

## **Integrating Population into Development: Emergence of State Population Policies in India**

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### **Introduction**

The two great social and economic forces - the population and development have been very intimately entwined in the life of the Indian people. These two dynamic forces have wielded vast influence, holding unrestrained sway over the life of people in the latter half of the twentieth century. For the newly independent country, the population was a part of governance and for the population of the country it was a matter of development. Such a unique and inseparable association between social and economic dimensions in the life of the people gave rise to concerns at the time of independence when the population growth was accelerating ahead of the retarded pace of development of the nation.

Population concerns preceded the thought of development in India, much before independence. The stark realities of backwardness and under development of the nation under the expansionist colonial regime were too glaring to escape observation and the leadership spearheading the freedom movement had set development of the nation as the immediate priority. Also, the leadership had foreseen that the growth of population as a potential impediment in the path of national development, once the nation attained independence. The magnitude of the problem of population in the pre-independent India was very well conceptualised by the erudite scholars of the time. The intellectual output was prolific, sound, and illustrative of several aspects of the problem of population vis-à-vis the outlook for the nation and its people, thus, setting the problem of population and its development on a very sound intellectual foundation. There were no doubts in the minds of men spearheading the freedom movement about the potential impact of population on the development of the nation. Every aspect of the problem was lucidly explored and understood very clearly by the intellectual giants involved in the freedom movement. They had found a clear divergence between population and development. That was the beginning of the efforts to integrate population into development as important dimensions in the life of the people of this country.

The background for the population concerns was provided by the censuses reports, beginning with the first report of 1891 census and the successive censuses in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The size and growth of the population is very well established with reasonable accuracy within the given parameters of enumeration leaving no scope for speculation in the Indian context (Srikantan 1977). These reports had in fact minutely drawn the attention to the high fertility levels in India. The intellectual foundations about the problem of population in India had their genesis almost at the dawn of the twentieth century. In 1916, P. K. Watal was the foremost among the erudite Indian scholars in highlighting the impending problem of growing population (Watal 1916). The other Indian scholars during the decades of 1930s and 1940s (Karve 1936, Mukerjee 1939, Chand 1939, Chandrashekhar 1946, and Ghosh 1946) were forthright in appraising several facets of the problem of the growing population, both from the economic and social perspective and suggested birth control as a means to overcome it.

The intellectual foundations were fully supported by the political commitment. The National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress spearheading the freedom movement had clearly expressed its concerns about the growth of population. It had underscored the apprehensions about the very size of the population becoming a

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stumbling block in the advancement of the nation upon securing independence. The apprehensions were voiced clearly by the president of the Indian National Congress Shri Subhash Chandra Bose, at the Tripura National Conference of the Party in 1939 (Gupta et al 1992). The subcommittee on population set up in 1940 by the National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress favoured the involvement of the government in the promotion of family planning. The subcommittee considered 'family planning and a limitation of children' as essential in the interests of social economy, family happiness and national planning (Visaria 2002).

There was no hint of conflict in the ideology of population and development and in the Indian context, and their integration was considered as necessary. There were several well meaning propositions to closely interlace the two aspects complementing each other for a speedier advancement of the nation – the integration in its true sense. Political commitment and administrative support for the integration of population into the development was absolutely a straight forward in India which was stated unambiguously.

Development was the most cherished dream of the Indians from the beginning of the twentieth century. As the independence became imminent, an eager population looked forward for a better future. With the attainment of independence in the mid-twentieth century, true to the spirit of freedom movement; the development became the prime objective of the Indian polity. The creation of the institution of Planning Commission by the Government of India and opting for Five Year Plans as the time frame for implementing developmental plans could be construed as an expression of a great desire to provide a decisive thrust to the development of the nation in which population was a major constituent. One of the earliest actions of the Planning Commission was to appoint a Population Policy Committee to formulate a policy to deal with the problem of population as an integral part of development (Gupta et al 1992). Thus, an official patronage was granted to the population policy in the exalted parlances of developmental planning in India.

### **Objective of the paper**

The objective of this paper is three folds:

1. To understand the integration of population as an important constituent of development in India, since independence,
2. To look for the developmental perspectives in the national population policies, and
3. To review the emergence of state population policies.

### **The pace of growth of population in India during the twentieth century**

The concluding century of the second millennium is very interesting for the observers of the population growth in India. The Census of 1901 had enumerated the population of India at 238 million. The growth of population in the early part of the century was negligible due to the natural calamities and pestilence, but the growth increased at a very slow pace from 1920s onwards. The population growth rate in India, which was virtually stagnant in the decades of 1900 and 1910 experienced a steady increase in the next three decades at an average rate of 13 per cent per decade. However the momentum of the growth rate increased to 20 per cent in the decades of 1950 and 1960. In a paroxysm thereafter, the population growth rate notched up a staggering 22 percent in the decades of 1970 and 1980. The decades of 1990 and 2000 showed but a very marginal decline in population growth rate of 21 and 19 per cent, respectively (Mitra 1977 and Visaria 2002). The population which was only 238 million at the beginning of the century could only increase by about fifty per cent in the next half a century or five decades to stand at 361 million. It is astounding to observe that a population of the size of 361 million almost

trebled itself in the next fifty years to scale a stupendous 1,027 million or 1.027 billion, at the turn of the century!

The insidious growth of population in the first half of the century was very well recognised by the elite polity and considered it necessary to institute a population policy to control the growth of population to commensurate with the needs of development of the country. The paroxysm of the population growth in the post independent India which almost neutralised the developmental initiatives to improve the quality of life of the population was alarming, forcing the nation to draw the 'demographic blue prints' in the form of population policies to modulate and contain such a growth of population.

### **Developmental concerns in the population policies in India**

Under severe pressure to blunt the unbridled growth of population, the debate on population was never considered as complete without a full reference to several aspects of development which have very intimate links to health, fertility control (family planning), and welfare of the people. Factually, it was on account of such intense concern for national development that the population was considered as a major constituent in the development as it could directly affect and moderate the national development.

