

TITLE : Let Everyone Live!

INTRODUCTION

Gender based discrimination is one of the common forms of discrimination that needs to be eliminated from all societies. The girl child is discriminated against even before she is born. The aim of this session is to create awareness about an alarming trend in society, namely, ‘female foeticide’ and the consequent decline in the sex ratio. This is of serious concern for everyone as it has widespread implications for our society and nation. Things will get worse if steps are not taken immediately. Students of today are adults of tomorrow, and if they are sensitized to the issue, this trend will change. Moreover, these students can help increase awareness about the problem among their families and neighbourhood.

- 1. Objectives** : By the end of this session the students will be:
- Able to understand the grave implications of female foeticide.
 - Realize that they must not commit this terrible act when they become adults.



- 2. Time** : 70 minutes
(Two continuous periods)

- 3. Life Skills Being Used** : Self-Awareness, Empathy, Critical Thinking, Decision Making, Effective Communication.

- 4. Advance Preparations** : 1. One small doll wrapped in a towel, 2. Select volunteers for preparing the role plays given in steps 2 and 12.

- 5. Linkages** : Please see Contents

- 6. Methodology** : Role plays, Brainstorming.



- 7. Process** :

Step 1:

Please read the Fact Sheet carefully, and go through this session well in advance before you carry it out with the students.

Step 2:

Greet the students, and ask for the 10 volunteers (who have already prepared the following role play) to enact it.

Note for Teachers:

Prepare 10 students a day earlier for the role play so that they can do it effectively. The role play deliberately attempts a worst case scenario to drive home the point.

The Great Elimination:

You are a group of students who have been chosen to travel to the future by a special time machine. You are very excited and land in Delhi, 50 years from now. You expect to see a world class city full of marvels and splendour, but are horrified to see a dirty, bleak place. There is **no colour** anywhere, **no beauty, no cleanliness.....!** There are thousands of men everywhere but hardly any children, and **no women**. Some men gather around you and start staring, especially at the girls. You walk away, but they chase you. You go into a huge mall, and see row upon row of men's stores, but no colourful sari shops, perfume or jewellery marts. There are no smart salesgirls, women buyers, or mothers with their children. There are in fact only a few children and that too only boys! The men are still trailing you.

Suddenly an elderly, kind looking man comes and asks you to quickly accompany him to a safe place. All of you are very scared by now and are wondering what exactly could have happened to make things the way they are. Once you are safe in a room that is almost dark, you ask the man why things are so strange and **terrifying**. The man tells you that ever since the '**great elimination**' of girls began since 2000, it has become so rare to see girls that men respond in this way. It has become very **unsafe** for girls, there are fights going on over women and they are being abused. In fact the situation has become such that there may even be a war coming up very soon. The men are all very **unhappy**, the family unit has broken down and everyone **blames** the past generations for this terrible state of affairs.

This news is really a very bad one. You request the man to help you reach your time machine safely and feeling shocked, return to the present, with a sigh of relief, but with real concerns on your mind. You are thinking "Is this really going to be the future of my city and country?"

Step 3:

Applaud the students for their good work. Then ask the class the following questions:

- What did you see in the role play?
- Why did you think there were so few women?
- Do you think this may really happen?

Expected Responses:

- There were very few women and men were unhappy and lonely, there were few children, things were imbalanced,
- Delhi was a dirty and unwelcoming place
- There seemed to be a dangerous environment for girls
- There were no women because they had been killed even before they were born
- I read about it, it is called 'female foeticide'
- Yes, it may happen, since female foeticide is becoming very common.

Note for Teacher:

Let the answers come out from the students themselves. Let the fact sink into them that this may be a reality tomorrow – ‘**A World without Women.**’

Step 4:

Now show them the newspaper cutting in **Annexure 3**. Ask them what they think about **buying brides**.

Note for Teachers:

Let a discussion take place. Allow the information to seep in and let the students realize that this is what is happening in our country **today**. Responses will range from disbelief to horror. It is important that there is a reaction to the news. Tell them to think of what will happen when there are no girls in our country, and people start getting married to girls from different countries, and people from there start raising objections to this – the possibility of a war will not be too distant. In fact World War III may be because of a lack of women!!

