

POPULATION PROBLEM IN PAKISTAN

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to make every common man understand and realize about the rising danger of population growth in Pakistan. This problem has two dimensions i.e. sociological and economical, the increasing population creates so many social problems on the one hand and economic problems on the other hand. This study actually deals with both the problems; and a province-wide study of population growth, standard of living and rate of literacy etc. are discussed in detail and an attempt has been made to explain every issue clearly.

Pakistan's population has increased somewhat rapidly. It is estimated that in 1901, the population of areas now constituting Pakistan (after the separation of East Pakistan in 1971), was approximately 16.6 million. In 1931, the population rose to 23.5 million. This increase indicated a rate of growth of about 1.1% per annum. This moderate rate of growth pointed to a high rate of mortality, particularly infant mortality.

Then, in the intercensal period 1931-41, the population increased by nearly 2.1% bringing the total upto 28.3 million. Though health and sanitation standards had gone up and there was no major epidemic, there was agricultural prosperity in the canal irrigated areas of the Punjab and Sindh. Yet the census of 1941 is viewed with some scepticism due to the decision of partition of the subcontinent.

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However, Pakistan's first census in 1951 revealed a continuation of the trend; and the rate of growth was 1.9%, raising the population to 33.78 million. Obviously, there was also a baby-boom between 1941-51. This situation in Pakistan also synchronized with the great spurt in world population, and consequent worldwide alarm felt by most nations, and the measures taken by the United Nations Organization, namely, active propagation of ideas of family planning and other positive checks on population growth.

In 1961, Pakistan's population rose to 42.97 million registering an intercensal increase of 27.2% and an annual growth rate of 2.4%.

CENSUS OF 1972

The next census was due in 1971, but that was an year of traumatic experience for Pakistan and the census operations had to be postponed. The count was held in some hurry in September 1972 on a schedule of enumeration consisting of only six questions, the minimum number ever asked in earlier censuses. These questions were related to only six items of information, namely, relationship with the head of the household; sex; marital status; age; religion; and literacy.

There was some delay even in the publication of the preliminary results. The information released in Census Bulletin No.1 (issued in January 1973) was confined to figures for total population down to district level and major towns and sex proportions. According to these figures, the population of Pakistan was 64,892,000 with 34,417,000

males and 30,475,000 females. This indicated an intercensal increase (1961-72) of 22,012,000 persons or almost 51.33% over the figures of 1961 i.e. 42,880,000. The size of the population and rates of growth since 1951 are given below:

CENSUS YEAR	POPULATION
1951	33,780,000
1961	42,978,000
1972	64,890,000

The figures above show that the percentage of intercensal increase as well as the annual rate of growth during 1961-72 appears to be high even for the better off developing countries. This state of affairs if truly mirrored in the accuracy of the census figures, is exceedingly alarming and poses a serious challenge to economic planners and demographers. Further more, according to census estimates, the population of the country is likely to reach a figure of 120.0 million in 1995 and 170.0 million by the year 2000.

If these trends are maintained, a demographer believes that Pakistan's population would continue to grow a long time, and on this assumption the population would continue to increase for another 75 years levelling off in the year 2047. Even this may sound as optimum, if great strides are not made with economic development, dissemination of education, eradication of illiteracy, positive checks to control births, and the framing of a sound long term population policy.

INTERCENSAL INCREASE

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE

19.3	1.8
27.2	2.4

The percentage increase of population during 1961-72 in Baluchistan (78.04) and Sindh (66.90) as against Punjab (47.00) and NWFP (44.00) creates an adverse reflection on the 1972 enumeration. There is no evidence to believe that the birth rates in Baluchistan and Sindh remained exceptionally high during the intercensal period 1961-72 as compared to the Punjab and NWFP. (See Table at page 138)

SEX RATIO IN POPULATION

The sex ratio of the different provinces of Pakistan shows that the decline is particularly marked in Sindh and Baluchistan where it has fallen down to 1.151 and 1.124 as compared to the 1961 sex ratio of 1.300 and 1.214 respectively. Some decline is also seen in NWFP from the figure of 1.092 in 1961 to 1.081 in 1972. Punjab is the only province where it has mounted up from 1.123 in 1961 to 1.135 in 1972.

In Baluchistan and Sindh the sex ratio in 1972 may indicate a some-what better enumeration of females, while for the Punjab it may point to some female emigration. The ratio in Karachi has fallen from 1.713 in 1962 to 1.235 in 1972, perhaps, showing that some earlier migrants into the city may have taken their families there in the intercensal period. It may also indicate better enumeration of females in 1972 as else where in the country.

At any rate, the study of the national sex ratio indicates that in 1972 there were 1.068 males per thousand females as compared to 1.163 and 1.153 for the censuses of 1951 and 1961 respectively. This may be because of better female enumeration in 1972 and also a decline in female infant and maternal mortality.

It appears that the crude birth rate of 50 per thousand in 1961 remained almost un-changed during 1961-72. This may mean an advance reflection on the progress of the family planning programme. Perhaps, it did succeed in preventing a rise in the crude birth rate in spite of a larger number of females attaining marriageable age during 1961-72.

