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## Understanding the Complex Factors Driving Female Foeticide in Bikaner District of Rajasthan

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### ABSTRACT:

*The present study entitled "Understanding the Complex Factors Driving Female Foeticide in Bikaner District of Rajasthan" was undertaken to analyze the factors that lead to female foeticide. The present study was conducted in the Bikaner district where there are seven panchayat samities out of which Kolayat and Sridungargarh panchayat samities were selected based on the lowest and highest sex ratio for selection of the rural respondents. Urban respondents were selected from Bikaner city. Bikaner city was divided into two zones (East and West zone) from each zone one ward was selected randomly. The data was collected with the help of a questionnaire method. The major findings of the present study revealed that most respondents were 21- 27 years old. The major factors perceived by the respondents that lead to female foeticide were the dowry system and boys as a source of support in old age. Comparative data indicate that boys are a source of support in old age. The dowry system was an important factor perceived by rural boys ranked first with a mean score of 0.86. In the case of girls, girls are a financial burden and the dowry system was the most important factor perceived by rural girls ranked first with an equal mean score of 0.74.*

**Keywords:** Female foeticide, Sex ratio, Dowry and Financial burden.

### INTRODUCTION

The selective abortion of female fetuses following prenatal sex determination, known as female foeticide, is still a serious violation of human rights despite legislative restrictions and public awareness initiatives. The custom is a result of long-standing patriarchal attitudes and gender inequality that prioritize male offspring above female offspring (UNFPA, 2020). Cultural and economic inclinations for sons have traditionally resulted in lopsided sex ratios in nations like China and India. (Bongaarts & Guilmoto, 2015). Medical technology has enhanced maternal health, especially about ultrasonography and prenatal screening but it has also made sex-selective abortions

easier, which has made gender inequality worse (Jha et al., 2022). The continuation of female foeticide is significantly influenced by economic considerations. Due to dowry customs and marriage costs, females are seen as economic liabilities in many civilizations, but sons are seen as financial assets who would inherit property and support their families in their later years (Pande & Malhotra, 2015). Sex-selective abortions have been attempted to be curbed by legal frameworks like India's Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, but enforcement is still lax and cultural opposition endures (Ghosh, 2021). The practice is also influenced by social and cultural factors, with traditional and religious beliefs reiterating the necessity of male heirs (Bhatnagar et al., 2019). Furthermore, contemporary socioeconomic changes like greater urbanization and economic growth have not substantially changed these prejudices and, in certain situations, have even made sex-selective abortion more widely available because prenatal testing is now more reasonably priced (Guilmoto, 2017). Female foeticide has serious long-term effects, such as skewed sex ratios, a rise in gender-based violence, and an increase in forced marriages and human trafficking as a result of a lack of available women (Chowdhury & Patel, 2023).

Female foeticide is a widespread social evil that affects communities all over the world and cuts over national boundaries and cultural boundaries. Selective abortion of female fetuses is part of this abhorrent practice, which contributes to skewed sex ratios and gender-based discrimination. Through an analysis of its historical background, societal effects, and governmental reactions, this research study aims to disentangle the complex web of causes that underlie female foeticide. To shed light on the complex and interrelated elements influencing the continuation of female foeticide, we must examine a wide range of literature as we begin our investigation. The purpose of this study is to highlight the seriousness of the problem and promote well-informed solutions that deal with these root causes to promote a society that is more just and equal. A grim picture of the diminishing female-to-male ratio is painted by the 2011 census and recent news reports. Surprisingly, reformist states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat have the greatest impact. According to UN criteria, there are typically 1050 women for every 1000 men worldwide. India is ranked 124th out of 173 countries in the Human Development Survey Report. It is true that our country lags far behind other countries in terms of health, gender discrimination, and education. Female infanticide and female foeticide are to blame (Bano et al., 2021).

