

GS Foundation Program 2024 | D9 | Benchmark Assignment #122

Subjective Questions:

Q.1) Examine the advantages and obstacles linked to India's expanding population. Propose strategies for leveraging the opportunities arising from this demographic trend.

(15 marks, 250 words)

Q.2) Briefly discuss the evolution of the caste system in India while highlighting its characteristics during such evolution.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Objective Questions:

Q.1) With reference to the population growth in India, consider the following statements:

1. India has never seen a negative population growth rate in the decadal census since 1901.
2. The decadal population growth rate of the country has started slowing down after 1981, as compared to the previous census.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2) Consider the following statements:

1. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 sets the target of 50% gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education by 2035.
2. The literacy rate for Muslim women in India is higher than women of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste.
3. As per Census 2011, literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes was more than that of Scheduled Caste population.

Which of the above statements is/are correct in the above context?

- a) 2 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.3) Consider the following statements about the interior of Earth:

1. Oceanic crust does not contain the rocks of SIAL.
2. Outer core is liquid because of the very high pressure.
3. Secondary waves or S waves are absent in the asthenosphere.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.4) Which of the following factors contributed to the formation of lithosphere?

1. Increase in density of earth during primordial stage
2. The Big Splat
3. Degassing

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

Q.5) With reference to urbanization in India and the world, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The growth rate of urban population in India is constantly increasing every year since independence.
2. There has been decline in rural population in India in the last decade.
3. Among the world capital cities, Delhi has the largest population.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3
- d) None of the above

GS Foundation Program 2024 | D9 | Benchmark Assignment #122

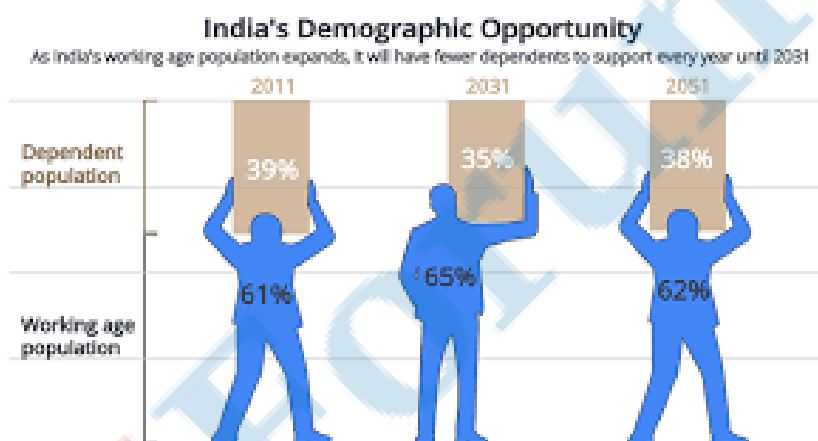
Subjective Questions:

Q.1) Examine the advantages and obstacles linked to India's expanding population. Propose strategies for leveraging the opportunities arising from this demographic trend.

Approach:

1. Introduction
2. Examine the positive and negative aspects related to increasing population in India.
3. Present methods through which India can leverage this increasing population
4. Conclude.

India became the **world's most populous nation with the population of 142.86 crore surpassing China** as per the **United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of World Population (SOWP) report 2023**. India's expanding population presents a dynamic landscape of advantages and challenges, offering a range of opportunities that can be leveraged through strategic interventions.



Positive Aspects:

1. **Youthful Population:** India's young demographic profile, with a median age of **28.7 years**, provides a substantial advantage until 2030. This "youth bulge" presents a demographic dividend, where a significant share of the population is of working age.
2. **Demographic Dividend:** India is currently within a demographic window of opportunity, poised to reap the benefits of a youth-driven workforce. **India's working-age Population (15-64 years) is projected to peak at 953 million in 2050**, which is more than the working-age population of the United States and Europe combined.
3. **Economic Growth:** The presence of a larger working-age population can potentially lead to higher economic growth. A greater number of individuals contributing to the labor force can result in increased productivity and a boost to the economy.

4. **Dependency Ratio:** The dependency ratio in India has been declining in recent years. In 2019, the dependency ratio was 50.1%. This means that there were 50.1 dependents for every 100 working-age people. In **2023, the dependency ratio is estimated to be 47.5%**. With a relatively lower proportion of dependent populations, such as the **elderly and young children**, India has the potential to channel more resources towards development and growth-oriented initiatives.
5. **Market Potential:** A growing population translates into a larger consumer base, attracting investments and driving economic expansion. Domestic demand for goods and services can stimulate various sectors, fostering economic development.
6. **Innovation and Diversity:** A diverse and young population enhances creativity and innovation, offering a rich pool of talents, skills, and perspectives that can contribute to technological advancements and entrepreneurship.
7. **Global Workforce:** The abundance of skilled labor can position India as a global hub for outsourcing and specialized services, strengthening its role in the global economy.

