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## **Population Growth**

### **Facts about Population Growth**

Population growth implies the significant upsurge in the sums of organisms, living things or people in a certain locality.<sup>1</sup> To this context population growth signifies human population development. The increase in human population either improves economic development or derails the economic growth process. Population growth structures are components of population growth that affect, influence or enhance economic development in a given region. Different population structures affect economic development differently. On the other way round, economic development also affects population growth of a country. An intricate affiliation exists between economic development and progression in human populations. In one context human populations are viewed as a factor of production through the growing workforce in the industries and other sectors of development. On a contrary point of view, population growth is identified to be a cause of poor livelihoods and unsustainable lives in a country.

Population growth involves the increase of manpower to factories in the economy. The increase in the population provides a diverse workforce in the economy and thereby enhancing economic development. Some countries have used their high population growth rates as a labor

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<sup>1</sup> Steele, Philip. 2012. *Population growth*. North Mankato. Smart Apple Media. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.

head required in the industries for economic activities.<sup>2</sup> For instance, China has the largest population size in the world and uses this as an economic development tool. Every person in that country strives to make a living through education, business and technological innovation. The people have been made to grow up in a culture that they are the primary source of income, and everyone must work towards achieving development goals.

Economic growth factors on the availability of resources adequate to provide sustainable livelihoods to the people. The availability of natural and financial resources to adequately provide the people with basic and at times secondary needs defines the condition of economic development that particular nation. Population growth affects economic development in a negative way. An increase in the numbers of people inclines pressure on the available natural resources that should support decent lives.<sup>3</sup> When the population size grows beyond the carrying capacity of a region, country or continents, then the population is likely to derail the natural resource base that supports livelihoods. In such circumstances, the natural resources get depleted after a short period and economic development declines. Therefore, increase human population impedes economic development.

Population growth is essential in acquiring a momentum for economic growth. There is a limit below which economic development cannot be triggered. Humans are the sources of labor in most of the developing and developed nations.<sup>4</sup> Therefore there is a certain percentage of growth that is required to initiate economic development in a particular nation. In the wake of industrialization, which is the major factor of economic development, many people are needed to offer labor in the different sections of production. A slowly growing population cannot provide

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<sup>2</sup> Steele, Philip. 2012. *Population growth*. North Mankato. Smart Apple Media. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.

<sup>3</sup> Simpson, David. 2013. *The rediscovery of classical economics: adaptation, complexity and growth*.

<sup>4</sup> Steele, Philip. 2012.

the industries with the required numbers of people. There is a quantification and qualification of laborers that are necessary to initiate economic development. Controlled population growth is helpful in achieving economic development highlighting the importance of population growth.

## **Classical Economists**

### **Adam Smith**

Concerning growth, Adam Smith identified significant factors that source growth. These are the primary sources of economic growth according to Adam Smith: enhancement in the effectiveness with which capital is used in labor via division of labor and development of technology, the growth in work force and capital stock and lastly the advancement of foreign trade that enlarge markets while reinforcing the other aspects or sources of growth. In his theory, the aspect of growth is represented in human capital.<sup>5</sup> He postulated that division of labor does not solely depend on technological development, but the market size also played a role. The economic production function identified only three factors of production, namely: labor, land and capital. The division of labor initiate and catalyzes the progress and formation of economies of scale in the market. Economic development depends on the increase of human capital, labor and technological development. An increase in labor force increases economic development through improved production and enhanced diversity in the workplace.

One major factor in the theory is the growth of labor force which depends on population size. The trend of population growth in the country dictates the availability of labor force in the industries. He claimed that population growth rate depends on the availability of funds for human use. An increase in wages will lead to population growth.<sup>6</sup> An increase in population is

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<sup>5</sup> Simpson, David. 2013. *The rediscovery of classical economics: adaptation, complexity and growth*

<sup>6</sup> Schumpeter, Joseph A. 2012. *The theory of economic development: an inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and*

dependent on the availability of resources to support life. Wages are used to avail, through buying, economic resources to the people. An increase in capitalization aids in improving the capital stock and subsequently investment increases successively in that economy. In economic development, human capital, as well as labor, form the pivotal role of providing the workforce, initiating investments and thus increases capitalization. Economic development is also dependent on capitalization in the economy as investments enhance economic productivity.

