

Islamic View and Fertility

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Introduction:

Population studies, essentially deal with issues regarding the size, growth, and distribution of population in a given area¹. The size, growth, and distribution are determined by three major factors, which are fertility, mortality, and migration. Of these factors, fertility is a potent socio-demographic force in the vital process of population growth. It is one of the main determinants of population growth and principally contributes to the pattern of population distribution. It has a crucial role in population dynamism, because it measures the rate at which a population increases.²

It defines as the number of live births a woman has actually had³.

In fact the levels of fertility are varying widely among nations, countries, geographic regions, ethnic and socio-economic groups, due to the influence of the biological and background factors. Such biological factors are: marriage pattern and contraception. Those biological factors are the direct factors, through which social, economic, and environmental variables (background variables) affect fertility⁴. On the basis these background variables, Islam by itself could play an important role in shaping attitudes and behaviors about childbearing. It is a key characteristic influencing several aspects of individual behaviors, including marriage and childbearing patterns, the demand for having children, and fertility regulation, through its philosophical content about having children, and its position on the moral acceptability of birth control. Therefore, this paper investigates fertility from an Islamic view, which includes Islamic motivations of having children. Also, the paper tries to make a critical review of western literature on fertility, focusing on Malthusian, Neo-Malthusian, functionalist, and conflict perspectives.

Fertility between Islam and western thought

Fertility has been subjected to several theoretical speculation and frameworks. The majority of these frameworks derive from the historical experience of European societies. Therefore there was a considerable doubt about the implementation of these frameworks and theories in developing

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G. letamo and S. K. Gaise, fertility levels, trends and deferential. demography of Botswana ,MMEGI publishing house, GABORNE Botswana, 1999,P77.1

G. letamo and S. K. Gaise,Ibid,p77.2

Colin Newell. methods and models in demography, p35.3

John Bongaart's, fertility, biology, and behavior an analysis of the proximate determinants. Academic press, New York, 1983 p 1.4

countries⁵. In spite of this, the widespread theoretical framework for the interpretation of fertility and the expectations of it is trends, in developed as well as developing countries, rest primarily on a body of explanations, generally, known as the demographic transition theory. According to the demographic transition theory, societies move from high birth and death rates to relatively low birth and death rates as a result of technological development⁶. The demographic transition takes place in three stages: the pre-industrial stage is characterized by little population growth; high birth rates are offset by high death rates. This period is followed by the transitional or early industrial stage, which is characterized by significant population growth as the birth rate remain high but death rates decline because of new technology that improve health, sanitation, and nutrition. In addition, others factors which were focusing towards maintaining high fertility, such as religious doctrines, moral codes, laws, education, community customs, marriage habits, and family organization⁷, do play a role in the movement of the aforementioned rates. The third stage is the advanced industrialization and urbanization: the birth rate declines as people control their fertility with various forms of contraception, and the death rate likewise declines as medicine and other health care technologies control acute and chronic diseases.

Today a large part of developing countries lie in this second stage, which is characterized by high level of fertility. According to the theory, the world can be classified into areas of low fertility (more developed countries) and areas of high fertility (less developed countries)⁸. The crude birth rate in more developed countries is around 11 per 1000 population, and total fertility rate is 1.6 per woman. But in less developed counties the crude birth rate is around 27 per 1000 population, and the total fertility rate is 3.3 per woman⁹.

As a result of these high levels of fertility, especially in developing countries, which were totally unexpected, the world population has more than tripled-from 2.5 billion in 1950 to almost 8 billion in 2009 and it is increasing about 94 million people each year.

The annual growth of the world population peaked at about 1.9 percent in 1970. It then slowed gradually, declining to 1.7 percent in the early eighties. But during the late two decades, it again began to accelerate, reaching 1.8 percent, largely because of a modest rise in the birth rate in china, and a decrease in the death rate in India¹⁰.

