

# **SOME DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN POPULATION IN NORTHERN SUDAN 1965—66 \***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The absence of any threat of over-population does not mean that the Sudan is free from other kinds of population problems. In fact, the country faces a number of problems connected with the growth, distribution and composition of the population.

Such phenomena are of great importance for the future of developing nations, and need to be taken into account as national plans and policies for economic and social development are worked out.

According to the first population census age-groups, the Sudan is among the youngest countries of the world with the highest proportion of children. About 47 per cent of the population were under 15 years of age.

It is apparent that the population distribution among provinces in the Northern Sudan is uneven. The outstanding fact is that the Blue Nile province accounted for more than 20 per cent of the total population of the country while other provinces contained in each less than 10 per cent. In fact the distribution of the population in the Sudan is a major problem.

This is because although the country has great possibilities for economic development, these possibilities are not equal in all parts. Thus, the existing distribution of population and manpower resources within the country and prospective changes in this respect are important considerations of developmental policy and strategy.

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Another existing problem is that of the qualifications of the Sudan's manpower, viewed as a source for the development of a modern economy. As matters have been since the second half of this century, activities other than agriculture and animal husbandry occupied a minority of the working force and were rare outside the few largest towns. Among the manpower occupied in activities which can be regarded as industrial, craftsmen were far more numerous than factory workers, and many a handicraft was carried out by women on a part-time basis in addition to their domestic duties. Though workers at high levels of skill were few, the relative shortage of workers of intermediate qualification, such as might become foremen, supervisors and clerks in industrial and commercial undertaking is even greater. It has been estimated that only 8 per cent of all employed workers were trained for professional, semi-professional, managerial, clerical or skilled jobs. Actually, the problem of improving the quality of human resources in these respects is closely related to the problem of rapid population growth, which constantly magnifies the requirements of adequate educational and training programmes.

#### AGE-SEX-COMPOSITION

##### *Sex-Composition :*

Khartoum province ranks top in containing the bulk of urban population as compared to other provinces. About 69 per cent of these were lifetime non-migrants. The sex-ratio amounted to about 123 per cent. This indicates that most of the in-migrants have been composed of males, who usually arrive at first alone in order to explore the unknown destination. The Blue Nile had almost 20 per cent of its urban population as in-migrants. The sex-ratio was about 106 per cent. In Kassala province the non-migrants represent about 75 per cent of the total urban population, and the sex-ratio amounted to 114 per cent. This implies that the male migrants constituted the majority. In Kordofan and Darfur provinces, the non-migrants comprised the largest proportion of the urban residents. In each the sex-ratio was nearly 98 per cent. This is mainly due to the fact that, the out-migrants were largely males, while the in-migrants were in most cases families.

The Nothern province had been characterized by having the least in-migrants compared to its non-migrant urban residents. The sex ratio among its urban population had been even. This might be an indication that most of the out-migrants, who departed at first alone, have been joined by their families (Table 1).

It is noteworthy that, the more urbanized provinces, excepting the Nothern Province which has been losing a lot through out-migration, namely Khartoum and Kassala have gained considerably through internal migration. Since the male migrants exceeded the females, the sex-ratio was highly disturbed. In the other provinces with more rural characteristics, this ratio was very slightly disturbed.

#### *Age-Composition :*

Considering the age-composition of Nothern Sudan, we have dated three main stages. These comprise the age intervals, 0—12, 13—67, and 68 years and over. The first interval refers to the childhood stage, the second the stage of adults, and the third to that of old people. The population sector lying in the middle stage represents the productive population, while those of the first and the third stages resemble the non-productive population <sup>(1)</sup>.

On average, the population contained in the age interval 0—12 years constituted about 40 per cent of the total population in each province. This assures our previous claim of the country's position as one of the youngest countries in the world. In the Blue Nile, Nothern, Kordofan and Darfur, the children proportions ranged between 40.3 percent. In Khartoum and Kassala the proportions were 73.2 and 39.0 per cent respectively. In this age interval, the male children exceeded the females in all provinces.

In the age interval 68 years and over, the population constituted only a small proportion of the total population in each province,

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(1) The conventional age intervals are 0—14, 15—64 and 65 and more years, but the above age intervals have been chosen to suit the data available.

roughly 2 per cent. The highest proportion has been had by Darfur province about 2.5 per cent, and the lowest proportion by Rassala province, approximately 1.8 per cent. In the Blue Nile, Kassala and Khartoum, the males outnumbered females, while in the remaining provinces the contrary was true.

The age interval 13—67 years comprised the majority of the population. In Khartoum province it contained about 75 per cent of the total urban population. Darfur and Kassala provinces had about 58 per cent of their urban population concentrated in this age interval, while the Nothern and Kordofan provinces had about 57 and 56 per cent, of the urban population in this age interval, respectively. In the Blue Nile the respective percentage amounted to 55 per cent (Table 2).

