CHAPTER IV

POPULATION PATTERN OF KAMRUP DISTRICT IN ASSAM
AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILY LIFE

Since hoary past Assam has been the assimilating ground of divergent people and cultures, while the Tibeto-Burmese entered into the fertile Brahmaputra Valley and the numerous hills on its basins, the Aryan's poured into the land mainly from the Indo-Gangetic plains in the heart land of India. Like many other parts over the globe, Assam too witnessed major human exodus at different periods of history. Thus the Brahmaputra valley acted as the melting ground of many ethnic and cultural groups resulting in the emergence of the present day composite Assam culture.

Following the legendary story of Kamadeva (cupid) and his consort Rati (goddess of eroticism) this part of the territory forming the north eastern part of the Indian peninsula was known as Kamrupa, the land where Kamadeva was restored to life after he was burnt to ashes by the wrath of Lord Shiva. Later on, Kamrupa became a famous centre of astronomy according to which this land came to be known as Pragjyotishpura, the eastern most land (of India) famed in astrology. Ancient Kamrupa
and later Pragjyotishpura was an independent land ruled by the mighty rulers like Bhagadutta of Mahabharata fame. Naturally, the civilization of ancient Kamrupa dates back to several centuries before Christ.

The lower part of the Brahmaputra valley around present day Guwhati formed the most civilized spot of Hindu culture in ancient Assam. The composite population of Aryan and non-Aryan tribes repulsed many expeditions both from the heartland of India and from the tribes of the surrounding hills. During Kumar Bhaskar Varman's rule the fame of Assamese culture and civilization attained their zeniths.

The 1981 census could not be conducted in Assam due to the then prevailing abnormal situation. As a result the actual population of the land and other demographic particulars are not reliably known. The data of the 1991 census conducted in Assam are not yet made available. Nevertheless, while realizing the provisional data for 1981 census in India, the registrar

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1 Sarua B.K. - A Cultural History of Assam (early period) Vol. I. Horizon publishing House, Delhi, p. 10.

2 Saikia Nagen - Ed. Assam and Assamese mind - Assam Sahitya Sabha, Chandrakanta Mandique Bhawan, Jorhat, Assam. Article by - Sharma Dr. Tarun Chandra - The culture and civilization of Assam, p. 19.
General has given the projected population figures for the state as 199 lakhs in 1981, as against 146 lakhs recorded in the 1971 census. The population of the state was estimated as 228 lakhs as on 1st October, 1985. Assam's population thus increased by 50.3 percent compared to 18.7 percent increase at all India level.  

As per 1981 census report Assam constitutes about 2.4 percent (78,523 sq.km.) of the total land areas and accommodates 2.9 percent of India's population. It has two distinct natural regions, the plains comprising the Brahmaputra and the Barak Valleys and the hill areas of the State separating the two valleys.

Assam's population was 33 lakhs in 1901 which rose to 199 lakhs in 1981 (estimated). Since, 1961, Assam's population began to grow at a much faster rate than in most other provinces. Thus, the decennial population growth rate in Assam during 1971-81 based on this projection was 36.09 percent compared to 24.75 percent for India during the same period. Table No. 1 below

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2 Ibid. 1982-83, p. 3.
3 Ibid.
shows the population trend in Assam and the country as a whole since 1901.

**TABLE NO. 1**

Population trend in Assam and India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (in lakhs)</th>
<th>P.C. Decade Variation</th>
<th>Density (Persons per Sq. Km.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2384</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2521</td>
<td>+ 17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2513</td>
<td>+ 20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2709</td>
<td>+ 19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3186</td>
<td>+ 20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3611</td>
<td>+ 19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4392</td>
<td>+ 35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>5481</td>
<td>+ 35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>199(a)</td>
<td>6852</td>
<td>+ 36.1(a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The density of population in Assam is estimated at 284 persons per sq. km. in 1981, against 221 in India. In 1971, the

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*Economic Survey Assam 1985-86, op.cit., p. 4.*
density of population in the State was 186 persons per sq. km, as against 177 for the country. The State is divided into 23 (twenty three) districts (including five carved out in 1989).

The Kamrup District of Assam was formed in the year 1834. The District was reorganised on 15th August, 1983. On 28th February, 1984, Kamrup district was further reorganised.

In the present series of studies the data are shown in respect of the district as per reorganisation of 15th August, 1983. Thus the present study includes both present day Nalbari and Kamrup districts.

The reorganised Kamrup District falls between 25°04'43"N and 26°51' latitudes and between 90°56'E and 92°12'E longitudes and is bounded on the North by Bhutan. On the South partly by Meghalaya and partly by Goalpara district, on the East by Darrang and Nagaon Districts and on the West by Darrpatia District.

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7 Ibid. 1982-83, p. 3.
The river Brahmaputra running from east to west divides the district into two parts with major portion of the Guwahati sub-division. On the southern bank and Nalbari Sub-division, Rangia Sub-division and a small portion of Guwahati sub-division on the Northern Bank. 10

ARLA AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

As per reorganisation of 15th August, 1983, the old Barpeta Sub-division of Kamrup District was bifurcated and declared a separate District. The newly formed Kamrup District consists of three sub-divisions namely, Guwahati, Nalbari and Rangia. The new Sub-division Rangia of reorganised Kamrup District was formed by bifurcating a portion of the old Guwahati sub-division and a small portion of the old Nalbari sub-division. The reorganised Kamrup district consists of an area of 6,648.7 sq. kms. There are altogether fifteen (15) revenue circles and seventeen (17) C.D. blocks served by eighty three (83) gram panchayats. The District has 2,263 villages of which 2114 are inhabited and the rest 149 uninhabited villages. 11

