

Chapter-3

POPULATION COMPOSITION

Introduction

People of any country are diverse in many respects. Each person is unique in her/his own way. People can be distinguished by their age, sex and their place of residence. Some of the other distinguishing attributes of the population are occupation, education and life expectancy.

SEX COMPOSITION

The number of women and men in a country is an important demographic characteristic. The ratio between the number of women and men in the population is called the Sex Ratio. In some countries it is calculated by using the formula:

Female Population

Male Population $\times 1000$

The sex ratio is an important information about the status of women in a country.

In regions where gender discrimination is rampant, the sex ratio is bound to be unfavourable to women. Such areas are those where the practice of female foeticide, female infanticide and domestic violence against women are prevalent. One of the reasons could be lower socio-economic status of women in these areas.

On an average, the world population reflects a sex ratio of 990 females per 1000 males. The highest sex ratio in the world has been recorded in Latvia which is 1187 females per 1000 males. In contrast, the lowest sex ratio occurs in U.A.E. which is 468 females per 1000 males.

The world pattern of sex ratio does not exhibit variations in the developed regions of the world. The sex ratio is favourable for females in 139 countries of the world and unfavourable for them in the remaining 72 countries listed by the United Nations.

In general, Asia has a low sex ratio. Countries like China, India, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan have a lower sex ratio.

On the other extreme is greater part of Europe (including Russia) where males are in minority. A deficit of males in the populations of many European countries is attributed to better status of women, and an excessively male-dominated out-migration to different parts of the world in the past.

Age Structure

Age structure represents the number of people of different age groups. This is an important indicator of population composition, since a large size of population in the age group of 15-59 indicates a large working population. A greater proportion of population above 60 years represents an ageing population which requires more expenditure on health care facilities. Similarly high proportion of young population would mean that the region has a high birth rate and the population is youthful.

Age-Sex Pyramid

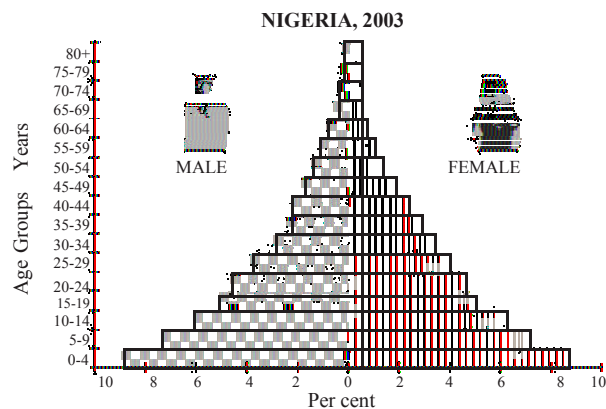
The age-sex structure of a population refers to the number of females and males in different age groups. A population pyramid is used to show the age-sex structure of the population.

The shape of the population pyramid reflects the characteristics of the population. The left side shows the percentage of males while the right side shows the percentage of women in each age group.

Different Types Of Population Pyramids.

Expanding Populations

The age-sex pyramid of Nigeria as you can see is a triangular shaped pyramid with a wide base and is typical of less developed countries. These have larger populations in lower age groups due to high birth rates. If you construct the pyramids for Bangladesh and Mexico, it would look the same.

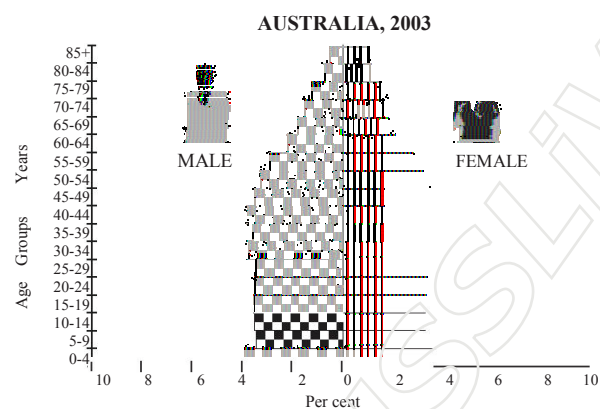


Data source: Demographic Year Book, 2003, United Nations Statistics Division. Data refer to national projection

Fig. 3.1: Expanding Population

Constant Population

Australia's age-sex pyramid is bell shaped and tapered towards the top. This shows birth and death rates are almost equal leading to a near constant population.



Data source: Demographic Year Book, 2003, United Nations Statistics Division.

Constant Population