

STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION

“Prenatal Sex Determination and Sex Selection Techniques - Christian Concern”

Organised by

Christian Medical Association of India

in association with

The National Council of Churches in India, Commission for Health of Catholic Bishop Conference of India, Catholic Health Association of India and Evangelical Fellowship of India.

New Delhi 1st August 2002

We, the participants in the consultation on "Prenatal Sex Determination and Sex Selection Techniques - A Christian Concern", representing various Churches and Christian Organizations, have had the benefit of deliberating with various experts in this field, and detailed discussion of the issues. We have arrived at the following conclusions which we wish to bring urgently to the attention of the Government, the Medical Profession, the Churches and the followers of all Other Religious Groups and Hospitals and Health Care Services.

- We express our concern at the consistent decline of sex-ratio in recent past discriminating against females in the age group of 0-6 years in India.

We recognize that the practices and techniques of pre-natal sex selection and sex determination that lead to gender injustice and the selective abortion of female foetuses, are the reasons for the drastic changes in the sex ratio. We realize that these malpractices are widespread, and not restricted to any geographic region or socio-economic or religious group.

- We denounce the misuse of medical technology available for the pre selection and pre determination of the foetal sex, which leads to these malpractices.
- We raise our concern over the emergence of new reproductive technologies such as pre-conception or in-conception sex selection methods that have a high potential for gross misuse in the form of discrimination against the female foetus.

We believe that these practices, if not contained, will lead irrevocably to the ultimate collapse of the social fabric of our nation.

- We unconditionally oppose all and any action, which contribute to the neglect, sub-optimal health, sickness or premature death of the girl child.
- We reject female foeticide and all forms of cultural, historical, religious, economic, social, or other forms of justification of this heinous and barbaric crime as a sin both against God and against humanity.

We affirm that a healthy society is an inclusive society which recognises the role and potential of both men and women and which commits itself to all that promotes and contributes to the improved condition, status, health, and well being of both sexes of all ages equally.

- We demand that the Government both the centre and the states enact appropriate laws to curtail the misuse of medical technology for sex selection and selective abortion, and that it takes aggressive steps to implement that law with all vigor and throughout our land.

We also demand that the Governments actively campaign for and support actions towards the achievement of a more equable sex ratio in India

- We urge the medical profession to dissociate itself from all such discriminatory practices that lead towards the misuse of medical technologies that are incompatible with the Hippocratic Oath.

We urge the medical profession to take a proactive role against pre-natal sex selection and sex determination, as these practices are unjust, unethical, and illegal. We feel the need to ensure that no form of health care is dehumanizing and that all members of the female sex, of whatever age, are fully regarded as persons, and not only as statistics or as target for programmes and their achievements.

- We urge the Church to address the issues of pre-natal sex selection and sex determination by building awareness within the communities they serve, and sensitising them to these matters and with urgency. We further urge that the churches specifically forbid such practices by their members, and that church related hospitals and health care programmes constantly evaluate the impact of their activities upon the girl child and upon women.

We request all the people in the country to ensure that such crimes against women are not committed and to maintain the dignity of women of all ages.