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## **New Themes in Population Research**

**G**IVEN the task of enunciating 'new themes in population research', I feel impelled to raise and answer some elementary questions at the outset. What constitutes population research? Which are possible perspectives in this regard? What is meant by new themes?

Population research is essentially concerned with extension of knowledge in respect of three vital demographic processes of fertility, mortality, and migration. Its primary concern is to find out as to how these processes are influenced by and in return impact upon all other aspects of society, economy, polity and environment. A scholar may meaningfully adopt this trio as the control or reference point for any of his research in population field.

From here flows a concern for the study of anthropo, economic, social and political dimensions of any population. A variety of themes emerge which can form the research agenda in anthropo-, economic-, social-, and political-demography. These subfields are expected to contribute diverse insights derived from the specific theory and methodology of the related disciplines.

Since situations change over time and vary over space, the temporal and spatial dimensions of all what is indicated above is of special interest in population research. Studies on demographic transitions over time and relocations over space emerge as collateral imperatives.

Above all, the most crucial aspect of population research today is policy formulation. What should be done to achieve the kind of population patterns we want or need? How population can be integrated into the overall process of development? In which manner should the evolving demographic scenario be managed? These are among the critical issues which are to be addressed to be meaningfully considered.

By its disposition, population research imbibes fourfold tasks: (i) building of abstract models or theories, such as, visualisation of an ideal population pattern for the world; (ii) testing of an already existing theory, like the demographic transition; (iii) analysis of some empirical demographic scene, for example, population change in India; and (iv) designing of population policy. We should preferably opt for those themes which are of value to society at large. The greatest loss from the opportunities foregone by not fully exploiting the potential of social science in the field of population is borne by developing countries (Demeny 1988:473).

A variety of perspectives is possible on any theme in population research. The most common is the 'positivistic' which professes to be a value free, objective, and cause-effect

study of population. Contrary to that is the 'political economy' perspective which perceives all population processes as a manifestation of differential economic gains accruing to different classes in consonance with their power to influence decisions.

Besides, we have the 'alarmist' perspective of population, as represented by the ideas of Malthus, the Club of Rome and Population Crisis Committee who view population growth as generators of human misery. Against this is the 'populationist' lobby, represented by Boserup, who sees population growth as a propeller of development. Population, with its ever growing demand for material goods, is seen as a threat to ecology by the 'environmentalist' group. On the other hand, we have 'developmentalists' who seek an effective interlinkage between population and development. Their insistence on research in the area of population policy is easy to comprehend.

What can be a new theme? It is difficult to imagine, as the following review of literature on population research will show, any worthwhile topic that has escaped the attention of scholars. Some topics have definitely been researched more than others. Some do require amplification. Some call for new perspectives. By new themes here is meant those research questions which have not been adequately and sharply addressed to and at the same time are of crucial importance to India of today. The suggestion is basically for functional research which serves the cause of society. But before we raise such questions, let us review the state of population research.

### **Review of Population Research**

What is the state of art in population research? It is impractical to review all the massive material available on the matter. One can simply sample and look for representative literature for drawing some tentative generalisations. This is what has been done here.

A perusal of the *State of World Population* documents, brought out annually by the United Nations Population Fund (1986-1990) for the last five years, gives a clue to what is most critical to action research in population. To stop population growth, attack poverty, and protect environment' are seen as the decisive choices. For this, 'women are to be placed at the centre of the change process' in full recognition of their role as mothers and wives, managers of local environment, and effective contributors to most sectors of economy. It is also to be recognised that 'our world will be urban majority by the end of this century'. Most of the urban population will be concentrated in large cities. Strategies pertaining to urban management are emerging as more discreet than those aiming at checking urban growth.

The 99 research papers, including articles, notes/commentaries, and data/perspectives, published in the *Population and Development Review* during 1986-89 can be broadly classified into three groups. The first covers papers on fertility (21), mortality (10) and migration (11). Studies on vital demographic processes, thus, account for over two-fifths of the total. The second includes papers on population policy and planning (12), population and development (13), and population research and data collection (10). These studies, having a direct bearing on population issues, make over one-third of the total. The remaining papers related to family and children (10), the aged (8), and others (4). Papers published in this journal purport to understand the interrelationships between population and socio-economic development and identify the related policy issues. During the years under

reference, the journal was found rather deficient in papers focusing on the questions of poverty, environment and urbanisation.

