

**UNDERSTANDING PARSİ POPULATION DECLINE IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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## Introduction

The topic of my talk today has great urgency for one of India's smallest communities, a group of people who came to India centuries ago as refugees and who have, since then, fully integrated and contributed to the economic, political, and cultural life of this country. The sad reality is that this community is now rapidly dying off, and that they have no one to blame but themselves, quite literally. As a Parsi myself, I have long been deeply concerned with reports that the Parsi population in India is in steep decline. Yet something that I have found even more concerning is that so many Parsis simply dismiss that there is a problem in the first place. Such attitudes, mixing sheer disbelief with defensiveness, are easily identifiable in some standard Parsi responses to the question of community demographics. If you are a Parsi, chances are that you have seen such responses in various emails that have been forwarded endlessly within the community:

*"Parsis might die out, but Zoroastrianism will live on. Millions are converting elsewhere."*

*"The Parsi community, dying? Who's dying? I am here, and so are you."*

*"What does the size of the population matter? Quality versus quantity."*

In the course of today's talk, I hope to put to rest any doubt that the Parsi population, at least the Parsi population here in India, is quickly dwindling. Furthermore, I will address something that I feel is equally significant: the great disconnect between scholarly analysis of Parsi population decline and what the Parsis themselves think. In part, I hope to illustrate how such standard community responses are not only unproductive and wrong, but also dangerous.

Amongst those Parsis who have accepted that we face a demographic crisis, there still is no popular consensus on precisely *why* this is occurring. Many Parsis believe that intermarriage—that is, marriage between a Parsi and a non-Parsi—is the main reason for why

our population is declining. In Bombay, there has been a legal precedent for the past century that if a Parsi man marries a non-Parsi woman, his children can be brought up as Parsi Zoroastrians. However, if a Parsi woman marries a non-Parsi man, her offspring cannot be considered as either Parsi or Zoroastrian. So, as long as intermarriage rates remain high, and as long as this standard holds, it is true that intermarriage will be a cause for population decline. But, as we will see, it is not the main cause. Other parties believe that migration from India to the West helps explain the stunning freefall in the Parsi population over the past few decades and that, overall, our numbers remain constant. However, professional demographers have dismissed out-migration as being the primary cause for population decline and, as it will be evident by the end of this talk, the numbers just do not add up.

While Parsi community debate has been wrapped around issues such as intermarriage and out-migration, very little attention—scarcely any attention at all, really—has been paid to what actual, professional demographers have identified as the prime reason behind our dwindling numbers: late-marriage and non-marriage. Quite simply, so many Parsis marry so late in life, or do not marry at all, that it has deleteriously impacted the number of children that we can have. As rates of late marriage and non-marriage have risen, subsequent generations of youth have become smaller and smaller, resulting in the rather absurd situation today when the Parsi community has several times more old people than it does children. This finding has been confirmed over and over in all demographic studies conducted since the late 1940s, including three studies specially commissioned by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, the apex body of the Parsis in Bombay.

Here is only a partial list of these academic studies:

- Paul Axelrod. "Cultural and Historical Factors in the Population Decline of the Parsis of India," *Population Studies*, November 1990, pp. 401-19.
- . "Natality and Family Planning in Three Bombay Communities," *Human Organization*, Vol. 47, 1988, pp. 36-47.
- . *A Social and Demographic Comparison of Parsis, Saraswats, and Jains in Bombay*, Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1974.
- J.K. Banthia. "Parsi Demography: Past, Recent, and Future," paper presented to PARZOR Seminar, 4 October 2003, Mumbai.
- C. Chandra Sekar. "Some Aspects of Parsi Demography," *Human Biology*, Vol. 20, May 1948, pp. 48-89.
- Sapur Faredun Desai. *A Community at the Cross-Road* (Bombay: New Book Co., Ltd., 1948).
- Government of India. *Census of 1961: Parsis of Greater Bombay*, Vol. 10, Maharashtra, Part X (I-D), 1971.
- Malini Karkal. "Marriage Among Parsis," *Demography India*, Vol. 4, 1975, pp. 128-45.
- . "Marriage Behavior and Demographic Transition Among Parsis," in K. Srinivasan and S. Mukerji, *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare* (Himalaya Publishing House, 1983).
- . "Pale Fire: Will the Parsis Soon Be Extinct," *Science Age*, September 1984, pp. 18-24.
- . *Survey of Parsi Population of Greater Bombay*, report of the International Institute of Population Studies, Mumbai, 1982.
- Ketayun H. Gould. "Singling out a Demographic Problem: The Never-married Parsis," *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, Vol. 3, 1980, pp. 166-84.
- . "The Never-Married Parsis: A Demographic Dilemma," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 17, June 26, 1982, pp. 1063-68.
- Elizabeth B. Gustafson. "A Demographic Dilemma: The Parsis of Karachi." *Social Biology*, Vol. 16, 1969, pp. 115-27.
- Maneck Pheroze Mistry. "Report of the Survey of Gujarat Parsis (Rural)," Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, 1967.
- Buddhishchandra V. Shah. *The Godavara Parsis: A Socio-Economic Study of a Rural Community in South Gujarat*, Godavara Parsi Anjuman Trust, Surat, 1954.
- Zubin Shroff. "The Potential of Inter-marriage on Population Decline of the Parsis of Mumbai, India," working paper, Harvard School of Public Health, 2010
- D.P. Singh and V.G. Gowri. *Parsis of Mumbai: A Socio-Demographic Profile*, report of the Tata Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, 2000.
- Sayed Unisa, R.B. Bhagat, and T.K. Roy. "Demographic Predicament of Parsis in India," International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai. Paper presented at XXVIth International Population Conference, Marrakech, 27 September-2 October 2009.
- Leela Visaria. "Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971" (three parts), *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 10, 12 October 1974, pp. 1735-41; 19 October 1974, pp. 1789-92; 26 October 1974, pp. 1828-32.

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In demographic terms, Parsis suffer from a very low “fertility rate.” The term “fertility rate” simply means that Parsis have very few babies. This does *not* mean that Parsis are *biologically* predisposed to have fewer or no children. In fact, the idea that Parsis are *biologically* more infertile appears to have no support in the various demographic studies that we encounter. C. Chandra Sekar, who wrote the first scholarly demographic study of the Parsis in 1948, found no evidence for low biological infertility and instead emphasized social and cultural factors; i.e., Parsi predisposition toward late marriage and non-marriage.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Paul Axelrod, who completed a Ph.D. dissertation on Parsi demographics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, wrote in 1990 that, “[i]t would appear that Parsi women are not sub-fecund [i.e., more biologically infertile] and, once married, are able to bear children quickly and without difficulty.”<sup>2</sup> Axelrod, like Chandra Sekar, and like every other demographer and scholar who has looked into this issue, instead pointed to social, cultural, and attitudinal factors. When fertility *is* a biological problem amongst Parsis it is because they get married and try to produce children at such a late age. And this is precisely why Parsi infertility clinics and programs do such brisk business here in Bombay.

Before we begin discussing how Parsi demographic trends have changed historically, I want to make one thing crystal clear. I am not a professional demographer. I have no scholarly credentials to carry out a demographic study of my own. No one does, quite frankly, unless they

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<sup>1</sup> C. Chandra Sekar, “Some Aspects of Parsi Demography,” *Human Biology*, May 1948, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> “Cultural and Historical Factors in the Population Decline of the Parsis of India,” *Population Studies*, November 1990, p. 414. Axelrod and others, such as Desai (pp. 57 & 60) and Shroff (p. 8), have suggested links between increased education, late marriage, and lower fertility rates. Parsi fertility rates begin to drop, and the age of marriage for women begins to climb, precisely at the same time that female education spread in the community (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Axelrod nevertheless cautions: “The pursuit of education for Parsi women had more profound effects on fertility than merely delaying marriage for a few years...But education by itself cannot be seen as the cause of low fertility in the Parsis. It has to be seen in the context of the larger pattern of values and adaptation during the nineteenth century” (p. 414).

have an advanced degree in the subject. I am strongly of the belief that we *must* listen to professional demographers, and *only* professional demographers, in order to understand what is happening to the Parsi population. This is what I am striving to do today. Therefore, the only value that I have, as a non-demographer, is to address this disconnect between what demographic scholarship says and what the Parsi community believes. I am a historian, and, as a historian, I am in the business of harnessing evidence and records to either confirm or cast doubts upon common conceptions and beliefs. And, after wading through the mountain of evidence on Parsi demographics, I can say with full confidence that common Parsi conceptions—that the population is not declining; that professional demographic studies are biased or unreliable; and that, even if the Parsi community disappears, Zoroastrianism will somehow survive—have completely no basis whatsoever.

