

CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY, ILOILO CITY

A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MARRIED WOMEN
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR FERTILITY

2827

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by
Linnie Landoy Layag

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Philip Handler, President of the United States National Academy of Sciences, in a speech delivered before the International Congress of Food, Science and Technology, has drawn attention to the political, economic, social and environmental consequences of rapid population growth. He said.¹

Many of the most tragic ills of human existence find their origin in population growth. Hunger, pollution, crime, despoliation of the natural beauty of the planet, extermination of countless species of plants and animals, overlarge, dirty, overcrowded cities with their paradoxical loneliness, continued erosion of limited natural resources, and the seething unrest which engenders the political instability which leads to international conflict and wars all derive from the unbridled growth of the human population. If humanity is ever to realize its potential, if life in that future world is to be worth living, population growth must be checked."

Scientists and international leaders alike have realized only recently that population growth is one of the most serious obstacles that hinder the economic growth of a nation. In fact all over the world nations are carrying out measures to ensure that their economic gains will not be nullified by continuing rise in population.²

¹Philip Handler, "Can Man Shape His Future," An Address to the International Congress of Food Science and Technology, Free World, XIX (December, 1976), p. 30.

²"Too Many Mouths to Feed--and not Enough Food to Go Round" SEATO RECORD, VII (December, 1968), p. 34.

In the "developing countries" in the Asian region where about two thirds of the world's population is situated and where five-sixths of population increase in the next decade is expected to occur, majority of the population policies issued by the government have sought to achieve a reduction in the rate of population growth by urging the people to practice birth control and, in effect, limit family size.³

In our country this problem was realized and acted upon as early as 1967 by the government, when President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos, together with other world leaders, signed the United Nation's declaration on population. The declaration proclaimed that "the population problem must be recognized as a principal element in long-range national planning if governments are to achieve their economic goals and fulfill the aspirations of their people."⁴ In a speech delivered by the President at the closing ceremonies of the National Science and Technology Week Celebration on July, 1969, he expressed further cognizance of the population

³Pedro V. Lorenzo, Jr., "Toward Population Socialization of Youth in the Philippines," Population Forum, I, (November, 1975), p. 5.

⁴Population Center Foundation, "Basic Policies of the Philippine Population Program," Initiative in Population, II (March, 1967), p. 2.

problem when he said:⁵

We recognize the fact that the rapid growth of our population may outstrip our ability to meet the expanding needs of our people. Our population grows at the rate of 3.4% a year or a total of 1.2 million annually. This rate is considered the highest in Southeast Asia and one of the highest in the world. It is to be expected that the yearly addition to our population will continue to impose increasing strains in the economic and social position of our country. This is a real challenge that we have to face squarely.

In the same year he created a special study group called the Commission on Population and finally signed Executive Order No. 233 on May 15, 1970 which committed the government to proceed with the program outlined by the Commission. It also empowered the Commission to coordinate and direct population activities as an integral part of the over all development strategy.⁶ Presently there are 40⁷ agencies both public and private involved in this population program of the government. The Department of Education and Culture is one of them. Since the problem concerning education in our country has roots which are partly entangled with population growth,⁸ it is our responsibility as teachers

⁵Ferdinand E. Marcos, "Food, Population and Science," A Speech delivered at the Closing Ceremony in connection with the celebration of the National Science and Technology Week, Manila Hotel, July 19, 1969, Science Review, X (August, 1969), p. 5.

⁶Population Center Foundation, loc. cit.

⁷Alejandro A. Vicente, "A Cast of 40 Population and Family Planning Agencies at Work in the Philippines," Initiative in Population, I (September, 1975), p. 13.

to help find solution to this problem. The investigator, being a public school teacher and a mother deeply concerned with the development of the "quality of life" among the students as well as those of her own children, takes this arduous task of looking into a small part of this big problem with the hope that she can contribute something towards its solution.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. In general the main problem of this study was to find out whether socio-economic status and community characteristics are associated with fertility. The factors which form the total socio-economic status like educational attainment, income, occupation and professional status were each also taken into account as they related individually to fertility. Incidentally, this study also aimed to present a profile of the respondents with reference to their socio-economic status in general. More specifically, the following questions were to be answered.

1. Profile of the respondents
 - a. Generally, from what socio-economic level do most of the respondents come?
 - b. What is the average monthly family income?
 - c. What is the average educational attainment of the respondents in terms of years of

schooling?

- d. Are there differences in the number of pregnancies of the respondents
1. in the towns, the barrios, and the city?
 2. with varying educational attainment?
 3. with varying monthly family income?
 4. with different socio-economic status?
 5. Whose husbands belong to different occupational groups?

2. Relationship

- a. Is there relationship between fertility and place of residence?
- b. Is there relationship between fertility and types of community according to major source of livelihood?
- c. Is there relationship between fertility and
1. socio-economic status?⁹
 2. joint educational attainment of husband and wife as represented by their combined scores?
 3. monthly family income?
 4. joint professional status of husband and wife as represented by their

⁹The socio-economic status of the respondent was determined by the total number of points he received in the socio-economic questionnaire. See definition of terms on page 10.

combined scores?

5. Other SES indicators like types of residence, appliances in the home, subscription to books and magazines, and membership in civic and social organizations?