

CHAPTER III

Demographic Pattern in Darjeeling

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CHAPTER III

Demographic Pattern in Darjeeling

3.1 Growth of Population

3.1.1 Introduction

Populations have a birth rate, that is, the number of young produced per unit of population per unit of time and a death rate, that is, the number of deaths per unit of time and a growth rate. The major agent of population growth is births, and the major agent of population loss is deaths. When births exceed deaths, a population increases; and when deaths exceed additions to a population, it decreases. When births equal deaths in a given population, its size remains the same, and it is said to have zero population growth.

The rate of population growth is the rate of natural increase combined with the effects of migration. Thus a high rate of natural increase can be offset by a large net out-migration, and a high level of net in-migration can counter a low rate of natural increase. Generally speaking, however, these migration effects on population growth rates are far smaller than the effects of changes in fertility and mortality.

An important and often misunderstood characteristic of human populations is the tendency of a highly fertile population that has been increasing rapidly in size to continue to do so for decades after the onset of even a substantial decline in fertility. These populations contain large numbers of children who have still to grow into adulthood and the years of reproduction. Thus even a dramatic decline in fertility, which affects only the numbers at age zero, cannot prevent the continuing growth of the number of adults of child bearing age for at least two or three decades.

Eventually, of course, as these large groups pass through the child bearing years to middle and older age, the smaller numbers of children resulting from the fertility decline lead to a moderation in the rate of population growth. But the delays are lengthy; allowing very substantial additional population growth after fertility has declined. This phenomenon gives rise to the term population momentum, which is of great significance to developing countries with rapid population growth and limited natural resources.

When introduced into a favourable environment with an abundance of resources, a small population may undergo geometric or exponential growth in the manner of compound interest. Many populations experience exponential growth in the early stages of colonizing a habitat because they take over an under exploited niche or drive other populations out of a profitable one. Those populations that continue to grow exponentially, however, eventually reach the upper limits of the resources; they then decline sharply because of some catastrophic event such as starvation, disease, or competition from other species.

If the aim of economic development is to raise the level of per capita incomes, it is obvious that this can be achieved both by increasing the rate of growth of total output and by reducing the rate of growth of population. As soon as birth rates stop rising, the relative increase in population in the working-age groups and the higher income available to existing family members immediately start to release resources for increasing consumption and saving.

In 1798 Malthus published anonymously the first edition of 'An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and other Writers'. In which he argued that infinite human hopes for social happiness must be vain, for population will always tend to outrun the growth of production. The increase of population will take place, if unchecked, in a geometrical progression, while the means of subsistence will increase in only an arithmetical progression. Population will always expand to the limit of subsistence and will be held there by famine, war, and ill health.

3.1.2 Growth of Population in Darjeeling

Darjeeling district offers the most remarkable example of growth of population stemming mainly from immigration from outside. At the time of the cession of the greater part of Darjeeling Sadar subdivision, comprising 357.4 sq. km. (138 sq. miles), by the Raja of Sikkim to the British in 1835, the tract was wholly covered by forests and it has been said that there were not even twenty resident families or households in that area.

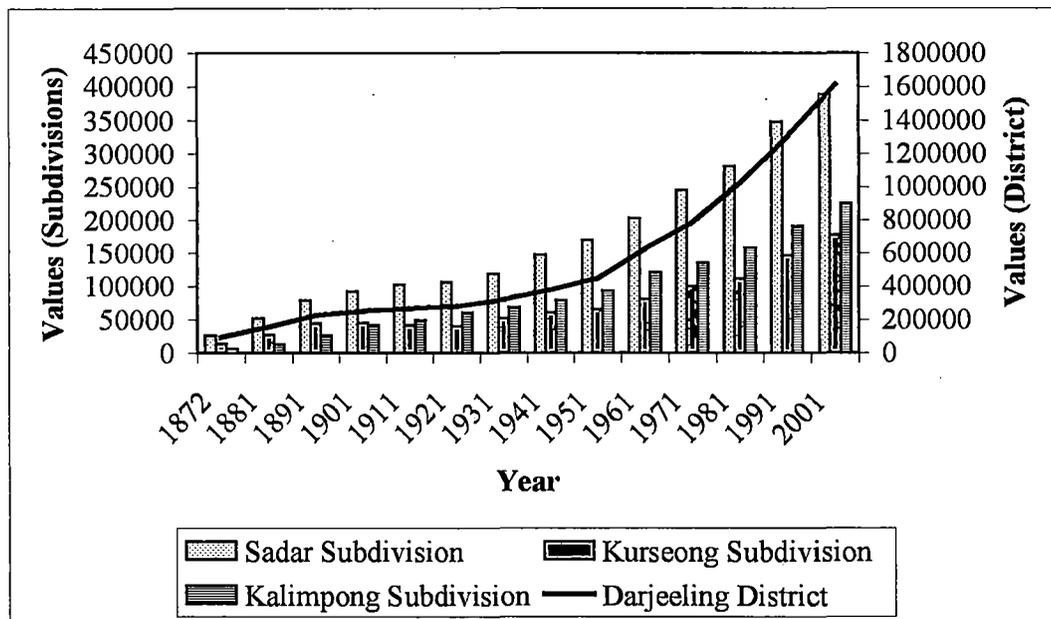
The period of Dr. Arthur D. Campbell's Superintendent ship from 1839 saw the growth of settlements and of population in the district. On becoming the Superintendent in Darjeeling Campbell took vigorous steps to attract settlers to the region and his measures proved so successful that by 1849, that is, seven years before any tea garden was established in the district, he was able to report that the number of inhabitants had risen to 10000. In 1869, when a rough census was taken, there were only 22000 inhabitants.

