

THE OVER-POPULATION PROBLEM IN EGYPT

Population Studies⁽¹⁾ no. 55, Oct.-Dec. 1980, contains, besides population statistics, three articles dealing with the population problem in Egypt. The first, (pp. 11-38) by Dr. Hussein Abdel Aziz Helmi Sayed and Dr. Mohamed Ezzat El-Khorazati, discusses levels and differentials of fertility in Egypt, taking as a basis the National Fertility Survey of 1974-1975. Here are some excerpts of this article:

The reported level of fertility measured by the average number of children ever-born for selected ever-married women aged 45-49 was about 6 children for the whole country. For urban and rural areas these averages were about 6.3 and 5.9 respectively (p. 15).

Examining the mean ideal number of children clearly shows the effect of socio-economic factors on fertility. The lowest values were those of highly educated women (married to highly educated husbands) who worked after marriage. These women are living in Cairo and Alexandria and they are of urban origin (p. 28).

Results show that with the increased effort in the socio-economic field, in particular in the area of education, marital fertility levels in Egypt will tend to decrease below recent levels (p. 30).

The most significant variables influencing women's attitudes toward ideal family size are their education and residence. Husband's education and origin/residence factors rank second in importance... Women's labor force participation affects fertility behavior but not attitudes toward fertility.

The second article, pp. 41-54, by Dr. Mary Taylor Hassouna and contributors, carries the title, "Barrier

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Methods Projects". It reports on a project carried out over six months, with the purpose of studying the acceptability of "Barrier Methods" of contraception among Egyptian married couples.

The barrier methods selected for the study were: Neosamptan foam tablets, Orthodiaphragm with jelly, Delfen cream, Delfen spray and condoms. Both governmental and non-governmental units involved in family-planning services participated in the investigation program. They presented the barrier methods and discussed them with the women who sought contraceptive services, then asked them to select a method.

In its first six months of service delivery, the Barrier Method Study attracted 3325 women to the practice of family planning. A large majority chose the "foam tablet". During the same period, 49% of the women who selected a method dropped out, either permanently or temporarily. They switched to either another barrier method or to the use of common oral contraceptives or to IUD's (intra uterine devices).

Since the availability of Barrier methods in Egypt is severely limited, their success will depend on their availability and on the ability of the personnel to give adequate explanations and effect convincing discussions among the clientele.

The third article, pp. 57-59, deals with the subject of the preparation of a teacher's guidebook in population education for geography teachers of secondary schools.

The article summarizes a study prepared by Mr. Mohammad El-Sayed Gameel, which aims to show the need for a teacher's guidebook in population education as a help to cope with the over-population problem in Egypt. Reaching 40 million in 1960, the population is expected to exceed 66 million by the year 2000. With development efforts unable to match this rapid population increase, several consequences arise such as difficulties in securing food, employment, housing, schooling and other services.

The proposed guidebook will present the population problem as a disproportion between the population growth, distribution and characteristics on the one hand and the available resources of the community on the other. The basic elements of population education will be stated as follows: development of awareness and understanding of the problem and its consequences, formulation of a mental attitude toward the problem, attainment of skills required for decision-making in personal situations related to population problems and improvement of the quality of life. Besides recommendations and suggestions for further studies, the guidebook will also contain directions for teachers, and proposed educational goals and aspects of students' activities.