

CHAPTER - II

POPULATION

2.1.0 Assam is situated in the North-East region of India – bordering seven States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and West Bengal and two countries viz. Bangladesh and Bhutan. With a geographical area of 78,438 sq. kms., Assam accounts for about 2.4 percent of the country's total geographical area. Most of the State's population lives in the lush and verdant valleys of its two major river systems in the twenty two districts of the Brahmaputra valley and the three districts of the Barak valley. Less densely populated are the two hill districts of Karbi-Anglong and the North Cachar Hills, set in the low-lying hills that separate the two valleys. For administrative and revenue purposes, the State has 27 districts including the newly created Kamrup urban district and four districts under the newly created Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) areas viz. Kokrajhar, Baska, Chirang and Udalguri.

2.1.1 According to the Census of India, 2001 the population of Assam stands at 2,66,55,528, of which 1,37,77,037 are males and 1,28,78,491 females. The decadal growth of the State's population works out to 18.92 percent during the decade 1991-2001 as against 21.34 percent for the country as a whole. Table 2.1 shows some important features of population of Assam and India.

Particulars	Unit	1991 Census		2001 Census	
		Assam	India	Assam	India
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Population	Lakh	224	8463	266	10270
2. Decadal Growth	Per cent	24.24	23.86	18.92	21.34
3. Change in percentage of decadal growth	Per cent	-	-	(-)-5.32	(-)-2.52
4. Density	Per Sq. Km.	286	273	340	324
5. Sex-Ratio	Females per 1000 males	923	927	932	933
6. Literacy	Per cent	52.89	52.21	64.28	65.38
7. Urban Population	Per cent	11.10	26.13	12.90	27.78
8. Rural Population	Per cent	88.90	73.87	87.10	72.22
9. S.C. Population	Per cent	7.40	16.73	6.85	N.A.
10. S.T. Population	Per cent	12.83	7.95	12.41	N.A.

Source : Census of India, 1991 and 2001

STATE HIGHLIGHTS OF DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE :

- Growth of population in the State after Independence (1951-2001) is 232 per cent against national growth rate of 184 per cent during the period.
- Assam ranks 14th in size of population among the states of India.
- Assam ranks 18th in Sex-ratio among the states of India.
- Assam ranks 24th in literacy among the states of India.
- In respect of density Assam ranks 15th among the state's of India.
- The share of population of Assam to the total population of India is 2.59 percent.

2.1.2 The 2001 Population Census has revealed that the decadal growth rate of population of the State has come down to 18.92 per cent during 1991-2001. This variation has been observed predominantly in the districts of Nalbari (13.03 per cent), Kokrajhar (12.00 per cent), Bongaigaon (12.05 per cent), Dibrugarh (13.68 per cent) and Golaghat (14.27 per cent). The districts of Kamrup, North Cachar Hills, Dhubri, Goalpara, Karbi-Anglong, Morigaon and Nagaon have maintained a reasonable increase during the last decade. The table 2.2 indicates the decadal percentage growth of population in all the districts of Assam.

Sl. No.	Districts	Total Population		Decadal Growth rate (1991-2001)
		1991	2001	
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Dhubri	1324404	1637344	23.63
2.	Kokrajhar	808730	905764	12.00
3.	Bongaigaon	807523	904835	12.05
4.	Goalpara	668138	822305	23.03
5.	Barpeta	1385659	1647201	18.87
6.	Nalbari	1016390	1148824	13.03
7.	Kamrup	2000071	2522324	26.11
8.	Darrang	1298860	1504320	15.82
9.	Sonitpur	1424287	1681513	18.06
10.	Lakhimpur	751517	889010	18.30
11.	Dhemaji	478830	571944	19.45
12.	Morigaon	639682	776256	21.35
13.	Nagaon	1893171	2314629	22.26
14.	Golaghat	828096	946279	14.27
15.	Jorhat	871206	999221	14.69
16.	Sivasagar	907983	1051736	15.83
17.	Dibrugarh	1042457	1185072	13.68
18.	Tinsukia	962298	1150062	19.51
19.	Karbi-Anglong	662723	813311	22.72
20.	N. C. Hills	150801	188079	24.72
21.	Karimganj	827063	1007976	21.87
22.	Hailakandi	449018	542872	20.89
23.	Cachar	1215385	1444921	18.89
	ASSAM	2241432	26655528	18.92

