



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

## RUKWA REGION SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE



Joint Publication by:  
THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
DAR ES SALAAM  
and  
REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE  
RUKWA

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## FOREWORD

1. *As we approach the 21st Century the problems facing rural areas in developing countries like Tanzania are numerous and formidable. Social and Economic services are deteriorating and proving to be unsustainable; school enrollment rates are declining; food situation is precarious; infant and maternal mortality rates continue to be high; unemployment is on the rise triggering off mass migration of youth from the rural areas into already overcrowded urban centres; in Rukwa Region, for example, land pressure is escalating and deforestation is going on at an alarming rate.*
2. *This situation has arisen because of many factors including ill - prepared rural development programmes and weak monitoring and supervision of the implementation of development programmes and sectoral strategies. The observed shortcomings in the policy formulation, project identification, design, and implementation in the developing countries is in turn attributed to lack of reliable and adequate data and information on the rural development process.*
3. *The publication of Regional Socio-economic Profiles series by the Planning Commission in collaboration with Regional Commissioner's offices should be viewed as a fruitful attempt towards finding solutions to the existing problem of data and information gap.*
4. *The Regional Profile series cover a wide range of data and information on geography, population, social economic parameters, social services, economic infrastructure and productive sectors. The publications so far have proved to be of high demand and a vital source of information to many policy makers, planners, researchers, donors and functional managers.*

*The Planning Commission has found it a worthwhile effort to extend the exercise to cover even more regions. Readers are invited to make suggestions and constructive criticisms which can assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of future Profiles.*

5. *I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge with thanks once again the financial support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy which facilitated the preparation of the Rukwa Region Socio-Economic Profile. I would also like to thank both the Planning Commission and Rukwa Regional Planning Staff who put a lot of effort into ensuring the successful completion of this task.*



**Nassoro W. Malocho (MP)**  
**MINISTER OF STATE**  
**PLANNING AND PARASTATAL SECTOR REFORM**

*December, 1998*

## SECTION I

### 1.0 LAND PEOPLE AND CLIMATE

#### 1.1 Geographical Location

Rukwa region lies in the remote southwestern border of Tanzania between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Rukwa. It lies between latitude 5° and 9° south of the equator and 30° to 33° E longitude. It is one of Tanzania's largest region. The region borders with Zambia in the south, Lake Tanganyika in the west and across the lake the Democratic Republic of Congo. Kigoma region lies to the North West, Tabora Region to the North East and Mbeya Region to the South East.

#### 1.2 Land Area

Rukwa region occupies a total area of 75,240 sq km; which is approximately 7.9 percent of the mainland's surface area. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest region in the country after Arusha, Tabora and Morogoro.

TABLE 1-2 LAND AND WATER AREAS OF RUKWA REGION BY DISTRICT

District	Total Area (Sq km)	Land Area (Sq km.)	Water Area (Sq.km.)	% of Total Area (Sq.km.)	% of Total Land Area (Sq.km.)
Sumbawanga (Rural)	12,836	11,664	1,172	17.0	17.0
Sumbawanga (Urban)	1,753	1,753	-	2.0	2.6
Mpanda	47,527	45,843	1,684	63.0	66.8
Nkansi	13,124	9,375	3,749	18.0	13.7
Total	75,240	68,635	6,605	100.0	100.0

Source: Rukwa Regional Commissioner's Office, Sumbawanga, 1994

**TABLE I-3 POPULATION SIZES, 1988 AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS UP TO THE YEAR 2000 BY DISTRICT, RUKWA REGION.**

District	1988	1978/88 per cent Growth Rate	Population Projections		
			1994	1998	2000
Sumbawanga (Rural)	236,340	3.9	298,650	349,070	377,387
Mpanda	256,487	5.9	365,431	462,700	520,650
Nkansi	110,175	3.3	134,299	153,250	163,706
Sumbawanga (Urban)	91,972	4.6	121,205	145,690	159,729
Total	694,974	4.2	919,585	1,110,710	1,221,472

