

## **CIVIL SOCIETY URGES PRESIDENT OF INDIA TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST GENDER-BIASED SEX SELECTION ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD**

***10,000 citizens to sign petition appealing President for stringent action against Gender-Biased Sex Selection and enhancing the value and position of girls***

***Girls Count to launch its website [www.girlscount.in](http://www.girlscount.in) on October 11***

**New Delhi, 10 Oct:** Addressing the joint session of Parliament in June this year, President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee had promised to launch a mass campaign for the girl child. “With a commitment of *Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao*, my government will launch a mass campaign for saving the girl child and enabling her education,” he said. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi also drew attention to the dismal child sex ratio in the country, and appealed Indians to stop gender-biased sex selection. He also appealed to the doctors not to detect the sex of foetus.

On October 11, 2014, as the world celebrates International Day of the Girl Child, more than 200 civil society organisations in alliance with **Girls Count** will urge the President of India to act against gender-biased sex selection. Girls Count has set in motion the process of asking civil society organisations in particular and all Indian citizens in general to support the cause. It has appealed people to sign the petition urging the President of India to advise all the states/union territories and the Union of India to take stringent and timely action for violations committed under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act.

The petition which will have the signature of more than 10,000 Indian citizens urges the President of India to:

- Issue a memo to the Governors and Chief Ministers of all the states/UTs to show their ‘administrative’ and ‘political’ will to stop sex selection and take stringent action against any person involved in violating the PCPNDT Act.
- Direct the Medical Council of India (MCI) to regulate sex selection and take stringent action against any medical doctor found to be involved in communicating the sex of foetus.
- Advise the judiciaries to expedite the prosecution under the PCPNDT Act. At present, there are over 1,900 cases (ranging from non-registration, poor record keeping to communication of sex) filed in different courts of law in the country.
- Direct the Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India, not to allow companies to do online advertisement about sex selection. Any kind of advertisements about sex selection is strictly prohibited and is punishable under the PCPNDT Act.
- Advise the concerned ministries to strengthen implementation of laws concerning women and girls and enact laws that tackle their subordination which gives rise to practices such as gender-biased sex selection.

- Issue guidelines to develop schemes that enhance the ability of girls to be self-reliant, and their empowerment including asset ownership, skill building, credit availability, safety and security among others.
- Issue guidelines to the concerned ministry to strengthen civil registration so that accurate birth data is more readily available across districts to enable monitoring of trends in sex ratio at birth.

It may be mentioned that the Child Sex Ratio (CRS) in the age group of 0-6 years has been on rapid decline since 1981 in India, indicating a continued discrimination against the girl child. In the 2001 Census, the child sex ratio was 927 girls for every 1,000 boys in the country, which dropped to 918 girls by 2011. Skewed sex ratios can have far-reaching and adverse social consequences. Evidences from regions with sex ratio imbalances indicate that it contributes to increased violence against women, trafficking, increase in practices such as polyandry, oppressive and limiting gender norms and increase in crimes.

The Supreme Court of India on September 16, 2014 after hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Voluntary Health Association of Punjab (VAHP) had issued instructions to state governments to strictly implement and monitor the PCPNDT Act which prohibits sex selection and sex determination of a foetus. As per the government records there are only 172 cases filed for communicating the sex of foetus in the country.

In light of these instructions by the Supreme Court, Girls Count has begun the initiative to gather the voices of the masses and urge the President to intervene in this matter.

The petition can be signed by visiting [www.girlscount.in](http://www.girlscount.in) or by giving a missed call to **08030636432**. Girls Count will meet the President and present him the petition.

**Launch of Girls Count website** - On the “International Day of the Girl Child” on October 11 this year, Girls Count will also launch its website giving detailed information about the gruelling issue of declining child sex ratio in the country. It is an interactive site with user driven content generated through discussions and debates, including blogs and eventually will have a rich resource section that makes it a clearing house for useful material on the issue.

**International Day of the Girl Child 2014** - On December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly had adopted a resolution declaring October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognise girls’ rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

In recognition of the importance of investing in and empowering girls during adolescence and preventing and eliminating the various forms of violence they experience, the theme of International Day of the Girl Child for 2014 is *“Empowering Adolescent Girls: Ending the Cycle of Violence”*.



Governments, the United Nations, civil society, and public and private institutions have been called on to join forces and reaffirm their commitment to end the scourge of violence against adolescent girls and to promote their empowerment.

### **About Girls Count**

Girls Count is a civil society response to patriarchy, gender-biased sex selection and declining child sex ratio. Ideologically positioned against discrimination and patriarchy, it seeks to arrest this decline as well as address issues that stem from it. Girls Count has more than 200 civil society organisations and individuals for collective action against skewed child sex ratio in India and the subordinate position of women and girls.

*For more information please contact Girls Count at 011-24376738, 9654445452, 8527703575*