This section includes abstracts of data on population and vital statistics of India based on the decadal census population. Demographic characteristics provide an overview of its population size, composition and the components of changes such as natality, mortality and social mobility. In addition to population statistics, vital statistics include indicators such as birth rate, death rate, natural growth rate, fertility rate etc.

India’s population is distributed across 35 states and union territories of varying population size, which as on 1st March 2001 stood at 10287.37 lakh (5322.23 lakh males and 4965.14 lakh females). Urban population was 27.8% of the total population as per 2001 Census. The projected population of India as on 1.3.2010 is 11767.49 lakh (6091.15 lakh males and 5676.34 lakh females) and the rural and urban population projections were 8490.33 lakh and 3277.10 lakh respectively.

Growth in Indian Population:

The population of India rose from 3610.88 lakh in 1951 to 10287.37 lakh in 2001, nearly tripling in size in half a century. The exponential growth rate of the population, which is an indicator of annual average rate of change of population, peaked at 2.2% during the decades 1961-71 and 1971-81. The growth rate declined marginally to 2.1% in 1981-91 and to 2.0% in 1991-2001. Both male and female populations had grown annually at an average exponential growth rate of 2.1% over the period 1951-2001. Population growth in India has been rapid and has important implications for social and economic development and quality of life. A substantial growth in the population of the country is almost inevitable.
Sex-Ratio of Indian Population:

The sex ratio in India had been unfavourable to the females. The female to male sex ratio had declined substantially since the beginning of the century, resulting in a substantial female deficit in the population. The sex ratio declined from 972 in 1901 to 930 in 1971, but it had remained fairly the same since then. The country had a low sex ratio of 933 females per thousand males in 2001, which had shown slight improvement over the last decade. An important feature of the population sex ratio in India is its regional variations that have persisted over time.

Urbanisation of Indian Population:

The process of urbanisation had rather been slow in India up to 1941, thereafter, urbanisation accelerated. The urban population in India was 624.44 lakh at the first Census after Independence, which increased to 2861.20 lakh in 2001. The proportion of urban population had increased from 17.3% in 1951 to 27.8% in 2001. This indicates a relatively low pace of urbanisation in the country. The exponential growth rate of urban population over the period 1951-2001 peaked at 3.8% in 1971-81. Since then, the urban growth rate had been decelerating to 3.1% in 1981-91 and to 2.7% in 1991-2001. Despite the slow down in the urban population growth rate, the absolute increase in urban population has kept on rising. Shifting of rural population towards urban areas took place in each decade since 1951 which had resulted in the growth of urban population.

The level of urbanisation varies widely across states and union territories. In union territories except Dadra & Nagar Haveli, the level of urbanisation is higher than national level. The states and union territories having about more than or equal to 50% of its population living in the urban areas in 2001 were Delhi (93.2%), Chandigarh (89.8%), Puducherry (66.6%) and Goa (49.8%). The states and union territories having more than or equal to 25% to less than 50% of its population living in urban areas were Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep. The states and union territories having more than or equal to 15% to less than 25% of its population living in urban areas were Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh. The remaining states are less urbanized, having less than 15% urban population.

Literacy Rate of Indian Population:

Literacy had increased substantially over time, but the education levels vary widely throughout India. The literacy rate in the country had shown an increase of 13.86% during the decade 1991-2001. As per 2001 Census, 64.8% of the population was literate. The male literacy rate was
higher (75.3%) in comparison to female literacy rate which was 53.7%. The level of literacy as per 2001 Census among the States and union territories of India is depicted below:

Life Expectancy in India:

Life Expectancy is one of the most preferred indicators in demographic and health analysis. It has been defined as the average number of years that a new born could expect to live, if he/she were to pass through life exposed to the age and sex-specific death rates prevailing at the time of his/her birth, for a specific year. Besides, Life Expectancy at birth is used in construction of a dimensional index of health in Human Development Index (HDI) and Gender Development Index (GDI). The life expectancy at birth had been increasing for both males and females from 1991-2005. The life expectancy of male population had increased from 59.7 years from the period 1991-1995 to 62.6 years during the period 2002-06, whereas, the life expectancy of female population had increased from 60.9 years from the period 1991-1995 to 64.2 years during the period 2002-06. This is an indication that there had been an improvement in the mortality situation for both males and females.

Some Concepts and Definitions:

Still Birth:

A stillborn baby is legally defined as a baby born after the 24th week of pregnancy who did not show any signs of life at any time after being born. If there were no signs of life before 24 weeks, it is known as miscarriage.

Live Birth:

A live birth occurs when a foetus, whatever its gestational age, exits the maternal body and subsequently shows any sign of life, such as voluntary movement, heartbeat, or pulsation of the
umbilical cord, for however brief a time and regardless of whether the umbilical cord or placenta are intact.

