

The Missing Daughters

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Abstract

Female infanticide is the deliberate killing of newborn female children. In countries with a history of female infanticide, the modern practice of sex-selective abortion is often discussed as a closely related issue. Female infanticide is a major cause of concern in several nations including India. It has been argued that the "low status" in which women are viewed in patriarchal societies creates a bias against females. Concerted efforts to break the gender stereotypes particularly at the +2 level. Conscious inputs into curriculum, textbooks, teacher education institutional planning supported by career guidance, counseling. Special awareness generation programmes and campaigns to sensitize the public.

Keywords: Infanticide; Children; Daughters.

Introduction

Missing daughters is the number of difference between 952 and daughters actually born per 1000 boys born in the region. Sex-ratio in India is the number of females per 1000 males (all ages) and in many other countries sex-ratio is the number of males per 100 females. Sex-ratio at birth (SRB) is the number of females born per 1000 males born. Child Sex Ratio (CSR) is the number of female children (0-6 years) per 1000 male children as per census; however now 0-4 yrs age group is taken up as CSR [1].

Missing Daughters in the Last Decade

STATE	CSR 2001	CSR2011	Decline/1000
J &K	941	859	82
Dadar & N Haveli	979	924	55
Maharashtra	913	883	30
Rajasthan	909	883	26
Uttarakhand	908	886	22
M.P	932	912	20
U.P	916	899	17

Biological sex-ratio in India is the number of female babies born per 1000 male babies born naturally. At the Inter-National level 105 boys are born naturally for every 100 girls-born. It is by virtue of better survival of the females which leads to a normal sex-ratio of 1:1 at adulthood naturally.

National Alarm

Child Sex Ratio in India declined from 927 in the yr. 2001 to 914 in the yr 2011.5 million daughters (0-6 yrs) missing in the country in last decade. Out of this, about 2 million addition during this decade only [2].

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States where CSR Improved

STATE	CSR 2001	CSR2011	Improvement
Punjab	798	846	48
Chandigarh	845	867	22
Haryana	819	830	11
Himachal Pradesh	896	906	10

Causes of Missing Daughters

- Mainly social e.g. dowry, domestic violence, social security, honor, eve-teasing, division of land, 'vansh' etc. leading to son preference.
- Marriages of daughters becoming all the more expensive and finding grooms becoming all the more difficult.
- Most important is the availability of sex determination/selection techniques [3].
- Increased female IMR, due to poor attention of daughters, adding to missing daughters.

