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## **Adoption of effective population control measures: The need of the hour**

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### **Abstract**

Based on the history of all the developed countries, we can find that the human capital is a major component of growth. Effect of population growth rate on economic development is one of the most debatable topics among academicians and researchers in the field of development. There are a lot of theories which show that rise in population has negative effect on both economic growth and development of a country. The population rise can be a disaster if we don't use them properly. Increasing population should be proportionate to resources available in the country so that resources may get exploited in its full capacity in effective and efficient manner.

**Keywords:** economic development, Indian economy, population control, population growth, welfare of society

### **Introduction**

In initial stages of human history as well as pre-history, the human population grew at a snail's speed till 17<sup>th</sup> century (i.e. 0.02% per year) with advancement in science, agriculture and industry the population growth began to accelerate. It took mankind more than a million years to reach the first billion around the year 1800. By the year 1900, a second billion was added and the twentieth century has added another 3.7 billion. The present world population is estimated at 6.8 billion. Every four days the world population increases by one million. India, the largest democratic country in the world covers 2.4% of the total land of the world and 16% of the total world population inhabits in it. Every year about 1.6 crores persons are added to its population. Activities (UNFPA) the world population increases by about 78 crores every year, India contributes about one-fifth of this growth. According to 2011 census, India now has a population of 1.2 billion comprising 624 million males and 587 million females. This is an increase of 181 million people since the census 2001 which is nearly equivalent to the population of Brazil.

### **Review of Literature**

Many researchers analyzed the relationship between economic and demographic variables in the past. Most of them has produced mixed results and they vary in their conclusions. Professor Schultz used time series data of Sweden and produced the result that 25% decline in fertility is explained by 50% decrease in infant mortality rate.

Gill (1992) investigated the relationships between population growth and economic development for the economy of India. He concluded that population growth in good but up to some extent, while large population growth caused pressure on resources within the economy. Large population growth has negative impact on economic development.

There are many debates going on the impact of huge population growth of a nation. The approach for almost all of

them is different and their motivation is different too. A working knowledge of the parties and their underlying philosophies will allow one to shift through the diverse rhetoric and hold them up to the light of scientific data (Aguirre, 1999).

Kothare (1999) investigated the relationships between population growth and economic development of the Indian economy for the time period of 1988 to 1998. He concluded that India is one of the world's fastest growing economies, primarily due to the rise in population growth creating a positive effect on its long run economic growth. India is now ranked one of the top producers in agriculture and is a top nation in terms of GDP in a developing country. In many cases, economists are correct in saying that population growth of a nation. In reality, economists might say, "If it weren't for its high populations India would still be a suffering developing nation".

Xiujian Peng (2002) examined the relationship between rise in the productivity of population growth and the labour division. He found that the change in productivity is not explained by the growth of population. But he found that division in labour has increased the productivity. He also explained that the increase in population of a nation helps the improvement in division of labour in a country.

### **Population Growth and Economic Development**

The effect of population growth on a society's per capita output level depends on the pattern of population growth as also its institutional (organisational) framework. In other words, it depends on the age composition of the population. The pattern of spending reflects the age distribution. An ageing population- one that contains a rising proportion of old people- requires an increasing quantity of products connected with old age and relatively fewer connected with the young. The industrial system has to adjust itself to the changing demand for goods and services. This adjustment could cause

problems, particularly because the labour force is less adaptable in an ageing population.

Young workers are generally more productive and adaptable. Although older people may have the advantage of experience, they are likely to be less energetic and enterprising. Moreover, in an ageing population, the young may have to wait longer to reach positions of responsibility and this could have a discouraging effect. Of course, the assertion that young people are more productive is open to contradiction (especially by their elders.) However, few would question the view that they are more adaptable and easier to train for new jobs. A young population should also provide a larger flow of school-leavers able to start work in the industries where labour is most needed. The difficulty and expense involved in the movement of workers between industries are thus avoided.

The ability of workers to move easily from one job to another is called mobility of labour. It is particularly important in economies such as that of India which must respond not only to changes of demand at home but also to foreign and competition.

Production depends on the working age group. It is obviously possible to produce more goods and services and so achieve a higher standard of living if a larger proportion of the population is in the working age group- between school-leaving and retirement ages- which must provide the bulk of the country's labour force. Moreover, this group bears the burden of supporting the non-working members of the community. If a larger proportion of the population is either retired or at school, the extra cost of pensions of education falls on relatively smaller numbers who are working earning.

