

POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS 1998 OF PAKISTAN
PROVISIONAL RESULTS AND SOME ANALYSIS

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The Population and Housing Census, 1998 was the fifth in the series for Pakistan. The first being in 1951, followed by 1961, 1972 and 1981. The fifth census was actually due in March, 1991 which could not be held till March, 1998 mainly because of apprehensions about its accuracy irrespective of serious efforts made in that regard. Ultimately 2nd March, 1998 saw the light of day and census was completed throughout the country in a most supervised manner upto 18th March, 1998. Few areas having bad weather conditions were completed later. Estimates have also been made for census blocks remained uncovered due to local feud in Balochistan Province, the percentage wise population of such blocks is only 0.36 of Pakistan.

2. The total population of Pakistan as emerged in the provisional results of the 1998 census is 130.580 million as against 84.254 million in the last census i.e. 1981 showing a percentage increase of 54.98 or an average annual growth rate of 2.61 percent. There is a welcome decline in the average annual growth from the rate observed during 1972-81 i.e. 3.06 percent. The population of 1998 census excludes foreigners/ non-Pakistanis including diplomats and their families against 1951 to 1981 Census which included foreigners/Non-Pakistanis except diplomats and their families. The census counts from 1951 to 1998 were all de-jure counts. The population of Pakistan in each successive census since 1951 census is in the following table :

TABLE - 1 : POPULATION SIZE OF PAKISTAN AND INCREASE SINCE, 1951

Census Year	Total Population	Increase			Average Annual Growth Rate (Percent)
		Absolute	Inter-censal (Percent)	Cumulative (Percent)	
1951	33816555	-	-	-	-
1961	42978261	9161706	27.09	27.09	2.45
1972	65320939	22342698	51.99	93.16	3.66
1981	84253644	18932705	28.98	149.15	3.06
1998	130579571	46325927	54.98	286.14	2.61

Source : Population Census Office.

3. Table-I reveals that there had been upsurge in the population growth from 1961 to 1972 in view of the overall high percentage increase of 51.99 percent and annual average growth of 3.66 percent observed in the period. It needs to be mentioned here that 1972 census was undertaken in a most politically charged atmosphere in view of the separation of the then East Pakistan as Bangladesh and break up of one unit of the then West Pakistan into four Provinces i.e. NWFP, Punjab,

Sindh and Balochistan. Therefore it was observed that there may have been an element of over reporting of population for political gains coupled with immigration from areas of Bangladesh and India besides natural increase which accelerated due to broadening population base.

4. The overall growth of population of 11.68 years during 1961-72 is almost comparable with the population growth of 17 years observed during 1981-98 irrespective of the longer time span in case of the later period. Similarly the intercensal increase (percent) during the period of 1951-61 and 1972-81 is also identical. The population of Pakistan as of 1951 has almost quadrupled in 1998 in 47 years. It is interesting to note that the size of absolute increase observed in the period 1981-98 is higher by 37 percent and by 8 percent from the overall size of Pakistan in 1951 and 1961 respectively. So pressure of population on resources is really mounting up.

5. It will be out of place if federating units i.e. provinces and special areas comprising Pakistan are not examined in terms of national outlook of population growth separately. Table-2 gives the proportional population distribution of each Province/ Area alongwith average annual growth rate of successive censuses since 1951.

TABLE - 2 : POPULATION PROPORTION AND GROWTH RATE OF PROVINCES/AREAS SINCE, 1951

Area	Census Year and Population Proportion					Average Annual Growth Rate (Intercensal)			
	1951	1961	1972	1981	1998	1951-61	1961-72	1972-81	1981-98
PAKISTAN	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.45	3.66	3.06	2.61
N.W.F.P.	13.6	13.4	12.8	13.1	13.4	2.31	3.29	3.32	2.75
F.A.T.A.	3.9	4.3	3.8	2.6	2.4	3.21	2.60	-1.47	2.11
PUNJAB	60.8	59.3	57.6	56.1	55.6	2.20	3.39	2.74	2.55
SINDH	17.9	19.5	21.7	22.6	23.0	3.33	4.60	3.56	2.71
BALUCHISTAN	3.5	3.2	3.7	5.1	5.0	1.57	4.94	7.09	2.42
ISLAMABAD	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	2.42	5.96	4.34	5.15

Source: Population Census Office

6. Since proportional distribution of population among provinces/areas is important in view of the linkage of census population with their political rights laid down under the constitution of Pakistan regarding distribution of National Assembly Seats, distribution of funds, determination of service/ recruitment quota, etc. Therefore any change in it through the census have lot of inter provincial and intra-provincial repercussions. Such assumed/perceived changes in the past have pre-empted controversies over population figures and lead to postponement of census date from time and again since 1991.

