

Employment and Fertility

Dr Santosh Singh

Assistant Professor Deptt. of Sociology
D.A.K. Degree College Moradabad.[U.P.]

Abstract

The world is facing various problems. One important problem is the population explosion. This ever increasing population is seriously posing a threat to mankind. For our own survival, we have to control human being production. Every body knows that this world is a place, where survival of the fittest theory of Spencer applies. So the population of the world and India in particular has to be given a thought. If in India, the population is not checked then our progress will definitely stop. Further, the day is not far off, when we would be starving to death. So in this paper, we have attempted to find out the relationship between employment and fertility. Because in this modern era, women are trying to develop their identity. They are getting education and because of this, their marriages are delayed. Women are getting out side exposure which pushes them to employment. Today, is the time of women empowerment, which is possible only when she is economically independent. Suppose, it is proved that employment does have positive relation with the fertility in India, then we can check our ever increasing population. In India, the fertility is very high. There are reasons for high fertility rates. But still, we have to check this ever increasing fertility rates in India.

Employment And Fertility

Today the growth rate of population of the world is posing a serious threat to mankind. Without wasting time, it is high time human beings should wake up. The continuation of this growth would lead to the doubling of the population within twenty five years. According to Julian Huxley the rapid population growth is the gravest problem of our times

The rapid growth of population in the world is attributed to the improvement in the health services and sharp fall in the rate of mortality. The birth rate of the world population is 35 to 40 percent per 1000 population and death rate is 15 to 20 percent per thousand population. It is estimated that 130 million babies are born per year. With the result 70 million person are added to the world population each year. The population of India has been increasing at a very fast rate. India is the

second most populous country in the world. It supports fifteen percent of the world population.

As a matter of fact, a large number of demographers are of the opinion that the uncontrolled population increase is a luxury, which the world can no longer afford. Similarly there is a popular opinion that if the present rate of population growth is not checked the mankind would be confronted with starvation in the near future. In a way, the population bomb is as great a threat to mankind as the nuclear bomb.²

The reason being is that the enormously increasing population creates abnormal deficiency in food supply and space. It is in this sense, a threat to the very existence of mankind. This ever increasing rate of population poses several problems, such as the low standard of living, malnutrition, high infant mortality, poverty, illiteracy

and unemployment. It also gives rise to abnormal psychological symptoms such as frustrations, anxiety, depressions etc. These problems are bound to aggravate, especially, in view of the fact, when India's population is going to be doubled within the period of twenty eight years. This increase in population was not due to decline in mortality rate but due to a phenomena of 'baby boom' which caused fertility rate to shoot up.³

In this study, we attempt to understand the way these socio-cultural factors affect the rate of fertility. We attempt to find out whether employment has any effect on the rate of fertility with the assumption that the employed women have the lower rate of fertility as compared to the unemployed, that is the housewives. The idea behind such an assumption is that the employed women as compared to the housewives get more outside exposure and, on this basis, they tend to develop a modernized outlook which, in the long run, induce them to have less number of children.

Further it is also assumed that the employment can serve as a sort of powerful contraceptive, in the sense, that it develops a set of aspirations such as higher education, delayed marriage, getting employment and putting efforts to improve standard of living with an equal emphasis on having a small size of the family. With the result, all these factors in different combinations help the employed women to achieve social mobility and better standard of living.

In view of the above assumptions, it is most urgent to make a systematic study with the objective to understand as to how the employment of women outside the home influence her fertility rate as compared to the housewives.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The population theories are the broad

statements expressed by the demographers, scientists, thinkers as to what should be desirable size of the population of any place. Population of a place is a determinant factor in a nation's socio-economic development. For example, a nation with a lot of area and resources considers a large population as a source of wealth and strength. On the contrary, a nation with less space, resources considers a large population as a source of misery and poverty. The theories of population would help us to understand the pattern of growth of population. Further this pattern can be utilized in planning and sustaining the limited resources in a better way.

Briefly the population theories can be classified into four groups 1]Biological 2]Social 3]Economic 4]Optimum theories. When we discuss the population theories, Thomas Robert Malthus name has to be taken at the first. In 1798, Malthus published his first essay entitled 'An essay on the principle of population' which has become a landmark in the history of demography. Malthus stated that the growth of population is much faster than the food production. He also said that positive and negative checks continuously operate to keep the population in proportion to the means of subsistence. Durkheim observed that increase in the density of the population leads to the reduction of the means of subsistence.⁴

Biological theories can be called natural theories. Sadler's density principle theory stated that the growth of population is related to the growth of density of settlement and viceversa. Next is Doubleday's diet principle, which states that in India the poor people have high fertility rate as compared to the rich people. Herbert Spencer theory regarding the growth of population was no alarm,

when people grew in numbers, they devoted more time and efforts to scientific and economic development.⁵

Social Capillarity theory of Arsene Dumont's states that the individual mounts to higher level in the social environment same as water rises under the force of capillarity in thin tubes.

