

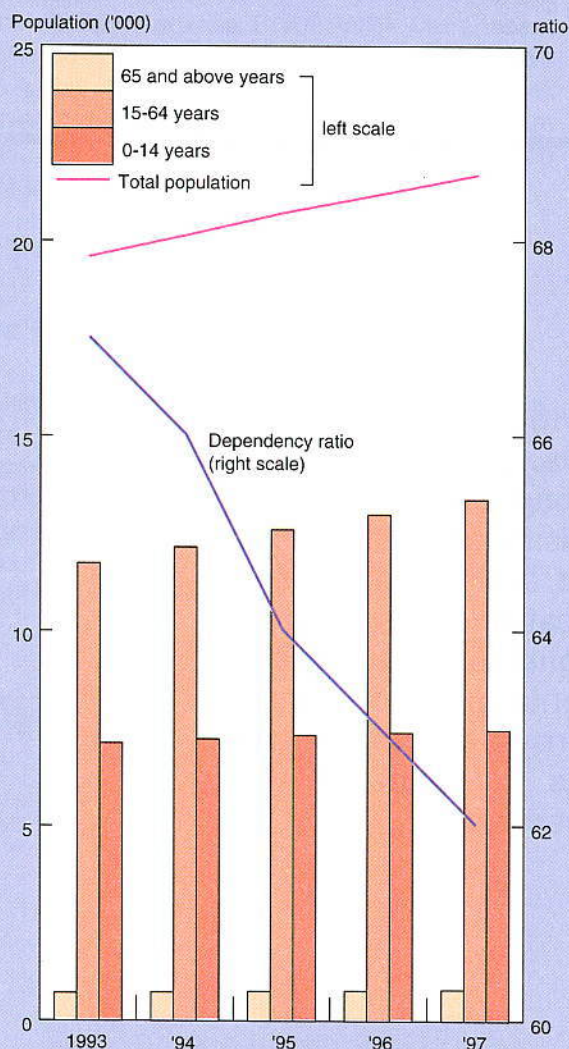
9

Social Trends

This chapter provides some socio-economic indicators, on the quality of life and welfare of the population. The data are on a time-series basis to reflect the trends in the sectors covered and encompasses population, health, education, transportation and communication, public safety, social welfare and environmental pollution. Short commentaries are provided under the respective indicators to explain the developments in the sectors.

Population

Chart 9.1
Population Size, Age Structure and Dependency Ratio



Source : Department of Statistics

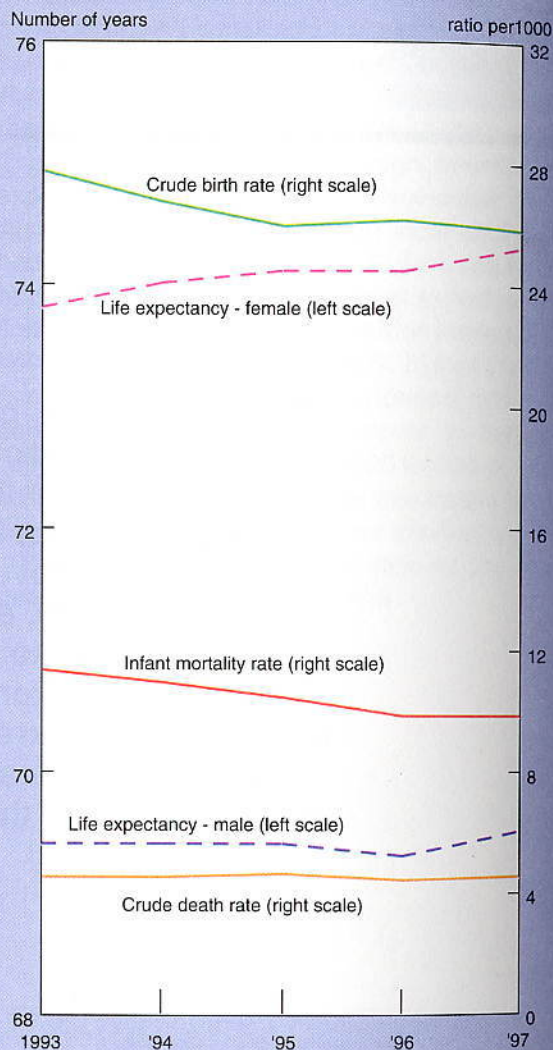
The population in Malaysia increased by an average annual rate of 2.6% during the period 1993 to 1997 to reach 21.66 million in 1997. This relatively high growth could be accounted for by the increase in the non-citizen population at an average annual rate of at least 13% during the years 1993 to 1995. However with the strict regulations imposed on inflow of foreign workers by the government since 1996, the growth rate in non-citizen population reflected a sharp decline to average 5.8% in 1996 and 1997. In 1993, the non-Malaysian citizens represented 5.2% of total population (1.03 million) and this increased to 6.8% in 1997 (1.5 million).

In terms of the age structure, in 1993 about 36.4% of the population were below the age of 15, which however decreased to 34.5% in 1997 brought about by declines in fertility rates. About 3.6% were in the age-group 65 and above in 1993 and this increased marginally to 3.7% in 1997. The economically active population i.e. in the age-group 15-64 which represented 60% in 1993 increased to 61.8% in 1997.

The dependency ratio, which is the ratio of dependents to every 100 persons of working age decreased from 67 in 1993 to 62 in 1997, a result of the decrease in the proportion of the population aged below 15 years.

