

Nasir, Jamal Abdul; Tahir, M. H.; Riaz, Muhammad

Article

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Demographic Profile of an Indigenous Community: The Arians of Pakistan

Jamal Abdul Nasir (Corresponding author)
Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan
Email: jamal.nasir@iub.edu.pk

M. H. Tahir
Associate Professor, Department of Statistics
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan
Email: mtahir_stat@yahoo.com

Muhammad Riaz
Department of Statistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan
Email: m.riaz08@yahoo.com

Abstract

In this paper, a demographic study was conducted on Muslim Arians of Punjab, Pakistan. Hitherto no detailed demographic study has been conducted on Arians of Pakistan. The population composition of Arians residing in Punjab was evaluated. The survey was conducted in three Arians pre-dominated districts. Data was collected by interviewing ever-married women in the age group 15-49 years from a sample of 510 households. The analysis demonstrated that the sex ratios of Arians were higher than their national counterparts. Overall, among Arians though the literacy is high, the gender gap in education is visible and the level of education attained is low. Residence characteristics indicate urbanized nature of settlement. This study attracts the planners and administrators for micro-level planning towards the development of ethnographical surveys in Pakistan.

Keywords: demographic variables; population structure; socio-economic profile; age-sex pyramid.

1. Introduction

Demography, the science of population, is termed as the scientific study of human population or more specifically, the study of the size, geographic distribution, age-sex structure and socio-economic composition of populations and the factors that affect changes in these dimensions, namely, fertility, mortality and migration (Siegel, 2002). An evaluation of population composition is an important aspect of demographic studies. It helps to understand the basic structure, which is the outcome of various demographic processes and social factors. The ethnic diversity provides a unique opportunity to study key demographic variations among the endogamous populations living in different geographical and ecological conditions. Globally, various studies have been conducted on

different ethnic groups (Bhasin and Nag, 2002a, b, c, d, e, f; Biswas and Kapoor, 2003; Dabral and Malik, 2004a, b, c, d, e, f; Kakkoth, 2004; Islam et al., 2009). However, the importance and application of demographic studies is ever growing and remains a wide area of research for a country like Pakistan because literature shows no detail ethnic based demographic studies so far. Since there is no ethnographical survey of the indigenous people of Pakistan, therefore the existing literature to assess the ethnic based demographic profile is lacking and remained an area of research in Pakistan. This provides a rationale for the present study.

Keeping these views in mind the present paper is an attempt to evaluate the population composition of Arians of Punjab. It aims at studying the age-sex composition of Arian besides socio-economic characteristics, namely; educational status, occupational status, economic status along with the variations in general characteristics of their residence.

2. Material and Methods

The Arians are an agricultural caste settled mainly in the Punjab region of India and Pakistan (Chowdhry, 1990; Bansal and Singh, 2003). Arians claims to be of Arab descent (Rose, 1911). The origin of Arians stem from Syria. It is claimed that the Arian came from Areeha also written as Ariha Jericho, Syria. These were *Areehai people* who joined the force of "Muhammad Bin Qasim" in 712 AD. These Areehai people could not get back and forcefully they had to stay in Indo-Pak (Najeebabadi, 1931). In the reign of *Abbasia* they had to suffer. As time went on, these Areehai people settled in countries which are now a day known as Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. In Pakistan, Arian are nearly ten million rather some saying that it is twenty million. In India, they range up to hundreds of thousands. In Afghanistan and free Tribes, their population is remarkable (Chaudhry, 1989). In Indo-Pak, wherever Arian people reside, they have formed some movements to better the society.

The present study was conducted among Arians residing in Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, and Rahim Yar Khan Division of Punjab in Pakistan. Most of them are belonging to the profession of agriculture and business. The data for the present study was collected from ever-married Arian women aged 15-49 years from a sample of 510 households comprising of 2225 individual using an interviewer scheduled. No more than one married women in the age group 15-49 years was selected from household. In the case of more than one ever-married woman in reproductive age per household, the eldest woman was selected.

A two-stage area sampling was used in conducting this survey. At the first stage, a sample of area units was drawn and at the second stage, a sample of households was selected within that area. Table 1 shows the detailed area wise sample size for this study. A structured questionnaire was filled by the interviewer from the ever married Arian women (15-49) years in the absence of any male Member.

