



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**Ministry of Economic Planning and Development**

**CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE**

**1990**  
**HOUSING AND POPULATION CENSUS**  
**OF**  
**MAURITIUS**

**ANALYSIS REPORT**

**Volume III — Disability and its prevalence**

**September 1996**

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MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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## **FOREWORD**

The Central Statistical Office conducted a complete Housing and Population Census in 1990. This was the sixteenth census for the country. A series of tabulation reports covering topics such as housing, demography and fertility, economic activity, education, household characteristics, migration and disability was published during the following years. At the same time, an evaluation and analysis of the census data was carried out with the help of a regional advisor from the United Nations Economics Commission for Africa (UNECA).

This report, forming part of a series of analytical reports prepared by the CSO is about disability in Mauritius. It covers the demographic, social and economic characteristics of people with disabilities as reported in the 1990 census. It should be noted that this was the first census in which statistical data on disability were collected

I would like to convey my gratitude to the team of local analysts for the efforts put into the analysis of the census data and the preparation of the reports. My thanks also go to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) for financial and technical assistance. Finally, the analyst team and myself are most grateful to Dr. K.V. Ramachandran for his guidance and supervision.

**(S. Basant Rai)**  
**Director of Statistics**

Central Statistical Office  
Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

**PORT LOUIS**

September 1996

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background information.

The Housing and Population Census is conducted about every ten years, in order to collect up to date information on the Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population for planning purposes by policy makers and private users. For the first time in the 1990 Census, a question relating to disability was included in the population Census questionnaire so as to collect information on disability at national level. It is worth noting that in some countries, among other causes, civil wars or diseases like polio might be contributing towards a high prevalence of disability while these factors might not be considered as causes of disability in Mauritius actually.

## 1.2 - Definitions of Disability

For the 1990 Census, a person with disabilities is considered to be one with a long term disability which limits his/her participation in individual and/or social activities considered normal for a person of his/her age and that the disability has lasted or is expected to last for six months or more. According to the W.H.O manual on the classification of Impairment, Disabilities and Handicaps (WHO, 1980), a simplistic way of depicting the relationship between disease, impairment, disability and handicap is as follows:-

DISEASE OR -----> IMPAIRMENT -----> DISABILITY -----> HANDICAP  
DISORDER

(Intrinsic                      (Exteriorized)                      (Objectified)                      (Socialized)  
situation)

According to the same manual, a consequence of disease may be classified in any one of the three sets of codes relating to impairment, disability or handicap



independently though the codification of impairment, disability and handicap simultaneously in conjunction with the international classification of disease (ICD) would yield a complete specification of the status of the individual. Among the W.H.O definitions of impairment, disability and handicap (WHO, 1980: pp 27-29), the W.H.O. definition of disability matches the census definition of disability the closest.

### **1.3 - Reporting information on disability**

The head of the household was required to fill in the census questionnaire and hence report any cases of disability in his/her household. In case of difficulties, the field enumerator was required to help the head of household in filling the questionnaire. There might be some element of subjectivity on the part of the head of household in assessing whether someone is disabled. The best way of detecting disability would be to carry out a medical test by a professional before accepting someone as being disabled but this procedure is impracticable in a census. In contrast, in a specialized survey on the topic, medical screening might be possible.

It is expected that all cases of serious disability have been picked up in the Census though some borderline cases might have gone undetected. Still, the data on disability would help to constitute a national profile of people with disabilities.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### 2.1 Introduction

This section attempts to investigate the incidence of disability in relation to the demographic characteristics of the disabled. This would help in the detection of any demographic characteristics peculiar to the disabled and hence would lead towards a better understanding of people with disabilities.

### 2.2 Prevalence of disability

A total of 27,852 persons with disabilities was reported at the 1990 Population Census of Mauritius representing about 2.64% of the total population enumerated in the Republic of Mauritius. The crude disability rate (The number of disabled persons per 1,000 mid-year population) prevailing was 26.4. The total number of disabled disaggregated by sex yields 14,613 males and 13,239 females that is a sex ratio of 110.4 hence indicating a predominance of males among people with disabilities.

**Table 2.1 - People with disabilities by sex**

Sex	Island of Mauritius	Island of Rodrigues	Republic of Mauritius
Male	14230	383	14613
Female	12867	372	13239
<b>B.sexes</b>	<b>27097</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>27852</b>

Disaggregating the number of disabled islandwise gave 27,097 persons with disabilities that is 14,230 males, and 12,867 females for the Island of Mauritius and 755 persons with disabilities that is 383 males and 372 females for the island of Rodrigues. The sex ratio among the disabled being 110.6 for the island of Mauritius and 103.0 for the Island of Rodrigues again indicating male predominance over disability.

It should be noted that though the number of persons with disabilities reported was 27,852, one person might be suffering from more than one disability and hence the number of cases of disability is expected to be higher. In fact, the number of cases of disability reported was 33,358 that is 17,504 males and 15,854 females, sex ratio being 110.4.

**Table 2.2 - Cases of disability by type, Republic of Mauritius**

Types of disability	No. of cases		
	Male	Female	B.sexes
Incomplete use of legs and/or feet	4100	3012	7112
Incomplete use of arms and/or fingers	2109	1425	3534
Partial or total loss of sight even with glasses	2892	3871	6763
Partial or total loss of hearing	1254	1552	2806
Partial or total loss of speech	1091	913	2004
Slow development/learning difficulties	912	799	1711
Behaviour problems/mental disability	3413	2755	6168
Loss of consciousness, fits, blackouts	666	658	1324
Other disabilities	1067	869	1936
<b>All disabilities</b>	<b>17504</b>	<b>15854</b>	<b>33358</b>

Regarding the distribution by type of disability as table 2.2 shows, "Incomplete use of legs and feet" comes topmost followed by "partial or total loss of sight even with glasses" and "Behavioural problems/mental disability".

Further analysis however, will consider only number of disabled persons rather than number of cases of disabilities.

### **2.3 - Distribution by geographical district**

The district of Plaines Wilhems registered the highest number of disabled persons that is 8,744 followed by the district of Port Louis (4,257). Clearly, these two districts come topmost as a result of their large population size. A better indicator of the prevalence of disability among the districts is given by the disability rate by district. Thus the disability rates for the district of Port Louis, Plaines Wilhems and Savanne are observed to be higher than the rate for the Republic while the disability rate for Rodrigues is the lowest. ( See Table 2.3 ).

**Table 2.3 - People with disabilities by district and sex**

District	No. of disabled			Disability rate
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	
Port Louis	2129	2128	4257	32.0
Pamplemousses	1434	984	2418	23.8
Riv. du Rempart	1216	951	2167	25.0
Flacq	1453	1328	2781	24.7
Grand Port	1304	1188	2492	25.8
Savanne	957	772	1729	28.4
Plaines Wilhems	4407	4337	8744	27.2
Moka	762	705	1467	22.5
Black River	568	474	1042	23.8
<b>Island of Mauritius</b>	<b>14230</b>	<b>12867</b>	<b>27097</b>	<b>26.5</b>
<b>Island of Rodrigues</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>22.1</b>
<b>Republic of Mauritius</b>	<b>14613</b>	<b>13239</b>	<b>27852</b>	<b>26.4</b>

## 2.4 - Disability by type

Table 2.4 shows the distribution of persons with disabilities by type of disability. According to the table, certain types of disability have a greater incidence on the population than others. For instance, for the Republic of Mauritius, disability of the "eye" and "mental" disability are on the top of the list with 5,713 persons each and together representing 41.0% of disabled persons. Next on the list comes "legs and feet" accounting for another 5,273 persons that is 18.9% of all disabled persons.

