

S. 4 GEOGRAPHY POPULATION OF AFRICA

Population refers to the number of people living in a given area in a given period of time.

TERMS USED IN POPULATION STUDIES

1. Birth Rates: This refers to the number of live births in a given year out of the total population per thousand people.
2. Death Rate: This refers to the number of deaths occurring annually per thousand of the total population.
3. Growth Rate: This refers to the percentage ratio of birth rate to death rate per thousand of the population.
4. Population Density: This refers to the number of people living in a given area per unit square.
5. Population Distribution: This describes the way in which people are spread out across the earth's surface.
6. Population Explosion: This is a sudden (rapid) increase of the number of people through natural means within a short period of time.
7. Over Population: This where the number people in an area exceeds the available resources.
8. Under population: This is where the existing population is too small to effectively exploit the available resources in a given area.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AFRICA

This refers to the way people are scattered/dotted in an area. It is how a country's population is spread over the unit land. Generally, the distribution of population over Africa is very uneven, some areas are densely populated while others sparsely populated.

NB: Areas with high population densities in Africa include:

- >The Nile valley in Egypt.
- >The Niger delta and Kano- Katsina region of Northern Nigeria.
- >The lake shores of East Africa.
- >The Maghreb region of North West Africa.
- >Ethiopia Highlands.

>The Eastern coastal region of South Africa.

>The highlands of Rwanda and Burundi.

Countries with low population densities include Congo, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Sudan, Gabon. etc.

FACTORS AFFECTING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA

PHYSICAL FACTORS

1.Climate: Areas with low and unreliable rainfall with hot temperatures such as Sahara, Kalahari, Namib and the semi desert regions of Somalia are sparsely populated. On the otherhand areas with heavy and reliable rainfall, with moderate temperatures attract dense settlements eg Niger delta, Nile delta, etc as many crops can grow to support the population.

2.Soils: Areas with fertile soils esp. volcanic and alluvial soils are suitable for farming thus attracting dense settlements eg Ethiopian Highlands, the Nile valley, the Niger delta etc. areas with infertile soils eg the sandy soils of the desert regions discourage settlement.

3.Drainage: Poorly drained areas associated with flooding are sparsely populated while well drained areas have dense population.

4.Relief: In extremely high mountains, temperatures tend to be too cold and the constant dampness together with steep slopes scare a way people hence low population while gently sloping areas/flat lands are highly populated because of easy construction of transport routes and houses.

5.Vegetation: Areas that are heavily forested like the miombo wood land in Tanzania, the Congo basin are sparsely populated because they hinder development of communication lines and are habitats for dangerous Wild animals and pests.

6.Pests and diseases: areas infected with pests like tsetse flies that cause diseases like sleeping sickness, locusts in Northern Africa, diseases like River blindness along R. Volta in Ghana etc have low population.

7.Transport and Communication network: Areas with good transport network have attracted dense settlements.

8.Government policy: The government may deliberately gazette very large tracts of land for national parks, game reserves, forest reserves hence influencing population distribution.

9. Growth of urban centers: urban centers tend to attract heavy settlements due to well developed social services eg towns attract people from rural areas leading to depopulation in villages and heavy population in urban areas.

10. Political stability: areas with a history of instability tend to support few people while politically stable areas are densely settled.

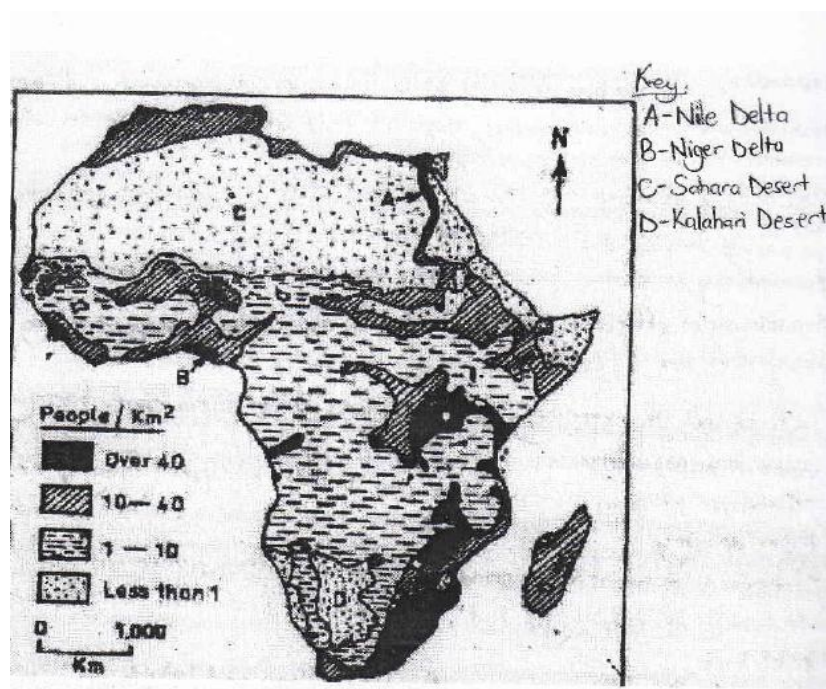
11. Industrialisation: highly industrialized places usually have dense population eg Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cairo and Lagos. While less industrialized areas have low population