### **From Growth to Decline**

First, let us take a look at what the Census of India has told us about the Parsi population:

<b>Census Year</b>	<b>Parsis (All-India)</b>	<b>Decennial Change (%)</b>
1881	85,078	
1891	89,490	+5.19
1901	93,617	+4.61
1911	99,412	+6.19
1921	101,075	+1.67
1931	108,988	+7.83
1941	114,890	+5.42
1951*	111,791	-0.27
1961	100,772	-10.93
1971	91,266	-10.42
1981	71,630	-27.41
1991	76,382	+6.63
2001	69,601	-9.74 <sup>3</sup>

\*The drop in population reflects the loss of 5,000 Parsis to Pakistan after the Partition of British India.

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics taken from Leela Visaria, “Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971: I—Size of Parsi Population.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 12, 1974, Appendix II, p. 1737; Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, p. 45.

Given the miniscule size of the community, it is not surprising that the question of demographics has, historically, loomed large for the Parsi community. As far as our sources tell us, the earliest recorded moment of panic over a potentially declining population occurred in the late 1860s<sup>4</sup>. On the heels of the so-called “share mania” in the cotton trade, Bombay plunged into financial depression, and the community also began to fear that its population was diminishing. It is telling that, for a commercially minded community such as the Parsis, fears of population decline coincided with a very real period of commercial decline. We find another such example some six decades later during, quite appropriately, the Great Depression. In the early 1930s, a Nadir Engineer authored what is, I believe, the first attempt at a demographic study exclusively focused on the Parsis. I found Engineer’s undated, typed manuscript in the library of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet. It appears never to have been published. Amidst the economic dislocation of the Great Depression, Engineer sought to dispel fears that Parsi birth and death statistics were working against the long-term prospects for the community’s survival. These fears, as Engineer tells us, stemmed from a series of articles published in the paper *Kaiser-i-Hind* between 1926 and 1927 claiming that the Parsis were on the verge of what was termed as “race-suicide” due to an unfavorable balance between births and deaths.<sup>5</sup>

The first few all-India censuses conducted by the Government of India dispelled any notions in the late 1800s and early 1900s that the Parsis were a dying minority. In fact, data pointed toward moderate population growth, buoyed by low mortality rates, increased life expectancy, and also the immigration of a few thousand Irani Zoroastrians from Iran. In 1881, the Indian census counted 85,078 Parsis within the borders of the country, increasing by 5.19 percent to 89,490 in 1891. By 1931, the population rose to around 109,000 and by the 1941

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<sup>4</sup> Dosabhai Framjee Karaka, *History of the Parsees*, Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1884), p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> “Population Problem of Parsis,” unpublished manuscript, no date, p. 95.

census, the last census conducted in undivided India, Parsis numbered 114,890. As we can see, this has been the highest recorded figure for the Parsi population in India to date.<sup>6</sup>

The first two comprehensive demographic studies of the Parsi population were released one year after Indian independence. In spite of demographic figures that still indicated moderate population growth, these two studies sounded a distinct alarm about the future of the community. One of these studies was entitled *A Community at the Cross-Road*, authored by Sapur Faredun Desai. In his book, Desai marshaled a truly scary battery of statistics: rising average ages for marriage and the “sorry tale” of a 40 percent increase in the unmarried population, resulting in a drop of 50 percent in the birthrates of Bombay Parsis since the early 1900s; smaller family size; and increased childlessness amongst Parsi couples.<sup>7</sup>

Desai’s work inspired an actual professional demographer—C. Chandra Sekar, who was affiliated with the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Calcutta—to conduct a detailed study of the community. In a paper that was presented at the Johns Hopkins University and later published in the journal *Human Biology*, Chandra Sekar, like Desai, noted with concern that Parsis were marrying later and later, resulting in fewer offspring and a definite aging trend in the overall population. For example, Chandra Sekar examined birth rate indicators for the Parsi community, which indicated the number of children born within a given population of 1000 individuals. Whereas Bombay municipal records showed a comparatively high Parsi birthrate of 25 per 1000 population between 1901 and 1920, this figure had declined to 14 per 1000 population by 1942.<sup>8</sup> As marriage ages increased, Chandra Sekar also noted an increased proportion of Parsis that *never* married. While only six percent of Parsi women in 1901 had completed their reproductive cycle without getting married, by 1931 this statistic had ballooned

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<sup>6</sup> From Visaria, “Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971: I,” Appendix II, p. 1737

<sup>7</sup> *A Community at the Cross-Road* (Bombay: New Book Co., Ltd., 1948), pp. 44, 181.

<sup>8</sup> C. Chandra Sekar, “Some Aspects of Parsi Demography,” *Human Biology*, May 1948, p. 55.

to 16 percent.<sup>9</sup> Basically, almost one out of every six Parsi women were either not getting married at all, or getting married too late in order to have any offspring.

While decreasing mortality rates and a longer average lifespan insured that, for the moment, Parsi births continued to outnumber Parsi deaths, Chandra Sekar and Desai foresaw a dramatic demographic shift occurring in the next few decades. Chandra Sekar predicted that, while the Parsi population would continue to increase through 1951, it would soon begin to drop and then freefall by six to seven percent every decade beginning in 1971. By 2001, he predicted that the Parsi population in India would be reduced to around 89,000, approximately the same as what existed in 1891. “The anticipated diminution in the Parsi population is simply due to the fact that the Parsis are not reproducing themselves in sufficient numbers,” he concluded, noting that the community would soon be faced with a rising proportion of aged individuals and a diminished pool of youth.<sup>10</sup> Desai concurred and challenged his community to take decisive action on the issue of demographics.<sup>11</sup>

What has happened since Chandra Sekar and Desai released their studies in 1948? Their conclusions, unfortunately, were largely dismissed by the community. After all, the first census of independent India, conducted in 1951, showed no overt signs of a population decline, returning a population of figure of 111,791, a slight drop from 1941 that could be explained by the fact that approximately 5,000 Parsis now lived across an international border in the new state of Pakistan. With no immediate evidence of decline, Parsis paid little heed to dire warnings of a future drop in population. Yet, what is striking about Chandra Sekar and Desai’s work is that their conclusions have been largely borne out; in fact, their estimates for population decline turned out to be rather conservative. Instead of there being 89,000 Parsis in India in 2001, as

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60. This is the percentage of unmarried women in the 45-49 age cohort.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-84.

<sup>11</sup> Desai, p. 186.

Chandra Sekar had predicted in 1948, there were only 69,000. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, every subsequent demographic study of the Parsi community has identified the two factors they wrote about, late marriage and non-marriage, as being the prime reasons for Parsi population decline. The remaining portion of this talk will be devoted to this scholarship and how such studies have indicated an entrenched pattern of late marriage and non-marriage, resulting in ever-diminishing birth rates and contributing to the severe demographic crisis that Parsis face today.

### **Late Marriage**

Let us begin with late marriage. Late marriage is nothing new in the community (see **images A and B**). We can trace it back to the 1880s, to some of the earliest records we have on the Parsis. In 1881, according to records kept by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, more than half the marriages in Bombay took place before the wife was 15 years of age and in only 10 percent of marriages was the wife above the age of 20. This was the era of child marriages, and the Parsis were amongst the first in India to abandon this bad practice. By 1890, a mere decade later, most Parsi women in Bombay married between the ages of 16 and 20, and by the 1901 Indian census, almost half of Parsi women were marrying when they were over 20 years old. By 1930, the median age of marriage for a Parsi woman was over 24.<sup>12</sup> Such a phenomenal jump in the average age of marriage was indicative of sweeping social change that gave Parsi women greater freedom and access to education and employment.

Many other communities in India followed the Parsis' lead in eradicating the practice of child marriage. However, unlike the case in these other communities, the Parsis continued to delay marriage until later and later ages. Three studies, all commissioned by the Bombay Parsi

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<sup>12</sup> Axelrod, p. 404.

Punchayet (BPP), confirmed this entrenched practice of late marriage. In 1961, the BPP requested the Government of India to conduct a special study of the Parsi population in its decennial census. Census results indicated that the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM)—the average age for those who marry by the age of 50—was 31.2 for males and 26.8 for females. The two other BPP-commissioned studies, run in 1982 by Malini Karkal, a professor of demography at the International Institute for Population Sciences, and in 1999 by D.P. Singh and V. Gowri, professors at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, found the singulate mean age at marriage to be roughly the same as it was in 1961.<sup>13</sup> So, at least for the past five decades, the trend amongst ever-married Parsis under 50 has not markedly worsened. Nevertheless, the contrast between Parsi marital behavior and that of the general Indian population is quite striking. In Karkal’s 1982 survey, 68.2 percent of women aged 20-29 reported that they had never married. For the general population of greater Bombay in 1971, this figure was 19.38 percent; for all of Maharashtra, it was 6.4 percent.<sup>14</sup>

### **Non-Marriage**

Late marriage has had one significant consequence: it has increased the number of Parsis that have never married (see **images C and D**). Paul Axelrod, who in 1990 published one of the most interesting studies of Parsi demography, comments that, “Though non-marriage is not always a direct result of late-marriage, this seems to be so in the case of the Parsis.”<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Leela Visaria, a prominent Indian demographer whose Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton delved into Parsi population issues, remarks that, “It is, of course, likely that the postponement of marriage

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<sup>13</sup> D.P. Singh and V. Gowri, *Parsis of Mumbai: A Socio-Demographic Profile* (Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences, January 2000), p. 37. In Karkal’s survey, the singulate mean age of marriage was 30.1 for males and 27.1 for females.