Although the rate of population growth is clearly very important, two other factors must be taken into account in studying the problem of population pressure in LDCs. The first is the population density in relation to natural resources and the second is technology. A growing population, within a limited geographical area, usually puts heavy pressure on the existing factor endowments, especially natural resources of the community. Moreover, if the society has a limited stock of capital, labour may have to be substituted for capital in which case the production function will exhibit the law of diminishing returns.

This occurs if the variable factor is labour, while capital is a fixed factor. Diminishing returns may become a serious problem if population growth is rapid and there occurs practically no or at best, a marginal increase in natural resource (land) or man-made resources (capital goods). However, technological progress converts the operation of the law, at least temporarily.

In studying the population problem of LDCs we have to take note of the absolute size of the population base. The size of the population base is of great importance as it affects the total scale of the economy. This is relevant for the success of industrialisation in as much as development is often hindered due to the small size of the domestic market.

A growing population means a growing market for most goods and services and we know that division of labour is limited by the extent of the market. A potentially expanding market may stimulate entrepreneurs to invest more and more

in capital goods and machinery. Business activity will be spurred as a consequence.

And more income and employment will be created in the process. Moreover, it will provide an outlet for the products of efficient large-scale, mass-production industries. The net effect may be favourable to the country. Of course, the size of the domestic market of a country does not only depend on the numbers, but also on the per capita income level. But given the same low level of income per head, a country like India offers a more favourable environment for setting up heavy capital goods industries which depend so much on the economies of scale for their success. In contrast, a thickly populated country with a small population base such as Sri Lanka seems to be especially handicapped by the small size of its domestic market.

Population growth has been a favourable factor in stimulating growth in many countries in the last two centuries, when vast areas remained largely unsettled. Even in the USA, in the 1930s, it was apprehended that a slowing down of the rate of population growth would lead to long-run (secular) stagnation. Contrarily, in India today the prophecies of Malthus have largely proved their validity. And it is believed that a slowing down of population increase might contribute substantially to our development prospects. So, what is sauce for a goose may not be a sauce for a gander. The moot point is that population growth may be either favourable or unfavourable to economic development, depending on where, when and how it takes. It is to be noted that while large populations of the advanced countries have grown up after, and as a consequence of, economic development, that large populations of the developing countries exist before development. This makes development not only more desirable but also more difficult. Per capita income is calculated by dividing national income by the size of the population. When population is increasing faster than national income or GNP the standard of living of the average citizen does not improve. In most developing countries population is growing steadily even today. This is important obstacles to development. The most serious problem for most developing countries seem to be controlling the growth of their population.

### **Negative Impact of Population Growth on Economic Development**

Population growth hampers the process of economic development in many ways:

#### ▪ **Problem of Investment Requirement**

As we know Indian population is growing at a very high rate as compared to developing countries. In order to achieve a given rate of increase in per capita income, larger investment is needed. Though both GDP and per capita income of India increased over a decade but due to overpopulation per capita income is increasing at a very slow rate. This adversely affects the growth rate of the economy. In India, annual growth rate of population is 1.15 percent as recorded in 2017 and capital output ratio is 4:1. It means that  $(4 \times 1.15) = 4.6$  percent of investment is required to stabilize the existing Economic growth rate.

### ▪ **Effect on per Capita Income**

Large size of population and rapid rate of growth results into low per capita income. India is now world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economy but still at 116th rank for per capita income. Per capita income has increased from last twodecades but due to overpopulation it is increasing at very slow rate.

### ▪ **Problem of Capital Formation**

Overpopulation in India hampers the increase in capital formation. High birth rate and low expectancy of life reflects that there is large number of dependents in the total population. In India about 35% of population is composed of persons less than 14 years of age. Most of these people depend on others for subsistence. They are unproductive consumers and reduce the capacity of the people to save. So the rate of capital formation falls. Therefore, access population is one of hindrance in the way of capital formation.

### ▪ **Effect on Food Problem**

Population explosion is one of the major causes of food problem in India. There is less food production as compared to increasing demand. Due to overpopulation large portion of agriculture land is shifting into construction of industries, houses, buildings, cities, roads and other infrastructure. This leads to the shortage of food in the country.

According to a report, in 2017 India was ranked at the 100th position but now India has been ranked at the 103rd position among 119 countries on the Global Hunger Index. According to the report, prepared by Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide, India is among the 45 countries that have serious levels of hunger.

### ▪ **Problem of Unemployment**

Unemployment is one of biggest challenge for the India. Unemployment is mainly caused by Overpopulation. Large size of population results in large army of labour force in India. But due to shortage of capital resources it becomes difficult for a country to provide gainful employment to the entire working population. Open unemployment in urban areas and Disguised unemployment in rural areas are the normal features of an under developed country like India.

