

Population Explosion-Remedies

India is in the phase of population explosion. This phase comes when the birth rate declines slowly but death rate is very slow due to advancement in medical sciences and better quality of life. The rate of growth of population is still more than 2 percent. According to the Census of 1991, population of India is 84 crores. Every minute 40 children are born. It is really explosion or bomb. It is eating away the fruits of our economic development. If the present trend continues and drastic action not taken the entire efforts towards development will be nullified.

The causes of population explosion are many. The major cause is the poverty and backwardness. Poor people consider the newly born as hands in earning and supporting the family. The rate of growth in rural areas and poor families is greater than urban areas and rich people. Ignorance and superstitions accentuate this problem in rural areas. Offsprings are considered as the gifts of God. The emphasis on male child aggravates the problem. The lack of health care and balanced diet leads to higher infant mortality rates which drives people to produce more children. In absence of proper education people are not able to change the old stereotypes and fall victim to vicious circle of poverty and population. The low status of women especially in rural areas and among lower income group make the situation even worse. The fertility rate is high in India. The average size of household is more than five. The preference for male child over enhances the chances for production of progenies. The awareness to use contraceptives is inadequate which does not help in stabilising the population. The family planning measures remain half-hearted due to lack of political will and social awareness.

Population problem is not such a thing that cannot be solved effectively if proper approach and right policies are adopted. The remedies are so many. If China with more population than of India can control its population, why can't India do? Firstly, India has to follow right kind of development. Some observers believe that development is the best 'contraceptive'. The emphasis should be on social and economic development. Poverty needs to be eradicated. Health care needs improvement especially in rural areas. The quality of life has to be given top priority. Proper education can solve many of population related problems. If Kerala can reduce its birth rate why can't other BIMARU states (Bihar, M.P., Rajasthan and U.P.), most prone to rising population? The literacy is 100% in Kerala. The status of women in Kerala is higher as compared to other states. The number of girl child born per thousand is more than male child in Kerala. Other states should follow the Kerala model of development. It can solve all the basic problems of illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, health care, etc.

The government should come out with the policy of qualification of not more than two children for entering into elected bodies and government salaried jobs. The measures like incentives and disincentives should be introduced by legislative bodies. In addition to this, instead of a national approach to solve the population problem, regional and local approach should be adopted as there are wide diversities at local and regional levels throughout India.

There should be heavy investments as regards to health care system. The arrangements should be made for a decent minimum level of nutrition for the mother and safe drinking water so that maternal mortality as well as the number of defective births is reduced. Drinking water is critically associated with infant mortality as drinking water is closely related with sanitation. Child immunization against killer diseases is of course, one element of the requirements for child protection.

Availability of contraceptives is one key item responsible for a decline in the rate of births of the number of children that a couple actually have. Awareness towards using the contraceptives should be made through governmental and non-governmental organisations campaign. Various programmes through T.V. channels and radio should be propagated. Spacing methods should be adopted between two children. The decision to have a child generally lies with men. Women should have more say in decisions to have a child or not. Psychological training for the men has become essential along with autonomy and assertion of individual rights of women.

In order to make population policies a success, empowerment of women has to follow soon. It has to become a people's movement. Government alone can't do it. The initiative has to come from people's side. The attitude has to change drastically. The attitude that only male child can look after during old days has to go. Ultimately it is the people who suffer the most. They have to face the brunt of long queues and heavy rush at all public places. Everywhere there is inconvenience due to rising population. We have limited resources. Shortages and mismanagement have become the order of the day. This is the right time to think and act in order to land into 21st century with strong and prosperous nation which of course, will not be done without political will.