



5. What is meant by 'the age structure' of the population? Why is it relevant for economic development and growth?

Ans:

India has a very young population. The average age of an Indian is less than that for most other countries. Majority of Indians are between the age group of 15 and 64 years.

- Age structure of the population refers to the proportions of persons in different age groups relative to the total population.
- Population under the age of 15 has decreased from 42% in 1971 to 31% in 2011. During this period the ratio of age group 15 to 64 was gone up from 53% to 63.7%.
- Age structure in a country changes with development poor medical facilities, prevalence of disease reduce the life expectancy.
- Age structure of population can be put in following age groups:
 1. 0-14 years. [Children]
 2. 15-59 years. [Working population]
 3. 60 + Years. [Old people]

This age structure of the Indian population can be understood by following table.

Age Structure of Indian Population

Year	0 – 14	15 – 59	60 + years	Total
1961	41	56	6	100
1971	42	53	5	100
1981	40	54	6	100
1991	38	56	7	100
2001	34	59	7	100
2011	29	63	8	100
2026	23	64	12	100

This table indicates that the share of the under 15 age group in the

total population has come down from higher level of 42% in 1971 to 34% in 2001 and it is expected to be reduced to 23% in 2026. It means birth rate in India is gradually decreasing.
Relevance for economic development and growth:

- Due to the advancement in medical sciences, public health measures and nutrition the life expectancy is at rise. This is due to economic development and growth.
- Need of family planning is being understood. Decrease in 0-14 years age group reveals that National population policy is implemented properly.
- Because of socio-cultural changes in Indian society and economic growth Age structure of population is moving towards positive young India.
- Dependency ratio is decreasing and increase in working population is causing positive growth in Indian economy.
- Economic development and improvement in quality of life improve life expectancy and changes the structures of the population.
- High infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate due to poor economic growth hence an adverse effect of age structure on the population.

6. What is meant by the 'sex ratio'? What are some of the implications of a declining sex ratio? Do you feel that parents still prefer to have sons rather than daughters? What, in your opinion, could be some of the reasons for this preference?

Ans: Sex ratio refers to the number of females per thousand males in a given area at a specified period of time.

- This ratio is an important indicator of gender balance in population.
- Historically there were more females than males in most countries of the world. This phenomena occurred due to two reasons:
 1. Girl babies enjoy better immune system and resistant to diseases in comparison of male child.
 2. Females live longer than males in most of the societies.
- The ratio between female babies and male babies is roughly 1050 female to 1000 male.
- In India sex ratio is declining significantly and continuously for more than a century. From 972 female per thousand males at the turn of 20th century the sex ratio declined to 933 at the turn of 21st century.
- The state level child sex ratio is alarming. As many as 6 states and union territories have a child sex ratio as low child sex ratio of 793. The highest child sex ratio of 986 is found in Sikkim.

Sex ratio seems to be declining in countries like India, China and South Korea.

In India, parents still prefer male child. This is basically due to social and cultural reasons. Being agricultural society the village population preferred male child to look after the land. The reason of preference of male child is definitely not linked with economic reasons. The states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh and Maharashtra are most prosperous states of India and should have highest child sex ratio, but things are just different.

The census of 2001 reveals that these are states with the lowest sex ratios i.e., 950 female babies per 1000 male babies. This data is a reliable evidence that selective abortion in these states is not due to poverty, ignorance or lack of resource. Predisposing factors for low child sex ratio in India:

1. Religious or Cultural Beliefs: Belief that only son is entitled to perform funeral and related rituals of his parents. Only son is

the waaris of family. In the absence of male child jthe.uansli will not continue.

2. Economic Reasons: The main occupation of Indian society is agriculture. Villagers have a thinking that landed property cannot be given to girls because after marriage they will go to another village, town or city. Neither girl child can get her share of load nor she can take care of the land.
3. Lack of Awareness: People in Indian society having ignorant conservation attitude are still not ready to give equal status to daughter because they think that during old age they will be dependent on the son. Only he will share food, house, customs and responsibilities.
4. Implications of child sex ratio: Low child sex ratio, if continues, will have serious implications on our social network, particularly the Institution of marriage. It will also cause severe law and order problem related to women.

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