

POPULATION EDUCATION

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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 its 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 given 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 accruing to them is a result of overall socio-economic progress. In simple terms this means that the question of family size

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and 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 clean 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 this 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 state 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 material 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's a definite need to undertake more such in-depth studies. In the absence of such studies, most of the knowledge in this area come 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

Causes of Growing Population

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Demographic causes	Economic causes	Educational Causes	Psychological causes	Recreational causes	Religious causes	Social causes

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.

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.

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.

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.

With 20-30 per cent of males and 10 per cent of all adolescent females estimated to be sexually active before marriage, there is clearly a need for such services.

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.
- (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.

10. Large Family Concept

For a long time, 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.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

1. *Backward Agricultural Economy*, In India, which practiced agriculture of the traditional type for a number of decades, a large number of children was considered as an advantage. Even if a few of them did not survive beyond ten or fifteen years, certain functions of economic nature like tending cattle or carrying out simple tasks in the Fields could be fulfilled by the younger ones. By all means emphasis was having more numbers.

2. *Low Standard of Living*, Traditionally rural society in India was not very particular in having a higher standard of living. People were prepared to share their resources. No particular consideration was given to the quantum of each share. This led to small agricultural holdings.

EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

Two of the most important factors are as under:

1. *General Illiteracy*: Lack of mass education has been undoubtedly an important factor in having large families. Without adequate literacy and education, people remain unacquainted with the benefits of increased knowledge. They believe in superstitions and sometimes think that large families are the gifts of God. They become fatalists.

2. *Neglect of Girls and Women's Education*: Although there has been a steady growth in this context, yet the situation cannot be said to quite satisfactory. Still nearly 46 per cent of females are illiterate (2001 census figures). The situation in rural areas, hilly areas, slums and

tribal areas is particularly disappointing.

Lack of education makes it difficult to communicate ideas about family planning.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

1. *Satisfaction through Sharing Resources:* Sharing the resources with new entrants in the family gave the members a social pleasure which in part compensated them for the lack of material resources. This tendency also developed among them a fatalistic attitude.

2. *Attitude of Dependence:* People in the past had little hope for a brighter future on account of their stagnating situation. They lost their initiative. Psychologically they resigned themselves to something beyond their control.

RECREATIONAL FACTORS

1. *Lack of Means of Entertainment:* A substantial section of people for years have remained without adequate recreational facilities. This factor became responsible for them indulging in sexual activity and desiring pleasure from it.

2. *More Leisure Time:* Subsistence agriculture is the occupation of nearly 70 per cent of Indian population. Agriculture is unable to provide employment throughout the year. Thus there is lot of leisure time at their disposal. The easiest pas time for them has been to occupy themselves in sexual activities, resulting in increased population.

RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Following are the main factors:

1. *Preference for Sons:* It is believed by the Hindus in particular that their last rites should be performed by the sons, otherwise there will be no 'mukti' (salvation) for them and they will not merit 'swarg' (heaven).

2. *God Given Children:* There is a religious belief among some sections of the society, that it is the will of god that has bestowed children to them.

SOCIAL FACTORS

Important factors are:

1. *Universality of Marriage.*

2. *Joint Family System,*

3. *Social Stigma.*

Two most important and comprehensive definitions which explain the concept of population

education more clearly and comprehensively are discussed below.

Prof. Sloan Wayland explains the concept and meaning of population education in these words, “Regardless the terms used, we are concerned about the situation in the formal system of instructional settings in which young people will come to understand the circumstances which led to the adoption of family planning as public policy and to understand that for the family and the nation, family planning is possible and desirable. This would include an understanding of the relationship of population dynamics to economic and social development of the country and the implications of family size for the quality of life of the individual family. The particular instructional activities at any given school level and in any particular subject field, would of course, be devised in a manner which would be pedagogically sound and appropriate for the particular society.” (Report of the National Seminar on Population Education, Bombay, NCERT, 1969)

POPULATION EDUCATION AND SEX EDUCATION

In the words of D. Gopal Rao, the difference is shown as, “The need for population education mainly arose because of the consequences of the imbalance between the population and world resources. Family life education in the west grew out of the growing evidence of the disintegration of the family, whereas sex education developed as a reaction to an increase in general diseases and out of wedlock pregnancies.”

