

(a) Summarise the arguments stating that population growth is not a real problem.

1. The problem is not population growth but other issues such as:

1.1 Underdevelopment: According to this argument, underdevelopment is the real problem and development must be the only goal. As countries develop, with it will come economic progress and social mechanisms that will more or less regulate population growth and distribution.

1.2 World resource depletion and environmental destruction: According to this argument, developed nation should lower their excessively high consumption standards instead of asking less developed nations to restrict their population growth.

1.3 Population distribution: According to this argument it is not the number of people that is causing population problems but rather their distribution. Governments must strive to rather bring a more natural distribution of the population.

1.4 Subordination of women: According to this argument, population growth is a natural outcome of a women's lack of economic opportunity. The empowerment of women will lead to smaller households.

2. The population problem is a deliberately contrived false issue: According to this argument rich countries is over concerned with the population growth of poor nations and is really an attempt by rich countries to hold down the development of poor countries in order to maintain an international status that is favourable to the rich countries self-interests.

3. Population growth is a desirable phenomenon: Larger populations provide the needed consumer demand to generate favourable economies of scale in production, to lower production costs and provide a sufficient and low-cost labour supply to achieve higher output levels.

Three other non-economic arguments view population growth as desirable:

3.1 Many countries claim a need for population growth to protect currently underpopulated border regions against their neighbouring countries.

3.2 There are many ethnic, racial and religious groups whose attitude favouring large family sizes needs to be protected for both moral and political reasons.

3.3 Military and political power is often seen as dependant on a large and youthful population.

(b) Summarise the arguments stating that population growth is a real problem.

1. The extremist argument: Population and global crises. This argument attempts to attribute almost all of the world's economic and social problems to excessive population growth. Over population is regarded as the principal cause of poverty, low levels of living, malnutrition, ill health and environmental degradation.

2. The theoretical argument: Population-Poverty cycles and the need for Family-Planning programs. The population-poverty cycle theory is the main argument by economists who hold that rapid population growth yields negative economic consequences. Advocates say that population growth intensifies the economic, social and psychological problems associated with the condition of underdevelopment. It also draws down government revenues simply to provide the most basic services to the additional people. This in turn further reduces the prospects for improving the level of living and helps to transmit poverty to future generations.

3. Other empirical arguments: Seven negative consequences of population growth.

3.1 Economic growth: Rapid population growth lowers per capita income growth.

3.2 Poverty and Inequality: The negative effects of rapid population growth fall most heavily on the poor because they are the ones that are made landless, suffer firsts from government cuts and bear the most environmental damage.

3.3 Education: It is generally the large families with low incomes that are the most restricted to educate their children.

3.4 Health: High fertility harms the health of mothers and children.

3.5 Food: Feeding the world's population is made more difficult by rapid population growth.

3.6 Environment: Rapid population growth contributes to environmental degradation.

3.7 International migration: International migration is one of the major consequences of developing countries rapid population growth.

(c) Discuss the theoretical argument, population cycles, be referring to the standard Solow-type neoclassical growth equation.

The population-poverty cycle theory is the main argument by economists who hold that rapid population growth yields negative economic consequences. The basic model that is used to show these adverse consequences of rapid population growth is a simplification of the standard Solow model.

Using the standard production function $Y = f(K, L, R, T)$, and holding the resource base fixed, we can derive the following equation: $y - l = \alpha(k - l) + t$ where y = rate of GNI growth, l = rate of population growth, k = rate of growth of capital stock, α = capital elasticity of output.

This equation states that the rate of per capita income growth is equal to the rate of growth of the capital-labour ratio plus the residual effects of technology. Thus in the absence of technology, the higher the growth of the population, the more rapid the growth rate of the capital stock must be and the greater the level of savings and investment must be just to maintain constant levels of per capita income.

Because the rate of growth of capital is not independent from the population growth rate, the consequences may be worse than the model predicts.

Another vicious circle exists because poor people have large families partly to compensate for their poverty, but large families mean greater population growth, higher dependency burdens, and lower savings, less investment, slower economic growth and ultimately greater poverty.

Population cycles therefore dramatically increases poverty, it follows that economic and social development is a necessary condition for bringing about a slowing of population growth through low levels of fertility and mortality. Development provides people with incentives and motivations to limit their family size, but family planning programs are needed to provide them with the technological means to avoid unwanted pregnancies.

(d) Explain the seven consequences of population growth.

1. Economic growth:

Rapid population growth lowers per capita income growth.

2. Poverty and Inequality:

The negative effects of rapid population growth fall most heavily on the poor because they are the ones that are made landless, suffer firsts from government cuts and bear the most environmental damage.

3. Education:

It is generally the large families with low incomes that are the most restricted to educate their children.

4. Health:

High fertility harms the health of mothers and children.

5. Food:

Feeding the world's population is made more difficult by rapid population growth.

6. Environment:

Rapid population growth contributes to environmental degradation.

7. International migration:

International migration is one of the major consequences of developing countries rapid population growth.

- (e) **Discuss the following statement: The consensus opinion about the effects of rapid population growth implies that rapid population growth should not concern developing countries at all.**

This is not true.

The consensus between developed and developing nations essentially consisted of three parts:

1. Population growth is not the primary cause of low levels of living, extreme inequalities or the limited freedom of choice.
2. The problem of population is not simply one of numbers but involves the quality of life and material well-being.
3. Rapid population growth does serve to intensify problems of underdevelopment and make prospects for development that much more remote.

As can be seen, rapid population growth must be of concern for all, including developing countries. Although the rapid population growth is not the main factor of poverty, it does serve to intensify the problems of underdevelopment such as poverty.

- (f) **Explain the link between resource use in the developed countries and the issue of world population growth. In your opinion, does this link have implications for the consumption patterns of the rich in developing countries such as South Africa as well?**

Population can only be a problem in relation to the availability and utilisation of scarce and material resources. The fact is that developed nations, with less than 25% of the world's population, consume almost 80% of the world's resources.

In terms of the depletion of the world's limited resources, the addition of one child in a developing nation has the same effect as many children in a developed nation.

Developed nations should try to lower their excessive high consumption standards rather than asking less developed nations to restrict their population growth. The poor nation's high fertility is due to their lack of resources which is the result of over consumption by the rich nations.

Yes, if the rich nations can lower their consumption, these valuable resources can be used to lower poverty in developing countries such as South Africa. By consuming less energy resources, the price of energy can fall and be made more readily available to all South Africans.

- (g) How should we judge the current slowdown in population growth in South Africa against the backdrop of the consensus opinion on the effects of rapid population growth in developing countries?**

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South Africa's population growth rate has decreased over the past few years. Looking at the consensus opinion on the effects of rapid population growth South Africa has done a great job fighting the fundamental causes of poverty, low levels of living expenses and extreme inequalities.