12. Mining: Areas with mineral deposits like the Rand in S. Africa, Shaba province of Zaire and Copper belt of Zambia have dense population, while areas without valuable minerals have low population.

13. Trade and Commerce: Development of commercial areas attract more people for business hence increase in population while areas with limited business opportunities have low population.

14. Historical factors: These include slave trade, kingdoms etc. Some places are over populated due to early historical events like kingdoms. This partly account for high densities of population in Buganda, Iboland, Yorubaland. Mombasa and Zanzibar are populated due to influence of slave trade, while Central Tanzania is less populated due to slave trade.

A SKETCH MAP OF AFRICA SHOWING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION



POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is one of the African countries which is densely populated with a total population of over 200 million people.

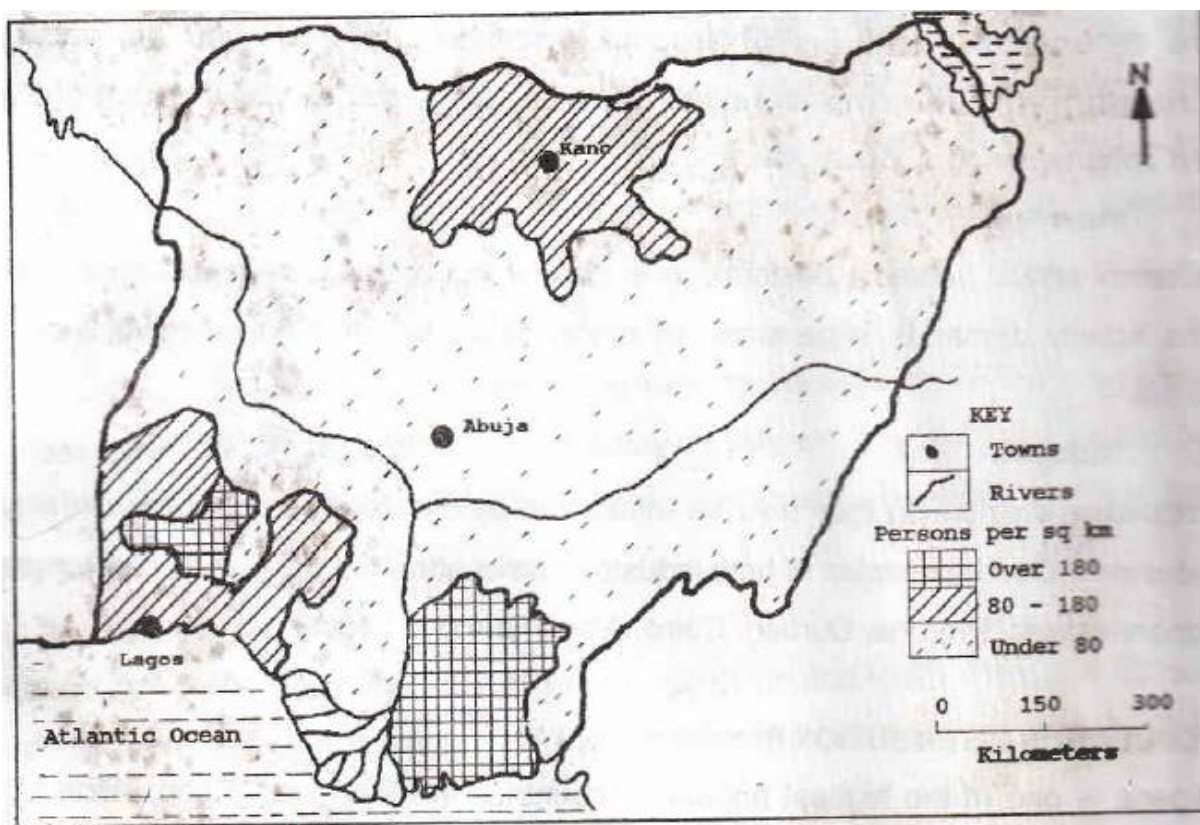
In Nigeria, the pattern of population distribution is uneven with regions of dense, moderate and sparse settlements.

