

At the rural area of Tucupita, 76% of homes (Chart N° 4.17) respond to the classification of homes where for each working member there are from 1 to 5 that do not work, and have to be maintained by those who work.

Chart N° 4.17
Housings, according to family load Tucupita Municipality, rural area, 1990

Family load	%
Total	100
1 to 5 persons	76
6 or more persons	24

Source: OCEI, Census of population and housing, 1990
Own Calculations

In general, based on the analysis of the available information, it can be established that the area of direct influence of this study is defined by: a very young population (a majority younger than 35 years), where the women/men ratio is relatively equal, with a very low educational level (not beyond basic education), and a high index of school drop-out.

On the other hand, the standard of living is low, considering that: access roads to the communities are mainly unpaved, the access to public services is almost exclusively limited to Barrancas and the houses are of low construction quality (shanty houses) and scarce public utilities. Lastly, the working population must share their income with at least 5 more members of their family.

4.4.5. Characterization of the area of study (direct influence) based on field information (surveys)

This paragraph tries to characterize the socioeconomic situation of the communities being studied and is based on the information gathered during the primary information compiling process. Only for the purpose of giving an order to the presentation, this characterization is approached by sequentially analyzing the following parameters: population, housing, homes and economic dynamic.

- Population
- Distribution by groups of age and sex

The differences between Barrancas and the remaining communities, concerning the population distribution by groups of age and sex, are not really significant. In the case of Barrancas, 45% of the surveyed population were men and 55% were women. For the rural communities the result was that 56% of the population were men and 44% were women. Likewise, as it can be observed in Charts (N° 4.18 and 4.19), there is an interesting phenomenon in the case of the youngster population (13 to 25 years old) since both in Barrancas and the rural communities, a reduction can be observed in the distribution values in this category. The explanation to this may be due to the fact that it is in this age group that the population is being educated and enters into the labor sector, and thus it is probable that they migrate to other cities defined as attraction poles for the zone, such as: Maturín, Tucupita, Ciudad Guyana, among others, in the search for employment sources, better educational services and higher education. Although this phenomenon could arise from the situation, or product of the sample characteristics, there is no doubt that it would be very interesting to delve deeper into the possible explanations to such variation.

Chart N° 4.18
Population distribution by gries groups of age, according to sex, Barrancas

Age groups	Total %	Sex	
		Masculine %	Feminine %
Total	100	45	55
Children (0 a 13)	36	15	21
Youngsters (14 a 25)	23	10	13
Adults (26 a 64)	36	17	19
Older citizens (65 and more)	6	3	2

Source: Own Calculations

Chart N° 4.19
Population distribution by gries groups of age, according to sex, Rural communities

Age groups	Total %	Sex	
		Masculine %	Feminine %
Total	100	56	44
Children (0 a 13)	43	22	21
Youngsters (14 a 25)	19	12	8
Adults (26 a 64)	33	20	13
Older citizens (65 and more)	5	2	3

Source: Own Calculations

Another aspect that should be highlighted is that the bulk of the population is concentrated (59%) in the first two population strata, and thus at the zone, just as in the country in general, the population is very young, that is, younger than 26 years old.

- Ethnic Groups

The presence of indigenous population in the area of study is not very significant. Although the Delta Amacuro State is the one that concentrates the largest percentage of indigenous population nationwide, the Warao ethnic group which is the most numerous one, is mainly located at the lower and medium Delta and not in the area of study. It was then possible to know that both in Barrancas and in the studied rural communities, the primitive indigenous population ratio ("non adapted to the "Creole way") is significant. Most inhabitants of this area are half-caste, product of the union of Indians and Creoles, or Indians already incorporated to the civilization, although generally in precarious conditions.

A quite particular and critical situation takes place in Barrancas, since there is a small area by the jetty where there is an Indian settlement in very unhealthy conditions. This sector of the population is absolutely excluded from the socioeconomic dynamic of the zone, and it would seem that they do not receive any attention from the authorities of Barrancas or Delta Amacuro.

