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DENSITY OF POPULATION

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Density of population

“Experience shows that a very populous city can rarely, if ever, be well governed. To the size of states there is a limit, as there is to other things (plants, animals, implements), for none of these retain their natural power when they are too large or too small.”

Aristotle (322 B.C.)

The population density of India has gone up to 382 persons per square kilometre in 2011 from 325 persons per square kilometre in 2001.

‘Density of Population’ is defined as the number of persons per square kilometre. It is an important index of population which shows concentration of population in a particular area. As per the provisional population totals of Census 2011, the population density of India has gone up to 382 persons per square kilometre from 325 persons per square kilometer in 2001¹. On an average, 57 more people inhabit every square kilometre in the country as compared to a decade ago.

As is noted in Chapter 3, India accounts for a meagre 2.4 percent of the world surface area of 135.79 million square kms. On the other hand, it supports and sustains 17.5 per cent of the world population. In contrast, the USA accounts for 7.2 per cent of the surface area with only 4.5 per cent of the world population. As such, among the ten most populous countries of the world, only Bangladesh has a higher population density compared to India.

The population density of India from 1901 to 2011 is shown in Statement 31. At the beginning of the twentieth century i.e. in 1901 the density of India was as low as 77 persons per sq. km. This steadily increased in each decade to reach 382 persons per sq. km. in 2011. This constitutes a 17.5 per cent increase over 2001.

Note

- For working out density of India, the entire area and population of those portions of Jammu & Kashmir which are under illegal occupation of Pakistan and China have not been taken into account.

Statement 31

Density of population, India: 1901-2011

Census Year	Density (Per.sq.km)	Absolute Increase	%age Increase
1	2	3	4
1901	77		
1911	82	5	6.5
1921	81	-1	-1.2
1931	90	9	11.1
1941	103	13	14.4
1951	117	14	13.6
1961	142	25	21.4
1971	177 ¹	35	24.6
1981	216 ²	39	22
1991	267 ²	51	23.6
2001	325 ²	58	21.7
2011	382 ²	57	17.5

Notes

- While working out the density of India, Jammu & Kashmir has been excluded as comparable figures of area and Population are not available for that State.
- The density has been worked out on comparable data.

The rate of increase in density of India has exhibited a sharp decline during 2001-2011 (17.5 per cent) as compared to 1991-2001 (21.7 per cent).

Source

- 1 World Scientist's Warning to Humanity, signed by 1600 senior scientists from 70 countries (including 102 Nobel Prize laureates), <http://www.worldpopulationbalance.org/quotes> accessed on 27th March 2011

While the absolute increase is indeed a matter of concern, the positive feature is that the rate of increase has slowed down and has shown a sharp decline in the last decade. High increase in the density of population is a matter of great concern as it puts immense pressure on our natural resources and existing infrastructural facilities and adversely affects the quality of life. "Pressures resulting from unrestrained population growth put demands on the natural world that can overwhelm any efforts to achieve a sustainable future. If we are to halt the destruction of our environment, we must accept limits to that growth."¹

POPULATION DENSITY OF STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES

The States and Union Territories of our country vary widely in terms of their density due to differences in climatic conditions, geo-physical characteristics, availability of resources etc. It is, therefore, essential to analyse the variations across the States/UTs. Statement 32 depicts rankings of States/UTs of India in descending order of their densities in 2011 and corresponding rankings in 2001. The area and population of all the States/UTs are also given in Figure 30.



