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Controlling Population

13.1 Why population control

- Economic aspect is not the only reason to control over-population. It is also the endurance of our mother earth (Section 11.4) to accommodate so many of us and take care of our basic necessities. A further rise in population shall only bring catastrophe as discussed already. In other words even if we manage to have a bubbling economy, our mother earth does not have the capacity to accommodate so many of us. Sooner we realise this harsh reality the better. To attain absolute prosperity we must reduce our population to a realistic level. It is this aspect that *we* have tried to discuss here.
- Many of those who migrate to cities and towns in search of livelihood dwell on roadsides or footpaths like stray cattle. Minimum 45-50% of our urban population today lives in this manner as analysed in Table 5.5. If we look at construction sites and the emerging *jhuggi* clusters, we notice more of toddlers and infants in the temporary swings made of *sarees* or bed sheets than the men and women workers. **We must first organise to bring up this class, provide them the basic necessities of life — shelter, clothing and education to the children who have already taken birth and stop further births. This is our primary duty for the nation.**

We are already facing lack of job opportunities. Mechanisation, automation and paperless offices are already rendering manual labour redundant. Also the latest techniques of farming and use of tractors, tillers (cultivators) and mechanised harvesting will render the rural youth jobless and farm labour surplus. With all these innovations and new work culture, gradually becoming the state of the art, the day is not far when we will start feeling the brunt of our over population. Many government and private industries and businesses are already doling out lucrative offers to employees by way of VRS and one time “golden hand shake” etc. For these surplus people there may be no further job opportunities. And then there is already a large force of unemployed youth desperately looking for jobs in

addition to the new force of educated and unemployed youth emerging every year as worked out in Table 13.1. A strict control over population is therefore absolutely mandatory. **Tomorrow's scenario is going to change rather rapidly and it is better to take caution now. Therefore we earnestly appeal all propounding any philosophy to religiously follow family control schemes discussed in this Chapter. If this is not done there may arise a situation when the nation will become incapable of providing avenues to earn livelihood and space to live for many. No one may tell us this in such clear terms but we must have wisdom to accept the harsh realities of the fast changing conditions.**

Note

One must look at the lack of job opportunities in the affluent societies in the same context (Japan, UK and US to name a few). The lack of job opportunities in these countries is not because of over population or under development as much as it is because of excessive automation, mechanisation and paperless offices.

Lessons from Tsunami (Dec. 2004)

More than 2.75 lacs people were killed and millions dislodged and wounded worldwide. A catastrophe that saw no bounds and the world was caught unawares. India alone lost about 20,000 persons and half a million dislodged and wounded. One may note that about 40% of the world population inhabits on the coastlines in *jhopar-pattis* or fragile hutments. It is a usual practice of weaker societies worldwide to inhabit on coastlines in this manner. This is a menace that the governments of various countries will have to address seriously on priority. Sprawling population worldwide is the greatest threat for such catastrophes. India being largely under-developed and partly a developing nation calls for a much more serious attention. One solution besides healthy economy is strict control over population.

Effect on work culture

Another dark side of proliferation of population is poor work culture at offices and factories and dwindling work output because of rising family problems, sickness and compelling social obligations. This calls for more attention to family matters and diversion of mind from work to family and social engagements. It leads to indiscriminate and sudden leaves and poor attendance at offices and factories. The work suffers and has a cascading effect resulting in overall poor work efficiency and quality of work, higher cost of production and

services and an overall dwindling economy of the country. In our new system we shall endeavour to develop a work culture of “work is worship” as in developed countries. Priority to work shall be the motto rather than personal and social obligations. Culture of absenteeism at one’s sweet will shall gradually become a culture of the past.

- The other reasons for practising strict population control are:
 - To provide people with homes, civic amenities, schools, colleges and hospitals, and everything that is important for modern living. Presently majority of our populace (urban poor and rural migrants particularly) inhabit in small clusters of hutments and *jhuggis* huddled together clumsily or live on footpaths. As a result most are deprived of basic necessities of life. Consequently most cities have become over-crowded, stinking and filthy. The rural living in any case is pathetic.
 - To enable more afforestation (Section 18.7(vii)) to improve environment.
 - To have enough free land for primary sector lest we fall short of arable land to grow sufficient food for ourselves (Table 11.3).