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p. 2.
It has eleven (11) towns of which three (3) are under Guwahati Municipal Corporation. Three under Municipal Boards and two (2) under two town committees while the other three (3) have not been served by any town committee or municipal board. Guwahati is the administrative head quarter of the District. The State capital (temporary) is also located at Dispur within the Guwahati Sub-division.12

PHYSICAL FEATURES:

The district has a widely varied topography. It has undulating land, alluvial plains and 'beals' of varying sizes. The Southern Bank of the mighty Brahmaputra is somewhat elevated. The hills which are part of the extended Khasi-Jayantia Hills vary from 100 metres to 330 metres in height above plains. Most of these hills and mounts are connected with some mythical episodes and are consacrated to gods and goddesses and therefore treated holy places. The holiest and the best known among them is the Nisachal Hill holding on its top the Kamakhya temple. Other hills connected with such

12 Ibid.
mythological importance are the Sobardhan Parbat, the Suragohain Parbat, the Gumi hills, the Kameswar Hills, the Siddheswar Hills, the Pis - Moco Hills, the Hatimora hills, the Medan Kamdev Hills, the Supeswar Hills etc. 13

POPULATION:

The 1971 census tells the total population of Kamrup as 13,92,446 of which 10,01,969 are males and 3,80,461 females. 14 Table No. 2 below shows the decadal variation of population since 1951 in the district.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Decadal Variation</th>
<th>P.C. Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>9,50,969</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>13,47,010</td>
<td>3,96,041</td>
<td>40.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>18,82,446</td>
<td>5,35,436</td>
<td>39.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid, p. 4.
15 Ibid.
KAMRUP DISTRICT

SCHEDULE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION,

(1971)

INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENSITY/KM²</th>
<th>GUWAHATI</th>
<th>RANGIA</th>
<th>NALBARI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1164</td>
<td>6589</td>
<td>1035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KAMRUP DISTRICT

SCHEDULE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION,

(1971)
Thanas and sub-division wise population of the District as per 1971 census is given below (Table 3).

### TABLE 3

**POPULATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subdivision</th>
<th>Thana</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Guwahati</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) 1,97,280</td>
<td>Asoko</td>
<td>1,57,280</td>
<td>61,177</td>
<td>76,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 1,07,302</td>
<td>Chhaygaon</td>
<td>1,07,302</td>
<td>56,071</td>
<td>51,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 1,41,190</td>
<td>Palsebari</td>
<td>1,41,190</td>
<td>74,618</td>
<td>66,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 2,75,074</td>
<td>Darughat</td>
<td>2,75,074</td>
<td>1,80,317</td>
<td>1,14,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) 18,894</td>
<td>Suwahati</td>
<td>18,894</td>
<td>9,948</td>
<td>8,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Kamrup (Part)</td>
<td>7,88,983</td>
<td>7,88,983</td>
<td>4,19,853</td>
<td>3,46,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,87,123</td>
<td>1,87,123</td>
<td>93,522</td>
<td>93,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,88,983</td>
<td>7,88,983</td>
<td>4,19,853</td>
<td>3,46,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moriga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) 1,80,112</td>
<td>Rongla</td>
<td>1,80,112</td>
<td>84,465</td>
<td>75,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 1,29,998</td>
<td>Harmo</td>
<td>1,29,998</td>
<td>69,164</td>
<td>60,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 1,29,981</td>
<td>Kamalpur (Part)</td>
<td>1,29,981</td>
<td>65,612</td>
<td>60,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 18,910</td>
<td>Tamulpur (Part)</td>
<td>18,910</td>
<td>9,880</td>
<td>9,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,34,979</td>
<td>4,34,979</td>
<td>2,28,301</td>
<td>2,06,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,34,979</td>
<td>4,34,979</td>
<td>2,28,301</td>
<td>2,06,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moriga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) 1,98,750</td>
<td>Baroona</td>
<td>1,98,750</td>
<td>1,03,005</td>
<td>95,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 3,63,604</td>
<td>Moriga</td>
<td>3,63,604</td>
<td>1,88,673</td>
<td>1,75,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 18,342</td>
<td>Tabulpur (Part)</td>
<td>18,342</td>
<td>62,333</td>
<td>56,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,80,804</td>
<td>6,80,804</td>
<td>3,84,011</td>
<td>3,26,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup Dist.</td>
<td>18,82,446</td>
<td>18,82,446</td>
<td>10,01,965</td>
<td>8,80,481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3 continued...*
DENSITY OF POPULATION:

As per 1971 census figures Kamrup has the highest density of population in Assam with 283 persons per square km. Out of the three sub-divisions Malbari has the density of population of 351 persons per square km, followed by Rangiya and Guwahati with 267 and 249 persons per square kilometer. 17

RURAL AND URBAN RATIO:

In Kamrup nearly 98.9 p.c. of the population live in rural areas and the rest 1.1 p.c. in the urban areas. Density of population in the urban areas is 3368 persons per square kilometre while that in rural areas it is 246 persons per sq. kilometre. Of the total urban population of the Guwahati sub-division 58.33 p.c. alone live in Guwahati city. 18

SEX RATIO:

According to 1971 census sex ratio in Kamrup was 879

17 Ibid. p. 5.
18 Ibid.
females against per 1000 males against the states ratio of 896 females against per 1000 males. 19

POPULATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES:

