

**DEMOGRAPHIC
PROFILE OF
NORTH EAST INDIA**

S. C. SRIVASTAVA

**Foreword:
B. K. ROY BURMAN**

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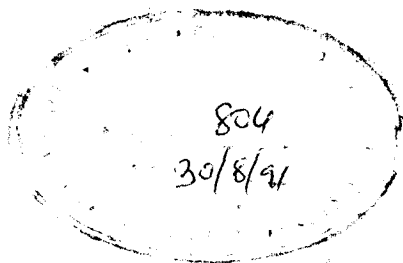
Foreword by

B.K. ROY BURMAN



MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
DELHI-110035 (INDIA)

304.60934'6
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First published in 1987

© S.C. Srivastava, 1987

ISBN 81-7099-001-7

Published by

K.M. MITTAL
MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
B-2/19-B, Lawrence Road,
DELHI-110035 (INDIA)

Printed at

OM HARI OFFSET PRINTERS
DELHI-110035

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POPULATION CENSUS AND ITS GROWTH

INTRODUCTION

India is the second most populated country in the world. According to 1981 census the population of India was 685,184,692 comprising of 354,397,884 males and 330,786,808 females. Its population as on the 1st March, 1986 is estimated at 758 million.

The Indian territory may be divided into five broad regions:

1. The Himalaya and the Eastern Hills;
2. The Great Plains;
3. The Peninsular Plateau;
4. The Coastal Plains, and
5. The Islands.

The Indo-Gangetic Plains, noted for its fertility, size, stretches for about 3200 Km. from the Rajasthan desert in the west to the Brahmaputra valley in the east. The plain in Rajasthan is an arid region. The rest in an alluvial plain watered by the Sutlej-Beas system in the north-west, the Ganga-Yamuna system in the centre and the Brahmaputra system in the east. The entire plain is one of the World's great agricultural regions and one of the densely populated areas of the country.

India is a federal republic comprising of 21 states and 9 union territories. For Administrative purposes, the states are split into districts and districts into tehsils, talukas, sub-divisions, police stations, etc. The north eastern region comprises of the states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

POPULATION CENSUS

Population census can be viewed from two different angles. It provides an instantaneous photographic picture as it was of a community which is valid at a particular moment of time. This is called the 'static aspect' of the census. Secondly, it provides the trends in population characteristics, the 'dynamic aspect' of the population. Information so collected through the census about people, their living conditions and the material and physical resources of a country is vital for national planning programme.

India has a rich tradition of collecting demographic, socio-economic data through the population censuses which are being conducted after every 10 years. The tradition of taking a regular census was established in 1872 in this country. This census was taken in different provinces at different times. The practice of taking a synchronous census was initiated in 1881 and since then the census has been conducted every ten years culminating in the latest census of 1981. Since 1872 census information about the population, socio and economic aspects has been collected and published in various publications. This information particularly relates to the following aspects:

1. General population
2. Economic status of the population
3. Social and cultural aspects
4. Migration
5. Fertility
6. Disabled population; and Houses
7. Weaker sections of the Society.

As an integrated practice of data collection the population census is the primary source of basic national data required for administrative purposes and for many aspects of economic social research and planning. The value of the census results is increased if these can be employed together with the results of the other investigations. The usefulness of the census is also enhanced if it can furnish the information needed for conducting other statistical investigations. In purpose of a continuing programme of data collection can best be served, therefore, if the relationship between the population census and other statistical investigations is considered when census planning is under way and if

3 *Population Census and Its Growth*

provision is made for facilitating the use of the census and its results in connection with intercensal and with labour force, educational and similar statistics.

The present volume deals with some of the demographic, social and economic data which have been collected through the population census in India, with special reference to north-eastern states.

