

NATIONAL POPULATION COUNCIL

FACT SHEET NO.1

JUNE 2004

POPULATION OF GHANA: NATIONAL TRENDS

1. Introduction

Population is defined as the number of people living in a defined area within a given period of time. Populations change over time in size, composition and distribution depending on births, deaths and migration. These changes influence development and the quality of life. It is therefore critical to take account of these population characteristics and dynamics in any development activity.

i) National Population Policy (Revised Edition, 1994)

Ghana adopted an explicit Population Policy in 1969. In 1994, the Policy was revised to incorporate emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, gender equality, protection of the elderly and persons with disabilities and promotion of the education and the welfare of children and the youth.

ii) Goal of the Population Policy

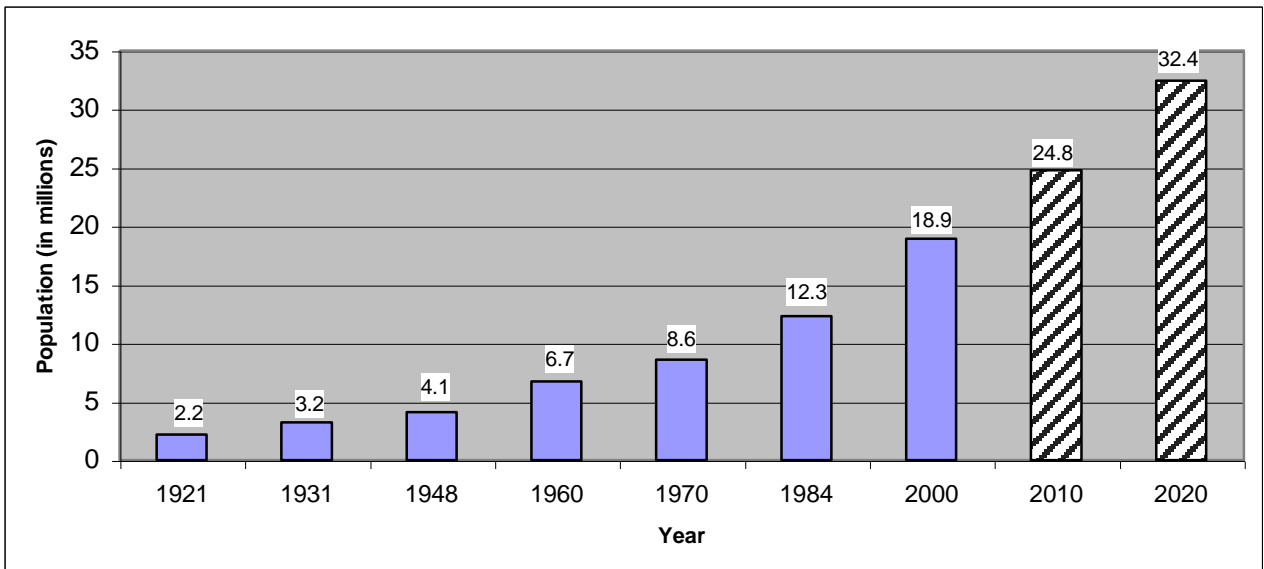
The ultimate goal of the National Population Policy (Revised Edition, 1994) is to ensure that the country maintains a level of population growth, which is consistent with national development objectives in order to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the people of Ghana.

iii) Areas of Emphasis

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|---|----------------------|
| a) Health and Nutrition | b) Poverty |
| c) Reproductive Health | d) HIV/AIDS and STIs |
| e) Migration/Spatial Distribution of Population | f) Agriculture |
| g) Children, Adolescents and Youth | h) Employment |
| i) Issues of the Aged & Persons with Disabilities | j) Housing |
| k) Gender | l) Education |
| m) Environment | |

