

# The Positive Impact of the Family State Program on the Social Status of Large Families and the Encouragement of Birth in Georgia

*Sophio Lazishvili*

PHD of Public Policy and Politic program of  
Grigol Robakidze University, Batumi, Georgia

[Doi:10.19044/esj.2023.v19n35p29](https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2023.v19n35p29)

Submitted: 13 October 2023  
Accepted: 05 December 2023  
Published: 31 December 2023

Copyright 2023 Author(s)  
Under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0  
OPEN ACCESS

*Cite As:*

Lazishvili S. (2023). *The Positive Impact of the Family State Program on the Social Status of Large Families and the Encouragement of Birth in Georgia*. European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 19 (35), 29. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2023.v19n35p29>

## Abstract

Georgia belongs to a country with a small population, where one of the country's social challenges is the issue of population demography. Despite the fact that the country has one of the strongest social support state programs, which includes measures to support citizens, measures to support demography, birth rate, and large families are underrepresented in it. The article discusses the issues of solving demographic challenges in Georgia, effective implementation of family policy and introduction of incentive mechanisms for large families. The purpose of Nashom's research is to determine the role of state support policies and identify gaps based on the study of challenges related to the birth rate, encouragement and support of large families, demographic process. Introduction of recommendations for the improvement of demography and the state policy supporting large families in Georgia. Mixed-quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to carry out the research, and general research methods were used for data processing. As a result of analyzing the studied international scientific literature, statistical and scientific studies, legislative packages, the state policy of support for large families operating in Georgia, challenges and mechanisms for strengthening the state policy of support for large families were highlighted. The recommendations obtained as a result of the studied scientific material and the conducted research will support and improve the

state policy of supporting large families in Georgia and will have a positive impact on demographic issues. The article will be interesting for representatives of the legislative and executive authorities, political entities, public administration specialists and experts.

---

**Keywords:** Family policy, multiple children, demography, well-being, social status, etc.

## Introduction

According to the research of the National Statistics Service of the State of Georgia, the population as of January 1, 2023 is 3,736.4 million people. It is true that compared to the same period of 2015, this figure indicates an increase in the population (3721.9 million in 2015), but not by a large amount. However, the slow pace of population growth is related to various circumstances, including socio-economic status, demography, and others. Therefore, in the process of solving demographic challenges, it is important to implement an effective state policy to encourage families and fertility, multiple children. According to the research of the same organization, the number of families with many children decreases every year in Georgia. However, according to the opinion of a certain group of scientists, the number of elderly people living in Georgia, at the same time the increase in the number of divorces in recent years and the low number of citizens of reproductive age will affect the decrease in the number of births and, accordingly, the number of workers in the country. According to the current birth rate, the birth rate in Georgia in 2022 will be 2024 births per woman. , which decreased by 0.49% compared to 2021. (National statistic office of Georgia, 2020-23)

A study was conducted by the United Nations on the effectiveness of public policies and social economic support for families and large families in several countries. The research was conducted in 2 parts: the 1st part included the research of the state-responsible institutions and their programs, and the 2nd part identified the needs of families and their challenges. The data obtained as a result of the research were generalized and general recommendations were developed, which, if implemented, would improve the influence of the state policy on the improvement of the social and economic condition of large families. Strengthening families is also strengthening the overall socio-economic progress of society. The strengthening of the family as an object of observation and support is related to specific, general public and social areas, including: child day care, daily family routine, child allowance or financial assistance for poor families, programs (eg education, health care) (OECD, 2023).

Recent studies show that the importance of state policy in the process of encouraging families and multiple children is important. More and more

scientific works appear in the modern scientific literature recommending the creation of state programs, since in most cases it is established that the strength of the family determines the social and economic strengthening of the country. However, some scholars discuss the existence of a "welfare state", where "a state or a state structure in which the state assumes greater responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens, for example, through unemployment and health insurance. In other words, a welfare state is a social system in which the state is responsible for the economic and social welfare of its citizens. In most cases, the state is the largest provider of social services, including: free education, free health care, unemployment benefit, social assistance program, etc. (Diakonidze, Julukhadze 2014).

