

1. What are the intended benefits of National Register of Citizens (NRC)? Explain. Is it a good idea to have a national level NRC? Critically examine.

Introduction

National Register of Citizens, 1951 is a register prepared after the conduct of the Census of 1951 in respect of each village, showing the houses or holdings in a serial order and indicating against each house or holding the number and names of persons staying therein.

Recently NRC was updated in Assam. The updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) was published on August 31, 2019.

Body

Intended benefits of National Register of Citizens

- Identification of illegal migrant – **The Assam accord 1985** promises to detection, deletion name from the electoral rolls and deportation of the *Bangladeshi refugees who entered in the state on mid night of March 24, 1971 a day before the Bangladesh war of freedom began*. An updated NRC is likely to put an end to speculations about the actual number of illegal migrants. Publication of an updated NRC is expected to deter future migrants from Bangladesh from entering Assam illegally.
- Curbing fake illegal voters – It will avoid the illegal immigrants from swinging elections in favour of those who promise them legitimacy.
- Resolve **crisis of identity** – Influx of immigrants has created a crisis of identity among the indigenous. Locals fear that their cultural survival will be affected, political control weakened and employment opportunities undermined because of immigrants.
- Reduce financial burden and better resource utilisation. Immigration has increased pressure on the part of state government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities to the immigrants.
- NRC also improves government data which could help in better planning and administration.
- It will also create a peaceful environment in long run, ending the role of suspicion and violence against foreigner. Just signing of Assam accord ended the six years of violence in 1985.

National level NRC is required for having a sound governmental data for effective public delivery of services and better planning and administration. However recent NRC demands arising out from different state leaders are disturbing as it may lead to rise of regionalism.

Also updating of NRC in Assam has created large number of exclusion whose deportation is a huge challenge. Further the official presumption that people residing in Assam areas are foreigners has reduced several million of these highly impoverished, mostly rural, powerless and unlettered residents to a situation of helplessness and extreme poverty, destitution, hardship. Exclusion of genuine citizen may happen especially women are in danger of exclusion from the citizenship register. Typically, they have no birth certificates, are not sent to school, and are married before they become adult.

Citizenship rights must be respected but it has to be balanced by human rights of foreigners. Likewise the feeling of Vasudev kutumbakam must be balanced by national security. Special arrangement has to be made for identified migrants such as making fresh talks with Bangladesh, allowing them to stay with reduction in rights etc.

Conclusion

The Central Government should appoint a **National Immigration Commission** to frame a National Migration Policy and a National Refugee Policy. The Commission should examine ways of strengthening the Foreigners Act 1946, as well as feasibility of Identity Cards for both citizens and non-citizens and Work Permits for migrants.

2. In the present era of machine learning and artificial intelligence, it is not sustainable to have a huge population. Do you agree? In this light, examine the imperatives to have a stringent population control policy to address the problem of poverty and unemployment.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions. And, Machine Learning is a current application of AI based around the idea that we should really just be able to give machines access to data and let them learn for themselves.

Body

Why in the era of machine learning and artificial intelligence, it is not sustainable to have a huge population?

- In the short term, there is a threat being posed to many job markets in the form of automation, and for many automation problems.

- The demand for skills linked to home appliance repair, for example, is shrinking quickly because technology is driving down the price of appliances and improving reliability.
- Mobileye of Israel is developing driverless vehicle navigation units.
- Baidu, the Chinese technology giant, is working with King Long Motor Group, China, to introduce autonomous buses in industrial parks.
- Sberbank, the largest bank in the Russian Federation, relies on artificial intelligence to make 35 percent of its loan decisions, and it anticipates raising that rate to 70 percent in less than five years. “Robot lawyers” have already replaced 3,000 human employees in Sberbank’s legal department. The number of back-office employees will shrink to 1,000 by 2021, down from 59,000 in 2011.
- Ant Financial, a fintech firm in China, uses big data to assess loan agreements instead of hiring thousands of loan officers or lawyers.

Why in the era of machine learning and artificial intelligence, huge population can be better sustained?

