

CHAPTER 12 POPULATION OF NIGERIA

Objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) Define population and explain population concepts.
- (ii) Describe the patterns, reasons for and effects of population.
- (iii) Describe the growth, structure and distributional pattern of population.
- (iv) State ways of checking down population growth.
- (v) Describe the population quality and the influence of HIV/AIDS on population quality.
- (vi) Describe the population data and their sources.

Population

Population refers to the number of people living in a geographical area at a particular time. Population is a major asset of any country, a major factor of development and a major beneficiary of development projects in any given society.

As the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria accounts for approximately one sixth of African population. About 50% of Nigerians are urban dwellers. The variety of customs, languages and traditions among Nigeria's over 389 ethnic groups gives the country a cultural diversity. The official language is English. Other dominant languages are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo.

Nigeria is constantly experiencing population increase. In 1991, the population was put at 88.5million. It rose steadily to over 140million in 2006. The 2012 estimate indicates that the country's population is about 170million with a growth rate of more than 2% per annum and a doubling time of about 30years. Increased population is associated with problems such as increased number of youths, crime rate, ethnic tension and high emigration.

12.1 Population: Size, Growth, Structure, Density

(i) Size: In terms of land area, Nigeria is the fourth largest country in West Africa after Niger, Mali and Mauritania. The total land area is approximately 923,786 square km. In terms of human population the country is inhabited by over 140m persons. Nigeria is regarded as the "giant" relative to other African countries.

Its large population size has become an important issue of concern. This is so because population, in terms of its size and composition has far reaching implications for change, development and the quality of life in society. Its large population size implies a large market for goods and services as well as a large pool of human resources for development. However, it is a challenge in terms of service, provision and food security.

(ii) Growth: It is difficult to trace accurately the growth of the population of Nigeria because of its sensitive and controversial nature. Its implications for shaping regional state, ethnic relations and balance of power is enormous. In the past, census figures were believed to have been manipulated for political advantages.

Population growth rate increased steadily from an estimate 2.8percent in the 1960s to around 3.3percent in the 1985 to 1990 period. Although, steady decline in the growth rate has been noticed in the 2000s, the rate is still high for the economy.

Population growth rate is influenced by the interplay of the three main demographic processes of fertility, mortality and migration. The major factor responsible for the rapid increase in the population of

the country is the relatively high fertility level as portrayed by a total fertility rate of about 6.0 live-births per woman in the 1990s. The relatively low mortality of about 13 to 14 per 1000 (crude death rate) and a declining infant mortality rate, as well as the increasing life expectancy in population, all suggest higher survival chances and therefore, a swell in the size of future population.

- (iii) **Structure - Age, Sex, Occupation:** The age and sex distribution of the population of Nigeria by the 2006 census has shown a high proportion of children in the population. Those under 15 years of age constituted about 42 percent of the total population. The proportion of the aged persons (60 years and above) in the population constituted only 5%.

The age structure of the population, according to the 2006 census, shows a very broad-based pyramid, reflecting the large proportion of children and young persons.

The high level of unemployment in Nigeria means prolonged dependency of working-age adults on parents and on the economically active (working) population. Obviously, a high dependency ratio exposes considerable strain on the economy at both the family and national levels. The sex differential in literacy rate is substantially narrow among the lower age groups. The 2006 census data on occupation and employment status show that Nigeria is still predominantly, an agrarian society with about 40 percent of the population engaged in agriculture.

- (iv) **Population Density:** Nigeria has a total land area of about 923,700sqkm. This gives a national density of 152 persons per square km. There are parts of the country with densities of under 50 persons per sq km, while there are other areas with densities from 500 to over 1000 persons per sq km.

Large population densities have implications on resources utilization, provision of facilities, etc.

12.2 Concepts of Population

Important population concepts include: over population, under population, optimum population and population density

1. Over Population: It describes a condition in which the population outweighs the available resources as to enable population enjoy a high standard of living.
2. Under population: A condition in which the size of population is small to harness the available resources of the country.
3. Optimum population: Describes a situation in which the population of an area can harness the available resources up till optimum level.
4. Population Density: It is the number of persons per square kilometer of land. It is expressed as:

$$\text{Population Density} = \frac{\text{Total Population}}{\text{Land Area}}$$

$$\text{Land Area} = \frac{\text{Total Population}}{\text{Population Density}}$$

$$\text{Total population} = \text{Total Land Area} \times \text{Population Density}.$$

(b) Ways of Checking Population Growth

The following measures can be used to check the growth rate of population in Nigeria:

- (i) **Family planning or Birth Control:** The rate of population increase can be reduced through family planning or birth control methods as being widely practised throughout the world. If the number of births is reduced,

the rate of population increase will definitely be checked. Birth control method prevents conception or pregnancy and encourage child spacing.

