

## Demographic Situation and Development in Nepal

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### 1. Relationship Between Development And Demography:

Development and demography are not only alliterative terms, but they are an inseparable whole. In view of massive economic development achieved in western countries and their steep declining fertility trend we can now well guess that development and demography constitute both cause and effect<sup>1</sup> ; Whereas in developing countries, there is least control over them, either. Even if there could be any positive gain in economy, it has had an impact effect on survival rates—more so it was result of fast control of mortality rates simply as to shoot up the survival rates of the human populace. It was the introduction of modern medical and other scientific technology that spectacularly reduced mortality rates, while no equally effective method to traditionally high birth rates was available. Success of development decades has not claimed

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<sup>1</sup>. **Population growth rates** : Mexican countries 2.3 : percent; S. American countries : 1.4 to 3.4 percent; African countries : 2.5 percent; Asian countries : 2.3 percent including Japan's 1.2 percent; European countries : 0.7 percent and U.S.A. : 0.8 percent.

(Source : William Peterson, **Population**, Third Ed., Macmillin Publishing Co., New York, 1975.)

a simultaneous success in curbing rise in demographic trend. Does it mean that population explosion in the individual but developing country cannot be dealt with severely, unless the development of the national economy is stepped up? Since economic development has been a pre-condition for lessening birth rates in the developing countries, answer to the question, of course, seems to be positive. Imperatively it is necessary that we should have frontal attacks on both, the anomalous situation created in development and demography (in Nepal's case, demographic trends with special reference to birth rates and migration from across the border in the south). Development of national economy of Nepal is trying to be in consistent with the population but the pace of the development, in most cases, is desperately low. The more than a quarter of the century's development history (of Nepal) amply indicates this. It is heartening that no coercive measures have been used for achieving the desired ends in development and demographic fields; but the judicious legislative measure/provisions should be stepped up, as in the case of land reform, towards population control also. One, who completely abides by family planning measures, should also be protected from socio-economic consequences of ultimate issuelessness, etc.

## 2. Concept of Development :

National planning begins its calculation in terms of economic growth. The planners have the tendency to quantify economic development. Development means further progress in terms of better socio-economic life and living. Development is an inclusive term, since it means right from exploration, assesment to the use of economic resources to the tune of feasibilities and / or need. It may mean expansion of frontiers of the economic activities. Development also means changes in production techniques, social attitudes and institutions. The whole of building of infrastructures come under development, which ultimately paves way for economic growth, which means definite amount of progress is to be made for increasing income. Development is a terminology generally used for poor countries and growth for rich ones. When there will be orderly development, that means an economic growth. Economic development may or may not have but economic growth has, self-sustained economic growth; country under economic development needs foreign assistance/loan, since it is in the neonate stage for accelerating income, savings, investment, thereby constituting low capital-output ratio. There is demand for writing off of loan from foreign countries, because of incompetence to pay it up.

We in Nepal had macro approach in planning with an emphasis on aggregate growth

economy; even if we have not forsaken the macro and growth model planning, steadily we are now leaning to development and micro level planning<sup>a</sup>, as much we do have leaning towards growth and macro economic planning system, not that the former, the older approach was bad, but it was not feasible because of our own serious limitations. The dualistic economy with a controversy to convert our traditional economy by imported technologies that the developing country constitutes naturally does suffer from this sort of controversy. Complete abandonment of the old socio-economic culture (including administration) in favour of the new one adopted by advanced country has got a benefit of doubt. Kipling's 'Never the twain shall meet' is a grim reminder in this context. Time of the day needs responsiveness on our part as to be quick enough to set developmental things aright within schedule but our situation does not permit us to go beyond our nose. Sometimes we find one step forward, which means two steps backward. So sometimes/somewhere, more so in Nepal, development should be thought of in the national setting than in international setting. We can have quite numerous examples which we have adopted with buoyancy but failed miserably in the end. New Education System Plan and chemical fertilizers were/are introduced but with little mental make-up and follow-up measures. Old system may be stated to have been virtually abandoned but the new one could not take root. Clear failing of trees with no improved farming is another example of national distress, which is definitely different with the case of Rhine River's right hand side of mountains-while going towards Cologne from Frankfurt in W. Germany-either covered by silviculture or horticulture (vine yards). We have forgotten the importance of ascetic life as to promote self-control than self indulgence in matter of population context. Family planning is a palliative measure, not the curative one-it is like taking heavy diet and sulfaguanadines as follow-ups for digestion.

