Political Transition and Development Imperatives in India

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of discrimination against persons with disabilities and is read effectively with Article 14, we find on close examination that the definition of disability is wanting and that it still does not enable a constitutional formulation on non-discrimination.

However, what provides an edge to possibilities of the articulation of disability rights is the idea of a *constitutional articulation* — which has the effect of moving disability from an inarticulate, depoliticised category to an articulate, political category on which non-discrimination is to be guaranteed. How may we get around the double negation, working with the idea of constitutional morality and finding ways of 'wheeling', 'covering', and 'encircling'[35] the negation, finding new constitutional languages in the process?

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[35] I borrow these words from the poem by Lois Keith, 'Tomorrow I'm Going to Rewrite the English Language', in idem (ed.) *Mustn't Grumble: Writing by Disabled Women*, London: The Women's Press, [1994] 1995, p. 57. Cf Minae Inahara, 'This Body which is Not One, p. 58.

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Whose Security, Whose Development?: Lessons from Campaigns against Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu

Swarna Rajagopalan

Introduction

I was born in 1964 to a family whose origins are in what used to be called North Arcot district in Tamil Nadu. In the decade between 1961 and 1971, the sex ratio in Tamil Nadu registered its sharpest decline, from 992 to 978.[1] In North Arcot, it slipped from 998 to 988.[2] I am always struck by the good fortune that kept me from being one of the infants killed for being female or abandoned for all practical purposes to a life of negligence and malnutrition for the reason. The right to life — to survive past infancy and childhood; the right to live well and with the freedom to choose what that should mean — we experience these as indivisible and prize them as inalienable. In each of our lives, security, development, and democracy are first experienced at the individual level through this right to life.

There could be few better issues through which to reflect on the relationship between security, development, and democratic governance than the baby girl's fragile enjoyment of the right to life. Female infanticide and foeticide (or sex-selective abortions)

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[1] Tamil Nadu Peoples' Forum for Social Development, 'Social Development in Tamil Nadu — Serious Concerns, A Peoples' Memorandum to the Govt. of Tamil Nadu on the State Budget 2000–2001', http://www.swtn.org/publications/social_development_in_tamilnadu%e2%80%93serious_concerns_2001.pdf, p. 10, accessed 13 August 2010.

[2] Sheela Rani Chunkath and V. B. Athreya, 'Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu: Some Evidence' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32 (17), April 1997, p. 3, http://www.cwds.ac.in/Library/collection/elib/sex_selection/ss_female_infanticide.pdf, accessed 20 January 2010.

are a security issue, a development challenge and a human rights violation. A preliminary exploration of this tripartite relationship, which is simultaneously mutually reinforcing and mutually inimical, is the object of this case study.

This article is structured inductively. It begins with a descriptive account of the case study: the campaign against female infanticide in Tamil Nadu. The next section uses gender violence as a lens through which to reflect on security, development, and democratic governance. This is the launch pad for the discussion of the interface between security, development, and democratic governance in the final section of the article.

Curbing Female Infanticide

In this case study, campaigns and interventions to eliminate female infanticide serve as a lens to illustrate the synergies and tensions inherent in the interface between security, development, and democratic governance. There has not been a comparable effort to tackle female foeticide, a variation of the same male child preference, and therefore, infanticide alone forms the subject of this case study.

The Setting: Tamil Nadu

About 62.5 million people live in Tamil Nadu, India's southernmost state. They pride themselves on still speaking a classical language that they describe as 'older than sticks and stones'. Their history encompasses two imperial ages, three classical literary congresses, and an egalitarian impulse whose early expression was in the poetry of Bhakti saints and whose contemporary expression has been in the rationalist movement articulated best by E. V. Ramasami 'Periyar'. While by and large women are safe in Tamil Nadu and enjoy mobility and freedom in a way their northern sisters may not, they also live with a culture in which a classical and popular ethos prizes qualities associated with machismo. Violence is one dialect of that machismo.

The modern political history of Tamil Nadu is traced to elite organisations that sought to limit the early Brahmin domination of government jobs and what they saw as the 'Brahmin–Bania' coalition of the Gandhian Congress. By the 1930s, the elitist moment had passed, and Periyar's 'Self-Respect Movement'

had swept over Tamil Nadu. Protesting the imposition of Hindi, speaking up for Tamil, decrying caste, ritualism, and religiosity, Periyar offered the people of Madras Presidency an alternative social vision. This rationalist, modernist vision remains the official ideology of the state whose politics has been dominated by parties from Periyar's movement.

There are two reasons why Tamil Nadu is a good location for the study of the interface between security, development, and democratic governance. First, the state has not known the upheaval of war or partition in modern times. The conditions for governance have therefore been extraordinarily stable. The tsunami had horrendous consequences but it was not a problem that bled the state over a period of time. Second, the rationalist ideology of the dominant parties in the state hold policy-making promise, especially in combination with the populist bent of the state's leadership. Gender equality would seem to be a corollary of the modernising element in Periyarist thought.

Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu

In the late 1980s, alarmed by the declining sex ratio in the state, the Tamil Nadu government began partnering with NGOs to campaign against female infanticide. In general, the sex ratio in India has been in freefall through the 20th century.

Table 6.1: Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratios in India and Tamil Nadu, 1901–2001

Year	Sex Ratio		Sex Ratio (0–6 Years)	
	Tamil Nadu	India	Tamil Nadu	India
1901	1,044	972	–	–
1951	1,007	946	999	983
1961	992	941	995	976
1971	978	930	984	964
1981	977	934	974	962
1991	974	927	948	945
2001	987	933	942	927

Sources: Table 1, in Sheela Rani Chunkath and V. B. Athreya, 'Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu: Some Evidence' Economic and Political Weekly, 32 (1), April 1997, p. 3, http://www.cwds.ac.in/Library/collection/elib/sex_selection/ss_female_infanticide.pdf, accessed 20 January 2010; Census of India, http://www.censusindia.net/data/ppt_t10.PDF, accessed 12 February 2004.

A declining sex ratio is arguably the most fundamental indicator of the status of women in a society; especially where their chance of survival is diminished through conscious agency, there can hardly be another interpretation. The growing difference between the general sex ratio and the child sex ratio suggests that something began early on to make a difference to the survival prospects of girl children. The most basic kind of physical security — the right to life, the web of social, economic, and cultural factors that fall into the developmental realm, and the state's ability and willingness to act as well as the nature of state actions, contribute interesting insights for our broader study.

In 1992, Amartya Sen published an article in *British Medical Journal* in which he wrote that there were more than 100 million 'missing women' worldwide.[3] But a few years before that, in 1986, activists from the Society for Integrated Rural Development took journalists from a Tamil magazine to Usilampatti to report on the high incidence of female infanticide in that district. The *Junior Vikatan* article shook Tamil Nadu with its headline: 'Fearing Dowry they Kill Girl Babies'. *India Today* picked up the story, investigated it, and female infanticide in Tamil Nadu made national headlines.[4]

Until the press broke these stories in the late 1980s, it was largely assumed that female infanticide was uncommon in the modern age, a relic of the past, and found mostly in rural areas. Sabu George wrote in 1999 that as late as 1989 demographers claimed this did not happen in South India, although there were British accounts from the 19th century and he himself had heard from people in North Arcot, Madurai, and Salem that it had been practised for generations.[5] George's research between 1986 and 1990 in northern Tamil Nadu led him to conclude that 10 per cent of newborn girls in villages he was studying were victims of female infanticide, a finding reinforced by other researchers. Athreya and Chunkath, an economist–administrator team, stated that 'the practice is widespread in a contiguous belt of districts

running south to north along a western corridor of the state. The belt runs from Madurai to Theni in the south through Dindigul, Karur, Namakkal, and Salem to Dharmapuri and Vellore in the north.'[6] Primary health centres (PHCs) have been cited to suggest that from a high of around 3,000 cases of infanticide a year in the 1990s, there has been a sharp decline to just 225 in 2003.[7]

What is female infanticide? Female infanticide is the intentional killing of girl children on account of the preference for sons. Methods of killing abound: poisoning the infant's milk with oleander; feeding the infant castor oil mixed with paddy husk; stifling the baby with a pillow; drowning her in milk; burying the infant in sealed mud pots; feeding the infant crushed sleeping pills or pesticide.[8] The killing is usually done by a female elder and very occasionally by the midwife or other birth attendant at the family's behest. Girls born further down the birth order are more likely to be killed or neglected and left with poor survival chances.

In the last 30 years, sex-selective abortion — also referred to as female foeticide — has also been practised across India, and is more common than female infanticide. Female foeticide has spread to urban and semi-urban areas, and is also prevalent in Indian diaspora communities. The numbers on sex-selective abortion vary from '3 million a year' to '10 million between 1981 and 2005' — either way they are shocking. The spread of sex-selective abortions belies the faith that people place in education and economic wellbeing.[9]

Why do people kill their girl babies? Male child preference is the simple answer, and male child preference is explained in terms of agrarian labour requirements, custom (such as sons

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[3] Amartya Sen, 'Missing Women', *British Medical Journal*, 304, 1992, pp. 587–88.
[4] Gita Aravamudan, *Disappearing Daughters: The Tragedy of Female Foeticide*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007, pp. 1–5.
[5] Sabu M. George, *Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu, India: From Recognition to Denial?* http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/SAsia/suchana/0225/george.html, accessed 4 April 2001.