- (ii) Public Enlightenment: There should be intensive public enlightenment on the danger of having many children per nuclear family. This can be done through the activities of government agencies such as National Orientation Agency (NOA) and other agencies of education like mosques, churches and schools.
- (iii) Change in cultural practices: People should be encouraged to practise monogamy and avoid having many children.
- (iv) Policy and Legal Methods: The rate of population growth can be reduced if it is entrenched in the constitution or other legal instruments on the number of children per woman.
- (v) Incentives for fertility control: This takes the form of certain rewards for couples who have accepted to practise birth control/family planning.
- (vi) Old age security: A social security system could be worked out so that aged people are entitled to some income or care by the society. This will prevent couples from having a large number of children.

12.3 Population Movements

Migration is the movement of people from one area to another for either permanent or temporary stay. Migration is as a result of endless search for job, food, shelter, knowledge, cure from illness, comfort, escape from danger caused by environmental threats, natural disasters and in the human desires for adventure. More recent in human history, other factors include religious proselytisation, land dispute and spiritual killing.

(a) Patterns of Movement

Pattern of movement can be classified into 2 *i.e.*

- (i) Internal movement – It involves the movement of people within the country.
- (ii) External/International movement – It is the outward movement of people to other countries.

Internal movement takes the following:

- (i) Rural – Urban: This is the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas (e.g. from village to city) for employment opportunity, educational purpose, trade, *etc.*
- (ii) Urban-Rural: It is the movement of people from urban centre to rural area (e.g. Enugu to village) especially on retirement in search of land for agriculture purpose and raw materials.
- (iii) Urban-Urban: It is the movement of people from an urban centre to another urban centre (e.g. from Kano to Lagos) for reason such as employment, educational purpose, recreational purpose, *etc.*
- (iv) Rural-Rural: It is the movement of people from one rural area to another rural area (e.g. from village to another village) in search of cultivable land.

(b) Reasons for Population Movement

The reason for population movement include:

- (i) The quest or search for job opportunities: People move to areas where they can be gainfully employed *e.g.* movement to industrial zones like Lagos, Kano, Kaduna and Port Harcourt.
- (ii) Religious Oppression: People tend to move from religious oppressed areas to areas of peaceful co-existence.
- (iii) Quest for medical facilities: This is the movement of people from areas with less medical facilities to areas with adequate medical facilities *e.g.* LUTH (Lagos University Teaching Hospital).
- (iv) War (Inter-tribal/Communal Classes) People migrate from war ravaged areas to peaceful communities.
- (v) Absence/Inadequacy of Social Amenities: People move to areas with adequate social amenities like electricity, good roads, medical and educational facilities.

- (vi) Unfavourable economic condition: People move in the face of harsh economic condition. This is responsible for the worrisome phenomenon of “brain-drain” (movement of intellectuals and academic out of the country in search of greener pasture).
- (vii) Environmental Hazards: Natural disaster such as food, soil erosion, etc cause people to migrate. Other factors influencing internal migration include impoverished soil, declining crop yields and poor harvests among others.

(c) Effects of Population Movement

Population movement has affected both the source region and the final destination.

(a) Effects on Source Region

1. It is responsible for the depopulation of rural areas.
2. There is decrease in the number of young able bodied men and women.
3. It leads to scarcity of labour since most of the workforce has migrated to other areas in search of greener pasture.
4. There may be less development since the able bodied people who could develop the region have gone to other areas of interest.
5. Absence of required labour may result into decline in productivity.
6. Depopulation leads to low value of landed property.
7. There may be occurrence of disintegration of cultural values such as broken homes.
8. There is decongestion of social facilities *e.g.* roads, hospitals, *etc.*

(b) Effects on Destination

1. Increased population
2. It leads to pressure on social facilities like housing, electricity, water, traffic, *etc.*
3. Increased rate of unemployment and underdevelopment.
4. Increase in informal services such as hawking, buying and selling, *etc.*
5. Increased land value.
6. Increased crime rate and social vices *e.g.* armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution, *etc.*
7. High cost of living and poor standard of living.
8. Development of slums and squatter settlements.

