



**MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL**  
INNOVATION FOR TECHNOLOGY

# **WORK AND THE FAMILY**

**Final Report**

*September 2002*

**MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL**

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International Labour Office &  
Ministry of Labour & Industrial Relations

# Work and the Family



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# Foreword

This study has been carried out by the **Centre for Applied Social Research (CASR)** of the **University of Mauritius** on behalf of the **International Labour Office (ILO)** under the auspices of the **Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations**.

I would like to acknowledge the goodwill and financial support of the ILO/Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and the Mauritius Research Council which have proved to be vital ingredient in the realisation of this project.

I would also like to place on record my sincere thanks to Ms Dy-Hammar of ILO who has provided valuable guidance in the design of the questionnaire for both the employee and employer surveys and to Mrs Nirmala Nababsing, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, our contact person at the Ministry.

I am grateful to the staff of CASR who generously gave their time to complete the work on target, to all the field staff, to my secretary, Mrs H.Gopal and to all those who have contributed one way or the other towards the realisation of this study.

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# Executive Summary

## Background

- (i) It is increasingly being recognized that the family is the cornerstone of society. The weakening of the family as a unit and the changing roles of its individual members resulting from social and economic development within society and the work place needs constant monitoring. Documenting the evolving situation will help in identifying the costs and benefits of the measures which have been taken to increase and improve working conditions and the impact on the development of a harmonious balance between work and family responsibilities.
- (ii) As stated by the International Labour Organization (ILO), " There is an urgent need to move the focus of attention beyond the impact that family demands have on work, to the impact that work and working conditions have on family and personal life and to gender equality. Family-friendly employment and social policies that are practical and cost-efficient to implement can make an important contribution to social protection and the essential objective of "decent work".
- (iii) Mauritius was chosen to form part of the project because it is a successful developing country, which has completed the structural transformation of its economy.

## Methodology

- (iv) The Study used a combination of methods, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of the impact of work on the family unit. The research began with a comprehensive Desk Study, followed by Focus Group Discussions and interviews with acknowledged Opinion Leaders. After this, questionnaire based studies of both Employees and Employers were implemented. The Employee study was conducted using face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of 1,500 respondents, while 50 Employers were canvassed through the use of self-completed questionnaires.

## Desk Study

- (v) The Desk Study focused on:
  - Work -family implications of the life cycle from a family perspective
  - Implications of the changing nature of work on family
  - Efficiency and effectiveness in achieving a work- family balance
  - Gender impact of work-family measures .

## Focus Group Discussions

- (vi) A series of 3 Focus Group Discussions were held with various organizations. A review of the FGDs has been included in the full report.

## **Interviews With Opinion Leaders**

- (vii) After selecting recognised opinion leaders, members of the CASR team conducted face-to-face interviews. A full review is included in the report.

## **Quantitative Studies**

### **Survey of Employees**

#### **Sampling Methodology for Employees**

- (viii) The sample size was 1, 500 selected from a sampling frame specifically constructed for CASR to be representative of the population of Mauritius when matched to the criteria of the study. The two stage sampling process was used in order to save on both time and cost.
- (ix) The first stage consisted of the selection of the 150 Enumeration Areas, (EAs) after stratification using the three regional strata of urban, semi-urban and rural. The second stage comprised the selection of 10 households from each of the 150 EAs following a listing of all of the household characteristics in each one.

#### **Questionnaire Design and Implementation**

- (x) The Employee Questionnaire was designed bearing in mind the objectives of the ILO Study and was prepared by CASR with input from the Conditions of Work Branch of the ILO. This was to ensure comparability of the results with similar studies in other participant countries. At all stages the ILO was informed of how questions needed to be worded or modified to take into account local specificities.
- (xi) The questionnaire had 7 sections, from A to F. Each section was designed to elicit information pertaining to a relevant issue.

**Section A** Demographic and Biographical data of the interviewee and members of his/her household.

**Section B** Data about the Main job of respondent and spouse if applicable.

**Section C** The longest section, with questions on arrangements for childcare and care of other dependants.

**Section D** Workplace Policies

**Section E** Supports for Work Family Balance.

**Section F** Questions on labour saving devices

**Section G** The income of the family.



## **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

- (x) Of the 1, 500 respondents, 43% lived in the Urban region, 24% in the Semi Urban Region and 33% in the Rural region. 66% were Male and 34% Female.

## **Age Distribution of Respondents**

- (xi) 64% of Male and 65% of Female respondents were aged between 30 years and 49 years old. 32% of the Female and 30% of the Male respondents were between 30 and 39 years of age.

## **Marital Status**

- (xii) 79% of the respondents were Married and 12% were Single. In Rural areas, 75% of Women were married compared to 69% in Urban regions and 59% in the Semi-Urban regions.

## **Education Attainment**

- (xiii) There was relatively little difference between the educational levels of Male and Female respondents, although there was a higher percentage of Females who had No Formal Education at 6%. A greater number of Male respondents, 69%, had enjoyed an education up to School Certificate, while for Female respondents the corresponding figure was 60%. The percentages of graduates were identical for both sexes, at 3%.

## **Income Distribution**

- (xiv) Information on income was collected in three distinct ways, the total monthly income of the respondent, the respondent's spouse's income, if this was applicable, and the total monthly income of the household.
- (xv) The majority of Female respondents, 71 %, earned less than Rs 6, 000 per month, compared to 47% of Male respondents. Only 8% of Female respondents earned over Rs 12, 000 per month compared to 11 % of Male respondents. Some 41 % of Male respondents had a monthly income of Rs 6, 000 to Rs 12, 000 compared to only 21 % of Female respondents.
- (xvi) 5% of households managed on less than Rs 4, 000 per month while 68% of the households brought in between Rs 4, 000 and Rs12, 000. Of this group 39% had a total monthly income of between Rs 4, 000 and Rs 8, 000 and 29% between Rs 8, 000 and Rs 12, 000. 10% of respondents lived in households with an income between Rs 20, 000 and Rs 50, 000 per month. This 10% were spread across a wide range of incomes, with just over 3% in households bringing in more than Rs 32, 000 per month
- (xvii) 44% of the total number of respondents lived in households where the total household income was less than Rs 8, 000. Although not an exact comparison, this does indicate an improvement over the percentage of respondents from households with a total income of less than Rs 7, 870, the median total household income cited by the CSO in the Household Budget Survey 1996 / 97.

## Number of Paid Jobs

- (xviii) 97% of respondents in the Private Sector and 98% in the Public Sector, had only one paid job. Where the respondent did have more than one job they were more likely to be Male and working in the Private Sector.
- (xix) The type of occupation of the respondents was grouped according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations prepared and published by the International Labour Organization. The three occupations most represented in our sample were those working in the Craft and Related Trades, 22%, Service and Sales Workers, 15%, and those employed in Elementary Occupations, also 15%. Those in the categories of skilled Agricultural and Fishing Workers, 26%, and Craft and Related Trades, 33%, were more likely to have more than one paid job.

## Nature of Employment

- (xx) Almost one quarter of respondents, (23%), worked in the Manufacturing Sector and almost another quarter, (24%), in Personal Services which include Central and Local Government. Female respondents, (32%), were more likely to be working in the Manufacturing sector, which included the factories of the EPZ, than Male respondents, (19%). In the Community, *Social* and Personal Services there was an *almost* equal representation of the sexes at 24% of Males and 23% of Females.

## Hours of Work

- (xxi) A greater number of Female than Male respondents in the Private Sector, worked less than 30 hours per week at 18% and 6% respectively.
- (xxii) In the Public Sector, 60% of Male and 66% of Female respondents worked between 31 - 40 hours per week, in the Private Sector the corresponding figures were 29% for Male and 28% for Female respondents. In the Private Sector 44% of respondents worked between 41 and 50 hours per week, made up of 23% who worked between 41 and 45 hours and 21% who worked between 46 and 50 hours. The corresponding figure for the Public Sector was 20%, split equally at 10% working between 41 and 45 hours and 10% working between 46 and 50 hours. No respondents in the Public Sector worked more than 55 hours per week, while, in the Private Sector, 18% of respondents stated that they worked more than 55 hours per week, a figure that includes 7% who said that they normally worked more than 60 hours per week. Those respondents working longer hours included those who worked in hotels, such as chefs and waiters and private security staff.

## Compulsory Overtime

- (xxiii) About 16% of respondents, stated that they worked some form of Compulsory Overtime. This percentage was made up of around 3% working in the Public Sector and 13% in the Private Sector. 32% of those who work compulsory overtime in the Private Sector, worked between 6 and 10 hours while 27% worked up to 5 hours. Of the Female respondents

working compulsory overtime in the Private Sector, 30% worked up to 5 hours and 35% between 6 and 10 hour per week. For Male respondents in these categories in the Private Sector the figures are slightly less at 25% and 31 % respectively. We also saw more Female respondents, 18%, in the Private Sector working 16 – 20 hours of compulsory overtime per week than Male respondents, 12%.

- (xxiv) When viewed by employment sector, 28% of respondents who worked in the Craft and Related Trades, worked compulsory overtime, of Plant and Machine Operators, 19%, and Service Workers and Sales Workers, 14%. 12% of those employed in elementary occupations, worked compulsory overtime.

## **Non – Compulsory Overtime**

- (xxv) 16% of the respondents stated that they worked Non Compulsory Overtime, (NCO). The majority of respondents working Non Compulsory Overtime were in the Private Sector rather than the Public Sector. While 19% of Female respondents and 32% of Male respondents worked up to 5 hours NCO per week, 52% of Female and 41 % of Male respondents worked between 6 – 10 hours per week. The majority of respondents working NCO were from the same categories as those working Compulsory Overtime.

## **Weekend Work**

- (xxvi) In the Public Sector, 48% of respondents stated that they worked weekends compared to 63% in the Private Sector. 56% of Female respondents from the Private Sector worked at some point during the weekend compared to 68% of Males. In the Public Sector 53% of Male respondents worked on some part of the weekend compared to 34% of Females.
- (xxvii) Only 1% of respondents in the Public Sector and 3% in the Private Sector stated that they worked more than 4 weekend days per month.

## **Childcare And Other Dependant Relatives**

### **School-going Children**

- (xxviii) 49% of households included school-going children and 51 % did not.

### **Responsibility for Childcare**

- (xxix) The majority of Male respondents, 79%, stated that the children were "looked after by the school and then their spouse", compared to only 10% of Female respondents responding in the same manner. However, we should notice that with the Female respondents, there was a broader range of responses. 21% of Female respondents stated that it was the "School and then other people living in their home" that was the principal method of childcare and 24% stated it was the "School and then other family members living elsewhere".

- (xxx) After the School and the spouse, the people Female respondents most relied on for after-school child-care were "other family members living in the same household" and «other family members living in a different household". It should be noted that 20% of Female respondents reported that the children looked after themselves after school. However, this is less than the 43% of working mothers who reported to the CSO in the year 2000, that no one looked after their school-going children after school hours and while the respondent was still at work.

### **Satisfaction with Childcare**

- (xxxi) A massive 98% of respondents with school-going children in the household reported that they were either Very Satisfied or Satisfied with their childcare arrangements.

### **School Aged Children Not Attending School and Disabled Children**

- (xxxii) Very few respondents indicated the presence of school-aged children not attending school. The issue of disability is more interesting as the number of respondents is less than we would expect, at only 1%.

### **Infants**

- (xxxiii) 24% of all respondents lived in households where there were infants present.
- (xxxiv) The number of respondents with infants in the household ranged from 22% in the Urban Region to 26% in the Rural. Over 70% of Male respondents in the Urban, 85% in the semi-Urban and 76% in the Rural regions, reported that Infant Care Arrangements were the responsibility of their Spouse or Partner. Childcare centres not run by the employer are used by 17% of respondents in the Urban regions and 15% in the Rural regions. In the semi-Urban region, this falls to 9.5% of the total number of respondents for that region. Few in any region use a child-care centre run by the employer. After the spouse and a childcare centre, the next most commonly utilized method of infant care in all regions was either other members of the household or family members living elsewhere.

### **Satisfaction with Infant Care**

- (xxxv) Only 7 respondents out of a total of 345, or 2%, indicated that they were unsatisfied with their Infant Care Arrangements.

### **Looking After a Sick Child**

- (xxxvi) In cases of sickness, 14.9% (Urban) 16.9 (semi-Urban) and 13.8 % (Rural) stated that it was their spouse who looked after the sick child. An almost equal percentage of Female respondents reported that family members either living in the same home and those living elsewhere looked after

their sick child. About 7 % of Male and 14 % of Female respondents continued to leave their children on their own even when the children were ill.

### **Leave Arrangements for Family Care**

(xxxvii) When it was necessary to take time off work to care for a sick child, Paid Casual Leave was the outright most common choice of the respondents, both Male and Female, and in both the Public and Private Sectors. Some 68% of the respondents stated that this would be the method that they were most likely to use. A massive 91 % of respondents in the Public Sector and 61 % in the Private Sector would opt for Casual leave in this type of situation. In the Private Sector 12% of respondents said that they would use Unpaid Leave, an option taken up by only 2% in the Public Sector. One other method prevalent in the Private Sector but not in the Public Sector, is to take time off and make it up later. 18% of respondents in the Private Sector would do this, compared to only 4% of respondents working in the Public Sector. Some 5% of respondents from the Private Sector also indicated that they would not be able to take time off work to cover any emergency, which could only lead to additional stress on the part of the employee. Only 4% of those in the Private Sector and 2% from the Public Sector would use Paid Sick Leave.

### **Dependant Relatives**

(xxxviii) 17% of respondents indicated that dependant relatives lived in their household. Slightly fewer households in the Rural region, 14%, had dependant relatives within them, compared to 18% in the Urban region and 19% in the semi-Urban region. 17% of households contained some type of dependant relative other than children. 78%, of dependant relatives were Parents or Parents-in-Law of the respondent.

(xxxix) 54% of Male and 9% of Female respondents said that their spouse looks after the dependant relatives. Some 43% of Female and 32% of Male respondents depend on other relatives for the care of dependant relatives.

### **Workplace Policies and Benefits**

#### **Assistance From Employers**

(xl) 12% of respondents stated that their employer provided some kind of financial assistance. 14% in the Private Sector and 4% in the Public Sector said that their employer has arrangements for financial assistance. This financial assistance tends to take the form of soft loans and, in general, it is in the Private Sector that soft loans are available as the Public Sector employers rarely go beyond the recommendations of the PRB. This is reflected in the very small number of respondents who have used financial assistance from Public Sector employers.

- (xli) 82% of respondents in the Public Sector and 59% in the Private Sector stated that they had at some point received Assistance With Transport from their employer. 33% of respondents in the Private Sector and 16% in the Public Sector said that they had received some form of financial assistance from their employer with medical expenses.

### **Leave to Deal with Family Responsibilities**

- (xlii) 79% of respondents in the Public Sector and 60% in the Private Sector would use Casual Leave to deal with family responsibilities. After Casual Leave, 10% of respondents in both Public and Private Sectors stated that they would take Paid Sick Leave. 16% in the Private Sector and 3% in the Public Sector also said that they would use Unpaid Leave. 8% of respondents working in the Private Sector said that they would take time off but make it up later.

### **Vacation Leave**

- (xliii) 14% of all respondents stated that they do not receive Paid Holiday Leave. In the Private Sector, 46% of respondents stated that they do not receive Paid Holiday Leave.

### **Sick Leave**

- (xliv) Some 31% of respondents in the Public Sector stated that they do not receive any Paid Sick Leave a figure that rises to 50% in the Private Sector.

### **Maternity & Paternity Leave**

- (xlv) In the Public Sector only 23% of respondents said that there was Paid Maternity or Paternity Leave available and this fell to 15% in the Private Sector. The majority of Female respondents, 61%, stated that they are not entitled to Maternity Leave. As regards Paternity Leave, we can see that in both Public and Private Sectors this is a relatively unusual provision.

### **Relationship With Employer**

- (xlvi) 24% of respondents in the Public Sector and 32% in the Private Sector said that they could start or finish work earlier or later without permission.
- (xlvii) 61% of respondents in the Public Sector and 47% in the Private Sector had access to a telephone for use for family reasons.
- (xlviii) Of the respondents, 15% of those who work in the Public Sector and 13%, in the Private Sector, stated that they could bring a child into the workplace for an hour or so.
- (xlix) Only 2% of respondents in the Public Sector and 4% in the Private Sector said that they could sometimes work from home.
- (l) 76% of respondents in the Private Sector and 82% in the Public Sector stated that they could not work fewer hours to suit family responsibilities.



- (ii) Some 37% of respondents in the Public Sector and 35% working in the Private Sector stated that they thought that their supervisor understood that the respondent might need to be absent from work sometimes because of childcare commitments.
- (lii) Less than half of the respondents working in the Private Sector, 47%, said that they could take their holidays to suit their family needs, compared to 71 % in the Public Sector.

## **Supports for Work / Family Balance**

### **Usefulness of Other People in Assisting with Family Responsibilities**

- (liii) Some 85% of Male respondents reported that their spouse was Useful in assisting with family responsibilities, while for Female respondents, reporting on their husbands or Male partners, this fell to 58%. Just 3% of Female respondents found their spouse was Never Useful in helping with childcare or home and family responsibilities.
- (liv) An almost equal number of Male and Female respondents, 38% & 39% respectively, found children useful in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities. As to whether they were Sometimes Useful, 17% of Male and 18% of Female respondents recorded that they thought that this was the case.
- (Iv) 18% of Male and 19%, of Female respondents, recorded that they felt that Other Relatives were Never Useful. A greater percentage of Female, 38%, than Male respondents, 33%, found other relatives Useful. About one quarter of both Male and Female respondents, 27% and 25% respectively, stated that they found other relatives Sometimes Useful.
- (lvi) 38% of Male and 41 % of Female respondents recorded that they found that their neighbours were Never Useful in helping with home, childcare and family responsibilities. Only 13% of Male and 9% of Female respondents felt that their neighbours were Useful in this respect.
- (lvii) 41% of Male and 45% of Female respondents found that their friends were Never Useful in helping with these particular aspects of home life. Both Male and Female respondents recorded fairly low figures for the Usefulness of friends at 10% and 7% respectively.
- (Iviii) Some 88% of Male and 85% of Female respondents indicated that the issue of paid domestic helpers or paid babysitters being useful was Not Applicable to them. A further 6% of Male and 7% of Female respondents indicated that they found domestic helpers or babysitters Never Useful. As to those that found them Useful, the percentages are relatively small at 4% of Male and 7% of Female respondents. Overall, 87% of respondents felt that the use of domestic helpers was Not Applicable and only 5% of respondents felt that they found their assistance Useful.

### **One Thing Respondent Would Change With Job to Ease Work /Family Balance**

- (lix) 4% of both Male and Female respondents make it clear that they would like to Work Less Hours. Slightly more Male than Female respondents, 9% and 8% respectively would like to work "No or Less Night Shifts" and 38% of Male and 41 % of Female respondents would like to Change Actual Hours of Work. Only 10% of Male and 12% of Female respondents stated that having More Money would be the one thing that they would change at work.

### **One Thing Respondent Would Change with Home Life to Reconcile the Exigencies Of Work /Family Responsibilities**

- (Ix) 50% of Male and 41 % of Female respondents said that they would change nothing or that they had no idea as to what they would change. Some 21 % of Female respondents stated that they would like to have some help in household responsibilities while for Males this category dropped to 9%. We again see More Free Time on the agenda, being stated by 6% of Male and 5% of Female respondents.

### **Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities**

- (lxi) *More Male, 39%, than Female respondents, 31 %, stated that they found it Mostly Easy to balance work and family responsibilities. 50% of Female respondents found it Sometimes Easy to balance their responsibilities while 19% of Female and 17% of Male respondents found it Mostly Hard to do so.*
- (lxii) Of those earning less than Rs 12, 000 per month a mean average of 18% of respondents reported that they find it Mostly Hard to balance work and family responsibilities.
- (lxiii) Of those earning more than Rs 12, 000 per month a mean average of 4% of respondents reported that they find it Mostly hard to balance work and family responsibilities.
- (lxiv) In general we can see that 46% of all respondents find it sometimes easy to balance work and family responsibilities reflecting the fluctuating nature of responsibilities. 17% of Male and 19% of Female respondents find it Mostly Hard to balance these aspects of daily living.
- (lxv) 50% of Male and 48% of Female respondents found that the responsiveness of their workplace to the need of employees with families was Good. A further 12% of Male and 10% of Female respondents found that it was Very Good. Only 2% of Male and 3% of Female respondents stated that, in their opinion, their workplace was Very Bad in this respect.

### **Reason for Rating Family Friendliness of Employer**

- (lxvi) Some 38% of Male and 39% of Female respondents stated that there was a Good Working Relationship and Co-operative Management. 24% of Male and 20% of Female respondents, stated that they could get Time Off to Suit their needs and that they Can Manage Family & Work. 16% of Male



and 22% of Female respondents stated that, in their opinion, the employer was Not Concerned, that the employer was Too Strict or that it was Difficult to Get Leave.

### **Labour Saving Devices in Household**

- (lxxvii) 88% of respondents stated that they had a refrigerator. Some 10% of Male and 9% of Female respondents stated that they Did Not Have a refrigerator and that they also Could Not Afford one.
- (lxxviii) Around half of the respondents, 48% of Male and 51% of Female, stated that they had a Washing Machine. Many other respondents, 41% of Male and 40% of Female stated that they Do Not Have but Cannot Afford one.
- (lxxix) The percentage of respondents who not only Do Not have but also Do Not want a washing machine is higher than in comparison with the refrigerator at 11% of Male and 8% of Female respondents.
- (lxxx) Only 2% of respondents said that they had a Dishwasher. 32% of Male respondents and 27% of Female respondents said that they Do Not Have but Cannot Afford a dishwasher, while 66% of Male and 71% of Female respondents, said that they Do Not Have and Do Not Want one.
- (lxxxi) 20% of Male and 26% of Female respondents stated that they had a Microwave Oven while almost half of the respondents, 49% of Male and 46% of Female said that they Do Not Have a Microwave and Cannot afford one.
- (lxxxii) Very few respondents, 6% of both Male and Female, stated that they had a Freezer. 72% and 73% of Male and Female respondents respectively, said that they Do Not Have and Do Not Want a freezer.
- (lxxxiii) 88% of respondents said that they had a gas cooker in their home while 10% indicated that they Do Not Have one but Do Not Want one.
- (lxxxiv) 2% indicated that not only did they Not Have a gas cooker in the home but that they Could Not Afford one.
- (lxxxv) 43% of respondents, both Male and Female, stated that they Do Not Have a vacuum cleaner in the household and Do Not Want one.

### **Overview of Study of Employees**

- (lxxxvi) At first sight, the respondents appear to be relatively content with the various ways in which they balance their work and family lives and responsibilities. However, when looking a little deeper we see that there is an undercurrent of discontent, particularly with the way that employers understand the everyday problems associated with working full time, managing a household and supervising childcare.
- (lxxxvii) One of the points to note is the difficulty of employees in enjoying whatever leave entitlement they have.
- (lxxxviii) Where there are childcare responsibilities, more often than not these will be perceived as a Female responsibility. Those involved in childcare appear to have several "back - up" systems in place to assist them should their preferred method fail but, perhaps surprisingly, relations, friends and neighbours, are not utilised or even perceived as useful by as many people as one may have assumed.

- (lxxix) One major issue is that children are often being left on their own between the school finishing time and the time when their parents return home from work. Seen in the results of the questionnaire based study, this issue was raised in both the FGDs and the interviews with Opinion Leaders.
- (lxxx) With the new types of employment being envisaged and promoted for the modern Mauritius the impact on family life may well substantially alter. Although 39% of respondents stated that the one thing they would like to change about their job was the actual hours of work that they do, it is perhaps the case that they did not have in mind changing day shifts for night shifts.

## **Study of Employers**

### **Sampling Methodology for Employers**

- (lxxxi) The sample size for employers was set at 50, made up of 36 *Private* and 14 Public establishments.

#### **Private Establishments**

- (lxxxii) The frame used was the list of large private establishments. The International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) was used to classify the establishments by their major type of industrial activity. The number of establishments selected for each industrial stratum was calculated with probability proportional to the number of employees.

#### **Public Enterprises**

- (lxxxiii) Different lists and administrative records were used to build up an exhaustive frame for the selection of the 14 public enterprises.

### **Questionnaire Design**

- (lxxxiv) As with the Employee Survey, the Employer questionnaire was designed by CASR in accordance with the objectives and recommendations of the ILO. It was built around a core set of standard questions that were drafted in such a way as to ensure the possibility of cross-country comparison.

### **Questionnaire Implementation**

- (lxxxv) The questionnaires were posted to the respondents, complete with full instructions for completion. They were dispatched at the end of October 2001. After 3 weeks, only 14 of the 50 questionnaires had been completed. The remaining workplaces either wanted more time to complete the task or said that it would be more convenient for them to return the completed questionnaires to CASR by post or fax. By the end of February 2002, 36 out of the 50 firms had responded.

(lxxxvi) Establishments in the Public Sector appeared more willing to cooperate, an 86% response rate, than those in the Private Sector, 75% response rate. Few respondents completed all the questions. It is important to note right at the outset that due to the smallness of the sample, the percentages should be interpreted with caution.

## **Profile of the Respondents' Workplaces.**

### **Respondents' Workplaces by Sector**

(lxxxvii) The EPZ and the Public Sector represented 25% and 33% of the sample respectively.

(lxxxviii) In the Public Sector, there was a concentration of workplaces with 'regular' hours of work of between 35 and 40 hours per week at 67%. In the EPZ, 47% of respondents worked between 41 and 60 hours per week.

### **Size of Respondent Firms**

(lxxxix) It was necessary to separate firms into those that are self-standing and those which are part of a larger firm, which may have any number of employees either nationwide or internationally. There was an equal split between those who stated that their workplaces were part of a larger firm and those who were not. 70% of workplaces had less than 500 employees whilst 25% had more than 500.

### **Employee Friendliness of the Workplace**

(lxxxix) The employers were categorical in their response and in both sectors 100% of employers state that it would not be possible for employees to work from home.

(xc) According to the employers, there is also very little chance of employees switching from Full-time to Part-time work. Of the Public Sector employers, 100% said that employees could not change their work status while a small percentage in the Private Sector, 4%, said that they could.

(xci) Few Employers from both sectors appear amenable to their employees working flexible hours with 15% in the Public Sector and 17% in the Private Sector saying that this would be acceptable.

(xcii) Over half of the responding employers from the Public Sector said that job sharing could be possible, while in the Private Sector this percentage falls to 22%.

(xciii) 62% of employers in the Public Sector and 61% in the Private Sector provide some form of health care, and 92% of employers in the Public Sector make some form of contribution to the employees' welfare fund, a percentage which falls to 52% in the Private Sector.

(xciv) 92% of employers from the Public Sector also stated that they provide equal opportunities to their employees, while in the Private Sector the percentage is 74%.

## **Employers and Childcare**

- (xcv) All responding employers stated that maternity leave is available to their employees. Other than maternity leave, neither Public nor Private Sector organisations seem to provide much assistance for childcare.

## **Childcare/Nursery on Site**

- (xcvi) The large majority of employers in the Public Sector, (92% ), said that they do not provide nursery facilities for the children of employees. In the Private Sector, 61% of responding employers stated that they have a subsidised childcare centre or nursery on site, and 9% stated that they have free childcare facilities. However, this is one of the occasions where one needs to be very wary of the statistics as only 9 respondents from our sample of 50 gave an answer to this question. Therefore, these percentages should be viewed with great caution given the very small number of responses on which they are based, an inevitable consequence of a small study sample. Given the unreliability of these percentages, no inference or extrapolation should be made.

## **Breastfeeding Facilities at the Workplace**

- (xcvii) About 83% of the surveyed workplaces do not provide breastfeeding facilities for mothers. More than 90% of responding employers in the Public Sector stated that they do not provide these facilities. In the Private Sector, responding employers from 78% of establishments said that breastfeeding facilities are provided, but the number of respondents was, again, too small for meaningful deductions to be made. Without the provision of other childcare facilities on site, the statement that employers provide breastfeeding facilities is misleading. Some women may use the facilities to express milk for later use, but this would require the provision of a refrigerator or similar hygienic storage capacity and it has not been ascertained as to whether the employers include this type of facility in the breastfeeding facilities they say that they provide.

## **Leave *ProYided* by Employer To Look After Sick Children**

- (xcviii) 54% of responding employers in the Public Sector and 39% in the Private Sector allowed paid leave to look after sick children.
- (xcix) 92% of responding employers in the Public Sector and 76% in the Private Sector stated that their establishment did not allow unpaid leave to look after sick children.
- (c) 78% of responding employers in the Public Sector stated that their establishment thought it Important to assist employees with childcare needs. None said that they thought it was Very Important, while 22% said that, in their view, it was Not At All Important. In the Private sector, 70% of responding employees said that they thought that assisting employees with childcare needs was either Very Important (5%), or Important (65%). The *remaining 30% said that it was Not Very Important, (25%), or Not At all Important, (5%).*

### **Availability of Sick Leave**

- (ci) 92% of responding employers in the Public Sector and 86% in the Private Sector stated that sick leave was available to their employees.
- (cii) 40% of the responding employers stated that their establishment provides unpaid sick leave, with more in the Private Sector, (44%), than in the Public Sector (31 %).

### **Paid And Unpaid Leave To Look After Sick Relatives**

- (ciii) Only 36% of the total number of establishments surveyed said that they provide Paid Leave for employees to look after sick relatives. Only 18% of the total number of employers stated that Unpaid Leave would be available to their employees, a figure that includes 100% of responding employers in the Public Sector.
- (civ) 46% of employers in the Public Sector and 30% in the Private Sector stated that they provided Paid Leave for employees to look after sick relatives, whereas those in the Private Sector, 30%, seem more amenable to Unpaid Leave to cover this type of eventuality.

### **Male Employees and Childbirth**

- (cv) Responding employers stated that most employees in both the Public and Private Sectors use their available paid leave entitlement in such an event, falling back on Sick Leave, Casual Leave, and, where available, Vacation Leave. This is reinforced by the percentages of responding employers who stated that to cover Paternity Leave the employee would take his Available Leave Entitlement, 69% in the Public Sector and 56% in the Private Sector. Looking at alternative arrangements, 13% of responding employers from the Private Sector stated that there would be No Such Facilities Available. This question elicited a high rate of non-response, with 31 % of Public Sector employers and 26% of Private Sector employers choosing not to answer.

### **Other Family-Friendly Policies**

- (cvi) 92% of responding employers in the Public Sector and 87% in the Private Sector stated that there was a telephone available in the workplace that the employees may use for family reasons.
- (cvii) 92% of the workplaces surveyed stated that assistance with housing was unavailable.
- (cviii) 89% feel that where facilities were available, such as a telephone, arriving late or leaving early without permission etc. they were available to Everyone in the Workplace, while the remaining 11 % of responding employers provided such facilities to a select few. When asked to give a reason as to why they provided such facilities for their employees 32%, said that it was because the 'Employer is family-friendly', while 32% saw it as "The Social Responsibility of the Enterprise". 23% said that it was to 'To Enhance Productivity' while the remaining 14% saw it as a means to "Facilitate the Recruitment of Staff'.

## Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities

- (cix) In the Public Sector, 23% of responding employers stated that they thought it Very Important to help employees balance work and family responsibilities, while in the Private Sector this percentage rose to 36%. Some 62% in the Public Sector and 55% in the Private Sector thought that it was Important. 8% in the Public Sector and 9% in the Private Sector thought that it was Not Very Important while 8% of responding employers in the Public Sector thought it Not At All Important.

## Overview of Survey of Employers

- (ex) Unlike many of the respondents among the employees, the responding employers appear to be well aware of what entitlements are available to their employees under the applicable Labour Laws. Accordingly, they state that these provisions are available to all staff.
- (cxi) It would seem that many employers are unwilling or unable to extend any kind of provision beyond that which is mandatory. On the other hand, they wish to come across as being caring and family friendly but are often unlikely to permit employees to take time off to deal with family responsibilities.
- (cxii) Sometimes, there are flaws in the actual legislation, which means that although the employer is fulfilling their legal obligations the employee is unable to enjoy the benefits. A good example is the provision of breastfeeding facilities. A nursing mother might be informed by the employer that, in accordance with the law, breastfeeding facilities can be provided for her should she so wish, but, with the absence of other childcare facilities, it is impossible to bring the baby onto the worksite.
- (cxiii) Notwithstanding this apparent contentment, many facilities, that could be very useful for employees in helping them to deal with unexpected events and family responsibilities, are seldom made available by the employers. Many employers do not offer any kind of leave to deal with such problems as sick children or sick relatives.
- (cxiv) While many of the responding employers were aware of the need for implementing family friendly policies and providing good facilities for their employees that would help them in balancing work and family responsibilities not all of them either did so or wished to do so.
- (cxv) It would perhaps be unrealistic or unreasonable to expect employers to implement any kind of policy to assist employees with their family responsibilities that would jeopardise the profitability or efficiency of the establishment. However, many policies that could be implemented, or facilities that could be provided, might well aid in the efficiency of the organization.



# INTRODUCTION

**"While various forms of the family exist in different social, cultural, legal and political systems, the family is the basic unit of society and as such is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support."**

**Programme of Action of the United Nations  
International Conference on Population and  
Development, 1994**

## **A. Background - The Changing Role of The Family**

It is increasingly being recognized that the family is the cornerstone of society. The weakening of the family as a unit and the changing roles of its individual members resulting from social and economic development within society and the work place needs constant monitoring. Documenting the evolving situation will help in identifying the costs and benefits of the measures which have been taken to increase and improve the development of a harmonious balance between work and family responsibilities.

As stated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the guidelines for the country studies 2000/01 Biennium, "There is an urgent need to move the focus of attention beyond the impact that family demands have on work, to the impact that work and working conditions have on family and personal life and to gender equality. Family-friendly employment and social policies that are practical and cost-efficient to implement can make an important contribution to social protection and the essential objective of *"decent work."*

By participating in the International Labour Organization's project on the Work and Family interface in a selected number of countries - the ILO 2000-01 Biennium studies - Mauritius is taking an important step towards a better understanding of the intricate and complex linkages between the individual, the family, the work place and society as a whole.

Mauritius was chosen to form part of the project because it is a successful developing country, which has completed the structural transformation of its economy. From being a mono crop, agricultural economy for more than 3 centuries, it diversified its economy by creating 2 new sectors - international tourism and export market manufacturing between the 1970s and 1990s. With the problems faced by the manufacturing sector in the late 1990s due to intense competition from emerging low cost producers, it is on its way to creating a fourth pillar for the economy which is the Off Shore sector, comprising a wide range of banking, financial, consultancy and other services.

The implications of the economic transformation on the family have been significant. Women who were mainly homemakers in the 1960s began to enter the labour market in larger numbers in the 1970s, working mainly as Production Workers in the newly set up Export Processing Zone factories. In the initial years, these industries mainly attracted young, unmarried girls with little education who worked to earn some extra pin money. Gradually, as families became accustomed to increased income, it was largely married women, often in the reproductive age groups and with heavy family responsibilities, who were the industrial workers. This change in the characteristics of industrial workers has had an important implication on the work/family interface.

It is this evolution in the profile of the industrial labour force, and its ramifications on the work/family nexus, which is the determinant factor to this study. There is thus a need to assess the impact of industrialization on the lifestyles of the people.

## **B. Methodology**

The Study on the Work/Family interface had recourse to a combination of methods, in order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of the impact - both nefarious and beneficial - that working women, and working mothers in particular, have on the family unit. The research began with a comprehensive Desk Study, followed by Focus Group Discussions and interviews with acknowledged opinion leaders. Finally, questionnaire-based surveys of both Employees and Employers were undertaken. The Employee survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews and the Employers survey by a combination of self-completed questionnaires and face-to-face interviews.

Since it was the first time that Mauritius was studying this important aspect of societal behaviour, bringing together two aspects of everyday life that are often considered as being totally independent and unrelated, it was felt that a desk study on the current situation regarding the relevant issues should be the starting point for the detailed study.

This desk study provides the background data on which the Centre for Applied Social Research has based the Mauritian Biennium study. The objective of this study is to document changes that are taking place within the family and the workplace. The report documents the existing situation in Mauritius, as per the detailed Terms of Reference of the ILO Biennium study given at Annex 1.

In spite of the statistical methods available for undertaking a sophisticated analysis of data obtained from the interviewing techniques, it is being recognized that these methods are not always adequate to capture the reasons for societal behaviour. The nuances in behaviour between different segments of the population cannot often be properly understood through quantitative studies. It was therefore important to use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods.



The qualitative methodology included the holding of Focus Group Discussions with members of various trade unions and unstructured interviews with opinion leaders. The objective was to gather information on how well employees are able to balance their work and family responsibilities.

The quantitative methods involved carrying out 2 surveys: one was a survey of 1,500 employees and the other a survey of 50 employers. Both surveys used structured interview techniques questionnaires designed to meet the Study's objectives.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Summary of Desk Study

### 1.1 Introduction

**1.1.1** An on-going succession of interconnected events mainly in the economic, political, social, gender awareness and legal fields triggered since the 1970s have radically altered the work/family nexus. As women enter the formal productive sector of the economy in larger numbers, they perforce have less time for their traditional domestic responsibilities. Thus, unless the male partner in a household is willing to provide some of the support services, the quality of family care and service is bound to suffer. In Mauritius, some studies on selected aspects of this vital nexus of family/work relationship have been undertaken. But they have been desultory. This is the first step towards putting together all the disconnected work that has been done to date on this vital issue, so that a clearer understanding of the situation can be obtained.

**1.1.2** Studies already undertaken and or in progress by the International Labour Organization and other organizations indicate that international competition will have an impact on social progress at the country level. This impact could be beneficial as much as it could lead to greater instability as unemployment levels increase. It is now recognized that it is as much the role of government, as of the community as a whole, to build on the family as a 'social pillar' to cushion employees so that unemployment and the other stresses at work do not lead to family break ups.

**1.1.3** How this 'social pillar' is to be strengthened is dependant on a variety of factors. These would include the economic situation of the country, the social structures already existing, the ethos of the population for individuality or collective care and the network of facilities available at the community and grass root levels. This study is expected to provide an insight into the stresses and strains of combining work and family responsibilities as well as some ideas as to what government could do to relieve some of the tensions.

**1.1.4** This study focuses, in particular, on the

- Work -family implications of the life cycle from a family perspective
- Implications of the changing nature of work on the family
- Efficiency and effectiveness in achieving a work- family balance
- Gender impact of work-family measures

## **1.2 The General Economic And Employment Context**

**1.2.1** Economic growth has been spurred by major structural changes to the economy. By 1986, Mauritius had completed its transformation from a sugar-based economy to an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) based one. While sugar had powered economic growth for almost two centuries, the shift out of sugar would appear to have been inevitable. After 1980, the manufacturing sector emerged as the main employment-generating sector. The performance of the manufacturing sector in employment creation was matched by its importance in wealth and export generation. After a slow start in the 1970s, the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) strategy had remarkable success in the mid 1980s due to a combination of external and internal factors. These were the flight of capital from Hong Kong due to the 1997 'back to China syndrome', the stable and pro-investor political climate, favourable duty-free entry of Mauritian textiles to the European Union (EU) under the Lome convention, the available pool of docile female workers and the small but dynamic group of Sino-Mauritian entrepreneurs who provided the bridge between Hong Kong and Mauritius.

### **Employment Trends**

**1.2.2** Mauritius has moved from levels of rampant unemployment, dismal poverty and social disharmony to a middle-income state of relative prosperity and high employment levels between the 1970s and 1990s. As a result of adopting a labour intensive, employment-creating strategy between 1970 and 1990, full employment was attained by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Employment trends in Mauritius have been characterized by a steady decline in the proportion of workers employed in sectors such as agriculture and fishing. Other sectors that registered important growth in employment between 1995 and 1999 were trade, restaurants and hotel sector (+17,800), the EPZ sector (+8,200), the financial and services sector (+8,600) <sup>1</sup>.

**1.2.3** The overall employment situation has, however, shown a marked deterioration in recent years. From 5.1% in 1995, the unemployment rate went up to 5.5% in 1996, then further up to 5.9% in 1997 and to around 8%, with almost 12% for Females, in June 2000<sup>2</sup>- Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Studies, carried out by the CSO, confirmed this trend. <sup>3</sup> A slow down of the EPZ, which has been more and more obvious over the last five years, partly explains this growth in the unemployment rate.

<sup>1</sup> The Present State of the Economy, Government of Mauritius, November, 2000, p.3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p.2.

<sup>3</sup>1999 Continuous Multi-purpose household survey– Economic and Social Indicators, Issue No.338, Central Statistical Office, November 2000.

### 1.3 Economic Challenges of the 3rd Millennium

**1.3.1** As shown in Table 1.1 below, it is tourism related sectors like Hotels and Restaurants and the financial sectors, followed by the EPZ, which have had the highest growth in the last few years. The high growth in the agricultural sector in the year 2000 should be discounted, as it is the result of the major set back experienced in 1999 due to adverse weather conditions.

Table 1.1 GDP Growth by Main Sectors, Percentage

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	W00
Agriculture and Fishing	8.4	5.3	3.4	-2.0	-28.1	28.4
- Sugarcane	10.0	11.1	5.1	2.5	-45.0	56.2
- Other	6.5	-2.0	1.0	-8.6	0.0	3.1
Manufacturing	5.9	6.4	6.2	6.7	3.0	8.3
-EPZ	5.0	7.0	6.0	6.9	6.0	6.0
Electricity, Gas and Water	8.7	7.5	8.3	6.2	0.0	8.0
Construction	-2.0	4.5	-1.0	6.0	8.0	8.0
Wholesale, Retail trade, restaurants and hotels	5.6	7.9	6.3	4.9	5.0	6.5
- Restaurants and hotels	9.0	16.0	10.2	6.0	6.0	11.0
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	8.7	6.5	6.4	6.0	6.7	6.8
Services						
- Financial Institutions	9.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.5	8.5
GDP at factor cost	5.6	6.2	5.6	5.8	2.6	8.3

Source: National Accounts of Mauritius 2000, Ministry of Economic Development, Financial Services & Corporate Affairs, January 2001.

