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**Forum:** General Commission 1

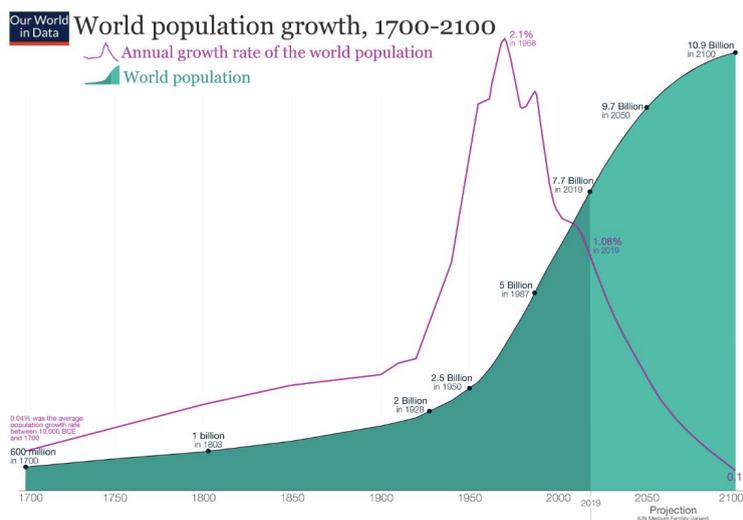
**Issue:** The issue of extreme population growth with an emphasis on India

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## Introduction

Population growth is the rate at which the number of individuals in a population increases over a specific time. It can be expressed as a fraction of the total population. Over the past 50 years, there has been a drastic increase in the overall world population. According to the United Nations in 1950 the world population was estimated at around 2.6 billion. Contrastingly in 2011, the world population was estimated at around 7 billion people. In the next 30 years, the world's population is expected to increase annually by 2 billion persons, from 7.7 billion currently to 9.7 billion in 2050. An estimated population growth curve from 1700-2100 can be seen below.



This boost in population is mostly caused by increasing numbers of people surviving to reproductive age. Fertility rates have increased due to increased survival rates, urbanization and accelerating migration. As years pass the above-mentioned factors will continue to increase exponentially, directly affecting the rate of population growth.

The concern with extreme population growth is that the world population will eventually exceed the planet's carrying capacity, especially with regards to Natural Resources. Extreme population growth is a threat to sustainability and sustainable development. Economies around the world are also affected negatively due to extreme population growth.



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In India, there is a 1.1% population increase annually. This is caused by a continuous increase in birth rates. India is amongst the countries with the lowest equity in the distribution of income. Hence extreme population growth leads to lower living standards and is a threat to economic and human development.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Sustainability:** “Refers to maintaining the ability of the environment and the economy to continue to produce and satisfy needs and wants into the future; depends crucially on the preservation of the environment over time. Related to the concept of sustainable development, meaning ‘Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (according to the Brundtland Commission), which is the idea that the use of natural resources in the present should not leave behind fewer or lower quality resources for use by future generations.”(Tragakes,2012)

**Population growth:** The increase of individuals in a society over a specific time period

**Human Capital:** “The skills, abilities and knowledge acquired by people, as well as good levels of health, all of which make them more productive; considered to be a kind of ‘capital’ because it provides a stream of future benefits by increasing the amount of output that can be produced in the future.” (Tragakes, 2012)

**Economic Growth:** Increases in total output produced by an economy

**Economic Development:** “Broad-based rises in the standard of living and well-being of a population, particularly in economically less developed countries. It involves increasing income levels and reducing poverty, reducing income inequalities and unemployment, and increasing provision of and access to basic goods and services such as food and shelter, sanitation, education and health care services.”(Tragakes,2012)

**Dependency ratio:** The percentage of economically dependent people, or people who must be supported by the working population. It includes children and elderly people, or those who cannot work to support themselves

## Background Information

**Extreme population growth and female empowerment:**



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As stated above the main cause of extreme population growth is increased fertility rates and low infant mortality rates. Developing countries usually have higher birth rates, and this contributes to higher population growth rates. While the number of births per woman is falling everywhere, they tend to be higher in developing countries compared to developed ones. Higher birth rates is higher population growth rates. Increased fertility rates are also associated with lower rates and quality of education, especially for females. Increased and better education and work of women outside the home and higher incomes lead to having fewer children, most females choose to proceed in their careers, hence leading to low levels of population growth. The education of women encourages their increased participation in the labour force, lower birth rates, leading to lower rates of population growth and may reduce poverty. There is a negative correlation between the educated female population and fertility rates. Equity between genders is a key factor in eliminating extreme population growth. Availability of education allows both genders to get insights about reproduction and contribute to female participation in the workforce.

