

Male preference could have negative impact

October 30 2007

Prenatal sex selection of boys in some Asian countries could lead to negative social consequences such as a surge in sexual violence, a U.N. agency reported.

New studies commissioned by the U.N. Population Fund predicted that as males outnumber females, because of pre-natal testing to determine the sex of fetuses and subsequent abortions of unwanted females, a surge in sexual violence and trafficking of women could occur.

Preference for sons is rooted in many Asian countries for cultural and economic reasons, the U.N. said.

"Sex ratio imbalances only lead to far-reaching imbalances in the society at large," Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, the agency's executive director, said in a statement during the Fourth Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights in Hyderabad, India.

In China, 120 males were born for every 100 females in 2005. In India, the 2001 census showed 108 males were born for every 100 females. Unless Vietnam and Nepal reject male preference thinking, they will face problems similar to those of India and China, the studies said.

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Citation: Male preference could have negative impact (2007, October 30) retrieved 1 May 2024

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