POPULATION GROWTH

There was a time when the growth of population was considered a natural phenomenon and not amenable to social or even individual control. Population grew and diminished, migrated abroad or stayed at home, urbanised or stayed rural and all that happened was considered the natural phenomenon. Malthus came out with his law of population and the natural tendency of population to grow without restraint and get only limited by inadequate food supply and disease and starvation, and then followed what was called the Iron Law of Wages, which always kept wages at the subsistence level because of Malthusian Law of Population and its operation on the supply of labour. The Malthusian law thus predicted a high birth rate and a high death rate, a population limited in its growth by the availability of food supplies and a continuing future of a near subsistence living for the vast masses of the people. But the history has belied the Malthusian prophecy. In the developed and industrialised World of the West, population growth was accompanied by a rise in the level of living of the vast masses of the people, the death rate had fallen sharply, but the birth rate also fell sharply after some lapse of time, so that the population is restrained in its growth inspite of the ability of available food supply to feed a much larger number of people. The theory of the demographic transition with its more optimistic undertones seems to have replaced the Malthusian Law with its pessimistic overtones regarding the future of humanity. Economic development, with the help of science and technology, and birth control, which made possible the planning and regulation of family size by individuals, have between them made population control, social and economic progress for the masses a fact of actual history, as far as the developed world is concerned.

4 Demographic Profile of North Eastern India

The demographic history of the developed world shows that social and economic change resulting from economic development has had a major effect in slowing down the growth of population and as a result made possible larger social and economic opportunities for the individual members of the comparatively smaller populations. The cycle thus seems to run thus: a high rate of economic growth, increase in education, both in population covered and level of education imparted, giving more education to individual, increased female participation in non-household economic activity, rise in the age of marriage, rise in family income social mobility, resort to family planning and increasing number of small families.

In the developing countries, the picture presented above holds good for a small minority of population which belongs to the upper income group but for the vast majority of the people, the cycle has been one of the sharp fall in the death rate, an inconspicuous fall in the birth rate, a rapid rise in numbers, a marginal rise in the level of living for some and a continuance of absolute levels of poverty for the many among the masses and non-emergence of the demographic transition that is associated with a significant rise in the level of living.

Now let us look at the Indian picture from the point of view of both social and economic development and population growth. The following statement gives the population of the country and the north-eastern states/Union territories from 1901 to 1981 alongwith percentage decade variation. It also gives the break up of population of males and females. The district wise break-up of these states is given in Annexe.1

Statement-1
DECADAL GROWTH RATE IN POPULATION SINCE 1901 IN INDIA AND NORTH-EASTERN STATES

India/State/ Union Territory	Year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	Males	Females	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
INDIA	1901	238,396,327	-	-	120,791,301	117,358,672	
	1911	252,093,390	+ 13,697,063	+ 5.75	128,385,368	123,708,022	
	1921	251,321,213	- 772,177	- 0.31	128,546,225	122,774,988	
	1931	278,977,238	+ 27,656,025	+ 11.00	142,929,689	135,788,921	
	1941	318,660,580	+ 39,683,342	+ 14.22	163,685,302	154,690,267	
	1951	361,088,090	+ 42,420,485	+ 13.31	185,528,462	175,559,628	
	1961	439,234,771	+ 77,682,873	+ 21.51	226,293,201	212,941,570	
	1971	548,159,652	+ 108,924,881	+ 24.80	284,049,276	264,110,376	
	1981*	685,184,692	+ 137,025,040	+ 25.00	354,397,884	330,786,808	
	North-Eastern region	1901	4,330,992	-	-	2,234,971	2,096,021
1911		5,146,619	815,627	18.83	2,661,286	2,485,333	
1921		6,086,764	940,145	18.27	3,174,032	2,912,732	
1931		7,282,320	1,195,556	19.54	3,833,855	3,448,465	
1941		8,739,636	1,457,316	20.01	4,604,611	4,135,025	

Conti....

6 Demographic Profile of North Eastern India

Cont.....

