



## FEMALE FOETICIDE: A CHALLENGE TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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### ABSTRACT :

*Female foeticide is the act of aborting a fetus because it is female related process. This is a major social problem in India. It estimated that more than ten million female foetes have been illegally aborted in India.*

**KEYWORDS :** *Female foeticide, major social problem, illegally aborted.*



### INTRODUCTION

The act of aborting or terminating a fetus while it's still in the womb, because it is female, is known as female foeticide. This can be done after determining the sex of the child before it's born, through ultrasound scans and other instruments.

Sex determination in India is illegal; the practice is rampant and has become a multi-million dollar industry. Coupled with prospective parents desperate for a boy child, and physicians who are carrying out these abortions, female foeticide has become a shameful and shocking reality of our nation.

### WHAT IS FEMALE FOETICIDE?

Female foeticide is the specific fetus removal/end of the young lady kid in the belly itself, done intentionally by the mother, after the identification of the kid's sexual orientation through therapeutic implies. This is typically done under commonplace weight from the spouse or the in-laws or even the lady's folks. Spontaneous pregnancy is commonly the explanation for fetus removal. In any case, female foeticide is an unquestionably more egregious sin than the deep rooted act of murdering an undesirable youngster, even before it's conceived.

In the same way as other social orders the world over, India also is male centric in nature. A set various leveled framework wins in all levels of the social request. The enthusiast fixation on the male sex, however, is unique. Directly from the old sacred texts, one discovers occasions where men are glowingly lauded as the way to proceed with the family heredity.

Unfortunately, a lion's share of female foeticide cases include an excited support of ladies, both old and youthful.

### CONSEQUENCES OF FEMALE FOETICIDE

Every unethical act, like this one, has some age-old lame reasoning behind it, which is used as genuine justification by its staunch supporters. The root cause for female foeticide lies within the cultural norms as well as the socio-economic policies of the country where this practice prevails.

### Following factors are common for this problem-

**1.Preference for the male child:** Elimination/removal of girls from the family tree even before they are born clearly indicates the vehement desire for a boy child. In rituals first preference goes to male. This happens for each and every social, cultural and political process. Sons are seen as the main source of income.

In India, the age old custom of dowry puts a damper on the parents' spirits who are 'blessed' with a girl child. Then begin the calculations associated with marriage expenses, which may happen after a couple of decades.

**2.Deteriorated Status of Women:** Males are the stronger sex when it comes to the pecking order in a country, but that does not entail a curbing of rights for women rather than whining about the denied opportunities, women should stand up and try to grasp the chances they want for themselves.

**3.Malpractices of Medical Ethics:** The opening conversation to this hub satisfactorily covers this point. With the legalization of abortion in India, illegal sex determination and termination of pregnancies has become an everyday reality. The professionals in the medical field are only too glad to help parents realize their dream of a healthy baby boy.

**3.Industrial Growth:** Industrialization of the health sector has further strengthened the selective sex abortion quarter. With the advent of ultrasonography sex determination of the fetes has become much easier than it was earlier. This goes on to show how the manufacturers of high-tech equipment's and gadgets, used to run these tests, benefit from the woes of future parents and their unborn child

The ultrasound technology is cheaper and within easy reach of the lower economically backward strata of society. It is also easily accessible in a hospital/clinic nearby with mediocre credentials.

Unfortunately, the probability of accuracy of the ultrasound is not always 100 per cent until the fetes is twenty weeks old. Consequently, the child aborted by those enthusiastic parents may just be the little prince they were hoping for.



Source: Reuters Blog

### EFFECTS OF FEMALE FOETICIDE-

As Newton's Third Law of Motion states, 'For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction', the after effects of this genocide are fatal and far-reaching. Blinded by the need for an assertive gender to rule the house after the parents' demise, the majority are often ignorant of the disaster they unwittingly invite by indulging in female feticide.

**1.Improper Sex Ratio:** In India, the number of girls per 1000 boys is declining with each passing decade. From 962 and 945 girls for every 1000 boys in the years 1981 and 1991 respectively, the sex ratio had plummeted to an all time low of 927 girls for 1000 boys in 2001. If that statistic is a matter of concern, the current figures are toeing the danger line with only 914 girls for 1000 boys in 2011. In the case of China, the sex ratio is an alarming 118 boys for 100 girls; that means 848 girls for 1000 boys. This is just an example of two nations trapped in the vicious circle. There are many others struggling with a skewed sex ratio.

Sex ratio is merely a microscopic view of the number of both genders. However, when calculated for the entire population, this clearly indicates the widespread disparity. This disparity may prove critical for the country's development in political, economic and emotional spheres. The sex ratios of some countries are listed below:

**2.Female/women trafficking:** The steep decline in the number of girls makes them scarce for the teaming number of males eligible for marriage. As a solution to this issue, illegal trafficking of women has become commonplace in many regions.

