

# **THE EFFECT OF POPULATION EXPLOSION ON FAMILY STANDARD OF LIVING IN CALABAR, NIGERIA**

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## **Abstract**

A nation whose accurate and current population figure is uncertain cannot plan well. It is always threatening if a population keeps exploding without an observable increase in the resources available, and this has posed a serious challenge/worry to Calabarians and the world in general. This paper investigates the effects of population explosion on family standard of living in Calabar – Urban of Cross River State, Nigeria. The major objective of this paper is raising consciousness on the need to discuss population issues in order to proffer long lasting remedies to its effect on family standard of living, its management to guarantee economic sustainability, development and family wellbeing. The sources of data were primary and secondary. 102 semi – structured questionnaires were designed/administered, reviewed literature and interviews were used too. Data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, simple percentages and illustrative graphs. The findings show that the population of females (60.8%) doubles

the male population (39.2%) in Calabar – Urban which could indirectly be attributed to the possibility of population explosion among other causes like illiteracy, poor family planning, poverty, religion and migration which is influenced by war, disaster, search for jobs/education, polygamy/early marriage and climate change. The study demonstrates: poor education, increased cost of living, increased crime rate, overcrowding, family stress, malnutrition, health complications, morbidity and mortality as effects of population explosion on families. This paper recommends that, there is need for mass education, equity in resources allocation to both rural/urban settings and encouraging agricultural practice with the aim of eradicating poverty and illiteracy which will in turn help in the control of population explosions in order to strike a balance with the available resources.

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**Keywords:** Calabarian, Population explosion, Migrants, Bread winner, Family, malnutrition, Morbidity

### **Introduction**

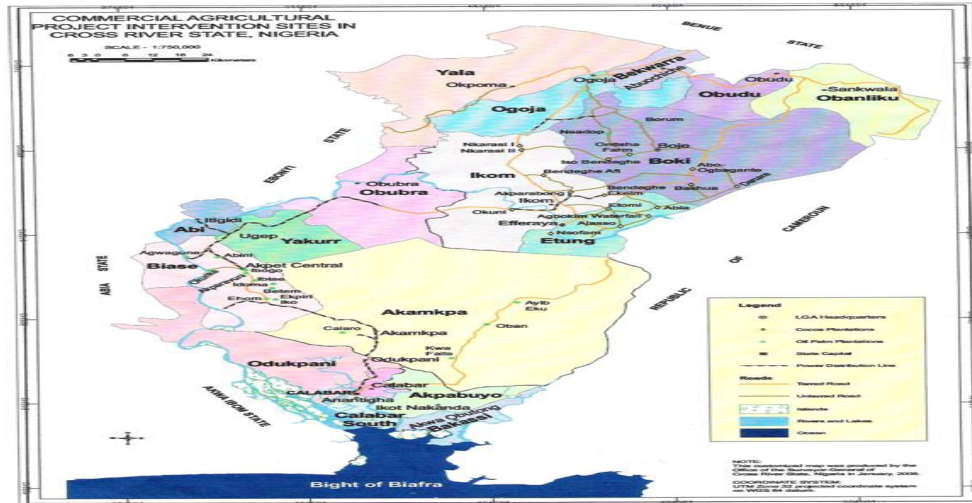
Population Explosion! The effect of Population Explosion on family standard of living in Calabar – Urban. How can Nigeria’s population growth be managed? Taking Calabar – Urban in Cross River State as a case study. A nation that does not know her accurate and current population figures cannot plan well. Calabar – Urban in particular and Cross River State, Nigeria, Africa, and the world in general must know its population figures to plan well for her people. With almost 7Billion, the world population is placing a huge strain on natural resources, (Latimer, & Kulkarni, 2013).

