



Fertility Changing: Effects On Economic Development In Iran (Case Study: 1956-2006)

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Abstract. Background: The science of demography is very new in Iran, as its introduction to Iran and the start of demographic investigations goes back to half a century ago. Because of its importance and effects, it seems now, that the time is ripe that special attention should be paid for the capacities of this science in medium and long term planning and decision making. Fertility is one of the essential subjects dealt by demography, as the survival and continuation of the population have their roots in it. The importance of fertility for demographer is to that extent that they consider it as one of the four vital events and since it directly affects the increase and decrease of population, therefore, fertility is regarded the important factor in population changes. The purpose of the present research is to examine undesirable consequences of uncontrolled fertilities and their negative effects on the economic growth of Iran. A study of Iranian age pyramid of population explicitly indicates that the trend of fertility is entangled in a state of disequilibrium and unplanned for years, so that, during 1977-87 years, child bearing had its highest record in the history of the population of Iran, which caused an average rate of 3.9 percent yearly growth. The most important outcome was an increase in age group of 0-4 years in these years. After this period, the economic and social crisis in one hand and governments awareness of family planning on the other hand, caused a decline in the fertility trend. This ultimately created an inflationary age group continuously ascending in the age pyramid. **Materials and Methods:** Data related to this research are on the basis of the information and statistics presented by Statistical Center of Iran and study and analysis of the censuses carried out in Iran. **Result:** According to the last census carried out in the year 2006 in Iran, the largest age groups of population are those of 15-19 and 20-24 years old, which indicates an adolescence population. Although this may be considered as a promising phenomenon which conform foundations for development in Iran, it may also create difficulties' in the process of the development of Iran, in the absence of favorable grounds for development. Another important point is the movement of population inflation higher up to older age groups. In the other word, Iran is rapidly progressing towards population ageing. Appropriate laws and proper planning is needed in this respect. **Conclusion:** In this essay, effort is made to avoid any prejudices. Firstly, the past present and future of the fertility and population in Iran are studied. Then, consequences of the uncontrolled fertilities on the economic growth of Iran are examined. Population forecast show that population of Iran will be a very aged population in 32 years from now. The process of economic growth in Iran is confronting concerns and difficulties due to above mentioned population changes in the past, present and future. This is much worrying when it is seen that there is no any special planning by governments to benefit and use capabilities and capacities of the population in the process of growth.

Keywords, fertility, family planning, ageing of population, economic growth, demography.

1. INTRODUCTION

Population is of the most essential subjects under discussion in our society, and there is no economic or social expert who is not watching changes and evolutions in the world from this point of view. Questions raised in this respect now days, needs much concerns and thoughts: thinking of a life on the earth with a population three times the present population seems very horrible or, is it possible at all? What effects would have an increase of fertilities on environment, natural reserves and world around us? Is an excessively high population harmful and must be reduced, or not? And the most important, what number of population is necessary

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and, favorable for public welfare, economic growth, comfort and security of every one? These are questions, thinkers in population and economic circles are trying to find proper answers to, as everybody knows that the welfare of the present and future populations depends on proper answers and solutions to them. It should be mentioned that some people believe that population increase, itself results in growth, on the contrary some other consider it as an obstacle to growth.

In the twentieth century, world population increased with acceleration all at once, more than any other time before, while before 1650 it was necessary to pass 35000 years for a population to double its size, today with present trend of fertility it only takes 45 years for the world population to double. On the other hand the relation of the economic growth and population is very important especially for developing countries, since growth is after the improvement in living standards, increase of incomes, favorable and desirable health standards, public welfare and education, which all of them is related to population.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data related to this research are on the basis of the information and statistics presented by Statistical Center of Iran and study and analysis of the censuses carried out in Iran. Six population and housing censuses were carried out in Iran, the first in 1956 and the last one in 2006. In this, research the state of fertility and child bearing in those censuses are studied and investigated.

3. RESULTS

Uncontrolled and unplanned fertilities during the years 1976-86 caused the population of Iran to become a juvenile population now. The statistics show that the population inflation in Iran is in the 15-29 year age group, which includes more than 35% of the total population(3). The causes should be found out in the increase of the fertility rate during 1976-86. In the year 1986 almost half of the population was reported fewer than 15 years old (45.5%).

