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## Research Paper-Education

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# ROLE OF A TEACHER FOR QUALITY IN EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

We are all interested in quality in education. The future of our country and the world depends on our children and college students receiving the best instruction. Using the framework of quality in our school districts, we can design roadmaps for continuous improvement. When educators understand what continuous improvement is all about, they gain confidence that they can shape and alter the nature of their schools. Change is possible! Inside the daily reality of classrooms and educational establishments, the promotion of quality education for all young people sharply brings to light problems concerning the role of the teacher and other education providers: their recruitment, the adequacy of their profile and function, their training, and their social recognition and status. It is evident that a sufficient number of competent teachers is required in order to improve the quality of educational processes.

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**Key words:** *Education, Quality in Education, Population Education, Sex Education*

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### INTRODUCTION

Population education emerged as an educational response to population and development issues confronting the society, nation and the world. It aims at making the learners aware

of the interrelationships between populations. Development, a-sources, environment and quality of life of the people, inculcating in them positive attitude and responsible behavior towards population and development issues. The population education programmes, as being implemented in about 90 countries of the world for the last over two decades, present a varied picture in terms of concept, content and clientele. They are known by different names such as population education, family life education, sexuality education and adolescence education depending upon their special emphasis.

### **NEED FOR POPULATION EDUCATION**

Realizing the negative effect of rapid population growth on development, many developing countries have launched family planning programmes. The success of family planning programmes in some countries has been significant in terms of reducing the rate of population growth.

There are two main reasons inter alia for the hidden momentum of population growth in the developing countries. These are (I) the socio-cultural and religious values of the people, which influence their fertility behavior, and (ii) the large young population of these countries. Population change is both a biological as well as a socio-cultural phenomenon- The whole process of reproduction leading to the birth of a child is biological. However, the decisions behind the birth of a child and size of the family are governed by socio-cultural values, traditions, and customs. For example, in most of the developing countries people place a high value on the birth of a child. Similarly, there are many other pro-natal values, which influence the fertility behavior of the people. In general, socio-cultural values change slowly over time through a variety of factors; but one of the most important factors is education. Any coercion in changing the values of the people can backlash and foil all the efforts. There are a number of studies, which show a direct relationship between education of the people and their fertility behavior. For example, a study shows that the rural women with five or more years of education, bore, on an average, just over half as many children as those with no schooling. Urban women with 10 or more years of education bore less than 45 per cent as many children as their counterparts with no schooling. (Also, see Module IV.)

In India, while evaluating the impact of population education programme on school students and teachers, the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, found that school students and teachers who were exposed to population education content and training showed greater awareness about and more positive attitudes towards population

issues than those students and teachers who were not exposed to such content and training.

In her inaugural address at the first Conference of Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development held in Delhi from February 17-20, 1984, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, made a specific reference to the importance of education in inculcating attitudinal and behavioral changes in the people to accept family planning. This should be accompanied by organizational arrangements for contraceptive advice and medical services. She said:

Young people must be in the vanguard of the movement to restrict population growth and to promote sustained development. In schools and colleges and through non-formal education they must be made conscious of the dynamics of population growth and its implications for their own further well-being and that of the nation. Properly planned population education programmes need to be introduced at various levels so that when people marry, they are fully aware of their responsibility to themselves, to future generations and to society. Every occasion and festival is it religious or otherwise, where people get together, affords excellent opportunity to reach out to them to explain the importance of these programmes.

We must, therefore, educate children at an early age, much before they mature, on the implications of population change. There is also the need to impart education in human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse. From the beginning, it must be instilled in their minds that the ideal of happiness and prosperity lies in limiting the size of the family. If the child understands the processes and consequences of population growth for him, the society, the nation, and the world by the time he leaves the secondary school, he may be in a position to make the right decisions and is likely to be more receptive to the message of the family planning later. In fact, one of the hidden objectives of population education is to create demand for family planning services.

Although there is no empirical evidence to show that population education will bring about the desired changes in the fertility behavior of the future parents, a number of studies have shown that there is greater awareness among students and teachers and a positive change in their attitudes towards population issues. If we believe in a non-coercive and non-propagandist way of changing behavior, probably education is the major means to help the individuals in making rational decisions for themselves and the society.

**Historical Background:**

Population education has a relatively short history. The first attempt to voice the need for population education was made, perhaps, by Alva Myrdal in 1941. In her book *Nation and Family*, she tried to convince the USA that a conscious population policy was essential to realize the social policy. She emphasized the role of education in the development of new population policy. The March 1962 issue of *Teachers College Record*, Columbia University, carried an article by Warren S Thomson entitled 'The Population Explosion', and another article 'Population-Gap in the Curriculum' by Philip M Hauser. Both these articles drew attention to the need for including population content in the school curriculum. In 1964, a project to prepare instructional materials related to population education was undertaken at Teachers College, Columbia University, under the leadership of Prof Sloan Wayland. The output of this project was two documents - 'Teaching Population Dynamics', and 'Critical Stage of Reproduction'. These were designed as proto-type materials for the pre-service training of secondary school teachers.