It is true that the Georgia has a state program of various contents (both in the annual programs of the central and local self-governments), but it cannot have a positive impact in the process of solving the demographic challenge. The mentioned problem dictates the study of the issue and the formation of qualitatively new mechanisms, which will contribute to the improvement of the social program in the state and the introduction of new programs (Avalishvili, Tushurashvili and others, 2017).

The main issue of the article is to develop the forms of the demographic challenge in Georgia, the support of large families and the state's modern social program. It is permissible that the financial resources available in the state cannot cope with the expansion of the social program, however, at this time the state should use its function and determine the areas of support according to priorities. The analysis of the article is based on the review of the opinions, recommendations and works in the international scientific literature, the review of the existing social programs in Georgia and the questionnaire survey of representatives of different social strata with many children. As a result of the research, recommendations are presented about new mechanisms and forms of the state's social program.

**Relevance of the problem:** the number of the population in Georgia is growing at a slow pace, which is related to various circumstances, including the socio-economic situation of the country. It should also be noted that the number of families with many children has decreased over the last 6 years. Although the state has a strong social support program, it lacks measures that would support or encourage the improvement of the demographic situation. Therefore, it is important to assess the challenges of large families in Georgia and their attitude towards state support programs that will improve and encourage families to have 4 or more children.

#### **Research tasks:**

- What kind of support and incentive programs the state has;

- To what extent do citizens have information about incentives and support measures and how much do they use it?
- Should state support programs be extended to all citizens regardless of their social status?
- Do they have the status of a large family?
- In what way and form do families with many children see the activities of the state support and encouragement program?

**The purpose of the research:** to study the forms of social support and encouragement that will have a positive impact on the increase in birth rate in Georgia, the satisfaction of large families and the solution to the demographic challenge in the country.

**Research hypothesis:** the population of Georgia is not growing at a fast pace, the number of families with many children is decreasing, which directly affects the demographic situation in the country. The state policy of support and welfare of large families will have a significant positive impact in terms of demographic challenges in the state

### **Research methodology**

The research for this paper was conducted in the form of qualitative research literature review and quantitative research, by analyzing statistical data, studying studies and reports. The results of the research were analyzed by analysis-synthesis, comparative-analytical research methods, which allowed us to determine the attitude of large families in Georgia about state support programs and their influence, demography and fertility promotion measures in different countries of the world.

In order to conduct quantitative research, a questionnaire was prepared in advance, where the questions based on the research tasks were defined. The research objectives were determined in advance from the research object and the subject. 75 respondents took part in the research. The received questionnaires were analyzed using the method of synthesis, based on the results of which the conclusion of the study was made.

Within the scope of this work, the legislation and normative base in Georgia, which establishes the norms of demography and birth promotion in Georgia, were analyzed and discussed together with the international literature. Information was sought about the state supporting and encouraging programs currently operating in Georgia.

The resource used in the research process was found through various sources, including the Internet resource, reports of international organizations, their web pages, international scientific literature, the best practical examples of the world's leading, developed social support program countries, their areas

of regulation, normative acts regulating state policy and Structure and powers of organizations responsible for their implementation. Based on the use and evaluation of the mentioned resources, a literature review is made.

### **Main part:**

In the modern era, developed states with strong and relatively weak economies are trying to promote the development of the family institution and support them through state welfare policies. The state policy of family support and encouragement has a different content, which is derived from the specific challenges and goals that the state has. between them:

- ✓ Reducing poverty and maintaining incomes. In such a case, the state provides benefits for low-income families, including housing;
- ✓ Reimbursement of costs related to child care, which applies not only to low-income families, but to everyone.
- ✓ Promoting the employment of parents, which implies the strengthening of women's labor force;
- ✓ Maintaining gender equality and their equal financing during maternity leave.
- ✓ Promotion of pre-school and school education;
- ✓ Birth rate increase and population rejuvenation, which is one of the recommendations of the European Commission;
- ✓ Legislative and political decisions that promote and prevent domestic violence against women and protection of children's rights (Dolan, Zegarac, 2020).

