

## DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH IN INDIA - A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO TRIBES OF SALEM DISTRICT IN TAMILNADU

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### Abstract

Population explosion is one of the most crucial problems facing the country today. It has resulted in deforestation, inflation, excessive urbanization, congestion, shortages, etc. Most of the gains of economic growth have been offset by the increase in population. The rapid, alarming increase in population must be checked. Unless timely action is taken, the situation may get out of control and lead to severe hardships for people.

**Keywords :** nought-nothing, nullified-offset, bewildering-confusing, phenomenal-large, undermines-destroys, aquatic-ofwater, unpotabel-undrinkable, demographic-of population, decelerate-decrease

### India: Cultures in Crisis

In 1974-1975, about 22 per cent of India's total geographical area was covered by forests. This forest region, interspersed all over the country, consists of evergreen forests, deciduous forests, dry forests, alpine forests, riparian forests and tidal forests. Some of these forests are conspicuous for their dense growth. Besides the commercially valuable sal, teak, ironwood, sandal wood and shisam, these forests are rich in the growth of climbers (epiphyte) and various kinds of minor forest produce.

### Forest Policy and Tribal Development

#### Problem of the Population Growth

There has been a rapid increase in the human population of the world particularly in many of the Asian countries including India. In fact, population explosion is one of the most serious problems facing the country today. The tremendous growth in population has set to nought most of the planning and nullified the economic and other gains. We knew that the land surface cannot be expanded and the natural resources are limited. The increase in population is putting pressure on land and natural resources. It has led to massive deforestation, excessive urbanization, unemployment, inflation, shortages, slums, congestion, etc...

A look at the figures will convince us about the enormity of the problem which is bewildering our planners and keeping the government on toes. An Indian is born every; 1.2 seconds. By the end of the minute 50 more. Within the hour: 3000. By the days' end: 70,000. In September 1988, the clock installed at the government-funded International

Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), ticked rapidly away to a landmark: 800 million. Since independence, In fact, another India has been added - in numbers. Now one out of six people in the world is an Indian.

There are numerous theories of population but one associated with Thomas Robert Malthus, and English economist of dubious worth is relevant. In 1798 Malthus Published Principle of Population in which he elaborated his theory of population. According to Malthus, population increases in geometric progression (1,4,8,16,32,.....) while means of subsistence (food, etc.) increase only in arithmetical progression (1,2,3,4,5,6,.....). Thus, there is always a gap between the growing population and the means to support it, and when this gap assumes a critical proportion, the corrective is applied by nature in the form of famines, epidemics, wars, etc., which level down population to the available means of subsistence.

The density of population in several countries like Japan is much more than India but still these countries are not characterized as overpopulated. India is overpopulated because we have failed to achieve a reasonable rate of economic growth. With the present rate of economic growth, India would continue to remain overpopulated even if the rate of population growth was radically brought down. If there was only one man in the world with no sufficient means of subsistence, the world would still be overpopulated.

Several factors have been responsible for this phenomenal growth in population. With the advancement in the field of medicine, longevity has gone up. Simultaneously, the infant mortality has considerably gone down. Epidemics like small-pox, cholera and plague have been nearly eliminated. Diseases like T.B., which were earlier in curable have become curable. Even cancer, if detected in early stages, is now curable.

Widespread backwardness, illiteracy, poverty, narrow and orthodox views about children and sex have further contributed to the growth in population. Poverty has played a double role in the respect; the poor people, lacking means of recreation, tend to overindulge in sex. Secondly, the poor families, both in the urban and rural areas, regard every additional member in the family as a source of income and, therefore, welcome him.

Rising population has resulted in several complications for the country. The obvious effect of a high rate of population growth is that it lowers the growth of per capita income. But what it does to the growth of current income is the least of the dangers that it poses. The real threat lies in the systematic way in which population growth undermines the very possibility of future economic growth. It eventually makes decent standards of living difficult to maintain.

It threaten to do this in three ways. First, it increases the pressure on the land, by steadily reducing its capacity to supply not just food, but fuel wood for cooking and foliage for cattle also. The search for agricultural land and fuel wood leads to the destruction of forests. A rising cattle population increases the pressure on pasturage, prevents grass and young sapling from growing. It thus disrupts the natural cycle of regeneration which alone

can reduce this pressure. Lastly, as fuel wood becomes scarce people start burning agricultural residues - crop stubble and cow dung - in its place. Thus, it prevents farming lands from recovering some of the nutrients drawn away by the crops. The result is flood, soil erosion, a falling water level and finally conversion of fertile land into desert.

