

Endangered Demography

**NATURE AND IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC
CHANGES IN WEST BENGAL
1951-2001**

Bimal Pramanik

October 2005

Preface

A change in the demographic pattern in a country is an obvious resultant effect of migration which is as old as human civilization, but if the change is significantly high in a short span of time it is bound to cause a serious social concern for the country experiencing this phenomenon. No people of a country accept migratory people with open arms and when this migration of people belonging to a separate religion takes the shape of a design the question of acceptance almost vanishes giving rise to social unrest and tension. Significantly, however, there has been marked departure from this hypothesis so far as migration/infiltration from East Pakistan/Bangladesh to West Bengal is concerned. The Hindus who were uprooted from their hearth and home in East Pakistan due to religious persecution and measures or lack of them, taken by the successive Governments in Bangladesh after partition in 1947 were accepted as refugees by the Government of India and her people, not of course without grudge, and were given shelter, citizenship and were gradually absorbed in the mainstream of Indian people, particularly that of West Bengal. This was quite understandable. But what happened after the birth of Bangladesh when it was the declared policy of the Government of India not to grant citizenship to any people (even if they were Hindus and were forced to leave Bangladesh as refugees after 1971)? In what way the migratory trend post 1971 was different from the earlier trends? How were hordes of Muslims able to settle in the border districts of West Bengal without much notice and commotion? How was this silent demographic invasion possible? Was there any historical perspective behind this large scale infiltration or a well thought out design of our neighboring country? What change this invasion has brought up in the demographic pattern of border districts as well as interior districts of West Bengal? These are the queries I have tried to address in this book.

I would like to make it clear that no extraneous facts except that are borne out of the data available from the Census reports have been considered for determining the change in the demographic pattern and the author has been swayed by reason to spell out some of its fallouts and possible danger to the polity of West Bengal socio politically as well as economically. One does not have to be communal or for that matter secular in one's attempt to pin point a social change which is part of history and history does not have any conscience of what is good or what is evil but its grand design provides some clues in finding out ways and means to mend our mistakes committed in the past in order to sustain a decent life for the present and the future, socio-politically and economically.

I leave it to the judgment of the readers of this book about its validity of perception, though I strongly believe that those who disagree cannot wish it away as a non-event.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Jayanta Kumar Ray who had kindly consented to edit this book. In this connection I also express my sincere thanks to my colleagues Shri P.N. Mukherjee, Smt. Munmum Ganguly and Shri Susanta Mondal for their active cooperation and help in my venture to write this book.

Bimal Pramanik

Endangered Demography

NATURE AND IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN WEST BENGAL 1951-2001

Introduction

It is fair to affirm that the vast demographic changes in the eastern and north-eastern States of India are deniable. Yet there is ample scope for an analysis of facts and factors behind such demographic changes. Moreover, the nature, the pattern and even the motives are to be brought into proper focus, if one is to understand the totality of phenomenal demographic changes that have occurred.

Migration from one country to another has been a persistent and significant socio-economic and socio-political phenomenon over the whole world. The concept of migration is not alien to the Indian people also. In fact, as an inevitable consequence of Partition of India in 1947, mass migration to West Bengal became ceaseless and large-scale. There was a continuous flow of the Hindu minority population from erstwhile East Bengal/East Pakistan, which was attributed mainly to the communal enmity of the Muslim majority population. The rate of this continuous migration from East Bengal to West Bengal, however, fluctuated, till 1971, depending on a multitude of socio-political and socio-religious factors.

A novel outcome of demographic pressures became more and more prominent over the years among the Bangladeshi migrants settling in India's border region. Amazingly, this has gone largely unnoticed, even though it reflects significant changes in the daily life style and affects the very root of the civil society. We have gone into some details in this study of such unanticipated fallout of the demographic changes.

I have tried to analyze the negative impact of gigantic immigration from Bangladesh upon India's attempts to preserve secular harmony as well as national security. We do not intend to overrate the military potential of Bangladesh while assessing the impact of Bangladeshi immigrants upon India's national security in north eastern and eastern States, but we can hardly underrate the significance of their disturbing and distorting impact on the ethos of secular harmony that India stands for, and has been practicing unabatedly since independence, despite Partition on religious grounds.

The sordid impact of Bangladeshi immigration upon India is but a logical consequence of the stark failure of Bangladesh to evolve as a secular multicultural polity. The ruling circle of present day Bangladesh is determined not only to broaden and deepen the Islamisation of Bangladesh, but also to use Islam to incite separatist or secessionist forces in eastern/north-eastern India—by extensive support to a protracted arms struggle, if necessary. It is an open secret that in Bangladesh many international terrorist outfits with aggressive fundamentalist agendas are making all efforts to envelop Bangladesh's socio-cultural fabrics with new Islamic prints and designs—though at the cost of the liberal tenets of Islam.

The religio-cultural aspects of social harmony and the political-economic aspects of national security have been taken up in an integrated fashion in this study. This will enable us to assess truly the potential menace casting its shadow on the relations between India and Bangladesh.

Following the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the eastern and north eastern region of India faced a novel political and social challenge. At one time, critics and analysts complacently characterized it to be a migration flow. But later on, a series of political events proved that this was nothing but a kind of infiltration flow. As a corollary, it is equally imperative to understand

the changing responses of the political parties and their leaders in this great drama of incessant demographic change, creating a menace to social harmony and national security.

This threat to our national security and social harmony will not be clearly understood unless we analyze the role of Bangladesh in this regard. Since the days of Partition, the Muslim psyche in both the parts of Pakistan has been suffering from a sense of injury about losing half of Bengal and Assam. They have been ruthlessly pursuing the policy of '*lebensraum*' since the days of partition. Acting, perhaps, on the philosophy of the great Italian, Machiavelli, who observed in the 16th century that "Sending immigrants is the most effective way to colonize countries because it is less offensive than to send military expeditions and much less expensive." Bangladesh with a single minded devotion has been following this policy, and, to say the least, it has been quite successful in this endeavor.

There was, however, not much concern about Muslim infiltration from erstwhile East Pakistan to India in the pre-1971 period. For, an extensive migration of Hindu population into India was regarded as a natural fall-out of Partition.

If we look back to the history of political development of East Pakistan, especially in the phase of 1966 to 1971, we can easily identify the new features and directions of the strong Bengali nationalist sentiment to encourage and enthuse Bengali masses, irrespective of religion, against the political leadership of the military junta of Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was able to articulate step by step the aggrieved Bengali psyche by mooted an alternative scheme of sharing power at the center of Pakistan's power structure. The central political power structure in Pakistan failed to comprehend anything beyond their selfish design of perpetuating the status of eastern Pakistan as a subservient region of the West Pakistani heartland. Obviously, on the other side of the barricade, Mujib's Bengal started resenting a colonial treatment.

When Mujib and his Bengal were fast assuming a posture of defiance against Pakistan political leadership, the Muslim population in North-East and Eastern India regionally, and in India as a whole, were suffering from a kind of nervousness at any prospect of political weakening of Pakistan, in case Mujib could triumph, and thereby justify his complaint about Pakistani colonial domination over eastern Pakistan. Obviously, Hindus, by and large, whether in east Pakistan or outside, were increasingly amused and gradually enthused about a potential political metamorphosis of the Pakistani state.

Mujib was not squarely ready at the strategic level for a resolution of his demand by even a sort of war, even if that was thrust upon him. On their part, the leadership of Pakistan started suffering from uncertainty about the fallout of a conflagration between Mujib's Bengal and western Pakistan. This was what exactly occurred in December 1971, almost inevitably.

The destiny of Pakistan from its historic origin was thus already blown off. The entire subcontinent was now on the verge of a new set of relations which were not intelligible, far less recognizable. Only one thing was discernible, and that was the fate of hapless and hopeless Hindus, whose sacrifice in the 1971 freedom struggle appeared to be negated by the assassination of Mujibur Rahman, and who started moving as an endless flock of people from Bangladesh to multiple directions into the land of India.

