

Module-21

SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHY



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INTRODUCTION

The word 'Demography' is a combination of two Greek words, 'Demos' meaning people and 'Graphy' meaning science. Thus demography is the science of people. In the middle of the nineteenth century in 1855, the word 'Demography' was first used by a French writer Achille Guillard. Even though, the term "Population Studies" is more popular, the word 'Demography' is under wider use these days. It is considered an important subject capable of throwing light on the nature of population education.

Since antiquity a number of thinkers have expressed their views on the level of economic development and the size of population. During the time of Confucius, many Chinese and Greek writers, and following them Aristotle, Plato and Kautilya (around the year 300 B.C.) have expressed their thoughts on the subject of population. Thus, as a subject, population education is as old as human civilization. Writers like William Peterson, Hauser and Duncan consider "Population Studies" and "Demography" to be different. According to them, 'Demography' encompasses limited spheres and it studies only the decisive factors of population growth, whereas in 'Population Studies' besides the social, economic, geographical, political and biological aspects of population, their ensuing relationships are also studied.

DEFINITIONS OF DEMOGRAPHY

The term demography has been defined both in a narrow and broad sense. The Oxford Dictionary of Economics defines demography as "The study of the characteristics of human populations." According to the UN Multilingual Demographic Dictionary, "Demography is the scientific study of human populations, primarily with respect to their size, their structure and their development." To Barckley, "The numerical portrayal of human population is known as demography." Similarly, according to Thomson and Lewis, "The population student is interested in population's size, composition and distribution; and in changes in these aspects through time and causes of these changes."

All these definitions take a narrow view because they emphasise only the quantitative aspects of demography. Some other writers have defined demography in wide sense by taking the quantitative and qualitative aspects of population studies.

In this context, according to Hauser and Duncan, “Demography is the study of size, territorial distribution and composition of population, changes therein, and the components of such changes, which may be identified as natality, mortality, territorial movement (migration), and social mobility (change of status).” According to Frank Lorimer, “In broad sense, demography includes both demographic analysis and population studies. A broad study of demography studies both qualitative and quantitative aspects of population.”

Thus, according to Donald J. Bougue, “Demography is a statistical and mathematical study of the size, composition, spatial distribution of human population, and of changes overtime in these aspects through the operation of the five processes of fertility, mortality, marriage, migration and social mobility. Although it maintains a continuous descriptive and comparative analysis of trends, in each of these processes and in its net result, its long run goal is to develop a body of theory to explain the events that it charts and compares. ”

These broad definitions take into view not only the size, composition and distribution of population and changes in them in the long run but also imply human migration and change in the status of population through education, employment, social status, etc.

Scope and Subject Matter of Demography:

The scope of demography is very wide. It includes the subject matter of demography, is it a micro or macro study? Whether it is a science or art? These are vexed questions about the scope of demography about which there is no unanimity among writers on demography. The subject matter of demography has become very vast in recent years.

The study of demography encompasses the following:

a. Size and Shape of Population:

Generally, the size of population means the total number of persons usually residing in a definite area at a definite time. The size and shape of population of any region, state or nation are changeable. It is because every country has its own unique customs, specialities, social-economic conditions, cultural atmosphere, moral values, and different standards for acceptance of artificial means of family planning and availability of health facilities, etc.

All these factors affect the size and shape of the population and if these factors are studied with reference to any area under demography, we can clearly understand the role they play in determining the shape and size of the population.

b. Aspects Related to Birth Rate and Death Rate:

Birth rate and death rate are the decisive factors that influence the size and shape of the population and therefore their importance in population studies is crucial. In addition to these, factors like marriage rate, belief regarding social status and marriage, age of marriage, orthodox customs related to marriage, early marriage and its effects on the health of the mother and the child, child infanticide rate, maternal death, still birth, resistance power, level of medical services, availability of nutritious food, purchasing power of the people, etc. also affect the birth and death rate.

c. Composition and Density of Population:

In the subject matter of demography, the study of composition and density of population is important. In the composition of population factors like the sex ratio, race wise and age- group wise size of population, the ratio of rural and urban population, distribution of population according to religion and language, occupational distribution of population, agricultural and industrial structure and per sq. km. density of population are very important.

