

10.

Invisible Children: Infanticide, Feticide and Abortion

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Invisible children are of many categories. Children are conceived and grow for a few months in the mother's womb and disappear due to natural abortion or using medical treatment for various reasons. Some children are born but become invisible the next day due to infanticide. They do not see the second day of their birth. Some of them are kidnapped for money, kidney, and sex-work or for bonded labour, from their families and vanish to an unknown place from where they cannot return. They are alive but uprooted, suppressed and kept underground, not to be visible. Some other children are controlled by rebel armies and trained to be suicide bombers and thus vanish in their young life. Many children exist in front of our eyes but we do not see them. For many of us, disabled children are not important and we do not recognize them. Some children sit in a lonely place and shed tears without making their cry audible because they are abused or accused unnecessarily or need some food or financial aid or counselling. Our eyes may notice them but our minds do not perceive them as children in crisis. Some children come to school with sadness and hopelessness because of their alcoholic father scolding them or refusing to pay their fees. So they may not be able to concentrate on learning in the classroom. Some teachers do not see their difficulties and shout at them. These children need sympathy and encouragement. Some children come from divorced or single-parent family longing for the love of teachers and friends but they are unaccounted in their sight. Blind, deaf and lame children try to cross the road waiting on the platform for a long time but we drive our scooters, autos

and cars without letting them to cross the road safely. Moving fast on roads whether there is a signal or not, has blinded our eyes to these children in need. Their plight is not visible to us Article - 10, classroom. Some teachers do not see their difficulties and shout at them. These children need sympathy and encouragement. Some children come from divorced or single-parent family longing for the love of teachers and friends but they are unaccounted in their sight. Blind, deaf and lame children try to cross the road waiting on the platform for a long time but we drive our scooters, autos and cars without letting them to cross the road safely. Moving fast on roads whether there is a signal or not, has blinded our eyes to these children in need. Their plight is not visible to us to recognize and help them. The age limit to be regarded as children varies in different cultures. But UN has regarded those who are below 14 years of age are children.

The Prophet Isaiah of 8th century BC spoke of the invisibility of the Israelites in seeing the injustice and violation of human rights in their society. He brought out this lack and arrogance on the part of the people of Israel by saying,

Keep listening, but do not comprehend
Keep looking, but do not understand.
Make the mind of this people dull,
and stop their ears,
and shut their eyes,
so that they may not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and comprehend with their minds,
and turn and be healed - (Isaiah 6: 9b-10).

God called Isaiah to go and proclaim his message to the people in southern kingdom. When Isaiah obeyed God's call to be a prophet, God gave him this message to tell the Israelites. The above text is to point out the sad situation of the people not having the willingness to see the injustice in their society, apostasy in religious life and correct their lives.¹ During the 8th century BC, the people of Israel had economic prosperity. The rich people accumulated wealth while the poor became poorer. Lands were alienated from the rural people to the rich money-lenders and court officials. The ruling class became wealthy whereas the poor lived in debt,

¹ John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC No. 24, Waco: Word Books, 1985), p.75.

poverty and hard labour. The exploitation and sufferings of the poor were ignored by the rich people. Their difficulties and misery were not taken seriously by the rulers and business community. The court was corrupt and perverted justice due to the victims. Many Israelites sought to worship Baal and Astharoth, the god and goddess of the fertility cult forsaking their God who brought them out of Egypt into freedom and gave them the Promised Land for ethical living. God wanted them to be sensitive to the needs of others but they were selfish. God expected them to practice justice and righteousness but they perverted justice. They were required to share their resources with widows, orphans, aliens and all the poor and powerless but the rich and ruling class added land to land and house to house and accumulated wealth and assets. A section of their society turned a blind eye to the problems of the poor, deliberately ignored them and refused to help the needy by hardening their hearts. So God had to point out this callousness and arrogance on the part of some people in the society sarcastically by telling Isaiah to make their minds dull and stop their eyes and shut their ears. This was the situation of the people and therefore they need to be made accountable. Their invisibility in terms lack of sensitivity, showing sympathy and empathy, willingness to help and empower the needy who are in their midst pained the heart of God. In spite of sending several prophets and messages, they did not change but continued their practices and ruined the lives of many. The punishment for such an attitude of the people has been spelled out in verses 11-13.

Other prophets in Israel point out this fact in their messages. Jeremiah who came on the scene in 6th century BC felt the same attitude in the people of his times. They were described as 'senseless people' who had eyes but do not see and had ears but do not hear (Jer. 5:21), indicating their unwillingness to listen to God and obey his commandments. Ezekiel too noticed this attitude in the people of his time and had to proclaim God's message whether they hear or refuse to hear implying their indifference to God (Ezek. 3:11). The Psalmist points out the arrogant nature of the oppressors as people with the heart of fat and gross (Ps. 119:70).

People with an indifferent attitude to God, divine values and

problems of society are present in every generation. Selfish people can be found in each society. Jesus noticed this trend in his time when ministering in Palestine. He used the prophecy of Isaiah discussed above in his message to point out this kind of attitude in people to his message and ministry. In the context of explaining the nature, role and value of the kingdom of God through parables, Jesus mentioned about the people who do not want to perceive or understand (Mt. 13:13-18; Mk. 4:10-12; Lk. 8:9-10).² Again in the context of speaking about his death and resurrection, Jesus pointed out the unwillingness of people to believe him by referring to Isaiah's prophecy of people having blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts failing to understand Jesus (Jn. 12:40). Paul in his letter mentioned the hardening of the heart on the side of Israelites to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 11:8). Like the early Israelites, Christians and their churches are quite often turning a blind eye to social problems particularly to children since they are small and taken for granted. However, there are a few people who have eyes to see the plight of the children, ears to hear their cries and heart to understand their problems and willingness to help them. As Jesus said about those who have more, more will be given (Mt. 13:13), the people with vision for children grow in their concern, develop their service and abound in achievements. The reports of various churches, organizations and NGOs and the Commissions of the governments in different parts of the world prove the progress in their service to children yet find this task needs the entire humanity to save the 'visibility' to understand children. The purpose of this booklet is threefold viz. to point out briefly the history, reasons and consequences of infanticide and feticide, to raise Christian response from the biblical view on abortion, murder and euthanasia and to draw challenges for Christian service.

