

THE ASIAN AGE

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"I HAVE ALREADY ANNOUNCED AN AWARD FOR ALL THOSE YOUNG WOMEN, WHO ARE HEALTHY AND CAN REPRODUCE BUT CHOOSE NOT TO. THIS IS THE GREATEST SERVICE YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW. THIS IS NOT AN ENDANGERED SPECIES. WE ARE JUST TOO MANY."
— SADHGURU JAGGI VASUDEV



ON THE OTHER HAND ELON MUSK HAS BEEN QUOTED SAYING, "SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT HAVING FEWER KIDS IS BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. ENVIRONMENT'S GONNA BE FINE EVEN IF WE DOUBLED THE POPULATION. JAPAN HAD THE LOWEST BIRTH RATE. HAVING KIDS IS ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING CIVILIZATION. WE CAN'T LET CIVILISATION DWINDLE INTO NOTHING."



"ALIA AND I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT HAVING KIDS FROM THE FIRST DAY WE MET AND FELL IN LOVE. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED CHILDREN. AND SHE WANTS CHILDREN. TO START A NEW CHAPTER IN LIFE, I AM EXTREMELY EXCITED ABOUT THAT, I CAN'T WAIT."
— RANBIR KAPOOR



Children should not be born for environment or society

DR. JYOTI KAPOOR, Senior Psychiatrist and Founder, Manasthali

A child who is given birth for a social cause is born in bondage and cannot get the opportunity to evolve. This is a culture that inhibits individual development as the emphasis from the beginning is not individual, a culture that eventually prevents the growth and development of society at large. Children should not be born for the environment or society or as an obligation to the species. Children should be born if we feel the urge to create life and nurture it. Having kids is a great responsibility and one must be prepared for it to make it a joyful experience for parents as well as children. In the current sociocultural environment, emphasis is on an individual's growth and evolution, it is not a mindless following of tradition. Many couples are choosing to adopt children instead of having their own, others are focusing on their spiritual development."



It's a personal chice

DR. MEENU KUMAR, Founder, Cos We Care Foundation (NGO) & Cosmo Arts Gallery

Parenthood is a status that can be achieved with ease but accepting the responsibilities of kids as parents is not that much easy. Respect should be given to the priorities of a woman. If a woman wants to excel in her professional life and there is a great scarcity of time, she must follow her career goals, and her partner should support her. Moreover, enforced, or involuntary motherhood is neither in favour of the woman nor it will be suitable for the new member of the family. The baby will be deprived of her mother's love, and the mother won't be able to concentrate on her work. In contrast, if one craves for a baby and has adequate time and other resources to nurture the baby in a conducive environment, there is no point in procrastinating parenthood."

Are kids bad for the planet?

Having children or not has become the hot point of discussion even as the likes of Sadhgaru and Elon Musk give contrasting points of view that has stirred the hornet's nest



Parenthood brings unparalleled joy

NANDNI SHARMA, PR Professional

Choosing to have children is a personal choice. While nature has designed the female body to produce an offspring, it is unfair to stereotype women into the role of a mother and judge them if they feel and choose otherwise. Women are human and every human has a unique nature. It took me some time to choose motherhood and I was lucky to have a life-partner who was understanding, empathetic and supportive. He respectfully gave me time, space and respected my wishes. We decided to become parents when the desire to have a child together as a couple came to me on its own. Parenting is tough but comes with its share of unparalleled joy. The experience is priceless. Till date, no matter how much my pre-teen fights with me, motherhood remains one of my most treasured experiences in this life."

BINDU GOPAL RAO

Children seem to have occupied a top spot in several discussions in the recent past. Upasana Kamineni Konidela, entrepreneur and philanthropist, in a conversation with spiritual leader Sadhguru, asked him why people "find it their duty to question her ability to reproduce". In response, Sadhguru promised an award to Upasana for her decision to not have kids. He told her, "I have already announced an award for all those young women, who are healthy and can reproduce but choose not to. This is the greatest service you can do right now. If you would have been a tigress, I would tell you to reproduce, as it is an endangered species. But this is not an endangered species." Elon Musk on the other hand has been quoted saying, "Some people think that having fewer kids is better for the environment. Environment's gonna be fine even if we doubled the population. Japan had the lowest birth rate. Having kids is essential for maintaining civilization. We can't let civilisation dwindle into nothing." Something, actor Ranbir Kapoor agreed with in a recent interview with *Harper's Bazaar* India, where he has been quoted as saying, "Alia and I have been talking about having kids from the first day we met and fell in love. I've always wanted children. And she wants children. To start a new chapter in life, I am extremely excited about that, I can't wait." So, do children need to be born in the current environment? Clearly there is no right answer as this is a prerogative and choice that is specific to everyone. We share some opinions of professionals from different walks of life to see what their take is.



Upasana Kamineni Konidela revealed that she is frequently asked 'when' she is having a baby and 'why' she hasn't one yet.

Children are our future

DR. MALINI SABA, Psychologist, Founder, and Chairman, Anannke Foundations

I concur with Musk that we must have children and educate them. Children are the future of environmental sustainability and the source of innovative solutions to the world's problems and fresh perspectives on life. The government should assist parents in having children by providing facilities such as affordable childcare, flexible working hours, and making each parent responsible for the upbringing of their child. Generation Z cares the most about the health of the world, pushes others to put sustainability first in their buying decisions, and keeps asking companies, brands, and governments if they care about the future of young people."



Put the nation first, have fewer kids

REHAN PONCHA, Olympian Swimmer and Arjuna Awardee

There is most certainly a concern of cultural continuity for populations showing a negative growth rate like the Parsis, but India as a whole, would flourish if people had fewer children for at least a decade. There is a tremendous strain, not just on the environment, but on all resources with overpopulation. Having a child is a lifelong commitment that comes with major emotional and financial responsibility and a fair share of sacrifice of personal time. I think people must have children, only if they have the resources and are ready to make that time. I feel, put the nation first, and if you choose to procreate, have one child or better still, adopt."

