

Theories of Population

(10) Malthus a False Prophet:

The Malthusian theory is not applicable to countries for which this was propounded. In the western European countries, the bogey and pessimism of Malthus has been overcome. His prophecy that misery will stalk these countries if they fail to check the growth of population through preventive checks has been proved wrong by a decline in birth rate, adequacy of food supply, and increase in agricultural and industrial production. Thus Malthus has proved to be a false prophet.

Its Applicability:

Despite these weaknesses, the Malthusian doctrine contains much truth. The Malthusian doctrine may not be applicable to the Western Europe and England but its principal tools have become the part and parcel of the people of these countries. If these lands do not face the problems of over-population and misery, it is all due to the bogey and pessimism of Malthusianism.

In fact, the people of Europe were made wiser by Malthus who forewarned them of the evils of over-population and they started adopting measures toward it off. The very fact that people use preventive checks, like late marriage and various contraceptives and birth control measures on an extensive scale proves the vitality of the Malthusian law.

Even famous economists like Marshall and Pigou and sociologists like Darwin were influenced by this principle when they incorporated it in their theories. And Keynes, initially overawed by the Malthusian fears of over-population, later wrote about “Some Economic Consequences of Declining Population.” Is it not the fear of Malthusianism which has created the problem of declining population in France?

The Malthusian doctrine may not be applicable now to its place of origin, but its influence spreads over two-third of this universe. Excluding Japan, the whole of Asia, Africa and South America come under its purview. India is one of the first countries to adopt family planning on state level to control population. Positive checks like floods, wars, droughts, diseases, etc. operate. The birth and death

rates are high. The growth rate of population is about 2 per cent per annum.