

Editorial of the Day – 27.01.2026**Index**

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1. Mind the time- On the financial burden of India's ageing population (TH)

General Studies 1- Indian Society

Topic- Population and associated issues.

Sub Topic- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

Introduction

A recent RBI report has flagged the uneven nature of India's demographic transition, debunking the myth of a uniform nationwide demographic dividend. While southern states are rapidly ageing, northern states continue to see a surge in their working-age population. This divergence creates complex fiscal, political, and social challenges that require region-specific policy interventions rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

1. The Three-Speed Demographic Transition (Key Details)

The report categorizes states into three distinct groups based on their demographic trajectory-

Ageing States (The South)

States- Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Projection- By 2036, the elderly population will exceed 22% in Kerala and 20% in Tamil Nadu.

Implication- Immediate pressure on pension and healthcare systems.

Youthful States (The North/East)

States- Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand.

Projection- Working-age populations will continue to grow well beyond 2031.

Implication- Massive demand for education, skilling, and job creation.

Transitional States (The Middle)

States- Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Status- Balancing fading demographic growth with emerging ageing pressures.

2. RBI's Fiscal Advice

For Ageing States- Rationalize subsidies to create fiscal space for rising pension and healthcare burdens.

For Youthful States- Invest heavily in human capital (Education & Health) to harvest the demographic dividend before the window closes.

3. Critical Analysis- The Political & Economic Dilemma**The Southern Disadvantage (Double Whammy)**

Fiscal Penalty- Success in population control leads to reduced Central tax devolution (as Finance Commissions often use 2011 population data).

Political Penalty- Impending Delimitation threatens to reduce their parliamentary representation, punishing them for better governance

The Northern Trap (Unrealized Potential)

Stagnant Spending- Despite a "window of opportunity," education spending in youthful states has stagnated or declined.

Employability Crisis- Mere population growth without quality skilling leads to unemployment, not a dividend.

4. Challenges in the Changing Labour Market

Automation Threat- Youthful cohorts are entering the workforce just as AI and automation are disrupting traditional labor-intensive sectors.

RBI's Risk- The advice to expand labor-intensive sectors might be outdated, risking a scenario where states "age before getting rich."

5. Social Dimensions of Ageing

Feminization of Ageing- Women live longer but often possess fewer assets. Many were never part of the formal workforce, leaving them without pension coverage and financially dependent.

Erosion of Family Support- The RBI's assumptions rely on traditional family care for the elderly.

Reality Check- Migration and the rise of nuclear families are rapidly eroding this informal safety net.

6. Way Forward

Beyond Fiscal Measures- Fiscal consolidation alone cannot solve the crisis; a holistic approach is needed.

New Industrial Policy- Focus on generating large-scale employment in future-ready sectors like Green Energy and the Care Economy.

Proactive Systems for Youthful States- They must build healthcare and pension systems *now* to cushion the fiscal shock when their fertility rates eventually decline.

Social Security Expansion

Social Pensions- Must be significantly expanded to prevent old age from becoming synonymous with poverty.

Public Geriatric Care- Without a major expansion of public facilities, "graceful ageing" will become a luxury available only to the wealthy, deepening inequality.

Conclusion

India's demographic transition is not a singular national event but a fragmented process with distinct regional timelines. Addressing this requires a nuanced federal approach- balancing the fiscal needs of ageing states with the developmental urgency of youthful ones. Without robust social security and future-ready industrial policies, the demographic dividend risks turning into a demographic disaster.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/the-hindu-editorial-on-january-27-2026-mind-the-time/article70553485.ece>

2. Let's recover the lost meanings of Ganaraj to face the political challenge of our time (IE)

General Studies 2- Polity

Topic- The Preamble, Significant provisions, and basic structure.

Sub Topic- Democratic ideals, Republicanism vs. Democracy, and Ethical Governance.

Introduction

Republic Day 2026 has reignited the debate on the true meaning of India as a 'Ganarajya' (Republic). While the Constitution and Indian passports use the term 'Ganarajya,' Republic Day is officially celebrated as 'Ganatantra Divas.' This distinction highlights a conflict between Ganatantra (Procedural Democracy) and Ganarajya (Normative/Ethical Republicanism), raising questions about the ethical soul of the Indian state.

1. Ganatantra- The Procedural View (The Limited Meaning)

Negative Definition- In political science, a "Republic" is often simply defined as a state where the head is not hereditary (unlike a monarchy). This definition is analytically weak because even authoritarian regimes can be republics.

Electoral Mechanism- In common usage, *Ganatantra* refers to the machinery of elections, representation, and majority rule.

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

Conceptual Redundancy- Since *Ganatantra* overlaps heavily with *Loktantra* (Democracy), it becomes a repetitive concept limited to procedures, lacking a deeper moral imagination.

2. Ganarajya- The Normative View (The Ethical Meaning)

Republic as a Moral Order- *Ganarajya* envisions the state not just as a system of governance, but as a community of equals.

Active Citizenship- Citizens are not passive voters but active custodians of power who hold rulers accountable.

Civic Virtue- The republic survives on shared ethical norms, civic responsibility, and public reasoning, not just laws.

Beyond Institutions- The strength of *Ganarajya* lies in the public conscience and moral restraints on power, rather than just in courts or parliament.

3. Indian and Global Republican Traditions

Western Republicanism- Historically, it emphasized "freedom as non-domination" (not being subject to the arbitrary will of another), rather than just the absence of a king.

Ancient Indian Parallels- Concepts like "Samanna-rajya" (rule by equals) existed in early India.

Caution- Ancient *Ganas* (like Vaishali) were lineage-based oligarchies, not modern mass democracies, but they still enrich our historical imagination of rule by discussion.

Continuity- Modern Indian republicanism is a blend of these civilizational ethics and modern constitutional values.

4. Jan-Gan-Man- The Indian Expression of Ganarajya

The article reinterprets the national anthem's trio of words to explain the Republic-

Jan (The People)- The ultimate source of sovereignty and legitimacy.

Gan (The Collective)- Represents citizens as a political community of equals, transcending fragmented identities (caste/religion).

Man (The Conscience)- Refers to the collective ethical conscience and moral judgment of the nation, which stands above temporary public opinion.

5. Contemporary Challenges & The 'Swadharm' of the Republic

Ethical Assault- Current political challenges are not just about "democratic backsliding" (weak institutions) but an assault on the ethical foundations of the republic.

Limits of Legal Defense- Merely defending the text of the Constitution is not enough if the values behind it lose public legitimacy.

Historical Roots- These values (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) were forged during the century-long freedom struggle, not just written in the Constituent Assembly (1946-49).

Swadharm (Ethical Duty)- The core duty of *Ganarajya* is to uphold equality, dignity, and freedom from domination.

Conclusion

To address modern political crises, India must move beyond the ritualistic celebration of *Ganatantra* (machinery of state) and recover the lost ethical meaning of *Ganarajya* (community of equals). The true defense of the Republic lies in active citizenship, civic virtue, and the preservation of its moral soul—its *Swadharm*.

Source- <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/yogendra-yadav-writes-lets-recover-the-lost-meanings-of-ganarajya-to-face-the-political-challenge-of-our-time-10496087/>