

POSSIBILITIES OF OVERCOMING DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL POLICY

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Abstract

The demographic situation in the world continues to be difficult. This is due to the ongoing uneven demographic processes in developed and developing countries. As of November 2011, the world population was 7 billion people.

The population decline in the early 2000s is one of the main challenges for the long-term development of Armenia, and a sharp decline in the birth rate is a serious socio-demographic problem.

The goal of the state demographic policy is to reduce the rate of natural population decline, stabilize the population, create conditions for its growth, and improve the quality and length of life.

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia draws attention to the exceptional importance of improving the demographic situation, on which the future of Armenia ultimately depends. All this predetermines the interest shown in the study of demographic processes and political science of modern Armenia.

According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia, "On State Statistics", the comparability of country indicators does not guarantee the absolute relativity of statistical data. Therefore, the discrepancy between the resources allocated to state statistics leads to statistical gaps.

The article describes the factors affecting demography: birth rate, death rate, marriage, divorce and migration, as well as their influence on forming the demographic picture of RA. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was chosen for the study of the mentioned problem. In this article, we used methods of documentary study and secondary analysis of statistical data, during which the current state of statistical data was largely revealed. The methodological basis of the study was the laws, patterns and principles of the Republic of Armenia, which reveal the essence and purpose of the influence of the demographic processes of the Republic of Armenia. The trends of state statistics for 2018–2024 in economic, demographic and social spheres have been studied.

As a result of these factors, the current demographic situation is qualified as a crisis, posing a threat to the state's national security. It follows that in the national security system, ensuring the country's defence capability and economic security is paramount.

Keywords and phrases: Demography, birth rate, mortality, migration, economic crisis, mortality, state security.

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ՎԻԿՏՈՐՅԱ ՍԱՐՋԱՆՅԱՆ

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Համառոտագիր

Աշխարհում ժողովրդագրական իրավիճակը շարունակում է մնալ ծանր: Սա կապված է զարգացած և զարգացող երկրներում անդադար ընթացող ժողովրդագրական անհավասար գործընթացների հետ: 2011 թվականի նոյեմբերի դրությամբ աշխարհի բնակչությունը կազմել է 7 միլիարդ:

Բնակչության թվաքանակի անկումը 2000-ականների սկզբին Հայաստանի երկարաժամկետ զարգացման հիմնական մարտահրավերներից է, իսկ ծնելիության մակարդակի շեշտակի անկումը՝ ծանրագույն սոցիալ-ժողովրդագրական խնդիր:

Պետական ժողովրդագրական քաղաքականության նպատակն է նվազեցնել բնակչության բնական անկման տեմպերը, կայունացնել բնակչության թվակազմը և պայմաններ ստեղծել նրա աճի, ինչպես նաև կյանքի որակի և տևողության բարձրացման համար:

Հայաստանի Հանրապետության ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարությունն ուշադրություն է հրավիրում ժողովրդագրական իրավիճակի բարելավման բացառիկ կարևորությանը, որից, ի վերջո, կախված է Հայաստանի ապագան: Այս ամենը կանխորոշում է ժամանակակից Հայաստանի ժողովրդագրական գործընթացների և քաղաքագիտական ուսումնասիրության նկատմամբ ցուցաբերվող հետաքրքրությունը:

Համաձայն «Պետական վիճակագրության մասին» Հայաստանի Հանրապետության օրենքի՝ երկրի ցուցանիշների համադրելիությունը վիճակագրական տվյալների բացարձակ հարեբերականություն չի երաշխավորում, ուստի, պետական վիճակագրությանը հատկացվող ռեսուրսների անհամապատասխանությունը հանգեցնում է վիճակագրական ձեղքերի առաջացման:

Հոդվածում մեծապես նկարագրվում են ժողովրդագրության վրա ազդող գործոնները՝ ծնելիություն, մահացություն, ամուսնություն, ամուսնալուծություն և միգրացիա, ինչպես նաև դրանց ազդեցությունը ՀՀ ժողովրդագրական պատկերի ձևավորման վրա: Նշված խնդրի ուսումնասիրության համար ընտրվել է որակական և քանակական մեթոդների համադրություն: Ուսումնասիրվող աշխատանքում կիրառվել են փաստաթղթերի ուսումնասիրության և վիճակագրական տվյալների երկրորդային վերլուծության մեթոդներ, որոնց կիրառման ժամանակ մեծապես բացահայտվել է վիճակագրական տվյալների ներկա իրավիճակը: Ուսումնասիրության մեթոդաբանական հիմք են հանդիսացել ՀՀ օրենքները, օրինաչափություններն ու սկզբունքները, որոնք բացահայտում են ՀՀ

Ժողովրդագրական գործընթացների ազդեցության էությունն ու նպատակը:

Ուսումնասիրության են ենթարկվել 2018–2024 թվականների պետական վիճակագրական ուղղություններն՝ ըստ վիճակագրության տնտեսական, ժողովրդագրական և սոցիալական բնագավառների:

