PM-EAC Report on Share of Religious Minorities

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Why in News?

According to a new analysis by the **[Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PM-EAC),](#)** the percentage of Hindus in India has decreased by 7.82% between 1950 and 2015, while the percentages of Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs have increased.

What are the Key Findings of this PM-EAC Report?

- **Declining Majority Population across the World:**
  - From 1950 to 2015, as per the data collected on the religious demographics of **38** [OECD](#) **countries**, 30 of these countries experienced a **significant decrease in the proportion of Roman Catholics**, the predominant religious group.
    - In 167 surveyed countries, the average reduction of majority populations globally during the period 1950-2015 was **22%.**
    - The decline of the majority religious population was steeper in OECD countries, with an average decline of 29%.
    - **In Africa, animism or native religion** was the dominant religion in 24 countries in 1950.
      - By 2015, they are no longer a majority in any of these 24 countries in Africa.
    - In the **South Asian** region, the **majority religious group** is **increasing** while minority populations have significantly **declined** in countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Afghanistan.
- **Findings for India:**
  - **Decline in Share of Hindu Population:** The population of Hindus has declined by 7.82%. As per **[2011 census](#)**, Hindu population in India as of 2011 is approximately 79.8%.
  - **Rising Share of Minority Population:** The share of Muslim population rose from 9.84% to 14.095% and Christian population rose from 2.24% to 2.36%.
    - Sikh population increased from 1.24% to 1.85% and the share of the Buddhist population rose from 0.05%to 0.81%.
    - The Jain and Parsi community populations decreased. The share of Jains dropped from 0.45% to 0.36%, and the share of the Parsi population decreased by 85% from 0.03% to 0.0004%.
  - **Healthy Population Growth Rate:** As per the data from **[National Family Health Survey](#)**, India's **[Total Fertility Rate (TFR)](#)** is currently around 2, which is close to the preferred TFR of 2.19. TFR is a reliable indicator for projecting population growth.

