

Women's Role in Nepal in General and Population Control in Particular -- An Assessment

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"The basis for an effective solution of population problems is, above all, socio-economic transformation."

(World Population Plan of Action, Bucharest, 1974).

1. BACKGROUND

Male and female elements are naturally present not only in human being but also in animal and plant world. In the animal and plant world the growth of number is governed by two opposite tendencies: the tendency to propagate their species and the struggle for life existence. But in human world alone the conflict of two opposing tendencies is complicated by other factors. They are: regard for the future which induces to control their natural impulses and the pressure of society on the individuals by religion, moral and legal sanctions for quickening or retarding the growth of population (Marshall: 1974). Hence a regular ebb and flow of the opinion and state-policy have been observed as to encourage or discourage the growth of population. However, a highly negative consequences of high rate of population growth has been experienced by the developing countries. Hence, all most all the developing countries, now, are implementing population control policies of their own. The impact of population distribution was noted in the First Five Year Plan (1956-61) of Nepal. However, it has only in the Third Plan (1965-70) the family planning programme was included in the national plan, for the first time in 1965, aiming at reducing the birth rate and bringing a balance between population and production (HMG/N, Third Plan 1965). Since that time, both in governmental and nongovernmental levels family planning programme was initiated to reduce the growth of population. After a lapse of time, it was realized that family planning alone is not enough and that it is necessary to tackle the determinants of fertility behaviour also. At present the integration of population and development programmes has been recognised as a basic approach to find a solution to this problem. Despite the efforts made to solve the population problem during the three decades of planned development in Nepal, the gap between population growth and the absorptive capacity of the economy is growing ever wider. Hence, more efforts are to be made and new methods are to be designed to combat with the present growth rate of population and to improve the quality of life of the population.

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~~Natural division between male and female has been considered indivisible.~~
 pensable for the propagation, maintenance and development of mankind. In our society men and women are considered to be part and parcel to each other. Hence, male and female both are essential for the well functioning of human life and society, without an active and deliberate participation of both sexes no political and socio-economic programmes can succeed. It is in this context an attempt has been made to analyse women's role in population control and achievement made so far. Women's participation in various sectors has been presented in the first part. The relationship between women and population programme along with the women's role has been presented in the second part, followed by the conclusion in the third part.

2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

2.1 Women's Participation in National Labour Force

The census of 1971 exhibits 50.3 percent males and 49.7 percent females population make the total population of Nepal. According to the 1981 census, it was 50.59 percent for male and 49.4 percent for female. It clearly shows that the population of male and female is near to equal. It indicates that population control programme, like other socio-economic programmes, cannot be made successful until and unless we actively mobilize about fifty percent of the total population i.e., women population. The shape and participation rates of labour force on the basis of census of 1971 and 1981 is presented in Table 1.

Table No. 1
Labour Force and the Participation Rate 1971-1981

	1971	1981
1. Population 10 years and above		
- male	4,140,624	5,387,614
- female	4,037,817	5,130,274
- total	8,178,441	10,517,888
2. Population Economically Active		
- male	3,434,288	4,479,944
- female	1,418,236	2,370,942
- total	4,852,524	6,850,886
3. Labour Force Participation Rate	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
- male	82.90	83.10
- female	35.10	46.20
- total	59.30	65.10

Source: The Seventh Plan (1985-1990).

The table shows that the population of 10 years and above between 1971 and 1981 increased by 2.329 million of which 2 million is economically active. Labour force participation increased to 65.10 percent in 1981 from 59.30 percent in 1971. Participation rate of women population increased more remarkably than the participation rate of the male population. Women participation rate increased to 46.20 percent in 1981 from 35.10 percent in 1971. However, it still underestimates the actual economic activity rate of the female population in Nepal (Acharya Meena, 1979). Increased participation of the female population has been recognised as the effect of improvement in the education standard and social status of women. Now turn to analyse women's participation in different sectors.

2.2 Women's Participation in Different Occupation

Table No. 2 shows the women's work participation in different occupation.

