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**PROGRESS OF  
THE MALAY COMMUNITY  
IN SINGAPORE**

**SINCE 1980**

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## Introduction

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**This report highlights the progress of the Malay/Muslim community since 1980. It updates a previous report published in 2001, and presents educational, economic, social, and quality of life indicators\* which together give a comprehensive picture of the community.**

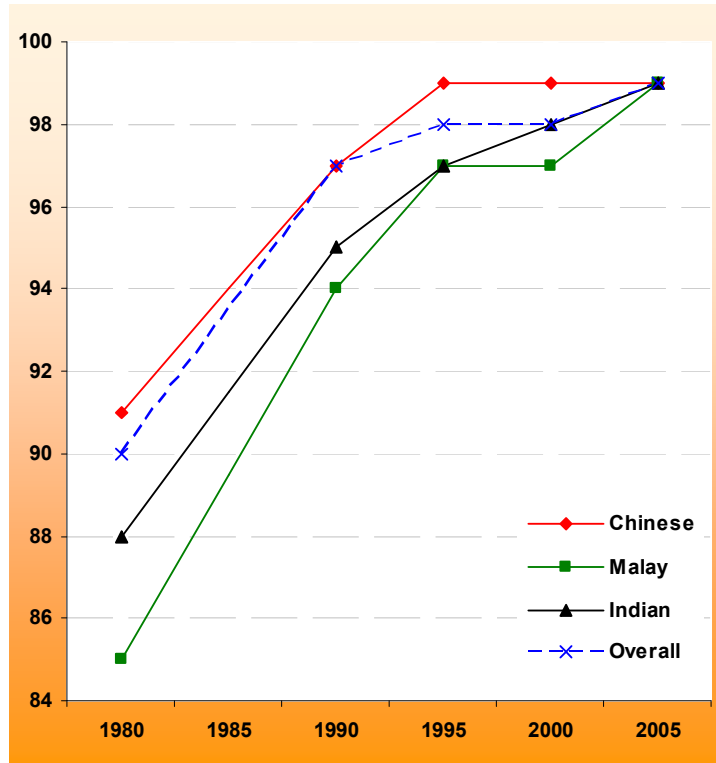
*\*Figures in report are rounded up to 2 significant figures.*

# EDUCATION

## 1. More Malay Children Enrolled in Schools

The proportion of students among Malays in the age group 7 -16 years has risen from 85% in 1980 to 99% in 2005. The proportion is now the same as the national average.

**Chart 1.1**  
Proportion of Students among Resident Population Aged 7 - 16 years (%)



	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	91	97	99	99	99
Malay	85	94	97	97	99
Indian	88	95	97	98	99
Overall	90	97	98	98	99

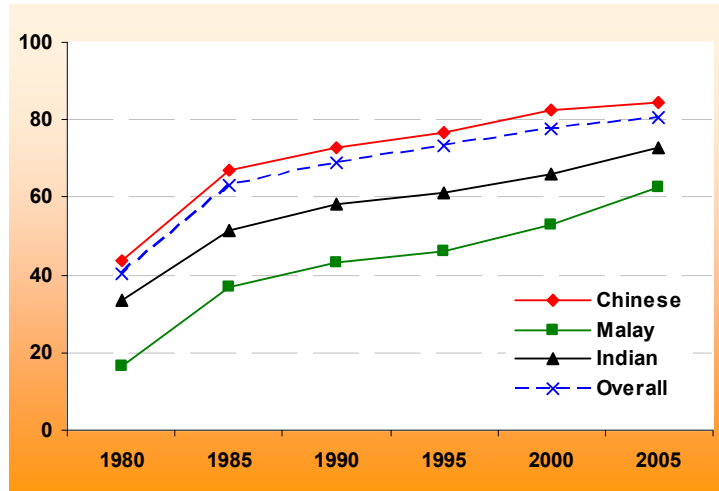
Source: Department of Statistics

Note: Data for 1985 is not available.

## 2. Improved Educational Performance

More Malay students in each cohort obtain at least five 'O' level passes, which enables them to progress to higher education. The proportion has increased steadily from 16% in 1980 to 63% in 2005.

**Chart 2.1**  
Percentage of GCE 'O' Level Students with at least Five 'O' Level Passes (%)

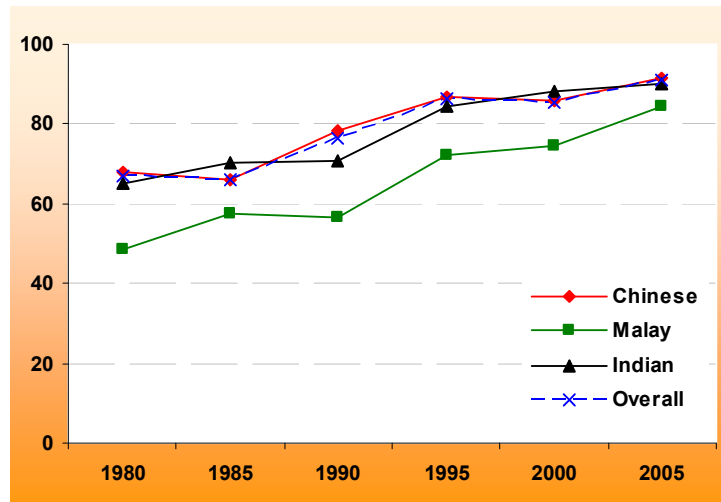


	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	44	67	73	77	83	84
Malay	16	37	43	46	53	63
Indian	34	51	58	61	66	73
Overall	40	63	69	73	78	81

Source: Ministry of Education

Similarly, the proportion of Malay 'A' level students who obtained at least two 'A' and two 'AO' level passes at the GCE 'A' Level examination (including General Paper) has increased from 49% in 1980 to 84% in 2005.

**Chart 2.2**  
Percentage of GCE 'A' Level Students with at least Two 'A' and Two 'AO' Level Passes including General Paper (%)



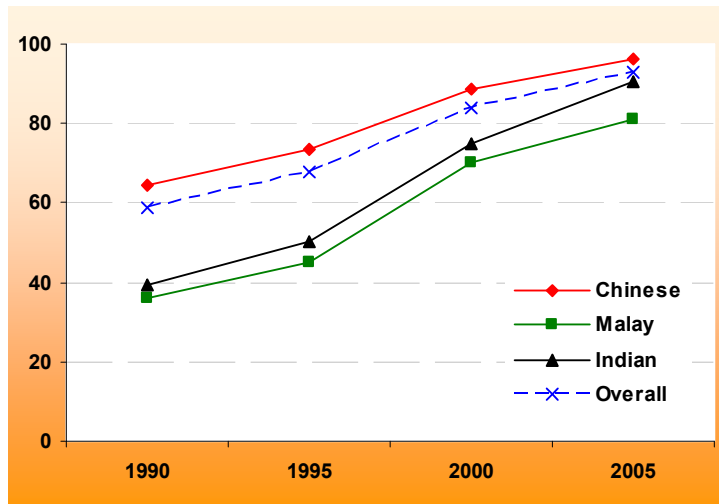
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	68	66	78	87	86	92
Malay	49	58	57	72	74	84
Indian	65	70	71	84	88	90
Overall	67	66	77	86	86	91

Source: Ministry of Education

### 3. Improved Educational Attainment

The proportion of a Malay P1 cohort admitted to post-secondary institutions (Institutes of Technical Education, Polytechnics, Junior Colleges / Centralised Institute) has more than doubled, from 36% in 1990 to 81% in 2005.

**Chart 3.1**  
Percentage of Primary One Cohort Admitted to Post-Secondary Institutions (%)

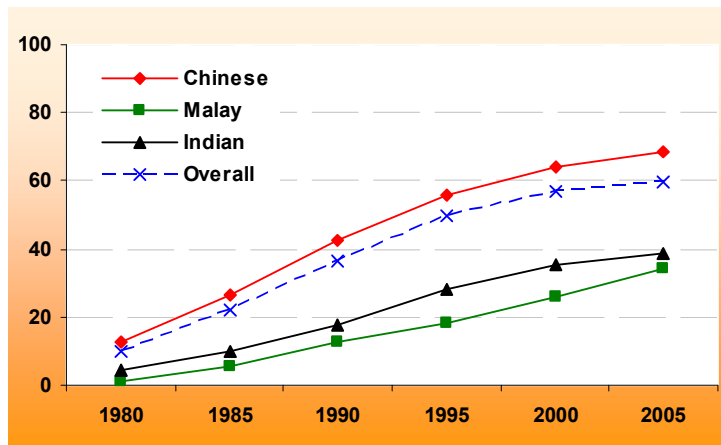


	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	65	73	88	96
Malay	36	45	70	81
Indian	39	50	75	90
Overall	59	68	84	93

Source: Ministry of Education  
Note: Data for 2005 is preliminary.