Table – 3.1: Population in Darjeeling, 1872-2001

Year	Darjeeling District	Sadar Subdivision	Kurseong Subdivision	Kalimpong Subdivision
1872	94412	26591	13690	6446
1881	155179	52318	26937	12683
1891	223314	79041	44645	26631
1901	249117	91953	45187	41511
1911	265550	102577	41207	49520
1921	282748	106511	40357	60093
1931	319635	119178	51996	68203
1941	376369	147327	59986	79042
1951	445260	169631	65713	93441
1961	624640	203523	80743	120526
1971	781777	245207	100233	134538
1981	1024269	281346	111302	158726
1991	1299919	347912	146640	190266
2001	1609172	388107	177264	225220

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Mitra, A: Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1954, Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Org., Development and Planning (T & CP) Department, Govt. of West Bengal and District Statistical Handbook 2005, Darjeeling, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

Figure – 3.1: Population in Darjeeling Hill Areas



During 1891–1901 the hills were very healthy. From table – 3.1 it can be seen that the increase of population was greatest in Kalimpong, where the wasteland was rapidly brought under cultivation by new settlers, chiefly, from Nepal. Already during, 1901-11 the population showed a decline in the rate of increase and shrinkage of the volume of immigration. Between 1872 and 1921 the district experienced phenomenal growth, but between 1901-51 the happy period of expansion and carefree production in an expanding market was over and the rate of growth during this period 1901-51 was very much less than half of the period 1872-1921. During 1911-21 the influenza epidemic caused great mortality in the hills and hung about longer than in the plains. During 1921-31 there was less immigration from Nepal. During 1931-41 there was a severe earthquake in January 1934 when a large number of old buildings in Darjeeling town and Tindharia collapsed. In 1935 there was heavy flood in Mechi (Mitra, 1954). During the sixty-year period from 1941 to 2001 the population of the three hill subdivisions were increased rapidly. For the Sadar subdivision the increase in population was more than three times. For Kurseong subdivision the same was nearly three times and also for Kalimpong subdivision the increase in population was nearly three times. The increasing trend in population is depicted in figure – 3.1

Table – 3.2: Profile of Darjeeling District

Year	Total Geographical area in Sq. Km.	Total Population	Density of Population No. Per Sq. Km.
1901	3015	249117	83
1921	3015	282748	94
1941	3087	376369	122
1961	3108	624640	201
1981	3149	1024269	325
2001	3149	1609172	511

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Lama Mahendra P and R L Sarkar (ed.), The Eastern Himalayas-Environment and Economy, Atma Ram & Sons, 1986 and District Statistical Handbook 2005, Darjeeling, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

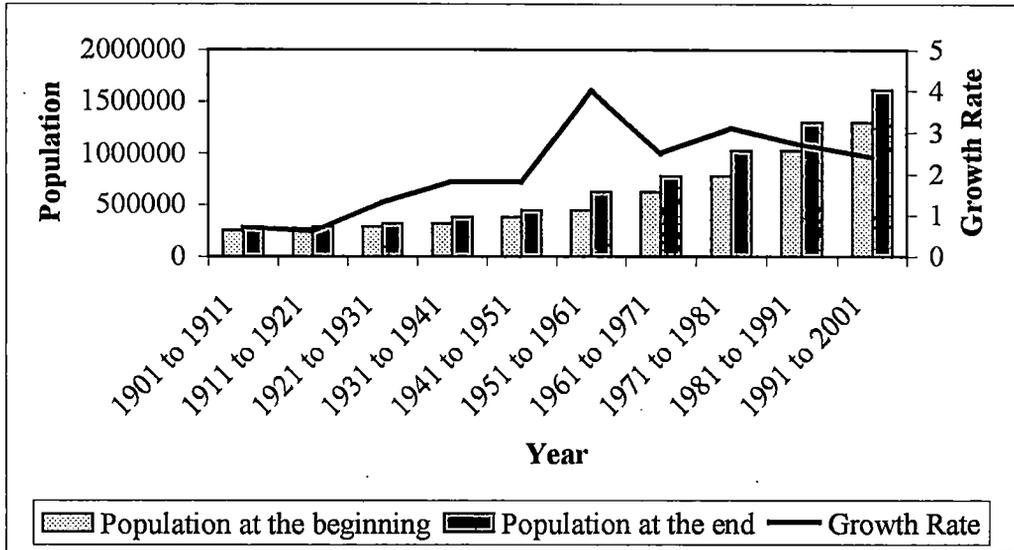
We can see from table – 3.2 that the density of population per square kilometre in Darjeeling district has been increasing gradually. During the sixty years from 1941 to 2001 it had been increased more than four times. So we can say that the growth rate of population was quite high during that period.

