

Unit 3- theories of population- Indian population policy – demographic dividend.

Theories of population: there are three important theories. Malthusian theory, Optimum theory and Transition theory.

#### 1. Malthusian theory of population

Malthusian theory is by Thomas Malthus. This theory postulates an arithmetic progression in food supply and a geometric growth in population. At some point, the population growth would overtake the food supply. This will result in various natural and man-made calamities like war, clashes, epidemics, flood, drought, starvation and others. These are positive checks. Nature is using these checks to control population growth. These are horrible. In order to avoid these, people must be self-restrictive. Raising marriage age, abstaining from sex, postponement of child bearing, using birth control measures are easier methods. These are preventive checks.

This theory has been criticised. This is pessimistic. This does not visualise dynamism in society. The causation between population growth and natural calamities is idiotic.

#### 2. Optimum theory of population

This theory was given by Edwin Cannan. Optimum population is the ideal one. It is the size of the population with the highest per capita income. Natural resources, capital stock, habits and tastes, ratio of working population and science-technology are all assumed to be constant. This theory is of more of a notional.

This theory is criticised. No evidence of optimum level, neglect of income distribution, no role for government, no correct measurement of per capita income, no explanation to population growth and oscillating optimum level.

#### 3. Theory of demographic Transition

This theory is universally applicable. It explains the population growth with socio-economic development. This development brings changes in the birth and death rates over a period. This period is divided into three stages.

First stage, both death and birth rates are high, so there is no population growth.

Second stage, high birth rate and low death rate, so high population growth.

Third stage, both death and birth rates are low, so population growth is very slow.

This demographic transition is evident world over. It has been proved.