

POPULATION EXPLOSION

Dancing around the fire is not the solution to any problem. One should try to see beneath the surface in order to grasp an idea about the basic issue. Despite a stream of strong words and Family Planning Programmes introduced by the governments of many countries of the world, population is still increasing at an alarming rate especially in the third world countries.

Pakistan is also facing the dragon of over population. This problem has given rise to multidimensional problems in our country. At present we are scarce in resources and it has become difficult for the government to meet the rapidly growing needs of the huge population with its scarce resources. The growth rate of Pakistan is very high and is among the highest in the world. Since partition in 1947, the population of Pakistan has become more than tripled. Every year almost four million people are added to already over burdened economy. This yearly increase in our population is equal to the total populations of any countries. This rapidly growing population has really created an obstacle in the way of our economic progress. The massively increasing population has almost outstripped the resources in production, in facilities and in job opportunities.

It is estimated that if the present growth rate prevails, then the population of Pakistan will be double by the year 2020. This is, in fact, an alarming situation. Even today at the population of 140 million it has become difficult for us to provide basic necessities of life to the majority of the population. A great number of people have no access to the health services. The safe drinking water is also not available at many places, many people do not have the sanitation facilities, a lot of children are not provided the primary education and illiteracy rate is very high among the adults. According to a report issued by United Nations about four million people are living below the poverty line.

The genesis of the situation reflects some obvious reasons. A major reason is the tradition of having joint family system. This system puts less burden of bringing up of children on the parents. As the parents have minimum expenditure so they tend to produce more children.

Another important factor is that majority of the population of our country lives in the rural areas. In these regions agriculture is the only profession and in agricultural processes, children are considered very helpful for the parents. This factor encourages the parents to have more children.

Then there is the question of male child in our society. The male baby is welcomed more warmly rather than a baby girl. This creates a desire for having a male baby at least, This factor acts an incentive for more and more children till

suitable number of male babies is achieved.

In addition to these the early age marriages in the rural areas, prove potential large size family makers. It has been observed that such marriages produce at least seven children.

Then it comes to the Islamic laws. According to these the widows are allowed to marry again and thus continue to act as procreation agents. Along with this the polygamy is also allowed and is practiced in Islam. This gives rise to an obvious result of multiple issues.

The Islamic viewpoint of the people is also one of the major causes for the over population. It is a matter of faith with the Muslims that Almighty God provides the needs of every child and the parents are having no obligation in this regard. The Muslims are staunch believer in fate and so they do not follow family planning programmes. These programmes are considered against the spirit of Islam. At many places most of the elders in the rural areas categorize it as an instrument of vagrancy and waywardness. They are of the view that such programmes give rise to immorality among the young boys and girls.

Another reason can be considered is the hot and pleasant climatic conditions of Pakistan. The environment of our country helps the early maturity of boys and girls and they become capable of raising a family at an early stage. Along with this the recreational facilities are almost non-existent. Conjugal recreation is the only alternative for married people.

The rapidly growing population is having a lot of adverse effects on our country. All over the country poverty as increased and people do not have the basic necessities of life.

There is a shortfall in educational institutions and class rooms are over crowded. It has become very difficult to get the child admitted to government schools. Due to this fact high fee charging intuitions spring up. These intuitions implement their own syllabus which is completely different from the course of government schools. This creates a clear distinction between the students of government and private schools. This also gives rise to tow educational systems working simultaneously in the county.

Due to high growth rate of population the health care facilities have become inadequate. Child and maturity centers are also lacking. The standards of food have been fallen and due to this the number of patients has increased.

Another problem which results from over population is that ever increasing population creates housing and settlement problems. It becomes very difficult for

the individual and the society to overcome them.

The great number of people is responsible for making the parks and gardens ugly spots. The reactions facilities are decreasing in this way.

The unemployment increase. It becomes very difficult for the employer to provide social fringe benefits to the employees. These employees are often deprived off from their rights like pensions, medical facilities children's education etc.

The high growth rate of population makes our society a consumption oriented society. This is because more natural resources are to be consumed for more people. These resources once used, cannot be renewed. So we have to import these terms at the cost of foreign exchange which increases our import bill thus widens the gap between imports and exports.

The increase in population means an increase in the crime rate. When the people do not get the jobs, when they do not get the proper facilities, they get frustrated and become revengeful against the society. Due to this factor the crime rate increases. The rise in crimes makes an atmosphere of fear. The people are oscillating between uncertainty and fear.

Dens traffic on roads cause a lot of accidents in which many precious lives are being lost. Due to high growth rate of population the unlawful settlements are formed. These type of settlements give rise to many problems . As no health facilities are available the are , so many disease are caused.

In late 1990's the government of Pakistan started two programmes to control the over population. These were names as primary health care and population planning. These were implemented through the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Population Welfare respectively. These are planned to proveddoor to door services especially in the rural areas. Many lady workers have been given jobs for this purpose. These women have been provided sufficient trainings. The aim of these programmes is to create awareness about the family planning programmes. For this purpose about ten thousands persons have already been inducted by population welfare departments.

As the dragon of over population is digesting our already scarce resources at a massive speed. So our government should go for the remedial measures. In this regard the following suggestions may prove very fruitful and result oriented.

Late age marriages should be encouraged and the early age marriages should be condemned very seriously. This will become very useful because the early age marriages usually gives rise to large families.

The services of ulemas should be utilized in order to convince the people that family planning programmes are not contrary to the Islamic values. In rural areas the people are highly under influence of the religious leaders so their words spoken in the favor of family planning may yield the desired results.

As the girls today are to become mothers in future so the high literacy rate in females may become very important. An educated female will be aware of the consequences of over population. In this regard the sex-education should be provided to all the graduates so that the problem of over population can be countered in a comprehensive manner.

Conferences and other programmes to create awareness in the general public should be held at all levels. These programmes will become very helpful in explaining the adverse effects of over population to the people. This might make the brain wash of the people.

The electronic media should also be utilized. The advertisements through television might convey the message very easily. Along with this non-government organizations should do some activities which may become helpful in conveying the message to the general public.

A day should be celebrated at National level with the name of National Population Day. This should be done on the pattern of the "World Population Day" which is being celebrated on the 11th of July each year. These types of activities play an important role in creating awareness about the subject matter.

So, conclude in this way that the dragon of population has become a serious threat for the prosperity of our country. Now the time has come that if we want to make Pakistan a State where integrity, solidarity and prosperity will be all around, then we should not leave any stone unturned in reducing the population growth rate. This reduction in population will lead the country towards a stage where it will be able to provide all basic necessities of life to everyone.