

A Study of Female Foeticide as Root Cause of Bride Trafficking in State of Haryana

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Abstract

Bride trafficking is forced sale, resale and purchase of girls/women in the name of marriage. Girls/women are kidnapped or lured into bride trafficking and sold, re-sold, raped and/or married off without their consent and their roles vary from sexual slavery to performing hard labour all the day, suffering physical and verbal abuse and living a life at the mercy of the men and/or their families who have 'bought' them. female foeticide remains the major cause for trafficking of brides in Haryana from other states as because of low sex ratio the number of marriageable girls in haryana are very less and which create a gender squeeze and force locals to buy brides from other poverty stricken areas. Poverty, lack of parenthood, illiteracy, customs and religious practices, quest for cheap labour, requirement of a servant/slave for the family, kidnapping, etc are some of the important factors, which contribute to the increase in number of trafficked brides in state of Haryana.

Keywords: *Bride trafficking, Trafficking for marriage, Female foeticide, Poverty and Trafficking, Mail order brides.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Factors promoting bride trafficking requires study of all social, political, religious, economic and legal factors surrounding this crime. The study of all these factors is important to understand the real gravity of this issue and this will also help us understand and discover what other factors or crimes help bride trafficking business thrive. After full understanding only, one can work out solutions to this problem and will be able to design a road-map for future.

The modus operandi for bride trafficking can be many². Some girls are purchased directly from parents and/or relatives purely on monetary

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considerations. Whereas some are sent by the parents on the pretext of job, education, marriage etc and some are kidnapped, others are lured for job, better life, marriage etc. and then sold for money. Traffickers keep devising new ways to trap the victims. One such mask worn by a human trafficker was that of an NGO worker called Munna who was on bail after being arrested from Udalguri district in Assam. He is accused of running a trafficking network in the guise of an NGO, trafficking minor boys and girls from poverty-stricken areas of Assam, Jharkhand and Bengal through an illegal placement agency called "Pooja". The placement agency is in New Friend's colony, Delhi. The trafficker was earlier arrested in a raid conducted by the police in another fake NGO agency named Rajdhani, based on information received from their Assamese counterparts. The man was also accused of cremating two girls from Assam without informing the police or parents about their death and has two cases registered against him in Assam Police station. He also has arrest warrants issued against him and has also sexually abused many poor girls and exploited them later by employing them as domestic helpers, after charging huge sum ranging from of Rs. 25000 to Rs.50000, from the buyers³.

One of the most important factors is the inherent gender discrimination in Indian society. Bride trafficking is a symptom of social crisis, which is deeply entrenched in the dominance of patriarchal customs over women in India. Women are sold and purchased as property, which shows their vulnerability. The biggest problem due to which bride trafficking is not coming to an end is the societal acceptance of this practice. The societal acceptance of bride trafficking is so high that in some of the instances when a run-away bride is searched by the whole family and village people and ultimately found and caught, she is handed over back to the so-called husband and his family⁴.

²[Harpreet Bajwa](http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/jan/07/not-a-minor-problem-bride-trafficking-remains-a-booming-business-in-haryana-1921519.html), Not a minor problem! Bride trafficking remains a booming business in Haryana, <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/jan/07/not-a-minor-problem-bride-trafficking-remains-a-booming-business-in-haryana-1921519.html> (last visited Feb. 18, 2016).

³NGO shield for trafficker, <https://shaktivahini.org/ngo-shield-for-trafficker/> (last visited Dec. 28, 2017).

⁴Shikha Kumari, Trafficked and Sold from One Man to Another, Minor Finally Returns Home, <https://www.videovolunteers.org/author/shikha-pahadin/> see also Ashok Kumar, Trafficked Women rescued from Haryana Village (Jan. 2, 2018), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Trafficked-women-rescued->

There have been various instances in which these women have tried to escape from this trap but they were forcefully sent back to their so called husband (or purchaser) and their families. In some of these cases, whenever the victim women approached the police to seek support and help, due to high societal acceptance of this trade, the police handed them back to their husbands and their families. No case is filed, and the police does not take any action even if the case is brought out by a trafficked bride herself. There are instances when Khap Panchayats have even awarded punishments to these women because they attempted to run away. Thus, Trafficked Brides have no one to support them or ensure justice for them. No doubt some Non-Governmental organizations are available to help them but approaching these organizations is also an uphill task for these poor women⁵.

