

It can be an all-woman planet

The 'female sperm' will make the role of men redundant in reproduction

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Imagine an all-woman planet where there are no men. And this is going to happen, if scientists have their say. British scientists have already produced what they term, "female sperm", to do away with the role of men in reproduction. If the female sperm works well, women will be able to reproduce children without the help of men.

But, all the offspring they produce will be girls. The female sperm will not be able to produce boys since it lacks the "Y" or the male sex chromosome.



PIC: MCT

It will also help lesbian couples have their children, again all girls. The Earth will then become a planet of women and the male species will become extinct. In case gay men too decide to benefit from the research, they can have their own 'eggs' produced from their stem cells and fertilise it artificially. They will then be able to produce children without the help of women. But unlike women, gay men will be able to produce both boys and girls.

City scientists, however, take the research of British scientists with a pinch of salt.

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"British scientists have taken stem cells from a woman's bone marrow and cultivated them in chemical soup to create female sperm cells. If they use the bone marrow of a woman for sperm production, then the offspring will be a girl. If the bone marrow of a man is used, the children can both be boys and girls," says senior geneticist and stem cell researcher, Dr M.N. Khaja adding, "If female sperm could be produced artificially, male eggs could also be made in the lab. Stem cell research should be used to improve health and not procreate clones with unknown genetic complications."

Geneticists also express concern over artificial production of "female sperm" and say it will not only lead to an all-woman Earth upsetting the natural balance, but will also cause incurable genetic diseases. There will also be no genetic lineage, since the Y chromosome is responsible for family lineage.

As the British scientists apply for permission to carry their work to the next stage, Indian infertility experts say it's better to take male stem cells to generate sperm for in-vitro fertilisation. "We have done pioneering research on production of sperm tissue from stem cells in test tube. The stems cells of an infertile person can be



processed to become sperm. The sperm can be used for artificial fertilisation and the child can be male or female. This way we can maintain genetic lineage without tampering with natural laws," argues senior invitro expert Dr Roya Rozati.

She is also working on developing methods to inject artificially produced sperm so that infertile men can conceive naturally. This will eliminate the need for test tube fertilisation for couples with male infertility problems.

Prof Karim Nayernia who leads the British research team says it may take three more years before mature sperms are capable of fertilising eggs. The research may pave the way for a woman to produce her sperm through artificial means but city scientists warn that such children will have massive genetic complications.