



International Girl Child Day

For Prelims: International Girl Child Day, United Nations General Assembly, Sustainable Development Goals

For Mains: Issues Related to Children, Women's Issues

Why in News?

Every year, International Girl Child Day is observed on 11th October 2022.

Why do We celebrate International Girl Child Day?

- **History:**
 - First time in history, the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** in 1995, proposed an action plan to advance the rights of girls.
 - In 2011, the [United Nations General Assembly](#) adopted **Resolution 66/170** to declare 11th October as the International Day of the Girl Child.
- **Theme for 2022:** “Our time is now—our rights, our future”
- **Significance:**
 - The day is observed to **recognise girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.**
 - The International Day of the Girl Child **focuses attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls' empowerment** and the fulfilment of their human rights.
 - **Also, [Women's empowerment and gender equality](#) are integral to all 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#).**
 - The achievement of gender equality is the fifth of 17 **SDGs** laid out in the Sustainable Development Agenda.
 - Justice, inclusion, economic growth, and a sustainable environment can only be achieved by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals.

What is the State of Girl Child in India?

- **About:**
 - According to the recently released report **“[Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India Report 2021](#)”** by [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#):
 - Crime against children surpassed the **pre-pandemic levels after declining in 2020 due to Covid-related restriction.**
 - In 2021, **1.49 lakh such cases were recorded**, higher than 1.48 lakh in 2019.
 - The data published by the NCRB is specifically grim for the eastern states of India:
 - **Sikkim has the highest rate of sexual offences** against children followed by Kerala, Meghalaya, Haryana and Mizoram.
 - **West Bengal and Odisha are among the top five states** (along with Maharashtra, MP and UP) which account for **47.1% of the total crimes**

committed against children across the country.

- There were 9,523 cases of crimes against children recorded alone in West Bengal in 2021.

▪ **Issues related to Girl Child:**

◦ **Female Infanticide and Foeticide:**

- India has one of the highest rates of female foeticide in the world.
- 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. 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](#).

◦ **Devoid of 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.

▪ **Related Initiatives:**

◦ **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 children**. 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 children 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.

- **Scheme for Adolescent Girls:** Government is also implementing [Scheme for Adolescent Girls](#), which aims to facilitate, educate and empower Adolescent Girls (AGs) so as to enable them to become self-reliant and aware citizens.

Way Forward

▪ **Strengthening the Child Protection System:**

- **Urgent measures are needed to strengthen the country's child protection system** and to make the police, judicial and legal systems more proactive.

▪ **Community-based Child Protection Mechanisms:**

- The **offenses related to children have a low conviction rate** and a high pendency rate hence, **boosting community-based child protection mechanisms**, such as village-level child protection committees can play a critical role.

▪ **Raising Social Awareness:**

- **Patriarchal social attitudes and prejudices need to be addressed** by including sensitisation on gender issues in school education.

[Source: DTE](#)

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