The densely populated regions are found in places like Kano, Sokoto, Emegu, Abuja, Niger Delta Ibadan, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Oyo, Onitsha.

Moderately populated areas are found around the densely populated areas like Kano, Sokoto etc.

Areas of low population are found in the middle belt and various pockets of central Nigeria.

A SKETCH MAP SHOWING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA



FACTORS INFLUENCING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA

1. Climate: Heavy /reliable rainfall and moderate temperatures in Southern Nigeria that favours agriculture have led to dense settlements. Low rainfall in the North, middle belt discourages settlement.
2. Soils: Presence of fertile alluvial soils in the south Niger Delta, leading to dense population while poor thin soils in the North (middle belt) have led to moderate/sparse population.
3. Relief: The flat landscape in most parts of the Southern and Northern Nigeria attract dense settlement because such areas are good for settlement and other economic activities like agriculture.
4. Vegetation: Some parts in the south have thick forests and mangrove vegetation which makes settlement difficult. The middle belt with grass land vegetation is moderately settled.
5. Drainage: Availability of water in the south esp. along the river valleys has attracted settlements as compared to the drier areas of the North East and North West.
6. Pests and diseases: Prevalence of pests and diseases limits settlement eg the middle belt of Nigeria due to tsetse flies which cause nagana to animals and sleeping sickness to human beings, mosquitoes which cause malaria. Other parts where tsetse flies, mosquitoes are not rampant have high population densities.
7. Transport: The good roads and railways in the south and the northern state of Kano have attracted dense settlement, while remote areas are sparsely/moderately populated.
8. Urbanization: Urban areas such as Ibadan, Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt with better social services are densely populated than the rural areas in the middle belt.
9. Mining: Mining areas such as oil in the Delta region, Tin in the Jos plateau etc attract dense population in order to get jobs.
10. Industries: Industrial areas tend to be densely populated because they offer employment opportunities which attract many people eg Lagos, Ibadan.
11. Trading activities: Early trade in west Africa started on the coast thus ports and markets are found at the coast hence densely settled.
12. Political stability: Areas where there are constant tribal conflicts/wars, the population is sparse where as areas with political stability are densely settled.

13. Government policy: eg creating anew capital city of Abuja, introduction of irrigation schemes, establishment of industries in Kano etc have attracted dense settlement, whereas places where government has gazzetted forest reserves, population is sparse.

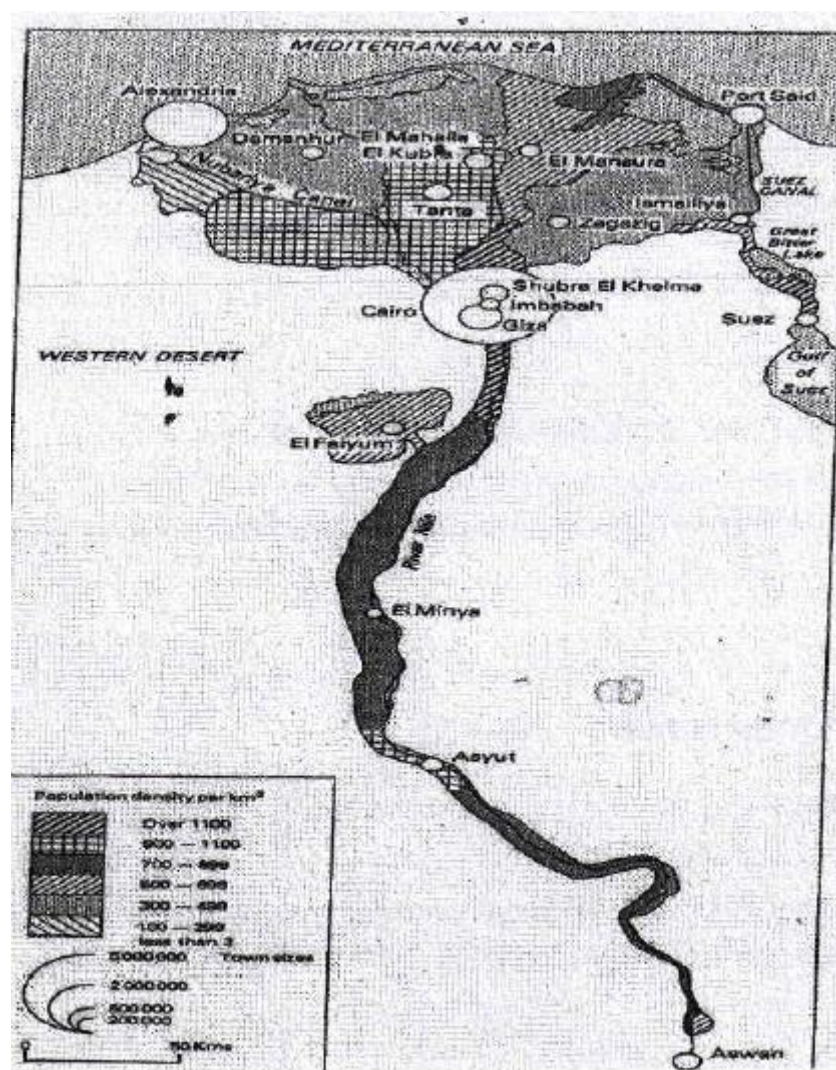
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EGYPT