Health

Chart 9.2
Life Expectancy by Sex, Crude Birth Rate, Crude Death Rate and Infant Mortality Rate



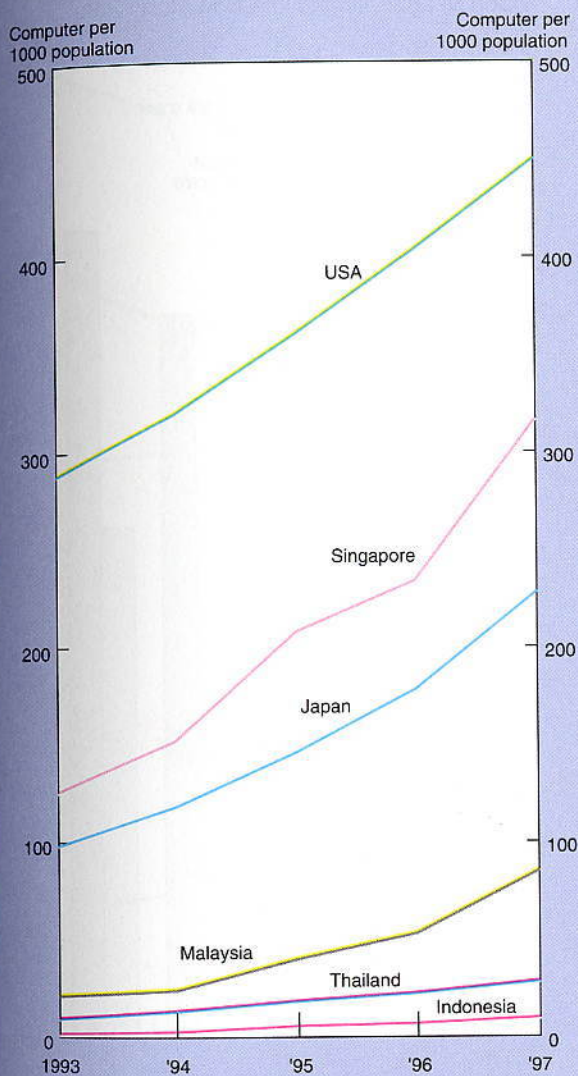
Source : Department of Statistics

The development of the health sector is an integral part of the socio-economic development in the country. The government has implemented several health programmes to improve the health status of the population. These include the expansion of health services to rural areas, upgrading the quality of inpatient care, increasing the efficiency of the services, the corporatisation and privatisation of hospital and medical services, the family health development and the occupational safety and health.

An improvement in the health indicators is noted over the period 1993 to 1997. The life-expectancy of the male population which was 69.4 years in 1993 improved to 69.5 years in 1997 while that of the female population increased from 73.8 years to 74.3 years. The infant mortality rate which is the ratio of number of deaths of infants under 1 years of age in a given year to per 1,000 live births in that year improved steadily from 11.3 in 1993 to 9.8 in 1997. Meanwhile the crude birth rate i.e. ratio of the number of life births during the year per 1,000 population was 25.8 in 1997 compared with 27.7 in 1993. The crude death rate however remain unchanged at 4.5 per 1,000 population.

Education

Chart 9.3
Comparative Information Technology Usage



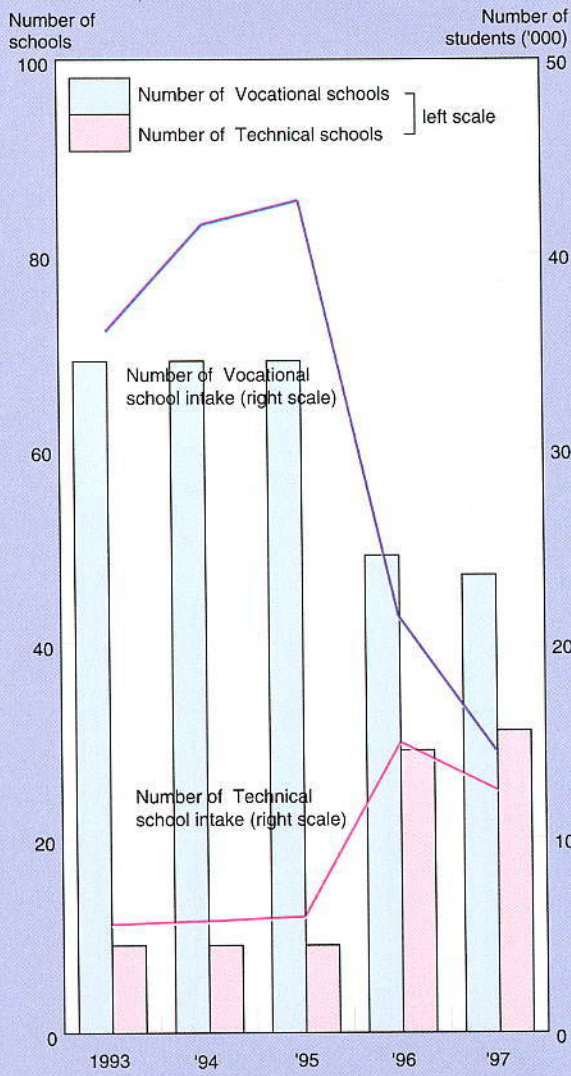
Source : World Competitiveness Report 1994-98

A country's progress in IT usage could be assessed more appropriately by the IT literacy rate. This is the percentage of people aged 10 and above who have minimal knowledge to use a computer for any purpose in an electronically connected environment. In 1997 MIMOS estimated that the IT literacy rate for Malaysia is 8.2%. Compared with other economies, the IT literacy and penetration is still low in Malaysia, which is indicated by the number of computers per 1,000 population and connections to Internet (Hosts per 1,000 people). Internet hosts refers to a computer that is connected to the internet that has an unique Internet Protocol (IP) address.

