

POPULATION EXPLOSION TO POPULATION STABILIZATION: ROAD TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Population growth remains one of the most significant factors influencing economic development, social welfare, and environmental sustainability. While a balanced population can serve as a national asset, uncontrolled growth places immense pressure on food security, employment, housing, healthcare, education, and natural resources. This paper examines India's transition from concerns of population explosion to the contemporary goal of population stabilization as a pathway toward sustainable development. It traces global and Indian demographic trends, highlighting how declining mortality rates, rising life expectancy, inadequate education, poverty, and gender inequality historically contributed to rapid population growth. The study explores India's historical policy responses, beginning with pre-independence committees and the launch of the world's first state-sponsored family planning programme in 1952. The role of the judiciary is also discussed in balancing state interests with constitutional rights relating to dignity, privacy, and reproductive autonomy. The paper further highlights the strong relationship between women's empowerment, education, and fertility decline. Educated women are more likely to marry later, participate in the workforce, and make informed reproductive choices, thereby contributing to healthier families and lower fertility rates. Recent declines in India's total fertility rate indicate gradual demographic maturity and the success of socio-economic development over coercive measures. The findings suggest that sustainable population stabilization is best achieved through education, healthcare access, gender equality, and economic opportunity rather than compulsion. The paper concludes that India's large population, if supported by human development and inclusive policies, can become a source of demographic dividend and sustainable national growth.

KEYWORDS: - Population, Sustainable, Education, women, Development etc.

INTRODUCTION

Population is one of the most important factors influencing the social, economic, and environmental development of a nation. Human beings are both producers and consumers of resources, therefore, the size, growth, and distribution of population directly affect a country's progress. A balanced population can become a source of strength, while uncontrolled population growth may create pressure on resources, employment, healthcare, housing, and the environment. For many developing countries, particularly India, the challenge has been to transform the issue of population explosion into a path of population stabilization while ensuring sustainable development.

Population is a vital component of human geography and development, referring to the total number of people living in a particular region or across the globe. Population remains one of the most widely discussed issues worldwide, with notable variations among countries due to climatic, geographical, and socio-economic factors. It took thousands of years for the global population to

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reach 1 billion in 1800, yet within the next two centuries it increased sevenfold. By 2011, the world population had reached 7 billion, with an annual rise of nearly 83 million people. According to projections, the global population is expected to grow further to 8.5 billion by 2030, 9.7 billion by 2050, and 10.9 billion by 2100.

This rapid expansion is largely attributed to improved survival rates, with more people reaching reproductive age, along with changes in fertility rates, urbanization, and migration patterns. Population growth is influenced by several interconnected demographic, social, and economic factors. When births remain high while deaths decline, the population increases rapidly. Improvements in healthcare, sanitation, nutrition, and vaccination have greatly reduced mortality rates across the world. In earlier centuries, especially during the 18th and 19th centuries, infant deaths were common due to disease, poor medical knowledge, and lack of vaccines. Over time, however, infant mortality has fallen sharply.¹ This decline is a major achievement in public health, but it has also contributed to faster population growth because more children survive into adulthood. Another major factor is the increase in life expectancy. In the pre-modern era, the average human lifespan was around thirty years. Today, due to scientific progress, improved hygiene, better hospitals, medicines, and technology, average life expectancy has risen to around seventy years globally. As people live longer, the total number of people in society increases, adding to population expansion.

Lack of education, particularly in developing countries, is also closely linked to high population growth. People with limited education often have less awareness of reproductive health, contraception, and the economic consequences of large families. As a result, families may have more children than they can adequately support, which lowers living standards and increases pressure on resources. Public awareness and education can therefore play an important role in population stabilization.

There is a strong negative relationship between women's education and fertility rates. Educated women are more likely to marry later, participate in the workforce, make informed reproductive choices, and prefer smaller families. Girls who stay in school are less likely to face early marriage and repeated pregnancies. Therefore, improving female literacy and educational opportunities is one of the most effective long-term strategies for reducing excessive population growth.

Poverty is another major cause of overpopulation. Poor families may view children as future earners or support in old age, especially where social security systems are weak. Combined with illiteracy and lack of healthcare access,

¹ Government of India, "Life Expectancy at Birth & Total Fertility Rate for Major States" (Ministry of Finance, 2023).

poverty often leads to higher birth rates. At the same time, larger families may remain trapped in poverty, creating a cycle of deprivation. This increases pressure on natural resources, employment opportunities, housing and the environment.