Table – 3.3: Growth Rates of Population for Different Periods

Period	Population at the beginning	Population at the end	Growth Rate
1901 to 1911	249117	265550	0.7
1911 to 1921	265550	282748	0.6
1921 to 1931	282748	319635	1.3
1931 to 1941	319635	376369	1.8
1941 to 1951	376369	445260	1.8
1951 to 1961	445260	624640	4.0
1961 to 1971	624640	781777	2.5
1971 to 1981	781777	1024269	3.1
1981 to 1991	1024269	1299919	2.7
1991 to 2001	1299919	1609172	2.4

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Table – 3.1

Figure – 3.2: Growth Rates of Population for Different Periods



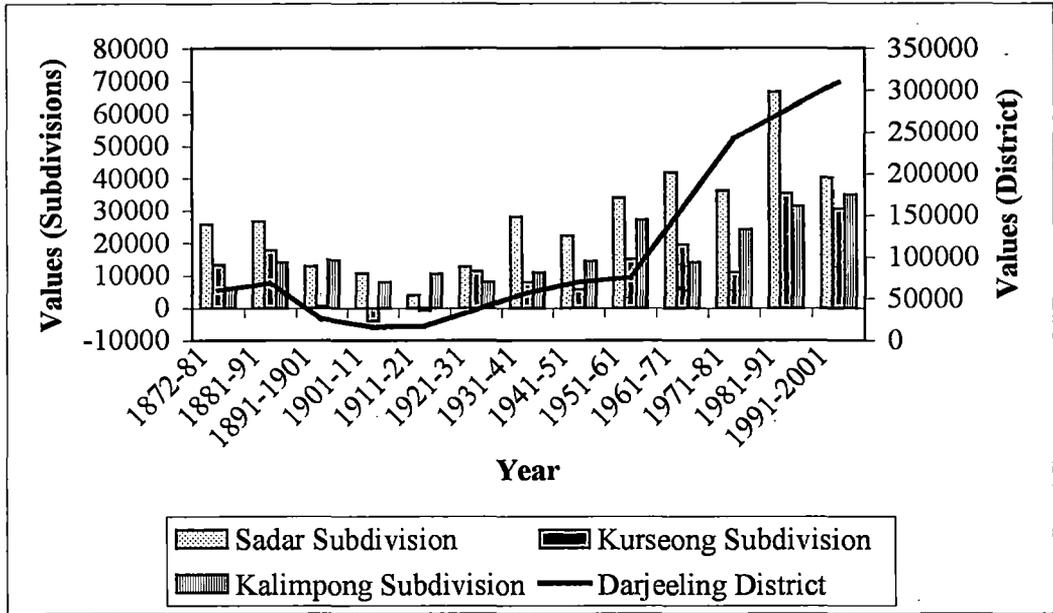
The growth rate of population in the early part of the century was low. However from table – 3.3 it can be seen that during the period 1951-61 the growth rate of population was highest in the century. The growth rates of population for different periods are depicted in figure – 3.2.

Table – 3.4: Population Variation of Darjeeling District, 1872-2001

Year	Darjeeling District	Sadar Subdivision	Kurseong Subdivision	Kalimpong Subdivision
1872-81	+60467	+25727	+13247	+6237
1881-91	+68135	+26723	+17708	+13948
1891-1901	+25803	+12912	+542	+14880
1901-11	+16433	+10624	-3980	+8009
1911-21	+17198	+3934	-850	+10573
1921-31	+36887	+12667	+11369	+8110
1931-41	+56734	+28149	+7990	+10839
1941-51	+68891	+22304	+5727	+14399
1951-61	+75023	+33892	+15030	+27085
1961-71	+157137	+41684	+19490	+14012
1971-81	+242492	+36139	+11069	+24188
1981-91	+275650	+66566	+35338	+31540
1991-2001	+309253	+40195	+30624	+34954

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Mitra, A: Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1954 and Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Org., Development and Planning (T & CP) Department, Govt. of West Bengal

Figure – 3.3: Population Variation of Darjeeling District, 1872-2001



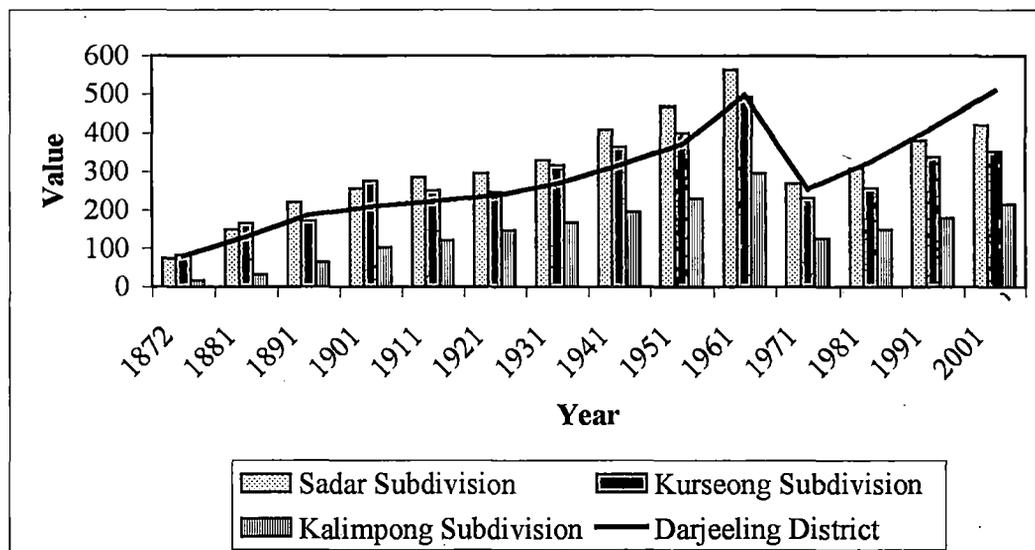
Between 1872 and 1881 the population had increased by 63.8 percent and during the next decade by 43.9 percent. The growth rate registered a drop to 11.6 percent during 1891-1901 and a further drop to 6.5 percent during 1901-11, which remained almost the same in the following decade. During 1901-11 most of the population growth took place in Kalimpong subdivision, which recorded a 19.3 percent rise in population, Sadar (Darjeeling) subdivision recorded 11.6 percent, while Kurseong suffered a decrease of 8.8 percent. During 1911-21 when the district recorded a 6.5 percent population increase, Kalimpong subdivision an even better growth, while Darjeeling (Sadar) showed a decline. During 1921-31 the district recorded a 13 percent growth in population, followed by a 17.7 percent increase in 1931-41. Migration, density of population and patterns of distribution of settlements are important considerations for development. The growth of population is quite high in Darjeeling region and the population became double in between 1931 to 1971 and this rapid growth is partly due to migration from other areas (Lama and Sarkar (ed.), 1986). From table – 3.4 it can be seen that during 1971-2001 the population had increased gradually for Sadar and Kalimpong subdivisions but for Kurseong subdivision the population had increased more than double. The population variation in Darjeeling district is depicted in figure – 3.3.

