



DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION OF INDIA - GS I MAINS

Q. Achieving health equity is essential for sustainable development and social progress. Discuss the measures needs to be taken by the stakeholders to ensure health equity across India. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *India's fall in fertility rate may be a boon in disguise*

What's in the news?

- India's population growth has been a significant concern, with forecasts from the UN Population Division indicating a potential increase to 1.7 billion by 2065.
- This underscores the ongoing transition of the demographic dividend in India.

Key takeaways:

- The Lancet projected that the total fertility rate (TFR) for India is to go down to 1.29 by 2051.
- The first impact of the rapid decline in TFR is a fall in the dependency rate and a larger share of working adults in the population, leading to an overall surplus income which can accelerate economic growth and lead to positive intergenerational transfers

Demographic Transition:

- A demographic shift denotes alterations in a population's composition over time, influenced by factors such as birth and death rates, migration patterns, and socio-economic conditions.

Demographic Dividend:

- The demographic dividend occurs when a nation's population structure shifts from a high dependency ratio to a higher proportion of working-age adults, potentially fostering economic growth through human capital investment and productive employment opportunities.

Factors Triggering Demographic Transition in India:

1. Rapid Economic Development:

- India's swift economic progress, especially since the early 21st century, has significantly driven demographic transition by enhancing living standards, healthcare access, and educational opportunities, thereby lowering fertility rates.

2. Reduction in Infant and Child Mortality Rates:

- Improved healthcare facilities and reduced child mortality rates have alleviated the necessity for larger families to ensure old-age support, leading to smaller family sizes.

3. Rise in Women's Education and Work Participation:

- Increased education and employment among women have contributed to declining fertility rates as financially independent and educated women tend to have fewer children and delay childbirth.



4. Improvement in Housing Conditions:

- Enhanced housing conditions and access to basic amenities have positively influenced family planning decisions by improving overall quality of life.

Challenges of Demographic Transition in India:

1. Dependency Ratio Shift:

- While an initial decline in the total fertility rate (TFR) decreases the dependency ratio, the eventual aging of the population leads to a higher proportion of elderly dependents, straining healthcare and welfare resources.

2. Uneven Transition Across States:

- Disparities in fertility rate decline across Indian states, particularly in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, pose challenges in achieving uniform demographic transition, exacerbating regional economic and healthcare disparities.

3. Labour Productivity and Economic Growth:

- Managing the aging workforce and ensuring skill development for the younger population presents challenges alongside potential economic growth spurred by demographic transition.

Opportunities of Demographic Transition in India:

1. Enhanced Labour Productivity:

- Decelerated population growth due to demographic transition can lead to increased capital and infrastructure availability per capita, bolstering labour productivity.

2. Reallocation of Resources:

- Reduced fertility rates allow resources to be redirected towards education and skill development, potentially improving human capital and workforce productivity.

3. Increased Women Participation in Workforce:

- Declining fertility rates may lead to more women joining the workforce as reduced childcare responsibilities free up time for employment, contributing to greater gender parity in the labour market.

4. Spatial Redistribution of Labour:

- Migration of labour from surplus regions to areas with expanding industries can balance the labour market geographically, potentially improving working conditions and mitigating wage discrimination and security concerns.

Way Forward:

- Capitalizing on demographic transition opportunities through sectoral and spatial workforce redistribution, skill development, and enhanced women's participation in the workforce can position India as a significant economic player in the 21st century.



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- Effective policy formulation addressing healthcare, education, and skill development, with a focus on inclusivity, is imperative to harness India's demographic dividend and foster global economic competitiveness.



**P.L. RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY | 1447/C, 3rd floor, 15th Main Road,
Anna Nagar West, Chennai-40. Ph.No.044-42323192, 9445032221
Email: plrajmemorial@gmail.com Website: www.plrajiacademy.com
Telegram link: <https://t.me/plraji2006> YouTube: P L RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY**