

Indian Association for the Study of Population

When the first Asian Population Conference was held in New Delhi in 1963, it was felt that there was a great need to organise an association of Indian demographers on the lines of various other associations of economists, sociologists, statisticians, historians etc. The idea was supported by all. However, in the next few years, no initiative was taken by anybody to organise such an association. A fairly large number of Indian demographers meanwhile became members of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population but oddly enough there was no national forum for them. Several Indian demographers met again during the IUSSP Conference at London in 1969 and the subject was revived. In an informal reception held by the Indian demographers to honour Dr. C. Chandrashekar the President-Elect of IUSSP, the need for launching such an association as early as possible was reiterated. Thanks to the help and encouragement we received from Mr. Asok Mitra, former Registrar General of India, Mr. A. Chandra Sekhar, the present Registrar General of India and our founder members, this idea at last became a reality. However, considerable spade work had to be done in this connection.

A preparatory meeting of demographers present in Delhi was held in 1971 to take the first steps towards fulfilling our long cherished objective. As we had no finances, it was not possible to involve demographers from all over India. But we were heartened by the encouragement which we had received not only from Indian demographers all over India but also from those residing in different parts of the world. At the first preparatory meeting it was decided to draft the memorandum of association and the rules and regulations, by way of fulfilling the legal requirements for registering our associations under the Societies Registration Act. Mr. S.P. Jain, former Deputy Registrar General and Mr. R.P. Goyal of the Institute of Economic Growth, held several consultations and did the necessary drafting work¹. These two documents were widely circulated to a large number of potential members of IASP for comments and criticism. In the light of the suggestions received, the Preparatory Committee finalised the memorandum of association and rules and regulations and finally registered the Association in February 1971.

An ad hoc Executive Committee was appointed to carry on the activities till elections were held. We were fortunate in having Mr. Asok Mitra as President of the first ad hoc Executive Committee and Mr. A. Chandra Sekhar and Mr. S.P. Jain as the Vice-Presidents. We also succeeded in getting outstanding economists, statisticians, and demographers as members of our Executive Committee, namely Professor A. Ghosh, Head of the Economics

Department, Jadavpur University, Calcutta ; Dr. N.T. Mathew, Director, Central Statistical Organisation, New Delhi ; Professor K.V. Ramchandran, IIPS, Bombay ; Professor P.M. Visaria, Bombay University, Bombay, and Dr. R.S. Kurup, OSD, Department of Family Planning New Delhi.

To begin with we had two categories of members, founder members and ordinary members. The founder members were required to pay Rs. 50/- in addition to the annual membership fee of Rs. 20/- . The response to our invitation sent out to a large number of Indian demographers both in India and abroad was excellent. We succeeded in enrolling 61 founder members. These include well-known economists, statisticians, sociologists, demographers and census administrators. Several Indian demographers working in the United Nations and Specialised Agencies enrolled as founder members. The membership fee for institutional members is Rs. 100/-. The Department of Family Planning, Government of India and the Demographic Research Centre at Dharwar enrolled as institutional members. The ordinary members are required to pay Rs. 20/- per year as subscription after their membership is formally approved by the Executive Committee, according to rules of our Association. In order to meet the high postal charges, the General Body of I ASP decided to raise the membership fee to 16 in the case of members residing abroad.

It may be noted that our members are drawn from universities, research institutions, and governmental organisations apart from several international organisations. To mention a few organisations, we may list the universities of Allahabad, Banaras, Baroda, Bombay, Delhi, Jadavpur, Lucknow and Punjab ; the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta ; the Ctokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona ; the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi ; the International Institute of Population Studies, Bombay ; and National Institute of Family Planning, New Delhi. The government organisations include the Office of the Registrar General ; the Planning Commission, Central Statistical Organisation and the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, New Delhi. The international organisations include the United Nations Population Division, New York; ECAFE. Bangkok; the African Economic Commission, Addis Ababa; and the World Bank, Washington. We are happy that the President of the IUSSP, Dr. C. Chandrasekaran is a founder member of our Association. We feel honoured that Professor V M. Dandekar, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona and Professor D.B. Laihri of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, joined our Association as founder members.