Table 1: The District-Wise Sample Size

District	Frequency	Percent
Bahawalnagar	162	31.8
Bahawalpur	185	36.3
Rahim Yar khan	163	32.0
Total	510	100.0

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Age-sex distribution of Arian

Age and gender are the important factors for the study of population structure, on the basis of which, other type of demographic data, such as population count, educational level, etc., are cross-classified and analyzed (Weeks, 2002; Hinde, 1998). Age and sex distribution of Arians suggests that more than one-fifth of the population is below 15 years of age and a marginal proportion is 65 years and above (Fig. 1). The age pyramid is an important means to learn the demographic history of a population (Ramakumar, 1986). The age-sex pyramid also indicates higher old age mortality and lower life expectancy. Broad base population pyramid for Arians, reflects a 'Young' population—more than thirty per cent of population being under 15 years). Dependency ratio among Arian is approximately 50 dependents for every 100 working individuals who is lower than the dependency ratio for the population of Pakistan (88.4, Population and Demographic Survey: PDS, 2005). The sex ratio in Arian (107.94) is slightly higher than population of Pakistan (106: PDS-2005). The age wise sex ratios do not exhibit any particular trend.

3.2 Educational Attainment

Education is an essential pre-requisite of all-round development of individuals towards better quality of life (Debra and Malik, 2004a). Among Arian though the literacy rate is high, the level of education attained is low. The literacy rate (total) among Arian is 87.11 percent, while it is 83.12 percent for females and 91.68 percent for males (Table 2A and Table 2B). Generally, a higher percentage of males than females have completed each level of education. This reflects that in Pakistan, in spite of positive policy initiatives gender gap in education still prevails. Major reasons for this are probably early marriage of women and domestic work load. The percentage of higher educated individuals is less among Arians. The extent of literacy and educational level of the Arians population, aged 7 years and above, by age and sex, shows that the proportion of illiterate males is almost same while it is slightly higher for females (males, 8.31 percent and females, 16.87: Table 2A and Table 2B), as compared to 1998 Census in Pakistan rates (males, 54.81 percent and females, 32.02 percent). There has been a progress in the level of literacy over time (Fig. 2), as indicated by marked improvement in the proportion of literates in younger age particularly females.

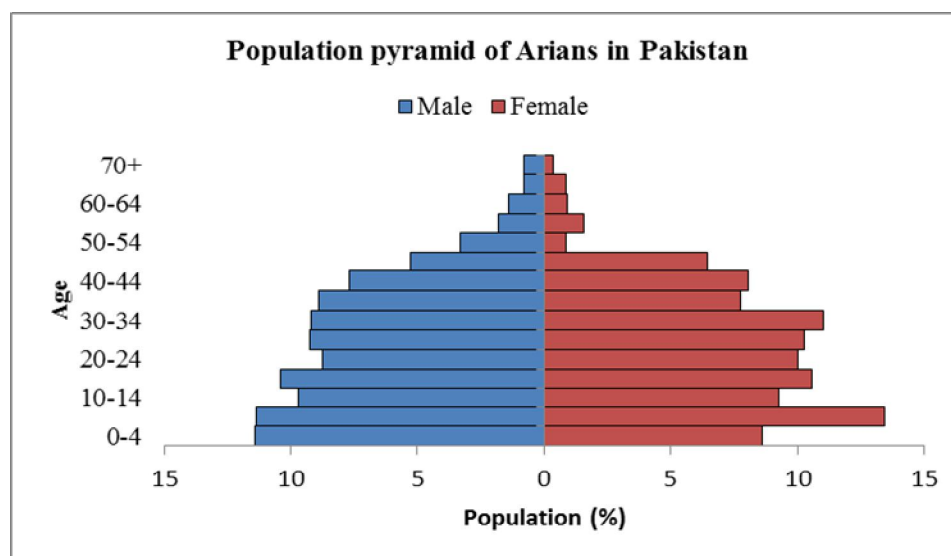


Figure 1: Population pyramid of Arians in Pakistan, 2009-2010

Table 2A : Percent Distribution of Males (5 years and above) by Level of Education and Age

Age Group (years)	<u>Literate</u>									<u>Total</u>	
	Illiterate	< PS	PS	MS	HS	HSS	G	PG	>PG	%age	Total
5-9	7.63	83.21	9.16	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	131
10-14	2.68	15.18	43.75	34.82	3.57	0	0	0	0	100	112
15-19	3.33	0.83	4.17	28.33	39.17	20.0	4.17	0	0	100	120
20-24	2.97	0.99	12.87	18.81	21.78	8.91	25.74	7.92	0	100	101
25-29	8.41	0.93	4.67	17.76	24.30	14.02	14.95	14.95	0	100	107
30-34	8.49	2.83	6.60	12.26	23.58	16.98	16.04	13.21	0	100	106
35-39	12.62	2.91	7.77	29.13	14.56	8.74	13.59	8.74	1.94	100	103
40-44	5.62	6.74	6.74	25.84	23.60	18.0	5.62	6.70	1.12	100	89
45-49	8.20	4.92	6.56	14.75	32.79	13.11	11.48	8.20	0	100	61
50-54	21.05	7.89	7.89	13.16	18.42	15.79	5.76	10.53	0	100	38
55-59	23.81	4.76	4.76	19.65	23.81	9.52	4.76	4.76	4.76	100	21
60-64	18.75	6.25	0	50.0	12.50	12.50	0	0	0	100	16
65-69	44.44	0	11.11	22.22	11.11	11.11	0	0	0	100	9
70+	44.44	11.11	0	33.33	0	0	0	11.11	0	100	9
Total	85	150	114	208	195	110	93	64	4	100	1023
%	8.31	14.66	11.14	20.33	19.06	10.75	9.09	6.26	0.39	100	

