

The Development of Population Policies and Consequences in China: A Review from the Perspective of Fertility

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Abstract

Population and development have become an important concern through forming right policy and its implementation to seek a way to achieve sustainable development with population, economy, society, resources and environment all in a harmony. Therefore policy should be time-demand based and appropriate in nature. In this respect the population policy in the P.R. China have been evolved through times since its foundation in 1949. But since the 1970s the policy has been turned into a new form in relates to fertility which is a remarkable example in Asia as well as in the whole world to deal with the problem of population treating rapid population growth as a major constraint in a more scientific manner and attitude where strong political orientations or commitments have been prevailed and continued till now. No doubt existing population policy -widely known as one child policy in family planning is very successful and earned as a focal point of discussion to policy planners, academicians and others having criticisms where both fame and constraints are reflected. The total population keeps on increasing; the size of family shrinking; imbalances in the sex ratio is widening, the aging of people are accelerating; more labor force shifting are from agricultural to non-agricultural sectors; migrating population are growing; unemployment rate is becoming an important feature; education level, employment structure and makeup of ethnic groups are changing. In this respect this paper has made an attempt to review the development of population policies with the consequences in the P.R. China from the perspective of fertility, which have been formulated since last 50 years. No doubt evaluation of the policies in a scientific manner will help the policy makers to take appropriate measures to combat present and future dilemmas of population successively in the 21st century based on the long-term socio- economic development plan.

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Introduction

Generally population policy means explicit or implicit measures instituted by a government to influence population size, growth, distribution, or composition of a country which indicates that how the country will face the population issues for better welfare of the community. It embraces the objectives sought by a state in respect of the magnitude or the composition of its population together with the means recommended for the realization of these objectives (Spengler and Duncan, 1956:441). But now-a-days population and development have further become an important concern through forming right policy and its implementation to seek a way to achieve sustainable development with population, economy, society, resources and environment -all in a harmony. Therefore policy should be time-demand based and appropriate in nature. In this respect the population policies in China have been evolved through times since the foundation of the P. R. China in 1949. But since the 1970s the policy has been turned into a new form in relates to fertility which is a rare example in Asia as well as in the whole world to deal with the problem of population treating rapid population growth as a major constraint in more scientific manner and attitude where strong political orientations or commitments have been prevailed and continued till now. No doubt population policy relate to fertility control (which is widely known as one child policy in family planning) in China is very successful and earned as a focal point of discussion to policy planners, academicians and others having criticisms where both fame and constraints are reflected. Here it can be noted that present China after the reformation is experiencing the new dimensions of fertility and population characteristics due to family planning policy, which are going to be a very important concern in coming years while nation's modernization drive is an essential feature. Currently China had a population of 1.30756 billion at the end of 2005 and its population is growing by about 7.6 million a year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2006:99). The country aims to maintain its population at 1.4 billion by 2010 and 1.6 billion by 2050 which currently belongs to 21% of the world population that means one fifth of the total human being and same as four times of the population of USA having annual growth rate of 0.6% and population density as 622 per square kilometer in 2002 (Donald and Benedict, 2005: 24, 25, 29). The total population keeps on increasing; the size of family shrinking; imbalances in the sex ratio is widening, the aging of people are accelerating; more labor force shifting are from agricultural to non-agricultural sectors; migrating population are growing; unemployment rate is becoming an important feature; education level, employment structure and makeup of ethnic groups are changing. Therefore it is the right time to evaluate the policies and strategies to take

appropriate measures to combat existing as well as future threats successively.

The Development of Population Policies in the P.R. China

To limit the size of population and to improve the quality of people are the proclaimed goals of the current population policy in the People's Republic of China. In fact China's population policy includes the control of population distribution or migration and the control of population growth (Wang, 1999:94). Here this section will only discuss the population growth control policies. It is widely accepted that China's rapid fertility decline is largely due to its very successful family planning program (Xizhe, 1991:16). The evolution of the programs can be traced back to the mid -1950s that means the history of population and development in the P. R. China since it was founded in 1949. These clearly reflect that the planned control of the rate of population growth is not easy and effortlessly achieved. In fact the policies have evolved through many hard and complex twists and turn and have been marked by variation. Here it can be noted that China's population policies have embraced two major strands. On the one hand, great efforts have been made to reduce mortality rates through developing health services and improving living standards. On the other hand are the attempts to control the growth of population which is the main concern here. Broadly speaking, the population policies in the P.R. China have evolved through the following major phases.

