

スリランカの出生力の地域性

Regional variations of Fertility Levels and Trends in Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious small island country located in the South Asian region. Despite the low level of economic development, people in Sri Lanka have benefited from free education and free health facilities for decades. As a result, Sri Lanka has achieved favorable demographic levels of fertility, mortality and various other demographic and health indicators. This benefited socio demographic background has allowed Sri Lanka to experience a rapid demographic transition. However the progress of demographic transition is regionally diverse due to the socioeconomic, ethnic, religious and cultural contrast which goes together with the development level and urbanization level of regions. Since there are no recent studies on regional fertility in Sri Lanka this paper analyzes the regional variations of fertility levels and trends, considering the second administrative division (district level) of 25 districts.

This paper utilizes data from three main sources: Sri Lankan Demographic and health surveys, the vital registration system (birth registration) and population censuses. The analysis includes regional fertility data of Crude Birth Rate (CBR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR), age at first sexual intercourse, age at first marriage and age at first birth, trends of illegitimate births, difference between ideal number of children and children ever born, behavior of birth spacing, trends of sex ratio at birth and prevalence of contraception.

The onset of Sri Lankan fertility transition marked around the 1960s and achieved the replacement level of fertility even before the dawn of the new century (De Silva, 1994). Fertility rates gradually declined until 2000. However, Sri Lanka approached to a unique transitional stage demonstrating a sudden increase of TFR from 1.9 in 1995-2000 to 2.3 in 2003-2006 (Department of Census and Statistics, 2009). The current TFR in Sri Lanka is 2.2, slightly above the replacement level

(Department of Census and Statistics, 2017). No single developing country has demonstrated this kind of fluctuation in TFR after reaching below replacement levels (De Silva et al, 2010). Hence the concept of below to above replacement level fertility in Sri Lanka challenges the conventional demographic transition theory.

The findings reveal that various regions of Sri Lanka stand at different stages of fertility transition. By 2016, 12 districts have marked replacement level or below replacement level fertility whereas other districts followed a declining trend of TFR with the exceptions of three districts. In majority of districts, age at marriage increased slightly while few districts reported dramatic increases up to 2006. However, by 2012, the age at marriage were decreasing in most districts compared to 1981, except a few war affected districts (Department of Census and Statistics, 2015). Even though more than 98 percent of births occurred within wedlock in Sri Lanka, regional data showed notable contrast between regions. Especially, war affected districts where majority of Sri Lankan Tamil people lived, reported having high illegitimate births continuously. Considering the age at marriage and length of first birth interval, Batticaloa and Kegalle districts had the highest interval in 2006 and 2016 consecutively. Likewise, the first birth interval showed an increasing trend in most districts. Despite the natural level of sex ratio at birth in Sri Lanka, some regions, mainly, war affected districts reflected unusual values continuously without reflecting a son or daughter preference. Moreover it is interesting to note that the least developed rural districts in Sri Lanka have reported high prevalence of modern contraceptives compared to urban districts. These findings suggest that Sri Lankan socio demographic achievements do not equally spread throughout regions and studies on Sri Lankan regional fertility behavior will explore a new aspect of fertility transition.

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