On the basis of the Resolution # 212 of the Government of Georgia of April 30, 2019 regarding the establishment and cancellation of the status of large parents and the approval of the procedure for the production of data on relevant persons, the conditions for granting the status of a large family were defined: the status of large parents (hereinafter - status) is granted to: or more children and/or adopted children. b) A stateless person with status in Georgia who has four or more children and/or adopted children (Government of Georgia, 2014).

A person seeking the status of a large family should apply to the State Service Development Agency of Georgia and submit the documentation defined by law(16). According to the data of this organization, the number of people seeking the status of large families in Georgia decreases every year (table 1.), which once again confirms the fact that the existing social program does not correspond to the requirements and expectations of these families from the state, as well as if we generalize the data of the National Statistical Service of Georgia on the number of citizens in Georgia , it is clear that new

packages of social programs should be introduced in Georgia in order to encourage vulnerable groups, including large families (Sulaberidze, 2020, National statistic office of Georgia 2020-23).

**Table 1.** Application for multi-child status seekers  
 07.05.2019 – 10.07.2023

Discription	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	total
Number of applicants	5137	2810	1945	2473	1105	13470
Positive decision	4984	2744	1880	2440	1085	13133
Half positive division	15	4	1	2	0	22
Number of rejects applicant	39	14	14	17	10	94
remained without consideration	5	4	4	3	3	19

*Source: House of Justice Georgia 2023*

In addition, it should be noted the active social programs in the state, which have had a positive impact on solving the demographic challenge in certain regions, although these serve vulnerable groups (targeted state program for promoting the improvement of the demographic situation and targeted state program for promoting the improvement of the demographic situation for persons permanently living in the highland settlement) whose goal in the regional sense Encouragement to reduce migration of citizens. The impact of the mentioned programs can be measured by means of the table indicated above, where it is clearly seen that after the state introduced the new program, the number of people wishing to register has increased. Accordingly, it is possible to assume that an adequate and needs-oriented state social support program to support large families will encourage fertility (Sulaberidze, 2020).

When discussing the influence of large families and state programs to encourage birth, we should pay attention to the practice of European countries. Since, the state family support program is one of the main components of the social policy of European countries (Irwin, 2017).

Liberal social security state policy is characteristic of Ireland, Switzerland, and outside of Europe - USA, Great Britain and New Zealand. The main source of improvement of the socio-economic situation under liberal state policy is the self-regulating market economy. In this model, the state is assigned a supporting role in providing assistance to the most needy families. Under liberal regimes, institutional support systems for child care families are concentrated in the private sector, regulated by market relations. In countries implementing such policies, the largest share of social security comes from cash social assistance. During the last 30 years, the birth rate in most of the EU countries has been decreasing alarmingly. Among the 27 member states, the total birth rate fell to 2.1 in 19 states. It is true that the total birth rate increased in several countries at the end of the 90s, but Iceland managed to

maintain the most stable demographic progress, where the total birth rate reached 2.07. (Irwin, 2017).

A good model of a practical and effective state program to encourage large families and births operates in the Swedish state, which is one of the best among European countries. The program takes into account children's health, parental workload and childcare measures, the goal of which is effective socialization and development of children. One of the interesting findings is the different regimes of parental income taxation in the case of families with two children, which includes a 30% to 50% reduction in income taxation in proportion to the number of children. Also, parental leave, long-term paid holidays related to child care (Kälvesten, 2006).