Table No. 2
Economically Active Population by Major Occupation
(10 years and above)

Occupation	Population	Male	Female
	6,850,886	4,479,944	2,370,942
1. Prof. Technical workers	64,132 (0.93)	53,465 (1.19)	10,667 (0.44)
2. Administrative workers	6,232 (0.09)	5,820 (0.12)	412 (0.01)
3. Clerical workers	49,161 (0.71)	46,307 (1.03)	2,854 (0.12)
4. Service workers	16,420 (0.23)	14,053 (0.31)	2,377 (0.10)
5. Sale workers	85,341 (1.24)	72,863 (1.62)	12,478 (0.52)
6. Farm/fish workers	62,59,613 (91.36)	3,982,139 (88.88)	2,277,474 (96.05)
7. Period/labour workers	213,851 (3.12)	172,782 (3.85)	41,069 (1.73)
8. Occupation not stated	156,126 (2.27)	132,515 (2.95)	23,611 (0.99)
Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.			

Source: Population Census, 1981
Geographic Region Tables Vol. II
CBS, Kathmandu, Nepal, 1984.

The table shows that 91.36 percent of the economically active population was engaged in agriculture. Taking the female population separately, 96.05 of the total female population was engaged in the same occupation; and 1.73 percent on productive work and less than one percent in other occupations. It also indicates that the participation by women in agricultural occupation was more than men, in Nepal.

2.3 Women's Participation in Agricultural Sector

The backbone of Nepalese economy is still rural and agricultural. The role of women in agriculture is equally important as men. As noted above more than 96 percent of the female working population depends upon agriculture. The work patterns vary between different communities and also between different parts of the country because of various religions and ethnic-origins.

According to the census of 1981 the percentage of female working population was only 37.78 percent in the mountain region, 40.09 percent in the Hill region and 25.39 percent in the Terai region out of the total working population of the respective regions. Taking female population separately, 97.95 percent, 97.18 percent and 92.80 percent were engaged in agriculture in Mountain, Hill and Terai region respectively. The percentages of male population engaged in agriculture were 94.56 percent, 91.49 percent and 86.89 percent in the respective regions (Population Census, 1981: 393, 399, 405). However some of the studies show that the female participation rate recorded in the census underestimates the actual economic participation. This may be due to the definition of economic and non-economic activity.

Schozoders (1979) study of Batulechaur in Pokhara concludes that in much of Hindu Nepal, women do more agricultural work than men even though ploughing in most of Nepal is a male job. He writes:

Women are responsible for the greater share of the agricultural work as well as far care of children, up keep of the family home, and the preparing, cooking and serving of meals. Men are free from most of the respective tasks, that must be done daily and men have pressing agricultural work to do only during peak seasons.

(Schrocders: 181)

They found that most arduous tasks and most of the time-consuming tasks are done by women. The labour input of men is large at peak seasons, i.e., at the time of planting, ploughing and harvesting; outside of these peak seasons men are free from pressing agricultural work. Women are also heavily worked during the peak seasons. In addition to it, they are responsible for much of the remaining tasks.

John T. Hitchcock's (1966) study of Magars in Western Nepal found complementarity of work between the sexes. He observed that most of the tasks can be done either by men or women or men and women together.

Macfarlane (1976) in his study of Gurungs observes, "There is very little division of labour among the Gurungs. Most work is done in groups containing both men and women. There are very few tasks which may not be done by either sexes" (Macfarlane: 112).

The same is true with Limbus of Eastern Nepal. Both men and women work side by side in the field. There is traditional division of labour between the sexes (Caplan, 1970), (Jones and Jones, 1976).

In Terai women's participation has been considered to be lower than in Hills, but substantial.

To sum up, most of the tasks done by women in rural Nepal are: collecting, protecting and choosing of seeds, smashing clods, hauling and spreading manure, sowing seeds, transplanting saplings, weeding, harvesting and grinding. In addition to it growing vegetables, raising domestic animals, washing cloths, carrying water, cooking food, cleaning cookware, feeding and milking animals, and collecting and carrying firewood are also to be done by women. Besides women have to look after their children. It clearly shows women's substantial participation in almost all kinds of works in Nepal. C.J. Wake writes:

More than in the West, Nepali women are equal bread-winners with their husbands in some parts of the country. They may work harder in the field as well as in the home than men.

(Wake, 1980: 155)

2.4 Women's Participation in Education

Literacy rate manifests the educational status of a country. Education is crucial to disseminate knowledge, views and ideas and to bring about a change in politico-socio-economic attitude of human being. The literacy rate of Nepal, as recorded in different censuses presented in Table No. 3.

The table indicates that the literacy rate for both men and women has increased during the periods. Male literacy rate has increased from 16.36 percent in 1961 to 33.96 percent in 1991, in the same period the literacy rate for female increased 1.76 percent in 1961 to 12.0 percent in 1981. The table also indicates the widened disparity in literacy rate between sexes during the intercensal periods. It shows the large disparity between male and female literacy rate and manifests limited access to women education in Nepal. The educational status of rural women is more deplorable.

