IDENTIFYING AND ANALYZING GENDER DIMENSIONS OF CRVS USING DEATH REGISTRATION DATA IN FIJI

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Mainstreaming Gender Stats Café, ESCAP
FBoS gender mainstreaming priorities in statistics

• All surveys and census conducted by FBoS are collected, compiled, analyzed and disseminated accordingly by sex disaggregated data under the Statistical Act Cap 71 & 72

• The Fiji Government has endorsed and approved the Fiji’s National Gender and Policy (2014) – (Policies to promote Gender equality in Fiji)
  • Recognizes age-disaggregated data as a key strategy to achieve its objectives

• The Fiji’s Country Gender Assessment Report was published in 2015. A report on the same for 2020 has been compiled and review in progress by the Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation, FBoS and other relevant stakeholders.
Death registration has gendered aspects

Women often need a birth, marriage AND death certificate to inherit property or claim inheritance from a deceased spouse, or receive social benefits such as pensions.

Proof of death can provide surviving children with access to social services and benefits – especially important for households headed by single mothers.

Unregistered deaths of women and girls affect the ability to prevent similar deaths. If you don’t know what women/girls are dying from, where, at what age, you cannot prevent similar future deaths. (Maternal mortality is a good example)
Inequality assessment of registration in Fiji

2014 Ministerial Declaration to “Get every one in the picture” and the associated Regional Action Framework’s call to “Assess inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population...” including among women, who are more likely to be left out worldwide.

With the support of UNESCAP, Fiji is currently implementing a project to assess inequalities in registration of births and deaths among different sub-groups in the population.

This involves assessing death registration completeness by characteristics such as sex, age group and ethnicity by comparing deaths that are actually registered by MOJ to estimated number of deaths based on recorded deaths from MOHMS*

Recorded deaths from MOHMS are used as best source of estimated deaths because:
- Notification of death from MOHMS is needed for burial or cremation permit
- Review from 2017 estimated MOHMS records 96.2% of all deaths

* 2018 data used was believed to be the most reliable year
Initial findings: registration of male deaths more likely

- Adult male deaths are more likely to be registered compared to adult female deaths.
- However, male death registration completeness decreases after age 75, which can impact inheritance rights and receival of social benefits by surviving spouses.
Initial findings: Differentials exist by age, sex, and ethnicity

• When broken down by ethnicity, differentials in death registration increase with I-Taukei (native Fijian) women having the lowest rates of registration
## Potential gender policy considerations

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<tr>
<th>I-Taukeis are more likely to live in the outer islands and in remote areas.</th>
<th>Those living in remote areas may not be aware of the requirement to register deceased family members.</th>
<th>Under-registration of I-Taukei male deaths could adversely impact I-Taukei women who are entitled to social benefits and inheritance</th>
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<td>Policies to increase access to registration and ease of registration process should be considered based on differing needs and challenges faced by women and men.</td>
<td>Consider outreach programs educating and creating awareness, particularly around the need to register women’s deaths and recording causes of their death to prevent such future deaths.</td>
<td>Consider collaboration with the provident fund to proactively contact family of the deceased and educate them about their benefits and the need for death registration.</td>
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<td>Raise awareness about the importance of birth and death registration as a permanent record to trace heritage, lineage, and ancestry which is highly valued in I-Taukei culture.</td>
<td>Investigate simultaneous issuance of burial order and death certificate.</td>
<td>Raise awareness among women’s groups, cultural heritage foundations, etc.</td>
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Next steps

• Further disaggregate data to lower geographical levels (e.g. District, Village level) by sex and the most vulnerable groups in terms of age and registration challenges.

• Consider focus groups or other types of research to understand from families why they are more likely to register a man’s death compared to a woman’s.
  • Use this information to inform more targeted policies to improve death registration among women.

• Investigate partnerships between Ministries to improve outreach and awareness to improve death registration completeness – particularly with the Provident Fund with outreach to surviving female spouses.
Vinaka!