



## population growth – india's current problems: an over view

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### ABSTRACT

India ranks second after China in total population. Its population is growing 20% per decade, leading to problems that include food deficits, sanitation deterioration and pollution. Although economic growth numbers look promising, the living standards of most citizens are not changing. Over 30% are living below the international poverty line, and there are not enough jobs to change that condition. The food and nutrition deficit has created a 20% death rate due to malnutrition. Clean drinking water is in short supply, and severe water shortages are common. Sanitation is a massive ongoing problem that the government has been unable to address. For example, 8% of India's population has no access to toilets, and 75% of surface water is contaminated by human waste. Moreover, 60% of India's GDP is lost to health-related costs. China and India are the two most egregious environmental polluters in the world. India uses coal for 80% of its power requirements, and it has been slow to transition to cleaner energy sources. New Delhi and other cities in India are among the most polluted in the world, and car emissions in these urban areas are creating breathing and skin ailments.

### KEYWORDS

Population, Poverty, Birth Rate & Death Rate

### Introduction

Man is the creator of all the wealth, said Karl Marx, and without man, all other resources remain idle. Thus, man is the central focus point of all development efforts. Man produces wealth and wealth is produced for the use of mankind. Hence, population of a country is a crucial factor in the development of its economy. Population was one of the most important contributory factors in the 'early development' of Western countries. Increasing population provided additional hands to work and additional pockets to buy the newly produced goods. However, beyond a point, the additional population becomes a drain on our economy's limited resources, more so particularly in the case of underdeveloped countries.

It further depresses the existing low levels of living, leaves no scope for capital formation and adds to ever-growing stream of the unemployed. Hence, the rate of population growth has to be kept under check to achieve any meaningful progress in the overpopulated underdeveloped countries.

### Demographic Trends in India

India ranks second after China in total population. Its population is growing 20% per decade, leading to problems that include food deficits, sanitation deterioration and pollution. Although economic growth numbers look promising, the living standards of most citizens are not changing. Over 30% are living below the international poverty line, and there are not enough jobs to change that condition.

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India is the second largest country in the world in terms of

the size of population. It is next to China. India's population constitutes nearly 15 percent of the total world population while her geographical area is only 2.4 percent of the world area. India's national income which is barely two percent of the total global income clearly shows the tremendous strain of population on her economy.

### The Population Census 2011:

According to the 2011 Census Report, the total population of India was around 1210 million (121.0 crore) as against 1028 million (102.8 crore) persons in 2001.

**Table -1 Population Growth in India 1901-2016**

Year	Population of Indian Union (in million)	Increase or Decrease Over Previous Decade (in millions)	Percentage increase or Decrease During the decade
1901	236.1	--	--
1911	252.1	16.0	5.7
1921	251.3	0.3	(-0.3)
1931	279.1	27.8	11.1
1941	318.7	39.6	14.2
1951	361.1	42.4	13.3
1961	439.2	78.1	21.5
1971	548.2	109.0	24.8
1981	683.3	135.1	24.7
1991	846.3	163.0	23.8
2001	1028.0	182.3	21.5
2011	1210.2	181.0	17.6
2016	1319.9	181.5	17.8

**Source:** Compiled from Census of Population 2011 and 2016 current and earlier reports.

**Table – 1** indicates the population growth during the sixty years, viz., and 1951-2011. India's population has increased by 849 million (84.9 crore) persons. The decade 2001-11 alone recorded the growth in population of about 180.2 million people giving a growth rate of 17.6 percent during this decade as against the previous growth rate of 21.5 percent recorded during 1991-2001.

**Period of Small and Irregular Increase (1901-21):** From the above Table-1 we find that the rate of growth of population was moderate and irregular till 1921. Between 1901 and

1921 India's population grew by less than 16 million persons giving a growth rate of less than 0.2 percent for the entire period of two decades. The main reason for this small and irregular rise was famines and frequent epidemics took of human lives. Kingsley Davis places the total lives lost through influenza during 1918-19 at 20 million.

**Period of Rapid Growth (1921 onwards):** From the year 1921, aptly described by the Census Commission for 1951 as the 'Great Divide', the rate of growth became alarming. The

net increase of population during the 30 years from 1921 to 1951 was of the order of 110 million. During the next four decades, i.e. 1951-91, another 485 million people were added

to India's population. This abnormal increase of population in India since 1921 was mainly due to a decline in "abnormal deaths" from epidemics and famines and the overall decline in the death rate.

