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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POPULATION EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT
In the present scenario in India, the social and economic context of population growth is different from that of other developed countries. While other Western nations are bolstering their socio-economic capabilities in tandem with population expansion, India is not achieving the same level of progress. China, the most populous country, utilizes its human resources to advance the nation. Nevertheless, India, the nation with the second-largest population, needs help efficiently harnessing its human resources. A primary factor contributing to this issue is the need for more adequate education.. In this present paper, researchers explain why population education is vital in Indian secondary schools. They are gathering data from various research articles and government reports.
KEYWORDS: *population growth, education, manpower, secondary school, Social-economic development.*

INTRODUCTION

Population growth is a serious concern in India. The exponential increase in population is causing significant disruptions to our personal lives, societal interactions, and overall national development. In the late 1960s, India devoted particular focus to this demographic. The exponential increase in population has brought attention to its profound influence on national life, leading to the introduction of population education as a means to raise awareness. The rapid rise of the population will have severe consequences for people's food, clothes, housing, life security, and health systems. Only through education can people become aware of these detrimental repercussions. Given the current circumstances, we have identified a need for population education. It is imperative to include this subject in the school curriculum, particularly at the secondary level.

Meaning and concept of Population Education

Population education cultivates students' logical thinking and sense of responsibility by teaching them about various aspects of family, community, and country. Population education enables students to comprehend the nature, attributes, and profound changes of population phenomena.

According to Gopal Rao, "population education may be defined as an educational program that provides for a study of the population phenomenon to enable the students to make rational decisions about problems arising from rapid population growth."

According to **UNESCO,** "population education is an educational program that provides for a study of the population situation of the family, the community, the nation, and the world to develop the student's rational and responsible attitudes and behavior towards that situation."

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the diverse facets of population education.
2. To explore population education and secondary school education in an Indian educational context
3. To understand population education needs in Indian secondary schools

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METHOD OF THE STUDY

In the current paper, researchers have used secondary data sources; researchers formulate information in a qualitative form. They collected data from various scholarly articles in open-access journals, edited books, and government reports on websites.

DISCUSSION

1. To understand the diverse facets of population education.

Different aspects of Population Education

The NCERT recommends five fundamental aspects of population education:

a) **Population Growth:** This term refers to the increase in the number of individuals in a specific county of the total population. It is important to know any country's population growth because it is associated with planning resources, health care, and environmental issues.

b) **Economic Development and Population: There is a direct correlation between economic development and population.** This aspect has some positive and some negative impacts on national progress.

c) **Social Development and Population:** This population education aspect is very crucial for policymakers; they understand the intercalation between social development and population and formulate sustainable and inclusive development for the nation.

d) **Health, nutrition, and population:** Maintaining good well-being and promoting the proper development of every child in a nation directly depends on health, nutrition, and population.

e) **Biological Factors, Family Life, and Population:** Genetics, reproductive biology, family structure, child-rearing practices, and social and cultural norms all play a role in this aspect of population education.

2. To explore population education and secondary school education in an Indian educational context

Population Education and School Education:

Adolescents are typically students at the secondary level of their education. This is the most critical juncture in human history. Students at this stage are more responsible and mature. We should organize and construct the secondary population education curriculum according to the learners' interests, maturation, age, development, and growth. We must design the curriculum considering a variety of factors, as this period marks the onset of adolescence. During this period, children experience a critical and transitional period. As a result, it is imperative that instructors and parents provide guidance and counseling when conducting population education. The secondary population education curriculum is essential for learners, parents, and instructors. It clarifies the distinctions between sex education, family planning education, and population education. T. S. Mehta and B. S. Parakh considered it necessary to incorporate population education into the secondary education curriculum in subjects such as biology, general science, geography, civics, and social studies. Furthermore, we are skilled at developing population education manuals. Manuals that focus on population dynamics and their diversified social, political, and economic implications may include specific instructional elements. Furthermore, graphics may prove advantageous. In addition, educators have the option of showing films to students in classes IX–X. Secondary school students will appreciate each of these.

3. To understand population education needs in Indian secondary schools

There is a need for population education in secondary school education in India.

The secondary level of schooling is significant because the students are often adolescents. During this period, sexual development is an essential developmental trait. This stage also signals the start of puberty for students. As a result, it is critical to include population education in the school curriculum. The following arguments justify the inclusion of population education in the secondary education curriculum:

- **Giving the next generation power:**

At this stage, students have emerged with fresh ideas. Properly educate the population, and they will comprehend their basic obligations to their families and society in the future.

- **Encouraging sustainable development:**

Sustainability and development are the main goals of our current global scenario. Students learn about population issues like environmental challenges, increased pollution, deforestation, a lack of drinking water, and many more. The concept of sustainability alerts learners to resource consumption.

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- **Fostering people's health and well-being**

We are teaching secondary school students how to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle. They can understand family planning, reproductive health, and pre-mature pregnancy. They are fostering a community awareness and health program to enhance each individual's well-being in a border context.

- **Enhancing socio-economic development**

Population education provides conceptual clarity to the learner about the relation between population growth and economic factors, such as unemployment, housing, and food-related issues. Students know these aforementioned issues, and they can try to improve their quality of life.

- **There are several possible ways to impart quick and accurate education.**

Secondary schools have fewer students but more qualified and trained teachers, so they can impart population education programs more quickly and accurately. We should encourage students at this stage, who lack critical thinking skills, to synthesize their knowledge and apply it in their daily lives.

- **Easy to evaluate**

In secondary education, the population education program is simple to evaluate. The students' maturity and teachers' professional training make evaluating the population education program easy.

CONCLUSION

Education has an incredible controlling power to reduce overpopulation. To foster attractive changes, reasonable educational measures play an important role. Therefore, we should promote population-related education during the initial phases of schooling. The secondary education stage engages some active minds and teaches them how to plan their adult lives. When initiated at a young age, students are capable of analyzing the negative impacts of overpopulation, taking the required actions, and making independent decisions. The secondary stage encompasses young students who are in their puberty stage, culminating in their teenage years at the end of school. Marriage is relatively all-inclusive at this particular age, too. Hence Population education at the secondary level of Indian education is, by all accounts, generally relevant.

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