

Malthusian Theory of Population



Part 2

Checks on Population

- ❖ There will be the *condition of disequilibrium*, because of rise in *population is greater than the food supply*
- ❖ As a result, *people will not get enough food even for survival, hence will die due to lack of food supply*
- ❖ People will be subjected to *wars, epidemics, famines, starvation*, and other natural calamities which are named as *positive checks by Malthus*

- ❖ On the contrary, there *are man-made checks* known as *preventive checks*
- ❖ According to *Malthus*, there are two types of '*checks*' that can reduce a *population's growth rate*

Preventive Checks

- ❖ *Preventive checks* are *voluntary actions* people can take to avoid contributing to the population
- ❖ Because of his religious beliefs, Malthus supported a concept he called *moral restraint*, in which people *resist the urge to marry* and reproduce until they are *capable of supporting a family*

- ❖ This often *means waiting until a later age to marry*
- ❖ He also wrote that there are '*immoral*' ways to check a population, such as *vices, adultery, prostitution, and birth control*
- ❖ Due to *his beliefs*, he favoured *moral restraint* and didn't support the *latter practices*

Positive Checks

- ❖ *Positive checks* to population growth are things that may shorten the average lifespan, such as disease, warfare, famine, and poor living and working environments
- ❖ According to Malthus, eventually these positive checks would result in a *Malthusian catastrophe* (also sometimes called a *Malthusian crisis*), which is a forced return of a population to basic survival

- ❖ The *Irish potato famine of the 19th century* has been considered *a classic example of a Malthusian catastrophe*
- ❖ In addition to dealing with *political and economic relations* with England and fragmentation of their land, the rapidly growing *Irish population was running out of food*
- ❖ There are often *other factors involved in events* that could be labeled as *Malthusian catastrophes*, so many scholars take caution when providing modern examples.

Malthusian Trap

- ❖ *The Malthusian Trap (or “Malthusian Population Trap”) is the idea that higher levels of food production created by more advanced agricultural techniques create higher population levels, which then lead to food shortages because the higher population needs to live on land that would have previously used to grow crops*
- ❖ *Also once the population exceeds what food supplies can support, this supposedly creates a Malthusian crisis with widespread famine as well as rampant disease*
- ❖ *This ends up decreasing the population to earlier levels*

To be Continued.....