The girl child has always been considered at a secondary level by the society, second class citizen, and therefore marginalized section of the society. Her rights as an individual were ignored by the society. She was never treated at par with boys, even in the earliest historical period. In ancient India, although there are no references found in the Vedic literature which proves the existence of female infanticide, there are a number of hymns which clarify that girls were not the desired sex; the wish was for a son alone. The Vedic texts recommend prayers for the birth of sons and for avoiding the birth of daughters and believed that the birth of a daughter spelt misfortune for her family. In the Vedic age there were two significant beliefs which supported the concept of son preference, firstly sons were desired to fight the battles for their clans, and secondly, religious importance attached to the funeral rites to be performed by the sons to make a place in the heaven after death, spurred on the keen desire for sons. The arrival of a girl created a feeling of disappointment. However, she enjoyed some rights to education, choice of groom and on some occasions her presence was considered auspicious. If the practice of female infanticide had been common it would have been condemned by Smriti writers who regarded the destruction of an embryo as a most heinous crime. Manu in fact talks of the protection of the girl child by her father in childhood, her husband in her youth, her sons maintain her in old age and in their absence the people of her caste were to look often her. There were no issues like dowry, child marriage, sati, infanticide nor did her family consider her as an economic burden. There was in fact strong concept of stridhan, personalized property of the girl in the Vedic age. On the whole, girls did have a right to life, even though there was a strong ‘son preference’. There is no suggestion than the girl child was harmed or ‘killed’. There was no danger to the right to life of the girl child.

In the medieval period, the right to life of the girl child started fading. The status of a wife was elevated only after the birth of a son. This clearly points to the additional importance attached to sons or being a mother of sons. With the hordes of invaders in north India the position of the girl child became more vulnerable. The parents of the girl child became worried about honour and family status if their girl fell in the hands of the invaders. As the concept of...
pride and honour was directly tied to the girls only, people discarded her or they felt that it was better to kill her instead of facing social disgrace in the future. This lead to a further deterioration of the position of the girl child and the feeling of ‘disappointment’ at the birth of a girl, reached the level of discarding her at birth itself. The first ever State interference against the crime of female infanticide was identified with the ordinances of Jahangir in the 17th century and Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur in the 18th century, as in 1731 A.D he assembled the Fifty- three clans of Kachwahas and the nobles and pandits of his court and explained to them that it was a serious crime on the part of parents to destroy their female offspring’s and asked them not to kill their female infants within the ‘territory’ of Jaipur. With this Jai Singh also tried to fix the amount of marriage expenditure and ordered that it should not exceed 1/8th of the annual income of the Chief. This proves that people had started killing their daughters. The extent of the crime however, was not wide spread as both ordinances were issued in the Rajputana area. The crime was only prevalent in some caste groups especially among the Rajputs of the region. The most important reason assigned to the killing of the girl child is, the unavailability of the suitable bridegrooms and sometimes the exorbitant demands of the Bhats and Charans. The parents of the daughters failed in both situations and to escape the social disgrace they found the easy way-out, kill the girl child immediately after her birth. At this point of time the girl child lost her right to life.

In the Punjab the Sikh Gurus, Guru Amar Das and Guru Gobind Singh strictly prohibited and condemned the practice of the killing of the girl child amongst some of their followers. This clearly points towards the prevalence of the practice among the Sikhs. In the caste of Bedis, Dharam Chand urged the Bedis to kill all their girls in infancy. The extent of the practice was however, limited to some caste groups and confined to some areas of the region. The practice of girl child killing was not followed by everyone. It was only condemned by Guru Amar Das, while all other Gurus were silent on its existence. Had the practice been wide spread it would have been condemned by the other Gurus too, as they were condemning other social evils too, like sati. It was only later that Guru Gobind Singh, who strongly condemned its existence and labeled such people Kurimaars, those who killed their daughter. This condemnation indicates that by the early 18th century the extent of the girl child killing had probably spread to more caste groups and areas within the region.
At this point of time tolerance of the birth of the girl child seems to have disappeared and reasons put forth for taking her right to life included the demand of dowry, unavailability of suitable matches, concept of pride, more rigidity in the caste system, hypergamous marriages, harassment of the bride’s family by the groom’s family at the time of marriage and an increase in the crimes against women like rapes, forced labour, prostitution and poverty which brought about a deterioration in the position of the girl child in the family. She was not at all welcomed by the family, people started thinking that if they brought up their daughters and were unable to marry her before puberty then she would definitely bring disgrace to their family. So to be more secure against these real or framed atrocities on the girl child, they justified an alternative to kill her immediately after her birth. In many cases the girl child lost the very right to life in the Punjab region.