So we have a missing component, say of capital, or of technician, that caused us to invite foreign component to fill up the missing component, which creases a kind of neo-colonial atmosphere paving way for foreign capital and technology. Development trees begin bearing fruits, but because of the trickle downs, rural masses do suffer and people below povertyline (earning less than two rupees a day) increase in figures, both in absolute and percentage.

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2. Nepal has seven integrated rural development projects with a coverage of 22 districts under 7 zones to have an impact on 27 lakh population against an estimated cost of Rs 1,500 millions operating under financial and technical assistances from 6 world (foreign) agencies over and above numerous other area planning approaches including Small Farmers Development Programmes, Co-operatives and Sajha organisations.

Even before we resorted to industrialization, we have invited great influx of people from within and outside nation. This has created mounting garbazes, pollution, traffic jams, delinquent behaviours. There is draining away, both of resources and men, from rural to urban areas, as if our urban areas are developed countries which exploit raw materials of the developing countries to use the same and sell but in a processed form at exorbitant rate. Few urban areas have developed affluence whereas many rural areas have developed poverty. Time has come when—as north against south, developing against developed countries—our rural people should be capable to do themselves. The basic development strategy for our rural poor over and above numerous others, is to meet the basic needs. Availability and production, both of these basic needs will mean the self-contained economic model.

### 3. Our Resources:

**Water**

**Forests**

**Minerals**

**Land**

**Manpower**

**Water:** We are thousands of miles away from sea-ports but the natural endowment comprised by snowy areas of the temperate north has enriched our nation with water supply, which, when harnessed, will irrigate dry land, supply drinking water, generate electricity from innumerable cusecs. And the scope for navigation for some mileage distance should not be ruled out provided management is made just as the Karnali can be the biggest hydro project, similarly, the Narayani <sup>3</sup> can be made useful for navigation to and from Indo-Gangetic area.

Unconfirmed report states that the irrigation facilities under public and private sectors have gone up to 20% of the total cultivated land.

**Forest:** Hard pressed by unlicensed settlers and merciless hewers, it is losing its total commanded areas. And it has come down to 29% from 33% of the total land of the country below. A country with virtually no other power and building resource alternative should have kept it under strict protective measures. <sup>4</sup>

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3. World Bank Report, 1969

4. The present trend makes a gloomy forecast about the total extinction of forest resources by the end of the coming decade. Out of total need of the cooking energy of 196 K.G. per man per annum, forest alone meets 185kg, What will happen, when will we help exhaust our forest resource ?

**Mineral Wealth:** One of the least exploited resources of the country is the mineral wealth, although there are few explorable items. We cannot spare them.

**Land:** The cultivated land has been extended from 168500 hectares in 1962/63 (2018/19) to 2328000 hectares during period of one and half decades.<sup>5</sup> This figure is a bit in high side as compared to figure quoted by HMG'S Economic Survey Report of 1981/82. We have resorted to extensive cultivation with or without increasing returns from the land (For returns, see HMG's Economic Survey Report, 1981/82, Table 2.1).

**Manpower:** We are faced of a paradox of scarcity in the surplus sector. Manpower, quantitatively speaking, is to be regarded as surplus in view of economically dependent. We have unemployment (both open and disguised), more so in our rural front<sup>6</sup> than in urban areas, whereas that of skilled and semi-skilled ones, we have remained deficit in each of the plan periods as worked out by our HMG's N.P.C. As revealed by our Fifth Plan, our requirement of the technical manpower was 24863 against availability of 19975 showing deficit of 4893 and the same kind of forecast has been made about our possible gap between requirement and actual supply during the current Sixth Plan (1987 - 1992 = 3304 number of deficit). HMG's endeavour of preparing manpower by availing pre-service, in-service training orientation, seminars, good workshops, HMG envisages for audio-visual arrangement and demonstration. HMG will start labour training centres at different places, like Dharan, Hetauda, Nepalgunj, Butwal, Mahendranagar, Surkhet, Pokhara, Jhapa, etc.