Source: Compiled Data Based on 1988 Population Census

**Fig. 2b: Population Projections up to the Year 1994, 1998 and 2000 by District, Rukwa Region**

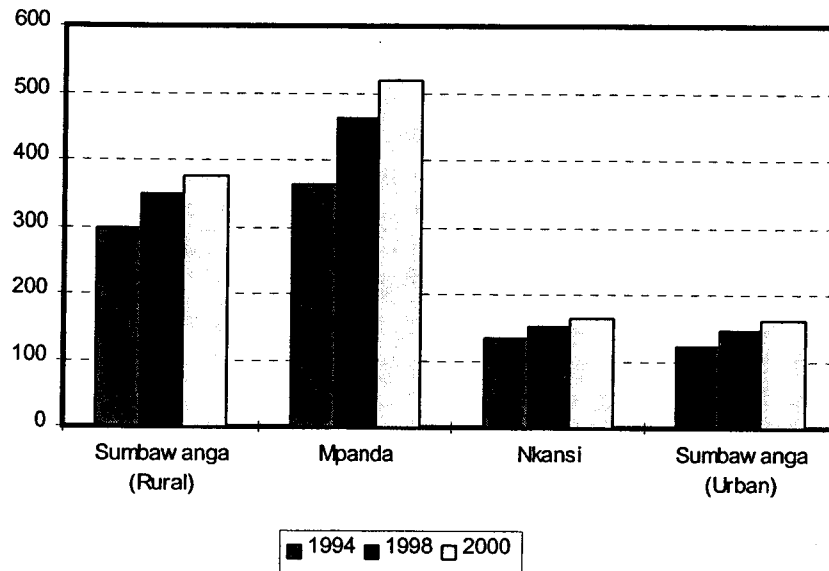




Table I-3 shows that the region's population is unevenly distributed. Sumbawanga rural and Mpanda districts are relatively the most populated among the region's districts which accounted for 34 and 37 percent respectively in 1988. Sumbawanga urban and Nkansi districts 13 and 16 percent respectively. The high growth rate can be attributed to many social, economic and political factors which among others include:

- i) Influx of refugees from Rwanda and Burundi into the region who were ultimately settled at Mishamo and Katumba settlement schemes.
- ii) High rate of natural increase which has been determined by high fertility rate.

According to 1988 Census, Rukwa region was one of the least populated region in the country. The region's population density was 8 people per sq km in 1978 and increased to 10.1 in 1988. The region's population density is extremely low compared to densely populated regions such as Mwanza and Kilimanjaro which had 95.4 and 83.7 population densities respectively in 1988 (See Table I-4).

**TABLE I-4 POPULATION DENSITY AND PERCENT INCREASE BY REGION, 1978 AND 1988 CENSUSES TANZANIA MAINLAND**

Region	Density per Sq.km		% increase 1978-1988
	1978 Census	1988 Census	
Rukwa	8	10.1	23
Dar es Salaam	553.2	976.9	77
Mwanza	73.3	95.4	31
Kilimanjaro	68.1	83.7	22
Mtwara	46.2	53.2	15
Tanga	38.9	48.1	23
Kagera	35.5	46.6	32
Mara	33.2	43.7	49
Shinyanga	26.1	34.9	34
Dodoma	23.5	30.0	28
Mbeya	17.9	24.5	37
Kigoma	17.5	23.1	32
Iringa	16.2	21.3	31
Coast	15.9	19.6	24
Morogoro	13.3	17.3	30
Arusha	12.4	16.5	29
Singida	11.3	16.0	45
Tabora	10.7	13.6	27
Ruvuma	8.9	12.3	38
Lindi	6.6	9.8	53
National Average	19.8	26.2	32

Source: 1988 Population Census, National Profile. Analytical Report

**TABLE I-5 POPULATION DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION BY DISTRICT, RUKWA REGION 1988 TO 2000**

