

CHAPTER – II

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF TERAI

The District of Darjeeling of present West Bengal consists of three distinct tracts, viz, (i) the *thanas* of Darjeeling, Jorbangla and Kurseong i.e. the whole of the hills except the Kalimpong outpost, most of this was ceded by the *Raja* of Sikkim in 1835, (ii) the Kalimpong outpost taken from Bhutan in 1865 and (iii) the Terai i.e. the Siliguri *thana* annexed from Sikkim in 1850.¹

The Geographical and religious structure of the Terai region with its multi-racial and multi-lingual character reminds us of the Indian diversity in races, culture and language. This feature has, therefore, provoked many scholars to refer North Bengal as 'little India'. Prior to the Colonial period the regions of North Bengal were covered with dense forests and it was an area of *Kala-Azar*, Malaria and ferocious and dangerous animals. Various sources state that there was the practice of agriculture among the inhabitation of people in this regions.² The records declare that the Terai had a scanty population with very rare settlements, mostly tribal. The Report of 1839 states that there were of inhabitation of few Mech population in the Darjeeling Terai when the British received Darjeeling in 1835 as a gift from the *Raja* of Sikkim.³ According to Campbell, the first Superintendent of Darjeeling, there were 400 Mech families in Terai in 1839.⁴ When the British ceded Darjeeling in 1835, the Terai area was covered with deep forest. It was a dump and most un-healthy place of Northern Bengal. The area was sparsely populated like Eastern Nepal, Dooars and Assam and was inhabited mainly by the few wild aborigines, like the Meches, the Dhimals and the Koches. The Meches, Dhimals and some Tharu people lived in the depths of the upper region of the Terai forest and they did not engage in hired services. They acquired almost as much immunity to protect themselves from the deadly fevers like *Kala-Azar*, Terai fever, Malaria etc, which was so prevalent in this region at that time. It is necessary to note that the earliest epidemics of Malaria reported in Bengal were from the district of Jessore in the first decade of the 19th century.⁵

Besides the tribal, the Koches or the Rajbanshis came to Terai with the expansion of Koch Kingdom in this region beyond the river Mahananda during the middle of the

16th century. Hooker mentions that the Koches, a Mongolian race, inhabited the open country of the district of Darjeeling replacing the Meches of the Terai forest. The Koches are not very dark and formed the once- powerful house of Cooch Behar. Latter the upper classes have adopted the religion of the Brahmins and the lower orders have turned into Mohammedens.⁶

The demography thus consisted of the indigenous population like Mech, Koch, Rajbanshi and others. The Mech are considered as a branch of the *Baras* of Darrang area of Assam. The name is almost certainly a corruption of the Sanskrit word *mleccha*, i.e, an outcast from the Brahmanic point of view, a non- observer of caste regulation.⁷ Buchanan observed that the Mech and Kacharies, one of the primitive race of Assam were the same people and at least of common origin. The large tract of country called Mechpara in the Gowalpara district of Assam was their original homeland. Therefore they migrated into the westerly direction and made their home in the Terai areas as far as the river Konki in Nepal. At that time they came into contact with the Rajbanshis, Dhimals, Tharus, Limbus, Kirantis, Lepchas, Murmis, Bhutias and the other peoples.⁸ The eminent scholar of North Bengal, Dr.C.C. Sanyal said that the Meches were of a Tibeto- Barman speaking Indo- Mongoloid tribe, who migrated into India through Patkoi hills between India and Burma and gradually spread themselves into the whole of modern Assam, North Bengal and parts of East Bengal. Furthermore, he commented that the Meches went towards the west along the foot of the Himalayas up to the river Mechi between India and Nepal and settled on the north bank of the river Mechi. They crossed the river and established themselves in the deep Forest of Darjeeling Terai and Baikunthapur of Jalpaiguri .⁹

There were other races in the Terai region mostly the Dhimals and Tharus. Hodgson describes the Bodo and Dhimal tribes as of the same race and there appears no reason for separating them in a work of this nature, as their customs, religion appear nearly identical. However, he admits that the comparison of language does not support so close a connection and the name of deities are different.¹⁰ The Tharus are aborigines of the Himalayas who used to cultivate low valley from which Malaria drove the ordinary population. It appears that the Tharus for fear of Muslim enemy left Northern part of Bengal and migrated towards Terai regions. Though they always claim that they originated from Chitor of West India, their physiognomy proves that they are no other

than Koch Kirat people. The Tharus of Kochila family of Morung and Saptari districts of southern part of Nepal seems to be the survivors of Koch Kirat people of Northern part of Bengal who must have migrated from Northern Bengal to entire area of Terai regions.¹¹ Campbell also pointed out that the Meches and Dhimals were inhabited in the Terai area at the lowlands of the foot of the mountains. These yellowish Mongolian people were not Hindus, Buddhists, nor Mohammedens. But the Tharus were mostly Buddhists or Mohammedans.¹² Therefore it is very difficult to state the actual number of people residing in the Terai region of Darjeeling in the pre-colonial period. But we come to know from A. Campbell that in 1850-51, just after annexation of Terai there were 36,000 souls.¹³ Among these 7,320 were Meches and 3415 were Dhimals and the rest were the Koches and other tribes with some Muslim people who lived in the lower Terai.¹⁴ After the annexation of Terai, the British Company introduced a progressive land tenure system. Under this system the Government was considered as the proprietor of the estate. No intermediaries or *zamindars* were present between the Government and the *ryots*. Lands were given free of tax for initial five years. Jungles or arable lands were cleared rapidly to expand cultivation and for this reasons many people of the adjacent areas were attracted to migrate in Terai.¹⁵

But the most important factor which contributed to increase the density in population in Darjeeling Terai was the growth of tea industry under the British. With the opening of as many as twenty two tea gardens in Terai in the first year of its introduction in 1862 a large number of labourers were imported from Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas. Labourers from Eastern Nepal also come to the tea gardens in search of employment. In the hills of Darjeeling most of the gardens labourers recruited were from the Eastern Nepal.¹⁶ Whereas in the gardens of Terai besides Nepalese imported labourers were also engaged. This was the picture in the initial stag, but the scenario radically changed in the subsequent period with the opening up of more gardens. This also enhanced the number of population. Bengalis also came into Darjeeling from the neighboring districts and from other parts of lower Bengal. Most of them took to agriculture as their mode of living and settled down permanently in the Terai. They had free intermixing with the other inhabitants of the plains. The other Bengali peoples took to the principal profession, *munshis*, domestic servants etc.¹⁷ Regarding this process for the establishment of tea industry some *bazaars* or *hats* were started in Terai where Bihari people began to sell some essential commodities to the outsiders as well as the earlier

inhabitants. As a result, according to the first Census of 1872 the total number of population in 274 sq. mile of the Terai was 47,985 and the total number of villages was nineteen in this region. Each sq.mile had 41 houses and number of population was 175. There were 11,111 houses and each houses consists less than 5 persons. The Census of 1872 pointed out that though the Rajbanshis were the majority of the population consisting of 23015 (in hills: 109) persons and the number of Mech and Dhimal were 893 and 873 respectively in Terai.¹⁸ Among the other races the Oraons were 1648 in number, who migrated from the Chotanagpur regions to the tea gardens areas as labourer as stated earlier.¹⁹ There were some Muslim people who lived in the lower portion of Terai region with the Rajbanshis “is to be accounted for by immigration from the Districts to the South”. Though the Mohammedans were 6248 (Male: 3566, Female: 2682) in the district but they were principally found in the Terai region.²⁰ It is to be assumed that the Marwari of North West India, who were claiming to belong to the great Vaisya or trading cast of ancient India came in Terai after the second half of the nineteenth century. The Marwari communities were mainly composed of Agarwala and Oswals. Besides this, large number of Bihari people also came here at the same time. They mostly belonged to Teli, Halwai, Baniya, Hazam, Chamar, Dom, Sonar and other Castes. The following table gives the data of immigrant into the Terai region of the district after 1850.