When analyzing international practice, the state policy of the Republic of Turkey on state support for families is interesting. The Ministry of Family, Social Security and State Support has been created in the Republic of Turkey, the main purpose of which is to implement the state support policy in the country in order to improve the social and economic standing of citizens. The existing family and birth support programs are diverse and include both health care, financial and property rights acquisition mechanisms, including: free medical care, incentives for newlyweds, programs to encourage children and parents of large families, protection of the rights of the elderly, dependents and their socialization. In the modern world, the Republic of Turkey is one of the advanced countries in terms of birth rate growth and sustainable demographic development of the population (Republic of Turkey, statistical analysis 2018).

## **Research**

In order to determine and analyze the causes of the problem, the opinions in the Georgian and foreign scientific literature were studied in order to develop family support programs, social assistance programs operating in Georgia were analyzed. A quantitative research questionnaire was also prepared and surveyed large families living in Georgia according to social status (we are talking about the status corresponding to social points). In the quantitative research questionnaire, such questions were selected that would allow us to determine the challenges of large families living in Georgia and their attitude regarding the form and process of the state incentive policy.

The aim of the study was to identify specific needs that would contribute to the quantitative growth of large families. Families with 4 or more children (and not only mothers) according to different age groups were defined as the study group. A questionnaire was prepared (the appendix is attached to the article), an online questionnaire was prepared through the Google platform and sent to the target groups, including the thematic groups on social networks.

75 respondents took part in the research. The majority of respondents, 70%, including the age group of 36 to 45 years. The research revealed that the majority are families with 4 children (63.6%), 5 children 9.1%, 6 children - 18.1%. The number of children, more than 6 children - 9.1%. 72.1% of the respondents do not have the status of a large family granted by the state, which indicates that families do not see essential support or do not have information about positive feedback, therefore 91.7% of the respondents do not and have not benefited from the state's support program for large families.

Regarding the question whether state support for large families should be provided equally regardless of social status, 63.6% of respondents indicate equal access. During the research, an interesting circumstance was highlighted in relation to the forms of support for large families from the government, where 58.3% believe that it should be in monetary form, 33.3% in another form - it means the establishment of privileges, the establishment of preference during the queue, etc., only 8.3 % believes that it should be expressed in non-monetary form. In addition, the status of multi-family families should be held for life and should not be dependent on the children reaching the age of majority 63.6%. The majority of respondents believe that the priority direction of the social support program should be the field of education, 63.6%, and the second place is education, 36.4%. It was interesting to determine the dependence of the respondents on the influence of the support program for large families in terms of encouraging the increase in birth rates, where 100% of the respondents believe that the existence of an effective support program will contribute to the increase in birth rates in Georgia.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the conducted qualitative literature review and quantitative research once again confirm the necessity of developing a social and domestic support program for large families in Georgia, which on the one hand allows us to help specific families and give their family members more opportunities for development, and on the other hand, the existence of such programs has a positive effect on the birth rate. The study showed that families with the status of large families in Georgia do not enjoy the benefits established by the state, which is partly related to the lack of information on the one hand, in other words, families do not have complete information about the benefits that the state grants them, and on the other hand, social support programs cannot influence to their needs or is appropriate. This once again underlines the introduction of a relevant state support program to solve the needs and challenges of new families with many children. According to the results of the research, families with many children are mostly in favor of determining the benefits and priorities in the field of services from the state, and believes that only monetary incentives cannot have an impact on



achieving the desired results. It is important that the majority of the interviewees believe that the status of a large family should be in effect permanently and special attention should be paid to the programs supporting education. It is important the attitude of the interviewees towards the implementation of the state-supported program, which they believe will affect the increase in the birth rate in Georgia. The results of the conducted research have confirmed the hypothesis, which gives the opportunity to propose recommendations. The issue discussed in the article is so relevant due to the modern governance systems that in order to implement the mentioned method in the future, in-depth research will be needed, during which the attitude of all interested parties towards the new state program will be evaluated, the positive and negative aspects of the program will be revealed.

