



CHETNA
For Women Young people Children

Creating an Enabling Environment for Girls



Raising Consciousness



Creating Awareness

30 January 2012

Although India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child mandating equal rights for children in 1992, many of them, particularly girls, continue to be discriminated against. This has been seen in the declining child sex ratio in the country which is skewed against girls (927 girls to 1000 boys).

To enhance awareness among community stakeholders about implications of declining child sex ratio and their role in creating enabling environment for the girl child

To enhance awareness on Pre Conception Pre Natal Diagnostic Technique Act (PCPNDT) as well as Medical Termination Pregnancy Act (MTP Act)

- Partnership and capacity enhancement of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and youth networks for reaching out to the communities and young people
- Partnership with media networks and organizations for wider dissemination and outreach
- Coordinated efforts with the Speaker Legislative Assembly- Gujarat and the Department of Family Welfare to reach out to elected members of Parliament and Legislative Assembly

- CHETNA undertook an exploratory field-based study in 2008 in 12 villages in Mehsana district.
- A total of 359 women having children up to 3 years of age were interviewed to understand
- Which girl child is unwanted and why?
- The extent of deficit of brides and perceived social ramifications of buying brides from other social groups
- Whether PCPNDT legislation was an effective answer to change social norms?

- 95 % of women reported desire for both a son and a daughter
- 37 % said daughters were unwanted because of dowry while few cited fear for their safety as reason for not wanting daughters
- 24 % women said that they had opted for sex selection as they had one more daughters
- 19 % families mentioned difficulty in the marriage of sons due to non-availability of girls
- More than 50 % women aware about sex determination test and PCPNDT Act

- A campaign for social mobilization was undertaken;
- Meetings were arranged with caste leaders of Patel and Chaudhary communities
 - About 5000 adolescents and youth were encouraged to educate their peers, families and communities in changing their mindset towards the girl child and promoting gender equality. They included representatives from networks like Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC) and academic institutions.
 - All the members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and members of the Parliament (MPs) from the state were urged to address the issue of sex selection.

- Ten journalists from the local, national and international print media were awarded fellowships to document and publish case studies on the status of girls and the reasons for sex selection. The electronic media, local, national and international, were also provided assistance to document stories on sex selection.
- Efforts were made to bring together relevant government departments and initiate the process of convergence for creating enabling environment for the girl child.
- The health department being a nodal agency, regular dialogues were held with the state and district authorities and members of advisory committees.

- All these efforts led to several initiatives by the community to improve the sex ratio.
- The leaders of both Patel and Choudhry communities introduced the agenda in their annual caste functions, in their newsletter, periodicals and group marriages. The Members of these communities pledged to stop sex selection
- Patel community promoted group marriages and provided financial support for education of the girl child and marriages for those parents having two or more daughters.

- Newly married couples took an oath during their marriage ceremony to promote girl child in their own families.
- A popular religious temple also printed the message to stop sex selection on the box of the *prasad* (offering given to the deity and distributed to followers) to highlight the issue.
- The multi pronged communication and advocacy strategy coupled with strict enforcement of the PCPNDT Act led to improvement in the sex ratio at birth from 806 in 2005 to 855 per 1000 in 2008 in Mehsana district (CRS 2008-2009)