

Abstract

Population Policy of Thailand

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Population policy may be defined differently by students of demography but is generally defined as measures aiming at influencing demographic processes - fertility, mortality and migration - through public and private programs. Population policy may also be classified in to different types: direct and indirect policies; population influencing and population responsive policies; explicit and implicit policies; and, domestic and international policies.

For Thailand, earlier population policies tended to be policies aiming at increasing the size of population through pronatalist and public health measures. However, findings of various studies in the early 1960's indicated that the rate of population growth of Thailand since the end of World War II had been as high as three per cent per annum. These had led the government to eventually issue the first national population policy statement "supporting family planning through a voluntary system..." in March 1970. The first five-year family planning program was included in the health plan of the Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-1976). From the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981) onwards, population policies were made more comprehensive to cover all dimensions of population: population growth, quality of population and population distribution and human settlements.

Since population policy is only an integral component of overall economic and social policies, it is inevitable that conflicts between objectives of sectoral policies have to be minimized to the lowest extent possible. Finally, future options of the population policies were briefly discussed.