Other factors which reduce the number of marriageable girls for marriage are female infanticide and foeticide due to which people must have to buy girls from other states. There are issues both at source side and destination side which cause bride trafficking to grow in India (943 females per 1000 male)⁶. On the source side, main issues are related to poverty, illiteracy and allurements whereas destination side the problem is because of female foeticide, female infanticide and requirement of cheap labor etc. The other issue, which paves way for bride trafficking, is abduction of young girls and women by traffickers. Earlier, bride trafficking was an unorganized sector but, slowly it is growing in its shape and becoming more organized⁷. Earlier, the traffickers used to be truck

[from-Haryana-villages/article14512330.ece](https://www.news18.com/news/india/its-so-common-for-haryanas-men-to-buy-and-sell-wives-that-no-one-cares-anymore-1824341.html) see also Adrija Bose, It Is So Common For Haryana's Men To Buy And Sell Wives That No One Cares Anymore (Aug. 12, 2018), <https://www.news18.com/news/india/its-so-common-for-haryanas-men-to-buy-and-sell-wives-that-no-one-cares-anymore-1824341.html>.

⁵Shikha Kumari, Trafficked and Sold from One Man to Another, Minor Finally Returns Home <https://www.videovolunteers.org/author/shikha-pahadin/> see also Ashok Kumar, Trafficked Women rescued from Haryana Village (Jan. 2, 2018), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Trafficked-women-rescued-from-Haryana-villages/article14512330.ece> see also Adrija Bose, It Is So Common For Haryana's Men To Buy And Sell Wives That No One Cares Anymore <https://www.news18.com/news/india/its-so-common-for-haryanas-men-to-buy-and-sell-wives-that-no-one-cares-anymore-1824341.html> (last visited Aug. 12, 2018).

⁶Census report, <https://www.census2011.co.in/sexratio.php> (last visited Sep. 10, 2018).

⁷Dispensable Daughters and Bachelor Sons: Sex Discrimination in North India." Economic & Political Weekly 43, No. 30 (2008): 109-114.

or taxi drivers because they used to travel here and there and for them knowing details of girls were not a tough task, nowadays lot of existing buyers with the help of their purchased wives are also selling brides to the other people. There are villagers who have made this either their full time or part time business because of the money involved in it. Sometimes, the purchased wives visit their native villages along with their husbands and relatives and buy other girls from their own native land to be sold and trafficked as brides⁸.

The increase in the cases of bride trafficking can also be accounted to the factor that the nature of this trade is such that women can be resold to anyone on higher prices and therefore, one has almost negligible chances of loss, losing profit or initial money⁹. Trafficked Brides are seen as every good investment for these people with no chance of loss and furthermore, one can also sexually exploit the trafficked girls, be it for some time. If someone wants kids or needs someone to take care of his old parents etc., then buying bride is the best option. He also says that these women do everything they are asked to do out of fear of being killed and have very less demands in comparison to the local girls of Haryana which makes it a good deal¹⁰. Hence it is evident that the treatment which is accorded to the trafficked brides is even worse than that of a slave.

Poverty and female foeticide are the main factors of bride trafficking. This business is highly profitable as the woman can be trafficked and re-trafficked many times and the trafficker can make money at each stage of the trafficking. He also emphasized that people in Haryana treat women like a commodity and never feel bad to buy or sell women for the purpose of marriage. According to him the biggest problem in curbing bride trafficking is the attitude of the society and police towards this type of crime. He also discussed various instances when

⁸Deebashree Mohanty, Slave brides <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2015/sunday-edition/slave-brides.html> (last visited July 28, 2017).

⁹Deebashree Mohanty, Slave brides <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2015/sunday-edition/slave-brides.html> (last visited July 28, 2017).

¹⁰Adrija Bose, It's So Common For Haryana's Men to Buy and Sell Wives That No One Cares Anymore <https://www.news18.com/news/india/its-so-common-for-haryanas-men-to-buy-and-sell-wives-that-no-one-cares-anymore-1824341.html>. see also Paro conclave by Empower People, http://www.empowerpeople.org.in/uploads/3/7/2/4/3724202/paro_conclave_report.pdf (last visited Dec. 22, 2016).

police discriminated the bride trafficking victims and created hurdles in their rescue¹¹.

