

Sample Registration System Survey

What is the issue?

- The Sample Registration System (SRS) survey data compiled by the Registrar General of India (RGI) for 2017 was released recently.
- While the total fertility ratio (TFR) of India, in both rural and urban areas, is declining, which is good news, the sex ratio is worsening.

What is SRS?

- The Government of India, in the late 1960s, initiated the Sample Registration System (SRS).
- SRS aims to provide reliable estimates of birth and death rates for the States and also at All India level.
- At present, the Sample Registration System (SRS) provides reliable annual data on fertility and mortality at the state and national levels for rural and urban areas separately.
- In this survey, the sample units, villages in rural areas and urban blocks in urban areas are replaced once in ten years

What are the highlights?

- **Birth rate** - The birth rate is the total number of live births per 1,000 in a population in a year or a particular period.
- The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) at the national level during 2017 stands at 20.2, registering a decline of 0.2 points over 2016 (20.4).
- [The crude birth rate is called "crude" because it does not take into account the age or sex differences among the population.]
- The maximum CBR has been reported in Bihar (26.4) while Kerala in the south recorded the lowest (14.2).
- In both rural and urban India, the birth rate has gone down by 1.3 points and 0.6 points, respectively.
- **Death rate** - The Crude Death Rate (CDR) at the national level stood at 6.3 in 2017.
- Chhattisgarh (7.5) recorded maximum CDR and Delhi (3.7), minimum CDR.
- The female death rate has declined by 0.5 points and male, by 1.0 points.
- Due to better health care, the all India level death rate has declined from

14.9 to 12.5 during 1971 to 1981.

- Thereafter, it has declined from 9.8 to 6.3 during 1991 to 2017.
- It has registered a decline of 0.7 points in the last 5 years.
- **Sex ratio** - Sex ratio indicates the number of females per 1000 males.
- The already skewed sex ratio in India further plunged from 898 in 2014-2016 to an all-time low of 896 in 2015-17.
- In the Population Census of 2011, it was 940 females per 1000 males.
- During the 2017 SRS survey, Chhattisgarh reported the highest sex ratio at birth (SRB) of 961.
- Haryana recorded the lowest sex ratio at birth of 833.
- **Fertility rate** - The total fertility ratio (TFR) is the number of children expected to be born per woman during her entire span of reproductive period.
- India's total fertility rate (TFR) has fallen to 2.2 in 2017 which is just above the WHO recommended replacement level of 2.1.
- The total fertility ratio (TFR) of India, in both rural and urban areas, is declining, which is a positive development.
- Factors such as improvement in education levels, especially among women, and access to healthcare and contraception for women has contributed to this.



- **IMR** - The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) registered a marginal decline of 1 point from 34 in 2016 to 33 in 2017.
- Madhya Pradesh (47) has recorded maximum IMR, and Kerala (10) recorded the minimum.
- IMR for the country has come down to 33 per 1000 live births in 2017 from 42 in 2012.
- In 2017, about 47% of the deaths were institutional and 53% received medical attention other than in institutions.
- There is a decline in rural IMR, indicating better chances of survival among rural young ones as compared to urban.
- In rural India, the decline has been to the tune of 9 points from 46 in 2012 to 37 in 2017.
- In, urban India, the decline is from 28 in 2012 to 23 in 2017.
- Both the gender have shown decline in the 2012-17 period.
- However, one out of 30 infants at the National level, one in every 27 infants in rural areas and one in every 43 in urban areas, still die within one year of life.

What is the key concern?

- As per an analysis, the declining sex ratio means 117 lakh girls are missing in the country.
- This is unfortunate, as the SRB (sex ratio at birth) had been improving over the past few years.
- It was 909 females for every 1,000 men in the 3 years ending 2013.
- More worrying, the SRB is lower in urban areas at 890 which is much lower than the 898 in rural areas.
- The SRB has risen in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Gujarat that were traditionally seen as less progressive states.
- However, a state like Kerala that traditionally had a high SRB has seen a big dip from 974 to 948.
- While the fall in fertility rate is welcome, combined with the decline in the SRB, this means there will be a continued fall in fertility rates in India.
- Therefore, over the next couple of decades, India may have to be dealing with a big dependency problem.

What lies ahead?

- The sex ratio skew hints at increasing illegal sex determination and related termination of pregnancy, despite the laws to stop this.
- A crackdown in Punjab (a state with one of the worst SRBs in the country) resulted in 60 sex-determination centres being caught so far this year.
- So, the government must realise that the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao programme needed to be re-targeted.
- It is now focused primarily on the poor and in rural areas; the problem is equally large in urban areas and among the not-so-poor as well.

Source: Financial Express, Economic Times