

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, STRUCTURE, DENSITY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS IN BOTSWANA

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Abstract: This paper provides a snapshot of the country's population structure and concentration by sex and other variables. The paper draws comparison between the current findings and the findings of the 2001 census.

The paper notes that the country of 2 million people is dominated by females especially at the ages 15 and above. The population is generally youthful with 32.7 per cent of it aged below 15 years down from 36.6 per cent in 2001. The analysis reveals a steady growth of persons within the economically active group now estimated at 64.9 per cent compared to 58.2 per cent in 2001. On the other hand, the elderly population aged 65 years and above has declined from 5 per cent in 2001 to an estimated 4.4 per cent in 2011. Further, the paper notes that majority of the elderly population are found in the rural districts compared to urban areas.

The country continues to attract foreign nationals who participate in various sectors its economy. The proportion of non-Batswana has increased from only 3.6 per cent of the population in 2001 to an estimated 5.5 per cent in 2011, majority of those whom are within the economically active group, mainly 20 – 44 years.

The number of people for every square kilometer – population density- has increased from 2.9 persons per square kilometer to 3.5. The South Eastern region, which also houses the national capital, has the highest density of 13.8 persons per square kilometer followed by the Eastern region. The Western region is the least populous with a density of less than one person per square kilometer. The South Eastern region is also home to 47.3 per cent of the country's population.

In conclusion, the paper gives a summary of the policy implications of the youthful age structure of the population, declining rate of population growth, low sex ratio as well as regional imbalances in population distribution.

1.0 Introduction

Population distribution refers to either the way a national population is spread by sex across various age groups or the manner in which a population is spread over geographic space. Refined measures of this spread provide specific numerical expressions such as the arithmetic and other population densities.

The age-sex structure or composition of a population reflects a cumulative outcome of demographic and mobility events that have been operating for many decades. Today's population dynamics echo those vital and mobility events that occurred several decades ago. Similarly, today's population processes will be etched indelibly onto the demographic profile of years yet to come. The spatial distribution of a population may be due to the occurrence of natural resources such as reliable rainfall, good surface and groundwater supplies, fertile soils and exploitable mineral resources. The distribution of economic investments such as industries, services and transport has also attracted population concentrations. Repulsive factors such as the presence of diseases tend to discourage human settlement.

A correct understanding of population distribution patterns is central to sustainable national development planning. Age-sex structure provides an empirical basis for the provision of goods, information and service for the various age cohorts. It also forms an informed basis for deciding whether national income should be earmarked for productive or non-productive sectors. Furthermore, it assists in the assessment of the probable impacts of fertility, mortality and migration on population growth patterns and trends. The spatial distribution and re-distribution of population determine where people live and why they are found in those areas. This facilitates the planning for the rationale and equitable allocation of those goods, information and services that determine the quality of life of the national population. Unless Botswana takes advantage of available Census data to make informed decisions, that are evidence-based, the country will be confronted with these challenges that undermine sustainability.

The chapter examines and rationalizes the demographic and geographical distribution of the population from the 2011 Botswana Population and Housing Census data. Finally, the policy implications of population distribution are discussed and conclusions drawn.

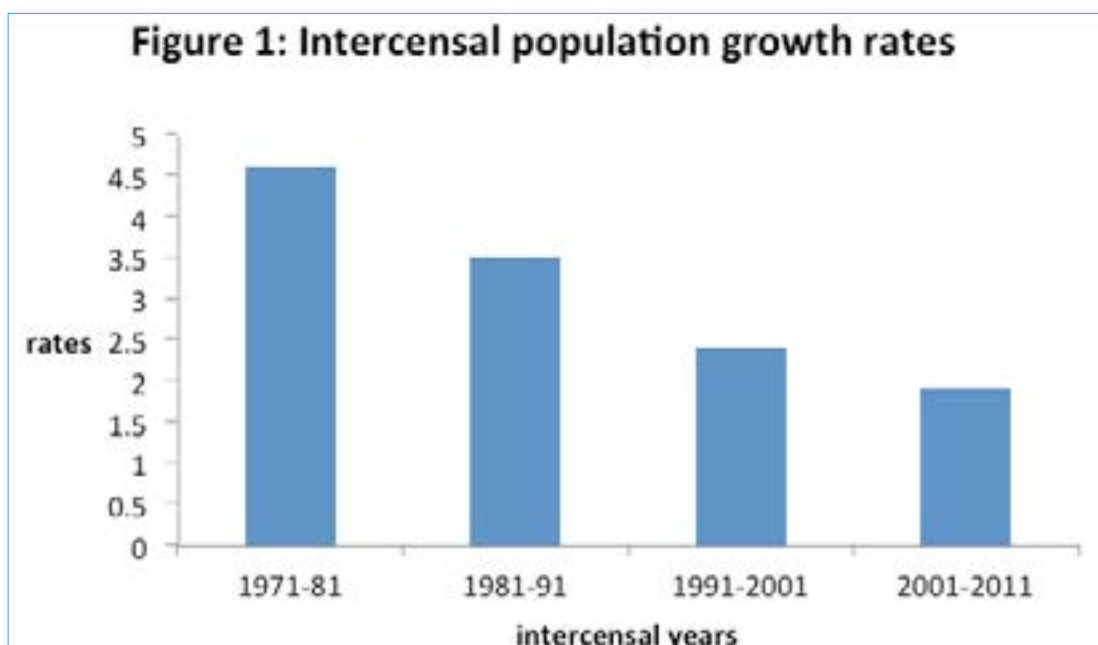
2.0 Data and Methodology

Data for this chapter is obtained from Statistics Botswana in SPSS format. It was then analysed using descriptive statistics method, then further summarized into tables and graphs. Descriptive statistics and socio-economic indices were obtained and interpreted. Edited data are not anticipated to change the reported findings fundamentally.

3.0 Analysis, Results and Discussion

3.1 Population size and demographic distribution

The total population is estimated at 2,024,904. This number represents an absolute increase of 344,041 from the population that stood at 1,680,863 during the 2001 census, but also shows the latest inter-censal annual growth rate of 1.9 percent, shown in Figure 1.



