

## Chapter V

### Patterns of Urbanization

An important aspect of urbanization all over the world is the uneven pattern of development of towns within the system<sup>1</sup>. Urban system depends largely on account of urban population. By looking throughout the world between the 1880s and the later 1940s the population of London, Glasgow, Amsterdam, Vienna and Naples doubled or nearly doubled; those of Birmingham and Lisbon nearly trebled; those of Madrid, Hamburg and Milan grew fourfold; those of Barcelona, Rome and Prague grew more than fivefold<sup>2</sup>.

Among some exponents of Indian population history, such as Vera Anstey and Kingsley Davis, it was held as axiomatic that wherever and whenever British rule was established, the order and peace it provided led to a rapid rate of population growth<sup>3</sup>. In dealing with Bengal proper which was subdivided into three main territories, Northern, Eastern and Western Bengal had in many points of dissimilarity. Northern Bengal was the great tongue of land stretching southward from the Himalayas and walled in by two mighty rivers, the Ganges and Brahmaputra. Its special tracts were the district of Darjeeling, which was itself divide into the Himalayan areas and the Terai, and the Western Duars of Jalpaiguri<sup>4</sup>. In Bengal the urban population has increased by 13.2 percent in 1911. Since 1901 its growth was more rapid than that of the general population but only 64 out of every thousand persons lived in towns. During the first decade of the twentieth century Bengal had 124 towns and Darjeeling of North Bengal with 93 per mille had the largest urban population<sup>5</sup>. Although the least thickly populated of the three

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<sup>1</sup> R. Ramachandran, *Urbanization and Urban systems in India*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1991, p.132.

<sup>2</sup> C.L.Mowat, ed.-*The New Cambridge Modern History*, -XII. *The Shifting Balance of World Forces 1898-1945*, Cambridge at the University Press, p.12.

<sup>3</sup> Irfan Habib-*A People's History of India*, 28 Vol. *Indian Economy 1858-1914*, Aligarh Historians Society, Tulika Books, Fourth Edition, 2008, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Census of India 1891*, Vol.III, *The Lower Provinces of Bengal and their feudatories*, p.34.

<sup>5</sup> *Census of India, 1911*, Vol V., *Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim*, p.23.

divisions of Bengal proper, the average population of North Bengal<sup>6</sup> to the square mile surpassed that of any country in Europe, except Belgium. The distribution of its inhabitants were very uneven<sup>7</sup>.

The level and trends of urbanization of North Bengal as a whole or of any districts of our study area may be measured from data provided by the censuses.

## A. Population distribution and study on the Four Districts

In this chapter we have studied the growth and development of the urban facility to increase the urban population between North Bengal as a whole and the four districts of North Bengal in comparison with Bengal proper. The development of towns with their benefit in many aspects made a way to urbanization. But how did it helped to bring the increase of urban population distribution of North Bengal? To examine the argument, we test the variation in urban population of the four districts of North Bengal as a whole according to the census report from 1881 till 1941.

**Table No. V.1 Urban population in Bengal, North Bengal and Four districts of North Bengal at successive censuses:-**

Province	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Bengal	2243411	2221141	2503065	2968247	3211304	3711840	5954406
North Bengal	263930	154122	205061	234650	252861	312860	434323
Dinajpur	12660	12204	13430	15945	18025	19156	41663
Jalpaiguri	7936	9682	10289	11765	14813	18962	27766
Darjeeling	7018	17667	21303	24579	28701	43470	58164
Malda	12430	17996	34426	41394	29835	35512	50342

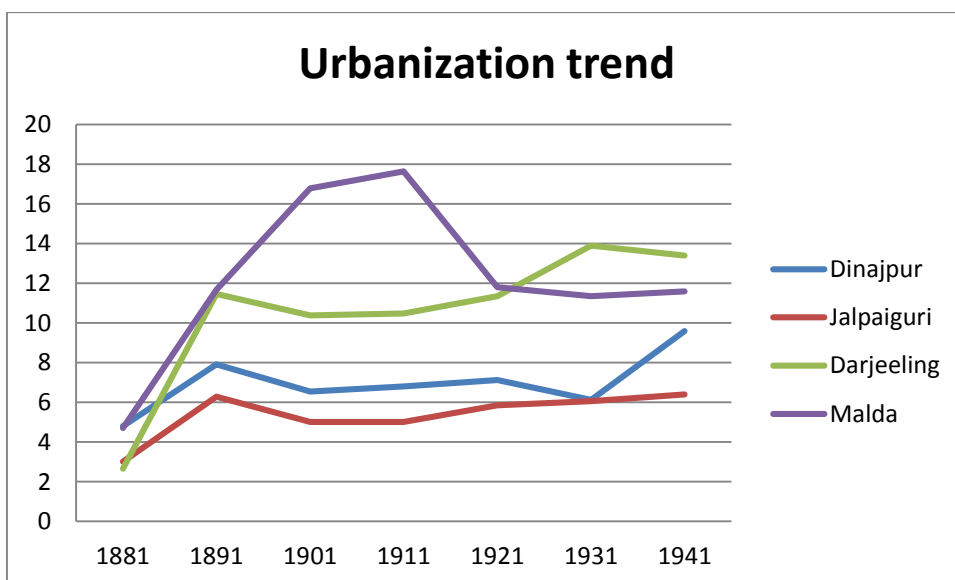
<sup>6</sup> Northern Bengal was a vast plain, appreciably larger than Denmark or Egypt (exclusive of the desert), and slightly exceeding an area half of Ireland.

