



(PHOTO: REUTERS)

Bodies of more than 300 newborn girls have been found in Pakistan's most populous city, Karachi, over the last year, as families prefer boys over girls, according to a report.

Between January 2017 and April 2018, nonprofit groups Edhi Foundation and Chhipa Welfare Association have found 345 bodies of new born babies in garbage dumps in Karachi alone, and 99 percent of them were girls, according to [The News International](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/309162-karachi-becoming-a-killing-field-for-newborn-girls) (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/309162-karachi-becoming-a-killing-field-for-newborn-girls>).

In many South Asian countries, including Pakistan and India, families do not want girls to be born. Girls are culturally seen as "someone else's property," as traditionally a woman leaves her home and moves into her husband's home after marriage. The bride's parents also have to pay a huge sum of money as "dowry" to the groom's family to look after their daughter.

Anwar Kazmi, a senior manager at Edhi Foundation, told the newspaper that a baby was found at the doorstep of a mosque, and people handed her over to a cleric, who ordered that the girl be stoned to death because it was "an illegitimate baby."

"I tried to register a case against the cleric but nothing happened," Kazmi complained.

In another case, the body of a newborn baby was found with her throat slit with a sharp knife.

"We have been dealing with such cases for years and there are a few such incidents which shook our souls as much. It left us wondering whether our society is heading back to the primitive age," Kazmi added.

"We give them a proper burial and perform other rituals for these babies. After completing the hospital and police formalities, we bury them in our own graveyard," Shahid Mehmood, a spokesperson for Chhipa, was quoted as saying.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the number of men in the country in 2007 stood at 106 million while the number of women was 101 million. Globally, the number of men is only negligibly higher than that of women.

Edhi has kept numerous cradles in front of its offices across the country so that families can drop off unwanted newborns.

Many families illegally get an abortion after determining the sex of the unborn child.

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