

CHAPTER-III

POPULATION AND ITS GROWTH

INTRODUCTION:

Demography is one of the sprouts from the venerable trunk of the science of geography. It focuses the measure of the rates and trends of various population characteristics, such as distribution, growth, density, composition etc. Trewartha (1969) has reminded the significance of the role of man in determining the character of areas. According to his opinion, 'man is the pivotal point from which all other elements are observed and derive meaning and significance'. So population is the focus to study the problems of an area. In fact there is a practical value in measuring population growth in order to be able to plan for satisfying man's needs throughout his life. Chandna (1994) has rightly observed that man has been considered the most undisputed and well established core of population geography and the various aspects of man have come to emerge as its subject matter. Singh (1972) has properly suggested that the enormous growth of population within a short span of time has brought in its wake several interesting demographic aspects, which have greatly moulded the structural form and cultural life of the city.

Melezin (1963) describes population geography as the study of population distribution and productive relationship existing within various population groups, the settlement network and its fitness, usefulness and effectiveness for productive goals of society. In this study the present investigator tries to assess not only the distribution of population in the town, but also population changes since 1901 upto 1997, composition of

population, age, sex structure, densities, etc. and some of the associated problems which arise due to population change.

Population is not a burden always. Demographers consider it as human resource. Human resource development is a causal factor for the cultural and economic development of a country. For political reasons, the entire area starting from Bangaon (a sub-division town) to Calcutta has seen a high rise in the population figure. But the additional population has developed agriculture commerce and many primary, secondary and tertiary levels of occupations. Barasat has witnessed it. It is nothing new from other municipal areas around. But the administrative measure on the recommendation of the Ashoke Mitra Committee, i.e. converting it into a separate district town of Uttar 24 Parganas, necessitated a planning, structural reform and before-hand anticipation. This has compelled the present investigator to give a fresh look over the present and future problems. So far as the swelling of urban population in West Bengal is concerned, some characteristic are noticed. The principal city, i.e. Calcutta swelled in area and population since 1911. There was no outflow from Calcutta. Old towns around Calcutta also grew in size and population, thus reducing the pressure on Calcutta.

Calcutta itself and the towns around did not become production (industrial) centers by themselves, causing hereby the level of tertiary occupation. This is urbanisation unrelated to the large scale production, urban centers remained substantially dependent on no productive level of occupation.

Munshi (1975) has observed that Calcutta and 24-Parganas registered a growth of factory employment (1961-66) of +0.88 but since showed a negative growth of -0.18. Total West Bengal index is -0.40. Barasat is within 25 kms. of Calcutta, an urban area without industry or

any large scale factory. Its vast hinterland is predominantly agricultural. Even then the green revolution was a phenomenon of Dakhin 24-Parganas, Hugly, Bardhaman, Medinipur and Birbhum. Barasat is outside the influence of green revolution. If Calcutta behaves like a huge magnet, then these small towns around Calcutta could have been depopulated. But this did not happen. People from the villages moved to these towns, indicating the stagnant agriculture and lack of occupational avenues there. They (small towns) have hardly any registered factory using electricity but only have small-scale industry type. They exist today because they are now the administrative centers. These administrative related services and the consequent of other branches of tertiary activities sustain these towns. Added to this is the wave of displaced persons from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh since 1971). This one way migration had three phases '1948-52, 1961-64 and 1970-72. It still continues.

Any serious observer will notice that small towns serve as distributing centers of different merchandise. *Champadalir More*, a wholesale distributing centre of vegetables, fish etc. is one such example in Barasat (Plate - 62). They hardly boast of any industry. They depend on their agricultural hinterland. Any upheaval like drought, famine, flood or epidemic upsets the service sectors of these towns. These towns by themselves are of the nature of satellites around the principal city area. They could never be developed into economic nerve-centres of the region. The picture of overurbanisation is everywhere on the study area Barasat reflects the points raised above. The distribution of population wardwise is given in Appendix-I.

From Appendix-I it is revealed that since 1971, the area of the town changed from time to time, only population figures may not be sufficiently illuminating. Any change of population requires some form of

adjustment. Folke, Steen (1968) describe some central functions of a town as follows:- Administration, Communication, Finance, Education, Health, Transport, Recreation etc. The population explosion in Barasat thus requires adjustments, remodelling, reshiffling, etc. in the above mentioned dimensions.

3.1 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS:

Even before independence, the town showed a steady process of urbanisation. But population was mainly concentrated on both sides of the jessore road. It appears that the population was mostly local in nature which showed no signs of mobility.

The economic features of Barasat did not change, as no break through in agriculture took place, no industry, no new trade route opened. But after independence the demographic profile of Barasat changed enormously and along with it some changes in the occupational structure also emerged. This was not only a feature of Barasat but of the whole area from Bangaon, a border town of Dum Dum.

People came to the town to settle permanently. They revolutionised agriculture, developed fisheries, monopolised whole sale and retail business. Population congestion has increased in Barasat town and expanded incorporating the surrounding areas. By this time the urban authorities began to take serious notes. They thought that the influence zone of Calcutta has extended from north to south. In the first phase, mainly the refugees have migrated to India through the Bangaon border and have flooded the area upto Calcutta. There are some other factors which are involved in the congestion of population in the Barasat town, i.e. spill over population from Calcutta, rural urban migration, improved

municipal services, establishment of different administrative units, improved educational facilities, etc.

3.1.1 Distribution of population:

In 1971, after the emergence of Bangladesh, another wave of influx, much more than earlier influxes, was noticed. Population had increased in each ward after 1971. Table 3.1 shows different categories of population size of different wards in 1991. To find out the pattern of concentration, the wards are grouped into various sizes.

TABLE- 3.1 NUMBER OF WARDS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF POPULATION SIZE (1991)

Population size	Category	Name of the wards	Number of wards	Percentage
Below 3000	Very low	II, III, XIV	3	20.00
3001-5000	Low	VIII, XI, XV	3	20.00
5001-8000	Moderate	I, IV, V, VI, X	5	33.33
Above 8000	High	VII, IX, XII, XIII	4	26.67
Total			15	100.00

Source – census 1991

Table 3.1 reveals that 20% of the wards of the town has a very low population (below 3000) but most of the wards, such as I, IV, V, VI and X accommodate a moderate population. A high number of population is noticed only in 4 wards which is 26.67% of the total wards. The wards are VII, IX, XII, XIII. There are several factors involved for the upswing of population in the wards. The wards II, III and XIV, have small areas. Of these wards II and III are old wards, so more people can not be accommodated here. Ward XIV lies at the periphery a little away from the

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN BARASAT
TOWN (1991)

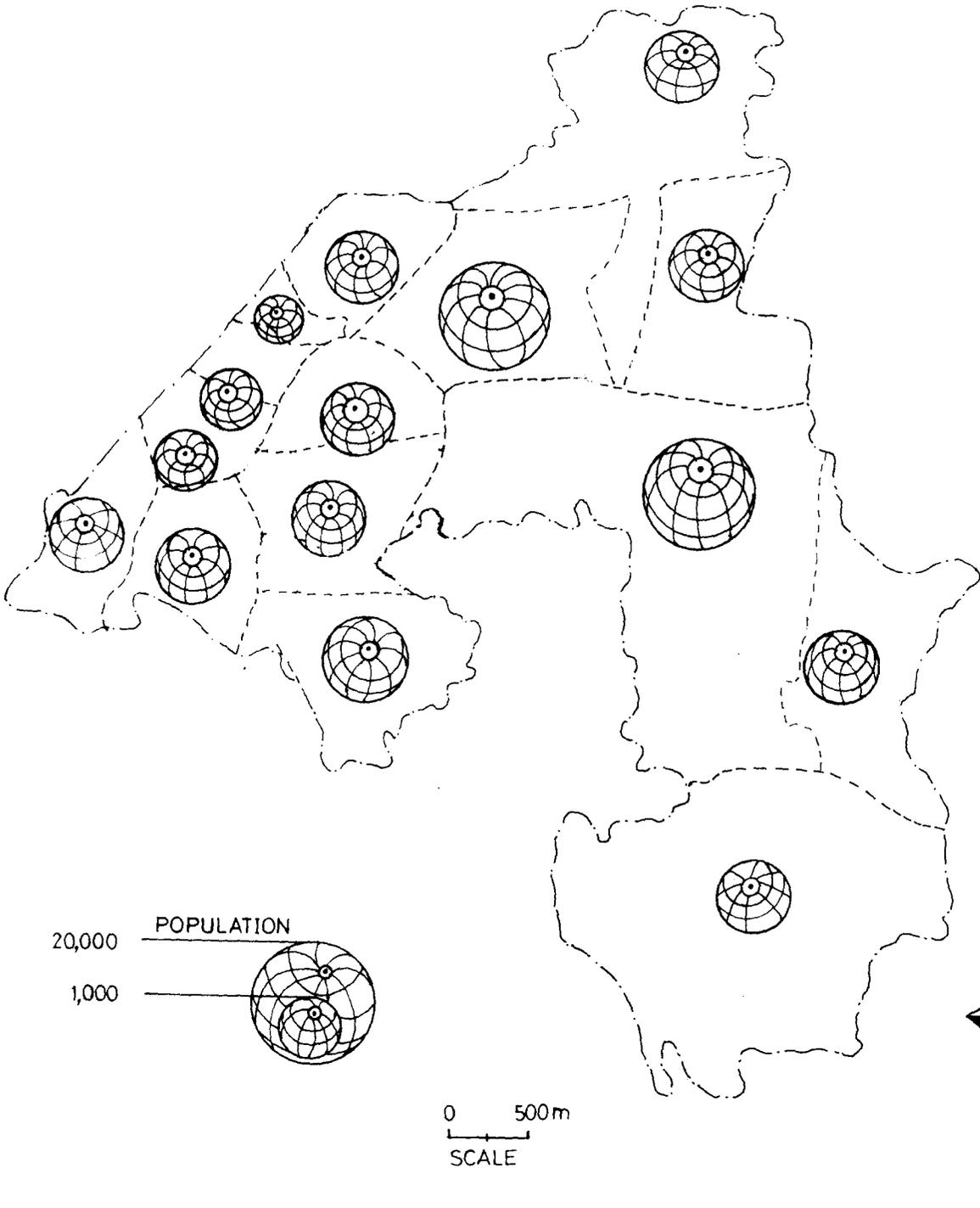


Fig.-31

main road. Small area, coupled with the problem of distance is the explanation of low population.

About high number of population, the respective wards are VII, IX, XII, XIII. From Appendix-I it is observed that apart from ward XV, ward XII and XIII are the next largest area. So they have more people than. About wards VII and IX, only wards VI and VIII are bigger than these two wards. But ward VII and IX get more people in it. However, in population distribution no one to one cause effect relationship exists. Fig. (3.1).

3.1.2 Population Growth:

The term growth of population is often used changing the number of inhabitants of a territory during a specific period of time, irrespective of the fact whether the change is negative or positive. Such a particular transition can be measured in terms of various mathematical and graphical processes.