In many cases if trafficked bride manages to run away from her matrimonial home and reach the police station to complain about her husband and in-laws and the police officer without understanding the gravity, tell her that quarrels and tiffs arise in every family and so she should go back to her husband's house. Not just this, he also called the so called 'husband family' and asked them to take their daughter-in-law back. These kinds of instances make the victims feel helpless¹². So they keep silent and never speak up against any human rights violation they face in the matrimonial alliance.

There are many factors which influence the attitude of trafficked victim attitude for not disclosing the atrocities they face and most important of the factor is that the husband's family is always near the trafficked victim when she talks to the people of NGO or media and due to this, most of the times, the real picture of their problem never comes out as the victim's answer is always manipulated in the presence of family. This factor also creates a situation due to which curbing bride trafficking becomes very difficult. It is also observed that the girls are married at a very young age (sometimes even less than 14 years) whereas the boys are married at a higher age of minimum 23-24 years, because of which, the availability of women in the village for local boys is less. Many a time boys study outside the village in different cities and places and when they come back to their village after studies, they are already above marriageable age according to the village standards. In this situation, the families of the boys are left with no other option than to purchase a Paro or Molki (in their terms) to marry their boys¹³.

¹¹Bride Trafficking <https://www.thebetterindia.com/6993/tbi-heroes-an-amazing-indian-who-aspires-to-empower-people/> see also Empower people Annual report http://www.empowerpeople.org.in/uploads/3/7/2/4/3724202/annual_report_2016-17.pdf (last visited Dec 29, 2018).

¹² Empower People Annual Report http://www.empowerpeople.org.in/uploads/3/7/2/4/3724202/ep_brochure.pdf (last visited Sep 28, 2019).

¹³supra note 3.

Para legal volunteer namely Mohammad Osman¹⁴ stated that only the poor people in Haryana buy women from other states for marriage while the rich marry within the state itself. No rich person marries a trafficked bride unless he is very old or is of unmarriageable age, physically handicapped, divorced or carries a bad reputation in the local community. He further said that if a well reputed and rich person buys a girl from outside, he is not respected in his own community. Apart from this there are various other reasons are observed which influence bride trafficking in Haryana. The families of local boys must spend a huge sum of money in the marriage ceremony and in the pomp and show associated with it and purchasing a bride is considered as a convenient option to avoid all this. The expenditure of one normal marriage could be around 5-10 Lakhs of rupees whereas these families of grooms can buy brides (Paro or Molki) for a price of not more than 1 Lakh rupees. These economic considerations also force families in Haryana to buy Trafficked Brides.

Bride trafficking is nothing but a form of forced slavery for women¹⁵. According to the renowned jurist Andrea Dworkin:

“The Genesis of any slave system is found in the dynamics, which isolate slaves from each other, obscure the reality of a common condition and make united rebellion against the oppressor inconceivable¹⁶”.

Similarly, these women are not allowed to talk to many people or organize themselves against their exploiters. Their silence against the crime has resulted in the rise of number of victims in the State of Haryana because the people who are engaged in the trafficking activity experience no fear or risk, specifically in terms of being implicated.

¹⁴supra note 7.

¹⁵Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/SupplementaryConventionAbolitionOfSlavery.aspx> (last visited Sep 28, 2019).

¹⁶Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating*, Penguin Group 1974 page 68 see also *african American History and Radical Historiography Essays in Honor of Herbert Aptheker* (<https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/149108/ApthekerFestschrift.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>) (last visited July. 17, 2016).

II. Female Foeticide

With advancements in science and technology and easy accessibility of prenatal diagnostic techniques, the rate of female foeticide is going high. In one of the researches by Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra NGO, regarding female foeticide and number of clinics with ultrasound facility, the NGO came to a conclusion that the places having more number of ultrasound clinics have less girl child sex ratio¹⁷. The Prenatal Diagnostics Techniques Act provides for punishment up to 3 years of imprisonment and fine up to Rs.50, 000 to culprits of prenatal diagnosis but still, the number of female foeticide cases is on rise. There are restrictions and punishments for doctors who are involved in it¹⁸. The State Medical Council can suspend or cancel the registration of medical practitioners who are found to be involved in female foeticides.

The grave problems of female foeticide and extreme poverty are found to be the root causes which results into bride trafficking in the states like Haryana. The geographical, social and political landscapes of Haryana make it a great destination for trafficked brides¹⁹.