Mohamed Salih Mahfouz, fertility levels, trends and determinants in Sudan.(Research series NO.4), levels, trends and determinants of fertility in Sudan. National population 5 council,(Sudan), UNFPA, 2009, p17.

Diana, Kendall, social problems in a diverse society. Allyn and Bacon, United States of America, 1998.6

John c. Caldwell. Theory of fertility decline, academic press, London, 1982.7

Asia Mohammed Sharief. factors affecting fertility Among Sudanese women in urban community: A case study of El-Dueim town. unpublished, M. Sc. 1999. 8

Asia Mohammed Sharief. Ibid.9

Lester R. Brown, the new world order. Taking side magazine, 7th edition, clashing views on controversial social issues. the Dudhkin publishing Group. Guilford, United States 10 of America. 1992.

With the existing state of fertility, the world is projected to add at least 960 million people during this decade, up from 840 million in the eighties and 750 million in the seventies.

Consequently the population will double again in the following 50 years¹¹.

Now the questions are: Can the earth's resources support this growing population? What are the consequences of these high levels of fertility? What are the solutions to this overpopulation? There are many opinions answering these questions in different ways. And there is great debate about whether having a lot of children threaten humanity and human welfare, or is it not bad for humanity?

The paper focuses on the Malthusian, Neo-Malthusian, functionalist, and conflict, perspectives on one hand, and the Islamic perspective on the other, as the main contrasting views on the issue of fertility.

1. The Malthusian perspective

In 1798, Thomas Malthus, an English clergyman and economist, published an essay on population. He argued that the population would increase in a geometric exponential progression, but the food supply would increase only by an arithmetic progression¹². Therefore population would grow too much to be supported by our food supply. He did think that, the population might stabilize eventually, but would stabilize at a level above what the resources could support. So, the earth cannot support the growing numbers of population. Consequently, relief from social problems would be rare and temporary.

Concerning, the consequences of high fertility, Malthus was concerned with living conditions in England. He saw them declining in the 19th century, and thought, high fertility was a great factor in living conditions. He attempted to attribute almost all the economic and social evils to excessive population growth, especially the overproduction of young, and the irresponsibility of poor, because they are having more children than they could support. In other words, this high increase in population is undermining the efforts to raise living standards of people, to provide large additions of youngsters with food, clothing and education, and of young adults with jobs, housing and other consumer essentials, while trying to break out of the vicious circle of poverty. The gravity of this crisis unfolds; as a cause of impending mass misery; as a threat to social system; and as a major obstacle in the path of our efforts to raise the levels of living. Thus, with the high level of fertility especially among poor people, the progress of mankind towards happiness could be much more remote¹³.

Lester R. Brown, the new world order. Ibid 11

Diana, Kendall, social problems in a diverse society. Allyn and Bacon, United states of America, 1998, p352.12

William Peterson, the politics of population. New York, Doubleday and company.1964.13

According to him, high fertility has serious consequences for the well-being of mankind throughout the world, if it is left unchecked, because it doubles once every generation. Malthus felt so strongly that population needed to be curbed, through preventive checks such as, moral restraint or the postponement of marriage with no extra material sexual gratification, vice, namely promiscuous intercourse (homosexuality), unnatural passions, violations of the marriage bed, and improper arts to conceal the consequences of irregular connections, and birth control applied either within or outside marriage.¹⁴ He was in favor of a family size regulation plan, as a solution to these population problems, so that poor families would not produce more children than they could support. Also, he was in favor of government intervention or hands on approach as governmental policy, to prevent uncontrollable growth of population.

At the same line, the Neo-Malthusian, have their contribution to this debatable issue.