7. As appears from the figures the proportion of Punjab Province is constantly declining contrary to the increase in the proportion of Sindh and Balochistan since 1951. The proportion of Balochistan has marginally declined from 5.1 percent in 1981 to 5.0 percent in 1998. The proportion of NWFP declined in 1961 and 1972 as against its proportion of 1951 and again picked up in 1981 and 1998. Its proportion of 1998 has become almost comparable to 1951. If we compare the overall growth of population in terms of times for the provinces/areas, the population of Balochistan has grown 5.5 times, Sindh by 5 times, NWFP by 3.8 times, Punjab by 3.5 times and FATA by 2.3 times in 1998 over their level of 1951 the first census of Pakistan.

8. The proportional share of population of FATA i.e. Federally Administered Tribal Areas is constantly showing decreasing trend since 1961 Census. The basic reason for their declining share is due to the change in methodology of census in these areas where group enumeration as against the standard practice of individual enumeration was also carried out in earlier census because of typical socio-cultural constraints. In these areas, names of females, their ages and other particulars are not reported. Islamabad which is the Capital of Pakistan and have a special federal status is a fast growing area because of significant immigration besides natural increase as appears from its population which has grown by 8.5 times in 1998 in comparison to its 1951 population.

9. The average annual growth rate (intercensal) observed for the federating units/areas have a direct bearing on the determination of increase or decrease in the population proportion of each province/area as already discussed. It would, therefore be appropriate to take into account these rates for further elaboration of the population trends observed in each unit/area. The average annual growth rates for different time periods as appear in table-2 do not show uniform trends which are partly or wholly difficult to explain through normal demographic variable of growth i.e. births, deaths and migration. Part of reasons for such erratic or uneven growth rate could be due to varying degree of quality of enumeration in one census or the other i.e. comparative under or over enumeration of Population as discussed earlier in case of 1972 census.

10. For example the rates are significantly higher for all provinces/areas except FATA in the period 1961-72 which were sustained to some extent for the period 1972-81 except FATA again which showed a negative growth rate. The highest average annual growth rate of 7.09 percent was also observed in this period for Balochistan province which was unprecedented. The rates for 1981-98, however, show a welcome decline from the earlier intercensal rates which are also quite close to each other in level and less than 3.00 percent in all provinces/areas. Islamabad is an exception having a rate of 5.15 percent which might be justified because of significant immigration in view of development of new housing sectors/areas in Islamabad besides the normal natural increase.

11. As far as urban/rural distribution and growth is concerned. The urban proportion is constantly growing with a relatively higher growth rate as compared to rural population as appears from Table - 3 below :-

TABLE - 3 : URBAN/RURAL PROPORTION AND AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE SINCE, 1951

Area	Proportion					Average Annual Growth Rate			
	1951	1961	1972	1981	1998	1951-61	1961-72	1972-81	1981-98
PAKISTAN									
Rural	82.26	77.48	74.59	71.70	67.48	1.83	3.33	2.58	2.25
Urban	17.74	22.52	25.41	28.30	32.52	4.92	4.73	4.38	3.45
N.W.F.P.									
Rural	88.92	86.76	85.75	84.94	83.06	2.09	3.21	3.21	2.62
Urban	11.08	13.24	14.25	15.06	16.94	2.20	3.98	4.00	3.46
F.A.T.A.									
Rural	100	100	100	100	97.25	3.21	2.67	-1.40	1.95
Urban	-	-	-	-	2.75	-	-	-	-
PUNJAB									
Rural	82.63	78.50	75.58	72.40	68.73	1.66	3.06	2.23	2.24
Urban	17.37	21.50	24.42	27.60	31.27	4.42	4.35	4.25	3.31
SINDH									
Rural	70.76	62.15	59.55	56.68	51.11	1.99	4.23	2.96	2.09
Urban	29.24	37.85	40.45	43.32	48.89	6.06	5.21	4.40	3.44
BALUCHISTAN									
Rural	87.62	83.12	83.55	84.38	76.71	0.97	5.18	7.21	1.84
Urban	12.38	16.88	16.45	15.62	23.29	4.73	4.91	6.43	4.91
ISLAMABAD									
Rural	-	-	67.74	39.94	34.36	2.08	2.72	-1.98	4.22
Urban	-	-	32.26	60.06	65.64	-	-	12.30	5.70

Source: Population Census Office

12. The overall urban population proportion at national level has increased to 32.52 percent in 1998 census meaning thereby that every third person in the country now live in a city or town. The overall average annual growth rate during 1981-98 has declined to 3.45 percent which is the lowest as compared to intercensal average annual growth rates which remained above 4 percent but relatively declining since 1951. In absolute terms the urban population size has increased more than seven times in 1998 to that of 1951. It appears that irrespective of acceleration in overall growth the urban tempo has slowed down during 1981-1998.

