

## SOCIAL IMPACT OF POPULATION IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

India's language, customs, and religion all have strong roots in the country. Religion and disputes between religious and cultural groups are important aspects of Indian society that have an impact on the country's demographics, the distribution of political power, the gap in economic and educational opportunities, and the traditional position of women. Population is the resource of labor force. The larger the size of population, the larger will be the labor force. Labor alone cannot produce anything. If other resources required for production are also available in sufficient quantity then a labor force is productive assets for a country. If other resources are not available in sufficient quantities then large labor force can become an obstruction to faster economic growth. Some countries particularly the developing countries have fast growth rate of population. This paper intends to highlight how the fast growth of population affects the economic development of the country and it also tries to suggest some measures to control population explosion so that economic development may not be hindered.

Key words : Economic, growth, population

### INTRODUCTION

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) aimed at achieving the GDP growth rate of 8 percent, doubling the per capita income and creation of 100 million of employment opportunities in next 10 years (Planning Commission 2002). These targets are formulated based on the past growth trends and the vision of making India as a developed country by 2020. In the last decade the country had experienced higher economic growth, reduction in poverty ratio, increase in the foreign exchange reserve and achieved price stability. The growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 5.6 percent in 1990s and the population below poverty line had declined from 39 percent in 1993-94 to 26 percent in 1999-2000 on a 30-day recall basis for the country. However, the goals of Tenth Five Year Plan are ambitious and the feasibility of these goals depends on demographic trends as well. In this context the immediate and medium term objectives of National Population Policy 2000 are quite relevant. The National Population Policy (2000) aimed at meeting the unmet need for reproductive health and family planning as its immediate objective and achieving the replacement level of fertility by 2010 as its medium term objective. If these goals are achieved, the country may gain demographic bonus, which in turn will accelerate the economic development in the country. The demographic trends indicate that with the current schedule of fertility and mortality about 16 million populations are adding to the country annually. The Infant Mortality Rate remains at a plateau of about 70 per 1000 live births in 1990s and contraceptive prevalence rate continues to rise.

### CASTE SYSTEM IN MODERN INDIA

The leaders of India made the decision to establish a democratic, socialist, and secular nation after independence. It is illegal to practise untouchability or to discriminate against someone based on their caste. The government of India permits affirmative discrimination against the poorer classes in addition to this statute.

Indian caste system customs have also become more flexible. India's urban population is often less rigid about the caste system than its rural counterparts. While one can observe people from different castes interacting in

cities, discrimination based on caste and occasionally even unsociability still exists in some rural areas. Violent altercations involving caste tensions may occur in cities or countryside. When a lower caste dares to advance in rank, the upper castes will sometimes attack them.

As per the policy of the central government, these three categories are eligible for favourable discrimination. These three categories are occasionally classified as backward classes collectively. Scheduled castes comprise 15% of India's population. As mandated by central government legislation, fifteen percent of government jobs and fifteen percent of university admissions must come from scheduled castes. The percentage of reserved seats for scheduled tribes in the Indian population is approximately 7.5%. Although they make up almost 50% of India's population, just 27% of government jobs are designated for members of the other backward castes.

### **MODERN STATUS OF THE CASTE SYSTEM**

Caste and subcastes have been formally recorded by the Indian government, mostly for the purpose of using the census to identify those who should be granted reservations. Even with its narrow focus, the Indian reservation system is totally based on quotas. Scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, and other lower classes are included in the government lists:

#### **SCHEDULED CASTES (SC)**

The majority of scheduled castes are made up of erstwhile "untouchables" (though the name "Dalit" is now favoured). Approximately 160 million people make up India's entire population, of which 16% currently reside there.

#### **SCHEDULED TRIBES (ST)**

Tribal groups are typically comprised of schedule tribes. Seven percent of the population is now living.

#### **OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES (OBC)**

Over 3000 castes were covered by the Mandal Commission under the OBC category, and it is estimated that 52% of Indians are OBC. The National Samples Survey, however, places the percentage at 32%.