Foeticide is defined as destruction or abortion of a fetus whereas female foeticide is defined as abortion or destruction of female fetus. The frequency of female foeticide is indirectly estimated from the observed high or low birth sex ratio, which is the ratio of boys to girls at birth. Female foeticide is common in northern part of India including State of Haryana where the society is predominantly controlled and governed by men (patriarchy)²⁰.

¹⁷Smita Sharma, what is the impact of Child Marriage, (Dec. 25, 2016, 8:41 PM), <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/themes/poverty/>. Also see, Stuart Shield, Poverty and Trafficking in Human Beings: A strategy for combating trafficking in human beings through Swedish international development cooperation, <http://www.government.se/contentassets/326c82b44c784d67860d51420086cbe9/poverty-and-trafficking-in-human-beings> (last visited Dec. 25, 2016).

¹⁸Sushma Sharma, An overview on Pre-natal Diagnostic techniques Act and its Implementation IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 21, Issue 10, Ver. 7 (October 2016) PP 62-68.

¹⁹Shruti Chaudhry, Lived Experiences of Marriage: Regional And Cross-Regional Brides In Rural North India, university of Edinburgh

²⁰ N Ahmad Female foeticide in India, (Apr. 01, 2016) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20879612>

The low status accorded to Indian women coupled alongwith the traditional gender bias which is prevalent as an adverse bearing on the child sex ratio. In Vedic age, women in India were source of power, knowledge and wealth and were treated as Goddesses. British period added the vulnerability of women as British people used to treat Indian women as slaves of slaves²¹.

In Haryana, on the birth of a girl child in a family the primary concern or mindset of the parents and other family members is that of her marriage dowry and women safety. In India, customary rituals of parents on their death are to be performed by male child and according to various religious texts; male child is considered a blessing of God and the female child, a curse²². For example, many hymns in Rig Veda express desire to beget heroic sons whereas no such similar prayers exist wishing for a girl child which shows that sons were preferred to daughters (This perhaps reflected the anxiety of a society that needed a larger number of male warriors to ensure its survival)²³. A common social behaviour which has been observed towards a girl child in India is that they cannot inherit the property (which legally they can) and that is why people want a son who can take their lineage forward and inherit their property. Women's right to property which is not enjoyed in Northern India is one of the main reasons for female foeticide.

During an interview with Vijay Pratap, a man of about 53 years of age and resident of Bhiwani district, the man expressed with confidence that he has four sons and no daughter because of which no family in the village ever take them lightly. He says that all his minor property disputes were also resolved with the help of his sons and he feels that his property is in safe hands. Vijay Pratap states one instance in which the property of a poor family was taken away by force by his own brother because this man had no sons to guard his property. He further says, sons in Haryana make you feel safe and powerful whereas having a daughter makes you vulnerable in the society. Your neighbours do not take you

²¹B. R. Sharma, Female feticide in India: Issues & Concerns, <http://medind.nic.in/jal/t08/i3/jalt08i3p157.pdf> (last visited Nov. 5, 2016).

²²B. R. Sharma, Female feticide in India: Issues & Concerns, <http://medind.nic.in/jal/t08/i3/jalt08i3p157.pdf> (last visited Nov. 5, 2016).

²³SreeNawas Rao, Rig Veda Position of Women Part II, http://creative.sulekha.com/rig-veda-position-of-women-2-2_306106_blog (last visited Feb. 2, 2015).

seriously and you cannot even have a strong hold on people nearby even if you are correct in any matter²⁴.

The above words of Vijay Pratap clearly depict the situation which people must be facing if they do not possess sons. This kind of thinking of people makes the girls unacceptable to the society and this directly increases the number of cases of female foeticide. Vulnerability of females because of brutalities of the male in the form of physical, sexual and mental abuse is one reason as to why parents are less willing to give birth to the girl child. Women or girls are always subjugated, condemned and deprived of economic, social and political opportunities, which leads to their further non acceptance in the society. Parents are always under the threat of such abuses against their daughters and this ultimately leads to female foeticide²⁵.