13. The comparative position of provinces/areas also show a similar trend with a relatively higher proportional increase for Balochistan urban from 15.62 in 1981 to 23.29 in 1998 coupled with the highest average annual growth at 4.91 among provinces which came down from its own level from 6.43 observed during 1972-81 which was also highest during that time. The rural growth rate in 1981-98 has come down to only 1.84 as compared to corresponding growth rate of 1972-81 at 3.21. This trend might not be explainable in the normal circumstances or the abnormal in or out migration and it might be over reporting of rural population in 1981 because of its unprecedented growth rate at 7.21 in that period in the province Balochistan. The urban growth has jumped up due to corresponding decrease in the rural proportion and growth rate.

14. Islamabad and FATA in view of their specific status areas, Islamabad predominately urban and FATA almost rural are hardly comparable with the four provinces. Among provinces, Sindh is the most urbanized province with a little less than half of its population living in cities/towns followed by Punjab, Balochistan and NWFP. As far as Sindh is concerned Karachi city alone is an important factor for its urbanized character as it accounts for 63 percent of total urban population of Sindh and 22 percent of the total urban population of Pakistan in 1998.

15. As far as concentration of urban population in 1998 is concerned, three major cities i.e. Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad account for 38.4 percent of the total urban population of Pakistan residing in 512 cities/towns of Pakistan. This number has also increased from 415 in 1981 Census. In case four other big cities recording population of over one million i.e. Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad and Gujranwala are added to these three cities, these seven in total account for almost half urban population of Pakistan.

16. As far as spatial distribution of population is concerned the following table would depict the concentration of population over land which is unevenly distributed.

TABLE - 4 : POPULATION DENSITY PER SQ. K.M.

Area	Area in Sq. K.M.	1998	1981
PAKISTAN	796095 (100)	104.0	103.0
N.W.F.P.	(9.4)	235.6	148.4
F.A.T.A.	(3.4)	115.3	80.8
PUNJAB	(25.8)	353.5	230.3
SINDH	(17.7)	212.8	135.0
BALUCHISTAN	(43.6)	18.8	12.5
ISLAMABAD	(0.1)	882.0	375.6

Source : Population Census Office

17. Among provinces, Punjab having the highest density at 353.5 percent (per sq. k.m.) in contrast to Balochistan Province showing the lowest density at 18.8 in 1998 census. Islamabad with a typical situation have the population density of 882.0 persons in 1998 which have more than doubled from 375.6 persons in 1981. The density of Population is directly related to natural environment existing around including geographic and socio-economic.

18. The overall sex ratio i.e. males over hundred females in the country is 108.1 in 1998 which was 110.6 in 1981 with a relatively higher level for urban areas as compared to rural areas. The decline in overall sex ratio, both in urban and rural areas, since 1951 could be attributed to better coverage of females and improvement in their life expectancy. The sex ratio by provinces/areas and by urban/rural level indicates that it is relatively higher in urban areas as such areas do attract more males than females for a variety of economic reasons. The typical increase in sex ratios from 1981 to 1998 of Sindh (rural) and Balochistan (urban) as well as (rural) are hardly understandable which could be due to comparative over reporting of males or under reporting of females in 1998. The detailed examination in this regard would guide the mechanism for such a typical trend once the data on age and sex is available.

