Society & Social Justice · GS - I

“Empowering women is the key to control population growth.” Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Female education; reproductive autonomy; delayed marriage; family planning; maternal healthcare; economic independence; gender equality; fertility transition; social norms; public health services

Model Answer

Introduction

Women's empowerment expands their educational, economic, social and political capabilities. It also enables women to make informed decisions about marriage, reproductive health and family size, thereby contributing to a voluntary and sustainable decline in fertility rates.

How Women's Empowerment Influences Population Growth

- **Education:** Educated women generally have greater access to reproductive-health information and are better positioned to make informed family-planning decisions.
- **Delayed marriage and childbirth:** Education and employment opportunities can reduce early marriage and support the postponement of first childbirth.
- **Economic independence:** Financial autonomy increases women's ability to negotiate household decisions, including the timing and number of children.

- **Access to healthcare:** Reproductive-health services, contraception and maternal care enable couples to plan pregnancies safely.
- **Reduced child mortality:** Better healthcare increases child survival, reducing the perceived need for larger families as insurance against child loss.
- **Gender equality:** Reducing son preference and strengthening women's decision-making can discourage repeated pregnancies driven by the desire for a male child.

Limitations

Women's empowerment alone cannot determine fertility patterns. Poverty, cultural expectations, child mortality, access to healthcare and broader economic conditions also influence family size. Population policy must therefore remain voluntary and rights-based.

Conclusion

Women's empowerment is a key driver of demographic transition because it expands reproductive autonomy and access to opportunities. Combined with education, healthcare, poverty reduction and gender equality, it can support stable population growth without coercive measures.

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