

Chapter 8

Conclusion

After the voluminous discussion of the demographic profile of North Bengal for the 120 years of transition under my investigation it has become clear that the construction of North Bengal demography had been the process began in long past. But the last quarter of the nineteenth century became more in limelight of history founding the milestone of modern demography with the modernization of this geo-historically and strategically important region. In fact, the geo-politico-administrative entity of North Bengal taking all the five districts under my discussion came into being with the British colonization and semi-colonization (in case of the State of Cooch Behar) leading to the formative phase of modern demography of North Bengal, the process which was to some extent had been started by the Maharajas of Cooch Behar State and the Zamindars of Dinajpur. The geography and physiographic structure of the North Bengal land became strategically more important to the British Bengal that is British Indian Empire as the frontier of the British Indian Empire came in direct touch Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal frontier and the way to China and Central Asia through this sub-Himalayan region. With this significance the gradual growth of this region led a greatest demographic growth both in size and nature being turned into a migrant-prone zone. Thus this formative phase began its journey and transited in constructional, de-constructional and re-constructional process throughout the period under my investigation in different phases of Colonial, post-colonial and post-Bangladesh liberation period. In this process of historical investigation number of politico-cultural-economic developments have been unearthed which are historically objective, statistically corroborated and socio-culturally, politically and economically evidential. In this last but most important section of my study those phenomenal developments will be scrutinized.

The first and foremost thing to bring into notice is the sizable growth and proportional development in population of North Bengal. In this process during the first phase of the colonial period (1872-1901) North Bengal witnessed a growth of 25.75 percent from 3.2 million population in the region to 4.05 million population in its periphery. And if we compare with that of the census record of 1881, the more accepted accurate data it becomes it grew in 13.76 percent from 3.5 million of total population in 1881 to 4.05 million total population of the region. And if we study the graphical presentation of the growth in the ingredient districts on North Bengal it will be found that the district of Dinajpur with largest proportion of territory always contained the highest number and proportion of population in North Bengal. After Dinajpur the district of Malda stood second followed by Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling with a small population compare to other. It is interesting to see that during the first two decades of my study Jalpaiguri remained behind the State of Cooch Behar but left the State behind since 1891. This indicates the growth of the district after its formation a new district. And it was the British rule was responsible for this growth. On the other Malda always remained at the level of waists in compare to the district of Dinajpur.

During this period the two bulks of Religious community were the Hindus and the Muslims in North Bengal. This varied from 56.62 percent Hindu population in 1881 to 56.36 percent in 1901 of total population with a tiny decline. On the other in Muslim population it varied from 42.55 percent in 1881 to 39.65 percent in 1901 of total population with small decline. This change in balance of composition of population was due to the growth of large volume of Buddhists and others that is the tribal religious followers. However the two districts in the southern part of North Bengal remained unchanged in balance of Hindu-Muslim population composition carrying the Muslims little more than half of the population and the Hindus little less than the half of the total population in the district of Dinajpur and carrying the opposite ratio of Hindu-Muslim population in the district of Dinajpur. The state of Cooch Behar also remained more or less balanced in carrying Hindu-Muslim having the Muslims little below the half of the total Hindu population during this period (1872-1901). The change in balance in religious demography in North Bengal, therefore, indicated towards Darjeeling –Jalpaiguri belt and it has been found the proportion of Hindu population more grew than the Muslims. The much growth in Buddhist population in Darjeeling district also was responsible for it. However, this equation change indicates of immigration of Hindu peoples in the region.

If we examine the caste composition of North Bengal demography it will be found that about one quarter of the total population of North Bengal was comprised by the Koch, Pali, and Rajbanshi people during 1872. In this Dinajpur-Jalpaiguri-Cooch Behar belt was mostly dominated by these communities, the largest share of whom was taken by the district of Dinajpur. In Cooch Behar State above 20 percent of the total population was consisted by totally the Rajbansis. In Dinajpur they constituted about thirty percent of the total population

and more than sixty percent of the total Hindu population. Both in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar the Rajbansis constituted the largest caste where as in Dinajpur the Pallias constituted the largest single caste. In Darjeeling and Malda they were in a small proportion though in Darjeeling in compare to the total population it was considerable. However the transition in 1901 was great in this composition. During this transition the Rajbansis together with the Paliya and Koch reached to 31 percent of the total population and most importantly 54.73 percent of the total Hindu population. In this the largest contribution was of the Dinajpur district followed by the State of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri district. This time the Rajbansis contained about sixty percent of the total population and about 85 percent of the total Hindu population of the State. In Dinajpur they were 68.78 percent of total Hindu population and in Jalpaiguri about sixty percent of total Hindu population. The tribal population constituted a good strength in the districts Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri 7.14 percent and 10.95 percent of total population respectively.

