The historical record shows that population decline is a negative phenomenon. It stifles cultural creativity and causes the rate of innovation in demand for goods and services to fall and thus reduces economic opportunity. Demographic decline places a heavy burden on the younger generations, who have to support an ever-growing proportion of dependent elderly. With the increased pressure it places on pension funds, demographic decline in developed countries will threaten rates of taxation and social security payments. Up to now, the working assumption in Western nations was that superannuation funds, built up by the baby-boomers during their working lives, would finance their living costs during retirement. However, as Japan and other Western countries are now experiencing, the safety and sufficiency of these funds is far from guaranteed.

In Australia, the Retirement Income modelling exercise (RIME), when the Australian Treasury has estimated that about 70 per cent of those who turn over the next 20 years will be eligible for either compensation or social security payments. It suggests that this could be a heavy burden on the younger population and the government beyond the Western societies. Amongst others, this is due to a loss of fundamental values relating to the family, education and purpose of marriage. This aspect of the problem is borne out in comments made by the Australian Prime Minister in 1992, which in reference to fertility levels and changing attitudes towards marriage, he said:

"Increasing levels of status over fertility with the introduction of the birth control pill in 1960 helped to provide young people with more family styles. Couples were reappraising the importance and relevance of marriage during the 1970s. This resulted from the reduced influence of religion on young Australian women and divorce rates that undermined the ideal of marriage, and the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s that helped to separate sexuality from marriage. In more recent years, the number of couples who choose to postpone or reject the traditional marriage in favour of cohabiting relationships has risen. By 1992, more than half (56%) of all couples who married in that year had cohabited before their current marriage, compared to 10% in 1975."

To reverse the present trends in fertility decline, it will be necessary to adopt economic and social policies that are family friendly and to support married couples who choose to have a relatively large number of children and who recognize that family life is a vocation of which a second to none. Coupled with this, we need to reaffirm the truth that the family is based on marriage as an indissoluble bond between a man and a woman is the basis of society.
The myth of 'overpopulation' has a long history, dating back to ancient Greece. In 1798, unaware of the agricultural and technological revolution taking place in Britain, British philosopher Thomas Malthus warned that the human race was dangerously overpopulated. Predicting that food supply could not keep up with population growth, Malthus argued that disaster was inevitable. He believed that every increase in population resulted in more people competing for the same resources, leading to a decrease in the standard of living. Malthus argued that there was a constant struggle between population growth and available resources.

Whilst Malthusian ideas became well ingrained in Western culture during the twentieth century, from the 1960s onwards, economic opinion began to shift gradually to a position where population growth was seen as a long-term positive impact on development. Advocates of this position argued that:

- A leading exponent of the revisionist view of population growth was the economist Friedrich von Hayek. Von Hayek argued that population growth was an important factor in economic development. He believed that population growth could lead to the discovery of new technologies and innovations, which in turn could lead to economic growth. He also argued that population growth could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations.

- In the 1960s, the economist Paul Ehrlich published his book 'The Population Bomb', which warned of the dire consequences of continued population growth. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, a group of economists, including Paul Ehrlich, began to revise their views on population growth. They argued that population growth was a factor in economic development, and that it could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations.

- In 1964, economist Julian Simon challenged the idea that population growth was a negative factor in economic development. Simon pointed to the extraordinary material progress of the human race over the last 500 years. He argued that population growth had led to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations, leading to economic growth.

- Simon argued that population growth was a factor in economic development, and that it could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations. He also argued that population growth could lead to increased competition, which could lead to increased innovation and economic growth.

- In the 1980s, economist Paul Romer argued that population growth was a factor in economic development, and that it could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations. He also argued that population growth could lead to increased competition, which could lead to increased innovation and economic growth.

- In the 1990s, economist Amartya Sen argued that population growth was a factor in economic development, and that it could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations. He also argued that population growth could lead to increased competition, which could lead to increased innovation and economic growth.

- In the 2000s, economist Paul Collier argued that population growth was a factor in economic development, and that it could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations. He also argued that population growth could lead to increased competition, which could lead to increased innovation and economic growth.

- In the 2010s, economist Jeffrey Sachs argued that population growth was a factor in economic development, and that it could lead to increased savings, which could be invested in new technologies and innovations. He also argued that population growth could lead to increased competition, which could lead to increased innovation and economic growth.

The question of whether population growth is positive or negative remains a topic of debate among economists. Some argue that population growth is a factor in economic development, and that it can lead to increased savings, which can be invested in new technologies and innovations. Others argue that population growth can lead to increased competition, which can lead to increased innovation and economic growth.

The key to understanding the relationship between population growth and economic development is recognizing the complexity of the issues involved. Population growth can have both positive and negative effects, and it is important to consider the specific circumstances and context in which population growth occurs. The effects of population growth can vary widely, depending on the country, the time period, and the specific policies and programs in place.

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