[6] Venkatesh Athreya and Sheela Rani Chunkath, 'Tackling Female Infanticide: Social Mobilisation in Dharmapuri, 1997–99', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 December 2000, pp. 43–45.
[7] 'Human Development and Health', presentation by Health Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Government to the State Planning Commission, 18–19 May 2005, http://www.tn.gov.in/spc/workshop/6-HD%20and%20Health-SEC.PPT, accessed 15 March 2010.
[8] Drawn from across Gita Aravamudan, *Disappearing Daughters*.
[9] Foeticide is not the subject of this article simply because efforts to end it have been relatively ineffective, and perhaps a little half-hearted; we will, however, return to that challenge briefly in the last section of this article.

being needed for funeral rites), and patriarchal inheritance laws. Researchers have identified several factors that make this a lethal preference. First, as people choose to have fewer children, they are more likely to select the gender of those children. Second, Sabu George points to the Green Revolution and the spread of cash or commercial crop cultivation. The way that credit, warehousing, markets, and technology now work coupled with patriarchal restrictions on women's mobility marginalised their role in the new economy. Third, with some farmers becoming affluent, conspicuous consumption has become common in both rural and urban India. Lavish weddings and wedding gifts are ways to show off the new affluence, and giving and taking dowry have spread not just to new regions and communities but also well beyond the occasion of the wedding to a lifetime of demands.[10] Fourth, advances in reproductive health technologies are being used to act on male child preference.[11] Regulatory and punitive legal mechanisms have not served as a deterrent, and we read that with relatively liberal abortion laws, India is also emerging as a destination for diaspora Indians to return to have these tests and abortions done.

Campaigns and Interventions

To their credit, state and civil society in Tamil Nadu have acted with enthusiasm (if not alacrity) against the practice of female infanticide. In fact, one scholar states that this is the 'first and only state in India to officially acknowledge female infanticide as a problem'.[12]

PHCs have been the focal point of state interventions and invaluable partners in the campaign against female infanticide

thanks to their presence on the ground across districts. They have also housed the reception centres for the Cradle Baby Scheme (CBS), with the existing staff of the PHC serving to care for the abandoned baby girls. PHC records are a critical component of the studies that have underpinned policy planning in this sphere. Tamil Nadu's Directorate of Public Health has also pioneered district-wise Vital Events Survey (VES) from 1996–99 and in 2003, creating a database on births and infant deaths. PHC records and the VES data together have enabled the administration and social sector to tackle female infanticide more effectively.[13]

In 1992, the Tamil Nadu government launched two schemes intended to address the problem of female infanticide, among other things: the CBS and the Girl Child Protection Scheme (GCPS). Their impact is still being assessed and debated, but they have caught the attention of the central government and other state governments and the GCPS has been adopted with or without changes across the country.

The CBS offered parents an alternative to killing female infants. They could now leave their unwanted daughters at baby reception centres, from where they would presumably be offered up for reception. The scheme was first introduced in Salem district and in 2001 was extended to Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, and Dharmapuri. The numbers vary, but with the scheme in operation since 1992, the first abandoned girls would be 18 years old by now. One report estimated that, 'Till March 2008, this programme has saved the life of 3,044 children.'[14] A 2007 Right to Information (RTI) petition revealed that as on 1 June that year, 2,589 girls were received at government centres, but most arrivals had occurred after 2000. The same response stated 1,545 babies were surrendered and 950 were abandoned.[15]

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[10] 'Expanding Dimensions of Dowry', All-India Democratic Women's Association, 2003, discussed in Jagori, *Marching Together: Resisting Dowry in India*, New Delhi, 2009, www.jagori.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/dowry_infopack.pdf, accessed 22 August 2010. The actual document could not be found on the Internet.

[11] Sabu M. George, *Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu, India*. See also M. Gandhimathi Jeeva and Phavalam, 'Female Infanticide: Philosophy, Perspective and Concern of SIRD', *Search Bulletin*, 13 (3), July–September 1998, pp. 9–17. http://www.cwds.ac.in/Library/collection/elib/sex_selection/ss_female_infanticide_philosophy.pdf, accessed February 2010.

[12] Sharada Srinivasan, 'Gender Bias in Child Mortality', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22 December 2001, p. 4768.

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[13] Sheela Rani Chunkath and V. B. Athreya describe data collection on female infanticide in their 1997 article 'Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu: Some Evidence', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32 (17), April 1997, http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/SAsia/suchana/1210/chunkath.html, accessed 13 April 2001.

[14] 'Positive Bias for Girls', *The Hindu*, 24 January 2009, http://www.thehindu.com/2009/01/24/stories/2009012454430700.htm, accessed 20 March 2010.

[15] P. C. Vinoj Kumar, 'Where do Rejected Little girls Go ...', *Tehelka Magazine*, 5 (12), 29 March 2008, http://www.tehelka.com/story_main38.asp?filename=Ne290308where_rejected.asp, accessed 4 January 2010. This article was an important resource for the critique of the Cradle Baby Scheme.

Critics of the CBS appear to outnumber its supporters, and there are many reasons for this. First of all, while parents believe that they are giving up children to the care of the government, in reality, the government passes them on to adoption agencies on an average two months after they are received. At this point, the government ceases to keep track of them or their welfare. Agencies are forbidden to speak about the cradle babies received, and direct investigators to the government for answers. The fate of the babies received is uncertain and undocumented. From around the time the CBS was extended across the state, the number of adoption agencies in Tamil Nadu has doubled, according to reports.[16] Reports of irregularities and corruption in the adoption process have also brought the CBS under scrutiny. Some would go so far as to say that the scheme has promoted trafficking in infants.[17]

Second, although since 1992 successive governments have pledged support to this cause, and to the CBS, the outlay available to the scheme has been to the order of ₹ 6–12 lakh a year.[18] Obviously, this pittance does not allow for special staff, leave alone specially trained staff. A *Tehelka* special report quoted P. Phavalam of the Society for Integrated Rural Development (SIRD) (which first brought female infanticide in Tamil Nadu to light) as saying that while the infant mortality rate in Tamil Nadu was 31, it was 162 for the cradle babies.[19]

An Usilampatti mother said to Gita Aravamudan:

> "Better to send my daughter to her maker than to leave her to the mercy of an *anadhashram* [orphanage] … Even if this one is a daughter, I will never leave her in the cradle. Today she may be a baby but tomorrow she will grow up into a young woman and who knows how the orphanage will use her?"[20]

For activists, the fundamental issue is that the CBS seems to implicitly endorse male child preference. The message sent out is, 'Fair enough, you don't want this daughter, but don't kill her, leave her with us.' Placing the cradles in districts where female infanticide is not known seems to encourage the abandonment of daughters.[21] Moreover, it sanctions the violation of the daughter's right to live with her natural family.

The GCPS offers parents who only have daughters a financial incentive. Also introduced in 1992, the scheme was based on the premise that girls are considered a financial burden for parents and it reached out to poor families with small daughters where at least one of the parents had undergone sterilisation before reaching 35 years. A small sum of money would be placed in a deposit account in the girl's name and, in addition, educational and other assistance would be made available. Few took advantage of this scheme in the first five years of its working, but it was still adopted at the national level in 1997. The GCPS was restructured in 2001–2002 to increase the financial emoluments offered and the number of beneficiaries increased 50-fold.[22]

Less controversial than the CBS, there are still some concerns about the GCPS.[23] One is that the scheme targets poorer families, but the practice of female foeticide is growing faster in affluent sectors. The second is that those who have now enlisted in the scheme are not from the female infanticide 'belt' districts of Dharmapuri, Madurai, Salem, Theni, and Namakkal but Chennai, Coimbatore, Kancheepuram, Kanyakumari, the Nilgiris, Thanjavur, and Thiruvarur, where this practice is limited. Moreover, the GCPS requires one parent to have undergone sterilisation, and ends up appealing more to those who lack a strong preference for sons, rather than changing the attitudes of those who do. Sharada Srinivasan and Arjun S. Bedi see this

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Arjun Bedi, 'Bare Branches and Drifting Kites: Tackling Female Infanticide and Feticide in India', *ISS Public Lecture Series 2008*, no. 5, The Hague, Netherlands, 16 October 2008, p. 26, http://campus.iss.nl/~bedi/inaugural_Bedi.pdf, accessed 10 March 2010.

[18] P. C. Vinoj Kumar, 'Where do Rejected Little Girls Go …'.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Gita Aravamudan, *Disappearing Daughters*, p. 18.

[21] Lalitha Sridhar, 'Treating Infanticide as Homicide is Inhuman', *InfoChange News & Features*, August 2004, http://infochangeindia.org/20040817165/Women/Features/-Treating-infanticide-as-homicide-is-inhuman.html, accessed 7 January 2010.

[22] Sharada Srinivasan and Arjun S. Bedi, 'Girl Child Protection Scheme in Tamil Nadu: An Appraisal', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIV (48), 28 November 2009, p. 11.

[23] Ibid., pp. 11–12.

requirement as a strong disincentive for parents who might otherwise enlist in this scheme. The coercive aspect of this requirement has also drawn criticism.[24]

Both the CBS and GCPS address the symptoms of male child preference — the willingness to eliminate or abandon a female child — rather than to transform that preference itself. This limits their value as tools of social change.

In 1997–99, the Tamil Nadu Area Health Care project adopted street theatre as a strategy in Dharmapuri to both conscientise the community against female infanticide and involve people in broader public health issues.[25] The project mobilised 350 social activists and volunteers to work together in troupes of 16 to perform specially developed plays around Dharmapuri district. They were first trained in a fortnight-long camp, which was in itself a transformative experience for many of them. The troupes stayed in the community, necessitating communication and negotiation with panchayat leaders. This created a local leadership including panchayat representatives, activists, and health functionaries for the fight against female infanticide. Over just 40 days, 18 troupes gave almost 3,000 performances, and directly or indirectly, they reached more than a third of Dharmapuri's population. A follow-up programme was held of eight panchayat union-level conferences made up of elected panchayat presidents, healthcare workers, and activists, where the panchayat presidents committed themselves to rooting out female infanticide. Venkatesh Athreya and Sheela Rani Chunkath, writing about this project, are very cautious about claiming instant success; however they point to the decline in female infanticides in Dharmapuri from 1,244 in 1997 to 997 in 1999, contrasting these figures with a contrary upward trend not just in female infanticide belt districts like Salem and Namakkal, suggesting the impact of this experiment is worth monitoring.[26]

Civil society has played an important role in spreading awareness and spearheading change. The first media reports in

[24] Sabu M. George, *Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu, India*.