We are of strong conviction that nobody has the right to create a liability for himself or the nation if both (parents and the nation) are not in a position to shoulder this responsibility. A child himself is not responsible for his plight. Presently a child of poor parents has to grow up poorly and is deprived of proper food, clothing, shelter and education. We have no system to take care of such a child. More than thirty percent of our children grow disabled or become destitutes (Table 4.1) and about 68% are compelled to live on or below the poverty line (Table 5.5). This is a matter of grave concern. Until our country is capable of addressing this problem, people should not be allowed to add more liability for themselves or the country. How can such children fulfil the aspirations of their parents or prove worthy of the nation, we don’t understand? Every woman wants to become a mother but how can she perform her role without sufficient means? Such births are therefore uncalled for. There is no harm in applying checks and controls over such births for the good of the nation and saving the children from facing disability and poverty. The controls proposed here are not coercive and we are sure people will take them kindly in the interest of all.

Many of us may see the benefits of our large young population compared to the ageing population of the affluent world which is

considered a hindrance to development. Young blood is a source of energy and strength. In this respect we surely stand at an advantageous position compared to others. But is it not an absurdly misconstrued philosophy in the face of our largely illiterate and mostly unemployed youth (Section 21.3) which is a liability rather than a strength for the nation. Under these conditions to compare the two situations is no wisdom. We must rather respect their foresight controlling their new births to cope with the emerging market challenges and constantly shrinking job opportunities. Therefore, before we look at impediments with others we better peep into our own perennial burning problems facing the nation more conscientiously. Unless we are capable to make use of our youth gracefully there is no point rejoicing on their large and ever-rising numbers.

Of utmost importance is that in future we stop breeding any more illiterate or physically disabled. The new generation should be healthy, educated and wise to own national responsibility. Consequently the state also shall be in a position to settle them in life, provide them basic necessities of life and healthy environment to live in. In the present age of globalisation, automation and small family concept we should mould ourselves with the changing times and practise the concept of small family. Husband and wife must remain two, not three at least for the first few years. Everything good that one wants to achieve in life comes the hard way and one will have to make sacrifices for it. If we want a prosperous nation there can't be a short-cut. At present bearing a child is a non-priority, since we have produced enough already. *We* suppose, it is worth a sacrifice for our country, for our own good and for the good of the future generations. *We* are sure the countrymen will receive the message kindly and give first priority to the nation.

The present situation already is extremely explosive but we love to overlook it in our ignorance. Most of us are not even interested to assess it. But we cannot always remain oblivious. *We* are sure wisdom will prevail, people shall realise the situation and sacrifice in the interest of the nation. **Remember containment of population and proliferation of education alone can pull us out of the marsh we are in and not vice versa.**

13.2 Whether parenthood

- In our society the predominant reason to bear a child is old age security for the lonely parents. But most of our urban couples in any case, are forced to live alone in their old age despite their grown-up

and well-settled children. The children may be living with their own families at different places/cities or are abroad. In affluent societies also (Europe, US, Japan), the old couples have to live on their own. There the state has made provisions to look after them in terms of old age pension, old age homes, special, free or subsidised medical care. The NGOs also extend some help. Old age security is therefore not a good enough reason to bear a child. Back home we lack means to support our old parents. Under our new concept, old age care, irrespective of whether one has children or not, will be a state obligation.

- In rural areas the situation may be somewhat different as the children generally live with their parents. But with the rise in affluence it is possible that in the long run there also parents may have to live by themselves, as their children may settle away from them. We will therefore like to emphasise that the parents in their old age must be prepared to stay alone whether or not they have children. In the new system, as the condition of the country improves; old age homes, pensions, medical care and other facilities will be made available to the old couples by the state.

We are discussing the subject not for a debate but to express its urgency. A child when born is the darling of all, particularly its parents, the lady having achieved her motherhood, considered so solemn in our country. The child is then brought up with the blood and sweat of his parents and one day starts going to school (if schools are there and his parents are able to send him there) (in context with our rural poor, rural migrants and also urban poor), then to college before he settles down in his life. The parents' attachment with the child is maximum in his infancy and when he is school-going. As he grows, this charm and attachment somewhat diminishes. Parents care less because their child is grown-up and can take care of himself. This is reciprocal, as the child also thinks he is grown up and can look after himself and has his own friends for company. Gradually the relationship between the child and his parents becomes a routine, each of them getting busy in his own affairs.