The population growth potential in India is high on two counts: first the base population is large and second, a reduction of death rate without a corresponding decline in the birth rate is highly improbable.

**Table -2 Average Annual birth Rate and Death Rate in India**

Year	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Natural Growth Ratio of Population
1901-1911	49.2	42.6	6.6
1911-1921	48.1	48.6	6.9
1921-1931	46.4	36.3	10.1
1931-1941	45.2	31.2	14.0
1941-1951	39.9	27.4	12.5
1951-1961	41.7	22.0	19.7
1961-1971	41.2	19.0	22.2
1971-1981	37.2	15.7	21.5
1981-1991	33.9	12.6	21.3
1991-2001	25.8	8.5	17.3
2001-2011	22.1	7.2	14.9
2013-2014	21.4	7.0	14.4
2015-2016	20.22	7.4	14.0

**Source:** Compiled from Census Report and Economic Survey 2014-15, 2015-16

**Table- 2** indicates that the annual birth and death rate in India during 1951-61 was 41.7 and 22.0 per thousand resulting in a natural increase of 19.7 persons per thousand of population. During 1961-71, the birth rate remained high at 41.2 per thousand while the death rate declined to 19.0 per thousand, giving natural increase of 22.2 persons per thousand of population. Similarly the decade 2001 to 2011 saw a further decline in birth rate and death rate. While the birth rate came down to 22.1 per thousand persons, the death rate declined marginally to 7.2 per thousand. This resulted in a relatively small increase in the growth rate of population; the national population growth rate being 14.9 per thousand as against 17.3 per thousand in the previous decade. The addition to India's population during the decade 2001-11 was around 18.1 crore persons Reducing the birth rate however, is a much more complex matter involving radical social adjustment which has hitherto been resistant to change.

**Table -3 Comparative demographic**

Category	Global Ranking	Reference Note
Area	7th	22
Population	2nd	22
Population Growth Rate	102 <sup>nd</sup> of 212	In 2010
Population Density (Sq.K.M)	24 <sup>th</sup> 212	In 2010
Male to Female ration at birth	12 <sup>th</sup> of 2014	In 2009

Causes of Population Increase

Rapidly increasing population of India is a result of prevailing high birth rates and a large decline in the death rate in our country. Thus analysis of factors which account for high birth

rate and the factors that have contributed to a large decline in the death rate is to be done.

**The main causes for high birth rate are:**

- The practice of early marriage is one of the main cause of the rapid increase in population. This gives wider reproductive period.
- Poverty of the masses in poor villagers is the another reason. • India's tropical climate making for earlier puberty, her joint family system, the institution of polygamy is also responsible for rapid growth of population.
- Lack of conscious family planning had also kept birth rate in India very high.
- The age and sex composition of the population and the fertility of women during the child-bearing age in India are most helpful for rapid growth of population.

**The main causes for decline in death rate are:**

- Widespread and Improved medical and health facilities.
- Controlled spread of famines in India due to development of the means of transport and communications.
- Control on dreaded diseases like malaria and TB and diseases like small pox, chicken pox etc. have been completely eradicated.
- Improvements in hygiene in both rural and urban areas and supply of pure drinking water.
- Improvements in overall economic conditions of the masses have contributed to the sharp fall in the death rate.

It is clear from the above discussion that India is presently passing through a period of 'Population Explosion' due to her continuing high birth rate and a sharp decline in the death rate.

**Theory of Demographic Transition**

This theory of Demographic Transition explains the effect of economic development on the size and growth rate of population of a country. The theory refers to the rate of population growth at various stages of economic development. According to this theory, there are three distinct stages of population growth with the advancement of an economy which are caused by the changes in the birth rate and death rate according to the changing socio-economic condition.

- I. High birth rate and an equally high death rate that causes slow growth of population.
- II. High birth rate and steeply falling death rate which causes population explosion.
- III. Birth rate also falls to match the low death rate that slow down population growth rate.

**Population Explosion – An Obstacle to India's Economic Development**

India today is grossly overpopulated. The Census of Population 2011 shows that we are now having over one billion people in India. This means that the country has to support over 16 percent of world population on just about 2.4 percent of total world area. And as country is short of capital and technology to fully exploit its resources, it means that most of the Indians live in poverty, face unemployment and suffer from ill health. No wonder that in spite of half a century of development, over a fourth of India's population lives below poverty line.