Nigeria is the 7<sup>th</sup> most populated country with an annual population growth of 31,405,530 with China and India taking the lead. This however, affects family standard of living as many people now compete for the limited resources. The population of Calabar as at 1991 was 310,839 and in 2003 it increased to 320,-862 and in 2012 it recorded 461,796 according to the GeoNames Geographical Database Report, 2012. The question now is; will continued population growth have a positive effect on our current family standard of living? Scientists and researchers declare that the world’s natural resources have a carrying capacity of 4Million people, (McMichael, 2001). This implies that by 2050, there will be more than twice the feasible amount of people drawing from the world’s resources including water sources, oil wells, natural gas, and farm produce. This also means more cars on the road, higher demands for food production and land use.

### **Study Area**

The target population of this study is the Calabar – Urban in Calabar Municipality/South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Calabar is the capital of the state and the main dwellers are the Efiks, the Efuts, and the Quas whose major widely spoken language is Efik and Ejagam. It is located in the Southern Senatorial District of the state. “The study area lies between latitude  $50^{\circ} 32^1$  and  $40^{\circ} 22^1$  North and longitude  $70^{\circ} 50^1$  and  $90^{\circ} 28^1$  East and is about 21, 481 sqkm in size (Figure 1). It is situated within the tropics sharing a common boundary with the Republic of Cameroon in the East, Odukpani Local Government Area in the North and Akwa Ibom State in the South (Eja, et al., 2011).



**Figure 1.**Map of Cross River State showing Calabar Urban in Calabar Municipality/Calabar South Local Government Area.

### The Problem

How many is too many? Poverty is not the cause of population explosion. It is the effect. It is always threatening when the population of a people keeps exploding without an observable increase in the resources available too and this has posed a serious challenge/worry to Calabarians and the world in general. When there is uncontrollable increase in human population there is bound to be struggle for survival in terms of the scarce and limited resources which will imply the survival of the fittest/strong and such has posed great change on human survival on earth as there are many mouths to feed yet few resources, malnutrition, overcrowding, social vices, increase infectivity, and mortality among others.

Take India for instance, on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2000, at 5:05 A.M., a baby girl was born in a New Delhi hospital. Her parent named her Astha, which means “Faith” in the Hindi language. Ordinarily, Astha’s birth would not have made news, after all, an estimated 42,000 babies are born in India every day – 15,330,000 each year. Astha, however, was special because with this child’s birth, the population of India officially hit 1million. India was the second country to reach a billion in population; China was the first. As

earth's human population density grows, there is increasing competition for resources including food, space, and energy. The population of India at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is growing so quickly that many of its citizens lack life's basic necessities – food, clothing and shelter (Research Links Report, 2014). The question for Calabar, India, China, and every other parts of the world experiencing population explosion is how to manage population growth so that economic development can continue and ensure equal proportion of human to available resources/amenities.

It is on this social problem the need for World Population Day was instituted. The United Nations (UN) World Population Day – usually observed on July 11 – reaffirms the human right to plan for a family. It encourages activities, events and information to help make this right a reality throughout the world. Family planning is an important topic raised during World Population Day. It aims to increase people's awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, including gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights as well as encourage activities like; seminar discussions, educational information sessions and essay competitions. In 1968, world leaders proclaimed that individuals had a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and timing of their children. The World Population Day was instituted in 1987. The UN authorized the event as a vehicle to build an awareness of population issues and the impact they have on development and environment.

The theme for this year's (2014) World Population Day is “Universal Access to Reproductive Health Services”. The theme is also one of the targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDG 5) and universal principle of the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD). “Protecting reproductive health and rights is fundamental to our collective future and sustainable development” – says UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin – “when women and adolescent girls have rights and opportunities, their families, communities and nations prosper”. For the worries associated with population explosion, the UNFPA is delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every child – birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to manage/control population growth if we must achieve equilibrium in number of humans on earth and the available resources.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this paper is to raise consciousness on the need to discuss population issues in order to proffer long lasting remedies to its effect on family standard of living, its management as well as to guarantee

economic sustainability, development and family wellbeing for a better tomorrow.

Other objects of the study include:

1. Finding out facts on population issues through the review of necessary literature on the subject matter.
2. Distribution of questionnaires to our population of interest to ascertain their view as regards over population within six months.
3. Comparing results obtained from the field with already existing/published materials for valid conclusion/recommendations.
4. Proffering possible remedies to the effects of population explosions based on the results/findings from the analyzed data from field, literature and interviews.