The proportion of a Malay P1 cohort entering local publicly-funded tertiary institutions (polytechnics or universities) has increased from 1.3% in 1980 to 34% in 2005.

**Chart 3.2**  
Percentage of Primary One Cohort Admitted to Tertiary Institutions (Polytechnics or Universities) (%)

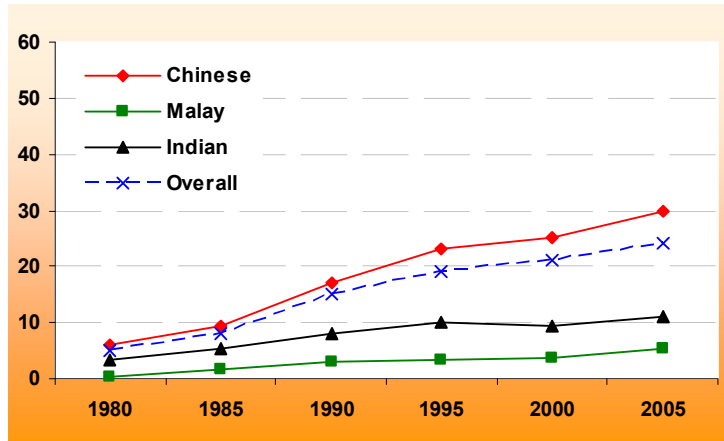


	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	13	27	42	56	64	69
Malay	1.3	5.8	13	18	26	34
Indian	4.3	9.7	18	28	35	39
Overall	10	22	36	50	57	60

Source: Ministry of Education

The proportion of a Malay P1 cohort entering local publicly-funded universities (National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Management University) has increased from 0.5% in 1980 to 5.4% in 2005.

**Chart 3.3**  
Percentage of Primary One Cohort Admitted to Local Publicly Funded Universities (%)



	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	5.9	9.5	17	23	25	30
Malay	0.5	1.6	2.9	3.3	3.8	5.4
Indian	3.5	5.4	8.0	10	9.3	11
Overall	4.9	7.9	15	19	21	24

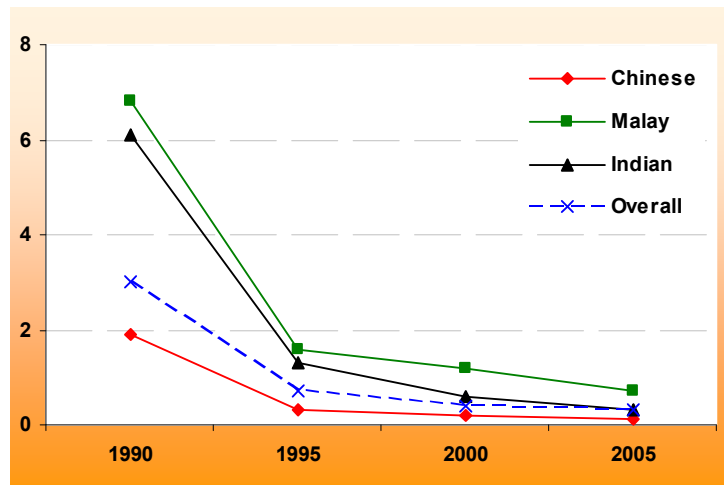
Source: Ministry of Education

#### 4. Fewer School Dropouts

The number of primary school dropouts has decreased steadily over the years. Out of every 1,000 Malay primary school students, there were just 0.7 dropouts in 2005, compared to 6.8 in 1990.

Refer to [Annex A](#) for data on the actual number of dropouts.

**Chart 4.1**  
Primary School Dropouts per 1,000 Primary School Students



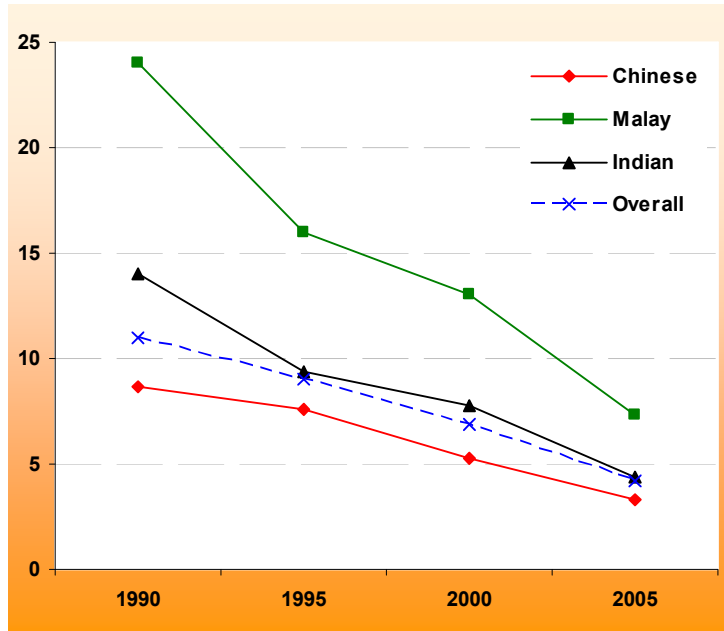
	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	1.9	0.3	0.2	0.1
Malay	6.8	1.6	1.2	0.7
Indian	6.1	1.3	0.6	0.3
Overall	3	0.7	0.4	0.3

Source: Ministry of Education

**Chart 4.2**  
**Secondary School Dropouts**  
**per 1,000 Secondary School Students**

The number of secondary school dropouts has also decreased. Out of every 1,000 Malay secondary school students, there were 7.3 dropouts in 2005, compared to 24 in 1990.

Refer to Annex A for data on the actual number of dropouts.



	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	8.7	7.6	5.3	3.3
Malay	24	16	13	7.3
Indian	14	9.4	7.8	4.4
Overall	11	9	6.9	4.2

Source: Ministry of Education

## 5. Comparison with Other Countries - Performance in Mathematics and Science

Singapore Malay students perform much better in Mathematics and Science than students from many other educational systems. The 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) compared educational outcomes across 49 developed and developing countries. Singapore students came in 1<sup>st</sup> in both Mathematics and Science at Secondary 2. The Ministry of Education estimates that Singapore Malays ranked between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in Mathematics (up from between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> position in 1999), and 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> in Science (up from between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> position in 1999). These rankings are well above the international averages.

Table 5.1  
Ranking in TIMSS 2003 for Top 30 Educational Systems  
(Secondary 2 /Grade 8)

	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE
Ranking	Country	Country
1	SINGAPORE	SINGAPORE
2	Korea, Rep. of	Chinese Taipei
3	Hong Kong, SAR	Korea, Rep. of
4	Chinese Taipei	Hong Kong, SAR
5	Japan	Estonia
	Singapore Malays	
6	Belgium (Flemish)	Japan
7	Netherlands	Hungary
8	Estonia	Netherlands
9	Hungary	United States
10	Malaysia	Australia
11	Latvia	Sweden
12	Russian Federation	Slovenia
13	Slovak Republic	New Zealand
14	Australia	Lithuania
15	United States	Slovak Republic
		Singapore Malays
16	Lithuania	Belgium (Flemish)
17	Sweden	Russian Federation
18	Scotland	Latvia
19	Israel	Scotland
20	New Zealand	Malaysia
21	Slovenia	Norway
22	Italy	Italy
23	Armenia	Israel
24	Serbia	Bulgaria
25	Bulgaria	Jordan
		International Average
26	Romania	Moldova, Rep. of
	International Average	
27	Norway	Romania
28	Moldova, Rep. of	Serbia
29	Cyprus	Armenia
30	Macedonia, Rep. of	Iran, Islamic Rep. of