<sup>14</sup> Malini Karkal, *Survey of Parsi Population in Greater Bombay—1982* (Bombay: International Institute for Population Sciences and Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Fund s and Properties, 1984), p. 68.

<sup>15</sup> Axelrod, p. 405.

to an advanced age increases the chances of one's remaining a bachelor or a spinster."<sup>16</sup> The studies of Axelrod, Visaria, and many other demographers have traced the simply stunning rates of non-marriage within the Parsi population. One demographer, Ketayun Gould, has even published several articles just on this phenomenon.

Importantly, non-marriage was not a trend that was confined to urban Bombay. Studies conducted in rural Gujarat found that anywhere between 13 percent and 55 percent of women in rural Gujarat surveyed continued to be spinsters well into middle age.<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Gustafson, a sociologist at the University of California, Davis, found the percentage of married Parsis across the border in Karachi to be "unusually low" in the 1960s. Around 74.4 percent of Parsi women in Karachi age 20 and over were ever-married, compared with 95.2 percent of Muslim women in Karachi in the same cohort.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, non-marriage is not a phenomenon linked to any socioeconomic class. Axelrod found "substantial numbers" of never-married women at all educational levels.<sup>19</sup>

Today's figures might be even higher. Ketayun Gould asserts that "the proportionate number of single people in the community might be one of the highest in the world."<sup>20</sup> Malini Karkal's BPP-commissioned study in 1982 found that 21 percent of Parsi females in the age group 40-49 were unmarried, and further warned that the proportion of unmarried individuals was increasing. To provide some context, Karkal noted that the 1971 census revealed that only

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<sup>16</sup> Leela Visaria, "Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1871: III—Fertility Trends," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26 October 1974, p. 1830.

<sup>17</sup> Buddhishchandra V. Shah's study of Godavara Parsis in 1954 showed 13.46 percent of women and 23.58 percent of men who were aged 45 years and above to be unmarried; Maneck Pheroze Mistry's 1967 study for the BPP found 54.89 percent of women and 37.09 percent of men between the ages of 16 and 40 to be unmarried; in Axelrod's survey in rural Gujarat, published as a part of his 1974 dissertation, he found that 25 percent of women over the age of 25 years were unmarried. Their findings are summarized in Ketayun Gould, "The Never-Married Parsis: A Demographic Dilemma", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26 June 1982, p. 1064.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth B. Gustafson, "A Demographic Dilemma: The Parsis of Karachi," *Social Biology*, 1969, p. 124.

<sup>19</sup> Axelrod, p. 404. He does note, however, that "those with higher education are more likely to be unmarried."

<sup>20</sup> Gould, p. 1064.

0.58 percent of all Indian females in the same cohort were unmarried.<sup>21</sup> The most recent BPP-commissioned study, Singh and Gowri's 1999 survey, found a decrease in the overall number of never-married Parsis, but stated that this was simply because the overall number of youth; i.e., the number of people who were of a marriageable age, had diminished so greatly. Jamshed Guzder, then president of the BPP, acknowledged that this was a "disturbing trend."<sup>22</sup>

According to Sayeed Unisa and her colleagues at the International Institute for Population Studies, who presented their paper in 2009, one out of every five Parsi Indian males, and one out of every ten females, is still unmarried by the age of 50.<sup>23</sup> Out of all the frightening statistics out there about the Parsi population, it is these statistics that frighten me the most.

### **Consequences for Fertility Rates and Population**

What are the consequences of late marriage and non-marriage? Every demographic study is in complete agreement that these constitute the prime factors for abysmally low birthrates in the community and, consequently, the rapidly dwindling Parsi population. Put quite simply, the Parsi birthrate is well below replacement level, the level necessary to sustain the community's population. In 1881, when the first comprehensive Indian census took place, Parsi fertility rates were, according to Leela Visaria, "moderately high." That year, the birthrate was tabulated as 34 per 1000 population for Parsis in Bombay. We have noted that this had fallen to 14 per 1000 population by the time Chandra Sekar wrote his study in the late 1940s. But it continued to drop. By the 1960s, it had slid to 12 per 1000 population for the Parsis. In comparison, the crude birth rate for the general Indian population was still 38 per 1000 population in 1970. According to another indicator, gross reproductive rates (GRR), Parsi fertility rates were already below

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<sup>21</sup> Karkal, pp. 68, 73.

<sup>22</sup> Singh and Gowri, pp. ii, 35-36.

<sup>23</sup> Sayeed Unisa, R.B. Bhagat, and T.K. Roy, "Demographic Predicament of Parsis in India," paper presented at XXVIth International Population Conference, Marrakech, 27 September-2 October 2009, p. 3, pp. 9-10.

replacement level in 1961. Visaria states that, “because of late marriage or non-marriage the births to Parsi women resident in Greater Bombay in 1961 were only 50 per cent of the number that would have occurred if every woman were married throughout her reproductive period.”<sup>24</sup>

That was 1961. The story gets worse from here onward. Unisa, et. al., in 2009 tabulated the total fertility rate (TFR) for the community. TFR measures the number of children born per woman and a TFR of 2.1 is necessary for replacement. By 1980-82, the TFR for Parsis was already 1.12; i.e., about half of replacement level. In 2000, it was 0.94.<sup>25</sup> Zubin Shroff, a Ph.D. candidate at the Harvard School of Public Health, has been working on a new demographic study of the Parsis for the past two years, and using data from 2001-06 he has observed a TFR of 0.88 (see **Image E**).<sup>26</sup> I recall him telling me that, when he disclosed this figure to a professor of demography at Harvard, she had a look of complete horror on her face. To provide some context, let us look at what the TFR is like amongst general populations in some countries. According to a United Nations report published in 2006, TFR between 2000 and 2005 was, for each country’s total population, 3.11 for India, 2.04 for the United States, and 1.29 for Japan.<sup>27</sup> In other words, indicators for the Parsis of India are well below that of Japan, a country where the government has thrown a significant portion of its resources into reversing its population decline and educating its population about how, precisely, its population has fallen.

A low fertility rate also created a dramatically upturned age distribution in the Parsi community, validating the observation that they are an aging group (see **images F and G**). In

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<sup>24</sup> Visaria, “Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971: III,” pp. 1828-30; “India Statistics,” UNICEF, [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_statistics.html) (accessed 5 May 2011). Gross reproduction rate (GRR) measures the number of daughters that would replace the mother generation, and a GRR of 1 would theoretically provide full replacement, although some mothers, of course, die before the end of their reproductive cycle. Whereas the GRR of the Parsi population was 2.15 in 1881, it was 1.43 in 1931 and 0.98 in 1961.

<sup>25</sup> Unisa, et. al., pp. 10-13.

<sup>26</sup> Shroff, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, United Nations, 2007, Table A.15.

spite of the fact that fertility began to drop in the 1880s and reached very low levels by the 1930s, the Parsi population in India kept growing until the 1950s thanks to lower mortality rates brought about by improved health and longer life expectancy. Quite simply, there were enough births to offset fewer deaths. When Nadir Engineer wrote his study in early 1930s, he was correct to argue that the balance of births and deaths was still in the Parsis' favor. But this was not too last for long (see **images H and I**).

As fewer and fewer children were born, the proportion of seniors in the community increased markedly. In 1881 roughly 37 percent of the Parsi population of India was age 14 and below, while approximately 5 percent was 60 and over. By 1971, however, approximately 15 percent of the population in Greater Bombay (now home to the overwhelming majority of Parsis) was 14 and below, while the cohort of 60 and above had ballooned to 20 percent.<sup>28</sup> In 1999, Singh and Gowri found that the median age of the Parsi population they surveyed was 48.04; in contrast, the same figure for the 1901 census was 24.<sup>29</sup> By 2001, according to Unisa, et. al., one in every eight Parsis was a child under the age of 15, whereas one in every four Parsis was aged 65 and above. The percentage of the Indian Parsi population above 65 stood at 24.2 percent, which was well above figures for Japan, Spain, and Sweden.<sup>30</sup> The United Nations defines a population as aged if more than 7 percent of its population is above 65.<sup>31</sup> The proportion of aged Parsis is over *triple* this amount.