The researcher in a telephonic conversation with one Chandra Bhushan Singh (name changed) of Barsola village of Jind district in Haryana got to know about the kind of fear people have regarding the birth of girl child. Chandrabhushan explains that a girl means more responsibility, no increase of family income and less gain as she will go to some other house after marriage. He further stated that one must give huge dowry in North India to marry his daughter and not just that, with every visit of girl's in-laws family to the girl's father's house, one must spend thousands of rupees in *vidai*²⁶ of groom. People equate daughter with financial burden on the shoulders of their father and brothers. Next issue, he says

²⁴Pamela Singla Department of Social Work 'We want Daughters-in-Law, not Daughters 'Forced Marriages in Jhajjar District of Haryana, India University of Delhi https://www.academia.edu/33408434/We_want_Daughters-in-Law_not_Daughters_1_Forced_Marriages_in_Jhajjar_District_of_Haryana_India?auto=download (last visited March 02, 2018).

²⁴Ragini Sengupta, Social Factors Influencing The Choices of The Indian Hindu Married Women in Marriage

²⁵Pamela Singla Department of Social Work 'We want Daughters-in-Law, not Daughters 'Forced Marriages in Jhajjar District of Haryana, India University of Delhi https://www.academia.edu/33408434/We_want_Daughters-in-Law_not_Daughters_1_Forced_Marriages_in_Jhajjar_District_of_Haryana_India?auto=download (last visited March 02, 2018),

²⁶Ragini Sengupta, Social Factors Influencing The Choices of The Indian Hindu Married Women in Marriage, Page 114 <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/bitstream/handle/10657/2690/SENGUPTA-THESIS-2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (last visited Apr . 01, 2016).

which bothers most of the people here is women safety. If you have a girl in your home, you must be always conscious of the people who are meeting your family. Furthermore, with increasing number of rape cases, sexual abuse of girls etc., it becomes a threat to parents to give birth to a girl child. Ancash Singh, Chandra Bhutan's elder son, says, if your boy elopes with a girl it is not considered a big issue in the society but in case vice-verse happens, one will be outcasted by the society and will lose his repute. Ancash states that he clearly instructed his wife to give birth to a male child only. The reason behind female foeticide cannot be explained in more clear way than this, as honestly stated above by these people. The society looks at a girl child as a liability and that's why the number of female foeticides are increasing day by day and sex ratio of men over women is increasing which ultimately leads to shortage of girls and later leads to evils like bride trafficking and polyandry²⁷.

Gender discrimination is so much culturally rooted in our society that changing the status of women seems to be a humongous and a really difficult task. The predisposition against females in India has social, financial and religious causes. Children are relied upon to work in the fields, earn more and take care of parents in their old age. The man centric mentality additionally presumes that the name of father and his family will be carried forward by the boy and not by the girl. Religious traditions and convictions additionally prompt such discrimination and increment the need of male kid in the general public. One such custom can be seen among Hindus where amidst one of the prominent ceremonies of Hindus, lighting the funeral fire by a male child is viewed as essential for salvation of the soul. As per Manu, a man cannot accomplish *mocha* (salvation) unless he has a male child to light his funeral pyre. In maturity, the children will watch over them acceptably²⁸.

²⁷Garg S, Nath A, Female feticide in India: Issues and Concerns, <http://www.bioline.org.br/pdf?jp08099> (last visited Nov. 21, 2016).

²⁸Samsunnessa Khatun and Aznarul Islam, 'Death Before Birth' - A Study On Female Foeticide In India, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Aznarul_Islam/publication/215590009_Death_Before_Birth%27_-_A_Study_on_Female_Foeticide_in_India/links/09e4150b8dba5859c5000000/Death-Before-Birth-A-Study-on-Female-Foeticide-in-India.pdf (last visited Apr.30, 2014).

The Sex ratio is of 861 women per thousand males and after the sex ratio provided above is depressing. The most depressing of it is the number of females in urban areas, which is way less than the number of women in rural areas. This depressing trend indicates that educated people are also involved in the heinous crime of female foeticide. This also gives a clear indication of female foeticide cases in the State of Haryana. Because of such less sex ratio, people of Haryana are forced to purchase brides from other states in a similar manner as someone is buying a property or commodity²⁹.

Bride trafficking is just one part of human trafficking and the statistics which are depicted are generally covered under human trafficking. In 2007 according to National Crime Records Bureau around only 249 accused are convicted out of 5528 arrested people³⁰. In year 2017 total 5898 cases were listed under head of human trafficking³¹. In 2007 according to National Crime Records Bureau around trafficking of 240 females took place for the purpose of forced marriage³².