Among the 89 research papers invited and printed for the formal sessions of the International Population Conference held at New Delhi in 1989, 21 deal with fertility transition, control and analysis. Data collection and estimation techniques are covered by 13 papers. Population policies and planning form the theme of 8 papers (International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1989).

Some modest research interest through seven papers is seen in emerging patterns of family systems/ structures and marital status. Issues relevant to international/internal migration and explosive growth of megacities receive attention of another seven papers. The child survival and health and the aged are the focus of three papers each. Another three papers indicate population research priorities. New directions in fertility research through an anthropological perspective, a deeper understanding of the related socio-demographic processes, and a more rigorous vector analysis are emphasised in particular.

Almost 90 per cent of the papers pertain to the developing world. A special interest is visible in China. Quite some papers attempt a comparison between the developing and developed countries. In respect of the developed countries, the major themes of interest are changing patterns of marital formation and family structure, aging, and policy responses to population decline.

The 16 Population Research Centres in India in 1986 completed 634 research studies during 1960-86 (Abbi *et al.* 1988: 2). About 60 per cent of these are in the area of 'family welfare' (planning) and 20 per cent on 'fertility'. Nearly 9 per cent of the studies are on 'general demography', 7 per cent on the impact of population growth on socio-economic development. The remaining covered a variety of themes ranging from 'public health' 'methodologies' to 'population structure and composition' to 'population policy'. Studies on 'population policy' are few to count.

Though most of the Population Research Centres are noted for their major research thrusts on family planning and fertility yet some of them can be mentioned for other research interests too: Waltair and Guwahati for the 'impact of population growth on socio-economic development', Patna for 'general demography', Dharwad for 'population structure and composition', Gandhigram (Tamil Nadu) for 'public health' and Pune for 'methodology' and 'demographic analysis'. Gandhigram Population Research Centre has been the most prolific; it alone claims 40 per cent of all the studies. The Patna and Lucknow Population Research Centres did 10 per cent each.

The Approach Paper to the Eighth Plan (Government of India 1990 a) projects itself as a document for movement towards social transformation. It sets forth generation of employment and reduction in population growth rate as its two basic demographic objectives. Rapid population growth is viewed as slowing down the process of poverty alleviation and hastening the pace of environmental degradation. The strategy of family planning is indicated as shifting its emphasis from the 'contraceptive measures' to 'rise in the status of woman', and 'control over infant mortality\*'. This is said to be achieved through the mechanism of decentralised planning.

The above review demonstrates that while in the developed world, the population research is concerned with problems arising from fertility decline, aging and family

disintegration, in the developing world, the major concerns remain with fertility control, youthfulness of population, and child survival. Rapid population growth is seen as detrimental to economic vigour, status of women and quality of environment. In India, the mechanical terms like birth control and family planning have been replaced successively by more dignified phrases like family welfare and human resource development. Yet, at the heart of the matter remains the question of reduction of fertility.

This signifies that a more vigorous and purposeful investigation of vital processes is to continue. This may be done through new research techniques and perspectives. The question of population redistribution, primarily as a strategy for reforming the resource/population situation in different regions may also be critically examined. Likewise, a fresh view should be taken of the population related issues and policy. The remaining part of this paper is devoted to these tasks.

### Vital Demographic Processes

The impressive amount of available research on fertility — its transition, determinants and consequences—was recorded in the previous section. A neat list of fertility influencing factors is laid out and empirically tested through data analysis. The procedure raises some innocent questions: Are there conscious and systematic family raising strategies on the part of Indian couples? If yes, which precise considerations are involved? What happens on the way with successive arrival of children? Which adjustments are made? There is a need to decipher the actual process in place of persisting with the traditional style of mechanically testing the fertility influencing variables.

Our hypothesis is that, in our country, the initial fertility of a couple is a simple byproduct of marriage. Most of the Indian couples start their reproductive career with limited knowledge about it. The first child just gets produced rather than is produced. There is a blind impulse at sex satisfaction. Additionally, the man is keen to prove his vitality and the woman welcomes an early child to strengthen her base in the new home. The process may get gradually tempered by some new and changing considerations over successive births. What really happens? At what stage do the efforts at voluntary contraception enter? Or why there may be none? We must get to know all this.