If these trends continue—if Parsi fertility rates continue to fall, if the percentage of the elderly increases, and new generations of Parsis become smaller and smaller in size—what will

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<sup>28</sup> Visaria, "Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971: I," Appendix II, p. 1740. Visaria writes that, for Parsis, age distribution was tabulated on an all-India level between 1881 and 1931 and for Greater Bombay after 1961. Since an overwhelming majority of Parsis have lived in Bombay since the 1950s, we should treat Bombay figures as quite representative of the entire Indian Parsi population.

<sup>29</sup> Singh and Gowri, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Unisa, et. al., p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted from Malini Karkal's 1984 study, in John Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 50.

happen to the community in a few decades from now? Unisa, et. al. calculate that by 2051 only 32,000 Parsis will remain in India; in other words, the population will be less than half of what it is today.<sup>32</sup> Shroff similarly projects that the Parsi population of Bombay, which was 46,557 in 2001, will decline to 20,122.<sup>33</sup> Keep in mind that roughly 70,000 Parsis called Bombay home in 1971. Do we really want to continue down a path where the Bombay Parsi community becomes, numerically speaking, a mere shadow of its former self?

### **Other Factors**

A powerful body of demographic scholarship, therefore, points toward late marriage and non-marriage being the prime factors for the drop in Parsi population, something that has manifested itself in shockingly low levels of births and smaller and smaller generations of youth. Why, then, is there such confusion within the Parsi community over reasons behind our demographic crisis? In their 1999 study, Singh and Gowri asked Parsis in over 6000 Bombay households about what they believed to be the causes for their decreasing numbers. About 81 percent of respondents agreed that intermarriage was a major cause, while 74 percent of respondents believed that migration outside of India was a factor. Curiously, nearly half of all respondents even believed that conversion to other religions was a serious problem, although we have no significant evidence for this, at all. Indicative of how much disconnect there is between popular belief and trustworthy scholarship, late marriage and non-marriage were not even mentioned as possible factors by Parsi respondents.<sup>34</sup>

When such a large proportion of Parsis believe that intermarriage and out-migration are prime culprits for their decreasing numbers, it is only fair and appropriate that we return to the

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<sup>32</sup> This projection assumes that TFR declines to 0.75 in 2051. If TFR remains constant at 2001 to 2051 at 1.0, the population will decline to 34,000. Pp. 13-14.

<sup>33</sup>P. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Singh and Gowri, p. 67.

scholarship and understand how demographers have assessed their relative weight. Let us begin with intermarriage. Few issues in the community have ignited such controversy in the past few decades. Intermarriage rates have definitely been increasing amongst Parsis. Barely registerable when Sapur Faredun Desai wrote his book in 1949, intermarriage rose to account for 19 percent of all Parsi marriages in Bombay in 1991 and 31 percent by 2005.<sup>35</sup> Figures for elsewhere in India appear to be higher. Once again, our demographers admit that it is very hard to measure the precise impact of intermarriage. But experts like Axelrod are confident that, while figures for intermarriage along with out-migration can by themselves be “substantial,” they are “not sufficient to account entirely for the population decline.”<sup>36</sup>

In his 2010 working paper, Shroff tried to measure the relative impact of intermarriage on the Bombay community’s future population. Shroff made population projections for 2051 where no children of any intermarriage were accepted as Zoroastrians, where only the children of intermarried Parsi men were accepted, and where children of both intermarried men and women were accepted. His findings are quite striking. He discovered that, irrespective of the acceptance of children of any intermarriage, “the Parsi population will decline sharply over the next few decades, given current fertility trends.” So few babies are being born into the community that the acceptance of children of intermarried couples makes hardly any difference. With current rates of fertility and intermarriage, the 2051 population in Bombay will be 19,136 if no children of any intermarried couple are accepted; 20,122 if only children of intermarried women are excluded; and 20,535 if all children of intermarriages are accepted.

For Shroff, the conclusions are crystal clear: both liberals and conservatives have over emphasized the importance of intermarriage as a factor in the community’s population decline,

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<sup>35</sup> Shroff, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> P. 411.

and instead the “abysmally low fertility” of the community—i.e., low birthrates—has “brought the community to the brink so to speak in demographic terms.”<sup>37</sup> Now, as intermarriage rates continue to rise in Bombay and elsewhere in India, it is imperative that the community have a reasoned, cool-tempered, and level-headed discussion on this topic and the acceptance of progeny of such unions. But, from the scholarship at hand, we can rule out intermarriage as being a factor on par with late marriage and nonmarriage in terms of its significance for Parsi population decline. Those who argue otherwise simply do not have scholarship on their side.

Finally, we come to the question of out-migration from India. Now, migration appears to be playing a very big role in diminishing the Parsi population of Pakistan. As early as the 1960s, Elizabeth Gustafson identified out-migration to be a major factor in the drop of the relatively small community in Karachi. Indeed, in August 2009 the *Newsline* of Pakistan quoted community leaders as saying that almost 95 percent of Parsi youth are choosing to leave the country.<sup>38</sup>

Scholars such as Leela Visaria and Sayeed Unisa state that migration might be a contributing factor for India, but caution that it is extremely difficult to measure and assess. Furthermore—and more importantly—it does not appear to be that significant. Certainly, nowhere even close to 95 percent of the youth are opting to leave India’s shores. Given the tone of debate in India, Unisa, et. al., decided to look for tell-tale signs of large out-migration within datasets on Parsi age distribution. They found “no significant distortions in the age pattern” between 1961 and 2001—i.e., unusual drops in the population of age cohorts of young adults. Therefore, they concluded that “migration does not appear to be a reason for the decline in Parsi

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<sup>37</sup> Pp. 13-16.

<sup>38</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed, “The Exodus,” *Newsline* (Pakistan), 28 August 2009. <http://www.newsline magazine.com/2009/08/the-exodus/>.

population in the recent past,” although an exact assessment is not possible.<sup>39</sup>

We have one other method for assessing the impact of out-migration: evaluating population estimates for the total number of Zoroastrians in the world. This is an exercise with some serious pitfalls, however: outside of India and Pakistan, we really have no reliable population figures and must instead rely on crude estimation. Furthermore, we must also factor in the presence of Iranian Zoroastrians in the worldwide Zoroastrian diaspora, especially as out-migration from Iran has accelerated in recent decades owing to worsening political and socioeconomic conditions.

Below is a list of both census figures and estimates for Zoroastrian populations in various countries:

Iran (current estimates)	15,000-24,000 <sup>40</sup>
United Kingdom (2004 estimates)	5,000 <sup>41</sup>
Australia & New Zealand (2004 estimates)	3,000 <sup>42</sup>
North America (2004 estimates)	15,500 <sup>43</sup>
Elsewhere (2010 crude estimate)	2,500 <sup>44</sup>
Pakistan (2010 figures)	1,766 <sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Unisa, p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Email correspondence with Shahin Bekhradnia, 5 December 2010; Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary, “Zarathushtis in Iran—A Demographic Profile,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, p. 26. Bekhradnia believes the current figure to be around 15,000 while Firouzgary placed it at 24,000 in 2004. Figures for the Iranian Zoroastrian population differ wildly due to limited data and what seem to be extremely flawed Iranian censuses.

<sup>41</sup> Rusi Dalal, “Demographics of Great Britain,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, p. 64. Rashna Writer, however, has recently cautioned me that, based on her research, the British population might be closer to the 7,000 mark as indicated by individuals in ZTFE.

<sup>42</sup> “Zarathushtis ‘Down Under’,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, p.76.

<sup>43</sup> In 2004, Roshan Rivetna compiled what is probably our most accurate estimate of the North American population, calling up community leaders in every US state and Canadian province and tabulating both the numbers of known Zoroastrians on association records and estimated maximum populations. In Canada, she recorded 5,341 known Zoroastrians and an estimated maximum of 5,975. In the United States, there were 9,158 known Zoroastrians and an estimated maximum of 10,794. This gives us a total North American population of anywhere between 14,500 and 16,800. Roshan Rivetna, “Zarathushtis in USA and Canada,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, pp. 55-59.

<sup>44</sup> For East Asia, see Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, p. 156; Yazdi Parekh, “Zarathushtis in the Far East,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, p. 82. Claims of 2,200 Zoroastrians in the Gulf alone seem to be wildly optimistic (Meher Bhesania, “Diaspora in the Persian Gulf,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, p. 70).

<sup>45</sup> Toxy Cowasjee, “Demographics of Zarathushtis in Pakistan,” *FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2004, p. 50; email communication with Toxy Cowasjee, 11 December 2010. On the topic of the Banu Mandal’s statistics, Hinnells writes, “the general professional nature of the people involved, and the respect in which the Mandal is universally held, means that these figures are likely to be as reliable as one could hope for—probably more reliable than an official census” (*The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, p. 217).

