

THE STATE OF WORLD POPULATION 1980



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Dear Editor,

I have pleasure in submitting to you the
'State of World Population' Report for 1980.

I hope we may count on your co-operation in
informing your readers on some of the important
issues raised. We have also prepared graphic
presentations of the main facts, plus features
and illustrations, which we hope may be useful
to you.

We would be very pleased indeed to receive
clippings of any articles, or of your own
editorials, on the State of World Population
1980.

With thanks,

Tarzie Vittachi

Tarzie Vittachi
Chief, Information and Public Affairs Division
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THE STATE OF WORLD POPULATION 1980



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Introduction

IN the decade of the 1980s the decline in world fertility will continue noticeably. The United Nations has estimated that the annual average rate of growth of world population would decline from about 2 per cent in the mid 1960s to about 1.8 per cent in the early 1980s, and to about 1.6 per cent at the end of the century.¹ However, this does not in any way reduce the magnitude of the "population problem" since the annual population growth rate would continue to exceed 2 per cent for the less developed countries till the end of this decade.² In fact, during the remaining two decades of this century, close to 2 billion would be added to the world population and this would be almost equal to what was added between 1950 and 1980. Over 90 per cent of this increase will occur in the less developed countries and their population alone by the year 2000 would be nearly twice the total population the world had in 1950. By the year 2000, nearly 80 per cent of the world population would be living in the less developed countries. Given these facts, there is no cause for complacency even though we have entered a phase of declining world fertility.

The full implications of population growth can be understood only if we take into account the regional dimensions of the distribution of world population. First, most of the increase in world population between now and the year 2000 would take place again in the areas which have already experienced the largest increases in population between 1950 and 1980. Second, the countries and regions where such growth would take place are the poorest areas of the world.

Between now and 2000 AD it is likely that there will be a further increase in the numbers of the poor and a worsening of the depth of deprivation unless urgent measures are taken to alter the living conditions in these areas. Third, for the very same

reason, the international disparity in incomes would widen farther.

These configurations of population growth have already generated a number of differing population trends of far-reaching consequences which will be accentuated further during the next two decades. The growth of population in the poorest areas of the world is acting as a powerful push factor forcing an increase in the rates of migration of population. Since, in most of these less developed areas, poverty and lack of employment opportunities are most persistent in the rural areas, migrants tend to move towards urban areas. In many developing countries the pattern of urbanization is highly skewed, thus giving rise to high growth rates in certain urban centres. This will result in the emergence of large metropolitan centres which will be hard pressed to deal with this growth and will increasingly become centres of concentrated urban poverty. Finally, world resources, including technology and human resources, are not distributed in the same manner as population, and this lack of matching of resources with population will continue to affect the capability of less developed countries to progress economically. This report is confined largely to a discussion of these issues.

Regional Distribution of Population

The most striking feature of population growth in the next two decades is that the largest increases in population will occur in the poorest countries and regions of the world. Countries which feel the greatest need to balance resources and population growth are the least able to achieve this end.

An examination of the shares of world population



in different regions among the less developed countries shows that these have been rising for quite some time and will continue to do so during the next two decades. The only exception is the East Asian region, where, due to the projected decline in the birth rate for China, the share would decline from about 28 per cent in 1980 to about 23 per cent by the year 2000.³ The share of the rest of Asia is projected to rise from 32 per cent to 36 per cent, Africa from 11 per cent to 13 per cent, and Latin America from 8 per cent to 10 per cent during the same period.⁴

These changes in the shares of total world population among the less developed countries still do not fully indicate the nature of regionalisation of population problems. Since resources and efforts have to be matched with the increase in numbers of population, it is necessary to study these numbers and how they will be distributed. It is estimated that between 1950 and 2000 A.D., while 600 million would be added to the combined total population of Africa and Latin America, the addition to the population of Asia will exceed 1000 million. However, most of this increase in Asia would be confined to South Asia, amounting there to over 780 million.

Mortality

The growth in numbers not only indicates the disparate movements of fertility and mortality rates but also mirrors the degree of success of programmes aimed at modifying the effects of these trends. This is apparent from an examination of the trends in fertility and mortality rates. In most cases greater declines are indicated for mortality rates than for fertility rates. This is a result of it being easier to bring about a reduction in the mortality rate than to bring about a similar reduction in the birth rate since the former appears to respond more quickly to public policy implementation. At the same time, a number of studies on population change have indicated that a decline in mortality rates is a necessary pre-condition for bringing about rapid declines in population growth rate. However, its proximate effect is a rise in population growth rate. Herein lies a paradox of population trends. The lower the death rate, the greater the likelihood of the population growth rate falling. It appears inevitable that before world population could settle down to an era of stable population, the population of less developed countries would have to pass through the various phases of this process.

Africa

An examination of the rates of population growth, fertility and mortality shows that various countries and regions are indeed at different stages of this process of demographic transition. By far the highest rates seem to persist in the different regions of the African continent. It is estimated that the average annual growth rate of population would vary between 3.2 per cent for Western Africa and 2.6 per cent for Middle Africa during the period 1980-85.⁵ Most of the countries in the African continent appear to be in the very early phase of demographic transition in which, due to a fall in death rates, their population growth rates are still

rising from the previous levels. While fertility rates continue to be high in most of these countries, this decline in mortality rates is attributed to medical intervention and the spread of health care facilities. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Kenya. Kenya has a birth rate close to 50 per 1000 and a death rate of 12 per 1000, resulting in a growth rate of 3.8 per cent per annum.⁶ The birth rates of most of the African countries, excluding Egypt, Tunisia and a few islands, are in the mid-40s or higher, and, depending on the rates of mortality decline, most of these countries are experiencing a phase of increasing population growth rates during this decade.

Latin America

Latin America depicts great variations in fertility and while some countries are in the early phase of demographic transition, there are others, especially in the Caribbean and Temperate South America, whose growth rates are tending towards the replacement level of fertility. However, there is a uniform factor which clearly distinguishes the Latin American situation from that of Africa. Mortality rates are uniformly low in all countries of Latin America, except Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras, Peru and Nicaragua. There is hardly any country with a fertility level comparable to rates prevailing in African countries. But due to the time-lag in fertility decline, the very low rate of mortality in some of the Latin American countries has resulted in an initial increase in population growth rate. However, only the Middle American region seems to have a rate of population growth comparable to regions in Africa and this is largely due to the high growth rate of Mexico. The population of Mexico may nearly double between now and the year 2000 if United Nations projections hold true.

Asia

Nearly 60 per cent of the increase in total world population between now and 2000 A.D. would be in Asia, and therefore what happens in Asia will largely determine the overall trends in world population. The aggregate projections for Asia conceal wide regional variations and include figures for East Asia where fertility levels have declined significantly (the only exception being Mongolia). Much of this decline can be attributed to the projected fall in the birth rate of China. It is also a fact that mortality rates are uniformly low in all countries of this sub-region. The rest of Asia can be divided broadly into three groups. There is the group consisting of Singapore, Sri Lanka, and possibly Malaysia where a distinct demographic transition is already under way. India, due to her size, should be treated separately. Fertility and mortality rates in India lie somewhere between those of East Asia and the rest of Asia. In the remaining Asian countries birth rates range from the mid 30s to the upper 40s and death rates lie between 15 and 20 per 1000 population. Almost all Muslim nations in this region have fertility rates around 45 per 1000: countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan belong to the poorest among Asian nations and also have very high mortality rates.

Population Migration

AN important aspect of population growth in the less developed countries has been the inability of employment to keep pace with population growth. This has turned out to be one of the most intractable problems of development in these countries in the past, leading to considerable internal migration of populations, or between countries or regions. Within the developing countries themselves, labour migration and the movement of population have been from rural areas to mainly urban areas. This has led to unprecedented growth in urbanization in many less developed countries.

Apart from internal migration, there has been an increase in international migration of skilled and unskilled labour from the less developed countries. Such migration has become, for some countries, a major element in their population trends. The nature and extent of migration between countries is generally determined by income differentials, but the number of immigrants is often restricted by the recipient countries. In spite of such restrictions, it seems clear from an examination of available data on international migration that it does reflect a salient population trend in various regions of the world.

International Migration

The recent migrations are of a modest scale compared to the mass migrations of population that took place from Europe to the New World in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. However, they represent a resumption of earlier patterns of international migration. It is estimated that at least 52 million people migrated from Europe to the United States, Canada, Latin America and Oceania between 1840 and 1930, and this amounted to 20 per cent of the population of Europe at the beginning of this period.⁷ There has also been a significant change in this pattern of migration from Europe and since 1960 there is a positive net migration to Western Europe.

The largest inflows of migrants within Western Europe have been to the Federal Republic of Germany and to France. The average annual net migration per 1000 population in the Federal Republic of Germany was +3.5 in the period 1960-70 and +5.9 during 1970-74.⁸ The natural rate of increase of population in Western Europe has become close to zero and in a few countries it is negative. If these trends continue, in a number of countries of Western Europe, migration from the less developed countries may be the only source of population growth.

A United Nations estimate for mid-1974 gives 9.5 million immigrants from the less developed countries as residing in the industrialized countries of Northern and Western Europe, Northern America and Oceania, compared to 3.2 million in 1960.⁹ These estimates are considered to be on the low side since they exclude illegal immigrants who escape inclusion in official statistics. Nearly 60 per cent of the total immigrants from the less developed countries in 1974 are in North America and Oceania. It is also estimated that for the period 1970-74, 70 per cent of the total immigrants to the United States came from the less developed coun-

tries.¹⁰ Of these, 40% were from Latin America and 40% from Asia (1974 figure).