Negative Aspects:

1. **Lack of Skill Development:** The absence of comprehensive policies for education, skill development, and healthcare can impede the effective utilization of the youthful workforce. Insufficient training and inadequate preparation for the job market can lead to underemployment and missed opportunities. According to the **India Skills Report 2023**, only **50.3% of the Indian workforce is employable**, which is still lower than the **global average of 60%**.
2. **Underemployment:** Despite being educated, a significant number of young Indians face underemployment or are engaged in jobs that do not match their qualifications. This underutilization of skills hinders both personal growth and economic development.
3. **Demographic Nightmare:** The potential demographic dividend can turn into a demographic nightmare if meaningful opportunities for the youth are not created. Without adequate avenues for productive engagement, a youthful population might lead to social and economic challenges.
4. **Regional Disparities: Uneven population growth** across different states can exacerbate regional disparities. While some states might experience faster aging of the population, others could struggle to harness the benefits of the demographic dividend.
5. **Resource Strain:** Rapid population growth can strain resources like water, food, energy, and infrastructure, leading to environmental degradation and unequal distribution.
6. **Pressure on Healthcare and Education:** Ensuring quality healthcare, education, and social services for a growing population is challenging and requires significant investments and policy reforms.

Strategies for Leveraging Opportunities:

Indian policymakers will need to recognize that realization of the demographic dividend depends on an economy's capacity to absorb workers into productive employment.

1. **Building human capital:** India must invest more in human capital formation at all levels, from primary education to higher education, cutting-edge research and development as well as on vocational training to increase the skill sets of its growing working-age population.
2. **Skill development:** Skill development is needed to increase employability of young population. Government has established 'Skill India' as a mission to skill India's youth and the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** with the overall target of **skilling/up skilling 500 million people in India by 2022.**
3. **Education:** Enhancing educational levels by properly investing in primary, secondary and higher education is important. As recommended by the **National Health Policy 2017** and the **National Policy on Education 1986**, India needs to increase its spending on health and education to **at least 2.5 % and 6 % of GDP respectively** from its current levels.
4. **Health:** Improvement in healthcare infrastructure would ensure higher number of productive days for young labour force, thus increasing the productivity of the economy.
5. **Job Creation:** The nation **needs to create ten million jobs per year** to absorb the addition of young people into the workforce. The number of formal jobs must be created, especially in labour intensive, export-oriented sectors such as textiles, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery etc.
6. **Good governance:** Effective avenues for citizen input, well-functioning institutions, respect for the rule of law, low level of corruption, respect for property rights, sanctity of contracts etc. are important aspects of good governance that enable equal opportunity to all.
7. **Sustainable Urbanization:** Implement well-planned urbanization strategies that focus on infrastructure development, affordable housing, and sustainable urban growth to accommodate the influx of people to cities.
8. **Environmental Sustainability:** Promote sustainable consumption patterns and resource management to mitigate the environmental impact of population growth, preserving natural resources for future generations.

India's expanding population presents a dual challenge and opportunity. While it offers a vast labor force and consumer base, it also strains resources and infrastructure. To harness the benefits, India must focus on education, healthcare, and skill development to empower its youth, promote sustainable economic growth, and foster innovation. Additionally, policies addressing family planning and urbanization are vital to managing population growth and ensuring a high quality of life for its citizens. Ultimately, a well-balanced approach will enable India to realize the potential of its demographic dividend.

Q.2) Briefly discuss the evolution of the caste system in India while highlighting its characteristics during such evolution.

APPROACH:

1. Introduction
2. Explain the evolution of the caste system in India.
3. Highlight the factors responsible for the evolution of the caste system
4. Conclusion

Ans. Caste refers to a broad hierarchical institutional arrangement along which basic social factors like birth, marriage, food-sharing, etc. are arranged in a hierarchy of rank and status. These sub-divisions are traditionally linked to occupations and decide the social relations concerning other upper and lower castes.

Caste is an institution **uniquely associated with the Indian sub-continent**. While social arrangements producing similar effects have existed in other parts of the world, the exact form has not been found elsewhere.