According to the Oxford Illustrated Dictionary, the term *infanticide* means 'murder of infant immediately after birth' or 'custom of killing newborn infants'³ The Orient Longman Word

² Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC No. 33, Texas: Word Books, 1993), pp.373-376.

³ *The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (ed. J. Coulson, Oxford:OUP, 1981), p.430.

Master - Learner's Dictionary of Modern English defines 'fetus' as 'an unborn baby that is almost fully developed'⁴ 'Feticide' means killing the embryo by using medicines or surgery or cruel methods of removing the embryo from the uterus by hand, an illegal practice which still goes on secretly in villages, towns and cities at the risk of the life of the mother. This is a horrible practice of harassment meted out to women and an insult to the newly formed child who did not commit any mistake.

I. MALE INFANTICIDE IN ANCIENT HISTORY

Killing of male children happened in different periods of history but we do not have sufficient details about this practice. In some ancient religious traditions, male children particularly the first born in the family were preferred as a special sacrifice to gods and goddesses. It was observed as ritualistic for various reasons such as to propitiate the anger of the deities or to please them to have mercy on the population by not sending epidemics, to save the village from chaos and calamities or to achieve desired result.⁵ The practices of child sacrifice was found in the ancient Near Eastern culture. The king of Moab gave his first born son and heir as a whole burnt offering upon the wall to save his country from the attack of enemy (2 Kings 3:27). The Ammonites sacrificed children to their God Molech. The ancient Israelites who lived among these nations and followed this practice of offering their children as burnt offering in the valleys was condemned by Jeremiah (7:31). Pre-Columbian cultures too show evidences of child sacrifice. Greek mythologies speak of kings sacrificing children to gain favourable weather for invading other territories. In the rural cultures of India, children were sacrificed to get rain if the monsoon failed and famine prevailed for two or three years.

Some magicians prefer the eldest boy child in the family and so they kidnap and take them to forest or cremation yards and perform the sacrifice and use the blood or ashes for their tricks or to spread over the doorposts of the newly built houses and other buildings or bridges. Some of them believe that the skull of

⁴ *Orient-Longman Word Master-Learner's Dictionary of Modern English* (ed. Usha Aroor, Chennai: OLP Ltd., 2004) p.207.

⁵ 'Child Sacrifice' in *www.answers.com*, accessed on 7th Dec., 2007, pp.1-7.

the boy could be a medium for receiving messages from the spirit world and foretelling the fortunes to people. This happens even today and is reported in the newspapers or TV. Such magicians or priests are arrested and kept under police custody. New born babies are thrown into the rivers as a special offering to gods and goddesses due to the superstitions among some families in India.

The Bible narrates a few incidents of killing male children. The Pharaoh of Egypt ordered the killing of the male children in his kingdom to reduce the male population of the Israelites to avoid any insurrection or political coup. He allowed the female babies to live in order to have women as cheap labour force who would not fight for freedom or rebel against the government. An attitude of racial discrimination and the control of immigrant population to be in minority always were the policies of Pharaoh (Ex.1:7- 2:22). Although the midwives saved the male babies disobeying the order of Pharaoh, we do not know how many Israelite families were forced by the Egyptian neighbours and commanders to throw their male child into the river Nile (2:22). Moses as a baby was saved from infanticide because his mother was unwilling to kill her baby and the daughter of Pharaoh showed concern for this baby floating in the river. The daughter of the Pharaoh could have ignored this baby and allowed to drown in the river. She knew the rule passed against the male children in Israelite families and not against Egyptian families to throw the child in the Nile river. She could have understood the child belongs to a Hebrew family. Moses could have been an invisible child and faced death but the compassion of the daughter of Pharaoh saved this child and a great leader arose. We attribute the miraculous saving of the child to God's providence. But we should not forget the contribution of human beings like the daughter of Pharaoh in saving the child disobeying the order of her own government. Mere rescuing would not save the child. She had to devise a strategy to save the life of the child from the law of male infanticide. She had no other option except adopting the child as her own and nurturing the baby (2:5-10).

Another similar incident of infanticide by political order is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (2:16-18) during the birth of

Jesus. Herod, the king of Judea ordered the killing of all babies below the age of two in and around Bethlehem. Male child could be a rival for his position and political authority. We can assume, therefore, his target was mainly the male child who could rise up as king of Jews in the future. Joseph had to escape with Mary and the child to Egypt to save Jesus. But the rest of the children below two years were massacred for political gain. The pain of this cruel act in society is expressed by the prophecy of Jeremiah (31:15) where Rachel, representing the entire women folk of the nation, is crying for her children. Mothers feel a deeper pain when they lose their children since they conceive, carry in their womb for nine months and deliver the children after hard labour. Mothers and children are attached biologically and psychologically. Ruthless leaders do not have eyes to see and heart to feel the pain of killing children. They want to strengthen their position and power at any cost even if it means suffering of innocent children.

Children, particularly boys, dying due to wrong political reasons happen all the time. Hitler killed millions of Jews including the children during the World War. Wars created by the leaders of tribal communities in Africa, politicians of the North America and religious leaders of Middle East Islamic countries have killed millions of innocent children in the past. It seems, more children may die or become orphans because of the policies of some leaders who need to open their eyes to see, ears to hear the cry of people and mind and heart to understand the value of life.

II. FEMALE INFANTICIDE IN INDIA

Killing female children at their birth goes on in different countries for various religious, social, economic and political reasons. Female children are more at risk today in our modern society from the day they are born. Female infanticide and feticide are important issues in medical ethics, gender studies and Child theology. Female infanticide is also known as 'gendercide'. The sex ratio of females per 1000 males, according to statistics, shows an alarming decrease in female population. At the beginning of the 20th century, the female population in India was 972 per 1000 males in 1901 and by the end of the century, it declined to 933 in 2001. The risk of

female children dying between the ages of one to five is 43 per cent. It is difficult to trace the origin and the spread of the practice of female infanticide in the world. But female infanticide was practiced from ancient times in many civilizations.⁶

1. Historical Survey and Reasons of Infanticide in India

When the practice of female infanticide began among some communities in India, is not known clearly. But the existence of this practice among some caste groups in North, West and South regions of India, controlled by the British rulers, was discovered in 1789 and brought to extensive discussion, to stop female infanticide.