Further analysis reveals the existence of sex differentials as regards type of disability. For instance "eye" disability seem to be more frequent among females and accounts for 24.5% of disabilities among females while the corresponding proportion among males is 16.9%. In contrast, "Legs and feet" and "mental" disabilities are found to be more frequent among males and account for respectively 20.8% and 21.5% of disabilities among males while the corresponding proportions for females are 16.9% and 19.4% respectively.

As regards Rodrigues, disabilities with the highest prevalence are the same as that for the Republic that is "legs and feet", "Eye" and "mental" except that in the case of Rodrigues, "legs and feet" tops the list with 165 persons (21.9%) suffering from it.

**Table2.4 - People with disabilities by type of disability and sex**

Types of disability	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Legs&feet(LF)	3034	2239	5273	80	85	165
Arms&fingers(AF)	813	463	1276	41	22	63
LF&AF	972	717	1689	17	23	40
Eye	2476	3237	5713	59	80	139
Ear	712	885	1597	30	25	55
Eye&ear	206	333	539	1	2	3
Speech	631	514	1145	25	23	48
Ear&speech	253	233	486	10	8	18
Slow development	767	641	1408	19	14	33
Mental	3144	2569	5713	75	61	136
Fits	577	572	1149	7	14	21
Other	1028	836	1864	19	15	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>14613</b>	<b>13239</b>	<b>27852</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>755</b>

## 2.5 Disability by age

The incidence of disability seem to be highly correlated with age. A good indicator for the study of the association between age and incidence of disability, is the age and sex-specific disability rate (ASSDR), defined as the number of disabled persons of a particular age group and sex per 1,000 population of that same age group and sex. Figure 1 makes a comparison of age-specific disability rates (ASDR) (Both sexes combined) for the Republic of Mauritius with that of Rodrigues while figures 2 and 3 compare the sex differences in age-specific disability rates for the Republic of Mauritius and Island of Rodrigues respectively.

Figure 1 shows that there is a general increasing pattern with age for the Republic of Mauritius as well as for the Island of Rodrigues except that the ASDR for Rodrigues show some undulations, perhaps due to the small size of the island's population. A closer look at the trend for the Republic indicates a steady increase with age and after the forties, an increasingly rapid evolution of ASDR is observed. The trend of ASDR for Rodrigues is

similar to that for the Republic, except that between the age bracket 20 - 50 years, the ASDR tend to stabilize. Comparing the evolution of ASDR for Rodrigues with that of the Republic, it is observed that below the age of 25, the Rodrigues citizens are more prone to the incidence of disability while between ages 25 to 60 years, citizens of the Republic, which comprise mainly of citizens of the Island of Mauritius, are more prone to the incidence of disability. Beyond the age of 60, the incidence of disability seem to be similar for Rodrigues, as well as for the Republic.

As figure 2 shows, for the Republic, the ASSDR are higher for males than females for all ages except for age group 75 +, where a reversal of the situation is observed. This reversal might be explained by the higher proportion of women who live further beyond age 75 than men.

**Table 2.5 - Age and sex specific disability rates**

Age group	Republic of Mauritius						Island of Rodrigues					
	No. of disabled			ASSDR			No. of disabled			ASSDR		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.sexes
0-4	203	161	364	4.2	3.4	3.8	16	18	34	8.0	9.2	8.6
5-9	484	406	890	9.2	8.0	8.6	32	20	52	12.9	7.9	10.3
10-14	763	530	1293	13.4	9.5	11.4	43	22	65	17.5	9.1	13.3
15-19	733	541	1274	14.9	11.3	13.1	35	28	63	17.4	14.1	15.8
20-24	947	593	1540	18.1	11.8	15.0	36	22	58	21.9	14.3	18.2
25-29	1059	733	1792	19.7	14.1	17.0	22	18	40	17.8	13.7	15.7
30-34	989	709	1698	20.7	15.5	18.1	20	15	35	18.0	14.0	16.0
35-39	999	744	1743	24.2	18.6	21.5	13	15	28	15.4	19.2	17.2
40-44	888	861	1749	29.5	28.4	28.9	8	18	26	12.0	29.0	20.2
45-49	1039	835	1874	47.4	36.6	41.9	11	23	34	16.0	32.9	24.5
50-54	981	785	1766	53.1	40.1	46.4	26	23	49	45.6	38.2	41.8
55-59	1127	815	1942	71.8	49.5	60.4	21	13	34	44.8	28.3	36.6
60-64	1180	1000	2180	80.0	62.2	70.7	25	29	54	75.3	85.0	80.2
65-69	1128	1063	2191	99.8	82.1	90.3	24	20	44	100.4	78.7	89.2
70-74	857	1034	1891	132.3	125.1	128.2	20	35	55	115.6	152.8	136.8
75+	1236	2429	3665	199.6	210.3	206.5	31	53	84	198.7	173.2	181.8
<b>All ages</b>	<b>14613</b>	<b>13239</b>	<b>27852</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>22.1</b>

The difference in the incidence of disability between men and women tend to be more pronounced for the age bracket (20 - 34) years when the ASSDR turn to be around 19.5 for

males as against 13.7 for females and also for the age bracket 50 - 69 years when the ASSDR is around 73.3 for males and only 56.3 for females.

As regards Rodrigues, the evolution of ASSDR in figure 3 also shows that males are more prone to disability in the age bracket 0 - 34 years as indicated by an ASSDR value of 15.8 for males and 11.1 for females. On the contrary, females seem to be more exposed to disability than males in the age bracket 35 - 49 years as indicated by an ASSDR value of 14.5 for male and 26.6 for females. At older ages, there is no clear-cut tendency.

Further analysis of the population of disabled by age and sex reveal that for the Republic, females are relatively older than males since fifty percent of females are aged 53.2 years and above while for males the corresponding value is 46.2 years and above.

In an attempt to eliminate any contribution of age structure of the population on the observed predominance of disability among males, age standardized disability rates need to be compared. The unstandardized disability rates for the Republic are 27.69 and 25.03 for males and females respectively. If the ASSDR for males were prevalent among the females, then the females would have an expected disability rate of 30.53. In other words, on the standard age structure (female), female ASSDR yield a disability rate of 25.03 while male ASSDR yield a disability rate of 30.53. Hence, the higher prevalence of disability among males is confirmed.

Similarly, due to differences in age structure of the population of Rodrigues and that of the Republic, a comparison of age-standardized disability rate is required. Taking the population of the Republic by sex as standard, application of the ASSDR for Rodrigues to that standard population yield a standardised disability rate of 24.63 and 25.26 for male and female respectively. Comparing the standardized rates for Rodrigues with the corresponding rates for the Republic reveal that there is a higher incidence of disability among males of the Republic as compared to Rodriguan males while conversely among females, Rodriguans seem to be more prone to disability.

## 2.6 - Types of disability by age and sex

For this analysis, the types of disability as well as age have been classified into broader groups for a better appreciation of any association between the two variables. As table 2.6 shows, among disabled females aged (0-4) years in the Republic, disabilities relating to the legs, feet, arms and fingers show the highest prevalence with 37.3% of females in that age group suffering from it while the corresponding figure among disabled males is 29.6%. Conversely, disabilities relating to mental, slow development and fits are higher among disabled males in the age bracket (0-4) years (31.5%) as compared to females (23.6%).