TABLE 3.2 INDEX GROWTH OF POPULATION (1901-1991)

YEAR	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
Popula- tion	8634	8790	8211	8672	11,230	16,027	29,281	4,2,642	66,504	1,02,660
Index of Growth %	100.0	101.8	95.1	100.4	130.1	185.6	339.1	493.9	770.3	1189.0

Source – Census India

Table 3.2 indicates the growth of index rate of population. Here an index of growth of population depends principally on migration. People generally migrate from one place to another seeking livelihood. Resulting changes of population growth rate are not dependent upon whims or adventures. Reasons are economic. In the earlier part of the century

push factors from the adjoining areas are not important, no important industry did not arise in Barasat.

Fig 3.2 shows the growth rate of population between 1901 and 1911. The growth rate was only 101.8%, during 1901-1911. Calcutta was not a dying city till then; near-by Barrackpore was the industrial centre. So Barasat had nothing more to offer. Between 1911 and 1921 there was a decline in the growth rate. It was an all India trend. Influenza, Malaria were reasons. The growth rate is 100.4% between 1921 and 1931. There was a great economic depression by the time. But Indian villages enjoying a closed economy were almost immune to the effect of depression. Between 1931 and 1941, the growth index is 130.1% a significant upswing. This 1931 is a cut off year. Even Calcutta registered a high growth of population. From 1939-1941 was the beginning years of the Second World War Calcutta and the area near by were busy for the industrial activity. Many war-related job activities sprang up. This may explain this growth. Between 1941-51 and 1951-61 again another sharp rise is noticeable. The indices are 185.6% and 339.1%. These twenty years are the periods of urbanization proper. Subdivision town Barasat opened itself for urban facilities and communications. The year of 1947 witnessed partition of India. The Noakhali massacre, the district of khulna a Hindu majority district, the district of jessore having a substantial Hindu population got uprooted and took shelter in the nearby areas of Bangaon, Habra and Barasat. This huge influx altered the demographic pattern. The outsiders outnumbered the local population. At the same time Kalikapur Colony, Ashutosh Colony , Saktinagar Colony, Vidyasagar Colony sprang up. Calcutta by now is almost saturated- the present Salt lake area was not developed as residential area, present satellite township of Rajarhat was a distant dream till then. Hence, Barasat and the adjoining areas bore the brunt of a new generation of jews'!

INDEX GROWTH OF POPULATION IN BARASAT TOWN

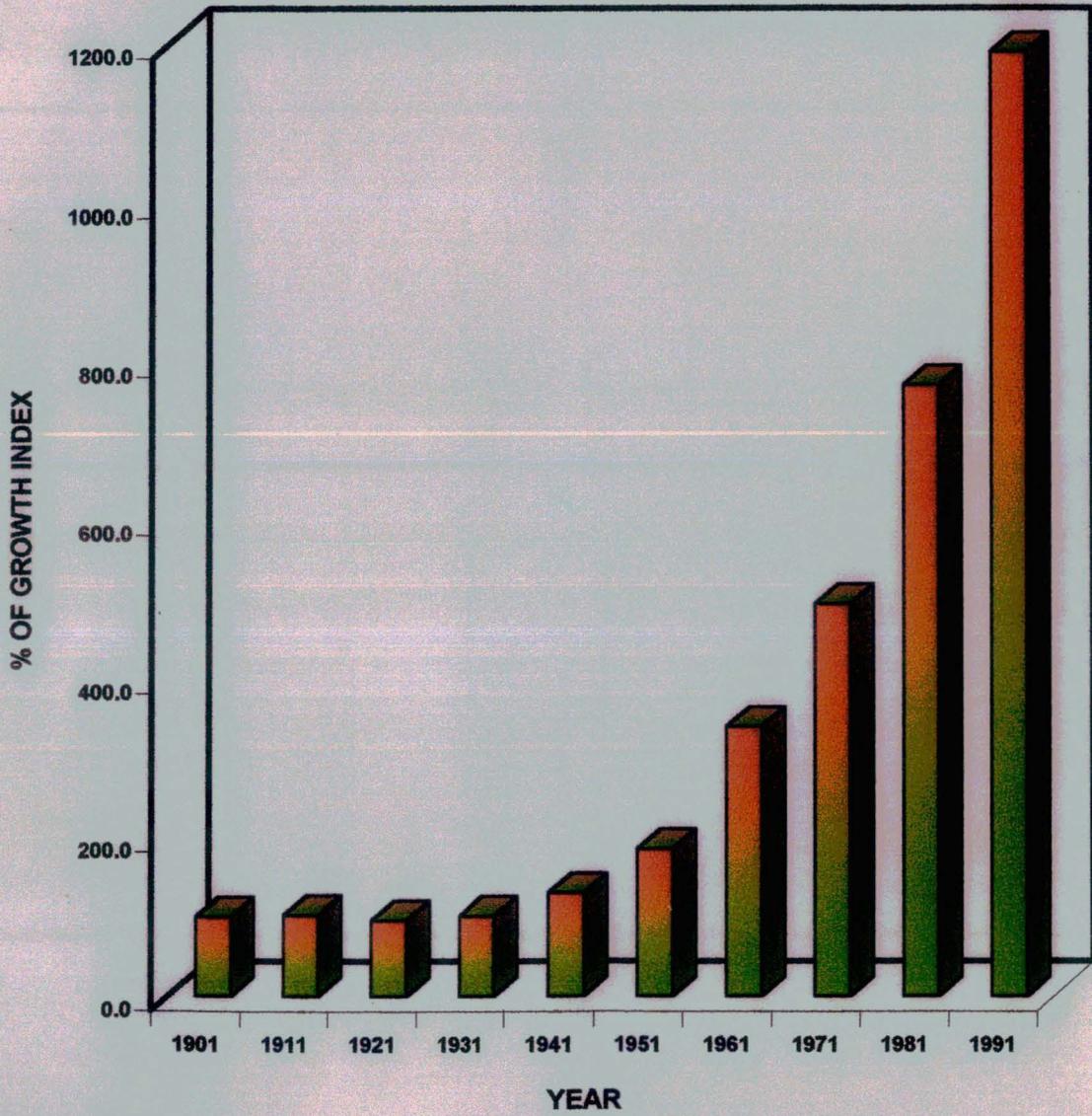


Figure - 3.2

After this, the periods till 1991 the growth rates are 493.9 in 1961-71, 770.3 in 1971-81 and 1189.0 in 1981-91. Barasat became a district Headquarter in Uttar 24 parganas migration from Bangladesh, erstwhile East Pakistan did not stop. Added to this village population, outside job seekers, Government officials, construction workers aggravated the already swelled number. But this period is characterised by the natural urbanization process. Government resources, had it been enough, and had it a planing before hand i.e. creating other satellite towns, self sufficient new urban centres and improved village life could have stopped this urban flow. This could not be done due to strained, over burdened economy.

TABLE 3.3A DISTRIBUTION OF WARDS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF INDEX OF GROWTH OF POPULATION DURING 1971-81

Index of growth in %	Category	Wards	Number of Wards	Percentage of wards
Below 100	Low	II	1	6.67
101-200	Moderate	I, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIV, XV	11	73.33
201-300	High	III, IV, XIII	3	20.20
Total			15	100.00

Source – Census India

Table 3.3A shows the distribution of wards in different categories of index of population growth during 1971-81 Maximum number of wards (73.33%) are in the moderate category of index of growth. During this period only 20.20% of the wards show a high index of growth in the township.

TABLE 3.3B DISTRIBUTION OF WARDS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF INDEX OF GROWTH OF POPULATION DURING 1971-91

<u>Index of Growth in %</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Wards</u>	<u>Number of wards</u>	<u>Percentage of wards</u>
Below 100	Very low	II	1	6.67
101-200	Low	I, V, VI, VIII, XIV, XV	6	40.00
201-300	Moderate	III, IV, VII, IX, XI	5	33.33
301-400	High	X, XII	2	13.33
Above 400	Very High	XIII	1	6.67
Total			15	100.00

Source – Census India

From Table 3.3B it is revealed that some of the wards such as X, XII and XIII show high and very high category index. Large number of wards (i.e. I, V, VI, VIII, XIV and XV) are in the low category. This unequal changes of index of growth can be attributed to local factors. This also indicates that man happens to gravitate in certain areas.

TABLE 3.4 DECADAL VARIATION OF POPULATION (1901-1991)

<u>Year</u>	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>
Decadal variation	-	156	-579	461	2558	4797	13254	13361	23862	36156
% of Decadal variation	-	1.81	-6.59	5.61	29.50	42.72	82.70	45.63	55.96	54.36

Source- Census India

The decadal variation of population of Barasat Town (Table 3.4) reveals that the population from 1901 the beginning of the century, showed a trend of growth. In 1901 it was 8634 and in 1991 it leapt to 1,02,660 persons. With a break in 1921, the year of pestilence an all India

