

Place of Population Education in Education Policies and School Curriculum

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ABSTRACT: Introduction- Population education refers to the education about people, population explosion, its impact on the environment and humans, family life, healthy lifestyle and soon. The population is a matter of concern among different policymakers for decades. The integration of the population into the school curriculum helps to create awareness among budding minds and guides them for the future.

Methodology- The study is done by using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from the syllabus and textbooks followed by CBSE & WBBSE boards. Secondary data is collected from various journals, articles and different Education Policies.

Objectives- The present paper focuses on the recommendations of Educational Policies related to Population Education and its integration into the school curriculum of the CBSE & WBBSE board.

Analysis and conclusion- The varied topics covered in the syllabus of both boards provide ample opportunity for the students to comprehend the concept of Population and apply them in their real life.

KEYWORD: Population, Population education, Population in curriculum, CBSE, WBBSE.

1. Introduction

‘Population’ typically refers to the number of people residing in a single area, whether it be a city or town, region, country, etc¹. ‘Population education as defined by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) refers to the procedure of assisting people in understanding the environment, sources and inferences of population procedures and how they are affected by individuals, families, communities and nations’². Population education refers to educating young minds of the next generation ‘to think seriously about population trends and how they impact the natural world and human well-being’³. So, Population Education can be referred to as a kind of education about people.

Population education is an inclusive field which includes several areas. It refers to teaching students about the concept and reasons for the increase in population, the effects of population growth on the environment, leading to calamities, health issues, measures to be implemented, women empowerment, awareness towards reproductive health and so on^{2, 4}. It develops an awareness and understanding of the causes and the consequences of changes in population characteristics; develops an understanding of the relationships that exist between changes in population and national development, and develops an understanding of the

consequences of individual decisions in the area of reproductive behaviour⁵. The purpose of population education and its integration into the school curriculum is to teach school-going children about basic population issues and to encourage them to have smaller families⁶.

2. Objectives

The objectives of my study are-

- To know the importance of population education.
- To observe the recommendations put forward by different education policies for Population Education.
- To find out the position of population education in the school curriculum.
- To understand the concepts of population dealt with in school curriculum.

3. Methodology

Data and information for the study are collected from both primary and secondary sources. For the collection of primary data, the syllabus and textbooks of secondary & higher- secondary (IX-XII) levels of both CBSE and WBBSE boards are undertaken here. The subjects and classes where the concept of Population is introduced are selected for the study. Besides, further information is collected from the websites of different schools. For secondary data collection different journals, articles and e-books based on population education, educational policies and schemes related to population have been reviewed to attain the objectives of this study.

4. Literature Reviews

Hussain & Kumar (2014) discussed the importance of integrating population education into the teacher education curriculum. He further pointed out the difficulties in doing so, as the relative narrowness of the concept of population education, the traditional conservatism of the educational professional and the multidisciplinary nature of population education.

Nzobonimpa & Zamroni (2017) examined the implementation of Population Education in senior high schools in terms of (1) the learning process (2) the learning materials, (3) the evaluation process (4) the course outcome (5) the teachers' role (6) insight towards Population Education, and (7) factors supporting. They have conducted survey-based research on teachers and students and found that (1) the teaching process was not proper (2) materials for Population Education were available and efficient (3) the evaluation process was not appropriate, (4) the students were satisfied with the teachers' role, (5) the student's perception of Population Education was very positive. Besides, they further discussed the limitations in Population Education which are- (a) limitation in time (b) several extra-curricular activities, (c) rapid changes of data, and (d) the validity of materials.

Kapur (2018) tried to look into the significance of the population and family life in education and the interconnection between them. She further discussed the contribution of population education and family-life education in making the life of an individual better.

Hazarika & Bora (2022) focused on the menace of population explosion and its causes and the role of population education as a remedy for these problems in North-east India. To attain the objectives of the study case study approach of some particular areas, i.e. Mulanpur Gaon of Dhemaji district and Tinthengia and Bhogpur Gaon of Lakhimpur district are explored.

Roy (2022) studied the various features of population education, like- nature, aims, objectives, and scope. Roy further discussed the consequences and causes of the population explosion and its impact on education.

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5. Educational Policies Related to Population Education

Many countries are acutely concerned regarding population. But India was one of those countries which has taken step towards this, with the initiation of various ‘family planning’ programmes in 1951⁷. In 1969, three national conferences were organized by- the Family Planning Association, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (Ministry of Education), and the Central Health Education Bureau (Ministry of Health) which aimed to develop national programs in population education. Thereafter, a unit was established in the National Council, with responsibility for research and the development of population education materials for the schools¹.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) set up a population education cell in its Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities. This department organised workshops and education projects to help students develop an understanding of the relationship between population and financial problems, to make population education a part of the formal educational system and to encourage balanced family-size choices by students and the community at large⁸.

National Policy on Education 1986, Programme of Action 1992 and National Curriculum Framework for School Education also gave importance to Population Education and mentioned it in their document. The recommendations laid down by these policies are discussed below:

*National Policy on Education 1986 (as modified in 1992)*⁹

- NPE 1986 recognised that the ‘spread of literacy and education among women is the only way to curtail the growth of population in upcoming decades’ (paragraph 1.13).
- It has suggested that ‘a national curriculum framework containing common core along with other components will be made that provide flexibility. Besides integrating values related to heritage, culture, democracy, etc. attempts will be made on the promotion of observation of small family norms through The National System of education’ (para 3.4). the National Literacy Mission will also emphasize on ‘small family norm’ alongside other goals (paragraph 4.12).
- In paragraph 8.16 NPE 1986 stated that “Population education must be viewed as an important part of the nation’s strategy to contain the growth of population. Starting at the primary and secondary levels with the inclusion of consciousness about the looming crisis due to the expansion of population, the educational programme should actively motivate and inform youth and adults about family planning and responsible parenthood”.

