

## 1. Population: Distribution, Density, and Growth

### I. Understanding Population Distribution

**Population distribution** refers to the way people are spaced over the earth's surface. The world's population is highly uneven; broadly, **90 per cent of the world population lives in about 10 per cent of its land area.**

#### Global Distribution Patterns:

- The 10 most populous countries contribute about 60 per cent of the world's population.
- Six of these ten countries are located in Asia.
- George B. Cressey remarked about Asia that it has "many places where people are few and few places where people are very many," a statement that applies to the entire world.

#### India's Distribution Patterns:

- India is the **second most populous country** in the world (2011 Census) with 1,210 million people.
- Distribution is highly uneven. States like **Uttar Pradesh (highest population)**, Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal have the largest shares.
- Ten states (UP, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, MP, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Gujarat) account for about **76 per cent** of India's total population.
- Conversely, states like Jammu & Kashmir (1.04%), Arunachal Pradesh (0.11%), and Uttarakhand (0.84%) have very small shares despite large geographical areas.

### II. Density of Population

**Population density** is the ratio between the number of people and the size of the land, measured in **persons per sq km**. It helps in understanding the pressure of the population on land resources.

#### India's Density (2011 Census):

- The average density of India is **382 persons per sq km**.
- **Spatial Variation:** Ranges from as low as **17 persons/sq km in Arunachal Pradesh** to **11,297 persons/sq km in Delhi**.

- **High Density States:** Bihar (1102), West Bengal (1029), and Uttar Pradesh (828).
- **Moderate Density States:** Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, and Odisha.
- **Low Density:** Himalayan hill states and North Eastern states (excluding Assam).

#### Refined Measures of Density (India):

- **Physiological Density:** Total population divided by net cultivated area.
- **Agricultural Density:** Total agricultural population divided by net cultivable area. (Agricultural population includes cultivators, labourers, and their families).

### III. Factors Influencing Distribution and Density

Population distribution is influenced by a combination of physical, economic, and social factors.

#### 1. Geographical Factors:

- **Availability of Water:** People prefer areas with fresh water for drinking, crops, and industries. River valleys are thus the most densely populated.
- **Landforms:** Flat plains and gentle slopes (like the Ganga plains) favour crops and transport, whereas mountains (like the Himalayas) hinder them and are sparsely populated.
- **Climate:** Extreme hot or cold deserts are avoided. Comfortable Mediterranean climates or moderate rainfall areas attract more people.
- **Soils:** Fertile loamy soils support intensive agriculture.

#### 2. Economic Factors:

- **Minerals:** Mineral-rich areas (e.g., Katanga Zambia copper belt) attract industries and generate employment.
- **Urbanisation:** Cities offer better jobs, education, and medical facilities, drawing rural migrants.
- **Industrialisation:** Industrial belts (e.g., Kobe-Osaka region in Japan) provide diverse job opportunities beyond factory work.

### 3. Social and Cultural Factors:

- Religious or cultural significance can attract people, while political unrest or social instability causes them to move away.

## 2. Population Growth and Change

**Population growth** is the change in the number of inhabitants in a territory during a specific period.



### I. Components of Population Change

There are three main components: **Births, Deaths, and Migration.**

- **Crude Birth Rate (CBR):** Number of live births per thousand people in a year.
- **Crude Death Rate (CDR):** Number of deaths per thousand people in a year.
- **Natural Growth:** The difference between births and deaths.
- **Actual Growth:** (Births – Deaths) + (In Migration – Out Migration).
- **Migration:** Movement from a **Place of Origin** (decrease in population) to a **Place of Destination** (increase). Migration is driven by **Push factors** (unemployment, poor conditions) and **Pull factors** (better jobs, stability).

### II. Phases of Population Growth in India (1901–2011)

India's growth has passed through four distinct phases:

1. **Phase I (1901-1921): Stagnant Phase.** Growth was very low, and 1911-1921 even recorded negative growth. High birth and death rates were due to poor health services, illiteracy, and food distribution issues.
2. **Phase II (1921-1951): Steady Growth.** Improvements in sanitation and transport brought down mortality rates, while the CBR remained high.
3. **Phase III (1951-1981): Population Explosion.** A rapid fall in mortality combined with high fertility. The average annual growth rate reached **2.2 per cent**. This was fueled by post-independence developmental activities and increased international migration from neighbouring countries.
4. **Phase IV (Post-1981 to Present): Slowing Down.** Growth remains high but the rate is gradually declining. This is due to a downward trend in CBR, influenced by higher marriage ages and improved female education.