The migration from Asia reflects both the pressure of population and the lack of economic opportunities. Latin America, however, had been a region of net immigration from Europe for a considerable length of time. A reversal of this trend has taken place since 1960 and despite lower population densities in the region, Latin American migration is spurred by the uneven distribution of both resources and economic benefits as well as by the extent of differential advantage one gains by migrating to the United States (almost the whole of Latin American migration is to North America).

Though there has been an increase in the number of Asian immigrants to industrialized countries, in most countries of Asia emigration has not reached any significant level as a proportion of their populations. Since 1974 there has been a considerable flow of labour to the oil exporting countries of the Gulf region and the Middle East. While this emigration has benefited a number of countries, especially in South Asia, through the repatriation of valuable foreign exchange, the numbers are small compared to their populations and it is also of a temporary nature. Migrants of this kind raise a number of issues which need international agreements and solutions. It is essential to protect the human rights of such immigrants, and mechanisms and safeguards need to be devised for this purpose. When such immigrants return home problems of resettlement arise. Some plans already exist to deal with such problems, for example, the schemes for resettlement of labourers who have returned as a consequence of the Sri Lanka-India agreement on the repatriation of plantation labour. With the increase in temporary migration of labour, such problems may assume greater importance in the future.

Refugees

A second type of migration which is of great international concern is the problem of refugees and their rights and rehabilitation. Large-scale forced migration of population for political reasons not only affects the development and economic structure of the country where it happens, but also leads to considerable strain on the resources of neighbouring countries to which such movements take place. Unlike labour migration, such refugee movements include women and children. In recent years the number of refugees in Asia has grown enormously and now many Asian countries are finding themselves unable to cope with such a volume of refugees. The same is true of the refugee problem in other parts of the world, particularly in Africa, and refugees are rapidly becoming an important international population issue.

Internal Migration

Cities have always attracted people. They were seats of government, the headquarters of trading and financial houses, the centres of culture and the sites of town houses for the aristocracy and landed gentry from the countryside. Then, with the beginnings of the industrial revolution, cities became the

hub of economic activity and of transportation networks, and also the location of the means of livelihood for a growing industrial proletariat. In those days, cities were designed to solve problems, to provide various types of external services to the growing industrial sector and to promote the growth of consumption of the products of industry. Now many of these have become problems due to rapid and unplanned growth.

Urbanization in the second half of the 20th century represented an antithesis of the earlier phase of the growth of cities. Latest United Nations estimates suggest that world urban population has doubled since 1950 and will double again before the end of the century. By then about three-fourths of the population in the more developed countries will be living in urban areas. While only about one-third of the population of less developed countries lives today in urban areas, the proportion is likely to increase to nearly one-half by 2000 A.D. These changes would be brought about by a higher rate of urbanization in the less developed countries than in the more developed countries.

The expected growth in urbanization in the less developed countries largely reflects population growth between now and the year 2000. It is the result not only of the natural increase in urban population but also of massive migrations of population to these areas in search of employment. It is estimated that the largest cities will grow more rapidly than the smaller cities and some of these are likely to reach proportions which are totally unfamiliar to town planners. In 1950 only four of the fifteen largest cities were in the less developed countries, but this number rose to seven by 1975. It is projected that twelve of the fifteen largest cities would be in the less developed countries by the year 2000.¹¹

There were only six cities with populations of five million and over in 1950 and their combined population was only 47 million. This has already risen to 26 cities in 1980 with a combined population of 252 million. Projections indicate that this number will rise to approximately 60 with an estimated population of nearly 650 million by the year 2000.¹²

The seriousness of these trends in metropolitan growth can be understood only if again, we analyze these regionally. In 1980, of the 26 cities of five million or more, 16 were in the less developed countries with a total population of 141 million, compared to only one city in 1950. By the year 2000, of the 60 cities of this size, 45 will be in the less developed countries. In 1980, there is only one

city in Africa with a population exceeding five million, but this number is expected to rise to five by 2000 A.D. The largest number of cities in this category are in Asia, and their numbers will rise from ten in 1980 to 29 in the year 2000, and their combined population will increase from 80 million to nearly 300 million. These figures clearly indicate how closely the trends in urbanization and metropolization follow the general trends in population growth and the regional distribution of world population. Due to migration from rural areas to urban centres, the rates of urbanization are much higher than the rates of natural increase in population.

Though the entire world is moving towards bigger and more numerous urban agglomerations, the urbanization trends vary between more and less developed countries. The urban future has become a subject of great concern in both groups of countries, though for different reasons. While the less developed countries are facing explosive growth in the cities a reverse trend has begun during the last two decades in some of the metropolitan areas of the more developed countries, where due to their inability to cope with the problems of urban growth, there has been an escalation of economic costs. These factors have resulted in either a stagnation in their population or a reduction due to movement of population from city to suburbs and further afield. The reverse flow of population from New York City to the Sun Belt is an example of this trend.

The growth of urbanization in the less developed countries reflects as much the lack of rural development as the growth of industry and employment opportunities in the urban agglomerations. Thus, the problems of the urban future and the growth of metropolitan areas in the less developed countries are equally a problem of 'total' development of the country just like any other population or socio-economic problem. The solution to the urban problem lies as much in the Rural areas as in the cities themselves. Only a contented countryside can provide a lasting solution to the ills afflicting the urban world.

Considering the manifold dimensions involved in the urban problem and with a view to exploring the possibilities of integrating these issues within a framework of population and development, the UNFPA is sponsoring an International Conference on the Urban Future in Rome in September this year, where mayors from 60 cities and planners from the same countries will participate.

Population-Resource Balance

THE next two decades of this century will be a hard testing time for the world community's ability to cope with the demands for food, education, health care and employment caused by this rapid increase in numbers. While the so-called population bomb may have been defused, the aspiration bomb has not. Every one of the 125 million babies born each year is a bundle of aspirations and the drive to fulfill these will become the most dynamic and unpredictable force in world affairs in the years ahead. And the explosion of aspirations in

the last two decades and the next two is likely to become a tremendous problem in its impact on limited resources, fragile ecosystems, on the struggle against mass poverty and on the world's political, economic and social fabric.

In the developing world, today's young people know more about the world and expect more from it than their parents did. They are increasingly educated, increasingly unemployed, and increasingly concentrated in cities.

In the developed world, where each person born

will consume 20 to 40 times more in his or her lifetime than a person born in a developing country, the drive to fulfill continuously rising material aspirations will have a major impact on the environment, on the possibilities for meeting the most basic needs for the poor majority in the developing world and on the struggle for more just economic relationships within and between nations. In this context it is worth remembering that population growth is a problem only when resources cannot meet the needs of people, and that by definition, it is as much a problem of regulating the use of resources as it is of regulating birth.

Just as the decade of the 70s saw the emergence of a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between population and development issues, we are also now witnessing the delineation of a similar relationship between population and the world's resources. For instance, the Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the Chairmanship of Willy Brandt states:¹³

"A question we cannot overlook is whether the resources and the ecological system of the earth will suffice to meet the needs of a greatly increased world population at the economic standard that is hoped for. So far the bulk of the depletion of non-renewable resources and the pressure on the oceans and the atmosphere have been caused by the spectacular industrial growth of the developed countries where only one-fifth of the world's population live. But population growth in some parts of the Third World is already a source of alarming ecological changes, and its industrialization is bound to lead to greater pressure on resources and environment."

Food Needs

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)¹⁴ has estimated that the number of malnourished people in the less developed countries (excluding China and other centrally planned countries of Asia) rose from about 400 million in 1969-71 to 450 million in 1972-74. They constituted about a quarter of the population of these countries. The prospects for dramatic increases in food output appear dim unless significant technological breakthroughs in high yielding varieties of seeds for a number of crops materialize or a considerable increase in inputs enables a rise in agricultural productivity. The estimated annual rate of increase in food production in the 70s in less developed countries has been less than three per cent. Unless a substantial increase in the rate takes place, the number of undernourished is unlikely to diminish. Even under the optimistic assumption that the proportion of undernourished is halved by the year 2000, it is apparent that their absolute number may still remain around 450 million in the less developed countries.

Estimates indicate that in the decade of the 70s the rate of growth of agricultural production in Africa has been less than half that achieved in other developing regions. In fact per capita food output in Africa declined at an annual rate of 1.3 per cent during the period 1970-77. The situation is no less true in the case of the most seriously affected countries in the Asian region. In their case also per capita food production has declined. Latin America

is the only region where food output has risen slightly above the rate of growth of population, but it is feared that this has been achieved at considerable cost. The FAO Report on the State of Food and Agriculture for 1978 points out with reference to Latin America that "the expansion of the modern sector appears to have been accomplished by a breakdown of the traditional sector, so that rural socio-economic disequilibria have been accentuated".¹⁵

The implications of these trends are clear. In Africa the self-sufficiency ratio for food declined from 98 per cent in 1962-64 to 90 per cent in 1972-74.¹⁶ During the same period, the total food imports into the region trebled. In South and South East Asia, where rice is the staple food, the average increase in rice production was only 2.2 per cent per annum, which was well below the population growth rate of 2.5 per cent per annum.¹⁷

The growth of population and its regional distribution between 1950 and 1975 is already bringing about a major transformation in the world food economy. While world grain output nearly doubled between 1950 and 1975, per capita grain production increased only one-third in the same period. Taken along with the fact that in the most densely populated countries belonging to the less developed group, there has been hardly any increase in per capita output, one can infer where such increases have taken place. Some developed countries which were net exporters of grain in the past have now become net importers of grain. The imbalances in the distribution of food and population are likely to be with us for some time and it is imperative that mechanisms are developed for the transfer of grain from surplus to deficit regions of the world. While there is a global responsibility to eliminate starvation irrespective of whether it leads to socio-economic development or changes in population parameters, there is considerable scope to increase food output in the less developed countries if appropriate policy measures are implemented. Such measures should include redistribution of land, provision of credit, expansion of irrigation and support of agricultural prices.

