

POPULATION EDUCATION: A STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

It is universally conceived that the progress of a nation and that of the family depends upon small families. Most of the developing and least developed countries have large families with the result that they are facing the problems of inadequate food, nutrition, clothing and shelter etc.

Promoting Small Family for Better Living: Population control programmes must be universally accepted in the interest of the family and the nation. The aim of this population control is not merely to cut down population, but to create conditions in which there can be happier families in which parents are able to give their families the care which is their due. The aim of the family planning is to make family life and the life of children happier richer, more contented more prosperous and more progressive. It is to usher a new social order. We want our children to inherit a better world than our own. We should, therefore realize that family size is controllable and that it can facilitate the development of higher quality of life in the nation and that a small family size can contribute to the quality of living for the individual family.

SMALL FAMILY NORMS

The question, "How many children a couple should have"? is most vital for the existence and continuation of every family and the society as a whole. Every society therefore should develop definite behavioral patterns to ensure a certain norm of family size. These behavioural patterns in the form of emphasis on marriage, age at marriage, preferences for sex, values and roles of children, etc automatically result in ensuring the normatively desired family size. The two extremes of family size norm could extend from „no child family“, to“ as many children as God may will“. Within these two extremes, the norm varies from society to society, depending upon is socio-economic and health, particularly mortality status. Logically one could expect change at a family size norm corresponding to changes in socio-economic status of any give in society. However, this change is not simultaneous because the normative values and behaviour patterns change at a slower pace as compared to economic progress. This cultural lag usually results in increased unhappiness in the individual families as well as society. It is one of the important purposes and goals of the national family planning programmes of every country to bridge this gap and enable individual families to adjust to changing situations so that they can maximize the gains accenting to them is a result of overall socio-economic progress. In simple terms this means that the question of family size arid how to regulate it plays a crucial role in deciding upon the

progress, development and happiness at both the family and societal level. The present slogan regarding norm is

(We are two and we should have two children).

FAMILY SIZE AND ITS INFLUENCES

Dr. D.C Dubey and Dr. A. Bardhan (1982) discuss the following influences of family size.

1. *Family Size and Morbidity.* Studies in this field have indicated a clear association between family size and illness. As the family size increases the number of sickness episodes per family and per member of the family also increases. Malnutrition causes several kinds of morbidity among children. Studies in his area have shown that family size is one of the important factors related to malnutrition. Children from large families are more likely to be malnourished. It is obvious that larger the family more the pressure on it because of increased number of illnesses, raced for more parental care and higher expenses for treatment.

2. *Family Size and Mortality.* Several mortality studies have analyzed relationship between family size and mortality. Invariably all of them indicate a definite association between family size and mortality rate. A study in Punjab found that infant mortality tended to increase with family size. Another study in England found that this increase in mortality with the number of children in a family was true in case of all the social classes. In some studies mortality rates of different birth orders were studied and it was found that higher the birth order higher the mortality. In other words, later births within a large family are likely to experience higher mortality.

3. *Family Size and Physical Growth.* Long term studies in England have established a significant difference in the physical growth of children associated with family size. These differences were further found to be not limited to the lower classes alone. A study suggests that birth of each additional child in a family acts as a check on the growth of all preceding children in very broad terms it can be said that the larger the family the less the height and weight at all ages of both the earlier and later born children.

4. *Family size and intelligence.* Intelligence is treated as a fairly good indicate of general well being. Because of the importance of intelligence, its association with family size has been examined in several studies. The studies have revealed a remarkable negative correlation between intelligent and family size. Further it is found that this negative relationship holds in case of all social classes and all age groups. In general terms, it can stated that intelligence test scores decrease as family size increases.

5. *Consequences of Family Size on Parents,* Not very many studies have been done in this field- but there is some evidence to suggest that family size in certain ways influences the life style and mental and physical health of parents. Here and Shaw found that physical and mental health

problem parents increased with family size. The increase was marked in case of health of the mother. Chen and Gobb found positive relationship between frequency of particulars among parents and number of children. Another study of women shows a positive relationship between arthritis and large family size. Similarly it was found that the incidence of hypertension increased with the number of children.

