cause burden on parents may it be financial, social, emotional and mental.

trafficked from other states of India including North Eastern states like Assam and Tripura to be brides for men in Haryana.⁸

Table 1 Haryana: Trend of Child Sex Ratio, 1961-2011 Year

Year	Female Children per 1000 Male Children		Decadal Change	
	Haryana	India	Haryana	India
1951	-	983	-	-
1961	910	976	-	-7
1971	898	964	-12	-12
1981	902	962	+4	-2
1991	879	945	-23	-17
2001	819	927	-60	-18
2011	830	914	+11	-13

Sources: i) Census of India Publications, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001.

ii) Census of India (2011), Provisional Population Totals, Rural-Urban Distribution, Paper 2, Vol. 1 of 2011, Haryana, Series 7, Director of Census Operations, Haryana, p. 20.

Table 1 reveals that Haryana has witnessed a decline by 91 points in child sex ratio during the period from 1961 to 2001. A comparison with the trend at all India level is quite revealing. During 1961 and 2011, India's population at the aggregate level has witnessed a decline in child sex ratio by 69 points. The rate of decline in child sex ratio in Haryana has been even more conspicuous since 1981. Between 1981 and 2001, child sex ratio in the state has gone down from 902 to 819, a decline by 83 points. But during the decade of 1991- 2001 alone, the decline in this ratio has been more rapid, i.e. of 60 points. However, an increase of 11 points has been noticed in CSR during the decade 2001 to 2011.

Haryana: Child Sex Ratio:

Table 2: Haryana: Child Sex Ratio by Descending Order of Districts, 2011

State/ District	Female Children Per 1000 Male Children
Haryana	830
Mewat	903
Palwal	862
Sirsa	852
Panchkula	850
Hisar	849

Fatehabad	845
Faridabad	842
Jind	835
Panipat	833
Bhiwani	831
Gurgaon	826
Yamunanagar	825
Kaithal	821
Karnal	820
Kurukshetra	817
Ambala	807
Rohtak	807
Sonipat	790
Rewari	784
Mahendragarh	778
Jhajjar	774

Sources: Census of India (2011), Provisional Population Totals, Rural-Urban Distribution, Paper 2, Vol. 1 of 2011, Haryana, Series 7, Director of Census Operations, Haryana, p. 20.

At district level, out of 21 districts of Haryana, 16 districts have recorded an increase in the child sex ratio during the last decade. Maximum increase has been witnessed in Kurukshetra district 771 in 2001 to 817 in 2011 (46 points), followed by Sirsa from 817 to 852 (35 points), Kaithal from 791 to 821 (30 points), Ambala from 782 to 807 (25 points) and Panipat from 809 to 833 (24 points). from 771 in 2001 to 817 in 2011 (46 points), followed by Sirsa from 817 to 852 (35 points), Kaithal from 791 to 821 (30 points), Ambala from 782 to 807 (25 points) and Panipat from 809 to 833 (24 points). On the other hand, there are five districts in which child sex ratio has decreased from 2001 to 2011. Maximum decrease has been observed in Mahendragarh from 818 in 2001 to 778 in 2011 (40 points), Jhajjar from 801 to 774 (27 points), Rewari from 811 to 784 (27 points), Bhiwani from 841 to 831 (10 points) and Faridabad from 847 to 842 (5 points). On the other hand, there are five districts in which child sex ratio has decreased from 2001 to 2011. Maximum decrease has been observed in Mahendragarh from 818 in 2001 to 778 in 2011 (40 points), Jhajjar from 801 to 774 (27 points), Rewari from 811 to 784 (27 points), Bhiwani from 841 to 831 (10 points) and Faridabad from 847 to 842 (5 points).

Implementation of Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 and Amendment Act, 2002 in Haryana

The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 and Amendment Act, 2002 has also been implemented in the state

of Haryana and came into operation in Feb. 1996. This Act has been amended in 2002 and Rules have also been amended w. e. f. 14.02.2003. Besides this the State Government has also taken the following measures to implement the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act, 2002

and check pre-natal sex determination leading to female foeticide:

- 1) The State has also constituted a multi member State Appropriate Authority under the Chairpersonship of Director General Health Services, Haryana besides Joint Legal Remembrance, Law Department and Deputy Director, Women and Child Development, Haryana as its member.
- 2) Civil Surgeons of all the districts have also been appointed as District Appropriate Authorities for effective implementation of the Act.
- 3) State Advisory Committee has been constituted.
- 4) A State Task Force under the Chairmanship of State Appropriate Authority has been constituted.
- 5) State Supervisory Board under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Health Minister, Haryana has been constituted to monitor the implementation of this Act.
- 6) District Advisory Committees with the District Family Welfare Officer as Chairman and District Immunization Officer, A Gynecologist, Pediatrician and 3 women social worker including Secretary, District Red Cross Society as members have also been constituted in the districts
- 7) The State Govt. has implemented the PNDT Act in letter & Spirit with all sincere efforts in order to check the declining sex ratio in the State⁹.