Human Resources

The problem of resources for the less developed countries is not only a problem of availability of natural resources but also a problem of inadequate development of human resources. The less developed countries often lack technical, administrative and managerial resources. The bulk of their labour force constitutes unskilled labour and their productivity is also affected by factors such as malnutrition, poor health, inadequate health care and lack of educational facilities. Some of these factors have affected most the conditions of children and women.

The significance of health care for the welfare of the population and for the success of population programmes is obvious. Life expectancy figures provide a good summary measure of the status of the health of a population. Life expectancy in 1975-80 was only 54 years for the less developed countries compared to 68 years for the more developed countries.¹⁸ Life expectancy figures reflect mortality rates and an increase in life expectancy is, therefore, closely linked to the expansion of health care facilities and to improvement in nutri-

tional levels. Among the less developed countries themselves there are pockets of high mortality and these areas will need special programmes. The highest mortality rates among the less developed countries are to be found in Africa. The whole region of Africa, with the exception of some countries in the extreme North and South of the continent, suffers from high mortality rates. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan are a group of high mortality countries in the Asian region. On the whole, countries in Latin America have been able to bring down mortality rates and do not appear to require as much assistance in this area.

The picture that emerges is not very different when we examine the prospects for the development of education and the projected figures of literacy rates. Estimates of illiteracy provided by UNESCO⁹ show that in most of Africa over 50 per cent of population over age 15 would be illiterate in 1980. The same is true for South Asia and the Middle East. There are also a few countries in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East where the proportion of illiterates in the total population is over 90 per cent. Unless a significant effort is made in these countries to improve literacy levels, the regional disparities in levels of education will continue to persist.

All the above factors affect most severely the conditions and opportunities available to children and to women. High infant mortality rates and lack of educational opportunities not only affect the present living conditions but also affect the future

development of human resources. We have just completed the International Year of the Child and a lasting service to children would be to make an all-out effort to reduce infant mortality and to provide universal literacy. This year marks the half-way point of the International Decade of Women. The brunt of poverty in the home is invariably borne by women and they are also the ones who suffer the consequences of high fertility rates. If women are excluded from taking part in the development process, this detracts from the human resources required for development and is itself a denial of basic human rights. Improvement in the status of women is closely related to overall development in these countries.

When all these regional variations are taken into account, it is quite apparent that the employment problem is not only one of creating additional jobs for over 600 million people but also of creating jobs that will take into account the nature and characteristics of the labour force. Since there are regional concentrations of population, employment generation would also have to be concentrated. At the same time, a substantial increase in the unskilled labour force in countries with very low incomes would only complicate this process because the potential for employment generation could be the lowest in these countries. Low incomes, high unemployment and poverty are also bound to affect not only the implementation of population programmes but even their effectiveness during their implementation.

Looking Ahead

THERE is a great deal of misunderstanding on the nature and consequences of the current demographic transition in the less developed countries. A demographic transition took place in Western European countries in the 19th century, when their base populations were much smaller so that even when their growth rates rose the absolute numbers added to their populations were not large. This period also coincided with colonial expansionism on the one hand and industrialization of their domestic economies on the other. Colonies assured them that the resources — food supply and other natural resources — necessary for sustaining high levels of population growth and industrialization were available at comparably low economic costs. At the same time, the increases in the supply of labour resulting from the higher growth rate of population could be absorbed by the expanding industrial sector. Besides, opportunities for migration to the United States, South America and Australia were also open to the populations of Europe.

These favourable conditions which were available to Europe then were not then and are not now available to the less developed countries. To begin with, some of the large countries, such as India and China, belonging to the less developed group always contained within themselves a major share of the world population. With an increase in the growth of population, their share of world population has risen further. The process of mortality decline which began in the 19th century in Western Europe did not spread to the currently less

developed countries at that time. On the other hand, advances made in medical technology in the 20th century have made effective control of communicable diseases possible. This has led to larger declines in mortality rates within a shorter time span in the less developed countries than it took in Western Europe in the 19th century. While paucity of resources are limiting the capacity of these countries to develop, restrictions on immigration are also limiting the scope for migration of population. All these factors need to be borne in mind when analyzing the current trends and devising population programmes and policies.

In my last report I indicated the need for an ever-widening array of "New Integrations" in the 1980s between demographic policies and development policy. The Colombo Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development held in September 1979 called for such an integration and for the strengthening of population programmes. The Brandt Commission Report too has emphasized the need for such integration. We are about to enter the Third Development Decade — an opportunity to begin such an integration by incorporating population programmes into development strategies.

But, such "integrations" require a pledge by all concerned that the programmes, which have had considerable success and need to be enlarged and extended, will not suffer from lack of resources. Such resources are needed on a wide front and population programmes form only one element of

such a scheme. The Colombo Conference has called for a total volume of international population assistance of \$1 billion by 1984.

The UNFPA is aware of the wide disparities that exist among the less developed countries and has considered a number of countries for assistance on a priority basis. It is clear from the studies on various interrelationships between population and

socio-economic variables that the success of population programmes is closely linked to the implementation of various other socio-economic programmes such as health care, education, adult literacy and maternal care. What we do now about population and development will determine the living conditions and opportunities for unborn generations of the next century.

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The Cradle and the Grave

When many children die in infancy, you would expect population growth to be slow. But the opposite is the case. Leading Indian demographer S.L. RAO examines the paradoxical link between birth and death-rates.

Call it irony or call it a paradox but one of the greatest triumphs of international cooperation may well be causing one of its greatest challenges of the immediate future. For the very triumph achieved in the struggle against the traditional killer diseases is allowing more children to survive and more people to live longer and has led to an immediate increase in population numbers. Indeed, as health facilities become more and more widely available, many countries are experiencing an alarming population surge.

Demographers are more and more convinced that this improvement in health conditions and the consequent jump in the population is a prerequisite for an eventual decline in fertility rates. No considerations, of course, should hinder the desirability of overcoming disease as an end in itself. Nevertheless the immediate effect is the growth in numbers now being

experienced in many parts of the developing world. If for no other reason, this increase is furthered by the practical consideration that it is easier to reduce the number of deaths than the number of births, at any rate in the short run.

The figures quoted by Dr. Mahler, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, in his address to the 32nd General Assembly of W.H.O. last year, clearly illustrate the correlation between crude birth rates and infant mortality. It is also significant that Africa has both the highest birth rates and the highest infant mortality figures of any world region. No decline in the annual population growth rate there can really be expected until the improvements in death rates have become established as more of a reality on the continent.

For it seems that the parents insure against a high rate of infant mortality by having more

births, and that only when death rates fall do they risk having smaller families.

Perhaps one of the best examples of an area where declining death rates have been accompanied by declining fertility rates is Sri Lanka. There infant deaths have declined from 141 per 1000 just after the Second World War to 50 per 1000 in 1968 and have continued to drop since. The overall population, after showing a high rate of increase for the first part of this period, has shown a sharp decline in recent years. In figures, the annual growth rate was 2.8 per cent during the period 1946-53 while in 1974 it had fallen to 1.4 per cent.

Similarly, there are clear indications that the level of fertility has started to decline in developing countries as a whole. During the 1965-75 decade, the crude birth rate in a group of 94 developing countries declined by about 13 per cent. This trend, though a very welcome sign, should not lead us to a sense of complacency in meeting the population challenges. In fact, there is an urgent need to reinforce the factors that are responsible for this decline and to initiate action where such declines have not yet begun.

All these changes in birth rates have also drastically changed the age of this planet's population.

The world is getting older. A glance at the

changing age structures of the world's population shows new challenges ahead - but also a unique opportunity for the less developed countries to catch up.

Over the next twenty years there will be a small but significant ageing of the population throughout the world. While this will be more pronounced in the developed countries when expressed as a percentage of the people living there (up from 10.6 per cent in 1975 to 13.2 per cent in 2000), the 0.8 per cent rise in the developing countries means that some 116 million more people will be living there beyond the age of 65 by the end of the century.

Taken by and large, few developing countries offer social security provisions, retirement benefits or any of the welfare payments which are taken for granted in most developed countries. So how are these millions of new 'pensioners' going to be supported? Under the traditional extended family system, that is clearly going to be an added burden and responsibility placed on the breadwinner in the family. Given the increasing competition for scarce jobs and the likelihood of soaring unemployment in many developing countries, this is unlikely to prove a satisfactory solution to the problem.

The challenge to the governments of the developing nations is going to be to devise new policies and programmes which will respond to what will be for most of them

an entirely new situation. This has been brought about by the success of the battle against many of the traditional killer diseases and the consequent increase in life expectancy. Yet, unless these new policies can be developed and tailored to the particular needs and the economic realities of the developing world, there is the real danger that the hopes of being able to live longer and resist an early death through wasting disease will leave a bitter taste as no provision is made for coping with the elderly.

In the developed world, despite a relatively long history of old-age pensions

and other social provisions, there is going to have to be a significant shift in resources from provision for the young to facilities for the elderly over the next quarter of a century to reflect the changing age profile. Theoretically, this should be possible inasmuch as the tax base (wage earners between the ages of 15 and 64) is going to increase slightly. Yet here too governments will have to think much more clearly about provisions for the elderly and particularly about ways whereby this important section of the population will be able to use constructively the leisure time which will be increasingly at their disposal.

World-wide Drop in Birth rates

"In the developing world, today's young people know more about the world and expect more from it than their parents did. They are increasingly educated, increasingly unemployed and increasingly gathered together in cities."