Thus, population growth is not caused by a single factor but by a combination of falling death rates, rising life expectancy, inadequate contraception, low education levels, gender inequality, and poverty. Addressing these causes through healthcare, education, women empowerment, and economic development is essential for achieving population stabilization and sustainable growth. These demographic shifts carry significant implications for future generations. In recent decades, fertility rates and life expectancy have changed dramatically. In the early 1970s, women gave birth to an average of 4.5 children, whereas by 2015 the global fertility rate had fallen to below 2.5 children per woman. At the same time, life expectancy rose from 64.6 years in the early 1990s to 72.6 years in 2019.

However, despite its economic strength and rapid growth, a large segment of India's population continues to face poverty, hunger, and unemployment. This contrast highlights both the country's challenges and its vast untapped potential. According to the latest United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, India ranks among the countries with high levels of income and wealth inequality, despite widespread poverty.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Population control measures sheds light on the current global population trends, identify key factors driving population growth or decline, and explore the implications of these trends on social, economic, and environmental systems. This includes examining birth rates, mortality rates, migration patterns, urbanization, and aging populations, as well as the challenges and opportunities these trends present for policy makers and society as a whole. This paper aims to explore population growth in India delving into the history of the population outburst and its control journey leading to Sustainable Development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the procedure to conduct the research in an aligned way by providing guidance to the researcher. In this study, history of population outburst and various methods used by the government of control the population has been discussed briefly. During the research, ethical principles are followed. For the preparation of the paper, secondary sources such as published journals, articles, Supreme Court and High Court's judgments and enacted laws in the country such as Constitution have been used.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND POLICY INITIATIVES

During the period from 1951-1981, India witnessed a sudden outburst of explosion in the country. This was the result of low mortality rate as the medical infrastructure was improving. This led to the concern of feeding overgrowing population. The Indian government in order to control the growth of population, implemented various policies. Efforts to control population growth were significantly influenced by social reformers who prioritized women's health and welfare. These reformers aimed to liberate women from the burden of constant childbearing, preventing unwanted pregnancies, and reduce the risks to maternal health.

The measures taken largely focused on awareness campaigns, utilizing different forms of media to promote family welfare programs, incorporating population education into formal schooling, encouraging sterilization procedures, and introducing policies such as barring individuals with more than two children from government jobs. These initiatives have notably influenced societal attitudes, particularly among the urban, educated population, where the cost of living and education is higher.²

Efforts to tackle India's rising population began even before independence and continued in the post-independence period through a series of policy initiatives and institutional measures.

EARLY GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES ON FAMILY PLANNING

In 1940, the Indian National Congress constituted a committee under the chairmanship of social scientist Radha Kamal Mukherjee to recommend measures for controlling the rapidly increasing population, which had begun to rise sharply after 1921. The committee proposed steps such as encouraging self-restraint, spreading awareness about affordable and safe contraceptive methods, discouraging polygamy, and adopting other strategies to reduce the rate of population growth. In 1943, the Bhore Committee, formally known as the Health Survey and Development Committee, was established under the leadership of Sir Joseph Bhore. In its 1946 report, the committee recommended the "deliberate limitation of family" as a means of controlling population growth. Based on these recommendations, India became one of the earliest developing countries to introduce a state-sponsored family planning programme in the 1950s.

In 1952, the Government of India created a Population Policy Committee to formulate strategies for population management. However, the early policies were largely unstructured and achieved limited success. To strengthen these efforts, the Central Family Planning Board was established in 1956, focusing

² Tim Dyson, *"A Population History of India: From the First Modern People to the Present Day"*, (OUP Oxford, England, 2018)

mainly on sterilization to regulate family size and lower the birth rates. These measures marked the beginning of organized population control efforts in India. In 1976, the Government introduced the first National Population Policy, which proposed several measures to address population growth. These included raising the legal age of marriage to 21 years for males and 18 years for females, providing financial incentives to couples adopting family planning methods, improving female literacy through formal and informal education, linking central assistance to states with population performance, using media platforms such as radio, newspapers, and television to promote family welfare, and introducing population education in schools. These steps aimed to create awareness and encourage public participation in population control programmes.