**Recommendation:**

- Create a new state social program to encourage large families - in the mentioned program, such forms of encouragement should be taken into account, which are not only expressed in financial assistance, but also give priority to the holder of the status in a certain situation. For example, reducing the working week from 1 to 2 days per month.
- The current state program should be improved into a complex assistance program, which reflects not only the issues of financial assistance, but also other family support measures, for example: tax and utility benefits, an improved health insurance package, access to education, co-financing of costs related to child care, and others.
- Self-governing cities and municipalities should create an additional assistance and support program - the state program naturally cannot provide the integration of all services, therefore a program encouraging the use of municipal services can be created at the local level. For example: reduction of municipal transport charges, reduction of utility bills and others.
- The state aid program should be extended to all large families regardless of the age and social status of the children (socially disadvantaged, disabled) - all large families should have the right to benefit from the aid program. It is up to the status maker to decide whether to use it or not.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author reported no conflict of interest.

**Data Availability:** All of the data are included in the content of the paper.

**Funding Statement:** The author did not obtain any funding for this research.

## References:

1. Avalishvili , Tushurashvili , Tsukhishvili and Kevkhishvili 2017. Assistance policy for families with many children in Georgia, Freedom of Information Development Institute, (25-52), Tbilisi [https://idfi.ge/ge/social\\_assistance\\_policy\\_of\\_family\\_with\\_many\\_children\\_in\\_georgia](https://idfi.ge/ge/social_assistance_policy_of_family_with_many_children_in_georgia)
2. Database of State Services Development Agency of LSI - 07.05.2019 - 10.07.2023 statistics of applications of multi-child status seekers.
3. Diakonidze , Julukhadze "Main issues of social policy". 2014, Institute of Public Affairs of Georgia, Tbilisi.
4. Diakonidze, Julukhadze "Main issues of social policy" 2016, Institute of Public Affairs of Georgia, Tbilisi.
5. European Union for Georgia & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) description and recommendations of social assistance 2014-2016, analysis of social benefits/assistance provided by central and municipal structures to the population in Georgia.
6. International scientific conferences of Paata Gugushvili Institute of Economics 2018., "Economy - XXI century", Tbilisi.
7. Irwin , Approaches to Family Policies 2011. A Profile of Eight Countries, Division for social policy and development department of economic and social affairs united nations, New York.
8. Kälvesten, Family Policy in Sweden.2006 Published By: National Council on Family Relations.
9. LSI Social Service Agency "State target program for promotion of improvement of the demographic situation", Tbilisi (09.08.2023);
10. Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Protection of IDPs from Occupied Territories, 2023.Tbilisi.
11. Makrotrends.com Georgia Fertility Rate 1950-2023
12. National Statistical Office of the State of Georgia 2022-23. Social security
13. OECD Family Database the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
14. Patrick Dolan , Nevenka Zegarac , and Jelena Arsic „Family Support as a right of the child“ social work &social sciences review 2020(2),pp 8-26. <https://rfpn.fpn.bg.ac.rs/handle/123456789/779>
15. Resolution of the Government of Georgia #262, 31.03.2014, on the approval of the targeted state program to promote the improvement of the demographic situation.
16. Social Services Agency of the State Administrative Council. Tbilisi (09.08.2023). Targeted state program for promoting the improvement of the demographic situation for persons permanently living in the highland settlement,

17. Sulaberidze, "The latest demographic situation - the start of depopulation in Georgia"2020. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.
18. United Nations Development Fund "Georgia's Demographic Security Concept", 2016. Tbilisi
19. Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia on the approval of the "Concept of Demographic Security of Georgia", N5586-II dated 24.06.2016. Tbilisi
20. Republic of Turkey, Labor and social services, the General directorate of family and social services. Advanced Statistical Analyses 2018.