12.4 Population Distribution in Nigeria

The national population census of 2006 showed that Nigeria has the population of 140,003,543.

Population of Nigeria According to States

	State	Population
1.	Abia	2,833,999
2.	Adamawa	3,168,101
3.	Akwa Ibom	39, 201, 208
4.	Anambra	4, 182, 038
5.	Bauchi	4, 676, 465

6.	Bayelsa	1,703,358
7.	Benue	4,279,244
8.	Borno	4,151,193
9.	Cross River	2,888,966
10.	Delta	4,098,391
11.	Ebonyi	2,173,501
12.	Ekiti	2,384,212
13.	Edo	3,218,332
14.	Enugu	3,257,298
15.	Gombe	2,353,879
16.	Imo	3,950,899
17.	Jigawa	4,348,649
18.	Kaduna	6,066,562
19.	Kano	9,383,682
20.	Kastina	5,792,578
21.	Kebbi	3,238,628
22.	Kogi	3,278,487
23.	Kwara	2,371,089
24.	Lagos	9,013,534
25.	Nassarawa	1,863,275
26.	Niger	3,950,249
27.	Ogun	3,728,098
28.	Ondo	3,441,024
29.	Osun	3,423,535

30.	Oyo	5,591,589
31.	Plateau	3,178,712
32.	Rivers	5,185,400
33.	Sokoto	3,696,999
34.	Taraba	2,300,736
35.	Yobe	2,321,591
36.	Zamfara	3,259,846
	Federal Capital Territory	1,405,201
	Total	140,003,542

The population of Nigeria is unevenly distributed. The national population density is 152 persons per square km. There are areas with dense, moderate and sparse population.

The densely populated areas are placed with between 500 to over 1000 persons per square km. This includes Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Onitsha, Kaduna, *etc.* Moderately populated areas with 100 – 500 person per sq km include Benin city, Bauchi, Sokoto, *etc.* Sparsely populated areas are Damaturu, Jalingo, Gussau, *etc.*