Bride trafficking is a kind of human trafficking and when human trafficking increases in a country, it directly affects the number of women who are trafficked as brides from other states to the state like Haryana.

Haryana is a destination for bride traffickers where women brought from other states are sold and later forced marriages are performed. These women are bartered for a price like a commodity and their prices vary upon various factors

²⁹Riddhima Sharma, *Sex, Lies, and a receipt: Bride trafficking lifts it heads from under the veil*, (Oct. 20, 2014), www.thealternative.in/society/sex-lies-and-a-receipt-bride-trafficking-lifts-it-head-from-under-the-veil/ .

Definitions for mu Dynamics

³⁰National crime records bureau, <http://ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/CII/CII2017/pdfs/CII2017-Full.pdf> page 981 (last visited Nov. 2, 2017).

³¹National crime records bureau, <http://ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/CII/CII2017/pdfs/CII2017-Full.pdf> page 981 (last visited Nov. 2, 2017).

³²National crime records bureau, <http://ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/CII/CII2017/pdfs/CII2017-Full.pdf> page 978 (last visited Nov. 2, 2017).

such as their age, beauty, physical appearance, virginity etc³³. This form of marriage is nothing but a modern form of slavery when a bride is purchased as slave in exchange for money. The dearth of women is forcing the villagers to buy brides for their unmarried sons. The fate of these women is generally decided by their buyers. These women are forced not only to be unwilling brides for aged men but also to serve as domestic workers, farm laborers as well as sex slaves³⁴.

The plight of such women is terrible and painful as they cannot even play the role of a whistle-blower due to the fear of being ostracized by the society. Furthermore, they are not even allowed to meet other people including other bride trafficking victims, which further creates a trap for them of which they can never come out³⁵.

These women are never given the status equivalent to that of the local bride who is not trafficked or purchased³⁶. For example, consider the case of Shalil (name changed) of Rohtak, who is a peasant in his late 40s. He discusses the culture of the region pertaining to purchased wives even in the presence of his first wife. His first wife is a native of Mewat and she is accorded more respect because she is native and not purchased like the other wife of the locality. Shalil married a Paro from West Bengal and that too after five years of his first marriage. His first wife and Shalil had a fight and because of which she did not return to Shalil's place for three years and during this phase, Shalil visited a trafficker in Kolkata who arranged a bride for Shalil after kidnapping a girl of age 15 years from Durgapur district of West Bengal. Shalil paid the money and brought the second wife from West Bengal to Haryana.

³³Ira Trivedi, When a Bride-to-Be Is a Bride to Buy <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2015-05-22/when-bride-be-bride-buy> (last visited Oct. 12, 2018).

³⁴Combating Trafficking in Women and Children: A Gender and Human Rights, http://www.childtrafficking.org/pdf/user/unifem_gender_and_human_rights_framework.pdf. Framework (last visited Aug. 14, 2017).

³⁵Definitions for mu Dynamics, <http://www.definitions.net/definition/mu%20dynamics> (last visited Apr. 29, 2016).

³⁶Danish Raza, *When women come cheaper than cattle*, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/when-women-come-cheaper-than-cattle/storyEJD38cJ4kaTGVn03LJzUkJ.html> (last visited March 02, 2014).

Shalil did not disclose the amount of money involved in buying his second wife. The discrimination between both the wives is clearly visible as the local wife stays in house which is around 300 yards but the second one stays in a house, which is one third of the house of first wife. Shalil has 5 acres of land and his trafficked wife has only one-fourth of that property for her and her children. The first wife does not work in field whereas second wife spends most of the time working in the agriculture fields. Therefore, calling this marriage as marriage will be a misnomer.

Another incident is of a victim named Durga (name changed) who is a resident of the village Chhichhrana, Tehsil Israna, Panipat. Durga was trafficked at the age of 12-13 years in this village with her husband who works on a construction site. Her husband is from landowner community but has very few acres of land in his own name and is called as “chotazaminder”. She stated that her husband is Zamindar for namesake and does not have much property in his name although she is living in a Pucca house and has around 1 acre of land. Her husband’s name is Ramesh Chandra (name changed) who is around 5 years elder to Durga, who is around 28 years of age. Durga has studied till 5th standard and knows how to read and write a bit but because there are not many opportunities in the village, she works as an agriculture labor. She further stated that she has three kids, two sons and one daughter. She also informed the researcher that she was forced to abort twice because the child in her womb was a girl. Her story clearly depicts that female foeticide is widely prevalent in Haryana³⁷.