**1.3.2** From concentrating on low value mass produced goods, Mauritius has to move into higher value, designer and niche market brand name type of products. Unfortunately, this march towards higher value added production has been more difficult - so that in 2000, industrial economists considered that the Mauritian industry in 1992 was still more than 90 % labour intensive, which is the low end of the technology spectrum, with only 5 % 'differentiated products' which are the 'sophisticated end of the engineering products and Mauritius had no 'science based products'. This pattern of specialization is not conducive to a sustained expansion of exports in the emerging technological and trading environment". The need to move up market has been the credo of every government and private sector document over the last ten years. Although more high technology industries have been set up over the last decade, the shift has been slow.

**1.3.3** What would be the demands on society for industry to move up market? While it may not necessarily mean working longer hours, it would certainly mean working

<sup>4</sup> Sanjaya Lall, Mauritius: Dynamiting Export Competitiveness, for Commonwealth Secretariat, June 1997

smartly and more productively. Does this depend only on increasing educational levels? The employers and employees are called upon to develop many qualities such as creativeness, innovativeness and greater flexibility. The dependence of the EPZ on foreign workers has been growing over the past decade. Most employers vouch that the EPZ would face difficulties without recourse to foreign workers.

- 1.3.4** With globalization and the dismantling of many of the well-exploited advantages, Mauritius faces the challenge of almost starting afresh in the world market. The recent Africa Growth and Opportunities Act 2000 could require major structural changes in the EPZ sector, before full advantage is taken of the provision of the Act.
- 1.3.5** The tourism sector could also be counted on to be the stimulus to the economy. Attracting tourists became a stated objective of the Government in the 1970s and with the adoption of a multi-pronged approach and substantial promotion, the tourist sector has enjoyed growth rates which have exceeded that of the economy as a whole. That growth is illustrated by the increase in the number of hotel beds from less than 200 in 1970 to nearly 18,350 in 2001. From less than 1,000 in the 1960s, tourist arrivals had grown to around 660, 318 by 2001. The sector has also been an important provider of employment with jobs increasing from 3,200 in 1976 to almost 20,000 in 2001, making the sector increasingly important to the national economy. The employment created in the sub sectors and activities, such as transport services, food and beverages, handicrafts and entertainment linked to the tourist sector, has been substantial. Cumulative direct and indirect employment created by the tourism industry was around 50,000 in 1998<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.3.6** The tourism sector is, therefore, a certain growth sector for the future. It also provides an important employment opportunity for women, in particular those with some management skills. The tourist sector has a flatter hierarchy and has attracted a larger number of university and secondary level graduates. It has the potential of growth but will require exceedingly careful planning to be environmentally sustainable.
- 1.3.7** The financial sector is also seen to provide the stimulant for future development. The setting up of the off-shore banking sub-sector, the Freeport and other financial services, such as consultancy services to the region and the surrounding areas could lead Mauritius out of the present situation. The financial intermediation sector, comprising insurance and banking services, sustained high growth rates of 9.7% in 1999 and 11.1 % in the year 2000<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Technical Supplement, Into the Third Millennium, Ministry of Economic Development, Productivity and Regional Development. Other tourist statistics from CSO Economic & Social Indicators – International Travel & Tourism Year 2001 – Feb. 2002

<sup>6</sup> National Accounts Estimates (1998-2001), March 2001 issue, Central Statistical Office.

- 1.3.8** "Indeed, it is the New Economy, shaped by the digital revolution and hi-tech that offers Mauritius the prospects to expand output, raise export earnings and create job opportunities. However, making the transition to the New Economy is not simple. The prerequisites are a "well-developed and efficient infrastructure, a strong knowledge base and requisite manpower skills to support start-ups -the knowledge-driven micro- and small enterprises - and the services-oriented industries. The success will depend on the country's ability and the pace at which it can bridge the 'information gap' or 'digital divide'." <sup>7</sup>

## **1.4 Labour Market and Employment**

- 1.4.1** A major change that has taken place in the labor market, which has had serious implications on the work/family nexus, has been the increasing number of women in the labour force. The attachment of Mauritian women to the labour market has kept pace with the overall economic development of the country and in particular with the re-launching of the Export Processing Zone as from the 1980s. Table 1.2 below provides data on the growth of employment.

<sup>7</sup> <http://ncb.intnet.mu/medrc/nweco.htm>

Table 1.1: Industrial sector, 1972-2000 (in thousands of persons)

INDUSTRIAL GROUPS	1972	1983	1990	1995	2000
Agriculture & Fishing	16,519	14,076	17,300	14,300	14,000
<i>Of which Sugarcane</i>		(12,611)	(11,900)	(8,600)	(7,700)
Mining and Quarrying	45	83	100	100	100
Manufacturing	3,559	22,552	63,400	72,500	72,500
<i>Of which Sugar</i>			(400)	(40)	(40)
<i>EPZ</i>			(60,300)	(60,800)	(60,200)
Electricity & Water	49	139	100	200	200
Construction	21	10	300	200	300
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	874	1,875	10,800	26,400	28,100
Transport, Storage & Communication	139	501	1,800	3,600	3,300
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	406	1,275	3,400	5,600	5,900
Community, Social & Personal Services			30,600	41,600	42,500
<i>Of which Central Govt.</i>	<i>7,241</i>	<i>12,870</i>	<i>(10,500)</i>	<i>(13,500)</i>	<i>(13,500)</i>
<i>Of which Local Govt. Activities</i>		38	(500)	(800)	(800)
(not elsewhere specified)			100	100	100
Total Female Number	25,854	53,539	127,900	164,100	167,000

Source: Ministry of Women, Women in figures, several years & CSO, Labour Statistics

**1.4.2** Thus, while in 1972 women accounted for only 20% of the labour market, by 1983, their share increased gradually to 28%, 35% by 1990 and finally to 40 % in 2000.

**1.4.3** A less favorable factor that emerges is the occupational distribution of women. While in 1962, 71 % of women were employed as agricultural labourers and most of the rest as domestic servants in the informal sector, in 1995 the majority were employed as production workers.

**1.4.4** Thus, the large mass of women has moved from the lowest rung in the agricultural sector to the lowest rung of the industrial sector, unlike more mature,

<sup>8</sup> Digest of Labour Statistics 2000, CSO, Ministry of Economic Development, Finance Services and Corporate Affairs, March 2001, p. 11 ; Annual survey of Employment and Earnings September 1972 & 1983, CSO.

<sup>9</sup> Provisional figures

industrialized countries where the occupational spread of women is less skewed. More recently however, there has been some movement up the occupational hierarchy in the EPZ. There are now more women engaged in jobs such as Human Resource Managers, Financial Controllers, Production Managers, Designers, Stylists and Marketing Managers.

- 1.4.5** The labour force activity rates for females (LFARF) increased from 20.3% in 1972 to 28% in 1983. The increase was witnessed in all the districts ranging from an increase of 11.7% in Pamplémousses to 1% in Plaines Wilhems between 1990 and 1995. The rates increased from 34.7% in 1990 to 38.8% in 1995, according to the 1995 Labor Force Sample Survey<sup>10</sup> and to 40.5% according to the 2000 Census. Important increases in the LFARF have occurred for older women as shown in the table below.

**Table 1.3 Activity Rates for Selected Age Groups<sup>11</sup>**  
1990, 1995 and 2000

Age last birthday	1990 Census Male%	1990 Census Fem%	1995 Survey Male%	1995 Survey Fem%	2000 Census Male%	2000 Census Fem%
15 – 19	50.7	25.7	44.0	24.6	31.1	18.0
20 – 24	90.4	43.6	89.8	49.0	85.9	51.6
25 – 29	95.5	41.9	96.2	47.7	95.6	47.4
30 – 34	96.8	45.6	96.5	47.1	97.0	50.6
35 – 39	97.1	45.9	96.8	54.7	97.5	59.3
40 – 44	96.6	41.8	96.2	51.7	97.0	56.5
45 – 49	94.6	37.0	95.6	45.5	96.0	49.3
50 – 54	91.2	32.4	92.4	38.2	93.1	41.4
55 – 59	81.7	24.6	83.7	29.3	85.0	31.7
15 & above	80.6	34.7	80.1	38.8	79.2	40.5

Source - Central Statistics Office, Labour Force Sample Survey 1997 and Census Report 2000

- 1.4.6** Table 1.3 shows the Activity rates for both males and females between the ages of 15 – 19 have been falling over the 1990 to 2000 period. This is due to the increased opportunities available for young people to pursue education and training activities. Increased income at the family level has not made it necessary for many young people to seek jobs until they have adequate qualifications.
- 1.4.7** For girls between 15 – 19 years, the activity rates have fallen from 25.7% in 1990 to 18% in 2000 as compared to the decline from 50.7% to 31.1 % for boys over the same period.
- 1.4.8** It is significant that the activity rates for women in the age groups of 30 – 34 and 35 – 39 years have been increasing. It is women of these age groups that are most often faced with having to combine family and work obligations. In 2000, more than 50 % of these women were in the labour market.

<sup>10</sup> Central Statistical Office, Labour Force Sample Survey 1995, Published March 1997

<sup>11</sup> Labour Force Sample Survey 1995, Central Statistical Office and Digest of Labour Statistics 2000, CSO, Ministry of Economic Development, Finance Services and Corporate Affairs, March 2001, p.9.



## Labour Force Activity Rates For Females by Marital Status

**1.4.9** It has been seen from the labour force sample survey that there has been a marked rise in the economic activity among married women between 1990 and 1995. Young single women (below 25 years) and men (below 25 years) on the other hand were probably extending their studies and postponed entering the labour market, as stated earlier.

**Table 1.4** Activity Rates of Population aged 12 and above, by Marital Status

Marital status	1990 Census Male %	1990 Census Female %	1995 Survey Male %	1995 Survey Female %	2000 Census Male %	2000 Census Female %
Single	64.0	34.2	59.5	33.5	59.5	34.9
Married	85.9	31.6	87.3	38.7	85.3	38.4
Widowed, Divorced & Separated	49.4	30.1	53.1	32.1	52.6	31.8
All marital status	74.9	32.2	74.8	36.1	73.9	36.4

Source: Central Statistics Office, Labour Force Sample Survey, 1995 & Census 2000

**1.4.10** Table 1.4 indicates that between 1990 and 1995, there were more married women in the labour force. The percentage of married women in the labour force rose from 31.6% in 1990 to 38.7% in 1995, rising to 38.4% by the time of the Census in the year 2000.

## 1.5 Social Context

**1.5.1** Over the last decades of the 20th Century, Mauritius witnessed a rise in the Human Development Index of the UNDP from 0.661 in 1980 to 0.825 in 1996. The emphasis on a consolidation of the welfare system (free education, free health and non-contributory pensions) as well as the full employment that the country experienced in the 1980s and early 1990s, contributed to Mauritius's relatively high Human Development Index.

**1.5.2** The Human Development Report (1999) ranked Mauritius 59th worldwide in terms of HDI but the latter as a measure of welfare has its limits.

## Poverty

- 1.5.3** In tandem with growing prosperity, there is evidence of the widening of the gap between those who have and those who do not have. Social issues such as social exclusion and marginalisation, family breakdowns, rising levels of criminality, increased teenage pregnancy and drug addiction are pertinent to the Mauritian reality. The Gini Coefficient, which measures disparity in income distribution, has deteriorated from 0.379 in 1991/92 to 0.387 in 1996/97<sup>12</sup>.

## Health

- 1.5.4** Although, relatively speaking, there has been an overall improvement in the general standard of living and the provision of health care in recent years, the eradication of Cholera & Malaria for example, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is high compared to the level of service available in Mauritius. There is also an alarmingly high proportion of low weight babies.
- 1.5.5** The greatest challenge in the Sexual and Reproductive Health sector (SRH) is the relatively high rate of infant mortality, which reflects the inability of women to cope with their reproductive and productive roles.
- 1.5.6** The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), which has been around 15 per 1,000 live births, is high for a country like Mauritius where most of the births take place either in hospitals, private clinics or are attended by qualified personnel, and where ante natal and post natal treatment is available at no cost throughout the island and water and sanitation facilities are good.
- 1.5.7** In an internal report of a Task Force on Reduction of Infant Mortality Rate, which examined data from 1976 to 1986, two main causes of the Early Neonatal *Mortality Rate* were reported. *These* were groupings of identified causes that showed that "slow fetal growth, fetal malnutrition and immaturity accounted for 44.8 % and hypoxia, birth asphyxia and other respiratory conditions of the newborn accounted for 37.5%."<sup>13</sup>
- 1.5.8** The estimated large number of abortions is also worrying. It would appear that many of the abortions that are taking place are sought by women who work long hours and/or are not physically healthy enough to go through with a normal pregnancy. It is also not clear if all pregnant women attend antenatal care from the beginning of their pregnancy.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid Chapter 7, p.39 Vision 2020

<sup>13</sup> Task Force on Reduction in Infant Mortality Rate, Report, Chairman, Dr. (Mrs.) R. Jagatsingh - Beehuspoteea, 1998

## Education

- 1.5.9** Educational levels of the male and female population as a whole have seen a continuous improvement. In 1999, the majority of all Males (43.3%) and Females (43.7%) had primary education. The percentage having secondary education was 41.9% for all Males and 36.7 % for all Females. Only 2.6% males and 1.3% Females had university education in 1999<sup>14</sup>.
- 1.5.10** In general, there has been a continuous improvement in the literacy levels of the population. By 1990, the literacy rate had reached 81.4, with Male and Female literacy rates at 86.3 and 76.6 respectively.
- 1.5.11** There has also been an improvement in the educational attainment of both Males and Females in the labour force. Only 10.4 % of the Female labour force had no education in 1995. And 2.2 % of Males had a university degree. Almost equal numbers of the rest of the Female labour force had either a primary (43.8%) or secondary (47.6%) education. By 1997, 2 % of the Female labour force had a University degree, 52.9 % had secondary education, 45.1 % primary education.
- 1.5.12** The University has been important for making tertiary education a reality for girls. The setting up of the University of Mauritius in 1965 as a development university saw a democratization of education, which became a fact only in the 1990s when the university embarked on a major expansion programme. The direct outcome of the expansion has been the improvement in the tertiary level enrolment ratio to nearer 5 % after 1995 as from less than 3 % in the 1980s.
- 1.5.13** However, the education system has largely failed to follow the changing socioeconomic environment. The result is an increasing skills mismatch'< on the labour market, with high risks of unemployment for those coming out of the secondary and tertiary education system.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Central Statistical Office, Household Budget Survey 1996/97 and 1999 Continuous Multi purpose Household Survey, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> See World Bank Aide-Memoire for Mauritius (2001)

<sup>16</sup> The Present State of the Economy, Op Cite, Chapter 6,p.35.

## 1.6 Family Trends

### The Implications for Work of Changing Family Needs

- 1.6.1** There is much contention among sociologists about the possibility of having one single, unified definition of the family. Murdock (1949), an eminent figure in the sociological debate about the family, defined it as follows:

*"The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults".<sup>17</sup>*

- 1.6.2** Given the existence of other types of families such as matriarchal families and "gay" families, Bruce et al (1995) adopt a wider definition of the family. According to them, despite a concern in recent times about the loss of the so-called 'traditional family', it is important to note that families have never fitted nicely into any single model. To them,

*'The family may refer to people linked by marriage or kinship or to people claiming descent from common ancestors in a lineage, tribe, or clan. People may form and extend families by adopting or fostering children, defining non-relatives as family, or establishing consensual relationships' (1995: 1).*

- 1.6.3** Furthermore, they argue, that families are as adaptable as they are diverse, reconfiguring themselves over their life cycles and evolving to accommodate the myriad pressures of the external world. There is a recognizance of other types of family such as the Matriarchal Family and Families based on a Homosexual Relationship.

- 1.6.4** For statistical convenience, the term family in this study will be used interchangeably with the term 'household'. The Central Statistics Office defines the household as:

*'A one-person household, that is, a person who makes provision for his own food and other essentials for living without combining with any other person.'*

or

*'A multi-person household, that is a group of two or more persons living together and who make common provision for food and other essentials for living. The persons in the group may pool their incomes and have a common budget; they may be related or unrelated or a combination of both.'*

<sup>17</sup> Murdock G.P 'Social Structure' MacMillan, New York 1949.

## Trends In The Family and Family Size

**1.6.5** Recent trends by household composition have shown that the small family is now the norm. This is mainly due to a dramatic decline in the fertility level as well as to the shift from the extended family type structure towards the nuclear family one.

### Decline in Fertility Rates

**1.6.6** As shown in Table 1.5 below, the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 49 years has continuously decreased from 181.40 in 1962 to 58.40 in 1998. While the Female population in the age group 15-49 has risen by 120% from 1962 to 1998, the average number of children born to the average woman has fallen from 5.86 to 1.96 over the same period.

**Table 1. 5 Fertility Trends (1962 – 1998)**

Rate	Year											
	1962	1972	1986	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
General												
Fertility	181.40	104.5	66.80	76.70	75.00	76.08	72.60	69.96	65.24	63.92	60.79	58.40
Rate												
Total												
Fertility	5.86	3.42	1.94	2.29	2.28	2.36	2.31	2.25	2.13	2.12	2.03	1.96
Rate												

*Source: Family Planning and Demographic Yearbook 1998,1999.*

**1.6.7** The most important factors responsible for the decline in fertility rates were the acceptance of family planning and the upward trend in the age of marriage. This upward trend in the mean age of marriage is shown in Table 1.6 below. Access to free state education and opportunities to join the labour force are other factors, which have indirectly brought about the decline in fertility rates.

**Table 1. 6: Mean Age at Marriage by Sex & Census Years**

		1962	1972	1983	1990
Mauritius	Male	26.2	27.2	27.5	28.3
	Female	19.9	22.5	23.8	23.8
Rodrigues	Male	NA	25.6	24.7	26.1
	Female	NA	21.3	21.7	22.0

*Source: Central Statistics Office. Housing and Population. Census 1983&1990*

**1.6.8** The change in the family structure as a result of the various forces is shown in Table 1.7.

**Table 1.7 Number, Size and Composition of the Household**

Concept/Years	1972	1983	1990	2000
Number of Households	155,223	199,712	229,690	288,156
% Household over Population		20.7	22.7	25.2
Average Size of Household		4.8	4.4	3.88
Female Heads of Household	29,253	37,014	40,237	-
Two or more Employed in Household		60,000	107,964	-

*Source: Census Reports, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Economic Planning & Development, various Reports*

**1.6.9** As seen from Table 1.7, the number of households is increasing while the size of the household is decreasing. There were also 16,000 single parent households in 1990 compared to 11,500 in 1962. There are also more one-person households and households headed by divorced and widowed persons.

**1.6.10** There was an increase in the number of households with more than one earning member over the 1962 to 1990 period. Between 1990 and 1997, the number of income earners per household had further increased from 1.7 to 1.9.<sup>18</sup>

### **Nuclearisation of the Family**

**1.6.11** A chain of events triggered by the industrialization of the country including higher levels of employment, higher standards of living and expectations, the growth of individualism as well as better opportunities for housing have all contributed to the breakdown of the traditional extended family structures.

**1.6.12** The dominant model in Mauritius is the nuclear family unit with two parents. The 1999 Household Budget Survey showed that the average household size was 3.88 compared to 4.12 recorded in the 1996/7 Household Budget Survey.

**1.6.13** *There has been a slight decline in the marriage rate.* As women become more financially independent, they have the choice of remaining single for a longer period of time.

**1.6.14** Thus, the marriage rate declined from 22% to 18.9% between 1972 and 1990.

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Women, National Gender Action Plan

## Symptoms of Pressures and Strains at the Level of Families

- 1.6.15** Notwithstanding the increase in material wealth and comfort, the welfare of the family is less secure. Although the number of divorces, which is the final breakdown of a family unit, is still low based on international statistics, the increase is clear enough. If divorce takes place when the couple have no children there may not be much adverse implications either for the individuals or society; but it is worrying to note that 50 % of cases take place within 10 years of marriage and when families have up to 4 children. In such cases, the welfare of the children becomes a matter of great concern to the family and to society.
- 1.6.16** It is clear that the pressures on the family unit are from all sides. As more women are forced to take up full time employment outside the family for economic reasons, it not only results in a lack of care for the children and other members of the family, but can also give rise to relationship problems between the spouses. In addition to the family-level instability are all the stresses that women and men have to face in the work place.

## Family Responsibilities and Work

- 1.6.17** Accommodating work and family responsibilities within the framework of the new economy is a major challenge. In order to respond effectively to the pressures of globalization, for instance in terms of changing business needs, Governments and firms around the world are promoting competitiveness by altering employees' working time schedules including extended operating and opening hours.<sup>19</sup> In the Mauritian context, nowhere is this situation more evident than for employees of the EPZ, Tourism and the Off-Shore sectors. How these changes in the scheduling of work affect family life, for example the distribution of household tasks and responsibilities and family health, has not been investigated.
- 1.6.18** Data from the 1999 Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey reveals that of the 2,345 women interviewed, about half declared that it was difficult to cope with work and family responsibilities but they managed to do so, while about 40% claimed having no difficulty and only 10% reported having much difficulty to cope with their situation as shown in the Table 1.8.

Table 1.8: Reconciliation of work and Family Responsibilities

	Number	%
Very difficult	245	10.4
Difficult, but can manage	1169	49.9
No problem	931	39.7
Total	2345	100.0

Source: *Economic and Social Indicators – An occasional paper*, Central Statistics Office (2000)

<sup>19</sup> Colette Fagan, 'Development in Working time in the EU: an overview' (Paper for the 5th CEIES Seminar – Working time and working patterns)



## Childcare

**1.6.19** With women's activity rate in the labour force at 40%<sup>20</sup>, and with just over half

of all married women in employment, the problem of inadequate day care services for children from birth to pre-primary school age has become particularly acute. The care being provided outside the home is too often mere babysitting and does not concern itself with child development issues. The fundamental needs of the child's early learning – play, support and encouragement, interaction with people and things, patience, understanding, sympathy, parents' love and attention – must be supplied in the environment where children spend most of their time, if they are to have a fair chance of success in the formal education system. Childcare needs to be viewed in terms of early childhood development, and must provide the first important stepping-stone in the educational process.<sup>21</sup> In Mauritius at present, the types of services available range from small nurseries, often run in private houses, to large day care centres managed by such organizations as the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund. However, in both cases, the fees payable can amount to a substantial part of a working parent's available income and the quality of service offered may not necessarily be of a sufficiently high standard that it will assist in the child's early development.

**1.6.20** Effective childcare is also fundamental to working women's, and aspmng working women's, well-being. After laying the foundation of the country's economic miracle by a drastic change in fertility behaviour and by joining the workforce in massive numbers, women must now be able to gain access to quality child care which will allow them to manage their time to their own benefit and that of their families.

**1.6.21** Data from the 1999 Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey reveal that among working mothers who have babies, 51 % left their babies in the care of grandparents while they were at work. Arrangements made by others are shown in Table 1.9 below.

<sup>20</sup> Data from 'A Statistical Profile on Women in Mauritius' (1999). Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child development.

<sup>21</sup> See Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development & UNICEF & Government of Mauritius, Dr Jacqueline Hayden, 1997, An Analysis of Early Childhood Development Day Care & Home Care Programmes, Quality, Cost & Accreditation, Vol 6 Part A, Synopsis Report, De Chazal Du Mee, Port Louis, Mauritius and Dr. S. Gopalan, October 1997, Early Childhood Development Policy, Strategies & A Programme for Action, Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development sponsored by UNICEF, Oct 97.



**Table 1.9 Care of Babies When Mother Was at Work**

Babies looked after by	Women reporting	
	Number	%
Grand-parents	136	50.9
Relatives without payment	37	13.9
Paid child-minder	33	12.3
Nursery	44	16.5
Other	17	6.4
Total	267	100.0

Source: Central Statistics Office (2000)

**1.6.22** Among working mothers with school-going children, 43% reported that their children were left on their own after school, while 32% left their children in the care of grandparents as shown in Table 1.10.

**Table 1.10 Care of School-going Children After School Hours While Mother Is Still At Work.**

Children looked after by	Women reporting	
	Number	%
Grand-parents	285	32.3
Relatives, friends or neighbours without pay	34	3.9
Relatives, friends or neighbours with pay	110	12.5
Nursery	22	2.5
No one (left on their own)	379	43.0
Other	51	5.8
Total	881	100.0

Source: Central Statistics Office (2000)

**1.6.23** Again, although the sample may not be representative of families with young children, based on these figures, the number of children left on their own is alarming. Grand-parents, and to a lesser extent, relatives, friends and neighbours, with or without pay, still play an important part in baby-sitting and childcare. The problem resides in the quality of the childcare available in such circumstances.

**1.6.24** The Child Protection Act gives a precise definition of child care services providers as formal child-care providers which include:

- (a) private individuals who set up an institution on a commercial basis
- (b) private organizations that run an institution on a profit or non-profit basis
- (c) non - governmental organizations that run institutions
- (d) institutions run by local authorities

'Home child-care giver' means any person providing child-care services at his residence to children on a commercial basis.<sup>22</sup>

**1.6.25** The requirement for day-care services in Mauritius fall under two categories, formal daycare and informal daycare.<sup>23</sup> According to Gopalan (1997), under formal daycare, 82 creches [at that time]<sup>24</sup> were registered with the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development.

**1.6.26** They were:

- (a) Private individuals who have set up creches as commercial enterprises
- (b) NGOs running creches on a no-profit, no-loss basis sponsored by the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund (EPZLWF).
- (c) Municipalities facilitating daycare service for children in some areas
- (d) A few creches for children with specific needs run by NGOs, for example Soroptimist International

**1.6.27** However, Gopalan felt that daycare centres are more an urban phenomenon and a higher proportion of parents living in urban areas use them.<sup>25</sup>

**1.6.28** Informal daycare seems to be undertaken either on a commercial or non-commercial basis without registration or assistance from Government or other agencies. "Informal daycare dominates the daycare sector. It is carried out by non-professional home caregivers who make no investment in infrastructure, equipment or staff training."<sup>26</sup> Commercial home caregivers usually live in the same locality as the home of the children. They either operate on their own or in the house of the baby they are looking after. They may be maids or relatives whilst non-commercial home care givers are generally grandparents. Older children living in the same house could also be made to perform this function.

### **Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund (EPZLWF)**

**1.6.29** The Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund (EPZLWF) was constituted under the EPZLWF Act of 1987. The Act stipulates that the objective is *"to do all such things as appear requisite and advantageous for and in connection with the advancement and the promotion of the welfare of workers and their children"*.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Regulations made by the Minister under Section 21 of the Child Protection Act, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Gopalan S, Early Childhood Development Policy, Strategies and a Programme of Action, Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development and UNICEF, 1997

<sup>24</sup> For more up-to-date data see Appendix

<sup>25</sup> Gopalan S, Op Cite

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

**1.6.30** One of the several strategies of the EPZLWF is *"to provide daycare services for children in the age bracket of 3 months to 3 years"*.<sup>28</sup> Under the Day Care Scheme, the Fund has constructed 8 centres in different localities and contracts them out to NGOs for service delivery.

**1.6.31** A study undertaken by Chazal Du Mee revealed that there seems to be a relationship between the educational level of mothers and the type of day care they choose for their children - the lesser educated they are, the more they will prefer to care for their children at home.<sup>29</sup> The distribution of the different types of care for children under 3 years is summarized in Table 1.11.<sup>30</sup>

Table 1.11 CARE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 3 Years of Age

TYPE OF CRECHES	%
Mother	40
Formal Sector	18
Home Care Givers	42
Commercial – home of caregiver	(6)
Commercial– child's home	(6)
Non-commercial – home of caregiver	(7)
Non-commercial – child's home	(23)

Source: De Chazal du Mee, *Study on Childcare*

**1.6.32** According to UNICEF,<sup>31</sup> if the need for early childcare services increases due to the changes in the prevailing economic conditions, several problems exist in the provision of daycare facilities. Among them are inadequate standards and service, untrained personnel, poor hygienic conditions, no medical visits of health workers, cramped spaces, inaccessibility to rural inhabitants and the high fees of daycare centres.<sup>32</sup>

**1.6.33** The survey on Women's Roles in Economic Activities (1994), adds to this by stating that since the majority of the female labour force in the country is employed in the textile sector and the net income of 54% of self employed and employed women surveyed is less than Rs 2,000, (80% earn less than Rs 3,000), setting up commercial child care facilities will not automatically solve women's problem of combining work and child care, as many women may still prefer to leave their children with family members, rather than pay for high cost organized child care facilities.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.24.

<sup>30</sup> De Chazal du Mee, *Study for External Child care*, 1999

<sup>31</sup> Invest in Children: Securing Rights in a Changing Society, UNICEF, October 1998, p.35.

<sup>32</sup> Early Childhood Development Policy and Programme Development in Mauritius with focus on the first three years, MWCDFW and UNICEF, September 1995, p.3-4

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Economic Planning and Development "Survey on Women's Role in Economic Activities, 1994

## **1.7 Trends in Decision Making and Parental Roles at Household Level**

### **Domestic Work**

- 1.7.1** As Lloyd and Duffy (1995)<sup>34</sup> argue, based on evidence that when men and women live together in a household, men add to rather than share women's workload. Men's superior bargaining power in the home may allow them to transfer domestic responsibilities to female family members, reducing men's expected workload. In Mauritius, although there has been some improvement in sharing the workload, patriarchal values are still preponderant and some tasks such as cooking, washing dishes and clothes and cleaning are still seen as predominantly female responsibilities.
- 1.7.2** In terms of decision-making, it is the male head of household who traditionally has the upper hand. However, with the increase in the number of working wives, there has been a move towards joint decision-making. Table 1.12 from the 1999 Household Budget Survey reveals that most of the major decisions are taken jointly by both spouses.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in 'Families in Focus' by Bruce et al, The population council, New York (1995)

**Table 1.12 Decision Making at the Household Level**

Decision	Decisions Taken By				
	Husband only	Wife only	Husband and Wife together	Other Household Member	Not applicable
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Purchase/Construction of house	19.9	1.8	67.0	0.9	10.4
Contracting Loans	25.0	1.8	61.2	1.1	10.9
Savings and Investment	23.0	4.4	66.2	1.1	5.3
Purchase of household appliances and furniture	11.6	9.9	75.7	1.4	1.4
Purchase of food	23.1	17.2	58.2	1.2	0.3
Daily choice of food to be prepared	6.1	46.7	45.0	1.8	0.4
Medical care of family members	15.9	0.0	7	0.0	0.0
Children's education	9.9	9.0	54.3	1.5	25.3
Participation of family members in sports activities	17.4	3.1	38.3	4.5	36.7
Participation of family members in religious activities	7.9	11.7	72.8	2.0	5.6
Participation of family members in social/cultural activities	12.9	6.1	61.8	2.2	17.0
Participation of family members in political activities	20.9	1.1	41.8	2.7	33.5

*Source: Central Statistics Office (2000)*

## Fathers and Childcare

- 1.7.3** While the literature on fathering remains limited, efforts are being made to break down the barriers to men's involvement with children. According to Engle and Leonard (1995), these barriers include limiting belief systems and cultural representations, lack of skills and information, insufficient economic opportunities for men and an inadequate framework of policies, programmes, laws and social incentives promoting fathers' attachment to and support for their children. For instance, paternity leave still has a negative connotation among many males who hold stereotypical beliefs about manhood.
- 1.7.4** The child/father/employee relationship has hardly benefited from systematic research in Mauritius and it would be interesting to see whether there are variations in terms of length and the quality of time fathers spend with their children according to their occupation and the attached conditions.

## Elderly Care

- 1.7.5 Interest in the issue of elderly care is not new. What perhaps is new is the ageing of the population and the changes in family patterns. The issue of elderly care is nowadays considered a workplace issue.<sup>35</sup> As more women are working, looking after the elderly could be considered as an additional burden for a family to cope with.
- 1.7.6 In Mauritius, the elderly (defined by the Central Statistical Office as that part of the population aged 60 years and above) accounted for 9% of the population in 2000 compared with only 6% some 30 years ago. It is estimated to represent 21% by 2037<sup>36</sup>. The same definition will be used in this context to refer to the 'elderly'. It is worth noting that the term 'Senior Citizen' refers to those who are 55 years and above.
- 1.7.7 Following studies undertaken by the Mauritius Family Planning Association (MFPA) in 1998, and the Mauritius Council of Social Services (MACOSS), the Government of Mauritius has prepared the 'Convention for the Protection and Rights of the Older People' (2000). This advocated amongst other things, an Older Persons Protection Act and provided guidelines and a legislative framework for the proposed Act. Essentially, the Convention addresses 10 issues considered important for the rights of the elderly. These are listed below:
- Care: Health and Institutions
  - Dignity and Respect
  - Education
  - Employment of the elderly
  - Participation
  - Financial Issues
  - Security
  - Independence and Survival
  - Habitat and Infrastructure
  - Leisure
- 1.7.8 The 'Right to care' in particular emphasizes the right of the elderly to free and unconditional access to health care including medicines and drugs, domiciliary medical treatment and health assistance by home care providers, especially for the disabled and the bed-ridden elderly. It was also recommended that hospitals be better equipped to help the aged, especially with the setting up of geriatric wards with relevantly qualified personnel. This includes the right to respect, beliefs, needs and privacy. The 'Right to care' also places special emphasis on the inculcation of proper dietary habits to ensure that they remain healthy.

<sup>35</sup> International Labour Office, Promoting harmony between work and family

<sup>36</sup> See DCDM report (2001), 'National Policy on the Elderly' (2001), etc.

## Gender Implication of Ageing

- 1.7.9** There is a need to consider the gender aspects of ageing as elderly women and men have different needs, requiring different responses. In most countries, as is the case for Mauritius, there are more elderly women than men. In 1997, there were 56,121 elderly women and 43,151 men. By the year 2037, this number is expected to increase threefold to 323, 715 (147,622 males and 176,053 females).
- 1.7.10** More importantly, elderly women and men differ significantly in terms of their socio-economic profiles and living arrangements. In 1997, approximately 80% of elderly men were married and only 13% were widowers. In contrast, only 32% of elderly women were married and 62% were widows.<sup>37</sup> The proportion of married men was significantly higher than that of married women in all age groups. Thus, women are more disadvantaged than men in terms of companionship and assistance in their old age. Only 4% of elderly women were employed compared to 20% of elderly men. The average income of an elderly man was almost Rs5,000 compared to Rs 2,000 for an elderly woman.
- 1.7.11** Nearly eight out of ten elderly persons who lived alone in 1997 were women and this rare is expected to increase in the future, *Also. it was found that the elderly living in mixed households were better off in terms of access to items such as telephone, TV, refrigerator, radio and washing machines than those living alone.* Not having access to such items adds to the isolation of elderly women and decreases their access to information.
- 1.7.12** There is a consensus that the legitimate place for the elderly is in the family unit as distinct from Residential Care Homes. In fact, the MACOSS study of 1992<sup>38</sup> unveiled a strong repulsion to the idea of living in a Home (85% would reject the idea), which most respondents associated with the end of their family life. However, with the gradual weakening of the traditional family system, there is an urgent need to provide for a few Residential Care Homes to cope with the marginal cases which, for one reason or another, cannot be accommodated in the normal family set-up. As shown in the Census findings, the average household size has continued to fall from 4.8 members in the 1983 to 3.8 members in 2000.

## Household Incomes and Access to Labour Saving Devices

- 1.7.13** There has been a gradual modernization of Mauritian households partly because of the improved standard of living. As more women enter the labour market, they have been forced to modernize their food and cleaning habits and resort increasingly to labour saving devices. They have had to give up many of the former traditional practices in their search for a more productive mode of life as they try to cope with their multiple chores.

<sup>37</sup> Source: Ministry of Social Security, 'National Policy on the Elderly' (May 2001)

<sup>38</sup> MACOSS - 'Etude Socio-economique du 3eme age', 1992

Table 1.13(a) shows the trend in household income from 1961/62 to 1996/97.

<b>Table 1. 13 (a): Comparisons of Some Selected Measures of Monthly Household Income, (1975, 1980/81, 1991/92 &amp; 1996/97)</b>					
Measures of monthly income	1975	1980-81	1986-87	1991-92	1996-97
Median monthly income Rs	740	2,212	3,496	6,503	10,179
Average monthly income per household Rs	552	1,518	2,663	5,300	7,870
Gini coefficient	0.420	0.445	0.396	0.379	0.387
Mode Rs	469	1,276	2,498	3,959	6,000

Source: Central Statistics Office, Household Budget Survey, 1996/97



**1.7.14** In 1996-97, the median value showed that 50 % of private households had a monthly income of less than Rs 7,870 and the remaining 50% of household's income was greater than Rs 7, 870. The improvement in the incomes of households is clearly seen in Table 1.13 (b). Households with less than Rs 5, 000 accounted for less than 24% of all households in 1996/97 compared to 73% in 1986/87. In 1986/87, the income of those earning less than Rs 1, 000 represented about 1.7% of the average income of all income groups, by 1991/92, it had fallen to less than 1%.

**Table 1.13 (b) Distribution of Households by Income Classes, 1986/87, 1991/92 and 1996/97 UBS.**<sup>39</sup>

Income class- ( Rs)	1986/87 HBS			1991/92 HBS			1996/97 HBS		
	No.	Per Cent	% Total income	No.	Per Cent	% Total income	No.	Per Cent	% Total income
Less than 1,000	370	8.7	1.7	99	1.9	0.2	26	0.3	0.0
1,000 to 5,000	3,116	72.6	54.2	2,238	44.4	22.3	1,452	23.3	7.6
5,000 to 10,000	643	14.9	28.4	1,868	37.1	37.1	2,619	42.1	30.1
10,000 to 16,000				580	11.6	21.1	1,265	20.2	24.8
16,000 and over	162	3.8	15.7	251	5.0	17.5	872	14.1	37.5
All classes	4,291	100	100	5,036	100	100	6,234	100	100

Source CSO Household Budget Surveys, Several Years

**1.7.15** It is clear that the majority of households depend on wages and salaries as the main source of income. This is shown in Table 1.13 (c).

<sup>39</sup> Rs 5,000 etc in 1986/87 and 1991/92 prices can be worked out. Rs. 1,000 in 1996/97 was Rs1,371 in 1991/92 and Rs2,090 in 1986/87. However it is more difficult to identify the number of households with incomes of less than Rs 1,371 in 1991/92 and Rs2,090 in 1986/87 as the HBS data for 1986/87 was destroyed when the Central Statistics Office changed from using a main frame computer to PCs. As of September 16\ 2002 the exchange rate for the Mauritian Rupee was Rs 30.11 to 1 \$US.

**Table 1.13 (c) : Monthly Household Income**

Sources of income	Average Monthly Household Income. Rs)
(i) Wage and Salaries (includes additional income	7,963
(ii) Entrepreneurial	2,020
(iii) Property	253
(iv) Transfer	844
<u>Average monthly household gross income</u>	11,079
(i) Deductions	901
<u>Average monthly household disposable income</u>	10,179
(i) Other income	166
(ii) Other receipts	2,006
<u>Average monthly household receipts</u>	13,251

Source: CSO Household Budget Surveys, Several Years

**1.7.16** Table 1.14 gives the distribution of household durable goods as per the 2001 Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey, the 1996/97 Household Budget Survey and a study of the role of women in economic activities undertaken in 1994.

**Table 1.14 Domestic Appliances 1994 Survey • 1996/97 HBS and 2001 CMPHS**

Household durable goods	Percentage of households surveyed possessing selected household goods		
	1994 Survey	1996/97 HBS	2001 CMPHS
Car	-	12.8	21
Motorcycle	-	20.9	24.9
Television	-	87	92.8
Radio-audio set	-	88.2	
CD player	-	11.2	
Refrigerator	54	67.5	82.9
Washing machine	11.8	25.3	41.3
Vacuum cleaner	5.8	7.8	
Sewing machine	41	45.5	
Telephone	-	50.4	76.3
Personal computer	-	4.3	13.3

Source: Central Statistics Office and Study of the Role of Women in Economic Activities

**1.7.17** In Mauritius, almost 100% of households have clean running water and are connected to an electricity supply. It is therefore not uncommon for people to

have, or desire, many of the labour saving devices more commonly associated with households in the developed world.<sup>40</sup> Table 1.14 shows that there has been an increase in the ownership and usage of some appliances, which can alleviate the drudgery of household tasks.

- 1.7.18** It is worth noting that, to solve the problem of time constraints, the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund (EPZLWF) has expanded its loan schemes for the purchase of labour and time-saving modern kitchen and other household equipment for the benefit of families where members work in the EPZ.

## **1.8 Working Conditions and Family Support Measures:**

### **Their Impact on Families**

#### **Public Sector**

- 1.8.1** Much has been written in the international literature about the impairment in family status, which has been linked with the inequality in working conditions.<sup>41</sup> On a local level, the hours and conditions of work in the Public and Private Sectors are well defined.

- 1.8.2** Pursuant to the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau (PRB), the standard working week in the Public Sector is as follows:

- (1) Manual workers: 40 hours
- (2) Watchmen: 60 hours
- (3) Non-manual office workers: Between 33 % and 40 hours
- (4) Officers classified as working on shift: 40 hours or a multiple of 40 hours where the shift covers a cycle.
- (5) Officers classified as working on roster and staggered hours: Not less than 33 ¾ hours and not more than 40 hours
- (6) Discipline forces: as specified by responsible officers
- (7) Any worker may be required to work on a six-day week basis, provided the normal working week is in accordance with the above provisions (1) to (6).

- 1.8.3** Shift workers may be made to work on roster/ at staggered hours if the exigencies of the service so require.

<sup>40</sup> Essential services such as clean water and electricity are available to virtually all households in Mauritius and there is a highly developed and affordable system of public transport. The principal cooking fuels are Gas and Electricity and very few people rely on other forms of fuel.

<sup>41</sup> Dy-Hammar F J, "How working conditions affect families: A global perspective", Harvard Center for Society and Health, Boston, 20-22 June 2001, p.2.

## **1.9 Existing Leave Provision in the Civil Service**

### **Vacation Leave**

- 1.9.1** According to the Conditions of Service", vacation leave is designed to cater for prolonged absences of officers employed in a full time or temporary capacity. It can be spent locally or abroad and is usually taken for relaxation purposes, convalescence, or to attend to personal obligations. National policies are in place which prescribe the minimum limits of available vacation leave according to occupation, sector and length of service.

### **Casual Leave**

- 1.9.2** Casual Leave is designed to cater for brief absences to attend to urgent personal matters including religious obligations and for recreation. It can be spent locally or overseas. At present, most full time employees are entitled to 11 working days of paid casual leave in one calendar year.

### **Annual Leave**

- 1.9.3** Officers holding substantive appointment after one year's continuous service are eligible for Annual leave as follows: 14 working days for those working on a five-day week basis and 16 working days for those working on a six-day week basis. Part-time employees who have been in continuous employment for 12 consecutive months continue to be entitled to 14 days of annual leave.

