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cians and national and international civil servants should decide how many children people may have.

Advocates of officially sponsored population policies often argue that they do not propose compulsion but intend only to extend the options of people by assisting the spread of knowledge about contraceptive methods. But people in LDCs usually know about both traditional and more modern methods of birth control. Moreover, in many Third World countries, especially in Asia and Africa, official information, advice, and persuasion in practice often shade into coercion. In most of these societies, people are more subject to authority than in the West. And especially in recent years, the incomes and prospects of many people have come to depend heavily on official favors. In India, for example, promotion in the civil service, allocation of driving and vehicle licenses, and access to subsidized credit, official housing, and other facilities have all been linked at times to restriction of family size. Forcible, mass sterilization, which took place in India in the 1970s, and the extensive coercion in the People's Republic of China are only extreme cases in a spectrum of measures extending from publicity to compulsion.

Policies and measures pressing people to have fewer children can provoke acute anxiety and conflict, and they raise serious moral and political problems. Implementation of such policies may leave people dejected and inert, uninterested in social and economic advance or incapable of

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achieving it. Such outcomes have often been observed when people have been forced to change their mores and conduct. It is widely agreed that the West should not impose its standards, mores, and attitudes on Third World governments and peoples. Yet, ironically, the most influential voices call for the exact opposite with regard to population control.

There is one type of official policy that would tend to reduce population growth, extend the range of personal choice, and promote attitudes and mores that foster economic advance and improvement of the well-being of the population. That policy is the promotion of external commercial contacts, especially contacts with the West, by the people of LDCs. Such contacts have been powerful agents of voluntary change in attitudes and habits, particularly by eroding those harmful to economic improvement. Throughout the less developed world, the most prosperous groups and areas are those with the most external commercial contacts. And such contacts also encourage voluntary reduction of family size. Thus, extension of such contacts and the widening of people's range of choice promote both economic advance and reduction in fertility. In these circumstances, a reduction of family size is achieved without the damaging effects of placing official pressure on people with regard to their most private and vital concerns. Yet policies of this kind are not on the agenda of those who advocate reducing population growth in LDCs. ♦

Mitteilung an unsere Abonnenten

Die allgemeine Kostenentwicklung macht es leider unumgänglich, den Abonnementspreis der Schweizer Monatshefte zu erhöhen. Das Jahresabonnement kostet ab Januar 1999 Fr. 100.–, Studentenabonnement Fr. 50.–; Auslandabonnement zuzüglich Fr. 21.– Portokosten; Einzelnummer Fr. 10.–.