According to 1971 census the total population of Kamrup includes 1,13,310 belonging to Scheduled caste and 2,20,639 belonging to Scheduled Tribes constituting 6.02 p.c. and 11.72 p.c. respectively of the total population. The corresponding state figures are 913 thousand (3.2 p.c.) and 1607 thousand (11.1 p.c.) respectively. 20

WORKERS:

The total population of Kamrup as shown in the 1971 census are 18,82,446 out of which 49,5588 or 26.3% are workers, the occupationwise division being 33.50% cultivation, 7.59% trade and commerce, 7.58% Agricultural labourers, 7.25 (approx.) miscellaneous occupations like manufacturing, processing, servicing, repairing etc. and 4.79% Transport and Communication. 21

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid. pp. 5-6.
21 Ibid. p. 6.
AGE WISE COMPOSITION:

10.1% of the total population falls in the age group 0 - 5 years, 38.2% falls in the age group 6 - 18 years and 41.0% in the age group 18-60 years while 4.8% in the age group 61 years and above as per 1971 census figures.22

LITERACY:

According to 1971 census figures, 5,94,934 persons or 31.61% of the total population are literate the percentage of literacy among the males and the females being 41.60% and 20.24% respectively.23

NUMBER OF HOUSE HOLDS AND OCCUPIED RESIDENTIAL HOUSES (RURAL AND URBAN):

As per 1971 census there are 30,9143 house holds and 30,6678 occupied residential houses in Kamrup out of which 28,7834 are in rural areas while 51,844 are in urban areas.24

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: COLLEGES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION:

In 1981-82 there were 26 colleges in Kamrup for general

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid. pp. 6-7.
education with a total of 32,374 students and 1,011 teachers. These 26 colleges included one commerce college at Guwahati and two Sanskrit colleges one each at Nalbari and Guwahati. 25

COLLEGES FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION:

The second Medical college in Assam is situated at Guwahati. It had altogether 782 students and 221 teachers in 1981-82. In 1981-82 there was only one Engineering College at Jalukbari (Guwahati) with 879 students and 69 teachers of different trades. The Veterinary College of the Assam Agricultural University is situated at Khanapara of Guwahati. During 1981-82 there were as many as 317 students and 94 teachers. In addition to the above there was an Ayurvedic College, one Nursing College and three Law Colleges all situated at Guwahati during 1981-82. 26

SCHOOLS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION:

During 1981-82, there were as many as 23 Higher Secondary Schools, 371 High schools, 590 Middle and Senior

25 Ibid. p. 25.
Basic schools, 2,697 Primary and Senior Basic Schools and 94 Pre-Primary schools in the district. 27

The Sub-Division wise distribution of students and teachers of the above schools during 1981-82 are shown in the following table.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard of schools</th>
<th>Guwahati &amp; Rangia Sub-Division</th>
<th>Nalbari Sub-Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of schools</td>
<td>No. of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Higher Secondary School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. High School</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Middle School &amp; Senior Basic</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>2647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Primary &amp; Senior Basic</td>
<td>1,595</td>
<td>2183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pre-Primary</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Ibid.
TEACHERS TRAINING:

During 1981-92 there was one B.T. College in Guwahati, 3 basic training centres, one each at Rangia, Mirza and Malbari and one Hindi Teacher Training College at Malbari. Both Pre-service and in-service training are imparted in the B.T. College, basic training and Non basic training centres.29

There is one Vigyan Mandir at Dimoria started by the C.S.I.R., in 1953 which was taken over by the Govt. of India in 1955 and handed over to the State Govt. in 1963. The objectives of the Vigyan Mandir are:

1) To spread modern scientific methods among rural people.

2) To arrange to deliver lectures on scientific methods, arrange Cinema shows and exhibitions and

3) To serve the students of rural areas. In addition to the institutions mentioned above there were 6(six) central schools with 269 no. of teachers and 4651 no. of students during

29Ibid. p. 27.
1982-83, a few Missionary schools and a number of Private English Medium schools in Kamrup district. English medium schools were mostly in and around Guwahati. There was also a Forest College at domihat at Guwahati which was managed by the Govt. of India.30

OTHER COMMERCIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SPECIALISED EDUCATIONAL CENTRES:

In addition to the institutions as mentioned above, there are other commercial, professional and specialised educational centres within the district, sub-division wise distribution of number of institutions and enrolments of them during 1981-82 is shown below (Table 5).

ADULT EDUCATION:

Following Govt. of India's direction The National Adult Education Programme was initiated in Kamrup on 2nd October 1978. One Adult Education Centre at each Development Block was set up in 1978, but the centres were closed down in July, 1979. Thereafter, Adult literacy centres in large numbers were set up in

30Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Guwahati and Rangia Sub-Div.</th>
<th>Nalbari Sub-Div.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Polytechnic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I.T.I.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nursing/Midwife</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Commerce</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Music &amp; Dancing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Oriental Studies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gram Sevak Training Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Texto, e Gastronomy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Land Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Deaf/Dumb &amp; Blind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Jail School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Arts &amp; Crafts School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Forest School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31Ibid.
the Development Blocks with effect from February 1980.  
Figures of schools, teachers and no. of male literates 
during 1981-82 and 1982-83 in the district is shown in Table 
6 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of regular schools</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>No. of male literates</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>31,029</td>
<td>29,646</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>35,889</td>
<td>23,637</td>
<td>901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNIVERSITY:

The Guwahati University is located at Jalukbari and the 
Veterinary branch of the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat 
is located at Khanapara. During 1981-82, 3119 Post Graduate 
(P.G.) students were on roll under Guwahati University of which 
2,190 were males and 992 females. There were as many as 238 
teachers in Guwahati University during 1981-82.  

