

Attitude towards girl's feticide among early adulthood and middle age respondents

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The phenomenon of female feticide in India is not new, where female embryos or fetuses are selectively eliminated after pre-natal sex determination, thus eliminating girl child even before they are born. In Indian society, female feticide has emerged as a burning social problem during the last few years. The present study aims to assess the attitude of both male and female adolescents towards girls' feticide their early adulthood and middle age. For this from Jhansi city, 100 respondents, 50 of early adulthood stage (25 male, 25 female) and 50 of middle adulthood stage (25 male, 25 female) randomly selected. A structured interview schedule was prepared containing 30 questions to measure the awareness among male and female regarding the female feticide. Results revealed that equal per cent of respondents were in the age group 18-40 years and 40-60 years. Maximum per cent of respondents (97%) were Hindu followed by 3 % respondents Muslim. In early adulthood and middle age group majority of male and female respondents (92 and 90%) strongly agreed to favorable comments on girl feticide, while for unfavorable comments less number of respondents of both sex were in strongly unfavorable category. Attitude of male and female respondents against favorable comments indicated association between sex and attitude in early adulthood *i.e.* $\chi^2=2.2$ but in middle age no association was found ($\chi^2=36$). On the other hand attitude against unfavorable comments indicated association between sex and attitude in both early adulthood ($\chi^2=0.156$) and middle age ($\chi^2=0.581$). Majority of the Hindu respondents both in early adulthood and middle age group strongly agreed to favourable comments on girl feticide. Regarding religion, attitude of Hindu and Muslim against favorable and unfavorable comments indicated association between religion and attitude in both early adulthood and middle age. Results revealed that both sex and religion have association with attitude regarding girl feticide.

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The problem of the "missing" girl child or the practice of female feticide is not uncommon to the country. This practice robs missing daughters not only of their right to a healthy environment, good

nutrition and education and the opportunity to reach their full potential, but most basically, their right to birth (Nayak *et al.*, 2012). The long standing tradition of son preference, coupled with medical technology now gives

to the status conscious Indian families, the choice between payment of large dowry for their daughters and elimination of daughters. The traditional method of getting rid of the unwanted girl child was female infanticide, where the female baby was done away with after birth in various ways-either by poisoning the baby or letting her choke on husk or simply by crushing her skull under a charpoy. With the advancement of medical technology sophisticated techniques can now be used or rather misused, to get rid of her before birth. In Indian society, female feticide has emerged as a burning social problem during the last few years. The girl child in India is treated right from her birth as an additional burden an extra mouth to feed, a liability and another man's property. The birth of a son is regarded as essential in Hinduism and many prayers and lavish offerings are made in temples in the hope of having a male child. Indian culture is ancient culture and respects women a lot. According to our culture, "Yatra Naranthya Pujiyathe Raman the Tetra Devatha". In our country a girl is worshiped as a Devi on one hand and denied her existence on the other as if she has no right to live. Time has perhaps come for us to get rid of male chauvinism and treat children as gifts of nature regardless of their gender. We cannot imagine a society in the future where there will be only males and no females. The society will be full of crimes and evils. Only if legislations enacted in this behalf are not sufficient. Orthodox views regarding women need to be changed (Jignesh and Virambhai, 2012). Kushwaha and Sharma (2014) emphasized that men and women should stand and fight jointly against the causes of female feticide and the elimination of fetus. So the present study is an attempt made in this direction with the specific objective to access the attitude towards girls' feticide of both male and female respondents in early adulthood and middle age.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The sample for the present study taken from Jhansi

district of Uttar Pradesh state, comprised of randomly selected 100 respondents, 50 of early adulthood stage (25 male, 25 female) and 50 of middle adulthood stage (25 male, 25 female). Total sample consisting 100 respondents with 50 male and female of age group between 18-40 year and 50 male and female of 40-60 year age group were taken from different areas of Jhansi city. A structured interview schedule was prepared to measure the attitude of male and female respondents regarding the female feticide in accordance with methodology, procedure and objectives of study. The schedule contained a questionnaire of 30 questions, duly pretested on 25 samples. On the basis of result obtained, schedule was analyzed, corrected and used for data collection. The scoring was done on the basis of scores as in Table A.

