

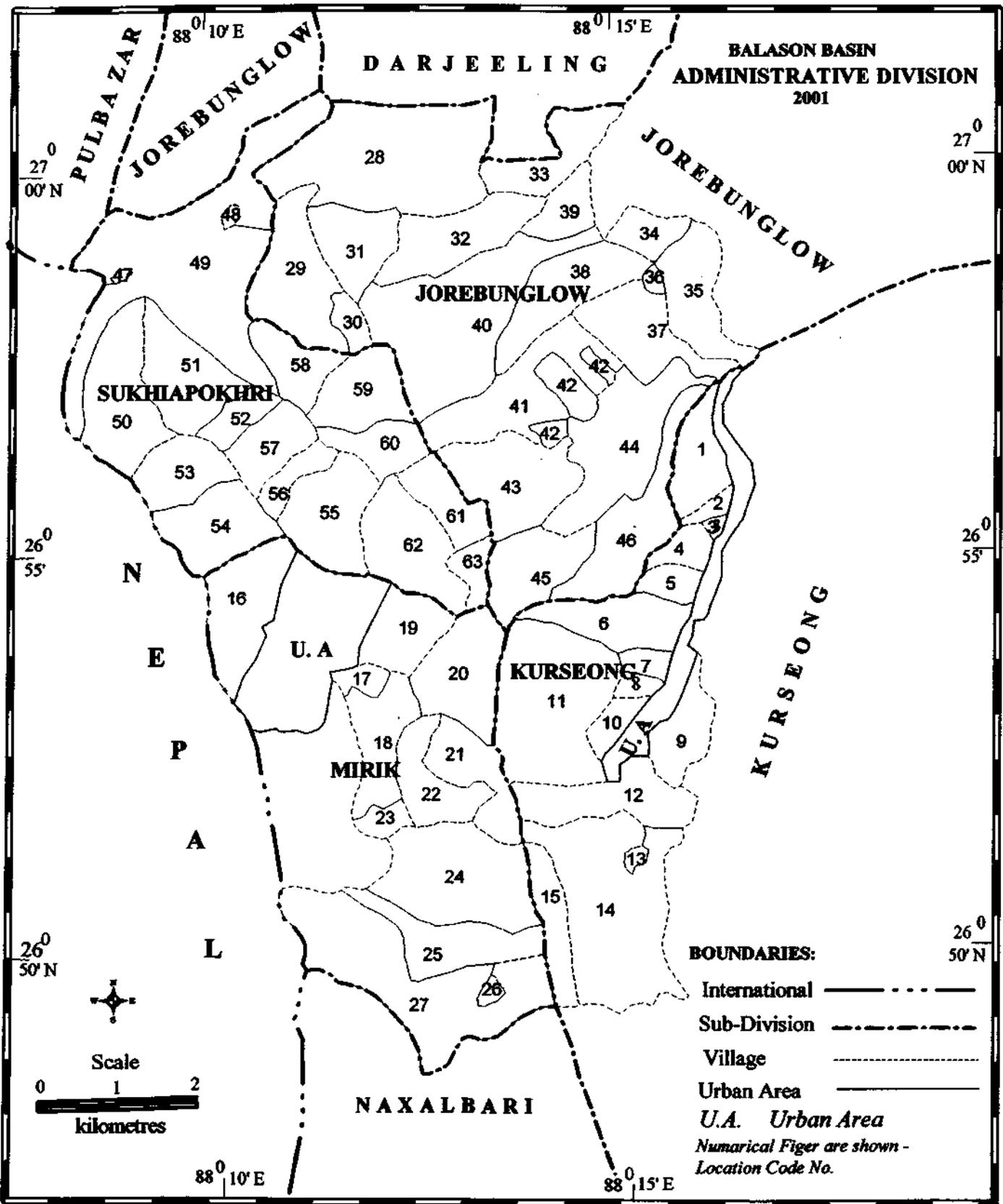
# **CHAPTER III**

## **HUMAN RESOURCE IN THE BASIN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Human resource study has its focus on the rates and trends of various population characteristics such as distribution, growth, density, composition etc. Population growth in itself helps in planning human needs like food, clothing, shelter etc. Any comprehensive geographical analysis of a region should take into account the differential growth of population. Number, densities, distributions and qualities of the population provide the essential background for all geography (Trewortha, 1972). Population is the central element around which all other elements revolve and derive geographical significance. Thus, the study of population is the single most important approach to geography and in which the regional concept has its broadest application (Ghosh, 1985).

The Balason basin is situated in the eastern Himalayas. The mountainous physiography provides very little flat land for the easy spread of population and naturally population is less. The steep slopes of the mountains, scarcity of water storage facilities, thin layer of rocky soil and severe climatic conditions discourage people to settle down in the hills. Population is very unevenly distributed all over the basin. Despite the pressures of population explosion, vast areas remain inaccessible to mankind. Distribution of population gives an understanding of the geo-economic prospects and potential of an area. The growth and distribution of population vary widely because of topography, social, cultural and economic factors in the basin. Forests in the basin are mostly uninhabited and tea gardens support the population of the labourers who work in the respective gardens. So population is only concentrated in the khasmahals, which are, Government vested lands.



**Fig.3.1**

### 3.1 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

Distribution of population refers to the way people are spaced over the surface of the earth (Ghosh, 1985). In fact, the distributional pattern of population is an eloquent expression of the synthesis of all geographical phenomena operating in the area (Singh, 1985). The interpretation of population distribution in terms of area and population quality etc. gives an idea about the pattern of people, regional contrast and disparities including the degree of concentration in different areas. It has been estimated that about 80 percent of the world's total population is concentrated only over 20 percent of the world's total land area. Not only the social and economic systems but also the behavioural system is to a certain extent found to be a product of the pattern of distribution of various components of both static and dynamic nature (Hasanuz Zaman, 1998).

The population distribution has continuously changed in space and time, with migration and varying rates of population growth. In the study area, the population distribution is uneven due to hilly terrain, severe climate, non-availability of agricultural land and paucity of water.

Table:3.1: Classification of the villages according to area.

Area in Km <sup>2</sup>	Category	No. of villages	Percentage to total area
> 8	Very Large	9	14.29
8 - 6	Large	10	15.87
6 - 4	Medium	14	22.22
4 - 2	Small	14	22.22
< 2	Very Small	16	25.40
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Villages were demarcated in the past as revenue villages. The settlements in the villages grew up in and around the water resources and available agricultural land. Villages are very small in size in the study area. Moderate to very small villages account for 69.84% of the total area of the Balason basin. To access the limited resources available, the villages are small. Large villages are mostly tea gardens. Two forests namely Manjha and Ghoom Pahar are very large in size. In

the last three decades, the village size almost remained unaltered due to restriction to encroach forests. Among the tea gardens, Longview is the largest and Edenvale is the smallest. Among the khasmahals, Mim Nagri Range has the largest area whereas Simana Basti has the smallest. Among the forested areas, Manjha forest occupies the largest area and Phuguri Forest occupies the largest area (Fig. 3.2)

Relationship between population and resources has the great significance mainly due to the relation that continued population growth was a barrier, which obstructed further development and kept the world in a state of perpetual crisis. Population growth becomes vital element in assessing population resource of an area. Population is an important and valuable resource if it can be utilized properly. Proper utilization depends on different factors like availability of educational facilities, employment opportunities, sex ratio etc.

Table: 3.2: Classification of villages according to population size.

Ranges of population	Category	No. of villages	Percentage to total population
> 4000	Very High	10	15.88
4000 - 3000	High	7	11.11
3000 - 2000	Moderate	14	22.22
2000 - 1000	Low	14	22.22
< 1000	Very Low	18	28.57
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Since Balason basin is situated in hilly area, settlements are isolated in nature but concentrated in areas where agricultural land and water supply is abundant. Population size is small in majority of the villages, compared to the mean of the basin. According to 2001 census, population ranges from 9030 in Sonada Khasmahal to 29 in Manjha Fst. (Pan.F.Rly.). The villages with population less than 1000 are mostly forest areas. Few villages on the western side of the Hill Cart Road, also has less population due to rugged steep terrain of the hill slope. But, in general, if compared to the plains, population is higher here. Among the tea gardens, Rongmook Ceder has the highest population i.e. 4908 and Edenvale has the lowest population i.e. 169. It is evident from the table 3.2, that 28.57% of the villages has population

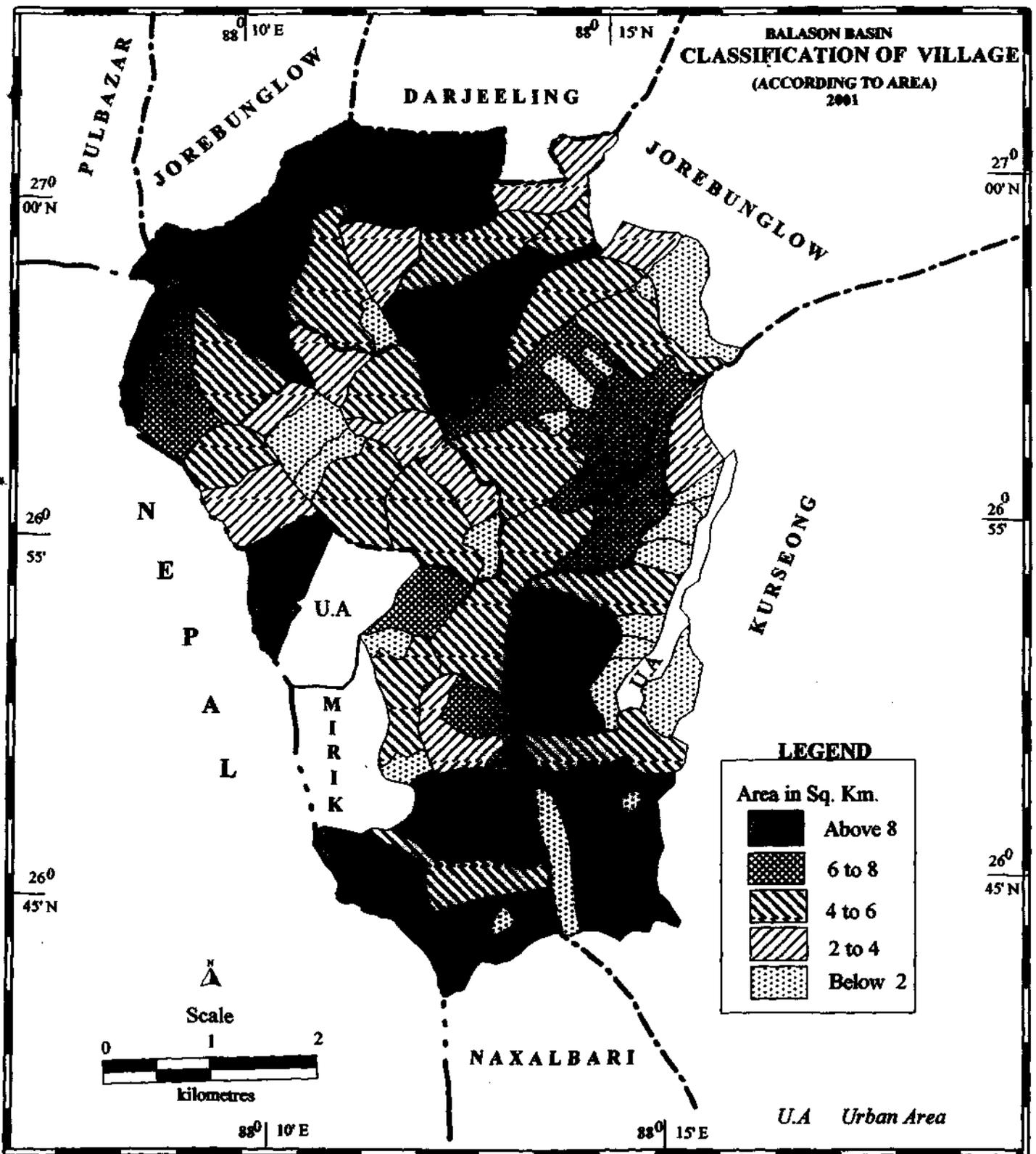


Fig.3.2

less than 1000. According to 1991 census it was 15.87% and 1981 census it was 9.52%. So there is a gradual population increase in the villages during the last three decades. Twenty-eight out of 63 (44.44%) villages have population less than 3000 and 26.99% villages have population greater than 3000. Percentage of villages having medium range of population gradually decreases during the last three decades, which is evident from 66.66% in 1981, 47.62% in 1991 and 44.44% in 2001. Percentage of villages having high population increased from 1981 to 1991 but remained same in between 1991 and 2001 (Fig. 3.3)

### 3.2. COMPOSITION OF POPULATION

Composition of population is an important determinant of human resources. Each family comprises of both male and female members, further differentiated as children and old age people, who are generally called dependants. It is also differentiated on the basis of literates and illiterates.

