

Malthusian Theory of Population



Part 3

Criticism

Criticism of Malthus Theory of Population

The *Malthusian theory* was criticised based on the following observations:

- A. *Population Growth not related to food supply***
- B. *Food Production***
- C. *Global Trade***
- D. *Mathematical Calculations are wrong***
- E. *Importance given only to food grains for livelihood***
- F. *Not Relevant to Modern Population Problems***
- G. *Neglected the Manpower Aspect in Population***

Population Growth not Related to Food Supply

- ❖ The *forecasts* put forward by *Malthus* related to *population and food* have not played out
- ❖ In *western Europe*, the *population was rising* at a *rapid rate* at the same time, the *food supply* had also *increased* due to *technological developments*

Food Production

- ❖ Thanks to *many technological advancements*, food production has dramatically *increased* over the past century times, *many a times food production had increased more than the population*
- ❖ *For example*, during the *1930s in the US*, *25% of the population* worked in the *agricultural sector* while the *total GDP* was less than \$100 billion
- ❖ Today, *less than 2% of the population* works in the *agricultural sector*, while the *total GDP* is over \$14 trillion

Global Trade

- ❖ Malthus theory stated that one of the reasons for *limited food supply* is *non-availability of land*
- ❖ However, the *amount of food supply* in various countries has *increased due to increased globalisation*

Importance given only to Food-grains for livelihood

- ❖ Malthus gave importance to only food-grains for livelihood
- ❖ But for livelihood, food-grains alone are not enough
- ❖ Fruits, meat, fish, milk, eggs, etc. can also be used as food
- ❖ They have high growth rate in comparison to the population growth

Mathematical Calculations are Wrong

- ❖ *Malthus did not provide calculations for the geometric growth of populations and the arithmetic growth of food*
- ❖ *Since then, experts have pointed out that the growth rates are not consistent with Malthus' predictions*

Not Relevant to Modern Population Problems

- ❖ The Malthusian theory of population is *not of much relevance* to *modern population problems* because it *does not explain* the reasons for :
- ❖ *Declining birth rate* in developing countries,
- ❖ The relationship between *birth and death rate*,
- ❖ The effects of *migration and urbanisation* etc.
- ❖ Thus, as pointed out by *Blaug*, The Malthusian theory is “*silent on the crucial question of the determinants of population growth*”

Neglected the Manpower Aspect in Population

- ❖ Malthus neglected the *manpower aspect* in population growth
- ❖ He was a *pessimist and dreaded* every increase in population
- ❖ He forgot that *an increase in population* means *an increase in manpower* which may tend to *increase not only agricultural but also industrial production* that may make the country *rich* by an equitable distribution of wealth and income
- ❖ As rightly pointed out by Seligman “*The problem of population is not merely one of mere size but of efficient production and equitable distribution*”
- ❖ Thus the increase in population may be *necessary*

Thank You