

# **Utilization of the 2000 Population Census of China**

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## **I.China's census data acquired in 2000 were unprecedentedly abundant**

Population census is the largest social survey in China, with the full and accurate data having invariably been an important basis for China's formulation of social and economic development planning and for the study of the population policies. An extensive development and utilization of the data has always been regarded as the ultimate aim of the population census. The 2000 census was the first one carried out by China under the market economy, and the social demands for the data and their market values have become more prominent. Especially after China's WTO accession in 2001, demands for such data by all sides at home and abroad will become more and more detailed and extensive.

China has attained unprecedentedly abundant amount of information from 2000 population census. A long-and-short form has been firstly adopted in this census. The census mainly embodied the natural condition of the population, migrations and flows of the population, educational attainment, participation in economic activities, marriage and birth and the family living environment, etc, with the housing conditions being firstly added as an object under investigation.

Preliminary data show that there have been some new characteristics in China's population development at the intersection of the two centuries: the effective control of the momentum of the excessively rapid growth of population, the further improvement of the population quality, the expedited aging process, the comparatively rapid growth of population of the minority nationalities, the incessant shrinkage of the household scale and the urbanization being on the track of rapid development. Some questions have been put forward in the census, such as how to stabilize the level of low birth, how to cope with the aging process in time and how to speed up the reform of the household register system, and so on.

The population census leading group under the State Council has requested that this census, with a characteristic of the information in vast amount and the contents abundant, should be made full use of, the opportunities should be seized to tap the latent power, the social effect of the census data should be brought into full play, emphases should be put on the study of the matters with regularity, foresightedness and strategic importance and the matters that are closely related to the masses, and the actual issues in the process of China's modernization should be straightened out with the help of the census data. Through analysis and studies of the data, China's population analyzing skill will be further promoted and the population analytical level of the statistical departments will be further stepped up. Therefore, population census office under the State Council and census offices of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government have specially drawn up *the Program for the Utilization of the Population Census*.

## **II. Overall thought for the census utilization program**

Utilization of the data is an important content in the three procedures in population census (namely, preparation for the census, field enumeration and post-enumeration check by sample survey, data processing and utilization of

data), which is under the unified leadership of the population census leading groups of the State Council and provincial level. Population census office under the State Council has constituted a team of experts for the development and utilization of the census data, consisting of the well-known domestic population statisticians, sociologists and economists being in charge of the advisory work, technical guidance, examination and appraisal of the research topics.

## **1. Total target and orientation**

**A. A research that serves the Party and government leadership.** Such an analysis will be mainly focused on the revelation of the matters of interest to Party and government leaders and the social problems at issue and on the study of countermeasures, which is required to be timely, authentic, brief and to the point. The monographic analysis will be usually adopted as an analytical method and will be undertaken by statistical bureaus and government departments.

**B. A research that is aimed at policies and sciences.** Such an analysis will be mainly focused on the study of the matters that have important influence on economic and social development, which is required to be broad and in-depth, with novel points of view and foresighted expositions being produced and is of greater instructive significance to some certain field of the society and of higher academic level. These matters are usually adopted as the key topics for research and will be undertaken by institutions of higher education and research units and will be carried out by statistical bureaus.

**C. Consulting services that are provided to the public.** This belongs in the field of resource regeneration. Such utilization will generally yield information products in series, which is required to be of practicality. The statistical bureaus will be responsible for the compiling and publishing of the promulgated data for the convenience of the inquires by the public.

Population census offices at state and provincial levels will be separately in charge of the organization and co-ordination of the census utilization at state and provincial levels, including selection of research topics, inviting tenders for the selected topics, oriented entrustment, co-operation between departments, use of the data and appraisal of the final achievements, etc. The research capacity of the scientific research units, institutions of higher education and government departments concerned should be brought into full play for joint participation in this work.

Population census offices at all levels will own the achievements in the tenders, entrustments and the topic researches and will have the intellectual copyright of the publications.

In order to guarantee the smooth progress of the utilization work, the State will establish a special-purpose fund to subsidize some key projects.

## **2. The principle of the management of data**

*The Statistical Law* and *The Population Census Statutes* explicitly stipulate that in terms of the secrets of an object under conservative investigation the original individual data may not be supplied in the course of the presentation and utilization of the census data. Population census offices at various levels should make a good job of the management and supply of the figures and data from population censuses in accordance with *the Measures on Management and Usage of the Population Census Data* provided by the population census office under the State Council in a unified way and, on this basis, should make public the census data step by step and to the maximum.

Population census data can be acquired through following channels:

**A. Data of paper medium.** Results from advance manual tabulation, results from computer processing tabulation and other compiled data will be published in succession.

**B. Website data.** The promulgated data can be retrieved on the statistical

websites.

**C. Data of magnetic medium.** For the purpose of in-depth analysis and studies, for some jointly-organized topics, sampling data will be provided as need arises with the basic address codes and subscriber information being deleted, but on the condition that some procedures must be carried out to ensure a non-proliferation of the data and the data not to be for other uses. And some fees will have to be paid as well.