Mothers in large family experience repeated pregnancies at short intervals. These pregnancies create heavy lactation demands. Prolonged lactation creates protein deficiency. Failure to meet this protein demand leads to premature ageing and early maternal death. This is particularly true of developing countries.

In India the problem of family size has not been studied extensively and in-depth. To illustrate such studies, mention of two studies—one carried out in North and the other in South, can be made. Gordon and Wyon made the study in Punjab villages (1962) and University of Kerala carried out a detailed study on family growth in Kerala (1968). There is a definite need to undertake more such in-depth studies. In the absence of such studies most of the knowledge in this area comes from several KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) studies carried out in the country. An attempt is made here to summarise some of the important findings of these KAP studies relating to reasons or factors motivating the people to have larger or smaller families.

CAUSES OR FACTORS OF GROWING POPULATION IN INDIA

DEMOGRAPHIC CAUSES

1. Gap Between Birth Rate and Death Rate

It is a healthy sign that death rate in India over the years has been declining. However, in India, which is on the path of economic development, the other variable of population growth i.e. birth rate has not declined proportionately. In the seven decades i.e. 1901-1910 to 1961-70, death rate decreased from 48.6 deaths per 1,000 to 19. However, the birth rate decreased from 48.1 per 1,000 to 41.2 per 1,000 only. During the period 1971 to 2000, the death rate decreased from 17 to 9 and the birth rate from 39 to 25 i.e. by 47 per cent and 36 per cent respectively.

2. Early Marriage Age

Marriage age marks the turning point in reproductive behaviour and signals the onset of sexual activity. Therefore, age of marriage has a great bearing on fertility rates, child bearing and other issues like infant mortality and maternal mortality.

Table 1.2: Birth Rate and Death Rate (1911-2000)

Annual Rate	Birth Rate per 1,000	Death Rate per 1,000
1911-20	48.1	48.6
1921-30	46.4	36.3
1931-40	45.2	31.2
1941-1950	39.9	27.4
1951-1960	41.7	22.8
1961-1970	41.2	19.0
1971-1980	37.2	17.0
1981-1990	32.5	11.4
1991-2000	25.0	9.0

The legal age at marriage in India is 18 for females and 21 for males. However, early marriage continues to be the norm. It is estimated that by the age of 15, nearly 26 per cent of females are married. By the age of 18, this figures rises to 54 per cent.

The present incidence of adolescent marriages below 18 years is as high as 71.0 in Bihar followed h Rajasthan, 68.3%. In Manipur and Goa, this percent is as low as 9.9 and 10.1 respectively. (see Fig. 3). Over 50 per cent girls marry before the age of 18. This results in a typical reproductive pattern of “too early, too frequent, too many”.

3. Fertility Rates

According to the South Asian Conference on Adolescent (1999). A progressively larger share of all births is occurring from adolescent girls between the ages of 15-19 years. Twenty five to thirty five per cent of adolescent girls of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal begin child bearing as early as 17 years. Moreover adolescent girls have shorter spacing intervals between successive births than older women. Thus the“ add to already high fertility rate among adolescent girls.

4. High Reproductive Age Group

The size of population in the reproductive age-group is large (estimated contribution 58 per cent). An addition of 417.2 million between 1991 and 2016 is anticipated despite substantial reductions in family size in several states, including reduction in family size in several states, also including those which have already achieved replacement levels of total fertility rate (TFR). This

momentum of increase in population will continue for some more years because high TFRs in the past have resulted in a large proportion of the population being currently in their reproductive years. It is imperative that the reproductive age group adopts without further delay or exception the “small family norm”, for the reason that about 45 percent of population increase is contributed by births above two children per family.