 **Statement 32**

Ranking of States and Union Territories by density: 2001 and 2011

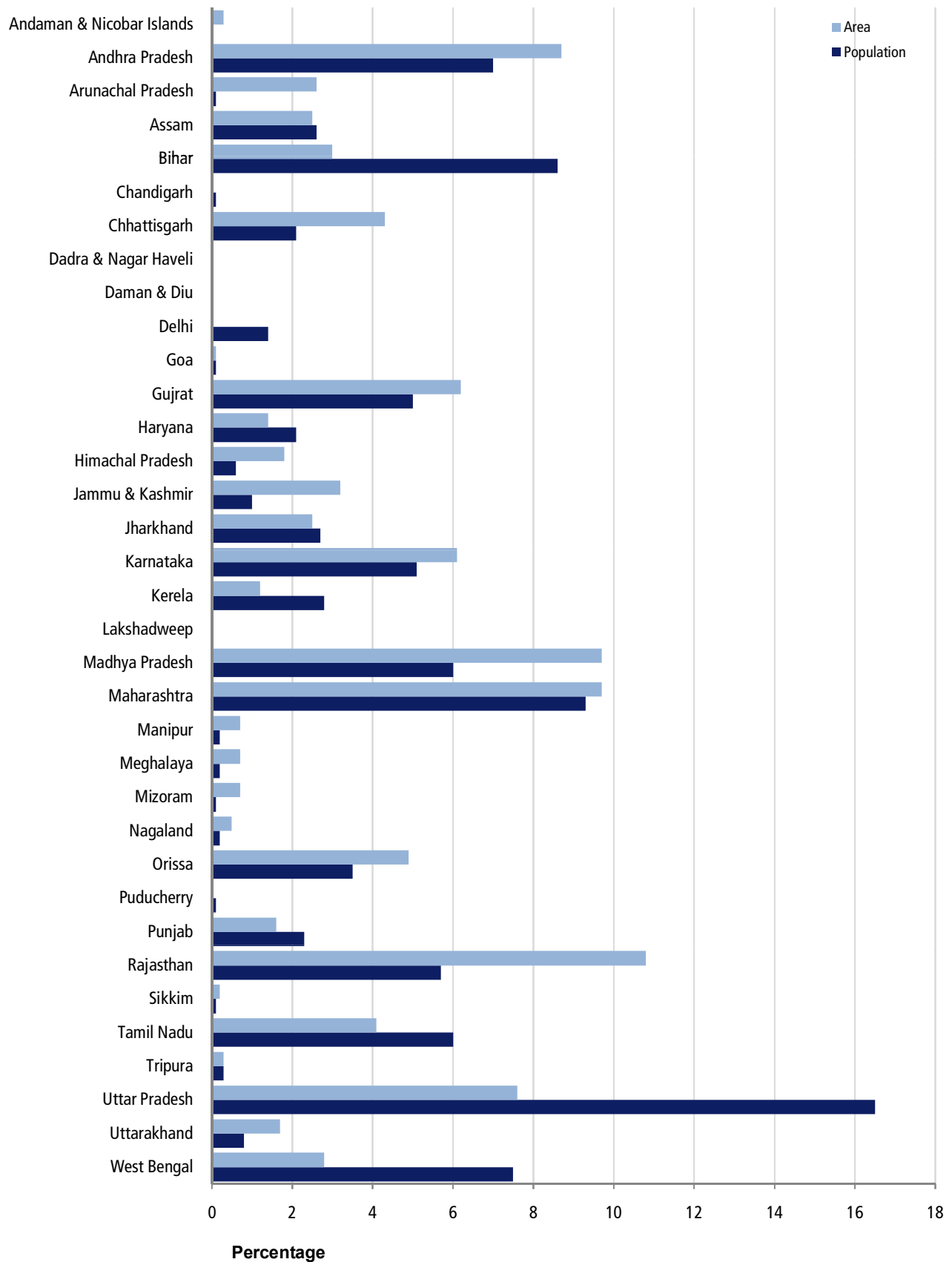
Rank in 2011	States/Union Territory #	Density (per sq.km)		Rank in 2001
		2011	2001	
1	2	3	4	5
	INDIA	382	325	
1	NCT of Delhi #	11,297	9,340	1
2	Chandigarh #	9,252	7,900	2
3	Puduchery #	2,598	2,034	3
4	Daman & Diu #	2,169	1,413	5
5	Lakshadweep #	2,013	1,895	4
6	Bihar	1,102	881	7
7	West Bengal	1,029	903	6
8	Kerala	859	819	8
9	Uttar Pradesh	828	690	9
10	Dadra & Nagar Haveli #	698	449	13
11	Haryana	573	478	12
12	Tamil Nadu	555	480	11
13	Punjab	550	484	10
14	Jharkhand	414	338	16
15	Assam	397	340	15
16	Goa	394	364	14
17	Maharashtra	365	315	17
18	Tripura	350	305	18
19	Karnataka	319	276	20
20	Andhra Pradesh	308	277	19
21	Gujarat	308	258	21
22	Orissa	269	236	22
23	Madhya Pradesh	236	196	23
24	Rajasthan	201	165	24
25	Uttarakhand	189	159	25
26	Chhattisgarh	189	154	26
27	Meghalaya	132	103	29
28	Jammu & Kashmir	124	100	31
29	Himachal Pradesh	123	109	28
30	Manipur	122	103	30
31	Nagaland	119	120	27
32	Sikkim	86	76	32
33	Mizoram	52	42	34
34	Andaman & Nicobar Islands #	46	43	33
35	Arunachal Pradesh	17	13	35