Source: Ministry of Education

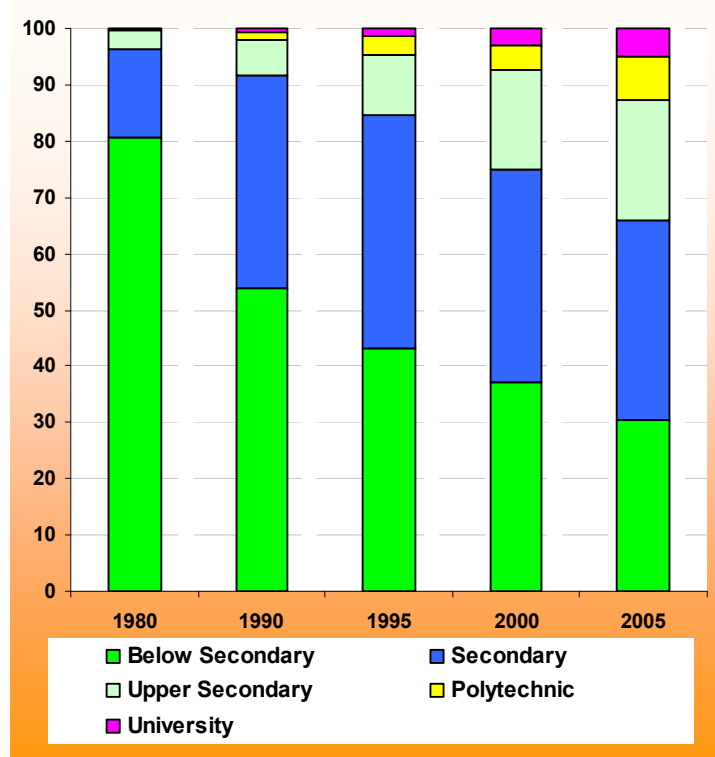
# WORKFORCE & INCOME

## 6. Improved Educational Profile of Malay Workforce

The educational profile of the Malay workforce has improved – 70% of the resident workforce in 2005 attained secondary and higher qualifications, as compared to 19% in 1980.

Refer to Annex B for data on Chinese and Indians in 2005.

**Chart 6.1**  
**Malay Resident Working Persons**  
**Aged 15 Years and Over By Highest Qualification Attained (%)**



	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
University	0.3	0.8	1.4	3	5.1
Polytechnic	-	1.2	3.5	4.3	7.6
Upper Secondary	3.3	6.5	10.6	17.7	21.5
Secondary	15.7	37.9	41.3	37.9	35.4
Below Secondary	80.6	53.7	43.3	37.1	30.4

Source: Department of Statistics

Note: 1) Polytechnic data for 1980 is not available separately and is included in the Upper Secondary category for year 1980.

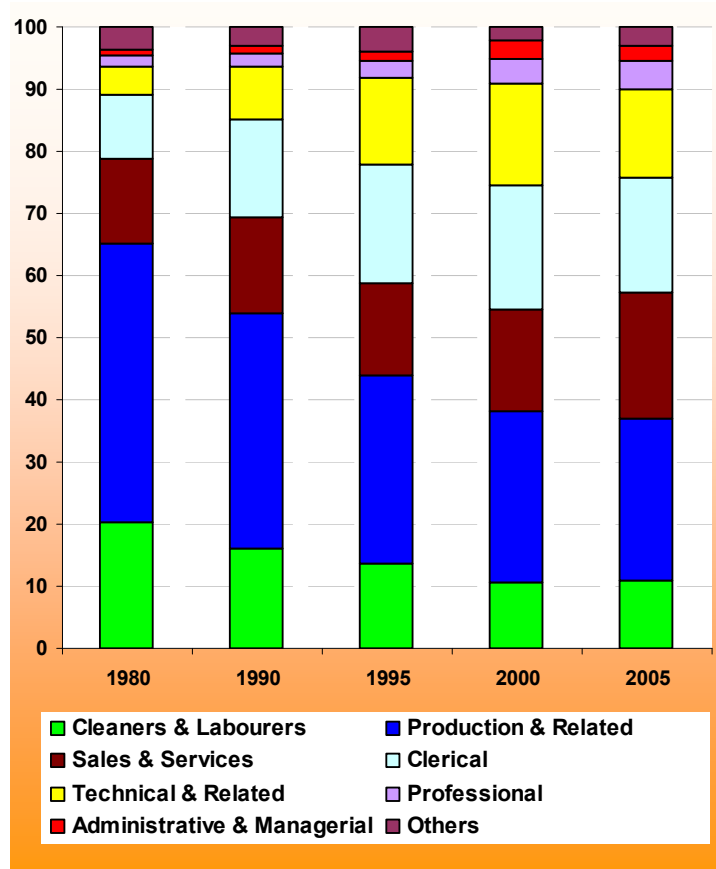
2) Data for 1985 is not available.

## 7. Improved Occupational Profile

Malay workers have experienced upward mobility in occupational profile. In 1980, only 7.2% of Malays were holding administrative and managerial, professional, and technical related jobs. This increased to 21% in 2005.

Refer to [Annex C](#) for data on Chinese and Indians in 2005.

**Chart 7.1**  
Occupational Distribution of Malay Resident Working Persons Aged 15 and Over (%)



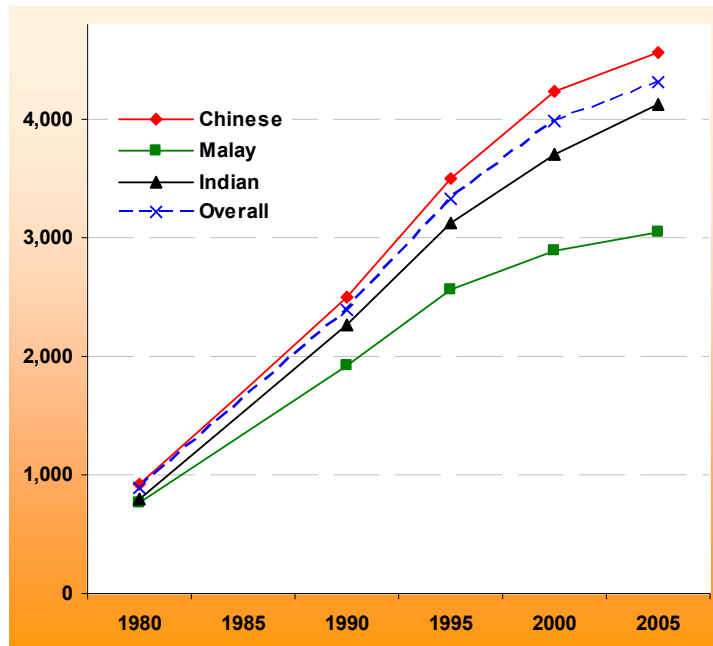
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Others	3.8	3.0	3.8	2.3	3.0
Administrative & Managerial	0.7	1.1	1.6	2.9	2.4
Professional	1.9	2.2	2.9	4.1	4.6
Technical & Related	4.6	8.4	13.9	16.4	14.2
Clerical	10.2	16.0	18.9	20.0	18.6
Sales & Services	13.6	15.4	14.9	16.2	20.3
Production & Related	45.1	37.7	30.4	27.5	26.1
Cleaners & Labourers	20.2	16.2	13.6	10.7	10.8

Source: Department of Statistics  
Note: Data for 1985 is not available.

## 8. Rising Income

Households are doing better financially. Median monthly household income for Malays has more than tripled from below \$800 in 1980 to \$3,100 in 2005.

**Chart 8.1**  
Median Monthly Household Income from Work among Employed Households (\$)



	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	920	2,500	3,500	4,240	4,570
Malay	770	1,920	2,560	2,900	3,050
Indian	800	2,260	3,130	3,700	4,120
Overall	890	2,390	3,330	3,990	4,320

Source: Department of Statistics

Note: 1) Data consists of only employed households.

2) Data for 1980 is not directly comparable to subsequent years.

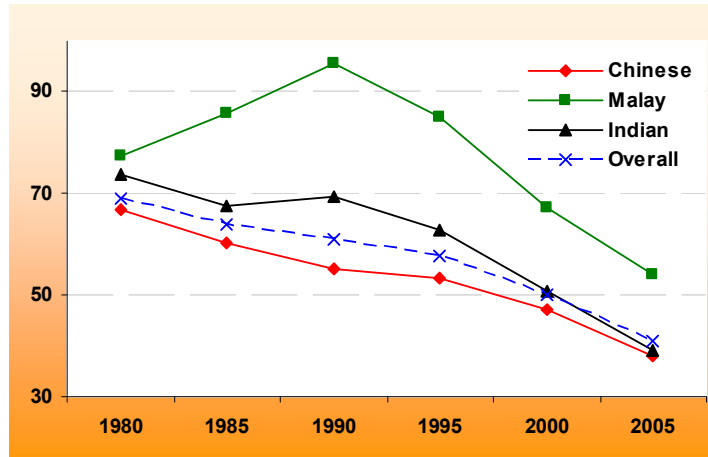
3) Data for 1985 is not available.

# SOCIAL PROFILE

## 9. Marriage and Family

The number of Malay marriages has declined following the national trend, although it remains higher than the other communities. In 2005, the marriage rate was 54 Malay females per 1,000 unmarried resident females. The corresponding figure in 1980 was 77.