Malaysia still lags behind some of the more advanced countries like Japan, USA and Singapore in computer usage but fares comparatively better if compared to countries like Thailand and Indonesia. In 1993 there were 21 computers per 1,000 people in Malaysia and this increased to 65 per 1,000 people in 1997 reflecting an average growth rate of 20.7%. This compares with Indonesia which had 9 computers per 1,000 people in 1997, Thailand 28, Singapore 316, Japan 228 and USA 450. With regard to connections to internet, Malaysia had 1.23 hosts per 1,000 people in 1997 compared with Indonesia 0.06; Thailand 0.17; Singapore 13.27; Japan 6.28 and USA 35.21.

To improve the level of IT literacy, the government has adopted a three-pronged agenda i.e promote IT literacy in schools; improve IT literacy in the work place and increase IT awareness among the populace.

Chart 9.4
Number Of Vocational and Technical Schools and Student Intake.



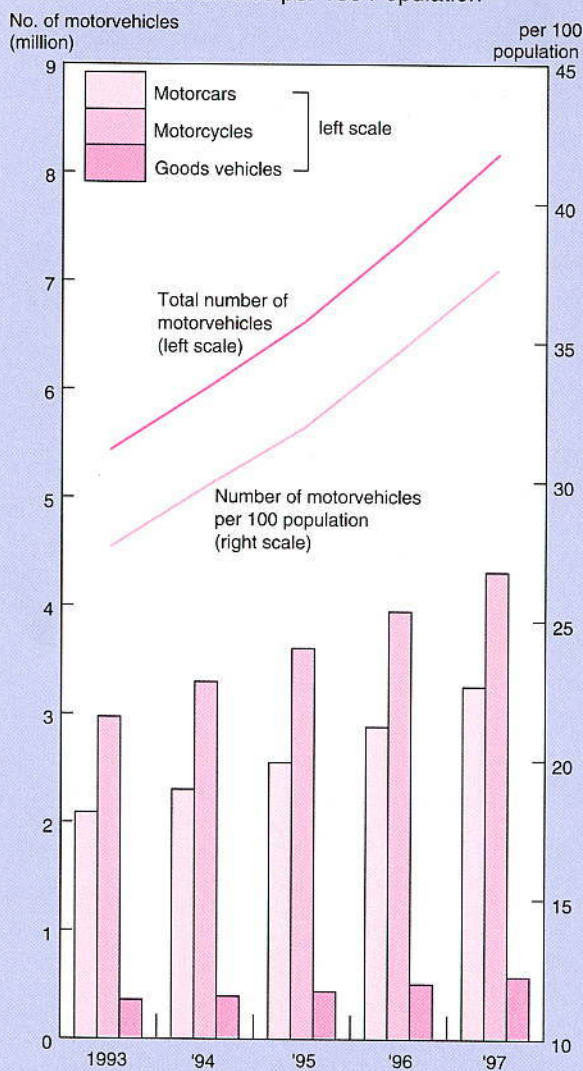
Source : Ministry of Education

Efforts are being made to expand the supply of skilled manpower through increased intake into the technical and vocational schools. In 1997, there were 31 technical and 47 vocational schools compared to 9 and 69 respectively in 1993. The enrolment in the technical schools increased from 5,493 in 1993 to 12,358 in 1997 while that in the vocational schools decreased from 35,761 in 1993 to 14,211 in 1997. In view of the need to increase more science and technical manpower, measures were taken to increase the supply of students with strong foundation in mathematics, science and technical related subjects. In this regard some 20 vocational schools were converted into technical schools in 1996. This explains the reduction in the number of vocational schools and its enrolment. The majority of students from the technical schools normally continue their studies in various institutions of higher learning. The government plans to convert all the vocational schools to technical schools by the year 2000 by which time the total enrolment in technical schools is expected to be 89,440 students.

