

Q Overpopulation is a root cause of all the environmental issues. If you can control the population, you can control almost anything. Discuss the statement with reference to Pakistan. [20].

1) Introduction:

The statement is a well established fact supported by evidence from various parts of the world. The situation is no different when it comes to Pakistan. Among other key areas such as water-scarcity, inflated energy demands, need for enhanced employment prospects, Overpopulation has an dire impact on the environment which induces severe environmental issues.

2) Pakistan's Population Growth:

Pakistan is witnessing a tremendous surge in its population. The World Bank states that the country's population has risen from 80 million in 1980's to a mammoth 230 million in 2021. This massive surge, primarily in the last four decades, indicates that the country was not prepared for such an unprecedented



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rise, and this could, in turn, take a serious toll on the environment.

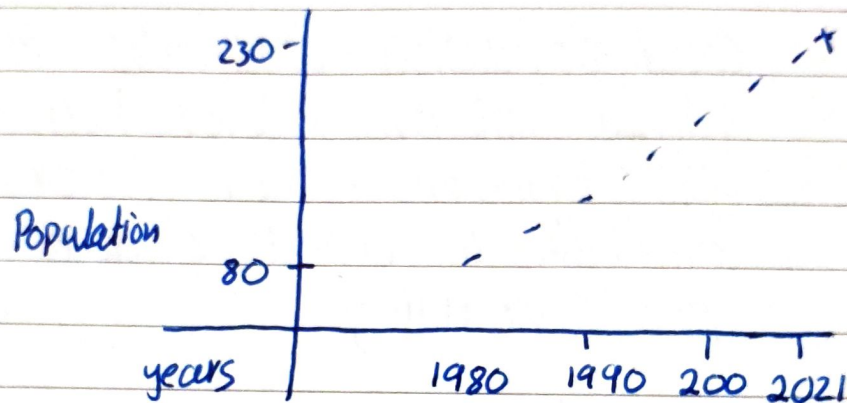


Fig 1: Pakistan's Population rise according to World Bank.

### 3) Environmental Issues caused by overpopulation

#### 3.1) Resource Depletion:

A larger population requires more resources such as water, food, wood, and raw materials. Overpopulation can lead to the consumption and depletion of these resources. The over-consumption of these resources can lead to deforestation, extinction of several animal species that are consumed by the locals to fulfill their requirements, hence resulting in disrupting the balance of natural

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Food chain.

### 3.2) Climate Change:

Over population contributes to higher vehicle emissions, deforestation, green house gas emissions. Such factors collectively contribute to climate change and global warming.

#### Example:

In recent years, Pakistan has been witnessing intense summers with record breaking temperatures. The country witnessed the hottest march in the last 69 years in 2022.

### 3.3) Air and Water Pollution:

Higher population densities often result in increased industrial activity, transportation and waste generation. This leads to higher level of pollution, affecting the quality of these resources.



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Example:

The city of Lahore, due to high population and poor city planning, suffers from severe smog and therefore is considered one of the most polluted cities in the world. It is rated 164 by Air Quality Index (AQI).

3.4) Habitat Loss and Biodiversity Loss:

As the population grows, more land is needed for housing, agriculture and infrastructure. This often leads to deforestation, habitat loss and fragmentation, leaving a dire impact on biodiversity and ecosystem.

Example:

The city of Lahore was initially surrounded by many habitats along its peripheries, however, as the city expanded these habitats were encroached and eventually destroyed.

3.5) Waste Generation:

Larger population generates more waste including plastics and other non-bio

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non-biodegradable materials. Inadequate waste management infrastructure can lead to environmental pollution.

Example:

Karachi, one of the most heavily populated cities in Pakistan suffers from excessive waste generation. According to International Trade Administration, Karachi produces 16,500 tons of municipal waste daily.

#### 4) Controlling Population Growth to Reduce Environmental Issues

##### 4.1) Resource Conservation:

A smaller population consumes fewer resources, reducing the pressure on water, energy, food and raw materials. This allows resources to be used sustainably and ensures their availability for future use.

##### 4.2) Biodiversity and Habitat Preservation:

A smaller population exerts less



pressure on ecosystems, reducing deforestation and ~~the~~ habitat loss. This helps protect biodiversity and allows ecosystems to recover.

### 3.3) Reduced Pollution:

With fewer people contributing to pollution through industrial activities and transportation, the level of air and water pollution can be decreased, ~~with~~ which in turn can improve the environmental quality.

### 3.4) Climate Mitigation:

A smaller population emits fewer greenhouse gases, contributing to efforts to mitigate climate change. This includes reducing energy consumption and promoting sustainable practices.

### 3.5) Waste Management:

A smaller population generates less waste. This makes it easier to manage the waste and perform recycling processes without the requirement of extensive



resources'

### 3.6) Land Preservation:

Controlling population growth can help preserve available land. Less people would mean less infrastructure required, which means less land is needed. This preserves many available lands, which would otherwise be used to build infrastructure.

### 3.7) Enhanced Quality of Life:

With fewer people, there's less competition for resources, leading to improved living conditions, better access to services, and reduced pressure on urban infrastructure.

### 3.8) Urbanisation Pressure:

A controlled population growth can help manage urbanisation and prevent and prevent urban sprawl reducing the conversion of natural habitats into urban places.

4) Conclusion :

Pakistan has witnessed an unprecedented population growth in the last 4 decades. This surge in population has begotten dire impacts on the country's environment. These environment issues have ramifications in our daily lives, and hence it is indispensable to curb the population growth in a bid to attenuate the crisis.