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## KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND CONFLICT

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

The small island of Katchatheevu has become a source of tension between India and Sri Lanka, highlighting the challenges of managing fishing rights and maritime borders in the region.

### ABOUT KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND

- Katchatheevu, a **285-acre deserted landmass situated in the Palk Strait** between India and Sri Lanka, lies northeast of Rameswaram, about 33 km from the Indian shoreline and approximately 62 km southwest of Jaffna, Sri Lanka's northernmost point. It was **formed as a result of volcanic activities during the 14th century**.
- The island **lacks essential resources like drinking water, making it unsuitable for permanent human habitation**. The **only construction on Katchatheevu is St. Anthony's church**, a Catholic shrine established in the early 20th century. Annually, Christian clergy from both nations conduct a festival service there, drawing devotees from India and Sri Lanka.



## HISTORY OF THE ISLAND

- **During British colonial rule**, the 285-acre territory was **jointly administered by India and Sri Lanka**. Katchatheevu island was owned by the Raja of Ramnad, which eventually became part of the Madras Presidency.
- **In 1921, both India and Sri Lanka asserted ownership over the island** for fishing purposes, leading to an ongoing dispute.
- Following India's independence, efforts were made to address the territorial dispute between Ceylon and the British. Presently, Sri Lanka administers the uninhabited island.

## WHAT IS THE CONFLICT AROUND KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND?

- For decades, the waters surrounding Katchatheevu Island served as a shared bounty for Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen. This **harmonious dynamic shifted dramatically in the 1970s with the signing of a series of maritime boundary agreements** between the two nations.
- These agreements, intended to establish clear maritime borders and facilitate resource management, inadvertently sowed the seeds of conflict.
- **Shifting the control:** A key point of contention is the ownership of Katchatheevu Island itself. **In 1974, India ceded control of the island to Sri Lanka under the "Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime Agreement."** While Indian fishermen retained limited access to resting and drying nets, their fishing rights were restricted.
- **Limited Fishing Zone:** The agreements carved out exclusive economic zones (EEZs) for each country, restricting fishermen from venturing into the other's territory. This posed a challenge for Indian fishermen, particularly as fish stocks in their own waters dwindled.
- **Depleting resources:** Depleted fish populations within the Indian continental shelf pushed Indian fishermen further into Sri Lankan waters in search of better catches. This influx raised concerns about overfishing and the potential ecological damage caused by modern fishing practices like trawling.
- **Strain in diplomatic relations:** The increased presence of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters has led to numerous incidents of apprehension by Sri Lankan authorities. This ongoing friction strains diplomatic relations and jeopardises the livelihoods of fishermen on both sides.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S AND TAMIL NADU'S STANDS.

### TAMIL NADU'S CLAIM ON KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND

- Tamil Nadu has a long history of contesting the ceding of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka. As early as 1973, the state's Chief Minister argued that the island rightfully belonged to India, not just Tamil Nadu.
- The issue flared up again in 1991. The then Chief Minister initially called for reclaiming the island entirely. Later, the demand softened to a request for a long-term lease (perpetual lease) of Katchatheevu.
- Notably, both the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in Tamil Nadu joined forces to approach the Supreme Court on this matter.

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

- The Indian government's stance centres around the **1974 and 1976 agreements** that established the maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka. In 2013, **they argued before the Supreme Court that the question of reclaiming Katchatheevu was irrelevant.** They

maintained that these agreements were settlements of historical disputes and no Indian territory was ceded in the process.

- However, the central government's position seems to acknowledge some nuance. While citing the same agreements in 2022, **they clarified in the Rajya Sabha that Katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the established maritime boundary.**
- The central government's position seems to be that the agreements are valid and the island belongs to Sri Lanka. However, the legal challenge by Tamil Nadu is still pending in the Supreme Court. This indicates that the domestic debate on Katchatheevu is far from settled.

## PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTIONS

### Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The value of Indo-Sri Lanka trade has consistently increased in the last decade.
2. "Textile and textile articles" constitute an important item of trade between India and Bangladesh.
3. In the last five years, Nepal has been the largest trading partner of India in South Asia.

