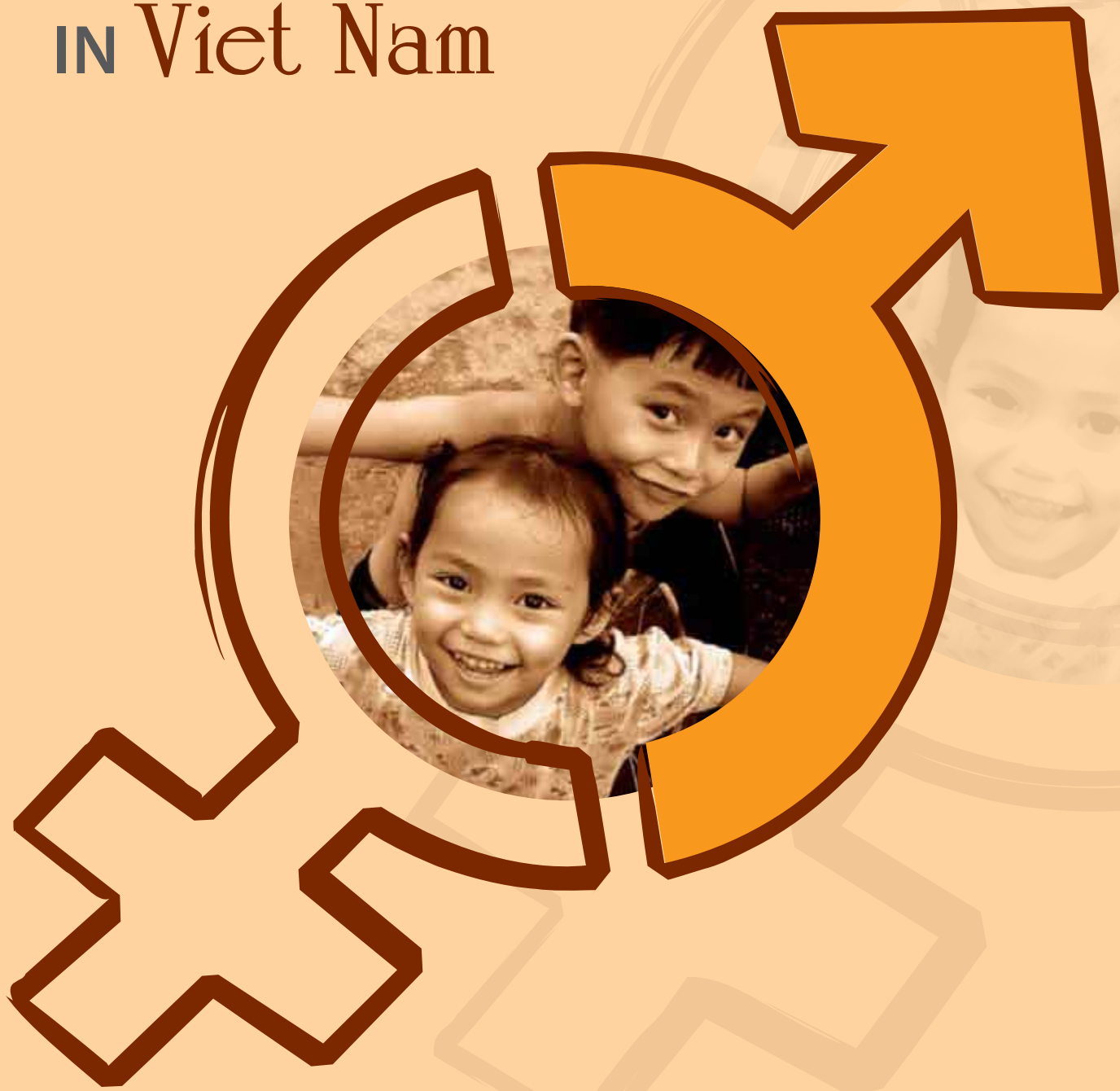


# RECENT CHANGE IN THE SEX RATIO AT BIRTH IN Viet Nam



A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE



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## Abbreviations

DHS:	Demographic and Health Survey
GSO:	General Statistics Office
HCMC:	Ho Chi Minh City
ISDS:	Institute of Social Development Studies
MICS:	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
PKS:	Prior Knowledge of the Sex of the Foetus
SRB:	Sex Ratio at Birth
TFR:	Total Fertility Rate
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO:	World Health Organization

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# Foreword

The Sex Ratio of a population is a demographic indicator, reflecting the sex composition of that population, whereas the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is primarily a concern of demographers. *Sex Ratio at Birth is conventionally defined as the number of boys being born per one hundred girls.* This ratio is normally between 104-106/100. An important note with regard to the use of this indicator is that under normal circumstances it is quite stable over time, across geographical regions, continents, countries and races. Any significant diversion of the ratio from the normal biological range implies, to some extent, an intentional intervention to this natural value. It also means that to produce an accurate estimate of the SRB, a large enough sample size is required, and moreover an appropriate estimation method.

Analysis of the SRB can tell us many things about the different dimensions of a society such as traditional cultural customs, socio-economic development levels, social welfare, political and health practices, and in particular public awareness and practices related to gender equality.

Studies in this area have indicated an unexpected trend of population changes, starting in the 1980's: a consistently rising SRB in some Asian countries, where the population is larger and population density is higher than most countries of the world. Along with declining fertility, this trend tends to spread throughout countries with large populations in Asia, thus threatening global demographic stability.

The concern that Viet Nam would face a risk of a potentially rising SRB was initially expressed in the first years of the 21st century after publication of the results of the 1999 Census. However, controversy surrounding this phenomenon had been minimal until 2006, when the General Statistics Office

(GSO), with technical support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), collected essential data and published the SRB of Viet Nam as standing at a considerably high level of 110/100. These figures became available through the Annual Population Change survey in 2006, conducted by the GSO in the same year.

Since then, the UNFPA has provided support to the Population and Reproductive Health programme of Viet Nam to conduct a series of analytic investigations and activities with different scopes to monitor the variance of this indicator at national and sub-national levels. Preliminary findings and discussions have been disseminated by the concerned parties and have for the first time received attention of the public and political leaders of the country.

The current report titled **"Recent increase in the Sex Ratio at Birth in Viet Nam: A review of evidence"**, will provide a comprehensive picture of an imbalanced sex ratio at birth occurring in Viet Nam. Dr. Christophe Z. Guilmoto, a demographer with substantive experience in SRB related research in China, India and other Asian countries, has provided technical assistance to the UNFPA by analysing the data and preparing this report. The report also offers a number of concrete conclusions and valuable recommendations for Viet Nam in the years ahead.

UNFPA would like to express sincere thanks to Dr. Christophe Z. Guilmoto for his contribution to this report. We are grateful to the GSO for providing data and valuable technical inputs. UNFPA also wishes to acknowledge the Institute for Social Development Studies for sharing their experience with SRB studies in Viet Nam. Furthermore, UNFPA wishes to thank the international and national consultants, as well as UNFPA program officers in Ha Noi who worked with Dr. Christophe Z. Guilmoto and provided support for the development and completion of the report.



UNFPA would like to introduce this valuable document to policy makers, managers, professionals, researchers and others who are concerned about Population and Reproductive Health in Viet Nam. Evidence presented in this paper comes at a critical time, as Viet Nam is now preparing a number of important population policy, strategy and legal documents which will have implications for many years to come.

**Bruce Campbell**

Representative of the United Nations  
Population Fund in Viet Nam



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