

Ethnic Fertility Behaviour among Youth: A Case Study of Maradana Grama Niladari Division Colombo District

Wijerathna, D.M.S.G., De Silva, W. Indralal

Department of Demography, University of Colombo

Indralald37@gmail.com

Fertility is one of the major demographic components, which is connected to various socio-economic and demographic factors. Fertility behaviour directly affects the changes of fertility levels, trends and patterns. There are three main behavioural patterns related to fertility, namely, starting, spacing and stopping behaviour. Fertility behaviour is depended on socio-economic factors such as ethnicity, religion, geographical area, education etc. ethnicity is one of the core factors affecting fertility behaviour. Sri Lankan society is diverse, as it is composed of a multi-racial, multi-religious and a multi-linguistic population. Sinhalese are the predominant majority group. Tamil and Moor communities form the other major ethnic groups (De Silva, 2016). According to the latest census, ethnic differentials of fertility are also significant in 2011. According to the data, it shows that Sri Lankan Moors report the highest fertility (TFR=3.3) in 2011 followed by Indian Tamils (2.9), Sri Lankan Tamils (2.3) and Sinhalese (2.3) respectively. As mentioned earlier, Fertility behaviour directly affects the changes of fertility levels. This study mainly focuses on identifying the factors affecting fertility behaviour of married women of different ethnic groups. This study used a mixed methodological approach. The sample includes 150 married women who are in the age group 15-29, representing Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim ethnic groups. The study area is Maradhana Grama Niladari division in the Colombo district. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample.

According to this study, in 1985-1999 birth cohorts, women in all three ethnic groups, show that most young women are limit their fertility and they expect only two children, expect longer birth spacing between births and stop their fertility before 30-35 ages. Socio-economic factors influence these changes of fertility behaviour. Economic difficulties, the quality of children, better education of children, freedom of

children, better nutrition of children and better social background for children are identified as key socio economic factors affecting expected fertility behaviour in their living environment. Although there is a significant variation existent in ethnic fertility at national level, there is no significant variation observed among the ethnic groups in the study area.

Key words: *Fertility, Fertility behaviour, Ethnicity, Factors.*