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THE Indian Association for the Study of Population was incorporated in the beginning of 1972. It had three main aims. First, to stimulate and assist the teaching of demography as a subject in the universities and their affiliated colleges. Second, to stimulate and, wherever feasible, to coordinate population studies and research and in doing so to emphasize a multidisciplinary approach. Third, to work closely with the federal and state government organisations and specialised institutions in the field of population policy and to identify areas where close collaboration would be desirable between these organisations and institutions on the one side and research and teaching institutions on the other . .

In all the three areas IASP can, in its short life of three years and a half, claim modest achievements. To begin with, it has succeeded in enrolling as many demographers as possible, teaching in universities and colleges, and involved them more and more in the discussion of policies and problems of teaching and research. Secondly, it has done significant work in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research and other Foundations devoted to population research, notably the Council of Social Development, the Institute of Management, the Indian Statistical Institute, the Population Council of India, the Family Planning Foundation, in extending the frontiers of research

and claiming new territories of concern. One of its effective operational arms has been its journal, *Demography India*, which has not only been actively engaged in discovering new talent but also in inviting contributions to new and complex areas of interest. Thirdly, it has ever been anxious to offer assistance to federal and state governments in areas of population policy, whether it be the Ministry of Health and Family Planning or the Office of the Registrar General, the State Planning Boards, or on such events as the Asian and the World Population Conferences. It is a matter of no small satisfaction that the Association has wrested suitable recognition from Government ever since its birth in 1972. In fact, the Government owed much of its record in the Asian Population Conference of 1972 at Tokyo and the World Population Conference of 1974 at Bucharest to delegates nominated on them by the Association. As everyone knows, Bucharest for the first time placed population in the context of the widest policy issues and of the New International Economic Order which has sparked so much of animated concern and debate.

Nonetheless this is no time to rest on one's oars and as we shall presently see in none of these areas can we claim to have made more than a very modest beginning. In fact, we have had even setbacks to the beginnings that had been made.

II

In July 1966, I took the opportunity, in my Convocation Address at the IIPS, to make a brief review of the facilities that India had then acquired of teaching demography in the universities, and of the use the policy organisations were making of trained demographers. In both areas, although substantial progress had been made since 1953, when facilities were really rudimentary, we had occasion to deplore certain undesirable tendencies. I regret to say that these tendencies still persist.

Let us take up the first of the three topics I mentioned at the beginning. The importance of teaching formal and technical demography in colleges and universities was first emphasized by a Committee set up by the UN Secretary General in December 1953, and the matter came up for consideration in the Population Commission in March 1955. The Government of India established its Demographic Advisory Committee in 1958. The founding of the Demographic Advisory Committee in 1958, preceded by the establishment of the DTRC at Chembur, Bombay in 1957, led to the official support of six other

Centres of Demographic Research at Delhi, Calcutta, Poona, Trivandrum, Dharwar and Madras.

The subject of teaching of demography in the universities was taken up earnestly at the First Asian Population Conference in the Fall of 1963 and between 1963 and 1966 the Universities of Aligarh, Allahabad, Banaras, Baroda, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Jaipur and Saugar instituted postgraduate teaching in demography as an optional paper in M.A. Economics. Poona introduced demography as a compulsory paper in M.Sc. Statistics; Ujjain and Lucknow as an optional paper in M.A. Sociology. Bombay as two optional papers in M.A. Economics, the Indian Statistical Institute as an optional subject for specialisation in the final year of B. Stat. and M. Stat., Lucknow, in addition, introduced a one-year certificate course and a two-year diploma course in demography. Kerala offers a two-year course for M.Sc. in demography. This indeed, as I observed in my Convocation Address in July 1966, was the sum of facilities available in demographic training in the country, much of which, however, as conscientious examiners will testify, is nominal. Neither the CSO nor the Registrar General's Office has yet found it possible to set up training courses in demography or census methodology.

Things have remained pretty much the same where they were in 1966 except that a few more universities have introduced syllabi on demography in combined courses of such subjects as economics, or economic statistics, or geography or sociology or anthropology. Meerut University's syllabus for course VI, economic statistics and demography, illustrates the casual manner in which demography is introduced into a composite course. This course includes analysis of time series, distribution of income and demand analysis and demography, of which demography includes the following : "Complete and abridged life tables and their construction from vital statistics and population data; Lotka's stable population theory and its use; Methods of intercensal and post-censal estimation; Logistic and other mathematical curves commonly used in studying population problems." This syllabus in broad outline represents what is sought to be taught in most other universities. In 1974, Jawaharlal Nehru University had introduced a one-year Diploma in Population Studies which now offers four courses of intensive study supplemented by choice of as many as seven specialised courses.