2. Trends in Population Size

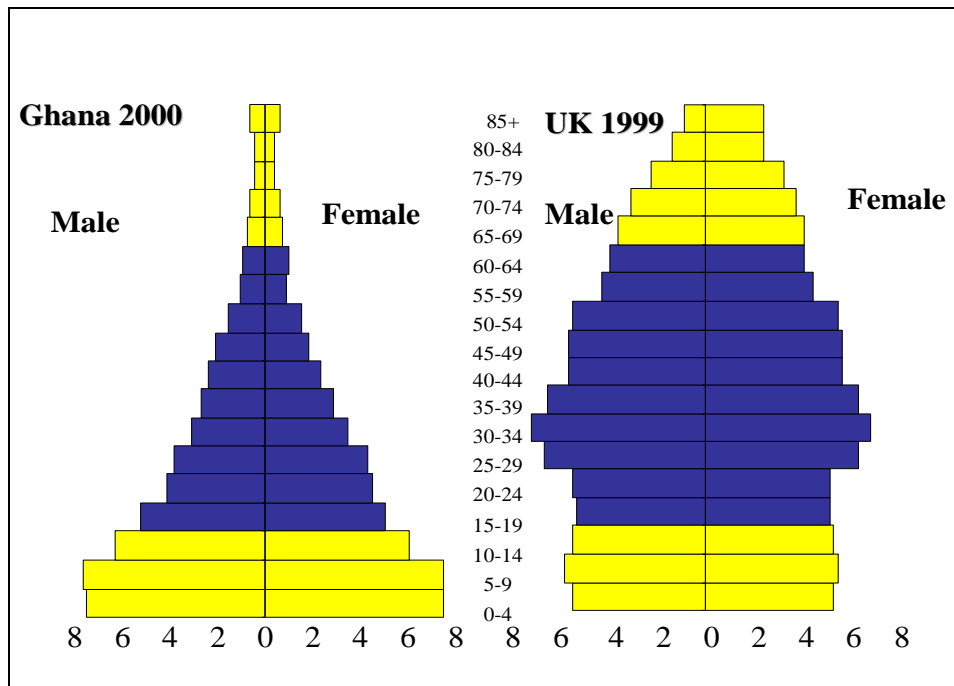
Fig 2a: Trends in Population Size, 1921-2020



Source: GSS, Census Reports (Crossed bars represent projected population figures at current 2.7% growth rate)

- The first population census in the country was held in 1891. Censuses were subsequently conducted every ten years until 1941 when a census could not be conducted due to the Second World War. The first post war census was conducted in 1948.
- The 1921 census was the first that covered the entire land area of present Ghana.
- The first post independence census was conducted in 1960. Censuses were then held in 1970, 1984 and 2000.
- The total land area of Ghana is 238,539 square kilometres. With a population of 18.9 million, the population density was 79.3 persons per square kilometre in 2000. There are however high density regions like Greater Accra (896), Central (162) and Ashanti (148).

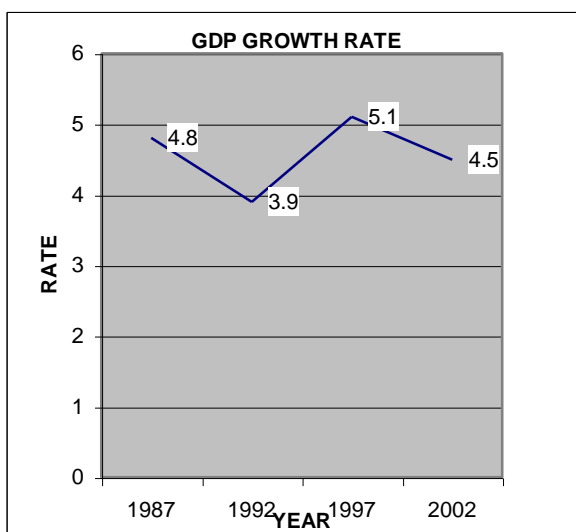
Fig 2b: Population Pyramids of Ghana and UK