VARIATION & INDEX OF GROWTH OF POPULATION
IN PERCENTAGES DURING 1971-'81, 1971-91 BARASAT
TOWN

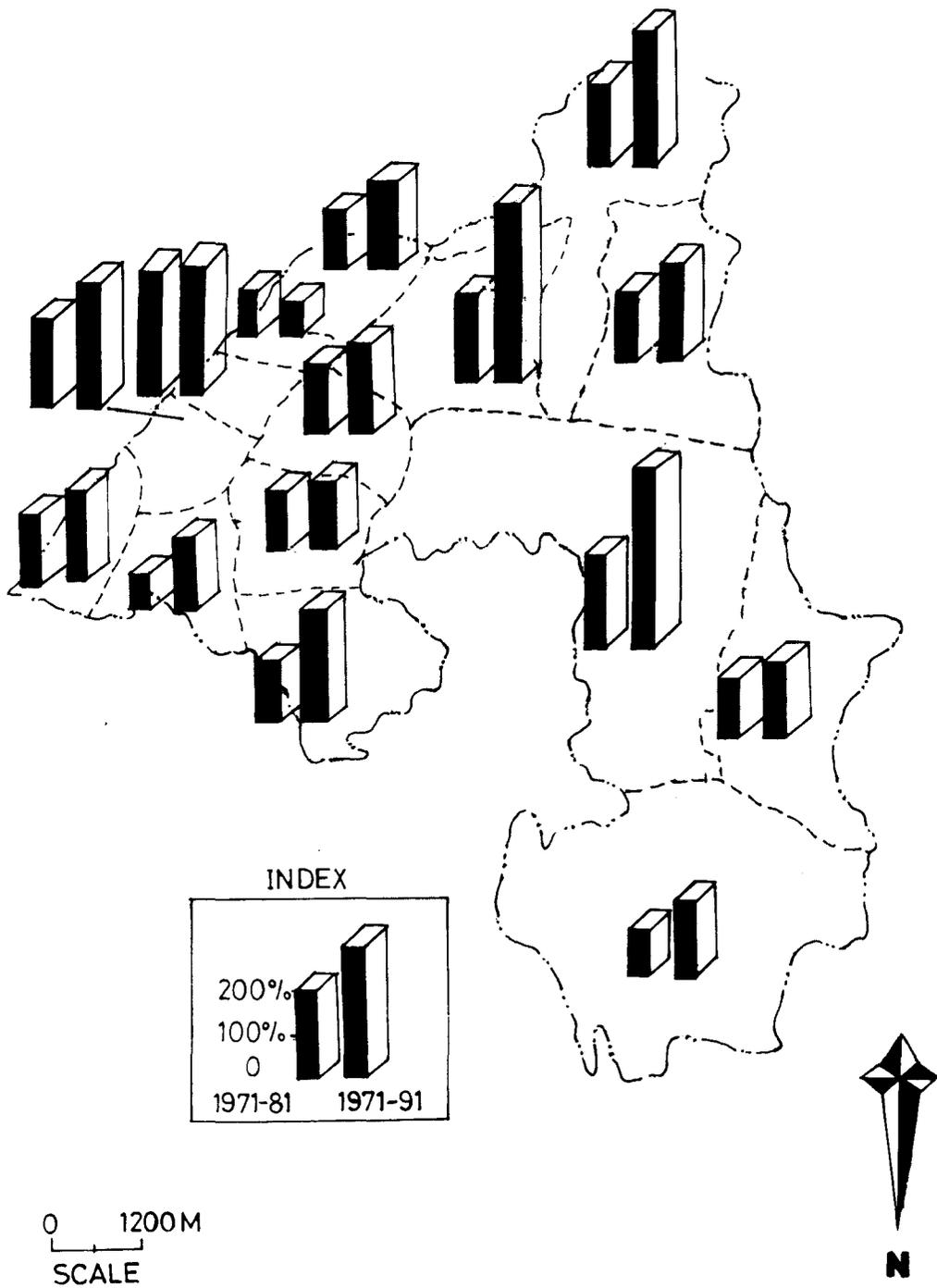


Fig.—3.3

affair. The growth was not uniform throughout the period. In the first 10 years (1901-1911), the percentage of decadal variation was only 1.81% since then barring the year 1921, it was never below 5%. Between 1931 and 1941 the percentage of variation was 29.5%. By then the rural flavour of Barasat had vanished. It established itself as suburb of Calcutta. So, the concentration of people is a natural expectation. The year of partition 1947, and the year of 1951 witnessed communal flare up in the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Massive refugee concentration took place from Bangaon (a sub-division border town) to Barasat. From 1961 to 1991 with the emergence of Bangladesh, another wave but more strong than earlier was noticed and these contributed a silent social changes in the area. The villages could not hold more people in agriculture. The development of Barasat as a commercial centre and with the establishment of administrative units attracted more people. This picture is uniform to all municipal towns of West Bengal. Kalyani, a newly created town of Nadia in the border of Uttar 24-Parganas was unattractive for new settlement as it could not provide avenues for occupation. The industrial attempts there were limping. So, Barasat began to grow, under the weight of new population during 1901-91. (Fig.3.4)

TABLE 3.5 PERCENTAGE OF WARD WISE DECADAL INCREASE OF POPULATION 1981-91

Decadal Increase in %	Category	Wards	Number Of wards	Percentage of wards
Below 20	Very low	II, III, VI	3	20.00
21-40	Low	I, IV, V, XIV	4	26.67
41-60	Moderate	IX, XI	2	13.33
61-80	High	VIII, X, XV	3	20.00
Above 80	Very High	VII, XII, XIII	3	20.00
Total			15	100.00

Source – Census India

DECADAL VARIATION OF POPULATION IN BARASAT TOWN (1901-1991)

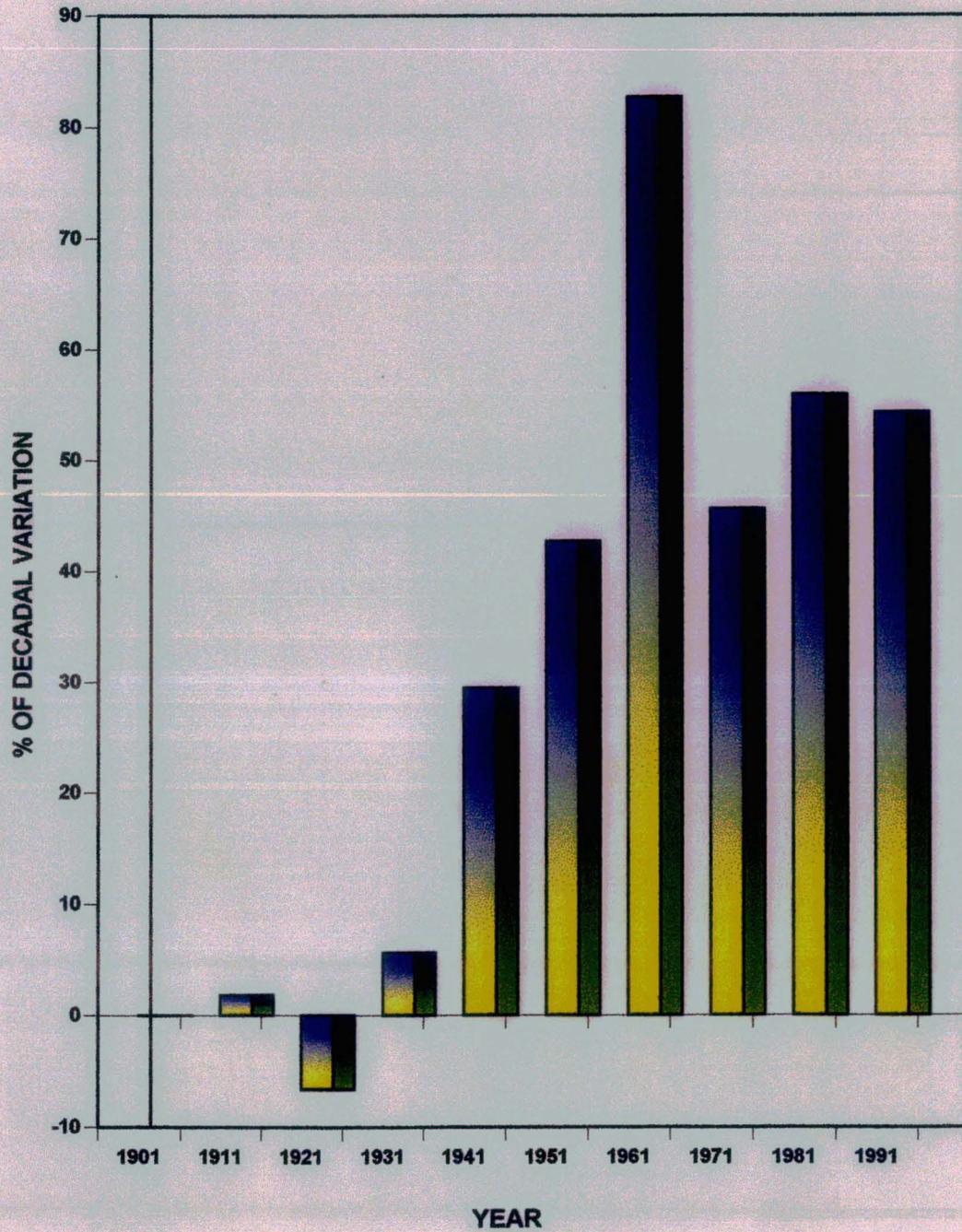


Figure - 3.4

DECADAL GROWTH OF POPULATION WARD WISE
(1981-91)

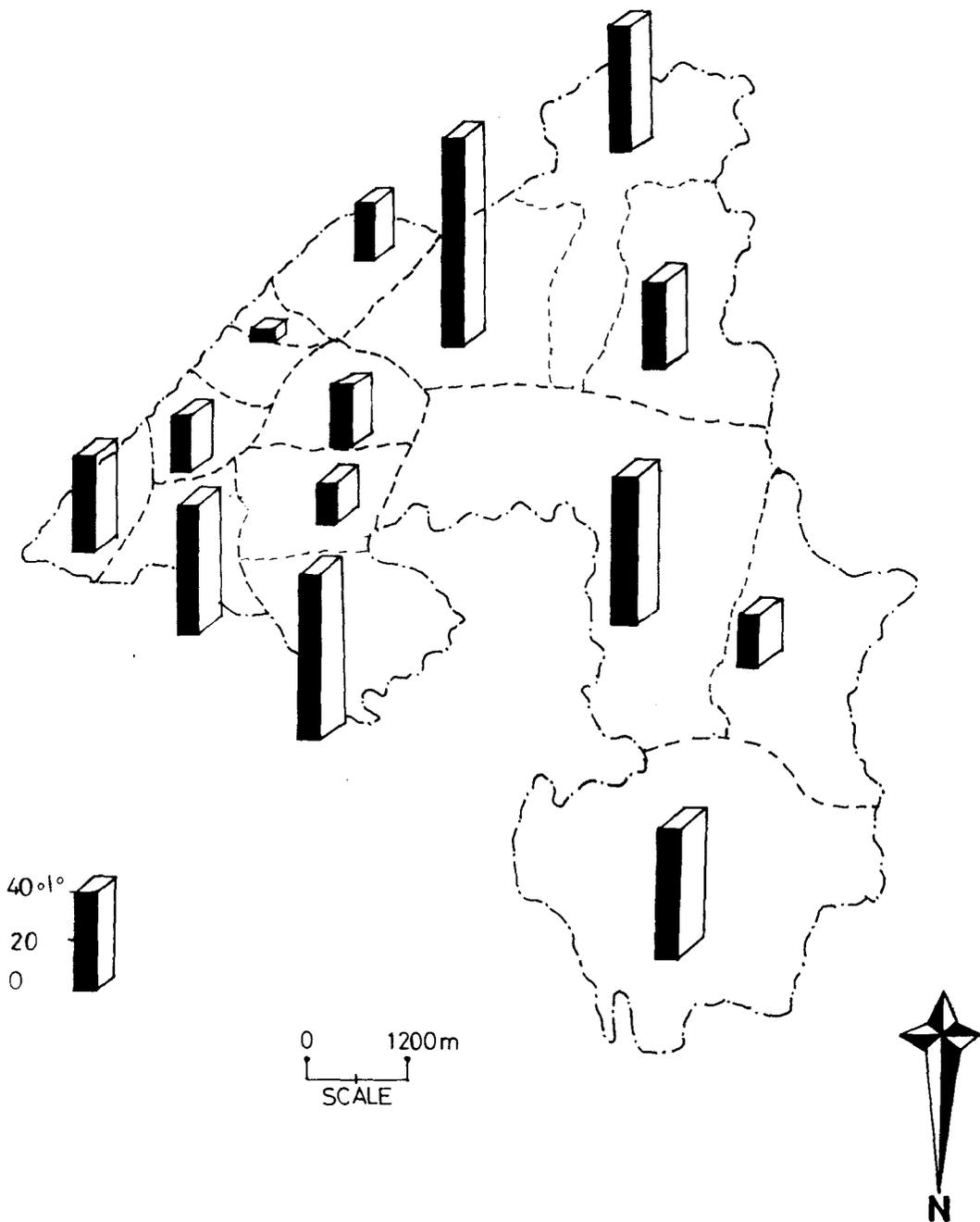


Fig-35

Population may increase or decrease due to economic, social or political changes. An expanding economy shows population changes. A closed economy does not show any change during the period of economic stagnation. In urban geography studies this may throw some light.