District	Land Area Sq.km.	1988 Population	Population Density 1988	Population Projection 1998	Population Density 1998	Population Projection 2000	Population Density 2000
Sumbawanga (Rural)	11,664	236,340	20.3	349,070	29.9	377,387	32.4
Mpanda	45,843	256,487	5.6	462,700	10.1	520,650	11.4
Sumbawanga (Urban)	1,753	91,972	52.5	145,690	83.1	159,729	91.1
Nkansi	9,375	110,175	11.8	153,250	16.3	163,706	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,635</b>	<b>694,974</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>1,110,710</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>1,221,472</b>	<b>17.8</b>

Source: Compiled Data Based on 1988 Population Census

**Fig. 4: Population Density for the years 1988, 1998 and 2000 by District, Rukwa Region**

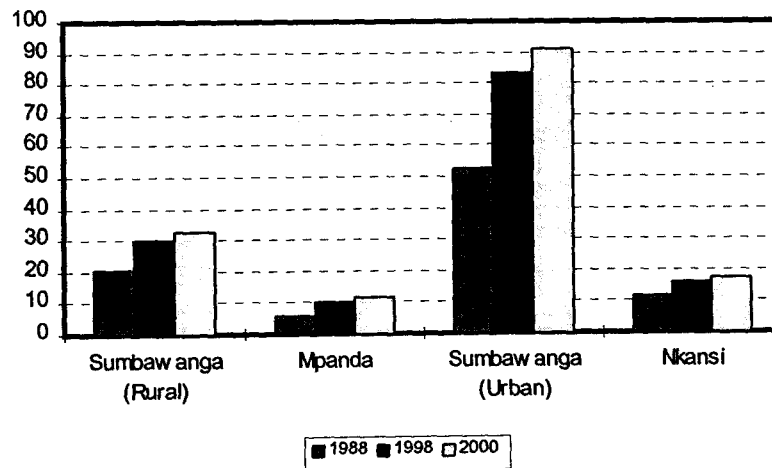


Table I-5 shows that Rukwa region has a large land area of 68,635 sq.km with a relatively very small population of 694,974 (1988 Census). By now, 1998 the region's population is estimated to be 1,110,710. The region in general experiences

no land pressure. The population is sparsely distributed with a density of 10.1 people per sq.km (1988). Regionwise Mpanda district is the least densely populated, with 5.6 population density. Nkansi then Sumbawanga rural districts follow next respectively. Based on 1998 population projection, the region's population density is estimated to be 16.2 people per sq.km. Still this is very small figure compared to densely populated regions in the country (Table I-5a).

**TABLE I-5a: POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY REGIONS - TANZANIA MAINLAND 1988**

Region	Land Area Sq.km	Population	Population Density per Sq.km	Population Rank
Lindi	67,000	646,345	9.6	19
Shinyanga	50,760	1,763,960	34.9	8
Mwanza	20,095	1,878,271	93.5	1
Dodoma	41,311	1,235,277	30.0	9
Arusha	82,098	1,352,225	16.5	14
Kilimanjaro	13,309	1,108,699	83.7	2
Tanga	26,677	1,280,262	48.1	5
Morogoro	70,799	1,222,737	17.0	13
Pwani/D'Salaam	33,800	1,998,865	59.1	3
Mtwara	16,710	887,583	53.2	4
Ruvuma	66,477	783,327	12.0	17
Iringa	56,850	1,193,074	21.3	12
Mbeya	60,350	1,476,261	24.0	10
Singida	49,341	791,814	16.0	15
Tabora	76,151	1,036,293	14.0	16

<b>Rukwa</b>	<b>68,635</b>	<b>694,974</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>18</b>
Kigoma	37,040	853,263	23.1	11
Mara	21,760	952,616	43.7	7
Kagera	28,456	1,313,639	46.6	6

Source: 1988 Population Census Report

**TABLE I-6 DISTRICTS POPULATION BY SEX, NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD AND AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE RUKWA REGION 1988**

District	Sex			Number of Household	Average Household size
	Male	Female	Total		
Sumbawanga Rural	115,179	121,161	236,340	42,736	5.3
Mpanda	127,696	128,791	256,487	49,605	5.1
Nkansi	54,242	55,933	110,175	20,277	5.4
Sumbawanga Urban	44,868	47,104	91,972	18,141	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>341,985</b>	<b>352,989</b>	<b>694,974</b>	<b>130,759</b>	<b>5.3</b>

