

Pattern of Migration and Demographic Changes

Colonial Period

The present days North Bengal, culturally called as epitome of India, from the dim past was the home of many miscellaneous stocks of races and peoples who had come in ever increasing numbers to settle here. This movement of peoples, as said by Sashi Bhushan Choudhuri in ancient Indian context¹ throughout the ages has presented a changing panorama a variety of human groups in their respective spheres in a number of characteristic ways. In India, as J.B. Hutton told, "All these varied peoples have been enabled to live together in conditions of comparative stability and forming what may be described as a multiple society linked together by customs having developed as a sort of organic response to the requirements of the particular age."² However, the structural, de-structural and re-structural demographic transition of North Bengal has been a continuous process due to its being 'migrant-prone zone and having course of 'in-migration' or 'immigration' in different phases in different ages whereas 'the people of this region were disinclined to leave their homes'³ letting the region be an epitome of Indian demography. The phenomenon is comprised of two inter related and interdependent phenomenon of 'Migration' and 'Demographic Change' under three periodical sections of 'Colonial Period', 'Post-colonial Period' and 'Post-Bangladesh liberation Period'. Here in this chapter I have taken only the colonial period to analyse. After having some general conceptions on the phenomenon of migration I shall proceed for the main part of discussion. However, in each case I shall discuss first the statistical analysis of demographic changes in North Bengal first and then will proceed to the factor and actor of this change, the phenomenon of migration.

Among the two factors on which the growth of population of a country at a given period depend are- the natural growth or the excess of total births over total deaths and migration or the excess of immigration over emigrants.⁴ The phenomenon of migration, defined as permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, with various dimensions such as demographic and economic create conditions for deep rooted changes in socio-cultural life of both the migrant as well as the host peoples. It is not only that the internal structure of migrants came under transformation but also it impacted on the structure of inter-community relations bringing political transitions at the destination. So the discussion of the phenomenon of migration in corporation with demographic transition through objective historical analysis, as the present chapter will go through, in context of given area of North Bengal is of a great significance. Prior going into the main discussion we should have apparent idea on migration.

The Encyclopedia Britannica meant by the term migration "moving from place to place in search of means of subsistence or to escape a stranger foe, men, from time immemorial, have spread over the greater part of the earth's surface".⁵ It is also stated here referring the recorded history that the phenomenon of 'human migration have transformed the entire⁶ aspect of lands and continents and racial, ethnic and linguistic composition of their inhabitants.'

The New Webster's Dictionary defined migration as "The act or an instance of moving from

one country, region or place to settle in another or the act or an instance of moving from one area to another in search of work".⁷ William Peterson, an eminent migration theorist and Sociologist, thought that "Free migration is a movement motivated by the individual willingness to risk the unknown of a new home and breaking from a familiar social universe for the sake of adventure, achievement of ideas, or to escape a social system from which he has become alienated."⁸ Helen I. Safa, an eminent anthropologist, indicated that though migration is generally viewed as economic phenomenon the non-economic factors have also good say in this context.⁹ B.S. Mehta treated migration as an act of movement of spatial mobility.¹⁰ There are many ways of organizing a text on mobility and migration. The questions like who moves, why do they move, where do they move and what are the impacts when they move there are taken as classic enquiries for elaboration and analysis of the migration.¹¹

Besides, migration may be examined in the parameter of different scales of inner-district mobility, inner-city mobility, inner-state mobility or inner-region mobility and inter-state and inter-countries mobility.¹² M.S.A. Rao, an eminent scholar of sociology and migration gave importance over the nature and process of migration, the composition of the migrants and the factors of selectivity and impact or feedback on and by the migrants.¹³ These questions may be taken in discussion of migration and demographic changes in region for a given period from historical perspectives. North Bengal, the great migrant prone zone, will be of a great significance to discuss its demographic changes under the parameters of those questions. In this respect, however, I shall discuss first the changing scenario of demography of North Bengal statistically and then shall scrutinize the phenomenon of migration with its nature and pattern effecting or affecting the changes. As the phenomenon of migration is a major factor bringing changes in demographic pattern and composition, on the other the demographic changes is also the parameter and indicator of volume, composition, nature and pattern of migration. I, therefore, shall discuss the phenomenon of demographic changes in North Bengal with statistical analysis which will be followed by examining the process of migration, also with statistical analysis, playing role in that changes in each of the periodic sub-sections of this chapter.

Colonial Period

1871-1901

I

In the introductory chapter we have seen the efforts made for accounting the demographic scenario of North Bengal districts. However, as in case of whole of Bengal prior to the Census

Operation of 1871-72 there was no systematic education, analysis or description of the demographic scenario of North Bengal. In context of enumerating demography of North Bengal, the Census Report of Bengal recorded that “Crossing the Ganges at the North ... as low as 220”¹⁴. Again the report recorded that “North of the Rungpor lie ... no more than 67 to the square mile.” From the “Abstract of the Area and Population of each district in Bengal arranged according to provinces commissioners’ Divisions’ the following scenario of demographic statistics of North Bengal in number and density may be observed by the chart follows:

Table-3.1
District wise Population Description’ 1872
North Bengal

District	Area in square miles	Total Population	Male	Female	Percentage per square mile
Maldah	1,813	676,426	331087	345339	373
Dinagepore	4,126	1,501,924	726431	725493	364
Darjeeling	1,234	94,712	53057	41655	77
Julpigoree	2,906	418,665/327985	169288	158697	144
Cooch Behar	1,307	532,565	278585	253980	407

Source: General Statement IA, “Abstract of the Area and Population of each District in Bengal arranged according to provinces and Commissioners’ Divisions.” Census of Bengal, 1872, p.xi

At the time of divisional administration the present day Indian part of North Bengal was under the jurisdiction of Rajshahy Division which comprised seven districts having total area of 17694 square miles. The population the division was not less than nine millions with an average of 500 persons to the square mile. The population in the North-East and south was comparatively dense, but in remainder tract it was not more than 400 souls in average to the square mile. The census report of Bengal 1872 of Beverly told that the population integrated in the banks of the two great river- the Ganges and the Brahmaputra and districts on the banks of their tributaries.[Report on the Census of Bengal, 1872, op.cit. p.100]. To have a proper picture we may discuss the composition of population district wise so that a clear description of region North Bengal may be disclosed. I shall present the description with statistical char for each of the present day Northern part of West Bengal for the period of 1870s.

It is clear from all the official records and Survey report that “the earliest recorded attempt at an enumeration of the population of Dinajpur appears to have been made in 1808 by Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, in his statistical Survey of the district”.¹⁵ During Suvey of Buchanan Dinajpur had a larger area than the time of first census enumeration. Then Buchanan surveyed the police circles (thanas) of Maldah and Gajol in the present district of Maldah, and of Khetalal, Panchbibi, and Badalgachhi, now within Bogra district within the periphery of Dinajpur.¹⁶ So he

returned the population in Dinajpur at three million with an average of 558 persons per square mile. Following the same way the Revenue Survey of the District of 1857-61 also included certain areas of neighboring districts resulting in estimation of 4586 square miles area for Dinajpur and returned a population of 1,042,832 with an average of 227 per square mile. As the Buchanan's was higher than the first census of Bengal it was much lower than of the 1870s. The following chart will reveal the statistics of Dinajpur population at the time.¹⁷

Table-3.2
Police Station wise population description, 1872
Dinagepore District

Subdivision	Thannah	Area in sq. mile	Total population	Populaiton per sq. mile
Sudder	Dinagepore	6	15,647	2,608
	Rajarampore	392	197,106	503
	Beergunge	303	150,097	495
	Kaliagunge	297	94,728	319
	Hemtabad	244	87,089	357
	Bungsihari	255	78,288	307
	Gungarampore	233	75,196	323
	Pateeram	293	66,866	228
	Putneetolla	457	122,700	268
	Porsha	213	48,803	229
	Chintamun	165	50,962	309
	Hubrah	172	62,907	366
	Nawabgunge	178	46,753	263
	Goraghat or Raneegunge	57	16,925	297
	Peergunge	238	89,296	375
	Raneesunkoil	186	78,696	423
	Thakoorgaon	437	219,865	503
District Total	4,126	1,501,924	364	

Source: General Statement IA, Abstract of the Area and population of each Thannah in the several districts of Bengal, in section of Statistical Returns, Bengal Census, 1872

Mr. Hunter wrote that the area of Dinagepore District in the table was an approximate area which was taken for the purposes of Census. The exact area of the district returned by the Boundary Commission of Bengal in November 1874 was 4095.14 square miles".¹⁸ However the total population of Dinajpur district in 1872 as shown in the table was 1501924 with 364 persons per square mile. The thannahs of Hubrah (366), Peergunge (375), Raneesunkoil (423) had shown higher and the thannahs of Rajarampore (503), Beergunge,(495) and

Thakoorgaon(503) showed much higher density of population. The Bengal Census report told that in Dinajpore, Malda and Bogra where there were fewer large rivers the population was thinnest. In fact the rivers at the time had a great impact on the settlement of population.

If we go through the different survey records it becomes apparent that there were no authentic information existed with regard to the total number of inhabitants in the district of Maldah prior to the general census of 1872. 'The only attempt at enumeration was what were called thana summaries conducted through the local police'.¹⁹ Pamberton in his statistical report of Maldah recorded number of houses 62379 allowing the average of five persons to each house giving a population of 311895 or 242.06 souls per square mile.²⁰ The collector of the district also provided Mr. Hunter a table of data for the year 1869 according to which total population of the district was 550809 persons.

Table-3.3
Police Estimate of the Population of Maldah District in 1869

Police Circles	No. of Houses	No. of Persons
English Bazar	16,950	72,532
Maldah	9,100	44,332
Kaliachak	68,607	112,552
Sibganj	22,118	110,870
Nawabganj	2,860	19,480
Gargariba	13,183	92,277
Kharba	6,635	34,263
Gumashtapur	3,502	17,576
Gajol	7,259	46,927
Total	150,223	550,809

Source: A Statistical Account of Bengal: Maldah, W.W. Hunter, Maldah, p.20

However, the census of 1872 enumerated following statistics of population for the district of Maldah.²¹

Table-3.4
Police Station wise population description, 1872
Maldah District

Subdivision	Thannah	Area in sq. mile	Total population	Populaiton per sq. mile
Sudder	English Bazaar	126	85,702	680
	Maldah	226	50,563	224
	Gorgoriba	221	65,548	297
	Khurba	231	92,011	327
	Gajole	261	55,316	212

	Kaliachuk	223	119,375	535
	Gomashtapore	160	48,999	306
	Sheebgunge	163	105,717	649
	Nawabgunge	152	53,195	350
	District total	1,813	676,426	373

Source: General Statement IA, Abstract of the Area and population of each Thannah in the several districts of Bengal, Report on Bengal Census, 1872

From the above table it is clear that the total population in the district of Maldah was 676426 with 373 per square mile in 1872. The thannahs of English Bazaar (680), Kaliachuk (535) and Sheebgunge(649) were very much high in compare to the district in totality in regards of density of population in the district. Like Dinagepore there is no less high density thannah here. Excluding those three thannahs rest of all were with density below to the district as a whole. As previously opined that rivers had a great impact on the peoples' habitation, it is also true in the case of Maldah. The census report on Bengal, 1872 noted that 'in the south of Maldah, too in the strip between the Ganges and the Mahanuddy or Mahanunda, south of the English Bazaar the average was 650 per square mile'.²² Before 1872 a census was taken of the inhabitants within the periphery of municipal areas of Darjeeling in 1869. The result gave a total of 22607 persons with male 14766 and female 7841. The area of Darjeeling Municipality was returned at 88,320 acres and in 1869 contained 2223 houses with an average of 10.17 souls to a house.²³ The regular census of 1872 provided the following statistics over the population structure of the Darjeeling district.²⁴

Table-3.5
Police Station wise population description, 1872
Darjeeling District

Subdivision	Thannah	Area in sq. mile	Total population	Population per sq. mile
Sudder	Hill Territory	960	46,727	49
Terai	Terai	274	47,985	175
	District total	1,234	94,712	77

Source: General Statement IA, Abstract of the Area and population of each Thannah in the several districts of Bengal, Report on Bengal Census, 1872

From the census report it is apparent that in 1872 the total population in Darjeeling district was 94712 with a density of 77 per square mile. In Sadar of the hill territory population was much less total 46727 with 49 only per square mile. On the other the Terai region was, to some extent, in better position having 47985 people with 175 per square mile density. In fact, the hilly tract largely covered with forest and the Terai region also covered with forest was not suitable for easy habitation which led the regions thinly populated. However, later, we shall see

that the population in both these region will be increased rapidly with some lucrative developments.

The Report on Bengal Census, 1872 reported that in the district of Jalpaiguri and the State of Cooch Behar, in North of Rungpore, the population gradually went on thins towards Terai to the square mile in the portion which formerly belonged to Rungpore. It is also reported that in the then acquired Dooars the population was no more than 67 to the square mile. Since it came under British rule, and still to be increasing at rapid rate, the increase was due of course to immigration from the more populous parts around.²⁵ The rough survey of 1869 as experimental census showed the population in Duars between the Teesta and Juldhaka river 54777 persons against 29133of 1864-65.²⁶ However, the regular Census of 1872 enumerated more accurate a statistics for the region as follows:

Table-3.6
Police Station wise population description, 1872
Julpigoree District

Subdivision	Thannah	Area in sq. mile	Total population	Populaiton per sq. mile
No distinction made	Silligoree	277	64,562	233
	Fakeergunge	170	54,466	376
	Mynagoree		9431	
	Boda	475	141,507	298
	Patgram	104	58,019	558
	Western Dooars	1,880	90,680	48
	District Total	2,906	418,665	144

Source: General Statement IA, Abstract of the Area and population of each Thannah in the several districts of Bengal, Report on Bengal Census, 1872

The enumeration of 1872 in Jalpaiguri district showed the total population of the district was 418665 with a low density of 144 as a whole in the district. Among them the permanently settled area was inhabited by 327985 with 169, 288 males and 158697 females. In regards to the Western Duars a special census was made in 1870 which returned the population at 90063 which exhibited 81 per cent increase over the figure of the Survey Officer in 1865-67. However in 1872 the population in Western Duars was shown 90680 with a very low density of 48 persons per square mile.²⁷ However, Patgram thannah was comparatively in a better position having 58019 persons with a sound density of 558 persons per square mile. In fact, Boda and Patgram being a very fertile and cultivable land had a tendency of high density.

As like as the other districts there was no attempt to enumerate the habitation of Kuch Behar before the census of 1872. However, the elaborate classification adopted for the Regulation

Districts of Bengal was not extended to the state of Kuch Behar. The Bengal census, as I mentioned earlier, reported of gradual thinning of population towards the Terai from Cooch Behar. The details of the population structure for the period of 1870s may be found in the statistics of Bengal Census of 1872 in the following manner.²⁸

Table-3.7
Police Station wise population description, 1872
Cooch Behar

Subdivision	Thannah	Area in sq. mile	Total population	Population per sq. mile
Sudder	Mekligunge	168	75,884	452
	Mathabhanga	227	82,303	363
	Lall Bazaar	176	73,381	417
	Deenhatta	206	118,032	573
	Cooch Behar	309	125,060	405
	Toofangunge	189	50,868	269
	Detached pieces in zillahs Julpigoree and Rungpore	32	7,037	220
	Total	1,307	532,565	407

Source: General Statement IA, Abstract of the Area and population of each Thannah in the several districts of Bengal, Report on Bengal Census, 1872

The total population in Cooch Behar in 1872 census enumeration was 532565 with 407 per square mile. This population was comprised by 278585 males and 253,980 females.²⁹ The average population in density of the district total was not much high or much low. The then state region being in Assam-Bengal border and communicated with eastern Bengal maintained at the more or less good number of people in compare to the average Bengal density. Among Northern Bengal districts it came after Maldah. Mekligunge (452), Lall Bazaar (417) and Deenhatta (573) had a high density in the context of period. As Rungpore had a good communication with Cooch Behar so, Dinhatta, contiguous to Rungpore returned highest density in the district.

During the census of 1871-72 the present day geo-administrative region of Indian North Bengal were integrated into two divisions – Rajshahye (Dinajpur and Maldah were under its jurisdiction) and Cooch Behar Divisions (Darjeeling, Julpigoree districts and Cooch Behar state were under its jurisdiction). Total population of Bengal province at the time was 36,769,735 souls in her 85,483 sq. miles area with average people of 430 persons to each square mile area. Rajshahye and the Cooch Behar state together with accounted areas of 23141 square mile, with population, as enumerated in the census, 9939680 have density per square mile 430 souls. If

we take the five districts of North Bengal of the time they together formed population of 3224292 persons in areas of 11,386 square miles reflecting density of 283 per square mile. In this statistics the Northern part of North Bengal comprising Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar the total population showed 1,045,942 in 5447 square miles area against total population of 2178,350 in 5939 square miles area of southern North Bengal comprising Maldah and Dinajpur. Thus the density of southern North Bengal (9367) is more 75 per square mile than that of Northern North Bengal (192) which was due to geo-historical confluence as stated above.³⁰

In 1881 the total population in Dinajpore district was 1514346 with 368 per square mile and in 1891 it was 1555835 with 378 per square mile. **[Chart for 1881 in Appendix of this chapter]** The growth of population from 1872 to 1891 was steady and seemed natural not so extraordinary or abnormal. **[Chart for 1891 in Appendix of this chapter]** But if we see partially the district in respect of constituent thanas then some important features become appeared. In respect of 1872 census year population decreased in some of thannahs like Rajarampore, Birgunj, Hemtabad, Gangarampore, Raneesunkoil in 1881 and 1891. Though the decrease of population in those thannahs it was negligible. But the phenomenon of decrease should be marked. Except Gungarampur there was no much territorial area change in these two census years. So it may be assumed that outmigration happened in these thannahs leading the reduction of population. In other thannahs as the steady growth of population with no abnormality barring Porsha thanah seemed to be as per the district growth.³¹

F.W. Strong in his "Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers, Dinajpur" wrote that "At the census of 1881 it was found that the population was practically stationary, having advanced only to 1,514,346 or taking the present district area, to 1442,518, an increase of 0.86 percent."³² Even Mr. Bourdillan, the Census Commissioner remarked "Dinajpore has made no progress at all during the last nine years for the advance of the population has been only 0.82 per cent which could be much more than accounted for by better enumeration"³³ The rate of increase in population became still more rapid and the Census of 1901 showed a population of 1567,080 or an increase of 5.3 per cent.³⁴ In 1881 there was slight increase of population of Dinajpur district numbering to 1482570 with a 2.7 percent increase. **[Chart for 1901 in Appendix of this chapter]** This was, according to Strong, due to 'a gradual increase in prosperity and to the recovery of the district to some extent from the exceptionally unhealthy year which preceded the census of 1881' and also due to 'immigration from the Santal Parganas'.³⁵ The thannahs of Patnitola (+19.15), Patiram(+23.95), Chintamon(+12.17) and Nawabgunj (+13.7) represented most increase. [Census of India, 1901, Vol. V, Lower Provinces of Bengal and their Feudatories, Part-II]