**Table 2.6 - Types of disability by age and sex**

(i) Rep. of Mauritius

Sex	Age group	Types of disability				Total
		LF, AF and Combinations	Eye, Ear, Speech and combinations	mental, slow-development and fits	Other	
Male	0-4	60	60	64	19	203
	5-14	268	368	546	65	1247
	15-59	2711	1994	3364	693	8762
	60+	1780	1856	514	251	4401
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>4819</b>	<b>4278</b>	<b>4488</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>14613</b>
Female	0-4	60	49	38	14	161
	5-14	184	344	349	59	936
	15-59	1618	1844	2669	485	6616
	60+	1557	2965	726	278	5526
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>3419</b>	<b>5202</b>	<b>3782</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>13239</b>

(ii) Island of Rodrigues

Sex	Age group	Types of disability				Total
		LF, AF and Combinations	Eye, Ear, Speech and combinations	mental, slow-development and fits	Other	
Male	0-4	2	9	5	0	16
	5-14	23	27	19	6	75
	15-59	59	56	66	11	192
	60+	54	33	11	2	100
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>383</b>
Female	0-4	6	8	4	0	18
	5-14	19	13	8	2	42
	15-59	46	64	56	9	175
	60+	59	53	21	4	137
	<b>All ages</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>372</b>



As regards disabled children in the age bracket (5-14) years, disabilities relating to mental, slow development and fits are highly prevalent among them as figures show that 43.8% of disabled males and 37.3% of disabled females in that age group are concerned. Among disabled persons in the age bracket (15-59) years, similarly, mental, slow development and fits rank first in terms of high prevalence where 38.4% of males and 40.3% of females in that age bracket are concerned.

The types of disabilities most prevalent among disabled persons in the retirement age are disabilities of the broad category eye, ear and speech followed by disabilities relating to the legs, feet, arms and fingers. The figures show that 42.2% disabled males and 53.7% disabled females aged 60+ years suffer from disabilities relating to eyes, ears and speech while 40.4% of disabled males and 28.2% of disabled females suffer from disabilities relating to the legs, feet, arms and fingers.

The figures for Rodrigues show certain peculiarities as compared to the Republic of Mauritius. For instance, for disabled children in the age category (5-14) years, mental disabilities, slow development and fits are the least prevalent in Rodrigues while the reverse is the case for the Republic. Also, among disabled Rodriguans in the retirement age, disabilities relating to the legs, feet, arms and fingers show the highest prevalence while for the Republic of Mauritius, disabilities relating to the eyes, ears and speech take the lead.

## **2.7 People with disabilities in private household**

The 1990 population Census enumerated some 27,852 persons with disabilities in the Republic of Mauritius of which 27,177 were currently residing in private households at Census time. The remaining 675 were most probably located in institutions. In this section, the subpopulation of disabled persons residing in private households, will be studied in relation to the household characteristics of the household of which they form part.

**Table 2.7 - People with disabilities in private households, by size of household****(i) Rep. of Mauritius**

Household of:	No. of hhlds	Disabled Pop.	Households with indicated no. of disabled				
			0	1	2	3	4+
1 person	12336	1537	10799	1537	0	0	0
2 persons	25092	2998	22462	2262	368	0	0
3 persons	39673	3247	36838	2465	328	42	0
4 persons	55797	4185	52143	3215	358	70	11
5 persons	42905	4439	38981	3501	353	56	14
6 persons	26905	3902	23544	2919	358	71	13
7 persons	15166	2765	12829	1985	298	42	12
8 persons	8352	1734	6944	1163	188	41	16
9 persons	4432	971	3630	661	119	16	6
10+ persons	5452	1399	4353	882	164	39	14
<b>All households</b>	<b>236110</b>	<b>27177</b>	<b>212523</b>	<b>20590</b>	<b>2534</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>86</b>

**(ii) Island of Rodrigues**

Household of:	No. of hhlds	Disabled pop	Households with indicated no. of disabled				
			0	1	2	3	4+
1 person	483	51	432	51	0	0	0
2 persons	746	77	677	61	8	0	0
3 persons	1170	84	1097	63	9	1	0
4 persons	1235	100	1146	81	5	3	0
5 persons	1015	88	933	76	6	0	0
6 persons	791	81	718	66	6	1	0
7 persons	602	66	546	46	10	0	0
8 persons	406	65	351	45	10	0	0
9 persons	286	61	235	44	5	1	1
10+ persons	356	82	294	48	10	3	1
<b>All households</b>	<b>7090</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>6429</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>

In the Republic, 236,110 households were enumerated for 1990 Census of which 23,587 households that is about 10.0% of total households had one or more disabled members. Taking only those households with disabled members, 87.3% households had one disabled member while another 10.7% had two members disabled.

Analysing the prevalence of disability among households as a function of household size, it is observed that the proportion of households with disabled persons decreases from 12.5% for household size one to reach a minimum of 6.5% for household size four and then increases continuously to reach 20.2% for household size ten and above. This

is an indication that people with disabilities tend to be located in very small and very large sized households.

The island of Rodrigues, with its 661 households ( representing 9.3% of all households) consisting of at least one member disabled, show a similar pattern of prevalence of disability by household size as for the Republic except that the minimum prevalence of 6.2% is attained for households size 3. ( See table 2.7 for details).

**Table 2.8 - Household size by no. of disabled per household**

Island	No. of disabled per household					All households
	0	1	2	3	4+	
Republic of Mauritius	4.41	4.87	5.34	6.12	6.95	4.46
Island of Rodrigues	4.76	5.28	6.29	7.00	10.00	4.82

A slightly different way of viewing the population of disabled in relation to their households, is to find out the average household size per specified number of disabled persons in the household as shown in table 2.8. The figures indicate that the average household size for households with disabled members is higher than the average household size for households with no disabled members. Also, household size tends to increase with increasing number of disabled persons in the household.

### **3. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section attempts to shed some light on the social profile of the population of disabled especially in relation to their marital, educational and household characteristics. This would contribute towards a better understanding of the social conditions of people with disabilities.

#### **3.2 - Marital Characteristics**

The analysis of marital characteristics of the disabled, will be focused on that section of the population aged 20 years and above, since it is usually beyond age 20 that the marital status of people tend to change. Comparisons of the marital characteristics of the population of disabled with the marital characteristics of the overall population will give further insight about the evolution of marital status among people with disabilities.

Table 3.1 showing the distribution of marital status by sex for disabled as well as the overall population indicates that among the disabled, 7,362 were single, 10,073 were married, 5,216 were widowed and 1,207 were divorced or separated representing 30.6%, 41.9%, 21.7% and 5.0% respectively of persons aged twenty years and above. The figures disaggregated by sex reveal that there is a higher proportion of married among the males (54.8%) as compared to 28.2% for females and conversely there is a higher proportion of widowed among females (37.6%) as compared to males (6.8%). Comparing with the distribution of marital states for the overall population, it is observed that the proportion of single and widowed are higher among disabled people, that is, 30.6% and 21.7% respectively as compared to 23.4% and 8.3% in the overall population. On the other hand, the proportion married is lower in the disabled population (41.9%) than the overall population (65.2%).

These observations might to some extent be explained by the older age structure of the population of disabled but could also be genuine since disability may inhibit marriage.

As regards Rodrigues, 158 (29.2%) were single, 252 (46.6%) were married, 95 (17.6%) were widowed and the remaining 36 (6.6%) were divorced/separated. The distribution by sex is similar to that for the Republic except that the gap in proportion married between the sexes observed in the Republic occur to a lesser extent in the island of Rodrigues.