**Chart 9.1**  
Female General Marriage Rate  
per 1,000 Unmarried Resident Females

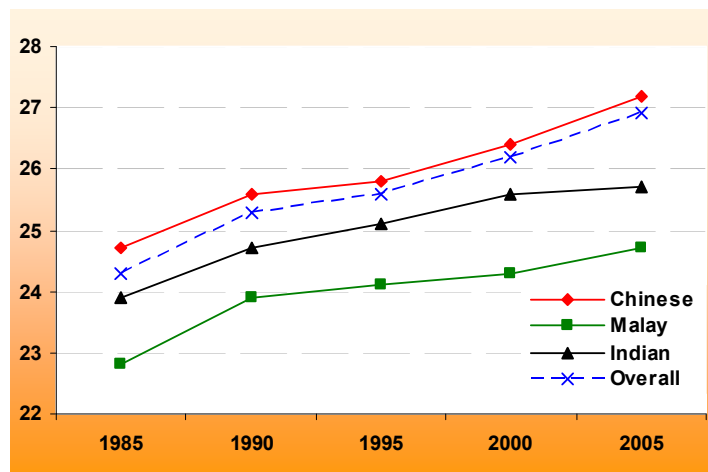


	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	67.0	60.1	55.1	53.3	47.2	37.9
Malay	77.3	85.8	95.5	85.2	67.1	54.0
Indian	73.6	67.6	69.5	62.7	50.7	39.2
Overall	68.9	64.0	60.9	57.6	49.9	40.8

Source: Department of Statistics

The median age of Malay brides at first marriage has increased, in line with the trend for Chinese and Indian brides. In 2005, the median age was 25 as compared to 23 in 1985.

**Chart 9.2**  
Median Age of Brides at First Marriage (Years)

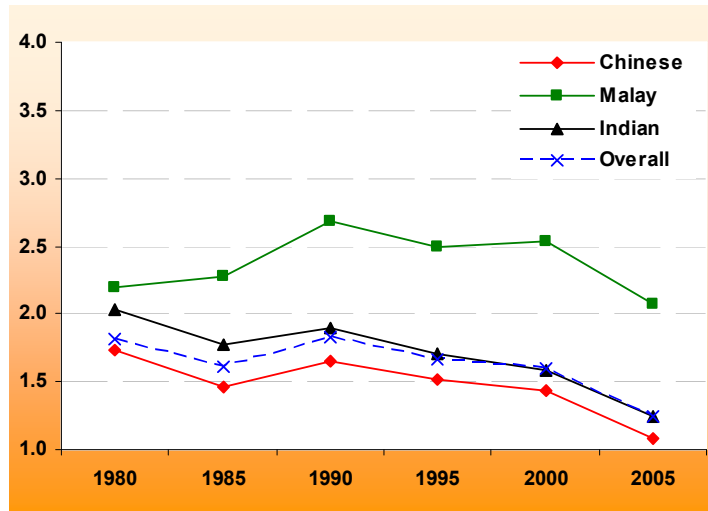


	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	24.7	25.6	25.8	26.4	27.2
Malay	22.8	23.9	24.1	24.3	24.7
Indian	23.9	24.7	25.1	25.6	25.7
Overall	24.3	25.3	25.6	26.2	26.9

Source: Department of Statistics

The total fertility rate (TFR) of Malays per resident female has decreased slightly from 2.2 in 1980 to 2.1 in 2005.

**Chart 9.3**  
Total Fertility Rate per Resident Female



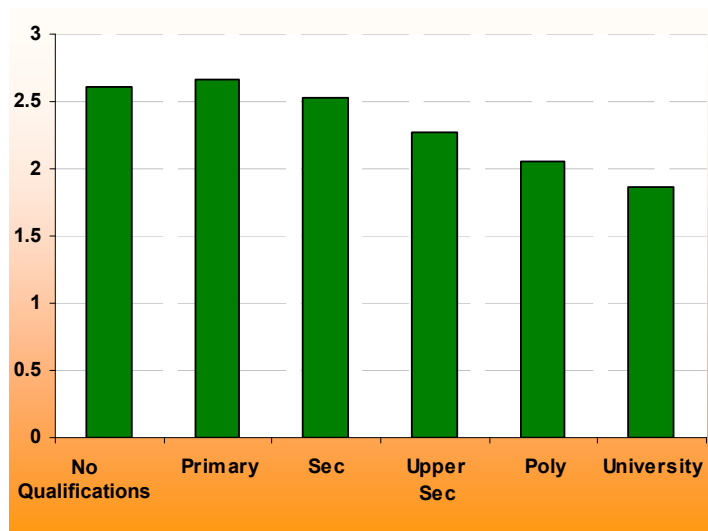
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	1.73	1.46	1.65	1.51	1.43	1.08
Malay	2.19	2.28	2.69	2.5	2.54	2.07
Indian	2.03	1.78	1.89	1.71	1.58	1.25
Overall	1.82	1.61	1.83	1.67	1.6	1.25

Source: Department of Statistics

Malay females with higher educational qualifications are likely to have fewer children, just like other communities.

Refer to [Annex D](#) for data on Chinese and Indians in 2005.

**Chart 9.4**  
Average Number of Children Born to Malay Resident Females Aged 40 – 49 Years By Highest Qualification Attained, 2005

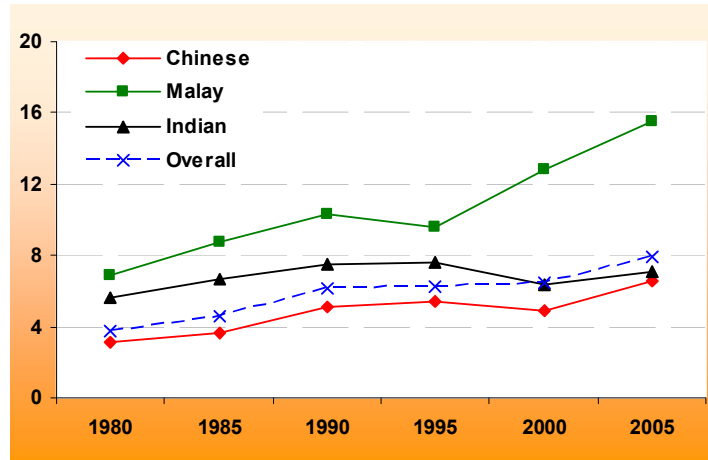


No Qualification	Pri	Sec	Upper Sec	Poly	Uni
2.60	2.66	2.53	2.28	2.06	1.87

Source: Department of Statistics

The number of divorces is growing. In 2005, the divorce rate was 16 Malay females per 1,000 married resident females, as compared to 6.9 in 1980.

**Chart 9.5**  
Female General Divorce Rate  
per 1,000 Married Resident Females

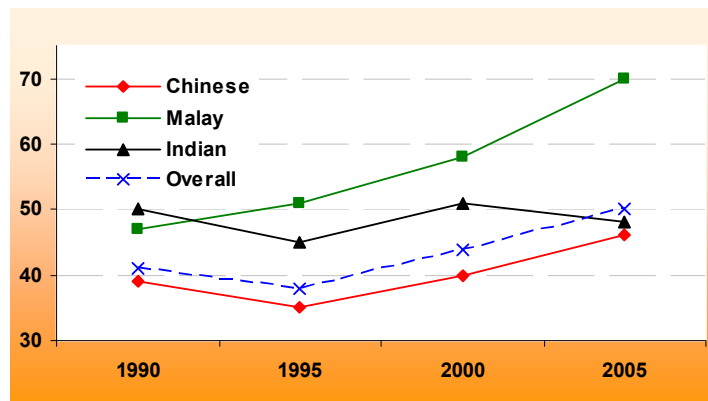


	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	3.1	3.6	5.1	5.4	4.9	6.6
Malay	6.9	8.8	10.3	9.6	12.8	15.5
Indian	5.6	6.7	7.5	7.6	6.4	7.1
Overall	3.8	4.6	6.1	6.2	6.5	7.9

Source: Department of Statistics

There is a steady rise in the number of single-parent households. Out of every 1,000 resident Malay households, 70 were headed by single parents in 2005, as compared to 47 in 1990.