 **Note**

While working out the density figures for Jammu & Kashmir for 2001 and 2011 censuses, the entire area and population of those portions of Jammu & Kashmir which are under illegal occupation of Pakistan and China have not been taken into account.

Figure 30

Area and population 2011 (States/Union Territories)



RANKING OF STATES

A better analysis would be possible if the States and Union Territories are segregated. The following Statement gives the comparative ranking of States in 2011 and 2001:

Statement 33

Ranking of States by density: 2001 and 2011

Rank in 2011	States	Density (per sq.km)		Rank in 2001
		2011	2001	
1	2	3	4	5
	INDIA	382	325	
1	Bihar	1,102	881	2
2	West Bengal	1,029	903	1
3	Kerala	859	819	3
4	Uttar Pradesh	828	690	4
5	Haryana	573	478	7
6	Tamil Nadu	555	480	6
7	Punjab	550	484	5
8	Jharkhand	414	338	10
9	Assam	397	340	9
10	Goa	394	364	8
11	Maharashtra	365	315	11
12	Tripura	350	305	12
13	Karnataka	319	276	14
14	Andhra Pradesh	308	277	13
15	Gujarat	308	258	15
16	Orissa	269	236	16
17	Madhya Pradesh	236	196	17
18	Rajasthan	201	165	18
19	Uttarakhand	189	159	19
20	Chhattisgarh	189	154	20
21	Meghalaya	132	103	23
22	Jammu & Kashmir	124	100	25
23	Himachal Pradesh	123	109	22
24	Manipur	122	103	24
25	Nagaland	119	120	21
26	Sikkim	86	76	26
27	Mizoram	52	42	27
28	Arunachal Pradesh	17	13	28

Amongst States, Bihar has become the most densely populated State with 1102 persons/km² and Arunachal Pradesh the least densely populated State with 17 persons/km² in 2011

The Statement given above reveals that the first two States have interchanged their places. Bihar is at the top pushing West Bengal to second rank. Kerala and Uttar Pradesh have retained their rankings of third and fourth respectively. Haryana on the other hand has advanced by two ranks from Rank 7 to Rank 5 replacing Punjab which has fallen by two ranks from 5 to 7. Jharkhand, similarly has risen by two places from Rank 10 to 8 replacing Goa which has declined from Rank 8 to 10. Karnataka has moved up by one place while Andhra Pradesh has fallen by one place from 13 to 14. Meghalaya has moved up by 2 ranks; Jammu & Kashmir has moved up by 3 ranks; Himachal Pradesh dropped by 1 rank; Nagaland dropped by 4 ranks. Other states namely, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Maharashtra, Tripura, Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Sikkim, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have retained their rankings.

