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Policy Dilemma

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, with a varied and rich cultural heritage. Following its independence from Britain in 1947, the Republic of India has worked to achieve all around socio-economic progress and to establish itself as a preeminent power in the international community.¹ The state's rising international profile can be attributed to some key sectors including economic development, knowledge industries including information technology (IT), military consolidation, and a growing population. However, there are increasing concerns about the sustainability of India's recent surge in development, and how the state will address the new challenges that accompany a rise in national strength.

A big factor in India's growth has been the state's economic development and success. India is able to capitalize on both the sheer size and capacity of its population to find its niche in the international economic market. If India is to sustain its present economic levels, it will need to consider improving its current industries and expanding its economic networks. India's foreign policy has played a significant role in the states' development of business relationships. India's diplomatic relationships have opened the door for foreign partners and markets. Its practice of foreign investment but not interfering with local politics has made India a desirable business partner. India will need to continue balancing economic and political interests as it continues to increase its global presence. A persistent concern in India is the increase and total size of its population. Despite India being well on its way to stabilizing its population, its growing population continues to impose many pressures on the states' social and physical infrastructure, environmental resources, and on many essential public services.² When considering the population in India, the big question is: How can the state convert its demographic burden into a demographic bonus?

¹ Government of India, "India at a Glance", Government of India, <http://india.gov.in/knowindia/profile.php?id=2> (accessed July 16, 2012).

² A.K. Shiva Kumar, "Population and Human Development" in *Handbook of Population and Development*, ed. A.K. Shiva Kumar, Pradeep Panda, and Rajani R. Ved, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Economy

Trade and bilateral economic cooperation are the cornerstones of India's relations with the world. Economic diplomacy provides a way for India to harness global opportunities for the benefit of domestic constituents in the hope of relieving poverty and alleviating discontent.³ Following independence in 1947, India adopted an inward looking development strategy based on a dominant role for the public sector that emphasized self-reliance and import substitution. Under this strategy, investments in basic and heavy industries were prioritized as essential for achieving self-reliance, while investments in consumer goods were given a much lower priority. By the early 1980s, India had developed a fairly large and diversified industrial base, though its capacity to manufacture consumer goods was somewhat limited. As a result, its ability to compete in the world market was restricted to a few traditional industries like textiles, garments, and tea.

As in the case of most other developing states that followed such an inward-looking strategy, the overall economic growth in India was quite slow and was clearly inadequate to lift the well being of a rapidly growing population. Since the mid-1980s India has increasingly opened its economy, a development that can be clearly linked to the export promotion policies, including an increase in manufacturing exports. The big change came in 1991 in the form of the structural adjustment program that more or less abandoned centralized planning and sought to integrate the Indian economy with the global economy in a phased manner.⁴ The policy adjustment has proven to be effective in increasing India's international economic status. With an estimated GDP of \$4.463 trillion USD, India has the fourth largest GDP, following the United States, China, and Japan.⁵

³ Rohan Makherjee and David M. Malone, "Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security Challenges." *International Affairs*, vol. 87 (2011). Academic Search Premier, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com>.

⁴ A. Ganesh-Kumar, Kunal Sen, and Rajendra R. Vaidya, *International Competitiveness, Investment and Finance: A Case Study of India* (London: Routledge, 2003), 9.

⁵ United States Central Intelligence Agency, "India", CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html?countryName=India&countryCode=in®ionCode=sas&rank=4#in> (accessed July 27, 2012).

India's large labor force has demonstrated to be a unique advantage in the state's recent economic success. India has the second largest labor force in the world, with roughly half of the labor force size of China. The state is capitalizing on its large educated English-speaking work force and is a major exporter of software and technology service workers.⁶ Unlike other developing states, India's recent expansion in exports has been led by services rather than manufacturing. Between 1985 and 2008, India's service exports grew at a rate of sixteen *per cent* per year, and by 2008 India was providing 2.7 *per cent* of global service exports. India has excelled in more sophisticated, skill-intensive services exports doing better in IT, business process outsourcing, insurance, and financial services.⁷ Despite its recent economic boom, India is now concerned with addressing ways to maintain economic growth.