Table No. 3
Literacy Rate of Nepal

	1961			1971			1981		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Male	57.10	14.62	16.36	61.57	22.94	24.72	62.00	32.92	34.90
Female	19.28	1.14	1.76	26.41	2.71	3.66	37.45	9.84	11.5
Overall	29.73	7.68	8.92	45.85	12.91	14.32	-	-	23.5

Sources: (a) The analysis of the population statistics of Nepal, 1977.

(b) Population Census 1981, Geographic Region, Tables Vol. II.

The female enrollment at primary education in F.Y. 1979/80 was 26.7 percent of the total student enrollment. The figure rose to 28.8 percent in 1983/84. The female enrollment at lower secondary school was 20 percent in F.Y. 1979/80 and 23.9 percent in F.Y. 1984/85. The female enrollment at secondary level was 17.9 percent and 21.8 percent for the same fiscal years (The Seventh Plan: 741-2).

The dropout rate in school education is quite high in Nepal. About 50 percent of the students leaves school before completing the Class I. A report taken in 1975 states that out of 100 students admitted in Class I only 7.6 goes up to Class X. The drop out among girls is estimated to be more due to socio-economic reasons. The record is poorest in the Terai and Western Hills, where women are said to work harder than men.

The same is true for higher education. The female enrollment rate in higher education was 20 percent in 1980/81 and 21.5 percent in 1984/85. All these indicates lower priority given to female education in household expenditure.

2.5 Women's Participation in Political Activities

The term political activity refers to the running of the state by voting, i.e. to elect or to be elected, and holding public offices. Women's participation in political side appears to be very marginal.

The few number of women holding decision making high posts either in governmental or non-governmental offices show the low participation of women in political activities.

The previous analysis shows that women participate equally in agricultural activities, more than men in household activities, but beyond if women participate proportionately less than men. This is due to the presence of superstition, illiteracy and poverty prevailing in the Nepalese society. People in Nepal still believe in the concept that women in childhood should be under the guardianship of parents, after marriage under the guardianship of husband and at old-age under the guardianship of son/sons. This manifests the old concept: "males are better than females" which has been handed down through many centuries. This is due to this concept and belief that most of the laws, rules and regulation of social and cultural life are constituted in favour of men, exploiting the women. After the political change in 1951 steps have been taken to treat men and women equal. The major change in law took place after the introduction of 'New Civil Code' in 1963. The constitution of Nepal states that "no discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe or any of them" (The Constitution of Nepal, 1976). However, due to backwardness illiteracy, superstition, and age-old social normal and socio-cultural barriers equality before law has no substantial meaning. In reality the female sex has not been treated equally. However, it has been realised now that women's participation is crucial in the process of social and economic development of Nepal of which population programme is one of the important part of it.

3. WOMEN AND POPULATION CONTROL

Demographers have explained three elements related to an increase in population growth rate. They are: birth rate, death rate and migration. It has been recognised that the main reasons for the fast growth of population in recent years is due to the high birth rate and declining death rate. The crude birth rate is estimated to be 41.5 per thousand. According to the census, 1981, the fertility rate of women is 6.3. The fertility rate in the age bracket 25-29 is high; that between 20-24 is still higher. The fertility rate of rural women is higher than of urban women. At present the fertility rate is estimated to be 6.1. During the last few years, due to the effect of different development activities and specially due to the extension of medical facility and health consciousness, death rate has dropped remarkably. Now the crude death rate is 16.57 per thousand. Likewise child mortality rate has come down to 115.2 per thousand (the Seventh Plan 1985: 165). The birth rate is still high the death rate falling and migration uncontrolled are the major characteristics of population in Nepal. The major policy to control the population growth rate is to reduce the fertility rate along with to control and manage the migration problem. In accordance with the long term perspective of the national population policy. The seventh plan aim's at to scale down the fertility rate to 4.0 by the end of the seventh plan. Various factors influence the fertility rate and women play an important role in utilizing and determining the various factors.

3.1 Factors Influencing the Fertility Rate and Women

Various factors influence fertility rates and opinions differ, most of the available information suggests that the major factors influencing

fertility are: high infant and child mortality, low female education, lack of women's participation in gainful activities, continued importance of and reliance on children and especially sons, mass poverty and family planning maternity and child care programme.