[25] Venkatesh Athreya and Sheela Rani Chunkath, 'Tackling Female Infanticide: Social Mobilisation in Dharmapuri, 1997–99', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 December 2000, pp. 4345–4348.

[26] Ibid., pp. 4347–4348.

1986 followed from the SIRD's initiative. In 1998, a coalition of civil society organisations, research institutions, and activists formed the Campaign against Sex Selective Abortion (CASSA). The objective of the campaign is to prevent the misuse of reproductive health technologies, promote reproductive health rights of women, and halt the decline of the sex ratio. CASSA uses educational programmes, monitoring exercises, and research publications to promote this objective. CASSA has been a vocal critic of the CBS and CASSA activists have also challenged the conviction of mothers in female infanticide cases on the grounds that they themselves are victims of the system.

The Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) was another leader in this work, but it began by establishing crèches and recruiting local women to run them.[27] They built trust by facilitating self-help groups and helping with income-generation activities. They also organised health and hygiene training programmes for adolescents. After several months, the topic of female infanticide was broached and despite initial resistance, ICCW volunteers began to monitor high-risk families discreetly. This combination of education, persuasion, and social policing resulted in a decline in the practice in the Usilampatti villages where ICCW worked. 'The ICCW's success in Usilempetti is mainly because it never told the villagers that it was there to prevent or end female infanticide.'[28]

The M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation launched the 'Voicing Silence' project in 1992, with a view to bringing together culture and social activism as a catalyst to women's empowerment and creating awareness of gender issues. The project has developed plays, organised theatre festivals around these issues, and organised training workshops to support women to use theatre to express themselves on these matters. 'Voicing Silence'

[27] Shobha Warrier, 'Again a Girl! Are You Not Ashamed of Yourself?', 'The Rediff Special: A Special Report on Female Infanticide', Rediff.com, 8 March 1999, http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/mar/08woman.htm, accessed 4 April 2001; Shobha Warrier, 'The Girls take an Oath that They Will Not be Involved in Female Infanticide either Directly or Indirectly', interview with Andal Damodaran, 'The Rediff Special: A Special Report on Female Infanticide'.

[28] Shobha Warrier, 'Again a Girl! Are You Not Ashamed of Yourself?' 'The Rediff Special: A Special Report on Female Infanticide'.

served to facilitate dialogue, networking, and follow-up at the grassroots level in affected districts like Salem and Madurai.[29]

A very important factor in the success of these initiatives was perhaps that government and civil society worked together. NGOs partnered on specific programmes and also collaborated with government projects. A sense of shared purpose has clearly made a difference on the ground. More recently, the collective reach of the Self-Help Group movement, National Cadet Corps, and National Service Scheme have been harnessed to further this campaign.[30]

Interventions against Female Infanticide have also included Arrests and Convictions

Karupayee was arrested in January 1994 in Usilampatti on charges of killing her infant daughter. She already had two living daughters and two other daughters had died soon after birth, so the ICCW's local team had been monitoring her pregnancy. Karupayee went home early with her daughter from the hospital and when the ICCW social worker visited their home, the daughter was missing. A complaint was filed and prompt police action followed. Karupayee and her husband Karuthakannan confessed; they had strangled the baby and buried her in front of their house. Karupayee was arrested (not her husband because he was not present when this was done).[31] Female infanticide is usually charged as culpable homicide and the sentence is life imprisonment. P. Phavalam from SIRD and CASSA told a journalist:

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[29] Mina Swaminathan, A. Mangai, and S. Raja Samuel, 'Confronting Discrimination: Some Approaches to the Issue of Female Infanticide', *Search Bulletin*, 13 (3), July–September 1998, pp. 64–74, http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/SAsia/suchana/0110/swaminathan_etc.html, accessed 13 April 2001.
[30] See, for instance, Ramya Kannan, 'SHG Launches Aggressive Campaign against Infanticide', *The Hindu*, 7 December 2003, at http://www.hindu.com/2003/12/07/stories/2003120705190100.htm, accessed 13 October 2010; Amutha Kannan, 'NCC Cadets Join Hands to Fight Female Infanticide, *The Hindu*, 31 August 2009, http://www.hindu.com/edu/2009/08/31/stories/2009083150470200.htm, accessed 13 October 2010.
[31] Gita Aravamudan, *Disappearing Daughters*, pp. 4–7.

Karuppayee made big news because she was the first woman in Tamil Nadu to be convicted of female infanticide. She was interviewed umpteen times and attained the status of a "notorious celebrity". Her case is pending before the high court and she is out on bail. The impact of all this on her life has been terrible. She no longer wishes to meet the media and has become a recluse. She prefers not to interact at all. We have interviewed over 25 women who have been convicted. Many have been badly scarred by their experiences.[32]

Social activists have questioned how appropriate it is to single out women, especially mothers, for punishment. In their view women are also victims — they face untenable pressure from families and the community to bear male children. Women who kill their children have not learnt to value themselves, a lack of self-worth they transfer to their female newborns. They are dependent on their families for identity and survival, and when threatened with desertion or worse for bearing a girl child, have nothing to draw upon for resistance. The Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women, however, recommended after a public hearing that other women complicit in the killing should not be spared. The mother may be a victim, but she is also part of the pressure group that encourages the crime.[33] The men usually find an alibi and escape arrest, leading to a tragic miscarriage of justice.[34]

In addition, judicial custody shatters the family, punishing the other children for crimes their parents committed. Schooling, poverty, homelessness, even being orphaned if either of the parents dies or commits suicide — they pay a disproportionate price. While female infanticide is hardly a secret or uncommon practice

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[32] Lalitha Sridhar, 'Treating Infanticide as Homicide is Inhuman', *InfoChange News & Features*, August 2004, http://infochangeindia.org/20040817165/Women/Features/-Treating-infanticide-as-homicide-is-inhuman.html, accessed 7 January 2010. Mythily Sivaraman describes such cases in 'Female Infanticide — Who Bears the Cross?' *People's Democracy*, XXV (25), 24 June 2001, http://pd.cpim.org/2001/june24/june24_infanticide.htm, accessed 7 on January 2010.
[33] Feroze Ahmed, 'Panel Recommends Milder Punishment for Female Infanticide', *The Hindu*, 9 June 2003.
[34] Venkatesh Athreya and Sheela Rani Chunkath, 'Tackling Female Infanticide', p. 4345.

in certain areas, being apprehended by the police results in the community (the same community that may have reinforced male child preference) ostracising them. The children lose every source of support they might have.

There is also concern that treating female infanticide as a law-and-order problem and punishing it as a crime has the effect of simply driving the practice underground.[35] Threatening to register cases offers opportunities for extortion and bribes are collected to cover up infanticide cases.[36] Corruption in the police and administration makes it possible to misreport both the cause of death and gender of a child, to say nothing of falsified death certificates. State officials come from the same society where these horrendous practices are valorised; collusion between local officers and guilty families makes it possible to obfuscate the crime and hinder the law from taking its course.

Amid all the campaigning and the scheme-making, there have also been attempts to stop reporting beginning with the false charges faced by the SIRD when it first took journalists to Usilampatti to accounts of ministers cautioning NGOs not to report cases to the media.[37] Parallel to the wish to tackle the problem seems to run a wish to cover up and save face.

A recent attempt to assess the impact of interventions classified them in terms of reach and intensity into three groups: heavily treated districts, lightly treated districts, and minimally treated districts.[38] It found that large-scale, district-wide interventions backed by the district administration made a positive impact. Moreover, 'the district-wide monitoring and counseling of high-risk mothers at the grassroots (by NGOs/women's self-help groups/village health nurses), linked to the credible threat of police and legal action and the possibility of economic support via schemes such as the GCPS comprise an intervention model' which has shown results and may be replicated.[39] A multi-pronged approach is more likely to work than each or any of these schemes in isolation. Most important, the greatest success

has been seen where the district administration and NGOs have worked together. Social change, it seems, requires public–private partnership!

What the Fight against Infanticide Tells Us

Since the first reports in 1986 about female infanticide in parts of Tamil Nadu, state and civil society have attempted to turn back the tide on this practice.

An unusual response, but critical to successful policy making and intervention, was the commissioning of the district-level Vital Events Survey (VES). The Department of Public Health administrators had the foresight to run this survey for a few years at a stretch, creating a baseline, and then it was run once more a few years later. However, the true utility of data is when it is collected regularly over a period of time. Given that the problem — female infanticide — was not random or episodic, there could hardly have been a justification for not running the survey regularly. It was just a change of team and a reordering of priorities.

The Danish International Development Agency-funded project and Madras School of Social Work project are examples of interventions that seek to change the thinking of the community. Both projects used theatre to convey a particular message as well as to encourage people to express themselves. Effectively communicating the idea that female infanticide is wrong, project leaders were able to persuade members of the affected communities to volunteer to be advocates, monitor at-risk families, and thereby become change agents. Both projects also created networks of women with leadership skills. Both seem to have run their course, raising questions about follow-up. Moreover, while female infanticide may have been a localised problem, male child preference is not, but it has apparently not been possible to expand the reach of these programmes.