The dependency ratio is very high as the case in other developing countries. The Nothern province showed relatively the highest ratio, about 119 per cent. Other provinces of comparatively high dependency ratios were the Blue Nile, Kordofan and Kassala, lower ratios were found in Darfur and Khartoum 95 and 95 and 96 per cent respectively.

As expected in developing countries, the median age of age composition of the provinces in Northern Sudan, was a bit lower compared to that of developed industrial countries. In average, it amounted to 21 years. The highest median age was found in Khartoum province amounting to 24 years, followed by Kassala and Darfur, where it numbered 22 years in each. In the other provinces it mostly centered around around the age 20 years (Table 3).

The low values of the median age were the direct result of the large proportions of the population in the childhood stage. The low index of ageing refers in addition, to the low number of people aged 68 years

age of the urban population in Northern Sudan, we could further emphasize our claim that the Sudan is one of the countries with young population.

TABLE 1.

Sex-ratio and Sex-composition of the population in the Provinces of  
Northern Sudan, 1965-66

Province	Both Sexes	Percentage of non-migrants	males	Percent- age	females	Percent- age	Sex-ratio
Blue Nile	312,090	79.6	160,910	51.6	151,190	48.4	106
Kassale	270,740	74.0	144,370	53.3	126,370	46.7	114
Khartoum	458,990	69.4	253,830	55.3	205,160	44.7	123
Kordofan	180,390	86.6	89,070	49.4	91,320	50.6	98
Nothern	121,360	92.8	60,700	50.1	60,660	49.9	100
Darfur	110,980	91.8	54,940	49.5	56,040	50.5	98

Source : Department of Statistics, Republic of the Sudan, Population  
and Housing survey 1964-66, Khartoum, 1968.

TABLE 2.

Percentage of the urban population, in the three main age intervals in the six provinces of Northern Sudan 1965—66

Province	Sex	Age intervals			Total
		0—12	13—67	68 +	
Blue Nile	Males	22.3	28.2	1.1	51.6
	Females	21.0	26.5	0.9	48.4
	Both Sexes	43.3	54.7	2.0	100.0
Kassala	Males	21.1	31.2	1.0	53.3
	Females	19.2	26.7	0.8	46.7
	Both Sexes	40.3	57.9	1.8	100.0
Khartoum	Males	19.4	34.9	1.0	55.3
	Females	17.8	26.0	0.9	44.7
	Both Sexes	37.2	60.9	1.9	100.0
Kordofan	Males	21.5	26.9	1.0	49.4
	Females	20.5	28.9	1.2	50.6
	Both Sexes	42.0	55.8	2.2	100.0
Nothorn	Males	21.7	28.5	0.9	51.1
	Females	20.7	28.2	1.0	48.9
	Both Sexes	42.4	56.7	1.9	100.0
Darfur	Males	20.7	27.8	1.0	49.5
	Females	18.3	30.7	1.5	50.5
	Both Sexes	34.0	58.5	2.5	100.0

Source : Same as for Table 1.

TABLE 3.

Dependency ratio, index of ageing and median age, in the provinces of Northern Sudan, 1965—66

Province	Dependency ratio	Index of ageing	Median age
Blue Nile	111	4	19
Kassala	101	3	22
Khartoum	96	4	24
Kordofan	107	4	20
Nothorn	119	4	20
Darfur	95	6	22

Source : Derived from Table 2.

### NUPTIALITY

In general almost over 30 per cent of the total urban population in all provinces were married with the exception of Kassala province. The proportion of the married females exceeded that of the males. In Kassala province, about 37 per cent of its urban population were married. Of these, the married males amounted to 19 per cent, exceeding that of the females with 1 per cent. The Northern and Khartoum provinces, compared to other provinces, show the smallest proportion of the married population. This could be attributed to the role of internal migration as the Northern represents the largest sending province and Khartoum, the major receiving province.

The proportion of the urban population sector ageing 12 years and over who has never been married shows interesting results. The relatively more urbanized provinces, namely Khartoum, Northern and Kassala, show the highest proportion. In Khartoum province about 25 per cent of the urban population has never been married, in Northern nearly 20 per cent and in Kassala about 17 per cent. Other provinces showed a comparatively smaller proportions, approximately 14 per cent in Darfur, 15 per cent in Kordofan and 16 per cent in the Blue Nile. This implies that since life in the more urbanized provinces is more difficult and complicated, it takes a longer time for a male, after passing adulthood stage, to marry. On the contrary in the less urbanized provinces, where life is relatively easier and marriage expenditures are comparatively lower, men could marry on reaching adulthood or very soon afterwards.

