

Female Feticide

Female feticide—the illegal practice of aborting a female fetus after determining its sex—remains a critical social challenge in India. It is primarily driven by a deep-seated cultural preference for sons and the perception of daughters as financial liabilities.

Core Drivers and Causes

- **Cultural Preference for Sons:** Sons are often viewed as "assets" who continue the family lineage, provide manual labor, and care for parents in old age.
- **Dowry System:** Despite being illegal since 1961, the Dowry Prohibition Act is poorly enforced. Families often view daughters as a future financial burden due to rising dowry costs.
- **Misuse of Technology:** Affordable ultrasound technology, introduced in the 1980s, made sex determination widely accessible.
- **Small Family Norms:** Adherence to "two-child" family planning often leads families with one or two daughters to selectively abort subsequent female fetuses to ensure a son.

Statistical Impact

- **Child Sex Ratio (CSR):** According to the 2011 Census, the CSR (girls per 1,000 boys aged 0-6) was **919**, a significant drop from 976 in 1961.
- **Regional Imbalances:** Northern states such as Haryana (834), Punjab (846), and Jammu & Kashmir (862) have reported some of the lowest ratios.
- **Missing Females:** Estimates suggest approximately **46 million** females are "missing" from India's population due to sex-selective practices.

Social Consequences

- **Bride Crisis:** Shortages of marriageable women have led to "bride buying" or trafficking from poorer states like West Bengal and Bihar to northern regions like Haryana.
- **Increased Violence:** Imbalanced sex ratios are linked to higher rates of sexual assault, kidnapping, and the marginalization of women.
- **Polyandry:** In some communities, bride shortages have forced practices like wife-sharing among brothers to prevent land division.

Legal and Policy Measures

- **PCPNDT Act (1994):** The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act bans the use of technology for sex determination and imposes strict penalties on doctors and families.
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (2015):** A flagship campaign aimed at improving the survival and education of the girl child.
- **Success Stories:** Villages like **Bibipur** in Haryana and **Piplantri** in Rajasthan have gained national recognition for grassroots initiatives, such as planting trees for every girl born or including women in village councils.
- Female foeticide in India - Wikipedia
This may be connected to the dowry system in India where dowry deaths occur when a girl is seen as a financial burden. Urban India...
- Unwanted daughters: Fighting female foeticide in India
22 Sept 2023 — This marked the first time when women in Bibipur got a platform to raise their concerns in public. Despite the fact that determini...
- Analysis of the Skewed Sex Ratio and Female Foeticide in India
Present study also suggests some measures to prevent this malpractice and hence empower the Women. * 1 Introduction. Female foetic...