Over the years, civil society groups have formed a coalition to coordinate their advocacy efforts for greater effect. CASSA brings together some of the first groups to take on this issue as well as newer, smaller organisations across Tamil Nadu. Such a coalition brings together a wealth of experience which can be useful to both state and civil society's efforts.

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Sabu M. George, *Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu, India*.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Arjun Bedi, 'Bare Branches and Drifting Kites'.
[39] Ibid., p. 26.

The GCPS provides an incentive to those who choose to have and keep their daughters. What is implicit in this, however, is the idea that having a daughter is not its own incentive, reinforcing the very prejudice that creates the problem of female infanticide in the first place. Moreover, the requirement that one of the parents have undergone some form of sterilisation means that the scheme appeals to those who have no particular preference, rather than 'converts' those who do. It also lends a coercive dimension to the scheme.

The arrest and subsequent conviction of mothers for killing of their girl babies has also been controversial. Exemplary punishment has its uses, but the argument that these convictions have punished victims has some degree of truth in this case. The other members of the family and community who might share and might have reinforced these beliefs go unpunished, but the women and other children are disproportionately affected.

The most high-profile 'solution' to the female infanticide problem, the CBS, is the most problematic. First, it locates the problem in the killing of the girl child and not in male child preference. Second, poor record keeping, lack of transparency, and abdication of responsibility characterise the operation of the scheme. Third, it is underfunded so even while an infant is at the PHC, there may be no one to take care of its special needs. Finally, the way the scheme has worked has spawned adoption rackets around Tamil Nadu.

Female infanticide rates have indeed come down in Tamil Nadu, but grassroots groups say it is because parents are opting for sex-selective abortions instead.[40] This is established by contrasting changes in the Infant Mortality Rate with the Sex Ratio at Birth.

The campaign against female infanticide has shown some good instincts and has been successful in some ways. However, lack of sustained effort and follow-up beleaguer the better interventions. The more problematic ones have sustained, but so have the reasons that were problematic in the first place. In addition to data collection not continuing, it appears as if neither evaluation

exercises nor dialogues with those on the ground have informed decisions to initiate or continue the state-run interventions.

The Challenge of Gender Violence

Gender violence is

> violence that is directed at an individual based on her or his specific gender role in a society. It can affect females or males; however, gender-based violence affects women and girls disproportionately. It is violence intended to establish or reinforce gender hierarchies and perpetuate gender inequalities.[41]

Gender violence is experienced across class, community, culture, life stage, and age. It begins with foeticide and ends with elder abuse. It is the power play of patriarchy — male privilege and male child preference are manifestations of patriarchal values. Gender violence offers an opening to reflect on security, development, and democratic governance in multiple ways that will be explored in this section.

Gender Violence and Security

The connection between gender violence and security is self-evident, even facile, until we consider that traditionally, security studies focused on states and their challenges of war and peace. After all, the simplest meaning of the word 'security' is safety, and being safe from physical harm is undoubtedly a way of being secure.[42]

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[40] Campaign against Sex Selective Abortion, *Position Note on Cradle Baby Scheme*, May 2007, http://cassa.in/pdf/Position%20paper%20on%20%20 Cradle%20baby%20scheme%20English.doc accessed 4 January 2010.

[41] Judy A. Benjamin and Lynn Murchison, *Gender-Based Violence: Care & Protection of Children in Emergencies: A Field Guide*, Save the Children, 2004, p. 3, http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/content/library/documents/gender-based-violence-care-protection-children-emergencies-field-guide, accessed 17 August 2011.

[42] Swarna Rajagopalan, 'Violence against Women and Security', InfoChange India, November 2008, http://infochangeindia.org/Governance/Security-for-All/Violence-against-women-and-security.html accessed 24 September 2010. See also Swarna Rajagopalan, 'Women and Security: In Search of a New Paradigm', in Farah Faizal and Swarna Rajagopalan (eds), *Women, Security, South Asia: A Clearing in the Thicket*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005, pp. 11–88; 'Research, Policy, Reality: Women, Security, South Asia', in *Sustainable Development: Bridging the Research/Policy Gaps in Southern Contexts.*

In the traditional view, the state is the primary referent of security, and security is about keeping states safe from threats — mainly external but also internal. However, the threshold of the home and the workplace and the realm of interpersonal interactions are firmly outside the purview of 'security'. In the last 20 years, scholars and practitioners have begun to prise open the sealed box of the private sphere to admit that the private or personal are also political and that perhaps there is some relationship between violence in the private and public spheres. The willingness to impose one's will through the use of force is the same whether it is interpersonal and takes place within a home or workplace or whether it takes place in a military context. However, the idea that gender violence is a security issue is still not mainstream unless the violence occurs in the public sphere of state institutions or during a conflict.

Gender violence is insecurity; the perpetrators are individuals and the victims are individuals but the context is social. Although data collection in this area is far from perfect, the statistics available still point unmistakably to acute insecurity.

(a) A commonly cited statistic of unknown provenance states that one in three women has experienced physical violence. Applied to the population of India, that means that out of 496,514,346 Indian women,[43] around 165,504,782 have experienced violence in some way. This is a larger number than the projected population of Australia: 22,444,581.[44]

Volume 2: Social Policy, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 80–97, 2005, http://www.swarnar.com/sdc03.pdf, accessed 15 September 2010; 'Conceptualizing Security, Securing Women', 'National Seminar on Challenges to Peace and Security in South Asia: Emerging Trends', Chennai: Department of Defence Studies, University of Madras, 19 February 2004, http://www.swarnar.com/securingwomen0204.pdf, accessed 15 September 2010.

[43] Census of India, India at a Glance: Population, http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/popu1.aspx, accessed 1 September 2010. These are 2001 census figures.

[44] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Population Clock, http://www.abs.gov.au/, accessed 1 September 2010.

(b) Amartya Sen wrote in 1992 about 37 million missing women.[45] By this time in 2010, we may safely and conservatively assume the number is closer to 45 million, especially because we are told that 3 million female foetuses are aborted every year in India. This is the rough equivalent of the population of countries like Ukraine and Colombia.[46]

(c) 56.5 per cent of Indian women between 20–49 years were married by the age of 18;[47] of these, 66.9 per cent experienced domestic violence.[48] The experience of violence by 67 per cent of any other population group would be an unacceptable state of affairs.

The first argument for regarding gender violence as a security issue is that the most basic component of insecurity is the threat of physical harm. As Kalpana Kannabiran writes:

> It is within the realm of the normal, the routine, that violence against women is deeply embedded, and it is because the greatest part of violence against women is the violence of normal times that it carries with it the guarantee of impunity irrespective of penal, punitive or constitutional safeguards.[49]

Writing about a strong correlation between female deficit and crime — not just crimes against women — Jean Drèze and Reetika Khera suggest that 'low female-male ratios and high murder rates are simply two manifestations of a patriarchal environment:

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[45] Amartya Sen, 'Missing Women—Revisited: Reduction in Female Mortality has been Counterbalanced by Sex Selective Abortions', *British Medical Journal*, 327, December 2003, pp. 1297–1298.

[46] Population—Country Comparison, Index Mundi, http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx, accessed 1 September 2010.

[47] UNICEF, 'Table 7: Child Marriage, Domestic Violence and Choice of Partner, Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice', 2005, p. 40, http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Early_Marriage_12.lo.pdf, accessed 1 September 2010.

[48] UNICEF, 'Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice', 2005, p. 22, http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Early_Marriage_12.lo.pdf, accessed 1 September 2010.

[49] Kalpana Kannabiran, 'Introduction', in Kalpana Kannabiran (ed.), *The Violence of Normal Times*, New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2005, p. 3.

patriarchal values and practices manifest themselves both in high levels of violence and in a strong preference for male children (leading, in turn, to low female-male ratios)'.[50]

Unbalanced sex ratios have disastrous long-term security consequences. Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea Den Boer's comparative historical research has showed that in periods when males far outnumber females in a society, levels of violence rise dramatically. Skewed sex ratios are their focus, but when they talk about passive and active killing of girl children, we could extend that to include lifelong negligence and vulnerability to violence.[51] We know already from demographic changes in the last two decades that violence against women rises as the number of women declines; low sex ratio states in India have seen forced polyandry, trafficking, sale and purchase of women, honour killings, and declining safety in public spaces. Hudson and Den Boer estimate that there will be around 30 million 'surplus men' (those for whom wives cannot be found because of the female deficit) each in India and China by 2020.[52] Young men, unable to afford a bride in a situation where women are scarce, unable to marry, having poor ritual and social status in societies structured around marriage and matrimonial kinship, are easily drawn to what in India is termed 'anti-social' activities. In our time, they could be easy prey for gangs and militant groups.

Research has shown that children who witness violence in the home accept it as normal; boys grow up to be violent[53] and girls grow up expecting violence.[54] When we overlay the impact of an imbalanced sex ratio on this research insight, it is evident

[50] Jean Drèze and Reetika Khera, 'Crime, Gender, and Society in India: Insights from Homicide Data', *Population and Development Review*, 26 (2), June 2000, pp. 345–46 http://www.jstor.org/stable/172520 accessed 16 November 2009.
[51] Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea Den Boer, 'A Surplus of Men, A Deficit of Peace', *International Security*, 26 (4), Spring 2002, p. 5.
[52] Ibid., p. 11.
[53] National Coalition against Domestic Violence, Factsheet on Domestic Violence, 2007, http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet%28National%29.pdf, accessed 2 September 2010.
[54] UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Domestic Violence against Women and Girls, Innocenti Digest No. 6, June 2000, p. 12, http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest6e.pdf, accessed 2 September 2010.

the deliberate killing of female infants and female foetuses is harbinger of a society desensitised to the pathology that is violence.