RURAL AND URGAN POPULATION

The unemployment and under employment figures in Pakistan range between 15% to 18%. There is a high proportion of rural population touching a national level of about 78%. In spite of fairly rapidly growing urbanization, there are only 19 towns with over 100,000 persons. In 1961 this number was twelve only.

There are two giant cities, Karachi and Lahore, with over two million population. The maximum urbanization is in the Punjab with thirteen towns topping the hundred thousand mark, three are in Sindh, two in the North Western Frontier Province and one in Baluchistan.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

The geographical distribution of population

needs the close attention of demographers. The population of Pakistan is extremely unevenly distributed. The overall density figures and total increase on a national basis can be quite unhelpful in examining the population problem. Vast areas of the country are very thinly populated (under 50 persons per square mile) and this constitutes almost one-fourth of the national territories, in Baluchistan and North Western Frontier Province. Another area covering large tracts in Sindh, NWFP and Punjab has a density under 150 per square mile.

The areas having densities between 250 to 750 cover another one-fourth of the country and densities above 750 are found only in the remaining one-fifth of the territory. Densities above 1000 persons per square mile and more are found only in regions around the Karachi and Lahore urban areas. In fact, the high density belt starting from Karachi follows its serpentine course via Central Punjab and from Lahore to Peshawar.

FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME

In Pakistan, the family planning programme was started in 1952 and pilot projects were started in 1959. International philanthropic help started forthcoming from various sources. UNO, UNICEF, Ford Foundation and several other organizations have been helping financially and otherwise. An allocation of \$59.7 million was made toward family planning efforts in the Third Plan (1965-70). Four Provincial Boards of family planning were also constituted.

Family Planning Association, Karachi Branch,

was formed in 1953. It has carried out its field work in the crowded suburban sections of Karachi and its industrial area projects covered factory workers. The people among whom they worked stuck to their outdated beliefs and social and religious taboos, and family planning personnel had been even stoned and hounded out of certain communities for advocating a "forbidden message". Yet, the present efficient and energetic Executive Director feels that better educated and trained motivators are working with determination and more success is being achieved in making people aware of the usefulness of family planning.

All reports, however, point to the painful fact that only a small measure of success has been achieved in the country as a whole. Of course, clear and conclusive statistics are not available to confirm this impression. There is the absence of a reliable system of vital statistics and their registration on an annual basis giving regular information on birth and death rates.

Conservatism, orthodoxy, economic situation at lower middle class level, industrial workers, and at the rural level, and above all, widespread illiteracy have hampered the task of those family planning workers who are truly devoted.

It has been suggested that as a part of a massive educational effort, either family planning be taught like other school subjects e.g. history, mathematics and geography etc, and later instruction may be imparted at both college and university level; or the main ingredients of the subject of family planning may form part of the syllabi in

such subjects as social sciences, sociology, psychology demography, geography, economics, history, social work and general science. The approach and emphasis may differ from stage to stage according to the mental growth of the students.

POPULATION AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

It is universally recognised that population growth has to stay behind economic expansion and not out space the GNP. Population and its growth is the underlying base of all economic planning and welfare programmes, and therefore, in the case of Pakistan as of some other developing countries, there is to be a drastic rethinking of planning concepts. The study and planning of population has acquired new dimensions, and is a matter of serious concern to all.

The inter-provincial and inter-regional migrations and movements are a subject of useful study in projecting population growth, assessing its relationship with economic expansion and visualising welfare programmes. There is a population problem and it has to be tackled in the national interest by applying positive checks, promoting economic development and in certain respects rearranging and redistributing the population, all as a result of a clear and determined policy on population.

CONCLUSION

It is quite clear from the facts and figures discussed in this paper that the dangerously increasing rate of population in Pakistan has become a serious threat to so-

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cial and economic development of Pakistan. It is now high time to check this problem seriously to adopt proper measures so that the present rate of growth in population be brought down.

It is a matter of Do or Die for the Pakistani nation, and apart from Government efforts, the common citizen should also feel and play its positive role to help control this problem. In this connection the Education plays a vey vital role and the people, through litracy programes and other vocational methods, should be made to understand the gravity of the problem and other appropriate measures through public and private sectors be introduced to intensify the campaign against this problem.

TABLE

SHOWING POPULATION OF PROVINCES AND SEX RATIO
AND INTERCENSAL INCREASE, 1951 - 72

AREA: Population in thousands (Sex ratio as males per
thousand females in Parenthesis).

Pakistan	1951	1961	1972	1951-61	1961-72
NWFP	33740	42880	64892	27.2	51.3
(including tribal area)	(1153) 5888	(1068) 7578	(1068) 10909	28.7	43.9
	(1117)	(1092)	(1081)		
Punjab	20476	20582	37609	24.0	47.0
(including Islamabad)	(1150)	(1123)	(1135)		
Sindh	6209	8367	13965	34.8	66.9
Baluchistan	1167	1353	2409	15.2	78.0
	(1214)	(1214)	(1124)		
Sindh minus Karachi	5076	6323	10496	24.6	62.6
	(1228)	(1294)	(1125)		
Karachi	1133	2044	3469	80.4	81.3
	(1343)	(1317)	(1235)		

Source: Population Census, Pakistan 1961, Vol.1 and Census Bulletin
No.1, 1972.

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