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Q2(c)

How same sex marriages are responsible for population dynamics in India? Discuss

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Population Dynamics

Population Dynamics: Population size, growth, composition and distribution; Components of population growth: birth, death, migration; Population policy and family planning; Emerging issues: ageing, sex ratios, child and infant mortality, reproductive health.

Core demand of the question

- State the legal status of same-sex unions in India honestly
- **Discuss population dynamics:** fertility, household, census, urban concentration
- Do not claim a large demographic shock
- Link kinship norms and stigma to why effects remain small

Revision summary

Navtej Johar decriminalised consensual same-sex relations; **Supriyo** did not create a right to marry.

National fertility and population growth are driven by education, contraception and urban costs.

Any demographic effect of same-sex unions is small because numbers are small and many still enter heterosexual marriage.

The clearer effects are on household form, inheritance gaps and kinship ideology.

Serious analysis avoids both moral panic and the claim that queer marriage will reshape India's age structure.

Introduction

Same-sex marriage is **not** a general civil right in India today. **Navtej Singh Johar** (2018) read down **Section 377** and protected adult consensual same-sex relations. **Supriyo @ Supriya Chakraborty** (2023) refused to constitutionalise marriage, leaving adoption, succession and spousal social security largely to the heterosexual legal family. Population dynamics must be discussed from that thin legal base, not from a Western marriage-equality census.

Body

Law, kinship and numbers

India's fertility decline is driven by **female schooling, contraception, urban costs and the two-child norm**, not by queer marriage. Even where same-sex couples live together in metros, their share of households is small. Any effect on **crude birth rate or TFR** is negligible at national scale. Some couples raise children through prior heterosexual marriage, kinship care, or informal adoption; that rearranges a few households, it does not rewrite the age pyramid.

- **What can change, slowly, is the morphology of the household:** more single-person and chosen-kin units in cities, less automatic joint-family absorption of a gay adult as a "unmarried child." **G. P. Murdock's** nuclear-family universalism never fitted India well; queer households make the misfit visible. Stigma, family violence, and dependence on natal property still push many people into opposite-sex marriage, which **supports fertility more than it reduces it**.
- **Health and migration matter more than nuptiality:** HIV programmes, urban anonymity, and IT/service class cultures create visible queer scenes without moving the Sample Registration System.
- **Honest sociology:** same-sex marriage talk affects **kinship ideology, law, and middle-class identity** far more than it "causes" population increase or decrease. If Parliament or a future Court extends civil unions, the demographic imprint would still be modest beside female labour, education and urban housing.

Flow diagram

377 gone / marriage not granted -> Few legally visible couples
 Education and contraception -> Fertility decline
 Few legally visible couples -> tiny Fertility decline
 Few legally visible couples -> Household and kinship politics

Conclusion

Same-sex relations are partly decriminalised; marriage is not generally recognised. Population size and fertility are almost untouched. The live effects are on household form, legal exclusion, and the politics of kinship-not on a national birth crisis or boom.

Facts & figures

Navtej Singh Johar (2018)

Supreme Court decriminalised consensual adult same-sex relations by reading down **Section 377**.

Supriyo (2023)

Supreme Court declined to read a fundamental right to same-sex marriage into the Constitution; left reform to the legislature.

TFR

India's fertility is near or below replacement in many states for reasons unrelated to queer nuptiality.