

Continent of Africa's Rapid Population Growth and Its Drawbacks የአፍሪካ አህጉር ፈጣን የህዝብ እድገት መከራ እና ጉዳዮቹ

Allow me to pose a contentious topic that has the potential to spark debate right from the bat. Is population a burden or a blessing? In other words, is population increase a burden in comparison to its benefits? There are many schools of thought, but they may predominantly be divided into two categories. Some scholars contend that population expansion may be seen as one of the most important elements for economic growth. Another school of thought holds that a growing population is a burden unless it is supported by adequate infrastructure, planning, and leadership.

Before going on to examine the merits of the various arguments, let me toss my opinion into the ring. Although I don't fit neatly into either category, I would want to provide an alternative argument. Putting aside the spiritual debate, human beings are remarkable and unique in many ways: they have extraordinarily complex and aware brains, articulate speech and language, symbolic, creative minds, and fantastic imaginations. Therefore, in my matrix, human beings should not be commodified; instead, prioritising their well-being should take precedence.

Understanding the scope of the discussion is crucial. We are all aware that no matter how advanced civilization becomes, it will never be able to meet man's most basic needs: providing for his or her shelter, food, and health. Unless intelligence comes with its own set of obligations for the individual, or unless the intelligence quotient of a person does not automatically and quickly lead to accomplishment or the cure for an affliction.

I make this claim not to broach the more significant issue of population growth but to focus on the rise of the African population and its implications for economic development and human welfare. But the population issue is more complex than just a numbers game. Rapid population increase is a development and human welfare concern because of its potential adverse effects on the lives of people all around the globe, especially in Africa.

Concerns over Africa's fast population increase relate to the continent's failure to provide enough economic opportunities; irregular migration; climate change; high unemployment rates among young people; and an acute lack of infrastructure. On the other side, the link between population growth and economic development and the debate on rapid population expansion might worsen the difficulty of assuring the sustainability and inclusiveness of future development.

The increasing number of people who need to be employed in Africa is a significant obstacle. Because Africans themselves persistently perpetuate socioeconomic barriers that slow Africa's progress. Due to slow economic growth and an unbalanced population, African nations will continue to be unable to provide sufficient job opportunities to their large pool of young people.

They are considering the projected expansion in population throughout the continent, which includes the roughly 350 million people who live in Nigeria and Ethiopia alone. In most African

nations, but particularly those with a large population, finding enough good jobs will take a lot of work. With everything else being equal, an expanding labour force means a growing issue with unemployment. In light of projected massive growth in the size of the African labour force over the next several decades, how do you think African nations will be able to meet demand? If jobs are numerous, then unemployment shouldn't rise too much, but what if it does?

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs reports that the world's poorest nations also have some of the world's fastest-growing populations. Between 2020 and 2050, the world's poorest nations, mostly in non-Maghreb Africa, are expected to have almost quadruple populations. In order to eradicate poverty, end hunger and malnutrition, and provide universal access to health care, education, and other essential services, low, and lower-middle-income countries will need to increase public expenditures on a per capita basis; however, rapid population growth makes it more difficult for them to do so.

With Population Expansion, Can African Nations Raise Living Standards?

According to available evidence, most developing nations, particularly impoverished, agriculturally reliant, and suffering constraints on land and natural resources have their per capita income growth slowed by high population increase. What effects does development have on population increase? The critical issue thus is whether or not the existing demographic situation in many African nations aids or hinders their prospects of achieving development objectives for both the current and future generations.

There has never been a consensus among economists on the degree to which growing populations influence economic growth. Allow me to make sense of a comparative comparison between the two countries in Africa with the largest populations, which are Nigeria and Ethiopia. The Nigerian population is growing at a startling rate, which necessitates an investigation into how this phenomenon influences the nation's economic growth.

Nigeria has more people than any other African country, has the "largest economy in Africa", and is among the fastest-growing nations in the world. Despite these positive indicators, the National Bureau of Statistics reports that more than 130 million Nigerians live in poverty. Among the most striking findings from the Multidimensional Poverty Index study conducted in 2022 was that 63% of the 133 million people now residing in Nigeria are multidimensionally poor.

