

An Analysis of Birth Rates in India

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Abstract

Birth rate is the number of individuals born in a population in a given amount of time. India's birth rates vary significantly by state. Subtracting the crude death rate from the crude birth rate provides the rate of natural increase, which is equal to the rate of population change in the absence of migration. Some States have high birth rates and some others have low birth rates in India. The birth rate also varies from rural to urban areas. The birth rate (CBR) at the national level is 20.4 varying from 22.1 in rural to 17.0 in urban areas in India. The present paper appraises the picture of birth rates in India

Keywords: Birth Rate, Crude Birth Rate, High Birth Rate States, Low Birth Rate States, India

1. Introduction

Birth rate is defined as the number of live births in a population over a given period, usually one calendar year, divided by the midyear population of the same jurisdiction, multiplied by 1000. Birth rates differ from country to country based on religion, cultural expectation, issues such as female participation in the workforce, or religious and political views of fertility limitation through birth control. It can also be influenced by political programs such as China's 'one child family' policy previously undertaken by the nation with the highest population in the world. Birth rate is the number of individuals born in a population in a given amount of time. Human birth rate is stated as the number of individuals born per year per 1000 in the population. For example, if 35 births occur per year per 1000 individuals, the birth rate is 35. Crude birth rate indicates the number of live births occurring during the year, per 1,000 population estimated at midyear. Subtracting the crude death rate from the crude birth rate provides the rate of natural increase, which is equal to the rate of population change in the absence of migration.

The birth rate or crude birth rate is the number of live births per 1,000 people in a population over a specific period, usually a year, indicating how fast a population is growing by adding new individuals. It's a key demographic measure calculated by dividing the total live births in a year by the total population, then multiplying by 1,000. This rate helps track population trends and health, contrasting with the death rate (mortality) to show net population change. India's birth rates vary significantly by state, with Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh consistently showing higher rates, while southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, along with regions like Andaman & Nicobar, Delhi, and Punjab, have much lower rates, often below the national replacement level, indicating different demographic stages. For instance, recent data shows Bihar with rates over 25 per 1,000 population and Kerala/Tamil Nadu around 12, reflecting major regional disparities in fertility.

Trends in Birth Rates Rural vs. Urban Divide

Rural areas generally have higher birth rates than urban centers across India.

Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

By 2021, India's national TFR dropped to below the replacement level (2.0), but Bihar (3.0), UP (2.7), and MP (2.6) remained above it, according to GS Score.

Data Sources

These figures come from sources like the Business Standard (Sept 2025), Statista (2020), Census India (2022) and Digital Sansad (December 2024).

INDIAN STATES BY BIRTH RATE

Crude Birth Rate (CBR) for India and bigger States/UTs

The table 1 provides the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) for India and bigger States/UTs. The table portrays The Crude birth rate (CBR) for India as per census 2011 was 21.8. In 2016 Census studies CBR at all India levels had declined from 29.5 in 1991 to 20.4 in 2016. The CBR has continued to be higher in rural areas compared to urban areas in the last three decades. The birth rate (CBR) at the national level is 20.4 varying from 22.1 in rural to 17.0 in urban areas. Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal are the States having birth rate below 20 both in rural and urban areas.

On the other hand, Bihar has the highest birth rate in rural areas (27.7) and Uttar Pradesh has the highest birth rate in urban areas (22.8) areas, followed by Uttar Pradesh (27.3) and Rajasthan (21.6) in rural and urban areas respectively. The lowest Birth rate (CBR) was recorded in rural areas of Kerala (14.3) and in urban areas of Himachal Pradesh (10.5).