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	1951	10,398,096	1,658,460	18.98	5,503,650	4,894,446
	1961	14,662,761	4,264,665	41.01	7,760,324	6,902,437
	1971	19,792,139	5,129,378	34.98	10,388,809	9,403,330
	1981*	26,923,584	7,131,445	36.03	14,111,934	12,811,650
STATES:						
1. Assam	1901	3,289,680	-	-	1,714,316	1,575,364
	1911	3,848,617	+ 558,937	+ 16.99	2,010,211	1,838,406
	1921	4,636,980	+ 788,363	+ 20.48	2,445,300	2,191,680
	1931	5,560,371	+ 923,391	+ 19.91	2,966,568	2,593,803
	1941	6,694,790	+ 1,134,419	+ 20.40	3,569,762	3,125,028
	1951	8,028,856	+ 1,334,066	+ 19.93	4,298,773	3,730,083
	1961	10,837,329	+ 2,808,473	+ 34.98	5,798,376	5,038,953
	1971	14,625,152	+ 3,787,823	+ 34.95	7,714,240	6,910,912
	1981	19,896,843#	+ 5,271,691	+ 36.05	10,467,461#	9,429,382#
2. Manipur	1901	284,465	-	-	139,632	144,833
	1911	346,222	+ 61,757	+ 21.71	170,666	175,556
	1921	384,016	+ 37,794	+ 10.92	188,119	195,897
	1931	445,606	+ 61,590	+ 16.04	215,815	229,791
	1941	512,069	+ 66,463	+ 14.92	249,183	262,886

Cont.....

Cont.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	1971	516,449	+ 147,249	+ 39.88	276,084	240,365
	1981	774,920	+ 258,481	+ 50.05	415,910	359,020
5. Sikkim	1901	59,014	-	-	30,795	28,219
	1911	87,920	+ 28,906	+ 48.98	45,059	42,861
	1921	81,721	- 6,199	- 7.05	41,492	40,229
	1931	109,808	+ 28,087	+ 34.37	55,825	53,983
	1941	121,520	+ 11,712	+ 10.67	63,289	58,231
	1951	137,725	+ 16,205	+ 13.34	72,210	65,515
	1961	162,189	+ 24,464	+ 17.76	85,193	76,996
	1971	209,843	+ 47,654	+ 29.38	112,662	97,181
	1981	316,385	+ 106,542	+ 50.77	172,440	143,945
6. Tripura	1901	173,325	-	-	92,495	80,830
	1911	229,613	+ 56,288	+ 32.48	121,820	107,793
	1921	304,437	+ 74,824	+ 32.59	161,515	142,922
	1931	382,450	+ 78,013	+ 25.63	202,932	179,518
	1941	513,010	+ 130,560	+ 34.14	272,025	240,985
	1951	639,029	+ 126,019	+ 24.56	335,589	303,440
	1961	1,142,005	+ 502,976	+ 78.71	591,237	550,768
	1971	1,556,342	+ 414,337	+ 36.28	801,126	755,216
	1981	2,053,058	+ 496,716	+ 31.92	1,054,846	998,212

Cont.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
UNION TERRITORIES:						
	1. Arunachal Pradesh*					
	1901	-	-	-	-	-
	1911	-	-	-	-	-
	1921	-	-	-	-	-
	1931	-	-	-	-	-
	1941	-	-	-	-	-
	1951	-	-	-	-	-
	1961	336,558	-	-	177,680	158,878
	1971	497,511	+ 130,953	+ 38.91	251,231	216,280
	1981	631,839	+ 164,328	+ 35.15	339,322	292,517
	2. Mizoram					
	1901	82,434	-	-	39,004	43,430
	1911	91,204	+ 8,770	+ 10.64	43,028	48,176
	1921	98,406	+ 7,202	+ 7.90	46,652	51,754
	1931	124,404	+ 25,998	+ 26.42	59,186	65,218
	1941	152,786	+ 28,382	+ 22.81	73,885	78,931
	1951	196,202	+ 43,416	+ 28.42	96,136	100,066
	1961	266,063	+ 89,861	+ 35.61	132,465	133,598
	1971	332,390	+ 66,327	+ 24.93	170,824	161,566
	1981	493,757	+ 161,367	+ 48.55	257,239	236,518

Notes: (1) * 1981 Figures of India and North Eastern Region include the projected population of Assam where census could not be held owing to disturbed condition prevailing there at the time of 1981 Census.

