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Essay on India's Rising Population: Pros and Cons (A Critical View)

As of 2026, India is the world's most populous nation, with an estimated 1.47 billion people, accounting for nearly 17.8% of the global population. This demographic reality places India at a decisive crossroads: population strength can either power economic transformation or deepen structural stress if mismanaged.

The Demographic Dividend: The Pros

India's foremost advantage lies in its young workforce. With a median age of 29.2 years and nearly 65% of the population in the working-age group (15–59 years), India enjoys a demographic profile unmatched by ageing economies such as China, Japan, and Europe.

This labour surplus acts as an economic engine, supporting sectors like IT services, manufacturing, startups, and the expanding gig economy, expected to employ over 2.35 crore workers by 2030. Additionally, a large population creates a vast domestic market, attracting sustained FDI inflows and supporting a 6–7% GDP growth

rate, among the highest in the G20. If productively employed, this population can enhance India's global competitiveness and strategic influence.

The Structural Burden: The Cons

However, population size also imposes serious challenges. Rapid urbanisation strains housing, transport, water, education, healthcare, and sanitation, while environmental stress intensifies due to unsustainable land use, groundwater depletion, deforestation, rising pollution, and increasing vulnerability to climate change-induced heatwaves, floods, and water scarcity. Despite being a leading food producer, India remains in the “serious” category of the Global Hunger Index (2025), ranking 102 out of 123 countries, with child stunting and wasting still widespread.

Employment remains the most critical risk. While overall unemployment stood at 4.8% in late 2025, youth unemployment and educated joblessness persist, particularly in states like Kerala. Regional disparities in fertility and development further complicate governance.

A Critical View

India's Total Fertility Rate of 1.9 signals that population growth will stabilize naturally by mid-century. Hence, the policy focus must shift decisively from population control to population quality. Converting human numbers into human capital through education reform, healthcare access, women's workforce participation, and skill development is essential.

Ultimately, India's population is neither a curse nor a guarantee of success—it is a test of governance capacity. The outcome will depend on how effectively the state transforms demographic potential into inclusive and sustainable growth.