Gender violence has unmistakable consequences for the livelihood security of individuals. For women, across time and place, the threat of gender violence has been met with restrictions on the mobility of women and girls. Schooling stops with puberty, women are not allowed to leave the house to seek employment, and every night brings them curfew. Without access to education, those women who must earn their living are doomed to unskilled, low-paid, and usually informal labour. Those who cannot go out to earn their living are doomed to dependence on men, and greater vulnerability within the so-called safe haven that is the home. Economic independence does not guarantee immunity from violence; but economic dependence definitely increases vulnerability to it.

The discourse of 'protection' arises from the threat of violence, but this protective blanket can have a jagged inner lining. Protector turns predator; child sexual abuse, domestic violence, rape (including date rape, marital rape, and custodial rape), and elder abuse are violence perpetrated by someone the victim knows and trusts, often someone expected to protect them. The culture of protection is also the culture of silence. Depending economically and materially on the abuser who is regarded as protector by the community makes it impossible for those who are powerless to openly say they have been abused. The threat of gender violence becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

'Protection' of women comes to be equated with 'protection' of community, especially community honour. This, in turn, exposes individuals to two dangers. First, individuals, male or female, are killed in order to avenge perceived slights to the honour of a community. Contentiously labelled 'honour killings', practices in the name of honour go beyond execution to abduction, rape, public humiliation, and battery. The second danger is that of sexual violence in times of conflict, especially inter-communal conflict. By the logic that creates violent 'protection' practices for women's bodies because the honour of a community is identified with them, sexual violence becomes the weapon that cuts deepest when a community is to be dishonoured and disgraced. Like the 'violence of normal times', sexual violence in times of

communal conflict has also mostly gone unpunished — although it is good to note that it is no longer overlooked.[55]

Gender Violence, Development, and Modernity

One of the most common responses in a discussion of gender violence is that the education and economic empowerment of women will eliminate or at least dramatically reduce the threat of gender-based violence against them. Tragically, this is not true. NFHS 3 showed that the prevalence of domestic violence is not very different between couples in which the husband is better educated than the wife (36 per cent) and couples in which the wife is better educated (32 per cent).[56] The same research found that women who go out to work were more likely to have experienced violence (39–40 per cent) than those who did not go out to work (29 per cent).[57]

Male child preference is one of the most commonplace expressions of patriarchy. The reasons for male child preference are many.[58] Hindus, for instance, express the desire to have at least one son in terms of funeral rituals: 'I need someone to light my funeral pyre.' More common in academics are materialist explanations that typically have three aspects. The first is that sons fulfil the need for a particular kind of labour.[59] For instance, among communities with fighting traditions, sons were needed to defend the community's honour and properties. Similarly, agricultural communities have always seen sons as labour assets.

[55] For a stomach-churning account of gender violence, especially sexual violence, during the 2002 Gujarat riots, read Syeda S. Hameed, 'Sexual Abuse in Revenge: Women as Targets of Communal Hatred', in Kalpana Kannabiran (ed.), *The Violence of Normal Times*, New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2005, pp. 312–31.

[56] National Family Health Survey 3, 'Chapter 15: Domestic Violence', 2006, p. 512, http://www.nfhsindia.org/NFHS-3%20Data/VOL-1/Chapter%2015%20-%20Domestic%20Violence%20(468K).pdf, accessed 24 September 2010.

[57] Ibid., p. 499.

[58] For an overview of commonly cited explanations, see Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

[59] Madhu Gurung, 'Female Foeticide', 1999, pp. 13–14, http://www.cwds.ac.in/Library/.../elib/foeticide/fo_female_foeticide.pdf, accessed 25 September 2010.

The second aspect relates to inheritance and property rights.[60] Muslim women have always had the right to inherit familial property, but other Indian women have won that right through law only recently. Gifts or legacies to women are seen in the context of patrilineal families as alienating family property; daughters thus shrink the family estate, such as it might be.

The spread of the practice of giving and taking dowry constitutes the third aspect of the materialist analysis of male child preference. Indeed, the most common explanation for female infanticide and sex-selective abortion is that daughters are an economic drain and dowry is the most important factor for the spread of infanticide. Dowry is now demanded and given even in communities which gave bride price or followed other wedding traditions, and it is given on more occasions than the wedding; festivals and other life-cycle rituals are also opportunities for making dowry demands. In 2003, the All-India Democratic Women's Association published a report, 'Expanding Dimensions of Dowry', according to which dowry demands are not expanding to new communities and regions but across the lifespan of a marriage.[61]

> 'Look at her,' one of the young men interjected. 'If she has one more girl what will she do? Think of all the expenses. Think of the clothes she will have to buy, the jewellery she will have to make. Think of the coming of age ceremony she will have to perform, the *varadatchinai* and *seer varisai* she will have to give. Where do you think the money will come from? One girl is bad enough ...'[62]

[60] V. Geetha, *Patriarchy*, Calcutta: Stree, 2007, pp. 83–84; papers by Nirmala Banerjee, Padmini Swaminathan, and Karin Kapadia in Karin Kapadia, (ed.), *The Violence of Development: The Politics of Identity, Gender & Social Inequalities in India*, New Delhi: Kali for Women (2002)/Zubaan (2006), New Delhi.

[61] The AIDWA report is not available in the public domain on the Internet. See 'New Report Shows Rise in Dowry Cases in India's Progressive States', InfoChange India, 2 August 2003, http://infochangeindia.org/200309062894/Women/News/New-report-shows-rise-in-dowry-cases-in-India-s-progressive-states.html, accessed 26 September 2010; Jagori, 'Marching Together ... Resisting Dowry in India', July 2009, p. 3, http://www.jagori.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/dowry_infopack.pdf, accessed 26 September 2010.

[62] Gita Aravamudan, *Disappearing Daughters*, p. 10.

The value of a woman goes down every time the value of gold goes up...Who does this gold benefit?[63]

The policy-relevant questions here are what the nature of the modernisation process and development choices have been that facilitate or perpetuate these material conditions.

Studies of the Kallar community whose practice of female infanticide first brought to light the recent southward spread of this practice, relate this spread to the changed political economic circumstances in which the community finds itself.[64] Living in the arid zone, the Kallars have a history of working as mercenary soldiers and highway robbers. Early studies described the community as matrilineal, practising cross-cousin marriages and bride price. Women controlled the economic resources of the household and the community. In the 1950s–1960s, both dowry and bride price came to be practised,[65] and by the late 1980s, the transformation had taken root.

With the construction of Vaigai dam, the community's fortunes changed in the same ways that the Green Revolution changed Punjab. The gap between those positioned to benefit from the dam and those who were rendered landless grew, as the former diversified their activities and moved out of the area. Correspondingly, the status of women was diminished. Those who were displaced from their land ended up working as wage labour. Moreover, migration and upward mobility introduced new practices like dowry and ostentatious wedding ceremonies into the community. It has been held that there is 'a correlation between the rise of this practice [dowry] and women's loss of traditional rights in land, their displacement and discrimination in the labour market, the destruction of traditional handicrafts that employed women, and their marginalisation in the new economy'.[66] A strengthening of male child preference followed, and female infanticide became commonplace.

Feminist economists have documented how Indian women have fared in the decades of planned development. Nirmala Banerjee points out that they enter the wage-labour market with many disadvantages.[67] Literacy among Indian women is very low, notwithstanding nationwide literacy missions. This means they are not competitive in the better-paid sectors of the economy, and are confined to the low-paying, low-skill jobs. Second, Banerjee says that the reluctance to let unmarried girls enter the labour market means that most Indian women enter the labour force in their 20s. The pressure to get girls married early means that by the time they are in their 20s, most of these women are married and likely have children. Attendant responsibilities limit their hours of work and their mobility. Ironically, women's diminished livelihood prospects make marriage more important to their parents' planning of their future, even as the same prospects weaken their prospects in the marriage market.

Men too face challenges in this changed, mostly unstable, livelihood environment. Banerjee states bluntly: '... since marriage is the one career where men are in demand and in a position to dictate terms, they have started to use it to improve their lifetime income prospects by demanding a dowry'.[68] Marriage and dowry improve men's life chances, but diminish those of women and of families with many daughters. Gender differences are overlaid with class differences; women with access to education and women whose parents can afford a match with men who have stable livelihood prospects do considerably better than their counterparts who have neither. But the assumption that education and wage labour will emancipate women is misplaced, as Padmini Swaminathan shows.[69] They do not compensate for the structural disadvantages of caste and gender which, in fact, limit access to both and undermine their potential.

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[63] Ibid., p. 17.

[64] For a summary of several key studies see Vina Mazumdar, 'Amniocentesis and Sex Selection', Occasional Paper, Centre for Women's Development Studies, 1994, pp. 12–13, http://www.cwds.ac.in/OCPaper/Amniocentesis VM.pdf, accessed 26 September 2010.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid. Mazumdar is actually quoting a mimeographed study by V. Vasanthi Devi which could not be found in the public domain on the Internet.

[67] Nirmala Banerjee, 'Between the Devil and the Deep Sea: Shrinking Options for Women in Contemporary India', in Karin Kapadia (ed.), *The Violence of Development: The Politics of Identity, Gender & Social Inequalities in India*, New Delhi: Kali for Women (2002)/Zubaan (2006), pp. 52–54.

[68] Ibid., p. 57.

[69] Padmini Swaminathan, 'The Violence of Gender-Biased Development: Going Beyond Social and Demographic Indicators', in Karin Kapadia (ed.), *The Violence of Development: The Politics of Identity, Gender & Social Inequalities in India*, New Delhi: Kali for Women (2002)/Zubaan (2006), pp. 69–141.

