Original Article

The effect of family planning policies on student population and their access to instructional sources in Iran: 1987-2011

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ABSTRACT

In the present research, the effect of family planning policies on the population of students and their access to instructional resources in Iran between 1987 and 2011 has been investigated. In this study, the first step was to collect the required documents concerning the enacted policies and programs of family planning from credible websites and articles about family planning issues. Subsequently, the alteration trend of the number of all normal and exceptional students was examined. Then, the ratio of the number (frequency) of exceptional students to the total number of students was estimated and reported in proportions during 1988 to 2011 and were then compared. Finally, the alteration trend in the proportion of normal/exceptional students and the human force, class and the instructional institutes of the education system were analyzed during 1988 upto 2011. Research findings show that the total frequency of normal students at the three grades of elementary, junior high school and high school increased from 1987 to 1998 for 68%. However, from 1999 to 2011, In the past 25 years it has increased for 3.4 times. This survay show Different governmental policies which lead to dramatic population revolutions influence student population and their access to instructional resources.

Keywords: Family planning, policies, student, population

Introduction

Population has been manifested as a key factor in planning. Today, the necessity of attending to population issues in policy making is evident for everyone. Family planning is one of the least costly general health affairs in developing countries. Taking advantage of these plans can result in a reduction of mortality rate among mothers and infants. It could as well affect the economic inflation. This planning is the main factor in preventing the transmission of AIDS from mother to child. It plays a key role in healthcare planning of adolescents and improving gender equality [1]. Expanding the access and the improvement of family planning has helped to enhance and maintain social and individual health worldwide so that people and societies can achieve their full potential [2]. Family planning policies are committed to maintaining family planning issues at local, national and regional levels. Discussions on health and the expansion of international programs are among such attempts [3]. Awareness of family planning sources along with a rise of new services and contraception in recent years has been increased in many countries [2]. These policies help the developing countries to modify their contraceptive programs and to focus on family planning in order to achieve their goals of development [3]. Family planning policies in Iran can be divided into three periods: before the revolution (1978), from the outset of the revolution (1978) to the end of 1987, from 1999 so far. The first modern census in Iran carried out in 1956 indicated an abrupt growth of population to a sum of 18.9 million people. Despite such growth, Iran was among the countries which were opposed to the interference of government in fertility issues in the public convention of the UN in 1962. However, after the census in 1966 and once the population reached 26 million people, the government accepted the population control policy and founded a new deputy called population and family planning in the ministry of health and medical education in 1967. It was in charge of planning, instructing, investigating, assessing, coordinating and supervising the enactment of family planning programs. Achieving a 1-percent population growth within the following 20 years was specified as one of the aims of family planning in the 4th 5-year development plan (1968-72). It managed to lower population growth from 3.1 to 2.7 percent from 1966 to 1971 [4-7]. Within the first decade of the revolution (1978-

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1987), the issue of family planning had both many supporters and adversaries. Due to the war, the government did not strictly follow the family planning programs. Family planning, therefore, lost its former prominence. As a result, the population began to rise again and reached 3.9% [8-10]. In the 2nd decade after the revolution which coincided with the 1st and 2nd 5-year social and economic development programs of the country (1989-1998), population control was of a great importance. In 1990, the council of ministers approved the formation of the council of birthrate limitation and was communicated to run. Moreover, in this period gaining the support of religious leaders and high-status governmental figures further justified the family planning programs and the lowering of population growth rate from 3.2 to 2.9 until the end of the first plan was considered as the most important population target [11, 12]. The devisal and enactment of family planning programs in the past decades have been used with a high intensity and strictness by policy makers. A decrease or increase in student population has been proceeded by a fall or rise of their access to instructional resources. In the present research, therefore, the effect of family planning policies on the population of students and their access to instructional resources in Iran between 1987 and 2011 has been investigated.

