

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF 1983 POPULATION CENSUS

Introduction

In 1983 Mauritius successfully conducted its fifteenth census of population on a "de facto" basis. Although initially planned for 1982, the exercise had to be reported to 1983 because of parliamentary elections held in June 1982.

The census field operations were conducted in two rounds. A Housing Census was taken from mid-March to May and it provided a list of heads of households and their addresses which served as basis for the Population Census at the second round of the exercise. The Population Census itself was conducted between 20th June and 17th July 1983 in respect of all persons who were alive in the Islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St. Brandon on the night of 2 - 3 July 1983.

The temporary fieldstaff recruited to carry out the census field-work was composed of 2 Chief Supervisors, 9 Senior Supervisors, 85 Supervisors, 607 Chief Enumerators and 3,568 Enumerators, i.e. a total of 4,271 persons.

The data collected at the census are being processed and it is expected that the first tabulations will be available around June 1984. This delay is considered reasonable in view of the large number of census forms which have to be edited and coded, and the enormous volume of data that have to be processed and cleaned before the computer can tabulate them. However, it has been possible to obtain certain preliminary results from the counts made by fieldstaff after completion of the field operations.

Total population

A preliminary count of the "de facto" population enumerated at the census of 1983 is given in the following table which also shows how the population has grown between the previous census in 1972 and the present one.

Table 1 - Population change between last two censuses

	Area (sq.km)	Population enumerated		Intercensal increase			Average annual rate of growth (%)
		1972 Census	1983 Census	Absolute	%	Annual	
Island of Mauritius	1,865	826,199	960,228	134,029	16	12,184	1.38
Island of Rodrigues	104	24,769	32,963	8,194	33	745	2.63
Agalega	70	238	350	112	...	...	...
St. Brandon	1	128	137	9	...	...	...
Mauritius	2,040	851,334	993,678	142,344	17	12,940	1.42

It is seen that the total number of persons enumerated in Mauritius at the 1983 Census was 993,678 as compared to 851,334 in 1972. This represents an absolute increase of 142,344 or a percentage increase of 17% over the 11 years between the two censuses. If we look at the Islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues separately we find that the percentage increase for Rodrigues (33%) is more than double the percentage increase for Mauritius (16%).

Rate of intercensal growth

The average annual rate of growth of population for the whole of Mauritius was 1.42% between the two censuses. Again, the separate rate for Rodrigues (2.63% per annum) is almost double the growth rate for the Island of Mauritius (1.38% per annum).

Table 2 below compares the growth rates for the last two intercensal periods 1962 - 1972 and 1972 - 1983. Although there has been a decline in the growth rates for both the Islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues, we observe that the decline in the rate for Rodrigues is only half the decline for Mauritius.

Table 2 - Comparison of growth rates for intercensal periods

	<u>Intercensal period</u>		<u>% change</u>
	1962 - 72	1972 - 83	
Island of Mauritius	1.94	1.38	- 29%
Island of Rodrigues	3.05	2.63	- 14%

Distribution of population by geographical district

Table 3 compares the preliminary census count for the Islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues with the official estimate for 1983 based on the 1972 Census data.

Table 3 - Comparison of census count with official estimate

	<u>1983 Census count</u>	<u>1983 estimate based on 1972 census data</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Island of Mauritius	960,228	957,301	+ 2,927
Island of Rodrigues	32,963	35,204	- 2,241
Total	993,191	992,505	+ 686

It is observed that the total count for the Island of Mauritius is about 2,900 higher than the official estimate. Since births, deaths and international migration are all taken care of in the official estimates, one of the possible explanations for the discrepancy would be that the enumeration at the 1983 Census was slightly better than that in 1972. Similarly, the count for Rodrigues, which is smaller than the official estimate by about 2,200, could reflect some underenumeration in Rodrigues. However, field checks carried out in Rodrigues have indicated that the extent of underenumeration, if any, is negligible. It is therefore possible that in the past a number of persons have left Rodrigues for Mauritius as stowaways. These persons would not appear in the counts of passenger traffic between Rodrigues and Mauritius so that the official population estimate for Mauritius would be smaller than the actual population, whereas that for Rodrigues would be larger. This explanation need not be the real one, but if it is, then one can say that the enumeration in both islands has been complete and that the extent of underenumeration is negligible relative to the 1972 Census. However, this assertion needs to be supported by detailed analysis later on.

