

SGPC and SHRG in collaboration with UNESCO

Conference on Basic Human Dignity

Foeticide and Violence Against Women
Towards a Plan of Action



**Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and
Sikh Human Rights Group in collaboration with UNESCO**

The phenomenon of female infanticide and foeticide has reached epidemic levels in many states in India. Female foeticide is the intentional killing of baby girls due to the preference for male babies and from the low value associated with the birth of females.¹

Background

According to the 2001 census the worst affected state is Punjab where there are fewer than eight girls to ten boys. As per 2001 census there were 876 females per 1000 of males in Punjab as compared to 933 females at the all India level in 2001. The sex ratio of children in the 0-6 age group is no better. While the all-India figure is 927/1000, it is 793 in Punjab. Young females are more prone to dying early due to less importance given to their health and nutritional needs

A well-documented study carried in the prestigious British medical journal "Lancet" makes the startling revelation that around ten million female foetuses may have been aborted in India over the last two decades. Lancet traced this unhealthy trend to the rapid proliferation of clinics and nursing homes offering foetus screening services all over the country and the excessive craving for the male progeny which is deep rooted in the Indian psyche.

Due to the advancement of technology mobile sex-selection clinics tests can be performed even in the remotest village.

According to data published by a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) study entitled 'Sex-Selective Abortion and Fertility Decline in Haryana and Punjab', during 1996-98, 51,000 sex-selection tests took place in the state of Punjab. The report states that Punjab comprises 26 per cent of all abortions in India. Data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) and the Sample Research Survey (SRS) states that there was an 18 per cent increase in female foeticide in Punjab. This has lowered the total fertility rate (TFR) in the state and according to the 1991 census, Punjab registered amongst two states with the highest number of missing children within the age-group zero to six years.

¹ Marina Porras - Female Infanticide and Foeticide.

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Medical School, Amritsar, India

THE BACKGROUND AND INCIDENCE

- A Statistical Overview, Who, What And Where: Foeticide And Violence Against Women - Dr Balwinder Arora Guru Nanak University
- Implications Of Foeticide And The Legislation The Indian Prenatal Diagnostic Act - Dr Gandhi Guru Nanak University
- Community And NGO Approaches

THE THEORETICAL POSITIONS

- Gurbani Position On Foeticide And Violence Against Women - Dr Surjit Kaur Chahal Pune University
- Implementation Of UNESCO Bioethics Declarations To Protect Human Dignity - Dr Darryl Macer UNESCO Asia
- A Position On Human Dignity And Bioethics - Dr Jasdev Singh Rai Sikh Human Rights Group UK

ACTION PLANS

- Violence Against Women Programmes Of Action To Date And Their Success: A Broad Survey
By The District Superintendent Of Police Chandigarh
- The Role Of Granthis And Community Organisations - Rajinder Singh Executive Member Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee
- A Sikh Human Rights Group Proposed Programme In Punjab - Terminder Singh Advocate
- Making A Commitment Towards An Action Plan By Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee Against Foeticide And Violence
Against Women - President Avtar Singh Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee

Further Information Contact shrg@shrg.net