Not only do they face discrimination, but these women are also forced to live in a deplorable condition and are forced to bear all kinds of abuses. Sometimes, these women are also used as servants.

These girls are sold and resold many times depending upon the demand and supply. One victim of trafficking says that everyone in Haryana is not fortunate enough to get a Paro or Molki because availability of these women is not so easy and due to this, there are a lot of people who want to buy a bride is already married to someone and such puraches is done from even from husband or broker who. These purchased wives, sometimes after giving birth to children are resold because the purpose of buying them is achieved. As the demand for them

³⁷Annexure 1 Interview 39.

is always there in Haryana, reselling them is never tough and only when they are old (40 years and above), the demand for them reduces.

Poverty and skewed sex ratio, which is inextricably tied to the social malaise called female foeticide, stands out as the push-and-pull factor for bride trafficking. Where poverty stands out as the push factor, skewed sex ratio and less availability of girls for marriage is the major pull factor for bride trafficking.

Female foeticide has led to such a situation in Haryana where the demand for marriageable girls is high which has resulted in operation of a lot of organized trafficking rackets have in both source as well as destination states. Bride trafficking and less availability of girls can thus be referred to as a demand and supply relationship, which also proves the fact that to put a check on bride trafficking, the first and foremost requirement is to put a strict end to female foeticide. Although this way, it might take centuries to come to an end, but this is the only relevant way to put an end to bride trafficking.

Female foeticide has also shown an increasing trend over the years even though state has taken many steps in order to curb this menace. The growth in this phenomenon can be easily understood by observing the declining number of girls over the years as girls cannot just vanish but have been killed before or immediately after birth to save the family from the burden of a girl's expenses and security³⁸.

Ms. Maneka Gandhi, on girl child day observed:

Today, we are proud that we are one of the fastest growing economies in the world but, the paradox remains that the girl child is denied the right to be born. It is a matter of great concern that gender biased sex selective elimination is continuing in many parts of our country. This is a violation of human rights and the right to life guaranteed under our

³⁸Source states are those states which send/sale the girls for marriage in other state E.g. Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc.

Destination states are those states which buy girls for purpose of marriage E.g. Haryana, Punjab etc.

*Constitution. The social biases against the girl child must be fought with all the resources at our command*³⁹.

Indian Government has also brought female foeticide related issues to the forefront through the “Beti-Bachao, Beti-Padao” initiative. Apart from this initiative, there are a lot of new initiatives which have been initiated since then in order to remove gender bias and gender imbalance from our society but the effect of these is negligible and still the sex ratio is not improving as thought.

Not only the problem of female foeticide is faced by this generation but it will be faced by our upcoming generations too because these trafficked brides are also forced to abort their girl child.

III. Other Factors Responsible for Push and Pull Factor for Bride Trafficking

There are various other factors responsible for creating a demand and supply phenomenon of trafficked brides. Unemployment affects the marriage choices both at the source and destination side of bride trafficking. In case the parents of the trafficked bride or the bride herself is unemployed, then the chances of bride trafficking increases many folds. During one interview with Mohammad Ismail who is around 25 years, it was told that when the boy is unemployed, no parent in Haryana will give their daughter to him for marriage which forces the boys to buy girls from Jharkhand, Bihar, Bengal or Orissa etc. Mohammad Ismail also told that some of his friends who are staying in nearby villages are married to Paro because only a Paro's parent can marry their daughter to unemployed men in Haryana. He further stated that these men do not ask any dowry due to which girl's family makes no exploration regarding employment and character of the groom. Sometimes the family and groom also lie to the parents that they are employed and working in some good company or government department. He said that no doubt it is a fraud in marriage but what to do when no one is available for marriage in the community.