Divorce differs according to the social ties, kinship and economic conditions prevailing in each province. In Kordofan and Darfur provinces the occurrence of divorce is not regarded as a serious matter but is considered as a mere ordinary event that passes without remarkable effects on the social ties. This fact explains the high percentages of divorce among the urban population, nearly 3.4 per cent. The lowest percentage is found among the urban population of Khartoum province where high expenditures of marriage together with relative better understanding of the population act as safety valves. The second lower percentage characterized the urban population of the Northern province. This is mainly owing to the very close social ties prevailing there, along with the fact that most of the marriage events usually occur among kins (Table 4).

TABLE 4.

Marital Status in the six provinces of Northern Sudan, 1965—66

Province	Blue Nile	Kassala	Khartoum	Kordofan	Nothern	Darfur
Total popula- tion	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Never married	59.4	57.4	61.8	56.5	61.8	52.6
Never married (12 years +)	16.0	17.1	24.7	14.6	21.1	13.6
Married	34.8	36.9	33.3	35.1	32.4	38.2
Divorced	2.2	2.3	1.5	3.4	1.7	3.4
Widowed	3.6	3.4	3.4	5.0	4.1	5.8

Source : same as for Table 1.

#### LABOUR FORCE

The labour force of the six provinces in Northern Sudan numbered about 438,030 persons. This number represents 30 per cent of the total urban population. In the Blue Nile province, the population sector in labour force amounted to 29 per cent of the urban population, 31 per cent in Kassala, 32 per cent in Khartoum, 30 per cent in Kordofan, 25 per cent in Northern and 32 per cent in Darfur. Of these employed persons amounted to 97 per cent in each of the Blue Nile Darfur and Kassala, 98 per cent in Kordofan, 96, per cent in Northern and 95 per cent in Khartoum.

Regarding the labour force distribution by age within the provinces of Northern Sudan, we notice that it followed the same pattern. The population ageing 38—52 years comprised the majority of the labour force, compared to other age intervals. In all provinces, it contained over 20 per cent of the population in labour force. The highest proportion has been had by Darfur province, while the lowest proportion characterized Khartoum and Kassala, 20 per cent in the former and 22 per cent in the latter. In Kordofan, Northern and the Blue Nile, they constituted almost 25 per cent. Those ageing 23—27 years, comes next



incontaining a higher proportion of the labour force population. In Khartoum and Kassala they comprised about 19 and 16 per cent respectively. In the Blue Nile, Nothern Kordofan and Darfur these percentages fell to 14 or 13 per cent.

In gernerall, the males proportion among the total in labour force exceeded the females, in particular, the more urbanized provinces showed even relatively higher proportions. The males constituted about 93 per cent of the labour force in Kassala, 94 per cent in Nothern and 95 per cent in Khartoum. In contrast, the males in the less urbanized provinces made up about 81 per cent in Darfur, 85 per cent in Kordofan and 91 per cent in the Blue Nile. This explains the dominance of males migration to the more urbanized provinces, where pull factors are more tempting and better chances of employment are expected.

Considering the age-specific activity rates of the labour force population in the various age intervals, we find that, with the exception of Khartoum and the Blue Nile, the age interval 33—37 years represented the higher percentages. In Darfur province the population in labour force took about 65 per cent of the population in these age intervals. In Kassala and Kordofan about 60 per cent and in the Nothern province a bit over 50 per cent. Besides, in the Blue Nile about 60 per cent in each of the age intervals 38—52 years and 53—67 years referred to those engaged in labour force. Khartoum province experienced the same percentages but in earlier age stages, namely the intervals 23—27 years (Table 5).

In general, the females constituted only a small proportion of the economically active population as compared to the males. Besides, the proportion of the males in the economically active population is relatively very high in the various age intervals. The age intervals starting 23 years and ending 52 years showed that the majority of the male population were engaged in the labour force, over 98 per cent. This phenomenon characterized all provinces. On the other hand, the female population shared with very small propotion in the labour force. Relatively higher proportions are noticed in the age interval as in between 33 and 67 years (Table 6).

TABLE 5.

Age-specific activity rates of the provinces in Northern Sudan, 1965—66

Age interval	Blue Nile	Kassala	Khartoum	Kordofan	Nothern	Darfur
8—12 years	5.5	5.0	3.5	5.7	3.0	3.7
13—17 years	26.4	28.0	21.6	29.0	16.4	24.7
18—22 years	44.3	43.9	45.4	42.3	38.5	40.2
23—27 years	49.3	53.5	59.6	47.2	49.0	46.5
28—32 years	53.3	55.2	60.6	52.5	45.2	52.4
33—37 years	57.2	60.6	58.8	60.1	52.9	64.1
38—52 years	60.5	61.3	58.5	61.7	54.9	66.5
53—67 years	62.8	57.4	55.0	60.0	51.7	61.2
68 + years	37.8	37.8	30.3	34.0	26.3	34.0

Source / Same as in Table 1.