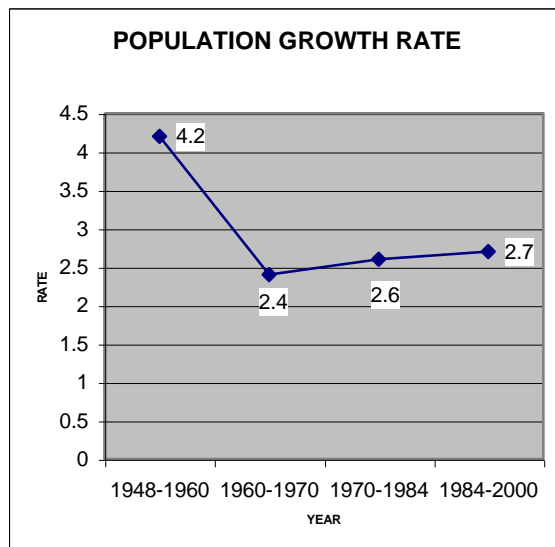
Source: Population Impact Project

- Ghana's population is broad-based with 43.1% of the population under 15 years as compared with 19.2% for the U.K
- The youthful age structure presents a high potential for rapid population growth as well as high dependency burden.
- While in developed countries about two active persons support one dependent person, in Ghana one active person supports two dependents.
- The population 65 years and above stands at 5.3% for Ghana as compared with 15.8% for the U.K

Fig 2c: Trends in Intercensal Population Growth Rate and GDP Growth Rate



Source: Human Development Report, 1987-2000



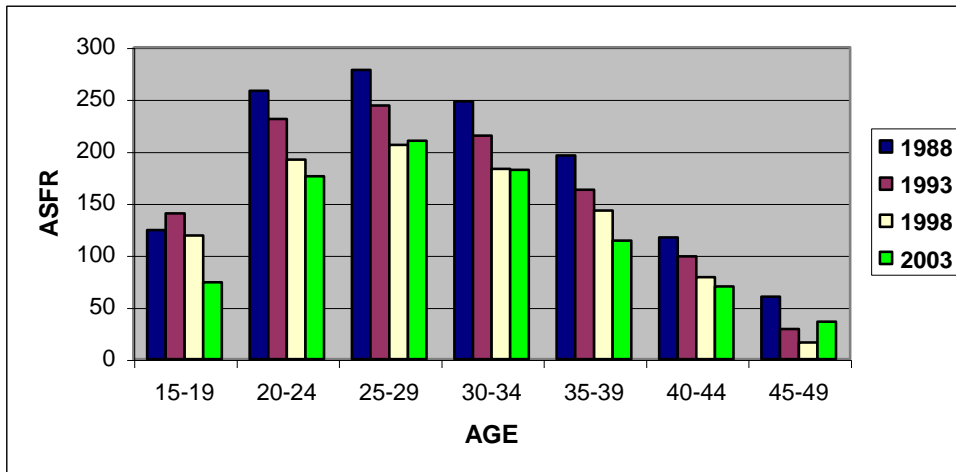
Source: GSS, Census Reports

- The size of Ghana's population per se does not pose serious problems, but rather the rate of population growth.

- The intercensal population growth rate increased from 2.4 in 1970 to 2.7 in 2000.
- The population of Ghana doubles in almost every 26 years as compared to 230 years for United Kingdom.
- Between 1987 and 2002 GDP growth rate fluctuated between 4.8 and 4.5 percent per annum.
- With the current population growth rate of 2.7% a GDP growth rate of more than 8% is needed to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the population.