Source: 1988 Population Census

**Fig. 5: Population Distribution by Sex and District, Rukwa Region, 1988**

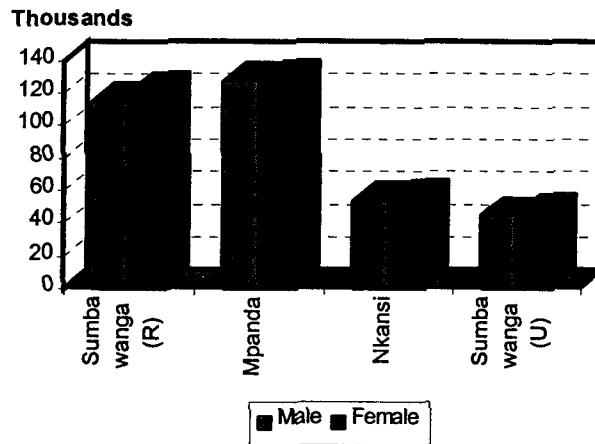


Table I-6 shows the region's population structure by district sex number of households and average household size. There is more or less equal numbers of women to men. There is a proportion of 50.8 percent women against that of 49.2 per cent for men. This means for every 100 females there are 96.9 males. The situation with respect to 1988 census sex ratios for the districts in the region are more or less similar to that of the regional average. Figures below illustrates the fact:

Districts	Sumbawanga (Rural)	Sumbawanga (Urban)	Mpanda	Nkansi	Region
Sex Ratio	95.1	95.3	99.1	97.0	96.9

Mpanda district displayed the least disparity in a number between the sexes in the region by having a sex ration of 99.1

There was a total of 130,759 household in the region. District household distribution indicates that Mpanda district had the highest number of 49,605 followed by Sumbawanga rural

district with 42,736. The least number goes with Sumbawanga urban district. Interestingly enough is that there is virtually no difference in household size. It ranges between 5.0 - 5.4 people.

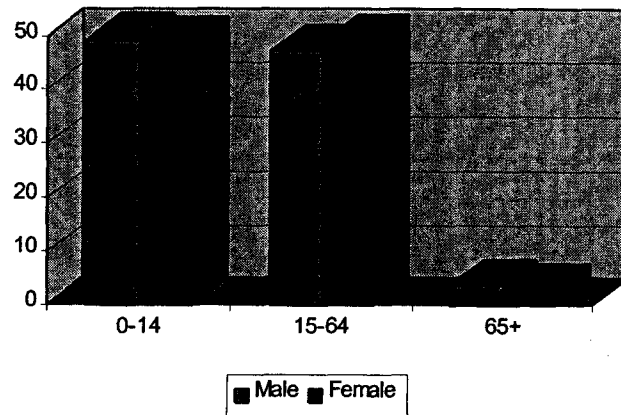
Data in table I-7 show per cent distribution of population by sex and age (1988 census) of Rukwa region. The regional population by age group indicates that the working group age (14-67 years of age) comprises of 48 per cent; the rest are dependants either too old to work or too young to be productive. Proportion of working age between the sex again closely balances, however, the females forming 48.8 percent and the males 47.2 percent. Those aged 0-14 form 48.8% of the regional population. This figure exceeds the national average of 45.7 per cent, those of 15-64, yrs 48.0% slightly below the rational figure of 50%.

**TABLE I-7 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION BY SEX AND AGE GROUPS (1988 CENSUS) OF RUKWA REGION.**

Sex	Age Groups			
	0-14	15-64	65+	%
Males	49.1	47.2	3.7	100.0
Females	48.4	48.8	2.8	100.0
Average	48.8	48.0	3.2	100.0

Source: 1988 Population Census, National Profile. The Analytical Report.

**Fig. 6: Percentage Distribution by Sex and Age Groups (1988 Census) of Rukwa Region.**



Calculated dependence ratio for the region stands at 107.9. Economically this is a very unhealthy situation for the region for there are more people who are unproductive either being too young below 15 years of age, or too old being 65 years and above.