### How many of the statements above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Answer: A**

### Q2. Consider the following pairs:

- | Regions      | Country     |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Catalonia | Spain       |
| 2. Crimea    | Hungary     |
| 3. Mindanao  | Philippines |
| 4. Oromia    | Nigeria     |

### How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Answer: B**

## MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

**Q1. Assess the potential socio-economic consequences of resolving the dispute over Katchatheevu Island for the livelihoods of fishermen and the diplomatic relations between India and Sri Lanka.**

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# THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION- OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION- OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

*This article covers 'Daily current affairs' and the topic details 'Demographic transition in India' and its impact on the country and the challenges which it poses in the long run. This topic has relevance in the Society, social justice and Economy section of GS1, GS2 and GS3 of UPSC CSE exam.*



### WHY IN THE NEWS?

The UN population division estimates the population close to 1.7 billion by 2065 before it starts declining. It will also accompany a demographic transition which is going to provide various opportunities and challenges for the country which we must prepare for.

Recently, the LANCET report has highlighted India's total fertility rate to decline to 1.29 by 2051. Though it is much higher than estimated by UN or NFHS surveys, but, it highlights interesting pictures about the population dynamics. This highlights our population will stabilize at the 1.7 billion mark much before 2065.

### FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION (DT)

Several factors have triggered DT in India:

**Rapid economic growth**– An important **transition** in the economic history of countries occurs when they move from a regime of low prosperity, high child mortality and high fertility to a state of high prosperity, low child mortality and low fertility. Same thing is happening in India.

**Low infant and child mortality rates-** reducing need for having a large family for old age support.

**Rise in levels of women's education and workforce participation-** various studies had suggested an inverse relation between women's education and fertility rates.

**Late marriages-** Combined with rising levels of education it leads to reduction in child bearing years and hence lower fertility rates.

**Increase mobility-** Increasing urbanization has led to higher numbers of people living in urban areas and hence change in patriarchal norms. Also, in urban areas couples prefer other aspects of life.

### **IMPACT OF DECLINE IN FERTILITY RATE**

The decline in TFR has manifold impact:

**Fall in Dependency ratio-** As new births have reduced so the number of dependent population also reduces. It also leads to a larger proportion of working adults in the economy **boosting economic growth** and surplus income, which can further invest in infrastructure, skill development and education.

#### **Increase in Labor productivity**

- Decline in population growth leads to increase in resources and infrastructure available in per capita terms.

-Reallocation of resources for skill development and education

-Increasing the proportion of the labor force in a population.

**Enhancing educational outcomes-** as the number of children enrollment in primary education reduces.

**Positive intergenerational transfers-** families allocating resources for children for better education and skill development.

**Women empowerment-** As women's educational years increase, it leads to higher levels of literacy and financial independence. It also helps tackle the problem of various patriarchal barriers.

### **CHALLENGES OF DECLINING FERTILITY RATE**

**Increase in dependency ratio in long term-** while fall in TFR leads to initial surplus income but higher number of elderly population in the long term.

**Labor force shortage-** a declining workforce due to low TFR can lead to lower economic production. Industries may face shortage of skilled workforce, or increase in labor cost, acting as a disincentive for foreign investors.

**Social support network-** smaller families means less people for mentoring and caregiving and emotional support.

**Better healthcare and social security network-** aging population requires better healthcare facilities and social security which is major concern in India.

**Economic Implications:** A shrinking workforce affects tax revenues, social security contributions, and economic stability.

In this regard, policymakers have to take appropriate actions to reap the demographic dividend by focusing on social expenditures and building capabilities. Also recognizing the challenges in the future related to aging population and building a holistic approach should be the way forward.

### **Prelims question**

**Consider the following statements:**

1. India's TFR has passed the replacement level.
2. The TFR in rural areas is lower than in urban areas.
3. There is a negative correlation between TFR and women's level of education.

Which of these statements are correct.

1. Only 1
2. Only 2
3. Only 3
4. None

**Answer 2**

### **Mains question**

Demographic transition in India presents it with a myriad of opportunities and challenges. Discuss.