2. The Neo-Malthusian perspective

Neo-Malthusian thought is a branch of Malthusian theory that applies some of the basic facets of Malthusian theory to modern times. They believed that, the world population growth is following the exponential growth pattern that Malthus described. The exponential growth occurs in population because children remain in the population and themselves have their own children¹⁵. To them, the earth is a dying planet with too many people in relation to the available food supply. Overpopulation and rapid population growth exacerbate global environmental problems, ranging from global warming and rainforest destruction to famine and epidemics such as AIDS¹⁶. One of the famous figures of this school was Paul Ehrlich, who wrote the “population bomb”. He believed that the most environmental problems arise from overpopulation. It is the major problem facing mankind. So, population had to be controlled or the human race might cause the collapse of the global ecosystem and its own destruction¹⁷. He argued that: “The earth has huge numbers of people, and we are managing to support and provide food for all these people. But the only ways for supporting this growing number are: by spending our capital, burning our fossil fuels, dispersing our mineral resources, and turning our fresh water into salt water. We have not only overpopulated but overstretched our environment. We are poisoning the ecological systems of the earth- systems upon which we are ultimately dependent for all of our food, for all of our oxygen and for our entire waste disposal”¹⁸.

William Peterson. Ibid.14

Diana, Kendall, social problems in a diverse society. Opcit. 15

Diana, Kendall. Ibid.16

Lester R. Brown, the state of the world.(W.W.Norton, 1991)17

Lester R. Brown, the new world order. Taking side magazine, 7th edition, clashing views on controversial social issues. The Dudhkin publishing Group. Guilford, United 18 States of America. 1992.

As a result of that irrational use of resources, the world experience ecological collapse and population die off unless population growth is reduced. Their positions are supporting the need to curtail population growth through birth control. They believed that the birth control is the main method to control us from our desperate, overpopulated population. They stresses that birth control not only be legalized, but that the poor people should have free access to birth control.

3. The functionalist perspective

Some functionalists take a Neo-Malthusian perspective, believing that to reduce food shortages and environmental problems, population must be controlled. In other words, the more alive people there are, the greater is the overuse of finite resources and degradation of soil, water, and land¹⁹. They believed that the solution to overpopulation and environmental degradation lies in social institutions such as education and the government²⁰. Educators can encourage population control by teaching people about the limits to agriculture and the difficulty of feeding the rapidly growing population. Government leaders and international organization such as the United Nations can cooperate to find far-reaching and innovative solutions and develop an understanding about more equitable use of the world resources.

4. The conflict perspective

Those who believe in conflict perspective reject Malthus and his works, and describe him as the contemptible Malthus and a plagiarist, a shameless sycophant of the ruling classes who perpetrated a sin against science. Also they saw his work as libel on the human race²¹. They argued that population and environmental problems have less to do with overpopulation and shortage of resources, than with power differential in societies and in the large global economy. For example, early conflict theorists such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels did not think that the food supply was threatened by overpopulation because agricultural technology could meet the food needs of the growing world population if it were not for poverty²². According to Marx and Engels, the main cause of poverty is the exploitation of workers by capitalists. This selfish utilization of the workers occurred because the competition in a capitalist economy drives all entrepreneurs to increase their efficiency to the utmost by installing more and more machinery. Greater efficiency produced by using new machines, tend to displace some of the workers that had been employed at a lower technological level. The laboring population,

Diana, Kendall, social problems in a diverse society. Opcit. 19

Diana, Kendall. Ibid. 20

William Peterson, the politics of population. Opcit.21

Diana, Kendall, social problems in a diverse society. Opcit.22

therefore, is turned into a relative surplus population. Moreover, the composition of the employed force steadily deteriorates, on view of the fact that, the capitalist progressively replaces skilled laborers by less skilled and mature labor power by immature²³.

Relying on the conflict perspective, the only and primarily reason for poverty, is not population increase, but the capitalist order, or mechanization which lead to unemployment, because machines and labor are interchangeable to some degree²⁴.

They view childbearing as a hindering process for women because it reduces the opportunities of women for full participation in the economic activities of their societies.

