



World Population Day

Why in News

Every year, 11th July is celebrated as the World Population Day.

Key Points

- **Theme for 2020:** How to safeguard the health and **rights of women and girls amid the Covid-19 pandemic.**
 - Various reports have shown that **domestic violence** has increased globally amid the lockdown.
 - The **National Commission for Women in India** reported a huge rise in the number of complaints related to domestic violence.
 - A study by the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** says, "47 million women in low- and middle-income countries **may not be able to access modern contraceptives**" if the lockdown-like disruptions continue for six months.
 - This could result in millions of unintended pregnancies and gender-based violence.
 - Women are also hit harder economically due to the **Covid-19 crisis.**
 - Around 60% of women across the world earn their livelihood by working in the informal sector, according to the report.
- **Background:**
 - In 1989, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** recommended that 11th July be observed by the international community as World Population Day, a day **to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.**
 - UNDP was inspired by the public interest and awareness that was created by "**Five Billion Day**" on 11th July 1987 when the world's population reached 5 billion.
 - The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** seeks to create awareness about the **issues** associated with the population.
- **India's Concerns:**
 - India has just 2% of the world's landmass and 16% of the global population. It is the **second-most populous country** in the world with an estimated population of around 1.37 billion by 2019.
 - It has been reported that India will soon surpass China's population.
 - **Mismatch in birth and death rate** resulted in faster growth of population in the past few decades.
 - **Poverty and illiteracy** contribute immensely to the population explosion.
 - Children in rural areas are considered as assets, who will take care of parents at old age, also more children mean more earnings.
 - The level of female education has a direct impact on fertility, as it is evidenced that

- the fertility rate of illiterate women tends to be higher than those who are literate.
- Lack of education prevents women from having full knowledge about the use of contraceptives, of the consequences of frequent childbirth.
- Although the **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** is declining in India, poorer states like Bihar (3.2), Uttar Pradesh (3.0), Rajasthan (2.6) and Jharkhand (2.5) still have **TFRs above the national average of 2.2.**
- Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is the average number of children born to women during their reproductive years. For the population to remain stable, an **overall total fertility rate of 2.1 is needed.**
- **High youth unemployment** in India is turning **demographic dividend** into a demographic disaster for India.
- This youth potential is often referred to as the 'demographic dividend' which means that if the youth available in the country are equipped with quality education and skills training, then they will not only get suitable employment but can also contribute effectively towards the economic development of the country.

United Nations Population Fund

- It is a **subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly** and works as a **sexual and reproductive health agency.**
- It was **established as a trust fund in 1967** and began operations in **1969.**
- In **1987**, it was **officially renamed** the United Nations Population Fund but the original abbreviation, '**UNFPA**' for the **United Nations Fund for Population Activities** was **retained.**
- UNFPA works directly to tackle **Sustainable Development Goals** on **health (SDG3)**, **education (SDG4)** and **gender equality (SDG5).**
- Recently, the UNFPA released the **State of the World Population 2020 report.**

Way Forward

- Family planning is an effective tool to ensure a stable rise in the population. The government at all levels- Union, State and Local, citizens, civil societies as well as the businesses must take the onus to **promote awareness and advocate the sexual and reproductive rights of women** and encourage the use of contraception.
- There is a need for well-researched planning and implementation on how to harness the population growth for the maximum economic benefit of the society and country.
- In order to have a better future for all on a healthy planet, attainment of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to poverty, gender equality, economic growth** among others is critical.

Source: TOI