

TEACHING DEMOGRAPHY IN EDUCATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

Rajabova Hulkaroy

3rd-year student of Geography and Basics of Economic Knowledge program, Gulistan State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract

This article provides information about the science of demography, the formation of the field, its application in the educational process, and early research in the field of demography..

Key words: Demography, birth, death, marriage and divorce, demographic characteristics of the family, age-gender and family composition of the population.

INTRODUCTION

Demography (from Ancient Greek: demos – "people" and graphy – "writing") is a science that studies the laws of population replenishment through the birth of new generations, replacing those who pass away annually due to various reasons, in connection with socio-historical conditions. The emergence of demography is primarily linked to the research of the English scholar J. Graunt (1620–1674) in the second half of the 17th century. The term "demography" was introduced by the French scholar A. Guillard in 1855 and was officially recognized during the Geneva session of the International Congress on Hygiene and Demography in 1882. It gained wider prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Uzbekistan, it began to be applied mainly from the 1960s. The purpose of demography is to study the processes and factors of population and national reproduction in specific regions, countries, and the world, identify problems, determine solutions, and forecast future trends.

Tasks of Demography: To study demographic processes (birth, death, marriage and divorce, demographic characteristics of the family, age-gender and family composition of the population,

demographic trends) and their influencing factors. To develop demographic forecasts (scientifically based predictions of the population size, age-gender structure, and demographic situation of a specific region). To design demographic policies (a component of population policy aimed at managing population growth). Demographic policy should form the scientific foundation of socio-economic policy. Only in this way can a society develop consistently in all aspects. Population growth is a complex result of social and natural development, influenced by various factors. In this regard, demography is closely related to economics, sociology, geography, medicine, and history. It benefits from their advancements while also providing them with crucial information. A vast amount of data is used in studying demographic processes. In most countries, demographic data is collected by statistical organizations. These include information on population size, composition, and demographic processes, presented in numerical tables and diagrams, along with scientific sources and the results of sociological-demographic research. Globally, the collection of demographic data is conducted based on a program developed under the leadership of the United Nations. Demography studies the laws of population growth and development for each socio-economic system individually, as the population growth patterns specific to each socio-economic formation directly influence the demographic situation. Until the second half of the 20th century, the social and economic living standards in Uzbekistan were relatively low, leading to high mortality rates among the population. Despite high birth rates, population growth was very slow. From the second half of the 20th century, mortality rates in Uzbekistan began to decline slightly, and the average life expectancy of the population increased. As a result, both the quantity and quality of the population improved. During this period, significant attention was given to the development of demography in Uzbekistan.

Demographic research in Uzbekistan is conducted by the following institutions: The Population Studies Research Laboratories at Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, Departments of Demography, Social Geography, Regional Economics, and Sociology, The Republican "Family" Scientific-Practical Center, The Republican Scientific Center for the Study of Labor, Employment, and Social Protection, The Institute of Economics under the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, The "Social Opinion" Public Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan's demographic development, its characteristics, factors, and challenges have been extensively studied in the scientific research of scholars such as I. Mullajonov, R. Ubaydullayeva, M. Korakhonov, E. Ahmedov, O. Otamirzayev, L. P. Maksakova, A. Soliyev, H. Salimov, A. Qayumov, M. Buriyeva, O. A. Ergashev, E. Safarov, O. Saidahmedov, G. Murtazina, Z. Kh. Rayimjonov, R. K. Ortiqboyev, and others. Since 1993, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been operating in Uzbekistan. Its activities encompass regional countries, including Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. The fund implements initiatives to improve population health, particularly women's health, and conducts extensive sociological-demographic research aimed at promoting the formation of healthy families in collaboration with national organizations and medical institutions. The development of demography in Uzbekistan has its own history. Demographic knowledge has existed in the region since ancient times, as evidenced by ancient manuscripts, archaeological monuments, and scientific sources. However, targeted demographic research began in the 1960s.

The study of demographic processes in the second half of the 20th century focused on three main issues:

1. Previously restricted topics on population history could now be openly discussed in the press.

2. From the late 1980s, researchers gained access to classified archival materials, primarily statistical data.

3. These issues are connected to the demographic situation that emerged in Uzbekistan at the beginning of the 21st century, whose roots trace back to the mid-1940s through the late 1980s.

Until the late 1950s, scientific research on demographic processes during the Soviet era was insufficient. This was primarily due to the absence of key sources, particularly demographic statistics, and restrictions imposed by the Soviet government. The few publications on population history from this period were dedicated to the social and productive structure of the population and were chronologically limited to the 1920s. It was only from the 1960s that scientific research on demography began to increase significantly. This can largely be attributed to population censuses conducted in the republic in 1959, 1970, and 1979. Additionally, scholars began addressing issues related to the country's population more actively during the late 1970s to the late 1980s. For example, in the studies of R. Kh. Aminova, issues such as the social aspects of women's labor and their participation in the production and social life of society are examined. Although Aminova's major research focused on the pre-war period, it provides a wealth of factual material about the social conditions of women in Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the social role of women in demographic processes was studied in greater detail by D. A. Alimova. She was among the first to critically evaluate many works by Soviet-era historians dedicated to the social status of the female population, particularly those written between the 1940s and 1980s. In general, M.Q. Korakhonov made a significant contribution to the development of the science of demography in Uzbekistan. The demographer reconstructed the demographic history of the republic starting from the second half of the 19th century. Additionally, M. Korakhonov was the first to comprehensively study Uzbekistan's population characteristics, including both quantitative and qualitative aspects, as well as demographic processes such as birth, death, marriage, and divorce. He also conducted demographic forecasting and authored scientific works on these topics.