Middle East

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic union of the Arab states that border the Persian Gulf. "As a group, the GCC is India's second-largest trading partner, the largest single origin of imports into India, and the second largest destination for exports from India."⁸ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is India's top trading partner in the Middle East, accounting for seventy-five *per cent* of India's exports to GCC and six *per cent* of India's global exports.⁹ India's decision to turn to the Gulf States' investment opportunities and resources was aided by the global financial crisis and recession. With a rising demand for infrastructure development, India is looking to the Gulf for large investments from funds generated from the recent surge in oil prices. The Gulf States meanwhile are interested in human resources from India to develop various sectors such as information technology, transportation, and services.¹⁰

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Ganeshan Wignaraja, *Economic Reforms, Regionalism, and Exports: Comparing China and India*, (2011): 15. Asia-Studies Humanities, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com>.

⁸ Harsh V. Pant "India's Relations with Iran: Much Ado about Nothing." *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 34 (2011): 67. Academic Search Premier, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com>.

⁹ *The Hindi Business Line*, "India—UAE ties in trade, commerce below potential," May 29, 2007, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2007/05/29/stories/2007052905101000.htm>.

¹⁰ Pant.

China

While India has experienced significant economic success in recent decades, China initiated its economic reforms much earlier, and has consistently outpaced India's impressive growth by two to three *per cent* every year. The result is that China's economy has expanded to nearly three times the size of India's. Thus, while China and India are often grouped together as 'emerging' states, China is far along in establishing itself as the principal international competitor of the United States, while India, even with its recent economic achievements, lags behind.¹¹ "China has surged ahead of India in world export markets, with China's exports of goods and services over five times bigger than India's. China's success is linked to the rise of manufactured exports, which have rapidly upgraded over time, and to the expansion of some services."¹² There is no predictable and obvious association between population size of a country and its economic growth, per capita income, poverty levels, or prosperity. China not only has a larger population, but also reports a per capital income approximately twice as high as that of India."¹³

National Security

In 1991 India faced a major turning point in politics, economic orientation, and foreign policy as it moved from non-aligned ideologies in favor of a pragmatic foreign policy. This policy favored some normalization of traditionally hostile relationships with neighboring states and a greater focus on national defense, including in the nuclear sphere. These shifts in India's foreign policy manifested themselves in various ways, including better relations with China; the 'Look East' Policy launched in 1992 aimed at improving relations with Asia to the east of India; acquiescence in the United States nuclear missile defense program in 2001; support for the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2002; and the Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreements of 2005 and 2008.¹⁴ In an effort

¹¹ Makherjee and Malone.

¹² Wignaraja, 24.

¹³ Kumar.

¹⁴ Makherjee and Malone.

to improve national defense and preserve the security of its trade and energy, India has made efforts to expand its maritime defense especially through the Gulf ports. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium provides a forum for the navies of the Indian Ocean states to engage each other in greater maritime cooperation. However, the defense relationship remains tentative.¹⁵ India has found that expanding economic relations provides a channel of cooperation with potential competitors or rivals, as for example in India's securing oilfields in Central Asia in collaboration with China. Some believe that by pursuing economic relationships with major powers, India will be able to simultaneously attend better to its key internal security challenges while progressively building up its institutional capacity to develop and execute a grander international strategy. Before India can out grow its region economically, it must first respond more successfully to its domestic security challenges.¹⁶

Domestically, the central aim of post-colonial India's national policy is the accommodation and organization of the state's extreme heterogeneity. Throughout history, India has sheltered numerous ethnic groups, cultures, and religions. Hinduism's assimilative tendencies has led to a broad trend of merging different cultural identities, although the caste system created social divisions that the modern state has tried to eliminate. However, since the 1990s the political rise of Hindu nationalism, or *Hindutva*, has raised questions about India's national secular identity. Although Hindu nationalism seems to be declining, the end result has been a host of political parties.¹⁷ Uneven development between regions and social groups has created unrest and strife; numerous insurgencies have arisen in response to the neglect of certain regions and communities. Smaller regional parties have proven effective in using their influence to detain the national government on key security issues. India's ethnically diverse northeast, in a region bordering on China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal, is home to numerous insurgent groups. Yet despite allocating funds into the development of the region, the

¹⁵ Pant.

