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MAINS 2027 EDITION

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UPSC CSE MAINS

GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL

PAPER I
Human Geography

+

PAPER II
Indian Geography

Cultural Setting Notes

Cultural Setting of Paper II with the demographic topics of Paper I, checked against the official syllabus and PYQs. Population theories: see Population Geography.

Compiled by Arvind KrS

INDIAN SOCIETY · TRIBES · CULTURAL REGIONS · DEMOGRAPHY · MIGRATION · POLICY

27	7	122	98
Chapters	Units	Previous year questions	Diagrams and figures



IN THIS BOOK

01 Indian Society and its Diversity

02 Tribes and Tribal Areas

03 Culture and Cultural Regions

04 Growth, Distribution and Density

05 Demographic Attributes

06 Migration

07 Population Problems, Policies and Health

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Geography Optional — Cultural Setting

Paper I + Paper II · Human Geography + Indian Geography

Mains 2027 Edition · Compiled November 2026

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Questions or corrections: support@lotusarise.com

The outline map of India on the cover and on the chapter and unit pages is decorative and not to scale.

How to read these notes

Every chapter is marked against the questions UPSC has actually asked on it, so the points that matter most stand out on the first read and are quick to find at revision.

Language shapes the map of States, education, administration and politics.

Yellow marker: key point. A point that carries the ideas UPSC has asked about in this chapter. Read these first, and make sure each one is in your answer.

Race is a biological idea: groups of people distinguished by inherited physical traits or, today, by shared genetic ancestry.

Blue marker: definition. The cleanest definition of a term, ready to open an answer with.

Identity and belonging: language marks **social and regional identity** and holds ethnic and regional groups together.

Saffron underline: PYQ term. A key term or phrase that appears in this chapter's previous year questions.

Language and Linguistic Diversity

PYQ 2022 · 2018 · 2017 +4

PYQ tag on a heading. The years in which UPSC asked about this section. Sections without a tag are background or linking material.

PYQ RADAR **13** questions Last asked **2024**

PYQ radar. At the start of each chapter: how many times the topic has been asked, and how recently. The contents page shows the same count for every chapter.

Suggested method. First read: the whole chapter. Revision: the yellow and blue marks, the tagged headings and the PYQ list at the end of the chapter. Last week before Mains: the PYQ list alone, answering each question in your head from the marked points.

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Tribes and Tribal Areas

Paper II: *Major tribes, tribal areas and their problems.*



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GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL | PAPER I + II · CULTURAL SETTING

Tribal Areas and their Problems in India



PYQ RADAR **13** questions Last asked **2024**

2024 · 2022 · 2020 · 2016 · 2013 · 2012 · 2006 · 2005 · 2002 · 1998 · 1995 · 1992 · 1989

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01 Tribal Areas
02 Problems of Tribal People
03 Tribal Development Policy
04 Previous Year Questions

- **Tribal areas** are the **contiguous regions** where Scheduled Tribes live in large numbers and form the majority or a large minority: the hills, forests, plateaus and islands of the tribal belt.
- They are both **cultural regions** and **administrative units**: the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution give many of them special forms of government.
- Their people share common **problems**: land alienation, displacement, indebtedness, poor health and education, and threats to identity. A long line of **policies** has tried to address them, from the Tribal Sub-Plan (1974) to PESA (1996), the Forest Rights Act (2006), PM-JANMAN (2023) and the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (2024).

01 Tribal Areas

PYQ 2024 · 2020 · 2016 +9

The Tribal Belt

- **India's tribal belt** is the set of **contiguous areas of tribal settlement**: groups that remained genetically and culturally distinct, unlike population groups that mixed widely across the subcontinent.
- The ST population is a numerical minority but **enormously diverse**. Tribes differ in:
  - language, physical features and population size;
  - their **ecological setting** and mode of livelihood;
  - the extent of **acculturation**, level of development and social stratification.

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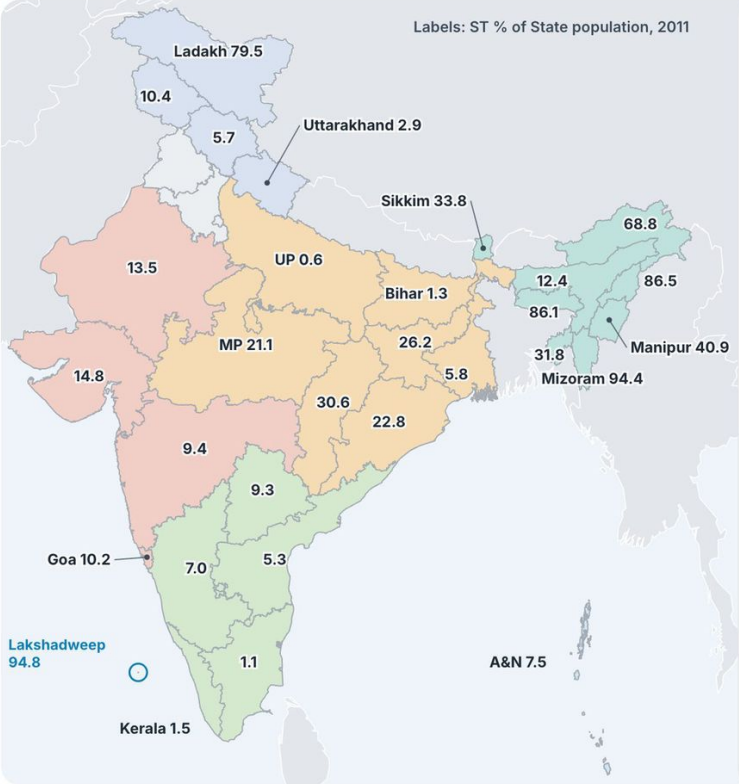
- **India's tribes** have **distinct cultures and histories**. They also share much with other **marginalised groups**: weak political representation, economic deprivation and cultural discrimination.
  - Tribal societies hold **knowledge systems** from which the rest of society has much to learn.
- **"Tribe" is a socio-cultural category; "Scheduled Tribe" is a politico-administrative one.**
- **Five tribal regions** (share of India's STs, Census 2011):
  - **Central and eastern belt (47%):** the Chotanagpur plateau, Bastar, the Satpura–Vindhya and Maikal hills and the Odisha highlands; Gond, Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Ho and Khond country.
  - **Western belt (28%):** the Aravalli, Satpura and the northern Sahyadri in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra; Bhil, Mina, Warli and Kokna.
  - **North-eastern region (12%):** the Purvanchal hills, the Meghalaya plateau and Arunachal Pradesh, where STs are a majority in Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.
  - **Southern region (11%):** small, scattered groups in the Western and Eastern Ghats and the Nilgiris, with many PVTGs.
  - **Himalayan north (2%) and the islands:** pastoral groups of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand; the hunter-gatherers of the Andamans.

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CULTURAL SETTING · TRIBAL AREAS

India's Tribal Belts

Three-quarters of India's STs live in the central and western belts; the north-eastern hills hold far fewer but are tribal-majority.



Where India's STs live, by region

Share of India's 10.45 crore STs (%)

Central and eastern	47.0
Western	27.7
North-eastern	12.1
Southern	10.9
Himalayan north	2.1
Islands	0.1

STs as % of each region's population

Central and eastern	8.6
Western	11.9
North-eastern	27.7
Southern	4.6
Himalayan north	7.4
Islands	20.1

Contrast — Central belt: numerical dominance; North-east: proportional dominance

Districts — 90 of 640 had an ST majority; Alirajpur 89.0%, Jhabua 87.0%

Central and western belts
- Plateaus, forests and hills
- Three-quarters of all STs
- Mineral wealth, mass displacement

North-east
- STs a majority in four States
- Sixth Schedule councils
- Jhum, terraces, clan land

Outside the belts
- Indo-Gangetic plains, far south
- No STs in Punjab, Haryana,
- Delhi, Chandigarh, Puducherry

Census 2011, Primary Census Abstract; regions grouped by State; post-2011 States/UTs built from their 2011 districts. Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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Distribution of Tribes

- **705 communities** were notified as STs in **30 States and UTs** (Census 2011).
- **Census 2011:**
  - The ST population was **10.45 crore**, or 8.6% of India; 90% rural.
  - Decadal growth 2001–11 was **23.7%**, against 17.7% for the whole population.
  - The ST **sex ratio** was 990, against 943 for India.
- **Two great concentrations: central India and the north-east.**
  - **More than half** of all STs live in central India: Madhya Pradesh (14.7% of India's STs), Maharashtra (10.1%), Odisha (9.2%), Rajasthan (8.9%), Gujarat (8.6%), Jharkhand (8.3%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%) and Andhra Pradesh–Telangana (5.7%).
    - The first seven of these alone hold about two-thirds of India's STs.