The idea may seem far fetched today but as history reveals, the seeds of every conflict have been a number of seemingly “small” things which built up over time. With hindsight, mankind has always wondered why the people living in those times could not perceive what was happening and take steps to stop it. Perhaps, future generations will think the same, if nothing is done to reverse the situation, of us and our times. The time therefore to stop female foeticide is NOW!

Step 5:

Now ask them, “**Why do you think such a situation has arisen? Why do people do such a thing? Do you think it is man – made?**”

Expected Responses:

- Because of dowry system and other social evils
- Because of prejudices against girls and male dominated society,
- Because of insensitive and cruel behaviour
- If people stop interfering with nature, the sex ratio will become equal.
- It is happening because people are going in for female foeticide.
- More girls are dying due to negligence.
- Yes it is man made phenomenon, no maybe less girls are being born naturally, No, it is not a natural phenomenon.

Notes for Teachers:

You can tell them about the skewed **sex ratio** in our country. When left to nature, the number of girls born is **slightly higher** than the number of boys. The number of girls for *every 1000 boys in the age group 0-6 years is called the sex ratio.* (See Annexure-2)

Share data from the **Fact Sheet**.

Today, technology is available that can tell the sex of the baby in the womb and people think it is not a crime if the foetus is aborted. Tell the students that by the time the sex can be determined, the foetus is not just a mass of cells as thought by many; it is actually a **fully formed baby** that moves around in the womb, only it cannot survive outside the womb as yet. Show them the **pictures** in the Annexure and the Fact Sheet. Also tell them that female foeticide is a **crime** in our country, **punishable** by imprisonment and a fine.

Step 7:

Now ask them, “**Why do you think some people opt for female foeticide??**”

Expected Responses:

- People think that a girl is a liability
- Because of the problem of dowry
- A girl gets married and leaves the house and therefore cannot look after the parents in their old age.
- Having sons is more important as they carry on the family name / property, etc.
- There is no respect for women
- Women are not the bread earners of the family.

Step 8:

Ask them, “**Is it right to do so? Are people correct in thinking about girls and women as they do? What problems will it lead to??**”

Expected Responses:

- It is not right to do such a thing, no people should not discriminate against girls and women.
- A girl can do everything that a boy can do e.g. being in the Police, Army, Air force.
- If girls are not allowed to be born, there will be no brides for men later on
- Foeticide is equal to murder.
- It is a cause of physical and emotional trauma to the mother.
- There will be a skewed sex ratio in the country
- A ‘world without women’ will not be a nice place to live in, in fact it cannot exist.
- It would mean **destruction of mankind**
- It would be the **end of the world**
- Foeticide is a crime.
- The mother also suffers from poor health due to repeated abortions.

Notes for Teachers:

Allow the students to come up with as many responses as they can. Impress on them that just like infanticide, foeticide is also murder. All the reasons that people give for not wanting to have daughters have no basis- ethical, social or legal. It is a crime to cause foeticide on the basis of the sex of the foetus. A girl is capable of doing anything that a boy can do – including looking after her parents, excelling in studies, and going to outer space, etc.

Also tell them that very often a woman is made to go in for the sex selective foeticide under pressure from the family. However, it is **ILLEGAL to do prenatal sex determination** (Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques - PNDT Act 1994). Both the patient and the Doctor when caught can go to jail. Ultrasound Test is a very useful test to detect foetal abnormalities and monitor growth but it is not permitted for determining the sex of the unborn baby .

Step 9:

Ask the students, “**What can you do to stop female foeticide??**” (Tell them about the **PNDT Act. 1994** from the Fact Sheet).

Notes for Teachers:

Let the students come up with their ideas. They have to use life skills of **Effective Communication, Problem Solving** by doing some **Critical and Creative Thinking** and **Decision Making**.

Expected Responses:

- Talk to people in the family and community about it
- Organize ‘nukkad nataks’
- Have poster campaigns
- Take vows never to do such a thing
- Inform concerned authorities if they find someone breaking the law etc.

Step 10:

Applaud the students for their responses. Note these down on the board as the suggestions come up and then do a quick recap of all that can be done by the students. Let them feel that they too have the power to prevent a major social evil.

Step 11:

Ask the previously chosen volunteers for the next role play. :

“POOR THING! WHY DID SHE HAVE TO DIE?”