First Phase: 1949-1952

Since 1949 up to the initiation of the country's First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957), the state was mostly busy to restore the war-damaged economy. The government did not put forward any specific needs or goal in the field of the population and development. Thus the population growth was almost similar what it had been before. But during that period of economic rehabilitation, the nature of the growth of population went under a major change and become characterized by a high birth rate, a low death rate and a high rate of increase. Between 1949 and 1952, the birth rate remained at the high level of 35 or more per thousand but the death rate dropped sharply reaching relatively low level of under 20 per thousand (Wenruo, 1981). Thus the speed of population growth rate was high. In terms of the governmental action, the social and economic policies perused by the state in effect encouraged more births. For example, the supply system, which was continued after 1949, gave government workers an extra allotment for every child born. More importantly, the strict government bans on sterilization and induced abortion were direct encouragements of more births. In 1949 there was an

approximate figure of 475 million of population in P. R. China (Cangping and Guangzong, 2004:24). It was revealed that at that time socialist construction needed a lot of manpower. Moreover, China still had a lot of land and other resources to be developed and utilized. Thus, the population problem did not draw wide attention for the time being (Cangping and Guangzong, 2004:24).

Second Phase: 1953-1965

During the period of 1953-1965 harmonization between population growth and economic development became gradually more apparent and the idea of instituting family planning and planned control over population growth gradually emerged. As the population problem began to surface, proposal came from state organs, government leaders and scholars about the need to practice family planning and to form the policy for planned regulation of population growth. For example, a noted economist and former president of Peking University Ma Yinchu (1882-1982) put forward his 'New Population Theory' where he advocated 'improving the quality of population and controlling its size referring the contradiction between the excessive growth population growth and the acceleration of capital accumulation, the raising of productivity, the improvement of productivity, the improvement of living standards and the development of science (Xueyuan, 1997). Thus the first Five Year Plan period saw the earliest definition of the basic orientation of China's existing population policy-family planning and controlled population growth. But the social and economic policies and measures adopted by the state and the collectives continued, in effect to encourage more births than to control the growth of population.

As a result in 1963 the natural growth rate rose to 33.5 per thousand, the highest level recorded after 1949(Wenruo, 1981).The population problem became severe. In 1964, the State set up a special agency to deal the affairs relate to family planning-'The Family Planning Office of the State Council', which laid the organizational basis for earliest implementation of family planning and the control of population growth throughout China. In 1965 family planning was regarded by the top leaders as progressive in nature and emphasis had given to motivate people to work to publicize and promote family planning on a nationwide scale.

Third Phase: 1966-1971

During this period high rate of birth and natural increase of population still continued. The net annual increases of population were the highest in the China's history. As the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, the work of the State Family Planning agencies came to a standstill as their personnel were disbanded. There was virtually no family planning at that

time. As a result of enormous population increased. The population problem became acute as never before. The impact was felt in many areas like food and cultivation, housing, employment and schooling (Wenruo, 1981).

