

Future Challenges of the Population Growth in India

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Abstract

India and many others Third World Countries are passing through the phase of population explosion. It is being argued that this situation has arisen because economic development in these countries has failed to maintain pace with population growth. In 2011, India's population, according to census was 121 crore. This is a serious situation. India's landscape is just 2.4 percent of the world area. Where as its population is nearly 17 percent of total world population. This has created lots of problems, like pollution, crowded transport, Industrial pollution, lack of food, water, electricity etc. How alarming is the situation in this country can be easily followed from the fact the national Income of India is presently even less than 1.1 percent of total world Income. In terms of the size of population, India occupies second position in the world, next to china. These facts clearly indicate that the pressure of population on the land in this country is very high. So the aim of this paper is to discuss main causes of population explosion, effects / challenges of population growth on India economy and remedies for population explosion.

Keywords: *Challenges, Economic Development, Pollution, Population Explosion*

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Dr. Anup Singh Sangwan,

Future Challenges of the Population Growth in India,

Journal Global Values,
Vol. X, No.I,
Article No. 3,
pp.17-24

https://anubooks.com/?page_id=5922

Introduction

If we are to safeguard our future and preserve our culture and civilization, limiting the population growth is imperative.

- Aristotle

According to the Theory of Demographic Transition, every country passes through three stages of demographic transition. These stages are empirically verifiable:-

First Stage: In the 1st stage, both birth and death rates are high. Hence, the population remains more or less stable.

Second Stage: The 2nd stage of demographic transition is characterized by a rapid growth of population because despite sustainable reduction in the mortality rate there is no corresponding decline in the birth rate.

Third Stage: In the 3rd stage of demographic transition, the birth rate declines significantly and thus the population growth remains low.

Population Explosion:

Rapid population growth or population explosion in India is the fundamental obstacle and chief villain to the process of economic development. This is due to high birth rate and declining death rate. During 1901-1951, the population grew by 12.3 crore, while during the next 60 years from 1951-2011, it increased by 121.09 crore that is by more than 10 times. The two main causes for this rapid growth of population have been high birth rate and a large decline in death rate which are discussed as under:-

(I) Causes of High Birth Rate in India:

- (1) **Predominance of Agriculture:** During harvesting, weeding and sowing times in agriculture need of labour. It is, in fact, in this period that child labour is required in agriculture. Therefore, In agrarian societies children have never been considered an economic burden.
- (2) **Poverty:** In poor families, the arrival of an additional child is considered as a source of additional Income and means of social security. So poverty in under developed countries usually results in high fertility.
- (3) **Lack of Education:** According to 2011 census, more than 26 percent population of India is illiterate and there is direct and positive relationship between illiteracy and marital fertility. Illiterate people do not feel the necessity of keeping a small family which leads to high birth rate. Moreover, there has been a consistent shortage of cheap, easy to use and harmless means of birth control.
- (4) **Universality of Marriage:** Marriage is both a religious and social obligation for the parents to marry their children. This results in greater fertility and increasing population.

(5) Joint Family System: In this system, the burden of child is not born by the parents but by the head of the family. So parents don't think and the increasing responsibilities associated with every new born child and be get more and more children.

(II) Causes of Decline in Death Rate in India:

(1) Medical Facilities: With the advancement of medical sciences and technology many dreadful and chronic diseases such as cholera, plague, smallpox, typhoid etc. no longer hold a threat. Antibiotics and others life-saving drugs have drastically reduced the number of deaths in India.

(2) Education and health awareness: Improvement in educational level, growing awareness and facilities for sanitation and cleanliness have helped to reduce the incidence of mortality rate. Better maternity and post –natal care have brought down the infant mortality rate.

(3) Improvement in Standard of Living: Our country has been developing fast since independence. People have begun to take nutritious and complete food. Consequently the death rate has declined.

(4) Late Marriage: Young persons both males and females, prefer to educate themselves and make a career in order to have a decent living rather than marry early. Girls marrying at a ripe age, give birth to fewer children. So the mortality rates of both mothers and children are on the decline.

(5) Other Factors: Elimination of famines, control of epidemics, immunization against various preventable diseases, supply of drinking water, sanitation and hygiene have helped in lowering down the mortality rate.

