Chapter II

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

I. Introductory

The settlement of Manipuris, and the import of plantation labour during the nineteenth century, and the continuous flow of Bengali immigrants ever since the days of Kaohari kings culminating in the influx of Hindu refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan following the partition of India, are the three principal factors, apart from the biological reason, which have completely reversed the demographic profile of the district to such an extent that the one-time sparsely populated "Kaohari Rajya" is now one of the few districts in the State of Assam with a very high ratio of man to land; and unless timely steps are taken to arrest the excessive growth of population the economy of the district is bound to face a crisis in the years to come.

II. Demographic Features

1. Trends of population growth

Trends of population growth in the Kaohari district will be evident from the following table.¹

¹ Office of the Statistical Officer, Statistical Handbook, Silchar Sub-Division, Silchar, 1976, p. 10
Table II.1

Population Growth of the Cachar District
(In thousand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Percentage decade variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>15.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>11.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>11.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>24.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>23.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1,713</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1,577</td>
<td>24.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to 1971 Census, as is revealed from the above table, the population of the Cachar district consists of 17,13,518 souls, of which 8,91,126 are males and 8,22,192 are females, while as per 1961 Census the population was 15,73,476 of which 7,22,486 were males and 6,55,989 were females, the overall percentage increase during the last decade being 8.39. The decadal growth rate of 24.29 per cent in the district corresponds to an average compound annual growth rate of roughly 2.5 per cent.

With 8.87 per cent of the total area of Assam, Cachar accounts for about 11.71 per cent of total population of the State as per Census 1971. The population of Assam, according
GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF GROWTH OF POPULATION IN CACHAR DISTRICT 1901 - 1971 (IN THOUSAND)

(Ref: TABLE NO. 21)
to 1971 Census, is 1,46,25,152 as against 1,08,57,000 recorded in the Census of 1961, the overall percentage increase during the last decade is being 34.95. It is, thus, evident that the growth rate of population in Cachar during 1961-71 is lower than that of the State of Assam.

The percentage decade variations of population in this district since 1901 are 13.21, 5.38, 6.94, 11.58 and 24.66, 25.55 and 24.29 for 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951, 1961 and 1971 respectively. It is thus evident from the above figures that the district experienced an excessive growth of population since 1941, obviously due to the partition of India and heavy influx of refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The magnitude of such influx can be well illustrated by the fact that the percentage growth of population during 1941-'51 in Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi towns worked out at 105.16, 144.44 and 166.50 respectively, vide Table II.2.

The following table will indicate the rate of population growth in the three Sub-divisional towns of the district over the last few decades:

Table II.2

Decadewise Percentage Growth of Population in the three Sub-divisional Towns of Cachar District since 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Silchar</th>
<th>Karimganj</th>
<th>Hailakandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>25.02</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>27.03</td>
<td>37.29</td>
<td>54.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>105.16</td>
<td>144.44</td>
<td>166.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>20.56</td>
<td>30.19</td>
<td>71.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>28.08</td>
<td>25.13</td>
<td>25.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.(a) District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1951, p. 94
(b) District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1961, p. 102
(c) District Statistical Abstract, Cachar District, 1963, Table 1.4
(d) Sub-Divisional Statistical Hand Book, Karimganj Sub-Division, 1974, p. 15
(e) District Statistical Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p. 7
(f) Sub-Divisional Statistical Hand Book, Hailakandi Sub-Division, 1975, p. 8
MULITPLE BAR DIAGRAM REPRESENTING DECADEWISE PERCENTAGE GROWTH OF POPULATION IN THE THREE SUB-DIVISIONAL TOWNS OF CACHAR DISTRICT. 1941 - 1971

(Ref. Table No. 2.2)
2. Urban and Rural Population

Table II.1 above also presents a vivid picture of the trend of growth of Urban and Rural population in the district. Of the 17.13 lakhs population of the district in 1971, 15.77 lakhs or about 92.4 per cent live in villages, 2 per cent less than what it was in 1951 (vide Table II.4). The percentage of urban population to the total population of the district, according to 1971 Census, was 7.9 as against 8.9 for Assam and 19.9 for the country as a whole. In 1961 the percentage of urban population in the district and the State of Assam were 7.0 and 7.4 respectively. This indicates that the population in the district is overwhelmingly rural and that the percentage of urban population in relation to the total population in the district is lower than that of Assam and the country as a whole. From the settlement pattern of the district it is also evident that while there has been an increase of population in the district in the last decade (1961-71) by 24.29 per cent, the percentage of urban population in the total population has narrowly gone down by 0.9. However, the urban population increased by 40.2 per cent during 1961-71, while the rural population increased by 23.1 per cent during the same period. This indicates the pressure of population in the urban areas. Such a pressure in the urban areas is due to the gradual growth of urban areas and the inflow of population to the towns.

