

FERTILITY OF MIGRANTS FROM MYANMAR IN RANONG PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

Ranong is a major entry point for thousands of Myanmar migrants gathering before proceeding to other provinces of Thailand. It has a highly visible migrant population comprising approximately half of the Thai population of the province.

This study aims to investigate the level and behaviour related to fertility of migrants from Myanmar who are living in Ranong Province because people who move, mostly are in reproductive age. The quantitative survey of reproductive health services among 503 female migrants in reproductive age was conducted in November 2003.

The samples are mostly Tavoyan, Burmese and Mon. Almost all of them are Buddhists. Their education level is low. Approximately half of the female immigrants have no job and income. For those who work, they are employed in fish related businesses.

It is found that approximately one-third of ever married migrant women had their first pregnant at the age of less than 20 years old. On average, the number of children ever born to female migrants in Ranong is 2.6. The significant factors related to number of children ever born are age, age at marriage, education, and ethnicity. The Total Marital Fertility Rate is 4.9 and it is significantly different between those who have income and no income.

Only 47% of currently married women were using any method of birth control. The methods that more than half of them were using were injectables and oral contraceptive pills. Many of them purchased these products either from markets or drugstores, some obtain from a Thai hospital, private clinics, World Vision clinic, and midwives in their community.

It has found that a approximately of ever pregnant women 9.6% had abortion and miscarriage in their lifetime. Among those induced abortions, they were mostly performed by TBAs, while some are self-induced.

It is recommended that in order to promote appropriate reproductive behaviour, attitude toward small family size should be encouraged. Moreover, family planning service for the migrants should be more available and accessible.