

CHAPTER III

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:

Demography is the scientific study of characteristics and dynamics pertaining to the human population. The characteristics encompasses by this study include size, growth rate, vital statistics and distribution of a specific population. Demography requires the study of specific information that may be gathered from a population census or vital statistics records. In some studies, the demography of an area is expanded to include education, income, the structure of the family structure of the family unit, housing, race or ethnicity and religion. However, the relevant demographic characteristics of North Bengal region have been discussed in this chapter on the basis of available data.

3.1: Population:

The *distribution of population* according to 2001 census among the six districts of North Bengal along with the adjacent diagram (*Figure Number: 3.1*) represent that the highest numbers of population (3401173) among the six districts of North Bengal is noticed in Jalpaiguri district. It is immediately followed by Maldah district (3290468).

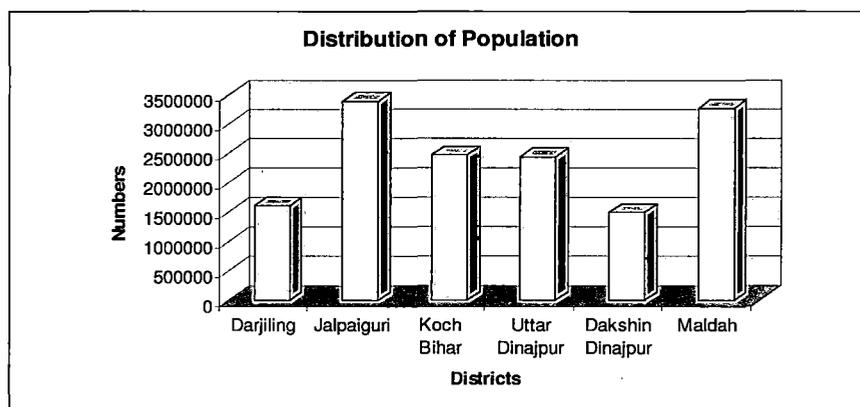


Figure Number: 3.1

Beside this, Koch Bihar (2479155) and Uttar Dinajpur (2441794) districts record more or less comparable numbers of population. It is subsequently followed by Darjiling district

having the population of 1609172 and lastly, by Uttar Dinajpur district with the population of 1503178.

Density of population is better measure understanding the variation in distribution of population. It is expressed as number of persons per square kilometers in 2001. North

Density of Population 2001:

Region	Density of Population/Sq.Kms.
West Bengal	904
North Bengal	674
Darjiling	510
Jalpaiguri	547
Koch Bihar	732
Uttar Dinajpur	778
Dakshin Dinajpur	677
Maldah	881

Table Number: 3.1

Source: Statistical Abstract of West Bengal 2000-2001

Bengal region is considered to be one of the most thickly populated areas, though it is lesser than that of state average, as West Bengal has 904 persons per square kilometer.

The following diagram and table records the districtwise **population growth** of North Bengal since the time period of 1901 to 2001. However, it is clear from the adjacent diagram (Figure Number: 3.2) as well as the table (Table Number: 3.2) and adjoining diagram reveals that North Bengal is showing decreasing positive growth.

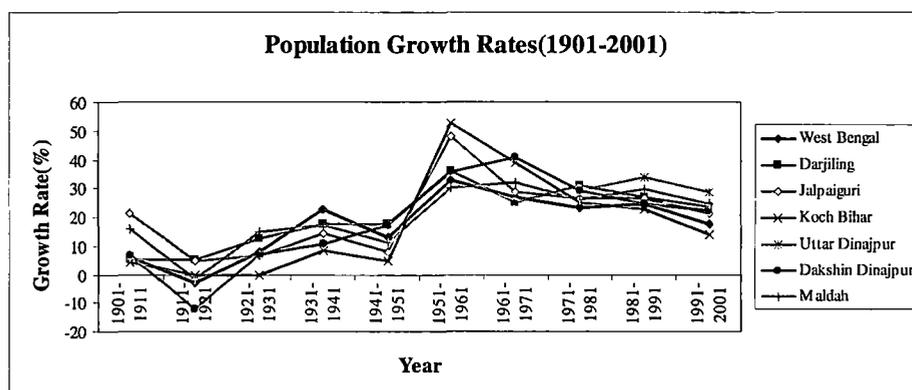


Figure Number: 3.2

Population Growth in North Bengal since 1901 - 2001:

Region	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001
West Bengal	6.25	-2.91	8.14	22.93	13.22	32.80	26.87	23.17	24.73	17.77
Darjiling	5.31	5.12	12.85	17.72	17.58	35.90	25.16	31.02	26.91	23.79
Jalpaiguri	21.30	4.93	6.47	14.42	8.13	48.27	28.76	26.55	26.44	21.45
Koch Bihar	4.58	-0.07	-0.26	8.43	4.74	52.45	38.67	25.28	22.55	14.19
Uttar Dinajpur	6.78	-12.13	7.23	10.99	17.03	35.51	40.50	29.31	34.00	28.72
Dakshn Dinajpur	6.78	-12.13	7.23	10.99	17.03	35.51	40.50	29.31	24.39	22.15
Maldah	15.72	-1.77	14.99	17.19	11.05	30.33	31.98	26.00	29.78	24.78

Source: Human Development report of West Bengal 2002-2003

Table Number: 3.2

3.2: Age-Sex Composition:

Sex composition plays an important role in social and economic structure of a region. In North Bengal region about 51% of total population is male population while womenfolk constitute about 49% of total population. Age composition, as social relations within a community, holds an important place among various components of population composition of a region and the community is affected considerably by it. Not only that, many types of planning, particularly the planning of community institutions and services, manpower supply, labour force and per head productivity as well as the economic development of the community etc. are guided by the age structure of the population.