During the period from 1901 to 1941 the population size North Bengal developed from 40.05 million to 52.66 million with a growth rate of about 30 percent on the population of the census year 1901. In this the largest share was of the district of Dinajpur having about 39 percent share in 1901 to about 37 percent share in 1941 with about 2 percent decline in the proportion of the total North Bengal population. Malda stood second carrying 22 percent in 1901 to 23 percent of total North Bengal population of 1941. Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling grew from 19 percent and 6 percent to 21 percent and 7 percent respectively. The State of Cooch Behar lagged 2 percent from 14 percent to 12 percent during 1901 to 1941. However it does not mean loss of population. It was the large increase of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling leading the changes in balance.

It is very important that during the census year of 1941 the population of Hindus was returned as 41.28 percent Much lower than the half of the total population of the Province leading to the amount of the Muslims 54.29 percent of total population Much higher than the half of the province. North Bengal following the same line recorded 5.2 million people of Muslim origin having 41.22 percent share of Muslim population in its territory. Thus the Muslim population of North Bengal shared about 6.50 percent of the total population. Another important aspect of the demographic profile during this decade was the considerable number and portion of the tribal people sharing 12.77 percent of the total population of North Bengal in compare to the State's share of 3.13 percent among the total population. This is important that during this decade there was decline of a small amount in growth of population of both in Hindus and Muslims and both in the State and in North Bengal, though the rate of decline was more among the Hindus than the Muslims. This was due to the appearance of greater volume of tribal population in the region. The Muslims in Malda became constituted 56.79 percent of the total population, in Dinajpur 50.20 percent, in Jalpaiguri 23.08 percent and in Cooch Behar State 37.87 percent. On the other there was a fall of people belonged to the Hinduism throughout

North Bengal. This decline was much high in Jalpaiguir-Darjeeling region. This was due to the changing of the people belonged to tribal community their religious recognition at least in official level led to this decline and it is more interesting that if he Buddhists and the Tribal, as religions if taken together they formed the major portion of the population in marginal level in the district of Darjeeling. They formed 48.86 percent in compare to the 47.42 percent of the total population and in Jalpaiguri they singly formed 25.63 percent of the total population. However, the State of Cooch Behar was witnessed the growth in Muslim population in State. This was because the tribal people in the State always remained insignificant in number. As a whole North Bengal was constituted by 44.26 percent Hindus, 41.22 percent Muslims and 13.62 percent tribal population.

During this census period the Rajbansis constituted the largest bulk of the Scheduled caste people in North Bengal. According to the Census return they formed 17.36 percent of the total population and 71.86 percent among the total Hindu population in the district. In Jalpaiguri district they formed 25.80 percent of the total population and 55.95 percent of the total Hindu population in of the district. Though the data for the State of Cooch Behar was not available, but in the previous census to that it had been seen that the Rajbansis formed the largest single caste in total and Hindu both the population of the State. In Darjeeling they formed 5.80 percent of the total population and 12.24 percent of the total Hindu population. Among the tribal people in Dinajpur and Malda the Santals were predominant and Jalpaiguirand Darjeeling the Oraons were predominant.

During post-partition period the population of North Bengal transited from 5.2 million in 1941 to 3.6 million in 1951 with curtailment of area from 11517 square miles in 1941 to 7614.8 square miles in 1951. With a loss of 33.89 percent of total land the loss of population was 29.95 percent. It is clear from the linear pie and bar graph that the partition affected districts of North Bengal concerning demography were the districts of Malda, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguir. But if take the post-partition thanas into account in relation to that of the pre-partition 1941 census year there was 11.05 percent growth in population in the district of Malda and the police stations of Kaliachak and Manikchak remained dense areas of the district. In the same way if the population of the pre-partition census of the post-partition police stains of the district of Dianjpur (After then will be called) West Dinajpur then it will be found that 23.49 percent growth in the district population happened. In Darjeeling the growth was 18.30 percent having large increase in the three sub-divisional owns of Darjeeling, Kusion and Kalimpong and greatest increase being in Siliguri, about triple in compare to 1941, indicating its urban expansion and growth. However, in Jalpaiguri the growth was less of 8.14 percent. The growth of population in Cooch Behar was less of 4.73 percent. Thus for partition though relatively there was loss of territory and population in North Bengal in practical if the post-partition area of the region is taken in account then the growth of 12.11 percent as a whole was witnessed by

North Bengal. Most importantly in proportion to the total population of North Bengal a balance may be noticed in post-partition period which is clearer from the graphical presentations.