The Fourth Phase: 1971 to Present

Since the 1970s with the introduction of the reform and opening program, China has formulated a basic state policy to promote family planning in all round way so as to slow down population growth and improve its quality in terms of health and education. The current family planning program and its policy started in the early 1970s. The national policy of delaying marriage and child-bearing, spacing births, and having fewer children (*Wan-Xi-Shao*) was implemented in 1973. The lowest age of marriage was set at 25 for males and 23 for females; a two child norm was promoted and a birth interval of at least 4 years was highly recommended. But this policy was soon replaced by one child policy in 1979. The policy met resistance from couples with only one child, especially if the first child was a girl, so amendments are soon made. The 'Policy of Opening a Small Hole' was adopted in 1984. Such a policy allows couples to have a second child under certain conditions. For example, it allows rural couples in some areas with only a girl to have a second birth after an interval of several years. Since then, the stabilization of the current family planning policy has been advocated (Zhenming, 2000:54). Although the policy is strict at urban level but later one child boys and girls if they marry each other they are allowed to take more where as minority nationalities have generally been allowed more flexibility in family size. The government encourages late marriage and late child bearing, and advocates the practice of 'one couple, one child' and having a second child with proper spacing in accordance with the law of regulations. In this regard family planning has been advocated among the ethnic minorities; various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central Government have formulated their own policy and regulations according to local condition (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2000:3). It can be noted that during the period between 1977 and 1990, when the one child policy was conceived and evolved certain sets of political and structural factors exercised a strong influence on the policy (Finkle and McIntosh, 1994:138). Since the 1990s, the central government has convened a National Summit Meeting on the issue of population and development once a year for the sake of adopting important decisions and measures based upon discussion and analysis of the major problems. The governments organizes and coordinates the relevant departments and mass organizations to implement the population

and family planning program, striving to integrate the family planning program with economic development, poverty eradication, protection of ecological environment of public health and a social security, and improvement of women's status (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2000:3). Reshaping the population problem as a human resource power house China's first Population and Development Strategy Research Report released on recently, January 11,2007 where it has been addressed that China has now made a feature of having a low birthrate, a low mortality rate and high growth rate(*People's Daily*, 2007). In this respect population development strategy refers to control total population and to improve population quality where three steps population strategy will be maintained by 2010, 2020 and 2050.

Table1.1: 'One-Child Policy' Over Times

Year	Issues or Programs
1980	'One-Child family Policy 'introduced. China aims to limit total population to 1.2 billion by 2000.
1984	'One-Child Policy' becomes more flexible, especially for rural Chinese whose first child was girl.
1991	Stricter controls introduced
1995	Incentives provide for rural households to limit family size. Official population exceeds 1.2 billion.
1996	Population growth rate is just over 1% and continues to decline.
1998	Family planning policy to continue for another 50 years. Government aims to keep China's population below 1.6 billion by mid-21 st century.
2001	The first national Law on Population and family Planning is adopted.
2004	The National Population and family planning commission call for a nationwide effort to 'create a favorable environment' for girls. Daughters-only or one son families to be given bonuses and privileges.
2007	Population development strategy refers to control total population and to improve population quality where three steps population strategy will be maintained by 2010, 2020 and 2050.

Source: Information has adopted from book- The State of China Atlas, 2005, p.29 (By Donald and Benewick, 2005; Population and Development Strategy Report, 2007(People's Daily, 2007)

Specific Fertility Control Policies in the P.R. China

Through deeper understanding of the magnitude of the population problem major birth control (family planning) policies have been taken over times since 1970s.Here important and widely concerned specific initiatives have been discussed below.

Late, Sparse and Few: In 1971, the specific necessities of family planning were summed up by the slogan-‘*Late, Sparse and Few*’. ‘Late’ meant that young people were required and expected to respond to the State’s call of their own accord delay their marriage date- in other words practice of late marriage which is not simply a matter of the individual or the family, it is related to the strategic task of controlling population growth in the country as a whole. The term ‘Late’ also obscured another requirement-that the married couple postpone child-bearing as long as possible. Late marriages and late child-bearing not only ease population pressure within a given period of time, they also add to lowering the birth rate since the high fertility period of women is shortened and fertility declines with age. The term ‘Sparse’ meant that the interval between births should be prolonged out-to about four years, as then predetermined- in order to prevent excessively dense child bearing and lessen the burden on the family. The emphasis, however, was on ‘Few Births’. As the work of family planning developed in depth, it was at first suggested that two children would be the most suitable and alter at most two, best only one. But measures aiming at achieving the target of two children per family were limited almost exclusively to ideological education and promotion. Although the constitution contained provisions on practicing family planning, no specific laws and regulations pertaining to population matters had yet been formulated(Wenruo,1981).According to Banister, by 1978 the P. R. China’s family planning program had achieved remarkable success in birth control use and limitation of fertility. A majority of the couple’s in China were practicing contraception, most using effective modern methods. Married couple’s were for the most part confining themselves to raising two or three children (Banister, 1987:183).

