

## CAUSES OF FEMALE FOETICIDE AMONG MALES AND FEMALES IN KASHMIR VALLEY

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### ABSTRACT

Female foeticide is the act of assassination a female foetus outside of the legal channels of abortion. It occurs in India for unspecified cultural reasons that span centuries. The frequency of female foeticide in India is assumed to be an estimation derived from its high birth sex ratio that is the ratio of boys to girls at birth. The natural ratio is assumed to be of 103 to 107, and any number above it is considered as suggestive of female foeticide. According to the decennial Indian census, the sex ratio in the 0 to 6 age group in India has risen from 102.4 males per 100 females in 1961, to 104.2 in 1980, to 107.5 in 2001, to 108.9 in 2011. The research was carried out by survey of 400 families in 10 districts of Kashmir. The data was collected with the help of scale namely Female Foeticide Scale constructed by Shah et al. (1993) with the respective families. The results of the study shows that better destiny for the parents can be ensured by son merely, because a male in the family is traditionally considered to be a source – source of money, source of respect, source of name and fame. A man is expected to work and earn for his family – in the process repaying all that was cost to bring him up. A woman is considered a financial obligation, as money spent on bringing her up, educating her, marrying her will not be repaid – as she will go to her husband's house after marriage, and the benefits of all that 'investment' shall go to his family. Consequences also show that birth of a female child lowers the status of a family and a mother in the society. The findings of the study highlighted that

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maximum of the respondents among males and females feel that people who go in for female foeticide should be fined heavily by law.

**KEY WORDS:** Female foeticide, sex determination techniques, abortion, patriarchy, gender discrimination, violence.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Homicide of female child has been an unusual attribute of Indian society under the canon of patriarchy since ancient days. The practice first dubbed as female infanticide came into trend due to the lack of scientific discovery and unavailability of modern and progressive technology and stylish sex determining instruments. With enough accessibility and widespread supply of such stylish sex determination techniques in the health institutions and clinics, there have been hundreds of incidences of female foeticide surfacing and hence assuming an alarming proportion across the country at present. It seems that the sex determination test leading to identification of the sex of unborn child has made the practice of killing the female child unobserved and easier than before. The practice that commenced in India under the influence of the severely rooted patriarchy, that is, to prove the strength of man over woman, has also been influenced by poverty and dowry. The practice of the phenomenon of female foeticide in India has vastly contributed to gender inequality. The conviction that the higher incidence of female foeticide was steadfast among the rural people, the poor, the uneducated and those not capable to pay the dowry has been proved incorrect at the present moment of time. The reasons of female foeticide also indicate the level of hard work and efforts, which needs to be contributed in order to prevent girls from the brutal practice of female foeticide (Swain, 2013).

The power of religion leaves a strong impact on abundant philosophies and customary beliefs, which believe that son, is vital for religious formalities, which are executed at different phases of life. Whereas a daughter is considered to be an auspicious sign of Goddess Laxmi but at the same time there are many families who kill the female foetus only because they want a male child to free them from all the sins after their death (Kushwaha and Sharma, 2014).

There have been a variety of social causes behind the practice of female foeticide, as it is belief that daughters do not present social protection to parents. A boy shall raise up to be the head of the family, and he shall offer a sense of protection to his aging parents – take care of them, serve them and take over the responsibility of running the family. (Sabharwal, 2006).

The Pre Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Technique Act, 1994 was passed 18 years ago due to an alarming raise in the brutal killing of female foetuses by latest means of scientific technologies. According to the 2011 Census the child sex ratio is 914:1000 and therefore it is evident from these figures that the impact and implementation of the Act is still in doubt as there has been a continuous fall in the child sex ratio (Chaudhuri and Pal, 2007). The Genocide taking place in India is a consequence of the lack of efforts made by the Government and Organizations to frame effective laws (Nirbhawane, 1996). Since the issue of female foeticide is so serious, it is essential to adopt international policies and frame strict laws which will prove to be effective enough to stop this genocide and save the subsistence and pride of women by providing them an equal opportunity to take birth and enjoy liberty just as any other group (Siddiqui, 2007).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Srivastava (2014) conducted a study on Female Feticide: A Social Evil in India (Challenges before Us). A sample of 50 respondents among the married women's in the age group of 25 – 35 belongs to higher educational population was selected from Banasthali University. The results bring out that 40% of engineering graduate faculties preferred first male child. 30% women's completed her post graduation in different subjects like management, social work, and commerce we mainly compare their views found that they do not clearly show their preference but in a hidden way they want male child due to future security. Whereas and 20% women's completed their PhD in different streams found that they prefer male child but not rigid with their views if they have female child they happily welcomed her and ready to carry their responsibilities and never even think about the violate of human right "Right to Life".