As an example, Victor Nwaoba Itumo has presented a compelling case that, as of 2016, there were around 17 million people in Nigeria without adequate housing. That number may only rise as the continent's population does. Reducing the stifling effects of socioeconomic impediments in African communities might boost the economies of many African countries, which in turn could help fund the development of a wide variety of infrastructure projects.

With a population of over 123 million, Ethiopia is the continent's second most populated country. The population is not projected to bring economic growth and development in particular due to the high rates of unemployment, child mortality, and poverty that are pervasive there. Therefore, the responsible authority is urged to reconsider anti-natal measures that discourage the fertility rate and instead support them with economic development policies.

Even after experiencing the world's fastest economic growth, Ethiopia is still one of the poorest countries in the world. While it has the world's second-highest population, Ethiopia is the world's most impoverished nation. In Ethiopia, 53.3% of those living in multidimensional poverty have an intensity of deprivations score. Given these parameters, do you think the country's expanding population will help or hurt her economic development? There has been an age-old argument on the relationship between population growth and economic success, but this topic still requires further research.

China's rapid economic growth has debunked the myth that more people equals slower growth, and the country now boasts the world's largest population. Despite China's huge population and predicted economic expansion, Nigeria and Ethiopia should not be comfortable with it. China's success is supported by a number of factors, including its psychological makeup, working ethics, leadership, governance, political and socioeconomic culture. Because it is impossible to achieve complete economic development based on the quantity of available natural resources and the size of the population alone, it is necessary to take a more holistic approach.

If Ethiopia and Nigeria are able to undergo a sociocultural revolution on par with industrialised countries like China, their rapidly growing populations would undoubtedly have a favourable impact on their economies. Inadequate resources, leadership, and regulation have allowed the population crisis to continue for too long. The good news is that innovation and industrialisation may have made energy, food, water, and medical care more accessible and stable.

Is Africa's Promised Demographic Dividend Just a Myth or A Reality?

The number of people living in Africa has increased at a lightning pace during the course of the last century. But the level of poverty stayed the same or even got worse. So, I will leave it up to researchers to figure out where Africa's "demographic dividend" is. With this note, the global North, which is home to about a quarter of the world's people, has four-fifths of the world's earned income. With three-quarters of the world's population, the South has just one-fifth of its wealth. Economically viable nations join the industrialised North, and any developing nation is considered part of the impoverished South.

It might also be related to the centuries-long slave trade and colonialism that depleted African countries of much-needed labour. At a time when indigenous technical talent is growing and the

direction of social order is shifting, population problems shouldn't be a significant concern. The difficulty arises when one analyses the larger picture and the fact that Africa is endowed with an abundance of natural resources and a decently developed human capital. Who is responsible for the fact that many African nations and regions remain underdeveloped?

The population size and expected growth rate of Africa are unique. This peculiarity is at the very centre of the family, the primary force behind population expansion on the African continent. Due to their limited financial resources, low-income parents cannot adequately provide for their children's futures, ensuring that future generations will also be unable to break the cycle of poverty.

Should Africa follow China's two-child policy, the two-child policy of India, Iran, and Hong Kong, or some other approach? Otherwise, Africa needs to allow the population increase to be regulated organically. Africa has reached a crucial point, as it is now apparent that the continent faces excellent peril if its people do not see substantial economic benefits from its rapid population growth.

There is no shadow of a doubt that the demographic imbalance, which is a huge worry in Africa, is both real and complex that has to be addressed. Greater demands on African governments in productive activities translate into a worsening of unemployment, underemployment, chronic poverty, urban slums, crime, and political upheaval as a result of the continent's rising population, ageing population, and rising dependence load.

In closing, demographic forecasting is essential for creating a roadmap to a more sustainable future. Proactive and forward-looking planning informed by an awareness of the expected nature and implications of large-scale population shifts is essential for successfully implementing demographic forecasting. In order to establish environmentally responsible consumption and production patterns and lessen the adverse effects of human activities. In the near and medium term, realistic future trajectories of global population lay within a relatively small range.

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