In the underdeveloped countries of today, increasing population is more of a hindrance to the development of the economy. It is now universally agreed that an effective control of population growth is necessary if our development efforts is to yield any result.

**Economic Challenges India Faces in 2016:**

On the surface, India's economy looks solid heading into 2016, with third quarter 2015 growth up 7.4% over third

quarter 2014. Industrial production also expanded by 9.8% in October compared to a year earlier. On the downside, inflation picked up in November 2015 to 5.4%, reaching a one-year high. The fiscal situation in India improved with the current account deficit falling to 1.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 from 4.8% in 2013. The government did not succeed in prodding parliament to pass legislation implementing a goods and service tax to help reduce the deficit further, but that remains a goal. Heading into 2016, however, the economic challenges India faces are more deep-rooted, persistent and harder to solve.

#### **Crumbling Infrastructure:**

India has not been able to improve its deteriorating infrastructure in business, education and health care. In business, a study found that China manufacturing is 1.5 times more efficient than India. In terms of economic freedom, India ranks as the 128th freest economy in the world.

Public transportation and roadways have not kept pace with population growth. Housing, sanitation and power facilities are woefully inadequate. The education infrastructure is backward, and over 280 million adults are illiterate. Many children do not attend school at all and instead begin working before reaching their teen years.

India's health care infrastructure is also abysmal, ranking 112th of 190 countries. More than 70% of the population has limited or no access to health care services.

India lags behind the modern world in many ways. Over 50% of the population is still involved in agriculture, which is an extraordinarily high number for a country trying to make giant technological strides in the 21st century. Indians involved in agriculture have the least access to basic education and health care necessities.

#### **Graft and Corruption:**

The great Indian-born writer Salman Rushdie once commented in regard to India's graft and corruption that "Indian democracy is one man, one bribe." The problem costs India's economy 6.3% of GDP per year.

A recent survey found that 60% of respondents point to corruption, bad business practices and delays as the biggest problems that entrepreneurs face, inhibiting growth of their businesses. The reasons for this damaging practice include competing government bureaucracies, a complex and opaque tax system and a lack of clear laws and procedures. Corruption is also strengthened by poverty and lack of opportunity in the job market. The problem is immense and deeply ingrained in India's culture. A solution is not imminent.

#### **Looking Forward:**

India's economic growth looked good on the surface in 2015. However, it could come to a crashing halt in 2016 if a recession or stock bear market slams the world. Even without those added burdens, no one can reasonably expect much progress in solving India's deep-rooted economic problems in 2016. The solution timetable is very long and will consume many years of effort by more than one generation.

Major Problems Created by Growth of Population in Development of an Economy in India

Following problems arise due to population explosion.

- Increasing population has eaten up much of the additional income that has been generated in the economy during the period of the Five-Year Plans. As against a eighteen fold increase in national income, the per capita income has gone up barely fivefold over this period of five decades.
- Population explosion in India has resulted in a serious food shortage in the country. In spite of the fact that more than seventy percent of the working people are engaged in agriculture,

Indian people still do not get even the minimum necessary amount of food.

- Increasing population with the growing number of children adds more to the unproductive population of the country.
- In India, due to population growth, by the end of 2009-10, the number of unemployed persons was estimated to be over 66 million. The present estimate of unemployment in India by many economists is nearly 80 to 90 million persons.
- Population growth hampers the growth of capital formation and reduces volume of savings
- Increase in population reduces per capita income and lowers the standard of living of the masses; it makes the people less efficient.
- Rural areas have become the worst sufferers. The problems faced by the rural areas are lower per capita, availability of land; increased subdivision and fragmentation of land

holdings, disguised unemployment, increase in ineptness etc., which all contribute to reduced efficiency and poverty in rural areas.

#### **Conclusions**

In India rapid population growth has thus hampered economic growth and this prevented any substantial reduction in poverty of the masses. To conclude, population explosion aggravates the poverty, worsens the unemployment situation, reduces per capita income and increases proportion of unproductive people, hampers capital formation and makes the people inefficient. Therefore, an all out effort has to be made to reduce birth rate through a comprehensive programme of family planning so that sufficient resources are released for the economic development of the country. It is found that in India Poverty it is also the main cause of rapid population growth. Poverty prevents better education and better living standard. Thus, population explosion is both a cause and an effect of poverty.