Northern and Western Regions

In his article, L.S. Vishwanath narrates in detail with evidences, the attempts made by the British to put an end to female infanticide in India.⁷ The documentary evidences used by Vishwanath proves the practice of female infanticide among the castes of Rajkumar Rajputs, Jedeja Rajputs, Suryavamsha Rajputs, Bedi Khutris, Jats, Gujars, Ahirs and Moyal Brahmins in the North and Lewa Patidars, Lewa Kambis in the western India. The empirical study of the British rulers and Christian missionaries brought to light the declining sex ratio of females in these communities. They had difficulties in collecting the data about the exact number of children killed, and at what day or weeks after they were born, because these communities were not willing to reveal the details to others. However, the information collected by interviewing some of the members of these communities, appointing informants and the Census Report, affirm the fact of female infanticide.

Rajputs

Among the Rajputs, L.S. Vishwanath lists 37 girls to 332 boys in Deogam of Azangash District in 1856 and 805 girls per 1000 boys

⁶ R. Muthulakshmi, *Female Infanticide: Its Causes and Solution* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2003), p.7., Pari Titus, 'Female Infanticide in Salem, Dharamapuri and Madurai Districts of Tamilnadu and Its implications for Christian Mission' unpublished Thesis submitted to CIME, Bangalore, 2007.

⁷ L.S. Vishwanath, 'Efforts of Colonial State to suppress Female Infanticide: Use of Sacred Texts, Generation of Knowledge' *Economic and Political Weekly*, (EPW, Mumbai, vol. 33, No. 19, May 9-15, 1998), pp.1104-1112.

in 1931. Suryavamsha Rajputs had only 72 girls to 729 males in Amroha region in 1856. In the region of Kutch and Kathiaward, it is estimated that 20,000 female children belonging to Jedeja Rajputs were killed in 1808, 15 girl children were left out in 1816 and only one girl child left out in 1817. Through the interviews with local people, the British rulers found out that the practice of female infanticide among the Rajputs is their custom.

- i. One of the reasons could be regarded as political for their customary practice of their warrior-ideology of conquering neighbouring regions and increasing their territory and income through spoils of war was threatened by the firm control of the British. This control on their war restricted the Rajputs communities from accumulating wealth for dowry and spending huge amounts on the marriages of their daughters. These restrictions led them to resort to killing female children.
- ii. The sociological reason is their practice of *hypergamous* marriage. The high caste Rajputs accepted brides from the middle caste Rajputs for the sake of the huge amount of dowry but refused to give their daughters to the grooms in lower caste Rajputs. This led the middle and lower caste Rajputs within the stratification of the Rajput community to reduce the number of female children by practicing female infanticide.
- iii. Another sociological reason is that maintaining the high status of their caste limited them to seek marriage alliance for their daughters from other castes and practice inter-caste marriage. When finding suitable boys for their daughters within the same caste or upper caste in the hierarchy of Rajputs became difficult, these caste groups tried to reduce their female population.
- iv. The economic reason is that the Rajputs were asked to pay heavy revenue to the British which resulted in falling of their economic capacity to maintain their high status and pay for the marriage of their daughters. The British colonial rule identified political, social and economic reasons for female infanticide among the communities of Rajputs but did not find any religious reason or sanction from the Shastras and

Puranas of Rajputs to justify the custom of female infanticide.⁸ On the other hand, they found out that the Shastras and Puranas are against female infanticide.

Lewa Patidars and Kambis

In the Western region of India, the Census record points to the fact, that the Lewa Patidars who were of higher status than the Lewa Kambis, practiced female infanticide. The Lewa Patidars living in Kaira Village had only 39-59 girls to 100 boys in 1872, Baroda region had 707 girls per 1000 males in 1901 and 717 girls to 1000 males in 1911. Lewa Kambis in Kaira village had 73 girls to 100 boys in 1872. Unlike the Rajputs, the Lewa Patidars and Kambis practiced female infanticide secretly for socio-economic reasons. The main reasons identified for the practice of female infanticide among the Lewas are the practice of *hypergamous* marriage, decline in their landholding, demand of high revenue by the British and paying huge dowry to marry off their girls to higher caste grooms.

Jats, Gujars, Ahirs, Rewari, Khurtis

Due to the decline of the Mogul power in North India, many Jats, Ahirs and Rewaris emerged as new and regional kingdoms and claimed royal status. But choosing grooms for their daughters, maintaining status and spending for dowry and marriage expenses forced these castes to resort for female infanticide. Jats had 789 female children per 1000 males in 1921 and 805 in 1931. Gujars had 778 females to 1000 males in 1921.

Another caste, Bedi Khurtis belonging to the Sikh community in Punjab also practiced female infanticide like the Rajputs for sociological and economic reasons. This is clear from the low female ratio in 1981. It seems, Moyal Brahmins too practiced infanticide but detailed information is not available.

Southern India

The assumption that female infanticide is not found in the South India was shattered when the sociologists studied the population statistics and infant mortality rate (IMR) in the census. They

⁸ L.S. Vishwanath, pp.1106f.

noticed that the female infant mortality rate is high in some villages in Tamilnadu particularly among caste groups such as Gounders, Khonds, Kallars, Vanniyars and Todas, a tribe of Nilgris hills. The practice of female infanticide may have originated in 1800 but went on secretly in the south for the past 200 years. This was brought to the notice of the public through newspapers and cinemas in the 1980s and publication of research articles and books.

Gounders

The report of the study of 12 villages in the North Arcot-Ambedkhar District between 1987-89 shows that the Gounder community is a majority to the tune of 56 per cent in the villages and practiced female infanticide.⁹ Out of the 33 female babies born, 19 female babies died which amounts to 72 per cent of female infanticide in the villages. The mortality rate of female babies born in the community of Gounders is documented as 100 females per 1000 males in 1999 in Salem District and 130.8 in Dharmapuri District. However, it declined to 103 in Salem by 2000, 65 in 2001 and 42 in 2002.

