POPULATION BOOM AND CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract:

India is holding 2.4% of the global land area with 16% of the world's population. The population in India has increased from 238 million to more than one billion in the present century and now erupts to 140 crores, surpassing China in the present period. This sudden increase in population is large enough to engulf and to neutralize all our efforts to conserve the resource endowment and protect the environment. This abrupt increase in population has caused fragmentation in land holdings, and created a rural-urban divide, causing socio-economic problems in cities including housing, mushrooming of slums, burden on municipal facilities along with poor human development indices like education, gender disparities, malnutrition, growing lack of opportunities in backward regions. The rising population has serious implications for food and water, food security, health care, rural-urban services and the sustainability of ecosystems.

Keywords:

Resource Endowment, Rural-Urban Divide, Mushrooming of Slums, Malnutrition, Food Security, Sustainability.

Introduction:

Overpopulation is one of the hazards & serious problems, which creates a great obstacle in the way of national development. It has a direct effect on the society and development of nation. The degradation of the environment in villages towns and cities is now seriously threatening the sustainability of the ecosystem. It is due to high population growth that we are losing topsoil, groundwater depletion, pollution of lakes and rivers, deforestation, loss of grazing lands, conversion of forests into agricultural land and air pollution.

The population is considered as an asset since it will imply the manpower capacity of the nation in terms of employment high employment, more taxes and leading to economic growth. The large size of the population in India and its rapid rate of growth results in low per capita income and low per capita resources. People do not get sufficient quantity of food due to low availability of food which affects their health and productivity. Due to a shortage of natural resources, it becomes difficult to provide gainful employment to the entire working population. Degradation of the environment, global warming, climate change, depletion of natural resources, high cost of living, unemployment, poverty, low per capita income, food problems, decline in social infrastructure, deforestation, reducing the living standard and land acquisition are the main problems which are generated by the overpopulation in India.

In the last 20 years in India, the vehicular population load went up more than 10 times and the industrial pollution load up six times. India's population has grown 2.6 times during a span of 49 years from 1951 to 2000 while forests have been declining as well as thinning. At the turn of the century, 40 percent of India's geographical area was forested. By 1951 it has been reduced to 22 percent and 1997 to 19 percent. The total forest area has been declined from 72 million hectares to 63 million hectares in 1997. The pace of urbanization has always been faster than the pace of population growth. The current annual withdrawal of fuelwood from forests is estimated at 235 million cubic meters against a sustainable capacity of about 49 million cubic meters. The lopsided development is taking place because of population pressure from big cities and the inability of civic bodies to cope with the urban migrants.

The current state of India's backwardness is in human development, even today our government is providing 05 kg of food grains monthly to more than 80 crores of people and still 15 % of the people are still living below the poverty line and the majority of them do not receive the minimum levels of education and health care necessary for functioning human capabilities. Till today same human resources that are in abundance in India are not in a position to exploit the available resources for the betterment of the nation.

Consequences of Overpopulation:

The overpopulation has to face a serious problem of scarcity of necessary food, minimum clothing & proper housing facilities, which are basic needs of human life. Thus, it affects the lifestyle and results in slum areas, starvation etc. The overpopulation aggravates the unemployment & disguised unemployment problem, it creates and gives rise to large families with low income reducing the standard of persons living therein. The slum areas, starvation and frequent epidemics are the results affecting the health and standard of persons residing within such nation.

Due to the population boom sustainable development is not at all feasible as growing population is in requirement of residence and shelter and to construct houses and places of shelter, man is greatly cutting and reducing forests to make a place to live. Overpopulated passion creates a large effect on the environment by exhausting a large proportion of waste. On the other hand, reducing forests which results the growth of pollution and with rapid industrialization and urbanization there is a great demand for fuel wood, fossil fuel and electricity. More people in a small area breed unhygienic conditions which has ill effects on human health. Overpopulation leads to eco-degradation by increasing air, water, soil and noise pollution, unhygienic conditions, and deforestation leading to flood and soil erosion. So rapid human population growth is creating increased pressure on the infrastructure, economy, environment, availability of primary health care and nutrition.

The rapid rate of growth of the population has been the root cause of the food problem. People do not get sufficient quantity of food due to low availability of food which ultimately affects their health and productivity. Poverty is a major cause as it limits the amount of food available to children. Overpopulation is linked to competition for food and can lead to malnutrition among children, especially in rural areas where access to food is limited. Per capita availability of land goes on diminishing and fragmentation of holdings goes on increasing. High population growth will disturb the man-land ratio. A high population further will create disguised unemployment and reduce per capita productivity.

