

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.

<https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2011/10/20/maharashtra-renames-its-unwanted-girls/>

INDIA REAL TIME

# Maharashtra Renames Its 'Unwanted' Girls

By Nikita Garia

Oct 20, 2011 12:00 pm IST

Around 200 girls in Maharashtra will have a new name Friday: They will no longer be called "unwanted."



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES Girls in Maharashtra's Satara district will no longer be called 'unwanted.'

A field survey in Satara district, which also happens to be Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan's home town, has revealed that 222 girls under the age of 18 years, were named "Nakusa," a Marathi word which translates to "unwanted" in English.

"The name 'Nakusa' cannot be given under normal circumstances," said Bhagwan Pawar, the district's health officer who led the survey after he came across this name during a field visit. "In most cases, after the birth of two or more female children, the next one would be named 'Nakusa' by the parents," he told India Real Time.

So, Dr. Pawar's team set out on a task to rename these girls according to the parents' and girls' choice. Dr. Pawar said that it wasn't difficult to convince the parents. "When the girls were born, they didn't want them. But after a long period of time, they realized that their girl child is not unwanted," he said.

He agreed that the renaming initiative might not mark a huge change but the district's health department is "trying to consciously send out a message that girls should be welcome."

Last month, 48 girls were renamed. “We had asked ground-level functionaries to rename these girls,” he said, adding that “the girls didn’t like their old name and took up names like Aishwarya, Kamna and Sakshi.”

Dr. Pawar’s team is accelerating that initiative with a renaming ceremony Friday to which the state’s health minister will be invited, said Dr. Pawar. He said that the survey will continue as they try to identify more ‘Nakusas.’

Satara, a district 100 kilometers from Pune, is among the districts in the state with a high sex ratio, which is defined as a sex ratio of above 970 females per 1,000 males. The state’s overall sex ratio, according to the latest census, is 925 females for 1,000 males. However, the district’s sex ratio has declined from 995 females per 1,000 males in 2001 to 986 in 2011. “We are concerned about the declining sex ratio. So, even a small message matters,” said Dr. Pawar.

He also said the message was spreading because he has been contacted by health officers in other districts. “Soon other districts will also start finding the ‘Nakusa,’” he said.

This step might go a long way to ensure that a girl child is not “unwanted” by name in any part of the state. Maharashtra had earlier announced plans to encourage the birth of females including a policy to offer financial help to families whose third child is a girl.

*Follow India Real Time on Twitter @indiarealtime.*

---

#### MORE IN WOMEN

---

- [India's Toilet Troubles - The Numbers](#)
- [Why Women in India Still Don't Report Sexual Assault](#)
- [India's Working Women - The Numbers](#)
- [Rape in India, Four Years After Delhi Gang Rape Case - The Numbers](#)
- [Tech Sexism in India: You Asked, We Answered](#)
- [Live Chat on Tech Sexism in India: Send Us Your Questions](#)

---

Share this:

---

[MAHARASHTRA](#)   [NAKUSA](#)   [POPULATION](#)   [SATARA](#)   [SEX RATIO](#)   [WOMEN](#)

Copyright ©2017 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.

