

Population Growth, Woes and Management in India

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Abstract: *In India population has been rapidly increasing and has become the first populous country in the World. The India Population is 1,450,935,791. India has added more than a billion people since independence in 1947, and its population is expected to grow for another 40 years. Indian cities will grow as migration increases because of lack of jobs and low wages in villages. Demographers say India also needs to stop child marriages, prevent early marriages and properly register births and deaths. India can reap the benefits of demographic change and achieve equitable and sustainable development for its growing population only through a holistic and integrated approach. The present paper deals with population growth, characteristics, consequences and population related issues and their overcome for Indian Development.*

Keywords: Population growth, Characteristics, Consequences and Population related issues and their overcome

1. Introduction

The India Population is 1,450,935,791 (Worldometer, 2025). The current population of India contributes to 17% of the global population. Also, all these people are unevenly distributed across 3.28 million square kilometers of our geographical area. According to the 2001 Census, Uttar Pradesh is the highest populated state in India with a total number of 166 million people. While on the other hand, states like Sikkim and Lakshadweep have the lowest population of 0.5 million in Sikkim and only 60000 people in the island state of Lakshadweep. Furthermore, six states - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh - that are home to roughly 40% of India's population also have fertility rates higher than the replacement level, 2.1. This is in sharp contrast with Kerala (1.8), Karnataka (1.7), Andhra Pradesh (1.7) or Goa (1.3). Though Rajasthan is the largest state in size, its population contributes to only 5.5% of the total population of India. This uneven distribution of the population is due to the varying population density of the country. Population density is the total number of people per unit of area. Also, population density is largely dependent on the geographical location and geological factors. Therefore, states like Assam, Himachal Pradesh, and other hilly terrains have a lower density of population. While the northern plains and coastal areas like Kerala, West Bengal, and Maharashtra have very high population density.

India, having surpassed China as the most populous nation in the world, is facing challenges due to its fast-growing population. With over 1.4 billion people and an estimated annual growth rate of approximately 1 percent, this demographic trend has complex and far-reaching implications on human development in India. India's population is expanding at an unsustainable rate and is projected to surpass 1.5 billion people by 2030 and 2 billion people by 2050 (Maitreesh Ghatak, 2025)

Characteristics of the Population of India

Age Composition

One of the most important characteristics of the population of India, the age composition determines the country's social and economic structure. The total population is broadly divided into three age groups, i.e. Children- below

15 years, Working-age- 15- 59 years and Aged (Senior)- 59 years and above. The median age in India is 28.4 years (Worldometer, 2024).

Adolescent population

This is one of the most important and influential elements of the age composition aspect of the population. Adolescents are people between the age groups of 10-19 years in India. Moreover, about one-fifth of the population comprise adolescent individuals. They are especially relevant to the future growth and significant part of the population of India.

Sex Ratio

The sex ratio of population is determined by the number of females for every 1000 males. This helps in understanding the equality of males and females in the society, which consequently gives an idea of the nation's culture. India's sex ratio has always been on the lower side, until recently. States like Kerala and Union Territory of Pondicherry have higher sex ratio than the major states.

Literacy Rate

This is yet another important characteristic of the population because the literacy rate of a country determines its economic structure and growth. Literacy is the ability of a person of 7 years and above to read and write in any language. The census states the literacy rate of the population of India is almost 74.04 per cent in 2016.

Occupational Structure

The number of people in a population involved in different economic activities helps assess the growth of the country's economy. The occupational structure is the distribution of the population across different occupations. This is an immensely important element of the population of India. Moreover, our occupational structure has three broad categories, i.e. Primary occupation- agriculture, fishing, mining, animal husbandry, forestry etc., Secondary occupation- manufacturing, building, construction work etc. and Tertiary occupation- communication, transportation, administration etc.

Population Growth and Related Issues

The country's rapid population growth puts pressure on resources and services, leading to environmental degradation, poverty, and inequality. The burden on the healthcare system increases, making access to quality healthcare a challenge. Education infrastructure struggles to meet the needs of a growing population, and urbanisation strains infrastructure and basic services. Environmental concerns arise due to the large population's impact on natural resources. Additionally, population growth also creates a dearth of employment opportunities. Overpopulation is a severe threat to our existence. It results in myriad issues with politics, society, and the economy, including unequal resource distribution, subpar living circumstances, a broken health system, and others. Overpopulation causes working institutions to become dysfunctional, undermines all efforts for upgrading the nation's infrastructure, and makes social welfare programs ineffective.

Social Aspects

Crime

Populace growth and poverty are directly related, and lack of resources and job prospects result in unemployment galore. The educated youth affected by unemployment are thus driven to commit social crimes like robbery, burglary, prostitution, murder etc. The despair, despondency and discontent among educated unemployed youth are reflected in the terrorist actions that we currently witness in several regions of the nation, for instance, Jammu and Kashmir.

