

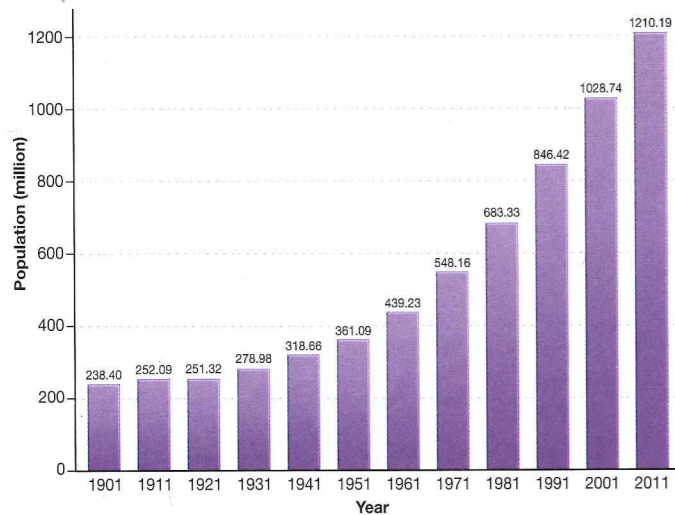
## Case study: India's booming population

In 2013, India's population reached 1.28 billion people. Despite falling fertility rates, India's population is projected to overtake China's. Thirty-one per cent of India's population is under 15 years of age, and more than 50 per cent is under 25 years. Future population growth is unavoidable, given the size of the under-15 age group, as this group will shortly enter the child-rearing stage.

### India's population growth

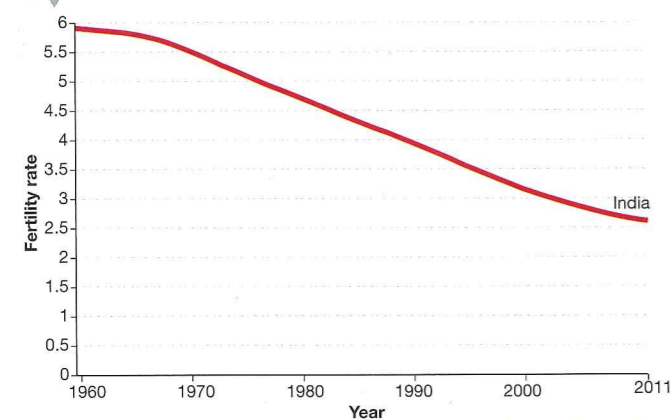
Figure 7.19 shows the decade-by-decade increase in India's population since 1901. Despite the increase, the fertility rate has decreased, as is shown in Figure 7.20. The decline in fertility has been attributed to increased female education participation rates, urbanisation and rising standards of living.

7.19 Decadal growth in India's population, 1901–2001



Source: India Population Commission

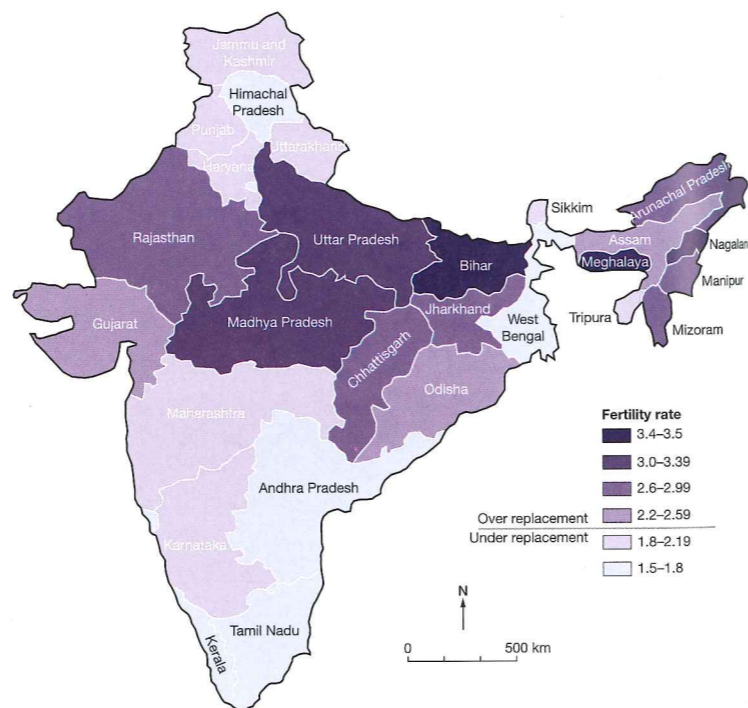
7.20 India's fertility rate, 1960–2011



Source: Google Public Data

India's population growth is not uniform throughout the country. Figure 7.21 shows that the rate of fertility differs throughout the country; consequently, population growth also varies throughout the country. Population growth rates are still relatively high in India's Hindi-speaking heartland, but below replacement level in the south.

