

New Study Finds . . .

500,000 Girls Aborted Each Year In India

By HILARY WHITE

LONDON (*LifeSiteNews*) — A study published in the leading British medical journal, *The Lancet*, says sex-targeted abortion is accountable for the deaths of up to half a million girl babies a year and is creating in India, as in China, a severe demographic imbalance in the population.

The study examined data from 134,000 births in 1997 among 6 million people living in 1.1 million households in India. The researchers found that in 1997, between 590,000 and 740,000 girls were aborted in India.

In 2001, the data showed that for every 1,000 male babies born in India, there were just 933 girls. The imbalance is even more pronounced in second births where the preceding children are girls; in those cases, the ratio of girls to boys in second births was 759 to 1,000. When two preceding children were both girls, the numbers fell to 719 girls to 1,000 boys.

The study's authors, Prabhat Jha of St. Michael's Hospital at the University of Toronto and Rajesh Kumar of the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Research in Chandigarh, India, cited the availabili-

ty of ultrasound which has made it easier for women to target girls earlier in pregnancy.

"If this practice has been common for most of the past two decades since access to ultrasound became widespread, then a figure of 10 million missing female births would not be unreasonable," Jha wrote.

Financial pressure is a significant factor in sex-selective abortion in India where girls require substantial dowries for marriage. Dr. Shirish Sheth of Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai wrote in the *Lancet*, "Daughters are regarded as a liability. Because she will eventually belong to the family of her future husband, expenditure on a daughter will benefit others. In some communities where the custom of dowry prevails, the cost of her dowry could be phenomenal."

The study also found that women with higher education were more than twice as likely as women with less formal education to abort a second child if she is a girl. This finding is in accord with abortion rates in the United States, Canada, and Britain where acceptance of abortion is more prevalent

among professionals and those with higher levels of formal education.

The media's reaction to the study has demonstrated the rift that was waiting to open up between the abortion-on-demand orthodoxy of most Western feminists and the need to protect women from violence and prejudice.

Writing for the CBC's Online opinion page, *Viewpoint*, Jeremy Copeland decried the use of sex-selection to kill girls. Copeland commented, "As India strives to become a developed country, it seems unable to let go of its old prejudices."

Copeland declined to mention, however, that almost every "developed country" in the world has adopted the radical feminist doctrine of abortion on demand. Canada and India are equally "developed" in having few or no restrictions on abortion and not requiring women to give any reason. The CBC, along with most Canadian media, has historically been in full support of the central feminist principle that children who create a financial burden or restrict the career opportunities of women can be aborted at will.