In the colonial period, Jonathan Duncan was the first to ‘discover’ the prevalence of female infanticide amongst the caste of Rajkumars in Jaunpur in 1789. In 1805-06, the British also noted its existence in Kathiawad, and North-Western Province, as well as Rajputana by Sutherland in 1839. The practice of female infanticide was confined to some regions of the country and it was followed by some caste groups in these regions only. Among the colonial administrators Duncan, Moor, Walker and Cave-Browne, existence of the practice of female infanticide is noted; however there is no comment on the extent of the practice. In fact, the stories that are recorded relate to the families of chiefs and Rajas are hearsay not part of their personal experiences. The Rajkumars of Jaunpur, the Gaikawad Princes in Kutch, the Rajas of Jamnagar and Murvi are recorded as following female infanticide according to the merchants of Kutch who in touch with the British. Duncan adds that the daughters were permitted to survive if there were no sons in wealthy families. He also says that the practice was not general nor in all subdivision of the Rajput tribe. It seems therefore that the practice of killing a girl child was restricted to ‘royal’ families and some members of specific tribes. It was by no means as widespread practice.

The general reasons for female infanticide in the late 18th century noted by Duncan relate to the unavailability of suitable grooms and the ‘social disgrace’ of having unmarried daughters beyond the age of puberty. Moor also underline the social disgrace and adds the expenses of marriage to an explanation of the practice existence. In fact, all the stories related in this context highlight the unsuccessful search for bridegrooms by the Brahman or Rajguru of the chiefs.
leading to this fateful step. Walker and John Cave Brown writing in the first half of the 19th century also cite ‘dishonour’ of unmarried girls and caste pride as the reasons behind female infanticide. It was therefore; more of a cultural issue than any other, though economic factors are also mentioned as contributing to the existence of this practice or taking away the right to life at birth of girl child.

The British, concentrated more on economic issues rather than cultural reasons in an attempt to understand the practice of female infanticide. In fact, the British largely ignored cultural factors which were beyond their realm of understanding being a point of the Indian mindset and the social context of the ‘natives’.

To curb the practice of female infanticide, the British administrators took various suppressive measures starting with the usage of Hindu sacred texts to put pressure on the minds of the people through their religious beliefs and underline that if they practiced female infanticide their own Gods will not forgive them. Second, the British began by making agreements with the local chiefs not to follow the practice in future and declared it equitant to murder. The British got an opportunity to interfere in the social customs of the Indian on the basis of their concern as a welfare State. Third, they declared it punishable as in other cases of murder. Fourth, they tried the experiment of stationing Mehtas at the principal Jadeja towns for the purpose of communicating births, preservation or murder of female children. Fifth, scheme of rewarding the informers against the crime of female infanticide was introduced. Sixth, the British also appreciated the local chief’s efforts to preserve their daughters and gave cash prizes to encourage them to save the girl child. Seventh, they entered in the ‘Treaty of Alliance’ with local chiefs to abstain from practice of infanticide and specifying that in case of any them do practice it the guilty person shall submit to a punishment of any kind that may be determined by company and the Kach Darbar.