Favourable	Scoring	Unfavourable	Scoring
Strongly favour	44-30	Strongly unfavour	11-16
Favour	29-13	Unfavour	5-10
Somewhat favour	Below-13	Somewhat unfavour	Below-5

Data was quantified using frequency distribution, percentage and Chi square to correlate the attitude of respondents according to sex and religion.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results on personal variable *viz.*, age, sex and religion have been given in Table 1. Data revealed that equal number of respondents *i.e.* 50 per cent belonged to age category of early adulthood (18-40 years) and 50 per cent were in the category of middle age (40-60 years). Religion status of respondents indicated that 97 per cent respondents were Hindu followed by 3 per cent respondents Muslim and none of respondents were Sikh and Christian.

The results presented in Table 2 gives the

Variables	Categories	Early adulthood (18-40 year)	Middle age (40-60 year)	Total
Sex	Male	25 (50%)	25(50%)	50
	Female	25(50%)	25(50%)	50
Religion	Hindu	49(98%)	48(96%)	97(97%)
	Muslim	1(2%)	2(4%)	3(3%)
	Sikh	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
	Christian	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

information regarding the sexwise distribution of views of early adulthood and middle age respondents regarding girl feticide. Results indicated that maximum number of early adulthood respondents (46%) both male and female strongly agreed to favourable comments on girl feticide, while negligible respondents were in somewhat agree and agree category. Similarly, results in unfavourable comments revealed that maximum numbers of male (32%) were in unfavoured category followed by strongly unfavoured (10%) and somewhat unfavoured category (8%). Similarly more number of female respondents were also in unfavoured category (36%) followed by somewhat unfavoured (8%) and strongly unfavoured (6%). As per the χ^2 value = 2.2 in favourable comments and χ^2 value = 0.156 in unfavourable comments, the association was found between sex and attitude regarding girl feticide among early adulthood respondents. This indicated that both male and female have similar attitude to the girl feticide problem. Results from table further showed that in middle age, maximum number of female (48%) and male respondents (42%) strongly agreed followed by 8 per cent male and 2 per cent female were agree and negligible respondents were in somewhat agree category. Results further revealed that 32 per cent of male and 24 per cent of female respondents were in unfavourable category, while 18 per cent female and 12 per cent male belonged to somewhat unfavoured category. Only 8 per cent female and 6 per cent male were in strongly unfavoured category. It is evident from the data that middle age male and female respondents were against the female feticide problem, while compared to female, less male were in favour. Salivkar (2012) reported that men/male dominated society is mainly

responsible for female feticide which partially agrees to our results on middle age respondent's attitude to female feticide. As per the χ^2 value = 36 in favourable comments, no association was found between sex and attitude while as per the χ^2 value = 0.581 in unfavourable comments, the association was recorded between sex and attitude regarding girl feticide among middle age respondents. Kapurkar *et al.* (2014) in a study on knowledge and attitude of pregnant women on feticide observed that 15% women had strong positive attitude, 59% of pregnant women had positive attitude and only 26% women had negative attitude towards female feticide. Kaur (1993) from a study in village of Chandigarh revealed that 95% of women favoured female feticide. Study further revealed that socio-economic pressure are so much that women considering abortion as a sin opted for female feticide. George (2007) reported that majority of the husbands (76.0%) have favorable attitude towards the birth of girl child, whereas, wives (53.0%) had an unfavorable attitude and the difference in attitude of the husband and wife towards the birth of girl child was significant. Contradictory results were depicted by Chand *et al.* (2014) that the attitude of women is dependent on education and independent of age, income, marital status, number of living children, religion, caste, and occupation.

