

## High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes (HLCDC) and National Security

**Mains: GS II - Polity & Governance**

### Why in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued a 'resolution' to constitute a High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes (HLCDC) to address challenges arising from demographic shifts observed across the country.

### What is the Composition and Timeline of the High-Level Committee?

- **Composition** - To ensure an intersectional approach combining jurisprudence, administration, security, and economics, the HLCDC is comprised of eminent domain experts:

Position	Member	Background / Significance
Chairman	Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar	Retired Supreme Court Judge; ensures constitutional validity and legal oversight.
Member Secretary	Joint Secretary (Foreigners-I), MHA	Provides direct executive coordination with internal security apparatus.
Official Member	The Census Commissioner of India	Brings demographic data infrastructure and statistical accuracy.
Expert Member	Durga Shankar Mishra	Retired IAS Officer; provides insights on urban governance and infrastructure stress.
Expert Member	Balaji Srivastava	Retired IPS Officer; addresses border management and law enforcement.
Expert Member	Shamika Ravi	Renowned Economist; analyzes fiscal resource distribution and macroeconomic impacts.

- **Initial Mandated Tenure - 1 Year**, the committee officially assumed its mandate following the gazette notification and is required to submit its report by May 2027.
- **Extension Provision**- The MHA has introduced a safety clause allowing for a maximum 6-month extension, strictly subject to the complexity of regional data reconciliation and field validation.
- **Maximum Lifecycle**- Under no ordinary circumstances will the committee's operational tenure extend beyond **18 months**, emphasizing the urgency of its national security directive.

**India's Demographic Scenario**

- The current demographic matrix reflects a stabilizing population with high working-age concentration:
- **Total Population - Current Status** - ~1.476 Billion.
- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR) - Current Status** - 1.9
- **Median Age - Current Status** - 29.2 Years.
- **Working-Age Share (Ages 15-64) - Current Status**- ~68%.
- **Urbanization Rate - Current Status**- ~37.6%.
- **Annual Population Growth Rate - Current Status** - 0.86%.

### What are the Key Findings & Observations by MHA?

- The executive resolution highlights several structural deficiencies in the current socio-demographic architecture:
- **Divergence from Natural Lifecycle Trends**- Population alterations in specific pockets are not lineally linked to regular fertility or mortality curves.
- Instead, they are spurred by external, abnormal catalysts like planned migration and administrative laxity.
- **Geographical Spillover**- While visually acute in border districts, the systemic tremors of these demographic anomalies are now spilling over into:
  - Tier-1 and Tier-2 urban ecosystems.
  - Strategic industrial corridors.
  - Socio-environmentally sensitive tribal belts (Vth and VIth Schedule areas).
- **Institutional Framework Gaps** - The MHA noted that existing ad-hoc mechanisms lack a well-organized, centralized, and data-driven approach to execute coordinated evaluation, monitoring, and legal response frameworks.

### What are the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Committee?

- The MHA has structured the committee's mandate to address the root causes and suggest long-term statutory corrections:
- **Causal Investigation** - To analyse variations in local fertility, cross-border infiltration routes, economic pull-factors, and environmental disruptions driving abnormal settlement patterns.
- **Structural Community Audits** - To map structural deviations among specific social or religious groups that radically diverge from uniform regional demographic trends.
- **Institutional Overhaul for Deportation**- To conceptualize a permanent, fair, legal, and time-bound mechanism for the identification, localized detention, and repatriation of illegal foreign nationals.
- **Federal Synchronization** - To build a robust policy blueprint that harmonizes the operational security measures between Central law enforcement agencies and State police architectures.

### What are the Specific administrative powers of the Committee?

- **Legislation Assessment Mandate** - Ministry of Home has tasked the committee to assess whether a brand-new, dedicated legislation is required to tackle "artificial" demographic changes, signalling potential future parliamentary bill.
- **Power of Sub - Committee** - Panel has power to independently request data, records & Secret documents from any Ministry, State Government & Individual or Public authority.

### What are the challenges and concerns associated with it?

- **Geopolitical Strains**- Implementing large-scale deportation and detention architectures risks fracturing diplomatic relations with neighbours like Bangladesh and Myanmar, who officially deny systemic illegal outward migration.
- **Federal Friction** - Since public order and police are State subjects under the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Central

directives that override local administrative control will likely trigger major political standoffs with opposition-led border states.

- **Humanitarian Violations-** Balancing aggressive internal security protocols with international customary laws, specifically the *principle of non-refoulement* (forbidding the return of individuals to regions where they face active persecution) will invite heavy judicial and human rights scrutiny.

### What is the Significance of the Move?

- **Consolidates Sovereignty-** Establishes a data-backed territorial integrity framework to counter undocumented demographic changes that challenge traditional Westphalian borders.
- **Protects Socio-Cultural Fabric -** Neutralizes local identity anxieties in culturally sensitive belts (like the Northeast, West Bengal, and Bihar) by safeguarding indigenous rights within constitutional bounds.
- **Eases Fiscal and Infrastructure Stress -** Prevents the distortion of public goods delivery models (PDS, healthcare, housing) caused by sudden, unnatural population spikes that unbalance planned state resources.
- **Plugs Internal Security Vulnerabilities -** Secures fragile border pockets against exploitation by transnational syndicates involved in asymmetric warfare, radicalization, fake currency networks (FICN), and human trafficking.

### What is the Way Forward?

- **Deploy Smart Border Grids -** Augment physical barriers with an integrated technology framework utilizing satellite tracking, thermal imaging, and LiDAR sensor to detect and intercept infiltration in real time.
- **Leverage Cooperative Federalism -** Institutionalize data collection by integrating state border intelligence, district magistrates, and Panchayats to ensure data accuracy and political non-partisanship.
- **Ensure Constitutional Compliance -** Ground all legal frameworks within the parameters of Article 21 (Right to Life and Liberty, which extends to non-citizens) to successfully withstand constitutional judicial review.
- **Digitize Civil Registration -** Accelerate the integration of a digital National Population Register (NPR) with real-time tracking via the Civil Registration System (CRS) to replace statistical estimations with hard empirical data.

### Reference

[Economic Times | High-level committee on demographic changes](#)



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