Egypt is one of Africa's most populate nations with over 100million people. The population distribution is uneven.

Dense settlements are found along the Nile valley, Towns like Cairo, Alexandria, Asyut, Port Said etc.

Sparse population is found on the western desert, Libyan desert etc.

SKETCH MAP SHOWING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EGYPT



FACTORS INFLUENCING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EGYPT

1. Presence of fertile soils in the Nile valley has attracted dense settlement for agriculture while the infertile soils of the western desert attract less/sparse population due to limited agriculture.
2. Relatively favourable climate with reliable rainfall around the Nile valley attract dense population due to agricultural activities while areas with limited rainfall and hot temperatures in the Libyan desert limit agriculture hence sparse population.
3. Presence of adequate water for domestic, industrial and agricultural use from the river Nile attracts a big population while its absence in the western desert has led to sparse population.
4. Pests and diseases such as locusts in the western desert, destroys crops thus scaring away settlements. People live along the Nile valley where pests are limited.
5. Relief: Quattara depression is avoided because of being prone to floods while the Nile valley and the gentle slopes of Cairo are densely populated.
6. Mining areas such as Aswan are densely populated while places without minerals remain sparsely populated.
7. Forested areas and areas with swampy vegetation in the north are avoided hence sparsely populated. While areas with Oasis vegetation are densely populated.
8. Urban centers such as Cairo, Alexandria, Suez etc with better social services are densely settled than areas in the west.
9. Government policy through developing the Nile valley and Towns like Helwan and Cairo has attracted dense population to this region as compared to other areas.
10. Availability of well-developed transport and communication network eg railway lines, roads and waterways attract many people to such areas while remote areas are less settled.
11. Development of industries that provide jobs attract dense population eg Cairo, Alexandria while places without industries have sparse population.
12. Availability of numerous trading activities in areas like Port Said, Suez, Alexandria, etc attract dense settlements to such areas while places with less trade activities have sparse population.
13. Political stability: Areas that are politically stable attract more people as compared to areas with many tribal conflicts and wars.

14. Historical factors and ancient kingdoms that existed at Alexandria and the Nile valley eg pharaoh settlements have dense settlements than the interior areas.

POPULATION GROWTH

This is the increase in the number of people of an area or region/region over a given period of time, usually one year. Africa's population has been rising rapidly over the years at a rate of 3%.

FACTORS THAT CAUSE HIGH POPULATION GROWTH RATE

1. High fertility rate in women leading to many children produced per woman.
2. Improved medical services leading to reduced death rates/low infant mortality rate.
3. Cultural values/traditions that are attached to having many children eg being looked at as a source of security, prestige and labour.
4. Influence of early marriages which gives the couples chance to stay longer periods in the process of child bearing.
5. Polygamy where a man marries more than one wife hence families will have many children thus increasing the population.
6. Religious factor where some religions like Moslems allow to marry many wives thus many children produced. Some religions are negative about artificial birth control methods eg catholic church.
7. Improved security thus wars are reduced leading to low death rates.
8. Availability of plenty of food/ improved nutrition leading to balanced diet thus large population.
9. Improved incomes leading to improved standards of living.
10. Low levels of Education which leads to limited ambitions and therefore look at children as a future security.
11. Ignorance about the use of family planning methods.
12. Wide spread poverty where children(girls) are married off in exchange for money /dowry.
13. Immigrations from other countries leading to large population size.
14. High birth rates and low death rates due to improved medical facilities.