### **Sick Leave**

- 1.9.4** Sick Leave is provided to cover an absence due to illness. Following sick leave provisions, officers appointed in a substantive capacity have 21 working days sick leave with full pay every calendar year and all leave not taken is accumulated up to a bank maximum of 90 days.

### **Flexitime**

- 1.9.5** The Pay Research Bureau introduced the concept of flexi-time in its report of 1993, pointing out that this system has several advantages for both organizations and employees. Flexi time working can alleviate transport problems and allow women with family responsibilities the freedom to cope with their work and family commitments. Flexi time has been recommended where demand exists and resources permit. However, no action has yet been taken for the introduction of flexitime in the Civil Service in Mauritius.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Pay Research Bureau, Review of Pay and Grading Structures & Conditions of Service in the Public Sector & Private Secondary Schools Vol 1. August 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Flexitime is an issue that has been talked about but, as far as we are aware, has really not yet been adopted by any organization either Public or Private in Mauritius.

## **Maternity Leave Provision**

### **Civil Service Employees**

**1.9.6** According to the PRB Report 1998,<sup>44</sup> a woman officer is granted, in the event of a confinement, 12 weeks' maternity leave and the leave is on full pay if the officer either holds a substantive appointment or has completed one year's continuous service. Maternity Leave with full pay is limited to three confinements only.

**1.9.7** Time off for prenatal treatment is reckoned against the Sick, Casual or Vacation Leave entitlement of the officer. Mothers who wish to take advantage of leave without pay in the period of 12 months following confinement to look after babies are granted up to 6 months leave without pay subject to the exigencies of the service.

**1.9.8** The other working arrangements for different types of workers are given below:

## **1.10 Labour Laws for Non-Civil Service Employees**

### **Workers on Shift, Roster and Staggered Hours**

**1.10.1** Working shift work usually involves working 40 hours weekly on a two or three shift cycle that includes time off. Work may be in relays during a 24-hour period that will invariably include night duty and work on Sundays and Public Holidays. Workers working shifts on a roster basis do not work a 24-hour shift system but instead work staggered schedules of duty where the start and finishing time will change according to the schedule. These staggered shifts may be in regular or irregular patterns and workers required to work irregular hours, or at short notice, may sometimes be given additional time off in lieu of an additional payment for extra hours worked.

### **Working Hours and Working Time Arrangements**

**1.10.2** According to the Labour Laws of 1991,<sup>45</sup> no worker is supposed to work more than 6 days in a week. Young people are supposed to work 6 hours in a day (exclusive of the time allowed for meals and tea) and older persons 8 hours in a day (exclusive of the time allowed for meals and tea).

<sup>44</sup> Pay Research Bureau- Data extracted from Review of Pay & Grading structures and conditions of service in the public sector & the private secondary schools. General background & Related Issues & Conditions of Service, Vol I. (Aug 1998)

<sup>45</sup> See Labour Laws 1991, RLI/315-30 December 1975.

## **Existing Leave Provision**

### **Sick Leave**

**1.10.3** Every worker, in continuous employment with the same employer for more than 12 months, is entitled in every year to 21 working days leave on full pay on grounds of illness.

### **Annual Leave**

**1.10.4** Every worker, in continuous employment with the same employer for 12 consecutive months, is granted 14 working days leave on full pay.

### **Additional Leave**

**1.10.5** Every worker is entitled to 2 days leave in every year in addition to the annual leave.<sup>46</sup>

## **1.11 Export Processing Zone**

### **Working Hours and Working Time Arrangements**

**1.11.1** Workers in the EPZ are expected to work 45 hours a week, which may be over 5 or 6 days. However, an employee may be required to work for more than the normal number of hours on any day with his consent. A minimum of 10 hours overtime is compulsory. The worker is informed at least 24 hours before.<sup>47</sup>

**1.11.2** Women who may be required to work between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. are not required to resume work before a lapse of 12 hours.

**1.11.3** It is interesting to note that according to a study<sup>48</sup> carried out in the EPZ in 1988, about 70 % were satisfied with the working hours, though there is a meaningful minority (38.1%) who found them too long. There also seemed to be no significant differences based on gender and between married and non-married respondents. But a higher proportion from rural regions found the working hours too long.

<sup>46</sup> This additional leave is provided over and above any rate of Annual Leave that is provided to an employee. It is in lieu of Public Holidays that, after Independence, were drastically reduced in number. As not every locally observed religious holiday is now an official Public Holiday, certain allowances are made to permit people to time off work. This is also the origin of "local" leave.

<sup>47</sup> Supplement to the Labour Laws 1992, Industrial Expansion Act 11 of 1993, Section 20: Employment and Labour Provisions

<sup>48</sup> University of Mauritius, School of Administration, Health, Nutrition and Productivity of Workers in the EPZ, Volume II, Analysis of Main Findings, September 1988.

## **Leave Provision**

**1.11.4** Those who work 5 days a week are entitled to 14 days local leave and 18 days sick leave annually after having worked for more than a year at the same factory. Those who work 6 days a week are entitled to 16 days local leave and 21 days sick leave. Local leave is a form of leave that is provided for employees to use to facilitate family commitments, unexpected events or the celebration of religious festivals etc. that are not covered by Public Holidays.

**1.11.5** Based on a Study on Absenteeism undertaken by the University of Mauritius in 1990, the most frequently reported reasons<sup>49</sup> for absence were sickness followed by having to look after the family and social reasons. However, over 50% of the respondents had only a relatively low to moderate level of involvement in domestic tasks and family responsibilities. In addition, some 68% of respondents lived in households that did not include any small children, handicapped or elderly people who might require unexpected additional care and therefore cause absenteeism.<sup>50</sup>

## **Leave for Reasons Relating to Family Responsibilities**

**1.11.6** No parental or family leave exists as such. However, employees who wish to attend to their wives following confinement may use their vacation leave.

**1.11.7** No one will deny the particular physiological and psychological demands associated with pregnancy and confinement. As an indispensable means of protecting the health of any pregnant woman who is additionally a wage-earner, certain leave provisions are enshrined in the Conditions of Service for workers as shown below.

## **Maternity Leave Provision**

### **Private Sector Employees**

**1.11.8** The Labour Laws specify that 12 weeks maternity leave on full pay is granted to those who have completed one year continuous service and is payable for up to a maximum of 3 confinements. A woman may take this leave during the 6 weeks immediately preceding and following her confinement.

<sup>49</sup> University of Mauritius, Study on Absenteeism among productivity workers in Mauritius EPZ, Stage II, 1990

<sup>50</sup> *ibid* p.2 UOM Study.

## **EPZ Employees**

**1.11.9** The Maternity leave provision under the Export Processing Zone regulations allows 12 weeks leave and paid up to 3 confinements. The *sine qua non* condition is that they must have worked for over a year for the leave to be granted. An employee is entitled to maternity leave without pay for confinements beyond three. Further, women who have entered their 7<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy are not allocated work requiring continuous standing.

## **Breast Feeding Facilities**

**1.11.10** Female workers nursing their un-weaned child are allowed a break of 1 hour daily or a break of half an hour twice daily for the purpose of nursing an un-weaned child.<sup>51</sup>

**1.11.11** According to standards for maternity protection of working women, the ILO advocates that pregnant working women should be protected from prolonged working hours or poorly planned working schedules.<sup>52</sup> However no similar working time arrangements apart from the ones cited above exist.

**1.11.12** Although there is no explicit national policy of support to workers with family responsibilities, a variety of community services exist that directly or indirectly help workers reconcile their work and family responsibilities.

## **1.12 Working Conditions and Family Support Measures**

### **Their Impact on Families**

**1.12.1** The White Paper on Women<sup>53</sup> and the National Gender Action Plan (NGAP)<sup>54</sup> both discuss women's subordinate status in the work place and the family. In the NGAP it is stated that "at the social level, the majority of women have combined their multiple roles in the labour market and home with little help from their spouses/partners". A study undertaken in 1994 by the Ministry of Economic Development indicated that husbands / partners provided little help in household chores. Recourse to household appliances or the technologically practicable substitutes of capital for labour at home is yet to become a part of normal working life. The situation has improved considerably with increased income and the introduction of the hire purchase schemes.

<sup>51</sup> Labour Laws 1991 only

<sup>52</sup> International Labour Office, Maternity at Work, Geneva, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Women, Child Development and Family Welfare, White Paper on Women in Development, March 1995, Port Louis and NGAP 2000

<sup>54</sup> Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development, National Gender Action Plan, (NGAP) End the Gap, 2 March 2000, Port Louis



**1.12.2** The Employees Welfare Fund has also been making loans available at concessionary rates to EPZ workers to enable them to buy domestic appliances.

**1.12.3** Compulsory overtime, long working hours and a lack of proper facilities in many factories also add to the difficulties faced by working women in balancing work and family responsibilities.

**1.12.4** It may be difficult to improve current provisions as the sector is facing a serious downturn. As a move to give greater flexibility to women, the Labour Amendment Act No. 6 of 1996 was introduced, providing for the introduction of part time work. But neither employers nor employees are taking advantage of it.

### **1.13 Conclusion: The Gap Between Work-Family Needs and Work-Family Support**

**1.13.1** Bridging the gap between work and family responsibilities will involve certain fundamental changes in the working arrangements. Support programmes will also relieve tension for both men and women, since both have equal responsibility towards family obligations.

**1.13.2** Focus Group Discussions on appropriate themes need to be conducted to analyse the value given to work-family support by employers and workers and the impact of work -family support programmes on families.

### **Gender Discrimination**

#### **Support Services**

**1.13.3** Explicit support services and facilities need to be provided by employers. If child care facilities are to respond to the child-care needs of working parents, constant monitoring is essential from another body. It is to be noted that, in Mauritius, support services tend to be scattered with no proper control and the duplication of services is not uncommon.

### **Employment Protection for Pregnant Women**

**1.13.4** It is crucial to adapt working life to childbirth. At present, only maternity leave exists. Maternity leave aims at safeguarding the health of a woman employee and that of her child during the perinatal period, whether immediately before or after the birth. At present, prenatal treatment is reckoned against either sick leave or casual leave. No specific leave provision pertaining to prenatal treatment exists although it is common knowledge that regular prenatal examination throughout pregnancy is essential for a successful pregnancy.

**1.13.5** However, it is also important to look beyond childbirth. Pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal periods require specific work conditions.

## Mother-Friendly Environment

- 1.13.6 The health benefits of breastfeeding are increasingly recognized. Medical authorities encourage exclusive breast-feeding, beginning immediately after birth. It should continue for at least 4 to 6 months, as it is the optimal means of ensuring the full and healthy development of the child.<sup>55</sup> Adaptation of working time to meet the needs of nursing mothers is important, failing which, many mothers may choose to wean their infants too soon. These employees may require nursing facilities and time to balance their professional and family responsibilities.

## Parental Leave

- 1.13.7 *Parental leave arrangements are recognized as a way of reconciling work and family life. Fundamental to the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment, it is essential that both parents are involved with family commitments. Introducing equal opportunities for both males and females to take time off for child-rearing will, for example, help to promote gender equality.*

## Working Time Arrangements

- 1.13.8 Traditionally, and currently in many sectors, working time patterns involve fixed working days. Flexible working time arrangements, e.g. teleworking, *would help to reduce gender stereotypes and allow parents to organize their time in a way that would best suit their family needs.*
- 1.13.9 The small family size has given rise to greater *dependency or burden on the* working members within the family. While most parents are fully conscious that children need a period of preparation for adulthood and children do represent heavy investment in time, personal care and money, families are increasingly unable to provide all of them.
- 1.13.10 To a certain extent, the need for intensive childcare has drawn more enlightened fathers into the sphere of childcare activities. Men may also be finding themselves as the weaker partner in the household as unemployment and loss of *status, income and power* are common. The *balance of economic responsibilities* in families is therefore gradually shifting. It is not only the result of individual choices, but is also due to increasing opportunities for women and decreasing prospects for men in the labour market. The problems are more acute for single parent households with children – usually the mother. The number of such households is on the increase in Mauritius.

<sup>55</sup> The World Health Organization recommends that infants should be fed exclusively on breast milk from birth up to the age of 4 to 6 months; they should be given no other liquids or solids other than breast milk during this period.

**1.13.11** What all this means is that the breakdown of the extended family network and the trend towards the dual-breadwinner model of the family have important implications for domestic responsibilities.

**1.13.12** Vital tasks such as childcare and elderly care have become more problematic. The availability of labour saving household appliances has undoubtedly proved useful but there is an important segment of the population who cannot afford such items. In fact, as Dy-Hammar (2001)<sup>56</sup> argues, it is becoming ever more apparent that family health cannot be advanced in the absence of a concern for reducing inequality between rich and poor by helping workers to escape the poverty trap. In the final analysis the economy has to be able to meet the bill for any improvements made to working conditions. Any changes to be made have to be in recognition of, and understanding of, the impact they may have on the profitability of an industry.

<sup>56</sup> F J Dy-Hammar, How Working Conditions Affect Families: A Global Perspective, Paper Submitted to the Conference on The Impact on Health of Global Inequalities at Work. June, 2001

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **Qualitative Studies**

### **Focus Group Discussions**

#### **2.1 Methodology**

- 2.1.1** Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), are an effective means of gathering qualitative data. They are normally held before the drafting of a questionnaire for a Quantitative Study. It thus provides an indication of the issues that could be studied through a survey. It is also a means of gathering data to support the findings of a quantitative study. They can be used both as an informal basis on which to build the framework of the enquiry and as a means to unearth more qualitative data to balance that captured by the study questionnaire.
- 2.1.2** However, it should be noted that although FGDs uncover interesting aspects of the research topic, the findings are anecdotal rather than scientific. Therefore, the information is presented as a separate part of the analysis.
- 2.1.3** The overall objective of the Work and Family study was to gather information on how well employees are able to balance their work and family responsibilities. The questionnaire-based survey of Employees in formal employment was a means to elicit the information required.
- 2.1.4** FGDs were conducted with different groups involved in monitoring the work situation in Mauritius.
- 2.1.5** In the present case, FGDs were implemented concurrently with the fieldwork, and not to provide a basis for framing the questions, as these had been previously determined by CASR and the ILO, but to open up avenues to more detailed and informed opinions on the subject and to have more relaxed and informal discussions with members of organizations actively involved in the world of work.
- 2.1.6** The lines of enquiry used in guiding the FGDs were developed from topics covered in the desk research, areas of enquiry that were important to the topic but which did not fit or suit the questionnaire and topics raised during the discussions that were felt to fit the parameters of the enquiry.
- 2.1.7** FGDs were thus incorporated into this study as a tool for probing into the issues that were of concern to the relevant partners to the work/family nexus and to the professionals working in this area.

- 2.1.8 FGDs were held with members of organizations representing employees' interests. The organizations involved were selected from compiled lists of trade unions and other organizations actively involved in a range of industries. Each major employment sector was represented by at least one organization. After selection, the organizations were approached and appraised of the objectives of the study and asked to nominate participants based on age, gender, ethnic group and active position within the organization.
- 2.1.9 The FGDs were held at the offices of the various organizations in a relaxed and semi-formal manner. Each group was moderated by a member of the CASR team and views and comments noted by two other members of the team. Topics for discussion were pre-decided but each meeting was allowed to develop and follow its own course, the moderator's task being only to ensure that each participant had a fair chance of being involved and that certain topics central to the study, were at least brought up for discussion. Although the review of findings presented in this report is in English, the FGDs, and the compilation of the review, were conducted in Kreol and then translated.
- In all, 3 Focus Group Discussions were held. The Organizations involved in the FGDs were the Artisans & General Workers Union, the Mauritius Labour Congress and the Federation of Civil Service Unions.

## Findings

- 2.1.10 The same topics were covered in all the groups except where additional issues pertaining to specific sectors of employment were addressed. The transcripts of the FGDs were compiled and edited and a summary of the points raised was prepared. As the FGDs were conducted in Kreol only the views expressed that have been incorporated in the preparation of this report have been translated into English. *It should be noted that the views expressed are those of the participants and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of others involved in the study or relate to the findings of the fieldwork.*
- 2.1.11 The participants of the FGDs generally agreed that it is extremely important to have an adequate salary to be able to meet the needs of the family. In some cases, to compensate for the lack of an adequate salary, some people have to take up more than one job and this leaves them with even less time to spend with their family. This was felt to be particularly the case in the Sugar Industry.<sup>57</sup>
- 2.1.12 Participants felt that there is an over-riding importance on having a stable and secure job and to be able to communicate with the employer. The working environment has an important role to play regarding the morale of workers and,

<sup>57</sup> The sugar industry is seasonal for many workers who often work a variety of other part time jobs during the year. This is supported somewhat by the results in this survey, where we see that the percentage of respondents working more than one job was highest in Agriculture and Fishing by Nature of Employment and Skilled Agriculture and Fishing by Occupation Title.

by extension, that of the family. Family life inevitably suffers if parents feel tired and stressed when they come back from work.

- 2.1.13** The nature of the parents' job also determines the quality of family life. For example, the government officer who has regular hours of work has more time to spare for family involvement as opposed to the EPZ worker who has long and often erratic hours of work. The result is that there is a noticeable effect on the welfare of the family members and the quality of family life. In cases where the parents have more time to spend *with their* families it was felt that there is a greater stability in the family and it is the children who benefit most.
- 2.1.14** Long working hours are a major problem because they reduce the amount of quality time spent with children. When the parents leave for work the children are often still asleep and when they come back from work the children may have already gone to bed. This is especially the case for those who have to work overtime. In addition, those people who have regular hours of work but live far from their place of work also face the problem of travelling and spending valuable time going to and from work, time which could have otherwise been spent with their children.<sup>58</sup>
- 2.1.15** People who have long working hours often rely on retired grandparents to look after the children. This leads to an additional pressure on older persons in the sense that, after their retirement, instead of resting, they feel obliged to take up the full-time job of looking after their grandchildren.
- 2.1.16** On the other hand, some elderly people can become an extra burden on the family after their retirement. There is nobody to care for them and there can often be no place for them in the family home. In contemporary Mauritius, nuclear families are increasingly replacing extended families. Paid care is a growing solution and many old people are being placed in care to live out their old age in an old people's home, the quality of which may be doubtful.
- 2.1.17** As said previously, some parents leave for work very early in the morning and there may well be nobody around to accompany the children to school. They are left to take care of themselves, prepare themselves for school, and to make the journey from home to school unaccompanied, which raises serious issues of personal safety and security.
- 2.1.18** When school is over, many children, knowing that their parents will not yet have returned from work, do not immediately return home. Parents have little control over them between the time they leave school and the time the parents return home. Even then, the parents have things to do within the home and have little time to involve themselves with the children who are subsequently often left on their own, with nobody to guide them. There is a lack of communication between

<sup>58</sup> In the Quantitative Study, 15% of respondents said that they left home before 06.00 and returned only after 16.00.

members of the family and, because of this, parents can feel responsible if their children experiment with smoking, alcohol, drugs, substance abuse or watching pornographic videos etc. It is also important to remember the strong pressure exerted on children by the external environment and the way that it influences their behaviour.


- 2.1.19** Children, influenced by their social environment, ask for such material possessions as computers and computer games, televisions or videos. Parents may consider taking up additional jobs or contracting loans to be able to afford them even if it means spending less quality time with their children. There is a substantial amount of peer pressure on parents who do not want to be seen to be failing their children. In modern Mauritius it is often the range of material goods that children have access to that is seen as a measure of the quality of parenting.
- 2.1.20** It was felt that those children who are the most successful in their studies are those whose parents devote a lot of time and attention to them. When parents pay close attention to their children's progress in class, this also facilitates the teacher's task and relieves some of the burden of achievement on the educational system. However, although people realise the importance of spending time with their family, they do not always do it. This is something that is recognised across the board and applies equally to parents of whatever educational standard or socio-economic class.
- 2.1.21** When parents have little time to devote to their family, it is the younger children who suffer the most but older children also feel the strain of this situation as they have a role to play *in loco parentis*. In their parents' absence, they are often the ones who have the responsibility of looking after their younger brothers and sisters, even if it causes them to miss school themselves or to lose out on playing time. The end result is that many children are growing up with a lack of parental affection.
- 2.1.22** In Mauritius today, most women are economically obliged to work. The result is a poverty of input into family life in the sense that when women come back from work they have little time to spend with their children. Paid work is seen as being additional to the tasks expected of a housewife and most women still have their household tasks to do in addition to holding down a job. It may well be that because women have so little time to spare, the health and nutrition of the family also suffers.
- 2.1.23** As regards the relationship between men and women, while traditional roles are changing with time there is still, more often than not, a clear division of labour within the home. Because both partners work, there may sometimes be a sharing of household chores, but many of the home based tasks, particularly childcare, remain with women. There are some husbands who understand that their wife also works hard and that they have to cooperate with her, but, as we have seen,



the role of housewife is still essentially a woman's even though she may even have a full time job with mandatory overtime.

- 2.1.24** The participants felt that there was no active national policy on the provision of creche facilities for working parents and this was not only problematic but a deficiency in the social fabric of an industrialized country. Similarly, they felt that a lack of affordable good quality sheltered housing for senior adults was as an area that should have been addressed on a national level as the erosion of the nuclear family structure means that there is an increasingly high demand for this type of housing for older persons. This is thought to be symptomatic of the bias of emphasis that has been placed on the economic aspects of development with less attention paid to social development issues.
- 2.1.25** The working regime also impacts on the way that other services essential to the family operate. Some medical services are under the greatest strain at certain hours of the day that fit in with the traditional working pattern. Dispensaries and hospitals are full before 08.00 and after 16.00 hours. This is because these are the only times that parents are able to accompany their children for medical advice and treatment.
- 2.1.26** It was felt that there had been a noticeable increase in stress related illness during the period of industrialization and economic growth because of the additional strains placed on ordinary people in their everyday lives.
- 2.1.27** With regard to the facilities offered by employers, these are generally felt to be at the employers' discretion. In reality very little informal help is given by employers, *with the* main reason cited being *that* employers are obsessed with the idea that "we live in a very competitive world and profit must be the first priority ....
- 2.1.28** The respondents also felt that employers give priority to reducing the cost of production and to meeting orders on time. In such a context, they believed that it is difficult for employers to take account of social considerations. The fact that EPZ workers have to work ten hours of compulsory overtime per week, that it is difficult for them to take time off or to be absent from work even for an emergency or that men, in whatever sector they work, are still not granted paternity leave was felt to be an indication of the employer's mentality. The participants stated that it is clear that equilibrium between work and family responsibilities will only be achieved when there is less competition, which is unlikely to happen with globalization.
- 2.1.29** In the sugar sector, informal help is provided to employees in the form of time off, salary advances and refunds of bus fares for children who attend secondary school or courses at the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB). Help is also provided to those whose children wish to go to university.



**2.1.30** To improve their quality of life, people take out loans to buy both basic necessities and increasingly expensive material possessions. More than 85% of the population is currently indebted. The problem is that those who take loans and then lose their job may find their possessions seized if they are unable to pay their debts. It is not unknown for others to go as far as committing suicide. However, those who have recourse to special funds such as the EPZLWF can make arrangements that take into account their special circumstances should they lose their job. It was also reported that some employees resort to the EPZLWF  after a long period of contribution.

**2.1.31** Overall, the general feeling is that there has been a *lot* of emphasis on economic development, with the main aim of reducing *unemployment*. Government *policy* regarding the social aspect of development has been *less* evident.

### Solutions Proposed

**2.1.32** The following are some solutions proposed by the participants of the FGDs to reduce the negative impact of work on the family.

1. Participation in healthy leisure activities is one way to relieve physical and emotional stress. It is important to note that during the last decade there has been an increase in the number of stress related illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes etc.
2. Proper management of community centres, social centres, and village halls. These are adequately equipped but they are not operated in an efficient manner.
3. The introduction of flexi-time at the workplace.
4. The Government and employers should take the initiative of setting up more creches all over the island. The EPZLWF has set up a number of creches but they are not accessible to all, being limited to a few geographical areas.
5. The Mauritius Labour Congress is insisting that, should a woman die after childbirth, her husband should be allowed to take leave for an amount of time equal to the maternity leave period his wife would have been granted. This will allow the father to look after his newborn child.

## 2.2 INTERVIEWS WITH OPINION LEADERS

- 2.2.1 The interviews with opinion leaders were carried out to get a broader and multi-dimensional picture of the difficulties employees generally face in reconciling work and family commitments.
- 2.2.2 The opinion leaders were representatives of the main employment sectors of the economy as well as leaders of NGOs and trade union organizations militating for employees' rights and conditions of employment. A leading psychologist was also interviewed in order to gain an insight into the psychological problems individual members of a family, and children in particular, face whenever work and domestic commitments are not adequately fulfilled.
- 2.2.3 The core issues addressed in the interview with opinion leaders were: the adverse effect of employment on family life, if any; the different ways in which employees of both sexes manage to reconcile their work and family commitments and the extent to which employers are able to provide a family-friendly environment at the workplace.
- 2.2.4 In general, all those interviewed seem to agree that it is becoming increasingly difficult to match the exigencies of work and family responsibilities. The difficulty is more pronounced for female employees.
- 2.2.5 Representatives of employers acknowledge that, in general, there is a lack of support from the employers' side as well as from the State to help employees reconcile work and family responsibilities. The degree of involvement in adopting family-friendly policies varies from enterprise to enterprise.
- 2.2.6 It was pointed out that employees of one of the key sectors of the economy, the EPZ sector, face this problem most acutely. Certain employers in the EPZ do not show enough concern about the impact of work on the family life of their employees. The existing laws prevailing in that sector, which date back to the early 1970s and which arguably were more about attracting profit-minded investors than to provide good and friendly conditions of work for the employee, make it very hard to maintain a work-family balance. The existence of compulsory overtime, the generally harsh conditions of work and the relatively low salaries in the EPZ considerably impair the family life of the employee. This is even more so for female employees who traditionally have the responsibilities of childcare and domestic chores to handle.
- 2.2.7 However, it is also believed that enterprises are becoming increasingly aware of what they stand to lose if they neglect their social responsibility towards their employees because whatever relates to the family has a direct impact on productivity. Nevertheless, rather than a general lack of concern, there are cost *constraints* which make it difficult or impossible to invest in employees' welfare. According to the representative of the Joint Economic Council, there have been a

series of trade agreements on the international front that are bound to impact negatively on the competitiveness of some of the sectors of the economy and in turn adversely affect employers' ability to invest in employee welfare.

- 2.2.8** The social workers interviewed explained in some detail the daily problems the average employees face in meeting their family needs. According to them, family health has shown a marked deterioration with worryingly high levels of stress among family members. This is mainly as a result of being in employment with a lack of quality time spent with the family.
- 2.2.9** Rising standards of living and changes to consumption patterns have made hire purchase and resorting to loans a normal and integral aspect of life in contemporary Mauritian society. As such, many employees are at the mercy of the conditions imposed by employers and have to work to be able to meet both ends. If they lose their job, the stress on the family can lead to separation, divorce, domestic violence and even suicide.
- 2.2.10** The parent-child relationship is very poor in modern society due to a lack of balance between work and family life. From a psychological point of view, there is virtually no bonding between children and parents. This leads to an emotional emptiness in children, poor educational attainment at school and juvenile delinquency, drug addiction and prostitution. Statistics show that these problems are increasingly affecting young people nowadays and lack of parental guidance may be the root cause of this.
- 2.2.11** There is a general belief that giving children food, shelter and clothing is enough. In other words, children are adequately cared for only in economic terms but not in psychological and emotional terms. If a child has an average Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and a high Emotional Quotient (EQ), he has every chance of being a long-term success. On the other hand, if a child has a high IQ but a low EQ, then the probability of him or her being a failure in adulthood is high.
- 2.2.12** Children and adolescents do not take their parents as role models anymore as they hardly spend any time together. Instead, they admire imaginary models mainly from films. This partly explains their acting-out behaviour (aggressiveness, stealing, clinging and remaining closed up).
- 2.2.13** During the time when children are back from school but parents are not yet back from work, some children remain on their own and as such are prone to experimenting with things, some of which may be dangerous or socially proscribed. The problem is exacerbated when these children have older people as role models.
- 2.2.14** Some organizations such as the National Women's Council, which works in collaboration with the National Children's Council, operate after-school facilities so that children can occupy their time from the moment they leave school till their

parents come back from work. Various activities are organized under the supervision of trained staff but these services are only available on a small scale.

- 2.2.15 Working is important for women for economic reasons. Having only one income earner in a household is not sufficient anymore, especially if the income is low. Moreover, women want to be economically independent with their own disposable income, so that they feel free to buy things that they want. Those who work are sometimes willing to do overtime just to earn some extra money for this reason.
- 2.2.16 Even though women work, their caring role has remained unchanged. They have assumed an additional role. However, it is clear that women endure a lot of pressure in their double role as carer and worker. The message sent to women is that they should never be absent from work, fail in their duties as a housewife or fail in their role as a parent. The fact that women work and are relatively more independent is believed to be a contributory factor to domestic violence although it is difficult to say to what degree.
- 2.2.17 Working women face a major problem during the school holidays. The nuclearisation of the family makes this problem worse as very often there is no one to look after the children. *This crisis is an invisible one and the stress of* 611J, *mgtilenlbtem i*, *again, place(!) upon women.*

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **Quantitative Studies**

### **Study of Employees**

#### **3.1 Sampling Methodology for Employees Survey**

##### **Sample Design**

- 3.1.1** The Work and Family Study in Mauritius was conducted on a sample of 1, 500 private households, which were randomly selected over the whole island of Mauritius. The selection was made using a two-stage sampling procedure with stratification at both stages.
- 3.1.2** The two-stage sampling process was used in order to save on both time and cost. Because the sample of 1, 500 households was dispersed throughout the whole island of Mauritius, simple random sampling would have been extremely time-consuming and expensive. A sample drawn by this method would have been distributed throughout the length and breadth of Mauritius, necessitating increased travel and a larger team of interviewers. To overcome this difficulty, the interviewing was arranged so that groups of respondents were interviewed in 150 geographical areas known as Enumeration Areas (EAs), which themselves had been randomly selected from the total number of Enumeration Areas in the island of Mauritius.
- 3.1.3** The first stage consisted of the selection of the 150 EAs, after stratification using the three regional strata of urban, semi-urban and rural. The second stage comprised the selection of 10 households from each of the 150 EAs. Households were selected after stratification by household size, religion and the average expenditure of the household.
- 3.1.4** It was also determined at this stage whether the respondents were employed in the Formal Sector and whether they had a family within the same household, as only those respondents which met these criteria at the listing stage would be included in the sampling to determine the respondents for the household interviews.
- 3.1.5** The sampling unit at the first stage was therefore the Enumeration Area and for the second stage, the household. At both stages, the final selection of the sampling units was done using systematic, or quasi-random, sampling.

- 3.1.6 Although the sample of 1, 500 private households was selected in such a way that *to ensure that the sample was drawn from a list of households that were relevant to the purpose of the study, that is, related to issues concerning work and the family.*
- 3.1.7 It was also important to ensure the representativeness of *Female* respondents since it was known that a sample based on Heads of Household only would be overwhelmingly Male in composition.
- 3.1.8 Some households listed were excluded at the sampling stage. These included households with no working members, single member households, married couples with no children and a few cases of composite households for example 2 unmarried brothers living together.
- 3.1.9 The households that were included fell into 3 broad categories: couples with unmarried children only, who formed the largest group, one parent families with unmarried children only and households of the extended type. These extended households were generally composed of families that included representatives from 3 generations: children (3<sup>rd</sup> generation), children's parents (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) and children's grandparents (1<sup>st</sup> generation). The respondent for the household of the extended type was taken from the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.
- 3.1.10 The gender representativeness of respondents in selected households was *determined by using statistical criteria. In Table 3.1 below we show the actual percentages of employment by sex for marital status (married and widowed/separated/divorced) in the island of Mauritius.*

Table 3.1 Employment by Sex for Marital Status

	%	
	Male	Female
Married	69	31
Widowed/Separated/Divorced	26	74
Total (for the 2 marital states)	65	35

Source Census 2000, CSO

- 3.1.11 Since our sample was representative of the target population relevant to the study, it had to reflect the proportions in the above table. Therefore, 35% of the selected households had to contain an employed Female parent. For these cases, as far as was possible, it was the working Female parent who was interviewed. For example, for working couples it was the woman who was chosen as the respondent.

## Stage 1 - Selection of Enumeration Areas

### Sampling Frame

**3.1.12** A sampling frame is a list of all sampling units in a population. This is necessary in order to be able to draw a random sample from the population. As mentioned earlier, the sampling unit for the first stage was the EA. The complete list of EAs identified at the 2000 Housing and Population Census conducted by the Central Statistics Office was used as the sampling frame for the selection of EAs. A total of 3,472 EAs were demarcated at the 2000 Census. Table 3.2 below shows that of these 3,472 EAs, 305 contained no households leaving a final total of 3,167 EAs.

Table 3.2 Enumeration Areas

Total number of EAs	3,472
Number of EAs with 0 households	305
Number of EAs used in the sampling frame	3,167

### Stratification and Selection of EAs

**3.1.13** The island of Mauritius consists of nine geographical districts. The districts are divided into localities, which fall into one or more of the three regional classifications of urban, semi-urban and rural. In this instance the island of Mauritius was separated into 21 regional strata, which were obtained by cross-stratifying the nine districts with the three regions. Table 3.3 shows these 21 regional strata with their corresponding total number of households and EAs and the number of EAs selected.



**Table 3.3 Number of Enumeration Areas Selected per Regional Strata**

District	Region	Stratum Number	Number of Households in Stratum	% of Households in Stratum	Number of EAs in Stratum	Number of EAs Selected per Stratum
Port Louis	Urban	1	28,995	10.0	330	15
	Semi—Urban	2	3,906	1.1	26	2
	Rural	3	662	0.2	6	0
Pamplemousses	Semi—Urban	4	10,340	3.6	101	5
	Rural	5	19,546	6.8	239	10
Riviere du Rempart	Semi—Urban	6	8,029	2.8	79	4
	Rural	7	16,413	5.7	188	9
Flacq	Semi—Urban	8	9,370	3.2	85	5
	Rural	9	21,343	7.4	249	11
Grand Port	Semi—Urban	10	11,465	4.0	113	6
	Rural	11	15,211	5.3	195	8
Savanne	Semi—Urban	12	7,712	2.7	77	4
	Rural	13	9,106	3.1	127	5
Plaine Wilhems	Urban	14	81,924	28.3	793	42
	Semi—Urban	15	8,932	3.1	103	5
	Rural	16	2,906	1.0	41	1
Moka	Semi—Urban	17	7,504	2.6	78	4
	Rural	18	11,037	3.8	150	6
Black River	Urban	19	760	0.3	7	0
	Semi—Urban	20	6,049	2.1	58	3
	Rural	21	8,770	3.0	122	5

Source: Bureau de la Statistique, 2009. *Journal de la Statistique*, 28(1), 3, 167, 150.

**3.1.14** To ensure that all households, regardless of the size of the stratum in which they fell, had equal chances of being selected, a procedure known as sampling with probability proportional to size was adopted. This means that the number of EAs allocated to each stratum was proportional to the number of households it contained.

**3.1.15** All EAs in that stratum were numbered sequentially, and the final selection of the EAs within each stratum was by systematic sampling. For example, *Stratum 1* contained a total of 330 EAs out of which a sample of 15 had to be selected. This gave a sampling interval of  $330/15 = 22$ . Therefore, the selection of every 22<sup>nd</sup> EA in the list would give the required sample of 15. The first EA to be selected was determined by generating a random number between 1 and 22. The number generated was the first selected and thereafter each count of 22 was selected.

## **3.2 Selection of Households**

### **Sampling frame – Listing stage**

**3.2.1** As no sampling frame for the selection of households was available, the construction of a frame for each of the 150 EAs was a sizeable task. In each of the 150 EAs selected the field staff undertook a listing of all households within that EA. During this listing stage the following information was collected for each household:

- Name of head of household
- Address of household
- Household size
- Household type
- Number of members working
- Occupation of main income earner
- Total monthly expenditure of household
- Religion

**3.2.2** The household type was used to determine the relevance of a particular household for inclusion in the final *sampling* for the survey. Five categories were enumerated:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Type 1: | Single member household                     |
| Type 2: | Married couple without children             |
| Type 3: | Married couple with unmarried children only |
| Type 4: | One parent with unmarried children only     |
| Type 5: | Other                                       |

- 3.2.3 Before stratification it was necessary to exclude those households that were not relevant to the study. For example, single member households or households with no members working were excluded. The list obtained after this exercise served as the frame for the selection of the 1,500 households needed for the survey

### Stratification and Selection of Households

- 3.2.4 The households were subsequently stratified by size, expenditure class and religion and, for each of the 150 selected EAs, the households relevant to the survey were numbered serially. These serial numbers were then allotted to cells in specially designed data sheets so that households with similar characteristics were grouped together in the same cells. The serial numbers denoting households in the different cells were then numbered sequentially. The final selection of the 10 households for each EA was done by systematic sampling in the same way as that described for the selection of EAs.

## 3.3 Questionnaire Design

- 3.3.1 The Employee Questionnaire was designed bearing in mind the objectives of the ILO study. A draft questionnaire was prepared by CASR with input from the Conditions of Work Branch of the ILO. This was to ensure comparability of the results with similar studies in other participant countries. Each draft of the questionnaire was forwarded to the ILO for comments. At all stages the ILO was informed of how questions needed to be formed or modified to take into account local specificities.

- 3.3.2 The questionnaire had 7 sections, titled from A to F. Each section was designed to elicit information pertaining to a relevant issue.

Section A                      Demographic and Biographical data of the interviewee and members of his/her household.

Section B                      Data about the Main job of respondent and spouse if applicable.

Section C                      The longest section, with questions on arrangements for childcare and the care of other dependants.

Sections D & E                Workplace Policies and Supports for Work Family Balance.

Sections F & G                Questions on labour saving devices and the income of the family.

- 3.3.3 The standard precautions applicable to questionnaire design were taken into account. Simple and careful wording was used to ensure clarity and to avoid bias,

the careful sequencing of questions, a clear layout and precise instructions to interviewers.

- 3.3.4** As indicated above, the separate sections were designed to address a range of issues relating to the main occupation of the respondent, and, where applicable, spouse, childcare and care of other dependent relatives, workplace policies and benefit, nature of supports for work/family balance as well as the availability of labour-saving devices and the total level of income of the whole household.
- 3.3.5** The section eliciting information on the demographic characteristics of the surveyed population was included to investigate the profile of the selected employees such as gender distribution, marital status, age distribution and educational attainment. The question on household composition was included in the same section to gather, among other things, information on household size, the age, sex and occupation of individual members as well as the headship of the household
- 3.3.6** Questions about the main occupation were addressed to both respondent and spouse (if any) as issues such as length of time spent at work, nature of business and sector of employment are deemed to have a certain impact on responsibility for dependents and level of satisfaction with work/family issues. Although it is interesting to know about the number of jobs held by the respondent and spouse, for the sake of simplicity the emphasis has been on the main job.

### **Pilot Study**

- 3.3.7** In October 2001, a pilot study was conducted to assess the relevance of the responses obtained and if the responses met the expected objectives of the Survey. It was also important to have an estimate as to how long each interview would actually take. Following the pilot study, some minor adjustments were made to the questionnaire.

### **Fieldwork**

- 3.3.8** To ensure optimal response and reliability, the employee survey was conducted using the face-to-face interview technique. A team of 75 experienced Interviewers, 10 Supervisors, 1 Assistant Chief Supervisor and 1 Chief Supervisor was constituted. Each interviewer was given the responsibility of interviewing respondents from two Enumeration Areas with which they were familiar.
- 3.3.9** A half-day orientation and training exercise for the team of interviewers was held in October 2001 following which the employee survey fieldwork was implemented during late October and the whole of November 2001.

**3.3.10** Respondents were re-interviewed whenever the information gathered was unclear or had been recorded ambiguously, and to act as a check on the standard of interviewing in the field.

## Analysis and Report Writing

**3.3.11** After completion of the fieldwork, the raw data was entered into a database and cleaned using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 10.1). This was completed by the end of February 2002. Analysis of the data and writing of the report took place during the months of March and April 2002.

## 3.4 Analysis of the Findings

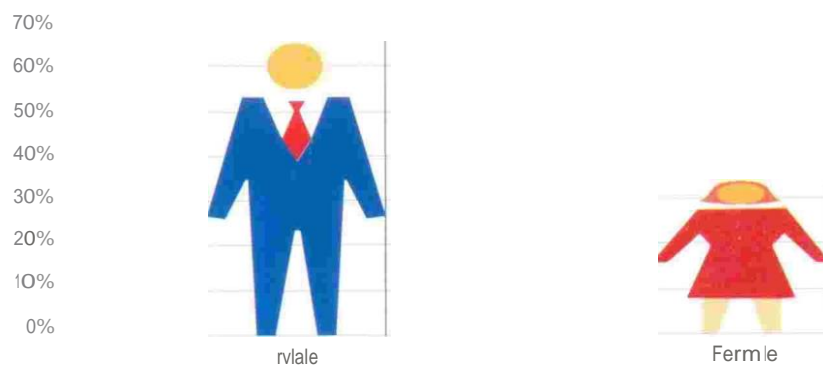
### Section A

**3.4.1** This section is an overview of the findings of the questionnaire-based study of employees. Tables and graphs have been kept to a minimum and only included where it was felt that they would usefully reinforce the point being made. A complete set of tables containing the figures referred to in the text, are given at the end of each section.

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

**3.4.2** As is clear from the Methodology of this study, the sample population was 1,500 persons, (Table 3.4), of whom 43% lived in the Urban region, 24% in the Semi Urban Region and 33% in the Rural region. The target for the gender distribution was 65% of Males and 35% of Females. In fact, the final total in this respect was that Males made up of 66% of the respondents and Females 34%.

**Chart 3.1**  
**Male and Female Representation**  
**in the Sample of Employees**



- 3.4.3 It would perhaps not be too contentious to suggest that at the beginning of the 21st Century, there is little difference in Mauritius as regards the lifestyle of those respondents of all three regions. In larger countries there may well be a significant difference in life experiences between those who live in remote rural areas and those who live in cities. In Mauritius, the relatively small size of the island means that people move easily between the different areas often living in a rural region but working in the urban region or *vice versa*.
- 3.4.4 Notwithstanding the difference in lifestyles between those who live in the villages and those who live in the towns, the population of Mauritius is, to a large extent, fairly cosmopolitan. There are no isolated regions on the island where the population is cut off from television, radio or the regular supply of newspapers. All areas of habitation are accessible by road and are serviced by public transport. With this in mind it is not surprising that in many aspects of the analysis of the data gathered during the study there is little evidence of contradiction or disparity between regions.