During post-partition period in 1951 North Bengal constituted by 2.69 million Hindus, 0.85 million Muslims and 0.09 million tribal people sharing 73.14 percent, 23.10 percent and 2.49 percent of the total population of North Bengal. However, there was a large decline in the people returned as belonged to tribal religion. This might have been due to the recognition of Hindu religion by the tribal people and their recognition in the Hindu society. Only 97 persons in the district of Malda returned as belonged to tribal religion. The partition periodic Hindu-Muslim fiascos might have impact on the tribes to declare them the Hindus. During this period the Hindus constituted 62.92 percent and the Muslims 36.97 percent in the district of Malda. The Muslim agglomeration was found in southern part of the district. The district of Malda constituted 69.30 percent Hindus, 29.94 percent Muslims and 0.27 percent tribal population in the district. Dinajpur lost areas containing 526914 persons Hindus, 756824 persons Muslim and 84551 persons tribes. With this the newly formed West Dinajpur district contained 69.30 percent Hindu population, 29.94 percent Muslim population; Jalpaiguri contained 84.18 percent Hindus and 9.74 percent Muslims and 2.79 percent Christian people; Dajeeling contained 81.71 percent Hindus, 1.44 percent Muslims, and 2.77 percent Christian people and district of Cooch Behar contained 70.90 percent Hindus and 28.94 percent Muslims. The decline of population in tribal religion is corroborated by the facts of Hinduization and the growth of Hindu population.

During this time the district of Cooch Behar contained 40.15 percent Scheduled Castes and 0.39 percent Scheduled tribes, the district of Jalpaiguri contained 25.72 percent SC population and 19.70 percent ST populations, Darjeeling contained 5.86 percent SC and 9.89 percent ST populations, the district of West Dinajpur contained 17.09 percent SC and 17.24 percent ST populations and the district of Malda contained 14.55 percent SC and 8.58 percent ST populations in the district. There was decline in proportion of SC and ST populations in all the districts of North Bengal barring Cooch Behar and Malda where there was growth in ST population. There was 67.21 percent Non-Backward caste and in West Dinajpur they formed 61.56 percent of the total population. The Rajbansi people during this time constituted 9.37 percent of total population in West Dinajpur, 18.89 percent in Jalpaiguri, 3.57 percent in Darjeeling, 37.58 percent in Cooch Behar district.

During the period from 1951 to 1971 the size of the population of North Bengal transited from 3.68 million to 7.41 million in numbers. It has also been seen that since 1951 the highest bar for the population in the districts was of Malda and the Bar of Jalpaiguri became higher than that of West Dinajpur in the graph. But astonishingly the district of West Dinajpur again turned into top among the districts of North Bengal concerning the population size. During this time

the district of Malda came below the population size of West Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri since 1961. The volume of increase of population in North Bengal was large having 33.68 percent over the population of the previous decade. ¹During the period between 1951 and 1971 Malda witnessed growth from 9.37 lakhs to 16.12 lakhs, the district of West Dinajpur from 7.20 lakhs to 18.59 lakhs, the district of Dajeeling from 4.45 lakhs to 7.82 lakhs, the district of Jalpaiguri from 9.15 lakhs to 17.50 lakhs and Cooch Behar from 6.71 lakhs to 14.14 lakhs. So a voluminous growth in size in population of the North Bengal districts happened during this time.

Within period of 1951 and 1971 there was little bit decline in the Hindu population in North Bengal from 73.14 percent in 1951 to 72.16 percent in 1971 and the little rise among the Muslims from 23.10 percent in 1951 to 24.86 percent in 1971. The Christians and the Buddhist also became important having 1.45 percent and 1.43 percent in the region. The rise of Christianity was spectacular in North Bengal during this time. The Hindus constituted 56.63 percent and the Muslims 43.13 percent of the total population of the district of Malda. In the district of West Dinajpur the Hindus contained 63.06 percent and Muslims 35.89 percent, in Darjeeling the Hindus were 81.45 percent and the Muslims in 3.00 percent, in Jalpaiguri the Hindus were 86.80 percent and the Muslims were 8.97 percent and in Cooch Behar the Hindus were 78.56 percent and the Muslims became 21.25 percent. So, though there was no decrease in the Muslim population we may find the proportional increase of the Hindus and decrease of the Muslims and this was happened due to the large volume of Hindu Bengali immigration leading to the growth of Hindu people's proportion in North Bengal.

During this time North Bengal consisted by the 27.69 percent SC people and 12.13 percent ST people. The district of Darjeeling became constituted by 12.57 SC and 13.89 percent ST population, the district of Jalpaiguri had 34.02 percent SC and 24.49 percent ST population, Cooch Behar with 47.03 percent SC and 0.75 percent ST people, West Dinajpur contained 23.10 percent SC and 11.90 per cent ST population and the district of Malda had 16.48 percent SC and 8.11 percent ST population. The Rajbansis constituted 32.06 percent of the SC population in the district of Darjeeling the second highest being the Kamis (20.40 percent), in Jalpaiguri the Rajbansis 55.29 percent and the second highest being the Namasudras (9.91 percent), in Cooch Behar the Rajbansis 72.37 percent and the Namasudras being second (10.11 percent), in West Dinajpur the Rajbansis 31.42 percent, the Paliyas being second (28.49 percent) and in Malda the Rajbansis 19.08 percent and the Namasudras being the second (9.06 percent) in the district population. Regarding tribal population Oraon in Darjeeling –Jalpaiguri belt, Santals in Malda-West Dinajpur belt was in higher percentage and in large volume.