Ramu and his mother Shantibai are waiting outside the nursing home where Ramu’s wife, Laxmi is admitted. She was 4 months pregnant. They had done a sex determination test, and were aborting this baby since it was a girl child. The nurse comes out, and gives them the foetus and shows its tiny hands, feet, head and body. They see it moving a little as if struggling for life, before it becomes limp and dies. Ramu is shattered. He had never thought of this baby as a human being, a person that he and Laxmi had created. Seeing the baby’s struggle for life, he feels its pain. He feels God shall never forgive him.

Note for teachers:

This is a sensitive and important role play so carefully choose the students who will act this well. This social message has to hit hard as early as possible. This generation should not perpetuate this evil! The ‘foetus’ can be a doll wrapped up in a towel.

Step 13:

After the play, ask the following questions:

1. What happened in the role play?
2. Does this happen often?
3. Do you think this is murder?
4. What do you feel about this?



Expected Responses:

- The emotions and dilemma of a couple who agree to abort the foetus is shown, yes I have heard of such things,
- Yes it is murder. The foetus is human too, like us.
- Poor baby, why did she have to die, In fact the whole family also dies emotionally, It is horrifying, Why do people do this

Step 14:

In the end tell the children “Let us all now take a pledge against female foeticide”

Ask all the students to stand up and hold their right hand up and repeat after you:

“We swear we will NEVER indulge in or ALLOW female foeticide”



Key Messages:

1. Foeticide is a crime punishable by imprisonment.
2. If this trend continues, the already skewed sex ratio will become worse.
3. A world without women will not be worth living in, in fact such a world would not exist.

Ideas for Learning More:

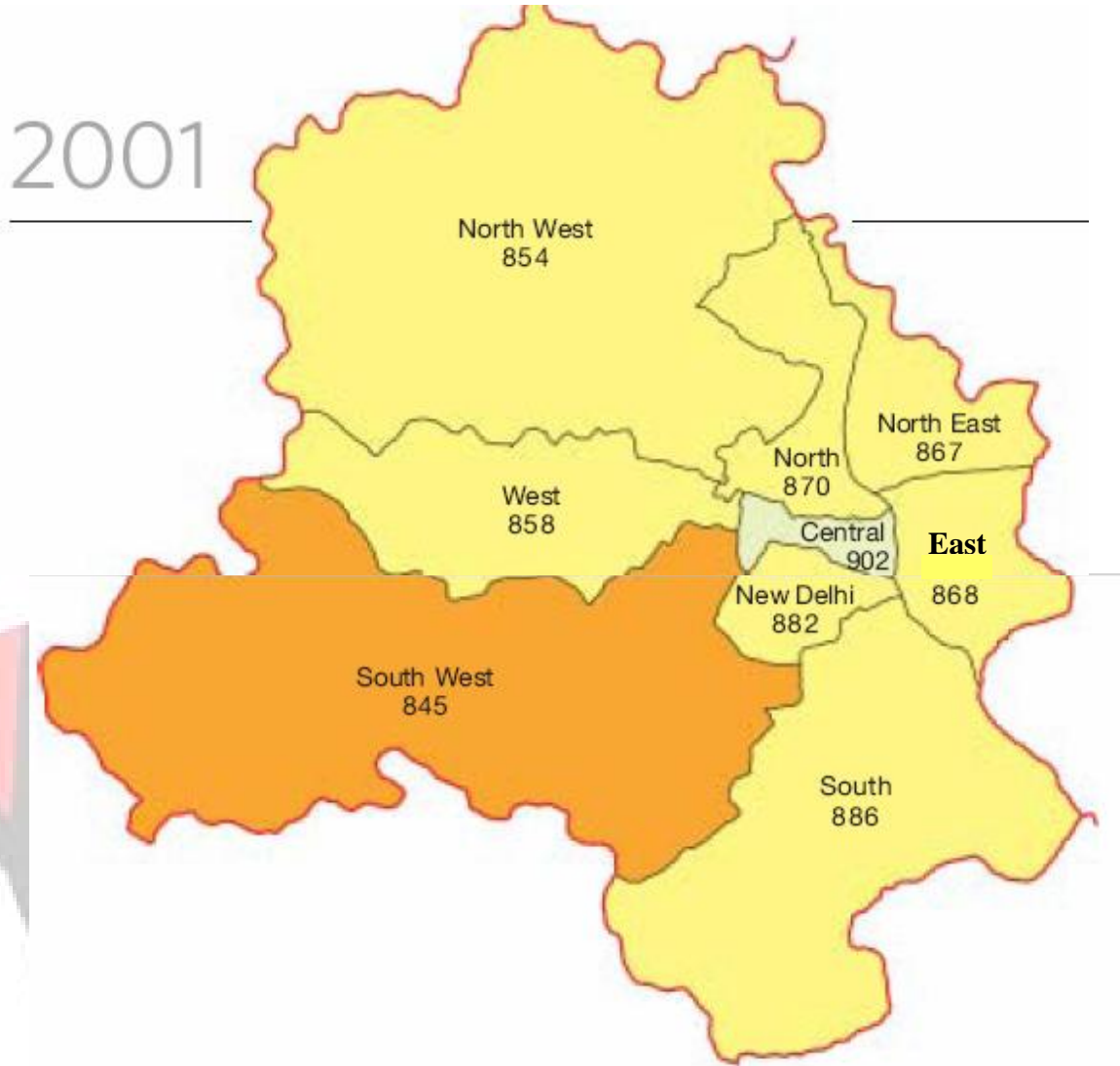
1. Ask the students to discuss this topic with their parents and older siblings , and gather their views on the subject. Try to make them see your view point
2. Check out for display of sign: “Pre Natal Sex Determination is Illegal”, at Doctors’ clinics in your neighbourhood.