That is the main challenge facing the world over the coming decades according to Rafael M. Salas, Executive Director of the U.N. Fund for Population Activities in his 1980 'State of World Population' Report.

A world-wide decrease in fertility rate is occurring says Salas, but the 'aspiration bomb' is becoming ever more threatening. "The explosion of aspirations in the last two decades and the next two," says the Report, "is likely to become a tremendous problem in its impact on limited

resources, fragile ecosystems, on the struggle against mass poverty and on the world's political, economic and social fabric."

Rising aspirations create further imbalances between population size and the availability of resources. It is inevitable, despite falls in the fertility rate, that almost 2 billion more people will be added to the present 4.5 billion population of this planet by the end of the present century.

The first question is whether future resources will be sufficient to sustain such a population. Secondly - and equally important - it follows from this that there is a need to ensure a more equitable global allocation of the earth's resources. The current pattern of the consumption of resources

is that a person in the developed world consumes 20 to 40 times as much as one in the developing world. In the future, resources will have to be better deployed to reach the deprived areas of the world.

Rapid world population growth reflects major advances in world health which have cut down death rates. But it appears that this surge is in itself a pre-condition of falling population growth. Herein lies the paradox of population trends," says the 1980 Report.

The paradox is explained by the fact that a high rate of infant deaths leads parents to have many children in order to ensure that some survive. When death rates fall and parents become confident that their children will survive, they tend to reduce births to the number of children they actually want. "The lower the death rate," says Salas, "the greater the likelihood of the population growth rate falling."

Over 90 per cent of the increase in numbers between now and the year 2000 will occur in less developed countries and their populations will be nearly twice the total population of the world in 1950. So, of the anticipated 6 billion by 2000 AD, about 5 billion will be in the developing countries.

When looked at by regions, the picture becomes more sombre. Africa, South and South East Asia and Latin America are the three areas where the greatest increases in population will occur during the next two decades. Yet in Africa not only did the per capita food output decline at an annual rate of 1.3 per cent during the period 1970-77 but per capita incomes have remained among the lowest in the world. The situation in the most seriously affected countries in the Asian and Latin American regions is similar.

These widening regional disparities between population growth and availability of resources will have serious repercussions on the prospects for increased self-sufficiency in food, for further improvements in life expectancy, and the prospects for development of education and increased literacy. These factors, as Mr. Salas points out, are bound to affect not only the pace of the implementation of population programmes but even their impact during implementation.

Yet, if there is a problem of an imbalance between regions, an equally serious problem within each region is caused by internal and international migration. The 1980 Report especially draws attention to the phenomenal growth of cities in the developing countries.

In the developing world, the planning of population policies has to cope with the rapid and increasing drift of people to the urban areas, mainly from the surrounding countryside. As the Executive Director notes in his Report: "Only a contented countryside can provide a lasting solution to the ills afflicting the urban world."

In the developed countries there is a discernible trend of people and industry moving out of more congested cities. This will involve a greater diversion of resources from already over-burdened cities to develop new suburban areas.

By the year 2000 the number of cities with populations over 5 million will be around 60, as compared with only about six such cities in 1950. These 60 cities would account for nearly 650 million people and twelve of the largest cities will be in the less developed countries.

In September 1980, UNFPA is sponsoring an international conference in Rome on the urban future, which will bring

together city mayors and national planners from about 30 countries. The conference is to explore practical solutions to these problems of the cities and, particularly, to look at them within the framework of population and development.

Looking to the future, Mr. Salas calls for a stabilization of world population at a level which realistically relates to the availability of resources.

He emphasizes that what is done in the next decade will determine the living conditions of the next generations. Mr. Salas reports, "The UNFPA is aware of the wide disparities that exist among the less developed countries and has considered a number of countries for assistance on a priority basis. It is clear that the success of population programmes is closely linked to the implementation of other programmes such as health care, education, adult literacy and maternal care. What we do now about population and development will determine the living conditions and opportunities for unborn generations of the next century."

Half the World in Cities

The world's city population has doubled in the last thirty years and will double again in the next twenty. In this special feature, the former chief of the 'New Bombay' project J.B. D'SOUZA, who has spent almost forty years grappling at first hand with the problems of big city growth, puts forward a new set of principles for making the poor world's cities fit to live in.

Poets, professors and planners have for decades abhorred the growth of cities. Shuddering at the "dark Satanic mills" that taint the urban scene, poets have waxed lyrical over the pastoral pleasures of the countryside. Planners and professors have eulogised the small towns, telling everyone else to divert industrial and other growth to them from the cities (even while they themselves mostly live in large cities).

The sentiment is popular. There is something sinister about a large city: it harbours vice and crime, misery and slums, dirt and congestion, and sin - and everyone is against sin. The smaller towns are dens of virtue, where you can breathe the clean, fresh air that Nature gave us before we began to defile it.

Sinister or not, cities are an essential part of our world. One can, in fact, make two confident predictions about the cities of the Third World: first, they will continue to grow in population; second, city managements will generally remain inadequate, as they now are. So that our prophets of doom and gloom, our poets, professors and planners, who so regularly tell us how rapidly cities are deteriorating, will have the satisfaction of being right.

Before we surrender to such undiluted pessimism we must remind ourselves that we have been hearing these dismal predictions for many decades. Nemesis has always been just around the corner. Are

we at last in the midst or on the brink of a desperate urban crisis? Or is it that we in the middle and upper classes are perturbed about our cities - and we have come to regard them as our cities - because the poor have invaded them in large numbers, and are now more visible? Two or three decades ago the poor were far less obtrusive; there was an effective class apartheid. Today the urban poor live in shanties squeezed in among luxury apartment houses, and get in your way as you drive. They compete for living space and road space, for medical facilities, for water and transportation.

What has happened, of course, is that poor people from the villages have kept coming to the cities for many years, in search of better lives. Clearly, we cannot confine them to the rural areas, keeping the cities as oases of affluence in a bleak and impoverished national landscape. Villagers will remain in their villages only if their lives there become as attractive as life in the cities. We unthinkingly and helplessly deplore this flow of people instead of doing what we can to cope with it.

Properly, we ought to lament the influx only if migrants to the cities consequently live more wretched lives than they would if they stayed at home in the villages. Clearly they do not, because they would in that case go back, and we could suspend our lament. So that even after allowing for all the miseries they suffer, you must conclude that they

are better off than they were in the villages. Their employment opportunities have increased immensely, and so have their access to drinking water, to health services, to schools, to entertainment. The new options, the vistas of opportunity that the cities offer them, are a welcome escape from the irrational compulsions and social taboos that rural society often imposes on poor people.

The rural influx, then, is not the continuing disaster that we are told it is. It is a natural search for equilibrium in an unequal situation. Yet there is cause for concern: should we let our cities become dirty, congested concentration camps where living conditions might be even worse than they are in the villages? Can we be complacent about urban ghettos in which poor people don't always get safe water to drink, garbage is never removed, sanitation does not exist, and crime flourishes?

In the Third World our answers to questions of this kind have too often centred around the bulldozer. We have nourished the delusion that demolishing squatter hutments here and there, or even on a large scale as in Delhi in 1975, is in some sense a 'final solution'. In fact such wanton measures overlook these people's contribution to the economy of urban areas - a contribution that is seriously disrupted if they are dispersed, or relocated at places on a city's periphery. For it is the

squatter settlements that house so many of a city's construction workers, its porters and loaders in the markets, shops and railway stations, its rickshaw pullers, tonga and taxi drivers, its pedlars, its carpenters, potters and barbers, its petty retail traders, its tinkers, tailors and candlestick-makers - all woven into the lower levels of the urban economy, but all essential for its efficient operation. Their relocation imposes an extra burden on economies already under stress, adds to the load on the city's already creaking transportation system, and piles untold misery on the victims of these bulldozer policies.

Priorities in a city manager's plan of administration are often topsyturvy. Let's look at what a harassed city administrator can do.

You would imagine that if the administration cannot place the needs of the poor at the top of the scale it can at least try to ensure for all citizens equal access to civic facilities. This is seldom done. The poorest areas of a city are generally dirtiest, not because the poor have dirtier habits, but because they are forced to live more densely. Yet municipal conservancy departments regularly give these areas less attention per resident than they give to sparsely settled upper class localities.

Take transportation. Much of our city manager's attention, and more of his city's money, go into improving the road system; making more roads, repairing

and widening them, and regulating traffice to help cars to move about quickly. Here again, disproportionate portions of the city's revenue are devoted to the comforts of relatively few people - money that could far more usefully be spent on improving a city 'bus system and reserving lanes for it on the city streets, on laying out bicycle tracks, and discouraging private cars.

The use of land too suffers from irrationality and extravagance that hurt the urban poor. City planners in the Third World have tenaciously clung to outworn theories and practices. They have tried to divide the city into chaste zones, each neatly earmarked for a particular kind of use. The result: a curtailment of the land available for some particularly popular use and a consequent gift, in price escalation, to the owners of such land. Planners have forgotten to plan for the people; they do not generally care how most people in Third World cities want to live. The rigid segregation of land uses that planners prefer inflicts inconvenience and hardship on poor citizens, by lengthening the time they have to spend on shopping, or educating themselves, or commuting to and from work.

A settlement that has happily escaped the planners' attentions is the walled city of Old Delhi, where, consequently, the people's convenience is greatly enhanced, and where the quality of life would

be much higher if the municipality were to spend as much per capita on cleaning as it does in Lutyens' gracious and sparsely settled New Delhi - all this at far lower cost to the city manager, because roads are so much less extensive, water and sewerage lines are shorter, and so on.