5. Unmet Demand for Contraceptives

Higher fertility is due to unmet need for contraception (estimated contribution 20 percent). India has 168 million eligible couples, of which just 44 per cent are currently effectively protected. Urgent steps are currently required to make contraception more widely available, accessible and affordable. Around 74 per cent of the population lives in rural areas, in about 5.5 lakh villages, many with poor communications and transport. Reproductive health and basic health infrastructure and services often do not reach the villages and accordingly, vast numbers of people cannot avail of these services.

6. Child Birth Insurance against High Infant Mortality

High wanted fertility is due to the high infant mortality rate (IMR) (estimated contribution about 20 per cent). Repeated child births are seen as an insurance against multiple infant (and child) deaths and accordingly, high infant mortality stymies all efforts at reducing TFR.

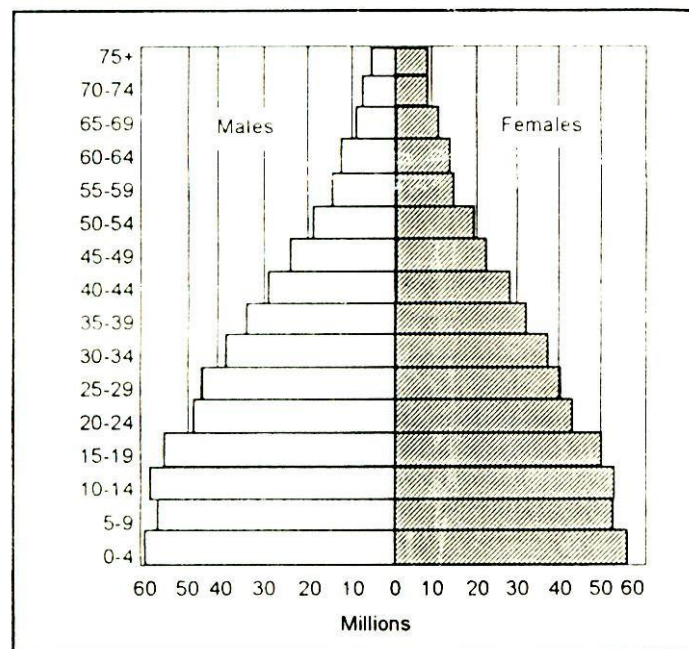


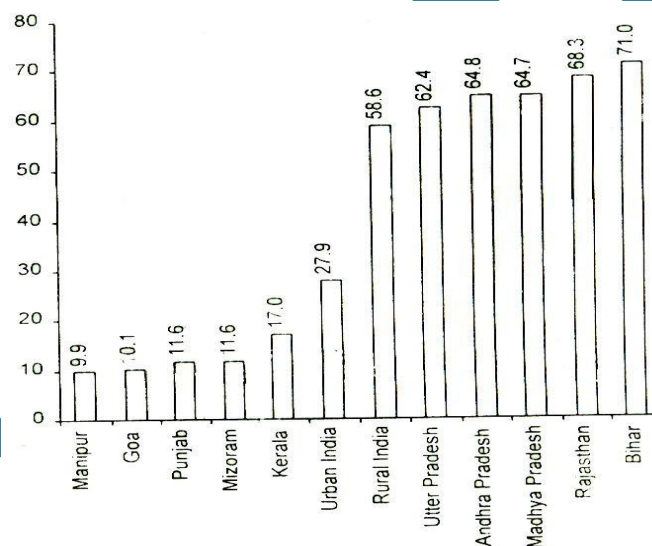
Fig. 1.1: Age distribution including adolescent group in India (2000)

Table 1.3: Percentage Distribution of Adolescents by Sex and Age Group

Age-Group	1981		1991		1996		2001		2006		2011		2016	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
0-14	13.2	12.6	11.9	11.6	12.0	11.5	12.1	12.1	10.5	10.6	8.9	9.0	8.7	8.7
5-19	9.9	9.4	9.7	9.1	9.9	9.5	11.0	10.5	11.2	11.2	9.7	9.9	8.3	8.3

Source : Central Statistical Origination, Youth in India >: Profile and Programmes 1998, New Delhi : CSO 1998, page 23-23

% of women currently aged 20-24 married before in age of 18 years..