Joshi and Bajwa (2012) found that respondent of both the socio- economic status have indifferent attitude towards female foeticide and it seems that the economic factor is not significant. The concerning facts that come into light is that nowadays female foeticide is no more an urban

phenomenon as rural people are also getting more and more involved in it and come all the way to cities to get these tests done. Although the degree may vary but the neglect of girl child and discrimination goes hand in hand. So basically it is the social and cultural factors that are setting the attitude against the girl child. Therefore, efforts must be put together in direction to give the girl child struggling inside their mother's womb to come out to a world of equal opportunities, to grow and to blossom.

Bilquis and Mayuri (2015) conducted a study on Female Foeticide and Female Infanticide: Perceptions of Situation in the Combined State of Andhra Pradesh. The sample consists of 420 (210 men and 210 women) from Andhra region, Rayalaseem region and Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. The respondents said that the negative attitude towards the girl child is due to the fear of dowry and sexual abuse. Sometimes if the child is born with deformity and failure of the family planning method then they go for aborting the female foetus. Good looking appearance of the child does not matter much and ranked last by the sample. Similar responses were reported by the female sample. However the females said that more number of female foeticides is due to the husband and in law's force and their opinion is not taken into consideration. They had opined that due to dowry problem and other social reasons female foeticide and infanticide are increasing in our society.

Dixit and Saini (2014) carried a study on Attitude of women towards female foeticide. A sample of 50 pregnant women in Antenatal OPD Hospital of Jabalpur. The results brings out that It is agonizing to know that the gender bias and deep-rooted prejudice and discrimination against girl child, which have been there down the centuries, are now found to begin in the womb itself. The girl child in the womb faces the peril of pre birth elimination i.e. female foeticide.

Patil et.al (2014) acquired a study on Attitude knowledge and attitude regarding PC PNDT Act among medical undergraduates: a study conducted in teaching institute Mumbai. The sample consists of 100 medical undergraduate in Medical college of Mumbai. The result shows that there were 59% girls & 41% boys. Only 98% knew about sex determination and female foeticide. Out of 98% who knew about sex determination, 66(i. e. 67%) were aware that Ultra

Sonography is used for sex determination, followed by 26% told amniocentesis while 7% were not aware about technique for sex determination.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the reasons for female foeticide.
2. To compare causes of female foeticide among males and females.

### 4. MATERIALS AND METHOD:

The sample for the present study is comprised of 400 respondents in which 200 were males and 200 were females. To ensure all the populations, 40 respondents were taken as sample subject from each district of Kashmir and random sampling technique was used.

**Type of data collection:** In the present study the primary as well as secondary sources of data was utilized to obtain the information.

- a) **Primary Data:** The primary data was obtained by collecting information through scales and interview method.
- b) **Secondary data:** Secondary data was collected from various books, journals, news papers, magazines and other relevant sources. The data was used only after through scrutiny.

### Tool Used for the Present Study

Female Foeticide Scale constructed by Shah et al. (1993) has been used for the present study to find the causes of female foeticide.

The scale was provided with 3 response categories, as follows:

