

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2369

ANSWERED ON:23.08.2013

FEMALE FOETICIDE .

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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has seen a recent report in an international medical journal, which states that a large number of rich and educated Indian women /families go for selective abortion of the second girl child, if their first born too was girl;

(b) if so, the details of the report and the reaction of the Government in this regard;

(c) the number of cases of female foeticide reported in the country during each of the last three years and current year along with the action taken against people found guilty in such cases, States/UTs-wise; and

(d) the concrete steps taken/being taken by the Government to check female foeticide including inculcating awareness amongst the people against the female foeticide?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

(a) & (b): A report pertaining to the prevalence of sex selective abortions in rich and educated Indian families was published in 'The Lancet', a medical journal, on 4th June, 2011. According to the report which is based on review of data of three rounds of the nationally representative surveys (National Family Health Survey – 1, 2&3) carried out during the years 1990 to 2005, it was found that the conditional sex ratio for second-order births when the firstborn was a girl child, fell from 906 per 1000 boys in 1990 to 836 in 2005. However, as stated in the report, decline was much greater in the case of mothers with 10 or more years of education than in mothers with no education, and in wealthier households compared with poorer households but there was no significant decline in the sex ratio for second-order births if the firstborn was a boy child, or for firstborns.

The Government is implementing a comprehensive legislation; the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 and the Rules framed thereunder, for prohibition of sex selection before or after conception, regulation of Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques and prevention of their misuse for sex determination leading to female foeticide. Both the Act as well as the Rules were amended in 2003 and the Rules were further amended in 2011 and 2012 with a view to make the provisions more stringent to act as deterrent.

(c): The Government does not maintain gender-wise data of foeticide. However, State/UT- wise cases of foeticide reported during 2010, 2011 and 2012, as maintained by the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), is annexed.

(d): Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy devising schemes, programmes and awareness generation/advocacy measures to build a positive environment for the girl child through gender sensitive policies, provisions and legislation.

The measures include the following:-

The Government has intensified effective implementation of the said Act and amended various provisions of the Rules relating to sealing, seizure and confiscation of unregistered machines and punishment against unregistered clinics. Regulation of use of portable ultrasound equipment only within the registered premises has been notified. Restriction on medical practitioners to conduct ultrasonography at maximum of two ultrasound facilities within a district has been placed. Registration fees have been enhanced. Rules have been amended to provide for advance intimation in change of employees, place, address or equipment.

The Minister of Health and Family Welfare has requested all the State Governments to strengthen implementation of the Act and to ensure timely steps to stop illegal sex determination.

The Prime Minister has urged the Chief Ministers of all States to provide personal leadership to reverse the declining trend in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and address the neglect of the girl child through focus on education and empowerment.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has intensified efforts to exhort the States and UTs to pay utmost attention to serious implementation of the Act.

The Central Supervisory Board (CSB) under the PNDT Act has been reconstituted and regular meetings are being held.

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology has been requested to block sex selection advertisements on websites.

The National Inspection and Monitoring Committee (NIMC) has been reconstituted and inspections of ultrasound diagnostic facilities have been intensified.

The Government is rendering financial support to the States and UTs for operationalization of PNDT Cells, capacity building, orientation & sensitization workshops, Information, Education and Communication campaigns and for strengthening structures for the implementation of the Act under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).

States have been advised to focus on Districts/Blocks/Villages with low Child Sex Ratio to ascertain the causes, plan appropriate behaviour change communication campaigns and effectively implement provisions of the PC & PNDT Act.

Religious leaders, women achievers etc. are also being involved in the campaign against skewed child sex ratio and discrimination of the girl child.