Source: National Family Health Survey – 2, 1998-99

Fig. 1.2: Age of marriage in select states of India

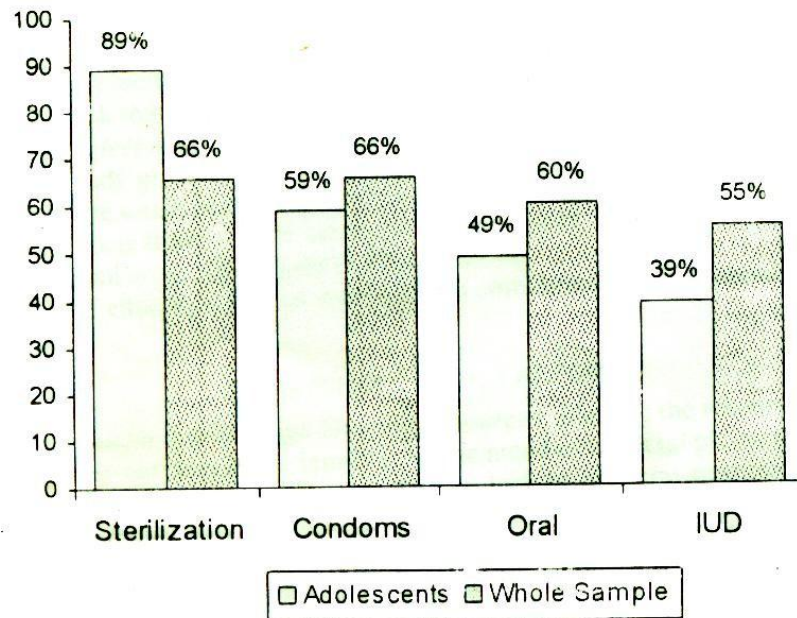
7. Lack of Adequate Knowledge of Family Planning Methods

Contraceptive use is very low among adolescents in India. Important reasons for this are Low levels of knowledge of contraceptive methods and lack of availability of contraceptive services for unmarried adolescents.

8. Sexual Activity and Behaviour

According to studies, following are the main characteristics of sexual activity and behaviour of the adolescents in India:

- (i) The magnitude of adolescent sexual activity is significant. It is higher in boys than in girls.
- (ii) There is under-reporting of sexual relationships by adolescent girls on account of fears of social disapproval.



Source : Indian Institute for Population Sciences, 1995

Fig. 1.3: Knowledge of Family Planning Methods

- (iii) Boys are more likely to be sexually active and at an earlier age than girls.
- (iv) The acceptance of pre-marital sexual activity is greater among boys than girls.
- (v) Attitudes on pre-marital sexual activity remain conservative.
- (vi) Parents and teachers are usually reluctant to impart information on sexual matters.
- (vii) Contraceptive use is low and is seldom used in first-time sexual encounters.
- (viii) Contraceptive awareness is usually about Organizations which is not suitable for most adolescents.
- (ix) Knowledge of HTV/AIDS, safe sex and preventive behaviour like use of condoms is low.
- (x) Knowledge of sexual and reproductive issues is extremely poor.
- (xi) The system of education does not adequately meet the needs for imparting sex education.

- (xii) Adolescent girls have very little choice on issues like whom to marry“ and „when to marry.
- (xiii) There is lack of adolescent health facilities, information on sex education and Organization services.

9 less Abortion Rate (Around 1996)

In India abortion rate is low as compared, with other countries. This also leads to growth of population.