- There is nothing artificial about intelligence and unlike industrial automation that is actually taking away jobs globally, AI is only going to supplement human intelligence across the spectrum -- from banking to media.
- AI consists of software tools aimed at solving problems.
- ML is absolutely not about replacing humans but enhancing the experiences, as per Olivier Klein, Head of Emerging Technologies, Asia-Pacific at Amazon Web Services (AWS).
- Machines are not here to take decisions on their own and certain human emotions -- empathy, for instance - can never be automated.
- Artificial Intelligence can expedite achievement of the SDG's. For example Population Foundation of India is carrying out a project in North India using AI to give adolescents access to sexual and reproductive health information.

Imperatives to have a stringent population control policy to address the problem of poverty and unemployment

- As per the East Asia Forum report, in 2050, India's population is projected to be 1.69 billion which will be higher than that of China.
- The demand for food will double in the year 2050 and even if India manages to feed its expanding population, its growth may not be ecologically sustainable.
- Small family is good for the society and nation. It’s high time the nation debates this and brings a law if needed. Else we will soon run out of resources.

There is no imperatives to have a stringent population control policy to address the problem of poverty and unemployment

- The number of Indian women, wanting to have another baby is falling fast, as per National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16). Only 24% of the married women between 15 and 49 years want a second child. For men, the corresponding proportion is 27%, down from 49% a decade ago.
- Based on the National Family Health Surveys (1 to 4), it is estimated that in 2018, around 430 million people out of 135 million in India were a result of unplanned pregnancies. The consequences of such pregnancies are being reflected in widespread malnutrition, poor health, low quality of education, and increasing scarcity of basic resources like food, water and space.
- Incidents of unplanned pregnancies can be dramatically reduced, if not eliminated, within the next five years by simply providing reproductive services as per the needs of clients, as had been done in Andhra Pradesh during the nineties. If Andhra—with little outside help—could manage its population growth under relatively low literacy and high poverty (Literacy Rate of A.P. in 2011 was 67.7% compared to 67.1% in Rajasthan, as per 2011 Census), there is no reason why other states, especially, Four Large North Indian (FLNI) States of Bihar, MP, Rajasthan and U.P.—with lesser problems and increasingly generous support from the centre—should fail so spectacularly in managing unwanted fertility.
- Reducing incidences of unplanned pregnancies will help in achieving the national goal of population stabilization at the earliest.

Conclusion

There is no need to implement coercive measures like a one-child norm or to provide incentives and disincentives, through a stringent population control policy. The real need is to provide services in un-served and underserved areas by realigning the capacity of the health system to deliver quality care to suit the needs of clients.

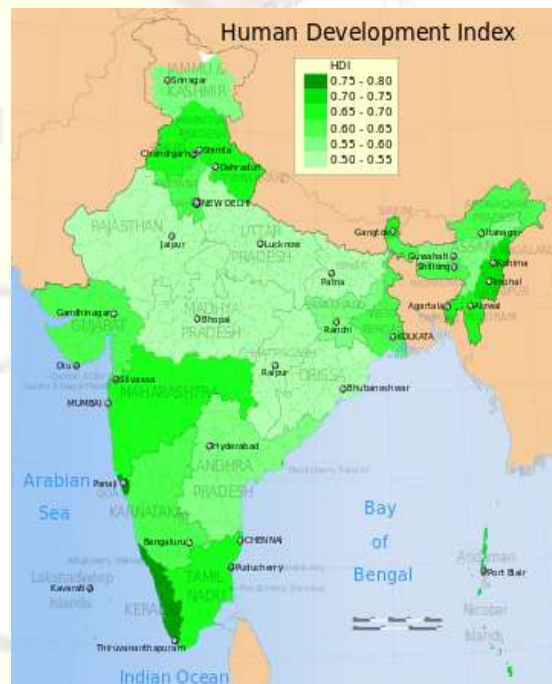
3. What are the key demographic indicators for measuring the status of human development in a state? Why do some states lag far behind on some of these indicators? Explain.**Introduction**

India with a population of over 1.20 billion is ranked 130 among 189 countries of the world in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI). With the composite HDI value of 0.64, India finds herself grouped with countries showing medium human development (UNDP 2017).

