Major Sources of Population Data

Population is described as the entire collection of the people living in our town, state, region or in a country and the respective characteristics such as age, sex, marital status and gender. Population is an entire group regarding whom we are interested in drawing the conclusions. Basically the population data tell us about the number of people that are living or planned to be living in an area and it is also about the all the number of people belonging to different religions and races living in a specified area

The most important problem that the social scientists are facing now days is the collection of the accurate, reliable and relevant data. Basically, the subject matter of the population geography is so vast so that's why the population geographers require large variety and amount of data which pertains to all the attributes of the population. Although, the particular data which is being requires by the population geographers is also dependent upon the issue he is working upon. At the micro level the population geographers collect the primary data whereas on the macro level it is far more beyond the level of any individual to collect the data on all the attributes of the population. So is should say that it is very difficult for an individual to collect data for large area that's why a population geographer always prefer to look for other official sources for the collection of the data. The primary

sources of the population data on the population size, characteristics and demographic structure are the census, projections, the registrations, migration reports and the surveys. Whereas, some of the statistics regarding the population can be produced in the form of secondary sources such as statistical abstracts indeed. In the regard of secondary sources for the collection of population data the United Nation Organization itself is the biggest producer of the Population data.

Population Census

The population census which is regarded as the most important source of basic data for the population data and it is conducted either decennially or quinquenially. A census count offers us a spectrum of the population at a specific point in time covering a vast range of the economic demographic and social attributes of the very population. Ones we have the process of census in our country then it became a continuous process and repeated in the country after every 5 to 10 years. In modern terms the census is defined as a process of collecting, compiling and publishing the economic, social and demographic data pertaining to all the individuals living in a country at any specific point in time. The first ever complete census of population of data has been conducted in 1881 on a uniform basis throughout the India. So that's why the census of 1881 has provided complete population data and demographic record for any comparable population. Even now days the modern census also faced a series of limitations according to population geographer Zelinsky countries that have low level of technological achievement faced

the problems such as ignorance, suspicion and dishonesty have made the task of census very difficult to perform. Even though, these countries also faced the administrative problem of getting funds for conducting the census. Another most important limitation to the census is the frequent boundary modification both at the international as well as at the regional level. As we all know that the censuses always have a specific reference point in time so if we introduce any boundary modifications then it will strict the utility of census data. In those states where the census take place after every 10 year so in that gap of Ten years a remarkable change occurred in the population. So it is suggested that a sample surveys should be conducted in such countries in order to fill the gaps between the two censuses.

The Surveys

It is very difficult to distinguish between a census and the survey as there is no clear cut differentiation between both of them. Census is described as the complete national canvass of the whole population of the country whereas the canvass of the selected households with an idea of collecting information regarding demographic attributes and socio economic conditions is regarded as survey indeed. In fact, surveys are conducted for supplementing the census data. In the recent tears the surveys has been conducted in order to collect the information regarding the fertility, mortality, mobility, morbidity, under employment, welfare, health, education and unemployment. Such kind of surveys often include attitudinal question regarding the problems of the population. So we could say that the role of

surveys is just to provide explanatory information to the population analysis. Both the private organizations and governments are very much engaged in conducting the surveys. The National Sample Surveys are conducted in the form of rounds and the each round covers several subjects but the emphasis is made on only one of the subject during a specific period.

The Registration

The practice of the population registration has been very common even before the emergence of the process of regular census. The Far East has a great demographic tradition of the population registration and its major function is to control the population. In this registration process the family is considered as the basic social unit for keeping record of the population. However, such a record keeping phenomena should have yielded a continuous population register but in reality the compilation has been never made or if made then in inaccessible secret archives. Presently, in the modern world many countries have adopted the registration systems in order to keep the record of deaths, births, marriages, adoptions, divorces etc. In some states it is known as population registers for record keeping.

Administrative Records:

Basically, these are the statistics that are acquired from the different administrative process. These administrative records not only include the vital events that have been recorded in the

civil registration system but it also includes the data on employment, deaths, births, education and health etc. well, the reliability of the data obtained from administrative records is dependent upon the completeness with the classifications and concepts that have been used in the census in order to collect population data. Theses administrative records are regarded as the by-products of the administrative records. The administrative data is collected due to the day to day operations of the organizations and there administrative files can be used as a substitute for census and surveys.

Miscellaneous Sources:

Other then the sources mentioned above the population geographers also make use of migration reports, projections, estimates and linguistic reports. It has been observed that the United Nations is fulfilling the responsibility of collecting vital population data from the member countries. The Estimates are produces in a variety of ways means the estimates are produced from the continuous population registers under the systems of registration. Secondly, these estimates can also be gathered with the help of the sample surveys. Thirdly, we can also compute the estimates by carrying population from the previously made population census. Projections are basically related to the estimates of the population for the future. These projections can be made for the total population of the country or they can be made with respect to marital status, sex and age. Basically, the compilation of the projections at the international level is not as common as we have the compilation of the estimates. I should

say that the estimates can also be calculated by taking the population from the previous census by the mathematical extrapolation of the past trends. Basically, the quality of the estimates is dependent on the type of the method used such as the estimates are mostly published in the national reports such as in the national statistical yearbooks. While, the population projections are related to the estimates of the population for the future.