### **Literature Review**

The growth in population is attributable to improvement in human survival associated with the application of modern medical science to health matters, adequate sanitation and potent immunization of children which has resulted in the reduction of death rates. According to Adediran (2012), fewer people live in rural areas which has little or no economic problem compared to urban, semi urban areas that have more population and on the other hand, the traditional beliefs about the value of children, particularly sons, as an asset to be relied upon by their parents in agriculture, protection and to support them during old age and the polygamous system of marriage in Africa and low level of female education which has brought about early marriages and high fertility have caused rapid increase in population. The support for early marriages in some part of Nigeria has also contributed to rapid population growth. African culture measures the wealth of a man not in terms of the money he has but the number of wives, and children he maintains. This development is encouraged by the need for an African man, who by occupation is a peasant farmer to have as many hands as possible to help in the farm work (Peters, 2011).

The non-use of contraceptives has also caused rapid population growth. The National average in the use of contraceptives is 9%; however, this figure varies from state to state. In the southern part of the country, the percentage per population that has embraced the use of contraceptives is between 20-25% among those of child bearing age, while in the Northern part of the country, it is as low as 2% and the reasons attributed to religion (UNDP, 2010). On the effect of population explosion, Peters (2011) affirms that high population exerts pressure on ecosystem leading to issues around food security, land tenure, water supply and environmental degradation. On economy, rapid population growth will demand that government spend more on provision of education, health, shelter and other social facilities. The

forces at work in the developing world also account, in large measure, for the explosion of coastal towns and cities in the industrialized countries of Europe and North America (Hinrichsen, 1998). “Two thousand years ago population growth and production were positively correlated. More people meant greater productivity” (Zuberi et al, 2003). A growing population meant more workers and laborers who would increase overall output.

Kerbo (2006), has suggested that, speaking in sheer numbers, it is fairly simple to understand that in order for a country to have a higher population and be economically better off, the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) must grow alongside the population and in order for a country to maintain the same standard of living while the population grows, the GDP must simultaneously increase. If the economy does not grow as rapidly as the population, people essentially become poorer and no economic growth results. Similarly, when the national GDP is unable to grow at the same rate as the population, there may be an economic decline, and people actually become worse off than before the population increase.

Ehrlich and physicist John Holdren (currently in the highly prestigious position of president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science) suggested a formula for understanding the consequences of human growth:  $I=PAT$ . This formula, once recognizable but now widely forgotten, means that human “Impact” is a production of “Population”, “Affluence” (consumption), and some measure of “Technology”. At the time, P (Population size) was seen as the underlying and key factor for determining the magnitude of human impact. During the last two decades, however, it has become fashionable to discount P and stress A (Affluence or consumption) but they all count (Foreman, 2008). The level of consumption is a key multiplier of population’s impact and individuals worldwide have vastly different levels of consumption of goods and services.

Van Bavel (2013), cited the work of Thomas R. Malthus in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century that in his famous “Essay on the principles of population” (first edition in 1789), Malthus argues justly that in time, the growth of the population will inevitably slow down, either by an increase of the death rate or by a decrease of the birth rate and that on a local scale, migration also plays an important role. Those living in rural areas quickly find themselves landless and possibly without an income. This likely leads people to migrate to urban area, where jobs are seemingly more prevalent. Urban areas within developing countries (like the case of Calabar – Urban) suffer the double burden of population growth and the influx of rural migrants (Latimer & Kulkani, 2013; Kerbo, 2006). As urban areas quickly grow, oftentimes without the necessary infrastructure to weather such a population increase, slums develop around the city, and poverty, crime, and disease become complications that hinder future growth within the area.

## Methodology

A semi – structured questionnaire were designed and administered, and this constituted one of our primary sources of data collected including interviews as well as direct field observations. A hundred and two (102) questionnaires were designed and administered and all were retrieved and carefully analyzed, and this constitutes the sample population (number of families/house hold) which was realized through randomization. The research respondents from the families were adults between the ages of nineteen to seventy eight (19 – 78) years who resides/work in Calabar – Urban.

Data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, illustrative graphs, charts and simple percentages. Colours used in the presentation of figures were carefully selected and applied for better/easy comprehension.

## Results/findings

This research investigates the actual impact of population increase in one hundred and two (102) families/homes in Calabar – Urban with the pursuit of administering lasting solutions to affected homes as discovered in the course of data collection.

Table 1. Shows the variables used in the instrument of data collection and the options provided. It presents the frequencies, and percentages associated with each variable and option as well as the mean and standard deviation of each variable for easy comprehension. This constitutes the raw data obtained from the field survey and the presentation of the tools used for data collection.

**Table 1.** Respondents' Socio-demographic Data

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Sex Sampled	Male	40	39.2	1.61	.491
	Female	62	60.8		
Age Sampled	19 – 28	43	42.2	2.19	1.288
	29 – 38	28	22.5		
	39 – 48	16	15.7		
	49 – 58	15	14.7		
	59 – 68	4	3.9		
	69 – 78	1	1.0		
Marital Status	Married	47	46.1	1.69	.820
	Single	46	45.1		
	Widowed	5	4.9		
	Divorced	2	2.0		
	Others	2	2.0		
Family Size	≤5 Members	23	22.5	1.79	.474
	>5 Members	79	77.5		

Bread Winner	Self	50	49.0	2.47	2.197
	Parent	29	28.0		
	Brother	2	2.0		
	Sister	2	2.0		
	Uncle	1	1.0		
	Aunty	1	1.0		
	others	17	16.7		
Occupational Status of Bread winner.	Employed	69	67.6	1.66	1.029
	Unemployed	7	6.9		
	Self-Employed	18	17.6		
	Others	8	7.8		
Influx of Migrants Affects Population in Calabar?	No	11	10.8	.89	.502
	Yes	91	89.2		
Uncontrolled Population is a significant burden to man	False	3	2.9	.97	.170
	True	99	97.1		

**Data Source:** Field Survey (2014).

Table 2.Shows the frequency/percentage presentation of results and responses/suggestions of respondents as regards causes of population explosion over the years in Calabar, factors that influence Population Pattern, effects of uncontrolled population explosion in family standard of living, and possible ways to mitigating this challenge.

**Table 2.**Detailed raw data showing results of open-ended questions in simple percentages.

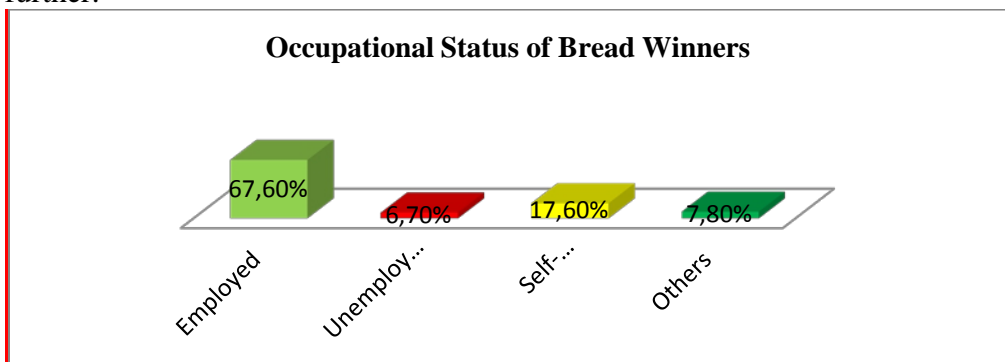
Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Causes of population explosion over the years in Calabar.	Poor Family Planning	21	20.6
	Poverty/Ignorance	4	3.9
	Culture/Religion	3	2.9
	Migration	37	36.3
	Urbanization	37	36.3
Factors that influence Population Pattern	War/Disaster	11	10.8
	Job/Education	9	8.8
	Polygamy/Early Marriage	32	31.4
	Climate Change	16	15.7
	Inflation	34	33.3
Effects of uncontrolled population explosion in family standard of living.	Poor Education	15	14.7
	Increase Cost of Living	29	28.4
	Family Stress	8	7.8
	Malnutrition	16	15.7
	Health Complications	18	17.7
	Over-Crowding	10	9.8