Minority-majority gap

Fears of supremacy over minorities and identity loss might arise in some cultures as a result of overpopulation. Thus, it has the potential to fuel communalism and cause rifts in the social fabric based on religion.

Economical Aspects

Economically, the expanding population necessitates the creation of adequate employment opportunities to accommodate the growing workforce. As per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, unemployment in India is at an all-time high of 8.5 percent. Another challenge is poverty<1>, with nearly 16.4 percent population living in poverty and about 4.2 percent living in severe poverty.

Ageing population

Due to an increase in life expectancy, India's population is ageing. This has increased the percentage of the elderly populace, for example, in 2011, Kerala's share of the populace over 60 years old was 12.6 per cent and Tamil Nadu's was 10.4 per cent. By 2031, these are anticipated to rise to 20.9 per cent and 18.2 per cent. An increase in the senior populace results in higher healthcare and social security costs. This will significantly increase the state exchequer's financial burden by curtailing funding for investing in capital assets.

Unemployment

Although there is a large army of labourers as a result of overpopulation, it is rather difficult to give each working person a job that pays a living wage owing to a paucity of

capital resources. There is a clear distinction between disguised unemployment in rural areas and an apparent unemployment in urban areas.

Resource Depletion

Overpopulation is a direct cause of excessive resource exploitation, environmental degradation and deterioration. While resources in India have either remained constant or have expanded arithmetically, generating resource constraints, population growth in India has been geometric.

Disparity in Income Distribution

The government's need for investment and capital formation is immensely impacted by overpopulation that has an impact on the government's overall development efforts. Unemployment, unequal food distribution, and rising poverty, which are the main causes of the increase in poverty, make the situation still worse.

Poverty

People become poor as a result of unemployment, unfair income distribution and dearth of resources. Addressing poverty and wealth inequality will become increasingly difficult as populations grow, requiring equitable distribution of resources and access to essential services. The strain on infrastructure such as housing and transport will increase, and large investments will be required to meet the needs of the growing population. As the population continues to grow, it becomes increasingly difficult to support the socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Rapid urbanisation leads to urban overcrowding and poor urban planning, creating problems such as slums, traffic congestion, and the lack of access to basic amenities. Governments need to focus on implementing policies that promote inclusive growth, entrepreneurship, and skills development to combat unemployment and ensure sustainable economic development.

Political Aspects

A nation's politics is impacted by its economic and social conditions. Rising unemployment, poverty, and unequal wealth distribution all have an impact on the nation's law and order condition.

Caste politics

Political parties engage in caste-based politics to satisfy their vote bank, which is another factor copiously contributing to the nation's division.

Interstate disparity in population distribution

There are significant differences among the states of India in terms of growth and population. Increased migration into states with smaller populations and more established economies will be caused by rising populations in some states.

Social conflict

Social conflict including the insider-versus-outsider debate may result from this. States already reserve jobs for their residents. Additionally, ageing states will depend on foreign immigrants to sustain economic growth.

Environmental Aspects

From an ecological perspective, population growth puts enormous pressure on natural resources, leading to overconsumption, deforestation, water scarcity, and pollution. According to the **Global Carbon Budget Report 2022**, India's coal, oil, and gas emissions are projected to grow by 6 percent. Sustainable management of natural resources and conservation practices are essential to meet these challenges and ensure long-term sustainability. Population growth increases greenhouse gases and accelerates climate change. India needs to implement green policies, promote renewable energy sources, and adopt sustainable practices to mitigate the negative effects of climate change. Promoting a sustainable lifestyle and raising awareness of the importance of environmental protection are important steps that need to be taken toward a greener future (Poonam Muttreja et al., 2024).

Environmental deterioration

Overpopulation is putting pressure on the land, water and air and there is less land available per person. Environmental deterioration brought on by population growth includes pollution, biodiversity loss, and global warming, among other things. Delhi is suffering from air pollution, are already seeing the effects of overcrowding (Macrotrends, 2025).

Health Aspects

Spread of infectious diseases

One of the main elements affecting people's health is population growth. Numerous infectious and contagious diseases have emerged as a result of grave concerns like urban overcrowding and environmental changes brought by population growth. Governments are increasingly unable to expand their healthcare facilities and systems due to population increase.

Demographic Disaster

The impacts of India's growing population on human development are multifaceted, impacting different areas of the economy, society, and the environment. Equitable growth, inclusive policies, resilient infrastructure, improved education and health systems, and sustainable practices are essential for seizing opportunities and meeting the challenges posed by a rapidly growing population. While the challenges are significant, it is important to recognise that population growth also provides opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and socio-economic progress. To effectively address these impacts, governments should work with civil societies and international partners to develop comprehensive and sustainable policies that promote equitable growth, strengthen social infrastructure, and ensure environmental protection to promote human development. Only through a holistic and integrated approach can India reap the benefits of demographic change and achieve equitable and sustainable development for its growing population (Shobha Suri, 2023).