Evolution of the Caste system:

1. **Varna System:** The origin of the caste system is attributed to **the Varna system**. Varna, literally 'color', is the name given to a four-fold division of society into **brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra**. It is generally agreed that the four varna classification is roughly **three thousand years old**.
2. **Jati System:** '**Varna/Jati**' system changed when new groups such as the **Shakas, Kushanas, Parthians, and Indo-Greeks** arrived in India.
3. The ancient four-fold varna system of castes began to **become more rigid** in the **Gupta period**. In particular, the **Brahmins strengthened their influence over Indian society**. The status of the outcastes declined due to the concern for ritual purity.
4. **Caste system during Britishers:** The Britishers invented or constructed Indian social identities **using categories of convenience**. This was done to create a **single society with a common law** that could be easily governed. Lower castes enjoyed an improvement in their social standings during British rule which was also a result of various **socio-religious movements**.
5. **Post Independence:** After independence, the Indian Constitution **established a more egalitarian society** according to special privileges to the backward and establishing equality among people of all castes.

Ways of the evolution of the caste system:

1. **Economic reasons:** Economic mobility is a prerequisite for development. It is certainly true that the lower castes remained locked in unskilled, low-paying occupations for centuries in the traditional economy.
2. **Segmental Division:** Membership in a caste group is acquired by birth and with it comes the position in the rank order relative to other castes.

3. **Caste Restrictions:** These were placed in every caste which permitted its members only to interact with particular groups of people. This included its dress, speech, customs, rituals, and from whom they could accept food.
4. **Pollution:** In this idea, the whole effort of a caste was to avoid contamination from polluting objects (those involved unclean occupations, or of the lowest caste).
5. **Traditional Occupation:** Many castes had a traditional occupation that was passed on to the next generations.
6. **Endogamy:** This trait of the castes was very distinct and essential to keeping it together as a group that maintained its own distinct character. Essentially it maintained that one could only marry within one's caste.
7. **Rural-urban divide:** The caste system in rural parts was more strictly followed than in urban areas.
8. **British rule:** The caste system was bolstered under the British Raj, which appointed only upper-caste Hindus to senior positions and administrative jobs.
9. **In modern times:** Inequalities under the caste system still exist in modern India which is the most visible form in respect of marriages and political vote banks.

Today, although constitution promotes equality and discourages discrimination on basis of caste, but **its roots have gone so deep in Indian society** that it continues to be a social reality, still observed by a majority of India's citizens.

ADDITIONAL POINTS:

The evolution of the caste system is attributed to various theories such as:

1. **Religious theories:**
 - a. **The Divine Origin:** Most of the religious authorities, Shastra's, and Puranas have advocated the divine origin of the caste system. As per the 'Purusha Sukta,' the Brahmin was Purusha's (creator's) mouth, the Rajanya (Kshatriya) was his arms, the Vaisya was his thigh, and the Shudra sprang from his feet.
 - b. **Karma and Transmigration:** It states that the various conditions of men, the highest, the middling, and the lowest are caused by karma. One's status in life is determined by one's actions (karma) in past incarnations.
2. **Tribes and Religious Theory:** From very early times, there has been a gradual and silent change from tribes to castes. It is believed that most of the lower or exterior castes of today were formerly tribes.
3. **Family and Marriage:** It holds that the principle of exogamy is the main basis of the Indian caste system. Caste assumed a peculiar form because of peculiar conditions in India like the prohibition of marriage within one's gotra.
4. **Attributional approach theory:** Attributes are inherent inalienable qualities associated with the caste system. As such every caste must necessarily partake of these attributes.
5. **Racial theory:** According to it racial differences and endogamous marriages lead to the origin of the caste system. The caste system developed after the emigration of Indo-Aryans from Persia where the society was divided into four classes—priests, warriors, cultivators, and artisans and this they maintained even after coming here.

6. **Evolutionary Theory:** According to this theory, the caste system did not come into existence all of a sudden or at a particular date. It is the result of a long process of social evolution.
7. **Occupational Theory:** Occupational theory advocates occupation as the lone factor for the development of this system. Before this system priesthood was not the exclusive monopoly of Brahmins. But later on, when hymns and rituals became more complex, a section of people got themselves specialized and became the Brahmins.
8. **Political theory:** According to this theory, the caste system is a clever device invented by the Brahmins to place themselves on the highest ladder of social hierarchy.

Objective Questions:

Q.1) With reference to the population growth in India, consider the following statements:

1. India has never seen a negative population growth rate in the decadal census since 1901.
2. The decadal population growth rate of the country has started slowing down after 1981, as compared to the previous census.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) b

Exp) Option b is correct.

Population growth is the increase in the number of people in a population. India's current annual population growth rate is 1 per cent.

Statement 1 is incorrect. India had a negative population growth rate in 1921 decadal census. The country's population growth rate was negative by 0.31 percent.