*Programme Of Action 1992*¹⁰

- In Para 5.5.1(e) of *Adult and Continuing Education*, POA propagates the message of ‘small family norm as one of the sub-themes of literacy campaigns to be accelerated. This, along with other measures like the importance of delayed marriage, proper spacing, changing existing social biases in favour of the male child, etc. will be integrated into the content of the primer, curriculum and course content of training and orientation of all functionaries, transaction of instructional lessons, evaluation, etc’.
- In Paragraph 8.9.14 of *Secondary Education* (Ch. 6) by POA 1992, it is stated that “Population Education: The NPE specified observance of the small family norm as one of the core curricular elements at all stages of education. This has been sought to be achieved through the population education programme. Contents relating to population education have been integrated into the syllabi and textbooks of Geography, Economics, Civics, Science, and Languages at the secondary stage. These contents have been drawn from areas like population and economic development, social development, environment, health and nutrition, family life and population dynamics. These contents are related to six major themes,

viz., Family Size and Fertility Welfare, Delayed Marriage, Responsible Parenthood, Population Change and Resource Development, Population-related Values and Beliefs, and Status of Women”.

*National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2000*¹¹

- In Chapter -1 “Context and Concerns” of NCF it is stated in 1.4.10 *Integrating Diverse Curricular Concerns*, that “attempts will be made to integrate different ideas and concepts, (like- ‘family system’, ‘environmental education’, ‘AIDS education’, ‘peace education’, ‘population education’, ‘migration education’, etc.) in the existing areas of learning”.
- In chapter-2 “Organisation of Curriculum at Elementary and Secondary Stages” under 2.5 *General Objectives of Education*, it is emphasized that the School curriculum should help to generate and promote among the learners “an appreciation of the various consequences of large families and overpopulation and need for checking population growth; and cultivating a proper understanding of and attitude toward healthy sex-related issues and respectful attitude toward members of the opposite sex”.

6. Population Education in Schools Curriculum

Various initiatives have been adopted by governments to integrate Population education and related issues into the school curriculum. Though Population education is not taught in schools as a separate subject, it is imparted in an integrated way with the help of different subjects. For the study purpose, textbooks of both secondary and higher secondary levels of the CBSE and WBBSE board are selected here. The subjects where the concept of Population education is integrated will be discussed here

6.1. In CBSE Board

i) Population Education in Class IX is imparted through the Geography of Social Science. The textbook under the name "Contemporary India", contains a unit namely Population. This chapter is primarily concerned with- population size and distribution, population growth and process of population change and characteristics of the population¹².

- Population size and distribution shows India’s population size and distribution by numbers as Census 2011 and India’s population distribution by density,
- Population growth and process of population change deal with the concept of population growth/ change and the three processes of population growth/ change (i.e., birth rate, death rate and migration).
- The various characteristics of the population shown are- age, sex composition, literacy level, occupational structure and health condition.

ii) Biology of class XII, provides knowledge on the reproduction system and reproductive health of the human being. The unit namely *Reproductive Health* deals with the concept of Population and also provides awareness about different topics⁷.

- It discusses- the problems and strategies of reproductive health, various ways of stabilisation of population and birth control, medical termination of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), infertility

6.2. In WBBSE Board

i) Population Education in Class X is integrated into science subjects. In the textbook "Life Science & Environment", one unit under chapter 5 namely Environment Its Resources and Their Conservation deals with the topic of Population. It deals with problems caused by the ever-increasing population¹³.

- The problems which are discussed are- over-exploitation and depletion of natural resources, deforestation and loss of ecosystems, shrinking of agricultural land, shortage of fresh water, air and water pollution,

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changes in atmospheric condition and global warming, destruction of wetlands and its consequences, scarcity of food.

7. Analysis and Interpretation

From the information collected from different educational policies related to Population education and its place and relevance in the different school curricula, it can be assumed that the government has taken adequate measures to spread awareness among the masses. Through integrating Population education into the school curriculum, young minds are allowed to understand the different areas related to Population and its impact on society, the world and the environment. The secondary level (IX to XII) of both CBSE and WBBSE boards introduce students to the concept of Population, population explosion, density, the reason for population growth/ change and the negative impact on the environment through pollution and other detrimental facts. At the higher secondary level, students became more mature and they are oriented with the knowledge of the reproduction system and maintenance of healthy reproductive life to alleviate population growth and other health-related issues.

Again, with the integration of Population education with other subjects, the burden of a separate subject on students was also curtailed. The amalgamation of Population education with compulsory subjects at the secondary and higher secondary stages provides students ample opportunity to learn about Population and related issues. Students are also able to build connections among different disciplines, a multi-disciplinary approach is also promoted by this method and students learn to apply this knowledge in real life.

8. Conclusion

Population education caters knowledge to students through the integration of the concepts of Population into the school curriculum. The increasing population of India and other parts of the world became a matter of concern among policymakers for decades. So, many steps have been adopted to generate awareness among people by educating them about Population and related factors through its integration into the school curriculum. The study shows that Population education was an integral part of POA, National Policy on Education 1986, NCERT, and NCF 2000. This compulsory integration of Population education in the school curriculum and its amalgamation with other subjects helps to acquaint students with different issues of population. Students from a very young age became aware of healthy physical and sexual life and ways to even out the growth of the population. Further, by making population education a part of other disciplines, the burden of an extra subject is also lessened and students will be able to make connections among different subjects.

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