Here questions relating to the intervention by state in fertility control become relevant. Lyndon Johnson, the American President, opined that less than five dollars invested in population check is worth a hundred dollars in economic growth (Piotrow 1973:90). At the 1974 Population Conference at Bucharest, however, India asserted that 'development is the best contraceptive'. Then where do we stand? What is the trade off between investment in family planning and in overall development? What we know for certain is that the cost of averting per birth in India increased from Rs. 286 in 1980-81 to Rs. 591 in 1985-86, something which is not warranted by the magnitude of price rise (Dandekar 1988: 841). Another visible situation is that while the women are the major targets of both the messages and methods of family planning, the felt contraceptive needs of the target women are not adequately catered to (Balasubrahmanyam 1986:69). How can this distortion be corrected? Only population research can provide an authentic answer.

Mortality also needs to be understood as it takes place. Within the framework of a family, who dies in what sequence—an infant, grand father or grand mother, mother or father? What

are the economic, social and psychological implications of each event? Do these events have different meanings for males and females?

It is noteworthy that while there are numerous studies on fertility transition, there are few on mortality transition. How does the behaviour of mortality decline differ from that of fertility decline? The former may climb down quickly in the initial stage and slow down later; the latter may display an opposite trend. Only some systematic studies can verify the validity of this hypothesis and provide a model of mortality transition. One should also investigate as to how an exemplary low death rate, comparable to that obtaining in most advanced economies, could be achieved in Kerala whose per capita income is lower than that of the Indian average?

Associated with above is the question of epidemiological transition — the nature and intensity of morbidity which a society experiences at different stages of its socio-economic development. How does morbidity differ by areas? In which manner is it related to the variables of habit quality, age, sex, and rural/urban location?

Another area of potential research relates to demographic transition over generations within a family. It can be hypothesised that high fertility and high mortality is associated with low level of literacy of both parents; some decline in birth rate but a steeper fall in mortality is experienced when the husband is educated but wife is illiterate or semieducated; and a situation of low fertility and low mortality will emerge when both parents are educated. Similar other hypotheses can be formulated for testing.

The evolving scene of family building strategies over the generations should also be understood. What is the relative contribution of population dynamics (fertility, mortality and migration) and the incidence of nuclear/joint families in determining the size of the families? Why is there a tendency toward break up of joint families in India? It has been suggested that large households go by the considerations of economies of scale, small by calculations of efficiency and privacy, and the medium households combine a balance of scale, privacy and companionship (Burch and Mathews 1987: 501). How far is this true? Our hypothesis is that an intensifying rationality, as expressed through an increasing faith in cost-benefit analysis of every situation, is at the root of break up of joint families in India and of the nuclear family itself in the West.

The literature on the magnitude, direction, composition and causation of migration is quite vast. Hardly any aspect of migration has been left uncovered. Here it may suffice to raise some policy issues. The first relates to the adoption of right kind of migration policies to best serve the interests of the development process. Some scholars believe that migration creates more problems than it solves and hence it should be contained through a decentralised pattern of development. A moot question arises: Is this feasible in view of heavy investment costs involved in raising the necessary infrastructure everywhere. This does not seem affordable in a scarce resource situation like India. A corollary of the same would be a check upon urbanward migration from rural areas. Rural development is recommended as the measure. While rural development is most desirable objective in itself but it is doubtful if it will make a dent on rural-urban migration. Similarly, the desirability of controlling large influxes into the metropolitan cities is generally expressed. Here one has to understand the reasons behind the unabated explosion of big cities. One may possibly arrive at a conclusion that the basic question is not of containing of the growth of dynamic cities but of managing them better.

Associated with above is the issue of increasing rural-urban disparity. Their per capita income is roughly in the ratio of 1: 3 in India (Mohan 1985 :627). But when one looks for the disparity in their assets the ratio gets reduced to 9 : 10 (Reserve Bank of India 1986: 439). How is this to be explained? Does it represent a vast difference in the cost of living in the two contexts? Do most of the urban families start with a meagre asset base? Is there net transfer of income from urban to rural areas? We do not have the answers to these questions.