Table – 3.5: Variations in Density (Persons Per Square Mile), 1872-2001

Year	Darjeeling District	Sadar Subdivision	Kurseong Subdivision	Kalimpong Subdivision
1872	79	74	83	16
1881	129	149	164	31
1891	186	219	171	65
1901	208	255	275	102
1911	221	284	251	121
1921	236	295	246	147
1931	266	330	317	167
1941	314	408	365	194
1951	371	470	400	229
1961	497	563	492	295
1971	254	268	230	125
1981	325	307	256	148
1991	413	380	337	177
2001	511	421	352	214

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Mitra, A: Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1954, Ray B: Census 1961, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1967, Census 1971, Series 22, West Bengal, Part X – A & B, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Ghosh, S. N.: Census of India 1981, Series 23, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Part XIII – A, Village and Town Directory, Darjeeling District, Published by the controller, Government Printing, Calcutta, 1988, Census of India 1991, Series 26, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling District, Part XII – B and District statistical hand book 2004, Darjeeling, Bureau of applied economics and statistics, Government of West Bengal

Figure – 3.4: Variations in Density, 1872-2001



From table – 3.5 it can be seen that from 1872 to 1961 the density of population had increased gradually and reached its highest point in the three hill subdivisions as well as in the district also. But in 1971 it suddenly decreased to half of the values of 1961. Again the density of population gradually increased and in 2001 it became two times greater than the 1971 values. The variations in density from 1871 to 2001 are depicted in figure – 3.4.

During 1901-11 there was a decline in the rate of growth of population. The explanation was that there was only a limited area in which there was room for an increase in population. Reserved forests covered over one-third of the district, while the tea gardens extended over about one-seventh of its area. While they were being opened out and developed, labour poured in and a phenomenal growth of population resulted. Then, all the land suitable for cultivation, within the area reserved for it, had been taken up; on the tea gardens, therefore, no considerable increase of population can be expected. As it is, tea occupied a third of the cropped area and the tea gardens employed a labour force of 53000 or one-fifth of the total population of the district. As regarded ordinary cultivation, only one-third of the district was cultivable, and it cannot, therefore, hoped to support a teeming agricultural population. Even in Kalimpong, where nearly half of the land was reserved for native cultivation, it was recognized that it had reached the limit of safety in some parts, and in such localities it had been found necessary to prohibit further extension.

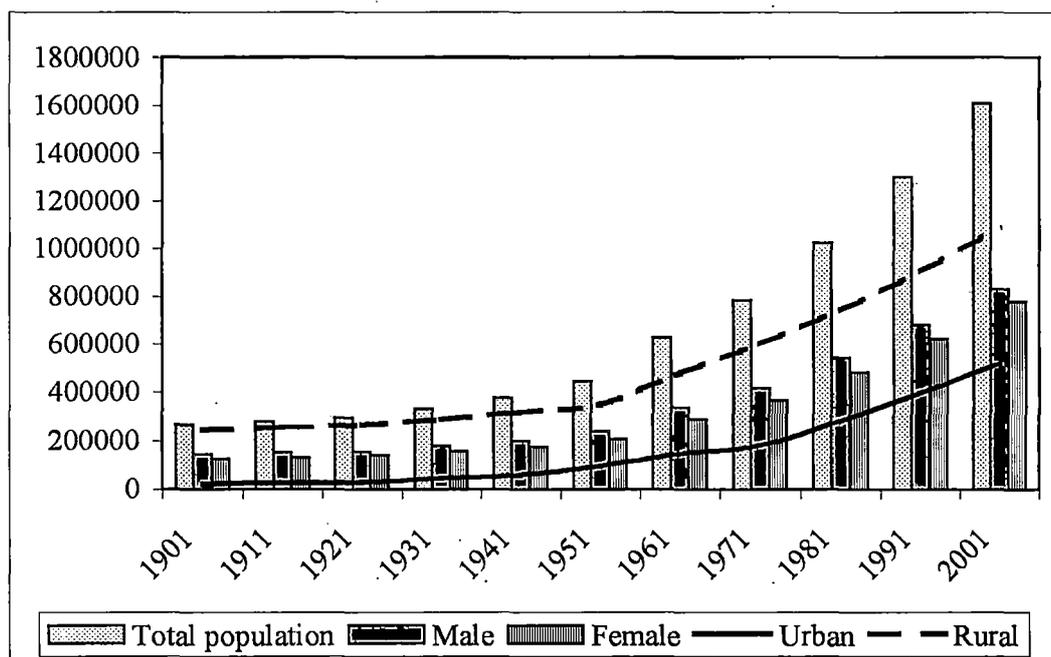
Table – 3.6: Growth of Population by Sex on Different Census Years in the District of Darjeeling

