

MARITAL STATUS

SUMMARY OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

TIMOR-LESTE POPULATION & HOUSING CENSUS 2015



United Nations Population Fund

Focus of the thematic report on Marital Status

The 2015 Census was conducted by the General Directorate of Statistics (*Direcção Geral de Estatística, GDE*) of the Ministry of Finance.

Marriage patterns, breastfeeding practices, the incidence of abortion, and contraceptive prevalence are the major proximate determinants of fertility. The 2015 Census does not collect data on breastfeeding practices or prevalence of contraceptive methods. However, the census collects data on marital status patterns by age, sex, background characteristics (literacy, educational attainment, employment status) and geography.

In this report, marital status is classified as: never married, married, living together, widowed, divorced, and separated.

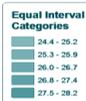
Increased Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM)

SMAM is the mean age at first marriage among those who ever marry. It increased from 25.8 years in the 2010 Census to 26.7 years in the 2015 Census. The SMAM was lower for females (25 years) than males (28.4 years) in the 2015 Census, but the **male-female gap** decreased from 4.2 years to 3.4 years between the 2004 and 2015 Censuses, demonstrating reducing gender disparities. The youngest SMAM was in Viqueue (24.4 years) & the oldest SMAM was in Dili (28.2 years). The SMAM was found to be higher in the north & lower in the south, except in Manatuto.

SMAM, 2010,2015 Census



SMAM, Municipalities, 2015 Census



SMAM, Municipalities, 2015 Census



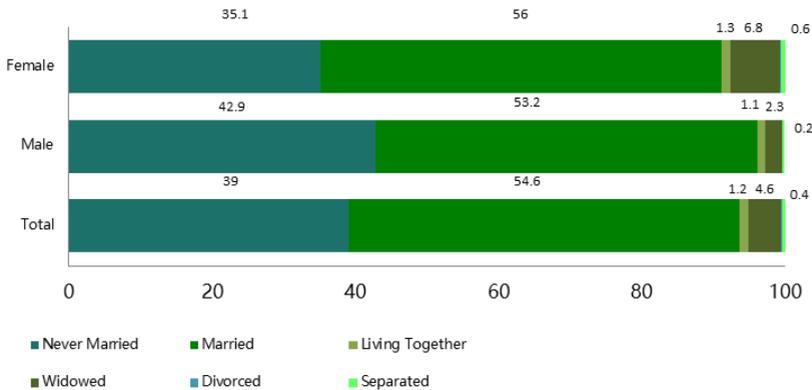
SMAM and background characteristics

The SMAM was higher for **literate** people (26.6 years) than **non-literate** people (25.2 years). The gap in SMAM between literates & non-literates increased from 1.2 years to 1.4 years between 2010 & 2015. The **male-female gap** in SMAM was 3.9 years for non-literate persons, whereas for literate people the gap was 3.6 years. Persons occupying lower quality housing had a lower SMAM than persons occupying higher quality housing. The SMAM was lower in agricultural households (26.2 years) than in non-agricultural households (26.8 years) in 2015.

Changes in Marital Status between 2010 & 2015 Census

In the 2015 Census, 54.6% of the population aged 15 years and above were **married**, a decline of 1.7% from 2010. The proportion of “never married” persons increased from 36.9% in 2010 to 39% in 2015. Males were more likely to never have married than females, and females were more likely to be married, living together, widowed, divorced, or separated compared to males. Widowhood declined from 6% in 2010 to 4.6% in 2015, due to increased life expectancy, especially for males.

Population age 15+ by marital status & sex, 2015 Census





MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN

Marital Status by background characteristics

There was a small increase in the percentage of non-literate women who were never married in 2015 (17.1%), compared to 2010 (15.9%). A higher percentage of **literate** women were reported as living together with a partner (1.7%) in the 2015 Census as compared to **non-literate** women (0.7%). **Widowhood** was higher for non-literate women in both 2010 (16.4%) and the 2015 (14.2%), the percentage of literate widows was only 2.2% in 2010 & 1.9% in 2015.

As the level of education increases, the percentage of women reported as never married had a tendency to increase. For example, in 2015, 38.5% of women with only

pre-primary education were reported as never married, whereas 54.9% of women with university education were reported as never married.

In the 2015 Census, the percentage of never married women who were “inactive” (*which includes full time students & household workers*) increased 13.7% from 2010. The percentage of married women who were **employed** increased from 63.3% in 2010 to 71.7% in 2015. This demonstrates that **unmarried women were remaining in full time education for longer**, and **married women were increasingly absorbed into the labour force**.