The annual rate of increase, which is the surplus of births over deaths, has however, been declining over the decennial censuses that have been held since 1971. Inter-censal annual growth rates were 4.6, 3.5 and 2.4 percent, between 1971-81, 1981-91 and 1991-2001 respectively. The observed declining growth trends might reflect the interactive outcomes of; declining fertility rates associated with increasing economic development; increasing female literacy and their participation in semi-professional and professional occupations and successful family planning programme. The population will nonetheless continue growing in response to the population momentum attributed past high fertility and the youthful population structure of the 1980s and 1990s.

Table 1 shows the 2001 and 2011 population size and percent increase. Gaborone (45,585) had the largest population increase over the ten year period among cities and towns as compared to Kweneng East (66,979) which experienced the largest population increase among the rest of the districts. On another note, South East district grew by 40.2% between 2001 and 2011 while the Delta decreased by 5.9% over the same period.

Table 1: Population size and percent increase by Census year and district

Table 1: Population size and percent increase by Census year and district

Census District	2001 Population	2011 Population	Population Increase from 2001	Percent Increase from 2001
Gaborone	186007	231592	45585	24.5
Francistown	83023	98961	15938	19.2
Lobatse	29689	29007	-682	-2.3
Selibe-Phikwe	49849	49411	-438	-0.9
Orapa	9151	9531	380	4.2
Jwaneng	15179	18008	2829	18.6
Sowa	2879	3598	719	25.0
Southern	113704	129247	15543	13.7
Barolong	47477	54831	7354	15.5
Ngwaketse West	10471	13689	3218	30.7
South East	60623	85014	24391	40.2
Kweneng East	189773	256752	66979	35.3
Kweneng West	40562	47797	7235	17.8
Kgatleng	73507	91660	18153	24.7
Central Serowe/Palapye	153035	180500	27465	17.9
Central Mahalapye	109811	118875	9064	8.3
Central Bobonong	66964	71936	4972	7.4
Central Boteti	48057	57376	9319	19.4
Central Tutume	123514	147377	23863	19.3
North East	49399	60264	10865	22.0
Ngamiland East	72382	90334	17952	24.8
Ngamiland West	49642	59421	9779	19.7
Chobe	18258	23347	5089	27.9
Delta	2688	2529	-159	-5.9
Ghanzi	32481	43095	10614	32.7
CKGR	689	260	-429	-62.3
Kgalagadi South	25938	30016	4078	15.7
Kgalagadi North	16111	20476	4365	27.1
BOTSWANA	1,680,863	2,024,904	344,041	20.5

Table 2 shows the percentage share of population for 2001 and 2011 for Kweneng East accommodates over 12.7% of the total population followed by Gaborone with 11% and Serowe/Palapye with 8.9% of all persons in 2011. Less than 6% of the population lived in Orapa, Jwaneng, Sowa, Delta, CKGR and Ngwaketse West combined. The percentage share of population has declined in the mining town of Selibe Phikwe and Lobatse.

Table 2: Percentage share of population by Census year and District

District	Percent	
	2001	2011
Gaborone	11.1	11.4
Francistown	4.9	4.9
Lobatse	1.8	1.4
Selibe-Phikwe	3.0	2.4
Orapa	0.5	0.5
Jwaneng	0.9	0.9
Sowa	0.2	0.2
Southern	6.8	6.4
Barolong	2.8	2.7
Ngwaketse West	0.6	0.7
South East	3.6	4.2
Kweneng East	11.3	12.7
Kweneng West	2.4	2.4
Kgatleng	4.4	4.5
Central Serowe/Palapye	9.1	8.9
Central Mahalapye	6.5	5.9
Central Bobonong	4.0	3.6
Central Boteti	2.9	2.8
Central Tutume	7.3	7.3
North East	2.9	3.0
Ngamiland East	4.3	4.5
Ngamiland West	3.0	2.9
Chobe	1.1	1.2
Delta	0.2	0.1
Ghanzi	1.9	2.1
CKGR	0.0	0.0
Kgalagadi South	1.5	1.5

3.2 Population Structure and composition

3.2.1 Age and Sex Composition

Table 3 shows the distribution of the population by age and sex. The population is dominated by women who constitute 51 percent of the population. The sex ratio of 95.5 also reflects the predominance of females in the population. This could be due to the general tendency of women to outlive men. In fact, female dominance starts at the ages above 14 while the data shows that there are more males at birth until the age group 10 – 14.

Table 3: Population and Percentage Distribution by Age and Sex

Age	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total
0-4	120046	50.6	117341	49.4	237387
5-9	108561	50.5	106622	49.5	215183
10-14	104468	50.4	102976	49.6	207444
15 -19	104847	49.7	105956	50.3	210803
20-24	97270	48.6	103045	51.4	200315
25-29	101193	48.7	106576	51.3	207769
30-34	84507	49.6	85989	50.4	170496
35-39	68438	50.6	66765	49.4	135203
40-44	48757	49.1	50494	50.9	99251
45-49	37879	46.1	44358	53.9	82237
50-54	29737	44.8	36616	55.2	66353
55-59	24363	45.1	29685	54.9	54048
60-64	17343	46.2	20235	53.8	37578
65-69	12237	44.1	15504	55.9	27741
70-74	9461	42.5	12788	57.5	22249
75-79	6963	38.9	10915	61.1	17878
80-84	4868	36.8	8344	63.2	13212
85 and above	8133	41.2	11624	58.8	19757
Total	989,071	48.8	1,035,833	51.2	2,024,904

Male sub-population dominates the 0 -14 age groups due, naturally to excess male births. Thereafter, almost all the cohorts are dominated by females due to excess male deaths that are normally attributed to biological, socio-cultural and socio-economic factors. The only exception is the 35-39 cohorts, where excess female deaths could be due to maternal deaths and HIV/AIDS related mortality that is more prevalent among women.