Methods and Materials

The present descriptive study aimed to investigate the effect of family planning policies on student population and their access to instructional resources in Iran: 1987-2011. The data related to the number of students, human forces and facilities during these years were gathered through visiting the statistics center of the ministry of education and the national statistics center. In this study, the first step was to collect the required documents concerning the enacted policies and programs of family planning from credible websites and articles about family planning issues. Subsequently, the alteration trend of the number of all normal and exceptional students was examined. Then, the ratio of the number (frequency) of exceptional students to the total number of students was estimated and reported in proportions during 1988 to 2011 and were then compared. Finally, the alteration trend in the proportion of normal/exceptional students and the human force, class and the instructional institutes of the education system were analyzed during 1988 upto 2011.

Findings

Research findings show that the total frequency of normal students at the three grades of elementary, junior high school and high school increased from 1987 to 1998 for 68%. With an addition of 6,849,894 people, it rose from 11,398,248 to 18,248,142 people. However, from 1999 to 2011, it indicated 32% of decrease. Therefore, in 2011 the number of students reached 12,327,813 individuals (figure 1).

Moreover, research findings indicated that the frequency of elementary school students rose for 2,179,662 people, i.e. it rose from 7,757,707 to 9,937,369 (28% of increase). From 1993 to 2011, however, this trend was decreasing. Therefore, in 2011 the number of students reached 5,701,521 (43% of decrease).

The number of junior high school students followed an increasing trend from 1987 to 1998. It rose from 2,466,916 to 5,294,672 people (a growth of 1.5 times as big). The opposite trend was evident from 1999 to 2011. In 2011, the number of students in this grade reached 3,228,405 (39% of increase). The frequency of high school students increased from 1173625 in 1987 to 4,536,697 in 1999 (a growth of 2.87 times as big). In 2011, this number reached 3,397,887 people (25% of decrease) (figure 2).

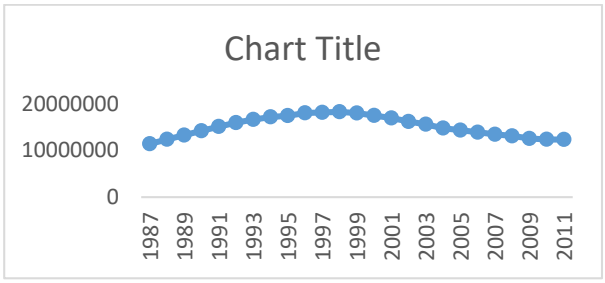

Figure 1: the frequency trend of the total number of students

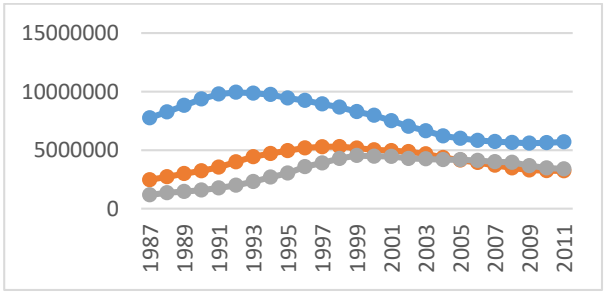

Figure 2: the frequency trend of normal students with regard to school grade

The alteration trend of exceptional students was on the rise. It actually rose from 24,428 in 1987 to 82,326 in 2011 (2.37 times as big). In the past 25 years it has increased for 3.4 times (figure 3). Moreover, the proportion of exceptional students to the total number of students has been increasing. In fact, it rose from .21 in 1987 to .67 in 2011. Contrary to figure 3 which is indicative of a higher increasing rate in elementary school years, here the increasing rate is faster in the final years of the period (after 2003) (figure 4).