Interwined with the process of migration is the question of locals and outsiders in the context of highly constrained job market in different states of India. Sometimes this issue percolates down to regional level with the states. All this is manifest in the 'sons of the soil' theory (Weiner 1978 : 269-73). Here one may try to probe deeply into the patterns and implications of linguistic, interstate and interregional migrations. The resultant patterns of social pluralism should be examined in respect of their impact on the development process. Our hypothesis is that regions with social heterogeneity in India are much better off than those marked by social homogeneity. Hence interstate and interregional migrations ought to be encouraged rather than discouraged.

Another theme deserving research attention is the migration, inflow or infiltration from across the borders with Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. What is its magnitude, causation and location? In which manner the destination/concentration regions or places of this international migration get affected in their economy or polity? How do local populations react to these new immigrants? Though of very different nature, the return of Indians from Kuwait and Iraq can also be subjected to a somewhat similar demographic analysis.

### Population Redistribution

To what extent are the existing population distribution patterns, as associated with all variety of settlements, are optimal? Any system of settlements in terms of their location, nature (rural or urban), spread (agglomerated or dispersed), size (population) and spacing (distance) evolves over time. It is a cumulative product of economic, social and other forces operating over time. Migration is the process by which population is redistributed and settlement system gets restructured. We have to identify these redistribution processes at macro-, meso- and micro- scales and discern the underlying forces. One crucial question arises in this context. Should we alter the prevailing patterns of population distribution to achieve some avowed objectives of efficiency or justice or security or integration? Should the dispersed populations be converted into clusters to reduce the cost of providing infrastructure and services? Will a subtle change in the population composition of politically sensitive areas help solve the problem of centrifugality? To what extent the tribal regions be kept impervious to inflows of outsiders? An overriding question still remains to be answered : Even if the optimal population distribution patterns are modeled, will it be possible to work them out?

### Population Projections

One of the prerequisites of any planning is to have population data as projected over time. It is necessary to know the size at which the population of India would stabilise.

Identifying the year when this is likely to happen, we may prepare a perspective plan for the entire period. Simultaneous exercises are to be undertaken to project the nutrition, housing, education, health, employment and other requirements of the population. This would give a firm understanding of what must be achieved by that time.

Another task is to project population and its requirements at different intercepts over time till the point of stable population. This will provide a time framework for assessing the success of planning policies, as reviewed at regular intervals.

For preparation of the Five Year Plans and their constituent Annual Plans, we require data as projected on yearly basis. Such data must be compiled in respect of population size, sex and age structure, rural/urban composition, labour force, and occupational structure of workers up to the district, block, and town/village level. Population projections for individual cities are indispensable for gauging their future infrastructure and service needs. Our assessment is that Indian population research has highly neglected these areas.

Some questions of perennial interest may also be raised here. What is the optimal size of India's population, given some precisely defined objectives? What is the optimal size of a city, again with clear enunciation of criteria of economic cost, employment generating capacity, productivity, income level and quality of living? What is the optimal size of a district at which it can be best administered or a development block at which it can be best planned? Our only fear is that such practical questions of defining norms are likely to be dismissed as highly theoretical.

### **Economic Development, Employment and Poverty**

The process of population growth, the question of employment generation and the pace of economic development are interlinked. The right to work is the centre piece of the new government's agenda. The Approach Paper to the Eighth Plan believes that 'the viable way to achieve the aim of full employment is to make sure that growth is widely distributed across the regions and sections of population and is of a kind which can absorb the increase in labour force and the backlog of the unemployed in different parts of the country'. How is this to be achieved? The basic questions are: How can productive jobs be generated in the shortest possible time at the minimum cost to the system? What is the comparative cost of creating jobs in urban or rural areas, in agriculture or non-agriculture, in region A or region B? What aspects of demography, especially migration and labour supply, are involved in the process? It will be rewarding for us to address ourselves to such questions of practical importance.

The public sector is the most coveted avenue of employment in India. About 18 million persons are in the service of the central government, state governments, municipal bodies and parastatals (Government of India 1990 b: 5-47). They make 70 per cent of the employees in the organised sector. On an average, every tenth household in India has one of their members in government service.

What is the background of these persons in terms of region, locality (urban or rural), caste, and parental occupation? We have no firm information. How is this educated, salaried, middle class shaping the demographic trends in the country, especially in respect of fertility,

child survival, family nuclearisation, and female education? There are no systematic studies on this point. Indeed the demography of this group offers itself as a potential field of research.

