

A B S T R A C T

Singapore is a small island at the tip of the Malay Peninsula with a largely urban population. It became an independent nation in August, 1965, when its affiliation with Malaysia was dissolved. It has a population of about 1.8 million with recent crude death of 5.7 and a birth rate of 32. The birth rate has been declining since at least 1958 and, with the exception of 1963 when there was a slight upturn, the number of children born has declined in each of the past seven years. The Singapore Family Planning and Population Board (SFPPB), was established as a Statutory Board under SFPPB Act, Singapore Statutes Chapter 168 on 7 January 1966 under the portfolio of the Minister for Health. The Board is responsible for implementing and coordinating family planning and population activities in the Republic.

The First Five-Year National Family Planning Programme (1966-1970) was aimed primarily at providing family planning services to 60% of all married women in the reproductive age group 15-44 years old, and reducing the 1964 Crude Birth Rate (CBR) of 31.6 live-births per thousand to 20 per thousand by 1970.

By 1977, a total of 156,556 women of 62% of the married women in the 15-44 age group and accepted family planning. Consequently, the CBR fell to 22.1 per thousand. The rate of increase also declined to 1.7%.

The Second Five-Year Plan (1971-1975) aimed at further reducing the CBR from 22.1 per thousand to 17.7 per thousand by 1975. A total of 89,501 new family planning acceptors (11.9% more than the targeted figure of 80,000 acceptors) were registered between 1971 and 1975. In addition, 37,413 women and 1,599 men underwent sterilization and 32,513 legalized abortions were performed.

In the period 1972-1975, Singapore experienced another sharp decline in birth and fertility rates. The fertility rate decreased by 10.8% annually from 1972 to 1975. The total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell from 3.1 per woman in 1972 to 2.1 in 1975 when Replacement Fertility was attained.

In 1975, live-births totalled 39,948. The CBR was 17.7 live births per thousand population. With a Crude Death Rate of 5 per thousand, the Rate of Natural Increase fell to 1.3%.

The demographic goal of the Third Five-Year plan (1976-1980) was to maintain fertility at Replacement Level (Net Reproduction Rate of 1.00) to achieve Zero Population Growth by the year 2030. When the population is projected to stabilise at 3.5 million.

From 1976-1980, the TFR decline steadily from 2.1 to 1.7 children per woman. Live-births decreased from 42,783 in 1976 to 38,364 in 1977 but increased marginally in subsequent years to reach 41,217 but rose to 17.1 in 1980. Despite the increase in the number of live-births, the rate of Natural Increase remained constant at 1.2% throughout the period

1978-1980. The Net Reproduction Rate (NRR) declined gradually from 0.998 in 1976 to 0.816 to 1980.

With the larger number of women born during the post-war baby boom period entering the reproductive age range, it was anticipated that the number of births would increase annually from 1975 onwards and peak at around 1990.

The number of birth in 1981 and 1982 was 42,250 and 42,654 respectively, followed by a drop to 40,585 in 1983. There was a slight increase in births to 41,556 in 1984 when the NRR reached 0.750 which is 25% below replacement level.

The central projected of the Population Projections produced by the board in 1983 assumed that fertility would continue its downward trend until 1985 and would then rise gradually and stabilise at replacement level.

In conclusion, the population size depends greatly on the programmes carried out by the Singapore Family Planning and Population Board (SFPPB). If population continues to explode, the economy of Singapore will suffer in the long run. With an ideal size of population, the Government of Singapore can trigger community developments in particular and economic facilitation in general.