3. Trends in Fertility, 1988-2003

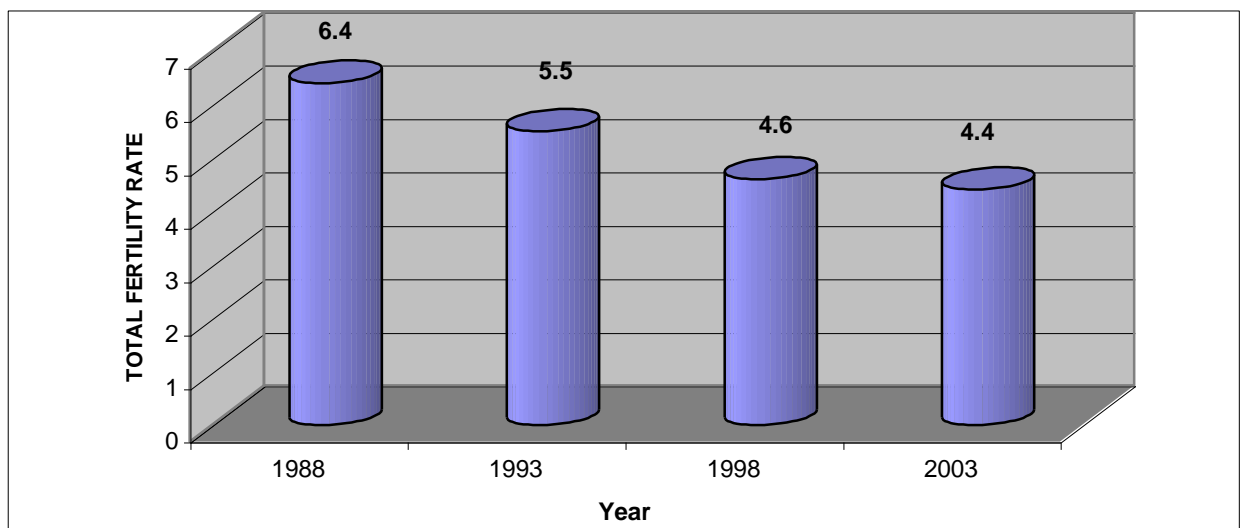
Fig 3a: Trends in Age Specific Fertility Rate, 1988-2003



Source: GDHS 1988, 1993, 1998 and 2003

- Age-Specific Fertility Rates (ASFR) among all age groups declined steadily between 1988 and 2003, except for women aged 45-49.

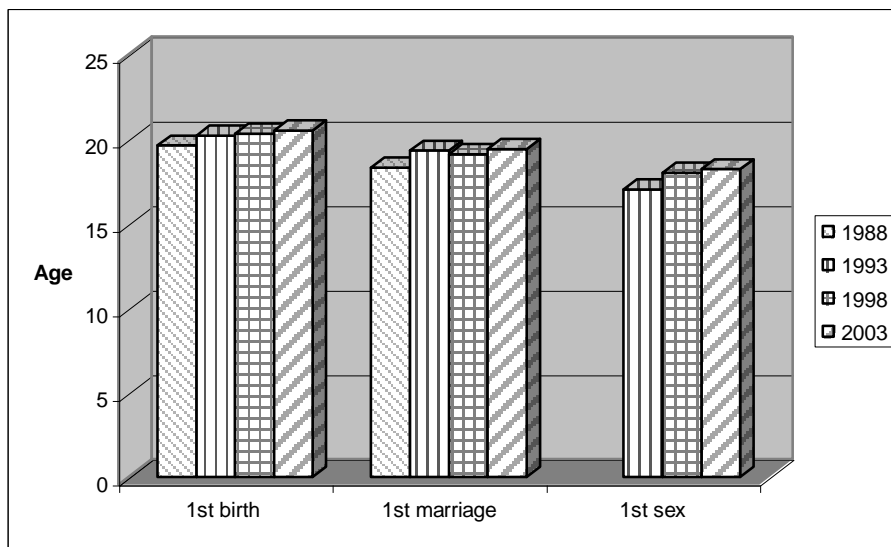
Fig 3b: Trends in Total Fertility, 1988-2003



Source: GDHS 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003

- Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined steadily since 1988 from 6.4 to 4.4 in 2003.

Fig 3c: Trends in Age at First Birth, Marriage and Sex (Females), 1988 - 2003



Source: GDHS 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003

(Data on age at first sexual intercourse was not collected in GDHS 1988)

➤ **Age at First Birth**

- Median age at first birth has increased steadily from 19.6 years in 1988 to 20.2 years in 1993, to 20.3 years in 1998 and then to 21.1 years in 2003 among women aged 25-29.

