

CHANGING PATTERN OF POPULATION AND LITERACY IN BANKURA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

Atanu Sarkar

Research Scholar, Department of Geography, University of Calcutta.

Abstract : Population change and literacy status of the people are two key determinants of the overall development of any region. This study aims to analyze the changing pattern of growth and the changes in literacy rate over a period of time in the district of Bankura based on secondary database from Census of India 2011. The study shows Bankura has always experienced a normal unevenness in terms of spatial distribution. It has a population density of 464 persons/sq. km in 2001 that increased to 523 persons/sq. km in 2011. Bankura exhibits a low decadal growth rate of 12.64% in 2001-2011. The literacy rate of Bankura has increased from 52.04% in 1991 to 63.84% in 2001 and 70.95% in 2011. Among all the blocks bankura district, Kotulpur block ranks first in terms of total literacy rate, male literacy rate and female literacy rate. However Bankura scores low on the overall female literacy side. Literacy rate has increased as a result of wide spread of free school education and mass literacy campaign through direct involvement of the poor and weaker section of the society mainly with the help of panchayets.

Keywords: Population, literacy rate, growth rate

INTRODUCTION

The term population refers the whole number of people or inhabitants in a country or region. Population study is also associated with the study of fertility, mortality, migration and social mobility. Several factors are responsible for changing the sizes of population at any place are fertility, mortality and migration. Population change of any area is a function of fertility, mortality and migration. Fertility always play positive role whereas mortality always play negative role and migration have both positive and negative role. Literacy, as defined by Population Commission of United Nations is the ability to both read and write a simple message with understanding in any language. The Census of India adopted this definition. Literacy reflects the socio-economic and cultural set up of a nation, ethnic group or community. The literacy rate and its change are dependent on many factors such as –physical, economic, historical, social, cultural, political etc. Population change and literacy status of the people are two key determinants of the overall development of any country.

STUDY AREA

This research schedule will encompass the district of Bankura, the spherical coordinates of which are 22°38' N and 23°38' N latitude and 86°36' E and 87°46' E longitude. The district is located in the western periphery of West Bengal. It is bounded by Puruliya district in the West, Bardhaman district in the north and east, Paschim Mednipur in south and Hugli in east. The district attained its separate identity as Bankura in 1881. It covers an area of 6882 sq. km (2,657 sq. mile) with a population of 3,596,674 (Male- 1,838,095 and Female- 1,758,579) as per 2011 Census.

OBJECTIVES

The two major objectives of the study are as follows:

- ❖ To examine the changing pattern of growth as influenced by population dynamics.
- ❖ To examine the changes in literacy rate over a period of time.

METHODOLOGY

The secondary database and information have been collected from Census of India- 1951,1961,1971,1981,1991,2001(Book and in CD format) and 2011 PCA data (in CD format), District Human Development Report, District Statistical Handbook, different journals etc. Various types of cartographic representation have become an essential tool in this study.

ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION

Changing pattern of population

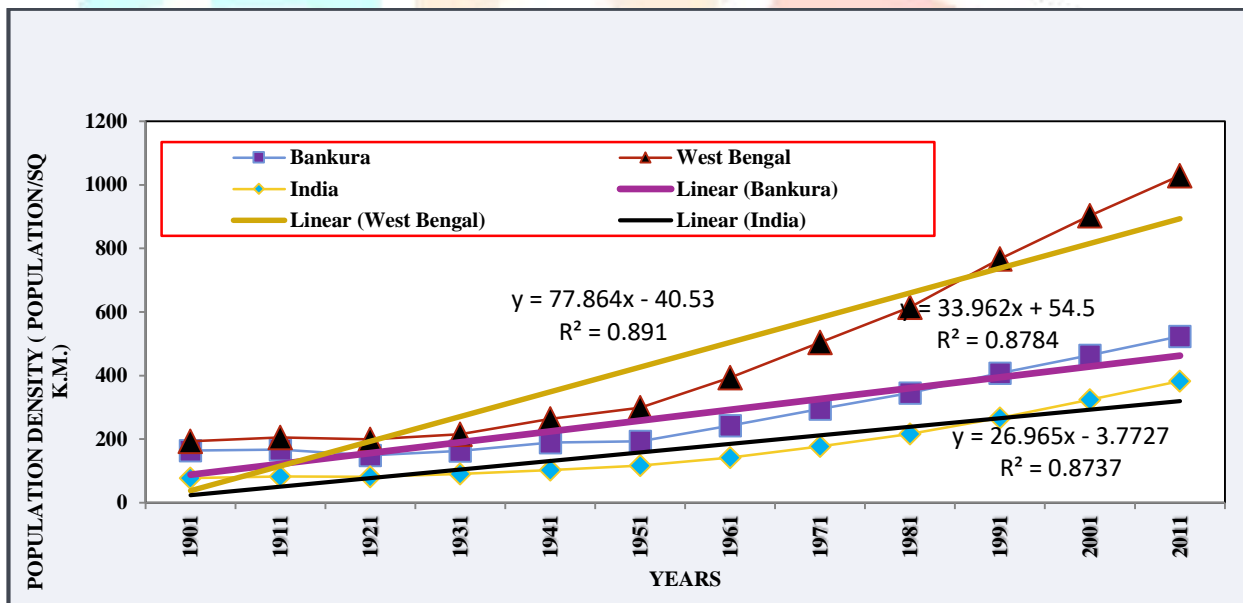
Distribution of population

Bankura has always experienced a normal unevenness in terms of spatial distribution. The Changing nature of occupation and resource availability influence the distribution everywhere. The district shares 3.94% population taking 7.75% area of the state of West Bengal in 2011. AS per census 2011 in Bankura district, 3,296,901 persons live in rural areas and 299,773 persons. The urban-rural ratio of district Bankura is 0.09 which is 0.48 in the state.

Population Density

Bankura with a population density of 464 Persons/Sq. Km in 2001 increased to 523 Persons/Sq. Km in 2011. Based on the population and area of the Blocks of Bankura (2011), highest population density (754 Persons/sq. km) is seen in CD Block Kotalpur whereas lowest population density (278 Persons/sq. km) is seen in CD Block Ranibandh. From population density data of the district, state and the nation (1901-2011) has been seen that Bankura District has always shown a general tendency to lie between national and state average since 1901. The density of the district shows always lower trend than the state of West Bengal and always higher than India.

Fig 1: Changing population density in Bankura district, West Bengal and India (1901 - 2011)



Source: District Census Handbook, Bankura

Growth Rate during different Census Years

Decadal growth rate is the growth of population in a particular region in a gap of every 10 years. As far as the growth rate of population is concerned, Bankura exhibits a low decadal growth rate (13.79%) in 1991-2001 and 12.64% in 2001-2011 in compare to 13.93% of State and 13.12% of Country’s Decadal Growth Rate in 2001-2011.

Table 1: Showing Decadal Growth Rate of Population in Bankura District

Year	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001	2001-2011
Total	2	-10.4	9	16	2.3	26.17	22.02	16.93	18.12	13.79	12.64
Rural	1.7	-11.3	8.9	14.7	2.3	25.94	21.85	16.72	17.28	14.96	11.43
Urban	7.4	6.4	10.4	36.8	2.9	29.11	24.21	19.45	28.27	1.19	27.81

