

# Sansad TV Perspective: Changing Population Dynamics

In the series Sansad TV Perspective, we bring you an analysis of the discussion featured on the insightful programme ‘Perspective’ on Sansad TV, on various important topics affecting India and also the world. This analysis will help you immensely for the [IAS exam](#), especially the mains exam, where a well-rounded understanding of topics is a prerequisite for writing answers that fetch good marks.

In this article, we feature the discussion on the topic: ‘**Changing Population Dynamics**’.

**Anchor:** Vishal Dahiya

## **Participants:**

1. Poonam Muttreja, Executive Director, Population Foundation of India
2. Prof. S. K. Singh, Head, Department of Survey Research and Data Analytics, IIPS
3. Dr. Yamini Agarwal, Professor, Indian Institute of Finance

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## **Introduction:**

- China has recorded its first population decline in several decades. According to data published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the population of mainland China was 1.411 billion people at the end of 2022, a decrease of 850,000 over the previous year.
- Last year in November when the world’s population reached 8 billion , the United Nations projection suggested that the global population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100.
- According to a UN report , sustained high fertility and rapid population growth present challenges to the achievement of sustainable development.
- In 2022, World's two most populous regions were in Asia and with more than 1.4 billion each China and India accounted for most of the population in these two regions.

- In December 2022, the Union Government in its reply to a question in Lok Sabha had said its efforts have been successful in reining in the growth of population.

**World Population:**

- Population growth is caused in part by declining levels of mortality, as reflected in increased levels of life expectancy at birth.
- Globally, life expectancy reached 72.8 years in 2019, an increase of almost 9 years since 1990. Further reductions in mortality are projected to result in an average longevity of around 77.2 years globally in 2050.
- Life expectancy at birth for women in 2019 exceeded that for men by 5.4 years globally, with female and male life expectancies standing at 73.8 and 68.4, respectively.
- For countries with continuing high levels of fertility, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to health, education and gender, is likely to hasten the transition towards lower fertility and slower population growth.
- More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- Countries of sub-Saharan Africa are expected to continue growing through 2100 and to contribute more than half of the global population increase anticipated through 2050.
- Whereas the populations of Australia and New Zealand, Northern Africa and Western Asia are expected to experience slower, but still positive, growth through the end of the century.
- The 46 least developed countries (LDCs) are among the world's fastest-growing. Many are projected to double in population between 2022 and 2050, putting additional pressure on resources and posing challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- For many countries and areas, including some small island developing States (SIDS), the challenges posed by rapid growth are compounded by their vulnerability to climate change and sea-level rise.

**Changing dynamics in India:**

- According to estimates, India currently has 1.39 billion people compared to China's 1.41 billion. India is also adding 86,000 to its population daily as against China's 49,400.
- India entered the demographic dividend opportunity window in 2005-06 and will remain there till 2055-56.
  - 25% of India's population is under the age of 15, while more than half is below the age of 30.
  - Whereas, only a fourth of China's population is under the age of 25.
  - India's median age is 28.4 years, while China's is 38.4 years.

- In 2020, around 67 per cent of India's population was in the working group compared to 64.9 percent for China.
- Although India is feeling the heat from the global economic slowdown, its GDP is projected to grow by 7 per cent in the current financial year, making it one of the world's fastest-growing economies.
- India's large population provides many opportunities for businesses to capitalise on, given its vast consumer base. The rural youth population accounts for more than 65 percent of the total population which actively generated employment opportunities, especially for the rural population.
- As per the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), India's population growth appears to be stabilising which shows that the country's national population policies and health systems are working.
- According to a recent Confederation of Indian Industry report, if India's demographic dividend was productively employed, growth prospects would brighten, helping it to leapfrog its GDP from the current \$3 trillion to \$9 trillion by 2030 and \$40 trillion by 2047.
- Therefore, India surpassing China in population should not be seen as a problem but as an opportunity for India to plan better and provide a healthy and happy life for people across the world.

#### **Effects of COVID-19 on population change:**

- Global life expectancy at birth has fallen from 72.8 in 2019 to 71.0 in 2021.
- The [COVID-19](#) pandemic has caused severe restrictions on human mobility, including international migration.
- In low- and middle-income countries, the demand for contraception, and reported numbers of unintended pregnancies and births, have remained relatively stable. In high-income countries, the pandemic has generated short-term fluctuations in the numbers of pregnancies and births.

#### **Challenges:**

- Sustained, rapid population growth adds to the challenge of achieving social and economic development and magnifies the scale of the investments and effort required to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Rapid population growth makes it more difficult for low-income and lower-middle-income countries to afford the increase in public expenditures on a per capita basis that is needed to eradicate poverty, end hunger and malnutrition, and ensure universal access to health care, education and other essential services.
  - Lack of autonomy and opportunity among women and girls can contribute to high fertility and rapid population growth.

- India's ageing population stood at 138 million and a report prepared by the National Statistical Office projected that the number of people in this demographic would rise to 194 million in 2030 — a 41% increase over a decade.
  - The big concerns on the minds of India's older population include increased cases of elder abuse, abandonment, loneliness and financial concerns.
- Demographic dividend phases do not automatically translate into economic growth, and without effective policy making, they may increase the number of people who are unemployed.
  - Unemployment would be a problem if the pace of skills development does not increase proportionately.

### Way Forward:

- A coercive and top-bottom policy like China's 2-child norm (which replaced its 1-child norm in 2016) is harmful in the long run. So, population control measures should be soft and a camp-based approach like the one seen in the 1970s shouldn't be repeated.
- Just reaching fertility replacement levels isn't sufficient because the population momentum will keep increasing the population. Thus holistic steps need to be taken to check the momentum growth of the population.
- More focus needs to be paid to enhancing the quality of life of the present population so that our [demographic dividend](#) doesn't turn into a demographic disaster.
  - In order for progress to be enjoyed equally and sustainably, the focus of population management needs to shift onto reforming the government's education, economic and social policies.
- Special focus needs to be on the groups where fertility ratios are beyond the national average.
- Information Education Communication – Behaviour Change Communication (IEC-BCC) should be an important component for a long-lasting attitudinal change via providing incentives to both the targeted person and the intermediary (ASHA workers).
- India needs to put in place public measures to address the needs of the growing ageing population. These would include attaining universal health care and improving social security systems.
- To maximise the potential benefits of a favourable age distribution, countries need to invest in the further development of their human capital by ensuring access to health care and quality education at all ages and by promoting opportunities for productive employment with relevant skills.