Chaste integrity in zoning is not the only part of our city planners' bible that needs change. There are unrealistic lower limits on the sizes of house plots, which combine with the land prices generally prevalent to prevent vast numbers of poor people from acquiring land to live on. There are, similarly, prescriptions about the kinds of materials a house builder may use in construction, prescriptions that prevent him from using simple local materials (mud, thatch) that he can afford. Such restrictions (materials, plot sizes, etc.) prevent an economical solution of the problem of housing the urban poor. If a city manager in a poor country can replace these imported

constraints by sensible rules appropriate to the life style of the urban poor, he will find that they can improvise housing which they will later improve into wholesome homes, reasonably well laid out and equipped, and largely free from the health hazards that today characterise the squatter areas - provided they are secure in their land tenure.

Our city managers can opt for these practical policies. It is unlikely that they will. Some of them will fret about the political infeasibility of bulldozer operations. Others will yearn for a legal ban on rural migration.

Centuries ago Elizabeth I tried to contain London, which then had 2 per cent of the nation's population instead of today's 24 per cent. Many of today's city managers have similar delusions. The urban malaise in Third World cities will move inexorably to a crisis - unless our city managers really begin to manage.

Two Abortions for Every Five Births

For every five births in the world there are now two abortions. NEW INTERNATIONALIST editor PETER ADAMSON reports on the need for a better way of avoiding unwanted children.

Today 300,000 women had a baby and 120,000 had an abortion. That fact - two abortions for every five live births - is brutal daily evidence of the need for a better way of avoiding unwanted pregnancy.

More evidence, if more were needed, is now beginning to emerge from the \$40 million World Fertility Survey, the largest international survey ever undertaken. "Preliminary results show that in most developing countries, half of the married women aged 15 to 49 don't want any more children," says the Survey's data analyst Herman Rodriguez. "But of those, only half are using any modern contraceptive method."

This unmet need for the knowledge and the means to plan births is

one reason why the U.N. Fund for Population Activities has called for \$1 billion in international population assistance by 1984.

'Population assistance' is not just a new euphemism for condoms, loops and birth pills. For in the last five years, the whole issue of family planning has been revolutionised. And a new understanding has been born.

The battle hymn of this revolution is that large families are more a result of poverty than a cause.

Where there are no old-age pensions, no medical services, and no unemployment pay, children are the main source of economic security. Where the tasks of fetching water and wood and tending animals take up to twelve hours a day, children are an asset in

the family's struggle for survival. Where infant mortality rates are high, many children are necessary to ensure the survival of some.

Preaching small families to people who need more children is not only insensitive it is also ineffective. "Unless at least a latent motivation towards smaller families exists," says University of Michigan expert Ronald Freedman, "providing the means and the services will have little effect."

Several hundred new population studies published in recent years have played the spotlight on the various factors which lead men and women to want fewer children. Chief amongst them are better health and lower infant mortality; rising incomes and greater economic security; the spread of education and the emancipation of women. Such changes do not depend for their justification on their contribution towards lowering the rate of population growth. They are the aim and the measure of development itself.

If and when rising living standards provide the motivation for smaller families, then family planning can provide the means. But family planning itself has not escaped the revolution of recent years. Today, family planning is coming to be seen by many parents as an integral part of improved health services.

There are many commonsense reasons for merging family planning with health services - it helps to avoid duplicating personnel and administration where resources are scarce; it helps in the not infrequent cases where contraceptives themselves have adverse effects on health; it helps that there is often a relationship of trust between people and their health workers. But most important of all, family planning is one of the numbers in the code which releases the combination lock of community health.

Perhaps because it has long been considered a 'woman's problem', the link between family planning and health has only been given priority, not money. Yet the contribution which family planning could make to improve community health is so great that the expenditure it requires would be amply justified even if population growth itself were not a problem.

Every year in Africa and Asia alone, half a million women die from 'maternal causes' - leaving behind over 1 million motherless children. In Latin America, illegal abortion is now the number one killer of women between the ages of 15 and 39. World-wide, 25 million women a year suffer serious illness or complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Fifteen million of the 125 million babies born every year will not reach their first birthday. And these deaths are just the tragic tip of an iceberg of

illness which affects every other aspect of the struggle for economic development.

The availability of family planning alone cannot cure all these ills. Inadequate food, lack of education, poor health services and back-breaking manual labour all add to the risks of pregnancy and birth for both mother and child. But if, on top of all this, births are too closely spaced then the risks soar.

Nutritionists like Professor Derrick Jeliffe call it the 'maternal depletion syndrome'. Village women in Bangladesh call it 'shutika'. But both are talking about the same thing - the fact that being pregnant, giving birth and breast feeding are exhausting processes for a woman's body. And it takes time to recover.

If the recovery time is too short, then health pays the price. Infants are more likely to be malnourished. Mothers suffer from anaemia, toxæmia and plain exhaustion. Babies are prone to low birth weights - carrying with it 20 times the risk of death in infancy. And often the next youngest child suffers as well: 'kwashiorkor', the wasting disease of malnutrition whose symptoms are known throughout the developing world, is a Ghanaian word meaning 'the illness of a baby deposed from the breast too soon'.

The age of the mother, as well as the frequency of birth, is also a strand in the web which links

family planning to health. Outside the age band 20-35, there is a higher incidence of unwanted pregnancy, a higher risk to the mother, and a higher rate of mortality among the infants born. And roughly one-third of all births in the world are to mothers younger than 20 or older than 35.

The women who are at the sharp end of this 'depletion syndrome' know better than anybody else how it affects their own and their family's health. And it is not just the lack of family planning availability which prevents them from taking their own fertility and their own health into their own hands. It is often the fact that they live in societies where men take the decisions and women take the consequences.

The availability and acceptability of family planning, by both men and women, could be crucial in reducing this heavy toll on human health. But above all, family planning needs to be, and be seen to be, a service which improves people's health and increases their power over their own lives, and not an imposition which is insensitive to their circumstances and contemptuous of their rights.

These twin recognitions - that rising living standards bring about the motivation towards smaller families and that family planning is an essential component of health and an improved quality of life - cast a different light on the issue of world population growth. In a word, look after the people and the population will look after itself.

**UNITED NATIONS
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POPULATION
ACTIVITIES**

Photograph submitted for use with the
'State of World Population' Report
or with the NEWS FEATURE :
'Two Abortions for every Five Births.'



Women attending a talk on family planning in Sir Lanka — but most women live in societies where men take the decisions and women take the consequences.

Photograph by Mark Edwards

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'State of World Population' Report
or with the NEWS FEATURE :
'The Cradle and the Grave.'



Every day more children die in the poor world than are born in the rich world.
Only when child death-rates fall will parents risk having fewer children.

*Photograph by Mark Edwards**

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ACTIVITIES**

Photograph submitted for use with the
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or with the NEWS FEATURE :
'Half the World in Cities.'

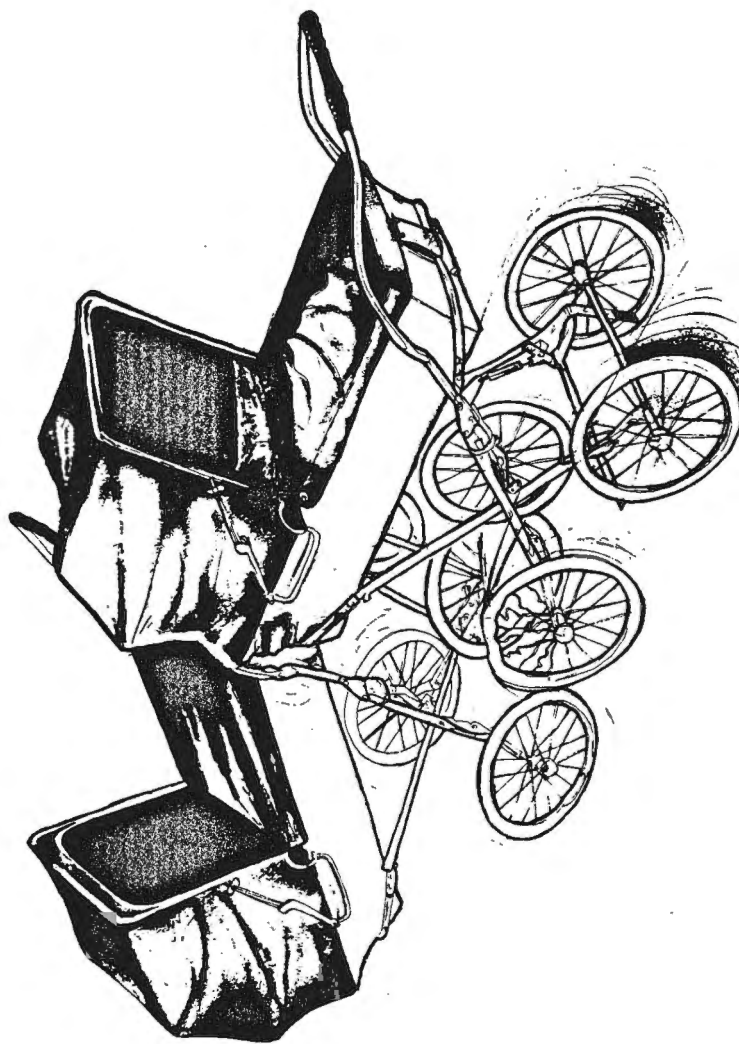


"We unwittingly deplore the flow of people into cities instead of doing what we can to cope with it."