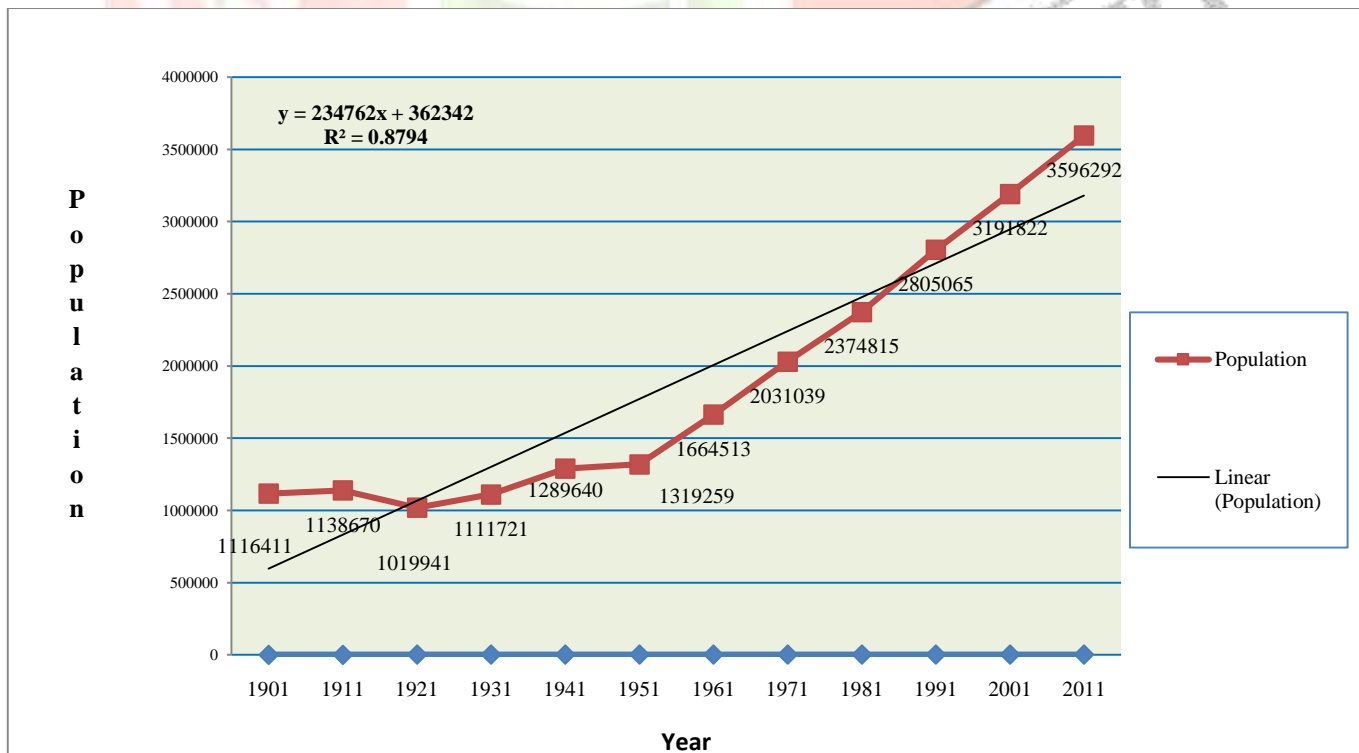
Source: District Census Handbook, Bankura

It can be seen from the above table that growth rate of Bankura over the last 5 decades is generally having a downward trend with exception of 1981-91 when it slightly went up. The same trend is observed in the case of rural areas of the district. But in the case of the urban areas striking increase is observed in 1981- 91 and apparently inexplicable decline is seen in 1991- 2001. The growth rate has notably declined in 2001 by 4.33 percent in the district. Rural growth rate has declined by 2.32 percent as against the urban decline (27.08 percent). It makes Bankura a district with the lowest urban growth rate (as per census 2001), the second being Kolkata 4.11%. In case of Bankura this decline in urban growth rate may be attributed to declassification of 2 census towns, i.e. Khatra and Patrasayer of 1991 in 2001. Highest Decadal Growth Rate as per census 2011 is seen in Hirbandh CD Block which is 15.63% followed by Chhatna CD Block which is 15.26%. Lowest Decadal Growth Rate during 2001-2011 is seen Joypur CD Block which is only 10.9%.

Changes in Total Population

At the very beginning of the last century the population of the district was 11.16 lakhs and it increased to 35.96 lakhs in 1901 to 2011 by an increase of 3.22 times as against 5.39 times in the case of State’s population.

Fig 2: Changes in Total population (1901-2011) Bankura District



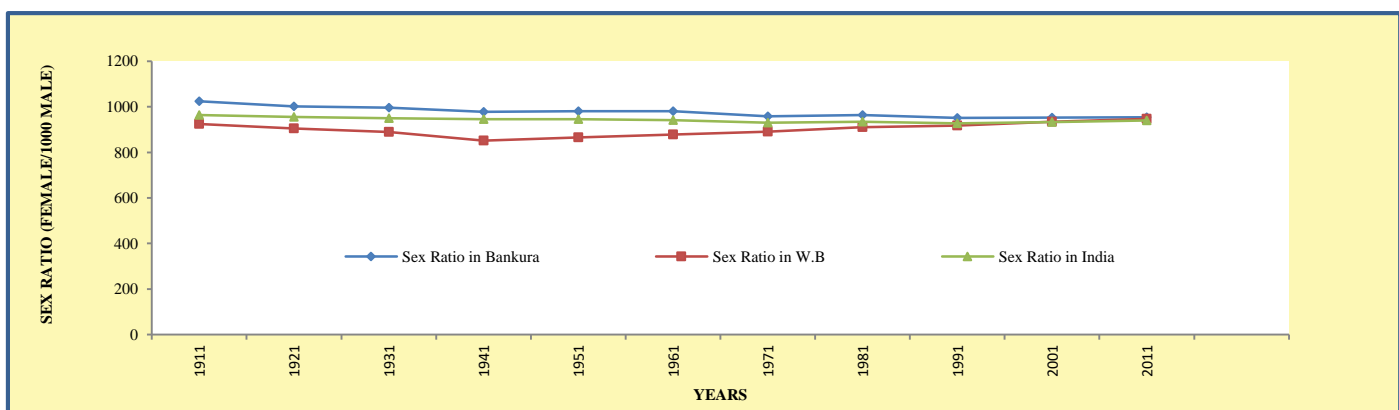
Source: *District Census Handbook, Bankura*

