

"The last generation without mass schooling and the fertility transition: the case of Sri Lanka", First Annual Sessions of the Population Association of Sri Lanka 28th February and 1st March 1998, Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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Abstract:

This paper examined the whether the last generation of parents without mass schooling controlled their marital fertility because more of their children started to attend school with the onset of mass schooling. With respect to educational attainment, the last generation of parents without mass schooling comprised of two groups: better-educated parents and lesser-educated parents. It was found that for the better-educated parents, marital fertility control was initiated as an integral part of the middle class culture that they were inculcated at school. However, the lesser-educated parents started to regulate their marital fertility after they realized that high fertility was a burden to their family economy when they had the opportunity to send more of their children to school after 1945. Their aspiration was that education could provide their children with the qualifications to obtain government employment and have a better future life. Once more of their children were in school, the costs of schooling became a short term economic burden since the children were not as available before to engage in productive activities to assist in the family's economic survival. Hence the direction of the net intergenerational wealth flow shifted from parents to children since more of their children were not available to contribute to family as a consequence of their schooling. Therefore, a considerable proportion of couples of the last generation of parents without mass schooling regarded large families as a burden to the family's survival.