**Chart 9.6**  
Resident Households Headed by Single Parents  
per 1,000 Resident Households with at least One Child Aged  
Below 16 Years of Age



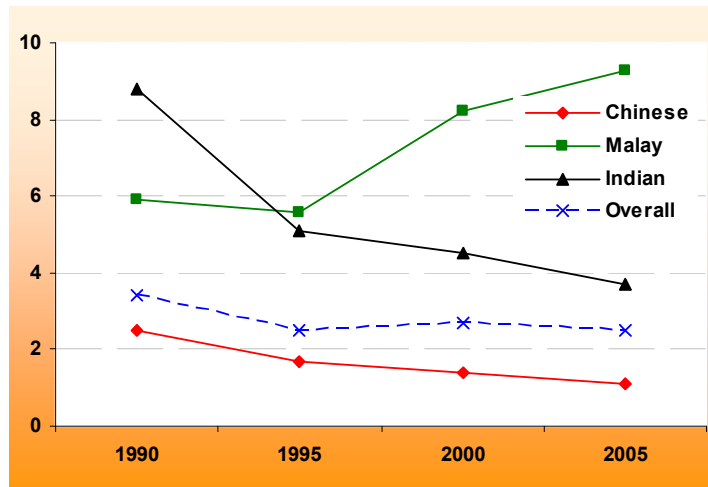
	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	39	35	40	46
Malay	47	51	58	70
Indian	50	45	51	48
Overall	41	38	44	50

Source: Department of Statistics

Note: Single parents refer to household heads who are single, widowed, divorced or separated and living with at least 1 child aged below 16 years.

The number of births registered by single Malay parents has also been rising. Such births per 10,000 female residents have increased from 5.9 in 1990 to 9.3 in 2005.

**Chart 9.7**  
Single Parent-Registered Births  
per 10,000 Female Residents



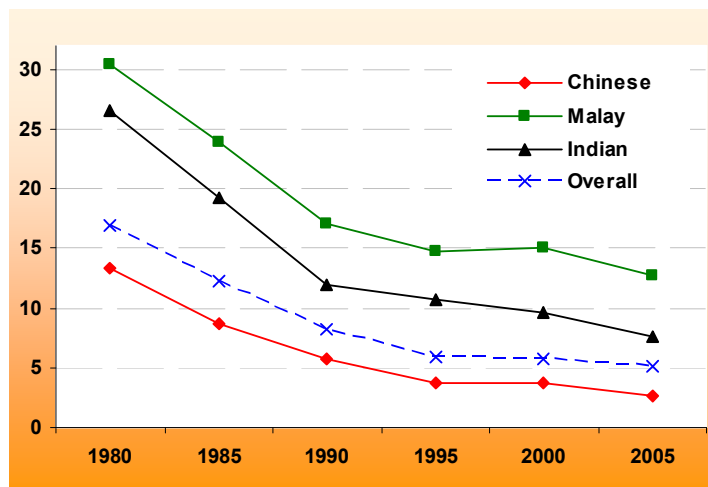
	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	2.5	1.7	1.4	1.1
Malay	5.9	5.6	8.2	9.3
Indian	8.8	5.1	4.5	3.7
Overall	3.4	2.5	2.7	2.5

Source: Immigration and Checkpoints Authority

## 10. Teenage Sexuality

Minor marriages remain relatively common, although the proportion has decreased from 31% of all Malay brides in 1980 to 13% in 2005.

**Chart 10.1**  
Proportion of Brides Aged 20 Years and Below (%)

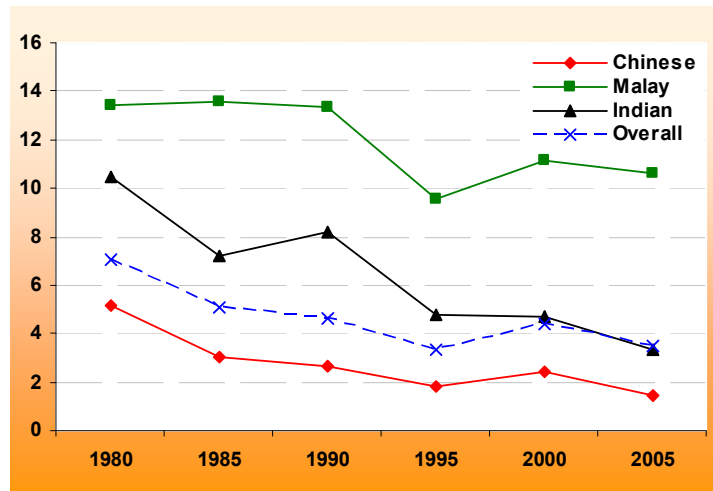


	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	13.4	8.7	5.7	3.8	3.8	2.7
Malay	30.5	24.0	17.1	14.8	15.1	12.7
Indian	26.6	19.3	12	10.7	9.6	7.6
Overall	17	12.2	8.2	5.9	5.8	5.1

Source: Department of Statistics

Teenage births remain high, although lower than before. In 2005, there were 11 Malay teenage births per 1,000 female residents (aged 10 to 19).

**Chart 10.2**  
Teenage Births per 1,000 Female Residents Aged 10-19 Years



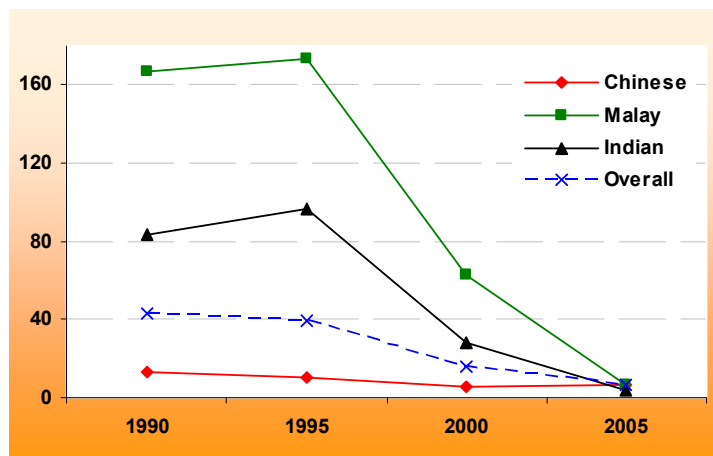
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	5.2	3.0	2.6	1.8	2.5	1.5
Malay	13.4	13.6	13.3	9.6	11.1	10.6
Indian	10.5	7.2	8.2	4.8	4.7	3.4
Overall	7.1	5.1	4.6	3.3	4.4	3.5

Source: Ministry of Health

## 11. Decline in Drug Abuse

Drug abuse has plummeted. The number of Malay drug abusers per 10,000 residents (aged 15 – 29) has decreased from 170 in 1990 to 6.7 in 2005.

**Chart 11.1**  
Resident Youth Drug Abusers per 10,000 Residents Aged 15-29 Years



	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	13.5	10.3	5.8	6.2
Malay	166.7	173.1	62.6	6.7
Indian	83.7	96.5	27.9	3.9
Overall	42.7	39.5	15.5	6.1

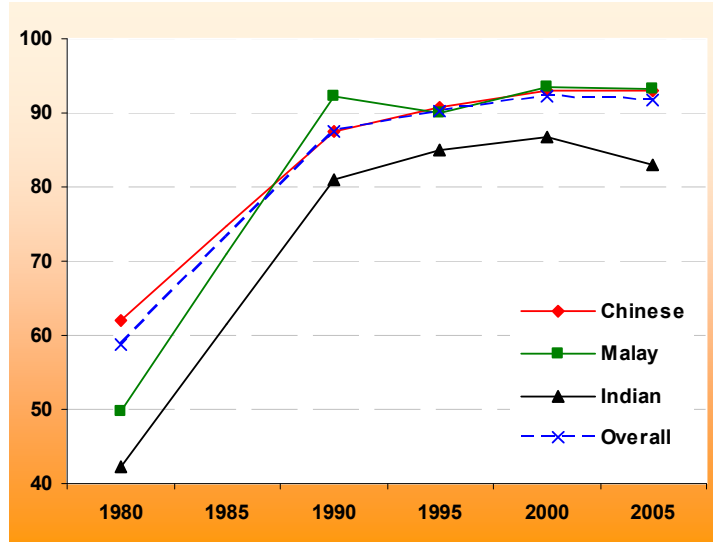
Source: Central Narcotics Bureau

# QUALITY OF LIFE

## 12. Better Housing

Home ownership is high. In 2005, 93% of Malay households owned the homes they lived in. In 1980, only half of Malay households owned homes.