#### 4 Employment:

On the basis of rural figure quoted above under footnote, percentage of population gainfully employed may be termed as 47% only and that of percentage of gainful employment in urban areas stood at 55% during 1977 (2034). Unless both agriculture and non-agriculture sectors are stepped up for creating additional employment opportunities, the total number of active population growth at the rate of 2.7 % of 1981 as compared to that of 2.3% of 1971 would create a great set back. The agricultural set back continuously for about half a decade might create further dismay in the mind of those whose job is not wholly limited to agriculture. This half-hearted group might be in search of non-agricultural jobs. Similarly the marginal farmers too might affect the job markets. The

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5. I. L. O. - ARTEP, **Employment And Basic Needs In Nepal: A Preliminary Analysis of problem and policies**, S.S.E. and East Asia, Bangkok, March, 1982.
  6. HMG'S N.P.C. has found out that 63 % of the rural working population is not gainfully employed.

non-employment sectors would be hard pressed by marginal and half-hearted farmers. The question is: will it be possible for the nation to create alternative jobs outside agriculture? If we cannot, we should strengthen agriculture sector itself but by intensive cultivation measures by pumpsets, tubewells and canal system. The progress undone during the previous plans may not be done during the present plan period only; so it will be a Herculean task for of all us to absorb our growing but surplus labour.

### 5. Impact of Population Growth on Defferent Sectors :

Before we come to policy measures taken by HMG, let us first analyse population growth<sup>7</sup> and its impacts on different socio-economic sectors of the county. New but palpitative demographic trend is in the stage of making. Time for doubling population is coming much nearer, nearer than presumably estimated figure of 30 years. If we compare doubling time of 60 years (during 1911-1971) against the grim picture of 27 years from 1981 onwards, we find the picture of contrast, unfortunately.

Demographers should come to a firm conclusion regarding the causes of such a massive increase and prescribe measures to curb the problems very judiciously. Possible reasons behind may be mentioned as failure family planning measures, cowardice administrative policy to curb against coming of unwanted elements to Nepal, or both.

### Some Projections

| Subjects           | Period |       |      |       |
|--------------------|--------|-------|------|-------|
|                    | 1971   | 1977  | 1981 | 1986  |
| a. Density         | 81     | 91    | 102  | 114   |
| b. Life Expectancy | 42.5   | 45.0  | 47.5 | 50.0  |
| c. Crude B/R       | 42.87  | 40.0  | 38.5 | 38.64 |
| d. Crude D/R       | 22.80  | 19.84 | 18.4 | 18.34 |

| 7. | Population in million | Average annual growth Rate.          |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
|    | 1920 - 5.57           | -0.1                                 |
|    | 1930 - 5.53           | -0.1                                 |
|    | 1944 - 6.28           | +1.2                                 |
|    | 1952/54 - 8.47        | +2.3                                 |
|    | 1961 - 9.41           | +1.6                                 |
|    | 1971 - 11.55          | +2.1                                 |
|    | 1981 - 15.00          | +2.6 (now firm figure stands at 2.7) |

(Sources : HMG's N.P.C. and Central Bureau of Statistics.)

Note: Projected figures specially on B.R., D.R. may not be very much reliable in the changed context as revealed by population census report of 1981. Again the figures quoted in the Vikash,<sup>8</sup> A Journal of Development, published by HMG, N.P.C. Secretariat, seem to be still different. So variations of big margin cannot be ruled out.

#### Other Sectors.

1. **Agriculture:** Land under agriculture in 1980 was 19.3% and land-man ratio was 1 : 0.196 hectare which will go down to 1:0.8 hectare by 1985. Food grain deficit will increase from 0.7 million metric tons in 1980 to 1.0 million metric tons by 1985, but the declining agricultural production trend may reveal further aggravation than what was estimated.

2. **Forests :** Density in forest area : 374 in 1980

3. **Labour Force :** It will swell up by 1.3 million in 1985

4. **Education :** Number of primary school going children in 1979/80 was 1.2 million. This figure is likely to go up to 2 million in 1985

5. **Health :** There will be steady improvement in terms of doctor, patients per hospital and per health post.

6. **Urbanization :** urban population will increase from 5.8 % of total population of 1980 to 6.8 % in 1985.

#### 6. Population Movement :

One of the growing demographic problems is of population movement in and out of Nepal. People going out of the hills and mountains to Terai outnumber the people coming from Terai to mountains and hills. pressure from rural areas to urban areas is also slowly increasing.

Even if figures quoted by CBS during 1974/75 indicate favourable picture, with reference to immigration (in-migration) and emigration (out-migration), the population growth rate of the Terai region during 1981 was 4.2 %. There is no reason why Terai region could have this sort of alarming rate of population growth without having immigration and emigration component.

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8. Vikash : A Journal of Development, Appendix II, Vol. 4, No. 1, N.P.C. Secretariat, Nepal, 1981 (2038).

