

## DEMOGRAPHY INDIA

Interest in problems relating to India's population has rapidly increased, both in India and abroad, during the period following the Second World War. Since independence, the Indian census has consistently sought to reorient its scope and canvas to suit the needs of changing times. The Government of India have set up a number of Demographic Research Centres in the country as a part of their planning programmes for social and economic development. In collaboration with the United Nations, they have also set up a centre for research and training in demography, which enrolls trainees from India as well as from other countries of Asia. The number of scholars interested in population problems has also rapidly increased; and we have now a sizable body of Indian demographers. Many of them have received training abroad, particularly in the United States of America, and several of the trained Indian demographers are working outside India, occupying at times positions of responsibility in the field of collection and analysis of population data.

This increase of general interest in population problems can, at least partly, be attributed to the phenomenon of rapid population increase which India, in common with most other developing countries, has experienced in the course of the last two decades. The acceleration of population increase began at a time when the challenge of acute problems of underdevelopment was taken up by the State. The accelerating growth of population came in fact to be viewed as a handicap to the development effort. It is, however, clear that this new population dynamics and the forces of economic and social change are interacting in such a way as to make planning a much more complex undertaking. An understanding of the population phenomenon in all possible details and investigation of the causal relationship between this phenomenon and other forces of economic and social change have become increasingly necessary.

Demographic literature too has rapidly expanded in the course of this period but it is quite clear that the research content of this literature is small and we still face the inadequacy of demographic knowledge, skills and competence which could be deployed in making policies and programmes of development more effective. It is also notable that the evolving situation in India, as in other developing nations, holds out a promise of basing meaningful research on direct observation of population changes as they are occurring. Search for an insight into a similar experience of population change in a developed country would necessarily involve a much more uncertain undertaking of digging into historical records. But in the developing nations, it is possible to use advanced techniques and tools of observation in

investigating population phenomena on a concurrent basis. This would seem to be an important reason why a number of western scholars have sought to specialise in the study of population change in the developing countries.

This opportunity could be fully exploited only if the study of population is evolved in India in a systematic and constructive manner. This need has been felt for quite some time and it is to take up this challenge that the Indian Association for the Study of Population (IASP) came into being. A perusal of the list of members of the Association, given at the end of this issue of the journal, indicates that the membership of the Association has been drawn both from official agencies like the Census and the Health Ministry's Department of Family Planning, and from academic circles, including universities and other research institutions. The two main objectives of the Association are: (a) to promote scientific study of population in general and India's population problems in particular, and (b) to promote, sponsor and undertake research on different aspects of India's population. The Association has launched this journal as one of the means of attaining these objectives.

We must note, however, that this is not the first time that a periodical on the subject of population has come into existence. We had, for example, the *Population Review* published from Madras under the editorship of Dr. S. Chandrasekhar. The second example is that of the *Indian Population Bulletin* published by the Office of the Registrar General, India. This was published occasionally and, apparently, in an ad hoc manner. The Registrar General's office was, however, contemplating to launch a journal on a firm and regular basis. This did not materialise and when the IASP put forth its proposal of publishing a journal, it was intended that the new journal would carry forward the work initiated by the *Indian Population Bulletin*. In a sense, *Demography India* succeeds the *Indian Population Bulletin*. It is now a journal of a professional association and as such will be devoted to the cause of evolving demography in this country on purposeful, systematic and scientific lines.

In fulfilment of this objective, *Demography India* will seek to promote exchange of ideas in the field of population and allied topics. Its editorial policy will be to present a broad spectrum of articles and views on the demographic experience of India in particular and of the developing countries in general, including comparative studies on the population problems of the developed and the developing countries. The journal will give special attention to contributions on population theory and methodological studies. One of the objectives of the journal is to encourage contributions to demographic research by emerging demographers and population specialists. The journal will seek to keep demographers working in India abreast of developments in the field abroad and to bring to the notice of foreign scholars the work that is being done in India.

This issue of the journal represents only the first step in this direction. It contains a series of articles and notes, and devotes some space to the activities of the Indian Association for the Study of Population since its inception. Future issues will follow the usual pattern of a scientific journal. Accordingly, the journal will have, in addition to full length articles and notes, a feature on current research in India, a section on book reviews and also a section on bibliography, covering books and research articles in outstanding demographic journals in English.