### III. Demographic Transition Theory

This theory describes the transition from high births/deaths to low births/deaths as a society moves from rural-agrarian to urban-industrial.

- **Stage I:** High fertility and high mortality; slow growth; engages in agriculture.
- **Stage II:** High fertility initially, but it declines over time; reduced mortality due to better health/sanitation; high net population addition.
- **Stage III:** Both fertility and mortality decline considerably; population stabilizes or grows slowly; society is urbanized and literate.

### 3. Population Composition

Population composition includes characteristics like residence, language, religion, and occupation.

#### I. Rural-Urban Composition

- In India, **68.8 per cent of the population lives in villages** (2011).

- **Rural Distribution:** States like Himachal Pradesh and Bihar have very high rural proportions, whereas Goa and Mizoram have just over half their population in villages.
- **Urban Distribution:** The urban population is **31.16 per cent** but is growing rapidly due to economic development and rural-to-urban migration.
- **Growth Patterns:** Urbanisation is most conspicuous along main road/rail links and industrial areas (e.g., Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi).

## II. Linguistic Composition

India is a land of massive linguistic diversity, with **22 scheduled languages** and hundreds of dialects.

- **Major Families:**
  1. **Indo-European (Aryan):** 73% of the population; largest group; includes Hindi.
  2. **Dravidian (Dravida):** 20%; concentrated in South India.
  3. **Austic (Nishada):** 1.38%; speech areas in Meghalaya, Nicobar, and tribal belts of Central India.
  4. **Sino-Tibetan (Kirata):** 0.85%; Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal, and the North East.
- Hindi speakers have the highest percentage among scheduled languages.

## III. Religious Composition

Religion permeates almost all aspects of Indian life.

- **Hindus:** The majority group (79.8% in 2011), distributed widely across states.
- **Muslims:** The largest religious minority (14.2%); concentrated in Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, Kerala, UP, Delhi, and Lakshadweep.
- **Christians:** 2.3%; concentrated along the Western coast (Goa, Kerala) and North Eastern hill states.
- **Sikhs:** 1.7%; mostly concentrated in Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi.
- **Buddhists (0.7%) and Jains (0.4%):** Smallest groups with selected concentrations. Buddhists are mostly in Maharashtra; Jains in urban areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

## 4. Occupational Composition

This refers to the engagement of individuals in various economic sectors.

### I. Categories of Workers (India)

The Census of India divides the population into three groups based on economic status:

1. **Main Workers:** Work for at least 183 days (6 months) in a year.
2. **Marginal Workers:** Work for less than 183 days a year.
3. **Non-workers:** Those who do not engage in any economic activity.
4. In India, only **39.8 per cent** are workers (main + marginal), meaning about 60 per cent are non-workers, indicating a high dependency ratio.

### II. Sectoral Composition (2011)

Working population is divided into four major categories:

1. **Cultivators:** (Primary sector)
2. **Agricultural Labourers:** (Primary sector)
3. **Household Industrial Workers:** (Secondary sector)
4. **Other Workers:** (Secondary and Tertiary sectors - includes trade, commerce, construction, and services).



  
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**Key Trends:**

- The primary sector (agriculture) still has the largest share at **54.6 per cent**, but this has shown a decline from 58.2 per cent in 2001.
- The **secondary and tertiary sectors** have registered an increase, indicating a sectoral shift in the economy.
- Work participation rates are higher in areas of lower economic development as manual labor is required for subsistence activities.
- Highly urbanised areas like Delhi and Chandigarh have a very high proportion of "Other Workers" in the service sector.

### III. Gender Variations

- **Male workers outnumber female workers** in all three sectors.
- Female work participation is relatively high in the primary sector.
- However, female participation in the secondary and tertiary sectors is showing recent improvement.

### 5. Regional Variations and Socio-Economic Challenges

- **Growth Rates:** Southern states like Kerala (9.4% - lowest) show low growth, while a continuous belt from West to East (Gujarat to West Bengal) shows high growth rates (20-25%).
- **Adolescents:** Make up 20.9 per cent (2011) of the population. They represent high potential but face challenges like illiteracy, school dropouts, and low nutrient intake.
- **Policy Response:** The **National Youth Policy (NYP-2014)** and skilling initiatives aim to empower this demographic. The '**Beti Bachao – Beti Padhao**' campaign addresses gender discrimination and the declining child sex ratio.
- **Resources:** Increasing population puts immense pressure on limited land and water resources. Per capita water availability is dwindling, further limited by pollution from industrial and domestic effluents.