Transportation and Communication

Chart 9.5

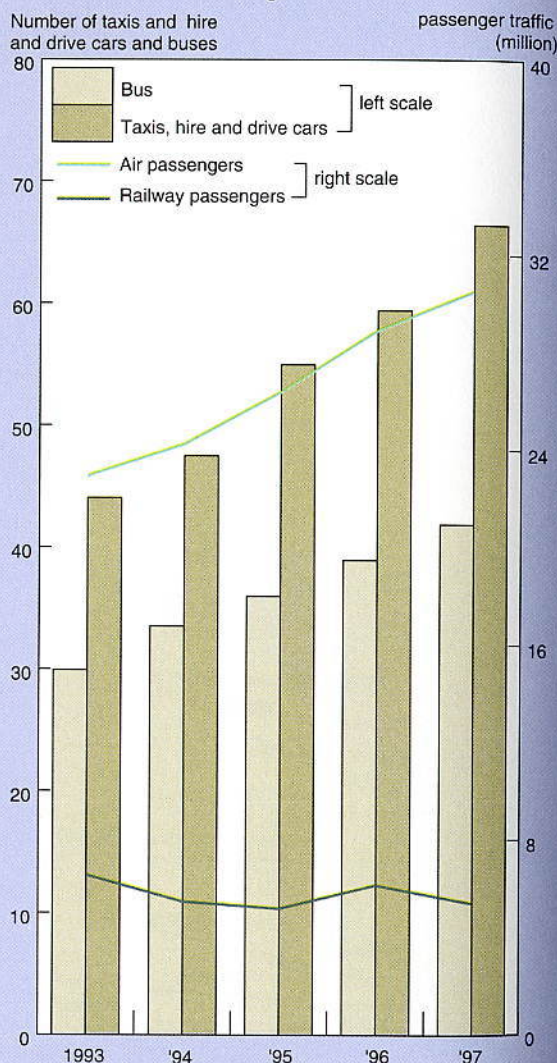
Number of Motorvehicles Registered and
Number of Motorvehicles per 100 Population



Source : Road Transport Department, Malaysia

Chart 9.6

Number of Taxis and Hire and Drive Cars, Buses
and Rail and Air Passengers



Source : Ministry of Transport

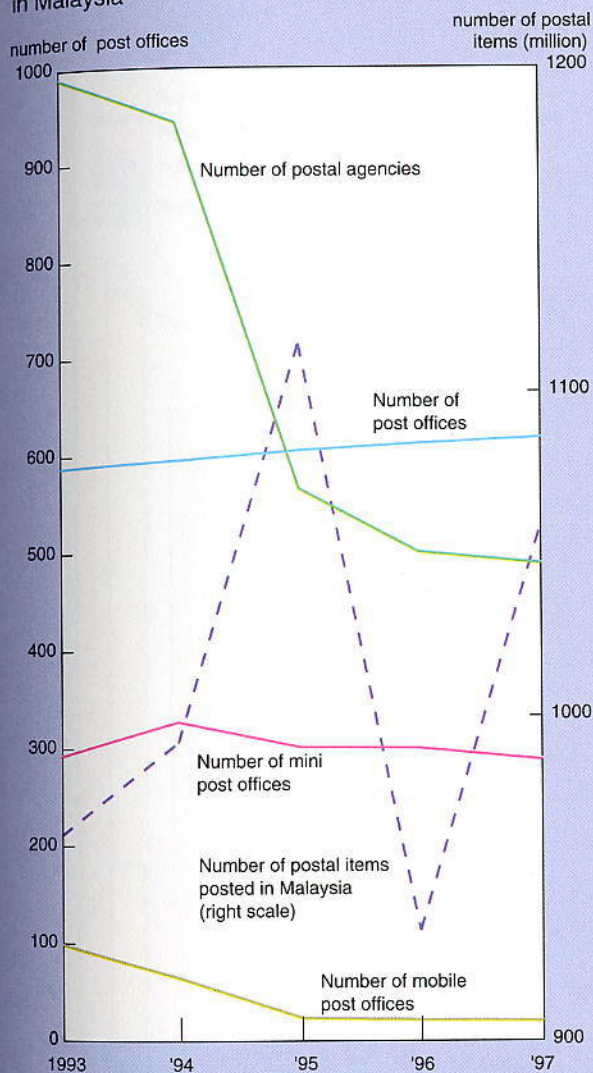
Improvements in road infrastructure and extensive road network, coupled with increases in population and income levels had resulted in an increase in the ownership of motorvehicles. In 1993, there were 5.4 million motorvehicles of which 38.6% were motorcars, 54.8% motorcycles and 6.6% goods vehicles. This increased by 50.5% to reach 8.1 million motorvehicles in 1997, with motorcycles accounting for 53% of the total, followed by motorcars 40% and goods vehicles 7%. The number of motorvehicles per 100 population, which is an indicator of the quality of life of the population, increased from 27.6 in 1993 to 37.6 in 1997. Concern over the traffic congestion problems and increased number of road accidents arising from the increased private vehicles usage has led to measures to create an efficient and reliable urban transport system.

The government is focussed on the further development of an efficient and integrated public transport system. Currently, buses, taxis, trains and aeroplanes represent the major modes of transportation, be it inter or intra city/towns. The number of buses have increased from 29,929 in 1993 to 41,912 in 1997 while the number of taxis, hire and drive cars increased from 44,040 in 1993 to 66,573 in 1997. To improve the quality, efficiency and reliability of the bus and taxi services, several measures have been taken, such as amalgamation of transport companies, route rationalisation, provision of supporting facilities such as terminals, depots, signages and route information system.

Rail passenger traffic, namely the intercity passenger services, was 6.5 million in 1993. But this decreased to 5.4 million in 1997 due to the availability of other modes of faster transport services. The total number of air passengers however increased from 22.8 million in 1993 to 30.5 million in 1997, partly accounted for by domestic and regional expansion of services.

To facilitate intracity transportation, the rail has also been developed as an alternative regional commuter system. This includes the KTM commuter for regional operations and LRT 1 and LRT II for metropolitan operations.

