

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2993

ANSWERED ON:19.08.2011

FEMALE INFANTICIDE

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Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether this Ministry has received the report from Thompson Reuters Foundation regarding female infanticide in the country; and
(b) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT(SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a) to (b): No Madam. No such report has been received by the Government of India.

However, it is understood from press reports that, a global perceptions survey based on a sample of 213 gender experts across five continents, has been conducted by Trust Law, the legal news service of Thomson Reuters Foundation. As per this report, India has been referred to as the fourth most dangerous country of the world for women, female infanticide and human trafficking are cited as the major reasons. The Government of India is not aware of the content and methodology adopted and can, therefore, not comment on the credibility of the conclusions it has drawn.

Infanticide and foeticide are punishable offences under the Indian Penal Code. To curb female foeticide and infanticide, Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy which includes legislative measures, advocacy, awareness generation and programmes for socio-economic empowerment of women. Legislative measures comprise of the implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994, under which sex selective abortions are punishable. For advocacy and awareness generation and to create national awareness on issues relating to girl child, in 2009, Ministry of Women and Child Development has declared January 24 as the National Girl Child Day. Further, to encourage change of mind sets, Government of India has introduced on pilot basis, 'Dhanalakshmi', a scheme for incentivising birth of the Girl Child. A number of States are also implementing their own schemes to incentivise the birth of a girl child and encourage families to place a premium on her education and development through Conditional Cash Transfer schemes.

Besides, the Government of India has undertaken a number of initiatives for socio-economic empowerment of women, such as Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihood Mission(NRLM) and loans through the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh.

However, along with effective implementation of existing policies and legislations and measures adopted for empowerment of women, there is need for change of traditional and patriarchal mindsets. It is a gradual process in itself and requires continuous and sustained efforts by both Government and civil society organisations.