Even if more women go out to work, it is not necessarily intrinsically a positive thing. Research among workers in the Madras Export Processing Zone suggested that the strain of work at home, getting to their workplace, working conditions (from harassment to lack of toilets to exposure to dust and chemicals), and the ever present threat of violence and humiliation in fact may mitigate the empowering impact of having an income. Moreover, women are hired for short periods, without a contract and not retained beyond that point. The way these enterprises function, not only are workers not able to mobilise and act collectively for better conditions, their existence is barely registered in the companies' books.[70]

The gendered impact of development as it has unfolded has largely elevated the status and expanded the opportunities of men and diminished the status of women and shrunk the universe that is open to women. Upward mobility for men has led to the imitation of customs like dowry and consumption practices that have traditionally contributed to women's vulnerabilities.[71] A very small number of privileged women benefit from development and economic growth, but they too benefit less than men in their class.

Devotion to the idea of modernity may actually be one reason why there have been concerted efforts to act against female infanticide while the campaign against sex-selective abortion has barely made a dent against the practice. Female infanticide is easily labelled as primitive, traditional, primeval, and anachronistic. The crude methods used to kill female infants underscore this portrayal. To document female infanticide has, in fact, been to contrast it with the standpoint and objective of 'civilisation', modernity, and development. Female foeticide, on the other hand, is the offspring of development and the advancement of diagnostic technology. The ability to access sex-selective conception and abortion and the accessibility of the technology even in India's rural hinterland are signs of prosperity and development even though their impact is anything but positive or progressive.

Both female infanticide and sex-selective abortion are gender violence and murder. The practice of female infanticide has been localised, and this is one reason why organised campaigning and action against it have been possible. Sex-selective abortion is admittedly harder to detect; but difficult is not impossible. The muted, somewhat scattered mobilisation against the latter may have to do more with the coding of the technology, the practitioner, and the conditions of access with 'modernity'. Machines, doctors (as opposed to village midwives), clinics (as opposed to home births and executions), and travelling clinics are appurtenances of 'modernity'. The lethal patriarchal preference for male children is at the root of killing of infants and abortion of foetuses, but it is not patriarchy that is offensive to state and society — it is the absence of 'modernity'. That is what one must conclude.

The well-intentioned 'costs-of-domestic-violence' approach seems to equate development with growth. The American Centre for Disease Control identifies two components to this cost — direct and indirect. Direct costs are actual healthcare, and judicial and social service costs incurred by society. Indirect costs include productivity losses from both paid and unpaid work and lost lifetime savings for women who succumb to violence.[72] The challenge is to take into account the social costs of gender violence. In fact, a World Bank paper on the subject concludes:

... there is a need for more studies on the economic costs of regionally-specific types of GBV such as female genital mutilation, dowry violence and incest, in order to position this issue as what it is: not only a woman's issue, a public health issue and a human

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[70] Padmini Swaminathan, 'The Trauma of "Wage Employment" and the "Burden of Work" for Women in India', in Kalpana Kannabiran (ed.), *The Violence of Normal Times*, New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2005, pp. 83–121.

[71] Karin Kapadia, 'Translocal Modernities and Transformations of Gender and Caste', in idem (ed.), *The Violence of Development: The Politics of Identity, Gender & Social Inequalities in India*, New Delhi: Kali for Women (2002)/ Zubaan (2006), pp. 142–82.

[72] Andrew R. Morrison and Maria Beatriz Orlando, 'The Costs and Impacts of Gender-based Violence in Developing Countries: Methodological Considerations and New Evidence', Working Paper 36151, World Bank, November 2004, p. 7, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/ costsandimpactsofgbv.pdf, accessed 25 September 2010.

rights issue, but also as an issue affecting poverty, development and economic growth.[73]

The 'costs-of-domestic-violence' approach may be characterised as being to the development discourse as securitisation is to the security discourse — a way of framing the issue so that it becomes a policy priority.

Gender Violence and Democratic Governance

The word 'governance' gained currency in the 1980s and 1990s, mainly in development, technocratic, donor, and policy discourse. Its usage was promoted, among other things, by the guidelines and grant-making priorities of international donor organisations which supported 'governance'-related projects around the world.[74] Governance is the work of government — making and implementing policy and creating conditions for constitutional and policy objectives to be reached. Governance refers both to the state as it carries out its mandate in response to the changing world around it and to a 'conceptual or theoretical representation of co-ordination of social systems, and for the most part, the role of the state in that process'.[75]

Good governance consisted in efficiency and efficacy, or being able to plan and deliver as promised. While a World Bank study defined good governance in terms of 'sound development management',[76] the UNDP understanding of governance was

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[73] Ibid.

[74] For instance, the Ford Foundation funded an important multi-country project in South Asia called 'Problems of Governance in South Asia' in the late 1980s–early 1990s. The studies were undertaken by country scholars and reflected their individual disciplinary and political concerns rather than using a single framework.

[75] Jon Pierre, 'Understanding Governance', in Jon Pierre (ed.), *Debating Governance*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 3, http://books.google.co.in/, accessed 3 April 2010.

[76] World Bank, *Governance and Development*, 1992, page 1, http://books.google.co.in/books?id = he3-MVQqsqwC&printsec = frontcover&dq = World + Bank + (1992) + Governance + and + Development.&source = bl&ots = rUCYGRwj vc&sig = 69AX0VGnryck-TU7vArkU7VpRbE&hl = en&ei = bVqxTLPFLcXJcY SumYYH&sa = X&oi = book_result&ct = result&resnum = 8&ved = 0CC0Q6A EwBw#v = onepage&q = World%20Bank%20(1992)%20Governance%20and %20Development.&f = false accessed 10 October 2010.

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mediated by the concept of human development that was first articulated and applied in its annual reports. An oft quoted UNDP paper identifies state, private sector and civil society as three domains of governance, which it defines thus: '... the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and mediate their differences'.[77]

From 'good governance', the emphasis has now shifted to 'democratic governance', whose twin emphases are identified as participation and accountability.[78] What is democratic governance? The idea of democratic governance is a hybrid of rule of law and rationality, inclusivity and efficacy, responsiveness and efficiency. The 2002 UNDP Human Development Report identified nine normative elements of democratic governance:

> People's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, allowing them to live with dignity.

- People have a say in decisions that affect their lives.
- People can hold decision-makers accountable.

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[77] United Nations Development Programme, 'Preface', *Reconceptualising Governance,* Discussion Paper 2, New York: Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, January 1997, p. x, http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/!UN98-21.PDF/!RECONCE. PTU/!front.pdf accessed 10 October 2010.

[78] UNDP, 'A Guide to UNDP Democratic Governance Practice', p. 16, http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/download/publication/?version = live&id = 2551865, accessed 10 October 2010. On pp. 14–15, the guide offers the following definitions: '... governance is defined as comprising the mechanisms, processes and institutions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are made on issues of public concern, and how citizens articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences ...' (And democratic governance ...) 'requires efficient institutions and an economic and political environment that renders public services effective and makes economic growth possible; at the same time, DG for human development must be concerned with whether institutions and rules are fair and accountable, whether they protect human rights and political freedoms, and whether all people have a say in how they operate.'

- Inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices govern social interactions.
- Women are equal partners with men in private and public spheres of life and decision-making.
- People are free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, gender or any other attribute.
- The needs of future generations are reflected in current policies.
- Economic and social policies are responsive to people's needs and aspirations.
- Economic and social policies aim at eradicating poverty and expanding the choices that all people have in their lives.[79]

Constitutive elements of the *process* of democratic governance as well: participatory decision making; accountability; inclusivity; fair play; gender equality; non-discrimination; sustainability; and responsiveness. While the onus of democratic governance primarily rests with the state apparatus, democratic governance by definition depends on the participation of society at large.[80]

The third Millennium Development Goal is 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', and it offers the point of entry

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[79] UNDP, 'Human Development Report: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World', 2002, p. 51, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2002_EN_Complete.pdf, accessed 4 April 2010.
[80] The influence of Amartya Sen's definition of development in terms of freedom, where freedom is both means and ends, is clear in the UNDP view, which in turn has been extremely influential. But the legacy of the 1960s thinking about political development is also there in the idea that democratic institutions must be strengthened 'so that they keep pace with the changing distribution of economic and political power' (UNDP, Human Development Report: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World', p. 61). Samuel P. Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), for instance, argued that it was the lag between economic development and subsequent political mobilisation around rising expectations on the one hand and institutional capacity to absorb and respond to this mobilisation and these expectations that led to what for him was the worst outcome: political instability. In fact, two key lessons identified by recent research on democratic governance in Latin America is that 'effective states' and 'institutionalized party systems' make a positive difference to the ability to consolidate democratic governance (Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, 'Latin America: Eight Lessons for Governance', *Journal of Democracy*, 19 (3), July 2008, pp. 116–20.

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for engendering development and governance.[81] Much of the work relating gender to governance is focused on the issue of participation: how much women participate in the democratic process, how responsive governance is to women's needs, and what the barriers are to participation as full citizens.[82] This reflects an assumption that the greater inclusion of women in politics and policy making is not just an intrinsic good but also instrumental one; more women will make for more gender-sensitive policy. Seema Kazi writes:

> If *democratic* governance is to be realised in *practice*, it should combine institutional accountability and transparency with the incorporation of policy measures that address the empirical fact of gender inequality. Gender equality is an integral aspect of struggles for social justice. States' record of governance must accordingly be assessed in terms of advancing *in practice* the inter-related goals of social justice and gender equality.[83] (Emphasis in original)

Any consideration of democratic governance that focuses on participation and justice but not on the pervasive reality of gender violence is incomplete. Gender violence puts a ceiling on full citizenship and enjoyment of inalienable human rights. The experience of gender violence transcends the threshold that stands between women's full engagement with the public sphere on the one hand and the public sphere's engagement with the politics of the home and relationships. The threat of gender violence stops women, in particular, from being active in the public sphere.

