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11:00 AM | BY - PRESHIKA MA'AM



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Important words used in editorial

Pragmatism : **Practicality, Realism, Rationality, Sensibleness**

Constitute : **Establish, Form, Create, Institute**

Paranoid : **Suspicious, Distrustful, Fearful, Skeptical**

Devious : **Cunning, Crafty, Sly, Underhanded**

Conspiracy : **Plot, Scheme, Intrigue, Collusion**

Unnatural : **Artificial, Abnormal, Unusual, Irregular**

doubtful

Premeditated : **Planned, Deliberate, Calculated, Intentional**

Assess : **Evaluate, Examine, Analyze, Appraise**

Demographic : **Population-related, Statistical, Social, Census-based**

Abnormal : **Irregular, Atypical, Unusual, Deviant**

Sovereignty : **Independence, Autonomy, Self-rule, Dominion**

Profound : **Deep, Intense, Significant, Far-reaching**

Preservation: Protection, Conservation, Maintenance, Safeguarding

Cohesion : Unity, Harmony, Solidarity, Integration

Formulate : Devise, Draft, Frame, Develop

Custody : Detention, Care, Guardianship, Protection

Deportation : Expulsion, Removal, Repatriation, Extradition

Dynamics : Trends, Forces, Patterns, Movements

Instrument : **Tool, Means, Mechanism, Agency**

Referendum : **Public Vote, Poll, Ballot, Plebiscite**

Contentious : **Controversial, Disputed, Debatable, Divisive**

Unregulated : **Uncontrolled, Unchecked, Unrestricted, Unsupervised**

Adjacent : **Connected, Related, Neighboring, Associated**

Electoral : **Voting-related, Political, Ballot-based, Representative**

V V V I P

Stateless	: Displaced, Nationality-less, Unrecognized, Alienated
<u>Deadlock</u>	: Stalemate, Impasse, Gridlock, Standstill
Profiling	: Classification, Identification, Categorization, Labeling
<u>Dividend</u>	: Benefit, Advantage, Gain, Reward
Evolving	: Developing, Progressing, Advancing, Transforming
<u>Trajectory</u>	: Direction, Course, Route, Progression

Continuum : Spectrum, Sequence, Range, Progression

Legacy : Heritage, Inheritance, Tradition, Bequest

Voluntary : Willing, Optional, Chosen, Deliberate

Involuntary : Forced, Compulsory, Unintentional, Coerced

Sensitivity : Awareness, Consideration, Understanding

forced

Politics over people: On India's High-Level Committee on Demographic Change Pragmatism should guide India's demographic governance. In constituting a panel to study demographic changes in India, the Centre was guided by a paranoid mindset that saw devious conspiracies everywhere. The move gave shape and substance to a thought expressed by Home Minister Amit Shah: "unnatural demographic change" is a "very significant challenge to the present and future of any nation". In his Independence Day address in 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the proposal, characterising illegal infiltration as a "premeditated conspiracy" to alter India's demography.

The committee, chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Justice P.P. Naolekar, is to assess demographic changes, examine patterns of abnormal population shifts among religious and social communities, and recommend a time-bound solution. Mr. Shah linked demographic changes not only to sovereignty but also to national security, law and order, "profound changes in social structure and the preservation of tribal society".

According to the government, demographic shifts have affected public service delivery, local governance, resource distribution and social cohesion, and Justice Naolekar has said that the panel will also formulate a system for the custody and deportation of infiltrators. It is indeed true that the management of population dynamics is a key instrument of governance. On June 14, Switzerland held a referendum and rejected a proposal to cap the country's population at 10 million. Across the world, immigration has become contentious, with unregulated cross-border movement seen as a challenge to sovereignty.

Population management, however, is not entirely about illegal infiltration, and securitising demographic trends at the cost of all adjacent factors could do more harm than good. As the recent experience with the SIR of electoral rolls shows, facts about people would be seen as valid only to the extent that these are established through documentation. If this exercise creates a large stateless population with no country willing to accept them, it could result in a demographic deadlock rather than a solution.

The fear of communal profiling of Muslims is real, and the Centre should also seriously consider whether the human costs are worth it. India faces major demographic challenges. Rising life expectancy and falling birth rates are changing the composition of India's population. There are concerns of India losing its demographic dividend, as the quality of education and health, and the evolving dynamics of work, remain very challenging.

Migration continues to shape India's trajectory. Partition created three sovereign countries out of a geographical and cultural continuum, and its legacy included voluntary and involuntary movement of people. Sensitivity and a long-term view should guide India's demographic governance.

1. Which of the following best captures the central argument of the passage?

A. Illegal infiltration is the sole reason behind India's demographic challenges.

B. Demographic governance should balance security concerns with social and humanitarian considerations.

C. Population growth is the greatest threat to India's sovereignty.

D. Religious demographic changes must be addressed through stricter documentation requirements

2. The author appears to be most concerned that the proposed demographic exercise could:
- A. ~~Increase the country's population growth rate.~~
 - B. ~~Lead to international diplomatic conflicts.~~
 - C. Create a large population whose citizenship status remains unresolved.
 - D. ~~Encourage further illegal immigration.~~

3. Which of the following assumptions is implicit in the passage?

- A. Every ~~undocumented~~ resident is an illegal ~~infiltrator~~.
- B. ~~Documentation~~ is always an accurate measure of ~~citizenship~~.
- ✓ C. Demographic changes are influenced by multiple factors beyond illegal migration.
- D. ~~Switzerland's~~ ~~demographic~~ challenges are ~~identical to India's~~.

4. The author's tone throughout the passage can best be described as:

- ~~A. Alarmist and hostile~~
- ☒ B. Critical yet balanced
- ~~C. Sarcastic and dismissive~~
- D. Enthusiastic and celebratory

5. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument?

- A. Several ~~countries~~ have successfully reduced ~~immigration~~ through strict border controls.
- ☒ B. A significant number of residents lack documentation despite being long-term lawful inhabitants.
- C. ~~Population growth~~ in India has declined ~~over the past decade~~.
- D. Public ~~opinion~~ strongly supports stricter ~~demographic monitoring~~.

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