Year	Total population	Index with 1901 as base	Male	Female	No. of female per 100 males	Urban	Rural	Percentage of rural population to total population
1901	265780	100	141697	124083	88	21393	244387	91.95
1911	279899	105	149636	130263	87	24579	255320	91.22
1921	294237	111	155014	139223	90	28703	265534	90.24
1931	332061	125	176551	155510	88	43479	288582	86.91
1941	376269	142	199891	176478	88	58167	318202	84.55
1951	445260	168	239018	206242	86	94481	350779	78.78
1961	624640	235	335036	289604	86	144637	480003	76.84
1971	781777	294	415442	366335	88	180212	601565	76.95
1981	1024269	385	542567	481702	89	282153	742116	72.45
1991	1299919	489	679323	620596	91	396060	903859	69.53
2001	1609172	605	830644	778528	94	520432	1088740	67.66

Source: District statistical handbook 2004, Darjeeling, Bureau of applied economics and statistics, Government of West Bengal

From table – 3.6 it can be seen that during 1901-2001 percentage of rural population to total population was gradually decreased. During 1901-2001 the number of male population increased by nearly three times and the number of female population increased by more than three times. The number of female per 100 males decreased during 1901-11. But it increased during 1911-21. Although it again decreased during 1921-61. From 1861 onwards the number of female per 100 males increased again. The growth of population by sex and rural urban distribution of population is depicted in figure – 3.5.

Figure – 3.5: Growth of Population by Sex on Different Census Years in the District of Darjeeling



3.2 Composition of Population

The most important characteristics of a population – in addition to its size and the rate at which it is expanding or contracting – are the ways in which its members are distributed according to age, sex, ethnic or racial category, and residential status (urban or rural).

The Bengal Census of 1872 returned the population of the district at 94712 persons (males, 53057; females, 41655) thus classified: - Hindus, 69831; Mohammedans 6248; Buddhists, 1368; Christians, 556; others, 16709. The inhabitants of the hilly tract consists to a large extent of Nepali immigrants and of aboriginal highland races, in the 'Terai' the people are chiefly Hindus and Mohammedans. The Lepchas are considered to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the hilly portion of the district. They have no caste distinctions, but speak of themselves as belonging to one of one septs or clans, who all eat together and intermarry with each other. In the upper and northern Terai, along the rise of the hills, the Mechs form the principal ethnical nature.

The population in 1881 was 155645 and in 1891 was 223314, giving an average density of 192 persons per sq. mile. Classified according to religion, Hindus numbered 171171, Mohammedans 10011, Buddhists 40600, Christians 1502 of which 1049 were Europeans, "others" 30. In 1901 the population was 249232 showing an increase of 12 percent, compared with an increase of 43 percent in the previous decade. The land revenue and rates were Rs. 165806, the number of police was 395, the number of boys at school in 1896 – 97 was 2938, being 15.9 percent of the male population of school – going age, the registered death rate in 1897 was 42.16 per thousand.

When a census was taken in 1891, it was found that out of the district population of 223314 persons, 88000 were born in Nepal. Even this figure failed to reflect correctly the bulk of the population of Nepalese origin in the district as it excluded those whose parents or grandparents were born in Nepal. In 1901 it was found that 61 percent of the population was of Nepalese origin; 27 percent were tribes and scheduled castes; while the Bhutias formed a bare 3 percent and the Tibetans 1 percent of the population. The remaining 4 percent was made up of people belonging to "upper" Hindu castes, Muslims and non-tribal Christians from the plains, and Europeans. In 1931 people of Nepalese extraction including the Sherpas and Limbus formed about 52 percent, the tribes and scheduled castes from Indian plains approximately 21 percent, the Lepchas and the Sikkimese Tibetans about 4 percent, the Bhutanese about 1 percent and the Tibetans about 1 percent of the total population. The rest of the population was made up of people belonging to "upper" Hindu castes, Muslims and non-tribal Christians from the Indian plains, and Europeans.

Turning our attention to the quantum of population growth from decade to decade as revealed by the census counts, we find that the census of 1872 was considered defective. There was an immense concealment of females in 1881. Many of them fled on the census night over the frontier into Nepal. Labourers absconded from tea gardens, from panic and other causes. It was believed that the census of 1891 for the first time took a satisfactory count. During 1891-1901 the hills were very healthy. On the other hand, the terai was notoriously malarious and mortality was very heavy. The Siliguri – Darjeeling railway line was opened in 1880-1881. And this

last factor partially offset the climatic disadvantage even in the Terai. It facilitated the growth of already existing Indo-Tibet, Indo-Sikkimese and Indo-Bhutanese trade thereby increasing employment potential in the tertiary sector of places situated on the railway line (Banerji, et. al., 1980).