<sup>7</sup> Census of India 1891, op.cit., p.37.

**Table No. V.2 Percentage of Urban Population of individual districts against North Bengal population:**

%urban population of individual districts against North Bengal population							
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Dinajpur	4.796726405	7.918402305	6.549271	6.795227	7.128422335	6.122866	9.59263
Jalpaiguri	3.006857879	6.282036309	5.017531	5.01385	5.858159226	6.060858	6.392938
Darjeeling	2.659038381	11.46299685	10.38862	10.47475	11.35050482	13.89439	13.39188
Malda	4.709582086	11.6764641	16.78818	17.64074	11.79897256	11.35076	11.59091

**Table No. V.3 Urbanization Trend according to the percentage of urban population:**



The census data of different years reveals that urbanization process of North Bengal exhibits a growing trend and begins to spread into the interior districts of Bengal. In the above table we see that Darjeeling and Malda had always contributed a large share to the urban population of North Bengal in proportion to its total urban population. Basically urbanization in Bengal has mainly been

centered on Calcutta and in the districts surrounding this great city where the level of urbanization was always greater than North Bengal.

In the census of 1881 a number of villages were included which had no true urban characteristics. Therefore the decrease that exhibited in some cases was not real in compare with the 1872 census. Census of 1891 showed the hill district of Darjeeling and the Terai jungle or the tea tracts of Siliguri and the Western Duars made a large population since 1873. It is said as their populations were the creations of British industries having presented with the inhabitants as Dravidians from central India and Nepalis and Bhutias from the native states of the Himalayas. Jalpaiguri was described as “a growing centre of trade, sharing the prosperity of the tea tracts to the east of Tista.” Between 1872 and 1891 there was a continuous growth of population in this district and to the influx of labourers and cultivators. The increase was confined to the Western Duars which comprises the Alipur subdivision (thanas Alipur and Falakata) and two thanas in the sadar sub-division viz., Mainaguri (with the Dhupguri outpost)<sup>8</sup>.

We have also seen in the nineties of the nineteenth century that the large influx of permanent settlers from the Santal Parganas; Bihar, particularly from the districts of Saran and Bhagalpur; Nadia and Murshidabad<sup>9</sup> came to Dinajpur for the great facilities afforded by the Northern Bengal Railway.

At that time Old Malda was said to be decaying in consequence of the withdrawl of trade, partly to English Bazar in the same district and partly to Rajmahal on the west of the Ganges. Kurseong town had been considerably reducing by the exclusion of the coolie lines of a large tea gardens in its vicinity. The largest increase in the sub-province appeared in the town of Darjeeling, the population of which had more than doubled in ten years, and in Jalpaiguri was an increase of 22 per cent<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Census of 1911, p.100.

<sup>9</sup> From Census of India 1891, 13,000 men and 5,563 women from Bhagalpur;immigrants of 3,006 persons from Nadia and 4,584 persons from Murshidabad.

<sup>10</sup> Census of India 1891, P.137.

The headquarter of the Dinajpur district had a slightly smaller population in 1901 than they had in previous census. English Bazar and Old Malda district had lost ground owing to the diversion of trade to other routes. But Nawabganj had the largest population of any town in this district. During 1911 English Bazar, the headquarters of Malda had lost because it suffered severely from malaria and had more than one fire which had done great damage. The population of Nawabganj in Malda district was reduced due to restriction of the municipal limits. Old Malda was fell rapidly into decay<sup>11</sup>. Jalpaiguri at the beginning of the twentieth century was in progress<sup>12</sup>. Its population increased by 22.5 percent in 1901-1911 and by 26.6 percent during 1911-21<sup>13</sup>. The inhabitants of Darjeeling in 1872, before the days of railway, numbered only 3,157. From then onwards the population increased by more than 100 per cent and doubled itself between the years 1881 and 1891 after the construction of the Darjeeling Railway had brought the station within a days journey to Calcutta. In 1901 census it was less than 20 percent. Being a hill station its population was at a minimum during the cold weather month, when the general census was taken. But its progress during the last ten years was less rapid partly because there was not much room for further expansion and partly because its expensiveness deters people from taking up a permanent residence in it<sup>14</sup>. Although during that time Darjeeling was regarded as the most populous hill station in British India after Simla. A table is being shown here in support of this<sup>15</sup>:-

