

Regional variations in contraceptive use in Kenya: comparison of Nyanza, Coast and Central Provinces

Abstract:

This paper analyses the regional variations in contraceptive use between Central, Nyanza and Coast Provinces in Kenya among currently married, fecund women drawn from the 2008-09 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) data. Specifically the study examined the role of socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors in explaining these variations using both bivariate and logistic regression. The analysis confirmed the higher use of contraception in Central compared to Nyanza and Coast. Current use of modern contraceptive methods in Central is 70 percent compared with 39 percent and 37 percent for Nyanza and Coast respectively. The higher contraceptive use in Central is attributed to the better socio-economic and cultural environment compared with the other two provinces. Central Province has very few cases of women with no education, a much lower percentage in the poorest wealth (9.6) category and the highest proportion in monogamous unions (97.1). The higher socio-economic status and better cultural environment has in turn created a favorable environment for the use of contraception through the intervening variables of knowledge on family planning and fertility preferences. The logistic regression results suggest that differences in contraceptive use between the three provinces could be narrowed by increasing the level of education in Coast and overcoming traditional practices such as polygamy in both Nyanza and Coast. Although mortality is still important, its effect has declined. However, the unexpected finding that contraceptive use is higher in rural areas of Central and Nyanza Provinces suggests further research to understand what could be responsible for the reversal.