

Population Growth and Environmental Consequences in India

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The rapid population growth and economic development in country are threatening the environment through the expansion and intensification of agriculture, the uncontrolled growth of urbanization and industrialization, and the destruction of natural habitats. Though the relationship is complex, population size and growth tend to expand and accelerate these human impacts on natural resources and the environment. The rapid increase of human numbers combines with desperate poverty is depleting and polluting local resource bases on which the livelihood of present and future generations depends. Rapid population growth makes it difficult for food production to keep up with demand. Population pressures on arable land contribute to the land degradation. In the recent past, natural resources are under increasing pressure and threatening public health. Water shortages, soil exhaustion, deforestation, air and water pollution afflicts many areas.

The present paper is an attempt to study the population change and its impacts on natural resources, and the environment. The data have been analyzed from various censuses of India, transport statistics of India, compendium of environment statistics and economic survey of India etc. Conducted an analysis of changes and trends over last fifty years.

The analysis reveals that rapid population growth plays an important role in depleting natural resources from deforestation to land degradation, air and water pollution and environmental problems of the country. Population pressure on arable land contributes to the land degradation, thus affecting the productive resource base of the economy. Human impacts on environment not only lead to deteriorating environmental conditions but also have adverse effects on health of people. The importance of population and environmental pollution control and protection of natural resources and environment has been highlighted. The paper concludes with some policy reflections and emphasizes the potential importance of natural resources. The policy aimed at overall development should certainly include efforts to control population and environmental pollution for better health of present and future generation.