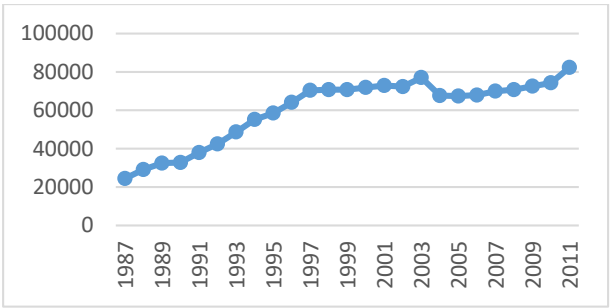

Figure 3: the frequency of exceptional students

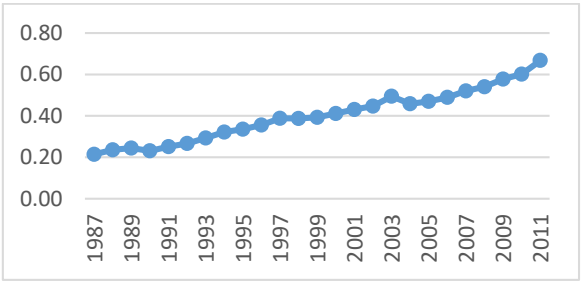

Figure 4: proportion of exceptional students and normal students

The findings show that the proportion of exceptional/normal elementary, junior high school and high school students to human force in 2011 reduced for the following percentages as compared to 1987: 3.1, 19, 5.1 and 8 for each grade. The highest proportions of exceptional and normal students at elementary, junior high school and high school to human force belonged respectively to 1987, 1988, 1994 and 1995. The lowest proportions belonged respectively to 2009, 2004-6, 2010 and 2011 (table 1).

Table 1: the proportion of exceptional, elementary, junior high school and high school students to the human force during 1988 to 2011

	exceptional	elementary	Junior high school	High school
1987	7.6	27.9	19.1	19.4
1988	7.5	28.3	20.0	21.1
1989	7.4	27.9	20.1	20.1
1990	7.0	27.8	20.1	20.1
1991	6.2	24.2	19.1	18.2
1992	6.5	24.4	20.3	18.7
1993	6.3	24.3	21.1	19.6
1994	6.5	24.3	22.0	21.7
1995	6.4	24.3	21.5	22.9
1996	5.3	23.4	21.5	19.7
1997	4.7	22.4	21.1	19.2
1998	4.4	21.3	20.5	19.3
1999	4.9	20.4	19.1	18.8
2000	4.7	19.9	18.7	18.9
2001	4.6	19.1	18.6	16.7
2002	4.8	18.7	18.2	15.7
2003	4.6	18.0	17.7	15.3
2004	4.3	17.5	16.9	15.0
2005	4.0	17.5	15.8	14.1
2006	4.1	17.5	15.5	13.8
2007	4.1	17.8	15.1	13.5
2008	4.1	19.4	15.1	14.1
2009	3.7	20.0	14.9	13.1
2010	3.9	18.0	13.5	11.6
2011	4.5	17.9	14.0	11.4

Moreover, the proportion of exceptional and normal elementary, junior high school and high school students had a falling trend. In 2011, as compared to 1987, it had respectively 1.5, 8, 7.6 and 12 percent of decrease. The highest number of exceptional and normal students at the three grades were 9, 30.3, 33.2 and 45 in 1995 & 1997, 1990, 1992, and 1994 respectively. The lowest number of students were 5.7, 20.9, 23.6 and 21.9 in 2011, 2006, 2007 and 2011 respectively (table 2). The proportions of exceptional/normal students at the three grades to the instructional institutes rose from 54.4, 147, 196.6 and 357.5 in 1987 to 99.47, 126.8 and 145.9 in 2011. The highest number of exceptional and normal students at the three grades in an instructional institute are respectively 79, 162, 214.2 and 375.9 in 2001, 1992, 1992 and 1988. The lowest number of students was 44.4, 90.2, 119 and 134.9 in 2010, 2006, 2008 and 2008 respectively (table 3).

Table 2: The proportion of exceptional students at elementary, junior high school and high school grades to class during 1987 to 2011

	exceptional	elementary	Junior high school	High school
1987	7.2	30.0	32.0	33.9
1988	8.5	30.1	32.7	35.2
1989	8.5	30.1	32.7	34.2
1990	8.2	30.3	32.7	33.7
1991	8.2	30.0	32.5	32.8
1992	8.4	29.7	33.2	34.8
1993	8.6	29.2	33.0	38.0
1994	8.8	29.2	32.4	45.0
1995	9.0	28.7	32.1	35.0
1996	8.8	28.2	31.9	31.5
1997	9.0	27.6	31.5	31.0
1998	8.8	26.9	31.1	31.4
1999	8.5	26.4	30.5	29.0
2000	8.1	25.1	29.5	30.0
2001	8.0	24.0	28.7	27.0
2002	7.3	22.7	27.7	26.4
2003	7.4	22.2	26.7	25.7
2004	6.5	21.4	25.6	25.0
2005	6.3	21.1	24.6	24.2
2006	6.3	20.9	23.9	23.5
2007	6.3	21.3	23.6	23.0
2008	6.5	22.1	23.8	22.8
2009	6.6	22.2	24.2	23.7
2010	5.9	21.9	24.2	22.4
2011	5.7	22.0	24.4	21.9

