**Infanticide** means the unlawful Killing of a **child** under the age of one year.

**Foeticide** is the killing of the foetus at any time prior to birth.

**Filicide** is the killing of a child by its parents.

**Neonaticide** is the deliberate killing of a child within 4 weeks of its birth.

**INFANTICIDE**

* **Infanticide** means the unlawful Killing of a **child** under the age of one year.
* It is equivalent to a murder and is tried under Section 302 of the I.P.C. and is punishable.
* When the infant is killed by its mother while suffering from disease of the mind (psychotic disturbance or depression) due to the effect of stress, associated with her pregnancy, delivery, puerperium or lactation. In such cases, the mother may not be held wholly responsible for killing the infant.

Causes:

* Infanticide is rare and usually committed by a young unmarried woman or widow.
* Female child
* Due to Economic condition
* unwanted children, such as those conceived after rape,
* deformed children born to impoverished families

**Causes of Death –**

The death of the child may occur in three causes natural, accidental or criminal.

**Natural cause**- prematurely born child, Malformations, the disease of the placenta, etc  
  
**Accidental cause** - Birth itself a traumatic event for the child. It includes fracture, Injuries A baby can be injured if during pregnancy the mother falls, dislocation of limb bones, skull fracture, tears of the venous sinus; it resulted in subdural haemorrhage, rupture of the liver. A child will die because of an accident during birth or after birth.

**Criminal cause**- Suffocation, strangulation, drowning, poisoining, etc.

Infanticide is quite common in India especially with the girl child.

* Due to social pressure and customs, the child is done away with within minutes to hours after birth.
* When the body of the child is detected, it is brought for post-mortem examination to the doctor. In such cases, investigating officer may raise following queries:

1. Was the child stillborn or dead born?

2. Was the child born alive?

3. If born alive, how long did the child survive?

4. What was the cause of death?

**STILLBIRTH:**

A stillborn child is one, which is born after 28 week of pregnancy, and which did not breathe or show any other signs of life, at any time after being completely born. **The child was alive in uterus, but dies during the process of birth.**

Common causes of stillbirth are: prematurity, anoxia of various types, birth trauma especially intracranial haemorrhage due to excessive moulding. placental abnormalities, erythroblastosis foetalis etc.

**DEADBIRTH:**

A **dead born child is the one who has already died in the uterus long ago** and may show following features due to putrefaction already begun in utero:

Sign -

(1) Rigor mortis at delivery.

(2) **Maceration** - **is a process of aseptic autolysis**. It is a sterile process in utero as the air has not reached inside the uterus. Due to maceration, the body of the foetus becomes soft, flaccid and a peculiar sweetish disagreeable smell is present. The characteristic features are seen in cranial cavity where cranial bones are separated and may overlap each other. This feature can be seen by radiological examination and is diagnostic. The brain tissue is converted into a mass. The viscera inside the body starts losing their shape and may reduce into a pulpy mass. On histological examination, evidence of phagocytosis may be seen. If air enters into liquor amnii due to rupture of membranes, the foetus goes into putrefaction rather than maceration.

(3).Mummification: This is sometimes seen in conditions where the foetus dries due to deficient supply of blood from uterine vessels and liquor amnii is dried up. Air has not entered the uterus in such cases.

**Live birth:**

It means that the child showed signs of life when only part of the child was out of mother, though the child may not have breathed or completely born. The causing of death of such a child is regarded as homicide.

**SIGNS OF LIVEBIRTH**

* In civil cases, any sign of life after complete birth of the child is accepted as proof of livebirth, e.g., hearing a cry, seeing movement of the body or limbs, muscle contractions, etc.
* The muscles may twitch for some time after death, and therefore it is not safe to assume that twitching of muscles indicate life.
* A child may cry either in the uterus or in the vagina, which may be heard by bystanders or even outside the room of delivery.
* This occurs only when the membranes have ruptured and air has entered the uterus.
* The law presumes that every newborn child found dead was born dead until the contrary is proved. In criminal cases, signs of livebirth have to be demonstrated by postmortem examination of the child.
* The following points-

1. **Shape of Chest**: The chest becomes arched or drum-shaped after respiration has started, before which, it is flat.
2. **Diaphragm:** While conducting post mortem to establish live birth, it is advisable to open abdomen first, so as to notice the position of diaphragm. It is found at the level of fourth or fifth rib if respiration has not taken place and its arch is concave. But once respiration has taken place, the arch becomes flattened and comes at the level of the sixth or seventh rib.
3. **Lungs:**

(a) **Volume:** Lungs are quite small with sharp margin before respiration is established. But once it is established, they grow in size and fill the chest and attain round margins.

(b) **Consistency:** Before respiration the lungs are firm, dense and liver-like and are non-crepitant. Once respiration is established, they become crepitant and spongy.

**(c) Colour:** Lungs are reddish-brown before respiration. If a cut section is made, it exudes frothless blood. But becomes rosy red in colour once respiration in established. On cut section, blood with froth comes out as alveoli are now filled with air.

**(d) Weight:** The lungs become double in weight after respiration due to air.

**Foeticide**

**Foeticide** is the killing of the foetus at any time prior to birth.

Causes

* The low status of women in society.
* Preference for a male child.
* Social and cultural practices like dowry.
* Misuse of diagnostic techniques.
* Intentional killing of a female foetus.