(2) Population of each state or union territory has been adjusted as close as practicable to its present set-up, i.e. as on 1st March, 1981.

(3) (i) In working out 'decade variation' and 'percentage decade variation' for India for 1941-51 and 1951-61, the 1951 and 1961 population of Tuensang district of Nagaland, i.e. 7,025 and 134,275 respectively have not been taken into account as this area was censused for the first time in 1951 and these figures are not comparable.

(ii) The 1961 population of Arunachal Pradesh (N.E.F.A.) has also not been taken into account for working out the decade variation and percentage decade variation for 1951-61 of India as it was censused for the first time in 1961 Census.

(4) The distribution of population of Pondicherry by sex for 1901 (246,354), 1931 (258,628) and 1941 (286,011) is not available. The figures of India for these years are, therefore, exclusive of these population figures so far as distribution by sex is concerned.

(5) # Projected.

In working out decade variation and percentage decade variation for 1941-51 and 1951-61 of Nagaland State, the population of Tuensang district for 1951 (7025) and the population of Tuensang (83,501) censused for the first time in 1951.

* Censused for the first time in 1961.

11 Population Census and Its Growth

The above statement reveals that while our population has certainly been increasing in absolute terms but the rate increased sharply after 1921 and much more sharply after the Independence in 1947. During the 1921-51 it increased sharply to 30% and much more sharply to nearly 53 per cent during the next 20 years, 1951-71. Even between 1971-81 there has been a slight rise in the percentage increase from 24.80 to 25.00. The explanation for this demographic change is seen from the following estimates of birth rate and death rate made by Shri S.P. Jain on the basis of Census Actuarial Reports and the Sample Registration Data of the 1971 Census:

Statement-2

Decade	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Growth Rate over the decade
1881-1890	48.9	41.3	7.6
1891-1900	45.8	44.4	1.4
1901-1910	49.2	42.6	6.6
1911-1920	48.1	47.2	0.9
1921-1930	46.4	36.3	10.1
1931-1940	45.2	31.2	14.0
1941-1950	39.9	27.4	12.5
1951-1960	41.7	22.8	18.9
1961-1970	39 or 38	17 or 16	22.0

It is the sharp fall in the death rate during the three decades 1921-1950 and the much sharper fall during the decade 1951-1970 that is responsible for the rapid growth of population during this period. If we look the data of the north-eastern states generally the growth rate has been found higher than the all India rate from 1911 onwards. During the decade 1911-21 when there was a slight fall in India's population, the north-eastern states, except that of Sikkim, registered a high growth rate and had an increase in its population.

The following statement indicates the growth rate in the North-Eastern States for the decade mentioned from 1941-1981:

Statement-3

<i>State/Union Territory</i>	<i>Percentage increase</i>			
	<i>1941-51</i>	<i>1951-61</i>	<i>1961-71</i>	<i>1971-81</i>
Assam	19.93	34.98	34.95	36.05
Mehgalaya	8.97	27.03	31.50	32.04
Manipur	12.80	35.04	37.53	32.46
Nagaland	8.60	14.07	39.88	50.05
Arunachal Pradesh	N.A.	N.A.	38.91	35.15
Tripura	24.56	78.71	36.28	31.92
Sikkim	13.34	17.76	29.38	50.76
Mizoram	28.42	35.61	24.93	48.55

N.A.: Not Available.

The growth of population creates both problems and opportunities in the social and economic fields.

By increasing the labour force, it makes possible economies of scale in the training and utilisation of human resources, makes for larger production, enlarges the market and contributes to economic development. This is possible only when there are natural resources of land, water, minerals, forests, etc. But in a country where natural resources is inadequate the social and economic development remains inadequate. Here the population growth may create more problems than opportunities.