Many people have complained about reverse discrimination against the advance caste (those who do not qualify for the reservation) as a result of India's caste-board policies, which have sparked widespread protests. One such instance is the anti-reservation demonstration in India in 2001. Since many Dalits today are wealthier and better educated than members of forward castes but still receive caste-based reservations and other government benefits, it is believed that caste-based reservations should be based on an individual's personal economic status. This is because caste-based reservations are unfair and discriminatory towards forward caste members. Many believe that reservations should be given based on an individual's personal economic condition rather than their caste, social background, or cultural heritage. This is the only practical solution to these issues of unfairness. According to some observers, the caste system in India should be seen as a way for wealthy, high-ranking groups to take advantage of lower-class, impoverished groups. High-ranking members of the dominant castes possess much of the land in many parts of India, where they profit from the exploitation of low-ranking landless labourers.

Political parties' agendas and election campaigns will inevitably include religion given the rise of extremism in India and throughout the world. The number of scheduled castes, which is impoverished, is growing at a rapid rate. In India, 31% of the population was comprised of scheduled castes between 1981 and 1991. The scheduled tribes are among the population's poorer segments as well. However, in their case, the growth rate from 1981 to 1991 was just 25.7%, significantly less than the population of scheduled castes.

**TABLE-1.1. DECADAL GROWTH RATE OF POPULATION BY COMMUNITIES IN INDIA. (1981-91%)**

Total Population	23.8
Scheduled Caste Population	31.0
Scheduled Tribe Population	25.7

Non-SC/ST population	22.1
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It will be observed that the population of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes has increased more quickly than that of non-SC/ST people. The literacy rates of the SC and ST populations and the general literacy rate differ significantly within each state as well. There is a notable difference in the literacy rates of men and women.

**TABLE-1.2.LITERACY RATE OF INDIA, 1991 (PERCENTAGE) (7+POPULATION)**

	Males	Females	Persons
<b>INDIA</b>			
Total Population	64.1	39.3	52.2
Scheduled Castes	49.9	23.8	37.4
Schedules Tribes	40.7	18.2	29.6

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**TABLE-1.3. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHEDULES CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES**

	Scheduled Class	Scheduled Tribes	Non SC/ST
All India Population Share within group characteristics	11.4	7.9	75.4
Infant mortality rate(0-5Years)	118	121	80
Literacy rate(Rural)	51	45	63
Literacy rate(Urban)	68	69	82
School Enrollment (7-17Years)	65.7	51.3	81.3
Drop out rate age(6-14Years)	72.2	73.0	50.7
Rural Head Count Ratio	36	46	21
Urban Head Count Ratio	38	35	21

SC are characterised as having a low social and ceremonial status in the past. The population share of SCs varies by state, with a maximum of 25 percent in any given state.

The physical remoteness and tribal culture of STs set them apart. Additionally, the population share of STs varies by state, with a maximum of 95% in any given state. India's underprivileged minority have long faced discrimination in all walks of life. Across all states, the percentage of disadvantaged minorities living below the Indian poverty line (as determined by the head count ratio) is higher than that of the general population. Comparatively speaking to their peers, the SC and ST populations in rural and urban India have the lowest rates of literacy in all states. Infant mortality rates for SC and ST are 118 and 121, respectively, and their health indicators are not much better. In contrast to their equivalents, both of these numbers are significantly greater.

Only 52.4 percent of ST and 58.2 percent of SC youngsters (age 6 to 14) can read and write, compared to 72.0 percent of their peers, according to the NSSO 2005. Despite all of the center's and the state's efforts, other worrying metrics for the disadvantaged minorities in the age range of 6 to 14 years old, such as the literacy, enrollment, and dropout rates, are over 70%. Despite being constitutionally reserved for them in India, low educational attainment among disadvantaged minorities has resulted in a number of vacant public sector jobs at the federal and state levels. The explanation is simple: their low educational achievement keeps them from meeting the requirements for public sector positions that are reserved for those with less education. In summary, compared to the general population, there is a greater likelihood that members of scheduled castes or tribes will be impoverished.

### **CASTE POLITICS**

Jawaharlal Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar, and Mahatma Gandhi all took quite diverse stances on caste, particularly when it came to constitutional politics and the position of "untouchables". Up until the mid-1970s, economic and corruption-related issues dominated Indian politics after independence. However, caste has been a significant political problem in India since the 1980s.

