

The United Nations estimates a slightly higher current birth rate for Pakistan than for India, but the birth rates in some other countries of the Far East, notably the Philippines and Thailand are apparently higher still, approaching fifty per thousand. In other Asiatic countries such as Taiwan and Malaya, birth rates are somewhat lower than in West Pakistan, but mortalities are much lower, less than ten per thousand, with the result that the annual rate of increase is over three percent. Several large countries in South America and Africa, including Brazil, Mexico, and Egypt, have rates of annual increase between three and four percent. It is conceivable that, with better health and more adequate nutrition, the annual birth rate in West Pakistan could rise to close to fifty per thousand, while the mortality could rapidly decline. The annual rate of population increase might then grow to more than three percent, or a doubling of population size in less than twenty three years.

Age Distribution

Because of high fertility West Pakistan is a country of young people. More than two out of five of its citizens (42.4 percent) are less than fifteen years old, and only one out of fifteen (6.9 percent) has reached the age of sixty.

Density of Population and Rate of Increase in Different Regions

Table 1.4 shows the distribution of population and the increase from 1951 to 1961 in different Districts and regions of West Pakistan. In the canal-irrigated portions of the Former Punjab, the increase of population was twenty-five percent between 1951 and 1961, slightly less than the increase for the Province as a whole. Because of immigration, the populations of Former Bahawalpur and the Former Sind increased more rapidly than that of the entire Province, while the poorly productive, mostly unirrigated districts in the northern part of the Former Punjab and the Former Northwest Frontier, though increasing significantly, nevertheless lagged considerably behind the rest of the country. Mianwali and D. G. Khan, in which canal irrigation is being rapidly extended, has high rates of population growth. The growth of Rawalpindi was primarily urban.

In both the Indus Plain and the sub-montane area to the north, cultivated land (land actually planted each year) averages little more than one acre for each person in the rural population. The man-land ratio is highest in the settled and comparatively productive canal-irrigated areas of the Former Punjab, and smallest in Former Sind and Former Bahawalpur, where irrigation development is occurring.