

## **Explain the size, growth and features of Indian Population?**

**Ans:** Population refers to the total number of people residing in any country and they are the ends and means for different types of economic activities. When in right numbers, they are an asset but when the number is beyond the capacity of the economy, they become a liability. Therefore, maintaining the correct number is very vital for the efficient functioning of the economy.

### **Size and Growth:**

India is characterized by a large size of population which has grown at a rapid rate in the past beginning with 1921 and more particularly since 1951. The growth rate since 1951 has been around 2% and this rapid increase in population has been caused by growing gap between a slowly falling birth rate and a rapidly declining death rate. The rapidly growing population has resulted in adverse consequences. It has placed considerable pressure on economic development as much of the current production is used for the maintenance of population.

### **Features:**

1. Rapidly rising Density: Density refers to the number of persons per square kilometer. The density of population has been continuously rising since 1921 and the increase has been much rapid after 1951. This is both at the central and the state level although the change in density has varied from state to state. Within the states also, there are differences in density among different regions.
2. Interstate /Regional differences: There are great differences in the density of population of different states, regions and within the states. India being an agricultural country, factors like climate, rainfall, irrigation facilities etc. vary considerably in various states and regions. Another factor contributing to such variation is the unequal development of industries in different states and regions. States having greater industrial progress have greater density of population. Also places of religious and historical importance and places having availability of educational facilities have a greater density of population as compared to others.
3. Density and Economic Development: Density can never be taken as a sure indicator of economic development. For example, in USA, the density of population is only 32 but yet it is the most prosperous country in comparison to Australia where the density is only 3.

4. Interstate variations: There are huge variations in the number of people residing in different states. As per the census of the year 2001, U. P continues to be the state with the largest population which is followed by Maharashtra and then Bihar. North eastern states like Sikkim continue to be inhabited by small population.

5. Rural and Urban Differences: In India, there has been a predominance of rural population. The number of people residing in the rural areas is more in comparison to the urban areas. Although in the recent years, there has been some change in the rural-urban population composition and gradually the proportion of the urban population is increasing.

6. Age and Sex Composition: In India, the number of population falling in the category of 0-14 years is found to be very high when compared to the data of the developed countries. Around 50% of the population comprises of people in the age group of 15-59 years and people above 60 years constitute 6% of the total population. In relation to sex composition, the number of males is more in comparison to the number of females. The number of females is still falling and there are wide differences in female-male ratio in different parts of the country.

7. Life Expectancy and Literacy Rate: The number of years for which people of a country expect to live at the time of birth is the average life-expectancy of that country. At the beginning, the life expectancy of the country was very low and was calculated to be only 23 years. Later on, the number rose and at present it is estimated to be 63 years. The literacy rate has been on increase with a sharp step up in the latest 1991-2001 decade. Literacy rate among males is greater as compared to females. Literacy rate also has wide variations in different states. Kerala has the highest literacy rate and Bihar has the lowest.

8. High birth rate and declining death rate: There has been a high birth rate in the country as compared to the other countries. The reasons behind it are poverty of the people, religious and social attitudes, illiteracy, ignorance and non-availability of birth control devices. Death rate has also been on a decline in the past few years as a result of the developments that took place in the country. The reasons behind are reduced famines and epidemics and improved medical and health facilities.