Other scholars, such as M.Q. Korakhonov, I.R. Mullajonov, R.A. Ubaydullaeva, O.B. Otamirzayev, L.P. Maksakova, D.B. Bobojonova, M.B. Buriyeva, and others, also made notable contributions to the development of demography in Uzbekistan. In 1995, D.B. Babadjonova's monograph titled "Demographic Processes and Their Characteristics in Uzbekistan" was published, which focused on the analysis of the population and migration issues in the 1970s and 1980s. Topics such as ecological challenges, protecting population health, and key demographic processes—like the utilization of labor resources, population distribution, and employment relations—drew significant interest.

The characteristics of migration processes were described in the textbook "Socio-Economic Relations in Uzbekistan" (1999), aimed at educators. The author analyzed the evolution of the demographic factor in interethnic relations and highlighted its unique socio-demographic consequences.

During this period, historical studies emerged that characterized specific issues influencing the development of demographic processes. These included the human losses of World War II and the deportation of various ethnic groups to Uzbekistan. Such issues were explored in the works of Sh.D. Pirimkulov, V.L. Genshtke, A. Rahmanqulova, P. Kim, and Sh. Khaitov. These studies relied on a wide range of sources, including eyewitness accounts, unpublished documents, and recently declassified archival materials. Analyzing this body of literature reveals a wealth of valuable

information on the composition and size of the population, as well as on facts regarding demographic losses, leading to the conclusion that these studies provide an essential resource for understanding Uzbekistan's demographic history. Scientific conferences, meetings, and seminars dedicated to population issues have become a distinctive indicator of a significant increase in research activity. In 2005, scholars from the National University of Uzbekistan organized an international conference on the theme "Ethnodemographic Processes in Uzbekistan." Collections of materials from republican scientific conferences held in various regions of the republic and dedicated to different aspects of history included numerous publications on the study of historical-demographic processes.

The published materials became an entirely new phenomenon, reflecting the beginning of a rise in the study of demographic processes at various stages of history. Thus, a significant amount of research was conducted to study demographic processes from the mid-1940s to the late 1980s. Historiographic analysis makes it possible to determine the key characteristics and stages of formation during the studied period. At the same time, the national-level study of demographic processes during the postwar decades has only just begun. Indeed, historical demography in Uzbekistan is a relatively young and developing field of science. Attempts to comprehensively examine the history of the population during the mid-1940s to the late 1980s remain rare in the country.

Demography is a specific science about the population that studies the laws of population existence and reproduction in relation to socio-economic conditions. This discipline occupies a significant place within the system of population studies. It provides comprehensive information about the system of demographic sciences, population size and composition, the timing and age of demographic events, population dynamics and composition indicators, marriage and divorce, birth rates, mortality, average life expectancy, population reproduction and its indicators, migration, and demographic processes. As a result of studying this field, future specialists are expected to understand that the economic development of a particular country or region depends on demographic processes, composition, and factors, which are based on strict patterns. Accordingly, they must develop the ability to analyze using demographic indicators.

The goal of teaching this discipline is to develop theoretical knowledge, skills, and competencies in demography among students. Demography is the science that studies the laws governing the replenishment of the population through the birth of new generations to replace those who die each year, in connection with social and historical conditions.

The primary subject of demography is the analysis of the laws governing population reproduction. As a distinct field of study, demography conducts a comprehensive analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the population. Quantitative characteristics of the population are expressed in the changes (increase or decrease) in the number of a particular nation or region. Qualitative characteristics, on the other hand, are mainly reflected in the health and education levels of a specific nation or region, as well as in average life expectancy.

The age composition of the population serves as a key object of study in demography, having its own origins and development. This development can be divided into the following directions:

- a) Statistical analysis of specific age groups and their proportions;
- b) Laws governing the formation of the population's age composition and its role as a factor in demographic development;
- c) The interconnection between the age composition of the population and socio-economic processes.

The research object of this field is the population. The main tasks of demography as a scientific discipline include:

Collecting, processing, and analyzing data about the population;

Developing theories of population development;

Theoretical substantiation and evaluation of the laws governing demographic processes (birth, death, marriage, and divorce);

Developing the theoretical foundations of demographic policy and forecasting.

Since the research object of demography is the population, it is worth elaborating on this subject. Knowledge about the population and the laws governing its development indicates that the concept of "population" was introduced into scientific use only in the second half of the 17th century. Prior to this, terms such as "people" or "inhabitants" were used.

The population, by its nature, has three distinct aspects:

1. The population as a biological unit. According to this aspect, human beings, as biological entities, are characterized by reproduction, and as biological aggregates, by regeneration.

2. The population as a socio-biological category. In this regard, the population is considered a unique successor of social and biological relations.

3. The population as a social phenomenon. In this aspect, it is seen as a collection of individuals united through social connections.

The population is a common and universal research object for many sciences. However, each discipline focuses on specific aspects and relationships of the population that are of interest to it and defines them accordingly. Demography does not study the relationships constructed by other sciences that study the population but rather focuses on the processes influencing population reproduction. To explain the laws of population reproduction, demography takes facts and methods established by these other sciences. The subject of demography is closely connected with sociology, as both consider society and various social phenomena. In sociology, as in demography, the research object is the individual. However, these fields differ in their social approach to individuals. Sociology views individuals as persons and members of society or specific groups within it, examining the interaction between society and individuals. In contrast, demography considers individuals as living beings and elements of a population, where each person merges into the collective, losing their individual traits.

Demography also utilizes certain laws from economic theory, as the population is one of the critical elements of labor force reproduction and serves as the natural foundation of society. The connection between demography and history lies in the fact that all demographic processes are studied within the context of historical events. It is that demographic laws have a specific historical character and reflect the consequences of historical events and facts.

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