Limitations of the above perspectives

As Malthus said the only solutions to high fertility are:

- Postponement of marriage.
- Vice, namely promiscuous intercourse (homosexuality).
- Violations of the marriage bed.

All these solutions will lead to vanish the family, which is the fundamental corner stone of every society. And no society can be viable if it lacks so fundamental an institution as the family, which must be protected by principle of legitimacy and moral injections against extra marital relations.

Malthus emphasizes on the fact that man is an animal, with sexual passions, and the need for food. This biological aspect of human being has been taken as a sum of his theory. He can be labeled as a biological determinist. But the clear alternative to Malthus biological theory is the fact that economic as well as social conditions, values and norms, affect the fertility of the population and that, sexual passions operate only within the restrictions or stimuli imposed by these norms, values and social condition. Thus the actual level of fertility depends upon the laws, institutions, and habits of each society²⁵.

On the basis of that, the matter is more complicated in the human species. For, man as a rational being, can consider the effect of his potential fertility and curb his natural instinct. Malthus also argued that unless profligate childbearing was checked, famine and hunger would be inevitable, because, the natural resources base is diminishing, even as population growth is expanding, and therefore fewer human beings are supported to alleviate the negative diminishing

William Peterson, the politics of population.p81.Opcit.23

William Peterson. Ibid.24

William Peterson, the politics of population.p42.25

of resources. Malthus was wrong in the sense that he did not anticipate the enormous potential of advancing technology and investing in new equipment to raise land productivity and increase wealth. We perform these tasks with increasing skills as technology develops, hence scarcity diminishes²⁶.

In the short run an additional person (baby) inevitably means a lower standard of living for every one, every parent knows that. More consumers mean less of fixed available stock of goods to be divided among more people, and more workers laboring with the same fixed current stock of capital means that there will be less output per worker. But if the resource is not fixed over the period being analyzed, then the logic of diminishing returns does not apply. And the plain fact is that, given some time to adjust to shortages, the resources base does not remain fixed. People create more resources of all kinds. As an example, life expectancy at birth in the developing countries has been rising as the result of the advances in agriculture, sanitation, and medicine. Is this not an astonishing triumph for humankind?

Concerning the conventional view of Malthus, Neo-Malthusians, and the functionalist, about the negative relationship between high fertility and socioeconomic development, one can say that: it would be equally naïve to determine that; countries with high fertility rates have socioeconomic growth rate lower than the average, and the countries with low fertility rates have socioeconomic growth rates higher than the average.

So, we have to turn completely away from the previous view that high fertility is a crucial negative factor in socioeconomic development. Consequently, high fertility is not the bogey that conventional opinion and the press believe it to be. It's clear that, the socioeconomic progress has nothing to do with low population size, but it's limited largely by the availability of trained workers, skilled, spirited, and hopeful people²⁷. Because, the main fuel to speed the world progress is the stock of human knowledge. But, the most skilled persons require, however, an appropriate social and economic framework that provides incentives for working hard and taking risks, enabling their talents to flower and come to fruition.

On the basis of the above views, one can sum that almost all these views look to childbearing as a burden process, and is not desirable. On the other hand, there is a unique vision provided by

Julian L. Simon, population growth is not bad for humanity. taking side magazine, 7th edition, clashing views on controversial social issues. the Dudhkin publishing Group. 26
Guilford, United states of America. 1992.

Julian L. Simon. Opcit. 27

Islam looking optimistically upon people as a resource rather than as a burden, a vision of receding limits, increasing resources and possibilities.

5. Islamic vision of fertility.

Essentially, Islam provides an overarching approach to understanding God and the world. It contains a particular perspective regarding: theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics, history and all human affairs. It is a philosophy of Muslims life which attempts to explain life's most basic questions about the world (universe) and human beings and how they fit into the scheme of things . It is these beliefs which influence Muslims thought and action, and gives their followers a basis, or a perspective, from which they can analyze, categorize, and synthesize data enabling them to make sense of their existence. It helps them integrate the facts into a meaningful whole. In a practical sense it is their basis for making life's decisions.

