

GROWTH OF POPULATION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, 1801—1961

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General

Undivided India in 1941 had an area of 1,582,989 square miles. The share of India and Pakistan together in 1941 was 3.03 per cent of the area and 17.30 per cent of the population of the world, and 15.9 per cent of the area and 32.10 per cent of the population of Asia. The share of area remained much the same, but the share of population had decreased slightly to 16.92 per cent of the world, and 31.14 per cent of Asia in 1961. The growth of population of India up to 1921 was slow and highly fluctuating from year to year due to vagaries of the monsoon. With adequate and well distributed rainfall, there was good harvest, a large number of marriages, a higher birth rate. With an unsatisfactory monsoon there was drought, failure of crops, famine or pestilence or both, with high death rates. Migratory movements between India and other countries were negligible before the partition of India in 1947.

The Government of India decided in 1865 that a general census would be taken in 1872. A series of enumerations in different regions of India were conducted in the years around 1871, which are usually referred to as the Census of 1871. This series, besides being incomplete, was not synchronous. The first all-India census, was therefore, the one taken in 1881. Since then a decennial census was taken, but at every subsequent census up to 1921, a portion of the country was left out.

The accompanying table shows the population of undivided India from 1871 to 1961. During the entire period, the population of India and Pakistan¹ together increased by 108.59 per cent, or by an average of 1.21 per cent per annum. The period, 1871-1921, was one of slow growth of the population with a total increase of 20 per cent in fifty years, or 0.4 per cent per year, due to fluctuating birth and deaths arising from good harvest or drought, famines, pestilence etc., from year to year. The increase in the next forty years, 1921-1961, was about 73.94 per cent, or at an average rate of 1.8 per cent per annum. The rate of increase rose steadily from 1.04 per cent between

¹ Pakistan's population was 76 million in 1951 and 94 million in 1961 showing an increase of 25 per cent in the decade.