

2 Child Norm in India: Denying Development?

- Government of India has ratified ICPD PoA and announced 'target free approach'.
- India's National Population Policy (NPP, 2000) underscores the principle of 'free and voluntary' choice.
- However, many states in India have their own population policies that militate against the spirit of NPP.

- The characteristic feature of such state population policies in 2 Child Norm.
- It is based on incentives and punishments that deny people their civil and political rights like contesting elections and exclude them from many government welfare schemes if they have more than 2 children.
- Women have to bear the worse effects. They are either denied ANC services as well as benefits of welfare schemes or they are expected to pay 'fine' if they wish to avail of state maternal health services after having 2 children

- The main driving force behind such policies is the obsession with ‘population explosion.’
- Consensus among State, judiciary, health services and ruling elite that such measures are in the national interest and should not be questioned.
- As a result many poor and disadvantaged groups, especially women, are denied development. Can this be justified?