Նշված գործոնների արդյունքում ներկայիս ժողովրդագրական իրավիճակը որակվում է որպես ճգնաժամ, որը վտանգ է ներկայացնում պետության ազգային անվտանգության համար: Սա ենթադրում է, որ ազգային անվտանգության համակարգում երկրի պաշտպանական և տնտեսական անվտանգության ապահովումը ձեռք է բերում գերակա նշանակություն:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ՝ ժողովրդագրություն, ծնելիություն, մահացություն, միգրացիա, տնտեսական ճգնաժամ, պետական անվտանգություն:

ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ ПРЕОДОЛЕНИЯ ДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ ПРОБЛЕМ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ

ВИКТОРИЯ САРДЖАНЫЯ

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Аннотация

Демографическая ситуация в мире продолжает оставаться сложной. Это связано с происходящими неравномерными демографическими процессами в развитых и развивающихся странах. По состоянию на ноябрь 2011 года население мира составляло 7 миллиардов человек.

Сокращение населения в начале 2000-х годов является одним из главных вызовов долгосрочного развития Армении, а резкое снижение рождаемости – серьезной социально-демографической проблемой.

Целью государственной демографической политики является снижение темпов естественной убыли населения, стабилизация численности и создание условий для его роста, а также повышение качества и продолжительности жизни.

Стратегия национальной безопасности Республики Армения обращает внимание на исключительную важность улучшения демографической ситуации, от которой в конечном счете зависит будущее Армении. Все это предопределяет интерес, проявляемый к изучению демографических процессов и политологии современной Армении.

Согласно Закону Республики Армения «О государственной статистике», сопоставимость показателей страны не гарантирует абсолютной относительности статистических данных, поэтому несоответствие ресурсов, выделяемых на

государственную статистику, приводит к возникновению статистических пробелов.

В статье описаны факторы, влияющие на демографию: рождаемость, смертность, браки, разводы и миграция, а также их влияние на формирование демографической картины РА. Для исследования указанной проблемы было выбрано сочетание качественных и количественных методов. В статье использовались методы документального изучения и вторичного анализа статистических данных, в ходе применения которых в значительной степени было выявлено современное состояние статистических данных. Методологическую основу исследования составили законы, закономерности и принципы Республики Армения, раскрывающие сущность и цель влияния демографических процессов Республики Армения. Изучены тенденции государственной статистики 2018–2024 гг. по экономической, демографической и социальной сферам.

В результате названных факторов текущая демографическая ситуация квалифицируется как кризисная, представляющая угрозу национальной безопасности государства. Отсюда следует, что в системе национальной безопасности обеспечение обороноспособности и экономической безопасности страны приобретает первостепенное значение.

Ключевые слова: демография, рождаемость, смертность, миграция, экономический кризис, государственная безопасность.

Introduction

Demography is the science of population reproduction patterns. Swiss mathematician Christophe Bernoulli was among the first to call “demography” a new science. The author used the name “population study” in his works [1, p. 92].

Demography has its clearly defined object of study, in the role of which the totality of people acts; therefore, it can be briefly defined as the science of population, and although demographic processes are the result of events in the lives of individual people, demography studies them as a mass.

The subject of demography is population reproduction [2, p. 21].

When considering the subject of research in demography, such factors as the study of divorce processes, demographic functions of families, social conditions of birth and death, population growth, and relationships between demographic processes and structures are distinguished.

The main task of demography as a science is to identify and understand demographic laws, patterns and relationships [3, p. 11].

The term “population” is used when there is a need to present its socio-economic characteristics, taking into account socio-cultural features, through which demography reveals patterns of population movement.

One of the central characteristics of population is its movement, which acts as a means of existence and expression [4, p 18].

In modern demographic science, the concept of demographic transition has been formed, which explains the change in the types of population reproduction and makes it possible to make the demographic development periodic. The “natural” or

“biological” nature of a population is manifested in its ability to constantly renew itself through the process of generational change due to births and deaths. This continuous process is called population reproduction. The processes of birth, death, marriage, and divorce, which are components of population reproduction, are called demographic processes.

A system of statistical indicators is used to study demographic processes, where all these indicators have a quantitative expression. These indicators are based on measures of demographic phenomena and processes [5, p 108].

Changes in the population and its composition are studied in demographic research from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, and people’s demographic characteristics serve to characterize the entire population and separate specific groups as an independent object of research [7, p 25].

The purpose of the research is to highlight the widespread problems in RA and to identify ways to settle demographic problems in the social policy of RA.

Demographic policy acts as an object of research.

The subject of research is the means of regulating demographic processes in the context of social policy.

The following issues arise from the purpose of the research:

1. To find out the addressability of the state’s policy in preventing demographic problems.
2. To find out the factors affecting the natural growth of the Republic of Armenia.
3. To find out the effect of readaptation on the formation of the migration pacts of the Republic of Armenia.
4. To find out the components of the demographic index of the Republic of Armenia.
5. To find out the ratio of marriages and divorces.
6. To find out the total number of deaths and the causes.