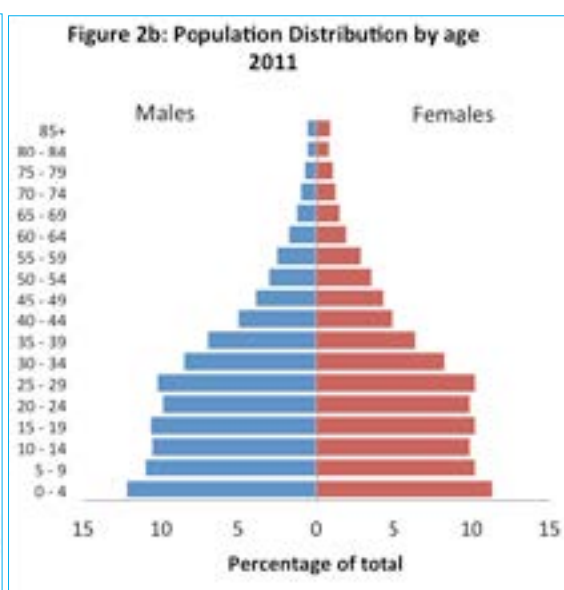
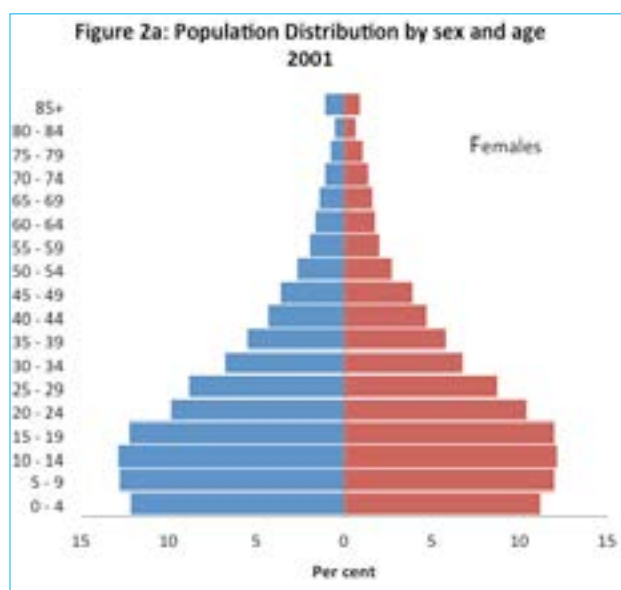
Only 5.1 percent of the population can be classified as being elderly. This is a decline from 5.5 percent estimated in 1998, probably reflecting a slow or stagnating life expectancy as well as rapid growth at the lower ages possibility persistent high mortality within this age group. This figure is below the 7 percent figure for Mauritius but slightly above those for the Republic of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Lesotho at 4.5, 4.2 and 4.2 percent respectively (<http://www.sadc.int/about-sadc/overview/sadc-facts-figures>). It is nonetheless relatively high when compared to the rest of the African continent's figure of about 3.6 percent.

Table 4: Population and Percentage distribution by sex and district

Area	2011				
	Total	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
Gaborone	231592	113536	49.0	118056	51.0
Francistown	98961	48104	48.6	50857	51.4
Lobatse	29007	14144	48.8	14863	51.2
Selibe-Phikwe	49411	24732	50.1	24679	49.9
Orapa	9531	4731	49.6	4800	50.4
Jwaneng	18008	9819	54.5	8189	45.5
Sowa	3598	1960	54.5	1638	45.5
Southern	129247	62256	48.2	66991	51.8
Barolong	54831	26680	48.7	28151	51.3
Ngwaketse West	13689	6875	50.2	6814	49.8
South East	85014	40697	47.9	44317	52.1
Kweneng East	256752	125195	48.8	131557	51.2
Kweneng West	47797	24392	51.0	23405	49.0
Kgatleng	91660	44565	48.6	47095	51.4
Central Serowe/Palapye	180500	88879	49.2	91621	50.8
Central Mahalapye	118875	57547	48.4	61328	51.6
Central Bobonong	71936	34247	47.6	37689	52.4
Central Boteti	57376	28143	49.1	29233	50.9
Central Tutume	147377	70323	47.7	77054	52.3
North East	60264	28596	47.5	31668	52.5
Ngamiland East	90334	44401	49.2	45933	50.8
Ngamiland West	59421	27913	47.0	31508	53.0
Chobe	23347	12023	51.5	11324	48.5
Delta	2529	1278	50.5	1251	49.5
Ghanzi	43095	22259	51.7	20836	48.3
CKGR	260	193	74.2	67	25.8
Kgalagadi South	30016	15119	50.4	14897	49.6
Kgalagadi North	20476	10350	50.5	10126	49.5
BOTSWANA	2,024,904	988,957	48.8	1,035,947	51.2

Table 4 show the population size by sex and district. In most of the districts, males are fewer than females.

A comparison of the 2011 population structure with the 2001 distribution shows a resurgence of the age group 0 – 4 years. While the 2001 showed the loss of dominance by this group, probably due to high deaths among infants and reduced births due to the risk of contracting HIV at the time. However, the 2011 shows return to dominance of this group probably owing the introduction of the ARVs and the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission programme which ensured survival of infants and children as most them are born without the virus.



The age sex profile, as depicted in Figure 2b, has a tapering apex typical of the expansive population structure genre characterized by a relatively improving life expectancy.

Table 5 shows that the population is youthful with 32.7 percent of it below the age of 15.

	Population	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-4	237387	11.7	11.7
4-9	215183	10.6	22.4
10-14	207444	10.2	32.6
15-19	210803	10.4	43.0
20-24	200315	9.9	52.9
25-29	207769	10.3	63.2
30-34	170496	8.4	71.6
35-39	135203	6.7	78.3
40-44	99251	4.9	83.2
45-49	82237	4.1	87.2
50-54	66353	3.3	90.5
55-59	54048	2.7	93.2
60-64	37578	1.9	95.0
65-69	27741	1.4	96.4
70-74	22249	1.1	97.5
75-79	17878	0.9	98.4
80-84	13212	0.7	99.0
85+	19757	1.0	100.0
Total	2,024,904	100.0	

3.2.2 Median age of the population

The median age of the population has been increasing steadily over the years. The median age increased from 23 years in 1991 to 24.8 years in 2001, and to the current 26 years. The increase shows that even though the population is still youthful, it is steadily getting older.