Degree of commences	Score
Mostly	3
Sometimes	2
Very few times	1

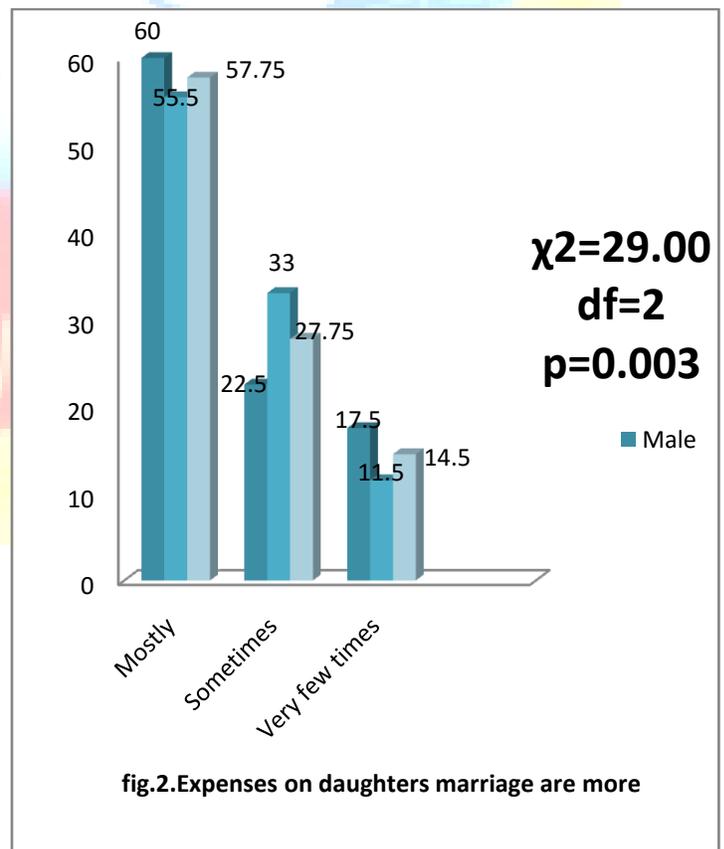
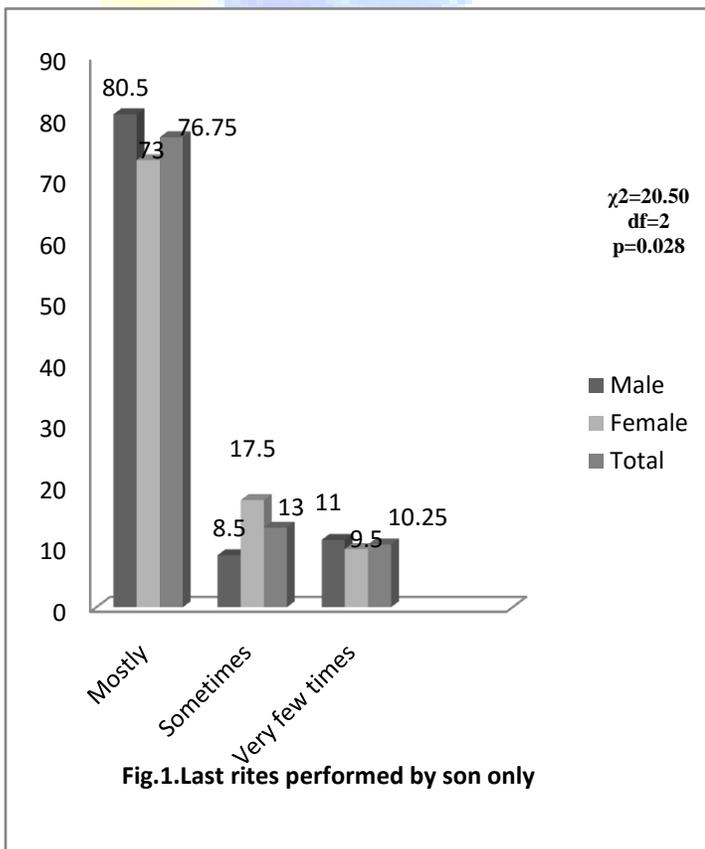
**Range of Scores**

Score Range	Weight age	Opinion
48-67	1.00-1.39	Highly Negative
6-81	1.40-1.69	Somewhat Negative
82-102	1.70-2.10	Positive

**Data Analysis**

The data obtained through scales was consolidated, analyzed and interpreted as per the requirement of the objectives, using specific statistical tools for example percentage, chi square analysis and correlation. The p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  was considered significant. IBM SPSS 20 Software was used for data analysis.

**5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**



The results presented in fig.1 indicates that majority of respondents 80.5 per cent (f=161) in males and 73.0 per cent (f=146) in females mostly think that last rites of parents can be performed by a son only which is found statistically significant at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =20.50, p <0.01$ .

