

# Family Planning in India: Notes for UPSC

Family planning is an important topic for the IAS exam. This topic is covered under the society and social issues sections of the general studies papers of the UPSC exam. In this article, you can read all about family planning in India, its origin, development, government's role, methods, impact, current status, etc.

## National Programme for Family Planning

- India was the first country in the world to launch a national programme for family planning when it did so in 1952.
- In India, family planning has been chiefly due to the efforts of the government.
- The programme has undergone a massive transformation from its early days when the focus was in terms of a clinical approach to today when the focus is on reproductive health, and in the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates, child mortality and morbidity.
- The National Population Policy (NPP) launched in 2000 has helped in the reduction of fertility.
- As part of the programme, the government established several clinics for reproductive health and family planning.
- There is also many awareness through various media propagating family planning, the need for spacing between children, and for having lesser number of children per couple.
- The government has popularised the slogan, “**Hum Do, Humare Do**”, for promoting the Two-Child Norm.
- There are also fines such as not providing government jobs if a person has more than two children, etc. But, these might have backfired in some places leading to more sex-selective abortions, etc.

## Family Planning History

- The National Family Planning Programme was launched in 1952.
- The chief objectives of the programme were:
  1. Lower fertility rates
  2. Slow population growth as a means to push economic growth
- The programme was tied to the Five Year Plans of the government.
- Over the course of the years, the preferred method of birth control shifted from rhythm method to sterilisation and IUDs.
- In the 1970s, the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had executed a forced sterilisation programme which led to people having an aversion to sterilisation.
- By the year 1996, the family planning programme had successfully averted an estimated 16.8 crore births.

- However, there is a variance between regions in the country in family planning adoption.

## **Contraceptive services under the Programme**

1. Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs)
  - Delivery of OCPs at doorstep by ASHA. Pills are also available free of cost.
2. Condoms
  - Free brand 'Nirodh' available at government facilities.
3. Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Devices (IUCD)
4. Female sterilisation
5. Male sterilisation
6. Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)

## **Family Planning Programme Achievements**

- The fertility rate is on a decline. In 1966, it was 5.7 births per woman, while as on 2014 (latest data), it is 2.3 births per woman. This is only 0.2 less than the ideal replacement rate of 2.1.
- There is more awareness of more modern methods of contraception.
- There has been an increase in the usage of contraceptives including condoms, which are also essential to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.
- There is increased awareness of female sterilisation techniques, which are safer.
- Among educated women and high-income groups, the fertility rate is low.
- The annual exponential growth in population of the country has been decreasing, from 2.20% in 1971, it was 1.64% in 2011.