RANKING OF UNION TERRITORIES

The following Statement gives the comparative ranking of UTs in 2011 and 2001:

 **Statement 34**

Ranking of Union Territories by density: 2001 and 2011

Rank in 2011	Union Territories [#]	Density (per sq.km)		Rank in 2001
		2011	2001	
1	2	3	4	5
	INDIA	382	325	
1	NCT of Delhi [#]	11297	9340	1
2	Chandigarh [#]	9252	7900	2
3	Puducherry [#]	2598	2034	3
4	Daman & Diu [#]	2169	1413	5
5	Lakshadweep [#]	2013	1895	4
6	Dadra & Nagar Haveli [#]	698	449	6
7	Andaman & Nicobar Islands [#]	46	43	7

NCT of Delhi continues to head the UTs, while Andaman & Nicobar Islands brings up the rear.

The ranking of UTs as per Population Density remains by and large the same with the exception of Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep who have exchanged places with each other. NCT of Delhi continues to head the UTs, while Andaman & Nicobar Islands brings up the rear.



POPULATION DENSITY BY GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS

An attempt has been made to analyse the differentials in population densities across the six regions in the country. Statement 35 gives the States/UTs included in different regions and densities of each of the regions.

Statement 35

Population density in different regions, States and Union Territories: 2001 and 2011

Region	States and Union Territories [#]	Number of States/ Union Territories	Density (per sq. km)	
			2001	2011
1	2	3	4	5
Northern	Jammu & Kashmir	7	223	267
	Himachal Pradesh			
	Punjab			
	Chandigarh [#]			
	Haryana			
	NCT of Delhi [#]			
	Rajasthan			
Central	Uttarakhand	4	347	417
	Uttar Pradesh			
	Chhatisgarh			
	Madhya Pradesh			
Eastern	Bihar	6	525	625
	Sikkim			
	West Bengal			
	Jharkhand			
	Orissa			
	Andaman & Nicobar Islands [#]			
North East	Arunachal Pradesh	7	151	176
	Nagaland			
	Manipur			
	Mizoram			
	Tripura			
	Meghalaya			
	Assam			
Western	Gujarat	4	293	344
	Daman & Diu [#]			
	Dadra & Nagar Haveli [#]			
	Maharashtra			
Southern	Andhra Pradesh	7	353	397
	Karnataka			
	Goa			
	Lakshadweep [#]			
	Kerala			
	Tamil Nadu			
	Puducherry [#]			

 **Note** See notes below Statement 31.

Eastern region has the highest density of 625 persons per sq. km. and the North Eastern region has the lowest density of 176 persons per sq. km.

It may be seen that the Eastern region has the highest density of 625 persons per sq. Km. and the North Eastern region has the lowest density of 176 persons per sq. Km. Central region occupies the second highest place in density with 417 followed by Southern region (397), Western region (344) and Northern region (267) respectively. Over the period 2001-2011, the density in the Central region (20.31%), Northern region (19.48%) and Eastern region (18.98%) has

Source

- 2 Overview, *Twenty-first Century India, Population, Economy, Human Development, and the Environment*, edited by Tim Dyson, Robert Cassen & Leela Visaria, Oxford University Press, pp 2.

gone up at a higher pace than that of Western region (17.18%), North-Eastern region (17%) and Southern region (12.58%).