**3.Increase in rape and assault:** Once women become an endangered species, it is only a matter of time before the instances of rape, assault and violence become widespread. In the backdrop of fewer available females, the surviving ones will be faced with the reality of handling a society driven by a testosterone high. The legal system may offer protection, but as is the situation today, many cases might not even surface for fear of isolation and humiliation on the girl's part.

**4.Population decline:** With no mothers or wombs to bear any child (male or female), there would be fewer births, leading to a decline in the country's population. Unequal sex ratio can create a number of problems in society like increase the crime rate, physical problems and psychological problems.

### PREVENTION AND CURE

The issues of female infanticide, female feticide and selective sex abortion have gained global attention. Many international and national law making bodies have come forward to stop this cruel practice. Of the numerous steps taken to curb the matter, the prominent ones are:

#### 1. Observation on doctors-

Cancellation/permanent termination of the doctor's license and strict punishment are involving this type of heinous crime.

#### 2. Record maintaining-

Specific record and submission of the data to government cooperation should be given by medical companies which specialize in marketing medical equipments used for illegal sex determination and abortion in unlicensed clinics and hospitals.

#### 3. Implementation of strict rules and regulations –

with high fines and judicial action against 'parents' who knowingly try to kill their unborn baby.

#### 4.Public awareness and information spread in society-

Widespread campaigns and seminars for young adults and potential parents to enlighten them about the ill effects of female feticide. Administration, NGOs and social workers can create the awareness in society to curb this problem.

#### 5.Self motivation and suggestions-

The basic human consideration to let an innocent child live and see the world she was conceived to grow in is not too much to ask. Let's not be murderers of our own flesh and blood.

#### What is the main origin of female foeticide in current scenario?

For centuries, families across many parts of India have regarded a male child as the preferred of the two sexes. There have been many social, financial, emotional and religious reasons for this preference and while times have changed, many of these reasons and beliefs continue to remain.

Today, some of the key reasons that exist for the preference of a male child are as follows:

- Dowry-The tradition of paying dowry at the time of a daughter's marriage is alive and kicking. This amount can be so huge that many parents will go to extreme lengths to avoid having a daughter in the first place.

- Patrual society - great place to sons-a son is seen as someone who can earn and care for his parents in their later years, while a daughter will get married and go away.
- Carry forward the name of race by sons-A son can carry on the family name, while a daughter becomes part of her husband's family.
- As a view of Financial matter-Girls are seen as consumers, whereas boys are seen as producers.
- Social status consideration-Many families consider it a status symbol to have a son, and a point of shame to have a daughter.
- Pressurize to women for diagnosis the child-often, the pressure to bear a male child on the woman is so great that she herself might choose to get sex determination done and abort the baby if it's a girl.
- Other common and traditional social problems-Illiteracy, poverty and the tag of 'burden' that is assigned to a girl child, makes the desire for a male child even stronger.

Modern technology has made it very easy to determine the sex of the child while it's still in the womb, giving parents-to-be the option of aborting the fetus and continuing to try to conceive till they get a male child.

While sex determination has been banned by the Indian government, it does not stop families from going to great lengths to find out this problem.

Once the gender of the baby is known, families that are keen to have a baby boy choose to abort the female fetus. The law on aborting is also strict, and the Indian government allows it only under certain circumstances.

Therefore, by determining the sex of the baby and aborting it because it's a girl, the parents as well as the participating physicians are breaking two major laws.

### **FEMALE FOETICIDE AND UNEQUAL SEX RATIO?**

Sex ratio refers to ratio of females to males in a given region. Practices like female foeticide and female infanticide (killing a baby girl after she is born) have had an adverse effect on the sex ratio of a nation and gives rise to further social evils

As per the censuses 2011 report, the sex ratio of India (females per 1000 males) is as follows-average India sex ratio – 933,rural sex ratio – 946,urban sex ratio – 900,state with highest female sex ratio – Kerala – 1058,state with lowest female sex ratio – Haryana – 861.

The most important impact of female foeticide is the skewed ratio it gives rise to. The dearth of females leads to other complications like female trafficking, kidnappings and in increase in assault and rape against women.

Female foeticide is a horrific and illegal practice that has got to be stopped. The way to do this is by implementation of stronger laws and bringing about a change in the mind-set of our countrymen – uphill tasks, but absolutely crucial nevertheless.

### **Initiatives and planning to stop this problem**

Expanded accessibility of cutting edge innovations, particularly ultrasonography (USG), has been the absolute most significant consider answerable for decline sex proportions and increment in female feticides. In India more than 25000 pre-birth units have been registered.Facilities of sex assurance through "center nearby" are currently helpfully accessible with the families ready to hand out any sum that is requested of them. The simple accessibility of portable filtering machines has converted into lively business for specialists. Sex determination procedures got mainstream in the western and north-western states in the late 70s and mid 80s while they are getting well known in the South at this point.