It is true that a working population increases economic resources and thus economic development. Being a responsible parent, by reproducing at the right time also increases the period of working towards self-satisfaction<sup>7</sup>. Self-satisfaction only comes when one has everything he wants to face life and the resources to support the life and education of their children. Having supported the need to invest more in the economy, reduce leisure times and only reproduce when you have the resources to support life, Adam Smith's theory restricted people socially.<sup>8</sup> It is realistic to improve the standards of living of a population by striving towards sustainability; increasing resource availability and controlling population growth.

### **Robert Malthus**

Malthus is known for his contribution towards understanding population growth dynamics and impacts of the same on development. According to Malthus, human populations grow at an exponential rate, as the food production grows arithmetically.<sup>9</sup> Human populations grow exponentially implying that at every cycle of development the population doubles its initial

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<sup>7</sup> Simpson, David. 2013. *The rediscovery of classical economics: adaptation, complexity and growth*

<sup>8</sup> Schumpeter, Joseph A. 2012. *The theory of economic development: an inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle*. Fourth Edition

<sup>9</sup> Robertson, Thomas. 2012. *The Malthusian moment: global population growth and the birth of American environmentalism*. Rutgers University Press.

size. On the other hand economic resources that support life; food grows arithmetically, suggesting that the amount of food increased by a constant addition to the initial cost throughout the cycle. The Malthusian theory denoted that populations increase at a higher rate compared to the amount of food available for subsistence. The exponential growth of population overtakes the rate of increase of food even if at the beginning, there was more food to sustainably feed humans.

To avoid the catastrophes of overpopulation and depleted natural resources base, Malthus suggested a number of ways of controlling human population. Keeping checks on human populations help in maintaining that population size that the resource base can sustainably support.<sup>10</sup> These controls envisioned to reduce birth rates and spending much of an individual's time trying to amass wealth to help his generations. Some of the measures proposed by Malthus included: giving rise to smaller families, later marriages, avoiding early attachment to a single woman that would lead to getting married soon afterward and parents restricting the number of children in their families. All these checks were social constraints as they were to affect the lives of the people socially.

Malthus said that the impact of overpopulation on the lives of people and economic development were extreme compared to the sacrifices that people had to undertake to control human population growth. Human overpopulation affects the standards of living for resources required to support livelihoods are diminished.<sup>11</sup> He also suggested that one should decide to have children at the time he/she should be economically stable to support the child and as well

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<sup>10</sup> Robertson, Thomas. 2012. *The Malthusian moment: global population growth and the birth of American environmentalism*. Rutgers University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Robertson, Thomas. 2012.

proposed that people should spend most of their times investing and building the economy so that you can be able to provide a support base even for their future generations. These had an economic impact as people would generate more incomes to buy resources to support their lives.

### **Summary of their Arguments**

Adam Smith considered human population as a source of capital to facilitate growth through the provision of labor and investments. According to him, a well-financed population will grow regarding the amount of capital they have and will continue providing capital to help in building the economy.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Malthus suggested that to avoid the wrath of nature and the impact of our irresponsibility on controlling populations and increasing resources, people have to apply control checks to reduce populations and sustainably extract the natural resources to support their livelihoods. Human populations grew exponentially as compared to the arithmetic progression of the available resources to support life.<sup>13</sup> The birth control checks aid in keeping the population in check and protecting the natural world

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<sup>12</sup> Schumpeter, Joseph A. 2012. *The theory of economic development: an inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle*. Fourth Edition

<sup>13</sup> Robertson, Thomas. 2012. *The Malthusian moment: global population growth and the birth of American environmentalism*. Rutgers University Press.

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