

Socialism by Family Planning: Horses for Courses strategy instead of One Size Fits All Approach

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Abstract: Family Planning in most nations of the world tries to achieve 2 children per family. This is rather odd. One would think that since raising child costs money it would be better if poor people have fewer children and rich people have more children. This paper suggests a differential family planning policy instead of uniform family planning policy where poor people have fewer children and rich people have more children.

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I. Introduction

In 20th century population began to rise exponentially due to lower death rates and higher life expectancy. Hence nations around the world began to adopt family planning to curtail population growth and achieve economic progress.

Now to achieve population stability it is necessary to achieve replacement level fertility which is 2.1. Hence governments in nations around the world adopted a 2 child per family approach. This approach has met with considerable level of success.

However this is not the most optimum family planning policy. This is because poor people cannot afford 2 children, especially in modern times when they are expected to send children to school and cannot use them for their own income support.

Rich people on the other hand waste their money, when they do not have adequate number of children. This paper suggests a new family planning policy where rich people have more children and poor people have fewer children.

This is the horses for courses strategy - that is the family planning policy changes as per income level of family. This is different from the previous one size fits all family planning policy where everybody was required to have 2 children irrespective of income levels.

This paper points to the benefit of having a differential family planning policy instead of one size fits all family planning policy.

Children are Taxes

It takes a lot to raise a child in modern day and age. Earlier before 20th century, children added to the labour pool in family. By the age of 5 children could be used to do some income earning work or household work. Thus children instead of being a cost were an income.

But now these days you have to provide education to children at least till the age of 18 and beyond. That means firstly there is a huge cost to raising children and what is even worse is that children do not earn any income to the family until they are 20 years or more.

This means that it is difficult to afford children. At least it is very difficult for poor people to afford children. For instance India has almost 20 million orphans and more than 80% are orphans because they were abandoned since their parents could not afford them. Hence it is obvious that poor people cannot afford two children per family.

Now some might argue that children are like God given taxes, which is not exactly true because children are produced by humans. The fact is that unlike regular taxes imposed by government, children are not given by government.

But fact is that children impose huge costs on family. Hence they are very similar to taxes. Now government imposes more taxes on rich and less taxes on poor. So shouldn't Government have a family planning that says poor people should have fewer children – say 1 and as people get rich they have more children.

Optimum Family Planning Policy

Hence as per discussions above a new family planning policy is being suggested. Here in this family planning policy the following will be number of children as per income level.

Income Level	Number of Children per Couple
Poor and Lower Middle Class	1
Middle Class	2
Upper Middle Class	3
Rich	4
Very Rich	5
Extremely Rich	10

This way the poor who cannot afford will have only 1 child and rich can have 4 -6 children, whereas middle class can have 2 children and upper middle class can have 3 children. And governments can most certainly influence how many children a family has.

After all if Government of developing nations could over a 50 year period convince everybody to have just 2 children, surely government can convince poor people to have 1 child and equally influence rich people to have 4-6 children since for centuries people have usually had as many.

Will this lead to Population Explosion?

No.

This family planning policy will not lead to population explosion. And here is the explanation in table below

Income Class	Percentage of Population(%)	Number of Children	Effective Number of Children
Poor and Lower Middle Class	40	1	0.5
Middle Class	40	2	0.8
Upper Middle Class	10	3	0.3
Rich	5	4	0.2
Very Rich	4	5	0.2
Extremely Rich	1	10	0.1
Average Number of Children			2.1

Thus even if extremely rich have 10 children the overall fertility rate will be just 2.1 which will stabilize the population

Not Just Income But Wealth Too

It should be obvious that this family planning policy will reduce inequalities of income per person and thus enforce greater equality of consumption, thus reducing poverty at one end and preventing waste at another end and thus optimising social welfare, which some would argue is the main task of Economics.

But more importantly this will enable a greater equality of wealth too. Say in previous scenario, the top 1 % had 2 children per family. And say in a scenario where rich marry rich. Then with 2 children scenario, if the top 1% had 50% wealth and all wealth was inherited, then the following generation would also have 50% wealth in the top 1%.

However say the top 1% had 10 children per family and if rich marry rich then if in one generation the top 1% had 50% of wealth, then in the next generation with division of assets, the top 5% will have 50% of wealth and top 1% will have just 10% of wealth.

Also at the other end of spectrum, this will multiply the assets of poor. If the bottom 40% had just 10% of wealth, then with 1 child per family, in the next generation the bottom 40% would have 20% of wealth.

Thus a differential family planning policy instead of one size fits all family planning policy will mean not just great equality of income and consumption but greater equality of wealth too.

II. Conclusion

The One size fits all family planning is absurd, in as much as it does not take into account the fact that children costs money to raise and poor people cannot afford to have 2 children and rich people will waste their money if they have only 2 children.

A more optimum family planning policy would be horses for courses strategy where poor people just have 1 child and middle class have 2 children and upper middle class have 3 children and rich have 4 - 10 children.

This will achieve greater equality of consumption, income and wealth and help in reducing poverty and checking waste.

This is Socialism by Family Planning.