**Population explosion**

[Amreen Mir](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/amreen-mir/" \o "More Articles by Amreen Mir)

June 21, 2021

In the contemporary world, where peace has merely become a word, issues like global warming, nuclear war, and pandemics are commonly discussed. Overpopulation is a major concern too and if it remains uncontrolled, it can be catastrophic. When population in a certain area starts getting out of control burden on available resources increases too.

Despite of knowing the fact that excess of everything is bad, but if the excess is dealt with wisdom it can prove to be the booster, so is the case with overpopulation. Realising the intensity of the threat, developed nations formulated policies to reduce famine and food shortage for the future, as well as to limit human birth through awareness campaigns on family planning.

On the contrary, overpopulation in Pakistan, has become a real threat hampering socio-economic development. Controlling population for countries like Pakistan has become unmanageable as the state seems more inclined towards resolving issues like infrastructure, health, and education. Apart from external threats Pakistan needs to realise the real threat emerging internally through over population.

According to 2017 consensus statistics, Pakistan jumps a rank higher, from 6th to 5th, in the most populous countries of the world with over 220 million people. Currently, with 2 percent population growth, it is expected to be doubled by 2050. As per Unicef report last year, Pakistan is likely to have 50 million new born in the first 9 months of the COVID-19 outbreak. Ironically, it is only overpopulation which has pushed Pakistan down in the human development index where per capita income of Pakistanis is even lower than Bangladesh. If this remains unchecked, the days are not far when countries like Nepal and Sudan will be doing better than Pakistan in the human development index.

Pakistan’s inept leadership and governance have failed to devise policies and strategies to overcome rising population. With its limited resources and poor governance, uncontrolled population has pushed the country on the verge of economic decline giving rise to poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy. Economists concede with the fact that economic growth is the main driving force behind poverty reduction over the long run. Despite Pakistan is a developing country, but it owns world’s largest labour force and labour markets provide the main transmission channel for the economic growth because the poor depend overwhelmingly on labour income.

Rising poverty has made many parents give birth to more children as they want more hands to earn, even it is done through child labour

Additionally, education sector in Pakistan has been the most neglected sector with only 58 percent literacy rate. Being a developing country with poor management of resources, Pakistan is unable to provide quality education to its masses. A country with relatively lower education percentile of its populace will never be able to educate the new entrants; hence, it will result in poverty and unemployment causing burden on the already poverty -stricken economy.

On the other hand, family planning is another problem we as a society face.Being a male dominant society women hardly have a say and the number of children keep increasing.. Thus, such increase in numbers have resulted in scarce resources and job opportunities. The government has clearly failed to build job opportunities through comprehensive processes of industrialization, fostering small scale firms and materializing infrastructural growth.

Having said that,the world’s most populous country China, formulated one child policy. On the other hand it trained its youth technically which changed the game for China, by strengthening its economic power by empowering technical training among masses. Similarly, Pakistan accounts for more than 60 percent of its population under 30; however, it has failed to train its young generation technically as well as provide them with basic education. This has resulted in rapid incline in poverty graph of the country resulting in unemployment and birth of various social evils in the society.

In areas like Thar and other places across the country, children are abject to mal nutrition ending in stunted growth of a child. Rising poverty have made many parents give birth to more children as they want more hands to earn, even it is done through child labour. Begging by children has become a mafia in the country, and is one of the major impacts of overpopulation.

Increase in population compels people to save less and consume more. Pakistan is one of the countries with least saving ratio that is obviously from its growing population. It is saddening to note that our current saving rate is 1/3rd of India, 1/2 of Bangladesh and 1/5th of China. Being extremely dependent on foreign savings, running high external account deficits piles up external debt.

Furthermore, overpopulation decreases the ratio of capital to labour which leads in decrease of labour productivity and slows down the economic growth that hinders poverty reduction.

Rapidly increasing populace requires expanded budgetary assets to preserve the amount and quality of education and health services and their present low levels. Despite being lowest revenue and tax collection, government still seems to be baffled in provision of better public services to its citizens. Literacy rate in Pakistan is at its slowest pace than its neighbouring countries while quality of education being heavily compromised by ghost teachers and government being equally involved as well.

Despite the above points, Pakistan has made considerable progress in poverty reduction, despite decelerating economic growth and continuing high population growth.

It is primarily because: first, income distribution remained relatively constant, thereby preventing the impact of increasing inequalities in wealth on poverty. Second, given the economic downturn, there has been continued growth in real per capita income, which has had a damping impact on poverty.But the main point is that the decline in poverty would have been much more dramatic if population growth had been higher and economic growth stronger.

Notwithstanding this substantial reduction, poverty in Pakistan has remained high. High poverty rates are undermining the very root of social structure in the world. With proven links to increased crime, social disagreement and inter-class and inter regional friction, our high population growth and poverty pose as much, if not greater, threat to the country as any external threat.

Many of the problems being faced by the country today are directly related to high population growth rates, and any further neglect of this topic will speedily exacerbate these problems. The time has come to act and dismantle population growth, starting with the obvious aim of increasing population growth.

*The writer is a post graduate and freelance writer, columnist, and blogger who wants to bring change in society, working for the youth development and women empowerment. The writer may be contacted via twitter @AmreenMir1*