



POPULATION GROWTH & AGEING: GEOGRAPHY

NEWS: Are pro-natalist policies the way to address the ageing population problem?

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

India's Total Fertility Rate has dropped below replacement level, yet population growth is expected until 2070 due to population momentum, with northern states growing faster than the south. The ageing population in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu is rising, presenting challenges in healthcare and employment for older adults. Pro-natalist policies, despite global examples, face hurdles due to high living costs and career impacts for women.

Population and Fertility Trends

- **India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** India's TFR dropped to 1.9 in 2021, which is below the replacement level of 2.1. This indicates population stabilization.
- **Population Growth Due to Population Momentum:** Despite the low TFR, India's population is expected to keep growing until around 2070 due to "population momentum"—the impact of a large number of people entering reproductive age.
- **Regional Variations:** Northern states in India have higher population growth, while southern states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu show much slower growth rates.

Ageing Population Trends and Concerns

- **Increase in Elderly Population:**
 - In 2021, elderly population rates varied significantly across states: Bihar had only 7.7% of elderly individuals, while Kerala and Tamil Nadu had higher rates at 16.5% and 13.7%, respectively.
 - By 2036, Kerala's elderly population is expected to rise to 22.8%, Tamil Nadu to 20.8%, and Bihar to 11%.
- **Drivers of Ageing:** Ageing is influenced by reduced fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, particularly in southern states.
- **Challenges of an Ageing Population:** As India ages, issues include healthcare demands (especially non-communicable diseases), creating employment for older adults, and addressing migration and gender inequalities.

Discussion on Pro-Natalist Policies

- **Shift Toward Larger Families:** Some political leaders suggest promoting higher birth rates to address the ageing population and balance the working-age population.
- **Global Examples of Pro-Natalist Policies:** Countries like Hungary, Poland, Greece, and Sweden have implemented measures such as increased parental leave, child support, and tax benefits.
- **Challenges for Pro-Natalist Policies in India:** High costs of living, childcare, education, and women's career impacts make it difficult to encourage larger families, reflecting issues similar to other countries.



PL RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

MAKING YOU SERVE THE NATION

India's Demographic Metrics (2022) according to UN

- **Total Population:** Approximately 1.4 billion.
- **Population Growth Rate:** 1.05%.
- **Sex Ratio:** 948 females per 1,000 males.
- **Median Age:** 28.7 years.
- **Urban Population:** 35.3%.
- **Literacy Rate:** 77.7%.
- **Life Expectancy at Birth:** 70.2 years.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/are-pro-natalist-policies-the-way-to-address-the-ageing-population-problem/article68842560.ece#:~:text=This%20can't%20be%20through,technology%20to%20create%20job%20opportunities.>

