

Female Feticide in South Haryana: A Serious Challenge For the Society

Prof. Randhir Singh Sangwan* & Neha Yadav**

* Professor and Chairperson, Department of Geography, IGU, Meerpur, Rewari

**Research Scholar, Department of Geography, IGU, Meerpur, Rewari

Received: May 09, 2019

Accepted: June 12, 2019

ABSTRACT: Women constitute half a human population have been discriminated, harassed and exploited irrespective of the country to which they belong. Everywhere woman is confronted with many challenges. Female is perhaps one of the worst forms of violence against woman where a woman is denied her most basic and fundamental right i.e. "the right to life" killing of female child has been a phenomenal characteristic of Indian society under the rule of patriarchy since ancient days. Female feticide cases have been increasing from a decade in many states of India. The girl children become target of attack even before they are born. Numerous scholars have observed that the latest advances in modern medical sciences the test like amniocentesis and ultrasonography which were originally designed for detection of congenital abnormalities of the foetus, are being misused for knowing the sex of the foetus with the intention of aborting it if it happens to be that of a female. The worst situation is when these abortions are carried out well beyond the safe period of 12 weeks endangering the women's life. Advanced medical technologies, increasing number of crimes against women, problem of security of women, financial burden on parents of daughters are some of the reasons responsible for female feticide. But the problem become worse when the balance of sex ratio get disturbed as nature has made both sexes equally important for the survival of civilization. In Haryana, the sex ratio is lowest as compared to neighbouring states except Punjab. This paper draws attention to the growing menace of female feticide in south Haryana. The extent causes and effects of this menace are been discussed at length using data obtained from census 2011.

Key Words:

Introduction

"Mahatma Gandhi" said, a woman is the companion of man, gifted with the equal mental capacities she has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has the same right to freedom and liberty as he. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. Man and woman are equal in status but are not identical. Female feticide is one of the extreme manifestations of violence against woman a social problem that is now spreading unchecked across the country. (Ms Rajini shrivastav 2014)

It is a travesty that a country projected to be a world power has to grapple with problems of imbalanced population growth largely on account of social prejudices against its women. Various social, economic and demographic indicators provide evidence of a gender bias as well as deep-rooted discrimination against women and girl children. A century old Indian demographic history records that in the matter of sheer numbers, the female ratio in total population had always remained unfavourable.

Approaches and Methodology

The Present study of child sex ratio of South Haryana an analysis is part of population geography.

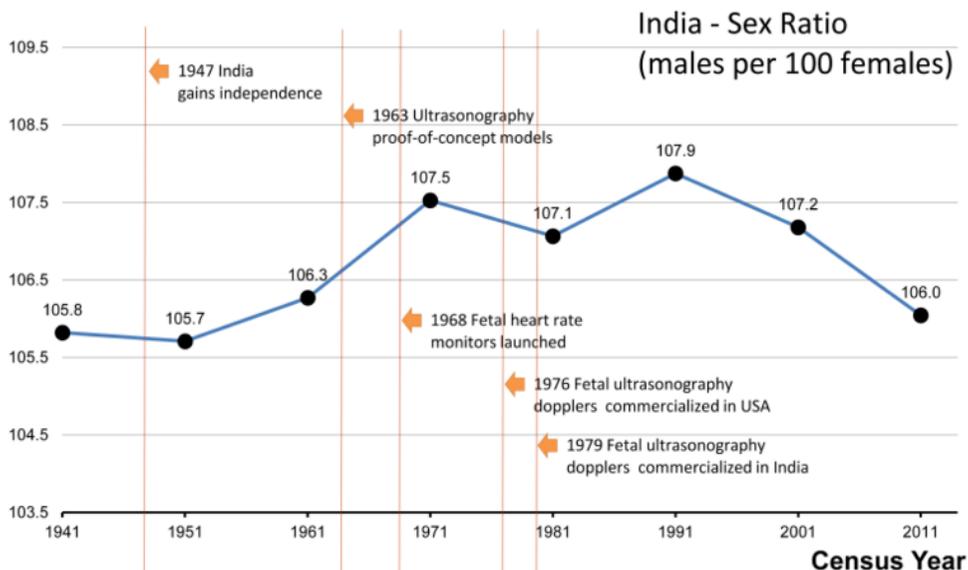
Data for decade 1991, 2001, 2011 for child sex ratio is considered for this analysis. It involves basically secondary data. The data is taking from census of India 2011, Primary census Abstract Haryana, Report of National commission for women. Data were arranged, processed and then presented in tables. Map will be used for the spatial pattern of sex ratio.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyses the trends of child Sex ratio in all the districts of Haryana.
2. To understand the causes and consequences of child sex ratio in south Haryana.
3. To examine the government initiatives or policies in improving child sex ratio in Haryana.