Kallars

Kallars are one of the sub-groups of the Thevar caste in Madurai District. They are regarded as the most backward caste (MBC). Practicing female infanticide due to economic and social reasons is common among the Kallar community in the region of Usilampatti and this has been documented in various books.¹⁰ A survey of the sex ratio shows 939.8 females to 1000 males in villages where female infanticide is practiced in contrast to 1018.6 females in other villages in that region where female infanticide is not practiced.¹¹ Out of 570 female babies born in Usilampatti region, 450 die due to the practice of female infanticide. This accounts to 80 per cent of female infanticide among the Kallar caste of this region.¹²

⁹ Sabu George, Rajaratnam Abel, and B.D. Miller, 'Female Infanticide in Rural South India', *EPW*, vol. 27. No. 22, May 30, 1992, pp.1153-1156.

¹⁰ Raj Kumar (ed.), *Violence against women* (New Delhi: Anmol Publication P. Ltd, 2000), ch.13, pp.139-140., R. Muthurajakshmi, pp.20-23.

¹¹ S. George, et al, p.1115.

¹² S. George, et al. p.1154.

2. Methods and Consequences of Female Infanticide

The study of female infanticide in the North, West and South India has discovered the following methods used to kill the female infants.¹³

- i. by giving the child some opium or poisonous sap of plants mixed with mother's milk.
- ii. By inserting paddy (rice with its husk) into their throats to swallow and bleed to death.
- iii. by pouring hot chicken soup in the mouth of the child.
- iv. Feeding the baby with a combination of solution of soap, salt and water.
- v. Covering the child's face with a wet cloth to struggle for breathing.
- vi. Exposing the child to heat or cold.
- vii. Refusing to feed the baby so that the baby is left to embrace natural death.

The persons involved in the infanticide are the child's family members particularly mothers-in-law, father of the child, the village nurse, relatives of the family and the mother of the child.

Female infanticide has severe consequences on the mother, family and community. Mothers go through guilt feeling, depression, grief, shame and psychological trauma for killing the baby. Some women have gone through hypochondria and others experience a sense of losing control over their wish and ambition of having children in the family. A few others hesitate to have a proper sexual life with their husbands due to the fear of conceiving another girl baby. The family practicing female infanticide is looked down upon by other castes living in that village or region. The male children born in that family have no sisters to relate to and their social bonds are limited to the boys. When they grow up, they question the action of their mothers and fathers killing of the female children born in the family. The

¹³ Pari Titus, unpublished thesis ch. IV, Vishwanath, p 1108, 'Born to Die' *India Today*, June, 28, 1986, pp.28-33.

impact has far reaching consequences in the sex ratio of that community. Among the Bhati community of Rajasthan, according to a Report in 1988, population of women was a record low - 550 to 750 for 1000 men.¹⁴

III. FETICIDE IN INDIA

The decline in the practice of female infanticide and the increase in the sex ratio of female child shown in some districts indicate some improvement in eradicating female infanticide due to the effort of the British administrators, Government, NGOs and other religious institutions. For example, female infanticide deaths (FID) decreased from 1048 in 1997 to 657 in 1999 in Dharamapuri, 125 to 79 in Madurai, 281 to 231 in Theni.¹⁵ However, it is not a hopeful sign because people resort to technological methods to abort the female fetuses. Gabriele Dietrich, in her paper, discusses the way the female feticide replaced the female infanticide.¹⁶ According to statistics more than 78000 to 1,00,000 female fetuses have been aborted by couples who had volunteered for tests in the state of Maharashtra between 1979-1985.¹⁷ The Bombay Metropolitan city witnessed the highest abortion of female fetuses - an estimate of 45,000 in 1985.¹⁸ The UN estimates approximately 2000 female fetuses are aborted illegally every day and more than 10 million female infanticides were committed over the past 20 years in India. These alarming numbers of children killed indicate clearly that the move is towards the abortion of female fetuses is from the age old practice of female infanticide.

The practice of female feticide is seen not only among the families in India but also found among the Indian born families living in UK. One of the studies undertaken in the recent years

¹⁴ Raj Kumar, pp.141-142.

¹⁵ V. Athreya and S.R. Chunkath, 'Tackling the Female Infanticide: Social Mobilisation in Dharamapuri, 1997-1999' in *EPW*, Dec. 2, 2000, pp.4345 to 4348. These authors point out in the same statistical Table No. 1 on p.4346 that FID has increased in other districts of Krishnagiri and Salem between 1997-99.

¹⁶ Gabriele Dietrich, 'Sex-Selective Abortions Replacing Female Infanticide: A Feminist Perspective' in *Female Feticide in Tamilnadu: Report of the State Level Consultation-Dec.23, 1998, Chennai* (eds. Sabu M. George and P. Phavalam, Madurai: SIRD, 2000), pp.25-34.

¹⁷ Raj Kumar, pp.134f.

¹⁸ Raj Kumar, p.134.

at the Oxford University about the Indian women in UK, estimates more than 1500 girl children missing in England and Wales from 1990-2005.¹⁹ The study revealed the alarming truth that Indian women come to India, undergo Sex Determination Tests and abort their girl babies.

Reasons and People involved in Feticide

Unlike female infanticide practiced by the few communities identified above, female feticide is found in many families irrespective of caste and class. The following are some of the main reasons for families accepting the practice of female infanticide. The reasons are applicable to feticide too.

- i. The Indian society is patriarchal in nature and functioning. Naturally, therefore, parents prefer boys to girls. A daughter has to go to her husband's home after marriage. But the sons remain with the parents and involve in the profession of the family and take care of the parents in their old age. Son-preference in the patriarchal system has led families to control the birth of girl child.
- ii. With the availability of sophisticated medical tests, equipments and technology of Ultra-sound-scanning, amniocentesis and other Sex Determination Tests (SDT), parents are able to get information about the sex of the child in uterus and go in for abortion. Doctors, nurses and brokers and agents are promoting scanning centres and SDT for a commission.
- iii. Families are of the opinion that a scientific way of abortion is safer and more acceptable than the cruel way of practicing female infanticide and being caught by the police or neighbours. Fear of being informed about their practicing of female infanticide to the local officials and being punished, has led them to use medical science and technology, which are respected and sanctioned legally, to get rid of the female fetus.
- iv. The mothers' attitude towards the girl child is also an important reason for feticide. The Indian society does not

¹⁹ 'UK Indian Women aborting girls' in *www.news.bbc.co.uk* accessed on 7th Dec. 2007, pp.1-4.

give equal value to women to enjoy all the rights. They are looked down upon as second or third class citizens, a financial burden on families and have no economic value for families. Since women have gone through the experience of discrimination and sufferings, they fear that their daughters too would go through similar sufferings. Therefore they hesitate to have girl children.