A new politics, a new economics and a new culture, taken together, started unraveling itself in India as a result of secularism, which aggravated the confusion of the exuberant and extravagant politics of secularism of the erstwhile radical nationalist and the radical left in India. Gradually, for the first time, the Hindu refugees were being treated at par with the Muslim infiltrators. This twin flow at the same time had introduced a new opportunity to show perversely that Bangladesh was as much secular as India. Politicians, who placed immediate electoral gain above national interest, could successfully equate Muslim infiltration with the Hindu refugee flow under the grand title of infinite and indefinite migration of Bangladeshis with nondescript faces through all conceivable manholes in the border region. A gunman, a smuggler and a family man have started working together only to mislead the border security forces, because the infiltrator is not easily distinguishable from a refugee. A new era has started, Leading Bangladeshi strategic analysts and

intelligentsia introduced the theory of *lebensraum* in the 1980s. They claim that their right to settle in India's eastern and north eastern States is to be considered as the natural course of overriding what is to them, an unacceptable political demarcation of the border.

Growing population pressure and crippling poverty and pauperization of the marginal rural masses in Bangladesh encouraged, if not forced, them to put this agenda of migration as a life and death question, which no lock can resist. In the mean time, the consolidation of Islamic forces was already advanced. They adopted the agenda of a greater Islamic region as a grand political strategy. Although it was an emotional issue for Sheikh Mujib, later it became a political and strategic issue with the support of Pakistan.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN WEST BENGAL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Population Movement or migration, internal or external, is a universal phenomenon of human society. Its nature, degree, direction and dimension, however, may vary from case to case. Numerous studies have been conducted to identify the attributes associated with migratory movements of people. Along with 'push' and 'pull' factors, a variety of explanations are also available as the cause and effect of migration and consequent societal change.

A change in the demographic pattern in any country is an obvious resultant effect of migration, which is as old as human civilization, but if the change is significantly high in a short span of time, it is bound to arouse a serious social concern in the country experiencing the phenomenon. No people of a country accept migratory people with open arms, and when this migration of people belonging to a separate ethnic group and religion appears to reveal an unholy political design, the question of acceptance almost vanishes, giving rise to social unrest and tension. The north eastern region of India, particularly Assam and West Bengal, are cases in point.

The change in the demographic pattern of the Eastern and North-Eastern States, particularly West Bengal during the last five decades, has been exhaustively dealt with in this book, and we can sum up the phenomenon in a few words.

A new dimension in the political and social arena has emerged in this eastern and north-eastern region of India after independence of Bangladesh in 1971. A novel phenomenon of demographic pressure—emanating from Bangladesh—started looming larger and larger in the border region. During the last three decades, illegal migration from Bangladesh to India is going on unabated. All the refugees who had been coming to West Bengal during Pakistan days were Hindus. In the Bangladesh era, Hindus are coming as usual like in the days of Pakistan due to religious persecution and political pressure, but a new feature also started emerging as people from the majority segment (Muslims), for different reasons and purposes, started coming to West Bengal. Both the Central and West Bengal governments were generally aware of this development, yet no great concern was visible before November 2002. In recent years, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of the NDA Government, the Chief Minister of West Bengal and even the President of India have expressed their grave concern and agony on the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration, and its implications for internal security issues.

There is no state religion in secular India, which is obliged to protect all religions equally, but the Bangladesh Republic has to preserve religious peace and harmony under the shadow of its state religion, viz. Islam. The adoption of Islam as the state religion has utterly demoralized Hindus, and has reinforced their already powerful compulsions about migration to India. Significantly, a state religion cannot extend the minimum of socio-economic protection even to Muslims, who, instead of being satisfied with living in Islamic Bangladesh, have long been voting with their feet, and continuously leaving for secular India, especially Assam and West Bengal. Whereas this is a constant tribute to India's secularism, this is also a threat to India's socio-economic-political security. Unfortunately, authorities in India have displayed little alertness in preempting or coping with this threat.

In this book an attempt has been made to explain the emerging picture consequent upon the internal demographic changes in the State as well as various districts of West Bengal. During the 1951-2001 period, the contrast between a decline in Hindu population and an extra-ordinary

upswing in Muslim population is indeed remarkable in every district of the State. In a number of districts, the rate of growth of the Muslim population is double or more than double that of the Hindu population. Growth rates of Hindus and Muslims are 198.54% and 310.93% respectively during 1951-2001. Population share of Hindus and Muslims in 1951 was 78.45% and 19.85% respectively, but during the last fifth years, the share of Hindus in West Bengal has come down to 72.47%—a decrease by 6%—whereas the share of Muslims has increased to 25.25%—an increase of 5.40%.

Another important aspect of growth of population as per 2001 Population Census is in the group of 0-6 years population. The growth rate of Hindus and Muslims in this group stood at 12.69% and 18.7% respectively and the share of this group (0-6) of Muslims among all religions in West Bengal is 33.17%, though population share of Muslims in the State is only 25.25%. On the other hand, the share of Hindus in the same population group (0-6) is only 64.61% in spite of their population share of 72.47%. This excessive increase of 0-6 group of population in the Muslim society in West Bengal tends towards a serious consequences. 0-6 population profile of the State /districts are shown in the *Annexure I*.

On account of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, Hindu refugees moved from East Pakistan, without much interruption, to various parts of India, especially to West Bengal, till 1971, when political boundaries in South Asia were redrawn. Even after the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country in 1971, however, the march of refugees to West Bengal appeared to be ceaseless. In the days of Pakistan, most of the refugees coming to West Bengal were members of the minority communities in East Bengal (East Pakistan), viz. Hindus, Buddhist and Christians. But after the Nehru—Liaquat Agreement on 8th April, 1950, drawn up in the contest of a massive exodus of displaced migrants from East Bengal to West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, most of the Muslim migrants who had in the early days of Partition crossed over to East Bengal came back and settled in their ancestral places in the above mentioned Indian States during the entire period of undivided Pakistan i.e. 1950-1971. According to the 1950 Agreement, the “Indian government ensured to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of the citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality.” India also assured minorities “equal opportunity with members of the majority community to [participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other offices and to serve in their country’s civil and armed forces.” (*Annexure II*)

On the other hand, the Pakistan government neglected to implement the agreement or failed to enforce the fundamental rights of minorities in their country, as mentioned in the agreement. As a result, no Hindu migrant returned back to East Pakistan/East Bengal after the Nehru—Liaquat Agreement. Therefore, during 1951-1961, the share of Hindu population in East Pakistan declined by 3.5%, i.e. from 22.0% in 1951 to 18.5% in 1961 with a growth rate of only 1.53%. Even during the 1961-1974 period, the share of the Hindu population further declined by 5%, and came down to 13.5% in 1974. A large number of Hindu families, who crossed over to India during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, did not return.

The minority community in Bangladesh participated in the War of Liberation with the expectation that in the newly liberated country they would enjoy status and rights along with the majority community. But in practice, the persecution of the minorities continued even after independence. The forms of oppression of the religious minorities in Bangladesh are manifold. Constitutionally, they have been downgraded; economically, they have been crippled through different discriminatory laws and practices; politically, they have been segregated and alienated from the mainstream; they have been made a non-entity in different government and non-government services; culturally and socially, they are insecure. They are totally deprived of the privileges of participation in the top positions of government, and nationally they are used as subjects tortured through communal riots organized by the government of counteracting political

unrest against the ruling party. As a consequence of the discriminatory policies, combined with land grabbing, looting, arson, rape, murder and attack on religious institutions of the religious minorities with the collusion, if not instigation, of the government or semi-government agencies, there has been a continuous exodus of the minorities from Bangladesh.

After the emergence of a sovereign Bangladesh in 1971, the Muslims in West Bengal did not feel any urge to migrate to Bangladesh because of the initially diminished Islamic fervor there in comparison to Pakistan. On the contrary, many Muslim families, who had migrated to the then East Pakistan came back and started living in several districts of West Bengal with a variety of help from a section of influential local Muslims, and ultimately settled in these areas, since they could not fit in with the Bengali Nationalism that emerged from the liberation struggle of Bangladesh without too much of Islamic fervor. Side by side, hordes of infiltrators found a new haven in this region. Consequently, the Muslim population in the border districts as well as in other interior districts of West Bengal increased in geometric progression. In the nineteen eighties, Muslims in the border areas were further encouraged for community consolidation by the ruling parties of West Bengal. Demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992 came as a great excuse for the perpetration of organized crimes/dacoities by local Muslims, and there were cases of assaults on the Hindu families in connivance with Bangladeshi Muslims, particularly in the districts bordering Bangladesh. Other criminal activities increased quite rapidly, and this, coupled with non-cooperation of the local administration (the police, the Panchayats, etc.) and the party in power determined to keep intact the Muslim vote-bank, forced many Hindu families to move to other interior Hindu dominated areas, leaving the border areas as densely populated by Muslims.