During the period from 1971 to 1991 the size of the population of North Bengal transited from 7.41 million to 12.02 million in numbers. During the period between 1971 and 1991 Malda witnessed growth from 16.12 lakhs to 26.37 lakhs, the district of West Dinajpur from

18.59 lakhs to 31.27 lakhs, the district of Dajeeling from 7.82 lakhs to 12.99, the district of Jalpaiguri from 17.50 lakhs to 28.00 lakhs and Cooch Behar from 14.14 lakhs to 21.71 lakhs. So a voluminous growth during the post-bangladesh liberation period has been found here and North Bengal crossed the boundary of 10 million populations. During this period the West Dinajpur district became the largest scorer of population in North Bengal district. It is very important that the population Jalpaiguri remained above second after West Dinajpur since 1961 and Cooch Behar remained in same distance all the time in size of population. Beginning journey with 3.2 (1872) or 3.5 (1881) million North Bengal have been growing absorbing number of populational tend in its bag and reached to its versatile demographic physic with one crore and two million population.

During the 1971-1991 periods North Bengal carried on from 72.16 percent to 69.63 percent population belonging to Hinduism with a good proportion of decrease. On the other the Muslims population transited from 24.86 percent of total population in 1971 to 26.99 percent in 1991 and this proportion was constituted by with the growth of 23.61 percent of Hindu population and 36.51 percent increase of Muslim population in compare to the previous decade. The Christians people grew in this period in a very large number and became 200699 during 1990s. Thus North Bengal alone contributed 52.34 percent of Christian population of the State of West Bengal. On the other in same decade North Bengal occupied share of 92.14 percent of the Buddhist population of the State. There were good number of Sikhs and Jains also in different parts of North Bengal during this period.

Regarding SC and ST population 30.20 percent population was constituted by the SC peoples and 10.47 percent people constituted the ST population of this region. So both SC and ST together they formed 40.67 percent of the total population of this region. The ratio of the SC and ST population in North Bengal districts were in 1991 in Malda SC 18.12 percent and ST 6.50 percent; West Dinajpur SC 29.02 percent and ST 9.83 percent; Darjeeling SC 16.15 percent and ST 13.78 percent; Jalpaiguri SC 35.16 percent and ST 21.04 percent and Cooch Behar SC 51.76 percent and ST 0.61 percent. It is important that the Rajbansis and the Namasudras formed the two majore bulk of SC population in Malda having 24 percent and 17.47 percent of the SC population. Interestingly enough that the Namasudras increased by 45.88 percent. The Rajbansis singly formed 53.95 percent and the Namasudras 11.57 and he Paliyas 11.57 percent in West Dinajpur. In Darjeeling the Rajbasnis constituted 46.10 percent and the Namasudras 14.05 percent. Rajbansis in Jalpaiguri constituted 63.33 percent of the total SC population and the Namasudras 22.66 percent of the SC population in the district. In Cooch Behar the Rajbansis constituted 77.03 percent of the SC and the Namasudras 13.02 percent. With all these the profile of demography developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century on the basis of which the course of history of North Bengal proceeded journey with multi-lineal developments and multi-lineal interpretations from the intellectuals of all the disciplines and all

strata of the society. However, in the above said of course of developments, number of crucial issues came under notice which may be regarded as the catalysts of turning politico-economic-cultural history of this region. These may be pointed out as follows.

From the discussion of the ongoing chapters and the above summary of the discussion it comes to clear that the demographic profile of North Bengal in its present day size, structure, composition, geographical distribution, ethno-cultural mobilization is the development of linear process in which the hundred twenty years of my study (1871-1991) had been not only the instrumental but also remained the catalyst for all sorts of development it witnessed within the period and also for all sorts of development of the period of almost three decades followed my period of study. The gradual development of theoretical intellectuality in interdisciplinary way such as subaltern, structural, post-structural, post-modern arenas of academic thought processors have been resulting in bringing the margins in history. North Bengal, a geographically peripheral Indian land of which strategic importance was realized and acknowledged the geographic, climatic, economic, ethnic and overall strategic importance of the present-day North Bengal even in context of the nineteenth century period, had the ground for the formation of its modern demography with large volume of non-North Bengali elements during the period of the Bringing the region under British hegemony. Prior to that the structure of that periodic demography of North Bengal already had been formed of which discussion has little been done in the introductory chapter of this work. But the post-British British hegemonic period terminated the previous form and tuning North-Bengal an economically developing zone 'pulled' 'initially the peoples of adjacent land who already were 'pushed' by the economic, political, climatic or any other causation flocked into North Bengal of the period. Thus the last three decades of the nineteenth century even up to the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the new construction of Indian North Bengal demography unbalancing the previous profile and founding the new balance.

