

Population, distribution, density essay sample



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Japan is a great example of an MEDC with a particular population pattern and distribution. The country, located on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean lies to the east of Asia and is made up of about 3, 000 smaller islands. There are several large main islands including, from top to bottom, Hokkaido, Honshu (the biggest), Shikoku and Kyushu. Japan is also interestingly rated 10th in the world by population count and has an area of about 377, 835 km². The aim of this case study is to examine, section by section, the different factors that affect Brazilian population growth and distribution by looking at areas such as geographical positioning, politics, history, and generate some sort of conclusion

Distribution:

Japan's population is mostly concentrated alongside the south and west coast (figure 1). Japan's population density is ranked 18th in the world, and has assisted in advertising very expensive land prices. From the years 1980 to 1987, prices of land in the six largest cities nearly doubled. This prevents many poorer families from ever purchasing or renting housing in the central cities. Because of this, daily transportation for many workers became a real lengthy hassle. For example some daily commuters had to travel up to four hours total to reach the Tokyo central area

Parks in small cities over Japan are rarer than in most European and American places, despite Japan's excess forested areas. Japan is often labeled as an "urban society" where only a small 5% of the labor force comes from farming. Roughly 80 million urban Japanese are situated heavily

on the pacific shore of Honshu and also North Kyushu. These areas include famous cities like Tokyo, Kobe, Yokohama, Osaka and Kyoto.

Population Growth

Japans current population, believed to be about 127, 333, 000 has undergone a unique and unbelievable growth rate during the last century due to industrial, scientific and sociological advances. Japan is about 3 times more densely populated than Europe as a whole, and 12 times more populated than the US. The population has tripled since 1872, when it was around 34. 8 million, however in the 1950s the birth rate cut short and by the 90's the rate of natural increase was under 1%. Recently however, the population growth is notably decreasing because of dropping birth rates and practically no immigration. Japan's top-of-the-line hygiene and health norms give it a life expectancy far greater than almost any other nation in the world.

Geography:

Considered as an island nation, Japan extends along the pacific coast of Asia, north-northeast of China (Figure 3). Japans total area is slightly smaller than the single American state of Montana. There are four distinctive seasons in Japan; however the climate varies by winds that come from the ocean and in the summer. A great part of Japan is in fact covered in mountains, roughly 73%. Japan is also known for its long coastline that is very densely populated especially in the South. This is an exceptionally convoluted coastline in comparison to the land area. Settlements have emerged all along the coastline and it has historically always been a strong trading route and post.

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With regards to climate, the Japanese climate is generally rainy and has high humidity. Also Japan is situated on a conjunction of several tectonic plates, making it strange how so many Japanese live with an earthquake risk.

Economics/Infrastructure:

Japan is often ridiculed because of how few Japanese farmers and farms there are. They tend to rely heavily on imports and other countries. However Japan is nonetheless a rich and powerful nation. Many of the millions of citizens have found jobs in the thriving technology sector. Also with the development of more so called " Science-Cities", Japan is continuously finding jobs for the workers.

Population Problem:

Japan's main problem with regards to population is the fact that it is facing an increasingly aging population like many other industrialized countries. 16 years ago, around 11.6 percent of the Japanese people were sixty-five or above, and now demographers hypothesize 25% in that age category by 2030. If that does happen, then Japan would become the world's " oldest" society and the quickest to get to that stage.

The rapidly aging population can be seen as an effect of the post war baby boom which was followed by a sharp decrease in births as Japan developed in the 20th century. Not only that, but Japan also has the crown for the highest life expectancy in the world, a phenomenal 78 years for men and 85 for women (2002). It is projected that around 20% of the population could be over 65 years of age in the year 2007. An aging population is a problem

because it creates many social issues, such as a decline in workforces and a rise in the cost of pension programs and retirement funds.

Low fertility rates played just as big of a role in creating the problem. In 1993, the rate was at 10.3 per 1000, and the average amount of kids born to a female over her lifetime was less than two since the 70's. Family planning became nearly universal, with condoms and legal abortions the main form of birth prevention. Because of this, Japan could be facing a problem such as shrinking population.

Government Interference:

Japan always has had a below than average tolerance for immigration, perhaps because of its strong cultural presence. Nonetheless, by the 1980's, there were nearly one million foreigners residing in Japan (most from Korea and China). Nowadays, legal immigration has become restricted to skilled workers and so most of the immigrants are skilled professional people employed by large corporations. However it must also be said that around 200,000 illegal foreigners can be found in Japan, most of whom are Chinese.

There remains a slight confusion and concern over the future of immigration policies. Unskilled labor is in need of a boost in Japan, explaining why so many Japanese work abroad. In conclusion, Japan's labor shortage, mixed with the ageing population, could stir up a serious problem for taxpayers, authorities and the government. Also, immigration is not publicly popular as recent increased crime rates are often attributed to foreigners living in Japan.

Future Growth?:

Japan could be facing a very serious problem if it does not do anything further about its aging population. The price for having too many elderly unemployed pensioners is a hefty one. One projection shows just how many 65 and older citizens there might be in the year 2050 (figure 6).

Major cities, like Tokyo, will always remain attractive to the young adult seeking a successful life. However unless the population problem is solved, that dream will never become reality for many.