

Two Children Policy

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The affidavit filed in Supreme court regarding the law making on population control needs a thought. Population in India has already crossed 130 crores. Entry 20A in the Concurrent List specifically mentions population control and family planning. One should know the pros and cons of such a law and present hurdles in framing one.

In news: The Centre has said to the Supreme Court that it cannot force citizens to have only 2 children.

Placing it in syllabus: Governance

Dimensions

1. What is the Government's stand ?
2. Two Children Policy: Advantages and Disadvantages
3. Hurdles to implement in India

Content:

What is government's stand on the issue?

- The central government has submitted in the Supreme Court that it is "unequivocally" against forcing people to have only a certain number of children in a bid to control the population.
- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** maintained that the Family Welfare Programme in India gives couples the right to decide the size of their family without any compulsion.
- The central government has said that it cannot introduce or encourage authoritative or legislative methods to control population.
- The Family Welfare Programme in India is voluntary in nature, which enables couples to decide the size of their family and adopt the family planning methods, best

suitable to them, according to their choice, without any compulsion.

- India is a signatory to the **Programme Of Action (POA) of the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994**, which is unequivocally against coercion in family planning.
- **National Population Policy 2000 and the National Health Policy 2017** are guiding documents to prioritise the role of the government in shaping health systems in all its dimensions and **achievement of Total Fertility rate (TFR) of 2.1 by 2025**.

Two Children Policy: Advantages and Disadvantages:

- Due to the Population explosion the constitutional rights to clean air, drinking water, health, livelihood and education cannot be secured to all citizens without controlling the population. The two-child policy can slow down the population growth.
- Parents will have less stress as they don't have to spend more on necessities.
- Unemployment can be reduced.
- Scarce resources can be shared well.
- The government can increase the quality of services as there are less people to satisfy.

Disadvantages:

- As people living in smaller towns and villages still follow the old traditions, the new policy would cause agitations in communities.
- In the long run it may have adverse effects such as loss of human resources.
- International experience shows that any coercion to have a certain number of children is counter productive and leads to demographic distortions. E.g. China's one child policy.

China's one child policy:

- It was introduced in 1979, modified beginning in the mid 1980s to allow rural parents a second child if the first was a daughter.
- The policy also allowed exceptions for some other groups, including ethnic minorities.
- In 2017, the country's fertility was low, at 1.6 children per woman.
- It had a declining youth population for years while the proportion of the population over age 65 has risen from about 4% to almost 10%.
- The policy also had worrying consequences for the gender balance as a desire for male children led to reported abortions and infanticide to ensure a couple's only child was a boy.
- China removed the policy in 2015, changing the law to allow couples to have two children.
- The country is now moving to remove birth restriction overall as concerns are growing over an aging population and a dropping birth rate.

Hurdles to implement in India:

- No such directions can be imposed upon states since **"public health" is a state subject.**
- It is the prerogative of the respective state government to implement the schemes envisaged by the Central government as per the prescribed guidelines.
- It is difficult to change the mindset of people in rural areas.
- As many as 25 out of 36 States/UTs have already achieved the replacement level fertility of 2.1 or less and bringing a new central law is not necessary at present.

Mould your thought:

1. Is the idea of having a two-child policy good for India.

What are the repercussions of such policy?

Approach to the answer:

- Write about the recent proposal.
- Write the advantages of such policy
- Explain the repercussions with respect to China's one child policy.
- Mention the hurdles and conclude.