In fact, the investigation unearthed firstly the phenomenon of this de-construction and reconstruction of demography of North Bengal during the early part of the period of my investigation. Here we find the record of migratory movements of the Toto and the Mech, the two aboriginal early clans of this geographical periphery. This formation was also found in the sub-Himalayan mountainous tract of North Bengal where mainly through inhabiting in the tract by the peoples belonged Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet with a good number of people from the plains Bengal and other parts of India. In this process of upholding the old balance of demography and establishing the new one the majority section of the people constituted by the Rajbansi, Pliay, Koch and Desi and the Muslim population in the belt of Cooch Behar –Jalpaiguri (permanently settled area)-Darjeeling plains –Dinajpur –Malda region did not have much bothering s or also had not been much affected by the new developments as the reports and Government officials recorded. However, this formative period took a pause in the second

decade of the twentieth century when some kind of saturation² seemed to be noticed by the contemporary officials of the British Government and which was also feared by LSS O'Malley in his reporting of Darjeeling district.³ The British Governments report of IB also reported that the new demography had turned up the existing balance of demography in giving new patta lease to the Lephas of the Darjeeling hill in view of 'to protect them as the aborigines.'⁴ During this period reverse migration of the immigrants also have been heard from Dinajpur district.⁵

However, an unnoticed developmental and demographic formation phenomenon had been occurred during this period. It was the family expansion and appearance of new generations in the families of the permanently settled migrants from the adjacent or other parts of Indian land or from the land of the Indian neighboring territories. Thus in the first quarter of twentieth century emerged a new demography in North Bengal in the form of second generation immigrants. Most of them being brought up in the soil and air of this region they gradually became akin to the North Bengal culture, even till the time basically based on the local Rajbansi people and Muslim population of the period. This might be one of the factor for which different reports of the British officials expressed the acculturates of the tribal people immigrated into North Bengal during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. So the immigrant tribal people in the plains also practiced some of the habits borrowing from the local peoples of this land. This kind of cultural co-habitation also had been described by the official records and reports. This was mostly happened in Malda –Dinajpur region. This may be corroborated by the fact that the process of Hinduisation of the tribal mostly carried on in the tribal belt of this part of North Bengal.

But the tribal who people who were recruited in the Tea Plantations and for whom colonial settlements were built in Wesern Duars areas led to form another isolated demography of the tribal population in North Bengal who had no much relation with the local people. So, cultural exchanges with the locals did not happen in context of that demography. This might have led the emergence of greater tribal solidarity among the different tribal people of the Western Duars in the latter period in a sphere of greater cultural metabolism. For this reason they could not become much closer contact with the plans people or the other Hindus. So the process of Hinduisatioin could not be found in this part of Western Duars of North Bengal. Rather Christianization is much present in this tribal part of North Bengal. It had been known from the secret I.B. records that some of the tribal took a move initiative to merge Darjeeling-Jalpaguir with Assam to be more consolidated in the Assam-Jalpaiguri-Darjeeling tea tribal belt.

The Oraons were the originally settled agriculturists and coming into North Bengal districts of Jalpaiguir and Darjeeling were employed in the hill's Terai and Durars region as tea labourers. So they again migrated to the villages nearby and engaged in cultivation of land. **[Field survey and Interview]** However, they had to live with the other tribal people like the Santals, Mundas and the Nepalis in a multi ethno-cultural social environment. In this circumstance they continued to practice

their own community cultural activities. In spite of this they had to assimilate with a new identity of integrity of the 'tribal ethnic' group with the other tribal people with the unitary connotation of 'Adibasis', unipolar profession of 'tea labour', in a single geo-physiographical entity of 'Duars' region, similar constitutional recognition of ST and single medium of exchange taken as 'Sadri.

