

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

Youth in Palestinian Territory Statistical Indicators

On the Occasion of the International Youth Day 12 August 2008

Introduction

In all societies, youth is an important demographic category that represents the strength and vitality of the society, and an important source of prosperity, progress and development. Youth symbolize the backbone, the protection and future of a nation and its wealth. Various studies use different definitions for what constitutes the age group of youth. Some associate youth with the age group (10-24 years) and others associate it with (12-24 years). In this summary the age group (15-29 years) has been endorsed as a target group to represent youth in compliance with the topics dealt with.

Palestinian youth (15-29 years) constitute a basic pillar in the society, as its size is relatively stable, and is representative of the Palestinian future. The significance of this category of society (its size, reality and challenges) makes it the group most affected by both positive and negative phenomena within society. Special care is required by policy planners and decision makers involved in development and planning to integrate this category in a comprehensive way into any national program for the purpose of progress and sustainable development.

Data in this analysis is based on several statistical surveys and other primary sources in addition to the 1997 and 2007 censuses; the main sources are the Palestinian Family Health Survey (PAPFAM 2006), database of marriage and divorce 2007, Household Violence Survey 2005, Household Survey for Technology Information and Communication 2006, database of Labor Survey 2007, Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2007 and Housing Conditions Survey 2006.

Population

The age group (15-29 years) has been endorsed as a target group to represent youth in compliance with the topics dealt with. In terms of growth patterns, individuals are divided into two categories, the first category of adolescents (15-19 years) and the second category of young people (20-29 years).

Statistics indicate that the estimated population in the Palestinian Territory totaled 3.7 million in 2007, (of whom 51% are males and 49% females), with a sex ratio of 103 males per 100 females.

The youth represent about 27.0% of the total population: 27.1% of males and 26.8% of females. The sex ratio of the youth is 104 males per 100 females. The youth are distributed into two main categories; the first category, adolescents (15-19 years), represents 40.3% of total youth in the Palestinian Territory; (39.5% of total youth in the West Bank and 41.8% in Gaza Strip), and the second, young people (20-29 years), represents 59.7% of the youth age group (15-29 years), (60.5% of total youth in the West Bank and 58.2% in Gaza Strip),

Household and Marriage

According to the 2007 database of marriage and divorce, 92.1% of the total registered marriages for females were for females aged (15-29 years), whereas for the total registered marriages for males,

81.6% were in the age (15-29 years). Based on the same database, 56.0% of total male divorces were for males in the age (15-29 years), compared with 78.5% of the total registered divorces for females in the same age group.

PAPFAM survey 2006 data showed that 28.0% of marriages for ever married women (15-29 years) were to first consanguinity husbands, whereas 56.1% of marriages in this category were to non relative husbands.

As to the preferred marriage age, the data indicates that young people see the appropriate average age at first marriage for a young man is 24.6 years, while the preferred age for marriage for girls is 19.4 years.

About 78.0% of youth see that the preferred method for the selection of a future partner must be personal choice, with 48.1% of the youth preferring to have (3-4) years difference in the age between spouses, while 31.0% of them prefer the age difference to be less than 3 years. In addition, 76.6% of females (15-29 years) prefer to marry a husband with a university degree.

Youth and Fertility

Despite the decline of fertility during the last 10 years, the fertility rate in the Palestinian Territory is still high compared to many other countries. Based on the 1997 Census data, the fertility rate in the Palestinian Territory was 6.0 births, 5.6 in the West Bank and 6.9 in Gaza Strip. However, as data of the PAPFAM survey 2006 showed, the fertility rate has declined to 4.6 births in the Palestinian Territory, 4.2 in the West Bank and 5.4 in Gaza Strip. Females aged (25-29 years) contribute 26.5% toward the total fertility rate which is considered to be the highest contributor age group.

Youth and Education

In 2007, available statistics showed that 44.1% of the youth (15-29 years) were enrolled in education, composed of 87.5% among the age group (15-17 years), 48.9% among the age group (18-22 years) and 10.8% among the age group (23-29 years). Statistical indicators also showed that dropout rates (both of those who previously enrolled and left or not attending) has reached 33.4% among males aged (15-29 years), compared with 27.4% for females. 7.5% of males in the age group (15-29 years) have completed at least the first university degree, compared with 7.8% for females in the same age group, whereas 4.3% of males haven't completed any educational stage compared with 3.4% for females in the age group (15-29 years).

0.9% of the youth (15-29 years) are still illiterate, of which 0.9% are males and 1.0% females.

Culture and Technology

The 2006 data showed that 67.3% of persons aged 15-29 years in the Palestinian Territory use the computer, 76.1% for the age group (15-19 years) and 61.5% for the age group (20- 29 years). Also 29.4% of persons in the age group (15-29 years) use the internet. The same data revealed that 34.7% of total females who use the internet use it for study purposes, compared to 11.8% for males. The percentage of persons (15-29 years) who have mobile phones was 42.9% of total persons in the same age group.

Youth and Health

The percentage of youth (15-29 years) practicing the smoking habit was 17.6% for the year 2006, 20.5% in the West Bank and 12.5% in Gaza Strip. The main reason for smoking, according to the

youth, was curiosity for 43.5% (44.6% in the West Bank and 41.2% in Gaza Strip) and (38.9% for males and 80.2% for females).

2.0% of the youth aged (15-29 years) in the Palestinian Territory are suffering from at least one chronic disease (2.4% in the West Bank and 1.2% in Gaza Strip); this was more prevalent among the age group (25-29 years) at 4.2%, compared with 2.0% among those aged (20-24 years) and 1.5% among the youth aged (15-19 years).

89.0% of young males (15-29 years) know of three changes occurring for males during puberty, while 83.2% of females know of three changes occurring for females during puberty. The main source of this information for males was friends at 49.7%, followed by 30.8% from related books, while 14% cite teachers as a source for more information on changes occurring for males during puberty. In comparison, the mother was the main source for 70.3% of females for more information on changes occurring for females during puberty, the older sister for 24.9%, friends for 15.8%, related books for 23.3% and the teacher for 10.8%.

Youth and Labor

In 2007, available statistics showed that 34.3% of the youth (15-29 years) are economically active (employed and un-employed), 36.4% in the West Bank and 30.8% in Gaza Strip, and 55.6% among youth males (15-29 years), compared with 12.2% for females. The age group (25-29 years) was the highest group with participation in the labor force, 85.7% for males and 22.6% for females.

The unemployment rate among young people totaled 30.3%. The highest unemployment rate was for the age group (20-24 years) which totaled 36.0% compared with 23.8% for the age group (25-29 years). 35.2% of unemployed persons had completed at least 13 scholastic years.

The services sector and its branches employs about one third of the youth (15-29 years), and 43.5% of the persons aged (25-29 years). The commerce sector, restaurants and hotels employ 31.5% persons aged (15-19 years).

28.0% of the employed persons in the age group (25-29 years) are technicians and specialists and clerks, whereas about 26.6% of the youth (15-29 years) work in basic level occupations.

The Palestinian Territory is the main work place of the employed persons (15-29 years), distributed by 60.0% in the West Bank, 29.3% in Gaza Strip, while employed persons in this age group in Israel were only 10.7%.

Youth and Intifada

According to the "Intifada" uprising data, until the end of June 2008, the youth (15-29 years) represent about 62.2% of the total martyrs in the Palestinian Territory, 61.5% in the West Bank and 62.7% in Gaza Strip.