



Women in India: The Problem of Missing Girl Child

Nishant Anand

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Advancement and empowerment of women has been a leading objective of state policy in India ever since the attainment of Independence in 1947. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State Policy. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Gender equality is a constituent of development as well as an instrument of development. No country can be deemed developed if half of its population is severely disadvantaged in terms of basic needs, livelihood options, access to knowledge and political voice. A natural corollary of ensuring gender equality is the elimination of gender discrimination. The problem of missing girl child pertains to unborn girl children in their mothers' wombs, who are deliberately disposed of (in contravention of the existing laws) before birth only because they are female. Their disposal before birth is extreme instance of gender discrimination, forbidden both by domestic and international laws and conventions. The burgeoning size of this missing group is now receiving attention as a factor crucial to the health of the social fabric and to the well-being of communities. 2011 Census data shows that the sex ratio for children below 6 years (i.e. number of girls for every 1,000 boys) dropped from 927 in 2001 to a dismal 914 in 2011. This decline is unabated since 1961 Census. This book provides deep insights into the problem of female foeticide in India. It explains and examines the reasons for its rapid growth, laws to safeguard the rights of women and the landmark judgments of courts in this context. Role of civil society and media has also been highlighted in improving the status of Indian women. [Subject: Women Studies, Asian Studies, Sociology, Gender Studies, Human Rights, Healthcare, Economic Development, Law]

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