

# A STUDY OF POPULATION AWARENESS, ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING AND REACTIONS TO THE INCLUSION OF POPULATION EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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## ABSTRACT

*Mostly the people are aware of the fact that the population of our country is increasing by leaps and bounds. To know whether the people are aware of this fact or not, this study has been conducted on a sample of 1000. The sample included students, teachers and parents. The population awareness of the sample people, their attitude towards family planning and their views regarding the inclusion of population education were judged with the help of suitable tests. 68.60 percent male students had moderate level of population awareness. 80 percent girls were found to have moderate level of population awareness. Most of the teachers (68%) and parents (58.50%) were found to have moderate level of population awareness. 77% students, 72.50% teachers and 64.50% parents showed favourable attitude towards family planning. Most of the students wanted to study the subject of population education as a separate subject. Most of the teachers wanted this subject to be taught in co-educational classes. Almost 100% parents wanted this subject to be taught in schools.*

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## INTRODUCTION

By August 2010 the population of the world has touched 6.86 billion mark and it is estimated that by 2011 it will cross the mark of 7 billion. By 2050 it will touch the mark of nine billion. About 78 million people are added to the world population every year. According to an U.N. projection the world population would stabilize at about 10.2 billion by 2085.

According to US population Reference Bureau every minute 267 children take birth in the world whereas the number of those who die is 108 per minute. This way 159 children are added to the world population every minute. The world population touched the mark of 5 billion on 11th July 1987. It touched the mark of 6 billion on 12th October 1999. It took 12 years to add one billion mark. Again it will take 12 years to add another one billion.

The world can be divided into three categories on the basis of population growth rate. There are countries which have higher growth rate than the world average (Asian countries); then there are countries with a zero growth rate (Scandinavian countries). There are countries with a negative growth rate (Luxumburg and Hungary). Asian countries account for about 59% of the total world

population. Six of the most populous countries in this region are Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Pakistan.

In India the situation is also alarming. We have reached 117.67 crore mark on 1st march 2010. By 1st march 2020 it will touch the mark of 132.62 crore. Our country, one of the ten most populous countries, accounts for 16 percent of the world population with 2.4 percent of world's total land area and with a high dependency ratio of 42 percent. If the present growth rate of 1.9 (of 2001) continues the population of the country will be 1.7 billion by 2060. About 1.8 crore people are added in country's population every year. Every year we add an Australia (or a Haryana) in terms of human numbers. With a wide gap between birth rate and death rate our country's population is increasing very rapidly. Though, there is a slight decline in our growth rate, the goal of national reproductive rate of one which is consistent with a birth rate of 21 percent at national level, seems remote, going by the present birth rates and trends.

This population explosion is giving rise to a number of problems. It is one of the greatest barriers to economic growth and social well being of the nation. What would such totals - for

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India and the world - mean in terms of the alleviation of poverty, the status of women and children, and the sustainability of developmental programmes. To what degree we are consuming today the very capital required to achieve decent standards of living for future generations?

Considerable progress in the area of population control had been recorded between the sixth and tenth plans but this had to be stepped several folds, given the magnitude of the problem. From 1950 to 2005 more than 10 crore births have been averted at a cost of Rs. 343 per birth. As per the report of technical group of population projection our country's annual exponential growth rate will be 1.1 percent between 2016 and 2020.

Haryana came into existence on Nov. 1, 1966 after the bifurcation of Punjab. It is covering an area of 44,221 sq.km. According to the census of 2001 its population is 21082989 (2.05%) of the total population of the country with a decadal growth rate of 28.06%. Its population is also increasing at an abnormal rate.

There seem to be three possible ways to deal with this problem:

- A. Persuasion with the help of mass media.
- B. Operations (family planning ways and means).
- C. Education.

The government has been doing the persuasion work with the help of T.V., Radio, Posters, family planning workers and other means. In the area of sterilization, I.U.D. and contraception enough money has been spent. Persuasion and operation table have not been able to achieve the desired goals. Education is superior to both these methods.

