



# drishti

## Declining Sex Ratio and Fertility Rates

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As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) data from the Registrar General of India, the country's **sex ratio at birth** (SRB) declined to **898** in triennium (three year period) ending 2017.

- The **fertility rate reduced** from **2.3** in the year 2016 to **2.2** in the year 2017, close to the replacement level of fertility of 2.1.
- This trend is in line with the population projections by the United Nations, which have been revised downward in recent years. The year in which India will surpass China in population has been extended from 2022 (according to 2015 report) to 2027 (according to the 2019 report).
- This trend also indicates that Indians want **less children** now but want them as sons. The Economic Survey 2017-18 underlined the meta preference towards son in detail.
- It is Telangana, Delhi, Kerala along with Bihar, that have shown the sharpest worsening in sex ratio at birth in recent years.
- Though use of sex-selection techniques is the biggest cause, social norms that prefer male children is a reason behind poor sex ratio in states like Bihar whereas in urbanised states, the richer households prefer more sons due to flawed social and economic reasons.

**Note:** The SRS data also demonstrated that the proportion of economically active population (15-59) as well as old age population (60+) in India is rising. While the former constitutes 65.4 % of the populace, the latter was at 8.2 % in 2017.

### The Sample Registration System

- The Office of Registrar General (under the Ministry of Home Affairs) initiated the scheme of sample registration of births and deaths in India popularly known as Sample Registration System (SRS) in **1964-65** on a pilot basis and on full scale from 1969-70. The SRS since then has been providing data on a regular basis.
- The SRS in India is based on a **dual record system**. The field investigation under Sample Registration System consists of continuous enumeration of births and deaths

in a sample of villages/urban blocks by a resident part-time enumerator, and an independent six monthly retrospective survey by a full-time supervisor. The data obtained through these two sources are matched. The unmatched and partially matched events are re-verified in the field to get an unduplicated count of correct events.

- The **revision of SRS sampling** frame is undertaken every ten years based on the results of the latest Census.