¹⁶ Makherjee and Malone.

¹⁷ Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Nature of Indian Democracy", in *Handbook of Sociology in India*, ed. Veena Das, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

central government has been unable to direct its policies in a way that better integrates the region into the Indian Union.¹⁸

According to the Fund for Peace's Failed States Index, six of India's neighbors rank in the top twenty-five dysfunctional states in the world.¹⁹ India has long endured what it calls 'cross-border terrorism' on its territory. The state worries about links between domestic terrorist groups such as the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and like-minded elements in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. Despite the threat of terrorism in India, its domestic response is less than agreeable.²⁰ India is uniquely positioned to be a leader of interstate cooperation in South Asia because in terms of religion or culture, India has something in common with each of its immediate neighbors, while the neighboring states do not share as significant of similarities among themselves.²¹ Unfortunately, so far India has not generated such cooperation.

Pakistan

India and Pakistan have a violent history, marked by two major wars in 1965 and 1971, two major acts of aggression by Pakistan (in 1948 over Kashmir and 1999 in the Kargil district of Kashmir), in addition to numerous smaller scaled incidents across their borders. During the Cold War, Pakistan was the ally of both the United States and China in South Asia, while India allied itself with the Soviet Union. Pakistan's continued alliance with China is a major national security concern for India, particularly in respect of China's transfer of missile systems and nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan. For a time, relative strategic stability was promoted after Pakistan and India both executed nuclear tests in 1998. One of India's most widely known security issues and a constant point of contention with Pakistan is the Kashmir region. After Pakistan failed to extort the region from India through military confrontation, they stepped up support for

¹⁸ Makherjee and Malone.

¹⁹ Vikram Sood, "India and Regional Security Interests", in *Power Realignments in Asia: China, India, and the United States*, ed. Alyssa Ayres and C. Raja Mohan, 252 (New Delhi: Sage, 2009).

²⁰ Makherjee and Malone.

²¹ Rajen Harshe, "South Asian Regional Cooperation: Problems and Prospects" in *Engaging With the World: Critical Reflection on India's Foreign Policy*, ed. Rajen Harshe and K.M. Seethi, 321 (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009).

insurgent groups in the region. A variety of Pakistan-based organizations, widely supported by the Pakistani armed forces and its intelligence apparatus, have supplied considerable fighting capability into the Kashmir valley, which experienced peak years of insurgency between 1988 and 2000 with 26,226 fatalities.²² India's possession of the valley is significantly weakened by the inability of its security forces to maintain order without a number of civilian deaths. Despite peace initiatives involving Indian Prime Ministers Vajpayee (1998 – 2004) and Singh (since 2004) and their Pakistani counterparts, they have failed to produce meaningful results. The deadly Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008 have created new challenges in Indo-Pakistani relations.

China

India and China's relationship has had strains since the mid-1950s, reaching its lowest point with their border war of 1962, in which India experienced a humiliating defeat. The Sino-Indian border disputes and the matter of Tibet are two issues that loom over the bilateral relationship. In 1959, India gave asylum to the fleeing Dalai Lama and has since experienced a migration of Tibetans escaping Chinese persecution. India has strived to maintain a balance between official recognition of Tibet as a part of China and granting asylum to the Dalai Lama and his followers. China is also known as a proliferator of nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan.²³

United States

In 2005, the United States helped transform India's national security situation through the 2005 framework for the Indo-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement that changed the global nuclear order to accommodate India.²⁴ The 2006 U.S. – India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act, also known as the Hyde Act, contained a "Statement of Policy" which included provisions designed to ensure India's support for United States policies

²² South Asia Terrorism Portal, 'Jammu and Kashmir Background', <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/background/index.html> (accessed July 10, 2012).

²³ Makherjee and Malone.