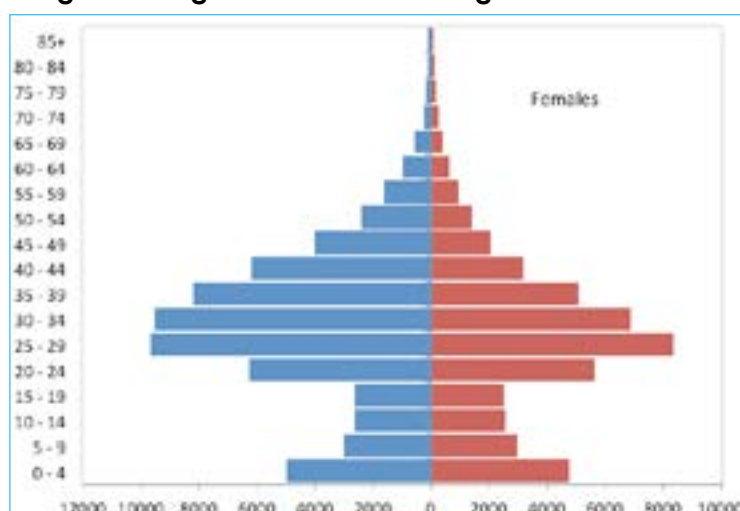
3.2.3 The economically active population

The working age population has increased from 58.2 percent in 2001 to 64.9 percent in 2011. The dependency ratio on the other hand decreased from 71.5 experienced an 8 percent decline from the 71.5 percent figure of 2001 to 56.7 in 2011. The decline reflects an increase in the size of the economically active cohort and the decline in the children-infant category as well as the population of the elderly.

3.2.4 Population by Nationality

Botswana continues to attract a sizeable number of foreign nationals. In 2001, there were 60,716 foreign nationals in the country, making up 3.6 per cent of the total population. This number increased to 111,485 in 2011, representing 5.5 per cent of the total population. As shown in figure 4 below, majority of this group is within the working age group of 20 – 44 years with an almost equal representation for both males and females. However, there are slightly more males than females across all age groups.

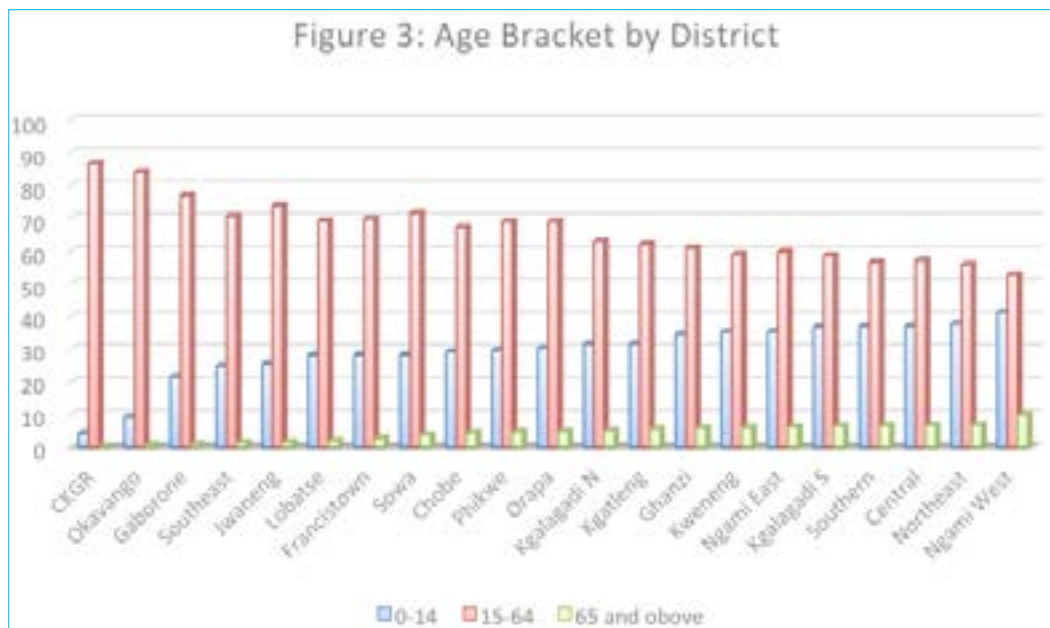
Figure 2c: Age Distribution of Foreign Nationals 2011



3.3 The Geographical Distribution of the Population

3.3.1 District Population Distribution by Age

Figure 3 shows the age distribution of the population by district. Elderly population aged 65 years and above constitutes a relatively small proportion of the population residing in districts predominantly urban districts



Elderly population aged 65 years and above constitutes a relatively small proportion of the population residing in districts predominantly urban districts. Their percentage ranges from about 0.5 percent to approximately 3 percent. They are least found in the mining towns of Orapa, Sowa, Jwaneng but are better represented in Lobatse, Francistown and Selibe Phikwe. Children aged 0 -14 years constitute less than a third of the population of towns and cities. They are least represented in Gaborone. The working age group constitutes the largest proportion of the residents of towns and cities, ranging from about 70 percent to 77 percent.

