

**Programme:** Master in Sociology  
Postgraduate Department of Sociology,  
Patna University

**Semester II**

### **Course: CC-6 (Sociology of Population Studies)**

## **Unit-IV (Part B) Population as constraint and source of development**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- To understand population as a constraint to development.
- To understand population as a source of development.

### **Introduction:**

Population of a country affects its development. In what way the growth of population is taking place is important in making it either a constraint or a resource for the country. This unit focuses on these aspects of population.

### **Population as a Constraint:**

Ever increasing population poses many challenges and difficulties in growth of country's development and becomes an obstacle in effective implementation of development programmes.

- ♣ **Constraint to per capita income:** Per capita income is calculated by evenly dividing a country's national income by its population. Thus, per capita income is dependent upon population growth. In developing nations, if the population of the country increases, there is a clear pressure on the per capita income of the country. There is extra stress on government and development agencies to produce more and more sources of income and generate more and more sources of output. The effect of population growth on per capita growth is mostly negative. The implication is that if the developing countries want to increase their rate of growth of per capita income relative to the developed nations, they must limit their population growth.
- ♣ **Constraint to equal employment opportunities:** It has been observed many a times in India that there are too many eligible seekers for a single job opportunity or a source of income which is because sources of employment generation are increasing with the pace of population and there is huge competition for acquiring good posts and grabbing profitable opportunities. This way, not all the candidates get into the aimed field and often work at poor salaries. Also, many of the over qualified people work on poor wages and are involved in low income generating tasks. This in turn increases distress among them. Many of the young, capable minds, when fail to grab multiple opportunities, often take wrong path and choose unfair means to earn money.
- ♣ **Unplanned migration:** Migration is also a result of shortage of income generating opportunities due to overpopulation. As the population is increasing and sources of employment are limited, more and more people take their routes towards cities or other states in order to earn livelihood. A large number of people are forced to do so because of the shortage of employment opportunities in undeveloped regions. Majority of the persons leaving their place of origin are not very clear about their future and settlement plans; however they, under the distress leave their native places in search of better

livelihood opportunities. This in turn results in stressed minds, low wages, poor living conditions and increase in crime graph in the society.

- ♣ ***Constraint towards 100 per cent education:*** With ever increasing population in India, it becomes a challenge to universalize elementary and secondary education and provide the right to education to all children, achieve full literacy for adults, upscale higher and technical education and expand opportunities for vocational training. In addition, the Government is also faced with the challenges of drawing up inclusive plans to bridge regional, social, gender and economic disparities which would provide equality of opportunity as well as a productive and meaningful life for all. A related challenge is to ensure availability of funds for ensuring up-gradation and strengthening of education infrastructure required to meet the desired objectives.
- ♣ ***Constraint to agricultural development:*** In under-developed countries like India, people mostly live in rural areas. Agriculture is their main occupation. So with population growth the land man ratio is distributed. Pressure of population on land rises because land supply is inelastic. It adds to disguised unemployment and reduces per capita productivity further. As the number of landless worker increases, their wages fall. Thus, low per capita, productivity reduces the propensity to save and invest. As a result, the use of improved technology and other improvements on land are not possible. Capital formation in agriculture suffers and the economy is bogged down to the subsistence level. In the other aspect, the problem of feeding growing population becomes serious due to acute shortage of food products.
- ♣ ***Constraint in health welfare:*** The rapid growth in population is stressing health care resources the world over. Population is growing fastest and health care tends to be even less available in developing nations like India. More number of hospitals, doctors, nurses, lab and x-ray equipment, medications, surgical facilities may be needed. There is greater need for resources required to prevent and treat illness. Health care is one of biggest challenges facing the Health Ministry of India.  
Another manner in which the population influences demand in healthcare resources is in terms of the age of the population. The greatest need for healthcare comes in the last few years of a person's life. According to the joint report of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Help Age International, India has around 100 million elderly at present and the number is expected to increase to 323 million, constituting 20 per cent of the total population, by 2050. Elderly people tend to have far greater health care needs than young people. According to the article written by Anand Kumar (2013) in Indian Express, there are about 6-6.5 lakh doctors available, but India would need about four lakh more by 2020 to maintain the required ratio of one doctor per 1,000 people.
- ♣ ***Constraint to fair deals:*** Corruption in the public sector the misuse of public office for private gain is often viewed as exacerbating conditions of poverty (low income, poor health and education status) in India. Ever-increasing population leaves few options for people for earning livelihood as there is a great competition for a single source of income in almost all the fields. Due to pressure of earning and making money by any way, corruption and false means of obtaining income have become prevalent in the country. Corruption cases, scams and scandals and frauds for extra income are seen everywhere in the news. A study conducted by Transparency International in year 2005 found that more than 62 per cent of Indians had first-hand experience of paying bribes or influence peddling to get jobs done in public offices successfully. Corruption in India is a major issue that adversely affects its economy.
- ♣ ***Constraint to safe social environment:*** As the burden on sources of income has increased due to increased population in every field, people in search of livelihood move away from their native lands and conflicts of cultures from migrants are often

seen. There is increase in number of crimes like burglary, thefts, arising due to poor economic conditions, unemployment. Crime has become part of everyday life and every aspect of survival has been affected due to this. A huge rise has been observed in the number of crimes against women.

