

Age Structure of Indian Union

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The Registrar General, India has published the population of post-Partition India as from 1901, but not its age structure, which occupies such an important position in demographic studies. S.B. Mukherjee has given the age-sex distribution of the Indian Union since 1881 according to 1971 layout by States and Union Territories in his book 'The Age Distribution of the Indian Population 1881-1961' by reconstructing the data from the district level, a tremendous task indeed. The enormity of the task and the use of artifices (which are unavoidable in a venture of this magnitude) has suggested the present attempt to obtain age composition of Indian Union as a whole by the direct method of deducting the age composition of the ceded areas from that of undivided India. Even this apparently simple task is not easy, particularly due to the inaccessibility of the relevant old census reports. Were it not for the ungrudging help of old colleagues, particularly of Shri S.C. Srivastava of Registrar General's office, the attempt could not have succeeded.

Census reports give age data for territorial units according to the layout as at the census data. This creates the problem of estimating the age structure of population of areas that may be formed into separate units subsequently. In the context of our problem the relevant changes were as follows. In 1901, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa formed one province. In 1905, it was split into two provinces of (i) West Bengal and Orissa, and (ii) East Bengal and Assam. In December 1911, East Bengal and West Bengal were formed into one province, Bihar and Orissa remained together. Important changes were made during 1931-41. Burma was separated in 1936 and Sind was carved out of Bombay Province. In 1937, Aden was separated. Finally, in 1947, Pakistan was carved out.

Since 1951, the age data for Indian Union has been published for each census. There was a break in 1941, as regular age tables were not prepared for the entire country. For the former British Indian provinces, tables based on Y-sample were prepared after Partition for the Indian Union parts. The relevant data have been published by the Registrar General. This paper, therefore, gives the age