

Population Growth in Post-Independence India: An Analytical Study

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Abstract: *Rapid population growth in India following independence has been a defining feature of the country's social, economic, and environmental transformation. India's population stood at approximately 361 million (36.1 crore) in 1951 and rose to about 1,211 million (121.1 crore) by 2011. This growth was not merely a numerical change; it was the outcome of a complex demographic process linked to declining mortality rates, increased life expectancy, expanded healthcare facilities, shifts in reproductive behavior, urbanization, and economic development. Official census data reveals that the growth rate was exceptionally high between the 1951–61 and 1971–81 periods, whereas a gradual decline was observed during 1991–2011.*

The nature of population growth in contemporary India is also evolving. There has been a significant drop in the Total Fertility Rate (TFR); according to NFHS-5 (2019–21), India's TFR has reached 2.0, placing it around the replacement level. Nevertheless, substantial disparities persist among states regarding fertility rates, age structure, education, health, and economic opportunities. Therefore, rather than viewing India's population issue merely as a problem of "overpopulation," it is essential to understand it within the contexts of demographic transition, human capital, employment, regional inequality, and sustainable development.

Keywords: Population growth, demographic transition, fertility rate, mortality rate, demographic dividend, urbanization, India.