The internal movements from hills and mountains to Terai can be checked if the hills and mountains are developed in a self-sustained basis. The second problem arising out of emigration needs to be tackled only in consonance with the Indian Government, because controlling oneself is meaningless if we are overpowered by foreigners.

### 7. Central Development Region<sup>9</sup> Scenario :

This is like an ever-growing area because of its own socio-political administrative importance. Not only that it has been a place of our central authority but it had been constantly nourished by cultural and architectural technocrats too for centuries. Now it has been a centre of learning because more than fifty percent of the total campuses, are located in this area. This region could bag the highest number of tourists for sight-seeing and trekking towards the snow-capped Himalayas. The Panchayat system believes in decentralization of politico-economic and administrative powers and much energetic water has flown to this direction, but because of security, creation of infrastructure, amenities, prospects of trade, including export trade, this area is growing, much beyond expectations. So to say, alarming situation has been developed in bazar streets, in hospitals. Hundreds, thousands of new buildings have incessantly come up despite acute shortage of the building materials and sky rocketing price of the land. The Kathmandu scenario (in view of its increasing garbages, congested drainage, swarming pedestrians, traffic jams with accidents, trickling water taps, shops and pedlars at every vantage point.....) is awfully horrible. The cleaners even with vehicles could not keep streets moderately clean. The industrial monopoly enjoyed by eastern sector has now come to Hetauda, Patan, Kathmandu of this region.

These have fast added in population from 3865753 in 2031 (1974) to 4915907 in 2038 (1981). Now this area constitutes 32.73%<sup>10</sup> of the total population, almost like one - third. Strong administrative steps alone, with follow-ups of economic measures and policies, will help develop decentralisation in the real sense.

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9. Eight years ago this region comprised of 28250 sq. km. with 19 districts having density of 137 per sq.k.m. (1.37 per hectare) : HMG, Ministry of Communication, Development of information, HMG'S Press, Kathmandu, 2031.

10. This figure is very much different while compared with 4.65% of Eastern Development Region, 20.88% of Western Development Region, 13.01% of Mid-Western Region and 8.73% of Far Western Region : Source : HMG, CRS, 1981,



The urban density cannot be ignored since 54% of the total urban population falls only in this region against national average of 6 %.

Persons per hectare of cultivated (during 1974/75) land in this region were 12.44, in mountains, 10.76 in hills, 3.84 in terai against Nepal's 6.31.

Even if it is not much unnatural to expect an influx of big number of people in the periphery of the capital of the country, it needs encounter before it becomes too late for solution. Socio-politico-economic factors are responsible for such an unbalanced dispersal of the population.

#### **8. Steps to Encounter : Allied Subjects of Demography:**

What we have made a forecast regarding demographic trends in Nepal has all been found superseded by CBS' report on population census in 1981 - forecast has remained at low side, actuals have been at high side. If demographic forecast does not tally with the actual, there is a major difference between economic development promises and performances. Both of these amply make it clear that the implementing agency does not comply with the dire necessity of the society.

In this context, we try to draw outlines of the two sectors (1) Economic impact projects, termed as special economic programme; (2) Demographic and institutional organisations.

**Special Economic Programme** has been recently introduced by HMG in view of immediate need of the development of the core sectors of the economy on the basis of directives issued by His Majesty in the last year. The main idea behind this programme is first to counter the frustration among the mass caused by big gap between plan promises and plan performances, diminishing returns of land, immoral trends developed in trade sector and to inculcate confidence, to avail opportunity to have better use of resources, thereby increase employment opportunities. Special endeavour will be made to equip society with basic minimum needs. Government sector aims to have further progress in cement, clothing, sugar, paper. So the new economic programme will try to regulate delinquent habit of the people having adverse effect on the economy, over and above its production and distribution programmes. Monitoring and evaluation of and follow-up measures in development will be further strengthened.

And the one which is equally an important constituent of HMG's recent special economic programme is: **to control over population growth and migration.**