One Child Policy: The one child policy was first put forward in the second half of the 1978.Following the issue of the open letter from the Communist Central Committee, September 1980, the campaign was carried out vigorously (Xizhe, 1991:45). Finally at the third session of the Fifth National Congress in 1980, the State Council put forward the general call for ‘only one child per couple’. A number of objectives circumstances dictate that the policy of having only one child is the most appropriate. First, there is the need to realize China’s modernizations, to build up the economy, and to see that the people are ‘comfortably off’ by advocating one child per couple and keeping the population within the 1.2 billion figure at the end the last century. A second factor is that the force towards population growth remains very powerful. In view of the large base number of the population, its young age- composition and the growing numbers of females entering childbearing age, if each couple

had two children, the population at the end of the century would certainly total more than 1.2 billion. Furthermore, it would continue to expand for a long time afterwards. Obviously this would not solve the problem or it would help rapidly to improve the nation's economic conditions. Thus it is fitting and proper to advocate that each couple should have only one child, and that third births should be prevented. Advocating one child for each couple in actual fact means replacing 'late, sparse and few' with 'late, few and better', or in other words, producing fewer and better children later in life. 'Better' which essentially means improving the quality of population, does not only imply preventing the birth of defective progeny. Actually advocating one child does not mean that all couples will be allowed only one child regardless of circumstances. Families under circumstances are allowed to have two children (Wenruo: 74). Therefore this is an uneven policy through relaxation. It can be noted that since 1980s the basic content of birth control policy has been to encourage having one child, to control the second birth and to prohibit the third birth. In practice the implementation of the policy has differed between regions and ethnic groups. In urban areas second births are more strictly discouraged, while in rural areas there is more relaxed implementation in accordance with local conditions. For instance, in some rural areas couple may have a second child if the first birth was female. Such relaxations make the policy more flexible and increase public acceptance. Some foreign observers have misunderstood China's policy concerning the number of children per family to mean that all families are limited to having only one child. Instead China's policy of controlling population is to encourage couples to have one child as the most desirable numbers rather than to have only one child universally. This is because:

- (i) China's current policy itself is not universally a one-child policy;
- (ii) In order to limit China's population to around 1.2 billion, it is necessary for all couples to have only one child is a measure adopted during a certain period with the aim of alleviating population pressure, and it will certainly experience adjustments as time passes and as the demographic situation changes(UN,1989:40).

The Consequences of Population Policies in China

The population policy in China is both well praised and criticized at nationally and internationally. But currently the policy has turned into the light for further discussion due to the emergence of new demographic and social consequences. Here some of these are discussed below.

Below Replacement Level of Fertility: It was revealed that annual population growth in China exceeded 2 percent for most years between 1949 and 1974 which has dropped to below 1 %(0.6) at present(Tien et

al 1991:16, PRB, 2005:11). Beginning in the mid-1970s, however, China suddenly shifted gears and fertility declined dramatically. Since the introduction of the one-child policy in 1979 due to a long term interval of the policy the impact is dominant yet where the current total fertility rate is 1.72(UNFPA, 2005:172) or like 1.6(PRB, 2005:11) which is below replacement level. As the policy tightened and loosened, the total fertility rate rose and fell over times.

Table 1.2: Population Characteristics in China, 1953-2005

Year	Total Population	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Natural Growth Rate	Average Family Size	Sex Ratio	Population Aged 65+	Life Expectancy
1953	59435	37.0	14.0	23.0	4.33	107.56	4.41	40.3***
1964	69458	39.14	11.50	27.64	4.43	105.46	3.56	57.1***
1982	100818	22.28	6.60	15.68	4.41	106.30	4.91	67.77
1990	113368	21.06	6.67	14.39	3.96	106.60	5.57	68.55
2000	126583	14.04	6.45	7.58	3.44	106.74	6.96	71.40
2005	1,30756	12.40	6.51	5.89	3.13	102.19	9.07 10.5*	71* 72**

*Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 1986, 2000, 2005, 2006; UN, 1989; *WHO, 2005:174(all data indicates the figure in 2003); **PRB, 2005:11; ***Xingming, 2006:68(adopted from Banister, 1987)*