⁶However, if this was the obverse side of the story, than there was also the reverse side. In that case the influx of the large number of the upper caste people in this northern part of Bengal for professional, commercial, trading, educational and many other causes led to the new demographic settlements in the relatively urban areas of North Bengal. This people as like as the so called 'Bhadraloks' who had no better thought about the local people. This Hindu caste of people constituted by the Brahmins, Kayasthas, telis, Kundus, Sahas, Baniks, Gandha Baniks and many others and even the upper Indian upper castes creating an urban demography in different districts of North Bengal. They had a feeling of cultural superiority leading to inferior treatment to the local Rajbansi, Muslim even to the tribal people. This might have become in the way of acculturation of the two communities rather created socio-cultural alienation. However, this did not reach to any level of confrontation, rather for dependency on the upper caste Brahmin for recognition of Kshatriyahood. However, as a byproduct of the phenomenal development of such alienation led them in regeneration and revival movement in the line of Rajbansi Kshatriya movement. The 'Varna Hindus' also treated as inferiors,. They were not entertained cordially in the Varna Hindu houses. They were given '*piris*' to seat at the floor. This naturally paved the way of alienation and growing coinsinces among both the Muslims and the Hindus for their cultural regeneration on one hand and the anti-Hindu sentiment for the Muslims and apathy towards Hinduism for the lower Hindus on the other.⁷

As we told the factor of saturation as the decrease of immigration in North Bengal another factor for the phenomenon was that the political and economic condition of the source region of Santal Parganas and the Chhota Nagpur regions were not provoking for the immigrants to come into North Bengal region. On the other the Muslim people of the Murshidabad region were finding new destination of Calcutta Cosmopolitan and its surroundings. However, in 1920 the colonization process of Darjeeling hill region by the Nepalis continued then. The government report of IB reported enhancement of rent and granting leases for lands in Ghum Pahar, Jore Bungalow in the district of Darjeeling.⁸ There is the IB record of IB also are there in Archive about the proceeding of survey and settlement operations in leasing the land.⁹ Again in leasing land the Government was also aware about the protection of the aboriginal people.¹⁰ In early phase of colonization of Darjeeling hil and Terai region the people from Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan were engaged in trading activities as peddler traders. But gradually the immigrants from plain region also appeared in the hill tract, Terai and Duars region of the Northern part of North Bengal. Thus the economic control of this region gradually transferred from those hill men to

plains men not only from Bengal but also from different parts of Bengal proper, different provinces of India leading deteriorating the condition of hill men traders. During pre-partition period the hill men were very much eager to have the government service posts of the superior staff and inferior staff to be filled by the hill men mostly they claimed to the government for this increasing employment in the Govt. offices in Darjeeling hill. ¹¹ However in 1930s and onward again the process of immigration got pace in North Bengal region. This was because of the gradual economic expansion of North Bengal districts based on tea cultivation; trade in wood, tea, Jute and development in communication all in water, road and rail. Thus again element of change in demography were coming to make effect. Besides, the geo-economic-ethnic agglomeration based on the immigrants' settlement also happened in the twentieth century. So claims, movements, demands came to be hovered in the twentieth century leading to the upgrading shift and mobility of different ethnic groups, cast groups and religious communities. Thus the movement by Chasi-Kaivarta and their attainment as being Mahishyas upgraded them slowly from their fellow Jalia Kaibartta. Likely the demand of the Shahas for Vaishya recognition and Sundi's or Sunri's demand of 'Saha' recognition though was for upgrading mobility, kept continued their social differences. Though the developments occurred in Bengal line at Calcutta the outcome might have good impact in other parts of Bengal like North Bengal districts. However, during the period of the caste movement and caste mobility the demands were shifting from one to another, even after fulfilling the early one. Thus after having recognized of Mahishya by the ChasiKaibartta, one section of them demanded during 1930s of 'Kshatriy' or 'Mahishya Kshatriya' and by another section of them of 'Devadas'. The most important is that the Oraons also demanded for 'Kshatriya' status during this time. ¹²

The Government's step of lower class representation in government in 1920s by mobilizing the lower caste Hindus under the connotation of 'Depressed Classes' excluding the Hindus and the hill tribes led to the great mobilization of the caste in Bengal in general and in North Bengal in particular. In 1930 specific use of castes in government records gave impetus to the cast mobilization. ¹³ During this time the people of different castes began to move to have recognition as specific castes based their profession and specific livelihood leading to the emergence of a great number of caste groups even closely differing each other. Thus the 1931 census aimed to strongly implement the name of real caste of people. Petitions and counter petitions for recognition and not in the caste leading new divisions of the Hindus society in twice born, Hindu Varna, not any other caste and even the Sudras. However, the responses to this were few in Bengal general and more few in North Bengal in particular. ¹⁴ There was mobilization from the Muslims of this region as the jolahas claimed for Mumin. The Sekhs protested against their inclusion cultivating people of 'Bengalis'. However, with this a relaxation in caste mobility also developed with separation of the different claiming castes such as between the Koch, Paliya and the Rajbansis; Mahisyas and Jaliakaibartas; Tellis and Tillis and so on. Thus in hill the Bhutias from Tibet and Sikkim were separately recorded. The 1941 census

enlisted the non-Muslim population of Bengal into Scheduled Castes, Non-Scheduled Castes and the Tribes.

