

The Demographic Structure of the Indian Society

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

1. Explain the basic argument of the theory of the demographic transition. Why is the transition period associated with a 'population explosion'?

Ans. Theory of demographic transition suggests that population growth is linked to overall levels of economic development and that every society follows a typical pattern of development related population growth.

There are three basic phases of population growth:

Stage I: Primitive Stage [Underdeveloped countries]

- Low population growth in a society that is underdeveloped and technologically backward.
- In such societies like Africa birth rate is high since people are unaware of the advantages of having small families, they are not educated.
- Death rate is also high since health and medical facilities are not available, therefore population is low.

Stage II: [Developing countries]. The birth rate and death rate rank very high, the net growth rate remains low.

Birth rate is high as in this society people live in a patriarchal society in which men decide how many children must be born and male child is preferred. People are illiterate and ignorant.

Death rate is also high since health and medical facilities are not available.

Stage III: [Developed countries]. Birth rate is low because people are educated and aware and use contraceptives, birth control is popularised. Death rate is also low because of availability of health and medical facilities, therefore population is low.

Transitional Stage: The stage between backwardness and skilled people]. In this stage growth rate of population is very high whereas death rates are brought down due to better medical facilities, nutrition and better medical and technological advancement therefore this transition period is associated with a population explosion.

2. Why did Malthus believe that catastrophic events like famines and epidemics that cause mass deaths were inevitable?

Ans. English political economist Thomas Robert Malthus argued that human population tends to grow at a much faster rate than the rate which the means of human subsistence (land, agriculture) can grow.

He said population rises in geometric progression whereas agricultural production can only grow in Arithmetic progression.

Malthus believed that positive checks to population growth in the form of famines and diseases, was inevitable. These are nature's way of dealing with the balance between food supply and increasing population.

According to him, these natural checks are extremely painful and difficult. Although it helps to achieve a balance between population and subsistence by increasing the death rate.

3. What is meant by 'birth rate' and 'death rate'? Explain why the birth rate is relatively slow to fall while the death rate declines much faster.

Ans. Birth rate and death rate are fundamental concepts in Demography.

Birth rate: It refers to the total number of births in a particular area, which can be the entire country, a state or any territorial unit during a specific period.

- Crude birth rate is expressed through the following method : $B/p \times 1000$

B = Number of births P = Entire population

- It is crude birth rate because it does not include the ratio of bearing age.
- Birth rate can be defined as the number of live births per thousand persons in a year.
- Birth rate gets significantly affected by Age of marriage, infertility, climatic conditions, social condition, religious beliefs and education.

Death rate: It is the number of deaths per thousands persons in a year in a particular area, which can be the entire country, a state or any other territorial unit.

Causes of slow birth rate:

Birth rate is relatively slow while the death rate can be brought down at much faster rate for the following reasons:

- Public health measures and medical advancement can control the death rate immediately. Everybody wants good health and wants to live a long life. Because of the love for life everybody adopts all medical and technological measures with high level of motivation.
- Birth rate continues to be high because it is related to attitude, beliefs and values of people. Birth rate is related to religious beliefs and by and large it is socio-cultural phenomena which is significantly slow to change.

4. Which states in India have reached or are very near the 'replacement levels' of population growth? Which ones still have very high rates of population growth? In your opinion, what could be some of the reasons for these regional differences?

Ans. Replacement level refers to the rate of growth required for new generations to replace the older ones that are dying out.

Replacement level refers to giving birth to two children that replacement completes. States at the replacement level of population growth: Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

States very near to the replacement levels of population growth: Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and West Bengal.

States having very high rates of population growth: U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh.

Reasons of regional differences:

- **Difference in Literacy Percentage** in different states.
- **Societal conditions** vary in different states. Terrorism, war-like conditions and insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and North-East.
- **Socio-Economic conditions** vary in different states.

(i) Number of BPL people is highest among states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha.

(ii) **Socio-cultural formation:** A belief that more children means more hands to earn or religious beliefs.

5. What is meant by 'the age structure' of the population? Why is it relevant for economic development and growth?

Ans. • India has a very young population. The average age of an Indian is less than that for most other countries. Majority of Indians are between the age group of 15 and 64 years.