According to the information gathered at the zone, the City Hall of Barrancas built them a structure at Isla Chivera and relocated them there. Nevertheless, this group of native Indians returned again

to the border of the jetty.

There, some of them manage to work as day laborers, unskilled laborers of farms and curiaras or other boats.

It is a population where problems such as alcoholism, drug-addiction, and diseases, among others, were observed. Nevertheless, due to the characteristics and scope of the current study, it was not possible to delve deeper into the situation of this group of local Indians, nor was it possible to know which are their reasons to remain in that area and under such conditions

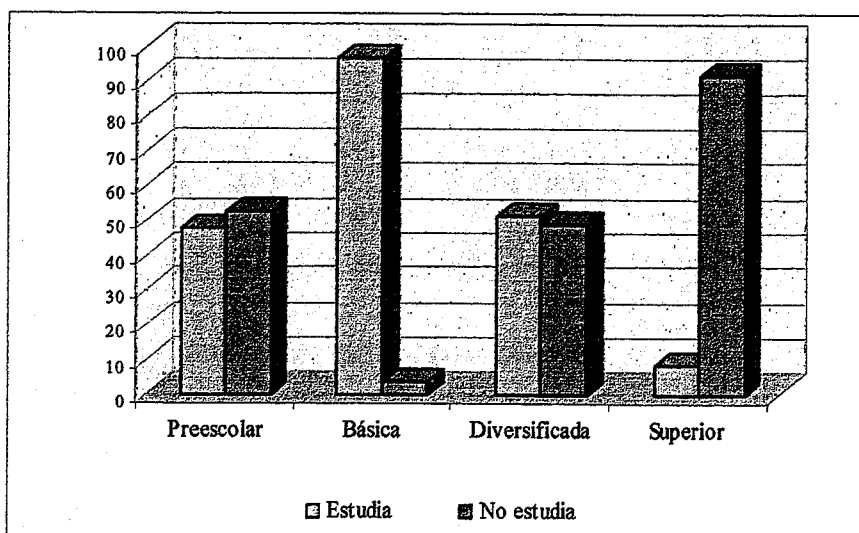
Another aspect observed is a significant immigration of people from the former British Guyana, mainly in Barrancas and Apostadero, who have managed to become incorporated to the socioeconomic dynamic of the sector and are employees in different occupations, their children attend school and live in the community with the remaining inhabitants of the area.

- Education

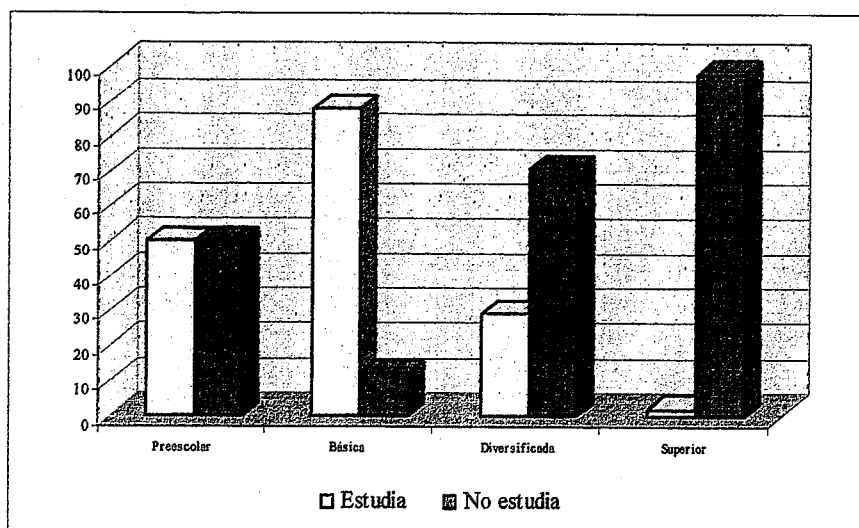
In terms of education, it should be pointed out that both in the rural communities and in Barrancas, approximately half of the population of school age does not study. (Chart N° C-4.6 Annex C). But in Graphs N° 4.10 and 4.11 this is analyzed in more detail, and it can be seen that in general, school abandonment takes place between the completion of elementary school and the beginning of high school.