Methods

Methods of document study and secondary analysis of statistical data were used in the work under study. The methodological basis of the study was the laws, patterns and principles of the Republic of Armenia, which reveal the essence and purpose of the influence of the demographic processes of the Republic of Armenia.

The state statistical trends of 2018–2024 were studied according to the economic, demographic and social fields of statistics.

Specialists dealing with demographic issues of RA act as experts. There are 8 experts; they were chosen according to such criteria as the competence of the field, the relevance of the activity to the field of the problem, and having some publications on the issue.

The expert survey method used during the study made it possible to identify the factors influencing the demographic indicators of RA.

Results

The study showed a demographic problem in the Republic of Armenia, and a unified social system has not yet been created to overcome it.

As a result of the expert survey conducted, the interviewed specialists talked

about several demographic problems in Armenia and the whole world.

The study discussed the addressability of the measures aimed at overcoming the demographic problems in RA. As such, the specialists mentioned the demographic strategy implemented in RA, which was completed in 2018.

Currently, the policy pursued in RA carries a system of actions to provide more situational solutions. Such a solution can be considered a drastic increase in the allowance for the first child or the recently adopted program of 50,000 AMD per month for the birth of the third and subsequent children.

Certain programs exist to provide housing support to young families, but according to experts, these programs are relatively inactive or in a declining phase.

When there is no general policy, solutions are always situational.

According to experts, when a family has a high level of legal awareness, fewer children are born than in families where the level of education is relatively unstable or absent at all.

It also mentioned the security problem in our reality when people with average social abilities have one child because they realize that the birth of any child in the family brings with it additional costs.

Referring to the formation of joint demographic programs with the participation of various departments within the framework of the demographic policy, the experts mentioned the healthcare, education and state housing construction programs. Such factors have an important impact on forming the region's demographic image.

While discussing the natural growth in RA and its individual components, the experts mentioned the minimum and average salary influencing the number of births.

Reference was made to the guarantees of the education and health sector, which are more important than the provision of financial support.

The migration balance of those leaving and returning to RA was discussed, and, according to experts, there has always been a negative index in RA.

Today, the difference between those who return and those who leave is very small. Of course, the situation remains negative, but it has significantly decreased and is even comparable to the natural growth factor. In addition, opening new jobs and introducing new opportunities will reduce the "brain drain", which is also a guarantee of development because an educated and law-aware generation is the greatest guarantee of the future of Armenia.

Speaking about the ratio of marriages and divorces in RA, the experts mentioned migration risks, because migration leads to an increase in the number of divorces. It was noted that in the world, as well as in Armenia, we are facing two conceptual problems, which need to be considered in two circles of the same dimension. Among these are the important indicators of the age of marriage for the first time and having a child for the first time.

The experts mentioned that the age of first marriage and having a first child is increasing yearly in the RA, and the main reasons for this were independence, economic independence, career creation, establishment, and socio-economic factors. It was also noted that parallel to this background, the number of marriages is slowly decreasing.

As an indicator of ageing, the increase in the number of abortions was mentioned, which is one of the main disasters for a small society like RA.

Demographic processes do not take place quickly, so every year, it is necessary to increase the confidence and stability of society.

Summarizing the conducted research, we can note that the existing demographic problems in Armenia are considered quite acutely. The inattention and non-constructive policies that have been and are currently being shown to them can become a real catastrophe, destroying the economy, education, and culture. Now, let's present an analysis of the statistical variables of the demographic problems of the RA in the context of the research topic.