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32 Ibid. p. 29.
33 Ibid. p. 29.
34 Ibid. p. 29.
The Second Medical College of the State is situated in the heart of the Guwahati which benefitted the people to a great extent. The Indian Red-Cross Society Hospital and the Chatrivari Mission Hospital at Guwahati serve the people regularly. There is one T.B. Hospital and one Cancer Institute at Guwahati.35

The number of State Govt. Hospitals, dispensaries and other health centres excluding Medical College Hospital and Ayurvedic College Hospital in the District during 1952-53 were as follows (Table No. 7).

35 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Division</th>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>Dispensaries</th>
<th>Primary Health Centres</th>
<th>Sub-Centres</th>
<th>No. of Adda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aushahi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Urban</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Rural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramola</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Urban</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Rural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makardah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Urban</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Rural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanpur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Urban</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Rural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{36}\text{Ibid., p. 30.}\)
In addition to the above, there were 15 Govt. Aided
Alopathic Dispensaries, 26 Govt. Aided Ayurvedic Dispensaries,
21 Rural Family Welfare Centres and 3 T.W. Clinics during
1982-83. Most of these centres were located in rural areas. 37

Under the National Leprosy Control Programme, there
were two Leprosy Patient Welfare Centres, one centre unit and
20 SET Centres (Survey Education and Treatment) and 5 Leprosy
Treatment Centres in Kamrup district during 1982-83. The main
objective of the programme was early case detection and domici-
ciliary treatment with sulphur drugs, thereby rendering the
infections cases non-infectious in the shortest possible time.
During 1982-83, 180 cases were detected by the Centres and
altogether 940 patients were treated. 38

During 1982-83 a total number of 20,408 patients were
treated in different govt. hospitals and Health Centres out of
which 19,974 were indoor patients. 39

37Ibid.
38Ibid.
39Ibid. p. 31.
Under the Family welfare Programme, sterilization and other conventional contraceptives were provided to both men and women. All the civil Hospital, Guwahati Medical College Hospital, Indian Red Cross Society Hospital and Chatribari Mission Hospital, Guwahati provided required facility of contraception to the willing persons. 40

Table 8 below shows the achievement under family welfare programmes during 1982-83.

**TABLE 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contraceptives used</th>
<th>Guwahati</th>
<th>Rangi</th>
<th>Malbari</th>
<th>Kamrup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.U.D.</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II) Sterilization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Male</td>
<td>1228</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>3,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Female</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>11002</td>
<td>13,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III) Contraceptive users</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>16202</td>
<td>19,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV) Distribution of condom</td>
<td>135632</td>
<td>136775</td>
<td>71214</td>
<td>343,721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid. p. 31.
The official table shown above has not taken into consideration number of births averted by induced abortion because of the fact that abortion had not yet been accepted by the government of India as a method of Family Planning though legal abortion was being done in recognised centres as a back up method of Family Planning Programmes under M.T.P. Act of 1972. Table 9 below shows the numbers of abortion done in Assam in 1980.

**TABLE 9**

**Number of Abortion cases treated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Case treated</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indoor</td>
<td>Outdoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1416</td>
<td>1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2065</td>
<td>10463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>3386</td>
<td>8836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>4917</td>
<td>14442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3914</td>
<td>18043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-division wise distribution of registered Medical and Para-Medical Personnel excluding those in Medical College

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Hospital and Ayurvedic College Hospital in Kamrup district during 1982-83 are shown in Table 10 below:

**Table 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Guwahati</th>
<th>Rangia</th>
<th>Nalbari</th>
<th>Kamrup Dist.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Allopathic doctors</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nurses</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Auxiliary Nurse Midwives</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Health visitors</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dhais</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pharmacists</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NATURAL CALAMITY:**

Flood is the main natural calamity in the district. Due to heavy rainfall during June and September the Brahmaputra...
and its tributaries are in spate and inundates vast area. This has been badly affecting the normal life of the people in the region causing extensive damage to standing crops besides loss of human and animal lives. Around 25,000 hectares of net area shown in the Kamrup district are chronically flood affected and around 5,000 hectares are occasionally flood prone. Thus around 30,000 hectares of land under cultivation in Kamrup district are under flood prone areas. A good number of beels and marshes are also located in different parts of the district. In early days when road transport was not developed, people had to depend on riverine routes for communication. Besides flood, intermittent drought have also affects crop production of the district.

As in any other places, in Kamrup too, topography has greatly regulated the cropping patterns of the farmers living in it which in turn has left its impact on the socio-economic condition in general. While the South bank and the central part of the south and north banks of the Brahmaputra are fertile lands producing rice, jute and other summer crops and

**Ibid. p. 31.**
Kamrup district has a predominantly rural and agrarian economy. The large rural population overwhelmingly depend on agriculture. The major portion of land in the district is under cultivation. The net area under cultivation as shown in 1982-83 is 3,06,316 hectares which constitutes 48 p.c. of the total land area of the district. In spite of this agrarian economy food problem has remained precarious in this district. The near stagnation in the farm output has become a matter of much concern specially in the context of rapidly rising population. The great majority of the rural population are small and marginal farmers and landless agriculturists.

In the whole of Assam, where 70 per cent of the population are farmers the average land holding is 3.10 acres for each farmer's family which is one of the lowest in the country. It compares unfavourably with 8.83 acres in Maharashtra and 5.37 acres in Punjab and is significantly lower than the

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
national average. The majority of the small and marginal farmers are engaged in mono-cultural farming mainly rice. Living standard is low and 75 per cent of the people live below the poverty line. Occupational and social mobility is negligible due to economic and socio-cultural frictions.