- For Hindus, **it declined from 3.3 in 1991 to 2.1 in 2015, and further to 1.9 in 2024.**
- In Muslims, **it declined from 4.4 in 1991 to 2.6 in 2015, and further to 2.4 in 2024.**
  - **Equality for Minorities**: In India, minorities experience equal benefits and live a comfortable life, while global demographic shifts remain a cause for concern.
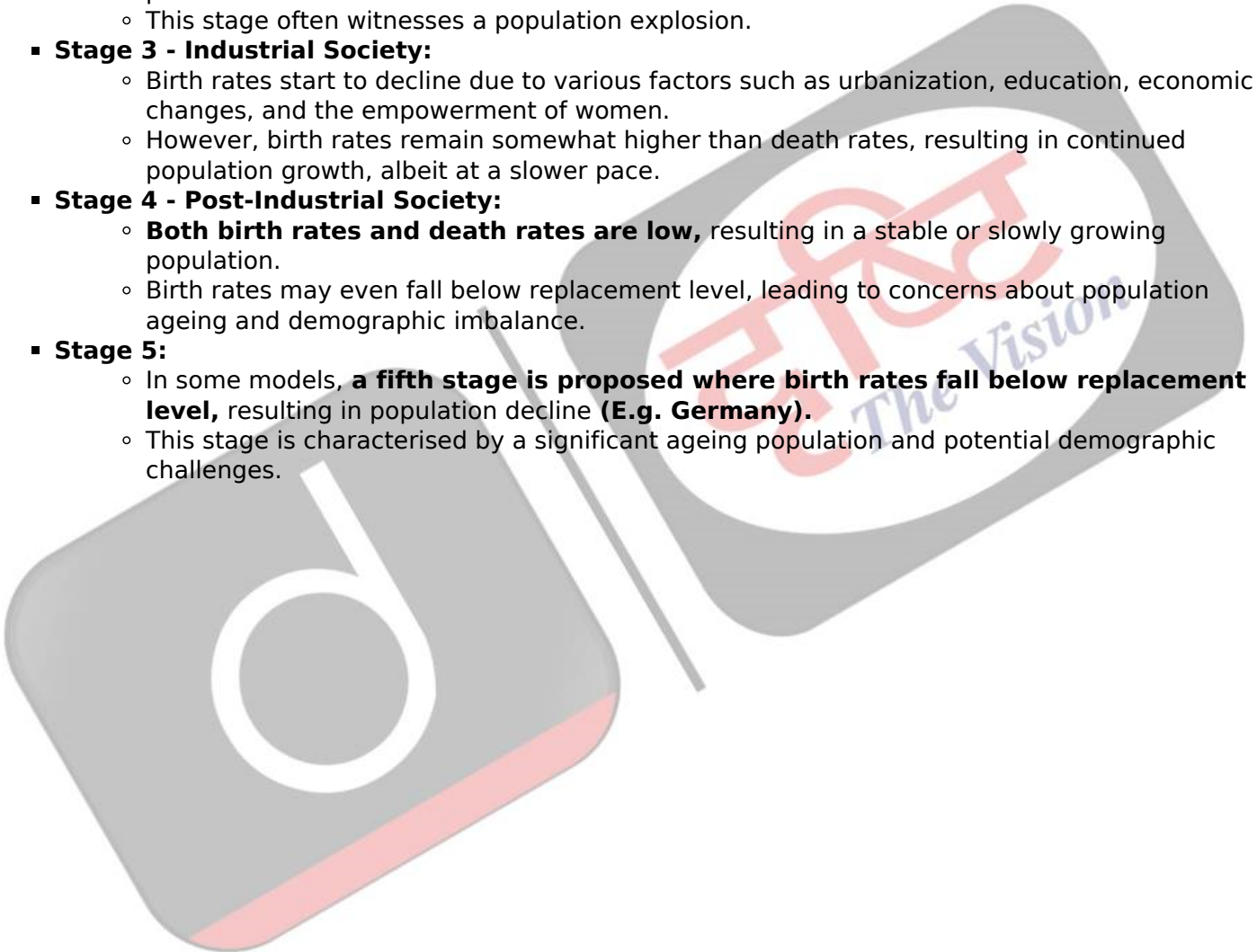
What are Demographic Patterns and its Relevance?

