

## **Contextual Analysis of Demographic Trends in the Sub-Continent and Pakistan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Like all other ancient civilizations of the world, Indus civilization also flourished at the bank of rivers. Indus civilization is believed to be one of the oldest civilizations of the world. As it was the richest part and source of agriculture of south Asia, so it accommodated vast majority of the population of South Asia. Sub-continent has been the largest populous region of the world, even today combine population of south Asia makes it largest populous region of the world. At the time of its inception in 1947, Pakistan was the 14th largest populous country of the world which has abnormally grown up to 200 million making it sixth largest country of the world.

**Key Words:** - Indus Civilization, Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Population growth, Pakistan. Pre -census

### **Introduction**

Before embarking upon a study of the present day population of Pakistan, ranked sixth in the world in terms of population size. The past trends in the evolution of the country's population should be examined .Throughout the ages the sub-continent of South Asia has supported one of the world's largest population, even today three of the world's top ten countries i.e. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh lie in the very same region. Broadly the history of population growth can be divided in to two parts –the pre-census period i.e. before 1855 and the census period i.e. 1855-1998

### **The Pre-Census Period**

Archaeological remains bear evidence to the fact that the parts of the sub-continent which now constitute Pakistan were the cradle of the Indus civilization. “The findings from various excavations at Harappa (25 km. South West of Sahiwal city in the province of the Punjab) on the left bank of the river Ravi, and Mohenjo-Daro (District Larkana in the province of the Sindh) on the right bank of the river Indus approximately 400 km from its mouth, confirm the existence in this part of

the world of a well-developed civilization as far back as the third or fourth millennium B.C. and probably much earlier. There were large populous and well-planned cities with well-built houses, temples, public building and well planned cities with well-built cities with well-built houses, temples, public buildings and numerous other amenities comparable to those in the contemporary Mesopotamia and Egypt. Further, these cities did not follow a haphazard growth but were rigorously planned in rectangular blocks with great consideration for security and hygiene. The Indus civilization (sometimes called Harappa culture) was a Bronze Age culture, quite similar to Sumerians in technical accomplishments and is believed to have derived its wealth basically from agriculture. In addition to the people inhabiting the Indus valley, another group with similar accomplishments was the Aryans who were thought to have descended upon the sub-continent from the north-west around 2000 B.C., at a time when the Indus civilization had reached a high pitch of organization. The Aryan invasion was supposedly promoted by the sub-continent's prosperity.”(Munawar1991)

In view of its well-developed economy and society it seems likely that the sub-continent supported a large population. “McEvedy and Jones have suggested a total population of 100,000 for the sub-continent in the tenth millennium B.C., about one million in 4000 B.C., and six million in 2000 B.C., when the Indus Civilization was in full Bloom.”(Mian 1983)

In the absence of a reliable record it is indeed difficult to estimate the population size of the areas now forming Pakistan during the pre-historic period. However, considering that these were the areas where an overwhelming part of the developed civilization concentrated, it could be argued that the bulk of the sub-continent's total of six million people around 2000 B.C. possibly five million (or 83 per cent) lived in the Indus Valley.

“By the middle of the second millennium B.C. the Indus civilization had collapsed, possibly due to the Aryan Incursions. As the Aryans occupied the fertile Indus valley the indigenous inhabitants were either subjugated or pushed southwards, and as the invaders attempted to impose their agro-postal culture on native population, the large urban settlements were reduced to tiny sizes characterized by shoddy dwellings. Thus the prosperous civilization which had earlier acquired a technology and attained a degree of economic affluence sufficient to support a dense [population, was plunged into a dark age.

The middle of the seventh century B.C. marks the commencement of the sub-continent's record history. Being a period of progress characterized by maritime commerce and diffusion of the art of writing, it provides a milestone after which various events can be dated fairly accurately. According to the Buddhist literature, the economic condition of northern India between the seventh and fourth

## *Contextual Analysis of Demographic Trends in the Sub-Continent and Pakistan*

centuries' B.C. were comparable to those prevalent in latter medieval Europe.”(Munawar 1991)

“The sub-continent's first empire was founded by Chandragupta Maurya (322-298 B.C) after Alexander had quitted the Punjab and his death in 323 had finished all fears of his return. In its heyday (250 B.C) under Chandragupta grandson, Ashoka (269-232 B.C) the Mauryan empire stretched from the Hindukush in the northwest to the Brahmaputra in the southeast, only a small territory in the peninsula remaining outside. Glimpses of the material progress and social –cultural prosperity during the Mauryan period are [provided by Kautilya's Arthashastra” (Mian 1983).