Fig.2 depicts that expenses on daughter's marriage are more than on a son's marriage. This cause for female foeticide is given by most of respondents i.e. 60.0 per cent (f=120) in males, followed by 55.5 per cent (f=111) in females. However, there is significant difference between males and females for this causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =29.00, p <0.01$ .

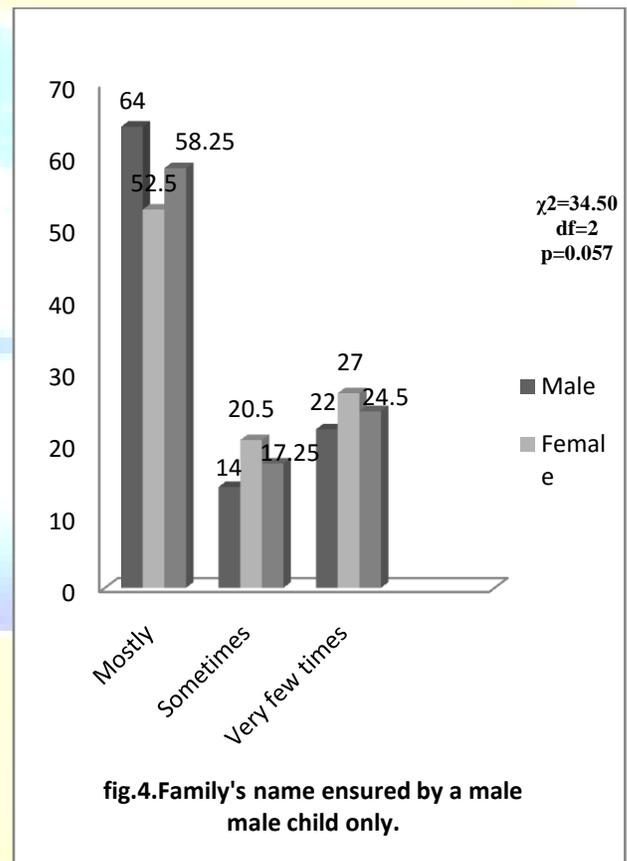
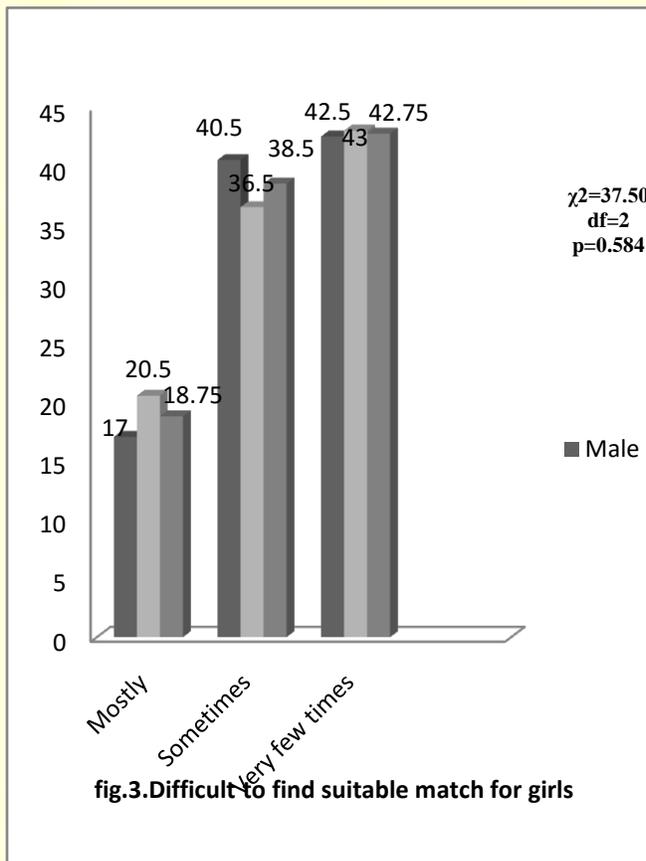


Fig.3. shows that at very few times the respondents i.e.43.0 per cent (f= 86) in females, followed by 42.5 per cent (f=85) in males feel that it is difficult to find suitable match for girls and this is consider another cause of female foeticide, which states that there is no significant relationship between males and females at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =37.50, p >0.05$ .

