

A study on the consequences of increasing population

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Abstract

In India, the over population has engulfed almost all our achievements in industrial growth, agricultural production, supporting services like medical care, housing, transport, education, banking etc. It has put serious pressures on every sector of our economy and every section of society. Almost all our national problems can be traced back to have their roots in overgrowing population.

At global level, China and India are facing overpopulation issues of highest magnitude. But rate of growth of population has reduced in China substantially in recent years. In India, the rate of growth of population has reduced in some states - while in others it is yet to be reduced.

However, rate of growth may not be the only yard stick to evaluate overpopulation. Total available population and density of population are important features to decide whether rate of increase in population really affects the country's progress.

Keywords: Population, Growth, Indian census

Introduction

Every nook and corner of India is a clear display of increasing population. Whether you are in a metro station, airport, railway station, road, highway, bus stop, hospital, shopping mall, market, temple, or even in a social/ religious gathering, we see all these places are overcrowded at any time of the day. This is a clear indication of overpopulation in the country.

According to the Indian census, carried out in 2011, the population of India was exactly 1,210,193,422, which means India has crossed the 1-billion mark. This is the second most populous country of the world after China and the various studies have projected that India will be world's number-1 populous country, surpassing China, by 2025. In spite of the fact that the population policies, family planning and welfare programmes undertaken by the Govt. of India have led to a continuous decrease in the fertility rate, yet the actual stabilisation of population can take place only by 2050^[1].

Currently, the world population continues to grow though more slowly than in the recent past. Ten years ago, world population was growing by 1.24 per cent per year. Today, it is growing by 1.18 per cent per year, or approximately an additional 83 million people annually. The world population is projected to increase by more than one billion people within the next 15 years, reaching 8.5 billion in 2030, and to increase further to 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100.

As with any type of projection, there is a degree of uncertainty surrounding these latest population projections. The results presented above are based on the medium projection variant, which assumes a decline of fertility for countries where large families are still prevalent as well as a slight increase of fertility in several countries with fewer than two children per woman on average. Survival prospects are also projected to improve in all countries. The uncertainty surrounding the median trajectories is accounted for with statistical methods that enable the Population Division to make statements about the degree of uncertainty in these

projections. For example, one can say with a 95 per cent degree of confidence that global population will be between 8.4 and 8.6 billion in 2030 and between 9.5 and 13.3 billion in 2100. In other words, global population is virtually certain to rise in the short-to-medium term future. Later in the century, global population is likely to continue to rise, but there is roughly a 23 per cent chance that it could stabilize or begin to fall before 2100.

Internal and international migration can be positive forces for economic and social development as they offer a mechanism to rebalance labour markets in areas of origin and destination, and to accelerate the diffusion of new ideas and technologies. Migration can also result in significant flows of remittances to areas of origin. Overall, international migration is a much smaller component of population change than births or deaths. However, in some countries and areas the impact of migration on population size is significant, including in countries that send or receive proportionately large numbers of economic migrants or those affected by refugee flows.

Causes Of Over Population

The two main common causes leading to over population in India are:

- The birth rate is still higher than the death rate. We have been successful in declining the death rates but the same cannot be said for birth rates.
- The fertility rate due to the population policies and other measures has been falling but even then it is much higher compared to other countries.

The above causes are interrelated to the various social issues in our country which are leading to overpopulation^[2].

Early Marriage and Universal Marriage System

Even though legally the marriageable age of a girl is 18 years, the concept of early marriage still prevails and getting married at a young age prolongs the child bearing age. Also, in India, marriage is a sacred obligation and a universal

practice, where almost every woman is married at the reproductive age.

Poverty and Illiteracy

Another factor for the rapid growth of population is poverty. Impoverished families have this notion that more the number of members in the family, more will be the numbers to earn income. Some feel that more children are needed to look after them in their old age.

Also hunger can be cause of death of their children and hence the need for more children. Strange but true, Indian still lag behind the use of contraceptives and birth control methods. Many of them are not willing to discuss or are totally unaware about them. Illiteracy is thus another cause of over population. Sons are the bread earners of the families in India. This age old thought puts considerable pressure on the parents to produce children till a male child is born^[3].

Last but not the least, we cannot ignore the fact that illegal migration is continuously taking place from Bangladesh, Nepal leading to increased population density.

Effects Of Over Population

Even after 67 years of independence, the scenario of our country is not good, due to over population. Some major impacts of high population are as follows:

- **Unemployment:** Generating employment for a huge population in a country like India is very difficult. The number of illiterate persons increases every year. Unemployment rate is thus showing an increasing trend.
- **Manpower utilisation:** The number of jobless people is on the rise in India due to economic depression and slow business development and expansion activities^[4].
- **Pressure on infrastructure:** Development of infrastructural facilities is unfortunately not keeping pace with the growth of population. The result is lack of transportation, communication, housing, education, healthcare etc. There has been an increase in the number of slums, overcrowded houses, traffic congestion etc.
- **Resource utilisation:** Land areas, water resources, forests are over exploited. There is also scarcity of resources.
- **Decreased production and increased costs:** Food production and distribution have not been able to catch up with the increasing population and hence the costs of production have increased. Inflation is the major consequence of over population.
- **Inequitable income distribution:** In the face of an increasing population, there is an unequal distribution of income and inequalities within the country widen.

Steps to Control Population in India

The Government of India, politicians, policy makers should initiate a bold population policy so that the economic growth of the country can keep pace with the demands of a growing population. Major steps which have been already implemented but still need to be emphasised more to control population^[5].

Increasing the welfare and status of women and girls, spread of education, increasing awareness for the use of contraceptives and family planning methods, sex education, encouraging male sterilisation and spacing births, free

distribution of contraceptives and condoms among the poor, encouraging female empowerment, more health care centres for the poor, to name a few, can play a major role in controlling population.

India's strengths in the global world in various fields cannot be ignored, whether in science & technology, medicine and health care, business and industry, military, communication, entertainment, literature and many more. Experts are hopeful that by increasing public awareness and enlisting strict population control norms by the Government will definitely lead the way for the country's economic prosperity and control of population.

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