



Outline:

"Shifting the Paradigm:

"from overpopulation to population management"

(A) Introduction:-

- Hook: China's population management
- Thesis statement:- Shifting the paradigm from overpopulation to population management requires combatting ideological, social, economic and various other challenges via cooperation with diverse groups (clergy and feminists) as well as legislative reforms.

(B) Challenges to Combat over-population:-

- (1) Clergy and ideology:
 - (1-1) Religious justification for overpopulation
 - (1-2) Clergy's support for polygamy
- (2) No Women Empowerment:
 - (2-1) No autonomy over bodies
 - (2-2) Early marriages

- (3) Poverty and economic assets theory:
(3.1) more children means more workforce (in farming, workshops), selling children.
- (4) No access to contraceptives:
(4.1) lack of infrastructure in remote areas, poor quality contraceptives.
- (5) Patriarchy: The need for a ^{male} ~~son~~ heir:
(5.1) Reproducing till male offspring is born.

2) Prospects to Combat Over-population:

- (1) Supporting feminism:
(1.1) supporting female bodily autonomy "Mera jism meri marzi"
- (2) Taxing more than 2 children
case study: China
- (3) legislation: ~~reducing~~ ^{increasing} marriage age
- (4) Out-dawing polygamy:
case study: legislation empowering women to deny permission to husbands.
- (5) Collaborating with Clergy
- (6) Leveraging Media for awareness campaigns
- (7) Sending people to states with ageing population: Japan



(D) Conclusion.



The Essay:

Introduction:

In the ~~(w)~~ twentieth century, China was one of the most populated regions / states in the world. The population was a burden on Chinese resources, environment and it occupied the government's energy on population management. There was unemployment, poverty, homelessness and social evils like theft and robbery. With prudent planning, strict implementation of policies and dedication, the government shifted the paradigm from overpopulation to population management. Shifting the paradigm from overpopulation to population management is challenged by ideology, gender inequality, poverty, patriarchy and can only be managed through supporting feminism, taxing, outlawing underage

marriages, polygamy, collaborating with clergy and leveraging media and last but not the least, filling the population gap in young states with ageing population.

Historically, ideologies have played a vital role in reproduction. The American ideology of "individualism" which emphasises self-care has automatically ruled out the overpopulation phenomena. Parents, specially mothers, aware of the responsibilities associated with child upbringing either totally give up having children, or reproduce one or two offsprings. This preserves resources, time and energy to cater to their "individualistic" needs. Contrary to this, in the twentieth century, fascists like Hitler and Mussolini emphasised on excessive reproduction, masked beneath their fascist ideologies, but serving their political and military goals. Fast forward to twenty first century, religious ideology emphasising the need to reproduce more, the Divine responsibility to cater for every new-born, alongwith justifying polygamy have been a major cause of overpopulation in regions like South-East Asia.

Secondly, gender inequality and suppression of women are another challenge to shift the paradigm from overpopulation to population management. Stigmatization of slogans like "Meri jism meri marzi" (My body, my will) has stripped women off from autonomy over their bodies. The fear of "divorce" and societal stigmas prevent them from using contraceptives and birth pills. Due to economic dependence and fear of abandonment, women get a little say in family planning. Underage and forced marriages result in higher chances of offsprings. Combatting stereotypes, societal and patriarchal barriers and empowering women remains a formidable task in population management.

In poorer families and poorer states and regions, children are seen as economic assets. In families holding lands, children are also treated as means of production. For instance, in an agrarian economy, a family tied to a landhold may reproduce more to generate more workforce for the land. Children are sent to

work in people's homes such as politicians and businessmen. Apart from that, children are sent to mechanic workshops, streets (for begging). In war stricken regions like Afghanistan, children (specially girls) are sold to generate income for the family. Hence, poverty acts as a bulwark against population management.

Contraceptives are a direct way to control population. Yet, their access is limited to remote areas. Areas like Balochistan, rural Sindh and rural Punjab in Pakistan and conservative states like Iraq, Afghanistan, along with sanctioned states like Iran have very little access to contraceptives and birth pills. Poverty also hampers accessibility to birth control. Reliance on traditional birth control methods poses risks of pregnancy and are hence unreliable.

In societies with patriarchal structures and narratives, population management becomes a more challenging task. The need of a male heir to carry lineage forward, along with the economic goal of

transferring wealth to male heirs and keeping wealth in the family, is where patriarchy meets overpopulation. Recurrent pregnancies until male heir is born results in many unwanted pregnancies. The girls, born out of the desire to produce a male offspring, go on to create their own families (marriage) and offsprings. This creates a vicious cycle of overpopulation. India and Pakistan are prime examples of such mindset.

The prospects of changing the paradigm from overpopulation to population management rests on the channel connecting the two realms: women. Without women empowerment, population management is, and will remain a distant reality.