Most people that studied completed basic education (68% in Barrancas and 75% in the rural communities), from then on, the ratio of population that continued the educational process or reached a substantially higher level of instruction (17% in Barrancas and 4% in the rural communities), that is, only 4% of the school age population of the rural communities, attained an educational level beyond basic education (Chart N° C-4.8 - Annex C). Likewise, from the population of high school age, in Barrancas, 49% and in the communities, 71% do not study, while the population in age for basic education, 96% in Barrancas and 88% of that population in the rural communities studies. It is thus confirmed that in general, the population of Barrancas and the rural communities only complete in their majority the basic education level. (Chart N° C-4.6 Annex C).

Graphic N° 4.10
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL LEVELS.
BARRANCAS



Graphic N° 4.11
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL LEVELS.
COMUNITIES



Graph N° 4.12 illustrates the instruction levels of the population.

Most youngsters that abandon their studies are dedicated to the family activity that is usually fishing or agriculture, since they are not formally trained to compete in a labor market where there is an increasing demand of higher qualification.

Another peculiarity of the educational aspect of the population being studied is that in most cases they have a school backwardness in relation to their age. Thus for example, 65% of the population should be attending high school, but they are in elementary or basic school. This educational lagging behind can be explained by several reasons, either because the population in school age enters late into the educational system, that is, a child that at the age of three should be entering pre-school, probably will not do it until the age of 5, which implies a delay that cannot be overcome afterwards. Another factor for this lagging behind can be a high rate of grade repetition because they get non-passing grades, in any of the cases both situations can be previous steps to the definite school abandonment.

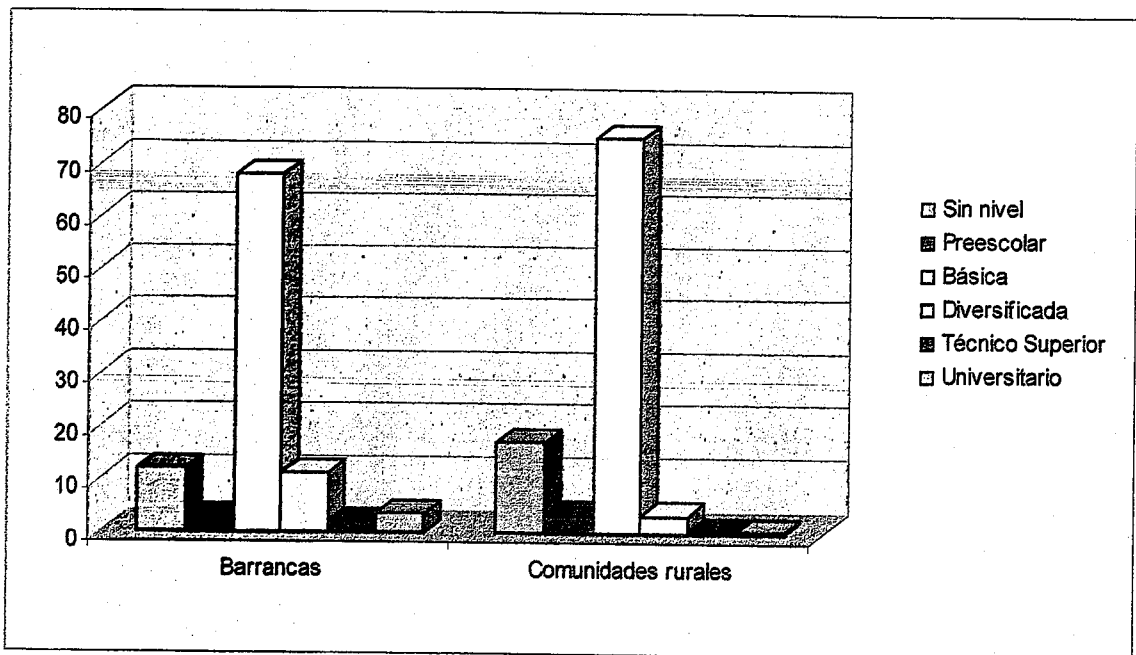
- Economic activity

When referring to the economic activities, it is necessary to start by distinguishing in the area of study two particular dynamics, one is that of Barrancas, the other is that of the communities close to Barrancas. Graph N° 4.13 shows the population older than 15 years of age, since it is after this age that the population is considered to have reached the working age. Graph N° 4.14 shows the type of occupation, which allows to know the activities to which the population of Barrancas and its communities aim at.

