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Comprehension story 23

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow, using your own words wherever possible.

While the influence of population growth on economic development is subject of heated, the weight of scholarly opinion today supports the view that the poorest countries would be more likely to achieve reasonable per capita income growth if their birth rates declined. The connection between economic and population growth is often confused by a chicken-and-egg dilemma. 05

Economic growth often leads to decline in death rates and increase in immigration, both of which contribute to population growth are mutually reinforcing. When the discussion is narrowed to the relationship between birth rates and per capital income change, negative of high fertility on income is more apparent. When each generation is similar in size to the one that precedes it, parents finds it easier to prepare their children for productive lives. Governments find it easier to build and maintain transportation infrastructure and provide such social services as universal schooling. These lay the ground-work for investment, innovation and economic growth. 10

It is possible, of course, that rapid population growth may contribute to economic growth at certain times and yet constrain it at others. In societies fortunate enough to begin the development process with small population and abundant natural resources, rapid population growth may indeed help spur economic development. But in most 15

developing countries today populations are already large relative to the availability of natural resources and supplies or renewable fresh water and farm land are scares and often concentrated in a few hands. Under such circumstances, further rapid population growth is especially likely to contribute to soil erosion, decline in water quantity and quality, and the partition of farmland into parcels too small to support families. These trends can undermine both subsistence farming and cash crop production and hinder both economic growth and industrial development, which historically have been built upon strong agricultural economies.

Governments must grapple with the problem of resource scarcity and inequality, while also devoting disproportionate effort to the challenge of educating and providing jobs for ever growing generation of young people. Lending support to the changing relationship between population and economic growth, a recent review of the evidence suggest that the association high birth rate and slowed income growth was weak in the 1960s and 1970s but strengthened significantly in the 1980s, especially in the poorest countries.

In theory, more people may mean a country can produce and consume more goods and services, leading to economic growth. But this can only occur when employment opportunities growth at least as fast as the labor force and when people have access to the necessary education and training. This is a race that many governments are losing. Rapid population growth complicates the task of providing and maintain the infrastructure, education and health care needed by modern economies.

“The balance of present scholarly judgment”, writes population scientist Joel E. Cohen “is that slower population growth would benefit most developing countries and that rapid population growth exacerbates many other problems of which it is not the sole or principal cause”.

Trade is now a global activity in and future economic growth in industrialized nation will depend in large part on the capacity of the people in countries around the world to pay for imported products. Boosting US exports, for example, stimulates the growth of jobs that pay, on average, wages that are 13% above average. Moreover, the most dynamic growth in demand for imported goods is occurring in developing countries. Rapid population growth can erode the expansion of this demand

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Questions

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02marks)
- (b) What the author mean by the following phrases:
- (i) "... prepare their children for productive lives."
(Line 11) (04marks)
- (ii) " the most dynamic growth in demand."(line 53 – 54) (04marks)
- (c) In not more than 100 words, summarize how population growth affects economic development (10marks)
- (d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible
- (i) weight of scholarly opinion (line 02) (02 marks)
- (ii) chicken-and-egg dilemma (line 06) (02marks)
- (iii) mutually reinforcing (line 07) (02 marks)
- (iv) narrowed (line 07) (02marks)
- (v) parcels too small (line 22) (02marks)
- (vi) grapple with (line 29) (02marks)
- (vii) a race (line 39) (02 marks)
- (viii) scholarly judgment (line 44) (02marks)
- (ix) exacerbates (line 47) (02 marks)
- (x) erode the expansion (line 57) (02marks)
- (20 marks)

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

Suggested answers

(a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02marks)

- Influence of population growth on economic growth
- Influence of population growth on economic development
- Effects of population growth on economic development

(b) What the author mean by the following phrases:

(i) "... prepare their children for productive lives."
(Line 11) (04marks)

Imparting/teaching survival skills to children

(ii) " the most dynamic growth in demand."(line 53 – 54) (04marks)

Rapid/Vibrant/active increase in purchasing power or
ability to buy goods and services

(c) In not more than 100 words, summarize how population growth
affects economic development (10marks)

EFFECTS OF POPULATION GROWTH ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rapid increases of population in theory would increase the economic development due to high production and consumption however, in practice especially in developing countries high population growth lead to decline in economic development because it leads to land fragmentation into unproductive pieces, scarcity of resources, lack of employment opportunities, and inability to develop and maintain infrastructure such, education and health facilities to cope with the rate of population growth. Consequently, poor countries would be able to achieve higher per capita income if they had low birth rates.

(d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage,
using you own words wherever possible

(i) weight of scholarly opinion (line 02) (02 marks)
based/depending on views of learned people

(ii) chicken-and-egg dilemma (line 06) (02marks)
it is unclear which of the two population growth and economic
development lead to another

(iii) mutually reinforcing (line 07) (02 marks)
complementing each other

(iv) narrowed to (line 07) (02marks)

- limited to/focused
- (v) parcels too small (line 22) (02marks)
tiny pieces/portions
- (vi) grapple with (line 29) (02marks)
struggle to overcome the problem
- (vii) a race (line 39) (02 marks)
a battle/struggle
- (viii) scholarly judgment (line 44) (02marks)
informed opinion/decision
- (ix) exacerbates (line 47) (02 marks)
worsen/complicates
- (x) erode the expansion (line 57) (02marks)
jeopardize/hinder/hamper development
- (20 marks)

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

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Thanks

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