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Table 1.3: Total Fertility Rates under ‘Later-Longer-Fewer’ Policy Period (1971-1978) and One-Child Policy’ Period (1979-Present)

<i>Year</i>	<i>TFR</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>TFR</i>
1971	5.27	1979	2.66
1972	5.08	1980	2.29
1973	4.63	1985	2.03
1974	4.04	1987	2.84
1975	3.64	2000	1.72
1976	3.14	2001	1.69
1977	2.90	2003	1.8**
1978	2.78	2005	1.72*(1.6***)

*Source: Chiu, 2004:9; *UNFPA, 2005:172; **WHO, 2005:174; ***PRB, 2005:11*

Population Growth and Economic Development

China has effectively curbed the excess growth of its population in recent years (Table 1.2; 1.3), and this represents a change of historical importance in its population reproduction. It is now well over 30 years since began to implement this policy and achievements in family planning has aroused global attention. First of all, China has effectively curbed the excess growth of its population. The birth rate and the natural growth rate of the Chinese population, which were respectively found at 37 and 23 per thousand in 1970, had dropped to 12 and 6.0 per thousand by 2005 (Table 1.2). Low rates of birth, death and population growth are the salient features of the reproduction of the Chinese population now, which used to follow a pattern of high birth rate, low death rate and high growth. Here it can be noted that the Chinese family planning policy has helped improve the living standards. Fewer babies mean reduced burden and restriction on economic and social development. In the past 50 years, China has successfully increased the supply of food and fiber to meet the needs of its rapidly growing population. Since the early 1980s, China has also shifted from being a net food importer to a net food exporter, which has significantly contributed to the world food security (IIASA, 2005: 12).

The success of China’s population policy and program is well documented. Nevertheless, there is a significant regional variation. For policy regulations and service, government commitments have had an influence on the achievement of birth control targets in the local areas. Generally speaking, the family planning program has achieved more success in the eastern coastal regions and less successful in inland provinces (Zhengming, 2000:60). A study (2000) by experts from six higher educational institutions including Zhejiang University and Wuhan University along with the Population Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences throughout China shows that China has by

its population reproductivity changed from a transitional pattern of high birth, low death and high growth rates to one with a low birth, low death and low growth rate. This should be attributed to the policy of "family planning" since the late 1970s. This study reports that "family planning" over the last twenty years has virtually led to cut family size and a general improvement of economic conditions in families. The average size of Chinese families was reduced to 3.36 persons in 2000 from 4.54 persons in 1980; families with a size of 4 persons or less came to take 76.7% from 53.7% in 1982. It's estimated that in the past two decades a baby boom of about 250 million has been averted as a result of "family planning" in China. Of 350 million Chinese families, every family has been reduced to a size of 0.74 baby less and this is to say at least RMB\$14,000 yuan per family has been saved when a baby's upbringing cost of RMB\$19,000 yuan from birth to 16 years old is counted. Also as proved by practice in the past 20 years, introduction of the policy of "family planning" has not only helped in a general improvement of the health of women and children but also a raise of women's social status. Compared with those rejecting the policy of "family planning", families embracing the policy generally enjoy by their children 13-year-old or so a 6% more junior middle school education opportunity, and the time used by women on house chores becomes as much as 18% less. (People's Daily, 25 September, 2000). No doubt continued economic liberalization will likely to promote small families in the coming years in China as the direct and opportunity costs of children are realized particularly in urban areas. Conversely, economic liberation may also promote fertility among the poor as a means of ensuring their economic success in an economy that is increasingly separated by rich and poor, leading observers to question on whether the low rates of fertility can be maintained over the long term (Newbold, 2002:23).

