UNIT 14 : ROLE OF MASS-MEDIA IN POPULATION CONTROL

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14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to—

- recognise the significance of population control;
- enlist various means of population control and ways to propagate them;
- describe the concept of mass-media;
- explain the significance of mass-media for population control;
- analyze the role of newspaper, radio, television in population control; and
- discuss the role played by other audio-visual aids in population control.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

You already know that population is a pivotal element in society. It serves as the point of reference from which all other elements are observed and from which they derive significance and meaning. Their numbers, distribution, growth and characteristics or qualities provide the basic background for understanding various aspects of the environment, particularly the resources available. Therefore, the size of the population is a concern for the social development and thus for national development. The ratio of population size and the resources available indicates many socio-economic parameters of development like poverty, hunger, environment, literacy rate etc. Until and unless the resources available are sustainably adequate for the population, the need to control population does not arise. But when the population size is not according to the resources available or to sustain resources for future generation, the need to control population arises. Of the various agencies which help in population control, mass media is one of the most influential agencies. In this unit, we will discuss the significance and means of population control and the role played by various mass-media like TV, radio, newspaper and other audio-visual aids in population control.

14.3 POPULATION CONTROL

It is known to you that the term **'**population' refers to a group of all the living organisms of a particular species, in a particular geographical area, at a specific time with the capability of interbreeding. Though 'population' may be of any organism, here we are concerned with the human population. The concept 'population control' refers to the methodology or the practices used to artificially control and maintain the type, location, size and rate of growth of the population. Population control involves measures that improve people's lives by giving them greater control of their reproduction. Historically, human population control has been implemented by limiting the population's birth rate, usually by government mandate.

14.3.1 Significance of Population Control

You can surely relate how uncontrolled growth of population helps increasing levels of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, environmental concerns and other such issues. At governmental level, various policies have been formulated for population control. In 1952, the government of India started Family planning programme to control the rate of growth of population. National Population Policy had been formulated in 2000. One of the immediate objectives of the National Population Policy, 2000 is to address the needs for contraception, health care infrastructure, and personnel and provide integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child health care. If we observe carefully, we can find various instances where population control has been related to sustainable development. Look at the disparity in birth rates between the less developed northern states of India and more developed southern regions like Kerala, where women are more likely to be literate and educated, and their children are more likely to be healthy. It is important to make people realize that with less number of children also, they can expect to see their children survive into adulthood. So, we can understand how much important it is to control population. Actually, population control is a response to various problems like lack of resources, ensuring sustainability of the environment, unemployment, poverty, hunger, etc.

14.3.2 Means of Population Control

Population can be controlled by using various means and practices. Some measures are taken at individual level while others at state level. Individual efforts in this regard can play effective role at micro level such as family and local community level. At national level, realization of such objective is possible only with effective state intervention aimed at controlling the population change in the desired direction. The govt. can effectively intervene in bringing changes in

the population situation both at macro and micro levels. It can determine the necessity in the given context, and direct the policy changes accordingly. However, the constitutional and public mandates at national and state levels are to be taken care of.

Some of the means of population control are—using contraception, abstinence, abortion, emigration, decreasing immigration, starvation, famine, epidemic, war, etc. While a specific population control practice may be legal in one country, it may be illegal or restricted in another. This is a very sensitive and controversial issue. The population policy of a nation cannot confine itself to the reduction of birth rate alone. Rather a holistic approach is to be adopted for overall improvement of the society, economy and demography of a nation. The adoption of means of population control by the people is strongly influenced by various agencies like religion, culture, education, media, etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is meant by population control?

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Q 2: State a few means of population control.