In the nineteen eighties, planned migration from Bangladesh conformed to the *lebensraum* theory, which was encouraged by the Indian Muslims in the border States under the protection and patronization of some political and social forces of India's Eastern and North Eastern region. This continuous infiltration from across the border is slowly and steadily changing the demographic pattern in the border areas, especially in the States of West Bengal and Assam. This changed demographic scenario easily lends itself to disrupting social harmony. Already it has taken a shape of demographic invasion in the region, which is threatening our secular polity and national security. This is a religio-cultural process taking place in a geographical space considered to be strategically important. Thus, the emergence of Bangladesh has created in the North-Eastern States of India certain conditions conducive to Islamisation. At least there factors, facilitating the process of Islamisation, are obvious. First, strangely enough, whatever Islamisation has occurred in these parts of North-Eastern and Eastern India has happened within a secular political environment. Secondly, the appeasement of aliens for the purpose of garnering votes and the continuous anti-Centre stance have been conducive to the expansion of a psyche of Islamisation. Thirdly, a weak, undefined and unorganized secular frame has failed to combat the process of Islamisation.

Frequent failure of living with a multi-cultural ethos has jeopardized communal harmony, and defaced the secular fabric of the Indian society. Islamisation has always been, historically, a 'power concept'. When secular forces come forward to protect social harmony on the basis of a dominant culture with a highly powerful assimilating force, forces of Islamisation might claim their due and finally crave for a division of the same, assertive secular society.

From the very beginning since the liberation of 1971, Hindus who had earlier gone to India as refugees and returned to independent Bangladesh, again started migrating from the newly independent country to India, because they failed to retrieve their property and enjoy social security. Bengali nationalism was eroding fast, and anti-India sentiment was growing rapidly. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in 1975, the relevance of the very Bangladesh concept of 1971 was lost, and Bangladesh became a state tilting towards Islamisation. All this shows that the emergent idea of a secular Bangladesh, partially apparent in 1971, was not only missing but was probably mistaken. Mujib's case of fighting against Pakistan had finally given way to a Bangladesh which never denied its Islamic character. On the surface, while Hindus imagined a

new secular-democratic prospect, Muslims suffered from a bankruptcy of leadership, which threw them eventually into the clutches of Mushtaq Ahmed, Ziaur Rahman and others after Mujib's death. It was a pity that Bangladesh came out as a country and a state with an overt Islamic identity.

As observed from the *Bangladesh Population Census 2001*, the share of Hindu population has come down to 9.2% only. During the last 50 years since 1951, the comparatively lower growth rate of Hindus indicates a steady migration of Hindu population from Bangladesh to India, particularly to the State of West Bengal. On the other hand, a steady growth of Muslim population since 1951 has enhanced their population share from 76.9% in 1951 to 89.7% in 2001. During the last five decades (1951-2001), the growth rate of Muslim population is 244.68% as against 23.16% of Hindu population. Side by side, the growth rate of Muslim population in West Bengal during the same period is 310.93%, i.e. much higher than in Bangladesh. How can it be possible when the growth rate of Hindus in West Bengal in the same period is 198.54%? It clearly indicates a massive Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. Consequently, the share of Muslim population has increased by about 6% in West Bengal during the last fifty years (1951-2001) after the Partition of India i.e. from 19.85% in 1951 to 22.25% in 2001 (see Chart Nos. 1, 2, 3 & 4 and *Annexures Iii & IV*).

To facilitate a clear comprehension of this phenomenon, we have analyzed district level trends of population share and growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in West Bengal during 1951-2001.

We have gone into some details in this study of salient aspects of the demographic changes and their implications in the selected districts of West Bengal so as to gauge the local situation, particularly during the 1981-1991 decade, when a massive jump in the growth rate of Muslims was observed in almost all the districts of West Bengal. Our micro-level analysis on 24 Parganas (North), Nadia, Murshidabad and Uttar/Dakshin Dinajpur has revealed an interesting picture. If we go through the Block level religious composition data of the above districts during 1981-1991, it will be seen from various tables that the share of Muslim population in some Blocks within a decade has risen abruptly to a staggering figure [See Habra, Hasnabad, Basirhat, Mograhat, Chapra, Tapan etc.]. Moreover, in most of the Blocks, the share of Muslim population has risen significantly. Other than demographic realities of the districts, we have discussed the infiltration situation, as also crimes including trans-border crimes, the changing scenario of religio-cultural activities, and relations among the different communities. Etc. (See Chapter Three)

Our Block level analysis of data for the districts of West Bengal have revealed a dismal picture of inept border management and grave security lapses, to the benefit of the vested interests of all the political parties of the State of West Bengal. This has posed an immeasurably serious threat to India's national security. Apart from the criminal activities associated with the smuggling of livestock and many essential commodities of daily consumption to Bangladesh, a long term plan for forcing out Hindus from the border areas of West Bengal is evidently in operation. The growth of Islamic fundamentalist forces under the umbrella of different political organizations, the easy access of terrorist outfits to sensitive locations assured by India's secular-democratic culture, and the perennial influx of Bangladeshi Muslims into West Bengal's border belt, have obviously facilitated the systematic eviction of Hindus from this belt.

Even a very casual enquiry shall reveal that the local administrators in West Bengal are indifferent to the rapid demographic transformation of the State. It is also important to note that such indifference to anti-national activities by the Bangladeshi people can spell a clear danger to internal security and social harmony. For the same reasons, the one time Hindu majority border villages have now turned into Muslim majority villages. In most of the Hindu majority villages the entire cattle population are left to the care of the Border Security Forces (BSF) or under the protection of local police stations before it is dusk, and taken away by the owners at dawn. It needs mentioning that the incidents of dacoity, cattle lifting, rape, kidnap and murder are more or less non-existent in the Muslim inhabited border villages of West Bengal.

Since most of the adjoining areas in Bangladesh are predominated by the Muslims, a huge and continuous influx of illegal Muslim migrants from Bangladesh has turned the socio-economic scenario from Bangladesh against the Hindus. Weak and inefficient border management and non-cooperation of local populace with the BSF and the most important reasons behind this legal trans-border movement of population as also smuggling of cows and many contraband goods. Due to the poor border management and political patronage, Muslims with vested interests have been successful in influencing the administrative decisions in the entire border region.

For more than three decades (1971-2005) there has been a ceaseless and significant demographic change in the districts of West Bengal, particularly districts adjoining Bangladesh. Now both sides of the Indo-Bangladesh border region are inhabited by a population which is ethnically, culturally, linguistically and religiously identical. Already, thus, it has taken the shape of a demographic invasion.

To sum up, callous local administration, limited scope for earning income in the incompetently managed economy of Bangladesh and religious vested interests may not always be meticulously working out anti-Indian designs, but from ground level data the impression is inescapable that they are so working. The most important fact to note is that the residual Hindu population in some border villages, still not insignificant, remains under a constant pressure to migrate from their traditional and ancestral places of habitation. Opinion makers and decision makers have not paid even the minimum of attention to available data on this significant subject. Such data, recorded and analyzed in the present study, deserve immediate attention from all those who are genuinely interested in national integration, internal security and social harmony in India.