#### Age Distribution of Respondents

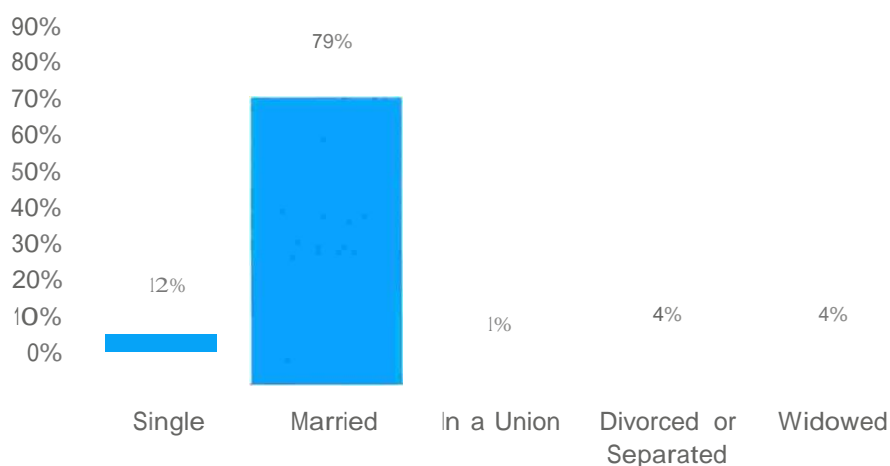
- 3.4.5 Because of the scientific design of the study we should also expect that there are no surprises as regards the age groups into which our respondents belong, (Table 3.5). The majority of respondents were between 30 years and 49 years old. 64% of Males and 65% of Females fell into this age group, although it is important to also look at those that were aged between 30 and 39 years as they are more than likely to be the ones with young children. Almost one third, 32%, of the Female respondents and 30% of the Male respondents were of this age.
- 3.4.6 Although raising a family is a task that can be problematical for a long period of time we could expect that by the age of 50 fewer parents have young children to look after. Therefore, we could assume that the pressures of balancing work and family life are perhaps most difficult up to age of 49 years old, which is also the accepted age of the end of the female reproductive cycle. However, the study also included questions on those in the household who may also need care such as those with disabilities or elder persons.
- 3.4.7 Although Females in Mauritius can expect to live longer than Males, for the purposes of this study we are more interested in the experiences and attitudes of those respondents aged over 30 years but younger than 50 years old.
- 3.4.8 We would also expect that the greater proportion of our sample in this age group to be married.

## Marital Status

**3.4.9** About 79% of the respondents were Married and 12% were Single. Looking at marital status, (table 3.6), was one of the few occasions when we were able to identify a difference between regions. In Rural areas, 75% of Women were married compared to 69% in Urban regions and 59% in the Semi-Urban regions.

**3.4.10** But this was not just a study of married people. Although Single Member Households were excluded during the sampling process, single *people* were included where they were members of a household that, in itself, fit the study criteria. Obviously, there is a difference between a "*single-member household*", as excluded from the survey, and *multi-person households* where the respondent's marital status happened to be *single*. Some examples would be where the respondent is an adult son or daughter living with his or her parents or the few cases where the respondent is a mother who has never been married or been living in a union. It should be remembered that it was not necessary for the respondent to be the parent of a child or children but to be resident in a household where children were present.

**Chart 3.2 Marital Status**



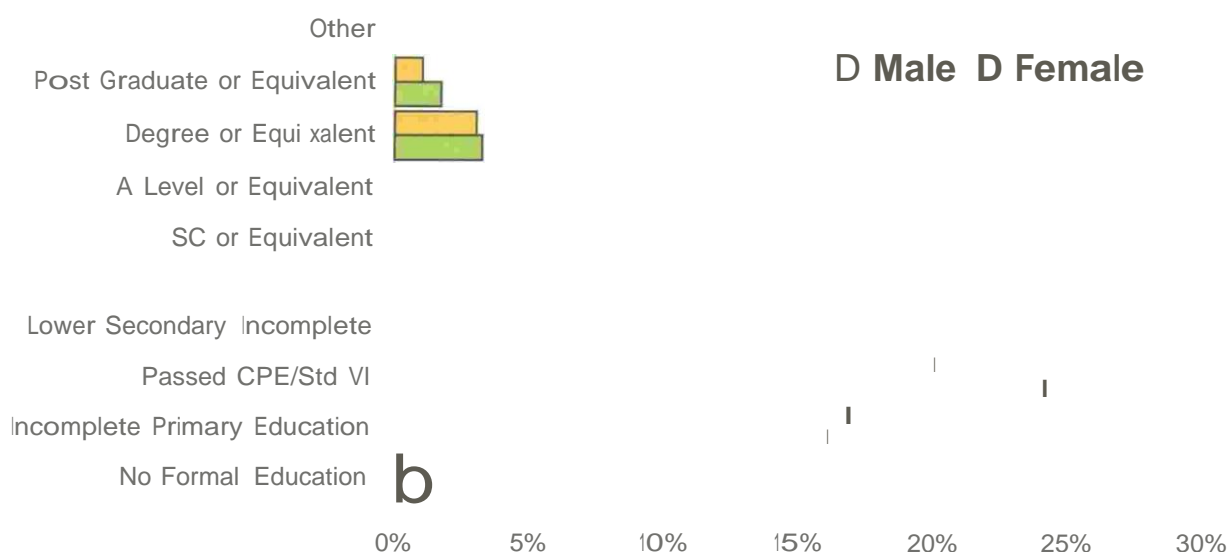


## Education Attainment

**3.4.11** Another important variable to consider was the educational attainment of the respondents (Table 3.7). One's education will often determine many different aspects of one's life, some obvious and some less so. As well as setting the horizons for the type of employment one may expect to be involved in, it may also influence the choice of childcare or the expectations that one has of the provision of certain services such as childcare.

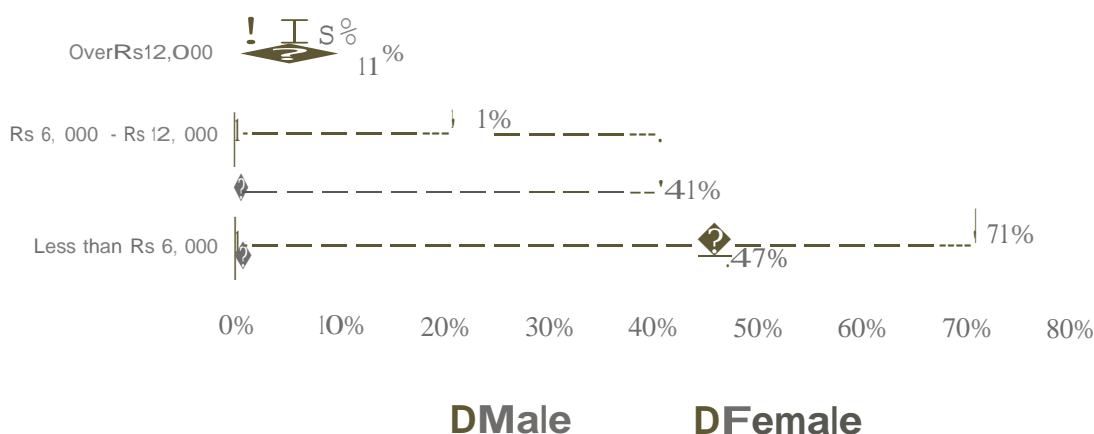
**3.4.12** In this study, there was relatively little difference between the educational levels of Males and Females, although there was a higher percentage of Females who had No Formal Education at 6%. There are some small differences between the educational levels of both sexes with a greater number of Male respondents, 69%, enjoying an education up to School Certificate, while for Female respondents the corresponding figure was 60%. However, we see that at the level of tertiary education the percentages of graduates were almost identical for both sexes, at 3%.

**Chart 3. 3 Educational Attainment by Sex**



## Income Distribution

**Chart 3.4**  
**Repondents' Monthfy income by Sex**



**3.4.13** One of the most important, if not the most important, aspects of work is the amount of money one earns (Table 3.8). In this study, information on income was collected in three distinct ways. First, respondents were asked to state their total monthly income, that is the total income per month for all of the jobs they do. Secondly, they were asked to provide details of their spouse's income if this was applicable and, thirdly, to supply details of the total monthly income of the household.

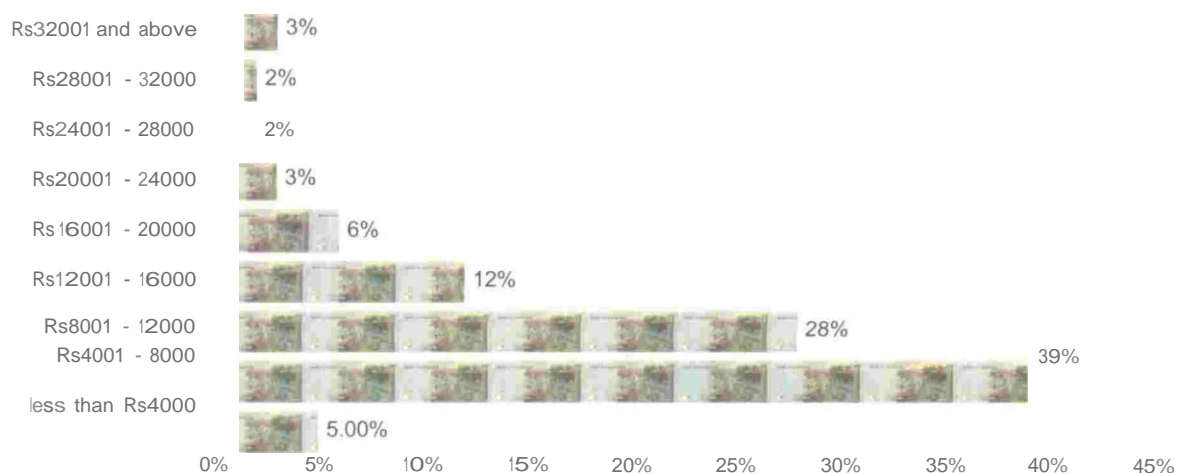
**3.4.14** It should be noted that this latter figure was not simply an addition of the respondent and spouse's income, but included all income into the household, regardless of source and regardless of which member of the household had earned it.

**3.4.15** One of the first things we notice is the disparity between the personal earning levels of Men and Women. In Chart 3.4, we can clearly see that the majority of women earn less than Rs 6,000 per month, at 71 % of Female respondents, while the figure for Men is much lower at 47% of Male respondents. In the two higher earning categories Women are even less well represented. Only 8% of Female respondents earn over Rs12,000 per month compared to 11 % of Male respondents.

**3.4.16** If qualifications lead to better paid jobs, then there is a gender discrepancy between the earning potential of graduates as we have seen that identical numbers

of respondents of both sexes had achieved an education up to graduate level yet there is a difference in the numbers of Men and Women on higher salaries.

**Chart 3.5 Total Monthly Household Income**



**3.4.17** Male respondents are also more favourably represented in the middle category of those who earn between Rs 6, 000 and Rs 12, 000 per month. Some 41 % of Male respondents had a monthly salary in this range while it applied to only 21 % of Female respondents.

**3.4.18** When looking at the Total Monthly Household Income, (table 3.9) we see that 5% of households managed on less than Rs 4, 000 per month and, later, we see that these may well be the people who state they cannot afford such everyday items as a simple gas cooker even though they are working. The largest group, 39% of the households to which the respondents belonged, brought in between Rs 4, 000 and Rs 12, 000.

**3.4.19** Of this group of respondents, 39% had a total monthly income between Rs 4,000 and Rs 8, 000 and 29% between Rs 8, 000 and Rs 12, 000. Moving up to the higher end of the scale we see that 10% of respondents earned between Rs 20, 000 and Rs 50, 000 per month. This 10% are spread across a wide range of incomes, with just over 3% living on more than Rs32, 000 per month.

**3.4.20** 44% of the total number of respondents lived in households where the total household income was less than Rs 8, 000. Although not an exact comparison, this does indicate an improvement over the percentage of respondents from households with a total income of less than Rs 7, 870, the median total household income cited by the CSO in the Household Budget survey 1996 / 97. (Table 1.13 (b)).

## 3.5 Section A - Tables

**Table 3.4 Sample by Region & by Sex**

Region		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%		
Region	Urban	415	42	229	45	644	43
	semi - Urban	255	26	102	20	357	24
	Rural	322	32	177	35	499	33
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3.5 Age Group by Sex**

Age group		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%		
Age group	19 and under	7	1	4	1	11	1
	20-24 inc	43	4	38	7	81	5
	25-29 inc	85	9	61	12	146	10
	30-39 inc	302	30	165	32	467	31
	40-49 inc	336	34	167	33	503	34
	50-59 inc	199	20	65	13	264	18
	60 and over	20	2	8	2	28	2
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3.6 Marital Status by Region & Sex**

	Region																	
	Urban						semi - Urban						Rural					
	Sex			Group Total			Sex			Group Total			Sex			Group Total		
	Male		Female	No.	%	No.	Male		Female	No.	%	No.	Male		Female	No.	%	No.
Single	53	13	33	14	86	13	28	11	19	19	47	13	41	13	12	7	53	11
Married	343	83	158	69	501	78	221	87	60	59	281	79	269	84	132	75	401	80
In a Union	5	1	1	0	6	1	3	1	0	0	3	1	4	1	2	1	6	1
Divorced or Separated	7	2	20	9	27	4	3	1	9	9	12	3	5	2	15	8	20	4
Widowed	7	2	17	7	24	4	0	0	14	14	14	4	3	1	16	9	19	4
Group Total	415	100	229	100	644	100	255	100	102	100	357	100	322	100	177	100	499	100

**Table 3. 7 Educational Status by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Educational Qualifications	No Formal Education	15	2	31	6	46	3
	Incomplete Primary Education	160	16	85	17	245	16
	Passed CPE/Std VI	242	24	102	20	344	23
	Lower Secondary Incomplete	232	23	87	17	319	21
	SC or Equivalent	222	22	116	23	338	23
	A Level or Equivalent	70	7	66	13	136	9
	Degree or Equivalent	32	3	16	3	48	3
	Post Graduate or Equivalent	17	2	5	1	22	1
	Other	2	0	0	0	2	0
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 8 Respondents' Monthly Income by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Respondent's total pay per month for all Paid jobs before tax and other deductions ( in Rupees)	less than 2, 000	5	1	33	6.5	38	3
	2,001 - 4, 000	102	10	225	44.3	327	22
	4, 001 - 6, 000	360	36	102	20.1	462	31
	6, 001 - 8, 000	223	22	47	9.3	270	18
	8, 001 - 10, 000	130	13	33	6.5	163	11
	10, 001 - 12, 000	62	6	28	5.5	90	6
	12, 001 - 14, 000	43	4	15	3.0	58	4
	14, 001 - 16, 000	17	2	6	1.2	23	2
	16, 001 - 20, 000	23	2	9	1.8	32	2
	20, 001 or more	27	3	10	2.0	37	2
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 9 Total Monthly Household Income by Region**

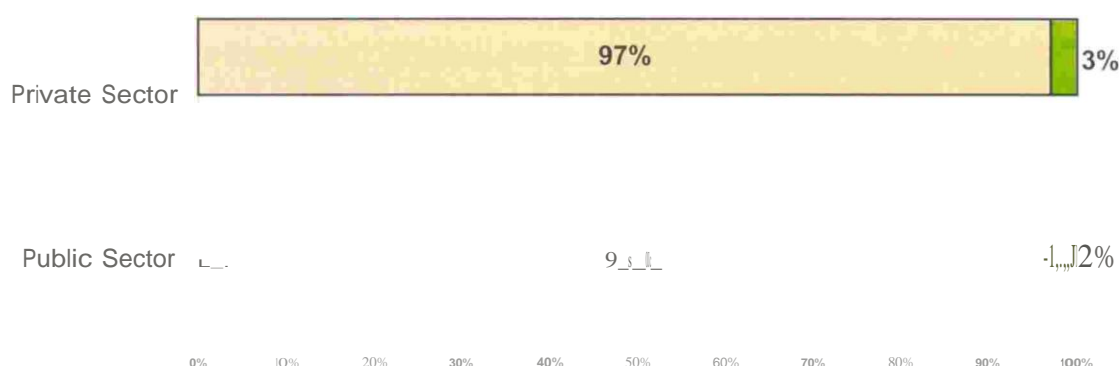
	Region semi -						Group Total	
	Urban		Urban		Rural		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
less than 4000	23	4	19	5	27	5	69	5
4001 - 8000	211	33	150	42	219	44	580	39
8001 - 12000	182	28	94	26	152	30	428	29
12001 - 16000	87	14	55	15	44	9	186	12
16001 - 20000	54	8	17	5	24	5	95	6
20001 - 24000	29	5	6	2	4	1	39	3
24001 - 28000	12	2	7	2	6	1	25	2
28001 - 32000	17	3	7	2	6	1	30	2
32001 - 40000	16	2	1	0	13	3	30	2
40001 - 50000	5	1	0	0	4	1	9	1
50001 - 70000	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
70000 +	5	1	1	0	0	0	6	0
Group Total	644	100	357	100	499	100	1500	100

## 3.6 Section B – Employment – Details of the Main Job

### Number of Paid Jobs

**3.6.1** Having looked at monthly income, the next section of the study concentrated on the number of paid jobs that respondents worked to earn that income. However, it should be noted that although the number of jobs that respondents had was recorded, information on the actual details of their work was only collected on what they considered to be their main job.

**Chart 3.6 Number of Paid Jobs by Sector**



**D 1 paid job**

**D More than 1 paid job**

**3.6.2** As we might expect, and we see confirmed in Chart 3.6 (table 3.10), most respondents, 97% in the Private Sector and 98% in the Public Sector, have only one paid job. Where the respondent did have more than one job they were more likely to be Male and working in the Private Sector. However, the number of respondents, both Male and Female having more than one job is relatively small and not enough on which to draw any real conclusion. In light of this, those respondents with more than one paid job have not been included in the main analysis.

**3.6.3** The type of occupation of the respondents was grouped according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations prepared and published by the International Labour Organization.

**3.6.4** Looking at the results, we see that the three occupations most represented in our sample were those working in the Craft and Related Trades, 22%, Service and Sales Workers, 15%, and those employed in Elementary Occupations, also 15%. (Table 3.11)

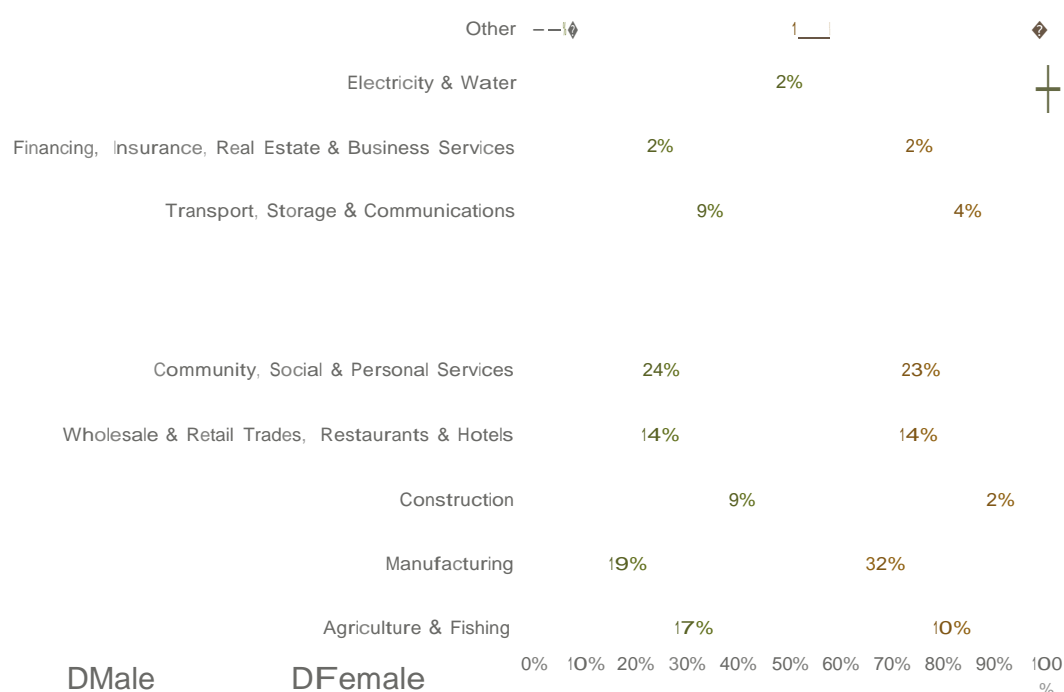


3.6.5 When we look at the Number of Paid Jobs by Occupational Group we see that those in the categories of Skilled Agricultural and Fishing Workers, 26%, and Craft and Related Trades, 33%, are more likely to have more than one paid job. But a quick look at the actual numbers of respondents shows that they are relatively small, at 11 and 14 respectively out of 1,500 respondents, and, therefore, statistically insignificant.

## Nature of Employment

3.6.6 Having identified that the majority of respondents, in whatever occupational group, have only one job we can look at the type of employment in which they are actually engaged. For this study the various occupations mentioned in response to the question of what type of employment was the respondents' main job, have been grouped according to the employer's nature of business. Table 3.12 gives a breakdown of the nature of employment by sex. It shows that almost one quarter of respondents, (23%), work in the Manufacturing Sector and almost another quarter, (24%), in Personal Services which include Central and Local Government. Female respondents, (32%), were more likely to be working in the Manufacturing sector, which included the factories of the EPZ, than Male respondents, (19%). In the Community, Social and Personal Services there was an almost equal representation of the sexes at 24% of Males and 23% of Females. Perhaps the most significant difference is in the previously stated higher representation of women in the Manufacturing sector as it is in this sector, particularly in relation to those respondents that work in the factories of the EPZ, that we later see some difficulties being experienced in balancing work and family responsibilities.

**Chart 3.7 Nature of Employment by Sex**

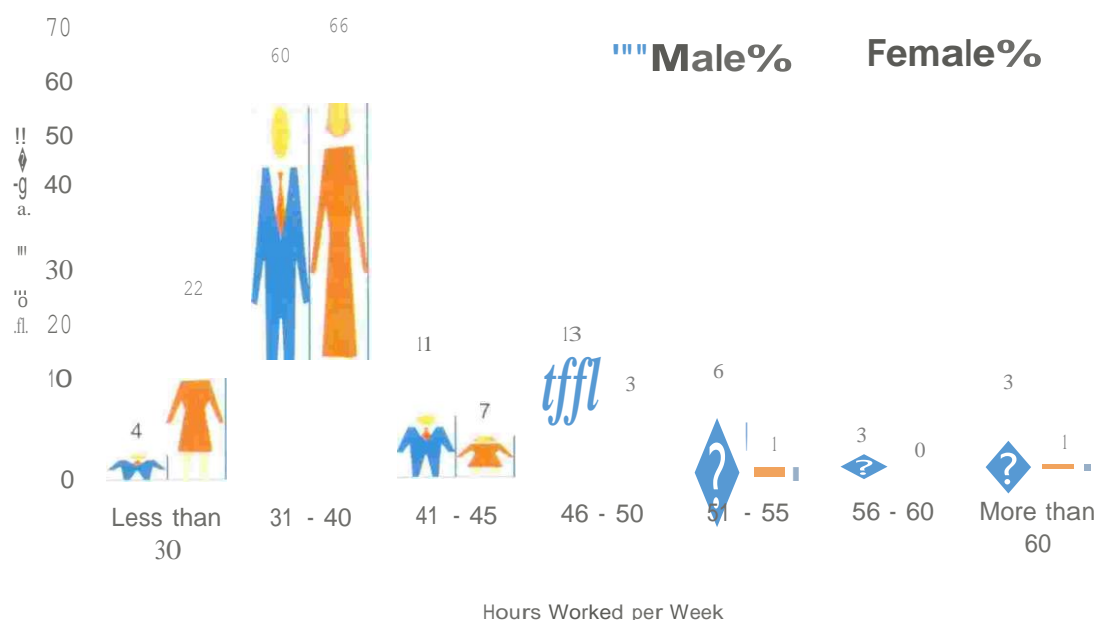


3.6.7 Of course the type of job that one has is one thing and the salary paid is another, but a third important aspect of employment is the number of hours that one has to work each week.

### Weekly Hours of Work

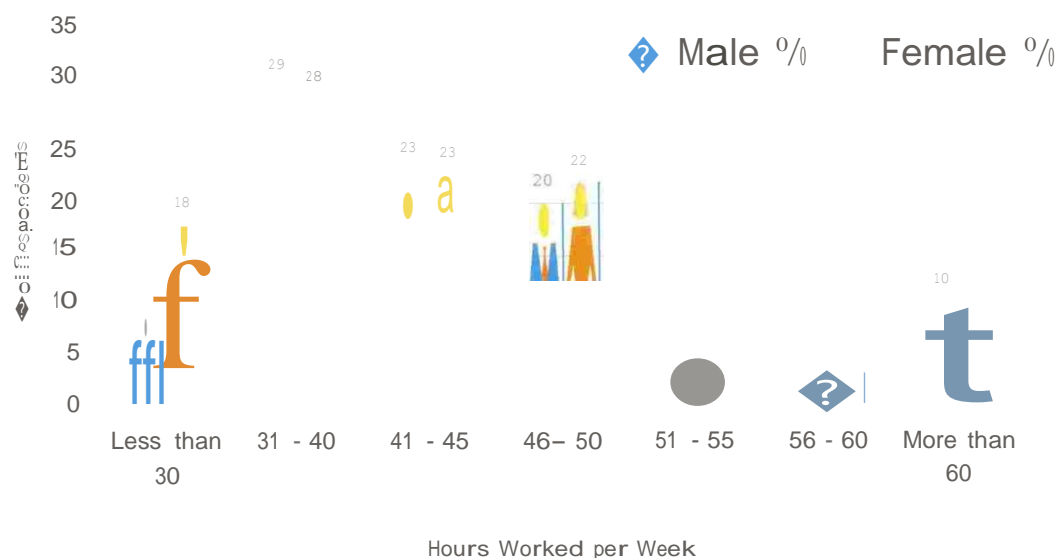
3.6.8 There appears to be considerable difference in the weekly working hours of respondents in the Public and Private Sectors. (Table 3.13) While in the Public Sector, 60% of Males and 66% of Females worked between 31 - 40 hours per week, in the Private Sector the corresponding figures were 29% for Males and 28% for Females. In the Private Sector 44% of respondents worked between 41 and 50 hours per week, made up of 23% who worked between 41 and 45 hours and 21 % who worked between 46 and 50 hours. The corresponding figure for the Public Sector was 20%, split equally at 10% working between 41 and 45 and 10% working between 46 and 50 hours. No respondents in the Public Sector worked more than 55 hours per week while in the Private Sector, we see that 18% of respondents stated that they worked more than 55 hours per week. a figure that includes 7% who said that they normally worked more than 60 hours per week. Those respondents working longer hours include those who work in hotels, such as chefs and waiters and private security staff.

**Chart 3. 8 Weekly Hours of Work Public Sector by Sex**



3.6.9 When looking at the figures by Sex, (Table 3.13), we see that there are a greater number of Female respondents than Males in the Private Sector, who work less than 30 hours per week, the figures are 18% and 6% respectively.

Chart 3.9 Weekly Hours of Work Private Sector by Sex



## Overtime

- 3.6.10 Although the above gives us an insight into the average length of the working week for respondents it is not the whole picture, as many have to work overtime on top of the number of contracted hours. This overtime may be compulsory, as for those who work in the EPZ, or non-compulsory.
- 3.6.11 Before going any further it is worth having a look at the definitions of overtime as they would apply to the majority of our respondents, in particular, the differences between those that work in the EPZ and those who do not.

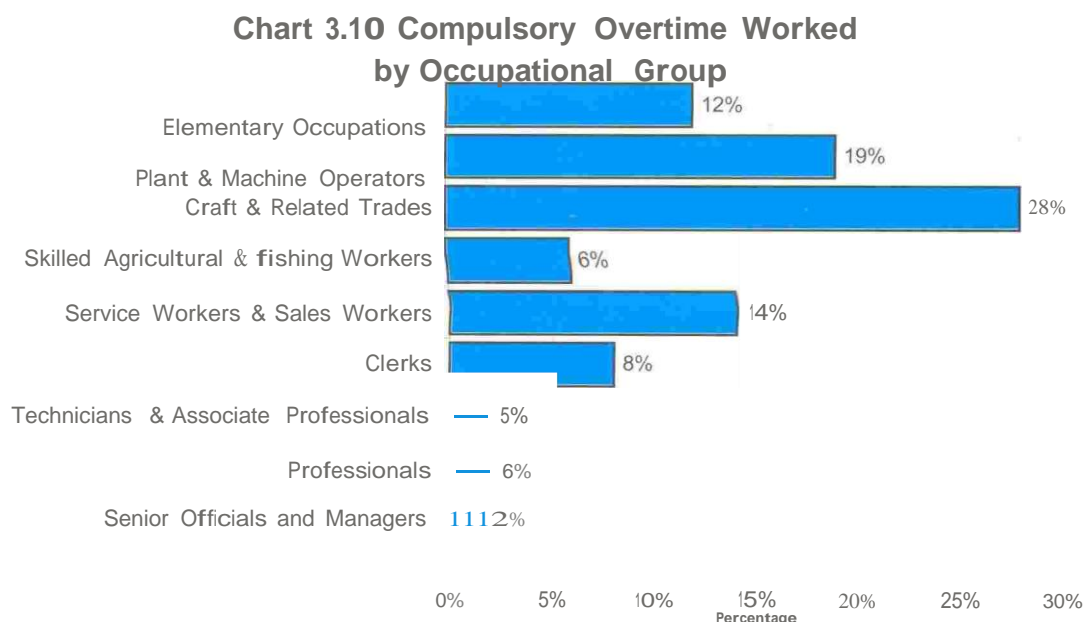
Provisions	Non-EPZ	EPZ
Overtime	Payment based on time and half after eight hours of work on weekdays. On Sundays and public holidays, first eight hours of work paid at twice basic rate and at three times basic rate afterwards.	10 hours of overtime per week compulsory. Employers to give 24 hours notice regarding overtime. Payment for first 10 hours after a 45-hour workweek is time and a half and thereafter payment is three times the basic rate. On Sundays and public holidays, first eight hours of work paid at twice basic rate and at three times basic rate afterwards.

**3.6.12** When looking at the following figures we should perhaps consider the number of women working in the EPZ and the possibility that their calculation of the working week could well include the amount of Compulsory Overtime worked in this sector and, therefore, appear to make their standard working week longer than most.

### Compulsory Overtime

**3.6.13** About 16% of respondents, stated that they worked some form of Compulsory Overtime. (Table 3.14) This percentage was made up of around 3% working in the Public Sector and 13% in the Private Sector. Of course, the Private Sector includes the EPZ, and, given the definitions above, it is not surprising that a higher percentage in this sector work some form of compulsory overtime. Indeed, it is perhaps surprising to some that the figure is as low as 13%.

**3.6.14** Of those who work compulsory overtime in the Public Sector the actual numbers are quite low and any conclusions drawn would, again, be unreliable. 32% of those who work compulsory overtime in the Private Sector, work between 6 and 10 hours while 27% work up to 5 hours. This gives us a figure of 59% of those that work compulsory overtime in the Private Sector working up to 10 hours per week. Of the Female respondents working compulsory overtime in the Private Sector, 30% work up to 5 hours and 35% between 6 and 10 hour per week. For Male respondents in these categories in the Private Sector the figures are slightly less at 25% and 31 % respectively. We also see more women, 18%, in the Private Sector working 16– 20 hours of compulsory overtime per week than Men, 12%.



**3.6.15** Of course, even within the same sector different people work different amounts of compulsory overtime according to their occupational group. The details are provided in Table 3.15

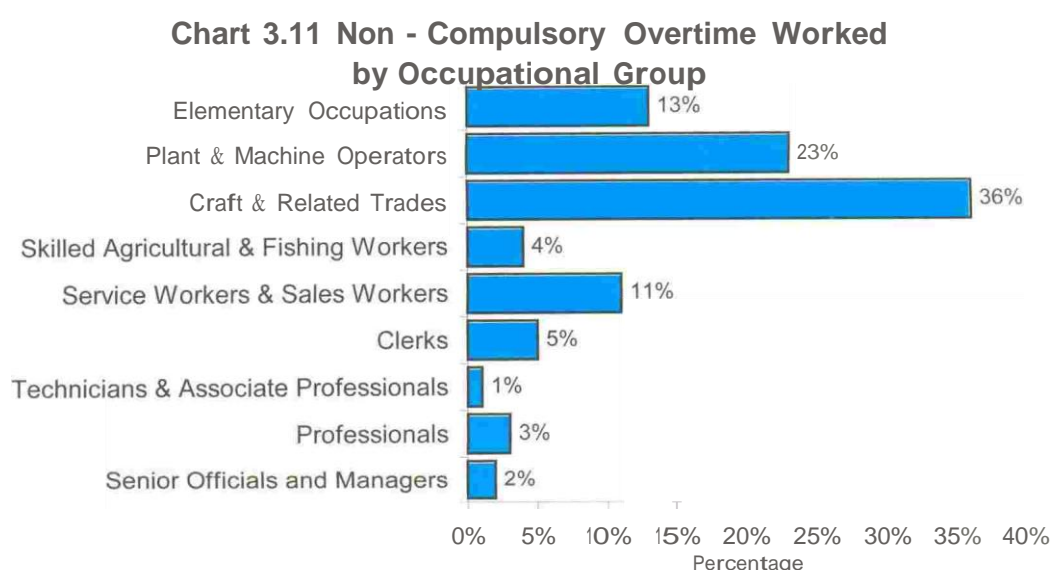
**3.6.16** In fact, in most of the Occupational Groups, relatively few respondents work Compulsory Overtime. Those who do are in the Craft and Related Trades, where 28% of the respondents work compulsory overtime, Plant and Machine Operators, 19%, and Service Workers and Sales Workers, 14%. Within the elementary occupations, those who work compulsory overtime make up 12% of the total number of respondents. However, as the numbers of respondents are thinly spread across all of the different rates of weekly overtime and across all occupational groups, it would perhaps be unwise to base any firm conclusions on any of the percentages cited above.

**3.6.17** In support of what we have previously said of those that work in the EPZ, we see that the majority of Plant and Machinery Operators & Craft and Related Trades workers are employed in the Manufacturing Sector, and more specifically in the Export Processing Zone.

### Non – Compulsory Overtime

**3.6.18** Compulsory overtime is not the only type of overtime worked and we can now turn to the rates of Non-Compulsory Overtime, (NCO), worked by the respondents.

**3.6.19** 16% of the respondents stated that they worked NCO. Perhaps the first thing to note is that the majority of respondents working Non Compulsory Overtime, are in the Private Sector rather than the Public Sector. Of those in the Private Sector working NCO, 52% of Females and 41 % of Males work between 6–10 hours per week. While 19% of Female respondents and 32% of Male respondents work up to 5 hours NCO per week we can see that the large majority of respondents working NCO are in the Private Sector and most of them work up to 10 hours per week, 71 % of females and 73% of Males.



- 3.6.20** Looking at the same set of respondents working NCO by Occupational Group, (Table 3. 17), we see that the majority of respondents working NCO are from the same categories as those working Compulsory Overtime. A slightly smaller percentage worked Non-Compulsory Overtime than worked Compulsory Overtime, 18% and 16% respectively.
- 3.6.21** The majority are again from the Craft and Related Trades, 36%, Plant and Machine Operators, 23%, and the Service Workers, 11 %. Those from the Elementary Occupations have moved up a place compared to Compulsory Overtime at 13%.
- 3.6.22** We can perhaps infer that again, because of the nature of the Occupations, the overtime worked in the EPZ is contributing to the high figures in these categories.

### **Weekend Work**

- 3.6.23** Another type of extra time that is often incorporated into the ordinary working week is that worked at weekends. This is a major element of this study as any work done at weekends has an increased impact on family life over that done on weekdays. Working weekends reduces the amount of time that whole families can spend together. We can see, (Table 3.18), that many of our respondents worked on weekends. In the Public Sector 48% of respondents stated that this was the case compared to 63% in the Private Sector. Staying with the Private Sector we see that 56% of Female respondents work at some point during the weekend compared to 68% of Male. In the Public Sector 53% of Male respondents work on some part of the weekend compared to 34% of Female.
- 3.6.24** However, we need to look a little closer at what constitutes work at weekends. Respondents were asked to state how many weekend days they worked per month, with the maximum being 8, or every weekend day, (Table 3.19). In fact, we see that very few, 1 % in the Public Sector and 3% in the Private Sector, stated that they worked more than 4 weekend days per month.
- 3.6.25** The respondents were not asked to indicate on which days of the weekend they worked but we can perhaps assume that the vast majority work on Saturdays and, based on anecdotal knowledge of Mauritian working habits, that this would, more often than not, be Saturday mornings. Any part of a day worked has been taken to constitute a working day during the weekend. We see from the figures that 61 % of the respondents worked 4 weekend days per month and 23% 2 weekend days per month. The latter may be made up of a significant proportion that work alternate weekends, most likely alternate Saturdays. Within the different Sectors, in the Public Sector 53% of Male and 43% of Female respondents worked 4 weekend days per month and in the Private Sector the percentages for the same category are 61 % of Male and 60% of Female.

## Overview of Chapter 3 Section B

- 3.6.26** Although in the opinions of those involved in the qualitative studies it was thought that many people worked in more than one job. In fact, as the representative sample shows, only 3% of respondents actually do so.
- 3.6.27** There is a more significant proportion of respondents who work more than 45 hours per week, particularly in the Private Sector. The contention was made in the FGDs that the nature of the parents' job can determine the quality of family life. It could be seen that those employed in the Public Sector have more relaxed conditions of work while those in the Private Sector, in particular in the EPZ, have "long and often erratic" hours of work.
- 3.6.28** As is clear from the Desk Study, long working hours are enshrined in the regulations governing the EPZ. The majority of the EPZ workforce is Female and this long working week is bound to impact on their ability to balance work and family responsibilities. The concerns expressed by the FGD participants about the working conditions in the EPZ are echoed by the Opinion Leaders and in many ways borne out by the findings of the quantitative study.
- 3.6.29** The FGD participants also expressed concern that when parents have to work long hours it can increase the strain on family life. Women who work in the Private Sector may have particularly long working weeks and, in the EPZ, this can be compounded by having to work a minimum of 10 hours per week of Compulsory Overtime. This in itself must create problems in balancing work and family responsibilities as it can be unpredictable as to when the need to work compulsory overtime will arise, given that it is based on the need to fulfill orders. Although the regulations state that 24 hours notice should be given of the need to work overtime it must often be difficult to arrange alternative care for children if one has to work, particularly in the school holidays.