Marital status for women age 15+ by economic characteristics, 2010 & 2015 Census

	Never married		Married		Living together	Widowed		Divorced		Separated	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Employed	22.0	17.4	63.3	71.7	1.0	13.1	8.7	1.0	0.3	0.6	0.8
Unemployed	55.8	50.3	33.3	40.1	2.3	9.6	6.2	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.8
Inactive	35.3	49.0	57.2	43.7	1.6	6.9	5.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.4

The percentage of married adolescent girls declined between 2010 & 2015

Compared to the 2010 Census, the percentage of women **aged 15-19 years** who were married decreased by 1.4% from 7.6% to 6.2%. Marriage was more common for older adolescent girls than younger adolescent girls, from 2.8% at **age 16** to 15.5% at **age 19**. "Living together with a partner" was a less common status, but it also increased with age: from 1.3% at age 15 to 1.9% at age 19.

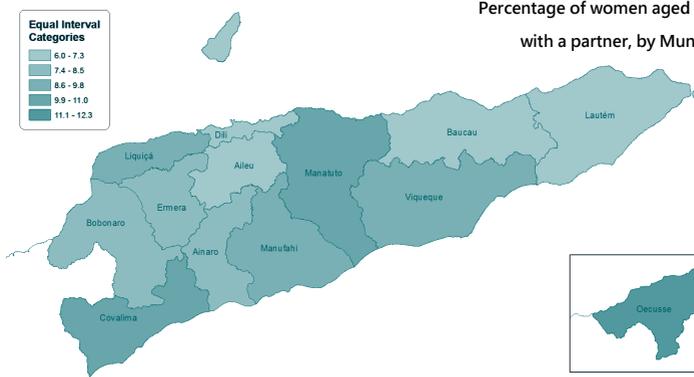
The percentage of adolescent girls reported as married in the 2015 Census varied between urban and rural areas, with 3.4% of urban adolescent girls and 7.7% of rural adolescent girls reported as married.

Dili & Aileu had the lowest percentages of girls married/ living with a partner (6%), whereas Oecusse had the highest percentage of girls married/ living with a partner (12.3%). Higher percentage of adolescent girls were married in western municipalities than in the eastern municipalities.

Marriage & Cohabitation of adolescent girls by age, 2015 Census

	% of women married ¹	% of women living with a partner	% of women married/ living with a partner	no. of women
Age				
15	/	1.3	1.3	14,976
16	2.8	1.3	4.1	13,686
17	5.2	1.4	6.6	13,305
18	9.9	1.9	11.8	12,832
19	15.5	1.9	17.4	11,577

Percentage of adolescent girls (15-19) married/ living with a partner by Municipality, 2015 census



Percentage of women aged 15-19 years married/ living with a partner, by Municipality, 2015 Census

¹: No data available for age 15



SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

The number of **single-parent household** declined by 1.3% from 5% of all households in 2010 to 3.7% in 2015. In the 2015 Census, more than 70% of single-parent households were headed by women, an increase of almost an additional one in ten single-parent households compared to the 2010 Census. There were higher percentages of **female-headed** single-parent households in the west, especially in the south-west and in Oecusse. In 2015, 78.2% of single-parent households were in rural areas.

Women were more vulnerable to widowhood than men

In the 2015 Census, **widowhood** was higher among women aged 15 years or above (6.8%) than men aged 15 years or above (2.3%), so women were **3 times** more likely to be widowed than men. Lautem (10.2%) had the highest percentage of widowed women.

Percentage of men & women age 15+ widowed, by Municipality, 2015 Census





KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5 IGUALDADE GÉNERO



Key Findings

In the 2015 Census...

- The Singulate Mean Age at Marriage was 26.7 years, 28.4 years for men & 25 years for women
- More than 50% of the population aged 15 years or above were married
- 7 out of 10 single-parent households were female-headed

Compared to the 2010 Census, in 2015...

- The SMAM had increased by 0.9 years from 25.8 years in 2010
- Married women were more active in the labour force, unmarried women were remaining in full time education for longer
- Marriage among adolescents dropped by 1.4% to 6.2%

What can be done?

- ⇒ The government should continue to foster an environment so adolescent women can remain in education longer, as a mechanism for preventing marriage & subsequent childbearing during adolescence
- ⇒ Information campaigns & services should be channeled towards communities & families in order to prevent risky behavior, i.e. early marriage and childbearing
- ⇒ Special social protection & livelihood interventions should be implemented for female-headed single-parent households
- ⇒ The government should put a focus on SDG 5 (*Achieve gender equality & empower all women & girls*)
 - To achieve Target 5.3: By 2030, eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage



Timor-Leste Population & Housing Census 2015

<https://www.mof.gov.tl/?lang=en>

<http://www.statistics.gov.tl/>

<http://timor-leste.unfpa.org/en>