

*Introduction to Egypt's Population
Demography*

Introduction to Egypt's Population Demography

Population Problem in Egypt

Defining the Population Problem:

The population problem is the imbalance between the population, the natural resources, and economic growth, as well as its impact on the social, health, and welfare aspects of a specific society

Three Dimensions of Egypt's Population Problem

1. High population growth rate per age categories of the population.
2. Poor population characteristics (i.e. social, economic, health, and education levels)
3. The imbalanced distribution of the population among the available land (high population density).

The Main Definitions and Indicators Used to Measure Population Growth:

1. Crude Birth Rate (CBR) = $\frac{\text{Number of living births in a year}}{\text{Mid-year Population}} \times 1000$
2. Crude Death Rate (CDR) = $\frac{\text{Number of deaths in a year}}{\text{Mid-year Population}} \times 1000$
3. Natural Increase Rate (NIR) = CBR - CDR
4. Growth Rate (GR) = NIR + migration rate
4. Doubling Time (DT) = Time for a particular population to be doubled = $\frac{69.3}{\text{GR}}$
5. General Fertility Rate (GFR) = $\frac{\text{Number of living births per year}}{\text{Women in reproductive age (15-49)}} \times 1000$
6. Total Fertility Rate (TFR) = the total number of living births during a woman's reproductive age (15-49)
7. Population Density (PopD) = the total population in one square kilometer
$$= \frac{\text{Mid Year Population}}{\text{Total Land Area}}$$

Development of the Population Problem's Dimensions

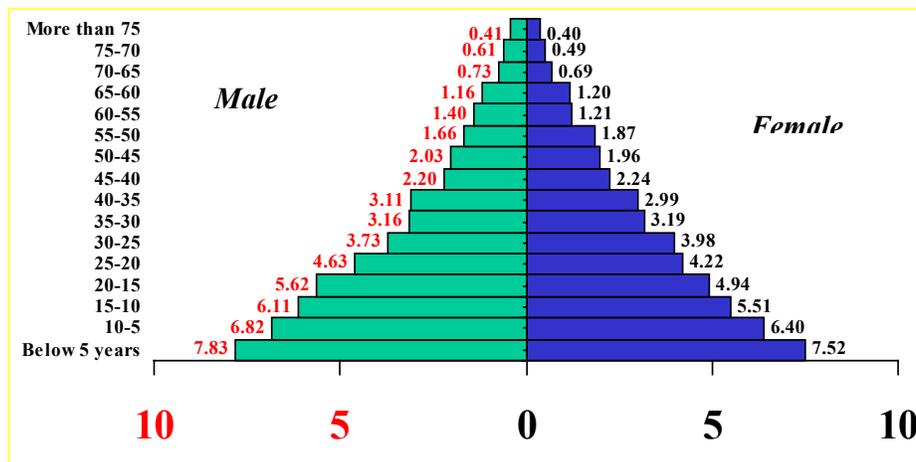
The Increase in Population Growth Rate

Population Growth

- Population doubled about 3 times during the last 120 years. The Population number was 6.7 million in the year 1882 and reached more than 70 million in the year 2004.
- The average yearly population growth reached its peak (2.75%) between the 1976-1986 censuses. It decreased again until it reached 2.08% between the 1986-1996 censuses.
- The natural increase rate is the difference between the birth rate and the mortality rate. In Egypt, this rate considerably decreased from 3% in 1985 to 1.96% in 2003.
- In 2017, the population will reach 96.2 million if the average population growth remains unchanged.

