

An examination of the intensification effect of son preference on recent trends in regional fertility in India

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Abstrak

Son preference's impact on Indian fertility is examined within 14 major states, utilizing the NFHS surveys of 1992-93 and 1998-99 but with emphasis on the NFHS-2 survey. The 14 states are grouped into two on the basis of the strength of son preference. The analysis indicates that the birth hazards for the gentler composition of surviving children are highest at parity 3 for the majority of the M states. The intensification effect, or increasing impact of son preference at lower parities, is manifested in strong son preference states experiencing large fertility declines such as Punjab and Haryana. Son preference continues to affect fertility at lower parities and it is possible that a floor well above replacement level is forming, especially in the populous northern/central states. However, with the increasing incidence of sex-selective abortions it is possible that lower fertility with dramatically skewed sex ratios at birth will result