

POPULATION EXPLOSION

1. INTRODUCTION:

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apidly increasing population is the most gigantic, formidable and intractable problem, which the world faces today. Malthus stated that in the race between increasing population and increasing production, population must eventually win. Those of us who decline to accept this pessimistic view recognize the difficulty of the practical problem of meeting the needs of an ever-expanding population. Achieving a world population in balance with its environmental resources is crucial to the future of our planet and the welfare of its people. Population growth is a complex issue that directly or indirectly impacts all aspects of our lives and the conditions under which we live – from the environment and global stability to women's health and empowerment. Population control — or population welfare, if you want to be genteel — is the buzzword today. The focus has been on the economic impact of a rapidly growing population and its implications for employment.

2. GLOBAL SCENARIO:

It took all of human history until 1830 for world population to reach one billion. The second billion was achieved in 100 years, the third billion in 30 years, the fourth billion in 15 years, and the fifth billion in only 12 years. Today, the world's population is approximately 6.5 billion and grows by nearly 80 million people each year. With expanded use of modern contraceptive methods in the developing world, the total fertility rate, or average number of births per woman, has fallen from over six in the 1960s to under three per woman today. However, total fertility rates still remain high in the less developed countries, at five children per woman. The median projection for world population growth shows a 2.6 billion increase to 9.1 billion people by 2050. This increase is approximately the size of the combined populations of China and India, the two most populous countries in the world.

The problem of over-population becomes even more serious in context of the developing countries like Pakistan. The population boom has not only resulted in an economic upheaval in developing countries rather it is also the primary cause of environmental degradation. The biological threat of ever increasing population has ushered in an era of shortage of safe drinking water, diminishing forest resources, climate change due to depletion of ozone layer among other things. Other forms of environmental pollution associated with population are marine pollution, noise pollution, depletion of land resources etc. Besides these, environmental pollution has also damaged the beauty and serenity of nature. Almost half of the world population is urbanized because of which traffic problems have multiplied, land erosion, and solid waste disposal are the major civic problems of today.

3. CAUSES OF OVER-POPULATION:

I. Increase in fertility rate. II. Control of the fatal diseases. III. Illiteracy
IV. Infant death rate curtailed. V. Lack of recreational facilities VI. Patriarchal societies
VII. Early marriages. VIII. Low status of women IX. Joint family system
X. Warm climate XI. False religious practices. XII. Polygamy.

4. EFFECTS OF POPULATION GROWTH:

I. Economic development. II. Per capita income. III. Standard of living.
IV. Agricultural development. V. Employment. VI. Labour force.
VII. Conflicts & confrontations. VIII. Social infrastructure. IX. Environment.
X. Health facilities, education etc.

5. SCENARIO IN PAKISTAN:

Pakistan's population has grown at an average rate of 3 per cent per annum since 1951 and until mid 1980's. Population growth slowed to an average rate of 2.6 per cent per annum during 1985-86 and until 1999-2000. However, since 2000-01 Pakistan's population is growing at an average rate of almost 2 per cent per annum. If Pakistan had succeeded in slowing its population growth rate to 2 per cent per annum since 1959-60, Pakistan's population today would have been 103.4 million as against 152.53 million. In other words, the country's population would have been 49.13 million less. Pakistan is relatively poorer today as a result of higher population growth rate in the past. Had Pakistan's population grown at an average rate of 2 per cent per annum since 1959-60, Pakistan's per capita income would have been Rs. 64366 today as against Rs. 43748. In other words, Pakistan would have been 52.02 per cent richer than what it is today. Furthermore, Pakistan's per capita income in dollar term would have been \$ 1083 rather than \$ 736.

History cannot be changed; those who are already born are part of the society. What is needed now is to educate them, to provide them skill through training and to make them productive members of the society. This is what the government of Pakistan is trying to do. It is trying to improve the quality of education. An extensive programme of vocational training is being developed to provide proper skills to the people so that they can become dynamic citizens of the country. During the last 50 years, Pakistan's population has increased from 33 million to 152.53 million in 2004-05. Thus making Pakistan the 7th most populous country in the world. Although the current population growth rate slowed to 1.9 per cent per annum, overall population has increased by 2.76 million people as compared to last year; this is still considerably high compared to the average of 0.9 per cent for the developed countries and 1.7 per cent for the developing countries.

According to one estimate, Pakistan's population will almost double in the next 32 years at the current growth rate of 1.9 per cent. Higher population growth supplies more work force in the market and given the low economic growth in the past, it creates less jobs. Thus, it puts pressure on educational and health facilities on the one hand and gives birth to unemployment, land fragmentation, overcrowding, katchi abadis, poverty, crime and environmental degradation on the other.

