The problem of rapid population growth is definitely hampering socio-economic development, not only in India, but also in the entire third world. The galloping population growth-rate, is as major an obstacle to their material progress, as a major global economic, social, and political problem. The Pearson Report states that no other phenomenon, caste a darker shadow over the prospects of international development, than the staggering growth of population. Mr. Robert McNamara, a former president of the World Bank, alarmed the entire third world, when he said that the greatest single obstacle, to the economic and social advancement of the majority of peoples in the under developed world, was the rampant population growth. The population problem is not only quantitative; it is also qualitative in nature, as the implications of population growth affect the quality of life, and the well-being, of a people.

Regular and high fertility, causes serious health problems for both the mother and the child. In most developing countries, married women aged between 17 and 37, are

2. Ibid., p. 275.
characterised by continuous nutrition drain from frequent pregnancies and lactation, resulting in material health depletion, and increased risk of maternal mortality, which increases with every pregnancy, after the third. Premature curtailment of breast feeding, and infant care by an intervening pregnancy, are important factors contributing to high infant mortality.

At present, concern has mounted, about the widening gap between population growth, and food supply, in developing countries because of rapid population growth. Available food supplies are inadequate and often of questionable nutritive quality, keeping the people away and far from an active and healthy life. The mortality rate is high. Deaths because of malnutrition and infection highlight the problem of adequate nutritive food availability, and the need of an immediate solution of the problem. Protein is crucial for a child's mental and physical development. A study in Mexico has found, that children unfortunate to be severely malnourished before the age of five were, were, on an average, 13 points lower in I.Q. than those who were not malnourished.

Unemployment is yet another aspect of the population problem. Due to high rate of population growth, the working

4. Ibid., p. 13.
population in these areas will grow rapidly in the coming years and is likely to double itself, by the end of the century. This rapid rise in working population, is mainly due to the growing number of young people. The need for increasing employment opportunities, for the rising number of young persons, will become even more urgent in future, and the ratio will increase still further, augmenting the number of job seekers all the more.

India has a high dependency ratio also. The dependent population (0-14 aged and 60+ years), is between 40 to 45 per cent, and the independent population is between 50 - 55 per cent of the total population. The dependency ratio in developed countries on the other hand is low.

There is the other major problem of providing schooling and education, to the increasing number of school going children in the less developed countries like India. However, this problem is not confined to the young only for the adults also need to be educated, more than one third of whom are illiterate.

If the countries of the world are classified into two groups, developing on the state of education in them, one set being that which has a developed educational system, and another, in which the system is not developed, then it will be found that the birth, and therefore, the population growth rate in the latter are comparatively higher.
The demand for housing is also directly affected by the rapid population growth. In Latin America, there has been a deficit of 20 million housing units during the 1960s, and in the ESCAP region has fallen short of 22 million housing units, in urban areas, and 125 million, in rural areas. In India, there was a deficit of 9.3 million housing units, in the urban areas, in 1961, and about 30% of the population lived in slums. In rural areas, it was estimated that about 50 million houses needed to be reconditioned.

Yet another important implication of this rapid population growth, is the high rate of internal migration to urban areas, and therefore the rapid growth of cities and towns. The United Nations has estimated that in the early 1960s, nearly ten dwelling units, per thousand inhabitants, had to be built each year, in the developing countries, in order to offset obsolescence.

According to a report of the United Nations, during the two decades, 1960-70, and 1970-80, the annual rate of

5. Ibid., p. 15. See also, Report on the World Social Situation New York, United Nation, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 1969, pp. 202


growth of the urban population, in developing countries, would vary between 4.6, and 4.5 per cent whereas it would be between 2.1, and 1.7 per cent, in the developed countries.  

Aims and Objectives of the Study:

The following are the main objectives of this study:

i) Ascertain the quantity, and distribution of people, within the area studied;

ii) Describe the past growth, decline, and dispersal of these people as accurately as available records permit;

iii) Explore the causal relation, between fertility trends, and various aspects of social organisation;

iv) Study both the negative, and positive aspects of population policy, since 1951, and find out why did the Government of India fail in the implementation of the family planning programme, and, in achieving the desired target, during three decades between 1951 and 1981.

v) Attempt a prediction about the strength of the future population, and the possible consequences that may ensue, as also suggest a few measures by way of a solution to the problem.