Another serious threat that the increasing population is posing is atmospheric and aquatic pollution. Large number of people require mass production of goods which in turn leads to increased industrialization and urbanization. The industrial chimneys belch out smoke and cause bronchial diseases. Factories throw into the rivers and canals large quantities of chemical waste, which poison the fish and pollute the water. Even a very high dose of chlorine is not sufficient to purify the water which becomes un potable. Industrialization has led to large scale migration of landless labour from the villages to the cities to work in the factories. This has resulted in overcrowding, congestion and inflation in cities.

Most important of all, growing population leads to unemployment. The threat that a growing army of unemployment can pose to any government is being demonstrated in India. The unemployed youth are taking to destructive ways and are becoming a liability to the nation.

The government is acutely aware of the dangers of growing population. It evolved a comprehensive National Population Policy in April 1976. Its main assumption was that the population explosion was an offshoot of poverty. Therefore it had to be tackled as part of the overall design for a better life. Clear demographic goals were spelt out in the policy. To integrate family planning with overall strategy of socio-economic development, a number of programmes were initiated.

Emphasis is also being laid on spread of literacy which would help in the adoption of the family planning measures by the enlightened people. The government has also been able to build up a country-wide health and family welfare infrastructure that is capable of providing advice and diverse services on family planning. But the sensitive nature of the subject - touching as it does our most basic drives - has made our leaders treat the problem rather cautiously. A little strictness during the days of Emergency became counterproductive. However, nobody can deny the urgent need to curb the rapid growth in population. Not only in national, but also in the interest of the world at large, population in India needs to be kept in check.

Ironically, India was the first country to launch a family planning programme. But despite several schemes and incentives, the population continues to grow at an alarming rate. Officials now openly admit that achieving the birth rate of 29 per 1000 by 1990 was almost impossible. In fact to stabilize the population in the country the government needs to decelerate the birth rate to 21 by 2000. But this is too distant a dream. Perhaps, the Government should fix more rational targets. States should be involved actively.

Economic development and population growth mutually interact. The economic development has both qualitative as well as quantitative effects. The development of the economy of a country in terms of an increase in GNP may tend to enlarge the population base because the capacity to support a bigger family increases. But to improve the standard of living a small family norm is preferable. The resultant fall in the population is due to an attitudinal change of the people. The development process also has a direct effect of the population growth as adequate and effective medical care reduces the birth and death rates. India's multi-dimensional population programme calls for a rapid economic development and social transformation. The problem of "Population explosion", i.e., excessive births over deaths can also be tackled by a rapid economic development according to some demographers.

India's phenomenal population rise from 362 million in 1951 to 835 million in 1990, unaccompanied by a commensurate rise in GNP has dipped the per capita income to 3.4 per cent. As a consequence, the inequalities in the distribution of income and health are perpetuated. Hence, the case for rapid economic development in India is clear and strong.

#### Tribal Population of Tamil Nadu

**Table 1 Area and Scheduled Tribes Population of Salem District**

Sl. No.	Name of the Blocks/ Municipalities	Area (sq.km)	Scheduled Tribe		
			Persons	Male	Female
1.	Salem	242.14	1529	803	726
2.	Veera Pandya	158.84	306	164	142
3.	P.N.Patty	159.56	5609	2827	2782
4.	A.Pattinam	229.41	8311	4134	4177
5.	Valapady	185.96	4145	2118	2027
6.	Yercaud	382.67	24491	12199	12292
7.	Attur	336.68	4128	2128	2000
8.	Pethanaickenpalayam	534.17	28245	14251	13994
9.	Gangavalli	410.18	9974	5079	4895
10.	Thalaivasal	404.88	746	403	343
11.	Omalur	202.94	348	199	149
12.	Kadayampatty	345.16	4368	2297	2071
13.	T.Mangalam	118.36	39	19	20
14.	Mecheri	195.70	36	17	19
15.	Nangavalli	220.09	576	307	269
16.	Kolathur	361.36	9741	5054	4687
17.	Sankari	299.55	96	42	54
18.	Magudanchavadi	126.38	1222	645	577
19.	Edappady	199.04	11	7	4
20.	Konganapuram	119.28	0	0	0
21.	Salem Corporation	91.34	1345	691	654
22.	Attur Municipality	27.62	246	120	126
23.	Mettur Municipality	14.55	367	187	180
24.	Edappady Municipality	28.22	4	3	1
Total		5,394.08	1,05,883	53,694	52,189