The first task which we took up was to organise a quick two-day seminar on the First Results of the 1971 Census of India. On account of lack of finances and because of the urgency of holding such a seminar as early as possible, we did not approach anybody for grants and straightaway proceeded to organise the seminar with the help and cooperation of the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi. The seminar was convened at the Institute of Economic Growth on November 22 and 23, 1971. As many as 31 papers were presented (please see the list in the appendix). The participants included Dr. B.N. Gangui, former Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University ; Mr. Asok Mitra, Secretary, Planning Commission; Mr. A. Chandra Sekhar, Registrar General, India ; Mr. K.K. Dass, Secretary, Minister of Health and Family Planning ; Dr. N.T. Mathew, Director, Central Statistical Organisation ; Mr. R.N. Madhok, Additional Secretary, Minister of Health and Family Planning ; Professor y.D. Mullick, Director, National Institute of Family Planning, New Delhi ; Dr. K.N. Rao,

former DGHS and currently Secretary General, Population Council of India, New Delhi, besides a number of demographers, economists and statisticians drawn from universities, research institutions and governmental agencies. Because of the problem of travel grants, many interested demographers from universities and research organisations could not attend the seminar. However, we sent a complete set of 31 papers with short report on the seminar to all members of IASP both in India and abroad. The seminar was a great success and it gave an excellent opportunity for a free and frank exchange of views between scholars outside the government and those working in the government, especially census administrators. One of the objectives of our Association is to promote such dialogues on a continuing basis so that in this process the academic experts learn more about the operational aspects of the census and the census administrators get an insight into the analytical problems confronting researchers.

The next important activity of our Association was the organisation of a new journal. The preliminary work in this connection was done by the ad hoc Executive Committee and Mr. P.B. Desai was appointed the Editor of the journal. However, because of a technical hitch about the name to be registered with the Registrar of Newspapers, the launching of the journal got delayed. Finally, we succeeded in getting the journal registered under the name *Demography-India* with the Registrar of Newspapers in March 1972.

The Registrar General, India, has organised an international seminar in connection with: the Indian Census Centenary in New Delhi from October 23 to 29, 1972. Our Association has been closely co-operating with the Registrar General in organising this seminar. A special feature of this seminar is a symposium on "Census and Development Planning", which will be held on October 24, 1972. We hope that there will be a fruitful discussion on the census as an aid to development planning. Our Association has also organised a Reception on October 23, 1972 on the lawns of Hyderabad House, New Delhi on the occasion of Indian Census Centenary Seminar.

We are happy to report that the Government of India has given full recognition to our new Association. The General Secretary of the Association was included in the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Second Asian Population Conference to be held in Tokyo in November, 1972. The Editor of *Demography-India* was nominated as a non-official member of the Indian delegation to this conference. In this connection we may also report that three of our members (Mr. Asok Mitra, Dr. P.M. Visaria and Dr. Ashish Bose) have been invited by the United Nations to participate in the Second Asian Population Conference.

We shall briefly comment on our financial position. We were fortunate in getting immediate financial help from the Indian Council of Social Science Research, thanks to the deep interest taken by its Member-Secretary Mr. J.P. Naik. A non-recurring grant of Rs. 5000/- was sanctioned to us for the financial year 1971-72 for the purchase of office equipment etc. and a recurring grant of Rs. 5000/- has been assured to us for the next five years. The first instalment of the grant for 1972-73 has already been released. We are deeply grateful to the ICSSR for this help and especially for the promptness with which they readily conceded to our request for financial help. We also approached the Family Planning Foundation (of India) for financial help for sponsoring our new journal. Again we

were fortunate in getting immediate response from the Foundation which made a generous contribution of Rs. 25,000/- for launching this journal. But for their help it would not have been possible for us to bring out this journal so speedily. We are not yet in a position to set up an independent office. We are grateful to the Institute of Economic Growth for extending their hospitality to us for carrying on the activities of our Association in the Institute's premises.

The first annual General Body meeting of the Association was held in New Delhi on March 7, 1972 under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Chandra Sekhar. It was decided at this meeting to hold the first general election for the office bearers of the Executive Committee of IASP sometime in October, 1972. Subsequently, Mr. K.K. Chakravorty, Chief Tabulation Officer, Office of the Registrar General, was appointed the Returning Officer for the IASP elections. We are deeply grateful to Mr. Chakravorty for undertaking the tedious work of conducting the elections. He sent a notification to all members of IASP about the election on August 24, 1972. The results of the election will be announced at the second General Body meeting convened in New Delhi on October 24, 1972. The new Executive Committee will take charge from January 1, 1973 for a period of two years according to our rules.

We have received a large number of requests for membership of IASP. To-date we have 178 members. The pending applications will be considered at the next meeting of the Executive Committee and we hope that our membership will soon exceed 200.

It has been a great personal pleasure for me to be associated with IASP right from the beginning at all stages of its work. I have been particularly fortunate in getting continued help, encouragement and co-operation from all members of the Association. A special feature of our Association has been the involvement of Indian demographers working abroad. This has given us an international outlook from the very beginning. Now that the solid foundations of the Association have been laid. I hope it will grow from strength to strength and serve the cause of demography both at the national and the international level.