Scope of the Study:

The proposed subject of study has considerable significance. First, it is timely. Population growth, is one of the most current, and pressing issues discussed both at the national and international level. And, opinions, studies recommendations report, and surveys abound. However, there is little attempt to explain observed facts, and if the precise variables not identified, prediction can only be made in dark.

Secondly, the investigation relates to a practical problem. The purpose of research is not merely description, and explanation, but also prediction, and control.

A case in point is the question of age at marriage. It was recently mooted in India that raising the age at which marriage was to be permitted by law, may shorten the span of the reproductive period of females, and thus curtail their fertility. Many surveys were cited, to show that women who marry late, have fewer children. However, there are just as many studies pointing in the opposite direction, some of show, that age at marriage, and fertility, are not related at all. If it were possible to analyse all these contradictory conclusions, and arrive at an explanation of the relationship between marriage-age and fertility, to help point up specific patterns, then legislative action would be more enlightened and even fruitful.
Further, and the third point is that the problem is related to an extensive and widespread population, for approximately ( ... million married couples live in India, and the findings, hopefully, will be applicable to most of India.

In many parts of the world, information concerning fertility and family planning, is urgently needed to design new family planning programmes and expand, or, evaluate those designed and planned earlier, in order to make them more effective. And the only practicable procedure, for obtaining this information, is through personal interview, with sample of persons drawn from a population, that needed to be better understood.

Consequently the study of population is an important source of knowledge about a society, or, community. Knowledge of a population, its strength, behaviour, and prospects, and public authorities that is on both macro, and micro levels. Also planning and programmes are better shaped, if information about the composition of a population is available, and taken into account. Thus education, taxation, social security military services, farm and factory production, highways, housing, hospitals and shopping, being all need based, are determined by what a population needs and what it can not afford, because it is oversized.
To determine how fast a nation is progressing, in its economic modernization, look at the figures on occupations, at the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture, in industry, and in services. For an indication of its living standards, look at its life-expectancy, because there is no better measure than the years of life a civilization gives each man. Even the state of national culture can be known by its literacy figures, and the years of school of various chunks of its population has population statistics can also give us an idea of race relations, for a look at the differences in occupations, income, schooling, and length of life would help us know that. Further, population size plus income and occupation figures could give an idea of a nation's power. 9

The findings of our study will be valuable especially for public health workers, government planners, social scientists, demographers and many others, who professionally deal with the problem of family planning, and, the population policy programme. It will also be valuable, for a better understanding, of the cases of resistance to family planning programmes, and the obstruction the implementation of the policy programme in India has to encounter. It will also enable scholars, researchers, policy makers, demographers, and doctors, to have a firmer grasp of the complex

factors that determine the adoption and performance of family planning programmes.

Area of Study:

Bihar is spread over a total area of 1,73,877 square kilometre.10 Almost half the total area is a region of hills and plateau. The plain regions of Bihar which cover a little more than 54 per cent of its entire area, contain nearly 75 per cent of the total population of the state. Bihar is divided into the following regions:

1- North Bihar Plain
2- South Bihar Plain
3- Chota Nagpur Plateau.

The North Bihar Plain is densely populated, because the soil of the North Bihar Plain, is very fertile, and suitable, for cultivation; However, the South Bihar Plain and the Chota Nagpur Plateau, are un-productive, and uncultivable and therefore not as populated. Obviously therefore, the density in Bihar decreases from North to South and, from West to East. In the South Bihar Plain, the highest density is in Patna Division and about 871 per square kilometre.11

10. Census of India, 1981 Table A-1 to A-3, pp. 88-
The major portion of the South Bihar Plain is covered by hills, ravines, forests, and un-cultivable land, and the demographic density is lowest in the Chota Nagpur Plateau area, particularly in the South Western, and Eastern parts of the Plain district. Also, there are marked differences in population density, between the industrial and non-industrial belts.