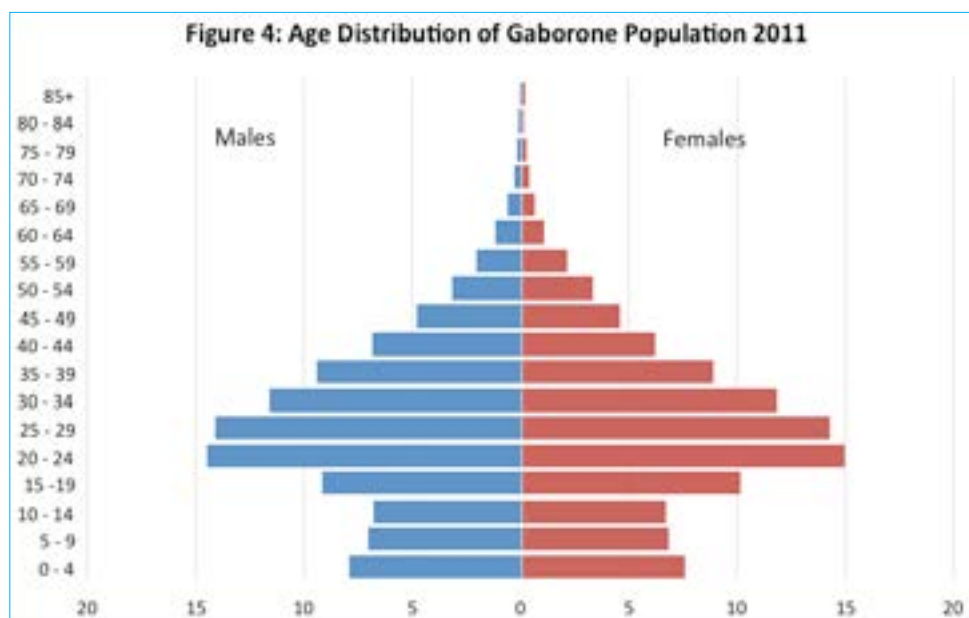
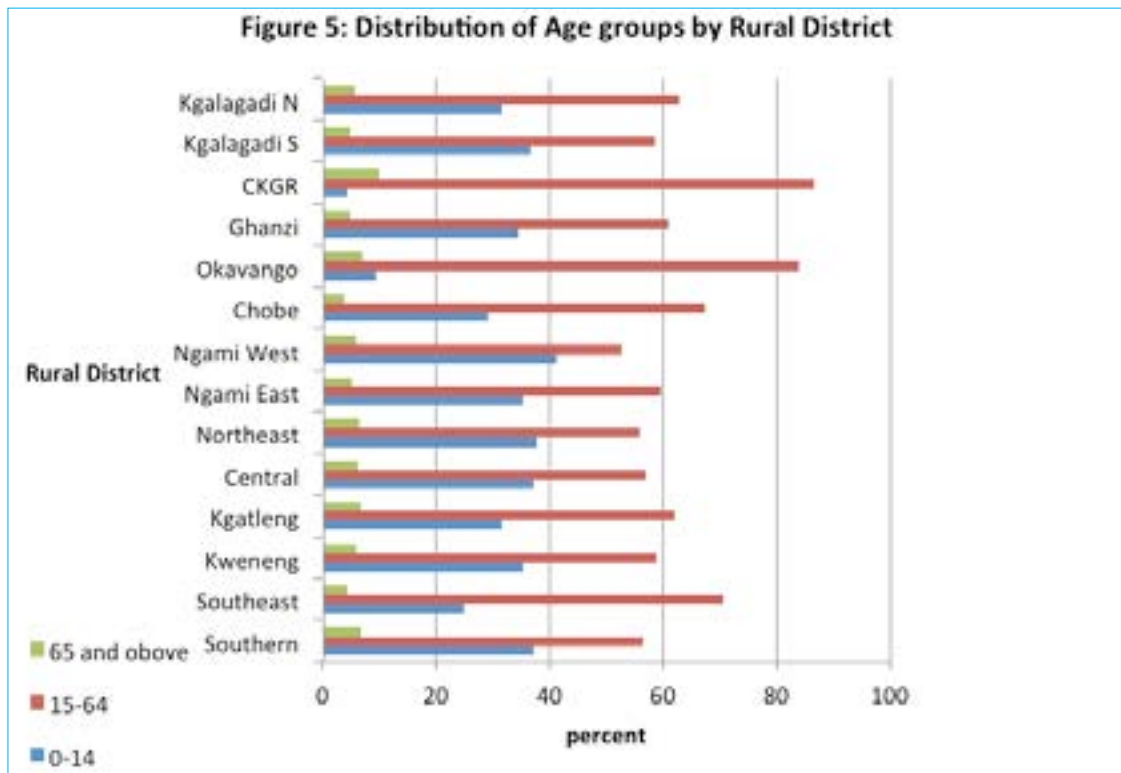


Figure 4 shows the distribution of the population of the national capital, Gaborone. The population is dominated by the youth aged 15 – 39 who also constitute the working age group. As already alluded to in the preceding arguments, the elderly along with children are least represented in the capital.

This population distribution patterns reflect selective migration to towns and cities by the economically active age cohort. It also reflects associational migration of dependent children.

The age patterns for the rural districts, depicted in Figure 5, show a higher representation of the dependent population compared with the urban pattern.



Children and infants represent 4 percent to about 40 percent of the population, whereas the elderly cohort makes up about 4 percent to 10 percent of the population. This sub-population is often referred to as a residual component that remains once the economically active group has relocated to towns and cities and certain rural areas such as urban villages, where employment opportunities avail themselves. The economically active population forms the dominant cohort in the Rural Districts, ranging from about 50 percent to approximately 90 percent of the rural population. It is to be found in the Southeast District where there is the highest concentration of job opportunities within the South Eastern Planning Region, and the tourist related areas such as the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and Chobe.

3.3.2 Districts Sex ratios

Table 6: Population and Sex Ratio by District

	Sex		Total	Sex ratio
	Male	Female		
Gaborone	113544	118048	231592	96.2
Francistown	48106	50855	98961	94.6
Lobatse	14145	14862	29007	95.2
Selebi-Phikwe	24733	24678	49411	100.2
Orapa	4730	4801	9531	98.5
Jwaneng	9820	8188	18008	119.9
Sowa Town	1960	1638	3598	119.7
Ngwaketse	62262	66985	129247	92.9
Barolong	26681	28150	54831	94.8
Ngwaketse West	6874	6815	13689	100.9
South East	40699	44315	85014	91.8
Kweneng East	125214	131538	256752	95.2
Kweneng West	24402	23395	47797	104.3
Kgatleng	44572	47088	91660	94.7
Central Serowe/Palapye	88889	91611	180500	97
Central Mahalapye	57548	61327	118875	93.8
Central Bobonong	34249	37687	71936	90.9
Central Boteti	28147	29229	57376	96.3
Central Tutume	70340	77037	147377	91.3
North East	28595	31669	60264	90.3
Ngamiland East	44410	45924	90334	96.7
Ngamiland West	27924	31497	59421	88.7
Chobe	12023	11324	23347	106.2
Okavango Delta	1277	1252	2529	102
Ghanzi	22268	20827	43095	106.9
CKGR)	193	67	260	288.1
Kgalagadi South	15119	14897	30016	101.5
Kgalagadi North	10347	10129	20476	102.2
Total	989,071	1,035,833	2,024,904	95.5

Apart from Orapa, which is a closed town and has a comparatively diverse functional structure, the dominance of males over females in the mining towns is evident. This reflects a gender stereotyping that governs the traditional division of labour; society has come to believe that most mining jobs can mostly be done by men. Rural districts show the effects of selective male migration. In cities, Lobatse town and highly urbanized districts such as the Southeast, Kgatleng, Kweneng and Central Serowe/Palapye East there is a predominance of females over males, generally. This could be due to the types of employment and the stereotypes that promote the gendered division of labour. Women are mostly employed in primary school education, nursing, secretarial and clerical work in both the public and private sector. They also dominate the retail sector as till operators and banks as tellers. Furthermore, they constitute the majority of domestic workers and the self-employed.