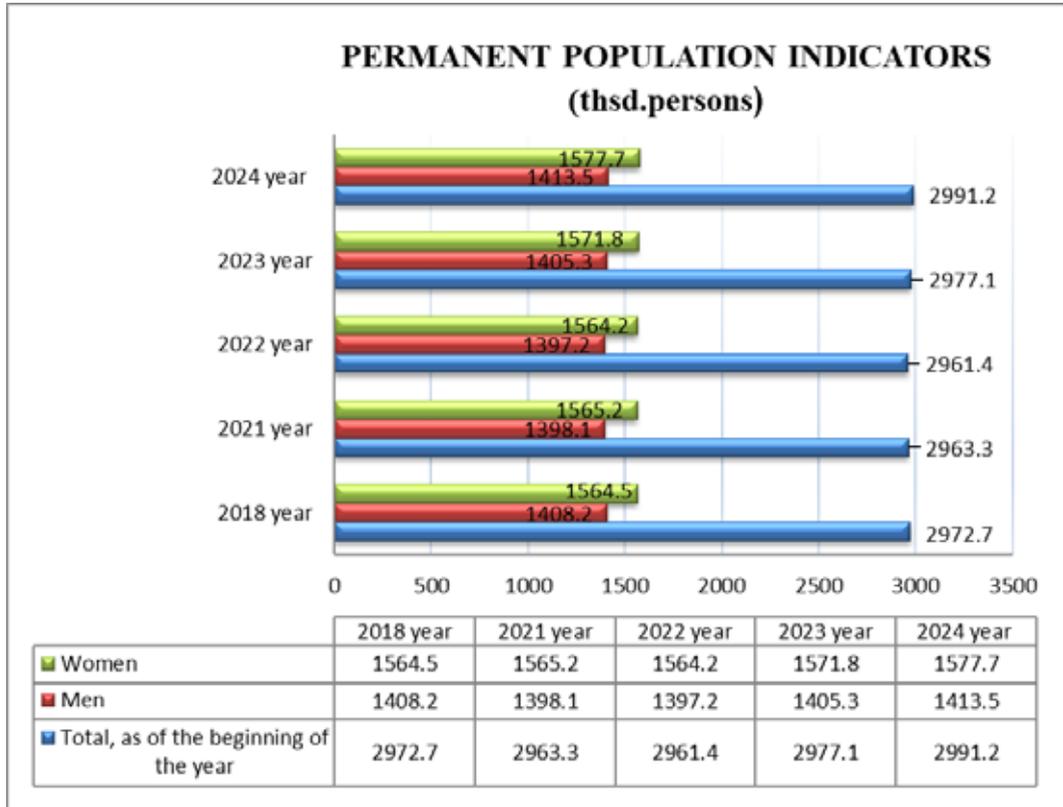


Diagram 1

“PERMANENT POPULATION INDICATORS” The diagram shows that at the beginning of 2018, the population of RA was 2972.7 thousand people, of which 47.4% were men and 52.6% were women.

In 2021, the picture changes slightly, and the number of men decreases by 47.1%, while the number of women steadily increases by 52.8%.

During 2022 and 2024, the population figures continue to decrease, making 47.2% for men and 52.7% for women, respectively.

Summarizing the obtained data, from 2018 to 2024, the number of men decreased by 0.2%, while the number of women increased by 0.1%,.

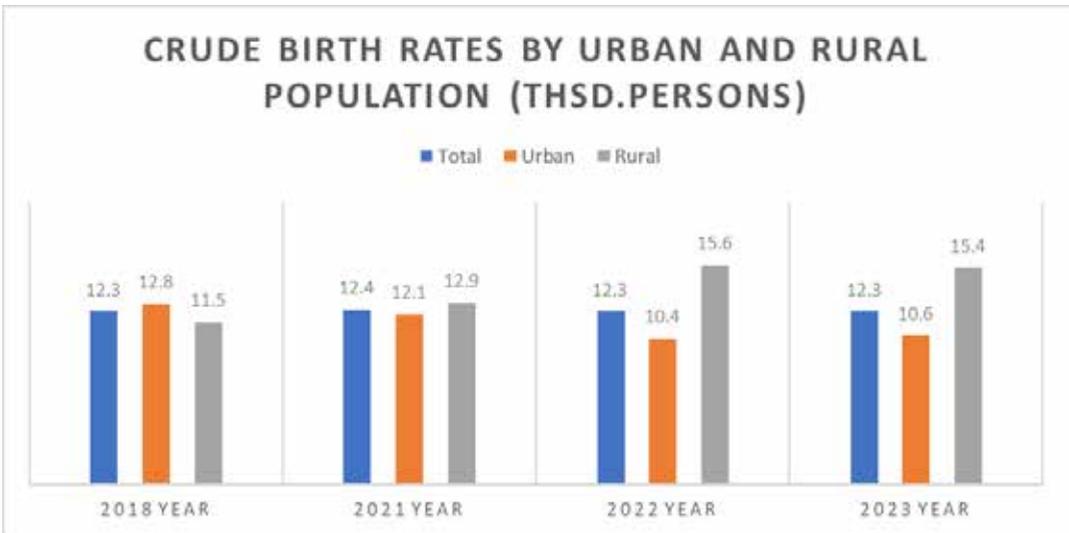


Diagram 2

“CRUDE BIRTH RATES BY URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION” It is clear from the diagram that in 2018, the city population was 12.3 thousand, and the rural population was 11.5 thousand.

In 2021, the indicator increased by 0.1 for the city, making 12.1 thousand; for the village, it remained unchanged at 12.9 thousand.

In 2022, there is an increase in the index by 0.1, making 15.6 thousand for the city and 10.4 thousand for the village.

From the analysis, it becomes clear that from 2018 to 2023, the number of urban population decreased by 2.2, and in rural communities has increased by 3.9.

The most clear characteristic of the birth rate is the size of the total birth rate, the decline of which was accompanied by a sharp decrease in the annual number of births.

The rapid decline in the absolute number of births was determined solely by the decrease in the intensity of birth of the population of reproductive age, as a result of which an increase in the average age of the mother at the time of the child’s birth was recorded.

Current limits of birth rates and trends in the decrease of the annual number of births give reason to assume that shortly, the Republic of Armenia will most likely hardly manage to avoid a new wave of reduction in the natural reproduction of the population, as the reproductive age enters the second half of the 1990s and 2000s—the non-energetic generation born at the beginning of the 19th century. Here, we must also take into account the fact that the war of 2020 claimed the lives of thousands of young people of the current reproductive age. By recording this, we can predict a downward birth rate trend in the coming years.