TABLE NO 2:1

TBIBES AND CASTES FOUND IN DARJEELING AND TERAI IN 1871

Sl. No.	NAME OF THE CASTE	PLACE WERE THEY COME	NUMBER IN HILLS	NUMBER IN TERAI
01.	Kshatriya (Warrior)	Northern India	117 Persons	28 Persons
02.	Marwari	North-West India	10 Persons	-
03.	Agarwala	Do	09 Persons	09 Persons
04.	Oswal	Do	13 Persons	21 Persons
05.	Teli (Oil pressers and sellers)	Bihar	111 Persons	301 Persons
06.	Baniya (Traders & Merchants)	"	67 Persons	163 Persons
07.	Napit (Hajjam)	"	405 Persons	30 Persons
08.	Kamar (Blacksmith)	"	393 Persons	63 Persons
09.	Halwai (Sweet Makers)	"	47 Persons	43 Persons
10.	Kahar (Palanquin bearers)	"	45 Persons	30 Persons
11.	Chamar (Leather dealers and Shoe maker)	"	221 Persons	64 Persons
12.	Dhoba (Washerman)	"	63 Persons	22 Persons
13.	Sonar (Goldsmith and Jewelers)	"	349 Persons	22 Persons
14.	Kurmi (Cultivators)	"	245 Persons	15 Persons
15.	Mihtar (Sweepers)	"	173 Persons	53 Persons
16.	Kayastha (Writer castes)	Bengal	36 Persons	08 Persons
17.	Barui (Pan growers)	"	285 Persons	57 Persons
18.	Namosudra or Chandals (Cultivators and Fishermen)	"	-	292 Persons
19.	Ganesh (Weavers)	"	-	890 Persons
20.	Tanti (Weavers)	"	12 Persons	632 Persons
21.	Sanyasi (A sect of Saivate religious)	"	267 Persons	36 Persons
22.	Kaibartta (Adopted Agriculture and Fishing as their profession)	"	-	125 Persons
23.	Goala (Milkman)	"	74 Persons	346 Persons
24.	Hari (Sweepers)	"	2 Persons	759 Persons
25.	Vaishnav (A sect of Hindu professing)	"	-	222 Persons
26.	Kandu (Sellers of perched or cooked vegetable food)	"	26 Persons	64 Persons
27.	Brahmans	Nepal	1002 Persons	98 Persons

[Source: *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. - X, W. W. Hunter, Trubner & Co, London, 1876, pp.81-84.]

It is revealed from the above table no 2:1 that the composition of population in the Darjeeling Terai from the early part of the sixties in the 19th century consists mainly trading community from the North-Western India, lower class people from North-Bihar, middle class people from neighboring areas of Bengal and upper class people from Nepal. Except the Lepchas and Meches there were no emigrations from the district. In 1871, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling similarly observes that the Meches who were migratory tribes had crossed the river Tista in Terai and migrated into the neighboring district of Jalpaiguri.²¹ For this reason within the next two decades the Mech population of the district reduced drastically while in the case of Jalpaiguri it was increasing. On the other hand Major George E. Bulger, mention in his travelogue, that Terai was inhabited by two main races namely Maches and Dhimals, who are said to be remarkably healthy. They are pastoral and agricultural tribes and are described to be industrious, honest, inoffensive and cheerful. After reaching Punkabaree, the northern hill portion of Terai region, where he first saw the hill men, Lepchas and Sikkim-

Bhutias, the barden-bearing race of this portion of Himalayas.²² Hodgson also said that the Dhimals, who were connected with the western part of Terai region and the tract lying between the river Konki and Mahananda was still known as Dhimali. The number of Dhimals were not exceed than 15,000 souls are confined to within the portion of *sal* forest lying between the Konki and the river Dhorla or Torsha, mixed with the Bodo or Mech, but in separate villages and without intermarriage.²³

The census of 1872 in this region is considered to be inaccurate by the authorities due to the severe cold weather and unscientific methods of counting. As a result the figure, found in Census of 1872 to have been considerably below the truth. Moreover in the case of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri etc. the enumeration of 1872 was carried out by rough and ready methods and under very imperfect supervision. On the whole of Bengal province there was an increase of 10.89 percent population, during last nine years (1872-1881), giving an average annual increase of 1.21 percent.²⁴ The phenomenal growth of the population in Darjeeling Terai since 1872 were due to two main causes, the development of the tea industry and the influx of settlers to exploit the wasteland in this region.²⁵ Nevertheless, in 1881 the population of Terai was increased to 63, 241 persons and the people lived per square mile were 233. Among the above population the Males consists 35,410 persons and Female 27,831 persons.²⁶The following table will exhibit the real picture-

TABLE NO 2:2
POPULATION OF DARJEELING TERAI IN 1881

Name of the Sub-Division	Area Sq. Miles	Number of villages	Number of houses	Total population	Total Male	Total Female	Proportion of male population	Number of persons per sq. mile	Number of persons per village	Number of houses per sq. mile	Number of persons per occupied houses
Siliguri Or Terai	271	737	12,185	63,241	35,410	27,831	55.9%	233	86	46	5.2

[Source: *The Imperial Gazetteer Of India*, Vol-XIII, W.W.Hunter, Trubner & Co, London, 1887, p.211]

In the district as a whole there was an increase of 63 percent population between the years of 1872-1881 but due to notoriously Malarias character and the high rate of mortality it was comparatively very high than the hills of the region.²⁷ The increase in mortality had affected the population but on the whole the increase of population in Terai during this decade was about more than 31 percent.²⁸ At that time the people of various castes who were found in Terai as given below, though it was an incomplete one-

TABLE NO 2:3

ETHNIC GROUPWISE POPULATION IN TERAI 1881

Name of the Caste	Male	Female	Total
Bhuimali and Mehter	539	540	1079
Bhutia	292	130	422
Brahman	500	130	630
Dami	75	33	108
Gharti	126	103	229
Gurung	981	935	1916
Kaibarta	194	135	329
Kami	373	257	630
Khambu	1314	1459	2773
Koch	6119	5014	11133
Lepcha	592	532	1124
Limbu	416	108	524
Mangar	832	514	1346
Munda	129	126	255
Murmi	500	502	1002
Newar	318	189	507
Oraon	2360	2272	4632
Rajput	366	143	509
Surki	109	43	152
Sunnwar	67	34	101
Yokha	33	24	57
Buna	644	526	1170
Shaik	4002	2299	6301

[Source: *Final Report On The Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p.08.]

The above table no 2:3 gives a picture of the caste and ethnic classification of population of Terai in 1881. But the Report prepared by Sasi Bhusan Dutta in 1897 was incorrect regarding population of the region was considered. In this report he has mentioned that the total Koch population in the Terai were 11,133 persons but the Census report 1881 puts total Koch population of Darjeeling district as 30,381²⁹ who were mainly inhabited in the Terai region of this district. So, it can be stated that the Koches formed about 50 percent population of the Terai region. The report mentioned that 177 persons per sq. miles were inhabited in the Terai region in 1872.³⁰ But it varies from the Hunter's assessment which was 175 persons per sq. mile.³¹ In this connection it is to be noticed that "the Census reports of 1872, 1821 and 1891 enumerate Koches, Rajbanshis and Paliyas under one head Koch".³² It was to be said that the Census of 1891 for the first time took a satisfactory count because in the previous Census there was an immense concealment of females. Many of them fled on the Census night over the frontier into Nepal. Laborers absconded from tea gardens from panic and other causes.³³

The growth of Darjeeling district in the past twenty years was the most remarkable expansion of population than any other part of Lower Province in Bengal. The population of the district in 1872 was 94,712 persons, while in 1891 Census it amounted of 223,314 persons, showing an increase of 136 percent. Great of this growth of inhabitants was in the whole district, more clearly, it was very much marked in the hill area than in the Terai or sub-mountains tract, which was conterminous with Siliguri *thana*. In Terai, the population has increased from 47, 985 persons to 72,997 persons or by 52 percent during last nineteen years.³⁴ The population grew due to the establishment of tea plantation industries in this region. Though the first experimental tea gardens were established in 1860, but it was in the year of 1862 commercial tea garden named New Champta at Khaprail in Terai was established by an Englishman named James White. During the next three decades the number of tea gardens had increased abruptly. The most important factor which contributed to the growth of population in Terai was the employment of Santals, and Chotanagpuri tribal as laborers in tea gardens.³⁵ With the growth of the tea garden the Colonial Government paid attention to the development of the roads and communication because the transport system from the tea gardens to the port was very poor at that time. Therefore, they paid their attention for the improvement of not only the roads but also the railways, so that the tea leaves could reach the port for trade without any difficulties. Though, the development of railways in Terai or Siliguri had started much earlier than any other region in northern part of Bengal. Yet in 1881 was not before Siliguri was connected with Calcutta by railway through the present Bangladesh. This helped to give an impetus to the tea industry in Terai. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the tea gardens were established within the period of 1890 in Terai (except which were established by the Indian Tea Planters).³⁶ Thus modern Siliguri town and urbanization of the Terai owes much to the development of railways and land connection. The Census report of India in 1891 gives a statistical description of migration between the district of Darjeeling and other neighboring part of this said district as given below:

TABLE NO 2:4

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF DARJEELING IN 1891
A. DECADAL POPULATION VARIATION OF DARJEELING DISTRICT 1872-1881

THANA	POPULATION IN 1891	PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION WITH 1881	PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION BETWEEN 1881 - 1872
DARJEELING	60,963 Person	+ 61.1	96.7
KALIMPONG	26,631 "		
JOR BANGALA	18,078 "		
KURESEONG	44,645 "	+58.5	-
TERAI OR SILIGURI	72,997 "	+17.0	31.8
DISTRICT TOTAL	2,23,314 "	+43.2	2.88