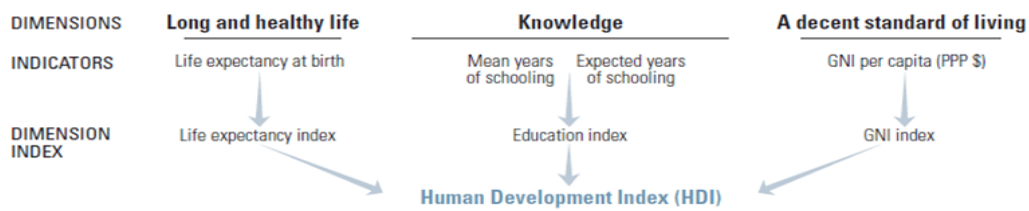
Body

1. Human development is a process of enlarging the range of people’s choices, increasing their opportunities for education, health care, income and empowerment and covering the full range of human choices from a sound physical environment to economic, social and political freedom.
2. Using the indicators selected by the UNDP, the erstwhile Planning Commission of India also prepared the Human Development Report for India. It used states and the Union Territories as the units of analysis. Subsequently, each state government also started preparing the state level Human Development Reports, using districts as the units of analysis.
3. The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development:

- a. Long and healthy life - A long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy.
- b. Access to knowledge - Knowledge level is measured by mean years of education among the adult population, which is the average number of years of education received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older; and access to learning and knowledge by expected years of schooling for children of school-entry age, which is the total number of years of schooling a child of school-entry age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the child's life.



- c. Standard of living - Standard of living is measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita expressed in constant 2011 international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion rates.



4. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar do poorly on the human development index (HDI), as smaller states Haryana and Himachal improved in the last 27 years at the same time, Industrial Gujarat and Maharashtra slipped in the HDI ranking between 1990 and 2017, while Haryana has improved the most. Southern states continue to lead the pack.
5. These variations between states in terms of human development indicators are due to multiple factors, some of which can be as seen below :
 - a. Geographical variations - India being a geographically diverse nation, it presents challenges towards achieving uniform success in HDI rankings across the states.
 - b. Economic Disparity - The states, which are economically better off, performed well in human development while the states, which were at the bottom of economic progress, also had a low level of human development.
 - c. Governance factors - The states with high HDI have well developed governance structures which facilitates implementation of programs for human development effectively.
 - d. Social factors - States with high HDI have a progressive characteristics where social indicators of development are emphasised leading to allocation of required resources to these sectors while others have a mostly feudal outlook.

Many consider that Ayushman Bharat scheme, which provides health cover to the poor, can help improve HDI value both at the national and sub-national level in the coming years if rolled out properly and rolled out across the states.

Conclusion

Thus, enlarging the range of people’s choices is the most significant aspect of human development. People’s choices may involve a host of other issues, but, living a long and healthy life, to be educated and have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, including political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect, etc. are considered some of the non-negotiable aspects of the human development and become important in the backdrop of ideals of ‘New India’.

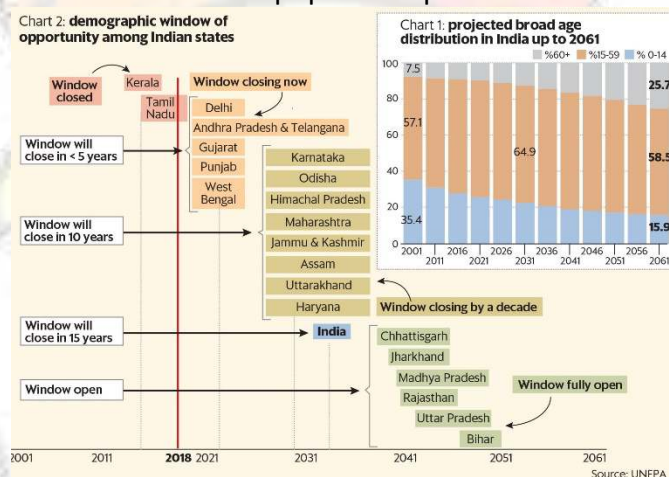
4. What is the demographic window of opportunity for India? Are we on the right track to make full use of this window? Critically examine.

