

The Causes and Economic Impacts of Overpopulation

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Over centuries, humans have tried various ways to strengthen their population and obtained many long-term benefits, such as expedited economic growth, improved demographic structure, economies of scale, and higher efficiency. But as the birth rate of each nation continues to rise, a global concern slowly emerges from the surface—overpopulation. This phenomenon describes the situation where the number of people living in a specific region or on the planet reaches the carrying capacity of the environment, ultimately leading to a series of consequences. Statistics show that more than one billion people were born between 1999 to 2011. The population of the entire world increased by that much in 12 years, and developing countries represent the largest areas of growth, where there are the fewest resources to support them. The human population has experienced a period of unprecedented growth, more than tripling in size since 1950. Human population exceeded 7.8 billion in 2020 and is said to hit 8.5 billion by 2030, the target date for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This issue must be addressed in order to prevent further depletion of the Earth's limited resources and the struggles of developing countries. Overpopulation results from a combination of factors, including high birth rates, decreased mortality rates, immigration, urbanization, and improved standardized living. One of the most significant impacts it has is economic implications, ranging from resource scarcity and unemployment to strained infrastructure and environmental degradation. This paper delves into the causes of overpopulation and the economic impacts it carries along with it.

As concerns for overpopulation become a global issue with far-reaching implications, one essential question comes to people's mind: What are the causes of this issue? Overpopulation is the result of a complex interplay of demographic, cultural and economic factors, understanding these factors is crucial in addressing the challenges posed by overpopulation. Firstly, demographic factors are the biggest contributor to this issue. In many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries, families tend to have more children. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon, such as the absence of accessible contraception and family planning services, and the perception that having more children ensures the continuation of one's lineage. Conversely, declining death rates constitute another pivotal demographic factor contributing to overpopulation. Advances in medicine, improved sanitation, and increased access to healthcare have led to lower mortality rates. As a result, more individuals are surviving various diseases and living longer, contributing to the overall growth of the population. Secondly, one of the often overlooked yet significant drivers of overpopulation is the influence of cultural factors. Cultural norms, beliefs, and practices can have a profound impact on birth rates, family size, and population growth. Cultural norms and values in many societies play a central role in promoting the idea of large families. In some cultures, having a greater number of children is considered a sign of prosperity, societal status, and strength of one's lineage. Families may feel compelled to conform to these expectations, which can lead to higher birth rates and, consequently, overpopulation. Moreover, some religions encourage their followers to have more children, viewing it as a religious duty or a way to ensure the perpetuation of faith and culture. This can lead to larger family sizes and contribute to overpopulation, particularly in regions where these religions are prevalent. Lastly, economic factors play a significant role in shaping population growth patterns. One of the most critical economic factors contributing to overpopulation is poverty. Poverty often leads to larger family sizes for several reasons. First, in impoverished communities,

children are seen as an additional source of labor and future economic support for their parents. Second, the lack of resources and opportunities discourages individuals and families from investing in education, healthcare, and family planning. Thus, impoverished populations tend to have higher birth rates, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and overpopulation.

Overpopulation can inflict a series of multitude consequences, which affect not only human society but also lead to destruction of the natural world. In order to maintain survival, people need to obtain resources from the outside world, leading to constant demand for natural resources from the environment to support the needs and wants of everyone. This leads to unethical extraction of resources, deforestation, habitat destruction, extreme climate change and many more devastating effects. For instance, the Amazon Rainforest, often referred to as the "lungs of the Earth," is one of the most biodiverse and ecologically significant regions on the planet. However, it has been experiencing severe habitat loss for the last decade, primarily driven by overpopulation and its associated demands for resources. Another example of overpopulation is the immense population growth in Brazil. Brazil has experienced significant population growth over the past century. As one of the most populous countries in the world with a population of over 211 million people. The population growth has led to increased demand for land, housing, and agricultural resources, which inflict another series of social challenges for the government in terms of providing adequate social services, such as health care, job opportunities, welfare and housing. While a larger population can contribute to a stronger labour force and consumer market, it can also lead to negative impacts and challenges. One of the most devastating consequences is that rapid population growth can strain public infrastructure and services, including transportation, healthcare, education, and sanitation. Governments and local authorities may struggle to provide adequate services, which can negatively affect overall quality of life and economic productivity.

Overpopulation puts pressure on economies by increasing the need for essential resources such as food, energy, water, and health care. Competition for these resources often results in price increases and shortages. Agriculture, which is pushed to meet increasing demand, exacerbates environmental degradation, contaminating ecosystems and hastening deforestation. Rising energy needs also put pressure on the environment, aggravating climate worries and draining nonrenewable sources. Housing and health care systems are stretched to their limits as they try to accommodate a larger population. Regions that are overpopulated face increased competition in the labor market, leading to lower wages and income inequality. The surge in population also increases the need for housing, health care, education, and other public services, which strains public finances and may impede investment in important industries. Tackling these economic impacts requires comprehensive solutions not only to manage population growth, but also to ensure equitable access to opportunity and resources for everyone.