	Increase Crime Rate	6	5.9
Possible Ways to mitigating population explosion	Rural Development	29	28.5
	Family Planning	26	25.3
	Refugee Homes Creation	3	2.9
	Mass Education	14	13.8
	Jobs	21	20.7
	Equity in resources allocation	3	2.9
	Encourage Agricultural Practice	6	5.9

**Data Source:** Field Survey (2014).

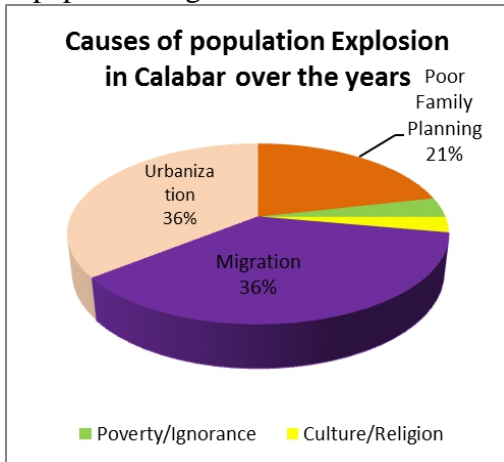
The analysis in Table 1 shows that 102 respondents were involved in the research with 39.2% male and 60.8% female in terms of gender. 42.2% were between the age of 19 – 28, while 22.5%, 15.7%, 14.7%, 3.9% and 1% fell within the age of 29 – 38, 39 – 48, 49 – 58, 59 – 68, 69 – 78 respectively. As at the time of this research; 46.1% were married, 4.9% widowed parent, 2.0% divorced parent, 45.1% were single, and 2.0% were “others” which included cohabiting. We found out that 22.5% constitutes a family that is five or less than five ( $\leq 5$ ) members while 77.5% constituted a family size of above five ( $>5$ ). From the analysis, the house whole responsibility and provision for daily needs lies within the respondent (self – 49.0%), parent (28.0%), brother (2.0%), sister (2.0%), uncle (1.0%), aunty (1.0%), and others which included people outside the house whole like friends (16.7%) respectively while relating this variable with their occupational status, 67.6% were employed, 6.9% unemployed, 17.6% were self-employed, and 7.8% were others which implies uncertain voluntary jobs. Figure 2 explains this further.



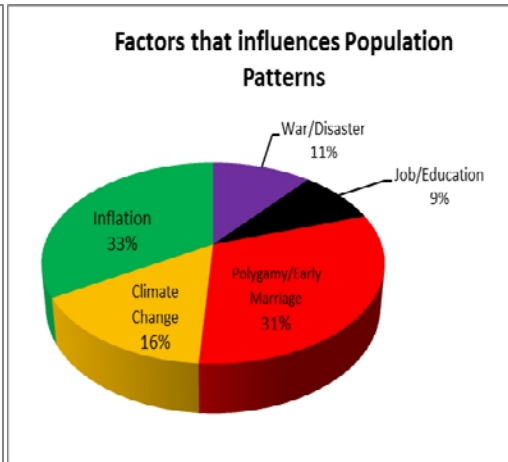
**Figure 2.**Occupational Status. **Source;** Field Survey (2014).

The result also provides in detail the responses of respondents on what they feel has been the major causes of population explosion over the years in the city of Calabar where 20.6% attributed it to poor family

planning, poverty/ignorance taking 3.9%, 2.9% said it is Culture/religion with migration (36.3%) and urbanization which takes 36.3% as a factor too. This is as shown in Table 2 and more explanation is presented in figure 3 below. On investigation for factors that influences population patterns, 10.8% submitted that it is war and disaster, 8.8% suggested search for jobs and education by migrants, 31.4% said polygamy and early marriage, 15.7% attributed it to climate change while 33.3% said inflation can influence population growth. More detail is presented in the discussion session of this paper and figure 4.