**Chart 12.1**  
Home Ownership Rate among Resident Households (%)



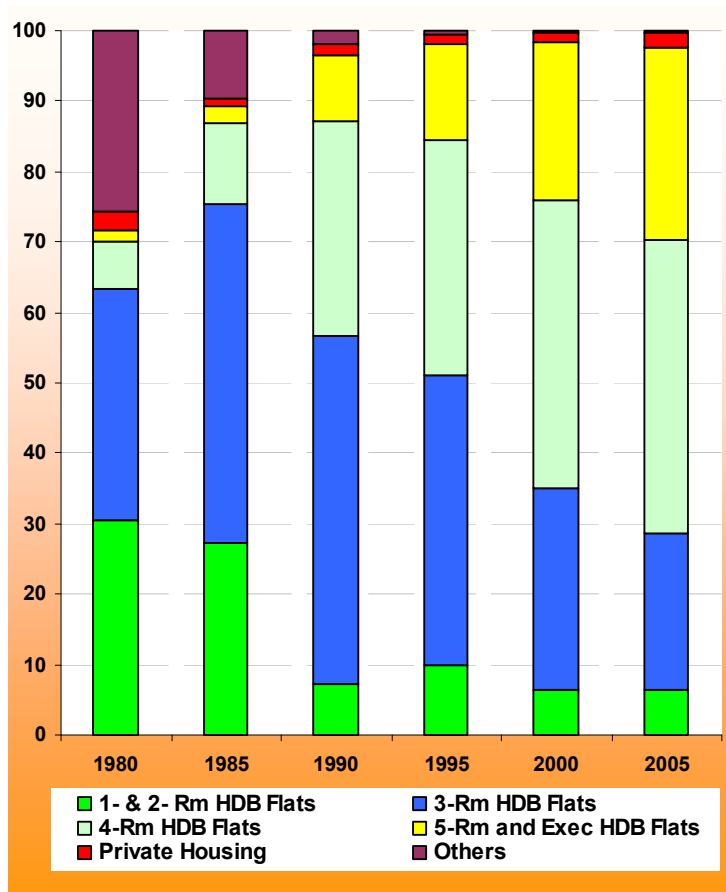
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Chinese	61.9	87.5	90.8	92.9	92.9
Malay	49.7	92.3	89.9	93.5	93.2
Indian	42.2	80.9	85	86.8	83.1
Overall	58.8	87.5	90.2	92.3	91.7

Source: Department of Statistics  
Note: Data for 1985 is not available.

**Chart 12.2**  
**Distribution of Type of Dwelling among Malay Resident Households (%)**

More households are living in bigger homes. The proportion living in 4-room and bigger flats and private housing increased from 11% in 1980 to 71% in 2005.

Refer to [Annex E](#) for data on Chinese and Indians in 2005.



	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Others	25.7	9.6	1.9	0.5	0.2	0.2
Private Housing	2.7	1.2	1.6	1.4	1.5	2.3
5-Rm and Exec HDB Flats	1.6	2.5	9.3	13.6	22.3	27.3
4-Rm HDB Flats	6.7	11.5	30.4	33.5	41.1	41.7
3-Rm HDB Flats	32.7	47.9	49.7	41.1	28.4	22.1
1- & 2- Rm HDB Flats	30.6	27.4	7.1	9.9	6.5	6.4

Source: Department of Statistics

Note: Others include other HDB dwellings, non-HDB shophouses, attap/zinc-roofed houses and other public flats.

### 13. Higher Ownership of Consumer Durables

Ownership of consumer durables has increased steadily. In 2003, more Malay households owned cars (23%), air-conditioners (47%), mobile phones (87%), personal computers (64%), and laser/VCD players (87%) than before.

Refer to Annex F for data on Chinese and Indians in 2003.

**Chart 13.1**  
Malay Resident Households with Specific Consumer Durables (%)

Consumer Item	1992	1998	2003
<b>Basic</b>			
Telephone	95	96	90
Handphone	1.1	40	87
Washing Machine	89	95	96
Refrigerator	98	100	99
Television	99	100	99
<b>Luxury</b>			
Car	13	16	23
Motorcycle / Scooter	23	27	23
Personal Computer	7.9	37	64
Laser / Video / CD Player	12	61	87
Microwave Oven	21	38	62
Air Conditioner	7.9	28	47
Cable TV Subscription	-	18	36
Internet Subscription	-	11	44

Source: Department of Statistics

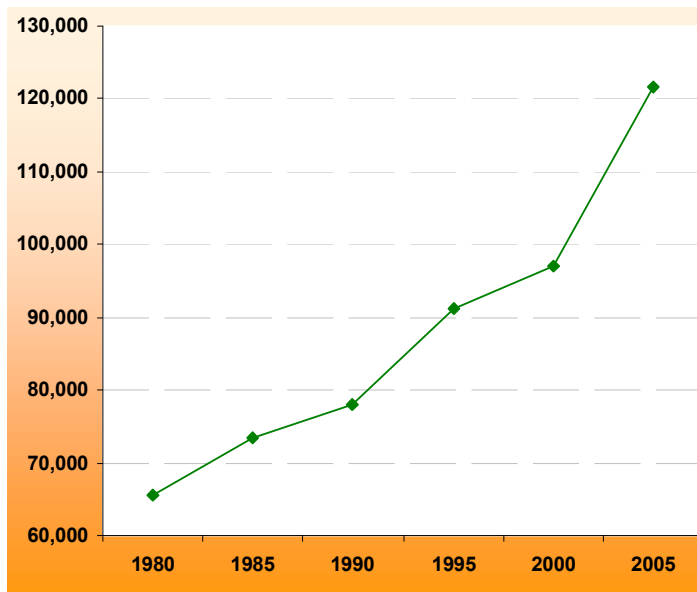
Note: Data includes all households in the Household Expenditure Survey (including one-person households).

### 14. Places of Worship

Between 1990 and 2005, the Islamic Council of Singapore (MUIS) has developed 11 new generation mosques in HDB new towns, half of which replaced old mosques. In addition, MUIS has also helped to redevelop and upgrade 13 existing mosques.

The mosque development/upgrading programme over the last fifteen years has provided about 43,500 more prayer spaces for the Muslim community.

**Chart 14.1**  
Number of Prayer Spaces



1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
65,645	73,460	77,970	91,220	97,020	121,520

Source: Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS)

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## 15. Conclusion

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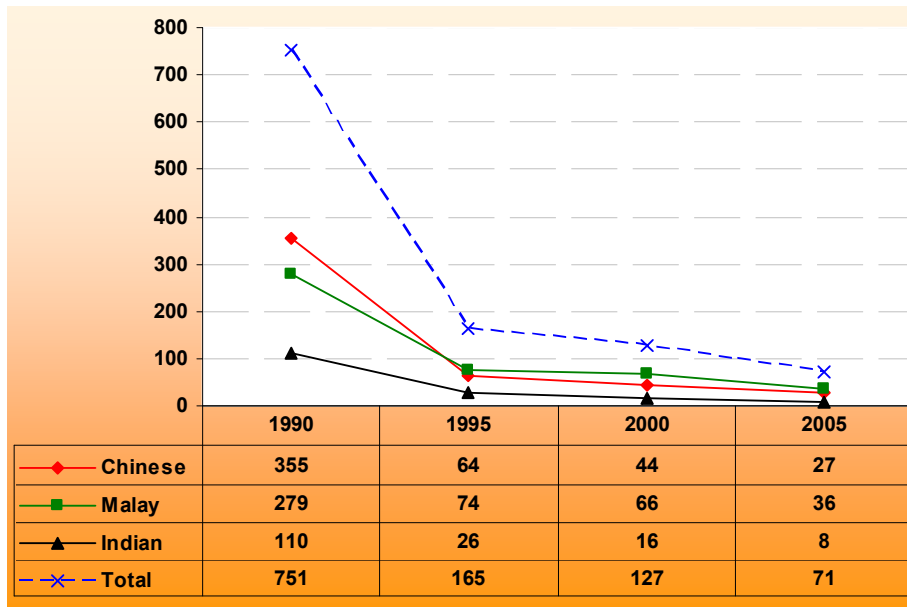
The overall well-being of the Malay/Muslim community has improved considerably over the last 25 years. More Malay/Muslim children are now attending schools. The number of school dropouts has decreased significantly, especially at the primary level. Educational outcomes have also improved, with more Malays making it to post-secondary education. Success in education has fed through and raised the socio-economic status of the Malay/Muslim community. Malay/Muslims are holding higher-skilled and better-paying jobs. Incomes have gone up. The quality of life, as measured by housing type and possession of consumer durables has also improved.

However, several social challenges remain. Divorce rates are rising. There are high rates of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. The number of single-parent families is also high. The progress which has been achieved equips the Malay/Muslim community to tackle these remaining challenges resolutely and decisively.