B: MIGRATION BETWEEN DARJEELING AND OTHERS NEIGHBOURING AREAS

DISTRICTS	IMMIGRANTS		EMIGRANTS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Jalpaiguri	2097 PERSON	1880 PERSON	1347 PERSON	894 PERSON
Purnea	6271 "	4832 "	327 "	230 "
Lohardaga	1871 "	1726 "	-	01 "
Chutia Nagpur	732 "	309 "	01 "	02 "
Darbhanga	845 "	193 "	-	01 "
Muzaffarpur	2045 "	315 "	06 "	08 "
Saran	3191 "	272 "	02 "	03 "
North Western Provinces	1565 "	414 "	-	-
Sikkim	3110 "	2946 "	-	-
Nepal	47,799 "	40,222 "	-	-
Bhutan	540 "	571 "	-	-
Total	70,066 PERSON	53,626 PERSON	1683 PERSON	1139 PERSON
Total	123692 PERSON		2822 PERSON	

[Source: *Census Of India 1891, Vol -III*, C.J.O' Donnell, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p.66]

The above table no 2:4 shows that in the year of 1897, 88,021 person's resident of Darjeeling was born in Nepal i.e. more than one third of the total population of the district. They were almost all found in the tea gardens in the hills. The people who came from Lohardaga and Chutia Nagpur were immigrated to Terai as tea gardens coolies, whilst the 11,103 persons from Purnea were mostly settled in Terai Governments farms, known as the Terai *jotes*. On the other hand, it is to be noted that, in the Darjeeling hills no Chotanagpur and Lohardaga tribal were found except two gardens of Kalimpong Sub-division.³⁷ The immigrants who came from Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan largely settled in

the hilly areas of the district of Darjeeling, a few number of Bhutia and Nepali immigrants also settled in Terai.³⁸ The immigrant from Jalpaiguri were mainly settled in the Terai region. However, in 1880 some portions of Jalpaiguri district came in the jurisdiction of Darjeeling district. So, there may be some confusion regarding the migration between Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district. After the introduction of railways in Siliguri the Bihari people of North Bihar, particularly from the district of Saran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga started to immigrate in Darjeeling. Among them some people went to Darjeeling for trading and other works. These people attended *hats* or *bazaars* in Siliguri, Bagdogra, Naxalbari, Phansidewa, Matigara etc. While trading and conducting commerce in the Terai many of them chose to settle in Siliguri. During the last part of the eighties in the nineteenth century a large number of road construction were under taken in this region and the Biharis worked there as labourers. Some of them, though little in number were engaged in agricultural work in Terai. Many served as “*Chaukidars*” in the tea gardens of Terai, but their main business was to sell various commodities to the working class people who were mostly settled in the tea garden areas. Latter some of them become *jotedars*. The people of North West province were engaged in money landing business both in the hills and in the Terai.³⁹

In the hills, including Kalimpong because of healthy weather and comparatively low death rate the growth of population was very high. On the other hand, in notoriously Malarious belt of Terai it was comparatively low. In the district as a whole there was an increase of 63 percent between 1872 and 1881 and 43 percent in the period between 1881 and 1891. The rate of expansion was far more rapid in the hills than in the Terai. In the hills the growth of population in these nineteen years was 222 percent, while in the Terai it was only 52 percent. Therefore, the Census of 1891, clear that the growth of the population during these nineteen years was phenomenal.⁴⁰ The following table give the total information regarding population of the Darjeeling Terai in the year of 1891.

TABLE NO 2:5
POPULATION OF TERAI IN 1891

NAME OF DIVISION	AREA S.q MILE	NUMBER OF VILLAGES	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL MALES	TOTAL FEMALES	NUMBER OF PERSON S.q MILE	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES PER S.q MILE	NUMBER OF PERSON PER OCCUPIED HOUSES
SILIGURI	271	400	14,975	72,997	41,868	31,129	288.5	59.5	4.6

[Source: *Census Report of the District of Darjeeling, 1891*, No-1512G, Dated 15th March, 1892, Darjeeling (D.C.O.D)]

Among the above population, the Bengalis comprise almost exclusively in Terai. They were mostly found in Siliguri *thana*. Out of the 47,435 Bengalis; 46,968 were found in Siliguri i.e. 67 percent of the population of that *thana*. In this connection it is to be mentioned that all the Rajbanshis of Terai were considered here as Bengalis. In the Census of 1881 there numbers were 51,267 and if these figures were correct, there had been falling off the indigenous population of Terai. Mr. J. M. Ritchie, the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling says “I believe that many of these are really Bengalis, and that many of the Hindi speaking population in the other *thanas* are Nepalese. The rest are up-country laborers and shop-keepers. The labourers work on roads in the Terai, drives pack ponies, and do much miscellaneous work”. The Urdu and Hindi speaking population shows a rise from 7,657 to 20,899 in between the year of 1881 to 1891. Though, these figures comprise other than Hindu and Musalman plainmen i.e. semi-Hinduised aboriginals. The Bhutia and Tibetan speaking people were 230 persons in Terai in 1891.⁴¹ Yet the table no 2:6 will exhibit the persons who were engage in different segments of this district.

TABLE NO 2:6
OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF POPULATION IN DARJELING DISTRICT IN 1891

DIFFERENT HEADS	AREA IN Sq. MILES	OCCUPIED HOUSES	PERSONS			NUMBER OF PERSON PER Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF HOUSES PER Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF PERSON PER OCCUPIED HOUSES
			MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL			
TEA ESTATES	242	20,256	47,135	42,449	89,584	370.1	83.7	4.4
GOVERNMENT FERMAS	382	19,013	52,741	44,974	97,712	255.7	49.7	5.1
FOREST	439	752	3805	1586	5391	12.2	1.7	7.1

[Sources: *Census Of India, 1891, Vol-III, C.J.O'* Donnell, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p.67]

Among the above population there were 13,712 persons engaged in the tea industry in Terai. 177 persons in the railways and 1920 persons in the road construction; 87 peoples were engaged in forest. In the agricultural fields 30,246 males and 24,539 females were engaged.⁴² In this connection, the small size of the household amongst the tea garden labourers, whose families include few dependents, except children is noticeable.

In 1901 the greatest density of population, viz, 775 persons to the square mile was found in Central Bengal, then, followed by West Bengal with 591 persons and East Bengal with 514 persons per square mile. North Bengal with 428 persons per square mile had suffered for the inclusion of Sikkim, Darjeeling and the newly acquired part of Jalpaiguri. If these areas be left out of account its density rises to 551 persons per square mile. The density was greatest in the east and decreased towards the west and north. In Terai the density was about the same as in Jalpaiguri, but it gradually diminished towards the north and in the Darjeeling Sadar Sub-division there were 184 persons inhabited per square mile.⁴³ The pressure of the population on the soil was greatest in the Terai, where there were 279 persons reside in per square mile.⁴⁴

TABLE NO 2:7
COMPARATIVE POPULATION OF DARJEELING DISTRICT AND TERAI IN 1901

DISTRICT AND THANA	AREA IN S.q MILES	NUMBER OF		POPULATION IN 1901			URBAN	RURAL	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	NUMBER OF PERSONS PER S.q MILES	TOTAL POPULATION AT PREVIOUS CENSUSES		
		TOWNS	VILLAGES	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE					1872	1881	1891
DISTRICT TOTAL	1,164	02	569	2,49117	133005	116112	21,393	2,27724	61,327	214	94712	155179	223314
SILIGURI OR TERAI	253	-	284	70,466	39,037	31,429	-	70,466	16,044	279	47,985	63,241	72,997

[Source: *Darjeeling District Gazetteer, Statistics, 1901-1902*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1905, pp.02-03]

From the table no 2:7 it is evident that the population in Terai decreased in between the years of 1891-1901. When the district received 11.5 percent growth rate during last decade the population of Terai decreased rather than increase -3.5 percent.⁴⁵ So, it was unusual phenomenal regarding demographic scenario of the district. The reasons behind this slow growth or decrease population during last decade can be assumed for the following reasons. L. L. S. O'Malley observed that in many localities

where Malaria has long been prevalent and become endemic. In some parts of Terai, the incidence of Malaria was very high.⁴⁶ Another reason was the *Kala-Azar* which led to number of deaths and created a panic among the workers and labourers of the region. L.A. Waddel mentions in his travelogue '*Among The Himalayas*' that "In this poisonous atmosphere no laborers can be induced to settle. Each fresh batch of imported coolies soon flees panic-struck before the Black-Death (*Kala-azar*), Black-water Fever and other Malarial pestilences which lurk in every brake and lay their avenging hands on every intruder who invades their reeking solitude".⁴⁷ But in Siliguri or Terai, the mortality has been exceptionally very high. During 1890-1900 as a whole give an average death-rate of 59.8 per 1,000 per annum, and in 1900 it exceeded 71 per 1,000. On the other hand the average birth-rate was only 19.4 per annum. There was a great demand for labour of all kinds and wages are far higher than in any other parts of Bengal. The than Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling observed that there was no district in the Province where the people are so well off.⁴⁸ For this reasons, in several Bengal districts the local labour has to be supplemented by the influx of immigrants from Bihar and Orissa, and the demand being in excess of the supply, wages are regulated thereby.⁴⁹ During this period, the tea industry, however, on which the growth of the district mainly depended, had been passing through a serious crisis. Prices have fallen greatly during 1895-1900 and many gardens were no longer able to work at a profit. Some few were closed and others have reduced their labour force, so that the increase due to extension of cultivation during the earlier years of the last decade of the 19th century has been to a great extent discounted by the subsequent reductions of establishment. Terai suffered the decrease of 2531 persons during last decade, about two thirds were accounted for by the fact that in 1891 a large number of temporary immigrants were employed there in the construction of roads and railway lines. The tea gardens have added 11 percent to their population, but the settlers in the "Terai *Khas Mahals*" have decreased by nearly 5 percent. Having regard to the heavy death rate, the loss of population in Terai must have been far greater than it was but for immigration from outside.⁵⁰ The following table no 2:8 gives a decadal population variation of Darjeeling district.