Causes Sequence of SD

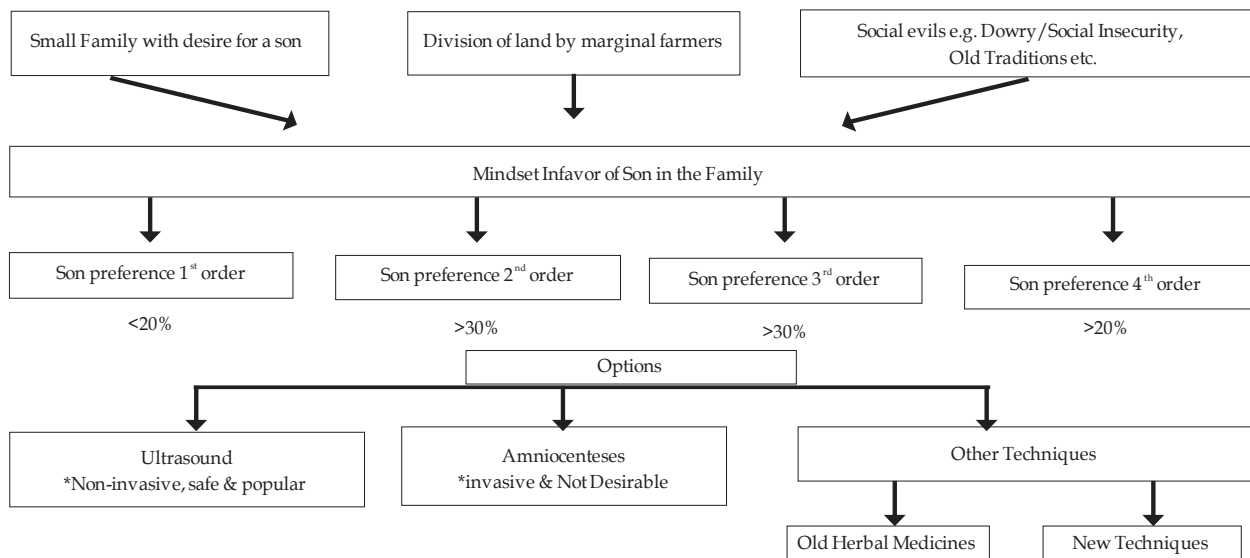


Fig. 1. Causes of Sharp Decline in CSR in Last Two Decades

Due Mindset or Misuse of Medical Technology?

What is mindset?

It is a Manifestation of:

1. Desire (small family but with a son).
2. Prevailing tradition (century old tradition of favor and craving for boys).
3. Available resources (misuse of technology of ultrasonography, misuse of abortion facilities, money for misuse of technology)[4].
4. Commercial angle (comparison of son with buffalo/cow i.e. sex does not matter when visualized from commercial angle)[5].

Prevention of Female Feticide/ Infanticide

Legal Initiative

To check female foeticide, the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 was enacted [6].

Awareness Campaign

To implement the provisions of the Act the help of media units like AIR, Doordarshan, Song and Drama Division, Directorate of Field Publicity, Press Information Bureau, Films Division and DAVP is also being sought. Workshops and seminars have been organized through voluntary organizations at State, regional, district and all block levels to create awareness against this social evil.

Eradication of Sex

Related Harmful Practices :The community, too acts in strange ways to perpetuate the crime by ridiculing couples who do not have a mal child illiteracy, ignorance of the welfare scheme available for the girl child and poverty alleviation and the legal implication of indulging in female infanticide, and the dowry system are some of the reasons for failure of the schemes and interventions undertaken by the government and NGOs to eradicate female infanticide[7].

The Long-Term Strategies should Include Education and Empowerment of Women

- Gender sensitive monitoring in mortality starting from the field level. priority will be given for educating parents on the importance of providing adequate food for the girl child.
- Extensive use of media for the sensitive promotion of a positive image of women and girls.
- Development of school based strategies for inculcating of positive self-image amongst girls [8,9].
- Concerted efforts to break the gender stereotypes particularly at the +2 level. Conscious inputs into curriculum, textbooks, teacher education institutional planning supported by career guidance, counseling. Special awareness generation programmes and campaigns to sensitize the public.
- NGOs working in affected community areas must build up legal and social pressure to counter this practice.
- Intervention programmes for dais can be implemented.
- Reporting of these deaths must be systematized[10-12].

Conclusion

The life of a girl is not so easy, the battle for her life commences right from the day she is conceived in her mother's womb. Her survival and existence is similar to game of Pitch and Toss. The statistics show that 10 million female foetuses have been aborted in India. Moreover, the ratio of girls to that of the boys is decreasing day by day. The time has come when we need to focus on the implication rather than making out fruitless strategies. Unless we take a step ahead,

these practices will continue to flourish. The result will end up in the sex selective abortions and no sooner women will enter into the list of endangered species

We should notice the reasons for female foeticide in the Indian society and try to solve one by one on regular basis. Female infanticide or female foeticide is mainly because of the sex determination. There should be legal stoppage to get control over it. All the laws should be strictly followed by the every citizens of India. And one should be surely punished if found guilty for this cruel practice. Permanent termination of license should be done if found practicing this. Marketing of medical equipments especially for illegal sex determination and abortion should be stopped. Parents should be penalized who want to kill their girl baby. Campaigns and seminars should be regularly organized to aware young couples. Women should be empowered so that they can be more attentive to their rights.

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