In case of Malda the total population in the district in 1881 was 711487 with 374 per square mile and 814919 in total with 428 per square mile in 1891. Though the growth of population

from 1872 to 1881 was steady [**Chart for 1881 in Appendix of this chapter**] but from 1881 to 1891 it was a large scale growth jumping 54 percent from 374 to 428. [**Chart for 1891 in Appendix of this chapter**] In cases of different thannahs like Maldah and Khurba the growth was steady. But in cases of English Bazaar, Kaliachak, Sheebgunge, Nawabgunge, the population grew in large scale from 1881 to 1891 whereas in cases of thannahs like Gomashtapur and Gajole the population decreased in a great number from 649 per square mile in 1872 to 311 in 1881 and 333 in 1891 and from 350 in 1872 to 200 in 1881 and 235 in 1891 respectively in Gomashtapur and in Gajole respectively.³⁶

M.O. Carter in his Final Report on the district of Maldah wrote in fourth chapter over people that “since the first census of 1872 the population of the district has shown a regular increase, with the exception of the decade 1911-21, when there was small decrease”³⁷ However in the earlier period the striking feature was the increase of population in the western side more than in Eastern part barring Barind. If we observe the statistics of the growth it may be noticed that Ratua, Kaliachak, Sibgunje, Maldah, Gajole, Gomashtapur and awabgunj showed this rapid growth of population. This was largely due to the immigration of Muhammadans from Murshidabad district and the influence of Santals from the Santal Parganas.³⁸ In 1901 the total population of Maldah district was 884030 in the area of 1899 square miles with a variation +8.48 per cent from 1891 to 1901. [**Chart for 1901 in Appendix of this chapter**] In this census year Kaliachak(+14.30), Shibganj(+11.22), Khorba(+10.41), Old Malda (+22.90), Gajol(25.04) showed a great increase from the previous decade whereas the thannahs of English Bazaar (-6.23), Nawabganj(-1.64) and Manikchak(-0.29) showed a small decrease.³⁹

Regarding Darjeeling district the total population in 1881 was 155645 with 134 per square mile and in 1891 it was 223314 with 192 per square mile. [**Chart for 1881 in Appendix of this chapter**]The population increased in a very sound way steadily from 1872 to 1891. This hill territory of the district was populated by 46727 in 1872 with 6.0 per square mile and the Terai region was populated by 47985 in 1872 with 4.3 per square mile in that census year. In 1881 the total population of the hill region became 88180 and 1891 it was 145,617. [**Chart for 1891 in Appendix of this chapter**]On the other in 1881 the Terai region was populated by 61465 and 1891 by 72997. So in both cases of hill region and Terai region of the district the increase was in a great volume.⁴⁰

A.J. Dash in his Bengal District Gazetteer, Darjeeling wrote that “there is no doubt however that the expansion of population between 1872 and 1891 was remarkable in spite of the vague alarm which caused numbers to escape across the border into Nepal rather than face the 1891 enumeration”.⁴¹ This rapid increase reduced from +43.4 percent in 1891 to 11.5 percent in 1901[**Chart for 1901 in Appendix of this chapter**] with a population of 249117 with an increase of 25,803 in an area of 1,164 square miles.⁴² Even in the decade Thannahs of Darjeeling (13.28),

Kalimpong(55.87) and Jorbungala(24.53) represented a greater growth where as the thannah of Siliguri showed a slight decrease(-3.47)⁴³ Enumeration of 1881 disclosed a population of 531096 in 1881[**Chart for 1881 in Appendix of this chapter**] with 445 per square mile and 681352 in 1891 with 462 per square mile in Jalpaiguri district. The growth of population in the district very high and steady also from 1872 to 1891 (about growth of 2,62,487 population). [**Chart for 1891 in Appendix of this chapter**] However, there were some changes in thannahs of the district during the period between 1872 and 1891. The thannahs also showed the steady growth of population in the period. The thannahs like Boda, Patgram and Maynaguri showed the growth from 141507 to 16638, from 58109 to 60101 and from 63897 to 99122 respectively.⁴⁴ In Rajganj-Titaliya populations grew from 75001 to 79712 during 1881-1891 census periods. In Alipore subdivision the population reduced from 113,977 to 72905 during 1881-91 periods. This reduction happened much in Salbari from 72337 to 40619 and in Alipur from 41,640 to 32096 during the decade 1881-91.⁴⁵

John F. Gruning in “Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri” wrote that between 1872 and 1891 there were various changes of jurisdiction “so that the variations in the population cannot be accurately stated, it does not appear that there has been any increase during the last 30 years.”⁴⁶ However, there was an internal out flow of people from Jalpaiguri to its non-regulation portion ‘Western Duars’ where land was rent low but fertile and also to Siliguri. The special census of 1870 by the Deputy Commissioner on Western Duars reflected the population numbering 10011. The census followed showed a remarkable growth of population here numbering 182687 in 1881, 296348 in 1891 and 410606 in 1901.⁴⁷ The total population of district in 1901 was 787380 with 2962 square miles area having an increase of +15.67 percent from previous decade. In 1901 [**Chart for 1901 in Appendix of this chapter**] Mynaguri (+20.18), Dhupguri (-3.89), Titaliya outpost (-1.82), Boda (-0.82), Patgram(-5.28) witnessed a decrease of population⁴⁸ The internal outflow might have impact on it attracting by newly established lucrative.

The total population in Kuch Bihar in 1881 was 602624 with 461 per square mile and 57578868 in 1891 with 443 per square mile. [**Chart for 1881 in Appendix of this chapter**] Within ten years the density of the region grew 54 per square mile. However from 1881 to 1891 the density of the population decreased. In thannahway distribution the variation was almost same as happened in case of the whole of the state. It increased from 452 to 497 in Mekligunge, from 363 to 447 in Mathabhanga, from 573 to 576 in Dinhatta, from 405 to 435 in Kuch Bihar and from 269 to 373 in Toofangunge in 1872-1881 decade. But except in Toofangunge in other thannahs the population decreased as per the whole of the State in 1881-1891 census decade. [**Chart for 1891 in Appendix of this chapter**] It decreased from 576 to 544 in Cooch Behar and increased in Tufangunge from 373 to 387. The Tufangunge thanah was named Fulbari in 1891 Census.⁴⁹ The total population of Cooch Behar State in 1901 census was

566974 in an area of 1307 square miles with a fall of 2.05 percent from the previous census decade.⁵⁰ It was written in West Bengal District Gazetteers, Cooch Behar, that “The decrease of population between 1881 and 1891 was mainly due to two epidemics of Cholera and partly, to migration to the tea gardens of Western Duars.”⁵¹ However, the unhealthy climate and scarcity of food in 1897 were the factors leading to the reduction of population during 1881-1901 in Cooch Behar. **[Chart for 1901 in Appendix of this chapter]**

But in compare to the census of 1872 the population of the State of Cooch Behar showed an increase of 925 populations. Here H.N.Choudhury quoted Mr. O’Donnell, superintendent of Census operation in Bengal 1891 said that “The great increase in 1881 was no doubt chiefly due to more accurate counting, but it was also certain that the State was healthy, prosperous and an object of attraction to immigrants, which is still the case in the Fulbari Thana in the east.”⁵² But the administrative record of the Cooch Behar State stated the gradual decrease of population in the state of Cooch Behar since 1881 to 1901. Unhealthy climate, Scarcity of food and migration to the tea gardens of Western Duars were made responsible for the decrease which is contrary to recognition of O’Donnell’s view by H.N. Choudhury.⁵³ The following Charts will help us in clarifying of the demographic scenario on whole of the North Bengal indicating the districts’ individual development:

Table-3.8
Population in North Bengal Districts
For the Census year 1881

Districts/Feudatory state	Area in Square Mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Persons per Square Mile
Maldah	1891	710448	346998	363450	375.70
Dinajepore	4118	1,514,346	782,292	732,054	367.74
Darjeeling	1234	155179	88948	66231	125.75
Jalpaiguri	2884	581562	305555	276007	201.66
Cooch Behar	1307	602624	311678	290946	461.0
Total of North Bengal	11434	3564159	1835471	1728688	311.71

Source: Report on the Census of Bengal 1881, J.A. Bourdillon, Inspector General of Registration, Bengal, Volume-II, Calcutta, the Bengal Secretariat Press, 1883

Table-3.9
Population in North Bengal Districts
For the Census year 1891

Districts/Feudatory state	Area in Square Mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Persons per Square Mile
Maldah	1902	814919	399917	415002	428
Dinajepore	4118	1555835	812047	743788	378
Darjeeling	1164	223314	123046	100268	192
Jalpaiguri	2962	681352	364659	316693	230
Cooch Behar	1307	578868	302457	276411	443
Total of North Bengal	11453	3854288	2002126	1852162	366.53

Source: Census of India, 1891, Volume. V, Lower Provinces of Bengal and their Feudatories, C.J. O'Donnell, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, pp.12,15,16,33,41, compiled from Provincial Table

Table-3.10
Population in North Bengal Districts
For the Census year 1901

Districts/Feudatory state	Area in Square Mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Persons per Square Mile
Maldah	1899	884030	437639	446391	466
Dinajepore	3946	1567080	823972	743108	397
Darjeeling	1164	249117	133005	116112	214
Jalpaiguri	2962	787380	422877	364503	266
Cooch Behar	1307	566974	301382	265592	434
Total of North Bengal	11278	4054581	2118875	1935706	360

Source: Census of India, 1901, Volume VIB, Lower Provinces of Bengal and their Feudatories, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, pp.1-60, compiled from Provincial Table

From the above discussion it is apparent that the growth of population in most cases in North Bengal as a whole was upward, steady and consistent within the period between 1872 and 1901. However, it is also true that a series of administrative and jurisdictional changes occurred in this land of North Bengal with the British penetration and organization and reorganization of the region happened during this time. So it is very difficult, sometimes, to understand the actual growth of different parts of the region. So an effort has been made in this chapter's appendix to provide thnnah wise description of the districts of North Bengal so that an accurate idea may be formed. It has also been seen from the above discussion that the increase of population did not reflect increase in density. As the lands were plenty and mostly covered

with unclean jungles so naturally density in average was low basically in the northern parts of North Bengal. If we see the nature of settlement of the thannhas of the region with their growth it comes clear that the initially the settlers settled in the lands nearer to civilized regions. After those lands became gathered by much people they moved on further. So we have found larger settlements of population in the Sudder areas.

If we study the male-female ratio from the charts of all district population there may be found a larger share of the males in compare to the females. It was defined by the inhabitation of the region by the peoples belonged to Mongoloid race like Rajbanshis and Nasya Seikhs (Musalmans) among whom females, traditionally, were small in number. However, the immigration process also contributed in this as in compares to the females the male immigrants remained always more numerous as it happened in the case of this territory of North Bengal. The above discussion of settlement of population in the region of North Bengal led a division of the land by nature of settlement. Bothe in Malda and Dinajpur districts people largely settled by the Animists and Muhhamedans there. On the other in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri there was less Muhammedan but more Hindu and tribal settlements occurred. From the point of this kind of settlement Kuch Bihar was more settled by the Hindus and Mostly semi-Hinduised inhabitants of the state. However, this issue will be discussed more analytically in the Chapter of cultural changes.

Colonial Period (1871-1901)

II

So prior to 1870 North Bengal districts became settled by different immigrant people of different religions, castes and creeds. However up to 1871-72 we do not have systematic statistics of these immigrants or for the process of migration. There are some records of Government survey and settlement over the different parts of the region. But there is no consolidated statistics to construct an apparent picture of the process by number or nature. With the beginning of the Census in 1870s the phenomenon came under notice, though in the first systematic census it was not possible to enumerate the people according to their birth place, which was taken in the census enumeration in 1881. Moreover, the process of migration in the migrant-prone North Bengal zone became more rapid with number of developments in this region. Government records are also there to clarify the process and statistics of migration during this period. So I shall give more notice over the process of migration since 1871-72 when from my study for the region begins. Like the pervious parts I shall analyze the phenomenon for the first three decades from 1871 to 1901.

From last going discussions it is apparent that up to 1871-72 the North-Bengal population was built of the bulk of immigrant people from other parts of Bengal and Bengal province, provinces of India other than Bengal and even from the contiguous territories of India such as Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Afganistan etc. People like Baneya, hypergamous group of Rarhi Brahmins and Baidyas⁵⁴ Baruis the people engaged in cultivation of piper betel in Bengal and Behar, Bauri, a cultivating, earth working and palanquin bearing caste of western Bengal, Belder earth worker of Behar and western Bengal, Bhumij the non-Aryan tribe of Manbhum, Singbhum, chammar, the tanner caste of Behar and upper India, Dhanuk a cultivating caste of Behar, Hari and Mihtar, a menial and scavenger caste of Bengal proper, Kahar, a large cultivation and palanquin bearing caste of Behar, Kalwar, a trading caste of Behar, Kayastha, the writer caste of Bengal proper, Khatri, the Mercantile and martial caste of Upper India, Kurmi or Kunbi, a very large cultivating caste of Upper India, Mal, a Dravidian Cultivating caste of Western and Central Bengal, Malo, boating and fishing caste from Western India, Marwari, Oswal, Agarwal, Maheswari, all traders from Rajputana, Nuniya, a Dravidian caste of Behar and Upper India, Rajputs, the fighting and landholding caste of Northern India, Sadgop, a cultivating caste of Bengal proper etc were immigrated from their existing homelands into North Bengal districts where they were found in 1870s.

Besides a large number of aboriginal tribes like the Santals, Kol, Oraons, Mundas found in North Bengal during the period immigrated from their ancestral land of Chhoto Nagpur and Santal Paragana region of Bihar and other parts of the province. Different kind of Brahmins like Rarhi, Maithili, Vaidik, Kamrupiya etc also came into North Bengal as immigrants. Up to the census period of 1871-72 Darjeeling hill area of North Bengal became populated greatly and mainly by the different caste of Nepali immigrants like Murmi, Newars, Gurung, Khamas, Rai, Sherpa, Limbu and also by the Bhutanese from Bhutan, Tibet and Skkim. The Garos, Bodos were also the immigrants from hill areas of North Eastern India. Sir Joseph Hooker compared the progress of Darjeeling to that of an Australian colony, both as regards the rapid extension of buildings and the accession of native families from the surrounding countries.⁵⁵ Concerning the composition of population of the hilly district O'Malley wrote that among the hill men "are Marwari Merchants, the Jews of the Himalayas, Bengali clerks, Hindustani Mechanics, Punjabi traders and even Chinese Carpenters."⁵⁶ These people might have immigrated here prior to 1870s with the hill men mentioned above.

Regarding the high caste Hindus Brahmins, Baidyas and Kayasthas of Cooch Bihar H.N. Choudhury wrote that "Most of these are, however, foreigners who either hold service under the state, or carry on business in the country."⁵⁷ He stated more that the most of Brahmins, Kayasthas and all the Baidyas were old settlers from Bengal and Assam who had made Cooch Behar their home and cut off all ancestral communication. In fact, the so called native Brahmins of Cooch Behar were encouraged to settle in Cooch Behar since the time of the Khen kings of

Kamtapur and the Maharaja Biswa Singha, from Kanouj, Mithila and Assam. The Morangs of this region also began to settle in Cooch Behar towards the middle of the sixteenth century.⁵⁸ Likewise in all parts of North Bengal Brahmanical settlement emerged.

Not only the Brahmanical settlement but also the Aristocratic settlement in different parts of North Bengal began in the process of higher caste immigration within period of 1870s. The Harishchandrapur Zamindar, Babu Ram Kinkar Roy of whose descended was Dina Nath Roy said to have resided at Ekbarpur during the Maharatta invasion.⁵⁹ The family of Raj Saheb Jadunandan Chowdhury and his cousin Babu Asutosh Chowdhury of English Bazar was said to have settled originally from Beneras in the middle of 16th century.⁶⁰ Among the Muslims old families Bengujm Sahiba, Zamindar of Rohanpur belonged to ancestral Delhi and later on Murshidabad land. Khan Bahadur Abul Hayat Khan Choudhuri, Zamindar of Kotwali and Khan Zamindar of Nurpur belonged to Pathan family.⁶¹ These kinds of many examples may be seen in different parts of North Bengal. The Nadegustis Muhammedan sect, said to have been Hindus of Nadia district and converted to Islam centuries ago migrated to Maldah district, according to Carter, 70 to 80 years ago from the time of his survey.⁶²

According to statistical Report of Hunter on Maldah district there was a thin flow of immigration or in-migration basically from the "Chhutia Nagpur" hill region. The people like Dhangars, Kols and Santals constituted this migrant community. This was a kind of induced migration as they entered into the district for working in the indigo factories. He pointed out of "small villages solely inhabited by these immigrants and their descendants." Those people came here in full family and became permanent inhabitants of the district. This led to the absorption of the host 'customs' and 'appearance' by the migrants. They immigrated into the district group by group in the process of recruitments in indigo factories. However, in the late of the decade of 1870s the flow became deemed due to diminishing of indigo planting. As stated earlier that emigration was not a feature of demography in this district. Hunter, in this regard, pointed out that "the Collector is of opinion that the prosperity of the cultivators, owing to the remunerative nature of the Mulberry crops, is such as to cause no desire to leave home."⁶³

On the other hand in Dinajpur district the phenomenon of immigration and emigration was negligible. It was historically more negligible during the decade of 1870s as the immigration was very temporary in nature. Hunter wrote that "At harvest time a number of labourers come to Dinajpur from neighboring districts as reapers, and readily obtain 4 *annas* (6d) a day for their work." The immigrant people mainly used to come from Rajmahal during the season period from January to March. They gave labour for the grain merchants. On the other the *Dhangar* coolies from Chotonagpur used to come into the district for the work of road construction and jungle clearing. Generally the immigrants as came for temporary labour, returned back in a particular summer or rainy season. In trading cases the people also from neighboring areas

used to come for a daily based work. Like Maldah district outmigration from the district is not mentionable.⁶⁴

The newly established district Jalpaiguri was very lucrative for the immigrant people. However, the Bengal Census of 1872 and Mr. C.F. Magrath's District census compilation it has been found that number of migrant people from different districts and provinces migrated into the district during the pre-census period. Among them number of Hindu Caste people were there. Hunter pointed out that "The Deputy Commissioner states it is supposed that about three hundred Brahman families of immigrants are living among the village people, and have permanently settled in the district"⁶⁵ these people were involved in land as land holder *jotdars* or cultivators. There were also the professional immigrant class in the district like pleaders of courts, revenue agents, law agents and subordinate judicial and executive officers in the various government courts and offices. The Deputy Commissioner in his report to Hunter in 1870 stated that "about five hundred kshatriya families are said to have permanently settled, and to have become a part of the fixed population of the district"⁶⁶ They were involved in land as land holder *jotdars*, rent collecting, clerking, messengering, armed guarding activities. The Census report recorded number of up-country immigrants into the districts like Rajputs as employed in services like maintaining rule and law of the districts in forms of policemen, guards, doorkeepers etc., the Agarwals and Oswals in the form of traders in the district. Emigration from the district like the other also was insignificant.