Intensive agriculture, fairly well-developed irrigation, abundant trade and commerce, well developed system of land revenue, the sophisticated population registration system, the institution of census, the use of metals, the promotion of industrial arts and above all, an elaborately organized and massive army speak of a high degree of civilization.

After the decadence of the Mauryan dynasty, the sub-continent witnessed another spell of economic prosperity and cultural revival under the Gupta's. During the reign of Chandragupta II Nikramaditya (385-413), the empire extended from the Chenab to Bengal and with the revival of some of the glories of the Mauryan age, the country's population of thought to have touched another peak. FaHein, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim (400 A.C) observed that the people were numerous and prosperous. According to Clark, the sub-continent' population was 75 million in 350.

The Gupta Empire was shattered in 540 A.C. due to the irruptions of nomads from Central Asia – the white Huns. The ensuing anarchy was only briefly mitigated during Harshe's rule (606-647) when another rise in the population occurred. According to Bana, the historian of Harsh's period, his army consisted of 100,000 cavalry and 60,000 elephants which are believed to be an indicative of a substantial population size.

“Russell estimated the sub-continent's population between 22-37 million during the first half of seventh century. In contrast to Nath's estimate of 100 to 140 million, supported by several other writers, that given by Russel is very low indeed, however the author defends it on the ground that it is in line with that of the contemporary Mediterranean-Eruopean areas”.

The main factor of uncertainty in Russell's estimate seems to be the level of urbanization, estimated on the basis of historical studies in other regions. It is likely that in the seventh century, the sub-continent had a very low urban-rural population ratio. If this were accepted Russell's estimate could perhaps be revised upwards. Consequent upon Harsh's death (647 A.C), the sub-continent suffered from increasing political instability.”(Mian 1983)

“The first Muslim entered the area in 712 A.C., from Sindh, called *Bab-Ul-Islam* (the door of Islam). However, real supremacy was established in the sub-continent in 1206 by the invaders from Afghanistan (First Mahmood Ghazni from the city of Ghazni) and continued with changes in dynasties and territorial extent, until 1857 when it gave way to the British. It was during these centuries that the region experienced another glorious period under the Moghals (1526-1857).” (Munawar 1991)

In the absence of any reliable record, it is difficult to estimate the population of the areas of Pakistan during these early periods. “However, utilizing Akbar’s record of land revenue and considering the contemporary accounts of the densely and sparsely populated areas. More land concluded that the Middle Ganges of the Punjab contained around 40 million. Gupta, on the other hand, in estimating the present India’s population, excluded one sixth from the sub-continent’s total. Assuming that this one sixth part was further divided approximately equally between the are now Bangladesh and Pakistan. Each should have in turn, one twelfth of the sub-continent’s population. Thus, it is likely that Pakistan’s population size was in the range of 8-11 million around 1600.” (Mian 1983)

Throughout the seventeenth century the sub-continent’s population is believed to have increased, though at a low rate. During the last years of emperor Shahjahan’s region 91627-1658) the sub-continent is assumed to have had a population of 145 million. This trend of slow but gradual increase is thought to have continued during Aurangzeb’s region (1658-1707) but after the death of Aurangzeb (1707 A.D), political instability gave rise to economic disorganization and the population growth rate of the country was declined.

“Datta estimated the sub-continent’s population at 162-176 million in 1801, but Durand maintains that 160 million is a “Low variant”. 214 million a “high variant” and 195 million a “medium variant” for the sub-continent’s population in 1800. Most other estimates range between 185 to 195 million. Whatever the size of population, one thing seems certain, that the advent of the nineteenth century proved to be a turning point in the demographic history of the area since the population growth rates mounted sharply and never declined afterwards. Pakistan’s population is estimated at 11 million in 1850.” (Munawar1991)

## **Areal Variation in Total population Growth**

### **Pakistan level changes:**

Keeping in view the past trend, it can be seen that, “at the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1901), the population of the area which now constitutes Pakistan was inhabited by only 16.6 million people.