With this type of information regarding the possibilities of development in that particular area, social-economic problems of the area, problems created due to increase in urban population, and density of population form part of population studies.

Socio-Economic Problems:

Out of the many problems relating to population growth, the effects of high density due to industrialization in the urban areas are of more importance as they affect the socio-economic life of the people. Problems like slum areas, polluted air and water, crime, addiction to liquor, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution, are also important subjects of study in demography.

Quantitative and Qualitative Aspects:

Along with the quantitative problems of population, the qualitative problems also form part of population studies. Moreover, the study of demography includes the availability of physicians in the total population, number of hospitals, the number of beds in hospitals, expectation of life at birth, daily availability of minimum calories, resistance power, advertisement of family planning programme and its development, the changes brought in the attitudes of people regarding child birth and adequate medical facility for delivery, etc.

2. Distribution of Population:

Population studies include the following:

(a) How people are distributed among and within continents, world regions and developed and underdeveloped countries?

(b) How their numbers and proportions change?

(c) What political, social and economic causes bring changes in the distribution of population. Within a country, it also includes the study of distribution of population in rural and urban areas, farming and non-farming communities, working classes, business communities, etc.

Migration plays an important role in the distribution of population and supply of labour. Demography studies the factors that lead to internal and external migration of people within a country and between countries, the effects of migration on the migrants and the place where they migrate.

Urbanisation is another factor in the distribution of population within the country. The focus in population studies is on factors responsible for urbanisation, the problems associated with urbanisation and the solutions thereto.

Similarly, theories of migration and urbanisation form part of the study of demography.

3. Theoretical Models:

There are vast theoretical aspects of population studies which include the various theories of population propounded by sociologists, biologists, demographers and economists, and theories of migration and urbanisation.

4. Practical Aspects:

Practical aspects of population studies relate to the various methods of measuring population changes such as the census methods, age pyramids, population projections, etc.

5. Population Policy:

Population policy is an important subject of demography especially in the context of developing countries. It includes policies for population control, and family planning strategies; reproductive

health, maternal nutrition and child health policies; policies for human development of different social groups, etc., and the effects of such policies on the total population of the country.

6. *Micro vs Macro Study:*

The true scope of demography relates to whether it is a micro or macro study.

Micro Demography:

Micro demography is the narrow view of population studies. Among others, Hauser and Duncan include the study of fertility, mortality, distribution, migration, etc. of an individual, a family or group of a particular city or area or community.

As pointed out by Bogue, “**Micro demography is the study of the growth, distribution and redistribution of the population within community, state, economic area or other local area.**” According to the micro view, demography is primarily concerned with quantitative relations of demographic phenomena.

Macro Demography:

A majority of writers take the macro view of population studies and include the qualitative aspects of demography. To them, demography includes the interrelationships between population and social, economic and cultural conditions of the country and their effects on population growth. It studies size, composition and distribution of population, and long run changes in them. Why migrations take place and what are their effects? What leads to urbanisation and what are its consequences? All these form part of macro aspects of population studies which also include unemployment, poverty and policies relating to them; population control and family welfare; and theories of population, migration and urbanisation, etc.

Prof. Bogue explains macro demography as “the mathematical and statistical study of the size, composition, and spatial distribution of human population and of changes over time in these aspects through the operations of the five processes of fertility, mortality, marriage, migration and social mobility. It maintains a continuous descriptive and comparative analysis of trends, in each of these processes and in their net result. Its long run goal is to develop theories to explain the events that it charts and compares.”

Balanced View:

Writers like Bogue, Lorimer and others favour a balanced view of population studies. They do not believe in dividing the study of demography into two separate micro and macro divisions.

As pointed out by Lorimer, "A demographer limited to the merely formal treatment of changes in fertility, mortality and mobility would be in a position like that of a formal chemist observing the compression of mercury with no information about associated changes in temperature or the constituent of the liquid."

Therefore, the scope of demography should include both micro and macro aspects of population. According to Thompson and Lewis, it should relate to fertility, mortality, information about female population, their health, marital status, distribution and classification of population according to occupation, and collection and study of information about social and economic condition, and migration of population.