The following actions have been taken so far to implement this Act in the State:

- ❖ First 3 court cases under this Act were launched in Haryana (district Faridabad), which were first of its kind in the whole country and thus became a trendsetter.
- ❖ Haryana State was also the first state who that gave conviction in PNDT case in the country.
- ❖ 14 doctors/ persons have been convicted in the State, so far, under PNDT Act and 2 convictions under MTP Act.
- ❖ 1036 Ultrasound Clinics/ Genetic Clinics & 67 Genetic Counselling centres registered.
- ❖ 42 ultrasound machines have been registered in Govt. Sector.
- ❖ 115 ultrasound machines have been seized and sealed on account of being unregistered/ other violations.
- ❖ 9296 inspections of various ultrasound clinics have been conducted.
- ❖ Registration of 245-ultrasound centres has been suspended/ cancelled.
- ❖ Recently four prosecutions were launched in the district courts by district Faridabad in the M/o Feb-March 2009.
- ❖ 49 court cases have so far been filed in various courts against the violators under PNDT Act.
- ❖ The name of Dr. Naveen Thapar, M/s Parbhat Ultrasound, Faridabad has been removed from the Haryana Medical Council for a period of 5 years after framing of charges by CJM, Faridabad.
- ❖ The name of Dr. M. P. Kamboj, M/s Kamboj Ultrasound and Diagnostic Pvt.

Ltd., Hisar has been removed from the Haryana Medical Council for a period of 5 years after being convicted by CJM, Hisar.

It is well known that in Haryana State, the child (0-6) sex ratio is 819, which is 2nd lowest, as compared to national average 927 (census 2001). With the best efforts of the state to address this area, the child sex ratio has increased to 854 (As per Civil Registration System (CRS) December 2008).

Haryana State is making efforts to root out this menace from the society by adopting various measures to uplift the status of girl child and women through various welfare schemes and information, education & Communication (IEC) activities highlighting the need for educating women, women empowerment and regarding the menace of dowry, pre-natal sex-determination, female foeticide etc. Community awareness is being created by adopting a holistic approach to make it a people's movement through various IES activities like Mahila Swasthya Sangh's meetings at grass root levels by LHV/ANM/AWW, workshops/seminars at PHC/block and district levels, posters, handbills, calendars, tin plates, exhibition, talks etc. Cinema slides and messages on city Cable T.V. are also being given. Print & Electronic Media is also being widely used to educate the masses regarding this menace. Public forum have been repeatedly used for addressing the issue of female foeticideⁱⁱ. On dated 08.12.2007, a State level seminar against female foeticide was

organized at Sirsa by Haryana State Legal Services Authority (HSLSA) in collaboration with Health Department, Haryana. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana was Chief Guest and Hon'ble Justice Virender Jain, the Chief Justice of Punjab & Haryana High Court was inaugurated this seminar. **Hon'ble Chief Minister, Haryana announced at the spot a prize of Rs. 1.00 lac to one village in each district showing highest increase in sex ratio and a prize of Rs. 5.00 lac to the village showing highest increase in sex ratio in the state.**

Steps taken by Haryana Government to strengthen the position of Women:

- ❖ The Govt. of Haryana has decided to give concession of 10 Paise per unit for domestic electricity connection in the name of woman, in case that the property is owned by woman.
- ❖ The Govt. of Haryana has decided to give 2% rebate on stamp duty in respect of purchase of immovable property by women.
- ❖ The Govt. of Haryana has also decided to reserve 33% seats for women in direct recruitment quota in teaching categories.
- ❖ Govt. of Haryana established 510 Delivery Huts in the State in order to ensure safe delivery in neat & clean environment where birth certificates are being given, which will help in better monitoring of male-female ratio.
- ❖ Govt. of India has made a provision for women empowerment in

JananiSurakshaYojna by giving financial assistance to mother Rs. 500/- and Rs. 700/- if she had a Home / institutional delivery respectively in rural area and in urban area Rs. 600/- are provided to mothers.

- ❖ JananiSurakshaYojna – State Initiative under SC/ ST sub plan - In order to improve the institutional deliveries, w. r. t. SC/ ST families, the State Govt. under the Plan scheme has taken a very positive initiative by providing an assistance of Rs. 1500/- to each pregnant woman belonging to SC/ ST family, who get themselves delivered in the Health Institutions both in Govt. & Private Sector.

The Govt. of Haryana has launched “Ladli Scheme” through Women & Child Development Department. Under this scheme, the Government will provide benefit/ financial assistance of Rs. 5000/- @ Rs. 2500 per girl child on the birth of 2nd girl child per annum for 5 years.

In Haryana women police stations has been opened in all 21 districts with a view to ensure safety of women and instil among them a sense of security and confidence. These police stations were inaugurated on the eve of RakshaBandhan. The all women staff to be posted in each of these 21 police stations has been fully trained and legally empowered to exercise powers under the Criminal Procedure Code. The DGP said that each police station would have one Mediation centre which would take care of matrimonial disputes and office of

protection cum prohibition officer which would look after the dowry cum domestic violence cases. Apart from this, common outreach programme and women self-training programs would also be run from the same building. Similarly, Apart from this, women Helpline No. 1091 would also work from Mahila Police Station and after receiving any information on Helpline would pass information to the concerned Police Station promptly

Conclusion and suggestions:

The female foeticide is purely a human-rights issue. It is a result of abuse of scientific technology; it depicts the powerlessness of women against an ideological onslaught of forces opposed to the independence of and emancipation of women. It is an example how the women are viewed by our society-just as a commodity for consumption. It is accepted fact that decline in sex ratio will have serious social consequence. The decline will play havoc with the population stabilisationprogramme, which requires a balanced gender ratio and a limit as the number of children born every year. Female foeticide will disempower Indian women. As sociologists’ stress, it is only empowered women who raise strong children and nurture strong families. Therefore, the most important step to curb this menace should be the empowerment of women. Empowerment of women can come only through proper education and by securing them economic development. Economic development of women is the most challenging task to be achieved; as it would empower not only the women, but the

nation as a whole. It would be valuable to remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi who said “when women, whom we call “ABALA”, become “SABALA”, all those who are helpless will become powerful.”

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