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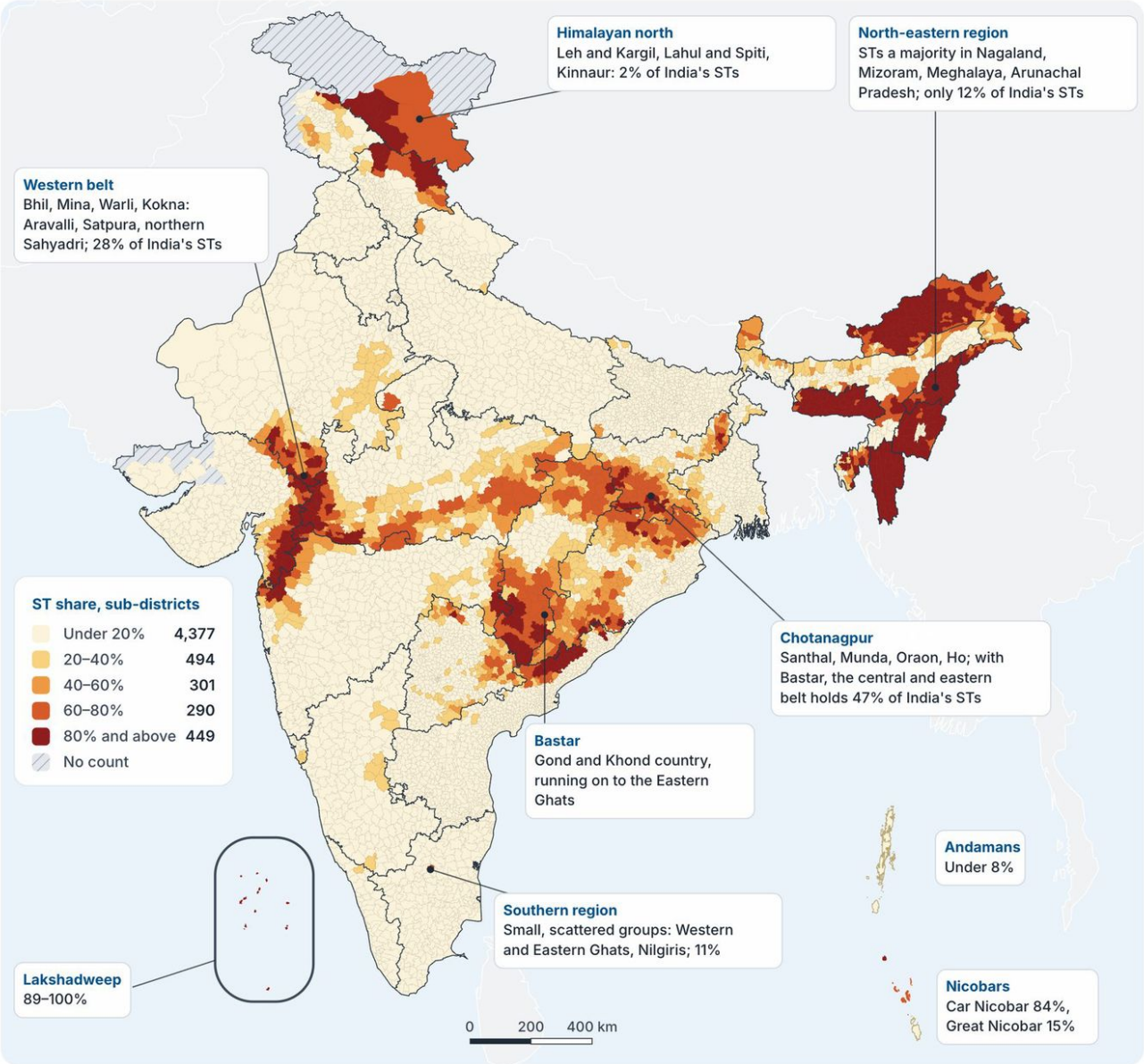
  - The north-east (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh) has the **highest shares** but only 12% of the numbers.
  - Elsewhere: West Bengal (5.1%), Karnataka (4.1%), Assam (3.7%) and Meghalaya (2.5%). All other States and UTs together hold 11.6%.
- **No ST is notified** in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh or Puducherry.
- **Districts:** STs form a majority in **90 districts** (2011), from Alirajpur and Jhabua to Bastar, Gumla and the hill districts of the north-east.
- The determinants of this pattern belong to the **spatial patterns of caste and tribe composition**: **relief, forest cover, historical refuge** and distance from the agrarian plains.

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CULTURAL SETTING · TRIBAL AREAS

Scheduled Tribe Share by Sub-district, Census 2011

Two great concentrations, central India and the north-east, stand out against a low-share plain and peninsula.



Hatched: no population counted (Rann of Kachchh), or under Pakistani and Chinese occupation and not enumerated. No ST is notified in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh or Puducherry. Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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Scheduled Areas: The Fifth Schedule

- **Scheduled Areas** are "such areas as the **President may by order declare**" (Fifth Schedule, under Article 244(1)).
- **Criteria** used for declaration:
  - **preponderance of tribal population**;
  - **compactness** and reasonable size;
  - a **viable administrative unit** (a district, block or tehsil);

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  - **economic backwardness** compared with neighbouring areas.
- **Ten States** have Scheduled Areas: Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana.
  - The Scheduled Areas cover about **11.3% of India's land area**.
  - Some cover **whole districts** (13 districts in Jharkhand), others only blocks or villages.
- **Special powers:**
  - The **Governor** may direct that any law of Parliament or the State shall not apply to a Scheduled Area, or apply with changes.
  - The Governor may make **regulations** for peace and good government, especially to prohibit transfer of tribal land, regulate allotment of land and control moneylending.
  - The Governor **reports to the President** on the administration of these areas. The Union may give directions to the State.
- **Tribes Advisory Council (TAC):** up to **20 members**, three-fourths of them ST members of the State Assembly. It advises on ST welfare. States with STs but no Scheduled Areas may also be directed to form one.
- **PESA (1996)** extends Panchayati Raj to these areas with **powers for the gram sabha**.

The Sixth Schedule

- The Sixth Schedule (**Article 244(2) and Article 275(1)**) applies to tribal areas of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
- It **protects tribal populations and gives them autonomy** through **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** and Regional Councils.
  - Each ADC normally has up to **30 members** (the Bodoland council has 46), most of them elected. It has legislative, executive and judicial powers.
  - It can make laws on **land, forests, water, shifting cultivation, village administration, public health and sanitation, inheritance, marriage and social customs**. The State can entrust it with agriculture. It can run village courts, collect some taxes and set up schools and dispensaries.
- **Ten autonomous councils exist:**

STATE	AUTONOMOUS COUNCILS
Assam	Bodoland Territorial Council, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao
Meghalaya	Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills
Tripura	Tripura Tribal Areas ADC
Mizoram	Chakma, Lai, Mara

- Other north-eastern States protect tribal custom and land through **Article 371** instead: **371A** for Nagaland, 371C for Manipur's hill areas, 371F for Sikkim and 371H for Arunachal Pradesh.

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- **Ladakh**, with an ST majority, has sought inclusion in the Sixth Schedule since becoming a Union Territory in 2019.

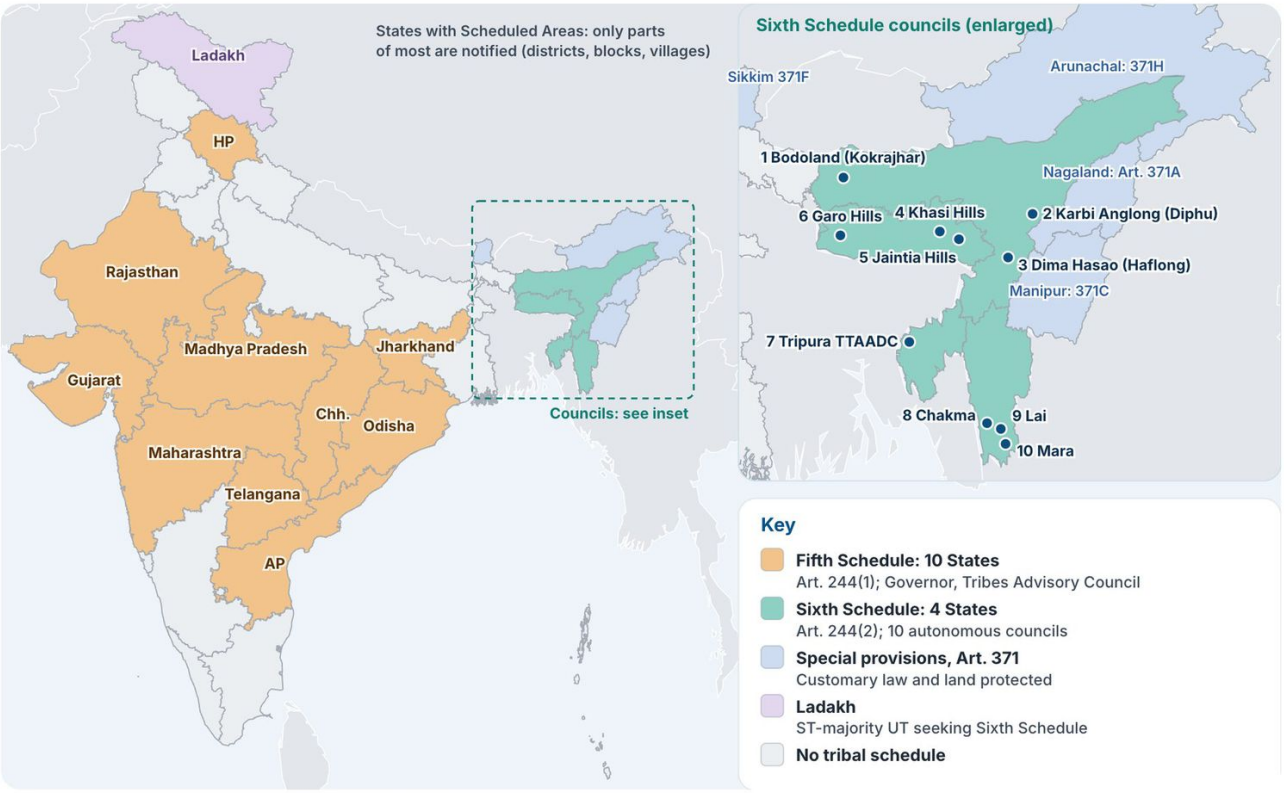
FEATURE	FIFTH SCHEDULE	SIXTH SCHEDULE
Article	244(1)	244(2), 275(1)
Where	10 States of mainland India	Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram
Key body	Tribes Advisory Council (advisory)	Autonomous District Council (legislative)
Who controls	Governor and State government	Elected tribal council
Self-rule	PESA gram sabhas	Customary law and council laws

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CULTURAL SETTING · TRIBAL AREAS

Fifth and Sixth Schedule Areas

Mainland tribal areas are governed through the Governor under the Fifth Schedule; four north-eastern States have elected autonomous councils under the Sixth.