The result indicated that in early adulthood, maximum respondents (90%) in Hindu category were strongly agreed to favourable comments on girl feticide (Table 3), while only negligible respondents were in somewhat agree and agree category. The entire Muslim respondents (2%) were against girl feticide (Manhas and Banoo, 2013). Table also showed that in middle age, 68 per cent respondents were in support for unfavourable comments

Table 2: Sex wise distribution of attitude of early adulthood and middle age towards girl feticide

Early Adulthood	Favourable				Unfavourable	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat unfavour	Unfavour	Strongly unfavour
Sex						
Male	23(46%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	4(8%)	16(32%)	5(10%)
Female	23(46%)	2(4%)	0(0%)	4(8%)	18(36%)	3(6%)
Total	46(92%)	3(6%)	1(2%)	8(16%)	34 (68%)	8 (16%)
		$\chi^2=2.2$			$\chi^2=0.156$	
Middle Age	P-Value=5.991 D.F=2(Association)			P-Value=5.991 D.F=2(Association)		
Male	21(42%)	4(8%)	0(0%)	6(12%)	16(32%)	3(6%)
Female	24(48%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	9(18%)	12(24%)	4(8%)
Total	(45 (90%))	5(10%)	0 (0%)	15 (30%)	28 (56%)	7 (14%)
		$\chi^2=36$			$\chi^2=0.581$	
	P-Value=5.991 D.F=2(No Association)			P-Value=5.991 D.F=2(Association)		

Table 3: Religion wise distribution of attitude of early adulthood and middle age towards girl feticide

Early adulthood	Favourable			Unfavourable		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat unfavour	Unfavour	Strongly unfavour
Hindu	45(90%)	3(6%)	1(2%)	8(16%)	34(68%)	7(14%)
Muslim	1(2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
Sikh	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Christian	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Total	46(92%)	3 (6%) ² =0.008	1 (2%)	8 (16%)	35 (70%) ² =0.187	7 (14%)
	P-Value=12.592 D.F=6(Association)			P-Value=12.592 D.F=6 (Association)		
Middle Age						
Hindu	43(86%)	5(10%)	0(0%)	13(26%)	30(60%)	5(10%)
Muslim	2(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(4%)	0(0%)
Sikh	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Christian	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Total	45 (90%)	5 (10%) ² = 0.114	0 (0%)	13 (26%)	32 (64%) ² =0.319	5 (10%)
	P-Value=12.592 D.F=6 (Association)			P-Value=12.592 D.F=6 (Association)		

followed by 16 per cent respondents were somewhat unfavoured and 14 per cent respondent strongly supported the unfavourable comments on girl feticide.

Results further showed that maximum number of middle age respondents (86%) in Hindu category were strongly agreed to favourable comments on girl feticide, while only negligible respondents (10%) were in agree category. In the support of unfavourable comments maximum Hindu respondents (60%) were in unfavoured category followed by 4 per cent Muslim. On the other hand 26 per cent respondents were in somewhat unfavoured and 10 per cent in strongly unfavoured category. Manhas and Bano (2013) reported that in Muslim community majority of fathers (92%) and mothers (82%) perceived female feticide morally wrong. As per the χ^2 value = 0.008 in favourable comments and χ^2 value = 0.187 in unfavourable comments, the association was found between religion and attitude regarding girl feticide among early adulthood. Similarly association was also recorded in middle age respondents. Dudi and Singh (2010) associated a number of variables with awareness to girl feticide and observed that caste, number of daughters, number of sons, mass media exposure and socio-economic status were significantly associated with awareness of rural and urban respondents to girl feticide. These workers recorded no association between religion and awareness of respondents to girl feticide.

Conclusion:

It is concluded that majority of the respondents were

Hindu (97%) and remaining 3% Muslims. Majority of the respondents in both age group irrespective of age and religion strongly agreed to favorable comments on girl feticide. Both early adulthood and middle age respondent's sex and religion have association with attitude regarding girl feticide.

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