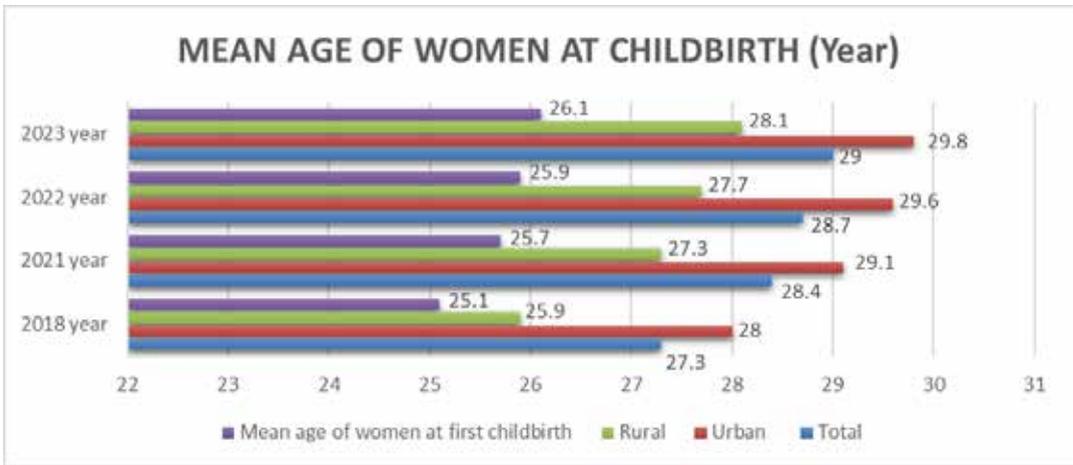


Diagram 3

“MEAN AGE OF WOMEN AT CHILDBIRTH” it is clear from the chart that in 2018, the average age of motherhood among RA female citizens was set at 27.3, and in the same year, the age of first motherhood was set at 25.1.

In 2021, the average age of motherhood was set at 25.7, and the age of first motherhood also increased to 28.4.

In 2022, the average age to become a mother was set at 28.7, and the age to become a mother for the first time was 25.9. Moreover, the age of motherhood in the city is higher, 29.6, than in rural communities, 27.7.

From 2018 to 2023, the average age of motherhood increased by 1.2 year, and the age of first motherhood by 1. This is due to several socio-economic circumstances that directly affect the construction of this indicator.

It should be noted that the Europeanization of Armenian society is taking place, as a result of which people’s value orientations and lifestyle are changing, which in turn lead to a reduction in the birth rate and a decrease in the number of births. In parallel, the desire to create a career is growing among women.

Recorded demographic changes and development trends have left an adequate and negative impact on the birth rate among the population in the country, whose coefficients are decreasing year by year.

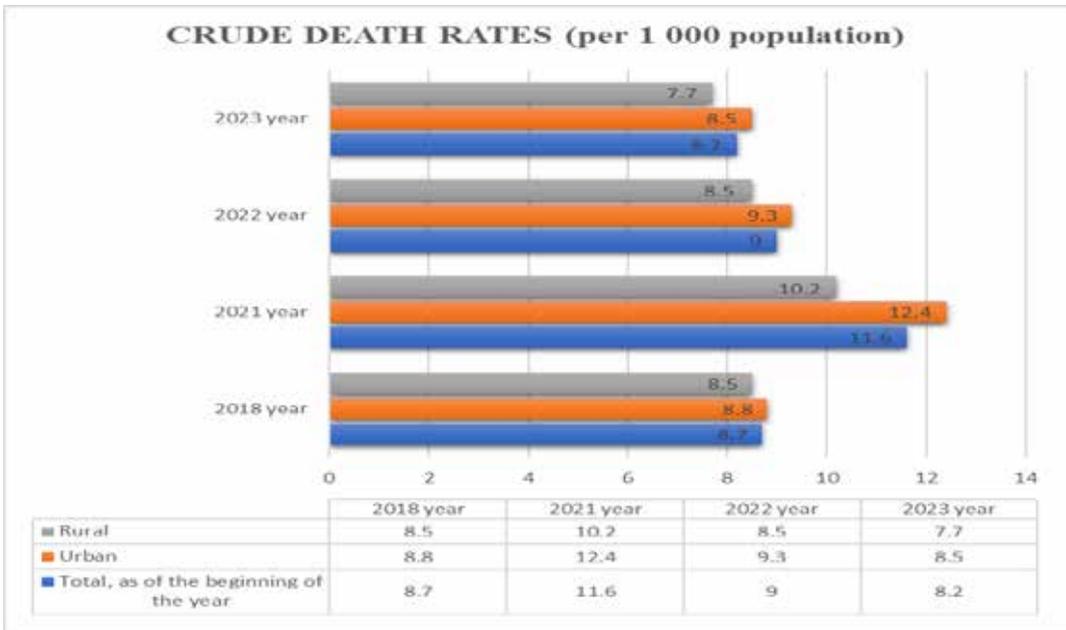


Diagram 4

“CRUDE DEATH RATES” The chart shows that judging by the development of the absolute number of dead and the overall mortality rate, the stability of the population mortality in the Republic of Armenia has been disrupted and a pronounced trend of mortality growth has formed.

If in 2018, when the index of permanent population was only 2986.1 thousand, 9.1 deaths per 1000 inhabitants were recorded.

It should be noted that in 2021, the overall mortality rate decreased to 8.7 per 1000 inhabitants.

In the context of the increase in the number of deaths registered in the republic, the number of deaths due to diseases of the circulatory system, neoplasms, digestive organs, and infectious and parasitic diseases that cause premature deaths remains problematic.

In 2022, that indicator was set at 9, and in 2023 at 8.2.

This increase in the index is largely due to the prevailing epidemic and war in the country.

The given numbers, however, do not give sufficient grounds to speak that the index may improve shortly because, when calculated using the estimates of the current census of the permanent population, these indices do not reflect the actual state of affairs.

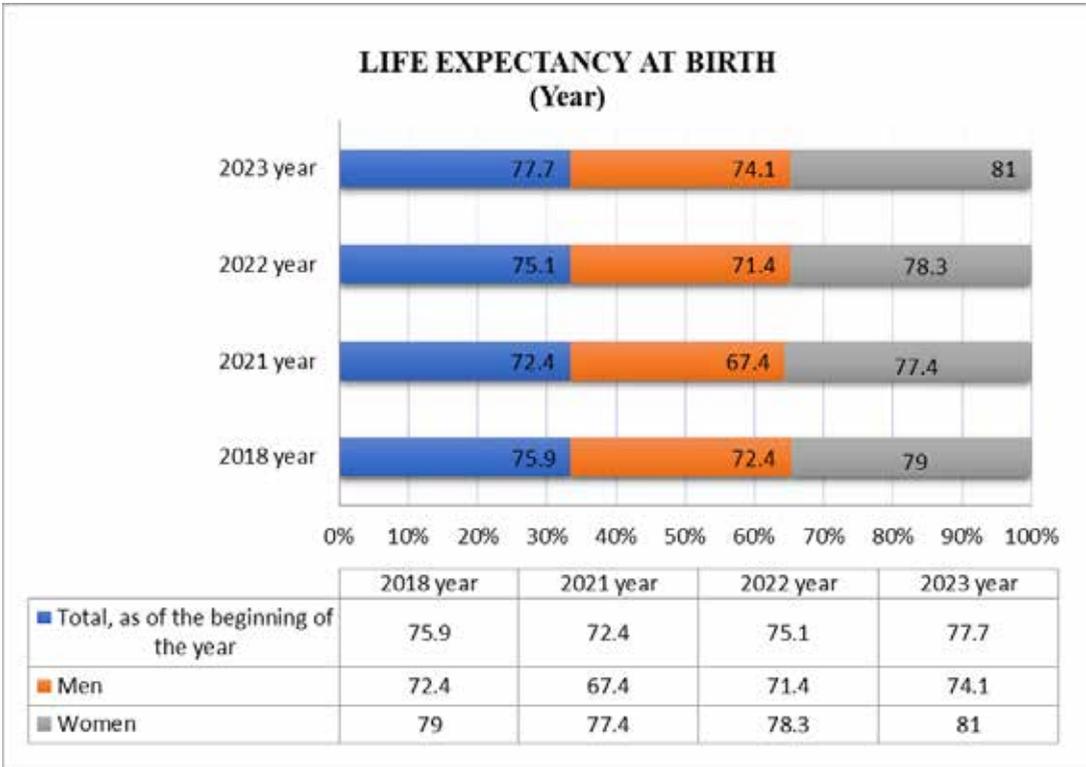


Diagram 5

“LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH” The diagram shows that the coefficient among women is relatively higher than among men. Most likely, this is related to the most common harmful habits among men, as well as the high mortality of people from external causes, including:

- reduction of deaths due to traffic accidents and other external causes,
- prevention of cardiovascular and other diseases with a high mortality rate,
- reduction of mortality and injuries from work accidents and occupational diseases, etc.,
- reduction of deaths due to traffic accidents and other external causes,
- prevention of cardiovascular and other diseases with a high mortality rate,
- reduction of mortality and injuries from work accidents and occupational diseases, etc.,