Effects of population Growth on Indian Economy:

According to United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) state of World's Population 2011 Report release on October 2011, India's population will touch the 1.46 billion mark in 2025 making India the most populous country in the world overtaking china 1.39 billion population. While China's population will decline to about 1.3 billion by 2050, India's population will continue to grow to about 1.7 billion till 2060 before beginning to decline.

Over population presents a formidable threat to the survival of a vast segment of the world's population and "its dimension are as dangerous as a nuclear war" overwhelming population growth in India brings out the never ending suffering of people. It creates serious problems in form of food shortage, unemployment, economic uncertainties, rising incidents of crime and social disorder and environmental pollution. Thus, the standard of living is affected.

The effects of rapidly rising population on India's economic resources are as under:-

- (1) **Declining Land-Man Ratio:** Due to rapid growth of population over the years, its pressure on agriculture land has increased and cultivable land per capita has declined. Over crowding on land have resulted in sub-division and fragmentation of holdings, so there is not much scope for raising the farm productivity in agriculture.
- (2) **Low Capital Formation:** Rapidly growing population makes increasing demand on resources for unproductive purpose and thus hinders capital formation. Not only does the household consumption rise but also public expenditures on school, colleges and hospitals also increase.
- (3) **High Dependency Burdens:** Rising population increases the proportion of infants and children in the country and hence, increases the burden of dependents or unproductive consumers (Unproductive Consumers are those who are not employed but they do consume. They include children below the age of 15 years and old persons who are above the age of 60 years). An increase in the number of dependents brings a greater burden on the economy and lowers the productive capacity of the country. Consequently, the economic development of the country is hindered.
- (4) **Unemployment and Poverty:** With the rapid increase of population in India the unemployment and poverty are increasing. The number of job opportunities created at the end of every five year plan has been found to be far less than the people seeking employment. In India, even now in spite of all the development during the seven decades, nearly 25 percent of population is poor and for most of the time suffers from extreme destitution. Unemployment and poverty both arecruse and their existence is serious obstacle in the economic development of the country.
- (5) **Low Quality of Life:** The low quality of life is reflected in the deprivation in knowledge by illiteracy, lacking access to health services and safe-water and the percentage of children under five who are moderately of severely under weight. The life of the poor particularly become miserable due to the population growth.
- (6) **Burden on Public Utility Services:** Rapid increase in population puts a heavy burden an social infrastructure like health care, education, housing, water supply, sanitation, power, roads, railway etc. Besides rising population puts pressure on the maintenance and administration of law and order in the country.
- (7) **Quality of Education:** Attaining education too has be come a basic requirement of life. But due to increase in population, the number of seekers of education has risen sky-high. The excessive growth of population may have the following impact : Excessive in student population, creating shortage of teachers, creating shortage of school buildings and teaching materials, lowering the standard of education, wastage and stagnation and students indiscipline.
- (8) **Food Problem:** With rapidly growing population, it became necessary for the government to arrange for adequate surplus food grains for the growing masses. In the course of the last few years, food grain production has been in India but food

shortage and import of food grains still continues. This is because the additional production of food is eaten up by the increasing population. Most of the people (45 percent) in this country suffer from malnourished and under nourishment.

(9) Corruption: High cost of living, poverty and unemployment are the off shoots of population problem which result in the demon of corruption (corruption is a factor denying many an impressive young man his due) Black marketing precipitates poverty and administrative deteriorates. The common people on the whole feel its impact.

(10) Transport & Entertainment: Increased population has made the means of transport and entertainment very expensive. The source of transport and entertainment are pitifully below the required level. Overcrowding in buses, trains and roads day and night is now an every day experience. This puts a strain on the family budget, thus defeating the aim of providing the family with amenities and prosperity.

(11) Environmental Pollution: Rising population affects the environment through the use of natural resources and production waste. These lead to loss of bio-diversity, air and water pollution and increased pressure on land. Industrialization, urbanization, growth of mega cities and increasing vehicular traffic have led to atmospheric pollution. With the growth of big town and cities to accommodate growing population, there has been water pollution due to discharge of domestic sewage and Industrial effluents. The polluted water has led to such water-borne disease as – diarrhea, intestinal worms, hepatitis etc. Thus rapid population growth has been leading to environmental degradation on a large scale in India.