²⁴ Pant.

regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. In particular, India was “to dissuade, isolate, and if necessary, sanction and contain Iran for its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including a nuclear weapons capability and the capability to enrich uranium or reprocess nuclear fuel and the means to deliver weapons of mass destruction”.²⁵ The United States’ involvement in the Middle East, specifically Afghanistan has affected India’s national security: “If Washington were to abandon the goals of establishing a functioning Afghan state and seeing a moderate Pakistan emerge, that would put greater pressure on India security.”²⁶

Energy & The Environment

The year before India became independent, Mahatma Gandhi was asked a simple question: would he like free India to be as ‘developed’ as the country of its colonial masters, Britain? ‘No’, said Gandhi, stunning the interrogator who argued that Britain was the model to emulate. He replied: ‘If it took Britain the rape of half the world to be where it is, how many worlds would India need?’²⁷

India, due to economic growth and a much-needed investment in its energy infrastructure, is facing the prospect of increasing dependence on foreign energy imports. According to data from the International Energy Agency, India accounts for approximately three *per cent* of total global oil consumption, making it the fourth-largest consumer of energy in the world. By 2030, the state is expected to overtake Russia and Japan and become the third largest global consumer of energy after China and the United States. India imports approximately seventy *per cent* of its oil and more than sixty-five *per cent* of its crude oil requirement is being met through imports from the Middle East. Some predictions indicate that by 2020 India will double its demand for oil.²⁸ As India’s appetite for energy grows, concerns are mounting about how its energy needs will be satisfied. The state’s inability to fulfill these energy demands from domestic sources has

²⁵ Pant.

²⁶ Pant, 65.

²⁷ Sunita Narain. “Population, Environment, and Climate Change” in *Handbook of Population and Development*, ed. A.K. Shiva Kumar, Pradeep Panda, and Rajani R. Ved, 32 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁸ Terence Roehrig, “An Asian Triangle: India’s relationship with China and Japan” *Asian Politics and Policy* 1, no. 2, (2009).

resulted in Indian companies and officials increasingly looking abroad for resources. For example, India imports twelve *per cent* of its coal despite the state having some of the largest coal reserves in the world. If coal consumption continues on the current trajectory, India is projected to run out of the resource in forty-five years.²⁹ “As things stand, more than two-thirds of the oil consumed in the country is imported; this dependence on oil imports, which is greater than that of the United States and China, is only expected to increase, reaching close to ninety *per cent* by 2030.”³⁰

As the energy needs for not only India, but also many states around the world increase, so does the competition for non-renewable energy sources. India is a late entrant in the global energy market and faces the fact that Western powers have already gained control over the majority of the best available oil fields.³¹ A major concern for environmentalists is the limited ‘carrying capacity’ of the Earth and the impact of a growing population, but especially on non-renewable resources. Concerns are being raised about the sustainability of present levels and styles of living. India’s natural resource endowment relative to population is comparatively low, issues of resource degradation and depletion are already acute, and overcoming these constraints through foreign trade is a severely limited option.³² New refinery capacity exists in India and while the state has the necessary capital, it currently lacks the technological capacity to substantially modernize and upgrade domestic oil infrastructures. Much of that technology is in the possession of American and European companies. Likewise, India would benefit from close co-operation with the West in areas such as technology, innovation, and environmental policy.³³ There is a compelling need for resource

²⁹ Tanvi Madan, “India’s International Quest for Oil and Natural Gas: Fueling Foreign Policy?” *Indian Review*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2010). Academic Search Premier, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com>.

³⁰ *Ibid*

³¹ Karolina Wysoczanska, “Sino-Indian co-operation in Africa: Joint efforts in the oil sector” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* vol. 29, no. 2, (2011).

³² Kumar.