#### 3.2.1. Sex Ratio

Sex ratio influences the form and tempo of life and population structure. Sex ratio is important as it affects the labour supply. Moreover, it influences age of marriage, fertility and population growth, determination of birth and death rates and status of women. At the same time sex ratio is influenced by birth, death, migration etc.

Table: 3.3. Classification of villages according to sex ratio (female/1000male).

Range of sex ratio	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 1100	Very High	5	7.94
1100 – 1050	High	9	14.29
1050 – 1000	Moderate	22	34.92
1000 – 950	Low	20	31.75
< 950	Very Low	7	11.11
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Majority of the villages have high sex ratio. Percentage of villages having sex ratio of above 950 females per 1000 males have increased from 57.14% (1981) to 60.325(1991) to 88.88% (2001) in the last three

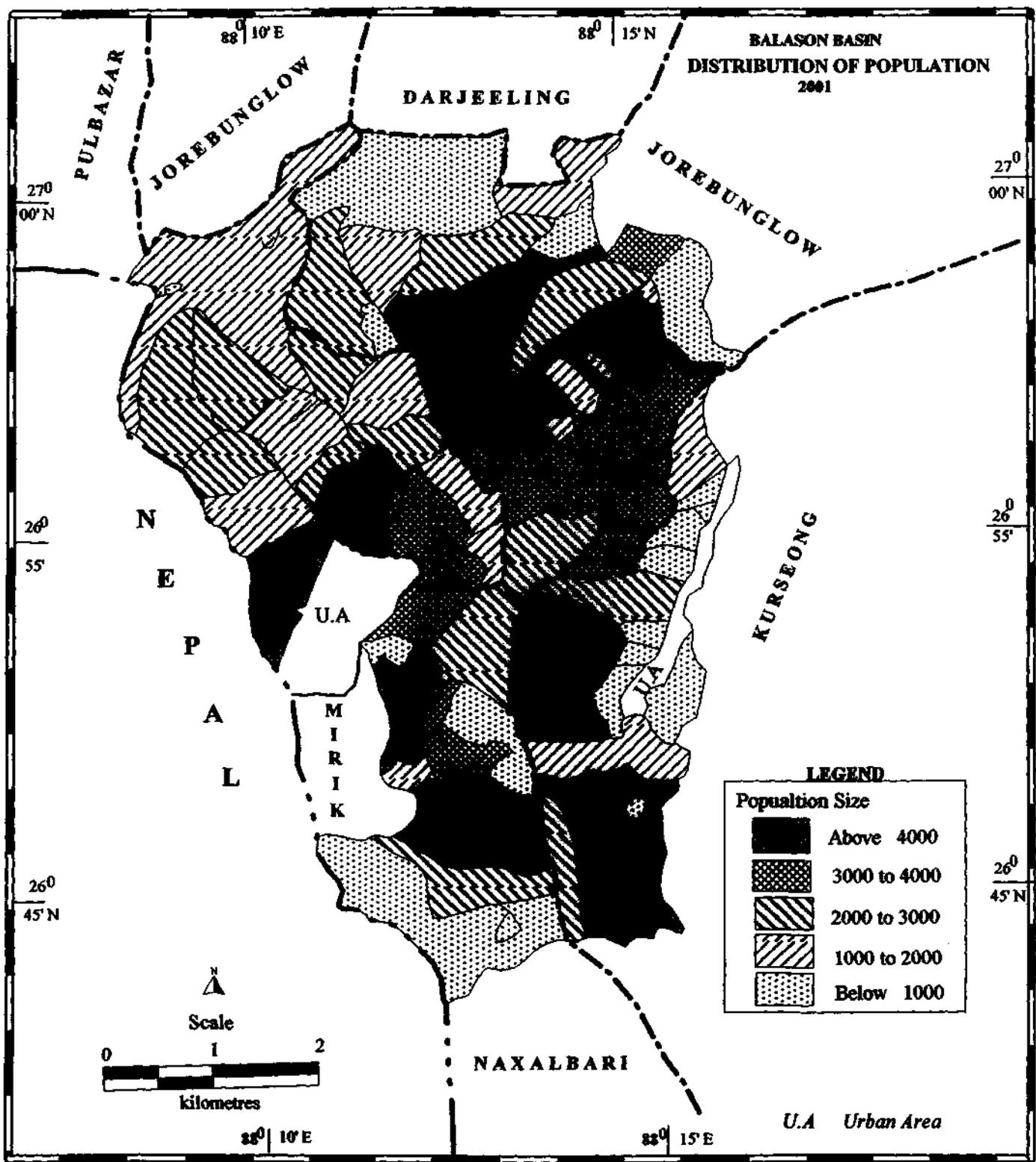


Fig.3.3

decades (Fig. 3.4). Sex ratio is visibly high in the tea gardens because female workers are much in demand in such areas. As a result, their number is more. Men usually go out to work in the nearest towns as labourers. Male members of the family also join the army and stay away from home. Low sex ratio indicates high cost of living, scarcity of accommodation and many other demographic problems.

### 3.2.2. Caste Composition

Two fundamental and primary strata within the Hindu society are the ritually higher caste and the untouchables, officially called scheduled castes (S.C.) (Bhardwaj, 1975). Another constituent of the population is the tribal people (S.T.) recognized by the constitution. As per the S.C. and S.T. Orders (Amendment Act, 1976) there are altogether 59 communities as S.C. and 38 as S.T. in West Bengal (Census, 1991).

In the study area, people from different places came to work in the tea gardens. The tea plantations created a big demand for plantation labour in the basin. Large-scale immigration took place. Since the inception of immigration, people belonging to various castes and tribes, speaking over a dozen Indo- Aryan and Tibeto- Burman tongues and hailing from Nepal, have always been a majority (Gazetteer, 1980). People immigrated from Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and Sikkim. The scheduled castes include Kamis, Damais and Sarkis in the study area.

Table: 3.4 Classification of villages on the basis of percentage of S.C. population to total population.

Ranges	Category	No. of villages	Percentage of villages
> 12	Very High	4	6.35
12 - 9	High	11	17.46
9 - 6	Moderate	16	25.40
6 - 3	Low	17	26.98
< 3	Very Low	9	14.29
Nil		6	9.52
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

The total population of the basin contains a small segment of scheduled caste population. The highest percentage of S.C. population

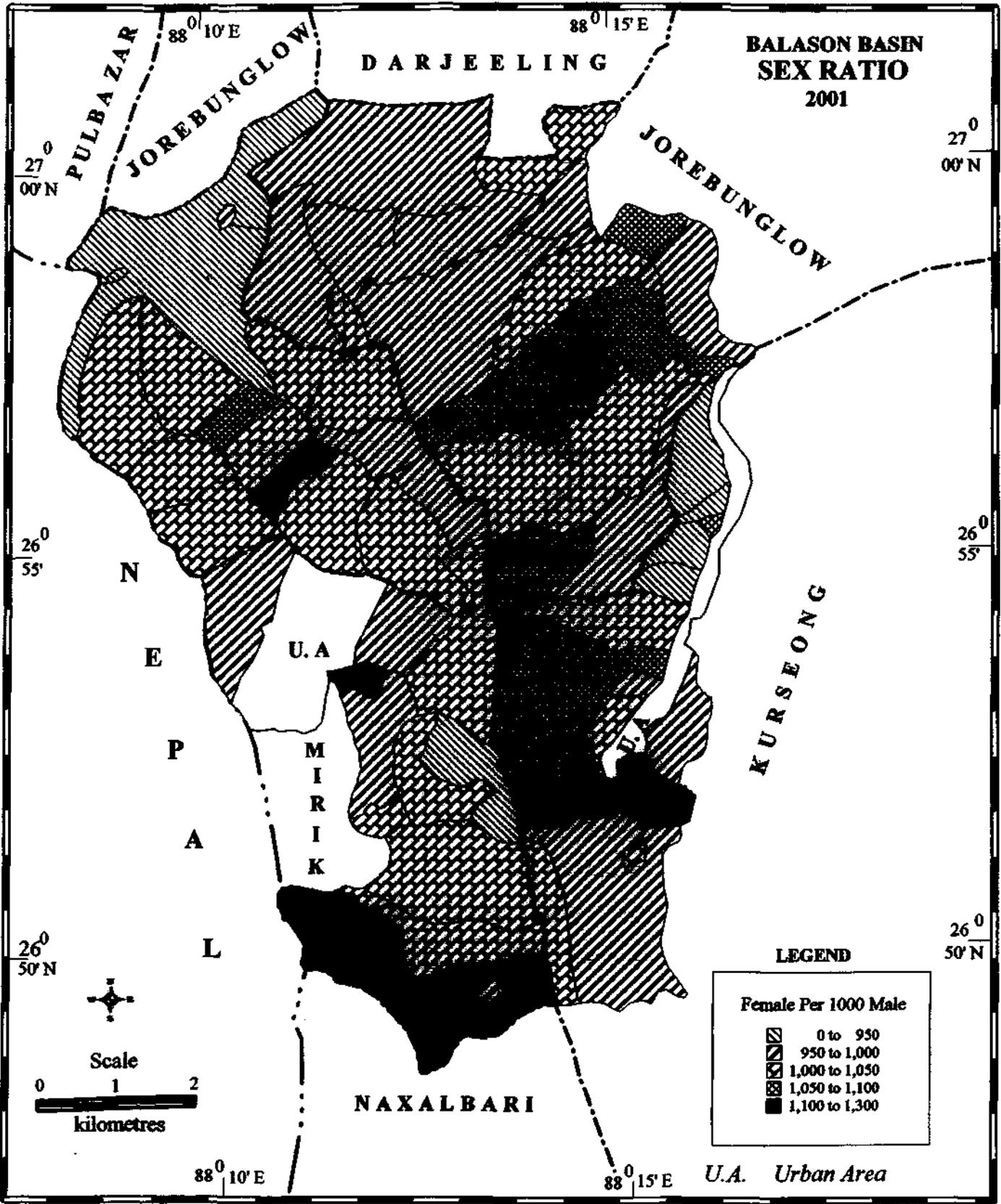


Fig. 3.4

i.e. 16.67, is found in Montiviot T.G. and lowest is 0.15, found in Dhajea T.G. Majority of the villages have high percentage of S.C. population. Out of these, 25% alone is found in sixteen villages. Six villages have no S.C. population. These villages may have S.T. and general caste population. Areas under high percentages of S.C. population are fluctuating through the last three decades i.e. 60.32% (1981), 42.86% (1991) and 49.21% (2001) in the study area (Fig. 3.5).

Table: 3.5. Classification of villages on the basis of percentage of S.T. population to total population.

