

## Problems of Regulating Distribution of Population in Azerbaijan Republic

**Zakir Eminov**

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Docent  
Institute of Geography  
Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

### Abstract

*Serious economic and sociopolitical changes took place after emergence of new independent countries in the late twentieth century. These changes significantly influenced on the process of population distribution that found its reflection by demographic indicators. In Azerbaijan Republic, the changes were related to decrease of employment level, increase of poverty, weak organization of social assistance. During transitional period of the country, natural increase rate of population sharply declined. Decrease of production output of industrial enterprises was responsible for decline of number of workers in urban areas. Consequently, many processes, including growth of emigration of urban residents, enfeebling of migration of population from rural areas to large cities, and reduction in rate of natural increase by both cities and rural settlements were typical for demographic situation in Azerbaijan. As a result of these processes, the urbanization rate has not been changed within the last 40 years.*

**Key words:** decrease of natural increase, population growth, rural settlements, labor-consuming, net migration

### Introduction

The end of 20<sup>th</sup> century was rich in socio-political, cultural, economic and demographic processes for Eurasia. The most significant event was the emergence of new independent countries in the territory of former USSR. Many nations sharing unique political, social and economic space, and common psychological and cultural views, started to exist independently. Following emergence of new independent republics, a number of tendencies by economic, political and demographic processes have been observed. These tendencies were typical for both internal processes and international relations.

Looking on the history of first years of independence, two main directions by development of newly-emerged republics can be shown. The first is that political and cultural relations of these young countries were close mostly within the territory of CIS, particularly with Russia, Ukraine and other Eastern European countries. In the meantime, partially based on previous industrial and cultural connections, these relations were less-developed. Achieving close relations with far foreign countries took relatively long time. These relations were different as each country was eager to take benefit and follow its economic interests. Development and change of political processes as well as intensive international migration of population in that period also should be noted as influential factors. Many countries faced regional and ethnic conflicts as well as political instability. Most of these regional conflicts still remain unresolved and curb economic relations in the region. Political interests and economic peculiarities as well as favorable economic- and geographical position allowed some countries to establish relations with countries of Western Europe and USA. Azerbaijan and countries of Central Asia were inclined to have versatile relations also with countries of Middle East such as Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Relations with these and others were established and developed in a short time.

The second direction of changes covered internal political and economic processes. These processes had absolutely new content and served for convergence of political system, industrial relations, and system of economic management between CIS countries and the others. Until the first half of 90es, functioning of the existing large industrial enterprises in various sectors of the economy was considerably reduced, and part of them was stopped completely. As a result, increase of industrial production based on the cooperative relations covering even all the republics of the former USSR was impossible.

These enterprises previously had played significant role in providing high rate employment, being also key factor for socio-economic base and development of population settlement. Products of food and light industries, satisfying the basic domestic needs of the population were of poor quality and could not compete with imported products. At the same time, consumption of these products decreased because of lower incomes of population. All these processes negatively affected the functioning of enterprises and employment rate.

Existing situation in a transition period led to mass unemployment, losses of incomes of the population, and decrease of consumer potential and increase of poverty rate. The analyzed situation negatively affected demographic processes. Within a short time, socio-demographic indicators significantly changed, namely birth rate, natural increase rate, number of marriages, rate of population growth decreased as well as intensity of emigrations, especially to the Western Europe, the USA, Israel and other countries raised.

Besides with these changes, industrial areas and infrastructure based on private property were created and redeveloped. Entry of foreign investment to the national economies was increased. The above-noted changes related to Azerbaijan Republic as well. Character of demographic processes as well as quantitative indicators changed. Intensity of migration by population of the country increased while natural increase rate fell. The reasons of changes of demographic indicators were related to decrease of workplaces and employment rate, less developed system of social assistance, and low speed of process of creation of new workplaces. Slump in production of agricultural products impeded process of developing enterprises in secondary sector.

In a transition period of economy, main role in distribution of the country's population was played by process of concentration of 65-70% of economic and socio-cultural potential in Absheron, the region with small territory area. This process still is being observed. Absheron has diversified industry that is highly developed. New workplaces basically are created in Baku, the capital city. Therefore, opportunities for finding workplace as well as standard of living are higher compared to other regions of the country.

In regions of Azerbaijan, distribution and density of population depend on an environmental condition and natural resources, rational use of resources and involvement of them to primary and secondary sectors, creation of different-type extracting and processing enterprises, prospects of development of settlements, construction of new industrial and service enterprises and its influence on employment and standard of living.

