

NATIONAL POPULATION EXPLOSION: 1961-2001

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A GOOD DEAL of attention has been focussed on the problem of population growth during the past decade. Discussions by economists, demographers, politicians and administrators are centered on what is currently described as the 'population explosion' in the country. This term refers to a situation where the death-rate declines very fast, there is no parallel reduction in the birth rate, and as a consequence the rate of population growth becomes alarmingly high. This calls for a detailed investigation of forces underlying the current demographic upsurge and possible changes in the future population situation in the country. Hence, the object of the study is to provide estimates of future changes in population by sex and strategic manpower age-groups.

Several factors contribute to the population growth. These are, fertility, mortality and migration. The contribution of last component to national growth-rate of population has been almost insignificant. Therefore, precision of the estimates of population changes depends solely on the judicious selection of realistic and plausible assumptions as to the future trends in the birth-rate and death-rate. These assumptions are to be based on a judgement of the past observations and experience in similar situations.

During 1951-60 the birth-rate, as estimated by the Census Actuary, was 41.7 per thousand population as compared to 40 per thousand population during 1941-50; whereas there was an improvement of nine years in the expectation of life at birth (e_0) for the same period. Similar phenomenon is observed in other low-income countries like Ceylon, Malaya and Taiwan, where death-rates have been brought down considerably while birth-rates remained unchanged.¹ Therefore,

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¹ COALE, A., and E. HOOVER, *Population Growth and Economic Development in Low-income Countries*, Princeton University, p. 13.