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1. China's Opposition to Taiwan's New Centre in India**Introduction**

China has strongly opposed the opening of Taiwan's Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC) in Mumbai. Beijing stated it "lodged solemn representations" to India, referring to India's commitment to the "One-China Principle," which serves as the foundation of China-India relations.

**Taiwan's Economic and Cultural Centres in India**

The Mumbai TECC is Taiwan's third office in India, following New Delhi (opened in 1995) and Chennai (opened in 2012). These offices facilitate cultural, economic, and visa services in the absence of formal diplomatic ties.

China's "One-China Principle" Explained

China's "One-China Principle" asserts that:

1. There is only one China.
2. Taiwan is an inalienable part of China.
3. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the sole legal government representing China.

This position stems from China's history. After the Chinese Civil War, the Communist Party under Mao Zedong established the PRC on the mainland, while the defeated Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, fled to Taiwan and claimed to represent "real China." Over time, countries seeking diplomatic ties with China were required to accept this principle.

India's Stance on the One-China Principle

India was one of the first countries to recognize the PRC in 1950. Though it had earlier ties with Nationalist leaders, India cut off relations with Taiwan after the Communists took power. However, in 1995, as part of its post-Cold War foreign policy, India resumed engagement with Taiwan but kept it limited due to sensitivities with China.

Why India Has Taiwan's Economic and Cultural Centres

India and Taiwan established representation in each other's capitals in 1993, with the India-Taipei Association in Taiwan and Taiwan's TECC in India. These offices promote economic, cultural, and technology ties, especially as Taiwan has emerged as a major global technology hub and semiconductor manufacturer.

The TECC in Mumbai aims to deepen ties between India and Taiwan, particularly in sectors like manufacturing. For instance, Taiwanese tech giant Foxconn has already set up a facility in Tamil Nadu, and the new TECC could boost Taiwanese investments in western India.

Broader Context: Taiwan-China Relations and India's Position

Taiwan has increasingly asserted its independence, especially under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which China sees as separatist. China, under President Xi Jinping, has repeatedly stressed its territorial claims on Taiwan and hinted at the possibility of forceful reunification.

Amid India's own border tensions with China since 2020, some experts argue that India should adopt a tougher stance on Taiwan. However, India has been cautious not to escalate tensions with China. Nonetheless, there are concerns that China may not show similar restraint when it comes to India's territorial concerns, such as in Kashmir.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

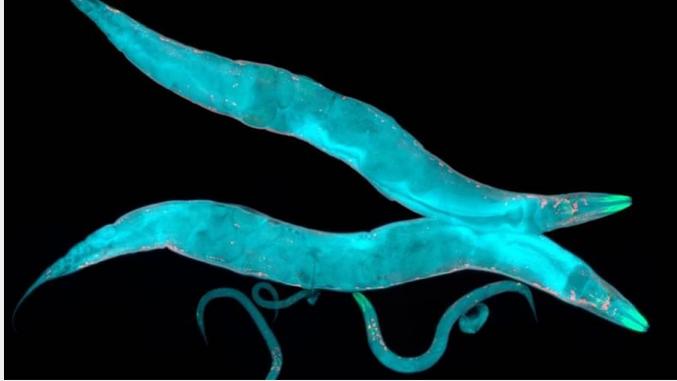
Source: Indian Express

2. How the microscopic worm *C. elegans* won 4 Nobel Prizes

Introduction

While accepting the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine this year, molecular biologist Gary Ruvkun spent a few minutes lauding his experimental subject: a tiny worm named *Caenorhabditis elegans*.

This is not this worm's first brush with international stardom nor is it the first time *C. elegans* has been thanked for aiding award-winning work. Ruvkun's award was actually the fourth Nobel Prize resulting from *C. elegans* research, cementing the lowly soil worm's outsize role in scientific discovery.



Four Nobels

The 1-millimeter nematode has helped scientists understand how healthy cells are instructed to kill themselves and how the process goes awry in AIDS, strokes and degenerative diseases. (That work was the subject of the 2002 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine.) Self-proclaimed "worm people" were recognised by the Nobel committee in

2006 for discovering gene silencing, which became the basis for an entirely new class of drugs. Two years later, the chemistry prize went to scientists who used nematodes to help invent cellular "lanterns" that allowed biologists to see the inner workings of a cell.

For each prize, a laureate made sure to thank the worm for its contributions, though perhaps the most famous nod came from Sydney Brenner, who won the first "worm Nobel." "Without doubt, the fourth winner of the Nobel Prize this year is *Caenorhabditis elegans*," he said in his lecture in Stockholm.

'Experimental dream'

One of the *C. elegans*' virtues is its simplicity, which allows scientists to test hypotheses about fundamental biological concepts in a model that is easy to understand. The nematodes have just 959 cells — a remarkably manageable number, compared with our trillions of cells — each of which scientists have named and charted from fertilisation to death. The destiny of each cell is easy to map, since the worms become translucent under the light of a microscope and cycle through all developmental stages in about three days.