Table 3: the proportion of exceptional elementary, junior high school and high school students to instructional institutes during 1988 and 2011

	exceptional	Elementary	Junior high school	High school
1987	54.4	147.0	196.6	357.5
1988	64.9	151.8	203.3	375.9
1989	65.2	156.0	207.3	365.7
1990	64.4	158.1	207.5	352.0
1991	66.0	161.3	207.8	336.8
1992	70.2	162.0	214.2	335.9
1993	73.8	159.9	212.4	332.4
1994	77.4	157.5	208.0	337.8
1995	74.3	151.0	204.0	320.4
1996	65.5	146.4	200.9	288.1
1997	69.5	142.6	197.9	286.5
1998	68.3	135.0	193.1	276.6
1999	64.9	130.3	184.2	240.3
2000	78.6	115.2	174.3	259.7
2001	79.0	109.1	167.0	212.2
2002	59.7	102.4	158.9	186.4
2003	64.2	98.1	148.6	171.5
2004	58.3	93.7	138.6	162.3
2005	52.5	91.7	129.9	152.7
2006	50.3	90.2	124.4	145.4
2007	49.8	91.3	120.6	138.9
2008	47.4	94.5	119.0	134.9
2009	45.3	97.9	122.0	173.9
2010	44.4	95.8	123.7	146.8
2011	47.0	99.0	126.8	145.9

Discussion

The first goal

Research findings show that ten years after the first decade of revolution (1978-1987) when the government was dealing with war, family planning was not a priority of govermental plans. Therefore, it was less heeded to. The frequency trend of normal

students at elementary, junior high school and high school grades had an increasing trend from 1987 to 1998 (68% of increase). During ten years, 6,849,894 people were added to the population of students. From 1998 to 2011 which was 10 years after the 2nd decade of the revolution (1989-1998), however, religious leaders and high-status governmental authorities began to heed to and support family planning programs and the council of birthrate limitation was founded. Following a decrease of 5,920,329 normal students, their population reached 12,327,813 in 2011. The findings of this research showed that the frequency of elementary school students (6-11 years of age) had an increasing trend. However, within the 5 years after the 2nd decade of the revolution and at the outset of family planning programs between 1993 and 2011, it faced a decreasing trend. The frequency of junior high school students (12-14 years of age) had an increasing trend between 1987 and 1998. It was followed by a decreasing trend 11 years after the revival of family planning programs from 1999 to 2011. The frequency of high school students (15-19 years of age) had an increasing trend until 1999. However, 12 years after the state prioritization of family planning policies it began to follow a decreasing trend. In 2011, the frequency reached 3,397,887. The present research is in line with the findings of James et al. which attested to the fact that population control policies affect all age groups including children and can directly influence public health and healthcare services and treatment [13]. The findings of the present research were not in line with Kenichi et al.'s [14].

One key reason for the increasing population of students is the lack of attention to family planning programs and an increase in human and non-human forces as well as their fair distribution especially one which is parallel to primary healthcare services. This would in turn increase the society's access to healthcare services and improves healthcare indices. From 1998 to 2011, human and non-human sources in healthcare domain had a rising trend. The number of human forces including physicians, paramedics and other personnel was increased from 13,898, 191,511 and 76,003 to 32,493, 215,950 and 113,184. Moreover, healthcare service providing centers such as urban medical centers, rural medical centers and local health-centers rose respectively from 2,301, 1,945, 7,895 and 77,804 to 7,886, 2,914, 17,649 and 126,854 [10]. As a result, the mortality rate of children below 5 years of age had a decreasing trend in 1970, 1990, 2000 and 2011 and reached 203, 61, 44 and 25 individuals per thousand people [11].