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<sup>11</sup> Census 1921,P.121.

<sup>12</sup> Census 1901.

<sup>13</sup> Census of India, 1921,P.121.

<sup>14</sup> Census 1911, p.29.

<sup>15</sup> Census 1921, p.121.

**Table No. V.4 Population in Hill Stations:**

Year	Hill Stations	Population
1901	Simla ... ..	37,895
	Darjeeling ... ..	24,696
	Ootacamund ... ..	18,829
	Nainital ... ..	18,027
	Mussorie ... ..	17,402
	Murree ... ..	16,934

The population in Kurseong of that district showed no signs of any great development in 1901<sup>16</sup>. In the year of 1921 North Bengal (Total) contained 18 municipal towns and five others. Dinajpur was grown and nearly half as large again as it was 30 years ago from 1921 and had gained 13.0 per cent since 1911. A table with inhabitants of different districts of our study are as follows:-

**Table No. V.5 Inhabitants in several districts of North Bengal:**

District	Inhabitants
Darjeeling	22,258
Dinajpur	18,025
Jalpaiguri	14,520
English Bazar	14,057

The Bengal province gained in the thirties of the twentieth century an area of 18.14 square miles as a net result of transfers between Bengal, Orissa and Assam; of which Malda got 2.20 from Purnia of Bihar. This means total gain came to North Bengal and the increase of urban population in those two areas (Dinajpur and Malda) reflected<sup>17</sup> the same in the table No. V.1.

<sup>16</sup> Census of India, 1901, Vol. VI, p.30.

<sup>17</sup> Census of 1941, p.9.

## B. Density variation of North Bengal

Density is a sign of the large pace at which urbanization was being achieved in North Bengal. A table is being shown here<sup>18</sup> :-

**Table No. V.6 Variation in relation to density from 1881 to 1921:**

	Percentage of variation Increase(+) or Decrease(-)				Mean density per square mile				
	1911-21	1901-11	1891-01	1881-91	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881
Bengal...	+2.8	+8.0	+7.7	+7.5	578	583	521	484	459
North Bengal...	+1.9	+8.0	+5.7	+4.1	538	526	459	483	444
Dinajpur...	+1.0	+7.7	+5.7	+2.8	432	428	397	376	366
Jalpaiguri...	+3.7	+14.8	+15.7	+17.3	319	309	269	233	198
Darjeeling...	+6.5	+6.6	+11.6	+43.5	243	228	214	193	134
Malda...	-1.8	+13.9	+8.5	+14.5	538	549	431	443	387

## C. Migration-

One of the most important feature of urbanization is migration. Migration, birth-rate and death-rate influenced the population. So in this section we will discuss the migration of North Bengal and how its population had affected the society and economy of that region? In this occasion, it is to be mentioned here that both the 'pull' and 'push' factors were responsible for the process of urbanization as had been

<sup>18</sup> Census of India, 1921, p.98.

said by scholars like Kingsley Davis that ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors are interconnected each other<sup>19</sup>. The following table will give an idea of how immigration had affected the variation in natural population:-

**Table No. V.7 Variation in natural population:**

Districts	Population in 1901				Population in 1911				Population in 1921				Variation % 1901-1911 in natural population increase(+), Decrease(-)	Variation % 1911-1921 in natural population increase(+), Decrease(-)
	Actual population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural Population	Actual population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural Population	Actual population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural Population		
Dinajpur	1666645	142003	15263	1452045	1687863	197043	23480	1520100	1705353	154907	25516	1575962	4.686838218	3.544628614
Jalpaiguri	786326	188723	16926	615529	902660	265268	20999	658391	936269	268874	26179	902660	6.963441203	27.06101965
Darjeeling	219117	121291	5694	130429	265530	117158	10416	138808	282748	110352	11243	183639	6.424184806	24.41257031
Malda	881701	97687	26704	810611	1004159	118871	41306	926796	985665	101345	23890	918210	14.33301547	-0.93508021

Migration of North Bengal in our study area can be explained in two classifications, one is frontier migration and the other is trans-frontier migration. In order to clarify this, tables will be shown here:-

**Table No. V.8 Migrated urban population:**

Contribution of migration in urban population				
District	total population	migrated to	migrated from	% of migrated increase over total population
Malda	1026739	198543	50985	14.37
Dinajpur	1700996	265136	8674	15.08
Jalpaigore	903155	326682	7244	35.37
Darjeeling	265550	59652	4477	20.78

<sup>19</sup> Kingsley Davis, Population of India and Pakistan, Princeton University Press, 1951, P.135.