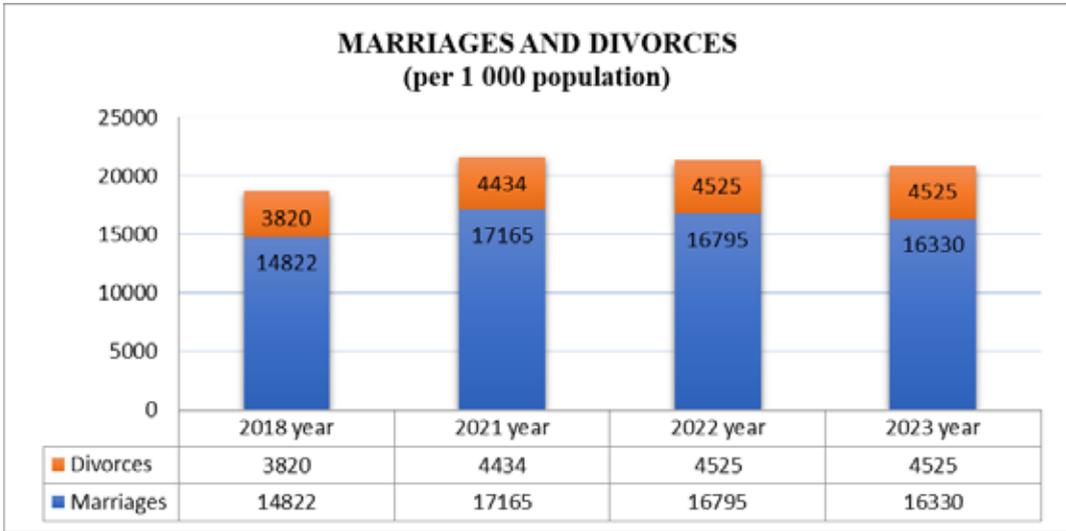


Diagram 6

The extraordinary realities prevailing in RA directly impact the marriage and divorce rates. In the conditions of insufficient availability of socio-economic, domestic and other factors, the absolute and relative sizes of marriages decreased significantly. As with births, the number of marriages also plummeted.

Thus, in 2018, 14,822 marriages were registered, and in 2023, the lowest number of marriages was recorded – 16,330. It becomes clear that from 2018 to 2021, the difference in the number of registered marriages was 1508 thousand.

The reduction in the number of marriages is largely a socio-economic arrangement, where material, housing, and living conditions are considered, which leads to the postponement of marriages or their refusal.

It should be noted that, according to the summary data of the RA National Statistical Service, in 2017, as of January 1, the number of male representatives aged 20–49 was 621,000, while the number of women of reproductive age, 15–49, was around 765,000. That is, there is a substantial discrepancy between the number of women and men of marriageable age, around 145,000. This is also evidenced by the 2011 census in the republic, according to which the number of never-married women is around 321,000, of which 171,000 are women of reproductive age.

It should be noted that the socio-economic reasons for reducing the number of marriages later become the reason for divorces. In 2017, 3940 thousand divorces took place among 15,214,000 newly formed married couples in the Republic of Armenia.

The “**MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES**” graph gives statistical data on marriages and divorces.

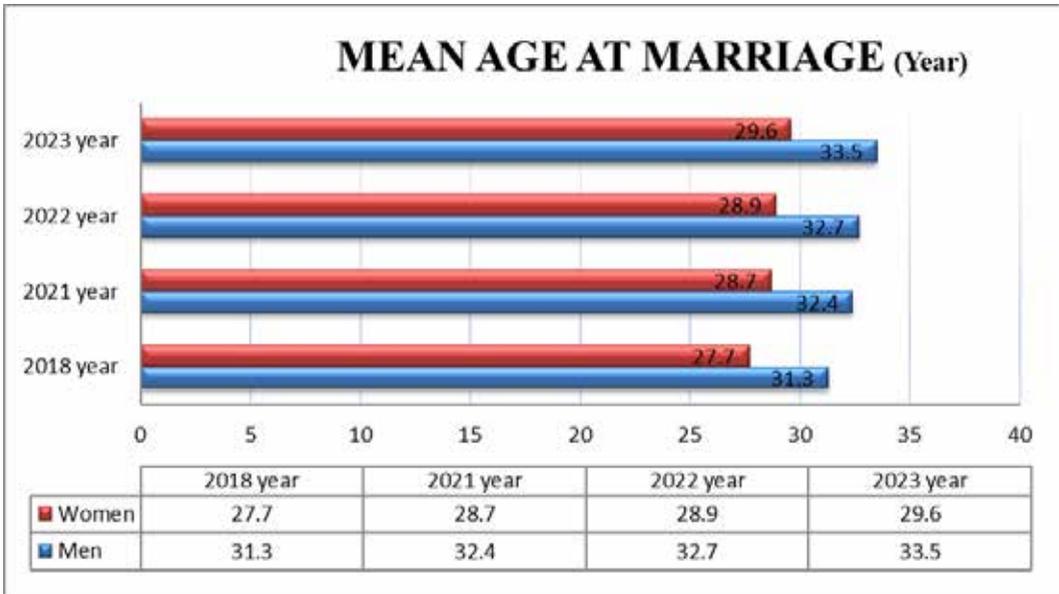


Diagram 7

“MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE” from the study of the chart, it becomes clear that the average age of marriage is relatively higher among men.

In 2018, there was an increase in the index, making 27.7 for women and 31.3 for men.

In 2021, the index registered a relative increase, being set at 28.7 for women, and 32.4 for men.

Comparing 2022 and 2023 among the set indicators, it becomes clear that the average age of marriage among women has increased by 0.7 and among men by 0.8.

