

Viet Nam

POPULATION 2008



UPDATED INFORMATION:

- Fertility
- Mortality
- Sex Ratio at Birth

Ha Noi, April 2009



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INTRODUCTION

While Viet Nam nationally has achieved below replacement level fertility, the disparity between regions and an imbalance in the sex ratio at birth (SRB) are issues that have continued to attract attention from policy makers, managers, researchers and the media. It is especially important in the context of new challenges faced by the National Population and Family Planning Program (P/FP), to sustain the trend in declining fertility and to improve the quality of human resources, as part of Viet Nam's priority targets.

In order to provide up-to-date information on crucial population issues, the Viet Nam Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has published a series of booklets that summarize the major results of the Population Change and Family Planning Survey (PCS) conducted on the 1st of April each year by the General Statistics Office. This is the fifth booklet published so far. It is based on information derived from the preliminary analysis of the UNFPA's international consultant and on data released by the General Statistics Office at the Dissemination Workshop on PCS's Preliminary Results on 28th of October, 2008.

In publishing this booklet, UNFPA hopes to update and inform readers on the current population status and to help them better understand the emerging issues in Viet Nam of fertility, mortality, population growth, SRB and third child bearing.

DATA SOURCES AND QUALITY

PCS provides one of the best surveys in Viet Nam on an annual basis, with vital statistics drawn from the national, regional and provincial levels. In recent PCSs, survey instruments have been improved to capture more efficiently birth and death statistics. The 2008 PCS commenced on 1st April, covering more than 378,000 households and 415,000 married women from all parts of the country.

As with previous PCSs, the reliability of this survey data was highly appreciated by the UNFPA's international expert. He mentioned that data from the 2008 PCS should be viewed as one of the best Vietnamese survey reports on age, contributing to the accuracy of estimates on fertility, mortality and others demographic indicators.



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TOTAL FERTILITY RATE (TFR)

Total fertility rate (TFR) is an important tool to reflect fertility. TFR is interpreted as the average number of children a woman will bear in her lifetime if she bears her children at the age-specific rates observed during that year. TFR is most commonly used to measure fertility change over a period of time, or to compare fertility rates between geographic areas (regions and countries). TFR enables direct measurement of the reproductive results of the female population of reproductive age without taking into account the age structure of the population group not participating in the reproductive process.

Table 1: Total Fertility Rate (TFR) by Geographic Regions, 2006-2008

Area	2006 PCS	2007 PCS	2008 PCS
Whole country	2.09	2.07	2.08
Urban	1.72	1.70	1.83
Rural	2.25	2.22	2.22
Red River Delta	2.05	2.11	2.13
Northeast	2.23	2.18	}2.30*
Northwest	2.43	2.39	
North Central	2.48	2.32	}2.30*
South Central Coast	2.28	2.19	
Central Highlands	2.82	2.77	2.68
Southeast	1.76	1.74	1.73
Mekong River Delta	1.92	1.87	1.87

(*) From 2008 PCS, GSO analyzed data by 6 instead of 8 economic regions as in previous PCS. According to this classification, Northeast and Northwest regions have merged to become a new region named the Northern Highland and Upland region. North Central and South Central regions have merged to become North Central and Central Coast region.

Table 1 shows that, *during the past three years, TFR has continued to fall below the replacement rate. In the 2008 survey, the TFR confirms 2.08 children per woman. This rate is not significantly different from the 2007 PCS of 2.07 children per woman.* Urban fertility (1.84 children per woman) is lower than that in rural areas (2.22 children per woman). The decreasing fertility trend in rural areas has become relatively apparent over the past three years.

Although an overall decreasing TFR trend is evident in most regions, the fertility disparity between regions still exists. Data from the 2008 survey show that the lowest TFR (below replacement) of 1.73 occurs in the Southeast with 1.87 in the Mekong River Delta region. The highest TFR of 2.68 children per woman is found in the Central Highlands (Table 1). *This clearly indicates that fertility should fall below replacement level, once the regional gaps in Viet Nam are bridged.*

Data from the 2008 survey confirms the continuing relationship between fertility with female education levels. Graph 1 shows that TFR is highest (2.65) for those who did not go to school, that it falls below replacement level for women who completed secondary school, and that it is lowest (1.64) where women have completed tertiary

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