**Table 3.1 - Population aged 20+ years by marital status and sex**

(i) Disabled persons

Island	Sex	Marital status					Total
		Single	Married	Widowed	Div/Sep	N.Stated	
Republic of Mauritius	Male	4051	6807	848	557	167	12430
	Female	3311	3266	4368	650	6	11601
	<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>7362</b>	<b>10073</b>	<b>5216</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>24031</b>
Island of Rodrigues	Male	90	133	15	19	0	257
	Female	68	119	80	17	0	284
	<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>541</b>

(ii) Overall population

Island	Sex	Marital status					Total
		Single	Married	Widowed	Div/Sep	Other and N.Stated	
Republic of Mauritius	Male	96144	211076	6519	5672	619	320030
	Female	55094	209938	46761	13233	928	325954
	<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>151238</b>	<b>421014</b>	<b>53280</b>	<b>18905</b>	<b>1547</b>	<b>645984</b>
Island of Rodrigues	Male	1980	5798	144	211	2	8135
	Female	1024	5608	794	384	420	8230
	<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>3004</b>	<b>11406</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>16365</b>

### 3.3 - Types of disability by marital status

In an attempt to investigate whether there is any association between marital status of the disabled and the types of disability they suffer, the data have been tabulated as in table 3.2. The figures for the Republic indicate that among those married, disabilities relating to the legs, feet, arms and fingers predominate and account for 38.6% of disabilities, followed by disabilities relating to the eyes, ears and speech (36.1%). Among the widowed,

disabilities relating to the eye, ear and speech top the list and is responsible for 51.1% of disabilities. Disabilities relating to slow development, mental and fits are predominant among the singles and Divorced/separated and account for 50.7% and 40.3% respectively, of disabilities within each category.

The distribution of type of disability by marital status for Rodrigues is similar to that for the Republic except that among the divorced and separated in Rodrigues, it is disability relating to eyes and ears which predominate(47.2%). Also among those married, the proportion suffering from disability relating to the legs and feet is significantly higher in Rodrigues(49.6%) than in the Republic(38.6%).

**Table 3.2 - People with disabilities aged 20+ years by marital status, type of disability and sex**

(i) Rep. of Mauritius

Types of disability	Marital status					Total
	Single	Married	Widowed	Div/sep	N.Stated	
legs & feet and Arms & Fingers	1627	3887	1509	320	62	7405
Eye, ear and speech	1648	3641	2667	314	15	8285
Slow Development, mental and fits	3730	1652	763	486	70	6701
Other	357	893	277	87	26	1640
<b>Total</b>	<b>7362</b>	<b>10073</b>	<b>5216</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>24031</b>

(ii) Island of Rodrigues

Types of disability	Marital status					Total
	Single	Married	Widowed	Div/sep	N.Stated	
legs & feet and Arms & Fingers	39	125	32	8	0	204
Eye, ear and speech	39	90	40	17	0	186
Slow Development, mental and fits	73	27	20	9	0	129
Other	7	10	3	2	0	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>541</b>

### 3.4 - School attendance

As a first step towards a study of the educational profile of the population of disabled, it would be helpful to investigate to what extent the disabled have been attending school in the past or is currently attending school and compare with school attendance for the overall population.

**Table 3.3 - Population aged 2+ years by school attendance and sex**

**(i) Disabled persons**

School Attendance	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Now	867	657	1524	28	24	52
Past	9422	6122	15544	184	168	352
Never	4112	6340	10452	170	176	346
N.Stated	171	87	258	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14572</b>	<b>13206</b>	<b>27778</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>750</b>

**(ii) Overall population**

School Attendance	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Now	132138	127252	259390	4415	4515	8930
Past	330825	295160	625985	9040	8777	17817
Never	43245	85798	129043	2806	3030	5836
N.Stated	729	406	1135	1	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>506937</b>	<b>508616</b>	<b>1015553</b>	<b>16262</b>	<b>16327</b>	<b>32589</b>

As the table 3.3 shows, among the 27,778 persons with disabilities aged 2 years and above, 1,524 that is 5.5% were currently attending school during census while 15,544 that is 56.0% attended school in the past and 10,452, that is, 37.6% never attended school. Comparing with the corresponding figures for the overall population, it is observed that there is a lower proportion currently attending school among the disabled(5.5%) as against a proportion of 25.6% for the overall population while the proportion who never attended school in the past is higher among the disabled(37.6%) as the corresponding proportion for the overall population is 12.7%. These observations might to some extent be explained by the older age structure of the population of disabled with consequently a lower

proportion currently attending school and a higher proportion who never attended school in the past among the disabled. This may also be indicative of lower proportion of school participation among the disabled than the others.

Analysis of the data by sex indicate that among the disabled, there is a higher proportion of females who never attended school in the past (48.0%), the corresponding proportion for male being 28.2%. It should be noted that this disparity between the sexes also exist in the overall population but to a lesser extent. For instance, these rates are 16.9% and 8.5% for females and males respectively.

As regards the Island of Rodrigues, of the 750 disabled persons aged 2 years and above, 52 that is 6.9% were currently attending school, 352 that is 47.0% attended school in the past while 346 (46.1%) never attended school . Analysis by school attendance and sex shows little sex differential as regards all educational categories, that is, there were almost equal proportion of males and females who were currently attending school, attended school in the past and who never attended school. This applies to the population of disabled as well as the overall population.

### **3.5 - Level of educational attainment**

Table 3.4 shows the distribution of disabled persons aged 5 years and over by their level of educational attainment. According to the table, 22,643 that is 82.4% of the disabled are categorised as those who either have had no formal education or have acquired some preprimary or primary education without holding a CPE certificate while 950(3.5%) were categorised as CPE holders only. In contrast, in the overall population, the corresponding percentages were 58.8% and 4.7% respectively. Among those having acquired secondary education, numbering 3224, 950(29.5%) were holders of either a School Certificate or a Higher School Certificate. The number of disabled with a degree level or equivalent amount to 106(0.4%).



**Table 3.4 - People with disabilities aged 5+ years by educational attainment and sex****(i) Rep. of Mauritius**

Sex	Level of educational attainment									Grand Total
	Nil and	Std I-VI but not Passed (subtotal)			Forms I-V but not	Passed SC or (subtotal)			Univ. Degree or	
	Preprimary	passed CPE	CPE	Primary	passed SC	HSC	Secondary	Equiv.	N.Stated	
Male	4149	7143	585	7728	1464	650	2114	93	326	14410
Female	6387	4964	365	5329	810	300	1110	13	239	13078
<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>10536</b>	<b>12107</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>13057</b>	<b>2274</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>3224</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>27488</b>

**(ii) Island of Rodrigues**

Sex	Level of educational attainment									Grand Total
	Nil and	Std I-VI but not Passed (subtotal)			Forms I-V but not	Passed SC or (subtotal)			Univ. Degree or	
	Preprimary	passed CPE	CPE	Primary	passed SC	HSC	Secondary	Equiv.	N.Stated	
Male	162	179	15	194	8	2	10	0	1	367
Female	163	179	4	183	7	0	7	0	1	354
<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>721</b>

Among males, 78.4% do not possess any academic certificate as against 86.8% among females, which result in a higher proportion of males with CPE or higher educational attainment. In the overall population, however, the corresponding percentages are 55.0% and 62.6% among males and females respectively.

In Rodrigues, 683 out of a total of 721(94.7%) disabled persons aged 5 years and over do not possess any academic certificate while practically the rest have a secondary level educational attainment.

**3.6 - Current school attendance**

The analysis will focus on disabled aged 2 - 29 years currently attending school as it is expected that the number of disabled beyond this age bracket currently attending school will be negligible.