➤ **Age at First Marriage**

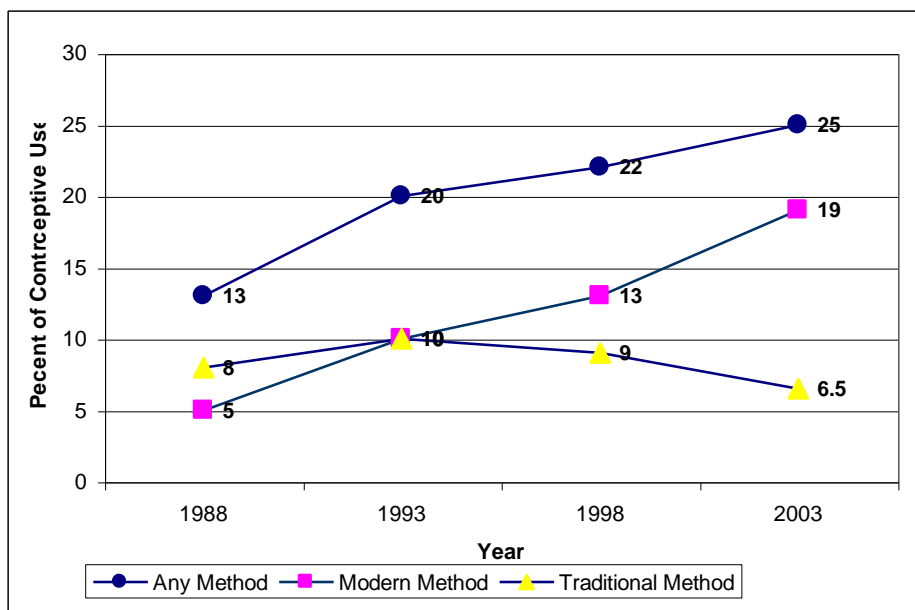
- The median age at first marriage for women aged 25-49 increased from 18.3 years in 1988 to 19.6 in 2003.
- Men in Ghana marry at older ages than women. While men aged 30-34 first married at age 25.0, women in the same age bracket first married at age 19.1.

➤ **Age at First Sex**

- Among women and men aged 25-29, the median age at first sexual intercourse was 18.3 years and 19.6 years respectively in 2003. Thus women are initiated into sexual intercourse at an earlier age than men in Ghana.