### 1.5 Migration

It is a common phenomenon in Tanzania and elsewhere in the world that a section of the population migrate for various reasons. Some of them are in search for new farming land, better pasture and water for their livestock, better life through employment opportunities and due to political persecutions in country of origin. Rukwa region has a pattern of more people moving in than those going out. Table I-8 shows that the region had Life time in migration of 87,599 and 49,294 lifetime out migration. The positive figure of net life migration of 38,305 means that there are many opportunities available in the region that attracted more people into it.

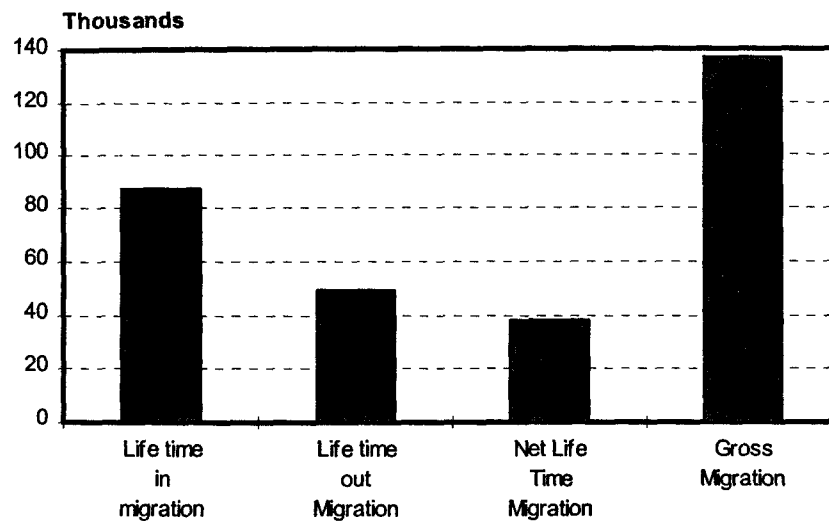


**TABLE I-8: LIFE TIME MIGRATION BY REGION, TANZANIA (1988-CENSUS)**

Region	Life time in migration	Life time out Migration	Net Life Time Migration	Gross Migration
Dodoma	89,900	190,985	-101,085	280,885
Arusha	218,427	76,703	141,724	295,130
Kilimanjaro	93,040	217,423	-124,383	310,463
Tanga	98,747	150,915	-52,168	249,662
Morogoro	172,393	141,956	30,437	314,349
Coast	103,804	207,716	-103,912	311,520
Dar es Salaam	651,246	150,625	500,621	801
Lindi	95,200	145,031	-49,831	240,231
Mtwara	46,299	144,988	-98,689	191,287
Ruvuma	66,442	81,661	-15,219	148,103
Iringa	49,282	169,480	120,198	218,762
Mbeya	160,377	113,378	46,999	278,755
Singida	86,651	130,531	-63,880	237,187
Tabora	241,729	175,359	66,370	417,088
<b>Rukwa</b>	<b>87,599</b>	<b>49,294</b>	<b>38,305</b>	<b>136,898</b>
Kigoma	26,795	129,718	-102,923	156,513
Shinyanga	288,210	281,447	6,763	569,657
Kagera	103,713	109,693	- 5,980	213,406
Mwanza	270,142	303,646	-33,504	573,788
Mara	75,982	115,865	-39,878	191,852
Total	3,025,983	3,106,414	-80,431	6,132,397

Source: 1988 population Census, National Profile Analytical report.

**Fig. 7: Life Time Migration Rukwa Region, (1988-Census)**



## 1.6 Climate

The climate of the region varies from dry sub humid in the extreme northwest and Southwest to semi arid in the central Ufipa plateau and Rukwa Valley. The main rainy season of the region is from Mid November to Mid May, the annual rain fall ranges from a maximum of 100 - 1300 mm in the far Northwest and Southwest to a low of 800 - 900 mm in the Rukwa Valley.

The Ufipa plateau appears to have the most moderate temperature with a mean annual maximum temperature of 24°C to 27°C and a minimum of 13° - 16°C.