TABLE NO 2:8
DECADAL POPULATION VARIATION OF DARJEELING DISTRICT 1891-1901
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

POPULATION	1901		1891	
	MALE	FEMAL	MALE	FEMAL
ACTUAL POPULATION	1,33,005	1,16,112	1,23,046	1,00,268
IMMIGRANTS	71,289	53,102	78,978	58,079
EMIGRANTS	3,128	2,566	3,298	1,528
NATURAL POPULATION	64,844	65,576	47,366	43,715

[Source: *Census Of India, 1901, Vol-VI, Bengal, Part-I*, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p.63]

The table no 2:8 revealed that total volume of immigration is less than it was in 1891, but the foreign-born still number nearly half the total population of the district. A very large proportion of them are permanent settlers on the tea gardens and in Terai *Khas Mahals*. The earlier immigrants were gradually dying out and their place had being taken by the next generation, i.e their children born in Darjeeling district⁵¹. Though, the total number of persons born in Nepal but enumerated in this province were 1,61,495 persons or slightly less than in 1891. Nearly half of the total numbers were found in the district of Darjeeling and nearly three quarters of the remainder were found in Sikkim, Cahamparan and Jalpaiguri.⁵² The following table will show real migration scenario of Darjeeling district in early year of 20th century.

TABLE NO 2:9
MIGRATION STATEMENTS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1901
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

DISTRICT	IMMIGRANTS		EMIGRANTS	
	MALE	TOTAL	MALE	TOTAL
Jalpaiguri	4,141	2,248	2,012	960
Purnea	8,965	5,203	221	170
Saran	2,851	2,438	04	02
Mozaffarpur	1,765	1,385	15	07
Sonthal Parganas	2,961	1,602	41	16
Ranchi	7,931	4,444	03	03
Central Prov. and States	267	106	17	13
United. Prov. and States	2,285	1,372	44	30
Sikkim	2106	1,004	1,909	1,017
Nepal	76,301	42,486	–	–
Tibet	1,038	620	–	–
Assam	113	53	741	452
Elsewhere	13,667	8,328	687	458
Total	1,24,391	71,289	5,694	3,128

[Source: *Census Of India, 1901, Vol-VI, Bengal, Part-I*, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p. Appendix I]

From the preceding table no 2:9 it can be observed that, in Terai it received numerous settlers from the adjoining district of Purnea and Jalpaiguri who were engaged in cultivation and a large number of colliers from Ranchi and Santal Pargana, who were attracted by the wages given in the tea gardens. But the great bulk of the immigrants come from Nepal, chiefly as labourers on the hill tea gardens.⁵³

In this connection it is to be mentioned that Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Purnea are well known to be unhealthy and have suffered since 1891, not only from Malaria but also from several epidemics of Cholera.⁵⁴ On the other hand Santhal Pargana had faced a severe famine and a heavy storm burst over the northern slope of the *Damin-i-Koh* in September 1899. As a result, at least 182,190 persons must have left the district during this decade (1891-1901). Most of these have left the district permanently for the Barind and other parts of Bengal or for Assam. The number of emigrants to Assam registered at Ranchi during this decade were 47,764 of whom nearly 20,000 were registered in the two years 1897-98 and 1899-1900.⁵⁵ The most striking features of migration in the Santal Parganas were firstly, its great volume and secondly, the strong tendency of the people to move eastwards.⁵⁶ Probably not more than a third were permanent settlers. The Santals, Mundas and Oraons who have made clearances in the jungles of North Bengal including Terai. The *zamindars* allow newly-cleared land to be held rent free for the first three or four years, and this exactly suits the taste of these unsophisticated aborigines, who do not mind the physical work involved in breaking down the jungle, but have a very great aversion to the payment of rent. They remain hold of the land until the rent is demanded and then move on. So, it is very uncertain to state that how many were come to stay in this region or Terai.⁵⁷ In 1901, the number of Oraons, Munda, Santals, Turia, Dhimal, Mech etc in Terai may be found from the following table no 2:10:

TABLE NO 2:10
CASTE, TRIBE OR RACE FOUND IN TERAI IN 1901

CASTE, TRIBE OR RACE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Rajbanshi (Koch)	–	–	29,178
Oraon	4,169	3,280	7,449
Munda	2069	1714	3,783
Santhal	882	726	1,608
Murmi	–	–	587
Dhimal	314	293	607
Khambu	–	–	562
Mech	–	–	343
Turai	136	73	209
Mahali	92	82	180
Kharia	69	68	137

[Source: *Census Of India, 1901*, Vol-VI, Bengal, Part-I, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, pp.118-126 And *Darjeeling District Gazetteer, Statistics, 1901-1902*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1905, pp.04-05]

In 1907 the Sub-division head-quarter was established in Siliguri. The people from different parts of the sub-continent had centered on Siliguri particularly due to tea, timber and transport trade. The attraction of the business prospect removed the fear of Malaria from the hearts of business loving people. Along with tea and timber, companies like Mark Mayer, Landen Clark, Railey Brothers etc related with jute business were established in this region. From the beginning of second decade of 20th century, the northern bank of the river Mahananda developed due to the growth of tea industry and the southern bank developed due the expansion of commercial activities.⁵⁸ The Census of 1911 shows a decline in the rate of increase, the actual addition of population in the district being 16,433, or 6.65 percent. The main reason behind this slow growth during this decade that there was only a limited area in which there was a room for an increase of population. Over one-third of the district was covered by reserved forests, while the tea gardens extend over about one-seventh of its area. All the land suitable for tea cultivation, within the area reserved for it, has been taken up. Therefore the tea gardens received no considerable increase of population during this period. The tea gardens labors possessed however, one-fifth of the total population of the district. In that period, it was shown that the tea garden population was slightly reduced, but this loss was more than counter balanced by the access of new settlers for ordinary cultivation. Nevertheless, the population of Terai was increased in 1911 “but it has not yet entirely made good the loss that occurred between 1891 and 1901, and the number of its inhabitants is still slightly less than it was 20 years(in 1891) ago.”⁵⁹ In 1911 the

population of Terai was 72,246⁶⁰ and which was slightly less than the population of Terai in 1891. Among them 40,399 were Males and 31,847 were Females and the number of persons per sq. miles was 286.⁶¹

TABLE NO 2:11
MIGRATION STATEMENTS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1901-1911
(NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

DARJEELING	1911		1901	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
ACTUAL POPULATION	1,42,094	1,23,456	1,33,005	1,16,112
IMMIGRANTS	67,102	50,056	71,289	53,102
EMIGRANTS	5,863	4,553	3,128	2,566
NATURAL POPULATION	80,855	77,953	64,844	65,579

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

The table no 2:11 thus revealed that the numbers of immigrants had decreased in the year of 1901 and on the other hand the number of emigrants had increased in 1911. The main reason was that there was some space available for settled habitation and the tea gardens has been passing through a serious crisis as stated earlier. However apart from this the most populous part of the district was Terai.⁶² The development of the jute and tobacco trade was increasing the demand for labour, which was not fully met from local sources. Therefore, a large number of labourers comes from Bihar and United Provinces, Santal Pargana and Chota Nagpur plateau; who found employment in different kinds of labour, e.g. as domestic servants, police constables, railway servants, field-labours leather-workers, *palki*-bearers etc.⁶³ In 1911, the numbers of Oraons immigrated in Terai were 1357, Munda 404 and Santals 362 persons.⁶⁴ In this context it is to be said that the number of tribal people is less than who emigrated from Terai during this decade. Among these immigrants the sex-ratio was fairly balanced and their migration, were therefore be called as semi-permanent. But despite their leaving the majority settled down and used to go home for an occasional visit only.⁶⁵