Since Independence, India has introduced population control measures through its Five-Year Plans.³ In 1951, it became the first developing nation to launch a state-sponsored family planning programme, initially promoting natural birth control methods. Later plans expanded clinics, though rural access remained weak. The Third Five Year Plan⁴ introduced the Copper-T device and created a separate Family Planning Department. The Fourth Five-Plan⁵ promoted both traditional and modern contraceptive methods. The Fifth Five-Plan⁶ introduced the National Population Policy, 1976, raising the marriage age and promoting education and welfare. However, forced sterilizations during the Emergency led to backlash and policy reforms later.

EMERGENCY PERIOD AND THE CONTROVERSY OF FORCED STERILIZATION

During the Emergency period in India (1975–1977), population control became one of the most controversial aspects of government policy. In this political environment, the government intensified its family planning programme and adopted coercive methods, most notably large-scale sterilization campaigns, as a means of controlling rapid population growth.

Although family planning had been part of India's public policy since the 1950s, earlier programmes were largely based on persuasion, education, and voluntary participation. During the Emergency, these principles were undermined. Population control targets were aggressively imposed upon state administrations, local officials, and health workers. Authorities were expected

³ Government of India, Planning Commission, Five-Year Plans (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

⁴ Government of India, Planning Commission, Third Five Year Plan (1961-1966), (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

⁵ Government of India, Planning Commission, Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974), (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

⁶ Government of India, Planning Commission, Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1978), (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

to achieve high numerical sterilization within short periods. As a result, sterilization, especially vasectomy for men, became the central method of implementation.

Many reports from that period describe how citizens were pressured, threatened, or misled into undergoing sterilization procedures. In several areas, poor and vulnerable communities were disproportionately targeted. Government employees, teachers, and local officials were sometimes instructed to bring people to sterilization camps. Mass sterilization camps were organized across different states, often in temporary facilities with inadequate medical infrastructure. Because of the rush to meet targets, procedures were frequently carried out under unsafe and unhygienic conditions. Many operations lacked proper pre-operative counselling, informed consent, or post-operative care. This led to serious health complications, infections, trauma, and in some tragic instances, deaths. The emphasis on numerical achievement overshadowed concerns of dignity, safety, and medical ethics. For many citizens, family planning ceased to be a welfare programme and came to symbolize state intrusion into private and bodily autonomy.

After the change in government, coercive practices were formally discontinued. The new administration sought to rebuild public trust by renaming the programme from “Family Planning” to the “Family Welfare Programme”. It reflected a new emphasis on maternal health, child welfare, reproductive healthcare, and voluntary participation rather than compulsory population control. The government recognized that sustainable demographic change could not be achieved through force.

The legacy of the Emergency period remains an important lesson in public policy. It demonstrated that even well-intentioned developmental goals lose legitimacy when pursued through coercion and violation of rights. Population stabilization must be rooted in education, healthcare, women’s empowerment, and informed consent. The events of 1975–1977 continue to shape debates in India, reminding policymakers that respect for human dignity and democratic values is essential in all social programmes.

POPULATION CONTROL TO FAMILY WELFARE APPROACH

During the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Five-Year Plans⁷, the focus shifted to long-term demographic objectives, emphasizing a balance between population control and sustainable economic growth. Efforts during this period were directed at improving healthcare access, education, and raising awareness about family planning. India’s evolving population control strategies highlight the government’s commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by

⁷ Government of India, Planning Commission, Sixth, Seventh, Eight Five Year Plan (1980-1985, 1985-1990, 1992-1997), (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

rapid population growth. These measures increasingly prioritize education, healthcare, and voluntary family planning, emphasizing the importance of informed decision-making and equitable access to resources. By integrating these aspects, India continues to work towards achieving sustainable development and a stable demographic structure.

In 1983, the National Health Policy was adopted, emphasizing the promotion of the small family norm through voluntary measures and working towards population stabilization. Later, in 1991, a Population Committee was constituted, which submitted its report in 1993. The committee recommended a comprehensive National Population Policy that would adopt a long-term and holistic approach to development, population growth, and environmental protection, while also creating monitoring mechanisms with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. These cumulative efforts eventually resulted in the National Population Policy, which came into force in 2000.

NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY, 2000: A RIGHTS-BASED FRAMEWORK

The National Population Policy (NPP) 2000⁸ is the Indian government's second comprehensive population policy, following the first policy introduced in 1976. The 1976 policy aimed to curb population growth and included a change in the minimum legal marriage age of a girl and a boy which was raised to 18 and 21 respectively.

