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**One Child Policy and its effects upon the Contemporary
Chinese Society**

Here we will be discussing a unique law, imposed and being strictly followed since last 30 years in the world's second largest country by land area, having world's biggest population of 1.3 billion, China. Today China is fastest growing economy on earth, but when we go few years back in the past, we see China as communist country famous for its Great Wall of China. In the beginning when the development in China was in initial levels, population was increasing whereas the resources were inadequate. Ruling governments were facing problems in making available food equally among the masses. Visualizing the future and planning for better progress, the leaders took up the initiative to control the fast growing population. In the 1960s, China's large population was growing so rapidly that there was a serious threat of mass starvation (Miller, Spoolman, 2008).

In 1979, the then Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping established a policy, banning birth of the second child. The couples were allowed only to have one child. Though this policy was announced as a "temporary measure", but till today it is being pursued. The one-child policy is perhaps the best example of the state's inability to cope with the strain on China's natural resources posed by its rapidly growing population (Becker, 2000). The policy was implemented with a set of regulations, relaxation for having a second was given on certain conditions. Couples abiding by the one child policy were encouraged by awarding different benefits like better jobs, medical facilities, better education, preferential treatment in obtaining governmental assistance, etc. whereas for those going against the policy were fined, better jobs were not offered and their participation in social activities were not encouraged. Secondly, the parents were to bear the education burden of the second child from their own expenses. However there are certain relaxation for urban couples allowing them conceive two children. Couples who are themselves only child to their parents can opt for a second child, if the first child is born with some disability and if the first child is a girl couple can seek permission for the second.

Strict measures were practiced to enforce the policy efficiently. Women at the workplaces were regularly examined for any abnormalities in health. Committees of elderly women were established in apartment complexes to check any defiance of the policy. In simple language, privacy of women was assaulted. Moreover, women were forced for sterilization and abortion to prevent them to conceive more than one child. Even in some cases late abortions were also conducted. Surgeries were done on unhygienic places and multiple times without maintaining medically approved gaps. These all deteriorated the health of an average woman. The liking of males has discouraged women participation in many fields, though as a work force they work shoulder to shoulder with men, but still in jobs men are given priorities over women. Even the maternity laws of China prevent the employers to hire female workers.

Urban couples, in particular, have accepted the 'one-child' policy, but preference is clearly a major factor that encourages abortions (Chambers, 2012). Chinese culture is a male dominant culture, birth of a girl as a first child creates miseries to the parents. The policy affected the pride of girl infants that gave rise to abortion and killing of new born. Concerns about female infanticide surfaced periodically in late

imperial edicts, which forbade it (Mann, 2011). This deed developed unbalanced ratio of 114 males for every 100 females as compare to the normal ratio of 105 males to every 100 females. The shortage of women may have increased mental health problems and socially disruptive behavior among men and has left some men unable to marry and have a family (Hesketh, Xing, 2005). Female infants if not aborted often grow up in orphanage and persuaded to lead a second class life in the society. The urban families a girl child were in advantage of this policy, as these girls have full family support, in respect of education and proper upbringing, similarly they enjoy better work opportunities. Abortion is not illegal in China, while the policy has encouraged the use of contraceptives; around 87% of women in China consumes short or long term contraceptives. This research proves negative in rural areas, where women have no other option of consuming contraceptives rather than following the local family planning committee directives.

There is diversity in implementation of one child policy, as it was only meant for Hans Chinese living in urban areas, whereas locals living in rural areas and Chinese ethnic minorities were exempted from the one child policy but with a gap of 4-5 years between the second child. Policy declined the population growth, in a country of 1.3 billion people. China's one child policy was designed to create a generation of ambitious, well-educated children who would lead their country into the first world. This strategy has succeeded, but at a price (Fong, 2004). Besides advantages and this policy gave desired results, but there were some flaws as well. At the time of imposing the policy they didn't realized its long term impact on its population and economy. Chinese people are now more educated and environmental awareness has changed there thought, now they are of different view, that instead of imposing ban on birth of more than one child, considering increase in the resources, would have been more fruitful.

China has made vast developments in industrialization, its economy is booming at a notable pace but scarce in migrant workers is very prominent. Similarly a single male child born, has to face the responsibility of supporting parents and grandparents, thus burden of four people is laid upon a single person. The population of China is steering towards 0-growth comprising other issues as well. The issue of aging is also the result of one child policy. Gap is increasing between elderly parent and adult children. In China, this problem has been named the "4:2:1" phenomenon, meaning that increasing numbers of couples will be solely responsible for the care of one child and four parents (Hesketh, Xing, 2005).