3.1.1 High Infant Mortality Rate

High infant mortality rate is considered to be one of the constraints for achieving small family size. "There is a two-way relationship between the level of infant and child mortality and fertility" (Brown and et al, 1982:97). Higher the infant mortality rate higher/e will be the birth order. Hence high birth order is one of the factors associated with high infant mortality rate. And a decrease in fertility through reduction in the proportion of high parity births can decrease infant mortality rate. It has been observed that early child death curtails the period of breast feeding and, therefore, shortens the birth intervals. Conversely, a decrease in infant mortality can suppress current fertility by increasing the duration of breast feeding. Full breast feeding and frequent suckling are considered to be the good guarantees that resumption of menstruation will be delayed. Failure to menstruate is a good, but not an absolute, guarantee against pregnancy, about 93 percent of women will not conceive without having resumed menstruation. (The World Bank, 1984). Besides breast feeding also avoids the considerable risks connected with bottle feeding. Some mother's prefer bottle feeding because they lack guidance and information about the health benefits of breast feeding, and they believe bottle feeding is more 'modern'.

When the infant mortality rate is high parents may feel the need to have many babies to be sure that a few survive, where boys are more important-parents need to have at least five children to be sure that one can survive.

Many births may increase the probability of infant deaths by weakening both mothers and babies. Thus, high infant mortality rate, pushes upward to fertility rate, on the one hand, and reduction in fertility rate will bring about reduction in infant mortality rate via better child care. In addition to it, reduced infant mortality rate would change parent's perceptions about the general level of mortality in the society and would thus decrease the fertility in the long run.

3.1.2 Female Literacy and Education

The level of female education in many developing countries has been shown to be negatively associated with fertility. "The observed relationship between education and fertility is the net result of effects of education in the age at marriage, the use of contraception and the duration of breast feeding." (Brown et al, 1982:99). It has been observed that the demand for children decreases with the advancement in female education. Studies show that "educating women makes a greater difference than does educating men in reducing family size." (The World Bank, 1984: 110). The negative influence on fertility of female education are explained by two competing hypotheses.

First, educational attainment increases a women's chance to participate in the paid labour force in the modern sector. A potential trade off may be created between time spent of child bearing and rearing and economic gain perceived from working in the modern sector. This trade off is likely to exert downward pressure on individual fertility.

But education in the absence of increase in opportunities to participate in the modern sector may not create downward pressure on individual fertility.

Second, education enhances a women's status within and outside the immediate family and increase their chances to be exposed to mass media and especially to printed materials; which broaden their horizon and bring about a change in their outlook and behaviour including fertility.

Studies of some developing countries have evidenced that women with primary schooling have slightly higher fertility than women with no education; and fertility declines monotonically as mother's education increases above primary schooling (Cochrane, 1980). The more education for girls would raise the marriage age for women, and the age at marriage has a substantial influence in the mean number of children born to women of child bearing age.

Fertility patterns show that educated women are more likely to know of and use contraceptives.

3.1.3 Status and Role of Women in Making Economic Decisions

High status and greater role of women in making economic decisions are likely to contribute to a downward trend in fertility. Many decisions related to various aspects of life such as allocation of resources for consumption, saving and investment in the development of human resources are made at the household level. Hence, where women are involved in such decisions they are more likely than men to investment in the development of human resources.

Women's involvement in gainful economic activities and control over financial resources would increase their relative role and power within and outside the household. Therefore, women's involvement in gainful employment and control over financial resources is likely to reduce fertility.

Bouge, an authority in demography, writes, "Whether as cause or effect, women who are employed full time have very low fertility rates, while those who are not in the labour force have above average rates" (Bouge, 1968:719). Thus such measures creating employment potential for women and increasing their access to credit, marketing and other means of production would promote their participation in gainful employment, and enhance their access to and control over financial resources, which in turn, would decrease their subsequent fertility.

3.1.4 Continued Importance and Reliance on Children

Parents get pleasure from children. But children involve costs - time and money for bringing them up. They are also a form of investment providing short term benefits if they work during childhood long term benefits, if they support parents in old age. Thus, the demand for children is assumed to be determined by the balance between the total 'cost' and benefit of children to parents. The word 'total cost' includes not only the perceived economic costs but also social and psychological cost to parents and the expected benefits derived by them. In-developing countries like Nepal benefits derived from children are usually higher than the costs involved in raising them.