- If the child is a male, the parents are worried about his education. Admission to college for higher studies and then arranging for finances for studies are all hard nuts to crack for a common Indian parent. One day the son gets married and likes to move away from his parents. It is generally seen (more so in urban and affluent rural societies) that in old age either the parents live on their own and are

lonely or languish disgracefully (speaking generally) with their children, sons playing oblivious to their needs or the love they yearn from them at that stage of their lives. **It is not by nature that a person is so unconcerned about his parents, it is his compulsions for his profession, his own family and social obligations that keep him engaged, leaving him with little time for looking after or be with his parents. A poor life this if, full of cares, we have no time to stand and stare!** In towns and cities a day indeed is too short to fulfil these obligations gracefully. More so, when there is clamouring even for small necessities of life like water, power, telephone and other daily chores, besides the arduous commutation through our chaotic traffic and congested roads. In rural areas the situation may be better but they may lack means to care for each other.

- If the child is a female, the situation may be only slightly different. At the marriageable age she is married and so leaves her parents. The parents are lonely again. In our society daughters are "*paraya dhan*" in any case and parents cannot expect any care or help from them, neither can they go and stay with them. Ultimately at the end of the day children leave their parents to start their own lives and the parents in their old age are left alone, when they need them more. Most parents are lonely at the fag end of their lives or may live with their children; this is a universal social phenomenon and would apply in most cases.

We can manage better living if we live entirely on our own without a child. At least there will be no worry to settle our children, their marriages and then worrying for their families and their children. By this way one can live an absolutely carefree life, long years of happy togetherness and enough time to care for each other and dedicate to the nation. **"Two is always a company and three is a crowd" should be our new philosophy.** Hence we shall advocate that the need of the hour is to have no children at all, rather adopt one, or at least wait for the first 10-15 years to have a child. And if at all we wish to have a child have only one and just one to make our child and future generations happy and prosperous. If we call it a sacrifice so it is. We must practise it for the happiness of all. When we will reach our target of 60 cr, discussed in Section 13.3 this policy can be reviewed in the best interest of all with prosperity of the nation in mind. The advice is for those who would be at the helm of affairs then.

13.3 Methods of population control

(I) OUR PAST MISDEEDS

Slogans alone can perform no miracle. Moreover about 91% (73% rural plus 18% urban poor and rural migrants) (Table 11.2b) may be considered as rural by their actions and deeds where no slogans apply or can bring about any radical change in their thinking and approach. Neither can any voluntary family planning scheme bring any reform. **The need of the hour is “family control” measures rather than “family planning” slogans.** There is no point wasting energy and time in a manner that may look democratic but bring no result. We must revolutionise our methods to achieve quicker results, rather than helplessly watching the situation becoming worse and our future more helpless.

In 1960's government slogan was to have two or three children. A few years later it was changed to one child or two. We are sure the next slogan shall be to have just one child and no more. **Once again, when the system is not sure of what it wants then how can the people be sure? The system has been working purely on whims without purpose or logical approach. The latest in the series is cash incentives to mothers giving birth to a child (Rs 1000 for a girl and Rs 500 for a boy child) by Sushma Swaraj the then Minister of Health (2003) encouraging more births rather than controlling them. No results can ever be expected from such policies. Why should a married couple bear even one child when they are not in a position to rear him and make him a worthy citizen and the state has to finance them for it with such paltry handouts. Or let the state take full guarantee to upbringing the child on behalf of the parents? In the absence of both, we cannot accept births that become a liability for the nation.**

(II) FUTURE PROJECTIONS

There is no rule of thumb to define the level of ideal population. One can only draw inferences from other countries or one's own resources and available land area. Today nothing is rationale because of many factors. Even affluent societies with contained populations are finding it hard to provide jobs to all job seekers. Looking at this, any level of population that we envisage for our country may look high. We however, propose a level of 60 cr to begin with and further corrective steps can be taken with time. The extra medical facilities so generated may be utilised to provide better health services to the needy.

