A Geographical analysis on changing population structure of a small town, Assam, India

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Abstract

The rapid and dynamic change of the population structure is one of the major socioeconomic forces that contribute to the alteration of the earth surface. The study of population structure of a town has found to be important as it reflects the population size, density, composition etc. Mangaldai town, situated at a distance of 68 km east from the Guwahati city lies on the intersection of 26°25′50″ N latitude and 92°02′0″ E longitude. At first, Mangaldai town was a market oriented town but now it becomes an administrative town by the side of National Highway-52. The actual Town committee was constituted in 1924 with 4 no. of wards which is upgraded to 10 wards with the rapid growth of population. The town has transformed from the district head quarter of Darrangia Kingdom to the District administrative headquarter of Darrang district of India and reflects a vast array of change in demographic aspects. Therefore, in the present work an attempt has been made to analyze the changing pattern of Mangaldai town with special reference to the population growth, density and distribution. The study related secondary data were collected from Darrang district Town planning committee (Mangaldai town) and from personal field survey work.

Keywords : Darrang District, Demography, Mangaldai town, Population.

1. Introduction

The population is the resource in any region which plays significant role as it may contributes to the development or deterioration of the region depending on the quality and quantity of it. Demographic study of a town includes population size, density, distribution and vital statistics. The urban people come from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and profess different values. It is also evident that urban population gets added up through migration of rural people for getting the scope of education and employment and hence there exists a disparity in the population structure.

The town Mangaldai had its early origin during the reign of the Koch dynasty (last 16th century to early 17th century). Later on, it become the head quarter of the Darrangia kingdom. Due to underwent of a regressive phase, it had lost the character of a town when occupied by British in 1826 and it remained as a small village market. It gained the status of a town and administrative head quarter during the British rule in 1833 (Medhi, 1984). The actual town committee was constituted in 1924 with four wards. However, after the Municipality Board had constituted (1956), the municipality area was extended from four to ten wards. Subsequently, the town become the administrative head quarter of Darrang district of India. Now, it is a class 1 town of India with 29,250 populations (2011). The historical background and the current status of the town demand vast studies on it and in this paper an attempt has been made to fulfill it to some extent.

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2. Study area

The Mangaldai town is a market oriented administrative town of India (District Darrang) with a total area of 4.59 sq km which lies in the intersection of 26°25'50" North parallel of latitude and 92°02'00" East meridian of longitude. Geographically, the town area is a small river valley plain of Mangaldai river. It is situated by the side of National Highway no. 52 at a distance of 68 km east of Guwahati city. In the east side, Mangaldai town is bounded by north trunk road and Bega River. On the north side, the village Tengabari, Chapai and Howly Mohanpur are situated. Similarly, on the south the town is bounded by Charlands of Brahmaputra River. On the other hand, Upahupara and Mangaldai river situated in the west. The town consists of 10 municipal wards.

2.1 Physiography of the study area

The relief of the town is almost the same with that of the district Darrang as a whole. The Darrang district consists of a patch of the plain lying between the steeply rising Himalayas on the north and the river Brahmaputra on the south. The area comprises of four distinct physiographic zones: i) the ‘Bhabar’ zone lying at the junction of Himalayas and the plain; ii) on the south of Bhabar, the ‘Terai’ zone; iii) on the south of Terai zone, there is a ‘central zone’ with an average width of 15-2-km; and iv) the low-lying zone bordering the Brahmaputra that consists of the active flood plain of the master stream.

2.2 Soil

The soil of the town and its suburbs are formed by silt, sand, clay, alluvium soil and humus which are found to be suitable for growing a variety of crops like rice, jute, pulse, vegetables etc.

2.3 Climate and Vegetation

The sub tropical climate has prevailed in the study area with well marked seasonal variations. There is heavy rainfall in summer and drought in winter. About 82% of the total rainfall of year occurs during March-September. Its mean annual temperature is 23°c. Commonly deciduous trees, grasses and semi evergreen trees are seen in Mangaldai area. In suburbs, where there are patches of alluvium soil, tea is grown. The flood plains have grass and swap vegetation with luxuriant growth of many other species such as Reed, Thatch etc.

Location Map
3. Aim and objectives

The present study focuses on the demographic characteristics of the people of Mangaldai town and the pattern reflected by them over different parts of the town.

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To bring into light the population growth of Mangaldai town and the changing pattern reflected by it,
- To study the population distribution pattern and density of the town.