From table 3.5, it is revealed that wards VII, XII and XIII show maximum decadal increase. But wards II, III, IV show very low population increase. In a small township (20.25 Km²) such as the study area significant or relevant information is unlikely to be available through ward wise analysis. In a metropolis like Calcutta or Bombay or Delhi wardwise analysis can throw some light on the differential economy or servicing sector or education or industry, but small town do not add much significant information.

3.1.3 Variation of density of Population 1901-97:

The population varies due to the discrepancy between the birth and death. If the life expectancy increases over a considerable number of years, then the number of inhabitants out numbers the original numbers and increase in life expectancy is the general trend of the world as a whole. But the most significant cause of high density is migration. If waves of people arrive, the population swells. Question arises – the migration can work both ways. Men may arrive (Immigration) and men may leave a place (Emigration). Both may upset existing population balance.

Migration is a form of geographical mobility or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another, it generally involves a changes of residence from the place of origin or place of departure to the place of destination or the place of arrival. When the movement is within a particular area it is an immigration when it is outside a particular area, it

is migration. When the movement is out of a particular country, it is also emigration. The study area (Barasat) shows evidence that in its case it is one way. It is only migration or immigration to Barasat.

Inter-state migration is negligible in India. The exodus of people from Barasat can not be much since the areas outside are predominant by agriculture, hence there is no push from Barasat. It is no industrial centre, hence inter-state migration to Barasat is ruled out. But Barasat has pulled people towards it. In the case of Barasat it is rural to urban, migration and immigration. Again this migration is of a permanent type i.e. the newcomers came to stay permanently. The three consecutive census reports (1971, 81 and 91) show that while total population changed from 42,642 in 1971 to 1,02,660 in 1991, through 66,504 in 1981. Whereas the new people came with family and came to stay permanently. Transport, employment facilities other amenities like shops, public entertainment, public utilities have contributed to the factor. The shock of migration was absorbed since no history of social tension either in the form of religious fanaticism, language or racial or ethnic conflict is reported. May be that new jobs mostly in tertiary or secondary sector was created rapidly.

The emergence of Barasat can also point out another thing. Small towns, in the case of Barasat, with a total area of 20.25 km² serve as intermediate station for daily commuters to bigger cities because it is located within daily commuting range. Such type of cities/towns are emerging rapidly and are developing more speedily than the main cities. The outlying areas of Delhi, Bangalore are examples where small towns have sprung up and from these towns many people commute to these cities during day time and return by night. These towns are emerging for reasons, (1) Old aristocratic locality, shedding their insular existence, is moving towards the focus of urbanisation, (2) The attractiveness or un-attractiveness of an area in the perception of the settlers. Barasat is thus

acting as a 'supplementary settlement area' to Barrackpore, Madhyamgram, Habra, Bangaon, Khardah, Dum Dum and Calcutta.

In the mapping of population through a visual presentation subjectivity enters in the selection of methods. The most commonsense method is no doubt a crude index- but for the study of the present area it is workable. It is workable in the sense that the physical area and the economy of the area is homogenous, (no breaking in the economic activity from ward to ward; no abrupt change in the physiography).

TABLE – 3.6 VARIATION OF POPULATION DENSITY PER KM²
1901-1997

Year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1997
Population	8634	8790	8211	8672	11,230	16,027	29,281	42,642	66,504	1,02,660	1,77,147
Area Km ²	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	34.50
Density Km ²	426	434	406	428	555	791	1446	2106	3284	5070	5135

Source – Census 1901 to 1991 & Barasat (M) 1997

Table, 3.6 reveals that, from 1901 to 1931 the density of population per km² 426 and 428 with a break in 1921. In 1941 there is slight rise 555. It was during the second world war, Calcutta became a centre for defence preparation. Many war related jobs were created. So, the onward growth of population is not unexpected. In 1951, the density of population was 791 per km². This increase was due to partition. Bangaon, a border town is 30 kms. away connected by a rail route and Jessore road. Uprooted refugee population is the cause of this high

POPULATION DENSITY IN BARASAT TOWN

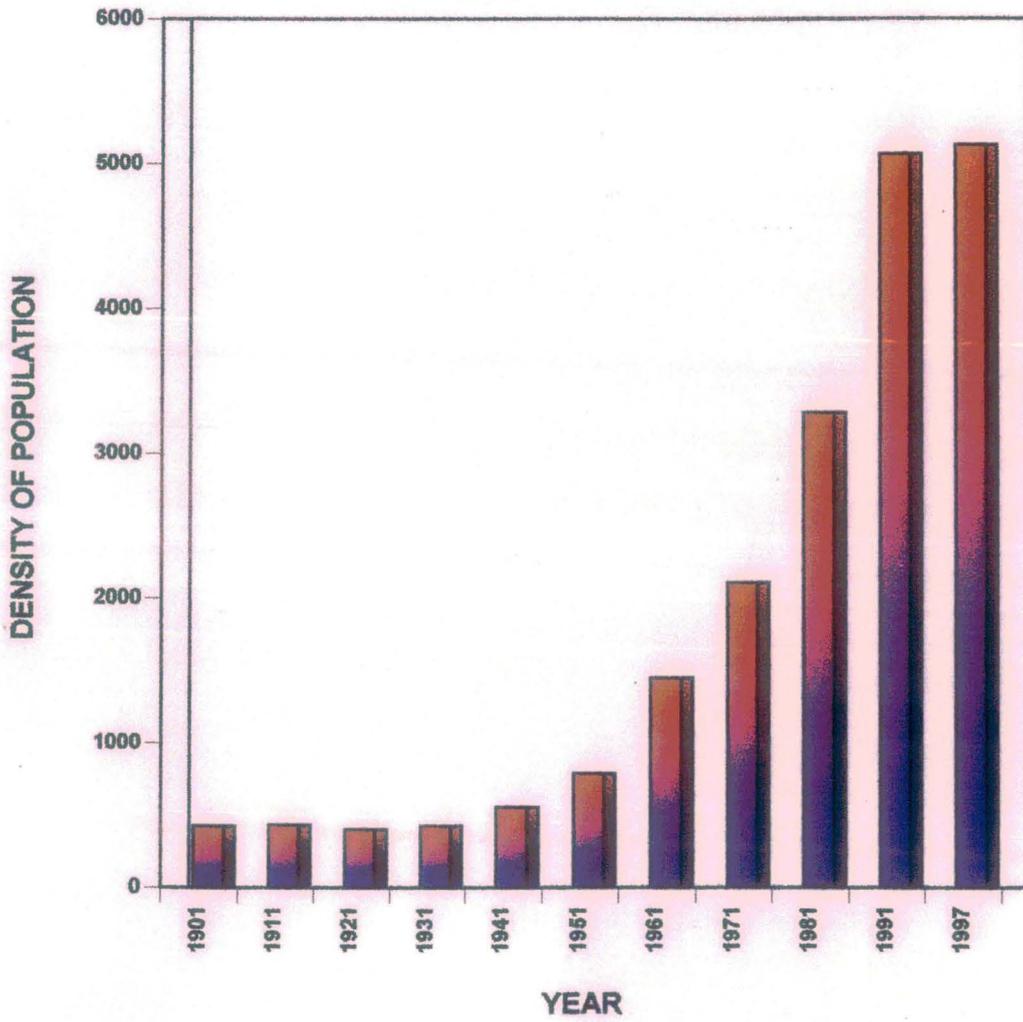


Figure - 3.6

figure. The migration of population is continuing unabated some times in waves and some times in trickles.

But since 1971 urbanization is the potent cause and this is the general trend. In 1971 the rural to urban migration is increasing. High literacy, low economic development of the rural areas, the increased pressure on land are main causes for rural urban migration. With frontier areas of technology opening new opportunities have lured people to urban areas. Easy access to Calcutta, the most developed communication system (Rail, Road etc.), educational facilities, public service network, have become powerful magnet in attracting people from other areas of Bengal.

The population density per km² had risen to 5070 in 1991 and 5135 in 1997. The declaration of Barasat as district Headquarter (1986, 1st March) created job opportunities mostly at tertiary sectors. But the booming of construction activities created jobs in other sector. Therefore, the sharp rise in population density is nothing new. The population can not equally disperse to other wards. Because it is not a planned township like Salt Lake, Rajarhut. The study area developed as the need arose and private enterprises had the principal role. The alternative is the accession of the outlying areas ; i.e. towards Khardah along the Nilgunge road, along Barrackpore- Barasat Road, towards Bangaon along – Jessore Road etc.

**Table 3.7 DENSITY OF POPULATION OF BARASAT TOWN
DURING 1971, 1981, 1991 (WARD WISE)**

Ward No.	Year		
	1971	1981	1991
I	1989	2807	3792
II	3993	3669	3473
III	1296	3483	3503
IV	2322	4950	6403
V	2840	4400	5710
VI	2008	2659	3177
VII	2640	3930	7302
VIII	2149	2191	3672
IX	3316	4776	7323
X	1979	3758	6111
XI	1908	2865	4230
XII	1772	3536	7015
XIII	1745	3694	7037
XIV	2016	2594	3261
XV	1444	1486	2397
Town Average	2106	3284	5070

Source – Census India

From table 3.7 it is revealed that the average density of population of the wards was 5070 persons per km² in 1991. After 1995 with some added areas the number of wards swelled from 15 to 30. The average density of population per km² is 5135 (Table 3.8). The wards VII, IX, XII, XIII exceed the town average of density of population.