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14.4 CONCEPT OF MASS-MEDIA

Now let us look at the concept of mass-media before going into its role in population control. Mass media is the means used to communicate to the mass population. The source from which a 'mass' population or a large population of the general public gets their news and information is considered as mass media. It is the primary means of communication used to reach a large chunk of the general public at a time. Mass media refers to the technology that is used to communicate to a large group, or groups of people in a short time frame. A mass media may be defined as any means,

agency, or instrument through which ideas, attitudes, impressions or images are simultaneously communicated to a large number of people. The general public typically relies on the mass-media to get information regarding political issues, social issues, entertainment, and news. Some of the most popular forms of mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, social media, internet, and films/movies. Mass-media have proved to help in classifying concepts, stimulating group and individual activities, developing a collective awareness, changing attitudes, imposing a new structure or organization on certain subjects and encouraging originality and creativity. It is known as 'message multipliers'.

Main functions of mass-media are mentioned below—

- To influence and generate public opinions: Different mass media can influence the mind-set and emotions of the people and change their opinions about different aspects of life.
- To disseminate vital information to a large section of people.
- To provide entertainment in appropriate form.
- To act as an agency for advertisement.

14.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF MASS-MEDIA FOR POPULATION CONTROL

If we want to make population control a mass campaign, mass-media is the only answer. Because, mass-media is capable of reaching the mass (a large population) within a less time. It takes a wide coverage of information regarding anything that is happening in anywhere in the world. It brings information of the whole world to the individual. These medias easily reach large group of people, reach remote places, give more reality, show cause-and-effect relationships and ultimately motivate the people and influence their attitudes. Mass media acts as an agency of social change and helps in modification of attitudes, inculcation of desirable values and acquaintance with cultural heritage. They simplify explanation and give clarity to it. They make the information concrete and stimulate interest and excite curiosity in things. They play a vital role in disseminating knowledge and bringing changes in attitudes regarding population issues. The contents of

population education include various facts and figures regarding population, health, environment, education, food and nutrition, welfare schemes, resources, economic development etc. All these information need to be communicated to the people, which can be done through mass-media. Importance of mass-media in population control can be summarized in the following points—

- The most significant advantage of mass-media is that it has the least boundary. It can reach people outside classroom or institutional environment, even to remote places.
- Mass-media offers the advantage of non-necessity of proximity of the sender and receiver, i.e. they do not require being at the same place at the same time. Moreover, through mass-media, information can be passed on at a real-time basis.
- Mass-media can present events that have already taken place in the past as well as the events which can be predicted that will take place in future. So, past events or consequences as well as future predictions of uncontrolled population growth can be communicated using mass-media.
- Mass-media helps to retain the learning for longer time. Using audio-visual aids as mass-media can have impact on long-term population control strategies.
- Mass-media helps in forming clear images in the mind of the people. Abstract ideas can be presented concretely. Concrete experiences make learning more natural and realistic.
- Mass-media provides variety of experiences. There are many sources to get the experiences in different ways. Variety of experiences helps in understanding the concepts which are sensitive in nature.
- It is difficult to motivate people for population control as religious and cultural sentiments are sometimes related to it. Mass-media acts as a good motivator in such cases.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Define the concept of mass-media.

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Q 4: Why mass-media is called a good motivator?

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14.6 ROLE OF MASS-MEDIA IN POPULATION CONTROL

You have learnt in the previous section that mass-media is a very effective medium of population control. Mass-media helps to disseminate news related to population and health. This has helped in reducing the world's population considerably. They facilitate short term, intermediate and long term objectives of stabilizing population. Short term objectives include giving people knowledge about the concepts related to population and health, creating awareness, keeping people updated and enhancing public service announcements. Intermediate term objectives include bringing changes in attitude, behaviour and perception of social norms. Long term objective is to focus on restructuring of perceived social norms. In a country like India where the population is vast and diverse, Mass Media plays a more significant role in creating social awareness, for intensifying family planning activities, to turn the governmental policies and programmes of population control into a social movement. The medias like T.V., radio and newspaper are good means to propagate the benefits of the planned family to the uneducated and illiterate people, especially in the rural and backward areas of the country.