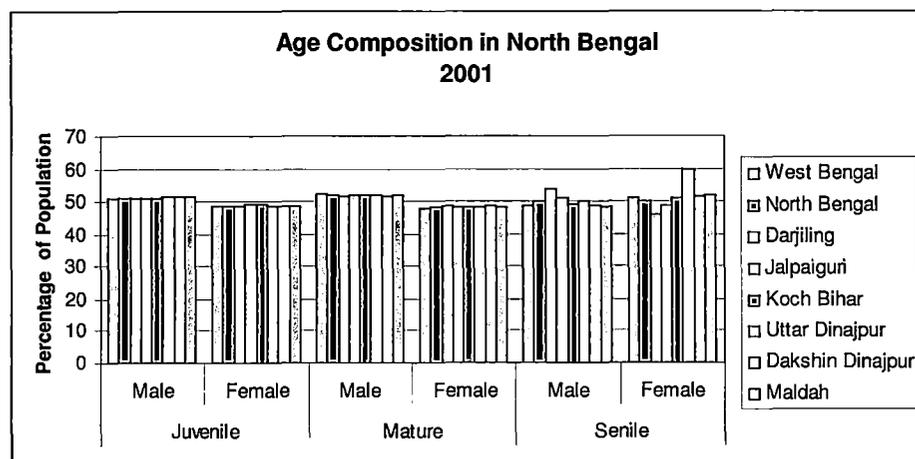


Figure Number: 3.3

In the state of West Bengal, during 1991, the proportion of population in young age-group was 37% and in North Bengal region it was 40%. Therefore, it can be easily said that, in North Bengal, due to high growth rate of population 2/5th of its population is in young age-groups. But in 2001, though all districts of the region as a whole show a decrease in the proportion of young age people, but still it is very high as compared to the state as a whole. According to 2001 census, about 38% populations are in below 15 age-groups in the region while in case of whole state the figure is about 33%. Besides, mortality also effects the age composition of a population. However, its impact upon age structure depends largely upon the variation in mortality rates at different ages. Migration effects completely in different way on the age structure of a population as the migrants have their own typical age pattern as well as natural increase pattern. Mainly due to its age selective character, the impact of migration is very high upon age structure of any region. Generally, people in the age-group of 15 to 30 years are more mobile than the people in the younger and the older age groups and this is the main reason behind the high proportion of adolescent and young adults in the urban areas of all districts of North Bengal which is mainly caused by age selective rural to urban migration, in search of employment, education and other facilities. This is the reason why after independence, there was increase of population in most of the district of North Bengal. The one and only factor was high rate of international migration from neighboring countries, mainly from Bangladesh.

One of the most important and commonly used methods of analyzing age composition is the *age-pyramid*, which is more commonly is the age and sex pyramid. The shape of the pyramid varies from region to region depending upon the stage of demographic transition through which the region is passing. North Bengal region, as it is characterized by high birth rate and sharply declining death rate, typical of second stage of demographic transition shall have broad base of the pyramid. This broad base constitutes for early age groups but tapers off rather due to low life expectancy. The population of North Bengal as a whole can be divided into three major age-groups that is the young or juvenile age-group, the adults on mature age group and the old or senile age group. The young juvenile age groups include below 15 years of age. The proportion of population in this age group in any region is determined by the stage of demographic

transition through which it is passing. This proportion is large if it is passing through the first or second stage of demographic transition. As North Bengal is in the second stage hence its proportion of people in below 15 age also large which starts declining as the region approaches the late second stage. It is interesting to note that, in this region about 37.86% of the total population is in the juvenile age-group and this figure is about 4.58 point more than that of the state average. Because of the regional variation of proportion of young population are related with the fertility patterns of different regions there seems to be a direct correlation between birth rates and proportions of young population. This age-group is economically unproductive and the most expensive age-group as it is to be provided with food, clothing, education etc. It may be said that the burden of population on the resources of a country is directly proportionate to the size of this age-group in a population on the resources of a country is directly proportionate to the size of this age group in a population.

In North Bengal region as a whole, while about 37.86% population is below the age of 15 years, the corresponding figure for the maximum and the minimum percentage among districts are 42.77% and 31.56% in Uttar Dinajpur and Darjiling district respectively in the census year 2001. Only Darjiling district records young population less than that in the state average. Thus in all parts of North Bengal, due to high fertility rate the proportion of young population is very high which will lead to further high rate of population growth till the end of their reproductive age. It is because, though the juvenile age-group is biologically unproductive, but when this group will enter the reproductive age-group it will create population explosion in the region. The decrease of proportion of juvenile population from 1991 to 2011, which is a very good sign and if this trend continues, then it will be much beneficial for the region to improve its economic condition and to control its high population growth. In spite the fact that, the percentage of child population is decreasing in the decade '1991 to 2001', all are much higher in them. According to the latest census data more than 15% population of North Bengal is in the age of below 6 years.

The population of a country is generally divided into three specific age-groups those are '0 to 14', '15 to 59' and 'above 59'. This categorization of population is useful for inferring dependency, need for education and employment, potential fertility and

other age related factors. Taking the state of West Bengal as a whole, the average population is increased in above 59 years from 6.05 % in 1991 to 7.12% in 2001. In case of North Bengal region it has increased from about 5.33% to 5.97%. According to 2001 census among all district of North Bengal region, the proportion of senile population in Koch Bihar is the highest being 6.91% followed by Darjiling and Dakshin Dinajpur and Maldah districts. They record more females than males in the senile age-group. The mature group comprises people falling in the age-group of 15 to 59 years. The adult age group is biologically the most reproductive, economically most productive and demographically most mobile. It supports the bulk of two other age-groups. About 60% people of the state of West Bengal are in this age-group in 2001, which is 56.17% i.e., about 4 points less than the state in North Bengal. Out of six districts, Darjiling possesses maximum proportion of adults, which is 61.84%, i.e. about 2 points higher than the state average. It is followed by Jalpaiguri, Dakshin Dinajpur and Koch Bihar districts, which record the percentage of working population more than the region's average. On the other hand, Maldah and Uttar Dinajpur record proportion of adults less than the North Bengal's average with the lowest in the Uttar Dinajpur district as 52.09%. That is to say, there is a wide variation in regional distribution of active population in North Bengal as there is about 10 points gap recording highest and lowest proportion of economically active population of the region.

Form the above discussion about age structure of North Bengal, it can be easily said that in caser of demographic transition, it is far behind of the state average. Out of the six districts of North Bengal, Darjiling shows a positive picture with lower proportion of young people and relatively higher proportion of adults. This means, it entered the last portion of second stage of demographic transition with lowering the fertility rate and declining mortality rate. On the other hand, out of all districts, the position of Maldah is worse. It records a broad base in age pyramid revealing the fact, that the fertility rate is still high, Thus, North Bengal, there are two zones:

- (a) the northern part which is passing through the late second stage and
- (b) the southern part which is still at the beginning of second stage of demographic transition.

3.3: Dependency Ratio:

Dependency ratio has a direct and positive bearing on the economic position of the state and its districts. Achievements in economic growth and progress bring prosperity, which makes the nations with low age dependency ratio to have high percapita income and to augment their capacity to invest in the process of economic growth. The population of North Bengal is characterized by very high proportion of dependents as a result of which the region is under great strain of very high dependency burden and this strain seems likely to get of dependency ratio are of three and these are total, juvenile and senile. Though all the districts suffer from heavy burden of dependency ratio, considerable inter-district variations are found there. On the whole, the dependency ratio for North Bengal is about 78 in 2001, which varies from maximum of 92 on Uttar Dinajpur district to the minimum of 62 in Darjiling district. Apart from Darjiling, other three districts, namely, Jalpaiguri, Dakshin Dinajpur and Koch Bihar record total dependency burden of below the North Bengal's average. In the study region, as in the state the 'juvenile dependency ratio' for the whole state is 56, which is 67 for the whole North Bengal region. District wise variation shows that it varies from minimum of 51 in Darjiling district to the maximum of 82 in Uttar Dinajpur district. Therefore there is a large gap between maximum and minimum concentration of juvenile population. Like in the case of total dependency ratio, three districts, namely, Jalpaiguri, Dakshin Dinajpur and Koch Bihar record the juvenile dependency burden below of the North Bengal's average during the year 2001.

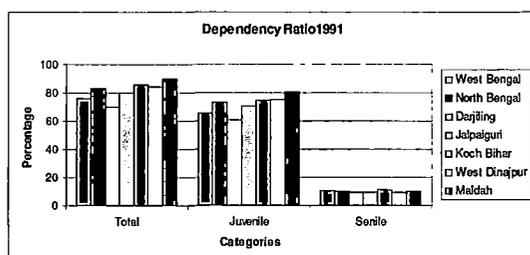


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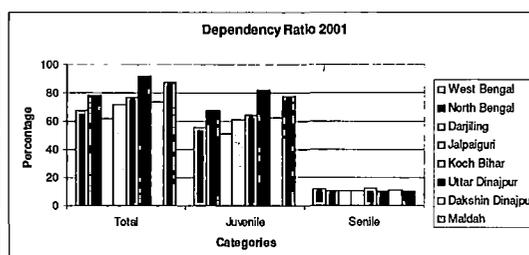


Figure Number: 3.5

During 2001, about 12% population of whole West Bengal is dependent upon working population as senile dependency burden. In case of North Bengal, this

percentage is about 11%. Out all of the districts of North Bengal, Koch Bihar has the maximum senile dependency ratio whereas Maldah encompass the lowest senile dependency with 9.83% in 2001. It is interesting to note that, in case of the whole state, as well as the North Bengal as a whole and obviously all of the districts, the total dependency burden have been decreased from the year of 1991 to 2001. The case of juvenile dependents is also similar to the total dependents but the condition for the senile dependents increased from 1991 to that in 2001.

3.4: Size of Household:

Size of household is measured as the ratio between ‘total population’ and ‘number of household’. The average size of household in North Bengal region during the period of 2001 has recorded about 5.19, which varies from 5.21 in rural areas to 5.02 in urban areas. The size of household is highest in Uttar Dinajpur district, where it is 5.26 which is subsequently followed by Maldah with 5.21 and Darjiling with average size of household of 5.05. In remaining there districts, the average size of household is less than 5.0 whereas the minimum size of household is recorded in Dakshin Dinajpur district, where it is only 4.73. For all areas, (*Figure Number: 3.6*) as well as rural and urban also, the household size is recorded maximum in Uttar Dinajpur district while it is lowest in Dakshin Dinajpur district for both in total and rural areas but in Koch Bihar for urban areas. In greater part of C.D.Blocks of North Bengal, the household size is less than 5.

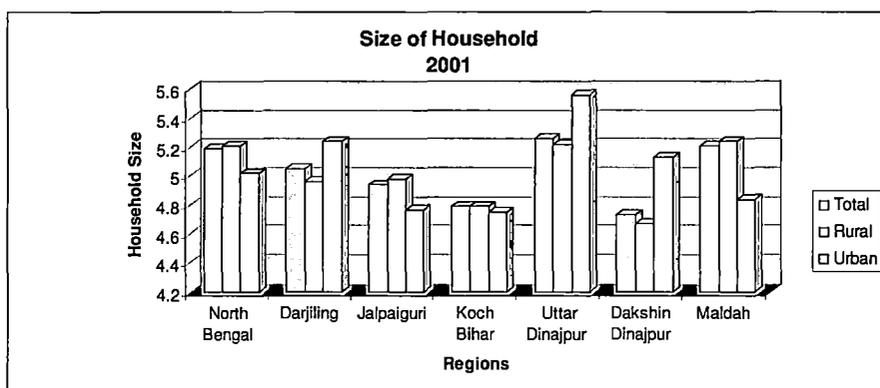


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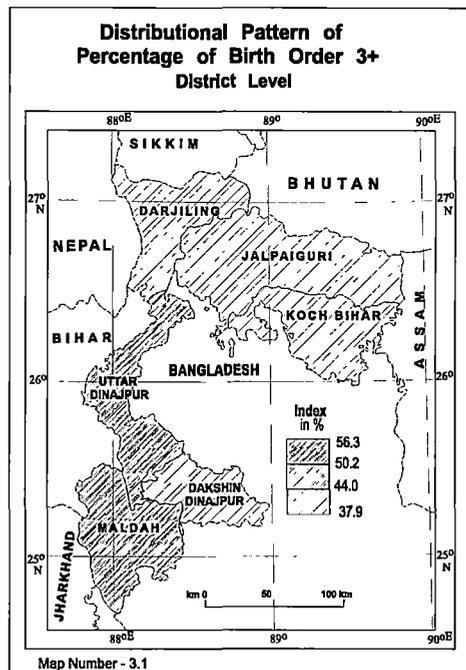
Among all *rural areas* of North Bengal, the average size of household is 5.21 which varies between highest of 5.24 in Maldah to minimum of 4.67 in Dakshin Dinajpur district, Maldah and Uttar Dinajpur records average size of household in rural areas more than 5.0, while all other districts record it less than 5.0. Uttar Dinajpur records maximum size of household in *urban areas* with 5.56. It is followed by Darjiling and Dakshin Dinajpur district, the average size of household in urban areas has recorded 5.24 and 5.13 respectively with the region average of 5.02. Remaining three districts record the average size of household less than 5.0 with lowest is in Koch Bihar district, where it is only 4.75. In maximum C.D.Blocks, the size of household is less than 5. The size of household of 58 % C.D.Blocks (*Appendix Number: 10.1*) of North Bengalis recorded as less than 5. Moreover, all the C.D.Blocks of Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts have size of household of less than 5. On the contrary, about 33% C.D.Blocks each of Maldah and Uttar Dinajpur districts and about 8% C.D.Blocks of Darjiling district recorded size of household as more than 5.41. In other words, the size of household of more than 5.41 is recorded in 13% C.D.Blocks of North Bengal. Therefore, in remaining 29% C.D.Blocks, the household size is recorded as between 5 and 5.41.

