

An Epistemological Review on Female Fand Sex Ratio in relevance to Mumbai

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ABSTRACT

Women are murdered all over the world. But in India a most brutal form of killing females takes place regularly, even before they have the opportunity to be born. Female feticide-the selective abortion of female fetuses is killing upwards of one million females in India annually with far-ranging and tragic consequences. Aborting female fetuses is both practical and socially acceptable in India. Prenatal sex detection technologies have been misused, allowing the selective abortions of female offspring to proliferate. Legally, however, female feticide is a penal offence.

Keywords: Female feticide, sex-ratio, sex-selective abortion, population, census, PC-PNDT, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Female feticide is the gory practice of sex-selective abortion, which renders the girl child a victim of the highest degree of gender-rooted prejudice. This paper examines the factors leading to the continuance of this practice despite the existence of specific legislations aiming to criminalize and tackle it. It also looks into the sociological aspects behind such sex-selective abortions, with a glance at future consequences for the same. An analysis of the Pre-Conception and the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 is also made.

"If it seems horrible to kill a man in his own house, it ought surely to be more atrocious to destroy a foetus in the womb before it has come to light." - Jean Calvin

"A woman upon being told that her child is healthy and beautiful looks away sullen. The nurse, pedantically, explains "It's a girl. That's why".

Through this project, the author seeks to understand the reasons behind female feticide in India and its consequences and also seeks to question the effectiveness of legal methodology as a means to eradicate the problem. This project deals with the sociological aspects of sex-selective abortion inclusive of the reasons of such atrocities and the implications and the future consequences of the same. Thereafter, a window is opened to the different statutes that aim to curb the problem, with special reference to the Pre-Conception and the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 (hereinafter, PCPNDT Act).

OBJECTIVE

1. The awareness amongst the women regarding decline in sex ratio, female feticide and related issues.
2. To compare their attitude towards female feticide and girl child of the family.
3. To asses and analyze the various determinant factors for female feticide in the selected area.
4. To formulate a strategy & develop a set of recommendation towards further effective prevention of female feticide.
5. To take the strict legal measures to eradicate this social evil.

LIMITATIONS

1. The first and the foremost thing that needs to change is the attitude of women about their life.
2. The sexual objectification of women in media and the inefficient judiciary that fails to provide justice is one of the major struggles of a woman.
3. Even, the #MeToo movement that has received the highest sharing on social media, the issue is not given importance that it needs.

❖ Why is female feticide still a problem, even in educated parts of India? Return on Investment(ROI)

- Female Feticide is very common in rural regions. It is now reducing drastically in urban areas. This is the mentality of people in uneducated parts of India- A girl child is a liability and a boy is an asset in the eyes of an Indian parent.
- This can be seen by one of its consequences- female feticide. The biggest responsibility any Indian parent have after a girl is born is to start saving for her marriage. Even if they wish not to due to societal pressures they are forced to.
- In villages, parents don't spend on their daughter's education so that they can save for her dowry. It is true that dowry system has diminished in the recent years. But it continues in a different form in urban cities.

Dowry is no longer asked directly, but given by parents in order to

- Provide security for their daughter
- A tie breaker in getting a nice groom for their daughter
- Establish status

In addition to providing her education, they need to save for dowry and seer. As far as a boy is concerned, they provide him education, he can work for 4 years after his college and he has the opportunity to pay back to his parents by working. Whereas a girl is either married off early. There is no return (Return on Investment), but they have to make up their minds that a huge investment has to be made when a girl is born. Others who can't just do this go for female feticide. Female feticide can be seen through history and cultural background. Generally, male babies were preferred because they provided manual labor and success the family lineage. The selective abortion of female fetuses is most common in areas where cultural norms value male children over female children for a variety of social and economic reasons.

A son is often preferred as an "asset" since he can earn and support the family; a daughter is a "liability" since she will be married off to another family, and so will not contribute financially to her parents. Female feticide then, is a continuation in a different form, of a practice of female infanticide or withholding of postnatal health care for girls in certain households. Daughters are liabilities because they have to leave to another family once they are married and cannot take care of their parents. Additionally, they do not contribute economically to the family wealth and are costly because of the dowry system.