Fifth Schedule areas
- Declared by the President
- Governor can bar or adapt laws
- PESA gram sabhas since 1996

Sixth Schedule councils
- Elected, with law-making powers
- Land, forest, jhum, customs
- Village courts and local taxes

PESA rules (2026)
- Notified in 9 of 10 States
- Jharkhand: 2 January 2026
- Odisha: draft rules only

States shaded where any area is scheduled; Fifth Schedule Areas cover parts of most of these States. Council points mark headquarters. Ministry of Tribal Affairs; Ministry of Panchayati Raj (PESA rules, Aug 2026). Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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02 Problems of Tribal People

PYQ 2020 · 2016 · 2006 +4

Nature of the Problems

- Tribes are generally **backward economically and educationally**, but the situation **varies**:
  - In the **north-east**, the tribes have high politicisation, higher literacy and a better standard of living than in other regions. The region's problems are more about ethnic conflict, insurgency and autonomy.
  - In the **mainland** (central India), poverty, unemployment, indebtedness and land loss are acute. Plains landlords and moneylenders steadily replaced tribal landowners.

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- A survey by **B. K. Roy Burman (1972)** found tribes the most backward group, mainly through **low literacy and a subsistence economy**.
- Problems differ in degree between:
  - hill tribes and plains tribes;
  - forest-based groups and settled farmers;
  - those who are Hinduised or Christian and those who keep a traditional way of life.
- **Shyama Charan Dube (1982)** classified Indian tribes by their **contact with non-tribal society**:
  - aboriginals living in **seclusion**;
  - tribes **associated with neighbouring non-tribal society** but keeping their distinctiveness;
  - tribes living in **villages alongside castes and sects** while keeping their identity;
  - tribes **degraded to the status of untouchables**;
  - tribes that enjoy **high social, economic and political status**.
- The common problems are **poverty and exploitation**, **economic and technological backwardness**, socio-cultural handicaps and the difficulty of assimilation with the non-tribal population.

Social Problems

- **Illiteracy and educational deprivation:**
  - In **1991**, about 70% of STs were illiterate. In 2011, ST literacy (59.0%) was still well below the national 73.0%.
  - Causes:
    - poverty, which pushes children into work;
    - nomadic or semi-nomadic life in some groups;
    - language barriers, since teaching is often in a language the child does not speak;
    - an irrelevant curriculum;
    - few schools and teachers in remote areas;
    - low awareness of the value of schooling, with superstition and prejudice against it.
  - Backwardness is worst in the **remote, forested and hilly** areas, a sign of spatial isolation.

LITERACY (%)	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
All persons	28.3	34.5	43.6	52.2	64.8	73.0
STs	8.5	11.3	16.4	29.6	47.1	59.0
All females	15.4	22.0	29.8	39.3	53.7	64.6
ST females	3.2	4.9	8.0	18.2	34.8	49.4

- **Gender gaps:**
  - Tribal women face **dual marginalisation**. Female literacy (49.4%) is far below male literacy (68.5%).

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- Girls drop out because of **housework, early marriage** and the lack of nearby schools and toilets.
- Women traditionally enjoyed **better status** than in caste society, but modernisation has eroded it.

- **Health and nutrition** (NFHS-5, 2019–21):
  - **Infant mortality 41.6** and under-five mortality 50.3 per 1,000 among STs, against 28.0 and 32.8 for the "other" group.
  - About **40%** of ST children are stunted, and 64.6% of ST women are anaemic (India: 57.0%).
  - Malaria, tuberculosis and **sickle cell disease** are concentrated in tribal belts.
  - Causes: remote facilities, food insecurity, low awareness of hygiene and preventive care, and reliance on **traditional healers (ojha, kabiraj)** and quacks, not linked with modern medicine.
- **Changing roles of women:**
  - **Deforestation** lengthens the walk for fuelwood, fodder and water.
  - **Mining and commercialisation** bring wage work but also exploitation and consumerism. Old gender roles are disrupted without support systems.
- **Assimilation and loss of identity:**
  - Contact with dominant cultures brings **loss of traditional practices**, internal stratification and intra-tribal inequality.
    - Its roots lie in colonial policy, unequal entry into the market and uneven exposure to modernisation.
  - **Customary institutions** and indigenous knowledge decline. Many tribal languages are endangered.
  - Conflict between **customary systems and modern law** creates insecurity.
  - Those displaced from their land are **not absorbed** into the modern economy. The result is pauperisation and loss of social support.
- **Alcohol:**
  - Rice beer and mahua liquor have long been part of **ritual and social life**. About **51% of ST men** drink, against about 30% of other men.
  - The shift from home brews to **commercial liquor** brings health risks, domestic violence and a drain on income.
  - Prevalence is highest in the east: Assam and West Bengal (about 70%), Odisha (69%) and Jharkhand (67%).
  - In Sikkim, Manipur, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Goa, more urban than rural ST men drink.

Economic Problems

- **Loss of control over natural resources:**
  - Tribes once held **customary rights** over land, forests, water and wildlife: the base of their subsistence economy and identity.
  - **Colonial forest laws** (from 1865 and 1878) turned forests into reserved and protected forests and curtailed these rights.
  - After Independence, **mineral development** in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh and growing population pressure continued the process.
  - The **Forest Rights Act (2006)** aims to restore these rights.

- **Poverty and exploitation:**
  - **Absolute poverty** is lacking the means for basic needs: clean water, nutrition, health care, clothing and shelter. **Relative poverty** is having less than others in a society.
  - Rural poverty has long been measured by **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** lists. The 2002–07 survey scored households from 0 to 4 on 13 parameters, including landholding, housing, clothing, food security, sanitation, literacy, labour, livelihood, children, indebtedness and migration.
  - In 2015–16, **50.6% of STs** were multidimensionally poor, the highest of any social group.
  - Causes: land alienation, a **low-productivity subsistence economy**, and exploitation by moneylenders, traders and contractors.
  - Many tribal districts are among the **Aspirational Districts**.
- **Land alienation:**
  - Tribal land passes to non-tribals through **debt traps**, manipulated or missing land records, fraudulent transfers and encroachment.
  - **Land transfer regulations** of the Scheduled Area States and PESA prohibit this, but enforcement is weak.
  - The result is **landlessness** and loss of economic independence.
- **Indebtedness:** credit at **exorbitant interest** for food, ceremonies or medical needs often ends in bonded labour or the loss of land.
- **Displacement and rehabilitation:**
  - Dams, mines, steel plants and parks are concentrated in tribal areas: the **Chotanagpur plateau**, Odisha's mining belt, West Bengal, central India (the Narmada dams), and Bhilai, Rourkela and Bokaro.
  - **Tribal people are estimated to be about 40% of all people displaced** by development since 1951, though they are 8.6% of the population.
  - Problems: **cash compensation** that is quickly spent, poor resettlement, migration as unskilled labour, cultural dislocation and stress.
- **Exclusion from welfare:**
  - **Low awareness** of schemes and administrative barriers keep many tribal families out of them.
  - These include scholarships, boys' and girls' hostels, ashram schools, vocational training, fellowships for higher studies, residential schools, NSTFDC loans, the Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana, the Tribal Forest Dwellers Empowerment Scheme, old-age pensions for BPL families, BPL ration cards, MGNREGA job cards and bank accounts.
  - Over 70% of tribal households in some regions had no bank account. Bureaucratic apathy and **poor accountability** add to the gap.
- **Subsistence economy:**
  - **Hunting, gathering, shifting cultivation** and small-scale farming with simple tools give little surplus. Even plough-using tribes supplement farming with hunting and collecting. Labour is little divided, units are small and there is almost no capital.
  - They leave households exposed to **crop failure and climatic shocks**. The move to a market economy is difficult.

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- **Unemployment and distress migration:**
  - **Seasonal unemployment** and few non-farm jobs push distress migration to cities, brick kilns and plantations as unskilled, informal labour.
  - Low skills, isolation and **poor infrastructure** are the structural causes.
- **Ill-health as an economic burden:** poor health lowers **productivity and earnings**, reinforcing poverty. Even under colonial rule, tribal plantation and mine labour suffered high mortality from malaria and blackwater fever. The Dooars Labour Act (1912) provided only for inspection of sanitation and public health.