Chart no. 1 : Inter Censal trend of population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh - 1951 - 2001

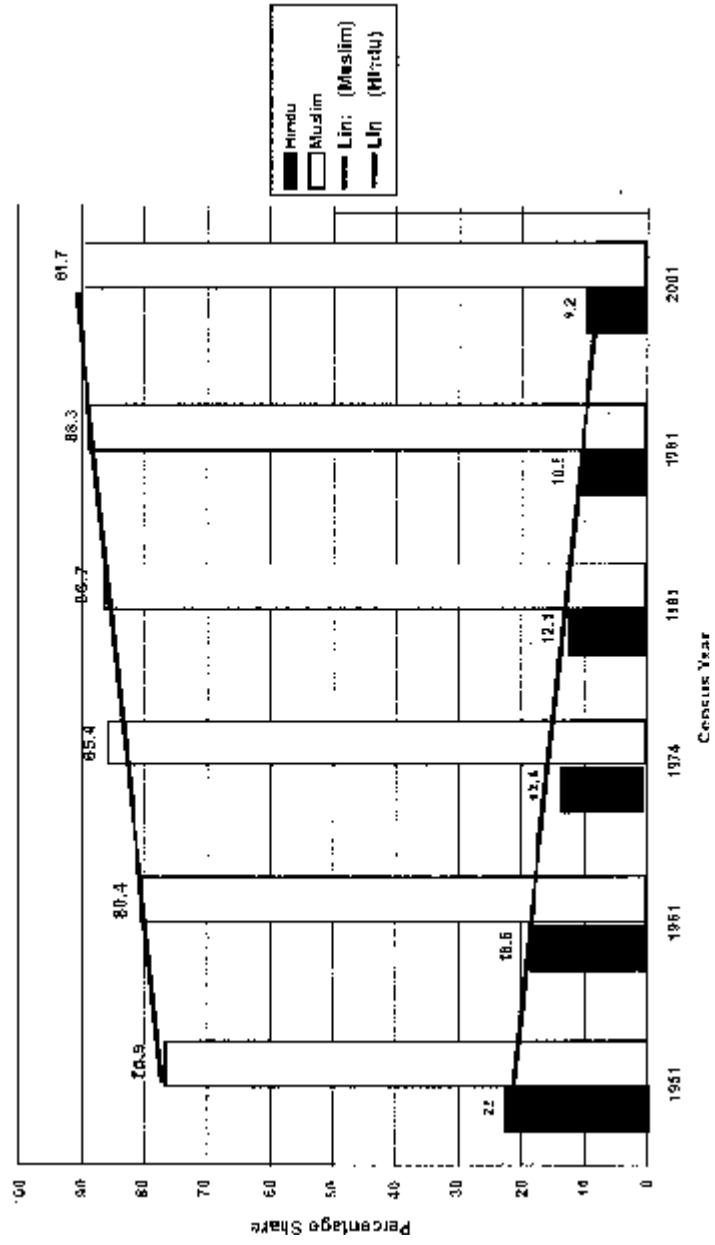


Chart no. 2 : Inter censal growth rates of population of Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh - 1951 - 2001

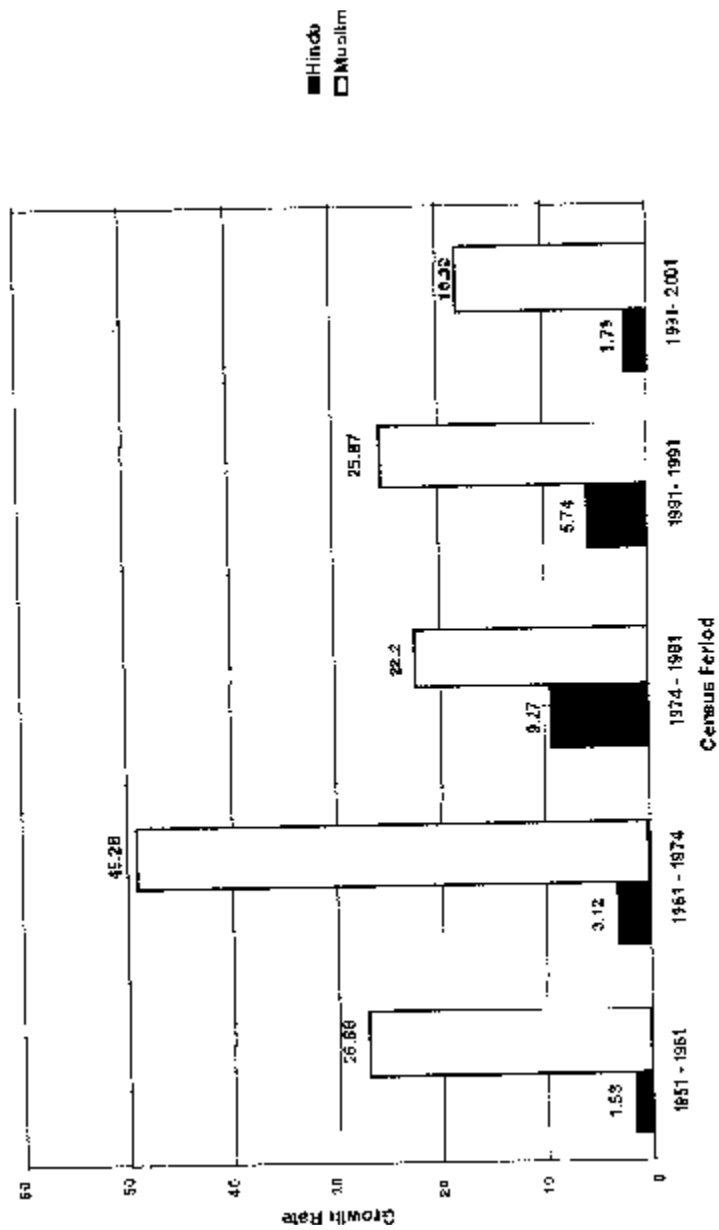


Chart no. 3 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in West Bengal
1951 - 2001

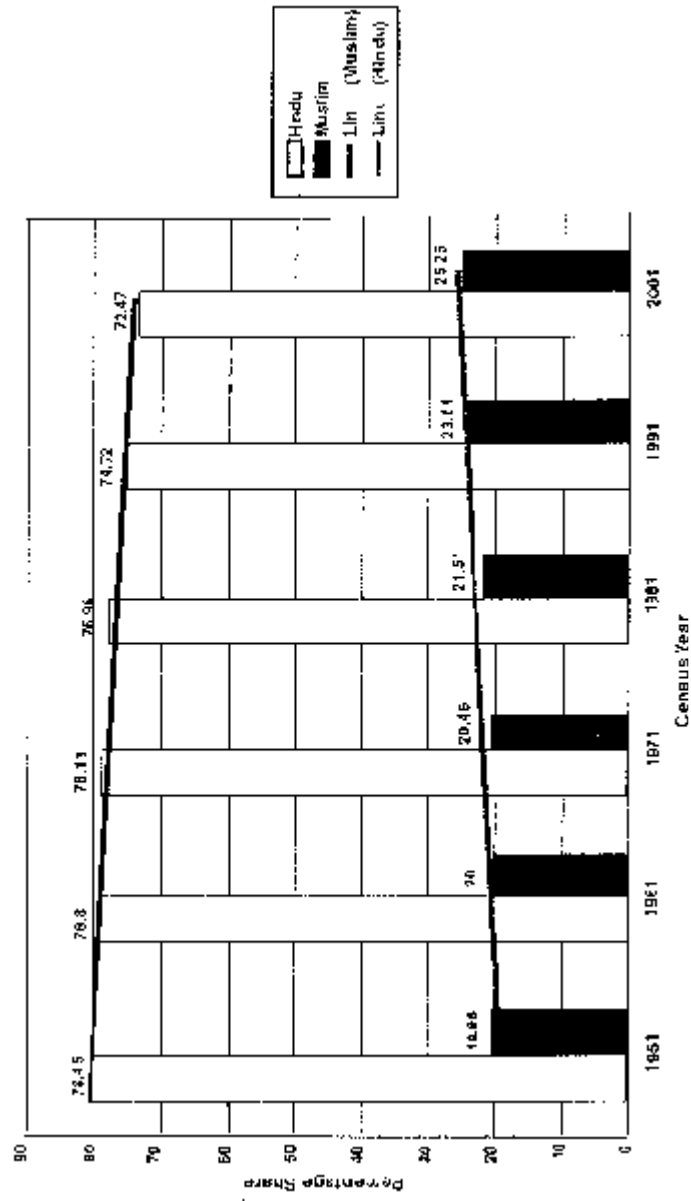
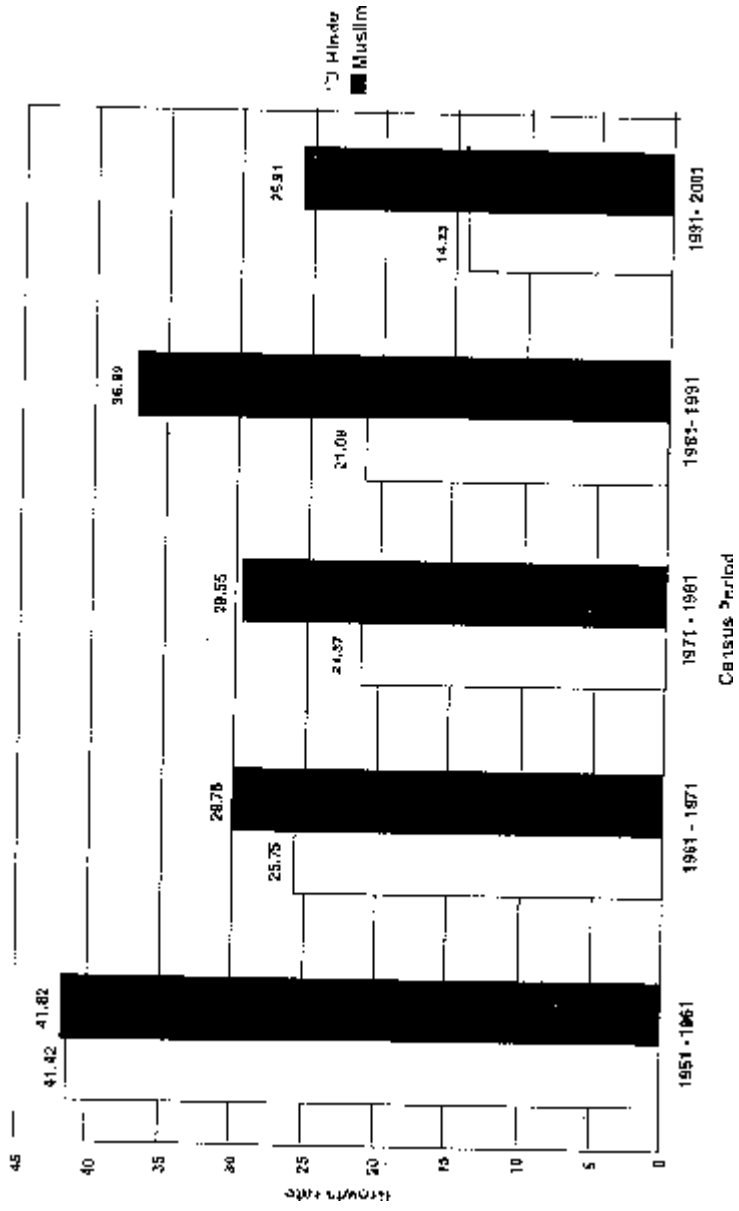


