



state of world population 2005

The Promise of Equality: Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals

Factsheet on Filipino Women and Men

The Philippines is among the most populous countries in the world today. The Philippines is the 13th most populous country in the world, and 3rd among Southeast Asian countries (HDR, 2004). Its population continues to balloon quite rapidly with an annual growth rate of 2.36 percent. The total population size is estimated to have reached 85.2 million in 2005 with women comprising 49.7 percent (National Statistics Office, 2000). The population census in 2000 yielded a sex ratio of 101.4, which means that there were 101.4 males for every 100 females.

The number of female-headed households is increasing. The population census and other household surveys reveal an increasing trend in the percentage of female-headed households: 10 percent in 1970, 12.2 percent in 1995, and 15.4 percent in 2003 or a 50 percent increase over the 33-year period.

One in six female-headed households is poor. Poverty incidence in 2003 was 24.7 percent (or about 3.966 million families), less than a quarter of the country's total families (FIES, 2003). Approximately 17.7 percent of the total female-headed households were living below the poverty line (FIES, 2000).

Education, area of residence, and wealth status influence marrying age of women. In general, better-educated, wealthier women, and those living in the urban areas marry later than other women. Urban women marry two years later than rural women (22.9 and 20.9 years, respectively). Women who have completed high school marry three years later than women with no education (21.2 and 18.2 years, respectively). Furthermore, differentials are even greater by wealth status. On the average, women in the wealthiest households marry at age 24.6 years, while women in the poorest households marry when they are 19.7 years old (NDHS, 2003).

Women tend to live longer than men. Life expectancy at birth of females remains higher than males. Female life expectancy was 72.5 years while the male life expectancy was 67.2 years (NDHS, 2003).

One in four pregnancies is mistimed and one in five pregnancies is not wanted at all. Fifty-five percent of births were wanted at the time of conception, an additional 24 percent were wanted but at a later time, and a significant 20 percent were not wanted at all (NDHS, 2003).

One in four women aged 15-24 years have begun childbearing. Twenty-six percent of women aged 15-24 years have begun childbearing and are more likely than other women to live in rural areas, have elementary schooling, and belong to poor families. (NDHS, 2003).

Not even half of all the currently married women have used at least one contraceptive method. Only 48.9 percent of all currently married women have used at least one contraceptive method. Of these, 13.2 percent have used pills, 10.5 percent resorted to female sterilization, while 8.2 percent have used the withdrawal method. Male condoms, even though widely distributed and easily accessible at health centers, accounted for less than 2 percent of total usage (NDHS, 2003).





Maternal health services are increasingly being made available to women. The number of women who sought prenatal care from doctors/nurses/midwives increased by 2 percent -- from 85.7 percent in 1998 to 87.6 percent in 2003 (NDHS, 2003).

Health care delivery issues pertaining to pregnant women still persist. Five percent of pregnant women did not seek any prenatal care and 6.5 percent resorted to traditional birth attendants (71.8 percent of which come from the rural areas). While only a few women were assisted by traditional birth attendants for prenatal care, one in three pregnant women were assisted by traditional birth attendants for childbirth. In addition, three in five pregnant women opted to deliver at home (NDHS, 2003).

Cases of HIV Ab Seropositives continue to rise. As of May 2005, the health department had received a total of 2,279 reported cases of HIV Ab Seropositives since it started collecting data in 1984. Of these, 843 (37 percent) are women. Out of the total HIV cases, 681 are AIDS. Sexual contact is the most common mode of HIV/AIDS transmission. Majority (92 percent) of this came from heterosexual contact, while the others came from homosexual relationships (NEC-DOH, 2005).

There is an increasing trend in the number of violence against women (VAW) cases. The number of VAW cases reported to the police increased seven-fold, from 1,100 in 1996 to 7,383 in 2004. The highest recorded number of VAW cases in the police department peaked in 2001 at 10,343. Rape cases reported to the police department were increasing from 1996 to 2000 but took a downhill trend from 2001 to 2004 (PNP, 2004).

Female literacy rate was slightly higher than male literacy rate. In 2000, female literacy rate was reported to be 92.7 percent while male literacy rate was 92.5 percent. However, these were both lower than the 1994 figures of 94 percent for females and 93.7 percent for males (NSO, 2000).

More girls are enrolled in elementary and high schools. The net enrolment ratio (proportion of population aged 6-11 and 12-15 years who are enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, respectively) for elementary and secondary education during SY 2002-2003 showed higher ratio for girls than boys. The female net enrolment ratio in the elementary level was 84 percent while the males' was 83 percent. Similarly, the female net enrolment ratio in the secondary level was 49 percent while the males' was 42 percent (DepEd, 2004).

Filipino women have higher voter turnout rate but continue to have little participation in politics and governance. During the 1998 and 2001 national and local elections, women voters' turnout rates were slightly higher. In the same election years, the proportion of women who won the elections is also around 20 percent. In 2004, the average proportion of women in key elective posts is no more than 17 percent. In fact, the dismal performance of women in the 2004 elections registered a sharp drop after an increasing trend beginning 1995 (COMELEC, 2005).

The participation of women in the judiciary is dismal. In 1996, only 15.4 percent of the total incumbent judges were women. Recently, the Shari'a court, special court for Muslim law, had had one female member. As of March 2004, there were four women justices in the Supreme Court (Supreme Court, 2005).

Women dominate the bureaucracy but unable to break the glass ceiling. Based on most recent data, women make up the majority of the bureaucracy, accounting for 53 percent of the total 1.45 million government personnel. Women in the bureaucracy are likely to be technical personnel and men are likely to be managers/executives or clerks. Only 34.8 percent of the total managerial positions were occupied by women (CSC, 1999).