Also, in the institutional or classroom setting, the teacher can make use of large variety of mass-media for the teaching of different types of lessons on population education. These media are—pictures, charts, maps, diagrams, graphs, films, black board, bulletin board, globe, tape recorder, field trips, etc. These media can be used both in classroom teaching as

well as in creating awareness among people about population issues. Let us now look at what role does these various means of mass-media play in population control.

14.6.1 Newspaper

You are familiar with this medium since childhood. Newspaper is one of the oldest means of communicating with the masses. It is a printed form of media.It plays an important role in spreading population awareness among masses both at institutional as well as general level. The newspaper includes a lot of information, opinion, views, etc. on various public, social and political issues. It reaches the masses easily and is of low cost. Most of the literate section of the society uses newspaper as a medium to know the world as well as the events happening in the world. Therefore, an issue like population control can be well-broadcast through newspaper. The role played by newspaper in controlling population are discussed in the following points—

- Newspaper creates public opinion on various issues related to population growth, population control, family planning, sex education, etc.
- It provides up-to-date information and news about population related issues with visual materials like pictures, graphs, cartoons, diagrams, tables etc.
- Reading matter has vast potentialities. It exerts strong influence on the individual's intellect as well as emotions and attitudes. It can thus influence the philosophy of life of the individuals.
- Newspapers contribute very largely in education of the masses. Press not only gathers events, they also present their own views on issues. So the reader gets an opportunity to consider an issue from many angles.
- Newspaper publishes different types of slogan related to family planning, need for population control, over-use of resources like water, etc. with attractive illustrations. This helps to create

awareness among the masses.

- Special articles are published in newspaper on population related issues to create awareness among the people about the consequences of uncontrolled population growth in the world.
- Newspaper disseminates detail knowledge about population situation, causes and consequences of population explosion and also gives the messages for population control.
- It informs the masses about the government policies and programmes on population control by publishing advertisements repeatedly.
- It is such a medium which can be referred to time and again whenever necessary, if we store it appropriately.

14.6.2 Radio

Radio is the greatest invention of its time. It gained tremendous popularity as an informal as well as non-formal agency of education. It has one of the richest potential of reaching the masses with any message. R.G. Reynolds describes the importance of radio as the most significant medium for education in its broadest sense that has been introduced since the turn of the century. As a supplement to classroom teaching its possibilities are almost unlimited. … children and adults in communities, however remote, have access to the best of the world's stores of knowledge and art (Aggarwal, 2010). Thus it can play an important role in population control. Let's see how it works.

- Radio can be used in all the forms of education—formal, non-formal and informal. It can be used as teaching aid to enrich the delivery of population and population control related contents of school syllabus. In non formal mode, it is used to deliver lectures, talks, etc. on population control to the learners. Informally, it also reaches the mass very fast with various information, news, etc. on population and its control.

- Radio broadcast can reach far and wide and remote places of the world, and thus can help spreading knowledge on population control.
- Radio helps to widen the outlook of the people about the world and its population problems.
- Information relating to population growth, health, family planning, nutrition, government policies and programmes are broadcast by radio with updated information.
- Radio broadcasts phone-in-programmes in which the people are given a phone no. to communicate with an expert of the field. It helps the masses to clear confusion about different population problems of their areas and also know about sex related diseases.
- Different population related discussions and talks broadcast in radio act as supplementary materials of instruction to enhance the understanding of the masses.
- Sensitive information related to population, population growth, population explosion, sex education, etc. can be subtly presented through the medium of radio.
- Radio is also a source of entertainment for the masses. So, it can use music, plays, story narrations, etc. to make people aware of the issues like population explosion, sex education, family planning, etc.
- Moreover, it is also a good medium to promote various types of birth control measures through advertisement.