Environmental Problems

- **Human–wildlife conflict:**
  - Tribes long lived in **balanced coexistence** with forests and wildlife.
  - Conflict has risen sharply through:
    - deforestation and habitat fragmentation by roads, railways and highways, including road widening and broad-gauge conversion;
    - tea estates and plantations (Dooars, Assam);
    - mining and quarrying, including dolomite and boulder mining in Himalayan foothill rivers;
    - river training through large embankments, which alters river systems;
    - encroachment, and growing wildlife numbers without larger habitats;
    - ecotourism.
  - Results: crop and livestock loss, deaths and **retaliatory killing**. It is worst in the north-east, the Dooars, central India and the Western Ghats.
- **Habitat degradation:**
  - Tribal regions lie in **fragile zones**: forests, hills and biodiversity hotspots.
  - They suffer **deforestation**, the shrinking of common property resources, monoculture plantations, pollution of soil and water, and unplanned settlements around industries.
- **Physical constraints:**
  - **Difficult terrain** limits transport and access to markets, health care and schools.
  - Poor communications delay **service delivery**.
  - Heavy rainfall in the foothills and the north-east brings **seasonal disease**.
- **Livelihood crisis:** fuelwood, fodder and **minor forest produce** are declining, and soil erosion and water scarcity cut farm yields. Tribal people are forced into wage labour and exploitative markets.
  - **"Ecologically rich regions become economically poor"** through unsustainable extraction.
- **Case: the Dooars:**
  - **Tea plantations** in the West Bengal–Assam foothills have taken over forest and grassland and fragmented elephant corridors.
  - Results: **human–elephant conflict**, loss of biodiversity, and poor housing and sanitation for tea-garden workers, most of them Santhal, Oraon and Munda migrants.

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  - Workers suffer long closures of gardens, lasting months or years. Many go to western India to earn more, and middlemen often cheat them.
- **Socio-environmental links:**
  - Loss of land and resources leads to exploitation and migration. Migration brings **cultural dislocation** and continued exploitation by middlemen.
  - Tribal communities are sometimes treated as **vote banks** while their core issues go unaddressed.

Political and Security Problems

- **Left-wing extremism** has been concentrated in the central tribal belt (Bastar, the Jharkhand–Odisha borderlands), feeding on **land loss, displacement and poor governance**. It has also kept development away.
- **Ethnic conflict and insurgency** in the north-east: clashes between tribes and with settlers (the Bru exodus of 1997, violence in Bodo areas), and **demands for autonomy and statehood**.
- **Identity demands:** inclusion in the ST list (Gurjars in Rajasthan, Koch-Rajbongshi and Ahom groups in Assam), separate statehood, or Sixth Schedule status (Ladakh).

CULTURAL SETTING · TRIBAL AREAS

Tribal Problems and the Policy Response

Each core problem of tribal areas has a matching law or scheme; the gap between the two lies in implementation.

Problem	Response: law or scheme
Land alienation Debt traps, missing records, fraud	**Forest Rights Act 2006 · land transfer laws** Titles: 25.4 lakh of 54.0 lakh claims (June 2026)
Displacement Dams, mines, industry: ~40% of the displaced	**Land Acquisition Act 2013 · PESA consent** Gram sabha consent in Scheduled Areas
Indebtedness, exploitation Moneylenders, traders, contractors	**Moneylending rules · TRIFED, Van Dhan (2018)** MSP for minor forest produce
Health and nutrition IMR 41.6, U5MR 50.3; 64.6% women anaemic	**Sickle Cell Mission 2023 · mobile medical units** Screening in tribal districts; elimination target 2047
Low education Literacy 59.0% vs 73.0% (2011)	**Eklavya Model Residential Schools** 728 approved, 508 functional (June 2026)
Identity and self-rule Customs, language, land under pressure	**Fifth and Sixth Schedules · PESA 1996** PESA rules in 9 of 10 States

Umbrella programmes: convergence across ministries

Tribal Sub-Plan → DAPST	PM-JANMAN	Dharti Aaba Abhiyan
1974–75; since 2017–18 as the ST Component in ~40 ministries	15 Nov 2023 · ₹24,104 crore 75 PVTGs · 11 interventions	2 Oct 2024 · ₹79,156 crore 63,843 villages · 25 interventions

Schematic. Figures: Census 2011; NFHS-5 (2019–21); Ministry of Tribal Affairs (FRA and EMRS status, 30 June 2026); Ministry of Panchayati Raj; displacement share is an estimate cited in the Xaxa Committee report (2014).

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03 Tribal Development Policy

PYQ 2024 · 2020 · 2016 +9

Approaches

- **Isolation: Verrier Elwin** (1939) proposed protecting tribes in "national parks" away from outside exploitation.
- **Assimilation: Govind Sadashiv Ghurye** saw tribes as "backward Hindus" to be absorbed into the mainstream.
- **Integration: Jawaharlal Nehru's Tribal Panchsheel** (in his foreword to Elwin's *A Philosophy for NEFA*, 1959) set out five principles:
  - tribes should develop along the **lines of their own genius**;
  - their **rights in land and forests** should be respected;
  - **tribal teams** should be trained for administration and development;
  - tribal areas should **not be over-administered**;
  - results should be judged by the **quality of human character**, not statistics or money spent.

Evolution of Programmes

- **1954:** 43 **Special Multipurpose Tribal Projects** (later called Blocks).
- **Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs)**, set up from the late 1950s and named in the Third Plan:
  - They covered blocks with a **tribal majority** and stressed agriculture, soil conservation, education, health, cooperation and communications.
  - The **Shilu Ao Study Team (1969)** found blocks too small for planning, schemes fragmented, and little tribal participation.
- **Tribal Development Agencies (1971–72):** pilot district agencies under the Collector.
- **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP, 1974–75):**
  - Launched in the **Fifth Plan** for areas of tribal concentration.
  - Funds from all sectors are earmarked **in proportion to the ST population**, and are non-divertible and non-lapsable.
  - Its units:
    - Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) for large tribal areas;
    - MADA pockets (Modified Area Development Approach): 10,000+ people, at least half ST;
    - clusters: 5,000+ people, at least half ST;
    - separate projects for PVTGs.
  - **Three-tier planning:** micro (block: schools, primary health, minor irrigation, cooperatives), meso (ITDP: higher education, markets, roads, power), macro (State: medium irrigation, industry, research).
  - Since 2017–18 it runs as the **Scheduled Tribe Component**, tracked as the Development Action Plan for STs (DAPST) across about 40 ministries.

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- **Critique:**
  - TSP funds are often **notional**, diverted or spent on general schemes. The sub-plan lacked independent status within the State plan.
  - **Benefits went to the better-off** among tribes.
  - Planning was **top-down**, with little tribal participation; bureaucratic rigidity and weak political will added to the failures.
- **Bastar (Chhattisgarh)** shows these tensions:
  - Over 65% of its people were tribal. Its regions run from the isolated **Abujhmar hills** of the Hill Maria to the more advanced Bhatra plains near Jagdalpur.
  - **Bailadila iron-ore mining** and railways brought growth but little local benefit.

Legal Safeguards

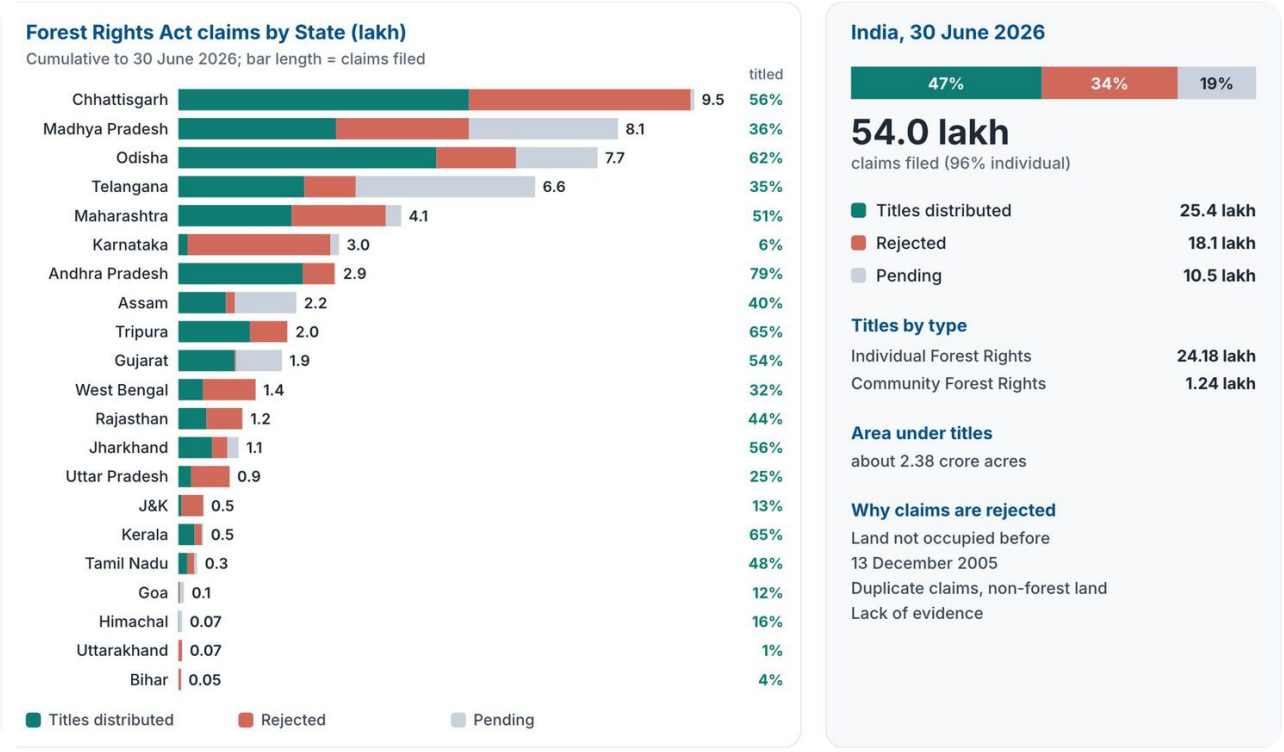
- **PESA, 1996 (Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act):**
  - Extends Panchayati Raj to Fifth Schedule Areas, recognising **gram sabhas** as competent to safeguard traditions, community resources and customary dispute resolution.
  - Gram sabhas must be **consulted on land acquisition** and must approve plans. They get ownership of minor forest produce and control over minor minerals, village markets, moneylending and land alienation.
  - **Nine of the ten States** have notified PESA rules; Jharkhand did so on 2 January 2026. Odisha has only draft rules (2023).
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006 (Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act):**
  - Recognises **individual rights** to forest land cultivated before 13 December 2005 (up to 4 hectares).
  - Recognises **community rights**: grazing, fishing, minor forest produce. It also recognises Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights to protect and manage forests, and habitat rights for PVTGs.
  - The **gram sabha** initiates and verifies claims.
  - **Status (30 June 2026):**
    - 54.0 lakh claims filed; 25.4 lakh titles distributed (24.2 lakh individual, 1.24 lakh community), covering about 2.38 crore acres.
    - 18.1 lakh (34%) were rejected and 10.5 lakh (19%) are pending.
    - Main reasons for rejection: land not occupied before the cut-off date, duplicate claims, non-forest land and lack of evidence.
- **Other laws:**
  - State **land transfer regulations** (for example the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 and the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act 1949).
  - The **SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**.
  - The **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013**, which requires gram sabha consent in Scheduled Areas.