ADVANTAGES OF A HIGH POPULATION

1. A source of cheap labour for the country.
2. Provides market for the goods.
3. Good for the defense of the nation in case of war.
4. It is a source of government revenue in form of taxes.
5. It promotes investments in the country.
6. Leads to maximum utilization of the country's natural resources.
7. Encourages innovation.
8. Encourages development of social services like hospitals, Roads, Schools and Piped water.
9. Leads to increased urbanization /growth of towns.
10. It is an indicator of growth and development.

DISADVANTAGES OF A LARGE POPULATION

1. Land shortage resulting in to land disputes.
2. Land fragmentation resulting in to low productivity and an economical use of land leading to a vicious cycle of poverty.
3. Over use of land/over cultivation leading to soil exhaustion and low crop yields.
4. Strain on social services like schools, hospitals, roads, water, electricity leading to constant breakdown.
5. High dependency ratio as there are fewer people working than the dependants.
6. Encroachment on marginal lands like forests, wetlands, steep slopes etc.
7. Destruction of vegetation leading to loss of bio-diversity.
8. High rates of unemployment leading to high crime rates.
9. Development of crimes in urban centers leading to poor sanitation.
10. Overcrowding/congestion of people leading to easy spread of diseases due to poor sanitation.
11. Promotes rural-urban migration leading to growth of slums in towns and depopulation and low food production in villages.
12. High government expenditure to provide social services.
13. Shortage of food/famine leading to high expenditure on imported food.
14. Pollution of the environment ie air, water and land due to poor discharge of wastes.

15. Over exploitation of natural resources like minerals forests and water resources leading to their exhaustion.
16. Political unrest leading to loss lives and destruction of property.
17. Limited accommodation due to high population in towns.
18. High crime rates involving acts like theft, murder, robbery, prostitution and pickpocketing etc.
19. Low standards of living due to poverty.
20. Moral degeneration/decadence eg prostitution.

STEPS BEING TAKEN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF HIGH POPULATION DENSITY

1. Establishment of settlement schemes.
2. Building of skyscrapers/storeyed houses to effectively utilize available space.
3. Carrying out reforms towards land consolidation.
4. Encouraging out migration to less densely populated areas.
5. Practicing modern methods of agriculture to increase production.
6. Encourage use of population control measures like family planning practices.
7. Industrialization of the economy to create employment.
8. Mass awareness and Education programs on the dangers of high population.
9. Strengthening security in order to control crime/law enforcement.
10. Rural electrification so as to develop the rural areas.
11. Expansion/extension of social services to the rural areas.
12. Restricting entry of immigrants into densely populated areas.
13. Promoting tree planting to solve the problem of deforestation.

LOW POPULATION

This exists when the population is too small to fully utilize the available resources. This is common in countries like DRC, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Sudan etc.

PROBLEMS FACED BY PEOPLE LIVING IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

1. High costs of establishing infrastructure like roads, schools and hospitals.
2. Low food production leading to famine malnutrition or even death.
3. Low standards of living due to limited economic activities.
4. Inaccessibility of most areas leading to slow movement of goods and passengers.

5. Labour shortage to work due to the small population leading to under development of various economic activities eg mining.
6. Low tax base due to low population density.
7. Limited market for goods and services.
8. Under utilization of available resources due to low population leading to low tax base.
9. It doesn't encourage innovations.
10. Retarded industrial growth.
11. Insecurity in the area.

STEPS/MEASURES THAT CAN/SHOULD BE TAKEN TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS FACED IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

1. Encouraging migrations into areas of low population densities.
2. Promote economic activities that entice people to areas of low population eg mining, industrialization, irrigation farming etc.
3. Modernization of agriculture thru irrigation and mechanization.
4. Development of rural areas by providing essential services to attract settlement eg water, electricity, roads, hospitals and schools.
5. Increasing accessibility to remote areas by constructing roads and railways.
6. Setting up development projects like industries and settlement projects to encourage migration.
7. Diversification of economic activities to create more employment opportunities and widening the tax base.
8. Importation of food from other countries to supplement what is produced locally.
9. Importation of labour from other countries to work in the different sectors of the economy.