The main Tribes in Tamil Nadu are Malayali, Toda, Kurumba, Paniya, Irular, Kattunayakan, Kanikar, Paliyan, Sholagar, Kadar, Vedar, etc., of which Toda, Kurumba, Koda, Paniya and Irular are the Primitive Tribes. The Shilu Committee constituted by the Planning Commission in 1969 for reviewing the Tribal situation had observed that a large number of Tribal communities continued to be extremely backward and some of them were still in the Primitive food-gathering stage. The Committee

described these Tribal communities as Primitive Tribes. It was emphasized that these communities needed special attention. There are 36 Tribes in all, whose combined population as per 1991 census in 5.74 lakhs representing 1.03% of the total population of the State which is 558 lakhs. Out of the 5.74 lakhs Tribals 51.03% of the Tribals are males and remaining 48.97% are females. The Tribal population in the State is largely concentrated in fifteen Districts mainly Western, East West, North West and Southern Districts. The Tribal Sub Plan comprises funds earmarked for the infrastructural facilities to the Integrated Tribal Development Programmes as well as the flow to Tribal people living both within and outside of these areas.

The details relating to the Block and Municipality wise area and scheduled Tribes Population in Salem District provided in the above table indicate that total area of Salem District is 5394.08 square kilometers. The total tribal population in Salem District is 1,05,883 persons. Among them the total male tribal population is 53,694 persons and the total female tribal population is 52,189 persons. Higher population of Scheduled Tribes and the ratio in Salem District is more than 3%.

#### Percentage of Scheduled Tribes Population in Rural and Urban Areas of Salem District

The details relating to the percentage of Scheduled Tribes Population in rural and urban areas of Salem District during 1991 census are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2 Percentage of Scheduled Tribes Population in Rural and Urban Areas of Salem District during 1991 census**

Sl. No.	Area	Percentage of Scheduled Tribes		
		Total	Male	Female
1.	Rural	4.89	4.82	4.97
2.	Urban	0.10	0.10	0.09

The details relating to the percentage of Scheduled Tribes Population in rural and urban areas of Salem District during 1991 census provided in the above table indicate that 4.89% of tribal population lived in rural areas and 0.10 tribal populations lived in urban areas. The rural male tribes are 4.82% and rural female tribes are 4.97%. The urban male tribes are 0.10% and the urban female tribes are 0.09%. In the above table reveal that the highest proportion of Scheduled Tribe population in its rural areas, it is observed that the Salem District where the Scheduled Tribes are found in larger numbers, the concentration is more in the rural areas. In this District more of hilly and forest tracts in which the Scheduled are generally found.

The total population of Tamil Nadu, as per the 2001 Census is 62,405,679. Of this, 651,321 (1 per cent) are Scheduled Tribes (STs). The growth rate of ST population in the decade 1991-2001 at 13.4 per cent is higher than the overall growth rate of 11.7 per cent of the state. As per the 2001 Census, among the numerically large STs, Kurumans have

reported the highest growth rate of 43 per cent, followed by Malayali (24.2 per cent), Irular (12.1 per cent) and Kattunayakan (5.8 per cent).

#### Population- Size and Distribution

Of the STs, Malayali, Irular, Kattunayakan, Kurumans and Kondareddis together constitute 85.3 per cent of the ST population of the state. Malayali are the largest ST with a population of 310,042, constituting 47.6 per cent of the state ST population. They are followed by Irular, numbering 155,606 (23.9 per cent), Kattunayakan 45,227 (6.9 per cent), Kurumans 24,963 (3.8 per cent) and Kondareddis 19,653 (3 per cent). Fourteen (14) STs have returned population below one thousand in 2001 Census.

Expectedly STs are primarily residing in the rural areas and only 15.4 per cent are in the urban areas of the state. Among major STs, Malayali have the highest (98.3 per cent) rural population, followed by Irular (87 per cent), Kurumans (78.9 per cent) and Kondareddis (71.7 per cent). On the other hand, Kattunayakan, the third largest ST population have reported as much as 61.6 per cent urban population. Salem, Tiruvannamalai, Viluppuram, Vellore, Dharmapuri and Namakkal are major ST populated districts of the state as these six districts account for 64 per cent of the ST population of the state.

#### Sex ratio

The overall sex ratio of the ST population in Tamil Nadu is 980 females per 1000 males, which has recorded improvement from 960 in 1991 Census. Among the district, Thanavur has recorded the highest sex ratio of the ST population (1054) and Perambalur the lowest (936).