1.Improve the status of ladies:- The most significant factor liable for diminishing youngster sex proportion is the low status of Indian ladies combined with customary sexual orientation contrast

It has for quite some time been contended that improvement in proficiency rates and financial advancement among ladies could change the antagonistic sex proportion to improve things. In any case, it has been seen that informed moms in Punjab are more inclined to oppress their girls than the uneducated ones. Also, the commonness of pre-birth sex assurance is increasingly across the board among the monetarily wealthy on the grounds that profiting of such administrations is controlled by one's capacity to pay. Strengthening of ladies is the need of time to revile this issue.

2. Eradication of ender segregation related issues-The inclination against females in India is grounded in social, monetary and strict roots. Children are relied upon to work in the fields, give more noteworthy pay and care for guardians in mature age. Along these lines, children are viewed as a kind of protection. What's more, in a man centric culture, children are liable for "conservation" of the family name. Additionally, according to Hindu conviction, lighting the memorial service fire by a child is viewed as fundamental for salvation of the soul. This solid inclination for children which brings about a real existence imperiling hardship of girls, isn't viewed as loathsome socially and socially. Equivalent status and same thought are critical to spread the mindfulness in the public arena.

3. Preclusion on dowry: The fiendish act of settlement is broadly pervasive in India. Subsequently, little girls are viewed as a monetary risk. The endowment framework is increasingly inflexible in the northern conditions of India which is probably going to add to the lesser youngster sex proportion. Ladies have little command over financial assets and the most ideal path for a youthful north Indian lady to increase household control predominantly originates from her capacity to create youngsters, specifically, children. Frequently in south Indian people group, relationships are not exogamous (however regularly consanguineous), and wedded little girls for the most part remain close socially and topographically to their unique family.

Exacting rules and guideline ought to apply those are include in settlement issue.

### PROCEDURES TO CURB FEMALE FETICIDE

Female feticide is a side effect of a fundamental disease. Its rate is expanding as families see that bearing little girls doesn't bode well and doesn't give any social favorable circumstances. Added to that is ages of predisposition that favors bearing a male kid.

The progressive Indian governments have found a way to improve the status of ladies in the general public. The means principally plan to furnish them with more prominent open doors for instruction, work and more prominent state in the issues of administration. They have remembered steps to address the inclination for terms of legacy rights. The PNDT Act is a law made with sincere goals. It bans sex determination when origination, and further manages the utilization of pre-birth indicative methods for carefully therapeutic purposes. Specifically, the law limits the utilization of demonstrative systems to enrolled organizations and administrators, which need to keep up point by point records. Its execution should be enhanced.

To accomplish the long haul vision, endeavors are above water to make a situation where children and little girls are similarly esteemed. Young men should be taught at an early level as to giving regard and equivalent respect to young ladies. The broad communications must be engaged with advancing a positive picture of ladies. School and school young ladies ought to be the intended interest group. Be that as it may, this ought to be joined with featuring the issue and threats of female feticide and slanted sexual orientation proportion. Examination of substance of data gave with respect to fetus removal and sex assurance demonstrated that the message underlined upon the wrongdoing of sex-specific premature birth as opposed to portraying the distinction between sex-particular premature birth and different abortions. Various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are now taking a functioning lead here. It must be stressed that contribution of network pioneers just as persuasive people would go far in guaranteeing achievement in such crusades.

### JOB OF MEDICINAL UNIVERSITIES AND EXPERT BODIES:

While numerous restorative experts have joined crusades against the abuse of these advancements with the help of expert affiliations, some have been solid supporters of sex-particular fetus removal underlining that it is the family's close to home choice to decide the sex of their youngsters. Subsequently the job of therapeutic schools and expert bodies, for example, Indian Medical Association (IMA), alliance of obstetric and gynecological social orders of India (FOGSI) and relationship of radiologists, in countering this consuming issue should be given due significance. This may incorporate

- Sensitizing restorative understudies in regards to the unfavorable sex proportion while worrying upon the moral issues associated with female foeticide.
- Conduct normal workshops/Continuing Medical Education sessions which would extraordinarily emphasize the significance of this issue in the nation. Private experts ought to likewise be urged to partake in such programs.
- Organize mindfulness crusades infield practice zones

### CONCLUSION

Women empowerment in India is a challenging task as we need to acknowledge the fact that gender based discrimination is a deep rooted social malice practiced in India in many forms since thousands of years. The malice is not going to go away in a few years or for that matter by attempting to work at it through half-hearted attempts. Formulating laws, legislations and policies are not enough as it is seen that most of the times these laws and policies just remain on paper. The ground situation on the other hand just remains the same and in many instances worsens further. Addressing the malice of gender discrimination and women empowerment in India is long drawn battle against powerful structural forces of the society which are against women's growth and development. Everyone has to participate in the movement against female foeticide and gender discrimination.

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