

Thailand's Socio-economic Context And It's Implications for Child Health and Development

Benchay Yoddumern-Attig

Mali Amporndanai

Within the past twenty years, Thailand has shown remarkable success in accelerating socio-economic growth, while also dramatically reducing marital fertility and the population growth rate. These changes, though, must inevitably affect the smallest unit of society and its smallest members, children, either positively or negatively. This study utilizes data drawn from a project entitled "The Effects of Family Size on the Status of Maternal and Child Health in Thailand" for the purpose of investigating how socio-economic and demographic changes have affected the health and development of young Northern and Southern Thai children. Project personnel interviewed 2,583 currently married women aged 15-44 in 3,612 households, with health examinations being conducted (including stool tests, hematocrit exam, and weight and height measurements) amongst 439 Northern and 579 Southern children under 5 years of age in the sample households.

Data analysis for this paper revealed that socio-economic factors, per se, are not statistically significant for the health status of children.

The health and development of children may become worse as parents struggle for a better socio-economic status, since their preoccupation with work and work related activities. This has definite adverse repercussions when parental time is also not adequately directed towards providing adequate health care and a health physical environment for their children, be the parents wealthy or poor.