

**WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND FERTILITY: EVIDENCE
FROM THREE PROVINCES OF LAOS**

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M.A. (POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH)

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ABSTRACT

Though fertility in Laos has declined, high fertility still exists especially in rural and remote areas. This study focuses on the impact of women's education on cumulative fertility. All women aged 15-49 from three provinces, namely Phongsaly, Xiengkhuang and Champasak, enumerated in census 2005 were included in the study.

Univariate analysis was used to describe the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the women, then bivariate analysis was used to assess the relationship between cumulative fertility and some key independent variables. Multivariate analysis (Ordinary Least Square Regression) was used to find out the effects of women's education on cumulative fertility, controlling for other factors. The result showed that educated women have fewer children than uneducated women. Furthermore, the multivariate analysis indicated that women's level of education has a significant negative effect on cumulative fertility. A stronger effect is found in women who have high education.

Because education affects long term fertility, if Government wants to have a sustainable improvement in the reproductive health of women and lower fertility, the educational development of women needs to be improved in parallel with other development programs. Future study should include other related intermediate variables to assess the net effect of education on fertility.

KEY WORDS: WOMEN'S EDUCATION/FERTILITY/ LAO P.D.R

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