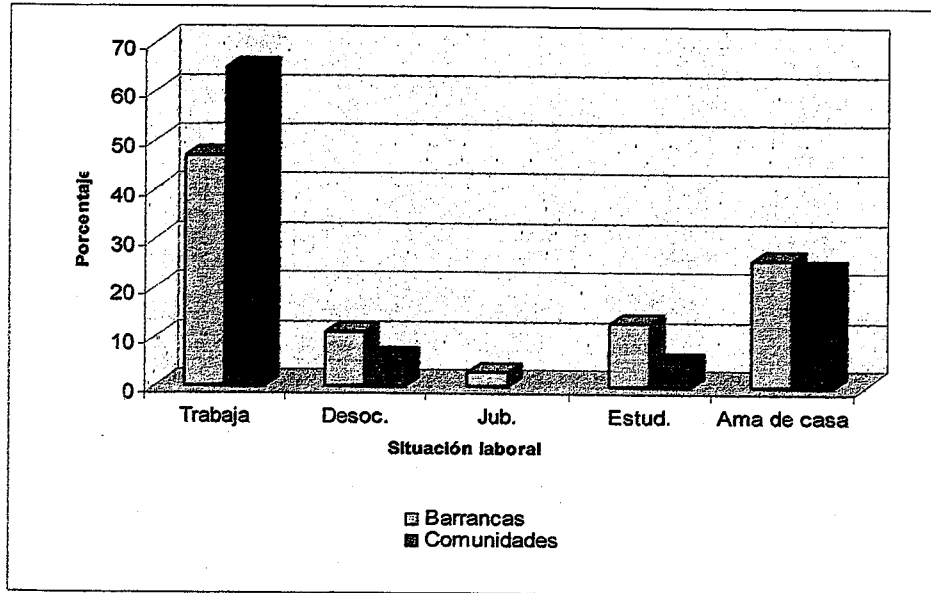
Barrancas is characterized for having a 47% employment and 11% unemployment (Chart N° C-4.4 - Annex C). It is important to notice that 26% of the population is dedicated to housework. Graph N° 4.14 shows that Barrancas, different from its neighboring communities, has an economic activity of low rural level, the percentage of occupied persons dedicated to fishing, agriculture or livestock is low. The main occupations are commerce (18%), construction (16%) and manufacture (11%). See Chart N° C-4.5 in Annex C).

Interpreting the data and adding it to the field observation made at the zone where it can be said that the economic dynamic of Barrancas is supported on two factors: agriculture and livestock and the public sector. Concerning the agriculture and livestock activity, Barrancas is a gathering and distribution center of the products of the zone, where the inhabitants of the close-by communities

