

**CONTROLLING POPULATION GROWTH IN SRI LANKA: PERCEPTIONS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

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**Abstract:** Population growth has always been perceived as a problem by the authorities in Sri Lanka. The policies and programmes adopted by the various governments with a view to solving the problem, however, varied in time. It is possible to identify four major stages in the evolution of these policies. Each stage reflects the effects of the contemporary social, economic, political, and cultural perceptions of the population issue. In general, a major characteristic of population policies of Sri Lanka up to the mid -1980s was their vigorous application. Since the late 1980s, however, the pivotal role played by population in development has declined to some extent.