**Table 3 The Statement below shows sex ratio and child sex ratio (0-6) of the ST population at the national, state and numerically the largest five STs in 2001 Census**

Age Groups	All STs (India)	All STs (TamilNadu)	Malaiyali	Irular	Kattunayakan	Karumans	Konda reddis
All Ages	978	980	966	996	1012	953	984
0-6	973	945	932	984	923	872	859

As may be seen from the Statement, the overall sex ratio of ST population in Tamil Nadu is almost equal to the sex ratio of ST population of the country. But in case of child sex ratio (0-6), it is less by 28 points than that of ST population aggregated at the national level. At the individual tribe level, all major STs, except Irular, have lower sex ratio in 0-6 age-group populations, as compared to the state ST population. Among these Kondareddis and Kurumans child sex ratio is alarmingly low.

## Tribal Population in Hills

Table 4 Tribal Population in Hills in Salem District

Sl. No.	Name of the Tribal Area	Area (Sq. Km.)	Total Population of the Area	Tribal Population
1.	Yercaud Hills	147.50	33,353	21,676
2.	Kalrayan Hills	319.21	21,395	20,665
3.	Aranuthumalai	29.02	11,879	6,604
4.	Pachamalai	109.92	24,161	6,583
Total			90,788	55,528

For the implementation of the Tribal Sub Plan strategy, integrated Tribal Development Projects were adopted during the Fifth Plan for covering the substantial Tribal population areas. In accordance with the above strategy Sub Plans were formulated for viable Project areas considering the local

resources and needs. Out of the total Tribal population integrated Tribal Development Project areas cover roughly 2 lakhs Tribal which is 33% of the total population on the Tribals. The Integrated Tribal Development Project area wise details of the Tribal population in Salem District are provided in Table 4.

## Literacy

Literacy rate is one of the important indicators which can be used to measure the development of a society. Literacy and level of education are two basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a group/society as literacy results in more awareness besides contributing to the overall improvement of health, hygiene and other social conditions. In census, a person is considered as a literate if he can both read and write with understanding in any language. All children aged 6 years and below were treated as illiterate in 1991 census instead of 4 years and below till 1981 census. According to 2001 Census, percentage of ST literate (those who can read and write with understanding) persons aged 7 years and above is 41.5 per cent in the state, which is lower than 73.5 per cent reported for the state as a whole. The literacy rate (41.5 per cent) has however increased from 27.9 per cent recorded in 1991 Census. Among the major STs, Kondareddis are reported to have the highest 78.2 per cent literacy rate, followed by Kurumans (61.4 per cent), Kattunayakan (54.7 per cent), Malayali (37.4 per cent) and Irular (34.3 per cent). The female literacy rate of 32.8 per cent among ST population is lower than 64.4 per cent registered among total female population of the state. As in literacy rate, the highest and lowest female literacy rate of 68.9 per cent and 27.1 per cent are also recorded among Kondareddis and Irular.

The literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribe population in Tamil Nadu is 27.89%. The corresponding rates for Scheduled Caste population and for general population are 46.74% and 62.66%. The literacy rate for Scheduled Tribe males is 35.25% while it is very poor, viz., 20.23 among Scheduled Tribe females. Among the Districts, the literacy rate is

generally found to be lower in the few contiguous Northern Districts where the concentration of Scheduled Tribe population and the rates are higher in the other Districts. Almost all the District in the Southern Parts of Tamil Nadu, are almost plain in coastal areas and do not have substantial population of Scheduled Tribes and the literacy rates among the few Scheduled Tribes are found to be comparatively higher. Obviously the Scheduled Tribe population found in the District would have settled from the Tribal areas in other parts of Tamil Nadu for employment purposes. Their mobility from their place of origin explicitly reveals their improvement in literacy and educational levels. Education might as well have influenced their mobility from their places of origin. Those Scheduled Tribes who are still illiterates are almost immobile and hence apparently remain in the places of their original habitat.

The literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribe population living in the rural areas is 25.24 for persons, 32.38 for males and 17.80 for females while the corresponding rates in urban areas are 47.29 for persons and 56.32 and 37.94 among males and females respectively. The literacy rate among the Tribals is about 27.89% as against the general literacy rate of 62.46%. The literacy rate among the Tribal women is 20.23% which is much less than that of Tribal man viz. 35.24%.

