



## **POPULATION CONTROL IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF INFORMATION**

### **DISSEMINATOR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper X-rays the role of the information disseminator in population control and the implication the paper identifies and discussed some major issues on the concept of over-population, causes of over-population such as cultural beliefs, early marriage, low level of literacy/ poor orientation and effects of overpopulation such as high rate of unemployment, high level of poverty, high demand of health facilities were explored. The strategies the information disseminator applied in ensuring the people are better informed about population control were also discussed. Recommendations were put forward.*

**Keywords:** Population, Population Control Information Disseminator, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Population is the driving force of any economy. Population usually has both positive and negative effects on the economy of any nation. Nigeria as a nation is witnessing population explosion at an alarming rate. If nothing is done to address the situation, then our dear nation will be heading for chaos. Over population has an adverse effect in the economy of any nation especially the developing countries and the social economic and psychological life of its citizens. The issue of overpopulation in the world is no longer news, Nigeria as a nation is not left out in keeping up with the challenges or over-population. Nigerian is a nation with an approximate population of 120 million. The population question according to Ottong, Ering and Akpan (2010) has been of some concern to demographers and development planners but opinion seems to differ on the effects of population on economic development.

However, Population growth is normally influenced by three main factors namely: birth, death and migration. Population is important in any society because the growth rate has implication on the family, the village, town city and the state (Adesina, Oribaber and Ehindero, 2005).

Awe (2009) pointed out that rapid population growth also have an impact on the economic, because governments need to provide human capital investments for their population when population grows too fast, such investments becomes logistically and financially very difficult to meet, they will slow down the increase of income per capita. On the contrary, Adewole (2012) buttressed that it has been accepted that economic growth is mainly affected by the population explosion, because the more the human activities, the more driven economy will be and this in – turn brings the needed growth in the country. He contends that population growth affects economic development in two ways; by promoting economic development this occurs in the developed economics, by retarding economic development, this occurs in the developing countries like Nigeria. According to United Nations publication, (2005) Nigeria ranked the third position in the top nine countries in terms of population increase. Population increase therefore has become a thing of great concern for economic planners, demographers and even government agents (Oladokun, 2004). He further stressed that as world population moves towards five billions the per capita production of many basic commodities is falling.

### **Causes of Over-Population**

1. *Cultural Values and Beliefs*: This has contributed greatly to over population. In some, community men are rated and respected based on the number of children they have whether they have the capacity to take care of them. Again, some of our rural dwellers are full time farmers and has belief that having more children will be of asset to them as they will serve as source of labour. More so, some family having desire to have a male child would not mind having dozens of children until the male child arrives, all this are pointer to the fact that our cultural beliefs contributes to over population.

2. *Early Marriage/Youthful Exuberance*: Early marriage is a contributor to over population. The early marriage witnessed in Nigeria contributes greatly to over population. Even the idea of early affairs among our youths has brought about many unwanted pregnancies amongst which many out of fear decided to have the child, thereby increasing our already high population.

3. *Low Level of Literacy/Poor Orientation*: it is believed that the rate at which uneducated people give birth is quite different from those that are enlightened. The illiterate and unenlightened individual care less about the effect of population as they see having more children as a blessing from God.

### **Effects of Over-Population**

Rapid population growth has economic social and political effect and it also interacts with public education, health and welfare, and the quality of the environment in which people live (Adewole, 2012).

Below are the effects of over-population on the economic:



1. *High Rate of Unemployment:* Over-population brings about high level of unemployment as many graduates will be competing to match the available space in the labour market.
2. *High Level of Poverty:* Population of not controlled may bring about increase in the poverty of any nation.
3. *High Demand for Health Facilities:* over population has the capacity to bring about high level increase in diseases and infectious diseases and this apparently will lead to high demand of health facilities.
4. *High Rate of Crime:* Over population drives the crime phenomenon. The high level crime witnessed in Nigeria is as a result of the population explosion.
5. *Slow Development:* Over population has the capacity to hinder growth and development of a nation.

### **Population Control**

The philosophy of population control rests on the basic assumption that rapid population growth is a primary cause of poverty, ill health, environmental degradation and political instability.

