

CBSE Class-12 Sociology Test Paper-03
Demographic structure of Indian society

General Instruction:

- Question 1-5 carries two marks each
 - Question 6-8 carries four marks each
 - Question 9-10 carries six marks each.
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1. What are aggregate statistics?
2. Give an example of why death rate is a social phenomenon and must be explained at the social level?
3. Why was the Malthusian theory of population growth considered to be pessimistic in its outlook?
4. How can prosperity be increased in the human world?
5. Why has the stage of demographic transition not yet been completed in India?
6. Describe the wide variations in the fertility rates across the states of India.
7. Describe the regional variations in the age structure of India's population.
8. Literacy varies considerably. Do you agree with this statement?
9. Give reasons for the decline in the economic and social significance of the agrarian-rural way of life.
10. Why has the towns and cities been acting as a magnet for the rural population.

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1. Aggregate statistics – or the numerical characteristics refers to a large collectivity consisting of millions of people. It offers a concrete and strong argument for the existence of social phenomena.
2. Emile Durkheim's famous study explaining the variation in suicide rates across different countries was a good example that the death rate is social phenomena. Durkheim argued that the rate of suicide (i.e., number of suicides per 100,000 population) had to be explained by social causes even though each particular instance of suicide may have involved reasons specific to that individual or her/his circumstances.
3. Malthusian theory was considered to be pessimistic one as he assumed that humanity is condemned to live in poverty forever because the growth of agricultural production will always be overtaken by population growth. He based his assumption on the argument that human populations tend to grow at a much faster rate than the rate at which the means of human subsistence (specially food, but also clothing and other agriculture-based products) can grow.
4. The only way to increase prosperity is by controlling the growth of population. Unfortunately, humanity has only a limited ability to voluntarily reduce the growth of its population (through 'preventive checks' such as postponing marriage or practicing sexual abstinence or celibacy). Malthus believed therefore that 'positive checks' to population growth– in the form of famines and diseases– were inevitable because they were nature's way of dealing with the imbalance between food supply and increasing population.
5. The stage of demographic transition has not yet been complete in India, as the mortality rate has been reduced but the birth rate has not been brought down to the same extent.
6. There are very wide variations in the fertility rates across the states of India.
 - i. Some states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have managed to bring down their total fertility rates (TFR) to 2.1 and 1.8 respectively.
 - ii. This means that the average woman in Tamil Nadu produces only 2.1 children, which is the 'replacement level' (required to replace herself and her spouse).
 - iii. Kerala's TFR is actually below the replacement level, which means that the population is going to decline in the future.
 - iv. Many other states (like Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Maharashtra)

have fairly low TFRs.

- v. But there are some states, notably Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, which still have very high TFRs of 4 or more.
 - vi. These few states already accounted for almost 45% of the total population as of 2001, and they will also account for about half (50%) of the additions to the Indian population upto the year 2026. Uttar Pradesh alone is expected to account for a little less than one-quarter (22%) of this increase.
7. There are wide regional variations in the age structure of India's population.
- i. While a state like Kerala is beginning to acquire an age structure like that of the developed countries, UP presents a very different picture with high proportions in the younger age groups and relatively low proportions among the aged.
 - ii. India as a whole is somewhere in the middle, because it includes states like Uttar Pradesh as well as states that are more like Kerala.
 - iii. The bias towards younger age groups in the age structure is believed to be an advantage for India.
 - iv. Like the East Asian economies in the past decade and like Ireland today, India is supposed to be benefitting from a 'demographic dividend'.
 - v. This dividend arises from the fact that the current generation of working-age people is a relatively large one, and it has only a relatively small preceding generation of old people to support.
8. Literacy indeed varies considerably across gender, across regions, and across social groups. We can agree with this statement based on the following reasons:
- i. The literacy rate for women is almost 22% less than the literacy rate for men. However, female literacy has been rising faster than male literacy, partly because it started from relatively low levels. Female literacy thus rose by almost 15% between 1991 and 2001 compared to the rise in male literacy of a little less than 12% in the same period.
 - ii. Literacy rates also vary by social group. Historically disadvantaged communities like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have lower rates of literacy, and rates of female literacy within these groups are even lower.
 - iii. Regional variations are still very wide, with states like Kerala approaching universal literacy, while states like Bihar are lagging far behind.
 - iv. The inequalities in the literacy rate are especially important because they tend to

reproduce inequality across generations. Illiterate parents are at a severe disadvantage in ensuring that their children are well educated, thus perpetuating existing inequalities.

9. The economic and social significance of the agrarian-rural way of life has declined relative to the significance of the industrial-urban way of life in the following ways:
 - i. The processes of modern development ensure that
 - ii. Agriculture used to be by far the largest contributor to the country's total economic production, but today it only contributes about one-fourth of the gross domestic product.
 - iii. While the majority of our people live in the rural areas and make their living out of agriculture, the relative economic value of what they produce has fallen drastically.
 - iv. More and more people who live in villages may no longer work in agriculture or even in the village.
 - v. Rural people are increasingly engaged in non-farm rural occupations like transport services, business enterprises or craft manufacturing.
 - vi. If they are close enough, then they may travel daily to the nearest urban centre to work while continuing to live in the village.
10. The town of the city has been acting as a magnet for the rural population in many ways:
 - i. Those who cannot find work (or sufficient work) in the rural areas go to the city in search of work.
 - ii. This flow of rural-to-urban migration has also been accelerated by the continuous decline of common property as these resources have been turned into private property, or they are exhausted. Thus, people no longer have access to these resources for survival.
 - iii. Opportunities for earning cash income are limited in the villages.
 - iv. The city is preferred for social reasons too, especially for relative anonymity.
 - v. For the socially oppressed groups like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, this may offer some partial protection from the daily humiliation they may suffer in the village where everyone knows their caste identity.
 - vi. The anonymity of the city also allows the poorer sections of the socially dominant rural groups to engage in low status work that they would not be able to do in the village.