**Directions: Read both articles and answer all questions on a separate piece of loose leaf.**

**India Tries Using Cash Bonuses to Slow Birthrates**

By [JIM YARDLEY](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/y/jim_yardley/index.html?inline=nyt-per) 8/21/2010

SATARA, India — Sunita Laxman Jadhav is a door-to-door saleswoman who sells waiting. She sweeps along muddy village lanes in her nurse’s white sari, calling on newly married couples with an unblushing proposition: Wait two years before getting pregnant, and the government will thank you.

It also will pay you.

“I want to tell you about our honeymoon package,” began Ms. Jadhav, an auxiliary nurse, during a recent house call on a new bride in this farming region in the state of Maharashtra. Ms. Jadhav explained that the district government would pay 5,000 rupees, or about $106, if the couple waited to have children. Waiting, she promised, would allow them time to finish their schooling or to save money.

Waiting also would allow [India](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/india/index.html?inline=nyt-geo) more time to curb a rapidly growing population that threatens to turn its demography from a prized asset into a crippling burden. With almost 1.2 billion people, India is disproportionately young; roughly half the population is younger than 25. This “demographic dividend” is one reason some economists predict that India could surpass China in economic growth rates within five years. India will have a young, vast work force while a rapidly aging China will face the burden of supporting an older population.

But if youth is India’s advantage, the sheer size of its population poses looming pressures on resources and presents an enormous challenge for an already inefficient government to expand schooling and other services. In coming decades, India is projected to surpass China as the world’s most populous nation, and the critical uncertainty is just how populous it will be. Estimates range from 1.5 billion to 1.9 billion people, and Indian leaders recognize that that must be avoided.

Yet unlike authoritarian China, where the governing Communist Party long ago instituted the world’s strictest population policy, India is an unruly democracy where the central government has set population targets but where state governments carry out separate efforts to limit the birthrate. While some states have reacted to population fears with coercion, forbidding parents with more than two children from holding local office, or disqualifying government workers from certain benefits if they have larger families, other states have done little.

Meanwhile, many national politicians have been wary of promoting population control ever since an angry public backlash against a scandal over forced vasectomies during the 1970s. It was considered a sign of progress that India’s Parliament debated “population stabilization” this month after largely ignoring the issue for years.

“It’s already late,” said Sabu Padmadas, a demographer with the University of Southampton who has worked extensively in India. “It’s definitely high time for India to act.”

The program here in Satara is a pilot program — one of several initiatives across the country that have used a softer approach — trying to slow down population growth by challenging deeply ingrained rural customs. Experts say far too many rural women wed as teenagers, usually in arranged marriages, and then have babies in quick succession — a pattern that exacerbates poverty and spurs what demographers call “population momentum” by bunching children together. In Satara, local health officials have led campaigns to curb teenage weddings, as well as promoting the “honeymoon package” of cash bonuses and encouraging the use of contraceptives so that couples wait to start a family.

“This is how population stabilization will come,” said Rohini Lahane, an administrator in the district health office.

India averages about 2.6 children per family, far below what it was a half century ago, yet still above the rate of 2.1 that would stabilize the population. Many states with higher income and education levels are already near or below an average of two children per family. Yet the poorest and most populous states, notably Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, average almost four children per family and have some of the lowest levels of female literacy.

“An educated girl is your best [contraception](http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/specialtopic/birth-control-and-family-planning/overview.html?inline=nyt-classifier),” said Dr. Amarjit Singh, executive director of the National Population Stabilization Fund, a quasi-governmental advisory agency. He said that roughly half of India’s future excess population growth was expected to come from its six poorest states.

Maharashtra is not in that category, but its population is still growing too fast. A farming district ringed with green hills, Satara has three million people. A 1997 survey found that almost a quarter of all women were marrying before the legal age of 18, while roughly 45 percent of all infants and young children in the district were malnourished.

In response, the district began a campaign to reduce the number of child brides and more than 27,000 parents signed a written pledge agreeing not to allow their daughters to wed before age 18. Within a few years, the marrying age rose and the rate of child [malnutrition](http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/malnutrition/overview.html?inline=nyt-classifier) dropped. Today, officials say about 15 percent of children are malnourished. But if couples were marrying a little later, they were usually producing a child within the first year of marriage, followed by another soon after. So in August 2009, Satara introduced its honeymoon package as an incentive to delay childbirths. So far, 2,366 couples have enrolled.

“The response has been good,” said Dr. Archana Khade, a physician at the primary health care center in the village of Kahner. “But the money is a secondary thing. It’s about the other things, for better future prospects.”

Now, health officials in other states have come to Satara to study the program. Every day, auxiliary nurses like Ms. Jadhav canvass villages to disseminate information about family planning and solicit new couples for the honeymoon package. In India, a new couple usually resides with the family of the groom and it is the older generation that represents Ms. Jadhav’s biggest challenge.

“The first time I go, they always defy you,” she said. “They say, ‘No, we don’t want to do that.’ The older generation believes that the moment a couple gets married, they want a baby in their house.”

