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Q6(c)

What are the causes and solutions for the low female sex-ratio in the DEMARU States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, and Gujarat ?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society

Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- What are the causes and solutions for the low female sex-ratio in the DEMARU States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, and Gujarat?
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

DEMARU states combined prosperity with missing girls.

Patriliney, dowry, and smaller families raised the premium on sons.

Ultrasound converted preference into selection.

Law against sex selection is necessary and not enough.

Daughter property and a change in kinship honour are the deeper solutions.

Introduction

DEMARU named a belt of prosperous states with alarmingly low child sex ratios. The puzzle is that wealth and literacy did not produce daughters. Causes sit in patriliney, dowry, and technology. Solutions must hit incentives and honour, not only clinics.

Body

Causes

- **Leela Dube's Seed and Earth:** the son continues the line; the daughter is a field given away.
- Dowry and hypergamy in north-western kinship make a girl a lifetime cost, as Irawati Karve's northern pattern would predict.
- **Green Revolution property** and smaller families intensified the need for one successful son, not for more children who might be girls.
- Ultrasound and abortion turned preference into sex selection, a modern tool for an old ideology.
- Agrarian honour, khap-like controls, and women's weak land titles close alternatives.

Why these states

- Prosperity bought machines. It did not buy gender equality, a disharmonic outcome in Beteille's sense.

Solutions

- Enforce the sex-selection ban without driving it only underground; watch clinics and advertisements.
- Daughter property rights that actually transfer land, not only paper law.
- Cash schemes help at the margin; they fail if marriage still drains the natal house.
- Public naming of missing girls, school, and women's work that make a daughter an asset in the parents' old age.
- **Change the kinship maths:** without a dent in **Seed and Earth**, ratios rebound.

Flow diagram

Seed Earth dowry -> Son preference
Ultrasound -> Sex selection
Son preference -> Sex selection
Sex selection -> Low child sex ratio
Land rights for daughters -> Possible rise

Conclusion

Low female sex ratios in **DEMARU** states are caused by patrilineal honour plus cheap sex-selection technology in property-rich regions. Solutions are legal, economic, and cultural together. Prosperity without a change in who counts as the seed will keep daughters missing.

Facts & figures

DEMARU

Acronym used for Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Gujarat as a low child-sex-ratio belt.

PNDT law

Ban on sex-selection diagnostics that clinics have often evaded.

Green Revolution property

Concentrated farm wealth that made the heir a sharper stake.

Seed and Earth

Dube's metaphor that explains why a daughter does not continue the natal line.

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