There are eight towns in the district at present as against three in 1951. There is no Class I town having a population of 1,00,000 or above, in the district. Silchar, with
A population of 52,612, is the Class II town, Karimganj, has been designated as the Class III town while Hailakandi and Badarpur (T.C.) towns have been grouped under Class IV. Class V towns are Badarpur Rly. Town, Ramkrishnamanagar and Lala. Lakhipur town falls under the category of Class VI.

The table, presented below, gives a classification of population of the district by town for 1951, 1961 and 1971:

Table II.3

Population of Cachar District by Town for 1951, 1961 and 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/Sub-division</th>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silehar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td>34,059</td>
<td>41,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,564</td>
<td>2,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karinganj</td>
<td>5,885</td>
<td>12,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badarpur Rly. colony</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karinganj</td>
<td>19,098</td>
<td>28,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.K. Nagar</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td>8,219</td>
<td>16,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lala</td>
<td>4,487</td>
<td>5,536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caabar 8 Towns 96,813 1,35,692

1. (a) District Statistical Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p. 7
(b) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p. 163
(c) Ibid., 1961, p. 182
There are altogether 2,413 inhabited villages in the district as per in 1971 Census as against 2,389 villages in 1961 and 2,245 in 1951. The total population in the villages of the district as per 1971 Census is 13.77 lakhs as against 12.81 lakhs and 10.54 lakhs in 1961 and 1951 respectively. Thus, while the towns are growing in size and number, the villages are also getting more and more crowded. The following table will present a sex-wise classification of rural and urban population of the district during 1951-'71:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of rural population to total population</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>558784</td>
<td>501705</td>
<td>1054489</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>668750</td>
<td>618913</td>
<td>1281663</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>818711</td>
<td>758915</td>
<td>1577626</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. (a) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1951, p. 90
(b) District Statistical Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p. 3
(c) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p. 178
(d) Ibid., 1961, p. 82
3. **Density of population**

Cachar ranks third among the districts of Assam (next to Newgong and Kamrup districts) in terms of density of population.¹ The density of population in Cachar which was about 161 persons per sq. kilometre in 1951 rose to 198 persons per sq. kilometre in 1961 and to 246 persons per sq. kilometre in 1971, thereby indicating a percentage increase of density by 25 P.C., 23.5 P.C. and 24.2 P.C. during 1941-51, 1951-61 and 1961-71 respectively. The density of population in Assam, which works out to 186 persons per sq. kilometre, is thus far below the district average.

Out of the three sub-divisions of the district, the density of Karimganj Sub-division is the highest. The following table will give a clear picture of the density of population of the district, Sub-divisionwise for 1951, 1961 and 1971.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-division</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1971</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silchar</td>
<td>143.4</td>
<td>175.9</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td>206.0</td>
<td>252.9</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td>147.5</td>
<td>187.7</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>160.8</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. (a) Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 1974, p. 6
   (b) District Statistical Abstract, Cachar District, 1963, Table 1.11 (Contd.)
The following table presents the density of population of the district, as per 1971 Census, by Police Stations.

Table II.6
Density of Population of Cachar by Police Station as per 1971 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/Sub-Division</th>
<th>Police Station</th>
<th>Density per sq. km.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silchar</td>
<td>Katigorah</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dorkhola</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ucharband</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lakhipur</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silchar</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonai</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>219</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karinganj</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Badarpur</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatherkandi</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Batabari</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>517</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katlicherra</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>245</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p. IV
(b) Ibid., 1961, p. 12
(c) Statistical Hand Book, Silchar, Sub-division, 1976, p. 12
(d) Sub-Divisional Statistical Hand Book, Karimganj Sub-division, 1974, p. 7
(e) Sub-Divisional Statistical Hand Book, Hailakandi Sub-division, 1975, p. 3
It is evident from the above table that the Karimganj and the Badarpur Police Stations are most thickly populated areas in the district with densities of 554 and 567 persons per sq. kilometre respectively. The Sama Police Station of the Silchar Sub-division is the largest Police Station with 968.66 sq. kilometres in area and a density of 159 persons per sq. kilometre. Badarpur being the smallest Police Station with an area of 121.73 sq. kilometre claims to be the densest of all the Police Stations of this district.

4. Sex ratio

According to 1971 Census, the male and female population in the Cachar district number 8,91,126 and 8,22,192 respectively, the sex-ratio being worked out as 923 females per thousand males, as against 896 females per thousand and 930 females per thousand for Assam and all-India respectively.¹ Sex-ratio of the district shows an upward trend since 1951, vide Table II.7.

The following table presents the population of the district by sex for the years 1951, 1961 and 1971.  