## 3.7 Section B -Tables

**Table 3.10 Number of Paid Jobs by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex				Group Total		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female				Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of Paid Jobs	One paid job	245	97	95	99	340	98	715	97	403	98	1118	97
	More than one paid job	7	3			8	2	25	3	9	2	34	3
Group Total		252	100	96	100	348	100	740	100	412	100	1152	100

**Table 3.11 Number of Paid Jobs by Occupational Group**

		Number of Paid Jobs				Group Total	
		One paid job		More than one paid job			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Occupational Group	Senior Officials and Managers	34	2	2	5	36	2
	Professionals	124	9	2	5	126	8
	Technicians and Associate Professionals	51	3	1	2	52	3
	Clerks	156	11	1	2	157	10
	Service Workers and Sales Workers	229	16	3	7	232	15
	Skilled Agricultural and Fishing Workers	169	12	11	26	180	12
	Craft and Related Trades	313	21	14	33	327	22
	Plant and Machine Operators ( Drivers)	165	11	2	5	167	11
	Elementary Occupations	215	15	6	14	221	15
	Other	2	0	0	0	2	0
Group Total		1450	100	111	100	1561	100

**Table 3.12 Nature of Employment by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%		
Nature of Employer's Business	Agriculture & Fishing	171	17	49	10	220	15
	Manufacturing	184	19	165	32	349	23
	Construction	85	9	9	2	94	6
	Wholesale & Retail Trades, Restaurants & Hotels	134	14	72	14	206	14
	Community, Social & Personal Services inc Central & Local Go	235	24	118	23	353	24
	Transport, Storage & Communication	93	9	19	4	112	7
	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	17	2	12	2	29	2
	Electricity & Water	10	1	1	0	11	1
	Other	63	6	63	12	126	8
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3.13 Weekly Hours of Work by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex				Group Total		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female		No.	%	Male		Female		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%			No.	%	No.	%		
Total Hours per week usually worked	Less than 30	11	4	21	22	32	9	45	6	73	18	118	10
	31 - 40	152	60	63	66	215	62	215	29	114	28	329	29
	41 - 45	28	11	7	7	35	10	171	23	93	23	264	23
	46 - 50	32	13	3	3	35	10	147	20	90	22	237	21
	51 - 55	14	6	1	1	15	4	47	6	18	4	65	6
	56 - 60	7	3	0	0	7	2	44	6	12	3	56	5
	More than 60	8	3	1	1	9	3	71	10	12	3	83	7
Group Total		252	100	96	100	348	100	740	100	412	100	1152	100

**Table 3.14 Compulsory Overtime Worked by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total	
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hours of Overtime Compulsory Worked per Week	Up to 5	13	34	3	33	13	36	40	35	29	39	53	32
	11 - 15	5	14	1	11	6	13	16	12	6	9	22	11
	16 - 20	8	22	1	11	9	20	27	21	12	18	39	20
	More than 20	1	3	0	0	1	2	8	6	1	2	9	5
	overtime worked but quantity not recorded	1	3	2	22	3	7	6	5	4	6	10	5
Group Total		37	100	9	100	46	100	130	100	66	100	196	100

**Table 3. 15 Compulsory Overtime Worked by Occupational Group**

		Hours of Compulsory Overtime Worked per Week										Group Total	
		Up to 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16-20		More than 20		Overtime Worked but Quantity Not Recorded	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Occupational Group	Senior Officials and Managers	0	0	2	3	1	4	1	2	0	0	0	0
	Professionals	4	6	4	5	3	11	1	2	0	0	2	15
	Technicians and Associate Professionals	2	3	5	6	3	11	1	2	0	0	1	8
	Clerks	4	6	3	4	7	25	6	13	0	0	0	0
	Service Workers and Sales Workers	12	18	11	14	5	18	5	10	1	10	1	8
	Skilled Agricultural and Fishing Workers	3	5	4	5	0	0	5	10	1	10	1	8
	Craft and Related Trades	19	29	23	29	3	11	13	27	4	40	6	46
	Plant and Machine Operators ( Drivers)	14	22	18	23	3	11	8	17	2	20	1	8
Elementary Occupations		7	11	8	10	3	11	8	17	2	20	1	8
Group Total		65	100	78	100	28	100	48	100	10	100	13	100

**Table 3.12 Nature of Employment by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%		
Nature of Employer's Business	Agriculture & Fishing	171	17	49	10	220	15
	Manufacturing	184	19	165	32	349	23
	Construction	85	9	9	2	94	6
	Wholesale & Retail Trades, Restaurants & Hotels	134	14	72	14	206	14
	Community, Social & Personal Services inc Central & Local Go	235	24	118	23	353	24
	Transport, Storage & Communication	93	9	19	4	112	7
	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	17	2	12	2	29	2
	Electricity & Water	10	1	1	0	11	1
	Other	63	6	63	12	126	8
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3.13 Weekly Hours of Work by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Sex		Group Total	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Hours per week usually worked	Less than 30	11	4	21	22	32	9	45	6	73	18	118	10
	31 - 40	152	60	63	66	215	62	215	29	114	28	329	29
	41 - 45	28	11	7	7	35	10	171	23	93	23	264	23
	46 - 50	32	13	3	3	35	10	147	20	90	22	237	21
	51 - 55	14	6	1	1	15	4	47	6	18	4	65	6
	56 - 60	7	3	0	0	7	2	44	6	12	3	56	5
	More than 60	8	3	1	1	9	3	71	10	12	3	83	7
Group Total		252	100	96	100	348	100	740	100	412	100	1152	100

**Table 3.14 Compulsory Overtime Worked by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total	
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hours of Compulsory Overtime Worked per Week	Up to 5	9	24	3	33	12	26	33	25	20	30	53	27
	6 - 10	13	35	2	22	15	33	40	31	23	35	63	32
	11 - 15	5	14	1	11	6	13	16	12	6	9	22	11
	16 - 20	8	22	1	11	9	20	27	21	12	18	39	20
	More than 20	1	3	0	0	1	2	8	6	1	2	9	5
	overtime worked but quantity not recorded	1	3	2	22	3	7	6	5	4	6	10	5
Group Total		37	100	9	100	46	100	130	100	66	100	196	100

**Table 3. 15 Compulsory Overtime Worked by Occupational Group**

		Hours of Compulsory Overtime Worked per Week												Group Total	
		Up to 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 - 20		More than 20		Overtime Worked but Quantity Not Recorded			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Occupational Group	Senior Officials and Managers	0	0	2	3	1	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	2
	Professionals	4	6	4	5	3	11	1	2	0	0	2	15	14	6
	Technicians and Associate Professionals	2	3	5	6	3	11	1	2	0	0	1	8	12	5
	Clerks	4	6	3	4	7	25	6	13	0	0	0	0	20	8
	Service Workers and Sales Workers	12	18	11	14	5	18	5	10	1	10	1	8	35	14
	Skilled Agricultural and Fishing Workers	3	5	4	5	0	0	5	10	1	10	1	8	14	6
	Craft and Related Trades	19	29	23	29	3	11	13	27	4	40	6	46	68	28
	Plant and Machine Operators ( Drivers)	14	22	18	23	3	11	8	17	2	20	1	8	46	19
Elementary Occupations		7	11	8	10	3	11	8	17	2	20	1	8	29	12
Group Total		65	100	78	100	28	100	48	100	10	100	13	100	242	100

**Table 3. 16 Non - Compulsory Overtime Worked by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex				Group Total		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female				Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hours	Up to 5	8	40	0	0	8	35	41	32	10	19	51	28
Non-Compulsory	6- 10	7	35	1	33	8	35	52	41	27	52	79	44
Overtime Worked	11 - 15	1	5	0	0	1	4	14	11	5	10	19	11
per Week	16 - 20	3	15	1	33	4	17	7	6	4	8	11	6
	More than 20	1	5	0	0	1	4	8	6	3	6	11	6
	overtime worked but quantity not recorded	0	0	1	33	1	4	5	4	3	6	8	4
Group Total		20	100	3	100	23	100	127	100	52	100	179	100

**Table 3. 17 Non - Compulsory Overtime Worked by Occupational Group**

		Respondent - Hours Non-Compulsory Overtime Worked per Week												Group Total	
		Up to 5		6 - 10		11 - 15		16 - 20		More than 20		Overtime Worked but Quantity Not Recorded			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Occupation Title - coded	Senior Officials and Managers	1	2	2	2	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
	Professionals	2	3	2	2	1	5	1	7	0	0	1	11	7	3
	Technicians and Associate Professionals	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
	Clerks	1	2	7	8	1	5	0	0	0	0	2	22	11	5
	Service Workers and Sales Workers	7	12	7	8	5	25	3	20	1	8	0	0	23	11
	Skilled Agricultural and Fishing Workers	2	3	3	3	0	0	3	20	0	0	0	0	8	4
	Craft and Related Trades	26	44	27	31	7	35	5	33	3	25	4	44	72	36
	Plant and Machine Operators ( Drivers)	10	17	23	26	4	20	1	7	7	58	2	22	47	23
	Elementary Occupations	9	15	14	16	1	5	2	13	1	8	0	0	27	13
	Other	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Group Total		59	100	87	100	20	100	15	100	12	100	9	100	202	100



**Table 3. 18 Ever Work Weekends by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total	
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you ever work on Weekends"	Yes	133	53	32	34	165	48	494	68	229	56	723	61
	No	116	47	63	66	179	52	237	32	181	44	418	37
Group Total		249	100	95	100	344	100	731	100	410	100	1141	100

**Table 3. 19 Number of Weekend Days Worked per Month by Sector & Sex**

		Public or Private Sector (Respondent)											
		Public Sector						Private Sector					
		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total	
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number days worked on weekends each Month	1	11	9	7	23	18	11	34	7	16	7	50	7
	2	41	32	8	27	49	31	106	22	56	25	162	22
	3	7	5	2	7	9	6	32	7	10	5	42	6
	4	68	53	13	43	81	51	292	61	133	60	425	61
	5	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	3	1	6	1
	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	4	2	11	2
Group Total		128	100	30	100	158	100	476	100	222	100	698	100

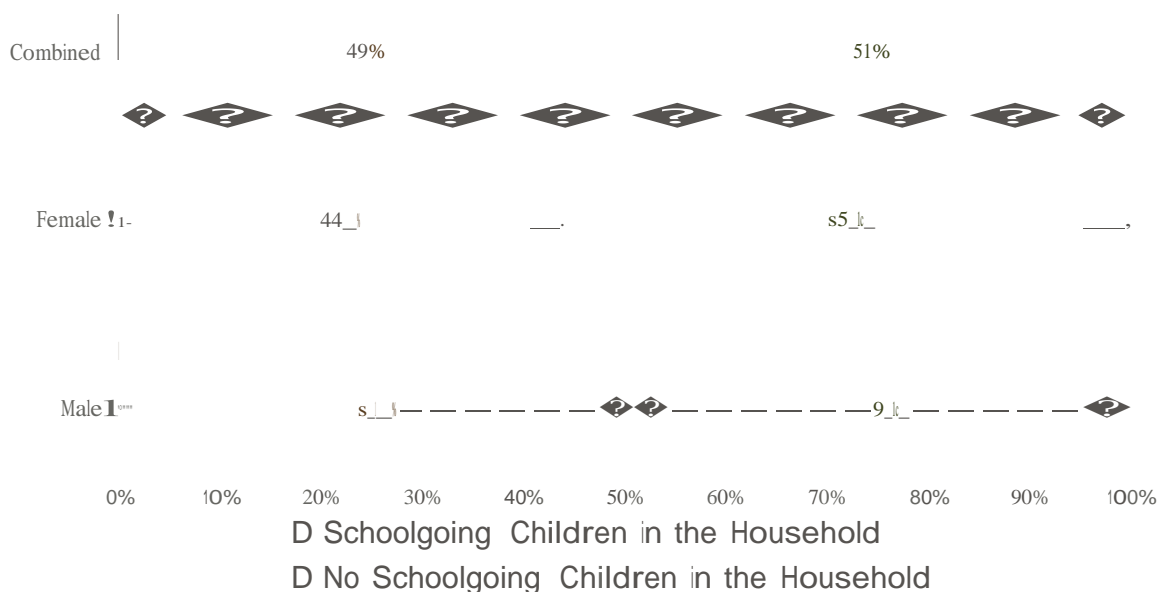


### 3.8 Section C - Childcare And Other Dependant Relatives

#### School-going Children

- 3.8.1 Now that we have a reasonable understanding of the working habits of the respondents, the next topic of investigation was on the presence of children in the household and the provision of childcare. What sort of childcare is being provided, given that most of the respondents and their spouses worked 5 day or 5 1/2 day weeks?
- 3.8.2 In Chart 3.12, (Table 3.20) we see that the households were almost equally split between those that have school-going children at 49%, and those that do not, 51%.
- 3.8.3 Looking at the same responses by sex, 44% of Female respondents stated that they lived in a household where there were school-going children while 56% said that they did not. We should keep it in mind that although the respondent was asked whether there were school-going children in the house, even if the answer was affirmative, it did not necessarily follow that the respondent was the parent of the children in question, or that they had responsibility for their care

**Chart 3.12 Schoolgoing Children in the Household**



## Responsibility for Childcare

- 3.8.4** Moving on to responsibility for childcare, (Table 3. 21), there is a clear indication that this appears to be an overwhelmingly female responsibility. Respondents were given various childcare options and asked to state what would be their usual method of providing after-school childcare. They were then asked to give in order of importance other options they would use should their usual method not be possible. Looking at the responses we see that 79% of Male respondents stated that the children were "looked after by the school and then their spouse", compared with only 10% of Females responding in the same manner. However, we should notice that with the Female respondents, there was a broader range of responses. 21 % of Females stated that it was the "School and then other people living in their home" which was the principal method of childcare and 24% stated it was the "School and then other family members living elsewhere".
- 3.8.5** This range of options seems to indicate that women tend to have a network of support in place, which they resort to when they have to combine paid employment and childcare.
- 3.8.6** Only 10% of Female respondents stated that their spouse or partner was responsible for after-school childcare, while for Men a massive 79% stated that their spouse had this responsibility.
- 3.8.7** After the School and the spouse, the people Women most relied on for after-school child-care were other family members living in the same household, at 21 %, and other family members who lived in a different household, at 24%. (Table 3.21) This is a similar situation to that we see reported by the CSO (Table 1.10 on page 19), where 48.7% of responding working mothers stated that relatives looked after the school-going children after school but before they themselves had returned home. According to the CSO results, 32.3% of these relatives were grand parents. A worrying aspect is the 20% of Women who said that, after school, the children looked after themselves. However, this is less than the 43% of working mothers who reported to the CSO in the year 2000, that no one looked after their school-going children after school hours and while they were still at work. (Table 1.10). This is a time where the children are at risk; younger ones from everyday dangers and older ones from experimentation with some of the less salubrious aspects of life.
- 3.8.8** Overall, 9% of the respondents said that this was the case and it opens up an intriguing debate as to the quality of care given to these children, perhaps not by the choice of the parents and carers but by the exigencies of work commitments. This is an area that was debated in the Focus Group Discussions and by the Opinion Leaders, who thought that, among other more tangible dangers, there was the risk of a low emotional quotient afforded the child.

**3.8.9** Table 3.22, gives the figures by Region and by Sex. When looked at by region, the majority of respondents 54% for both Urban and Rural and 72% for semi-Urban areas, reported that it is the "School and then my spouse / partner", which is responsible for Childcare.

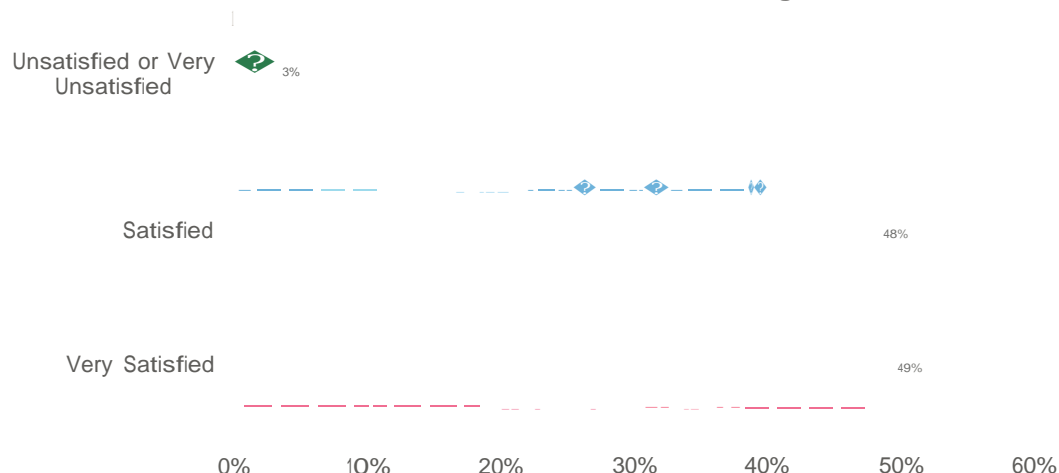
**3.8.10** There was little difference in the percentage of respondents in the 3 regions, 8.3% in the semi-Urban, 9.2% in the Urban and 9.9% in the Rural areas, who stated that children were left on their own after school.

### Satisfaction with Childcare

**3.8.11** Having childcare arrangements in place may help to ease the problems of balancing work and family life but how satisfied were the respondents with the childcare that they had in place? In Chart 3.13 we see that a massive 98% of respondents with school-going children in the household, reported that they were either Very Satisfied or Satisfied with their childcare arrangements.

**3.8.12** This leaves a very small group of almost 3% who are Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied with their childcare arrangements. This small number is surprising given how often child-care problems are an issue in anecdotal references to the effect work has on family life. This is particularly interesting where respondents have indicated that children are left to their own devices after school and before the return of the parents. There may be an air of fatalism in this simply because there are often few alternatives.

**Chart 3.13 Satisfaction With Childcare Arrangements**



### School Aged Children Not Attending School and Disabled Children

**3.8.13** The study also contained questions on whether the respondents' households had school-aged children who did not attend school or disabled children. Very few respondents indicated the presence of school-aged children not attending school. Since education is free and compulsory at the Primary level with enrolment ratios at this level near 100%, it seems that most if not all children register in school although attendance may not be regular.

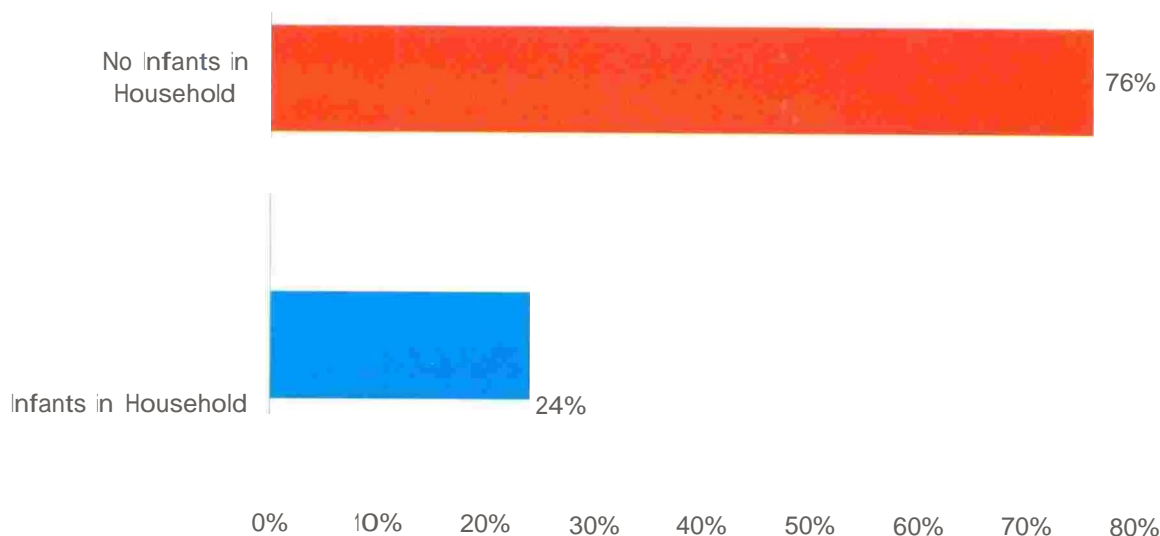
**3.8.14** The issue of disability is more interesting as the number of respondents is less than we would expect at 1%, but this would need to be the subject of another study as to why disability appears to have been under-reported.

### Infants

**3.8.15** The next category of children we inquired after were those children who were under school age; the infants. Almost a quarter, (24%), of respondents lived in households where there were infants present.

**3.8.16** When looking at infants in the household by region and by sex, (Table 3. 23), we seem to see that there is little difference in the number of respondents with infants by Region ranging from 22% in the Urban Region to 26% in the Rural.

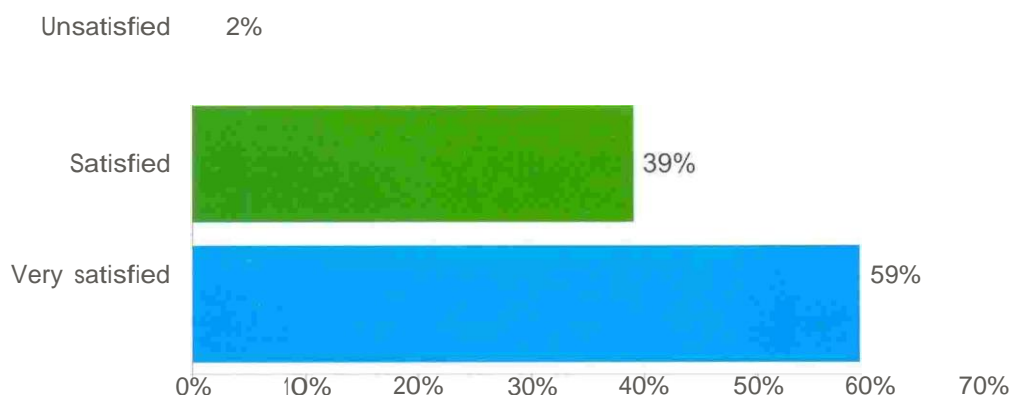
**Chart 3.14 Infants in Household**



**3.8.17** This does mean that around a quarter of all the respondents in each region have to arrange some kind of infant care.

- 3.8.18** Infant Care Arrangements, (Table 3.24), follow a similar pattern as those in place for the care of school children. Infant care is more often than not seen to be a Female responsibility. Over 70% of Male respondents in the Urban, 85% in the semi-Urban and 76% in the Rural regions, reported that Infant Care Arrangements were the responsibility of their Spouse or Partner. As we have seen in both the Desk Study and in earlier analyses of this study women do more often than not manage *to cope with their childcare responsibilities but balancing work and family responsibilities* can be difficult for them.
- 3.8.19** Childcare centres *not run* by the employer are used by 17% of respondents in the Urban region and 15% in the Rural areas. In the semi- Urban region, this falls to 9.5% of the total number of respondents for that region. Few in any region use a child-care centre run by the employer.
- 3.8.20** After the spouse and a childcare centre, the next most commonly utilized method of infant care in all regions was either other members of the household or family members living elsewhere.
- 3.8.21** This is an example of where women have in place a network of caring provision in case that they cannot, for some reason, provide the care themselves. We again see the pattern of infant care being seen as a responsibility of females who, invariably, resort to a backup network of care provision as and when necessary.
- 3.8.22** As with the school aged children, having identified the types of child care available the next step was to ascertain as to whether or not the respondents were satisfied with the type of arrangements they had in place.

**Chart 3.15 Satisfaction With Infant Care Arrangements**



## **Satisfaction with Infant Care**

**3.8.23** In Chart 3.15, we see that a very high proportion of respondents with Infants in the household are either Very Satisfied or Satisfied with their childcare arrangements. Only 7 respondents out of a total of 345, or 2%, indicated that they were unsatisfied.

**3.8.24** It may be that there is little alternative or that the type of childcare available suits the needs of nearly all of the respondents. Whatever the case, it is clear from the table that these respondents are satisfied with current arrangements.

## **Looking After Sick Children**

**3.8.25** Information was also sought on the strategies families adopted for coping with eventualities such as a sick child. A question was included on 'who looks after a child when he falls ill?' (Table 3.25) It was again seen that Male respondents overwhelmingly rely on their spouse, reinforcing the image of the female partner in a relationship being responsible for all aspects of child-care. However, it would appear that in cases of a sick child, more women depended on their partners than they would for regular child care. It was seen from previous tables that only 10 % of Females depended on their spouses after school care of children or care of infants. But in cases of sickness, 14.9 % (Urban) 16.9 (semi-Urban) and 13.8 % (Rural) stated that it was their spouse who look after the sick child.

**3.8.26** An almost equal percentage of females reported that Family members either living in the same home and those living elsewhere looked after their sick child.

**3.8.27** This means that it is only in exceptional cases that the normal childcare arrangements were altered when a child fell ill. It is very disconcerting to see that about 7 % of Male and 14 % of Female respondents continued to leave their children on their own even when the latter were ill.

## **Leave Arrangements For Family Care**

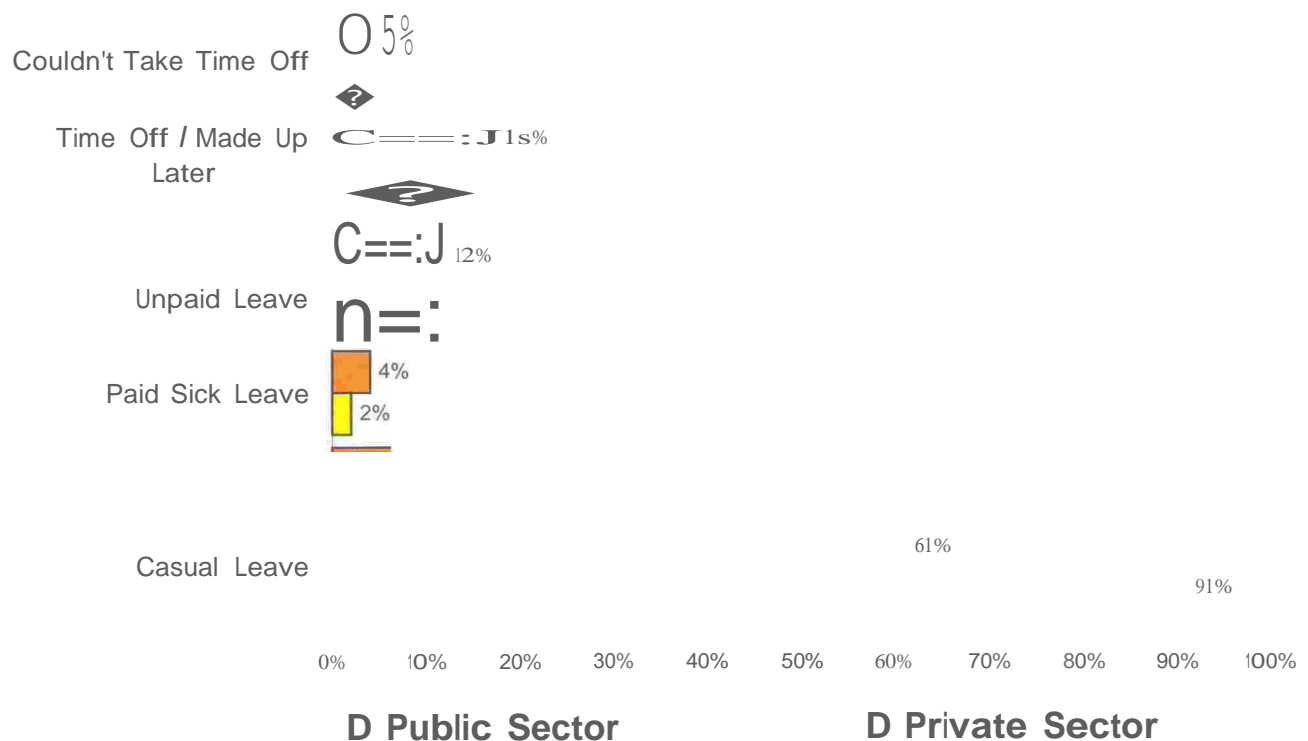
**3.8.28** As we have seen in the Desk Study, there are various types of leave entitlement available to most full time workers. However, although one has leave entitlement it is not always easy to take time off when one needs it, particularly at short notice. Vacation leave may be intended for a relaxation period away from the stresses of work, but it is a reality that many people rely on this type of leave to take time off in the event of unexpected occurrences to do with their family responsibilities.

**3.8.29** Our first investigation of leave from work is based on what type of time off from work the respondents would normally take to look after a sick child or dependant,

(Table 3.26), an occurrence that is probably all too common in most households with school-going children or infants.

**3.8.30** In Chart 3.16, we see that when it is necessary to take time off work to care for a sick child, Paid Casual Leave is the outright most common choice of the respondents, both Male and Female, and in both the Public and Private Sectors, 68% of the respondents stated that this would be the method that they were most likely to use. A massive 91 % of respondents in the Public Sector would opt for Casual leave in this type of situation while in the Private Sector, 61 % would use Casual Leave. After Casual Leave, taking Unpaid Leave is the most preferred choice of those in the Private Sector, where 12% of respondents said that they would use this facility, while in the Public Sector this option is resorted to by only 2% of the respondents.

**Chart 3.16 Method of Time Off to Care for Sick Child or Dependant**



**3.8.31** One other method prevalent in the Private Sector but not in the Public Sector, is to take time off and make it up later. 18% of respondents in the Private Sector would do this compared to only 4% of respondents working in the Public Sector. Some 5% of respondents from the Private Sector also indicated that they would not be able to take time off work to cover any emergency, which could only lead to additional stress on the part of the employee.

**3.8.32** It appears that very few of the respondents would use Paid Sick Leave. Only 4% of those in the Private Sector would do so, while a minimal 2% of respondents from the Public Sector would take this form of time off from work.



**3.8.33** Overall, it would appear that the Private Sector is more strict in permitting time off in such cases as unexpected eventualities around childcare etc. In the Public Sector it would appear that Casual Leave is easily obtained and that the overwhelming majority of employees in this sector use this method of taking time off whenever necessary.

### **Dependant Relatives**

**3.8.34** The sample for this study was made up of various types and sizes of households, as defined in the Methodology section. Many of these households have infants or school-going children residing in them, but many others may also have other dependant relatives such as parents, parents-in-law or other dependant relatives.

**3.8.35** Respondents were asked to state whether or not there were other dependant relatives living in their household, other than those that fit into the previous categories. The results show that 17% of respondents indicated that they also had dependant relatives living with them. (table 3.27)

**3.8.36** There appeared to be some confusion for some respondents as to what constituted a "dependant" relative. For example, many respondents had older persons living in the household but who were either personally or economically independent. Some respondents indicated that they had older persons living in the household who were "dependant" on them for caring but when asked as to who provided the care they stated "they look after themselves." These types of responses have not been considered during the cleaning of the data and the tables are based only on those respondents who provided some form of care to older persons in the household.

**3.8.37** For some reason, slightly fewer households in the Rural region, 14%, had dependant relatives within them compared to 18% in the Urban region and 19% in the semi-Urban region. The differences are not significant and the findings reveal that 17% of households contain some type of dependant relative other than children.

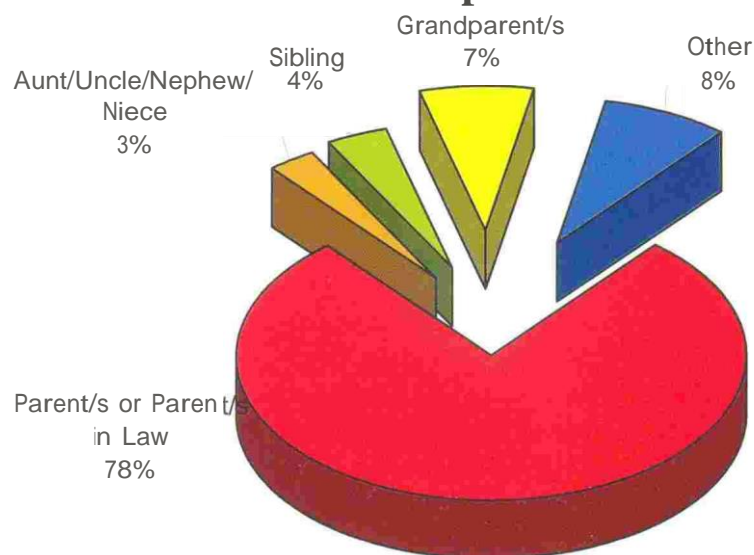
**3.8.38** Having established this percentage of households in which there are dependant relatives it would be interesting to look at the relationship of the dependant relative or relatives to the respondent. (table 3. 27)

**3.8.39** In Chart 3.17, we see that an overwhelming number of dependant relatives, 78%, are Parents or Parents in law of the respondent. This is perhaps not surprising given the lack of facilities in Mauritius for the care of aged parents. There are, however, other factors to consider. One is that many families in Mauritius are caring about their aged parents and prefer to do whatever is necessary to look after them in the family home. The other is that, as we have seen earlier, there is a lack of desire by many old people themselves to live in care homes, as evidenced by the MACOSS report from 1992 referred to in the Desk Study.



**3.8.40** It may well be that the household was originally the home of the now dependant parent and that the respondent has taken over the running of an established household including the care of the parents. This gives some food for thought as in situations where there are Parents or In Laws living in the same household, it might be tempting to think that they can help with childcare, but in fact, they may well need some extensive care themselves.

**Chart 3.17 Relationship of Dependant Relative to Respondent**



**3.8.41** Who is most likely to provide the majority of this care? Not surprisingly, perhaps, the answer is that it tends to be the women of the household. (Table 3.28) 54% of Male respondents said that their spouse looked after dependant relatives but only 9% of Female respondents said the same of their spouse. Some 43% of Female and 32% of Male respondents depend on other relatives for care of dependant relatives.<sup>59</sup> Again, as we have seen in the desk study and in other aspects of this study, care duties are predominantly expected of women. As the National Gender Action Plan states quite clearly, women are more often than not expected to take on home and family responsibilities in addition to, rather than instead of, work responsibilities. In some instances it is stated that children provide the care but, where this was the case, perhaps we should assume that the children were older or adult offspring.

<sup>59</sup> The high percentage, although small in number at 10 respondents for other for the Females is predominantly husbands with disabilities or adult offspring that have remained dependant on the parents, most commonly the female parent.

**3.8.42** What we see is an increasing burden on female members of the household who perform the majority of tasks around both childcare and care of any dependant relatives. This needs to be considered bearing in mind that many women will also be working in a full time job, which, if in the EPZ for example, will have long daily working hours or perhaps from 07.30 to 17.00.

## **Overview of Chapter 3 Section C**

**3.8.43** Roughly half of all respondents lived in households where there were school-going children present. There is a heavy bias towards childcare being the responsibility of the women of the household. FGD participants expressed the opinion that they thought that traditional family roles were changing with time but that there was still a clear division of labour within the home. Certainly, as it pertains to childcare activities, then the division of labour is clearly defined with it continuing to be seen as a woman's role, particularly by men.

**3.8.44** The Desk Study points to the additional strain placed on women by having to work and take care of family responsibilities as being one of the catalysts in the arising of marital problems. The increasing rise in the number of divorces of couples who have children may be influenced by the strains created by having to simultaneously manage full time employment and more traditional family responsibilities. The Opinion Leaders also felt that an additional burden is placed on working women during the school holidays and that the nuclearisation of the family in contemporary Mauritius was adding to that burden.

**3.8.45** However, the quantitative study has shown indications that the often assumed back-up systems of friends, neighbours and family members are not as prevalent as often thought. As predicted by participants in the FGDs, we see that some respondents feel that the presence of elder members of the family in the household only serves to add to the responsibilities rather than to help alleviate them. It is clear that there is a lack of adequate and affordable day care services for children while the parents are working. What after-school facilities are available are only operating on a small scale such as those provided by the National Women's Council or small, often unregulated, informal care regimes provided by individuals in their own homes.

**3.8.46** Many respondents resort to Casual Leave to fulfill family responsibilities, although those working in the Private Sector can sometimes find that it is difficult to take any time off by whatever method. In the interviews with Opinion Leaders the representatives of the employers acknowledged this seeming lack of support of employers for employees but saw it as a natural consequence of operating in competitive markets.

### 3.9 Section C - Tables

**Table 3. 20 Schoolgoing Children in the Household by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Schoolgoing Children in the Household	Yes	509	51	221	44	730	49
	No	483	49	287	56	770	51
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 21 Childcare Responsibility by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Who usually looks after the children during working hours?	The School because I only work during school hours	20	4	32	15	52	7
	The school and then my spouse/partner	397	79	22	10	419	58
	The school and then other people who live in my home	31	6	45	21	76	11
	The School and then other family members who don't live in m	24	5	51	24	75	10
	The School and then neighbours and/or friends	0	0	5	2	5	1
	The school and then me while I work	1	0	3	1	4	1
	The School and then a paid helper/attendant/domestic helper	9	2	13	6	22	3
	The school and then they look after themselves	20	4	43	20	63	9
	Other arrangements	1	0	3	1	4	1
	Group Total	503	100	217	100	720	100

Table 3. 24 Infant Care Arrangements by Region &amp; Sex

		Region																	
		Urban						semi - Urban						Rural					
		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Group Total	
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		No.	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Who usually looks after them while you are at work?	Spouse/Partner	62	70	2	4	64	46	61	85	1	7	62	72	69	76	2	6	71	56
	With me at work	2	2	3	6	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	2
	Nursery/childcare centre run by employer	0	0	2	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1
	Nursery/childcare centre not run by employer	9	10	15	30	24	17	7	10	2	14	9	10	11	12	8	23	19	15
	Paid babysitter/domestic help in respondent's home	0	0	2	4	2	1	1	1	1	7	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	2
	paid babysiter/ domestic helper in their home	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	5	14	7	6
	Others in respondent's home	3	3	7	14	10	7	2	3	6	43	8	9	5	5	7	20	12	10
	family members outside of respondent's home	1	1	15	30	16	12	1	1	4	29	5	6	2	2	5	14	7	6
Other		11	13	4	8	15	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	4	3
Group Total		88	100	50	100	138	100	72	100	14	100	86	100	91	100	35	100	126	100

Table 3. 25 Care Arrangements for Sick Children by Region &amp; Sex

		Region																	
		Urban						semi - Urban						Rural					
		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Sex		Group Total		Group Total	
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		No.	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
If a child who lives with you is sick who usually looks after them?	I take time of work to look after them	32	10	74	41	106	21	10	4	29	38	39	13	19	7	65	43	84	20
	My spouse/partner looks after them	257	77	27	15	284	55	186	83	13	17	199	66	213	80	21	14	234	56
	The paid babysitter or domestic help looks after them	1	0	4	2	5	1	3	1	2	3	5	2	3	1	6	4	9	2
	Family who do not live in my home look after them	6	2	21	12	27	5	3	1	7	9	10	3	5	2	16	11	21	5
	Others who live in my home look after them	15	4	27	15	42	8	13	6	13	17	26	9	18	7	29	19	47	11
	Neighbours and/or friends look after them	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0
	They look after themselves	23	7	26	14	49	10	9	4	11	14	20	7	6	2	14	9	20	5
	Other arrangements	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	2	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Group Total		334	100	181	100	515	100	224	100	77	100	301	100	266	100	152	100	418	100

**Table 3. 26 How Would Take Time Off Work to Care for Sick Child or Dependant by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How would you normally take time of work to attend to an urgently sick child or dependant?	Casual leave	307	91	658	61	965	68
	Paid sick leave	8	2	46	4	54	4
	Unpaid leave	6	2	130	12	136	10
	take time off and make up later	12	4	196	18	208	15
	Couldn't take time off work	5		57	5	62	4
Group Total		338	100	1087	100	1425	100

**Table 3. 27 Dependant Relatives in the Home by Region**

		Region						Group Total	
		Urban		semi-Urban		Rural			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have any aged parents, disabled or otherwise dependant relatives?	Yes	115	18	66	19	72	14	253	17
	No	528	82	281	81	426	86	1235	83
Group Total		643	100	347	100	498	100	1488	100

**Table 3. 28 Relationship of Dependant Relatives by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dependant Relative	Parent /s or Parent /s in Law	107	81	33	67	140	77
	Aunt, Uncle, Nephew or Niece	4	3	2	4	6	3
	Sibling	6	5		2	7	4
	Grandparent /s	10	8	3	6	13	7
	Other	5	4	10	20	15	8
Group Total		132	100	49	100	181	100

**Table 3. 29 Who Looks After Dependant Relatives by Sex**

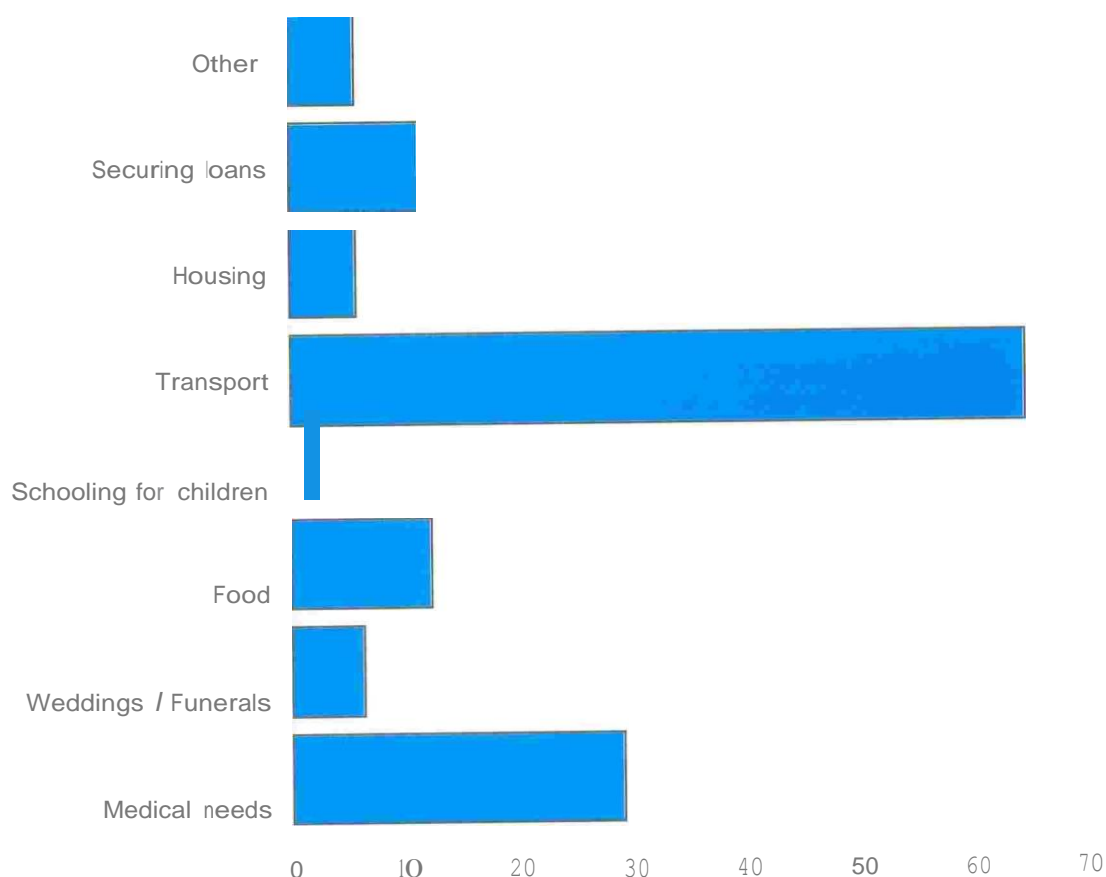
		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
Who looks after		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dependant Relatives	Myself	10	8	7	15	17	10
	Spouse	69	54	4	9	73	42
	Children	3	2	6	13	9	5
	Other Relatives	41	32	20	43	61	35
	Friends and / or Neighbours	2	2	4	9	6	3
	Others	2	2	6	13	8	5
Group Total		127	100	47	100	174	100

## **3.10 Section D - Workplace Policies and Benefits**

### **Assistance From Employers**

- 3.10.1** One of the main factors to take into consideration when looking at family life is the financial situation of the family. It is quite often the case that one's own income or even the combined incomes of all of the household members is not enough to meet the household's needs. At such times, it may be necessary to look to others for assistance, particularly financial assistance. For many, the first place to look would be the employer. Respondents were asked whether there was any such assistance provided by their employer. (Table 3.30)
- 3.10.2** Overall, 12% of respondents stated that their employer provided some kind of financial assistance. Those working in the Private Sector, 14%, were more likely than those in the Public Sector, 4%, to have the provision of financial assistance from their employer. However, this means that most employers, 86%, notwithstanding the 3% of respondents who did not know, do not provide any kind of financial assistance even for family emergencies. Some employers do offer financial help on a loan basis.
- 3.10.3** What form is this type of assistance likely to take? (Table 3.31) The three most common types of financial assistance provided by employers are the various soft loans grouped under the heading Other Soft Loans, at 30%, Advances in Salary, at 22% and Loans for Medical Fees, 18% and these are most likely to be available from Private employers. If we amalgamate all of the responses that fall under the umbrella term of "soft loan" whether for weddings, funerals, house construction, medical fees or other purposes then we see that 64% of respondents have had recourse to some form of soft loan from their employer. The Public Sector employers rarely go beyond the recommendations of the PRB and this is reflected in the very small number of respondents who have used financial assistance from Public Sector employers.
- 3.10.4** Looking at what types of assistance the respondents had ever actually received from their employers, (Table 3.32), we see that Assistance With Transport is the most common in both employment sectors with 82% of respondents in the Public Sector and 59% in the Private Sector stating that they had at some point received this type of assistance from their employer.
- 3.10.5** 33% of respondents in the Private Sector also said that they had received some form of financial assistance from their employer with medical costs although this is only the case with 16% of respondents in the Public Sector.
- 3.10.6** Having established what sort of assistance is likely to be provided by which type of employer and which type of assistance respondents had previously had recourse to, the next step was to ascertain which of these various types of assistance they had found most useful. (Table 3.33)

**Chart 3.18 Assistance Ever Received From Employer**



**3.10.7** In both the Public and Private Sectors, it is mostly Assistance With Transport that has been found to be the most valuable, which is not surprising given that this was the most common form of assistance received by employees in both the Public and Private Sectors.