India's population has crossed 121 crores and shall continue to move upwards indicating that a significant portion of the world's cumulative inhabitants live in India. So much so, population experts forecast that it would overtake China as the most populated country within a few decades. However, there has been a discrepancy among population reports regarding the balances of the sexes. Since the early nineteen hundreds, India has recorded higher number of males being born in relation to females. Over the last several

decades, the imbalance has widened and is now of grave concern. The numbers recorded by Census India in 2011 showed that for every 1000 males born in India only 940 females were documented. According to the decennial Indian Census the sex ratio in the 0 to 6 age group in India has risen from 102.4 males per 100 females in 1961 to 104.2 in 1980, to 107.5 in 2001, to 108.9 in 2011 (Census Bureau Government of India 2001 Census, Census of India 2013)



It strangulates our growth as humankind. The rules made by patriarchal society can surely be reworked for building a better society which does not indulge in acts of perjury against helpless female foetus. Why do we need to have different attitudes towards men and women? Why can't they just be treated as individuals and valued for their worth?

Once in our lives, most of us must have heard that a child is a 'gift' from God. Though whatever biology may suggest, it is not an uncommon sight in India to see couples praying to be blessed with a child. But almost half of India, no longer considers it a blessing if that child happens to be a girl. The blessing soon becomes a curse and the 'precious gift' is done away with as soon as possible before extending another demand to God, that of a 'male' child. The worst of the doing away practices is slaying her even before she can take even free breath.

It is more than timely to pause, think and question as to why what Apoorva says, "Her every unformed limb is battling for her rights, her every stifled cry begs for freedom and her every unsung death mourns the dilatory demise of humanity (Gupta and Apoorva 2009)

Indian society is based on patriarchal beliefs. By and large the identity of a woman is not independent, but is dependent on patriarchal social relations in the sense that women are predominantly known as the daughters, wives, or mothers. Of these three identities, the role as a mother is an important one. "It is not only that motherhood brings status to woman but also it is an attribute without which she is useless." (Patel and Tulsi 2007)

The number of cases of female feticides has been increasing in northern and southern states of India. Fast changing technologies in the medical field has provided ultrasound diagnostic methods to identify the gender of the foetus in the women, leading to large scale female feticide. (Meenu 2014)

Sex ratio is a composite indicator of woman's status in a society. If we analyse state wise sex ratio, it is most disturbing to note that the States like Punjab and Haryana which are among the prosperous states of India, female-male ratio is continuously declining.

Scenario in Haryana

Table No- 2 Demographic profile of Haryana

Current Population of Haryana in 2011	2,53,53,081
Total Males	1,35,05,130
Total Females in Haryana	1,18,47,951
Sex Ratio in Haryana	877 females per 1,000 males
Child Sex Ratio in Haryana (0-6 age)	830 females per 1,000 males

(Source: www.censusindia.gov.in)

Table No.- 3 Current Population of Haryana

State /District	Total Population	Sex Ratio 2011 Census	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 age)	Literacy Rate
Haryana	2,53,53,081	877	830	67.91
Panchkula	5,58,890	870	850	83.4
Ambala	11,36,784	882	807	82.9
yamunanagar	12,14,162	877	825	78.9
kurukshetra	9,64,231	889	817	76.7
Kaithal	10,72,861	880	821	70.6
Kar nal	1506323	886	820	76.4
Panipat	1202811	861	833	77.5
Sonipat	1480080	853	790	80.8
Jind	1332042	870	835	72.7
Fatehbad	941522	903	845	69.1
Sirsa	1295114	896	852	70.4
Hisar	1742815	871	849	73.2
Bhiwani	1629109	884	831	76.7
Rohtak	1058683	868	807	80.4
Jhajjar	956907	861	774	80.8
Mahendragarh	921680	894	778	78.9
Rewari	896129	898	784	82.2
Gurgao	1514085	853	826	84.4
Mewat	1089406	906	903	56.1
Faridabad	1798954	871	842	83.0
Palwal	1040493	879	862	70.3