PS: primary school

MS: middle school

HS: high school

HSS: higher secondary school

G: graduation

PG: post graduation

>PG: above post graduation

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Table 2B : Percent Distribution of Females (5 years and above) by Level of Education and Age

Age Groups (years)	Literate									Total	Total %
	Illiterate	< PS	PS	MS	HS	HSS	G	PG	>PG		
5-9	16.67	75.0	8.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	144	100
10-14	8.08	17.17	29.29	43.43	2.02	0	0	0	0	99	100
15-19	12.39	2.65	7.08	15.93	36.28	15.93	9.73	0	0	113	100
20-24	9.34	2.80	9.34	14.02	12.15	17.76	28.97	5.61	0	107	100
25-29	16.36	3.64	7.27	18.18	20.91	9.09	14.54	9.09	0.91	110	100
30-34	11.02	1.69	12.71	13.56	21.19	11.86	11.86	15.25	0.85	118	100
35-39	9.64	8.43	14.46	21.69	18.07	13.25	9.64	4.82	0	83	100
40-44	25.58	5.81	12.79	16.28	16.28	13.95	4.65	4.65	0	86	100
45-49	33.33	5.80	15.94	23.19	7.25	8.69	4.35	1.45	0	69	100
50-54	33.33	0	33.33	0	11.11	22.22	0	0	0	9	100
55-59	41.18	0	29.41	17.65	5.88	5.88	0	0	0	17	100
60-64	50.0	0	40.0	10.0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100
65-69	77.77	0	22.22	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	100
70+	7.50	0	0	25.0	0	0	0	0	0	4	100
Total	165	153	130	165	140	93	87	43	2	978	
%age	16.87	15.64	13.29	16.87	14.31	9.51	8.90	4.40	0.20	100	

PS: primary school
MS: middle school
HS: high school
HSS: higher secondary school
G: graduation
PG: post graduation
>PG: above post graduation

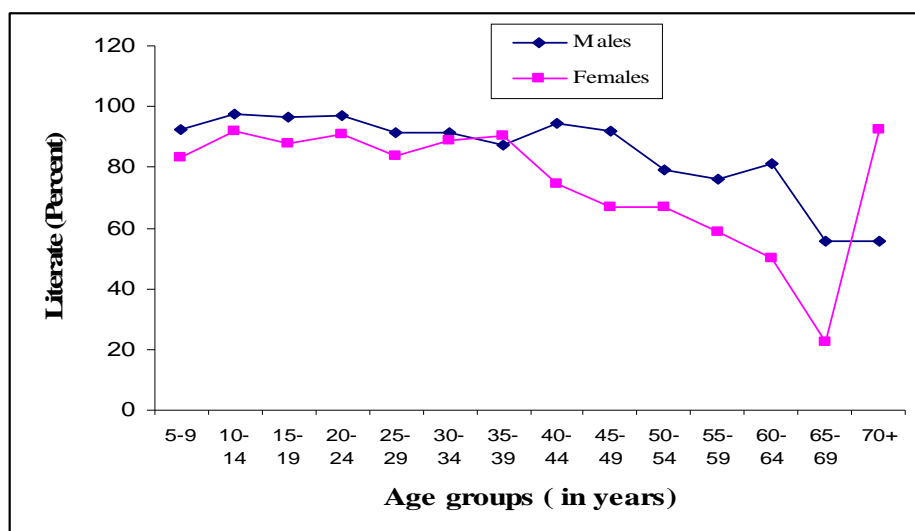


Figure 2: Percentage Literate, by Age and Gender

3.3 Occupational Status

The occupational structure of a community is an index of its economic profile. It is one of the sensitive indicators of an individual's status (Debra and Malik, 2004a). Livelihood among Arians, as in most of the human societies, is observed to be primarily a male's responsibility. Less than one-third of the Arian males are engaged in farming (Table 3). Among non-agricultural activities, private jobs and business constitute the major categories. One-fourth is in government jobs while only a small proportion is self-employed. On the whole, more than half of the males are economically active while rests are non-workers. Female employment among Arians is visible (Table 3). The Arian women entrepreneurship is also observable (10 percent, Table 3).