It should be mentioned here that there was great increase in scheduled caste population in the North Bengal districts during post-partition period. Both the SC and ST population agglomerated in one or another places leading to the emergence of Schedule caste and Scheduled Tribe villages in large numbers in different parts of North Bengal. Even there were some villages where cent percent people belonged to SC communities.

The partition of India in 1947 was a great event in the history of demography of North Bengal. It had direct and indirect both the impact. I have discussed in second and third chapter about the phenomenon of partition and its impact of demography. In fact, the post-partition period with a great flow of this migration led number of changes in profile of demography. So, the period of post partition periodic two decades may be regarded another phase of construction of demography. Initially the upper caste and classes, then the middle classes and finally the lower caste Hindus specially the Namasudras in large volume came in regular stream into the districts. The period followed the Bangladesh liberation movement witnessed more large volume of immigration into North Bengal, though the post-war periodic immigration came to be happened in the form of illegal migration. This again deconstructed the demographic structure formed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. From the IB report the government steps of a good number of Border Posts, as referred in bibliography, in different parts of North Bengal is clear. But still the process of illegal immigration has not been taken as a serious issue so far the government steps in case of Bengal is concerned. The people also became tolerable to this phenomenon. So we do not find any fierce friction in the land of North Bengal under our discussion, about the so called illegal immigrants (not the infiltrated terrorists) as like as the adjacent and neighbouring territories of our North Bengal. Thus a new demography emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century basing on which the twenty first century demography of North Bengal developed in new caste composition, economic proliferation and political and cultural orientation.

The post-partition periodic North Bengal absorbing the displaced and immigrants of East Bengali people witnessed different functional group of caste that enriched the region of North Bengal with their efficiency in different specific fields. Thus the overcrowding of the Namasudras in rural areas of North Bengal districts led to the higher quantity of land in cultivation, even turning the non-arable or waste land under fertile with higher technology of cultivating the land and with resulting of higher production of the land.¹⁵] This is interpreted by the young scholars as 'knowledge migration or rather immigration' into the region. The Malos, being efficient in fishing became engaged in fishery profession at Bulbulchandi of Malda district leading to the lowering of price of fishes there.¹⁶ The immigrants of East Bengal living at Palpara, Matigara, Siliguri were professionally the earth workers who coming into this

settlement also continued the profession and became prosperous and also made the region prosperous turning the area as pottery industrial area.¹⁷

In fact the North Bengal economic expansion since the clearing of jungles and turning the waste land into cultivating land through the way of land enterprise with tea plantation, agricultural commercialization, small scale industrialization in all economic activities were contributed and enriched by the different functional groups during the colonial period and latter on the commercial class with capital during the late colonial and post-colonial period. Besides, the changing pattern of land system, Government policy of procure and distribution all these marginalized the traditional landed class in North Bengal. This alienating them led them in political mobilization to some extent. However, the political participation of the North Bengal people in National Movement made them politically oriented and in post independent period they participated in large number and procured political orientation and taking the constitutional order they became largely engaged in electoral politics. For from the last chapter it has become clear that the Caste formation of demography led the delimitation of constituency in such way that the basing on demographic distribution in the districts of North Bengal.

On the other in hill of Darjeeling district the Nepali became outnumbered to the other hill communities. We have come from the linguistic statistics that large number of non-Nepali people returned their mother language as Nepali. So a hill men consolidation has been emerged under the banner of the Gorkha identity moving for a separate state within Indian Union. T.B. Subba, the sociologist highlighted over the anti-hillmen inclination in the movement. However, it is true that post-colonial demographic restructure in all through the North Bengal led the participation of all the communities in political development of the State of the nation for the right of the people. In this the candidature of the constituencies itself disclose the demographic composition of that region.

It has been found in different reports that generally the Rajbansis were inclined with agrarian economy as their family profession and any changes were not to be embraced by them. But the rapid demographic changes carrying economic changes of the region also led them towards new professions, though in a smaller extent. So after initial reactions a new professional class also began to emerge among the Rajbansi people of North Bengal. This new educated professional class among the Ranjbansis gradually began to replace the landed middle class of the region. But changes also happened among this newly emerged professional middle class being less accounted with the old values of their society. For the service oriented middle class for occupational cause had to leave their villages and they settled in the urban areas and thus they imbibed urbanism. However, in spite they might not have been totally absorbed in the new urban culture, but more important is their identifying themselves with their old

values as before. Thus a feeling of identity crisis emerged among them leading again some of them to be involved in the cultural revivalism.