Thus, we can see how radio helps to disseminate population education by reaching the masses. Availability of radio in mobile handsets has made it more popular and most used entertainment source among the masses. Since radio can be listened to while at work, at play, at drawing room, at travel, at recreational centres, it becomes a good medium to affect the mindset of the people. It not only informs, but also motivates. It inculcates values and virtues and also creates attitudes, interests and appreciation. However, care

is to be taken that the broadcasts should be of a very high quality and worth-listening to from the point of view of content, speech, style, audibility and presentability so that it can target all sections of the society .

14.6.3 Television

Television is a better medium than the radio in that it adds visuals along with auditory stimulus. It is because seeing is always more effective than only reading or hearing. Moreover, it is a regularly used medium of entertainment among the masses. There are different channels transmitting various types of programmes. The television can be an important central medium in providing functional, formal, non-formal and informal education to the masses. As the television gives us both audio and visual stimuli, the person watching the television is more engaged in the task of learning consciously or unconsciously. Hence, it has become a very important and powerful agency of mass communication for population control. Go through these points to understand its effectiveness as a strong medium of mass communication for population control.

- Television easily draws the attention of masses on the topic of population control and population education.
- Television can cast a long lasting effect on the masses on issues like population control, family planning, sex education, etc.
- Television makes the abstract ideas of population education like fertility, mortality, sex related diseases appear concrete and relatable to real life.
- Television is an effective means of developing modern outlook and change the attitude of people towards issues of population control. It can make the topics of family planning, sex education, contraception, etc. comfortable to be discussed among the masses, which are otherwise not comfortable to talk about.

- Television addresses the varied interests of the masses. For example, some people are interested in talk shows, some in cinema, some in music, etc. It telecasts different kinds of programmes to make people aware about the issue of population control.
- As India is yet to achieve 100% literacy, we have some sections of the society who are illiterate. Television provides need-based population education to these illiterate people. It is a good medium to reach those sections, who cannot be included in the formal or non-formal education.
- Various movies, talk shows, interviews with doctors, phone-in programmes, etc. based on issues of population explosion and population control may be telecast through television.
- The lecture programmes on television are more lively as people not only get verbal information and the instruction of the speaker but also the whole of his/her personality, including the emotional expressions.
- On television, news items related to population explosion and its consequences evident in various parts of the world, various population control measures taken by other countries with similar problems, etc. are shown along with reporting from the actual place. As a result of this, the problems are discussed and practical remedies and solutions are also suggested.
- Television can give a very good idea of the history of the country through dances, plays, short-films on historical moments, documentaries, etc. on events which are of political, social, global significance for population education.

There are some milestone instances of using television for social purposes like population education. In 1956, the educational television was started in India in the General Conference of UNESCO held in New-Delhi. During 1975-76, the famous Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was implemented. The programmes telecast were related to education, agriculture, health, family

planning, national integration and so on. The target audience for this project was the rural population. In 2014, Population Foundation of India (an NGO) launched its flagship transmedia initiative 'Main Kuch bhi Kar Sakti Hoon' telecast on the DD Nation TV. It talks about the importance of family planning and issues of child marriage. You will find a short video excerpt of it in the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CuuaYSjWhs. Thus, after going through this section, you may well have an understanding that television plays a vital role as a means of mass media in educating the masses on issues related to population.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: State two ways to use newspaper as a medium of population control.

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Q 6: How can the radio influence the mindset of the people?

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Q 7: Why television is said to be an appropriate medium for diverse population?

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14.6.4 Other Audio-visual Aids

Audio-visual aids are some other media which can help us to reach the masses easily and quickly. They also help in making teaching more effective by adding some visual or auditory or both stimuli. They make learning experience more concrete, realistic, lively and dynamic. They make use of the senses of hearing as well as visuals. The contents of population education or issues related to population control are sensitive, abstract, less discussed and sometimes difficult to present or teach. Various audio-visual aids

can be used as instruments to help present such matters. Let us look at some important audio-visual aids which can be effectively used for presenting matters related to population control—

Pictures: Pictures are very effectively used in population education. Pictures can convey more than words. For example, pictures of overcrowded places, large habitant and small habitant places, small and large families, child marriage, environmental pollution etc. serve as illustrations. They can be used to make people realize about the impacts of population growth and the need of population control. The pictures may be carefully collected or prepared by the teacher.