Islam is not only a religion of worship but is also a social system, a culture and civilization, it deals with human needs, activities and concerns, it is a complete way of life²⁸. The basis of this claim is evidently shown in the following verses from the Glorious Qur`an (nothing have we omitted from the book)²⁹.

According to the leading exegetes, this verse refers to the comprehensiveness of the Qur`an.

It leaves nothing un-discussed.

It is in the light of that there is no aspect of human endeavor that Islam has not made provisions for. As a matter of fact fertility can not be an exception to the scope of the content of the Qur`an and the Sunnah. It has considered it with objectivity. Islam encourages begetting children for many reasons, which include:

A. Sustainability of human kind (Preserving progeny).

The Islamic sharia aims at preserving the five essentials: the preservation of life, the preservation of religion, the preservation of progeny, the preservation of mind and the preservation of property³⁰. Therefore, the survival of any society depends on the survival of these essential things. Preserving progeny then is one of the five essentials intended by Shari'ah rules to be secured and protected through begetting children. Thus, Islamic sharia, encourage fertility, to protect the human race, and to continue the lineage.

B. Developmental reasons.

Adel Rahim Omran. Family planning in the legacy of Islam, Rutledge, New York. 1998.28

Al-Anam sura. verse 3829

Ahmed Al-Raysuni. Imam Al Shatibi, Theory of Higher Objectives and Intentions of Islamic Law, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, Washington, 2005, p138.30

The Quran says: (O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Allah who created you from a single soul, and from it created inmate, and from them twain, has spread a multitude of men and women).³¹

This verse emphasizes that:

- From the beginning of human history men and women are bonded in marriage to have progeny so that human continuity is maintained, human groups are formulated, and human society is found.
- God has created all humankind from the same origin. Thus, the foundation of human society was starting with the marriage process between (Adam and Eve) then, reproduction.

Based on the above, societies and human beings have not been created without a purpose and in vain. Allah says: (Did you think we have created you in vain and that you would never be returned to us)³². It is obvious that, the human being has a fundamental mission on the earth. The Qur'an provides a clear description for human being's mission in more than one verse. For example, (He brought you forth from the earth and settled you therein, then ask forgiveness of him and turn to him in repentance. Certainly, my lord in near to all by his knowledge, responsive)³³ (And when Allah said unto the angels: lo! I am about to place a viceroy on the earth)³⁴. (He brought you forth from the earth and delegated you to inhabit and develop it)³⁵.

These verses explain and portray man's duties as follows:

- To inhabit, develop, and populate the earth, and to make an evolutionary progress in all the dimensions of his existence and ultimately to make a journey towards absolute perfection³⁶.
- To be Allah's viceroy on earth by worshipping him and obey His instructions and His directives.

It is clear that Divine creation is meaningful and human existence has a noble purpose that is to submit to the will of Allah, worship Him, and develop the earth by using the bounties Allah in the world for his (man) well-being. The above jobs cannot be achieved without producing children and multiplication of the nation. So, in order to perform his duty in the earth, man is ordained to multiply.

In contrary to western thought, reproduction in Islam has a developmental necessity; it is a source of power and strength to the Muslim nation.

C. Religious Motivations.

al -Nisa verse, 1.31

al-M^omimun: verse 115.32

HUD: verse 6.33

30: al-Baqara: verse34

HUD: verse 61.35

Ayatollah Muhammad Hosayni. Philosophy of Islam. Islamic Seminar , Salt Lake City, USA. P203.36

Begetting children serves the function that they are a gift of God. Allah says: (to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, he creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills. Or He bestows both males and females, and He renders barren that He wills verily, He is the all-knower and is able to do all things)³⁷. Also there is another religious motivation for having children, for instance, when a man dies his children will pray for him.