In the beginning of 2010, the number of population of Azerbaijan made 8997,4 thousand people of which 4866,6 thousand people (54,1% of total population) were urban residents, and 4130,8 thousand people (or 45,9%) were dwellers of rural settlements. The highest rates of natural increase of population (more than 30 persons per 1000 persons) have been observed in 60es. In that period, population has grown with higher speed. After 1970, absolute growth of population number made 1 million people for each decade (between every two censuses). Thus, population number of the republic made 3697,7 thousand persons in 1959, 5117,1 thousand persons in 1970, 6028,3 thousand persons in 1979, and 7021,2 thousand persons in 1989 [2, 19].

Within the last two decades, overall growth rate of population number sharply have been decreased as a result of reduction in natural increase rate, growth of death rate, and increase of emigration. In 1990-2000, natural increase rate defined per 1000 persons fell from 19,8 persons to 8,9 persons. In 2009, this indicator made 11,3 persons per 1000 persons. Absolute growth of population at the expense of natural increase made 140,2 thousand persons in 1990, 70,3 thousand persons in 2000, and 99,6 thousand persons in 2009 [2, 25-28].

Decrease of natural increase shows changes of brutto- and net coefficients. In 2009, brutto coefficient made 1,040 which means it decreased 2 times as less within 1970-2009. In 2009, net coefficient of reproduction of the population was 1,002. Each 1000 woman are replaced by the same number of girls. For urban population this indicator is lower than 0,913, for rural population it is 1,126 [1, 94]. Such situation is connected with some socio-economic factors. In cities, service areas and infrastructure actually do not meet requirements and are developed not in accordance with the demand. Besides with this, many challenges concerning providing housing also exist, and this also curbs growth of urban population number.

The problem in cities is that the number of yearly created large manufacturing and service areas (with high labor-consuming capacity and use of highly qualified personnel) is lower than the demand in market. This relates to light industry, especially cotton processing, textile, knitwear, garments and carpet-weaving factories, food processing enterprises.

Financial resources necessary for restoration and technological updating of the existing enterprises are not being allocated whereas this financial assistance would play significant role in increasing quality of products in the above-noted areas. It is very important for centers of administrative regions to create enterprises of extensive production as well as develop infrastructure areas. This would promote providing employment among population at the working age number of which is sufficiently higher due to high natural increase rate in 70s and 80s. There are big opportunities for taking advantage of potential of natural condition and resources as well as developing food-processing industry on the basis of agricultural crops, and also developing recreational business in mountainous and foothill areas.

The statistical data on 2000-2009 years show that the number of workers employed in manufacturing declined, being reduced for 7,9 thousand as less [5, 13]. Intensity of migration of urban population is higher than that of rural population. After 2000, net migration in cities made -11,2 thousand person whereas it was +1,4 thousand by population of rural settlements [1, 413].

Involvement of manpower to manufacturing is managed at the expense of using labor resources of various regions, particularly dwellers of rural areas. In the meantime, main enterprises are eager to hiring less number of workers. In this regard, it is necessary to enlarge network of social service, develop its new areas, and increase number of engaged people in this sector.

After 2000, 240 new manufacturing enterprises were created in the city of Baku. In 2000-2009, the number of these enterprises have increased by 21,1%. The number of the registered businessmen operating in secondary sector has grown by 5,3 times as much whereas growth by industrial products (including works and services in this area) has made 7,2 times. However, in contrast with this growth, the number of industrial workers during period from 2000 to 2009 has been decreased 9,3 thousand as less [5, 144]. The reason of such situation was that the number of hired workers was equal to dismissed ones as industrial enterprises either stopped functioning or reduced workplaces. In contrast with manufacturing, most labor resources are engaged in other economic areas.

As for Sumgait, the second largest city in Absheron area and the second largest industrial center in Azerbaijan, the number of workers engaged in manufacturing enterprises grew by 26% in 2000-2009. In this period, the volume of industrial products (including works and services) has been risen by 1,4 times while the number workers engaged here has been reduced for 4,5 thousand as less [5, 151]. In Sumgait, despite restoration of operating of some plants of the chemical industry, economic regression in this area is still continuing. It should be noted that chemical industry served as an economic base for development of Sumgait in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is necessary to take measures and allocate financial resources for providing needed modern equipment for the enterprises of this city, and improve quality of the products of heavy industry.

According to official statistics, the annual net migration by the city of Sumgait has the negative sign, hesitating between -0,4 and -0,6 thousand person. Natural increase rate is low, making only 10,2 person per 1000 person in 2009, as a result of which the number of population grows with low speed. From 1970 to 1979, the number of population has grown by 152,7%, but in 1989-1999 it was 111,4 %, and after 2000 this indicator made 109,3%. In 1989, population number of the city of Sumgait was 230,5 thousand person. 10 years later the indicator reached 256,8 thousand person, and now the figure is 312,0 thousand [1, 66; 8, 367].

