UNIT 13 : POPULATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

UNIT STRUCTURE

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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

- explore the meaning of quality of life
- understand the meaning, nature, benefits and barriers of small family norms
- develop understanding about the concept and programmes of family planning
- explore the reasons for slow progress of family planning programme in India.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Growth of population of a country naturally affects the living standards or quality of life of the people of that country. It covers all the major aspects of development. Broadly speaking, these aspects can be divided into two parts such as human and science-technology based. The components of the human aspect are economic, social, cultural, political, educational, moral and aesthetic etc. The components of science and technology are the strategies of utilizing the resources of nature through which the

developmental needs of human beings can be adequately met. These include new innovative knowledge of science and technology, experiences, industrialization, modernization, development of communication systems, etc., through which the process of globalization can be accelerated. In this unit, we shall discuss the meaning of quality of life as well as the meaning, nature, benefits and barriers of small family norms. Again concept and programmes of family planning and the reasons for slow progress of family planning programme in India will also be discussed.

13.3 MEANING OF QUALITY OF LIFE

'Quality of life' is a complex and wide-ranging concept, the simple meaning of which cannot be given in one sense. The Dictionary meaning of the word 'quality' is the degree of excellence of an object or subject. It is also defined to mean the excellent, beautiful and valuable state of a subject. Quality of life refers to a way of life of a person which is excellent, beautiful and valuable from personal and social point of view. Living such a quality life can meet the physical, mental, emotional, social and economic needs of the individual and the society in a reasonable and hopeful way. This is a very important point to consider when it comes to quality of life.

The concept of quality of life is interpreted, analyzed and determined differently from the point of view of population education. It can be grasped as follows:

(i) Quality is determined by considering the **physical needs** of a person. Considerable components of physical needs are food, clothing, shelter, air, water, etc. The quality of life of people becomes improved, better and more promising if these physical elements can adequately meet the human needs.

(ii) The quality of life is determined by meeting the **social and cultural needs** of the people. The factors to consider in this connection are education, employment, healthcare, leisure, emotional security, creativity, etc. If these social and cultural needs are adequately met, the quality of life of the individual can be improved and enhanced.

(iii) Meeting **economic needs** is another aspect that can be considered

to improve the quality of human life. From this point of view, it is said that improvement of the quality of life depends on increasing the per capita income in the economy of the country. Personally, high quality economic earnings are indicative of improved quality of life. In addition, the size of the population, food, production, health care, housing, education, etc. improve the quality of life of the people economically.

World Health Organisation (WHO) defined quality of life as "individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of dependence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship". Some of the important characteristics of quality of life are stated below:

- The quality of life is a wide range of emotional and complex humanistic concepts.
- It is a process of human life, which is considered to be excellent, beautiful and valuable.
- It should be able to meet the physical, emotional, social and moral needs of human beings.
- Improved quality of life can increase the per capita income by meeting the economic needs of the individual.

13.4 POPULATION RELATED TO QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life of human being is related to different favourable and unfavourable concepts of population such as education, environmental degradation, public health, employment, pollution, small family norms, family planning etc. All these concepts are very important to explain quality of life in relation to population. Here, we shall discuss the important concepts like small family norms and family planning.

13.4.1 Small Family Norms

A small family is the need of the hour, especially in India

where population explosion is a major problem. Unless the population growth in the country is checked with all the people adopting the small family norm, the quality of life in our country will continue to be far below the world standards. While availability of food, health services and educational facilities in the developed countries are improving, these are continuously on the decline or are stagnant in our country because of the growing population. With too many people chasing after few services or products in the country, the quality of life is affected considerably in our country. Industrialization has resulted in tremendous changes in the life-style of the people in the developed countries. Though a small percentage of the people in our country have a life-style that matches the western standards, a majority of the population are still below the poverty line because of unemployment and underemployment resulting from population explosion. If the living standards of the majority of Indians are to improve, everyone should adopt the small family norm.

Meaning of Small Family Norms

The small family norm connotes control over the number of children. The rate of reproduction and the level of acceptance of family control methods are to a large extent influenced by what people consider as the ideal family size. Adoption of small **family** norms is today not only desirable but almost a necessity. It has become difficult to survive with a large family particularly because of price hike, growing needs and necessities. It is true that a small family is a happy Family. The lesser number of children is a boon not only to their parents but also to the country itself. They have better chances of food, clothing and education. Too many children are a burden to the society or family. Over-population is a curse

All the plans of progress and development stand nullified when the family is in trouble; happiness vanishes. One son and one daughter are ideal. Too many sons and daughters cause misery and unhappiness. They invite unnecessary trouble. Unlimited children cause problems.

