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Q10

How do you explain the statistics that show that the sex ratio in Tribes in India is more favourable to women than the sex ratio among Scheduled Castes?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS I · 12 marks · Women, Population and Urbanisation

Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Core demand of the question

- How do you explain the statistics that show that the **sex ratio** in Tribes in India is more favourable to women than the **sex ratio** among Scheduled Castes?
- Cover kinship, economy, son preference, and data caution
- Keep the explanation within a 12-mark length

Revision summary

ST sex ratios have often been less skewed against women than SC ratios.

Women's farm and forest work and bride-price traditions raise women's visible worth in many tribes.

SC life is more tightly bound to caste patriarchy, dowry, and son-need.

SC numbers cluster in regions already known for missing women.

Migration undercount and later arrival of sex-selection clinics are secondary explanations, and the ST lead is not guaranteed forever.

Flow diagram

ST work bride-price -> Higher female share
SC in caste dowry son -> More masculine ratio
Plains missing women belt -> SC in caste dowry son
Sanskritisation clinics -> ST work bride-price
Sanskritisation clinics -> Gap may close

Conclusion

- Explain with kinship and women's work first, then regional concentration of SC in high son-preference zones.
- **Do not romanticise tribes:** witchcraft accusations, land loss, and falling child sex ratios in some ST pockets show the lead can close.

Tribal sex ratios look more favourable to women because many ST economies still give women field and forest roles and weaker dowry-son regimes, while SC groups more often share the

caste-Hindu penalty on daughters. The statistic is a social map, not a moral ranking of two poor communities, and it can change as tribes enter the same marriage market.

Facts & figures

Sex ratio

Women per 1,000 men; child sex ratio tracks girls among children and shows sex selection more sharply.

Bride-price versus dowry

Payment toward the bride's family in some tribal marriages, unlike dowry that can make daughters a cost.

Missing women pattern

Amartya Sen's phrase for shortfalls of women where neglect and sex selection are strong, worst in parts of north-west India.

Sanskritisation

Status climb by copying upper-caste norms, including stricter patriarchy, which can worsen tribal gender balance.

PESA and forest work

Tribal law and livelihood still often assume women's role in commons, unlike purely domestic caste ideals.

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