### *Employment Status :*

The Employment Status of the economically active population is a good indicator to the stage of economic development. Usually, in the early stages of economic development family-owned enterprises prevail, but at higher stages of development, a more complex type with mass-production enterprises dominates. The former type is characterized by the large proportions of the self-employed persons and family workers together with small proportion of the employees, while for the latter type the contrary is true.

Table 7 shows the position of Sudan's economy in the ladder of economic development. About 43.3 per cent of the economically active population were self-employed and family workers. This is really a high figure if we come to know that we are dealing with urban areas only and not the country as a whole. The employee group was 53.0 per cent. This percentage is expected to be much lower if the whole country is considered.

The females, compared to the males, have lower proportions in the groups of family workers and self-employed persons. Of the females in all activity groups those in the self-employed group comprised 67.3 per cent while in the case of males, they made up only about 38 per cent. On the other hand, of the total males in all activity groups, those in the group of employees amounted to 53.0 per cent, while the respective percentage of females was only 27.0 per cent.

There is a wide variation in the employment structure of the labour force among the different provinces. In the more urbanized provinces about 50 per cent and more of the economically active population were employees; specifically, about 50 per cent in Kassala, 63 per cent in Nothern and 68 per cent in Khartoum. The respective proportions for the less urbanized provinces were 34, 41 and 43 per cent in Darfur, Kordofan and the Blue Nile respectively. The sector of employers showed also some differences between the more urbanized and other provinces. While in the former, relatively higher percentages were noticed, the latter showed lower percentages. These percentages range from 4.2 per cent in Khartoum to 1.9 per cent in Darfur. The Blue Nile Province, being an exception of the less urbanized provinces, had a higher percentage, 3.0 per cent, because of its agricultural economy (Table 8).

The self-employed persons constituted larger proportions of the labour force in the less urbanized provinces compared to other provinces, because of the prevalence of family-managed enterprises. They comprised about 60 per cent of the economically active population in Darfur, 53 per cent in Kordofan and 49 per cent in the Blue Nile. In the more urbanized provinces they contained about 26 per cent of the labour force in Khartoum, 31 per cent in Nothern and 44 per cent in Kassala. Actually the differences in the status pattern noticed between urban and non-urban provinces are analogous to those differences between the developed and developing countries.

TABLE 7.

Per cent distribution of labour force by status  
and sex, Northern Sudan, 1965—66

Status	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Employers	3.2	3.4	1.2
Self-employed	40.5	37.9	67.3
Family workers	2.8	2.7	3.1
Employees	53.0	55.5	27.0
Others	0.5	0.5	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : Same as in Table 1.

TABLE 6.  
Age-Sex-Specific activity Rates of the Provinces in Northern Sudan  
1965-66

Age interval	Blue Nile		Kassala		Khartoum		Kordofan		Nothorn		Darfur	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
8-12 years	9.8	0.8	7.6	2.0	6.4	0.4	9.8	1.5	5.2	0.8	6.3	0.6
13-17 years	47.9	2.8	48.4	5.9	38.1	2.0	50.9	5.4	32.2	0.8	43.7	3.2
18-22 years	85.6	5.0	87.1	5.2	74.3	6.9	68.5	6.8	78.5	4.5	86.8	8.2
23-27 years	98.4	6.6	98.2	5.9	95.2	6.7	99.2	9.4	99.1	3.2	99.3	9.6
28-32 years	99.1	6.3	99.1	5.3	98.1	6.5	99.5	10.4	98.2	3.1	98.9	16.1
33-37 years	99.3	10.5	98.4	8.1	98.8	7.1	99.2	17.8	98.6	4.7	98.2	25.9
38-52 years	98.6	15.5	98.0	10.7	98.5	6.4	98.3	25.8	98.8	7.1	98.0	31.1
53-67 years	93.8	19.9	89.3	10.4	87.7	8.1	92.4	26.2	88.2	22.8	92.9	34.5
68 + years	63.0	9.0	63.4	3.4	53.6	5.6	65.8	6.2	53.2	3.1	66.4	11.4

Source : Same as in for Table 1.

TABLE 8.

Per cent distribution of labour force by status for Provinces  
Northern Sudan, 1965—66

Status Province	Employers	Self- employed	Family worker	Employees	Other	Total
Blue Nile	3.0	48.5	5.0	43.1	0.4	100.0
Kassala	3.3	43.7	3.0	49.6	0.4	100.0
Khartoum	4.2	25.5	1.2	68.2	0.9	100.0
Kordofan	2.1	53.1	2.5	41.8	0.5	100.0
Northern	2.6	31.3	2.3	63.1	0.6	100.0
Darfur	1.9	59.8	3.5	34.4	0.4	100.0

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