Fig.4.reveals that the other cause of female foeticide is family’s name which is supposed to be ensured by a male child only. This cause of female foeticide is perceived by most of the respondents among males i.e. 64.0 per cent (f=128), followed by 52.2 per cent (f=105) among females, which indicates there is significant relationship between males and females for the causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =34.50, p <0.01$ .

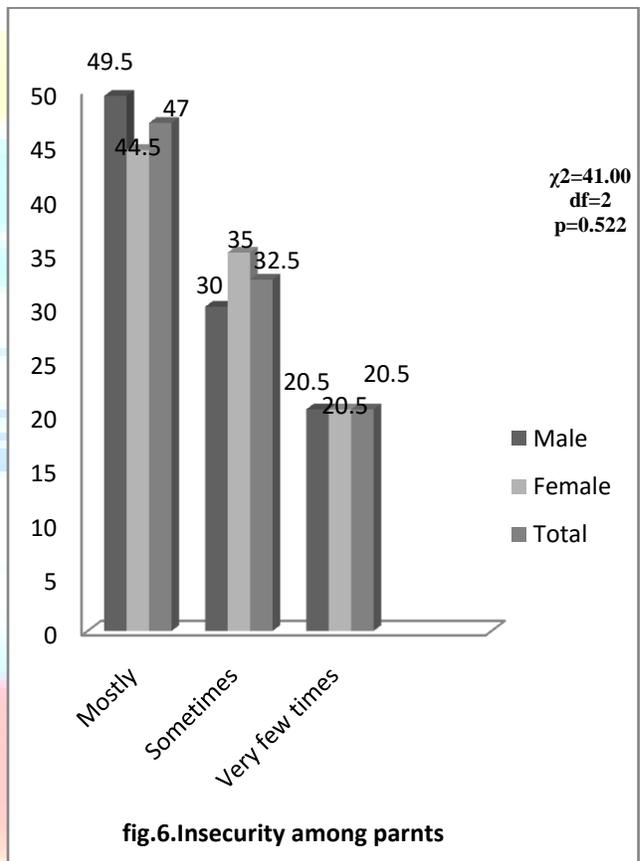
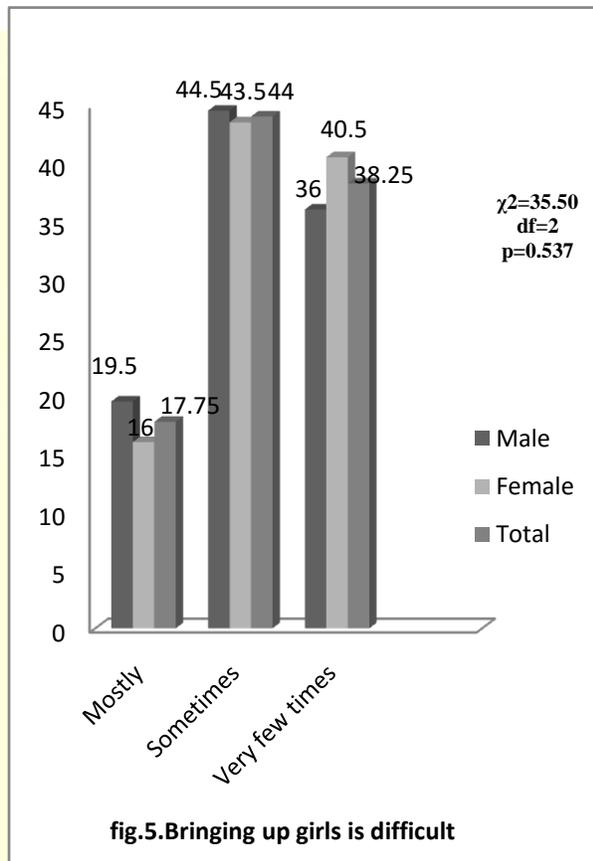
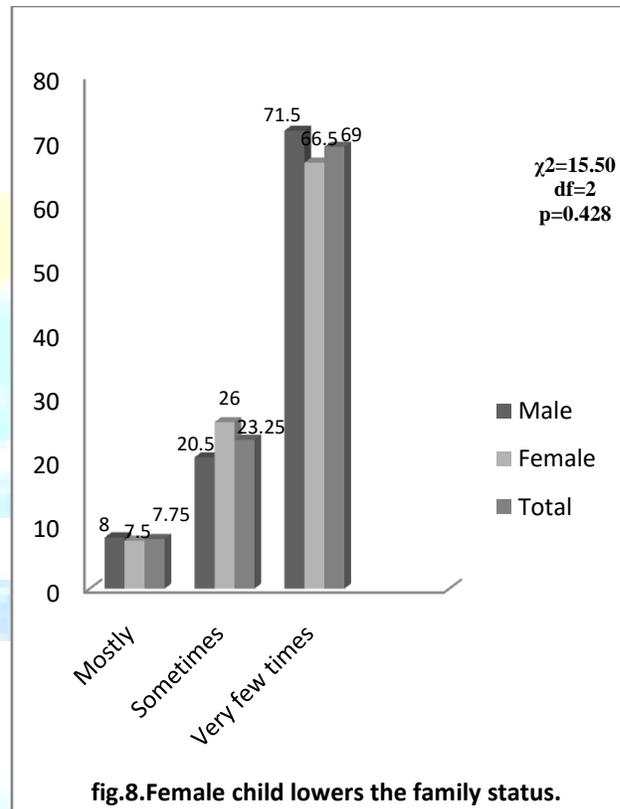
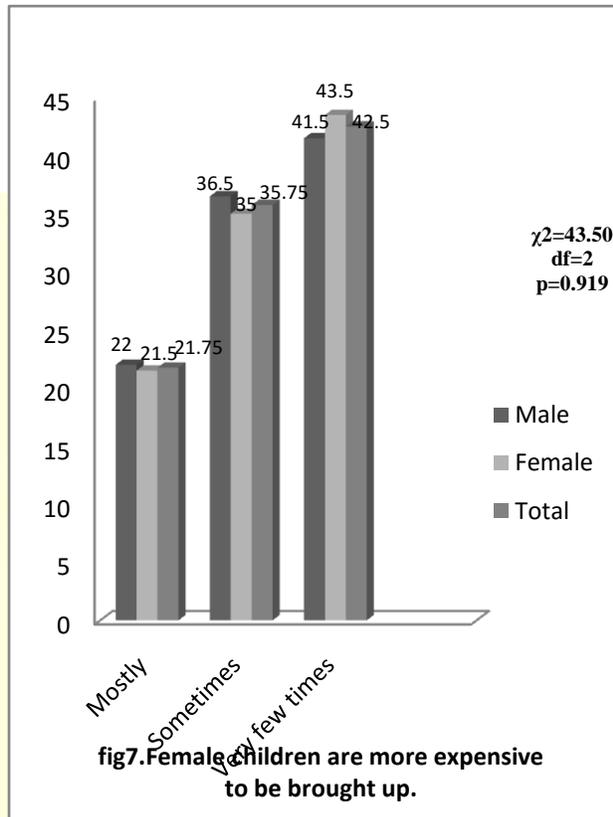