Though agriculture is the main occupation of the people in this district are also some craftsmen and manufacturers. The people of Kamrup are generally more enterprising compared to some other districts in the state. "Hajo", "Salunkuchi" and "Sarthebari" are potential centres of cottage industries. In "Salunkuchi" the largest village in Assam almost all the people, both male and female are engaged in spinning, and weaving and producing "Pat", "Muga" and "endi" clothes of superior qualities and designs. These products due to their fine texture and durability remain unique in the whole of India and abroad. "Hajo" and "Sarthebari" are famous for dal-metal and brass metal industries.


48 Ibid.
As in the other plains districts of Assam, in Kamrup too the villages are situated generally on the elevated ground surrounded by swampy paddy fields or dry barren lands used for village graziers. From a distance a village looks like a shady haunt with cluster of huts surrounded by green bamboo groves, tall coconut trees, plantain groves, tall trees, arecanut trees with creepers of bottle leaves climbing on them, the whole mass stand overlooking the sprawling fields all around them. The families are found establishing their homesteads with distinct compound for each family either on both the sides or on one side of a road running through the village. Every household has a compound distinctly marked either by a bordering drain or decorated with hedge fencing. Each such compound, generally contains plantation of a coconut bamboo and other useful plants.

Besides the dwelling houses each family has granary cow-sheds, and other extra houses for the purposes of paddy husking and keeping country looms, fuel storage etc. and all within the campus. Many families have their tanks or ponds within their respective compound. This kind of settings are found in most of the villages in the plains districts of Assam, except some thickly populated villages of haphazard settlements.
In this region of India, joint family was the general norm and the concept of Patriarchal Society took its roots especially after the coming of the Aryans. The main law text book of the Hindu "Mitra-shara" states that there should exist common ownership of property. Although this law does not oblige brothers to live together in their parents’ home to share a common kitchen, to participate in common religious activities, it has been rather customary to work together to enhance the family income and thus realise one’s role in the family to aid one another. It was rather obligatory for the sons to bring their wives to the same household under the guardianship of the parents. Thus this pattern of joint living is customary and viewed as the ideal way of life. It is believed to be a sound convention that will remain in the family orientation at least as long as the parents live.

50 Ibid.
This family norm is very helpful to the newly married wives who will be joining the new family's lifestyle. They are young and lacking material as well as psychological preparedness to be independent. Joint family arrangement provides them with economic support and warm interactions among the members. A large, harmonious family carries a good reputation and status in the village community. To achieve such status by persons on their own merit would have been a difficult task.

The eldest male is acknowledged by the family members as possessing authority over the household. Loyalty, submission, respect and difference are bestowed on him. These attributes in turn enhance better relationships in the family such as children to their parents, wives to their husbands and younger brothers to their elder brothers. In a general way, restraint permeates social relations in a joint family.

After the parents pass away, varied amount of time elapses before the brothers divide themselves and share the ancestral property. Usually the brothers wait until all their younger brothers and sisters are educated and married. This
separation is inevitable, considering the physical conditions of so many members living together and after the jointness of the family works against its own ideals. Unless the brothers have joint economic enterprises the nature of their employment usually prevents the physical unity of the joint family. Disputes related to sharing of work and other kinds of disputes among the brothers and their wives are unavoidable. This separation is merely physical. Mutual aid and fraternal solidarity still remain to keep the brothers psychologically united as the members of a wretched joint family.

Thus, the brothers begin their own families which are nucleus family types initially, but soon they develop into a joint family, maintaining the cyclical family pattern, joint family - nucleus family - joint family. Hence, this nucleus family type does not really exist as a separate entity, but as a sector of the continuous extended family arrangement.

Family norms are affected by family occupations. For example, Brahmins, a priestly caste who do not cultivate land themselves retain for a long duration both the strong authoritarian eldest male role and the joint family life style. Since, land is the sole pecuniary source and is held
Jointly, it would not be economically viable for a son to leave the joint family after his marriage.

The life cycle of a person is composed of a series of ceremonies beginning with the bathing and naming of the infant. If the baby is a boy he is initiated through rituals at the time of his first hair cut and entering school. The child is given his way by the family until he reaches the age of about six. Duties should be performed by both sexes. Boys help in tending the cattle, while girls help in the housework and watch over their younger siblings. During this period they become more responsible for their roles.

Marriage is one of the most important events in one's life. Arranged marriage is common in the society. In the selection of spouse astrological considerations are important. Marriage is sacrament and hence a sacred bond unalterable and rigid. This belief is emphasized by religiously oriented marriage ceremonies and yearly ritual cycles. Marriage gives full adult status to males and females. Parenthood, specially giving birth to a boy, is important. The wedding ceremony lasts for two to three days and certain rites spread over a couple of weeks. Marriage in Assamese society is based more
on mutual love and understanding between the bride and the

Among the lower castes, divorce is a customary practice
groom and their parents than on mundane considerations such
due to the civil orientation of the marriage ceremony. The
as social status and wealth.

Hindu society is composed of a hierarchical system of a multitude
of "Jatis" (Castes) which also include the untouchables. These
"Jatis" possess specific historical, mythical, economic,
political, religious and cultural backgrounds. Theoretically
one is placed in a certain occupational category according to
one's birth. However, this does not preclude a person's chances
for social and economic mobility. Each "Jati" practices its
unique religious rituals. Members of respective castes worship
in temples and shrines allotted to them. Visit to a temple is
sometimes restricted on caste considerations. In modern times
of course such prohibitions have been outlawed. Certain social
norms are observed by all members of the "Jati". The "Jati"
also determines with whom one may eat, from whom to take food
and how to dress etc.