Since 2001, 58 new manufacturing enterprises were constructed in Ganja, which is the second largest city in Azerbaijan. In 2009, the number of enterprises reached 131. In 2001-2009, the number of registered businessmen, functioning in secondary sector has been increased by 7,4 times. The volume of industrial production and the rendered services has been risen 2,4 times as much. In contrast with this change, the number of engaged workers in manufacturing has been decreased from 13,8 thousand to 7,4 thousand [5, 159]. With creation of new enterprises, the number of workplaces increases, but at the same time workplaces in most enterprises are being reduced.

Economic processes influence on the demographic situation in Ganja. Thus, in recent years, growth of natural increase rate is being observed. In the meantime, each year, the number of people migrating from other areas to Ganja exceeds the number of people leaving this city for about 300-400 person. Consequently, the overall population growth is going relatively slowly in this city. Since 2000, population of Ganja has grown by 104,6% whereas the corresponding indicator made 122,4% in 1970-1979 and 106,7% in 1989-1999.

According to data of 1989, the population of Ganja was 280,1 thousand person. Ten years later this indicator reached 280,1 thousand persons, and in the beginning of 2010 it was 314,6 thousand person [1, 67; 8, 387].

Looking on the late history of social and economic development of the fourth largest city – Mingachevir, it is notable that since 2000, 9 new industrial enterprises have been commissioned in this urban area. However, it also should be noted that in the last 9 years, industrial output of Mingachevir has been decreased as a result of which the number of workers also has been reduced by 4,1 thousand person or 45,3% [5, 213]. Consequently, intensity of migration from the city rises as well as population growth was enfeebled. In the last 10 years, the sign of net migration by Mingachevir was negative as the number of people migrating to this city was more than migrants leaving here for about 400-600 persons annually. That's why, each year the city's population grows only by some 100-200 persons due to relatively high birth rate. In 1970-1979, population of Mingachevir has grown by 138,6%. In 1989-1999, the growth made 114,2%. As for 2001-2009 period, population number grew only by 102,7%. In 1989, 82,3 thousand persons lived in Mingachevir, number of which grew up to 94,0 thousand by 1999 and reached 97,0 thousand by 2010 [1, 70; 8, 382].

Unlike Mingachevir, the city of Shirvan develops more dynamically. 21 new industrial enterprises were created in the years of 21<sup>st</sup> century. The volume of made industrial products has grown by 80,8%. The volume of produced industrial products has grown by 80,8% [5, 205]. Previously operated enterprises have been recovered.

Increase in number of the enterprises and made products, creation of new workplaces positively influences on processes of transition to steady social and economic development and affects also population growth. Since 2002, the natural increase almost does not change, and with the reduction of migration, population number grows for about 1000 persons each year. In 1970, population number of Shirvan was 33,8 thousand persons, and ten years later the figure reached 58,0 thousand persons. In 1999, the indicator equated to 67,4 thousand persons. Today, number of dwellers of Shirvan is 78,1 thousand persons. In 1979-1989, the number of population grew by 139,5%. In 1989-1999, it fell to 116,2%, making only 111,5% after 2000 [1, 70; 8, 382].

Industrially developed regions of the country play significant role in distribution of urban population. 52,5% of the urban population of Azerbaijan are officially residents of the region of Absheron, the eastern pre-Caspian part of Azerbaijan. The capital city of Baku is situated here. In recent years, the rate of natural increases in this city. The net migration is positive, i.e. the number of people migrating to Baku exceeds the leaving people. As a result, population of the city increases by 20-30 thousand persons annually. In 1970, population number of Baku city with adjacent urban settlements was 1265,5 thousand persons. In 1989, the indicator was 1794,9 thousand persons, and in 1999, it grew up to 1788,9 persons. In 1979-1989, the number of population has grown by 115,8%. Population decreased by 0,3% in 80es because of intensive emigration of its Russian-speaking part. In 2001-2010, the growth of population made 237,8 thousand persons or 13,0%. Presently, 2064,9 thousand persons are the registered residents of Baku [1, 66].

The economic regions of Aran (with 14,4% of urban population of the country) and Ganja-Gazakh (11,2%) hold the second and the third places respectively for the number of urban population. The share of other regions is less than 3,0-4,0%. Considerable changes by the growth of urban population of economic regions have not taken place within the last 40 years in connection with weakness of economic and social development of cities. The less developed economic potential does not allow cities to involve rural population from adjacent territories. In addition, most cities each year loose part of their population.

Rural population is unevenly distributed by the territory of Azerbaijan. Process of distribution is influenced by level of involvement of territories to production as well as natural and climatic conditions which define directions of agricultural development, prospects of population clusters, demand for various agricultural crops, and network of enterprises of food- and light industry. Growth of rural population depends on affinity to water sources and conditions of soil irrigation as well as rate of natural increase and intensity of migration.