Population boom leads to environmental degradation more pollution, damage to the biosphere and more toxic wastes will be generated. With rapidly growing population, it will become difficult to manage economic and social change. A large and uncontrolled population will create problems such as housing, power shortage, water and transport problems and it will threaten permanent environmental damage through intense urbanization. The rapid growth of the population puts pressure on facilities like housing, transportation, and health care, and it leads to an increased demand for food products, clothes, houses etc.

Over-population has put tremendous pressure on natural resources like land, water, unpolluted air etc. These resources are over-exploited to a point beyond their renewable capacity. Over-utilization of resources results in depletion of groundwater, and desertification and causes undesirable damage to the environment. With increase in population, income disparity increases at the national level poor standard of living; the prevalence of disease and malnutrition; poverty; mismanagement of agricultural resources; political unrest and upheaval; and the problem of utilization of manpower.

Drinking water, sewage treatment, inadequate rainfall, rapid depletion of natural resources, extinction of many plant and animal species due to deforestation and loss of eco-systems, increased level of life-threatening air and water pollution, high infant and child mortality rate and hunger due to extreme poverty are some of the results of over-population.

Sustainable Development and Population Stabilization:

Sustainable development requires a rate of development that can be sustained by natural resources without causing the environmental degradation that jeopardizes the development options of future generations.

Sustainable development can be pursued more easily provided to by achieving goals.

- Population stabilizes at a level consistent with the productivity capacity of the ecosystem.
- Proper planning is needed to overcome deficiencies in housing, water supply, sanitation and health care.
- Biodiversity should be conserved and sustainably used. Sustainable land and water use policy can be adopted.
- Lean and clean technologies can be developed and adopted in all production systems and the development of natural resources. Renewable sources of energy should be replaced with non-renewable ones.
- Services can be provided in a planned manner for a burgeoning urban population.
- To reduce IMR, MMR and low birth weight children, we should work for food security at the level of each individual.
- A demographic transition to low birth and death rates can be achieved if population policies are rooted in the principles of ecology, social and gender equity and opportunities for food, health, literacy and work for all.

Waste management and sustainable lifestyles in cities are needed on an urgent basis as they have implications for the ecology of the rural areas. Houses are

to be designed in such a way so that they harvest and conserve rainwater. The community should aim to live within the population-supporting capacity of the ecosystem. Environmental issues need a long-term perspective and if not taken for granted the devastation and havoc in the form of floods, drought, landslides, famine, hunger, disease and death cannot be prevented. Sewage treatment and waste disposal should form part of housing design. Housing designs should have inbuilt mechanisms for harvesting sun and rain.

The public has to come forward with mounting pressure on governments and industries to adopt eco-friendly measures and give up harmful and damaging ways. Public awareness is the key to effecting a change in the attitudes and policies affecting the environment by forcing polluters to mend their ways and to conduct themselves in a socially responsible manner.

There is an urgent need to take the following actions:

- Promoting interrelationships between demographic, education, environmental and developmental programs in order to achieve sustainable development.
- Smokeless chulhas are to be promoted for reducing indoor air pollution in rural areas.
- Investment has to be increased in water harvesting, artificial recharge of groundwater, completion of pending irrigation and flood control projects, cleaning rivers, lakes and wetlands and ensuring public participation in irrigation and drinking water projects.
- Forest cover has to be increased to conserve soil water and biodiversity for the welfare of present and future generations besides promoting sustainable development and alleviation of poverty.

Human resources development can meet all the challenges posed by nature. It is high time we stabilize our population, conserve and sustain and sustain our resources to attain sustainable development in our state.

Conclusion:

India is a large country and most people who live in backward areas are illiterate and ignorant. No second green revolution now and food will become a problem in the near future. Death rates will decrease further but may increase in the future due to one reason or another other like pollution, accidents, and increases in natural disasters as a result of global warming. If things continue like this no sustainable development will take place as we will require more resources for our population so more exploitation of resources and things would get worsen. In the

near future if the situation continues like this then there will be civil disorder, anarchy and a civil war-like situation in our country. We have 65 percent of the population which is below 30 years and 60 percent of our population is below 25 years. At present we have a large chunk of human resources in our country but it is of no use and total waste of our human power.

Today, we failed to provide our youth the work they are looking for and no policy to date has been framed that can make use of this large chunk of human power like China which to some extent has had success in making use of their young blood (i.e. use and throw type of products are prepared by the youths residing in villages). Lastly, I have no idea where we and in what direction we are heading and what will be the future of our youngsters. What do we have to do to make our primary occupation agriculture as a profitable occupation otherwise the youths even in villages are losing interest in the agriculture sector. How long have we been able to provide food to our population as the foodgrains production in India has reached up to almost saturation level. How long we can sustain our population and provide food to people living below the poverty line at the rate of rupees 2 to 03 and 36 kgs in a month. So, things will get worse in the near future.

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