Eighth, a fund named ‘The Infanticide Prevention Fund’ was established to meet the expenses on the marriage of daughter which was identified as one of the major reason responsible for the practice of female infanticide. Nineth, the British even permitted to postpone the payment of their tribute in the year in which the marriage of a daughter took place. Tenth, they organized a native essay writing competition on the subject of female infanticide and its suppression, to know the viewpoint of the natives in Kathiawad region. Eleventh, the British reiterated the idea of the reduction in the marriage expenses by regulations to dimishing, the gifts
and fees to mendicant classes like Brahman, Bhats, Charans and barbers in attending marriages among the Jadejas. Twelfth, the British honored those zamindars that started bringing up their daughters by presenting shawls as a token of reward and recognition. Thirteen, they introduced a strict supervision by four members of the village namely the Chaprasi (peon), gorait (messenger), chowkidar (watchman) and dai (midwife), each acting as a check on the other. They were all to report separately the birth of every girl in the suspected clans at the thanas (police station) and failing to do so would subject them to a heavy penalty. This way the British tried various efforts to put stop on the killing of the girl child, but practically there was no improvement found. Lastly, the British passed ‘The Female Infanticide Prohibition Act of 1870’ to restore of the right to life of the ‘girl child’ in the colonial period. The Act was applied to the selected villages or areas where the practice was most suspected. Registration of births, deaths and marriages were made compulsory in the areas where this Act was applied. In the event of the breach of these rules the person was liable to be imprisoned or fined both. The Act was repealed by the colonial government in 1906 without giving any strong justifications. The sex ratio patterns at an all-India level and in the province of Punjab still showed as skewed a sex ratio as earlier. The British claimed that everything was under control and there is not further need of this Act in India. At this point of time it seems that the British understood that the problem of female infanticide was not as wide spread as had been assumed. Their interference in the social sphere of the people actually helped to the practice to those groups who had not previously practiced it. The sex ratio figures too did not show any real improvement in the Punjab from the Census of 1868 to 1931.

In the province of the Punjab, they were informed of the practice in 1851, Major E. Lake, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur, was the first who drew the attention of the Board of Administration to the ‘enormity’ of the practice of female infanticide in the Punjab. With their ‘experience’ in other regions the colonial administrators in Punjab made three assumptions about the prevalence of the practice of girl child ‘killing’ in the region. The administrators first felt that the skewed sex ratio was a significant indicator for the prevalence of female infanticide. Second, the practice of female infanticide was confined largely to a particular religious group, the Sikhs. Third, it was followed by particular caste groups of Khatris, Aroras, Jats, Bedis, Rajputs in the various regions of the Punjab. All these three assumptions however were not supported by the figures in their own census records. These assumptions need a re-examination of the census data.
The first assumption of the British was based on the fact that the practice of the colonial Punjab, had a lower proportion of females in the census enumeration can easily be disapproved with the census information of the period collected by the British themselves. The sex ratio among the age group of 0-5 years from 1868 to 1931 Census record showed 925 plus girls per 1000 boys in the Punjab. This clearly shows that at the time of birth there was no problem of a skewed sex ratio in the Punjab, the issue emerged as the girl child grew up. In the Census of 1881, there were 948 girls per 1000 boys, which declined to 927 in 1891 and then again to 926 in the Census of 1901. There was 22 points decline noticed in the child sex ratio from 1881 to 1901. From the 1901 the child sex ratio consistently showed an improvement to 941 girls in the Census of 1911, 962 in the 1921 Census and 961 girls in 1931 with one point decline. In totality, there was 13 points increase in the child sex ratio from the Census of 1881, 948 girls to 961 girls of the 1931. This directly shows that the problem of the skewed sex ratio was not severe at the time of the early childhood; it became so as the girl grew-up. Reasons like early marriage, early age of motherhood, neglect of nutrition and medical care, male dominant immigration, ravages of epidemics which took the heavy toll of female’s life, were significant for the skewed sex ratio in the later age-groups of women. In fact, in all districts the gap between girls and boys was not at all large. If it evident thus that the sex ratio was not low due to female infanticide but extraneous factors at play often the age of early childhood. The extent of the practice of female infanticide was not much prevalent in the region as it was explained by the some British administrators. There were no doubt people did ‘kill’ their daughters but its scope was limited to some areas and caste groups. Majority of the people were not following it, it was confined to only some.