Ward I comprises an area of 1.76 km² and had a density of population of 3792 Km² in 1991. In 1971 it was 1989. The density has increased about double in a course of 20 years compared to many other wards where the population turned four folds. A map of Barasat (Fig. 5.3) shows that it is at the meeting point of three principal roads like Taki Road, Jessore Road and North Bengal Highway (N.H. 34), *Champadalir More* (crossing) touched a corner of this ward. Towards the western margin is Sealdah Bangaon section of Eastern Railway. Therefore, a less than average density of population is unexpected. The plate 8 shows that towards the north, major part of the area is covered with residential complex but southern part of the ward is reserved for Government uses and for commercial activities. People come here for administrative

DENSITY OF POPULATION OF BARASAT TOWN IN 1971, 81, 91

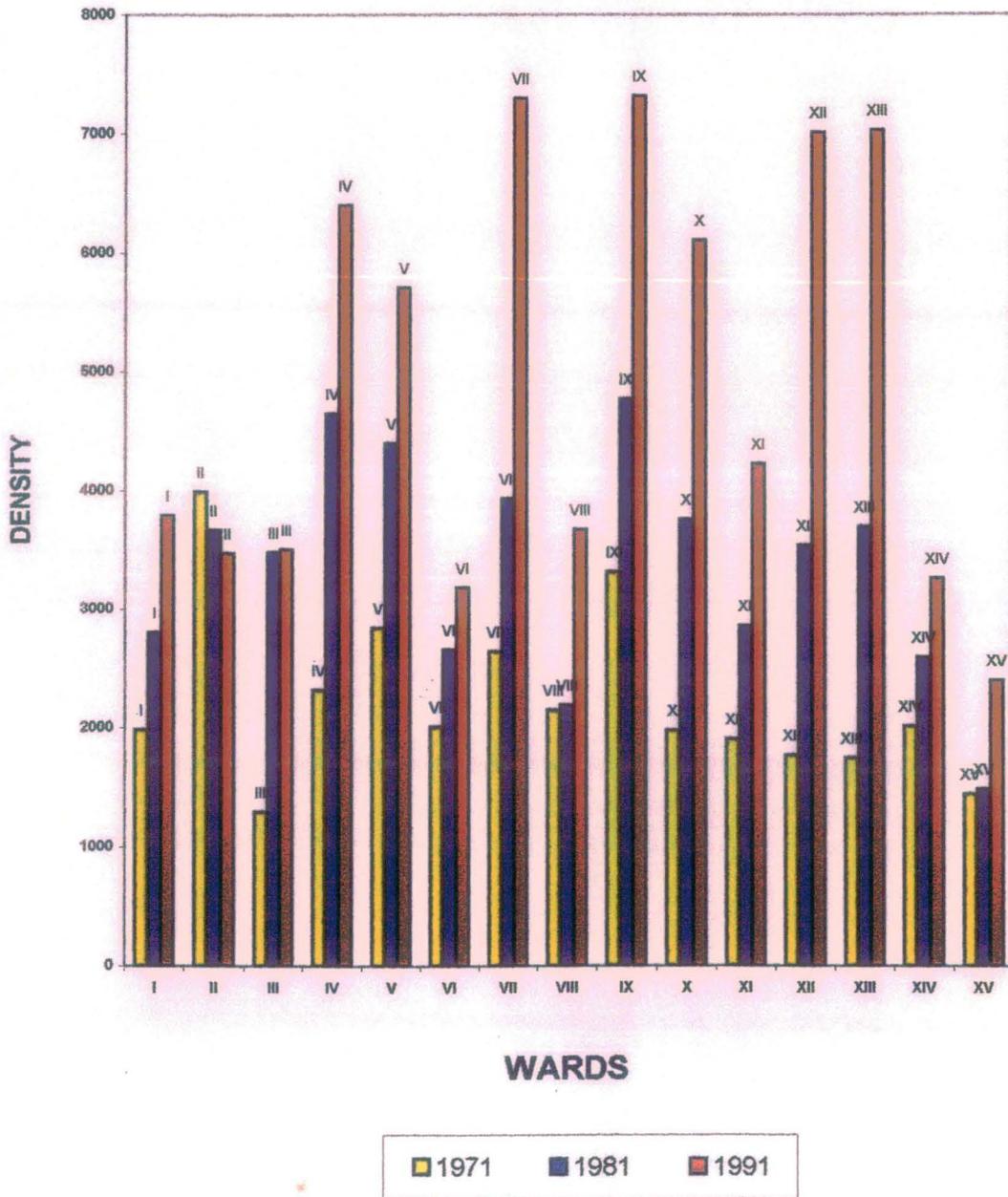


Figure - 3.7

requirements and business ; their stays are for the day time only. Therefore, no high concentration is natural. Ward II is another riddle. Area is smallest (0.76 km²). The density of population shows a negative trend table 3.7. Government acquisitions may be a cause of this. This is a commercial area, the cost of the land is prohibitive. Ward number III also has less than average density of population. Its area is 0.78 km² and density of population is 3503 per km². Increase of population is very slow in this ward. Ward IV comprises an area of 0.91 Km² and density of population is 6403 (1991). In 1971 density of population was 2322 but during the last 20 years the upswing is more than double.

TABLE 3.8 PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE OF POPULATION

Name of the town	Year	Area (Km ²)	Population	Density	Percentage of increase of density during 1901-1999
Barasat	1901	20.25	8,634	426	-
	1999	34.50	1,77,147	5135	1105.39

Source – Census 1901 & Barasat (M)

Ward V is at the junction of Jessore Road and Taki Road – the two arterial roads of Barasat. The important *Champadalir More* (junction) is on the west of this. Its area is 1.35 km² and has a population of 7708 (1991)Appendix-I. Density is 5710 persons per Km² which is above the average. Population concentration trends during the last twenty years doubled. This is one of the old areas of the town. For old locality it is natural that it is inhabited by the old residents. The ward VI is a residential area. The upswing of population is one and a half time through the last two decades. Density of population is below average. A road passes north to south exactly through the middle of the ward VII. In 1971 the population of this ward was 3301 and in 1991 it rose to 9128 compared to the adjacent ward VI, it had more agricultural land.

The ward VIII comprises an area of 1.17 Km² and has population of 4296 (1991) ; density of population is 3672 below town average. Hence upswing of population is striking because during the last two decades most of the agriculture and orchardland is converted into residential plots. Ward IX is extended towards the eastern side of the railway line (Sealdaha to Bangaon). Railway station Hridaypur is situated in this ward. This is one of the oldest locality of Barasat. Its area is 1.15 Km² and had population 8421 in 1991 and density of population is 7323 per km². The population is compact in nature.

Jessore road bifurcated the ward X. It has an area of 1.16 Km² and had a population of 2296 in 1971. In 1991 the density of population was 6111 above the total town average. The growth of population can be attributed to the conversion of agriculture land. The residential area is 86.47% of the area (Appendix-XI)

Ward XI comprises an area of 1.07 Km². Its population was 2042 in 1971 and density was 1908 per Km². Barasat-Basirhat line passes through it. Taki road passes through the southern fringe. Density of population per km² in 1991 was below town average (4230). There is scope for future development. For wards XII and XIII the densities are 7015 and 7037 respectively. Ward XIV, XV are situated south-eastern and southern part of the municipal area. Density of population is below town average in these two wards. The densities are likely to be 3261 and 2397 in 1991. These two wards are away from the heart centre of the town.

3.2 POPULATION COMPOSITION:

The study area has some history behind it. But by no means that was the beginning of the urbanization of the area. At least, it was a

flourishing locality of the middle ages with small groups of particular identity confined within small and separate areas. Urbanization began in the East India Company days. Subsequently, it was converted into a municipality and now it is a district headquarter. Barasat town is surrounded by agricultural belts and small-scale cottage industries were scattered here and there. No mineral and agro-based heavy industry is situated in the Barasat town. Retail and whole-sale trade is the principal source of economy (Plate-6.2). With the boom in construction, timber and brick-making industries have flourished. Barasat being a headquarter town, different service sector economies have also developed in the last decade. Barasat has become a nodal point for transportation (Fig-5.3). As a junction place of two national highways and two important link roads, these are connected by the sub-divisional towns, transportation-based economy has gained.

It is not a cosmopolitan town like Calcutta. So culture, style of living and social rituals are more or less homogeneous. Therefore, so far as the social factor is concerned, the town is safe because of its long tradition.

It is a natural trend that unless the surrounding areas are economically, culturally and educationally developed, population will gravitate towards the city. The result is overcrowding, pressure on civic amenities, housing etc.

3.2.1 Sex Ratio:

Sex ratio its ups and downs, shows the nature and quality of urbanization. In stagnant agglomeration, this ratio remains almost constant unless female fertility rate change. But in settlement where push and pull factors operate one up setting the other ratio shows variation.

TABLE 3.9**DECADAL SEX RATIO (1901-91)**

Year	Male %	Female %	Females per 1000 Male
1901	52.83	47.17	893
1911	53.82	46.18	858
1921	54.78	45.16	825
1931	54.54	45.35	833
1941	54.42	45.57	837
1951	53.63	46.37	864
1961	54.72	45.28	828
1971	52.92	47.08	890
1981	52.06	47.94	921
1991	51.55	48.45	940

Source (Census 1901 to 1991)

Barasat was never an industrial centre, nor did it arise all on a sudden, still it shows a low sex ratio favouring male over female. Though no convincing logic can be given for this, some explanations are available and those lie within the roots of our socio-economic ethos. Till 1970 the ratio is less than 900 females per 1000 males (Table 3.9). Barasat was a mofussil town, the rural smell was still in it. For educated middle class, villages could not offer any future. So for education, occupation, the people from villages migrated. Those 'guests' did not want to make a permanent home. On weekends or once in a month or two they used to go back to the villages. Village home was the anchor for them. They did not bring females with them.

Since 1947 there was a change. Uprooted people from Khulna, Jessore and other places of the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), migrated. These new 'Jews' took everything with them, and made a permanent home in safe, secular India. Barasat bore the weight of this

SEX RATIO IN BARASAT TOWN (1901-1991)

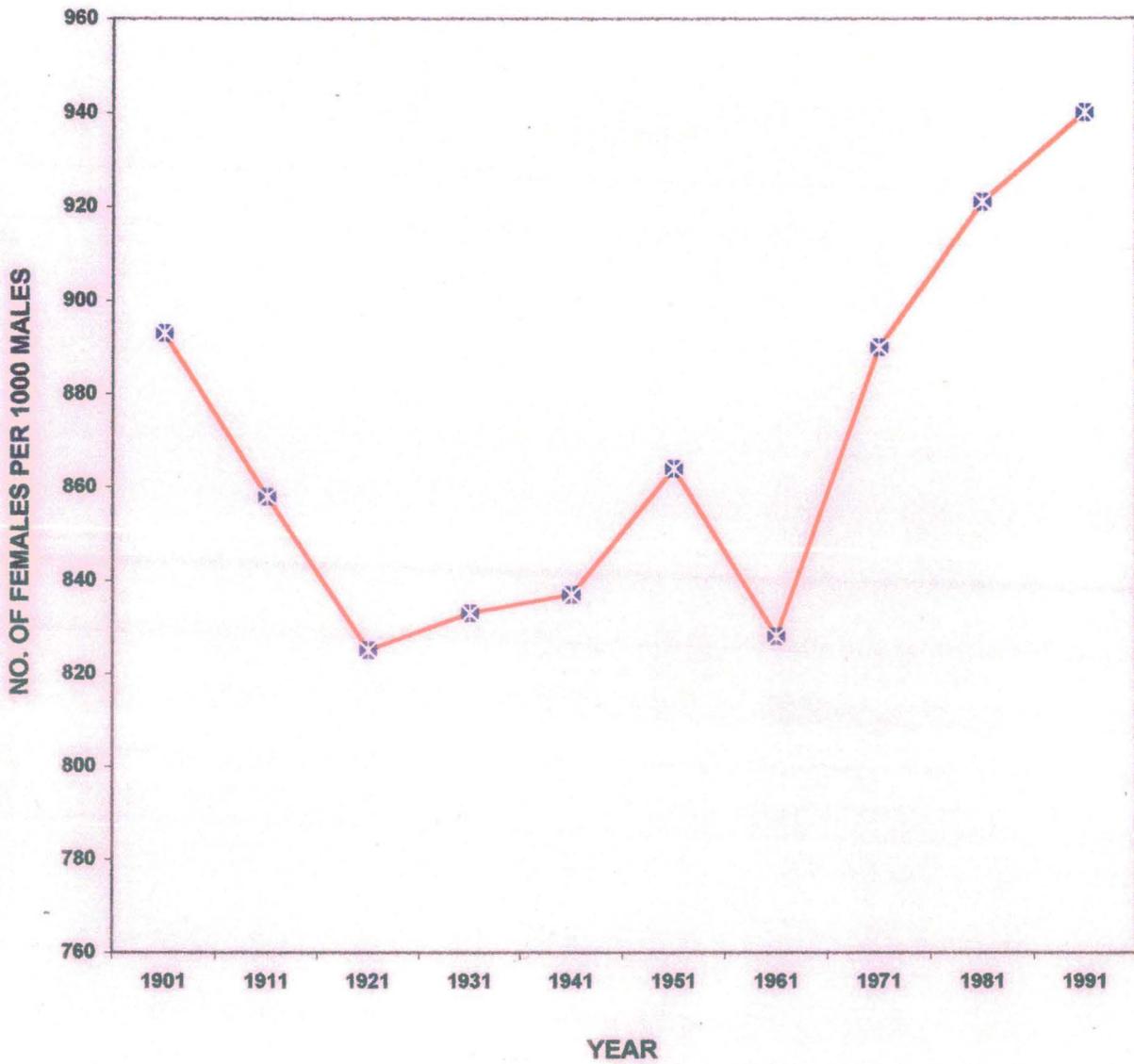


Figure - 3.9

influx. Added to the increasing process of urbanization this swelled the number. The ratio leapt to 940, almost the national average (Fig 3.8).