(Source: [www.censusindia.gov.](http://www.censusindia.gov/))

As per the latest 2011 census, a significant feature of Haryana population is preponderance of males over females. Out of total population of 2,53,53,081 in the state, 1,35,05,130 are males and 1,18,47,951 are females, resulting in low sex ratio. According to the census of India 2011, the sex ratio of Haryana stands at 877. This is a welcome improvement from 2001, which had recorded 861 females for every 1000 males.

The Census evidence points towards a strict cultural preference for male children as observed from the pattern that emerges across regions. The two kinds of explanation put forward for this deviant pattern are in terms of the practice of female foeticide, and sex-selective abortion as well as female child neglect, none of which is described in terms of its precise magnitude on its bearing on masculinity of sex ratios. While these could be the immediate causes resulting in the distortion of sex ratios, the prime motivation for practice of such measures stems from the preferential sex composition of children. With the ongoing pace of fertility transition, couples are rather forced to achieve a desired sex composition of children within a limited allowance for the number of children. This is mentioned as another dimension intensifying preferential fertility regulation leading to the distortion in sex ratios.

Table No. 4

Child Sex Ratio	1991 Census	2001 Census	2011 Census
Haryana	879	819	830
Panchkula	890	829	850
Ambala	888	782	807
Yamunanagar	888	806	825
Kurukshetra	868	771	817
Kaithal	854	791	821
Karnal	871	809	820
Panipat	889	809	833
Sonipat	878	788	790
Jind	858	818	835
Fatehabad	873	828	845
Sirsa	883	817	852
Hisar	864	832	849
Bhiwani	885	841	831
Rohtak	868	799	807
Jhajjar	886	801	774
Mahendragarh	892	818	778
Rewari	894	811	784
Gurgao	895	807	826
Mewat		893	903
Faridabad	884	847	842
Palwal		854	862

(Source: www.censusindia.gov.)

A look at the trends of child sex ratio in Haryana over the three consecutive censuses from 1991, 2001 and 2011 in table no. 4 reveals that there has been a historical consistency in the region regard to decline in child sex ratio. Child sex ratio in 1991 census is 879, reflecting a decrease of 60 points in 2001 as it touched a low of 829. In 2011 census though it increased by 11 points to reach 830 but still remained below 879 of 1991.

Coming to Haryana, Gurgaon shows highest child sex ratio in the state according to 1991 census with ratio 895. Though in 2001 it dropped to 807 and gradually it increased in 2011 with ratio 826.

Mewat is the district which is not a part of Haryana in 1991. But from 2001 onwards it becomes a part of Haryana which shows the highest child sex ratio in 2001 census with ratio 893 and it increased in 2011 with ratio 903.

The district showing the lowest child sex ratio 1991 census is Kaithal with ratio of 854 which dropped further to 791 in 2001 and gradually increased to 821 in 2011 census.

According to the latest census of 2011, the lowest child sex ratio was in the district of Jhajjar which is 774. Despite that it showed an increase as compared to 2001 census which showed the figure of 801. Then in Mahendragarh it is 778 and in Rewari it is 784 which is decreasing as compared to 2001 it is 818 and 811 respectively.

According to census of 2011, the lowest child sex ratio shows in south Haryana district of Jhajjar, Mahendragarh and Rewari are in worst districts.

In case of southern part, which includes the Rewari and Mahendragarh districts of Haryana, generally indicate prejudices attitude against girl child. It has been observed that the overall situation of Rohtak Sonapat and Jhajjar districts of Haryana indicate that 14.09 per cent of the male and 16.13 per cent of the female respondents. On the other hand, there were the areas in southern region of Haryana which indicate their less than 800 female (0-6yrs) per 1000 male sex ratio. It has also been observed that the mind-set of the respondents belongs to rural and the urban areas indicate their views more or less same within these districts. (singh 2014)

Major Reasons for the Lowest Sex Ratio in South Haryana

1. Differences by Social and Religious Groups

An analysis of the census data reveals that among the various religious communities, the Sikh have the worst track record for sex selection. There are just 786 females to every 1000 males in the 0 to 6 age groups.