The second assumption of the British was that the practice of the female infanticide was wide spread among the Sikhs can also be challenged as it is not supported by the census figures. There was no doubt that the Sikhs were always at the lower end of the sex ratio tally in comparison to the Muslims and Hindus from the Census of 1868 to 1931. The Muslims always had the highest number of females per 1000 males followed by the Hindus and last by the Sikhs. On the basis of this it was assumed that the Sikhs followed the practice of female infanticide most. In the colonial period, slowly and gradually the sex ratio among the Sikhs consistently showed an improvement with every passing decade and census enumeration as compared to Hindus and Muslims from 1868 to 1931. The Sikhs were at the lower end in 0-5 age group, having 855 girls nearly 100 less girls as compared to Hindus (945) and Muslims (967) sex ratio.
in 1881 Census enumerations. From 1881 to 1901 the Sikh child sex ratio showed a decline of 23 points in the girl child figures with 783 girls in the 1891 Census and 760 in 1901 Census. From 1911 to 1931 the Sikh child sex ratio improved substantially by the 1931 Census to 927 girls per 1000 boys. Among the Sikhs it was for first time that the sex ratio pattern crossed the mark of 900. On the whole there is no doubt that the Sikhs had lowest sex ratio as compared to the Hindus and Muslims, but important fact is here that the Sikhs were showing tremendous increase of 72 points in their sex ratio patterns from 1868 to 1931 Census. This increase from 855 to 927 in the Sikhs showed that there was no prevalence of the practice of female infanticide at large. The reports of the British officials on the relation, existence, extent of the prevalence of the practice of female infanticide among the Sikhs does not supported by the census statistics. As especially in the age group of 0-5 years the Sikhs sex ratio was far improved in 1931 (927) from 1868 (855). The Muslims showed decline of 6 points, those were assumed that they did not followed the practice of female infanticide as compared to the Hindus and Sikhs. On other hand the Hindus showed an increase of 34 points and the Sikhs of 72 points, those were assumed followed the practice of female infanticide. So this clarify that there was no relation present in the skewed sex ratio and religious groups. If they had earlier practiced female infanticide, in the colonial period the scope of such practice was limited and did not extend further.

The third assumption of the British that specific castes Jats, Aroras, Khatris and Rajputs were more prone to the practice of female infanticide is also re-examined. And the assumption that the Sikh Castes were more prone to the practice of female infanticide than any other castes groups can also be challenged. Among the Sikh castes only the lower castes like Chamar (-30), Churah (-10), Tarkhan (-9), Nai (-18) showed the declining sex ratio from the Census of 1881 to 1931. The upper caste of the Sikhs Khatri (+81), Arora (+89) and Jat (+1) showed improvement in the females numbers per 1000 males from the Census of 1881 to 1931 as was the case with the overall caste groups. It was spreading more in the lower caste groups than the upper castes of the Punjab. The reasons like the unavailability of the suitable bridegrooms, marriage expenditure and hypergamous marriage trends could be discarded as the problem of skewed sex ratio was not present in the upper caste groups as compared to the lower caste groups especially with the case of Sikh caste group. The caste grouping showed shifting trends but at same time assumption that certain caste groups vulnerability increased due to female infanticide is disproved. The caste assumed to be more prone to decline like, Khatris, Aroras and Jats actually showed an increase in
their sex ratio patterns in the census records of 1868 to 1931. This clearly bring out that the practice of the female infanticide was not confined to any specific caste groups as the British administrators had claimed.