With advancement in the medical sciences, more health care and more life saving drugs becoming available easily, continuous researches the world over and drugs being invented for human immunity against

incurable diseases, the death rate that has already reached a low of 0.75% may dip further, say upto 0.5% in times to come. Gradually the longevity will rise and number of people dying every year will diminish, and unless we control our population rise drastically, the population will rise even more rapidly. **A moderate birth control will be more than offset by a proportionate decline in the death rate. It is therefore imperative to practise strict birth control measures.** Looking at the enormity of the situation no short term measure can reduce 55 cr (115 cr minus 60 cr) easily. Considering a liberal plan of achieving this in, say 100 years, it will call for a **reduction of 55 lac/year by simple linear method.** It can be achieved by restricting the births to only 31.25 lac/year compared to the present death rate at 0.75%, i.e. 86.25 lac/year (0.75×115 cr).

Warning : We may like to caution all that in light of human immunity from diseases and consequent longevity and the effects of automation and mechanisation that have started showing up worldwide in the shape of rising unemployment, man is becoming excessively surplus rather redundant and even 60 cr may have to be further pruned and not only us, the whole world shall have to follow suit as also discussed in Section 7.6.

In our ignorance we have controlled industries that symbolise prosperity, rather than population that symbolises adversity.

- Dear countrymen, many of us do not take it kindly when we talk of family control. Remember family control is no punishment, it is a means to make our lives happier and prosperous. **Like sweets are good but not for those who are overweight, have blood pressure (BP), are diabetic or have heart problem. For them sweets are no less than poison. Our sprawling and voraciously rising population and day by day dilapidating economic conditions, shrinking means of livelihood and space for living and growing food, caution us to pause and think.** The situation is already very grim and explosive and it will be our wisdom to shed ignorance and accept the bitter truth. If we overlook the seriousness of the situation even now, it will be catastrophic and axing our own selves. It is already late but never too late to begin.

(III) TARGET POPULATION FOR POPULATION CONTROL

The reproductive age group of women may be considered as 15-49 years to be on the safe side (generally it is taken as 15-44) years. Based

on a population of 100 cr (Table 13.1), total population in this age group,

$$= 10.77 + 8.91 + 15.47 + 12.01 + \frac{8.46 \times 5}{10}$$

$$= 51.39 \text{ cr}$$

The demography of our country suggests that women constitute about 48.2 % of the total population.

∴ Total women in 15-49 year age group,

$$= 0.482 \times 51.39$$

$$= 24.77 \text{ say, } 25 \text{ cr}$$

Considering a population of 115 cr in 2006, about 29 cr couples (25 cr $\times \frac{115}{100}$) or 58 cr people must generate only 31.25 lac children/year as noted above to achieve a level of about 60 cr in about 100 years.

Table – 13.1
Approximate demography

(Considering a population of 100^a cr in the year 2000)

Age Group	Population (cr)	% rise	Remarks
0-4	10.72	2.7	
5-14	23.62	2.4	School going
15-19	10.77	2.2	School and college going
20-24	8.91	1.80	Higher education
25-34	15.47	1.57	^c Working class between 20-59 age group = 47.92 cr (less those going for higher studies)
35-44	12.01	1.22	
45-54	8.46	0.73	
55-59	3.07	0.62	
60 and above	6.97 ^b	0.35	
	100.00	Average [@ 2.5%]	

a. Actual population may not be less than 105 cr and accordingly the figures noted above may rise. In our calculations however, we have considered the population in 2006 as 115 cr.

b. This reflects at our longevity. By one estimate it was 7.5 cr by the end of 2000 and may cross 17.7 cr by 2025. To cope up with the rising number of old, it is possible that the retiring age may have to be raised to mitigate the old age agonies.

- c. Maximum working class in the age group of 18-60 years,
 $\cong 47.92 + \frac{2}{5} \times 10.77$ (in 18-19 age group) + $\frac{1}{5} \times 6.97$ (in 60 age group)

[as a rough estimate]

= 53.62 cr, rising @ 2.5 cr/year who may seek jobs. In terms of 115 cr it will work out to staggering $\frac{115}{100} \times 53.62 = 61.66$ cr, rising @ $\frac{115}{100} \times 2.5 = 2.87$ cr

per year. While employed are only 36 cr (based on *SOL (Statistical outline of India) 2001-2002*)