Table 1
Crude Birth Rate (CBR) in India

Sl. No.	State	Total Birth Rate	Rural Birth Rate	Urban Birth Rate
1	Andhra Pradesh	16.4	16.7	15.8
2	Assam	21.7	22.8	15.0
3	Bihar	26.8	27.7	21.1
4	Chhattisgarh	22.8	24.3	18.1
5	Delhi	15.5	17.0	15.5
6	Gujarat	20.1	22.0	17.7
7	Haryana	20.7	22.0	18.3
8	Himachal Pradesh	16.0	16.5	10.5
9	Jammu & Kashmir	15.7	17.4	11.9
10	Jharkhand	22.9	24.5	18.4
11	Karnataka	17.6	18.5	16.2
12	Kerala	14.3	14.3	14.4

13	Madhya Pradesh	25.1	27.1	19.5
14	Maharashtra	15.9	16.3	15.5
15	Odisha	18.6	19.6	13.7
16	Punjab	14.9	15.6	14.1
17	Rajasthan	24.3	25.2	21.6
18	Tamil Nadu	15.0	15.1	15.0
19	Telangana	17.5	17.8	17.0
20	Uttar Pradesh	26.2	27.3	22.8
21	Uttarakhand	16.6	16.8	16.0
22	West Bengal	15.4	16.9	11.8
India		20.4	22.1	17.0

Source: Based on Indian Census 2017 Studies

States with High Birth Rate

In India some states have high birth rates owing to various reasons like non implementation of birth control, family planning etc. Thus there is variation in birth rates in different states. The states having high birth rates are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2
States with High Birth Rate in India

Sl. No.	State	Total	Rural	Urban
1	Bihar	26.8	27.7	21.1
2	Uttar Pradesh	26.2	27.3	22.8
3	Madhya Pradesh	25.1	27.1	19.5
4	Rajasthan	24.3	25.2	21.6
5	Jharkhand	22.9	24.5	18.4
6	Chhattisgarh	22.8	24.3	18.1
7	Assam	21.7	22.8	15
8	Haryana	20.7	22	18.3
9	Gujarat	20.1	22	17.7
10	Odisha	18.6	19.6	13.7

Source: Based on Indian Census 2017 Studies

The top 5 India States by Crude Birth rate as per 2017 Census studies are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradeesh, Rajasthan & Jharkhand, Chhatishgarh, Assam and Haryana also have crude birth rate

above National Level of 20.4. Bihar has the highest birth rate in rural areas (27.7) and Uttar Pradesh has the highest birth rate in urban areas (22.8) areas, followed by Uttar Pradesh (27.3) and Rajasthan (21.6) in rural and urban areas respectively.

States with Lowest Birth Rate

In India some states have lowest birth rates owing to various reasons such as high literacy, implementation of proper family planning, education and employment. The Table 3 indicates the states having lowest birth rates in India.

Table 3
States with Lowest Birth rate

Sl. No.	State	Total	Rural	Urban
1	Kerala	14.3	14.3	14.4
2	Punjab	14.9	15.6	14.1
3	Tamil Nadu	15.0	15.1	15.0
4	West Bengal	15.4	16.9	11.8
5	Delhi	15.5	17.0	15.5
6	Jammu & Kashmir	15.7	17.4	11.9
7	Maharashtra	15.9	16.3	15.5
8	Himachal Pradesh	16.0	16.5	10.5
9	Andhra Pradesh	16.4	16.7	15.8
10	Uttarakhand	16.6	16.8	16.0

Source: Based on Indian Census 2017 Studies

The lowest Birth rate (CBR) was recorded in rural areas of Kerala (14.3) and in urban areas of Himachal Pradesh (10.5). The total lowest birth rate is highest at 16.6 in Uttarkhand and the total lowest birth rate is 14.3 in Kerala State.

Conclusion

The birth rate or crude birth rate is the number of live births per 1,000 people in a population over a specific period, usually a year, indicating how fast a population is growing by adding new individuals. Birth rates rates differ from country to country based on religion, cultural expectation, issues such as female participation in the workforce, or religious and political views of fertility limitation through birth control. Birth rates in India vary from rural to urban as well as state to state. The top birth rate states Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand. The states having lowest birth rates are Kerala and Himachal Pradesh.

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