Chart 9.7
Number Of Post Offices and Postal Items Posted in Malaysia



Source : Pos Malaysia Berhad

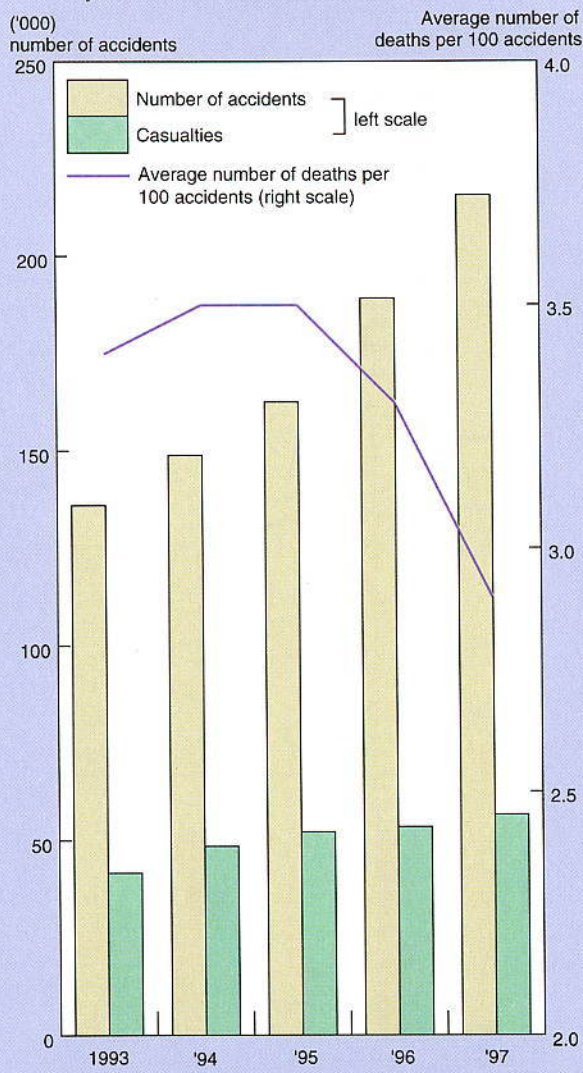
The Postal Services was corporatised on 1 January 1992 and since then measures have been taken to expand and upgrade the facilities to improve the quality of service provided. During the period 1993 to 1997, 31 new post offices were set up. To enhance customer convenience, several post offices in urban areas extended their operational hours to 10 p.m. and nearly 3,000 stamp vendors were appointed to reach the public especially in the rural areas. To improve the efficiency of counter services, more than 95% of the post offices were computerised.

With the infrastructural and technological developments, the mobile post offices outlived their usefulness and were gradually phased out from 99 in 1993 to 22 in 1997. Similarly with the introduction of the vendor stamps, the postal agencies were reduced from 990 in 1993 to 490 in 1997.

The volume of postal items handled increased by nearly 9.5% between the years 1993 and 1997. Of the more than 1 billion postal items handled in 1997, about 97% were for delivery within Malaysia.

Public Safety

Chart 9.8
Number Of Road Accidents and Casualties Reported in Malaysia

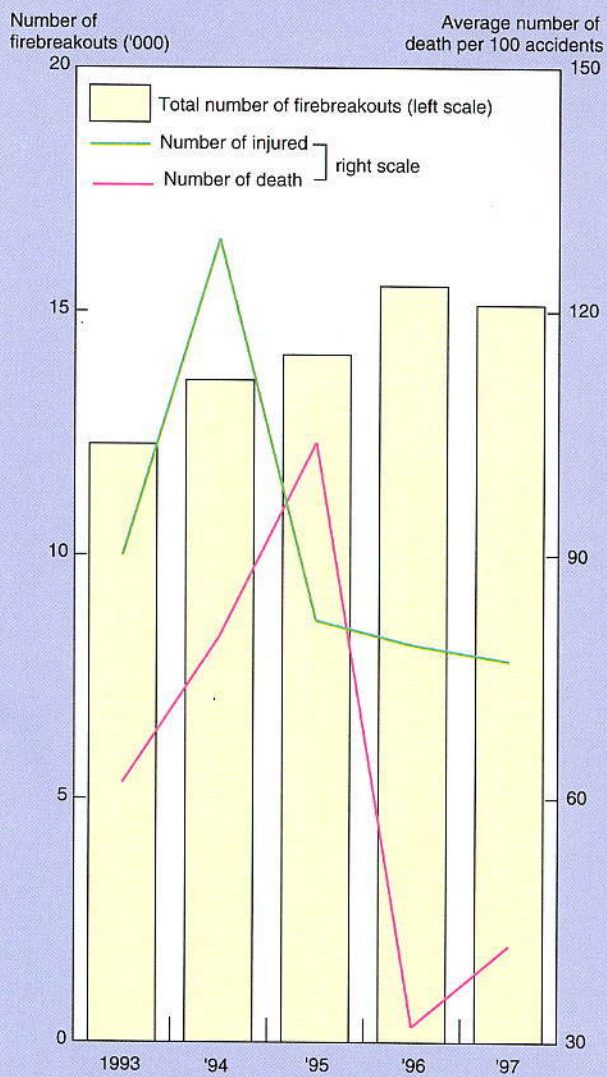


Source : Royal Malaysian Police (Headquarters)

The number of road accidents has been on the increase inspite of the measures taken by the government to ensure road safety and comfort of travel. In 1993, the number of accidents totalled 136,996 and this increased to 215,632 in 1997, reflecting an average annual increase of 12%. Among other factors, the greater frequency of road accidents could also be attributed to the increase in the number of vehicles, especially motorcars and motorcycles, during this period. In 1997, of the 338,066 vehicles involved in road accidents, about 60% were motorcars. This was followed by motor cycles (24%) and goods vehicles (12%).