## 1.7 Agro-Economic Zones

The region consists of 5 pronounced Agro-Economic Zones which are classified according to their development potential.

(i) **Katumba Plain:**

It is the largest zone generally consisting of tse-tse infested miombo woodland between 1,000 and 1,500m and covers the eastern part of Mpanda district. Most of the zone is uninhabited, but smaller and densely settled man-made clearings exist where cultivation takes place. Most important food crops are maize and cassava, followed by beans and groundnuts. Tobacco is grown as a commercial crop, mainly in the tobacco complexes. Honey and beeswax represent an important additional source of income.

(ii) **Ufipa Plateau:**

This is the second largest and by far the most populous zone. It is also the most important agro-economic zone in the region, not only do half of the population obtain their livelihood there, but also a large part of the marketed agricultural surplus from Rukwa originates there. It is an uplifted highland lying between two wings of the rift valley formed by Lake Tanganyika and the Rukwa Valley. The plateau is mostly grassland. The Wafipa is the tribe inhabiting this area, they are both subsistence farmers and cattle keepers and the major prospect for agricultural development in this zone is linked to a further integration of agriculture and livestock husbandry. Population growth and concentration of people in the area intensified the use of land. The major crops in this zone are maize, (which have been expanding rapidly, both as food crop and for sale), finger millet and beans. In general this zone covers 1.5 million ha. and contains about half of the region's population.

18(a) (iii) **Rukwa Valley:**

This zone is between the Lyambalyamfipa Escarpment and Lake Rukwa, the area stretching north westwards from the lake. The inhabited part of the valley is a 1-10 km. wide strip of land along the escarpment. During the 1970's Wasukuma pastoralists moved into the eastern part of the valley. Towards the lake Rukwa the soil is water-logged and saline, and north of the lake there are swampy areas. Parts of the valley are susceptible to droughts. However, near the escarpment the water table remains high even during the dry season because of rivers discharging their water underground. Generally the soil is sandy, but along some of the larger rivers there are heavier soil. Some of these valleys could be suitable for irrigation.

(iv) **Lake Tanganyika Shores:**

Along the shore of Lake Tanganyika, clusters of settlements are found where the inhabitants are involved in fishing and agriculture. The steep and stony shore of the lake offers little possibilities for agriculture. Settlements and agricultural activities are mainly confined to lacustrine terraces where rice, maize, cassava and tree crops like oil palm, mango and citrus fruits are also grown. The main occupation is fishing.

(v) **Karema Depression and Mwese-Mpanda Ranges**

These two zones are in the western part of Mpanda and both contain less than 5% of the total population of Rukwa.

The main features and characteristics of the five agro-economic zones are summarized in the following table.

## AGRO-ECONOMIC ZONES

Zone	Area in KMF	General Morphology	Altitude Range in (M)	Dominant Soils	Economic Activity
Katumba Plain	30,000	Very gettle plain	800-1,813	Sandy	<u>Agriculture</u> maize Cassava beans groundnuts tobacco honey and beeswar
Mwese Mpanda Ranges	3,000	Gettle plain with moderately stoppind hills and plateaux	1,100-1,936	Ferrilitic with narrow bands of more fertile basisols	<u>Agriculture</u> maize cassava
Karema Depression	2,800	Very gettle plain	772-1,200	Varriables	<u>Agriculture</u> maize cassava
Rukwa Valley	6,500	Flat plain	810-1,200	Sandy	<u>Agriculture</u> maize fruits <u>Livestock</u> cattle goat
Lake Tanganyika Shores	4,500	Steep hills with gentle plateau and plains	772-1,631	Shallow with scattered clayey lacustrine plains	<u>Fishing</u> <u>Agriculture</u> maize cassava oilpalm
Ufipa Plateau	11,800	Very gentle plain with moderately stopping hills and gentle plateau	1,000-2,461	Ferrallic	<u>Agriculture</u> cattle maize cassava groundnuts millet beans livestock goat <u>Fishing</u>

Source: Compiled data, Planning Commission