- v. Economic reason such as expenses for the education, dowry, marriage of daughters contribute to female feticide as have contributed to infanticide. However, the changes in land-holding and tenure in villages and cities have forced many families to reduce the number of female children.

Madhu Kishwar writes: The most important and far reaching of the changes introduced by the British involved imposing changes in land ownership patterns. Cultivators now ended up as tenants of a much more interventionist and rapacious State. While creating these new tenancy rights, women's rights in the land were disregarded and bypassed. Even among communities where women were the primary workers on the land, in the process of converting communal property rights of the clan into individual property rights, women were almost completely excluded. Labour power is more valued in societies with surplus land and scarce labour. As land become scarce and population pressure increases, a woman's labour power loses its value and possession of land becomes the all important asset. If ownership of land is vested mostly or exclusively in the hands of men, women begin to be treated like mere dependents and considered as liabilities rather than assets.²⁰

A similar view is expressed by Gabriele Dietrich when she says:

It is evident that women in areas like Usilampatti have been more and more marginalized in agriculture and lost control over traditional agricultural methods while green revolution methods took over and bride price was substituted by dowry. A lot of feminist research has shown that women's access to land, water and decision-making in agriculture is a very crucial factor not only for their well-being but for their very survival.²¹

Selling of agricultural land due to debts or industrial developments or for real estate reduced the value of women who were once

²⁰ Madhu Kishwar, 'When Daughters are Unwanted: Sex Determination Tests in India' in *Manushi*, No 86, Jan-Feb. 1995, p.20 discusses how the changing land-tenure system contribute to devalue women and causing feticide.

²¹ Gabriele Dietrich, p.27.

employed in agriculture. This has led to their being regarded as useless and unwanted in families.

- vi. The rapid urbanization of rural areas has led couples to opt for female feticide. Villages after villages vanish in many regions of India particularly in the surrounding vicinity of cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore, Pune, Chennai because of the construction of computer, automobile and garment industries and multi-storied housing apartments. Rural people have not only lost their land and sustenance but are being influenced by city culture to have small family and resort to abortions.
- vii. The influence of mass media particularly cinemas and TV serials focus their attention on male child in families and promote patriarchal system. Advertisements promote small families to enjoy high standard of living owning double bedroom houses, small cars and educating their one or two children in international and English medium schools. The driving force set by the media is to limit the number of children, particularly with male children.
- viii. The process of globalization of bringing MNCs to various countries with their latest scientific techniques and technological equipments like scan for SDTs, people are encouraged to use them to their advantage. International travel becoming common among the middle class, people travel to India for medical treatment which is not costly when compared to the West and make use of SDTs and resort to abortion.

IV. ABORTION

Abortion is part of feticide. The history of abortion dating back to ancient times shows evidences of pregnancies being terminated through a number of methods viz. using *abortifacient* herbs, sharp needles and knives, application of abdominal pressure, injecting poison directly into the uterus and other techniques.²²

Since the population of India is growing fast and has crossed the mark of one billion the Government of India has appealed

²² 'History of Abortion' in *www.answers.com*. assessed on 7th Dec., 2007, pp.1-20.

to people and families to control the birth of children. Various family planning projects and programmes are promoted by using the media. Many parents now want to limit the number of children to one or two, preferably male. Some families accept the idea of having one daughter rather than the second or third female child. The Sex Determination Tests (SDT) and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971 (MTPA) allow parents to go on for abortion of a second female child. The MTPA allows abortion for particular reasons.²³ First, the abortion of fetus can be carried out for *therapeutic* reason if the life of the pregnant woman is in danger or would affect her mental health rendering her useless care for the baby or because the life of her child was at risk. The second reason is *eugenic* in the case of the conceived child who would be born with serious physical and mental handicap due to the effect of German measles, chicken pox or small pox, viral hepatitis, toxoplasmosis or radio-activity or invisible - ray treatment on the pregnant woman. The third reason is based on *humanitarian* ground, that is, abortion of the fetus if conceived due to sexual assault and rape. The fourth reason is of *social* concern of pregnancy occurring on account of the failure of contraceptive device. This issue of abortion will be discussed from the biblical perspective later as a Christian response to infanticide and feticide. Roy Zuck has dealt with these issues in the Bible in his book which is recommended for further reading.²⁴

Many 'Pro-Choice' advocates justify all the above reasons for abortions. According to the 'Actuality Principle' of *Functionalism*, a fetus is not a person. Only when a person begins to act as a moral, spiritual and intellectual being, then he or she is human.²⁵ Human organisms have a right to life if only they can act with self-consciousness and personal thought. On this basis, abortion or euthanasia of a defective child is valid.

²³K. Kumar and Punam Rani, *Offences against women: Socio-Legal Perspectives*, (New Delhi: Regency Publication, 1996), p.37.

²⁴ Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), pp.71-89.

²⁵ Robert N. Wennberg, 'The Right to Life: Three Theories' in *Readings in Christian Ethics: Issues and Application* (Eds. D.K. Clark and R.V. Rakeshtraw, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), vol. 2, pp.36-46. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, 'Reproductive Choice: Basic to Justice for women', *Readings in Christian Ethics*, pp.26-31.

- i. The advocates of pro-choice see abortions are the only way to control the increase in population.
- ii. They also argue that abortion is necessary in the interest of the health of women and saving the life of the mother.
- iii. Sexual assault resulting in pregnancy can cause many problems in the family and so abortion is the remedy to get rid of the fetus and to maintain relationship within the family.
- iv. To help the female child escape discrimination and misery in her life, abortion is resorted to.
- v. Women have a right over their reproductive system and can decide when and what gender of child they want. At this juncture, it is important to note the key reasons for the Western Feminists demanding women's right to abortion. Young people in the west like to refrain from child bearing to enjoy freedom and a good standard of life, for fear of ecological decline and nuclear and toxic effect on health and life of children and over emphasis on the rights of women.²⁶ Increasing divorce rate, separation and single parenting are another reason for abortion.

