

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN DESIRED CESSATION OF CHILDBEARING AND INTENDED CONTRACEPTIVE USE: A CASE STUDY OF MARADANA GRAMA NILADARI DIVISION, COLOMBO DISTRICT

D.M.S.G Wijerathna*

Abstract: Fertility is one of the major demographic components, which is associated with various socio-economic and other demographic factors. In fertility studies, Research reveal that fertility behaviour of women directly affects the current fertility trends, patterns and fertility transition of a population. There are three main behavioural patterns such as starting, spacing and stopping the behaviour. Typically, once desire fertility is achieved, women are expected stop having any more children. The objectives of this study were to examine the ethnic differences in desired fertility and intended contraceptive use and their factors among married women in the age group of 15-29 years. The study was based on a primary survey conducted using a purposive sample of 150 married women who were in the age group 15-29 years, representing three ethnicities namely Sinhalese, Tamil and Moor ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The study setting was Maradana Grama Niladari Division in the Colombo district. Findings reveal that the majority of women in the sample desire to have two children irrespective of their ethnicity while want to stop their childbearing before the age of 35years. Nearly half the studied women responded that they intend to use traditional methods to limit childbearing. Although a significant variation exists in desired fertility and intended use of contraception by ethnicity at national level, the findings do not show a marked ethnic variation in the studied urban multicultural context.

Keywords: Ethnic fertility, desired fertility, cessation of childbearing, intended contraceptive use.

Introduction

Fertility is the core factor in human reproduction, and it is directly linked with the capacity of a population to reproduce its offspring. Fertility behaviour directly affects the changes in fertility levels, trends and patterns. Desired fertility is a demographic term that describes the average number of children that couples want or are planning to have during their reproductive span (Darmalingam, 1996). Before the 1960s, many couples did not have any idea about the number of children they want, but now most of women even in younger ages have desired number of children and it directly influences the actual fertility behaviour of a country. There are three main behavioural patterns related to fertility, namely starting, spacing, and stopping behaviour. Compared to starting and spacing fertility behaviours, stopping fertility behaviour is important in determining the overall fertility of a country (McDonald and Knodel,

* Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Colombo
sandunigayanika@yahoo.com