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CULTURAL SETTING · TRIBAL AREAS

Forest Rights Act: Implementation Status

Under half of all claims have become titles; Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh account for nearly half the claims, and Karnataka has rejected most of its own.



Ministry of Tribal Affairs, FRA Monthly Progress Report as on 30 June 2026 (Lok Sabha replies, July 2026); area from MoTA regional conference, Sept 2026. Pending = claims not yet disposed.

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Major Schemes

- **Education:**
  - **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** in every block with over 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal people.
    - 728 approved, 508 functional (June 2026), with over 1.5 lakh students.
  - Pre- and post-matric **scholarships**, hostels and ashram schools.
- **Livelihoods:**
  - **NSTFDC** loans for self-employment.
  - **TRIFED**, with Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (2018) and minimum support prices for minor forest produce.
- **Health:** the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission** (2023) screens tribal areas, with the aim of ending the disease by 2047.
- **PM-JANMAN (15 November 2023):**
  - **₹24,104 crore** over three years for the 75 PVTGs, through 11 interventions of 9 ministries.
  - Interventions: housing, roads, water, mobile medical units, Anganwadis, hostels, electricity, telecom and Van Dhan centres.

- **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA):**
  - Launched on **2 October 2024**, named after Birsa Munda ("Dharti Aaba").
  - Outlay **₹79,156 crore** (Centre ₹56,333 crore) for 2024–25 to 2028–29.
  - It aims to **saturate infrastructure gaps** in 63,843 tribal-majority villages in 549 districts and 2,911 blocks, benefiting over 5 crore tribal people.
  - **25 interventions** by 17 ministries. It also funds gram sabhas and CFR management under the FRA.
- **Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana:** converts villages with large ST populations into **model villages** through convergence.

Why Tribal Areas Still Lag

PYQ 2024 · 2012 · 2006 +6

- **Implementation gaps:** TSP funds diverted; PESA rules late and **gram sabha powers overridden** by line departments.
- **Rights not secured:** a third of FRA claims rejected, **CFR rights** under-recognised, land records missing or out of date.
- **Development model:** mining, dams and industry extract resources without **benefit-sharing**, while displacement outpaces rehabilitation.
- **Delivery failures:** vacant teacher and doctor posts, distant facilities, and schemes designed for the plains.
- **Elite capture:** benefits concentrated among the **better-off tribes and households**.
- **Conflict:** insurgency and ethnic violence that keep the State and services away.
- **The Xaxa Committee (2014)** recommended:
  - **strict enforcement** of PESA and the FRA;
  - **prior informed consent** of gram sabhas for land acquisition;
  - **land-for-land** rehabilitation;
  - better **education in tribal languages**;
  - stronger **tribal health systems**.

Way Forward

- Tribal problems are part of a wider crisis of **ecological imbalance and unsustainable development**.
  - Tribal people, once **custodians of nature**, have been displaced from their ecological base and exposed to degradation and economic insecurity.
- **Development aligned with ecology: community-led forest management** under CFR rights, value addition to forest produce, and protection of commons.
- **Self-rule:** real powers for **gram sabhas and autonomous councils**, and full use of the Fifth and Sixth Schedules.
- **Land security:** updated records, **restoration of alienated land** and consent before acquisition.
- **Culturally sensitive services: mother-tongue teaching**, tribal health workers and attention to sickle cell disease and anaemia.

- **Conservation with participation: community participation** in parks and reserves, and fair benefit-sharing from minerals.
- The goal is balance: **between development and ecology, and between modernisation and traditional knowledge**.

Previous Year Questions

1989	Discuss the problems of the tribal areas and suggest measures for solving them.
1992	Write short note: Salient features of Tribal area planning.
1995	Discuss the problems of Tribal areas in India.
1998	Critically examine the problems and prospects of tribal areas in India.
2002	Elucidate the role of Tribal development blocks in development of Tribal areas.
2005	Identify the tribal areas of India and highlight their important problems.
2006	Present an account of Tribals, tribal areas and their problems in India.
2012	Elucidate the role of Tribal Development Blocks in the development of Tribal areas.
2013	Planning and development of 'Tribal Regions' in India.
2016	Describe the major tribal regions of India and their problems.
2020	Identifying areas covered under tribal sub-plan, discuss the programmes initiated to address their problems.
2022	Discuss the impact of Forest Rights Act, 2006 on the local forest communities in India.
2024	In spite of various tribal area development programmes in India, tribal areas still lag behind. Discuss critically with examples.

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UNIT 05 | 7 CHAPTERS | PAPER I + II

Demographic Attributes



Paper I: *Demographic attributes.*

Paper II: *Demographic attributes: sex-ratio, age structure, literacy rate, work-force, dependency ratio, longevity.*

CHAPTERS

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GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL | PAPER I + II · CULTURAL SETTING

Sex Composition and Age–Sex Pyramid



PYQ RADAR 5 questions Last asked **2025** 2025 · 2016 · 2015 · 2014 · 2006

CONTENTS

01 Sex Composition
02 World Pattern
03 Sex Ratio in India
04 Age–Sex Pyramid
05 Previous Year Questions

- **Sex composition** is the balance of **males and females** in a population. It is expressed as the **sex ratio**.
- Along with age, it is the most basic of the **demographic attributes**. It shapes **marriage, fertility, labour supply and migration**, and it reflects the **status of women** in a society.
- The **age–sex pyramid** shows age and sex together in one graph. It records a population's **past births, deaths and migration** and hints at its future growth.