The demography of the poor is another crucial field of investigation. Who are the poor? Do they make a homogeneous group in terms of their demographic attributes? Do they grow faster and make larger households? In which vocations do they concentrate? How do the rural poor differ from the urban poor? To what extent poverty in India is linked with caste? Research on such questions through collection of data at the microlevel can be supplemented by parallel thinking on wider issues at the macro level. Should poverty be attacked directly through a radical social policy or should it be alleviated through the traditional economic policy of overall growth?

The World Bank (1990: 3) throws some fresh light on the issues relating to poverty. It opines that the principal trade off is not between economic growth and reduction of poverty but between the nonpoor or poor. Who should be given priority, poor or nonpoor, to achieve best results in both short and long terms? It believes that investments in the poor will be more successful provided the poor are made politically strong too. The proposition is interesting but demands a critical assessment.

From here we are led to the question of statutory reservation of government jobs for the backward classes in addition to the existing provisions for the scheduled castes and tribes. This is one of the ways through which the poor will be accorded a measure of political power. Backwardness or poverty in this case has been deemed synonymous with caste. To what extent is this true? Only some impartial research can give an objective answer. For us, an equally crucial research point is: What are the demographic implications of this policy of positive discrimination in favour of the poor? Which castes among the backward, which members of a given caste, and which parts of India are likely to benefit more in the process?

### **Gender Analysis**

In no country of the world, the status of women equals that of men. They have been described as the powerless, pregnant and poor. Forming almost a half of the world population, they contribute two-thirds of the hours worked in the world, earn about one-tenth of the world's income, and have only about one per cent of the world's property in their name (United Nations Population Fund 1989 :28).

Measured in terms of access to and control over material resources (food, income, land and other forms of wealth) and social resources (education, power and prestige), the relative status of women differs from one country to another, and also within a country. A strong association is underlined between the relative status of women and desired patterns of fertility, mortality and migration. If so, we should spell out population policies which will raise the status of women. Creating more jobs for women in the organised sector? Encouraging rural-urban migration? Promoting nuclear families? Above all, spreading female education? The basic research and policy issues relate to the strategy which will render greater economic and reproductive autonomy to women. One may find out as to which measure is most critical to the status of women.

About one-fifth of the households in the developing world are headed by females. The phenomenon is associated partly with male selective outmigration and partly with

widowhood. As a result, such households are said to be poorer and prone to greater socio-economic insecurity. What is the actual situation? How do such households make their living? What is special in the demographic attributes of these households? Only systematic studies can provide firm information.

Above all, it is imperative to conduct research in the spirit of gender analysis. The intention is to discover the ways in which women are differentially affected by the changes in technology, government policies and programmes, and the development process in general. One of the prerequisites for this is to collect and present data as segregated by sex on every relevant item. Here a comparison between the two sexes, in terms of number of hours for which they work and the kind of work they do, will be of special interest.

### The Environment

Environment refers to the sum total of natural resources as associated with the quality of physical conditions of lithosphere, atmosphere and hydrosphere.

Population growth is seen as reducing the per capita availability of natural resources and economic development and causing the degradation of physical environment. The most serious environmental problems include deforestation, desertification, degradation of aquatic environment and pollution of air. It is notable that the concern for environmental problems has increased and that for exhaustion of natural resources has decreased since mid sixties. It is acknowledged that resources are to be used for development but this has to be done in manner that ecology is not damaged in the process. In other words, resources have to be conserved rather than preserved.

It is also true that technology enables more intensive use of resources. Economic development raises the capacity of a system for ecological conservation. The development process and ecology should not be seen as in perpetual conflict.

Hence the basic question is: How can the process of population growth be meaningfully integrated with technological advancement, economic development and ecological conservation. For this, one has to analyze the existing relationships between the population size, distribution and growth with the resource advancement and environmental character of different areas. The prevailing distortions have to be identified and demographic adjustments worked out. A prerequisite for all this is our deeper understanding of interlinkages between population, resources and ecology.

### The State and the Population Policy Research

Finally, we may consider some issues relating to population policy research as an aid to strategy formulation for government action.

This may be done best by raising some related questions. To what effective use the massive amount of data collected by the Census of India has been put by the government? Which population analysis has guided policy formulation? To what extent have the demographic impacts of government policies been subjected to systematic research? How strong is the interaction between the producers and users of population research? What should be the content of the population policy research in India?