India is the first country in 1952 to implement established population policies, in a series of Five Year Plans starting from 1951. In the First Five Year plan, from 1951 to 1956, it has been recognized by the Planning Commission that a population policy is necessary and family planning is identified as an important component of the legislation, hence family planning received 100% funding from the central government. In the next five years, from 1956 to 1961, the method of sterilization is emphasized, and by the next 5 years, family planning programs are placed as national priority.

In 1966, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is set up to manage the new population policy, called Small Family Norm that encourages families to only have two children. The symbol for family planning health and contraception services is an inverted red triangle. A small family not only alleviates the overpopulation problem in the national level but also benefits the welfare and health of individual families. Although India has a booming economic growth rate, there are not enough resources to withstand effective improvement in the large majority of the poor and sustain the flourishing economic growth rate. Therefore, to bring about qualitative changes, it is an urgent need for the Indian government to curb the problem of overpopulation and opt for a slower population growth. However, this birth rate control is not as effective as there are disincentives amongst masses,hence due to various factors such as religion, culture and social-economic, this is not widespread, especially in rural areas and urban slums.

Nature of Small Family Norms

Main motto behind small family norms is to control the population of the particular country. Every society should develop definite behavioural patterns to ensure a certain norm of family size. These behavioural patterns are mainly based on marriage, age of marriage, preferences for sex, values and roles of children etc. which automatically result in ensuring the normatively desired family size. The two extremes of the family size norm could extend from ‘no

child family' to 'as many children as God may will'. Within these two extremes, the norm varies from society to society, depending upon its socio-economic and health condition,particularly mortality status. One could expect change in family size norm corresponding to changes in socio-economic status of any given society. However, this change is not simultaneous because the normative values and behaviour patterns change at a slower pace as compared to economic progress. This cultural lag usually results in increased unhappiness in the individual families and society. It is one of the main goals of the national family planning programmes of every country to bridge this gap and enable individual families to adjust to changing situations so that they can maximise the gains accruing to them as a result of overall socio-economic progress.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is small family norm?

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Q 2: Write a note on family planning of India.

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Q 3: What is the main motto of small family norm?

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Advantages of Small Family Norms in Population Control

A small planned family has many advantages and benefits. The planning for a family starts from marriage at proper age. The safest time for pregnancy for health of both the mother and child is when she is 20 to 30 years. The reasonable gap between two children will give mother sufficient time to replenish her body nutrients depleted during the earlier pregnancy. Here, we now discuss the advantages of small family norms in population control.

1) Advantages for Mother

- Small family norms help to maintain the health of the mother.
- It also helps to minimise the fear of unwanted pregnancy.
- Small family norms minimise the number of children and it helps to less strain and worry due to less children.
- It helps the mother to spare more time and energy for children.
- It also helps the mother to spend more time for /education and vocation of their children.
- Small family norms provide better job opportunities to the mother as they are free from family problems related to a large number of children.
- Small family norms help the mothers to nourish the health of children attentively.

2) Advantages to Child:

- Child will have conducive atmosphere for his proper physical and psychological growth and development.
- Child gets proper nutrition, education, prenatal care and love.

3) Advantages to Father:

- Father can provide children with better education, comfort, food, clothing and recreation.
- He will be more relaxed and enjoy good health.
- He will improve living standards, better health and better quality of life.

4) Advantages for Community:

- Small family leads to conservation of natural resources and savings.
- Small family norm helps the nation to have enough schools, hospitals and other basic services.
- Small family yields more employment.
- Small family norms provide happiness, peace, harmony and prosperity among the people of a nation.

Barriers of Small Family Norms

Different barriers of small family norms are discussed below:

1) Religious Barriers

- **Preference to male child:** In Indian society, desire for or preference to a son is deeply rooted. The deep rooted religious and cultural values help in promoting the preference to have a male child as he is believed to be the medium to get salvation of the soul after death.If a male child doesnot perform the last rites of a person,it is believed ,the person's soul is to be doomed in hell.
- The son is also old age insurance to the parents.
- **God Given Children:** There is a religious belief among some sections of the society that it is the will of God that has bestowed children to them.