Table II.7

Population of Cachar District by Sex for 1951, 1961 and 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th></th>
<th>No. of</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>females per thousand males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>5,88,306</td>
<td>5,27,559</td>
<td>11,15,865</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,28,487</td>
<td>6,55,989</td>
<td>13,78,976</td>
<td>911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,91,186</td>
<td>8,82,198</td>
<td>17,13,318</td>
<td>923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Age structure

The age structure of population in any economy, in the wake of material progress, has its repercussion on the nature, speed and pattern of economic development. It determines the

1. (a) N.C.A.E.R., New Delhi, Techno-Economic Survey of Assam, 1962, p. 194
(b) District Statistical Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, pp. 1, 13
(c) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1961, pp. 11-12
size of the working force. In Assam (including the District of Cachar), like the other parts of India, the age group of fifteen to fifty-four\(^1\) may be considered as the main working force which can contribute to the productive efforts of the community. The Census of 1961\(^2\) reveals that in Cachar 43 per cent of the total population is under the age of fifteen years.\(^3\) Out of this 43 per cent, about 16 per cent are below five years of age.\(^4\) As the death rate amongst this group is higher than the other groups, the loss and waste to the national economy can easily be realised.

According to 1961 Census, the persons capable of hard work (i.e., in the age group of fifteen to fifty-four) account for about 49.3 per cent\(^5\) of the total population in the district. The incidence of diseases in India causes a great loss of working days amongst the workers. The proportion of active workers amongst the female is lower than among the males, because of the social habits and customs and the high rate of maternity. The effective working force in the community is, thus, much lower than the percentage shown above.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Goswami, P.C., The Economic Development of Assam, Bombay, 1963, p. 35
\item Age structure of the Cachar district as per 1971 Census is not available.
\item Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1961, p. 281
\item Ibid., p. 293
\item Ibid., p. 281
\end{enumerate}
6. Classification of population by religion

It may be observed from Tables II.8 and II.9, supplied below, that Caohar’s population is composed of many heterogeneous religious and linguistic races and tribes.

In this district 58.72 per cent of the population are Hindus, 39.88 per cent Muslims, 1.32 per cent Christians, 0.01 per cent Sikhs, 0.02 per cent Buddhists and 0.05 per cent Jains as per Census of 1971 (vide, Table II.8).

If a comparative picture is drawn on the distribution of population by religion in the district between 1951 and that of 1971, it will be revealed that while the percentage of Hindu population to total population has declined, the percentage of almost all other religious communities in relation to total population has increased. While the percentage of Hindus has declined by nearly 2 per cent, the percentage of Muslims has gone up by a little more than 1 per cent, the Christians by .57 per cent and Jains by .04 per cent. The reasons for the higher growth rate among the Muslims may be attributed to their practice of Polygamy and indifferent attitude against family planning on religious ground.¹ It may not be out of place to

---
¹ The following quotation will corroborate the statement regarding the practice of Polygamy among the Muslims and their indifferent attitude in accepting family planning on religious ground: "It is assessed that 39.88 P.C. of the total population are Muslims and they lack in the knowledge about the essential necessity of family planning. Of course, there are some reasons also. Many orthodox Muslim parents consider family planning as a religious offence. Well-informed circles add some more causes - economic uncertainty, polygamy, illiteracy, poverty and hard labour", Nasumder, Abul Kalam, Family Planning Among the Caohar Muslims, The Frontier Sum. November 13, 1976, p. 8
mention here that the average size of family among the Muslim community is generally large than the Hindu families.\(^1\)

Relatively higher growth rates among the Jains of the district may be due to the influx of a good number of people of such community in the district at regular intervals from other parts of the country in business connections.

The distribution of population by religion is presented below in a tabular form.\(^2\)

\*\*\*\*


2. (a) Census of India, \textit{District Census Hand Book (Cachar District)}, 1951, p. 865

(b) \textit{Ibid.}, 1961, pp. 304-5

(c) \textit{District Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 1974}, p. 10

(d) \textit{District Statistical Abstract, Cachar District, 1963}, Table 1.10
Table II.8
Distribution of population by Religion in Cachar District for 1951, 1961 and 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>6,76,640</td>
<td>60.63</td>
<td>4,29,457</td>
<td>38.48</td>
<td>8,422</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>8,21,600</td>
<td>59.60</td>
<td>5,39,457</td>
<td>39.15</td>
<td>15,178</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>10,03,995</td>
<td>58.72</td>
<td>6,93,587</td>
<td>59.88</td>
<td>22,686</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jains No.</th>
<th>P.C.</th>
<th>Other religions No.</th>
<th>P.C.</th>
<th>Religion not stated No.</th>
<th>P.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Distribution of population by language

The linguistic composition of this district is something unique in character. It is the abode of multifarious communities and different races and tribes of Aryan, Austrick and Dravidian origin speaking different languages.¹ Bengalis form the major linguistic community of the district. Other predominant linguistic communities of the district are Hindi-speaking people (mostly from Bihar and U.P.), Manipuri, Bishnupriya, Dimasa, Oriya, Khasi, Assamese, Kuki, Nepali, Hmar, Santhali and Lushai/Mizo.