3.3 Distribution of Population

3.3.1 Distribution of Population According to Sex

Table – 3.7: Sex Ratio (Females Per 1000 Males), 1901-2001

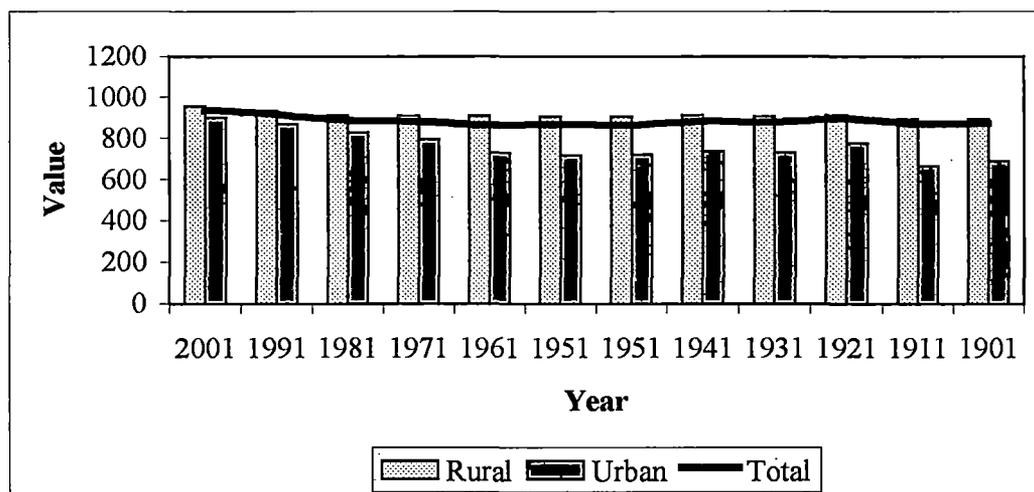
	2001	1991	1981	1971	1961	1951	1951	1941	1931	1921	1911	1901
Total	937	914	888	882	864	867	863	883	879	896	869	873
Rural	956	934	911	910	909	907	905	912	905	911	892	892
Urban	899	868	830	793	731	717	721	736	728	777	666	690

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Mitra, A: Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1954 Ray B: Census 1961, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1967, Census 1971, Series 22, West Bengal, Part X – A & B, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Ghosh, S. N.: Census of India 1981, Series 23, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Part XIII – A, Village and Town Directory, Darjeeling District, Published by the controller, Government Printing, Calcutta, 1988, Census of India 1991, Series 26, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling District, Part XII – B and District statistical hand book 2004, Darjeeling, Bureau of applied economics and statistics, Government of West Bengal

From table – 3.7 it can be seen that during 1901-11 females per 1000 males for total population had decreased. It had increased during 1911-21. Again it had decreased during 1921-31 and increased during 1931-41. This trend of decreasing and increasing was followed during the years 1941-51, 1951-61, 1961-71 and 1971-81 respectively. During 1981-2001 females per 1000 males for total population had increased. During 1901-21 females per 1000 males for rural population had increased. During 1921-31 it had decreased. Again during 1931-41 it had increased. But during 1941-51 the same had again decreased. During 1951-2001 females per 1000 males for rural population had increased gradually. 1901-11 females per 1000 males for urban population had decreased. It had increased during 1911-21. Again it had decreased during 1921-31 and increased during 1931-41. This trend of decreasing and increasing

was followed during the years 1941-51, 1951-61, 1961-71 and 1971-81 respectively. During 1981-2001 females per 1000 males for urban population had increased. This trend is depicted in figure – 3.6.

Figure – 3.6: Sex Ratio (Females Per 1000 Males), 1901-2001



3.3.2 Rural and Urban Distribution of Population

Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong became municipal towns in 1850, 1879 and 1945. Kalimpong was, however, growing as urban centre by virtue of its being the headquarter of the respective subdivision as also important entrepot markets served by a communication network with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan. The waning of trade between India and Tibet has affected Kalimpong adversely.

The following table indicates the rural and urban distribution of population in the district as also the percentage shares (shown within brackets) of rural and urban areas to the total district population in 1901, 1931, 1961 and 1991 from which the progress of urbanization will be apparent.

Table – 3.8: Distribution of Population in Rural and Urban Areas of Darjeeling District in Absolute Numbers and in Percentages

District/ Subdivisions	1901		1931		1961		1991	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Darjeeling District	219871 (90.44)	23246 (9.56)	276156 (86.40)	43479 (13.60)	480003 (76.85)	144637 (23.16)	903859 (69.53)	396060 (30.47)
Sadar Subdivision	75028 (81.59)	16925 (18.41)	97993 (82.23)	21185 (17.77)	162872 (80.03)	40651 (19.97)	274850 (78.99)	73062 (21.00)
Kurseong Subdivision	40718 (90.11)	4469 (9.89)	44544 (85.67)	7451 (14.33)	67333 (83.40)	13410 (16.61)	119882 (81.76)	26758 (18.25)
Kalimpong Subdivision	40442 (97.43)	1069 (2.57)	59427 (87.14)	8776 (12.86)	95421 (79.17)	25105 (20.83)	151434 (79.59)	38832 (20.41)

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Banerji, Amiya Kumar, et. al.: West Bengal District Gazetteers – Darjeeling, 1980 and Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Org., Development and Planning (T & CP) Department, Govt. of West Bengal