Throughout the developmental planning in India, a wider perspective of the cause and consequences of population growth on the developmental outcome and planning were considered at length, and meticulously. Nevertheless, the developmental planning and devolution of resources remained centralised and the programme implementation appeared decentralised as it was handed over to the state governments to be implemented through the states' own infrastructure and manpower. The centralised exercise of drawing up plans and devolving resources to the states on more or less uniform pattern on certain criteria set forth for the purpose has not been conducive to meet the felt needs of all the regions of the country. The difference in the capacity of the states to implement the programmes as drawn up by the centre have become pivotal and were responsible for the existing differentials in development. Also, due to such difference in the implementation the cohesion and uniformity required for such a purpose was severely affected.

Since the problem of the population is perceived in a wider perspective in the interest of the development of the people and the nation, almost all the population policies have been conceived and drafted for a uniform application through out the nation. In exceptional instances the perspective of regional development has been considered to some extent, but not included.

### **Status of population in the developmental planning**

Soon after independence the importance of population was recognised and accorded primacy in the national developmental planning. It is very well reflected in the deliberations leading to the preparation of the draft First Five Year Plan. The opening sentence of the first five year plan proclaimed that "The central objective of planning in India is to raise the standard of living of the people and to open to them opportunities for a richer and more varied life" (Planning Commission 1953). The creation of the mammoth institution of the Planning Commission under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and with a full pledge Ministry of Planning, are affirmation of the firm commitment of the nation towards the development and path chosen at the beginning of the national reconstruction. The constitution of a Population Policy Committee as early as 1952 in the Planning Commission amply reflected the desire of the planners in integrating the population into the developmental planning of the nation (Visaria and Jain 1976).

The pattern of development across the country was not uniform during the colonial rule. Integration of several administrative territories into the current Indian states

virtually masked the underdevelopment in many regions and uniform pattern of developmental planning failed to meet the particular needs of such regions. This imbalance led to lagging of these regions in development and consequently became high fertility zones in India with a massive increase in the size of population which continues to grow even now.

Beginning with the first five year plan, all the five year plans have considered the problem of population as an important constituent of developmental planning and accordingly introduced and expanded family planning programme (Mitra 1974, and Srinivasan 1995). The planning being a centralised exercise and population control a national programme the planning function is carried out by the central government and also takes the responsibility for devolution of resources and the state governments implement the programme with their own programme implementation mechanisms.

Uniformity in the programme implementation both in the area of population and development could not be achieved across all the states as the regional disparities in development that existed at the time of independence persisted into the planned development also. The reorganisation of the states under which a number of small states and territories were organised into the current states masked the vast regional differentials in development that existed before such unification. The omnibus planning process at the central and state level did not specifically take into account such differentials. Over a period of time the persisting differentials in regional development increased leading to difficulties in implementing the central plans resulting in interstate and intrastate differentials in the outcome of population growth and development. At the beginning of developmental planning states with progressive administration, infrastructure, and higher levels of literacy and cultural practices that guaranteed good social status for women have shown progressive trends in the development. The pockets of backward regions within some of these states have remained underdeveloped leading to intrastate differentials in population and development.

## II

### EVOLUTION OF POPULATION POLICY IN INDIA

Although a great deal of intellectual debate was generated on the issue of population growth in India in the earlier half of the twentieth century, very little had come out as a strategy to deal with the population growth, either before independence or thereafter. The earliest thinkers were more concerned with the impact of burgeoning population on future development and were unable to indicate precise approach to contain the growth. Considering the problem of population in India, it was the outstanding Indian demographer Dr. S. Chandrashekhar, who proposed the first ever population policy for India, in 1946 (Chandrashekhar 1946). Perhaps, the earliest writing about the population policy in Indian context could be traced to a population policy proposed for the Bombay Presidency, in 1939 (Rao 1939). It provided a regional perspective of the population problem of the Bombay presidency of the colonial days and proposed a population policy, perhaps, the first regional population policy, in India. The population policy proposed by Dr. S. Chandrashekhar is comprehensive and has taken into consideration all the relevant aspects prevailing at that time.

#### **Population policies since independence**

The primacy granted by the Indian planners to the question of population in the area of development is amply reflected by the Planning Commission which constituted a Population Policy Committee in 1952 to suggest a population policy. Except for the fact that the very intent of constituting such a committee was laudable this committee does not

appear to have produced any population policy as such (Visaria 2002). The next known effort at formulating a population policy was by the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, Government of India in late 1967. This first 'official' population policy document was released in 1968 and was formulated at the time when Dr. S. Chandrashekhar was the Minister of State for Health and Family Planning, Government of India (Chandrashekhar 1970). Except for a few references in literature no substantive citations have been made from this document, either.

The Council for Social Development, New Delhi, had organised the National Conference on Population Policy and Programmes in December 1969 under the patronage of the Government of India. It appears to have been the first ever concerted, very well deliberated effort to draft a population policy for the country. This high level conference had the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders along with representatives from international organisations and the entire population and family planning establishment in the country. After considerable deliberations the conference produced and approved a 'draft Population Policy Resolution' for the presentation to the appropriate authority of Government India for consideration (Council for Social Development 1970).

Nevertheless, the first official population policy was declared by the Government of India in April 1976 (MOHFW n.d.). This was a policy statement issued during the emergency period. Besides attracting much criticism, it was replaced within a short while by another policy statement in June 1977.

During the Janata Party rule in the country, the Planning Commission appointed a Working Group on Population Policy in 1978. This group of experts deliberated at length and submitted its report in 1980 (Planning Commission 1980). This was a comprehensive attempt to provide a reasonably good policy frame work for the country. However, with the change of government at the centre, the report did not become an official instrument.

