



Research Paper

Family Planning needed in Africa to prevent Population Explosion

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Abstract: The good news is that population is stabilizing in Asia. India, Bangladesh have already reached replacement level fertility of 2.1 and Pakistan will reach replacement level fertility in 2 decades. Most Islamic nations also stabilizing population and are reaching replacement level fertility. However there is bad news from Africa on population front. The fertility rate in Africa is still above 4 and declining very slowly and it will take almost 50 years for Africa to reach replacement level fertility. African population is increasing rapidly and will quadruple from present 1 billion to nearly 4 billion by 2100 before it stabilizes.

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I. Introduction

Thomas Malthus has said that population increases geometrically(1,2,4,8,16) whereas food production increases arithmetically(1,2,3,4,5) and hence population growth would outstrip food growth and population explosion is inevitable.

His doomsday predictions have fortunately proven to be wrong, with China and India and other Asian countries controlling population adequately to enable fast development and progress.

Even Islamic nations are right on track to control population though Pakistan it must be said is a laggard. However even Pakistan will manage to control population within 2 decades.

However one area of concern is Africa. The fertility rate is very high in African nations As if that was not bad enough, the fertility rate is declining very slowly in African nations. Indeed fertility rate in African nations is higher than 4 and is declining at rate of 15% per annum. At this rate African population will quadruple from present 1 billion to almost 4 billion by 2100 before stabilizing. This paper raises the issue of population explosion in Africa and exhorts urgent action on issue of family planning.

Total Fertility Rate of African Nations

African Nations have a very high fertility rate. Average fertility rate in Africa is around 4.155 a decline of 1.35% from 2022. Fertility rate of Africa in 2022 was 4.212 a decline of 1.31% from 2021. Fertility rate of Africa in 2021 was 4.268, a 1.32% decline from 2020. The fertility rate of Africa in 2020 was 4.325 a 1.28% decline from 2019.[1]

Fertility rate in some African Nations is as follows [2]:

Nation	Fertility Rate	Nation	Fertility Rate	Nation	Fertility Rate
Niger	6.74	Nigeria	5.25	Benin	4.7
Somalia	5.89	Gambia	5.1	Cent AfrRepb	4.57
Congo	5.72	Burkina	5.03	Guinea	4.55
Mali	5.69	Tanzania	4.77	South Sudan	4.54
Chad	5.55	Mozambique	4.71	Zambia	4.5
Burundi	5.24	Uganda	4.7	Senegal	4.49
Mauritina	4.45	Congo	4.3	Togo	4.2
Cameroon	4.44	Sudan	4.29	Liberia	4.18
Eq Guinea	4.35	Sao Tamo	4.21	Sierra Leone	4.08

Fertility Rate is Declining Very Slowly

As if this is not bad enough the fertility is declining at a very slow rate in most African nations of world. At the rate fertility is declining, it will take almost 50 years for Africa to reach a fertility rate of 2, which is replacement fertility.

Table 1: Sub-Saharan African Fertility Rates & Transition Status			
Country	TFR, Previous Survey	TFR, Most Recent Survey	Status
Benin	5.6	5.7	stall
Burkina Faso	5.9	6.0	stall
Cameroon	5.0	5.1	stall
Chad	6.4	6.3	stall
Ethiopia	5.4	4.8	transition
Ghana	4.4	4.0	transition
Guinea	5.5	5.7	stall
Kenya	4.9	4.6	transition
Lesotho	3.5	3.3	stall
Madagascar	5.2	4.8	transition
Malawi	6.0	5.7	transition
Mali	6.8	6.6	stall
Mozambique	5.5	5.9	stall
Namibia	4.2	3.6	transition
Niger	7.2	7.0	stall*
Nigeria	5.7	5.7	stall
Rwanda	5.5	4.6	transition
Senegal	5.3	5.0	transition
Tanzania	5.7	5.4	transition
Uganda	6.7	6.2	transition
Zambia	5.9	6.2	stall
Zimbabwe	3.8	4.1	stall

Source: MEASURE DHS STATcompiler. Countries included are those with at least two surveys with an interval of less than 10 years. The most recent survey is no older than 2003.

* Niger, where fertility has never dropped below seven children per woman, could be more accurately considered a pre-transition country.

The decline in fertility between 2 surveys at distance of around 10 years means in some nations the decline is at pace of around 0.5 per decade and in some nations the decline is at pace of less than that . This is half of decline that developing nations experienced in 20th century.[3]At this rate of decline it will take Africa more than 50 years to reach replacement fertility of 2.1

The Demographic and Health Surveys ask women who are not contraceptive users to identify their main reason for non-use. Women’s responses can be grouped into five broad categories:

- Fertility-related: a woman believes that she cannot or will not get pregnant;
- Opposition: she, her partner, or religious beliefs oppose family planning;
- Knowledge: she does not know a method or how to obtain one;
- Access: she lacks physical or financial access to obtain a method;
- Health: she has health concerns about contraception or its side effects

Matter of Political Will

The usual arguments of religion and education and development are not entirely valid in context of Africa. Because even after development, Africa still continues to have high fertility rate and even after increases in education, Africa continues to have high fertility rate and religion is certainly not a barrier to decreasing fertility as experiences in Islam nations have shown.

African Population crisis is entirely made by its politicians and their belief that more population means more power. President John Magufuli urged Tanzania's women to "set your ovaries free" and bear more children as a way to help boost the economy into a regional powerhouse, a step critics said would instead worsen inequality and poverty.[4] In Asia fertility decreased it is because of political will. If in Pakistan there is delay in achieving fertility decline then it is because of lack of adequate political will.

II. Conclusion: World must Intervene

Since internal political will does not seem to drive fertility decline in Africa, hence the countries of world and united nations must intervene to solve Africa's population problem. Just as UN mandated Millennium development Goals and Countries of World worked towards combatting climate change, entire world must put pressure on Africa to control its population at a rapid rate. Without global pressure and international sanctions, Africa cannot achieve demographic transition needed to avert drastic disaster.

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