Chart no. 4 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in West Bengal – 1951- 2001



DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES : DISTRICTWISE
PROFILE OF WEST

District: Koch Bihar

Koch Bihar is situated on the north and north-eastern corner of West Bengal. Paddy and Jute are the main agricultural products. Timber, cane and handicrafts are among the major industries. The demographic profile of Koch Bihar, particularly the religious component of demographic trends during 1951-2001, is interesting. After the Partition of India in 1947, a massive number of Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan migrated to this district till 1971, and a good number of Hindu refugees, who had crossed over to this district during the nine months of Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, did not return to newly independent Bangladesh. As a result, from 1951 to 1981, a continuously high rate of growth of Hindu population is observed. But no notable out-migration of Muslim population is observed. But no notable out-migration of Muslim population from this district to East Pakistan or Bangladesh in the above period was observed. On the other hand, a massive Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh to this district during the last two (1981-2001) decades was notable, particularly in the 1981-1991 period, which witnessed an exceedingly high growth of Muslim population (37.63%), enhancing their population share in one decade by 2.56% (i.e. 23.34% in 1991 as against 20.78% in 1981). But, no mentionable Hindu immigration from Bangladesh in the above period is observed. During the last five decades (1951-2001), growth rates of Hindu and Muslim population were 293.39% and 209.4% respectively.

Decade-wise population shares and growth rates for Hindus and Muslim during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 5 & 6.

District: Jalpaiguri

This district is situated at the foothills of the Himalayas. Most of the areas of Jalpaiguri district were earlier known as the Doors Region. In the post-independence period, Jalpaiguri remains the sole gateway to North-East India. Apart from tea, the other agricultural products are paddy, jute, betel leaves and fruits. Timber and cane are the two major industries in Jalpaiguri. After the Partition of India, particularly during the 1951-1961 period, a massive number of Hindu refugees had immigrated to this district from East Pakistan. On the other hand, a large number of Muslims, who had crossed over to East Pakistan after Partition, came back after Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950. Gradually, but significantly, Hindu immigration came down during the last four decades (1961-2001). But, Muslim immigration to this district during 1981-2001 was found to have risen significantly. Growth rates of Muslims in the above two decades are 45.13% and 31.36% respectively and their population share shot up from 8.75% to 10.85% in 2001.

Decade-wise population shares of religious communities and their growth rates are shown in the chart nos. 7 & 8.

District: Malda

Malda is situated on the eastern bank of river Ganga bordering the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh. It is basically an agricultural district with paddy and jute being the main products. It is also famous for fruit production, particularly mangoes. Demographic transformation of this district during 1951-2001 is very interesting. Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in 1951

were 62.92% and 36.97% respectively. The growth rate of Muslims during the 1951-1961 period was remarkably high (62.8%), and Muslim population share shot up from 36.97% to 46.18%. After the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement in 1950, most of the Muslims, who had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition, came back and settled in the district during this decade. On the other hand, the growth rate of Hindus, i.e. 11.11%, indicates that no Hindu immigration took place in the above period. But the 1961-1971 decade witnessed a significant Hindu immigration in the district. During the last three decades (1971-2001), however, the share of Muslim population in the district has surpassed that of Hindu population because of unabated Muslim immigration from Bangladesh. Within the last fifty years (1951-2001), Malda has become a Muslim-majority district by increasing its population share from 36.97 to 49.72%. Growth rates of Hindus and Muslims during this period were 174.87% and 372.0% respectively.

Decade-wise populations shares of religious communities and their growth rates are shown in the chart nos. 9 & 10.

District: Birbhum

Birbhum is situated in the Rarh region of Bengal bordering Murshidabad and Bardhaman. In modern times, this district is famous for Santiniketan of Rabindranath Tagore and also for folk art and culture. After the Partition of India, a good number of Hindu refugees migrated from East Pakistan to this district. Also, most of the Muslim refugees, who had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition, came back after the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950. During the 1951-1971 period, the share of Muslim population in this district increased significantly [i.e. from 26.86% to 29.19%]. The post 1971 scenario is also very interesting. During the last three decades (1971-2001), the growth of Muslim population is much higher (nearly double) than that of Hindus [25.24%, 30.16% and 25.19% respectively, as against 14.75%, 18.8% and 14.24%]. Massive infiltration of Muslims from Bangladesh is the main reason for their higher growth rates. During the last five decades (1951-2001), Muslim population growth rate has become 269.21% as against 151.07% for Hindus. Currently, the share of Hindu population has come down from 72.60% in 1951 to 64.49%, and the share of Muslim population has risen from 26.86% in 1951 to 35.08% (2001). With the present rate of growth, the Muslim population will surpass the Hindu population within a few decades.

Decade-wise population shares and the growth rates on the basis of religion are shown in the chart nos. 11 & 12.

District: Bardhaman

Bardhaman district is a potentially major industrial base in the country, and it has now become the granary of West Bengal. After Partition, a good number of Hindu refugees from East Bengal settled in this district. On the other hand, most of the Muslims, who had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition, returned back to this district during 1951-1971 because of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950. Growth rates of Muslim population during 1951-1961 and 1961-1971 were respectively 36.79% and 43.74%, which corroborate this phenomenon of in-migration. The post-1971 phenomenon is also very interesting. The share of Muslim population has risen significantly (by 2%) during 1981-1991 due to Bangladeshi infiltration to this district. The growth rate of Muslims in this decade was 38.99% as against 22.42% for Hindus. During the last five decades (1951-2001), the share of Muslim population has risen from 15.60% in 1951 to 19.78%. Side by side, the share of Hindu population has declined from 83.73% in 1951 to 78.89% in 2001. Thus, the trend of growth of the Muslim population since 1951 is consistently higher than that of the Hindu population.

Decade-wise population shares and the growth rates on the basis of religion during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 13 & 14.