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[81] Noeleen Heyzer, 'Globalization and Democratic Governance: A Gender Perspective', background paper for '4th Global Forum on Reinventing Government', 2002, unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan006228.pdf, accessed 10 October 2010.
[82] See, for instance, Yasmin Tambiah (ed.), *Women & Governance in South Asia: Re-imagining the State*, Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2002. Also, IDRC, 'Democratic Governance, Women's Rights and Gender Equality: Synthesis Report', 2010, draws on eight commissioned papers to focus on inclusivity and participation.
[83] Seema Kazi, 'Democratic Governance and Women's Rights in South Asia', IDRC, 2010, p. 10.

The reach of state and society stop short of the threshold of the home, declaring violence within the home beyond the jurisdiction of the state and the interventions of society. Martha Nussbaum points out that where the attempt to gain and press advantage is considered 'dangerous and inappropriate' in the public sphere, the head of the household is granted privilege and authority that is unavailable to other members.[84] She points out that while law in fact dictates and regulates private matters — from age of marriage to sexuality to adoption — it also perpetuates the 'public–private' distinction in other ways, such as recognising rape outside the home as sexual violence but often treating marital rape as beyond its jurisdiction.[85]

If gender equality is a defining concern of democratic governance, then a gender audit of governance practices must prioritise responses to the prevalence of violence — against women, men, girls, boys, and sexual/sexuality minorities. To what extent does 'gender violence' figure in the actual programmes and projects of a government? And if we extend the domains of governance to include civil society and the private sector, then to what extent does it figure in the collective conscience of a society?

The modern history of the state–society interface in India may actually be said to begin with the colonial state's attempt to legally abolish sati and child marriage.[86] Independent India built the idea of gender justice into its constitution in the form of Article 15 which prohibits discrimination on many grounds, including sex. Post-independence India has tried to legislate away many iniquitous practices from dowry to rape.[87] A controversial

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[84] Martha Nussbaum, 'Gender and Governance: An Introduction', in Martha Nussbaum, Amrita Basu, Yasmin Tambiah, and Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Essays on Gender and Governance*, Human Development Resource Centre UNDP, 2003, p. 6.

[85] Ibid., pp. 8–10.

[86] The abolition of sati, 1829; the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (also known as the Sarda Act).

[87] Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Dowry Prohibition (Maintenance of Lists of Presents to the Bride and Bridegroom) Rules, 1985; Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994; Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Rules, 1996; Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Work Place Bill, 2007.

attempt to reform through codification the secular practices of the Hindu community was made in the early years after independence. This culminated in the passage of four bills: the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Hindu Succession Act, 1956; Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956; and Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956.

The reform by law of Hindu practices reflects the contrary impulses of liberalism in general — on the one hand, there is a commitment to reform whether the motivation is modernity or human rights or justice; on the other hand, there is a hesitation to intervene in the practices of the 'other' born of cultural relativism. Reform is most contentious — we might even say only — when it involves women, their bodies, family relationships, and the household. This means that of all the areas in which a state might intervene, these are the most difficult — red herrings, even, distracting attention from the problem this is an attempt to address. In 2005, when Imrana was raped by her father-in-law, many aspects of her case became controversial — who would see that she got justice, what the basis of that justice would be, and the response of the larger community.[88] Imrana's gender, communal and, arguably, class identity undermined her right to justice in the first instance.

The other problem is that laws need enforcement. While the community might agree in principle that gender violence, especially sexual violence, is undesirable, this agreement is based on two assumptions: that violence happens to others and that which one experiences (as perpetrator or victim) is not violence. The reach of the state stops here; the best-intentioned police personnel, lawyers, or social workers cannot act unless victims identify abuse as violence and unjustified. This is where the other domain of governance becomes important — civil society.

Furthermore, those who are tasked with law enforcement often share the very values that make violence seem acceptable to its perpetrators and victims. The inclination to counsel patience, 'adjustment', and conciliation follow from these values, where

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Links to the text of many of these laws can be accessed at http://wcd.nic. in/wcdact.htm, accessed 15 September 2010.

[88] For more information on this case, see 'Chaitanya Guide 3: Imrana's Gauntlet', August 2005, http://www.chaitanyaconsult.in/chaitanya/guide/ cg3gauntlet.htm, accessed 15 September 2010.

the victim of violence is also given some responsibility for their condition. In Imrana's case and countless other cases, it is a value system that suggests the victim marry the rapist as compensation for having suffered violence. The loss of chastity and honour and destroyed matrimonial prospects are more important than the victim's trauma after violence. Similarly, domestic violence victims are counselled to think of the family.

Moreover, because the line between victim and offender, immediate perpetrator and structural injustice is murky in instances of gender violence like female infanticide, it is hard to identify a course of action that will yield the immediate return of saving lives as well as the long-term consequence of social justice without miscarriage of justice, as well as meet the standards of transparency and accountability that democracy requires. Arrests made on charges of female infanticide ended up victimising the person with the least decision-making autonomy — usually, the mother of the dead infant. Whether it is the CBS or GCPS or the workings of the law-and-order system, the way it works ends up discriminating against the most defenceless.

In India, violence has been an important issue for the women's movement from the 1980s onwards. Unjust decisions in rape cases, spiralling reports of dowry-related deaths, and the use of diagnostic techniques for sex-selective abortions were rallying points for women across the political spectrum. Faith in the foundations of the political system lent a legalistic orientation to the demands made by women's organisations for new laws and prohibitions. Less attention has generally been paid to creating support systems for survivors and to raising social consciousness against the underlying causes of gender violence.

The Tamil Nadu campaign against female infanticide holds interesting insights into the relationship between gender violence and democratic governance. First of all, it is clear that on the part of the state, notwithstanding a sympathetic statutory and ideological climate, swift, creative action depended on the initiative of individual administrators. Second, when the state did introduce measures it imagined were remedial, there seems to have been no anticipation of consequences. The implicit endorsement of male child preference in the CBS illustrates this.

In fact, the various interventions that made up the campaign against female infanticide did not necessarily reflect the ideal of

gender equality. The DANIDA, ICCW, and MSSW interventions tried to create an attitudinal shift, but the CBS and the GCPS inadvertently reinforced male child preference. There is no public education programme that addresses discrimination or prejudice. There does not seem to have been any official evaluation of the scheme either. From this, it is tempting to speculate that the motivation for the introduction of such schemes arose from impulses closer to populism or a wish to be seen doing the right thing, than a profound commitment to gender justice.

The government has also been unresponsive to the changing nature of the problem: that infanticide is being replaced by foeticide as the 'weapon' of choice. All of these interventions have barely made a dent in the patriarchal preference for male children. With a battery of laws in place, there are still few arrests or prosecutions and virtually no reliable data.

The role that civil society has played has been more consistent, if less effective. Organisations and individuals who first got involved with the campaign against infanticide have remained engaged with this issue for the most part. Their effectiveness is limited though without the infrastructural power of the state. Apart from the CASSA, most civil society programmes were most active during the 1990s when concerned district administrations were looking for entry points for lasting change.

The DANIDA, ICCW, and MSSW interventions were designed to engage members of the community in a conversation about their lives. They did not directly take on the practice but placed it in a broader context of outreach to the community. Their work had a ripple effect, engaging more and more people. It was also inclusive, and to be fair, so is the GCPS — it has two fairly generic requirements. However, it is a fact that the CBS and GCPS were not the product of a consultative process, nor were consultations held to consider their effectiveness before extending them. Lack of resources, lack of commitment, and lack of imagination have variously limited the ability to follow up, to follow through, and to sustain any of these efforts beyond a point. The DANIDA and MSSW projects were well-documented but seem to be short-lived. The CBS was created without an adequate budget for special child-care providers.

The governance gap also manifests as a data gap. Indeed, documentation and data collection are in general low priorities, locking

programming into decision-making based on anecdotal evidence or popular pressure in the moment. The VES plugged this gap briefly but seems to have become infrequent, and it is possible it has even been abandoned. NGOs do not have the funding, but the state government could have sustained the district-level VES. The quality of data collection is a reflection of the effectiveness of monitoring and documentation in a given situation. Almost a quarter century after the first *India Today* story broke, the fact that documentation on female infanticide is still limited might point to apathy, callousness, or both underlying the rhetoric on saving the girl child.

The government could also have made it mandatory both to keep records about babies abandoned in the receiving centres, as well as to keep track of adoptions. Right now, thousands of girl children have more or less disappeared without a trace into the abyss of an uncaring system. Without trained and committed staff or any record keeping, there is no question of accountability. Parents have had a change of heart or wanted to ask about their children, but where is the information to give them?

Looking at democratic governance through the lens of gender violence, especially female infanticide, points to under-researched questions: Why has a rationalist, ostensibly progressive political elite not backed the campaign against infanticide and sex-selective abortion more firmly, consistently, and thoughtfully? In other words, does patriarchy trump other ideological concerns? Why have civil society organisations not networked even more effectively over a 25-year period, and why have existing networks not made a stronger impact? What would a gender violence audit, qualitative and quantitative, suggest about the gender sensitivity of governance mechanisms in Tamil Nadu?

Human Security + Human Development + Human Rights = Democratic Governance?

The discursive journeys in recent decades around 'security,' 'development', and 'democracy' have each culminated in a variation of that concept and an operationalisation of that value that places human beings at the centre of attention. The shift displaces the state but only enough to accommodate a wider variety of actors, and introduces a greater plurality of aspirations, resources, and strategies. The intersecting interface between

human security, human development, and human rights opens up new, yet very old, intellectual agendas, and the laws, agents, and actions of states offer up texts for our consideration. A brief review of definitions is a useful point of departure for the analytical discussion to follow.