TABLE 3.10: WARDS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF SEX RATIO (1991)

Category	Values/Females per thousand males	Name of the Wards	No. of the Wards	Percentage of total wards
Very Low	850-880	II, III, IV	3	20.00
Low	881-910	I, XV	2	13.33
Medium	911-940	VII, X, XI	3	20.00
High	941-970	V, VI, VIII, IX, XIV	5	33.33
Very high	> 970	XII, XIII	2	13.33
Total			15	100.00

Table 3.10 shows female-male ratio over wards. The number varies from 850 to 970 of which three wards (II, III, IV) having female ratio 850-880 comprise 20% of the total wards. Two wards 13.33% (I and XV) have female ratio 881-910. Three wards (VII, X, XI) have ratio from 911-940. Five wards (V, VI, VIII, IX and XIV) have ratios from 941-970. Two wards (XII, XIII) have ratios 970 and above. Separately the lowest figure is 850 (ward-III) and the highest is 975 in wards XII, XIII.

The discrepancy between sex ratio is a matter of interest to the Geographers, because of the contrasting roles in the economy and the society. The discrepancy shows regional, racial affair and the social culture of particular community. In certain states males out number the females (Punjab), in certain states the female out number the males (Kerala), in some states male children are valued more than the female and infanticide is encouraged. Of course mortality among sexes are matter to be taken care of.

Census reports till 1971 showed a declining trend in sex ratio. With exception in 1901. In 1981 it was 921, in 1971 it was 890. In case of

study area the fig. was 940 in 1991. The almost static ratio in wards barring four wards (II, III, IV and XV) goes to prove that other effects of discrepancy in male/female ratio is not working (Appendix-VII). The residents are almost permanently settled with a stable family life and has little chance of moving out side permanently. This is not unusual because Calcutta is near and well-connected through rail and road ways, so people can easily go and come back on same day. Migration generally upset the balance. But the study area witnessed a different type of migration. The uprooted refugees came here along with their families. So male female ratios has not upset the balance.

The statistics vary ward wise. Some wards have little developed and some wards are commercial and administrative centers. The other wards have developed area.

3.2.2 Schedule castes and Schedule tribes population:

The schedule castes and schedule tribes are specified in accordance with articles 341 and 342 of the Indian constitution. Implementation of welfare schemes is being shared between the Central and the State Governments. The constitutional protections and safe guards have also been prescribed for the Schedule castes, and the Scheduled tribes and other worker sections of the society for promoting their educational and economic interests and removing social disabilities.

According to the 1991 Census, the schedule caste and schedule tribes population stood at 16.48 and 8.08 percent of the total population of India respectively. But our study area shows a some what different picture in the following Table 3.11.

COMPOSITION OF POPULATION OF BARASAT TOWN IN PERCENTAGE

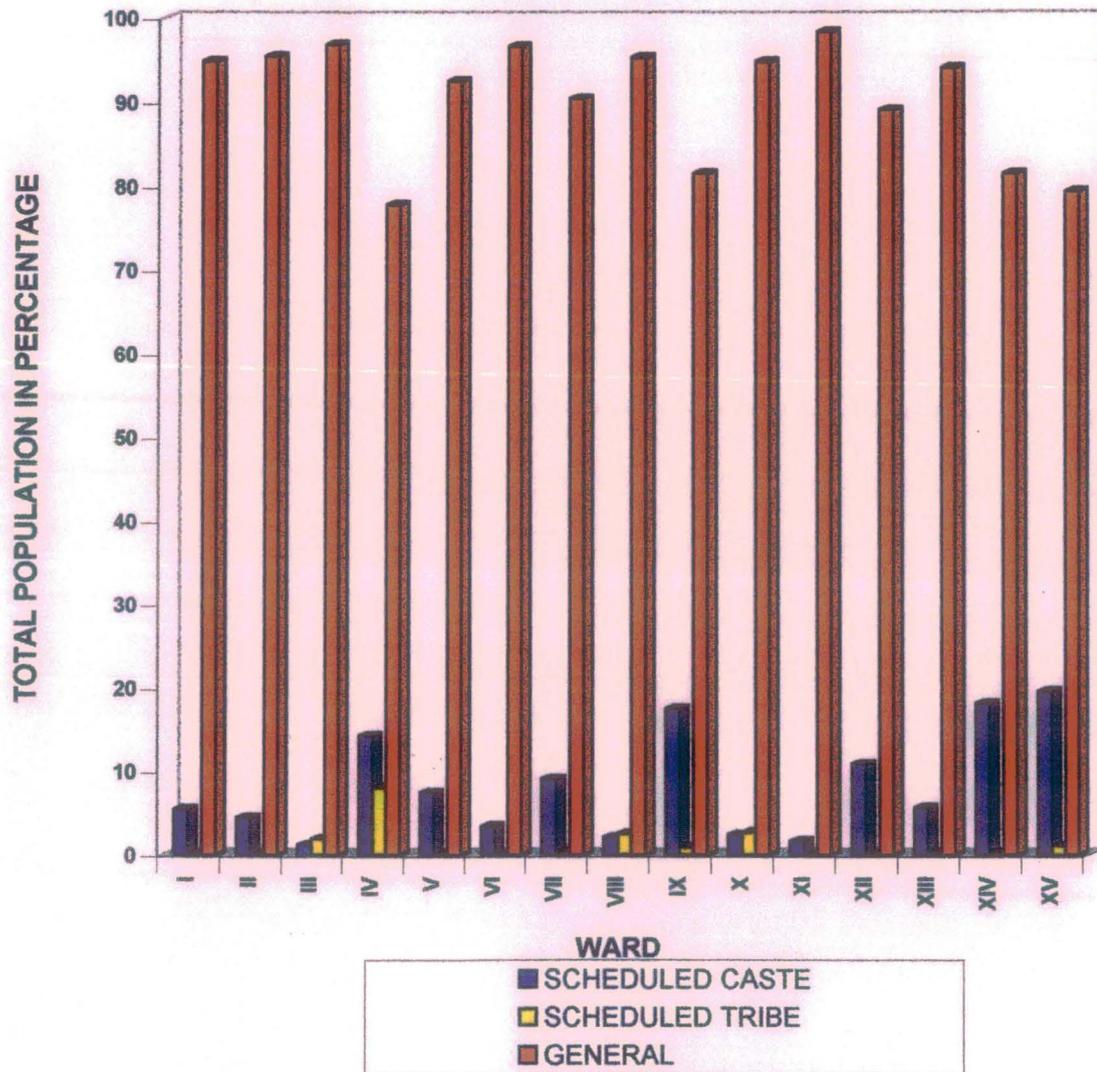


Figure - 3.9

**TABLE 3.11: SCHEDULE CASTE AND SCHEDULE TRIBE POPULATION IN
BARASAT TOWN, 1991.**

Caste	Population	Percentage of total Population
Scheduled	8742	8.52
Tribe	1069	1.04
General	92849	90.44

Source – Census India 1999

The Table 3.11 reveals that scheduled castes population was 8.52 percent and scheduled tribes population only 1.04 percent, which are much below the national average. Detailed ward wise break up of schedule castes and schedule tribes population has been shown in fig 3.9. From the fig. It is noticed that the maximum schedule castes population (11% to 20%) are concentrated in the ward numbers IX, XII, XIV and XV (Appendix-VIII).

3.2.3 LITERACY:

A resource is some thing which can be used to generate new resources. Landmass, water, forests, minerals are resources – they can be used to generate new resources. If the man is not sufficiently skilled, if his philosophy is not oriented towards the use of raw materials (resources) – then the land, water, forest etc. by themselves can not generate more resources. Educated man, skilled man, philosophy oriented (towards future achievement) man is a pre- requisite for social and economic achievement primitive societies are backward because they do not have educated and skilled manpower; an advance society is advanced because of his sufficiently trained manpower. Hence education in every developed under developed or in developing country is on a top agenda of social, political and economic philosophy. The minimum

measurement of educational status is the degree of literacy (Ghosh 1985).

The appendix-VI shows percentage in literacy of both male and females. The entire municipal area has a literacy of 58% in 1971, 62% in 1981 and 66% in 1991 above the national average but not much above. In West Bengal the total literacy rate is 40.9% the male literacy is 50.7% and female literacy being 30.2%. In urban areas basic skills of education is a must for productive activity, pull factors- operates for the migration of educated people from rural to urban areas, socio-cultural ethos exert pressure upon male and female to educate themselves. Against this backdrop the study area i.e. Barasat municipal town, which was a sub-divisional town, was later converted into a district town. The first girls school of mofussal Bengal, was established here – noted educationists had there activities centered around Barasat – The Barasat Government high school and literary association were established in 1846 and 1913 respectively. The study area did not come around all on a sudden – it developed slowly and gradually – the national movement lent an urge of educational waves. So, this non encouraging rate of literacy is not easily explainable. The investigator thinks the reason may be – i) During the early phases till the thirties of this century the study area still had a rural flavour in terms of occupation and conservative social culture. ii) The second world war years virtually stopped the establishment of new school, the famine had its toll on population. iii) Refugee migration brought may illiterates.

Out of many determinants of literacy, with reference to the study area, the investigator puts special emphasis on the degree of urbanization. The more the degree of urbanization, the greater is the need of education. Primary level of occupation yield places to secondary and tertiary level of occupation with added demands on education. Moreover, the degree of urbanization literates the people from social

pressure, enhances individual enterprise which further encourages self improvement. The tiers of social hierarchy are more sharp and visible and education being the social elevator – literacy in both quantity and quality can not but increase. The study area being not an industrial area by itself, even not an industrial suburb, the influence of industrialization upon literacy and education is not considered here.

