

Prominent means employed in India to address issues emerging out of regionalism:

- Indian Constitution lays down that India “a Union of States”, not a federation. It also empowers the Union Parliament to reorganize the states for territorial adjustment.
- The constitution of India contains a number of special provisions under the schedules five to seven for the self-governance of various tribal groups living in various parts of India. It also provides for the distribution of legislative powers between Centre and State within Schedule seven.
- Government accepted the reorganization of states based on linguistic lines.
- The right to language forms part of the fundamental ‘cultural and educational rights of minorities’ under Art. 30 of the Indian Constitution.
- Three language formula: Other than Hindi and English, states can recognize their own official language under Articles 345 & 347 (providing for 8th Schedule of the Constitution).

Other than these, recommendations of Finance commissions, grant of Special Category status to some states on the basis of deprivation and backwardness, several central schemes initiated to remove regional imbalances such as Backward Regions Grant Fund, and cooperative federalism is also being encouraged. Recently NITI Aayog has been formed to provide voice to each state.

19. There is a clear demographic divide between north and south India. Substantiate. What are the challenges and opportunities associated with this trend?

Approach:

- Briefly describe facts regarding the demographic difference in North and South.
- Discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with this trend.
- Suggest some strategies to deal with these challenges and ensure effective demographic management.

Answer:

Due to good healthcare, rising literacy and infant survival rates, a clear demographic divide has emerged between the north and south. The southern states- Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana) have achieved Total Fertility Rate (TFR) below 2 which is comparable to developed countries like the UK and Sweden.

Whereas, the TFR for Bihar in 2016 was 3.3, while for UP it was 3.1. As per the current demographic trend, the five States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh will account for more than 55% of population growth in India till 2030.

This trend poses the following challenges:

- **Inter-state migration:** In the South, there will be a dearth of young working people to keep up and expand the level of economic development. Interstate migration, if not managed properly, may generate “anti-outsider” sentiments. There is a challenge of moving into new communities that speak different languages and have different cultures.
- **The socio-economic implications** of young people heading south, leaving the increasing number of children and elderly behind.
- **Political tensions:** The growing North-South disparity has political consequences in particular to the system of political representation. Also, population as a criterion in finance commission recommendations further creates political tensions.
- **Economic growth affected:** In case of the BIMARU States, their exploding demographic growth has nullified the economic gains achieved by the States whereas the Southern States are registering significant growth rates.

However, the demographic dividend and consequent high young working population can be an asset for the nation if enough timely economic opportunities could be provided. Inter-state migration at healthy rate tends to meet demand of labour in more developed states. Thus, despite below-replacement-level birth rates, populations continue to rise in the South, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Further, the achievements of southern states can serve as role model for northern state to emulate.