The following table shows the population of 0-14 year age group in Iran from 1986 to 2006. (2)

Table 1. Population of 0-14 year age group in Iran from 1986 to 2006.

Year	0-14 years age group
1986	45.5
1996	39.5
2006	25.1

As the table shows fertility is declined from 1986 to 2006. Therefore the population of 0-14 age group is decreasing. Naturally the population of middle age and ageing people are increased. The rate of the aged is increased from 3.0% in 1986 to 5.19 in the year 2006.(4)

Table 2. Fertility is declined from 1986 to 2006.

Age group	1956	1966	1976	1986	1996	2006
0-14	42.2	46.1	44.4	45.5	39.5	25.08
15-64	53.8	50.0	52.1	51.05	57.4	69.73
+64	4.0	3.9	3.5	3.0	3.1	5.19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

According to the table, the over 65 year's old population in Iran was 5.19%. This percentage is unfortunately increasing. On the basis of population forecasts, the youthfulness of population

in Iran is rapidly aging. Population estimated indicates that Iranian population will be an aging population in 2050 decade.

Life expectancy in Iran is of important indices which causes the increase of the aging trend of the population. A study of past censuses indicates that life expectancy for men and women is increasing so that a percentage is also anticipated for over 95 year old age group in the age pyramid for 2050 decade. Therefore, the most important social and economic outcomes in that decade are aging and its related difficulties.

4. DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, the increase in fertilities during 1976-86 caused a juvenile population now. Although the juvenility of population may be promising, it may also have many economic, social and cultural out comes if not properly dealt with. As it happened in the years passed, the increase of the population created problems for the entire population. Referring to statistics furnished by past censuses in this respect helps to clarify the point.

According to those statistics, under 15 years population of the country formed 45.5% of the total population in the year 1986. This resulted important problems, most important of which were chaos in the educational state of this age group. Appearance of malty-shift schools, crowded schools, shortage of teachers and classes are the important consequences of over population in that age group.

According to 1996 census the percentage of the less than 15 years group were declared as 39.5. Also it shows a decrease compared to previous census, it still is a high percentage. Beside the educational difficulties in these years, the main problem was competition in university entrance examinations for this age group. In the other word, some of the problems of the over population are transferred to science ministry from the educational sectors.

Less than 15 years age group was reported only 25.1% in 2006 census, which indicates remarkable reduction. (4) Therefore the densest population group was reported to be 15-24 years age group. Consequently the needs and necessities of this group turned to be exactly the problems of the society. Increase of demands for jobs, marriages, complementary education and housing are the economic and social consequences which turning to be the most essential problem of the country as there are not enough capacities to meet them.

The point to be considered is that according to forecasts the juvenile population is rapidly moving towards an ageing population, so that we will witness an elderly population in the year 2050 in Iran.

World statistics show that the number of elderly people will surpass 2 billion in 2050, while it was only 606 millions in 2000. This rise is much higher in developing and under developed countries. The rate of aging is reported 2.5% in such countries. During 1996-2006 the population of over 84 year of age is increased from 3.5% in 1996 to 5.2% in 2006. In another word elderly people formed 5.2% of the population of Iran in the year 2006. The reason of this trend must be looked for in the increase of life expectancy during those years both for men and women. The high density age group is going higher up in the age pyramid. If during 1996-2006 the consequences of population growth were such numerous problems as education, university entrance, marriage, unemployment, and housing and ..., the most important problems of the future will be aging and its related difficulties.

5. CONCLUSION

The present research shows that the population growth in Iran created an exclusive characteristic in the structure of the Iranian population. Population aging is what Iran will face in the future. This could be overcome by deliberation, planning and execution of the proper directorship. However, it should also be noted that to achieve a desirable and stable economic growth is not possible without taking into account conditions and capacities of the population. As a country pacing rapidly towards development, Iran can not be an exception to the rule. Although 5 economic and social development plans had been projected in Iran, but their progress were very slow as the capacity of the population was disregarded. It is appropriate, that plans be produced according to conditions and needs.

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