**3.10.8** In the Public Sector the PRB provides for meeting the costs of transport for Public Officers. In the EPZ Sector, many employers find it more productive to offer transport facilities or to refund part or all of the employees' transport costs. In both Sectors, and overall, transport is again followed by Medical Assistance.

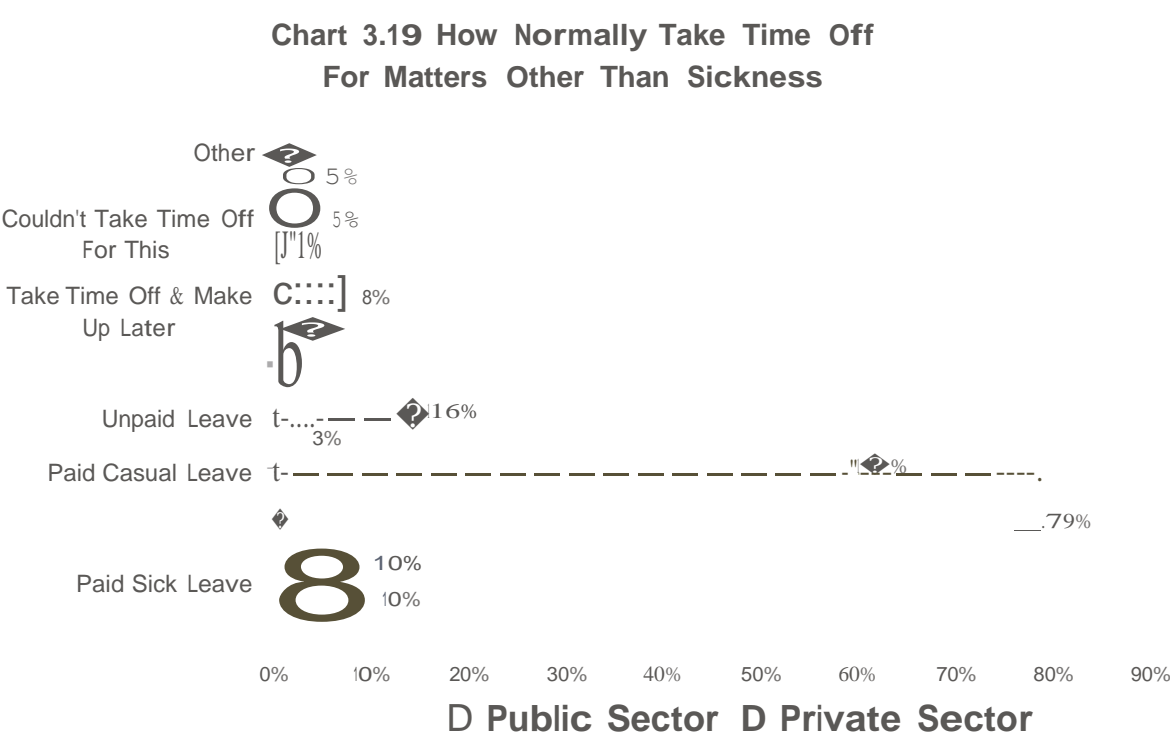


### Leave to Deal with Family Responsibilities

**3.10.9** It is not unreasonable to expect that at some point the respondents will be sick and will need to take time off work. As we have previously seen many employees have Sick Leave available as either a statutory right or as a contractual right.

**3.10.10** However, what form of leave or method of time off would they use for matters other than sickness? (Table 3.34)

**3.10.11** It would appear that the overwhelming preference in such an instance would be, as we have previously seen in other instances where time off is concerned, to take Casual leave, with 79% of respondents in the Public Sector and 60% in the Private Sector stating that this would be the method of taking time off that they would be most likely to use. In fact, as we see in the Desk Study, one of the reasons for providing 11 days of Casual Leave to employees in the Public Sector is *"to attend to urgent personal matters"*.



**3.10.12** After Casual Leave, 10% of respondents in both Public and Private Sectors stated that they would take Paid Sick Leave although 16% in the Private Sector also said that they would resort to Unpaid Leave. In comparison, only 3% of respondents working in the Public Sector said that they would use Unpaid leave to resolve such an emergency.

3.10.13 This is not unexpected given that most employees have a set number of Paid Sick Leave days per year as per their contracts of employment or as provided by the Labour Law.

3.10.14 Of the respondents working in the Private Sector, 8% said that they would take time off but make it up later. This suggests an added pressure on them and their family responsibilities as that time that is made up will have to be found from their free time outside of the normal working hours or by sacrificing vacation leave.

3.10.15 In the Private Sector again we see that 5% of respondents said that they could not take time off work to do this, which begs the question of who will deal with the urgent family matter and the personal and psychological effects on the respondent who will have to remain at work while the matter is being resolved.

3.10.16 It is conflicts between work and family responsibilities such as these that can create undue strain on the relationship between the two aspects of life.

#### Vacation Leave

3.10.17 Given the stress placed on individuals in attempting to balance the two aspects of their life, it would not be unreasonable to imagine that they would enjoy their vacation leave, where this was available and use it as a chance to relax and recuperate from the pressures of work.

3.10.18 Apart from those on short-term contractual employment or those respondents having been in post for less than 12 months, we would perhaps expect that all others would say that they have Paid Holiday Leave, given that it is a statutory right of employees.

3.10.19 Those working in the Public Sector have set entitlements to Paid Holiday or Vacation Leave, including those temporary workers who have been in continuous employment for longer than 12 months. Notwithstanding the temporary and contract workers, 14% of respondents stated that they do not receive Paid Holiday Leave. (Table 3.35)

3.10.20 This is even more alarming when looking at the Private Sector. Here, we see that 46% of respondents state that they do not receive Paid Holiday Leave.

3.10.21 As we have seen in the Desk Study, in the Private Sector every worker, in continuous employment with the same employer for 12 consecutive months, is entitled to 14 working days leave on full pay and 2 days leave in every year in addition to the annual leave.

3.10.22 This being the case, why is it that 46% of respondents working in the Private Sector state that they do not receive Paid Holiday Leave?

3.10.23 One explanation may be those of our respondents who work in the EPZ as here the leave entitlements are different, with no Vacation Leave entitlement. Leave in the EPZ is discretionary with a Local Leave entitlement of 14 days per year for those who work 5 days a week and 18 days sick leave annually after having worked for more than a year *at the same factory*. This means that any of our respondents who had changed factory within the last 12 months would have lost their leave entitlement. This may well influence the percentage of respondents in the Private Sector who state that they do not receive any Paid Leave. Another explanation may be that workers may not be aware of their leave entitlements.

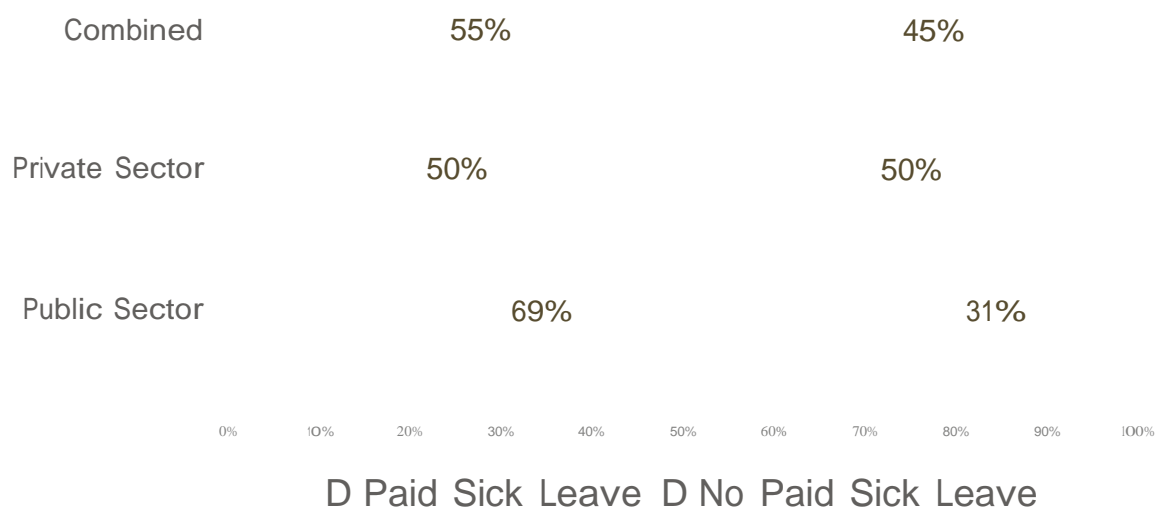
3.10.24 One other mitigating factor may well have been the time of the year when the fieldwork was implemented. During October and November, many workers have used up their leave entitlement and may have answered the question according to how much leave they had left for that year.

### Sick Leave

3.10.25 After the various forms of Vacation Leave, the next most important type of leave often guaranteed by conditions of service or statute is Sick Leave.

3.10.26 As with Vacation Leave, there appears to be a discrepancy between statutory provision and the experience of the respondents. In Chart 3.20, we see that some 31% of respondents working in the Public Sector state that they do not receive any Paid Sick Leave a figure that rises to 50% in the Private Sector.

**Chart 3.20 Sick Leave by Sector**



3.10.27 Again, perhaps we can assume that the experiences of those respondents working in the EPZ push up the percentages of those in the Private Sector who say that they have no Paid Sick Leave entitlement. Alternatively, many employees of this sector may not be aware of their leave entitlement.

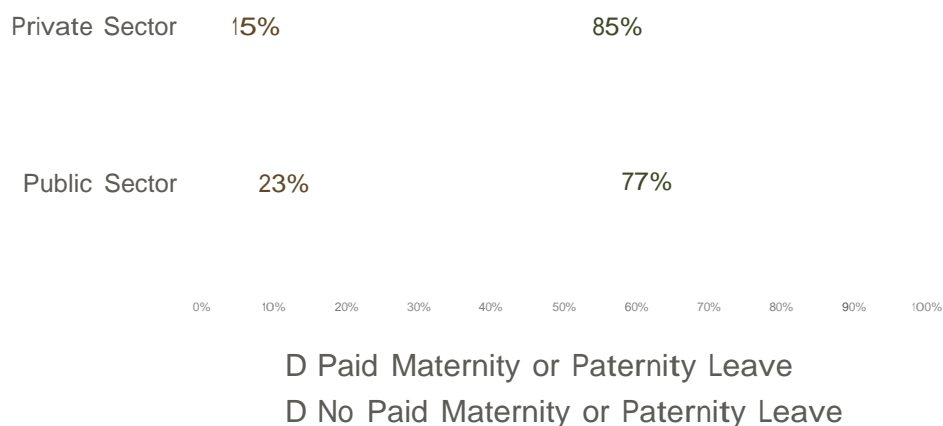
3.10.28 In the Public Sector, the figures will be influenced by those on short-term contract or in temporary employment, however, there is still some investigation to be done as to why it appears that workers in both sectors are not enjoying their statutory rights as regards Paid Sick Leave entitlements and that as many as 45% of the total number of respondents stated that they are not entitled to any form of Paid Sick Leave.

3.10.29 On several previous occasions we have concentrated on the burden placed upon Female respondents given their roles in the household, child-care and paid employment. When they have children do they have the right to maternity leave? The analysis of the data has combined maternity and paternity leave in one table, but, in fact, paternity leave is a rarity in Mauritius.

### Maternity & Paternity Leave

3.10.30 In Chart 3.21, we see that in the Public Sector only 23% of respondents said that there was Paid Maternity or Paternity Leave and this falls to 15% in the Private Sector.

**Chart 3.21 Paid Maternity Leave Available?**



3.10.31 However, given what we have previously said about the rarity of Paternity Leave it would perhaps be more useful to look at the provision by sex and by doing so disaggregate maternity leave from paternity leave.

3.1032 Maternity Leave is covered by statutes relating to both sectors and, as we have seen in the Desk Study, in the Public Sector a female officer is granted 12 weeks' maternity leave on full pay if the officer either holds a substantive appointment or has completed one year's continuous service.

**3.1033** In the Private Sector, a woman is entitled to 12 weeks maternity leave on full pay if she has completed one year of continuous service.

**3.1034** With EPZ Employees the Export Processing Zone regulations allow for 12 weeks leave, after having worked for over one year. In all instances, maternity leave is restricted to a maximum of 3 confinements.

3.1035 However, we see that the majority of Female respondents, 61 %, stated that they are not entitled to Maternity Leave. (Table 3. 36)

3.1036 There may have been some confusion that could have led the respondent to assume during the interview that one had to have current possible need of, or have previously used, Maternity Leave or just to state if provision for it was made under the terms of their employment. For example, younger women may have answered that maternity leave was not available because they were not yet married or did not yet have any children and older women may have answered that it was not available because they had already passed the child-bearing age and that, subsequently, their need for maternity leave was over. One other aspect to consider is that the accepted childbearing age would finish at 49 years old, but more realistically, few women would be intentionally having children after 40 years old. If we take into consideration just those women in the sample up to 39 years old then the responses would be from only 52% of the 34% Female representation in the study sample, or, put another way, a sample of 268 women. On the other hand, it may be that, as with vacation leave, many respondents simply did not know their leave entitlements. Whatever the case the findings on maternity leave should be viewed with caution.

**3.1037** As regards Paternity Leave, we can see that in both Public and Private Sectors this is a relatively unusual provision as neither the prevailing conditions of service nor the Labour Legislation provide for it. There would be little disagreement that it is essential that both parents are involved with family commitments. In this respect, providing equal opportunities for both males and females to have time off for childcare responsibilities would help to promote gender equality.

## **Relationship With Employer**

3.1038 Having determined types of leave taken and the likelihood that the respondents could avail themselves of that leave, the respondents were asked a range of questions to throw light on the relationship with their employer and any *ad hoc* provisions that could be made to facilitate combining work and family responsibilities.

- 3.10.39 The range of responses was quite large and to facilitate understanding of the results they have been split into sections under the heading Table 3.37
- 3.10.40 The first element, (Table 3.37 (a)) was as to whether the respondent could start or finish work earlier or later without advance permission. In the Public Sector, just under one quarter of the respondents, 24%, said that this was possible, while in the Private Sector it rose to almost one third of respondents, at 32%.
- 3.10.41 This can impact on family life as many people, particularly those with small children have many things to do before setting off for work and the luxury of being able to arrive just a little late or leave just a little early without recrimination could well ease the stress placed on them by trying to reconcile work and family responsibilities.
- 3.10.42 The next part of the question, (Table 3.37 (b)), concentrated on the availability of a telephone. From the responses we see that in the Public Sector 61 % of the respondents had access to a telephone for use for family reasons, and this fell to 47% in the Private Sector.
- 3.10.43 This discrepancy in figures between Sectors is not surprising given the predominance of office workers and others with access to office equipment in the Public Sector and those who work on the shop floor in the Private Sector.
- 3.10.44 However, it could be argued that with the prevalence and popularity of mobile telephones this is not as big an issue it once would have been. Although over half of the respondents in the Private Sector, 53%, and 39% of respondents in the Public Sector, had no access to a telephone at work for family reasons, it can probably be assumed that in contemporary Mauritius, at all levels of society, it is not difficult to gain access to a 'phone wherever one is working.
- 3.10.45 The results of Table 3.37 [c] are closely linked to the issues discussed in relation to Table 3.37 (a). When one has responsibility for childcare and is also in employment there are sometimes occasions when it would help matters greatly if one could bring one's child to the workplace for an hour or two. School may be closing early or a usual child-minder may be sick and sometimes there is the need to find a suitable short-term measure that will combine childcare with work commitments.
- 3.10.46 Of the respondents, only 15% of those who work in the Public Sector and even less, 13%, in the Private Sector stated that they could bring a child into the workplace for an hour or so.
- 3.10.47 This would seem to suggest the need for ad-hoc care facilities to be in place for unexpected eventualities. However, it would obviously depend on the type of employment in which one is engaged as to whether it was suitable or realistic to

bring a child to the workplace for any amount of time. With this in mind it does not necessarily mean that it is the employer who is preventing the employee from utilizing this method of providing short-term childcare solutions.

3.10.48 Nevertheless, this type of short-term childcare is quite often a real problem that most parents have to solve and one that employers perhaps need to recognize.

3.10.49 As with the previous table, the type of employment in which one is engaged will to a large extent dictate the feasibility of working from home, (Tatie 3.37 [d]).

3.10.50 Nevertheless, the percentage of those that say that they can do so, 2% and 4% in the Public and Private Sectors respectively, is quite low.

3.10.51 Noting those who either did not respond or who stated that the question was not applicable to them, an equally high number of respondents in both the Public Sector, 86%, and the Private Sector, 87%, stated that they could not work from home.

3.10.52 This being the case, it would seem that if there was some need for them to deal with a family responsibility then they would have to take some form of leave in order to do so. In the Public Sector using up one's leave entitlement to take care of such exigencies may not be such a problem, but, as we have seen previously, in the Private Sector, particularly for those working in the EPZ, leave is a relative luxury and leave taken to cope with family responsibilities is deductible from one's vacation.

3.10.53 It is perhaps no surprise then that workers may often resort to saying that they are sick and fall back on their Sick Leave entitlement.

3.10.54 Private Sector employers seem slightly more amenable to changing working hours to suit the pressures of the family responsibilities of the employees. (Table 3.37 [e]) However, having said that, more than three quarters of the respondents who work in the Private Sector, 76%, and 82% of respondents in the Public Sector, state that they could not work fewer hours to suit family responsibilities.

3.10.55 As we work through the elements of this particular line of enquiry we see the pressure building up on those that need to provide some form of childcare. Various options that could perhaps go some way to easing the burden of childcare and other family responsibilities are not available to the respondent.

3.10.56 The next part of the question was a very subjective element, as it asked about whether or not the respondent thought that his or her supervisor understands that parental responsibilities mean that one will sometimes need to be absent from work. (Table 3.37 [t]) One factor to consider is the relatively high number of respondents to whom this part of the question did not apply or who chose not to answer it, 19% in the Public Sector and 20% in the Private Sector.



- 3.10.57 Not surprisingly, the results appear to show that some supervisors understand and empathize with the responsibilities of childcare and make allowances while others do not. There is very little difference in response between those working in the Public Sector and those working in the Private Sector. Only just over a third of respondents in both the Public Sector and the Private Sector, 37% and 35% respectively, stated that they thought that their supervisor understood that the respondent might need to be absent from work sometimes because of childcare commitments.
- 3.10.58 Having an understanding supervisor is one thing but it does not necessarily mean that one can just take time off and it is likely that the respondent is again using up either Vacation, Casual or Sick Leave in fulfilling their family obligations.
- 3.10.59 Having previously suggested so often that respondents may have to resort to vacation or other leave entitlements to cover for family responsibilities and obligations this element of the question asked whether the respondent could usually take holidays at times that suited their family needs. (Table 3.37 [g])
- 3.10.60 In terms of when the respondents can take leave, the Private Sector seems far less flexible. Less than half of the respondents working in the Private Sector, 47%, said that they could take their holidays to suit their family needs, compared to 71% in the Public Sector.
- 3.10.61 This figure may well again have been influenced by those working in the EPZ, but it still remains high given that over half of the respondents working in the Private Sector stated that they could not usually take holidays at times that suited their family needs.
- 3.10.62 It is not only at times of emergency or during short-term care needs that this is a problem. Just deciding when to have a family holiday can be problematic if leave entitlement is at the discretion of the employer.
- 3.10.63 For those with children, it may well be the case that they would prefer to take their vacation during the school holidays and if this is not possible it can only add to the difficulties already faced around childcare and quality time spent with the children.



## Overview of Chapter 3 Section D

- 3.10.64 Many employees have turned to employers for financial assistance with transport. In the FGDs it was stated that many workers have to travel long distances to and from work, mostly by Public Transport. This is becoming increasingly expensive, is tiring and time consuming and the time taken in travelling, time that could otherwise be devoted to family responsibilities, adds to the length of the working day.
- 3.10.65 The Desk Study provides an insight into the various types of legislation that cover the provision of vacation and other leave. On paper, leave entitlements for those in full time employment seem fairly liberal. However, in practice, many respondents find it difficult to take their full quota of leave. Casual leave is the main method of taking time off for unexpected occurrences. Maternity leave is available to expectant mothers but Paternity Leave is a very rare commodity in Mauritius. As we see in the FGDs this is an issue that is being addressed by the Trade Union Movement.
- 3.10.66 At first sight, responding employees appear to regard their relationship with employers in a positive light. However, as the study progresses the facilities made available by employers to those employees with family responsibilities such as childcare seem to be only those covered by the appropriate legislation. This is in accordance with the opinions expressed in the qualitative studies that many facilities that would be useful in this respect are provided only at the employer's discretion and that these employers, operating in a competitive environment, are loathe to offer any facility that would affect production and profitability.

### 3.11 Section D - Tables

**Table 3. 30 Financial Assistance Provided by Employer by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Does your employer provide any financial assistance for family emergencies?	Yes	14	4	158	14	172	12
	No	327	95	942	83	1269	86
	Don't know	4	1	38	3	42	3
Group Total		345	100	1138	100	1483	100

**Table 3. 31 Type of Assistance Provided by Employer by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Description of type of financial assistance	Advance in Salary	2	15	34	23	36	22
	Loans for Medical Fees	2	15	27	18	29	18
	Loans for House Construction	0	0	8	5	8	5
	Loans for Funerals	0	0	15	10	15	9
	Loans for Weddings	0	0	3	2	3	2
	Other Soft Loans	3	23	45	30	48	30
	Other Financial Assistance	6	46	16	11	22	14
Group Total		13	100	148	100	161	100

**Table 3. 32 Assistance Ever Received From Employer by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector (Respondent)				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Ever received from employer assistance with medical needs?	Yes	55	16	377	33	432	29
	No	293	84	768	67	1061	71
Group Total		348	100	1145	100	1493	100
Ever received from employer assistance with weddings / funerals?	Yes	11	3	83	7	94	6
	No	337	97	1061	93	1398	94
Group Total		348	100	1144	100	1492	100
Ever received from employer assistance with food?	Yes	21	6	162	14	183	12
	No	327	94	983	86	1310	88
Group Total		348	100	1145	100	1493	100
Ever received from employer assistance with schooling for children?	Yes	5	1	50	4	55	4
	No	341	99	1088	96	1429	96
Group Total		346	100	1138	100	1484	100
Ever received from employer assistance with transport?	Yes	285	82	677	59	962	64
	No	63	18	467	41	530	36
Group Total		348	100	1144	100	1492	100
Ever received from employer assistance with housing?	Yes	24	7	62	5	86	6
	No	323	93	1083	95	1406	94
Group Total		347	100	1145	100	1492	100
Ever received from employer assistance with securing loans?	Yes	59	17	110	10	169	11
	No	289	83	1032	90	1321	89
Group Total		348	100	1142	100	1490	100
Ever received assistance with anything else from your employer?	Yes	5	5	19	6	24	6
	No	89	95	305	94	394	94
Group Total		94	100	324	100	418	100

**Table 3. 33 Most Useful type of Assistance Received by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector (Respondent)				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Most useful assistance received from employer	Medical assistance	31	10	233	29	264	24
	Assistance with food	3	1	25	3	28	3
	Assistance with schooling for children	1	0	22	3	23	2
	Assistance with housing costs	11	4	27	3	38	3
	Assistance with loans	42	14	56	7	98	9
	Assistance with transport	209	70	434	54	643	58
	Other	3	1	9	1	12	1
Group Total		300	100	806	100	1106	100

**Table 3. 34 How Normally Take Time Off Work for Matters Other Than Sickness by  
Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How do you normally take time off for urgent family matter other than sickness?	Paid sick leave	33	10	116	10	149	10
	Paid casual leave	274	79	663	60	937	64
	Unpaid leave	12	3	182	16	194	13
	Take time off and make up later	4	1	83	8	87	6
	Couldn't take time off for this	5	1	50	5	55	4
	Other	19	5	12	1	31	2
Group Total		347	100	1106	100	1453	100

**Table 3. 35 Paid Holiday Leave by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paid holiday leave?	Yes	299	86	625	54	924	62
	No	49	14	522	46	571	38
Group Total		348	100	1147	100	1495	100

**Table 3. 36 Paid Maternity /Paternity Leave by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paid maternity/paternity leave?	Yes	51	5	199	39	250	17
	No	939	95	309	61	1248	83
Group Total		990	100	508	100	1498	100

**Table 3. 37 (a) Start or Finish Work Late or Early by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector (Respondent)				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Could you start work 15 minutes late or leave 15 minutes early without advance permission?	Yes	84	24	365	32	449	30
	No	263	76	782	68	1045	70
	Not answered or Not applicable	1	0	5	0	6	0
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 37 (b) Phone at Work by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Is there a phone at work you can use for family reasons?	Yes	211	61	543	47	754	50
	No	137	39	605	53	742	49
	Not answered or Not applicable	0	0	4	0	4	0
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 37 (c) Bring a Child into the Workplace by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Could you bring a child to work for an hour or so?	Yes	52	15	151	13	203	14
	No	222	64	760	66	982	65
	Not answered or Not applicable	74	21	241	21	315	21
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 37 (d) Work From Home by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Could you work from home for a day or two?	Yes	8	2	47	4	55	4
	No	298	86	999	87	1297	86
	Not answered or Not applicable	42	12	106	9	148	10
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 37 (e) Change Hours of Work by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Would your employer accept you working less hours per week to suit family responsibilities?	Yes	64	18	262	23	326	22
	No	284	82	880	76	1164	78
	Not answered or Not applicable	0	0	10	1	10	1
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 37 (t) Supervisor Understands by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Does your Supervisor understand that you might need to be absent from work sometimes to look after your children?	Yes	129	37	406	35	535	36
	No	152	44	513	45	665	44
	Not answered or Not applicable	67	19	233	20	300	20
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 37 (g) Take Vacation to Suit by Sector**

		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Can you usually take holidays at times that suit your family needs?	Yes	246	71	540	47	786	52
	No	100	29	601	52	701	47
	Not answered or Not applicable	2	1	11	1	13	1
Group Total		348	100	1152	100	1500	100

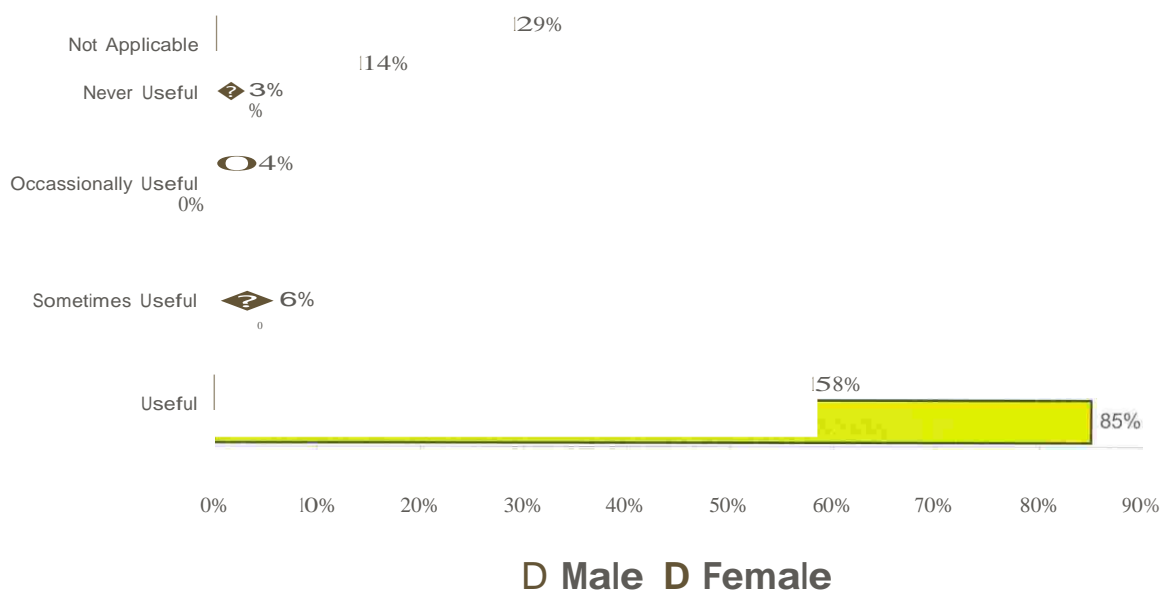


## 3.12 Section E - Supports for Family-Work Balance

### Usefulness of Other People in Assisting with Family Responsibilities

- 3.12.1** Respondents were canvassed on the usefulness of other people involved in childcare. As with the previous set of tables, this question has been separated into constituent elements and the results reported in the numbered Tables 3.38.
- 3.12.2** In Table 3.38 (a), we can see how the respondent rated the usefulness of their spouse in helping the respondent with home, childcare and family responsibilities.
- 3.12.3** For 29% of Female and 14% of Male respondents this question element was not applicable as they were not married.
- 3.12.4** Some 85% of Male respondents reported that their spouse was Useful in this respect while for Female respondents reporting on their husbands or Male partners this fell to 58%. Where respondents were not married the question was not applicable but some married respondents also stated that it was not applicable. Whether the respondent meant by this that their spouse was not useful in any way in this respect it was not possible to ascertain.
- 3.12.S** A small but interesting number of Female respondents, 3%, found their spouse was Never Useful in helping with childcare or home and family responsibilities. In general, we can see that these responses support the premise as identified in the National Gender Action Plan, that women have often combined their multiple roles "with little help from their spouse/partners" (see page 33)

**Chart 3.22 Usefulness of Spouse in Helping by Sex**



- 3.12.6** On the Usefulness of Other Children, (Table 3.38 [b]), the percentage of respondents who recorded that it was not applicable was more significant at 32% for both Male and Female respondents. This is because not all of the respondents had children and, when they did have children, they were not necessarily old enough to help.
- 3.12.7** This definition of the age when a child is old enough to take responsibility for caring for its siblings or helping in the house is both interesting and contentious. There is anecdotal evidence, backed up by comments made in the Focus Groups and by Opinion Leaders, that quite young children are sometimes expected to take on a child caring role within the family unit, when, in fact, they are still children in need of adult care and attention themselves. As we have seen previously, the parents or carers may often be left with few options other than to resort to the help of their children as it is not possible to combine the responsibilities of their job with finding time to cope with any unexpected aspects of childcare.
- 3.12.8** We see that the percentages of responses to each of the categories, is very similar regardless of the sex of the respondent. An almost equal number of Male and Female respondents, 38% & 39% respectively, found older children useful in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities.
- 3.12.9** As to whether they were Sometimes Useful, 17% of Male and 18% of Female respondents recorded that they thought that this was the case.
- 3.12.10** It is interesting to note the relatively small percentages of respondents, 5% of Male and 6% of Female, who thought that older children were Never Useful
- 3.12.11** If children are seen as sometime useful and sometimes not, for whatever reasons, how do the respondents rate the Usefulness of Other Relatives? (Table 3.38 [c]) Some 18% of Male respondents and, a slightly higher percentage, 19%, of Female respondents, recorded that they felt that Other Relatives were Never Useful. This is interesting as it is often assumed that people, particularly women, can rely on other relatives to support them in aspects of home and childcare.
- 3.12.12** Looking at the percentage of respondents who found other relatives Useful, we can see that a greater percentage of Female, 38%, than Male respondents, 33%, found that this was the case.
- 3.12.13** About one quarter of both Male and Female respondents, 27% and 25% respectively, stated that they found other relatives Sometimes Useful. What we don't know is whether this can be interpreted as to whether other relatives in general are useful on the intermittent occasions when the respondents need to call upon their services or whether they feel that certain relatives are useful on intermittent occasions, as in hindsight we can see that the question could have been interpreted either way by the respondent.

- 3.12.14 In general, though, perhaps the most significant finding here is that other relatives are not overwhelmingly seen as being always useful as may often be assumed.
- 3.12.15 Turning to the respondent's neighbours, how useful are they rated? (Table 3.38 [e]) In fact, we see that 38% of Male and 41 % of Female respondents recorded that they found that their neighbours were Never Useful in helping with home, childcare and family responsibilities.
- 3.12.16 Very few respondents, 5% of Male and 9% of Female, felt that this question was not applicable and an interestingly small percentage of respondents, 13% of Male and 9 % of Female, felt that their neighbours were Useful in this respect.
- 3.12.17 It may well be that many people, particularly employers, feel that when a problem arises a person, particularly women who are responsible for the majority of home and childcare activities, can fall back on their relatives and neighbours. What we see is that it is not necessarily the case.
- 3.12.18 In respect to helping with home, childcare and family responsibilities, the usefulness of friends is called into question by our respondents. (Table 3.38 [f]) 41 % of Male and 45% of Female respondents found that their friends were Never Useful in helping with these particular aspects of home life.
- 3.12.19 Both Male and Female respondents record fairly low figures for the Usefulness of friends at 10% and 7% respectively.
- 3.12.20 However, the combined percentages of Sometimes Useful and Occasionally Useful, give a more significant interpretation by the respondents of the usefulness of friends. When combined, 42% of Male and 39% of Female respondents found their friends Sometimes/Occasionally Useful, notwithstanding the issue of how the respondent understood the question.
- 3.12.21 A clear majority of our respondents do not appear to have the luxury of paid domestic helpers to assist with home, childcare and family responsibilities. Some 88% of Male and 85% of Female respondents indicated that this was the case by stating that the issue of whether domestic helpers or paid babysitters were useful or not was Not Applicable to them. A further 6% of Male and 7% of Female respondents indicated that they found domestic helpers or babysitters Never Useful.
- 3.12.22 As to those that found them Useful, the percentages are relatively small at 4% of Male and 7% of Female respondents.
- 3.12.23 Looking at the overall figures we see that 87% of respondents felt that the use of domestic helpers was Not Applicable and only 5% of respondents felt that they found their assistance Useful.

### One Thing Respondent Would Change With Job To Ease Work/ Family Balance

3.12.24 Realistically, most people often have to put up with their working life as it is. Where changes are possible they be minor and would not make a significant difference to one's working day or be difficult to implement and perhaps unlikely to happen. Nevertheless, it could be safe to assume that most people will have an idea of some sort of changes that, if possible, they would make to the conditions of their working life. These changes would most likely be designed to make the balance between their work and home lives easier.

3.12.25 The study questionnaire contained two questions on changes to work and home life that the respondent might wish to make. The first of these questions was on what *One* thing associated with their job the respondent felt changing would most help in balancing work and family responsibilities. (Table 3.39)

Chart 3.23 One Thing Would Change With Job



3.12.26 The responses appear to cluster around issues of working hours. A small percentage of both Male and Female respondents, 4% of each sex, make it clear that they would like to Work Less Hours. Slightly more Males than Females, 9% and 8% respectively would like to work "No or Less Night Shifts" and a significant 38% of Male and 41% of Female respondents would like to Change Actual Hours of Work, this latter category being a combination of various responses that centered mainly on either beginning work later, finishing work earlier or both

3.12.27 This desire to change the number of hours one works is a consistent response and more pronounced in the responses of those that work in the Private Sector, both

Male and Female. (Table 3.40) Of the Male respondents, 33% in the Public Sector and 39% in the Private Sector said that they would like some change in their hours of work. For Female respondents, the difference between sectors is even more marked with 42% of those working in the Private Sector stating that they would like to change their actual hours of work compared to the lower, yet still significant, 34% working in the Public Sector.

3.12.28 When looking at the wish to change hours of work by the length of the working week (Table 3.41), we see that there is a consistency of wishing to change that is in line with the length of the respondents' working week. The percentage of those respondents who state that changing their actual hours of work would make balancing work and family easier steadily increases from 28% of respondents working less than 30 hours per week to 49% of those who work more than 60 hours per week. There is a slight fall between those working 51 – 55 hours per week, 47%, and those working 56– 60 hours per week, 44%.

3.12.29 As we have seen earlier, issues of time constraints, particularly in the early morning and in the evening, and often centered on childcare, could be alleviated by having more time to use before going to work or after returning home. Even beginning work just 15 minutes later or finishing 15 minutes earlier could assist greatly in fulfilling family responsibilities.

3.12.30 It is interesting that the second largest category is made up of those that said that they would change nothing or had no idea as to what they would change. However, one should be cautious in interpreting this category as it may not necessarily mean that they are content with their work and family lives but perhaps that they could not identify one single factor that they thought would resolve any problems that they had.

3.12.31 It is perhaps even more surprising that a relatively small number of respondents, only 10% of Male and 12% of Female, stated that having More Money would be the one thing they would change at work. (Table 3.39)

3.12.32 One interesting aspect of this finding is that while one might expect that, in general, people would prefer to work less and be paid more, when relating work to the family it appears to be the issue of more free time to spend with their family that is more important.

### One Thing Respondent Would Change with Home Life To Reconcile the Exigencies of Work/ Family Responsibilities

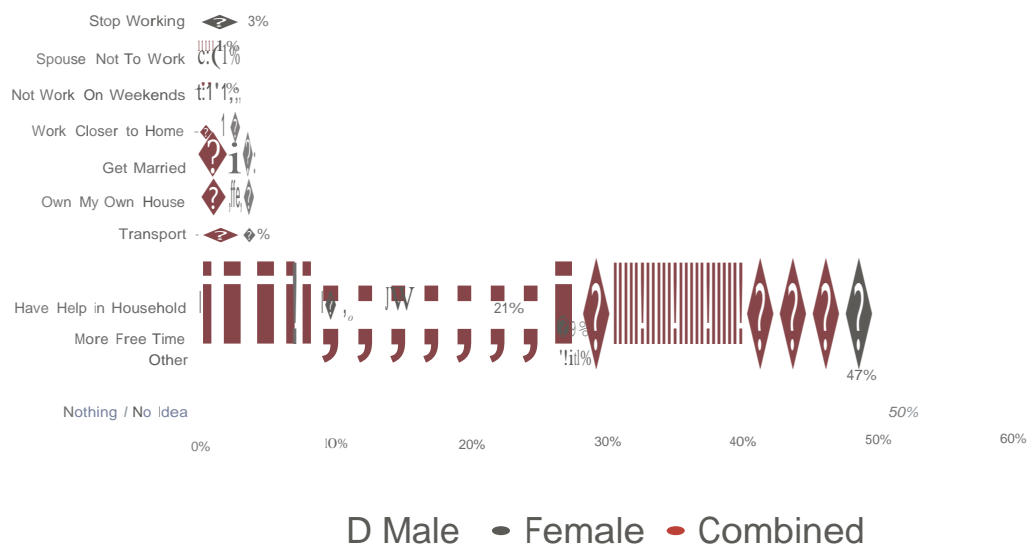
3.12.33 Given the responses to the previous question on work and family matters we would perhaps look for corroborating responses to its partner question on what *One* thing the respondent would change with their home life to help in reconciling their work and family responsibilities. (Table 3. 42)

3.12.34 However, the responses ranged quite broadly based on the individual experiences, wants and needs of the respondent. Nevertheless, we again see the high number of respondents, 50% of Males and 41 % of Females who recorded that they would change nothing or that they had no idea as to what they would change.

3.12.35 Among these respondents we can assume that some are indeed happy with their home and working lives but others are perhaps unsure as to what one thing they could change that would help to resolve any problems that they have.

3.12.36 The individual nature of many of the responses means that the category of Other is somewhat over-inflated to apply to 26% of Male and 25% of Female respondents. The responses grouped in the table as "Other" included such comments as for a respondent's "sons to get jobs and to get help with handicapped daughter", "to get up earlier" and "to have a hot drink on the eve of a working day".

Chart 3. 24 One Thing Would Change With Home Life



3.12.37 Some 21 % of Female respondents stated that they would like to have some help in household responsibilities while for Males this category drops to 9%.

3.12.38 We again see More Free Time on the agenda, being stated by 6% of Male and 5% of Female respondents.



## Reason for Rating Family Friendliness of Employer

**3.12.45** It is difficult to rate a workplace as one may often have no better or worse experience to use as a yardstick against which one can measure one's current employers, so the respondents were asked to state the main reason for rating their employer as they had done. (Table 3.47)

3.12.46 Some 38% of Male and 39% of Female respondents stated that there was a Good Working Relationship and Co-operative Management. These are crucial elements that go toward building a good working environment and can only help one in resolving work and family responsibility conflicts. We also see that 23% of respondents, made up of 24% of Male and 20% of Female, stated that they could get Time Off to Suit their needs and that they Can Manage Family & Work.

3.12.47 However there is a significant number of respondents, 16% of Male and 22% of Female, who stated that, in their opinion, the Employer was Not Concerned, that they were Not Strict or that it was Difficult to Get Leave. This ties in with what they had said previously that they did not have even though they rated the employer in this way than Male.

**3.12.48** Not surprisingly, Free Time for Family Responsibilities again makes a small showing with 1% of Male and 1% of Female respondents stating that this was a factor in rating their employer.



## Overview of Section E

- 3.12.49As stated by the FGD participants there is still a clear division of labour in many Mauritian households. This is supported by the 58% of Female respondents who found their husband or male partner useful in assisting with family responsibilities compared to the 85% of Male respondents who answered positively as to the usefulness of their wife or female partner.
- 3.12.S0As suspected by those taking part in the FGDs, many older children are used to assist in maintaining the household, particularly in aspects of child-care. The idea expressed in the qualitative studies that other family members are used to assist in household responsibilities is not borne out by the evidence of the respondents who found other family members, friends and neighbours are less useful in this respect than was perhaps imagined.
- 3.12.S1When asked as to what they would like to change about their current working conditions it was issue of the hours of work that many respondents would wish to address. This is an indication that many respondents are aware of the difficulties of balancing work and family responsibilities and would welcome more time in the home as a part of the solution. In this respect there appears to be total agreement between the Respondents, the Opinion Leaders and the participants in the Focus Groups that it is becoming increasingly difficult to balance work and family responsibilities.
- 3.12.52Whatever their conditions of work, many people become adept, or believe they have become adept, at balancing their work and family responsibilities. However, the participants in the qualitative studies were more concerned with this determination to balance one's dual responsibilities as being a source of stress on the individual leading to a strain on family harmony. The Opinion Leaders also expressed concern on the way that the stress imposed can present itself by impacting on the physical and mental health of the family members.