Statement 2 is correct. In 1961 and 1971, the population growth rate was 21.51 percent and 24.80 percent respectively. In 1981, it became 24.66 percent. After that, the decadal growth rate of country's population though remained high, has **started slowing down gradually**. It was 23.85 percent in 1991, 21.54 percent in 2001 and 17.64 percent in 2011.

Q.2) Consider the following statements:

1. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 sets the target of 50% gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education by 2035.
2. The literacy rate for Muslim women in India is higher than women of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste.
3. As per Census 2011, literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes was more than that of Scheduled Caste population.

Which of the above statements is/are correct in the above context?

- a) 2 only
 b) 1 and 2 only
 c) 2 and 3 only
 d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans) b

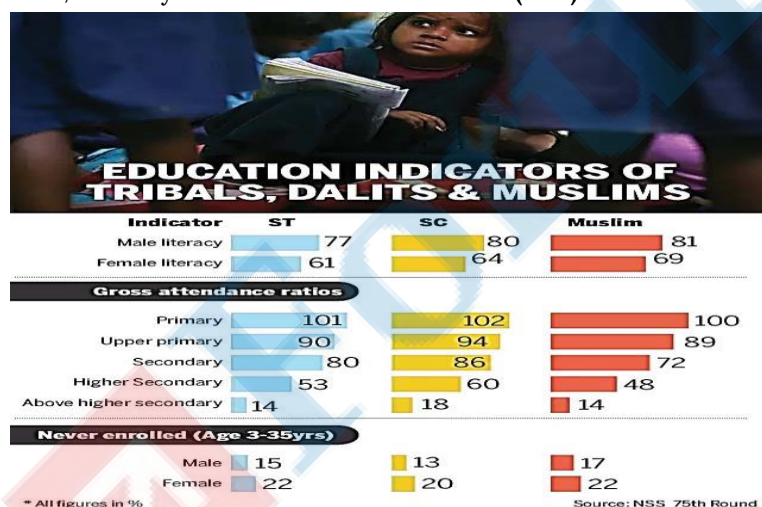
Exp) Option b is correct

The New Education Policy announced by Government of India is based on 5 pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability is aimed for sustainable development.

Statement 1 is correct. The new education policy 2020 aims at improving the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) in higher education and Government of India has set a target of achieving 50 per cent GER by 2035. To achieve this target, the government has decided to add 3.5 crore new seats in Higher Education Institutions of India by 2035.

Statement 2 is correct. The literacy rate of 69% among Muslim Women was higher than the rate among women of ST (61%) and SC (64%).

Statement 3 is incorrect. In India, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe and other backward class are officially recognized by the constitution as groups of disadvantaged indigenous people. The literacy rate of the total population in the country was about 73 percent in 2011, in comparison to about 66 percent among the scheduled caste population. As per Census 2011, literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes (STs) was 59%.



Q.3) Consider the following statements about the interior of Earth:

- Oceanic crust does not contain the rocks of SIAL.
- Outer core is liquid because of the very high pressure.
- Secondary waves or S waves are absent in the asthenosphere.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
 b) 1 and 2 only
 c) 2 and 3 only
 d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans) a

Exp) Option a is correct.

Statement 1 is correct: “Crust” describes the outermost shell of a terrestrial planet. Oceanic crust is mostly composed of different types of basalt. **Geologists often refer to the rocks of the oceanic crust as “sima”**. Sima stands for silicate and magnesium, the most abundant minerals in oceanic crust. Rocks of Sial are absent in oceanic crust.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The outer core of the Earth is in liquid state while the inner core is in solid state. **The metallic nickel-iron outer core is liquid because of the high temperature.** However, the intense pressure, which increases towards the inner core, dramatically changes the melting point of the nickel-iron, making it solid.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The mantle contains a weaker zone called asthenosphere. It is from this that the molten rock materials find their way to the surface. **Asthenosphere or low velocity zone because P and S waves travel more slowly in this region and the S waves are attenuated or weakened.** Thus, S waves travel through it.

Q.4) Which of the following factors contributed to the formation of lithosphere?

1. Increase in density of earth during primordial stage
2. The Big Splat
3. Degassing

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

Ans) c

Exp) Option c is correct.

Only 1 and 2 are correct.

1. Increase in density of earth during primordial stage - During the primordial stage of earth, the earth was mostly in volatile stage. So due to gradual increase in density, the temperature inside the earth has increased. **As a result, the material inside started getting separated depending upon their densities.** This allowed heavier metals to sink towards the center of the earth and the lighter ones to move towards the surface. **This process is called differentiation.** With the passage of time, it cooled further and solidified and condensed into a smaller size. This led to the development of the outer surface in the form of a crust.