India (2001 figures)	69,601
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112,367-121,367</b>

How does this figure compare with previous population estimates? Relying on the last census of undivided India, scholarly estimates on the Iranian Zoroastrian population, and accounting for a limited Zoroastrian diaspora outside of India and Iran, we can arrive at an estimated worldwide Zoroastrian population of 133,000 for the early 1940s.<sup>46</sup> We have another set of numbers for the early 1960s. From census data from India, Pakistan, and Iran, and estimates on the emerging diaspora, we arrive a worldwide Zoroastrian population of approximately 131,000.<sup>47</sup> Thus, as we can see, our estimate for the current Zoroastrian population is much less than those for either the early 1940s or 1960s. These estimates, I must once again emphasize, are extremely imprecise and must be used with a degree of caution. Nevertheless, they show that it is extremely unlikely that out-migration from India can entirely explain the drop in population figures. If this were the case, the worldwide Zoroastrian population would not have fallen by up to 20,000 people since the 1940s; it would have *at least* remained stable. Migration cannot fully explain why the Parsi population in India was 115,000

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<sup>46</sup> According to the Census of India, as we have seen, the Parsi population of undivided India reached its numerical maximum of roughly 115,000 individuals in 1941. See Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change* (München: Weltforum Verlag, 1974), p. 35. At that time, we can assume that perhaps 3,000 Parsis were scattered elsewhere such as Rangoon, Aden, China, East Africa, and England. We have no precise figures for Iran, but based off scholars' estimates it was probably around 15,000 in the early 1940s. The German scholar B. Spuler estimated the Iranian Zoroastrian population to be 16,800 for 1938 (Kulke., p. 35). Bekhradnia cites lower figures: roughly 14,000 by 1956 ("Zoroastrianism in Contemporary Iran," *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies*, summer 1991, p. 122). With these statistics and estimates, we arrive at a worldwide Zoroastrian population of roughly 133,000 in the early 1940s, which is around 12,000 people more than our maximum estimate for today.

<sup>47</sup> In the 1961 census, when the BPP commissioned a special census study in order to look into the question of falling numbers, the Parsi population of India stood at around 101,000. The Pakistani census of the same year returned a Parsi population of approximately 5,200 (Kulke, p. 35). According to Iran's 1966 census, approximately 20,000 Zoroastrians were in that country. See Janet Kestenberg Amighi, *The Zoroastrians of Iran: Conversion, Assimilation, or Persistence* (New York: AMS Press, 1990), p. 267. Furthermore, the report of the Second World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay in 1964 estimated around 5,000 Parsis abroad in Asia, East Africa, and North America (Kulke, p. 36). Totaling these figures, we arrive at a worldwide Zoroastrian population of approximately 131,200 for the 1960s, which is still higher than today's estimated numbers.

in 1941 and only 69,700 as of the last census in 2001. Migration *might* account for some decline in India, but other factors are clearly at work here.

## **Conclusion**

In 2011 we sit at a crossroads of sorts. The Parsi community today, whether it be here in India or abroad in the diaspora, is more wealthy and socioeconomically advanced than it has ever been before. There is no way that—as in the “share mania” fallout of the late 1860s or in the Great Depression of the 1930s—our fears of a Parsi demographic crisis can be pinned on the incidence of any great financial distress. A Parsi demographic freefall has been a tangible reality, in terms of actual numbers, since at least the 1960s, and for much, much longer in terms of rates of late-marriage, non-marriage and, consequently, fertility.

In the course of this presentation, we have been able to thoroughly dismiss two standard Parsi responses to the demographic crisis:

*“The Parsi community, dying? Who’s dying? I am here, and so are you.”*

*“What does the size of the population matter? Quality versus quantity.”*

There is not much quality, after all, when your community is aging and dwindling rapidly.

Now, I have two concluding thoughts. The first thought has to do with the issue of Parsi politics, as odd as that term may sound for a tiny band of 69,000 individuals. Everyone inside the community, and an increasingly large portion of the general public outside of the community, is aware that there is a bitter liberal-conservative divide that has spawned heated exchanges, mudslinging, and the occasional court case. For a community of our miniscule size, it is incredible—and deeply saddening, and even more deeply embarrassing—to see how much rancor and outright hatred this division has spawned. As a historian, I can tell you that Parsis have long been an extremely garrulous community and that the current liberal-conservative

divide is only the latest of many arguments that have caused discord amongst the Zoroastrians of India. This history, of course, still doesn't excuse such shameful behavior.

While our demographic situation is, by no means, enviable, it does pose an opportunity for conservative-liberal reconciliation and cooperation. Certainly, promoting more marriage, and encouraging more childbirth, within the community is a noble cause that both conservatives and liberals can support. It is certainly something that is enjoined in our religious tradition. Consider what the great Parsi scholar Jivanji Jamshedji Modi wrote about marriage and children in the Zoroastrian tradition. Marriage, he pointed out, is favored by Ahura Mazda and encouraged by Zarathushtra. We find evidence of this in the Gathas and the Vendidad (Videvdad), amongst other texts. Marriage is a “good institution and well-nigh a religious duty, recommended by religious scriptures,” and helping to bring about a marriage is considered a highly meritorious act. We can observe this historically, as well, from the time of the ancient Persians all the way up to someone like Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, who set up charities specifically to help poor Parsis get married.<sup>48</sup> These are essential parts of our religion, a religion that is in danger of disappearing in a few generations because of low rates of marriage and childbirth. I will leave you to ponder the irony of this situation.

And that brings me to my second and final thought. We have one last myth to bust:

*“Parsis might die out, but Zoroastrianism will live on. Millions are converting elsewhere.”*

This is an argument that is made over and over in emails of dubious origin that circulate within the community. I have even seen “statistics” in published books claiming resurgent Zoroastrian populations in Central Asian countries where the religion has been extinct for centuries.

Unfortunately, no one bothers to properly research and verify such claims and, perhaps even

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<sup>48</sup> Jivanji Jamshedji Modi *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay: British India Press, 1922), pp. 14-15.

more unfortunately, when we *do* research the matter, we find that there is absolutely no factual basis whatsoever to support the assertion that millions are converting. Yes, there have been some converts in places such as Central Asia, Russia, Europe and even South America. But they are a mere handful. For example, in Tajikistan, the Central Asian country that can claim some of the strongest cultural ties to Zoroastrianism, one researcher, Shahin Bekhradnia, found precisely 14 such declared converted Zoroastrians. There was a fifteenth but he was killed by fanatics in 2001.<sup>49</sup> I seriously doubt that any Zoroastrian convert faces an easier time in less liberal countries such as Uzbekistan. Similarly, in Russia, the scholar Michael Stausberg has counted only a few dozen individuals who follow Pavel Globa, a Russian who converted himself to Zoroastrianism.<sup>50</sup> But Globa converted so that he could pursue an esoteric school of astrology loosely based on some Zoroastrian ideas, something that is quite different from the Zoroastrian religion as it is practiced within the Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrian communities.

Such converts number, perhaps, a few hundred and, at absolute maximum, a few thousand. They do not constitute a significant number. While there has been much excited talk over the past century of a “return to Zoroastrianism” movement amongst Iranian Muslims, we have seen barely any real conversion, even during the more liberal period under the Shah. And, given the political climate in today’s Iran, where conversion from Islam carries the death penalty, I do not think that we should anticipate any mass return anytime soon.

This leaves us with a stark reality. For the moment, barring some truly spectacular change in fortune, the fate of Zoroastrianism as a living religion hinges entirely upon the existing

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<sup>49</sup> Shahin Bekhradnia, “Zoroastrianism in Tajikistan: A Political Tool?,” paper delivered at the University of Kent, March 2010, p. 13. Arash Zeini, a Ph.D. candidate studying Zoroastrianism at SOAS, traveled to Dushanbe in Tajikistan in 2005 partly in order to investigate the rumors of Zoroastrian conversions. He could not find a single person who was even familiar with the terms “Zartosht” and “Zartoshty” (email communication with Arash Zeini, 10 December 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Michael Stausberg, “Para-Zoroastrianisms: Memetic Transmission and Appropriations,” in John Hinnells and Alan Williams, eds., *Parsis in India and the Diaspora* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 249-51.

Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrian communities. If the Parsis die out, then the flame of Zoroastrianism will also be severely, if not fatally, imperiled. Zoroastrianism will live or die depending on the choices that today's Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians make. By continuing with our current behavior of late marriage, nonmarriage, and limited childbirth, we are killing both a community and a religion. And that, I believe, is the greatest tragedy that faces the Parsis of today. It is time for change.