# ANNEXES

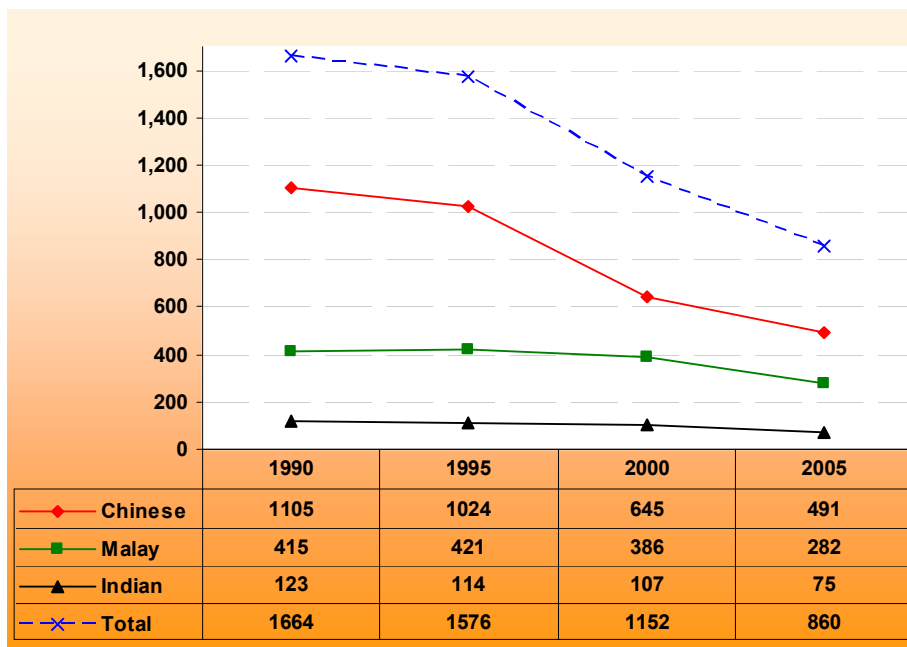
## Annex A

Chart A1: Number of Primary School Dropouts



Source: Ministry of Education

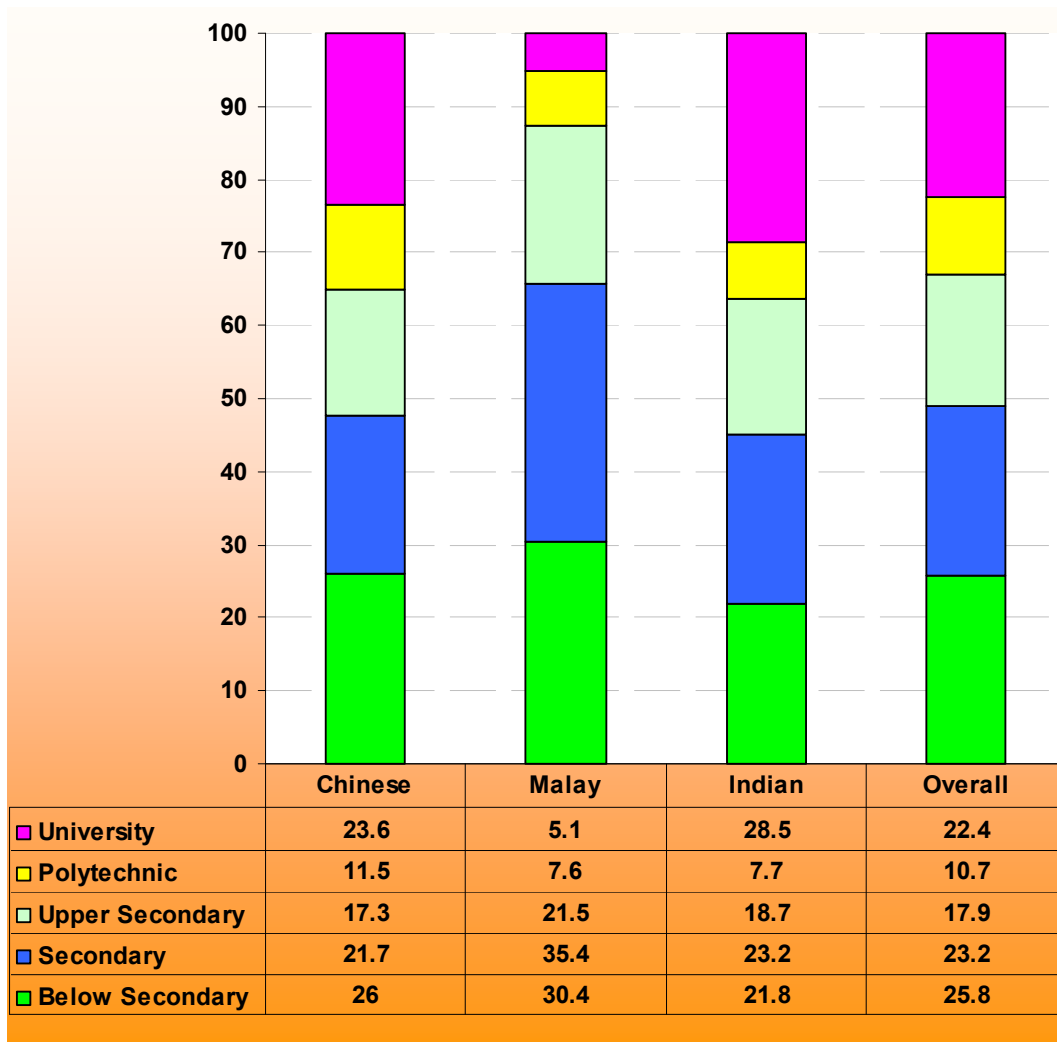
Chart A2: Number of Secondary School Dropouts



Source: Ministry of Education

## Annex B

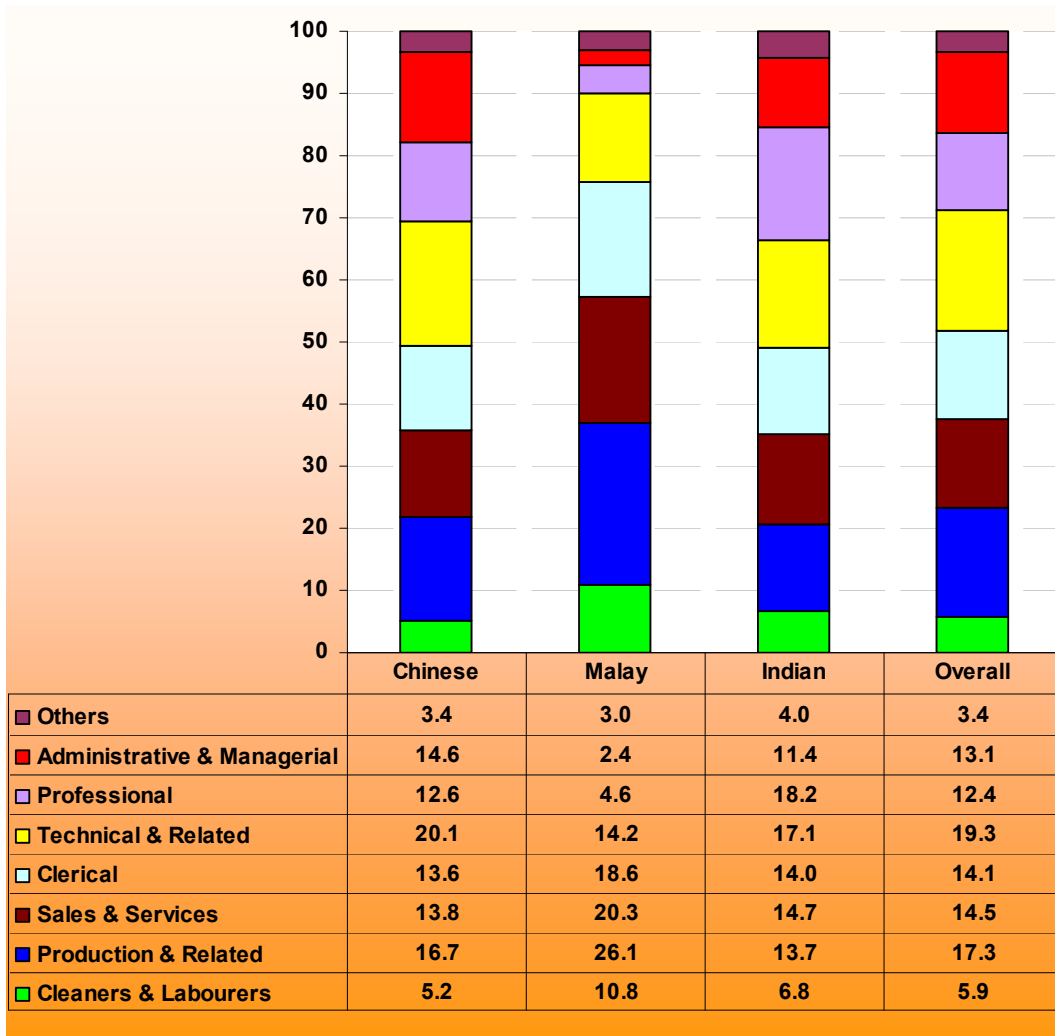
**Chart B1: Resident Working Persons Aged 15 Years and Over  
By Highest Qualification Attained, 2005 (%)**