#### **MATERIAL & MATHEDS:**

The present study was curbed to measure the factors that lead to female foeticide by youth. Two panchayat samiti of Bikaner district were selected based on the highest sex ratio i.e. Sridungargarh and lowest sex ratio i.e. Kolayat for the selection of rural respondents. Urban respondents were selected from Bikaner city. Bikaner city was divided into two zones (East and West zone) from each zone one ward was selected randomly. For selection of respondents, a total of

200 respondents were selected for the study purpose. The sample size constitutes 100 rural youth (50 girls + 50 boys) and 100 urban youth (50 girls + 50 boys). Keeping in view the objectives and the variables under study, a questionnaire was framed. The questionnaire contained the background profile of respondents and factors that lead to female foeticide.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

### **Factors that lead to female foeticide:**

The present study shows factors that lead to female foeticide expressed by the respondents grouped into three factors i.e. Socio-economic factors, Technological factors and Population Policy. Thus, a total of thirteen factors were recorded based on the rank assigned to each factor.

The data incorporated in Table 1 reveals that the dowry system was the most important factor that lead to female foeticide perceived by the respondents occupying first rank with a mean score 0.75. it can be seen that boys as are source of support in old age was the second important factor with a mean score 0.72 whereas girls are a financial burden occupied third rank with a mean score of 0.71. The other important factor was boys are financial and social support, Boys carry the family name, Son being responsible to carry forward family name and occupation Presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound ranked at fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh with mean score 0.68, 0.67, 0.64 and 0.55. Further it can be observed that torture by in-laws, Government of India promote a family with two-child so the families prefer having son compared to daughter, social responsibilities taken by male, boys perform religious rites during cremation, social prestige of girls is lower in society and girls need more protection than boys ranked at eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth with mean score 0.47, 0.44, 0.42, 0.41, 0.40 and 0.38 respectively.

In case of boys, dowry system and boys are source of support at the old age were most important factor that lead to female foeticide perceived by the rural boys occupied first rank with equal mean score 0.86 whereas dowry system perceived by the urban boys and occupied first rank with mean score 0.70. Boys are a financial and social support was second most important factor perceived by the rural boys with mean score 0.76 whereas girls are a financial burden was second factor perceived by the urban boys with mean score 0.68. The other important factor was son being responsible to carry forward family name and occupation, girls are a financial burden and boys carry the family name were ranked third with equal mean score 0.72 stated by rural boys and boys are source of support at the old age and boys carry the family name ranked third with equal mean score 0.64 given by urban boys. The other important factor was presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound, boys perform religious rites during cremation, government of India promote a family with two-child so the families prefer having son compared to daughter and torture by in-laws ranked at fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh with mean score 0.68, 0.62, 0.58 and 0.56 given by rural boys and boys are a financial and social support, son being responsible to carry forward family name and



occupation, presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound and social responsibilities taken by male were ranked fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh with mean score 0.60, 0.54, 0.46 and 0.36. Social prestige of girls is lower in society, Social responsibilities taken by male and Girls need more protection than boys perceived by rural boys occupied eighth and ninth rank with mean score 0.54 and 0.52 whereas boys perform religious rites during cremation, social prestige of girls is lower in society and girls need more protection than boys were important factors perceived by the urban boys occupied eighth rank with mean score 0.34 followed by torture by in-laws and Government of India promote a family with two-child so the families prefer having son compared to daughter was given ninth rank with equal mean score 0.32.

In case of girls, girls are a financial burden and dowry system were most important factor perceived by rural girls ranked first with equal mean score 0.74 whereas girls are a financial burden and dowry system were most important factor stated by urban girls ranked first with equal mean score 0.68. Boys are source of support at the old age and Boys are a financial and social support both rural and urban girls given second rank with equal mean score 0.70 and 0.66. Boys carry the family name, Son is responsible to carry forward the family name and occupation, Torture by in-laws, the Presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound, Government of India promotes a family with two-child so families prefer having son compared to daughter are the factors that lead to female foeticide perceived by rural girls occupied third, fourth, fifth and sixth rank with mean score 0.68, 0.66, 0.66, 0.62 and 0.54 whereas Son being responsible to carry forward family name and occupation, Boys carry the family name, Presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound and Torture by in-laws perceived by urban girls occupied third, fourth, fifth and sixth rank with mean score 0.64, 0.62, 0.44 and 0.34. Social responsibilities taken by male and Social prestige of girls is lower in society were important factor perceived by the rural girls occupied seventh rank with equal mean score 0.48 followed by boys perform religious rites during cremation and girls need more protection than boys given by rural girls occupied eighth and ninth rank with mean score 0.46 and 0.42 whereas Social responsibilities taken by male and Government of India promote a family with two-child so the families prefer having son compared to daughter perceived by urban girls ranked seventh with equal mean score 0.30 and Boys perform religious rites during cremation, social prestige of girls is lower in society and girls need more protection than boys occupied eighth rank with equal mean score 0.22.

