

# Example of changing patterns of consumption research paper

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



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Population density is the number of people per unit area. It is a statistic frequently used to compare places worldwide. It is simply the number of people per square mile or the number of people per square kilometre. Mathematically, this is arrived at by dividing the total area population by the area of land in square miles or square kilometres. It is a rough estimate of population distribution across an area. Population density can always be calculated once the land size and the total population of that area is known. From the world population figures, it was seen that Asia has the highest population density with 203 people per square mile. It is closely followed by Europe which has 134 per square mile and South America with 73 people per square mile. Africa has 65 per square mile; North America has 32 people per square mile while Australia is the least with 6. 4 people per square mile. Asia is the most populous continent in the world and by far the largest continent. Asia is home to about 4 billion people representing more than 60% of the total world population living on about one third of the world's arable land. Over the next five decades, it is projected that Asia's population will achieve growth of about 44%.

There are a host of factors that affect population density. They are either natural or human factors. The natural factors have to do with relief, the shape and height of land, the resources and the climatic conditions of an area. Areas with low lands tend to have a high population density. Example is the Ganges valley in India. Also, areas with high land mountains such as the Himalayas tend to have a lower population density. Resource rich areas tend to have a high population density. Such areas rich in coal, wood, oil and gas tend to be highly prosperous. Example of such areas is Western Europe. Likewise, areas with little or no natural resources are sparsely populated. Such areas have no significant attractions for the people. Example of such an area is the Sahel. Climate is a key factor in determining the number of people in an area. Areas where harsh climatic factors dominate have few people inhabiting such places. There could be extremes of heat or cold. Example of such a place is the Sahara desert. Areas blessed with temperate climates have dense populations. Such areas have enough rain and adequate heat to grow crops. Countries with a conducive political atmosphere and stable governments have a high population density. Example of such a country with a stable government is Singapore. Likewise, countries marred in wars, conflicts and bedevilled with unstable political climates tend to have a lesser population density. There is a tendency for people to migrate and seek greener pastures in stable and politically friendly countries. Examples of such countries experiencing violence are Syria and Afghanistan. Good social standings and excellent economy in certain areas increase their density. This increases the health status, which subsequently increases the life expectancy of such region. Resource depletion,

environmental degradation and an interplay between population growth in Asia is a cause for concern. Population growth, urbanization and economic growth cause encroachment on arable agricultural and wetland, this singular action threatens biodiversity.

It is expected that close to a hundred percent population rise in countries like Afghanistan, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Laos, Pakistan and Nepal is expected. Also, significantly high growth rates is expected in India, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines and Vietnam. Presently, most of these countries are experiencing monumental stress on water, land and their natural resources. Their capacity to cope with added environmental stress is surely in doubt. Within the next 18 years the population of the elderly in Asia is expected to double from about six to twelve percent. Also, over the same period of time, the number of Asians living in cities will increase from about 37% to 53%. These changes will undoubtedly place enormous pressures on the environment and the limited resources.

Changing consumption patterns, increasing demand for energy, unplanned urbanization, persistent poverty and environmental challenges are the implications of a rising population density in Asia.

Worldwide, Asia is the largest and fastest growing region industrially and economically. The industrial and economic developments of the region are accompanied by significant consumption patterns. For instance, the increase in the number of automobiles in the region is a pointer to increased affluence and prosperity. This is a useful indicator of increasing economic growth of the region. Presently, the sum total of the buses, trucks and buses in Asia increases by a hundred percent every seven years. This singular act results

in increased fuel consumption, increased air and environmental pollution, traffic jams and increased needs for construction of more roads and maintenance of existing ones. Road construction consumes land meant for agriculture. India and China are Asia's most populous countries. It has been projected that in these two countries alone, automobiles will witness a fivefold increase at the minimum over the next twenty years. Presently India has 10 million automobiles, in the next twenty years; she is expected to have about 57 million. Same goes for China which presently has 15 million automobiles; she is expected to have 75 million in the next 20 years. Besides cars, a drastic rise in food demand is expected. An ever rising demand for meat and an ever increasing population is responsible for this. A vast amount of grains is required to feed livestock to meet their meat demands, and with a large chunk of agricultural land sacrificed for construction of more roads, more money is expended on importing both cereals and meat. The region's demand for cereals is expected to increase by about 45% while the demand for meat is expected to double in about 8 years. Also, it is projected that only China will account for more than 25% of the world's demand for grain.

## **PERSISTENT POVERTY**

Economic growth and development causes' environmental stress, also is persisting poverty levels. It is estimated that a whopping 800 million Asians are poverty stricken. That is, they live below one dollar a day. Environmental degradation and deterioration affects the poor and the disadvantaged more. The rising population places enormous pressures on the meagre available

resources. Only the very skilled get better means of livelihood. In the rural areas, the poor residents and farmers live without basic amenities of life.