In sex education, the stress is on the individual whereas in population education, it is the interaction between the individual, family and society.

POPULATION EDUCATION AND FAMILY PLANNING

Taylor Daniel in his book *Developing a Foundation for Population Education* (1968) stresses the motivational relationship between a population education programme and the practice of family planning.

Population has a two-fold task: it is both motivational (encouraging people to adopt family planning) and instructional (teaching students in particular and people in general).

Burbson considers it relevant to include both sex education and family life education within the scope of education.

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.

WHY DO WE START POPULATION EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

Population education is given in schools because of the following reasons:

1. School is a social institution started by the society for serving the changing needs of the society.
2. Schools are the appropriate places for laying the foundations of a well ordered life.
3. In the plastic period of their life, students (future parents) can acquire, develop and strengthen knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding population education.
4. Schools have a tradition of being future oriented.
5. Schools are engaged in adopting new inventions and chances

ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN POPULATION EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Important functions of the government in Central Government in population education are listed below.

- 1) To diagnose and appraise the existing educational system in relation to population

education.

- 2) To diagnose and appraise the need and importance of population education in relation to the economic and social situation.
- 3) To assess the financial resources available for population education.
- 4) To establish relevant quantitative projections in the light of economic, demographic and social factors of economic.
- 5) To set basic long term and short term targets of population education.
- 6) To set basic and special objectives of population education.
- 7) To formulate the contents, methods and structure of population education programme.
- 8) To co-ordinate with other national plans.
- 9) To ensure inter-ministerial co-operation in the implementation of the programme at the central and state level.
- 10) To ensure participation of non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).
- 11) To implement plans and initiate appropriate action for the same i.e. budget, contracts, etc.
- 12) To evaluate the plan and revise it in the light of implementation on the basis of new economic, demographic, educational, political and technological developments.
- 13) To maintain necessary contact with national groups of demographers, i.e. economists, educators and sociologists with a view to ensure the effective use of resources in population education through research findings.
- 14) To maintain contact with international organizations working in the field of population education and allied fields.
- 15) To ensure political commitment to population education programmes.
- 16) To make adequate and effective use of mass media and electronic media in promoting population education concept, contents and methods.
- 17) To establish appropriate monitoring system.

NEED OF STARTING POPULATION EDUCATION IN SCHOOL AND ROLE OF VARIOUS AGENCIES AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Role of NGOs in the implementation of population education programme has been accepted all over the world including India. Population education is an area ideally suited to NGOs work. The programme of population education to be implemented is of such dimensions that their mobilization will play a crucial role in the success of our plans.

Regarding the role of the voluntary organisations, the UNO International Conference on Population and Development (1994) observed, “the nongovernmental” organisations are important voices of the people and their association and networks provide an effective and efficient means of better focusing local and national initiatives and addressing pressing population environmental migration and economic and social development concerns.”

The conference further observed, “non-governmental organisations, especially those working in the field of sexual and reproduction health and family planning etc. have increased knowledge and services which will contribute towards successful implementation of population and development policies.”

The conference also recommended that the project-oriented sector should consider how it might assist non-project NGOs in playing a wider role in society by enhancing or creating mechanisms to provide financial and other support to NGOs.

Main Functions of the Non-government Organisations in Population Education

1. To take responsibility in well-defined areas of population education for promoting it.
2. To organise programmes of population education in selected territorial areas.
3. To organise population education programmes catering to slum and other backward areas.
4. To undertake resource development activities including population education curriculum development, production of teaching and learning material, training of family planning education workers, preparing audio-visual aids including establishment of State Resource Centres, District Resource Units, etc.
5. To take up programmes of experimentation, innovation, and research including application and technology and pedagogic for improvement of population education programmes.
6. To take up programme evaluation including support to institutions population education research.
7. To help in the creation of environment, through support to the media, folk, and traditional media, organisation of 'jathas' etc.

8. To organise symposia, seminars and conferences etc. for the promotion of population education.
9. To train youth and other animators to facilitate implementation family planning programmes.
10. To undertake such other activities as may be appropriate for the objectives of the National Population Education Policy.
11. To make the optimum use of government grants and submit timely reports and statements of accounts etc.

