

III. Population Changes

Population

The population of Lhasa District in 1984 totalled 285,591 persons, accounting for 14.5 per cent of the total population of Tibet. Compared with the 165,756 persons enumerated in 1958, the population had increased by 72 per cent, with an average growth rate of 2.1 per cent per annum. Lhasa District is the most "crowded" area in Tibet, with a population density of seven persons per km² in rural areas (5 times more than the average for Tibet) and 197 persons per km² in Lhasa City.

According to the census records of 1982, some characteristics of the population in Lhasa District are as follows: the distribution of the population by gender indicated that 50.28 per cent of the population are males and 49.72 per cent females, with a gender ratio of 101:100; the population aged 0-12 years represented 29 per cent of the total; the education level recorded that, in every thousand people, there were 9.89 persons with college level, 28.72 persons with high school level, 79.32 persons with middle school level, and 235.79 persons with primary school level education; the percentage of illiterates in the population aged above 12 years was 57.4; and nearly 60 per cent of the illiterates were female: the 1981 natural growth rate was 1.917 per cent. The urban-rural population distribution (1984) in Lhasa District was 37 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. The urban population refers to the people residing in the city or town, most of whom are supplied with commercial foodgrain. The term rural population implies people who are engaged in agricultural production and who are living in the rural areas.

Up to 1984, the rural population in Lhasa District numbered 179,815, 1.5 times more than in 1958. The mean annual growth rate, from 1958 to 1984, was 1.6 per cent. A great difference is revealed in examining numerical changes in annual growth rates over several time periods. The rural population increase from 1958 to 1963 was about 15 thousand, averaging 3,050 persons per year and an annual growth rate of 2.24 per cent. From 1963 to 1974, the rural population increased by about 25 thousand, representing an

annual increment of 2,260 persons and a growth rate of 1.6 per cent per annum. From 1974 to 1984, about 20 thousand were added to the rural population, indicating an addition of 2,030 persons per year and an annual growth rate of 1.2 per cent. The declining tendency in rural population growth was partly caused by the changes in population policy, and, in addition, by urban employment in Lhasa City. The rural population is distributed unevenly. The figures in Table 10 give the rural population, rural area, and population density of each county. This distribution pattern reflects differences in natural conditions, land productivity, and economic development among the eight counties. The population density along the lower reaches of the Lhasa Valley, namely Lhasa, Quxu, Dagze, and Doilung, is higher than the rest of the district (in Lhasa it is the highest). In the highland areas, i.e., Damxung, the population is sparsely distributed.

Since the 1960s, great efforts have been made to improve the public health services in Tibet. Medical care has been provided free of charge in the rural areas. Improved medical supplies and treatment have led to a decline in infant mortality and an increase in life expectancy. As a result the age pattern of the population changed, and the number of working population decreased. As Tibet is a relatively remote region and is a minority area (Tibetans accounted for 86.5% of the population in Lhasa District), policies regarding population have been relatively flexible. Because the fertility rate was exceeding the mortality rate (e.g., in 1983, the fertility rate was 2.01% while mortality was 0.63% in Lhasa District) continuously, it resulted in an increasing proportion of young age groups and therefore an increasing dependency syndrome.

Rural - urban migration is also another important factor influencing the relationship between the rural population and the agricultural labour force. Although employment is an important cause for migration, educated young people from rural areas also prefer to work in the city rather than for the agricultural labour force.

In relation to occupation, the labour force is classified into two groups: farm labourers and herdsman. Farm labourers

Table 10: Distribution of the Rural Population (1984)

County	Rural Population (person)	Rural Area (km ²)	Density (Person/km ²)
Maizho	33,203	5,308	6.3
Dagze	20,055	1,318	15.2
Lhasa	11,014	866 (-554)	35.3
Doilung	28,958	2,635	11.0
Quxu	24,126	1,581	15.3
Nyemo	23,693	3,162	7.5
Damxung	27,711	9,901	2.8
Lhunzhub	11,055	4,254	2.6
	(+32,101)		(10.1)

* Population of State farms. The situation of State farms is not discussed in this paper.

are mainly involved in crop production and herdsmen are mainly devoted to animal husbandry. In most cases, the activities of crop production and animal husbandry are mixed, especially along the middle and lower reaches of the Lhasa Valley.