Established in 1979, the Mandal Commission's goal was to "identify the socially or educationally backward". The commission's 1980 report upheld the affirmative action policy established by Indian law, which grants people from lower castes exclusive access to a subset of government positions and admission to public universities. Nationwide demonstrations broke out in 1989 as the V.P. Singh Government attempted to put the Mandal Commission's recommendations into practice. Many said that the politicians were attempting to use caste-based reservations for their own personal gain in order to win elections.

### **SOME SOCIAL BELIEF WHICH PREVENT THE POPULATION STABILIZATION**

#### **Population is a development issue**

Many people view population growth as a problem, but in reality, rising numbers only serve to highlight the absence of social and economic progress. Put simply, couples in that demographic are more likely to have more children at lower socioeconomic development levels.

The most striking illustration of this is the disparity between the states of India; in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, women receive only 14% of comprehensive prenatal care while 51.3% of them are literate<sup>5</sup>. An average of four children are born to each marriage in Uttar Pradesh, which is nearly twice as many as in Kerala, where the majority of people are literate and all women receive full prenatal care and give birth in a medical facility. Because Uttar Pradesh still has a high fertility rate (TFR 4.4), it will take another 20 years for the state to reach the "replacement level fertility" that Kerala, with its advanced social development indices, reached two decades ago.

#### **PREFERRING A MALE CHILD**

For both societal and customary grounds, Indian society clearly favours having male children. Sons are viewed as supporting their parents as they age in addition to being the legitimate and capable heirs to the family name and property and as a vital link in the lineage. A male child is likewise prized for representing the parents' alleged ultimate salvation through the fulfilment of their last rituals. Because of the social evil of dowries, which force parents to spend a lot of money on their marriage, girls are sometimes viewed as a burden. Investments in a daughter are viewed as wasted since, following marriage, she frequently cannot share her earnings with her parents and departs for her husband's place.

When this preference is present, parents are more likely to invest in a male child's job, education, nutrition, and overall health than in a female child. Such prejudice, whether overt or covert, would inevitably reduce the prospects for a girl child's growth, which will serve to perpetuate gender bias. It is obvious that favouring a male child over a female child devalues the latter and violates her fundamental rights to life, development, and growth. Moreover, women's lives are negatively impacted by male desire, which perpetuates male dominance and makes

it challenging to create a society that is just, fair, and egalitarian. It is impossible to make progress towards empowering women to participate equally in society in such a skewed environment.

### **INCREASE IN AGE AT MARRIAGE AFFECT POPULATION STABILIZATION**

In India, marriage is almost universal. Women's employment and educational prospects have a direct impact on their age at marriage; those who are more educated and employed tend to marry later than those who are less educated and/or jobless.

Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the average age of marriage climbed substantially from 17 to 20 years. Nevertheless, 43% of women marry before turning 18, which is the legal age of marriage for women in India. Early marriages frequently result in early pregnancies since most women become pregnant right away due to a lack of information, lack of access to contraceptive treatments, and pressure from their families to have a child within the first year of marriage. However, a man's desire to demonstrate his "masculinity" by having a kid keeps him from taking contraception right once after being married. As there is more pressure on the guy to take care of his wife when she is the mother of his kid, having a child is also considered as a way to solidify the marriage. Women who have not given birth are more likely to commit infidelity and desert their partner. The health and survival of the mother and child are at risk when an adolescent becomes pregnant, whether or not they are married.

The couple wants larger families as a result of losing their children. Macroeconomically speaking, even when couples choose to have one or two children, early marriage and childbearing impede population stabilisation by hastening the replacement of generation.

### **POPULATION AND POVERTY LEVEL**

The amount of individuals who have little purchasing power and limited access to necessities like clean water, medical care, education, etc. is indicated by their poverty level. According to estimates from the World Bank Development Indicator Report (2004), around 1.1 billion people, or one-sixth of the global population, live in extreme poverty and make less than \$1 per day. An estimated 500 million people in India are thought to be living in extreme poverty. It is far more common to be somewhat impoverished. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, there was little discernible decrease in the poverty rate, which remained at 50%.

