

Quadrant II – Notes

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Module Name: Challenges of Modern Age: Poverty & Population.

Module No: 16

Poverty

- In our daily life, we see poverty all around us. They could be landless labourers in villages, people living in overcrowded cities, daily wage workers or child workers.
- Poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. Poverty means that the income level from employment is so low that basic human needs can't be met.

Poverty Line

- It is a method to measure poverty based on income or consumption levels.
- Poverty line varies according to time and place.
- In India, the poverty line is determined through a minimum level of food requirement, clothing, footwear, fuel and light, educational and medical requirement, etc.

Causes of Poverty

- **Population Explosion:** India's population has steadily increased through the years which increases the demand for consumption of goods tremendously.
- **Low Agricultural Productivity:** A major reason for poverty in the low productivity in the agriculture sector. The reason for

low productivity is manifold. Chiefly, it is because of fragmented and subdivided land holdings, lack of capital, illiteracy about new technologies in farming, the use of traditional methods of cultivation, etc.

- **Price Rise:** Price rise has been steady in the country and this has added to the burden the poor carry. Although a few people have benefited from this, the lower income groups have suffered because of it, and are not able to satisfy their basic minimum wants.
- **Unemployment:** Unemployment is another factor causing poverty in India. The ever-increasing population has led to a higher number of job-seekers. However, there is not enough expansion in opportunities to match this demand for jobs.
- **Colonial Exploitation:** The British colonisation and rule over India for about two centuries de-industrialised India by ruining its traditional handicrafts and textile industries. Colonial Policies transformed India to a mere raw-material producer for European industries.
- **Climatic Factors:** Most of India's poor belong to the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, etc. Natural calamities such as frequent floods, disasters, earthquake and cyclone cause heavy damage to agriculture in these states.

Anti-Poverty Measures

The current anti-poverty scheme is divided into two parts.

1 Promotion of economic growth

2 Targeted anti-poverty programmes

The Challenges Ahead

- **In India, Poverty has certainly declined, but it still remains India's most compelling challenge.**
- **Great challenges include making better progress in reducing the poverty level in the next ten to fifteen years, providing minimum necessary health care, education and job security for all and achieving gender equality in society.**

Population

- **India is the second most populated country in the world.**
- **Over population refers to the rapid increase in the number of people in an area.**
- **It is a situation where the economy of the country cannot cope up with the rapid growth of the population.**
- **Furthermore, in simpler words, it is a situation where the economy cannot provide proper facilities to its people.**
- **Evidently, the largest contributing countries to population explosion are the poorer nations and are termed as developing countries.**
- **In India, the state of Uttar Pradesh is the most populated state and Lakshadweep is the least populated.**
- **Hence population explosion is inversely related to the development of that area.**

Causes of Population Explosion:

- **The major cause of population explosion is the difference between the birth rate and death rate.**

- The birth rate is the number of individuals born in a population in a given amount of time. The human birth rate is the number of individuals born per year per 1000 in the population.
- The death rate is the ratio of deaths to the population of a particular area or during a particular period of time, usually the number of deaths per one thousand people per year.
- Apart from these, some other factors are partially responsible for population explosion, such as:
 - A decrease in infant mortality rate (Mortality rate refers to the number of deaths of infants below the age of 6 months).
 - The increase in life expectancy (An estimate of the average number of additional years that a person of a given age can expect to live).
 - Earlier the life expectancy of people was around 55-60 years. Now the average age of a person has increased to 70-75 years but due to better and improved medical facilities, the life expectancy of people has increased.
 - Illiteracy is another cause of an increase in population. Low literacy rate leads to traditional, superstitious, and ignorant people. Literate people are aware of birth control methods.
 - Family planning, welfare programs, and policies have not fetched the desired result. The increase in population is putting tremendous pressure on the limited infrastructure and limiting India's progress.
 - Poverty is another main reason for this. Poor people believe that the more people in the family, the more will be the number of people to earn bread. Hence it contributes to the increase in population.

Impact of Population Explosion:

- **The growth of the population has a major impact on the living standards of people.**
- **That is why, despite the incredible progress in the agricultural and industrial spheres, the capita income has not risen appreciably.**
- **Natural Resources :** Natural resources are materials from the Earth used to support life and meet people's needs. Hence if there are many people, then there is a high requirement for Natural Resources.
- **Unemployment:** When a country becomes overpopulated, it gives rise to unemployment as fewer jobs support many people. The rise in unemployment gives rise to crime, such as theft, as people want to feed their families and provide them with basic amenities of life.
- **High Cost of Living:** As the difference between demand and supply continues to expand due to population explosion, it raises the prices of various essential commodities, including food, shelter, and healthcare. It means that people have to pay more to survive and feed their families.
- **Poverty:** Another major issue of population explosion is the increase in poverty as people are unemployed due to a lack of job opportunities and an abundant workforce.
- **Illiteracy:** Because of unemployment, they cannot provide better education to the coming generation, giving us back population explosion.
- **Starvation:** When resources are scarce, starvation, ill health, and diseases caused by diet deficiency become eminent.

Conclusion

- **Population explosion is a term used to state the rapid growth of people in a particular area. It is because of lack of education, illiteracy, lack of proper knowledge of sex education, rituals, and superstition in the country's most populated area.**
- **Overpopulation results in a lack of development and exploitation of resources, whereas India's strength in the global world in various fields cannot be ignored. By raising public awareness and enlisting strict population control norms, this issue can be tackled.**