

FERTILITY RATE IN UZBEKISTAN IN THE 20TH CENTURY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

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The earliest information about the demographic situation of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, dates to the second half of the 19th century. More accurate statistical data for Uzbekistan became available in the first half of the 20th century because of the 1926 All-Union Population Census.

There was a decrease in the fertility trend in 1897-1940. [1] This is due, to a certain extent, to the influence of some primarily demographic and socio – economic factors. The age-sex structure of the population is of particular importance for the birth rate.

Statistical information on the age structure of the population in Uzbekistan appeared in the first half of the 20th century. By this period, the proportion of the working age population (men 16-60 years old, women 16-54 years old), as well as children (0-15 years old) was high, while the elderly (men 61 years old and older, women 55 years old and older) were fewer [2]. This is primarily due to the high birth rate (45-47%), as well as the low average life expectancy of the population (32-33 years) [3]. It should also be noted that the civil war (1918-1923), famine, and epidemics had a negative impact on the age structure of the population.

Between 1924 and 1939, Uzbekistan experienced positive changes in its socio-economic conditions. As a result, the proportion of the elderly population rose to 9.0% by 1939, marking a 2.1% increase from 1926.

From 1939 to 1959, significant shifts occurred in the age structure of the population: the shares of children and the working-age group declined, while the elderly population's share grew further. These changes were attributed to a reduction in the birth rate and the challenging living conditions during the war years. The war's direct impact (1949-1945) on the demographic processes of the republic began with disruptions in the gender and age structure of the population. In 1939, there were 936 women for every 1,000 men in Uzbekistan. Over time, this disparity lessened, and by 1959 the ratio of men to women was 1000:1083, in 1970 it was 1000:1054, in 1979 it was 1000:1037, and by 1989 it was 1000:1026. Archival data indicates that 49.3 thousand marriages were

recorded in the republic in 1940. This number fell to 33.6 thousand in 1942, to 22.1 thousand in 1943, to 24.7 thousand in 1944, and to 26.7 thousand in 1945. The number of marriages returned to the 1940 level only in 1947, with 49.9 thousand marriages registered [4]. These factors, along with other wartime hardships, led to a decline in the birth rate and an increase in mortality. In 1940, there were 224.3 thousand births. By 1944, this figure had dropped to 69.0 thousand, and the number of deaths that year exceeded the number of births, reaching 73.3 thousand. These changes disrupted the natural population dynamics. In 1945, the total fertility rate was 15.7% lower than in 1940, and the natural population growth rate was 11.8 per thousand.

By the 1970s, the age structure of Uzbekistan's population had significantly changed during the post-war period. Families were restored, new families emerged, and as a result, the birth rate increased. Consequently, the proportion of children in the general population rose. The birth rate in the region returned to its previous level in 1952. However, by 1979, the age structure of the population had shifted. Data from the 1979 census revealed a decrease in the proportion of children, while the proportion of the working-age population increased. This change was attributed to a decline in the birth rate observed since 1979. Consequently, the population's reproduction rate decreased. In the 1950s and 1970s, the Republic's population grew annually by 3.5%, whereas in the 1970s and 1980s, it grew by 2.9%, and in the 1980s and 1990s, by 2.6% [5].

In addition to demographic processes, the level of education and employment of women plays a crucial role in the birth rate trend in Uzbekistan. The educational level of the population is one of the main factors influencing fertility. As the educational level, especially among women, increases, the birth rate tends to decrease. This trend has been observed both nationwide and in specific regions.

Uzbekistan made significant strides in public education during the post-war years. An essential indicator of comprehensive educational growth was the graduation of specialists and the training of qualified workers across various educational institutions:

- In 1988, 41.5 thousand people graduated from higher educational institutions, which was 12.5 times more than in 1940.
- Secondary educational institutions saw 93.4 thousand graduates, a remarkable increase of 27.5 times compared to 1940.
- 294.6 thousand people received full secondary education, marking a 5.6-fold increase from 1960.

A significant increase in graduates from secondary schools of all types, technical schools, universities, and other educational institutions has contributed to an overall rise in the education level of the entire population. In 1959, there were twenty-one people with higher education per thousand employed individuals aged 15 years and older, and thirty-six people with secondary specialized education. However, by 1989, these numbers had increased significantly to 92 and 150, respectively. [6]

The 1989 census data objectively reflects the achievements and improvements in the educational level of both urban and rural populations in the republic. Specifically:

- In 1989, compared to 1959, among the urban employed population aged 15 years and older, the number of individuals with higher education, specialized secondary education, and full secondary education had increased by more than three times.

- For rural populations, the corresponding indicators were 8.1 times for persons with higher education, 6.0 times for secondary specialized education, and 8.4 times for complete secondary education. [7]

Of particular note are the great achievements in raising the educational level of women in Uzbekistan. In 1988, the number of women among students in higher educational institutions was 46%, while in secondary specialized educational institutions, it was 52%. The employment of female specialists with higher and secondary specialized education in the national economy also increased. Their numbers grew from 107.2 thousand in 1960 to 816.0 thousand in 1987, representing a 7.6-fold increase. Specifically, the growth was 8.2 times for higher education and 7.2 times for secondary specialized education. As a result, the proportion of women among the total number of specialists with higher and secondary special education rose from 45% in 1960 to 50% in 1988. [8]

The significant changes in the education level of women and the entire population of the republic directly impacted fertility and natural population reproduction. Women's education plays a particularly crucial role in family dynamics. The highest birth rates in both urban and rural areas occur among women with secondary and incomplete secondary education. Conversely, women with lower primary education have lower birth rates than those with incomplete secondary and secondary education. This trend is partly since most women with lower primary education are older. Additionally, women who received secondary specialized and higher education tend to have 1.5-2 times

fewer children in their families compared to women with primary and lower primary education. Furthermore, during the study period, the birth rate was influenced by the ethnic composition of the population in cities.

According to the results of a survey conducted in the population laboratory (TashGU, 1988), higher and secondary specialized education had the greatest impact on the birth rate in rural settlements. With an increase in the educational level of women, there was a decrease in the birth of children in high priority. Among the women surveyed, 12.7% were women with higher education, 11.6% with specialized secondary education, 50.3% with secondary education and 25.4% with incomplete secondary and primary education. These figures were 19.5; 25.7; 28.3; 26.5% in the city, respectively.

In urban settlements, the birth of children in large families (with seven or more children) has significantly decreased. This trend is also confirmed by survey data from 1988. Among surveyed Uzbek women with higher education, those with 7-10 or more children accounted for 2.1%, while those with secondary special education had 6.4%, those with secondary education had 8.0%, and those with incomplete secondary education had 17.8%. A similar reduction in large families was observed across almost all educational groups in the city. Consequently, the increase in the educational level of the population, especially among females, contributed to a certain extent to the decrease in the birth rate in Uzbekistan. [9]

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