It is actually possible that poverty worsened in the early 1990s; a distinct downward trend in poverty did not emerge until 1998. A 2005 NSS study found that roughly 27% of people live below the poverty line. There is a great deal of regional variation in the poverty rate. Less than 8.4% of people live in poverty in Punjab, compared to 40% or more in Orissa, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. One of the main causes of ongoing poverty has been identified as the continued reliance on the agriculture industry, which employs an astounding 60% of the labour force while only making up 20% of the GDP. Since liberalisation, the majority of new jobs have been in the service industry, leaving millions of people who are illiterate or only partially literate with few opportunities to profit from an open economy. There is conflicting evidence regarding these strategies' efficacy. The main goals of long-term efforts to reduce poverty should be to increase the inclusiveness of growth by investing heavily in human capital and providing chances to utilise that human capital.

### **IMPACT OF LITERACY & EDUCATION LEVEL ON POPULATION**

The population's human capital is gauged by the literacy rate. In comparison to many other countries in the globe, India has performed poorly when it comes to population education. India's literacy rate, at 66%, lagged behind the global average of 80% in 2001. Significant regional differences in learning and literacy levels are a reflection of how ineffective many state education programmes are. Kerala is unique in that its population is over 90% literate, partly due to widespread public campaigns and political initiatives known as the "Kerala Model." States with a 55% rate include Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. It is surprising to see that states with higher economic performance, like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, have slightly higher literacy rates than the national average.



Female literacy is a key factor in human growth. A well-read woman always looks out for her child's medical, nutritional, and educational requirements. Reduced rates of baby and maternal mortality as well as the spread of STDs like AIDS have all been associated with higher levels of female literacy.

The goal of the NDA government's 2000 launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA) was to achieve universal basic education by 2010. In 2001, the mid-day meal programme was implemented nationally along with SSA. All of them contributed significantly to the 94% primary school enrolment growth (Pratham ASER Survey, 2005). According to the present trend, it is possible to guarantee that every person has access to education, and India is on track to attain universal literacy by 2030.

### **FERTILITY RATE AND GROWTH OF POPULATION**

The total fertility rate (TFR), or average number of children a woman bears in her lifetime, is one of the main factors influencing population increase. In the event that the TFR falls below the replacement threshold of 2.1, the population will start to stabilise. India has a TFR of 2.82, which is somewhat higher than the global average, whereas UN estimates from 2007 have the TFR of the world at roughly 2.62.

There is a great deal of regional variation in India's birth rate. Certain states, notably Tamil Nadu (1.0) and Kerala (1.7), have done a good job of regulating their fertility rates. A number of states, including Punjab, AP, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, are almost at replacement level. The states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (BIMARU) exhibit remarkably elevated birth rates, with every state exceeding four. These states also have lower rates of female literacy, which is a major factor in lower fertility rates.

### **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX OF POPULATION**

The true riches of a country is its people. While many nations have demonstrated strong social growth despite generally weak economic circumstances, India seems to be the exception. Amartyasen and Mahbub-ul-Haq developed composite parameters, such as literacy, education level, and per capita income, in the early 1990s to quantify the quality of life. According to the UNDP report from 2005, India ranks 127th in the world with an average HDI of 0.63 (medium).

India is a land of ancient civilization, home to cultivated fields, cities and villages, and magnificent artwork that dates back four millennia. The result of a protracted period of regional expansion is India's high population density and diverse social, economic, and cultural makeup. It is impossible to understand India without comprehending its religious beliefs and customs, which have a significant impact on the personal lives of the majority of Indians and regularly affect public life. Indians of today recall the rich historical heritage of their religions.

Certain societal norms, such as early marriage, opposition to contraceptive technologies, preference for male children, etc., are social ills that undermine population stabilisation. Muslims face discrimination and have a higher population growth rate overall. The Muslim community has experienced a rise in intimidation, especially within the past 20 years. An example of this is the devastation that occurred in Gujarat in 2002. Social progress and reforms are subordinated in such a dire circumstance.

### **CONCLUSION**

An environment that allows every member of the community to participate in social and political life in safety and dignity must be created. Even in such a dire circumstance, a slowdown in the rate of population increase implies social workers are purposefully concentrating their efforts on community advancement and education. Census data based on religion can be used for more beneficial purposes. The data will be worthwhile if it makes us aware of the hardships faced by a specific community, including its poverty, illiteracy, and insecurity, and motivates us to act as a nation to address it. It is hoped that the government will implement appropriate corrective measures to acknowledge that population control cannot be accomplished in the absence of social advancement and literacy growth.

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