Analysis of Demographic & Reproductive Health Indicators

This 2003 Yearbook is the twenty-ninth volume presenting demographic and family planning data for the Republic of Mauritius. The 59 tables and 15 charts are grouped under the following headings: population, vital statistics, family planning and health service points. Data are also provided separately for the Island of Rodrigues.

Island of Mauritius

Age structure of the population

Table A.1 shows the population distribution of the Island of Mauritius at census dates. During the intercensal period of 1990-2000, the population size increased by 11.80%, giving an annual population growth rate of 1.18%. Moreover, the 2000 census enumerated more females than males and the sex ratio was 981 males per 1000 females.

Table A.2 shows the estimated mid-year resident population according to age group and sex in 2002 and 2003. The figures show that between 2002 and 2003 the proportion of population aged under 15 decreased slightly from 25.2% to 25.0% while the proportion of the elderly population (aged 60 and above) has remained at 9.2% during the two years. Moreover, the median age of the population increased from 29.7 years in 2002 to 29.9 years in 2003.
Table A.7 summarises the changes in the age structure of the Mauritian population from 1962 to 2043. The total size of the population is projected to grow by 21.0% between 2003 and 2043. The proportion of people aged under 15 will decline from 25.0% in 2003 to 18.0% in 2043 and the proportion of people aged 60 and above will increase from 9.2% in 2003 to 24.7% in 2043. In absolute numbers, the elderly population will increase from 109,172 in 2003 to 354,212 in 2043, thus exhibiting an increase of slightly above threefold.

Chart 2 portrays the age-sex profiles of the population of Island of Mauritius: from a young population (the figure narrows at top), as evidenced in 1962, to an ageing population (the figure looks more like a ‘chimney’), as projected in 2043.

Life expectancy at birth has improved considerably over the years. Table B.8 shows that life expectancy at birth was 75.34 years for females and 68.56 years for males in 2003. By 2043, life expectancy at birth is projected to be 79.87 years for females and 75.23 years for males (Table A.6).

Table B.1 indicates that the population growth rate in 2003 was 0.94% and if this rate is maintained annually, it will take 75 years for the 2003 population to double in size.

**Vital Rates**

The last twenty years has been characterised by a cyclical trend in the crude birth rate: a steady decline from 27.2 in 1979 to 18.3 in 1986 and after an increase from 19.1 in 1987 to 21.1 in 1992, it decreased again from 20.4 in 1993 to 15.6 in 2003.

Moreover, the *average* crude birth rate in the last 5-year period has declined as opposed to the preceding 5-year period: from 18.0 for the period of 1994-98 to 16.4 for the period of 1999-03.
From 1981 to 2003, the crude death rate has fluctuated between 6.7 and 7.0 and in 2003, it was 7.0.

There have been significant improvements in the survival of infants over the past four decades. The infant mortality rate has decreased from 60.1 in 1962 to 12.4 in 2003, which is the lowest infant mortality rate ever recorded in Mauritius. Moreover, figures show that there has been a decrease of about 15% in the infant mortality rate over a one year period as this rate was 14.5 in 2002.

Table B.3 shows that the still birth rate dropped from 24.3 in 1980 to 10.9 in 2003. However, the lowest still birth rate recorded was 10.2 in 2002.

From 1981 to 2002, the maternal mortality rate fluctuated between 0.7 and 0.05. In 2003, the maternal mortality rate was 0.22 maternal death per 1000 live births (22 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births).

The perinatal mortality rate declined from 37.6 in 1981 to 17.5 in 2003, thus representing a decrease of 53.4%.

The early neonatal mortality rate dropped from 15.1 in 1981 to 6.6 in 2003, thus indicating a decrease of 56.3%. However it must be noted that the number of early neonatal deaths contributed to about 53.5% of all infant deaths in 2003.

**Vital rates by geographical distribution**

Tables B.4 to B.7 show the trends in vital rates by district in 1972, 1983, 1990 and from 1995 to 2003. In 2003, Port Louis had the highest crude birth rate (18.2) while P. Wilhems had the lowest crude birth rate (13.8). Five districts had higher crude birth rates than the national level of 15.6.
In 2003, Port Louis had the highest crude death rate (8.9) and Black River had the lowest crude death rate (5.5). Moreover, in the last ten years, Port Louis had the highest crude death rate.