The present population of this region can be classified
into three broad categories, namely -
1. The Tribes
2. The Non-Tribes
3. Caste Hindus and
4. The Scheduled Castes

The tribal belong to different ethno-cultural communities such as the Miris, the Kochris (including the Bodos), the Deoris, the Rabhas etc. The non-tribal groups include mainly the Ahoas, the Brahmins, the Kayesthas, the Kalitas, the Kochris, the Moranis, the Mattakes, the Chutias etc. The Seefores, the Soniyas, the Dhobis, the Miras, the Kaibartas and the Namasudras etc. are included in the Scheduled Castes.

The Assamese as a race are very much peaceful, tolerant and liberal - not because they are weak, but because they do not like to invite troubles. They become tough enough when they need to face their problems. The national festival of Assam, the "Bihu" brings out the liberal attitude and secular ideals of the Assamese people in the sphere of their interpersonal relationship. The "Bihu" is celebrated with equal zeal.

52 Ibid.
and earnestness by all communities, both tribal and non-tribal, Hindu and non-Hindus. Besides Durga, some common festivals like Durga Puja, Kalipuja, Lakshmi Puja, Saraswati Puja etc. are also celebrated in this region. The festivals of other religious groups such as Muslims, Sikhs, Christians etc. are also celebrated by the people in general.

POSITION OF WOMEN

The conception of Hindu married life has made woman a co-partner in the spiritual and temporal affairs of her husband. The term "Grihakumari" or "Sahodharini" indicates her inseparable entity with husband and these two epithets have been considered as the two great ornaments of a wife's character. Happy domestic life and the training of their children depend much upon the women possessing good qualities and education: Rev. C.F. Andrews had remarked long ago that "Assamese women whom I met in every place have won by reverence by their deep patriotism and true sincerity of perfect womanhood shown in unselfish labour and devotion."

Even after the death of her husband Hindu widows are honoured and respected and revered by the society for her devotion and sacrifice. She weaves linings for the family and teaches the little children round her like a dedicated mother. In some caste groups like the drahmin, widow remarriage in still prohibited in this district, and regarded as a sin. By spinning and weaving these widows held her true place of dignity and prove that they are active bread winners with an independent occupation. Handloom and weaving have been special occupation of the womenfolk in this region through the ages. During the Ahom period the 'Kaoa Kapor', the protective piece of cloth worn by a warrior, spun and woven in a single night was believed to have brought victory to their warrior husband. In 1921, Mahatma Gandhi in his tour in Assam described the Assamese women as the weaver of "fairy tales" in cloth.\(^5^4\)

The position of wife and mother in the Assamese household is almost equal to that of the husband and the father, the twin pillars of the family. The woman enjoys a fair degree of freedom

\(^5^4\)Ibid, Article by - Bordoloi Gopinath About Assam, p. 50.
Women are active bread winners with an independent occupation -
Photo from village "Boko", Kamrup District.

Handloom and weaving have been special occupation of the
womenfolk in this region through the ages -
Photo from village 'Uttarkuchi', Nalbari District.
in the Assamese society. In ancient times Pardah system was prevalent in the Assamese society. Even now wearing of veils is a common practice among Assamese married women particularly in rural surroundings.

During the Ahom rule women occupied an important place in the society. There were some Assamese women who went to battlefield. They had respectable position both in the family and the society. In the family a woman was adored as a daughter, respected as a wife and then honoured as a mother. According to most authorities women by and large enjoyed a high status equal to that of men at home and in the society. The noblest woman martyr, Sati Jaymoti of sacred memories practised passive resistance and was slowly tortured, to death under the order of cruel Lora Roja. She cheerfully defied the most brutal death spurning the highest position offered to her, yet firmly refusing to disclose the whereabouts of her beloved husband Godapani which she alone knew.

Afterwards due to various socio-cultural and political factors the status of women began to decline gradually. It was because, the East India Company as well as the missionaries did not interfere with the customs and traditions of the
Girls' education was discontinued and they ceased to have any voice in the choice of mate, as their age at marriage was also reduced to below eight or nine years and their marriage was arranged by the parents even without their consent or merely with their formal consent. According to Manu, the Hindu law-giver, women have to depend on her father in her childhood, on her husband in her young age and on her son in her old age. Thus women's status continued to decline and she had become somewhat like a puppet moving when someone else pulls the strings. The Charter Act of 1813 said nothing about the education of the girls. Therefore, schools for girls were either started by the missionaries or by the individuals. The first girls' school in Assam was opened in 1813 but had to be discontinued. Till recently, education of girls was not favoured by the parents. Therefore, the percentage of literacy among girls and women was much lower than that of boys and men. According to the 1971 census figures in Kamrup district 31.61% of the total population were literates. The sexwise percentage

56 Das Maneignh and Jardie D. Penco - Family in Asia, op. cit., p. 111.
Complete neglect of women's education in this district coupled with the practice of child marriage, paraksh and sati, with no provision for divorce and remarriage for widow brought about tremendous degradation in the status of women. Still now the divorced and remarried women are looked down upon as some what unholy.

The position of women in Kamrup District especially among the middle and upper middle classes begins to improve in the beginning of the 19th century. Variety of social, cultural, political and economic factors along with the untiring efforts of the social reformers and religious leaders and other enlightened and progressive men and women have helped to bring in such improvement. These liberal minded leaders felt convinced that national development and progress were not possible without the education and emancipation of women and believed that a motion that did not respect its women folk could never become or remain great. They realized that for the liberation of the

country as well as for its progress the active participation of women was a sine-qua-non. They all stood for the principle of women’s emancipation and equality of the sexes.