**I) Migration to and from Frontier Districts:-**

In 1911 the districts from distant places like Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri saw the largest gains of about 44<sup>1/2</sup> percent and 29 percent respectively of the foreign born. The number born in the Santal Parganas who were found in Malda, Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Jalpaiguri in 1891 was only 47,995. In 1901 it had more than doubled and reached 108,209. It rose nearly 50 percent to 156,089 in 1911, but had fallen since 1921 to 121,308<sup>20</sup>. The reason for this large influx were the extensive cultivable wastes in the Barind of Dinajpur and Malda inspite of malaria prevailed there<sup>21</sup>. So the number of workers recruited for Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri tea gardens and elsewhere the development of jute and tobacco trade from certain areas like Bihar, Orissa and Santal Parganas were carried as migrants. Those migrants labourers also engaged themselves in the work of domestic servants, police-constables, jail wardens, railway servants, field-labourers, leather-workers, palki-bearers, scavengers, etc. As a result of which we see large influx. A table is giving here:-

**Table No. V.9 Frontier Migration:**

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<sup>20</sup> Census 1921, p.144.

<sup>21</sup> Census 1911, p.105.

Enemurated in	district of contiguous Provoence of	Population			Born in	district of contiguous Provoence of	Population		
		Total	Male	Female			Total	Male	Female
Malda	Bihar & Orisa...	71613	39190	32423	Malda	Bihar & Orisa...	17432	8063	9369
	Contigious district...	55317	28163	27154		Contigious district...	16121	7459	8662
	Santhal Parganas...	48402	24973	23429		Santhal Parganas...	6824	3144	3680
	Purneah...	6915	3190	3725		Purneah...	9297	4315	4982
	other districts...	16296	11097	5199		other districts...	1311	604	707
Dinajpur	Bihar & Orisa...	132568	81175	51393	Dinajpur	Bihar & Orisa...	4337	2200	2137
	Purneah...	7243	3566	3677		Purneah...	2976	1104	1872
	other districts...	125325	77609	47716		other districts...	1361	1096	265
Jalpaigori	Bihar & Orisa...	162452	91856	70596	Jalpaigori	Bihar & Orisa...	1753	943	810
	Purneah...	3282	1779	1503		Purneah...	685	245	440
	other districts...	159170	90077	69093		other districts...	1068	598	470
	Assam...	889	672	217		Assam...	1869	1025	844
	Goalpara...	320	189	131		Goalpara...	1818	994	824
	other districts...	569	485	84		other districts...	51	31	20
Darjeeling	Bihar & Orisa...	28339	17700	10639	Darjeeling	Bihar & Orisa...	743	530	213
	Purneah...	7305	4076	3229		Purneah...	183	94	89
	other districts...	21034	13624	7410		other districts...	558	434	124
	Sikkim...	2974	1423	1551		Sikkim...	2993	1555	1438

## II) Trans-Frontier Migration:-

This type of migration was periodic or temporary and small in extent throughout the period. From Nepal we found the following numbers since 1891 to 1921 living in Darjeeling, Sikkim and Jalpaiguri born in Nepal:-

**Table No. V.10 Migration from Nepal:**

Found in-	1891	1901	1911	1921
Darjeeling	88,021	76,301	70,021	58,026
Sikkim	Not available	22,720	25,610	20,876
Jalpaiguri	20,578	18,649	34,015	23,681

The number from Nepal found in Jalpaiguri had been the subject to curious fluctuations because the Nepalese did not went down to this district to settle permanently as they had done in Darjeeling and in Sikkim. It happened because of the hot and the rainy weather from the middle of February to the end of April of Jalpaiguri district. They came to be regarded as temporary coolies in the tea gardens and on the roads, as wood cutters ,as sawyers, as harvesters in the Terai, etc<sup>22</sup>. In spite of continued immigration the heavy mortality in Darjeeling and Sikkim had reduced the population<sup>23</sup>. The immigration from Nepal to Darjeeling was not only for trade engagement but also for joining as soldiers for the recruitment for Gurkha regiments<sup>24</sup>. In 1931 as many as 30,000 persons came from Nepal to Darjeeling during the cold weather. Their children were recorded as native born Bengali speaking all languages and even the khaskura language of Nepal<sup>25</sup>.