- **Demographic patterns**
  - It refers to the **systematic variations and trends observed in human populations.**
  - These patterns **emerge from the study of population dynamics,** including factors such as birth rates, death rates, migration, and population composition.
- **Relevance:**
  - **Understanding Population Trends:**
    - Demographic data is used to identify patterns over time. By studying birth and death rates, they **can predict population growth or decline.**
    - It is crucial for **planning infrastructure, healthcare, education**, and social services.
  - **Analysing Causes and Consequences:**
    - It investigates the **causes behind population changes.** Factors like economic development, education, healthcare, and cultural norms influence birth and death rates.
    - **Consequences include workforce dynamics,** dependency ratios (proportion of non-working age groups), and implications for social security systems.
  - **Policy Formulation and Implementation:**
    - **Healthcare:** Understanding age-specific health needs helps allocate resources effectively.
    - **Education:** Demographics guide educational planning, such as school infrastructure and teacher recruitment.
    - **Urban Planning:** Population distribution affects city infrastructure, housing, and transportation.
    - **Ageing Population**: Policies address the needs of elderly citizens, including pensions and healthcare.
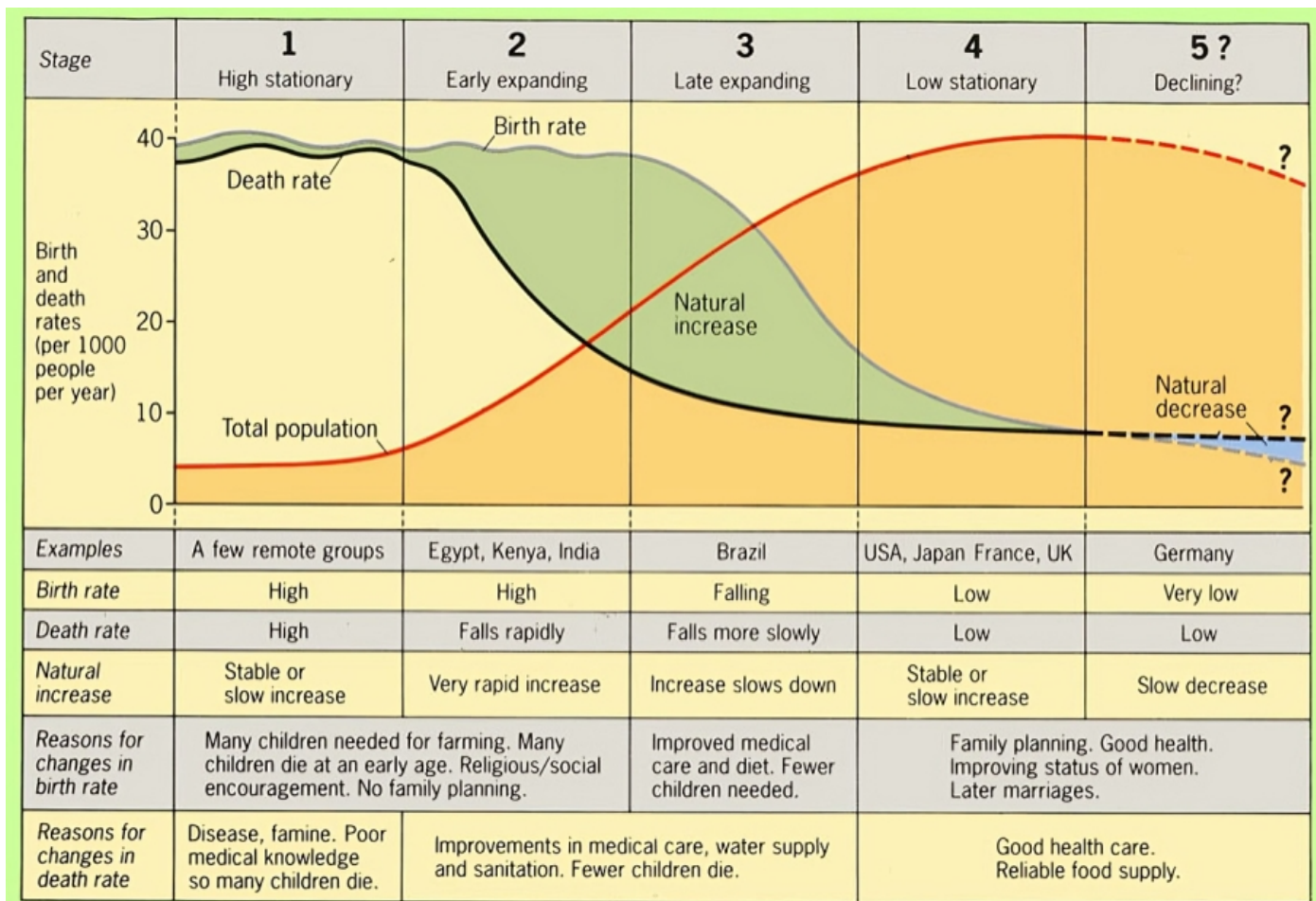
What are the Basic Population Control Theories?