Indeed to plan families is more important for the younger generation than for those who have already made their contribution to our demographic profile. The govt. policy on health and family welfare has also stated that "steps should be taken to see that youths get

population education as part of their normal courses of study". The govt. has emphasized the need to introduce "population values" in the education system. It is essential that the younger generation should grow up with an adequate awareness of the population problem and a realization of their national responsibility in this regard. We must realize that it is not only a clinical problem and the operation table is not the sole remedy. We need to create an intellectual atmosphere, so that people voluntarily take to family planning methods. And such a climate can only be created through education. Education will not be worthwhile at all, if it does not bring about an all round consciousness about the various problems facing the country, and most certainly the problem of increasing numbers is the most urgent. It is high time that teachers, educators and educational administrators and planners realize their responsibility in this context. And most certainly population awareness is a continuing problem and must be taken an such. Both today and tomorrow as well as the day after are involved. Therefore, our target population should flow right from the nursery classes through the primary, middle, secondary and college levels right into adulthood. Not much work has been done in the area of population education research in our country and specially in Haryana. So the investigator thought it proper to conduct a research study on the population awareness, of students, teachers and parents of Haryana and their attitude towards family planning and also their reactions to the inclusion of population education in the school curriculum.

#### **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study has been delimited as follows:

1. The study has been delimited to the school students (standard IX and X) of Haryana.
2. Only the teachers of middle and high schools of Haryana have been included in the sample.
3. Only the parents from Haryana state have been included in the sample.
4. Only the population awareness, attitude towards family planning among the school students, teachers and parents and their

reactions to the inclusion of population education have been studied. All the three-students, teachers and parents have been selected from rural as well as urban areas.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The broad objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the degree of population awareness of Haryana School students (standard IX & X).
2. To assess the degree of population awareness among Haryana school teachers (Middle & High school).
3. To find out the degree of population awareness among the parents in Haryana.
4. To find out the attitude of school students towards family planning.
5. To find out the attitude of school teachers towards family planning.
6. To find out the attitude of parents in Haryana towards family planning.
7. To find out the preparedness of school students, teachers and parents for the inclusion of population education in the school programme.
8. To understand the views of the three (students, teachers and parents) regarding the ways and means of introducing population education in the school system.

### **HYPOTHESES**

In order to carry out the study with clarity and arrive at testable conclusions the hypotheses are stated in null form as follows:

1. The school students in Haryana are not aware of the fact that the population is increasing rapidly.
2. The school teachers in the state of Haryana are not aware of increasing population.
3. The parents in Haryana do not have population awareness.
4. The attitude of all the three (students, teachers and parents) is not favourable towards family planning.
5. The students, teachers and parents have

negative reactions towards the inclusion of population education in the school curriculum.

### **SAMPLE**

1000, IX and X class students, 400 middle and high school teachers and 200 parents from four districts - Rewari, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Faridabad of Haryana.

### **METHOD**

Descriptive survey method of research.

### **TOOLS OF THE STUDY**

1. Population Awareness Test (Level -A) for students.
2. Population Awareness Test (Level -B) for teachers.
3. Population Awareness Test (Level -C) for parents. All these tests have been prepared by Dr. B.S. Parakh and Dr. D.P. Jain of N.C.E.R.T. The tests have been translated in Hindi by the researcher herself.
4. Family planning Attitude scale by Dr. Yashvir Singh.
5. Questionnaires to judge the reactions of students, teachers and Parents to the inclusion of population in the school curriculum.

Data were collected with the help of these tests. Data were analysed by using suitable statistical techniques like - Mean, S.D. 't' value, percentage, graph, correlation etc.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **A. POPULATION AWARENESS OF STUDENTS:**

Three categories of students were formed on the basis of the Means and standard deviations of their population awareness scores by doing plus and minus of the SD from the Mean. The categories were like the following Poor population awareness - score range 46-60. Moderate population awareness - score range 61-75. High population awareness - score range 76-95.