According to the 2001 census, the number of landless agricultural workers in India was 10.67 Crore and as per Census 2011 it was 14.43 Crore⁴⁰. The number

³⁹Manika Garg, *Infanticide vs. Female Foeticide*, Int. Jnl. of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, ISSN: 2277-7881 Vol. 1 Issue 3 <http://ijmer.in/pdf/volume1-issue3-2012/220-229.pdf> (last visited Sept. 12, 2014).

is alarmingly very high and due to this only large number of people live below poverty and have nothing to sell at the time of marriage of their girls and as a result fall prey to the trafficker and marriage agents. Landless workers because of their poor economic condition sometimes marry their daughters to far off villages in Haryana to the grooms who ask for no dowry in return without giving it a thought as to what might befall their daughters and what could be the hazards of such marriage alliances⁴¹.

Social vulnerability caused because of religion, caste, colour and creed is also responsible for creating hurdles in marriage and due to this the people sometimes are forced to buy women for marriage⁴². There are various other factors which increase the bride trafficking and some of them are natural calamity, migration and livelihood conditions. Natural calamity disturbs the economic fiber of a family and parentless children are more vulnerable to bride trafficking. The ethnic clash groups in Assam are more vulnerable to the traffickers and are considered as soft targets for luring them to sell their girls to be a part of trafficking⁴³.

There are many other factors like corruption of police officers and other law enforcement officers which also promote bride trafficking to a large extent. Bride trafficking is supported by the villagers and anyone who goes against it is not tolerated because of which during a lot of rescue operations these villagers

⁴⁰Dr. K. Hanumantha Rao (Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation), National Institute of Rural Development, Rural Development Statistics 2011-12, <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/rural%20development%20statistics%202011-2012.pdf>. (last visited May . 27, 2016).

⁴¹Krishnaji, N.1987. "Poverty and Sex Ratio: Some Data and Speculations." Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXII, No 23, 892- 897.

⁴²Aditya Parihar, Crime Against Women Inharyana: An Analysis, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention ISSN (Online): 2319 –7722, ISSN (Print): 2319 – Volume4 Issue 11 November. 2015 PP.16-24.

⁴²Human Trafficking: Two Assam girls rescued from Haryana, available at: <https://shaktivahini.org/human-trafficking-two-assam-girls-rescued-from-haryana/>. (last visited May . 27, 2016).

⁴³Human Trafficking: Two Assam girls rescued from Haryana, available at: <https://shaktivahini.org/human-trafficking-two-assam-girls-rescued-from-haryana/> (last visited May . 27, 2016).

become violent and even try to manhandle police personals and NGO workers if they attempt to rescue the victim⁴⁴.

IV. Conclusion

Bride trafficking is one of the traditional slavery systems, which has a deep history of the region. Therefore, the change cannot be brought by rescue and some other immediate relief or any harsh law. It can only be abolished by way of cultural renaissance and sensitization of people. This phenomenon is more like the demand and supply feature of any product or commodity which is sold in the market. The phenomenon will continue until there is a demand for brides in the states with skewed sex ratios and comparatively lower number of girls compared to boys. Thus, female foeticide and infanticide needs to be abolished or curbed at-least in order to keep a check on the by-products of this phenomenon like bride trafficking which by itself has become a widespread phenomenon in today's scenario.

A girl, who is supposed to be in school at the tender age of 14 or 15 to build her future in the proper direction with proper opportunities to be made available to her, is being forced into the so-called institution of marriage with men twice or thrice her age. The deplorable condition of such girls can be made out from the fact that such girls work as domestic slaves during the day and sex slaves at night.

According to a research around 6 women out of 318 are forced to have sex with multiple partners, the same research also shows that 19.7 percent women will like to stay in poverty rather than live as a trafficked wife⁴⁵

It is thus concluded that where a girl child is received unpleasantly and is considered a burden, bride buying becomes a by-product and an absurd reality. Furthermore, result of the absence of a monitoring mechanism and minimum standards of victim care and protection in the schemes of govt. for the protection of trafficked victims and children, the National Commission for Protection of

⁴⁴Girl finally rescued from forced marriage, police largely uncooperative <https://www.bba.org.in/?q=content/girl-finally-rescued-forced-marriage-police-largely-uncooperative> (last visited May . 27, 2016).

⁴⁵Supra note 24.

Child Rights team detected cases of selling infants and sexual exploitation of girls at a State-supported “Swadhar” home in Rohtak. The alarming sex ratio of Haryana showed the fact that it would take about 50 years to reach a natural sex ratio even if zero female feticides takes place⁴⁶.

⁴⁶Unwanted women <https://shaktivahini.org/unwanted-women/> (last visited Jul . 23, 2016).