Population Distribution by Age Group

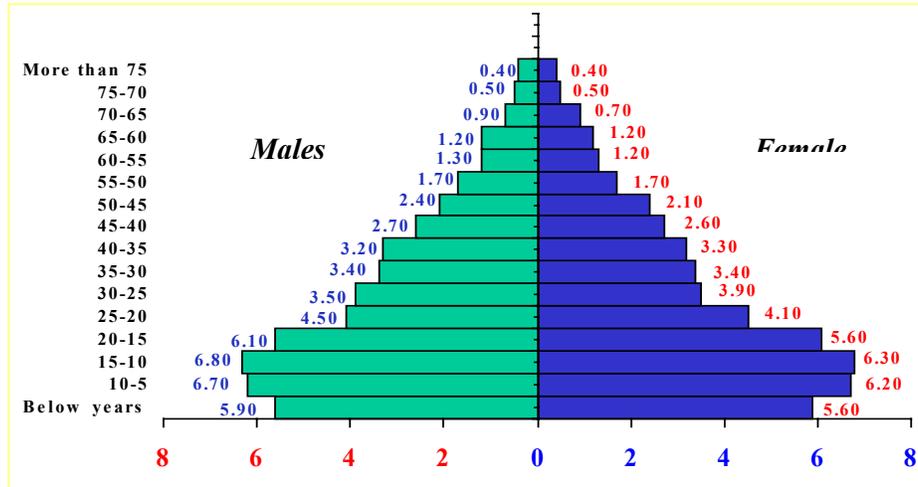
The Population Pyramid of the years 1986 and 1996 shows the following:



1986 Population Pyramid

- More than 15% of the population is in the age group of less than 5 years old
- The Pyramid's base is large due to the increase in birth rate and the decrease of mortality rate
- More the 40% of the population is in the age group of less than 15 years old.

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1996 Population Pyramid

- The population percentage of age group (less than 5 years old) decreased to 11.5% compared to the 15% in the 1986 population pyramid.
- The population percentage of the age group (less than 15 years old) was 37% compared to the 40% of the year 1986.
- The large pyramid base of the 1986 population pyramid for age group (less than 5 years old) has moved up to reach the targeted categories of the current family planning program (16 years old over and above)
- The percentage of women in the reproductive age group increased to reach 26% as compared to 23% in 1986.

Population Characteristics

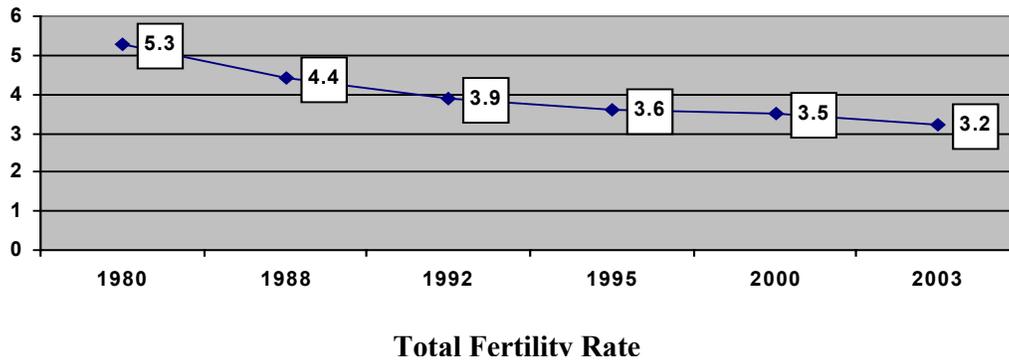
Health Characteristic

The most important indicators of the population health levels are the general mortality rate, the birth rate, and the maternal mortality rate.

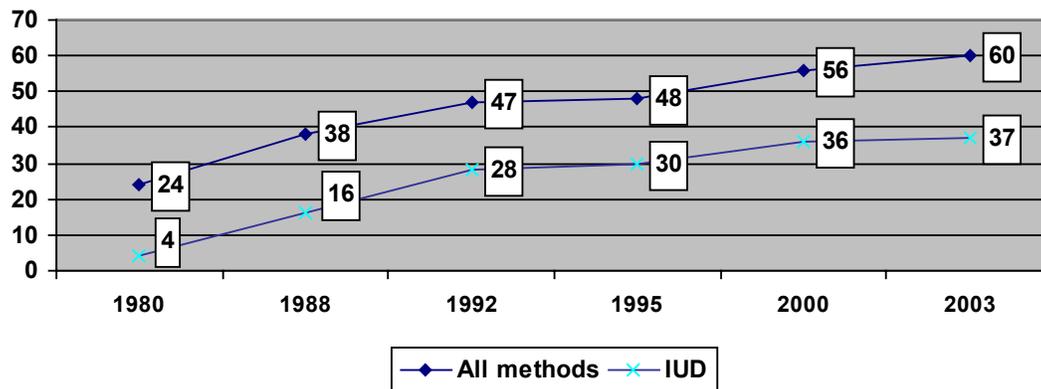
- Child mortality rate is 25 out of 1,000
- Maternal mortality rate is 4 out of 10,000 born alive children of women in the reproductive age group.
- The birth rate decreased from 40/1000 in 1980 to 26.1/1000 in 2003
- The death rate decreased from 10/1000 in 1980 to 6.5/1000 in 2003
- Life expectancy increased from 53.8 for females and 51.6 for males in 1960 to 71.5 for females and 67.1 for males in 2001.
- Total fertility rates for women decreased from 5.3 child/woman in 1980 to 3.2 child/woman in 2003¹.