Photograph by Mark Edwards

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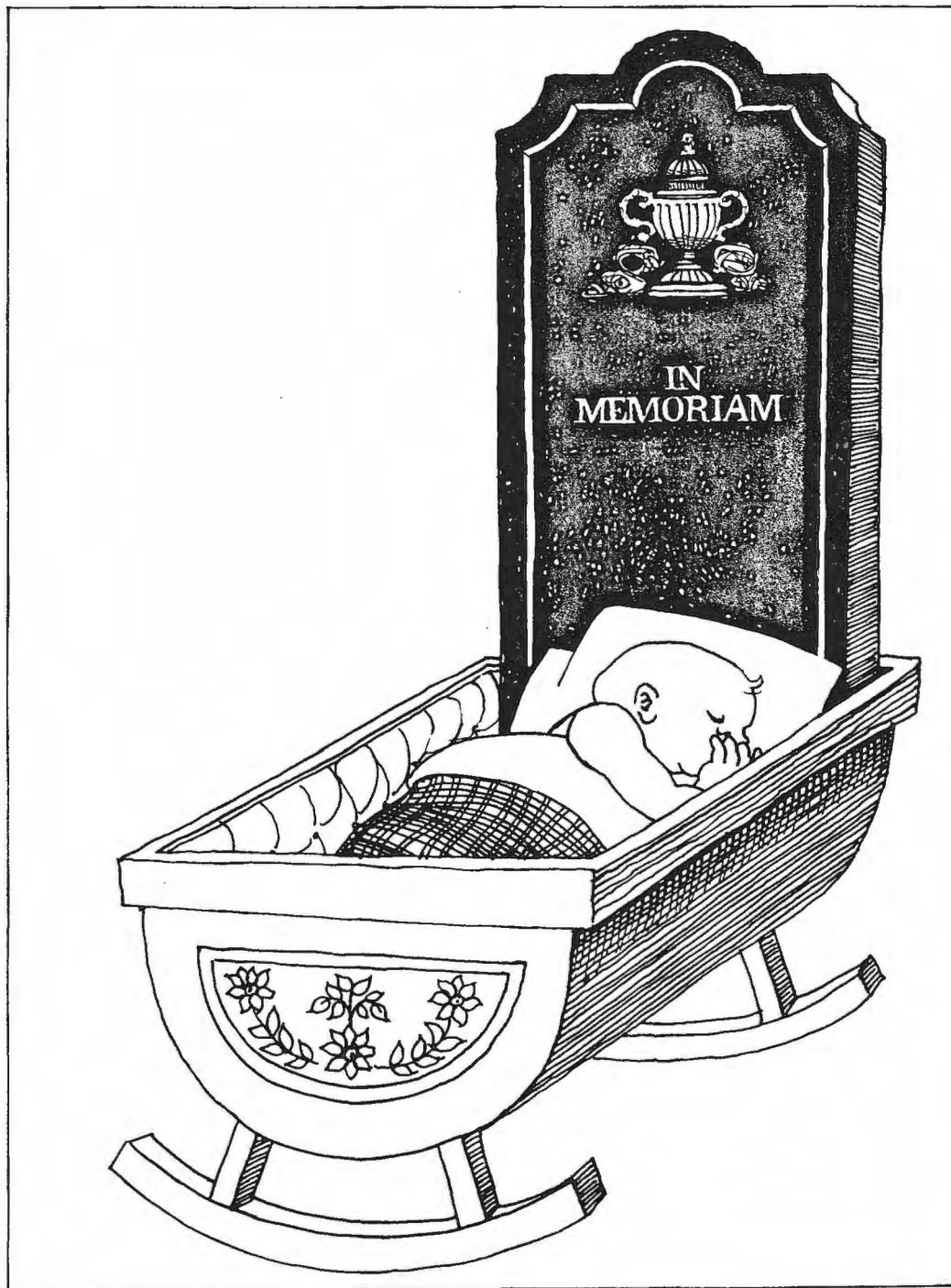
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Pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding are exhausting. If one child is born too soon after another, then the health of both mother and child is undermined.

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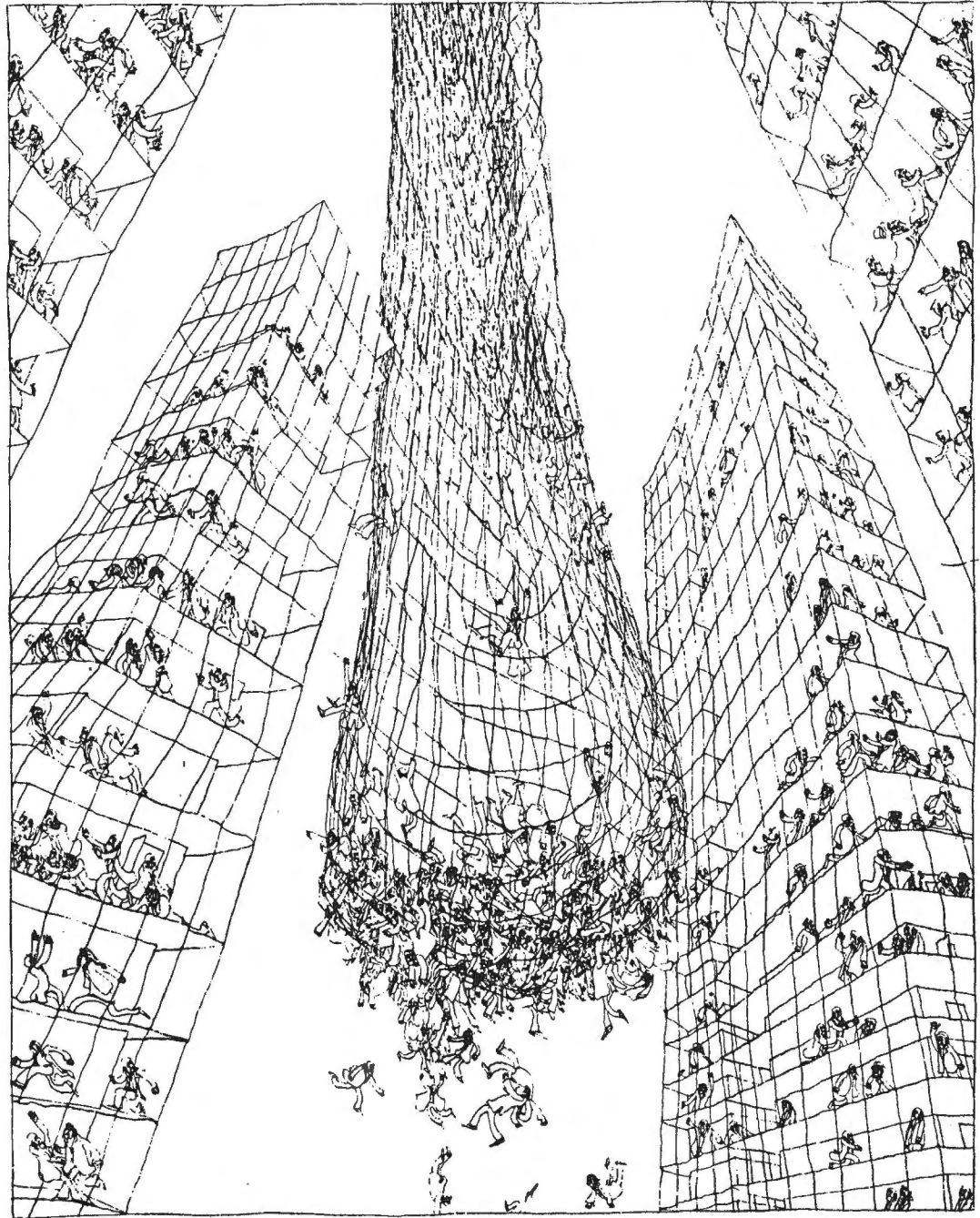


“ A decline in mortality rates seems to be a necessary pre-condition for bringing about rapid declines in population growth rates” – 1980 'State of World Population' Report (UNFPA).

Drawing by Clive Offley

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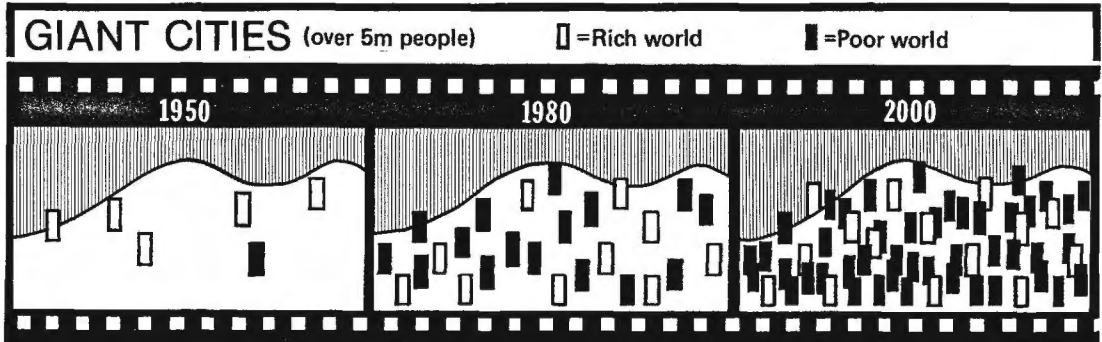
Drawing by Hans Georg Rauch

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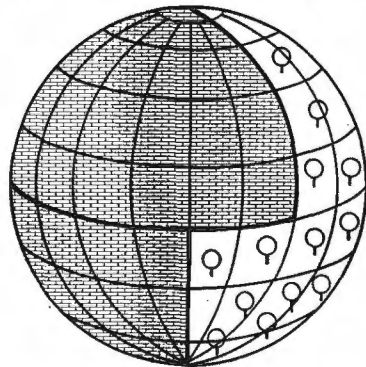
Topic Chart submitted for use with the
'State of World Population' Report
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'Half the World in Cities.'

