

## ABSTRACTS

Fertility decline in Asian countries has largely characterized over the later part of the last century. Beginning with the initiation of Japan's transition in the 1930s, fertility declines in other Asian countries soon followed. In the 1950's when most of the Asian countries kept very high levels of fertility, fertility in Singapore is estimated to gradually decline. In the 1960's fertility began to decline in some countries and regions, such as Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, together with Singapore.

Fertility trends and associated factors in 37 Asian countries have been examined under my study. In some countries fertility has plummeted to well below the replacement level, whereas, high fertility still prevails in some populations. Within intermediate fertility countries, fertility is close to the replacement level in some countries, while some others have shown signs of fertility transition.

The Asian countries of today can be viewed as being at various stages in the process of demographic transition. Certainly in almost all areas the decline in mortality is already well underway, and to the availability of low-cost medical technology is advanced much more rapidly than was the case in the now industrialized countries. There are 14 Asian countries that had already completed fertility transition to the replacement level and fertility continued to decline or stayed much below the replacement level already for 10 to 25 years. More countries are sure to follow them in the near future.

As the demographic transition theory suggests, there does appear to be some correlation between the extent of fertility decline and the level of development, although the availability of contraceptive techniques is clearly playing an important role as well for Asian countries.