2. The Big Splat - **During the formation of moon, due to giant impact called the “big splat” the earth was further heated up** and then again, the process of differentiation started which resulted in layering of materials depending upon different densities.

3. Degassing - **Degassing is not the reason behind the formation of lithosphere.** It is the reason behind the evolution of the atmosphere by which gases and water vapor were released from the interior of the earth.

Q.5) With reference to urbanization in India and the world, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The growth rate of urban population in India is constantly increasing every year since independence.
2. There has been decline in rural population in India in the last decade.
3. Among the world capital cities, Delhi has the largest population.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
 b) 2 and 3 only
 c) 1, 2 and 3
 d) None of the above

Ans) d

Exp) Option d is correct.

Urbanization is the process through which cities grow, and higher and higher percentages of the population comes to live in the urban areas.

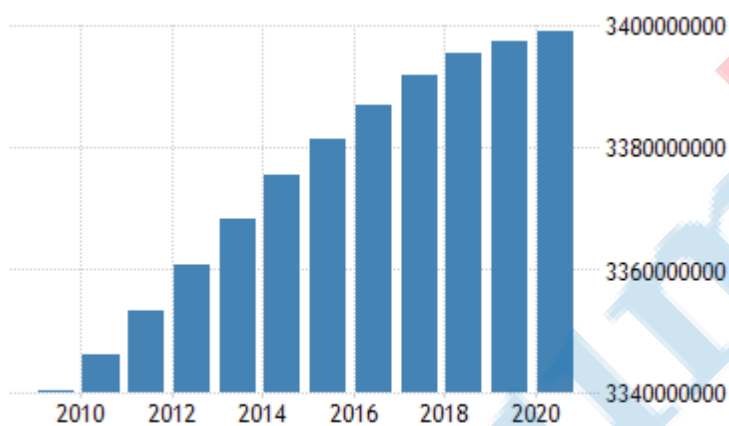
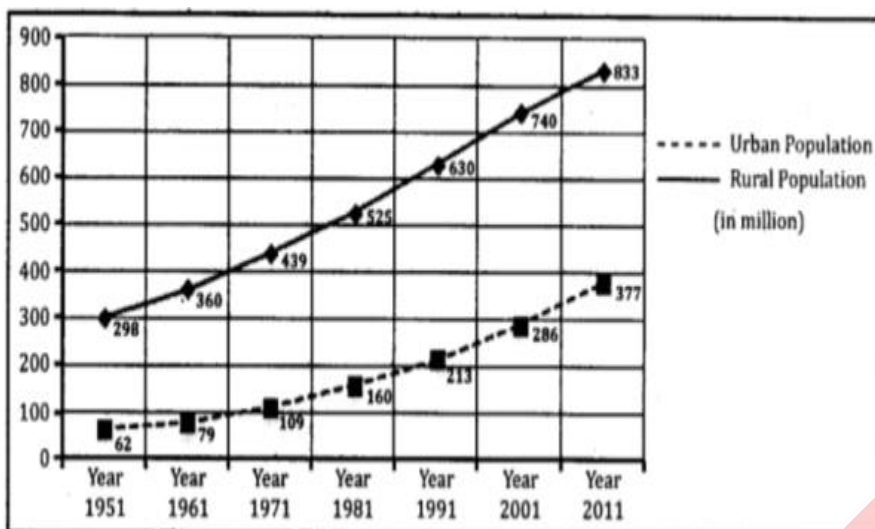
Statement 1 is incorrect: Although the absolute number of urban populations is increasing constantly, the growth rate has been variable.

| Census Year | Urban Population (in million) | Percentage Urban | Annual Exponential Urban Growth Rate (%) |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1961 | 78.94 | 17.97 | - |
| 1971 | 109.11 | 19.91 | 3.23 |
| 1981 | 159.46 | 23.34 | 3.79 |
| 1991 | 217.18 | 25.72 | 3.09 |
| 2001 | 286.12 | 27.86 | 2.75 |
| 2011 | 377.10 | 31.16 | 2.76 |

As the 1981 Census was not conducted in Assam, and the 1991 Census was not held in Jammu and Kashmir, the population of India includes projected figures for these states in those periods.

Source: Census of India, various years.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Both the urban and rural population has been consistently increasing although the rate of increase has declined.



WORLD BANK | TRADINGECONOMICS.COM

Statement 3 is incorrect: Japan’s capital Tokyo has the largest population of the world’s capital cities at over 37 million people. This was followed by Delhi (India) at over 28 million; Mexico City (Mexico) at 21 million; and Cairo (Egypt) with 20 million. Across the world the most common capital size was in the range of 1 to 5 million people.