In 2003, Flacq had the highest still birth rate (14.6) and Savanne had the lowest still birth rate (7.5). The most noticeable improvement in still birth rate has been observed in Plaines Wilhems where the still birth rate has decreased by 16.2% - from 11.1 in 2002 to 9.3 in 2003. Pamplemousses shows a significant deterioration in the still birth rate with an increase of 57.5% during the period 2002 to 2003.

In 2003, Grand Port had the highest infant mortality rate (17.2) and Riviere du Rempart had the lowest infant mortality rate (8.7). The improvement in infant mortality rate in Riviere du Rempart represents a decrease of 54.5% over the 2002 figure, which was 19.1. In 2003, 5 districts had higher infant mortality rates than the national level of 12.4.

**Fertility Rates**

Tables B.9 to B.12 show the trends in fertility rates. There has been a downward shift in the general fertility rate from 181.4 in 1962 to 66.8 in 1986. However from 1987 onward, the general fertility rate showed an upward trend reaching 60.84 in 1999 followed by a downward trend between 1999 and 2003.

In 2003, the general fertility rate was 56.01 which is the lowest rate ever recorded in Mauritius.

The total fertility rate increased from 1.94 in 1986 to 2.36 in 1992, thus showing an increase of 21.6%. But from 1993 onward, a reversal in the trend was observed, the total fertility rate decreased from 2.31 in 1993 to 1.87 in 2003, which was the lowest rate ever recorded in Mauritius.
From 1996 to 2003, the net reproduction rate fluctuated between 0.89 and 1.01 and in 2003, it was not only below replacement level (0.89), but it was the lowest ever–recorded net reproduction rate in the Island of Mauritius.

The mean age of childbearing was 26.3 years and 26.7 years at the 1983 census and the 1990 census respectively. The 2000 census reveals that the mean age of childbearing was 26.9 years.

Table B.9a shows that between 1995 and 2003, the fertility rates declined in the first four five year-age groups (from 15-19 years to 30-34 years), but showed a slight increase in the three older five-year age groups from (35-39 years to 45-49 years). In 2003, the age-specific fertility rates showed that women aged 25-29 years had the highest fertility, which was 110.6, followed by women aged 20-24 years, which was 110.5. However between 2002-2003 a slight decrease in fertility was observed among women in all age groups except in the age groups 35-39 and 45-49.

Adolescent fertility rate (age group 15-19) increased substantially from 39.6 in 1986 to 44.4 in 1993, but from 1995 to 2003, a reversal in the trend was observed, whereby the rate decreased from 38.9 to 36.2. However, an increase in the number of livebirths pertaining to mothers aged under 15 years was observed: from 27 livebirths in 2002 to 28 livebirths in 2003.

In 2003, there were 3,693 births of third and higher orders, which accounted for 19.9% of the 18,518 total live births in the Island of Mauritius. Table B.11 shows that 8.6% of the total live births were to mothers under 20 years, thus representing 1,587 live births of which 16 were of third and higher orders.
Nuptiality

Table A.4 indicates that 27.80% of the total women in the age group 15-19 were currently married in 1962 compared with 10.83% in 1990 and 9.7% in 2000. This reveals that women got married at later years and this factor has played a crucial role in fertility reduction.

Chart 7 shows a downward trend in the marriage rate from 22.0 in 1990 to 17.5 in 2002. In 2003, there were 10,556 marriages registered in the Island of Mauritius and the marriage rate was 17.8.

In 2000, the mean age at first marriage was 29.8 years for males and 25.4 years for females.

In 2003, there were 1,190 divorces granted in the Republic of Mauritius as opposed to 1,291 divorces granted in 2002 and 64.5% of all couples granted divorce in 2003 had at least one dependent child. Incidentally, there were 1359 dependent children whose parents were granted divorce in 2003. Chart 8 shows an increasing trend in the divorce rate from 1.4 in 1996 to 1.9 in 2003.