It has been narrated about the prophet (pbuh) that he says: (when a man dies, all the good deeds done by him cease except three kinds of deeds which never end: first, any kind of beneficial investment for the good of humanity. Second, the knowledge he has imparted to others. Third, pious children who would always pray for him)³⁸.

Additionally, on the day of resurrection, the prophet would be proud of the number of his Umma (nation) compared with other Ummas (nation) and that he admonishes Muslims to reproduce and increase in number and quality. The prophet (pbuh) said: (Marry and multiply, for I shall make a display of you before other Ummas (nations) on the Day of Judgment)³⁹

The above traditions emphasized the importance of having children in life and after death.

D. The economic and social motivations.

In Islam having children is very important. By having children, parents hope to achieve an old age insurance and better life, because their children have to take care of them in their old age. The Qur`an says: (whether one or both of them attain old age with you, say not (Fie) unto them nor repulse them, but speak to them graciously. And bestow kindness, humility and submission unto them and say: my lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little)⁴⁰. Also children are described as the decoration of life, human capital, social prestige and power. The Qur`an says: (Wealth and children are the adornment of life). So, the collection of good things that parents receive from having children is many, for instance, children ensure for their parents the stability of the marriage and they also continue the family name.

E. Psychological motivation

There are also psychological reasons for begetting children. It is that having children is satisfying the instincts for fatherhood, and motherhood. They are the joy and apple in the parent's eyes. The Qur`a says:

Al-Shura, verse 49.37

Qutbaddin Aziz. The prophet of Islam, Dar Al Nadwa. Al riadh,1989,p95.38

Authenticated by Ibn Mardawieh, and Abu Dawoud.39

Al-isra: verses:23,24.40

(And those who say: “our lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders of the Muttaqun (the pious)⁴¹.”

The above motivations of Islam for having children will sustain high fertility in Muslim society. But in Islam, begetting children has conditions:

- It is not allowed out of the marital relation and that is why Islam encourages marriage.
- Family has to pay attention to the raising and quality of her offspring to bring them up in accurate manner and to give them the complete attention to grow up healthy. For, the strength of a nation is measured not by numbers or quantity of its people but rather by the quality⁴²

So the positive values of children come from the family responsibility towards them; it has to educate them, intellectually, spiritually, and physically. Without good knowledge they can not develop themselves and become active in their community. Therefore children have rights to be fulfilled. Allah gives us the children as a trust to take care of. The family must protect them and teach them Islamic teachings. Any neglect for this duty will have negative consequences in the quality of its children⁴³. So, it is the family task to provide education, care for their health, nutrition, clothing, shelter from danger, treat them with love and mercy, and all facilities that make them live in harmony. The prophet (pbuh) says: “He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our youngsters.” He also says: “He who does not show mercy will be shown no mercy on the Day of Judgment)

Allah has recommended parents to raise their children according to the way of Islam, in their entire life because it is the parents who build the child personality, and make his way of thinking. They can make him Muslim or not, in this case the one hadith (tradition) says (there is none born but is created in his true nature. It is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian just as beasts produce their young with their limbs perfect. Do you see anything deficient in them)⁴⁴

Therefore, the early phase of the child has an important effect on his future and determines his religious background to be a Muslim or disbeliever. If the family wants her children to be strong believers it has to pay attention to their education, especially the spiritual education. It has to teach them the true Islamic ideology, and its principle. Children have to know how to worship God, and how to be true believers.

