

AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR IN KENYA :

A CASE STUDY

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Population, a resource and consumptive factor, becomes a problem when the latter aspect dominates. It is because of this feeling in many developing countries, including Kenya, that the high population growth rates have become the most disturbing problem to the development planners. The problem shows itself in low activity and participation rates.

The causes of the high population growth in Kenya are mostly assumed since little research work has been undertaken. In particular, projections have always relied on crude extrapolation.

This study aims at furthering in some way our understanding of the economic factors influencing fertility and therefore population growth rates. Econometric methods are applied to cross-sectional data from 229 rural households. The data were obtained from fieldwork undertaken in August and September 1979 in Muruka location of Muranga district in Kenya.

The main conclusion arrived at is that there are important demographic and economic factors that may help to explain fertility behaviour in Kenya. These factors fall into two categories. There are those variables which could be manipulated to reduce fertility. Some of these are female education and employment and child and infant mortality. The others like land and incomes will tend to increase fertility at least for the next few years.

Finally, a more equitable distribution of incomes seems to be necessary.

The study would, probably, have been more forceful if time series data were available to be used as well.