Five-Year Plans and Non-Governmental and Voluntary Organisations. It is accepted that NGOs have been playing a very important role for the welfare of deprived sections in all areas of national life. Accordingly, NGOs have been helped by the government in a number of ways in the Five Year Plans.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare has installed the following programmes involving the NGOs:

1. Revamping of Mini Family Welfare Centre in areas where couple protection rates are below 35 years.
2. Involvement of Indian System of Medicine (ISM) and Homeopathy System.
3. Area specific LEC activities through NGOs.
4. Establishment of Standing Committees for Voluntary Actions (SCOVAs) to fund NGO projects promptly.
5. Identification of government/NGOs for training of NGOs in project formulation, programme management and monitoring.
6. The Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India provides grants, assistance and guidance to NGOs working in the field of adult education to include popularisation of population education as one of their activities.

Important NGOs in the Field of Population Education

- 1) Family Planning Association of India (FPAI), RK. Puram, New Delhi.
- 2) Adult Education Association. This organisation has established a National Documentation Centre on Literacy and Population Education, Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi. It was set up by UNFPA.

- 3) Association for Social Health in India, New Delhi.
- 4) Population Services International (PSI), New Delhi.

APPROACHES OF POPULATION EDUCATION:-

As a result of recognition of education as an effective instrument for bringing about change in the behaviour and attitude toward population issues, the next question that arises is a to what approaches or strategies should be adopted disseminate these messages to the target group. Different types of approaches have been adopted by different countries in Asia for developing curriculum in population education. Population education being of recent origin has no clear content boundaries. Mainly two types approaches are used in most of the countries.

1. Separate Subject Approach
2. Integrated Approach.

In integrated approach, population education becomes a subject area along which with other subjects are taught at one or more grade level.

Separate Subject Approach:- The curriculum of population education can be introduced as a separate subject in the school curriculum by the following three way.

- a) Independent Subject;
- b) Brief Curriculum; and
- c) As a compulsory subject.

A) Independent Subject:- In this approach of separate subject, population education is introduced as a separate or independent subject then the curriculum is developed. The advantage of this type of approach is that we can move from simple to complex by deciding population related facts. This type curriculum is beneficial for the secondary, senior secondary and teacher training institutions. Through a separate subject approach, the description of the subject possible and the knowledge also get enriched. If population education is introduced as a subject for elementary classes there will be burden of one more subject on small children. But the benefit of introducing population education as an independent subject will be that the learners will develop an insight about population related matters. The thoughts and attitudes of students get a definite directed and the gaps created by integrated approach are not seen in this approach.

B) Brief Curriculum: In this approach of separate subject, the population education brief curriculum is added to the subjects like general science or environment or social

science. In brief curriculum approach, population education is taught weekly or some time or continuously for some time. Less weight age is given to population education compared to the main subject. But if we give less weight age importance to the main subject, the feelings of the students having faith in that particular main subject got hurt. But this is possible with the subjects like social studies, General science etc. These brief curriculums cannot be added with any subject.

- C) **Compulsory Subject:** Population education can be introduced as a totally new and compulsory subject in teacher training institutions, Universities etc. This subject should be a compulsory separate subject in teacher training institutes in pre-service training. In institutes where there is totally freedom for curriculum arrangement, population education can be introduced as a totally separate subject.

In India, population education has not been introduced as separate subject in the school, rather the strategy of incorporation has been adopted. Population education contents have been incorporated into the syllabus and the textbooks of selected subjects like mathematics, social studies, general science and environmental studies at primary level.

The world opinion also is not in favour of a separate course. According to Viederman, "A survey of the sparse literature in the field and discussion with its proponents suggest that separate population education course or a series of course be included in elementary and secondary programme awareness. The curriculum is already overcrowded, the demand from the traditional disciplines for more time as the boundaries of knowledge are pushed back generally preclude the possibility of adding a new population course. Furthermore, children will probably learn better if they are confronted with population relevant material both throughout their school curriculum and during their entire period of schooling population education is multi-disciplinary in natural and related to various subject areas."

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.

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