During the census period of 1872 number of Hindu caste people came into Kuch Behar. The Census Report of 1872 recorded Brhamins whom it regarded all immigrants from other districts of Bengal who were involved in the activities of priesthoods, spiritual guidance and clerks. The Kshatriya Rajput caste was recorded as immigrants from other districts involved in military services. Trading castes from upper India immigrants like Marwari, Oswal enterprised as trders and bankers in the state. The report also recorded the Kayastha or the writer caste of Bengal coming from southern districts of Bengal into Kuch Behar State. The Banik or Gandhabaniks like other parts of North Bengal came from southern district of Bengal here as shopkeepers and traders. The Koeri or the Behar castes of market-gardeners were also included in census return of 1872 of the State. The emigration from this district may be seen, though in a small number for the period.

According to the census report 34 percent of the population of Darjeeling district was formed by the immigrant Nepalese who came into Darjeeling with its formation as a newly district in 1865. Like other districts Darjeeling also noticed the immigration of upper caste Hindu Brahmins as priest class, land holders and professional classes. Hunter wrote that 'the caste-khatri in the census report in the great trading caste of Northern India. They all immigrated into both the hill and *Terai* region of the district. Hunter wrote that barring the Nepalis the people

from the neighboring district and other parts of lower Bengal immigrated into the district as agriculturists, clerks, *munsis*, domestic servants etc.⁶⁷ Regarding the emigration the Deputy Commissioner in 1871 reported that “there were comparatively few Lepchas and Meches in the district; the former having left British territory in large number and gone to independence Sikkim while the latter had crossed the Tista river in the Terai, into the neighboring District of Jalpaiguri.”⁶⁸ However, no any statistical records of emigration were given in the Census of 1872.

From the Census statistics of 1881 the following scenario of migration, basically immigration in North Bengal may be realized.⁶⁹ The statistics to be presented here are compiled from the Bengal census of 1881 where a table has been made on birth places of the persons wherever he was enumerated by the census officers. So naturally a person enumerated in a place returning other district or province for his place of birth may be treated as immigrant for the place of his enumeration. In the table follows I am going to present the number persons of North Bengal districts who returned their place of birth in the places like various administrative divisions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, its feudatory state and people from Asia beyond India. The grand total in the table will not mean the total of the entry of the table. It has been taken as it is in the Census table.⁷⁰

Table No. 3.11
Showing the Birth places by Districts of the population of North Bengal
For the Census year of 1881

Places of Birth	Districts where found				
	Maldah	Dinagepore	Julpigoree	Darjeeling	Cooch Behar
Burdwan Division	826	122	21	29	9
Presidency Division	7831	465	45	72	30
Rajshahy Division (excluding the district of Enumeration)	1	20808	-	1189	1153
Dacca	59	757	1567	5	121
Chittagon	5	19	1	3	2
Total of Feudatory States	390	1506	29348	735	552839
Patna Division	90	74	6	6	-
Bhagalpur Division	11565	11609	926	441	-
Orissa	-	2	-	-	-
Chhoto Nagpur	21	60	3	4	1
Asia(Outside India)	14	34	5752	55001	227
Grand Total (Including the district/state itself)	710448	1,514,346	581582	159179	602624

Source: Census of Bengal, 1881, Table No. XI, pp. 329-65

Here the statistics have been given of the people who were not born in the districts of North Bengal. That is they were the first generation migrants in North Bengal. The total number of migrants altogether of the districts is 381560 numbering 94165 in Dinajpur, 81385 in Darjeeling, 86605 in Jalpaiguri, 69620 in Maldah and 49785 in Cooch Behar. However, there was also internal migration among the North Bengal districts themselves. For example in Dinajpur district people born in Darjeeling was 18, born in Malda was 525, born in Jalpaiguri 4391 and born in Cooch Behar was 5722 totaling 10656. So the net migration from other parts of Bengal and Bengal and India or beyond India in North Bengal will differ. Among the North Bengal districts during this period between 1872 and 1881 Dinajpur was the largest holder of the immigrants. Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda and Cooch Behar gradually followed them. It is clear that the volume of migration was much more from the outside of Bengal proper, both in case of Dinajpur and Malda large in volume from numbering 11683 and 11655 respectively.

In Darjeeling born in outside India predominantly Nepalis were large in volume which numbered 55001. So a great development happened in the case of peoples' movement in relation to in-migration in North Bengal during 1872-1881 periods. However emigration was very negligent to mention for North Bengal region. Regarding this region Lord Ulick Brown wrote "there was really, no necessity for emigration"⁷¹ The census record of 1891 by Bourdillon gave a clear picture of immigration into the districts of North Bengal very extensively as it also detailed the thanawari immigration into the districts. **[A separate chart of details of immigrants for North Bengal districts has been given in the appendix of this chapter]** The following table comprised from the migration table of the Census Report may make clear the structure of immigrants in North Bengal. **[Census of Bengal, 1891]**

Table No. 3.12
Distribution of immigrants population in the Districts of North Bengal
For the Census year of 1891

Places of Origin	Immigration to				
	Maldah	Dinagepore	Julpigoree	Darjeeling	Cooch Behar
Other districts in Bengal Proper	6820	15202	20072	2379	4463
Behar	15671	18563	16744	9584	7023
Orissa	138	360	325	69	70
Chutia Nagpur	3682	27705	22454	5010	160
Other Provinces & Countries	8402	8717	30176	105207	7304
Contiguous District	51411	41489	58755	15008	28189
Total	86124	112036	148527	137057	47217

Source: Census of Bengal, 1891

However the census commissioner did not provide the details of all districts from where immigrants happened to be had in the districts of enumeration. Only data had given of the contiguous districts of the case district and the remaining as the 'other districts in Bengal Proper'. In case of Bihar important immigrants supplier districts have been taken separately for separate districts. However, the census details reflected a great volume of increase of immigrants in all the districts of North Bengal leaving Cooch Behr. It totaled in North Bengal 530961 in whole of North Bengal out of total population 3780407 having a share of 14.05 percent in the total population. In number the highest share of immigrants carried by Jalpaiguri district followed by Darjeeling, Dinajpur, Maldah and Cooch Behar.

In all the cases the contiguous districts of each district of North Bengal was the supplier of the larger share of immigrants. Thus in case of Dinajpur the main districts provided immigrants were Purnea (15714), Rangpur (8308), Malda (5246), Jalpaiguri (2708) and Rajshahi (7700). But Bihar (18563) and Chhoto Nagpur (22705) emigrated together more than the contiguous district. In case of Darjeeling only from Nepal the lion portion of immigrants (about 76 percent) constituted. In case of Jalpaiguri, Kuch Behar hold the large share of immigrants with total number of immigrants 36288 having 24.43 percentages of migrants Chhoto Nagpur (22454) and Bihar (16744) together also supplied a large volume of migrants in Jalpaiguri. In case of Malda the contiguous areas of Santal Parganas (19457), Murshidabad (16239) and Purneah (98056) were the large sharers of immigrants. Bihar had also significant share (15671) in this context. In case of Kuch Behar Rungpur (17516) and Jalpaiguri (10673) were the prominent supplier of immigrants into the State. H.N. Choudhury provided a data of 4117 immigrants of into Cooch Behar. He quoted Msr. O'Donnel who remarked that "It is a noticeable fact that whilst the number of immigrants is very little changed, Cooch Behar, which subscribed only 1316 individuals to the neighboring districts in 1881, has, during the last decade, sent forth 44650 emigrants whom the equality of numbers of men and women proves to have permanently left the State." ⁷² However in case of the North Bengal districts the immigrants figured estimated by both the temporary and permanent members, though the latter was greater.

The census of 1901 also gives the details of enumeration of people according to their birth places. Born in district but found in other places naturally be regarded as the immigrants in the district of Enumeration. **[A separate chart of details of birth places for North Bengal districts has been given in the appendix of this chapter]** Here are a table people found in different North Bengal districts but actually born in other districts of North Bengal, Bengal province except the district where found, in Feudatory States, in other provinces or States in India and the countries in Asia beyond India. ⁷³

Table No. 3.13
Showing the Birth places by Districts of the population of North Bengal
For the Census year of 1901

Places of Birth	Districts where found				
	Maldah	Dinagepore	Julpigoree	Darjeeling	Cooch Behar
Total within Province	89443	122334	162218	41256	36619
Burdwan Division	1014	1018	734	1081	178
Presidency Division	13150	7376	10623	1695	822
Rajshahy Division (excluding the district of Enumeration)	6933	14816	18981	5400	22499
Dacca	668	2059	1757	277	2343
Chittagon	36	34	84	74	98
Patna Division	6811	12317	9700	7529	10017
Bhagalpur Division	58543	74507	16378	13471	439
Orissa	69	113	1976	73	92
Chhoto Nagpur	2116	6414	84335	9330	39
Feudatory States	103	880	26550	2226	22
Other Provinces or States in India	8388	9506	6219	4124	7825
Countries in Asia beyond India	54	153	19637	78231	371

Source: Census of Bengal, 1901

From the table above it may be seen that the total immigrants in North Bengal in 1901 was 586378 out of total population in the region 40,54,581 having a share of 13.52 percent in North Bengal population with little drop of 0.52 percent from the previous decade. This was due to decrease of immigrants in compare to previous decade in Darjeeling (from 137057 to 123611) and Cooch Behar (from 47217 to 44815). However, in other three districts the number grew. In Dinajpur 122334 persons were recorded born in Bengal province outside Dinajpur, 9506 persons in other provinces and state. In Jalpaiguri it was 162218 in Bengal province other than district of enumeration, 6219 in other provinces and State and 19637 in countries in Asia beyond India. In Malda it was 19443 persons born in Bengal province excluding the Maldah district and 8388 in other provinces or states in India. If we account the volume of immigrant for the last decade of Nineteenth century up to 1901 the number of migrants in all the districts of North Bengal barring Cooch Behar was voluminous, particularly in consider of Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri district.

The main supplier of immigrants during this decade to Dinajpur were Nadia (3628), Murshidabad (3026), Rajshahi (3090), Rangpur (4959), Saran(15455) Mujaffarpur (2349),

Monghyr (3430), Bhagalpur (8527), Purnea (7494), Malda (6485). Only from Santal Pargana it was 48591. Chhoto Nagpurias in Dinajpur were 8614. A very important feature is that the 6815 persons from United Provinces enumerated in the district. In case of Jalpaiguri the large share of immigrants in this decade were of Diampur (2979), Darjeeling (2012), Rungpur (13316), Saran (4481), Muzaffarpur (2349), Purnea (3616), Santhal Pargana (10562) and United Province (3388). Chhoto Nagpur also shared a good number of immigrants who were 84335 mainly from Ranchi (80436). The then feudatory state Cooch Behar shared 26287 persons in Jalpaiguri as immigrants. Another important feature of this process was people belonged to Nepal (18649) and Bhutan (759) in large number flocked into the district. In case of Darjeeling 76301 persons were only from the adjacent Nepal land. Among the rest were from Saran (2251), Muzaffarpur (1765), Purnea (8905), Santhal Parganas (2961), Chhoto Nagpur (9330) mainly from Ranchi (7931), Sikkim (2108) and United Province (2203). In respect of Maldah Murshidabad (11936), Rajshahi (2680), Shahabad (1987), Saran (1054), Muzaffarpur (1813), Munghyr (3067), Bhagalpur (7015), Purnea (5886), Santal Pargana (42575), Chhoto Nagpur (2116), United Province (8144) shared significant number of immigrants. For Cooch Behar the principal suppliers were Jalpaiguri (7685), Rangpur (14011), Saran (6332), Assam (3171), United Province (3743).⁷⁴

So if we analyze the statistics of the last three decades of nineteenth century from 1872 to 1901 it comes to be revealed that even to 1870s the North Bengal district had a good connection with some Bengal districts and other provinces and even contiguous nations which remain active as major source of immigrants into North Bengal districts with some variations. Nadia always remained in good connection with Maldah and Murshidabad with both districts of Malda and Dinajpur. Rangpur was for whole of this period in a very good deal with Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Rajshahi district was steady to provide immigrants in Dinajpur and Maldah throughout this period. Munghyr was in good terms with Malda and Dinajpur in this respect. Muzaffarpur and Saran had continuous flow of immigrants for all the North Bengal districts excluding Darjeeling to which the ratio was very low. Sahabad only had good relation with Maldah in this respect. Purneah also was good source of immigrants for North Bengal districts excluding Cooch Behar. Santhal Pargana and Chhoto Nagpur also had a continuous and voluminous out flow of immigrants to Maldah and Dinajpur. On the other Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri next to Darjeeling was characterized by non-Indian migration basically from Nepal and Bhutan for the period steadily and Cooch Behar was characterized by Assamese immigration during this period. In this respect Maldah-Dinajpur tract of Southern North Bengal and Darjeeling-Jalpaiguri tract of Northern North Bengal bore similarities as it will be discussed in case of caste and racial and religious composition of the population during this period.

Besides there was a good deal of internal migration among the North Bengal districts in which Dinajpur had a great share to Maldah and Jalpaiguri and little share with Darjeeling Terai. Darjeeling had a good share with Jalpaiguri and sometimes with Cooch Behar. Jalpaiguri had good share with Dinajpur, Darjeeling and Cooch Behar. Maldah had a good share only with Dinajpur in this respect. In fact Maldah was under Bhagalpur Division for a long period (up to 1915). So barring contiguous Dinajpur district she had no good deal with other North Bengal people. On the other Cooch Behar also had only good deal with Jalpaiguri, its sister land and little share with Dinajpur and Darjeeling Terai. This kind nature of immigration share of immigrants might have impacted the economic, cultural and political if of this region which will be discussed in latter chapters.

From the first portion of this chapter we have seen that during the period between 1872 and 1881 the density of population in the North Bengal districts was very much thin and sparse. This naturally had availability of waste land in large volume. This led to the waste-land oriented migration of cultivating labour class from one point of view and the land holding middle class from the other point of view. This varied from district to district according socio-political-economic condition of the region. For example Dinajpur had a great demand of labour in season time (dry months). A great influx of in-migration from Santal Parganas and the Choto Nagpur Plateau to Barind and other sparsely populated portions of the district had been recognized by F.W. Strong⁷⁵ There were also permanent settlers from Murshidabad, Nadia, Behar and the Bengal provinces in the district as cultivators.⁷⁶ In regards agricultural labour immigration it becomes apparent from the exceptional growth of population in the Kalimpong tract to the east of the River Tista and in 'Khasmahals' or 'Government Estates' in the Duars.⁷⁷ These Estates included all the Western Duars outside the tea gardens and reserved forest divided into four *Tehasils* (revenue collector areas) of Mainaguri, Falakata, Alipur and Bhalka and also the Tehasil of Ambari Falakata at the West of River Tista.

The tract of Kalimpong composed almost entirely of forest during its annexation and inhabited by the aborigines of the country was soon cleared and land was brought under cultivation. The Nepalese were attracted to this land and even the cooli Nepalese from tea gardens also began to be settled there.⁷⁸ O'Malley also wrote that "In the Tarai it receives numerous settlers from the adjoining districts of Purnea and Jalpaiguri, who engage in cultivation...."⁷⁹ In the West Bengal District Gazetteer for Darjeeling district it was written "The early settlers were most agriculturists. Campbell gave them every encouragement to reclaim forest lands and settle down there."⁸⁰ The Nadezusties and the Shersabadiya Muhammedan sects in Malda also immigrated there as the agriculturists. However, as the land was plenty with jungles and others uncultivable during 1870 and the people were rural in Nature in Bengal and its contiguous portion so the earlier colonial periodic migration in North Bengal was 'pro-land' of the 'Agriculturists' and 'rural' in nature.

There are number of official reports as archival records in support of waste land-turned-agricultural-land oriented migration in North Bengal. The Divisional Commissioner's Report for 1875-76 of Rajshahi and Cooch Behar Division acknowledged of waste lands available for cultivation in districts like Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Dinajpur.⁸¹ The Annual General Administration Report of the Rajshahi and Cooch Behar Division for 1877-78 reported of a large number of Santals and Dhangars in Dinajpur engaged in clearing jungles, cultivating land, husking rice, digging tanks and in other manual works.⁸² The Report of 1875-76 also recorded of immigrants from Cooch Behar and Rangpur settled on the Waste land in the Duars of Jalpaiguri.⁸³ The Annual General Report of the Rajshahi and Cooch Behar Division for 1879-80 reported that the a large number of coolies from Santal Parganas and Choto Nagpur and seasonal immigrants for Dinajpur gradually took up lands and settled permanently in the police stations of Bansihari, Patiram, Patnitola and Parbatipur of Dinajpur district. The same report told of Nepalese migration in Kalimpong for cultivation of land.⁸⁴

A very important phenomenon concerned with North Bengal during the period of this part of our study (1871-1901) is that the North Bengal districts at this time were going through a series of constructional developments. Starting with administrative townships, communication development with large number of road constructions and even railway constructions, commercial centers, Industrial centers, though in small number, related constructions, establishment of cantonments and railway stations and many other led the North Bengal districts under massive construction activities. The last quarter of the nineteenth century was peak hour in this regard and the British in post-mutiny period and under Victorian rule began to establish moiré consolidated and controlled colonization from which North Bengal territories were not exempted. Even the excluding Areas o f North Bengal, though non-regulated, were under special control. However, this huge construction works needed huge number of labour leading to the construction work oriented labor in-migration in North Bengal.