Crude Birth Rate:
The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) is defined as the number of live births in a year per thousand of the mid-year population. The birth rate declined from 29.5 in 1991 to 22.5 in 2009. The birth rate of rural population had declined from 30.9 in 1991 to 24.1 in 2009, whereas, the birth rate of urban population had declined from 24.3 in 1991 to 18.3 in 2009.

Crude Death Rate:
The crude death rate (CDR) is measured as the ratio of the number of deaths in a year to one thousand of the midyear population. CDR in the country declined marginally during the period 1991-2007, from 9.8 in 1991 to 7.3 in 2009. The death rate of rural population had declined from 10.6 in 1991 to 8.0 in 2007, whereas, the death rate of urban population had declined from 7.1 in 1991 to 5.8 per thousand population in 2009.

Natural Growth Rate:
The Natural growth rate in population is measured by the difference of birth rate to death rate. It indicates the natural growth of population of a country. The Natural growth rates declined during the period 1991-2007 from 19.7 in 1991 to 15.2 per thousand population in 2009. The Natural growth rate of rural population had declined from 20.3 in 1991 to 16.3 per thousand population in 2009, whereas, for urban population, it had declined from 17.2 in 1991 to 12.5 per thousand population in 2009. The population, however, continued to grow as the decline in birth rate is not as rapid as the decline in the death rate.
Infant Mortality Rate:

The Infant mortality rate (IMR) is defined as the number of infant deaths in a year per 1,000 live births during the same year. The infant mortality rate in the country has shown a declining trend during the period 1993-2009. IMR had declined from 74 per thousand population in 1993 to 50 per thousand population in 2009. The IMR of rural population had declined from 82 per thousand population in 1993 to 55 per thousand population in 2009, whereas, the IMR of urban population had declined from 45 per thousand population in 1993 to 34 per thousand population in 2009. The IMR had steadily been declining though it had been higher in rural areas.

Neo-natal Mortality Rate:

The neo-natal mortality rate is measured as the ratio of number of deaths of infant of age less than 29 days to one thousand live births in that year. The Neo-natal mortality rate in the country has also shown a declining trend during the period 1993-2007, from 47.1 in 1993 to 35 per thousand population in 2008. The Neo-natal mortality rate of rural population had declined from 52.3 in 1993 to 39 per thousand population in 2008, whereas, for urban population, it had declined from 28.4 per thousand population in 1993 to 21 per thousand population in 2008.

Post-natal Mortality Rate:

The post-natal mortality rate is defined as the number of deaths of children between 29 days and one year of age in a given year per 1000 total live births in the same year. The Post-natal mortality rate of India declined from 26 in 1994 to 18 per thousand population in 2008. The Post-natal mortality rate of rural population had declined from 27.5 per thousand population in 1994 to 19 per thousand population in 2008, whereas, for urban population, it had declined from 19.6 per thousand population in 1994 to 15 per thousand population in 2008.

Peri-natal Mortality Rate:

The peri-natal mortality rate is measured by the ratio of number of still births and infant deaths of age less than 7 days per thousand of live births and still births in a particular year. The Peri-natal mortality rate of India has declined from 44.2 per thousand population in 1993 to 35 per thousand population in 2008. The Peri-natal mortality rate of rural population had declined from 47.9 per thousand population in 1993 to 39 per thousand population in 2008, whereas, for urban population, it had declined from 31 per thousand population in 1993 to 22 per thousand population in 2008. It has been observed that Peri-natal mortality rate had been highest for rural mothers and for mothers with no education.

Still birth Rate:

The still birth rate is measured by the ratio of still births to one thousand still births and live births in a particular year. The Still birth rate has declined from 10.5 per thousand population in 1993 to 8 per thousand population in 2008. The Still birth rate of rural population had declined from 10.8 per thousand population in 1993 to 9 per thousand population in 2008, whereas, for urban population, it had declined from 9.3 per thousand population in 1993 to 7 per thousand population in 2008.
Total Fertility Rate:

Total Fertility Rate (TFR) signifies the total number of children an average woman will produce in her child bearing years. TFR is a useful indicator for analyzing the prospects for population stabilization. Fertility continued to decline in India and TFR for the year 2008 has been estimated as 2.6 per women. TFR for rural areas had been estimated as 2.9 per women, whereas, TFR for urban areas has been estimated as 2.0 per women. In 2000, the country established a new National Population Policy to stem the growth of the country’s population. One of the primary goals of the policy was to reduce the total fertility rate to 2.1 by 2010. Fertility in India continues to be above the replacement level. In 2008, a woman in India produced, on average, 2.6 births during her entire reproductive life, which is well above the replacement level of 2.1 births per women.

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