**Table 3.5 - People with disabilities aged 2-29 years currently attending school by educational attainment and sex**

(i) Rep. of Mauritius

	Educational attainment					Total
	Preprimary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	N.Stated	
Male	124	475	169	10	79	857
Female	95	345	140	1	62	643
<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>1500</b>

(ii) Island of Rodrigues

	Educational attainment					Total
	Preprimary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	N.Stated	
Male	5	21	2	0	0	28
Female	2	18	4	0	0	24
<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>

During census, 1,500 disabled persons in the age bracket 2- 29 years of age were currently studying, of which 219(14.6%) were attending preprimary classes, 820(54.7%) that is more than half were following primary classes, 309(20.6%) were studying at secondary level while only 11(0.7%) were following university degree courses or equivalent. Compared with the overall population, it is observed that the proportion studying at secondary level is significantly higher in the overall population(30.8%) than among people with disabilities. Disaggregated by sex, the data for the overall population as well as for people with disabilities indicate almost no association between level attained and sex, that is, educational level attained does not appear to be related to sex.

As regards Rodrigues, 7 out of the 52 disabled persons aged 2-29 years currently attending school were studying at pre-primary level, 39, that is, three quarters were studying at primary level and the rest (6 in number) were studying at secondary level.

### **3.7 - Relation with other members of household**

According to the 1990 population Census, 27,177 disabled persons were residing in private households of which 14,344 were males and 12,833 were females. Among them, 9,813 persons that is 7,057 males and 2,756 females were heads of household giving a headship rate of 49.2% among males and 21.5% among females. The age distribution of the heads of household by sex indicates a mean age of 56.6 years among male heads while the average females head is aged 61.6 years. It should be noted that for the overall population, heads of household are relatively younger with a mean age of 45.3 years among males and 55.5 years among females.

In the island of Rodrigues, all disabled persons enumerated for census were residing in private households. The headship rate among the disabled were 36.3% among the males and 21.5% among females. The mean age of disabled heads were 57.3 years among males and 60.9 years among females(see table 3.6).

A broader analysis of the relationship of the disabled with the head of household indicate that in the Republic of Mauritius, 36.1% were heads of households while 10.4% were spouse of head and 31.1% were children of the head. The remaining 22.4% comprised mainly of parent of head (7.6%) and "other relatives" (12.5%). It should be noted that parent of head and "other relatives" add up to 5,461 disabled in private households.

In the island of Rodrigues, 29.0% of the disabled were heads of household while 13.3% and 41.3% were respectively spouse of head and children of head. Among the remaining 16.4%, 4.4% were parent of head and 8.9% "other relatives".( See table 3.7 ).

**Table 3.6 - Headship rate among people with disabilities by sex**

Country	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Republic of Mauritius	49.2	21.5	36.1
Island of Rodrigues	36.3	21.5	29.0

**Table 3.7 - People with disabilities in private households, by relation to head and sex**

Relation to Head	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Head of H.Hold	7057	2756	9813	139	80	219
Spouse	233	2600	2833	11	89	100
Children	4846	3588	8434	176	136	312
of which unmarried	(4533)	(3316)	(7849)	(172)	(125)	(297)
of which evermarried	(313)	(272)	(585)	(4)	(11)	(15)
Spouse of child	40	54	94	0	0	0
Grandchild	223	155	378	12	8	20
Parent of head	461	1593	2054	10	23	33
Other relatives	1417	1990	3407	32	35	67
Other and N.Stated	67	97	164	3	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>14344</b>	<b>12833</b>	<b>27177</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>755</b>

## 4. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

### 4.1 Introduction

It is reasonable to believe that the physical and/or mental conditions of the population of disabled would impose some restrictions on the types of jobs that the disabled would be able to perform and hence would have an impact on the level of activity of the disabled. This section will probe into the level of activity and the employment situation of the disabled.

### 4.2 - Level of activity

As the table 4.1 shows, out of 26,075 disabled persons aged 12 years and above in the Republic of Mauritius, 4,121 were enumerated as economically active during Census, giving an activity rate of 15.8%. Disaggregated by sex, the activity rates work out to be 23.5% and 7.4% among males and females respectively. Compared with the activity rate of 53.5% in the overall population (74.9% among males and 32.2% among females), a much lower level of economic activity is observed among the disabled.

**Table 4.1 - Economically active population**

Island	Sex	People with disabilities			Overall population		
		No. of Active population	Population aged 12+ yrs	Activity Rate	No. of Active population	Population aged 12+ yrs	Activity Rate
Republic of Mauritius	Male	3198	13615	23.5	301368	402144	74.9
	Female	923	12460	7.4	130651	406107	32.2
	<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>4121</b>	<b>26075</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>432019</b>	<b>808251</b>	<b>53.5</b>
Island of Rodrigues	Male	87	320	27.2	8870	11562	76.7
	Female	26	328	7.9	3362	11626	28.9
	<b>B.Sexes</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>12232</b>	<b>23188</b>	<b>52.8</b>

The island of Rodrigues, with a total of 648 disabled aged 12 years and above, 113 were economically active giving an activity rate of 17.4% . Disaggregated by sex, the activity rates turn out to be 27.2% among males and 7.9% among females.

Strictly speaking, the comparison of activity rates for the population of disabled with the overall population need to be made on the basis of standardized rates. The reason is that the age structure of the population might be one of the components affecting unstandardized rates hence might invalidate comparisons of unstandardized rates.

**Table 4.2 - Standardized activity rate by sex**

Island	People with disabilities			Overall population		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Republic of Mauritius	27.3	10.1	19.8	74.9	32.2	53.5
Island of Rodrigues	30.9	8.4	19.9	76.7	28.9	52.8

Table 4.2 above shows standardized rates for the disabled as well as the overall population. The figures show some improvement in activity rate but still indicate a lower level of activity among the population of disabled (19.8%) as compared to the overall population (53.5%). Therefore, the lower activity level among the population of disabled seems to be not because of age structure but is genuine and may be due to the disabilities.

A more in-depth analysis of the variation of the level of activity with age would require analysis of the age-specific activity rates. The age and sex-specific activity rates are plotted in figure 4.

The figure shows that the level of activity peaks at about 40% among males and 15% among females at around 40 years of age. If a comparison is made with the age specific activity rates for the overall population, it is observed that in the overall population the peak level is almost attained in the age group (20-24) years. Among the disabled aged 20-24 years, the level of activity attains about three quarters of the peak level for disabled males and four-fifths the peak level for disabled females.

### 4.3 - Types of economic activity

The previous analysis focused itself solely on the economically active population but in this section the activity status of the population will be viewed more globally. As pointed out earlier, 4,121 disabled persons were registered as currently active during census of which 3,845 (93.3%) were currently employed while the remaining were unemployed.

**Table 4.3 - People with disabilities aged 12+ years by current activity status and sex**

Activity status	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Employed	2972	873	3845	82	25	107
Unemployed	226	50	276	5	1	6
<i>Active population</i>	<i>3198</i>	<i>923</i>	<i>4121</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>113</i>
H.Hold duties	184	5053	5237	3	95	98
Studies	313	208	521	4	6	10
Disability	6465	5100	11565	163	182	345
Retired	3150	953	4103	56	7	63
Other	127	133	260	6	5	11
<i>Inactive population</i>	<i>10239</i>	<i>11447</i>	<i>21686</i>	<i>232</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>527</i>
<i>Activity N. Stated</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>268</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13615</b>	<b>12460</b>	<b>26075</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>648</b>

Among the currently inactive population numbered 21,686, the predominating cause of inactivity is disability and accounts for 63.1% of inactivity among males and 44.6% of inactivity among females. The next most important cause of inactivity among males is retirement accounting for another 30.8% of males while household duties comes in the second place among females accounting for 44.1% of females.