Women Empowerment and Gender Disparity and Sex Ratio

Both positive and negative aspects are reflected in case of women empowerment and gender disparity and sex ratio. In one sense the family planning policy has enhanced women's social status. For women, fewer babies mean more time and energy for participation in public activities. China, as a matter of fact, is one of the countries featuring a high level of participation in politics by women. Women are able to enjoy a better status in marriage and family. To be more precise, women are playing a greater role in decision-making in families. Equality between the husband and wife now constitutes the most salient feature of families in China, in cities in particular. According to a nationwide survey jointly conducted in 2001 by the All-China Women's Federation and the National Bureau of Statistics, 93.25% of the women covered by the survey were "satisfied"

or "fairly satisfied" with their marriages and families. Men are encouraged to get involved in family planning by sharing the responsibility with their wives. As a developing country in China gender inequality is prevails where the index (GDI) at 2004 was .741 comparing to Australia (.945) and USA (.936) which is quite satisfactory but needs more actions in this respect (Donald's and Benewick, 2005:29). Family planning has reduced the cases of early marriage, early pregnancy and reduced the number of children a woman has and provides them with safe contraceptive measures. These have all helped to improve the health of women and their children. Family planning has enabled women to devote more time to work, social activities, their children's education, entertainment and rest instead of household work, and in turn, has helped to improve women's social status (People's Daily, 26 September, 2000). The Chinese family planning policy has promoted the development of public health, education and other undertakings of social welfare. The life expectancy of the Chinese female people has risen to 74 where average is 72 years on an average as good as for developed countries with an average level of development (Table 1.2).

In terms of sex ratio, it is widely reported that there are more boys than girls in China now. This is particularly true in rural areas, where boys are seen as more productive in agricultural work, and more vulnerable to the aging parents. The consequences of small or one-child family policies have been severe for girl children in the countryside. The sex ratio imbalance is due to under reporting of female births, especially in the countryside, aborting more female than male fetuses, and female infanticide. There, stories of abandonment and tales of abductions- of adolescent girls and young women-suggest a widening gender gap amongst under 30-years-olds. Here it can be noted that 86 girls per 100 boys are in average in China where as the natural gender ratio at birth is 95 girls per 100 boys (Donald's and Benewick, 2005:28,29). Another study reports that starting around 25 or 30 years after the mid-1980s, around the year of 2015 and continuing until around 2030, there wont be enough Chinese girls for boys (25 million extra) from China to marry (Poston, 2005:131) The growing shortage of women of marriageable age has led to the exploitation of women. UNICEF estimates that as many 250,000 women and children were trafficked in China in 2003. Implementation of the law is left to provincial governments, who may vary it according to local conditions. Concerned about a lack of people to care for its increasing elderly population, Shanghai has relaxed its regulations to allow some couples to have two children, now offers incentives to daughter only families (Donald's and Benewick, 2005:28,29).

Table 1.4: Sex Ratio at Birth in China, 1981-2000

<i>Year</i>	<i>Sex Ratio</i>
3 rd Population Census, 1982	108.5
1% of Population Sampling Survey, 1987	110.9
4 th Population census, 1990	111.3
1% of Population Sampling Survey, 1995	115.6
5 th Population Census, 2000	116.9
Report of National Bureau of Statistics	119.25

Source: *China Population Today*, August, 2005:18, *People's Daily*, April 8, 2007

One study indicates that one child policy affected intra-household distribution between genders but improved Chinese children's health status in general. Here the majority of the benefits went to boys in families with children of both sexes (example, Mosher, 1993:6). Two significant factors that mitigate the gender discrimination are household income and maternal education (Li, Guanghui. 2003:1-57). Moreover high sex ratio at birth will hit peak around 2040 and in 2020 china will face the shortage of brides (Sheng-Li, 2006). The sex ratio is continued to increase over recent years (Table 1.4).According to the fifth national population census conducted in 2000, the sex ratio at birth rose to 116.86, far beyond the normal range. Great disparities are also existed between regions (municipalities and regions) and in terms of rural-urban location. Table 1.5 indicates obviously remained in the normal range for the first birth in all three surveys but it rose drastically to a higher level for the second birth and even higher for the third and above.

Table 1.5: Sex Ratio at Birth, by Birth Parity

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>1st Birth</i>	<i>2nd Birth</i>	<i>3rd Birth</i>
1990	111.3	105.2	121.0	127.0
1995	115.6	106.4	141.1	154.3
2000	116.9	107.1	151.9	159.4

Source: *China Population Today*, August, 2005:19

Most of the birth which appear to be missing from the registration system and even from the censuses are of females. Migrants and those in the private sector may be willing, for future legitimacy or other advantage, to record a son but are much less likely to report a daughter. In addition they provide a possible kin network through which others can hide a daughter from local investigation (Kane,1999:200-201).Trends in reported sex ratios at birth have risen from 108.5 males to 116.9 in 2000(Table 1.4) for every 100 females.