1. Most of the students (68.60 percents) fall in moderate category of population awareness.
2. 15.40 percent students possess a very poor level of population awareness.
3. 16 percent students have exhibited high level of population awareness.
4. 65.625 percent male students have been found to have moderate level of population awareness.
5. Almost equal number of male students 17 percent and 17.375 percent have been placed in poor and high categories of population awareness respectively.
6. 80.50 percent girl students possess moderate level of population awareness.
7. 9 percent girls are in poor category of population awareness whereas 10.50 percent fall in high category. That is to say that nine percent of girls have poor knowledge of population phenomena whereas ten and a half percent possess a very high knowledge of population dynamics.
8. If we compare boys and girls, we find that in the poor category of population awareness the percentage of boys (17 percent) is greater than that of the girls (9 percent).
9. In the category of moderate population awareness the percentage of girls (80.50) is greater than that (65.625) of the boys.
10. In the high category of population awareness, the boys have fared well. Their percentage (17.375) is greater than that (10.50) of the girls.
11. If we analyse the population awareness position of the students districtwise, we find that the highest percentage of students in the high category of population awareness is from Gurgaon district. A contradictory finding is also there when we see that the highest percentage of students in the poor category comes from Gurgaon district (Exactly equal, 22 percent in poor and 22 percent in high).
12. Majority of the students from the three districts, namely, Rewari, Rohtak and

Faridabad fall in moderate category.

13. A greater percentage of girls from Faridabad district have high level of population awareness. Their knowledge of population dynamics is greater than that of the girls from Rewari district.
14. In the matter of different components of population awareness, we find that in some of them significant differences have been found in male and female students.

In the area of social and economic development and values (SVD) significant difference is there. In this area female students are better than the male students. In the area of family life education (FLY) male students have shown better results. Again in the area of ecology (ECO) or environmental issues male students are better than the female students. In the areas of demography (D), health, hygiene and nutrition (HHN) and quality of life (QLY) no significant differences have been observed between girls and boys.

#### **B. POPULATION AWARENESS OF TEACHERS:**

Like those of the students three categories of teachers were formed in the matter of population awareness. The findings are:

1. Most of the teachers (68 percent) fall in the moderate category of population awareness.
2. 17.25 percent teachers have high level of population awareness.
3. 14.75 percent teachers have a very poor amount of population awareness.
4. Sexwise, too, we find that most of the teachers - both male and female have moderate level of population awareness (66.50 percent males and 69.50 percent females).
5. In the high category of population awareness both male and female teachers are almost equal in percentage (17 percent male and 17.50 percent female).
6. 16.50 percent male teachers and 13 percent female teachers have poor level of population awareness.
7. No significant difference exists in the

population awareness of male and female teachers. The value of  $t$  .088 is not significant at any level of significance.

8. Districtwise, it has been found that the teachers from Gurgaon district (26 percent) are at the top in high population awareness category. They are very few in number (only 6 percent) and no female teacher from this district is in poor category of population awareness. In high category the percentages of other districts are almost equal (Rewari 14, Rohtak 15 and Faridabad 14). The greatest number of low achievers are from Faridabad district (23 percent) followed by Rewari (17) and Rohtak (13 percent).
9. Most of the teachers (68 percent) possess moderate level of population awareness. Here, the districtwise sequence is - Rohtak (72 percent), Rewari (69), Gurgaon (68) and Faridabad (27 percent).
10. On the whole female teachers have shown better performance in the matter of population awareness than their male counterparts.
11. In different components of population awareness, except in the area of family life education (FLY) ( $t$ -value 2.288, significant at .05 level), no significant differences have been observed. In family life education (FLY) area female teachers have shown better awareness than male teachers.

#### **C. POPULATION AWARENESS IN PARENTS:**

1. 58.50 Percent parents in Haryana have moderate level of population awareness.
2. 17.5 percent parents have a poor level of population awareness.
3. 24.50 percent parents have high amount of population awareness.
4. Sexwise, we find that male and female parents differ significantly in population awareness ( $t$ -value 7.339 - significant at .01 level). Male parents have greater amount of population awareness.
5. Population awareness componentwise, it

has been observed that in the areas of social and economic development and values (SVD), health, hygiene and nutrition (HHN), family life education (FLY) and ecology (ECO) both the groups (male and female parents) differ significantly. Male parents are better in all these areas. In the areas of demography (D) and quality of life (QLY) the  $t$  values are not significant. Both the groups have almost similar level of awareness in these areas.