The nematode was the first animal to have its genome entirely deciphered — in 1998, years before scientists were able to do the same for flies and mice. The worm is inexpensive, easy to store and entirely self-sufficient when it comes to reproduction; female *C. elegans* have functional sperm that allow them to inseminate themselves.

"It's an experimental dream," said Judith Kimble, a nematode researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Bonding over worms

Kimble attributes much of the research success to the fact that worm-bonded scientists tend to share their resources and cooperate. Ruvkun, of the Harvard Medical School, and his co-winner, Victor Ambros, a professor of molecular medicine at UMass Chan Medical School, shared their findings with each other, allowing them to piece together the mechanics of microRNA.

The C. elegans research community comes together every other year at the International Worm Convention.

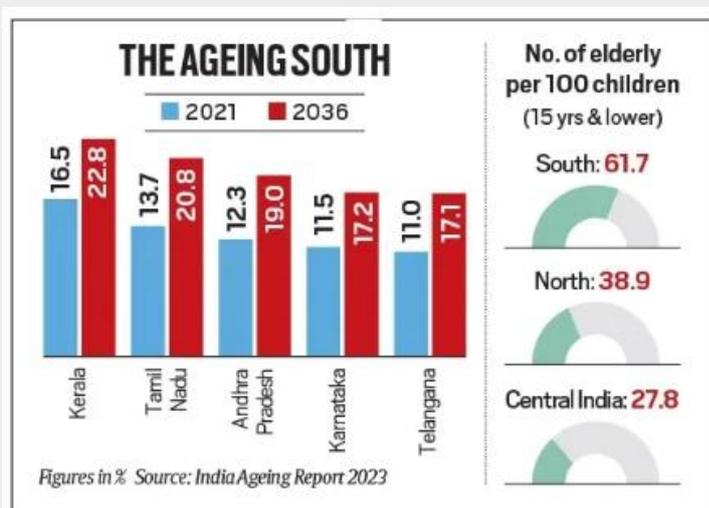
Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: Indian Express

3. Challenges of South India's Aging Population

Introduction

South India is experiencing a demographic shift, with its aging population becoming a growing concern. Andhra Pradesh's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu recently highlighted this issue, noting that the region's low fertility rates may lead to a declining young population, which in turn could impact the state's workforce and economic future. This demographic transition, while positive in controlling population growth, presents new challenges, particularly in managing an aging society.



Population Projections and Aging Trends

According to a 2020 report by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the proportion of people aged 60 and above is rising across India. Southern states, having achieved lower fertility rates earlier than their northern counterparts, are expected to see a faster increase in their aging population:

- **Kerala:** The proportion of people aged 60+ will rise from 13% in 2011

to 23% by 2036.

- **Andhra Pradesh:** The fertility rate dropped to the replacement level (2.1 children per woman) as early as 2004, more than two decades ahead of states like Uttar Pradesh.

With these trends, the dependency ratio—the percentage of non-working, dependent individuals—will increase, placing pressure on social services and healthcare.

Economic Impact of an Aging Population

An aging population poses challenges for economic productivity. As the working-age population shrinks, there will be fewer people to support the elderly. This could lead to higher spending on healthcare and pensions, potentially straining state resources. Southern states are particularly concerned that their smaller population growth could reduce their representation in Parliament after electoral delimitation.

Can Incentives to Increase Fertility Work?

N Chandrababu Naidu suggested policies to incentivize larger families to counter the population decline. However, research indicates that pro-natalist policies—efforts to

encourage more births—have had limited success globally. Countries like Japan, South Korea, and parts of Europe have tried similar policies, but have not been able to significantly raise birth rates. Even Scandinavian countries, where extensive family and childcare support exists, have only managed to prevent fertility rates from falling too drastically.

Experts like Sonalde Desai argue that once populations reach a certain level of prosperity and education, it becomes difficult to encourage higher fertility, even with financial incentives.

Addressing the Aging Challenge: Migration as a Solution

Rather than focusing on increasing fertility, experts recommend internal migration as a more viable solution for South India. Migration from the northern states, where the population is younger and growing, can help offset the labor shortages in the South. This approach has several advantages:

- Southern states can benefit from an influx of working-age individuals without having to invest in their education and upbringing.
- Migrants can contribute immediately to the local economy, filling gaps in sectors like manufacturing and services.

This model of leveraging migration is similar to the approach taken by the United States, which has sustained its economy through immigration and the economic contributions of younger populations from abroad.

Boosting Economic Productivity

Experts also stress that instead of focusing on increasing the birth rate, the priority should be on enhancing the economic productivity of the existing workforce. Ensuring that South India fully benefits from its current demographic dividend, with a focus on improving skills, education, and employment opportunities, can help maintain economic growth even as the population ages.

Conclusion

South India faces significant challenges with its aging population, but incentivizing larger families may not be a successful or sustainable solution. Instead, encouraging internal migration from other parts of India and boosting workforce productivity are seen as more effective strategies to maintain economic stability in the face of demographic change.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Society

Source: Indian Express