Ranges	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 6	High	12	19.04
6 - 4	Moderate	1	1.59
4 - 2	Low	9	14.29
< 2	Very Low	22	34.92
Nil		19	30.16
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

The percentage of S.T. population is low in the study area compared to the S.C. population. This is because Nepalese don't want to consider themselves as S.T.'s. Tribal people are less in the basin because people are mainly immigrants who are S.C.'s and not S.T.'s. About 41 out of 63 villages, have less than 2 percent S.T. population. This is quite an exception. Surprisingly, all the khasmahals have the highest percentage of their population as S.T. population. Jorebunglow has 41.95 % of its population as S.T. population, which is also the highest in the entire Balason basin(Fig. 3.6). Other villages having high percentage of S.T. population are Simana Basti, Sonada Khasmahal, Sukhiapokhri, Pulungdung Khasmahal, Mim Nagri Range and Rongbong Basti. Number of villages, which has above 10% of its population as S.T., decreased from 15(23.81%) to 9(14.29%), in between 1981 and 1991 respectively. The S.T.'s include Lepchas, Bhutias, Dukpas, Sherpas, Yolmos etc.

### 3.2.3. Literacy

In population geography, literacy is considered as a reliable index of socio - cultural and economic advancement of an area. Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental isolation for cultivating

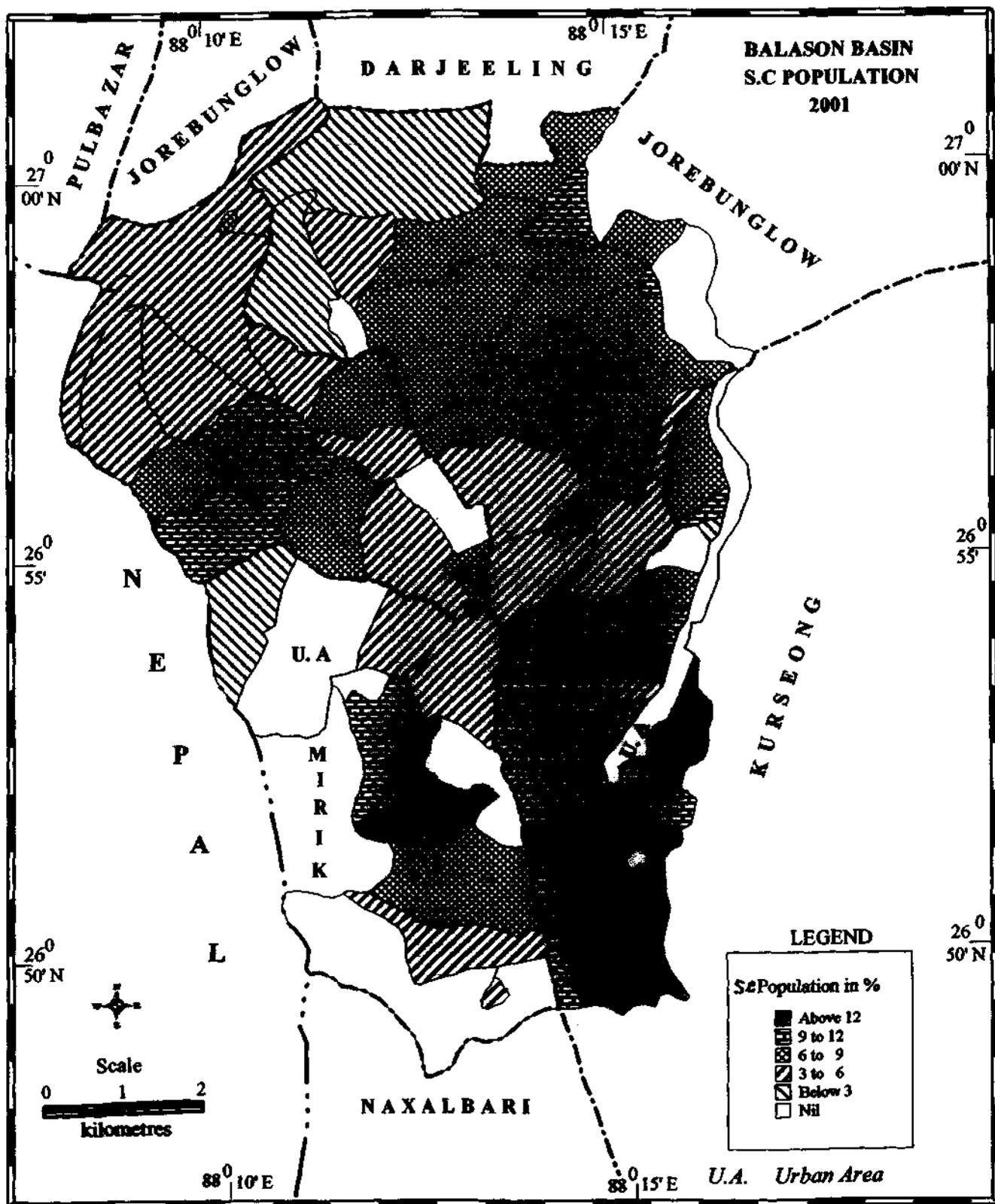


Fig.3.5

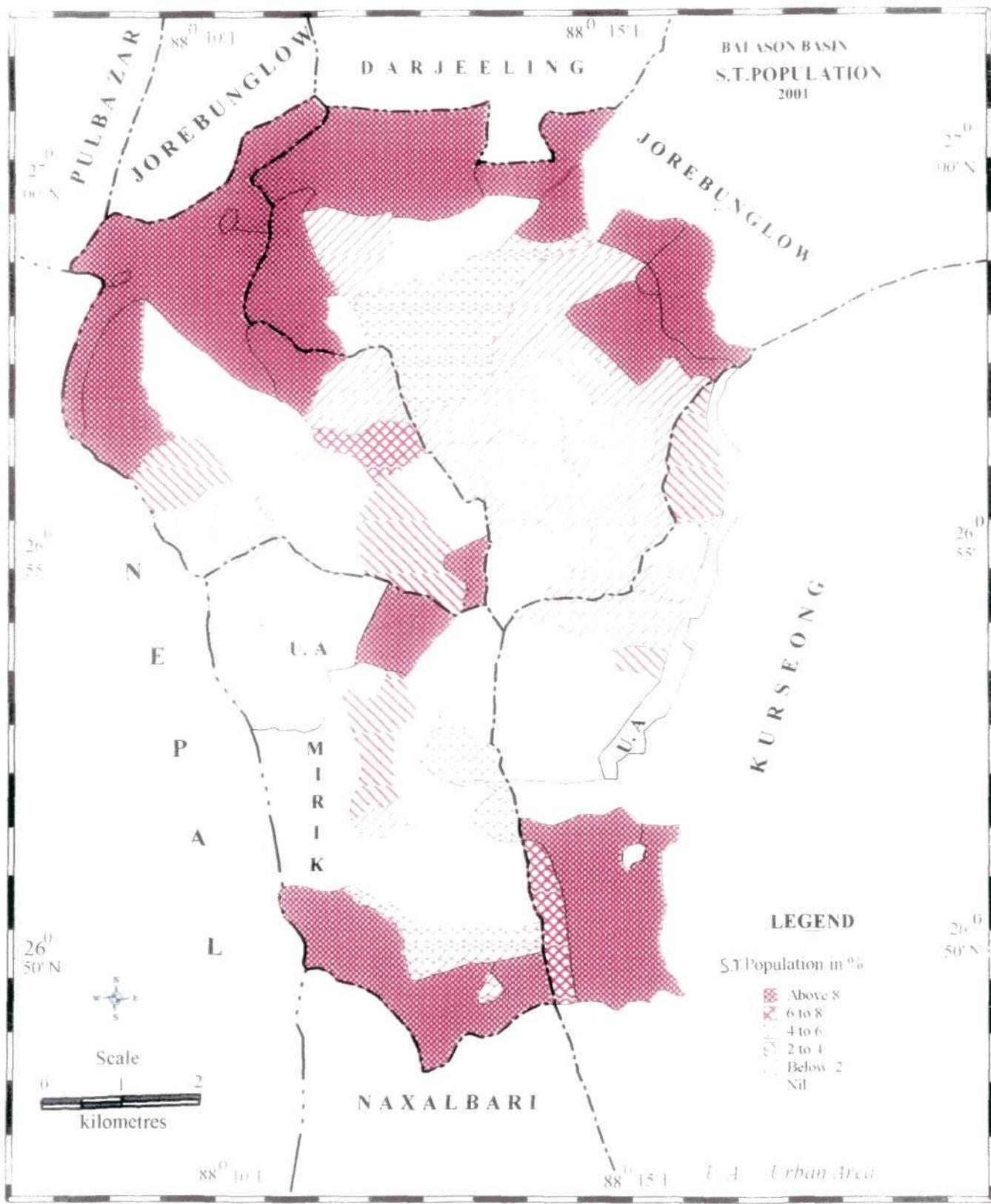


Fig. 3.6

peaceful and friendly international relations and for permitting the free plays of demographic process (Chanda et. al., 1980). The trend of literacy is the index of socio – economic development of the society. Education affects demographic behavior concerning marriage, fertility, mortality as well as labour force. A very low degree of literacy is an obstacle to economic growth. The basic minimum measurement of educational status is the degree of literacy. But it is very difficult to measure the degree of literacy in accurate terms (Ghosh, 1985).

Table: 3.6. Classification of villages on the basis of percentage of literates to total population.

Ranges	Category	No. of villages	Percentages
> 75	Very High	9	14.29
75 – 70	High	22	34.92
70 – 65	Moderate	14	22.22
65 – 60	Low	8	12.70
< 60	Very Low	10	15.87
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Majority of the villages have high literacy rate. Rate of literacy increased by leaps and bounds in the study area in the last three decades. This is evident from the fact that out of 63 villages, number of villages having more than 50% literacy, has increased from 12(19.05%) to 31 (49.21%) to 61 (96.83%) in the year 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively (Fig.3.7). Free and compulsory education along with mid-day meal encourages the children to go to school. Mainly villages in and

Table: 3.7. Classification of villages on the basis of percentage of male literacy to total male population.