The 1951 Census recorded as many as 95 mother tongues in the district. This number has come down to 77 in 1961.² One reason for such decline in number of mother tongues may be that some of the linguistic communities who constitute a very small number might have left the district for other places, for, they are migratory in nature. Another reason may be that some of the mother tongues with fewer population may have been grouped under 'others' in the 1961 Census. The third reason may be attributed to the ignorance of some of the illiterate people particularly of the interior places. These people might have ignorantly named their mother tongue as one which was not theirs. The ignorance of some of the Census enumerators is also to some extent responsible for such anomaly.

---

¹ Chattepadhyay, Bhaktimadhab, Casharor Jana Sinyas, Silehar 1978, p. 5, cols. I and II
² The 1971 Census in Assam has not shown the distribution of population by principal languages - districtwise.
From a comparative study of the number of people under each linguistic community as per 1951 and 1961 Census reports, it will appear that while the number of all the major communities has increased during this decade, the number of Manipuri community has declined. But judging from the fact that Bishnupriya language was omitted to be mentioned separately; and most likely grouped under the head 'Manipur' in 1951 Census, one will come to the natural conclusion that the number of Manipuri community during this period has not actually declined.

Though there are various linguistic groups in Cachar, the contact between different groups is not difficult, for most of the linguistic groups have adopted Bengali language and can carry on conversation freely.\(^1\) Bengali is, as such, the principal language of the district while the State language is Assamese.

Table II.9, presented below, will show the distribution of population by principal languages in Cachar district for 1951 and 1961.\(^2\)

---

1. (a) Bhattacharjee, J.B., Cachar under British Rule in N.E. India, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 214-15
(b) Planning Forum, Kalinganj College, A Probe into the Socio-Economic Structure of a Township, 1965-66, P. 11
2. (a) District Statistical Abstract, Cachar District, 1963, Table 1.8
(b) District Statistical Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, p.14
(c) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1951, Data compiled and processed, pp. 295-299
(d) Ibid., 1961, pp. 295-299

\(^1\) The mention of Bishnupriya language has been made in the Census Report for the first time in the year 1961.
**Table II.9**

Distribution of Population by Principal languages in Cachar District for 1971 and 1961*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rural/Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bengal</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Manipuri</th>
<th>Assamese</th>
<th>Kuki</th>
<th>Xhosa</th>
<th>Hmar</th>
<th>Lusai Mizo</th>
<th>Bishnupriya</th>
<th>Dimasa</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Santali</th>
<th>Oriya</th>
<th>Nagi</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>61376</td>
<td>55162</td>
<td>3860</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>105448</td>
<td>905610</td>
<td>112610</td>
<td>80348</td>
<td>3204</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>4703</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>1288</td>
<td>2916</td>
<td>10505</td>
<td>2286</td>
<td>26661</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1115865</td>
<td>850772</td>
<td>116470</td>
<td>81125</td>
<td>3462</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>4751</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>2916</td>
<td>10537</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>26949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(77.13)</td>
<td>(10.43)</td>
<td>(7.27)</td>
<td>(0.31)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.26)</td>
<td>(0.94)</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.79)</td>
<td>(0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>96813</td>
<td>87653</td>
<td>4820</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1281663</td>
<td>997634</td>
<td>137582</td>
<td>73163</td>
<td>4126</td>
<td>1473</td>
<td>6832</td>
<td>3700</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>10924</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10816</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>14855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures within brackets indicate percentage to total.

---

*Census 1971 has not incorporated districtwise distribution of population by principal languages in Assam.

Note: Figures within brackets indicate percentage to total.
8. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population

According to 1971 Census, the population of the district include 2,08,867 persons (12.19 per cent) of Scheduled Castes and 15,283 persons (0.89 per cent) of Scheduled Tribes as against 1,08,114 persons (9.68 per cent) of Scheduled Castes and 6,700 persons (0.60 per cent) of Scheduled Tribes in 1951 (vide, Table II.10). It is, thus, evident that Scheduled Caste population of the district outnumber the Scheduled Tribes, a picture which is quite reverse in the case of the State of Assam where 6.25 per cent and 11.91 per cent of the total population comprise Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population respectively.

