

Female Feticide

Social discrimination against women results in systematic neglect of woman health, from womb to tomb. Female infanticide and female feticide are widely practiced in many states. The overall over ratio, at present, is favorable to women in Kerala. But in Kerala also, in the 0-6 age group, the sex ratio was 963 as per 2001 census. Out of total 36.5lakh 0-6 age group population 18.6 lakh were male babies and 17.9 lakh babies. Thus, 79760 female babies and infants were missing in 2001 in Kerala. This masculinisation of sex ratio is a result of selective abortion of female fetuses after the use of ultrasound techniques of sex determination.

The reason of female infanticide can be linked with the evil of dowry prevailing in our society. A more degrading and disparaging feature of the society has been existing for the last two decades is the immense love for male child and elimination of female fetus. With invention of new technologies to monitor the frontal health, it was expected to be used for taking care of the health of the unborn child, but it became terminator of female fetus. While there can be no moral or ethical justification for feticide, still it continues to be practiced. In fact, sex determination which was mainly restricted to metros only now, is prevalent in villages as well. If sex determination test are allowed to proliferate, and the crimination female fetuses allowed, the society should be ready to pay for this sin, after around two decades.

The amendment to the 1994 PNDT Act (Pre-Natal Diagnostic Act) is one of the means to wards an end. We must take a national campaign against gender discrimination and inequities. The root cause for elimination of female fetus is to be traced unless the evil of forced marriages, dowry and illiteracy among the females are done away with lives of women will not improve. Banning prenatal sex determination might add a feather in the cape of right activists; it will not materially improve the lives of women. A social! Awakening for true respect to the girls is required. A lot of hones hard work with full political will in this field can only solve the problem.