### 4.4 - Employment by occupational group

Table 4.4 shows the employed disabled population classified by occupational group as specified by the International Standard Classification of Occupation, ISCO - 1988. Figures for the Republic indicate that elementary occupation tops the list with 1,311 persons followed by craft and related trade workers (910) and by plant and machine operators and assemblers

(535). Together, the three occupational groups cover 71.7% of all employed disabled persons.

**Table 4.4 - People with disabilities aged 12+ years by occupational group and sex**

Occupational Group	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Legislators, Senior officials and Managers	183	15	198	3	0	3
Professionals	56	7	63	1	0	1
Technicians and associate professionals	104	45	149	0	1	1
Clerks	147	44	191	1	1	2
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	166	57	223	1	0	1
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	219	28	247	23	9	32
Craft and related trade workers	811	99	910	8	1	9
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	326	209	535	2	0	2
Elementary occupations	951	360	1311	41	13	54
Occupations n. stated	9	9	18	2	0	2
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>2972</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>3845</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>107</b>

A breakdown by sex shows that a higher proportion of males that is 27.3% as compared to 11.4% females are employed as craft and related trade workers while there is a higher proportion of females, employed as plant and machine operators and assemblers, as well as employed in elementary occupations, the proportions being 24.0% and 41.2% respectively while the corresponding proportions for males are 11.0% and 32.0% respectively.

Compared with the occupational distribution of the overall population, it is observed that a higher proportion of disabled are employed as craft and related trade workers (23.7%) and in elementary occupations (34.1%) as compared to 20.0% and 27.1% respectively for the overall population. Conversely, disabled people tend to engage themselves less as plant and machine operators (13.9%) as compared to the overall population(20.6%).

In the Island of Rodrigues, 107 disabled persons were currently registered as employed at the 1990 Census, of which 54 (50.5%) were engaged in elementary occupations while 32 (29.9%) were engaged as skilled agricultural and fishery workers.



#### 4.5 - Employment by industry.

The employed population of disabled classified by sectors of the economy is presented in table 4.5. The classification by industry have been made in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Industries.

**Table 4.5 - People with disabilities aged 12+ years by industry and sex**

Industry	Republic of Mauritius			Island of Rodrigues		
	Male	Female	B.Sexes	Male	Female	B.Sexes
Agriculture,hunting,forestry and fishing	549	152	701	39	15	54
Mining and quarrying	2	0	2	0	0	0
Manufacturing	789	362	1151	5	1	6
Electricity,gas and water	28	0	28	1	0	1
Construction	378	2	380	18	0	18
Wholesale and retail trade,restaurants and hotels	411	66	477	3	1	4
Transport,storage and communications	170	-9	179	3	0	3
Financing,insurance,real estate and business services	59	6	65	0	0	0
Community,social and personal services	577	268	845	11	8	19
Activities not adequately defined	9	8	17	2	0	2
<b>All Activities</b>	<b>2972</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>3845</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>107</b>

According to the figures, 1,151 disabled persons, representing some 29.9% of all employed disabled persons in the Republic of Mauritius, were engaged in the manufacturing sector. The next two main sectors of the economy employing disabled persons were the community, social and personal services sector employing 845 persons (22.0%) followed by the Agriculture and Fishing sector which employed 701 persons that is 18.2%.

A comparison of the distribution of employed persons by industry for the disabled population with the corresponding distribution for the overall population indicate that among the disabled, there is a lower proportion working in the manufacturing sector (29.9%), the corresponding proportion for the overall population being 32.1%. In contrast, the proportion working in the community, social and personal services sector is higher among the disabled (22.0%), as compared to 20.1% for the overall population.

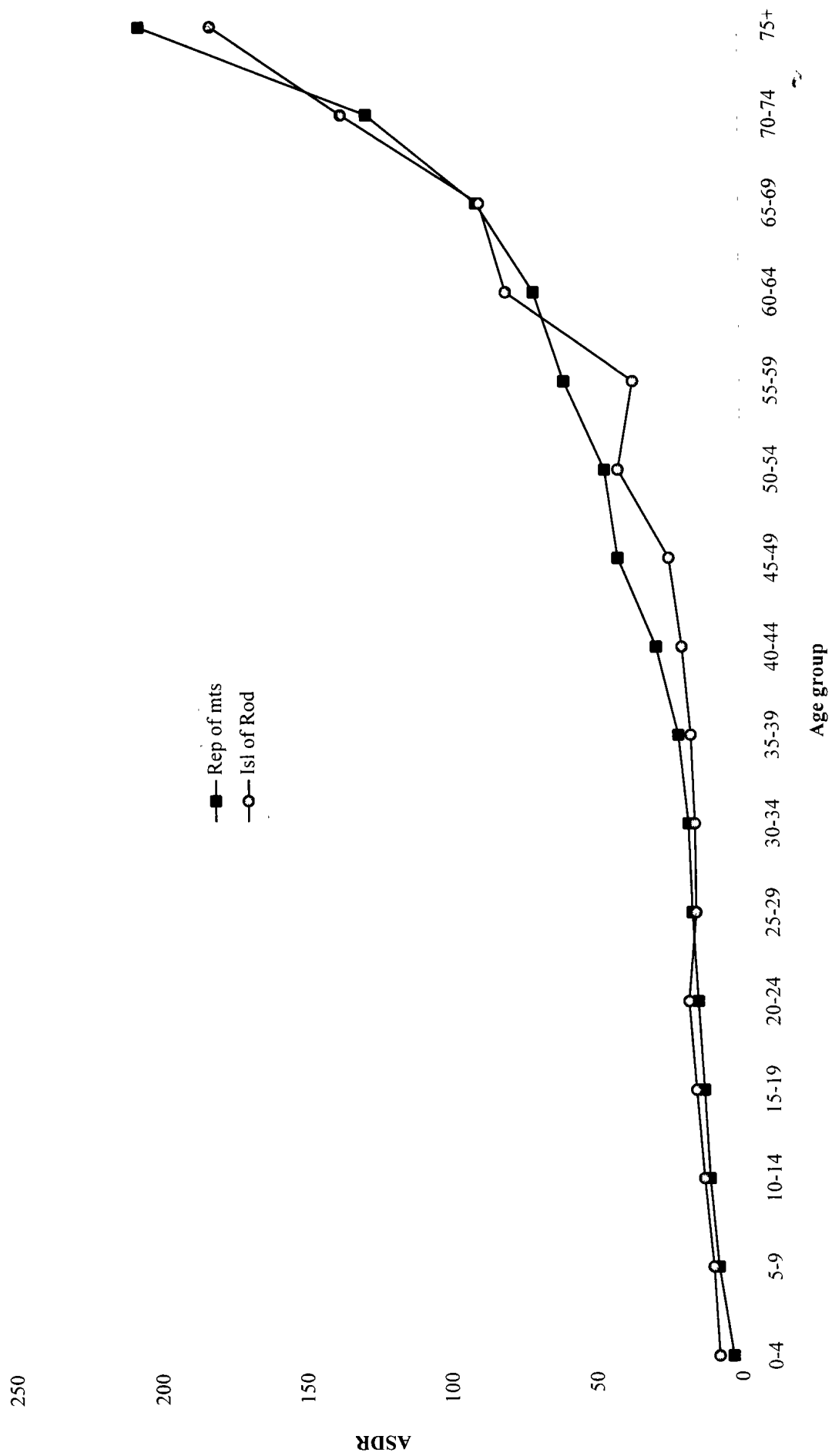
The data for the disabled, disaggregated by sex indicates a higher proportion of females in the manufacturing sector(41.5%) and the community, social and personal

services sector (30.7%), the corresponding proportions for males being 26.6% and 19.4% respectively.

