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Q5(d)

Fertility and Fecundity

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Biological and socio-ecological factors influencing fecundity, fertility, natality and mortality.

11.3 Biological and socio-ecological factors influencing fecundity, fertility, natality and mortality.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on Fertility and Fecundity
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Fecundity is the ability to conceive.

Fertility is the count of live births.

Intermediate variables connect the two.

Indian age at marriage and breastfeeding are cultural brakes or accelerators.

Infertility and high fertility are different public problems.

Introduction

Fecundity is the biological capacity to conceive. Fertility is the actual production of live births. Demography and anthropology keep the two apart.

Body**The distinction**

- A fecund couple may have low fertility because of late marriage, breastfeeding, contraception, or loss.
- **Natural fertility** populations, in **Henry's** sense, lack deliberate parity limitation but still space births by lactation.
- **Davis and Blake** listed intermediate variables: intercourse, conception, and gestation.

Anthropology

- Age at marriage, widow remarriage, and son preference shape Indian fertility more than fecundity alone.
- Infertility stigma is social. Biomedical fecundity problems need clinics; high fertility needs policy and gender analysis.
- **Bongaarts** later modelled proximate determinants that operationalise the same split.

Flow diagram

Fecundity capacity -> Marriage lactation contraception

Marriage lactation contraception -> Fertility live births

Conclusion

Fecundity is potential. Fertility is births achieved. Culture sits between them, which is why anthropology belongs in population study.

Facts & figures

Henry

Natural fertility: no deliberate stopping by parity, yet spaced births.

Davis and Blake

Intermediate fertility variables between social structure and births.

Bongaarts

Proximate determinants model used in later demography.

Lactational amenorrhoea

A major natural spacer of births in many Indian rural series.

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