Half the World in Cities

We are now seeing the greatest mass migration in human history
—the trek to the cities



BY THE YEAR 2000



¾ of the Northern World and ½ the Southern World will be living in cities

THE LURE OF THE CITY

Earnings can be three times as much
Chances of college education 7 times better
9 times more credit available
Chances of seeing a doctor ten times better

Five out of six families in an Indian city live on \$50 a month or less

Housekeeping
Income per month \$50
Food \$35
Fuel, utensils, medicine, clothes, schooling, transport, \$10
AMOUNT LEFT \$5
TO BUY HOUSE

LOANS Paying back \$5 a month—on a house loan over 20 years at 10% interest—means the maximum price you can afford for a house is no more than \$400

In the developing countries the cheapest houses now being built 'for the poor' cost around \$2000: only half the population can afford that much

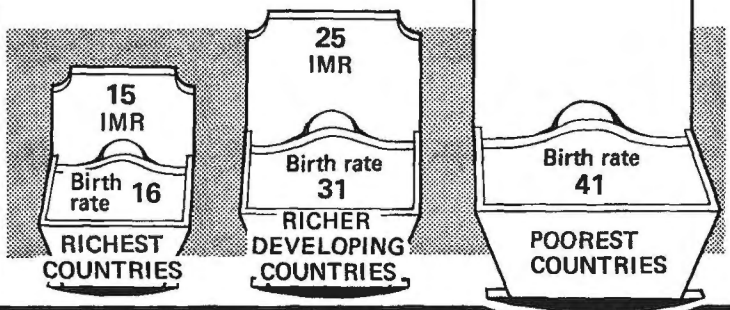
The Cradle and the Grave

'The lower the death rate, the greater the likelihood of the population growth rate falling'
1980 'State of World Population Report'(UNFPA)

LESS DEATHS = LESS BIRTHS

IMR= Infant Mortality Rate
(death per 1000 live births)

Birth rate=Births per 1000 population



PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

About three quarters
of all child deaths
could be prevented by:—

BETTER
NUTRITION



ADEQUATE
WATER



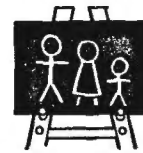
SAFE SANITATION



IMMUNISATION



PARENTAL
EDUCATION



But about three
quarters of health
budgets are spent on
doctors and hospitals

SURVIVAL

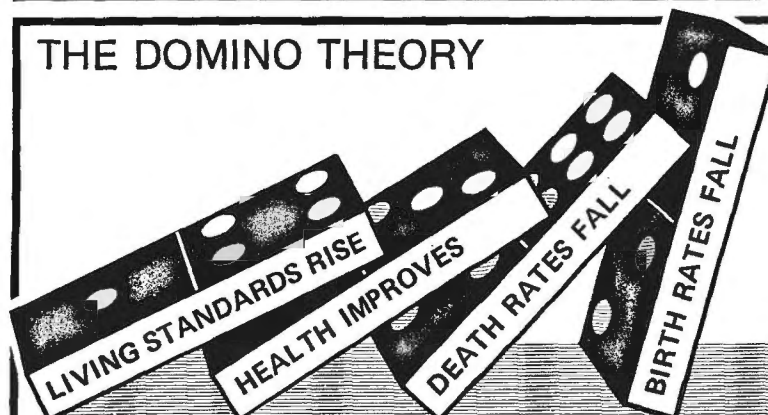


Ever day more children die in the
poor world than are born in the
rich world



To be 95% certain of
having one surviving son
to depend on in old age,
an Indian family has to
have about 6 children

THE DOMINO THEORY



BUT . . .

It takes time for
parents to be sure that
their children will live
so there is often a
time lag between
declining death rates
and declining birth
rates. And in the
short-run, population
growth rises

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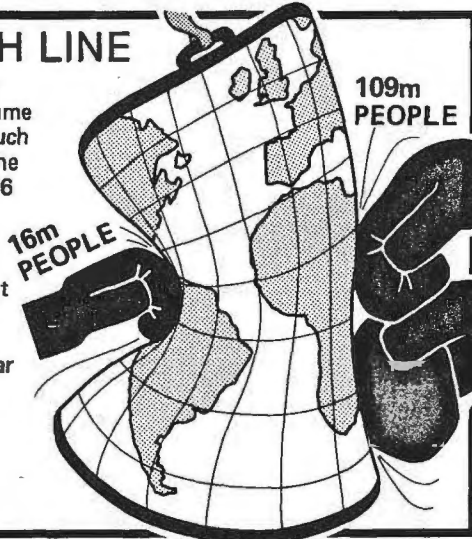
Topic Chart submitted for use with the
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or with the NEWS FEATURE :
'The Aspiration Bomb.'

The Aspiration Bomb

'While the so-called population bomb may have been de-fused the aspiration bomb has not'
-1980 'State of World Population' Report (UNFPA)

THE PUNCH LINE

A person born in the rich world will consume about 30 times as much as a person born in the poor world. So the 16 million babies born each year in the rich world have about 4 times as much impact on world resources as the 109 million babies born each year in the poor world



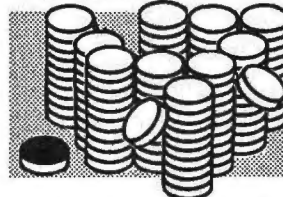
TO HIM WHO HATH SHALL BE GIVEN



In 1900 the average person in the rich world had 4 times as much as a person in the poor world

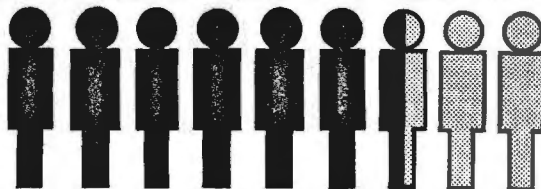


By 1970, the ratio had become 40 to 1

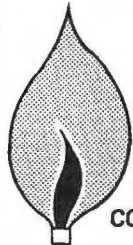


Today the pay rise which an American can expect in one year is greater than an Indian can expect in a 100 years

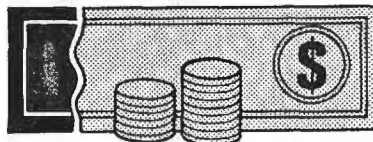
THE DEVELOPING WORLD HAS . .



75% OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE



15% of WORLD ENERGY CONSUMPTION



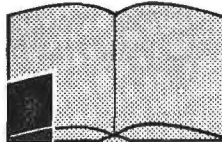
17% OF THE WORLD'S GNP



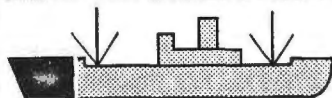
6% OF THE WORLD HEALTH EXPENDITURE



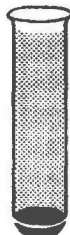
30% OF THE WORLD'S FOOD GRAINS



11% OF WORLD EDUCATION SPENDING



18% OF WORLD EXPORT EARNINGS



5% OF WORLD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



8% OF WORLD INDUSTRY

'Observers have wondered why their contemporaries who are three or five or ten times richer than their grandparents did not seem to be three or five or ten times happier or more content or more richly developed as human beings.'

Robert Heilbroner in 'The Human Prospect'

**UNITED NATIONS
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Topic Chart submitted for use with the
'State of World Population' Report
or with the NEWS FEATURE :
'Two Abortions for every Five Births.'

Two Abortions for every Five Births

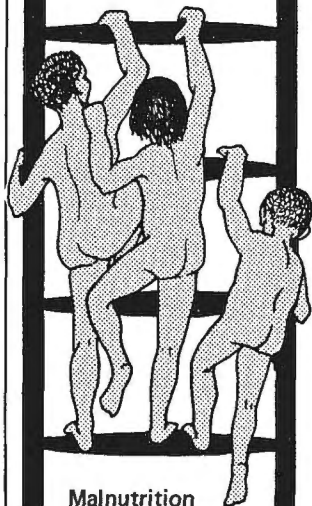
The ability to choose how many children to have
and when to have them is vital to family health