Between 1951 and 1970 the State of Bihar had only seventeen districts and four regional divisions (See Table No. 1, and The Pie-diagram No. 1). The Patna Division had three districts, namely, Patna, Gaya and Sahabad; Tirhut Division had four and these were Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga. However Bhagalpur Division had five, Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Saharsa, Purnia and Santhal Pargana, whereas Chota Nagpur comprised five districts namely, Palamu, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Dhanbad, and Singhbhum. Due to the demographic rise many changes took place in the State of Bihar, between 1970, and 1981. The total number of districts also increased, from 17, in 1970, to 31, in 1981. South Bihar Plain, and Chota Nagpur now had 15 districts, namely: Patna, Gaya, Aurangabad, Nalanda, Bhojpur, Rohtas, Palamu, Ranchi, Singhbhum, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Santhal Parganas, Nawada, and Gridih. The North Bihar Plain had the remaining 16 districts. These were Saran, Siwan, Gopalganj, East Champaran, West Champaran, Sitamarhi, Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Madhubani, Dhanbad, Samastipur, Begusarai, Saharsa, Purnia
and Katihar. The number of zonal division also increased from four to seven in the same decade. These are Tirbhat Division, Darbhanga, Division, Kosi Division, Bhagalpur Division, North Chota Nagpur Division, South Chota Nagpur Division, and Patna Division (see the diagram No. 1).

The North Bihar Plain as compared to the South Bihar Plain is now slightly better off, and has less villages and towns. The entire North Bihar Plain now has three zonal divisions, namely Tirbhat, Darbhanga, and Kosi division. The Tirbhat Division which covers most of west Bihar has eight districts, which are Saran, Siwan, Gopalganj, East Champaran, West Champaran, Sitamarhi, Musaffarpur and Vaishali. The Darbhanga Division covering the North Central Bihar Plain compares the four districts, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Samastipur and Begusarai, Finally the Kosi Division which covers the North East Bihar Plain has three districts namely, Purnia, Saharsa and Katihar.

The South Bihar Plain has the rest four zonal divisions and these are Bhagalpur Division, North Chota Nagpur Division, South Chota Nagpur Division, and Patna Division. The Bhagalpur Division now has three districts, namely Bhagalpur, Monghyr and Snathal Pargana. The North Chota Nagpur Division has also three districts, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh and Giridih. Even the South Chota Nagpur Division has now three district namely Ranchi Palamu and Singhbhum, However, The Patna Division has seven districts and these are
Patna, Gaya, Aurangabad, Nawada, Hohtas and Nalanda.

Areas of the North East Bihar Plain, are less populated than areas of the North West Bihar Plain. The Eastern most districts, particularly Purnia, have an average density of 731 per square mile, which is also the lowest density in the entire Kosi Division. However, Katihar had a density of 781, Sadar 752, Araria 720 and Kishanganj 614, in 1961. Southern areas of the Purnia district were more densely populated than its northern areas. The highest density was in Barsoi being 914. The population is scattered in Kishanganj sub-division, and in the north eastern corner. The lowest density was in Thakurganj being 490.

Let us now make a district-wise study of the demographic position in Bihar, and begin with Purnia:

**Purnia District:**

Four of the eight towns in the district of Purnia, viz., Araria, Karba, Jagbani, and Sanmanki Bazar, are new towns, added in 1961. Purnia, Katihar, and Kishanganj, have been continuing as towns since 1901 or even before. Forbesganj was listed as a town, for the first time in 1921.

The district had an urban population of 1,85,597, in 1961, as against 31,439 in 1901. The increase therefore has been by nearly 5 times. Its contribution to the state

12. Ibid., pp. 21-23.
13. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
15. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
urban total, was 4.7 per cent, while the urban content was 6 per cent, which was considerably less than the state average of 8.43 per cent.

Now, Purnia, with 14,007 persons, in 1901, was the largest town of the district. Its population fluctuated somewhat, in the first two decades, but remained substantially the same. The rate of growth, from 1931 onwards, however, has been more rapid. Also Purnia district is primarily a service town. Road communication have greatly improved in the last three decades and the town electrified. There has been considerable progress. Doctors have increased, private clinics have multiplied.

The Sadar sub-division, of Purnia district has ten rural and urban areas. The average density of the Sadar sub-division was 752 per square kilometre. The highest density was in Kasba town (1977), and the lowest, in Kirtyanandnagar, being 526. Kasba town at present is a jute centre, and is nearest to Purnia town. Banmanki is a business centre and is likely to develop in future.

Kishanganj is another sub-division of Purnia district, and followed a demographic trend, somewhat similar to Purnia. It has grown at a progressively high rate in each successive decade. The area of Kishanganj has also increased.

