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KEY WORD : BIRTH SPACING PRACTICE REGIONAL DIFFERENTIALS LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

LAVAN SOUTHISAN: REGIONAL DIFFERENTIALS OF BIRTH SPACING IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. THESIS ADVISOR : CHANYA SETHAPUT, Ph.D. , CHURNRURTAI KANCHANACHITRA, Ph.D. 69 p. ISBN.974-661-476-2

The objectives of this study are to establish the demographic, socioeconomic, program and geographic differentials among Lao women who practice birth spacing methods, as well as to examine the mechanisms through which the above factors affect the methods use and non-use by regions.

This study is aimed to find out the differential of birth spacing practice in 4 regions of Lao PDR. Using data from the 1995 Lao Fertility and Birth Spacing Survey. The FBSS sample is nationally representative covering in 17 provinces and one special zone and included 6,087 households and 5,796 eligible women who were identified, but they were 5,787 women who were interviewed successfully. For the analysis of data in this study is based on frequency distributions and cross-tabulations are used.

The findings showed that the relationship between background characteristics of respondents, i.e. age, number of living children, education, occupation, residence, region, knowledge, and exposure to mass media, and current use of contraception are statistically significant.

Birth spacing practice in the 4 regions of the country is highest among younger married women, women with 3 or more children, with a higher educational level, who work outside of the agriculture sector, who live in urban areas, who live in Vientiane Municipality, with knowledge of contraception and who are exposed to radio or mass media.

All of the hypotheses of the study was supported. However, it is interesting to note that in the Central, North and South regions women with high knowledge of birth spacing do not use birth spacing. This can be explained by accessibility and availability of service which are problems that are not included in this study. The effect of exposure to mass media (radio) on the use of birth spacing is likewise interesting to note. While the hypothesized difference in exposure to mass media is supported for women in Vientiane Municipality, contrary to expectation, of the 25.5 per cent of the women in the Southern part of the country who were exposed to mass media only 12.2 per cent use birth spacing. In theory, however, it is possible that exposure to mass media may have no impact on listeners, as their understanding and motivation to take action would depend on the programmes they listen to. For example, radio listeners may not have listened to informative programmes, news broadcasts or campaigns aimed at delaying marriage.