## **INCREASING DEMAND FOR ENERGY**

Increasing population, increasing prosperity and affluence has rapidly increased the rate of energy consumption. Over the next quarter of a century, Asia's energy demands will be more than that of any region in the world. The rate of growth will be noticed in Asia's developing countries. By year 2020, China will surpass the whole of Western Europe's energy consumption as opposed to 1999 when China's total energy consumption was a little bit less than half of Western Europe's energy consumption. The increased energy consumption is as a result of changing consumption patterns and economic development. China relies heavily on coal. From the environmental point, this is an issue of concern because the combustion of coal is not as efficient as other fossil fuels. This will make China become the second largest producer of green gases behind United States of America worldwide by the year 2020.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**

Climate change, global warming, water pollution, air pollution, loss of bio diversity, water scarcity, pressure on land and habitat destruction are a bunch of problems caused by economic development and population growth.

Compared to any other region in the world, Asia is bedevilled with acute pressure on farming land. In the past 30 years, the region's overall population rose by about 68 %, while the total land area under cultivation

increased from 355 million hectares to just 430 million hectares, a 21% increase. There is no hope for an expansion because the available suitable land in Asia is already being cultivated. The land shortage has resulted in intensification of land use in higher dimensions. Lakes, rivers and coastal areas are overfished, pastures are overgrazed. The fields are irrigated, pesticides and chemical fertilizers are applied to increase the field's yield. In the whole of Asia, about a third of the cropland is damaged through unsustainable practices. Consequently, a large expanse of productive farmland will decrease in years to come.

Cities in Asia are highly polluted. Dangerous air pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide pervade the atmospheres Beijing, Delhi, Jakarta and Karachi in levels higher than the recommended by world health organization. The most astonishing fact is that of the 15 largest cities in the world with the worst air pollution problems, 12 are Asian countries. Also, in Delhi, India, Lead pollution is being experienced. this is toxic for normal brain development of children. Also, indoor air pollution is experienced on a large scale in the poor Asian countries. Smoke which contain harmful gases and particles emanate from cooking with wood, heating crop residues and animal dung indoors. This act has serious health implications as diseases like blindness, tuberculosis; asthma, chronic obstructive airway disease and other inflammatory lung diseases ravage the people.

The diversity of the ecosystem that hosts the various plants and animals in Asia is intriguing. About 70% of the worlds biological resources abound in 17 countries and five of them are in Asia. They are China, Malaysia, Indonesia,

Philippines, and India. Indonesia alone houses more than 30, 000 species of plants. However, population pressure has resulted in the destruction of forests and wetlands. This resulted in an estimated loss of close to 90% of the regions initial wildlife habitat.

Also, fresh water use has increased rapidly in Asia compared to other regions in the world. Presently, the region has the least available fresh water for her population. The water pollution in Asia is caused by disposal of industrial waste, untreated sewage, nitrates from chemical fertilizers and animal waste and seawater intrusion. Consequently, one out of every three Asians do not have access to clean drinking water. The unsafe water results in millions of mortality and morbidity yearly, affecting infants and children more.

The emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases causes the phenomenon of global warming. It was projected that by year 2010, Asia will be the number one producer of carbon dioxide worldwide. This is a result of increasing energy demands and use of poor inefficient technologies. Carbon emissions are more in Japan and China.

## **URBANIZATION**

Urbanization in Asia is largely unplanned. It is simply the rural to urban migration of populace in Asia. According to the United Nations, the region is the fastest urbanizing region on the planet. It is estimated that the population of the urban dwellers in Asia will double in thirty years' time. By year 2030, about 2. 6 billion people, this represents more than half of Asia's population will live in Asian cities. Also, by year 2015, the population of the urban dwellers in Asia will be more than the sum total of all the urban



regions of the world. This rapid unplanned urbanization will drastically reduce the population of those actively farming as they are in search of white collar jobs in the cities. Also, there is bound to enormous pressure placed on the available infrastructure. Health, transport, water, telecommunications and housing problems will surely predominate.

Traditionally in Asia, the hierarchical structure is practised, with males and the older ones considered as the boss. The males are valued more than the females as it is believed that they will continue the family lineage. The females task is to be submissive to the males, perform house chores and stays obedient to her husband, while the man is to provide for the family and accord respect to the older males before him. It is also believed that not displaying any form of emotion is a sign of maturity. Their family name is held in utmost esteem as they feel it is more precious than valuables, hence honour and loyalty to the family is emphasized.

In conclusion, the high population density in Asia could be a blessing and as well a curse to the region. A blessing in that the region is abundantly blessed with vast human resources and a curse if the problems associated with overpopulation are not addressed on time with adequate planning and quality policies.

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