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Population Distribution, Density, Growth and Composition

Population studies in India focus on understanding how people are spread across the country, how densely they live, how the population grows over time, and the composition of the population in terms of age, sex, occupation, language, religion, and residence.

Population Distribution and Density

Population distribution refers to how people are spread across different regions of India. It is uneven, with states like Uttar Pradesh having the highest population, while states such as Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand have relatively low populations despite large geographical areas.

Population density is the number of persons living per square kilometer. As of 2011, India's population density was 382 persons per sq km, showing a steady increase from 117 persons per sq km in 1951.

Physical factors such as climate, terrain, and availability of water largely influence population distribution. Socio-economic factors include the development of agriculture, transport networks, industrialization, and urbanization. Urban centers like Delhi, Mumbai,

Kolkata, Bengaluru, Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, and Jaipur have high population concentrations due to industrial development and migration from rural areas.

Urbanisation is the process by which people move from rural areas to cities, contributing to urban population growth.

Exam Question

Q: What are the main factors responsible for the uneven distribution of population in India?

A: The uneven distribution of population in India is mainly due to physical factors like climate, terrain, and water availability, and socio-economic factors such as agricultural development, transport networks, industrialization, and urbanization.

Growth of Population

Population growth is the change in the number of people living in an area over time. It has two components: natural growth (birth rate minus death rate) and induced growth (migration).

India's population growth has gone through four phases:

- **Phase I (1901-1921):** Stagnant or stationary growth.
- **Phase II (1921-1951):** Steady population growth.
- **Phase III (1951-1981):** Population explosion with rapid growth.
- **Phase IV (Post-1981):** High but gradually slowing growth rate.

Growth rates vary regionally, with northern and north-central states generally showing higher growth than southern states. The adolescent population is significant and presents challenges such as early marriage, illiteracy, health issues, and social problems.

The Government of India has implemented policies like the National Youth Policy to support the development of youth and adolescents.

Exam Question

Q: Describe the four phases of population growth in India since 1901.

A: The four phases are: (1) 1901–1921 stagnant growth, (2) 1921–1951 steady growth, (3) 1951–1981 population explosion, and (4) post–1981 high but slowing growth.

Population Composition

Population composition studies the characteristics of the population such as age, sex, residence, language, religion, literacy, and occupation.

Rural population distribution is uneven and influenced by migration patterns within and between states.

Urban population, though smaller in proportion, is growing faster than rural population.

India is linguistically diverse with 22 scheduled languages and many non-scheduled languages.

Religion plays a major role in cultural and political life, with Hindus forming the majority in many states.

Economically, the population is divided into main workers, marginal workers, and non-workers. In 2011, only 39.8% were workers, with the majority engaged in the primary sector. Female participation is higher in the primary sector but is increasing in secondary and tertiary sectors.

Exam Question

Q: What are the main features of India's population composition?

A: India's population composition includes diverse age groups, uneven rural-urban distribution, linguistic diversity with 22 scheduled languages, religious diversity dominated by Hindus, and an occupational structure with a majority in the primary sector and a low overall work participation rate.

Solved Examples

Example 1: Calculate the population density if a state has a population of 50 million and an area of 100,000 sq km.

Solution: Population density = Population / Area = 50,000,000 / 100,000 = 500 persons per sq km.

Example 2: Explain why urban areas have higher population density than rural areas.

Solution: Urban areas have higher population density due to industrial development, better employment opportunities, and facilities that attract rural migrants, leading to concentrated populations.

Practice Set

Easy

- Define population density.
- Name two states with high population and two with low population in India.

Moderate

- Explain the factors responsible for uneven population distribution in India.
- Describe the four phases of population growth in India.

Challenging

- Discuss the challenges faced by the adolescent population in India and government measures to address them.
- Analyze the occupational composition of India's population and its implications.

Answer Key

Easy:

- Population density is the number of persons living per unit area, usually per square kilometer.
- High population states: Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra; Low population states: Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir.

Moderate:

- Uneven distribution is due to physical factors like climate and terrain, and socio-economic factors like agriculture, transport, industrialization, and urbanization.
- The four phases are: stagnant growth (1901-1921), steady growth (1921-1951), population explosion (1951-1981), and slowing growth (post-1981).

Challenging:

- Adolescents face challenges like early marriage, illiteracy, health issues, and social problems. The government's National Youth Policy aims to support their development.
- Most workers are in the primary sector, with low overall work participation. This affects economic development and highlights the need for diversification.

Quick Reference

- **Population Density:** Number of persons per sq km.
- **Urbanisation:** Movement of people from rural to urban areas.
- **Phases of Population Growth:** Stagnant, steady, explosion, slowing.
- **Population Composition:** Age, sex, language, religion, occupation.
- **Adolescent Population:** Youth aged 10-19 years with specific social challenges.

Glossary

- **Physiological Density:** Number of people per unit area of arable land.
- **Agricultural Density:** Number of farmers per unit area of arable land.
- **Population Doubling Time:** Time taken for a population to double in size.
- **Main Worker:** Person engaged in economically productive work for most of the year.
- **Marginal Worker:** Person engaged in economically productive work for a short duration.
- **Maternal Mortality:** Death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of delivery due to pregnancy-related causes.
- **Inter-state Migration:** Movement of people between different states.
- **Intra-state Migration:** Movement of people within the same state.

Chronology of Population Growth in India

Time Period	Event / Change	Importance
1901-1921	Stagnant or stationary population growth	Low growth due to high death rates and epidemics

1921-1951	Steady population growth	Improved health and sanitation reduced death rates
1951-1981	Population explosion	High birth rates and declining death rates caused rapid growth
Post-1981	Slowing growth rate	Family planning and awareness led to gradual decline in growth rate

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