In Nepal, wages for women are low and the difference between the children's and mother's earning is little; income lost by the mother during a child's infancy may be easily recopped by the child later on. "Nepalese village boys and girls of six to eight years work three to four hours a day carrying for farm animals and helping with younger siblings" (The World Bank, 1984:51). In addition to it if they are girls they have to help with household chores like carrying water, washing cloths and gathering firewood. The developed countries, by contrast, children do not contribute much to household chores and income as they grow up. In costs guide, the cost of raising children in developed countries rises as a result of increased educational and employment opportunities for women, or a rise in school fees or restriction on child labour etc. Like in other underdeveloped countries the cost of raising children in Nepal has been considered to be low and the demand for children in Nepalese society has not diminished.

The micro-economics of family fertility leads to the conclusion that a decrease in benefits including utility of children and, or an increase in cost of raising them would lead to decline in the demand for children and a subsequent reduction in fertility.

Sons in Nepalese society, preferred for economic and non-economic reasons. Sons are essential to perform religious rite; they are essential to preserve the line of posterity. Besides, there are social and psychological factors that necessitate a son. Parents want to have at least one surviving son by the time they reach old age. Women having no son are humiliated, and in some cases restricted, to join at some of the religious ceremonies. There is a belief among Nepalese folk that those who have a son or sons can only enter into heaven.

In addition to it sons are seen as insurance against old age security. Thus is natural for, old and disabled persons due to lack of safe alternatives in an under developed country like Nepal.

Thus, where sons are more important parents need to have at least 5 children to be sure that one son survives. And many births may increase the probability of infant death by weakening both mother and babies. In Nepalese society, daughters are considered to be the property of others and parents have, usually, no obligation to daughters, in the same manner, daughters have no obligation to parents, for these reasons sons are preferred against daughters.

3.1.5 Age at Marriage

Marriage is not only socially sanctioned initiation of sexual activity and child bearing for women but also a ritual rite, and has been considered as one of the duties of parents. Child marriage arranged by parents, is still common in some communities, though it is prohibited by Muluki Ain. At present the minimum age at marriage, with the consent of parents or guardian is fixed 16 years for girls and 18 for boys; and 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys, without the consent of the parents or guardian (Muluki Ain, 2038:235). Nearly 90 percent boys and girls marry before 24 years of age and all most all boys and girls marry in between 25 to 30 years of age. The resultant effect of these marriages is 3 to 4 children at the age of 30. Age bracket 25 to 30 has been considered to be the most fertile period in women's life. The mean age at marriage for men and women in Nepal, according to 1981 census, were 20.7 and 17.2 respectively. The mean age at marriage for a Nepalese rural men was 20.6 and for urban men was 22.5. The corresponding figures for women were 17.1 and 18.5 for rural and urban women respectively. It shows that the mean age at marriage was higher in urban than in rural areas. A study indicated that by increasing the mean age at marriage for females up to 21 years, the growth rate of the population may be reduced to 1.8 percent.

3.1.6 High Poverty

The people of Nepal are poor. People of the rural Nepal are poorer. The standard living of the people is very low. About 42 percent of the Nepalese people live below the poverty line. The relationship between poverty and fertility can be demonstrated by the observed association between fertility measures and per capita monthly expenditure. Persistence of low economic condition and high poverty can influence fertility through various mechanisms including a demand for more children, high infant and child mortality rate, the lack of accessibility to contraceptive methods among poor people. Thus, the eradication of poverty may be considered as one of the important measures to reduce fertility rate. Does it not indicate that "development is a best pill"?

3.1.7 Family Planning and Maternal Child Health Care Programme

Family Planning and Maternal Child Health care programme affects fertility rate directly. It has been observed that fertility declined in the countries where governments are committed to population control programmes and encouraged family planning and maternal child health care programme. The family planning programme was introduced first by Nepal Family Planning Association, a non-governmental organisation in 1958. Its services were limited and confined to Kathmandu Valley only. In the governmental level His Majesty's Government included family planning programme only in the Third Plan (1965-70) by including a chapter on "Population and Manpower." His Majesty's Government of Nepal created a semi-autonomous board called Nepal Family Planning and Maternal Child Health Board in 1968. Since then family planning and maternal child health care services are provided by the FP/MCH project in Nepal. At

present, the project provides family planning and maternal child health care services in 52 districts.