2) Demographic Barriers:

- **Early Marriage:** Early marriage is still prevalent in our society. Child marriage contributes to every social problem that gives India a low ranking in women's right.
- **Lack of Adequate Knowledge of Family Planning Methods:** Contraceptive use is very low among married couples in India. Main reason behind this is lack of proper knowledge about family planning methods.
- **Large Family system:** For a long time, large family system provided facilities for the care and bringing up of children. Couples saw safety in large families. This also hampers the norm of small family.

3) Economic Barriers:

- **Low Standard of Living:** This is another barrier of small family norms. Low standard of living encourages particular section of people to indulge in sex play as entertainment.
- **Backward Agricultural Economy:** In India the traditional method of agriculture has been practising since

decades.Therefore a large number of children is considered as an advantage as they offer help in various activities.Even if a few of them did not survive beyond ten to fifteen years, certain functions of economic nature like tending cattle or carrying out simple tasks in the fields could be fulfilled by the younger ones.

4) Educational Barriers:

- **Illiteracy of Masses:** Lack of mass literacy has been undoubtedly an important factor in having large families. Without adequate literacy and education, people remain unacquainted with the benefits of increased knowledge. They believe in superstitions and sometimes think that large families are the gift of God. They become fatalists.
- **Neglect of Girls' Education:** Lack of girls' education create different problems while adopting small family norms. As the women counterparts have no knowledge about family planning due to lack of education, they can not fulfil the dream of small family norms.

5) Recreational Barriers:

- **Lack of Means of Entertainment:** A substantial section of people for years have remained withoult adequate recreational facilities. This factor became responsible for them indulging in sexual activity and desiring pleasure from it.
- **More Leisure Time:** Main occupation of nearly 70% of Indian population is subsistence agriculture. Agriculture is unable to provide employment throughout the year. Thus there is lot of leisure time at their disposal. The easiest time pass for them has been to occupy themselves in sexual activities, resulting in large families.

In order to remove barriers of small family norms, Government should take certain measures such as:

- Provide adequate recreational facilities to the masses which

will be effective for economic growth of the family and maintaining the norm of small family.

- Proper functional education regarding small family norms should be provided to poor and illiterate people of our country.
- Voluntary maternity of women should have a proper place of information in the health centres.
- Family planning programme should be made as a people's programme. It allows the couples to decide their family size and also the time spacing of their offspring.
- Role of voluntarily organisations is very important in this regard. Different Government and Non-Government Voluntary Organisations can play effective and operational role in controlling the population of our country.
- Modernised improved methods should be introduced in the agricultural operations throughout the country for raising its productivity. This can also raise the standard of living of the people and indirectly reduce the birth rate.
- Mass-media, song, drama and extension education are some methods through which the people can be approached and educated for family planning programme.
- Opening family planning centres throughout the country can play an effective role in limiting the size of the family.
- The Government should introduce various incentive schemes for adopting small family norms such as cash incentive, preference for employment, preference for insurance, promotion etc.

It is said that family size influences the overall family welfare and happiness of a country. Its influence on the well being of children is particularly marked. To plan for a small family with one or two children is to plan for a happy family.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Write the benefits of small family norms for the father of the family.

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Q 5: Write about recreational barriers of small family norms.

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13.4.2 Family Planning

The growing population of the country and society cannot be stopped. We don't even want to try to do that. Of course it can be reduced or controlled as people want or as expected. One of the natural and straightforward efforts for this is population education. One effective way of this education is to control the number of families. In order to carry out such controls properly, it is necessary to plan its actions in a planned or authoritative manner. Family planning is very important to reduce the ever increasing population growth.There is no other alternative acceptable system of human population control in the hands of modern man.

Concept of Family Planning

As the current population growth has been creating an explosive situation, it comes to our mind naturally to control it with the help of family planning. It is said that the process of giving birth to a child by a newly-married couple should be planned with respect and dignity of fatherhood and motherhood. It should not be stupid and irrational. Or it may not turn out to be an unexpected accident for them. We want such an arrangement to make the married life beautiful and happy and to make it a long lasting marriage. Only a well-planned family or a visionary marital life can make them aware of and seek out the unseen problems of their future. They have to create and plan their own future. This is the basic concept of family

planning and its underlying expectations.

Of course, it is important to note that the success of this scheme depends on the mutual understanding and consensus between the husband and wife during the marital period. The two of them need to develop some new feelings and perceptions between them. It is important to keep in mind the feelings and attitudes of the couple when it comes to building a happy married life or a happy family. This is the main consideration of the Family Planning Scheme, which can have far reaching implications for its social success.

According to World Health Organisation, family planning is a "way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily, upon the basis of knowledge and attitudes and responsible decisions, by individual and couples in order to promote the health and welfare of the family group and thus contribute effectively to social development of a country".