Kaibarta or Jalia, Nali or Malakar, Patni, Rabidas or Nushi, Namassura, Suklabaidya or Dhupi or Dhobi, Methar or Mangi, Sutradhar are some of the Scheduled Caste communities of the district.¹

The Scheduled Tribe population of the district comprise mostly of Barma (Plains tribe), Khasi, Nissa, Naga, Kuki, Hmar etc.²

The following table presents the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population of the district for 1951, 1961 and 1971.³

2. Ibid., pp. 176-77
3. (a) District Statistical Abstract, Cashar District, 1963, Table 1.6
   (b) District Statistical Hand Book, Cashar District, 1971, p. 5
   (c) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cashar District, 1971, pp. 178-79
   (d) Ibid., 1951, p. 266
   (e) Ibid., 1961, p. 22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>P.C. to total population</td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>P.C. to total population</td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>P.C. to total population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>1,06,11k</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>1,92,805</td>
<td>13.99</td>
<td>2,08,867</td>
<td>12.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>14,076</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>15,285</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Working force and occupational pattern

Caobar's economy has a preponderant agrarian bias, as is seen reflected in the relatively high percentage of the working population in agriculture. According to the 1971 Census, the working population in the district constitutes nearly 29 P.C. of its total population as against 35 P.C. in 1961 vide, Table II.11 presented below.¹

1. (a) District Statistical Hand Book, Caobar District, 1971, pp. 8-11
(b) Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 1973, pp. 12-15
(c) Economic Survey, Assam, 1973-74, p. 45
(d) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Caobar District, 1971, pp. 179-181
(e) Ibid., 1961, pp. 22-23
<p>| District | 1961 | | | | | 1971 | | | | | |
|----------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total workers</th>
<th>Cultivators</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Agricultural labourers</th>
<th>Non-workers</th>
<th>Percentage of Cultivators &amp; Agricultural workers to total</th>
<th>Percentage of workers to total population</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total workers</th>
<th>Cultivators</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Agricultural labourers</th>
<th>Non-workers</th>
<th>Percentage of Cultivators &amp; Agricultural workers to total</th>
<th>Percentage of workers to total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>334</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>565</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"The fall in the labour force participation rates according to 1971 Census which was more marked in the case of females, has been mainly attributed to conceptual difference in the definition of workers in 1961 and 1971. The 1961 Census definition of work was on the liberal side which had exaggerated the participation rates because a person was categorised basically as an economically active worker even if such a person's contribution to work was extremely marginal. There was also a bias in favour of persons being categorised as cultivators. In the 1971 Census, persons were classified as workers or non-workers based on their main activity. If a person was basically not engaged in any economic activity, he or she was treated as non-worker even when he or she attended to any secondary work for marginally contributed to work.1

It may be gathered from Table II.11 that 66.5 P.C. of the district's working population is engaged in agriculture, either as cultivators or as labourers, as against 65.8 P.C.2 for Assam and 69.7 P.C.3 for India as a whole. The next important group - Forestry, Fishing, Livestock, Hunting, Plantation orchards and allied activities - absorbs another 12 per cent while Mining and Quarrying, Household industries,

2. Ibid., p. 45
3. Publications Division, Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, India 1975, p. 15
PIE DIAGRAM REPRESENTING OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN CACHAR DISTRICT, 1971.

1. CULTIVATORS.
2. AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.
3. LIVESTOCK, FORESTRY, FISHING, AND OTHER ALLIED ACTIVITIES.
4. MINING AND QUARRYING
5. HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY
6. OTHER THAN HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY
   MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.
7. CONSTRUCTION
8. TRADE AND COMMERCE.
9. TRANSPORT, STORAGE & COMMUNICATION.
10. OTHER SERRIES.
Manufacturing and Construction activities together account for a little less than 5 per cent only. The remainder of the working population is absorbed in Trade and Commerce, Transport, Storage, Communications and Services.¹ The percentage of agricultural labour (29.8) to total agricultural workers is highest in Cachar among the districts of Assam.²

The classification of tea garden labourers as non-agricultural class has reduced the percentage of agricultural population in the district of Cachar. "The large number of East Bengal Hindu refugees who are mostly non-agriculturists has also swelled the non-agricultural population in the Cachar district."³

The large percentage of non-earning dependents, i.e., non-working population that constitutes about 71 per cent indicates the strain and economic pressure under which the whole economy is working. A minority with their limited income has to support the rest.

1. District Statistical Hand Book, Cachar District, 1971, pp. 10-11


10. Literacy

The literacy percentage of this district which was 22.2 per cent in 1951 has gone up to 30.6 per cent in 1971 indicating an improvement of the literacy rate of the district over the last two decades, vide Table II.13. Of the total population of 11,15,667 in 1951, only 1,94,374 males and 53,759 females were literates, while as per Census figures for 1961, out of total population of 13,78,476 - 2,90,629 males and 1,03,679 females were literates. The 1971 Census, however, reveals that out of the total population of 17,13,318 - 3,60,194 males and 1,63,625 females are literates. From these figures, it is apparent that as per 1951 Census, overall percentage of literacy of the district was 22.2 of which the percentage of female literacy was 10.1 only. Since then, a gradual improvement in the literacy percentage of the district may be noticed from the figures available as per 1961 and 1971 Census. In 1961, the overall percentage of literacy of the district was 28.6 of which the percentage of female literacy was 15.8 only, but as per 1971 Census, the overall percentage of literacy of the district is, 30.6 of which percentage of female literates is 19.9. The figures for 1971 also reveal that 68.8 per cent of the literates are male. Among the Sub-divisions, literacy rate is the highest in Silchar and lowest in Hailakandi.¹

The literacy rate of the district is comparatively better than that of the State of Assam and of the country as  

¹. U.D.I., Calcutta-1, Credit Plan for Cachar District, 1978, p. 16
a whole (vide, Table II.12 presented below). This is no doubt a hopeful sign for the district because the overall economic development of a region depends, to a considerable extent, on the literacy of the people of that region.