#### **D. ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING:**

1. 12.50 percent students have unfavourable attitude towards family planning. Their scores on the family planning attitude scale are very low.
2. 77 percent students have favourable attitude towards family planning.
3. 10.50 percent students have strongly favourable attitude towards family planning.
4. The girl students have more favourable attitude than the boys, towards family planning.
5. 13.75 percent teachers have shown strongly favourable attitude towards family planning.
6. 72.50 percent teachers have shown favourable attitude towards family planning.
7. 13.75 percent teachers have exhibited unfavourable attitude towards family planning.
8. There exists no significant difference between the Means of the scores of male and female teachers. The  $t$ -value .436 is not significant at any level of significance.
9. Still then, some difference is there. A greater number of female teachers (17.50) has shown strongly favourable attitude towards family planning in comparison to that of the male teachers (10 percent).
10. In just favourable category male teachers are ahead to female teachers by 10 percent (the percentage of male teachers 77.50; the percentage of female teachers 67.50).

11. In unfavourable attitude category, the female teachers are somewhat a little ahead to male teachers (female teachers percentage 15; male teachers percentage 12.50).
12. 15 percentage parents are not in favour of family planning.
13. 64.50 percent parents have shown favourable attitude towards family planning.
14. 20.50 percent parents have shown strongly favourable attitude towards family planning.
15. There exists no significant difference between the Means, numbers and percentages of male and female parents.

On the basis of the correlation, it has been found that there is no significant relationship between the attitude of teachers and parents towards family planning and their population awareness. Only in the case of the students significant correlation have been observed. The attitude of students as a whole and that of the female students has got negative correlation with their population awareness.

#### **E. REACTION OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO THE INCLUSION OF POPULATION EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM.**

##### **REACTIONS OF STUDENTS**

1. 98.23 percent students were of the view that something should be done to control the increasing population.
2. Girls and boys separately also favoured this view.
3. Most of the students are willing to learn about population education in the school.
4. Most of the students (69.10) preferred to study the subject as a separate subject. Same was the case with boys and girls separately. Even the girls are more keen to study it separately.
5. Most of the students (93.88 percent) expressed the view that population education gives knowledge about the population problem.

6. Most of the students preferred IX, X and +2 stage as the most appropriate classes for the study of population education. Boys as a separate group preferred the classes IX and X whereas the girls preferred the +2 stage as the best stage for studying the subject of population education.

##### **REACTIONS OF TEACHERS**

1. Most of the teachers (99.65%) expressed the view that the increasing population is a big problem for our country.
2. Most of the teachers are of the view that the students community should be made fully aware of this national problem (increasing population).
3. The most preferred classes by the teachers to start the teaching of this subject are VI (24.17%) and VIII (23.33 percent).
4. The teachers want this subject to be taught as a separate subject (56.25 percent). A somewhat less percentage (43.75) was in favour of teaching it as part of other subjects.
5. Most of the teachers (63.46%) are in favour of the view that the subject of population education be taught in coeducational classes.
6. Teachers in general (76.15 percent) favoured the teaching of sex education alongwith population education.
7. 42.15 a percent of the teachers were of the view that the teachers will need some training to teach this subject.
8. About 54 topics were mentioned frequently by the teachers for the content of population education.

##### **REACTIONS OF PARENTS**

1. Hundred percent of the parents favoured the idea that the concept of 'small family a happy family' be developed in the children.
2. Most of the parents (93.55 percent) were aware of the fact that some educationists and sociologists have suggested the idea that the subject of population education be introduced in the school curriculum.

3. All the parents (100 percent) expressed the view that the subject of population education be taught to the children in the schools of the state.
4. A greater number (60 percent) of the parents wanted that the subject of population education be taught to their children in co-educational classes. Only 40 percent expressed their views in favour of separate classes for boys & girls.
5. Again almost the same number of parents (60.61 percent) favoured the teaching of sex education with population education. 39.93 percent were of the view that the sex education should not be taught along with the subject of population education.
6. Class IX has been regarded as the best class for starting the teaching of the subject of population education by the parents.
7. 51.22 percent of the parents favoured the idea of integrating the subject of population education with other subjects of the school curriculum. 48.78 percent parents were of the view that this subject should be taught as a separate subject.
8. Most of the parents (54.55 percent) expressed the view that the teachers should be given some special kind of training to teach this subject. 24.24 percent of the parents were of the view that teachers themselves will be able to teach this subject. 21.21 percent were in favour of the view that the services of experts should be taken for the teaching of population education.

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