In response to the very high increase in population growth rate, as revealed by the 1991 census, the National Development Council (NDC) comprising of the Chief Ministers of all the states in the country, decided to set up a Committee in 1992, under the chairmanship of Shri K. Karunakaran, then Chief Minister of Kerala. After examining all the relevant aspects the committee recommended the formulation of a National Population Policy (Planning Commission 1992).

Consequently, an experts group under the chairmanship of an agricultural scientist Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, was constituted in July 1993 to formulate a population policy for the adoption by the Parliament. The Committee submitted a draft report in May 1994 containing two specific aspects, Policy Frame Work and its Implementation (MOHFW 1994). This document was also not tabled in the Parliament.

The impending size of Indian population reaching the billion-mark in May 2000 forced the Government of India to publish the National Population Policy 2000, outlining the perspectives of population growth and the strategies for controlling such growth. This is the first ever official population policy which is laid out in some elaboration though not exhaustively (MOHFW 2000).

### **National Population Policy 2000**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2000, at the threshold of crossing the stupendous figure of a billion people, India had its tryst with the most elusive document in the history of modern India – the National Population Policy 2000 (NPP 2000). Considering the magnitude of the problem, expectations and aspirations of a billion people the policy document is a mere framework within which the strategies and programmes are incorporated. Having regard to the imperatives and the choices before the nation, the NPP2000 is fundamentally an

antenatal policy, which seeks to achieve replacement levels of fertility in three stages – immediate, medium-term and long-term, to reach a stable population by the year 2045.

A set of fourteen National Socio-Demographic Goals and twelve Strategic Themes with intended Action Plans form the matrix of the policy. It is basically a framework broadly outlining the current country-wide demographic perspective and proposed thrust areas to achieve the desired – population stabilization by the year 2045. Decentralisation of planning and programme implementation has been emphasised with convergence of services at the unit level. Although the regional differentials in population have been highlighted, specific strategies to meet the particular needs of the regional or state differentials in the area of population and development have not been advanced. The regional differentials in the population and development have been the major stumbling block in the advancement of the country in the sphere of development.

### **III EMERGENCE OF STATE POPULATION POLICIES**

The geographical extent of India is vast enough to be rightly referred to as a subcontinent in Asia with many geophysical, cultural, and developmental variations across the country and within the regions of the country. Similarly, the socio-economic development and advancement of the regions in the post independent India has also shown large variations. These regional variations in the development were known at the beginning of the developmental planning and they became more and more obvious with the passage of time.

Physically, several states in India are larger than many of the countries in the world. In terms of the size of the population, some of the larger states in India have population second only to some of the largely populated countries like China, the United States of America, and Indonesia (Government of Uttar Pradesh 2000 and Government of Maharashtra 2000). Importantly, many of the larger states in India have lagged behind in socio-economic development leading to high levels of fertility and consequently have large populations.

The present day Indian states have been formed by integrating a large number of smaller states and territories which were a part and parcel of colonial rule. The integration of states was on the basis of the major regional languages spoken by the people of the region. It was the political decision to integrate the smaller states and territories on the basis of the regional language termed as ‘emotional integration’ of the scattered smaller states and territories governed by different political and administrative outfits earlier during the colonial rule.

Thus, at the beginning of the developmental planning the integrated states had inherited the multiple contiguous regions with varying levels of socioeconomic development. Naturally, the pattern of development was uneven among the states and within the states. In the post independent era the regional variations in development have not only persisted but also increased in several instances leading to regional backwardness and underdevelopment. The larger the number of units integrated into the formation of a state the greater seems to be the variation in development.

The interstate variations in development are also well-known. Some of the states are very large physically and have lagged behind proportionately in development, also. The higher levels of fertility and consequently the very large size of the population are cited as the cause of underdevelopment of these states.

Nevertheless, four large states in south India, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu and adjoining two small states, Goa and Pondicherry, have shown vast difference in development and fertility levels with the exception of a very few

north Indian states. The south Indian states have been ahead of the north Indian states in the entire spectrum of development and also in reaching replacement levels of fertility.

### **Population programme implementation in India**

In the federal scheme of administrative hierarchy, the population and family planning are central subjects and national programmes. The policies and programmes are conceptualised, planned and designed by the central government as an omnibus package and handed down to the state governments along with allocated resources for the implementation. The spread of strategies and resources had been uniform throughout the country without regard to the regional needs. The anticipated goals and outcomes are also set for the nation as a whole.

The five year plans are means of planning and implementation of national development programmes with a review of the outcome at the end of the concerned plan period. The demographic outcomes were utilised to measure and evaluate performance of the population programme in the preceding plan and to project the goals for the future plans. The whole exercise was performed by the central government through the Planning Commission without greater involvement of the states concerned.

Such centralised planning with an extended duration of plan periods of five years rendered the population programmes less sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the states and the regions within the states. By virtue of being mere implementing agencies of the population programmes without any active role and responsibility, the states were unable to manipulate the population situation of the regions to their advantage.

The failure of the population control programme to effectively check the growth of population during the earlier five year plans when the size of the population of the country was within the manageable limits resulted in the cumulative effect on the development of the states. Once the cascade of rising fertility levels gathered acceleration in the decades of 1950s, and 1960s, the planning process was overwhelmed beyond its capacity. It happened in spite of increasing financial outlays and improvements in technologies over the decades.

### **The build-up towards regional perspectives in population programme in India**

The widening gulf of imbalances in the population and development started becoming apparent by the mid 1960s. During this period the Government of India was actively considering several options and was open to the consultations and recommendations on the issues of population from several sources. However, the efforts lacked precise direction and were limited to the long term perspective of population control.