- Age structure of the population refers to the proportions of persons in different age groups relative to the total population.
- Population under the age of 15 has decreased from 42% in 1971 to 31% in 2011. During this period the ratio of age group 15 to 64 was gone up from 53% to 63.7%.
- Age structure in a country changes with development poor medical facilities, prevalence of disease reduce the life expectancy.
- Age structure of population can be put in following age groups:
0-14 years. [Children]

15-59 years. [Working population]

60 + Years. [Old people]

This age structure of the Indian population can be understood by following table.

Table. Age Structure of the Indian Population 1961-2026

Year	Age groups (Percentage round up)			Total
	0-14 years	15-59 years	60 + years	
1961	41	53	6	100
1971	42	53	5	100
1981	40	54	6	100
1991	38	56	7	100
2001	34	59	7	100
2011	29	63	8	100
2026	23	64	12	100

This table indicates that the share of the under 15 age group in the total population has come down from higher level of 42% in 1971 to 34% in 2001 and it is expected to be reduced to 23% in 2026. It means birth rate in India is gradually decreasing.

Relevance for economic development and growth:

- Due to the advancement in medical sciences, public health measures and nutrition the life expectancy is at rise. This is due to economic development and growth.
- Need of family planning is being understood. Decrease in 0-14 years age group reveals that National population policy is implemented properly.
- Because of socio-cultural changes in Indian society and economic growth Age structure of population is moving towards positive young India.
- Dependency ratio is decreasing and increase in working population is causing positive growth in Indian economy.
- Economic development and improvement in quality of life improve life expectancy and changes the structures of the population.
- High infant mortality rate and material mortality rate due to poor economic growth hence an adverse effect of age structure on the population.

6.What is meant by the 'sex ratio'? What are some of the implications of a declining sex ratio? Do you feel that parents still prefer to have sons rather than daughters? What, in your opinion, could be some of the reasons for this preference?

Ans. Sex ratio refers to the number of females per thousand males in a given area at a specified period of time.

- This ratio is an important indicator of gender balance in population.
- Historically there were more females than males in most countries of the world. This phenomena occurred due to two reasons:
 - (i)Girl babies enjoy better immune system and resistant to diseases in comparison of male child.
 - (ii)Females live longer than males in most of the societies.
- The ratio between female babies and male babies is roughly 1050 female to 1000 male.
- In India sex ratio is declining significantly and continuously for more than a century. From 972 female per thousand males at the turn of 20th century the sex ratio declined to 933 at the turn of 21st century.
- The state level child sex ratio is alarming. As many as 6 states and union territories have a child sex

ratio as low child sex ratio of 793. The highest child sex ratio of 986 is found in Sikkim.

Sex ratio seems to be declining in countries like India, China and South Korea.

In India, parents still prefer male child. This is basically due to social and cultural reasons. Being agricultural society the village population preferred male child to look after the land. The reason of preference of male child is definitely not linked with economic reasons. The states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh and Maharashtra are most prosperous states of India and should have highest child sex ratio, but things are just different.

The census of 2001 reveals that these are states with the lowest sex ratios i.e., 950 female babies per 1000 male babies. This data is a reliable evidence that selective abortion in these states is not due to poverty, ignorance or lack of resource. Predisposing factors for low child sex ratio in India:

•**Religious or Cultural Beliefs:** Belief that only son is entitled to perform funeral and related rituals of his parents. Only son is the waaris of family. In the absence of male child the family will not continue.

•**Economic Reasons:** The main occupation of Indian society is agriculture. Villagers have a thinking that landed property cannot be given to girls because after marriage they will go to another village, town or city. Neither girl child can get her share of land nor she can take care of the land.

•**Lack of Awareness:** People in Indian society having ignorant conservative attitude are still not ready to give equal status to daughter because they think that during old age they will be dependent on the son. Only he will share food, house, customs and responsibilities.

Implications of child sex ratio: Low child sex ratio, if continues, will have serious implications on our social network, particularly the Institution of marriage. It will also cause severe law and order problem related to women.