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**Topic: Fertility Decline in the GCC: Causes and the Way
Forward Evidence from Qatar**

Abstract:

Fertility rates in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been declining in recent decades. This decline has been attributed to a number of factors, including urbanization, education, and employment opportunities for women. A mixed-method study was conducted in Qatar to explore the causes of fertility decline and to develop recommendations for addressing this issue. This study investigates the factors that contribute to the decline in fertility rates in Qatar. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey of 4,271 individuals with a qualitative study of 58 semi-structured interviews. The study findings indicate that a number of factors are contributing to the decline in fertility rates in Qatar, including structural factors such as celibacy and delayed marriage, changing social and cultural values, individual preferences, lifestyle, the care for quality over quantity, economic factors including the high cost of marriage and the cost of childbearing, increased female labor force participation with lack of work-family balance policies, in addition to the health factors. The study also found that the factors that contribute to the decline in fertility rates vary by gender. For instance, men are more likely to cite economic factors as a major cause, while women are

more likely to cite changing social and cultural values. The authors conducted benchmarking analysis as well to conclude by recommending a number of policies and programs that could help to slow down the drastic decline in fertility rates in Qatar and the GCC at large.

Keywords: Fertility Decline, Marriage, Divorce, Population Dynamics, Qatar, Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Bio:

Abdelhadi Al Marri currently serves as the Director of the Technical Bureau at the Permanent Population Committee. In this capacity, he is responsible for overseeing the examination of the population structure in Qatar and the development of demographic policies. His primary role involves supervising various aspects of population dynamics and variables through research and studies aimed at comprehending the social landscape within the nation. During his tenure, he has actively fostered collaboration and coordination with ministries, governmental and non-governmental entities, as well as regional, Arab, and international organizations dedicated to population-related matters.

Bio:

Ahmed Aref holds the position of Planning and Content Manager at the Doha International Family Institute. With a wealth of experience, he specializes in policy research and the development of evidence-based policies, encompassing interdisciplinary policy analysis, impact assessment, advocacy, and international cooperation. Prior to his role at QF, Ahmed gained valuable experience working with the UNFPA Arab States Regional Office, the EU Program on Family and Child Rights, and the Egyptian Prime Minister's Office. His expansive expertise covers a range of areas, including the politics of social policies, political economy, labor policies, family policies, social justice and protection, migration, social inclusion/exclusion, demography, population dynamics, and sustainable development. Ahmed has taken the lead in strategic initiatives and the management of projects focused on achieving meaningful impacts in these domains. Furthermore, his contributions extend to numerous national, regional, and international conferences and expert group meetings. Ahmed also maintains an affiliation with the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath, UK.
