

Population Stabilization in India: A Sub-State level Analysis

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Abstract

The study aims at analyzing economic and policy factors impinging upon population stabilization measures at the district (sub-state level) in India. It reflects upon popularly debated notions, namely, that development is the best contraceptive or whether contraceptive is the best development. In order to reflect upon this notion, we hypothesize that the factors determining the success of population stabilization measures are likely to be different across rich and poor states. It is more likely that in a rich state economic development becomes a significant factor for population stabilization relative to a direct intervention by the state. By contrast, in a poorer state, direct intervention acquires main significance relative to supporting influence of economic development. To test the validity of our assumption, we have the district level data for the three categories of Indian states belonging to different income levels relative to overall average of the country. Thus we focus on the district level information of the three states, namely, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, which in terms of per capita income, belong to rich, middle income and poor category of states respectively. Our regressions using district level data for three states depict the significance of difference in influential variables across the categories. The results thus confirm our hypothesis that direct intervention acquires main significance at a lower level of per capita state income and economic development becomes a major influential factor at higher levels of per capita state income. The results also support our earlier results using state level data. In the light of these results, it could be emphasized that in the long run development is the best contraceptive. However, in the short run, a considerable achievement could be made by improving basic health and family planning services and by increasing the level of facilities including basic amenities, media and infrastructure development.

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