Fundamentals of Human Geography

Chapter-3 Population Composition

Key Notes:

- People can be distinguished by their age,sex and their place of residence
- Some of the other distinguishing attributes of the population are occupation, education and life expectancy

SEX COMPOSITION

- The number of women and men in a country is an important demographic characteristic
- The ratio between the number of women and men in the population is called the Sex Ratio
- In some countries it is calculated by using the formula:
  Male population/Female population ×1000
- In India, sex ratio is calculated by using the formula :
  Female populatio/Male population ×1000
- The sex ratio is an important information about the status of women in a country
- Reason behind low sex ratio in some areas are-
  - the practice of female foeticide
  - female infanticide and
  - domestic violence against women are prevalent
  - men might have migrated to other areas for employment
- The world population reflects a sex ratio of 102 males per 100 females
- The highest sex ratio in the world has been recorded in Latvia i.e. 85 males per 100 females
- In Qatar there are 311 males per 100 females
- According to United Nations the sex ratio is favourable for females in 139 countries of the world and unfavorable for them in the remaining 72 countries

- Asia has a low sex ratio(countries like China, India, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan)
- Europe shows high sex ratio. Main reasons are-
    - better status of women
    - an excessively male-dominated out-migration to different parts of the world in the past

Age Structure

- Age structure represents the number of people of different age groups
- This is an important indicator of population composition
- A large size of population in the age group of 15-59 indicates a large working population
- A greater proportion of population above 60 years represents an ageing population which requires more expenditure on health care facilities

Age sex pyramid

- The age-sex structure of a population refers to the number of females and males in different age groups
- A population pyramid is used to show the age-sex structure of the population
- The shape of the population pyramid reflects the characteristics of the population
- The left side shows the percentage of males while the right side shows the percentage of women in each age group

There are different **types of population pyramids**-

1. **Expanding population-** This population pyramid is wide at the younger ages, characteristics of countries with high birth rate and low life expectancy. For example, the age-sex pyramid of Nigeria is a triangular shaped pyramid with a wide base and is typical of less developed countries.These have larger populations in lower age groups due to high birth rates.
2. **Constraint population-** This population pyramid is narrowed at the bottom. The population is older on average, as the country has long life expectancy, a low death rate as well as low birth rate
3. **Declining population-** Countries with declining population have a high number of older

people. For example, Japan pyramid has a narrow base and a tapered top showing low birth and death rates.

Rural Urban Composition

- The division of population into rural and urban is based on the residence
- This division is necessary because rural and urban life styles differ from each other in terms of their livelihood and social conditions
- The age-sex-occupational structure, density of population and level of development vary between rural and urban areas
- Rural areas are those where people are engaged in primary activities and urban areas are those when majority of the working population is engaged in non-primary activities
- In Western countries, males outnumber females in rural areas and females outnumber the males in urban areas
- The excess of females in urban areas of U.S.A., Canada and Europe is the result of influx of females from rural areas to avail of the vast job opportunities.
- Farming in these developed countries is also highly mechanised and remains largely a male occupation
- In Asian urban areas remains male dominated due to the predominance of male migration
- Countries like India, female participation in farming activity in rural area is fairly high. Shortage of housing, high cost of living, paucity of job opportunities and lack of security in cities, discourage women to migrate from rural to urban areas

Literacy

- Proportion of literate population of a country in an indicator of its socio-economic development as it reveals the standard of living, social status of females, availability of educational facilities and policies of government
- In India literacy rate denotes the percentage of population above 7 years of age, who is able to read, write and have the ability to do arithmetic calculations with understanding

Occupational Structure

- The distribution of the population according to different types of occupation is known as Occupational structure
- Occupation is classified into 4 sectors-Agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining are classified as primary sector ; manufacturing as secondary sector ; transport, communication and other services as tertiary sector and the jobs related to research and developing ideas as quaternary sector
- The working population (i.e. women and men of the age group – 15 to 59) take part in various occupations ranging from agriculture, forestry,fishing, manufacturing construction, commercial transport, services, communication
- The proportion of working population engaged in these four sectors s is a good indicator of the levels of economic development of a nation
- A developed economy with industries and infrastructure can accommodate more workers in the secondary tertiary and quaternary sector
- Whereas if the economy is still in the primitive stages, then the proportion of people engaged in primary activities would be high as it involves extraction of natural resources