**Table 5 Educational levels attained by major STs**

Name of ST	Literate without educational level	Below primary	Primary	Middle	Matric/Secondary Higher Secondary Intermediate etc.	Technical & Nontechnical diploma	Graduate & above
All STs	10.3	26.3	33.3	14.7	12.8	0.6	1.8
Malaiyali	10.6	27.6	35.2	14.2	10.8	0.5	0.9
Irular	12.5	31.4	33.5	13.6	8.1	0.3	0.5
Kattunayakan	10.6	23.9	31.0	16.5	14.7	0.6	2.6
Kurumbas	6.1	19.3	31.7	17.7	20.1	1.5	3.6
Kondareddis	3.9	13.0	28.1	16.4	28.2	2.1	8.3

Out of the total literates, 36.6 per cent are either literates without any educational level or have attained below Primary level. The literates, who have attained education up to Primary and Middle levels, constitute 33.3 per cent and 14.7 per cent respectively. 12.8 per cent are having educational level up to Matric/Higher Secondary levels, implying that every 8th ST literate is a Matriculate. Literates with educational level of Graduation and above are 1.8 per cent. Individually, Kondareddis (8.3 per cent) have the highest percentage of Graduation and above educational level. From the educational level table, it also emerges that the drop out starts after the Primarily level and it increases with each subsequent level of education. Population in the age group 5-14 years are the potential students. 61.7 per cent of the ST population in this age group is attending various educational institutions.



**Economic activity****Work Participation Rate (WPR)**

The work participation rate (WPR) is the percentage of workers to the total population. The WPR among the ST population at 2001 Census is 54.9 per cent, which is higher than that for state population as a whole (44.7 per cent) as well as the state SC population (48.1 per cent). The WPR of ST population has increased if compared to 52.1 per cent recorded at 1991 Census. The WPR at 60.1 per cent for ST males is higher than 49.5 per cent reported among ST females at 2001 Census. At individual tribe level, the WPR varies from 59.5 per cent among Malayali to 40.5 per cent among Kattunayakan. The trend is same in case of female WPR. Malayali have the highest 57.7 per cent female WPR.

**Definition of Workers**

Work may be defined as participation in any economically productive activity. Such participation may be physical or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also effective supervision and direction of work. It also includes unpaid work on farm or in family enterprise. The economic questions till 1951 census were based on income concept while the concept of work measured in terms of time or the labour force concept was adopted since 1961 census and this is being continued in 1991 census also. But, in 1961 census as well as in 1971 census, a dual reference period was adopted - one for seasonal and another for non-seasonal work. However, there was no change in classifying a person as worker in the case of seasonal work between 1961 and 1971 censuses; but, in the case of non-seasonal work, one should have worked at least for a day during the week preceding enumeration in 1971 census instead of a fortnight in 1961. But in 1981 and 1991 censuses, a single reference period of one year prior to enumeration was adopted both for seasonal and non seasonal work.

**Division of Workers**

In 1961 and 1971 censuses, the population was divided into workers and non-workers. But in 1981 census, workers were further sub divided into main workers and marginal workers, depending upon the period of participation in economic activity. If a person had worked for major part of the year six months (183 days) or more, during the year proceeding the day of enumeration, he was considered as main worker and if he had worked for less than six months or less than 183 days he was considered as a marginal worker. Persons who had not worked even for a day during the year preceding the day of enumeration were treated as non-workers. The above definitions of main worker and marginal worker were continued in 1991 census also. While in 1981, main workers were divided into four industrial categories for presentation of data in the Primary Census Abstract, now they are shown under nine industrial categories, as given in the publications of 1961 and 1971 censuses. Out of 5.74 lakhs of Tribals 2.78 lakhs are non-workers and the remaining 2.96 lakhs are workers. Out of 2.96 lakhs workers 1.34 lakhs are cultivators, 0.93

lakhs are agricultural labourers, 0.04 lakhs are house-hold workers, 0.47 lakhs are other workers and 0.18 lakhs are marginal workers.

It may be observed that the work participation rate among the Scheduled Tribe population in 1991 census is 52.10%, 49.10% are main workers and 3.00% are marginal workers. The work participation rate for Scheduled Tribe population is higher than the work participation rate for general population and Scheduled Caste population in 1991 census which are 43.31 and 48.43 respectively. The corresponding rates for Scheduled Tribe in 1981 Census was 48.20 for main workers and 3.11 for marginal workers the balance of 48.69% representing non-workers. It may be observed that the percentage of main workers has increased slightly to 49.10 in 1991 from 48.20 in 1981.