Immigrants recorded from Tibet and Sikkim in 1931 numbered not more than 1,538 and 6,320, respectively and of the Tibetans no less than 1,435 or 93 percent were recorded in Darjeeling, whilst a similarly high proportion of the Sikkimese immigrants, namely 5,321 or 84 percent, were also found in this district<sup>26</sup>. Immigration from Tibet of little over 1,500 were enumerated in Darjeeling which was considered larger in 1911 than in 1901 because it was partly followed by Tibet mission and partly

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<sup>22</sup> Census 1931, p.100.

<sup>23</sup> Census 1921, p.145.

<sup>24</sup> Census 1911, p.102.

<sup>25</sup> Census 1931, p.100.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 1931, p.100.

because the Dalai Lama's presence at Darjeeling in 1911<sup>27</sup>. Kalimpong, in Darjeeling district, was the centre of trade between Bengal on the one hand and Sikkim and Tibet on the other and the movement of peoples between these regions and Bengal falls into two distinct classes. There was the comparatively small immigration into Darjeeling district itself of rickshaw coolies, road labourers and personal servants who came principally for the Darjeeling "season" in February, March or April and return about November.

Traders bringing wool and other merchandise from Tibet came into Darjeeling. Apart from this the Tibetan Buddhists as beggars and religious mendicants from Tibet and Sikkim passed through Darjeeling and Bengal on their way to join the pilgrimages at the pious Benaras, Gaya and Sarnath. As we have already mentioned that the number of immigrants coming from Tibet and Sikkim in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri as permanent residence, was very few as regarded tea-garden coolies. The peddlers from Bhutan came as petty traders to Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri from October to December for selling oranges, apples, blankets, yak-tails and other merchandise. Some other works like employment by the Forest Department for cutting and sawing timber and in clearing jungle, breaking stone as road metal, selling ornaments of itinerant gold and silver-smiths were also considered as their occupations<sup>28</sup>.

No matter that immigration always happened towards the hill areas of Darjeeling, but certain number of Lepchas and others from Darjeeling was moved across the frontier because "Abundant forests, untrammelled by restrictions, enable them to follow their wastful, though ancient, system of *jhuming*. Any such as the grip of the money-lender presses beyond endurance can emigrate to Bhutan, which is the El Dorado of the Eastern Himalayas, now that the milder form of Government lately introduced by

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<sup>27</sup> Census 1911, p.175.

<sup>28</sup> Census 1931, p.100.

the Bhutanese chiefs has introduced thousands of Nepali cultivators to clear the vast and fertile jungles of that country”<sup>29</sup>.

The number of persons born in the chief European countries and in Africa, America and Australia came to Bengal. Out of which Darjeeling got during the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century 1,570 Europeans for tea gardens and European schools as well as to its containing a military station<sup>30</sup>. In the thirties of the twentieth century, of the 13,557 persons born in Europe, majority were recorded in Calcutta while seven percent recorded in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling<sup>31</sup>. The following table is a detailed birthplace of persons born in British possessions in Europe<sup>32</sup>:-

**Table No. V.11 European Population in North Bengal:**

Locality of enumeration	England & Wales			Scotland			Ireland			United Kingdom unspecified		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sex	M	F	Both sex	M	F	Both Sex	M	F
Dinajpur...	12	5	7	2	2	..	1	...	1	...	..	...
Jalpaiguri...	133	138	50	130	105	25	10	3	7	...	...	...
Darjeeling...	330	208	122	107	54	53	36	22	13	14	....	14
Malda...	5	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

#### **D. Mortality Levels and Trends-**

<sup>29</sup> C.A.Bell, Kalimpong Settlement Report, PP-17, cited in the census of 1911, p.174.

<sup>30</sup> Census 1911, p.175.

<sup>31</sup> Census 1931, p.101.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.108.

The most determinant factor of population growth was essentially influenced by the rate of natural increase or the difference between birth and death rates. Between them, the level of death rates was more important<sup>33</sup>. Before the census period we found several estimates of mortality as had been given by the Britishers. On the eve of the 1770's famine Warren Hastings said "at least one-third of the inhabitants perished". After some years the Governor-General had reported to the Court of Directors that one-third of the Company's territory in Bengal "was a jungle inhabited on by wild beasts". Rennell's map showed the lower part of the delta as empty of villages, with the words "Depopulated by the Maghs" written across it<sup>34</sup>.

