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North India's Obsession with the Male Child Unchanged

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According to the latest data available with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indians continue to show a preference for a male child.

- Haryana, followed by Rajasthan and Punjab continue to top the list of offenders seeking to illegally ascertain the gender of the unborn baby. This practice manifests in a low child-sex ratio.
- At present, India has a child sex ratio (0-6 years) of 919 females per 1,000 males.
- Convicted offenders have been registered under Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994.
- The Ministry is expanding the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme** now on a pan-India level. Implementation of the PC-PNDT Act is a part of this programme.
- The registration of cases and convictions have increased gradually because of the government's stringent action and zero tolerance towards the issue.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

- The scheme was launched by the Prime Minister in 2015 as a comprehensive programme to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues to the empowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum.
- The scheme is being implemented as a convergent effort of, Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.
- The campaign focuses on awareness and advocacy campaign, multi-sectoral action in select 161 districts, enabling girls' education and effective enforcement of Pre-Conception & Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act.
- **Objectives:**
 - Preventing gender biased sex selective elimination.
 - Ensuring survival and protection of the girl child.
 - Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.