### **III. Progress of census utilization work**

#### **1. Census bulletin has been released.**

In March of 2001 the National Bureau of Statistics held a population census news conference attended by more than 200 Chinese and foreign press units. During the conference the journalists put forward questions enthusiastically and showed great solicitude for the 2000 census, which was unprecedented as compared with the past news conferences held by the National Bureau of Statistics. All provinces subsequently published census data bulletins. The bulletins displayed to China as well as to foreign countries the current development of the Chinese population and the major characteristics of the changes in quantity and structure of the Chinese population.

#### **2. The advance manual tabulation of the major figures has been published.**

In order to guarantee the effectiveness of the data and cater to the social demands at an early date, the state census office and the provincial census offices fulfilled the advance tabulation of the major figures at early April of 2001 and the data were off the press after compiling. The advance tabulation mainly include population quantity, age structure, sex ratio, household size, population of nationalities, urban and rural population, and education, etc.

**3. A number of census statistical information and analytical reports have been written.**

According to the advance tabulation, the State, provincial and local population census offices at all levels have organized the efforts to make analysis and studies and have provided timely and effective information and policy-making consultation to government departments and to all walks of life. Some of the issues have been followed with interest by the government and some suggestions have been adopted by the government, such as stability of the low birth rate, importance that should be attached to children's schooling and the medical care, acceleration of urbanization and management of the floating population, good performance of life security for the old and the support of the old, etc.

**4. Various thematic data sets are under way.**

Right now computer processing of the census data has been completed. According to the computer tabulations and in accordance with the past practices, the State and the provinces are compiling and printing *2000 Population Census Data of China*, which is a combination of more than 160 data sheets and which consists of about 3000 pages, and the video compact discs will be released along with the book. Besides, the State is prepared to compile albums of township-level and county-level census data and albums of the data of all nationalities so as to meet the social demands.

**5. A sub-regional analysis and research of the population census will be launched in an all-round way.**

In order to realize the social value of the population census in a more extensive way and to respond to the efforts and co-operation made by the grass-roots governments and masses, we have decided that the census utilization at county level should be launched throughout the country, which is an innovation in the census utilization work. To make a good job of this work, the population census office under the State Council has made a pilot project for the sub-regional analysis and research in the city of Nanhai, Guangdong Province and the project has been fulfilled at present. The

analysis consists of 12 chapters in all with more than 100 thousand characters. In line with the local conditions and with the data and relevant materials being utilized all-sidedly, the aforesaid analysis has brought to light the situation and the trend of the population growth and the social and economic development in this region, and has set an example for more than 2800 administrative regions at county level throughout the country in the utilization of the census data.

## **6. Geography information system (GIS) is undertaken.**

Establishment of GIS was a new assignment in China's 2000 population census. Taking the census as a turning point, the GIS technology has been popularized and applied. In the short run, we will be able to combine the census data with the geographical information and develop the space for the development and utilization of the census data; in the long run, we will build a complete digital geographical supporting system to serve the data collecting and to realize the all-round presentation of census data and the application of the geographical analysis. Besides, the establishment of GIS has laid the foundation for the development of the geographical inquiry and presentation system for the entire statistical data, and will favor the establishment of the geographical system of unified statistical data collection and the establishment of the data releasing geographical system, and also give an impetus to the innovation of the statistical system and the statistical methods.

At present, in co-operation with the departments concerned, the population census office under the State Council has updated the geographical data of the administrative divisions at the county level in 2000 on the 1:250,000 digital map and developed the geographical presentation and analyzing system for the advance tabulation of the census at county-level. In the meantime, the GIS in some key cities has been developing rapidly.

**7. Researches of the key State topics by the census departments at provincial level and academic units have been carried out throughout**

**the country.**

The research topics applied for by all provincial census offices will be fulfilled in June of 2002. Tenders for the research of the key State topics have been made openly throughout the country and have been answered actively by scientific research units and institutions of higher education all over the country. Nearly one hundred units participated in the tendering. Upon review by the team of experts, topics by tendering of 33 units have been determined eventually. The research theses will be submitted at the end of the year and the team of experts will make an examination and appraisal of the achievements in research. Meanwhile, population census office under the State Council will still organize researches of the topics on different economic geographical regions and on different population categories to further extend the achievements in census research.

**8. Compilation of the book series entitled the Chinese Population at the Outset of the 21st Century will be organized.**

In order to reflect in an all-round way the basic condition of the Chinese population in 2000, the State will make unified planning and accomplish the fascicles separately with the provinces before putting them into series.

**9. The domestic and international science symposia on population census are supposed to be well done.**

The science symposia on population census will completely present the achievements in census research and will vigorously boost the in-depth progress of the census utilization work. On the basis of all the analysis and researches, the team of experts will screen out part of the fine achievements for the preparation for the domestic science symposium on population census. Foreign experts and scholars will be invited afterwards to attend the international science symposium on population census so as to extend the influence of China's population census in the world and raise the international status of China's statistical work.