Pictures of aborted foetus



SEX RATIO IN DELHI



24000 Girls missing every year.

Falling sex ratio reflects in UP, joins Punjab in buying of brides

TARANNUM MANJUL
SHAHJAHANPUR, OCT 30

■ Anita hails from a small village in Orissa. Five years ago, she was brought to Shahganj village in Bhawaal Kheda block of district Shahjahanpur and sold off as a "wife" to Mahender, a Pasi by caste, for Rs 7,500. Five years and two children later, Anita still cannot talk to her husband as she can hardly understand his language. She may have been bought by Mahender, yet the village does not consider her to be his wife

■ Meera Devi hails from Bihar. She was bought as a wife for Rs 8,000 by Rajiv, two and a half years ago. So far, she hasn't been able to conceive and Rajiv's family feels that they have wasted the money on her

BRIDE buying is no longer limited to states like Haryana and Punjab, and these cases serve as an eye opener. In Shahjahanpur district, where the urban sex ratio boasts is one of the lowest in the country (678/1,000) and where the biggest tehsil has the lowest sex ratio (535/1,000), the system of bride buying has become rampant in the past five years. Bhawaal Kheda block has several villages where men have "bought" brides from states like West Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand and Bihar. The



Anita with her husband Mahindrar, mother-in-law and children. Tarannum Manjuli

price ranges from anything between Rs 7,000 and Rs 10,000.

Shahganj is one such village that has around 250 families. As many as 60 per cent of the families have "bought" wives from other states. "We have been forced to buy brides from other states because there are hardly any women in our surrounding villages. The number of girls is really low in this region," says Lalaram, the village pradhan.

A survey of the village reveals that bride buying is a constant factor in all castes. Asha Devi, a 45-year old widow from Kolkata, was bought as a wife by a Brahmin widower

Narayan Lal for Rs 10,000 (she calls it the 'wedding fee' given to her son), some 5 years ago. She says she visits Kolkata, where her son stays, once in two years. She may not be able to speak Hindi fluently, but since Narayan Lal's family is educated, she is able to make them understand what she wants. "I have no problems at all. Being a widow, I was rebuked back home. But now, I atleast have a man who takes care of my needs," she says. Ram Lali (her maiden name was Anita) was bought by Ram Bhajan, a Baniya, from Kolkata four years ago, for a "wedding fee" of Rs 10,000.

She has four children and is happy that this marriage has at least brought her out of poverty. "The money, which my husband gave to my family, has helped them survive. So it is not bad for me," she says.

The villagers, however, refuse to accept these women as wives and consider them "arrangements". Said Maheshwar, an elderly man in the village: "We know that these women have been bought and the proper ceremonies attached to marriage have not been performed. Hence, it is difficult for us to call them wives." Mahender, who bought Anita from

Orissa, said: "I bought her from a man for Rs 7,500. She is satisfying all my needs and is also my children's mother, but my relatives don't like to call her my wife."