Among all the districts of Assam, Cachar has the second highest percentage of literates (50.6 per cent), only next to Sibsagar (56.6 per cent). The comparative figures as to the percentage of literates for Cachar, Assam and India as per 1961 and 1971 Census Reports are supplied below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/State/ Country</th>
<th>Percentage of literates 1961</th>
<th>Percentage of literates 1971</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>28.60</td>
<td>30.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>28.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>24.03</td>
<td>29.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Ibid., 1973-74, p. 3
Male, Female and Urban, Rural break-up of the literates of Caeshar District for 1951, 1961 and 1971 are supplied in a tabular form\(^1\) (Table II.13).

III. Immigration

Immigration in Caeshar started much before the British annexation, when the Kaeshari kings invited and encouraged the Bengalis to settle in the kingdom by liberal grants of land.\(^2\) For obvious reasons, the flow of immigrants increased during the British rule; and hundreds of agriculturists immigrated from Sylhet, Mymensingh, Cemilla and even from Barisal and Barhina; and they were followed by the traders and fortune-seekers.\(^3\)

1. (a) Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Caeshar District, 1951, p. 207
   (b) ibid., 1971, p. 179
   (c) District Statistical Abstract, Caeshar District, 1963, Table 1.5
   (d) District Statistical Hand Book, Caeshar District, 1971, p. 4
   (e) ibid., 1961, p. 22

2. (a) Census of India, 1961, District Census Hand Book, Caeshar District, p. 6
   (b) District Information and Public Relations Officer, Caeshar, Silchar, Caeshar : Assam’s Southern Sentinel, 1973, pp. 9–10
   (c) Barman, N.K., The Queens of Caeshar or Heramba and the History of the Caeshari, Northola, Caeshar, 1974, pp. 125–89

3. (a) Chattacherjee, J.B., op.cit., p. 186
   (b) Census of India, 1961, District Census Hand Book, Caeshar District, p. 6
   (c) District Information and Public Relations Officer, Caeshar, Silchar, op.cit., p. 10
Table II.13

Number of literates in the Cachar District for 1951, 1961 and 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons F.C. to total population</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>P.C. to total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>194374</td>
<td>53759</td>
<td>248133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>290629</td>
<td>103679</td>
<td>394308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>360194</td>
<td>162685</td>
<td>523819</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the tea industry was set-up, large number of workers were imported from other parts of the country to meet the problem of dearth of workmen in this sparsely populated land of Cachar. The first large-scale importation of labour, according to Sir Percival Griffiths, was in 1958-59, when 400 labourers were brought to this district from Benaras, Chasipore, Chota Nagpur and Bihar; and after 1960, the importation was much accelerated.

The immigration from various sources and for various reasons continued all throughout the British rule; and in 1931, the number of Bengali-speaking people in the district was 3,58,772, Hindi - 1,03,789, Manipuri - 55,550, Oriya - 9,611, Kuki, Nag and others - 40,194, while the number of Dimohi and Bodo (Plains Cachari) was 13,547 and 9,068 respectively out of the total population of 5,70,531.

Till 1941, the immigration continued in the way, as so discussed, but during the decade 1941-51, it took a serious shape, as was never before, when the mass exodus of displaced persons (or Hindu refugees) from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) took place following the Partition of India in 1947, and this disturbed the demographic profile of the district as

3. Excluding present Karimganj Sub-division, but including, new separated, N.C. Hills.
4. (a) Census of India, 1931, Assam
   (b) Bhattacharjee, J.B., op.cit., p. 246
will be evident from the analysis of population growth embodied in the following paragraphs.