According to Calister, "Family Planning is the intricate process by which persons, if they wish, can determine for themselves the timing, spacing and number of children to be born for them."

Based on the above, the main features of family planning can be identified as given below:

- Family planning is a need based thinking and life process for today's people.
- It is a responsible decision made by the married couple voluntarily.
- This is the only way to improve the health and well-being of a family.
- In adopting this plan, there is a mutual understanding between husband and wife, will power, uniqueness of decision making etc. This is not a forced plan for anyone.
- Family planning can contribute to the overall development of the country and society.
- It can improve the quality of family life and, on the other hand, the economic condition of social life.

- Family planning is a plan to make the fullest utilisation of the human resources of the country.
- This scheme is also referred to as Family Welfare Program in view of the possible health effects of the current termination.

Program of Activities of Family Planning in India

The Government of India constitutes the Planning Commission in March 1950. On 1 April 1951, the Commission constituted a Sub-Committee. Through this sub-committee, the Commission advises the Central Government to implement the Family Planning Scheme across the country. Family Planning and Family Welfare Scheme is directed by a Commissioner under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Central Family Planning Board is also under the purview of the Union Ministerial Office. In addition, state-based family planning agencies provide assistance. Therefore, the organizational and administrative system of family planning has been developed from the Union Minister's Office to the district level of the State.

The next five-year plans focus on the family-planning schemes with a view to the socio-economic development of the country. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Union Government provides 90% financial assistance to the State Governments in this regard.

The following steps are taken by the Ministry of Family Welfare for the implementation of the scheme.

- ***Accepting Small Family norm:*** The principle of 'Accepting Small Family Happy Family' is popularized among the general public by this scheme. Under this scheme, human beings are encouraged to adopt the ideals of two children.
- ***Spaced method:*** Giving birth to one child after another at the beginning of the year creates a frightening situation for the family. One of the salient features of family planning is that there is a considerable time gap between the birth of the first and the second child. This is the essence of family planning

and its implications.

- ***Supply of contraceptives:*** Women and men who are capable of giving birth to children need to be made to have easy access to contraceptive devices for self control. The departmental authorities are keeping a close eye on this matter. The Family Planning Scheme of the country pays special attention to make contraceptive kits easily available to these able-bodied people.
- ***Clinical services:*** The family planning scheme provides clinical and surgical medical services to the people, especially mothers and children. Primary health centres are set up on a need basis and the services of the Family Welfare Scheme are extended to the public.
- ***Community education:*** Family education or family welfare scheme cannot be expected to be successful without education of the community people living in different backward areas of the country. The government authorities have adopted a number of new programmes, policies and procedures under the scheme.
- ***Training of the medical personnel:*** The success of the Family Welfare Scheme depends to a large extent on the trained personnel required at different stages of the medical sciences. These staffs are medical staffs, physicians, midwives and other related medical staff. The Medical Council of India also approves a separate short-term medical training course for these people. At the state level also training of medical personnel is provided.

Reasons for Slow Progress or Failure of Family Planning Programme in India

The family planning programmes of our country failed to achieve its expected goals. In some states of South India like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra, its progress and results have been satisfactory. However, in the northern states of India, such as the United Provinces, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh,

Rajasthan, Haryana and Assam, its progress has been disappointing.

Some of the reasons for slow progress or failure of Family Planning Programme in India are stated below:

- **Male dominated social set up:** Due to male dominance in Indian social life, women are not able to express their views, desires and interests. The question of male-female consent or disagreement has been made irrelevant in our family life when it comes to birth control.
- **High rate of illiteracy among women:** Illiteracy among the general population in India and its high prevalence among women are the major Obstacles to Family Planning.
- **Need of a male child:** Need of a male child and need of security of future life is another reason in this regard. The married couple do not want to think of contraception or sterilization in the family planning system without the arrival of a male child.
- **Child as the earning member:** The poorest and most economically disadvantaged people in India cannot think of their child's education. They want their children to be the breadwinners of the family from an early age. Giving birth to more sons become a way for the family to earn more money.
- **Absence of sex-education:** Teaching family planning without providing basic concepts of sex-education is also considered as a ridiculous thing.
- **Lack of dedicated workers:** Employees working in the Family planning department need to be people who are motivated by ethical ideals and have a self-employed attitude towards the society. The concerned authorities should motivate and encourage their loyal staff by giving recognition and rewards. However, due to the lack of such a system, family planning workers cannot be motivated by their attitude towards government service alone. As a result, the whole process has become a mechanical one.

