

India, with over 1.36 billion people, is currently the second most populous country and is expected to overtake China by 2027 according to the UN. Excess population brings with it adverse effects especially the burden on the limited natural resources. Birth rate is the single main factor responsible for rapid population growth in India. As an economic adviser of India, I would suggest the following steps to reduce the birth rate :

1. Emphasis on effective Education and especially female education :

This scheme is not new to the world and has shown significant results in this area over the last two decades. It has been evident through various researches that educated persons, both men and women tend to delay marriage, due to which they embrace small family norms. Educated women will be more *aware* as well as health conscious and will thus avoid frequent pregnancies. Current policies offer free education to all till age of 14 and lacks in the quality of education imparted. Students need to be educated about various problems prevailing in our society and their effects as well. Also, more emphasis is required on the sex education which is for now just limited to a couple of Biology chapters and that even in higher grades. There should be weekly classes for it, which can be enforced by making it a compulsory subject. For effective education, both government and private school teachers can be trained by professionals by various training camps and workshops. Implementing these policies will require hefty monetary investments, such as training, marketing costs etc. which can be met by increasing the share of education in budget from 3.5% to around 6% of GDP.

2. Increase Employment opportunities especially in rural areas and for women:

Rural areas suffer with the problem of disguised unemployment. Increasing employment opportunities would effectively increase their income and improve their standard of living which increases higher chances of them subjecting to smaller families. This can be done by development of transport, agro-based industries and better education and health services in rural and semi-rural areas. Employment to women would essentially keep a check on population growth as working women also lean towards smaller family norms. Providing special incentives for women in industry and subsidised and safe accomodation along with focused skill development can be implemented to increase paid employment for women. Such policies will require both direct as well as indirect costs since they involve production of various goods and services. These costs can be attributed to corresponding ministries of government.

3. Incentives for smaller family :

Family planning can be strengthened by providing incentives to small families. Free/discounted education for single poor childrens, and financial assistance to poor families having not more than two kids, can be used as an effective measure to control population in our country. Apart from direct incentives, this policy will also include marketing and campaigning costs.

All these policies are essential major reforms and require the contribution of the government as well as the citizens of the country.