CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY
Rapid growth of population has emerged as one of the most significant problem that world faces today. Population as a human problem appears in various forms in different parts of the world, but looking, at its nature and dimensions with a view of taking action, it stands as a matter of equal concern everywhere. In fact, the problem of population explosion is alarming almost everywhere in the world. Due to this problem, most of the countries in the world, particularly the developing and under-developed countries, are faced with the crucial problems of food supply, social, economical and educational concern. Rapid population growth posed a serious threat to the development efforts in these countries in general and the South Asian countries in particular. India being one of the South Asian countries is facing a number of problems on account of rapid population growth.

The scale at which India’s population is increasing is simply mindboggling. “While the total population of our country in 1991 was 843.9 million which increased to 1,027 million in 2001 with a decadal growth rate of 21.34 per cent.”1 With every beat of pulse, “two children are born in India, or more than 55,000 babies a day”2. Due to high rate of population growth India faces a number of problems and even failed to provide the basic facilities to the increasing number.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir being a part of Indian Union is no exception in the prevailing situation of rapid population growth in India. “It’s population increased from 77.18 lakhs in 1991 to 1.06 crore in 2001
with a decadal growth rate of 29.04 per cent.\textsuperscript{3} The population growth in Jammu and Kashmir State is no more different from other States of India.

Thus, population is growing at a rapid rate both at country as well as at State level. So, there is an increasing need for research in population problems not only for understanding its causes and consequences but also for finding some solid solutions.

2.1 Theoretical Orientation

This study has an explanatory research design and its purpose is to assess the impact of population growth on Jammu and Kashmir with main focus on Shangas Block in Anantnag district. The theories of Robert Thomas Malthus and Demographic Transition are hardly applicable to the present population problems. Malthus pointed out that the food production increases by arithmetical ratio while as population by geometrical ratio, as a result of this imbalance, there would be over-population and people will starve. But, his prophecy about food production could not prove totally correct because of the revolutionary developments in science and technology that ensured the maximum food output available to the society. Another argument against Malthus is that he did not foresee the development of effective methods of birth control, such as we have today.

The sequence of events described in Demographic Transition given by Frank W. Notestein, Warren S. Thomson, Blacker and Sax, can be traced in every region where the economy has evolved from an agrarian to an industrial market-oriented economy. But, it is difficult to quantify the degree of decline of the vital rates. It is argued that the theory does not provide any time dimension for a country to move from one stage to the next. Basically, it is a description of historical events that have occurred in the developed countries.

Therefore, we can not proceed with any hypothesis with regard to the population growth and its implications on Shangas Block, on the basis of above theories. However, certain hypothesis has been developed on the basis of optimum population theory given by Sir Edwin Cannon, Dalton and
Rabbins. The theory explains the relation between the growth of population and availability of resources. The population which just makes the maximum returns possible is the optimum or best population. In case the population continues to increase beyond the optimum stage, the proportionate balance of sources of production will be disturbed and the population will be available in more quantity than what is ideally needed. The country at this stage is overpopulated and the implications of further increase in population will be adverse. It is this theoretical orientation which is more relevant in context of this study. While evaluating the population growth and its social implications at the block level, the above insight will be in the background of analysis. The study at the block level is primarily an empirical one. All the prepositions and conclusions of the study are based on extensive field-work carried out in the Shangas Block of Anantnag District.

2.2 Focus of the Study

In the context of theoretical and empirical perspectives, this study has focused on the social implications of population growth at the block level. An attempt has been made to investigate the nature of population increase and how it affected the rural life in totality. The study was primarily a micro-sociological study having two major features. First, the size, structure, growth and changing patterns of population was focused upon. Second, the implications of this population growth were analysed with special thrust on the variables like food supply, health, education, unemployment, dependency ratio, housing, family structure and functions. The findings were analysed in the light of optimum population theory and conclusions were drawn accordingly.

2.3 Hypotheses

(i). Population increases in totality with special reference to sex and age.

(ii). When population growth crosses the optimum stage, it affects the society adversely.
2.4 Objectives of the Study

In the immediate thematic context of the above, this sociological study followed the specific objectives which are as follows:

(i). to know the size, structure, distribution and growth of population in the State of Jammu and Kashmir;

(ii). to enquire about the changes which have been brought mainly through rapid growth of population in the State;

(iii). to investigate about the nature, dynamics and implications of population growth in the Shangas Block, in Anantnag district;

(iv). to provide suggestions for population stabilization in the context of experience at the block level.

2.5 Field Study

An extensive field study was carried out in Shangas Block (Unit of study) of Anantnag district. The nature of population growth and its social implications were analysed in this study at the micro-level. The Shangas Block was selected as the unit of study on the grounds that, it is one of the largest blocks in rural Kashmir in terms of it’s population and the people in the block belong to different socio-economic groups. An attempt was made to investigate the nature and social implications of population growth at the block-level. The focus was also on the attempt to know the reality of changes in the past and present patterns of population growth.

