

*Social Policies
and Population Growth
in Mauritius*

RICHARD M. TITMUS

*Social Policies
and Population Growth
in Mauritius*

Report to the Governor of Mauritius
by

RICHARD M. TITMUSS AND
BRIAN ABEL-SMITH

assisted by

TONY LYNES

LONDON
Methuen and Co Ltd
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.2

Published in Mauritius by authority
of the Mauritius Legislative Council

Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1960
Port Louis

★

First published in London by
Methuen and Co Ltd 1961
Catalogue Number 2/6437/10

*Printed in England
by Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited
at The Thanet Press, Margate*

To His Excellency The Governor of Mauritius,
Sir Colville Montgomery Deverell, K.C.M.G., C.V.O.,
O.B.E.

LONDON 1960

Your Excellency,

In September 1957 your predecessor appointed a Committee of Ministers to investigate the feasibility of contributory, compulsory and comprehensive social insurance in Mauritius. This committee reported at the end of 1958. In January 1959 your predecessor invited me

“In the light of the report of the Ministerial Committee, to advise the Government of Mauritius as to the provisions to be made for social security, bearing in mind the resources of the territory and the needs of its people”.

I accepted this assignment on 24th February and asked whether the terms of reference could be interpreted widely enough to allow me to consider the whole field of social security, health and welfare in Mauritius. I also asked for the services, in London and Mauritius, of Dr. Brian Abel-Smith and Mr. Tony Lynes. These requests were granted.

During the next few months, I took the opportunity afforded by the visits of several of your Ministers to London to discuss with them my terms of reference and hear in greater detail about the problems facing the island. I also studied the reports of earlier committees and commissions and a variety of other papers which helped me to see these problems against the widest possible background.

I had hoped to be able to visit Mauritius in August 1959 but ill-health made this impossible. Instead, I asked Dr. Abel-Smith and Mr. Lynes to go to Mauritius in my place to undertake initial investigations. Accordingly, my two colleagues arrived in Mauritius on 5th August 1959. Dr. Abel-Smith left on 2nd September 1959, and Mr. Lynes on 17th September 1959.

Soon after my colleagues arrived in Mauritius, an advertisement was inserted in the newspapers asking for written and oral evidence. On 28th August 1959, oral evidence was received from seven persons, whose names are among those listed in Appendix A of this report.

mortality Levels Implied by Life Table
titus.

mortality level tions model bles)	Average annual change in mortality level		
	1957	1944-52	1952-57

82	+3.2	+1.0
73	+3.6	+1.2
87	+4.8	+1.4
88	+5.5	+1.4
93	+7.4	+2.6
89	+8.4	+2.0
84	+7.8	+2.6
79	+7.0	+2.8
65	+5.6	+1.8
57	+4.6	+1.8
49	+4.1	+1.8
40	+3.8	+1.0
34	+4.0	+0.4
31	+3.9*	—
27	+3.2*	+0.2
38	+2.2*	+4.0
Average:	+4.9	+1.6

82	+3.2	+0.8
68	+3.1	+1.8
80	+3.9	+1.2
81	+3.6	+2.4
75	+6.6	+2.2
73	+7.8*	+2.2
67	+6.4	+2.0
70	+5.1	+3.0
68	+4.6	+2.4
68	+4.9	+2.0
66	+4.6	+2.0
66	+4.2	+2.8
60	+4.0	+2.8
56	+5.0	+1.4
50	+5.9	-0.4
51	+5.8	+0.2
Average:	+4.9	+1.8

se age groups is understated, since mortality
n model level 0.

dy at moderate levels by 1944, and
: quite so impressive.†

ility decline have been recorded in Ceylon,
) the principal factor in bringing down the
: striking in the age groups between 10 and

At the upper ages women seem to have benefited more than men from the improvements in health conditions. In fact, even in 1957 death-rates for men over 45 remained high by prevailing world standards.*

The average mortality gains recorded annually, defined in terms of U.N. model level numbers, amounted to about 1.7 levels during 1952-57, as compared with a very rapid gain of about five levels annually during the earlier period (Table B-10). Thus, even during the later period when the fall in the death-rate had tapered off, mortality was declining at a rate faster than the "normal" trend as defined for projection purposes in the U.N. models.