Fig.5 depicts that majority of respondents i.e.44.5 per cent (f=89) in males and 43.5 per cent (f=87) in females at sometimes think that bringing up of girls is difficult due to their biological structure which can be harmed. However, there is insignificant difference between males and females for the causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =34.50, p > 0.05$ .

Fig.6. represents that insecurity among parents is a major cause of female foeticide. This is perceived by 49.5 per cent (f=99) in males and 44.5 per cent (f=89) in females. The statistical

analysis confirms that the differences are insignificantly different at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) = 41.00, p > 0.05$ .



In fig.7 very often the respondents i.e.43.5 per cent (f=87) in females, followed by 41.5 per cent (f=83) in males feel that female children are more expensive to be brought up, which shows that the result is statistically insignificant at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) = 43.50, p > 0.05$ .

Fig.8 seems that again, at very few times, the highest percentage of respondents i.e. 71.5 per cent (f=143) in males and 66.5 per cent (f=133) in females think that birth of a female child lowers the status of a family in the society. There is insignificant difference between males and females for this causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) = 15.50, p > 0.05$ .

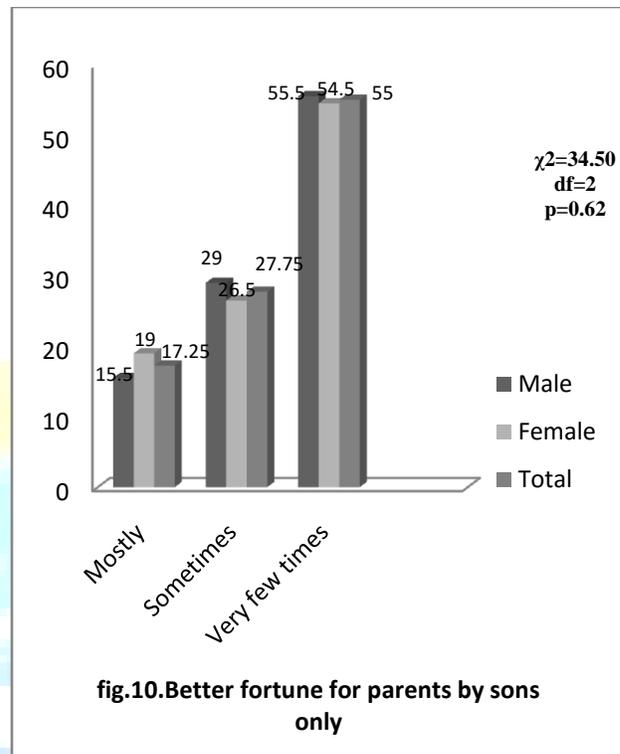
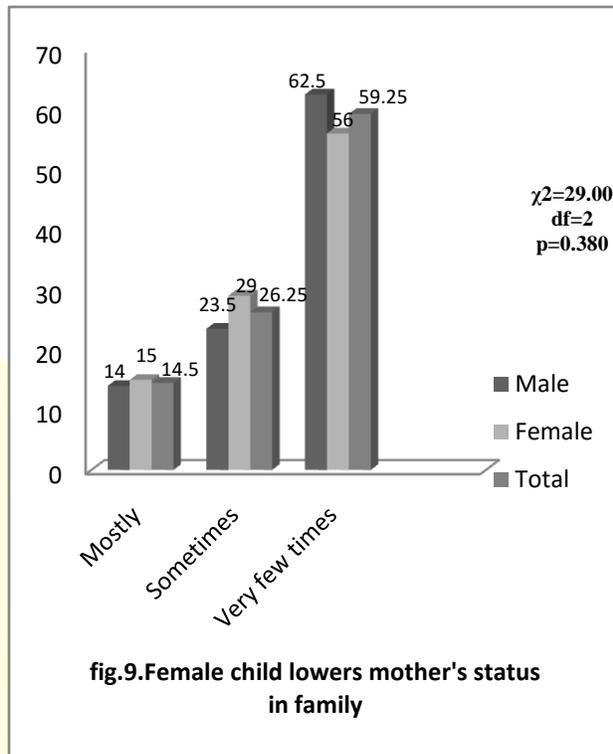


Fig.9 depicts that one among the causes of female foeticide is that it lowers the status of mother in the family. At very few times, the respondents i.e. 62.5 per cent (f=125) in males, followed by 56.0 per cent (f=112) in females shows this as the cause of female foeticide. This result is found to be statistically insignificant between males and females for the causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =29.00, p >0.05$ .

Fig.10 shows that better fortune for parents by sons is another reason of female foeticide, in which majority of the respondents 55.5 per cent (f=111) in males, followed by 54.5 per cent (f=109) in females at very few times perceive this as the cause of female foeticide which clearly shows an insignificant relationship between males and females for the causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =34.50, p > 0.05$ .