After the partition of India persons who left Pakistan for Civil disturbance or for fear of such disturbance or on account of the creation of two dominions, have been termed as displaced persons.¹ Such migrants, best known as refugees, form the last phase of migration in the district. Being nearer the abandoned areas and having in some respects, somewhat similar environments,² Cachar and Goalpara districts have attracted displaced persons west.³ According to the Statistical survey of displaced persons from East Pakistan in Assam, 1955-56, conducted by the Director of Statistics, Assam, the largest concentration of the displaced persons is in the Cachar district, which accounts for 26.3 P.C. of the total; the next largest quota is shared by Goalpara (19.1 P.C.) followed by Kamrup (15.3 P.C.), Nowgong (12.09 P.C.), Darrang (9.4 P.C.), Lakhimpur (8.1 P.C.) and Sibsagar (7.5 P.C.) in the order of decreasing concentration.⁴ The 1951 Census recorded 95,177⁵ Hindus migrated from East Pakistan to this district. The statistical survey of displaced

---

1. Census of India, District Census Handbook, Cachar District, 1951, p. xiii
4. Ibid., p. 7
5. Census of India, District Census Handbook, Cachar District, 1951, p. viii
persons from East Pakistan in Assam 1955-56 put the total figure
till date to 1,84,096.\(^1\) The influx of displaced persons continued
unabated and their total figure reached 1,61,497 (37,314 families)
on 31.12.1959.\(^2\) In an estimate made by the Relief and
Rehabilitation Branch, Cachar, during the influx of 1964 as many
as 12,464 families consisting of 46,449 persons came and settled
in the district.\(^3\) So with the migrants of 1964-65, the total
number of displaced families in the district arrived at 49,778,
consisting of 2,07,946 persons.

There was a fresh influx of displaced persons since
July 1967 as per the report of 'On New Migrant population in
Cachar District as on 31.3.70, and during the period July 1967
and March 31, 1970, in all 1,745 displaced families took shelter
in Cachar.\(^4\) The record also reveals that out of 1,745 families,
1,841 families consisting of 4,580 persons stayed in the Camps,\(^5\)
and on the basis of this ratio (between families and persons),
it may be deduced that all these 1,745 families consist of roughly
6,000 persons. So at the end of March 1970, the estimated number

\(^1\) Director of Statistics, Assam, Shillong, op.cit., p. 2
\(^2\) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Relief and Rehabilitation
Branch, Cachar, Silchar, Facts and Figures in Brief on Relief
and Rehabilitation Work in Cachar District as on 31.12.1959, p. 1
\(^3\) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Relief and Rehabilitation
Branch, Cachar, Silchar, On New Migrant Population in Cachar
District as on 31.3.1970, p. 3
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 2
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 4
of displaced families of the district came to 51,523 and these families consisted of 2,15,946 persons. It deserves mention that West Pakistan, being far away from the district, the number of displaced persons from West Pakistan is almost nil and that the displaced persons consisted of Hindu refugees only, for obvious reasons. No significant migration of Muslims has been reported.¹

The impact of refugee influx on the demographic features of the district will be evident from the foregoing Table II.1 which shows that since 1941 Cachar has been experiencing a persistently high rate of population growth. Cachar showed an overall increase of population of 24.66 per cent during 1941-51, a rate higher than that registered by any other district of the State of Assam except Nowgong. This is in striking contrast to its position in the previous decade (1931-41) when Cachar registered only 11.38 per cent increase and stood at the very bottom of the Natural division of the State in this respect.²

Such a high rate of growth of population in the district since 1941 had forced up its density from 129 persons per sq. kilometre in 1941 to 160 persons in 1951 signifying an increase in density of over 25 P.C. over the period.

During the next 20 years (1951-71) it again displayed a steep rise. During the two decades (1951-71) population of the district increased by 54.39 per cent as against 51.81 per cent

1. Census of India, District Census Hand Book, Cachar District, 1951, p. ix

2. Ibid., p. vii
for the entire country. In fact, the growth of population took
a revolutionary turn since 1941. This can be substantiated from
the fact that during 1941-71, population of the district increased
by about 91.39 per cent.

The impact of refugee influx on the growth of urban
population is remarkable as is evident from the foregoing
Table II.2. It shows that the percentage growth of population of
Silchar town over the decades since 1911 are 16.15, 28.08, 27.03,
105.16, 20.56 and 28.08. From 1921 the population of Karimganj
town began to increase gradually by 25.02, 37.29, 144.44, 50.19
and 10.23 per cent in 1931, 1941, 1951, 1961 and 1971 respectively.
The percentage increase of population in Hailakandi town recorded
in 1941, 1951, 1961 and 1971 was 54.04, 166.50, 71.94 and 17.78
respectively. Thus, during 1941-'51, there has been a tremendous
increase of population in the three Sub-divisional towns of the
district, obviously due to the influx of refugees.

As hinted earlier, the reasons for such galloping rate
of population growth after 1941 is obvious - the partition of
India in 1947 and the resultant influx of refugees in lakhs from
time to time. The influx of refugees continued unabated even in
the last decade (1961-'71), and as such the accelerated growth
rate of 24.29 P.C. in the last decade (1961-'71) may be attributed,
apart from the biological reason, to the influx of refugees from
erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after January, 1964.

1. Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Relief and Rehabilitation
Branch, Cachar, Silchar, On New Migrant population in Cachar
District as on 31.3.70, p. 2
Speaking about the impact of refugee influx in the State, Dr. P.C. Goswami, in "The Economic Development of Assam" has remarked, "A new stream of immigrants recently flowing into Assam has been the Hindu refugees from East Bengal. These people are averse to become cultivators or manual labourers and as a result their influx has created a serious imbalance in the economy more particularly in urban areas. Because of the absence of other opportunities for development, excepting agriculture which has already been overstrained, increasing pressure on land can easily be foreseen with the increase of population in the State. Unless measures are taken to create more employment opportunities for the people of Assam, a serious crisis in the economy of the State is bound to occur."1

As the district of Cachar repeats, in miniature, the broad economic pattern of the State of Assam, the effect of refugee influx is bound to be same in Cachar; and the foregoing demographic analysis confirms the heavy pressure of refugees on the economy of the district. It is obvious, at the initial stages of refugee influx, the district was faced with twin problems of providing food and shelter to the migrants and in subsequent years the Government had to remain preoccupied with the heavy task of refugee rehabilitation in and around the district.2

2. Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Relief and Rehabilitation Branch, Cachar, Silchar, On New Migrant Population in Cachar District as on 31.3.1970, pp. 2-16
Though it cannot be denied that the refugees by their active nature\(^1\) contributed to the socio-cultural and socio-economic development\(^2\) of the district particularly in the fields of agriculture\(^3\) and allied activities and other subsidiary occupations specially handicrafts,\(^4\) yet it must be pointed out that the rehabilitation work in the district was inadequate, for which the economy of the district was overstrained. It deserves mention here that neither micro-level planning for areas of refugee concentration was taken up, as was done in Nilokheri and

1. The recognition of the active nature of the displaced persons (or refugees) by the Government of Assam is evident from the following quotation: "The largest section of permanent population (in Badarpur P.S.) is consisted of displaced persons (Hindus) who have migrated from erstwhile East Pakistan. The people are generally of very active type and conscious of rights and obligations." - The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978, Part II(A), p. 2319

2. The contribution of the refugees in the process of economic development of the district finds its best expression in the following remark of the Sub-divisional Planning Cell, Karimganj Sub-Division: "In fact, the development work in this Sub-division began not with the advent of the Five Year Plan, but with resettlement of vast number of refugees, who have considerably contributed in the upliftment of the Sub-division." Sub-divisional Planning Cell, Karimganj, Draft Outline of Fifth Five Year Plan, Vol. II, Sectoral Plan, 1974-79, p. ii (Preface)

3. The cultivation of Boro rice in the depressed lands is essentially a post-partition feature in the district, meaning obviously that this Boro rice cultivation is primarily the contribution of the displaced persons, a sizeable number of whom were allotted fallow depressed lands for settlement. - District Information and Public Relations Officer, Cachar, Silchar, Cachar: A Descriptive Note, 1967, p. 3

Faridabad,\(^1\) nor district-level planning, with special reference to refugee settlement, was taken up by the Government in the context of developmental planning; and the little that was done in Ramkrishnanagar, the only refugee colony of the district, by combining the rehabilitation work with Community Development Programme, suffered from wrong location and poor planning; and, in spite of good potentiality, the colony could not expand beyond the limited growth of administrative centre, as the growth had been checked for inadequate transport and communication facilities and paucity of means of livelihood.\(^2\) Moreover, in the absence of proper planning and right perspective to deal with the problem of migration in the eastern region following the partition of India, there was only one-sided influx without any exchange of population as was done in East Punjab;\(^3\) and had it been done, the district would not have experienced such a heavy pressure on the economy due to the Partition of India.


3. To quote Statesman : "... Indian politicians did not try to fob off Punjabi Hindus with illusory promises; on the contrary, they encouraged a total exchange of population, speedily following it with all the Constitutional and economic measures necessary to absorb the new comers. No such sympathy was ever shown to eastern refugees." - The Statesman, Editorial Columns, Calcutta, May 9, 1980.
IV. Conclusion

Cachar may be called a multi-lingual district of migrants. The migration continued in phases down the ages; and the last phase took the form of mass exodus from the erstwhile East Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947.

The district experienced tremendous growth of population during the period under study, which may be attributed, apart from the biological reason, to the heavy inflow of refugees. Therefore, unless stringent measures are adopted to check further inflow of migrants, the economy of the district is bound to be jeopardised.

In view of the rapid growth of population in the context of underdeveloped nature of the economy of the district, preventive measures for birth control are urgently called for. The National Family Planning drive, already initiated and implemented in the district (vide Appendix-4) seems to be quite inadequate.

Other redeeming demographic features of the district are that, unlike the State as a whole, the Scheduled Castes outnumber the Scheduled Tribe population, and that the percentage literacy in the district is higher than that of Assam and all-India average.