District: Hooghly

After independence the Hooghly district has become a very important industrial district. Also, Hooghly has a large hinterland, which is notable for agricultural products. It is situated on the western bank of the Hooghly river opposite to 24-Parganas on the other side. After partition, a good number of Hindu refugees settled in this district, but no notable post-1971 settlement is observed. On the other hand, a continuous growth of Muslim population in this district is easily discernible. After the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement in 1950, most of the Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition came back to this district. Growth rates of Muslims during 1951-1961 and 1961-1971 were respectively 36.94% and 31.14%, which corroborates this phenomenon of in-migration. Growth rates of Muslims during the last three decades (1971-2001) were rather high—being respectively 32.17%, 29.15% and 20.77%—as against the growth rates of 22.47%, 20.96% and 14.06% for Hindus, thus confirming large scale Bangladeshi infiltration in this district. During the last five decades, the population growth rate of Hindus in Hooghly is 213.56%, as against 270.20% for Muslims. It is clear from the above data, that Muslim infiltration from East Pakistan/Bangladesh cannot be ignored in any way.

Trends of shares of Hindu and Muslim population and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 15 & 16.

District: South Twenty Four Parganas

After bifurcation of the district of 24 Parganas, the religious composition of the population of South 24-Parganas was as follows—Hindu 72.96%, Muslim 26.05% and others 1% in 1971. Only after three decades, the share of Hindu population came down to 65.86%, and the share of the Muslim population shot up to 33.24%. Particularly, during the last two decades (1981-2001), the growth rate of Muslim population is remarkably high, i.e. respectively 45.38% and 34.17%, as against 24.68% and 15.14% for Hindus. The rate of growth of Muslim population is thus double that of the Hindu population. A massive illegal immigration of Muslims from Bangladesh to this district is evident during the 1981-2001 period, and a good number of them, noticeably, are Bihari Muslim immigrants. One can go through micro-level (Block-level) data to get a clear idea of this massive infiltration and a remarkable decline in the growth rate of Hindus in the selected Blocks of the district (e.g. Mograhat I & II, Diamond Harbor I & II, Bhangore I & II, etc.).

Decade-wise Hindu-Muslim population shares and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 17 & 18.

District: Dargeeling

It is situated at the north and north-west corner of West Bengal bordering Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Darjeeling is the main producer of world famous 'Darjeeling Tea'. It is interesting for its complex demographic composition and varieties of culture. Out of four subdivisions, one is in the plain, namely, Siliguri. In 1959, a part of the territory which lay north of the river Mahananda was transferred from the West Dinajpur district to the Darjeeling district, so that the Mahananda river formed the boundary between Darjeeling and West Dinajpur. In 1951, the religious composition of the district was as follows : Hindus 81.71%, Muslims 1.14%, Christians 2.76% and Buddhists 13.96%. During the last five decades, a continuously high growth of the Muslim and the Christian population is observed. These two communities have been able to increase their population share significantly by 2001 i.e. by 5.31% and 6.17% respectively. On the other hand, Hindu and Buddhist population declined to 76.92% and 11.02% respectively in 2001. A very high growth of Muslim population during the 1951-61 period could be accounted for by the newly included territory from West Dinajpur. But, during the last three

decades (1971-2001), a remarkably high growth of Muslims was undoubtedly due to infiltration of Bangladeshi Muslims. Most of the infiltration have taken place in the plain region of the district. Growth rates of different religious communities during the last fifty years (1951-2001) were: Hindus 240%, Muslim 1235%, Christian 706% and Buddhists 185%.

Trend of religion-wise population shares and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 19 & 20.

District: Bankura

Bankura is basically an agricultural district situated on the western periphery of the State bordering mainly Bardhaman, Medinipur and Purulia. The district is long known for its handicrafts, art and culture traditions. A good number of Hindu refugee colonies were established after Partition of Bengal in 1947 in this district. But from 1961 onwards, no notable Hindu immigration from East Pakistan/Bangladesh is observed, and the growth rate of population (GRP) of Hindus during the last four decades have always been lower than the State average. On the other hand, the GRP of Muslims in the above periods has been double or more than double that of Hindus. Particularly, the post-1971 growth of the Muslim population is remarkably high in this district. Growth rates of Muslims during 1971-1981, 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 were 36.14%, 38.73% and 28.87% respectively, as against 15.66%, 14.54% and 10.16% for Hindus during the same period. During the last five decades (1951-2001), Muslim population growth rate shot up to 312.58% as against Hindus at 123.92% only. As a result, the share of Muslim population has risen from 4.40% in 1951 to 7.51% in 2001. Bangladeshi infiltration is the major reason for this extra-ordinary growth of number of Muslims in this district.

Trend of religion-wise population shares and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 21 & 22.

District: Purulia

Purulia is basically an agricultural district with rice being the main product. This district was a sub-division under the Manbhum district of Bihar at the time of Partition in 1947. In 1956, Purulia was included in West Bengal under Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act. Now it is bordering the newly formed Jharkhand State. After 1947, no Hindu refugee migration had taken place in this district. The growth rate of Hindus was always lower than the State average in Purulia during the last four decades. On the other hand, a very high rate of growth of Muslims has taken place during the last three decades (1971-2001), i.e. respectively 35.79%, 31.74% and 35.74%, as against 14.08%, 19.11% and 4.59% for Hindus. This disparity can only be attributed to Bangladeshi infiltration. During 1961-2001, Muslim population growth rate is 121.65%, as against Hindus at 67.07% only.

Trend of religion-wise population shares and the growth rates for Hindus and Muslims during 1961-2001 are shown in the form of chart nos. 23 & 24.

District: Howrah

Howrah was developed as an industrial base with many industries coming up on the bank of the Hooghly river during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Howrah is still one of the most important transit points for passengers and goods movement in the country through rail links. Howrah remains a pride of place in the industrial map of West Bengal. After Partition in 1947, a good number of refugee colonies were established in the district, but during 1951-2001, the growth rate of Hindu population was always remarkably lower than that of the State average. On the other hand, a continuously high growth rate of Muslim population in this district has raised their population share from 16.22% in 1951 to 24.44% in 2001. A large number of Muslim families have come back from East Pakistan after the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement in 1950, although they had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition. The post-1971 Muslim infiltration in

this district is also remarkably high. Growth rates of Muslims in the last three decades (1971-2001) are 37.51%, 38.48% and 26.02% respectively, as against 19.28%, 22.48% and 10.91% for Hindus. This can only underline the phenomenon of Bangladeshi infiltration in this district. It may be mentioned here that a large number of Bihari Muslims from Bangladesh have settled in this district after 1971. During 1951-2001, the GRP of Muslims stands at 300%, as against 138% for Hindus. Thus, the growth rate of Muslims is more than double that of the Hindus.

Trend of religion-wise population shares and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 25 & 26.

District: Medinipur

Medinipur is basically an agricultural district. Kharagpur in the district is known for its important Railway Terminal and Workshop. Haldia is also becoming one of the major industrial complexes in the State with a fast developing port as an alternative to Kolkata. After Partition, a few colonies of Hindu refugees from East Bengal were established in this district. But, from 1961 onwards, no notable Hindu was always lower than that of the State observed. GRP of Hindus was always lower than that of the State average. On the other hand, Muslim immigration in this district is remarkably high. Most of the Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition, came back during the 1951-1971 period. A massive number of Muslims have illegally immigrated to this district from Bangladesh during the last three decades (1971-2001), particularly during the 1981-1991 decade, which may be termed as the 'decade of infiltration.' GRP of Muslims stood at 53.17% in this decade only. The share of Muslim population has risen from 7.17% in 1951 to 11.33% in 2001. During the last fifth years (1951-2001), the growth rate of Muslim population has reached 352%, as against 166.78% for Hindus.

Trend of religion-wise population shares and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the form of chart nos. 27 & 28.

District: Kolkata

Kolkata witnessed a continuously high growth of Muslim population during the last five decades (1951-2001). After Partition in 1947, a large number of Hindu evacuees from East Pakistan had rushed to Kolkata and its outskirts. A large number of colonies were established by these new entrants in the vicinity of Kolkata. Most of the areas are now under Kolkata Corporation as well as the Kolkata district. In 1951, Dr. Ashoke Mitra, Superintendent of Census Operations, West Bengal, had given the figure for the displaced persons who came to Kolkata after 1947 as 433228. In spite of massive Hindu immigration in Kolkata up to 1971, the growth rate of Muslims during 1951-1961 and 1961-1971 was unbelievably high, i.e. 22.29% and 46.96% respectively, as against 15.58% and 25.75% for Hindus during these two decades. This enhanced the population share of Muslims by 2.75% within two decades. One of the main reasons behind this growth is that most of the refugees who crossed over to East Pakistan after Partition came back after the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement in 1950. After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, a large number of Bangladeshi Biharis have settled in the selected areas of Kolkata. Post-1971 growth rate of Muslims in Calcutta clearly testifies to this fact. On the other hand, a clear trend of declining rates of Hindu and Christian population in Kolkata is evident since 1951. During the last five decades, the share of Muslim population has remarkably increased from 12.0% in 1951 to 20.27% in 2001. On the other hand, the share of Hindu and Christian population declined from 83.41% and 2.987% respectively in 1951 to 77.68% and 0.88% in 2001. During 1951-2001, the growth rate of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Kolkata were 67.09%, 202.93% and -46.97% respectively.