This is consistent with what historical demographers have noted, “The Gangetic plain has constituted the sub-continent’s demographic heartland for over two millennia, and will remain so during the foreseeable future. The North-South demographic divide is also of long standing”.²

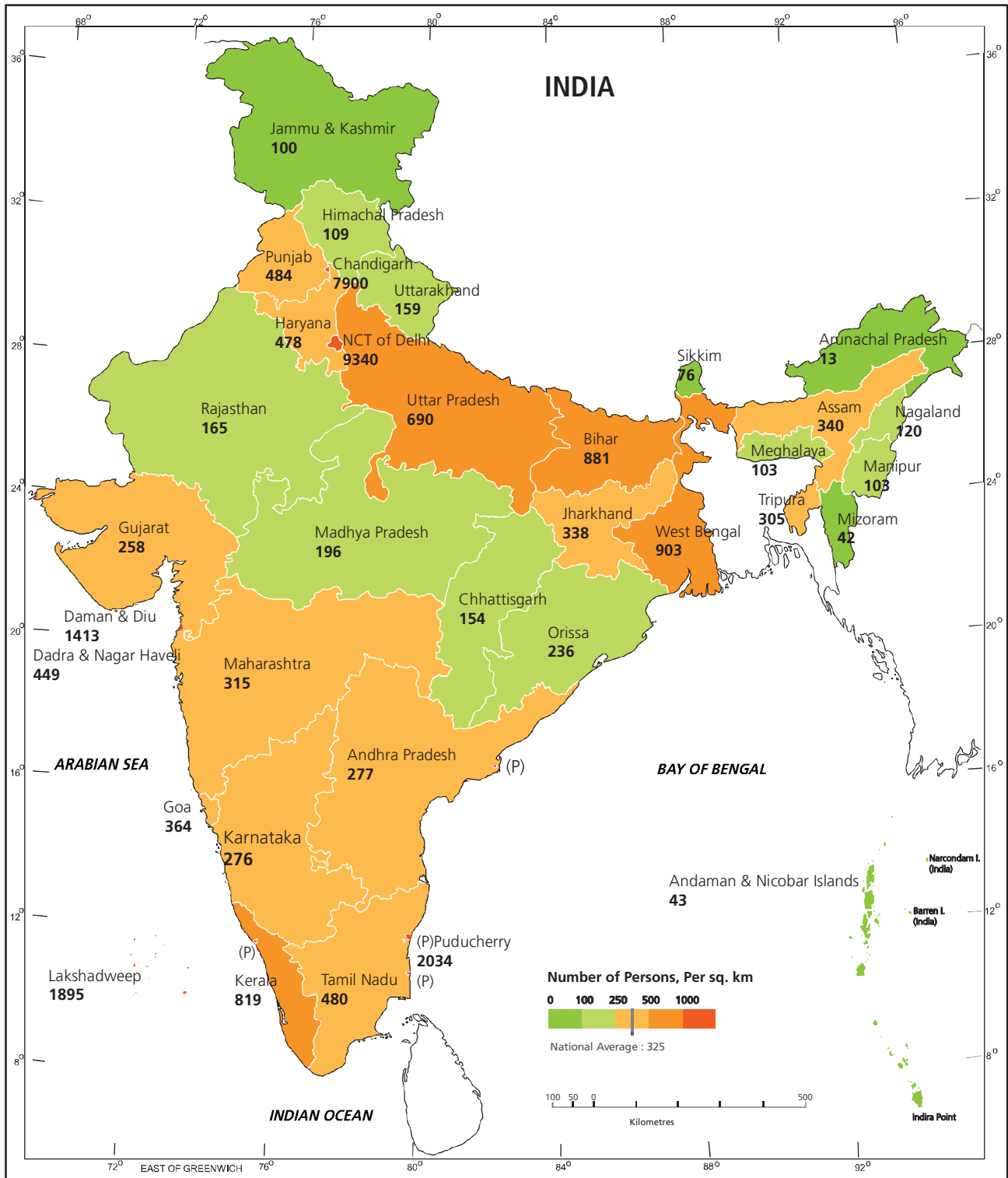
Density of population impacts the environment and ultimately quality of life of the people. Increasing pressures of population has already impacted the way people live and how they are governed. Reducing the load on the natural resources and infrastructure especially in the urban areas would remain a huge challenge for administrators and policy makers.





Map 20

Density of Population, India, States and Union Territories: 2001



Map 21

Density of Population, India, States and Union Territories: 2011