6. POPULATION SCENARIO IN PAKISTAN & SOUTH KOREA:

The negative economic impact of high population growth over the decades is also reflected in the following comparative statistics between Pakistan and South Korea. During the five decades from 1950 to 2001, the population of Pakistan has increased 4.3 times - from 33 million to 140.36 million, whereas the population of South Korea increased only 2.4 times - from 20 million to 47.7 million. Over the same period, the per capita income in Pakistan increased by only five times from \$79 in 1950 to \$503 in 2001, whereas South Korea's per capita income increased by 129 times from \$82 in 1950 to \$10,550 in 2001. It may be pointed out that in 1950 the difference in per capita income between the two countries was merely \$ 3 but this difference widened to \$10,047 in 2001. While economic policies in the two countries determined these statistics, the rate of population growth must also have played a role.

7. POPULATION RELATED ISSUES (PROBLEMS & SUGGESTIONS):

[Economic Survey (2005-06)]

Pakistan being a developing country also faces the problem of over population. During the past 25 years, cultivable land has increased by 27 per cent compared to 98 per cent increase in population, resulting in reduced individual land holdings in Pakistan. Due to a high birth rate urban population will double in the next 20 years

causing more and more forests to be cut to make way for humanity. Even now each year, deforestation occurs at the rate of 2.5 per cent. In addition, since only 60 per cent of our population has sewerage facility, the remaining 40 per cent churn out wastes damaging the environment and causing a lot of diseases. Rising levels of income on the one hand and easy availability of loan facility/financing on the other has led to an increase in motorization in the country and almost 70 per cent of our on-the-road vehicles have outlived their life span and emit un burnt monoxide gases. In fact, the total number of vehicles in Pakistan emits more noxious fumes in the air as compared to all vehicles in the US. Finally, rapid expansions in the industrial sectors has caused the industrial and residential areas to merge causing health hazards for the population.

I. Fertility and Mortality:

While mortality has been decreasing and fertility has shown a significant decline over the recent years, the crude death rate (CDR) of Pakistan is estimated at 8.2 (per thousand) in 2005-06. In Pakistan, decline in mortality rate is due to the elimination of epidemic diseases and improvement in medical services. Despite a considerable decline in the total mortality in Pakistan, infant mortality has still remained high at 77 per thousand live births in 2005. Maternal mortality ratio ranges from 350-400 per hundred thousand births per year leading to about seventeen thousand newborn babies being born motherless.

II. GDP Growth:

Real GDP grew strongly at 6.6 per cent in 2005-06 as against the revised estimates of 8.6 per cent last year and the 7.0 per cent target for the year. When viewed at the backdrop of rising and volatile energy prices and the extensive damage caused by the earthquake of October 8, 2005 Pakistan's growth performance for the year has been impressive. The key drivers of this year's growth have been the service sectors and industry. Within industry, large-scale manufacturing grew weaker-than-expected by 9.0 per cent as against 15.6 per cent of last year and 14.5 per cent target for the year, perhaps exhibiting signs of moderation on account of higher capacity utilization on the one hand and a strong base effect on the other.

III. Per Capita Income:

Per capita income is one of the main indicators of development. It simply indicates the average level of prosperity in the country or average standard of living of the people in a country. Per capita income defined as Gross National Product at market price in dollar term divided by the country's population, grew by an average rate of 13.9 per cent per annum during the last four years – rising from \$582 in 2002-03 to \$847 in 2005-06. Per capita income in dollar term registered an increase of 14.2 per cent over last year – rising from \$ 742 to \$ 847. The main factor responsible for the sharp rise in per capita income include: a sharp pick up in real GDP growth, stable exchange rate, and rise in inflow of workers' remittances.

IV. Inflation:

Among the most appreciated developments, during fiscal year 2005-06, was the significant abatement of price pressure over the course of the year. For the first ten months of the current fiscal year (July–April 2005-06), all-important barometers of price pressure in the economy indicated a steady deceleration in inflation. Inflation during the first ten months (July-April) of the current fiscal year is estimated at 8.0 per cent as against 9.3 per cent in the same period last year.

V. Education:

Currently, the literacy rate is 53 per cent which is much below the targets set to be achieved in 2005 and far away from reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target of 80 per cent literacy till 2015. Looking at the gender disaggregated

data for overall literacy, 65 per cent of males and 40 per cent of females were literate in the year 2004-05. The key impediments to the progress in reaching a higher level of literacy in Pakistan are the low enrollment rates and poor quality of education provided by the public sector.

VI. Health:

According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights " Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate to the health and well -being of himself/herself and his/her family."

Importance of the health in the social lives of the people makes it such an important area that it cannot be considered in isolation and it is inextricably tied to other socio economic and political realities. The Constitution of Pakistan in its article 38 titled "promotion of social and economic well being of the people" ensures the provision of basic necessities of life including health and medical relief for all citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race.

There is a considerable improvement in health care facilities over the past year as the existing vast network of health care facilities consists of 946 hospitals, 4554 dispensaries, 5290 basic health units/sub health centers (BHUs/SHCs), 552 rural health centers (RHCs), 907 maternal and child health centers (MCHs) and 289 TB centers (TBCs). Available human resource for the fiscal year 2005-06 turn out to be 118160 doctors, 6761 dentists and 33427 nurses which makes the ratio of population per doctor as 1310, population per dentist 25297 and population per nurse as 4636.