Table 3 : Percent Distribution of Economically Active Males and Females (aged 15-70+, years) by Occupational Categories

Occupational Categories/Activities							Total	
Gender	Sample Size	Govt. Jobs	Private Jobs	Business	Self- employed	Farmer	No.	%age
Males	1155	24.92	17.08	23.20	5.80	29.00	638	100
Females	1070	34.68	19.37	10.36	0.00	35.59	222	100

3.4 Economic Status

Distribution of households, by income, is one of the bases of socio-economic status. On the basis of annual income, annual per capita income of the households was calculated. In case of agriculturalist, an estimate of yearly income from farming was provided by them (because harvesting season is twice or thrice a year depending upon the crop sown). However, in case of other sectors, they provided an account of their monthly income. An estimate was computed to the closest annual figure. The various annual per capita income groups, on which the Arian households are divided suggests that, two-fifth of the households have annual per capita income up to Pakistani rupees, PKRs. 25,000-60,000 (Table 4). Only, small proportions of the households have annual per capita income higher than PKRs. 300,000 and above.

Over one-third of the households do not own any agricultural land (Table 5). The possession of consumer durable goods is in varying proportions (Table 6).

Table 4 : Percent Distribution of Households, by Annual Per Capita Income

Annual Per Capita Income (PKRs in thousands)		
Households	Number	Percent
< 25	80	15.69
25-60	196	38.43
60-100	88	17.25
100-200	128	25.10
200-300	11	2.17
≥ 300	7	1.37
Total	510	100.0

Table 5 : Percent Distribution of Households Owning Agricultural Land

Asset	Number	Percent
Yes	315	61.76
No	195	38.24
Total	510	100.0

Table 6: Percent Distribution of Households Owning Selected Consumer Durable Goods

Asset	Number	Percent
Motor Cycle	315	61.76
Car	79	15.49
Tractor	96	18.82
Truck or bus	20	3.92
Water pump	414	81.18
Telephone	407	79.80
Refrigerator	399	78.24
Television	442	86.67
CD player	187	36.67
Radio	247	48.43
Air-conditions	73	14.31

3.5 Residence Characteristics

The residence characteristics of the population reflect its settlement nature. The regions or cities we considered in this study are quite urbanized and this is reflected by their settlement patterns. Only two percent of the households do not have electricity at the time of survey (Table 7). Large majority of the households (fifth-seventh) have house drinking water in their residence, another one-fourth get it from supply line while remaining from tanker. Regarding sanitation facilities, (fifth-eleventh) of the households have a simple toilet, another fourth-tenth use modern flush while the remaining has no facility. Seventh-tenth of the households use ghee for cooking (Table 7). One-fourth still uses oil. Majority of the household live in 'puce' houses (92.5 percent). Over one-third of the households have three members while another one-fifth has two members (Table 8). The mean household size is 3.42 persons or 4 persons. All the above characteristics reflect urbanized nature of these households.

Table 7: Percent Distribution of Households by Residence Characteristics

Residence Characteristics		Number	Percent
Electricity	Yes	499	97.84
	No	11	2.16
Gas	Yes	265	51.96
	No	245	48.04
Source of drinking water	House	365	71.57
	Tanker	11	2.16
	Supply line	134	26.27
Sanitation facility	No	71	13.92
	Simple	235	46.08
	Flush	204	40.00
Main medium of cooking	Ghee	355	69.61
	Oil	127	24.90
	Others	28	5.49
Condition of house	Puce	473	92.75
	Kucha	37	7.25

Table 8 : Percent Distribution of Households by Size

Household Size	Households	
	Number	Percent
1	21	4.1
2	121	23.7
3	198	38.8
4	75	14.7
5	39	7.6
6	29	5.7
7	5	1.0
8	16	3.1
9+	6	1.2
Total	510	100.0

4. Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it may be concluded that Arian males outnumber females in most of the age groups and the sex ratio of Arians is higher as compared to population of Pakistan. The lower value of dependency ratio and higher value of literacy rate gives greater potential for economic as well as educational development of Arians than their national counterparts. Arians residences are semi-urbanized in nature. Finally, an effective evaluation of present demographic profile is a step in developing an educated and modern population with appropriate demographic behavior. For the micro-level planning of indigenous ethnic groups, it is also hoped that this study will be helpful to planners and administrators about the development of ethnographical surveys in Pakistan.

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