In addition to it there are more than 23 organisations dealing with family planning activities. According to Contraceptive Prevalence Survey 1981, 50 percent of the married women within 15 to 49 age bracket had knowledge about the family planning services: and 34 percent of them wished to use the family planning devices, whereas only 7 percent of them used the family planning devices. The number of women using family planning devices regularly was estimated to be lower than that. The mean age of people using temporary device was 30 years. And couples were found to use temporary devices after having 2 to 3 children, and those accepting sterilization normally had 4 to 5 children prior to sterilization. The number of women using temporary or permanent means of birth control within the age bracket 15-49 has only about 9 percent in 1984 (Economic Survey, 1984-85:77). They indicate the ineffective coverage and low participation of people in the family planning programme in Nepal. Hence men's outlook, efforts and means are to be designed and applied to make the programme successful.

4. POLICY IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

In addition to the factors explained above there are many other factors concerned with fertility behaviour-biological, social, psychological and institutional. Whatsoever, participation by an individual either of male or female only cannot contribute to check the population growth rate. In fact, decisions are made in family. Family is composed of both male and female sexes. It has been realised that until and unless women's get an equal opportunity, in the real sense, in the decision making process in a family, the decision will be not only partial but will be ineffective to mobilize and utilize the resources meant for population control. At the same time, family decisions are influenced by socio-economic environment and the government's policy and programme at large. In reality, government policy and programmes can change and shape the socio-economic environment contributing the factors that check population growth.

Government decision may be grouped into: (a) policy and laws, (b) public spending and (c) tax programme. The first is related with such policy and laws that affect minimum age at marriage, breast feeding, status of women, children education etc. The second is concerned with government spending programmes in education, primary health care, family planning, old age security, incentive for the fertility control activities etc. And the third is concerned with tax discrimination programmes such as family allowance, and user fees for large families. All these decisions contribute to change socio-economic environment and family decision relating to fertility consequently late marriage, acceptance of family planning devices, employment of women in gainful occupation outside home will become a normal matter, and hereby contributed to the population control programme.

"The women of Nepal have not been able to fully take part in the development activities because of their lack of education, ignorance, and poverty. The superstition prevalent in the society and negative thinking have been major obstacles in mobilising women participate" (The Seventh Plan, 1985:282). This statement is still true. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate women's activities in one hand, and it is also essential to widen the limited opportunity for women to participate in the decision making process of the nation, on the other hand. Male and female both are equally responsible for the household management and thereby in all sphere of life. It has been recognised that the impact of mother upon children will be more than that of the father. Hence it is essential to mobilise the women population for the effective implementation of the population control programme. It is said, "To educate a woman is to educate a family."

One of the major objective of population policy is to reduce mortality rate and especially infant and child mortality rate. It is essential to provide pure drinking water, nutritive food, maternity and child care, opportunity for health and family planning services and population education to reduce the mortality rate.

Another major objective of the population policy is to reduce fertility rate. Equal access to education for women, (technical and vocational) equal opportunity for employment along with some reserved quota for women also are the need of the time to make women's participation more effective.

It is also essential to change our traditional and social norms that prefer a boy over a girl. Measures should be taken to bring attitudinal change on this question.

Minimum basic needs must be fulfilled and programmes relating to increase production must be designed in an effective manner, at the same time, justifiable distributive system must be implemented.

All these activities affect fertility and thereby help to control population programme. Emphasis should be on developmental activities. Family planning and maternity and child care programme should be implemented more effectively to reduce fertility rate. The working area of the family planning programme is still urban centres of the country. Health and family planning service are not only nominal but lacks every thing, even in the urban centres, from public service point of view. Dedication and honesty are still lacking in every sphere of society.

Besides, to raise minimum age at marriage, legal abortion with the consent of couple, social security and clear cut migration policy are the important areas to be dealt with by population programme.

Lastly, it is necessary to reduce political socio-economic disparity between sexes. At present, it will be a leap forward if we could implement the policy of women's participation in development as stated in the seventh plan and national population strategy developed by

National Commission on Population. Firm belief, determination and dedication are needed to translate the programme into reality. Now, it is high time to recognise that 'most of the poor are women. Most of the unemployed are also women's most of the women are illiterate.' The majority of the undernourished are also women. The majority of women are not represented in important assemblies. Where decisions on development are taken.' And majority of the women are not benefitted by the developmental activities of the nation. Thus it is essential to change our perception and attitude, and also essential to break the monopoly of male population not only in holding political and monopoly power but also in monopolising knowledge power to ensure and promote full participation by women in developmental activities including population control programme.

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