

UNIT ONE

POPULATION EDUCATION

1.1 DEFINITIONS OF POPULATION

Population is a word that is synonymous with size or number or quantity of a known thing in a cultural plane. The concept of population is a home word. It is as often used as one drinks water. One often hears people ask what is the population of chickens in your your class or your school. What is the population of the households in your village or your hamlet. What is the population of chickens in your poultry or what is the population of the pigs in your pigery etc. Let us look at population from different perspectives.

Ecologically, population will mean the number of organisms in a particular habitat in a given time. But in this discourse, population means the numerical size or strength of people living in a place at a particular time. Hence, in this stance population has human connotation. In other words, population simply put, is the number of people in a place and at a given time, whether they have the same or varied culture.

Population education is a critical study of the size of people, how the size increases, decreases or stabilizes for some time, and, the effects of its increase or decrease cum appropriate measures for controlling population explosion to the human society. Hence it involves the size of people, structure and distribution cum density of the size.

Technically, population education is a demographic phenomenon that deals with the study of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of people in their cultural plane. It is important to note that almost half the world's population lives on 5 percent of its land area, and 57 percent of its land area contains less than 5 percent of the population.

The science of population study has been developed into a field of specialization called demography. It is a statistical study of human population in terms of size, structure and distribution and density.

1.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The study of population like sociology is relatively recent but the problem of people as social animals has occupied the inquisitive minds of great men of all ages. The philosophers of antiquity had something to say about population, its increase, decrease and the attendant consequences. Their views on public policy in reciprocal fashion, influenced the population theories they developed.

The development of population policies has as one of its origins the writings of the ancient Chinese sages, among whom the name of Confucius always occupies a prominent place. They presented the notion that too many people in a given area or nation, for example, will reduce the economic productivity per worker, influence adversely the general level of living, and strife and conflict as its consequences.

They had the notion that there is an ideal relationship between land and people, any deviation from which will result in the dislocation of the economy and they entertained as a corollary an early conception of an optimum population. They believed in the necessity or at least the desirability of moving people from over populated to under populated areas and concluded that this was one of the functions of government. They discussed some factors that operate to check population growth such as insufficient food, premature marriage (because it was thought to increase infant mortality), war, and surprisingly the high cost of weddings which in turn of course, reduced the rate at which the young people marry.

The Greek philosophers: Plato and Aristotle made significant points on the issue of population during their own time. For example they were concerned with the best government for the city-states and they both recognised that the number and quality of the people who inhabited the city had something to do with the matter. They wrestled with the question of size. The society had to be able large enough to be economically self-sufficient and large enough too to be to defend

itself, but not so large on the other hand, as to make governance difficult. Both philosophers addresses themselves on determining the exact number of people that will be necessarily sufficient for an ideal city-state.

× Plato specified the exact number of 5,040 citizens for one state and 60,000 for the whole states. "This figure was born for the curious reason that the number 5,040 has fifty-nine divisions and for the less curious reason that this number will furnish numbers for war and peace, and for all contract and dealings, including taxes and divisions of the land".

On reviewing Plato's work Aristotle suggested that great care hard to be taken concerning the number of citizens and the limit should be fixed by calculating the chances of mortality in the children, and of sterility in the married persons". He warned that to neglect this subject "which in existing states is so common, is a never failing cause of poverty among the citizens and poverty is the parent of revolution and crime". Although Aristotle was not as precise as Plato on the specific number of citizens, he was very interested in the relationships that obtain in a society between population and property, and interested in both of these as relevant to the stability of the state.

In making this recommendations Aristotle stated:

First among the materials required by the statesman is population. He will consider what should be the number and character of the citizens and then what should be the size and character of the country. Most persons think that a state in order to be happy ought to be large; but even if they are right, they have no idea what is a large and what is a small state. And even if we reckon greatness by numbers, we ought not to include everybody, for there must always be in cities a multitude of slaves and sojourners and foreigners; but we should include those only who are members of the state, and who form an essential part of it. The number of the latter is a proof of the greatness of a city; but a city which produces numerous artisans and comparatively few soldiers cannot be great, for a great city is not to be confounded with a populous one. Moreover, experience shows that a very populous city can rarely, if ever, be well governed; since all cities which have a reputation for good government have a limit of population.

Aristotle concluded this section in his remarks "clearly then the best limit of the population of a state is the largest number which suffices for the purposes of life, and can be taken in at a single view".

In antiquity, as in our own times, the attitudes that legislators and others might take toward population problems depended first of all upon size and kind of unit in which the questions arose. Thus the Greece with their numerous and relatively small city-states, had a fairly local attitude whereas Romans like the Chinese, though more in terms of the empire has this task to administer. In the Greek situation, accordingly, emigration and immigration were of more significance than they were in the Roman or the Chinese situation where the territory of the respective empires was so vast that migration became meaningless as a solution to a population problem. Furthermore, in these latter situations increasing numbers of people, and therefore of potential soldiers, and again therefore of military power, was a goal to be promoted. The Romans and the Chinese in consequence advocated population policies that encouraged growth and expansion rather than restriction and retreat. The Romans were concerned to encourage population growth for the greater glory of the empire. Roman writers disapprove of celibacy, defended the importance of reproduction and recommended rewards for the birth of children, Cicero opposed the plan of Plato for a communal ownership of wives and advocated monogamy instead because he thought the latter institution more productive of offspring. Cicero also mentioned various checks to population growth, famine, war, revolution, and the depredations of wild animals. Pliny was a notation or two on immigration in his *Historia naturalis*, but otherwise the Roman references are rather sparse.