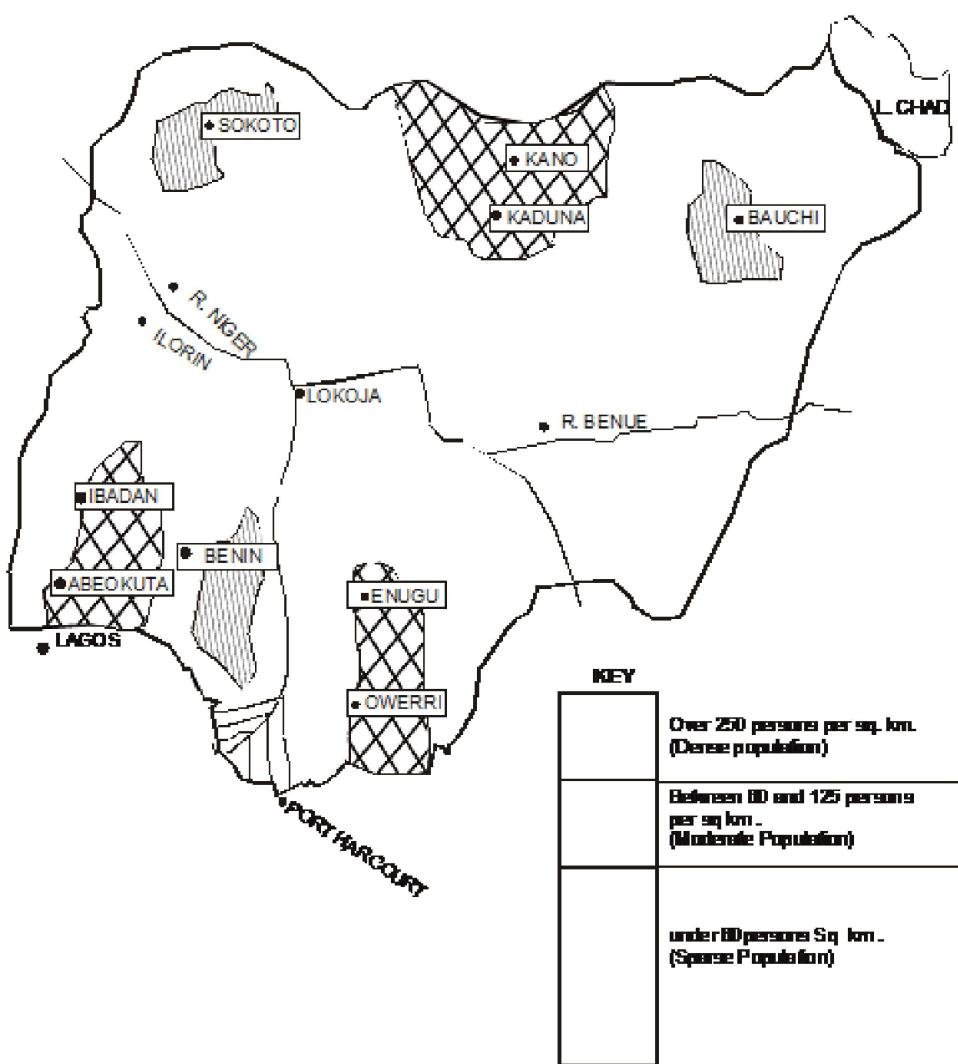


Fig. 12.1: Population Distribution in Nigeria

Factors Influencing Population Distribution

The factors influencing population distribution include:

1. Favourable climate: Areas with favourable climate such as adequate rainfall, moderate temperature favour human habitation.
2. Fertile Soils: Presence of fertile soils favours the cultivation of food and cash crops like yam, beans, cassava, cocoa, etc.
3. Historical factors: The growth of some old empires (e.g. Oyo empire) a factor that has attracted people to the area.
4. Administrative headquarters: Most Nigerian towns like Ibadan, Jos, Kano, Owerri, Abuja, Umuahia attract people to them because they are administrative centres.
5. Presence of minerals: The discovery of the minerals such as coal in Enugu, Tin in Jos, oil in Port Harcourt attracted lots of people to the areas of employment.
6. Improved medical facilities: The presence of improved medical facilities in some areas attract people.
7. Commercial centres: Commercial centres such as Onitsha, Aba, Kano, Lagos, Ibadan attract lots of people because of large market.

12.5 Qualities of Population

Among all the factors that influence the productivity, human resource is the most active one, and it is the most valuable resource compared with other sorts of resources, playing a leading role in the activities of nation's

innovation.

Nowadays the world economy is changing from the industrial economy to that of knowledge-based economy, and the modern international competition has been turned into the competition of science, knowledge and intellectuals, which is, in fact, the competition of human, especially of talents.

Labour adjustment within the industrial sector has accelerating the pace of technology transfer, and constantly improve the skills of workers, and also improve the quality of national life, such that international competition is becoming increasingly fierce. New challenges, being faced has made human resources not only expanding its scale, but assisted in adjusting the structure, open up new markets, enhanced knowledge and labour skill and also improved people's quality of life, in order to enhance the nation's ability to make important innovations.

There is a clear and increasing trend in the population of Nigeria. A variety of changing characteristics of Nigeria's population since 1960 include:

- (i) The age structure: has continually revealed a virile labour force.
- (ii) Improved opportunities for educational advancement.
- (iii) High average life expectancy estimated at 47.5year
- (iv) Increasing urban population with opportunities for better living conditions.

(b) Indicators of population qualities

The attributes associated with population include:

- (i) Living conditions, denoted by the state and condition of people's well being. Such nutritional and calorie intake, health status, availability of public infrastructure
- (ii) Areas of improved care facilities and increased life expectancy.
- (iii) A mobile and active work force that is productive.
- (iv) Access to functional educational services.
- (v) Availability of immense employment opportunities for the active workforce.

(b) Effects of HIV/AIDS on Population

The effects of HIV/AIDS on population are as follows:

- (i) HIV/AIDS causes reduction in population of Nigeria as infected people often die where there is no adequate care and treatment.
- (ii) There is heavy pressure on health facilities.
- (iii) It affects the education status of some children as they suffer from ill-health or loss of parents.
- (iv) It reduces social ties and interaction.
- (v) It affects the income of families because they spend a lot of money on drugs and other forms of treatment.
- (vi) It affects the productivity of the working population.