TABLE NO 2:12
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TERAI IN 1921

DISTRICT, SUB-DIVISION & THANA	AREA IN Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF		NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	POPULATION IN				PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION		NUMBER OF PERSONS PER SQ MILE IN 1921
		TOWNS	INHABITED RURAL MOUZAS		1921			1911	1911-1921	1901-1911	
					MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	BOTH SEX			
DARJEELING DISTRICT	1,164	2	302	65,008	1,49,094	1,33,654	2,82,748	2,65,550	6.5	6.6	243
TERAI OR SILIGURI	254	-	64	18,272	41,619	34,168	75,787	72,246	4.9	2.5	298
SILIGURI	91	-	24	6350	14,384	10,710	25,094	72,246	4.9	2.5	276
NAXALBARI	87	-	21	5393	11,752	9,955	21,707				249
PHANSIDEWA	51	-	16	4532	10,575	9,434	20,009				392
KORIBARI	25	-	03	1997	4,908	4,069	8,977				359

[Source: *Census Of India, 1921*, Vol-V, Bengal, Part-II, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1923, pp.456-457]

This growth of population in 1921, as shown in table no 2:12 was possible because of trade and commerce facilities, and development of tea industry. Terai used to hold at suitable and convenient places, a number of weekly and bi-weekly *hats* or markets belonging to Government and *Jotedars*. The most important of them being those at Matigara, Naxalbari, Panighata, Siliguri and Phansidewa which, in comparison, with density of population, were extraordinary flourishing centers of trade. All the *hats* and tea gardens were linked up by roads, some of them well metalled and fit for use throughout the year by all manner of vehicles. The northern branch of the Eastern Bengal Railway had its terminus at Siliguri from where the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway branches went out in three directions, viz, towards Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Purnea and thus taps the most important centers of trade in Tibet, Nepal, North Bengal and the hills.⁶⁶ For this reason, during 1911-1921 when the Darjeeling district received the increase of population about the same 6.5 per cent, Siliguri had gained 4.9 per cent against the 2.5 per cent of the previous decades as mentioned in the above table(2:12).⁶⁷ The population of Terai mainly consisted of the Bengalis while the picture of the rest of the district was quite different.⁶⁸

TABLE NO 2:13
MIGRATION STATEMENTS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1921
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

DISTRICT DARJEELING	1921			1911	1901
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	BOTH SEX	BOTH SEX
ACTUAL POPULATION	1,49,094	133,654	2,82,748	2,65,550	2,49,117
IMMIGRANTS	62,215	48,137	1,10,352	1,17,158	1,24,391
EMIGRANTS	6,530	4,713	11,243	10,416	5,696
NATURAL POPULATION	93,409	90,230	1,83,639	158,808	1,30,420

[Source: *Census of India, 1921*, Vol-V, Part- I, W. H. Thompson, Bengal, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1923, p. 68]

There was migration across the Nepal frontier and more than half of the immigrants came from Nepal, though the actual number of people who were born in Nepal has decreased by 15.7 per cent. Since 1911 tea cultivation was not spreading as it was in 1901, because most of the land which was suitable has now been taken up. At that time the Nepalese people of Darjeeling hills were to go into Jalpaiguri and Doars. It was for that, they were not try to mix with the people of Terai. On the other hand due to demand of labour force immigrants come from Purnea into Terai in large numbers. The people also come from other parts of Bihar and the United Provinces. Though, the numbers of Bengali immigrant were few at that time. Apart from this the numbers of immigrants has increased only slightly in between 1911-1921 compared with the increase between 1901 and 1911.⁶⁹

The following caste, tribe or races who were mostly found in Darjeeling Terai in 1921 is given below:

TABLE NO 2:14
CASTE, TRIBE OR RACE FOUND IN TERAI IN 1921

NAME	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Rajbanshi	12,194	10,997	23191
Dhimal	244	261	505
Santhal	1896	1171	3607
Oraon	5070	5062	10,132
Munda	2604	2718	5322
Khambu	139	177	316
Kharia	295	275	570
Bagdi	66	22	88
Baidya	143	118	261
Barui	427	51	478
Bauri	14	30	44
Bhumali	22	03	25
Chamar	297	141	834
Dhoba	311	129	440
Dom	187	97	284
Dosadh	255	106	361
Goala	705	313	1018
Kibarta	164	155	319
Kamar	66	64	130
Lohar	694	534	1228
Bhuiya	431	293	724
Numasudra	29	02	31
Malakar	187	100	287
Koch	90	51	141
Nuniya	227	208	435

[Source: *Census of India, 1921*, Vol- V, Bengal , Part- II, W. H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1923, pp. 09-10]

Among the above population (mention in table no 2:14), and the population which have already mentioned in the table no 2:12, the Bengali speaking people at that time in Darjeeling district were 38,106 (M- 20,836 and F- 17,270), Hindi and Urdu speaking persons were 21,236 (M-14,084 and F- 7,152), Kherwari 9,338 (M- 4,957 and F- 4,381) Kurukh 10132 (M-5070 and F- 5062) Malto 27 (M-27 and F-00), Gujrati 38 (M-28 and F-10), Marathi 424 (M-215 and F-209), Punjabi 63 (M-50 and F-13) and Rajasthani 1,256 (M-1098 and F-159).⁷⁰The people who were used Eastern Paharia or Khaskura language as their daily use were 63,936 (M-32,728 and F-31,208) in 1921, who were mostly settled in the hill region of the district of Darjeeling. The Muslims, who were mostly found in the Terai region of the district of Darjeeling their number in 1891, 7863 persons and in 1921 their number was decreased in 6,889 persons.⁷¹

After having serious degradation in tea industry in Darjeeling as well as in Terai in 1920-1921 it looked better by 1922-1923 and it was prevailed till 1926-1927 due to satisfactory condition of tea in Terai, the planters recruited more laborers from Chotanagpur. But from 1927 to 1931 the condition of tea was again unsatisfactory⁷² and therefore it may presume that labour recruitment in tea industry might have been stopped. So, in 1931 the number of new person in Terai were 4,471.

TABLE NO 2:15
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TERAI IN 1931

DISTRICT, SUB-DIVISION AND THANA	AREA IN Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF			POPULATION IN				PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION		NUMBER OF PERSONS PER Sq. MILE IN 1931
		TOWNS	INHABITED RURAL MOUZAS	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	1931			1921	1921-1931	1911-1921	
					MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL				
DARJEELING DISTRICT	1,221	06	531	71,191	1,70,131	1,49,504	3,19,635	2,82,748	11.9	3.8	330
TERAI OR SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	278	01	262	17,172	45,090	35,168	80,258	75,787	5.9	4.9	289
SILIGURI	124	01	99	6,939	20,789	15,179	35,968	55,778	6.0	4.9	290
KHARIBARI	90	-	96	5,380	12,783	10,362	231,45				257
PHANSIDEWA	64	-	67	4,853	11,518	9,627	21,145	20,009	5.7	11	330

[Source: **Census of India, 1931**, Vol-V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part- II, A.E. Porter, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1932, p.260]

The above mentioned population (in table no 2:15) increased in 1931, was due to some extent for the introduction and expansion of the broad gauge railway lines in Siliguri. A. E. Porter stated that “.....the extension of the broad gauge railway to this place (Terai) probable accounts for the greatest part of the increase, but an accurate estimate cannot be made owing to the fact that Kharibari P.S which is now shown separately, was not separately shown in 1921 and it is reported that the bulk of the increase of population almost certainly comes from outside from such places as Muzaffarpur, Patna and Darbhanga in Bihar and from the hills.”⁷³ In Terai the number of Tharu people in 1931 were 231⁷⁴ and Meches were 346, among them 181 were Male and 165 were Female.⁷⁵ The number of Dhimals were 375, Rajbanshi 26,969, Santal 4299, Oraons 12,412 and the Mundas were 5,062 souls^{75a} who mostly settled in Terai region of the district, apart from this the Negesia and Turi, who were come from Chotanagpur in Terai were 358 and 117 respectively.⁷⁶ The other tribes and non-tribes races and castes who were mostly found in Darjeeling Terai were as follows:

TABLE NO 2:16
PROMINENT TRIBES AND NON-TRIBES RACES AND CASTES FOUND IN TERAJ IN 1931

NAME OF THE GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Kherwar	6,537	5,033	11,570
Bhumij	46	43	89
Ho	02	03	05
Kora Or Koda	414	40	454
Korwa	105	119	224
Kharai	815	231	1,082
Malto	59	37	96
Bhumali	–	–	50
Bhuyia	–	–	66
Chamar	–	–	633
Dhoba	–	–	209
Dom	–	–	111
Dosadh	–	–	170
Ghasi	–	–	217
Hari	–	–	548
Kaibartta (Jalia)	–	–	71
Koch	–	–	122
Malpahariya	–	–	1,801
Muchi	–	–	156
Musahar	–	–	234
Namosudra	–	–	42
Methor	–	–	196

[Source: *Census of India, 1931*, Vol-V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part- II, A.E. Porter, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1932, p.190 And *Census 1951, The Tribes And Castes Of West Bengal*, A. Mitra, West Bengal Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1953, pp.95-110]

The number of Marwaries of Darjeeling district was 1473 in 1931. Among them 1,196 persons were Males and 277 persons were Females, the number of Punjabis was 127 (M-97, F-26), who were scattered in all over the district.⁷⁷ Though, their number in Terai is not found. Most probably their immigration was temporary in the district, because the preponderance of male population over female in this connection is noticeable.⁷⁸

From 1931 onwards Terai began to attract more and more immigrants, the bulk of whom were traders, white-collared employees and transport workers from the Indian plains, who came in the wake of urbanization of Siliguri an entrepot market and the most important transport node in north-eastern India.⁷⁹ In 1941 there were 9,756 new persons increased in Terai.