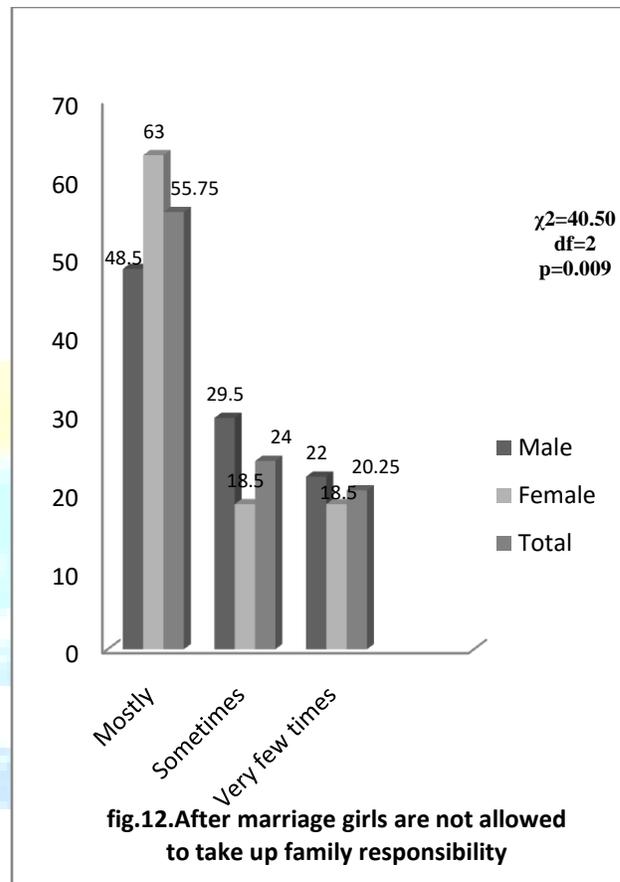
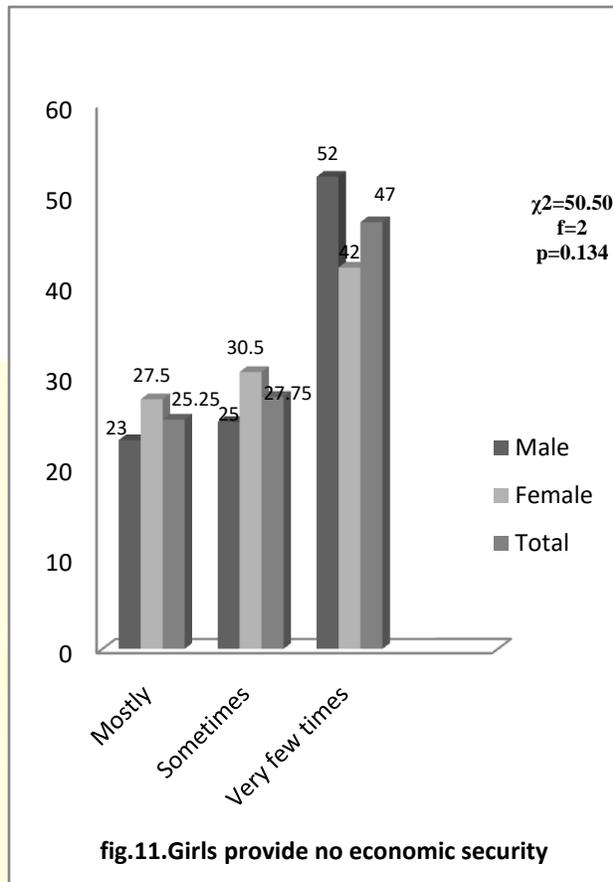


Fig.11 reveals that girls provide no economic security to parents. At very few times, the highest percentage of respondents i.e. 52.0 per cent (f=104) in males, followed by 42.0 per cent (f=84) in females shows this as the cause of female foeticide. The data shows an insignificant relationship between males and females for the causes of female foeticide at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =50.50, p> 0.05$ . After marriage girls are not allowed to take up family responsibility.

Fig.12 represents that this is another cause in which most of the respondents i.e.63.0 per cent (f=126) in females, followed by 48.5 per cent (f=97) in males agree on this cause of female foeticide. Significant differences are found regarding their perception of girls are not allowed to take family responsibility at  $\chi^2 (2, N=400) =16.92, p <0.01$ .

## 6. CONCLUSION

Days are not so distant, when there may be appearance of the condition where brides will not be accessible for the nuptials of the sons to maintain heredity and continue the human race of even

those people who believe on long standing tradition of son preference. The fondness for a male child in huge sections of our society even in extremely educated groups to the root cause of an unfair sex ratio "Foeticide was invented, touted and sold by the medical profession, and it operates with the whole approval of all factors of our society. Therefore it is felt that the mentality of the people should be changed right from now towards the importance of the girl child in the family unit. There is a vital need to modify the demographic composition of India's population and to deal with this atrocious form of violent behavior against women.

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