According to the first census after independence in 1951, the population of the country doubled in 50 years from 1901 to 1951. Since the turn of the century, the population has increased more than six-fold and since independence, in a period of only 40 years, the increase has been more than three-fold. As the population growth continued at the high rate, it was 132 million in the last conducted census of 1998 and about 145 million by the time the country entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century (year 2000). This means a nine-fold increase over a period of a hundred years with approximately 4.5 fold increase in population since independence.”(Munawar 1991)

The present population growth rate of Pakistan is in the vicinity of two per cent per annum, which is the highest among the six largest countries of the world in terms of population size. The growth rate is even higher than overall average rate of other developing countries (1.9%).

Since independence, the population has grown at an average rate of 2.9 percent per annum. If the pre-independence growth rate is considered, it will be seen that from less than one per cent up to 3.1 percent in 1981. During the intercensal periods 1961-72 and 1972-81 the population grew at an average annual rate of 3.09 per cent and 3.06 respectively.

“The first doubling of the population, therefore, took almost 50 years (1901-1951) and the next about 21 (1951-1972). As the similar trend of growth continued, the population has again, third time, doubled in less than 26 years. By comparison the population of other regions will double at the intervals of developed countries 128 years, developing countries 34 years, Asia 39.9 years, South east Asia 32 years and South Asia in 30 years.”(Munawar 1991)

**Table .1**  
**Population Growth in Pakistan, 1901-1981**

<b>Census Year</b>	<b>Population (000)</b>	<b>Inter-Census Change (000)</b>	<b>Inter-census % change</b>	<b>Growth Rate % age</b>
1901	16,577	-	-	-
1911	19,382	+2803	16.9	1.6
1921	21,109	+1727	8.9	0.9
1931	23,542	+2433	11.5	1.1
1941	28,282	+4740	20.1	1.9
1951	33,740	+5217	18.5	1.7
1961	42,880	+9406	28.1	2.5
1972	65,309	+22,404	52.2	3.7
1981	84,253	+18944	29.0	3.1
1998	13,2352	+48099	57	2.69

Source : computed from census reports of Pakistan 1951, 1961, 1972, 1981 and 1998

## Population Change at Provincial Level

Population according to the population size, the Punjab is leading province of Pakistan. The inter-censal growth rate was 2.7 per cent low than the growth rate of Pakistan which was 3.1 per cent during 1972-81. (Table 2)

The population of the Punjab province has more than doubled since the first population census of Pakistan in 1951. It was 47,292 thousand in 1981 compared to 20,554 thousand in 1951, resulting in an increase of 130 per cent since then. The population of the province increased by 25.7 per cent during the 1972-81 inter-censal period (8 years and 5½ months) at an average annual growth rate of 2.7 per cent, whereas this rate was 3.4 per cent during 1961-72 (11 years and 7½ months). However, during 1951-61 this rate was only 2.2 per cent. Most of the population growth thus took place during the last two decades.

Sindh:

According to the population size, the Sindh is the second largest province of Pakistan with a population of 19,029 thousands in 1981. The inter-censal growth rate was 3.6 per cent higher than growth rate of Pakistan which was 3.1 per cent during 1972-81. (Table 2)

**Table 2: population growths in Pakistan  
By provinces 1972-81**

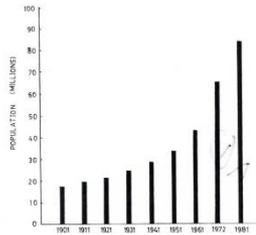
Province/Region	Population			Change 1972-81	
	1972	1981	Number	%	Growth Rate
Punjab	37,610,159	47,292,441	+ 9,682,282	+ 25.7	2.7
Sindh	14,155,909	19,028,666	+ 4,872,757	+ 34.4	3.5
N.W.F.P.(KPK)	8,388,551	11,061,328	+ 2,672,777	+ 31.9	3.3
Baluchistan	2,428,678	4,332,376	+ 1,903,698	+ 78.4	7.1
F.C.T.I.	234,813	340,286	+ 105,473	+ 44.9	4.5
F.A.T.A	2,491,230	2,198,547	+ 292,683	- 11.7	- 1.5
Pakistan	65,309,340	84,253,644	+ 8,944,304	+ 29.0	3.1