Al-furqan: verse 74.41

Imam yahya. Islam and reproductive health, net, access on 23/7/2007.42

children in Islam. Al-Azhar University in cooperation with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), (net,www.org. access on 19/6/2007).43

Authenticated by Muslim. 44

From all the above, it is clear that Islamic Shari'ah gives its whole attention to the matter of children's socialization, and provides the suitable climate, for the upbringing of them. A climate where children can learn about the world and formulate their customs and norms may generally consider that:

- Child spacing must be two years, or more. The Qur'an says: (And mothers shall suckle their children two full years for those who wish to complete breast feeding)⁴⁵. Islam specifies two years or more as a suitable duration of breastfeeding. In this regard Current scientific researches, has emphasized this fact, and has shown that two years interval is beneficial for the mothers and children, for the following reasons:
- Birth intervals of two years reduce infant and maternal mortality and morbidity.
- Birth interval less than two years decreases breastfeeding and causes infection and malnutrition.
- Repeated pregnancies with short intervals do not allow mother to replenish and compensate her losses, because the body needs above two years to return to normal pre-pregnant status.

The implementation of the above conditions will produce a person who has ability to establish an Islamic state, and obey God and His messenger, a person, who could be a subject of pride for the prophet on the Day of Judgment.

Concluding remarks.

In this paper, the topic of fertility has been approached from different explanatory frameworks: the Islamic framework and the Western framework. It must be recognized that there is a wide divergence of opinions between these frameworks about whether fertility increase is in fact a serious problem as appeared in western explanatory frameworks (Malthusian, Neo-Malthusian, conflict, and functionalist perspectives) or the real problem is not fertility increase per se as it appeared in Islamic view.

Malthusian, Neo-Malthusian, postulated a universal tendency for the population of a country to grow at a geometric rate doubling every 30 to 40 years, unless checked by dwindling food supplies. At the same time because of diminishing returns to the fixed factor, food supplies could only expanded roughly at an arithmetic rate. Since the growth in food supplies could not keep pace with the burgeoning population, per capita incomes would have a tendency to fall so low as to lead to chronic low level of living, absolute poverty and environmental problems. However, the functionalists believed that fertility increase is the major crisis facing mankind. It is claimed to be the principal cause of food shortages, overuse of resources and environmental degradation.

Al-Baqara(Sura 2:233).45

Moreover, the conflict perspective speculated that childbearing is an obstacle for women, because it prevents them from doing their economic activities.

The above western perspectives, believed that begetting of children is a serious problem facing mankind, and it must be curbed.

On the other hand, in Islam there are many values attached to children begetting and there are costs associated with that. The costs and benefits of having children will affect the fertility behavior. One of the main underlining causes of high fertility in Islam is the value of children which means the collection of good things, parents receive from having children⁴⁶

Such values are economical, psychological, and social. Thus, children can provide monetary income and may act as an economic asset to their parents. They can also be considered as a source of social security for the parents during their aging, and may produce emotional and psychological satisfaction to them.

In Islamic culture, as mentioned above, children are considered to be a source of wealth and prestige. Many children assured respect and sign of high social status. They are the decoration of life. These values give satisfaction or utility for the parents and are associated with their decisions on family size, and stand as personal motivations for having children.

Hence, having children through marriage is highly encouraged in Islam because it has positive consequences such as:

Multiplication of the Muslim Umma (nation) helps in protecting the human race from extinction and playing the role of development of the earth and so on. Population growth is not a source of social evils, as Malthusian and neo-Malthusian believed, but the main reason for the social problems according to Islam, is man`s selfishness and greed. Also, Islam believes that begetting children is not a hindering process for the woman, as the conflict perspective argues; it is a source of social status and prestige for her. For this reason, Islam encourages quality as well as quantity of offspring.

In addition to the values of begetting children, Islam has taken into account the rights of children, which includes provision, to the child, of basic of requirements up to adulthood for such things as food, shelter, clothing, education, medical care, labor time required for child care plus an advice about the required time for child –bearing and child rearing. These rights may change the

James P.M. Ntozi, opcit, p72⁴⁶

stream of benefits that flow from children to parents. As Cald Well has said, these rights may delay the age at which the children become self-supporting, and will decrease the births rate⁴⁷.

John C. Caldwell. Theory of Fertility Decline, *ibid.*⁴⁷

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