01 Sex Composition PYQ 2016 · 2014

Measurement of Sex Ratio PYQ 2016 · 2014

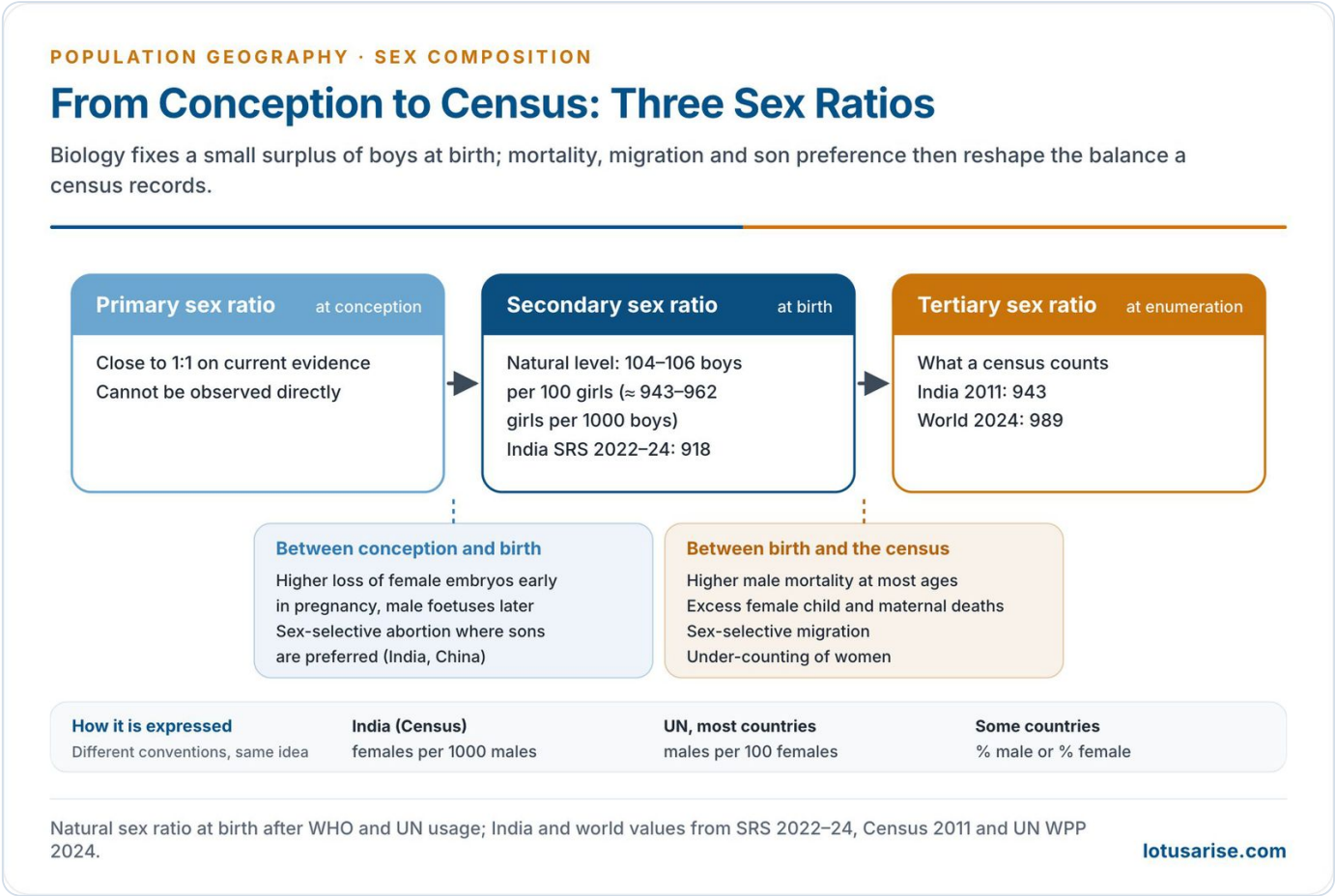
- The idea is the same everywhere, but the way of expressing it differs:
  - **India (Census): females per 1000 males**.
    - Sex ratio = (female population ÷ male population) × 1000.
  - **United Nations and most countries: males per 100 females**. This is also called the **masculinity ratio**.
  - Some countries (Russia, for example) report the **percentage of males or females** in the total population. A balanced population is 50 : 50.
- Readers must check the convention before comparing figures.
  - India's 943 females per 1000 males (2011) is the same balance as about **106 males per 100 females**.

- The calculation needs a **reliable count of each sex**. Under-enumeration of women, common in poor and patriarchal societies, lowers the measured ratio.

Types of Sex Ratio

PYQ 2016 · 2014

- **Primary sex ratio:** the ratio **at conception**.
  - It cannot be observed directly.
  - The older view held that far more males are conceived. Recent large-sample evidence (Steven Orzack and colleagues, 2015) suggests the ratio at conception is **close to 1:1**.
- **Secondary sex ratio:** the ratio **at birth**, also called the **sex ratio at birth (SRB)**.
  - The **natural** level is about **104–106 boys per 100 girls**, or roughly 943–962 girls per 1000 boys.
- **Tertiary sex ratio:** the ratio **at the time of enumeration**, as a census counts it.
  - Unless stated otherwise, "sex ratio" means the tertiary ratio.



Determinants

- **The sex ratio at birth.**
  - The small natural surplus of boys arises **during pregnancy**: female embryos are lost more often early in pregnancy, male foetuses more often later. On balance, more boys are born.
  - **Sex-selective abortion** pushes the SRB well above the natural level where **son preference** is strong. This happened in China, India, South Korea, Vietnam and the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan).

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- **Differential mortality.**
  - Males die faster at **almost every age**: through biology, risky work, accidents, violence, smoking and alcohol.
  - The male surplus at birth therefore **shrinks with age**. Most populations have more women than men at **older ages**.
  - Where women's status is low, the pattern reverses. **Neglect of girls**, **excess female child mortality** and **maternal deaths** remove women faster than men.
- **Sex-selective migration.**
  - **Labour migration is usually male-selective**. Areas of **in-migration** (cities, mines, plantations, the Gulf) gain men; areas of **out-migration** keep women.
  - Marriage migration of women within India and the migration of women into domestic and care work (Hong Kong, the Gulf, Europe) work in the other direction.
- Wars and conflict kill mostly men. The female surplus they leave lasts for decades.
- Enumeration errors: under-counting of women and girls.

Significance

- The sex ratio decides the marriage market and the size of the labour force.
  - A shortage of women produces "**marriage squeezes**" and **bride trafficking**.
  - China's surplus of young men is one example. In India, women are "brought" into Haryana from Assam, West Bengal and Odisha.
- It is an **indicator of women's status**. A deficit of girls signals **discrimination before birth** and in childhood.
- It shapes fertility and the demand for services, for example health care for elderly widows in ageing societies.

02 World Pattern

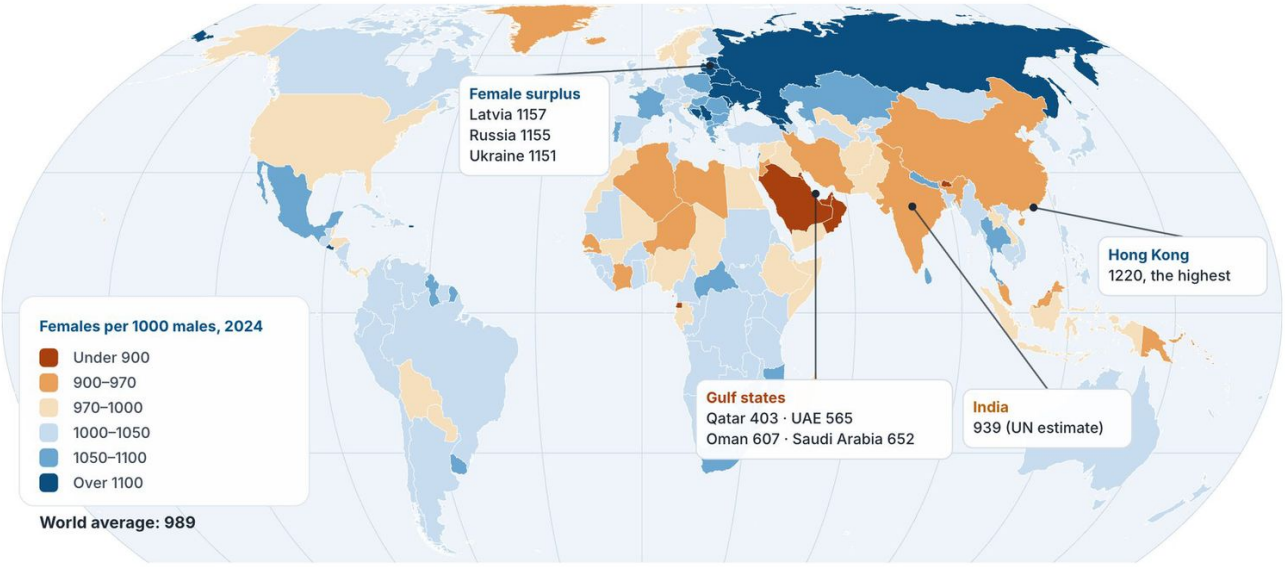
- In 2024 there were about **989 females per 1000 males** in the world. Put the other way, this is about **101 males per 100 females** (UN World Population Prospects 2024).
  - The world has a **slight male surplus** because Asia's two giants (China, India) are male-heavy.
- **Male-surplus regions:**
  - Gulf states, through **male labour migration**:
    - Qatar has the lowest ratio in the world: about **403 females per 1000 males**, or 248 males per 100 females.
    - It is followed by the UAE (565), Oman (607), Bahrain (612), Maldives (615), Kuwait (636) and Saudi Arabia (652).
  - **South and East Asia** (China 963, India 939, Pakistan), through **son preference**, high female child mortality in the past, and **sex-selective abortion**.

- **Female-surplus regions:**
  - Former Soviet states: Latvia (1157), Russia (1155), Ukraine (1151), Moldova, Armenia.
    - These reflect **very high male mortality**, from alcohol, cardiovascular disease, accidents and violence, and the losses of war.
  - Ageing developed countries, where women outlive men by 4–6 years: Japan (1050) and much of Western and Southern Europe.
  - **Hong Kong (1220)** has the highest ratio in the world, because of **female foreign domestic workers** from the Philippines and Indonesia and **cross-border marriages** with women from mainland China.
- **Near balance:** most of Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.
  - Their **young age structures** mean that the surplus of boys at birth is not yet offset by male deaths at older ages.
- **Trend:**
  - The global ratio fell slightly as China's and India's SRBs rose from the 1980s.
  - It is **projected to approach balance by 2100**, as SRBs normalise and populations age.
  - South Korea shows that the trend can reverse. Its SRB of about 116 boys per 100 girls in 1990 returned to the natural level by the late 2000s.

POPULATION GEOGRAPHY · SEX COMPOSITION

Sex Ratio of the World's Population

Male surpluses mark labour-importing Gulf states and son-preferring South and East Asia; female surpluses mark ageing Europe and the high-mortality former USSR.



