

Intergenerational continuity and discontinuity in attitude of rural women towards female foeticide

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The present study was undertaken to assess the intergenerational continuity and discontinuity in attitude of rural women towards female foeticide in Ludhiana district. The study was based upon the sample of 200 respondents. The respondents were distributed equally over the two generations, the first comprising of mothers-in-law and the second comprising of daughters-in-law. The subjects for the sample were drawn randomly from six villages located on Block I of Ludhiana district. Data were collected through interview schedule. Results revealed that continuity was observed in attitude statement like exorbitant demand of dowry is coming in the way of the birth of a girl child. Highly significant differences in attitude were observed for attitudinal statement like sex selective abortions are a way to have a balanced family, only sons can provide age old security to the parents and only boys can perform the last rites of the parents.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Female foeticide, Intergenerational, Attitude

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India has historically a deficit of women compared to most other countries, but we now live in a time when a systematic extermination of an entire gender is taking place right before our eyes. Until the 1980s, women and girls were dying either of neglect or were killed soon after they were born. Today, the horrifying reality is that, thanks to 'advances' in medical technology, they are now eliminated while still in the womb (Aravamudan, 2007). The girl child in the womb faces the peril of prebirth elimination *i.e.* female foeticide. The term "foeticide" is a combination of the Latin words '*fetus*' and '*caedo*' which means to kill an unborn child. The practice of female foeticide involves the detection of the sex of the unborn child in the womb of the mother and the decision to abort it, if the sex of the child is detected as a girl (Scaria, 2006). Although the changing interrelationships between education, work, marriage and family status in some sense have brought a light of empowerment for women but the continuously declining sex ratio poses a big question towards the developments that have taken place till date. Keeping this in mind, the present study had been undertaken to know the intergenerational attitude of rural women towards the practice

of female foeticide.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in rural areas of Ludhiana district. Random sampling technique was followed. A list of blocks falling in Ludhiana district was prepared. Out of the 11 blocks, block 1 was randomly selected. A list of villages falling under block I was prepared and out of them six villages were randomly selected for drawing the sample. The study was based upon the sample of 200 respondents. The respondents were distributed equally over the two generations the first comprising of mothers-in-law and the second comprising of daughters-in-law. The data were collected through interview schedule which was consisted of both positive and negative items and analyzed using percentages, Z test. Scoring was done on a three point scale by assigning 3,2,1 scores for agree, doubtful and disagree, respectively for positive items and *vice versa* for negative items.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 throws light on intergenerational continuity in