**Demographic and Institutional Organisations:** (1) It has been growingly realised by important sectors of the government that places having high population growth rate and that women (under 20 - 39 years) with high fertility be served with family planning services; (2) to have a check on migration from hills/mountains to Terai, HMG is trying to go ahead with availability of basic of minimum needs to economically hazardous and difficult areas; (3) there is also an attempt towards mobilization of women community and also keeping this community at high esteem as to curb the growth rate; (4) HMG is also trying to bring co-ordination and good harmony among the population agencies to have a concerted action; (5) There is also a vigorous attempt to introduce population education (both formal and non-formal) at different levels of education and society. Numerous Sajha organisations embracing different socio-economic objectives are found engaged in this stupendous task of declaring moral war to achieve low fertility at village level; (6) Search and research works are being undertaken both by students and teachers. HMG's Population Commission and Tribhuvan University's Research Centre are some of the organisations which we can quote in this context. (7) Development of urban centers under urbanisation programme is under consideration. The programme aims at speedy development of family planning organisation, health posts, local skills and technologies as to have strong grip over increasing population. It may either have a check against or regulation of migration. Planned resettlement is another constituent of urbanisation. Recent trend to convert hills and mountains as deserted areas in favour of pressurising Terai is also likely to be tackled, to some extent, by this urbanisation programme.

Some social organisations have sprung up with objectives to help develop population control measures. These organisations are backed by our own government and by our foreign agencies too. They have under their purview the programme to extend facilities of population education, family planning, child and maternal welfare, etc. Really they have significant role in view of growing density, increasing fertility, fast nearing time to doubling population.

**Women's Organisations:** Women's Affairs Training Centres (WATC), Nepal Women's Organisation (NMO), Women's Service Co-ordination Committee and (WSSC) Mothers' Club. These organisations aim at making rural people aware in matters of socio-economic problems.

**Other Organisations:** Agricultural Development Bank, Nepal (ADB/N), Small Farmers Development Programme (SFCP), Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDPS), Co-operatives and Sajhas, Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN), Centre For Economic

Development And Administration (CEDA), etc. All these, except CEDA and FPAN, deal with the rural people.

**Foreign agencies** taking interest in family planning are: United States, Agency For International Development (USAID), United Nations Fund For Population Activities (UNFPA), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), Integrated Community Health Project (ICHP), Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc. Over and above other functions, they also aim at imparting population education to the organised sector or through Panchyats, co-operatives, etc.

**Non-Governmental Organisations** are: International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Save Children's Fund, Britain-Nepal Trust, etc. These organisations also include family planning components, including monetary and service assistances to our Nepalese organisations.

The tasks of these numerous organisations are stupendous. Their sphere of influence, their functions, their effectiveness in matters of demographic control need review, evaluation, monitoring for channelising them to the goal of population control as to frustrate the gloomy demographic forecasts. In 1977, His Majesty, the King, established by law the Social Service National Co-ordination Council (SSNCC). This organisation is chaired by Her Majesty the Queen, of Nepal. So, we hope, for promoting precautionary measures to deal with the population problems confronting Nepal.

#### **Summary Report:**

1. Development of the national economy, lagging behind adverse demographic trends, has lopsided our development achievements.
2. Initial macro approach planning has been accompanied by micro approach, too, because of introduction of Integrated Rural Development Projects.
3. Creation of responsiveness in matters of development programmes is the need of the hour.
4. In matters of resources, forest is being fast depleted, minerals remain mostly unexploited, land suffers from diminishing returns, manpower needs training for its absorption in the economy, water is either least used by us or misused or drained away by the foreign agency. Still their potentiality has not dried up; it can be revived to a blooming stage within a period of, say, fifty years, provided we are careful of our future generations and step up

measures accordingly, with participation by all concerned people and agencies. Employment of unskilled labourers cannot be increased unless we take up special measures in their favour, whereas there has always been shortage of junior or senior technicians to the tune of national requirement.

5. Impact of population growth on national economy is, though adverse, can be mended by using double edged razor-massive economic development and massive family planning measures, backed by population law, social guarantees against ill-effects of family planning.
6. Migratory character in context of in-migration has damaged the balancing of Hill-Terai distribution of population because of desperately slow economic development in hills and mountains. We can just imagine fate of the hills and mountains whose able-bodied people have come down to low level plains of the Terai<sup>11</sup>, causing hilly land to become almost barren.
7. Not less serious is the emigration / immigration because of our economic weakness and aggressive design of the non-Nepalese.
8. Scenario of the Central Development Region: of the five regions, this one has a kind of aggressive design to attract population, because of its socio-economic, political factors. Decentralization alone can help to mitigate increasing hurdles of population influx.
9. Even if dozens of social organisations have sprung up in this course of generating consciousness in family planning, they need frequent reviews, evaluation as to direct their energy for population control.
10. We are stunned when we see increasing number of food deficit areas—they have increased from 17 in 1960 to 38 districts in 1972.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Amatya, Madan Man, The Effect of Resettlement And Internal Migration In Nepal on Its Population, Family Planning Programmes, 1979.

12. Ibid.