About 90 percent of the national population lives either in urban villages, rural villages or towns and cities while the rest live in lands areas, cattle posts, freehold farms and caps, as shown in Table 7. Some 64 percent of the population is urban. The Table sheds further light on the differential distribution of sex by sub-locality.

Table 7: Distribution of the Population by Locality

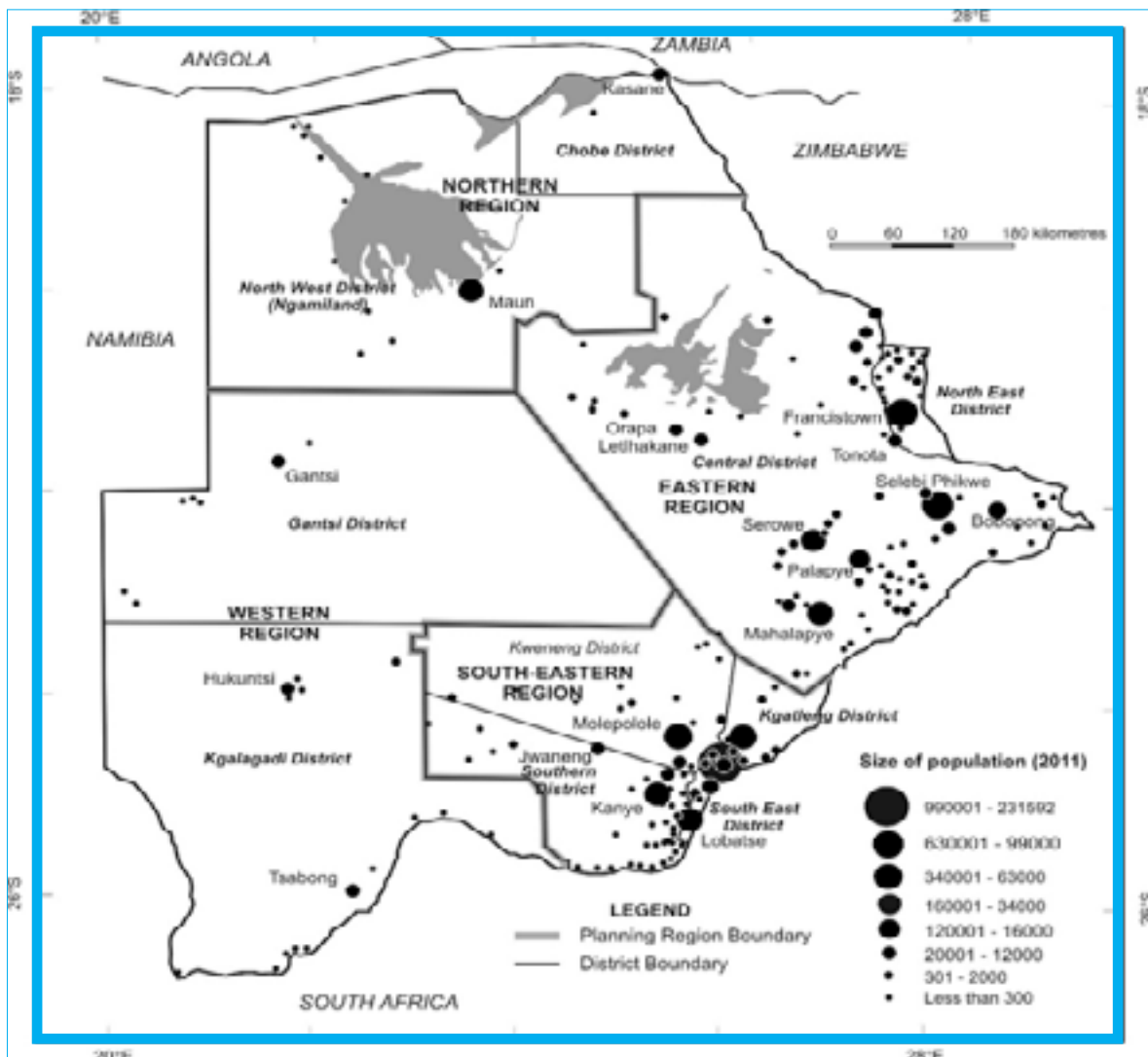
Locality	Frequency	Percent	Sex ratio
City/Town	440,108	21.7	92.1
Urban Villages	857,179	42.3	88.2
Rural Village	523,687	25.9	87.4
Lands area	92,776	4.6	136.8
Cattle Post	52,849	2.6	189.1
Freehold Farm	15,170	0.7	146.2
Mixture of lands and Cattle Post	20,203	1.0	155.8
Camp or Other Locality Type	22,932	1.1	186.2
Total	2,024,904	100.0	95.5

Cities, Towns, Urban Villages and even rural villages offer the gendered employment alluded to above. For the rural localities, such as cattle posts, freehold farms, camps and lands areas, the emerging pattern is very clear. The influence of gender roles and responsibilities on the location of men and women is highlighted in the agricultural sector. Other rural employment activities include leather work, wood carving and borehole maintenance. In the rural districts, the male population is thus predominant in the lands, cattle posts and freehold farms. They also feature highly in districts with abundant tourism activities where game operators, rangers and tourist guides are in demand, such as Camps and Game Reserves.