At about the time of these intense explorations for solutions to the growing population problem, the Council for Social Development organised a National Conference on Population Policy and Programmes in December 1969. It was a well organised high level intellectual forum involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders from across the country and several international organisations. After considerable deliberation the draft Population Policy Resolution formulated at the conference clearly voiced the need for regional planning perspectives in the population programmes (Council for Social Development 1970). This is more or less the first reference to the regional perspective in the population policies and programmes. However, the proposal was not included in the subsequent policy statements of the Government of India.

The official commendation on the need for the state specific perspectives in population policies and programme was made by the Working Group on Population Policy appointed by the Planning Commission in 1978. In view of the "large differentials in the socioeconomic and demographic conditions and family planning performance among various states in the country, the Working Group suggested that the strategies for

the realisation of the demographic goals should be suitably modified and made relevant to each state” (Planning Commission 1980).

The unabated persistence of the growth rate of population as confirmed by the 1991 census forced the National Development Council to seriously explore the approaches to control the population growth in the interest of development of the nation. In its vehement search for solutions to the gigantic problem, in 1992, the National Development Council appointed a seven member committee, the Committee of the National Development Council on Population in the Planning Commission, consisting of central ministers and chief ministers of the states under the chairmanship of the then Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri K. Karunakaran (commonly referred to as Karunakaran Committee). After an exhaustive exploration of all the aspects related to the population and its growth the Committee of the National Development Council on Population observed that “one of the weaknesses of the National Family Welfare Programme has been its uniform approach and infrastructure development all over the country irrespective of varying socio-economic background, administrative and health care strengths, and current levels of family welfare acceptance”. Further, the Committee added that, “Uniform approach was inevitable in the initial stages when the infrastructure for the programme had been created from a scratch so that a minimal organisation for delivery of family welfare services was available in the country. A differential approach is, however, now called for in view of gross variation in ground reality from area to area. The base and basis of the population control programme should be through decentralised, area-specific micro-planning within the general directional framework of a national policy ...” (Planning Commission 1992). Further, the committee advocated the need for differential approach at the state and district levels.

This was the first ever official recognition and endorsement of the need for regional perspectives in population issues and planning in India and advocacy for micro-planning, thus providing impetus to the much thought of, long delayed, and highly desired regional planning. The committee recommended among other things several aspects for incorporation while formulating the national population policy such as decentralised planning, inter-sectoral coordination, strengthening administrative infrastructure, and the involvement of cross section of the political, professional, and community leaderships.

In pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee of the National Development Council on Population, in 1993, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, constituted a ten member Expert Group for preparing a draft National Population Policy. The expert group on the draft National Population Policy reiterated that the “Policies and programmes will have to be tailored to suit the particular socio-cultural and socio-economic factors prevailing in each region”. It has further emphasised the decentralisation of population programmes to the Panchayat level, stating that “Hence, this population Policy is structured on the basic premise: think, plan and act locally and support nationally” (MOHFW 1994).

Thus, whatever that remained of the population problem in the country as a monolithic and enormous till then was considered as surmountable, but unfortunately after a long lapse of nearly fifty years, by which time the population of the country was racing towards the billion mark. Though belated, the concept of regional planning for population control in the country which was set in motion in 1969 in the form a draft Population Policy Resolution found acceptance of the political, administrative and experts groups of the country.

The ‘paradigm’ change in the population programmes following the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994 (ICPD Cairo), sharply diverted the attention of the developing countries including India from the focused population



agenda towards reproductive and child health (RCH) approach. A sudden shift in focus from population agenda created confusion in the rank and file of the population establishment in the country. These unexpected changes robbed the draft National Population Policy the just importance it should have been credited with. The concept of regional planning got sidelined once again and the document remained as a draft only, but the suggested regional planning found its echo in the higher echelons of state administrations.

#### IV THE ERA OF STATE POPULATION POLICIES

The year 1997 is a land mark in the history of population policy in India. It was during this year that the State Government of Andhra Pradesh formulated a very well articulated Andhra Pradesh Population Policy – a pioneer among the state population policies in India, in a way, reminiscent of the Population Policy for Bombay Presidency (Rao 1939). In a statement eloquently justifying the need for a state population policy, it has been stated, that,

“Although there are commonalities of approach in the general contours of the population policy for the country, specific policies and strategies are to be designed to suit the diverse demographic, socio-cultural, socio-biological and socio-economic factors prevailing in each state. An effective population stabilization programme must be state specific, and within the state, it must be district, sub-district and gram panchayat, family specific” (Government of Andhra Pradesh 1997).

The state government has prefaced the justification with the statement that:

“... four decades of effort have failed to yield the desired results in containing the rapid increase in population. Population growth remains a formidable challenge even today demanding urgent, intensive, concerted and sustained action to address it and achieve the goal of population stabilization”.

Thus, it opened a new chapter in the area of population policy which was expected to fulfil the long felt needs of many regions of the country. It was not only a pioneering effort but also a very decisive one, for, there were no precedents or models yet the state government had chartered an illustrious course which was emulated later on by several other states in India. It was an outstanding example of the perceptions about the regional development and extending leadership support in fulfilling such aspirations of regional development.

In 1999, the State of Rajasthan formulated its own population policy. It was followed in quick succession by the State of Madhya Pradesh and State of Uttar Pradesh in 2000, State of Gujarat in 2002 and the newly formed States of Uttaranchal and Jharkhand in 2002 and 2004, respectively. Draft population policies were formulated by the Government of Maharashtra in 2000 and Government of Kerala in 2003. On account of administrative reasons both the drafts have been stalled for the time being. The Government of Karnataka has incorporated the issue of population stabilization into the Karnataka State Integrated Health Policy, in 2004 (Table 1).

Thus, seven states in India have formulated their own full pledged population policies with two more states having formulated a draft population policy each, and the third one a statement on population stabilisation incorporated into its health policy.

Three of the states, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh have formulated their population policies prior to the National Population Policy 2000 and rest of the states have done so following the National Population Policy 2000.

