

What alternative Birth control programmes exist?
A Case study of the Differences between Kerala, India and China

Kerala's GDP per capita (\$) is 2,950. This is extremely high in comparison with the average Indian GDP per capita and other low-income countries (around 6.5 times higher). It is however still very low in comparison with the UK, which has a GDP per capita of 27,000, almost ten times higher.

Kerala's infant mortality rate and fertility rate (per 1,000) respectively are 12 and 1.8, in comparison with India's averages of 65 and 3.1; this clearly shows how new-born children and infants in Kerala have a much greater chance of survival and that there is a lower birth rate, which also shows that women are more educated and have a higher status than in the rest of India. The infant mortality rate is significantly higher than that of the UK (7) but much lower than the average of other low-income countries (80). The same is true for fertility rates, although Kerala's fertility rate is very close to that of the UK's, just higher by 0.1.

There would be many advantages to living in Kerala as opposed to other regions of India. Firstly, women have a higher status in society and it is easier for them to find work and education in Kerala. Education is generally better, as can be seen by the relatively high adult literacy rate (91 %). Healthcare and contraception is more widely available, and people have easy access to family planning schemes.

Whereas China's one-child policy focused mainly on the disadvantages of having more than one child, Kerala focused more on the advantages of having a small family. Birth control was much more prominent in China than in Kerala; people were encouraged to be sterilized and the 'granny police' monitored everyone to keep them from having a second child. In Kerala, sanctions were less severe and people were given more choice in the matter.

Similarities:

- There are penalties/benefits for having more than a certain amount of children
- Marrying at a higher age is encouraged
- Family planning and healthcare are readily available

Differences:

- In Kerala, women were not allowed maternity leave if they had over *two* children
- In China, families that had a second child were given a 10% salary cut and the parents had to pay for all health care and education
- In Kerala, couples are *encouraged* not to marry until a later age. In China, couples are *not allowed* to marry until their late 20s

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