

Tackling India's Population Dilemma



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In 1881, India's population was 288 million. Today it is about 1.37 billion.

As per United Nations, world population today stands at 7,713,468,000.

1 out of every 6 people on the planet lives in India. By area, India is world's 7th largest country. Between 2001 and 2011, the country grew by 17.7%, adding 181.5 million people. In last 40 years, India's population has doubled in size. In few years, India will exceed China as the world's most populous country. India's current population rate of growth is 1.02% or 2.33 births per woman. Its current population density stands at 416 people per square kilometer, which gives it 31st rank in the world.

In India, a baby is born every 1 second. A person dies every 3 seconds. So there is net gain of 1 person every 2 seconds. A migrant (especially from Bangladesh) comes to India every one minute.

Totally, some 66,206 babies are born every day in India while 27,062 people die every day. Then there are net 1421 migrants entering the country every day. Thus, 37,723 people are added to India's

population every day. That means, 37,723 more people need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, educated and employed every day...a herculean task for any country!

This year, as of July 11, 2019, India's population has increased by 7,884,107 people! A huge number indeed!

While India's population growth rate has slowed down considerably, it is still much higher than China's and European countries'. In next few years, both India and China will have 1.55 billion people. Any population that increases or decreases continually over the long term is not sustainable.

Worldwide, 227,000 more people are added to the planet every day and UN forecasts that human population will reach 9.9 billion by 2050 and will surpass 11 billion by the end of this century. As the global population grows, demands for water, food, land, trees and fossil fuel grows simultaneously while planetary resources are limited. That takes a huge toll on other living species of the earth. Thus, every day, some 200 living species are going extinct.

So what should India do to curb its increasing population problem? Several steps should be taken as soon as possible:

- Create mass awareness among India's masses the need to have no more than two children per couple.
- Increase minimum age for marriage, 25 years for men and 22 years for women.
- Movie going is the biggest past time for all the Indians; especially for India's youth. There are hundreds of thousands of theatres in India. Why not to show at the beginning of every movie, a 20 minute documentary depicting the need to control population and limiting two children per couple? This way, vast number of people, especially the young people will get the message.
- India's Movie Industry is the biggest in the world. India's movie moguls, the producers, directors and the actors should be encouraged to produce movies that has a profound message of the need for population control. Movies like Sujata, Mother India, Lagaan, Toilet, Lakshya or guru; all had great message for the population. India's masses follow the actors and actresses as they are the heroes in their lives. Masses of India have given so much love and respect to our movie actors, actresses, producers and directors that they owe it to our people and the country to help solve the population crisis once and for all.
- Require every young couple to undergo a three months' course in family planning and the need to have no more than two children. Iran did this and drastically reduced its near-record population growth rate to one of the lowest in the developing world just in one decade.
- Narendra Modi's BJP government has so far come out with great schemes—PM-Kisan Scheme, Mega Pension Scheme, Skill India mission, Make in India, Swachh Bharat Mission, Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao, and many more-why not initiate the biggest and most necessary scheme of them all... "Zero Population Growth Yojana"? This will be the most vitally important scheme if adopted. This could change India for ever.
- Family Planning: Make sex-education mandatory early on in our schools from 8th or 9th grade. Emphasize the need for family planning with only 2 children per couple.

While education of women has profound impact in reducing fertility, soap opera on TV and radio can even change more quickly peoples' attitudes about family size, gender equality and environmental protection. A well-written opera with family planning message can have a profound effect on population

growth as India's teeming millions follow their heroes...our famous actors and actresses. This is something vitally important that our actors can do for India.

Power of this approach was pioneered by Miguel Sabido, a vice-president of Televisa, Mexico's national television network when he did a series of soap opera segments on illiteracy. The day after one of his famous character visited a literacy office wanting to learn how to read and write, a quarter million people showed up at these offices in Mexico City. Eventually, 840,000 Mexicans enrolled in literacy courses after watching the series. Sabido dealt with contraception in a soap opera entitled Acompañé, which translates as Come With Me. Over the span of a decade, this drama series helped reduce Mexico's birth rate by 34 percent. We in India can learn from these success stories and invent our own.

Japan, which cut its population growth by half between 1951 and 1958, was one of the first countries to benefit from the demographic bonus. South Korea and Taiwan followed, and some time back China, Thailand and Vietnam benefited from earlier sharp reductions in birth rates. Reduction in birth rates to near zero population growth launches the country into modern era in few years.

In April, 2017, a non-profit named AIDS Healthcare Foundation launched a first of its kind free online condom store in India. One can call a toll-free number or send an e-mail to the foundation. The offer can be availed by NGOs, government and private institutes, community, health and reproductive health organizations or anyone who wants to add condom distribution to their programme.

Zero population growth can be India's major movement; if successful, it would make India into a powerful developed nation in few years.

Luckily, India today is blessed with a powerful, wise and fearless leader, Narendra Modi with a party that is dynamic and resourceful.

We very much hope that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the BJP government will launch this movement of Zero Population Growth Yojana as soon as possible; and India's teeming millions will seize this moment and convert it into a mass movement that could change India from a developing country to a thriving developed nation.