3.5: Fertility & Mortality:

The districtwise *birthrate* below the age of twenty in North Bengal for the year of 2001 ranges from the minimum of 6.9% in Uttar Dinajpur district to the maximum of 12.6% in Dakshin Dinajpur district, the range being approximately 5.7%. Taking into account this range three classes, namely, low (6.9% - 12.6%), medium (8.8% - 10.7%) and high (1.7% - 12.6%) have been formed for depicting the districtwise spatial pattern of birth rate below the age of twenty by choropleth map (*Map Number: 3.1*). The map displays that two districts, namely, Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts belong to the high level. The sole Maldah district lies in medium level whereas Darjiling, Jalpaiguri and Dakshin Dinajpur districts to the low level of birth rate below the age of twenty.

The percentage of Birth Order 3+ and above is a direct measure of fertility and various researchers have studied the district level fertility in India using this indicator provides a reasonably good idea about the fertility at the level of smaller administrative unit. Moreover, it requires minimum information, i.e. the distribution of birth by order

(Bhat 2004, Ram, Chander Shekhar and Mohanty 2005). The Indian census has been provided the information on Birth Order since 1981, larger the percentage of Birth Order3+ three and above, higher is the fertility rate. In other words, lower the percentage of Birth Order3+ three and above better is the district.



The districtwise Birth Order3+ in North Bengal for 2001 ranges from the minimum of 37.9% in Darjiling district to the maximum of 56.3%. Taking the range of 18.4% three qualitative classes, namely, low (37.9% - 44.0%), medium (44.0% - 50.2%) and high (50.2% - 56.35%) have been formed to show distributional pattern of Birth Order3+ by a choropleth map, prepared accordingly. The map represents that there is no district in the medium class as four wards, namely, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts belong to the low class whereas the rest two districts, i.e. Uttar Dinajpur and Maldah districts display high percentage of Birth Order3+.

Two decade ago, North Bengal recorded 9447601 populations in 1981. Its population has grown at an annual rate of 2.80 during 1981-2001. North Bengal lies in the region of *crude birth rate* of 17.9 per thousand in 2001 of West Bengal, whilst the *crude death rate* of West Bengal is only 6.3 per thousand in 2007.

3.6: Migration:

As **migration** is one of the demographic factors influencing a region's sex ratio, it also does so even without any substantial change in the numerical magnitude of the population. If the median age of the migrants is lower than the median age of the whole population, the migration will produce instantaneous ageing, especially if the migration rate is high, and mortality and fertility remain constant. But in case of the country of immigration, the results reverse. Generally the median age of the migrants is lower than the median age of the population and as such, the impact of immigration is reflected in an instantaneous rejuvenation and the retardation of aging process statistical evidences reveal the fact that, migration is generally sex selective and male are more prone to migration. Only in a short distance internal migration, the selectively, appears to turning favour of females. Migration behavior of people changes the sex structure of the population both the dispatching and receiving areas. Generally, sex selective migration results into more masculine nature of areas of in migration, whereas the proportion of females tends to increase relatively in areas of out-migration. Thus there is an inverse relationship between sex ratio and in-migration in all districts of North Bengal.

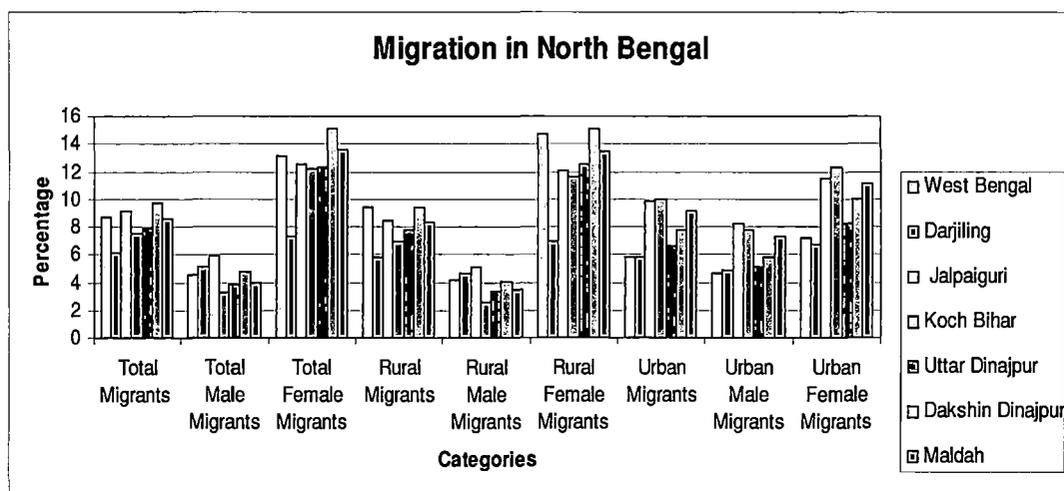


Figure Number: 3.7

On the basis 2001 Census, it can be said that Out of the six districts of North Bengal highest migration (9.78%) is occurred in Dakshin Dinajpur district whereas the least migration is observed in Darjiling district (6.16%). Jalpaiguri district (9.18%) also

represents more migration than the state average (8.70%). On the other hand, the remaining three districts, namely, Maldah (6.63%), Uttar Dinajpur (7.91%) and Koch Bihar (7.57%) lesser migration than the state average. It is very interesting feature to mention here that magnitude of male migrants is smaller than that of female one. However, the maximum *male migration* is occurred in Jalpaiguri district (5.90%) which is subsequently followed by Darjiling (5.11%), Dakshin Dinajpur (4.72%), Maldah (3.94%), Uttar Dinajpur (3.77%) and lastly by Koch Bihar district (3.25%). In case of *female migration*, it is observed that maximum migration (15.10%) is recorded in Dakshin Dinajpur district. Another district, that is to say Maldah (13.58%) display more female migration than the state average (13.13%). The remaining four districts i.e. Jalpaiguri (12.50%), Uttar Dinajpur (12.32%) and Koch Bihar (12.13%) display lesser female migration than the state average. If we consider the rural population separately it is observed that alike the total migrant population the highest rural migration is recorded in Dakshin Dinajpur district (9.42%) and the lowest one is in Darjiling district (7.28%). Jalpaiguri (8.45%), Maldah (8.31%), Uttar Dinajpur (7.77%) and Koch Bihar (6.97%) follow Darjiling district successively being below the state average of rural migration. In case of urban migration, the scenario is little different as Koch Bihar district (10.02%) records maximum urban migration which is abnormally high from the state average (5.83%). Even excluding Jalpaiguri district (5.76%) all the remaining four districts, namely, Jalpaiguri (9.80%), Maldah (9.16%), Dakshin Dinajpur (7.81%) and Uttar Dinajpur (6.58%) districts display more urban migrants than the state average.