Remedies for Population:

Undoubtedly, population explosion is one of the major impediments to development and thus it is not something to be welcomed and eulogized. Therefore, stern efforts must be accorded to control it so that it may not hamper the true sense of development. To deal with the present population problem, broadly speaking, threefold measure would be required:-

(1) Economic Measures: The size of population in India is large and it is neither desirable nor possible to reduce it. In these circumstances vigorous efforts and attempt are needed on the economic front. The most important ones that are suggested include:

(a) Industrialization: The burden on the agricultural sector should be reduced by expansion of the industrial sector in the country. Cottage and small scale industries should be setup in villages and towns so that they provide employment opportunities to the maximum number of people. Higher productivity in this sector makes workers more conscious of their standard of living. They realize that in order to raise their standard of living they must restrict the size of their family.

(b) Equal Distribution of Income and Removal of Poverty: Poor people are virtually, unconcerned about the size of their families and they welcome any new comer to their family. They even loss human qualities while living in poverty. So attempt should be made to bring equality among the haves and have-nots. State can do is to guarantee the right to work and ensure a living wage to every one.

(2) Social Measures : Illiteracy, superstition, orthodoxy and deplorable conditions of women are social maladies, and they all have contributed to the population growth in this country. Therefore, efforts must be made to remove social evils in the country. They are:-

(a) Spread of Education: Contribution of Education in bringing down the birth rate is significant, Education often changes the attitude of person towards family, marriage and the number of children he should have. The educated people like to delay their marriage and prefer to have small family. Education, by making a frontal attack on orthodoxy and superstitions, induce people to practice family planning.

(b) Improving the status of Women: In India, the position of women is inferior to that of men, both socially and economically. The discrimination between men and women in society leads to the growth of family size. Therefore, stern efforts should be made to raise their status in society, so that they may perform their social responsibilities. Free education should be given so that they must aware of their duties and abandon old false values. They must realize the value of family planning.

(c) Raising the minimum age of Marriage: Since fertility depends on the age of marriage, it is necessary that every possible social, moral and educative measure should be undertaken to raise it. The government should raise the minimum age of marriage to 24 years for men and 21 years for women with a view of restrict the rate of population growth.

(3) Family Planning Programme: It is universally recognized that the family programme is an important device in controlling population explosion. In China, the country has approved of a one-child norm and has succeeded in bringing down the birth rate. China's success on this front is due to widespread use of contraception. About 85 percent of married women of child-bearing age use contraception in China, now, as against 55 percent in India. The following aspects of the family planning programme in this country deserves particular mention:-

(a) Public Information Programme: This is considered necessary for raising level of consciousness of the people without which they will not accept any family planning programme. Hence the government should use all media of publicity, including cinema, radio, television, poster and newspapers to publicise the importance of family planning.

(b) Incentives and disincentives:- Cash prize and other facilities should be given to those people to go in for sterilization. Moreover those who reject family planning may be denied from government facilities.

(c) Family Planning Centre: In addition to these clinical centres, large number of contraceptive distribution centres should also be located in both urban and rural areas.

(d) Research: Research in the field of demography, communication action reproductive biology and fertility control should be given a high priority in any family planning programme.

Conclusion

The world that we live in has changed tremendously ; living is no more pleasant for quite a sizeable section of the man kind. It has almost turned into a living hell. This unprecedented situation has been brought about by the unprecedented proliferation of population. This population explosion has brought in its trail the most excruciating form of food shortage, unemployment, economic uncertainties, rising incidents of crime, social disorder and environmental pollution.

In fact, population growth is not to be left to the natural, biological and other factors, but policy intervention is needed to be plan and regulate it in tune with the need of society and economy. For national prosperity and happiness of the family, there should be a reduction in the number of unwanted children and increase in the income of the family. The population problem is a big one. It must be solved on many fronts-national, educational, economic, social, industrial, agricultural and biological. The government alone can not solve this gigantic problem unless people co-operate. For national prosperity and happiness, we must have through planning of population because more the number of children, greater the strain on the family budget. So every person, every family needs to participate in the population stabilization movement. Every citizen must share the concern that all our precious gains earned become losses if there are more mouths to feed. It is an imperative duty of every citizen to interact with those in their villages or slums or surrounding and convince every one to reduce it to smaller families and ensure that the norms are adopted, accepted, voluntarily, willingly and happily.

After attaining independence, we used to say “we are two, we have two”. But in the Modern scenario, this conception has changed and today, we say – “We are two, we have one”.

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