**Figure 3.** Source: Field Survey (2014).



**Figure 4.** Source: Field Survey (2014).

On finding out respondents opinion on the effects of uncontrolled population explosion in the family standard of living, 14.7% said it results in poor education for the offspring, increase in cost of living (28.4%), family stress (7.8%) especially on the head (breadwinner) of the family, 15.7% added that it results in malnutrition for there are more mouths to feed, 17.7% said increases health complications, 9.8% had it that it results in over – crowding, while 5.9% added that it increases crime rate as displayed in table 2 and figure 5. Effort was also made to hear from respondents the possible ways they feel population explosions could be mitigated and 28.5% suggested rural development, 25.3% suggested family planning, 2.9% suggested the creation of refugee homes, 13.8% suggested mass education, 20.7% said creation of more jobs will do, 2.9% said equity in resources allocation and 5.9% suggested encouraging the effective practice of agriculture. This is presented in figure 6.

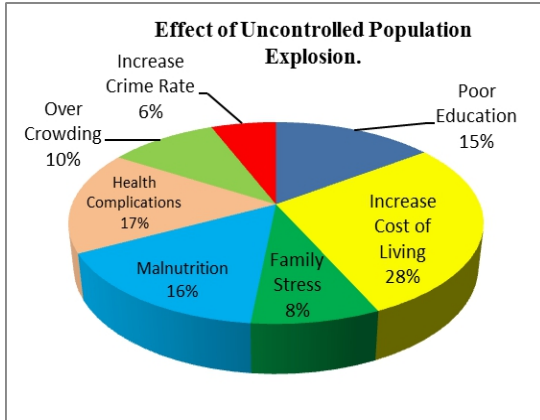


Figure 5. Source: Field Survey (2014).

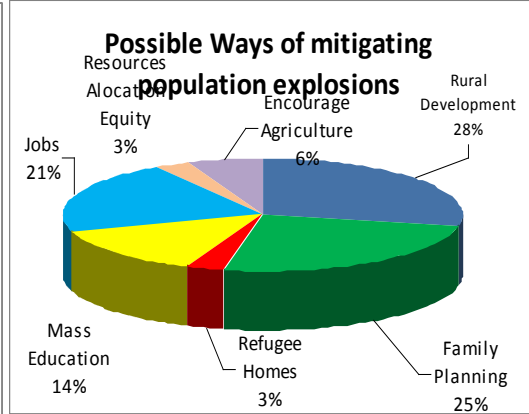


Figure 6. Source: Field Survey (2014).

**Discussion**

In attempt to studying the effect of population explosion on family standard of living in Calabar – Urban, many discoveries were made. First, 39.2% of males were interviewed and 60.8% of females were involved. This implies that there are more females than males for the figures almost doubled that of male. When there are more females than male, there tend to be the possibility of population increase because more births can be achieved. Hence, all our respondents were adults who are between nineteen to seventy eight (19 – 78) years of age. What makes an adult apart from clocking the age of eighteen (18) is the ability to take decisions alone and be ready to take consequences of the after effect as well as the ability to earn wages in return for their labour and take care of themselves. This is represented in figure 7.