Charts: Charts are very effective aid in teaching population education. Different types of charts may be used for the purpose. For example, cause and effect charts are used to show the relationship between population growth and socio-economic development, population growth and health, population growth and quality of life etc. Narrative charts are used to show events in a process, for example, chronological events in population policies and programmes in India, process of urbanization, process of institutionalization of population education, etc. Tabulation charts are used to show the numerical data of population for making comparisons. Charts of various characteristics of population may be used.

Graphs: Graphs are pictorial representation of numerical data. Population growth rate, mortality rate, fertility rate, immigration trend, emigration trend, male-female ratio, literate illiterate ratio, occupational composition, religious composition, age composition of population etc. can be shown through different types of graphs.

Maps: Maps are especially useful for teaching population statistics and world demography. The maps can be printed ones or drawn on a big piece of thick paper by the teacher him/herself. The teacher can also draw the maps on the board which of course requires a little practice on the part of the teacher.

Bulletin Boards: Bulletin board is a board fixed on the wall inside or outside the classroom. It can also be used in other social institutions like community library, club, playground, etc. It has to be fixed in a place where it gets maximum attention of the people. Various articles, posters, cartoons, graphs, news items, etc. related to population education are displayed on these boards. However, care has to be taken to update the items of the board frequently.

Pamphlets: Pamphlets are nothing but small printed unbound books or leaflets (consisting of a single sheet of paper folded in half, third or fourth) which contain information about a particular topic**.** Pamphlets are used to spread population and health related messages. You may find these in most of the private hospitals, offices of private practitioners, health-care institutions and voluntary health organization. These may also be used by the educational institutions in awareness programmes related to population control.

Films: Films provide both audio and video stimuli. Realistic presentation of facts is possible through films. They are highly popular audio-visual aid. They help in communicating ideas, influencing attitudes, sharing experiences, developing human relations etc. This media is proved to be very effective in population education. Films capture the reality and narrate it in a language of masses. Government uses films for informing about and for promoting family planning and family welfare programmes. Films depicting population events, mortality, fertility, migration, unemployment, over-crowding, child marriage etc. are very useful supplement to the classroom teaching as well. Some instances of films that have portrayed the issues of population explosion and its consequences are—Logan's Run (1976), Children of Men (2006), Wall-E (2008), The Age of Stupid (2006), Mother: Caring for 7 Billion (2011), etc.

Social Media Platforms: One of the fastest and most effective means of reaching the masses is social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. These are platforms where

people register to remain socially connected to the world in a virtual mode. These are easily accessible to the masses as a large population is now able to afford mobile phones as well internet. Therefore, the messages, news or information which are disseminated through such social media platforms are very fast in spreading (getting viral) and therefore are a good medium to influence the mindset of the people on issues like population control, population explosion, population control policies, etc. Go through the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oheFP4vSsac where you will find a Population Control Anthem.

The most important advantage of targeting the masses for population education, rather than limiting it to educational institutions, is that it affects a large number of people at one time and the effect is large-scale and long-lasting. Moreover, it is easier to talk on sensitive topics like population control, sex education etc. by using mass-media as it makes people comfortable to talk about such issues among themselves.



14.7 LET US SUM UP

- The ratio of population size and the resources available indicate many socio-economic parameters of development like poverty, hunger, environment, literacy rate etc.
- When the ratio of population size is not according to the resources available or to sustain resources for future generation, the need to control population is arises.
- Of the various agencies which help in population control, mass media is one of the most influential agencies.
- Population control involves measures that improve people's lives by giving them greater control on marters like reproduction.