The Government Report of 1877-78 stated that the Santals and Dhangars immigrants of Dinajpur district were also employed in Road works.⁸⁵ Hunter also reported that among the Dhangar, Kol and Santal immigrants from Chhoto Nagpur hill region into Maldah district the Dhangar were mostly employed in indigo factories and their immigration later on decreased due to the decay of indigo planting in the region.⁸⁶ F.W. Strong detailed the growth of Dinajpur as an administrative town with a number of buildings like Government headquarters, circuit house, official Bunglows and institutions like European club and also number of road construction. In these entire field a good number of immigrant laborers were recruited⁸⁷ including roads (such as Great Hill Cart Road) and railways (Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, originally called Northern Bengal State Railway, as stated by F.W. Strong, by and through the

distinct of district was opened between, 1884 and 1891 which extended further through Jalpaiguri up to Siliguri⁸⁸ employed a large number labour in the construction. Mr. Sunder provided a list of 44 *Kachcha* roads in Jalpaiguri⁸⁹ of which repairmen needed and engaged a large number of laborers. The extension of North Bengal Railway up to Haldibari (in 1876) and the State's construction of Railway (1894) from Mogalhat to Koch Behar also engaged laborer from outside of the State.⁹⁰

Another important aspect of the labor migration is industry oriented immigration in North Bengal. The Government report of 1882 on Maldah states that migration of laborers into Malda, Dinajpur and other eastern districts was regular and consistent. They used the 'Emigration roads', as stated by Dr. Haraprasad Chattopadhyay, through Bhagalpur and Purneah and by the Rajmahal road and were employed principally in road work and in Mulberry plantations.⁹¹ 'The number of Laborers in Kaliachak, Maldah concern was thus returned by Major, M.J. Brown in total 11092.'⁹² At this time Silk industry with its associative activities, mulberry plantation, Lac plantation industry and even mango plantation engaged large number working laborers. Of the immigrants, both the male and female had good share. In Dinajpur, though not the large scale jute press, Rice husking, sugar pressing, fishing weaving [the professional weavers were Tantis (Hindus), Jugis(Hindus) and Jolahas (Muhammadans)], mat and basket making (by Doms and Santals) and other minor manufacturing activities also employed the in-migrants. Though indigo plantation industry had some saying over this immigration flow, but, as it has mentioned earlier, the declining of indigo plantation led the laborers to be engaged in other fields. In Cooch Behar Silk Fabric, Cotton Fabric and Jute fabric manufacturing, the pottery activities were needed a large laborer engagement.

Plantation industry oriented labor migration in North Bengal was a prominent feature during the period. In this context Indigo, Mulberry, Mango, Tobacco, Cinchona and most importantly Tea plantation in North Bengal had a great impact on the demographic composition of the region. In earlier I have mentioned about indigo, mango, Mulberry plantation and the engagement of the labor in those. Cinchona in Darjeeling hill and Terai region and Tobacco in Jalpaiguri-Cooch Behar-Dinajpur region was also important and recruited labor. But over the all Tea plantation industry largely and voluminously attracted the laborer in a very high, constant and for long periodic range. In each and every documents for migration movements of the people in this time for the region like of O'Malley, Grunning, A.J. Dash, D.E.H. Sanders and the official records the tea plantation development had been recorded as a persuading factor. L.S.S. O'Malley reported the influence of tea plantation on labor immigration in Darjeeling district with few statistics. He wrote "in 1872 the number of tea estate in Darjeeling was only 74 with an area of 14000 acres planted with tea. In 1881 the number of these estates had risen to 153 and the acreage under tea to 30,000, the number of estates having thus increased by 200 percent and the acreage being more than doubled. Ten years later there were 177 gardens and

45000 acres were actually under tea. These figures sufficiently denote the prodigious development of operations whose characteristic is the employment of an enormous quantity of manual labour. To this rapidly increasing demand the local supply of labour was quite unequal; the result was an unexampled immigration; and at the census of 1891 it was found that no less than 88000 persons resident in the district were born in Nepal”⁹³ Even in the latter decade though ‘tea industry passed through a period of depression’ the tea garden cooli population in district in 1901 returned ‘more than two-thirds’ of the total population.

Mr. Sunders wrote that “as the opening out and improvement of the Western Duars and the increase in population here is chiefly due to the tea industry...”⁹⁴ Grunning quoted Mr. C.J. O’Donneell saying in 1888 that “This important industry has increased so much of recent years as to change almost completely the physical characteristics of the submontane country over a great area thirty miles long extending from the debouchment of the Tista from the Darjeeling hills to a similar point on the Daina river on the frontier of Bhutan East of the Diana, a similar tract stretches for about the same distance as far as the Rajabhatkhaoa forest reserve due north of Alipur”⁹⁵ ‘The coolies employed in tea gardens were Paharias coming from Nepal and Darjeeling; Oraons, Mundas and a few Kols coming from Chota nagpur district; Uriyas from Ganjam and Santhals from the Santhal Parganas recruited by the Sardars’.

Thus plantation oriented immigration transformed the region with a new tribal demographic structure and composition. Official records of 1877-78 acknowledged the Nepalese and Dhangar cooli immigration in tea-gardens”⁹⁶ The growth of labor force has been described by the Jalpaiguri Disict Centenary as follows:”When these tea gardens were set up to population for *Duars* was very thin. The local people had plenty of land and were engaged in food cultivations. They loved easy life. So local men were not available for the arduous job of tea plantation and these people did not like to experience the life of Labourer in an industry. So, labour force had to be recruited from outside. Both the European and Indian tea planters had to do this. In a few years the number of tribal people from Bihar, Madhyapradesh, Mardras, Nepal and *Terai* began to increase and now their number is considerable. Formally the laborers used to go home after the term of contract they were repatriated. But now they have settled in the *Duars* permanently and are swelling in numbers giving to raise lots of new problem”⁹⁷

As the labour immigration led to bring the large scale o uncultivable land under cultivation and plantation and also led the increase of industrial work force or labour force the production grew very rapidly in all the districts of North Bengal during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This obviously facilitated the condition of trading and commercial activities leading to the business oriented trading class immigration into the districts. Development of road, railway and also of ferry communication also attracted the trading class from up country land. At the

time Chapai Nawabganj, Kalindri, Balia Nawabganj, Mahaghat were important trading centers. The Mahajans from upper country land played an important role in selling silk fabrics, known as Maldehi cloths to Calcutta and Benares (Hunter, p.80). The chief silk mart in Maldah was Amaniganj *hat* where the people from Murshidabad and Rajshahi took a great part. English Bazaar, Maldah Rohanpur, Nawabganj and Haiatpur were important for food stuff trade. Hunter reported that 'Many as the banias and Mahajans took part in trade of Malda was natives of North-Western provinces or Behar [Hunter, p.86].

The important trading centers in Dinajpur were Chandganj, Samijhia, Fakiraganj, Kumargaon, Patiram, Balurghat, Dangirhat, Nithpur, Ghoraghat, Raiganj, Gareya, Khansama, Lahirihat etc.⁹⁸ The railway stations like Parbatipur, Bhawanipur, Phulbari and Charkoi, Chirirbandar, Kaugaon, Dinajpur, Biral Rdhikarpur, Kaliaganj, Bangalbari and Raiganj also attracted the large scale trading class in this region. The chief trade centers of Jalpaiguri district Titaliya, Rajnagar, Saldanga, Chilahati station, Debiganj, Baura, Jorpokri, Falakata, Alipur also attracted trading class migrants for their communication privileges. The chief trade centers in Darjeeling at the time were Darjeeling, Kurseong, Siliguri, Kalimpong, Matigara and Naksal Bari attracting trading class for communication importance. In Cooch Behar the important trading centers of the period were Balrampur, Chaura, Gobra-Chhara, Dewanganj, Changrabanda, Lawkuthi, Gosanimari, Haldibari and Mekligunj. In this context of trading class Hunter wrote that "Nearly all the commerce of the state, except such as is carried on the weekly markets, is in the hands of the foreign merchants, chiefly Marwaris from Bikanir, who bring more energy and enterprise to the work than the Kuch Beharis usually possess."⁹⁹ This was also the same picture in 1890s as H.N. Chowdhury wrote that "As noticed in 1872 nearly all the commerce is still in the hands of foreigners, chiefly Marwaris."¹⁰⁰ Besides Maldah was a great juncture between North Bengal districts and proper Bengal or Calcutta. So Hunter wrote that "... there should be added the rice of Dinajpur, the tobacco of Purniah and Jalpaiguri, and the gunny bags from the great mart of Dulaganj, in Purniah; for all these must pass through the heart of Maldah district on their way to their final destinations."¹⁰¹

The plantation industry, as discussed earlier not only led the immigration of labour class but it also helped in plantation oriented entrepreneur immigration into North Bengal all in Chinchona, tobacco, mango mulberry and most importantly tea plantation. However, in case Chinchona and Tea plantation it was the Europeans who predominated in the enterprise. But gradually the Bengalis from Southern, western and Eastern part of Bengal, the Marwaris, the money lender-cum-merchant class came forward. However in this portion of discussion the Europeans were dominant.¹⁰² But it is also to be mentioned that within few years of beginning of tea plantation enterprise in the Duars Munshi Rahim Baksh, a Bengali Muslim from Noakhali began the first Indian tea garden, the Jaldhaka Tea Estate.¹⁰³ Bhagaban Chandra Bose,¹⁰⁴ Birendra Chandra Ghosh, Shib Shankar Mukherjee,¹⁰⁵ Bhawani Charan Ghatak, Musharaff

Hossain , Joy Chandr Sanyal, Sashi Kumar Neogi were the other leading Besngli tea planters. Bengali Baboos from proper Bengal like Bipradas, Pal Choudhury from Nadia, Kamal Krishna Haldar from Burdwan Raj state, even a Nepali Government Contractor Bhagabati Rai also established the tea estates. So tea plantation oriented Babu Immigration in North Bengal was also important.

In fact, as has been detailed earlier, North Bengal with its administrative, agricultural, industrial and most importantly development of communication has become turned into a commercial zone. Moreover, the abolition of British monopoly trade by the Charter Act, 1833 led the opening of Indian markets for international one. This naturally paved the way of growth of industrial enterprise also in North Bengal. In this process the Marwaris, Beharis, Gujratis and other communities flocked into North Bengal. Narayan Chandra Saha in his research on Marwary community has shown that 'For the potentiality of the moneyed Marwaris to invest capital for the expansion of the tea industry and other type of trade and commerce they surpassed all other business communities in this respect.'¹⁰⁶

The above discussion disclose the process of development of various important areas of North Bengal into urbanity which was regarded by K.C. Zackaria as important part for the process of migration¹⁰⁷ With the British penetration, as has been seen, into North Bengal districts urbanity was developing in various parts of the region. Though, not in modern sense, sub urbanity developed in the administrative centers, trading and commercial centers, industrial centers even in railway stations, cantonments all these developments led to the growth of those regions towards urbanity. This urbanity attracted the in-migrant groups belonged to professional class in this region. It was an 'important social factor' in mid 18th century India as imported from Victorian Britain¹⁰⁸ which was happened to North Bengal in the nineteenth century and specially in this beginning period of our study, the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, it is seen that comparatively developed and intelligent peoples were employed in the administration. Even prior to British intervention in Cooch Behar State, the Hindu Brahmins and other intelligent persons were invited and settled in Cooch Behar State. Prof. A. G. Ghosh has enlightened the aspect in various article both in English and vernacular language.¹⁰⁹ Though the large number of inducements and pull factors were responsible for the immigration into North Bengal districts, if we study the historical background of immigrants and of their places of origin then the 'push factors' behind the curtain also may be noticed. In fact, out migration seemed to be happened with both the culmination of inducement and also of forceful incident or circumstance, may anyone be dominant or prominent in compare to other.

In nineteenth century Behar the tribal society was in a humiliating condition. But the process of Hinduisation of the Munda ruler of Chhoto Nagpur region his kinsmen influenced him to

employ the non-tribal from the outsiders in the royal administration and granting those jagirs. ¹¹⁰It de-organized 'Khund-Khunti' land system. Besides, at the same time, British penetration into the region began leading to intrusion of more aliens or outsiders with new faith leading their economic ruination. ¹¹¹ The Santhals were come also under such British exploitation. So they were also pushed to hide out the better life leading the wave by wave emigration from their place of births. F. Hamendorf, in his 'Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal' ¹¹² elaborated that pressure on land and impoverishment of the peasant in Nepal led their large volume of outmigration from their own land. Prof. M. Dasgupta and A. Samad tried to analyse Nepali emigration in the light of king Prithvi Narayan Shah's Hinduisation and land transfer from the 'original inhabitants' to the 'upper caste Hindus' alienating the locals. ¹¹³ On the other hand in business class from their land it may be said that "The barrenness of the soil of Rajputana forced them out of their province in search of economic opportunities which were available elsewhere." ¹¹⁴ So Push-pull both the factors were eminent in context of large scale immigration in North Bengal districts.

An important aspect of the process of immigration during early times was its temporary nature. Both laborers and traders from the contiguous regions used to come into North Bengal as daily wagers for a few days or a season. After a particular time they used to return in their home. So O'Malley said that "During 1901 census in Darjeeling *Terai* there was a small decrease partially due to fortuitous census, viz. to the fact that a large number of temporary immigrants employed in road making were enumerated at the previous census" ¹¹⁵ In fact, the laborers employed in construction work were mostly temporary migrants as the work was for a particular time, which was also true in case of fields. But gradually all the developments of the region and the Government's inducement with various policy and the availability of Waste lands in large or finally the push factors in their home regions and long engagements and familiarities in the region where they went temporarily led them to settle permanently. So within 1901 the immigrants of North Bengal were mostly first generation migrants though the process began since time immemorial.

Another important feature of the process of immigration in North e Bengal was a voluminous immigration of non-Indians or foreigners from the land contiguous to India but beyond India especially from that of Bhutan and Nepal of which the latter played the most significant part. In all the census records as I have said earlier the people from Nepal and Bhutan had been recorded as 'people born' or 'immigrated from' Asiatic country beyond India. This gave the immigration process international character. And we have seen that with the formation of the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district how the increasing wave of the Nepalese engulfed the hilly tract of the district and gradually they extended towards Darjeeling Terai and Jalpaiguri district. Though, not so much in number as like as the Nepalese, the Bhutia population also immigrated

both in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts in the form of Sikkimese Bhutia, Tibetan Bhutia and Dharma Bhutia. However Haraprasad Chattopadhyaya had shown in his stalwart work "Migration between India and Nepal"¹¹⁶ both countries had a traditional relation of immigration and emigration. But the British acquiring of Darjeeling from Sikkimputti turned Nepalese immigration into India a gigantic one.

From the above discussion it is clear that North Bengal at this juncture (1872-1901), in various ways, became lucrative for the immigrants into the land. The abundant of lands for cultivation great demands for labor in various fields, high rate of wages, various privileges from the Government, vacuum of strong trading class acted as 'pull factors' for the immigrants into the region. Not only this, it was the newly established Government very much eager to have greater revenue making the region more cultivable, and more industrious and more habituated. Moreover, the region of North Bengal strategically seemed to them too important to have relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet and even China. So they took number of developmental steps as per the recommendation of various survey settlements. As the region was malarious they also endeavored for the betterment of sanitation of the region and also influenced the Jotdars and Zamindars to use development funds for the good sanitation of areas under their locality. The officers also personally made provocations to settle the people in North Bengal from other parts of Bengal and India. So this turned into 'induced migration' or 'invited migration'. The feature of invited migration was prominent in Cooch Behar. The Rajas of Cooch Behar invited Brahmins from different parts of Bengal and India who permanently settled in the surroundings of Cooch Behar town. With the initiative of D.H.E. Sanders , Rev. A.J. Shields a Santhal Colony was established in Western Duars by the Government notification 4300 I.R., dated 27 the' August, 1894.¹¹⁷ However, as a whole the whole process of migration into North Bengal districts had both trends of rural-turn and urban-turn character the previous being prominent and dominant. In cases of tribal immigration they migrated with family turning the process as 'unit migration' and towards 'tea districts' it was 'destination oriented' in nature.

Colonial Period (1901-1941)

III

The turning of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century is very significant for the study of Bengal and as well as North Bengal. A great administrative and jurisdictional distribution and redistribution happened in the first decade of the twentieth century Bengal which greatly may influence not only on her politico-administrative structure but also on her demographic scenario. North Bengal, the region of our study, the geographical entity at the time, had also some impacts on this occasion, which I had discussed in the

previous chapter. These impacts were due to the transfer of territory between Bengal and her adjoining provinces on the occasion of declaration of partition in 1905. The partition was annulled in 1911 and re-reorganization carried on, which had been called second partition by the Census Commissioner, L.S.S. O'Malley in his Report,¹¹⁸ to be effected on 1st April, 1912. By this Bihar, Chhoto Nagpur and Orissa were grouped into a province under Lieutenant Governor. On the other the Presidency and Burdwan Division, the hilly district of Darjeeling and the State of Cooch Behar included into a Presidency under a Governor and his Council. Assam was kept under a Chief Commissionership. For this administrative and jurisdictional complexion Bengal was divided in four natural divisions in Census description such as East, West North and Central Bengal physical and ethnical affinities taking under consideration.¹¹⁹ However, my discussion will be confined, as earlier, in four districts and the State of Cooch Behar from the natural division of North Bengal, which formed the post partition periodic Indian part of North Bengal. The following table may represent the demographic scenario of North Bengal in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Table No.3.14
Population distribution in North Bengal
1911

District or State	Area in Square mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Density	Increase/Decrease	Variation 1901-1911
Bengal	84092	46305170	23803331	22501839	563	3433311	+8.0
Maldah	1832	1004159	498547	505612	548	+122425	+13.9
Dinajpur	3946	1687863	889876	797987	428	+121018	+7.7
Jalpaiguri	2921	902660	490228	412432	309	+115334	+14.8
Dajeeling	1164	265550	142094	123456	228	+16433	+6.6
Cooch Behar	1366	592952	316548	276404	434	+25978	+4.6
Total of North Bengal	11226	4453184	2337293	2115891	387	398603	+9.8

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913

In 1911 the total population of Malda district was 100459 with an area of 1832 square mile having 548 souls per square mile. It was increase of 13.9 percent from the previous decade, which was second highest increase among the North Bengal districts having a 22.55 percent share in North Bengal population. However, unequal distribution of population was the continuous picture of Malda district in this period also. The 'Diara' region comprising Kaliachak and Sibganj was densely populated having density of 845 and 808 respectively. This was

basically because of fertility of this region by fluvial action of the river 'Padma'. English Bazaar-Khurba tract of Malda being built by older alluvium was comparatively less but not less dense area having 739 and 584 persons per square mile which was much above the whole region of North Bengal. The 'Barind' region comprising Gomastapur, Malda and Gajol being less fertile was thinly dense area of Malda having 397, 357 and 356 people per square mile. L.S.S. O'Malley, in this context, wrote "The thanas are not exactly conterminous with these natural divisions, but the marginal statement clearly indicates the influence of the character of the soil on the distribution of the population."¹²⁰

Table No.3.15
Distribution of Population in Malda
For the year 1911

Malda	Population	Percentage of variation	
	1911	1901-1911	1891-1901
District Total	1004159	+13.88	+8.49
Gomastapur	67414	+11.77	+6.61
English Bazaar	94617	+4.61	-6.23
Nawabganj	71274	-0.34	-1.63
Kaliachak	164801	+11.20	+14.30
Sibganj	150371	+15.79	+11.01
Kharba	82399	+16.37	+10.41
Ratua	135093	+22.16	+4.23
Tulsihatta	57204	+19.90	+0.35
Old Malda	84222	+16.41	+22.90
Gajoli	96763	+21.05	+25.00

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.105

Whatever the density or unequal distribution coined Malda's demography the increase of population in this district, in spite of malaria fever in 1905, 1906 and 1907 and the flood of 1906, was very steady.¹²¹ A large volume of increase was seen in the police stations of Sibganj (15.79 percent), Kharba (16.37 per cent), Ratua(22.16 percent), Old Malda (16.42 percent) and Gajol (21.64 percent). Kaliachak (11.20 percent) and Gomastapur (11.77) also showed significant increase by numerical strength of population. This increase was greatly influenced by the Sonthals. Another important feature of population composition of this decade in Malda was more number of female than the males which was 1000 males in 1020 females though in the east of Mahananda the number of females was 973 in 1000 males.¹²² Another important aspect of this growth was the higher rate of birth (52 per mile) in this decade in compare to death rate (29.4 per mile). This obviously grew the natural population of the district in number.

