

From Fertility to Infertility: Biopolitics and Biosocial Dynamics of Reproduction in Contemporary Tamil Nadu, India

Human reproduction is shaped by both biological and social factors, and in Tamil Nadu, the transition from high to low fertility has been driven by active policy interventions. In the 21st century, the boundary between biology and technology, as many envision it, is the post-human phase in which technology will overcome biological limits. The phrase “Fertility to Infertility” highlights how demographic changes since the late 1960s, characterised by the state's focus on reducing fertility through targeted programmes, have yielded both public health achievements and new social challenges. This evolving landscape now raises questions about ageing populations, labour shortages, and representation, suggesting that solutions to one set of demographic problems may exacerbate another. Accordingly, the main argument is that shifts in policy and medical priorities have reshaped reproductive experiences in Tamil Nadu, transforming how fertility and infertility are perceived and managed.

The research proposal examines how the shift from "fertility to "infertility," as a medicalised and politicised condition, is constructed in contemporary Tamil Nadu. Using the frameworks of biopolitics and biosociology, the study will analyse the roles of the state, the market, and biomedical interventions in regulating reproduction, and assess how Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) and infertility acquire political and demographic significance. Biological perspectives, including life-history theory and endocrinology, will be integrated directly with sociological analysis to reveal how techno-bio politics shapes reproductive practices and inequalities.

The research questions are: (1) How are fertility and infertility represented in public policy and policy discourse in Tamil Nadu? (2) How do these representations cast fertility and infertility as economic threats, welfare concerns, or individual risks? (3) In what ways do biosocial factors and biopolitical technologies, particularly ART, interact to shape reproductive experiences and inequalities? (4) How are data privacy, informed consent, and transparency addressed in relation to ART and infertility?

Keywords: *Fertility, Infertility, Biopolitics, Biosociology, Demographic problems, Public Health, Reproductive Health, Endocrinology, Assisted-Reproductive Technology.*