Demographic Divergence

What is the issue?

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- There is a predominantly youthful population in northern States and a maturing population in southern and western States.
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- This has induced series of migrations which might increase in future.
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Does India have demographic divergence?

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- Most of the current and future demographic potential is locked in the northern States.
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- It is located in Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
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- As per population projections, these five States will account for more than 55% of population growth in India till 2030.
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- Those who are under 15 years of age today will become India’s working population in the coming decades.
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- Almost every second person in this age group resides in these five States.
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- The proportion of the elderly population started increasing in the southern States.
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- Now, the phenomenon has extended to the western, extreme northern and eastern States.
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- This demographic divergence between States and regions is important from the policy perspective and forward-looking development planning.
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What are the implications?

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- Southern states will require a young workforce to keep institutions functioning efficiently, and also to take care of the elderly.
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- This need is likely to be met by people from the youthful North.
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- Already the migration trend has started with established flows of young people from northern states.
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- The divergent demographic transition in the high-low Total Fertility Rate (TFR) states will add further impetus to this movement in the coming decades.
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What should be done?

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- The challenges of moving into new communities that speak different languages and have different cultures need to be understood and addressed.
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- Along with the migrants, the issues of the locals must also be appreciated.
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- There is a need to gain deeper understanding of migration flows to address the changing need for housing and infrastructure, health care and utilities, education and skills.
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- States need to work together to provide portability of identity proof and entitlements.
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- There is a need to build support systems for families left behind.
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Source: The Hindu

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