On the part of the government, the most used data is the size of population — for devolution of funds to the states with population size as one of the criteria, for giving differential rates of allowances to the employees on the basis of population size of cities, for determining the quota of each state in recruitment to defence forces, and so on. The delimitation of electoral boundaries is based on the distribution pattern of population. The States Reorganisation Commission took into consideration the data on linguistic composition of population. The family planning programme received an impetus from the census data revealing a population growth rate which left all projections behind. Beyond this, much of the census data are used rarely and that too in a prefatory manner.

Similarly most of the research findings arising from population analysis remain uncared for. This is due to lack of interaction between the government and research institutions, particularly universities. The real factors behind this state of affairs are rather deeper, for which both the researchers and the government should share responsibility.

Generally the researchers pick up themes at random. They generally respond to some available data or information and rarely start with a precisely defined question of social value. Most often the policy implications of their findings are not indicated. The government is not far off the point in accusing social scientists of not attending to directly relevant issues of the society, or not making available their research based advice at the time it is needed, or of offering solutions which are impractical. On the other hand, the academicians are also right in accusing the government of denying access to information on the pretext of confidentiality, of being hypersensitive to any criticism, and of seeking simply firefighting solutions. The government is seen as being highly arrogant in claiming all the possible practical wisdom. But it is also true that much of the social science research is fragmentary, imitative and vague.

The outcome is obvious. The government policies tend to be not only inconsistent but also contradictory and even counterproductive. The same government is seen as experimenting with opposites over time. Quite often it is more responsive to advice emanating from the international agencies rather to homespun wisdom. The need is to break this tendency and encourage policy research.

The population policy research envisages that:

(i) It will be multidisciplinary, its agenda will be decided through direct consultation between the producers and users of research, and it will be accomplished within a given time frame.

(ii) It will aim at an indepth understanding of the existing demographic patterns, a clear appreciation of the emerging trends, and a firm calculus of the demographic projections. At the heart of the whole effort will be questions relating to fertility, mortality and migration. The fertility directed research will deliberate over issues like incentives/disincentives for family planning, relative advantages/disadvantages of different contraceptive methods, and success/failure of the current fertility control policies. The mortality related research is expected to look into the process of epidemiological transition, the trade off between the preventive and curative health services, and advisability of promoting traditional systems of medicine as an adjunct to the modern one. Migration research has to debate over questions like rural-urban migration, migration into tribal regions, and migration as a measure to change population composition of sensitive areas displaying centrifugal tendencies.

(iii) Above all, it will spell out alternative lines of action—as phased over time, assessed in terms of their cost and benefit, and judged in respect of their administrative feasibility. The demographic objectives to be achieved and the desired strategies towards them are to be clearly stated. It must tell what the government should do as a part of its action plan (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 1988 :229).

### Concluding Remarks

What is the message of this paper? This can be listed by points. First, there is only a limited scope for extending the frontiers of population research to new themes. But a wide scope exists for having a new perspective of all that has been already examined. Secondly, a political economy perspective of demographic processes will be particularly helpful in identifying the critical issues involved in population management. All demographic scenes, at both the micro and macro levels, are to be assessed in terms of their cost-benefit as accruing to the two sexes, or different classes, or various regions in consonance with their power to influence decisions. Thirdly, there is an equal need to cultivate political demography as a special field of research interest. The political implications of all demographic patterns and trends will form the core of its studies. Fourthly, the vast multitude of data collected and provided by the Census of India must be processed through research mill. An intelligent use of demographic variables can be made to identify the patterns of economic, social and educational backwardness, intensity of urban-rural relations, status of women and disparities in development level, and so on, at all spatial scales of the states, districts, development blocks and villages. Fifthly, a serious effort is imperative for discovering the hidden linkages between population, development and ecology. The demographic situations which promote development or damage ecology are to be identified. Sixthly, all demographic analysis ought to cover the temporal biology of patterns, trends and projections. The future scenarios are to be worked out not merely in terms of number of people but also in respect of overall demography. Above all, a high priority is to be accorded to population policy research. India, like other developing countries, cannot afford the luxury of pursuing research simply for the sake of research. It must direct its research efforts to the needs of the society so as to arrive at meaningful strategies for achieving the stipulated goals.

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