Among the male Scheduled Tribe population in the State, 59.07% are main workers; and 0.32% are marginal workers while among female Scheduled Tribes, 38.71% are main workers and 5.80% are marginal workers. The corresponding proportions in 1981 among male Scheduled Tribes were 61.26% in respect of main workers and 0.72 in respect of marginal workers. Similar ratios, among the female Scheduled Tribes in 1981 were 34.73% in respect of main workers and 5.57% were marginal workers.

#### Category of Workers

There has been a decline in the ST main workers from 94.2 per cent at 1991 Census to 81.3 per cent at 2001 Census. This, in turn, has resulted in corresponding increase in the marginal workers from 5.8 per cent in 1991 to 18.7 percent in 2001. Out of total workers, 'agricultural labourers' constitute 37.8 per cent, which is similar to the national average of 36.9 per cent for ST population. 'Cultivators' account for 36.3 per cent and only 23.6 per cent has been returned as 'other workers'. Remaining 2.4 per cent have been workers in 'household industry'. Thus, there is a change in agriculture related economic activities; the workers engaged in agricultural activities (cultivators and agricultural labourers) constitute 74.1 per cent of the total workers against 81.8 per cent recorded at 1991 Census.

**Table 6 Percentage of Tribal Workers Population in Salem District 1991 census**

Sl. No.	Persons	Percentage of Tribal Workers		
		Main Workers	Marginal Workers	Non Workers
1.	Total Workers	54.37	2.94	42.69
2	Male Workers	61.84	0.18	37.98
3.	Female Workers	46.58	5.82	47.6

At the individual tribe level, the highest percentage of 'agricultural labourers' (58.2 per cent) is recorded among Irular; 'cultivators' (58.8 per cent) among Malayali, 'other workers' (68.1 per cent) among Kattunayakan and 'household industry' (7.4 per cent)

among Kondareddis.

The details relating to the percentage of tribal workers population in Salem District during 1991 census provided in the above table indicate that total main workers are 54.37%. Among them the total male main workers are 61.84% and the total female main workers are 46.58%. The total marginal workers are 2.94%. Among them the total male marginal workers

are 0.18% and the total female marginal workers are 5.82%. The total non workers are 42.69%. Among them the total male non workers are 37.98% and the total female non workers are 47.6%. It is well known that there are subtle variations in the engagement of male and female workers as between different industrial categories and this is reflected in the census figures also. Female main workers among Scheduled Tribes are also accordingly found in much lower ratios in categories like Transport, Storage and Communications, Constructions, Trade and Commerce, Mining and Quarrying, Manufacturing and Processing etc. under the factory sector, other services, etc.,

#### **Marital status**

Marital status is one of the important determinants of fertility and growth of a population. The 2001 Census data on marital status show that 44.6 per cent persons among the STs of Tamil Nadu are 'never married'. The 'currently married' constitute 50.1 per cent while 4.8 per cent are 'widowed'. Only 0.5 per cent are 'divorced and separated'. Majority of girls and boys among STs in Tamil Nadu are getting married after attaining the legal age of marriage. Marriages of ST girls below 18 years (2.7 per cent) are higher than that recorded among ST population at national level (2.1 per cent). On the other hand, the incidence of marriage of boys below 21 years at 2.6 per cent is almost equal to 2.8 per cent aggregated at national level for ST population. The mean number of children ever born per ever married ST women of all ages as well as 45-49 years age group are 2.2 and 2.8 respectively, which are lower than that of 3.2 and 4.1 for ST population at national level.

#### **Religion**

Majority of the ST population of the state are Hindus (99.2 per cent). There are only 3,497 (0.5 per cent) Christians and 453 (0.1 per cent) Muslims ST populations in the state.

#### **Conclusion**

The family planning programme should not be viewed as Centre's responsibility only. Everyone has to get into the act to solve the problem. Industrialist J.R.D. Tata advocated that we must make population control a national concern - number one priority. But the big question is how to tackle the problem. Besides the governmental efforts through incentives, better health services, more and more private voluntary organizations should opt to work in the rural areas. Services of the village dais and traditional doctors should be utilised. They should be trained as they can certainly help in bringing about better acceptability of family planning methods by educating the rural people.

The educated, urban middle class plan their families. Increasing number of young couple had adopted small family norms. But a lot remains to be achieved, particularly in the poor uneducated sections of society in villages. Population control should be everybody's concern. Otherwise life will become too hard for the growing generations in the years to come with limited space, job opportunities and resources and high rate of inflation. After all land and natural resources may not an inexhaustible.

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