

Demographic transition

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Demographic Transition Demographic transition is a well known" model theory for human population phenomena" (Teitelbaum, 1975). It refers to the series of changes from a high birth and death rate to a low birth and death rate. The transition helps to understand changes in the countries and its subsequent effect on the population.

Demographic transition is made up of four different stages (phase I-IV). During phase I, equilibrium in population size persists. High rate of mortality is seen owing to absence of modern facilities. High infant mortality is seen but this is balanced out by birth rate which is an immediate result of high fertility rate. Phase I is mostly seen in pre-industrialized countries (Galloway & Patrick, 1986).

Most developing countries are in the Phase II of the transition. In the second phase, the state of equilibrium in the population is lost and death rate is exceeded by birth rate thereby leading to a " population explosion." This change is subjected to the fact that better facilities such as good sanitation, nutrition, health facilities etc. are implemented. Such measures help in checking the rate of mortality and increase the lifespan. Though the death rate is lowered the birth rate remains high because most of the people looks upon children as assets who will help bring in money into the family. These growths in population triggers the next stage of transition i. e. Phase III. In this phase a decline in birth rate is seen. This decline is seen because the population is educated and use contraception. Most of the people earn more and therefore do not look upo children as assets and parents realize that children need to be looked after well (Lee, 2003, p 170)." Some of the improvement in child survival is itself a response to parental decisions to

invest more in the health and welfare of a smaller number of children” (Nerlove, 1974). In phase IV, both birth and death rates reduce drastically. This is because of societal changes where too many children are looked upon as hindrance in leading a good satisfactory life and hence both fertility and birth rate falls.

According to researchers, the factors that are primarily responsible for declination in the Crude Birth rate include education among women, use of contraceptives, medical facilities which help in survival of babies thereby eliminating need for reproduction of more babies. On the other hand better health facilities, newer technologies and infrastructure, faster transport and higher earnings trigger declination in Crude Death rate.

All developed countries are in stage IV where the women are both educated and independent. Populations in such countries enjoy better medical facilities, faster transportation and use contraception. In stark contrast to this, developing countries have high CBR and CDR because of lack of education among the population, mostly the women, in rural areas who do not understand the problems related to population growth and are not self dependent. Most of these women depend on the earnings of their husbands which automatically creates a pressure on the women to bear children. For example in countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal, women are forced to reproduce till a male child is produced. Again, sex education and use of contraception is not widespread.

In order to assist a developing country to reach the Phase IV of the transition, I would suggest better education and women empowerment so that the women understand their self worth and become less dependent on

others and are enabled to take their decisions in life especially when it comes to child bearing age and family planning. Next, I would also suggest improving infrastructure and ensuring better medical facilities and implementation of programs that are aimed to help both pediatric and geriatric population.

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