

In India, a form of eugenics that people might embrace

The term “eugenics” has very negative connotations today. Nevertheless, in some ways society [is moving in a direction](#) which results in “eugenical” outcomes, insofar as allele frequencies and genotypes are skewed from what would otherwise be the case if natural processes operated without human volition.*

Probably the most obvious case in modern medicine is the [high rate of abortion](#) of fetuses which are inferred to carry the genetic profile of an individual with Down Syndrome. In the future this sort of instance will be more general, as high quality prenatal genome sequencing along with progress toward understanding of the basis of inheritance of [Mendelian diseases](#) will avail parents of many choices. This will naturally result in a lot of discussion and debate about ethics and values.

But there is a less high-tech and ethically fraught form of eugenics, which is nevertheless culturally controversial. One of the overlooked aspects of the 2009 paper [Reconstructing Indian population history](#) is that it found that many Indian populations had an excess of [homozygosity](#), likely due to long standing endogamous practices encouraged by the caste system. This, despite customs which enforce exogamy for Hindus across much of India, in particular the North. Within the abstract the authors suggest then that “there will be an excess of recessive diseases in India.”

Read full, original article: [A Form Of Eugenics People Might Not Object To](#)