Changes in Sex-Ratio

The word sex ratio is used to denote the number of females per 1000 males of any particular population. Sex ratio in Bankura district according to the Census of 2011 is 954, which is higher than the state and national level sex ratios (947 and 940 respectively). Sex ratio as per census 2001 separated for caste categories show that in the district of Bankura the sex ratio for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population (966 and 984 respectively) are higher than the sex ratio for general caste population (which is 937). This reflects higher gender discrimination among general caste and a comparatively better approach towards women among Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste population.

The comparative decadal change in sex ratio of Bankura District, West Bengal and India are given below.

Fig 3: Comparative Changes in Sex-Ratio of District Bankura, West Bengal and India (1901-2011)



Source: *District Census Handbook, Bankura*

Literacy status of the district

The literacy rate of Bankura has increased from 52.04% in 1991 to 63.84% in 2001 and 70.95% in 2011. In the rural areas of Bankura the literacy rate has increased from 50.01% in 1991 to 62.24% in 2001 to 69.60% in 2011. Saltora, Hirbandh, Patrasayer etc block are mainly dominated by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population and has low literacy rate.

Among all the blocks bankura district kotulpur block ranks first in terms of total literacy rate, male literacy rate and female literacy rate. In this block the percentage of total, male and female literacy are 78.01%, 85% and 70.70% (Census 2011). This is because of nearness to hugli district, good accessibility and connectivity of the block. Beside Kotulpur literacy rate is high in Sarenga and Bankura-II block. The literacy rate is lowest in the block Saltora which is only 61.45%. The male literacy rate is lowest in Patrasayer block (73.45%) followed by Saltora block (73.83%). The female literacy rate is lowest in Saltora block (48.45%) followed by Hirbandh block (49.86%). Literacy rate is low in these blocks because these blocks are mainly dominated by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations.

Female Literacy Status

Bankura scores low on the female literacy side. Although the level of literacy has increased in the study area, the gender bias against female education continues to exist resulting in lower literacy rate among females. The female Literacy rate has increased from 30.43% in 1991 to 49.43% in 2001 and 60.05% in 2011. The male Literacy rate has increased from 66.75% in 1991 to 76.76% in 2001 and 80.05% in 2011. The gender gap in Literacy rate decreased significantly during the last three decades but still lagging behind other districts of the state.

Table 2: Changing Literacy Rate in the District (1901-2011)

Year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Literacy Rate(%)	9.29	9.43	11.13	8.51	12.49	14.12	23.08	29.14	38.33	52.04	63.84	70.26
Male Literacy Rate(%)	18.30	18.36	21.30	15.93	20.95	21.22	36.17	46.93	51.92	66.75	76.76	80.05
Female Literacy Rate(%)	0.55	0.71	0.99	1.06	3.84	6.58	9.78	10.69	24.24	30.43	49.43	60.05
Gender Gap(%)	17.75	17.65	20.31	14.87	17.11	14.64	26.39	36.24	27.68	36.32	27.33	20