People in India usually see men's work as "productive" and contributing the family, while the social perception of female labor does not have that connotation. This also ties to the fact that it is easier for men in India to get high paying jobs and provide financially for their families. Women need increased access to education and economic resources in order to reach that level of gainful employment and change people's perceptions of daughters being financial liabilities. With this cost and benefit analysis, many families come to the conclusion that they must prioritize male children's lives over female lives in order to ensure their financial future. That's why female feticide is still a problem in India.

FEMALE FETICIDE IN INDIA: A HARSH REALITY

India is a vast country. But, in a number of states, villages, cities and towns, another existence found is that of gender bias. Gender bias at the time when a child is born, leading to female feticide and female infanticide.

We often see a number of incidents in the news related to this issue. Recently, a girl child, barely a few months old, was found in a garbage box. There have been incidents of the fetus lying in farms, floating in rivers, wrapped up in jute bags and left to die. A number of reasons lead to this heinous crime. To quote some, want of a male child to carrying the name of the family forward, lighting the funeral pyre to hoping for a bread earner are a few. The most prevalent these days is the fear of the demand for dowry. This has often

been noticed that killing an unborn or just born girl child is better than paying a huge sum as dowry at a later stage. This mentality is specifically found in the rural areas and also in a few metropolitan cities.

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 feticide. It was later amended and replaced in 2002 by the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act.

1. Nearly 10 million female fetuses have been aborted in the country over the past two decades
2. The United Nations has reported that India's female ratio between 0-6 years age group has fallen to 896 females per 1,000 males, the lowest ever in a decade for the world's second most populous nation
3. About three-fourths of the women in the suburban area know about the sex determination test, and female feticide is favored both in rural and urban areas
4. Of the 12 million girls born in India, one million do not see their first birthday
5. Seven thousand fewer girls are born in India each day than the global average would suggest.

Laws That Makes Female Feticide Illegal:

India passed its first abortion-related law in 1971, the so-called Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, which made abortion legit in almost all states of the country, but it was particularly made for the cases of medical risk to the mother and child conceived by rape. The law had also established physicians who could legally perform the abortion in the said scenarios. But the government had not considered the possibility of female feticide based on technological advances. Due to this reason, this law proved to be highly ineffective. During the 1980's, sex screening technologies in India was easily accessible to the common people. Due to this reason, a large number of reports started pouring in about the abuse of the sex screening technologies. Considering this problem, the Government passed the Pre-natal Diagnostic techniques Act (PNDT) in 1994. This law was again amended due to various reasons, and it finally became Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) (PCPNDT) Act in 2004. Its main goal was prevention and punishment of prenatal sex screening and female feticide.

SEX RATIO IN MUMBAI

Mumbai is one of the most populated cities in the world. The densely populated metro city of India is home to over 22.8 million people. According to 1991 census, the population of Mumbai was only 9.9 million; So Population of Mumbai has been rising at an alarming rate in the last 20 years. Mumbai has a Population density of 20,482 persons per square kilometer which is relatively very high.

Current Population of Mumbai in 2018-

Current population of Mumbai Metropolitan Region is estimated to be 22,869,736. This region consists of Mumbai city along with attached towns. Mumbai city population is estimated to be 12,851,726 in 2018.

Population of Mumbai in 2017

Population of Mumbai was estimated to be 22.5 million in 2017.

Population of Mumbai in 2015

Population of Mumbai, the lifeline of Maharashtra is estimated to be over 22 million people. The city ranks at number 6 spot in terms of most populated cities in the world. According to various Government sources, Mumbai metropolitan area is one of the most densely populated areas in India.

Population of Mumbai in 2014

According to estimated figures, the historical city of Mumbai was home to over 21.5 million people in 2014. Mumbai is also one of the most densely populated urban agglomerations in the world.

Population of Mumbai in 2013

Mumbai has experienced a massive growth in its population in the last 50 years. The city was home to over 21 million people in year 2013.

Population Composition in Mumbai

Hinduism continued to be the largest religion in Mumbai with 67.30% Hindu population. Muslims with 18.56% population forms the second largest religious community in the city. The religions of Buddhists 5.22%, Jains 3.99%, Christians 4.2% and Sikhs 0.58% have also significance presence in Mumbai. Marathi is the official language of Mumbai.

