

AN ESTIMATION OF LEVELS AND DIFFERENTIALS
OF FERTILITY AND MORTALITY :
A CASE STUDY OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY IN KENYA.

BY

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ABSTRACT

Few studies, have dwelt on the estimation of demographic parameters pertaining to minority groups residing in Kenya such as the Asians, Europeans and Arabs, to mention a few, resulting in a lack of demographic information on these groups.

Thus the main objective of this study was to estimate fertility and mortality levels and differentials of one such minority group namely the Asian Community of Kenya using the 1979 Population Census Data.

Fertility levels and differentials were estimated using the Coale-Trussell technique and Current Fertility Method. Infant and child mortality levels and differentials were estimated through the application of the Coale-Trussell method. These methods are commonly used to estimate fertility and mortality in countries which rely heavily on census data and were therefore considered most appropriate for this study.

The major findings of the study revealed that fertility and mortality rates among the Asians in Kenya were influenced by the mother's level of education, mother's place of residence and mother's place of birth. The results indicate that as the level of education among mothers rises, total fertility and infant and child mortality rates decline. Differential analysis by mother's place of residence conformed to the National experience of higher fertility and mortality rates being experienced by women residing in rural areas compared to those residing in urban areas, while fertility and mortality rates for women born outside Kenya were found to be

higher than for those born within Kenya. Hence all the hypothesis tested in the study were confirmed.

The total fertility rate of the Asian population was estimated to be 2.84 implying that whereas an average Kenyan woman bears about 8 children during her reproductive lifetime, the average Asian woman on the other hand limits her family size to between 2-3 children. The infant mortality and child mortality rates among Asians, derived directly from the life table constructed were estimated to be 45/1000 and 13/1000 respectively. These were also found to be significantly lower than the national estimates of 104/1000 and 52/1000.

On the basis of the research findings, the study concluded that demographic characteristics should not be generalized at the national or macro level since pockets or sub-groups of the total population could differ significantly as is evidenced by the Asian case.

The study recommends that the standard population census questionnaire should be re-designed to include information on variables such as income, contraceptive use, family size desires and religion which were not considered in the 1979 census data. Secondly, the Government should try to curb the out-migration of the minority groups such as Asians due to their contribution to the economy of the country.