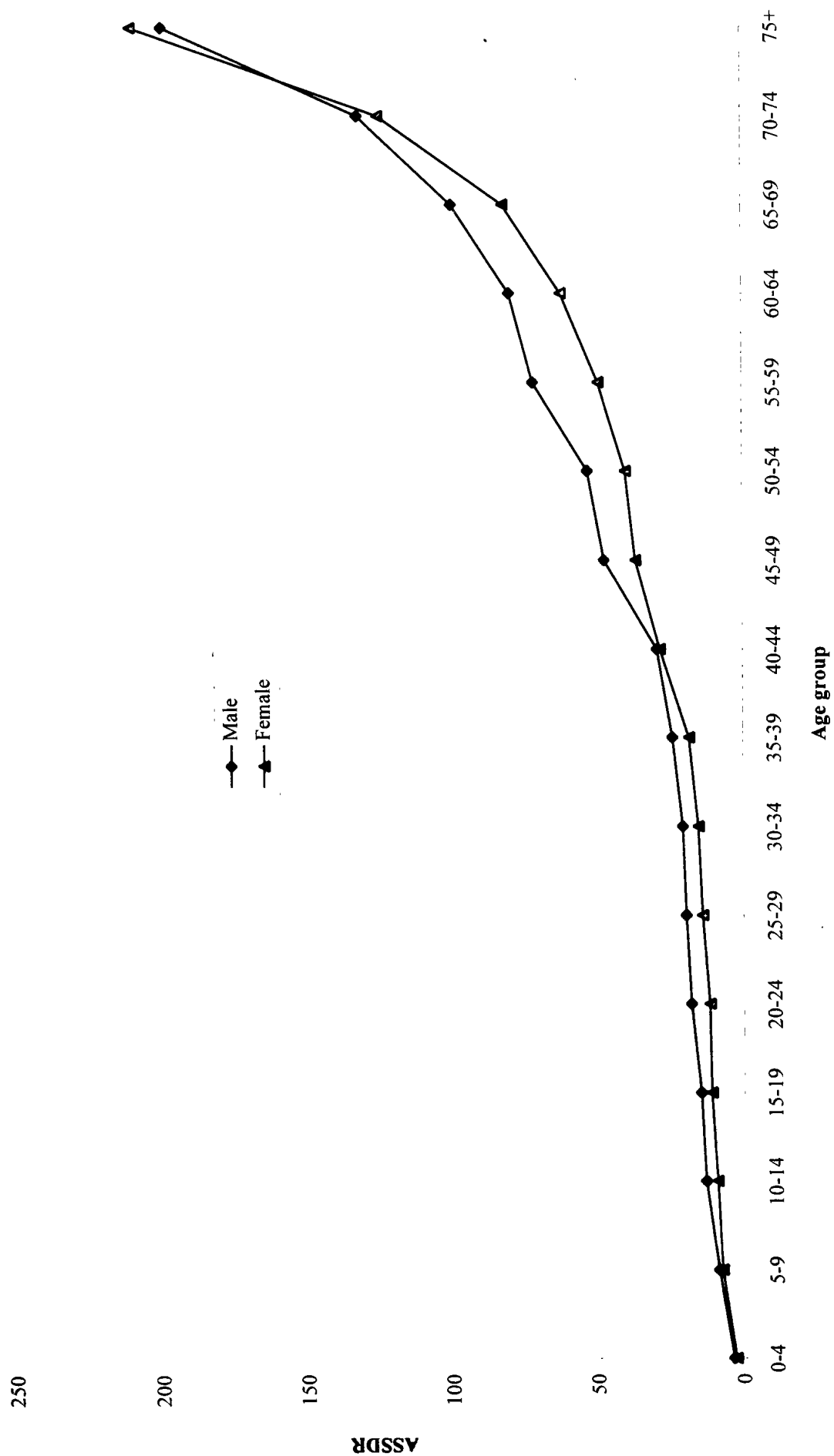
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In the Island of Rodrigues, the agricultural sector employs more than half of employed disabled persons that is 54 out of a total of 107. The community, social and personal services sector comes next and employs 19 persons followed by the construction sector which employs 18 persons.