Trend of religion-wise population shares and their growth rates during 1951-2001 are shown in the form of chart nos. 29 & 30.

N.B. Analysis of Uttar Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Nadia and North-24-Parganas districts have been included in the Chapter Three as detailed case studies.

Chart no. 5 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Koch Bihar - 1951 - 2001

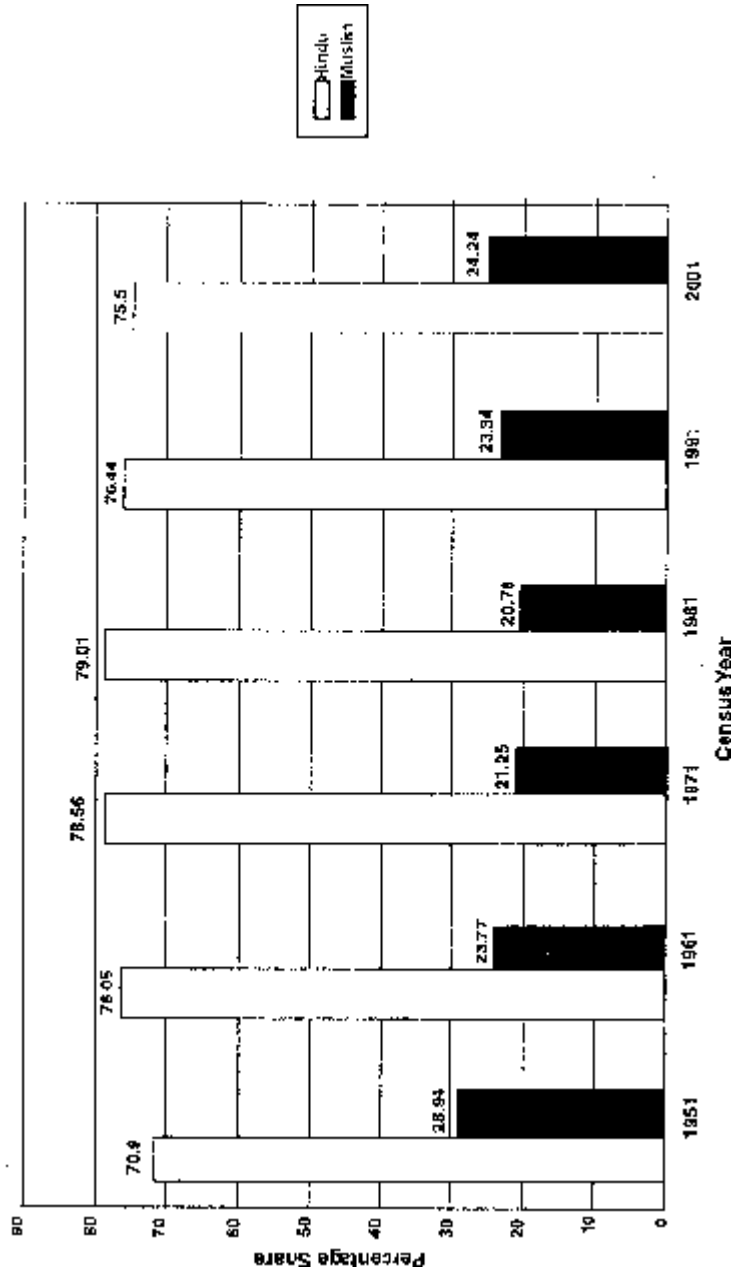


Chart no. 6 : Decadal growth rates of Hindu and Muslim in Koch Bihar during 1951 - 2001

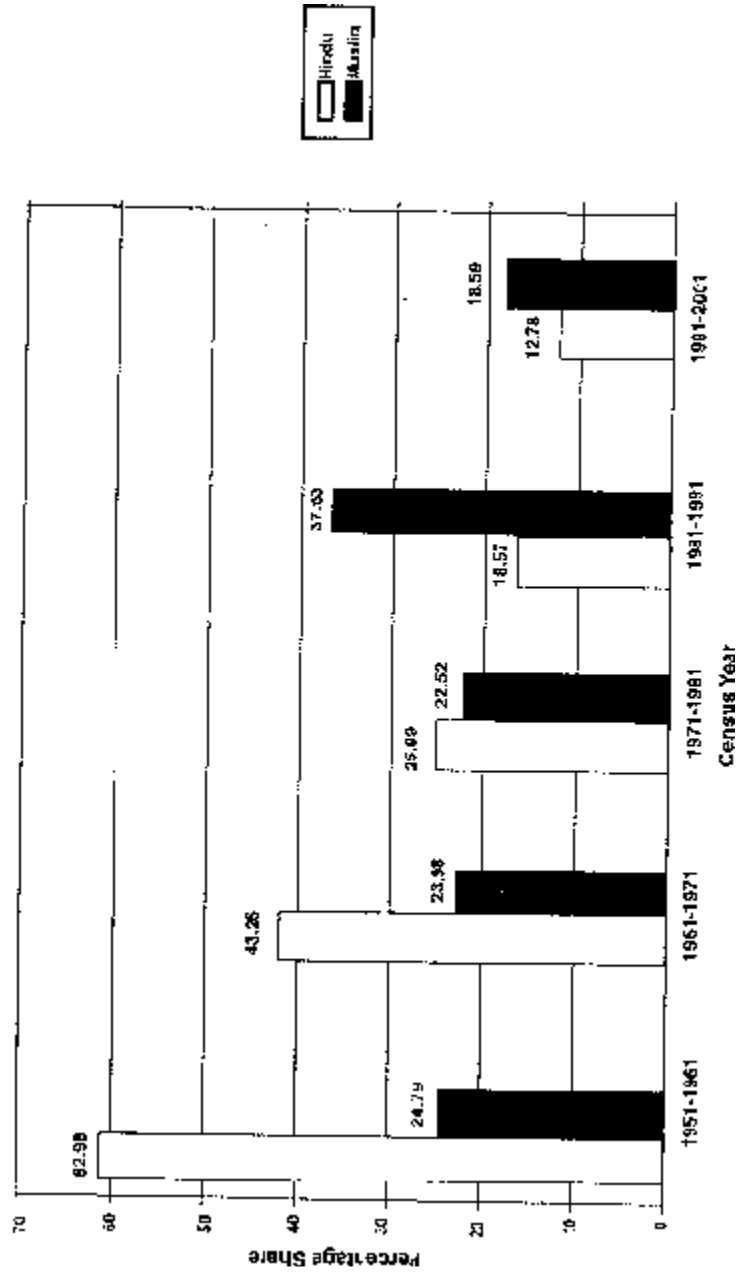


Chart no. 7 : Trend of Population share of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Jalpaiguri - 1951 - 2001