### 3.13 Section E - Tables

**Table 3. 38 (a) Usefulness of Spouse in Helping by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How useful is you spouse in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities?	Useful	837	85	290	58	1127	76
	Sometimes useful	8		32	6	40	3
	Occasionally useful		0	21	4	22	
	Never useful	5		14	3	19	
	Not Applicable	137	14	145	29	282	19
Grau Total		988	100	502	100	1490	100

**Table 3. 38 (b) Usefulness of Older Children in Helping by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How useful are older children in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities?	Useful	370	38	198	39	568	38
	Sometimes useful	169	17	90	18	259	18
	Occasionally useful	73	7	25	5	98	7
	Never useful	48	5	29	6	77	5
	Not Applicable	314	32	160	32	474	32
Grau Total		974	100	502	100	1476	100

**Table 3. 38 (c) Usefulness of Other Relatives in Helping by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How useful are other relatives in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities?	Useful	329	33	191	38	520	35
	Sometimes useful	263	27	126	25	389	26
	Occasionally useful	202	20	89	18	291	19
	Never useful	174	18	94	19	268	18
	Not Applicable	24	2	7	1	31	2
Group Total		992	100	507	100	1499	100

**Table 3. 38 (d) Usefulness of Neighbours in Helping by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How useful are neighbours in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities?	Useful	130	13	47	9	177	12
	Sometimes useful	192	19	86	17	278	19
	Occasionally useful	245	25	120	24	365	24
	Never useful	372	38	209	41	581	39
	Not Applicable	52	5	45	9	97	6
Group Total		991	100	507	100	1498	100

**Table 3. 38 (e) Usefulness of Friends in Helping by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How useful are friends in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities?	Useful	95	10	35	7	130	9
	Sometimes useful	173	17	79	16	252	17
	Occasionally useful	248	25	114	23	362	24
	Never useful	407	41	228	45	635	42
	Not Applicable	67	7	50	10	117	8
Group Total		990	100	506	100	1496	100

**Table 3. 38 (l) Usefulness of Paid Domestic Helpers in Helping by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How useful are Paid domestic helpers or babysitters in aiding with home, childcare and family responsibilities?	Useful	42	4	37	7	79	5
	Sometimes useful	4	0	2	0	6	0
	Occasionally useful	8	1	2	0	10	1
	Never useful	62	6	34	7	96	7
	Not Applicable	853	88	421	85	1274	87
Group Total		969	100	496	100	1465	100

**Table 3. 39 One Thing Would Change With Job by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
nothing/no idea		233	24	102	20	341	23
less hours of work		41	4	21	4	62	4
more money		101	10	58	12	159	11
less workload/share workload		32	3	19	4	51	3
better transport facilities		67	7	24	5	91	6
no or less night-shifts		87	9	39	8	126	9
flexi-time		1	0	0	0	4	0
other		40	4	35	7	75	5
Change Actual Hours of Work		367	38	205	41	572	39
Group Total		978	100	503	100	1481	100

Table 3.40 One Thing Would Change with Job by Sex and Sector

		Sex											
		Male						Female					
		Public or Private Sector				Group Total		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector				Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One thing	nothing/no idea	75	30	164	23	239	24	27	28	75	18	102	20
would	less hours of work	8	3	33	5	41	4	2	2	19	5	21	4
change to	more money	19	8	82	11	101	10	3	3	55	13	58	
make	less workload/share workload	5	2	27	4	32	3	6	6	13	3	19	
12 balancing	better transport facilities	29	12	38	5	67	7	13	14	11	3	24	5
4 work and	no or less night-shifts	22	9	65	9	87	9	5	5	34	8	39	8
family easier	flexi-time		0	0	4	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0 other	10		4	30	4	40	4	7	7	28	7	35
	7 change actual hours of work	83	33	284	39	367	38	32	34	173	42	205	41
Group Total		251	100	727	100	978	100	95	100	408	100	503	100

Table 3.41 One Thing Would Change With Job by Hours Worked Per Week

		Total Hours per week usually worked														Group Total	
		Less than 30		31-40		41-45		46-50		51-55		56-60		More than 60			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One thing	nothing/no idea	46	32	131	24	69	23	63	24	13	16	6	10	13	14	341	23
would	less hours of work	7	5	24	4	14	5	10	4	3	4	2	3	2	2	62	4
change to	more money	27	18	56	10	34	11	22	8	5	6	6	10		9	10	159
make	less workload/share workload	2	1	17	3	11	4	7	3	4	5	6	10	4	4	51	3
11 balancing	better transport facilities	7	5	50	9	9	3	14	5	5	6	0	0	6	7	91	6
work and	no or less night-shifts	2	1	35	6	28	9	30	11	8	10	13	21	10	11	126	9
family easier	flexi-time		0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	4
	0 other	14	10		27	5	12	4	15	6	4	5	1	2	2	2	75
	5 change actual hours of work	41	28	199	37	118	40	106	40	37	47	27	44	44	49	572	39
Group Total		146	100	540	100	297	100	267	100	79	100	62	100	90	100	1481	100

**Table 3. 42 One Thing Would Change to Balance Work & Family Responsibilities by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One thing would change to make it easier to balance work and family responsibilities	Nothing / No Idea	476	50	202	41	678	47
	More Free Time	58	6	24	5	82	6
	Transport	25	3	8	2	33	2
	work closer to home	9	1	4	1	13	1
	have help in hhold responsibilities	88	9	106	21	194	13
	own my own house	14	1	8	2	22	2
	not work on weekends/nightshift	8	1	0	0	8	1
	get married	18	2	4	1	22	2
	spouse not to work	12	1	2	0	14	1
	other	251	26	123	25	374	26
	stop working	2	0	15	3	17	1
Group Total		961	100	496	100	1457	100

**Table 3. 43 Feeling on Current Siuation by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How do you feel about your current situation?	mostly easy to balance work and family responsibilities	383	39	156	31	539	36
	sometimes easy to balance work and family responsibilities	436	44	254	50	690	46
	mostly hard to balance work and family responsibilities	166	17	96	19	262	18
Group Total		985	100	506	100	1491	100

**Table 3.44 Feeling on Current Situation by Sex and Sector**

		Sex											
		Male						Female					
		Public or Private Sector				Group Total		Public or Private Sector				Group Total	
		Public Sector		Private Sector				Public Sector		Private Sector			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How do you feel about your current situation?	mostly easy to balance work and family responsibilities	117	47	266	36	383	39	39	41	117	29	156	31
	sometimes easy to balance work and family responsibilities	112	45	324	44	436	44	48	50	206	50	254	50
	mostly hard to balance work and family responsibilities	22	9	144	20	166	17	9	9	87	21	96	19
Group Total		251	100	734	100	985	100	96	100	410	100	506	100

**Table 3. 45 Family Friendliness of Current Workplace by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rating of workplace and its responsiveness to the needs of employees with families	Very good	117	12	52	10	169	11
	Good	489	50	243	48	732	49
	Neither good nor bad	222	23	120	24	342	23
	Bad	134	14	76	15	210	14
	Very bad	20	2	14	3	34	2
Group Total		982	100	505	100	1487	100

**Table 3.46 Family Friendliness of Current Workplace by Sex and Sector**

		Sex											
		Male						Female					
		Public or Private Sector		Group Total		Public or Private Sector		Group Total		Public or Private Sector		Group Total	
		Public Sector	Private Sector			Public Sector	Private Sector			Public Sector	Private Sector		
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rating of workplace and its responsiveness to the needs of employees with families	Very good	34	13	83	11	117	12	11	11	41	10	52	10
	Good	145	58	344	47	489	50	50	52	193	47	243	48
	Neither good nor bad	50	20	172	24	222	23	25	26	95	23	120	24
	Bad	20	8	114	16	134	14	7	7	69	17	76	15
	Very bad	3	1	17	2	20	2	3	3	11	3	14	3
Group Total		252	100	730	100	982	100	96	100	409	100	505	100

**Table 3. 47 Reason for Rating of Family Friendliness of Employer by Sex**

	Sex				Group Total	
	Male		Female			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Employer Not Concerned / Strict / Difficult to Get Leave	155	16	110	22	265	18
Good Working Relationship / Cooperative Management	370	38	192	39	562	38
Time Off to Suit Respondent / Can Manage Family & Work	235	24	97	20	332	23
Employer Sometimes Good / Sometimes Bad	14	1	9	2	23	2
Profit Over Staff Needs	5	1	3	1	8	1
Not Enough Free Time For Family Responsibilities	19	2	6	1	25	2
Other	170	18	80	16	250	17
Group Total	968	100	497	100	1465	100



## **3.14 Section F - Ownership of Labour Saving Devices**

### **Labour Saving Items in Household**

- 3.14.1** The next set of questions concentrated on the ownership by the respondent of a range of household appliances that make home life easier.
- 3.14.2** As we see in Table 3.48 (a), the first question was about the ownership of a refrigerator. The overwhelming majority of respondents, 88%, stated that they had a refrigerator. Some 10% of Male respondents and 9% of Female stated that they Did Not Have a refrigerator and that they also Could Not Afford one. In a sub-tropical country like Mauritius a refrigerator is an essential item and not being able to afford one would have quite an impact on the ease with which one can go about one's daily life. Having said that, there was a small group of respondents, at 2% of both Male and Female, who said that, not only do they Not Have a refrigerator but that they Do Not Want one. Reasons why were not determined.
- 3.14.3** Around half of the respondents, 48% of Male and 51 % of Female stated that they had a Washing Machine. (Table 3.48 [b]) Many other respondents, 41 % of Male and 40% of Female stated that they Do Not Have but Cannot Afford one. This would appear to show that a major household appliance, that can relieve a large part of the drudgery of household tasks and responsibilities, is enjoyed by only half of the households of the nation.
- 3.14.4** Our number of respondent who not only Do Not have but also Do Not want a Washing Machine is higher than in comparison with the refrigerator at 11 % of Male and 8% of respondents. It is perhaps not surprising that the number of Male respondents that do not want a Washing Machine is higher than the number of Female respondents.
- 3.14.5** We can see that the ownership of a Dishwasher in Mauritius is still a relative novelty. (Table 3.48 [c]) Given that they are no more expensive than refrigerators or washing machines and given the amount of time they can free up for individuals with families and noting that we have seen how much the desire for extra free time has been cited by the respondents, it is perhaps a little surprising that dishwashers are not more prevalent.
- 3.14.6** Nevertheless, only 2% of respondents said that they had a Dishwasher. 32% of Male and 27% of Female respondents said that they Do Not Have but Cannot afford a dishwasher, while the largest percentage of our respondents, 66% of Male and 71 % of Female, said that they Do Not Have and Do Not Want one. It may well be that not having had the experience of having a dishwasher in the home contributes to the respondents' lack of desire to purchase one.

- 3.14.7** Dishwashers may still be a relative novelty in Mauritius, but Microwave Ovens are more widespread. Almost a quarter of the respondents, 20% of Males and 26% of Females, stated that they had a Microwave. (table 3.48[d])
- 3.14.8** It could be argued that Microwave ovens are labour saving devices that do contribute to freeing up time that would otherwise be devoted to cooking meals but it may well be that they are not particularly well suited to Mauritian cuisine other than to use it for warming through certain items of food. This may account for the relatively high percentage of respondents, 31 % of Male and 28% of Female, who stated that not only do they Do Not Have a Microwave but that they Do Not Want one.
- 3.14.9** Almost half of the respondents, 49% of Male and 46% of Female, said that they Do Not Have a Microwave and Cannot afford one.
- 3.14.10** As with the refrigerator, it might be expected that in a sub-tropical country and with our respondents stating how busy they are and how little free time they have, a Freezer might be an invaluable appliance to have in the home. (Table 3.48 [e])
- 3.14.11** In fact, very few, 6% of both Male and Females respondents, stated that they had a Freezer.
- 3.14.12** Again, there is a substantial group of respondents who said that they do Not Have but Cannot Afford such a major appliance as a freezer even if it is a useful Labour Saving Device.
- 3.14.13** But there is a large majority of respondents, 72% and 73% of Males and Females respectively, who say that they do Not Have and Do Not Want a freezer.
- 3.14.14** Some of the factors which may go some way to explaining this are the relatively high cost of frozen foods, the unsuitability of frozen foods to local cuisine and the horror stories of those who have had to empty their freezers and throw away substantial amounts of frozen foods during the power cuts that can follow cyclones.
- 3.14.15** A more prosaic explanation may be that the freezer compartment that is an integral part of most refrigerators is nearly always more than sufficient for the needs of most people.
- 3.14.16** Two elements of the question were about types of cookers. One was the ordinary gas cooker with no attached oven. (table 3.48 [f]) The majority of respondents, 88%, said that they had a gas cooker in their home while 10% indicated that they did not have one but did not want one. This may well have been because they had some other form of cooker such as an electric stove.

**3.14.17** However, 2% indicated that not only did they Not Have a gas cooker in the home but that they Could Not Afford one.

**3.14.18** A Vacuum Cleaner, (fable 3.48 [h]) is of questionable relevance in many Mauritian homes, so it is perhaps not surprising to see 43% of respondents, both Male and Female, stating that they Do Not Have one and Do Not Want one.

**3.14.19** Overall, labour saving devices can be just that but one has to often logically decide if the cost is rewarded by the usefulness of the item. Is it really worth working long hours of overtime to save the money to buy a labour saving device or better to have more time with your family even if some of that time is taken up with household tasks?

## **Overview of Section F**

**3.14.20** Development in Mauritius has reached a point where working people want to have labour saving and leisure devices in the household. In the Desk Study it was noted that in the 2002 Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey in Mauritius 82.9% of households had a refrigerator, compared to the 67.5% whose household had a refrigerator in 1996/97. In this study 88% of respondents had a refrigerator in the household showing the continuation of this pattern of increase of refrigerator ownership. This pattern is repeated with other labour saving devices. The availability of a washing machine in the respondent's household is around 50% in this study compared to 41.3% in the 2001 CMPHS and 25.3% in the 96/97 HBS. However, it would be reasonable to suspect that many of these items have been bought on Hire Purchase agreements reinforcing the concerns expressed by the FGD participants about the levels of indebtedness in contemporary Mauritian society. This normalization of indebtedness in contemporary Mauritian Society was also noted by the Opinion Leaders who saw rising standards of living and changes in consumption patterns. These changes had made taking loans and purchasing goods on hire purchase agreements a standard method of providing households with major appliances and luxury goods.

### 3.15 Section F - Tables

**Table 3. 48 (a) Ownership of Refrigerator by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have a Refrigerator?	Have	868	88	453	89	1321	88
	Do not have but do not want	20	2	8	2	28	2
	Do not have but cannot afford	104	10	47	9	151	10
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 48 (b) Ownership of Washing Machine by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have a Washing Machine?	Have	479	48	260	51	739	49
	Do not have but do not want	111	11	43	8	154	10
	Do not have but cannot afford	402	41	205	40	607	40
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 48 (c) Ownership of Dishwasher by Sex**

		Sex				Groun Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have a Dishwasher?	Have	17	2	9	2	26	2
	Do not have but do not want	654	66	361	71	1015	68
	Do not have but cannot afford	321	32	138	27	459	31
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 48 (d) Ownership of Microwave Oven by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have a Microwave?	Have	195	20	132	26	327	22
	Do not have but do not want	306	31	140	28	446	30
	Do not have but cannot afford	491	49	236	46	727	48
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 48 (e) Ownership of Freezer by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have a Freezer?	Have	58	6	31	6	89	6
	Do not have but do not want	710	72	370	73	1080	72
	Do not have but cannot afford	224	23	107	21	331	22
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

**Table 3. 48 (f) Ownership of Gas Cooker by Sex**

		Sex				Group Total	
		Male		Female			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have a Gas Cooker?	Have	872	88	447	88	1319	88
	Do not have but do not want	98	10	52	10	150	10
	Do not have but cannot afford	22	2	9	2	31	2
Group Total		992	100	508	100	1500	100

### **3.15 General Overview of Findings in the Employee Study**

- 3.15.1** At first sight, the respondents appear to be relatively content with the various ways in which they balance their work and family lives and responsibilities. However, when looking a little deeper we see that there is an undercurrent of discontent, particularly with the way that employers understand the everyday problems associated with working full time, managing a household and supervising childcare.
- 3.15.2** One of the points to note is the difficulty of employees in enjoying whatever leave entitlement they have.
- 3.15.3** Where there are childcare responsibilities, more often than not these will be perceived as a female responsibility. Those involved in childcare appear to have several "back-up" systems in place to assist them should their preferred method fail them but, perhaps surprisingly, relations, friends and neighbours, are not as often utilised or even perceived as useful by as many people as one may have assumed.
- 3.15.4** With full or near full employment it was an issue that children were being left on their own between the end of the school day and the time when their parents were returning home from work. This issue also arose in both the FGDs and the interviews with Opinion Leaders.
- 3.15.5** It is sometimes assumed that people from the lower income brackets would be more likely to leave their children unattended after school.
- 3.15.6** In fact, when we look at a breakdown of after-school childcare by income group we see that this is not the case as the percentages of respondents who leave their children by themselves after school is relatively small in all income groups.
- 3.15.7** Only 4.2% of the respondents indicated that this was the case. In fact 28% of respondents stated that their children were looked after by the school and then their spouse. The results were clustered around the Income Groups Rs 4, 000 to Rs 12, 000, the income range into which the majority of the respondents belonged. (Table 3. 45)
- 3.15.8** However, if we consider that many of the families in Mauritius have both parents working, and often not finishing their work until long after the school day is over, in many households there would appear to be a gap in the day when some children are left to their own devices.
- 3.15.9** As yet, shift working over 24 hours a day and 7 days per week is not a common practice other than for those involved in such services as Security, Policing, Fire• Fighting, Medical care and other essential services.

**3.15.10** Although in the industries of the EPZ many people work long hours, with shifts sometimes extending into the late evening, very few actually work night shifts. It is working a full shift from the late evening to the early morning.

**3.15.11** With the new types of employment being envisaged and promoted for the modern Mauritius this may well change and the impact on family life may well substantially alter. Although 39% of respondents stated that the one thing they would like to change about their job was the actual hours of work that they do, (Table 3. 39), it is perhaps the case that they did not have in mind changing day shifts for night shifts.

**3.15.12** In the next chapter, we look at how the employers see themselves and the role of their companies in regard to the issues of balancing work and family responsibilities.

**Table 3. 49 Childcare by Income Group**

Who usually looks after the children during working hours?																			Groop Total	
Too/Monthly Household income in Ru/tes	The School Because I Only Work During School Hours		The School And Then My Spouse/Partner		The School and Then Other People Who Live in My Home		The School and Then Other Family Members Who Don't Live In My Home		The School And Then Neighbours And/Or Friends		The School And Then Me Whili: I Work		The School and Then a Paid Baby-Sitter/D omestic Helner		The School And Then They Look After Themselves		Other Arraneements		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
less than 4000	2	4	19	5	1	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	2	1	25	28	4
4001 - 8000	26	50	208	50	23	30	16	21	3	60	0	0	2	9	25	40	1	25	304	42
8001 - 12000	10	19	116	28	25	33	30	40	2	40	2	50	1	5	13	21	1	25	200	28
12001 - 16000	7	13	40	10	11	14	11	15	0	0	1	25	3	14	9	14	0	0	82	11
16001 - 20000	2	4	15	4	11	14	8	11	0	0	0	0	4	18	6	10	0	0	46	6
20001 - 24000	3	6	4	1	3	4	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	5	4	6	0	0	19	3
24001 - 28000	0	0	8	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	25	1	5	1	2	1	25	14	2
28001 - 32000	1	2	5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	3	0	0	11	2
32001 - 40000	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	23	1	2	0	0	8	1
40001 - 50000	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	14	0	0	0	0	5	1
70000 +	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	0
Green Total	52	100	419	100	76	100	75	100	5	100	4	100	22	100	63	100	4	100	720	100



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Study of Employers

## 4.1 Section 1

## Sampling Methodology for Employers

- 4.1.1** The sample size for employers was set at 50, and included both the Private and Public sectors. The unit of enquiry was the establishment, defined as a unit, engaged in one, or predominantly one, kind of activity.
- 4.1.2** 36 Private and 14 Public establishments, which included para-statal bodies. Ywere selected from the sample, calculated proportionately to the number of employees in th two se tors. T bas: wa.: dat3.. 9uh L b. fue, \|. . b. b":, G in its Digest of Labour Statistics – Year 2000.

### Private Establishments

- 4.1.3** The frame used was the list of large private establishments, that is, those establishments employing ten or more persons, as enumerated at the 2000 Housing and Population Census. The reason being that small establishments tend to be family enterprises or employ very few people. As such, several sections of the employer questionnaire did not apply to them. The International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) was used to classify the establishments by their major type of industrial activity.
- 4.1.4** The number of establishments selected for each industrial stratum was calculated with probability proportional to the number of employees. The final selection within each stratum was done using systematic sampling.

## Public Enterprises

- 4.1.5** Different lists and administrative records were used to build up an exhaustive frame for the selection of the 14 Public enterprises. The main lists used were the **Digest of Public Finance Year 2000**, published by the Central Statistics Office, and the **Pink Pages of the Telephone Directory**.

<sup>60</sup> For the purposes of this study the Public Sector included Public Service, which are government controlled institutions and Para –Statal bodies which are semi-autonomous institutions set up by statutes and managed by a board.

## **Questionnaire Design**

- 4.1.6** The survey of Employers was intended to provide a more balanced picture of employer-employee relations.
- 4.1.7** As with the Employee Survey, the Employer questionnaire was designed by CASR in accordance with the objectives and recommendations of the ILO. It was built around a core set of standard questions that were drafted in such a way as to ensure the possibility of cross-country comparison.
- 4.1.8** The first section was designed to gather data on the demographic profile of the company, that is its geographical location, its size, sector, type of business and hours of operation.
- 4.1.9** The remaining sections were designed to provide an understanding of the 'family• friendliness' of the workplace. This was measured in terms of the provision by the employer of some previously identified workplace facilities and policies intended for the welfare of the employees and their families. These included equal employment opportunities, the ability to work from home or to work flexible hours, to switch from full-time to part-time work, or to have a compressed working week, as well as assistance with childcare, leave to look after sick relatives, health care provision and counseling etc.
- 4.1.10** The standard precautions applicable to questionnaire design were taken. The questionnaire had simple and careful wording to ensure clarity and to avoid bias. The questions were carefully sequenced and placed within a clear and unambiguous layout and a clear set of guidelines for the completion of the questionnaire was drafted and included with each questionnaire.

## **Questionnaire Implementation**

- 4.1.11** Although this particular part of the study was targeted at employers, the questionnaire was actually designed for completion by people in managerial positions within each establishment sampled. The Mauritius Employers Federation, which is the apex body of employers in Mauritius, and the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, in its capacity as the commissioning agency of the study in Mauritius, were contacted and requested to liaise with the selected establishments and to encourage their cooperation.
- 4.1.12** At first, it was decided to administer the questionnaire in a face-to-face interview with the managers of the 50 selected workplaces. However, in reality, this proved to be impractical. It was difficult to arrange appointments with some of the managers, and sometimes, where an appointment had been agreed, the respondent managers would not spare enough time to allow for the full completion of the questionnaire. Eventually, it was decided that it would be more effective to post

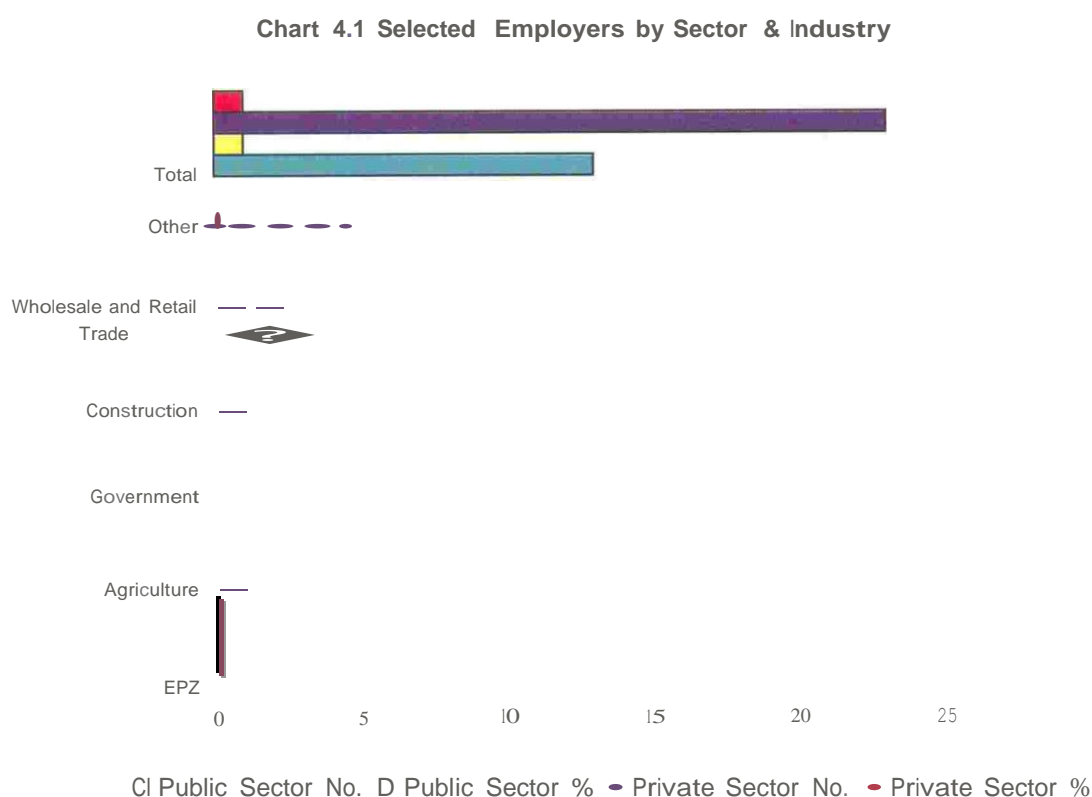
the questionnaires to the respondents, complete with full instructions for completion. The questionnaires were dispatched at the end of October 2001.

- 4.1.13** The accompanying letter explained that a representative of CASR would call to collect the questionnaire 3 weeks from the posting date, and would also be available to answer any further queries that there may be regarding the questionnaire and its completion. However, after the end of the 3 weeks, only 14 of the 50 questionnaires had been completed. The remaining workplaces either wanted more time to complete the task or said that it would be more convenient for them to return the completed questionnaires to CASR by post or fax.
- 4.1.14** However, there remained a need for persistent weekly reminders to encourage the firms to return the outstanding questionnaires. Finally, personal visits were made to those establishments who had still not completed or returned their questionnaire.
- 4.1.15** By the end of February 2002, 36 out of the 50 firms had responded. Bearing in mind that postal questionnaires are notorious for yielding a very low response rate, in this instance, the achieved response of 72 % is high enough on which to base the analysis and should not adversely affect the findings of the study.
- 4.1.16** What may be regarded as a significant finding in itself is that establishments in the Public Sector appeared more willing to cooperate, 86% response, than those in the Private Sector, 75% response. Private Sector companies proved more reluctant to cooperate and alleged that they were extremely busy and it was difficult for them to find time to complete the questionnaire.
- 4.1.17** Another interesting observation was that few respondents completed all of the questions. The response rate for certain questions was particularly low compared to others and this hindered the analysis.
- 4.1.18** It is important to note right at the outset that due to the smallness of the sample, the percentages should be interpreted with caution. The analysis will mainly focus on differences in employment, hours of operation, gender and other data for the Public and Private Sectors. It will not be possible to undertake the analysis based on industrial activity and occupational groups, as the numbers of respondents are too small to make valid conclusions.

## 4.2 Profile of the Respondents' Workplace

### Responding Workplaces by Sector

**4.2.1** Of the 50 firms selected 36 responded. Of those 36 respondents, 13 (36%) were from the Public Sector and 23 (64%) from the Private Sector. The EPZ and the Government are the largest employers representing 25% and 33% respectively in the sample.



**4.2.2** It should be noted that the standard classification for industrial groups," as adopted by the Central Statistics Office, has not been used here as the number of units in some of those groups would have been even smaller and statistically insignificant. One distinct category has been used for the EPZ as it has the single largest number of firms in this industrial group. Government and Para-Statal bodies have been grouped together under the category "Government" as they have fairly similar conditions of work determined by the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) recommendations. Almost 40% of the responding employers' businesses in the Private Sector were in the Export Processing Zone, (EPZ). (Table 4.1) A further 22% were engaged in the Wholesale and Retail Trade.

<sup>61</sup> See National Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (NSIC), Central Statistical Office, Mauritius (2000)

- 4.2.3 However, as we see, the number of respondents is small for all categories and that 40% is in fact only 9 of the respondents from this sector. Given the grouping of Public Sector employees explained above, 100% of the respondents in the Public Sector are employed in the government.
- 4.2.4 Employers were asked about the usual hours of work of the workforce in the respondents' workplace by industrial sector. As is to be expected, in the Public Sector, there is a concentration of workplaces with 'regular' hours of work of between 35 and 40 hours per week at 67%. In the EPZ, we see that 47% of respondents work between 41 and 60 hours per week. Other percentages are based on numbers of respondents that are too small on which to base any real conclusion.

### Size of Respondent Firms

- 4.2.5 The Central Statistics Office in Mauritius defines a large firm as one which employs more than 9 workers and, by this definition, all of the workplaces selected were large. However, it was necessary to separate them into those that are self-standing and those which are part of a larger firm, which may have any number of employees either nationwide or internationally.
- 4.2.6 When asked to situate their company within this choice of options there was an equal split between those who stated that their workplaces were part of a larger firm and those who were not. (table 4.3)
- 4.2.7 70% of workplaces have less than 500 employees whilst 25% have more than 500. In fact, 2 respondents, chose not to answer this question, accounting for 6% of the total number of respondents.

## 4.3 Section 2

### Employee Friendliness of the Workplace

- 4.3.1 The world of employment is varied as to what sort of provisions there may be available to employees. The employer, while not necessarily trying to make life difficult for the employee, is obviously in a position of having to balance family friendliness with the efficiency and profitability of the industry.
- 4.3.2 Having said that, there are some provisions that can sometimes be made that can help both employee and employer resolve any difficulties that may arise because of the need to balance one's work and home responsibilities.
- 4.3.3 Some that spring to mind, in light of what was asked of the employees in the employee field study, is the facility of being able to work from home, to switch to part-time work, perhaps temporarily, and the availability of a compressed working

week. Having noted that it is obviously down to the nature of the employment as to whether or not the provision of these facilities would be feasible or not, we see that, according to the employers, they are not available at all in the workplaces that formed the sample for this study, whether in the Public or the Private Sector. Where a small number of employee respondents had stated that they could work from home for a few days, 2% in the Public Sector and 4% in the Private Sector, (Table 3.37 [d]), the employers are categorical in their response and in both sectors. 100% of employers stated that it would not be possible for employees to work from home.

- 43.4** Looking at the other aspects of "employee friendliness", we see that there are some, albeit often minor, differences between workplaces in the Public and Private sectors. (Table 4.51)
- 43.5** According to the employers, there is also very little chance of employees switching from Full-time to Part-time work. Of the Public Sector employers, 100% said that employees could not change their work status while a small percentage in the Private Sector, 4%, said that they could.
- 43.6** Employers from both sectors appear more amenable to their employees working flexible hours with 15% in the Public Sector and 17% in the Private Sector saying that this would be acceptable. Although it is uncertain that the responding employers understood the term "flexible hours" in the way that it was intended when drafting the questionnaire.
- 43.7** Over half of the responding employers from the Public Sector said that job sharing could be possible, while in the Private Sector this percentage falls to below a quarter of responding employers at 22%. Again, there is a need for caution as to the interpretation by the responding employers of the term "job•sharing".
- 43.8** All of the above would be very useful for employees in dealing with unexpected events around home life, particularly childcare, and would go some way to alleviating the problems of balancing work and family life, but, as we have seen, they are seldom available and where they are available, they may be difficult to achieve, given that they would be at the discretion of the employer.
- 43.9** It appears that, according to the employers, some workplace policies, which may be highly beneficial to employees, are wholly or nearly inexistent in both the Public and Private sectors. The rigid legislation concerning employment within the Public Sector explains the categorical answers - no possibility to move from full-time to part-time, to work from home or to work a compressed working week.
- 43.10** However, it should be noted that many employers from both sectors say that they do provide some form of health care, 62% in the Public Sector and 61 % in the Private Sector. Some 92% of employers in the Public Sector state that they make



some form of contribution to the employees' welfare fund, a percentage that falls to 52% in the Private Sector. However, in Mauritius, there is a wide range of available public health care and there may be some uncertainty as to what degree the responding employers had separated access to public health care and that provided according to statutory requirements from any additional health care made available or contributed to by the responding employer.

- 4.3.11** 92% of employers from the Public Sector also stated that they provide equal opportunities, while in the Private Sector the percentage is 74%. Although at first sight these percentages may seem relatively high, it does mean that 8% of employers in the Public Sector, and over one quarter of employers in the Private Sector, 26%, do not, by their own admission, provide equal opportunities in employment.

### **Employers and Childcare**

- 4.3.12** Arguably, one of the main indicators of the family friendliness of an employer is the availability of childcare facilities for its employees.
- 4.3.13** As it is mandatory, all responding employers have stated that maternity leave is available to their employees. However, we have seen in the employee study that many respondent employees stated that they do not have recourse to maternity leave.
- 4.3.14** Other than maternity leave, neither Public nor Private Sector employers seem to provide much assistance for childcare. (Table 4.6) Help with childcare during school holidays, the availability of breastfeeding facilities for nursing mothers and unpaid leave to look after sick children did not appear to be available in the majority of the surveyed workplaces. On the other hand there are certain variations in terms of the availability of childcare centres/nurseries, paid leave and educational assistance for the children of employees according to employment sector.

### **Childcare/Nursery on Site**

- 4.3.15** The majority of responding firms in the Public Sector, 92%, stated that they do not provide nursery facilities for the children of employees, while 61% of responding employers in the Private Sector, said that they have a subsidised childcare centre or nursery on site. However, we should view these percentages with great caution given the very small numbers of responses on which they are based, an inevitable consequence of a small study sample. In fact, only 9 respondents from our sample of 50 gave an answer to this question. Therefore, given the unreliability of these percentages, no inference or extrapolation should be made.

employers in both the Public Sector, (92. %), and Private Sector (86. %) who stated that it was available to their employees. (Table 4.8)

**43.21** Public Sector workers who are appointed in a substantive capacity<sup>62</sup> have 21 working days full pay sick leave every calendar year. Similarly, outside the Public Sector, every worker in continuous employment with the same employer for more than 12 months, is entitled annually to 21 working days leave on full pay on the grounds of illness. Those employees who stated in the employees study that they do not get sick leave may not have been employed in a substantive capacity or not have been with their employer for more than a year.

**43.22** Unpaid Sick leave is more discretionary and there is no official provision for this. Normally, Sick Leave is unpaid when the length of the illness stretches beyond the number of Paid Sick Leave days to which the employee was entitled. 40% of the responding employers stated that their establishment provides this facility, with more in the Private Sector, (44%), than in the Public Sector (31 %).

### **Paid And Unpaid Leave To Look After Sick Relatives**

**43.23** Employers were asked about whether they provide paid and unpaid leave to look after sick relatives. (Table 4.9) Only 36% of the total number of establishments surveyed said that they provide Paid Leave to look after sick relatives. It appears that Unpaid Leave is even less in favour with the employers, as only 18% of the total number of employers stated that this would be available to their employees.

**43.24** One point of interest is that employers in the Public Sector, 46%, were more likely than those in the Private Sector, 30%, to give Paid Leave to look after sick relatives, whereas those in the Private Sector, 30%, seem more amenable to Unpaid Leave to cover this type of eventuality. Leave to look after sick relatives is largely discretionary and normally given on compassionate grounds as there is no such provision included in the legislation governing leave entitlement. In the Public Sector there is often recourse to Casual Leave and discretionary holiday leave. However, the general unavailability or lack of availability of this type of leave may be an indicator employers are not, as a rule, too concerned with the less common or less obvious family responsibilities of their employees.

### **Male Employees and Childbirth**

**4.3.25** Another type of leave entitlement not covered by the Labour laws is Paternity leave.

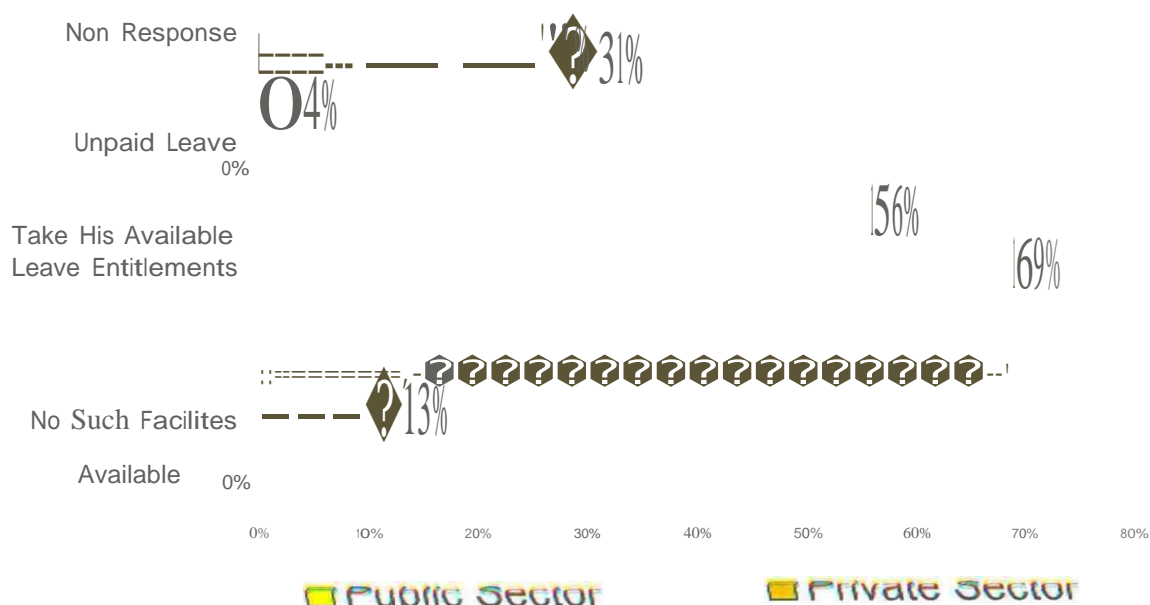
**43.26** Nevertheless, even though there may be no official leave available to new fathers, there may be substitute arrangements that may be made between employers and employees. Most employees in both the Public and Private sectors use their

<sup>62</sup> In this instance substantive means employed as a full time member of staff and subject to contractual terms and conditions.



available paid leave entitlement in such an event, falling back on Sick Leave, Casual Leave, and, where available, Vacation Leave. This is reinforced by the percentages of responding employers who stated that to cover Paternity Leave the employee would take his Available Leave Entitlement, 69% in the Public Sector and 56% in the Private Sector. Looking at alternative arrangements, 13% of responding employers from the Private Sector stated that there would be No Such Facilities Available. This question elicited a high rate of non-response, with 31% of Public Sector employers and 26% of Private Sector employers choosing not to answer. This is not unexpected as the issue of Paternity Leave is rare to employers in Mauritius in both the Public and the Private Sector.

Chart 4.2 Leave Entitlement of Male Employees  
At the Birth of a Child



43.27 This appears to illustrate a built-in contradiction in the existing Labour Laws whereby, on the one hand, gender equality is pursued and, on the other hand, there is no provision for Paternity Leave, without which care of the new born baby can only remain a predominantly female activity. This also gives an example where work and family responsibilities clash, putting a strain on the relationship at a time when the stress on the employee and their family is quite possibly already heightened.

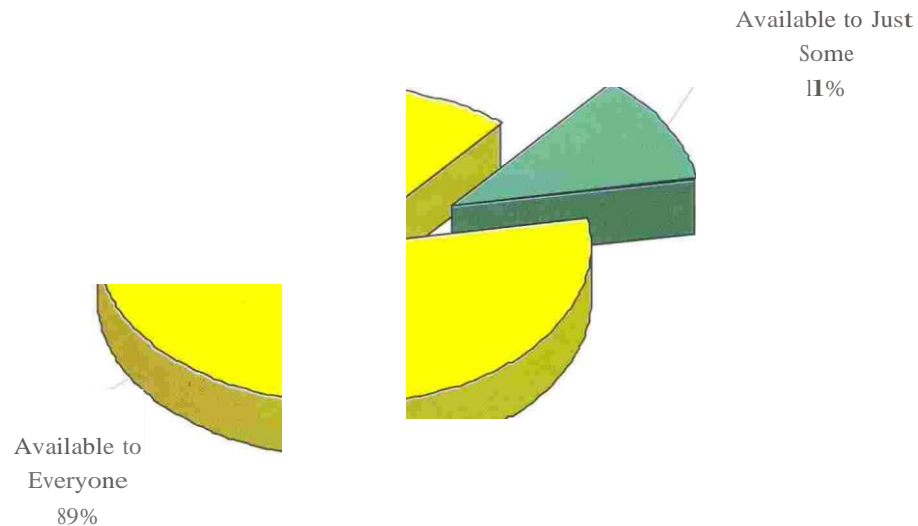
### Other Family-Friendly Policies

43.28 Workplaces may have in place some facilities that help their employees balance their work and family responsibilities. We have seen in the findings of the survey of employees, (table 3.37), the way that employees have rated these types of provisions. Notwithstanding what was said about the prevalence of mobile telephones in Chapter 3, one of the primary facilities that can assist the employee keep in touch with family events is the provision of a telephone in the workplace.

(Table 4.10) In answer to this question, 92% of responding employers in the Public Sector and 87% in the Private Sector stated that there was a telephone available in the workplace that the employees may use for family reasons. This appears to be at odds with the response from employees where we see, in Table 3.37 [a], that 61 % of employees in the Public Sector & 47% in the Private Sector said that there was a telephone available to them to be used for this reason. In effect, in many of these workplaces, the phone is mainly there for work purposes and used for family reasons largely at the discretion of the employers.

- 4.3.29** Very few employers, in either the Public or Private Sectors, said that Assistance With Housing was available. (Table 4.11) A massive 92% of the workplaces surveyed stated that this type of assistance was unavailable and this perhaps reflects the minority of occupations and positions within certain occupations where this assistance is provided. This tallies with the mere 6% of respondents among the employees surveyed, (Table 3.32), who stated that they had ever received this type of assistance from their employer.
- 4.3.30** However breaking down the availability of services further, In Chart 4.3, we see that, according to the responding employers, 89% feel that the facilities mentioned above, covering such aspects as being able to work from home, changing from full time to part time employment, having flexible hours of work, job sharing or compressing the working week are Available To Everyone in the Workplace, while the remaining 11 % of responding employers provide a more selective availability which means that the facilities are available to just some, based on such criteria as length of service, the type of contract and position held.

