GENDER INEQUALITY AND FERTILITY RATE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

— ABSTRACT —

Amra Fetahović
Directorate for Economic Planning
Titova 9a, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Phone: ++ <387 33650913>; Fax: ++ <387 33650845>
E-mail: <afetahovic@dep.gov.ba>

Purpose. This research paper analyses the relationship between gender gap and fertility rate. The paper is considering opportunity cost of being employed for women and having more than one child in Bosnia and Hercegovina (BIH). It is assumed that women at a fertile age want to have more children than they do.

Methods and Data. Research analyses the correlation between Gender Inequality Index (GII) and total fertility rates. GII goes from 0 (the lowest inequality) to 1 (the highest inequality). GII is divided in deciles. For each decile the median total fertility rate is calculated for countries which belong to a particular decile.

The comparative method was conducted for 37 European countries in order to establish the correlation between changes in gender gap for employment rates and fertility rate in a ten year period.

The paper compares women’s wages and cost of kindergartens and babysitters in BIH.

The data that were used come from statistical offices in BIH (Census 2013 and statistics on demography trends in BIH, Federation BIH, Republika Srpska and Brcko District, Labour Force Survey, Household Budget Survey), UN (GII and total fertility rate worldwide), EUROSTAT (changes in employment rates by sex and fertility rates). Total fertility rates for BIH, FBIH, RS and BD that are based on the Census 2013 were calculated by the author. The provision of women’s average wage is calculated by the author. It is calculated based on the weighted average of net wage for the five sectors where most of the women are employed. This covers 74% of total employed women.

Results. The curve that shows the median of total fertility rates and GII deciles is U shaped. Countries in the lowest decile or gender inequality have a higher median fertility rate than countries that belong to second decile of GII. BIH belongs to second decile and has a lower fertility rate than the median total fertility rate (1.25 versus 1.5).

The analysis of changes in gender gap employment rates and fertility rates showed that most of the European countries, 23 out of 35, are faced with a simultaneous increase in fertility rate.
and decrease in gender gap, BIH included. For those 23 countries the curve is concave. Sperman's rank correlation coefficient for all 35 countries is 0.443 (p-value=0.443).

Public kindergartens are the cheapest option for households. On average, the public kindergarten expenditure for one child takes 20% of the average women’s income and almost 40% for two children. The second option is baby sitters and private kindergartens which cost about 80% of women wage. Although there is a third option, grandparents, the paper does not discuss it.

Conclusion and policy implication. Considering the current situation in BIH, the decreasing gender gap in employment could decrease fertility rate. Other policies must be introduced such as increasing capacities for public kindergartens and making them more affordable for families with more children.