In the Census of 1868, the Punjab had 835 females and in the Census of 1931 this ratio declined to 831, there was slow and gradual decline noticed before independence. In the Punjab Census of 1881 the disparity of girls to boys was 844, which improved to 850 in the Census of 1891 and 854 in 1901 Census. In the Census of 1911, this ratio declined to 817 after which an increase was identified to 828 in 1921 and an eventual increase to 831 in the Census of 1931. Over the colonial period thus there was practically no improvement in the sex ratio patterns. The one feature that is evident is that there is a shift in the practice among various caste groups. The castes or so called infanticidal groups which were spied on by the police gave up the practice, but castes which were not practicing female infanticide earlier started practicing’s it, especially among the lower caste groups. This issue of shifting trend can be explained by the fact that the inferior castes started practicing the beliefs and customs of the superior castes to prove that they too belong to as superior caste group. The spread of female infanticide to some extent in the lower castes might be a result of this fact.

Even the Districts Commissioners in their reports noted that the practice of female infanticide was not wide spread in their respective districts. Where it did exists, it was confined to some caste groups only. In the Census of 1868, only eight districts officers supported the existence of female infanticide. The officials at Jhang record, ‘Girls were not actually ill-treated, but their birth was often considered a misfortune.’ and in Gurdaspur infanticide was said to be practiced ‘if at all, only among the Bedi Khatris’. Colonel Gorden of Jalandhar was of the view, ‘that there was only neglect, not murder and even that only among high-class Rajputs or Jats.’103 In the Census of 1881, Major Nisbet explained and was supported by Mr. Frizelle from Shahpur, that a child of either sex was welcomed eagerly though boys were preferred. Mr. Smyth from the Delhi district mentioned that there was no infanticide, but Hindus treat their girls’ carelessly while Muslims do not. Mr. Benton of Karnal writes, ‘There is no doubt that infanticide, if not generally still exists among the agricultural population to a much larger extent than could have been imagined. Colonel Harcourt, wrote as follows in his Census Report of 1881 for the Rohtak district, ‘Infanticide is by no means a vice of this district. The administrators conducting the

103 Census of Punjab 1868, Report, 54.
Census of 1881 were of the opinion that after the age of one year the parents had a good attachment with their child so they were not able to kill her for any reason. In the Census of 1891, Mr. Baines is of the view that the disparity among the boys and girls in the North India only begins after the age of 5 years and did not support the idea of the existence of the practice. The various British administrators themselves claimed the non-existence of the practice in their respective districts or areas. If the practice existed at all it was confined to only some people caste groups. In 1906, the British repeal ‘The Female Infanticide Act of 1870’ showed that they understand that the issue of female infanticide was not that much widespread as their earlier administrators reported it. In Punjab the sex ratio in the Census of 1911, was worst ever with 817 females and 914 girls per 1000 boys. In the overall sex ratio from 1868 to 1931, there was decline of -4 points as in the 1868 there were 835 females and till reaching to 1931 left with 831 females. In the child sex ratio there were 948 girls in the Census of 1881 and 961 girls in 1931, there was improvement of 13 points in the child sex ratio. It was obvious in the census records that the issue of skewed sex ratio was more prominent in the overall sex ratio patterns not in the child sex ratio, as it actually showed improvement in the proportions of girl as compared to adult females.

After independence, a reverse trend is identified in the sex ratio patterns in comparison to the colonial period. As there was improvement in the overall sex ratio trends and decline in the child sex ratio patterns. This clearly indicates that something definitely went wrong or against the right to life of the girl child in recent times. In Punjab from the Census of 1951 till the Census of 1991 there was continuous increase in the overall sex ratio figures, as it had 882 females in 1991 with an increase of 38 points as compared to 844 females of 1951. It was only in the Census of 2001 that the overall sex ratio of the Punjab has fallen to 876 females per 1000 males with a decline of 6 points and in the recent Census of 2011 the Punjab again identified with the highest ever sex ratio of 893 females, with an increase of 17 points. It is only in the child sex ratio that the disparity not only exists but the gap is widening. In case of the child sex ratio patterns in the Punjab the deterioration is rather alarming. In the Census of 1961, there were 888 girls per 1000 boys in the Punjab, which improved to 899 in the 1971 and further to 908 in the Census of 1981. In the Census of 1991, it was 875, a decline of -33 points was recorded and this situation worsened in 2001 with further decline of -77 points and reached at 798 girls per 1000 boys. The declining child sex ratio from 875 in the Census of 1991 to 798 in 2001 reflects a
substantial decline in the numbers of girls. According to the Census of 2001, every fifth female in Punjab is “missing” or has not survived because of her gender. Her right to life is seriously jeopardized.