The researcher carried out a detailed field study for a period of six months. All the primary and secondary source material available was utilized in order to get the necessary and relevant information about the topic. The primary information was collected from the residents of Shangas Block. The Heads of 500 families of the block belonging to different socio-economic
groups were interviewed and the information was collected with the help of Interview Schedule. In addition to this, all the notable and resourceful persons of the block were interviewed. Since they were the real witness of the condition of people in the block, they were able to throw light with evidences and examples on the traditional and emerging patterns of population growth and its implications on their day-to-day life.

The detailed Interview Schedule was prepared of closed and open-ended choice questions, suiting to the ego and taste of the respondents. The researcher with scientific temperament and intimacy developed rapport with the respondents and sought answers to the questions put to them. An attempt was made to seek answers from respondents individually and not in groups, in order to avoid imitation of thoughts by respondents from each other, the danger of which always remains within the group interview. Some of the willing responsive and research conscious respondents were subjected to a deeper probe and they proved to be valuable and informative and provided the requisite information in detail and at length.

Interview Schedule was followed by observation during the data collection. The reason for such kind of choice was mainly that it proved sociologically relevant and methodologically suitable. Since, the majority of respondents in the block were illiterate or low-level educated, so it was not possible for the researcher to use questionnaire method.

During the field study, the concept of objectivity to have its maximum orientation was taken into consideration and every possibility of wrong information was checked and eradicated. Of the answer to a question seemed ambiguous, it was rechecked by cross examining the question.

During the course of field study, our objective remained to know the reality of the phenomenon concerned. So, the relevant topics and themes were discussed, analysed as well as criticized, even during the discussion with villagers. The observation of the phenomenon concerned became possible through serious and minute study during the field work.
In addition to the field study, the secondary sources were also utilized in order to get a quantitative as well as qualitative picture of the topic concerned under study. This secondary source material included books, articles, government reports, official records and so on. However, the statistical figures from the sources were taken cautiously.

Thus the information collected from primary and secondary sources about the nature and implications of population growth at block level, was aggregated, tabulated, analysed in the pre-determined theoretical framework and then described systematically. Subsequently, these findings were discussed and certain conclusions and suggestions were drawn accordingly.

2.6 Sample

As already mentioned, the study was carried out among 500 respondent families of the block. The sample was taken from all the 19 Panchayat-Halqas of the block as per the existing population ratio. The Heads of these 500 families on the criterion of income were approached for the purpose of obtaining required information. The total sample respondents were divided into three main income strata which accommodated the respondents from all groups, classes and professions. The selection of respondents was a conscious choice, in order to give representation to all societal groups. These respondent families belonged to the following income groups:

Table 2.1
Income of the Respondent Families in Shangas Block.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income group</th>
<th>Income Range (Rupees)</th>
<th>Number of Respondent Families</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Class</td>
<td>Upto 30,000</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>31,000 — 60,000</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>61,000 and above</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Income standard refers to the annual gross income of the respondent's family from all sources measured in terms of rupees.
2.7 Analysis

During the study, respondents of the block were put under sociological investigation. Each question and sub-question was numbered separately in the Interview Schedule. Simultaneously, the response of the respondents to the question and sub-question was categorized and each category was codified and given a particular number. These code numbers with responses were then noted on tabulation sheets. These statistical figures made the tabulation of data possible. A number of tables were made theme-wise, question-wise, identical responses were counted and placed in a tabular form. The similar and dissimilar responses for a particular theme were aggregated. After tabulation and aggregation, each thematic table was explained on the basis of the aggregate of the responses provided by the respondents. Wherever needed, co-relation of the responses with regard to the respondent’s socio-economic affiliation, educational status, demographic status were explained. Lastly, a detailed sociological analysis of the findings of each thematic table and responses were provided in relation to the implications of population growth. Finally, this analysis led to the sociological explanation and interpretation of the responses given by the sample respondents.

2.8 Difficulties Encountered

During the course of field-work for this study, some problems were faced by the investigator. Firstly, some of the respondents were not conscious about the research and displayed apathy during the interview. Secondly, because of the prevailing militancy situation in the State, the research work got hampered for some time, until the confidence of the respondents was gained. Thirdly, the problem of rapport existed for some time. But, these problems were solved to a great extent by making the villagers in general and village notables in particular conscious about the objectives of the purely academic study. The problems were tackled gradually, after developing a rapport with the respondents and were assured
that their identity would not be revealed, especially with regard to some extremely personal and sensitive questions. Moreover, attempts were made to negate the degree of bias through the adoption of objective analysis and scientific methodology.

References