In contrary Dinajpur district was not so much responsive in case of density of population. The natural as well as the physiographical factor was responsible for it. The district was not benefited by the fluvial activities of river Ganges or Brahmaputra. The Barind region being high and unfertile could not have so much importance. Balurghat subdivision of this Barind region had a density of 380 souls per square mile. However, in case of Dinajpur district concerned with density or per square mile people was evenly distributed. The district headquarters Dinajpur had the greatest density of 553 persons per square mile and Porsa, in Barind had the lowest density of 315 persons per square mile. Though there was some scarcity in 1908 and 1909 in the west and south west corner of the district there was still growth of population during 1909 to 1911 in the district even the birth rate being high than the death rate. 17000 more births and 11500 less deaths happened at this period there. All the police stations of Banshihari (15.31 per cent), Parbatipur (12.00), Nawabganj (17.23), Patnitala (17.24), Porsa (15.88), Balurghat ((14.72), Gangarampur (14.80), Phulbari (Chintmand, 16.20) showed a great increase from the previous decade. However, police stations of Thakurgaon (-1.65) and Ranisankoil (-0.99) showed a small decrease from previous year. Thus Dinajpur district as a whole in 1911 with a population of 1687683 in number of shared 38 percent of entire North Bengal Population with a mean density of 428 per square mile and 7.7 percent increase from the previous census decade amounting 121018 persons in number.¹²³ However the continuous process of migration was not a less important factor. Because it is acknowledged in census 1911 that Dinajpur district represented a higher death rate than the other North Bengal districts having 4,646 excess of births over deaths.¹²⁴

Table-No.3.16
Distribution of Population in Dinajpur
For the year 1911

Dinajpur	Population	Percentage of variation	
	1911	1901-1911	1891-1901
District Total	1687863	+7.72	+5.70
Sadar Subdivision	694954	+9.04	+4.04
Dinajpur(Kotwali)	217776	+4.08	+0.31
Kaliaganj	116560	+10.64	+4.64
Raiganj	88620	+3.08	+1.36
Banshihari	99692	+15.31	+3.81
Parbatipur	84044	+12.09	+0.41
Nawabganj	88362	+17.06	+13.71
Balurghat Subdivision	447343	+15.77	+14.21
Patnitala	110181	+17.36	+19.06
Porsa	63605	+15.88	+8.39
Balurghat(Patiram)	106501	+14.22	+23.96

Gangarampur	95686	+14.80	+4.92
Phulbari (Chintamani)	71370	+16.26	+12.27
Thakurgaon Subdivision	545566	+0.46	+2.20
Thakurgaon	223671	+1.65	+1.35
Ranisankail	72261	+0.99	+0.45
Pirganj	104503	+6.41	+3.66
Birganj	144411	+6.47	+4.16

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.99

There was very uneven distribution of population in Jalpaiguri district during the period between 1901 and 1911. This was largely due to the physiographic feature of the district being covered by forests amounting one sixth of its total area during this period. So whereas in Alipur *thana* the density of population in the east was only 162 it was 381 per square mile if the forest areas excluded from the account. However, as a whole Jalpaiguri district reflected 309 souls per square mile with 902660 populations in number. It showed a great increase 14.9 percent population in the region from the previous decade. This growth was very much happened in the western Duars areas between the Tista and the Sankosh rivers comprising Alipur subdivision [*thanas* of Alipur (81.49) and Falakata (53.45)] and the *thanas* of Mainaguri with Dhupguri outpost and Damdim [7.81] of the Suddier subdivision¹²⁵ was a greater increase even more than the previous decade in case of Alipur Subdivision though in Sudder it was less from the previous decade. But even the district as whole, comprised 20.26 per cent of entire North Bengal population. J.A. Milligan in his 'Final Report' elaborated the development of Jalpaiguri district influencing the habitation of the region. He also raised the issue of decreasing of the Meches and increasing of the Totos in their respective tracts of the district.¹²⁶

Table-No.-3.17
Distribution of Population in Jalpaiguri
For the year 1911

Jalpaiguri	Population	Percentage of variation	
	1911	1901-1911	1891-1901
District Total	902660	+14.79	+15.70
Sadar Subdivision	699959	+4.95	+9.85
Jalpaiguri	83783	+4.20	-0.70
Rajganj	75480	+4.08	-3.31
Boda	163401	+0.27	-0.82
Pathgram	58624	+4.93	-5.28
Mainaguri	200636	+9.23	+31.17

Damdin	116035	+7.81	+28.26
Alipoe Subdivision	202701	+69.83	+64.75
Alipor	126580	+81.49	+70.01
Falakata	76121	+53.45	+57.875

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.100

In 1911 Darjeeling district had a population of 265550 which shared 5.96 percent of total population of North Bengal. As a whole the district had a density of 309 souls per square mile. But if we exclude the forest land it will rise to 369 persons per square mile even being the small in compare to the other districts of North Bengal. At this time Siliguri Subdivision in *Terai* region became most populous in the district. However, as a whole in 1911 the district represented decline in rise of population with 6.65 percent increase in compare to the 11.55 percent increase of previous decade. This decline is explained by the census commissioner due to 'the depression of the tea industry' and 'a limited area, one third covered by reserved forest' and over one seventh being covered by tea gardens. As the one third of district was cultivable so extension of agricultural population more could not be supported. It is said in Report of Census that "Even in Kalimpong, where nearly half the land is reserved for native cultivation, it is recognized that it has reached the limit of safety in some parts, and in such localities it has been found necessary to prohibit further extension."¹²⁷ L.S.S. O'Malley also bore doubt in 1907 about the declining growth of population in Darjeeling in near future of his time.¹²⁸ Even in Kalimpong the rate of growth decreased from 55.9percent to 19.3 percent in 1911 from previous census year. JorBunglow, Darjeeling also reflected a loss in decrease in compare to the previous decade. Kurseong subdivision which was in 1901 to some extent static, showed not only decreases but loss of 3.81 percent in total population. It was only Siliguri in Terai which represented a slight growth of 2.32 percent after healing the loss of 2.47 percent from the previous decade.

Table-No.3.18
Distribution of Population in Darjeeling
For the year 1911

Darjeeling	Population	Percentage of variation	
	1911	1901-1911	1891-1901
District Total	265550	+6.65	+11.55
Sadar Subdivision	152097	+13.96	+26.33
Darjeeling	75367	+6.54	+13.78
Jorbungalow	27210	+20.86	+24.63
Kalimpong	49520	+19.29	+55.87
Kurseong Subdivision	41207	-8.81	+1.39
Kurseong	41207	-8.81	1.39

Siliguri Subdivision	72246	+2.53	-3.47
Siliguri	72246	+2.53	-3.47

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.101

The declining phase in growth of population in the then Cooch Behar State came into an end in 1911 even covering the loss of -2.05 percent of the decade 1891-1901. During first decade of the twentieth century conditions became more favorable abating any severe epidemics in the period barring the inundation of 1906 in North Mathabhanga. Even the state showed only 9000 death tolls from cholera against 17000 death tolls in previous decade. Thus the state achieved total population of 592952 with a density of 434 per square mile as a whole occupying 13.32 percent of total North Bengal population. However, this growth was not so much uneven. Expansion of cultivation, price hike in agricultural production, extension of Eastern Bengal State Railway up to Gowhati (from Gitaldah) were responsible for this growth¹²⁹ However, the density of population was more in Dinhatta and Haldibari (on the average 545) though all the parts of the state had parts of in the growth. The most progress was seen in Tuffanganj (9.14 percent) followed by Cooch Behar Kotwali (7.40). Haldibari showed a normal growth of 5 percent the least being in Mathabhanga which suffered from the flood of 1906. However in Cooch Behar administrative report the population of the district was recorded 593052, an increase of 26.079 (4.59 Percent) from the previous census and regard it as satisfactory in prevalence of epidemic disease and other causes.¹³⁰

Table-No.3.19
Distribution of Population in Cooch Behar
For the year 1911

Cooch Behar	Population	Percentage of variation	
	1911	1901-1911	1891-1901
District Total	592952	+4.58	-2.05
Kotwali	130602	+7.40	-4.4
Tuffanganj	80147	+9.14	-1.4
Dinhatta	148529	+3.22	-2.0
Matabhanga	142604	+1.73	-3.5
Mekliganj	51545	+2.67	-1.0
Haldibari	39623	+5.01	+9.2

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.105

I have discussed that changes was happened in the jurisdictional structure of North Bengal even after the annulment of partition of Bengal in 1911 and constituted on April 1st, 1912 and continued to be the same in 1921 barring a few little changes in Bengal-Assam and Bengal-Bihar-Orissa border exchanges.¹³¹ In 1921 Census again North Bengal was taken as a unit of

Bengal Province in form of Natural division to present the tabular data of demography. However I have compiled the information of the five districts which constituted the post-partition periodic Indian part North Bengal. At the time a large part of the Lower delta of Eastern Bengal was under sea leading to the progress of population in Rajshahi division. But the physiographic character of North Bengal of our discussion still then amounted for the sparsely population there. So the rapid change which began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in demographic expansion and composition in North Bengal seemed to be withering away gradually and slowly.

Like the previous decades the population of North Bengal and its density were not evenly distributed also in the decade of 1911-21 though the changes in density of population in different parts of the region was not so rapid. It was caused by the fact, as the census report recorded that like the southern part and western part of the province North Bengal and especially the tract under our discussion remained mostly unaffected by the organized industrial development. Moreover, the old alluvium and hilly tract of the region also influenced the population expansion in this context. So in this time it was also said that 'the north is sparsely populated and still in process of development.'¹³² The total population of North Bengal during this period was 4502524 in number having a density of 399 persons per square mile. It was only an increase of 49340 souls with 1.1 percent variation from the previous decade. The following table will help us to have an idea of demographic scenario of North Bengal in 1921.

Table-No.3.20
Population distribution in North Bengal
1921

District or State	Area in Square mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Density	Increase/Decrease	Variation 1911-1921
Bengal	82277	47592482	24628385	22964097	578	+1287282	+2.8
Maldah	1833	985665	492822	492843	538	-18494	-1.8
Dinajpur	3946	1705353	896400	808953	432	+17490	+1.0
Jalpaiguri	2931	936269	503397	432872	319	+33609	+3.7
Dajeeling	1164	282748	149094	133654	243	17198	+6.5
Cooch Behar	1418	592489	315628	276861	450	-463	-0.1
Total of North Bengal	11292	4502524	2357341	2145183	399	49340	1.1

Source: Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal, Part-II, Tables, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot., Calcutta, 1923, compiled from Table I & II, pp.1-3

In 1921 the district of Malda district showed population strength of 985665 persons in totality with 538 souls per square mile. The district which was showing a growth in the last quarter of

the nineteenth century and even a growth of 13.9 per cent in the last decade presented a decrease of 1.8 percent in total population from the decade preceding. However this decline of population was mostly observed in the densely populated area of English Bazaar (655) and Bholahat (580), Previously included in English Bazaar, Kaliachak (809) and Sibganj (792). The losses in this region were 14.5 percent, 4.2 percent and 2.1 per cent respectively. Even the police stations of Ratua (-4.2 percent), Manikchak, prviously included in Ratua (-4.2), Malda (-4.9per cent), Habibpur(-4.9), previously included in Malda, Gomastapur (-2.3) showed reduce in population. So the western side represented by Ratua , Kalicachak and Sibganj and Malda and Gomostapur in the Barind on the east which previously contributed high rate of population growth for the district showed thus decrease. The decrease had been explained by M.O., Carter, as the result of epidemic malaria during several years in the district.¹³³ But, the census survey record, in contrary, told that the birth rate in the district was in 1911-13 higher than the other districts. Only it was Harischandrapur, previously known as Tulsihatta which showed a large growth of population of 25.9 percent having 471 persons per square mile not contributing large volume of population as a whole. However as a whole though out the decade death exceeded births. But the most important thing is the decreasing rate of immigration which largely contributed the district population in the last decade. Thus though Bengal province as whole or North Bengal as the whole tract not loss but little a growth in contrary Maldah district reflected the loss and shared 21.89 percent of total North Bengal population still then.

Table-No.-3.21
Description of Population
Malda District (For the year 1921)

Malda	Population 1921	Density per square mile	Variation per cent 1911-21
District Total	985,665	538	-1.8
Khurba police station	80,516	579	-2.3
Harishchandrapura.....	72,022	471	+25.9
Ratua	81,073	587	-4.2
Manikchak	48,289	653	
Gajole	65,773	337	+2.6
Bamangola	33,491	441	
Malda	32,707	372	-4.9
Habibpur	47,414	327	
English bazaar	62,909	655	-14.5
Bholaha	17,990	580	
Kaliachak	157,828	809	-4.2
Nawabganj	47,801	771	+1.7
Nachole	24,699	287	
Sibganj	147,288	792	-2.1

Gomastapur	65,865	390	-2.3
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Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot., Calcutta, 1923 on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p. 71

Dinajpur district comprised of 'New Alluvium' and 'Old Alluvium' also during this census period could not maintain the growth of population of the previous period. However over the entire district showed a little increase of 1.0 percent on the previous decade's population. The district achieved total population strength of 1705353 having a density of 432 souls in per square mile area. This was the 37.87 percent of entire North Bengal population. But like other districts the population here also was not evenly distributed throughout the district. The density of population in the north-west to south-east it was between 300 and 400 persons per square mile, in the district boundary at the north of Thakurgaon subdivision the density was above 500 souls per square mile and in the region between the districts headquarters it was about 600 persons per square mile. The highest percentage of increase was showed by Parbatipur police station and highest number of population was returned by Thakurgaon police station where as the highest density was represented by Dinajpur police station. On the other the police stations like Raiganj, Hemtabad, previously included in Raiganj(simultaneously -2.6 percent), Kaliaganj, Itahar, previously included in Kaliaganj (simultaneously -2.1 percent), Banshihari, Kushmundi, previously included in Banshihari (simultaneously -5.3 per cent) reflected decrease on the previous decade. The highest loss was shown by Gangarampur police station (-6.3) percent on the previous census. This decline in growth was basically due to the epidemic malaria and influenza.¹³⁴. However the phenomena of migration might have impacted on this.

Table-No.-3.22
Description of Population
Dinajpur District (For the year 1921)

Danajpur	Population 1921	Density per square mile	Variation per cent 1911-21
District Total	1,705,353	432	+1.0
Sadar Subdivision	705,449	441	+1.5
Parbatipur police station	90,987	548	+8.3
Nawabganj	69,546	414	5.6
Ghoraghat	23,743	339	
Dinajpur	83,538	653	+4.0
Chiriabandar	81,446	627	
Biral	61,452	452	
Raiganj	59,454	454	-2.6
Hemtabad	26,761	239	

Kaliaganj	58,890	363	-2.1
Itahar	55,267	395	
Banshihari	44,310	328	-5.3
Kushmundi	50,055	410	
Balurghat Subdivision	448,476	381	+0.3
Patnitola police station	62,335	462	+3.6
Dhamoirhat	51,772	408	
Porsha	66,983	332	+5.3
Balurghat	74,710	361	-2.9
Kumarganj	28,739	342	
Phulbari	74,288	464	+4.1
Gangarampur	42,976	318	-6.3
Tapan	46,653	367	
Thakurgaon subdivision	551,428	471	+1.1
Thakurgaon police station	126,965	508	+0.4
Paliadanga	55,400	504	
Atwari	42,133	520	
Ranisankail	46,422	414	-0.8
Haripur	25,998	338	
Pirganj	69,172	467	+2.9
Bochaganj	38,331	431	
Birganj	65,647	466	+1.8
Khansama	42,134	527	
Kaharul	39,226	473	

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot., Calcutta, 1923 on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p .64

Darjeeling district in 1921 unlike other districts of North Bengal showed a moderate increase of its total population which was number 282748 and featured the density of 243 persons per square mile. It shared 6.28 percent on entire North Bengal population. The populations were dense in the region where the tea gardens were clubbed in the slopes and spurs of the hilly tracts. Thus the police stations of Darjeeling (890), Jore Bunglow (477) and Sonada (482) having a density of above 500 or near 500 souls per square mile. The Kalimpong Subdivision as well as the Kalimpong police station and Gorubathan police station, previously within Kalimpong Police station represented much growth of 21.4 percent on the previous census account. However as the land of this tract was largely covered by reserved and other forests and occupied by tea gardens the density of this area was low being 186 per square mile in Kalimpong police station and 75 per square mile in Gorubathan. Thus the northern valleys of the Sadar subdivision under Pulbazar, the Tista Valley under Rangli Rangliot and Kalimpong, and the eastern fret area under Gorubathan were sparsely populated, while the high western ridge under Sukhiapokri was

scarcely inhabited.¹³⁵ Siliguri which was previously the part of and Kurseong, its adjoining territory was moderately populated area having 276 souls per square mile with an increase of 4.9 percent to the previous decade. Phansidewa and Khoribari police station having much cultivable land had more density with 392 and 359 to the square mile respectively and the Naxalbari police station, having less cultivable land, was less populous with 249 to the square mile at the time. However, the local influenza epidemics during last years of the second decade of the twentieth century led to the relapsing of the population in the region.¹³⁶ However, a gradual decrease in increasing growth was reflected in population of Darjeeling.¹³⁷

Table-No.-3.23
Description of Population
Darjeeling District (For the year 1921)

Darjeeling	Population 1921	Density per square mile	Variation per cent 1911-21
District Total	282,748	243	+6.5
Sadar subdivision	106,511	323	+3.8
Darjeeling police station	39,160	890	+4.6
Pulbazar	16,289	143	
Rangli rangliot	21,877	246	
Sukhiapokri	1,531	53	
Jore Bunglow	10,980	477	
Sonada	6,942	482	
Kalimpong Subdivision	60,093	148	+21.4
Kalimpong police station	49,564	186	+21.4
Gorubathan	10,529	75	
Kurseong Subdivision	40,357	232	-2.1
Kurseong polic station	34,224	218	-2.1
Pankhabari	6,133	361	
Siliguri Subdivision	75,787	298	+4.9
Siliguri police station	25,094	276	+4.9
Naxalbari	21,707	249	
Pansidewa	20,009	392	
Khoribari	8,977	359	

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta, 1923on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.67

Like Darjeeling district Jalpaiguri district also showed, though not so much, a growth of 3.7 percent on the previous decadal census sharing a population of 936269 with a density of 319 to the square mile as whole in the district. However, the distribution of density was not even throughout the district. The south west portion and the police station of Patgram was mostly

dense area of the district. It was 598 persons per square mile in Patgram followed by Boda (523) and Debiganj (501). But the growth in Pat gram reduced 2.1 percent from the growth of previous decade. The growth of population also decreased in the police stations of Rajganj and Maynaguri. But the large fall in growth of population was happened in Jalpaiguri police station. However, most significant was the phenomenal growth of population in Alipur Subdivision of the district having shown a growth of 20 percent population from the previous decade which was largely due to the existence of vast cultivable wasteland. In fact, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the western duars turning into suitable for settlement continued to be gradually from the west to eastward making the process of growth unabated. The phenomenon of immigration was also not a less important phenomenon at that time.