- **Political complexity:** India's population control policy and family planning system are embedded in political complexity. Vote bank politics does not want to follow the principles of population control. That is why the people's representatives are not interested and enthusiastic about the population control policy.

Hence, it is important to solve the problems of family planning programme of our country. In this connection, following points are worth mentioning:

- Universal primary education.
- Women's economic self dependence.
- Establishment of community development centre.
- Development of cottage industry.
- Old age pension.
- Motivated sterilisation.
- Imparting sex education.
- Provision of healthy entertainment of leisure.
- Encouraging the Non-Governmental organisation.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: Define family Planning.

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13.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the following matters:

- Quality of life refers to a way of life of a person which is excellent, beautiful and valuable from personal and social point of view. Living such a quality life can meet the physical, mental, emotional, social

and economic needs of the individual and the society in a reasonable and hopeful way.

- Unless the population growth lin the country is checked , the quality of life in our country will continue to be far below the world standards.
- A small family not only alleviates the overpopulation problem in the national level but also benefits the welfare and health of individual families.
- The two extremes of the family size norm could extend from 'no child family' to 'as many children as God may will'. Within these two extremes, the norm varies from society to society, depending upon its socio-economic and health, particularly mortality status.
- A small planned family has many advantages and benefits. The planning for a family starts from marriage at proper age. The safest time for pregnancy for health of both the mother and child is when she is 20 to 30 years. The reasonable gap between two children will give mother sufficient time to replenish her body nutrients depleted during earlier pregnancy.
- Main barriers of small family norms are: preference to a son, god given children, early marriage, lack of adequate knowledge of family planning methods, large family system, low standard of living, backward agricultural economy, illiteracy of masses, neglect of girls' education, lack of means of entertainment, more leisure time, etc.
- Family planning is a need based thinking and life process for today's people. It is a responsible decision made by the married couple voluntarily.
- The following steps are taken by the Ministry of Family Welfare for the implementation of the scheme. These are: accepting small family norm, spaced method, supply of contraceptives, clinical services, community education, training of the medical personnel, etc.



13.6 FURTHER READING

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13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: The small family norm connotes control over the number of children. The rate of reproduction and the level of acceptance of family control methods are to a large extent influenced by what people consider as the ideal family size.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: India is the first country in 1952 to implement established population policies, in a series of Five Year Plans starting from 1951. In the First Five Year plan, from 1951 to 1956, it has been recognized

by the Planning Commission that a population policy is necessary and family planning is identified as an important component of the legislation, hence family planning received 100% funding from the central government. In the next five years, from 1956 to 1961, the method of sterilization is emphasized, and by the next 5 years, family planning programs are placed as national priority. In 1966, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is set up to manage the new population policy, called Small Family Norm that encourages families to only have two children.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: Main motto behind small family norms is to control the population of the particular country.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: The benefits of small family norms for the father of the family are:

- Father can provide children with better education, comfort, food, clothing and recreation.
- He will be more relaxed and enjoy good health.
- He will improve living standards, better health and better quality of life.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: Different recreational barriers of small family norms are:

- **Lack of Means of Entertainment:** A substantial section of people for years have remained without adequate recreational facilities. This factor became responsible for them indulging in sexual activity and desiring pleasure from it.
- **More Leisure Time:** Main occupation of nearly 70% of Indian population is subsistence agriculture. Agriculture is unable to provide employment throughout the year. Thus there is lot of leisure time at their disposal. The easiest time pass for them has ban to occupy themselves in sexual activities, resulting in large families.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: According to Calister, “Family Planning is the intricate process by which persons, if they wish, can determine for themselves the timing, spacing and number of children to be born for them.”



13.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q 1: What is meant by quality of life?

Q 2: What is meant by small family norm?

Q 3: Mention one advantage of small family norm for society.

Q 4: Mention one demographic barrier of small family norm.

Q 5: What is meant by family planning?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Mention the characteristics of quality of life.

Q 2: Write a note on nature of small family norms.

Q 3: What are educational barriers of small family norms?

Q 4: What measure should government take to overcome the barriers of small family norms?

Q 5: Write a note on the Family planning programme of India.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: According to you, why India is failing tofulfill the dream of small family norms till now?

Q 2: Discuss the advantages of small family norms.

Q 3: Write an essay on small family norms from Indian perspective.

Q 4: Discuss the reasons for slow progress or failure of Family planning programme in India.

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