### ▪ **Low Standard of Living**

Rapid growth of population accounts for low standard of living in India. Even the bare necessities of life are not available adequately. As the population increase pressure on healthcare centres, education departments, transporting services, railways, and other public services increases.

### ▪ **Burden of Unproductive Consumers**

Due to overpopulation In India, a large number of children are dependent. Old persons above the age of 60 and many more in the age group of 15-59 do not find employment. In 2001, working population was 39.2 percent while 60.8 percent are unproductive workers. This high degree of dependency is due to high rate of dependent children. This dependency adversely affects effective saving. (Mehta)

### ▪ **Poverty**

Poverty is one of the biggest issue in India. Rising population increases the poverty in India. According to United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) programme 270 million or 21.9% people out of 1.2 billion of Indians lived below poverty line of \$1.25 in 2011-12. People have to spend a large portion of their resources for bringing up of their wards. It results into less saving and low productivity of labour.

### ▪ **Social Problems**

Over-population give rise to various social problems. It leads to movement of people from rural areas to the urban areas and causes the growth of slum areas. People live in most unhygienic and insanitary conditions. Unemployment and poverty lead to frustration and anger among the educated youth. This leads to robbery, beggary, prostitution and murder etc. The terrorist activities that we find today in various parts of the country are the reflection of frustration among educated unemployed youth. Overcrowding, traffic congestions, frequent accidents and pollution in big cities are the direct result of over-population.

### ▪ **More Pressure on Land**

Due to excess population growth density of population in India is increasing very fast. Rising rate of population growth exerts more pressure on land. On the one hand, per capita availability of land goes on diminishing and on the other, the problem of sub-division and fragmentation of holdings goes on increasing. More and more agriculture land comes under the construction of industries, roads, cities and other infrastructure. Population explosion leads to environmental degradation. Higher birth rate brings more pollution, more toxic wastes and damage to biosphere. It adversely affects the economic development of the country. Briefly speaking, population explosion hinders the economic development. It should be controlled effectively.

### **The Way Ahead**

Population of India is very large and is rapidly increasing. One percent growth rate of population means an addition of 1 crore people every year but at present growth rate of population is more than one percent therefore more than 1 crore persons are being adding every year. For the betterment and welfare of society effective population control measures is the need of the hour. As we know that birth rate is mainly responsible for rapid population growth. Hence, measures which can reduce the birth rate should be adopted.

These measures may include

- To control the population growth rate effective steps from government side be taken to eradicate poverty which will ultimately lead to low fertility rate.
- People need to be motivated for delayed marriages. Late marriages should be promoted as a campaign.
- Encouraging female education and women empowerment.
- Making available family planning methods through different outlets in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

- Government should provide incentives and awards to people for adopting and promoting family planning measures.
  - Invest in health infrastructure to reduce infant and child mortality rate.
  - Creation as well as promotion of social consensus for small family norm.
  - People in India is being found to prefer to have male child instead of female child. This leads to increase in births because people gave birth to child until male child is not born. This type of attitude among people should be changed.
  - Government should create more and more employment so that income of people can be raised. This will increase the living standard of people and people will adopt small families instead of big one.
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### Conclusion

Population is very important for the development of a nation. It is the means as well as ends of economic development. Population is an important asset for the nation but becomes liability if it is uncontrolled. Population has crossed the optimum limit in India and has become a liability. So, problem of population explosion in India has proved to be a big hindrance in the success of economic planning and development. From last two decades population has increased from 983 million in 1998 to 1283.60 million in 2017 that is 30.58% increase.

Although overpopulation has not affected the GDP and GDP of India has grown very fast from last two decades. India is now 3rd largest economy with GDP (PPP) \$10.40 trillion but due to population explosion still it is ranked 116th country in terms of per capita income and 130th position in terms of HDI. Population explosion is adversely affecting the standard of living. Overpopulation creates the problems like unemployment, shortage of food, low per capita income, problem of capital formation, high pressure, social problems, economic insecurity, social insecurity, increases pressure on land and environment degradation.

The economic planning and development of India, is very much influenced by the changes in population. India with its increasing human resources and abundant natural resources is still considered a developing country. India is still not in a position to use its natural resources adequately for the welfare of the growing population. Poverty prevails to great extent in India due to poor clothing, inadequate housing, poor medical care and malnutrition. The situation in India today is marked in terms of lack of electricity in many villages, insufficient food for a large part of its population and very little health care and education facilities.

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