TABLE NO 2:17
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TERAI IN 1941

DISTRICT AND SUB-DIVISION	AREA IN Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF			POPULATION IN				PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION		NUMBER OF PERSONS PER Sq. MILE IN 1941
		TOWNS	VILLAGES	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	1941			1931	1931-1941	1921-1931	
					MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	TOTAL			
DARJEELING DISTRICT	1,192	06	578	82,138	1,99891	1,76478	3,76369	3,19,635	17.7	13.0	316
TERAI OR SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	258	01	194	21,222	50,674	39,340	90,014	80,258	12.2	5.9	349
SILIGURI	124	1	74	10,217	24,663	17,700	42,363	35,968	17.8	6.00	342
KHORIBARI	70	-	62	5,614	13,411	10,805	24,216	23,145	4.6		346
PHANSIDEWA	64	-	58	5,391	12,600	10,835	23,435	21,145	10.8	5.7	366

[Source: *Census Of India, 1941*, Vol-IV, Bengal, R.A. Dutch, Government Of India Press, Simla, 1942, p.65]

The table no 2:17 shows that, the Siliguri Sub-Division had an area of 22 percent of the district area but it received or consist 24 percent population of that district. The density of population was thus slightly higher than that of that district. Even the density of population throughout the sub-division was not equal .During this decade (1931-1941) the Kharibari *thana* showed the lowest rate of increase and the Siliguri *thana* the highest. It was because the forest and waste land of that area were well cultivated and much being under tea. On the other hand the high rate of increase in Siliguri was no doubt due to abnormally rapid expansion of the Siliguri urban area. This expansion has taken place in spite of unhealthy and insanitary conditions and has no doubt been due to Siliguri's increasing importance as a focus of communications.⁸⁰ The 1941 Census figures gave the Male population as 1,76,478 persons and the Female population as 1,76,478, i.e. just over 88 females for every 100 males. In the hill areas of the district it was about 92; but the number of females for every 100 males in Terai was only 78. So, these figures perhaps indicate that the population of the hill areas was more permanent than that of Terai.⁸¹

Hence, the Census of 1941 gave for the last time, detailed ethnic group wise population figures for the district. Among the Bengalis the Scheduled Caste Rajbanshis i.e. a composite caste formed by some former ethnic group like the Koches, Paliyas, Kantais etc. were the majority, their numbering were about 17,991, besides 5,655 persons belonging to other Bengali Hindu Scheduled Caste group. They together accounted for 6.2 percent population of the district. High caste Bengali Hindus, numbering 13,830 and the Bengali Muslims, numbering 6,280 formed 5.3 percent total

population of the district. Taking Bengalis of all social denominations together, it was found that in 1941 they formed 11.5 percent of the population of Darjeeling district. Members of tribes who were mostly found in the Terai, namely Oraons 12,433, Mundas 4,993, Santals 4,045 and others, together numbered 27,155 were accounted for 7.2 percent population in 1941. The Hindi-speaking Hindus from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, numbering 21,996, Urdu-speaking Muslims from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh numbering 2,448 and the Jains and Hindus from Rajasthan, numbering 2,416, together numbered 27,894 were accounted for 7.4 percent of the population of the district in the same Census year.⁸²

TABLE NO 2:18
POPULATION OF TERAI AND DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1941

GROUP, RACE, TRIBE OF CASTE	SILIGURI OR TERAI	DARJEELING DISTRICT	PERCENTAGE IN SILIGURI	PERCENTAGE IN THREE HILL SUB-DIVISION
MUSLIMS	6,924	8,728	7.7	0.6
SCHEDULED CASTES	47,511	50,750	52.7	1.1
PLAIN HINDUS(OTHERS THEN S.C)	29,644	39,276	32.9	3.4
NEPALIS	5,572	2,54,608	6.2	86.8
OTHER HILMEN	73	20,083	0.0	7.0
INDIAN CRISTIANS	359	730	0.5	1.0
BRITISH	45	884		
ANGLO-INDIANS	16	935		
EUROPEANS	09	228		
ASIATICS	56	588		
TOTAL	90,209	3,76,810	100.0	99.9

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteer : Darjeeling*, A.J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, pp.62-63]

It is to be note that the number of Rajbanshis in 1941 as recorded in the Census has decreased by 9000 in total from 1931. A. J. Dash describes it as “ faulty declaration of Census slips”. Probably, for this reason the Dhimals and the Koches were not traceable in the Census of 1941.⁸³ About half of the Rajbanshis were recorded as the inhabitant of the Kharibari *thana*. The numbers of the aboriginal Meches were 275 in Terai in 1941. A very few Muslims were found in the tea areas of the Terai and they were most numerous in the rural areas of Phansidewa (2,520 persons) and Kharibari *thana* (905 persons). About 2,900 of the Santals in the Siliguri sub-division lived in non-tea garden areas and only about 1,000 within tea gardens. It may be presumed that all were recruited for tea garden works most of whom were still employed as labourers. The number of Mundas who lived in tea garden areas were 2,666 persons and other areas of the Terai were 1805 persons. In the case of Oraons it was 5137 and 6867 respectively. The Oraons (13 percent) and the Munadas (3 percent) together formed about eighteen percent population of the sub-division.⁸⁴ The Marwaris, who were mostly settled in

Siliguri town were 343 persons in 1941. The Hindi-speaking Hindus were mainly Beharis. They were most numerous in the Terai, though in the tea areas their number were 10,711 persons and in other rural areas were 3,824 persons.⁸⁵

The population in Terai increased by fifty two percent during the period of 1872-1891 and beside tea industry, one of the reasons behind this increase was the extension of railways up to Siliguri in 1881. The easy means of transport helped drag give, a large employment seeker to the growing areas of Terai. With the opening up of most of the tea gardens in Terai by the first two decade of the twentieth century the numbers of migrants, further increased. Most of these migrants were Marwari traders of Rajputana, poor peasants of Bihar and Orissa. Expert artisans, such as Punjabi carpenters also arrived there while Bengali migrations of various Bengal districts come in Terai for clerical jobs and accounts keepers works. As driver of pack ponies, domestic servant, as workers in road construction works, as barbers and masons, as scavengers and sweepers. Terai offered new avenues to earn their bread who had no means of livelihood in their native land. Thus with the turn of the 19th century, as per census report of 1901, Terai had a density in population, two hundred and fifty three persons per square miles of territory and garden laborers formed one fifth of its total population within the next decade, 1901-1911, the density in population on Terai further shown up to two hundred and eighty six people. It was observed in the said Census Report that pressure of the population on the soil was greatest in Terai despite its unhygienic condition and unusual death rates wooing to bivalent diseases like *Kala-Azar* and malaria. In 1921 it came to two hundred and fifty four persons per sq. miles. With occasional fall, as it was shown in 1921 the density was found to be on the increase in the subsequent decades during the period under reviews.

DEMOGRAPIC CHANGES IN TERAI IN POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:

In the period 1941-1951 while Darjeeling district, for instance recorded an increase in population by 18.3 percent, Terai or Siliguri sub-division registered an increase of 29.4 percent. During the forties and fifties following the partition of India and Bengal a large number of people deserted the wrest while East Pakistan now Bangladesh and come to various parts of the Indian dominion as refugees. Such displaced persons also came in Siliguri town in large numbers⁸⁶ and in 1951 the population in Darjeeling

Terai recorded to be 1,16,475 souls (Siliguri 68,280, Kharibari 24, 876 and Phansidewa 23,319 persons).⁸⁷ In Terai, Rajbanshis once constituted the bulk of the native population, but due to the settlement of displaced persons in massive scale during 1947-1971 numerical superiority of the Rajbanshis was crushed.⁸⁸ This had produced far reaching effects in the socio- political history of the entire zone as will be seen later.

