

Socio-Economic Determinants of Fertility in Indonesia

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The fertility level has been declining rapidly in many developing countries, following the launching of family planning programs in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The total fertility rate¹ (TFR) in Asia fell from about 5.4 children per woman in 1970-1975 to 2.3 in 2005-2010, and this ranges from replacement level or below in 13 countries to above five children per woman in three countries (UN 2010).

Indonesia is one of the countries that have experienced rapid fertility transition, with TFR falling from 5.6 children per woman in 1969, just before the launching of the national family planning programme, to 3.4 in 1985, 2.8 in 1996, 2.6 in 2001, and further to 2.2 in 2005-2010. The fertility rate had fallen by for all age groups (Table 4.1). The rising age at marriage from 19.3 years in 1971 to 23.4 years in 2005 and the widespread use of contraception have been the main proximate determinants of fertility in Indonesia.

The growing concern on the rapid rate of population growth in the 1960s resulted in the proliferation of demographic research, in particular fertility analysis. Between 1974 and 1982, the World Fertility Survey (WFS) was carried out in 42 developing countries and 20 developed countries under an international research programme on human fertility. Subsequently, Demographic and Health Surveys have been undertaken in about 80 developing countries under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Many national governments have also conducted demographic surveys periodically to monitor the fertility trends. These surveys provided voluminous information for in-depth analysis of factors affecting fertility in different parts of the world.