Ageing and Old Age Security:

By 2004, the rate of population growth had slowed, although the actual population was still large and still growing. From the sheer weight of numbers, policy implications flow. China will experience a dramatic trend in population aging over the next 50 years. At present the proportion of elderly people are more than 10 % (WHO, 2005). In 2020, 11.7% of the Chinese population is expected to be aged over 6 (Donald and Benewick, 2005: 109). Although there is a measure of the improvements in life style, medicine and nutrition, it presents the problem of how China is going to deal with the pensions, housing and health care needed on such a massive scale. And to complete the picture, the declining birth rate means there will be a smaller workforce to support a larger elderly population). Changing Shape of China's population Pyramids will be significant and the total dependency ratio is expected to increase for elderly. By 2040, the population aged above 65 in China will be a serious warning against difficulty in finding sufficient work force for social and economic development. A major problem to be overcome in promoting one child per couple is to ensure that the elderly will be looked after properly. As the old people when they are unable to work, can live on pensions and thus reduce dependence on their sons or daughters. Formulating effective policies to solve the problem of how to care for an old couple with only son or daughter and old people without offspring is thus an important condition for promoting acceptance of the one-child per couple norm in the rural areas (UN, 1989:47). It can be noted that the rapid reduction in fertility level in just 25 years has resulted in a young population (aged 15 and less) that is substantially smaller than previous generations, creating a heavy burden of old age dependency. It's optimistic that Chinese government is trying to cope with an ageing population and a shrinking labor force that supports elderly. Moreover, the erosion of traditional family structure means that children no longer care for their elderly parents, posing additional problems, making future relaxation of the one-child policy to meet the problem of ageing possible (Newbold, 2002:23). The current characteristics of age structure- large percentage reductions of the young population without a corresponding increase in the old population- have led the country's politicians and demographers to speak of a 'golden age' (Scharping, 2003:304).

Individual Choice and Changing Family Relationship

A study (Zhao, 1996) indicates that couples decisions regarding number of children has been influenced by the population control policy in place at that time. A couple's socio-economic and socio-political background has limited effect on the decision. Among the only child families, family relations are shifting from the traditional adult centered to a child

centered relationship. Because of the reduced number of children, the only child families experience a closer relationship among three generations. The popular response to the only child policy is mixed, which may have contributed to the success of the policy implementation and the policy has created a strong sense of old age insecurity among the only child parents (Zhao, 1996). With the ongoing economic reform characterized by decentralization and increasing individual mobility and choice, the family planning program is facing new challenges and difficulties. Some rich farmers are not afraid of paying off the fine for extra births. The increasing number of men and women migrating from rural to urban areas also pose the difficulties for family planning officials and workers who have to provide the family planning services and enforce family planning regulations. However, economic development has also provided new opportunities for family planning. Increased income and job opportunities have also raised the opportunity costs of living children. More and more men and women at reproductive age, especially around their twenties, are involved in non agricultural sectors, and the time spent on childbearing means lost money and career opportunities. Economic reform in China has enhanced the living standards of farmers and as a result, changes their values and fertility attitudes, especially those of the younger generation. The transfer of labors from rural to urban areas and agriculture to a non agriculture sectors is having a significant impact on fertility. Having young children or being pregnant are seen as incompatible with the search for better jobs and opportunities for the migrants which leads to postpone the marriage and childbearing. Spending on education, healthcare, and daily life for children have increased dramatically with the improvement of living standards. These refer that some young parents want fewer children. High expense of marriage is also a determinant in the timing of marriage and child bearing (Zhengming, 2000:61).