Needless to mention the bulk of the displaced persons were the middle class Bengali Hindus. Quite a large number of them were fairly educated and about one third of total Bengali Hindu refugees from East Pakistan had settled in the neighborhood of Siliguri town, but the rest belonging to the lower stratum settled in the remote areas of Terai as cultivators in Siliguri sub-division. As many of them were experts in paddy growing task, the yield in the agricultural produce substantially increase. During the period between 1947-1951 besides the Hindus the population the Mohammedans were also increase.⁸⁹ In 1951, 1.44 percent of the population in Darjeeling district was belongs to Mohammedan population⁹⁰ and most of them were settled in the plain areas of the Darjeeling district, named Terai as agricultural labourers and cultivations. Between 1946-1951, a total of 15,738 persons, among them 8,931 Males and 6,807 Females were immigrated from the former East Pakistan into Darjeeling district. In 1950 alone, following the disturbances in the East Pakistan, the largest number of displaced Hindu Bengali families arrived and settled in the Terai belt.⁹¹ The stream of such arrivals continued up to 1960 and consequently the number of settlers in Terai swelled beyond imagination. A. Mitra pointed out that, the II World War also gave a great fillip to recruitment in the armed services and between 1945 and 1950 was the most prosperous quinquennium that the district has even seen. It was for that the war brought prosperity in every way to tea, to agriculture and contractors of military supplies. In this connection it is to be mentioned here that Darjeeling was also one of the first districts where full rationing was introduced early in 1944 over a wide area. It was this that, there was very little migration in the hills after the partition but Terai saw some between 1949-1951.⁹²

The partition (1947), based on the distribution of majority community, would naturally lead to the existence of minority community, as well, both in East Pakistan and West Bengal. Exodus emerged as a part of the problem faced by this minority community, when, millions of people fled from their ancestral homes with whatever they could slavage. The exodus from East Pakistan were ceased entirely with migrants

continuing to come for relief and rehabilitation over a long stretch of time. This series and large scale migration in both North and South Bengal was caused by the casualties and oppression happened over the minority Hindus in East Pakistan by orthodox Muslim. It can be clearly learnt from the All Bengal Refugee Convention held at Calcutta University on 11th June 1950, that the minorities in East Pakistan were spending their lives in miserable conditions.⁹³ Presiding over the convention, Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee pointed out that the harassment and outrage of Hindus in East Pakistan between 1st May to 31st May, 1950 are as follows:⁹⁴

Murder	-	32
Abduction with or without rape	-	23
Rape	-	05
Missing Girls	-	04
Outraging Family modesty	-	06
Dacoity	-	202
Robbery	-	35
Theft	-	15
Extortion	-	76
Arson	-	16
Stabbing and Grievousheapt	-	05
Forcible occupation and trespass	-	123
Wrongful conferment	-	02
Defiling Hindu temples	-	16
Total		630

During post Independent period there was going on a series of communal-riots in East Pakistan and each of the every riot forced the Hindus to be migrated in their mostly affinitative Bengal. Though after the Libration of Bangladesh in 1971 the Government was changed their but the mind of majority community did not change .It should be kept in minds that the influx from East Pakistan to West Bengal was not balanced by a counter efflux from Indian part.⁹⁵

In the post-colonial migration in North Bengal got a new impetus instigated by the political ups and downs in boarder, most important in this context is the Chinese occupation of Tibet. For a long time China was demanding her suzerainty over Tibet .But when the Civil War in China came to an end and the Communist Government was established in China, Tibet was annexed by China in 1949. With this annexation of China the Tibetans were started to migrate in India, particularly in West Bengal. However, these Tibetan refugees were given place in Southern Bengal, but latter for geographical and climatic reasons they settled in Darjeeling. Thus a large bulk of Tibetan migrants

settled in Darjeeling also Siliguri sub- division. Though the main bulk of Tibetan refugees began arriving in India from 1959. For instance ,out of 6,292 Tibetan refugees who settled in Kalimpong between 1959-1967, only 606 persons were found living there in November 1977.⁹⁶ This indicated that they scattered all over the district including Terai region.

Another important feature regarding the immigration in Bengal as a whole, particularly in North Bengal was the *Bangal Khedao* movement in Assam which started in early 1960s. The Assamese from the felling of marginalization started the movement to quit Bengalis from Assam. This also led to the large influx of Ahom-Bengalis into Bengal, particularly in Darjeeling Terai.⁹⁷

In the initial stage the number of immigrants settled in Darjeeling Sadar sub-division was higher than in Terai sub-division mainly due to health ground, as stated earlier. But after the partition of India the scenario radically changed rammed by sudden influx. During the period of 1951-1961 only four to five percent people migrated to the hill area of Darjeeling but it was abnormally high in the Terai.⁹⁸

TABLE NO 2:19
VARIATION OF DENSITY (PERSONS PER sq. mile) IN DARJEELING AND TERAI 1931-1971

PLACE	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
HILL AREA OF DARJEELING (933.3 S.q. MILE)	256	307	352	434	514
DARJEELING TERAI (323.3 S.q. MILE)	287	323	405	680	938
WEST BENGAL(34194 S.q. MILE)	533	679	769	1021	1296

[Source: 'Demographic Pattern of the Hill Areas of Darjeeling District: A Study of the Census of 1971', Manas Das Gupta, *The Himalayas: Profiles of Modernization and Adaptation*, S. K. Chaube, (ed), Starling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1985,p.53]

The Census of 1961 recorded 35.90 percent increase in population of Darjeeling district. The increase in population in three sub-division i.e. Darjeeling, Kerseong and Kalimpong was only nominal, but it was abnormally high in the fourth sub-division Terai which has shown a spectacular increase of population to the tune of 68.04 percent. In 1961, in Phansidewa and Kharibari police stations in Terai increase in population was recorded to be 55.47 percent and 46.24 percent respectively. This high increase has been shared both by the tracts under command of agriculture and rapidly growing urban areas centering round Siliguri. The police station of Naxalbari has even shown the rate of

growth of population as 82.84 percent which was followed by Siliguri police station with a growth rate of 77.96 percent. Besides there two police stations, the highly industrialized and urbanized police station of Durgapur in Burdwan district and five other police stations of 24 Parganas district have shown a higher growth rate of population in West Bengal.⁹⁹ Besides the Hindu Bengali displaced persons who come in Terai by 1961 a good number of Hindi-speaking traders also came in Terai in search of employment, of which a section started petty business.¹⁰⁰ They helped increase in the number of population in Terai. One common trends among the new arrivals from outside and within India was, most of them preferred to settle in the rural areas i.e. in the plains of Terai except hill, despite health hazards and higher mortality rates. The following table will exhibit urban and rural rate of their settlement.

TABLE NO 2:20
PERSONS ENUMERATED IN DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1961

PLACE	PERSON	RURAL	URBAN
BIHAR	40,287	26,046	14,241
MADYA PRADAESH	2,206	2,068	138
ORISSA	2,231	1,962	269

[Source: *Census 1961, District Census Hand Book: Darjeeling, Part-I*, Bisweswar Roy, Directorate Of Census Operations ,West Bengal,1961, pp.61-62]

It deserves to be mentioned here that when in 1956 some areas of Purnea district were transferred to Darjeeling district. This addition of land also helped Terai to raise its population. The portions which come from Purnea were dominated by Mohammedan people. Therefore this also enhanced the Muslim community in this region.

TABLE NO 2:21
MIGRANTS CLASSIFIED BY PLACE OF BIRTH AND DURATION OF RESIDENCE
IN DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1961
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)
 PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANTS CLASSIFIED BY DURATION OF RESIDENCE IN THE DISTRICT IN YEARS

WHERE BORN	NO. OF MIGRANTS	LESS THAN 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16 AND OVER	PERIOD NOT STATED
BORN OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT BUT WITH IN THE STATE OF ENUMERATION	13,521	16.95	33.42	17.18	13.39	16.71	2.34
BIHAR	40,287	9.71	26.72	23.33	14.80	24.05	1.39
SIKKIM	5,961	4.50	16.78	20.95	20.33	35.90	1.59
NEPAL	41,109	6.84	20.32	17.56	16.13	36.85	2.31
PAKISTAN	38,162	25.37	24.13	17.44	21.03	11.44	.57
TIBET	4,717	-	-	-	-	-	-

[Source: *West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, Amiya Banerjee, Barun Dey and Others, Superintendent of Printing, Calcutta, 1980, p.110]

It will be seen from the preceding table no 2:21 that only 11.44 percent or 4,364 out of a total of 38,162 persons from East Pakistan residing in the district of Darjeeling in 1961 had come to settle there before the partition of the country.¹⁰¹ In 1961 it was found that 21,794 persons or little over 57 percent of the total of 38,162 persons lived in the urban areas of the district mostly in Siliguri, while 16368 persons or a little less than 43 percent had settled in the rural areas in Terai. However, a little percentage might have settled in the hills.¹⁰² On the other hand it is so difficult to say how many Bihari people lived in the Terai areas of Darjeeling district in 1961. Though, it may be presume that they are scattered in all the places of Darjeeling district as stated earlier. The following table no 2:23 will show at a glance the population in Darjeeling Terai in 1961 excluding Siliguri urban areas (Siliguri Municipality):

