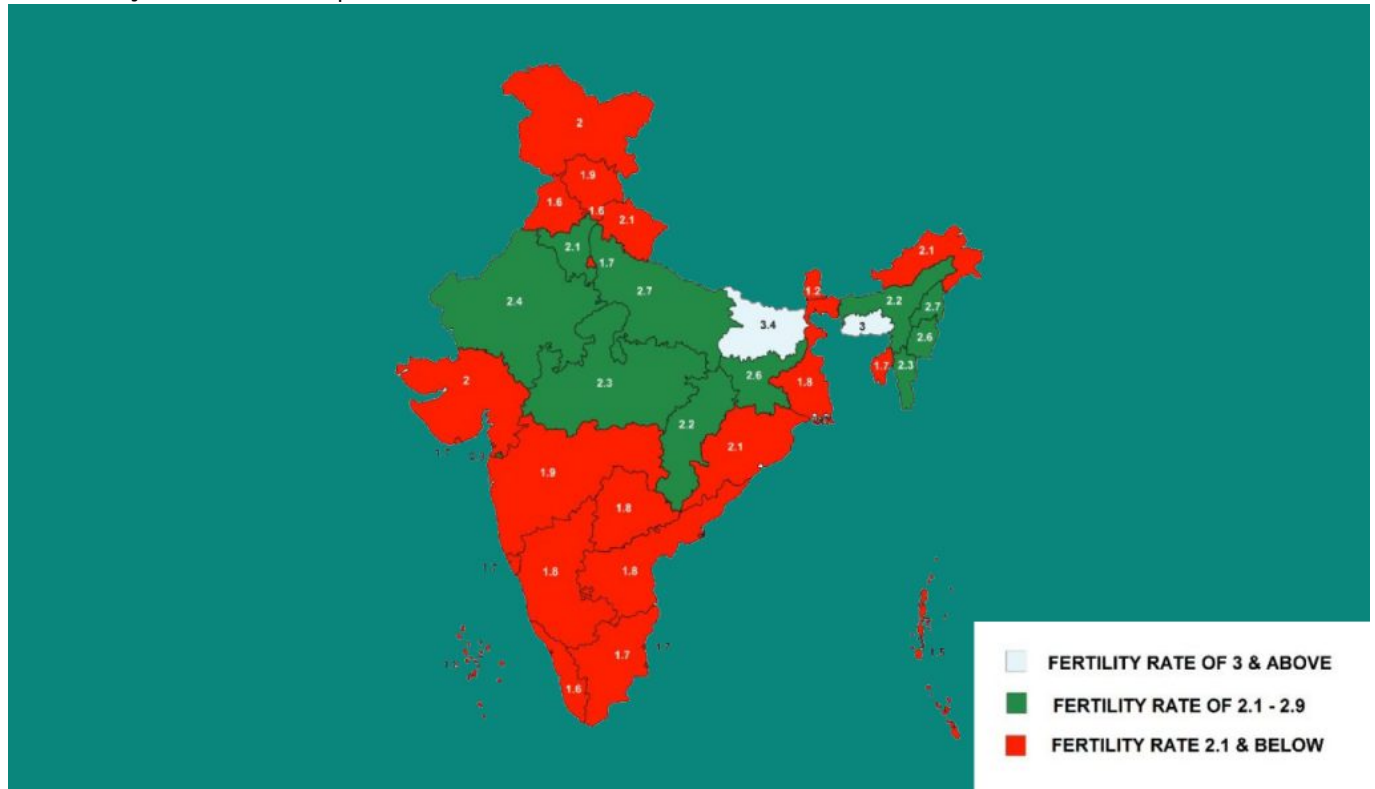


Replacement Level Fertility in India

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[GS Paper 1 - Population and Associated Issues]

Context - India has achieved replacement level fertility, with 31 States and UTs reaching a Total Fertility Rate (an average number of children per woman) of 2.1 or less, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare has informed Parliament.

About Replacement Level Fertility

- Replacement level fertility is the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next.
- In simpler terms, it denotes the fertility number required to maintain the same population number of a country over a given period of time.
- In developed countries, replacement level fertility can be taken as requiring an average of 2.1 children per woman.
- In countries with high infant and child mortality rates, however, the average number of births may need to be much higher.

- RLF will lead to zero population growth only if mortality rates remain constant and migration has no effect.

Benefits and Advantages

- RLF helps ensure greater food security. The reduced demand for food would in turn lessen agriculture's impact on the environment.
- It would also likely lead to economic benefits through a "demographic dividend."
- Finally, achieving replacement level fertility would yield significant social benefits—especially for women.

How did India achieve this?

- Between 2012 and 2020, the country added more than 1.5 crore additional users for modern contraceptives, thereby increasing their use substantially.
- India has witnessed a paradigm shift from the concept of population control to population stabilization to interventions being embedded toward ensuring harmony of continuum care.

Way forward

- Although India has achieved replacement level fertility, there is still a significant population in the reproductive age group that must remain at the centre of our intervention efforts.
- India's focus has traditionally been on the supply side, the providers and delivery systems but now it's time to focus on the demand side which includes family, community and society.
- Significant change is possible with this focus, instead of an incremental change.