Introduction

Demographic window of opportunity is said to be occurring when the ratio of the working age population is high and the dependency ratio in terms of proportion of children and elderly people low. This advantage can create the space needed to increase investments in enhancing human capabilities, which, in turn, can have a positive influence on growth and development.

Body

A study on demographic dividend in India by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) throws up two interesting facts. One, the window of demographic dividend opportunity in India is available for five decades from 2005-06 to 2055-56, longer than any other country in the world. Second, and more interesting, is the fact that this demographic dividend window is available at different times in different states because of differential behaviour of the population parameters.



1. India has entered a 37-year period of demographic dividend, which could spell faster economic growth and higher productivity.
2. As such, the government needs to engineer its policies to harness the opportunity.
3. It must also formulate policies to take care of higher medical costs as the population ages and productivity shrinks.
4. As more people live away from their parents, India will also need to have an affordable social security system that provides pension to the elderly and takes care of their daily needs and medical expenses.

India’s step towards reaping the benefits of its demographic dividend:

- Education: India is home to the world’s largest concentration of illiterate people in the world. It has made gains in human development, but challenges remain, including big barriers to secondary schooling, low-quality public services, and gender discrimination. The draft National Education Policy 2019 provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform the

current exam system, strengthen teacher training, and restructure the education regulatory framework.

- **Providing Skills:** According to the National Sample Survey, out of the 470 million people of working age in India, only 10% receive any kind of training or access to skilled employment opportunities. Recent initiatives such as “Skill India Mission” aim to train and create an employable skilled talent pool of 500 million people by 2020.
- **Nutrition mission:** Key nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions such as exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding and micronutrient supplementation are the need of the hour. Steps taken by govt: POSHAN Abhiyan: POSHAN Abhiyan is government’s multi-ministerial convergence mission with the vision to ensure attainment of malnutrition free India by 2022. It is focusing on ensuring the nutrition of children, women, and pregnant mothers in impoverished areas and the government seems to be looking at community management of the problem.
- **Employment:** Lack of jobs combined with a demographic dividend will increase the share of the population that is dependent on the working population. This will increase the economic insecurity of the elderly, as there will be fewer people generating wealth. Various schemes of govt to generate employment are MGNREGA, Start up India, Stand up India, MUDRA Bank, Din Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojana, Self employment and talent Utilisation (SETU), Atal Innovation Mission, Make in India etc.
- **Human capital:** Investing in people through healthcare, quality education, jobs and skills helps build human capital, which is key to supporting economic growth, ending extreme poverty, and creating more inclusive societies. Various schemes of govt to develop human capital are Rashtriya Uchchar Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA), National Research Professorship, PMSSY, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Mission Indradhanush, National Ayush Mission, Skill India Mission etc.

Concerns:

Technological change is making labour partially or wholly redundant in a number of sectors, across the world. Even where labour is still necessary, increasing complexity of production requires labourers to have a minimum skill level that is much higher than the skill level required during the labour-intensive output boom in China and South-East Asia in the past decades. Also, an alarming aspect of the current employment situation is that a large proportion of employees are not in a very happy situation. According to a study, nearly 40% of employed people are not satisfied with their job profiles. The major reasons for dissatisfaction cited are unsecure jobs, low salaries, stressful environment, and mismatch between job and qualification.

Another appalling concern is that a significant proportion of qualified women drop out of the workforce for reasons ranging from no suitable jobs in the locality—particularly in rural areas—to family responsibilities and marriage.

This is not only a huge loss of valuable human resource, but also has a deleterious impact on family incomes. The government of India had launched an initiative called Skill India to equip millions of people with basic blue collar skills. Even here the results will take time because the quality of primary schooling in India is very poor.

The more one thinks about it, the more difficult it is to see how India will be able to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend. A period of mass unemployment and social unrest is looming unless there is a shift, both internal and external, that at the moment is nowhere to be seen.