The first Director-General of UNESCO, Sir Julian Huxley, in his Annual Report for 1948, emphasized that overpopulation could drastically affect the future civilization and its rate of advance. He was particularly concerned by the undernourishment of much of the world's population and with the problems of erosion and depletion of natural resources. He wrote, "Population must be balanced against resources or civilizations will perish." He suggested that UNESCO's task must include educating the peoples of the world to realize the gravity of the problems involved.

The workshop on Population and Family Education, sponsored by the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia held at Bangkok in September-October 1970, was a landmark in (his history of population education. Educators from 13 member states in Asia addressed themselves to the task of preparing a statement of objectives for population education, suggesting strategies for organizing programmes, outlining content for incorporation into school curricula in the social sciences and the natural sciences, and preparing a set of draft sample instructional materials in mathematics, science, and social studies. A noteworthy outcome of the workshop was that in course of time several of the participants played key roles in developing population education programmes in their own countries.

After initial resistance, the programme of population education picked up quite fast in the seventies. Five countries in Asia launched national programmes in population education after the 1970 Regional Workshop, with financial support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and technical assistance from UNESCO.

India was, perhaps, the first country to have taken up the task of introducing population education. The Family Planning Association of India presented a memorandum to the Government of Maharashtra. Urging that population education be introduced into the educational system of the state. During the same period a 'White Paper' on educational reconstruction was published by the Maharashtra government in April 1968. The proposal was based on the conviction that one of the important ways in which the educational system can be made a 'powerful instrument of the national development' was by providing a basic understanding of the dynamics of population growth and how it affected the daily lives of the people and national welfare.

The first National Seminar on Population Education held in 1969 in Bombay (now Mumbai) set the pace for the introduction of population education in the school system. Since 1980. Population education has been launched as a national programme under the banner of the National Population Education Programme (NPEP) by the Ministry of Education with the financial support of UNFPA and technical assistance of UNESCO. By 1998. 30 states and union territories were implementing the programme- The NPEP executed by the Neff-RT completed three cycles and entered a new phase in 1998. During its first cycle, it had sought to institutionalize population education in the formal school and teacher training systems. The programme was expanded to non-formal education, adult education and universities during the Seventh Five Year Plan (1986-90). The population education programme is now being implemented in many countries at various levels of education in primary and secondary schools, pre-service and in-service teacher training, vocational and technical schools, higher education and non-formal and adult education.

### **Meaning of Population Education:**

Since the population education programme was initiated to supplement the family planning programme, it is sometimes understood, both within and outside the educational system, as another name for sex education and/or family planning education. This misconception has been one of the hurdles in starting population education

programmes in some countries. Cultural variations have determined differences in the concept and scope of population education programmes in different geographical regions. Sex education is still considered unacceptable in many countries of Asia, although some other countries such as the Republic of Korea and the Philippines have included family planning and sexuality as a part of population education curriculum in schools. In Fiji, sex education is a major component of family life education. Some Latin American countries place major emphasis on sex education because of the need felt for the individual to understand himself or herself as a sexual being, which is a prerequisite to the development of responsible parenthood.

### **Family Life Education and Population Education:**

Family Life Education is an education designed to promote happy family life. It seeks to prepare young people for a successful married life and responsible parenthood. With these purposes of family life education, the contents that are generally included in it are the concept of family structure, types and functions of family, family discords and their resolution, adolescence and related needs and problems, information about human sexuality, preparation for marriage, and responsible parenthood. The focus is on family. In population education, the centre of study is population and its related issues. Some of the elements of Family Life Education fall in the area of population education, and therefore, these interfaces lead to an impression that both educations are identical.

### **Sex Education and Population Education:**

Sex education is also at times treated as synonymous with population education. Sex education is aimed at imparting education in human sexuality, human reproduction, responsible and healthy sexual behavior and related ethical and moral issues. '

With the fast spread of HIV/AIDS, AIDS education has been made an integral part of population education. As such, inclusion of selected content and information on human sexuality forms part of population education.

Conceptualization of population education is rather a question of emphasis, rooted in complex and historical differences. The situation is not expected to remain static. There are already signs of change in the concept and scope of population education in some countries. Although some countries do not openly accept any kind of sex education or family planning education in schools, they do realize the need for including some content related to these areas in the population education curriculum. A number of surveys recently conducted in some countries in Asia vouch to this change in the perception of

and acceptance to include sex education related contents in the framework of population education.

The concept and scope of population education also differs with the target group. Although opinions may differ with regard to the nature and content of population education for the children, there is little difference of opinion so far as the population education program for adolescent youth and adults is concerned. The information on sex and family life is of immediate relevance to this group.

Given the cultural and religious diversities and different target groups, it may be difficult to give one definition of population education which can be universally accepted. Definitions also differ in the specific behavioral outcomes, which they specify, such as acceptance of a small family norm while others adopt a non-directive approach.