16. Ibid., p. 47.
17. Ibid., p. 48.
After the country's partition, in 1947, Kishanganj sub-division was seriously affected. A large number of traders and refugees settled in the town. It is primarily service town. Kishanganj sub-division consists of seven rural and urban areas, and its average density of population was 614 per square kilometre. The highest density was observed in Kishanganj town itself, being 819, and the lowest in Thakurganj being 490. Araria is yet another sub-division of Purnia district, and had a population of 13,924 in 1961. The important towns in Araria sub-division are Araria itself, and Jokihat, Palasi, Sikti, Kursakatta, Forbesganj, Jagbani Narpatganj Bhargama, and Raniganj. The average density of Araria sub-division was 720, and of Araria town 1266. Jagbani town is on the main Indo-Nepal trade route, and is nearest to Biratnagar in Nepal. Forbesganj is an important centre of trade and commerce. Nearly one fourth of its workers are engaged in trade and commerce. Its population was 15,846 in 1961. After India's partition, several refugees and traders settled here, and entered the jute trade which became the source of livelihood for them. The Kosi-Project has improved the position of Forbesganj. Its nearness to Biratnagar in Nepal, also makes it, one of main centres of Indo-Nepal trade and commerce.

18. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
19. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
20. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
**Saharsa District:**

Till 1951, the Saharsa district was entirely rural. In 1961, six places were elevated to urban status. These were Supaul (17,460), Saharsa (14,803), Madhopur (11,832), Murliganj (9,848), Birpur (8,061), and Nirmali (5,423). The district has an urban population of 67,427, which works out to 3.91 per cent of its total population, and a mere 1,72 per cent of the state urban total. Even now, it is the least urbanized district in the state.

Sadar sub-division of Saharsa comprises of five rural and urban areas, namely, Kahara, Nauhetta, Mahishi, South Bazar, Sonbasra. Supaul sub-division of Saharsa, has 9 villages and towns. These are Sapaul, Pipra, Nimali, Tribeniganj, Kishanpur, Maranna, Raghopur, Basantpur, and Chatapur. The average demographic density of Supaul sub-division was 702 per square kilometre. The highest density was in Sapaul, being 919, and, lowest in Maranna, being 537.

**Katihar District:**

It is an important railway junction and a manufacturing centre. It had a population of 9,761, in 1901, and of 10,219 in 1911. Thereafter, it even outstripped the population of Purnia in each decade. In 1961, it had 59,344 persons. In 1961, about 26.49 per cent of the working

21. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
22. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
population, was engaged in transport and communication, and 22.26 per cent, in manufacturing other than household industries. It also had two jute mills, and two floor mills, in the same decade and now there has also been some increase in small industrial enterprises.

Katihar district has seven rural and urban areas. The most thickly area was Basaoci where the density of population was highest being 914,23 and lowest in Balampur being 614. The average density of Katihar was 781 per square kilometre in 1961.24

Present social conditions can help explain the population problem, in the State of Bihar, Bihar is the most backward state of India. There is immense poverty and deep conservatism, begging, and unemployment, particularly in its north eastern region. However, the state is rich in minerals and has most of India's coal mines. It is unfortunate therefore that the state suffers misery and starvation. As a whole the state is industrially and educationally backward. Its level of education, and standard of living are also very low and the status of women is much lower. These problems are most acute in its north eastern parts particularly in Purnia, a Katihar, and Saharsa districts. In these areas, most parts are cultivated lands and occupied by rivers and bridges in

23. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
24. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
Purnia district the total number of workers was 13,09,906 and non-workers were 26,31,957 in 1971. Workers constituted only 33.22 per cent and non-workers, 66.77 per cent of the total population of Purnia district. It had only 620037 literate persons which was only 15.73 per cent of the whole population of the district. Again in Saharsa district workers were 8,29,789, and non-workers were 15,20,479, in 1971. Thus the ratio between workers and non-workers was 35.31 %: 64.69 %. And literacy in this district in 1971 was 15.48 per cent of its population if figures stood at 3,64,056.

Now, areas of Purnia, Saharsa, and Katihar were selected for the study of fertility trends and the impact on them, of a particular population policy because the researcher himself belongs to this belt and therefore knows its topography and even culture well.