**Fig 1 - Age specific disability rate(ASDR)**  
Rep of Mtns v/s Isl of Rodr



**Fig 2 - Age and sex-specific disability rate(ASDDR)**  
 Republic of Mauritius



**Fig 3 - Age and sex-specific disability rate(ASDR)**  
Island of Rodrigues

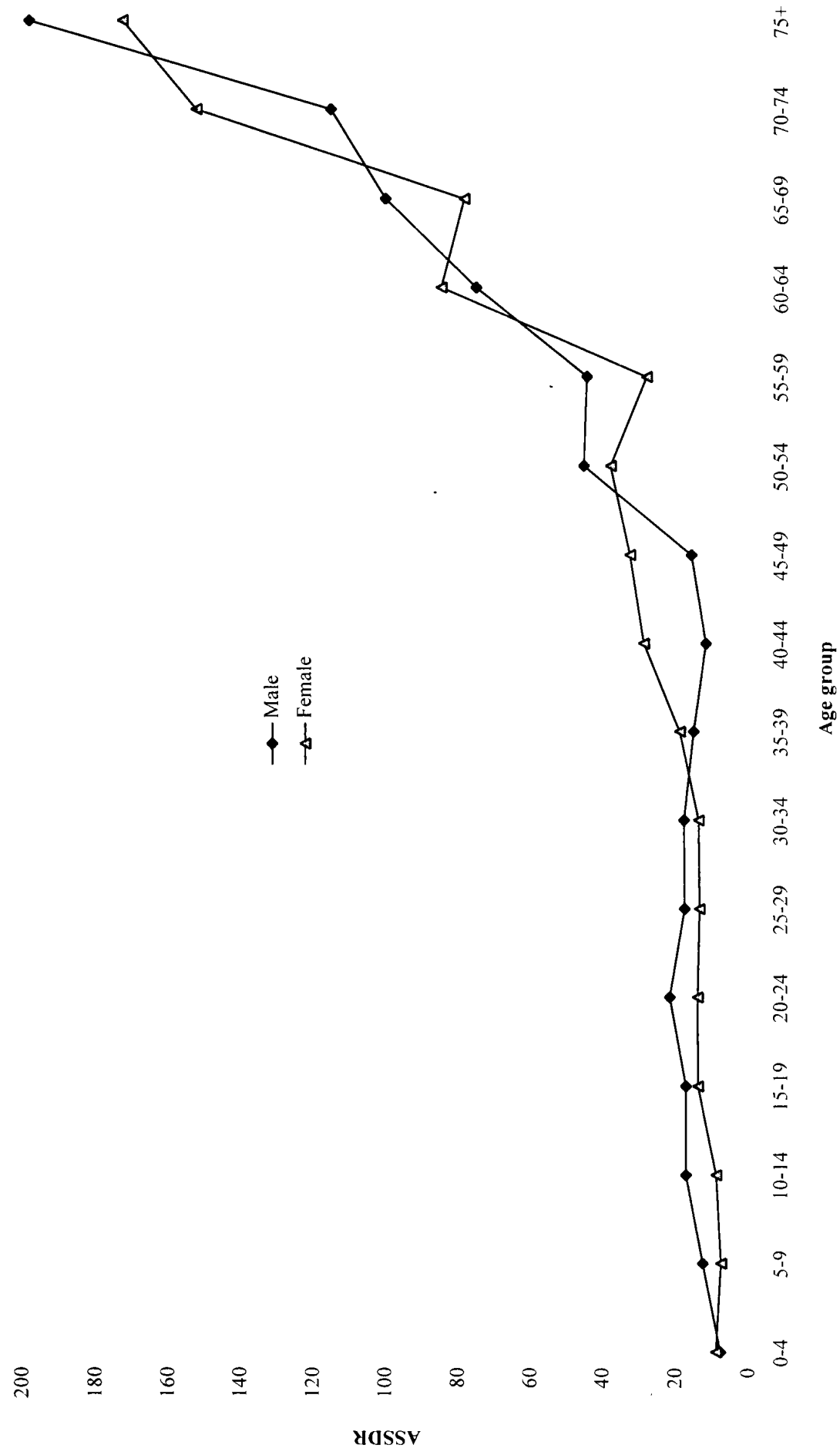
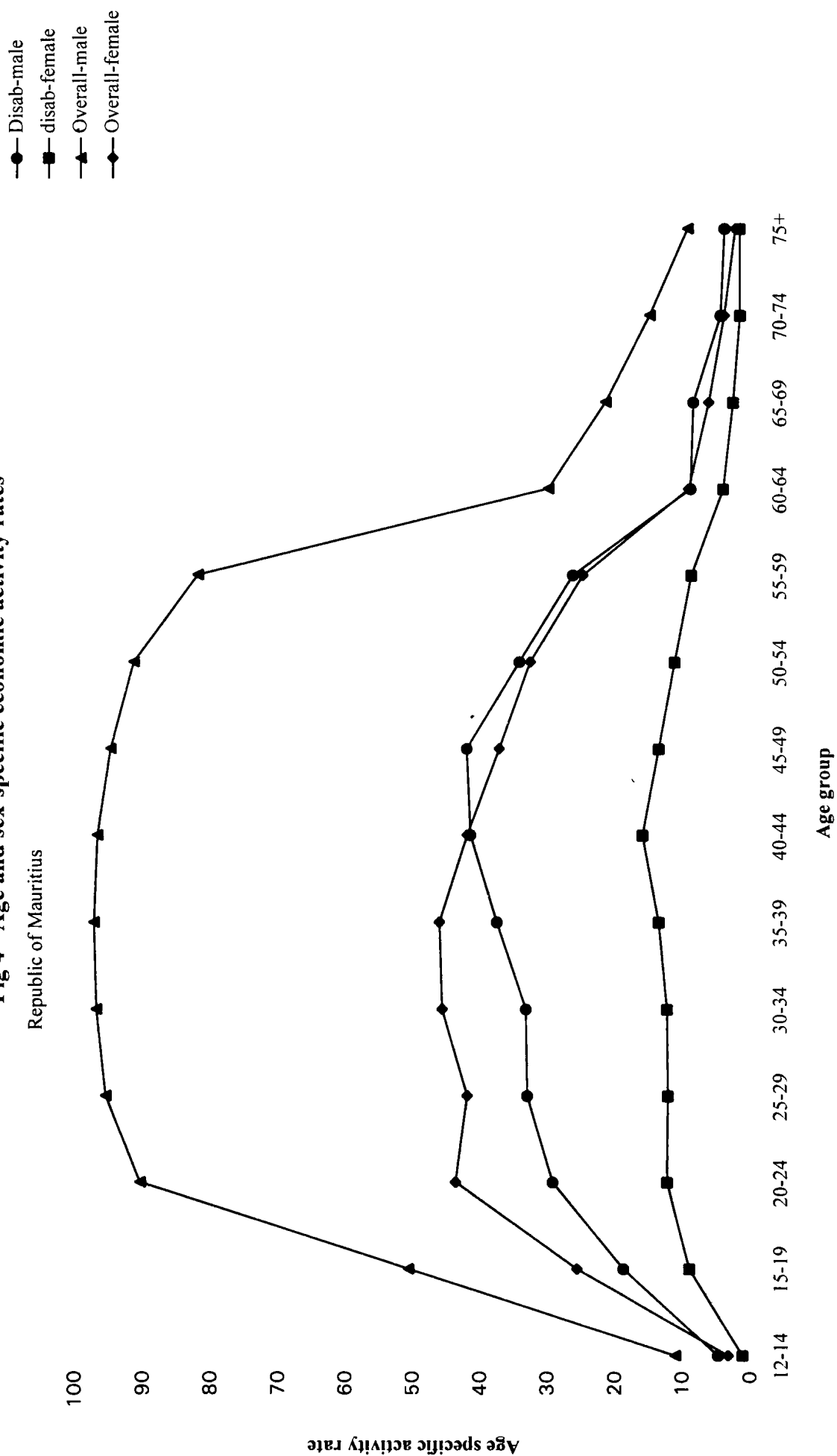


Fig 4 - Age and sex-specific economic activity rates



## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the census data brought out a few salient findings regarding the disabled population in the country. Especially the study highlighted the problems faced by the disabled in respect of employment, education and family support. It must be remembered that the latest National Development Plan 1992-1994 took cognisance of the special requirements and needs of the disabled and stated that in the light of the objective of integrating the disabled in society and in providing them with equal opportunities in terms of education, employment and other facilities, the following changes will be effected

*\* amendment of the existing legal provisions of the Employment of Disabled Persons Act of 1988*

*\* allowance to families, which are bringing up disabled children below 15 years, and*

*\* development of community-based facilities for providing support services to disabled persons*

In order to enable the planners and policy makers to articulate relevant action programmes, some recommendations are given below.

1. Census figures show that the male disability is higher than female disability. This is essentially contributed by the larger number of males with leg and arm disabilities. Perhaps the greater exposure of males to accidents and injuries on the worksite and road plus the higher incidence of diabetes resulting in amputation is responsible. This is true for females also to a certain extent. Action programmes should be accordingly instituted.

2. There is an increasing incidence of disability with increasing age, more pronounced at old ages. More than a third of disabled persons are aged 60+ years. Due to the ageing of our population, it is expected that in the coming decades, this proportion will increase dramatically and a good majority of which would be females due to their higher life expectancy. Hence, increasing resources will be required to rehabilitate this category of people in the future.

3. Among the disabled, there is a higher propensity to be dependent on the kinship groups and therefore with the break up of the extended family system, they are more vulnerable. The future of this category of disabled persons is at stake. Hence this category of people may turn towards institutions for help and therefore appropriate measures should be taken to address the issue. Also, among households with at least one disabled person, more than one-sixth of such households are of size 1 or 2, which means that these people have no family support and hence very vulnerable. Efforts should be made so as to reduce the hardship of this category of people.

4. Families with disabled are either too small or too large and therefore the burden on such families is quite enormous. Financial and other support need be given to such families.

5. There is a lower prevalence of getting into matrimony among people with disabilities. Perhaps institutional arrangements which may help to assist the disabled finding partners may be required.

6. Disabled persons tend to abandon education at primary level. Attempts should be made so that they could pursue their studies further to improve employment opportunities. The "Trust Fund for Disabled Persons" is also helping them in providing vocational training so that they could be integrated in the working environment. The legislation "The Employment of Disabled Persons Act of 1988" is a further step towards helping them. Various awards are also being given so as to encourage the disabled to pursue their studies further and also to employers to encourage them to employ more disabled persons.



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