The density of population of Assam has gone upto 340 in 2001 as against 286 in 1991 census. The sex-ratio in the state shows an improvement from 923 in 1991 to 932 in 2001. The growth of literacy in Assam has shown an encouraging sign. The literacy rate for Assam as per Census 2001 comes to 64.28 percent with 71.93 percent for males and 56.03 percent for females.

Some important characteristics such as highest and lowest population, percentage of growth, literacy rate, sex ratio and density among the districts of Assam may be seen at Table- 2.3.

TABLE – 2.3
SOME IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSAM'S POPULATION
(2001 CENSUS)

Information on	Highest among the districts		Lowest among the districts		
1) Total Population	Kamrup	25,22,324	North Cachar Hills	1,88,079	
2) Total Rural population	Nagaon	20,36,342	Hailakandi	4,98,787	
3) Total Urban population	Kamrup	9,08,217	Nalbari	27,486	
4) Percentage of population growth (1991-2001)	Kamrup	26.11	Kokrajhar	12.00	
5) Literacy rates	Total	Jorhat	77.91	Dhubri	49.86
	Rural	Jorhat	76.29	Dhubri	45.73
	Urban	Karimganj	91.62	Goalpara	77.32
6) Sex ratio	Goalpara	956	North Cachar Hills	884	
7) Density	Nagaon	604	North Cachar Hills	38	

2.1.3 Classification of population by economic activity according to the result of Population Census, 2001 reveals that out of total population of 26655528 in the State, 9538591 were total workers of which 7114097 were main workers and 2424494 were marginal workers. Among male workers 85 per cent were main workers, 15 per cent were marginal workers, while among females 47 per cent were main workers and 53 per cent were marginal workers. Out of a total 9538591 workers in Assam, 3730773 were Cultivators (39 per cent), 1263532 were Agricultural labourers (13 per cent), 344912 were engaged in Household Industries (4 per cent) and 4199374 were Other Workers (44 per cent). Thus, about 52 per cent working population was engaged in Agriculture (i.e. cultivators and agricultural labourers) in the State.

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES:

2.2.0. The data obtained from the Sample Registration Bulletin published by the Registrar General of India depicts some idea about the trend in the birth and death rates and infant mortality rate in the State. According to this source, in most of the years from 1991 to 2002 birth rates, death rates and infant mortality rates were found to be higher in the State than that of the country as a whole. During the year 2002, the birth rates, death rates and infant mortality rates of Assam have been 26.6, 9.2 and 70 per mille as against 25.0, 8.1 and 64 per mille respectively at all-India level. The Table - 2.4 shows the birth, death and infant mortality rates of Assam and India from 1991 to 2002.

TABLE - 2.4
BIRTH, DEATH AND INFANT MORTALITY RATES OF ASSAM AND INDIA
(PER MILLE)

YEAR	BIRTH RATE		DEATH RATE		INFANT MORTALITY RATE	
	ASSAM	INDIA	ASSAM	INDIA	ASSAM	INDIA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1991	30.9	29.5	11.5	9.8	81	80
1997	28.2	27.2	9.9	8.9	76	71
1998	27.9	26.5	10.0	9.0	76	72
1999	27.0	26.1*	9.7	8.7*	76	70
2000	26.9	25.8	9.6	8.5	75	68
2001	26.8	25.4	9.5	8.4	73	66
2002	26.6	25.0	9.2	8.1	70	63

* Excludes data for Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland (Rural).
Source : Sample Registration Bulletin, R.G.I., New Delhi.