IMAGES

Image A: Trending Toward Late Marriage

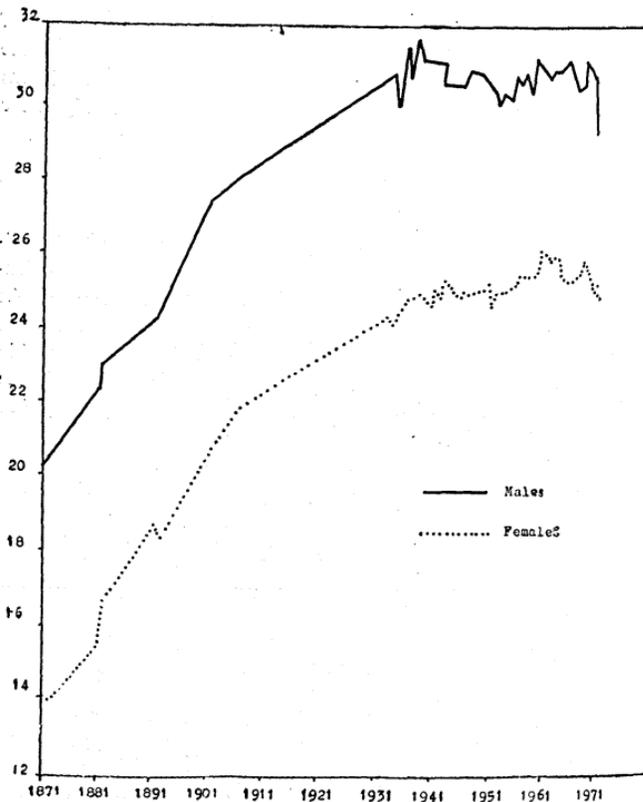
Table 2. Parsi marriages in Bombay: 1871-1946

Age groups	1871				1901				1946			
	Numbers		%		Numbers		%		Numbers		%	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6-10	2	16	1.1	8.5	—	1	—	0.3	—	—	—	—
11-15	30	125	16.0	66.5	1	32	0.3	10.0	—	—	—	—
16-20	72	40	38.3	21.3	13	135	4.1	66.8	1	74	0.2	13.2
21-25	70	6	37.2	3.2	112	119	35.1	37.3	86	256	15.3	45.6
26-30	12	1	6.4	0.5	120	30	37.6	9.4	202	140	35.9	24.9
31-35	2	—	1.1	—	59	2	18.5	0.6	175	74	31.1	13.2
36-40	—	—	—	—	10	—	3.1	—	57	14	10.1	2.5
41-45	—	—	—	—	3	—	0.9	—	30	3	5.3	0.5
46-50	—	—	—	—	1	—	0.3	—	9	1	1.6	0.2
51-55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	0.4	—
Total	188	188	100.0	100.0	319	319	100.0	100.0	562	562	10.0	100.0

Source: E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India* (Delhi: 1974), p. 44.

From Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, p. 405.

Image B: Median Age at Marriage



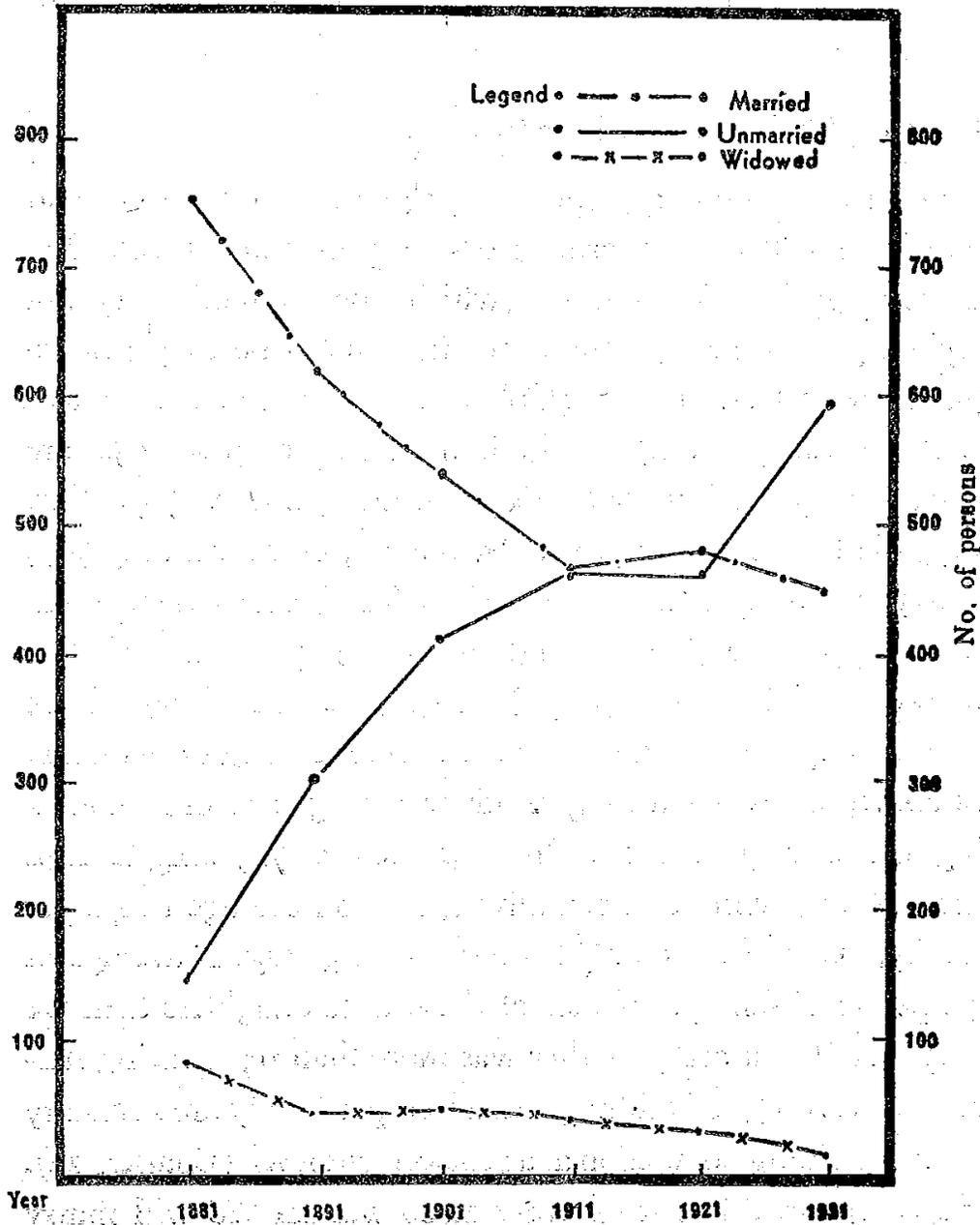
From Malini Karkal, "Marriage Among Parsis," *Demography India*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 133.