The second goal

The findings revealed a rising trend in the number of exceptional students during the past 25 years which was 3.4 times as big. Moreover, the proportion of exceptional students to the total number of students was increased too and altered from .21 in 1987 to .67 in 2011. The findings of the present research were similar to those gathered by the instructional data provision center [15]. A myriad of factors were involved in the increase of the population of exceptional children. On the one hand, a number of factors have led to an increase of the number of these children, and on the other, their access to instructional services has been augmented. The lack of fertility in women will result in less mortality of children including the mentally retarded. Therefore, the birthrate of mentally handicapped infants will be increased as well [13]. In the past, due to the concentration of resources in privileged areas and the shortage of resources and instructional centers in deprived areas, fewer members of society had access to services. This is more evident in the case of exceptional students who require particular sources and services. In many of deprived regions, families send their normal children to nearby cities for education. In the case of exceptional children, due to the hardship of transportation and children's inability to take care of themselves many families do not send them to nearby towns for education. An increase in the foundation of instructional centers in many of the deprived regions as well as a better access of society to these centers, the demands of society have also increased. Many children are now provided with opportunities of education [16]. Raising the awareness of society is a key factor of development in every society. Raising literacy level especially in rural areas, among women and enhancing their cooperation led families to heed more to these issues and not only take care of their exceptional children but also pay attention to their education. In 1967, the total number of educated people was equal to 23,878 thousand which comprised 61.7% of the society. From among them, 14,051 people (70.9%) were male and 9,826 thousand (52%) were female. In 1990, the total number of the literate had a significant growth and reached 57362 thousand people which comprised 85% of the society. From among them, 57362 thousand people (88.4%) were male and 27236 thousand (81%) were female. In addition, in 1990, the percentage of literate people in urban and rural areas increased and rose from 73.1 and 48.4 to 88.6 and 75.1 respectively (the national statistics center of Iran). The literacy level of society had an increasing trend from 1335 in a way that the percentage of male, female, rural and urban areas rose respectively from 14.6, 5.4, .7 and 14.3 in 1956 to 88.8, 79.9, 69.6 and 85. [17]. Women progressed at university academic level. In 2005, women comprised 54% of university students and 62% of those who were admitted to universities [18].

The third goal

The findings of this research indicate that the proportion of exceptional and normal students at elementary, junior high school and high school grades to human force in 1987 were respectively 7.6, 27.9, 19.1 and 19.4. In 2011, it was reduced to 4.5, 17.9, 14 and 11.4. The highest proportions of exceptional and normal students at the three grades to human force belonged to 1987, 1988, 1994 and 1995 while the lowest proportions belonged respectively to 2009, 2004-6, 2010 and 2011 (table 1).

Furthermore, the proportion of exceptional and normal students at elementary, junior high school and high school grades to instructional class had a decreasing trend. It reduced from 7.2, 30, 32 and 33.9 in 1987 to 5.7, 22, 24.4 and 21.9 in 2011. The highest frequency of exceptional and normal

students at the three grades in a class was 9, 30.3, 33.2 and 45 belonging to 1995, 1997, 1990, 1992 and 1994. The lowest frequencies were 5.7, 20.9, 23.6 and 21.9 belonging to 2011, 2006, 2007 and 2011 (table 2). The proportions of exceptional and normal students at the three grades to instructional institutes altered from 54.4, 147, 196.6 and 357.5 in 1987 to 47, 99, 126.8 and 145.9 in 2011. The highest frequencies of exceptional and normal students at the three grades in an institute belonged to 2001, 1992, 1992 and 1988 which were estimated as 79, 162, 214.2 and 375.9. The lowest frequencies belonged to 2010, 2006, 2008 and 2008. They were respectively 44.4, 90.2, 119 and 134.9 (table 3). The present research indicated that the proportion of students to accessing resources in recent years followed a decreasing trend. This was similar to the findings of Schwartz et al [19].

Conclusion

Different governmental policies which lead to dramatic population revolutions influence student population and their access to instructional resources. Population alterations in different countries reduce the ability of nations to deal with the problems caused by investment. On the other hand, realization of national development of these countries to pave the way for solving this problem is delayed day in day out. Therefore, the authorities in these countries can move towards social development by devising appropriate national macro-policies which are in line with population alterations.

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