The distribution pattern of the labour force and the changes over time can, more or less, give a general pattern of employment in agriculture (Table 11).

The characteristics of the development of animal husbandry in Lhasa District are described below.

Figures in Table 11 depict that the number of herdsmen is much less than farm labourers in most counties, except in Damxung where labourers are purely involved in animal husbandry; the growth in the numbers of herdsmen has been faster than in the case of farm labourers, especially after the 1970s. The ratio between farm labourers and herdsmen differs significantly by geographical positions; farm labourers in Lhasa and Quxu (the lowest area in Lhasa District) contribute more than 95 per cent to the total labour force. This proportion remained steady during the period

Table 11: Distribution of Farm Labourers and Herdsmen

	1958		1970		1984		% Increase ('58-84)	
	Farm labourers	Herds-men	Farm labourers	Herds-men	Farm labourers	Herds-men	Farm labourers	Herds-men
Maizho	12,198	1542	14,390	1,429	13,150	2,044	7.8	32.56
Dagze	7,302	293	8,260	752	8,60	1,320	17.79	450.51
Lhasa	5,753	148	6,100	200	6,462	257	12.32	73.65
Doilung	9,223	588	13,146	864	13,354	1,330	44.79	226.19
Quxu	8,878	391	1,031	489	11,268	488	26.92	24.81
Nyemo	7,478	965	10,350	1,332	10,255	1,504	37.14	55.85
Damxung	-	10,047	-	13,377	-	13,317	-	32.55
Lhunzhub	2,067	1,448	3,477	1,253	2,807	2,587	35.80	78.66
Total	52,899	15,422	56,754	19,696	58,156	22847	9.94	48.15
%	77.43	22.57	74.24	25.76	71.79	28.21	-	-

from 1958 to 1984; and, in Dagze and Doilung counties, the labour force engaged purely in animal husbandry increased rapidly (by 4.5 times and 2.3 times respectively), while, in other counties (except Damxung), the labour force has experienced a slight decline in the share of farm labourers.

Experience during the last three decades shows that the population in the urban areas grew faster than in the rural areas. However, the growth in the rural population exceeded the growth of labourers involved in agriculture, and the number of herdsmen increased more rapidly than farm labourers. Some basic tendencies in population changes are listed below.

1. The rural population migrated to urban areas. Most of the migrants were skilled (e.g., workers in construction) or educated people. Illiterates formed the majority of the agricultural labour force.
2. Young people account for a large proportion (more than 30%) of the population. More opportunities for employment are needed in the near future.
3. The proportion of herdsmen increased, while the proportion of farm labourers decreased. Employment in animal husbandry has had more potential than crop production, in terms of the ratio of farm labourers and herdsmen, between 1958 and 1984.

Table 17: Distribution of Farm Labourers and Herdsmen

County	1958		1970		1984		% Increase (58-84)
	Farm labourers	Herdsmen	Farm labourers	Herdsmen	Farm labourers	Herdsmen	
Maritime	12,198	1,540	14,700	1,420	13,150	2,044	7.8
Dagze	7,302	203	8,200	780	8,800	1,320	17.99
Lhasa	2,727	148	4,100	200	4,402	227	12.32
Doilung	9,223	288	13,140	804	12,224	1,330	44.79
Gaxa	8,808	301	1,031	480	11,268	488	26.92
Nyemo	7,478	462	10,320	1,322	10,282	1,304	37.14
Damxung	10,047	-	13,277	-	13,217	-	-
Linzhi	2,107	1,418	2,477	1,220	2,207	2,287	22.80
Total	52,899	12,422	66,724	10,686	64,126	22,817	9.84
%	77.82	22.17	74.24	25.76	71.79	28.21	-