3.7: Ethnic Structure:

Caste is an essential element in the social structure of India as it is both a social class and a social institution. As a social class it is functional, endogamous hereditary and hierarchical. In the North Bengal as a whole, as per 2001 census, about 30% populations is scheduled castes. District wise distribution reveals the fact that, Koch Bihar with 50.11% tops the list. Next important concentration is found in Jalpaiguri district with amount 38% of its population as scheduled castes population and it is followed by Dakshin Dinajpur with 29% and Uttar Dinajpur with 28%. However, less than 20% concentration of scheduled castes population is recorded in two districts of extreme south

and extreme north i.e. Maldah and Darjiling. Therefore, in whole North Bengal, though the percentage varies from one district to another from 50% to 16% and though the concentration of scheduled castes population has decreased from 31% to 30% during 1991-2001 periods, but it is still too high as compared to whole nation (16.20%) and the state of West Bengal (23.02%).

Likewise total areas, in *rural areas* also, Koch Bihar and Jalpaiguri constitutes first and second largest concentration of scheduled castes population with 53% and 40% respectively. Next important cluster is in Dakshin Dinajpur and Uttar Dinajpur districts with 30% and 29% of total population respectively. But in two extreme north and extreme south districts, scheduled castes percentage varies between 17% - 19% of total population. In North Bengal as a whole, in rural areas, scheduled castes population constitute about 32% of total population.

But in *urban areas* of the region, about 16% of total population is scheduled castes. Among the districts, it varies from 20% in Jalpaiguri district to 10% in Darjiling district. Thus in urban areas, Jalpaiguri district shares highest concentration while Darjiling as the lowest. More than 15% of the total population as scheduled castes is found in Uttar Dinajpur and Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts. But in Maldah, the concentration is less than 15 %.

In general, the origins of the tribe lie in the earliest stage of human evolution: the emergence of man as a hunter, food gatherer led to the unique pattern of social behavior and his march towards civilization has wearied a complex network of economic social and ecological relationship. The primitive way of living may be vanishing but tribalism lives on:

According to 2001 census, about 10% total population of North Bengal region is scheduled tribes. Maximum concentration of scheduled tribes populating is in Jalpaiguri district with about 19% of its total population as scheduled tribes. It is followed by Dakshin Dinajpur and Darjiling districts, about 16% and 13% of total populations scheduled tribe, with less than 1% in rural areas, as whole, tribes constitute about 11% of North Bengal's total population. In Jalpaiguri about 22% of its total population is tribal population and in Koch Bihar, tribes constitute less than 1% but in urban areas, in aggregation, tribal population constitutes less than 10% of the total population.

Maximum concentration of it occurs in Darjiling district, which share about 5% of its population as tribe in urban areas.

3.8: Religion:

Mainly six *religious groups* are present in North Bengal region. These are the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, the Sikhs, the Buddhists and the Janis. Among them, here is the over whelming supremacy of Hindu religion in four districts, namely, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur. Uttar Dinajpur district shows slight dominance of Hindu religion. On the other hand, Maldah district is the only one that shows a slight dominance of the Muslims over the Hindus.

As regards the percentage of the Hindus, Jalpaiguri shows the highest percentage followed successively by Darjiling, Koch Bihar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur and Maldah. The percentage of Muslim population is, on the other hand, highest in Maldah district which is followed by four districts, namely, Uttar Dinajpur, Koch Bihar, Dakshin Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri, Darjiling district is the only one in North Bengal Region where he Buddhists rank second after the Hindus. The percentage of Christian population is definitely highest in Jalpaiguri district which is followed by Darjiling where it ranks third among all religious groups. However, the Christians also rank third in Jalpaiguri and Dakshin Dinajpur districts. Other religious groups represent insignificant percentages i.e less than one percent.

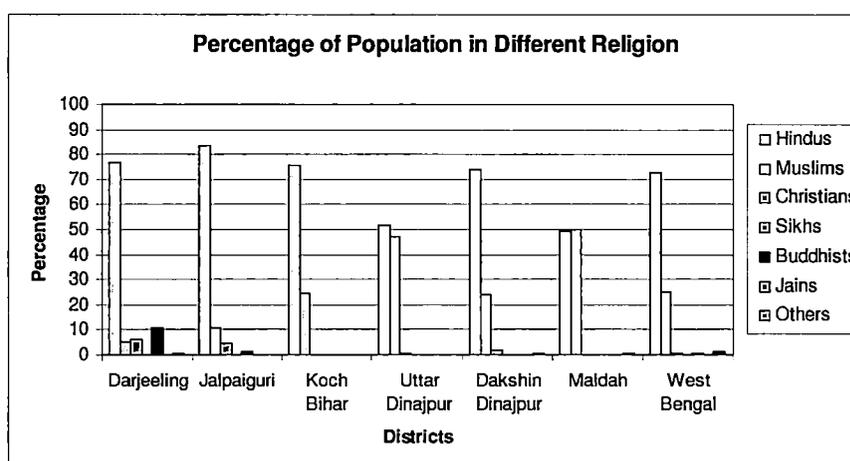


Figure Number – 3.8

3.9: Work Participation Rate:

The districtwise *total work participation rates* in primary, secondary and tertiary activities in North Bengal for the year 2001 has been represented by simple bar graphs to show the spatial variation of it.

