

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of population has attracted the attention of a number of scholars. It figures in the works of Plato and Aristotal who made references to it in considering the size of the city-states in which man could make the best contribution to the 'highest good'. Bahadur K.P.¹ has quoted the statement of Aristotle that 'the state comes into existence only when the population has grown large enough to live as a political association.....but there must be some point at which it stops increasing....the best limit of population is the largest number requisite for self sufficiency...' Both Plato and Aristotle wrote of restrictions to population. Plato considered that birth should be restricted if needful by restraining the production of those in whom generation is affluent. But in fact large and growing populations are found in every country since seventeenth century. Most of the people were thinking to increase power and wealth.

The well known Utopian school of philosophy, Malthus T.R.² believed that man's sexual passion and his other basic

1. Bahadur, K.P. : 'Population Crisis in India', p. 1.

2. Malthus, T.R. : 'An Essay on the Principles of Population', p. 8.

impulses likely to remain what they had always been. Increase in numbers was depend on increase in the means of subsistence because most people live hand to mouth. Unless there was more production and consequently a rise in the subsistence level, no improvement was possible. They believed in the dictum that man's ability to reproduce was greater than his ability to produce. Mathus argued that some powerful checks are required to keep the population from growing beyond the means of subsistence, or else it will lead to 'misery'.

Malthus had thought about motivation long before it became an integral part of the family planning programme. He realised that educating people into family planning was a difficult task but had none the less to be successfully done as it was essential to make people realise the need for small families. He brought the study of population within the field of science. Malthus elucidated the factors determining population growth and considered the relationship between fertility and economic progress. Man's increase in numbers was inversely related to his food supply. When the food supply was bettered, population declined. According to Doubleday, T.³ 'People with a high degree of education know the advantages of family planning and of limited families and so they deliberately have fewer children. He further said that poor and uneducated people

3. Doubleday, T. : 'The True Law of Population', pp. 5-7.

impulsively more reproductive. According to Brentano, L.⁴
'Man is always fond of pleasure. The poorer classes have less avenues of enjoyment and so they make up for it by sexual intercourse and thus procreate more, whereas wealthier classes have a number of pleasures and can find them beyond sex also, as for example art, intellectual pursuits, sports etc. These pleasures are possible only when a man is rich enough to afford them, and for that he must have a small family.

World population is increasing at a tremendous pace primarily because of the fall in the death rate without corresponding drop in birth rate in most countries of Asia. While western countries have been able to control births and have economically and socially well developed as compared to Asian countries.

As far as India is concerned it is the second most populous country in the world after China. The population of India has risen from 238 millions in 1901 to 685 millions in 1981. Table No. 1 shows the population of India from 1901 to 1981 based on decadal censuses.

4. Quoted by Bahadur K.P. : Op.cit., p.17.

TABLE No.1
POPULATION OF INDIA - 1901 TO 1981⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1901	238,396,327
1911	252,093,390
1921	251,321,213
1931	278,977,238
1941	318,660,580
1951	361,088,090
1961	439,234,771
1971	548,159,652
1981	685,184,692

The above table shows, that prior to 1921, the population of India grew at a slow rate because of famines and epidemics in various parts of the country. But after 1921 the rapid population increase poses a serious threat to development efforts of India. According to Agarwala⁶ the current population growth rate is nearly 1.3 million persons per month. The table shows that after 1921, India's population increased significantly by

5. Source : Agarwala, S.N. : 'India's Population Problems', Third edition, p. 52.

6. Ibid 4, p.48.

roughly 28, 40, 42, 78, 109 and 137 million during the 1921-31, 1931-41, 1941-51, 1951-61, 1961-71 and 1971-81 decades respectively. The rapid increase in population after 1921 is not due to any spurt in the birth rate but due to a decline in the death rate as it is identified in Table No. 2.

TABLE No.2

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES IN INDIA - 1901-81⁷

Decade	Birth Rate	Death Rate
1901-11	49.2	42.6
1911-21	48.1	48.6
1921-31	46.4	36.3
1931-41	45.2	31.2
1941-51	39.9	27.4
1951-61	41.7	22.8
1961-71	41.2	19.0
1971-81	37.2	15.0

Control of epidemics and endemic diseases, improvement in drinking water facilities, improved drainage system, increase in medical and health facilities, use of antibiotics and introduction of new drugs, development of a more effective food

7. Ibid 4, p. 54.

distribution system, avoidance of famine catastrophes of the past and improvement in transport and communication facilities have led to a decline in death rate. Though the problem of rapid population growth was created by rapid and unprecedented decline in mortality rate in India from 1921-31 decade. It is not possible and certainly desirable to reduce the rate of growth by increasing the rate of mortality. Day by day mortality rate will decline as long as medical sciences develop. The proper way of reducing the birth rate is to control the fertility rate by adopting various natural and artificial means and methods of birth control.

