

Q. Though India has entered a demographic milestone, it lacks a clear path to achieve sustainable development goals. Examine.

→ India has entered a sweet spot in its demography as half of the population is under 29 years of age, which drives India starkly upwards in terms of economic and social growth.

Therefore, young people should not only be healthy and skilled but must also be provided with rights and choices to develop themselves holistically, especially, in terms of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

Lack of clear path to achieve SDGs

Despite the decline in maternal mortality ratio from 327 in 1997-2001 to 43 per 100,000 live births in 2016-18 and shifts in family planning, there has been challenges in achieving SDGs.

Examples:

* 2 million adolescent girls in the years of 15-19 has unwanted or unintended pregnancy.
(63%)

* Girls ~~are~~ married off too young before they turn 18 and have child in their first year of marriage (26-8% women aged 20-24 are married before 18 years)

* 22-2% girls aged 15-19 years had an unmet need for contraception.

Way forward:

Although Government Schemes like Beti Bachao Bet Padhao has made efforts to challenge the social norms, there has not been significant changes in the empowerment of women. India will be on a clear path to achieve Sustainable development Goals when women, (young girls, adolescent girls) have access to education, make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and provide them with opportunities and employment.