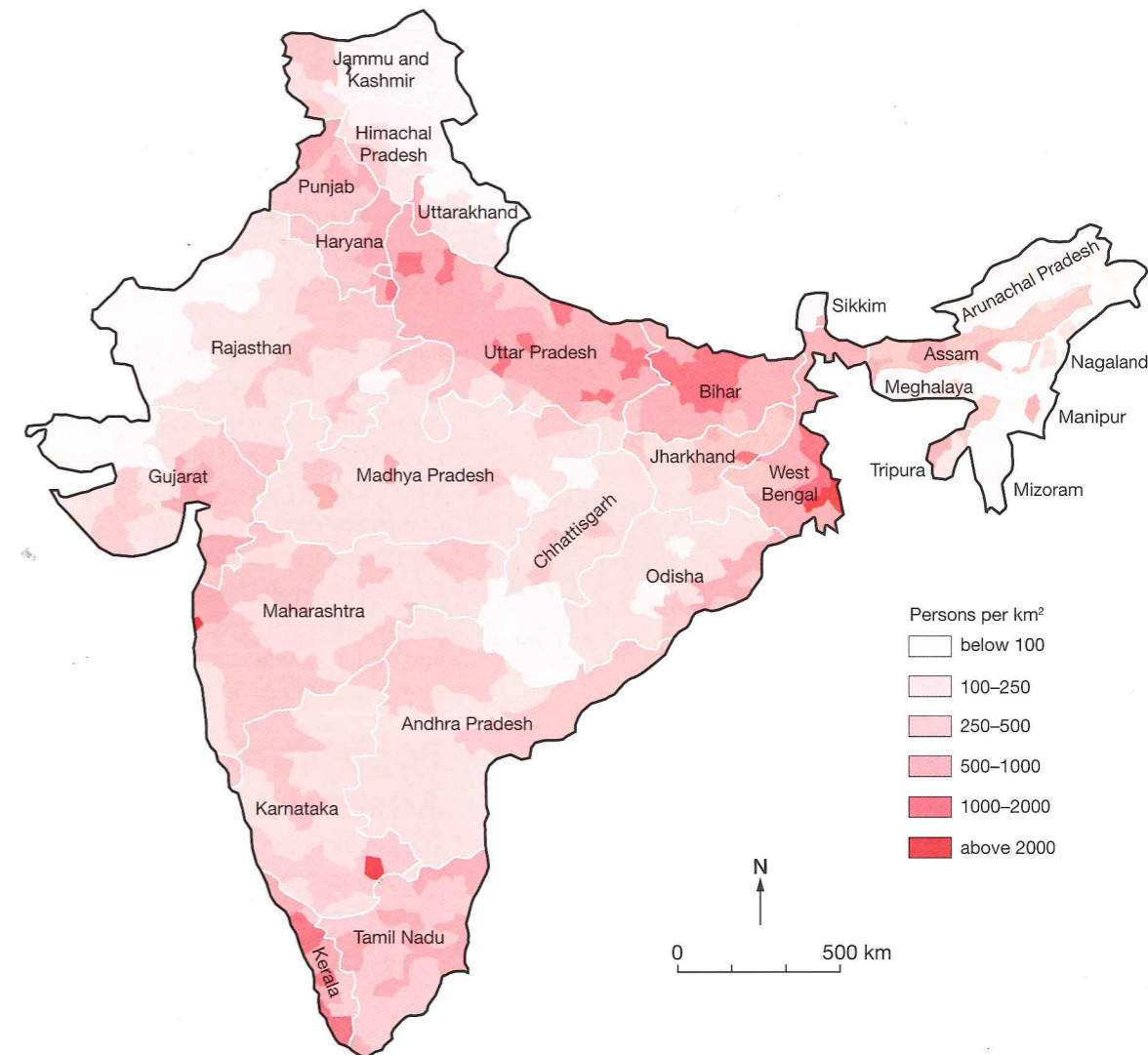
7.21 Fertility rates in India, by state and territory, 2012



### Population distribution and density

While India occupies just 2.4 per cent of the earth's surface, 17.5 per cent of the world's population lives there. The most densely settled parts of the country are the Ganges River valley and the eastern and western coastal margins of the Deccan Plateau, as shown in Figure 7.22.

7.22 Population density in India



A string of northern states, which lie just to the south of the Himalaya mountain range, are dominated by cold, arid deserts and fertile valleys. The physical limitations of the region limit population density.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Knowledge and understanding

- 1 List the reasons given for the decline in fertility rates.
- 2 Explain why the proportion of the population under the age of 15 years is important in terms of future population growth.

#### Geographical skills

- 3 Study Figure 7.19. Using data from the graph, describe the trends in India's decadal population growth.

- 4 Study Figure 7.20. Using data from the graph, describe the trend in fertility since 1960. What factors explain this trend?
- 5 Study Figure 7.21. Identify the states with the highest and lowest fertility rates. Outline the overall spatial pattern of fertility.
- 6 Study Figure 7.22. Which areas have the highest population density? Which have the lowest?