Table 1.4: Comparative Data on Abortion

Sl.No.	Country	Abortion Rate
1)	Russian Federation	68.4
2)	China	26.1
3)	U.S.A	22.9
4)	Australia	22.2
5)	New Zealand	16.4
6)	Denmark	16.1
7)	Sweden	15.6
8)	Canada	15.5
9)	Japan	13.4
10)	France	12.4
11)	Germany	7.6
12)	Belgium	6.8
13)	Spain	5.7
14)	Bangladesh	3.8
15)	India	2.7

10. Large Family Concept

For a long tune, joint family system provided facilities for the care and bringing up of children.

Couples saw safety in large numbers. There was little burden and responsibility on them. Thus there was preference for large families. Now this tendency seems to have been weakened on account of various factors.

11. Indifferent Male Attitude Towards Family Planning

Research studies conducted in India show that family planning business is considered by males as women's job. Thus almost the entire burden of family planning falls upon women. This indifferent attitude of men contributes to more births.

POPULATION EDUCATION AS AN INNOVATION

Some thinkers regard population as an innovation. It is argued in this respect that it attempts to provide a significant dimension to educational goals.

The concept of innovation has been described by the Third Regional UNESCO Conference 1991 in these words, "Innovation is the introduction of a new idea, a process or technique. It is not a change for the sake of change. It implies an awareness of the inadequacy of an existing practice or technique, an attitude of searching for new ideas, and put them to use."

According to H.S. Bholra, "An innovation is a concept, an attitude, a tool with accompanying skills introduced to a system or culture which had not been functionally incorporated before."

In due course, when population education becomes an integral part of the educational programme, it will lose the status of an innovation.

POPULATION EDUCATION: CONCEPT, MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS

1. Population education is essentially an educational response to a felt need for a problem – a major national as well as global concern of a great magnitude.
2. Population education is a long term and a continuing process.
3. Population education is not an isolate educational programme. It is an integral part of all school activities.
4. Population education is needed for all sections of people.
5. Schools have a special responsibility for imparting population education to the future citizens.
6. Population education can be imparted through formal, informal and non-formal methods of teaching-learning.

7. Like any other innovation, its introduction in an effective manner is beset with several problems. A strong political will and educational commitment are needed for getting the desired results.
8. Population education is needed for all sections of the society.
9. Population education is needed for the developed, developing and least developed countries.
10. Population education is not confined to classroom. It must go beyond it.

CONCEPT AND MEANING OF POPULATION EDUCATION

Several attempts have been made to define population education but no commonly accepted concept has emerged. Perhaps this difficulty has arisen on account of three reasons. First, the concept of population education is of recent origin. Second, population issues are not totally similar in all countries. Third, the traditional and cultural values of different countries are not the same.

To have its clear perception, let's take a glimpse of some important definitions given below:

According to Massials, "Population education is the teaching and learning of reliable knowledge about the ways of inquiring into the nature of human population and pollution. In fact, population explosion is the „mother“ of poverty and environmental pollution. Our quest for adequate food, shelter, clothing, health and work for all will remain an illusion unless success is achieved in bringing under control the galloping growth of our population. It is therefore, very essential to understand the meaning, concept and significance of population education.

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) an English economist was the first thinker to discuss the impact of growing population on the progress and prosperity of the nations. He is usually called the „Father of Modern Population Study“. He brought population study within the orbit of social science.

In his „Essay on Population“ he stated that populations when unchecked reproduce at a geometric rate (i.e. 2,4,8,.....) while food produced at an arithmetic rate (i.e. 1,2,3,.....). The ultimate result would be lack of enough food to support such a huge population and hence individuals would face death due to starvation and malnutrition... The natural disasters would then control the size of population.

The theory of Malthus still holds good to a considerable extent in the case of least developed and slow developing countries. If we do not go by the literal meaning of what he said, the picture presented by him is not entirely without significance.

As the globe hurtles towards the new millennium, it continues to be overburdened by the addition of the newborn babies every second around the world. The alarmingly high levels of education have forced the mankind to ponder over its future in the new century. An overburdened mother earth can not accept more people on her chest; her resources aren't immortal, her ecology is not population-proof and her inhabitants are not Gods so that they could withstand hunger, wars, floods and famine for ever.