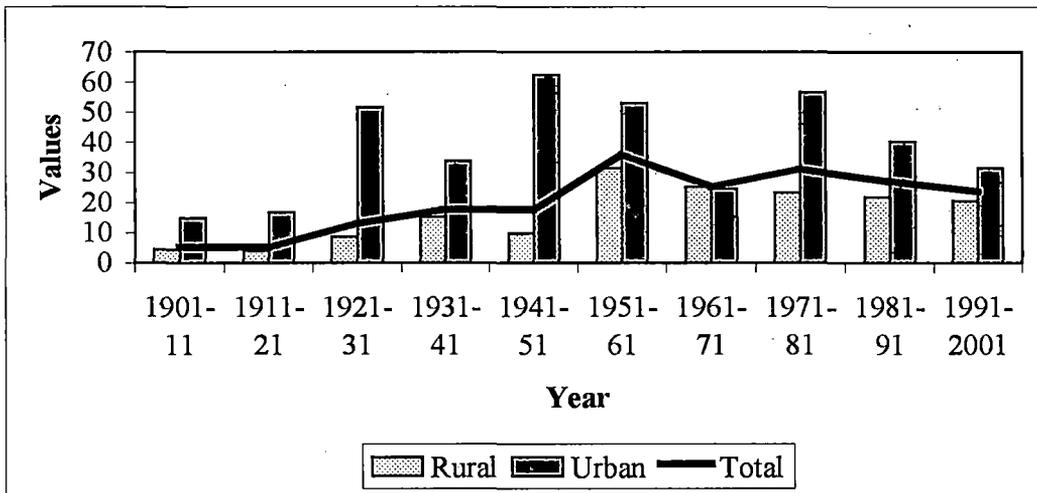
From table – 3.8 it can be seen that during 1901-1991 the percentage of rural population had decreased gradually for Kurseong and Kalimpong subdivisions and for the district as well. For the Sadar subdivision the percentage of rural population had increased firstly and then it had decreased gradually. During 1901-1991 the percentage of urban population had increased two times for Kurseong and ten times for Kalimpong subdivisions and more than three times for the district as well. For the Sadar subdivision the percentage of urban population had decreased at first and then it had increased gradually.

Table – 3.9: Percentage Variations of the District’s Population, 1901-2001

	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001
Total	+5.3	+5.1	+12.9	+17.7	+17.6	+35.9	+25.2	+31.0	+26.9	+23.8
Rural	+4.5	+4.0	+8.7	+15.3	+9.7	+31.5	+25.3	+23.4	+21.8	+20.5
Urban	+14.9	+16.8	+51.5	+33.8	+62.4	+53.1	+24.6	+56.6	+40.4	+31.4

Source: Banerji, Amiya Kumar, et. al.: West Bengal District Gazetteers – Darjeeling, 1980 and Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Org., Development and Planning (T & CP) Department, Govt. of West Bengal

Figure – 3.7: Percentage Variations of the District’s Population, 1901-2001



Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong are three important hill towns and urban centres. From table – 3.9 it can be seen that the percentage variation of the district’s total population, rural population and urban population had increased by more than four times, five times and more than two times respectively. The percentage variation of the district’s total population had decreased during 1901-21, increased during 1921-61, decreased during 1961-71, increased during 1971-81 and decreased during 1981-2001. This increasing trend in percentage variations of the district’s population is depicted in Figure – 3.7. The percentage variation of the district’s rural population had increased during 1901-41, decreased during 1941-51, increased during 1951-61 and decreased during 1961-2001. The percentage variation of the district’s urban population had increased during 1901-31, decreased during 1931-41, increased during

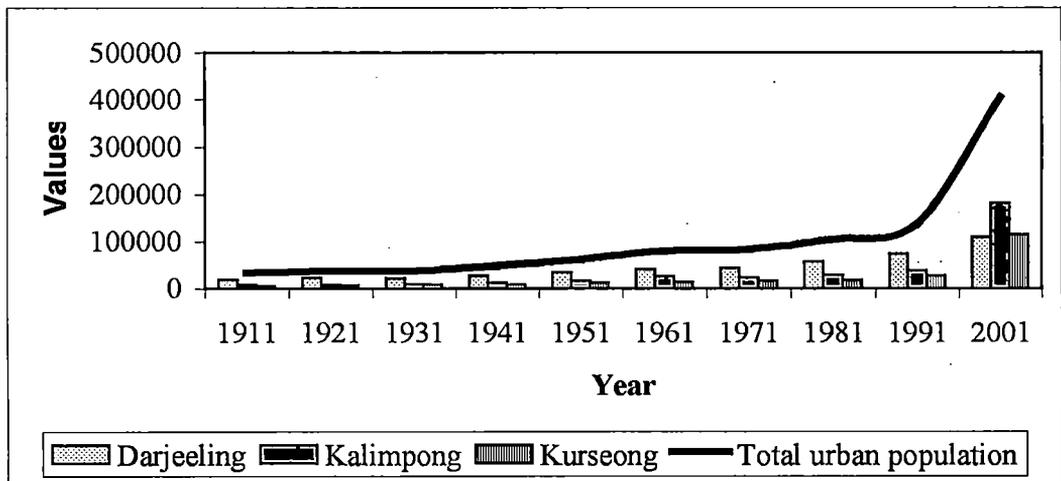
1941-51, decreased during 1951-71, increased during 1971-81 and decreased during 1981-2001. This percentage variation of the district's population is depicted in figure – 3.7.

Table – 3.10: Growth of Urban Population in Three Hill Subdivisions

Year	Darjeeling	Kalimpong	Kurseong	Total urban population
1911	19003	7880	5574	32457
1921	22258	8550	6445	37253
1931	21185	8776	7451	37412
1941	27224	11961	8495	47680
1951	33605	16677	11719	62001
1961	40651	25105	13410	79166
1971	42873	23430	16425	82728
1981	57603	28885	18008	104496
1991	73062	38832	26758	138652
2001	108830	182222	114441	405493

Source: Compiled by this scholar from Lama Mahendra P and R L Sarkar (ed.), The Eastern Himalayas-Environment and Economy, Atma Ram & Sons, 1986 and Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Org., Development and Planning (T & CP) Department, Govt. of West Bengal

Figure – 3.8: Growth of Urban Population in Three Hill Subdivisions



From table – 3.10 it can be seen that during 1911-21 the growth of urban population had increased for Darjeeling subdivision but it decreased during 1921-31. Again it increased during 1931-2001. In Kalimpong subdivision during 1911-61 the growth of urban population had increased but it decreased during 1961-71. Again it

increased during 1971-2001. During 1911-2001 the growth of urban population had increased for Kurseong subdivision.