Source: Department of Statistics

## Annex C

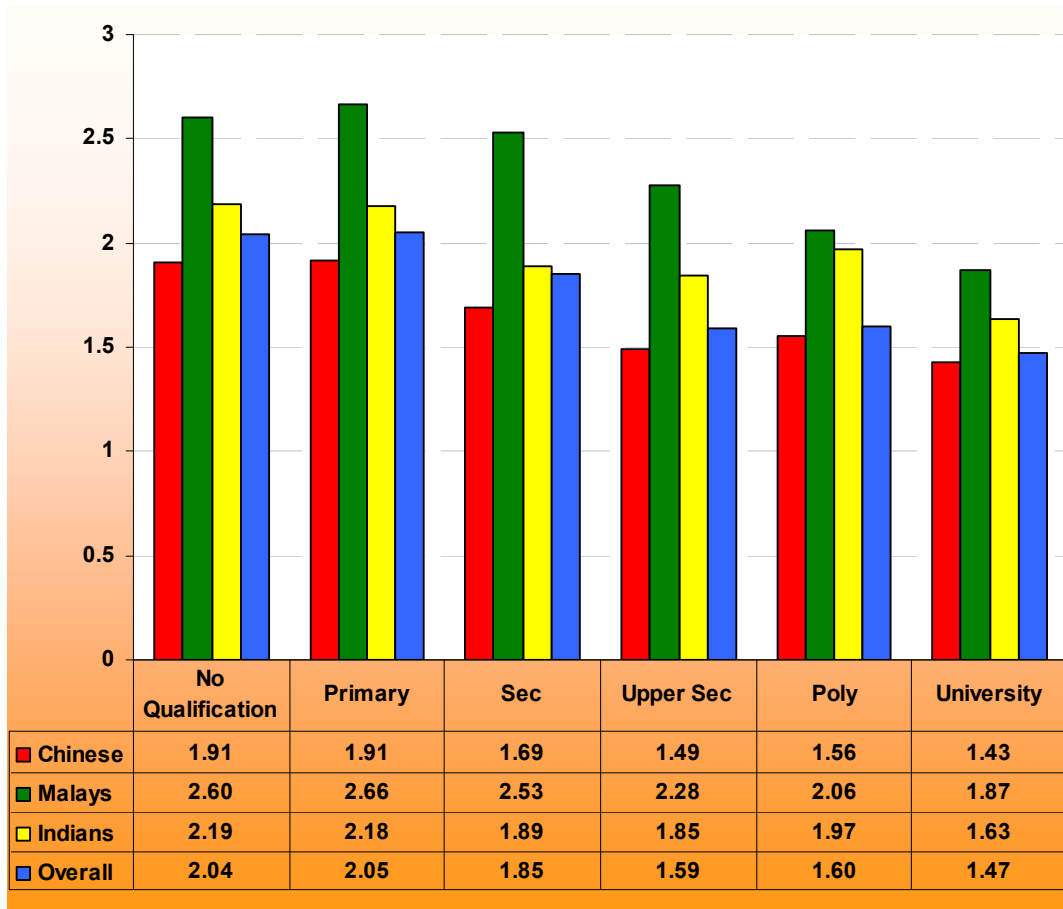
**Chart C1: Occupational Distribution of Resident Working Persons Aged 15 and Over, 2005 (%)**



Source: Department of Statistics

## Annex D

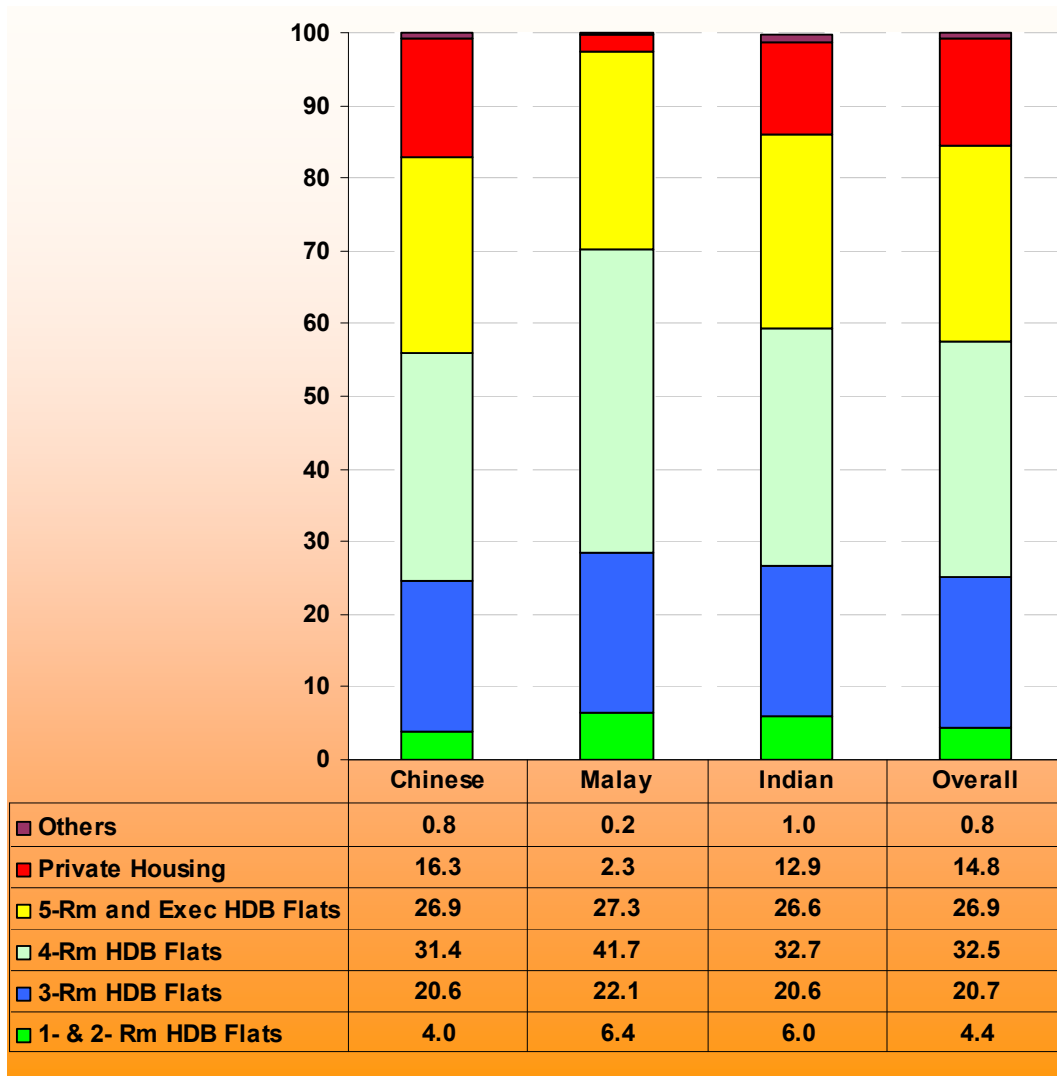
**Chart D1: Average Number of Children Born among Resident Females Aged 40 – 49 by Highest Qualification Attained, 2005**



Source: Department of Statistics

## Annex E

**Chart E1: Distribution of Type of Dwelling  
Among Resident Households, 2005 (%)**



Source: Department of Statistics

Note: Others include other HDB dwellings, non-HDB shophouses, attap/zinc-roofed houses and other public flats.

## Annex F

**Table F1: Resident Households with Specific Consumer Durables, 2003 (%)**

Consumer Item	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Overall
<b>Basic</b>				
Telephone	94	90	94	93
Handphone	90	87	87	89
Washing Machine	92	96	96	93
Refrigerator	99	99	98	99
Television	98	99	98	98
<b>Luxury</b>				
Car	39	23	22	35
Motorcycle / Scooter	6.4	23	8.6	8.7
Personal Computer	71	64	72	70
Laser / Video / CD Player	83	87	81	83
Microwave Oven	52	62	69	55
Air Conditioner	76	47	64	72
Cable TV Subscription	32	36	67	35
Internet Subscription	57	44	58	56

Source: Department of Statistics