

Factors associated with the fertility of Sri Lankan women

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Along with other developing countries, Sri Lanka has also experienced declining trend of fertility during the last five decades due to various demographic, socio economic and cultural factors. The average number of live births during the mother's reproductive life span has decreased from 5.4 live births in 1953 to 1.9 live births in 2000 and the total fertility rate has approximately become stable during 2000 to 2006/07. Human reproduction is purely a biological process. It is affected by numerous biological as well as demographic, socio economic and cultural factors. Therefore it is important to study the determinants of fertility and show their behavior in the reproduction process of a woman.

In this study our aim is to examine the relationships between fertility and the indirect determinants of fertility. The data collected through the Sri Lanka Demographic and Health Survey 2006/07 is been used in this study. Different descriptive, univariate and multivariable methods of data analysis are used to satisfy the main objective of this study.

The results indicate that, current age, age at first union, ever use of contraceptives, nationality, level of education, occupation and status of having current unions are the major determinants of fertility of the mothers in the country, in this order of importance. Therefore demographic factors might have played the main roles in this issue of childbearing. The results from the Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) model suggest how the fertility has changed at individual level, in terms of increasing or decreasing of fertility rate which can be identified at the aggregate level.