This substantial decline in the child sex ratio after the 1980s clearly showed some outside intervention in the natural process, which could be in the shape of new technologies that ‘promoted’ female foeticide after the 1980s. The right to life of the girl child was completely ignored by society. Though in the recent census of 2011 an increase of +48 points is seen, a positive sign for the life of girl child. The State intervention to save the right to life of the girl child was also not strict or effective. It was only in 1994, that the government first passed, The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act to save the right to life of the girl child.

In the recent time also some assumptions were made to explain the skewed sex ratio which was thought to have some relation with religion, literacy and urban-rural divide. Before independence the Sikhs had the lowest female proportion per 1000 males. After independence however, whole scenario noticed a shifting trend as the Sikhs topped the sex ratio tally by having 897 female per 1000 males in the Census of 2001 an increase that had been continuous since the Census of 1971. On other hand, the Hindus retained their second position of before independence and having 846 females in 2001, this was the result of slow and gradual declining trend in their sex ratio patterns since 1981. The Muslims reflects a shocking decline in their sex ratio from 846 in 1951 to 793 in the Census of 2001, lowest among major religious groups. Before independence they had always topped the sex ratio figures with the highest females’ ratios per 1000 males. Thus this shifting trend in the sex ratio of religious groups before and after the independence of India clarifies that the sex ratio patterns have no relation with religion.

The development indicators like literacy rate and urban-rural divide also showed that there is no strong connection in between sex ratio patterns and literacy rate of the area as it is identified that the sex ratio in rural Punjab is better than urban Punjab though the literacy rate in rural Punjab is lower than the urban Punjab which concludes that the literacy rate has no connection with sex ratio patterns of areas.

The State also carried out numerous reforms and suppressive measures to save the right to life of the girl child. Before independence the British started with the use of Hindu sacred texts in which the killing of the foetus declared an offense in the eye’s of the God, then they made agreements with the local chiefs, declared female infanticide equal to murder or criminal offense,
fixed marriage expenditure and demands of Bhats and Charans, made a provision of an ‘Infanticide Fund’ to help out the parents of the girl child to marry their daughters respectfully, organized essay writing competition to spread awareness, threatened people with confiscation of estates, maintained registers of births, marriages and deaths, frequent census was conducting in the areas of so called infanticidal groups.

The Central and State government also made numerous efforts to control the skewed sex ratio in the Punjab. From the very first five year plan, the Indian government gave due space to the issue of equality, justice, education, development and empowerment of women. However, it was only in the eleventh Five Year plan the issue of skewed sex ratio among the 0-6 age group of children was raised. This showed that the State had not paid serious attention to the atrocities of the skewed sex ratio before this time. Even the ‘Status of Women Report’ of 1974 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 were also not talking about the issue of female infanticide and foeticide specifically.

There is no doubt that the government did pass various laws to make women more economically strong they passed Hindu Succession Act of 1956. With every passing decade government becoming more gender sensitive. Indian government has launched various women welfare policies and legislations to make her more strong, efficient and competent in society. In this regard we have total 48 Acts those supports women equality, justice and empowerment, out of these 48 Acts there is six Acts, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1965; The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 Amended in 1986); The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986; The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987; Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005. To put a stop on especially female infanticide and foeticide, The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Regulation and Prevention of misuse) Act 1994 was passed. Its real purpose has still not been served, as sex determination tests are being carried out with impunity. Only strict legislation can bring desired results and there is strong need to initiate a change in the mindset of the people as they have strong desire for sons. On the other hand an increase in the crime rate against the women has increase the level of serious insecurity regarding the girls.