After the Sikhs, it is the Jains, who have a dismal sex ratio of 870 females to 1000 males. Muslims fair well with regard to a sex ratio of 950 females to 1000 males. The best sex ratio is of Christians, at 964 females to 1000 males and Buddhist at 946. Hindu have reported a child sex Ratio of 925 that is slightly lower than the national average of 927 for the total population (census 2011). The linkage between culture, religion and feticide has always been considered an important one. Several researchers have pointed out that the practice of female feticide has received religious sanction, which has led to the masses adopting such values. The pregnant woman, though often equally anxious to have a boy, is frequently pressurized to undergo such procedures. In south Haryana Mewat is the best example of good sex ratio, as compared to other districts, because in Mewat maximum population is Muslim population (census 2011).

In this context, the religion ranks first, In Haryana, Hindu is a dominant region, followed by Sikhs in Karnal, Kurukshetra and Sirsa districts. The sex-ratio of the Children is lowest in the Sikhs. Their love for the agricultural land which further require male for inheriting and cultivating. It was observed in some of the respondents, in Dheerpur (Kurukshetra) and Uchani (Karnal) villages of Haryana. All these areas indicate less than low child ratio (less than 820 females per 1000 female). On the contrary, the Mewat region of Haryana where the Islam is practiced by 85 percent of the „Meos“ in whole district of Mewat and Hathin Tehsil of Palwal district (singh 2014)

It has been observed that the „Meos“ are having a strong prejudice against the family planning and the female foeticide practices. As a result, indicate highest child sex-ratio (906) in whole North-western region of India (census, Haryana 2011)

Dowry System: The evil of dowry system has led to a belief that daughters have to be protected and sufficient financial resources have to be accumulated to support the marriage of the girl. Boys on the other hand are considered as assets, who fetch a fabulous dowry for the parents. This has created a stereo-type notion of girl as a “burden” on the household

As Haryana is economically stronger than other states, per capital income of the people is more so there is more demand of dowry. But as compare to another district of Haryana. Jhajjar, mahendergarh, Rewari, district of south Haryana are economically very week and per capita income of the people are less. But because of per capita income of Delhi and gurgaon are high and increasing day by day. Rates of land are also increasing in these districts from last few years. So dowry is also increasing according to their Income. And because of this surrounding areas of these districts, Dowry system is also increasing in south Haryana. But these districts are economically week and less developed. So they feel that female is a burden for them. Lastly, the income determines the preference for son. It has been observed that the higher income groups, are having no preference of boys or girl. On the other hand, the respondents, belonged to lower income groups have relatively preferred the son. This trend has been observed in almost all the districts of Haryana (Dalbir and satpalsingh 2014)

Crimes against Female: In Haryana crimes against females are more and administration is not able to put control on such incidences in last few years. According to (Tahir and hussain 2013) Crime against women in NCR is increasing from last few years. Among the 12 metropolitan cities, Delhi accounted for 30 per cent of rape cases and 46 per cent of kidnapping cases in 1990. On the whole crime against women has gone up by 75% in 15 years between 1998 and 2011. The majority of crimes against women is matrimonial crimes. The rate of increase in cases of domestic violence is highest at 140 %, followed by kidnapping at 117%, rape by 60 % and molestation at 40 % between 1998 and 2011. However, as an exception, there was a substantial increase in the number of rapes and acts of sexual violence reported after December 2012 till March 2013 (hussain 2013).

So we can say crime against female is a major factors for decreasing child sex Ratio in south Haryana because these worst district are also a part of NCR and very close to Delhi and gurgaon.