Economic theories says that economic factor is responsible for having less number of children. Becker's economic theory states that fertility behaviour is the result of household choice. He is also of the view that fertility rate is directly related to the income of the parents.⁶

Optimum theory states that man has always striven to attain an optimum number. Above the optimum number is said to be over population and below it is under population.

Apart from these four groups of theories, demographic transition theories also tried to give their opinions. To name some Landry, Blacker Notestein, Kingsley Davis, Thompson etc. believes that modernization is responsible in a greater way for the transition in the European countries.⁷ Most of them were of the opinion that firstly the fertility rate goes high or is uncontrolled. Second stage the fertility rate is affected by economic factors. Third stage is the modern stage where the fertility rate declines by itself.

Having the knowledge of theoretical perspectives regarding the fertility rate of the world and India in particular, we shall now study the relationship between employment and fertility in a comparative way.

Review of Literature

We now make a brief review of literature. Feyiseten and Bamikale in Lagos, Nigeria studied the relationships between female employment and fertility. It was found that the mothering and working tended to

conflict only if employment is undertaken in the formal sector of the urban labour market.⁸ Reed and Richard Udry studied the relationship between female work force participation and fertility of white females of United States. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between female work and fertility. The total respondents were 912 white and 565 black respondent ever married between 15-44 ages. It was found that the fertility differentials between the working and non-working females was a result of the more frequent use of contraceptives by the working females.⁹ Another study was conducted by Kamuzora and Wechmura in a district named Bukoba of Tanzania. The results show that poverty was the main cause of high fertility.¹⁰ Sweet in U.S.A. found that women with larger number of children were found to be less able or less liable to engage themselves in employment. The findings showed that the fact of being employed had a negative effect on fertility. Barth et al. found that the rise in women's employment as the primary cause of the recent decline in fertility. Economically active women bear substantially fewer children than dependent women.¹¹ Agarwala found that cultivators and labourers gave birth on average to 7.4 children, the service and the professionals gave birth to 6.6 children.¹² Maurice Febvay studied a sample of 50,000 respondents in France, found fertility of wives differed when their husbands were classified by occupation.

Driver found that the findings of Mysore population study showed that the service class people had the lowest fertility as compared to the labourers and the domestic servants. Colliver and Langlos stated the simple hypothesis that fertility is inversely related to women's labour force

participation. The study showed that labourforce participation was a powerful means of reducing fertility.

Further it was found in some countries, such as Belgium, France, Hungary and Yugoslavia, the working wives with good educational attainment tended to have very small families. The women who never worked and who had not completed even schooling had fertility two to three times larger than that of working women with good education. This study also confirmed the relationship between employment and fertility, and hence it depended on the type of work whether full time, or part time, whether at home or outside.

Weller reviewed the already available literature on female employment and fertility and reached several conclusions about the probability. Whether the wife was employed away from home rather than at home, and if she was in a white collar occupation rather than in some

other occupation. Myrdal and Klein also confirmed that in modern industrial societies the women had to seek employment outside the home in order to contribute to the family income which made them difficult to take care of small children.

On the basis of theoretical perspectives and review of literature we come to the conclusion that employment of ever married women does play an important factor in decreasing the fertility rate. Employment itself matters most in the sense that whether it is at home or outside, whether bearing rearing of children is separated from job or combined with job. Employed women is naturally at loss of time, so she tries to combine her work whether at formal/informal sector with the family chores. Other socio-cultural factors also affects fertility rate, we need to study those aspects also in order to better understand the relationship between employment and fertility rate in India.

References

- Agarwala S.N. India's population problem. Tata MCgraw Hill publication Co. New Delhi.
- Agarwala S.N. A demographic study of six urbanising villages. Asia publishing House London 1970.
- Arora G. Caste, socio-economic status and fertility-A study of proximate determinants of fertility in village Riwas-Guru Nanak Journal of sociology .vol.6,no.oct.1985.G.N,D,U.press.Amritsar.
- Barth Barnabas Klinger a,Melt-enyi K.and Gyorgi Fertility, Female Employment and Policy makers in Hungary. population Studies Vol.39,no,2 march 1985.
- Belcher John C Social class, styles of life and fertility in and Carder Kelly Puerto Rice. Social Forces, Vol, 52, no.4 june1974.W
- Blake Judith Family size and quality of children.Demography vol.18,no.4,nov.1981.
- Chaudhury Social aspects of fertility with special reference to developing countries. Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.1982.
- Driver Differential Fertility in Central India,Princet on University Press,Princeton New Jersey.1965.
- Encarnation Fertility and Labour Free Participation,Phillipines.1968.
- Heer David Economic Development andFertility Demography,vol.3 no.2,1966.
- Mitra Asok India's population.Aspects of quality and conyrol.vol.1,Abhinav pub.New Delhi 1978.