When we compared the British and Indian government efforts it was found that the British were more concerned or worried about the issue of female infanticide specifically than the empowerment of women, they introduced much more efforts specifically against the crime
female infanticide than the present Indian government. There is no doubt that the Indian
government gave due space to women empowerment and development. But the efforts like
introduction of Infanticide Fund, fixation of marriage expenditures and demands of menial
groups (Bhats, Charans and Marasis), fixations of expenditure on each and every event of the
wedding, identification of infanticidal groups, rewards to informers, agreements with the local
chiefs to abandon the practice, supervision and spy system of the special police and last the
passing of Prevention of Female Infanticide Act of 1870 all these measures deserves great
appreciation for the British. Though their all efforts were not new in nature many of them were
already done by the Indian rulers earlier like fixation of marriage expenditure and demands of
the Bhat and Charans. All these efforts of the British are missing in contemporary India.

After Independence, Indian government focused on the overall development and
enhancement of the girl child by promoting their education and protecting them from
discrimination and deprivation. But the right to life of the girl child is ‘missing’. On other hand
when we analysis the success rate of these efforts it is found that there is a major gap present in
the set objectives of the policies and achieved goals both in the colonial times and in present
India. All schemes, policies and legislation failed to get desired results and in giving social status
and security to the women and girl child. Only one direct law has been passed which leaves
much to desire where implementation is concerned. In fact, hardly any conviction has taken
place in known incidence of sex selective abortions or female foeticide. In the various schemes
and programmes too the concentration is more on health and education of young girls and less on
any check on taking the life of unborn girls or even educating people about such ‘reforms’.

On other hand in recent years efforts by the local administrators have attained new
results. As in the case of the Fatehgarh Sahib pilot project, in the Census of 2001, it had a child
sex ratio of 808 and in 2011 it is improved by 71 points and reaches to 879 in 2011. It was just
the result of the efforts of the Deputy Commissioner and civil society. A joint effort of the
government and civil society brought about an improvement of 71 points in child sex ratio within
a time frame of a decade. So it also gives us message and method to improve our State and
country sex ratio, which starts from local level were people, NGOs played an important role to
catch the guilty of female infanticide and foeticide.

In the present scenario, the problem of skewed sex ratio has reached alarming proportions
and right to life of the girl child is in danger. The experts warns that the demographic crisis will
lead to increase in sexual violence and abuse against women and female children, women trafficking, maternal deaths due to abortions, early marriages and increase in the practices like polyandry. There is an urgent demand on the rise to save our girl child, because if we wouldn’t than we have to be prepared for the worst social chaos. This paucity of the females leads the society to other social situations such as forceful abductions of the girl child as well as early marriage of the girls by the parents to feel secure, rise in the crimes against women like women trafficking due to lack of brides in the future for the marriageable boys, prostitution, rapes, eve-teasing, sexual harassment at work place. A skewed sex ratio has great implication on the society in the long-term. The predominance of male child preference and the simultaneous rejection of the girl child are reflected in the adoption of methods to beget a male child and subsequent resort to female foeticide. Till, now economic reasons have been highlighted in order to explain the incidence of female infanticide/foeticide. It seems however that there are socio-psychological factors which are at play and which cut across boundaries of caste, class, religion and education which result in such criminal practices. This needs to be addressed seriously at the ground level.

To bring changes in the mindsets of the people and improvement in sex ratio both is a long process and has to be tackled through women’s education and empowerment including the right to property and land rights. States in the North East and in Kerala where women have these rights showed a comparatively better sex ratio. Another way out is to make our society more gender save and strong needs emerged to lessen down the crimes against the women and girl children. If unfortunately girl or women became a victim, society has to make to adapt her and needs to give her equal opportunity of rehabilitation. The media and civil society also needs to play positive role to save the girl child of our nation by promoting and highlighting the achievements of the women at national and international level. There is no doubt that the ages old phenomena of son preferences and to be deleted or eradicated only with patience, we the people of India needs to change our customary thinking and mindset against the women and girl child. Everybody has women and girl in their homes so why we not treated them equally or make them victims of different atrocities. The change needs to be initiated from within.