The National Population Policy, 2000 outlines its goals such as to meet the needs for contraception, strengthen healthcare facilities, and enhance the availability of health personnel while ensuring service delivery for basic reproductive and childcare facilities. To reduce the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to the required replacement levels. The aim was to attain population stabilization by 2045, aligned with the objectives of sustainable economic growth, social progress, and environmental conservation. The NPP also emphasizes the government's commitment to voluntary and informed choice in reproductive health care services. It aimed to ensure that population programs and services were tailored to the specific needs of different regions and communities within India.

The NPP emphasizes the government's adherence to promote free and well-informed decisions while ensuring peoples cooperation to maximize the benefits of reproductive health services. Ensuring free and compulsory education for children up to 14 years of age and reducing dropout rates for children. Lowering the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to below 30 per 1,000 live births (targeted for achievement by 2010 as per the original policy). Reducing

⁸ National Population Policy, 2000, available at: <https://www.india.gov.in/national-population-policy-2000> (Visited on November 8, 2024).

the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to below 100 per 100,000 live births (targeted for achievement by 2010 as per the original policy). Ensuring all children are fully immunized against diseases that can be prevented through vaccines. Promoting late marriages for females, preferably above the age of 20. Providing universal access to information and a diverse range of fertility regulation and contraception services. Preventing and managing communicable diseases. Actively promoting benefits of small and happy family and creating awareness that family planning is a welfare scheme for social benefit.

ROLE OF JUDICIARY IN POPULATION STABILIZATION

The judiciary has supported population control measures in specific contexts. In a notable judgment, the Supreme Court upheld a law provided under Haryana Panchayati Raj Act⁹ that disqualifies individuals having more than two children from participating in local body elections. This decision reflects the court's acknowledgment of the importance of legislative efforts to curb population growth, particularly at the grassroots level.

Constitutionally, Article 21 protects life and personal liberty, which courts have interpreted to include reproductive autonomy, dignity, privacy, and family decision-making. In Devika Biswas v. Union of India¹⁰, the Supreme Court emphasized informed consent and voluntary sterilization, rejecting coercive methods. Thus, while the State may pursue population stabilization, reproductive choices and family life remain protected fundamental rights.

In a case Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay V. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare¹¹, 2020, the Supreme Court had dismissed a plea for issuing directions to the Centre to make the two-child policy mandatory across the country for ensuring strict population control. The public interest litigation said that the government should promote family planning and adopt all such measures to motivate people to follow the two-child policy. The Centre told the Supreme Court that India is unequivocally against forcing family planning on its people and that any coercion to have a certain number of children is counter-productive and leads to demographic distortions

STATE LAWS TO CONTROL POPULATION GROWTH

India's approach to population regulation reflects a combination of legislative proposals, state-level restrictions, constitutional values, and welfare-oriented family planning initiatives. Rather than relying solely on coercive measures, the country has adopted a mixed framework that attempts to balance demographic concerns with individual rights and social welfare. Over the years, several

⁹ Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 (Act No.11 of 1994)

¹⁰ (2016) 10 SCC 726

¹¹ MANU/SCOR/18229/2021.

proposals have sought to introduce a two-child norm through incentives and penalties, though many of these have remained controversial due to concerns relating to privacy, equality, and reproductive autonomy.

At the state level, Haryana has enacted some of the most prominent population-related restrictions through the Haryana Municipal Act, 1973 and the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. These laws disqualify individuals having more than two living children from contesting or continuing in local self-government institutions such as municipalities, Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zila Parishads. The objective behind such provisions is to encourage smaller family norms by linking eligibility for public office with responsible family planning practices.

Alongside these restrictive models, India has increasingly emphasized rights-based and voluntary family planning programmes. The government has expanded contraceptive choices by providing condoms, oral pills, intrauterine devices, injectable contraceptives, and sterilization services. Mission Parivar Vikas was launched in high-fertility districts to improve access to reproductive health services and promote spacing methods. Compensation schemes for sterilization acceptors seek to offset wage loss, while postpartum and post-abortion contraception services help women make informed reproductive choices after childbirth or termination of pregnancy.