¹. Total Fertility Rate – Egypt – 1980 – 2003 (EDHS)

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- Increase in contraceptives prevalence rate (CPR) among married women in the reproductive age.



Contraceptive use has more than doubled in Egypt since 1980 – much of the growth is the result of increased IUD use since Pill use has been declining, and injectables were introduced fairly recently

- CPR increased from 24.2 in 1980 to 60% in 2003 in accordance with Demographic Health Survey information (DHS 2003).
- About 25% of the children suffer from growth shortages.

The Direct Effect of the Health Status on the Acceleration of the Population Problem

- Increase in child mortality pushes family to reproduce more children
- Maternal mortality leads to the increase of child illness resulting in remarriages and reproduction of more children
- The increase in illnesses, malnutrition, and shortage of physical and mental health lead to increase of the burdens on health services. This will result in a greater need to investments on health and pharmaceuticals.

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- The nutrition level, the prevalence rate of anemia among children and mothers, the shortage in physical and mental growth for children and youth are the most important factors affecting health characteristics.

Social Characteristics

- Early marriages were one of the population problem's determinants. This situation changed, and the age of marriage substantially increased to become 19.5 years among females (21.1 in urban and 18.1 in rural areas)
- More than 80% of women do not participate in the labor market
- Male births preference
- Child labor encourages poor families for more births due to the relationship of child labor with the economic and social level of these families. In addition, it also encourages school drop outs and the involvement of those children in the labor market to increase their families income. The statistics shows the decrease of child labor in the labor market during the last two decades from 11.6% in 1986 to 2% in 1995
- On what it called the over-crowd culture either domestic or in schools and universities or inside the work place, this phenomena led to the following behaviors:
 - a) The spread of violence, fundamentalism, and addiction
 - b) Feelings of non-loyalty to the society
 - c) Indifference and animosity for others especially among youth
 - d) Increase in crime rate
 - e) Increase in violence against women, children, and gender discrimination

Educational Characteristics

Education represents the corner stone in the worsening of the population problem as they mutually affect each other.

- The increase in illiteracy rate especially among women (42.4%) make it difficult for them to access the IEC messages and the new trends in health and population. In addition, they are more clinging to harmful habits and traditional legacy behaviors
- The increase in the numbers of school dropouts raises the number of illiterate, and causes the spread of un-trained labor and child labor.
- The overcrowded classrooms are impeding the educational process and help in the spread of particular lessons phenomena. This occurs inspite of the construction of new schools.
- The education delivered is inadequate and do not correspond with the demands of the labor market.
- The number of graduates usually exceeds available employment opportunities
- The prevalence of cultural illiteracy even among the educated people. The lack of support to creativity and innovation resulted in lack of creativity and innovation in general.

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The Economic Aspects

- The low rate of economic and human development.
- The increase in unemployment and disguised employment in addition to the increase in the required investment to provide employment opportunities
- An increasing need to import basic goods to meet the society's basic needs
- The low quality of produced local goods resulted in the increase of imported goods versus the exported.
- The increase in the reclaimed land areas versus the eroded agricultural lands
- The production of agricultural lands per acre for traditional and non-traditional crops increased, though this increase is not keeping pace with the population growth. This in addition to the change that occurred in the consumption patterns of the society.

Housing

- There is a housing crisis despite the availability of vacant housing units
- A considerable improvement occurred in the housing standards and the living conditions inside the household.
- Some 87.4% of the population have clean water (97% in urban areas and 64.9% in rural areas)
- Some 97% of the population have electricity

Population Distribution

- Congestion of the population around the Nile river and its Delta
- The population density is about 114 persons per square mile, sometimes reaching 70 thousands per square mile in squatter areas
- This congestion constitutes a huge load on the infrastructure and lead to environmental deteriorations
- The overcrowd results in the erosion of the agricultural lands
- The migration from rural to urban areas leads to the spread of squatter areas, and the transfer of rural behavioral patterns to the urban areas.
- The accumulation of wastes and garbage results in more and more deterioration to the environment and the spread of communicable diseases.