Ranges	Category	No. of villages	Percentages
> 85	Very High	7	11.11
85 – 80	High	16	25.40
80 – 75	Moderate	20	31.75
75 – 70	Low	12	19.04
< 70	Very Low	8	12.70
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

around Kurseong town have high literacy rate because number of schools in such locations is more and economic condition of the people is high. Transport and communication is better along the Hill Cart

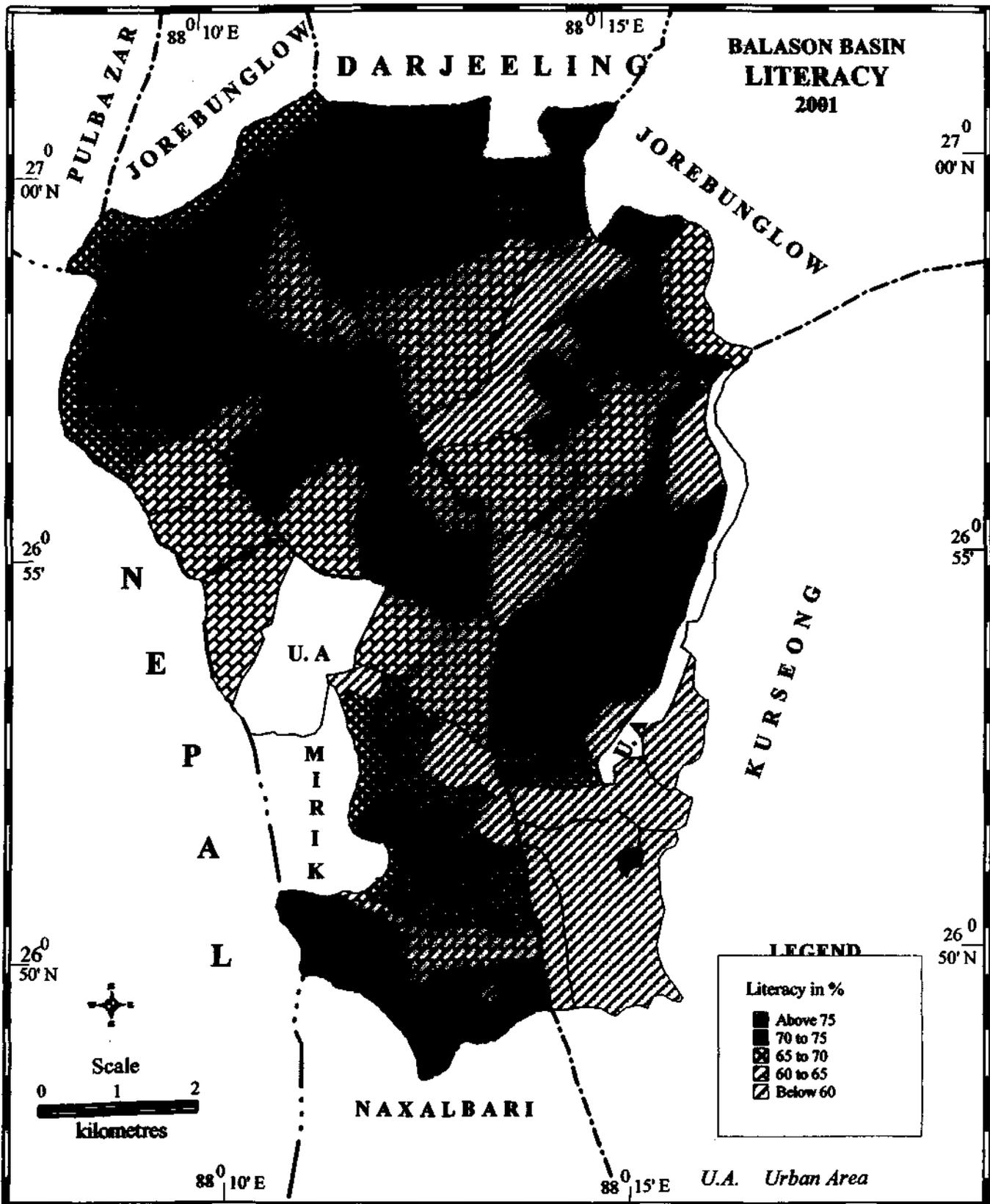


Fig. 3.7

Road, than other areas which improve accessibility. Usually tea gardens show low literacy rate because of their remote location.

Male literacy is high in the study area. If observed carefully, there was a sudden fluctuation in the pattern of growth of male literacy rate in the last three decades. Percentage of villages having above 50% literacy changed from 96.83% to 49.21% to 100% in the year 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively. Literacy rate among males are higher than the females because they are the main bread earners of the family. Manjha Fst. records the highest male literacy rate because it has the lowest male population in the study area. Actually, Ragbul has the highest literacy rate (87.39%) in the basin. Other than forest areas, Pulungdung T.E. has the lowest male literacy (57.87%)(Fig. 3.8).

Table: 3.8. Classification of villages according to the percentage of female literacy to total female population.

Ranges	Category	No. of Villages	Percentages
> 65	Very High	12	19.05
65 - 60	High	18	28.57
60 - 55	Moderate	15	23.81
55 - 50	Low	6	9.52
< 50	Very Low	12	19.05
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Female literacy rate is extremely low in the study area. According to 1981 Census, there were no such villages with literacy rate above 50%. Female population is backward as well as neglected. Early marriage, household work, working in the tea gardens, going to the forest for collecting fuel wood and fodder, bringing water from far are the main activities, which keep them away from the schools. Out of 63 villages, number of villages having above 50% literacy was 12 (19.05%) in 1991 and 51 (80.95%) in 2001, which is a major improvement. Female literacy in the study area should be given more importance in future because it is still far below the male literacy rate. Highest female literacy (77.37%) is observed in Jorebunglow and lowest (35.83%) in Pulungdung T.E (Fig. 3.9).

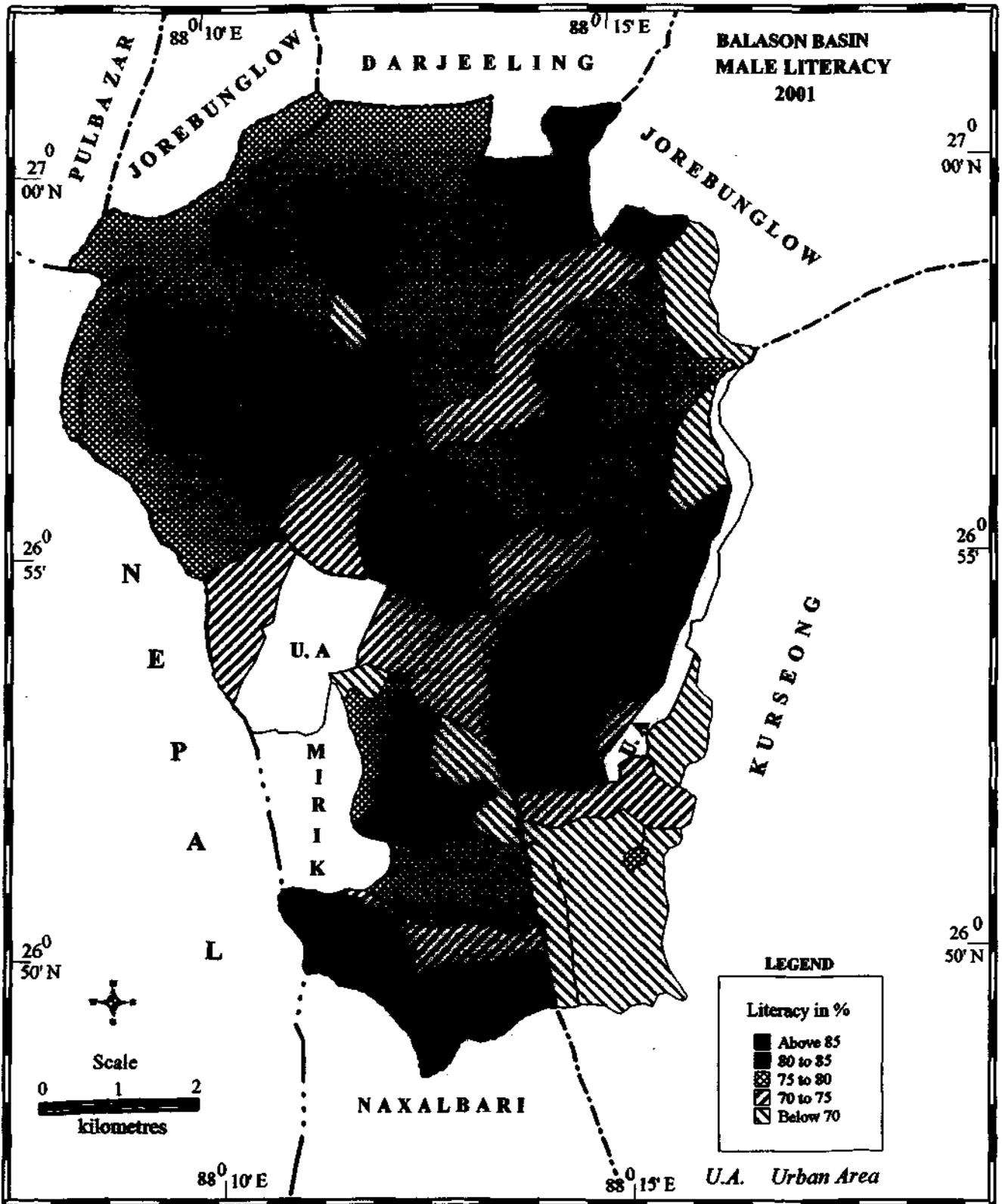


Fig. 3.8

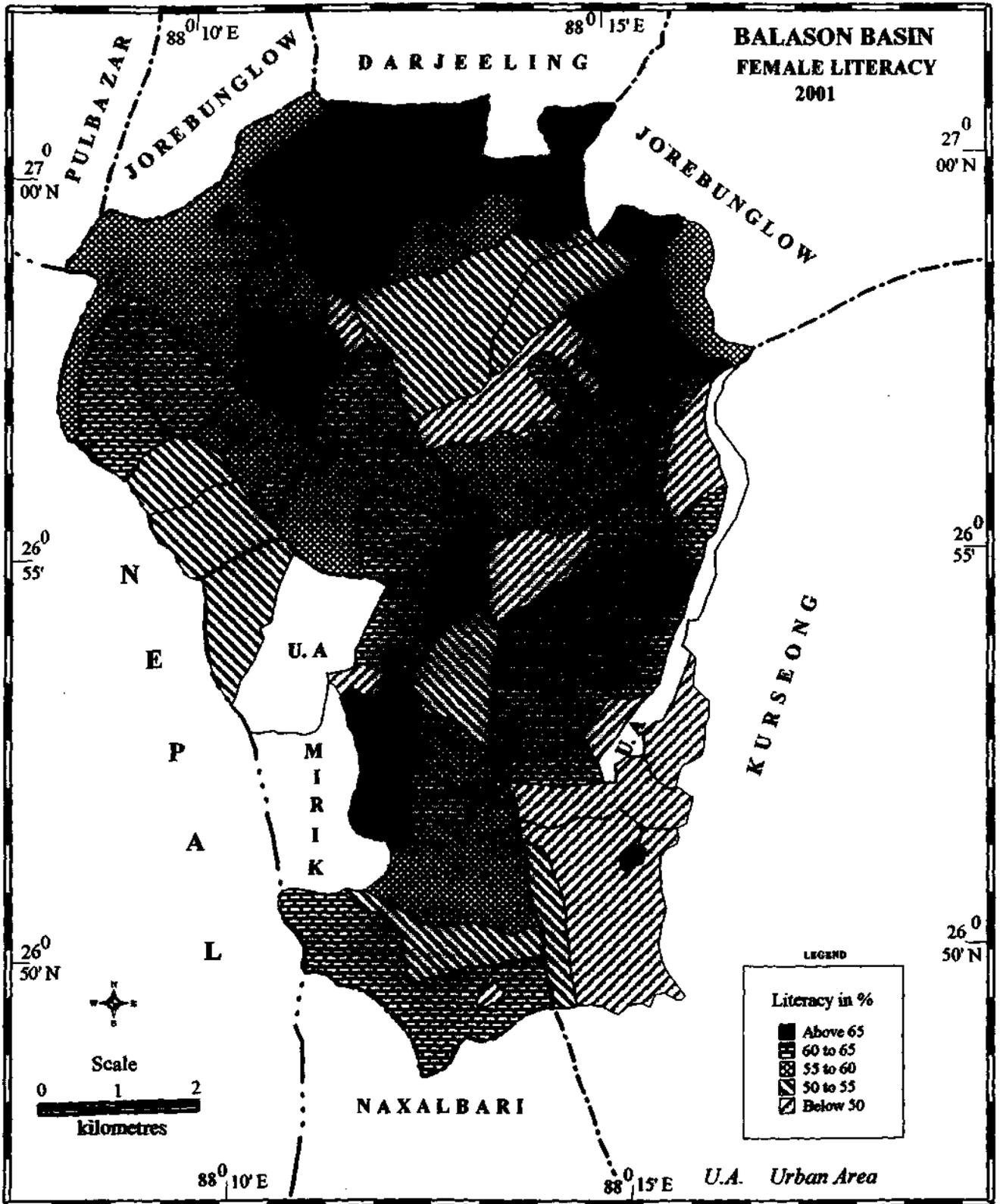


Fig. 3.9

### 3.3. DENSITY OF POPULATION

The distribution of arithmetic density of population can be explained by analyzing the density pattern. Population density is a useful abstraction, assisting in the analysis of diversity of man's distribution in space (Clark, 1977). Density of population is one of the most important parameters to determine the pressure of population on land. Density of population is not uniform in the study area. The difficult mountainous terrain, scarcity of agricultural land, paucity of water for irrigation, extensive soil erosion and thick forest cover have been some of the deterrents in the way of dense population in most of the areas.

