

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.0. DISCUSSION.

The main objective of this study is to examine fertility dynamics in informal settlements in South Africa. The study is based on the 2001 South Africa Population Census and makes use of both direct and indirect technique for estimating fertility. These methods give almost the same total fertility rates (TFR) in South Africa informal settlements. The difference between the direct and indirect method is negligible. The informal settlements TFR is close to the national TFR of 2.87 (Moultrie & Dorrington, 2004). Regression analyses shows that, highest level of education, religion, income and household possession significantly affect fertility levels in informal settlements.

Higher level of education marks the point from which the highest level of education achieved by women depressed fertility in South Africa informal settlements. In other words, it from higher level of education that highest level of education starts depressing fertility in South Africa informal settlements, meaning that only women with higher education who are having low fertility. This confirms Makiwane (1998) study in Transkei that education depresses fertility. Indeed, in South Africa informal settlements, no educated and primary level of education still have a positive effect on fertility. This is consistent with, De Rose et al (2002) study in Ghana, who found that women with senior secondary school or higher education were more likely to offer knowledge of contraceptive means as a reason why educated women desired fewer children than the less educated women. In addition, in a study in Bangladesh, Akmam (2002) found a greater number of unmarried women with higher education levels who were more likely to be able to organise their lives outside marriage and family.

However, because of the high level of contraceptive use in South Africa (DHS, 1998), low level of education of informal settlements women seem not to be affecting fertility in this area.

When taking into account income of women, it is shown that increasing level of income inhibits fertility in South Africa informal settlements. In fact, higher income allows households to better afford the highest costs of childbearing. (Kasarda et al, 1986). Since majority of informal settlement women comprise lower income (99 %), income is not a significant inhibiting effect on fertility in South Africa informal settlements.

Overall, this study shows that the level of socioeconomic development in the Informal Settlements does not have the expected effect that because of the low socioeconomic development in informal settlements, fertility will be higher. This study shows a contrary finding.

6.2. CONCLUSION.

Contrary to our expectations, the findings of the study do not indicate clear differences between fertility levels in South Africa informal settlements and that of the country as a whole. In fact, after adjustment, fertility was almost the same in informal settlements and that of the country as a whole. Indeed, both direct and indirect methods give almost the same total fertility rates (TFR) in South Africa informal settlements. The difference between the direct and indirect method is negligible. Fertility of 3 children per woman in informal settlement is close to the national level of 2.87 children per woman (Moultrie & Dorrington, 2004).

This pattern of lower fertility may be explained by the past history of this country characterised by a widely accessible family planning services and health services that are well established (National Population Unit, 2000:46). In fact, South Africa government began to provide strong support for family planning already in the beginning of 1960s. This support was driven by the

fear that rapid population growth would undermine South Africa prosperity and economic development, but also by concern among white political leaders and administrators that the fast growing African population would overwhelm the much smaller number of white (Swartz, 2003). On the other hand, “deprivation of access to land and the total breakdown of the traditional lifestyle, both socially and economically, made fertility control a rational choice for South African women.” (Swartz, 2003: 548).

South Africa informal settlements is furthermore characterised by a high level of never married women. In fact, about 56 percent of women are never married. However, marriage remains among proximate determinants of fertility in South Africa informal settlements. This is contrary to the study of Swartz (2003), who found an insignificant difference between marital and non marital fertility of women in South Africa. In fact, ever married women in South Africa informal settlement are the most important factor of fertility enhancement with the standardized coefficient of 0.172 (See Beta coefficient in the output above).

7.2 Recommendations.

Although fertility is lower in South Africa informal settlement, majority of informal settler women still lag behind socio-economic development. This portends a temporal event that is likely to be reversed if nothing has to be done to improve their conditions.

For the current trend to be maintain, the following demands urgent attention:

- Strengthen the South African government programme on population development system with a particular attention on women in informal settlements. In fact, South Africa Population Policy adopted by the 1994 democratic government claim to integrate population concerns into all development strategies with the goal of meeting the needs and improving the quality of life of the present and the future. (SA Population policy, 1998) and the issue of informal settlements has to be taken particular into account.

- Strengthen promoting women's educational opportunities at the tertiary level (White paper on Population Policy, 1998) with a particular attention to women in informal settlements. In other words, progress to higher education amongst women has to be a priority;
- Strengthen strategies of creating employment (White paper on Population Policy, 1998) with a special focus on informal settler women.
- It is in the light of this goal that the Department of Social Development launched the Developmental Programmes for Unemployed Women with Children under Five Years. The objectives of the programme include building women's capacity for economic independence. The main aim of the project is to reduce poverty through income generation activities to women. Particular attention has to be put to informal settlements women in order to regulate fertility in informal settlements.

Further studies have to investigate the contribution of proximate determinants of fertility at sub national levels and or in informal settlements in order to better understand fertility and its dynamics in South Africa.