Population and its problems

What is the issue?

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India’s ‘demographic dividend’ is a myth with resources under stress, be it health or education.

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What is the elephant in the room crisis?

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- India’s enormous population is at that tipping point — a little north of China’s numbers, and we are in for a downward spiral.
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- In the recent years, Indians have conveniently dodged the worrying fact that we are now the second most populated country in the world.
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- But unlike China, whose major national agenda has largely revolved around population control, India’s approach consistently walks the “we’ll figure this one later” narrative.
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What needs to be done?

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- For one, there is need for strong governance.
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- If it is possible to have “surgical strikes” both economically and militarily then it is equally possible to have one on population.
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- The government’s plans to improve railways, roadways, connectivity or programmes such as Swacch Bharat Abhiyaan cannot work unless we take serious measures to manage our population growth.
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- Social services like education and healthcare come under immense strain and there is shortage of houses and food.
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- The problems of over population are clearly visible through heavy traffic and long queues, exasperated faces and patience running dry on an all-time low.
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- It’s not just depleting resources but also affecting the cultural fabric of the nation.
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- Delhi’s population in 2012 (18.98 million) was higher than the population of the Netherlands’ at 16.94 million in 2015.
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- We are set to beat China as the world’s largest nation by 2025, with a big chunk of working populace.
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- Over the coming 20 years, India’s demographic dividend could add about two percentage points per annum to India’s per capita GDP growth.
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- However, if no actions taken towards population control, basic minimum living standards including food, water and energy will become a struggle for entire population.
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- India will never be well-prepared to handle a population of over 1.6 billion people, as it is projected to reach by 2050.
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- It will impact the 3Es – education, employability and employment.
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- India to have coveted “developed nation” tag, it becomes imperative that work exceptionally hard on our education system.
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- However, because of our burgeoning population, education becomes difficult to disseminate and be provided to one and all.
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- This has a direct effect on employability and hence, quality of living, while the number of job seekers continue to soar.
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- These three issues put together have adverse effects on our economy – reduced rate of capital formation, lower standard of living, and adverse effect on per capital income and so on.

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- This is what economists call the vicious circle of poverty.
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- Thus it becomes important to come up with effective ways to implement population stabilisation.
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- Using digital India as a tool to create more conversations around population is a viable solution.
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Source: Business Line

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