Some 'Pro-Life' promoters take either the stand of 'Potentiality principle' in functionalism which emphasizes the right to life if that fetus can develop with self consciousness and personal life.²⁷ Other pro-life promoters follow the principle of *Essentialism* which emphasizes that a human organism is a human person and has a right to life because it is member of human species and as such a fetus is a developing person.²⁸ Modern medical science points out that the tiny heart of the baby begins to beat by third week of pregnancy. The head and body are distinguishable by the fifth week and the brain starts functioning by the seventh week. Therefore, abortion cannot be allowed. Many of the pro-life advocates criticize the loopholes in the MTPA that allows couples to have abortions done easily at the cost of Rs.150 (USD 4) to Rs.500 (USD 13) in private clinics. This group points out various

²⁶ Gabriele Dietrich, pp.29-31.

²⁷ R.N. Wennberg, pp.38-39

²⁸ Robert E. Joyce, 'When does a Person Begin?' pp.46-51, R.N Wennberg, pp.42-44. Also the introductory comments on 'Abortion' in page 24 by the editors D.K. Clark and R.L. Rakeshtraw. *op.cit.*

consequences of using modern techniques for sex determination and abortion of fetus.

- i. It is risky for the fetus, as some believe, to draw amniotic fluid through uterus for amniocentesis test to determine the sex of the fetus. The child can have some defect or physical deformity.
- ii. The method of Chorionic Villi Sampling (CVS) by vaginal extraction in 8 to 16 weeks of pregnancy can cause infection and result in fatality to the pregnant woman or have the side-effect of spontaneous abortion.
- iii. The Ultra-sound scanning method in sex determination is unreliable and can lead to the abortion of the fetus of a male child by mistake.

To promote pro-life emphasis, Gabriele Dietrich points out, the Indian society needs to be educated on the value of life. Children and women cannot be separated. To address the problem of children, the focus has to be on women also. Instead of punishing the mother who allowed infanticide or feticide, it is important to heal her self-value of being a woman. In our patriarchal society, women as custodians of life should be emphasized to promote the welfare of women and female children. Not only women but the entire society should realize the shame and guilt of infanticide and feticide.²⁹

V. EFFORTS OF THE BRITISH, INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND NGOS

Efforts were taken by various groups to stop infanticide and feticide. Some of these efforts are briefly listed below:

1. British Administration

The British administrators particularly Jonathan Duncan, Warren Hastings, Alexander Walker and Elphinstone had taken various efforts to stop female infanticide. Some of their attempts discussed by L.S. Vishwanath are listed below.³⁰

²⁹ Gabriele Dietrich, pp.31-34.

³⁰ Vishwanath, pp.1106-1111.

- i. The British administrators during their rule did not find any evidence for female infanticide in the Hindu puranas and shastras. They, however, noticed that the *Bretemo Bywurt Pooran* (Brahma Vaivarta Puran) speaks of punishment for taking a life of even a fetus. The killer shall suffer in hell or be born again as a leper and afflicted for sin. So the British administrator used this purana to educate the Rajputs to stop female infanticide.
- ii. They made the Rajputs and Jedeja community to sign an agreement, which included the punishment as stated by the shastra, to persuade these castes to relinquish the practice of female infanticide. Although the practice was stopped for a short period, it continued and the agreement became a 'dead letter', as noticed by the British officials.
- iii. The communities were persuaded to expel those who practiced infanticide and not have any relationship with such families.
- iv. The British administrators created Caste Council to educate communities not to go in for *hypergamous* marriages to avoid dowry demands and to overcome social and economic factors forcing them to practice female infanticide.
- v. Some of the British officials insisted on a 'coercive' approach. Informants were appointed to bring to the notice of the government these families practicing female infanticide. But others opposed this coercive system as an intrusion into the domestic privacy of the communities and warned the informants with threats of the danger of their being alienated from their local communities. As an alternative approach, police surveillance encouraged in some villages helped to control female infanticide to a certain extent.
- vi. The British administrators insisted on compulsory registration of births and deaths in areas suspected of female infanticide and encouraged the panchayats to co-operate in the registration process.

The attempts of the British administration in the North and West of India brought about awareness on female infanticide and yielded some significant results in the control of female infanticide, although it could not eradicate the practice completely.

2. Government of India

Both the Central and State governments are aware of the problem of female infanticide and feticide and have taken various steps to control and eradicate these practices. Their approach was twofold viz. one, to deal with the issue of infanticide and feticide by enacting laws and implementing them and the other, for promoting welfare schemes for children, particularly girl children, and awareness programmes for women. It is not possible to discuss the achievements and failures of these schemes in detail here except for listing briefly that the government is concerned about children.

- i. Since the problem of female infanticide is connected with various sociologically complex issues such as the marriage system and dowry, prostitution and abortion, divorce, preference for sons over daughters and the patriarchal structure of society, the government passed laws against dowry system and sati which caused misery to women and forced families to reduce the birth of girl children, involve in prostitutions and illegal abortions. But the Indian government is unable to challenge the patriarchal structure of society by laws and bring equal status to women. The practice of caste system, dowry demands, prostitutions and abortion are still going on unreported but can be controlled by the intensive implementation of laws.
- ii. Son-preference and female feticide are challenged by laws controlling pre-natal diagnostic tests. No woman can be forced to go in for SDT. The Pre-conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act and Rules 1994 as amended up to 2002 state clearly the rights of women to refuse SDT. The scan centres and the clinics involved in Sex-Determination Tests that carry out abortion are controlled by the same law enforcing powers the Enforcement Authorities of Central and State Supervisory Board. Yet, feticide goes on, failing to bring the medical centres and the doctors to accountability.
- iii. Laws in Indian society can bring some results but cannot solve the problem fully unless the public and officials cooperate and are willing to stop the practices. Combined with the rules and regulations, the government has launched several literacy programmes and projects to educate women

about family, marriage, children, health and hygiene and child development programmes like Danish International Development Assistance (DANDA), ICDS, Tamilnadu Area Health Care Project (TNAHCP), Cradle Baby Scheme, Girl Child Protection Scheme, etc.

