

Chapter 6: The Population

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Importance of Population in Social Studies

- Population is central to development—focuses on people, especially the marginalized.
- Ideas of equality and justice are directly tied to population dynamics.
- Population growth is often blamed for job scarcity, food shortage, and resource pressure.
- 92% of India's working population is in the unorganised sector with minimal social security.

Understanding Census in India

- Census: Systematic collection of population data every 10 years.
- Provides data on age, sex, occupation, education, religion, etc.
- Organised by Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India.
- First census in 1872; first complete census in 1881.
- Population in 2011: 1.21 billion (Men: 623 million, Women: 586 million).

Age Structure of Population

- Children (<15 years): Dependent, need care, education, nutrition.
- Working Age (15–59 years): Earners, biologically reproductive, economically productive.
- Aged (60+ years): May receive pensions; many still work informally; often dependent.

Sex Ratio and Gender Discrimination

- Sex Ratio: Number of females per 1000 males.
- India's 2011 child sex ratio (0-6 years): 919 girls per 1000 boys.
- Skewed sex ratio shows gender discrimination and preference for male children.
- Kerala (1040) and USA (1050) show balanced sex ratios due to gender equality.

Literacy Rates and Gender Gap

- A person aged 7+ who can read and write is literate.
- Literacy is key for economic and social development.
- India's literacy rate in 2011: 74% (Men: 82%, Women: 65%).
- Women's literacy reduces child mortality and improves gender equality.

Working Population and Employment Categories

- Census divides workers into cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry workers, and other workers.
- Home-makers and unpaid workers often excluded from formal data.

Population Growth and Fertility Rate

- Population growth = births + in-migration – deaths – out-migration.
- Rapid growth due to falling death rates (better healthcare, sanitation).
- Fertility Rate: Dropped from 5.9 (1961) to 2.7 (2011); Andhra Pradesh: 1.9.

Population Density and Distribution

- Population Density: Persons per sq. km. (2011: 382 persons/sq km).
- Bihar: 1102 (high); Arunachal Pradesh: 17 (low).
- Factors: Terrain, soil fertility, rainfall, urbanization.
- Northern Plains and Kerala: Very high density due to fertile land and water.

Summary and Key Concepts

- Population affects every aspect of development.
- Key terms: Population growth, Census, Age structure, Sex ratio, Literacy, Fertility rate, Density.
- Effective policies need accurate, inclusive population data.