NGOs working in this village on maternal health and female foeticide say the declining sex ratio is indeed one of the major reasons behind a practice like bride buying. Sunil Singh of Rahi foundation, an organisation which works on the issue of maternal health and female foeticide in the district, says, "These women who have been bought as wives have no rights at all. They are bought here only as commodities and nothing else. One can also see that the women are being trafficked here from poorer states like Orissa and West Bengal because their families need the money to survive."

Neelam Singh of Vatsalya, an NGO working in the state against female foeticide, said, "Women are becoming commodities to produce babies and satisfy sexual needs and they are being bought for this reason. Such practices have come up because of a low sex ratio. The administration and the Government should ensure that practices like female foeticide are stopped so that the situation can change in the years to come."

FACT SHEET

Female Foeticide in India

The biological differences between a man and a woman have been converted, over the ages, into inequalities of various kinds. This is not limited to any society or age, and India is no exception.

One of the most heinous ways of discrimination against women in a society is through female foeticide – the wanton killing of female fetuses in the mother’s womb. To discriminate against a woman when she enters what is often referred to as a ‘man’s world’ is one thing; to not even let her be born to face that world, is quite another. Why is female foeticide practiced by some? The answer lies in a complex array of interconnected and intricate reasons, which probably have roots in culture and society, but have a strong economic angle as well. The practice has got a further boost with the introduction of advanced technology in the field of medicine -ultrasonography.

Female foeticide is a **two-step** practice. The first step involves the **detection of the sex** of the unborn baby in the womb of the mother. This could be done at the behest of the mother or father or both or under family pressure.

The second step involves a decision taken by the mother or father or both or under pressure from the family to have or **not have the child**.

Abortion was legalized in India with the passing of the bill Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act in 1971 (MTP Act, 1971) which came into effect on 1st April, 1972.

Under the two main laws (Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act 1971 and the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act 1994), the Indian government has conceded that abortion may be carried out if there is

- Danger to the life of the mother if the pregnancy continues till the child birth,
- Danger to the child by or at risk of being born handicapped, or
- If the woman has conceived the child as a result of rape.

Women are also allowed the right to abortion if they wish to do so in the interest of keeping the family small. However, abortion has to be done within a specific period when it is difficult to identify the sex of the foetus. If the abortion is to be carried out after 16 - 18 weeks of pregnancy, because of any medical reasons, the opinion of two doctors is a must.

Unlike abortion, female foeticide is usually done beyond the legal period i.e. when the foetus is much older and developed, and is done **only** because the foetus is a girl. Female foeticide is a punishable offence in our country. The offenders (both doctor and parents) may be imprisoned or fined or both.



Given below are visual pictures of what the foetus looks like in the initial months of life.



Month 1



Month 3



Month 4

Month 3, 4 and 5 is when most female foeticides take place (anecdotal evidence)



Month 5

Female foeticide is a **gross violation of many rights**. The first is the **right to life** of the unborn child. The second right violated is that of the **woman's right** over her body. Often the decision not to have the child is taken by the man (husband) or the family and the opinion of the mother who painfully bears the child is rarely considered. At the macro level, this has an impact on the sex ratio of the country.

Female foeticide is fast emerging as a problem that affects all parts of the country. However, one can clearly see regional fluctuations in the figures that are available.

In the northern region, the child sex ratio is dismal for the states of Punjab, Haryana, **Delhi**, Gujrat, Uttranchal and Maharashtra. The states of Bihar and Jharkhand seem to be much better off than the more prosperous states in this comparison. The North East Region shows healthy sex ratios.

One of the districts with the highest prevalence of female foeticide in India is Salem in Tamil Nadu with the child sex ratio being staggeringly low at 763 females to 1000 males.

Income and wealth, usually taken as symbols of prosperity and development, have not led to a change in the social mindset of the people. The highly prosperous areas of the country are not immune to the trend of female foeticide. Areas of Punjab and Haryana are the most prosperous states in the country, and Gujarat and Maharashtra the most industrialized. Yet the practice pervades in these prosperous states as well. **The child sex ratio stands at a mere 754 in Fatehgarh Sahib district in Punjab**, the lowest in the country. i.e. there are only 754 girls to 1000 boys in the district. The Kurukshetra district of Haryana has the ratio as low as 770, Ahmedabad has a ratio of 814 and **South West Delhi has 845**. These regions again are among the most prosperous in the country. The ratio in Mumbai is also seen to be falling at 898.