Egypt's Population Program

The three dimensions of the population problem interact in a way that makes it so difficult to affect a real development without a balanced encounter to each of them. They also interact with all the economic and social sides of the population problem, affect the degree of stability and prosperity of the Egyptian society, and decrease the benefits of the efforts aiming at improving the quality of life of the Egyptian citizen. Encountering the population problem requires the integration of the population goals with the economic and social development plans.

In the year 2000, the Ministry of Health and Population played an important role to update the National Population Policy in collaboration with other partners working in the field of population.

The National Population Policy

In collaboration with all the respective ministries and agencies involved in the population issue; the national population policy issued in 1986 was updated so as to correspond with the requirements of the next stage. In addition, the national population strategies were set for the period 2002 and up to 2017. Goals and objectives were determined, and the roles of the respective ministries and agencies participating in the implementation of the plan were identified, in order to reach a replacement rate of 2.1 children/woman by the year 2017, which is considered a national target.

Objectives of the Population Policy:

1. Reducing the population growth rate
2. Improving the geographical distribution of population
3. Upgrading the population characteristics
4. Reducing the demographic, social and economic gaps among population groups and different geographic areas

The Principles

1. Recognizing the family's right to decide upon the appropriate number of children, its right to get the information and means that enable it to execute such decision, within the context of the society culture and religion
2. Avoiding abortion and sterilization as family planning methods
3. Recognizing the right of the citizen to migrate or move from one place to another inside or outside Egypt.
4. Activating the role of NGOs and the private sector in managing and carrying out population programs
5. Recognizing the right of each human being in enjoying all the rights and freedoms stated in the International Declaration of Human Rights without any discrimination, and in compliance with all heavenly laws
6. Admitting that the family is the main unit of a society, therefore, it should be reinforced, and obtain the required protection and support.
7. Support gender equality and equity, empower women, and eliminate all forms of harmful practices against females.
8. The policies and objectives related to population are considered an integral part of the social and economic development model aiming at improving the quality of life

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of citizens. Therefore, strategically, the population issues should be integrated into the development strategies, planning and decision making, resource allocation at all levels and areas, so as to support social justice and eradicate poverty by means of an accelerated economic growth in the context of sustainable development.

Strategies

The National Population Strategic Plan includes eleven specific strategic plans:

1. Family Planning and Reproductive Health Strategy
2. Child Health and Child Survival
3. Education and Literacy Improvement
4. Women Empowerment
5. Adolescent and Youth Care
6. Family Protection and Support
7. Information, Education and Communication
8. Environment Protection
9. Population Redistribution
10. Minimizing Population Gaps
11. Information and Research Support

These strategies help in achieving the following targets:

1. Increase the number of reproductive health and family planning service delivery outlets in an incremental annual plan that considers population density in each area
2. Make ultimate use of the available service delivery points by raising its efficiency level
3. Full cooperation with religious leaders making use of their influence on effecting change of concepts, and communicate an effective religious message
4. Participate in developing squatter and deprived areas by means of intensified work so as to ensure access to services whether by the establishment of new health clinics, or the continuous presence of mobile clinics to cover the needs of all residents
5. Support the Family Medicine programs for the delivery of comprehensive health and social services for the community
6. Full coordination with governorates. The governors' council approved to work in this direction, and agreed on the formulation of a population council in each governorate, including all the respective agencies working in the field of population to follow-up population activities.
7. Work towards changing misconceptions, habits, and inherited traditions (i.e. male child, and repeated pregnancy waiting for the male child)
8. Eradicate illiteracy, educate the girl child in order to improve the population characteristics of women, and put an end to early marriages and pregnancies.
9. Stop school drop out for both genders, and consequently stop the child labor phenomena to create a new generation physically and mentally sound.

References:

- El Zanaty and associates: Egypt Demographic and health survey (ED.HS 2003)
- National Population Policy and Strategies document