Family Planning

New Acceptors

In 2003, there was a total of 10,947 new acceptors in the Island of Mauritius at Government Family Planning Clinics, Mauritius Family Planning Association (MFPA) and Action Familiale (A.F.). This total also includes 620 new acceptors of tubal ligation and 95 new acceptors of implant reported at Government Family Planning Clinics. Pill was the most preferred method amongst the total new acceptors accounting for 38.7% followed by barrier method (34.2%), sympto-
thermal (13.7%), tubal ligation (5.7%), injectable (5.5%), intra-uterine device (1.3%) and implant (0.9%).

**Current Users**

Table C.10 shows that, there was a total of 96,280 current users as at 31st December 2003 in the Island of Mauritius at Government Family Planning Clinics, A.F. and MFPA. This total also includes the 10,504 clients who have undergone tubal ligation, but were registered at Government hospitals. Amongst the total current users, 20.8% were on pill, 5.1% on intra-uterine device, 23.8% on barrier method, 18.5% on tubal ligation, 26.7% on sympto-thermal, 4.4% on injectable, and 0.6% on norplant.

Estimates show that 29.1% of women in the reproductive age group and 47.5% of married women in the reproductive age group were contraceptive users in 2003. However, the 2002 contraceptive prevalence survey indicated that 75.9% of married women in the reproductive age group used family planning methods. This nation-wide survey revealed that women obtained their method not only from government programme, A.F. and MFPA but also from private clinics and pharmacies and that some women used traditional methods.

**Family Planning Service Points**

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has established 5 operational health regions covering the whole Island of Mauritius and within each health region, there are service points that provide family planning services and information. In 2003, there was a total of 189 service points throughout Island of Mauritius, including 1 Family Planning Supply Centre and 48 Industrial Family Planning Supply Centres. Moreover, in 2003, about 1,749 women in the reproductive age group were served per point.
Family planning services are provided through a network of 1 Community Hospital, 2 Medi-Clinics, 23 Area Health Centres, 109 Community Health Centres and 3 Family Health Clinics, 2 Family Planning Clinics, 1 Family Planning Supply Centre and 48 Industrial Family Planning Supply Centres throughout the five health regions. Tables E.3.A to E.3.E show the attendance of family planning clients at these service points by district.

In 2003, 17 family planning clinics provided services after working hours, on Sundays and on public holidays.

Island of Rodrigues

Tables F.1 to F.6 show vital rates and family planning statistics in Rodrigues. In the past three decades, the crude birth rate dropped significantly from 45.2 in 1969 to 22.6 in 2003. However in 1997, Rodrigues experienced the lowest crude birth rate ever recorded, which was 19.8.

Fertility levels in Rodrigues, also measured by the total fertility rate, have declined from 5.16 in 1983 to 2.7 in 2003.

From 1996 to 2003, the age-specific fertility rates showed a pattern that peaked at ages 25-29. In 2003, the fertility rate of women aged 25-29 had the highest fertility rate (135.1)

The adolescent fertility rate (age group 15-19) was 69.6 in 2003 as opposed to 59.7 in 2002, representing an increase of 16.6% in one single year.

Rodrigues has witnessed remarkable improvement in the survival of infants. The infant mortality rate dropped from 56.7 in 1982 to 24.2 in 2003, thus representing a decrease of 57.3%. However, Island of Rodrigues experienced the lowest infant mortality rate ever recorded in 1997, which was 18.7.
The still birth rate declined noticeably from 21.8 in 1982 to 17.9 in 2003, thus showing a decrease of 17.9%.

In 2003, 609 new acceptors were recorded in the family planning clinics in Rodrigues: 284 were on injectable, 178 on pill, 57 on sympto-thermal, 82 on barrier method and 8 on intra-uterine device.

By the end of December 2003, 6,339 current users were recorded in the family planning clinics: 32.9% were on pill, 25.6% on injectable, 10.4% on barrier method, 23.4% on sympto-thermal, 3.7% on intra-uterine device, and 4.1% on tubal ligation. Estimates show that about 64.9% of women in the reproductive age group were contraceptive users in Rodrigues.

**Family Planning Service Points**

In 2003, there were 17 family planning service points across the Island of Rodrigues and about 575 females in the reproductive age group were served per point.