Of foremost and over-riding importance, in this field is, the paucity of trained and qualified persons to teach these courses and here the situation has

certainly not improved; it may have, in fact, deteriorated since 1966. In my Chembur Address, I had the occasion to acknowledge the deep debt we owed to the Population Council. From 1955 to 1971, the Population Council granted nearly a hundred fellowships to India. Nearly one-half of the recipients are working outside of India as of date and some 24 of the remaining are working in India, either in the biomedical field or the zoology faculties of universities. The rest are available for demography either in the universities or the government departments of India. Of these 25 and odd Fellows^ only about a dozen are in active teaching assignments in the universities. The bulk of the Population Council Fellowship beneficiaries have thus been lost to the teaching of demography in Indian universities; a kind of brain-drain which India cannot afford. Instead of improving, the position has thus absolutely as well as comparatively, deteriorated since 1966.

The position is so serious that the Association must feel called upon to address itself to the Government, the University Grants Commission and the Indian Council of Social Science Research. The rub lies not only in the matter of job satisfaction but also in that of remuneration and recognition. Demography obviously is still a low priority and neglected discipline, which qualified scholars do not find it attractive enough to stick to or bestow their teaching capabilities on. And quite often even qualified persons drift along to economics or sociology or geography or some other discipline which offers better economic and professional prospects. Clearly in such a situation it is the University Grants Commission and the ICSSR that must put their heads together and the IASP can certainly help by pointing out where things may not be clicking properly. For not only are we losing Population Council Fellows in the teaching profession but also Fellows trained in our Demographic Training and Research Centres and specialised institutions.

III

The second area, in which IASP feels concerned over recent trends, is the organisation of demographic research both in the universities, specialised institutions and government.

In my Convocation Address of 1966 at DTRC I had the occasion to observe : "It is possible that the concentration of official research funds on the theme of family planning may even wean trained demographers away from their

legitimate disciplines to provide so called research support to what really are operational, administrative or logistic decisions." I further pleaded "first that demography be consciously encouraged to preserve its many voices and move towards a multidisciplinary approach and; secondly, that even while working as an operational and administrative aid, the independence of family planning research be safeguarded to prevent it from degenerating to a pliant tool, defeating its own purpose."

How the study of contraceptive practice, KAP and Family Planning still dominates research will be evident from a brief analysis of the information contained in the ESCAP Directory of Institutions devoted to Research, Teaching and Training in Demography (Asian Population Studies Series No. 8, Supplement No. 1, 1974). Of the eight Indian institutions listed in it, the Demographic Research Centre of Kerala conducted 12 research projects of which no less than ten were devoted to contraceptives and family planning. Of the remaining two one was devoted to the study of worker participation rates and the other to population of one district. Of the eight studies undertaken by the Council of Social Development almost all were devoted either to fertility surveys or to women's status. The Research and Training Institute of ISI devoted its four projects to four different topics, one of which was on Indian nuptiality and another on a demographic report of West Bengal, while the Family Planning Unit of ISI gave most of its attention to fertility and communication action research. The Institute of Management at Ahmedabad had only one project on management of population programmes, while the Osmania University had also a single project on changing concepts and definitions in India of Population censuses (in Urdu). Of the two projects of the Population Council of India, one was devoted to KAP, the other to integration of functional literacy with family planning. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the University of Bombay alone devoted their energies to other legitimate areas of demography and not narrowly to family planning. The Tata Institute went in for a varied fare like study of family types, unemployed youth, pavement dwellers, the industrial community and its changing composition, social problems of urban growth and demographic correlates of urban communities by size. The University of Bombay, besides a study on rural-urban migration in India, undertook a major work on socio-economic and demographic implications of population growth, 1971-2001.

Control of population is certainly one of the most important and crucial elements in economic and social change in India but it would be a pity if other

areas of demographic study and research were not simultaneously strengthened to pose questions and attempt answers relating India's population to problems of economic and social change. It is important to continue research on the demographic aspects of social and economic change in this country while striving to reduce Indian fertility and perfect its measurement. More cohesion and unity of approach among teaching and research institutions and scholars seem desirable in this direction where demographers can help in a variety of ways.

It has not yet been possible for the dozen and odd universities, the IIPS, the **ISI**, and the NIFP to come together with the ICSSR and UGC to discuss and decide on syllabuses and on common and special areas of study. Except for five institutions, or perhaps six, I do not know of others where a research scholar can expect competent guidance for Ph.D. work in demography. No institution really possesses arrangements for systematic study and analysis of basic data particularly the census and vital statistics data. It is astonishing how little is known about the variety and range of census data in India and it is still more astonishing how little enthusiasm exists in pursuing historical demography.