A real world example that was greatly impacted due to poor management in population growth is China. China's population growth was an uprising of concern for the government, leading to the implementation of the one-child policy. The policy stated that each family can only have one child, which was successful in curbing population growth to some extent, but it also had economic consequences, including an aging population, labor shortages, and challenges in providing for the elderly. The seventh national population census of the People's Republic of China suggests a potential Chinese labour force gap for the next decade and beyond. In fact, the projected annual labour force gap is calculated to be around 11.8 million workers. As the second-largest economy in the world, China's worsening conditions

in the labour market will have huge impacts on the world's economic development, therefore, it makes it necessary to address this issue well in advance. In contrast, India is one of the world's most populous countries with over a billion people living there. It has brought both positive and negative economic impacts. On one hand, the large labour force acts as a big contributor to economic growth and innovation, on the other hand, overpopulation has led to inevitable challenges such as high unemployment rates, inadequate social services and strained infrastructure, causing the many regions in the country to live under poverty. To address the issue, India set up a family planning program for its citizens. The National Family Planning Program was launched in 1952 and has since evolved into the National Family Welfare Program. These programs provide information, counseling, and access to contraceptives to help couples plan their families. Various contraceptive methods, including sterilization, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and oral contraceptives, are made available to the public.

Mitigating overpopulation involves a multifaceted approach that combines family planning programs, education, and awareness campaigns. Addressing the causes and economic impact of overpopulation is essential for sustainable development. One of the most popular strategies for managing overpopulation is to provide access to family planning education and services. Giving people and couples the resources they require to strategically plan and space out their pregnancies, we can contribute to a decrease in unwanted pregnancies and further sustainable population growth. Family planning techniques come in a variety of forms, such as hormonal contraceptives, barrier methods, and long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), like implants and intrauterine devices (IUDs). These techniques can assist people and couples reach their ideal family size and can be quite successful in preventing unwanted births. Education is essential, in addition to granting access to family planning techniques. Reducing unwanted pregnancies and promoting more sustainable population growth can also be achieved through awareness campaigns. There are numerous ways to do this, including media campaigns, community outreach initiatives, and school-based sex education programs. Policies implemented by the government are essential for controlling population increase. Family planning and reduced family numbers can be promoted by incentives like tax exemptions or financial awards for smaller families. On the other side, regulations may include provisions encouraging the use of contraception or restricting the number of families. In order to respect individual rights and ethical considerations, these policies must be properly crafted and put into action. One example of successful interventions and their economic benefits would be China's one child policy. China's one-child policy significantly slowed down the country's population increase, while being controversial. Increased per capita income, less strain on resources, and higher living conditions for a large number of people were among the economic advantages.

Implementing population control measures is a complex and sensitive issue that involves addressing demographic challenges while respecting cultural and ethical concerns. Balancing the need for responsible population management with the preservation of individual rights and cultural values is a delicate task. One of the primary challenges in implementing population control measures is the need to be culturally sensitive. Different societies have diverse beliefs, norms, and values surrounding family, reproduction, and gender roles. Introducing population control measures that contradict or dismiss these cultural aspects can lead to resistance and backlash. Cultural sensitivity and respect for local customs are crucial to the successful implementation of such measures. Furthermore, population control measures should be implemented in a way that upholds equity and human rights. This is a challenging task, as vulnerable and marginalized populations may face discrimination or be disproportionately affected by

these measures. Ensuring that policies are equitable and respect the rights of all individuals is a crucial but challenging aspect of population control.

Challenges and controversies

Future generations may experience more resource scarcity, stressed ecosystems, and socioeconomic difficulties if overpopulation is not adequately controlled. The unrestrained population expansion may worsen environmental deterioration in the absence of global collaboration and a commitment to sustainable development goals. This might result in a further depletion of natural resources and an increase in disputes over necessities like water and arable land. Setting sustainable development goals as a top priority is essential for controlling population growth, promoting gender equality, healthcare, and education, and empowering communities by lowering fertility rates. In order to put into effect policies that support responsible population management and guarantee a balance between human needs and the planet's capacity to sustain them, global collaboration is essential.

In conclusion, there are several obstacles to both environmental sustainability and economic stability posed by the growing world population, especially in developing nations. Overpopulation causes resource scarcity, stressed infrastructure, and environmental deterioration. It is fueled by factors including high birth rates, declining mortality, cultural influences, and economic conditions. A multimodal strategy including family planning programmes, education, and awareness campaigns is needed to mitigate these issues. Sustainable population growth can be facilitated by fair and culturally responsive policies, as well as access to family planning services and education. Achieving sustainable development goals and tackling the intricate interplay of demographic, cultural, and economic issues contributing to overpopulation require global cooperation. Comprehensive policies are needed due to the economic repercussions, which are manifested in the strain on public services, income disparity, and environmental deterioration. Future studies should concentrate on improving population control strategies that uphold cultural norms and individual rights while promoting laws that strike a balance between the needs of people and the environment. Prioritizing sustainable development objectives and encouraging international cooperation are necessary for policymakers to maintain a balance between population expansion and the planet's limited resources.

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