

# **Towards An Operational Geo-relational Cartographic Database For Population Census For Nigeria**

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The importance attached to human head count can not be over-emphasized. Census has great significance for social and economic planning. The bases of planning whether strategic or process planning is to adequately cater for human needs. This is why censuses are carried out regularly. Censuses in Nigeria is still be in evolution. The 1963 census of the country was for 28 years (until 1991) the country's most reliable head count. Censuses in Nigeria have been very controversial for various reasons. In a bid to have a clean break with the past, the 1991 census was carried out meticulously and dutifully. Quite a lot was done to ensure a reliable head count. And in all fairness, there was a lot of improvement in terms of the execution of the whole exercise. However, a critical look at the pre-census activities and the inputs reveal that there was a fundamental need for upgrading the status of the input data sets used for the exercise. This was manifest in the crude nature of the primary data set upon which all the census activities were based- the Enumeration Area (EAs) and Supervisory Area (SAs). The problem of census mapping in Nigeria is largely the problem of delivering maps to support all the various phases of census activities. Even though the terrain objects of significance are based on operational rules, they have not been formalised for a standard representation of the geographic reality that census activities typify. Besides, off-the-shelf GIS and mapping facilities are proving inadequate for the gargantuan graphics and non-graphics features of interest that must be made explicit in the database. The paper discusses the efforts of the Cartographic unit of the National Population Commission of Nigeria as it prepares for the next census exercise especially in the design and creation of an enterprise-wide seamless cartographic database.