

*Hindustan Times, Saturday, July 16, 2011*

## **7 of 10 Indians are rural folk**

Nearly 7 out of 10 Indians still live in villages but the rural population growth rate declines sharply over the last decade, according to census data released on Friday.

“For the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas than in rural”, census commissioner C Chandramouli declared as he unveiled provisional urban-rural population figures.

The census 2011 showed an increase in urbanization up from 27.8% to 31.2%.

The population growth in rural areas has declined but in urban areas it has remained almost the same.

The statistics reveal that while the maximum number of people living in rural areas in a particular state is 155 million in Uttar Pradesh, Mumbai tops the list having the maximum number of people in urban areas at 50 million.

The data also reflects that 18.62% of the country’s rural population lives in UP

and 13.48% urban population lives in Maharashtra.

Chandramouli, however, said the figures revealed an extremely worrying trend of child ratio- perceived to be largely an urban problem- declining sharply. “The fall in child sex ratio in rural areas is around 4 time that in urban areas. In urban areas, the decline is much more gradual,” he said.

At 914. The country’s child sex ratio is at the lowest since the 1961 census. Statistics released on Friday revealed that the decline of 13 points from 927 in 2001 was driven by rural areas.

Literacy rate in rural areas, however, has improved by two times more than in urban areas. The rural-urban literacy gap which was 21.2 percentage points in 2001 has come down to 16.1 percentage points in 2011.

There is improvement in female literacy than in male literacy in both rural and urban areas, according to the data.

*The Pioneer, Tuesday, August 9, 2011*

## **Farmers, scientists demand second green revolution**

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Farmers came together on Monday with scientists and representatives of the agri-biotech industry to demand a second green revolution in India. Speaking in a unified voice at a Press conference in the Capital, they agreed that use of new technologies in agriculture was the only hope for farmers and solution to address the challenges of food security. The group demanded that parliament clear the long awaited Biotechnology regulatory Authority of India Bill (BAI) and Seeds Bill. They also emphasized on expeditious approvals of biotech crop trials and commercialization under the existing system till the BRAI is approved.

According to a working paper by the Indian Council for research on International economic Relations (ICRIER), India would have to double its food production by 2020. Ravinder Singh, farmer leader, said, "Biotechnology offers a way out of this dilemma of growing more with less. It's nothing less than a miracle crop that requires fewer resources and produces greater yields than old-fashioned cotton, bringing prosperity to many families. With more than 90 percent of India's cotton farmers taking advantage of biotechnology, I would appeal to the Government to replicate the benefits in the case of other crops".

Dr. Vibha Dhawan, Executive Director, The Energy & Resource Institute (TERI), cautioned that some groups with vested interests are providing misleading information to public, media and policy makers and this is dangerous. Dr. Bharat Char, lead Biotechnology, Mahyco and ABLE-AG member, said that they are committed as an industry to prove the safety of biotech crops and adhere to very robust trails rules laid out by the Government of India. Dr. P. Anand Kumar, Principal Scientist, national research Centre on Plant Biotechnology (NRCPB), Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI), Ministry of Agriculture, said as illustrated by the success of Bt Cotton the benefits are clearly in favor of Indian farmers, whose earnings have improved considerably, commensurate with dramatic increases in cotton yields over the past decade.

Dr. N. Chandrasekhara Rao, Associate Professor, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad, who has studied the socio-economic profile of cotton farmers in Andhra Pradesh, said, "We have seen a positive shift in the lifestyles of many farmers and the changes were clearly linked to increase in their incomes after adoption of Bt Cotton."

*Hindustan times, Sunday, August 7, 2011*

## **Govt. studies forecast less water, lesser yield**

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Climate Change ‘Temperatures will rise and monsoon will be erratic’

With India expected to be warmer than estimated earlier, a new set of government-sponsored studies have predicted lesser availability of water and decline in agriculture production on account of climate change.

The studies were done under the aegis of the Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment (INCCA) to provide a holistic picture with an aim to push the government to form mitigation and adaptation policies.

Climate change impact on agriculture is the highlight of the studies to be published in Current Science on Monday with recorded fall in per acre production of wheat and rice; it comes at a time when India is debating the proposed National Food Security law to ensure monthly food entitlement to 75% of population and 50% in the urban India.

A study by PK Aggarwal of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IRAI) shows wheat production in 2004 fell by 4 million tonnes on account of an increase in temperature of one degree, resulting in faster maturing of crop. A fall in production of mustard, peas, tomatoes, onion and garlic has also been reported on the basis of 22 years’ record of yield.

The future, with temperature expected to rise by another four degrees Celsius by the end of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, would be bleak.

The Indo-Gangetic plains, the food bowl of India, will have the maximum impact with a decline in water resources. Western Ghats and the coastal belt are

highly vulnerable areas, with estimates of a huge fall in production by 2030, the study says.

In another study, analyzing monsoon data from 1901 to 2007, Krishna Kumar of Pune-based Indian Institute for Tropical Meteorology says the number of rainy days have reduced with increase in frequency and intensity of heavy rains.

The IITM study predicts that there would be 15% increase in summer monsoon precipitation by 2080, meaning lesser sunny days for crops to mature.

The study predicts increase in intensity of transmission of malaria from seven to nine months to 10-12 months in north-east and some regions of Himalayan belt.

Every year 2.3 million people are affected by malaria and about a million from dengue.

Global warming has caused faster melting of glaciers as predicted by the Indian Space Research Organization. AK Gosain of IIT-Delhi says because of this most of the rivers in India will see an increase in precipitation at the basin level till 2050, except Brahmaputra, Cauvery and Pennar.

The positive, however, is that India’s rate of global warming was just 3.3% between 1994 and 2007, even though the economy had grown at an average of 6% during this period. “It is because most of the technologies adopted by us are less emission intense,” a senior environment ministry official said.