Table-No.3.24
Description of Population
Jalpaiguri District (For the year 1921)

Jalpaiguri	Population 1921	Density per square mile	Variation per cent 1911-21
District total	936,269	319	+3.7
Sadar Subdivision	693,038	365	-1.0
Jalpaiguri police station	79,952	437	-6.8
Rajganj	35,133	191	-1.8
Tetulia	19,013	359	
Pathgram	57,411	598	-2.1
Boda	77,375	523	+1.5
Pachagar	32,776	341	
Debiganj	55,638	501	
Maynaguri	81,447	314	-1.0
Nagarkota	37,949	342	
Dhupguri	79,249	387	
Damdim	83,627	368	+0.9
Mitali	33,468	272	
Alipur Duar Subdivision	243,231	236	+20.0
Alipur Duar police station	74,981	259	+25.0
Kumargram	34,519	204	
Kalchini	48,771	161	
Falakata	44,891	333	+11.6
Mal	40069	299	

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta, 1923 on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.64

Cooch Behar, following the decadal trend, reflected a little reduces in the growth of population from the previous census. The total population in this census period in Cooch Behar

was 592489 souls which was 13.16 percent of entire north Bengal population in 1921. It was only the Tufanganj police station in the North eastern border of the state, which continued to show the progress though a moderate growth of 3.5 percent in this census year. In spite of this growth Tufanganj was lowest in density in Cooch Behar. Dinhata which in previous census reflected growth signed decrease of a little bit of 0.2 percent in compare to previous census. However, in case of density of population Dinhata was second highest in the district by showing 547 persons to square mile followed by Haldibari showing 560 to square mile. Haldibari, a Bandar area of Cooch Behar, though had shown a growth in the last census now fall in growth of 2.2 percent on last decade growth. But previously, as the Cooch Behar administrative record showed, the region for trading purpose was congested in season time.¹³⁸ A minimal growth in population happened in this time in Mathabhanga only of a 0.9 percent to the previous census year having 397 souls t the square mile. The highest reduce in growth from the last decade was shown by Mekliganj with 5 percent fall in the growth.

Table-No.3.25
Description of Population
Cooch Behar District (For the year 1921)

Cooch Behar	Population 1921	Density per square mile	Variation per cent 1911-21
State Total	592,489	450	-0.1
Cooch Behar police station	132,334	474	+1.2
Dinhata	148,183	547	-0.2
Mathabhanga	96,044	397	0.9
Sitalkachi	45,323	449	
Mekliganj	48,976	371	-5.0
Haldibari	38,666	560	-2.2
Tufanganj	82,963	370	+3.5

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta, 1923on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.72

The decade followed 1921 did not show any transitional change in the study of Demography of North Bengal. No major natural disaster happened in this period. However, in the case of rain the distribution was not even specially during 1927-28 in Malda and Dinajpur. There was an earthquake happened in Cooch Behar.¹³⁹ [Floods as regular course in North Bengal affected the agricultural sector though not in great volume, during the period between 1921 and 1931. So the cultivators were affected to some extent in outturning of crops. It is known from the Subdivisional returns by the Director of Agriculture that the wages for the agricultural laboures, Blacksmiths and carpenters, wee high in Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, Malda and Darjeeling during this decade.¹⁴⁰ The Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee reported of indebtedness in North Begnal district.¹⁴¹ So, when Bengal as a whole had shown an increase in growth of 7.3 percent

from the previous decade, North Bengal showed a growth of only 3.4 percent from that of that of the previous decade. From the following table the scenario of demography in North Bengal for the decade of 1930s may be understood.¹⁴²

Table No.-3.26
Population distribution in North Bengal
1931

District or State	Area in Square mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Persons per Square Mile	Increase/Decrease	Percentage of Variation 1921-1931
Bengal	82955	51087338	26557860	24529478	616	+3488105	+7.3
Maldah	1764	1053766	527305	526461	597	+41357	+4.1
Dinajpur	3948	1755432	924092	831340	445	+43537	+2.5
Jalpaiguri	2932	983357	533819	449538	335	+47088	+5.0
Dajeeling	1212	319635	170131	149504	264	+36887	+4.1
Cooch Behar	1318	590886	313230	277656	448	-1603	-0.3
Total of North Bengal	111114	4703076	2468577	2234499	423	+200552	+4.5

Source: Compiled from the Census of India, 1931, Volume V, Part-II, Bengal Tables, Porter A.E., Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1933, Imperial Table I, p.2

Malda district in 1931 had an increase of 3488105 souls with 4.1 percent growth within the decade 1921-1931. It was an increase covering the previous decade's loss. It led her have a total population 1053766 with a density of 616 persons per square mile having 20.40 percent share in entire population of North Bengal. It may be though that the newly established railway from Amnura to Nawabganj may have some influence over the increase. But A.E. Porter said that the settlements in the way of the railway were not much responsive in strength of population.¹⁴³ The police stations of Maldah English Bazar and Nawabganj had a great density of population having 2138, 9393, 4798 respectively. Among the Barind police stations of Malda district such as Gomastapur, Nachole, Nawabganj, Malda, Bamongola and Gajole decrease in population was seen in Bamongola(1.2 percent), Malda (6.5 per cent) and very high decrease in Nachole (22.0 percent) from the previous decade. Sibganj police station also reflected a high decrease of 13.9 percent population from the previous decade. Industrial decline is regarded for this decline. In District Census Handbook of Malda it was reported tht the Bains region as a whole suffered then from decreasing fertility and severe scarcity in 1925-26.¹⁴⁴ But Manikchak, and Kaliachak, though in the same declining tract, showed a moderate growth of 4.3 percent

and 0.1 percent to the previous decade's population. Bholahat showed a large growth of 27.0 percent. Kharba and Ratua showed normal increase. The jurisdictional change had a good deal on the population of the district. But the process of immigration and emigration still then, though in a smaller scale, had some impact over this. So the tiding back of the Santhals in 1926 was regarded by the census commissioner as a cause of diminishing growth of Malda population in this period.¹⁴⁵

Like the previous decade, in 1921-31 Dinajpur also could not show much progress in the population growth. With a total population of 1755432 in 3948 square mile areas the district had density of 445 souls per square mile area. Thus it occupied 37.33 percent share in entire North Bengal population. But increase in the present decade of study it was only 2.5 from the growth of previous decade's 1.0, a slight development. Even Biral and Raiganj in Sadar Subdivision showed decrease though a little (0.2 and 0.7 percent respectively). The commission was reported the immigrant labourers who came there in persuasion of Jute industry returned back during the period 1929-30.¹⁴⁶ Parbatipur, the police station of Sadar Subdivision showed only a voluminous growth of 9.9 percent population in compare to the previous decade. This was an impact of the growth of trade and mills on account of extension of the broad-gauge railway by the region. Besides, Hemtabad, Kaliaganj, Banshihari, Kushmundi and Itahar also showed a growth due to the process of immigration, new settlements in the waste lands and healthy climatic change in the respective region. In the Census of 1951 also it was recognized.¹⁴⁷ But the most important feature is the decrease of population in all the police stations of the Thakurgaon Subdivision barring only Khansama where the process of immigration might have contributed a small strength leading its growth of 0.9 percent growth. In this context the unhealthy climate and malaria epidemic are made responsible for this decline. Reduce in Baliadighi and Atwari is described by the emigration towards Purnea and Jalpaiguri. On the other in Balurghat subdivision only the police station of Phulbari represented a loss of 3.2 percent population in compare to the previous decade. This was due to the jurisdictional change of the police station and the emigration of the Santhals from the area. But in other police stations of Balurghat subdivision there was a moderate growth of population except Karandighi where the growth was large of 45.3 percent. This was caused by both the inner district and inter-district migration.

In this phase of decline and moderate growth of population in North Bengal Darjeeling district represented a voluminous development recovering its previous decade's slow growth of 6.5 percent to 13.0 percent. In this process of progressive development the Sadar subdivision much contributed from its previous decade's 6.5 percent to 11.9 percent whereas Kalimpong subdivision stepped down from previous decade's 21.4 percent to 13.5 percent in 1931. The Siliguri subdivision on the other hand remained static only growing 1.0 percent from the preceding decade with 5.9 percent growth. Thus as a whole the district of Darjeeling with its

total population of 319635 and density of 264 souls per square mile shared only 6.8 percent of North Bengal population. The growth in the sadar subdivision is described by the phenomenon growth of tea gardens and the natural increase by excess of birth over deaths. The growth of population in Siliguri subdivision and especially in the Siliguri police station was caused by the thronged of the people from Muzaffarpur, Patna and Darbhanga of Bihar and from the hill areas of the district. The growth in Kalimpong is ascribed to the natural causes and the process of immigration in which Sikkim contributed much than Bhutan and Tibet as the record showed. The culmination of tea gardens' growth, natural causes and permanent settlement by the ex-officials led the growth of population in Kurseong subdivision. However, the Darjeeling town, the police stations of Jalapahar and Rangli-Rangliot represented a decline in growth of population in the district.¹⁴⁸

The district of Jalpaiguri returned 5.0 percent growth in 1931 compare to the previous decade. In this the Sadar Subdivision only contributed 2.5 percent and the Alipur subdivision contributed much of 12.2 percent increases. Thus the total population of the district in 1931 was 983357 with a density of 335 persons per square mile in the district having a share of 20.91 percent of total North Bengal population. But surprisingly that the thanas like Rajganj Maynaguri and Pahtgram continued to represent decline in the growth of population. Moreover, Boda and Pathgram also become reducing in nature in the growth of population for the district. Thus Rajganj decreased 10.4 percent to the previous decade; Boda decreased 5.8 percent, Debiganj 1.5 percent, Maynaguri 3.9 percent and Pathgramsram 1.0 percent. The decline of Rajganj population is ascribed by its jurisdictional change and transfer of its Taluk Sannyasikata to Tetulia. This was also caused by the process of emigration of coolies as the phenomenon proved.¹⁴⁹ The natural calamity caused by the small pox in 1925 and cholera in 1922-24 were also responsible for the decline of population in Boda. Debiganj also suffered from small pox during 1925. In case of Pathgram low price of tobacco and epidemic small pox in 1924 are ascribed for the cause of decline. On the other the growth of tea cultivation in Pachagar and its jurisdictional increase accounted its small growth of population. This growth and extension of new tea gardens and tea cultivation greatly influence the increase of population in Dhupguri, Mitiali, Mal, Falakata, Nagrakata, Kumargram, Kalchini and Madarihat police stations also in this period. Constructional development and public health development also caused the increasing growth of population as a whole in the district.

The then State of Cooch Behar continued its suffering of decline in growth of population returning a decrease of 0.3 percent. In this loss Mathabhanga had a contribution of 0.5 percent, Sitalkuchi 2.8 and Haldibari 3.6 percent to the previous decade. On the other the police stations of Dinhata, Sitai and Tufanganj showed a moderate growth in the population. The births and deaths figure of the state supported a net increase of 1607 births over deaths during the period 1920-21 to 1929-30. It has been recorded in the Report of Census that 'the decrease in the stte

is entirely contributed by the Hindus who are nearly 18000 less in 1931 than they were in 1921'.¹⁵⁰ However, natural factors like Cholera, small pox and earth quake might have resultant impact on the declining demography. The state was greatly affected by cholera and small-pox epidemics in 1928-29 leading to the death of 4000 souls. This was only the reported death; unreported death might have been many more.¹⁵¹ It is also assumed that the modernization process of Cooch Behar with reforms in social tradition whole have influence over the decrease leading the Hindu tribes into other parts of Bengal and India. However, with this Cooch Behar represented 590886 numbers of people with 448 persons per square mile and had 12.56 percent of total population of North Bengal.

The decade followed by 1931 represented a great improvement in the growth of population in Bengal as well as in the region of our discussion. In 1941 census the population of Bengal as a whole was enumerated as 61460377 which were 20.30 percent increase to the previous decadal growth. Thus density in Bengal all through turned into 741.59 which were 616 in the last decade. This was 7.3 percent increase numbering 10373039 in Bengal in compare to the growth of 1931. North Bengal also showed greater and progressive development in population growth during 1931-1941. During this decade North Bengal of our discussion enumerated total population of 5266175 having 8.57 percent population over the total Bengal population with an area of 13.90 (11517 square mile) percent of Bengal territory (82876 square mile). At this time North Bengal gained density 457.25 which was 423 in the last decade. Total increase of population in this decade was 563099 having varied 11.97 progressively from the previous decade. The following table will show the scenario of the demography of North Bengal in 1941.

Table-No.3.27
Distribution of Population in North Bengal Districts
for the Census year 1941

Districts/Federal state	Area in Square Mile	Total Population	Male	Female	Persons per Square Mile	increase	Percentage of variation
Bengal	82876	61460377	32360401	29099976	741.59	10373039	20.30
Dinajpur	3953	1926833	1018509	903324	487.43	171401	9.76
Jalpaiguri	3050	1089513	591294	498219	357.21	106156	10.80
Darjeeling	1192	376369	199891	173473	315.74	56734	17.74
Malda	2004	1232618	619272	613346	615.07	178852	16.97
Cooch Behr	1318	640842	340931	299831	486.22	49956	8.45
North Bengal	11517	5266175	2697897	2488193	457.25	563099	11.97

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-I, pp. 1-4

Among the North Bengal districts in 1941, Maldah was highest scorer in population growth having an increase of 178852 persons showing 16.97 percent progress positive from that of the previous census period. Thus Malda achieved total population of 1232618 with a density of 615 souls per square mile. So this development was at par with the state development. During this decade of 1931-41 the only natural negativity was the flood of 1938. Moreover, the a large growth of mango gardening happened during this period, even which was substituting Lac and Mulberry fields leading to the economic prosperity and thronging of labour force in the region.¹⁵² At this time the thanas of Kharba, Harishchandrapur and Ratua showed a spectacular growth with 22.3, 21.0 and 20.0 percent respective increase and on the other Sibganj covering its previous decade's great decline achieved 20.3 percent growth in population. English Bazar town had a growth of 38.1 percent whereas the Old Malda town covering its previous loss of 11.6 percent received a growth of 38.3 percent. Police stations of Bamangola and Malda also recovered their loss and increased by 15.4 and 11.1 percent respectively. Police stations of Gomastapur (14.9), Nawabganj (18.0), Kaliachak (12.0), Manikchak (14.7) and Gajole (9.5), Habibpur (6.8) also represented the growth of the district population.¹⁵³ Thus Malda became great part of North Bengal population having 20.04 percent share in the North Bengal population.

The growth of population in Dinajpur district also was in rise during this decade. Dinajpur attained a population of 1926833 in total with a density of 487 per square mile. It was an increase of 9.76 percent from that of the previous decade numbering 171401 souls. During this decade of 1931-41 no disastrous calamity was reported. Agricultural production was in rise and trade also increased. Hili became an important center of rice and paddy. All the police stations and towns of the district showed steady growth of population in compare to the previous decade.¹⁵⁴ Even the police stations such as Thakurgaon, Baliadighi, Atwari, ranisankail, Haripur, Pirganj, Bochaganj, Birganj which represented a loss in the previous decade showed positive growth. Thus the Thakurgaon Thana which suffered a loss of 1.2 percent in 1931-41 now represented a growth of 6.4 percent from the previous decade. Outstanding growth was seen in Hilibandar (17.7 percent) and Tapan (22.7) police station in Balurghat subdivision and Dinajpur town (47.2 percent), Parbatipur town (26.3 percent) and Dinajpur police station (21.7 percent) and Ithar police station (15.4) in Sadar Subdivision.¹⁵⁵ Thus the Sadar subdivision attained total growth of 10.9 percent recovering the previous decade's loss of 3.9 percent. Thus Dinajpur district achieved a positive growth in this decade and shared 36.59 per cent of entire North Bengal population a slight loss from the share (37.33 percent) of previous decade.

In context of population transition in district of Darjeeling during this period A.J. Dash wrote that 'the steady increase of population received a check in 1931 but was resumed in 1941.'¹⁵⁶ During the period between 1931 and 1941 one disastrous event was the severe earth quake of 1934. Darjeeling town and Tindharia were affected by this natural trauma. Beside, the flood of

1935 in Mechi also had an impact on the district population.¹⁵⁷ The district as a whole in 1941 represented total population of 376369 with a density of 316 persons per square mile and showed a 17.7 percent growth in compare to the previous census year. In the sadar subdivision the highest growth was seen in Jore Bungalow police station increasing population 51.9 percent numbering an increase 10952 souls. The police stations of Darjeeling (10.5 percent), Pulbazar (18.4 percent), Rangli Rangliot (23.0 percent), Sukhiapokri (28.5 percent) witnessed a very high range of population growth in this period. Darjeeling town and Jalapahar cantonment recovering their loss of 4.8 percent and 14.3 percent presented growth of 29.9 percent and 26.0 percent respectively.

The growth of population in Kalimpong subdivision showed an increase of 15.2 percent in compare to the 13.5 percent of the previous decade. Though Kalimpong police station showed a positive increase of 16.5 percent from the previous decade (10.6 percent), Gorubathan showed negative increase of 13.3 percent almost half of the last decade's increase (26.9 percent). Kurseong subdivision also represented a downward increase of population having 15.4 percent of growth from 28.8 percent of last decade. Most spectacular growth in population was seen in Siliguri subdivision, Siliguri police station and Siliguri town representing 12.2 percent, 17.8 percent and 72.9 percent respectively. On the other Kharibari police station showed a smaller growth and Phansidewa police station a higher growth of 10.8 percent.¹⁵⁸ Thus the Darjeeling district showed a steady growth of population as a whole and shared 7.14 percent of North Bengal population with 10.35 percent territory of North Bengal.