Table: 3.9. Classification of villages according to density of population (persons/hectare).

Ranges	Category	No. of villages	Percentages
> 20	Very High	4	6.35
20 - 15	High	1	1.59
15 - 10	Moderate	4	6.35
10 - 5	Low	15	23.81
< 5	Very Low	35	55.55
Nil		4	6.35
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Mostly tea gardens have low density of population. Population density ranges from 332 persons per hectare in Sukhiapokhri to 1 person per hectare in the forested villages, which is extremely uneven in nature. Percentage of population density below 10 persons per hectare was 79.37%, 63.49% and 84.13% in 2001, 1991 and 1981 respectively (Fig. 3.10). Population density keeps on fluctuating in the study area. Khasmahals are densely populated because people from different parts of the district grabbed these lands, as these are vested lands and settled down. As more and more people settled down, commercial activities started thus turning these areas into congested commercial centers. Such places have access to water, improved transport and communication and act as centers of administrative importance and economic activities. But such khasmahals are less in number in the study area.

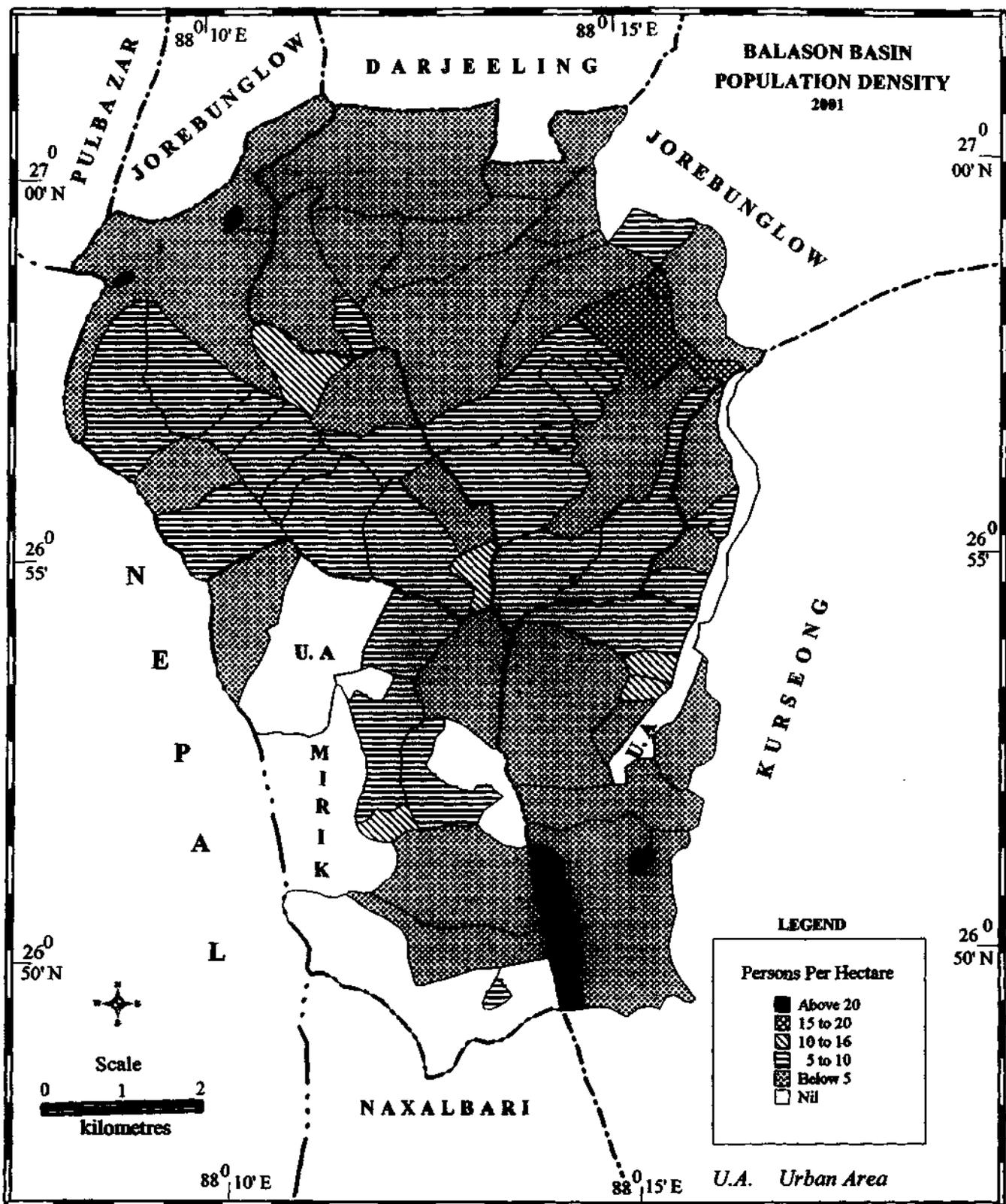


Fig. 3.10

### 3.4. GROWTH OF POPULATION

Changes in population are more normal than stable states, so it is no surprise that observers attempt to isolate those elements, which combine to produce output measures of population (Baxter and Williams, 1978). A population is constantly in a state of influx. During this process the size of population varies and develops potentialities for unlimited growth (Rajkumar, 1986). The dynamics of population growth of an area over a certain length of time is the sum of the net migration in the region during the period under consideration (Singh, 1985). Population growth is one of the important aspects to study the pressure of population on land of an area. Fertility, mortality, migration, crude birth rate and crude death rate are the basic components of natural population growth.

Table: 3.10. Classification of villages on the basis of the percentage of growth of population. (1991-2001)

Population growth in %	Category	No. of villages (-)	Percentages (-)	No. of villages (+)	Percentages (+)
> 45	Very High	4	6.35	8	12.70
45 - 35	High	3	4.76	2	3.17
35 - 25	Moderate	2	3.17	3	4.76
25 - 15	Low	3	4.76	2	3.17
< 15	Very Low	10	15.87	20	31.75
Total		22	34.92	35	55.56

Source: Census of India, 2001.

In the study area, maximum villages have positive growth of population though the percentage of growth is low. Around 14% of the villages have recorded moderate (25% - 35%) to very high (> 45%) negative growth of population may be due to migration and low rate of natural birth. Tea gardens have the maximum positive growth of population due to lack of education and awareness. Five forest areas have no growth of population may be due to the restrictions imposed to settle in the forest area by the Forest Departments. According to 1981 Census, percentages of positive and negative growth of population were almost the same. But in 1991, 80.95% of the villages showed positive growth of population whereas 19.05% showed negative growth. This condition improved in 2001 with 55.56% of the villages showing

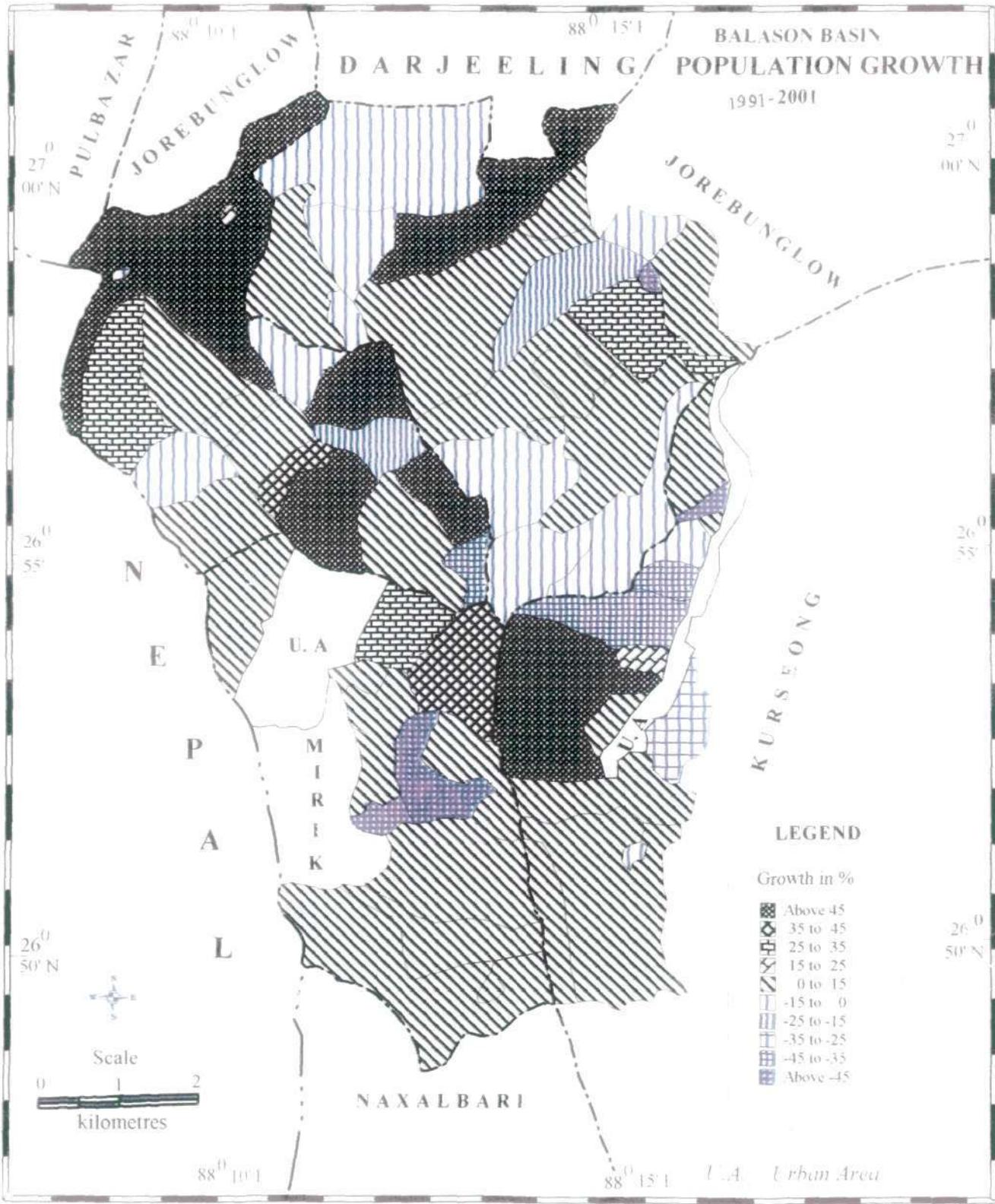


Fig.3.11

positive growth of population, which decreased from before and 34.92% showed negative growth, which increased from before (Fig. 3.11).

### 3.5. OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

Occupation reveals the nature of economic development and sophistication of a country (Ghosh, 1985). Occupation determines the individual's relationship with other individuals in the same and other occupations (Hall, 1975). Occupational structure is the unitary relationship pattern of the three occupational components – primary, secondary and tertiary working population of an area, which constitute the core of the economic system. Among all the social attributes of a given individual or group, occupation is of paramount importance. It is particularly significant for the population analysis, since to a considerable extent, the nature of work determines the surroundings both physical and cultural (Smith, 1948).

Distribution of workers indicates the employment scenario of the study area. Lack of agricultural land and water for irrigation discouraged agricultural activities in the river basin. Land is pre occupied by tea gardens, which provides employment to the people who emigrated from different areas. Percentages of cultivators and agricultural labourers are low whereas percentage of other worker is very high. The Tea District Emigration Act of 1868 gave rise to the first batch of legally recognized labour. By virtue of tripartite settlement during the last 25 years quite sizable volumes of employment in different categories have been created (Labour Gazetteer, 1994).