TABLE 3.12 DISTRIBUTION OF WARDS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF INDEX OF LITERACY GROWTH DURING 1971-91 IN BARASAT TOWN

Index of Growth in %	Category	Name of the wards	No. of wards	Percentages of Total
Below 150	Very Low	II, III	2	13.33
151-200	Low	VI, VIII, XIV, XV	4	26.67
201-250	Moderate	I, IV, V	3	20.00
251-300	High	IX	1	6.67
Above 300	Very High	VII, X, XI, XII, XIII	5	33.33
Total			15	100.00

Source -Census 1991

Table 3.12 reveals that 13.33 percent of the wards contain a very low index of growth of literacy, below 150 percent. Such wards are II and III. The maximum percentage of index of growth of literacy has been found in some selected wards, such as VII, X, XI, XII and XIII, 26.67 percentage of wards enjoy a low category of index growth some wards are for moderate category of index of growth. Such wards are number I, IV and V. High category of index of growth is in ward IX but very high category, i.e. above 300 percent of index of growth of literacy is in 33.33 percent of the total wards. Such wards are number VII, X, XI, XII and XIII.

VARIATION & INDEX OF GROWTH OF LITERATE
IN PERCENTAGES DURING 1971-81, 1971-91
BARASAT TOWN

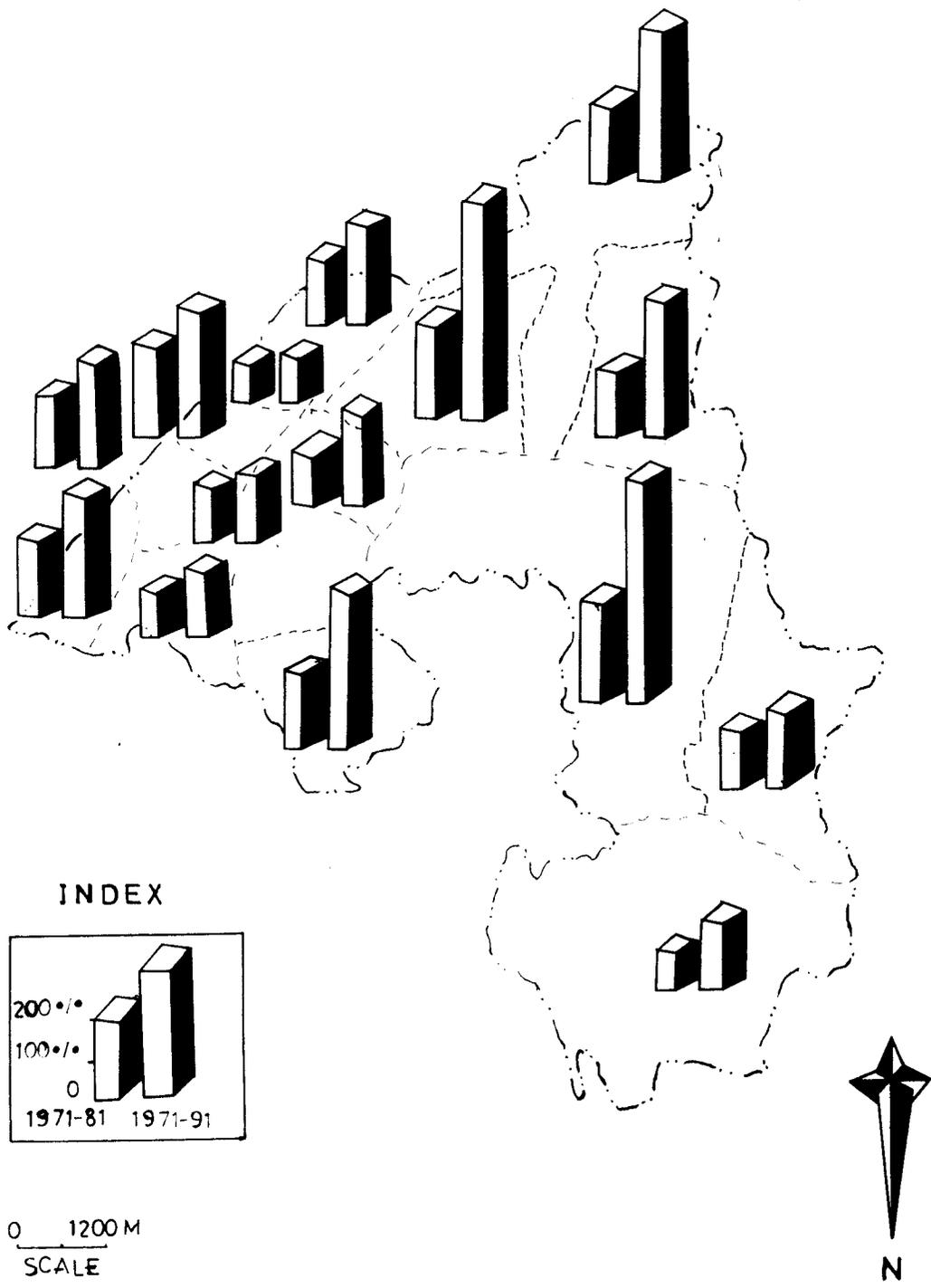


Fig - 3.10

Variation of index growth of literate percentages during 1971-81 and 1971-91 in Barasat town is shown in fig. 3.10.

From the available data we conclude that –

- i) Education i.e. literacy is confined to a particular i.e. middle class section. This section had started education itself much earlier – so in the later part of the century the numerical advance is not very perceptible.
- ii) An increase in population from 42,642 (1971) to 1,02,660 (1991) might have produced differential growth. Perhaps that section contributed this quantum jump in population which put less value in education.
- iii) Since 1980 the Government of India with different projects with the aid of World Bank, UNESCO, gave drive for the eradication of illiteracy but this drive was put on the village level and to the backward section of the society. The urban centres did not see any ripple.

If statistics tells the truth - then the data are depressing. The fig. remains stagnant almost for decades. The female literacy increased marginally from 23% to 29% during 1971 to 1991 Appendix-VI. The study area had an explosion of population since 1951. Mostly refugees from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) came here. This huge number of refugee people diluted the figure of literacy.

3.2.4 Religions:

Kazipara is an settlement under the Barasat town. The name suggests that the area was established by the muslim community and is chiefly populated by muslims.

TABLE 3.13 POPULATION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUPS OF BARASAT TOWN (IN PERCENTAGE)

Year	Percentages of Total population				Total
	Hindu	Muslim	Christan	Others	
1901	59.17	40.35	0.48	-	100.00
1911	57.08	41.59	0.28	1.05	100.00
1971	86.49	13.42	0.08	0.01	100.00
1999	75.86	24.17	-	0.37	100.00

Source – Census & Barasat (M)

Table 3.13 shows the percentage of different religious dimensions. In 1901 Hindu community comprised 59.17% against a 40.35% Muslim, 0.48% Christian populations. In 1911, percentage of Hindus reduced to 57.08%, with an increase of Muslims population to 41.59%, the Christian fell back to 0.28%. Perhaps the Christians stayed from the Nilkar days (Indigo Planters).

In 1971, total population rose to 42,642 i.e. almost five times from of 1901/1911. The Hindu population rose to 86.49% in 1971 from 59.17% in 1901 and 57.08% in 1911. The Muslim population also increased from 40.35% in 1901 to 41.59% in 1911. In 1999, the Hindu population reduced from 86.49% to 75.86% and the Muslim population increased from 13.42% to 24.17%.

3.2.5 Migration:

Migration can not be considered a mere shift of the people one place to another. Trewartha (1969), properly suggest that migration, like fertility and mortality holds of a place of prominence in a geographical analysis of population change in any area. In this context Barasat is a well connected town from various neighbouring urban and rural areas. Bangladesh i.e. erstwhile East Pakistan is notorious for religious intolerance and is responsible for exodus of Hindu people; some of them swelled the population of Barasat. Moreover the poor economic condition of rural areas have invaded the town which amounts to an explosion situation. The figures below try to explain this.

TABLE 3.14 PLACE OF BIRTH OF INHABITANTS IN BARASAT TOWN

Sl. NO.	Place of Birth	Percentage of Total
1	Native	26.87
2	Calcutta	3.66
3	Other Places	50.34
4	Other States	3.93
5	Bangladesh	15.20
Total		100.00

Source – Field survey, 1998

Table 3.14 reveals that the native population percentage is 26.87%. Whereas birth place of people outside Barasat is 50.34%. This is an outcome of urbanisation and due to stagnant economy of the villages. Calcutta as birth place shows a percentage of 3.66%, showing that the exodus or push-out factor from Calcutta has not affected the study area. From the other states, 3.93% has come, which is an expected result. It is not a production centre, so migration from other states is minimum here. The share of Bangladesh is 15.20%. The data

shows that increased urban facility is the source of this influx of population. Those who register other places as their birth place comprise 50.34%. This explains that the study area behaves like a magnet-proximity to Calcutta, a nodal point of transport, the future possibility of development as commercial centres, the opening of new centres of employment, many of the amenities like education, health etc. may be the factors behind.

TABLE 3.15 IMMIGRANTS CLASSIFIED BY THEIR PERIOD OF LIVING IN THE BARASAT TOWN

Sl. No.	Period of living (Years)	Percentage of Total
1	10	18.72
2	11-15	15.60
3	16-20	12.35
4	21-25	7.60
5	26-30	8.41
6	> 30	37.32
Total		100.00

Source – Field survey, 1998.

Table 3.15 reveals that percentage of persons living for 10 years is 18.72%. It is a district town since 1986, 1st March. A new district town means a new administrative set-up, newer offices, and specialized services. These hands are comparatively new in this town. For population in living more than 30 years is 37.32% of the total population, that is, earlier than 1968, when the second rush of population from Bangladesh started afresh and the first rush of 1946 and later consolidated this stay at Barasat.

3.2.6 Occupational Pattern:

The economic composition of population of a locality remains vague without a study of the occupational structure of the people living in that locality. Occupation refers to a trade, profession or service to keep mankind engaged for his maintenance. Occupational pattern or its dispersion can speak of the economic and social structure. Again occupations depends upon the economic base. Any upheaval of the base dismantles the nature of the occupational pattern. A study is made upon the nature of occupation of the study area, the emergence of new areas, its future and potentialities by the investigator .

TABLE 3.16 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN BROAD AGE GROUP IN BARASAT TOWN

Age Group (Years)	Male	Female	Total
0-14	13.63	8.92	22.55
15- 60	39.23	33.14	72.37
Above 60	3.52	1.56	5.08
Total	56.38	43.62	100.00

Field survey, 1998

Table 3.16 shows percentage of Broad Age Group, that between 15 to 60 years of age live 72.37% of the population and 5.08% of population above 60 years of live age. This figure should have been higher. Again 22.55% is the dependent group.