3.3.3 Population Distribution by Planning Region

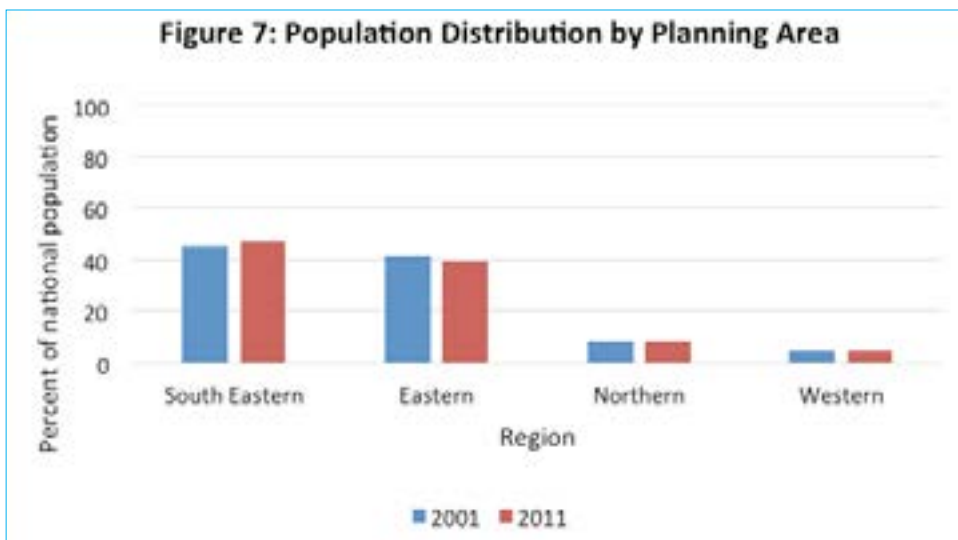
Figure 6 shows the distribution of human settlements by Planning Regions.

Figure 6: Distribution of Settlements by Planning Regions



Human settlements are concentrated on the hard veld Planning Regions, reflecting ecological and spatial investment differentials in the country. The remote Planning Region of the sandveld and the resource frontier region are characterized by the paucity of human settlements.

Figure 7 shows the distribution of the national population by Planning Regions over the last ten years. The percentage of population residing in each Region increased except for the Eastern Region. This could have been due to net migration from the latter Region to the South-Eastern Region which recorded the highest net increase. Selibe Phikwe and Francistown have been facing serious economic challenges over the interim period. Similarly, the down-sizing of labour in the “closed” diamond-mining town of Orapa, in response to the economic recession, might have been responsible for its negative population growth. The population of the Northern and Western Planning Regions increased marginally, probably due to the growth of the tourism sector.



3.4 Population Density

Overall the national population experienced a rate of change of 20.5 percent and a density increase from 2.9/km² to 3.5/km², over the 2001 to 2011 intercensal period as depicted by Figure 8. Population density increased among all the Regions, especially the South-Eastern Regions. Even if the Eastern Region recorded net population loss, its density increased by 0.9 per square kilometer. The density of Northern Region increased marginally whilst that of the Western Planning Region remained stagnant.

The South-Eastern Planning Region recorded the highest proportion of the national population, at 47.3 percent. This marks an increase from the 45.6 percent recorded in the last census. The Region has also the highest population density at 13.8/km², compared with 11/km² in 2001. These figures reflect the presence of the national capital, two towns and the large satellite dormitory urban villages to Gaborone. Next, the Eastern Region has 39.4 percent of the national population, a 2 percent decline since 2001, and a density of 5.4/km², a marginal increase from a figure of 4.5/km², in 2001. This reflects the presence of the second largest city, the gold copper/nickel, soda ash, diamond and coal mining towns and large population concentrations in the major villages of Serowe, Palapye, Mahalapye, Shoshong, Tonota, Tutume and Tati Siding. The Region's share of the national population has decreased from 39.4 percent probably due to outmigration from Selebi-Phikwe.

The Northern Planning Region ranks third with 8.7 percent of the national population and a density of 1.4/km². This is a remote region that was recently prone to water-related diseases. For example Okavango, Chobe and Ngamiland are designated as malaria endemic areas. However with the improved health situation, tourism is becoming an important economic sector attracting population to the urban district of Kasane. Also public sector investment in administrative and social services and private sector investment in commercial agriculture are creating employment opportunities. Subsistence farming is constrained by destruction of crops by human-wildlife conflicts, floods, but also endemic diseases such as foot and mouth which inhibit the sale of livestock to the BMC.

The Western Region is bottom of the list, both in terms of population size and density. This is because of its harsh arid climate, remoteness and a weak economic base. The challenge will be the provision of infrastructure and services to remote area dweller settlements with a minimum population of 250.

There are regional imbalances in the population distribution pattern. The higher concentration of population in the South Eastern and Eastern Planning regions is responsive to the relative availability of services and infrastructure in this area.