Jalpaiguri like other districts of North Bengal also showed steady growth of population during the decade of 1931-41. There were total 1089513 persons with 591294 male and 498219 female in the district. It represented a growth of 10.7 percent in compare to 5.0 percent growth of the previous decade. The district showed a moderate density of population having 390 persons per square mile below the Bengal province and also below the range of North Bengal as a whole. In this the sadar subdivision contributed less than the Alipur Subdivision. Both Jalpaiguri police station and Jalpaiguri town showed good deal of growth by 17.4 percent and 46.4 percent respectively. The police stations of Maynaguri (20.2 percent), Dhupguri (16.2 percent), Mal (13.3 percent) showed a large growth of population. But police stations of Pachagar and Pathgram surprisingly showed decrease in population by 1.2 percent and 10.1 percent respectively. On the other hand Alipur subdivision though small in density 293 persons per square mile, represented growth of 17.5 percent to the previous decade. The most spectacular growth happened in Kalchini police station of 25.0 percent, though a little less from the previous decade of 27.6 percent. The police stations of Alipur Duars (18.3 percent), Kumargram (15.4 percent), Madarihat (14.0 percent), Falakata (11.5 percent) also were high in growth rate. Thus the district of Jalpaiguri took the share of 20.69 percent of total North Bengal population with 26.48 percent territory of North Bengal.

There was no event happened in Cooch Behar during the period of 1931-41 in context of affecting the population transition in the state of the time.¹⁵⁹ It was 640842 number of population enumerated in the district with an area of 1318 square mile and having density of 485 persons per square mile. However, in Annual administration report of Cooch Behar State it was said that the total population of the State was provisionally found to be 639898 against 590866 in 1931 showing an increase of 49032 persons.¹⁶⁰ During the time among the two Bengal States when Tripura showed a growth of 34.1 percent population The Cooch Behar State reflected only 8.5 percent far less from the whole Bengal province and smaller less from whole of North Bengal. However it was much improvement from the previous decade. Voluminous increase in population was seen in Haldibari (25.9 percent), Mekliganj (17.0 percent) and Cooch Behar (13.1 percent) police stations. The rural towns showed very higher growth rate such as 35.2 percent in Cooch Behar town, 40.5 percent in Dinhata town, 25.5 percent in Haldibari town. Rate of growth was very low in the police stations Mathabhang and Sitalkuchi. Mekliganj showed negative growth by 3.9 percent from that of the previous decade. As a whole the State of Cooch Behar showed a medium high increase in population sharing 12.17 percent population of entire North Bengal having 11.44 percent area.'

From the above statistical account it is clear that the three districts of North Bengal Malda (14.70 percent), Darjeeling (43.90 percent) and Jalpaiguri (17.15 percent) witnessed a good amount growth of population in 1891 much higher than the average of North Bengal. Darjeeling district showed extraordinary growth of 43.90 percent over the population of the decade of 1881-91. This indicated large volume of immigration into the district both in plains and hill tract both by the hill men specially the large scale Nepalese and the tribals from Chhotonagpur to Terai. Dinajur witnessed a little growth and the State of Cooch Behar witnessed negative growth by decrease in its population. So a mix experience was seen by the districts and the State of North Bengal during 1881-91 decade. In 1901 the trend continued in the same manner only in case of Malda and Darjeeling district the growth being decrease in percentages. The decade followed 1901 to 1911 positive development was seen in all the districts. But in 1921 a great decrease happened in population in whole of North Bengal following the tradition of Bengal. Even the districts of Malda and Cooch Behar witnessed decline. So the period between 1901 and 1921 was period of static or decline in the population development of North Bengal barring Jalpaiguri and Malda in 1911. Even in the decade of 1921-31 the development remained the same. The manner of growth in the case of whole of Bengal was also same. So it may be justified by decline in fertility rate. But in the decade 1931-41 following the Bengal line the growth of North Bengal districts and the State also reached in a sound position.

Colonial Period (1901-1941)

IV

In context of population Renell's Map showed the lower part of the delta as empty of villages, with the words "Depopulated by the Maghas" written across it.¹⁶¹ It was also reported in census record round the 1800 there were Maratha inroads in different parts of Bengal, especially in the Western Bengal leading to the people towards far North. As we have seen in 1911 there was a steady growth of population in North Bengal districts this must turn to discuss the phenomenon of migration in the region. Because still then North Bengal was moulding its demography having the immigrants a large by chain way following the path of the earlier immigrants. In this context the district of Dinajpur was no exception. Though a moderate increase of 7.7 percent to the total population Dinajpur contributed, in this contribution the immigrants numbering about 65000 also had contribution. Thus total number of immigrants in the district became 197043, having 11.67 percent share in the total population against the emigration of 23488 numbers of emigrants being 1.39 percent of the total population. The following table will show us the statistics of immigrants and emigrants of the district.

Table No.3.28
Migration in Dinajpur
For the Year 1911 in Compare with the Year 1901

DInajpur	1911		1901	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actual Population	889876	797987	823851	742993
Immigrants	119502	77541	30789	51214
Emigrants	11064	12424	8490	8773
Natural Population	781430	732870	751483	700552

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Pasrt-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.99

However, the immigrants were not evenly distributed in the district. They mainly immigrated in Barind region as in earlier period there were other immigrants of their own people who cleared the land and brought under cultivation. This group of immigrants was mainly constituted by the aboriginal people like Santals, Mundas and Oraons from the Chhotongpur and Santal Paragana tracts of Bihar. These tribal people in the district thus grew from 90345 to 131668 in the district having a good percentage share in the total population of the district. Thus with this immigrant population in Barind the Police stations of Kaliagnj, Banshihari, Parbaipur and Nawabganj and the whole of the Balurghat subdivision reflected increase of over

10 percent in the first decade of the twentieth century. It should be mentioned here that death rate in the district was surpassed by the birth rate and having excess of 45626 of births over deaths.¹⁶²

The district of Malda had a steady growth in its population overall by 13.88 percent on the population of last decade. Barring only the thanna of Nawabganj all the thannas reflected this growth. This was contributed by the excess birth over the death, good crops, relief work in distress, and most importantly the opening of the Katihar-Godagari Railway traversing throughout the district from north to south. However, the phenomenon of immigration being both the cause and consequences of the whole process greatly contribute in that growth of the population in the district. The following table may high light the statistics of the process.

Table No.3.29
Migration in Malda
For the Year 1911 in Compare with the Year 1901

Malda	1911		1901	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actual Population	496547	506612	439497	445237
Immigrants	64678	54193	53070	42817
Emigrants	21368	20140	13220	13544
Natural Population	455237	471569	394647	415944

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.106

The total number of immigrants in the district was 118871 which were 11.83 of the total population. The number of immigrants also increased during this time, though not much in number figuring 41508 and deducting share of 4.13 percent from the total population. However, in the increase of population in the district the excess of birth rate over death rate also contributed. In 1909 the birth rate in the district was much higher (52 per mile) than the death rate (29.4 per mile). The Katihar-Godagari Railway traversing the whole of the district from north to south also caused in the growth in immigration and emigration. The immigrants were mainly the Santals and the Musalmans who in chain of the previous immigrants settled in the 'diara' tract of the district. The Santals contributed as the single immigrant group larger by 14394 in number. There were a good number of Bihari immigrants in the northern thanas of district.¹⁶³

The phenomenon of immigration was very much significant in case of Jalpaiguri district. Though the growth of population in the district was 14.79 percent, the growth of natural population was increased only of 7 percent. So the bulk of increase was the contribution of immigrants. The number of emigrants also increased but not so much. The growth in Western duars was very sharp, specifically in the new thannas adjacent to the old settled tract. The

following table will provide us the statistical picture of immigration and emigration in the district in compare the previous decade.

Table No.3.30
Migration in Jalpaiguri
For the Year 1911 in Compare with the Year 1901

Jalpaiguri ⁹	1911		1901	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actual Poplulation	490228	412432	422350	363976
Immigrants	153309	111959	104914	83809
Emigrants	9677	11322	7565	9871
Natural Population	346596	311795	324991	290538

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Pasrt-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.100

The total number of immigrants in the district in 1911 was 265268 with a share of 29.39 percent of total population. The number of immigrants in that decade was 77,045 or 41 percent in compare to that of the previous decade. On the other the emigrants numbered total 20999 deducing the share only 2.33 percent. The immigrants mostly were the tribal people belonged to the Santal Paraganas and Chhotonagpur region. The upcountry men and the different caste Hindus from Bengal proper also contributed in the numerical strength of the immigrants. The areas which were affected much in this process were Mainaguri, Damdim, Alipur and Falakat police stations of the district. However the old settled police stations of Sadar Subdivision like Jalpaiguri, Rajganj, Boda and Pathgram remained less attractive for the immigrants.¹⁶⁴ The process of immigration continued in a good scale also in 1911 or in the first decade of the Nineteenth century in district of Darjeeling. However like Jalpaiguri district the terai region of Siliguri did not contribute in this process as the hilly tracts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Jore Bungalow contributed. The following table may provide the statistics for the immigrants and emigrants of the district clearly.

Table No.3.31
Migration in Darjeeling
For the Year 1911 in Compare with the Year 1901

Darjeeling	1911		1901	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actual Poplulation	142094	123456	133006	116112
Immigrants	67102	59056	71289	53102
Emigrants	5863	4563	3128	2566
Natural Population	80855	77963	64844	65579

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.102

The total number of eh immigrants during this time in Darjeeling was 126158 which constituted 47.51 percent during this decade. However, from the point of view of decadal immigration, during 1901-1911 periods this was a decline. This decline is as per as the declining ratio of the growth of the total population of the district. The total population of the district also declined during this period. In fact, the population of the Darjeeling district largely was comprised by the immigrant settlers and the numerical demographic growth was dependent on the volume of immigrants. This was resulted in this period of 1911 census that the volume of growth declined during this time as the volume of immigration declined. However, within this time the second generation of the first generation immigrants born in the land of Darjeeling began to substitute their fore-fathers, though fresh wave of immigration was in slog.¹⁶⁵ In this process of immigration in the decade Jorebunglow and Kalimpong region showed progressive development. And we have seen that these tow police stations and the Sadar subdivision as a whole witnessed a very high rate of growth in population. This growth naturally corroborated the heavy flow of in-migration in those tracts of the district. Kursiong subdivision, on the other hand, continuing to its downward trend and witnessed a slight loss in sharing immigrants in the district. However the important phenomenon is that the demography based on tea garden also became effected throughout the district by reducing the number of immigrants there. But a new trend developed by the people to turn in cultivation and town-ward move.

The State of Cooch Behar though witnessed a decline, even a loss in the growth of population in 1901 in compare to the decade before, this was recovered in 1911 and a moderate growth happened which we have discussed earlier. This growth obviously had been contributed by the phenomenon of immigration. The census report recorded a good number of immigrant population in the state some 10000 greater than in 1901. The immigrants in the state were about 4000 during the decade. The following table may show the feature of emigration and immigration for 1911 in compare to that of 1901.

Table No.3.32
Migration in Cooch Behar
For the Year 1911 in Compare with the Year 1901

Cooch Behar	1911		1901	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actual Population	316548	276404	301382	285592
Immigrants	36293	18849	27884	16959
Emigrants	19121	17115	16761	15782
Natural Population	299376	274670	290259	264415

Source: Census of India, 1911, Volume V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, p.106

So there were good number of immigrants in the State of Cooch Behar in 1911 numbering total of 55142 in the state where as the total number of emigrants were 32543 which was a significant number. The Administrative records of the State reported that 266 person emigrated from and 230 immigrated into the State against 549 and 552 respectively in the preceding year.¹⁶⁶ However, those immigrants were mostly temporary, because the State had trend of emigration of the common people of cultivating character and the immigration of the higher classes and different Hindu castes.

The Dinajpur district, though, had a greater rate of birth as per the birth rate of Rajshai division or above the natural division of North Bengal, had had a great experience of immigration into the district. In the decade of 1911-21 the district recorded exceed of births 888 in number or .05 percent over the death to the population of 1911. The following table will show the statistics of migration in the district in 1921.

Table No. 3.33
Migration in Dinajpur
For the Year 1921 in Compare with the Year 1901

Dinajpur	1921			1911	1901
	Male	Female	Total	Both sexes	Both sexes
Actual Population	896,400	808,953	1,705,353	1,687,863	1,566,845
Immigrants	91,820	63,087	154,907	197,043	132,003
Emigrants	11,737	13,779	25,516	23,480	17,193
Natural Population	816,317	759,645	1,575,962	1,514,300	152,035

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta, 1923 on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.65

The total number of immigrant population of the district was 154907 having a share 9.08 percent of in the entire population of the district. By number and percent this was less from the preceding decade, but this was due to slowing down of the process which took very speedy and high during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, emigration was less in number as usual and much less than the previous decade. In fact, during this period the first generation immigrants were decreasing leaving their predecessors in the land where they born as the habitant of the district. There was good deal of difference between the male and female during this decade corroborating the phenomenon of immigration having the male element much.¹⁶⁷ The important feature in the demography of Malda district since 1901 was the high rate of birth which was over numbered by the death rate during the decade of 1911-21. It was reported that death in this decade exceeded births by 8,631 In case of Malda in 1921 the process of migration

also took the U turn. The declining loss of natural population in the district was, then, obviously due to the fact that immigration came down during this decade which could, if be greater number, recover the loss. Rather the volume decreased during this decade. The following table is the statistics of immigration for the decade in the district.

Table No. 3.34
Migration in Malda
For the Year 1921 in Compare with the Year 1901

Malda	1921			1911	1901
	Male	Female	Total	Both sexes	Both sexes
Actual Population	492,822	493,843	985,665	1,004,159	881,734
Immigrants	55,969	45,376	101,345	118,871	97,387
Emigrants	17,609	16,881	33,890	41,508	26,764
Natural Population	453,862	464,348	918,210	926,796	810,611

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta, 1923 on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.72

The total number of immigrants in the district in 1921 was 101345 against 118871 in 1911 and having share of 10.28 percent in total population. It is reported that the immigrant people still then came into the district from Santal Parganas and Murshidabad. On the other the emigrants, also constituted by tribal people from the same region but previously came into the district now emigrated to Rajshahi, Dinajpur and also in Nepal-Terai region. This led in change of the demography of Malda district, as the emigrants were mostly Hindus or Animists giving the way of increase of numerical strength of the Muhammedans.¹⁶⁸ Jalpaiguri district greatly developed with its tea enterprise in Western Duars and cultivated land in the West of the Tista River and greatly settled by the immigrant people specially the Western Duars. On the other the eastern part was then also settled by great number of immigrants. But during the decade 1911-21 the growth rate of population became reduced in a great volume which has been discussed earlier. In this reduction of growth rates the lesser number of immigration had a great part. The following Statistical table will show the detail.

Table No. 3.35
Migration in Jalpaiguri
For the Year 1921 in Compare with the Year 1901

Jalpaiguri	1921			1911	1901
	Male	Female	Total	Both sexes	Both sexes
Actual Population	503,397	432,872	936,269	902,660	786,326
Immigrants	145,566	123,308	268,874	265,268	188,223
Emigrants	12,582	13,597	26,179	20,999	17,426
Natural Population	370,413	333,161	693,574	658,391	615,529

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta, 1923on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.66

Jalpaiguri district had shown a little increase or development in numerical strength of immigrants. This numerical growth was an addition of number of immigrants over the previous immigrants of the district. However, the growth was much less of 1.4 percent than 41 percent of last decade. In this number of immigrants the number of female was lesser in good number. However, in compare to the immigration the number of emigrants was not significant like the previous decade. There was an excess of death over the number of births in the district during the decade. But the increasing number of immigrants compensated the reduce. Excess of males in labourer also supported the fact.¹⁶⁹ The phenomenon of migration or rather immigration in Darjeeling district had a special significant. Because the district grew as a settler's district the small number of aborigines outnumbered by the immigrants particularly from Nepal and also from other parts of Bengal and India. As a whole the district in 1921 showed a growth of 6.5 percent in total population which do not corroborate much of immigration into the district during this time. However, only the Kalimpong Subdivision showed the growth in its suitable land for cultivation. The following table may highlight over the statistical analysis.

Table No. 3.36
Migration in Darjeeling
For the Year 1921 in Compare with the Year 1901

Darjeeling	1921			1911	1901
	Male	Female	Total	Both sexes	Both sexes
Actual Population	149,094	133,654	282,748	265,550	249,117
Immigrants	62,215	48,137	110,352	117,158	124,391
Emigrants	6,530	4,713	11,243	10,416	5,694
Natural Population	93,409	90,230	183,639	158,808	130,420

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot., Calcutta, 1923on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.68

The total number of immigrants in the district was 110352 which was 117158 and in previous decade. This was 74.01 percent of the total population. This growth of immigrant directly was responsible for the growth of the district population of the district. There were a negligible number of emigrants numbering by 11243 in the district. The Siliguri Subdivision also found less number of immigrants during this period. In spite of this 'there was still a steady stream of migration across the Nepal frontier and more than half of the immigrants still came from Nepal, though the actual number born in the district was decreased by 15.7 percent since 1911.¹⁷⁰

The state of Cooch Behar had slight decline in the total population. We have seen in the discussion earlier that immigration of the tribal did not happen in case of the State as happened in other parts of North Bengal. The emigration like other parts of North Bengal was not of much significance. The following table will explain the demographic evolution in context of the process of migration.

Table-No.3.37
Migration in Cooch Behar
For the Year 1921 in Compare with the Year 1901

Cooch Behar	1921			1911	1901
	Male	Female	Total	Both sexes	Both sexes
Actual Population	315,628	276,861	592,489	592,952	566,974
Immigrants	37,360	22,509	59,869	55,142	44,834
Emigrants	13,266	13,275	26,541	36,236	32,543
Natural Population	291,534	267,627	559,161	574,046	554,674

Source: Report on the Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot., Calcutta, 1923 on the Census of Bengal and Sikkim, 1921, p.72

The total number of immigrants in the district was 59869 during the decade of 1911-21 having share of 10.10 percent, a good percentage of total population. The excess of immigrants over the emigrants was 2.5 times since the last twenty years. During this time the immigrants in Cooch Behar State came from Rangpur and Jalpaiguri district. Aviating from the general northward migration the people of Cooch Behar, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri became closely related and established marriage relation. Thus a new equation came into being with Rangpur-CoochBehar-Jalpaiguri' cultural relation strengthen by the process of immigration. There was also migrational relation among Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar State and Goalpara in Assam.¹⁷¹ The phenomenon of migration, specifically immigration, in context of North Bengal districts remained continued in 1931 as like as 1921. The following table in summary will reflect the phenomenon of immigration into and emigration from the districts of North Bengal.

Table 3.38
Immigration and Emigration in Districts of North Bengal from and to outside the State
For the Year 1931

District/State	Actual Population	Immigration	Emigration	Natural Population	Percentage Variation
Malda	720440	30464	5358	695334	+6.9
Dinajpur	523977	22783	2062	503256	+9.4
Darjeeling	319635	100700	3455	222390	+19.0

Jalpaiguri	983357	158757	-	-	-
Cooch Behar	590886	14918	1848	577816	+1.2
North Bengal	3138295	327622	-	-	..