In 60s and 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the natural increase of population was very high. Therefore, rural population grew with high speed. This process continued till 1999. In 2001, absolute growth of newborn infants among rural population made 60,7 thousand persons, and natural increase made 38,8 thousand persons whereas in 1991, the analogical indicators were 101,0 thousand and 79,6 thousand respectively. From 1991 to 2001, the natural increase rate per 1000 persons has been decreased from 23,8 persons to 9,8 persons.

As for number of newborn infants by rural population in 2009, it made 52,6 thousand persons in absolute expression as well as 13,0 persons for every 1000 persons [1, 85]. Dynamics of rural population is also notable. It was 2828,0 thousand persons in 1979, 3215,3 persons in 1989, 3889,1 thousand persons in 1999, and 4183,3 thousand persons in 2009 [1, 38].

Distribution of rural population is considered to be a one of key indicators of distribution and density of population by overall territory of a country. Large territories, the low relief, the big natural waterways (the rivers of Kura and Araz), sufficient supply of solar light and plenty of effective temperature, development of a labor-consuming cotton-pitting have influenced on distribution of population so that today, 1/4 of rural population of the country live in the economic region of Aran. In the beginning of 2010, population of rural settlements made 1114,0 thousand persons, and this higher figure defines high population growth rate in those clusters. From 1970 to 2010, the number of rural population has grown by 489,6 thousand persons or by 78,4% as much. As a result of this process, the share of the economic region within rural population of the country has grown from 24,5% to 27,0% [1, 69; 8, 424].

The economic regions of Ganja-Gazakh and Lankaran-Astara each separately shares 15,0% of the rural population of Azerbaijan. Growth rate of rural population are different in these regions. Higher rates of natural increase observed in the region of Lankaran-Astara allow the region's rural population to be doubled from 1970 to 2010, reaching 312,6 thousand persons. In present, overall growth rate of rural population is highest in Lankaran-Astara compared to other regions of the country. The share of rural population of this economic region has grown from 12,3% to 15,0%. Population of the economic region of Ganja-Gazakh also has risen within the above-noted period growing by 40,2% or 181,3 thousand person as much. But the share of this region decreased from 17,7% to 15,3% [1, 67; 8, 428]. The analogical decrease is being observed also by the regions of Guba-Khachmaz, Shaki-Zagatala, and Yukhari (Mountainous) Garabagh despite of the higher percentage of rural population among their total population.

In Azerbaijan Republic, the rural population is being settled in 4257 rural settlements. Most of rural settlements are less in size. 41,6% of the rural settlements falls to the share of villages population of which is less than 500 persons. These villages shares 10,4% of the overall rural population. A third part of rural population live in 720 villages with population from 1000 to 2000 persons. Rural clusters with more than 2000 thousand persons make up 12,6% of all rural settlements, and share 43,2% of the total rural population. 67 rural settlements have 5000 dwellers and more, sharing 12,9% of the total rural population. It is interesting to show for comparison that in 1970, the analogic indicators were 11 villages and 2,6% as well as in 1989, 38 villages and 7,5% respectively [8, p. 408-409].

Distribution of population by altitude belts is also notable because population in the territory of Azerbaijan is distributed very unevenly: the number of population is changing in accordance with ascending up to mountains. 52,0% of population is distributed in areas with 200 meter of height. The territories situated below the shown height makes 42,0% of the total territory and covers the lowland of Kura-Araz, foothill plains, and Pre-Caspian coastal areas. 45,2% of the rural population of Azerbaijan are situated in these areas. 21,6% of rural population are concentrated in areas with 200-500 meter of height, living in 17,1% of all rural settlements. 42,5% of the territory are situated above 500 meter. The rural population is being settled basically at the height of 1000 meter. 17,4% of rural population live at the height of between 500 and 1000 meters. These areas include 20,4% of rural settlements. 9, 0% of rural population is dwellers of areas with 1000 meter of altitude and more.

### **Conclusion**

Uneven distribution of population over the territory of Azerbaijan necessitates realization of a number of economic and social works at regional level. Concentration of significant share of working-age of population in Absheron region is still being observed while rural settlements in mountainous areas are needed to be supported for long-term socioeconomic and demographic development.

Summarizing the above-mentioned political-economic changes and analysis of demographic situation in the country, the main conclusions may be formulated as the following:

– Political and economic changes going in the post-soviet territory have strongly influenced on demographic situation in Azerbaijan.

Consequently, natural increase, population growth rate, employment level and incomes of population have been decreased whereas activeness of migration has fallen.

– In the country, sharp differences between Baku-located Absheron and other areas for population number and development level is not favorable, and this leads to reduction of economic and demographical potential of the peripheral regions.

– It is necessary to implement the adopted State Program on development of regions for solution of these problems.

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