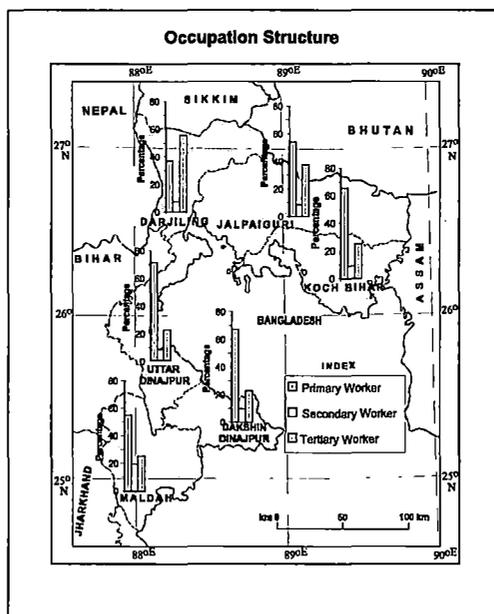
From the map (*Map Number: 3.2-3.4*) it appears that all the districts except Darjiling display maximum work participation rate is in primary activities, whereas only Darjiling district represents maximum work participation rate in tertiary activities. Those five districts display the secondary dominance in tertiary activities whilst in Darjiling the secondary dominance is on primary activities. It is noted here that the secondary activities have minimum work participation rates in all the six districts of the region.

However, the participation rate in primary activities is maximum in Uttar Dinajpur district; it is about 70%. Another two districts i.e. Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur represent work participation rate in primary activities above 65% whereas Maldah and Jalpaiguri have more than 50% primary workers and Darjiling district has only about 35% primary workers. On the other hand, all the five districts except Maldah display work participation rate in secondary activities less than 15%. It is about 25% in Maldah district. In case of tertiary workers, the percentage ranges from 20% to 32%. Moreover, Darjiling district has about 50% tertiary workers.

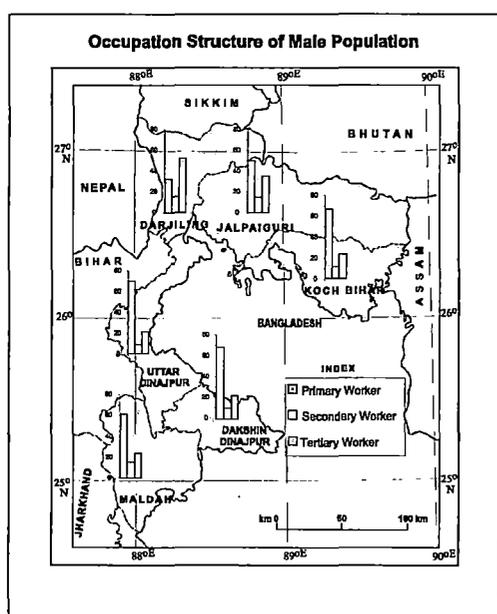
The same pattern is observed in case of *male work participation rate* as in the case of total main workers, although the picture is slightly better in case of male work participation rate. The male participation rate in primary activities has decreased in case of two districts, namely, Darjiling & Jalpaiguri. On the contrary, there are two districts e.g. Dakshin Dinajpur and Maldah where the work participation rate in primary activities has increased slightly. The remaining two districts i.e. Koch Bihar and Uttar Dinajpur display same participation rates as in the case of total main workers. In case of secondary and tertiary workers there is no significance change worth mentioning, as the change is very small. Only one point to be mentioned here is that the secondary work participation rate of Maldah district is higher by about ten percent than that of total main workers.

The occupational structure of female main workers represented by simple bar graphs reveals that there are two notable changes in case of *female work participation rate* in primary activities. Darjiling district represents more work participation rate in

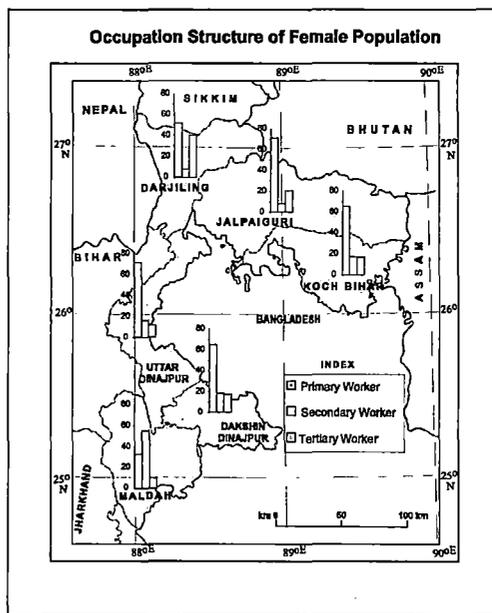
primary activities than in secondary and tertiary ones in case of female workers. Surprisingly, female primary work participation rate is lower than that of secondary one only in Maldah district. Another district i.e. Uttar Dinajpur displays the dominance of female secondary workers over female tertiary workers. On the other hand, Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts display equal participation rates of female workers in



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Map Number - 3.3

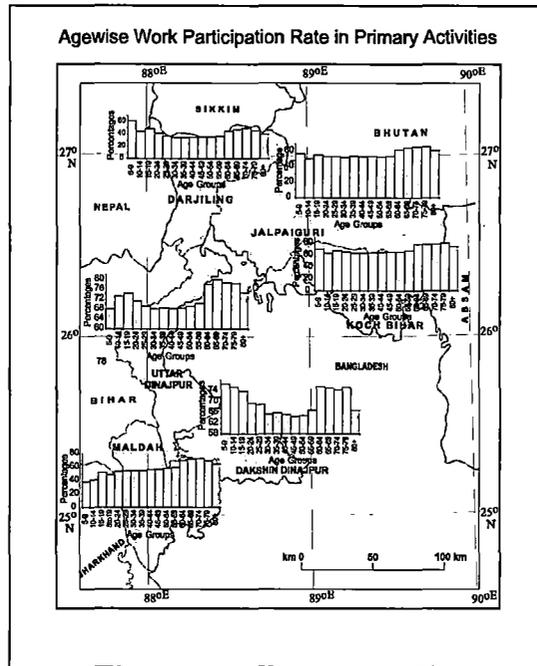


Map Number -3.4

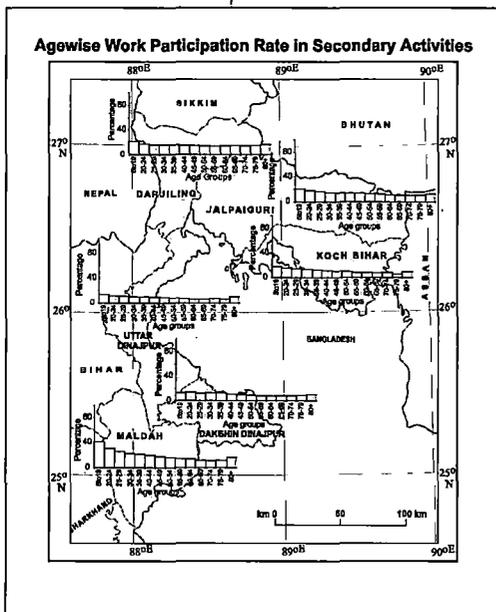
secondary and tertiary activities. The tertiary female participation rate is lower than that of primary and secondary ones in Darjiling, Uttar Dinajpur & Maldah districts. Another important feature that may be mentioned here is that there are some differences between the total main workers and female primary work participation rates; it is twenty percent more than that of total main workers in Maldah district and about fifteen percent less in Darjiling and Jalpaiguri districts. Similarly, in case of female percentage of secondary workers the values have minimum i.e. about five percent difference in five districts but the sole Maldah district has thirty percent more female secondary work participation rate than that of total main workers.

