

## **Value of children (VOC) on fertility transition in Sri Lanka: spatio-temporal study**

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Many researchers have concluded that there is a weak relationship between fertility and socio-economic indicators and fertility and pattern of contraceptives used in Sri Lanka. In contrast to the demographic transition model, it is possible that the changes in VOC of a population can occur without the presence of socio-economic development. Trends of fertility decline in Sri Lanka in the absence of socio-economic development or modernization has been questioned. The objective of this paper is to study how the value of children has changed and how it has affected the fertility levels in Sri Lanka. A spatio-temporal approach was applied to explain fertility transition and changes of VOC. The spatial approach is represented by urban, rural, and estate spaces and the temporal approach is represented by three generations; G1 (age 18-39), G2 (age 40-60), and G3 (age 61-81). Six GN divisions from the district of Kandy, which represents typical urban, rural and estate characteristics were selected. Sample size of this study was 750 women. The multi-stage stratified random sample procedure was followed to select the respondents. A structured survey schedule was used to collect data. Fertility rate is expressed as the actual number of children per women of those who have completed child bearing. An index was prepared to represent the net value of children by the evaluation both positive and negative VOCs. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics; mean comparisons (ANOVA) and correlation analysis. The analysis revealed that the fertility in the urban space is lower ( $M=2.61$ ,  $SD=1.22$ ) than the fertility in the rural ( $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=1.82$ ) and estate ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=1.54$ ) spaces. The urban dwellers are shifted from positive VOC to negative VOC compared to other spaces. Similarly, temporal analysis revealed that the fertility in the younger generation is lower (G1,  $M=2.44$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and (G2,  $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ) than the older generation (G3,  $M=3.73$ ,  $SD=1.95$ ) and the younger generation has shifted toward negative VOC from positive VOC compared to older generation. The correlation analysis revealed that there is no statistical relationship between fertility and VOC of urban space and younger generation. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that fertility transition in Sri Lanka from positive values to negative values was due to value changes of children.

**Key words:** fertility, transition, spatio-temporal, value of children,