The census of high mortality were primarily related to waves of epidemics<sup>35</sup>. The mortality or deaths and births in towns had been registered since 1873<sup>36</sup>, but in rural areas deaths alone were registered. In this regard we would like to mention here a kind of system introduced in 1892 of reporting births and deaths. Under this system, compulsory registration was in force in the towns, householders i.e. parents, guardians or the person as were required to report births and deaths to the town police, while in rural areas *chaukidar* or village watchmen was provided with a notebook and was responsible for this record by himself or the village *panchayat*. The registering centers were basically the town police stations and outposts. They compiled the statistics and submitted monthly to the Civil Surgeon, who prepared return for the whole district for inclusion in the annual report of the Sanitary Commissioner<sup>37</sup> of the Department of Public Health<sup>38</sup>. Inspectors and sub-Inspectors of vaccination checked the statistics from time to time and for neglecting report properly he could even punish *Chaukidars*. But in the towns because of fear of legal penalties tended to make registration and classification of diseases more accurate than in the

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<sup>33</sup> Dharma Kumar (ed) The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol.II C.1757-2003, Orient Blackswan, 2010, p.469.

<sup>34</sup> Census of India, 1911, Vol.V. Bengal,Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part I, p.60.

<sup>35</sup> Dharma Kumar, Op.Cit, p.502.

<sup>36</sup> But it was 1872 as referred in the census of 1921.

<sup>37</sup> Census 1911, p.79.

<sup>38</sup> Census 1921, p.38.

rural tracts, because the *Chaukidar* were commonly illiterate and therefore made some mistakes or omissions.

In the chapter of PHH we have already mentioned in Table No.III.12 that mortality was caused by so many diseases- small pox, fever, cholera etc. which took a heavy toll of life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century<sup>39</sup> North Bengal. Apart from this deadly epidemics there were other caused mortality by small scale famine. However, “the developmental works, including railway- and road building, also had certain adverse effects on mortality because they spread certain diseases in areas which were once relatively isolated”<sup>40</sup>

One of the deadly epidemics which recurred periodically was malarial fever<sup>41</sup>. In the second decade of twentieth century we saw fever was such an important factor in Bengal that it diminished the population by death and hindered the development and of commerce and industry. “A leading cause of poverty and of many other disagreeable in a great part of Bengal- is the prevalence of malaria. For a physical explanation of the Bengali back of energy, malaria would count high”. This kind of conditions were existed in North Bengal where malaria prevalent. The medical officers deputed to assist the Bengal Drainage Committee, during the special enquiry hold in 1904 the Dinajpur district, it was found that less than one-third of the deaths classified as due to fever were actually caused by malaria<sup>42</sup>. In part of the Terai the incidence of malaria was high, “but the inhabitants, such as Tharus, Meches and Rajbanshis seem inured to it”<sup>43</sup>. There were severe floods in Jalpaiguri in 1902,1906 and 1910 and for this epidemics in cholera and fever broke out. The influenza epidemic great mortality in the hills and hunged about larger than in the plains. There were also local epidemics of relapsing fever and the recorded death rate

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<sup>39</sup> Tirthankar Roy, op.cit., p.272.

<sup>40</sup> Dharma Kumar, op.cit., p.502.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Census 1911, p.69.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.70.

for the district rose as high as 53.1 per mille in 1918 was in 1919 it was 48.4 and dropped only to 43.9 in 1920<sup>44</sup>.

This gradual declining sign of mortality was occurred on the four pillars of successful medical intervention in the early twentieth century were malaria eradication, immunization, improved sanitation and the use of antibiotics. However, critics pointed out that this was not universally applied before mortality began to decline.<sup>45</sup>

## **E. Trends in Fertility**

If we look into the table as has already been shown in Table No.III.10 in the chapter of PHH, we will see the fertility or birth level affected population, although we see much greater extent in mortality level. This birth rate was ensured due to various social means. The most effective was to get women married early and therefore increased the risks of rate of children. In Northern Bengal there were proportionately more aged marriage between grooms 27-33 and brides aged 17-23<sup>46</sup>. This early marriage of women reflected a strong cultural norm for which we see that restrained the participation of women in commercial work, and led to low levels of female literacy<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.104.

<sup>45</sup> Tirthankar Roy, op.cit., p.272.

<sup>46</sup> Census 1931, p.162.

<sup>47</sup> Tirthankar Roy, op.cit., p.274.