**Chart 4.3 Are these Policies Available to Everyone at the Workplace or Just Some**

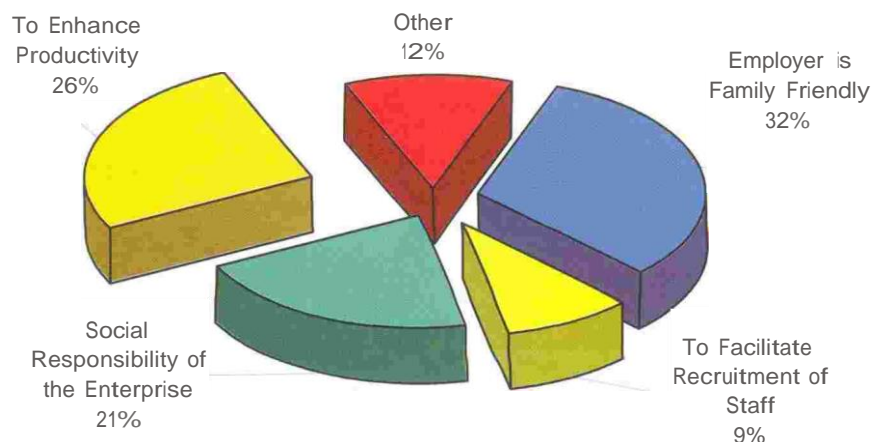


#### **Main Reasons for Providing Facilities.**

**4.3.31** When asked to give a reason as to why they provided the previously mentioned facilities for their employees, almost one third of responding employers, 32%, said that it was because the 'Employer is Family-Friendly', while 32% saw it as 'The Social Responsibility of the Enterprise'.

**4.3.32** Almost a quarter of responding employers, 23% said that it was to 'To Enhance Productivity' while the remaining 14% saw it as a means to 'Facilitate the Recruitment of Staff'. (Table 4.12)

**Chart 4.4 Main Reason for Employer Providing Facilities - Both Sectors**



## Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities

**4.3.33** Employers appear to be aware of the importance of having family-friendly policies within the workplace to help the employee reconcile the exigencies of employment and family life, and respond favourably to enquiries on how important they believe it is to help employees balance their work and family responsibilities. (Table 4. 13) In the Public Sector, 23% of responding employers stated that they thought it Very Important while in the Private Sector this percentage rose to 36%. Some 62% in the Public Sector thought that it was Important while this time the percentage in the Private Sector dropped to close to half of the respondents at 55%. An almost equal number of respondents in the Public Sector, 8% and Private Sector, 9%, thought that it was Not Very Important while 8% of responding employers in the Public Sector thought it Not At All Important. It is interesting to note the high percentages of employers in both Sectors who state that it is either Very Important or Important to help employees to balance work and family responsibilities, 88% overall in both sectors, and yet, as we have seen in Table 4.9 and elsewhere there are not similarly high *percentages of employers who offer leave to staff to cover for family emergencies, or give paternity leave to new fathers.*

**Chart 4.5 Importance of Assisting Employees  
With Work / Family Balance by Sector**

Private Sector

Public Sector

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

**D Important or Very Important Not Important**

## 4.4 General Overview of Employer Study

- 4.4.1** What is immediately apparent is that, unlike many of the respondents among the employees, the responding employers appear to be well aware of what entitlements are available to their employees under the applicable Labour Laws. Accordingly, they state that these provisions are available to all staff. However, the reality can be different. Many employees, for example have stated that they do not have any leave entitlement, as discussed in Chapter 3. Often, leave may be discretionary, based on the situation at the time that the employee wishes to take leave. For example, if a factory is working flat out to fulfil an order commitment it is unlikely that staff will be granted leave during this period.
- 4.4.2** Labour Laws are also intended to protect the minimum entitlements for employees but it would seem that many employers are unwilling or unable to extend any kind of provision beyond that which is mandatory. On the other hand, they wish to come across as being caring and family friendly but, as we have seen, are often unlikely to permit employees to take time off to deal with family responsibilities.
- 4.4.3** Sometimes, there are flaws in the actual legislation, which means that although the employer is fulfilling its legal obligations the employee is unable to enjoy the benefits. A good example is the provision of breastfeeding facilities. A nursing mother may, perhaps be informed by the employer that, in accordance with the law, breastfeeding facilities can be provided for her should she so wish, but with the absence of other childcare facilities at the workplace it is impossible to bring the baby onto the worksite. The lack of other facilities such as a refrigerator would also make it unlikely that nursing mothers could express breast milk and store it for later use.
- 4.4.4** Nevertheless, many employees appear to be content with the situation. In Table 3.42 we have seen that when asked to determine the "Family Friendliness" of their employers, 62% of Male and 58% of Female respondents, found that the responsiveness of their workplace to the need of employees with families was either Good, or Very Good. In fact, very few respondents, 2% of Male and 3% of Female, stated that, in their opinion, their workplace was Very Bad at responding to the needs of employees with families.
- 4.4.5** Notwithstanding this, aQ"arent contentment, many facilities that could prove very useful facilities for employees when having to deal with unexpected events and family responsibilities are seldom made available by the employers. Even though the employers wish to come across as "family friendly", we have seen that many of them do not offer any kind of leave to deal with such problems as sick children or sick relatives. When asked to give their reasons for having family friendly policies in place more responding employers saw it as a means of enhancing productivity than as the social responsibility of the enterprise. (Chart 4.4)

- 4.4.6** It appears that while many of the responding employers were aware of the need for implementing family friendly policies and providing good facilities for their employees that would help them in balancing work and family responsibilities, not all of them did so or even wished to do so.
- 4.4.7** Of course, it has to be recognised that the primary aim of the employer is, by and large, to increase productivity, generate income and to make a profit. As stated by the participants in the FGDs, given the need of employers to prioritise production costs and meeting the deadlines of order fulfilment, it is not unusual for them to accord social considerations a secondary priority. It would perhaps be unrealistic or unreasonable to expect of them that they implement any kind of policy to assist employees with their family responsibilities that would jeopardise the profitability or efficiency of the establishment. However, many policies that could be implemented, or facilities that could be provided, might well aid in the efficiency of the organisation, as removing the stress of many of the family responsibilities from employees may assist their performance, reduce absenteeism and promote loyalty to the employer. It was clear from the FGDs and the study of employees that the creation of creches and other childcare provisions would be a suitable place to begin.
- 4.4.8** The representatives of the employers interviewed as Opinion Leaders were also aware that there is often a lack of support from employers, as well as the State, to assist employees in balancing their dual responsibilities. It was accepted that employers in the EPZ are often guilty of not showing enough concern about the impact of work on the family life of their employees. This can affect all the tiers of the family structure as work induced stresses and strains can have an eventual effect on all members of the family and household.

## 4.5 Chapter 4 - Tables

**Table 4.1 Selected Employers by Sector & Industry**

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nature of Business	EPZ	0	0	9	39	9	25
	Agriculture	0	0	2	9	2	6
	Government	13	100	0	0	13	36
	Construction	0	0	2	9	2	6
	Wholesale and Retail Trade	0	0	5	22	5	14
	Other	0	0	5	22	5	14
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100

**Table 4.2 Respondent Firms by Industrial Sector and Hours of Work**

		total hours of operation						Group Total	
		35 - 40 hours per week		41 - 60 hours per week		More than 60 hours per week			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nature of Business	EPZ	1	7	8	47	0	0	9	25
	Agriculture	0	0	2	12	0	0	2	6
	Government	10	67	0	0	3	75	13	36
	Construction	1	7	1	6	0	0	2	6
	Wholesale and Retail Trade	2	13	2	12	1	25	5	14
	Other	1	7	4	24	0	0	5	14
Group Total		15	100	17	100	4	100	36	100

**Table 4.3 Type of Workplace by Number of Employees**

		Is your workplace part of a larger firm?				Group Total	
		Yes		No			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Number of Employees	less than 100	7	39	8	44	15	42
	Between 100 and 500	3	17	7	39	10	28
	More than 500	8	44	1	6	9	25
	Missing	0	0	2	11	2	6
Group Total		18	100	18	100	36	100

**Table 4.4 Largest Occupational Group by Industrial Sector**

		Largest Occupational Group										Group Total	
		Shop-floor		Clerical		Technical		Professional		Other			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nature of business	EPZ	9	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	25
	Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33	2	6
	Government	1	6	5	71	5	100	1	50	1	17	13	36
	Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33	2	6
	Wholesale and Retail Trade	2	13	2	29	0	0	0	0	1	17	5	14
	Other	4	25	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	5	14
Group Total		16	100	7	100	5	100	2	100	6	100	36	100



**Table 4.5 Family Friendliness of Employer by Sector**

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Equal Employment Opportunities available at the workplace	Yes	12	92	17	74	29	81
	No	1	8	6	26	7	19
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Able to work from home?	No	13	100	23	100	36	100
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Can <i>move</i> from full time to part time work?	Yes	0	0	1	4	1	3
	No	13	100	22	96	35	97
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Flexible hours of work on demand of the employee?	Yes	2	15	4	17	6	17
	No	11	85	19	83	30	83
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Job sharing is available to any workers?	Yes	7	54	5	22	12	33
	No	6	46	18	78	24	67
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Workers can work compressed working week?	Yes	0	0	1	4	1	3
	No	13	100	22	96	35	97
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Does the firm offer employees health care provision?	Yes	8	62	14	61	22	61
	No	5	38	9	39	14	39
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Does the workplace <i>have</i> subsidised or free food?	Yes	3	23	6	26	9	25
	No	10	77	17	74	27	75
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Does the workplace offer employees any counselling services	Yes	1	8	5	22	6	17
	No	12	92	18	78	30	83
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Does the firm make any subscriptions to an employees' welfare fund?	Yes	12	92	12	52	24	67
	No	1	8	11	48	12	33
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100

**Table 4.6 Employers and Childcare by Sector**

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Does the workplace have a child care centre/nursery on site?	Yes - free	1	8	2	9	3	8
	Yes - subsidised	0	0	14	61	14	39
	No	12	92	7	30	19	53
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Does the firm have breastfeeding facilities for mothers?	Yes	1	8	8	22	6	17
	No	12	92	18	78	30	83
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Paid leave to look after sick children?	Yes	7	54	7	30	14	39
	No	6	46	16	70	22	61
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Unpaid leave to look after sick children?	Yes	1	8	8	24	6	18
	No	12	92	16	76	28	82
Group Total		13	100	21	100	34	100
Does the firm offer employees financial assistance for child care?	Yes	2	15	2	9	4	11
	No	11	85	21	91	32	89
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Does the firm offer employees educational assistance for the children of employees?	Yes	0	0	8	22	8	14
	No	13	100	18	78	31	86
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100

**Table 4.7 Importance Attached by the Organisation to Childcare Needs**

		Em loyment Sector				Table Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How important is it for your organisation to assist employees with childcare needs?	Very important	0	0	5		3	
	Important	7	78	13	65	20	69
	Not very important	0	0	5	25	5	17
	Not at all important	2	22	5		3	10
Table Total		9	100	20	100	29	100

**Table 4.8 Availability of Sick Leave by Employment Sector**

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Is there paid sick leave?	Yes	12	92	19	83	31	86
	No	1	8	4	17	5	14
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Is there unpaid sick leave?	Yes	4	31	10	43	14	39
	No	9	69	13	57	22	61
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100

**Table 4.9 Leave to Look After Sick Relatives by Sector**

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paid leave to look after sick relatives?	Yes	6	46	7	30	13	36
	No	7	54	16	70	23	64
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100
Unpaid leave to look after sick relatives?	Yes	0	0	6	30	6	18
	No	13	100	14	70	27	82
Group Total		13	100	20	100	33	100

**Table 4.10 Telephone Available For Use Of Employees By Sector**

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Does the workplace have a phone that employees may use for family reasons?	Yes	12	92	20	87	32	89
	No	1	8	3	13	4	11
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100

Table 4.11 Assistance With Housing for Employees By Sector

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Does the firm offer employees assistance with housing?	Yes	1	8	2	9	3	8
	No	12	92	21	91	33	92
Group Total		13	100	23	100	36	100

Table 4.12 Main Reason For Providing Facilities For Employees By Sector

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
main reason for providing facilities	Employer is family-friendly	4	33	7	32	11	32
	To facilitate recruitment of staff	0	0	3	14	3	9
	It is the social responsibility of the enterprise	0	0	7	32	7	21
	to enhance productivity	4	33	5	23	9	26
	other	4	33	0	0	4	12
Group Total\		12	100	22	100	34	100

Table 4.13 Importance of Assisting Employees With Work/ Family Balance By Sector

		Employment Sector				Group Total	
		Public		Private			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
How important does your organisation think it is to help employees balance work and family responsibilities?	Very important	3	23	8	36	11	31
	Important	8	62	12	55	20	57
	Not very important	1	8	2	9	3	9
	Not at all important	1	8	0	0	1	3
Group Total		13	100	22	100	35	100

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Conclusion

- 5.1.1** In the introduction to this report it states "There is an urgent need to move the focus of attention beyond the impact that family demands have on work, to the impact that work and working conditions have on family and personal life and to gender equality". In the analysis of data obtained from the fieldwork we have concentrated on those issues that provide an insight into the impact of work on contemporary family life and local working conditions.
- 5.1.2** One of the main findings of this study is that, in many ways, the world of work in Mauritius still appears to be lacking in attempts to achieve gender equity. The social and economic development of the country has meant that women have left the household and joined the labour market in ever increasing numbers and yet they are still expected to fulfill their traditional roles as housewives and the main providers of care within the family setting.
- 5.1.3** It could be argued that by working in full time employment women have not necessarily relinquished their role of housewife but, rather, adapted and increased the range of tasks expected of them to encompass the roles of worker, housewife and mother. Each of these roles carries with it its own forms of stress.
- 5.1.4** In many industries women work just as long a working day as men and yet, as we have noted, are still expected to provide care for the children and to take care of family responsibilities within the household. It is evident from the responses obtained from the fieldwork that men rely far more on their spouse or female partner for taking care of the family and household than women rely on their male spouse or partner.
- 5.1.5** Moreover, the study also shows that, although there was little difference between the educational levels of males and females, in general the income earned by women is lower than that of men thus confirming one facet of the argument of the feminization of poverty at the individual level.
- 5.1.6** In general, the meagre income earned by an average household makes it difficult to afford help with domestic responsibilities such as in the form of some kind of home help or paid babysitter.
- 5.1.7** Balancing the dual responsibilities of work and the family is difficult at the best of times, and when there is some unexpected occurrence such as a sick child to deal with, that difficulty is exacerbated. Again, we see that the burden of dealing with this type of eventuality will mostly fall upon the female members of the household. It is also clear that, should the woman be employed, there is every likelihood that there will be little assistance from the employers to help her deal

with the situation. An expectation to cope appears to be the norm whether by the employee, the employer or by the rest of the members of household.

- 5.1.8** In coping, we have seen that many female respondents have in place alternative systems of support on which they will rely if the normal or preferred method becomes problematic. However, the assumption that friends, family members or neighbours would be more useful in this respect has been opened to question as the respondents have indicated that they do not necessarily find these people particularly useful in assisting with childcare or with the care of dependant relatives.
- 5.1.9** What we have seen is that those having to cope are under pressure from both work and family responsibilities and that neither institution appears to be of great assistance. Children are often called upon to assist with some family responsibilities which opens up a line of enquiry as to what sort of assistance children should be expected to give and at what age they can reasonably be expected to assume this type of responsibility. In the interviews with Opinion Leaders and in the FGDs, concern was expressed that with the parents absent from the home for long periods of the day, often leaving for work before the children are up or ready for school, and returning long after the school day is over, the children are at risk both from physical and moral harm and that there is a degree of emotional poverty resulting from a lack of parental attention.
- 5.1.10** We see that many, if given the chance, would wish to change their working conditions. Work is obviously necessary to be able to provide an income but we have seen that with many responding employees, increased remuneration is not the principal motivation behind their wish to change their working conditions. In fact, in support of what has been said about the lack of time for parents to provide the level of childcare they would like to offer, many would like to change their working conditions in order to be able to spend more time with their families, the inference being that they feel, at present, that they are not able to spend enough time with them.
- 5.1.11** The nuclearisation of the family has changed the everyday experience of the household but has not necessarily simplified life or relieved the women of the household from extended family responsibilities. Many households have dependant relatives, but with a smaller household group the responsibility for care falls again upon women, even though, in a lot of cases it will be the parents of the male partner who are living within the household. Women also expected to provide care for any incapacitated members of the household such as adult offspring with disabilities that should perhaps be the responsibility of all of the family members.
- 5.1.12** Legislation on leave entitlement and other benefits for the employee has ensured that employers provide those facilities that are mandatory, but more often than not, the employer will not make any provision beyond that. It is also evident that

there are some vagaries in the laws that mean that even though an employer has made a legal provision it is unlikely that the employee will be able to make use of it. The provision of breastfeeding facilities is a classic example, whereby it is easy for an employer to comply with the law by simply designating an area as being available for breastfeeding but, without the provision of other facilities, this may be rendered meaningless.

- 5.1.13** Many employees have stated that it is difficult for them to take their leave entitlement, that they use this entitlement to cover for family responsibilities or that they do not receive any entitlement at all. Certainly the employers have intimated that they would expect employees to use their vacation leave to cover many family exigencies.
  
- 5.1.14** It is evident from the comments made in the FGDs, the comments of the Opinion Leaders and the experiences of the respondents that some issues clearly do affect the ability of people to balance their working life and family commitments. Parents are tired when they return from work and find it difficult to offer their children decent emotional support or to physically take part in their play or homework activities. It is clear that many parents also leave home early and return late. As the child psychologist and others made clear, parents returning from work are often stressed and, consequently, can be poorly prepared for coping with parental duties. The proposal that the nature of the parents' jobs determines the quality of family life is supported by the wishes of the respondents that, if it were possible to change their conditions of work, they would prefer to work fewer hours.
  
- 5.1.15** The belief expressed in the FGDs that there was still a clear division of labour in the household is supported by a small number of female respondents who rely on their husbands compared with the number of males who rely on their wives.
  
- 5.1.16** The lack of creche facilities for working parents, identified in the qualitative studies, was reinforced by the relatively small number of respondents who use them, showing that there is a need to develop these facilities on a nationwide level.
  
- 5.1.17** The opinions expressed that people could not cope financially on just their basic salaries was supported by the number of respondents who said that they had taken loans from their employers to pay for such everyday essentials as schooling and transport as well as major occurrences such as weddings and funerals.
  
- 5.1.18** Employers would appear to want to believe that their establishment is "family-friendly", and yet all too often there seems to be a reluctance to implement employment and social policies that, in the guidelines for this country study, are seen as "practical and cost-efficient to implement", and which can "make an important contribution to social protection and the essential objective of "decent work".

- 5.1.19** The range of personal experiences in balancing work and family responsibilities analyzed during the course of this study is very broad. Yet, as the results show, there is certainly scope for extending the existing measures in order to harmonize work and family responsibilities.
- 5.1.20** In brief, this study has highlighted certain gaps in the reconciliation of work and family exigencies for both employees and employers.
- 5.1.21** Some of these issues have already been addressed in the labour laws and they therefore have precise policies formulated to deal with them. However, the main problem lies in what perhaps can be referred to as a lack of monitoring of how these policies are actually implemented at the workplace. There is also sometimes a lack of realism in the drafting of certain legislation making it impractical in its implementation.
- 5.1.22** There are also other areas where longstanding legislation is, by any standards, outdated. In particular, legislation regarding the EPZ, from which a sizeable proportion of households derive their main income, is in need of revision.
- 5.1.23** Moreover, in spite of the work carried out by organizations such as the Mauritius Employers Federation to encourage employers, particularly in the Private Sector, to instill a family-friendly culture at the workplace, and to take more initiatives to reconcile the exigencies of work and the family, it appears that there is still a lot of ground to cover. In some Private Sector industries, such as in the EPZ, the long working day, compulsory overtime and shift work patterns make it even harder for parents to cope with childcare and other domestic responsibilities. Compulsory Overtime in particular seems an aspect of employment unique to the EPZ that is firmly contradictory to assisting workers in reconciling their work and family responsibilities.
- 5.1.24** From the perspective of the family, one of the areas where further support is needed is that of childcare. This is particularly the case to cover the period from the time that children return from school up to the time the parents or carers return home. Childcare should not only be seen as being the responsibility of the mother. Equal opportunities legislation should also make provision for parents and carers of both sexes to have adequate time off from work to fulfill their childcare responsibilities.
- 5.1.25** It is primarily important to more systematically address some of the deeply embedded sexist attitudes about the domestic division of labour that are reflected in certain aspects of this analysis. If this is not done it will not be possible to begin to alleviate some of the daily stresses experienced by working women who also happen to be wives and mothers.



# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix I**

### **MAURITIUS**

#### **GUIDELINES FOR THE COUNTRY STUDIES: 2000-01 BIENNIUM**

##### **Introduction**

The family is at the core of society. While the definition of 'family' is not the same everywhere, its central importance is.

In recent years, the family has been subject to powerful forces and changes. Factors such as urbanization, HIV/AIDS, migration and civil conflict are among the many influences on family composition and labour force participation. The declining prevalence of the extended family places new burdens on the family. In some countries the level of family responsibility is rising as the elderly form an ever larger proportion of the population, often without adequate social protection. There has been rapid growth in the number of women in the workforce. Women now tend to remain employed throughout their child-bearing years and families have become dependent to an increasing extent on the earnings of the mother.

These new pressures on the family are occurring in the context of rapid change in the world of work. Working conditions have changed significantly in industrialized countries and are already changing in developing countries as a result of globalisation and the new economy. Some changes, such as the growth of part-time work and telework, have created new opportunities (as well as problems) for some workers to reconcile work and family responsibilities. On the other hand, insecurity of employment has been exacerbated, while workplace changes such as reliance on shift work, overtime and night work have been negative effects on family life. Policies and practices should address the need to balance work and family responsibilities. There is an urgent need to move the focus of attention beyond the impact that family demands have on work, to the impact that work and working conditions have on family and personal life and to gender equality.

Family-friendly employment and social policies that are practical and cost-efficient to implement can make an important contribution to social protection and the essential objective of "decent work".

In particular, there is a need to extend the scope and coverage of existing measures that seek to harmonize work and family responsibilities, which where they exist are often available only to a small proportion of workers. In order to have a real impact, initiatives by governments and at the community level can be complemented by employer actions at the workplace, for example in giving workers wider choice in more flexible working arrangements. A closer dialogue is needed between governments, employers and workers on work-family challenges. Greater efforts should also be undertaken to assess the costs and benefits of measures to harmonize work and family concerns, and their influence on satisfaction and performance at work. These assessments, complemented by the identification of innovative public and corporate strategies that have had a positive impact on work-family experiences, will assist in developing specific strategies, which benefit women and men workers and their families, as well as employers, in terms of quality of work life and improved business performance.

ILO standards, including the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention and Recommendation, the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000, the Part-Time Work Convention, the Home Work Convention and others, as well as the standards concerning child labour and equality of opportunity and treatment, provide guidance in these matters. Countries' reports on these Conventions that they have ratified may be a source of information for the country studies.

## **The Aim of the Country Studies**

The role of the country studies is to identify major trends and illuminate the key work-family issues in the country. The country studies will document the important changes that are happening to the family and to work:

- Work-family implications of the life cycle from a family perspective;
- Implications of the changing nature of work on family;
- Efficiency and effectiveness in achieving a work-family balance;
- Gender impact of work-family measures.

Most available information on work-family issues relates to industrialized countries. The work-family research that has been carried out in developing and transition economy countries is piecemeal and limited by comparison, and yet there may be valuable lessons to be learned from the experience of such countries in balancing work and family responsibilities. Thus there is a particular need for further research on how work responsibilities are addressed to take into account family responsibilities, not only in developed countries, but also in countries of the developing world and transition economy countries. Country studies will be undertaken in selected industrialized countries, developing countries and countries in transition.

In Mauritius, the country study is being undertaken in response to a Government initiative, which places the family, and the link between work and family, at the core of its concerns. This in-depth study of work-family issues should provide a factual basis and analysis that would be the main input to a consultation process involving the tripartite partners and others, leading to a National Conference on work-Family to be held in the second half of 2001. The National Conference, in addition to the ILO's tripartite constituents, may also involve NGO's, academics and others in civil society.

It is envisaged that the objective of the Conference would be to develop a common approach to policies and practices that effectively address the need to balance work and family demands have on work, to consider also the impact that work has on family and personal life, not only of women but also of men. This would be intended to lead to more targeted national action.

In view of the multi-dimensional nature of work-family concerns, which are not simply a women's issue, nor solely a business issue, nor just an aspect of workers' protection, the preparation of the country study should ensure contact and consultation with a broad range of individuals and organisations who are "stakeholders" in the work - family debate. Within government, this could include the Ministries of Health, Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, Finance and perhaps others, as well as of course the Ministry of Labour. The collection of information on what the main stakeholders think about work-family programmes would also indicate how much consensus there is within Mauritius in terms of the current state of play, future directions and main issues.

### **A Common Structure**

It is essential that the country studies provide similar information so that a comparative analysis may be carried out with regard to the circumstances in all the countries studied. Each study should therefore provide the information and analysis outlined below, to the extent that the information required is available. However, it is recognized that there will be differences in categorization and extent of data available for each country, and for this reason there may be a need to adapt the outline to reflect national context.

## Appendix II

### Opinion Leaders Interviewed

- Ms B Budory                      Social Welfare Commissioner  
Ministry Of Social Security
- Ms L Collen                      Political Activist
- Ms A Aujayeb                      Social Psychologist
- Mr R Makoon                      Chairperson  
Joint Economic Council
- Ms P Essoo                      National Women's Council
- Ms V Essoo                      Statistician and Economist -  
Mauritius Employers' Federation

## Appendix III

### The Organizations involved in the Focus Group Discussions

- The Artisans & General Workers Union
- The Mauritius Labour Congress
- The Federation of Civil Service Unions.

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UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

*CENTRE, FOR APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH*

WORK/FAMILY STUDY

EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

*OCTOBER 2001*

Geographical District : ..... 'D' \_ \_  
Regional Stratum : .....  
Enumeration Area : ..... I ..... \_ \_  
Household Number (01-10) : \ \_ \_  
**Name of Interviewer :** .  
Starting time of Interview Ending time of Interview .  
Signature of Interviewer when returning completed questionnaire ..\*.....\*....  
Name of Supervisor: .  
Signature of supervisor if present at the interview: .  
**Date** .

FOR OFFICE USE

CODED BY: .....

INPUT BY: .

SECTION A: PARTICULARS OF RESPONDENT

Identification No

Address

A1 Sex: MD F D

A2. Date of Birth..... Age

A3 Marital Status

1. Single 0 2. Married 0 3. In a Union 0  
4. Divorced/separated D 5. Widowed D

A4. Highest Educational Qualification

1 No formal Education	D
2 Incomplete Primary Education	D
3 Passed CPE/Std VI	D
4 Lower Secondary incomplete	D
5 SC or equivalent	D
6 A Level or equivalent	D
7 Degree or equivalent	D
8 Postgraduate degree or equivalent	D
9 Other, please specify	D

AS. Professional Qualifications

Specify

A6 Household Composition (*Please indicate the Head of Household-HoH*)

Serial No	Relationship to Respondent	Age	Sex	Occupation	HoH
1.	Self	( ..... )	.....	.....	.....
2.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
3.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
4.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
5.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
6.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
7.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
8.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
9.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
10.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

SECTION B: ABOUT MAIN JOB

(Note to interviewer: emphasis is on 'Main' Job if respondent has more than one job)

*RESPONDENT* | *SPOUSE*

B1. Do you have just one paid job, or more than one paid job?

- |                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Just one                     | D | D |
| 2. More than one – state number |   |   |

B2. Is that employer in the public or private sector?

- |            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| 1. Public  | D | D |
| 2. Private | D | D |

B3. Nature of employer's business

B4. What is your occupation in your main job?

BS. Is that occupation permanent, temporary or for a fixed term?

- |             |   |             |   |              |   |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|--------------|---|
| 1 Permanent | D | 2 Temporary | D | 3 Fixed term | D |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|--------------|---|

|RESPONDENT

|SPOUSE

86. How many hours in *total* do you usually work per week including overtime or extra time in your main job?

Total Hours per week

87. How many overtime or extra hours do you usually work each week, whether paid or unpaid? (*More than one response possible*)

- (1) Compulsory paid overtime
- (2) Non-compulsory paid overtime
- (3) Unpaid Extratime
- (4) (4) None

BS. Do you ever work on weekends?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes state how often per month.

89. Do you ever work on night shifts?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes state how often per month.

B10 - At what time do you leave home to go to work?

B11 - At what time do you usually get back home from work?

SECTION C: CHILDCARE AND OTHER DEPENDENT RELATIVES

C1 SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN

C1(a) - Do you have children living with you who go to school?

1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ — Go to C2(a)

C1(b) - If the answer is Yes who usually looks after your school-going children while you are at work? (Please circle the relevant answer)

- (1) The school because I only work during school hours.
- (2) The school and then my spouse/partner.
- (3) The school and then other people who live in your home.
- (4) School and then other family members who don't live in your home.
- (5) School and then neighbours and/or friends.
- (6) School and then me while I work.
- (7) School and then a paid baby-sitter/domestic helper
- (8) School and then they look after themselves
- (9) Other. Please Specify

C1(c) Are you satisfied with the arrangements you have in place for looking after your children when you are at work? ( Please encircle the relevant answer)

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Very satisfied | (2) Satisfied         |
| (3) Unsatisfied    | (4) Very unsatisfied. |

If not satisfied say why?

C2 SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN WHO DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL

C2 (a) - Do you have school-aged children but who do not go to school?

1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ Go to C3(a)

If yes who looks after them while you are at work?

C2(b)- Are you satisfied with the arrangements you have in place for looking after them when you are at work? ( Please encircle the relevant answer)

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Very satisfied | (2) Satisfied         |
| (3) Unsatisfied    | (4) Very unsatisfied. |

If not satisfied say why?

C3 INFANTS

C3(a) - Do you have children who are too young to go to school?

1 Yes ☒ 2 No ☒ Go to C4(a)

C3(b) - Who usually looks after them while you are at work? (Please encircle the relevant answer)

- (1) My spouse or partner.
- (2) They are with me while I work.
- (3) Nursery / Childcare centre that is run by my employer.
- (4) Nursery / Childcare centre not run by my employer.
- (5) A paid baby sitter / domestic helper in my home.
- (6) A paid babysitter/domestic worker in their home.
- (7) Others who live in your home.
- (8) Other family members who do not live in your home.
- (9) Neighbours and/or friends
- (10) They look after themselves
- (11) Other . Please specify

C3(c) - Are you satisfied with the arrangements you have in place for looking after them when you are at work? (Please encircle the relevant answer)

- (1) Very satisfied (2) Satisfied
- (3) Unsatisfied (4) Very unsatisfied.

C3(d) - If not satisfied say why?

.....

C4 DISABLED CHILDREN

C4(a) - Do you have any disabled children?

1 Yes ☒ 2 No ☒ Go to C5

C4(b) - If yes who looks after them while you are at work?

.....

C4(c) - Are you satisfied with the arrangements you have in place for looking after them when you are at work?

- (1) Very satisfied (2) Satisfied
- (3) Unsatisfied (4) Very unsatisfied.

C4(d) - If not satisfied say why?

CS - If a child who lives with you is sick who usually looks after them ? (Please encircle all of those which apply)

- (1) I take time off from work to look after them.
- (2) My spouse/partner looks after them.
- (3) The paid babysitter or domestic help looks after them.
- (4) Family who do not live in your home
- (5) Others who live in your home.
- (6) Neighbours and/or friends
- (7) They look after themselves
- (8) Other (please specify)

C6 - Do you have any aged parents, disabled or otherwise dependent relatives who live with you in your home and whom you need to look after?

- 1 Yes ☐ Please specify
- 2 No ☐ Go to CS

C7 - Who looks after them when you are at work?

CS - If you suddenly had to take time off to attend to a sick child or other dependent relative, how would you do that? (Please encircle relevant answer)

- (1) Casual Leave
- (2) Paid sick leave.
- (3) Unpaid leave
- (4) Take time off and make the time up later
- (5) I couldn't leave work to do this.



SECTION D: WORKPLACE POLICIES AND BENEFITS

D1. Does your employer in your main job provide any financial assistance to help you if a family emergency arises?

1. Yes                      2. No                      3. Don't know

D2. If yes, could you describe the type of financial assistance?

03. In your main job, have you ever received any of the following from your employer? (Note to interviewer: ask each one in turn: yes/no response for each)

- |   | <div>Ves</div> | <div>?</div> |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Assistance with medical needs  | [ ]            | [ ]          |
| 2. Assistance with weddings/funerals                                    |                |              |
| 3. Assistance with food   |                |              |
| 4. Assistance with schooling for children                               |                |              |
| 5. Assistance with transport  |                |              |
| 6. Assistance with housing  |                | ]            |
| 7. Assistance with securing loans                                       |                | ]            |
| 8. Any other things your employer has provided for you, please describe |                |              |

D4. Out of those forms of assistance that you have stated, which one of these would you say has been the most valuable to you? (Please encircle relevant answer)

1. Medical assistance
2. Assistance with food
3. Assistance with schooling for children
4. Assistance with housing costs
5. Assistance with loans
6. Assistance with transport
7. Any other things your employer has provided for you please describe

DS. If you suddenly had to take time off from work to attend to an urgent family matter for a few days, ( a matter other than you or a child being sick), how would you do that?

1. Paid sick leave
2. Paid casual leave
3. Unpaid leave
4. Take the time off and make the time up later
5. I couldn't leave work to do this
6. Other . Please specify

06. Do you get any of the following types of PAID leave in your job? (Please encircle relevant answer)

1. Paid holiday leave
2. Paid sick leave
3. Paid maternity/paternity leave
4. Other. Please describe

07. Thinking about your main paid job, do any of the following apply to you?  
(Encircle T for True and F for False)

1. I could start work 15 minutes late or leave 15 minutes early if I needed to, without telling anyone in advance.      T      OR      F
2. There is a phone I can use at work for family reasons.      T      OR      F
3. If I needed to, I could bring my child to work with me for an hour and it would be okay.      T      OR      F
4. If I needed to, I could work from home for a day or two rather than come into the workplace.      T      OR      F
5. If I wanted to work less hours per week because of my family responsibilities, I could probably do that and still stay with my current employer.      T      OR      F
6. My supervisor is okay about the fact I have children and might need to be absent from work sometimes to look after them.      T      OR      F
7. I can usually take holidays at times that suit my family/ I can choose when to take my holidays.      T      OR      F

# SECTION E: SUPPORTS FOR WORK FAMILY BALANCE

E1 - If you could change one thing associated with your job that would help make balancing work and family easier for you, what would it be?

E2 - If you could change one thing with your home life that would help reconciling the exigencies of work and your family responsibility, what would it be?

E3 - How useful are the following people in terms of helping you with work around the home and with childcare or other family responsibility issues? (*Please tick in relevant space*)

	Useful	Sometimes useful	Occasionally useful	Never useful
1. Your spouse	.....	.....	.....	.....
2. Older children	.....	.....	.....	.....
3. Other relatives	.....	.....	.....	.....
4. Neighbours ..	.....	.....	.....	.....
5. Friends				
6.Paid Domestic help/baby sitters				

E4. Which of the following describe how you feel about your current situation? (Please encircle relevant answer)

1. It is mostly easy for me to balance my work and family responsibilities
2. Sometimes it is easy, sometimes it is hard for me to balance them
3. It is mostly hard for me to balance them

ES. How would you rate your workplace in terms of how responsive it is to the needs of employees with families, would you say it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad very bad?

1. Very Good
2. Good
3. Neither good nor bad
4. Bad
5. Very Bad

E6. Why do you say that?

SECTION F : LABOUR-SAVING DEVICES

F1. Which of the following items do you have or do not have at home? (*Please tick in relevant space*)

	Have	Do not have but do not want	Do not have but cannot afford
1. Refrigerator			
2. Washing-Machine			
3. Dishwasher.			
4. Microwave Oven			
5. Freezer			
6. Gas Cooker			
7. Gas/ Electric cooker			
8. Vacuum Cleaner			

## SECTION'G: INCOME

G1. How much do you get paid for ALL your jobs, before tax and other deductions?

	<i>RESPONDENT</i>	<i>SPOUSE</i>
1 Less than Rs 2000 per month	D	D
2 Rs 2001 – Rs 4000 per month	D	D
3 Rs 4001–Rs 6000 per month	D	D
4 Rs 6001–Rs 8000 per month	D	D
5 Rs 8001–Rs 10000 per month	D	D
6 Rs 10001–Rs 12000 per month	0	0
7 Rs 12001–Rs 14000 per month	D	D
8 Rs 14001–Rs 16000 per month	D	D
9 Rs 16001–Rs 20000 per month	D	D
10 Rs 20001 or more per month	D	D

Total Household Income per month (including any other jobs that people in your household do and any other sources of income) :

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS**

*CENTRE, FOR APPLIED SOCIAL RE,SEARCH*

**WORK/FAMILY STUDY**

**EMPLOYER QUESTIONNAIRE**

*OCTOBER 2001*

NUMBER: .

INTERVIEWER: .

DATE OF INTERVIEW: .

SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWER: .

CHECKED BY: .

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: .

Job title of respondent .....

**GENERAL**

A 1. Name of establishment/employer

2. Postal address

3. Nature of business

4. Is your work place part of a larger firm?

5. If yes where is the head office located?

6. No. of employees in total  
for the whole firm

MALE

FEMALE

TOTAL

7. Largest occupational group (LOG) at this workplace

8. No. of employees in the *LOG*  
at this workplace

MALE

FEMALE

TOTAL

9. How many hours per week do employees in the *LOG* normally work  
without including overtime?

10. **Other occupational groups at your work place.** Could you please  
state **roughly** how many men and women work in each occupational group?

**Occupational Group**

**No. of Employees**

**M**

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)





11. Number of employees at **this** work place, (if different from 6)

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL

12. Hours of operation (e.g. 24 hours)

13. Sector (public/private)

14. Number of part-time **(P/T)** / full-time **(F/T)** employees at this workplace

		P/T		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
FIT				

### FAMILY-FRIENDLINESS OF THE WORK PLACE

**B1 - Which of the following is available to any of the workers at the work place?**

**( Encircle all that apply).**

- (1) Equal employment opportunities.
- (2) Working from home.
- (3) Moving from full time to part-time work.
- (4) Flexible hours of work on demand of the employee
- (5) Job sharing
- (6) Compressed working week.
- (7) Paid sick leave
- (8) Unpaid sick leave
- (9) Leave to look after sick children: (a) *Paid* (b) *Unpaid*
- (10) Leave to look after sick relatives: (a) *Paid* (b) *Unpaid*
- (11) i. Maternity Leave: (a) *Paid* (b) *Unpaid*  
 ii. Duration of maternity leave:  
 (a) *Up to 1 month* (b) *Between 1 and 3 months* (c) *More than 3 months*
- (12) Breast feeding at work
- (13) Other paid leave (specify)

82 - Are these policies available to everyone who works in this establishment or just some'!

83 - Ifjust some please specify to whom (by occupation)

84 - Does your workplace provide any of the following?

(1) A phone that employees may use for family reasons.

(2) A child care centre/nursery on site.

(a) Free

(b) Subsidised

(c) Fee-paying

(3) Financial assistance for child care.

(4) Help with child care during school holidays.

(5) Breastfeeding facilities for mothers.

(6) Health care provision.

(7) Subsidised food/free food.

(8) Educational assistance for children of employees.

(9) Assistance with housing.

(10) Counselling services.

(11) Subscription to an employees welfare fund.

(12) Any other facility (specify).

85 - Are these policies available to everyone who works here or just some?

86 - Ifjust some please specify for whom (by occupation)?

B7. Reasons for providing facilities indicated at B1 and B4. Please encircle and rank in order of importance

- (1) Employer is family-friendly
- (2) To facilitate recruitment of staff
- (3) It is the social responsibility of the enterprise/organisation
- (4) To enhance productivity
- (5) Other. Please specify

BS. Do you intend putting in place any more family/friendly policies in the future?

- (1) Yes - Specify which and when
- (2) No - Why not?
- (3) Don't know.

B9. How important is it for your organisation to assist employees with childcare need?  
(Please encircle the appropriate answer)

- (1) Very important    (2) Important    (3) Not very important    (4) Not at all important

B10. How important does your organisation think it is to help employees balance work and family responsibilities? (Please encircle the appropriate answer)

- (1) Very important    (2) Important    (3) Not very important    (4) Not at all important

**B11.** Do you agree or disagree with following statements? (Please tick in the relevant space)

BEING FAMILY-FRIENDLY	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(1) MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
(2) IS EXPENSIVE	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
(3) CAN LEAD TO ABUSE OF PRIVILEGES	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
(4) IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EMPLOYER	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

**B12.** How family friendly is your organisation towards its employees as compared to other organisations in a similar line of business? (Please encircle the relevant answer)

1. Average                                      2. Above Average                                      3. Below Average

**B13.** What do you think is the most family friendly single measure which exists for employees in your organisation?

**B14.** How do you think this workplace could be made more friendly for employees?

**B15.** Why is it that your workplace is not currently implementing what you have stated in the previous question?

**B16a.** If an employee who worked full-time wanted to switch to part-time work would this be (Please encircle):

- (1) Acceptable in all or nearly all cases
- (2) Unlikely to be accepted
- (3) Likely to be accepted but only in exceptional cases
- (4) Depends on the occupation of the employee

**B16b.** If answer is 4 above, for what occupation is it likely to be acceptable?

817. Are employees allowed to vary their standard hours, such as starting and finishing work earlier or working through their lunch break, so that they can leave early? (Please encircle the relevant answer)

1. Yes, allT

2. Yes only some

3. No

818. If a female employee wanted to take time off work around the birth of a child, what would they be entitled to? (encircle all that apply)

1. Take paid maternity leave. (Please specify length of time )

2. Take unpaid maternity leave. (Please specify length of time )

3. Take other paid leave.

4. Take other unpaid leave.

5. Lose their job.

819. If a male employee wanted to take time off work around the birth of a child, what would they be entitled to?