Above are the few main issues that are most commonly debated in the world community, nevertheless there are many other factors that has now disfavoured the policy. Another, serious concern for the Chinese authorities is girl trafficking and commercial sex. In 2005 in China there were 100 female births for every 118 males, which means, according to a Chinese report, that in 2020 there will be 30 million men of marriageable age who will probably not find a wife (Scarpa, 2008). According to reports, girls are smuggled into China from North Korea, Vietnam, Burma, Mongolia and Thailand. These girls are used for forced marriages and commercial sex. Even girls from Chinese rural areas are bought or kidnapped by the influential or rich family, who becomes the brides of their only sons.

In 1978 when the policy was enforced, China's economy was far behind from where it stands now. Carried out in defiance of cultural and political reason, the policy has induced social suffering and human trauma on a vast scale (Greenhalgh, 2008). The policy makers didn't visualize the future China, and its remarkable growth in industrialization. There's a scarce of skilled and qualified workers available to for the massive industries in China. The Chinese population is ageing at a noticeable speed. The pace of its aging trend is by itself unparalleled, with the proportion of older adults projected to grow from 6.8 percent to 23.6 percent over the first half of the twenty-first century, reported by United Nations (2005, cited in Uhlenberg, p. 157) In rural areas the only son has a burden of supporting his family (parents – grandparents), he is forced to move to urban cities for employment, whereas he lacks proper training and qualification on the other side of picture, the son of upper class getting proper training and education, has various options of jobs inland or abroad. Compared with the large numbers of the total labor force, China's skilled labor force is much smaller, forming less than 20 percent of the total (Gao, 2012). Thus the qualified workers available are limited. Multinational organization having huge investments in China, have serious concerns over the availability of skilled labor on cheap wages. Because of the low birth rate, associated with the one-child policy instituted more than 30 years ago now, China's work force has been shrinking for the past decade; the current census indicates that the shrinkage is set to become more pronounced (Gardner, 2011).

The changing global environment and competitive market, has compelled the think tanks of China to persuade the government to terminate the one child policy or make some amendments in it allowing a second child. The same policy was imposed on temporary basis but new leaders taking over, brought forward the same. Referring to new researches, China might be facing challenges related with social and economic factors. Preferably the changes in the policy was to be made few years back, China is now facing the impacts of the family limiting policy. China has taken a long leap since 1979, passing through many social, political and economic changes, the effects of policy seems to be dimmed. The freedom and wealth enhancement, has weakened the government's strength to enforce the policy.

The one child policy, since its implementation in 1979, undoubtedly slower the birth rate. The global family planning authorities, claims that the policy has been unsuccessful in producing the desired results, acknowledging the actual figures, according to the census records, since the policy was enforced, there has been addition of around 12 million people every year, in the Chinese population. The government claims that its one child policy has prevented around 400 million births. It should be noted that many Chinese families who want more than one or two children, use different tactics to avoid registration, they may change their location or change family identities. Moreover, improved health conditions have declined the death rate. Thus the confirmed figure will be higher than official ones.

Irrespective of high pressure on the government, by the general public and associated think tanks, to terminate the thirty year old policy, certain factors need to be justified before taking any action. Global geographical changes are quite obvious since last thirty years. Where overall world population is increasing, resources are declining, the major concern of developed countries is the availability of resources and unemployment. The high rates of economic and industrial developments that accompanied population growth in the twentieth century fed fears about depletion of resources and

fouling of the land, air, biota and water in nearly all parts of the globe (Academies of science, 2001). Whereas China is still out of the queue, from such issues. Chinese government still holds the steering wheel to bypass the country, to some extent, from these global issues.

In, 1979 when the one child policy was enforced, it was only meant to control the growing population accordingly to cope up with the available resources, as discussed above there were many loopholes in the policy making. But, now making amendments in the policy or terminating the policy, will not be an easy task. Aging, imbalance ratio of sex, male domination, available resources, employment and health conditions, will be influencing the decision of making any change or cancelling the policy. Chinese family planning authorities has changed their stance over population control to family care. Modernized methods are introduced instead of abortion and sterilization to control the birth rate. Scarce of women, available as brides will further decrease the birth rate. The one child policy has also displayed China as violator of human rights. Global authorities related with human rights, has accused China for breaking laws of human rights, enforcement of one child policy is of the example. Amendment of policy is needed to promote the importance of women in the Chinese society, effective counseling would be helpful in changing the male dominance. It is predicted unless serious measures are not taken the Chinese economy might collapse in another 5 – 10 years.

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