### **The compulsions leading to the formulation of state population policies**

The persistence of the backwardness and regional disparities in development of the states concerned, on one hand and lack of innovation and required thrust in the national population control programmes to meet the specific needs of the under developed regions of the states on the other, are cited as the major reasons for formulating states' own population policies. The political leadership of the times had their own vision of the development of the states and encouraged and supported the population and health experts towards the formulation of population policies.

**Table 1: Chronology of the Formulation of State Population Policies in India**

	State	State's Population 2001 Census (%)	Status of Policy	Year of Formulation
1	Andhra Pradesh	7.40	Published	1997
2	Rajasthan	5.49	Published	1999
3	Madhya Pradesh	5.86	Published	2000
4	Uttar Pradesh	16.15	Published	2000
5	Gujarat	4.92	Published	2002
6	Uttaranchal	0.82	Published	2002
7	Jharkhand	2.61	Published	2004
8	Maharashtra	9.41	Draft	2000
9	Kerala	3.09	Draft	2003
10	Karnataka	5.13	Minor reference	2004

The state population policies have very clearly expressed their desire for having a state population policy and have cogently explained the need for such policies leaving nothing for imagination or speculation. These statements are explicit in their import about the problem statement, the mission, the background, and the goals and objectives. Several states have also formulated implementation guidelines for instituting interventions to achieve the goals in an effective manner within the timeframes set for the purpose.

### **Pattern of state population policies**

There is a distinct pattern in the formulation of the state population policies in India. One set of population policies have been formulated with a great deal of inputs with a wider participation of stakeholders. Such inputs have rendered these state population policies more robust in their content and approach. This group of states had been supported in their quest for policy formulation by the international technical support groups. The POLICY Project of The Futures Group International (TFGI), New Delhi, has supported the population policy formulation in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, and Jharkhand. The UNFPA has supported the population policy formulation in Gujarat. A pattern of refinement in the processes and the content of the state population policies are clearly observed among the five population policies formulated under the aegis of the POLICY Project which reflects the experiences gained with the passage of time.

The population policies in other states have been formulated with the local resources and inputs. Except for the population policy of Andhra Pradesh the other three state population policies have remained either incomplete as in the case of Maharashtra and Kerala or very imprecise as in the case of Karnataka.

In retrospect, the Andhra Pradesh Population Policy looks like a marvellous document both in terms of the times at which it was formulated and the decisive content for a forerunner among the population policies. In fact, with the formulation of the state population policy the state of Andhra Pradesh scored a convincing march towards achieving replacement levels of fertility within a very short duration.

### **Processes involved in the formulation of the state population policies**

The most of the state population policies have been formulated with intense political willingness, commitment, and direction. In fact, the political leadership of the states was the driving force behind the formulation of these state population policies. The political leaders of the times were popular and had their own vision about the development of their respective states. Such liberal attitudes and foresight towards difficult problems like population control had furthered the formulation of population policies with greater ease.

Technical expertise and inputs required for the formulation of state population policies have been accorded utmost prominence so that the policies as formulated would be technically robust. Individual experts and groups of experts with considerable experience and expertise were involved in the preparations and drafting the policy document. POLICY Project – the internationally acclaimed group of policy experts from the Futures Group International, had taken up the leadership role in the formulation of the state population policies in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, and Jharkhand. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has played a similar role in the formulation of Gujarat State Population Policy. Another international aid agency was reported to have been involved in the formulation of the draft population policy in Maharashtra. Local expertise was utilised in the formulation of the state population policies in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Karnataka.

Extensive planning and spade work were the hall mark of the policy formulations undertaken under the aegis of The POLICY Project and UNFPA. The process of policy formulation was rigorous. The population and developmental perspectives of the states were discussed and deliberated extensively opening opportunities for the entire spectrum of stakeholders and the intellectuals to contribute to the knowledge base of the policy formulation. The spectrum of stakeholders was very wide ranging from bureaucrats, political leaders, planners, administrators, population and development experts, medical and health experts, programme specialists and managers, leaders of nongovernmental organisations, and international technical assistance groups (Government of Rajasthan 1997, Government of Madhya Pradesh 1999, Government of Uttar Pradesh 2000, Government of Jharkhand 2002, Government of Uttaranchal 2002, Government of Andhra Pradesh 1997a, and Government of Rajasthan 2000).

Conclusions based on the presentations and discussions on several important aspects of the policy formulation as related to the particular state formed the basis for the drafting of the population policy. The final policy document was an outcome of such extensive deliberations. These policy documents are robust both from the point of technical content and policy implications and implementation.

### **Analytical overview of the state population policies**

The vast disparities in the regional development and the effect of the increasing size of the population in the states have been the driving force behind the formulation of state population policies in India. The impact of the shrinking natural resources locally, and dwindling devolution of resources from the central pool was more visible at the state level forcing the states to reconsider their priorities in the development beyond the national developmental plans. Population size was considered as the most powerful factor

responsible for the states' poor record in development. Although the family planning programme had picked up momentum in the late 1980s the contraceptive prevalence rates stagnated, which was worrisome for the larger states. Also, the states appeared to have realised the perceived lack of clear direction in controlling the growth of population at the national level. The states were desperate and looking for alternatives within their own reach to control the growth of population and further development. It is under these circumstances that the state government of Andhra Pradesh formulated its population policy, in 1997. It is the first population policy formulated by a state government to address the specific needs of the state. The advocacy, as contained in the Draft National Population Policy 1994 "to think, plan, and act locally and support nationally" appears to have set the stage for the states to reconsider their priorities in the development of the states. The state population policies of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh were formulated prior to the National Population Policy 2000. The other four, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttaranchal, and Jharkhand state population policies were formulated following the publication of the National Population Policy 2000.