4. Methodology

The population characteristics have been studied and analyzed on the basis of field observations, personal surveys and the data obtained from various sources. Generally, methodology for the work had covered 2 parts:

- Collection of primary data with distribution of questionnaires and schedule in randomly selected households in different parts of the town. Personal interview had also been conducted.
- The secondary data were collected from official records (District Town committee official records), statistical handbooks (Darrang district Census handbook), journals, related books and some other sources which are represented here by graphs and diagrams.

5. Results and discussion

The present study, based on various primary and secondary data reflects the rapid development of township in Mangaldai area which also changes the demographic pattern. Population is an important element of an area and the study about population pattern of any specific area bears enormous importance. As mentioned above, the population structure of a town includes population size, growth, density, distribution, composition and so on. In the present study, the findings are analyzed and discussed under the following headings:

5.1. Population Growth

The census of India, 1921, had recorded the population of Mangaldai area as 1023 persons but it was increased to 12,150 in 1971 which had
spread over an area of 4.95 square km. The first 50 years showed rather slow growth of population and after that there was a rapid growth of population, especially from 1971 to 2011 (Table-1 and fig 2). During this period of 40 years, an increase of 17,100 persons has observed. The present population of the town is 29,250 persons (as per 2011 projection).

**Table - 1 :** Mangaldai town : Growth of population from 1921-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Decade Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>+673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>2,093</td>
<td>+397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>+1,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>8,547</td>
<td>+4,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>12,150</td>
<td>+3,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991*</td>
<td>20,747*</td>
<td>+8,597*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>23,920</td>
<td>+3,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29,250</td>
<td>+5,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Gazetteer of India, Assam state, Darrang District 2011

* Variation in two decades (1971-1991). As no census was conducted in Assam in 1981, the growth of population during the decade of 1971-81 has not been shown.

The significant high rate of increase during this period may be due to the reasons like expansion of employment scope, influx of immigrants and the migration of people from rural area to the town. Other causes of population growth in Mangaldai town are – increase in administrative, commercial and industrial activities, increased scope for higher education etc. It is already evident that the rate of urban growth in Assam (122.53%) was four times higher than that of rural growth (30.16%) (Sharma, 1979). The town Mangaldai is not an exception as the changing population pattern reflects a rapid growth resulting from the rapid urbanization process.

**Fig. 2 :** Population Growth curve of Mangaldai town

Source : Census of India 2011, District Census handbook, Series-19 part xii-A and B
5.2. Population Distribution and Density

The pattern of population distribution and density in Mangaldai town has found to vary in different area (fig 3). The central part of the town has highest concentration of population which comprises the Ward no. 2 (19%). Comparatively lower population is found in Rajapam [Ward no. 9 (4.59%)], Islampur [ward no. 8 (6%)] and Bhebarghat [ward no. 10 (6.9%)] areas. The population distribution of the town shows a pattern from the central part to the outer parts (Medhi, 1984). Some specific patterns of population distribution have also obtained in terms of religious groups. The Muslim peoples are mainly concentrated in Islampur (70%) and Sahityanagar (60%) area. People of the Hindu community are found to be widespread throughout the town. In a similar way, the Christians and Jain people are mostly abundant in central part of the town.

In 1961, the average population density of Mangaldai town was 1726.63 person/sq km. It was increased to 2454.55 person/sq km in 1971. With the advent of urbanization and rapid increase of industrialization, the population density is increased to 4832.32 person/sq km in 2011 (Census, 2011). However, the highest density occurs in central part (ward no. 3) and the lowest in the peripheral areas. The reason behind this variation among different parts of the town is clear to all that the central part holds the attraction as it is the commercial and trade centre of the town. The newly developed areas lie on the periphery and hence, population density gets lowered.

With the growth of various economic activities, the process of urbanization becomes more rapid. In demographic studies, the most important factor to be considered is migration. Migration is the essential factor for the growth of
population. Mangaldai town gained a substantial no. of migrants since the advent of British rule. The present population of the town is essentially for migration of people, of which about 60% migrants to the town are from rural areas of the district, 35-37% from other places and the rest 3-5% are immigrants (field survey data). Majority of these people are migrated for service and business, some of them are migrated for educational and other purpose.

6. Conclusion

The present study elucidates the demographic pattern of Mangaldai town of India (Darrang district) that includes population growth, distribution and density. Mangaldai town, the district administrative headquarter has found to be shown a significant demographical pattern. The study has advanced the basic ideas of socio-demographic aspects. A comprehensive plan will required for the proper management of the town including the housing, industry development, employment, transport and communication and so on. Today’s world is facing a high rate of population growth. Considering the growing tendency of population, every citizen should think about the proper management of human distribution and settlement. This kind of study may be specially useful and advantageous in such aspects.

References

Census of India 2011. District Census handbook, Darrang, Series 19, Part xii-A and B.
www.darrang.gov.in