On the contrary, the female work participation rate in tertiary activities is less than that of total main workers by about 10% in three districts, namely, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri and Maldah. Whereas; the amount is about five percent less in case of Koch Bihar, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur districts.

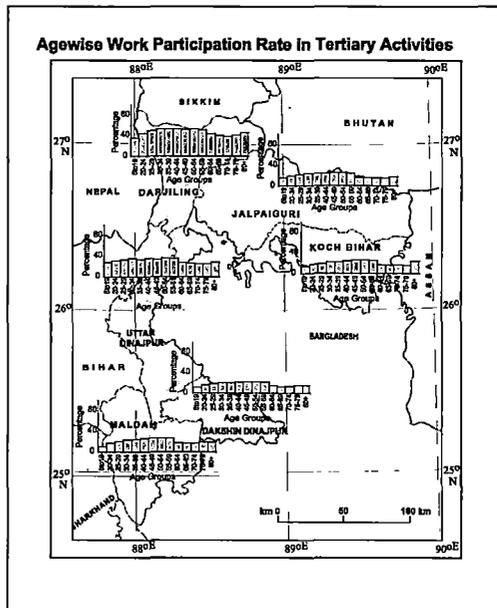
The *agewise work composition* of North Bengal for the year of 2001 has also been represented by bar graph. Here, it can be mentioned that the variation of work participation rate is less with changing age-group in case of primary and secondary primary activities is slightly higher in the age-groups of above 60. It should be mentioned here that the trend of agewise composition of primary work participation rate. It is equally true in case of male and female population. On the contrast, the trend of agewise composition of tertiary work participation rate follows the same trend of agewise composition of literacy rate. The trend of agewise composition of tertiary work participation rate follows the same trend of agewise composition of literacy rate. The trend is more prominent in Maldah and Koch Bihar districts. In case of agewise composition of secondary work participation rate, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur districts represent a little variation of secondary work participation rate with the changing age group even in case of male and female population. The declination of female age-specific composition of work participation is extraordinarily sharp in Maldah district. Moreover, the amount of it is also comparatively higher. Another important feature to be noted here that the agewise tertiary work composition represents a plateau like appearance in all the three cases i.e. total, male and female. The tertiary work participation rate is higher mainly in the age groups of 20-60. The exactly similar trend is



Map Number - 3.5



Map Number - 3.6

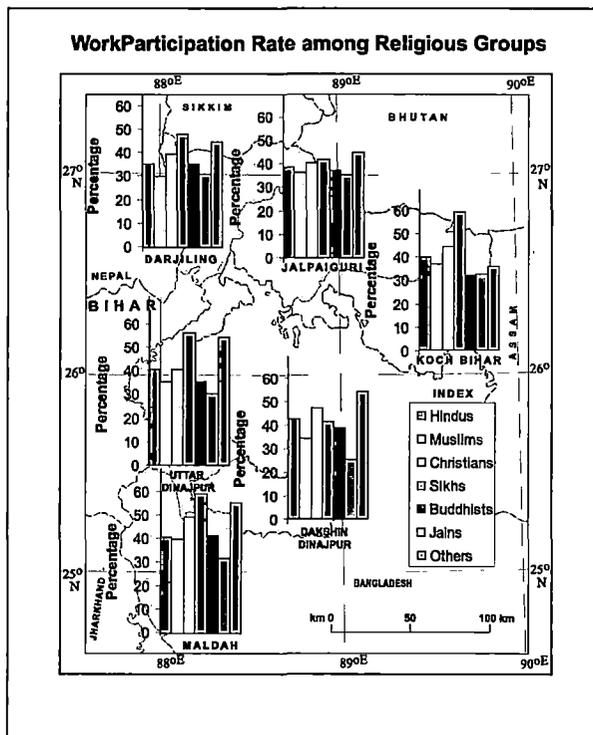


Map Number - 3.7

followed in case of age-specific composition male and female tertiary work participation rate. Thus, the comparative study of agewise composition of literacy and agewise composition of work participation rate reveals that cooperatively greater correspondence

is observed in case of agewise composition of secondary work participation rate than that of primary and tertiary one.

The *work participation rate among different religious groups* in North Bengal region reveals that there is the undoubted supremacy of Sikh religious group in five districts of North Bengal, namely, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Uttar Dinajpur and Maldah except Dakshin Dinajpur, though it is a minority group in North Bengal in respect of religion. Dakshin Dinajpur is the only district in the region where another minority group viz. the Christians show dominance over all groups in respect of work. Again, the Christians rank second to the Sikhs in all the previous five districts, whereas the Sikhs rank third to the Christians in Dakshin Dinajpur. Thus, the positions of the Sikhs and the Christians in respect of work participation rate are rather reciprocal to each other. The Hindus rank third in respect of work participation rate in all the districts of North Bengal except Dakshin Dinajpur where its rank second to the Sikhs. Thus, in this district the position of the Hindus is slightly better than in the rest. What is astonishing here to note is that inspite of being the major religious group, the Hindus fail to dominate in the field of work participation rate.