In the given background, the state population policies are the instruments of change sought to retard the pace of population growth in their respective states. Thus, these state population policies are essentially antenatal policies designed to promote large scale contraceptive acceptance in these states with the view to lower the growth rate of population. However, the state population policies have built into their strategies many demographic and developmental aspects which would further the acceptance of contraception and consequently reduce the pace of population growth. It would be interesting to look at the essential features of these individual state population policies.

#### ***Andhra Pradesh Population Policy:***

The outstanding feature of the Andhra Pradesh Population policy lies in the fact that it was without any precedent or a model in the country and formulated basically as a means of achieving the demographic goals of replacement levels of fertility, as early as possible. It has been clearly stated that the "Fertility reduction is at the heart of the development of the state. Rapid growth of population has serious implications for the health of the people, for socio-economic development and for the preservation of the environment".

In its seven sections the document deals with specifics such as the need for a state population policy, problem statement, population stabilization goals, means of achieving the goals through family planning and other related aspects. Establishing new institutions at the state, district and sub-district levels involving appropriate political and administrative leadership with "delegation of authority and responsibility, and administrative and financial flexibility at the district level to allow for effective adaptation of the programme to localised needs" is the new approach for the programme implementation. Additional funding for the family planning programme implementation is another important feature of the policy in Andhra Pradesh. The policy seeks to achieve the population stabilization through the means of increasing the contraceptive prevalence, maternal and child healthcare, female literacy, and increasing the median age at marriage of females, and convergence of all welfare services. The policy has set forth incentives for the communities, individual acceptors and service providers and the field experiences indicates that these incentives have helped to achieve higher levels of contraceptive prevalence in the state. With such a thrust, at a very opportune time the state population policy has enabled the state to achieve replacement levels of fertility within a very short period.

#### ***Population Policy of Rajasthan:***

Formulated in 1999, the Population Policy of Rajasthan is relatively more elaborate document than that of Andhra Pradesh. The POLICY Project of the Futures Group International has assisted the state government in the formulation of the state population policy. This is the first population policy document which has been formulated following an extended participation of all the stakeholders in the state and the interaction and contributions from the intellectuals and academicians concerned with the problem of population and development of Rajasthan.

The document has considered the population problem of Rajasthan in a wider perspective with emphasis on issues such as population density, sex ratio, reproductive behaviour, maternal and child health, and family welfare. It has also outlined the impact of rapid population growth on the socioeconomic development of the state and on its environment. Thus, creating a sound background for the formulation of state population policy with the statement that “In the face of this stark reality of a rapid population growth and given the social context, it is absolutely imperative for the state that the population growth be brought under control in the least possible time”.

The content of the policy include population stabilization goals, elaborately outlined operational strategies, and implementing structures which include among other things the convergence of all the developmental programmes in the state. All the aspects of the population policy have been clearly stated. The policy concludes with the statement “It is a reflection of state Government’s commitment for over all welfare of the people of Rajasthan. At every level from the secretariat to level of panchayat, people’s co-operation will be sought and ensured for implementation of this policy”.

#### ***Madhya Pradesh Population Policy***

The government of Madhya Pradesh initiated the formulation of state population policy in 1999 but released the document in January 2000, preceding the release of the National Population Policy 2000. Madhya Pradesh Population Policy was also piloted by the POLICY Project of the Futures Group International. This document appears to be a refinement over the Rajasthan Population Policy. Increased precision in identification of issues, greater cohesion in the organisation of the sequence of the approaches and wider perspective of the participation of stakeholder has become very much apparent in this policy document. Convergence of various developmental programmes has been firmly emphasised.

The Political and administrative commitment is as vehement as in Andhra Pradesh. Key initiatives and thrust areas have been defined well and implementation structures appear to be similar to other state policy documents with minor variations.

#### ***Uttar Pradesh Population Policy***

Uttar Pradesh Population Policy was formulated following the formulation of the National Population Policy 2000. Within the state, Uttar Pradesh has typically large regional variations in terms of population and development. In November 2000, the northern hilly region of the composite state was ceded to form the new state of Uttaranchal.

The large USAID funded project, Innovations in Family Planning Services (IFPS) was under implementation at the time of formulation of the state population policy. At that point of time the Co-operating Agencies (CAs) of the USAID were working actively in Uttar Pradesh for the implementation of the IFPS project. Unlike other states, the technical inputs for the formulation have come more liberally from several of these technical support agencies. The POLICY Project has coordinated the process of the formulation of the state population policy.

The policy formulation is further refined with the incorporation of the inputs from the workshop organised for the purpose. It is basically directed towards population control. The primary health care, especially the reproductive and child health (RCH) approach has been chosen as the means of achieving the reduction in fertility levels. Regional variations in population and development have been pointed out clearly suggesting approaches to fulfil the regional needs. The strategic plan has been cast very widely including the functional areas of the IFPS. Decentralisation of implementation and linkages among various departments dealing with developmental aspects has been stressed. The role of NGOs and private sector in the programme implementation is extensive. Uttar Pradesh has the advantage of the district level societies with the District Magistrate as its chairman for the implementation of the strategies, monitoring, and evaluation. These societies have been designated to supervise and evaluate the programme implementation across the state.

### ***Population Policy of Gujarat***

The Gujarat population policy was formulated in 2002 with the support from the Gujarat unit of the UNFPA. The policy formulation takes its roots from the suggestions made in the National Population Policy 2000 to formulate regional population policies and appears to have been highly inspired by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo (Visaria n.d.). The policy document has the distinctive features reflecting the influence of UNFPA in its formulation. The political commitment and administrative support find greater vehemence in Gujarat State Population Policy than the other states.

The influence of the ICPD is more obvious in the statement of objectives and the strategic approaches of the Gujarat population policy. The policy envisages achieving the goals through a broad based approach of reproductive and child health involving a wider spectrum of inter-sectoral coordination through structural and financial reforms.

### ***Health and Population Policy of Uttaranchal and Jharkhand***

These two are the last in the series of state population policies formulated with the assistance of the POLICY Project of the Futures Group International.