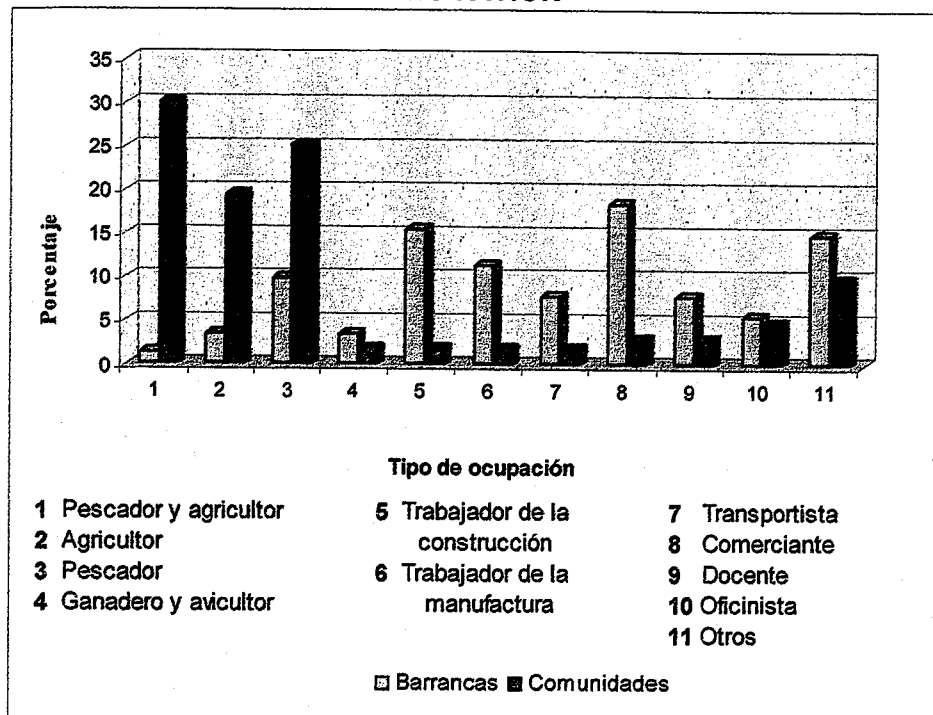
Graphic N° 4.12
LEVELS OF INSTRUCTIONS REACHED BY THE POPULATION,
BARRANCAS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES



Graphic N° 4.13
POPULATION OVER 15 YEARS OLD ACCORDING TO LABORAL STATUS AND RESIDENCE LOCATION



Graphic N° 4.14
POPULATION PER TYPE OF OCCUPATION ACCORDING TO RESIDENCE LOCATION



sell their products (fish catch and crops) and they buy food and other products, while on the other hand, a high percentage of the population directly or indirectly depends on the public sector (mainly the City Hall of Sotillo and the Delta Amacuro Government). As it can be understood, all other activities of Barrancas are closely conditioned to the influence exerted by the agriculture and livestock and the public sector activities.

Other activities such as tourism are of low significance in Barrancas. In some opportunities it is possible to see vessel owners to offer transportation to visitors that want to fish in the area, but in general tourism is an informal activity, this is why those who work there, do it part time; this is not the case of Tucupita, where it is possible to find a more structured tourist activity.

The neighboring activities show an essentially rural dynamic. On the one hand is the fact that there is a greater percentage of employed people than in Barrancas (65% vs. 47%) and on the other the significant weigh that the agricultural and fishing activities have. 25% is exclusively dedicated to agriculture, 20% exclusively dedicated to fishing, and 30% dedicated to both activities. In total, 75% of the occupied population is dedicated to fishing or agriculture (See Chart N° C-4.5 in Annex C). The economic dynamic of these communities is very different to that of Barrancas, since in said city the economic activities are more stable and represent a more stable income, while the agricultural and fishing activities developed in the communities are subject to the climatic seasons.

During the rainy season (locally called winter season or "when in the North"), the low lands are flooded, and in this process the sedimentation plays an essential role in the fertilization of lands. When the dry season arrives (locally called summer season), the waters withdraw from the low lands, leaving an optimal condition for cultivation. Certain agricultural activity for self-consumption is developed throughout the year, but the main crops for sale take place during the summer.

The fishing activity takes place almost all year long, but differently depending on the season. In winter time, when the water level rise, the fishermen practically fish for self-consumption, during this period fishing usually is made in the internal lagoons. During the summer, when the water level lowers, the lagoons are partially dried (forcing the fishes to migrate) at different sites of Tórtola caño, the so-called "playones" (small beaches), where a large variety of fishes accumulate (that are probably in a migration process). The fishermen alternate their work trying to catch the fishes that are moving from the lagoons to the river, and trying to catch the fishes that are located at the small beaches. It is during the summer season when the fishermen have their higher production level.