MERITS

1. **Systematic and Sustained Learning:-** As a separate subject, we can give systematic and sustained learning to students about population facts.
2. **Knowledge about Population Facts:-** We can acquaint the students with the nature of population, its characteristics, the reasons for changes in population, its results on family, society, nation and world. By introducing population education as a separate subject.
3. **Subject Description:-** As a separate subject, the description of subject is possible and we can give through knowledge to the students about population.
4. **Knowledge Enrichment:-** Through a separate subject approach, solid and verified knowledge can be provided and the knowledge get enriched.
5. **Psychological Laws:-** By introducing separate subject approach, we can go use psychological principles like move from simple to complex, concrete to abstract etc.
6. **Developing Insight:-** Through a separate subject approach the students can develop as keen insight about population facts.

DEMERITS

1. **More Burden on Students:-** There will be burden of one more subject on students, especially on small children, if population education will be introduced as a separate subject.
2. **More Expenditure:-** Educational expenditure will be increased because more text books, population relate matters etc will be needed.
3. School time table are already over crowded and teachers find difficulty in accommodating a new course.
4. New teachers will be required if it is introduced as a separate course.

At the end, we can say that population education should not be taught as a separate subject, but should be integrated with other subjects, because as a separate subject it will give more burden to school students. Further more children will probably learn better if they are confronted with population related material both throughout their school curriculum and during their entire period of schooling. It may be included as a separate subject in teacher training institutions.

CONCLUSION

In general, the feedback from so many survey showed a strong interest in current materials and the latest data. The respondents noted a very strong interest in maps and a significant interest in new lessons and videos. They also showed that textbooks and the Internet are the main sources used for preparing lessons. Considering only two to three hours are devoted to major population topics, new materials would have to be concise and very applicable to what teachers are allowed to cover in the classroom. Even though some types of materials were rated more useful, there is an apparent interest in a wide range of materials, PRB will use these survey results in developing its teaching materials.

The International Conference on Population and Development was held at Cairo (Egypt) from 5 to 13 September 1994. The Conference convened by the UN was attended by 11,000 participants - from governments, specialized agencies and organization is of the United Nations system, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organisations and the media. The Conference was attended by representatives of by the Government of India also.

The Conference adopted a programme of action.

The Conference emphasized the need for integrating population and elopement strategies. These strategies also relate to the role of the Governments. Evidently this applies to the field of population education - an integral programme in population related strategies.

The conference suggested the following programme having a bearing on education:

1. Governments should give priority to investment in human resource development in their strategies and budgets.
2. Programmes should seek to increase people's access to information, education, skill development and employment opportunities.
3. The governments should increase people's access to information regarding reproductive health services, including family planning.
4. The governments should improve the knowledge base through research.
5. The governments should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of consumption and

production.

6. The governments should promote appropriate demographic policies.
7. The governments should work for economic growth, and eradicate poverty.
8. Governments should eliminate all forms of discrimination against women as they are the key factors in development and ensuring quaji family planning and reproductive health.
9. The government should ensure that population, environment a poverty-eradication factors are integrated into sustainability development policies and strategies.
10. The governments should involve voluntary non-government organisations (NGOs) in planning population programmes.
11. The governments should make us of mass media and electronic media in population related programmes.

Population Education Programme

Realising the potential of education in tackling the problems of growing rate of population a Population Education Programme was launched with effect from April 1980. The underlying object of the programme is to create in the younger generation, an adequate awareness of the population problems and realization of its responsibilities towards the nation in this regard.

The Population Education Programme is a plan scheme in the Central Sector of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. It has been developed in collaboration with the United Nations Fund form

Population Active (UNF}“A) and with the active involvement of the Mostly of Health and Family Welfare. (Discussed separately)

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