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STATISTICAL CENTRE OF IRAN

In Iran there have been 6 rounds of population and housing census in 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, and 2006. Recently according to a presidential decree which was aimed at updating the information on Iranian population, the National Population and Housing Census will be conducted every 5 years in Iran and consequently the next Population & Housing Census in our country will be conducted in 2011.

Researches and studies for the last census were started from 2004. Due to planning of the 2006 National Population and Housing Census, a specialized planning committee, established including 4 work groups namely geographical information, data processing, information, dissemination and training work groups.

In 2006 National Population and Housing Census, a valuable and a mixed census and sample survey was conducted in the Census for collecting more detailed information on some specific items.

The general activities for conducting the Census were as follows:

- Studies for implementing mixed census and sample survey
- Researches for selecting and using various statistical data collection technologies
- Studies for using CAC technology in data coding
- Conducting a pilot census in some provinces in 2005 including following steps:
 - Designing Questionnaires and label forms
 - Designing data editing algorithms and instructions
 - Outsourcing required software based on the selected method in data capture i.e. ICR
 - Developing, editing, imputation and coding software packages
- Conducting stage of 2006 National Population and Housing Census was composed of these steps:
 - Finalizing questionnaire and label forms
 - Finalizing data editing algorithms and instructions

- Releasing the final version of developed ICR software package
- Releasing the final versions of editing, imputation and coding software packages
- Training human resources for different tasks of the Census.
- Conducting the Census in all provinces up to imputation step in a decentralized way within a 3 months time span
- Running the imputation step in the SCI in a centralized way
- Weighting the Census information
- Publishing the preliminary census results within 5 months after the Census.

The strength points in conducting the 2006 National Population and Housing Census:

- An appropriate designing of the questionnaire forms.
- A good practice in offering an acceptable estimation of scanning and reading times.
- Acceptable estimation for required staffs.
- Using the product of the same company software which was used in pilot census because of its accuracy and reliability.
- Improving quality of the developed software based on feedbacks and experiences gained from the Pilot Census and experimental versions.
- Using completely automated management systems in order to distribute the tasks.
- Using suitable educational aids
- Providing a practical exercise due to implement a pilot census

The problems encountered are:

- Lack of enough experience on ICR technology
- Unexpected problems such as software and hardware errors leading to reducing the operation pace
- Changing the ICR software due to changes in questionnaire format. (In fact it was the first experience of the SCI in application of ICR technology and some minor modifications were necessary)
- The planned process time table was very intensive
- Due to time constraints, experiences from the Pilot Census and resulted solutions were not tested in a separate pilot census

before the main Census to determine the degree of their efficiency.

The budget allocated for the 2006 National Population and Housing Census in Iran was about USD 39 million.