The past trend of mortality in Mauritius, which after a long period of only slight improvement has changed drastically in recent years, does not provide a useful basis for projecting the rate of decline likely to occur in the future. While the rapid rate of decline experienced since the war cannot long continue, it is nevertheless true that mortality still remains quite high at certain ages. Some further decline therefore seems probable. The method adopted for estimating future mortality trends for purposes of the population projections is described in Section VI-A.

IV. FERTILITY TRENDS

A. Statistics on births by age of mother

While trends in fertility as measured by the crude birth-rate or general fertility ratios can be studied over a long period in Mauritius, it is only recently that more refined data have become available. Since 1955 information relating to age of mother has been obtained on the birth registration form. Age-specific birth-rates computed from these

Appendix B—Table 11. Age-specific Fertility Rates for Mauritius:
1955-58†

Age group‡	1955	1956	1957	1958
15-19	145.3	153.2	146.3	143.8
20-24	279.8	299.8	310.7	306.4
25-29	269.8	281.8	280.3	263.3
30-34	228.5	242.3	241.3	229.1
35-39	152.4	174.3	169.1	155.1
40-44	55.8	55.6	56.8	54.0

SOURCE: Recent issues of the *Yearbook of Statistics*

† For General and Indo-Mauritian population.

‡ Rates for ages below 15 and above 44 are here omitted.

* It will be seen that, beginning at age 30, a fall of approximately 10 levels, i.e. equivalent to two models, occurs with each successive age group. Beyond age 55 the disparity between mortality levels at successive age groups is not so great.

Appendix B—Table 12. Age-specific Fertility Rates for Selected Countries

(Births per 1,000 women in age group)

Age group*	Mauritius 1956-58	Ceylon 1956	Taiwan 1954	Singapore 1947	British Guiana 1954	Venezuela 1950	Guatemala 1950	Puerto Rico 1950	Trinidad & Tobago 1955	El Salvador 1950	Fiji 1955
15-19	144.3	71.0	47.5	101.1	165.5	NA	163.2	99.2	178.9	NA	109.5
20-24	299.0	289.4	263.2	314.1	323.3	276.4	285.7	279.7	321.4	296.0	280.8
25-29	289.3	323.9	334.1	333.8	288.4	277.5	298.2	260.3	276.8	320.2	271.1
30-34	239.3	221.7	291.8	269.7	214.2	217.3	258.5	200.0	201.2	249.4	180.4
35-39	169.7	173.5	218.2	196.3	125.7	144.7	197.1	143.1	129.3	146.0	141.2
40-44	54.6	39.3	104.4	83.3	43.0	52.4	86.9	53.1	40.5	58.4	59.3

NA=Not available.

SOURCE: Except for Mauritius and Ceylon, data are from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook*. Ceylon rates from National Planning Council, *Population Projections for Ceylon 1956-1981*, Colombo, 1959, p. 32.

* Rates for ages below 15 and above 44 are here omitted.

274

data are shown in Table B-11.* These rates and Indo-Mauritian population who total of the total.†

The time period for which these new data are shown is 1956-58. It will give any indication of trends. It will of the rates are very high; in fact, if the during the passage of a cohort of women ages, these women would bear on average numbers of female births related to age imply a gross reproduction rate of 2.9 of 2.47.

It is also noteworthy that child-bearing rates in Mauritius. This may be seen very clearly in the 1956-58 average fertility rates for Mauritius for some other countries. The early doubt a reflection of the early marriage Indian culture. The same pattern is where Indians form a large part of the British Guiana, Trinidad and Tobago the peak period of child-bearing get whereas it is more often at ages 25-29.

As shown in Chapter 3, fertility in Mauritius by marked annual fluctuations, and sensitive to changes in economic conditions in health and other post-war developments.

Appendix B—Table 13. Derivation of Rates for Mauritius: 1956-58

Age group of women	Live births to General and Indo-Mauritian women 1956-58 (1)	Live births to all groups 1956-58† (2)
15-19§	10,728	11,074
20-24	20,085	20,734
25-29	17,366	17,927
30-34	14,197	14,656
35-39	7,607	7,853
40-44	2,459	2,539
Total	72,442	74,783

† Distribution in col. 1 applied to total.

§ Including also births to females under age 15.

|| Including also births to females aged 45 and over.

* These rates are taken from the Mauritius population estimates used as a base for the 1952 census data and vital statistics figures.

† Chinese births by age of mother are excluded.

275