### **Need for Population Control**

Nigeria though rich in human and natural resources is being ranked among the 13 poorest countries in the world and according to Ezekwe ([www.appg.popdevrh.org.uk/.....](http://www.appg.popdevrh.org.uk/.....)) with per capital income falling significantly to about \$300 (below the Sub-Sahara average of \$450), approximately 90 million of Nigeria's 133 million people (about 66 percent) are living in absolute poverty i.e. in less than one dollar a day, this apparently calls for population control.

### **Role of the Information Disseminator**

Librarians, information specialist or information disseminator plays an invaluable role in population control. By utilizing various media, the information disseminator can help to disseminate information relating to population control to both those in urban and rural areas. The begging question is how the librarian can strike a balance between the information available to the information user and those not within reach and vital to population control. The general mandate of the information disseminator or information specialist is to ensure that the right information gets to the right user at the right time in the right format. As an information specialist, the information dissemination will use the available mass media such as TV, radio; satellite to disseminate information on population control. The librarian's role is not just sitting down to take note of books required and then place order for such documents. Librarianship has grown from such misconception to another level of understanding. The information disseminator identify the needs of the contemporary society, sources for information that will help in addressing such need, organized it and them disseminate it to the right people at the right time.

### **Strategies for Information Dissemination in Population Control**

The information disseminator can utilize the following media as means of disseminating information relating to population control:

1. *Social Media*: Various social media such as twitter, face book, amongst others can be used to disseminate information in relation to population control. However, this approach can only be effective in communities where there are internet facilities and even when internet facilities exist, the issue is how often do they access these service/facilities.
2. *Display*: The information can utilize display of information resources relating to population control at strategic spots in the community as way of keeping the people abreast of the consequences of over population, thereby sensitizing the people on the need for birth control.
3. *Mass Media*: The information disseminator can also utilize the various channels of mass media to sensitize the people on the need for population control. Mass media such as radio, television and newspapers can be effectively utilized to sensitize the people of the problems associated with over-population. If the radio must be used, effort should be made that information are disseminated through the local dialect or the language that is understandable to the people.
4. *Public Awareness Campaign*: The information disseminator can effectively use public awareness campaign strategies to keep the people informed about the need for birth control which will also culminate in population control. Public awareness campaign can be delivered through handbill, posters, fliers etc. in all cases, the level of literacy in any community will determine the best approach to use, but the bottom line is that the language understandable to the majority should be strategically utilized.
5. *Symposium/Conference/Seminars*: The information disseminator can also organize conferences where issues relating to population control will be deliberated upon. This will afford the people the opportunity of having direct contact with professional / experts that are better positioned to offer solutions relating to their area of doubt.
6. *Use of Non-Governmental Agencies (NGO)*: The information disseminator can also use the various NGO to reach out to the various classes of people in the society. Some NGOs are solely concerned with youths; they can be effectively utilized as means of reaching to the young couples in a locality with a view of sensitizing them on the need for population control.

### **Challenges Faced by Information Disseminator**

The followings are likely challenges that information disseminators will face when disseminating information relating to population control.

1. *High level of illiteracy in rural areas*: The high level of illiteracy witnessed in rural areas in Nigeria can limit the effort of information disseminator. The information disseminator must adapt to the language of the rural areas if communication must be effective.
2. *Finance*: Considering the poor road networks in Nigeria, it will be almost impracticable for the information disseminator to effectively touch the rural areas and of course, it is the rural areas that are the breeding points for population explosion. The cost of transportation from one local area to another is very high except if the information disseminator is on sponsorship.

**3. Language barrier:** Language barrier is another hurdle that the information disseminator must cross if the objective of disseminating information relating to population control is to be achieved. Nigeria is a nation with multiple languages and this scenario apparently poises a threat to the sustainability of information dissemination.

### **Recommendations**

1) **Population Education:** population education as suggested by Adesina, Oribabor and Ehindero (2006) should be inculcated into the minds of both the parents and the children. In their view, the exposure to the tenets in population education would enable parents to take worthwhile decisions on the size and care of children.

### **Conclusion**

Controlling population in a developing country like Nigeria has a lot of challenges especially to the information disseminator. There is no doubt that information disseminator play the central role in population control in contemporary society. No matter how we view librarianship, the fact remains that information disseminator can through display, mobile library services, exhibition attract people to hear about the latest information in relation to population control.

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