

**ESTIMATES OF CURRENT FERTILITY FOR SRI LANKA, DERIVED BY
APPLYING THE OWN-CHILDREN METHOD TO THE 1981 CENSUS**

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The analysis of fertility decline in Sri Lanka has evinced much interest among demographers in recent times. National censuses, vital registration records and more recently, the World Fertility Survey, have provided a wealth of information for computing, identifying and understanding trends in fertility.

Unfortunately, the Census of 1981 had not extracted any information on fertility. The present paper reports on the application of a special technique known as the Own-Children Method, to the 1981 Census of Sri Lanka, in order to derive fertility estimates. This method is a census or survey based reverse-survival technique for estimating fertility rates for several years, prior to a census, by matching enumerated children to mothers

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within households. In the present study, the Own-Children Method was applied to a 10 per cent sample from Sri Lanka's 1981 Census, in order to derive estimates of total fertility rates and age-specific birth rates for all women as well as currently married women, for the 15 year period, 1966 to 1980.

Since Sri Lanka has a rich diversity of peoples and cultures, arising from a variety of socio-economic factors, the paper also identifies and attempts to explain recent fertility trends in terms of important socio-economic variables such as ethnicity, religion, level of education and urban-rural residence, for the 15 year period. It is evident that national aggregates and fertility trends do not replicate themselves within the identified socio-economic sub-groups.