12.6 Sources of Population Data

There are several sources from which population data can be obtained. They include:

- (i) Population censuses which involve the direct counting or enumeration of people within a given country.
- (ii) Vital registration which consists of information on the registration of births, deaths, migration, marriage, etc within a country, published by the National Population Commission.
- (iii) Official statistical yearbooks which contain information on socio-economic attributes such as housing, employment, occupational structure, inflation trends, etc.

(iv) National civil registration of Nigerians which biometric information about Nigerian and use for the issuance of the National I.D. Card.

Summary

- Population is the total number of people living in an area. It is an asset to the development of a society.
- Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. In land area, it is the fourth largest country. Its growth rate is still high compared with the developed countries.
- Concepts of population are under population, optimum population and over population.
- The patterns of movement involve rural-urban, urban-rural, rural-rural and urban-urban migration. People move as a result of religious oppression, quest for education, political oppression, war /communal clashes etc. population movement has effects on the source region and destination.
- Nigeria has a national density of 152 persons per square kilometer. The southern part is generally densely populated. So, there are densely, sparsely and moderately populated areas in Nigeria.
- Urban areas depend on rural areas and vice versa. The quality of population in Nigeria has improved tremendously.

Revision Questions

Objective Questions

1. The UNO's estimate of the world's population by the year 2012 is
 - 2,500,000,000
 - 3,000,000,000
 - 4,200, 000,000
 - 7,000,000,000
 - 100,000,000,000
2. Which of the following is a measure aimed at controlling world population growth?
 - family planning
 - decrease in food production
 - migration
 - Encouraging early marriage
 - improving soil quality
3. Which of the following may not solve the problem of over population?
 - increase in food production
 - birth control
 - increase in the area extent of towns
 - reduction of agricultural land
 - Migration
4. The only factor that least explains the pattern of population distribution in Nigeria is the: (WASSCE JUNE 1998)
 - Arab slave raiding
 - stability of Government of the Old Kingdoms
 - Physical factor of rainfall
 - Movement of people from one place to another
 - Occurrence of earthquakes in certain areas

5. Which of the following best explains the drift of population from rural areas to the cities in Nigeria? (SSCE JUNE 1994)

- A. The cost of living in the cities is very high
- B. There are more job opportunities in the cities.
- C. There is food scarcity in the rural areas.
- D. Better recreational facilities are available in the cities.
- E. Opportunities for higher education are only available in the cities.

6. Which of the following least influences population density in Nigeria?

- A. Mining
- B. Fertile agricultural land
- C. thick forest vegetation
- D. tsetsefly infestation
- E. industrialization

7. The most populous country in Africa is

- A. Egypt
- B. Nigeria
- C. Zimbabwe
- D. Ghana

8. A state with high population density in Nigeria is

- A. Zamfara
- B. Akwa Ibom
- C. Kwara
- D. Lagos

9. As at 2006, the population of Nigeria was about

- A. 120m
- B. 130m
- C. 140m
- D. 150m

10. The number of persons per square kilometer of land is

- A. population
- B. population census
- C. population density
- D. Land area

Answers

1. D 2. A 3. D 4. E 5. B 6. D 7. B 8. D 9. C 10. C

Essay Questions

1a. On a map of Nigeria, locate the name

(i) two areas of low population density (ii) two areas of high population density (iii) one important town in each of the areas shown.

b. State three advantages of: (i) low population density to any one of the areas shown in 1a(i) above.

(ii) high population density to any one of the areas shown in (a) (ii) above.

2. Explain the following terms: (i) over population (ii) Migration

- b. Describe any three factors which encourage the occurrence of each term in (a) above within a population growth. (June 1990)
3. Explain any four factors that determine population distribution.
- b. Describe any two types of population movement.
- c. What four problems are associated with any one of the types of population movement describe in (b)?
4. Identify four patterns of population movement within a country.
- b. Give five reasons that may lead to any one pattern of the movement identified in 5(a) above.
- c. Highlight three possible effects of populations movement on the (i) Source region; (ii) Destination (WASSCE June 2001)
5. Draw an outline map of Nigeria. On the map: show and name:
- (i) one areas of sparse population (ii) one area of moderate population (iii) one area of dense population (iv) one town in 6a(i) above (WASSCE JUNE, 2006)