



MOKSHA AND ITS IMPACT ON POPULATION EXPLOSION IN INDIA- A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Except for Cārvāka, Indian philosophical traditions view moksha, or freedom from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, as the ultimate purpose of human life. These systems, based on karma and samsāra, view life as pain (duḥkha) caused by desire, attachment, and ignorance. Against this philosophical context, the current study investigates an apparent paradox: despite the strong spiritual ideal of liberation from rebirth, modern India faces a serious population explosion. This dissertation examines the notion of moksha in many Indian traditions, including Vedānta, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Buddhism, and Jainism. It also analyses its relevance and impact on population growth in modern India. The study analyses scriptural teachings, ethical prescriptions such as niṣkāma karma (desireless activity), and spiritual disciplines targeted at detachment to see if the decline of moksha-centered ideals contributes to unchecked population expansion. The study also places philosophical concepts within modern demographic patterns, emphasising the difference between India's spiritual legacy and current socioeconomic reality. The research contends that the marginalisation of moksha as a lived ideal, along with material aspirations and socio-cultural variables, undermines limits on desire and fertility. Finally, the study suggests that re-engaging with moksha's ethical and spiritual dimensions may provide useful perspectives for addressing population-related challenges, not as a policy prescription, but as a philosophical framework encouraging restraint, responsibility, and higher human purpose.

Keywords: Moksha, Samsara, Karma, Indian Philosophy, Population Explosion, Demographic Growth, Desire and Attachment, Liberation, Spiritual Values, India

Introduction

Across all Indian philosophical system (except Carvaka) whether it is orthodox like; Nyaya- Vaishesik, Sankhya –Yoga, Purva and Uttara Mimansa or Heterodox like; Jainism or Buddhism it is noticed that the life of an individual is governed by the law of Karma. Unless the karmic cycle stops the individual soul has to take birth-rebirth in Samsara. Since the life is full of pain and suffering so it is the innate desire of an individual soul to get rid of embodiment as early as possible. The Sankhya recognizes three kinds of pain .

- A. Adhyatmika: Pain due to bodily diseases and mental troubles.
- B. Adhibhautika: Pain due to other men and animals.
- C. Adhidaivika: Pain due to supernatural agencies.

Whereas Yoga admits other three kinds of pain

The enjoyment of sensual pleasure gives rise to painful consequences. Thirst for them is intensified by enjoyment. The pain generated by the enjoyment of sensual pleasure is consequential (Parinamadukha). Attachment to sensual pleasure involves aversion to those who thwart the desire for their enjoyment, which is painful (Tapadukha). Feelings of pleasures and pain produce their dispositions (samskara). They produce recollections of pleasure & pain which produce actions.

Action (Karma) produce merits and demerits which consequently produce pleasure and pain. Cycle of pain due to dispositions (Samskardukha) continues.

Moksha / Release / Mukti is complete destruction of these dispositions and absolute freedom of the self from the mind and its modes.



Buddha preaches four noble truths which are also based on pain and suffering.

- A. Life is full of pain and suffering
- B. There is cause of suffering
- C. There is cessation of suffering
- D. 8-fold way to stop suffering.

So, Nirvana is absolute extinction from suffering.

Since the life is full of suffering so it is the innate desire of an individual soul to get rid of it as early as possible.

As per the Indian Scriptures there are four goals of human life. Viz, A. Dharma B. Artha C. Kama D. Moksha.

Lets analyze moksha in detail.

Moksha is unique to Indian tradition and it is rooted in the understanding that human being have the inherent capability to transcend the limitations imposed by the nature and attain freedom in an absolute sense. Moksha is about getting off the wheel of Samsara or the cycle of suffering caused by birth-death and Re-birth.

Objectives:

1. To study the recent trend of population in India
2. To Know the concept of Moksha in comprehensive manner
3. To measure the impact of Moksha on population explosion of India
4. To find out the important factors affecting Moksha on population explosion.

Literature Review:

Moksha is the union of the atma (individual soul) with the Brahman (world soul). This union however is not easy as the individual soul filled with desire incessantly reincarnates itself through rebirth. Even if residual desire remains moksha is difficult to attain. As the soul finds unity with the supreme being and the person exists the cycle of birth, death & rebirth, self realization occurs. In the process of achieving moksha, one loses the focus on the ego and the body and is able to focus on his / her divine self.