However, if the economic benefits are not inclusive, unable to create jobs, and unable to enhance the living conditions of the youth, the social cohesiveness may suffer significantly. This optimistic view of the demographic dividend presented in the preceding discussion may be clouded by issues with

education, employment prospects, and health care. A youthful population that lacks skills is underutilized, and is frustrated might stymie economic development and cause a demographic disaster that could destabilize peace and incite conflict. Therefore, the only way to prevent this demographic dividend from becoming a demographic disaster is to ensure that there is more employment in the manufacturing and service sectors, and we also need to work on revamping the educational system. The negative consequences of low employment growth are already evident in the rise in violent protests, terrorism, and other law-and-order issues.

2. Effective Management of Population Rise

Raising the Marriage Age

Fertility is influenced by marriage age. Therefore, rising the marriage age to 21 is a good idea.

Education dissemination

It influences people's perspectives. It increases understanding of the significance of family planning and birth control options. Women who have received education are more health-conscious and steer clear of repeated pregnancies, which lower the birth rate.

Adoption

Adoption is another powerful tool for reducing the population. Despite costly medical care, some parents are unable to conceive. It is advised that they adopt children from orphanages.

Economic Measures

Numerous economic actions must be implemented as preventative measures against population expansion. More employment opportunities must be created by the government through policies. It is essential to increase employment opportunities in both urban and rural locations.

India's Population Policy

India has had a formal population policy in place for more than 50 years. India may have been the first nation to formally declare such a policy in 1952. The National Family Planning Programme served as the implementation of the population policy. The fundamental goals of this programme have not changed much throughout the years; they are to attempt and change the rate and pattern of population growth in a socially desirable way. Early on, the main goals were to enhance public health standards, raise public knowledge of population and health issues, and cut down the rate of population growth by promoting various birth control methods. After the Emergency, the National Family Welfare Program was established instead of the National Family Planning Program, and coercive techniques were abandoned. A wide range of socio-demographic goals is now present for the programme. The National Population Policy of 2000 included the development of a fresh set of rules.

National Population Policy (NPP), 2000

The strategy sought to combine community initiative, women's empowerment, education, and Panchayati Raj institutions into the field of population control. Family welfare is used in place of family planning.

Objectives

- To provide integrated service delivery for essential reproductive and child health care, as well as to meet the unmet needs for contraceptives, health care infrastructure, and health professionals.
- By 2010, the total fertility rate should reach replacement levels as a medium-term goal.
- Long-term goal for stabilizing the population by 2045.

Broad Targets

- Reduce infant mortality to 30 per cent and improve child and reproductive health by addressing the infrastructure, service, and supply needs for basic reproductive and child health.
- Reduce the percentage of boys and girls who drop out of primary and secondary school to under 20% by making education up to the age of 14 free and mandatory.
- Reduce maternal mortality to 100.
- Achieving universal immunization of children against all vaccine-preventable illnesses.
- Achieving 80% of deliveries should take place in medical facilities, 100% should be handled by skilled experts, and 100% of pregnancies, births, and deaths should be registered.
- It envisioned a stable population by 2045, which was later postponed to 2065.
- Enhancing the health and family welfare services and expanding access to contraceptives.

It has drawn criticism on several fronts since it offers monetary incentives for small family norms, even though financial incentives do not alter habits and behaviours based on social norms. Additionally, NPP-2000 placed a strong emphasis on the function of Panchayati Raj Institutions, although it did not specify exactly what that function would be. Disincentives are the most common kind of coercion. State-imposed disincentives frequently discriminate against the poor and women.

Government Schemes

To stabilize the population, the government has mostly relied on family planning initiatives. Family welfare programs are a crucial part of the family planning process, and several different ones have been introduced over time:

The Janani Suraksha Yojana

It encourages institutional delivery while lowering maternal and newborn fatalities through financial aid.

The Integrated Child Development Scheme

It emphasizes the overall health, nutrition, and vaccination of children under the age of six as well as the correct dietary and physical education of expectant and nursing mothers. Moreover, there is a program for universal immunization.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Yojana

It aims to balance out the disparities between the cost and accessibility of tertiary-level healthcare. There is a program for ASHAs to provide contraceptives to beneficiaries' homes and doorsteps. There is a plan for ASHAs to ensure birth spacing. An essential component of the ASHA kit now includes the pregnancy testing kit.

3. Conclusion

Population growth is a serious global concern that has negative socioeconomic, environmental, and health effects. The birth rate, mortality rate, and migration rates are all factors that affect the population growth rate of the country, which is rapidly rising. The demand for greater resources in overpopulated areas leads to deforestation for food production, urban overcrowding, and the spread of terrible diseases. Since Independence, the government has launched several initiatives to reduce population increase, some of which have been somewhat successful in doing so. There is a need for a more targeted strategy in certain areas that continue to experience rapid population expansion. India needs to create enough jobs for its young working age population to reap a demographic dividend.

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