

ABSTRACT

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Project Title :The study of population optimum in Thailand

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This study aims to review the concept of optimum population and to find out the most appropriate optimum population in Thailand in terms of size and age-sex structure. The theory of demographic transition is used as the conceptual framework of this study.

The stationary population can be called “Optimum population” in demographic aspect. The age structure of population with a low birth rate and constant death rate for a long time will form an aging population.

The researchers project 3 scenarios of optimum population, using population in 2107 as base population. In 2017, there is about 66 million people with the birth rate is about 11 per 1,000 people, death rate is 8 per 1,000 people and growth rate is 0.3 percent/year.

Scenario I: It is assumed that the number of birth remains at 660,000 births per year (birth rate is about 10 per 1,000 people). For this scenario, the number of population would fall to 56 million in the next 70 years and remain constant thereafter in the next 100 years. The birth rate and death rate would be constant at 12 per 1,000 population. The proportion of people aged under 15 would be 17% while 56% would be aged 15-64 years. The older population aged 65 years old and over would be about 27% of total population. The projected population in scenario I would be called the “Optimum population” in Thailand.

Scenario II: It is assumed that the Total Fertility Rate (The average number of children per total women throughout the reproductive age) would decrease from 1.55 in 2017 to 1.45 and remain constant thereafter in the next 80 years. It is projected that the number of population would be 42 million in the next 100 years. The birth rate and death rate would be constant as 11 per 1,000 population. The proportion of people aged under 15 would be 16% while 54% would be aged 15-64

years. The older population aged 65 years old and over would be about 30% of the total population. The projected population in scenario II is possible if the fertility rate of Thailand in the future is not much lower than the present fertility rate.

Scenario III: It is assumed that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) would decrease from 1.55 in 2017 to 1.2 and remain constant thereafter. It is projected that the number of population would be 28 million in the next 100 years. The population growth rate would be minus. The proportion of people aged under 15 would be 8% while 52% would be aged 15-64 years. The older population aged 65 years old and over would be about 40% of the total population. The projected population in scenario III is possible because the young generation Thai population probably have very low fertility. Most women are more likely to stay single. The life style of Thai people has changed, causing Thai people to have fewer children.

The results of this project have clearly given three scenarios of optimum population of Thailand as the stationary population with both size and age sex structure of population. The researchers have suggested a guideline to make Thai population being the optimum population or transit closely to scenario I and far off scenario III. Thailand should have a policy to promote births each year that so that the number of births is not much lower than today. Furthermore, Thailand should emphasize the development of population quality both in size and age-sex structure conforming to the stationary population in the future.