Table:3.11. Village wise distribution of percentage of total workers.

Total Workers in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage of villages to total
> 45	Very High	3	4.76
45 – 40	High	9	14.29
40 – 35	Moderate	14	22.22
35 – 30	Low	26	41.27
< 30	Very Low	11	17.46
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Total worker percentage is low in most of the villages of the Balason basin. Population growth is faster than economic growth. People are only dependent on agriculture but agricultural land is less compared to population. Limited avenues of employment kept the total worker percentage low. Maximum tea gardens, which are the only source of employment in the basin, are presently stagnant with zero employment opportunities. Young men leave the villages to join army and a few go to work in the cities. Maximum villages in the basin have less than 35% total workers. Out of 63 villages, number of villages having less than 35% total worker was 40 (63.49%), 35 (55.55%) and 37 (58.73%) in 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively. But at the same time, the number of villages, having above 35% total worker, increased at the rate of 21, 22 and 26 in 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively (Fig. 3.12).

Table: 3.12. Village wise distribution of percentage of main workers.

Main Workers in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage of villages to total
> 90	Very High	17	26.98
90 - 80	High	18	28.58
80 - 70	Moderate	16	25.40
70 - 60	Low	6	9.52
< 60	Very Low	6	9.52
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

In the study area, there is a sudden hike in the percentage of main worker in 2001 than in 1991 and 1981. People working in the tea gardens and tea industries were always more but the sudden influx may be due to more people getting employed in trade, transport, construction and mining (Fig. 3.13).

Percentage of cultivators has drastically declined in the study area. According to 2001 census, there are only 12 villages having only 10% cultivators. But this amount was more in 1991 and 1981 being 21 and 20 villages respectively. This may be due to the fact that agricultural land became limited due to terrain, sloping and scarce in the hilly areas. Agricultural land is also small in size and area due to fragmentation, making agricultural practice unprofitable. Agriculture in

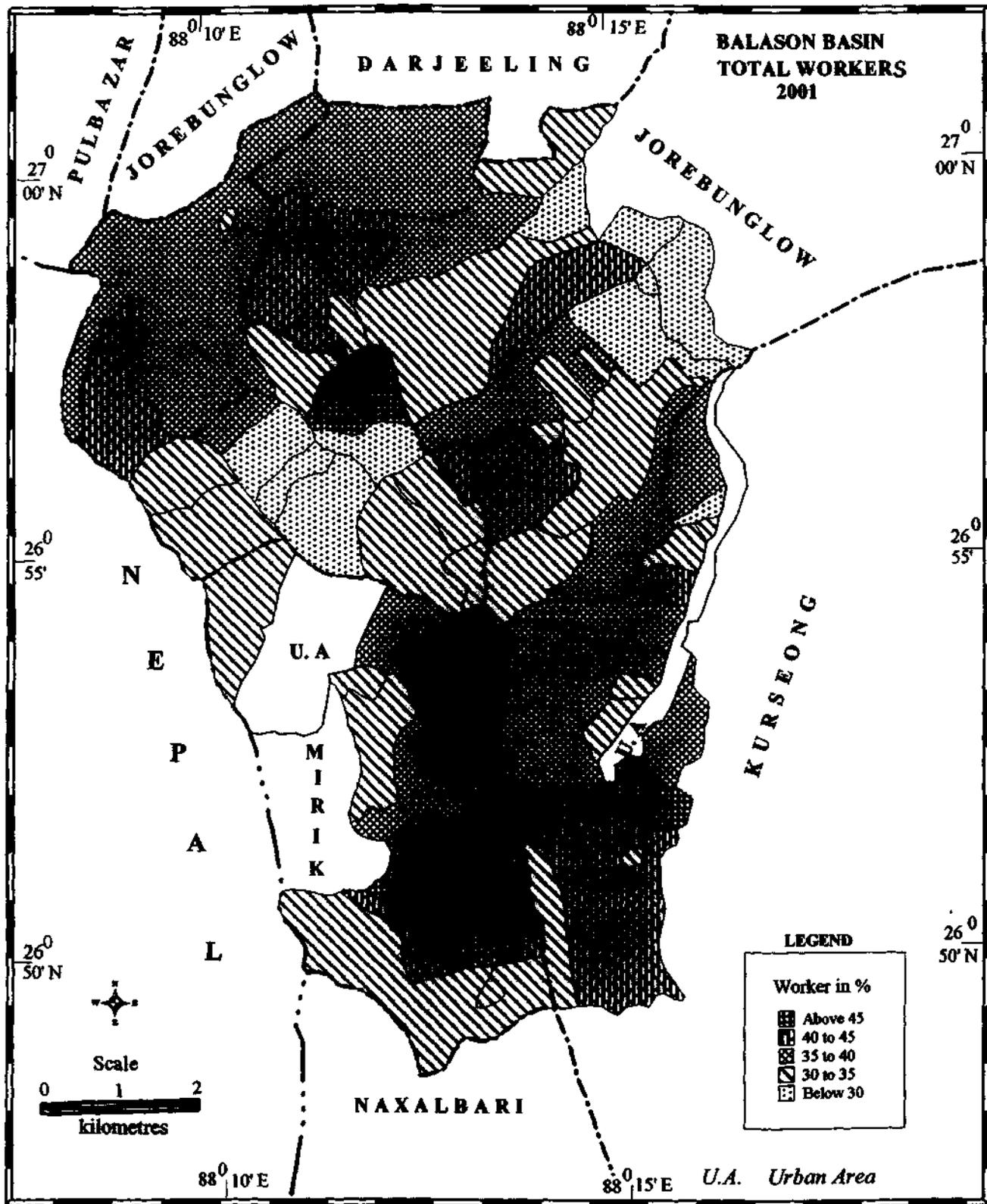


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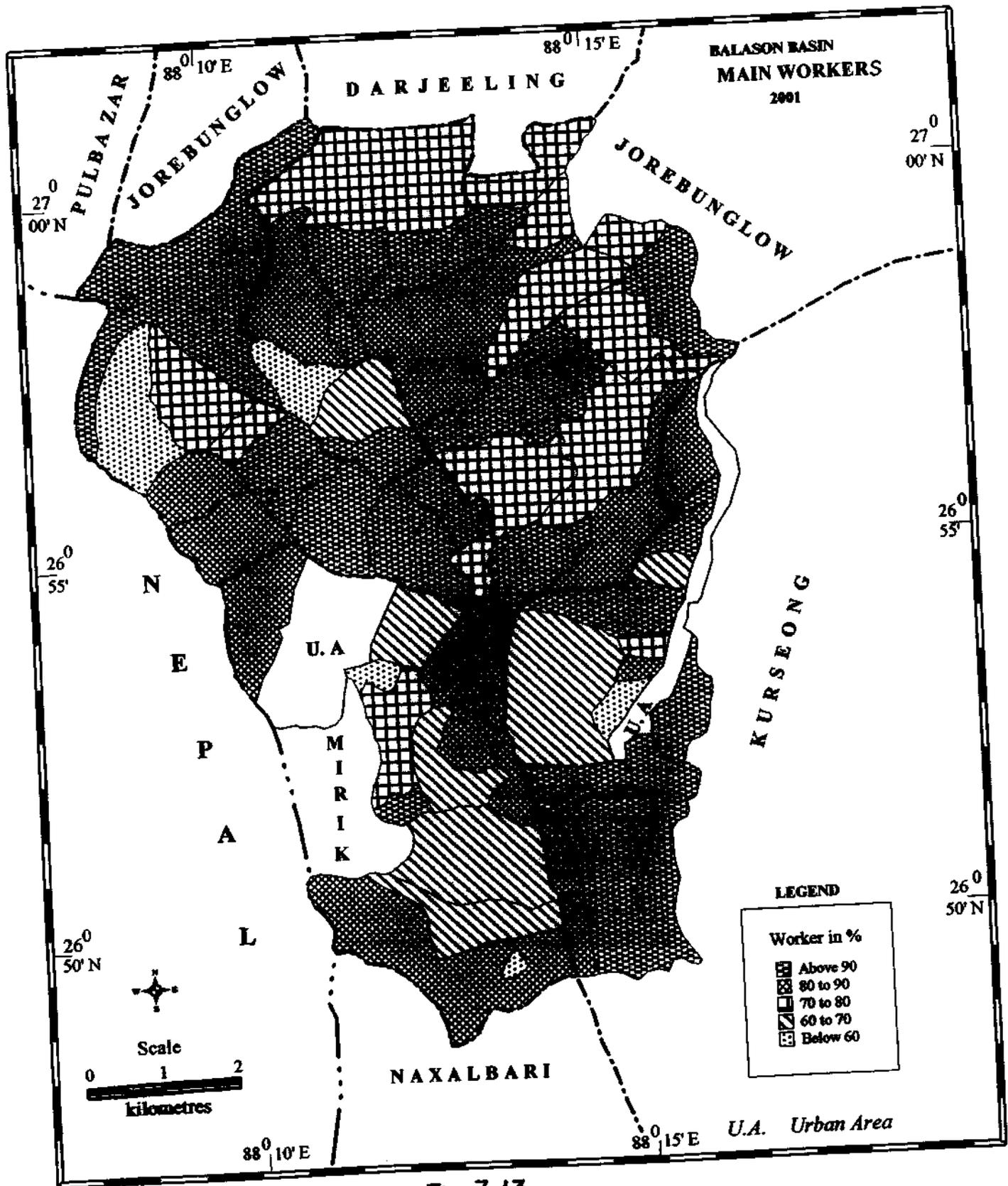


Fig. 3.13

Table:3.13. Village wise distribution of percentage of cultivators.

Cultivators in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 10	Very High	12	19.05
10 – 8	High	1	1.59
8 – 6	Moderate	2	3.17
6 – 4	Low	3	4.76
< 4	Very Low	40	63.49
Nil		5	7.94
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

the tea gardens is restricted. People in the tea gardens grow crops, in the backyard, only for self-consumption. Cultivation can only be done in the khasmahals and bastis, where the percentage of cultivators is the high. Mirik khasmahal has the highest percentage of cultivators i.e. 77.20% to total main workers. Among the khasmahals, Pokhriabong has the lowest percentage of cultivators i.e. 1.29% to total main workers (Fig. 3.14). Vegetable and fruit cultivation in Mirik and Sonada khasmahals are of high commercial value in the local markets.

Table: 3.14. Village wise distribution of percentage of agricultural labourers.

Agricultural labourers in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 8	Very High	12	19.05
8 – 6	High	3	4.76
6 – 4	Moderate	2	3.17
4 – 2	Low	4	6.35
< 2	Very Low	22	34.92
Nil		20	31.75
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

The percentage of agricultural labourers is lower than the cultivators in the Balason basin. Family members are only cultivating the small patch of land they have. So demand for agricultural labourers is decreasing day by day. Agricultural land is getting occupied by residential complexes, which are thought to be more profitable(Fig3.14a).