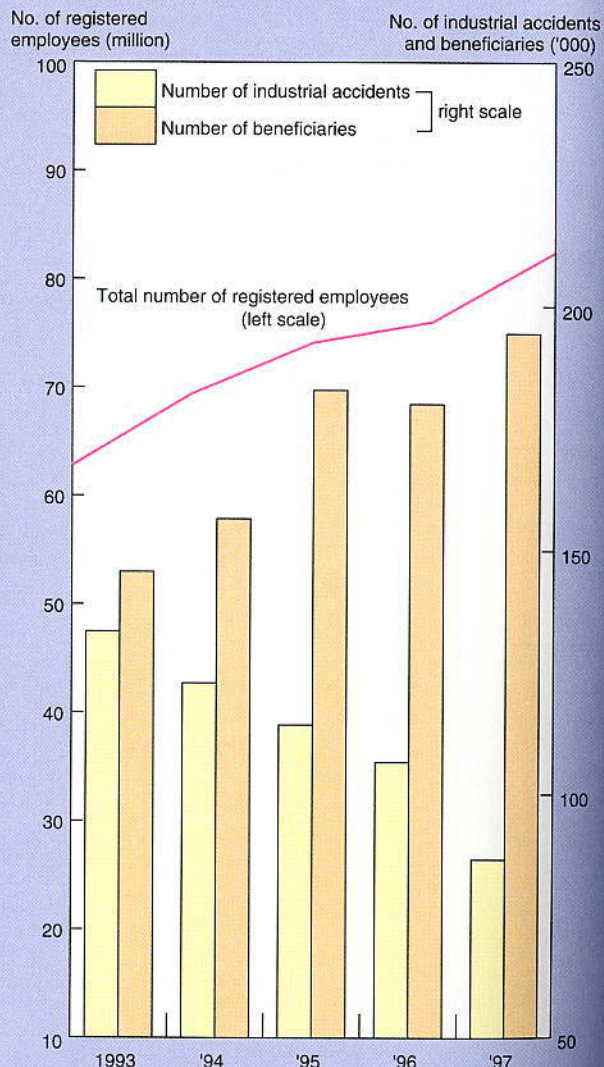
The casualties from these accidents, both injuries and death, also were on an increase though at a decreasing rate. In 1993, there were 41,686 casualties of which about 11% (4,666) were deaths. In 1997, there were 56,574 casualties including 6,302 or 10.6% deaths. The average number of deaths per 100 accidents decreased from 3.4 to 2.9.

Chart 9.9
Number Of Fire Breakouts and Casualties



Source : Fire and Rescue Department, Malaysia

Chart 9.10
Number of Registered Employees in SOCSO, Industrial Accidents Reported and Number of Beneficiaries



Source : Social Security Organisation

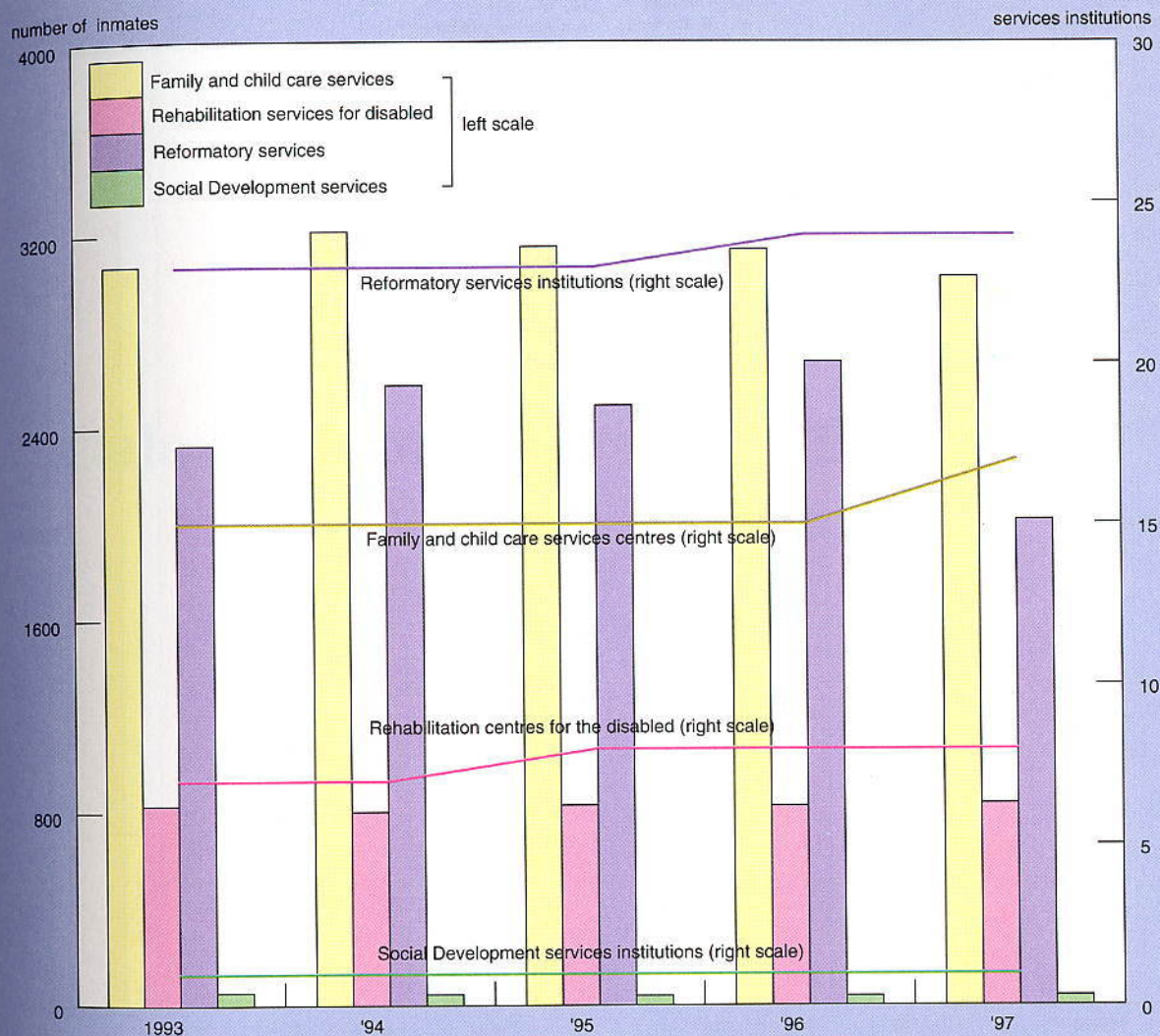
During the period 1993 to 1997, the number of fire breakouts increased from 12,275 to 15,134, damaging properties ranging from shops, factories, housing units, vehicles, machineries and plantations. The major sources of fire breakouts have been identified as electricity, cigarette butts, sparks of fire, fire-crackers/fireworks, gas/kerosene as well as incendiary and non-incendiary sources. The number of injured from these fire breakouts have however shown a decrease i.e. from 90 in 1993 to 77 in 1997. Similarly the number of deaths also decreased from 62 in 1993 to 42 in 1997.