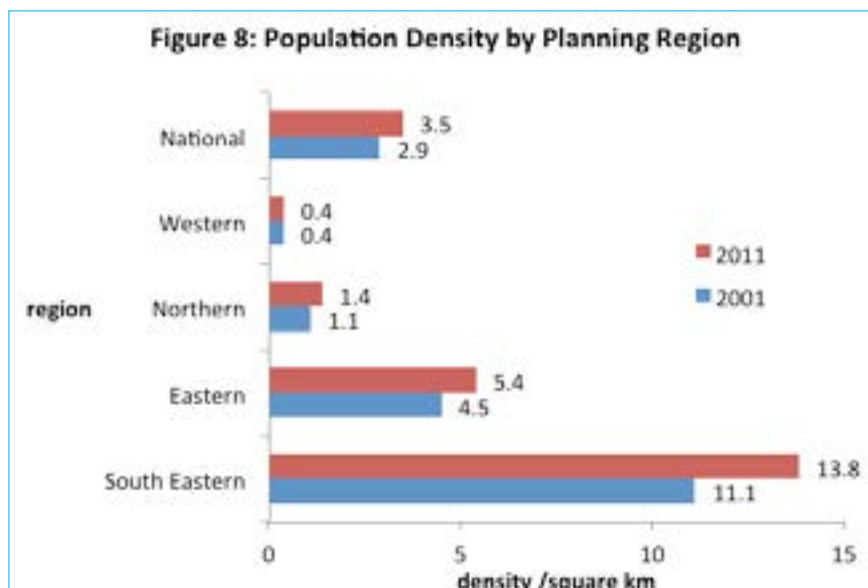


Table 8: Population Distribution by Planning Region

REGION	AREA	POPULATION		Density/Km2		% Population	
		[2001]	2011	[2001]	2011	[2001]	2011
EASTERN	147 501	[695 682]	797 829	[4.5]	5.4	[41.4]	39.4
Northeast	5 120		60 264	[9.7]	11.8		
Central	142 076		576 064	[4.0]	4.6		
Sowa	159		3 598	[18.8]	22.6		
Orapa	17		9 531	[543.8]	560.1		
Francistown	79		98 961	[1068.4]	1 252.7		
Selebi Phikwe	50		49 411	[996.9]	988.2		
SOUTH EASTERN	69 621	[766 992]	957 597	[11.1]	13.8	[45.6]	47.3
South East	1 780		85 014	[34.3]	48.8		
Gaborone	169		231 592	[1099.9]	1 370.4		
Kweneng	31 100		304 549	[7.4]	9.8		
Southern	28 470		197 767	[6.0]	6.9		
Lobatse	42		29 007	[708.3]	690.6		
Jwaneng	100		18 008	[151.8]	180.1		
Kgatleng	7 960		91 660	[9.2]	11.5		
WESTERN REGION	223 110	[75 219]	93 847	[0.4]	0.4	[4.5]	4.6
Kgalagadi	105 200		50 752	[0.5]	0.5		
Ghanzi	117 910		43 095	[0.3]	0.4		
NORTHERN	129 930	[142 970]	175 631	[1.1]	1.4	[8.5]	8.7
Ngamiland	109 130		152 284	[1.5]	1.4		
Chobe	20 800		23 347	[1.0]	1.1		
TOTAL	581 730	[1 680 863]	2 024 904	[2.9]	3.5		

4.0 Policy Implications and Issues

The preceding discussion has shown the complexity of patterns, processes and outcomes of population distribution in Botswana. The following paragraphs will highlight specific challenges and broadly suggest how they could be dealt with to achieve sustainable development.

4.1 The demographic profile

The demographic distribution of the population has highlighted the following trends, namely; overall, there is a low sex ratio, declining annual rate of population growth and an increasing working age population.

4.2 Low sex ratio

The low sex ratio suggests that women are the dominant sex group. Therefore those policies that discriminate against their empowerment to access the means of production do not promote equity but also frustrate national development. Household Income and Expenditure Surveys have consistently portrayed women as either doing unpaid household work, unemployed or over-represented in the marginal employment sectors. Within the domestic sphere, they bear the burden of triple gender roles. Women are a latent human capital force that needs to be activated and harnessed to achieve cardinal principles of democracy, development, self-reliance, unity and botho. Both men and women should therefore be accorded self-realization space and empowered to equitably access social, economic and fixed capital in order to contribute meaningfully to national development. In this way, the Vision 2016 goal of a prosperous, productive and innovative nation will be accomplished.

4.3 Declining rate of population growth

The annual growth rate has also been declining probably due to a slowdown in natural increase and net migration. One of the threats to industrialization and economic diversification is the country's small population size. Decreasing fertility and low life expectancy are a threat to the realization of a critical population mass for sustained industrialization and economic growth. Pro-natalist population policies, encouragement of the return of Botswana who have emigrated and selective migration policies should be encouraged.

4.4 Increase in the working age group

The increase in the working age population could either be a curse or blessing. Training the human resource in this cohort could boost economic production, consumption and sustain economic growth. Conversely, it could be a liability by nurturing the unemployed, the under-employed and the misemployed.

The orphans, youth, elderly and women are the most vulnerable in terms of poverty and having access to sustainable livelihoods. New and ongoing programmes such as the Brigades and the Local Entrepreneurship Programme designed to create skills, employment and social safety nets need to be sensitive to the needs of these groups. This is the essence of not only creating a prosperous, productive and innovative nation but also that of a compassionate, just and caring one. The National Strategy for Poverty Reduction that addresses lack of incomes, human capabilities and participation is also critical for dealing with these issues.

4.5 The geographical distribution of population

4.5.1 Regional imbalances

The population is concentrated in the South-Eastern and Eastern Planning Regions. This reflects the combined effect of primary/ecological factors and secondary/responsive factors. The first relate to favourable climate and soils while the second relates to investment in physical, social and economic infrastructure. Regional disparities in the economic development have created imbalances in which the Northern and Western Planning Regions are disadvantaged.

4.5.2 Promotion of equitable regional development

The aim of the National Settlement Policy (NSP) (1998, 2004) to create equitable development, achieve spatially balanced development across the country should guide development.

The increasing proportion of the national population that is being attracted to the South Eastern Planning Region implies additional demands on land, social services, physical infrastructure and employment. Over-

concentration of the national population is being accompanied by serious unregulated development and environmental problems. Negative social externalities associated with population pressure on the environment need to be anticipated and planned for on the basis of sustainable environmental management strategies under the Environmental Impact Assessment Act, the National Settlement Policy and the National Conservation Strategy.

The comparative advantage of the Eastern Planning Region in terms of easier access to water, latent and prospective employment opportunities and geographical centrality, needs to be exploited in terms of future investment. This would facilitate an equitable distribution of employment opportunities in the country. The development of the natural resources in the Northern Region needs to be strongly supported in order to divert population from moving to the congested regions.

The NSP emphasizes that there should be creation in the least developed areas, especially rural ones in the Western Region. Thus the importance of the improvement of existing and initiation of new productive activities, exploration and development of potential renewable and non-renewable natural resources as well as the identification and development of the necessary infrastructure, which facilitates the development of settlements. This will ensure the realization of the Vision of a socially-just, united and proud nation by 2016.

5.0 Conclusion

The country's population has gone through a demographic transformation over the last decade. The population is experiencing an increase in both the median and average age. On a related note, the economically active population is growing at a faster pace, which put pressure on the already limited capacity of the country to provide decent jobs and the accompanying social amenities.

The country is also experiencing a decline in the proportion of persons below the age of 15, increase in the youth population and decline in the elderly population. However, the decline in the elderly population may be reversed as the health and survival probability of the population increased. Regarding the distribution of the population, the density of the country has increased meaning that there are more people per square kilometer. The increase in the density will in the long run imply that land reserved for agricultural purposes is limited. The south eastern part of the country is the most populous region and close to half of the population lives in the regions. The region houses the national capital and other industrial centers where job opportunities are favourable compared to other parts of the country.

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