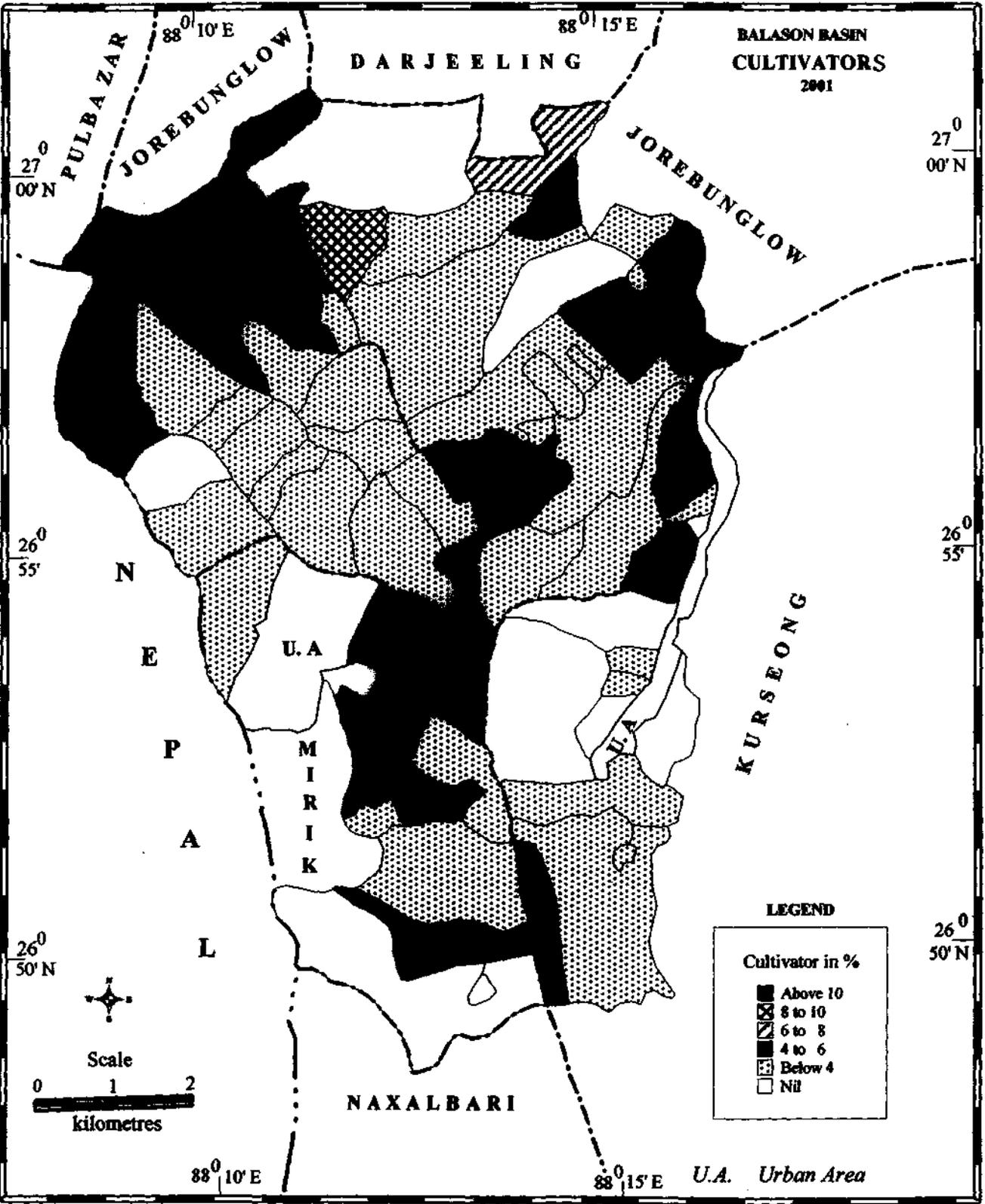


Fig. 3.14

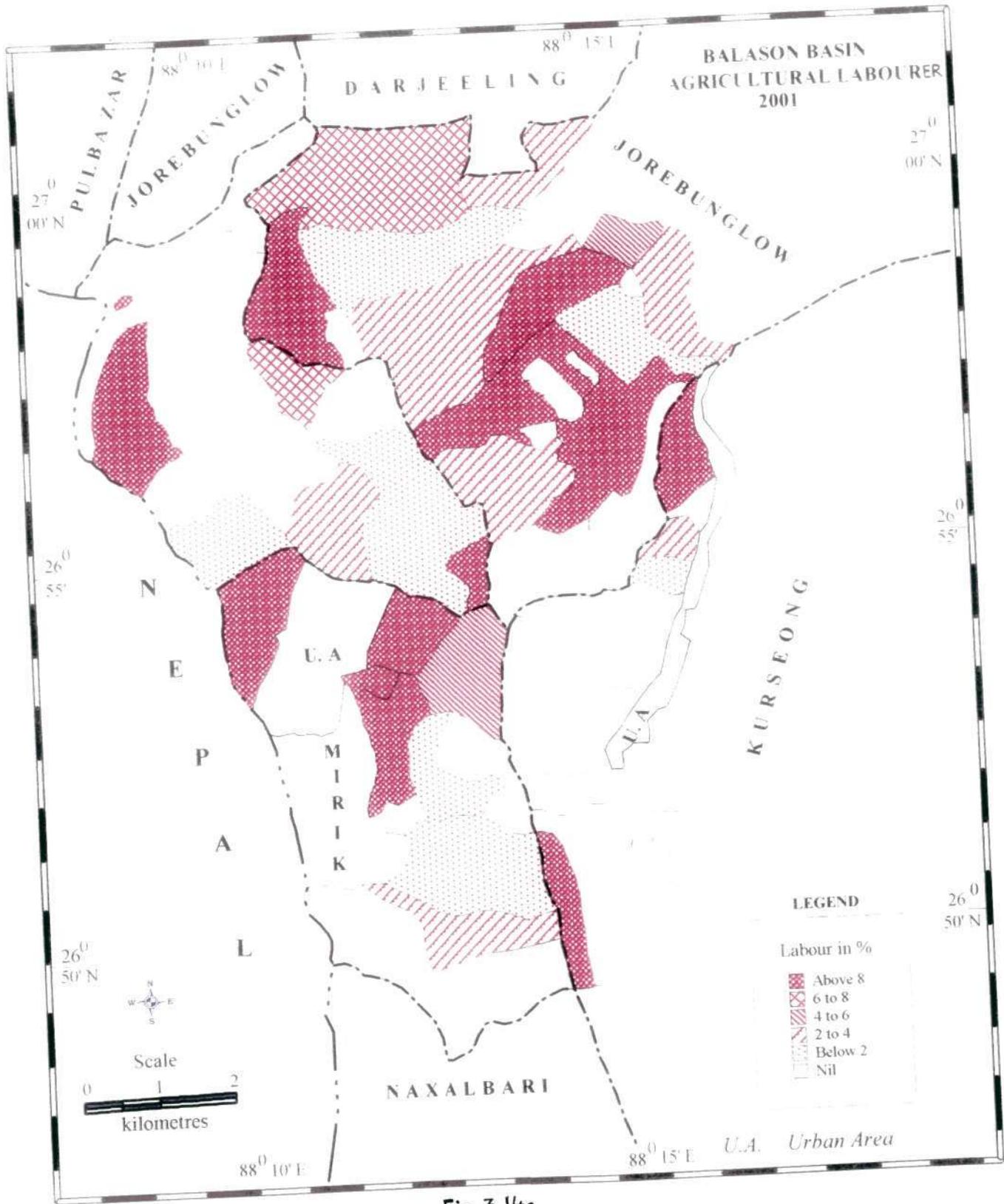


Fig.3.14a

Table: 3.15. Village wise distribution of percentage of other workers.

Other Workers in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 95	Very High	30	47.62
95 - 85	High	12	19.05
85 - 75	Moderate	9	14.29
75 - 65	Low	3	4.75
< 65	Very Low	9	14.29
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

The percentage of other workers is high in the study area because a large area of the basin is occupied by tea gardens. These other workers are the people who work in these tea gardens as permanent labourers. Tea gardens are the major source of employments in the basin. Almost 30 villages have above 95% other workers and mostly these are tea gardens. The workers who come under this category include factory workers, plantation workers, all Government servants, municipal employees, teachers etc. In the study area, out of the total main workers, 85% on an average are other workers. This percentage is quite high. In 1991 and 1981 the percentage was 73.34% and 74.99% in the corresponding areas (Fig. 3.15).

Table: 3.16. Village wise distribution of percentage of marginal workers.

Marginal Workers in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 40	Very High	6	9.52
40 - 30	High	6	9.52
30 - 20	Moderate	15	23.81
20 - 10	Low	19	30.16
< 10	Very Low	16	25.40
Nil		1	1.59
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

The percentage of marginal workers in the study area is low because percentage of total main workers is very high. Out of 63 villages in the study area, 40 are tea gardens employing maximum population of the Balason basin. So, marginal workers are less in the tea gardens because less casual workers are employed. Such tea gardens are Tarzum and Sagmaru, which have less than 2% marginal workers. The highest percentage of marginal workers are found in Phuguri forest, where people have no permanent job and are

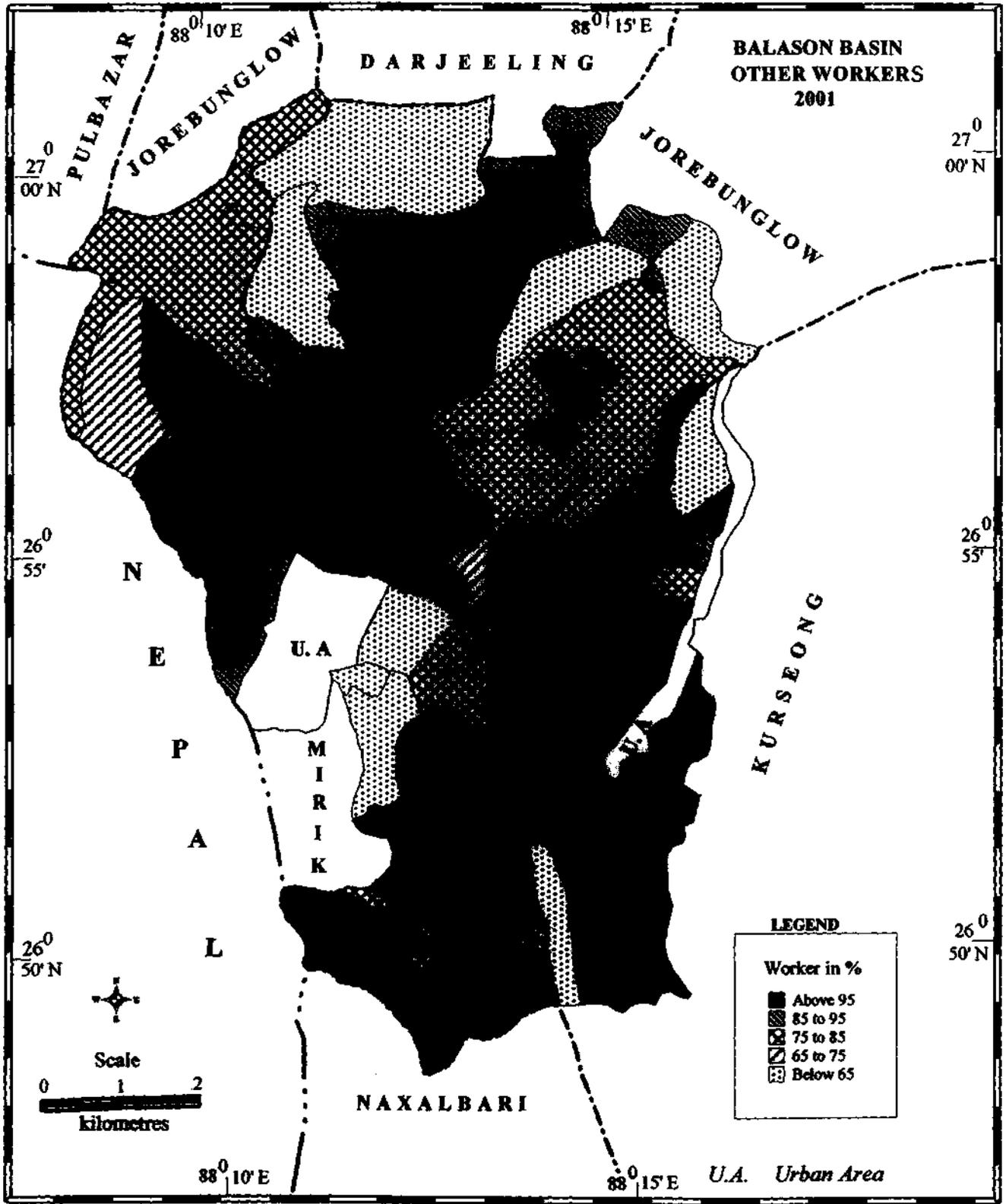


Fig.3.15

temporarily employed by the Forest Department and live by collecting fuel wood and fodder from the forest. Among the tea gardens, Springside has the largest percentage of marginal workers i.e. 89.40%. Among the khasmahals, Pokhribong has 47.57% marginal workers, which is the highest. Female marginal workers are more in the tea gardens because they are employed during plucking of leaves. Male workers are more in the khasmahals because they are employed during cultivation and harvesting of crops and in construction work, trade and transport. Surprisingly, in 1991 and 1981 the highest percentage of marginal workers were 12.46% and 33.33% respectively. This indicates a sudden increase in the percentage of marginal workers in 2001 (Fig. 3.16).