13.4 Incentives for family control

Presently family control is being practised mostly by the educated and affluent society. They are more aware of future uncertainties and hardships, lack of educational means, high competition, cost of education, and receding career opportunities for their children. While the population of this class is increasing only slowly, the population of the weaker section is rising unbound. The latter being blissfully unconscious and unaware of any such fears because of their illiteracy and ignorance. Rigorous efforts will have to be made to bring awareness to this class. We will like to propose a few cash incentive schemes to encourage population control, the option of it may be left to the person concerned. Since most of our population is rural or lower middle class they should be happy to receive cash incentives and refrain from producing a child. Imposing certain kinds of penalties, stopping subsidies or aids for higher studies or other such kinds of deterrents are meaningless and have proved futile in the past. The problem must be nipped right in the bud. The purpose is not to add the liability at any cost – not by coercion but with love, understanding and awareness.

▪ SCHEMES

- i. All newly weds and
 - ii. Those who are married but don't have a child
1. An incentive of Rs 10,000 per year to all those (couples) who can refrain from having a child for at least 10 years. Interest and Rs 10,000 shall be added to their account every year. The whole amount shall be payable after the completion of 10 years if no child is born. This amount can be made income tax free. Detailing shall be done when it actually comes into practice. At the present rate of GDP (Rs 28.38 lac cr (2004-05)) it may cost the nation about 1.02% of its GDP per year

$$\begin{aligned}
 & (2.5\% \text{ births (maximum)} \times 115 \text{ cr population} \times \text{Rs } 10,000 \\
 & \cong 0.29 \text{ lac cr} \\
 & = \frac{0.29}{28.38} \times 100 \cong 1.02\% \text{ of GDP)}
 \end{aligned}$$

All couples shall be enrolled with the family control centres to obtain the family control policy.

2. Those couples who do not want to bear a child at all may be given special cash incentive and appreciation award right at the beginning against production of a medical certificate and a personal oath to this effect. We may propose the following incentives :
 - (i) Newly-weds and all those who will not have any child - Rs 1 lac (lumpsum)
 - (ii) Those who adopt a child irrespective of whether they have their own child or not - Rs 50,000 (lumpsum)

Note

That means a newly wed who pledges not to bear a child rather adopt one will be entitled for Rs 1.5 lac.

3. Those who already have one child will also be eligible to some incentive for bearing no more child. Tentatively, we may propose this @ 2500/- per year but payable only after 10 years. In any case they will not be permitted to bear any more child.
4. One child norm per family:

We propose that even the lone child also be born only to those couples who earn at least Rs 50,000¹ a year and can meet the child's basic needs of nutritious food, clothing and schooling etc. While this figure too is too meagre to rear a child but since presently most couples don't earn even this (Table 5.5), the figure may be considered as reasonable. Experts' opinions shall be sought to ensure that with this provision also the new borns do not exceed our target of 31.25 lac/year.

Parents who may reason out for the second child to give company to the lone child can always adopt a child. An obvious advantage of one child norm is averting a family feud also that sometimes arise between siblings causing embarrassment and unpleasantness to the parents and other family members.

1. This is with the present level of earning of our people. With rise in affluence this figure will also rise. The purpose is to maintain a negative growth of 55 lac/year.

5. Those who already have 2 or more children will not be allowed to bear any more child nor given any incentive. The hospitals and nursing homes may be empowered to abort the child.
6. To discourage early marriages the present law will be religiously followed, the minimum age of marriage for boys as 25 years and girls 22 years (irrespective of Delhi High Court legalising marriage at the age of 15 years (Oct. 2005)).

Let us clarify, the incentives are only for one's sacrifice. More than one child shall not be allowed in any case. As an exception some provision can be kept for those earning more than Rs 4.0 lac/year. This is a rough proposal, the same shall be given final shape in consultation with experts in the field and cross-section of some citizens without diluting our ultimate target.

- Reaching out to the masses

It may be possible to pursue family control drive through an extended organ of our existing insurance companies involved in life insurance and medical insurance activities. They can be backed up with a team of counsellors and doctors and asked to evolve attractive packages for a couple to opt for family control. Government will consider incentives to such companies and institutes also for propagating family control objectives and helping in achieving the targets.

- Monitoring of family control methods

We will have adequate follow-up to address after-effects of any family control method. We would not like to repeat the episodes of 1960s when cases of vasectomy and loops back-fired. The plans will be carried out with utmost precautions and with everybody's consent backed-up with proper follow-up.