## **F. Socio-Cultural characteristics of the Cities of North Bengal**

The population of cities of North Bengal is heterogenous. Cities have peoples who speak different languages and profess different religious composition<sup>48</sup>. So the major attributes of urban social life-language, religion and ethnicity may be discussed for this purpose.

### **I. Linguistic Composition**

language is a major social parameter that lends a distinct personality to a city<sup>49</sup>. In Bengal Bengali is the mother tongue. In 1930s we see that 923 in every 1,000 inhabitants were Bengali speaking in Bengal. While in Rajshahi Division where other languages than Bengali have the greatest prevalence, no fewer than 879 in every 1,000 of the population actually speak Bengali. However persons born outside Bengal and Bengali as mother tongue were negligible in proportion to the total population. Apart from these bilingualism also prevalent in North Bengal<sup>50</sup>. Hindustani language was prevalent in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling counted in every 10,000 the population 498 and 331 respectively use it in this way<sup>51</sup>. Some were appeared in Dinajpur and Malda also, as in Malda this language was treated as indigenous to a permanently settled portion of the population<sup>52</sup>. Kherwari dialects spoken by Mundas, Santals and allied tribes in Rajshahi division 29 persons in every 1,000 speaks it. In Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts they contribute to the labour force on the tea plantations.

The Nepali and Tibeto-Himalayan languages represented the tongues spoken by Nepalese, Sikkimese, Bhotia and Tibetan immigrants were naturally represented most strongly in the Rajshahi Division, of

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<sup>48</sup> R.Ramachandran, *Urbanization and Urban Systems in India*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p.170.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p.171.

<sup>50</sup> Census 1931, p.367.

<sup>51</sup> Census 1931, p.349.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p.355.

them exclusively confined to the Darjeeling district and to a very much smaller extent to Jalpaiguri<sup>53</sup>. The Pahari group of the inner sub-branch was represented by Naipali (probably same form of Nepali language)<sup>54</sup> spoken by 134,147 persons found principally in Darjeeling (92,970) and Jalpaiguri (28,878) with 3,693 in Calcutta. In Jalpaiguri the proportions were highest in Kalchini, Madarihat, Mitiali, Kumargram and Nagrakata. In Darjeeling it was the mother tongue of half of the population but was spoken by more than one-third in Darjeeling, Rangli-Rangliot, Jore Bungalow, Kalimpong and Kurseong<sup>55</sup>.

## **II. Religious Composition**

The table below gives the religious status of the population of North Bengal in different years, which shows that all the major religions were prevalent here.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.351.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.366.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.366.

**Table No. V.12 Religious Demography of North Bengal: 1881-1931 (Per 10,000 population):**

Districts	Year	Total population	Hindus		Muslims		Tribal		Buddhist		Others	
			Population	% of total population	Population	% of total population	Population	% of total population	Population	% of total population	Population	% of total population
Dinajpur	1881	1514346	4732	47.32	5255	52.55	10	0.1	0	0	3	0.03
	1891	1493595	4759	47.59	5150	51.5	69	0.69	0	0	13	0.13
	1901	1578877	4636	46.36	4957	49.57	401	4.01	0	0	6	0.06
	1911	1700996	4499	44.99	4884	48.84	604	6.04	0	0	13	0.13
	1921	1718709	4409	44.09	4907	49.07	652	6.52	0	0	32	0.32
	1931	1762113	4522	45.22	5051	50.51	384	3.84	0	0	43	0.43
Jalpaiguri	1881	581562	6326	63.26	3585	35.85	55	0.55	8	0.08	26	0.26
	1891	680051	6508	65.08	3265	32.65	92	0.92	37	0.37	8	0.08
	1901	786786	6790	67.9	2902	29.02	193	1.93	80	0.8	35	0.35
	1911	903155	6063	60.63	2631	26.31	1152	11.52	80	0.8	65	0.65
	1921	936778	5502	55.02	2475	24.75	1860	18.6	65	0.65	98	0.98
	1931	983929	6763	67.63	2390	23.9	678	6.78	76	0.76	155	1.55
Darjeeling	1881	155179	8171	81.71	527	5.27	40	0.4	1210	12.1	62	0.62
	1891	223314	7665	76.65	448	4.48		0	1814	18.14	73	0.73
	1901	249117	7512	75.12	370	3.7	138	1.38	1788	17.88	182	1.82
	1911	265550	7141	71.41	356	3.56	405	4.05	1804	18.04	294	2.94
	1921	282748	7120	71.2	301	3.01	449	4.49	1838	18.38	292	2.92
	1931	319635	7412	74.12	263	2.63	218	2.18	1843	18.43	204	2.04
Malda	1881	710448	5337	53.37	4638	46.38	24	0.24	0	0	1	0.01
	1891	824390	5021	50.21	4720	47.2	258	2.58	0	0	1	0.01
	1901	893943	4982	49.82	4807	48.07	209	2.09	0	0	2	0.02
	1911	1026739	4636	46.36	5033	50.33	326	3.26	0	0	5	0.05
	1921	1013471	4063	40.63	5151	51.51	778	7.78	0	0	8	0.08
	1931	1055643	4217	42.17	5428	54.28	343	3.43	0	0	12	0.12

