

POPULATION OF INDIA

DISTRIBUTION, DENSITY, GROWTH AND COMPOSITION

India is the second most populous country after China in the world with its total population of 1,028 million (2001).

- India's population is larger than the total population of North America, South America and Australia put together.
- Such a large population invariably puts pressure on its limited resources and is also responsible for many socio-economic problems in the country.

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

- India has a highly uneven pattern of population distribution.
- U.P., Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh along with Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Gujarat, together account for about 76 per cent of the total population of the country.
- Share of population is very small in the states like Jammu & Kashmir (0.98%), Arunachal Pradesh (0.11%) and Uttaranchal (0.83%) in spite of these states having fairly large geographical area.
- Climate along with terrain and availability of water largely determines the pattern of the population distribution.
- North Indian Plains, deltas and Coastal Plains have higher proportion of population than the interior districts of southern and central Indian States, Himalayas, some of the north eastern and the western states.

- Development of irrigation (Rajasthan), availability of mineral and energy resources (Jharkhand) and development of transport network (Peninsular States) have resulted in moderate to high concentration of population in areas which were previously very thinly populated.
- Among the socio-economic and historical factors of distribution of population, important ones are evolution of settled agriculture and agricultural development; pattern of human settlement; development of transport network, industrialisation and urbanisation.
- Regions falling in the river plains and coastal areas of India have remained the regions of larger population concentration.
- urban regions of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Jaipur have high concentration of population due to industrial development and urbanisation drawing a large numbers of rural-urban migrants.

DENSITY OF POPULATION

- The density of population in India (2001) is 313 persons per sq km and ranks third among the most densely populated countries of Asia following Bangladesh (849 persons) and Japan (334persons).
- Population densities in the country ranges from as low as 13 persons per sq km in Arunachal Pradesh to 9,340 persons in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- West Bengal (903), Bihar (880) and Uttar Pradesh (690) have higher densities, while Kerala (819) and Tamil Nadu (480) have higher densities among the peninsular Indian states.
- Assam, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Orissa have moderate densities.
- The hill states of the Himalayan region and North eastern states of India (excluding Assam) have relatively low densities while the Union Territories (excluding Andaman and Nicobar islands) have very high densities of population.

- The density of population is a crude measure of human and land relationship.
- the physiological and the agricultural densities gives a better picture of population pressure on agricultural land.
- $\text{Physiological density} = \text{total population} / \text{net cultivated area}$
- $\text{Agricultural density} = \text{total agricultural population} / \text{net cultivable area}$
- Agricultural population includes cultivators and agricultural laborers and their family members.

GROWTH OF POPULATION

- Population growth has two components namely; natural and induced.
- The decadal and annual growth rates of population in India are both very high and steadily increasing over time.
- The annual growth rate of India's population is 2.4 per cent. At this current rate of increase, it is estimated that the country's population will double itself in another 36 years.
- There are four distinct phases of growth identified in India in one century-
 - 1. Phase 1- 1901-1921- a period of stagnant or stationary phase of growth. Both the birth rate and death rate were high keeping the rate of increase low. Poor health and medical services, illiteracy and inefficient distribution system of food and other basic necessities were largely responsible for a high birth and death rates in this period.
 - 2. Phase 2- 1921-1951- period of steady population growth. The crude birth rate remained high in this period leading to higher growth rate than the previous phase. An overall improvement in health and sanitation throughout the country brought down the mortality rate.

- 3.Phase 3- 1951-1981- period of population explosion in India. caused by a rapid fall in the mortality rate but a high fertility rate of population in the country. economy started showing up ensuring the improvement of living condition of people at large. Consequently, there was a high natural increase and higher growth rate. Increased international migration bringing in Tibetans, Bangladeshis, Nepalis and even people from Pakistan contributed to the high growth rate.
- 4. Phase 4- post 1981 till present- growth rate of country's population though remained high, has started slowing down gradually. A downward trend of crude birth rate is held responsible for such a population growth. affected by an increase in the mean age at marriage, improved quality of life particularly education of females in the country.
- The growth rate of population is still high in the country and it has been projected by World Development Report that population of India will touch 1,350 million by 2025.

REGIONAL VARIATION IN POPULATION GROWTH

- 1. The States like Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Puducherry, and Goa show a low rate of growth not exceeding 20 per cent over the decade. Kerala registered the lowest growth rate (9.4).
- 2. A continuous belt of states from west to east in the north-west, north , and north central parts of the country has relatively high growth rate than the southern states.
- 3. It is in this belt comprising Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand, the growth rate on the average remained 20-25 per cent.
- 4. An important aspect of population growth in India is the growth of its adolescents. At present the share of adolescents i.e. up to the age group of 10-19 years is about 22 per cent (2001).
- 5. the north-eastern states on the one hand and some of the Union Territories on the other (leaving Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, and Andaman and Nicobar islands) very high growth rates?
- 6. The growth rate of population is widely variant over space and time in the country and also highlights various social problems related to the growth of population.

THE ADOLESCENT POPULATION

At present the share of adolescents is about 22 per cent (2001), among which male adolescents constitute 53 per cent and female adolescents constitute 47 per cent.

- The adolescent population is regarded as the youthful population having high potentials, but at the same time they are quite vulnerable if not guided and channelised properly.
- There are many challenges for the society regarding these adolescents, some of which are lower age at marriage, illiteracy – particularly female illiteracy, school dropouts, low intake of nutrients, high rate of maternal mortality of adolescent mothers, high rates of HIV/AIDS infections, physical and mental disability or retardedness, drug abuse and alcoholism, juvenile delinquency and committance of crimes, etc.
- the Government of India has undertaken certain policies to impart proper education to the adolescent groups so that their talents are better channelised and properly utilised.

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

- Launched in 2003, stresses on an allround improvement of the youth and adolescents enabling them to shoulder responsibility towards constructive development of the country.
- Aims at reinforcing the qualities of patriotism and responsible citizenship.
- Special emphasis was given in empowering women and girl child to bring parity in the male-female status.
- deliberate efforts were made to look into youth health, sports and recreation, creativity and awareness about new innovations in the spheres of science and technology.