Now, women’s education has made progress in recent years, but the records of the census reports show that the percentage of literacy among women is still very low. The indifference of the government in the past, public apathy, early marriage, poverty of the parents, bad communication wants of women teachers, absence of separate schools for girls, dearth of suitable curriculum, absence of opportunities for employment, parents lack of appreciation for the education of their daughters are some of the factors responsible for the slow progress of education among the girls.

POPULATION PROBLEMS:

The greatest problem facing this region at present is its explosive population growth. It has been the source of mounting socio-economic pressures. Over the past few decades it has been experiencing an average decadal growth rate of population. In a single decade that is 1961-71 the population of Assam grow by 35 per cent as against 25 per cent for the
Marriage is one of the most important events in one's life - Photo from village 'Majkuchi', Kamrup District.

The greatest problem facing this region at present is its explosive population growth - Photo from village 'Sanekuchi', Nalbari District.
country as a whole. Kamrup is noted now to be the highest populated district in Assam with a density of 283 persons per square kilometer. The decadal variation in population and percentage variation of population from 1951 to 1971 has been shown in the Table No. 2 above.

Now, due to the improvement in maternal and public health care facilities coupled with spread of education and family planning services there has been a steady decline in birth and death rates in this region.

**BIRTH CONTROL MEASURES TAKEN BY THE MARRIED COUPLE IN KAMRUP DISTRICT:**

Over the last few years there have been a steady decline of birth and death rates in the State of Assam compared with the All India rates as evident from the sample Registration Bulletin published by the Registrar General of India.

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50 Ibid., p. 4.
In Kamrup district like some other regions of the State, the birth control movement from its inception was associated with the feminist movement and women’s organisations were among the first to start voluntary campaigns for spread of birth control techniques among women. Even now they are active propagators of the Govt.'s programmes to persuade more and more women to accept family planning methods. All recent studies seem to agree more on the observance of the relationship namely that improved status of women with rise in the age of marriage, education, employment, better living conditions and greater general awareness that have a direct impact on the adoption of family planning methods.61

Among the people living in this district majority are Hindus (77.35% in Kamrup and 83.71% in Morigaon).62 The influential Hindu classics have emphasized celibacy which is believed to lead to spiritual and physical strength. Such religious ideals which the Muslims had rejected and which even the Hindus were beginning to question were popularised and supported by both Gandhi and Nehru. Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi believed that

61 Towards Equality - Report of the committee on status of women in India, Govt. of India, p. 332.

Birth control would weaken the moral fibre of the people and expected each man and women to follow his/her own unique idealism, limiting their families by self-restraint. Later, Nehru's contraception campaigns not only lacked force and adequate financial support, also they were run by a spinster Health Minister who was decidedly unenthusiastic about the subject. 63

According to the performances of Family Welfare Programme in Kamrup district in the year 1963-64 (as the Table No. 8 shows), the largest circulated birth control measure is condom. The press advertised 'Nirodh' (Protection) condoms and the Govt. subsidized them - the price has been lowered.

Sterilization is one of the popular methods of birth control in this region. The attitude to both types of sterilization is almost favourable. However, between the two types of sterilization, a significantly larger portion of people favour female sterilization rather than male (Table No. 8 shows). As has been known this was primarily because more complications are reported both somatic and psychological

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63 Das Mansingh and Barcis D Pane - Family in Asia, op. cit., p. 149.
regarding vasectomy compared to female sterilization. Further, men being the bread winners and source of socio-economic security in most of the families the women do not want to risk their health. These factors might be influencing women favouring female sterilization as against vasectomy.

Another important method of contraception in this district is IUD insertions. The "zipper loop" which is one of the important methods among the IUD insertion was popular previously but now it is not so much in use because of discomfort. Table No. 8 shows the figures in this respect.

Other birth control methods, such as pills, diaphragms, foam tablets and jellies are not in practice amongst the people living in this district because these methods are costlier and only people of higher income range can afford them.

There is no doubt that knowledge of family planning methods enables a woman to regulate her biological function and thus gives her a greater control over her life expectancy her future in general. This certainly helps to build up her confidence in herself and can enable her to pursue various other ways in developing her personality such as taking career
interests and fulfill responsibilities to herself, her family and to the society at large.

Above all, this has a direct impact on her health, ability to prevent frequent and excessive strain on her physical resources. Since health is the basic necessity for any kind of development for a person, ability to plan her family ultimately contributes to wider improvement of a woman's personality. A third consequence which is sometimes emphasised is the possible change in husband-wife-relationship leading to improved position of the woman in decision making within the family.

All these results could certainly lead to a general improvement of a woman's status, but each of them are integrally connected with the other socio-economic factors and developments. The relationship between family planning and status improvement depends, in the ultimate analysis on the presence and behaviour of such variables as social attitudes and opportunities for women's education, employment, pursuit of independent interests and career. Size and sex of the family accessibility of health services and general economic development. Now, the Govt. has adopted several measures to improve the status of women. To
improve their educational level different educational institutions from primary to University level have been set up and non-formal centres have been organised for educating drop-out school children of the age group 8-14 years. Enrolment drive in all these formal and non-formal institutions has been geared up to make universalisation of elementary education. Efforts have also been made for removal of illiteracy through Adult Education programmes as will be evident from table 5.

It is evident that education plays a vital role in birth control. Actually it is the indirect method of birth control. In addition to these measures to improve the educational status of women, to improve their health condition a good number of hospitals, primary health centres, civil hospitals and one Medical College Hospital have been established in Guwahati, the capital city in Kamrup.