Unlike the belief that foeticide occurs where people are poor, illiterate and unaware, the highest ratios of foeticide have been observed in economically developed areas. Punjab and Haryana today are India's most prosperous states. These are the states where introduction of technologies like those for the Green Revolution have revolutionized the prosperity of the people. The states, at the same time, are also providing the maximum number of sex determination clinics.

SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTION, FEMALE FOETICIDE AND INFANTICIDE

The main law for prosecuting persons who are engaging in sex selective abortion is the **Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation And Prevention Of Misuse) Act, 1994**. The PNDT Act now stands renamed as the **Pre Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex selection) Act from 2003**.

- It prohibits misuse and advertisement of – pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of sex of foetus, leading to female foeticide.
- It permits and regulates the use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for detection of specific genetic abnormalities or disorders and use of such techniques only under certain conditions and only by the registered institutions.
- It provides for punishment for violation of the provisions given in the act.
- The complaint made by any person should be first given to the appropriate authority with the notice of not less than thirty days for proper action and with the intention to make a complaint to the court.

Apart from this law, the following sections from the Indian Penal Code, 1860 are also important.

- When death is caused by a person (Section 299 and Section 300).
- Voluntarily cause a pregnant woman to miscarry the unborn baby (Section 312).
- Act done with intent to prevent child being born alive or to cause it to die after birth (Section 315).
- **Causing quick death of unborn child (Section 316).**
- Exposing and abandoning of child below 12 years (Section 317).
- Concealing the birth of child by secretly disposing her /his body (section 318).

The punishment for these offences extends from two years up to life imprisonment, or fine or both.

The emotional impact of female foeticide on the parents, particularly the mother, has not been extensively documented. It is however reasonable to presume that once the parents are aware of the processes involved, after they ask themselves the crucial question - **“how will the body of my dead baby be disposed of?”**- it is likely that every right thinking individual will vow never to commit this terrible deed.

After incentives, govt plans crackdown

Crying shame

2,000 unborn girls aborted illegally every day, according to UN estimates

10 million girls killed by parents either before or immediately after birth in last 20 years, says government

Dubious distinction

Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi have most skewed sex ratios in country, with less than 800 girls for every 1,000 boys, according to 2001 Census

Reason

Female foeticide on rise due to easy availability of ultrasonography and amniocentesis, which help determine gender of foetus

Sons are seen as breadwinners who'll look after their parents and carry on the family name; daughters are financial liabilities

Implications

Rise in violence against women

Practices like polyandry, where several men, often brothers, share the same wife

Trafficking of girls to states like Haryana and Punjab



Foeticide may carry life term

Aloke Tikku
New Delhi, December 7

FOETICIDE COULD soon be punished with life imprisonment.

Health minister Anbumani Ramadoss told the Rajya Sabha on Friday that the government intended to make penalties for violations of the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, more stringent.

The proposal comes in the backdrop of several government plans to provide incentives to families that do not indulge in infanticide and foeticide. One of them, a reward of Rs 5,000 to families where a girl child is born, will be launched early next year.

States like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh have witnessed a steady decline of the sex ratio, a trend that indicates the existence of foeticide. "We have given Rs 5 lakh to each MP from these six states for campaigns on the declining sex ratio," Ramadoss said.

Ramadoss said the central supervisory board for implementation of the PNDT Act is

slated to meet next week. "Let me inform that there will not only be fine, but even life imprisonment too," he said.

The minister said there were 403 pending cases and 132 ultrasound machines have been seized and sealed under this law. In this year, about 125 cases have been reported and there have been four convictions.

Ramadoss, however, acknowledged that the conviction rate was low as foeticide is a clandestine affair.

The minister, however, made clear that there was no way he could ban the existing 32,000 ultrasound machines in this country that also saved many lives. He was responding to a suggestion made by Gandhian, Nirmala Deshpande, who said former prime minister Indira Gandhi had toyed with the idea of banning the machines.

"I am afraid that testing the sex of an embryo creates problems for us. I am thinking of banning it. But, how long can we ban this. I am really disturbed about this and this may, in future, create serious problems," Deshpande quoted Indira Gandhi as saying.