TABLE NO 2:22
NUMBER OF INHABITED VILLEGES, AVERAGE POPULATION PER VILLAGE AND
NUMBER OF VILLAGES PER HUNDRED SQUARE MILES OF TERAI IN 1961

SUB-DIVISION OR POLICE STATION	AREA IN Sq. MILES (RURAL)	NO. OF INHABITED VILLAGES	TOTAL PERSONS (RURAL)	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE PERSON PER INHABITED VILLEGES	NUMBER OF INHABITED VILLEGES PER 100 MILES (RURAL)
TERAI	317.3	297	1,54377	83954	70,423	520	94
PHANSIDEWA	120.6	90	58,573	31,581	26,992	651	75
SILIGURI	61.5	66	27,654	15,179	12,475	419	197
KHARIBARI	55.4	70	25,957	14,135	11,822	371	126
NAXALBARI	79.8	71	42,193	23,059	19,134	594	89

[Source: *Census 1961, District Census Hand Book: Darjeeling, Part-I*, Bisweswar Roy, Directorate Of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1961, p.34]

Census Reports indicate that during the last sixty years period of 20th century Darjeeling's growth of urban population showed a phenomenal increase. In 1931 due to the inclusion of more areas under urban command, the urban population added more than half the number of what the district had in 1921. The people of this district appear to have more predilections for town life, as almost every fourteen persons of this district is a town dweller. Population in general of the other North Bengal district seems to be less inclined for town life. It is least in Malda where only four percent of the populations are town dwellers.¹⁰³ From this period the enormous demographic change had occurred in and around Siliguri urban areas, which will be discussed in chapter V.

By 1971, population of Terai increased further. It was estimated to be 301,799 persons of whom 1,67,090 Males and 1,34,709 Females, and density was 360 persons per sq. kilometer, much higher than the average density of the whole district which was only 254 persons per sq. kilometer. In other words, Siliguri sub-division covering only 26.5 percent of the total area of the district accounted for 38.6 percent of the total population, which was due to the fertility of its soil as also the widespread industrial and commercial activities in and around Siliguri.¹⁰⁴ Apart for these, the importance of Terai was further enhanced by the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Along with the heavy military concentration in the Terai Forest area, new railway station came into existence in Siliguri. Due to this trade and commerce flourished. Transport became a very important

occupation for a large number of people.¹⁰⁵ The following table (no 2:23) shows the population distribution of Darjeeling Terai in 1971 is as follows:

TABLE NO 2:23

THANA WISE DISTRIBUTION AND DENSITY OF POPULATION IN TERAI IN 1971

SUB-DIVISION OR POLICE STATION	AREA IN S.q. K.M	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES	DENSITY PER S.q. K.M
SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	837.4	3,01,799	1,67,090	1,34,709	360
PHANSIDEWA	312.4	71,885	38,252	33,633	230
SILIGURI	174.8	1,34,392	77,443	56,949	760
KHARIBARI	143.5	44,723	23,584	21,139	312
NAXALBARI	206.7	50,799	27,811	22,988	246

[Source: *West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, Amiya Banerjee, Barun Dey and Others, Superintendent of Printing, Calcutta, 1980, p.98]

The above table no 2:23 shows that when the entire Terai region received density 360 persons per sq.km. Siliguri police station recorded more than double persons per sq. km. Another interesting thing regarding Siliguri town is that while in the urban areas of the three hill sub-division the women compose 44.82 percent of the population it was only 42.41 in Siliguri town. It was for the reason that most of the immigrants into the urban areas of the hills, except traders from Bihar and Rajasthan, were permanent settlers, where as a great number of immigrants in Siliguri town were traders, skilled or unskilled workers and day laborers who were non-permanent residents. In the rural areas of Siliguri sub-division, especially in the tea gardens, more non-permanent residents were found.¹⁰⁶

TABLE NO 2:24

DECADAL CHANGES IN DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN TERAI 1971-1981

POLICE STATIONS	1971			1981			PERCENTAGE OF DECADAL VARIATION		
	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN
NAXALBARI	50,799	50799	-	81175	72467	8708	59.80	42.65	-
SILIGURI	134392	36908	97484	232610	78232	154378	73.08	111.96	58.36
PHANSIDEWA	71855	71855	-	107464	107464	-	49.49	49.49	-
KHARIBARI	44723	44723	-	51646	51646	-	15.48	15.48	-

[Source: *Census Of India 1981 (Series 23, West Bengal) District Census Handbook, Darjeeling*, Part XIII-B, Director Of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1987, p.10]

According to the Census of 1971, Darjeeling district was inhabited by 781,777 persons. However, in 1981 the state of West Bengal experienced an increase in population of 23.17 percent over the base population of 1971. During this period Darjeeling district has gone up 2,42,492 i.e 31.02 percent over its population. Likewise the district has increased by 23.36 percent rural and 56.57 percent urban population against 20.36 rural and 31.73 percent urban population in the whole state. The Census Reports indicates that the high increase in urban population in the district is explained by the fact that the population of Siliguri Municipal Town recorded 1,54,375 persons i.e an increase of 56,894 new persons over the decade (1971-1981).¹⁰⁷ The above table no 2:24 shows that during this period Siliguri police station recorded 111.96 percent increase in population growth, which is better to say an abnormal. Besides Kharibari, the other two police station in Terai region i.e Naxalbari and Phansidewa also recorded a phenomenal growth in population. The main reasons behind this population growth were the continuation of migration from Bangladesh after 1971 and *Bangal Khedao* movement in Assam as stated earlier.

TABLE NO 2:25
DECADAL CHANGE IN DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION 1981-1991 IN SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION
(Darjeeling Terai)

NAME OF POLICE STATION	1981			1991			PERCENTAGE OF DECADAL VARIATION 1981-1991			PERCENTAGE OF URBAN POPULATION	
	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	1981	1991
NAXALBARI	81175	72467	8708	102537	90473	12064	+26.32	+24.85	+38.54	10.73	11.77
MATIRARA-INVESTIGATION CENTRE	77165	77165	--	84760	80057	4703	+9.84	+3.75	--	--	5.55
SILIGURI	155445	1067	154378	223747	6797	216950	+43.94	+537.02	+40.53	+99.31	+96.96
PHANSIDEWA	107464	107464	--	140045	140045	--	+30.32	+30.32	--	--	--
KHARIBARI	51646	51646	--	64012	64012	--	+23.94	23.94	--	--	--
DISTRICT	1024269	742116	282153	1299919	903859	396060	+26.91	+21.79	+40.37	+27.55	+30.47

[Source: *Census of India 1991 (Series-26, West Bengal), District Census Handbook: Darjeeling*, Part XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1992, p. xxi]

During the last decade of the 20th Century Siliguri sub-division witnessed the enormous growth of population. Apart from Siliguri's rapid urban growth the main reason behind this were the 'Anti- Foreigner Movement' which was started in the early part of the 80s of the 20th Century in the North-Eastern part of India especially in Assam and Meghalaya. This drove out the Bengali speaking persons bound to search their new

settlement which was nearly identical with their religion, caste, custom etc and in this regard Siliguri was their first choice. On the other hand the political disturbance in those areas (N.E. India) persuaded the business community mostly Marwaries and Biharies to set up their new commercial hub, and in this connection after 1962 Sino-Indian war Siliguri became the transit point of entire North-East India on the one side and hills and Dooars on the other. As a result a large number of shops and godown were opened in both side of Hill Cart Road, Sevok Road and Bidhan Road of Siliguri. In this connection numerous Medicine Shops and Store business are noticeable .Bhutan also drove the Nepali speaking people, who were popularly known as ‘Bhupali’ made their settlement in the rural areas of Terai. A rehabilitation camp was made by UNO in Jhapa of Nepal Terai to gave some short of shelters of these Bhupali migrant. But after dissolved the camp they were mostly settled in Naxalbari and Kharibari areas. The communal violence of Bangladesh in the latter part of the 80s in 20th Century bound to migrate the minority Bengali Hindus and Bihari Muslims to settled themselves in North Bengal. In course of time, due to job opportunity they made their permanent settlement in and around of Siliguri’s urban areas. Between 1951 and 1991 the Hindu population of Bangladesh declined by about 12%. The above table no 2:25 reveled the real picture of the enormous growth of population in Siliguri urban areas, which will be discussed in chapter V.

The above narratives indicate how once a sparely populated and unknown wilderness like Terai was peopled by migrants coming from different parts of India under the Company’s Rule. The stream of outsiders continued there even after the termination of the British rule. Though, migration was very high mainly due to economic reasons, yet the tea gardens dragged the bulk of migrants for its own growth, development and survival. Despite the migrants heterogeneous character in language and way of life, they formed as will be seen later a composite class and helped generating a historic peasant class movement in the subsequent period for the redress of their grievance. The story will be told in chapter VI.

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