An important indicator is also the divorce index or the share of divorces in marriages in a given year, which recorded an increasing trend and in 2019 increased to 24.9%, almost doubling, which definitely has a negative impact on the demographic situation.

Migration plays a destructive role in family ties. This happens even when migrating families. families in the new environment do not feel the support of relatives and friends, resulting in stress and divorce.

The general trend of marriage in recent years is an increase in the age of brides and grooms at the conclusion of first marriages, which is clearly demonstrated by the “aging of marriage”.

Summarizing the secondary analysis of the statistical data, we can record the fact that due to the chronological coincidence of the heavy socio-political realities unfolded in the 21st century, in particular, the economic crisis, the epidemic and the war, the normal course of socio-economic development of the Republic of Armenia that lasted more than half a century was interrupted.

It is evident that because of all this, the demographic situation of the Republic of Armenia underwent significant changes. The result of the changes was that

the birth rate began to decline rapidly, the death rate increased, the average life expectancy decreased, the system of marital and family values was undermined, the foundations of the traditional Armenian family were undermined, divorces increased, marriages decreased, the rate of natural population growth decreased, and a part of the population became poor.

As a result of many socio-demographic factors, the sex-age proportions of the population changed, and the population began to age rapidly. In other words, the demographic situation of the Republic of Armenia has also changed significantly, which has become a serious threat to our state and national security. It should be taken into account that the results of the demographic policy are not immediately visible and require long-term observations and actions.

It was also noted that the growth and development of the permanent population of RA is greatly influenced by the uncontrollable growth of the migration flow, which leads to reproductive sex-age mismatch.

Conclusion

Thus, analyzing this work and the results of the research related to it, it can be concluded that today, the Armenian society is facing a demographic disaster.

Extraordinary realities have a direct impact on statistical data indicators. The impact of material, housing, domestic and other factors significantly reduces the absolute and relative stability of the presented indicators, and in that context, the natural movement of the population is emphasized, which continues to be the main issue of demographic research, and we can say that the ageing of the population in RA, the outflow of the working population, the consequences of the lack of workers and the breakdown of the traditional family are now more acute than ever.

The rapid growth of the world's population is associated with great anthropogenic pressures on the environment, climate change problems, depletion of natural resources, food shortages and other circumstances. The cause of all these difficulties is not only population growth, but its non-constructive solution.

Returning to our reality, let's note that the analysis of demographic processes makes it possible to outline possible scenarios for the future development of our country, while statistics, in turn, only allow us to build an objective picture to show what is happening in the world. However, demographic processes require a special methodology, and the approach should be comprehensive, differentiated and consistent. In this context, we can consider the sharp decline in the birth rate. Today, the fertility index in Armenia is only 1.6. Most likely, with such an indicator, the country's population will decrease by half within 70 years, as a result of which our population will decrease by about 1.5 million at the end of the 21st century.

Research has repeatedly shown that a large number of young families are having fewer children today than years ago, and there is also a serious problem of infertility affecting both women and men. All this causes demographic problems.

Summarizing the general results, it should be noted that all measures to overcome the demographic crisis, despite a certain positive effect, cannot radically change the demographic situation prevailing in the country, which in turn requires the introduction of a number of comprehensive, targeted legislative measures and

continuous monitoring.

It became clear that the decent quality of life of people can be the basis for improving population reproduction, because the current demographic situation requires the intervention of both state and public institutions. In this context, the hypothesis put forward that the main reason for the migration of RA citizens is socio-economic instability was confirmed. As a result of the expert survey, the experts interviewed repeatedly mentioned the role and importance of this factor.

Referring to the possible ways of increasing the effectiveness of the implemented demographic policy, the “active broad information campaign”, which will be aimed at improving the quality of life of families with children, will, in turn, increase the effectiveness of the implemented measures and show the active positive attitude of the authorities in the field of solving and supporting family problems, which of course, it forms a favourable public opinion.

As a result of the research, proposals for improving the state policy aimed at increasing the demographic indicators were formed.

In order to improve the demographic situation, we suggest:

1. To formulate and develop new approaches to the settlement of demographic problems, in particular, to develop a unified strategy, including the mechanisms for the settlement of health care, migration, birth rate, mortality, marriage and divorce problems.

2. Partial proposals are as follows:

- Create a council of independent experts who will develop a demographic policy.
- Collection of divorce taxes, moreover, the more frequent the divorces, the higher the tax levied.
- Collection of childlessness tax.
- Providing money to encourage the marriage of young couples; moreover, the older the couple gets married, the smaller the incentive amount.
- Provision of social housing for young families.
- Activation of housing support programs for young families.
- Increase in birth allowance for the first child.
- Implementation of measures aimed at promoting immigration, in particular, creating jobs, raising wages, improving education and quality of life.
- Implementation of perspective-building and foreign experience localization programs among young people.
- Implementation of legal awareness-raising measures among the uneducated population.

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To summarize the work, we can note that the proposals presented below have been largely developed, taking into account the negative change in demographic data.

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