While the pursuit of historical demography may not be a matter of great moment in some countries undergoing rapid change, I would plead that this subject is still of great importance for India and deserves intensive study because in very many areas the present can only be explained or interpreted in terms of the past. Elsewhere, I have referred to five main features of our population, which have proved quite stubborn; the age structure happens to be the first stubborn feature, followed by the rural-urban ratio, the industrial structure of the population and the educational profile. The fifth is the steady staircase decline of the sex ratio since the beginning of the century. All these features demand close historical study for the understanding of the present.

There is another reason for closer research into historical demography. We have usually thought of historical demography for studying how population growth has brought about social and economic change. But as recent studies on levels of regional development, stimulated by a detailed analysis of the 1961 census results, have shown massive regional investments in industry, agriculture and infrastructure have also brought about immense changes in the demographic structure of regions. The 1961 Study showed that the process

of agricultural and industrial investment in India had brought about extensive but discontinuous tracts of development or the lack of it all over India. To take but one example : Calcutta, Bombay, Madras or Delhi are no longer islands or primate cities in the sense they could be construed in, say, 1931 or 1941. The investments of the last two or three decades have very thoroughly changed the entire umland of these cities causing a series of very extensive demographic transformations which deserve detailed study.

This brings us to the crux of the new problems of research and study facing the universities and institutions. Population problems in India must henceforth be studied in their economic, social, industrial and cultural context, beyond the narrow limits of traditional demography. Two distinct areas suggest themselves at once : rural demography and urban demography. Within each there are regional variations that cry out for detailed examination—regional variations brought about by recent development projects, investments, and emergence of territorial complexes based on the exploitation of natural resources in specific regions. The concept of population has acquired a new dimension, that of organisation of societies. Along with a study of the household in the reciprocal circular link between the structure of the family and the structure of society must come the study of matters that are more social, industrial, agricultural and economic than merely physiological or physical, like fertility, mortality or morbidity or even geographical distribution. We have no clear idea as to how population used to be, or can be regulated in rural societies, let alone in urban or industrial societies, what action programmes must ride along with improvements or institutional changes in agriculture to contain or regulate population growth in the rural spaces and what other action programmes must be invoked to regulate urban growth and bring about new demographic complementarities between agriculture and non-agriculture.

The overwhelming reality of political and cultural unity in a federal structure does not wholly conceal the fact that India is a multi-ethnic and multilingual conglomerate divided neatly into ethnolinguistic blocks in which the flow of goods and services and the network and interflow of industrial and commercial enterprises and interchange of natural resources create problems similar to those of international exchange and international division of labour, of problems of trade-offs, a major role in which is played by internal migration, which in a territory like Europe, would amount to no less than international migration. There are not only problems of formation of families of edu-

cation, of industrial and technical skills to be studied and of the disparities and inequalities they generate or leave in their wake, but also problems of occupation and occupational mobility, of changes in the labour force. There is again an entire universe of demand functions to be studied broken up into small and large regions, small and large communities and the inter-relationships between them, complicated by different paths of population growth and accretion. In the context of India what we call internal migration essentially assumes the character of international migration—rendered more complex by its rural, and urban components—which demand the measurement and analysis of migratory flows, migratory "histories" by cohorts, which implies knowledge about the length of stay of migrants. They also demand research on the decision to migrate, the study of the structure of the regions of departure and its influence on migratory movements, of the economic aspects of migration, the study of direct and indirect relationships between inter-regional migration and other demographic variables (e.g. effects on nuptiality, fertility of migration, etc.). Most important of all is the need to study the relationship between inter-regional migration and economic and social changes, the motivation for return migration, the effects of the brain drain between regions and between rural and urban, and a detailed and continuous study of the assimilation and integration of migrants and the 'tolerance' and melting pot conditions of net receiving regions.

Of the most abiding interest of all is the measurement of regional and inter-regional disparities and whether they are widening or narrowing and of the nature of the t-shaped curve in respect of specific attributes of the populations and resources of regions. The new dimension to all this is the interaction between population and the environment, inclusive of natural resources.

In a recent paper Leon Tabah, the Director of the Population Division of the United Nations has posed the question rather dramatically. I quote :

"we have now reached the heart of the subject matter : to what extent is the profession ready to accept and to adapt itself to the all-embracing global, multi-dimensional vision, which implies a profound change in which population problems no longer are given an exclusively technical and demographic meaning . . . And now what one asks of the scholar, who abhors confusion, is to broach not only demography but economics and sociology, to take into account the system of value in force in the societies which he

studies and to integrate variables like environment, a field in which quantified indicators are almost unavailable up to now."

The concept of population has always had a political context. Flung into the new inquiry on organisation of societies, the Indian demographic community has new challenges to face and new paths to break. It is the task of the IASP to fashion some order and a scheme of priorities in this second field of its responsibilities.