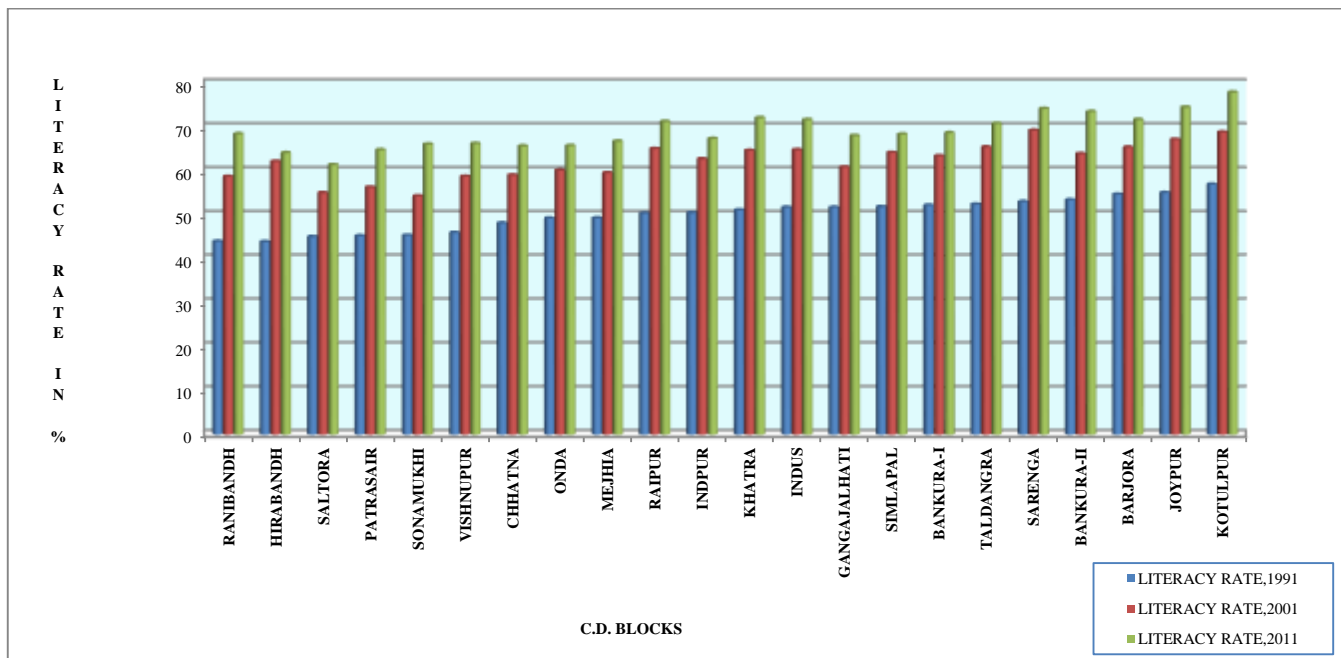
Source: District Census Handbook, Bankura.

From the Census data of 2011 it is clear that among the blocks of district gender gap is worst in case of Hirbandh Block (27.94%) followed by Saltora and Ranibandh. Incidentally these are also blocks which score low on the standard of living.

Changing pattern of Literacy

Literacy rate in the district has increased gradually despite several physical and economic constraints and backwardness in the district. This is because of the rising literacy rate as a result of wide spread of free school education and mass literacy campaign through direct involvement of the poor and weaker section of the society mainly with the help of panchayets. Bankura has increased 54.16% literacy rate during post independence period (1951-2011). During the same period the rural literacy rate has increased from 15.8% to 68.93% (53.13% increase) and urban literacy rate increased from 19.1% to 84.42% (65.32% increase). During the same period state's increase in Total, Rural and Urban Literacy is 51.26%, 53.33% and 39.08%.

Fig 4: Changes in Literacy Rate of blocks of Bankura District, 1991-2011



Source: District Census Handbook, Bankura.

Among the CD Blocks Ranibandh achieved highest position in literacy increase with 24.53% increase during 1991-2011 period and Gangajalghati CD Block achieve lowest position in Literacy increase with 16.34% increase during 1991-2011 periods.

Major findings and Suggestions

- Demographically Bankura over the years have presented a picture of stability with low growth rate of population.
- A number of policies should be recommended at the micro level for the overall improvement of the district.
- Special attention should be given to employment generation to increase the workforce participation rate.
- It is necessary to improve the overall quality of life in district Bankura

Conclusion

From the study, the multiple aspects of population distribution, density and change together with the social, economic, religious and demographic profile and literacy of the district have been revealed. Now education becomes a man's basic need. The problems of illiteracy are not confined to backward district like Bankura only, but also this is remarkable in the overall state and in the entire country. Here the principal aims should be on the promotion of literacy amongst women, members belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, minority communities particularly in the rural areas and so on and so forth. The prime objective of education for all is not just to maintain a moderate literacy rate but to achieve hundred percent literacy. In order to have an educationally stable social order, it is necessary to minimize regional variation in literacy rates at micro level with a uniform spread in education amongst the population.

References

- Census of India. 2001. Migration Tables, D-Series, West Bengal.
- Primary Census Abstract. 2001. West Bengal.
- Provisional Population Totals. 2001. West Bengal, Director of Census Operations, Govt. of West Bengal.
- Provisional Population Totals. 2011. West Bengal Series 20.
- Chandna, R.C. 2005. Geography of Population: Concepts, Determinants and Patterns, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, p. 132-239.
- District Census Handbook, Bankura. 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011. Govt. of West Bengal.
- District Human Development Report, Bankura. 2007. Development and Planning Department, Government of West Bengal.