**TABLE - 5 : SEX RATIOS OF PAKISTAN, PROVINCES/AREAS
BY RURAL/URBAN SINCE 1951**

Area	Census Year				
	1951	1961	1972	1981	1998
PAKISTAN	116.4	115.3	114.3	110.6	108.1
Rural	114.6	112.4	112.6	108.7	106.4
Urban	126.4	125.5	119.3	115.3	111.9
N.W.F.P.	112.4	108.8	108.4	108.7	104.3
Rural	109.4	105.9	106.9	107.3	102.8
Urban	139.9	130.0	118.0	117.1	112.3
F.A.T.A.	112.0	110.4	103.3	108.3	108.8
Rural	112.0	110.4	103.3	108.3	108.6
Urban	-	-	-	-	119.4
PUNJAB	115.3	114.3	116.2	110.8	106.9
Rural	113.4	112.1	115.5	109.7	105.6
Urban	124.6	122.6	118.3	114.0	110.0
SINDH	124.3	123.2	115.1	110.7	111.7
Rural	121.8	120.1	111.4	106.6	110.0
Urban	130.5	128.6	120.7	116.4	113.4
BALUCHISTAN	121.2	121.7	113.2	111.5	114.9
Rural	116.0	117.9	111.9	109.8	112.8
Urban	169.0	141.9	120.5	121.0	122.0
ISLAMABAD	-	-	123.6	118.9	116.2
Rural	-	-	113.3	110.9	107.8
Urban	-	-	148.6	124.5	121.0

Source : Population Census Office

NOTE:- The figures of Islamabad for 1951 and 1961 have been included in the Punjab Province.

19. With this preliminary analysis of data emerged through the provisional results for 1998 census on population size, distribution and growth which would further be supplemented with the detailed data on age, sex, marital status and other characteristics as available after processing of individual census returns after about a year, a simple question arises is its credibility level which is assessed by the analyst before examining the data. In this regard following factors need to be taken into account :-

- a) The 1998 census of Pakistan was undertaken in a most supervised way in view of the apprehensions expressed/ observed about the likely census results, since 1991 the original time schedule for the decennial census. The most supervised here means that a team of two enumerators one from the civil side and other from the defence forces was deputed in each block. A systems of check and balance was introduced to ensure the independence of the two enumerators. They both completed different forms and figures of two sources were separately completed and matched. Simultaneously a separate National Data Base Form was also distributed to the respondents to be filled up by themselves and signed as a token of correctness and got attested by a responsible person. These forms were also collected during the census operation.
- b) Close supervision of the census operation at all levels was done in a manner exercised never before to check and assure the transparency and fairness of the operation. An important and effective element of fast mobility was built in so that nothing remains away from the census authorities. With this mechanism no serious complaints what-so-ever were reported/observed and public at large cooperated in a unprecedented manner. The criticism though meek done in some circles after the release of provisional figures is the outcome of the non-fulfilment of assumed trends at small area/regional level is just subjective/biased.
- c) Heavy cost was incurred around Rs.1500 million to assure the quality of operational aspects of the 1998 census as against the previous census whereby cost was used to be much less. Roughly the cost per head for the 1998 census operation was around Rs.11/- as against only Rs.1/- for the 1981 census. This 1998 cost excludes expenditure incurred from the international assistance like UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and Government of Pakistan recurring expenditure incurred from 1987 to 1997. Such cost was in-significant for 1951, 1961 and 1972 censuses.
- d) The proportional distribution of delimitation of census blocks by Provinces/ areas which is also broadly based on the criteria of households/population developed in 1989 and updated thereafter is quite close to population

proportion emerged through the 1998 Census. The variation wherever it is observed is explainable in terms of the size of the blocks. The following table gives the comparative view of proportional distribution of census blocks and population proportion of 1998 census by province/area.

TABLE - 6 : PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF CENSUS BLOCKS AND POPULATION OF 1998 CENSUS

Area	Province/Area wise proportion of total census blocks	Population Proportion 1998
PAKISTAN	102249 (100)	100.0
N.W.F.P.	13.6	13.4
F.A.T.A.	2.9	2.4
PUNJAB	54.0	55.6
SINDH	20.6	23.0
BALUCHISTAN	8.2	5.0
ISLAMABAD	0.6	0.6

Source : Population Census Office

20. In view of the above it would transpire that the 1998 census in terms of operationalization and figures so emerged are quite credible which would further be examined after detailed tabulation on different characteristics of population are available.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

21. The average annual growth rate observed during 1981-98 census at 2.61 percent is the average of seventeen years. It is not the current growth rate which according to experts would be in between 2.1 to 2.3 percent. Therefore it shall be a matter of great satisfaction for Pakistan that it might enter 21st century with a growth rate of 2 percent or even less than that, so doubling time of population of Pakistan which was 23 years in the year 1981 has further increased to 27 years on the intercensal growth rate of 2.6 percent if taken on current growth rate of 2.1 or 2.3 percent the years would be 33 or 30 which is required to be further enhanced for helping the nation to reduce population burden on economic resources.