These outcomes are supported by the results of Sarkar and Dasgupta (2015). This study revealed that 90.6% of respondents had a notion that at least one male child is necessary in a family. 63.2 % women responded that the main reason for a preference for a son was old age security.

## CONCLUSION:

Based on results obtained from present study, regarding factors that lead to female foeticide, dowry system was the most important factor perceived by the respondents. Majority of the

respondents gave reason that boys are source of support at the old age. The other important factor was Boys are a financial and social support, Boys carry the family name, Son being responsible to carry forward family name and occupation Presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound.

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Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to factors that lead to female foeticide

S. No.	Statements	Rural								Urban								Total (n= 200)				
		Boys (n= 50)				Girls (n= 50)				Boys (n= 50)				Girls (n= 50)								
		f	%	Mean score	Rank	f	%	Mean score	Rank	f	%	Mean score	Rank	f	%	Mean score	Rank	f	%	Mean score	Rank	
1.	Socio-economic factor																					
a)	Son being responsible to carry forward family name and occupation	36	72	0.72	III	33	66	0.66	IV	27	54	0.54	V	32	64	0.64	III	128	64	0.64	VI	
b)	Boys are source of support at the old age	43	86	0.86	I	35	70	0.70	II	32	64	0.64	III	33	66	0.66	II	143	71.5	0.72	II	
c)	Social responsibilities taken by male	26	52	0.52	IX	24	48	0.48	VII	18	36	0.36	VII	15	30	0.30	VII	83	41.5	0.42	X	
d)	Girls are a financial burden	36	72	0.72	III	37	74	0.74	I	34	68	0.68	II	34	68	0.68	I	141	70.5	0.71	III	
e)	Dowry system	43	86	0.86	I	37	74	0.74	I	35	70	0.70	I	34	68	0.68	I	149	74.5	0.75	I	
f)	Boys carry the family name	36	72	0.72	III	34	68	0.68	III	32	64	0.64	III	31	62	0.62	IV	133	66.5	0.67	V	
g)	Boys perform religious rites during cremation	31	62	0.62	V	23	46	0.46	VIII	17	34	0.34	VIII	11	22	0.22	VIII	82	41	0.41	XI	
h)	Social prestige of girls is lower in	27	54	0.54	VIII	24	48	0.48	VII	17	34	0.34	VIII	11	22	0.22	VIII	79	39.5	0.40	XII	

	society																				
I)	Boys are a financial and social support	38	76	0.76	II	35	70	0.70	II	30	60	0.60	IV	33	66	0.66	II	136	68	0.68	IV
j)	Girls need more protection than boys	26	52	0.52	IX	21	42	0.42	IX	17	34	0.34	VIII	11	22	0.22	VIII	75	37.5	0.38	XIII
k)	Torture by in-laws	28	56	0.56	VII	33	66	0.66	IV	16	32	0.32	IX	17	34	0.34	VI	94	47	0.47	VIII
<b>2)</b>	<b>Technological factors</b>																				
a)	Presence of low-cost technologies like ultrasound	34	68	0.68	IV	31	62	0.62	V	23	46	0.46	VI	22	44	0.44	V	110	55	0.55	VII
<b>3)</b>	<b>Population Policy</b>																				
a)	Government of India promote a family with two-child so the families prefer having son compared to daughter	29	58	0.58	VI	27	54	0.54	VI	16	32	0.32	IX	15	30	0.30	VII	87	43.5	0.44	IX