

Female Foeticide, Trafficking Subject of New Book

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As discrimination against girls assumes gigantic proportion in India, a new book focuses on female foeticide, trafficking and socio-cultural consequences of the menace by examining social and human variables at play, their inter linkages and resultant multi-facet implications.

"Life and Times of Unborn Kamla" by K K Varma tries to shed new light on the brewing crisis as a result of diminishing daughters.

The author says every 12 seconds a girl foetus is aborted in India.

"That means 700,000 girls are killed every year. All around the world, 1.2 million children are annually trafficked. Every day all across India 200 young women are being forced into prostitution. And sex selective abortion has grown into a Rs 1000 crore industry in India," says Varma, who had a teaching stint at IIT Kharagpur besides working in the social sector.

Published by Palimpsest, the book starts with the story of Kammo, who had a troubled married life as she was forced to abort girl foetuses, raped by members of her husband's family and often not given food. She was then sold to a brothel from where she managed to escape after much difficulty. She was given shelter in [Shimla](#) by an organisation working for the destitute.

Kammo then fulfilled her dream of passing the school leaving examination through an open school option. Though she was offered a job of teaching other inmates at the shelter, Kammo also decided to open a tea stall so that she could donate a little more to the shelter funds.

"Kammo introduced me to the grim reality of domestic violence – torture, abortion, abuses and rape within the close confines of home. She was a real story. She had gone through it all. She was a real victim," the author says.

"The simple woman had left a deep imprint on my mind. Her harrowing stories of torture, domestic rape, forced abortions and abuse brought back the chilling accounts of gender violence I had read about in books, newspapers and periodicals."

The Kamla in the book's title is the unborn girl whom Kammo had to abort. Kammo's journey is the harrowing tale of thousands of young women in India.

According to Varma, trafficking from the northeastern states is high but largely goes unnoticed because of their remoteness.

"The rising demand for live-in maids in urban areas has resulted in trafficking of girls from villages in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. They are first ill-treated by their placement agencies, and then in the employers' homes. They are often subjected to sexual abuse," he says.

Varma also cites several other instances of atrocities on women.

"After months of travels across dusty small towns, impoverished villages, affluent urban enclaves to unearth the complete story of why they did not allow Kamla to be born, I knew the war ahead would not be easy to win. The fight for Kammo's unborn daughter was going to be the mother of all battles. This war would have to be wages inside our minds, in the town square and at the village 'chaupal' – within our milieu. It would be a war with ourselves," he writes.