³³ Wysoczanska.

conservation, waste reduction, and increased efficiency in an equitable and sustainable manner.³⁴

“Faced with increasing demand for energy, the Indian government has been following a strategy of diversification, pursuing a number of options related to various energy sources on both the domestic and international front.”³⁵ India recognizes the need for greater research and investment in renewable energy power (REP), such as solar and wind. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is responsible for administering the renewable energy sector. “The MNRE has defined grid-connected renewable energy sources as including small hydro projects, bagasse cogeneration, biomass power, urban and industrial waste power, wind and solar power.”³⁶ In 2010, wind power accounted for the largest share of renewable power with over seventy *per cent*, followed by small hydropower making up sixteen *per cent*.³⁷ Some of the barriers to the development of REP are financial constraints and geographically uneven distribution of natural resources. India has considered collaborating with other states to capitalize on combining economic resources to secure energy sources. India has expressed a strong desire to join forces with China in a global search for energy security. “In January 2005 India acquired a twenty *per cent* share in the development of the largest onshore oil field in Yadavaran, Iran, operated and fifty *per cent* owned by Sinopec, China’s state-run oil company”.³⁸ In 2006, both countries signed a Memorandum for Enhancing Cooperation in the Field of Oil and Natural Gas pledging to bid jointly for crude oil resources overseas and encouraging co-operation in energy exploration, research, production, and development.³⁹

³⁴ Kumar.

³⁵ Tanvi Madan, “India’s International Quest for Oil and Natural Gas: Fueling Foreign Policy?” *Indian Review*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2010): 4. Academic Search Premier, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com>.

³⁶ Gisele Schmid, “The Development of Renewable Energy Power in India: Which Policies Have Been Effective?” *Energy Policy*, vol.45, (2012): 318. Science Direct, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com>.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ Chietigj Bajpae, “India, China locked in energy game” *Asia Times*, March 17, 2005.

³⁹ H.H. Lai, “China’s oil diplomacy: Is it a global security threat?” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no.3 (2007).

Middle East

India's quickly increasing energy needs has motivated the state to invest in the Middle East as an immediate and long-term energy source. The GCC states supply forty-five *per cent* of India's petroleum, a quarter of those supplies are from the Saudis. Qatar remains India's exclusive supplier of natural gas, supplying five million tons of liquid nitrogen gas to India annually. One of the states India would like to have an increased presence is Iran, which accounts for only about eight *per cent* of Indian oil imports. India is facing increasing competition in the area; Pakistan signed a pipeline deal with Tehran and China is beginning to make its presence felt. China has rapidly occupied the space vacated by western firms and is now Iran's largest trading partner. Despite India's efforts in the area, Iran has proven to be an unreliable trade partner. In Iran, like other states in the Middle East, the lack of stability in political leadership has effected business ventures and made it difficult to execute deals agreed on by previous regimes. For example, in 2005 India signed a twenty-five year, USD\$22 billion agreement with Iran for the export of liquefied natural gas that has yet to produce any results. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad does not recognize the deal as final or binding because it was signed prior to him taking office.⁴⁰ Another country that India is seeking to increase energy relations with is Saudi Arabia. Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, is India's chief supplier of oil, and India is the fourth largest importer of Saudi oil after China, the United States, and Japan. It is projected that India's crude oil imports from Saudi Arabia will double in the next twenty years.⁴¹ One of India's main concerns is that the volatility in the Middle East's could jeopardize India's energy security, unfortunately India does not have many alternative options and this is a very possible risk if India continues to pursue deals in this region.

⁴⁰ Pant.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 66.

Africa

Africa has come an attractive destination for states, including India, which are seeking additional access to energy sources. India is courting Nigerian officials to explore new oil sources in hopes of reducing its reliance on imports from the volatile Middle East. India has agreed to a USD \$6 billion infrastructure deal with Nigeria in exchange for extensive access to some of the best production blocs.⁴² “More controversially, Chinese and Indian enterprises have jointly launched petroleum initiatives in politically isolated Sudan”.⁴³ India’s options in Africa are limited. It must look for oil where Western states are not present, and their initiative in Sudan represents this strategy put into practice.⁴⁴

China

China is now the world’s second-largest consumer of oil after the United States of America.⁴⁵ China’s increased demand for oil and gas reflects the state’s economic performance, but also its lack of domestic reserves. China holds only about one *per cent* of total world gas reserves and two *per cent* of oil.⁴⁶ Prior to 1993, domestic oil reserves were sufficient to meet domestic energy needs, but since then China became a net oil importer, replacing Japan as the world’s second largest oil importer since 2003.⁴⁷ In 2006, almost fifty-two *per cent* of China’s crude oil came from foreign supplies. Some predict that China will increase its energy consumption by 150 *per cent*.⁴⁸ Several analysts argue that China’s efforts to gain overseas oil supplies will undermine American national security.⁴⁹ China has constructed an extensive network of political and economic

⁴² Peter Pham, “India’s expanding relations with Africa and their implications for US interests” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 29, (2007).