Fig. 1. Median Age at Marriage for Parsi Males and Females 1871-1971

Image C: Rising Non-Marriage, 1881-1931

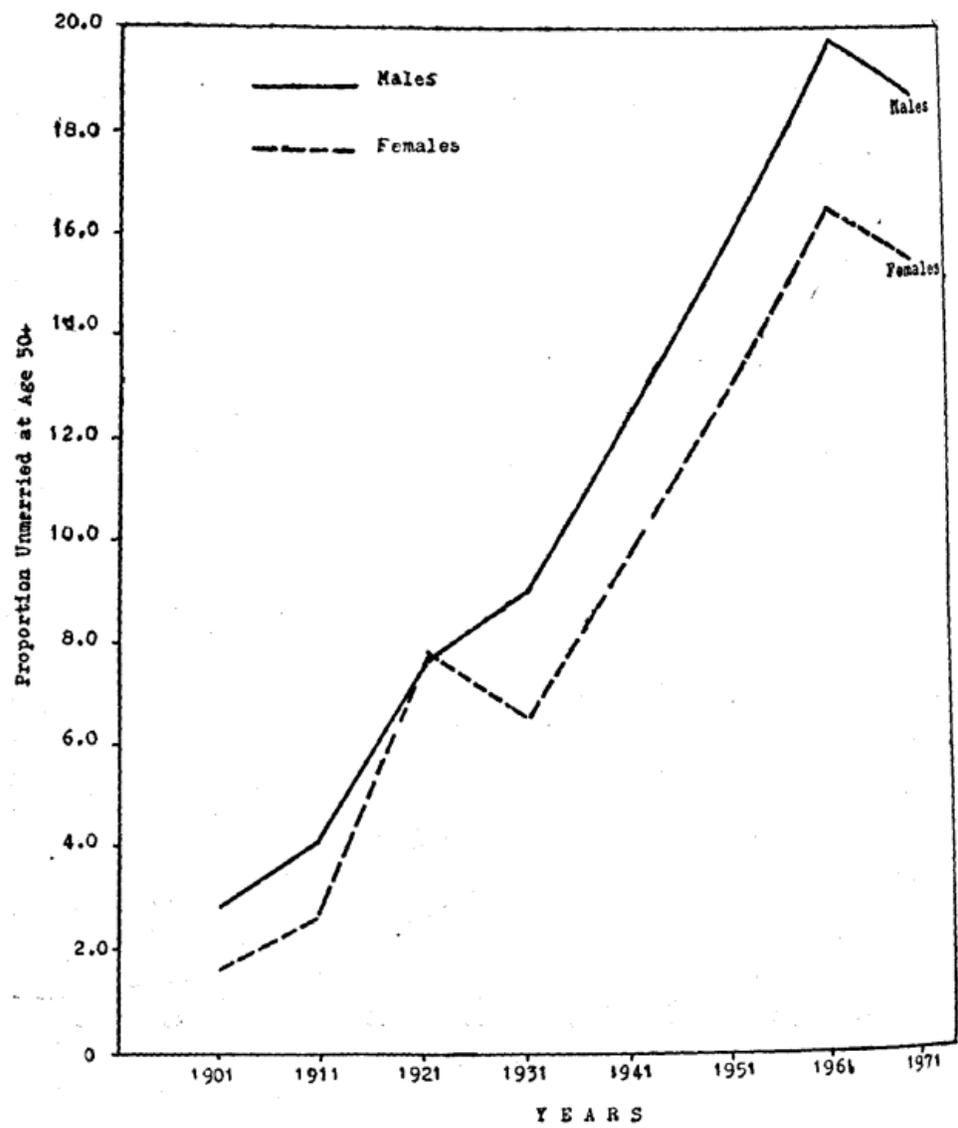
Fig. 4

Married, Unmarried and Widowed Parsi Population, 1881-1931



From Desai, p. 49.

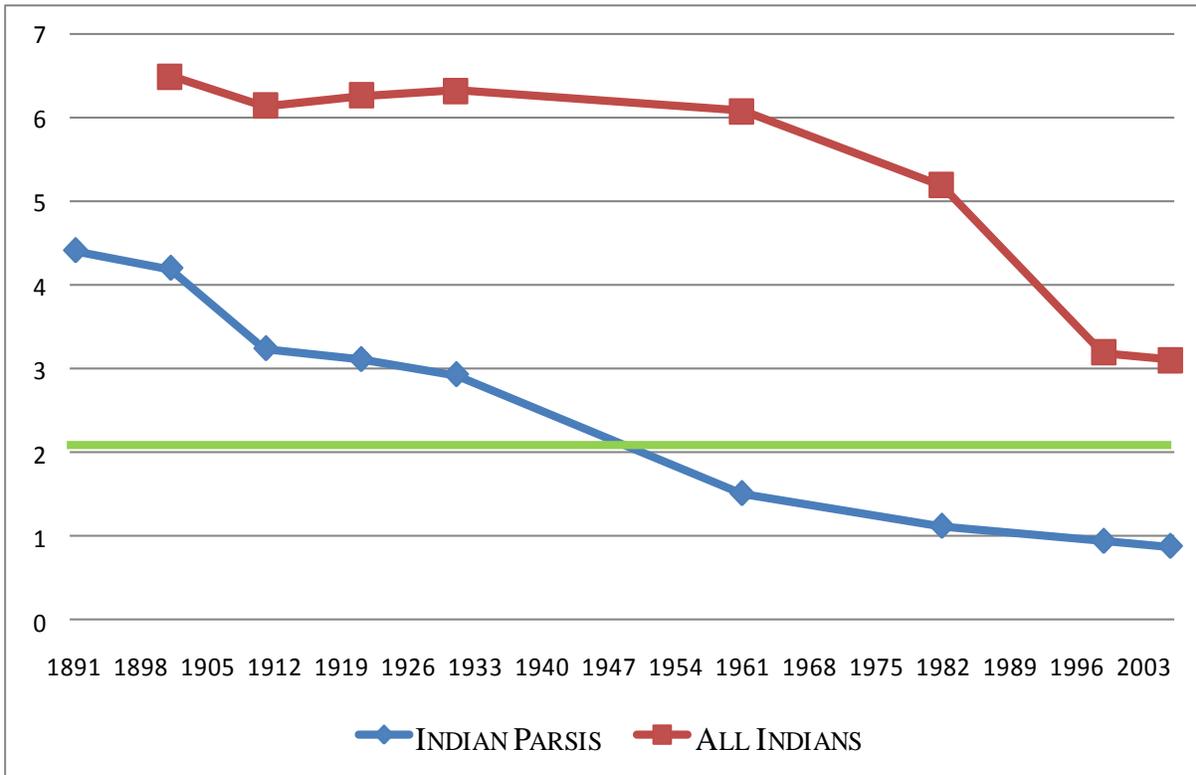
**Image D: Rising Non-Marriage, 1901-71**



**Fig. 3. Proportion Unmarried at Ages 50 and Over 1901-1971.**

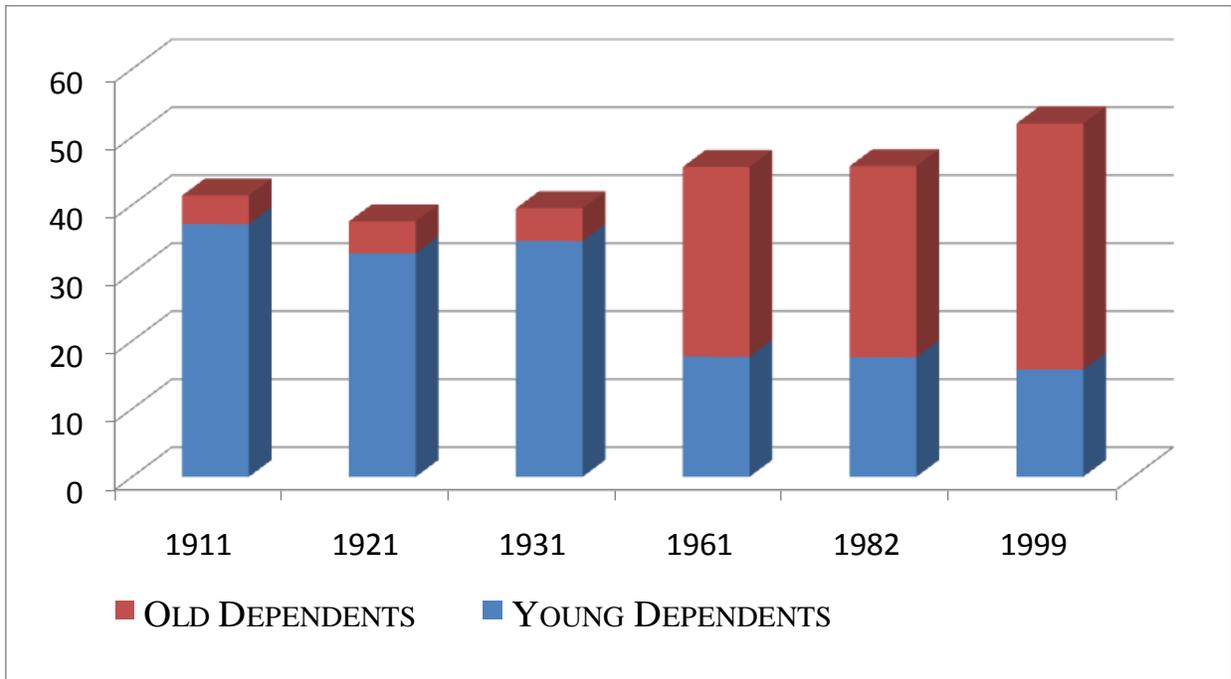
From Karkal, "Marriage Among Parsis", p. 140.

**Image E: Observed Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**



Data from Visaria, "Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971: III;" Unisa, et. al. pp. 10-13, and Shroff, p. 13.