***Uttaranchal:*** The state government has attempted the integration of health and population for the purpose of policy formulation. However, the two aspects stand apart in the policy document but juxtaposed, closely.

This policy has more innovations incorporated over the other policy documents produced through the aegis of the POLICY Project. In respect of health, the policy has considered the general health status, women's health, child health, and the problems of ageing and disabilities. About the population, the policy has taken into account the current demographic situation in the state.

Political commitment and administrative support has been assured for the implementation of the policy. Decentralisation, inter-sectoral coordination, and involvement of the civil society are the major approaches envisaged in the implementation of the policy.

***Jharkhand:*** In Jharkhand the population policy is combined with the reproductive and child health (RCH) policy. Formulated in 2004, the policy has laid greater stress on the reproductive and child health aspects than the population as such. Wider issues of RCH have been included in the policy.

Political commitment for the policy formulation and its implementation has been assured. However the document is not clear about the plans for the implementation of the policy.

### ***The Draft State Population Policies***

The state governments of Maharashtra and Kerala have produced draft population policies which have been stalled at that stage.

The draft Maharashtra State Population Policy is a very well drafted document in which even minor aspects have been dealt with due care. The two child norm has been legislated in Maharashtra and the draft population policy intends to promote the same to achieve the population goals of the state. The draft population policy has been drawn up under the firm political patronage. The implementation plan and approach to specific issues is very well set out in detail. Administrative support has been spelt out clearly. However, reportedly for extraneous reasons the policy formulation process has been effectively stalled.

### **The Case of Population Policy of Kerala**

On the other hand the draft population policy of Kerala is a refreshing deviation from the rest as the situation in the state is altogether different. It is sans fertility reduction goals! The vision statement makes it clear that the “Kerala’s population policy should be an integral part of Kerala’s development strategies – that achieving socio-economic and environmental development; ensuring social justice, and eradication of poverty; sustainable social development should expand people’s choices. The role of the government is the creation of an enabling environment, for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. The objective is to attain high quality life for all citizens of the state”.

Having reached replacement levels of fertility, the state of Kerala is actively looking for broader perspectives of quality of life and the emerging problems of ageing. Since the entire region of South India is in an advanced state of fertility transition, having already reached or about to reach the replacement levels within a short period, the population perspectives of the region are much different from that of the other regions of the country (Reddy and Rayappa 2004). The population concerns of Kerala must be seen as forerunner in which the demographic balancing act makes way for aspirations for higher quality of life for its people with the imminent problem of ageing. In a sense it is the true regional differential in population and development as compared to the northern states.

### ***Population Stabilisation in the Karnataka State Integrated Health Policy***

During May 2000, the Centre for Population Dynamics, Bangalore, and the Corporation Bank Economic Development Foundation, Mangalore, had jointly organised a seminar on the “Formulation of Population Policy for Karnataka”. The seminar was patronised by the state government and was well organised. The recommendations as a part of the outcome of the seminar were submitted to the Government of Karnataka. However, no specific population policy has been evolved in the state of Karnataka. Instead the state government has produced an integrated health policy which includes a brief account on the population stabilisation. It is an offshoot of the final report of Task Force on Health and Family Welfare in Karnataka, which included a draft integrated health policy (see Appendix for Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4).

### **Relevance of state population policies with reference to development**

Development has been the principal reason cited in all most all the state population policies formulated thus far. Also, the state population policies have very well articulated sets of cogent arguments in support of the need for the state population policies. These policies have also considered the state of development of the regions within the state for which the state government is directly responsible. In the interest of retaining the political

power the leadership of the states have expressed concerns over the development of the regions within the states as a proof of effective administration.

With the accumulation of experience over the decades the state governments have considered that the national level population policies could only be a framework under which the states must seek out approaches to fulfil the developmental goals as promised to the people. And the states have felt the need for a supplementary/complementary framework to meet the challenges of development, a desire from which the state population policy takes its origin (Reddy 2004).

Rayappa and colleagues have argued that by formulating a state population policy the states have shifted their roles from the passive implementation of the central policy to committed active planner of their own population prospects and implementers such plans (Rayappa et al 2000 and Rayappa et al 2000a). Some of the states have put forth a number of innovations in the approaches and have firmly committed additional resources in spite of the resource crunch experienced by such states. Field experiences in Andhra Pradesh are a testimony to such a bold approach, which has been proved successful.

### **Integration of developmental perspectives in the state population policies**

The desire to march the state in the path of socioeconomic development was the principal reason for the state governments to embark on the formulation of the state population policies. The political leadership in several states in recent times had a very strong desire to promote the advancement of their states in the socioeconomic path. Nevertheless, the leadership was convinced that the uncontrolled population growth was thwarting their sincere efforts. The lack of foresight and dynamism in the national leadership to push forward the population control agenda had led to frustrations at the state levels and such frustrations were more emphatic in the states with high fertility levels. Repeatedly, it has been pointed out clearly that the uncontrolled growth of the population has outstripped the states' resource base and was responsible for the backwardness of the states concerned which has a cumulative effect both on the fertility levels and the development. The sensitive leadership was enthusiastic to get the state out of the vicious cycle of "high fertility levels - poor development - higher fertility levels".

The areas of public services which are directly or indirectly connected to the over all development of the people have been brought into the fold of population activities and tethered to the demographic outcome. It is not that it has been any new invention altogether, such services or activities were going on for decades but their relevance to the demographic outcome was not realised in the past. Also, there are sections of academicians, scholars and researchers who have been objecting to the incentives and disincentives in population control programmes in India. Nevertheless, the field experience has shown that the incentives and disincentives have a definite place in a situation like the one that is prevailing in India. The state population policies have laid emphasis on incentive and disincentives which appears to be judicious and has already produced desired results as in the case of Andhra Pradesh.

