

Total Fertility Rate remains constant at 2.0 in 2021: report

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The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), the average number of children per woman, in the country has remained constant at 2.0 in 2021, the same as the year 2020, according to the Sample Registration System (SRS) report for 2021 released by the Registrar General of India (RGI) on May 7.

Bihar has reported the highest TFR at 3.0, while Delhi and West Bengal reported the lowest TFR of 1.4.

The report said there had been a gradual decline in the share of population in the age group of 0-14 from 41.2% in 1971 to 24.8% in 2021. The “proportion of the economically active population between 15-59 years has increased from 53.4% to 66.2% during the same period,” the report said.

The elderly population has gone up from 5.3% to 5.9% for 65+ age group and 6% to 9% for 60+ age group during the same period.

Elderly population

Kerala recorded the highest percentage of population in the age group of 60 and above with 14.4% of the total population falling under this category. Tamil Nadu 12.9% and

Himachal Pradesh 12.3% are the other two States with the highest percentage of elderly population, the report said. On the other hand, Bihar 6.9%, Assam 7% and Delhi 7.1% have the lowest percentage of the population in the age group of 60 and above.

The mean age at effective marriage for females has increased from 19.3 years in 1990 to 22.5 years in 2021.

As Census is usually counted every 10 years, SRS is the largest demographic survey in the country mandated to provide annual estimates of fertility and mortality indicators at the State and national level. The survey was conducted in 8,842 sample units across all States, covering about 84 lakh sample population.

During the 2024 interim budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced a high-power committee to consider the challenges arising from “fast population growth and demographic changes.” Though the committee is yet to be formed, the announcement suggested there has been “fast” population growth in the country, however the SRS data says otherwise. A comprehensive pattern will emerge after the Census is conducted, pending since 2021 and which was last conducted in 2011.

“It is noteworthy that the replacement level TFR, viz. 2.1, has been attained at the national level, along with Delhi 1.4, West Bengal 1.4, Tamil Nadu 1.5, Andhra Pradesh 1.5, Jammu and Kashmir 1.5, Kerala 1.5, Maharashtra 1.5, Punjab 1.5, Himachal Pradesh 1.6, Telangana 1.6, Karnataka 1.6, Odisha 1.8, Uttarakhand 1.8, Gujarat 2.0, Haryana 2.0 and Assam 2.1,” the report said.