Demographic Transition in Kosovo - Challenges and Opportunities

Fertility Level in Kosovo (gender perspective)

Dr. Mimoza DUSHI

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Introduction

• Socio-economic changes cause transformations in demographic development, in particular in determinates of natural movements

• Theory of Demographic Transition - balance between mortality level (under 30/1000) and natality (under 30/1000
  - fertility in the replacement level
  – marriage
  – traditional methods for family planning

• Second Demographic Transition (Van de Kaa, 1988)
  – fertility under replacement level
  – cohabitation
  – modern methods of family planning
Demographic Transition in Kosovo

• In Kosovar society demographic flow marks a transformation, transition from para-transitional societal into transitional

• In the para-transitional society
  – fertility level was very high
  – main fields of economy were agriculture and farming,
    • Requesting increase of labor force (including children)
  – Woman should have given birth constantly
- level of mortality falls under 30/1000 during 20’s
Change of fertility level

• After Second World War – immediate changes were unnoticed
  – Kosova still had the highest natality level in Europe approximately on average 50 per 1000
  – Approximately eight children per woman

• Kosovar society continued to remain agricultural

• Patriarchal family norms and traditional society were preserved
Change of fertility level

Economic investments (heavy industry)

- need for male labor force

- insufficient inclusion of woman in economical processes
  - continuing isolation of women within the household

- enough time to give birth and raise the children
  - she remains tied to her biological function, giving birth
Change of fertility level

- after 60’s
  - start investments in economy (light industry)
  - Possibilities for women to engage in socio-economic processes

- however, large number of deliveries shows that there are no big changes in economy and demography
  - the only improvement is decrease of infant mortality, as long as fertility rate remains unchanged
  - This period marks the biggest natural growth for Albanian population in Kosovo
– Fertility level under 30/1000 in the second half of XX Century
• Real changes toward birth and number of descendants start only after year 2000
  – Rural-urban migration (in particular after 1999 conflict)
  – change of country’s urban structure
  – change of economy
    • primary sectors replaced with tertiary sector
• Creation of better condition for woman employment
  – has reached a certain level of individual and economic independence
  – her main objective is not anymore birth and child-bearing, but advancement of her career and use of free time
• increased demand for qualified labor force
  – removal of children from work
- this situation spontaneously imposes need for family planning
  - late marriages
  - small number of children
  - use of different methods for prevention of pregnancies
Readiness of Kosovo women to plan their families

• concept is linked with two categories of questions, those for
  – family planning
  – Ability of women for decision making

• Analyzed based on
  – demographic variables
    • age and marriage status
  – Socio-economic variable
    • level of education, employment, level of income and type of residence
• Family Planning –
  – In economical aspect – enables planning of number of children in accordance with family income
  – In social aspect – is preventive method in unplanned births especially in avoiding abortions
  – In medical aspect – represents curative methods in treatment of sterility

• Abortion – method for interruption of pregnancy

• Contraceptive methods – method for prevention of unplanned pregnancies
Demographic variables

• marriage status and its time frame has more impact on women use of contraceptives

  – family planning is used more by elderly women who are married then younger and single

  • younger women might have uncertainties regarding their future pregnancies

• Elderly women have reached preferred number of children
Socio-economic variables

- Educated and employed women who have managed to secure economic ground
  - Actively participate in the family planning issue
  - Coordinate time spent at work and with their families

- Uneducated and unemployed have lower social status, mainly leave in rural settlements and large families
  - Without clear stands on reproductive behavior
  - Their families are “planned” by their husbands
    - They hinder their wife’s to use contraceptive methods
• Educated and employed women mainly in urban settlements

• Analysis shows the importance of labor status and level of monthly incomes
  – senior position at work + higher monthly income = lower number of children
Conclusion

- Reproductive behavior of Kosovar women is changing depending on the woman’s position in the society.
  
- Individual change of reproductive behavior imminently reflect on the social level:
  - Women determination for lower number of children slowly will change total fertility rate.

- Bigger transformation of overall society is needed:
  - Current level of women education in Kosovar society looks insufficient in changing massively the overall stances on fertility.
  - Housewife and parenthood will continue to remain the main women professions.
Thank you!