

LIFE TABLE FOR CEYLON 1963*

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INTRODUCTION

The study of mortality — its level and trend — is very important from more points than one. Mortality being an important component of population change, any study on it is of use to the demographer, planner and others. Study of mortality is also of vital importance to the public health authorities and health planners, especially if mortality statistics are available by several characteristics such as age, sex and cause of death.

This paper attempts to estimate the mortality level and construct a life table for the year 1963. Ceylon, especially in recent years, has had demographic data of quite enviable accuracy. As a matter of fact, as of 1967¹ it is claimed that registration of vital events (births and deaths) is more than 99 per cent complete. A sample survey² conducted in 1953 revealed 88.1 per cent completeness of birth registration, and death registration was found to be more complete than birth registration. Assuming that the improvement in the completeness of the registration over a period of time is linear then in 1963 the completeness of registration of vital events would be about 95 per cent. Since the registration was quite complete, an attempt has been made to construct life table on the basis of registration data and the census of 1963. Migration has been of serious magnitude in the past though reduced in the recent years, but the life table based on registration and census data for a comparable period may be assumed to be unaffected by migration to a large extent.

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