Table: 3.17. Village wise distribution of percentage of non-workers.

Non-Worker in %	Category	No. of villages	Percentage
> 70	Very High	11	17.46
70 – 65	High	26	41.27
65 – 60	Moderate	14	22.22
60 – 55	Low	9	14.29
< 55	Very Low	3	4.76
Total		63	100.00

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Non-worker percentage is quite high in the Balason basin, which indicates high growth of population and limited job opportunities. So dependents are more and pressure of population on family is high. This may deteriorate the standard of living. Total non-worker percentage ranges from 77.81% in Rangbul to 46.10% in Manjua forest. Percentage of villages having above 60% non-workers has increased through the last three decades. This was 65.08%, 71.43% and 80.97% in 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively (Fig. 3.17).

## CONCLUSION

Population is the central element around which all other elements revolve and derive geographical significance. According to 2001 census, the total rural population of the study area is 135615 and total urban population is 49160. So the rural population density is 452

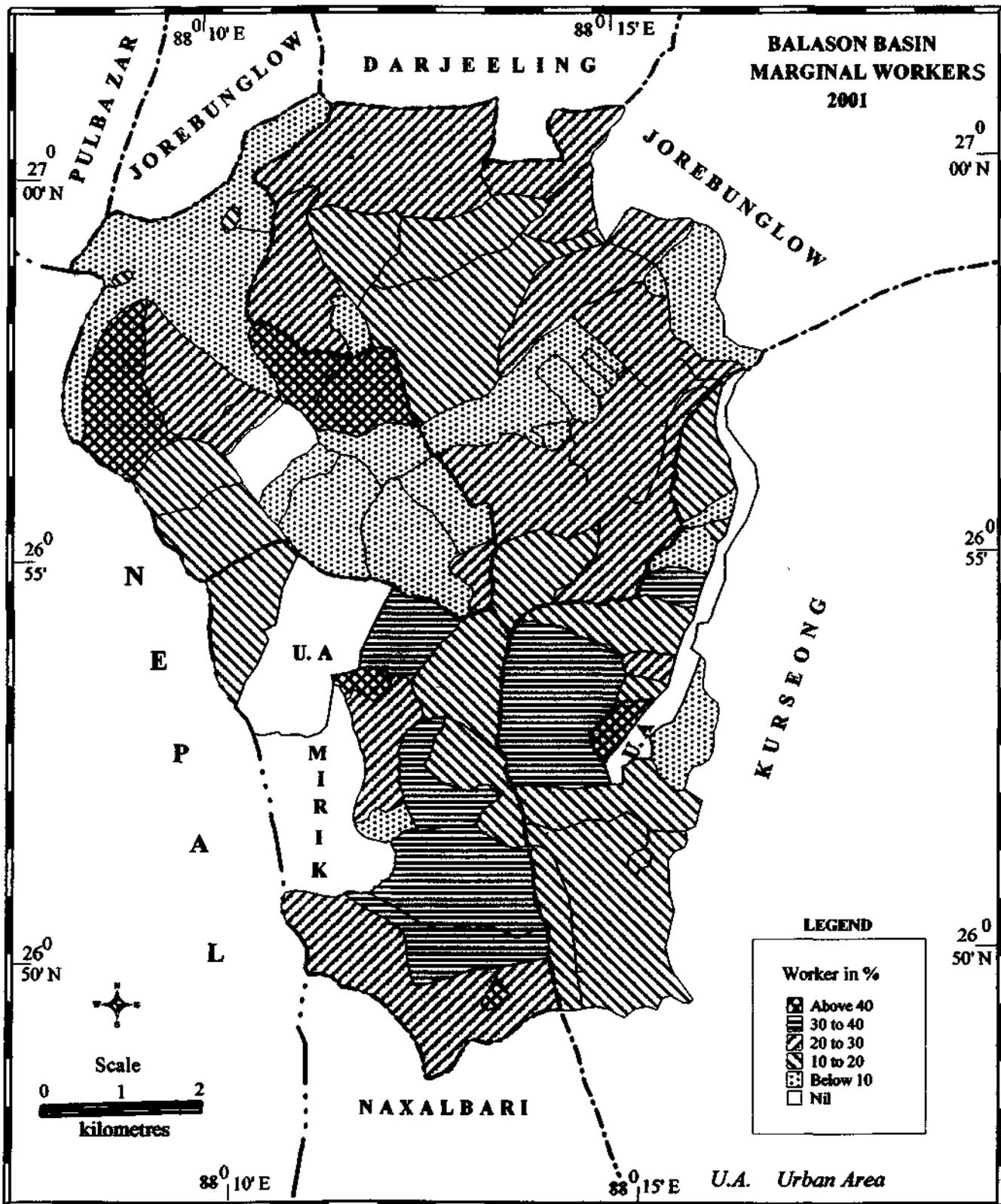
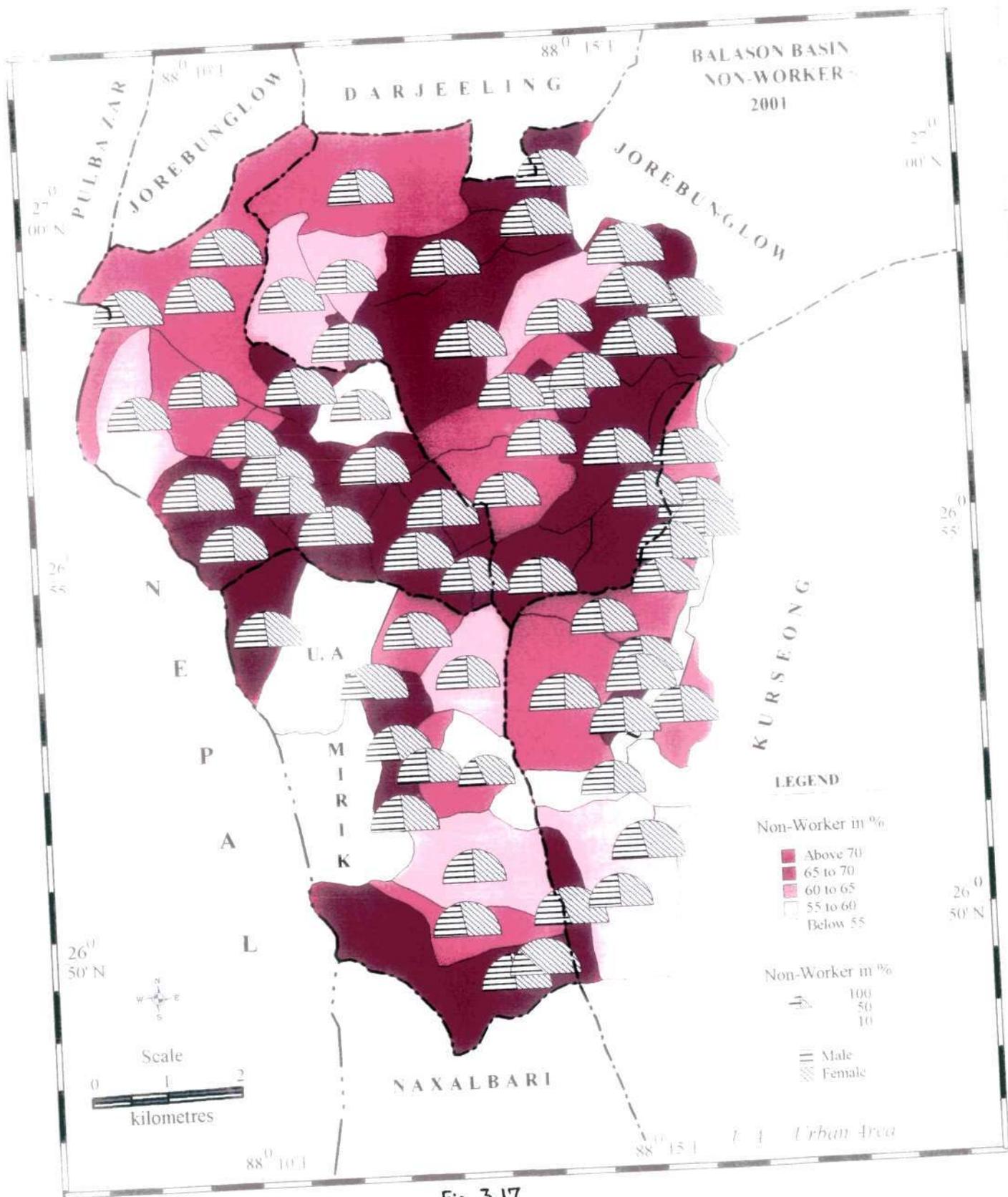


Fig.3.16



persons per km<sup>2</sup> and urban population density is 4256 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. The population distribution in the study area is extremely uneven due to mountainous terrain, severe climate, non-availability of agricultural land and scarcity of water. Villages in the study area are mostly very small in size. Two forests namely Manjha and Ghoom Pahar are very large in size. Village having population less than 1000 is more in the study area. Villages having medium range of population decreased whereas villages having very high population increased during the last three decades. Majority of the villages have moderate to high sex ratio because tea gardens employ female workers more than males. People in the study area are mainly immigrants from Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and Sikkim. In general the S.C. population is more than the S.T. population in the study area. Tea gardens have more of S.C. and general castes whereas khasmahals have more S.T. population compared to tea gardens. Here S.T. population is involved in non-farming activities and work as construction labourers, porters, water carriers etc. Literacy rate is high among males than females. Literacy rate has increased by leaps and bounds in the last three decades. With free and compulsory education many children are attracted towards the educational institutions in the present time. No detention policy of the Government and provision for mid day meal allure the children to go to school. Tea gardens show low literacy rate because of their remoteness, lack of proper infrastructure, lack of trained teachers and irregular inspection by the Government departments. In most of the villages, there is no scope for pursuing higher education because of lack of high schools in the villages. Government education is cheap whereas private educational institutes impart are very expensive at the same time. Female literacy rate is low because they mostly work in the tea gardens or remain busy with daily household chores. Population density is very low in majority of the villages. Adverse living conditions in the hills do not allow population to be dense. Only the khasmahals are densely populated because of availability of land to construct houses, availability of supplied water, good transport network and other

facilities.

Majority of the villages have positive growth of population. Such villages are tea gardens where people are still backward, uneducated and irresponsible. Among the total workers, main workers are more than the marginal workers. Main workers are mostly other workers because the area has many tea gardens and people working in the tea gardens constitute this group. Due to scarcity of agricultural land and water, percentage of cultivators and agricultural labourers occupy a meager share of the main workers. Non worker percentage is quite high, which indicates high dependency ratio. Since population growth is high and mortality rate is low, children and aged people fall under this group and number of villages having non workers is increasing through the last three decades.