'Demography studies the size distribution and composition of population. It studies components of population change like mortality, fertility, mobility and migration' as explained by Hauser and Duncan⁸ Demography is mainly social science that deals with the whole population or a section of population rather than individuals. Hence, it is akin and allied to part of other social sciences like Sociology, Politics, Economics and History. But demography as a science attained its maturity only after the first quarter of the twentieth century. Problem oriented studies dealing with the inter-relationship between population and other social factors form an integral part of the scope of demography.

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8. ICSSR - A Survey of Research in Demography, p. 21.

Prior to the middle of the 1930's there was little discussion in India about its population problems, because the rate of population growth did not appear alarming to the policy makers. In 1935 some interest was generated and the first Indian population conference was held in 1936 under the auspices of the University of Lucknow. At this conference a paper entitled 'Future Growth of India's Population'⁹ was presented.

The Second All India Conference on Population and the first Family Hygiene Conference was held in Bombay in 1938. An interesting controversy regarding the rate of population growth ensued at this conference. So also in 1938 the National Planning Committee, set-up by the All India Congress Committee under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, appointed a sub-committee on population and thus recognised the importance of the study of population in the context of India's economic development.

The Indian Statistical Institute under the directorship of Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis had developed an interest in population problem and had developed an interest in population problem and had begun collecting data on fertility through sample surveys in 1937. The period 1935-40 marks the beginning of interest in population problem in India, although demographic analysis was still in elementary stage.

9. ICSSR : Ibid, p. 2.

The period between 1940 and 1956 is noted for the interest which the Government of India started taking in the field of population. In 1943, Government of India appointed the Health Survey and Development Committee, known as 'Bhore Committee', which made a comprehensive survey of India's health needs and also provided relevant data on population.

In 1944, then the department of Education, Health and Lands set up the 'Population Data Committee' under the Chairmanship of W.M. Yeatts to advise the Government of India on the available data relating to growth of population.

Interest in population problems further increased with the appointment by a resolution of the Government of India, of the Planning Commission in India in March 1950.

Within the past three and half decades, practically in every country changes have occurred in every aspects of life. Perhaps the most significant has been the recognition that rapid rates of population growth influence every sector of economic and social development. Population Policy is now rapidly becoming an accepted part of development programmes. World wide interest in the problems evolving from rapid population growth has been promoted by two major considerations, one, an increasing concern about the relation between population growth and available resources and second, a growing awareness that unrestricted population growth tends to impose a strong constraint on the

standard of living, happiness and even survival of mankind through the spiralling consumption of the fixed quantity of resources. Developing countries, like India, have come to realise that population growth rates have negated major benefits which might accrue from the developmental process; and for a country to even maintain its standard of living on a per capita basis. It is necessary that social and economic development must match population growth. Economic planners and governmental administrators in developing countries have come to realise that rapid population growth is not a simple problem of the relationship between man and the land he occupies. It is a multitude of various dependent problems e.g. employment, housing, health services, transportation, industrialization and agricultural productivity etc. Almost every country is in some measure realising its evil consequences. Today most of the developing countries have population policies favouring the birth control. Population policy concentrates on family planning and family welfare. The goal of family welfare programme is not merely to reduce, increase or stabilise the number of people, but to make possible a richer and fuller quality of life for an increasing proportion of population.

After the outbreak of the second world war, not only number of sovereign and independent countries were increased but population of each independent country has increased with a very high speed. The rapid increase in population pose a serious

threat to development efforts of developing and under-developed countries. The population problem is not merely quantitative concept but it has a qualitative significance.

In developing countries like India, married women are characterised by continuous nutritional drain from repeated pregnancies and lactation resulting in maternal depletion and increased risk of maternal mortality. Premature curtailment of breast feeding of an infant by an intervening pregnancies are one of the important factors responsible for high infant mortality. Children who survive in families, where there are too many children arriving too fast are likely to be stunted prematurely in their growth and undeveloped due to lack of nutritive food when malnutrition is wide spread.

