Summary

- Vital statistics is defined as that branch of biometry, which deals with data, and the laws of human mortality, morbidity and demography. The term vital statistics refers to the numerical data or the techniques used in the analysis of the data pertaining to vital events occurring in the given section of the population. By vital events we mean such events of human life as fertility and mortality (deaths & births), marriage, divorce, separation, adoptions, legitimating, etc.
- Demography is the statistical study of human populations and sub-populations. It can be a very general science that can be applied to any kind of dynamic human population, that is, one that changes over time or space (see population dynamics). It encompasses the study of the size, structure, and distribution of these populations, and spatial and/or temporal changes in them in response to birth, migration, aging and death.
- Demographic analysis can be applied to whole societies or to groups defined by criteria such as education, nationality, religion and ethnicity. Institutionally, demography is usually considered a field of sociology, though there are a number of independent demography departments. Formal demography limits its object of study to the measurement of population processes, while the broader field of social demography population studies also analyze the relationships between economic, social, cultural and biological processes influencing a population.
- The term demographics refers to characteristics of a population. There are two types of data collection direct and indirect with several different methods of each type.
- Direct data come from vital statistics registries that track all births and deaths as well as certain changes in legal status such as marriage, divorce, and migration (registration of place of residence). In developed countries with good registration systems (such as the United States and much of Europe), registry statistics are the best method for estimating the number of births and deaths.
- A census is the other common direct method of collecting demographic data. A census is
 usually conducted by a national government and attempts to enumerate every person in
 a country. However, in contrast to vital statistics data, which are typically collected
 continuously and summarized on an annual basis, censuses typically occur only every
 10 years or so, and thus are not usually the best source of data on births and deaths.
 Analyses are conducted after a census to estimate how much over or undercounting
 took place. These compare the sex ratios from the census data to those estimated from
 natural values and mortality data.
- Population censuses are the ideal method of providing information on size, composition and spatial distribution of the population including their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Population censuses provide data either for the whole population or for a very large sample of the population, so that estimates may be produced for relatively small geographic areas and population subgroups. It is also ideal for the segmentation of a population into various population subgroups based on some specified characteristics and for identifying target populations for policy and/or planning for both governments and private businesses. A population census is also a very important source for population estimates needed to calculate vital rates based on data derived from civil registration. It is also important in providing the base population for the estimates of statistics obtained from demographic surveys.

- The other important data source that is commonly used in many countries is administrative records. The statistics compiled from various administrative processes can be very valuable to the overall national statistical system. Many social statistics are produced as a by-product of these administrative processes, for example, education statistics from periodic reports by the ministry of education, health statistics from periodic reports based on hospital records, employment statistics compiled from employment extension services, etc.
- The reliability of the statistics depends upon the completeness of the administrative recording process and the completeness of the reporting system. It is very important to continuously monitor and improve the system of recording, reporting and compiling for producing such statistics since they constitute complementary sources of data to those obtained from censuses and surveys. It is also necessary as far as feasible to keep all concepts, definitions and classifications used in these records the same as those in the other data sources so that data can be compared.