- Some of the means of population control are—using contraception, abstinence, abortion, emigration, decreasing immigration, starvation, famine, pestilence, plague, war, etc.
- The adoption of means of population control by the people is strongly influenced by various agencies like religion, culture, education, media, etc.
- Mass media is the means used to communicate the general public. The source from which a 'mass' population gets their news and information is considered as mass media.
- Mass media influences and generates public opinions, informs, educates and entertains people in a wide variety of ways.
- Mass media acts as an agency of social change and helps in modification of attitudes, inculcation of desirable values and acquaintance with cultural heritage.
- The subject-matter of population education includes a large amount of facts and figures regarding population, health, environment, education, food and nutrition, economic development etc. All these information can be communicated to the people through mass-media.
- The newspaper reaches the masses easily and is of low cost. Most of the literate section of the society uses newspaper as a medium to know the world. Therefore, issues like population control can be well-broadcast through newspaper.
- Radio has a rich potential of reaching the masses with any message. It can be used in the classrooms, as well as it can reach the people in communities, however remote. Thus it can play an important role in population control.
- As the television gives us both audio and visual stimuli, the person watching the television is more engaged in the task of learning, consciously or unconsciously. Hence, it has become a very important and powerful agency of mass communication for population control.
- The contents of population education or issues related to population control are sensitive, abstract, less discussed and sometimes difficult to present or teach. So, various audio-visual aids can be used as

instruments to help present such matters.

- Pictures can be used to make people realize about the impacts of population growth and the need of population control. The pictures may be carefully collected or prepared by the teacher.
- Different types of charts are a very effective aid in teaching population education.
- Graphs can be used to show population growth rate, mortality rate, fertility rate, male-female ratio, literate illiterate ratio, occupational composition, religious composition, age composition of population etc.
- Maps are especially useful for teaching population statistics and world demography.
- Various articles, posters, cartoons, graphs, news items, etc. related to population education are displayed on bulletin boards.
- Pamphlets are used to spread population and health related messages.
- Films may be used for communicating ideas, attitudes, experiences, human relations etc. to the masses. This media is proved to be very effective in population education.
- Social media platforms are a good medium to influence the mindset of the people on issues like population control, population explosion, population control policies, etc.



14.8 FURTHER READING

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6) Mangal, S. K. (2001). Foundation of Educational Technology. Ludhiana: Tandon Publications.

7) Pandey, V. C. (2012). Population Education. Isha Books.

YouTube Channel Ravi Tripathi Official

YouTube Channel Population Foundation of India



14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Population control refers to the methodology or the practices used to artificially control and maintain the type, location, size and rate of growth of the population.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: Some of the means of population control are—using contraception, abstinence, abortion, emigration, decreasing immigration, starvation, famine, epidemic, war, etc.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: A mass media may be defined as any means, agency, or instrument through which ideas, attitudes, impressions or images are simultaneously communicated to a large number of people.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: Mass-media make the information concrete and stimulate interest and excite curiosity in things. They simplify explanation and give clarity to it. Therefore, mass-media can be good motivators.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: Newspaper can create public opinion on various issues related to population growth, family planning and sex education. It can also inform the masses about the governmental policies and programmes on population control.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: Since radio can be listened to while at work, at play, at drawing room, at travel, at recreational centres, it becomes a good medium to affect the mindset of the people.

Ans. to Q. No. 7: Television addresses the varied interests of the masses. For example, some people are interested in talk shows, some in cinema, some in music, etc. It telecasts different kinds of programmes. So, television is said to be an appropriate medium for diverse population.



14.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions:

Q 1: When does the need to control population arise?

Q 2: State one function of mass-media.

Q 3: In which year India started the family planning programme?

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

Q 1: Illustrate how social media platforms can be used in population control.

Q 2: Write in brief what kind of programmes related to population control can be broadcasted through radio.

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

Q 1: Write in detail the significance of mass-media in controlling population.

Q 2: Describe how television proves to be an efficient medium in population control.

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