⁴³ Chris Alden, “China in Africa” *Survival* 47, no.3 (2005): 155.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ H.H. Lai, “China’s oil diplomacy: Is it a global security threat?” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no.3 (2007).

⁴⁶ M. Dooraj and C. Currie, “Lubricated with oil: Iran-China relations in a changing world” *Middle East Policy*, no.2 (2008).

⁴⁷ Gawdat Bahgat, “Energy partnership: China and the Gulf states” *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Review* 29, no. 2 (2005).

⁴⁸ Terence Roehrig, “An Asian Triangle: India’s relationship with China and Japan” *Asian Politics and Policy* 1, no. 2, (2009): 166.

⁴⁹ Michael Klare, *Resource Wars: The new landscape of global conflict*. (New York: Henry Holt, 2001).

relations across Africa that is the subject of increased concerns among scholars and policy makers.⁵⁰ Chinese companies have historically been overpaying for equity positions. Beijing has viewed paying a higher price to secure energy resources as an issue of national security and such bidding wars between Chinese companies and their competition, including India, have further intensified such practices. India has consistently lost out in deals sought out by China; Chinese firms have utilized their economic advantage by overbidding at least ten *per cent* more than Indian companies. Such bidding wars are raising global prices, creating consequences for both oil-importing and exporting states.⁵¹

Population Demographics

As of July 2012 it is estimated that India's population is 1.205 billion people, making it the second most population in the world.⁵² While it is true that India's population has tripled from 1951 to today, there are positive features that characterize trends in the country's population growth. Since 1971 India's population growth rate has been declining and fertility rates continue to fall steadily, while longevity continues to improve in India. In 1950, life expectancy at birth in India was a mere thirty-two years; it doubled to approximately sixty-four years in 2006. A consequence of the declining trends in birth and death rates was a change in age structure that has given India a definite demographic advantage. With approximately sixty *per cent* of the population at working age – fifteen to fifty-nine years – this is seen as an advantage fundamental to accelerating and sustaining economic growth.⁵³

India is blessed with rich religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. Any national policy should keep in view this tradition of cultural diversity and political

⁵⁰ Wysoczanska.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² United States Central Intelligence Agency, "India", CIA World Factbook

[https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html?countryName=India&countryCode=in®ionCode=sas&rank=4#in)

[factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html?countryName=India&countryCode=in®ionCode=sas&rank=4#in](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html?countryName=India&countryCode=in®ionCode=sas&rank=4#in) (accessed July 27, 2012).

⁵³ Kumar.

pluralism. However, the two majorities stand out to be the greatest sufferers of uncontrolled population growth – the youth and the poor.⁵⁴

Five significant features of India's demographics are: large regional variations, uneven human development, adverse sex ratios, growing urbanization, and internal rural-urban migration. National population trends conceal the many differentials in the levels of demographic indicators across the country's twenty-nine states and six Union territories.⁵⁵

It is important that any population program specifically addresses a concentration of efforts on a priority zone comprising Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These areas are significant because they are "...the four Hindi speaking states which constitute [forty *per cent*] of India's population and are demographically, economically, and socially the most vulnerable states in India."⁵⁶

Addressing Population Growth

In the 1950s, India became the first state in the world to adopt an official National Population Policy and formulated its first Five Year Plan in 1951. However, until the 1980s, India's family planning program was dominated by a population-control mindset and guided by time-bound sterilization 'targets'. The state witnessed the worst forms of coercive family planning policies from June 1973 to March 1977, a time declared by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as 'an era of national emergency' when women were being forced to undergo compulsory sterilization.⁵⁷ In the 1990s, India made several progressive changes in its approach to population stabilization, signaling a strong commitment to human and women's rights. This change included a shift away from demographic targets to improving the reproductive health needs of individuals.⁵⁸

There is good news on India's population front. India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is expected to drop from the current level of around 2.7 to 2.1 by 2020. The annual rate of

⁵⁴ Bose, Ashish, *India's Quest for Population Stabilisation* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2010): 20.