As it can be observed, those working in agricultural or fishing activities, work in terms of the river seasons, this is why it does not matter the period of the year and it is unlikely that they are qualified as unoccupied or idle, since their work lasts all year in spite of having seasons. This comes to explain, on the first place, the higher percentage of occupied people at the communities and not in Barrancas, and secondly explains why the difference of population of working age that are studying in Barrancas is 13% and at the communities it is barely 5% (Chart N° C-4-4 Annex C).

Another interesting aspect that must be tackled is the differentiation of activities by sex, This information is shown in the above mentioned Charts: Population of 15 years and older due to the labor situation and Population occupied by the type of occupation by sex and shown in Graphs N° 4.15 and 4.16.

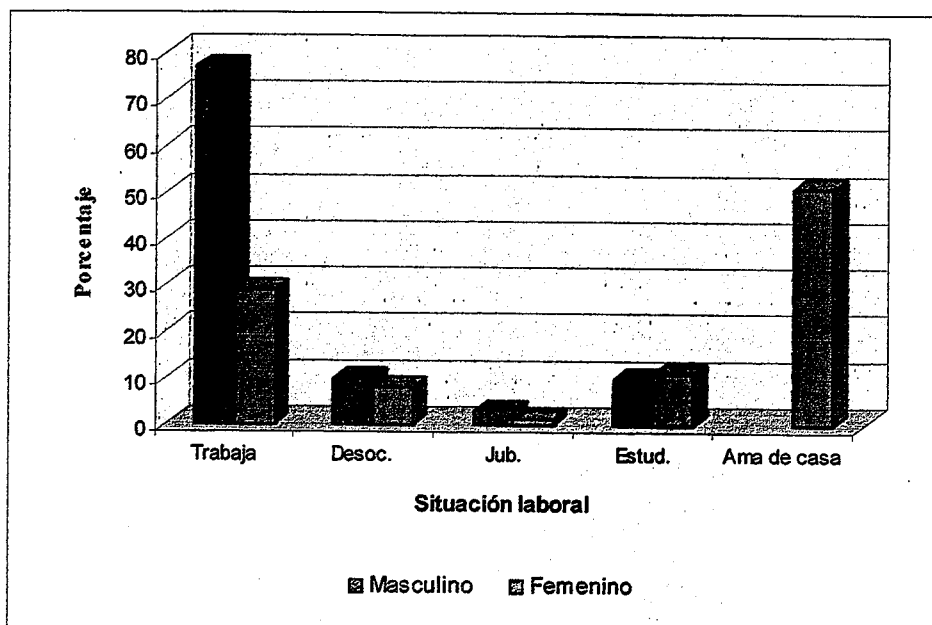
On the first place it can be observed that 77% of the masculine population 15 years old and older works, the remaining 23% is either unoccupied or studying. In the case of women 51% is dedicated to housework, 11% are students, 8% is unoccupied and 1% is retired; thus there is a 71% of persons that do not work. The distinction of tasks between sexes within the homes is a subject that could be expanded in greater detail with an anthropological study. Nevertheless, as a first approximation it can be asserted that these are homes that economically depend mainly on the masculine work, and the women take care of the housework.

On the other hand, it can be observed that the activities related to agriculture and fishing are mainly developed by the masculine population, and the other activities, such as teaching and office work are performed by women. Certain industrial and commercial activities are developed both by men and women.