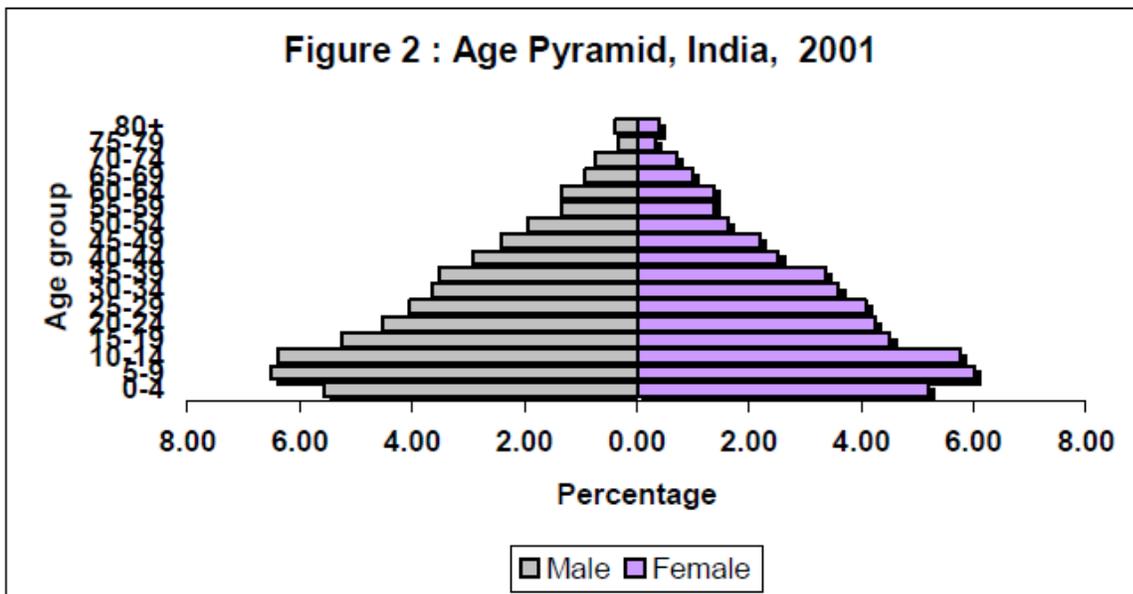
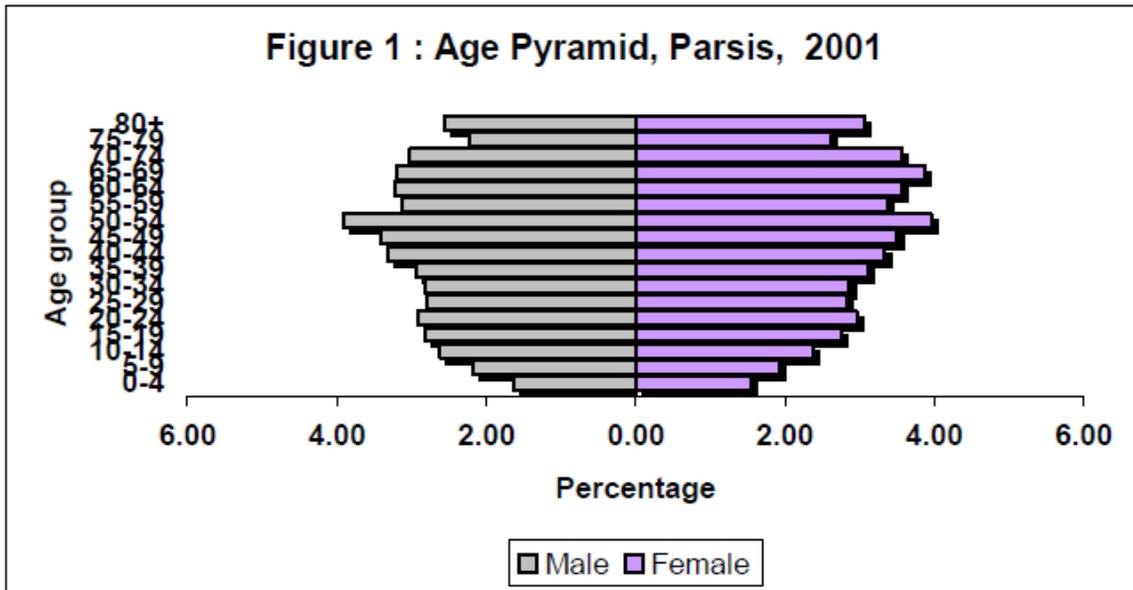
**Image F: Dependency Ratio**



From Singh and Gowri, p. 33.

Dependency ratio measures the number of people, per 100 individuals in a population, who are below age 15 or 65 and above. As is clearly evident, the proportion of young dependents has shrunk dramatically over the past century, which the number of old dependents has greatly increased.

Image G: Age Distribution, Parsis vs. All Indians

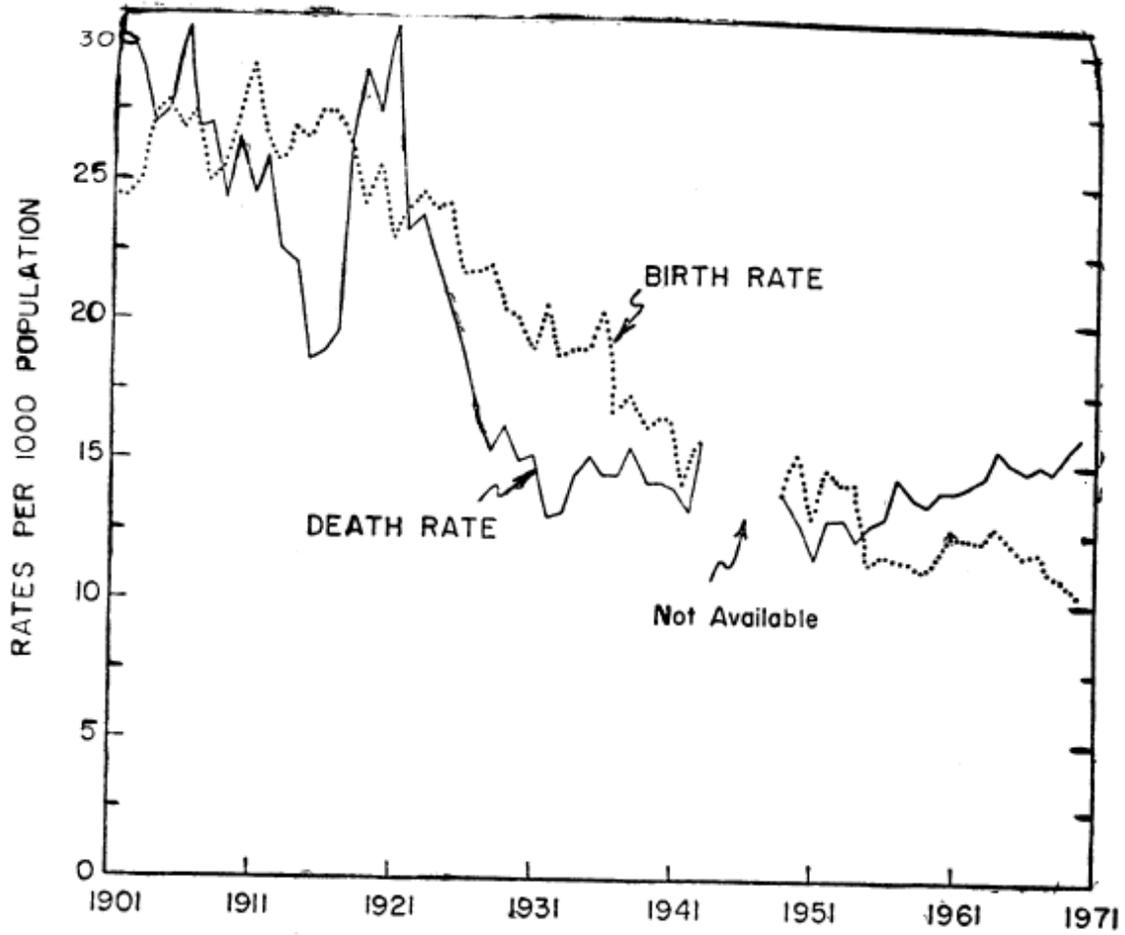


From Unisa, et. al., p. 5

**Image H: Birth vs. Death Rates**

Visaria, "Demographic Transition Among Parsis: 1881-1971: II," p. 1729.

**FIGURE 1: BIRTH AND DEATH RATES FOR PARSIS IN BOMBAY CITY, 1901-70**



**Image I: Excess Births over Deaths**

TABLE 2.2. *BPP Review of excess of deaths over births*

Year	Births	Deaths	Excess	Year	Births	Deaths	Excess
1955	788	878	90	1978	648	1047	399
1956	817	902	85	1979	646	1084	438
1957	807	1007	200	1980	646	1084	438
1958	797	956	159	1981	650	997	347
1959	790	935	145	1982	462	983	521
1960	806	969	163	1983	486	1020	534
1961	870	971	101	1984	570	1092	522
1962	861	1001	140	1985	601	966	365
1963	844	1007	163	1986	500	1027	527
1964	893	1078	185	1987	580	974	394
1965	856	1037	181	1988	620	1048	428
1966	821	1027	206	1989	437	965	528
1967	812	1034	222	1990	220	961	741
1968	766	1016	250	1991	446	898	452
1969	730	1055	325	1992	418	1053	635
1970	699	1084	385	1993	447	1055	608
1971	692	1035	343	1994	412	998	586
1972	706	1057	351	1995	367	936	569
1973	677	1020	343	1996	380	989	609
1974	643	979	336	1997	321	903	582
1975	576	1010	434	1998	305	996	691
1976	520	1018	498	1999	276	928	652
1977	636	1059	423				

From Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, p. 48.