➤ **Contraceptive Use**

Fig 3d: Trends in Contraceptive Use, 1988-2003

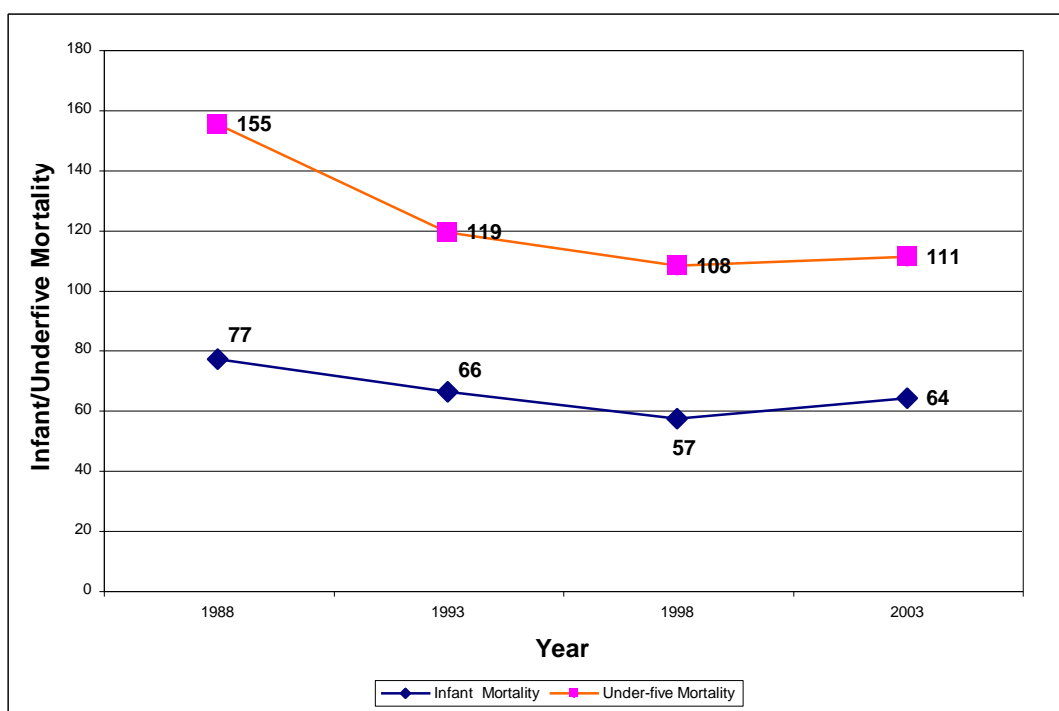


Source: GDHS 1988, 1993, 1998 and 2003

- Contraceptive prevalence rate, especially modern methods, has increased since 1988. Current use of any method of contraception among currently married women increased from 13 percent in 1988 to 25 percent in 2003.
- The use of traditional methods among currently married women decreased from 8.0 percent to 6.5 percent between 1988 and 2003.

4. Trends in Mortality

Fig 4: Trends in Infant and Under-five Mortality Rate, 1988-2003



Source: GDHS 1988, 1993, 1998 and 2003

- Infant mortality rate declined from 77 to 66 deaths per 1000 live births between 1988 and 1993 and then to 57 deaths per 1000 live births in 1998. It however increased to 64 deaths per 1000 live births in 2003.
- Under-five mortality rate also declined from 155 to 119 deaths per 1000 live births between 1988 and 1993, and declined further to 108 deaths per 1000 live births in 1998. The rate increased thereafter by 3 percent to 111 deaths per 1000 live births in 2003.
- The current increases in infant mortality and under-five mortality rates call for detailed researches to determine causal factors.

Population Profile of Ghana

No	Indicator	Indicator Level			Source
		National/Average	Male	Female	
1	Total Population	18,912,079	9,357,382	9,554,697	©
2	% of Population Female	50.5			©

3	Intercensal Growth Rate	2.7%			©
4	% Of Population under 15 years	41.3	41.9	40.7	©
5	% Of Population above 64 years	5.3	5.3	5.2	©
6	% Adult Population (18 years +)	52.6	51.7	53.4	©
7	Dependency Ratio	87.1	89.4	84.8	©
8	Land Area (sq km)	238,539			©
9	Population Density (persons per sq km)	79.3			©
10	Urban Population (%)	43.8			©
11	% of Female (15-49 yrs)	47.3			©
12	Total Fertility Rate	4.4			∇
13	Total Fertility Rate (Urban)	3.1			∇
14	Total Fertility Rate (Rural)	5.6			∇
15	Average Life Expectancy (years)	57.5	55.4	59.6	©
16	Maternal Mortality Rate (deaths per 100,000 live births)	214			*
17	Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	64	70	59	∇
18	Under-five Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	111	111	108	∇
19	Adult Literacy Rate (English & Ghanaian Lang.)	53.3%	56.9%	43.1%	©
20	% of Population attaining primary education	18.6	18.8	18.3	©
21	% of Population attaining Middle/JSS education	21.1	23.1	19.1	©
22	% of Population attaining Secondary/SSS education	6.0	7.6	4.7	©
23	% of Population attaining Tertiary education	2.8	3.8	1.9	©
24	% Female heads of household	34.3			©
25	Households with access to pipe-borne water	42.1%			©
26	Households using borehole/well	33.0%			©
27	Households using other sources of drinking water	24.9%			©
28	Households using electricity (source of lighting)	43.7%			©
29	HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate	3.6%			□
30	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (Modern Methods)	19%			∇
31	Median Age at first Marriage (30-34 yrs)		25.0	19.1	∇
32	Median Age at first sex (25-49 yrs)		19.6	18.3	∇
33	Median Age at first Birth (25-49 yrs)			21.1	∇

Sources

- © GSS, 2000 Population and Housing Census Report
- ∇ GSS, 2003 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Report 2003
- * Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003 Annual Progress Report
- NACP, 2003 HIV Sentinel Survey Report