Education: Education plays a significant role for acquiring the knowledge & awareness. In this study declining son preference has found among the couples, mostly well educated, belong to urban areas. In the context, low sex ratio among the (0-6 yrs) age group of the children in Jhajjar, mahendergarh and Rewari district indicate relatively lower sex ratio. It is because of higher level of literacy within these districts. It is 80.8, 78.9, 82.2 in Jhajjar, Mahendergarh and Rewari district respectively. (census 2011) The highly educated group has more exposure and knowledge of sex determining technique etc.

Problem of Security of Girls: As girls are more prone to crimes, problem of security of girls is a main problem of parents. Delhi occupies the top place for reported crimes among 35 cities in India with million plus population, the share being 16.2%, as also in the rate of crime against women (27.6 per 100,000, compared to national average rate of 14.1). The crime mix includes rape, kidnapping, abduction, dowry deaths, cruelty, immoral traffic, molestation, sexual harassment, and eve teasing. The following conclusions

were drawn from the primary survey of victims in NCR in the year 2012. The highest percentage (31%) of victims was from the age-group 25-35 (Tahir and Hussain 2013). So insecurity of sexual offences against girls is increasing in south Haryana.

According to Khichi and T. Bir (2012) The various reasons for son preference mentioned by the ASHAs in Rewari, include that he is support and provider in old age; keeps the family name alive; perform the last rites; and by investing on sons in their education or business the wealth remains intact in their family.

On the other hand, reasons for not preferring female child are dowry and perception of girls being *parayadhan*. It has also been stated that investing on girls is waste with no returns and security reasons especially sexual offences against girls.

Laws Against Female Feticides in India

MTP Act

The maternal termination of pregnancy act was come in to existence in 1971. This was the first law to regulate the termination of pregnancy. According to this law, if pregnancy involves a risk to life of pregnant women in that case she can go for abortion.

PNDT Act

The pre-conception and pre-natal diagnostic technique (Prohibition of sex selection) Act was brought in to force in 1994, to prevent misuse of technologies like ultrasound that enable testing the sex of an unborn child.

The Maharashtra government enacted the Maharashtra regulation of pre-natal diagnostic technique Act 1988, the first anti sex determination drive in the country. This was followed by a similar Act in Punjab in May 1994.

This act carrying a three years imprisonment and Rs 10,000 fine for offender, but the actual implementation of law took place in 1997.

Since the advent of ultrasound and detection technique for the sex determination 10 million female fetuses have been aborted in India. According to a study, every year about 50,000 unborn girls, one in every 25 are aborted. According to the UNICEF, 40 to 80 million girls have gone missing from Indian population since 1991. As per census 2001, the child ratio in Punjab is 793 girls to 1000 boys. This is the lowest child ratio in the country.

India tops the list as far as illegal abortions and female feticides are concerned. Knowing that it is immoral and unethical as well as it may amount to an offence, fetus of a girl child is aborted by qualified and unqualified doctors or compounders. This has affected overall sex ratio in various states (Menu 2014)

The situation is particularly bad in the agriculturally developed and high per capital income states like Haryana and Punjab. According to UNICEF study there are only five states where no case of female feticide or infanticide have been reported in 1994 to 1996, 3 years, these states are Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Jammu and Kashmir.

Initiatives by the government for the Increase of Sex Ratio

The Ladli Scheme: The Scheme aims at curbing female feticide and improving the social state of the girl child by supporting education and protecting them from discrimination. Sponsored by state bank of India, in this scheme the account in the name of a girl child will be opened with a deposit of 10000 and subsequently Rs 5000 will be deposited with the girl's

Admission to classes.

Sable Scheme: The main objective of this scheme is empowerment of adolescent girls. It includes bringing back the out-of-school girls under the umbrella of formal and non-formal education. It would also contain information about important milestones of her life, such as joining school, marriage etc.

Dhanalakshmi Scheme: launched in 2008. It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for child with insurance cover. It is aimed at providing cash transfer to the family of the girl child on fulfilling certain specific conditions such as birth and registration, immunization etc.

Sukanya Samriddhi Account: (literally Girl child Prosperity Account) in a Government of India backed saving scheme targeted at the parents of Girl children. The scheme encourages parents to build a fund for the future education and marriage expenses for their female child. The scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 January 2015 in Panipat Haryana, as a part of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Campaign. The scheme currently provides an interest rate of 9.2% and tax benefits. The account can be opened at any India Post Office or a branch of some authorised commercial banks.

