POPULATION

Population refers to the total number of people living in a particular area at a particular time.

As at 1982, the world population was put at 4.5 billion people. With the world average growth rate of the population at 1.8%, it was estimated that by the year 2000, the population of the world would have been 6.25 billion people.

In terms of continents, Asia is the most populous continent followed by Europe, then Africa, North America, South America, and lastly Australia.

In terms of countries, China is the most populous country (1.3 billion), followed by India (1 billion), United States, Indonesia, etc. In Africa, Nigeria is the most populous country with around 100 million people. These are population estimate for these countries.

Population Concepts

1. **Over population:** Over population is defined as a situation wherein the population is considered too large for the available resources. It leads to a larger labour force, large market, better defence, togetherness, increase in crime, insufficient food, unemployment/underemployment, inadequate housing, pressure on natural and man-made resources, etc.

2. **Under population:** This is the type of population that is less than the available resources. It then means that, the size of population is so small that when combined with the available resources of a country and given the level of existing technology it will secure minimum returns per head. It leads to abundant resources, low crime rate, adequate planning, regular flow of traffic, high per capita income, high standard of living, inadequate labour force, low output, low defence, low revenue, low level of development, under-utilisation of infrastructure, etc.
3. **Optimum Population:** Optimum population is the number of people that can be supported by the available resources in an area so to achieve the highest possible standard of living.
4. **Population Density:** Population density is defined as the number of persons per unit area of land or per square kilometre of land. Population density of a country can be expressed mathematically as

$$population\ density = \frac{total\ population}{land\ area}$$

5. **Birth rate:** The birth rate (or natality) of a country refers to the rate at which children are being given birth to in that country. Generally, high birth rate may lead to population increase or over population while low birth rate can lead to low population. Birth rate is increased through the encouragement of early marriages, encouragement of polygamy, absence of family planning, or birth control, etc.

6. **Death rate:** The death or mortality rate of a country refers to the rate at which people (both adult and children) die in a country. Generally, high death rates lead to population decrease or low population while low death rate leads to increase in population.