But urbanization is usually thought to be a consequence of the growth of large-scale industries, expansion of administration, development of transport and communication and growth of trading activity. Hill areas in Darjeeling have not experienced any of the industrial activity. By their very nature the Hill areas are not suitable for the development of large industries. Agriculture is carried on in a scattered manner and agriculture is not productive enough to generate surplus and therefore, large-scale trading activities in agricultural products are not possible. Further, it was the tea industry, which brought urbanization in this area. But there is an all-pervading stagnation in the tea industry.

Darjeeling and Kurseong towns historically developed as the centres for tea plantation. The "centres" do not show any sign of expansion. Kalimpong town was a traditional centre of Indo-Tibetan trade. The traditional trading with Tibet came to a standstill after 1962 (Lama and Sarkar (ed.), 1986).

Therefore this limited urban growth in Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong may primarily be ascribed to the development of tea gardens and stoppage of Indo-Tibetan trade.

One should note that urbanization in the hills is being characterized by uncontrolled and unplanned haphazard growth, mushrooming of squatter colonies through illegal and forceful occupation of land, inadequate urban facilities, like water supply, sewerage etc. and congested and unhealthy living condition in general (Lama and Sarkar (ed.), 1986).

The population of the urban area of Darjeeling district was subject to considerable seasonal variation. The most favourite summer resort of Eastern India, Darjeeling received large number of visitors in the towns of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong. In the Autumn, in the months of September and October a smaller seasonal influx occurs. In the winter many people from the hills went down to the plains. It was difficult to estimate what the summer population was or the time it rose to, as the number of visitors varied from year to year. Trade depressions, military conditions had from time to time checked the flow of summer visitors (Mitra, 1954).

Rural areas fall into two main categories, first, what may be described as the plantation areas, i.e., areas that have been exploited by large capitalist or departmental agencies and, secondly, those worked by the small cultivator controlled by the revenue administration.

3.3.3 Marital Status

Table – 3.11: Marital Status According to Age Groups in Darjeeling District in 1901

Age Group	Unmarried percentage of		Married percentage of		Widowed percentage of	
	Males to total male population	Females to total female population	Males to total male population	Females to total female population	Males to total male population	Females to total female population
All ages	51.1	45	45.1	44.9	3.7	10
0-10	24.8	27.7	0.1	0.2	0	0
10-15	10.3	9.7	0.4	1.6	0	0
15-20	7.4	4.9	1.8	4.6	0	0.1
20-40	7.8	2.3	27.4	29.1	1.3	2.7
40-50	0.5	0.2	12.4	7.7	1.4	4.2

Source: Banerji, Amiya Kumar, et. al.: West Bengal District Gazetteers – Darjeeling, 1980

Table – 3.12: Marital Status According to Age Groups in Darjeeling District in 1961

Age Group	Unmarried percentage of		Married percentage of		Widowed percentage of	
	Males to total male population	Females to total female population	Males to total male population	Females to total female population	Males to total male population	Females to total female population
All ages	57.3	53.8	38.1	38.7	3.7	6.4
0-9	27.7	32.1	-	-	-	-
10-14	11.4	11.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
15-19	7.9	5.7	0.8	3.3	0.0	0.0
20-39	9.3	3.6	21.8	25.5	0.8	1.0
40-49	0.4	0.2	7.9	5.5	0.7	1.2

Source: Banerji, Amiya Kumar, et. al.: West Bengal District Gazetteers – Darjeeling, 1980

From table – 3.18 and table – 3.19 it can be seen that between 1901 and 1961 there has been a significant upward movement of age at marriage both for males and females. In 1901, 1.8 percent of males used to get married between 15 and 20 years while the corresponding figure in 1961 for the age group 15-19 was only 0.8 percent. 27.4 percent of males were married between 20 and 40 years in 1901 while only 21.8 percent of them were found married in 1961. Similarly, in 1901, 1.6 percent of girls in the 10-15 year age group was to be given in marriage whereas the corresponding figure for 1961 was only 0.3 percent. In 1901, 29.1 percent of the girls in the 20-40 age group was married while in 1961 25.5 percent of the girls of that age group became wives. Though the figures show an upward trend in the marriageable age of both sexes, the age group pattern has remained basically the same. For instance, the practice of getting married in large numbers in the 20-40 age group was there in 1961 as it was in 1901 for both males and females (Banerji, et. al., 1980).

3.4 Conclusions

It is true to say that in the development and distribution of urban settlements the physical configuration of the Darjeeling Himalayas has great influences. It is a region of confused relief featured with hills, ridges, spurs and deep valleys. These physical conditions offer a settlement pattern strikingly different from the rest of West Bengal. The difficult terrain producing an economic condition supported by a land tenure system rather different from the remaining part of the state might have influenced the distribution pattern as well as the nature of settlement of the region (Lama and Sarkar (ed.), 1986). Urbanization is of lower degree in this zone. This may be due to non-availability of land.

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