### **Extreme Population Growth and Poverty Trap:**

It was seen that 85% of the world's population live in developing countries due to higher birth rates. It is estimated that population growth will continue to occur in developing countries. As birth rates increased dependency ratio within a family or population increases. It is estimated that around 46% of the population in developing countries are economically dependent on the working population. High dependency ratio correlates to the income of a family being stretched between the family members. High dependency can lead to a poverty cycle. A poverty cycle occurs when low income results in little to no savings, low investment in natural, physical and human capital. Leading to low productivity of land and labour. A poverty cycle can occur within a family or can extend to the economy as a whole. Poverty can be transmitted through generations. Often times children in low-income families are considered as an additional source of household income. However since the only motive of the children is to work and bring money to the house, the low-skilled and uneducated portion of the economy increases. Since health and education are not accessible to most low-income earners, the quality of human capital in an economy also decreases and is transferred between generations. Population growth holds a risk in driving the economy into a poverty cycle and lower the quality of labour.

### **Extreme population growth and sustainability:**

As stated in the Brundtland Report, poverty is the most important cause of environmental destruction, due to the over usage by poor people of their limited environmental resources. Poor people usually have relatively higher birth and population growth rates. Due to the increasing population an increase in agricultural space should occur, therefore resulting in deforestation. Lacking modern energy sources is also another factor that leads to deforestation. The chance of borrowing money is limited for this portion of the population, therefore improvements in sanitation, land or agricultural inputs don't occur. The occurrence of such activities is a threat to environmental sustainability and can be seen as overusing our world's resources. As the world population increases there are more individuals that use the demerit goods that negatively affect our environment. The depletion of the ozone layer is seen to directly correlate with population growth and irresponsible use of natural resources.

### **Economic growth and Population Growth:**



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GDP per capita is a component of the economy that is associated with living standards. The higher the GDP per capita, larger the output hence availability to a variety of resources. Generally, if total GDP increases faster than the population, then GDP per capita increases. But if the country's population increases faster than total GDP, then GDP per capita falls. The country should be able to support the rapid increase in population. This can be done through: creating employment opportunities, avoiding harm to the environment, improving quality of health services, education, infrastructure. Basically all measures to improve the life standards of the poor. Extreme population can act as a barrier to economic development. Due to the above mentioned factors such as the role of females in the society, poverty cycle and environmental degradation

## Timeline of Major Events

(Date)	(Description)
1952	International Planned Parenthood Federation Formed: First measure taken in order to prevent unwanted population growth.
1954	First World Population Conference
1960	First Contraceptive Pill available for Women in the USA: Measure to biologically prevent population growth, with the consent of individuals.
1969	UNFPA established
1987	Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer: Extreme population growth is seen as a threat to the deterioration of the ozone layer
1990	First IPCC report
2000	Millennium Development Goals established: Measures to achieve the goals include reducing the rate of population growth. Family planning is an important MDG.



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The 8 Millennium Development Goals

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Their mission is “to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled” (UNFPA,1969). Achievement of the mission is ensured by making the access high-quality sexual and reproductive health services available, including voluntary family planning, to give insights about birth.

### India:

India is amongst the limited countries with a 1.1% annual population increase, ranking as the country with the highest population growth rates. India is also the second most populated country in the world, with a population of 1.37 billion people. Extreme population growth in India leads to unemployment, exploitation of natural resources, pressure on infrastructure, inequitable income distribution, decreased production and increased costs. India has to take measures in order to reduce the rate of population growth.

### China:

China is the most populated country around the world with a population of 1.48 billion. Even Though the population growth rates are relatively low compared to some countries, 0.6%, due to its high population population growth is considered to be a major issue in the countries agenda. China has started implementing population control policies on their citizens, in order to reduce population growth rates.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue



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Below are two links to all the previous attempts to resolve extreme population growth within the UN body.

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/resolutions/index.asp>

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/resolutions/index.asp>

## Possible Solutions

- Possible solutions to decrease population growth include:
- Providing free reproductive healthcare to females
- Encouraging the reliable access to modern contraceptives
- Efforts to end child marriages by implementing government regulation(laws)
- Subsidise education in rural areas, where the poor are located, especially for the females
- Allocating land for poor people from the land owned by government for agriculture (to prevent environmental degradation)
- Find a motivation for low birth rates and incentivise citizens to lower birth rates.
- Create employment opportunities for the low-skilled workers by increasing output
- Apply trade barriers on primary commodities in order to encourage domestic production, hence creating new job opportunities.
- Limiting the amount of children per family (may create political backlash)

## Useful Links For Further Research

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/index.asp>

[https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019\\_Highlights.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf)

[https://www.who.int/topics/millennium\\_development\\_goals/about/en/](https://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/about/en/)- Millenium Development Goals

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