- ♣ ***Constraint to environment sustainability:*** Rapid population growth leads to environmental damage. Scarcity of land due to rapidly increasing population pushes large number of people to ecologically sensitive areas such as hillsides and tropical forests. It leads to over grazing and cutting of forests for cultivation leading to severe environmental damage. Moreover, the pressure of rapid growth of population forces people to obtain more food for themselves and their livestock. As a result, they over-cultivate the semi-arid areas. This leads to desertification over the long run when land stops yielding anything. Over the past 30 years, while Asia's total population increased by about 68 per cent, the total area of land under cultivation increased by only 21 per cent—from 355 to 430 million hectares. This expansion has been largely at the expense of lowland forests.
- ♣ ***Constraint in reducing poverty:*** Population pressure is major contributing factor to poverty. Population pressure leads not only to land fragmentation and to a reduction in the average size of landholdings, but also to landlessness, either through the formation of new landless households or because very small holders are vulnerable to indebtedness or calamity.
- ♣ ***Overuse of natural resources:*** India is the fastest-growing region in the world. This economic and industrial development is inevitably accompanied by changing patterns of consumption. The demand for energy has grown quickly in India than in any other region of the world. This leads to depletion of natural resources like air, water, wood, oil, wind energy, hydro-electric energy, iron and coal.
- ♣ ***Constraint to healthy environmental conditions:*** Demands and requirements of increasing population leads to more number of vehicles, transports systems, industrialization and urbanization, all of these factors in turn lead to heavy air pollution. Asian cities are among the most polluted in the world (ADB2001). Suspended particulate levels in Delhi are many times higher than recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Other types of air pollution, including emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), are also far above levels recommended by WHO. In the countryside, nitrates from animal waste and chemical fertilizers pollute the soil and water and in the cities, the air is contaminated with lead from vehicle exhaust. In India's largest cities- Mumbai and Delhi-about one-half of children under age 3 show signs of harmful exposure to lead, defined as 10 or more micrograms of lead per decilitre of blood (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000). Such elevated levels of lead in the blood can be harmful to the developing brain and central nervous system of young children and can cause damage to other body organs.
- ♣ ***Increasing delinquency:*** Due to increasing population and earning challenges, a large number of people, including juveniles suffer from distressed mental states. In general, the pressure of developing a good career, bright future and high incomes result in lot of pressure on the young minds. The conditions of too many competitions at workplace, educational institute and pressurized conditions at home lead juveniles mind towards crimes and following wrong methods for earning money. Although increasing population not the only reason for juvenile delinquency, however, it is a major cause.

- ♣ ***Increasing conflicts among families:*** Increasing number of population results in arising of conflicts and disagreements among family members, people at workplace and in other relations. These conflicts are results of extreme pressure of performance and earning better livelihood and less number of amenities available. People often become part of competitive race towards achieving a particular asset or facility. Since the seekers are much more than the availabilities, conflicts are apt to rise.

### **Population as a source of development:**

Generally, we understand that population means a collection of people. Population means the collection of people living in a given geographic area or territory. This is how it is used in the census. The collection of people is seen and understood primarily in terms of number. But population is also considered as a resource, a human resource.

What is resource? It is something that can be used and reused like furniture, books, notebooks, pen, cups and others and it is the people who with their physical and mental efforts convert the natural resources like trees, minerals, metals into various goods of utility. But, if resources are things that are used and reused, how can population be considered a resource? We all know that the grains which are cultivated in the fields, the minerals that are mined and the goods which are manufactured in factories are all produced by people. People of the country produce and develop various facilities and services to make their lives comfortable. The facilities, whether these are means of transport and communication, schools, colleges, hospitals, electricity producing units, infrastructure for irrigation and others, play a significant role in the development of a country.

For producing and developing all such facilities and converting them into useful resources, human beings play the role of the best resource. Without human beings, other resources cannot be developed and utilized properly. Therefore, the number as well as the quality of people, collectively, is the real and ultimate resource of a country.

In view of the above, the sheer number of people, which is determined by census conducted at periodic intervals, may be a liability, but the qualitative population becomes the human capital of a country. For converting the number into capital, the country has to invest a lot in the form of improving the health and nutritional status of the people, their education and specialized training and their overall quality of life.

The investments for improving the quality of the people made by the state as well as the society matter a lot. It is essential that every individual develops to the fullest capability and is engaged in the development process of the country. It is therefore important to understand that people as human resource are both an object of development and also a participant in development. Let us see few important attributes of population that makes it a source of development.

- ✚ Population growth does not merely involve increasing mouths to feed, but it also involves increasing hands which can be utilised for productive works.
- ✚ In spite of plenty of resources, economic development was held back by the paucity of population.
- ✚ When market is extended, division of labour also extends and the marginal efficiency of capital can be maintained by population growth.
- ✚ High growth rate of population tends to lower wages thereby increased profits which in turn increases investment, income and output.

- ✚ Cheap labour for production makes labour – intensive process lucrative. This increasing number of labour can be trained for skill formation which can be utilised for economic development.
- ✚ In increasing population, the number of young men in labour forces also increase which is favourable for utilization of resources on one hand and changing the attitudes of people on the other.
- ✚ Population growth leads to higher social mobility by shifting labour gradually from agriculture to industry, thus contributing in development.
- ✚ Population growth due to immigration brings stock of capital and skill which are helpful for development.
- ✚ Agricultural development is both a cause and an effect of population growth. It can be done by many people together giving hands to different tasks at different growth period of a crop or any product.