The case in point is simply a comparison between an uneducated, less empowered and more educated, more empowered women ~~living~~ both living in cities. The educated, career oriented and independent women will never go beyond one or two children, regardless of the offspring's gender. On the contrary, the uneducated and less empowered women will have more

children. Working, educated and empowered women, aware of their rights, will always prefer quality over quantity in offspring.

Policies like programmes and social media ads sponsored by state should promote the cause of feminism and decode controversial feminist slogans like "Mera jism, Meri marzi". The slogan, which gives women autonomy over their bodies including reproduction empowers women to deny pointless reproduction. Hence, sponsoring and supporting feminism is pertinent to shifting the over-population paradigm.

When China was faced with the overpopulation menace, it addressed the challenge by legislating the increased economic cost of offsprings. China's "One child policy", stands as a testament that with prudent policy measures and state intervention, population can be easily controlled. Many families, wary of the dual cost and burden of 1) raising the offspring 2) paying taxes, abandoned over-reproduction. This brought a steady and systematic decline in China's

and spending energy on other challenges. In countries of South Asia, where ideology drives over-population, such policy changes can easily evade ideological and societal barriers to reproduction. This would directly stop the people's tendency to reproduce and indirectly shape the future mindset of generations by giving them exposure to the benefits associated with family planning. It would hence, subconsciously train them to reproduce less.

From the above mentioned policy, it can be easily deduced that policy and legislation play a central role in population management. But, in States and regions where socio-economic factors drive population growth, a plethora of legislative acts are required. One such example is outlawing underage marriages, setting the appropriate age for marriage and introducing enforcement mechanisms. States like Iraq, where marriage age has been reduced to 9 for girls and 14 for boys through legislation passed in 2024, women empowerment, education, career building

and other human rights are threatened. Thus, such states pose a population explosion challenge not only nationally but internationally. Cooperation and mediation with such states is crucial to ensure such practices are avoided. Departments, such as Police for underage marriages, online complaint portals, and presence of these departments in rural areas is essential to enforce compliance at national level. For instance, Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act faces issues of enforcement. Hence, outlawing underage marriages and enforcing it is vital to combat overpopulation.

Another important legislation in this regard is outlawing or restricting polygamy to wife's consent. In societies, where male prestige is associated with the number of wives and offsprings, polygamy is rampant. Women have no autonomy over their bodies, their husbands and their family life. Pathans, or Pushtoons, are a glaring example of this practice. Each pathan possesses at least 5, 6 wives, offsprings with each wives (20-24 children) which

Neither provided with education, nor with proper resources. Outlawing polygamy hence is vital to contain the number of children per family.

To shift the paradigm from over-population to population management, a paradigm shift in ideology and ideational factors is important. Collaborating with Clergy is hence as vital as passing legislations. To ensure success of legislation and prevent backdash from clergy and conservative groups, taking them in confidence is important. This can be done in several ways including dialogue. Issues with over-population (such as threats to national security) must be communicated to Clergy. Political Clerics, like Maulana Fazlur Rehman, should be included in these processes so the impact reaches the masses. Secondly, at school and madrasas level, religious teachings should be reformed, re-interpreted and myths about Divine justifications such as God's responsibility to provide must be debunked.

Media, both traditional and social media, should be leveraged. Dramas promoting polygamy to replace an infertile wife, along with narratives showing childlessness as a curse and hole in one's life should be dismantled and censored. Instead, alternate perspectives on marriage, offsprings and fertility should be promoted. For instance, a childless couple either adopting abandoned children or working together towards a greater goal (social welfare, charity, education) should be encouraged. Another way is to de-stigmatize male offsprings. Patriarchal narratives promoting the urgency of male offsprings must be banned. Social media campaigns highlighting family planning, correct way to use birth controls and videos and reels targeting the risks of reproduction with maternal health, resources and the merits of smaller families must be paid and sponsored by states.

For the immediate alleviation of the population predicament, states like India, Pakistan can fill the "youth-hole" in states with

ing populations. States like Japan, Korea and Russia face security challenges owing to their dearth of youth. States with youth bulge, such as India and Pakistan, can fill this gap by sending the unemployed youth to these states. Apart from lowering the population burden, it will also enhance diplomatic ties, remittances and overall soft image of the sending state. Hence, through prudent policy measures and strategic planning, the over-population can be leveraged as economic and diplomatic assets, enhancing the sending state's prestige on global stage and world politics.

To conclude the essay, shefing the population dynamics requires a paradigm shift in ideational factors, societal structures and economic factors impacting population growth. Political will, awareness campaigns, regional as well international effort, adequate resources and strict enforcement can reduce the "human-burden" on Earth and its finite resources such as

water, food and shelter.