

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 United Nations. Excess population brings with it adverse effects, especially the burden on the limited natural resources. The birth rate is the single primary 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 just 14 and lack in the quality of education imparted. Students need to be educated about various *problems* prevailing in our society and their effects as well. For effective education, both government and private school teachers can be trained by professionals by numerous training camps and workshops. Emphasis is also required on *sex education* which is currently limited to a couple of Biology chapters and even higher grades. There should be weekly classes for it, which can be enforced by making it a compulsory subject. 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 the budget from 3.5% to around 6% of GDP.

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

Rural areas suffer from the problem of disguised unemployment. Increasing employment opportunities would effectively increase their income and improve their living standard, which increases their chances of subjecting to smaller families. This can be done by the 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 the industry and subsidized and safe accommodation along with focused skill development must be implemented to increase paid employment for women. Such policies will require both direct and indirect costs since they involve the production of various goods and services. These costs can be attributed to corresponding ministries of government.

3. Incentives for a smaller family :

Family planning can be strengthened by providing incentives to small families. Free/discounted education for single poor children, and financial assistance to low-income families having not more than two kids, can be used as an effective measure to control population in our country. Apart from cost in 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.