### III. Ethnic composition with Profession

There is

definite relationship between caste and profession. This is not simply identity. Even there are some religiously neutral professions which are followed by a number of different castes<sup>56</sup>.

Ghurye has taken caste's traditional profession as the question based on linguistically. He noticed that caste names are very often the names of trades, not only names: ethnic or tribal names, names of sects and names indicating still other features are also found. Therefore the profession is one of the differences, whereby a group seen from a caste is designated.

<sup>56</sup> Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus The Caste system and Its Implications*, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.93.

Blunt made a special study of the changes in occupation. So far as the matter of occupation is concerned, it can be said that there is only a scission at the level of the caste, or separation at the level of the subcaste, if there is an important difference in status between the old profession and new<sup>57</sup>.

For Dumont, caste is seen to express a commitment to social values that the modern world lost, and therefore Nicholas B. Dirks said “ it is hard not to read Dumont’s scholarship as a peculiar form of modern western nostalgia, if with a long colonial pedigree”<sup>58</sup>.

Andre Beteille says the caste system is clearly a hierarchical system and talk of Weber who seems to argue that it is meaningful to talk of classes only in a market economy: “... always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that is kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual’s fate; ‘class situation’ is, in this sense, ultimately ‘market situation’”<sup>59</sup>.

Whatever be the ideology of caste in sociological outlook, as has been discussed above, we come across in a historical process that with the establishment of a firm root of modern industry the ‘bourgeoisie’ class began to emerge with full power. They emerged by centering *Bazar*. During the colonial period all products were produced for this need, although it is in a village or a town or it may be agricultural or industrial goods. Therefore merchant communities emerged and gradually new labour class has come out. It is because of railway which prepared the industrial progress and therefore we found the emergence of labour class in mine, plantation etc. economic activities<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid, p.95.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind colonialism and the making of modern India*, Permanent Black, 2013, p.5.

<sup>59</sup> Andre Beteille, *Caste, Class and Power*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p.4.

<sup>60</sup> A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, pp.146-148.

For the need of new society introduced for long colonial pedigree, modern professions has come which were followed by a number of different castes, separated from pre-British Indian society. We will sketch out with the help of the following statement table about the presence of different castes with different occupations in North Bengal of our study area<sup>61</sup>:-

**Table No. V.13 Different castes with different occupations:**

Caste	Locality	Occupation	1921	1911
Bhotia	Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri	Graziers or cultivation in hills	27,247	28,855
Blad	Malda		10,437	11,407
Chain	Malda	Cultivating caste	80,645	90,305
Chasati	Malda	Industrial castes (silk worm rearer)	17,867	27,048
Damail	Darjeeling	Industrial castes (tailor; hill people)	7,051	6,609
Dhaluk	Malda		9,835	11,553
Gangai(Ganesh)	Malda and Dinajpur	Industrial castes (weaver)	17,817	20,175
Gurung	Darjeeling	Soldiers(Hill people; also cultivators)	14,793	16,688
Kami	Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri	Industrial castes (Blacksmith; hill people)	18,113	18,422
Khambu	Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri	Cultivators (Hill tribes)	58,573	60,211
Khas	Darjeeling	Soldiers	7,236	18,809
Khen(Khyan)	Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri	Cultivating caste and also petty trader	18,909	20,918
Lepcha	Darjeeling	Cultivators (Hill tribes)	18,890	19,737
Limbu	Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri	Cultivators	22,731	26,380
Mangar	Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri	Soldiers	18,445	21,611
Mech	Jalpaiguri	Cultivating caste	10,777	19,521
Murmi	Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri	Cultivators (Hill tribes)	19,716	38,017
Nagar	Malda	Cultivating caste	14,714	16,606

<sup>61</sup> Census of India, 1921, Volume IV, Bengal, Part I, Report, W.H.Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1923, Calcutta, p.372.

Newar	Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri	Cultivators (Hill tribes)	13,192	12,403
Sarki	Darjeeling	Industrial castes (Leather worker; hill people)	2,014	1,093
Sunwar	Darjeeling	Cultivators (Hill tribes)	—	—