

## Lowest Fertility Rate in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Health*

### Why in News?

*The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the lowest fertility rate in India, according to the National Family Health Survey-6 recently released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.*

### Key Findings for Andaman and Nicobar Islands

- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR) Trajectory**
  - **Current Status** - The Union Territory's TFR has plummeted to **0.9**, which is less than half of the standard replacement level benchmark.
  - **Historical Trend** - This represents a steep decline over the last decade, falling from **1.4** in NFHS-4 (2015-16) and **1.3** in NFHS-5 (2019-21) to its current historic low.
- **Shift in Age Structure & Demographics**
  - **Declining Child Population** - The share of children under 5 years of age has dropped to **3.7%** in NFHS-6 from 5.3% in NFHS-5.
  - Similarly, children under 15 years now constitute just 17.5% of the population, down from 20.8%.
  - **Ageing Population** - Conversely, the proportion of individuals aged 60 and above expanded from **11% to 12.6%**, signalling a rapid demographic transition toward an older populace.
  - **Preschool Enrollment Contraction** - Paralleling the reduction in early childhood cohorts, preschool attendance among children aged 2 to 4 years witnessed a sharp reduction, dropping from **88.5% to 66.2%**.
- **Underlying Determinants of the Decline**
  - **Socio-Economic Framework** - The islands function largely as a middle-class society characterized by high literacy rates, low structural unemployment, and prominent women's education.
  - **Economic Independence** - Enhanced female labor-force participation and financial autonomy have delayed marriages and

reshaped reproductive choices.

- **Family Planning Access** - Widespread, frictionless access to modern family-planning methods and a cross-generational socio-cultural shift preferring single-child households.

### **Quick Facts**

- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** - The average number of children a woman would give birth to during her childbearing years (typically periods spanning ages 15–49) based on current age-specific fertility rates.
- **Replacement-Level Fertility** - The specific TFR level at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next without migration. Globally, this benchmark is established at **2.1** children per woman.

### **Reference**

[Down to Earth | India's lowest fertility rate](#)