⁵⁵ Kumar.

⁵⁶ Bose, 18.

⁵⁷ Kumar.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*,

growth of population is expected to fall from the present level of around 1.9 to 0.32 *per cent* between 2045 and 2050.⁵⁹ It is important to acknowledge that given the age structure of the population, population growth will continue despite a decrease in the birth rate due to what demographers call momentum, “i.e., the effect of a young age structure caused by high population growth rates in the recent past. With a large proportion of the population, almost sixty *per cent*, below the age of thirty years, further growth of the population is inevitable”.⁶⁰

The fear of growing numbers continues to needlessly fuel knee-jerk reactions. Supporters of ‘population control’ argue for forcibly limiting the number of children a family can have. This is viewed as the ideal way for lowering birth rates and promoting the larger good of society. In contrast, human rights advocates condemn even the use of the term ‘population or fertility control’ and the use of force. To them, the phenomenon of having more children than wanted reflects society’s failure to enhance people’s capabilities, especially women in particular, to have greater freedoms and improved access to basic health care, education, and employment.⁶¹

Two-Child Norm

In Indian states that have adopted the two-child norm a number of incentives and disincentives have been advocated, for example limiting schooling in government schools to only two children of the same parents and limiting employment in public services to those with two children. “The Population Control Bill 2000 also seeks to punish people who violate the small family norm with rigorous imprisonment for a term of five years and a fine of no less than Rs 50,000.”⁶² The response to India’s two-child norm have been mixed; some see the norm as an effective option to address population growth while others feel that it violates the government’s commitment to democracy and human

⁵⁹ Kumar.

⁶⁰ Mohan Rao, “Why Penalize People?” in *Handbook of Population and Development*, ed. A.K. Shiva Kumar, Pradeep Panda, and Rajani R. Ved, 44 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶¹ Kumar.

⁶² Rao.

rights.⁶³ The two-child norm has resulted in a surge of popularity in the son preference that is powerful, pervasive, and persistent in Indian society. The medical and technological advances have created a new factor in child preference: an alarming rise in the use of female feticide and amniocentesis.⁶⁴ A vigorous pursuit of the two-child norm is an invitation to female sex-selective abortion.⁶⁵ “The son preference in Indian society, and this is equally true of middle-class and upper class persons in urban areas, is getting further accentuated by their expectations of dowry.”⁶⁶

Reproductive Health

In the Nation Family Health Survey of 2005-6 (NFHS-3) women aged fifteen to forty-nine were asked the ideal number of children they would have. “More than two thirds (sixty-nine *per cent*) of these women considered two or less as the ideal number of children, and another nineteen *per cent* considered three to be ideal. Only nine *per cent* of women regarded more than three as an ideal number of children.”⁶⁷ Despite the overwhelming number of Indian women that desire to have two or fewer children, the population data shows that India women are experiencing high fertility rates than desired. Although there are many possible explanations of the higher-than-desired levels of fertility in India, for example families do not feel secure that their infants will survive and the many deprivations that the Indian poor face, the large number of unwanted births point towards the limited access that women have to reproductive health choices. Also, high fertility rates, which are the result of unwanted pregnancies and births, raise critical issues of women’s autonomy and gender justice, especially when patriarchy and other social norms limit the freedoms and choices that women have to decide how many children to bear.”⁶⁸

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Bose, 9.

⁶⁵ Rao.

⁶⁶ Bose, 9.

⁶⁷ Kumar.

⁶⁸ Kumar.

China

India and China interact on numerous ventures, building a strong partnership in many different industries. Though India does not directly play into the status of population growth in China, the two states combined account for thirty-seven *per cent* of the total world population.⁶⁹ Discussions on population policy often involve an India-China comparison with some calling on India to emulate China's one-child policy in a national two-child norm. Those who advocate a two-child norm refer to the Supreme Court ruling of 2003 that points out that "China, the most populous country in the world, has been able to control its growth rate by adopting a 'carrot and stick' rule."⁷⁰ Although the one-child policy has reduced the birth rate in China, there is much debate over how effective implementing a similar policy would be in India, and it is important to examine the different factors that would impact the policy's effectiveness. Many states of the world, including Bangladesh in recent years, have lowered birth rates without limiting family size.