On a recent afternoon, Ms. Jadhav and Dr. Khade made their pitch to a 20-year-old bride, who stared silently down as her mother-in-law hovered in an adjacent room of their farmhouse.

“You can delay your first [pregnancy](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/health/diseasesconditionsandhealthtopics/pregnancy/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier),” Dr. Khade said. “Have you talked to your husband about family planning or when you want to have a child?”

“He doesn’t want to have children early,” the bride answered, almost in a whisper.

“Do you think your in-laws will be happy with your decision?” Dr. Khade asked.

The young bride was silent. Her in-laws did not know that she was already using birth-control pills.

Many experts emphasize that easing India’s population burden will require a holistic response centered on improving health services and teaching about a full range of contraception.

Many rural women know little about family planning, and female sterilization is the most commonly used form of [birth control](http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/specialtopic/birth-control-and-family-planning/overview.html?inline=nyt-classifier). During the 1990s, officials in the state of Andhra Pradesh advocated sterilization of mothers after a second child, an approach that brought a sharp drop in the birthrate but was criticized as coercive in some cases.

In Satara, the birthrate has fallen to about 1.9 children per family, partly because of the honeymoon package, with many women opting for sterilization after their second child. Problems persist, such as a sharp gender imbalance in Satara and many other regions of India because of a cultural bias toward having sons. With more pressure to limit families to two children, female fetuses are often aborted after a couple sees an [ultrasound](http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/test/ultrasound/overview.html?inline=nyt-classifier).

Yet the idea of waiting appeals to many women. One new bride, Reshma Yogesh Sawand, 25, said she and her husband wanted to wait to have a child — and only one — in order to save money and move to a bigger city.

“If I have just one,” said Ms. Sawand, who is taking a computer course and has a job selling insurance policies, “I can take better care of it.”

1. Describe three ways India has tried to slowdown its birthrate.

2. Why is an educated woman the best form of birth control?

3. Explain how family expectations are an impediment towards young couples accepted the honeymoon package in Satara.

# *Burying ‘One Child’ Limits, China Pushes Women to Have More Babies*

**By**[**Steven Lee Myers**](https://www.nytimes.com/by/steven-lee-myers)**and Olivia Mitchell Ryan**

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BEIJING — For decades, China harshly restricted the number of babies that women could have. Now it is encouraging them to have more. It is not going well.

Almost three years after [easing its “one child” policy](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/30/world/asia/china-end-one-child-policy.html?module=inline) and allowing couples to have two children, the government has begun to acknowledge that its efforts to raise the country’s birthrate are faltering because parents are deciding against having more children.

Officials are now scrambling to devise ways to stimulate a baby boom, worried that a looming demographic crisis could imperil economic growth — and undercut the ruling Communist Party and its leader, [Xi Jinping](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/31/world/asia/xi-jinping-internal-dissent.html?module=inline).

It is a [startling reversal for the party](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/10/29/world/asia/china-one-child-policy-timeline.html?module=inline), which only a short time ago imposed punishing fines on most couples who had more than one child and compelled hundreds of millions of Chinese women to have abortions or undergo sterilization operations.

The new campaign has raised fear that China may go from one invasive extreme to another in getting women to have more children. Some provinces are already tightening access to abortion or making it more difficult to get divorced.

“To put it bluntly, the birth of a baby is not only a matter of the family itself, but also a state affair,” the official newspaper People’s Daily said in an editorial this week, prompting widespread criticism and debate online.

In what appeared to be a trial balloon to test public sentiment, the provincial government in Shaanxi, in central China, last month called on Beijing [to abolish all birth limits](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1111866.shtml" \o "" \t "_blank) and let people have as many children as they want.

The proposal is politically fraught because removing the last remaining checks on family size would be another reminder that a policy that touched every Chinese family and [reshaped society](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/06/magazine/the-long-shadow-of-chinas-one-child-policy.html?module=inline) — most Chinese millennials, for example, [have no siblings](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/14/world/asia/china-one-child-policy-loneliest-generation.html?module=inline) — may have been deeply flawed.

“Among regular people, among scholars, there’s enough consensus already about the policy,” said Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization, a research organization in Beijing. “It’s just a matter of time before they can lift this policy.”

A plan to end the two-child limit was floated during the legislative session in Beijing last spring and now appears to be under consideration with other measures, the National Health Commission said in a statement.

Experts say the government has little choice but to encourage more births. China — the world’s most populous nation with more than 1.4 billion people — is aging quickly, with a smaller work force left to support a growing elderly population that is living longer. Some provinces have already reported difficulties meeting pension payments.

It is unclear whether lifting the two-child limit now will make much of a difference. As in many countries, educated women in Chinese cities are postponing childbirth as they pursue careers. Young couples are also struggling with economic pressures, including rising housing and education costs.

The “one child” policy also resulted in more boys than girls being born. Some parents obtained abortions because the fetuses were female, reflecting traditional preferences for male children, though such selective abortions were illegal. Because of that and other factors, there are now simply fewer women to marry and bear children.

The number of women between the ages of 20 and 39 is expected to drop by more than 39 million over the next decade, to 163 million from 202 million, according to He Yafu, a demographer and the author of a book on the impact of China’s population controls.