Therefore a reduction in the rate of population growth would definitely help in accelerating the pace of economic development. But before that it is essential to know the various factors responsible for rapid population growth. Various demographers in India have explained the factors responsible for population growth with their sample studies. Generally, rise in birth rate and fall in death rate lead to higher growth of population. Progeny is not doubt is a biological process but excess population is related to socio-cultural factors. For example early marriage i.e. marriage before puberty or age at marriage may cause higher population growth rate. It has been

assumed that sex ratio in a particular socio-cultural community may affect on type of marriage system i.e. polyandry or polygamy, which lead to multiplicity of children. As far as education is concerned, it is found that the population growth rate is found more among illiterate community than the literate. On the basis of income or economic position of the members of the community, the higher population growth rate is found more among economically backward community than the economically sound people. Religion may also affect on population growth rate. Table No. 3 shows the growth rate of population in different religious communities in India in decades from 1901 to 1971.

TABLE No.3

GROWTH RATE OF POPULATION IN DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS¹⁰
COMMUNITIES IN INDIA FROM 1901 TO 1971

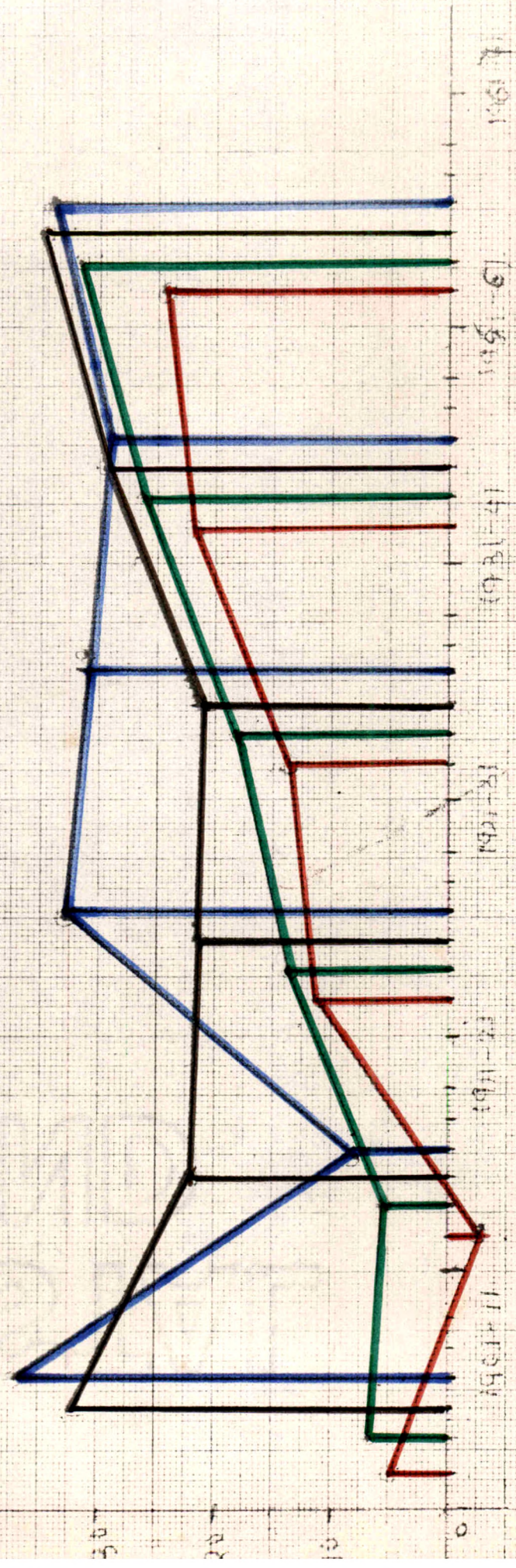
Religion	1901 to 1911	1911 to 1921	1921 to 1931	1931 to 1941	1951 to 1961	1961 to 1971
Hindus	5.0	-0.4	10.4	12.75	20.29	23.69
Muslim	6.7	5.1	13.0	18.51	25.61	30.85
Christians	32.6	22.6	32.5	20.75	27.38	32.60
Sikhs	37.3	7.4	33.9	31.27	25.13	32.28
Jains	NA	NA	NA	NA	25.17	28.48

10. Calculation by researcher.

Table No-3

Decade growth rates of population of India based on religious communities from 1901-1971

- Hindu
- Muslim
- Christian
- Sikh



The above figures show that the population growth rate is more among minority religious communities than the majority community i.e. Hindus. The present study is related to outlook towards family planning of different religious communities in Ajara. Hence it is essential to know the outlook towards the progeny and the family planning of different religious communities. Unless the birth rate of different religious communities in India declines substantially in future India would not develop on her own initiative. Hence Government of India has adopted the family planning programme as a national programme from 1950.