A summary definition of human security states that it is 'the idea that the individual is at the receiving end of all security concerns, whereby security is understood as freedom from want and/or freedom from fear'.[89] 'To protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment' is how the Commission on Human Security defines it, adding detail that embraces virtually every aspect of life: 'protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations'; 'using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations'; 'creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity'.[90] Should there be any doubt on our part, the Commission states: 'Human security thus brings together the human elements of security, of rights, of development.'[91]

Anticipating this as early as 1994, the UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) cautioned against conflating human security with human development. Human development, it stated, was a broader concept, 'a process of widening the range of people's choices', while human security meant that 'people can exercise these choices safely and freely, and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow'.[92]

If human development was going to widen people's choices, as we were told in successive HDRs, starting from 1990, then

[89] Rita Floyd, 'Human Security and the Copenhagen School's Securitization Approach: Conceptualizing Human Security as a Securitizing Move', *Human Security Journal*, 5, Winter 2007, p. 40.
[90] Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, 2003, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/English/chapter1.pdf, accessed 3 January 2010, p. 4.
[91] Ibid.
[92] UNDP, 'Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security', 1994, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1994_en_chap2.pdf, p. 23, accessed 10 February 2010.

the right to health and longevity, the right to education, and the right to a 'decent standard of living' were the three most essential areas for those choices.[93] As income is not the sole focus of people's lives, the first HDR argues, nor should it be that of development. Higher incomes do not lead automatically to the betterment of people's lives, and development should focus on making that connection stronger. The report acknowledges that 'political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect' are also desirable choices, taking us into political territory.

Though the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) list of more or less traditional socio-economic goals, there is a clear correlation between each of the MDG and human rights standards.[94] Achievement of the MDGs enables the enjoyment of human rights. Human rights guarantees also facilitate the achievement of the MDGs.

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is 'universal' in its vision and in speaking to all UN member states, human rights violations continue to occur at the hands of state agents, non-state political actors, corporates, communities, families, and individuals. We have internalised the language of rights but hardly the behaviour. To states goes the major responsibility of guaranteeing human rights and protecting citizens from human rights violations. States are often the most egregious violators of citizens' rights, although far from being the only ones. Moreover, as we have seen, human rights guarantees extend well beyond political rights to economic, social, and cultural rights. The scope of this mandate is almost coterminous with the whole of the state's working agenda.

What is the 'human-rights approach'? A 2003 consultation of UN agencies arrived at three features of a human rights-based approach to programming.[95] First, all programmes should further

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[93] UNDP, 'Human Development Report', 'Defining and Measuring Human Development', 1990, p. 10. http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1990_en_chap1.pdf, accessed 10 February 2010.

[94] Oslo Governance Centre, UNDP, 'Human Rights and the MDGs: Making the Link', 2007,hurilink.org/Primer-HR-MDGs.pdf, accessed 3 April 2010, p. 11.

[95] United Nations Population Fund, The Human Rights-Based Approach http://www.unfpa.org/rights/approaches.htm, accessed 10 February 2010; United Nations, The Human Rights-Based Approach to Development

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the UDHR. Second, human rights standards and principle should guide and inform all sectors and stages of programming and all development cooperation. These principles include: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; accountability and rule of law. Finally, 'Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of "duty-bearers" to meet their obligations and/or of "rightsholders" to claim their rights.'[96] In formulating this agreement, the UN system was following rather than leading global civil society organisations (and many academics), many of whom had long advocated human rights approaches to political and socioeconomic problems.

So, 'Human Security + Human Development + Human rights = Democratic Governance'?

Atul Kohli, writing on the crisis of governance in India, states that '... a democratic developing country is well-governed if its government can simultaneously sustain legitimacy, promote socio-economic development, and maintain order without coercion'.[97] This foreshadows the idea of 'human security', which is generally attributed to the authors of the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report. '... not just security of their nations', '... not just security of territory', and '... not in the weapons of our country', wrote Mahbub Ul-Haq in 1994 of a new concept of human security whose referent would be 'people'.[98] The UNDP Report stated,

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Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding among the UN Agencies, 05/02/1969 http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/hrbap/HR_common_understanding.doc, accessed 17 August 2011.

[96] http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/hrbap/HR_common understanding.doc.

[97] Atul Kohli, 'Political Change in a Democratic Developing Country', in Niraja Gopal Jayal (ed.), *Democracy in India*, New Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks, 2001, p. 129.

[98] Mahbub ul Haq, 'New Imperatives of Human Security', RGICS Paper No. 17, New Delhi: Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS), Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, 1994, p. 1, cited in Kanti Bajpai, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, Kroc Institute Occasional Paper #19:OP:1, August 2000, p. 11.

In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons — it is a concern with human life and dignity.[99]

Freedom from fear and freedom from want — phrases that entered this discourse from the despatch of the US representative at the San Francisco Conference — were identified as the two major components of human security.[100] The big distinction made both by the UNDP and by Canadian and Norwegian officials who took up the concept was that human security put people at the centre. Much of the early effort was to list all the threats that could be classified as 'human security' and they included drugs, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, and state repression.[101] The new idea of security thus extends to embrace many issues that were hitherto classified as 'development' or 'politics'. Democratic governance would seem to refer to the authoritative structures that enable human security.

The Security–Development–Democratic Governance Interface: Lessons Learnt

Gender violence is physical insecurity. Even where violence takes the form of verbal/psychological abuse or economic exploitation, the loss of human dignity is tantamount to physical harm. It has a complex relationship with material conditions. Power is at its root and economic difference is an important element of power; workplace sexual harassment exemplifies this but where dowry is seen as a substitute for inheritance, it is again the relationship between economics and power that is at play. Some kinds of gender violence become more common with economic growth

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[99] UNDP, 'New Dimensions of Human Security', Human Development Report 1994, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1994_en_chap2.pdf, p. 22, accessed 10 February 2010.
[100] Ibid., p. 24.
[101] Kanti Bajpai's paper records all the various lists that were generated as a prelude to suggesting a way to conduct a human security audit.

and expansion of resources, income, and access to technology. The misuse of diagnostic technologies to opt for sex selection, for instance, has become more common as family incomes have risen; people prefer to leave cruder ways behind. The epidemic scale of gender violence also results in a loss of productivity across the economy, expenditure on medical treatment and, finally, loss of livelihood for victims. Gender violence concerns both state and society, but the state is limited by convention to responding to things that happen in public spaces and hard-pressed to actually intervene even when laws address private space and relationship violence. Civil society has no enforcement capability and is too resource-strapped to make its support available in a consistent way. Thus through this one lens, we gain insights on the ways in which security, development, and democratic governance are mutually intertwined.

Absolute positions are heard in debates on security, development, and democratic governance. Gender violence shows them to be impossible, and nothing illustrates this better than the challenge of punishing the perpetrators of female infanticide. The problem is security. The motivation is said to be dowry, expectation of which has come with development. It falls to the government to enforce the law and provide justice to the killed infant. But who should it arrest and prosecute: the mother, who cannot independently choose to use contraceptives, but stifles her daughter's birth; the family, whose values reflect those of society, but will prevail upon a mother to give up her daughter; society, as in neighbours, relatives, and the larger community, including people in law enforcement and public healthcare, who say: 'One more girl? How unfortunate!'? To not arrest the perpetrator would be a travesty of democratic governance, but to arrest a mother or a midwife could be a travesty of justice, if justice cannot take cognisance of their circumstances.

There is a symbiotic, if non-linear, relationship between security, development, and democratic governance. Insecurity is caused by the absence of change, the process of change, and also the consequences of change. Development is intended to remove some sources of insecurity and provide a better life for individuals and groups. It is the work of governance to promote development and create security. Development debates create

their own challenges for governance which become security challenges. What is happening with the allocation of land for special economic zones everywhere illustrates this. The zones create jobs for a large number of people but they also displace farmers who must seek alternative livelihoods. The battle over Nandigram was one instance of this conflict; likewise, the construction of large irrigation projects. Governance failure is, therefore, development failure and a source of insecurity. By appending 'democratic' to governance, we add the expectation that the state will be responsive to emerging needs and demands. With each new shift in the socio-economic environment, new challenges and new sources of insecurity are born, and government agencies must read anew, interpret afresh, and review their responses and plans. There is nothing static about the security, development, and democratic governance interface, either conceptually or in practice.

This is amply illustrated by our case. Female infanticide existed in small pockets even a couple of hundred years ago. However, modernisation facilitated the spread of the practice in many ways — the loss of livelihood, the introduction of dowry, the reduced status of women. The right to life of baby girls was endangered even as sections of society were beginning to enjoy a more comfortable life. That governance was blind to the spread of this practice and did not notice the changes recorded in child sex ratio were signs of failure. But the state administration's willingness to act, in creative and collaborative ways, would mitigate its failure except for the fact that its commitment had not been sustained and that its policies and programmes had a hasty, populist, half-baked quality to them. It would seem that the GCPS and CBS were both introduced in a hurry and that the government has not felt the need to review and reform them. The absence of records underscores this impression, as does the superficiality of the government effort. The result is that civil society–state interventions against female infanticide have not had the impact they could have had.

At the end of this meandering exploration, we can say three things for certain. First, security, development, and democratic governance are indivisibly interlinked today, both by the ways

in which we conceptualise them and the ways in which we experience them. Second, the agenda of democratic governance — engaging state and civil society — is security and sustainable development. Finally, both state and civil society are important for this agenda — creating security and insecurity, creating a better life for everyone. When the state acts alone, its impact is superficial and not sustained. When civil society groups act alone, their impact goes this far and no further; they cannot enforce change.