“Without the introduction of measures to encourage fertility, the population of China will drop sharply in the future,” he said.

In advance of any policy changes nationally, local governments are already taking steps to promote childbirth.

In Liaoning, a province in the northeast with one of the nation’s lowest birthrates, officials last month proposed an array of new benefits for young families, including tax breaks, housing and education subsidies and longer maternity and paternity leaves, as well as investments in clinics and preschools.

In Jiangxi Province, in the southeast, the government has adopted a more intrusive approach, reissuing guidelines for when women can get abortions. Though the rules were not new, the move raised fears that the authorities intend to enforce them more strictly, including a requirement that women who are more than 14 weeks pregnant obtain three signatures from medical personnel before an abortion.

Officials said the guidelines were meant to enforce the law prohibiting couples from aborting a female fetus in hopes of having a boy — though they acknowledged that keeping the official birthrate up was also a consideration.

Two other provinces have [tightened the requirements for couples to divorce](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/world/asia/china-divorce-quiz.html?module=inline), saying the changes were made in part to keep alive the possibility of new offspring.

Such measures have revived longstanding complaints about the government’s invasive control over women’s bodies.

“Women cannot decide what happens to their own ovaries,” one user complained on Weibo, a popular microblogging platform, after Jiangxi detailed the abortion guidelines in July.

The “one child” policy was introduced in 1979 as a way to slow population growth and bolster the economic boom that was then just beginning. The party built a vast bureaucracy of “planned birth” workers to enforce the policy, sometimes with violence. Resistance in the countryside was especially fierce, in part because of a rural preference for male children who could help with farm work.

In 1984, the government allowed rural couples whose first child was a girl to have a second child, and there were other exceptions for ethnic minorities. In 2013, recognizing the implications of an aging population, the government allowed parents who were only children themselves to have two children. Two years later, the limit was [raised to two children](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/30/world/asia/china-end-one-child-policy.html?module=inline) for everyone, effective Jan. 1, 2016.

The birthrate jumped that year, reflecting the exuberance of those longing for a second child, but it dropped again in 2017, prompting the reconsideration now underway.

One recent government study estimated that China’s labor force could [lose 100 million people](http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2018/07/13/ARTI1531443023003519.shtml" \o "" \t "_blank) from 2020 to 2035, then another 100 million from 2035 to 2050. It warned of pressure on “economic and social development,” budget resources and the environment.

The economic imperatives have prompted some private companies to act on their own.

Ctrip, the world’s second-largest online travel company after Priceline, already offers a variety of benefits to support parents, like taxi rides to and from the office during pregnancies and bonuses when employees’ children reach school age. Last month, it announced that it would also begin subsidizing the cost of freezing the eggs of some managers — said to be a first for a Chinese company.

The company’s chief executive, Jane Sun, said Ctrip was acting out of a sense of social responsibility but also responding to economic factors: A declining population hurts growth. James Liang, a co-founder of Ctrip, has [written a book](https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Demographics+of+Innovation%3A+Why+Demographics+is+a+Key+to+the+Innovation+Race-p-9781119408925" \o "" \t "_blank) warning of the impact of China’s shifting demographics on technological innovation.

“The generation before us only had one child, so in their mind having only one child is the normal thing,” Ms. Sun said in an interview in the company’s Shanghai headquarters.

“I think we really need to have a sense of urgency — from the top down and the bottom up — to encourage families to resume a healthy birthrate,” she added.

In a written response to questions, the National Health Commission said the “two child” policy was working. While the total number of births dipped to 17.2 million last year — compared with nearly 17.9 million in 2016 — the percentage of families with two children has climbed from 36 percent in 2013 to 51 percent today, it said.

The commission acknowledged that couples faced many obstacles to having a second child and said the government was working on policies in areas like taxation and education that would address them.

“To eliminate the concerns of the masses and sustain the birthrate, we need to focus on the practical difficulties in fertility and child-rearing,” it said.

Demographic experts warn that it will be difficult to change people’s reproductive behavior.

Shang Xiaoyuan, a professor at the University of New South Wales in Sydney and an expert on child welfare in China, said the government needed to help the families most likely to have a second or third child.

“This kind of family should be given more support and should have more invested in child welfare: early education, maternal and child health,” she said.

Better benefits and services will not be enough to persuade everyone.

Sun Zhongyue, a 27-year-old accountant in Beijing who is pregnant with her first child, said she had already ruled out having a second, citing workplace discrimination, the costs of education and the social strains on extended families.

While grandparents often help with child care in China, the majority of Ms. Sun’s generation are only children who are expected in turn to support their aging parents.

“Although elders can help us look after the kid, they cannot once their health worsens,” she said during a visit to a government office to obtain reimbursement for her maternity care.

“Raising a child is stressful,” she added. “It costs money and manpower.”

1. Why did China end its “One-Child” policy?
2. Describe further steps that the Chinese government is taking to encourage its citizens to have more kids.
3. Why are many young couples reluctant to have more than one kid?
4. In your opinion, should a government have a right to tell a person how many kids they can have? Why or why not?