With the settlements of different ethnic group of people Darjeeling hill and Jalpaiguri Duars emerged in North Bengal as so called 'ethnological Museum' leading the belt a special ethnic-cultural-economic zone. The tourism industry developed in this region not only for geo-environment of the region but also diverse ethno-cultural nature and feature of the demography of this belt. Diverse languages, dresses, different food habits, different ornamentation of the different ethnic people attract the people of not only of different parts of Bengal or India but also of the world. Thus the products of handicraft produced by the different ethnic people of the Darjeeling hill-Jalpaiguri Duars belt had also great demand not only for the tourists but also in different parts of Bengal and India specially in the plains of North Bengal and Bengal. It led the belt in forming a special ethno-cultural-economic zone in culmination with the tea economy. So special industrial items such as Tibetan Blanket, Darjeeling Shwal , Bhutia Sweater, Lepcha weaving are of special demand in various market. They are sought by the people in general during time of any big fair like *Ras Mela* of Cooch Behar.

From the above study it has come to clear that through a long periodic construction, de-construction and reconstruction during our period of our study divided North Bengal into number of demographic zones. Thus, from broader perspective, in colonial period the southern North Bengal of Malda-Dinajpur belt having demography with religious, linguistic, caste and ethnic affinity emerged. The northern part of Bengal with Darjeeling hill-Jalpaiguri duars belt having the same pattern of caste or ethnic-religious-linguistic demography developed. On the other the south-eastern north Bengal of plains of Darjeeling-Jalpaiguri-Cooch behar belt developed having demography with religious-caste-linguistic affinity. But if we make more micro level analysis then the geo-cultural diversities will divide the North Bengal region into too many cultural blocks. In this compartmentalization of North Bengal the demographic settlements played the most significant role.

The people of different origins other than Bengal began to speak in Bengali language leading to the emerging of new dialect of Bengal language also in North Bengal region. This is very significant that due to the necessary of profession and other the large number of people alien to Bengali language used to speak Bengali in their own way. Thus the due to the efforts of Hindi people speaking Bengali language gave birth to the 'Khotta' dialect of Bengali, the mixture of the Bengali and Hindi languages, in the district of Malda. A good number of people spoke in this language in the Barind region of Malda and the areas adjoining to Bihar. It is very important that linguistic absorption, even declaring to mother tongue, by the immigrants from the host people is the way of regionalization of them through cultural dilution in the host region and society. The Maithili Brahmins largely living in Araidanga, Milki, Amriti, Bangitola etc. adopted Bengali as their mother tongue instead of Maithili. In 1980 it was reported that the number of Bengali speakers among the Maithilis was considerable.¹⁸ in fact, after two or three generation the people outside Bengal origin naturally have taken Bengali as their mother tongue because of bringing up in the Bengali environment with a same geography surrounded by the Bengali people and culture. As a result the third to fourth generation of the migrants who had come into North Bengal in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were very smooth and do not feel uncomfortable in speaking Bengali. Most of them spoke in Bengali outside their community.

Other changes were found in relation to the local people of the having borrowed different practices from the local people the Rajbansis and lending theirs to the local people. Initially the displaced persons from East Pakistan, mainly the Hindua, got shelter in huge number in the house of the Rajbansi people, especially the Jotedars or in their lands mostly waste in nature. It happened especially in the rural areas where the evicted Hindu people from East Pakistan flocked into. In 'Uttarer Howa' Dinesh Dakua had shown how the Rajbangsi and the migrant people lived together helping each other and participating in social gatherings of each other.¹⁹[**The story of 'Danga Dola' in Uttarer Galpo, Dakua, Dinesh**] With the passing of time cultural assimilation also happened but in smaller extent. For example prior to 1990s there scarce references of marriages relation between the two communities. In dressing, food habits, worshipping, speaking and pronouncing Bengali languages and words and in work habits they had great differences. However, with the passing of time many Rajbansi cultural habits intruded into the migrant Bengali Hindus and many of them to the Rajbansi cultural habits.

During the colonial period the agglomeration of the settlements were formed by the immigrants of different sects, communities, races and castes. Thus the Santal Settlements, Oraons settlements, Nepali settlements, Munda settlements, the Jele Kiabrtta settlements etc. all in rural areas or the areas by the rivers and Bihari settlements, upper Indian trading class settlements, the Upper caste Hindu settlements all in urban areas. The people living prior to them, the locals like the Ranjbansis, the *Dseshis*, the Koches, the *Palias* all lived in concentration in the rural and semi urban areas. The Muhammedans basically the cultivating class lived in the rural areas also being clotted. To the outsiders the Ranjbangshis were known as the *Bangals* and the areas where they resided were known as the *Bangalparas*. Likewise the Deshis in Malda were called as the *Gaur Deshsis*.²⁰ All these denoted their indigenous origin distinguishing them from the other settled peoples like the different tribes, Upper caste Bengalis, Biharis and the Upper Indian upper castes. Thus various cultural segments developed in accordance with the agglomeration of the settlements. However, with the development of British administration in the North Bengal region and modernization of the tract including the State of Cooch Behar, development of education, economic activities, new land settlements, growth of peoples' mobility led to the interactions, exchanges among the different communities of different settlements

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