Map Number - 3.8

Similarly the Buddhists rank fourth in all the districts of North Bengal, namely, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Maldah districts except Koch Bihar where it is displaced by the Muslim religious group, although the Muslims rank fifth in all the remaining five districts. It is rather striking to note here that the Jain religious group shows fifth ranking only in Koch Bihar district, although it ranks sixth or last in the remaining five districts. The Buddhists show least work participation rate in Koch Bihar district only. It appears rather paradoxical that even though the Jains rank first in respect of literacy rate in all the districts of North Bengal except Jalpaiguri, it exhibits least work participation rate. The probable reason behind this type of fallacy is that their religious rituals demand them to be literate. Besides, their main occupation i.e., business also rarely pushes female members of the family to participate in business. Another very minority religious group, i.e the Sikhs, on the other hand, shows both very high literacy rate as well as very high work participation rate. A more striking feature is the fact that two major religious groups of the region i.e. the Hindus and the Muslims, display a pathetic picture in respect of both literacy rate and work participation rate. The second dominant religious group of Darjiling district i.e. the Christians shows significant level of literacy and work participation rate, ranking third in respect of the former and second in respect of the latter and thus reveals a close association between the rates of literacy and work participation. In case of Dakshin Dinajpur district, the high literacy rate but low work participation rate among the Christians represented by the low level of literacy standards which is one of the influences of the Christian Missionaries.

3.10: Literacy:

The '*Literacy*' of the North Bengal region has been discussed in details in next chapter (*Chapter Number: IV –Distributional Pattern of Literacy*). However, the districtwise growth of literacy for the time period of 1991 to 2001 has been shown in the following diagram (*Figure Number: 3.10*).

Age wise literacy rates (*Map Number: 3.9*) for the year of 2001 of different districts of North Bengal have been represented by simple bar graphs. A cursory glance on the diagram reveals that the literacy rate of each districts decreases with the increasing rate of age groups. The declination rate is very sharp in agewise composition of female

literacy rate as the literacy rate drastically deiced with the increasing age groups. It should be mentioned

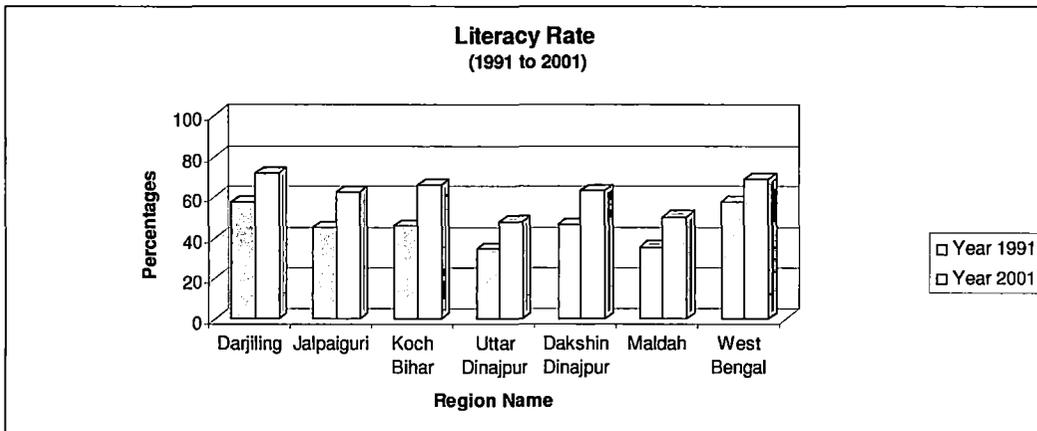
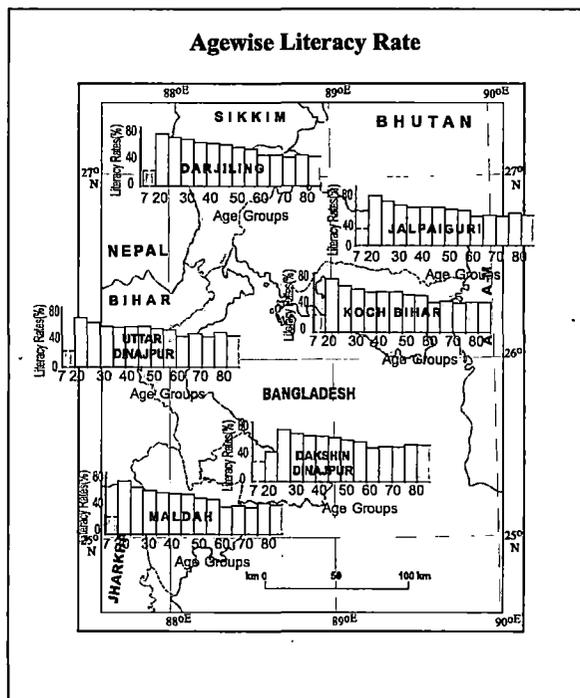


Figure Number -- 3.9



Map Number -- 3.9

here that the agewise composition of male literacy rate rather give a platue like impression as some good values are concentrated in the middle age groups too. The

maximum declination is observed in Koch Bihar district. The literacy rates of 7 to 19 age-groups only represent a moderate picture as it is near about 60% in four districts, namely, Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar and Dakshin Dinajpur. The rest two districts i.e. Uttar Dinajpur & Maldah represent an worst picture as the literacy rates of these age-groups are only 40%-60%. The gender gap of literacy appears quite prominent in agewise literacy composition. However, in case of agewise composition of male literacy rate, more or less, similar pattern observed in each districts individually.

The origins of the socio-cultural and socio-economic diversity in India lie in the physical as well as geographical framework of the sub-continent. Likewise, North Bengal region also possesses large physico-geographical peculiarities. It is the physical framework of the region, which provided the basis for diversities in landforms and the ecological differences based on them. Physiographically, more precisely, politically North Bengal region enjoys international boundary between Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. It is another reflection as well as influence on cultural interaction of people resulting into social and economic diversities. The long history of migration of people of different groups and with different customs and culture that managed to reach in this region from different parts of Asia, mainly South-East Asia at different points of time shows how different cultural groups distributed themselves in space depending on the ecological settings in conformity with their own primordial mode of economy. The wide alluvial plains of North Bengal were vastly accessible because of their open nature and became the medium of the incoming streams of the people. On the periphery of this plain, the rim of hills and uplands allowed the primitive economic modes, such as food gathering and pastoralism, to survive unaffected by the march of time. This contributed to the emergence of a cultural mosaic of great diversity. The cultural history reveals that the diversities were rooted in the environmental setting of the region. It also shows that, the people who came to settle in different regions also came with diverse cultural traditions. They did not take similar paths in the history of social evolution. The cultural differentiation was also an end product of primary differences in human initiative and ingeniousness. These contrasts were further strengthened by the fact that, the human decision making which was directed from the nodes of power, neglected the inter-fluvial

tracts and the rim lands because of their perceived agricultural endowment. As a result, logically the above elucidated demographic distinctiveness has been engendered in North Bengal in terms of magnitude as well as sketches.

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