MUMBAI POPULATION 2018

Mumbai, also called Bombay, is the capital city of the state of Maharashtra in India, and it's the most populous city in India. The most recent census was conducted in India during 2011, which put Mumbai's Urban Agglomeration at 20,748,395, while the city itself was recorded at 12,478,447. The next national census is scheduled for 2021.

Mumbai's urban population is estimated to be over 22 million, and the densely populated city is the largest in India in terms of population, trade activity and business. The metropolitan area has experienced an explosion in growth over the past 20 years, a common occurrence with metropolitan areas in India. The rapid population growth is attributed to migration from other regions in the country, with migrants seeking business and employment opportunities. The population of Mumbai has more than doubled since 1991, when the census showed that there were 9.9 million people living in the area. The rapid expansion has led to serious health issues that have to be addressed by the government, and a large percentage of residents live in the city's slums.

The percentage of people living in slums is estimated to be as high as 41.3% in Greater Mumbai, meaning that over 9 million people live in these areas. The number of people residing in slums throughout the entire country is estimated to be 104 million, or 9% of the total population of India. Dharavi is the largest slum in Mumbai and the second largest in Asia (after Orangi Town in Pakistan). It is estimated that one million people live in Dharavi, which spans just 535 acres, has a population density of an incredible 869,565 people per square mile. There are approximately 5,000 businesses and 15,000 single-room factories in Dharavi. The slum is the most literate in the country, with a literacy rate of 69%.

The population density of Mumbai is approximately 73,000 per square mile, which makes Mumbai one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Because land is at such a premium, residents of Mumbai frequently live in cheap, cramped housing far from work, leading to long commutes on the city's busy mass transit system.

Mumbai Population Growth

Mumbai has experienced rapid growth over the past twenty years, which has led to an increased number of residents living in slums and has elevated the growth of its largest slum, Dharavi. The Malad-Dahisar region in the west and the Chembur-Govandi region in the east have grown the fastest, growing between 17 and 20% in the last 10 decades. The north is growing much more populous as the southern regions become less inhabited, and the fast-growing areas are seeing massive ghettoization as the fastest growth is occurring in the poorest areas.

The Indian government is currently working to boost the population of the Parsi community, as they have the highest literacy rates and sex ratio in India, but their numbers are rapidly declining. Out of 1.2 billion people in India, only 69,000 are Parsi's, and their numbers have been declining 12% a decade. Mumbai is still home to the largest Parsi's population in the world.

By 2030, Mumbai will have an estimated population of 28 million. These estimates mean that the 6th most populous city in the world would move up the list to become the 4th most populous.

CONCLUSION

Through many mediums, awareness about female feticide is being spread throughout the nation. Let it be plays, soap operas, mass awareness programs, ads, endorsement by various celebrities, Beti Bachao campaign, rallies, posters, etc. Everyone is trying to spread the message everywhere. Despite all these efforts, the sex ratio of our country is not improving.

According to the 2011 Census, there are approximately 110 boys behind 100 girls. This shows that we have wrecked the sex ratio of our country. We can blame the government, the NGO's or the society as a whole for all we like but till the time the common man does not understand the value of a girl child, this problem will not be solved. The people of this country need to understand that every action has a reaction. Due to female feticide, the demand for girls for marriage has increased in the whole country. In one way or the other, it is the female who suffers. We need to understand the importance of a female. After all, they constitute one-half of the society. They should be given the same preference and respect which a male gets in the society.

SUGGESTION

1. Dowry system should be ceased at every level. There must be a penalty on dowry. There should be a community in which a member of the community will inform the police about the dowry practice.
2. Parents those who have one or two girl child should be benefitted by some government scheme. For e.g. Savitribai Phule scheme run by Maharashtra government.
3. Radiologist or Diagnostic centers should be under control of area government health officers and taluka or district health official. Regular screening of centers should strictly carried out.
4. The present laws must be amended to make them effective.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

1. Amendments to constitution should be very structured in case of dowry abolishment and sex determination. If a strong action is taken against people who go for gender determination, there will be rise in corruption at clinics and diagnostic centers. Change should be made at social level and mentality needs to be changed.
2. When dowry practice will be abolished, the society will stop forcing a women to go for female feticide.
3. As millennials are coming to forefront who have had a life free of gender biasness, there is a new hope for India.

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