

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AMONG MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS IN SRI LANKA.

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Abstract: The multi-ethnic society of Sri Lanka comprises four major ethnic groups namely the Sinhalese, Sri Lanka Tamils, Sri Lanka Moors and Indian Tamils. The demographic changes of the major ethnic groups show a continuous decline in the rate of growth of population as well as declines in mortality and fertility. The net migration which has shown negative rate during the past four decades has been mostly related to ethnic groups. A clear inverse relationship between fertility and mother's education is observed among all ethnic groups. Given this relationship it is very likely that in the future, with socio-economic development the characteristics hypothesis will predominate and fertility levels of all major ethnic groups will reach replacement level at least by the end of the first quarter of this century. Projections of population by ethnic groups show that when Sri Lanka's population stabilizes around 23 million by the middle of this century, the Sinhalese would comprise about 16 million, Sri Lanka Tamils 3 million, Moors 2.5 million and the Indian Tamils 1.5 million. By then, the proportionate share of the Sinhalese to the total population would be about 71 per cent and Moors will comprise about 10 per cent of the total population. The slower ageing of about 30 per cent of the population would be economically beneficial as the country advances into the first few decades of this century.