IV

I would like to conclude with the Association's third area of major interest which has two broad divisions. First is the Association's abiding interest in participating in the working out of concepts, methods and definitions of population censuses, registration of vital statistics and continuing surveys like the NSS and special surveys conducted by academic and specialised institutions, and particularly in the tabulation of data obtained from these sources so that they can mesh with each other for yields of complementary information.

The Indian Census and the Vital Registration System are almost the only source not only of historical demography but also of the study of specific regions and spaces over time. These two sources and, for the last two decades, the National Sample Survey provide the best reservoirs of information, but anyone who has tried to work out time series data feels exasperated at their unsatisfactoriness. The Indian census was primarily designed to give the administrator a working knowledge of the people he had to deal with. The vital statistics system was similarly designed to keep a rough tab on mortality, morbidity and natality by defined geographical spaces. The NSS alone of all the three was conceived and designed by P. C. Mahalanobis to generate systematic data for planning purposes and for the organisation of societies. The three together has brought about what Leon Tabah has described a paradox. Surveys, he says, collect more variables than one can analyse, at least simultaneously, while the processing of data gathered through censuses or vital records involves an excessive number of observations relating to very few variables.

In the Indian situation, the paradox has led to exasperations. In all the three streams, concepts, definitions and methods have constantly changed from one inquiry to another, so that any scholar who wishes to use them as complementary information feels greatly abashed. The matter is compounded by the

fact that the tabulations, class ranges of variables and even the variables themselves have, for reasons that one cannot appreciate, changed from one operation to another, as a consequence of which it is difficult to get even two consecutive pieces of information for an identical age-group. In the case of the NSS the matter is doubly compounded by the inordinate delays that have attended tabulation and publication. On top of it all, is the code of secrecy usually observed by all Departments : inordinate deliberation goes on before it is decided to publish or release a particular table, and even when the decision to publish has been taken, the generators hang on to the tables and are extremely loth to share the precious monopoly while it lasts.

After the 1961 Census the Registrar General contemplated a series of micro-censuses which, for various reasons, did not fructify. Considering that the wealth of economic and social data yielded by the Census is very limited, and considering that more detailed information for investigating what is happening to small spaces, sub-regions, regions, small and large communities over time, the Association feels called upon to press the demand for micro-censuses in the future. There is a great deal to be said, although opinions will doubtless differ, in favour of a whole series of micro-censuses being held over time by the Census organisation itself. The field of income which the census and other surveys have avoided so far can hardly be kept out of bounds any more. There has to be more searching questions on work, work participation, preferences, skills, aptitudes and education and a whole area of migration to be freshly explored. Above all a coherent series of model tabulations await authoritative recommendations. In the last Data Base Seminar organised by the ISI, IASP and the Indian Econometric Society, there was agreement that IASP and IBS should offer their services to the appropriate organisations and in fact the IASP has been the first to do so. It would be unrealistic to expect that the IASP would be overwhelmed with enthusiastic welcome. It is, therefore, particularly important that our Association should go on knocking at every door, for it is in this area that the Association could find a major fulfilment.

The second subject that I would like to mention before I conclude is the area of population policies. Population policies so far have been widely equated with family planning and, more specifically, the reduction of the birth rate, so much so that, as was observed at Bucharest, everybody was astounded that assembled governments should think of a whole universe of other considerations, over and above the reduction of the birth rate. So dismaying was this experi-

ence that even a good eight to ten months-after Bucharest, donor agencies and multilateral organisations were hardly prepared to accept Bucharest as anything but a political stunt on the part of the Third World. That was all big talk, all they want really is our money for more family planning : was the conviction of many luminaries in the population field. But what was wrong in wanting money from Foundations and Organisations? After all their main work is to invest donations received from private sources or governments. If even among expert multi-disciplinary academics, there should still be a lack of perception of relationships that exist between demographic and non-demographic processes, it is but logical that I ASP must earnestly apply itself to bring about this perception in state planning organisations and other institutions engaged in social, economic and demographic analysis. The second task in which IASP must closely cooperate with government organisations is to identify problems resulting from an imbalance of demographic and non-demographic processes, particularly the identification of demographic problems that influence or are influenced by the total problems of development.

There are two more areas although I am not sure, IASP possesses the competence to make a full impact on them, but in which IASP should strive to retain its visibility. First to assist in the formulation and implementation of population policies aimed to solve problems of development, and secondly to assist in formulating methods for evaluating population policies.

But these are details. The main point is that the IASP must constantly strive to assist in the exploration, identification and analysis of the relationship between population and development or, more simply, the relationship between population and economic and cultural change.