Conclusion: In South Haryana the genocide against girl child in form of foeticide and infanticide continues unabated across castes, class and communities. Today, no major District in Haryana is free from this menace. A combination of legal, economic and social factors have contributed to female foeticide and infanticide. This has led to adverse sex ratio, especially child sex ratio. In the coming years, if this problem is

not effectively arrested, it would lead to social catastrophe. Therefore, a multipronged strategy encompassing legal, economic and social reforms is required.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Gupta, Apoorva theviewpaper.net/a-death-unsung-female-foeticide-in-india/7/6/2009.
2. **Patel, Tuls, (ed.) (2007)**, "The Mind Set Behind Eliminating the Female Fetus". *Sex-selective Abortion in India: Gender, Society and New Reproductive Technology*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications, p.142.
3. **Rajni Shrivastav, (2014)**, "Female Feticide: A Social Evil in India (Challenge before Us), *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.19, pp 71-74
4. **Meenu (2014)** "Why Haryana has Lower Sex Ratio", *Weekly Science Research Journal*", vol.2
5. **George and Dahiya(1996)**"Female Feticide in Rural Haryana" *Economic and Political weekly*, August 8-14, 33(32) 2197-98
6. **Sanjeev Kumar khichi and T.bir (2012)**"Declining Child Sex Ratio: Perception of asha in Rewari District of Haryana State" *Health and Population perspectives and Issues* 35(3),95-103,2012
7. **Dalbir singh and Satpalsingh (2014)** "Evaluating the Magnitude of female Foeticide Problem of Punjab and Haryana-A regional Analysis" *journal of Humanities and social science*, volume 19, Issue 10
8. **Dr. Mary Tahir and Dr.Tahir Hussain** "Crime Against Urban Women in NCR(Natinal Capital Region, Delhi)" ISSN:2371-1784, vol 01 Issue-01(May 2013)
9. **Ghosh, Esther A, Goel Rita, And Shanti Balda (2005)** Awareness of Rural Couples about Sex Ratio; *Journal of Human Ecology*, 2005, 18(2), 167- 168.
10. **Jagdeep Kumar and Shilpa Devi (2013)** "Sex Ratio of Haryana: A Geographical Analysis, ISSN No 2277-8160; vol:2, Issue :12 dec 2013
11. **Kaur Ravinder (2007)**Declining Juvenile sex ratios. *Journal of Applied Economic Research*; Referred by TabasumZubaida. A study of factors contributing to decline in sex ratio in Sri Nagar district, *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 2013, January 2 (1), 3.
12. **Ranvir Singh, Ramesh Verma, Pragya Dixit (2015)** "Awareness about Female Feticide among Adolescents in Rural Areas of Haryana: A School based Cross-Sectional study" *Internatinal Journal of Basic and applied Medical Sciences* ISSN-2277-2103, vol.5 (2),pp. 71-77/ singh et al
13. **Garg and Nath A (2008)**Female feticide in India. *J Post grad* Vol 54; Referred by TabasumZubaida. A study of factors contributing to decline in sex ratio in Sri Nagar district, *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 2013, January 2 (1), 3.
14. **Srivastava, Arti, Dasgupta, Papia and Rai, Shashi (2005)**Attitude towards Girl Child and Declining Sex Ratio in Bhopal, Bhopal; *Centre for Women's Studies*,42
15. **Christian D, Sonaliya KN and Garsondiya J (2014)**. Female feticide in the view of fertile females: A study among suburban pregnant women of Gujarat, India. *International Journal of Medical Science and Public Health* 3300-4.
16. **Kansal R, Maroof KA, Bansal R and Parashar P (2015)**. A hospital-based study on knowledge, attitude and practice of pregnant women on gender preferences, prenatal sex determination and female feticide. *Indian Journal of Public Health* 54 209-12.
17. **Jos, Mary (1988)** A Socio-Spatial Analysis of Crimes in India: A case Study of Delhi, Unpublished M.Phil dissertation, CSRD, SSS,JNU, New Delhi India at Glance (2013) *Population Census 2011, Census of India, Government of India. Census (2001) censusBeuroe Government of India.*