In spite of the difficulties in the perception of population education, many individuals and many conferences have tried to give a definition of population education. For those who are interested in definitions, three are given below:

Population education is “an educational programme which provides for a study of the population situation in the family, country, nation, and the world with the purpose of development in the students of rational and responsible attitude and behavior towards that situation.”<sup>1</sup> “Population Education is an educational process to develop among learners an understanding of the interrelationships between population and sustainable development, causes and consequences of population changes, and criticality of essential conditions of population stabilization. It inculcates among them rational attitude and responsible behavior towards population and development issues in individual and social contexts. So that they can make informed decisions.”<sup>2</sup> “It is generally agreed that population education is the process of helping people understand the nature, causes and implications of population processes as they affect, and are affected by, individuals, families, communities and nations. It focuses on family and individual decisions influencing population change at the micro level, as well as on broad demographic changes.”<sup>3</sup>

As one might notice, in three definitions there is no mention of the needs of adolescents, reproductive health and skill development, which are now being emphasized in the light of the ICPD 1994. Though these aspects are subsumed in these definitions, it is felt that there is a need to formulate a new definition highlighting the new emphasis in population education, especially the development of life skills.

**Reconceptualisation:**

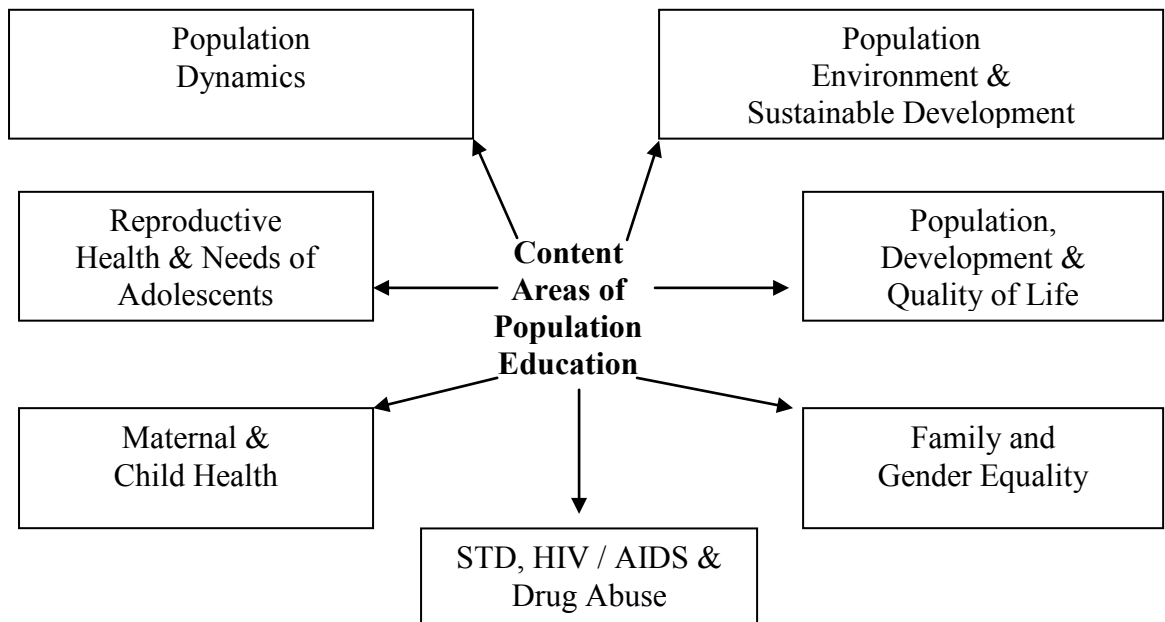
Prompted by the need to reconceptualise and synthesis various aspects of population education, the UNESCO Regional Seminar held in Bangkok initiated the exercise way back in 1984. The process of reconceptualisation continued for about a decade with important inputs from different international conferences, including the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 known as the *Earth Summit*; the Istanbul Declaration and Plan of Action (April 1993); the (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994; and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995- The major focus in the reconceptualisation has been to register a paradigm shift from a purely demographic or population control approach to a broader interdisciplinary approach for sustainable development encompassing related issues of environment, resources, poverty and reproductive health.

The 1994 (ICPD) has given a broad mandate on development issues than previous population conferences. Reflecting the growing awareness that population, poverty, patterns of production and consumption, and the environment are so closely interconnected that none of them can be considered in isolation. The Programme of Action recommends a set of important population and development objectives, both quantitative and qualitative. Among these objectives and goals are sustained development, education, especially for girls; gender equity and equality; infant, child and maternal mortality reduction; and the provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health.

In this context, it is important to mention that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) had organized a National Seminar on Adolescence Education in mid-April 1993. The National Seminar on Adolescence Education had recommended that sex education and education for preventing HIV/AIDS and drug abuse should form part of the population education programme for secondary school students and teachers.

The content areas of population education, namely (i) Population dynamics, (ii) Population, Environment and sustainable development, (iii) Population, development and quality of life, (iv) Family and gender equality, (v) Maternal and child health, (vi) Reproductive health and needs of adolescents, and (vii) STD, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, reflect the overall consensus and recommendations of the major national and international conferences and seminars.



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