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Population and Development in Ethiopia: Investigating the Impact of Fertility on Household Economy (Emphasis on Selected Case Studies in Amhara National Regional State)

Theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that, in poor countries, a high fertility rate impedes the economic well-being of households and household members. The general objective of this study is to investigate the impacts of fertility on household economic well-being in Ethiopia. We developed a household survey in which parents were asked, in a structured interview, about their past fertility behavior and their current economic well-being at a given point in time. The structured interview will be supplemented by unstructured discussions (focus group discussions) among samples of participants. Data will be analyzed both statistically and textually to understand the link between parents' fertility and conditions of the household's economic well-being. We predict that parents with a low fertility rate will score better in economic well-being.

Country where the research will take place

Ethiopia

How does the research describe the impact of population/reproductive health on poverty reduction and/or economic growth?

The study investigates how fertility—measured in terms of household size and age composition—influences economic well-being and poverty conditions at individual and household levels in Ethiopia. Household economic well-being is defined in terms of labor force participation (especially of women), and household consumption expenditure. Addressing the questions below will show how the research describes the impact of population on economic growth and/or poverty reduction:

1. Do changes in household size and age composition affect household economic well-being in terms of its per capita consumption expenditure? If so, how much do they affect household per capita consumption expenditure?
2. Are there differences in poverty status measured in terms of consumption expenditure, among households based on differences in their household size and age composition?
3. Do changes in household size and age composition affect household economic well-being in terms of mothers' labor market participation rate?
4. Do the effects of household size and age composition on the economic well-being of the household vary in the life cycle of the household?
5. How do the population and development policies and programs influence the demographic-economic relation-

ship and how do the households perceive and respond to these policies and programs? What are implications for future intervention?

How will the research address a policy need, and what kind of policy lesson is expected?

While there may be many other factors hindering the realization of reproductive health and family planning programs' objectives, one of these is lack of empirical evidence about the links between fertility and household economy. In the literature, the relationship between population growth and economic development has often been disputed, but there is growing evidence in many developing countries that, at least in the short run, high fertility inhibits growth, and that successful efforts to reduce fertility can accelerate economic growth. However, while such evidence is relatively well-documented for Asian and Latin American countries, no adequate information is available for African countries; and Ethiopia in particular. Inadequate evidence might have contributed to a lack of commitment on the part of the region's governments to effectively enforce their population policies and programs. I hope that investigating the links between population and development at the household level will provide better empirical evidence and contribute to informed policy in Ethiopia.

Methods used

I will use both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze data; first, calculating quantitative results using an appropriate regression model, and then triangulating those results with qualitative analysis. Households will be categorized into two groups based on the

difference in the ages of children of a given size in households. I will analyze the differential effects separately for each group and compare the results. Hopefully, this would shed some light on presence or absence of life cycle effect in households. Similarly, the study will include separate analysis for rural households and urban households to reveal any differential effects in residential location or employment structure.

Data used

In the household survey, parents were asked in structured interviews about their past (and present) fertility behavior and economic well-being at a given point in time. I gathered the

data from both rural and urban households. The structured interview will be supplemented by unstructured discussions (focus group discussions) among samples of participants.

Notes

I am processing the completed quantitative data gathered. After determining which quantitative model to use for analysis, I will proceed to qualitative data gathering and analysis.