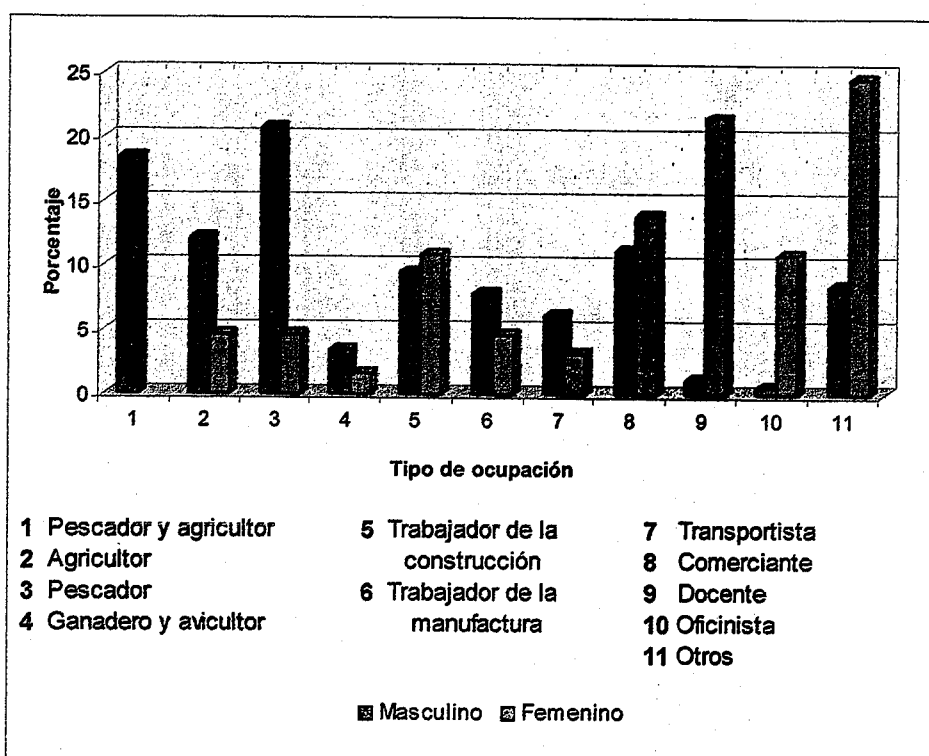
- Structure of income and expenditure

To measure the structure of income and expenditure is an issue that poses great difficulty, since on the one hand is the need to obtain various indicators that will enable the validation and comparison of information, and on the other hand, the need for successive gathering of information throughout the year that will enable to study income variation depending on the seasons, especially when the main activities are linked to the climatic conditions, as is the case of fishing and agriculture.

Graphic N° 4.15
POPULATION OVER 15 YEARS OLD ACCORDING TO LABORAL STATUS AND SEX



Graphic N° 4.16
POPULATION PER TYPE OF OCCUPATION ACCORDING TO SEX



Nevertheless, based on the information gathering made and on field observations, it is possible to have a first approximation to the income structure and the expenditure of the area of study.

It should be pointed out that just as Barrancas and the communities have different economic dynamics, in the same way the income and expenditure structures vary.

The urban activity, such as intermediary tasks and social services, represent a certain stability concerning income. In these cases the income is usually permanent, either monthly or by-weekly. This type of activities are more frequent in Barrancas del Orinoco. Nevertheless, given the budgetary crisis of the state governments and city halls, the public sector employees frequently experience delays in the payment of their salaries.

Rural activities such as fishing and agriculture are an income related to the fishing and cultivation seasons. In this way, the main income of these homes takes place in the summer, during the crop or the fishing season. During the rest of the year the income is sporadic, and depends on the informal or temporary activities. To understand the particular income structure in this type of homes, it is necessary to study the different economic strategies of the homes.

Graph N° 4.17 "Per capita income of a home (Bs. per person) by place of residence" shows the results yielded by gathering information (Chart N° C-4.3 - Annex C). These data must be observed more as a trend than as a punctual data. On the first place, account must be taken of the number of homes that do not file tax return, mainly due to the difficulty of determining such information in such circumstances, and on the other hand, that at first glance the communities file less tax returns than in Barrancas. This is related to the fact that the communities file their tax return corresponding to the production time, without specifying with enough accuracy the time period to which it corresponds.

In what concerns income, what is important is to highlight the economic dynamic at the zone. Since Barrancas del Orinoco is a population with more employment in the intermediary role and social services, has more people with permanent income. But the neighboring communities, mainly dedicated to fishing and agriculture, have a more irregular distribution in time, although their income is probably higher during the production periods.

In what concerns the expenditure, the possibility of estimating it with some degree of accuracy is still more difficult, mainly because the people keep little account of their expense levels.