Medieval thinkers in the latest: Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) and Giovanni Botero (1543-1617) couched of course in moral and religious context rather than a political or scientific one. In accordance with the tenets of christianity they were opposed, as one might expect, to such measures of population control as abortion, infanticide, child-exposure, divorce, polygamy, second marriage and even for some persons, first marriage. They approved of virginity continence, celibacy, and for those who married at all, monogamy. Most of them favored an

increase in population, supporting perhaps the Biblical command to be fruitful and multiply, "although some, on the other hand advocated clerical celibacy on the ground that it would reduce the rate of population growth. Ibn Khaldun, the greatest philosopher of history and sociologist of the Moslem world, developed a Cyclical theory of population change and related it to a more general cycle of life of societies. Giovanni Botero suggested that no matter what size of population man continues to reproduce at about the same rate and this situation, in the long run, can have serious consequence wherever there are limits to the capacity to find subsistence.

The philosopher of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries advocated a kind of favourable balance of people, payments and power - a large and growing population one that would have military as well as economic and political advantages. These noble men include John Graunt (1620 - 1674); Sir William Petty (1623-1687), and almost a century later: John Peter Sussmilck (1707-1767) - introduced a more systematic and analytic study of population.

* Graunt the father of vital statistics announced four basic population principles.

1. That vital phenomena exhibit statistical regularities;
2. That Urban death rates exceed rural death rates;
3. That the death rate is higher for the young and the old than for those at the middle age of life and;
4. That male births exceed female births in number although the proportion of the sexes is nevertheless approximately equal.

Graunt has the honour in addition of having constructed the first table of population in London.

Petty made many economic theories and noted some effects of population growth. He laid emphasis on the considerations of "Number, Weight and Measure".

Sissmilch wrote a comprehensive work on variation in mortality rates with respect to different variables (age, sex, residence etc) emphasized the regularity and order population phenomena exhibit, estimated the world population to one billion and offered a hypothesis that the number will double periodically but at a rate that would vary inversely with the increasing size of the total. These three men ended the eighteenth century population study although - Benjamin Franklin wrote a book on population in 1751. In his book concerning the increase of mankind and the peopling of countries he suggested that there is no limit to the prolific nature of either plants or animals except the crowding that interfere with acquiring the means of subsistence. It is perfectly possible according to this English philosopher to suppose that one nation alone could in the absence of other inhabitants populate the entire earth.

The Nigeria Education Research Council defined population Education as "an educational process which provides for the study of the population situation in the family, community, nation and the world with the purpose of developing in the citizens a more rational and responsible attitude and behaviour towards improving the quality of life now and in the future.

1.3

POPULATION THEORY OF 19TH CENTURY

The most influential and of course important work on population was the one published in 1798 by an English Clergyman, Thomas Robert Malthus. This work was the basis for Charles Dawin's principle of natural selection and his theory of evolution. Thomas work on population gave an insight to David Ricardo in his own theory of the iron law of wages. In deed, Thomas Malthus thrilled the brain of the world demographers and economic planners of his age and beyond. The title of his work run thus: An Essay on the principle of population as it affects the future improvement of society, with remarks on the speculation of Mr. Godwin Williams, Condorcet, and other writers.

Malthus title was too long a title in accordance with today's principle but that suggested his basis in the theory he propounded.

The mention of Godwin and Condorcet in Malthus title compels us to look a little into what these men (Malthus referrals) said about population. Godwin and Condorcet were two philosophical optimists who believed in the infinite perfectibility of the human race. Condorcet wrote a history of human progress titled *Esquisse dun tableau des Progre's L' esprit human* in 1795 and he looked forward to a time when all inequalities, animosities and miscellaneous troubles would have vanished from human societies, when all would speak the same language all survive disease, and when men finally, would be so rational that they would refrain from "filling the earth with useless and unhappy beings" William Godwin in his work titled *Enquiry concerning political justice* 1793 made a similar research when he emphasized that people should not be worried about population increase or its economic effect because it is mere fantasy. He urged the people of his age that a time of stability will soon come when there will be no crimes, no administration of justice, as it is called and no government. Besides this, there will be neither disease, anguish, Melancholy nor resentment. Every man will seek, with ineffable ardour, the good of all.

Malthus in an argument with his father was less optimistic and sensed that in the continued increase of population that there will be a dangerous effect. Hence Malthus investigated the works of Condorcet and Godwin in some details.

According to Biersted B (1970) - Malthus believed in brief simplicity that the programs of the reformers of his day in their efforts to relieve the unspeakable ills of the society were doomed to failure. Their plans were palliatives, not remedies. In order to get to the heart of the matter of poverty and human misery it was necessary to consider population itself and the rate at which it increases. If it is allowed to increase without checks of any sort the population would double every twenty-five years and thus increase in geometric ratio in

accordance with the series 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and so on. Food supply on the other hand, even in circumstances most favourable to human industry" could not possibly increase in more than arithmetic ratio in accordance with the series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and so on. Malthus concluded therefore that "in two centuries the population would be to means of subsistence as 256 to 9, in three centuries as 4,096 to 13, and in two thousand years the differences would be incalculable. With this theory we enter a new era and the writings on population become so numerous that it is no longer profitable or possible to pursue them. From 19th century till date, it has become a continued controversy of Malthusian anti Malthusian theorists.