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Impact Of Population On Education-II

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THE sex composition of the population also plays an important part in planning for educational development, particularly in those countries where there are wide disparities in school attendance and educational attainment between the two sexes, and where national policies give priority to enhancing women's education. In many areas, the relative under-representation of girls in the educational system is compounded by an overall scarcity of resources, placing them at an even greater competitive disadvantage. This scarcity is often greater where population pressures are most acute.

The geographical distribution, density, degree of concentration, and the pattern of settlement of the population have an important bearing on the development of educational facilities and services as well as on the educational attainment of the people. A low density of population, or its scattered nature over large areas very often renders expensive and uneconomical the provision of educational facilities and services or their planned expansion. This is particularly true of elementary schooling which is essentially a neighbourhood service and should be adjusted to the geographical distribution of the population.

In practically all countries, considerable differences exist in regard to the availability of educational facilities and services as well as the level of educational attainment and literacy in the rural and urban areas. In most countries rural areas are neglected in regard to developmental

activities while urban areas are often the beneficiaries of disproportionate political patronage. Educational development in rural areas is often handicapped because of inadequate facilities, poor staffing, insufficient equipment and material, as well as by a lack of incentives for education on the part of the rural population. Consequently, literacy levels are low in rural compared with urban areas. These differentials are of course not due to the pattern of settlement per se as much as the priorities in national, social and economic development.

Components of population change also have an impact on educational development at the micro or household levels. The high fertility patterns obtaining in developing countries means a large family or household size. High fertility, and thus large family size, is a phenomenon usually associated with low-income groups in the society. In countries where education is not free, low-income families often find it difficult to educate all their children even minimally. Given the limited incomes and resources, the tendency among the poor in most societies is to favour male children over female children with regard to schooling. Apart from the traditional preference for male children which exists in many societies, the social perception of the role of female as being only that of wife and mother is also a factor influencing the priority accorded at the household level to the education of boys, and at the national level to the provision of

better facilities for the education of boys.

The size of the family has also an important effect on the duration of the children's education. The larger the family size, the greater the possibility of an early withdrawal of the children from the educational system. This is because the parental demand for education will be reduced as a result of the depressive effect of every new addition to the family on the family's per capita income.

In other words, the chances of access to higher education are decreased with an increase in the size of the family. Thus, the child of a labourer cannot expect to go very far in the education process unless that child comes from a small family. Also, the chances of early withdrawal from the educational system is greater for girls than for boys.

The age at marriage also has an important effect on the education of children, particularly female children. Among many communities in some developing countries, very early age at marriage has for long been an important factor inhibiting educational development, especially that of girls. In several Muslim cultures, social values and customs still favour the marriage of girls when they are young. The younger the average at marriage, the earlier the girls terminate their education. It has been noted that in societies where girls often marry and bear children at ages below that of graduation from high

school, secondary level enrolment is generally very low. However, in several developed countries, although it used to be the practice in the past not to marry before completing one's studies and attaining a position, today there appears to be an increase in the number of married students, particularly at the tertiary levels of education.

The lack of adequate educational facilities in the rural areas often results in out-migration of the children of well-to-do families to urban areas to seek further education. The number such migrants as well as their educational requirements and aspirations will have an effect on the demand for education. At the point of origin, that is the village, the emigration of a substantial number of children of school-going age may result in a wastage of already established facilities, while at the destination, the city, there will be a need to expand existing capacities to accommodate the in-migrant children. On the other hand, if the rural-urban migrant stream consists largely of those who have completed their education, then such migration will not result in any noticeable reduction in the number of pupils in the schools of the out-migration region. However, it is likely that out-migration of a large number of persons with a certain type of education may increase the demand for this type of education in the place of origin as more youngsters would like to acquire the same education with the intention of migrating later in their turn.