### **Role of political leadership in the formulation of the population policy**

The formulation of state population policies was solely dependent on the firm political commitment and unwavering support later. It is impossible even to think of a population policy without the political support. In the states which have formulated the state population policies, the political commitment and support has been absolute. In fact, the policy formulation has been nurtured by the political patronage. It is remarkable to observe that the political leaders of all the states which have formulated their own state population policies were from excellent educational background and had held their own vision about the development of their states. When the political commitment is absolute the administrative support merely follows creating an enabling atmosphere which helps to



render the task of implementation of the population policy very easy. Field observations in Andhra Pradesh confirm such political and administrative commitment and support which has brought in an ocean of difference in the implementation and great strides in the outcomes.

## V

### CONCLUSIONS

The rate of population growth was a major concern for Indians since the beginning of the twentieth century. The intellectuals had voiced concern about the impact of population on the resource base and the future development of the nation. The political leadership spearheading the freedom movement readily recognised the problem of population growth and its relevance to the development of the nation after attaining independence. Population was recognised as one of the prominent constituents in the developmental planning in India. The concerns of population found expression when the Planning Commission appointed a Population Policy Committee as early as 1952.

Though there were several attempts to formulate a population policy for the nation none of them succeeded for decades till the formulation of National Population Policy 2000 in May 2000. The omnibus policy framework similar to the National Population Policy 2000 proposed earlier were ineffective to implement the population and development agenda across the country as these frameworks did not take into consideration the existing regional disparities in development across the country.

In view of the vastness of the country the National Conference on Population Policy and Programmes in 1969 and the Working Group on population Policy in 1980 and the Draft Population Policy 1994 had suggested to consider the regional variations in development and to formulate a population policy which would meet the needs of such areas.

Taking the advantage of the constitutional provision of decentralisation and the liberal attitude suggested in the Draft National Population Policy, in 1997, the Government of Andhra Pradesh formulated the first ever state population policy in India, with the view of surmounting the problem of incessant growth of population and to advance the state in the path of development. This was followed by six other states in quick succession and two more states having formulated draft population policies. It is basically the determination of the political leadership of the states who patronised the formulation of the state population policies. With this the long felt need for regional perspectives in population and development appears to have opened new vistas in the area of regional development. States have demonstrated their capabilities in planning their own development and executing such plans.

The process of population policy formulation has been rigorous with the participation of all the stakeholders. In every instance, the policy formulation has meticulously considered the developmental perspectives and specific needs of the state. Larger convergence of the development related departments in the states with the resources invested directly towards achieving a balanced population growth to serve the needs of the advancement of the states concerned is the cornerstone of all the state population policies. Field experiences indicate that significant achievements have already accrued to some of the states.

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## Appendix

**Table 2: Elements Involved in the Formulation of Population Policies States / National**

State	Mission Statement	Statement of Objectives	Demographic Goals	Developmental Goals	Intervention Plans	Implementation Strategies	Stakeholders Participation
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Not Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Limited
<b>Rajasthan</b>	Not Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Broad
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Broad
<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Very Broad
<b>Gujarat</b>	Not Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Broad
<b>Uttaranchal</b>	Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Broad
<b>Jharkhand</b>	Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Broad
<b>Maharashtra (Draft)</b>	Not explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Well Defined	Well Defined	Broad
<b>Kerala (Daft)</b>	Explicit	Stated Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Not stated
<b>Karnataka</b>	Not Stated	Vague	Not Clear	Not Included	Not Defined	Not Defined	Not stated
<b>National Policy</b>	Not Explicit	Set Clearly	Set Clearly	Defined	Defined	Defined	Broad

**Source:** Adopted from the National Population Policy 2000 and State Population Policies of the above States

**Table 3: Processes Involved in the Formulation of Population Policies**

<b>State</b>	<b>Government's Intention</b>	<b>Clarity of Purpose</b>	<b>Preparatory Activities</b>	<b>Involvement of Professionals</b>	<b>Internal Resources</b>	<b>Intersectoral Coordination</b>	<b>Political Commitment</b>
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Committed	Organised	Absolute
<b>Rajasthan</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Not Clear	Organised	Absolute
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Not Clear	Organised	Absolute
<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Not Clear	Organised	Absolute
<b>Gujarat</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Not Clear	Organised	Absolute
<b>Uttaranchal</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Not Clear	Organised	Absolute
<b>Jharkhand</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Not Clear	Organised	Absolute
<b>Maharashtra (Draft)</b>	Definitive	Well Defined	Diligent	Good	Committed	Organised	Absolute
<b>Kerala (Daft)</b>	Definitive	Poorly Defined	Poorly Done	Limited	Not Clear	Poor	Not Known
<b>Karnataka</b>	Vague	Poorly Defined	Not Done	Not Involved	Not Clear	Not Defined	Not Known
<b>National Policy</b>	Definitive	Vague	Poorly Done	Limited	Not Clear	Organised	Vague

**Source:** Adopted from the National Population Policy 2000 and State Population Policies of the above States

**Table 4: Perspectives and Participants Involved in the Implementation of Population Policies**

<b>State</b>	<b>Demographic Perspectives</b>	<b>Developmental Perspectives</b>	<b>Political Participation</b>	<b>Intersectoral Convergence</b>	<b>Local Bodies/ Institutions</b>	<b>Private Participation</b>	<b>NGOs</b>
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully Involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Rajasthan</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully Involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully Involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully Involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Gujarat</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully Involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Uttaranchal</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Jharkhand</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Maharashtra (Draft)</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully involved	Accepted	Involved
<b>Kerala (Daft)</b>	Different	Included	Not Stated	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear
<b>Karnataka</b>	Included	Vague	Not Stated	Vague	Involved	Vague	Vague
<b>National Policy</b>	Included	Included	Definitive	Well Defined	Fully involved	Accepted	Involved

**Source:** Adopted from the National Population Policy 2000 and State Population Policies of the above States