Male surplus
- Gulf states: male labour migration
- China, India: son preference and
- sex-selective abortion

Near balance
- Most of Africa and Latin America
- Young populations, where more
- boys at birth offset male deaths

Female surplus
- Russia, Ukraine, Baltics: high
- male mortality
- Japan, Western Europe: ageing

Data: UN World Population Prospects 2024 via World Bank (2024). Base map: Natural Earth. lotusarise.com

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PATTERN	REGIONS	MAIN CAUSE
Strong male surplus	Gulf states	Male labour immigration
Moderate male surplus	China, India, Pakistan	Son preference, sex selection, past female mortality
Near balance	Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America	Young age structure
Female surplus	Russia, Ukraine, Baltics	High male mortality, war
Female surplus	Japan, Europe	Ageing; women live longer

03 Sex Ratio in India

PYQ 2016 · 2014

Trend

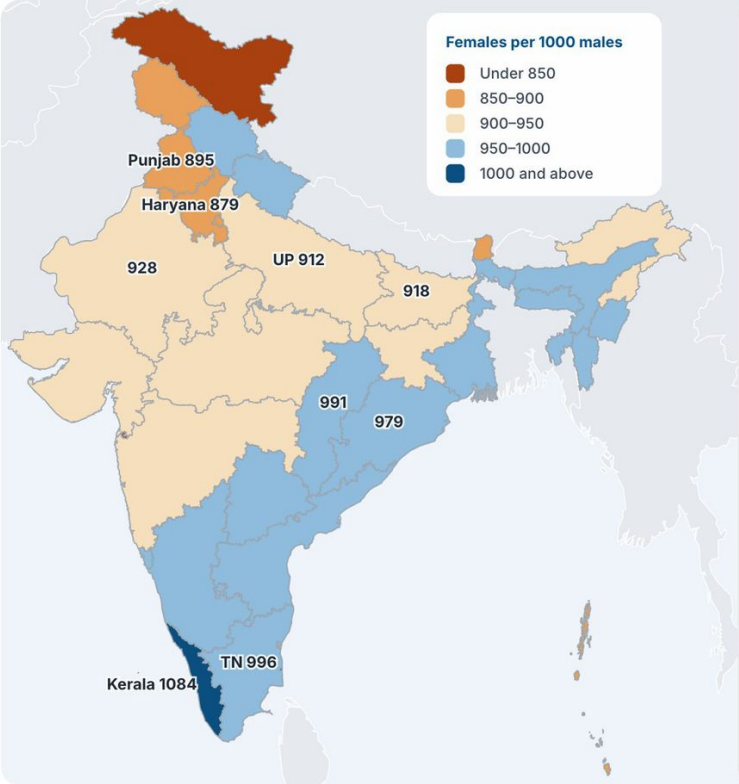
- India has had a **persistent deficit of females** since the first census.
- Over the 20th century the ratio **declined**:
  - 972 in 1901, 946 in 1951 and 941 in 1961.
  - The **lowest point was 927 in 1991**.
- It then **recovered**: 933 in 2001 and **943 in 2011**, the best since 1971.
- The **child sex ratio (0–6 years)** moved the other way. It **fell for five decades**:
  - from 976 in 1961 to 945 in 1991, 927 in 2001 and **918 in 2011**.
  - This is the clearest sign of **sex selection before birth**.
- **Sex ratio at birth** (Sample Registration System):
  - It improved from **898 in 2014–16 to 918 in 2022–24** (SRS 2024).
  - It was highest in Chhattisgarh (978) and Kerala (974), and lowest in Uttarakhand (872).
- NFHS-5 (2019–21) recorded **1020 females per 1000 males** in surveyed households, the first female-majority figure.
  - This is a **household survey of the usually resident population**. It is **not comparable with the census**, because it misses men living away for work and those in institutions.
  - Its sex ratio at birth for the previous five years was 929.
  - The **NFHS-6 (2023–24)** fact sheets, released in May 2026, do not report sex ratios, so NFHS-5 remains the latest survey value.
- The next census, delayed from 2021, will give the first post-2011 count. Its houselisting phase ran in 2026, and population enumeration has a reference date of **1 March 2027**.

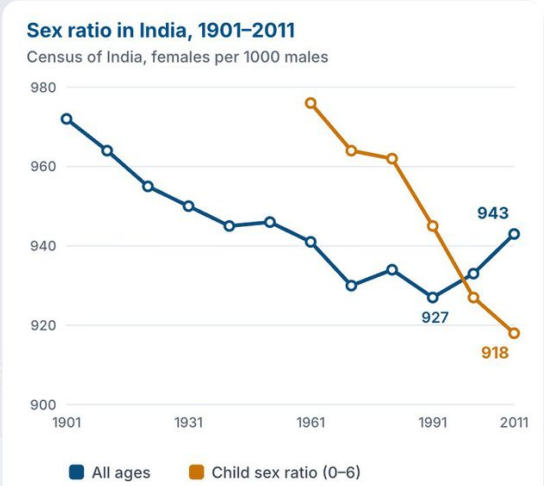
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POPULATION GEOGRAPHY · SEX COMPOSITION

Sex Ratio in India: Pattern and Trend

A female deficit runs from the north-west to the Ganga plain; the south and north-east are near balance. The child sex ratio fell for five decades.





Census 2011	Rural 949 · Urban 929 · 60+ 1033
	Highest: Kerala 1084, Puducherry 1037
	Lowest: Daman & Diu 618, Dadra & Nagar Haveli 774, Chandigarh 818
SRS 2022–24	Sex ratio at birth 918
	Chhattisgarh 978 · Uttarakhand 872
NFHS-5	Households 1020 · at birth 929

Favourable south and north-east
- Kerala, Puducherry above 1000
- Higher female literacy and status
- Tribal and matrilineal societies

Deficit in the north-west
- Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh
- Son preference, sex selection
- Male in-migration to cities

Why rural exceeds urban
- Men migrate to towns alone
- Women stay in villages
- Towns of the west: worst ratios

Census 2011 values; post-2011 States/UTs classed from their 2011 districts. Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet). lotusarise.com

Spatial Pattern (Census 2011)

- **Highest: Kerala (1084)** and **Puducherry (1037)**.
  - These are the **only two** States/UTs with more females than males.
- **Lowest:** Daman and Diu (618), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (774) and Chandigarh (818).
  - All three are industrial or urban UTs that attract **male migrant labour**.
- **Near balance (970–1000):**
  - Tamil Nadu (996), undivided Andhra Pradesh (993), Chhattisgarh (991), Meghalaya (989), Manipur (985), Odisha (979), Mizoram (976), Goa and Karnataka (973), Himachal Pradesh (972).
- **Severe deficit:** Haryana (879), Delhi (868), Jammu and Kashmir (889), Sikkim (890), Punjab (895) and Uttar Pradesh (912).

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- **Regional pattern:**
  - The **south, the north-east and the tribal belt** of central and eastern India have **favourable** ratios.
  - The **north-west and the Ganga plain** have the **poorest** ratios.

Rural–Urban Differential

- Rural (949) is higher than urban (929), because **men migrate to towns alone** and women and children stay in villages.
- The gap is **narrowing**. The urban ratio rose from 860 in 1951 to 929 in 2011, as more migrants move with their families.
- Rural ratios range from 690 (Chandigarh) to 1078 (Kerala).
  - Five States/UTs have rural ratios of 1000 or more: Kerala, Puducherry, Goa, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.
  - Uttarakhand's figure reflects the out-migration of men from the hills.
- Urban ratios range from 551 (Daman and Diu) to 1091 (Kerala).
  - Urban ratios are favourable in Kerala, Puducherry, Manipur and Meghalaya.
  - They are balanced in Tamil Nadu.

Child Sex Ratio

- **918 in 2011**, with a range of:
  - 834 in Haryana (lowest), then Punjab (846) and Jammu and Kashmir (862);
  - 972 in Arunachal Pradesh (highest), then Meghalaya and Mizoram (970).
- The decline spread **from the north-west to the east and south** between 1991 and 2011. It followed the spread of ultrasound and prosperity combined with small-family norms.

Causes of the Female Deficit

- **Son preference**, rooted in **patrilineal inheritance**, **dowry**, old-age support from sons and the ritual role of sons.
- **Sex-selective abortion**, which spread from the 1980s with ultrasound. It is most common among **prosperous, small-family households**: the "**squeeze**" of wanting fewer children but at least one son.
- **Excess female child mortality**, from neglect in nutrition and health care.
- Maternal mortality: the maternal mortality ratio was still **87 per lakh live births in 2022–24**.
- Male-selective migration, into cities and industrial UTs.
- Under-enumeration of women.

Consequences and Responses

- **Consequences:**
  - **Marriage squeeze** and bride trafficking.
  - **Violence against women**.
  - Distorted **labour markets** and **sex-ratio imbalance in cities**.

- **Responses:**
  - **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act** (the PNDT Act of 1994, extended in 2003): bans sex determination.
  - **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** (2015): launched in Panipat, Haryana, focused first on the worst-CSR districts.
  - Sukanya Samriddhi accounts.
  - Conditional cash transfers.
- **Outcome:**
  - Haryana's SRB has improved.
  - Kerala shows the role of **female literacy and status**. It combines a favourable ratio, low fertility and the longest female life expectancy among the major states.

04 Age–Sex Pyramid

Construction

- The **age–sex pyramid** is a pair of back-to-back **horizontal bar graphs**:
  - Males on the left, females on the right.
  - Age groups (usually five-year) run from youngest at the base to oldest at the top.
- Bars show absolute numbers or, for comparison between countries, the percentage of total population in each age–sex group.
- Its shape depends on the **stage of the demographic transition**, and on epidemics, wars, famines and migration.
- The **age composition of the population** and the dependency ratio are read directly from it.