India and China have different government structures, and it is argued that enforcing a law that limits family size so specifically is easier to enforce in an authoritarian country like China. In contrast, it is possible that enforcement of a similar measure could have disastrous political consequences in a democracy like India. A possible consequence of China's one-child policy was a considerable rise in abortion rates, further damaging women's health. Recent reports note that at least thirteen million abortions occur yearly in China. This number only covers hospital terminations and does not take into account abortions in unregistered rural clinics and the ten million pills to induce abortion sold yearly.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Carl J. Dahlman, *The World Under Pressure: How China and India are Influencing the Global Economy and Environment* (California: Stanford University Press, 2012): 151.

⁷⁰ Kumar.

⁷¹ David Batty, "13 Million Abortions Carried Out Every Year in China, Newspaper Reveals," *The Guardian*, July 30, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/30/china-abortion-statistics>

Conclusion

India has made major strides in its effort to prove itself to the international community, but it is clear that the state still has much to do to ensure that its power and influence are sustainable. There are many difficult policy decisions that lay ahead for India surrounding the issues of economics, national security, energy resources, and population. Although India wants to extend its economic and political influence, the government must be cautious not to do so at the expense of its people. “With India’s economic performance improving by leaps and bounds each year, economic diplomacy provides the path of least resistance for coalition governments struggling to pull their members together on foreign policy decisions.”⁷² Economic prosperity is seen as the key to India’s achievement of a position of authority in the international community. Moving forward India will have to reexamine its current partners and carefully consider future partnerships. If the Republic of India is to secure its position in the international community, it must commit to the sustainable development of the state and prioritize the needs of the population.

⁷² Makherjee and Malone.

Discussion Questions

- Consider your position in the Indian Cabinet. How does your role affect your view of the issues presented (economy, national security, energy, population) and possible solutions?
- What can be done to address India's growing energy demands and security concerns? Is it possible for the country to achieve sustainable development?
- What role does India's population growth play on its domestic policies? How does this status affect India's foreign policies?
- Considering India's growing and aging population, what is the best way to meet its present and future needs?
- Keeping in mind India's current foreign policies and its growing role in the international community, what should its relationship with some of the major key countries moving forward? For example the United States, Pakistan, China?

Annotated Bibliography

For Further Reading

A.K. Shiva Kumar, Pradeep Panda, and Rajani R. Ved. *Handbook of Population and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

This book offers a comprehensive review of population and development in India. It gives deeper insight into the politics of India by providing facts, figures, and analysis of issues facing India. The editors provide a thorough analysis of contemporary issues, including potential policy alternatives. This book is a useful resource in understanding the key development and population issues in India.

Bose, Ashish. *India's Quest for Population Stabilisation*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2010.

This book maps the evolution of India's population policies since its independence in 1947. Bose presents his research of numerous reports and unpublished documents in a manner that is easy for readers to access. Bose also highlights key developments in India's population policies, including significant documents, concepts, and individuals. This book provides a comprehensive history and discussion of policies that have shaped India's approach to population stabilization.

Harshe, Rajen. "South Asian Regional Cooperation: Problems and Prospects" in *Engaging With the World: Critical Reflection on India's Foreign Policy*, ed. Rajen Harshe and K.M. Seethi. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009.

India's relationship with its South Asian regional counterparts is complicated and can be traced back through history. This book provides a reflection on the region's cooperation, its current problems and the future prospects of these key issues being resolved.

Makherjee, R. and Malone, D. "Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security Challenges." *International Affairs* vol. 87 (2011): 87 – 104, Academic Search Premier, via Ebsco, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com> (accessed July 25, 2012).

This document highlights historic Indian foreign policy that has impacted India's current position in international politics. It also provides a comprehensive account of India's traditionally hostile relationships with its region neighbors, which is significant in understanding India's foreign policy today.

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