3. Non-Governmental Organizations

Many non-governmental organizations are involved in dealing with the problems of children. Some of them have contributed to the welfare of orphans, the mentally affected and the physically challenged, by establishing or supporting financially the orphanages, homes, health clinics and schools for these children. Others are fighting against child labour and for the rights of children. A few others are involved in helping children who have been sexually abused. Two of the NGOs I know viz. Society for Integrated Social Upliftment (SISU) and Society for Integrated Rural Development (SIRD) based in Madurai, are concerned about female infanticide and feticide and initiated programs to educate the families of the Kallar community against female infanticide. These NGOs organize seminars and give training against feticide and have launched non-violent struggles against Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques and abortions. Similarly other NGOs are working among the Gounder and Vanniyar communities in north Tamilnadu. The welfare schemes such as loans for purchasing cows, improving agriculture and small businesses and grants for educating girl children either instituted by the NGOs with their funds or recommended to the government, to improve the economic and social status of these communities and thus stop the practice of infanticide and feticide, brought about some results initially but it did not last.³¹ Some NGOs work closely with leaders of local communities and the state government. The Street Theatre programme of 'KalaiPAYANA Kuzhukkal' supported by TNAHCP brought about an awareness of infanticide and mobilized village panchayat officials, community leaders and health officials to educate their local communities.³² Their preventive and controlling approaches rather than the developmental schemes, achieved good

³¹ Pari Titus, ch. VIII.

³² V. Athreya and S. R. Chunkath, p.4346.

results in reducing the practice of infanticide and feticide. However, a detailed evaluation of the achievements of NGOs is needed and the process could take a long time.

VI. CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO INFANTICIDE AND ABORTION

Christians, as individuals and local churches, have responded to social problems ever since the time of the Apostles. The Gospel values have compelled them to involve in social transformation. Christian response is in the form of theological basis as well as practical action.

Missionaries and Churches

- i. Missionaries living in North India during the colonial rule wrote extensively about the way the female infanticide was practiced and its consequences. They published their findings to bring about awareness on this practice and mobilize the British administrators to pay serious attention to this problem and pass necessary laws to eradicate it.
- ii. A research conducted in Tamilnadu to know the involvement of the churches and Western Mission societies (CMS, LMS, ALC) in addressing the problem of infanticide shows that these missionaries focused their attention more on the care of orphans and providing primary health care and schools for the education of the children rather than on eradicating the practice of infanticide.³³ Churches also followed the same social service of health care, education and establishing orphanages and children's homes for the needy. Whether churches in various regions of India were hesitant to address the problem of infanticide, or attempted and failed or simply ignored it, needs detailed research.
- iii. In addition to continuing the social service to children in various capacities, churches need to discuss the issue of abortion from theological and sociological perspectives. For, Christians are divided on this issue of abortion and euthanasia. Roman Catholic Christians, following either the potentiality principal of functionalism or essentialism reject

³³ Pari Titus, ch. X.

abortion. Other Protestant churches have varied opinions because of the way they interpret the biblical texts. In fact, the Bible does not state clearly on abortion but some texts have been used for the case of pro-life and pro-choice.

Theological Response

Pro-life advocates quote Ps. 139:13-16, Jer.1:5 and Lk.1:41-44 to support their views but the following examination of texts shows that they are not speaking of the right to life or against abortion. The emphasis of Ps. 139 is on the omniscience of God. The Psalmist acknowledges that God knows man from the time he is conceived in his mother's womb because God has created man wonderfully. He cannot hide himself from God. The message of Ps. 139:13-16 is about God's creation of human beings and his constant watch over them rather than against abortion. John Stott believes that this psalm is speaking about the value of life and explains it to prove his pro-life position.³⁴ Similarly, Jer.1:5 speaks of creating Jeremiah to set him apart for prophetic ministry and not about right to life. Mary's greetings to Elizabeth in Lk 1:41-44 made her rejoice. She could feel the baby leaping in her womb. These texts appreciate the mystery of God creating human beings in the womb of women that they can realize the wonderful work of God and serve him.

Another text which is against killing of human lives is in Ex. 20:13, 'You shall not murder'. Both pre-mediated murder and incidental murder are wrong and the punishment varied according to the case, in ancient Israel. The message of this text is applicable to a person born and growing day by day. This includes the case of infanticide or euthanasia of terminally ill children but this becomes controversial in the case of feticide due to the question of when the zygote becomes a person.

The controversial text is Ex. 21:22-24 used by both groups to support their pro-life and pro-choice stand.

If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows (v.22).

³⁴ John R W. Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Basingstoke: Marshalls, 1984), pp.280-288.

But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life (v. 23).

Scholars differ in their translation and interpretation of this text. According to Gershon Brin, this text is not double laws but one single law with two principal parts namely, 'miscarriage and yet no harm' (v.22) and 'if any harm' (v.23) and with two different degrees of damage caused to the pregnant woman and varying punishments.³⁵ The damages caused to a pregnant woman are the miscarriage and assault on her life. If the second part (v. 23) is understood as injury to the mother's life and death penalty is imposed, then this issue is not directly related to the question of abortion. However, the problem lies in the first part of the text (v. 22). Is it right, first of all, to translate the phrase 'gives birth (a child) prematurely' or 'miscarriage'? The second problem is to understand the Hebrew word *ason* - 'harm' or 'injury' in v.22. The third problem is to find out the main focus or thrust of this text. Is it on the life of the pregnant woman or the losing of the child or fetus? According to Alan Cole, this text is not about the issue of abortion. Its focus is on the injury caused to the mother when she interferes during the fight between her husband and another man. He points out that the miscarriage should be compensated because it is an injury to the mother without discussing the meaning of miscarriage as fully formed fetus or unformed fetus.³⁶ Cornelis Houtman quotes the view of Fensham that the word *ason* refers to a permanent damage done to the woman who can no longer be able to bear children as a result of injury. But he disagrees with Fensham because the issue is not whether the woman is still fertile or not.³⁷ Susanne Scholz focused her attention on the literary aspect of the text speaking of her husband deciding the amount of penalty to be paid to him for the injury caused to his wife and criticizes the male dominated language and the patriarchal values of the society rather than discussing the issue of miscarriage.³⁸ Joseph Blenkinsopp

³⁵ Gershon Brin, *Studies in Biblical Law: From the Hebrew Bible to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (S.No. 176, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), p.20.

³⁶ R. Alan Cole, *Exodus* (TOTC, Leicester: IVP, 1973), p.169.

