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Essays on Population: (300 WORDS)

First:

The United Nations has projected India's population to be around 1.9 billion by 2100. Amid India's aspirations to become one of the top three global economies, it is crucial to consider how the country can use its human capital as a boon for these aspirations while preventing it from hindering sustainability.

Perils of Population Growth

India is home to 17% of the global population but only has 2.4% of the world's landmass. This low per-capita land availability makes India a densely populated country. The increasing pressure on cities is due to the unprofitability of traditional agriculture and the search for better career opportunities. For instance, according to the 2011 Census, Delhi's population density is 11,297 people per square kilometre. This density has led to deforestation, congestion, and vehicular pollution, which further aggravates the "Urban Heat Island Effect," contributing to poor air quality and turning the capital into a heat and gas chamber. This signals that India's population density poses a threat to the entire ecosystem and economy.

Proper Management of Population

It is undeniable that India's fertility rate is gradually dropping, indicating a shift into the third stage of demographic transition. This shift varies by state. For instance, Bihar has a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 3.0, whereas Kerala's TFR is 1.7 as of 2019-20. With better education and an empowered society, families are becoming more conscious of their quality of life. According to The Hindu, parents are increasingly choosing to have fewer children to invest more in quality education and upbringing.

Way Ahead

Indian youth form 65% of the country's population. With proper implementation of the National Family Planning Mission 2000 objectives and by adopting Kerala's model of education and awareness, the proposed Population Committee by the Finance Minister can convert India's growing population into a demographic dividend, creating a talented diaspora. By doing so, India can use its population as a boon rather than a bane.

In conclusion, India can leverage its human capital to achieve its economic aspirations by focusing on sustainable population management, education, and



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empowerment. This approach will help turn the challenges of population growth into opportunities for growth and development.

Second:

Rajiv, a man from Hisar, Haryana, is a father of three daughters. Despite his poor financial condition and his wife's opposition, he has an insatiable desire for a male child. His patriarchal mindset and societal pressure fuel his ambition. This is just one of countless cases contributing to the grim consequences of population explosion, impacting employment, healthcare, and social security. Are we aware of the ill consequences of overpopulation? What toll does population explosion pose on a country's fortune?

Endeavours to Decode Population Mechanism

An eminent English economist, Thomas Robert Malthus, theorised that "Human population grows faster than the rate of human sustenance." This could lead to a crisis of survival. Malthus proposed two mechanisms to counter this: preventive checks (e.g., postponing marriage and sexual abstinence) and positive checks (e.g., famine and disease). His positive check theory is evident in events like the Spanish flu and COVID-19. Subsequently, the Demographic Transition Theory, consisting of three stages, denotes "a typical pattern of development related to population growth." India is in the second stage of this theory, with a rapid population explosion since 1931. India now has 18% of the world's population living in 2.4% of the world's area.

Challenges Spread Like Branches of a Tree

This increasing population results in deforestation (India's non-forest region is 75.38%), environmental degradation causing human-animal conflict, and pandemics. Additionally, this vicious cycle of overpopulation induces overcrowding, destitution, increased crime rates, and political turmoil, ultimately creating a lack of jobs and housing. Currently, 65.5 million people live in 13.7 million slums in India. How can we transform this bane into a boon?

The Golden Mean to Ensure Balance

As David Attenborough wisely stated, "Instead of controlling the environment for the benefit of the population, perhaps we should control the population to ensure the



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survival of our environment." To achieve this, we need a national policy to control the population in a democratic way, such as the National Population Policy 2000, which aims to achieve a stable population by 2045. Increasing marriage age (e.g., Prema Strategy), improving education levels (e.g., Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), and promoting the use of contraceptives (according to NFHS-5, contraceptive use has increased by 56.59%) are essential steps. Education and awareness can bring reform and transform the mentality of people like Rajiv to participate in a greater cause for the nation.

By implementing these measures, we can address the challenges of overpopulation and harness the potential of our human capital to ensure sustainable development and prosperity for the nation.

Third:

Back in 2020, we witnessed empty roads, quiet streets, and silent cities as humans remained indoors. With no environmental destruction, the earth seemed to hit the pause button. However, many lives were lost in the wake of COVID-19. If humans fail to manage their numbers, nature will find its own solutions, often with devastating consequences. This raises a crucial question: How is overpopulation becoming a disaster for itself?

The Problem of Unintended Consequences

Years ago, Robert Malthus theorised that population growth would outstrip resources, leading to crises. Though criticised, this concept resurfaced in the demographic transition theory, highlighting how population explosion causes overcrowding, destitution, increased crime rates, and political turmoil. India, with 1.44 billion people, has surpassed China as the most populated country, with a population density of 481 people per sq. km. With 18% of the world's population living on 2.4% of the land, India faces severe challenges, including a shortage of jobs and housing, as well as conflicts over resources.

Two Sides of the Coin

India's large population, if well-managed, can be a significant asset. With 63% of the population in the working age group, there are opportunities for economic growth,



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increased productivity, and cultural diversity. A skilled and educated workforce can drive economic competitiveness and development.

Towards a Brighter Future

According to a study by Wynes and Nicholas, having one less child can reduce emissions by 58.6 tonnes of CO₂ per year in developed countries. To balance population growth and raise awareness, the government needs to implement national policies like the National Population Policy 2000, which aims to achieve a stable population by 2045 and has successfully brought India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to 2.0. Increasing the marriage age and promoting the use of contraceptives are essential steps. Slogans like "Hum Do, Humare Do" and TV advertisements have increased contraceptive use by 56.5%. Awareness programs like "Mann Ki Baat" and initiatives like the Prerna strategy, which aims to delay the marriage age of girls, are also crucial.

Empowering women is key to population control. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." Through education, family planning, and advocating for policies that support sustainable population growth, we can contribute to a brighter future for generations to come, saving them from pandemics like COVID-19 and many more.



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Fourth:

Riya stood outside the gate of the under-construction building, reminiscing about the lush green park that once existed there. As the city expanded, so did the demand for space to build homes. Rajat, the eldest of nine children, often dreamed of a day when all his siblings could enjoy proper meals twice a day. His family's struggle was just one of thousands, highlighting the severe impact of overpopulation on the environment and resources.

Despite being one of the relatively newer species, humans have seen exponential growth. It took about 10,000 years to reach the first billion, but in the last few decades, the world added an additional billion people in just a decade. This rapid population growth has profoundly impacted the availability of resources. Overpopulation is inversely related to resource availability, meaning as the population grows, resources become scarcer.

Today, it is common to see apartments and malls occupying any open space available, which has severely affected the environment. The green cover of many countries is at an all-time low, with forests and open lands being used excessively to cater to the needs of the growing population. A clear example of the strain overpopulation places on resources is the demand for electricity. Every year, the demand for electricity rises, forcing the state to increase production through resources like coal, dams, and hydro plants. This has led to the overmining of resources, contributing to environmental degradation.

Overpopulation also directly affects the prosperity of a nation, as the additional strain on resources and the environment can hinder economic growth and development. When considering possible solutions to overpopulation, population control is an obvious choice. If implemented in a planned manner, population control measures can help manage population growth within a few generations. For the current population, the state can provide opportunities using sustainable methods and create awareness about the judicious use of resources and the importance of environmental conservation. By promoting sustainable practices and encouraging responsible consumption, we can help mitigate the adverse effects of overpopulation on our planet.

In conclusion, while overpopulation presents significant challenges, it is possible to address these issues through thoughtful planning and sustainable practices. By



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prioritising environmental conservation and resource management, we can work towards a future where both humans and the environment can thrive.

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