Various measures are being undertaken by the government to provide effective fire prevention and fire-fighting services to protect life and property. These include construction of fire-stations in urban areas and small towns, upgrading of fire-rescue equipments, public awareness campaigns in preventing and controlling fire occurrences and the establishment of volunteer fire-fighting brigade in housing estates to enable prompt action during fire-occurrences.

The Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) was formed as a government department on 1 January 1971 and on 1 July 1985 it became a statutory authority. SOCSO administers the social security schemes which provide protection to the workers for several contingencies, namely, employment injury including commuting accidents, occupational diseases, invalidity and death. The scheme guarantees timely and adequate benefit payments to the worker and his dependents in the event of a contingency. The total number of registered employees increased from 6.3 million in 1993 to 8.3 million in 1997 reflecting an increase of over 30%. This is in tandem with the economic development of the country especially development in the manufacturing, construction and services sectors. The number of reported industrial accidents have declined by 35 % i.e. from 133,293 in 1993 to 86,589 in 1997, with the occupational safety measures and campaigns undertaken by the government. The number of beneficiaries from the industrial and industrial related accidents was 145,527 in 1993 and this increased to 194,421 in 1997.

Welfare

Chart 9.11
Number Of Welfare Services Institutions and Inmates



Source : Ministry of National Unity and Social Development

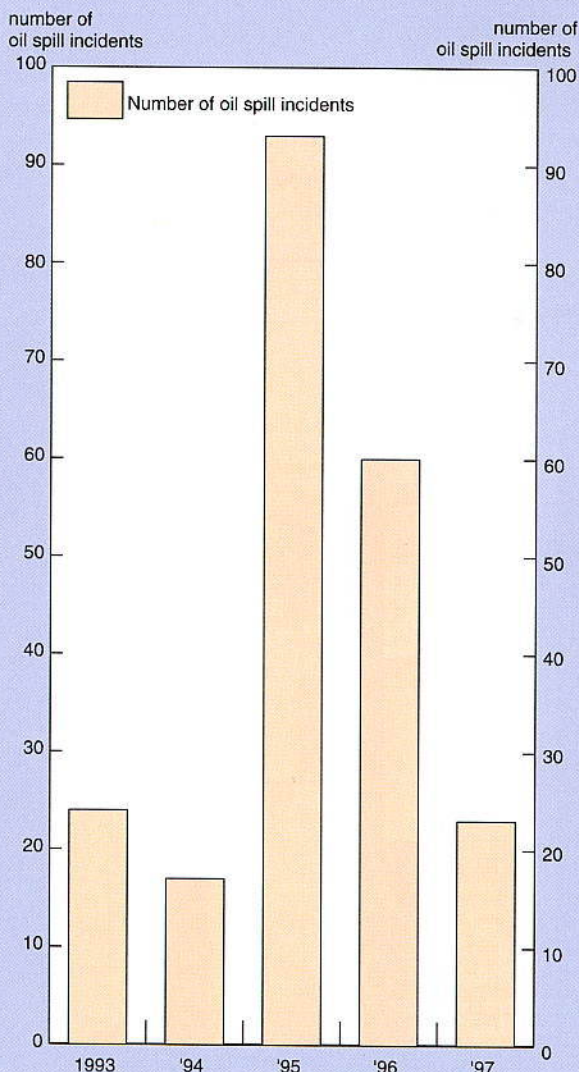
In line with the caring society concept, the Government continued to provide welfare services to the less fortunate segments of the population. These services undertaken by the Department of Social Welfare cover the following:

- **Family and Child Care Services** to ensure substitute care that encourages natural development and security for the dependant segments of society. A total of 17 centres have been set up as of 1997, which include homes for children, Rumah Seri Kenangan for the needy and aged and Desa Binadiri Pengemis to assist in the recovery of dignity and self-respect and become a self-reliant person. In 1997, the centres catered for about 3,022 inmates.
- **Rehabilitation Services for the Disabled** segments of the population to become self-reliant and more productive members of the community. In 1997 a total 8 institutions catered for some 837 inmates.
- **Reformatory Services** to prepare the socially maladjusted for eventual integration with the society. These include a school for rehabilitating juvenile offenders, remand homes/probation hostels to provide care and reeducation to the juveniles and an institution to rehabilitate women and girls exposed to moral danger. There were a total of 24 institutions in 1997 with about 1,770 inmates.
- **Social Development Services** which help develop skills for handicapped persons for placement in competitive employment. The institution which provides this service is Bengkel Daya Klang which had about 40 inmates in 1997.

Environmental Pollution

Chart 9.12

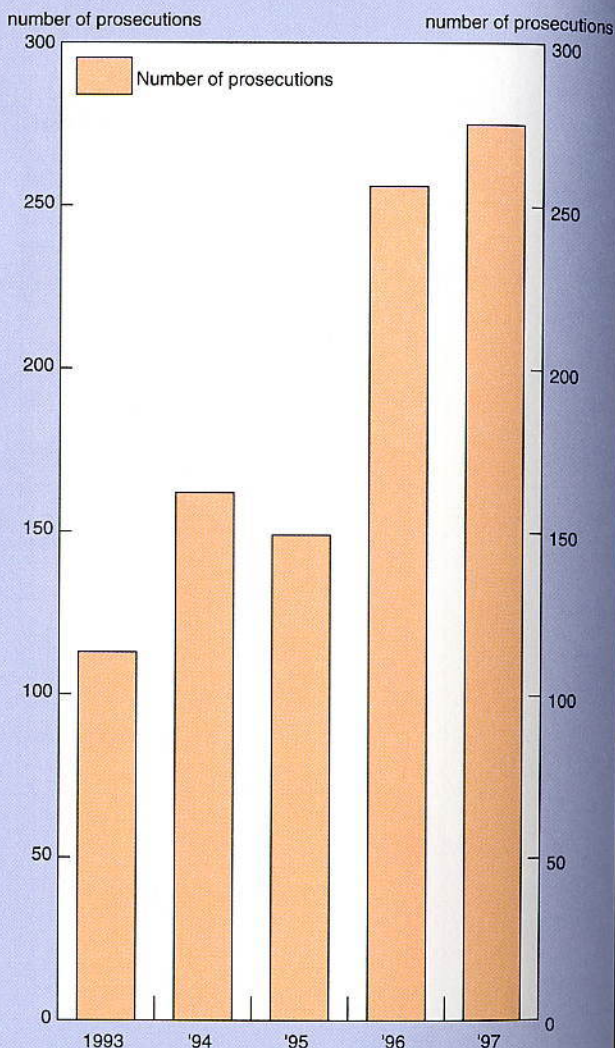
Oil - Spill Incidents in Malaysia



Source : Department of Environment.

Chart 9.13

Number of Offences Prosecuted Under the Environmental Quality Act 1974 and Regulations Made Thereoff



Source : Department of Environment.

Environmental issues continue to be an area of concern to the government, despite measures being taken to combat environmental pollution. One of the main contaminants of the environment are accidental oil spills. In 1993, 24 oil spill incidents were reported along the South China Sea and the Straits of Melaka and this increased sharply to 93 in 1995. Most of the incidents were due to collision of vessels especially tankers, pipeline leaks, oily water discharges, leakages during transfer and tanker cleaning activities. The main threat had been the oil spillages entering sensitive areas such as fish farms and mangrove swamps.

To prevent such practises, the Department of Environment tightened up detention procedures and stepped up surveillance of oil spills and desludging by vessels plying the Malaysian waters. The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was further strengthened with the establishment of the Oil Spill Beach Clean -Up Committees at each state and the Beach Clean-up Fund. Malaysia also ratified the International Convention for the prevention of pollution from ships on 1 May 1997 and the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation on 30 October 1997. These conventions deal with the prevention and control of pollution from vessel-based discharges and prescribe international cooperation on oil spill incidents. In 1997, there were 23 oil spill incidents which represents a significant reduction from 1996 when there were 60 such incidents.

Despite the efforts of the Government in implementing environmental laws and regulations, the number of offences prosecuted under the Environmental Quality Act 1974 and Regulations thereof, are on the increase. In 1997, a total of 275 cases were prosecuted compared with 113 cases in 1993. About 60% of the offences committed in 1997 were cases involving discharge of effluents exceeding the stipulated standards in contravention of the Act. Other offences were related to open burning and involving scheduled waste handling.

The Department of Environment has stepped up efforts to enhance public awareness on the need for environmental protection and conservation. Environmental information are being undertaken together with the NGO's, schools, institutions of higher learning and the private sector.