**SPACE
FOR
HEALTH**

Too many babies
too close together
can mean:—

More
children die

More
mothers die

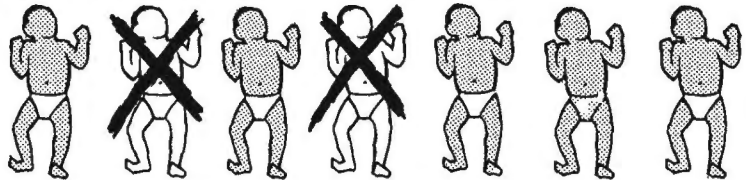


Malnutrition
because children
weaned too soon

Birth weights
are lower

More mothers
are exhausted
and fall ill

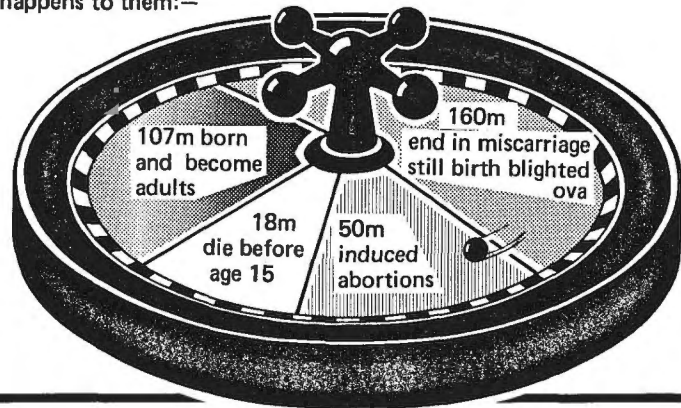
WANTED: A BETTER WAY



For every five live births in the world, there are now two induced abortions

THE BIG GAMBLE

There are 335m conceptions every year
What happens to them:—

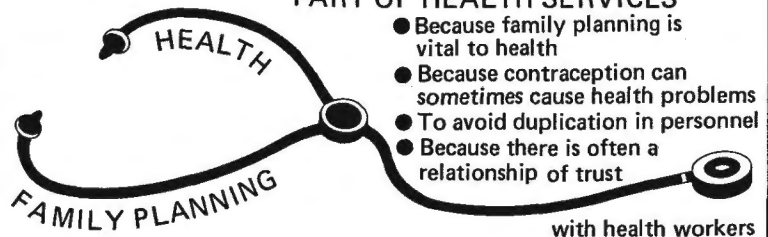


WOMEN OF THE THIRD WORLD



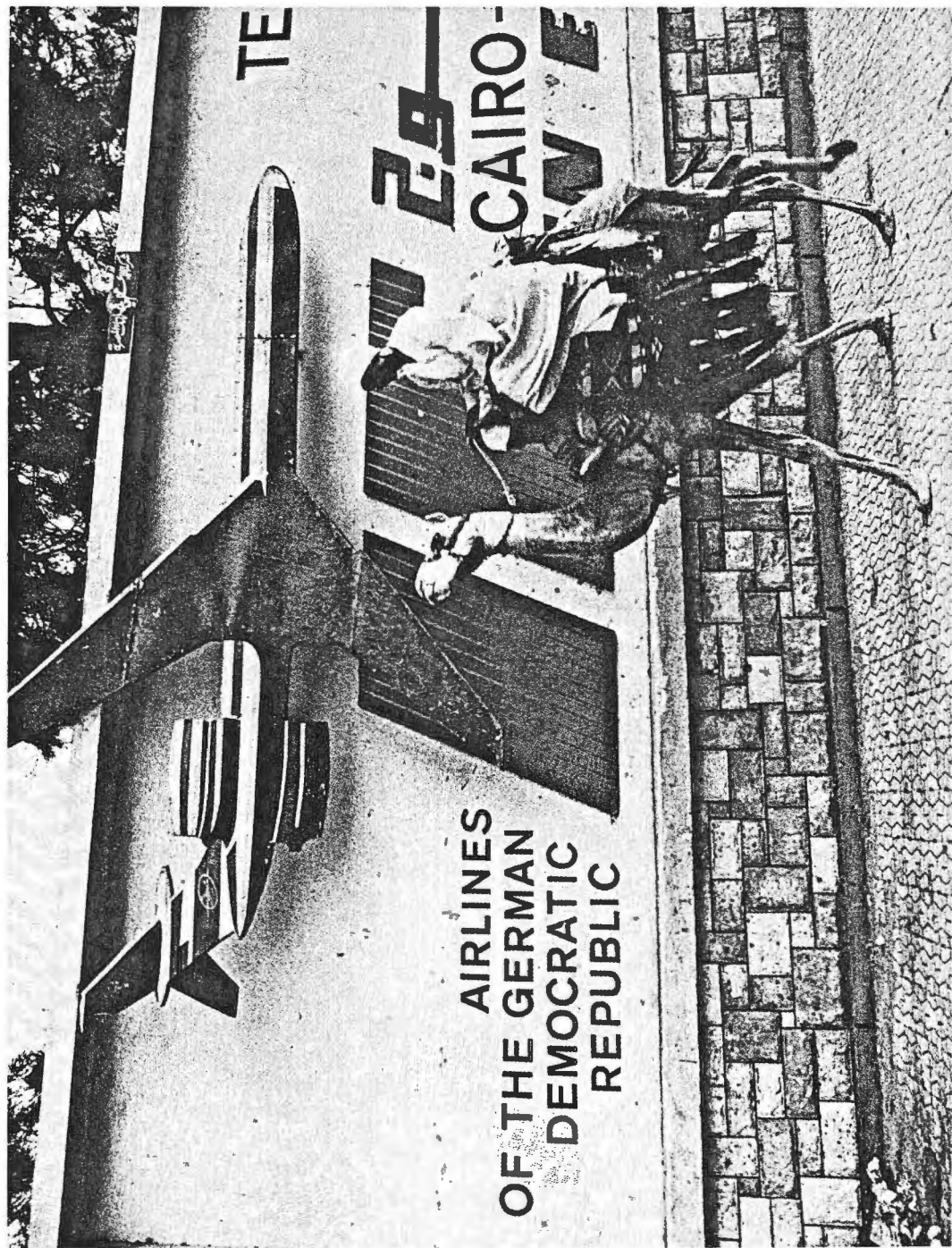
In most developing countries more than half the married
women age 15 to 49 don't want any more children. But of those
only half are using any modern contraceptive.

THE MERGER FAMILY PLANNING SHOULD BE
PART OF HEALTH SERVICES



**UNITED NATIONS
FUND FOR
POPULATION
ACTIVITIES**

· Photograph submitted for use with the
'State of World Population' Report
or with the NEWS FEATURE :
'The Aspiration Bomb.'



“In the developed world, each person born will consume 20 to 40 times more than a person born in a developing country” – 1980 'State of World Population' Report (UNFPA).

Photograph by Mark Edwards

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“ The explosion of aspirations is likely to become a tremendous problem in its impact on limited resources, fragile ecosystems, and on the struggle against mass poverty” – 1980 'State of World Population' Report (UNFPA)

Drawing by Mark Wilkinson

The Aspiration Bomb

The human impact on the world's economy and ecology depends not only on the numbers of people but also on what those numbers consume and aspire to. ANURADHA VITTACHI reports on the consumption explosion.

A third of a million babies were born today. Ten out of every eleven of those babies saw the light of their first day in a village or town in the poor world. Only the eleventh was born in an industrialised country.

Yet that eleventh baby will have a far greater impact on the earth's finite resources and fragile ecosystems than all the other ten put together. For each person in the rich world will consume 20 to 40 times as much during his or her lifetime, as a person born in Africa, Asia or Latin America.

Commenting on these figures in his 1980 'State of World Population' Report, Rafael Salas, Executive Director of the U.N. Fund for Population Activities, concludes that "while the so-called population bomb may have been defused, the

aspiration bomb has not." Every one of the 125 million babies born each year is a bundle of aspirations," says the Report, "and the desire to fulfill these aspirations will become the most dynamic and unpredictable force in world affairs in the years ahead." It is a force which will take its toll not only on the environment but on the chances of improving the quality of life for the world's poor majority.

Romesh Thapar, India's representative to the Club of Rome, has also warned recently against more and more consumption: "Rising expectations," he says, "should be interpreted in terms which raise the dignity of the world's many millions who cannot possibly become the inheritors of even the minimum standards decreed by present day affluent societies."

In fact the world could at present support only about half of today's population if everyone were to live in the same way as the average European. "The more affluent must learn to limit their wants," says Rafael Salas, "there is a need for a society of sufficiency to replace the distortions of both excess and deprivation."

But back in the rich world, it seems that marketing men can take wants above needs so much for granted that they have now moved on to the next stage - playing off one want against another. A recent advertisement, for example, shows a tanned thigh emerging from a black slit skirt, pinned by a cluster of South African diamonds. The caption reads: 'Now doesn't that look better than a new bedroom carpet ?'

The complaint is not new. "Civilisation," mocked Mark Twain, "is the limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities." The United Kingdom alone spends a billion pounds a year on advertising to increase consumption. The United States spends ten times that figure. Without any increase, the rich world already consumes 85 per cent of world energy, 70 per cent of the world's food grains. And such inequalities are worsening. In 1900 the average person in the rich world had four times as much as a person in the poor world. By 1970 the ratio was 40 to 1.

It is because the world is so obviously working on the principle

'to him who hath shall be given' that the developing nations are pressing their demands for a New Economic Order. The present order, they claim, is geared to meeting the wants of the few, not the needs of the many.

But what the Third World is asking for now is not so much a transfer of present wealth from rich to poor countries but a redistribution of opportunities for future economic progress. At present, the average American can expect a pay rise next year which is greater than the average Indian can expect in the next hundred years.

So far, high unemployment and inflation rates have kept the Third World's concerns very much on the periphery. But there are whispers in the winds of change.

Potentially the most important of them is the debate which was heard in Sweden in the 1970s. Today, it is still only a whisper. But if it were to become a roar, then the direction of the industrialised world could be changed and the aspiration bomb defused.

The debate began when Swedish futurologists Göran Backstrand and Lars Ingelstam pointed out that by the end of the century Sweden would be producing and consuming three times as much paper,

six times as many chemicals, twice as much food, and four times as many industrial products. Sweden's population is not expected to increase, they argued, so what is all this production for ?

For some time there has been a growing recognition that greatly increased prosperity was no longer bringing about a commensurate increase in happiness. At the same time, there was also a growing awareness of the environmental consequences of accelerating production and consumption.

At this time, too, Third World voices were beginning to make themselves heard - and there was a new note of warning in the call for justice. "It is no longer possible," wrote Romesh Thapar, "to talk patronisingly to undernourished people's about minimum standards of living. It will not be tolerated. The new theme will have to be the maxima - a standard beyond which consumption is criminal waste."

Backstrand and Ingelstam put these arguments together and suggested that Sweden should become the first rich country to cry "Enough is enough!" and change direction - for the sake of the environment, for the sake of world peace, for the sake of the needs of the majority of mankind and for the sake of the quality of life in Sweden itself.

They translated rhetoric into precise examples of ways in which Sweden could cut down on wasteful consumption whilst maintaining a high standard of living. For example, they suggested realistic maximum consumption levels for meat, energy, living space and private transport.

Their Report "How Much is Enough ?" has so far generated more words than action. But it is perhaps the nearest that the rich world has yet come to taking seriously Mahatma Gandhi's famous dictum: "The world has enough for every man's need but not for every man's greed."