The Home Delivery of Contraceptives Scheme through ASHA workers improves accessibility in rural and underserved regions by delivering contraceptives directly to households. Further, the Family Planning Logistics Management Information System (FP-LMIS) ensures proper supply and distribution of contraceptive commodities. Together, these measures demonstrate that India's long-term strategy increasingly favors informed choice, healthcare access, and sustainable population stabilization rather than coercive population control.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION, AND FERTILITY DECLINE

Education has a significant impact on women's lives and family well-being. Girls who continue their education are more likely to marry at a later age, which helps in reducing early pregnancies and related health risks. Educated women generally prefer smaller families and maintain better spacing between births, contributing to healthier households. Mothers with education are also more likely to ensure vaccination, schooling, and proper nutrition for their children. In addition, education improves employability and income opportunities, making women more financially independent and less dependent on others. It also builds confidence and strengthens their ability to participate in decision-making within families and communities.

Women empowerment, access to education, and declining fertility rates are closely connected indicators of social progress and sustainable development. Across the world, societies that invest in women's education and autonomy often experience lower fertility rates, improved family health, and stronger economic growth. Fertility decline does not merely mean fewer births, it reflects changing social attitudes, better healthcare, delayed marriage, informed family planning, and greater decision-making power for women.

In developing countries, including India, this relationship has become especially significant. As women gain access to schooling, employment, healthcare, and legal rights, they tend to marry later, have fewer children, and invest more in the health and education of each child. Thus, women empowerment is not only a matter of equality but also a catalyst for demographic transition and national development.

POPULATION STABILIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Population stabilization refers to the process of achieving a balanced rate of population growth in which births, deaths, and available resources remain in harmony with the country's developmental capacity. It does not necessarily mean zero population growth, but rather a situation where population increase becomes manageable and sustainable. For a country like India, which has long faced the challenge of rapid population expansion, stabilization is an important milestone for economic progress, social welfare, and environmental sustainability.

Over the years, India has implemented several measures such as family welfare programmes, improved healthcare services, women's education, delayed marriage, access to contraception, and awareness campaigns. These sustained efforts have gradually reduced fertility levels across the country. The decline in fertility rates demonstrates that India is moving towards demographic maturity and long-term population balance.

Recent data shows a steady fall in India's fertility rate. In 2021, the fertility rate stood at 2.179 births per woman. This declined to 2.159 births per woman in 2022, reflecting a 0.92% decrease from the previous year. In 2023, the fertility rate further reduced to 2.139 births per woman, marking a 0.93% decline from 2022. By 2024, it reached 2.122 births per woman, representing another 0.79% decrease from 2023.¹² These figures indicate a consistent downward trend and reveal the gradual success of India's population stabilization policies along with changing socio-economic conditions.

¹² India Fertility Rate 1950-2024, *available at:* <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/IND/india/fertility-rate> (Visited on Feb. 09, 2024).

Rising literacy levels, especially among women, have played a major role in lowering fertility rates. Educated women are more likely to marry later, participate in the workforce, and make informed decisions regarding family size. Improved access to healthcare and maternal services has also reduced infant and maternal mortality, decreasing the need for larger families. Urbanization, changing lifestyles, and higher living costs have further encouraged smaller family norms. Smaller and healthier families often experience better living standards and greater opportunities for children. A stable population also supports sustainable development by balancing human needs with environmental protection.

At the same time, India's large population of approximately 1.43 billion people presents significant opportunities. It provides economies of scale, a vast labour force, a large consumer market, and immense human capital. India has greater potential for innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth due to its youthful and dynamic population. Its demographic strength also enhances international influence, labour mobility, and global partnerships. In addition, India's cultural diversity and social vitality remain valuable assets in the modern world.

Thus, population stabilization should not be viewed as a decline in national strength, but as a shift toward balanced and sustainable growth. India's progress in reducing fertility rates reflects a successful transition from concerns of population explosion to the promise of demographic stability. If supported by continued investment in education, healthcare, employment, and gender equality, India can transform its population size into one of its greatest developmental strengths.

Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. For countries experiencing rapid demographic changes, achieving population stabilization is an important step toward long-term and inclusive development. When population growth is moderate, governments can allocate resources more efficiently for schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and welfare programmes. However, population stabilization should not be understood as coercive population control. History has shown that forceful methods violate human dignity and often create long-term social problems. Sustainable stabilization is best achieved through voluntary, rights-based measures. Education, especially girls' education, plays a transformative role.

Population stabilization is not merely a demographic objective but a foundation for sustainable development. The path forward lies not in compulsion, but in education, healthcare, gender equality, and social justice. When people are empowered to make informed choices, societies move naturally toward stability and sustainability.