Compiled from Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbooks, Malda, A. Mitra, Manager of Publication, Delhi, Government of India Press, Calcutta, 1954, District Handbooks, Darjeeling, West Bengal Government Press, 1954, District Hand Books , Cooch Behar, A. Mitra, Sree Saraswati Press, 1953, District Handbooks, West Dinajpur, A.Mitra,Thacker's Press,1953 and West Bengal District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri, De, Barun, N.K. Goassin & Co, 1981

During the decade, as we have seen earlier, the population increased in Malda 4.1 percent a very moderate increase. Even some of the police stations witnessed very low progress. But the physiographical changes like moving of the Ganges to the Santal Parganas creating 'char' areas attracted a good number Shershabadi Muslims from Murshidabad. But the Barind region of Malda the immigration took a reverse turn. During the decade 1921-31 the immigration from Santal Parganas not only came to be ceased but also the tide turned backward. ¹⁷²In context of Dinajpur district the immigration of Santals, Shershabadia Muslims and other colonist occurred in the police stations of Bansihari, Kaliaganj, Itahar and Hemtabad. Ghoraghat and Nawabganj also witnessed new settlements in wasteland and jungle land by the immigrants. On the other people from Baliadangi and Atwari emigrated to Purnea and Jalpaiguri due to unhealthy climate. The subdivision of Balurghat also witnessed emigration of Santhals in other places. However in other cases the settlements of new Santals, Kols and other aborigines happened in Gangarampur and the Shershabadia Muslims from Malda and Murshidabad also poured into the district.

The decrease in population growth in the Sadar Subdivision of the Jalpaiguri district was caused by the emigration of good number of people towards Purnea or Assam or to the Alipur subdivision. However in different police stations of Alipur Subdivision immigration was seen. The district of Darjeeling also gained good number of immigrants though not in the volume it had earlier. It is said in the census report that immigrants from Nepal were in the district 10 less than had been record in 1921. However, Siliguri police station witnessed a great increase during this time due to its communicational development. The immigrants in Siliguri were comprised by the immigrants from Muzaffarpur, Patna and Darbhanga in Bihar and also from the hills. Immigrants from Bhutan and Tibet came lesser down during this decade.

In the State of Cooch Behar a decrease in population in 1931 is thought to be considered to the large number of emigrations from the district. But the administrative records do not support the assumption. Here we may have look over the death and birth rate of the State during the decade from the following table:

Table 3.39
Births and deaths in Cooch Behar State
1920-1930

Year	Births	Deaths
1920-21	9579	8140
1921-22	7768	8219
1922-23	6712	6008
1923-24	7712	6008
1924-25	8948	9063
1925-26	8104	8578
1926-27	8191	8447
1927-28	7649	6893
1928-29	8891	10378
1929-30	9369	9593
Total	82923	81317

Source: Census of India, Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part-I, Report, A.E. Porter, General Publication Brnch, 1933, Statement No. 1-15. p.50

So the birth and death rates also did not present the decrease showing a marginal increase of 1607 births over deaths. In the statistics of religious demography it would be seen the decrease of population in the State as happened in other districts of North Bengal was due to the 18000 less Hindus showed in the census of 1931 in compare to that of the 1921. The cholera and small pox epidemic caused a great toll of life in 1928-29 in which the recorded death was about 4000 alone. But the proverbs and interviews with some old persons of the state proved that unrecorded death, particularly in rural areas used to be happened, thousands in number. However besides this epidemic death among the Hindu communities like Rajbangsi, Poliya, Koch and Mechh the last one were continued to be driven by the settled cultivation may corroborate the phenomenon.

However from the following table of Birth place of the people living in North Bengal districts the phenomenon of immigration may be understood more with clarity.

Table 3.40
The population of North Bengal born in Elsewhere
1931(Birth Place)

Province, State or country of Birth	Malda	Dinajpur	Darjeeling	Jalpaiguri	Cooch Behr	Total of North Bengal
Born in Bengal	1009209	1679103	218935	772150	575968	4255365
Provinces and states adjacent to Bengal	41253	69307	30483	157789	11195	310027
Other Provinces	3107	6240	8277	20594	3167	41385

and States in India						
Born in Nepal	70	397	59016	29191	466	89140
Born in other Asiatic Countries	122	349	2277	3258	82	6088
Born in Non-Asiatic countries	5	36	645	337	7	1028

Source: : Compiled from the Census of India, 1931, Volume V, Part-II, Bengal Tables, Porter A.E., Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1933, Imperial Table VI, pp.26,27,30

Table 3.41
The population of North Bengal born in Elsewhere
1931-Birth Place (Selected)

States, Province or country	Malda	Dinajpur	Darjeeling	Jalpaiguri	Cooch Behr	Total of North Bengal
Assam and Assam States	33	157	513	1132	2503	4338
Bihar and Orissa their sates	41220	69149	24541	155872	8690	229472
Cooch Behar	7	64	64	15423	514174	N.A.
Tripura	74	17	28	442	63	624
Burma	-	7	108	319	2	436
Sikkim	-	-	5321	466	-	5787
Ajmer-Merwara		1	-	20		21

Source: : Compiled from the Census of India, 1931, Volume V, Part-II, Bengal Tables, Porter A.E., Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1933, Imperial Table VI, pp.26,27,30

From the above statistical table it is clear that in 1931 the large number of immigrants was in North Bengal districts under our study numbering 310027 from the Provinces and States adjacent to Bengal, 41385 form other provinces and states in India, 89140 born in Nepal, 6088 born in other Asiatic countries and 1028 from the Non-Asiatic countries. This totaled about 448000 persons in North Bengal populations with a share of 9.53 percent of entire population of the North Bengal districts. The main supplier of the immigrants in North Bengal as a whole was Bihar and Orissa and their states contributing 229472 in number. There were 98620 persons were reported in the census of whom 88,207 or more than 89 per cent settled in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. A number of 1538 immigrants were reported from Tibet and 6320 from Sikkim most of whom resided in the hill tract of Darjeeling.

The phenomenon of migration continued to be a living factor up to 1941. During the decade followed 1931 there was a great up rises in the growth of population both in Bengal and North

Bengal. As a whole, North Bengal under our discussion had a growth of 10.69 percent. Among the districts of North Bengal the district of Darjeeling showed a great growth of 15.07 percent on the population of the last decade and the district of Jalpaiguri showed the growth in 9.74 percent in the same line of the growth of the Bengal province. This large volume of growth might have been contributed by the process of in-migration in large volume. The following table can highlight over this numerical development of the population of the North Bengal districts.

Table 3.42
The population of North Bengal born in Elsewhere
1941 (Birth Place)

District/State /Province	Total	Born within the district	Born outside the district but within the province	Born outside the province
Bengal	1216803	1109230	57082	50511
Dinajpur	37763	34694	1377	1892
Jalpaiguri	21508	16321	1149	4038
Darjeeling	7487	5286	286	1915
Malda	24422	28110	636	667
Cooch Behr	12856	11114	1374	368
Total of North Bengal	104036	95525	4822	8880

Source: Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A. Dutch, Manager of Publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942

It was written in the table of Birth Place that “For the sake of economy this table has been restricted to the extraction of three categories only, Namely, those born within the district of enumeration, those born outside the district of enumeration but within Bengal, (including the States of Cooch Behar and Tripura) and those born outside the province. Otherwise, this table corresponds to Imperial Table VI of 1931.¹⁷³ There was also the government of India’s restriction on limited tabulation as at the time the World War II.

However, the high rate of growth in most of the districts especially in Darjeeling and Malda district reflected the phenomenon of immigration in huge number in the districts. The following table also will highlight over the phenomenon of migration in the North Bengal districts.

Table 3.43
Immigration and Emigration in Districts of North Bengal from and outside the State
For the Year 1941

District/State	Actual Population	Immigration	Emigration	Natural Population	Percentage Variation
Malda	844315	22952	6388	827751	+19.0
Dinajpur	583484	25539	2459	560404	+11.4
Darjeeling	376369	95750	4120	284739	+28.0
Jalpaiguri	1089513	156765	-	-	-
Cooch Behar	640842	18400	2203	624645	+8.1
North Bengal	3534523	319406			..

Compiled from Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbooks, Malda, A. Mitra, Manager of Publication, Delhi, Government of India Press, Calcutta, 1954, District Handbooks, Darjeeling, West Bengal Government Press, 1954, District Hand Books , Cooch Behar, A. Mitra, Sree Saraswati Press, 1953, District Handbooks, West Dinajpur, A.Mitra,Thacker's Press,1953 and West Bengal District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri, De, Barun, N.K. Goassin & Co, 1981

From all tables it is clear that migration particularly immigration again became steady process in the districts of North Bengal particularly in the districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. This obviously was contributed by the new group of labourers from the adjacent territories of Bihar and Santal Pargana. Besides in Malda and Dinajpur the Muslims from Mrshidabad continued to be immigrated during this decade. After a stagnancy or halt in 1921 again the phenomenon got new life though not like the period of last three decades of Nineteenth century.

From the above discussion it is apparent that the process of migration was basically comprised in North Bengal district by the phenomenon of immigration and emigration with barring a few exceptions was not a significant aspect of the total process in the districts of North Bengal of our study also during the first half of the nineteenth century,. However like the previous period this time also the source of immigration was continued to be more or less same. Immigrations of the Santals, Kols and the Shershabadia Muslims continued to be immigrated, though not in a great volume, into the districts of Malda and Dinajpur contributing the growth of the Muslim population in both the districts. Like the previous decades the upcountry plainmen also went on spreading in different parts of North Bengal, even in the Duars region. The construction works in road and railway also led attracting the labourer keeping continuing the labour immigration in North Bengal. Those constructions also helped in trade and commercial activities in expanding with growing '*bazaars*', '*hats*' and '*Ganjs*' in different station areas. So it was reported in the Collector of Rangpur wrote in the context of Katihar-Godagari Railway opening that "At every railway station a bazaar has sprung up, and the cultivator has profited largely by the competition of traders in Jute, rice, and other country produce. Growers of the mango fruit are now able to reach markets at a greater

distance and command better prices. Another result had been to facilitate immigration into the thinly populated, areas in the east of the district.”¹⁷⁴. Obviously the construction of broad gauge railway beyond Parbatipur, Gouhati extension of Eastern Bengal State Railway, Amnura-Nawabganj Railway in Malda enriched the process of migration.

Inter-district migration during this period was also important. Immigration from Malda to Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri also happened in this period in the form tribal and Muslim people’s immigration into the district. From Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling Terai outmigration also happened. This was one kind of chain migration from Malda to Dinajpur and Malda-Dinajpur to Jalpaiguri and from Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling and in this context mostly migration of migrants occurred. An important aspect of inter-district migration in the North Bengal district was immigration into Cooch Behar State from Mymensingh and emigration from the State to the district. In 1911 this immigration of the Mymensinghians into the State numbered 1552 which increased in 9797 in 1921. On the other hand the State of Cooch Behar also emigrated, but small in number during this period.¹⁷⁵ This, in case of Jalpaiguri district, became lowered from 26681 in 1901-11 to 18796 in 1921. However emigration was highest in number in case of North Bengal districts during 1911-21.¹⁷⁶ Even for better opportunity and livelihood inner district migration also happened as happened in the case of labourers’(Santals) immigration into Balurghat from Phulbari or the Nepalese or Bhutanese immigration into Darjeeling Terai from Darjeeling hill region.

The trading class immigration also continued in the districts of North Bengal. The people came from upcountry lands still were trading their number being increased and provoking their fellow men they spread throughout the districts of North Bengal. However, the traders from Bengal proper during the twentieth century became very good number. During the first three decades of twentieth century there were huge number of rice mills, Jute farms, tobacco production and availability of woods which attracted the big commercial class into the land. The Annual Administration Report of the Cooch Behar State reported of huge volume of tobacco trading through Mathabhanga.¹⁷⁷ This resulted large number of tobacco farms built by the traders not only from Bengal but also from the other parts of India. The Duars Plantation Association reported of 25 rice mills during 1920 of which most were situated in the Dinajpur districts.¹⁷⁸ In the The Bengal Censu of 1921 reported of 13 rice mills in Dinajpur district.¹⁷⁹ Among the trading castes in North Bengal, besides the Marwari and Gujaratis there were Vaishya, Gandhabanik, Subarnabanik, Shaha, Kundus and many other trading castes immigrated into the districts of North Bengal from other parts of Bengal.

It was reported in the Census of 1931 that 30000 people came in cold weather in Darjeeling and were employed as coolies in the tea gardens, on the road constructions, as wood cutters, as sawyers, as harvesters in the Terai region. Some of them also went to Jalpaiguri and Assam

through Darjeeling region and employed as the same¹⁸⁰ there were number of Bhutias coming from Sikkim traded in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri with apples and Oranges. Traders from Tibet used to come with wools and other merchandise. On the other tea plantations industry, though new teaplantation area much not developed, extended and expanded both, where scope or access was given to it. Thus tea plantation oriented migration also continued. From the following table the development of tea industry and strength of recruited labourers will furnish the picture.

With all these discussions of the immigrants into the districts of North Bengal it should be mentioned here that the course and pace of the immigrants into the region was not as high during the first half of the twentieth century as it was in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In fact within the thirty years so voluminous immigration occurred in this region within the time the opportunities which induced the labours particularly could not remain same. Because land was limited and a large portion of the land in this region was covered with forests. Further tea plantation growingly reserved huge amount of land under its occupation. So lack of land for cultivation did not or could not settle the cultivator class or labour class. The areas like Kalimpong, Sadar Darjeeling, Plain land of Jalpaiguri like Boda, Patgram Bochaganj and Tetulia and the Barind region of Dinajpur and Malda became to some extent saturated. Moreover, the first generation of immigrants who permanently settled in the region was succeeded by their native born descendents who were then procuring their paternal profession. Thus a new class of laborers grew in this region that ancestrally belonged to other parts of Bengal or India but by birth were North Bengalis. But still the trend of immigration did not wither away as the growth in population of different districts of North Bengal witnessed barring 1921 and other few exceptions. However with them a new development in socio-cultural arena of North Bengal began to be emerged which will be dealt in the next chapters.

Colonial Period (1941 to 1947)

V

The period followed 1941 was as eventful as the transitory for the study of Demography of Bengal as well as the districts of North Bengal. The great Bengal Famine of 1943, the communal holocausts in 1946 in Calcutta, of Noakhali and also of Bihar and most importantly the Partitioning of India into two independent Unions and resultant great wave of migration all these turned the demographic construction of the districts of North Bengal in a new move. The famine of 1943 had great toll over the deaths of Bengali people which numbered as per the record of the Famine Commission was 688846 during the period between December 1943 to June 1944 exceeding highly over the births.¹⁸¹ Among the most affected districts by the famine

and post-famine disease of Cholera and dysenteric diseases were Malda and Dinajpur of North Bengal under our study. Darjeeling was less affected as aloof from the plains and Jalpaiguri was moderately affected.¹⁸² On the other the chain of communal violence in Calcutta erupted in 16-19 August, 1946; triggered by the Great Calcutta Killings the anti-Hindu riots in October' 1946 in Noakhali and some adjoining areas of Tripura and anti-Muslim riots thereafter in Bihar greatly affected Bengal as a whole and North Bengal as a part.

Thus the pre-1947 periodic Bengal witnessed trauma and stress in demography oriented socio-political arena of North Bengal.¹⁸³ With all these came the independence of India but with more traumatic partition, a largely discussed issue not only in India but also in the world, bringing lot of things to enquire into the demographic arena of the districts of North Bengal under our study. In previous chapter I have already discussed in details boundary formation and jurisdictional changes of the North Bengal districts in 1947 in the previous chapter. Here I shall only analyze the issues raised by the Indian National Congress, Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League related with demography and boundary of West Bengal and East Pakistan and the opinion or decision of the Commission in this regard.

The Muslim League in their submission to the Boundary commission both districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri arguing of the districts' not being contiguous to the main non-Muslim majority block of West Bengal, to have the control of the Catchment Basin of the river Teesta and resuscitation of other rivers of North Bengal and for the use of timber and forest of the districts. But the commission on the ground of their being predominantly non-Muslim area and finding no reason in other arguments declined the demand. In Dinajpur out of 30 police stations 15 were Muslime predominant and 15 were Hindu predominant. Among the 15 Muslim dominated police stations nine were in the east and 6 were on the west, remaining 15 police stations with non-Muslim majority. So the commission opined that barring Dinajpur the Muslim majority police stations on the east eight in number to be included with East Pakistan and the remaining with West Bengal. In case of Malda the Commission stated that out of 15 police stations and among the eight Muslim dominant police stations four eastern police stations of Bolahat, Shibganj, Nawabganj and Gomasthapur with Hindu dominant Nachole were to be added to East Pakistan. However, the Congress accounted to connect the two major non-Muslim blocks having Kaliachak, Farakha and other Muslim majority police stations and also three police staiions in Jalpaiguri and six of Dinajpur, by way of connecting link. On the ground of railway connection with Assam the Muslim majority police station Bhurangamari at the north-east of Rangpur district was claimed by the Congress map. They also claimed for Dimla and Hathibanda, the non-Muslim majority police stations of Rangpur contiguous to Pathgram of Jalpaiguri district.

The commission did not find any proper ground against these claims. Mapping of the Boalia thana of Rajshahi district, a non-Muslim majority pocket within a predominantly Muslim area was also not recognized by the Commission. Though, the Commission appreciated the Congress mapping of 73 percent of entire population in East Bengal 70.67 percent of entire non-Muslim population in West Bengal. But the Commission rejected the Congress claim considering it 'untenable'. The claim of Hindu Mahasabha of entire Malda district, portions Rajshahi district, Faridpur, and Bakarganj district were also claimed by the Mahasabha to be included in West Bengal. The Muslim League also claimed for the Chitagong Tracts.¹⁸⁴ In fact all these claiming were resulted to be greater percent of Muslims or non-Muslims in either side, either of West Bengal or East Bengal to be recognized as East Pakistan. So, though partially considered, the claims were not accepted by the Boundary Commission. The commission, experienced by all these developments, decided its own and made the partition plan following which the two independent dominions emerged in the midnight of the 14th August, 1947 through which the districts of North Bengal under our study also emerged in a new physique.

Thus partition resulted in procuring 40.37 percent populations with 37.13 percent area by the State of West Bengal from the pre-partition Bengal province including the State of Cooch Behar (as per the record of 1951 Census in compare to that of 1941). North Bengal in this circumstance procured 70.05 percent populations with 66.12 percent area from the pre-partition North Bengal of under our discussion (as per the record of 1951 Census in compare to that of 1941). So during this time North Bengal constituted 24.74 percent of West Bengal land and 14.87 percent of populations of the State in 1951 in compare to 13.89 percent area and 8.57 percent population of the Bengal province in 1941. Thus this was an increase in area and population of North Bengal in context of its share in Bengal and West Bengal as newly constituted State of West Bengal lost huge quantity of area and population as a resultant cause of partition. But, as a whole, North Bengal also had a share in this loss both by area and population. In fact, the inflow of the displace persons from the Eastern part of Bengal began to waved in North Bengal districts of our study prior to the happening of partition mainly since 1946 the year of Noakhali Riot. However, the details of the demographic changes in post-partition period will be presented in the proceeding Chapter.

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