TABLE 3.17 PLACE OF WORK OF INHABITANTS IN BARASAT TOWN

Ranks	Place of work	Percentage of Total
1	Barasat	49.19
2	Calcutta	35.91
3	Out side	14.90
Total		100.00

Source – Field survey, 1998.

Out of the working population, almost 50% work at Barasat. Calcutta still absorbs almost 36%. The investigator undertakes a field survey on the heads of occupations. The Table 3.17 is as follows.

TABLE 3.18 OCCUPATION OF THE PEOPLE IN BARASAT TOWN

Ranks	Occupation	Percentage of Total
1	Service	55.36
2	Business	34.33
3	Others	10.31
	Total	100.00

Source – Field survey, 1998

The service sector comprises 55.36%, whereas the business sector 34.33%. The later sector is self employment sector. The service sector includes secondary and tertiary levels of occupation. This is the sign of matured urbanity.

3.2.6a Workers and Non workers:

Nature is the primary source, mankind works upon and produces what keep the society going. Men and women, children and the aged through young's, all participate in work. Classification of work makes specification necessary, the social and cultural factors allow some to work

and for some working is discouraged (housewives). Some economic stages of advancement keep men up to certain ages 18 years (approx.) out of work, legislation's in some countries have forbidden child labour. These keep the ratio between workers and non-worker varying.

For a micro-level analysis, census operations in many countries collect specialized information pertaining to economic composition of a population. Again, manpower is a concept which implies those persons who can engage themselves in economically gainful activities for the need of production directly or production related activities or for some such activities that contribute to the welfare of the human resource material.

Classification can also be made into economically active and non-active section, economically active section is directly engaged in the production of goods and services. Economically non-active section is engaged in activities like home-keeping, domestic works, or in studies or retired people or pension holders and others depending upon royalties from debentures, shares, interests.

Age wise classification, as can be shown that from age 20 to 60 is the range of age who are economically active and they support the non-working population. Hence, this type of analysis can illuminate the economic base of areas. This can be explained in terms of dependence ratio also. But the census of India has different thoughts. In 1961 census population is divided into workers and non-workers. Who are workers? Workers are they whose main activity was participation in any economically productive work either by his physical activity or by his mental activity (Census 1971). Thus not only active but effective supervision and direction were also included. It is a change from the 1961 concept. The concept of 1901 is that working at least one hour a day as average, makes a worker, if his main activity was economically

productive. Excluded were house wives, students, beggars, prisoners, rent receivers etc.

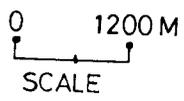
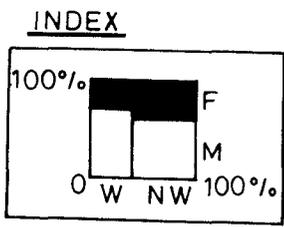
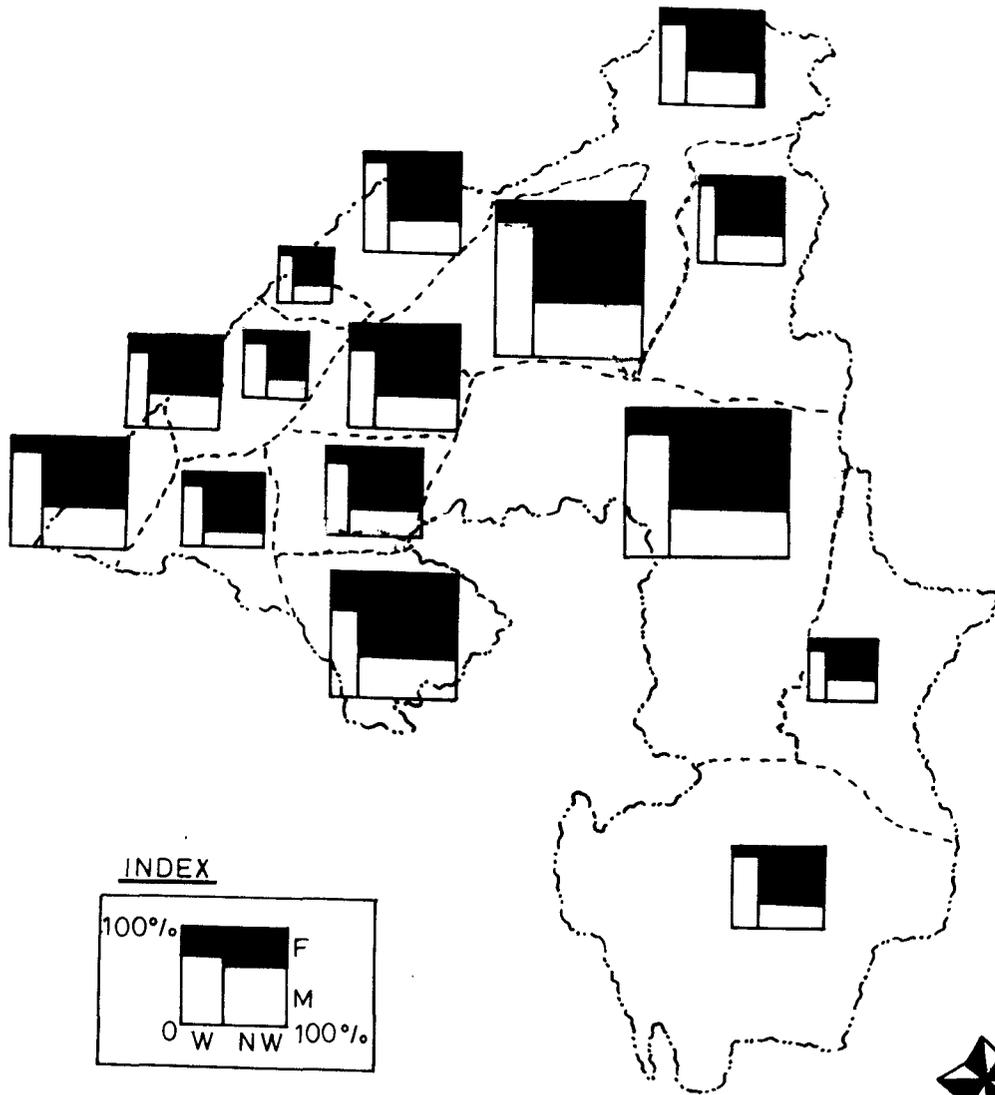
In 1981 a classification of workers as main workers and marginal workers were made. Main workers worked for most part of the year (180 days) marginal workers have not worked for most part of the year. Non-workers did not worked at all.

Social and economic factors determine working population. Literacy, education, status of woman, type of economy, availability of employment opportunity, level of income are the determinants. Age structure is also a factor.

Total study area has a population of 1,02,660 (Census 1991). The total workers are 29,632 which is 29% of the total population, much lower than the all India average (33.4% of 1981). But out of 29,632 workers, 26,116 are male (88%) and working women are 12%. According to 1981 census 51.6% of country's males and 14% of the females are workers. The 1981 census takes into account the rural urban, tribal non-tribal all together but the study area is an urban centre, where idle hands should have been fewer. This low percentage can not be explained in terms of male and female ratio or on the ratio between adults and non- adults. The town could not open avenues of employment- the heavy rush of uprooted people had settled only –but could not by now make any break through in occupational ladder – the primary occupational areas are exhausted – the secondary or tertiary sectors await for development. The picture is worse in 1981. The town holds many people than it can provide for.

The appendix – IV shows the workers, and the non- workers sex wise in each ward. Only wards II and III have a population less than 3,000. The highest is being in ward XII and XIII (more than 15,000). The working percentage is lowest 23% in ward II (fig.3.11). The value mostly

WORKERS & NON WORKERS OF BARASAT TOWN (1991)



W = WORKER
NW = NON WORKER



Fig-3-11

varies from 29% to 30% among the wards. The highest being 34% (in ward III). Irrespective of uneven distribution of population the percentage of working males and females remain almost the same. The study area appears to grow through years and not 'over night'- so, there is a uniformity of many population characteristics. Perhaps the patriarchal value system in the male population shoulders the economic burden. A sizable number of well – entrenched, permanent people reside here. The working people stay here with their families and do not migrate a few years after.

3.2.6b Income Pattern of the people:

TABLE 13.19 MONTHLY INCOME OF THE PEOPLE OF BARASAT TOWN

Monthly Income (Rs.)	Percentage of Total
< 1000	6.50
1001-3000	37.80
3001-5000	36.31
5001-7000	14.78
> 7000	4.61
Total	100.00

Source Field Survey in 1998.

About monthly income, Table 13.19 shows that the middle income groups ranging from Rs. 3001.00 to Rs. 7000.00 occupy 51% of the total population. The high income group earning monthly Rs. 7000.00 and above occupies only 4.61% of the population. So the economic picture of the town is not alarming.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, the growth of the study area is phenomenal (in term of population only) and is no different from other urban centres around

Calcutta. Towards the east bank of the river Hugli, the area has historical reference, but they have scattered localities. But the area from Dum Dum to Bangaon has refugee influx and it is the principal cause of the rapid growth of population. These areas were not prepared to adjust to this pressure. Barasat has no economic base. Throughout in pre-independence days it had a municipality and had some secondary and tertiary levels of occupations, the problems of the existing population are being solved with administration, private and individual efforts. No intervention either from the Government or from any central level was actually felt.

Sudden population growth requires time to adjust. More demands in form of accommodation, livelihood, hygienic living, education etc. arise. Some seventy or eighty years ago, the town might have been contented with insular existence with little mobility towards outside, but after the thirties of this century the mobility has increased. The process of urbanization is a natural tendency. The demands of civilised living is another cause. Agricultural land is being engulfed. More and more tertiary level of occupation emerge. Barasat is a part of Calcutta metropolitan area-from Calcutta to Bangaon, from Calcutta to Kalyani, from Haora (Calcutta) to Bandel have all become an unbroken chain of urban centres. These areas have become termacadum and contrete jungles. Barasat is not fashionable or exclusive residential area of higher or middle income groups (though small pockets have sprung up), nor it is an industrial suburb. It has undergone changes through factors which are more social than geographic or industrial. Absence of any large scale industry (preponderance of cottage and small – scale industry) the rise of repairing workshops, some small or modern industry employing a few people or requiring less capital suggests a gradual (though non-uniform) transformation of 'village'.

Since (1986) with the emergence of a district administrative centre scores of people with different levels of education came and have changed the consumption pattern. The Metro Dairy project, though originally meant for Calcutta, Barasat and the adjoining areas consume a large amount, leaving Calcutta for Mother Dairy and Belgachia Government Dairy. The fruit juice industry at Nilgunge has also a ready market at Barasat. A sex ratio also has a clear picture of stability. For every 1000 male there is 940 female. Stray immigration is not high here, otherwise the difference between male and female would have been greater. Hindu population is 75.86%, whereas Muslim population has come down from 40.35% (1901), to 24.17%. A partition effect may be the reason. Table 3.17 reveals that 49.19% of working people have Barasat as their working place. This figure indicates that immigrants who work are still fewer in number. The percentage of people living here for more than 30 years is 37.32% (Table 3.15). This is another proof of slow urbanisation.