CHINA'S POPULATION DECLINE: LESSONS FOR INDIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC FUTURE

China implemented one child policy in 1979 and remained in force until 1 January 2016. The policy was adopted in response to concerns regarding overpopulation and its possible adverse effects on economic development, natural resources, and the environment. China sought to regulate population growth through a combination of incentives and penalties, often described as the “carrot and stick” approach.

The policy was stringent in nature and imposed severe consequences on couples who violated its provisions. Urban couples were generally restricted to having only one child, and those who exceeded the limit often faced monetary fines, workplace sanctions, and other penalties. The policy also produced significant social and demographic consequences. It contributed to an imbalanced sex ratio, as cultural preferences for male children encouraged sex-selective practices. Although the policy succeeded in reducing population growth, it also led to concerns regarding an aging population and the possibility of future labour shortages.¹³

Over time, it became clear that while the policy had achieved its immediate objectives, it might not be beneficial in the long term. Recognizing these demographic and social challenges, the Chinese government gradually began relaxing the policy in the early 2010s. In 2013, certain couples were permitted to have a second child if one of the parents was an only child.

China's population has now begun to decline after decades of rapid growth. While this demographic shift in the world's most populous country is significant, China is not alone in experiencing population decline. According to United Nations projections, many countries are expected to witness shrinking populations by 2050.¹⁴

CHALLENGES

However, the idea of population decline is not without controversy. Economists often warn that falling birth rates may lead to economic challenges. With fewer people entering the workforce and a shrinking consumer base, economic growth could slow down, posing potential issues for social welfare systems and economic stability. Balancing the benefits of reduced population pressure with the economic implications of demographic shifts is critical. Sustainable strategies must address both environmental and economic concerns to ensure a balanced and resilient future for humanity.

¹³ Xinhua, “China mulls law amendment to allow 'one couple, two children'”, ChinaDaily.com (December 12, 2015)

¹⁴ UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019), *World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights*, UN Doc ST/ESA/SER.A/423

Once these cultural shifts take root, they become difficult to reverse. For example, in China, where fertility rates were drastically lowered through the one-child policy, women now value their educational and economic freedoms. Even though the policy has been relaxed to allow larger families, many women choose not to return to traditional roles centred on high fertility. Transitioning to a framework focused on degrowth and equity, coupled with lower fertility rates, offers a more sustainable path forward.

As population decrease, societies will need to adapt to aging demographics. A well-managed decline driven by improvements in well-being could eliminate fear around family planning and pave the way for a better future for both people and the planet. The choice is ours, we can allow the growth-driven economy to dictate our fate, or we can recognize that demography and ecology are intrinsically connected and act accordingly.

FINDINGS AND RESULT

Addressing the root causes of population growth requires a more holistic approach. Rather than relying solely on restrictive measures, efforts should focus on improving access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, particularly for women. Empowering individuals through education and awareness about family planning can lead to voluntary reductions in fertility rates without infringing on personal freedoms. India's declining fertility rate in recent years is evidence that education and socioeconomic development play a critical role in stabilizing population growth.

Since 1972 and specially after Bruntland Commission¹⁵, there always have been a supressing need to maintain sustainability in all the spheres of the life. The shifting trends in size of population, migration, urbanization, there arose a need to understand to keep up with the change by the policymakers. To sustain present and provide to the future, there is a need to understand the population dynamics, how many people are living on the planet, their locations, their age distribution, and future population trends.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This paper aims to highlight the significant milestones achieved through societal shifts in India, while also assessing how deeply these changes have been accepted. It traces India's population growth from 1915 to the present, exploring the evolving roles and perspectives of women in society. In the past, women rarely questioned their roles, but as women's influence has grown across different sectors, a revolution has begun, encouraging women to challenge societal norms and explore opportunities for change. The paper also

¹⁵ UN, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1983

discusses the challenges faced in implementing control measures and reflects on the impact of post-independence initiatives, showcasing the progress made over time.

In conclusion, while India's growing population presents significant challenges, solutions must strike a balance between managing growth and safeguarding societal harmony. Over-reliance on restrictive population control policies could lead to lasting social and demographic issues. A comprehensive strategy that emphasizes education, healthcare, and equitable development offers a sustainable path to addressing India's population concerns.

The population surge is a response to the traditionally patriarchal nature of laws, challenging and aiming to transform them. To fully understand population control and its strategies, it is essential to examine its intersection with various other fields, as it cannot be isolated.