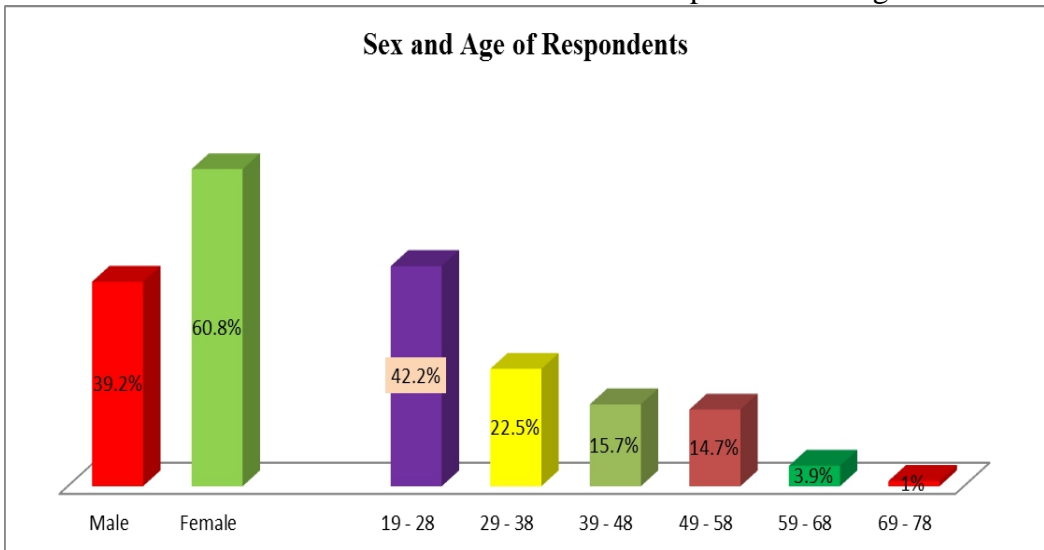
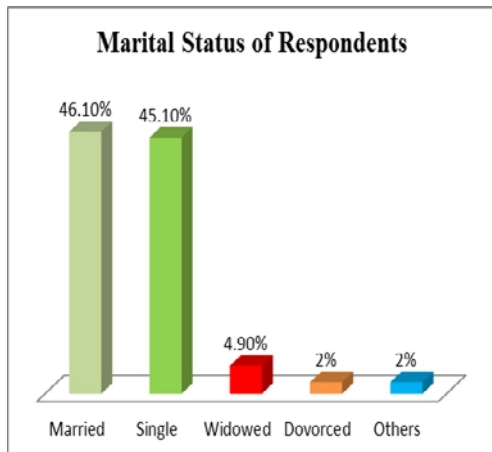
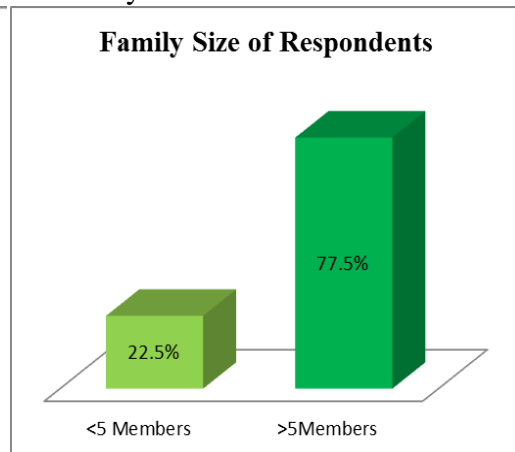


Figure 7. Source: Field Survey (2014).

The marital status of the sampled population also shows a great relationship between the married and the single. From the results and findings, it is discovered 46.10% married which is almost the same figures with the population that are singles (45.10%) implying that, more births were realized and these single adults are definitely going to start making children sooner or later to add to the already exploded population and this could also imply more social vices because youths are more involved in it. However, 4.90% were widowed and 2% divorced while 2% others. These others imply adults who are cohabiting under the same house whole without any legal marriage backings and in all of these cases, children are still produced. Comparing the categories of the marital status of the respondents of the sampled population with how large the house whole is, we found out that only 22.5% were operating on a family size that is less than five (<5) members and to some extent it is ideal in order to strike a balance with the limited resources available while 77.5% were operation on large families of above five (>5) members. This, from our field observation has posed an observable stress on the family, affected nutrition and resulted in overcrowding as these numbers outweighs the resources available. Figure 8 & 9 show raw as obtained from field and analysis.



