

SCRIPT CO

The Plight of Women in India 1m31

25 year old cradles her one month old bay girl. Her name is Kushi in Hindi, that means happiness.

Kushi would not have been alive had her mother given into pressure from some relatives and neighbours. They would cry and yell: "What are you doing giving birth to a girl! Push her off the roof of this building! Kill her! Why are you keeping her?"

Sumanjeet says she was under great pressure to abort all 4 of her daughters, just because they were girls, an issue all too common in these parts of India.

Jhajjar District in the state of Haryana has the lowest female to male child sex ratio in the country. Out of every thousand boys, there are only 774 girls here.

The main reason even the government acknowledges¹: sex-selective abortions, now outlawed in India but according to a 2011 study 600,000 female fetuses are aborted every year in India.

And the discrimination that begins in the womb² continues throughout a girl's life. "They send boys to good schools, they give them good food, nice clothes to wear, they treat them well; they say "oh, it's my son!". The daughters, they say "get the cow done, sweep the floors; what would you do of an education?"

Often seen as a burden, nearly half of India's girls are married off before the age of 18. S. says she was forced to marry a man 15 years older than her when she was just 12 years old.

¹To acknowledge : admettre, reconnaître

²The womb: l'utérus