³⁷ Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus* (HCOT, Leuven: Peeters, 2000), vol. 7, p.170.

³⁸ Susanne Scholz, 'The Complexities of 'His' Liberation Talk: A Literary Feminist Reading of the Book of Exodus' in *Exodus to Deuteronomy: A Feminist Companion to the Bible* (ed. Athalya Brenner, Sheffield: SAP, 2000), p.34.

emphasizes the economic value of children as a resource for families and the need for compensation to the husband without discussing the issue of miscarriage as referring to premature birth of fully formed child or unformed fetus.³⁹ John Durham sees 'miscarriage' in two possible ways viz. premature birth of a child and no harm to the life of the mother and the baby or the loss of fetus which is *ason* (harm) and such an injury demands penalty. He is not discussing the issue of abortion except emphasizing the effect, harm and compensation.⁴⁰

Jack Cottrell taking the pro-life position argues that the translation 'miscarriage' is not appropriate in v. 22 which can mean only the loss of fetus. He points out another Hebrew word *shachol* used in Ex. 23:26 and Hosea 9:14 to refer to miscarriage (cf. Gen. 31:38, Job 21:10 refers to animals, 2 Kings 2:19, 21, Malachi 3:11 referring to the land and plants not producing mature fruit).⁴¹ On the basis of the words *yeled* (child) and the verb *yatza* (to go out, to come forth) used in v. 22, Cottrell interprets this text as meaning the premature birth of a child and not the destruction of a fetus. Furthermore, he says that the text does not make any distinction between harm done to the child or to the mother. The fine or the penalty is not based on this point of view but from the very fact that the mother and child are exposed to danger and distress. V. 23 introduced with 'if' clause can have effect if the mother dies of injury. For him, this text cannot be used as a justification for liberalizing the law of abortion.

Extensive discussion is taken by Stanley Isser in his article on Ex. 21:22-23.⁴² He compares this Old Testament law with the laws in Ancient Near Eastern countries and Greco-Roman period. Out of his study he points out two possible understandings of the word *ason* in v. 22. It can mean not fully formed fetus and

³⁹ Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'The Family in First Temple Israel' in *Families in Israel* (eds. Leo G. Perdue and others, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), pp.69f.

⁴⁰ John I Durham, *Exodus* (WBC, No. 3, Waco: Word Books, 1987), pp.323f.

⁴¹ Jack W. Cottrell, 'Abortion and the Mosaic Law' in *Readings in Christian Ethics*, vol. 2, pp.32-35.

⁴² Stanley Isser, 'Two Traditions: The Law of Exodus 21:22-23 Revisited' *CBQ*, 52, 1990, pp.30-45.

so compensation according to the months of the fetus levied as penalty. Or else it could also refer to a fully formed fetus equal to a human person. If so, then death penalty is demanded for taking a life. The growth of the fetus aborted naturally due to the injury during the fight between a woman's husband and the other man can be judged only by the elders of the village with the help of the nurses in their society. It is possible that the judgment was awarded according to the details collected and verified in ancient Israel about which we have no further information in the Old Testament. The harm could be against the unformed fetus or fully formed fetus. The focus of the text, however, is on the unexpected and incidentally happened abortion in the context of fight between men and not pre-planned and deliberately induced abortion. Both pro-life and pro-choice promoters can claim this text but have to solve the problem of interpreting it and seek medical advice about the growth of the fetus as unformed, semi-formed or fully formed into a baby and the rules of the nation.

Instead of searching for a proof of text in the Bible to prove either of the positions, it is important to emphasize the creation theology of the Bible. God who created both male and female in his own image, values human life.⁴³ The Bible does not say that murder or infanticide or abortion will never happen. It criticizes the inhuman practices of sacrificing children to gods and goddesses, dedicating female children to be cult-prostitutes in temples as is seen in the *devadhasi* system in India or using them as medium for sorcery. These superstitions and rituals may have contributed to the practice of infanticide and feticide. The world-view of the people and the cultural practices based on the world views need to be challenged by the creation and redemption theology of the Bible combined with the ideology of humanism. The Gospel of Christ for new humanity should be proclaimed and promoted to emphasize the value of life for the present and future generations.

⁴³ Refer to J.B.Jeyaraj, *Biblical Perspectives on Children and their Protection: Towards a Child Theology* (Madurai: JIP, 2007).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is easy to leave the discussion of abortion open for further discussion without stating any conclusion. We can leave it to the views of Christians to take their own stand on abortion. But there are certain situations like rape, mental illness of the mother or child, forced pregnancy by the husband, illegal pregnancy in prostitution and failure of contraceptives and surgery demand a stand on abortion and the congregations are looking for a clear guidance from their authorities. Should one's mother, sister or daughter be made to bear the brunt of having the child, conceived when raped? Should one be made to have a child when mentally ill? Who will be the father of the child in the case of gang rape? Will that child born be acceptable to the husband and family members? Who will marry a girl if she is raped and has given birth to a child? Should the deformed and mentally retarded child be borne by the mother and both of them with their family members suffer life long? On the other hand, when abortion is done, the woman and the family may feel guilty of killing a child. The most affected person is, undoubtedly, the mother who has to live with the guilt of having lost her child. She undergoes trauma for life.

In my opinion, Christians should take into account, three factors viz; i) the way they understand the biblical teaching, ii) the law of the Government and medical ethics, and iii) the humanitarian aspect which includes sociological relationship. Proper guidance and counselling is necessary to the woman and family members, before and after abortion, if it is done for valid reasons at an early stage of pregnancy. However, one particular view cannot be imposed on everybody. Both male and female child as well as the mentally retarded and physically challenged children should have the right to life. Families all over the world should be trained to care for them. Societies should be educated to accept them not as a burden but as a challenge to their spirituality and an opportunity to develop them. The governments are also responsible to legislate appropriate laws, modify the existing rules and implement them effectively. Churches, Seminaries, Missions and Christian colleges and schools need to include the concern of children and build up the future generation in their programmes, projects and curriculum.

Questions for further discussion

1. How to collect information about female infanticide and feticide and control Sex Determination Tests?
2. What are the measures to be taken by the Government, NGOs and churches to address the causes and consequences of infanticide and feticide?
3. What are the religious teachings of different communities against the killing of fetuses and children and for promoting the value of life?