**SOURCE: Computed from Census Report of Pakistan, 1981.**

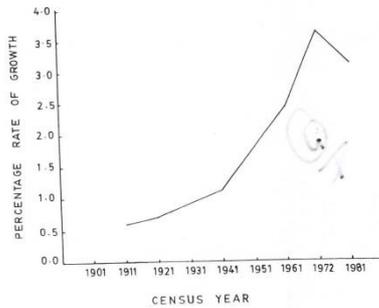
The population of Sindh province has increased nearly three times since the first population census of Pakistan in 1951. It was 19,029 thousand in 1981 compared to 6,048 thousands in 1951, resulting in an enormous increase of 215 per cent since then. The population of the province increased by 34.4 per cent during the 1972-81 inter-censal period (8 years and 5½ months) at an average annual growth rate of 3.6 per cent which is the second highest amongst provinces. It was 4.6 per cent during 1961-71 (11 years and 7½ months). However, during 1951-61, this rate was 3.3 per cent. Most of the population growth thus took place during the last two decades.

# Contextual Analysis of Demographic Trends in the Sub-Continent and Pakistan

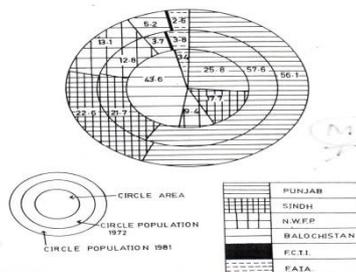
THE POPULATION OF PAKISTAN (1901-81)  
(POPULATION IN MILLIONS)



AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF POPULATION  
GROWTH IN PAKISTAN ( 1901 - 81 )



POPULATION AND AREA IN PAKISTAN  
BY PROVINCES, 1972-1981



### **KPK (N.W.F.P)**

Population size wise third province of Pakistan is North-West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P) with a population of 11, 061 thousands in 1981. The inter-censal growth rate was 3.3 per cent. (Table 2)

The population of the North-West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.) has more than doubled since the first population census of Pakistan in 1951. It was 11,061 thousand compared to 4,557 thousands in 1951, resulting in an increase of 143 per cent since then. The population of the province increased by 3.9 per cent during the 1972-81 inter-censal period (8 years and 5 ½ months) at an average annual growth rate of 3.3 per cent, which was the same during the 1961-72 (11 years and 9 ½ months). However, during 1951-61, this rate was only 1961-72 and 1972-81. Most of the population growth thus took place during the last two decades.

### **Baluchistan**

Population size-wise having lowest number of people is the province of Baluchistan. During the period of 1972-81, the inter-censal growth rate was 7.1 per cent, more than double of the growth rate of Pakistan which was 3.1 per cent, (table 2)

The population of Balochistan province has increased nearly four times since the first population census of Pakistan in 1951. It was 4,332 thousand in 1981 compared to 1,167 thousands in 1951, resulting in an enormous increase of 299 per cent since then. The population of the province increased by 78.4 per cent during the 1972-81 inter-censal period (8 years and 5 ½ months) at an average annual growth rate of 7.1 per cent, the highest amongst the provinces, whereas this rate was 5.1 per cent during 1961-72 (10 years and 7 ½ months). However, during 1951-61 this rate was only 1.5 per cent. Most of the population growth rate thus took place during the last two decades.

### **Conclusion**

Archaeological remains evidence to the fact that the areas now comprising Pakistan were once the cradle of the Indus Civilization and the sub-continent has always been one of the world's most populous region. Therefore, McEvedy and Jones have estimated at total population one million in 4000 B.C. to Six million in 2000 B.C. Similarly, in the course of time the population of the areas now in Pakistan slowly but surely kept on growing at different rates in different periods until Data estimated the sub-continent's population around 162-176 million in 1801. Pakistan's population is estimated at 11 million in 1850. At the outset of the 20th century (1901), the population of the area which now constitutes Pakistan was inhabited by only 16.6 million people. Population change at provincial level has been discussed in this paper which reveals that all the four provinces of Pakistan have shown remarkable change in their population growth. The population of the

### ***Contextual Analysis of Demographic Trends in the Sub-Continent and Pakistan***

Punjab has more than doubled since the first census of Pakistan in 1951. It was 47,292 thousand in 1981 compared to 20,554 thousand in 1951, resulting in an increase of 130 per cent since then. According to the population size, the Sindh is the second largest province of Pakistan with a population of 19,029 thousand in 1981. Similarly, population size-wise third and fourth provinces of Pakistan are N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan with 11,061 and 4,332 thousand people respectively in 1981. Macro level of provinces, have also been studied, which shows that some parts of Pakistan have shown remarkable change in growth of population and some indicated lowest per cent change, during the selected period 1972-81.

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### **Biographical Note**

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