Types of Pyramid

- **Expansive (progressive):**
  - **Broad base**, concave sides and a **narrow apex**.
  - **High birth and death rates**. Over 40% of the population is under 15.
  - Stages 1–2 of the **demographic transition**.
  - Niger, Ethiopia, Afghanistan; India before 2000.
- **Stationary:**
  - **Near-vertical sides** up to middle age.
  - **Low birth and death rates**, so the cohorts are roughly equal and growth is slow.
  - USA, France, Australia.
- **Constrictive (regressive):**
  - **Narrow base**, wider middle and upper sections.
  - Fertility is **below replacement**, and older cohorts outnumber the young.

  - Japan, Italy, South Korea, Germany.
- **India today** is moving from expansive to stationary.
  - Its base has narrowed since about 2000 as fertility fell to **1.9 (SRS 2024)**.
  - A **bulge in the working ages** (15–34) carries the **demographic dividend**.

POPULATION GEOGRAPHY · AGE–SEX COMPOSITION

Three Basic Shapes of the Age–Sex Pyramid

Each pyramid compresses a country's past births, deaths and migration into one picture; the base shows today's fertility, the top its longevity.



Expansive
- High birth and death rates
- Over 40% under 15
- Stage 1–2 of transition

Stationary
- Births ≈ deaths over decades
- Even sides into middle age
- Stage 3–4

Constrictive
- Births below replacement
- Older cohorts outnumber the young
- Stage 4–5

Data: UN World Population Prospects 2024, estimates for 2025 (85+ grouped). lotusarise.com

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TYPE	SHAPE	BIRTH AND DEATH RATES	GROWTH	EXAMPLES
Expansive	Broad base, narrow top	High, high (falling)	Rapid	Niger, Ethiopia, Afghanistan
Stationary	Near-vertical sides	Low, low	Slow or nil	USA, France, Australia
Constrictive	Narrow base, wide top	Very low, rising deaths	Decline	Japan, Italy, South Korea

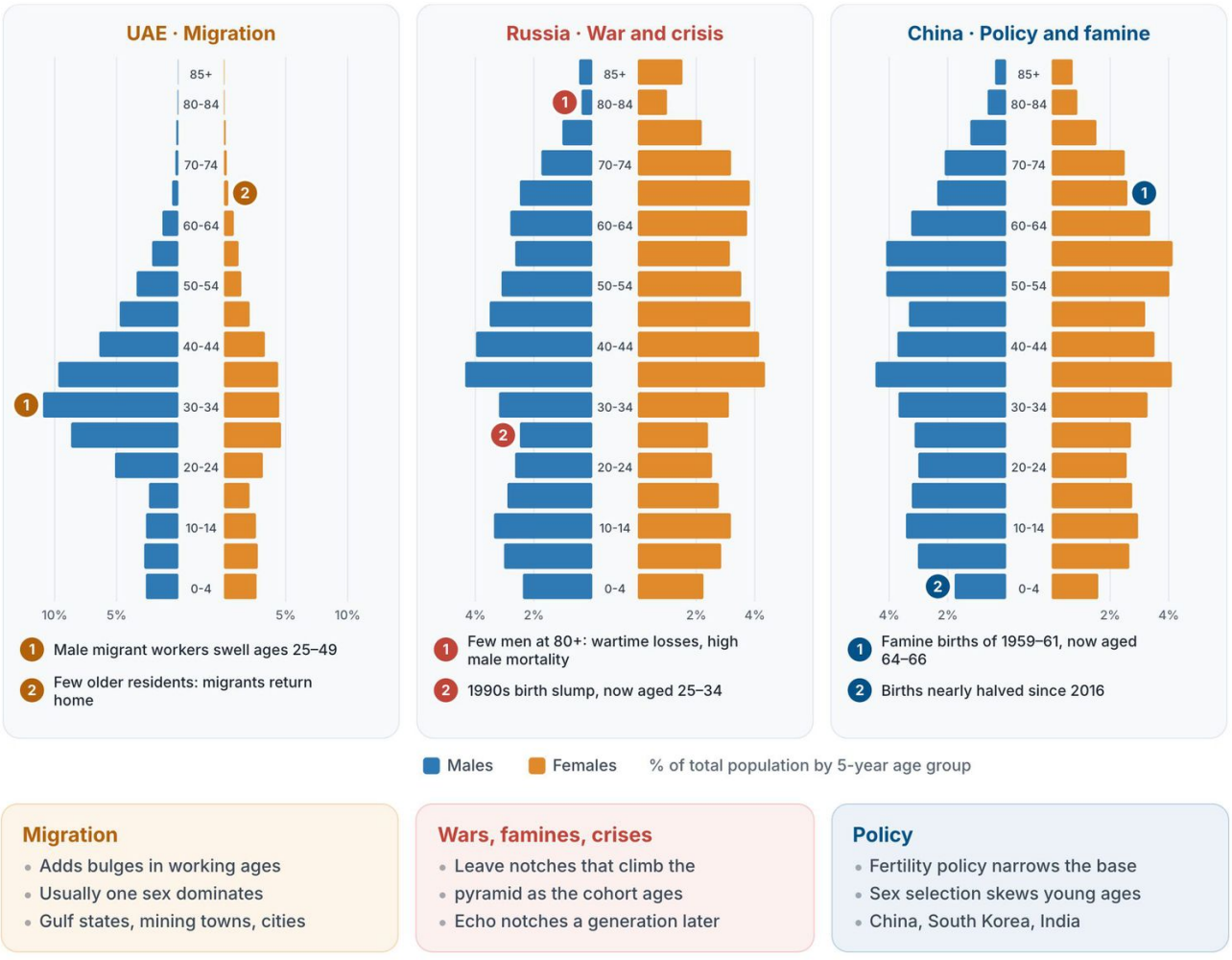
The Pyramid as a Record of History PYQ 2015

- Every event that changes births, deaths or migration leaves a **mark that moves up the pyramid** as the cohort ages:
  - **Migration:**
    - The UAE and Qatar have a huge **male bulge at 25–49** from migrant workers, and few old people, since migrants return home.
    - Kerala's and the Uttarakhand hills' pyramids show the reverse: a shortage of working-age men.
  - **War:**
    - Russia still has very **few men aged 80+**, because of the Second World War and high male mortality.
    - Its **1990s birth slump** shows as a notch at ages 25–34.
  - **Famine:**
    - China's 1959–61 famine is a **notch at ages 64–66** today.
  - **Population policy:**
    - China's **one-child era** (1980–2015) narrowed its base. Its births have nearly halved since 2016.
    - **Male surpluses** in the young cohorts of China and India record **sex selection**.
  - Baby booms (USA, Europe, 1946–64) appear as **bulges**, now near the top. Echo booms follow a generation later.

POPULATION GEOGRAPHY · AGE–SEX COMPOSITION

Pyramids as a Record of History

Migration, war, famine and population policy leave bulges and notches that move up the pyramid as each cohort ages.



Migration
- Adds bulges in working ages
- Usually one sex dominates
- Gulf states, mining towns, cities

Wars, famines, crises
- Leave notches that climb the
- pyramid as the cohort ages
- Echo notches a generation later

Policy
- Fertility policy narrows the base
- Sex selection skews young ages
- China, South Korea, India

Data: UN World Population Prospects 2024, estimates for 2025 (85+ grouped). lotusarise.com

- Pyramids are also used to **project** future population:
  - A **broad base** means **population momentum**: growth continues for decades even after fertility falls to replacement.
  - A **top-heavy pyramid** means a rising **old-age dependency ratio**, shrinking labour forces and pressure on pensions and health care, as in Japan, Italy and South Korea.

Child Sex Ratio and the General Sex Ratio

PYQ 2025 · 2016 · 2014

- **Key features of India's sex ratio (Census 2011):** 943 females per 1,000 males overall, 949 in rural areas and 929 in urban areas. Kerala is highest at 1,084 and Haryana lowest among States at 879.
- The two ratios have moved apart: the general ratio rose from 933 in 2001 to 943 in 2011, while the **child sex ratio** fell from 927 to 918.

- **Why the general ratio improved anyway:** women live longer than men, and male out-migration abroad lifts the ratio in some States.
- **Impact of the child ratio on the general ratio:**
  - Today's **missing girls** become tomorrow's missing women, so a low child ratio drags down the adult ratio as these cohorts age.
  - The present gain is therefore partly hidden and may not last.
  - Fewer women at marrying age leads to a **marriage squeeze**, bride migration and trafficking, as reported in Haryana and Punjab.

Previous Year Questions

2014	Highlight the implications of declining child sex ratio in India.
2015	"Age-sex pyramid is representative of the history of a region." Explain.
2016	Discuss the factors influencing the distribution of sex ratio in India.
2006	Discuss the causes and consequences of sex-ratio variations in India.
2025	What are the key features of sex-ratio of population in India? Evaluate the impacts of child sex-ratio on general sex-ratio in the country.

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01 **Indian Society and its Diversity** 6 chapters · from page 6

02 **Tribes and Tribal Areas** 3 chapters · from page 107

03 **Culture and Cultural Regions** 3 chapters · from page 160

04 **Growth, Distribution and Density** 2 chapters · from page 206

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