Concept of Moksha in Indian Philosophy: Except Carvaka all Indian philosophical systems (Theistic / Atheistic), moksha is considered as the ultimate goal of human life. It is also known as liberation, Apavarga, freedom, Mukti etc.

The present life is considered to be the result of many lifetimes of past desires, Karmas and the result of those previous karmas. The result of these previous karmas are unfolding at every moment. Some karma is mature and bearing fruit at the present moment, other karmas are lying as seed waiting to mature at future time. All that we have done in the past creates who we are in the present and all that we do in the present is creating who we will be in the future.

In this way there is great cycle of desire, action (karma) and reaction that drives the wheel of life. As a result all beings are forced to remain with this world in order to experience the fruit of their desires and actions (karmas). Desires and actions (Karma) are said to be the source of reincarnation. Beings continue to 'rotate' through endless lifetimes in this physical world unless get moksha. Sometimes in heaven (nice place) sometimes in the middle regions (medium places) and sometimes in the hellish realms. This rotation through endless lifetimes is the process of reincarnation called samsara in Sanskrit. The ultimate goal of life mentioned in all philosophical systems is to break this cycle of reincarnation, to escape samsara and to release pain and suffering. Breaking this cycle is done through the process prescribed by different systems differently called as Moksha, liberation, mukti, apavarga, freedom, etc.



In spite of having such a unique concept of moksha in Indian tradition our rapid growth of population is one of the major challenges of modern India. Which is registering an annual growth of around 2.5% i.e nearly 15 million people are added to the existing number every year. During 1961-71 the growth was registered at 24.8% results in the net addition of 108 million people which is almost equivalent to the whole population of Japan. The country's population was 340 million at the time of independence has now increased to 1.4 billion in 2022. In April 2023, India reached 1.425,775,850 people, it surpassed population of China and became the most populous country in the world. The world's total population stands at around 8 billion.

Throughout the history of the world, the growth of population has been identified with the prosperity and strength of the nation. But now such a massive growth of Indian population is being seen as the curse. Excessive growth of population is one of the major factors affecting the country's economy and ultimately prosperity. It also deteriorates the environment with many types of –social, economic and psychological – apart from leading to abject poverty and misery one of the fundamental reasons for the sordid state of affairs in India is its dangerously growing population.

Although the reason for poverty and low standard of living in India are very complicated and various factors like social customs, lack of education, state of politics, plurality of religion affects them but being a student of philosophy we would like to study about the concept of Moksha and its impact on the growth of population.

From the Spiritual point of view, real achievement of life is not money, power, luxury neither it is sexual nor eating pleasure. It is neither business nor political power nor any type of instinctive /intellectual needs. These are natural pursuits in human life to be sure, but our divine aim on this earth must be to personally realize our identity in and with God. Identifying ourselves with God is called enlightenment, self realization, God realization and Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The liberated soul or atma finally enters the abode of God, the kingdom of God. The ultimate goal of every life for all human beings, is to reach the stage of moksha or salvation.

According to the scriptures, the discipline of unattached action (Nishkama Karma) can lead to salvation of the soul. So they recommend that one should remain detached while carrying out his duties in life. As lord Krishna said in the Bhagwad-Gita “ To the man thinking about the objects (of the senses) arises attachments towards them; from attachment arises longing; and from longing arises anger; from anger comes delusion; and from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory, the ruin of discrimination and on the ruin of discrimination, he perishes. People believe that the soul passes through a cycle of successive lives (Samsara) and its next incarnation is always dependent on how the previous life was lived (karma). In a life time people build up karma both good and bad, based on their actions within that life time. This karma affects their future lives and existences. Moksha is the end of the birth-death and rebirth cycle. It is classed as the fourth and ultimate goal of life. It is the transcendence of all arthas. It is achieved by overcoming ignorance and desires. It is a paradox in the sense that overcoming desires also includes overcoming the desire for moksha itself. It can be achieved both in this life and after death. Scripture discusses various states and types of moksha attained by various means like, knowledge, bhakti, yoga etc. Especially eight stages or types of moksha are defined in various texts.

1. Salokya Mukti
2. Samipya or Sannidhya Mukti
3. Sarupya Mukti
4. Sayujya Mukti
5. Karama Mukti or Avantara Mukti
6. Vishishtadvaita Moksha



7. Purva –Mimamsa Mukti

8. Apavarga Mukti.

Conclusion:

In the light of various above theories in the respective domain we need to carry out an intensive study with proposed hypothesis to reach at a logical conclusion.

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