- **Malthusian Theory:** It was proposed by Thomas Robert Malthus, an English economist and demographer, in his 1798 work **"An Essay on the Principle of Population."**
  - It revolves around the r**elationship between population growth and resources.**
  - **Population Growth**: Malthus argued that **populations tend to grow exponentially**, meaning they increase at a geometric rate (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, etc.), while the **availability of resources only increases arithmetically** (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.).
    - Therefore, population growth will eventually outstrip the capacity of resources to sustain it.
  - **Resource Constraints**: Malthus identified two primary constraints on resources: **subsistence (food)** and the ability of the environment to support the population **(limited land, water, etc.).**
    - He believed that as **population increased, pressure on these resources** would intensify, leading to scarcity, famine, and ultimately, a decrease in population through "positive checks" such as disease, starvation, and war.
  - **Checks on Population Growth:** Malthus classified checks on population growth into two categories:
    - **Positive Checks**: These are the natural forces that decrease population **growth, such as famine, disease, and war.**
    - **Preventive Checks:** These are **conscious decisions made by individuals or societies** to control population growth, such as delayed marriage, abstinence, and birth control.
  - However, **Malthus was ultimately proved wrong as breakthrough**s in agricultural

technology made countries, such as India, net food surplus.
- **Demographic Transition Theory:** It outlines the **process of population change** over time as societies progress through **different stages of economic and social development.**
- **Stage 1 - Pre-Industrial Society:**
    - Characterised by **high birth rates and high death rates**, resulting in a relatively stable population size.
    - Birth rates are high due to the **absence of birth control** and cultural preferences for large families.
    - Death rates are also high due to **limited medical knowledge, poor sanitation, and widespread disease.**
- **Stage 2 - Transitional Phase:**
    - Begins with industrialisation and improvements in healthcare and sanitation.
    - **Death rates decline significantly due to advances in medicine,** hygiene, and food production.
    - **Birth rates remain high initially, leading to rapid population growth** as death rates plummet.
    - This stage often witnesses a population explosion.
- **Stage 3 - Industrial Society:**
    - Birth rates start to decline due to various factors such as urbanization, education, economic changes, and the empowerment of women.
    - However, birth rates remain somewhat higher than death rates, resulting in continued population growth, albeit at a slower pace.
- **Stage 4 - Post-Industrial Society:**
    - **Both birth rates and death rates are low,** resulting in a stable or slowly growing population.
    - Birth rates may even fall below replacement level, leading to concerns about population ageing and demographic imbalance.
- **Stage 5:**
    - In some models, **a fifth stage is proposed where birth rates fall below replacement level,** resulting in population decline **(E.g. Germany).**
    - This stage is characterised by a significant ageing population and potential demographic challenges.

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Stage	1 High stationary	2 Early expanding	3 Late expanding	4 Low stationary	5 ? Declining?
Examples	A few remote groups	Egypt, Kenya, India	Brazil	USA, Japan France, UK	Germany
Birth rate	High	High	Falling	Low	Very low
Death rate	High	Falls rapidly	Falls more slowly	Low	Low
Natural increase	Stable or slow increase	Very rapid increase	Increase slows down	Stable or slow increase	Slow decrease
Reasons for changes in birth rate	Many children needed for farming. Many children die at an early age. Religious/social encouragement. No family planning.		Improved medical care and diet. Fewer children needed.	Family planning. Good health. Improving status of women. Later marriages.	
Reasons for changes in death rate	Disease, famine. Poor medical knowledge so many children die.	Improvements in medical care, water supply and sanitation. Fewer children die.		Good health care. Reliable food supply.	

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q1. In the context of any country, which one of the following would be considered as part of its social capital? (2019)

(a) The proportion of literates in the population
(b) The stock of its buildings, other infrastructure and machines
(c) The size of population in the working age group
(d) The level of mutual trust and harmony in the society

Ans: (d)

Q2. India is regarded as a country with "Demographic Dividend". This is due to (2011)

(a) Its high population in the age group below 15 years
(b) Its high population in the age group of 15-64 year
(c) Its high population in the age group above 65 years
(d) Its high total population

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q1. Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. **(2021)**

Q2. ''Empowering women is the key to control the population growth.'' Discuss. **(2019)**

Q3. Critically examine whether growing population is the cause of poverty or poverty is the main cause of population increase in India. **(2015)**

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