Way Forward

- To be able to harness the potential of this large working population, which is growing by leaps and bounds, new job generation is a must. The nation needs to create ten million jobs per year to absorb the addition of young people into the workforce.
- UNFPA advocates a differential approach in forward-looking policymaking and programme planning to harness the demographic dividend opportunity. For example, the focus in the states where the window is closing soon will have to be on ageing and migrant-friendly policies and programmes, while the focus in the states where the window is open and will close in the next 10-15 years will have to be on empowering girls and women, provisioning of health, education and skill development for young people, and employment generation. The focus in the states where the window is yet to open will have to be threefold—addressing harmful practices such as child marriage, access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and family planning services to all, and provisioning of health, education, life and vocational skills to all the young people.
- Improved infrastructure, skill development, access to easy finance, reducing barriers to entrepreneurship and forums for mentorship of emerging entrepreneurs in partnership with corporates are some of measures.
- The current situation calls for more and better schools, especially in rural areas. It also calls for better transportation links between rural areas and regional urban hubs.
- The government must also ensure better quality of jobs with a focus on matching skill-sets and job opportunities.
- There is a need to look into these qualitative issues of job satisfaction, job profile and skill matching, and the creation of opportunities for entrepreneurship in order to be able to harness the vast potential of human resources.

Conclusion

Fine-tuning the planning and implementation of schemes and programmes by factoring in population dynamics is likely to yield greater socio-economic impact and larger benefits for people.

5. What are some of the key insights derived out of India's gender demographics? What lessons can be learnt from these insights? Explain.

Introduction

India is set to be the most populous country by 20207 as per UN population report. Indian population median age is 27 years and forms a strong demographics. An ideal demographical utility for a country would be equal participation and development level of both the genders. However, the fact that India ranks 108th in WEF gender gap index depicts the improvement still needed in gender equality.

Body

Key insights out of India's gender demographics:

- Sex ratio: is 1.08(male to females) which has increased from 933:1000 in 2001 to 943 in 2011. Though, this is a good sign of decreased female foeticide and infanticide, there are still concerns on discriminated nutrition among girl child and also among women (50% of female are anemic).
- Age group: Below 65 years age group India has more males than females. However, above 65 years, females are more. This is because of the more life expectancy of females than males (71.8 for female and is 69.2 for male). It indicates that, as the country ages, the number of females would increase.
- Dependency ratio: is around 48% of the total population. However, the dependency ratio if women alone is concerned is around 70% of the total women population.
- Labour force participation: Though the participation of females is increasing, there is a gender gap and low female labour force participation (which is around 25%). Also, Gender pay gap is around 30% which shows discriminatory treatment of women at workplace (also inferred from the fact that only around 20% of top-level posts are occupied by women).
- Population pyramid: Increasing narrow base suggests an ageing population with decreasing fertility rate (which is 2.3 as per the latest government data).
- Urban population of women is less than men mainly owing to the migration pattern wherein the male would migrate to towns in search of marriage and female would stay behind in village.
- Demography is skewed in terms of its utility in entrepreneurship and participation in innovation. E.g. Only 14% of Indian women are entrepreneur. Only 24% of data scientists on India are women etc.,

Lessons Learnt:

- Importance of sex ratio and women nutrition: which also impacts the infant/new born child nutrition. Hence, the government is giving more importance to through schemes like PM Matru vandhana yojana, Mission Indradhanush

etc., Delivery is being institutionalized through schemes like Janani suraksha yojana and criminalizing sex selection, registration of births are being conducted to improve sex ratio.

- Importance of Women education: The schemes like Sukanya samruddhi, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao etc., shows that the government and the society has recognized the importance of women participation in education.
- Promotion to women employment: promotion to SHG, reservation in several government jobs etc., show that the lesson is learnt on productively using gender dynamics. Government has also recognized the problems faced by women at work place and came up with steps like Sexual harassment at work place act, SHE box, working women hostel etc., to promote employment.
- Recognition of inadequate safety to women: schemes like One stop centre, Swadhar Greh and so on aiming at providing secure environment to women so that they can develop to their potential which would help India to reap its demographic dividend.
- Women participation in science and technology, higher education is being recognized as important and is being promoted through various schemes like KIRAN scheme, Women scientist scheme and so on.

Conclusion

When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves and then ultimately the Nation moves forward. We have learnt the lesson that the country cannot progress with half its resources lagging behind and taking proactive steps to actively reap demographic benefits. Transformatory reforms are needed to bridge the gender gap and effectively reap the gender demography.