VII. Labour Force:

In Pakistan, labour force participation is estimated on the basis of the Crude Activity Rate (CAR) and the Refined Activity Rate (RAR). The CAR is the percentage of the labour force in the total population while RAR is the percentage of the labour force in the population of persons 10 years of age and above. The figures both for CAR (32.8%) and RAR (46.9%) for the first half of 2005-06 fare higher than LFS 2003-04 (30.4% and 43.7%). This phenomenon is more obvious for rural areas and women. Augmentation of the rates for the set of economic activities carried out within the house precincts also depicts the same scenario (42.8 Vs 38.5%).

VIII. Transport & Communication:

Road transport is a backbone of Pakistan's transport system, accounting for 90 per cent of national passenger traffic and 96 per cent of freight movement. Over the past ten years, road traffic – both passenger and freight – has grown much faster than the country's economic growth. The 9,518 km long National Highway and Motorway network contributes about 3.7 per cent of the total road network and carries 90 per cent of Pakistan's total traffic.

IX. Energy Requirements:

X. Environment:

The key factors contributing to air pollution in Pakistan are: a) rapidly growing energy demand; b) increasing industrial and domestic demand and c) a fast growing transport sector. In the cities, widespread use of low-quality fuel, combined with a dramatic expansion in the number of vehicles on roads, has led to significant air pollution problems.

Air pollution levels in Pakistan's most populated cities are among the highest in the world, causing serious health issues in the process. One of the major achievements during 2005-06 was the formulation of the "National Environmental Policy 2005" which addresses the sectoral issues such as (a) water management and conservations, (b) energy efficiency and renewable, (c) agriculture and livestock, (d) forestry and plantation, (e) biodiversity and protected areas, (f) climate change, air

quality and noise, and (g) pollution and waste management.

Water availability in Pakistan continues to decrease, both in total amount of water as well as in the per capita water availability in Pakistan. In 1951, when population stood at 34 million, per capita availability of water was 5300 cubic meter, which has now decreased to 1105 cubic meter, just touching water scarcity level of 1000 cubic meter. With a present growth in population and the low rainfall, the threshold limit of water scarcity i.e. 1000 m³ of water per capita per year may be reached as early as the year 2010. Various mega initiatives have been planned especially under WAPDA vision 2025. The estimates show that the current water shortage of 9 million acre feet would aggravate to 25 MAF if all planned dams under Vision 2025 are not constructed by 2016.

XI. Housing:

Housing is one of the basic human requirements, as every family needs a roof. Providing shelter to every family has become a major issue as a result of rapid urbanization and higher population growth. According to the housing census 1998, the housing backlog, which stood at 4.30 million, has been currently projected at 6.19 million. It is estimated that to address the backlog and to meet the housing shortfall in the next 20 years the overall housing production has to be increased to 500,000 housing units annually. The present housing stock is also rapidly aging and estimates suggest that more than 50 per cent stock is over 50 years old. It is also estimated that 50 per cent of the urban population now live in slums and squatter settlements.

XII. Agriculture:

The performance of agriculture remained weak this year as it grew by only 2.5 per cent, as against 6.7 per cent of last year and the 4.2 per cent target for the year, with major crops and forestry registering a negative growth of 3.6 per cent and 5.7 per cent, respectively. Agriculture, this year was subjected to adverse weather conditions.

XIII. Manufacturing:

Manufacturing is the second largest sector of the economy, accounting for 18.2 per cent of GDP, and registered a growth for the third year in a row, albeit at a relatively slower pace of 8.6 per cent as against 12.6 per cent last year. Large-scale manufacturing, accounting for 69.9 per cent of overall manufacturing, registered weaker-than expected growth at 9.0 per cent as against the target of 14.5 per cent and last year's achievement of 15.6 per cent. The relatively slower pace of expansion perhaps exhibits signs of moderation on account of higher capacity utilization on the one hand and a strong base effect on the other.

8. POPULATION WELFARE PROGRAMME:

In 1953, the Family Planning Association of Pakistan (Non-Government Organization) initiated few clinics to provide family planning services. During the second plan period (1960-65) the Population Welfare Programme was started by the Ministry of Health but the programme did not show adequate progress. Finally an autonomous Family Planning Council was created in 1965 to run the programme independently. At that time the annual crude birth rate was around 45 per thousand and death rate was around 18 per thousand whereas the net growth rate was 2.7 per cent per annum. The overall execution and entire funding of this Program is the responsibility of the Federal Government. The Ministry of Population Welfare is the main executing agency of the national program while implementation of field activities is the responsibility of the Population Welfare Departments in each of the four Provinces of Pakistan.

9. CONCLUSION:

With the commencement of the new millennium the population welfare programme

has also taken a new turn. This turn in policy is a shift from the focus on fertility towards a more comprehensive approach of integrating family planning with reproductive health and also addressing wider range of concerns, especially economic status, education and gender equality. One of the major achievements of the Cairo Conference has been the recognition of the need to empower women, both as being highly important in itself and as a key to improving the quality of life for everyone. It also emphasizes that men have a key role to play in bringing about gender equality, in fostering women's full participation in development and in improving women's reproductive health.