



## National Girl Child Day

**For Prelims:** National Girl Child Day.

**For Mains:** Rights of the girl child, related issues and steps needs to be taken.

### Why in News

India celebrates **National Girl Child Day every year on 24<sup>th</sup> January.**

### Key Points

- **About:**
  - The National Girl Child Day was **first initiated in 2008** by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
  - The main focus is on **changing society's attitude towards girls, decrease female foeticide** and create awareness about the decreasing sex ratio.
- **'Save The Girl Child' Webinar:**
  - It was organised by the [National Commission for Women \(NCW\)](#) to promote rights of girl child and to increase awareness on various topics concerning girls including their education, health and nutrition.
- **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2022:**
  - Twenty-nine children were given the award on the occasion for their **exceptional achievements in** innovation, social science, education, sports, arts and culture and for demonstrating bravery.
  - They were given **digital certificates using [blockchain technology](#)** and a cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh at an event held online.

### Issues Related to Girl Child

- **Female Infanticide and Foeticide:**
  - India has **one of the highest rates** of female foeticide in the world.
  - **Female foeticide is due to** strong son preference, the practice of dowry and the patrilineal necessity of heir.
  - The **census of 2011** has recorded the lowest ever sex ratio of 914 in the age group 0-6 years with 3 million missing girls; from 78.8 million in 2001 to 75.8 million in 2011.
- **[Child Marriage:](#)**
  - Each year, at least **1.5 million girls under 18 get married in India**, which makes it home to the largest number of child brides in the world - accounting for a third of the global total. Nearly **16% of adolescent girls aged 15-19 are currently married.**
  - **While child marriage has declined, it has been marginal:** from 27% in 2015-16 to 23% in 2019-20, according to [National Family Health Survey \(NFHS\) 5.](#)
- **Education:**
  - Girls are encouraged and also engaged more in household work and drop out of school at an early age.

- A study by the International Centre for Research on Women has found that **girls out of school are 3.4 times more likely to be married** or have their marriage already fixed than girls who are still in school.
- **Health and Mortality:**
  - Girls in India face discrimination both inside their homes and outside in their communities. Inequality in India means **unequal opportunities for girls**.
  - **Under-five mortality for girls** in India remains **8.3% higher than for boys**. Globally this is **14% higher for boys**.

## Steps taken by the Government

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Launched in 2015 with the **aim to address sex selective abortion** and the **declining child sex ratio** which was at 918 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2011.
- **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana:** Launched in 2015, in order to promote the welfare of girl child. It encourages **parents to invest and build funds** for the future studies and marriage expenses of the girl's children.
- **CBSE Udaan Scheme:** UDAAN is a project launched by the CBSE to address the **low enrolment of girl students in prestigious engineering institutions** and the teaching gap between school education and engineering entrance examinations.
- **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE):** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** launched in 2008, which aims to **promote enrollment of girl child** in the age group of 14-18 at secondary stage, especially those who passed Class VIII and to encourage the secondary education of such girls.

## Way Forward

- The answer to delaying child marriages lies in ensuring access to education since the practice is a social and economic issue.
  - Skill & business training and sex education in schools, will also help..
- An **awareness campaign is required on a massive scale** on the **increase in age of marriage**, and to encourage social acceptance of this new legislation (**Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill**), which would be far more effective than coercive measures.
- The **NFHS findings are also a reminder of the urgent need** to close gaps in girls' education and address the pathetic nutritional status of women and children.

**Source: PIB**

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