Question of Increasing Consumption Wave and One Child Generation

Now the questions are emerging under the sated policy –‘Will the first “only child” generation lead the third consumption wave in China’? The consumption is now regarded as the last motivator of the Chinese economy, together with the export and investment who have greatly advanced the Chinese economy. Recently, a research organization made an exciting prediction: the first “only child” generation would lead the third consumption wave (PKU NEWS, 2005). While traditional Chinese people attach more importance to the saving, the new generation born in 1970’s and 1980’s has a stronger awareness and a higher level of consumption. Some of them spend all their income and even borrow money from the banks. So will this part of consumers who has new

consumption ways, concepts and actions be the main force of Chinese consumers?

This generation is getting so much support from the family and the independence which may lead them to degenerate under the globalize world unless come through proper socialization.

The Coercion Controversy

There is a controversy regarding the birth control in China. Some critics treat the existing birth control as coercive nature (e. g. Aird, 1990; Xiaokang, 1996). Xiaokang(1996) argued that the importance of continuation of the patri-lineal family is still deeply implemented in the mind of the most of the people. Moreover, the lack of social security for the elderly in the rural areas, where majority of the people is located, reinforces the preferences of people to have as may children as possible and as early as possible, preferably sons. All this serves to explain the difficulties and controversies from the moment when China introduced its family planning policy, especially in rural areas (Liwen, 1999:6-7). As economic reforms progressed, it became increasingly difficult to regulate peasant fertility, or penalize those who had large families. With the demise of collective agriculture much of the pressure on individual's to conform to local family size or family spacing norms disappeared. Increasingly, fines became the main way of attempting to discourage an extra birth. As peasants grew wealthier, however, fines became less of a deterrent (Kane, 1999:197).

Conclusion

China's existing population policy has been evolved over times and population has been well under control since the family- planning policy was adopted in 1970s, and the country has been experiencing an ideal period characterized by "low birth rate, low death rate, low growth rate" since late 1990s. The proportion of China's population to the world's total figure has decreased from previously one-fourth to one-fifth. In China total fertility rate had dropped below replacement level where as total fertility rate dropped from 4.9 in 1975 to 1.8 in 2003 following the increasing trend of ageing (aged 60 years and over) population from 7% in 1975 to 10% in 2003 while decreasing aged 0-14 years population in the trend of 39% in 1975 to 23% in 2003(UN, 2003:133). The government's views on population growth is too high and policy on growth is lower and fertility level is satisfactory (UN, 2003:132, UN; 2002:108). In this regard the government is active to yet make the level lower through intervention (UN, 2003:132; 1998:39). Governments also report that in no case is coercion allowed as a means of implanting family planning policy. It is the firm policy of the Chinese government to prohibit coercive action in implementing family planning (Sen and

others, 1994:98). Even the policy is successful to control the growth of population but no doubt China will be faced with several overwhelming challenges: there will be sweeping increase in the amount and the proportion of elderly people, the working population in relation to the elderly and other dependent population will fall significantly, and these two issues will cumulate a major interruption in China's pension and elderly care systems. As there is a significant gap in the sex ratio and that is mainly for son preference due to one child policy and misreporting and the question of aging in Chinese society government should pay attention to evaluate the policy for possible reformation or have to take effective measures to face the coming future rightly. Although population policy is on of the planned control of population development but it requires scientific study depending on the stage of development of China's economy and on the national conditions whether to reduce the rate of population growth, or to stabilize the population at a given level. Neither can be achieved without proper planning and its exercise. These require active intervention and regulation by the state through plans, which co-ordinate population-development with advances in material production, thereby help improve the living standards of the people materially as well as culturally. The economy and the social productive forces must be developed and the influence of feudal ideology must be eliminated (Xueyuan, 1981:54). It's good to note that reshaping the population problem as a human resource power house China's first Population and Development Strategy Research Report released on recently, where it has been addressed that China has now made a feature of having a low birthrate, a low mortality rate and high growth rate. How China can transform itself from a country with a large population to a human resources power is now a tough but pertinent question (People's Daily, 2007). Thus it is necessary to use a really scientific socialist theory of population to guide practice and work out population polices and measures which correspond to objective conditions, and to act in accordance with the true socialist law of population. Thus population concept has to be reconsidered for seeking a qualitative shift to promote the quality of life and the services that could advance human well being and freedom. In this respect we must have to find constructive views, well-founded and relevant to men and women who are the final executors of every population policy.

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