Distribution of population by district

Table 4 shows the preliminary census counts of population for the geographical districts of the Island of Mauritius. It also compares these counts with the official estimate for 1983 based on the 1972 census data.

Table 4 - Comparison of census count with official estimate by geographical district

<u>Geographical district</u>	<u>1983 Census count</u>	<u>Estimate based on 1972 Census</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Port Louis	132,189	148,317	- 16,128
Pamplemousses	90,164	82,128	8,036
Rivière du Rempart	80,492	80,556	- 64
Flacq	107,454	108,035	- 581
Grand Port	92,328	93,995	- 1,667
Savanne	58,283	61,304	- 3,021
Plaines Wilhems	301,329	294,124	7,205
Moka	61,266	56,660	4,606
Black River	36,723	32,182	4,541
Island of Mauritius	960,228	957,301	2,927

When interpreting the differences within districts it must be noted that the official estimates based on the 1972 Census data do not take into account any migration between one district and another. Hence at least part of the difference between the census count and the official estimate for each district must be attributed to the net balance of movements of population into or out of that district. Thus we observe in Table 4 that during the intercensal period 1972 - 1983 there has been a net balance in favour of Pamplemousses (8000), Plains Wilhems (7200), Moka (4600) and Black River (4500). By far the biggest loser of population has been the district of Port Louis (- 16,100) with Savanne (- 3,000), Grand Port (- 1,700) and Flacq (- 600) lagging well behind. The net effect of migration on Rivière du Rempart seems to be negligible. Once again it must be stressed that these conclusions are only tentative and must be checked against detailed census data on migration at a later stage.

Distribution of population by electoral constituency

The population in each constituency and the way it has changed from the 1972 Census to the 1983 Census is shown in Table 5. The main features to be noted are :

- (i) constituencies Nos. 1 and 2 show practically no change in the size of their population;
- (ii) the population in constituency No. 3 has declined by nearly 4,700;
- (iii) all remaining constituencies show an increase, which varies from about 2,800 in No. 13 to about 16,600 in No. 5.

Table 5 - Population of Mauritius by constituency

<u>Constituency</u>	<u>1972 Census</u>	<u>1983 Census</u>	<u>Change from 1972 to 1983</u>
1. Grand River North West - Port Louis West	39,979	39,741	- 238
2. Port Louis South - Port Louis Central	33,112	33,112	-
3. Port Louis Maritime - Port Louis East	26,687	22,005	- 4,682
4. Port Louis North - Montagne Longue	48,203	56,772	8,569
5. Pamplemousses - Triolet	44,408	60,986	16,578
6. Grand'Baie - Poudre d'Or	44,459	55,749	11,290
7. Piton - Rivière du Rempart	35,809	41,206	5,397
8. Quartier Militaire - Moka	41,182	48,695	7,513
9. Flacq - Bon Accueil	50,156	60,938	10,782
10. Montagne Blanche - Grand River South East	41,375	49,565	8,190
11. Vieux Grand Port - Rose Belle	38,837	44,488	5,651
12. Mahebourg - Plaine Magnien	37,614	43,024	5,410
13. Rivière des Anguilles - Souillac	37,378	40,189	2,811
14. Savanne - Black River	47,404	58,878	11,474
15. La Caverne - Phoenix	47,340	58,150	10,810
16. Vacoas - Floréal	43,464	50,561	7,097
17. Curepipe - Midlands	36,621	43,292	6,671
18. Belle Rose - Quatre Bornes	39,361	42,688	3,327
19. Stanley - Rose Hill	42,840	48,199	5,359
20. Beau Bassin - Petite Rivière	49,970	61,990	12,020
<b>All Constituencies - Island of Mauritius</b>	<b>826,199</b>	<b>960,228</b>	<b>134,029</b>
21. Rodrigues	24,769	32,963	8,194
<b>All Constituencies - Mauritius</b>	<b>850,968</b>	<b>993,191</b>	<b>142,223</b>

Reliability of data

Although the count of persons seems to be satisfactory, the reliability of the data collected can be assessed only at the analysis stage. However, reports from the field indicate that the information on employment and unemployment may be seriously in error. Many persons known to be working have strongly insisted on being entered as unemployed on the census form. Furthermore, many other persons who are not working and are not interested in working have maintained that they are looking for a job.

On the whole, however, the census has been a successful operation, yielding a large volume of reliable information on the socio-demographic characteristics and the living conditions of the population.

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January 1984