The districts which have most Muslims in Bihar are Purnia. Katihar. However the Muslims population is the lowest. In Saharsa district Muslims are the fewest. Now Muslims of Purnia district in general, are somehow, culturally different from the Muslims in other parts of Bihar, One of them most unique feature is that socially they are

27. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
less mobile. The aboriginal natives of these areas are generally black in colour. The people of this area can be broadly grouped into two classes, the upper and the lower, the latter being in majority. The lower classes are daily-wage workers, though a few of them do belong to the upper class also and are generally absentee land owners, and are both economically, and educationally, better off.

Now caste feeling is very strong in the three districts of Purnia, Saharsa, and Katihar. People never marry outside their caste. A Kulhaiya will marry his daughter in another Kulhaiya family only. Similarly, a Sekhera and a Mungaria and, the Iraqvi will always seek matrimonial relations for their children, in their respective communities. Also Muslims are less qualified, degree and certificate wise, because University education is not easily to be had, and from this particular perspective, women have least access to education but because of a blatant lack of girls school and women's colleges, in their towns. Poverty and lack of resources prevented girls travelling for in pursuit of certificates and degrees. Of course the veil too kept quite a few away from these establishments, for the incongruous thought was that the veil and the current educational system do not go together. However, the veil has not prevented quite a few elsewhere from achieving very high and often, even the highest qualification known to the modern educational system. Still habits of thought die hard, and if
The veil and educational system current, have once been categorized as not not agreeing with each other, then in typical follow the leader fashion, it is easier to let the thought step and settle into the more-well-known-because-well-broadcaste-and-orchestrated groove, than sit up and question the why and where fore of the thought itself. Thus it is not so much the veil as excruciating poverty and lack of local schools and colleges in these areas that have prevented the Muslim women and girls from coming forward and prove themselves better masters of the degrees and certificates these institutions make available. However since the education current is the aim, the fact remains that it is not easy to come by in these areas be it because of the veil, poverty, or the total absence of all the requisite paraphernalia that aspect to educate. Finally that have easy access to the system through acceptance and performance have done well to nail the truth, which is thus that in these areas access to the system is not to be had because of poverty and want of resources.

Literacy is fairly high, both among Hindus and Muslims, though in both communities the beneficiaries are more males than females. Most Muslims read Arabic and Urdu very few are in government service. Muslim Institutions, in any case are very few of these, the Insan School Complex the Azad Academy, Alsans Milliu College, are a few, and not
being considerable at all, can hardly be instruments of any change whatever, social, or otherwise. The question of employment of requisite educational qualifications being unfortunately absent. Lack of enthusiasm to attend schools, much less good schools or even a general lack of enthusiasm for education, the amenities wanting, can hardly be an act of conjunction or omission, on the part of Muslim girl or even women. Understanding this as the basic position, higher education becomes too much of a far cry. The over all situation being as difficult, the enthusiasm of many Muslims to run schools and colleges for their community is very understandable. However the problem is colossal and all the effort at getting fellow Muslims, the much sought after certificates and degrees pales into insignificance because the demand if ever, that is a situation could be reached where a legitimate need could be satisfied even as a demand remains an unfulfilled reality. But the effort, however, small is there, and the people who seek admission in these institutions are almost all Muslims. The Bihar Board Syllabus is taught though special attention is given to religious instruction, and one paper is Muslim Theology at the Matriculate level is compulsory.

Marriages, in these areas are of course arranged. Boys are expected to agree, and girls generally not consulted.
Girls are married off even at 13. However the dowry system practised by Hindus, has been taken over by a considerable section of the Muslim population, and this often renders even arranged marriages impossible because of sustained poverty on the one hand and dowry demand on the other hand. Marriage itself therefore, is quite a problem. However Hindus and Muslims in this area, are generally monogamous. Only the Kulhaiya and Mungaria families of Purnia, practise bigamy or even polygamy.

Tools of Study:

The tools of data collection are empirical, and based on census statistics. These data were obtained from the Directorate of Statistics and Evaluation, Patna, Government of Bihar, and the census Departments of Bihar and Delhi, These data were counted, classified, and analysed, according to age, religion and the reproductive mortality and fertility figures married persons, demographic density, and migration, and the percentage of each. Next, these were analysed to measure social trends, and explore the underlying causes and significance of population facts like high birth and low death rates. Also since data on out-migration, at international level are not available in India, and also,

since data of district-wise of out-migration for which
are not available in both the 1961 and the 1971 censuses,
the net migration of the country, as well as of districts,
have been calculated on the basis of the following formula:

\[ M = (P_1 - P_0) - (B - D) \]