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City unsafe, even for unborn girls

'Service Providers' Thrive As Rich, Educated Delhiites Also Party To Female Foeticide

Abantika Ghosh | TNN

New Delhi: Gurgaon's aborted foetuses may have brought the problem of female foeticide once more into the limelight but the problem is hardly a unique one for Haryana. At 838 girls for every 1,000 boys in the 0-6 age group, the Capital's sex ratio is way below the national average of 927, which again is considerably below the minimum "acceptable" WHO prescribed ratio of 950.

And what is even more worrying is that a look at the district-wise sex ratios of Delhi clearly shows that urban areas like Preet Vihar, Vasant Vihar, Defence Colony and Punjabi Bagh are worse off than their rural counterparts, which would mean that education or affluence are no deterrents. According to NGOs working in the field, the dipping sex ratio is one of the "side effects" of the success of family planning programme. "Among the hip set, it is uncool to have more than two kids, so it is important that one or both are boys. So they cannot take chances. The easy option is foeticide," said an NGO official.

In a recent letter to the chief minister, deputy chairman of planning commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, had expressed concern about the dismal sex ratio in the city and

SEX RATIO AND THE CITY

Although the Prenatal Diagnostic Technique Act has been implemented, there has to be a change in the mindset of people to tackle the menace of female foeticide. The Census 2001 figures show that some of the hippest colonies of the city fare the worst in terms of sex ratio



Area	Boys below 6	Girls below six	Sex ratio
Punjabi Bagh	46,947	39,566	842
Rural	7,211	6,160	854
Urban	39,736	33,406	840
Patel Nagar	77,364	67,143	867
Rural	1,103	1,034	937
Urban	76,261	66,109	866
Vasant Vihar	37,577	32,297	859
Rural	3,245	2,879	887
Urban	34,332	29,418	856
Defence Colony	40,285	35,653	885
Rural	578	571	987
Urban	39,707	35,082	883
Preet Vihar	69,170	60,766	878
Rural	608	540	888
Urban	68,562	60,226	780
Hauz Khas	81,577	71,965	882
Rural	9,304	7,831	841
Urban	72,273	64,134	887
Kalkaji	55,579	49,882	897
Rural	5,387	4,887	805
Urban	50,192	44,995	896
Delhi	10,79,618	93,7231	868
Rural	85,484	72,676	850
Urban	9,94,134	8,64,555	869

(All figures indicate number of girls per 1,000 boys)

advocated "concerted action, perhaps in mission mode, so that the target of 890 at the end of the Eleventh Plan is exceeded..."

Nevertheless, for those willing to spend the money, which is not too much in any case — an ultrasound can cost Rs 1,500

to Rs 2,500, followed by abortion for a measly Rs 5,000 to Rs 8,000 — there is hardly dearth of willing "service providers" in the city who will nip the girl child in the bud. And the re-

sults of ultrasound are never conveyed in writing — the language used is usually, "it is not what you think/want" and the next step is easier still, "go to XYZ doctor. He/she is very good. Your job will be done".

In a recent letter to the CM, Montek Singh Ahluwalia advocated 'concerted action so the target of 890 at the end of the 11th Plan is exceeded'

In fact, in the medical circles of the city, the sudden spurt in demand for post-graduate degrees in radiology is often explained by the presence of these "clinics" that continue to operate surreptitiously.

There is a legal framework in place. The Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act, 1994, makes conducting a foetal sex selection test a punishable offence. The person who gets

it done is liable to be charged with a b e t t e m e n t . Thanks to the tardy judicial

process in the country, however, in the more than a decade since the Act was framed, there are 70 ongoing cases in the city but no punishment has been pronounced in any.

Says principal secretary (health) D S Negi, "The chief district medical officers (CDMO) in each of the nine districts are responsible for carrying out raids and regular inspections of around 2,000 clinics which have registered ultrasound machines. Raids are conducted only when complaints are received and this being a social problem, that hardly ever happens." He feels the allocated manpower of about three to four people per district is enough, but there is a problem of coordination.

"The CDMO is a medical person. But liasoning with police and prosecution takes a lot of time and creates unnecessary problems. About six months back, Union government was petitioned to change the rules so that the SDM is made responsible for coordination," Negi added.

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