**Figure 8. Source:** Field Survey (2014).



**Figure 9. Source:** Field Survey (2014).

It is noticed that the member of the family whose labour supplies the food and daily needs of the family is self and this accounts for 49% without any external assistance. This has increased the financial stress of the bread winner. We also discovered that 28% homes were won by parents not self, 2% by brothers, 2% by sisters, 1% by uncles, 1% by aunties, while 16.70% homes were won by others like friends and well-wishers which in most cases not easy to come. Research has proved that there is no care that can be compared with the motherly one which endures and tolerates. This is in comparison with those whose needs are shouldered by third parties who are

not their parent like the uncles, aunties, brothers, friends and others. This has posed an observable effect on the family standard of living. However, bread winner’s occupational status was not left out. In the course of this study, we found out that: 67.6% of bread winners were employed, 6.7% were unemployed, 17.6% were self – employed, while 7.8% were others like traders and vocational jobs. This data is encouraging to some extent for only 6.7% were unemployed. However, this percent of population are facing population explosion effect. This is statistically presented in figure 10 & 11 below.

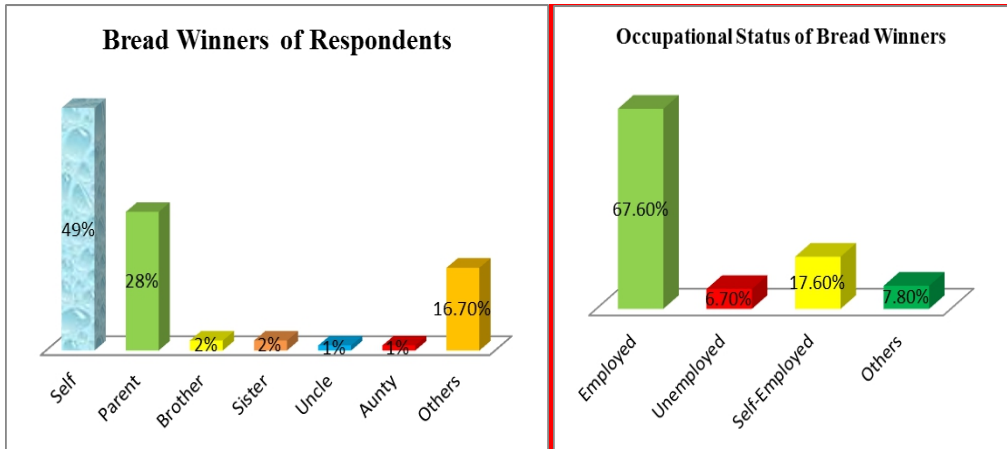


Figure 10. Source: Field Survey (2014).

Figure 11. Source: Field Survey (2014).

### Conclusion/Recommendations

Comparing the literature review and the results obtained from the study, we were able to discover that the following factors – poor family planning, illiteracy, poverty, ignorance, culture, religion, migration, and urbanization – causes population explosion and this is influenced by factors like: war, disaster, search for jobs and education, polygamy and early marriage, climate change, and inflation. However, the results/findings from the research questionnaire of this study indicates the following as the effects of population explosion on family standard of living – poor educational standard for the children, increase in cost of living, increases family stress especially on the bread winner, malnutrition, health complications/problems (as in the case of infections, morbidity and mortality), overcrowding, and increase in crime rate/social vices.

Based on this study and our findings, we recommend the following, as these will go a long way to control population explosion and as well mitigate its effects on family standard of living:

- i. There is need for mass education on population issues at least annually to serve as a reminder to the public on the effects of large families above the family resources.

- ii. Better awareness on efficient and effective family planning methods, making them accessible, affordable and feasible in order to encourage its practice.
- iii. There is need to encourage monogamy as against polygamy and a check on early marriage.
- iv. Equity in resources distribution to both the rural/urban areas including man power.
- v. Creation of more jobs in the rural settings as this will mean rural development.
- vi. Encouraging agricultural practice as part of entrepreneurship to empower the people.
- vii. It is necessary for the government to build refugee camps and find refuge for victims of war or disaster even in the case of unfavourable economy or climate that could result in migration.

However, the above recommendations can help to eradicate poverty and illiteracy. With the results obtained from the field, the discussions, and recommendations, we were able to achieve our set goal and objectives as presented in this study.

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