M.T.P. USED AS A MEASURE OF BIRTH CONTROL BY THE MARRIED WOMEN:

It has been stated that neither "Buddhist nor Hindu" theology contains any scriptural prohibitions against early
Women generally visited Primary Health Centres (P.H.C.S) for undergoing M.T.P. specially in rural areas (Photos with Present researcher)

P.H.C. Centre of Village "Dekhingaon" Nalbari District.

P.H.C. Centre of Village 'Rani', Kamrup District (South Kamrup)
abortion treating it as a social rather than religious issue. 64
Infact, the Indian Govt. in 1965 began to investigate the
legalization of all abortion, modeled on the Japanese system
(where "no religious or ethical objection to abortion have
been raised"). Nevertheless, Indian scriptures such as the
Rigveda, Ramayana, Mahabharata and the laws of Manu, mention
abortion and even condemn it as a serious sin, although they
recognise exceptional cases, since there was no agreement
concerning the exact beginning of life. For instance atleast
two passages in the Law of Manu refer very critically to women
"who have caused an abortion" or destroyed the embryo. 65

For such social restrictions many women of Kamrup
district, as in some other parts of the state also sought illegal
abortions which had tragic physical and psychological consequences.
As a result public opinion generally became more liberal by the
time the A.T.P. Bill was introduced in the Parliament. Prior to
that number of death from illegal septic abortion was very high. 66

64 Ibid., p. 152.
65 Ibid.
66 Hazani Dr. K.M. Ed. — The Journal of Obstetrics and
Gynaecology of India. Federation of Obstetrical and Gynaecological
Societies of India (FOGSI) June 1973 Vol. XXXII, No. 3. Article by-
Bhatt, V. Rehit and Soni M. Gyotena — criminal abortion in western
India. p. 243.
P.H.C. Centre of village "Kamalpur", Kamrup District (North Kamrup)

P.H.C. Centre of village "Sanakuchi", Nalbari District.
It is very difficult to know the actual number of such cases because, such case had gone unrecorded.

The study undertaken by the International Research Fertility Programme has revealed that 88% of abortion cases were among married women of whom 55% were between the age of 25 years to 33 yrs., 81% were urban, 19.1% rural, 37% had three or four children. In other study it was found that 72% were married, of whom 60% were in the 20 years to 29 years age group. The average total pregnancy of these groups was 4.3% where the average number of living children 2.5% and 0.8% had previous abortions. 50% of all the patients had a previous abortion in their record 17.8% had 2 to 5. 67

During interview with some women it has been told by that majority of the women in Kamrup were induced to abortion specially because in rural areas because modern contraceptives are still a novelty. Many methods are still unknown to large sections of the society. The category of modern contraception known till recently either through governmental programmes or

Women visited Gauhati Medical College Hospital for undergoing M.T.P. - 
Photo from Gauhati Medical College Hospital, Gauhati District - Kamrup, Assam

Women also visited Civil Hospitals for undergoing M.T.P. - 
Photo from Nalbari Civil Hospital, Nalbari District.
other sources are male and female sterilizations condom and 
BID. No other methods have a place in the ongoing programmes 
among these population.

In the absence of knowledge about the use of modern 
contraception, some traditional methods are used and induced 
abortion is an important event among the rural communities. 
It is believed that abortion cannot be widely practised by 
many people if there is no cultural base on which it is already 
accepted and practiced. In many societies abortion is mostly 
used for terminating premarital pregnancies.68

In Kamrup district M.T.P. is not yet widely accepted 
specially in rural areas where illegal abortion takes serious 
form. It has come to be known from the present study that three 
methods of illegal induced abortion are usually employed:

1. Introducing a stick with some irritant into the cervix by 
a barber midwife. This is the most common technique.

2. Papaya, Jaggery and other self - administered oral medicines.

3. Medicines obtained from quacks or homeopathic doctors.

68Rashdwan, K. - Sociology of Fertility - Sterling 
Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, p. 113.
Of the numerous methods employed to induce abortion, the method of introduction of foreign bodies has been employed more commonly than any other method in most criminal abortions.

Foreign Body in the Urinary Bladder—
Goswami & Sharma

Showing the herbal root removed from the urinary bladder

Foreign Body in the Urinary Bladder (A case report) -
by - Goswami Manabendra and Sarma Gopal Chandra
From - Barthakur Clinic, Kharghuli, Guwahati, Assam.
Many studies indicate that most pregnant women who go in for induced abortions are fully motivated for small family norms if not planned parenthood. These people are very amenable and can be fully motivated for adoption of family planning methods more often sterilization, if they have two or more living children or other temporary methods of spacing children.69

It has been said that there are serious psychological hazards caused by pregnancies as well as abortion and sterilization. It has been reported that the areas of maximum insanity in India are either in or along the foothills, it was highest in Assam in 1931.70 It is therefore imperative to organize systematic research on this field, to ascertain the impact of these situations and operations on the physical and mental health of women.

In case of unmarried girls most doctors generally show reluctance to perform R.T.P. It is necessary to clarify the point that rape is not the only ground to justify termination

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69Towards Equality Report of the status of women in India, Govt. of India, op.cit., p. 329.

in cases of unmarried girls nor is there any legal obligation on the doctor to inform the Police of an abortion done in a rape case. It should be noted that the All India Medical Council has introduced this Act in the syllabus for Medical jurisprudence with the object of setting up new norms for the medical profession. 71 This will go a long way in breaking down the resistance of doctors.