CHAPTER IX

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSTRAINT ON POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAMME IN MIZORAM.

Mizoram has maintained a higher population growth rate than the all India average. The population explosion, which is undermining all efforts towards socio-economic development is perhaps the single most pressing problem. The alarming rate at which the population is growing necessitates the correct population programme.

The population control programme has two objectives: (a) it seeks to secure a balance between human and non-human resources. (b) It aims at optimising the quality of man power and also the quantity of life by putting a brake on the growth of quantity of population. The success of population control programme depends on social acceptability, resources, condition of progress in economic and social aspiration of the people. The population control programme which is dependent on social acceptability for its success will have to be implemented within a number of constraints which are in nature. The term "Socio-economic" socio-economic includes sociological, economics, political and cultural factors interacting together to influence the success of the programme.

Economic Constraint:

(a) Low level of technology, low productivity of shifting cultivation practised by the Mizos, labour intensive industry based on family labour increase the needs for large family.

(b) Low income group view their children as economic asset. The attitude towards children as economic assets constitute an important constraint on population control in Mizoram.
(c) Lack of assets and absence of dependable social security system encourage large family.

(d) Any dependence on manual works like gathering firewood, collecting drinking water from distant places etc. emphasis importance of large family.

(e) High death rate in a poor society tend to increase birth rate because of the survival instinct.

**Social Constraint:**

1) In Mizo society the birth of the child in a family is a sign of progress. A large family is considered a healthy and progressive sign.

2) The barren women are not socially appreciated. A young woman, in the yearly years of marriage, is apprehensive that she may turn out to be a barren woman.

3) Prevalence of early marriage which means longer productive life particularly among rural areas in Mizoram is an important constraint on population control in Mizoram.

4) Preference of male child exist in the society which is the biggest constraint on population control in Mizoram.

5) Inferior status of women is largely responsible for high rate of population growth.

6) Due to the political instability, fear of communal disharmony, there is a race in the community to increase their numbers. Each community trying to outnumbered the other to gain political leverage.

7) Ignorance and illiteracy, superstition, lack of cultural pursuits specially among the Riangs and Chakmas are responsible for high growth rate.
It has been remarked that economic development is the best contraceptive to control population growth. In fact, in the final analysis it is the economic development which solves the problem of a fast growing population. Rise in the standard of living helps in reducing birth rate. Therefore, anti-poverty programmes in both rural and urban areas as a measure to reduce economic disparity have a great role to play in population control. The technological change, spread of urban facilities and modern culture to the villages, spread of education of adult literacy will also help population planning a great deal. Minimum need programme consisting of supply of drinking water, elementary education and health care, housing etc. will create a conducive atmosphere. There is no denying of the fact that education is one of the most important factors in any economic developmental process. Education narrows the gap between programme and people. It is a sure indicator of economic and social development.

Population control is a modern concept and it needs a change in the value of society. Unless the mother becomes the decision maker of child birth, all attempts at population control are bound to meet with failure. It must be realised that although death rate is mainly a technological variable, birth is essentially cultural variable. Hence arises the importance of change of attitudes and value in society.

Lastly, a decentralised approach is needed to make population control the people's programme. Regional and rural biased efforts population control mechanism can be created by organising village level panchayat-level population associations which will study and highlight the problems of imbalances between human and non-human resource.
In raising the consciousness of the people towards population control programmes Mizoram has certain social institutions with specific advantage.

(1) The first and foremost institutions is the village level institution (the village council) and the prevalent customary laws. It would be impossible to think of any developmental programme without participation of that institution.

(2) The second important factor is education which is a pre-requisite to making people aware of developmental programmes. Fortunately Mizoram has a high literacy rate (84.23 per cent) and ranks second after Kerala (90.59 per cent) in 1991. High level of literacy in Mizoram being a potential input in the programme of family welfare has not been fully exploited.

Conclusion