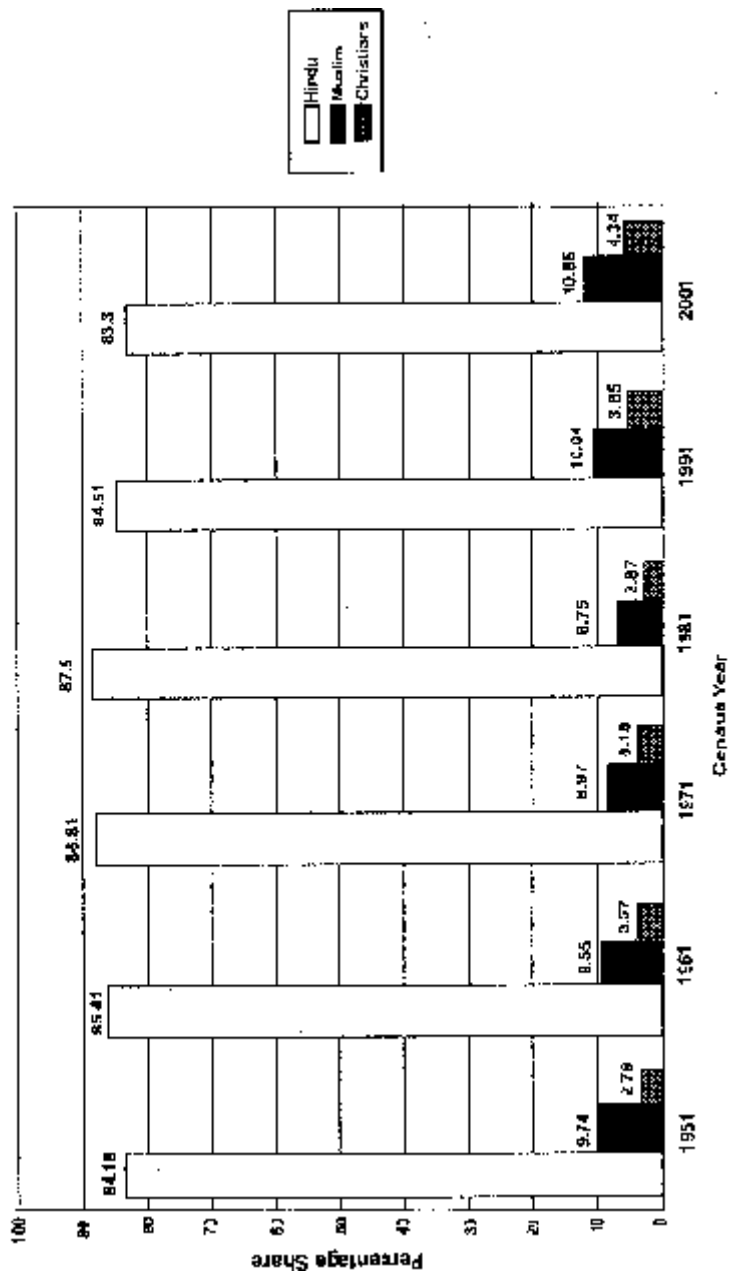


Chart no. 8 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Jalpaiguri during 1951 - 2001

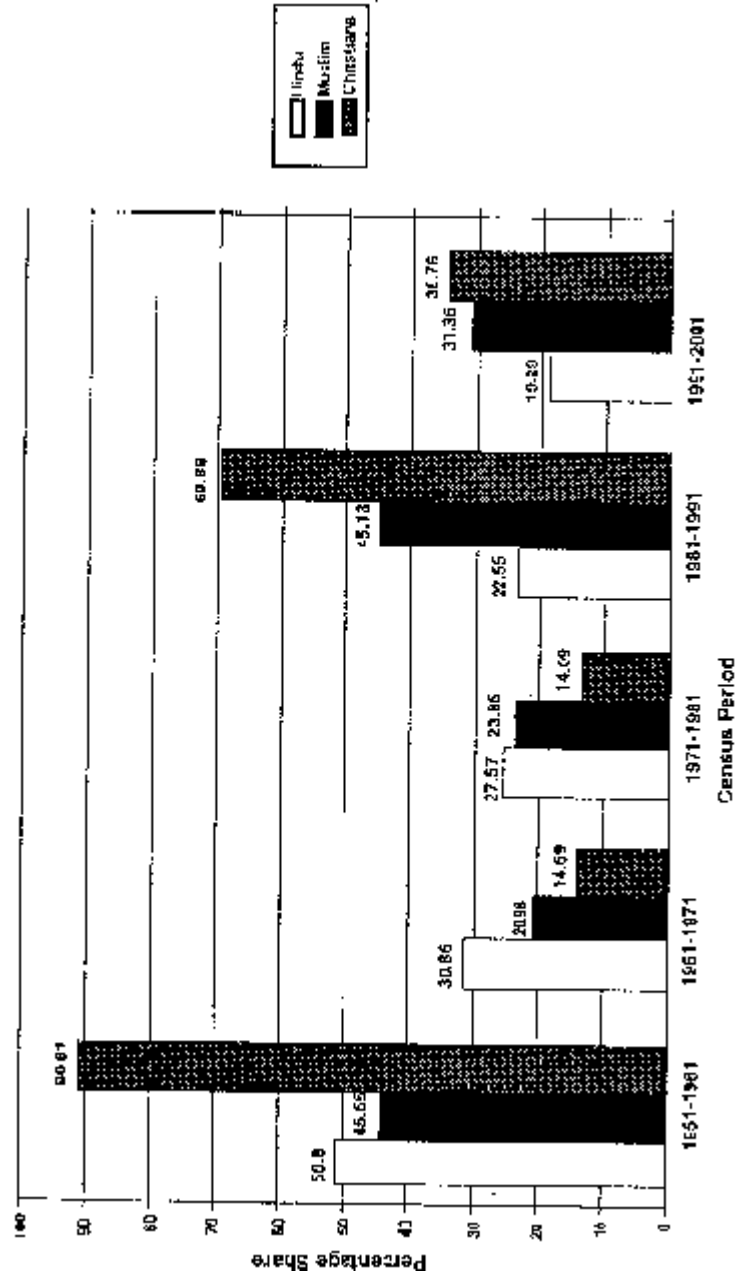


Chart no. 9 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Malda - 1951 - 2001

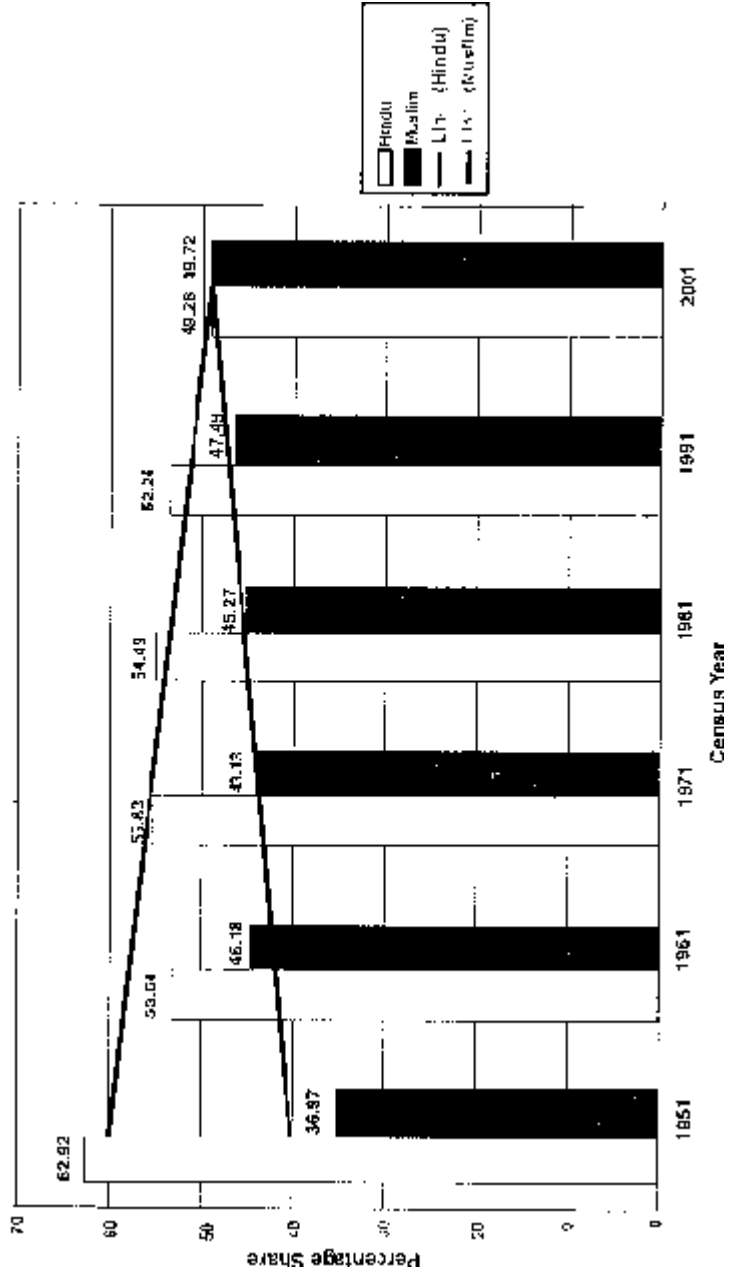


Chart no. 10 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Malda during 1951 - 2001

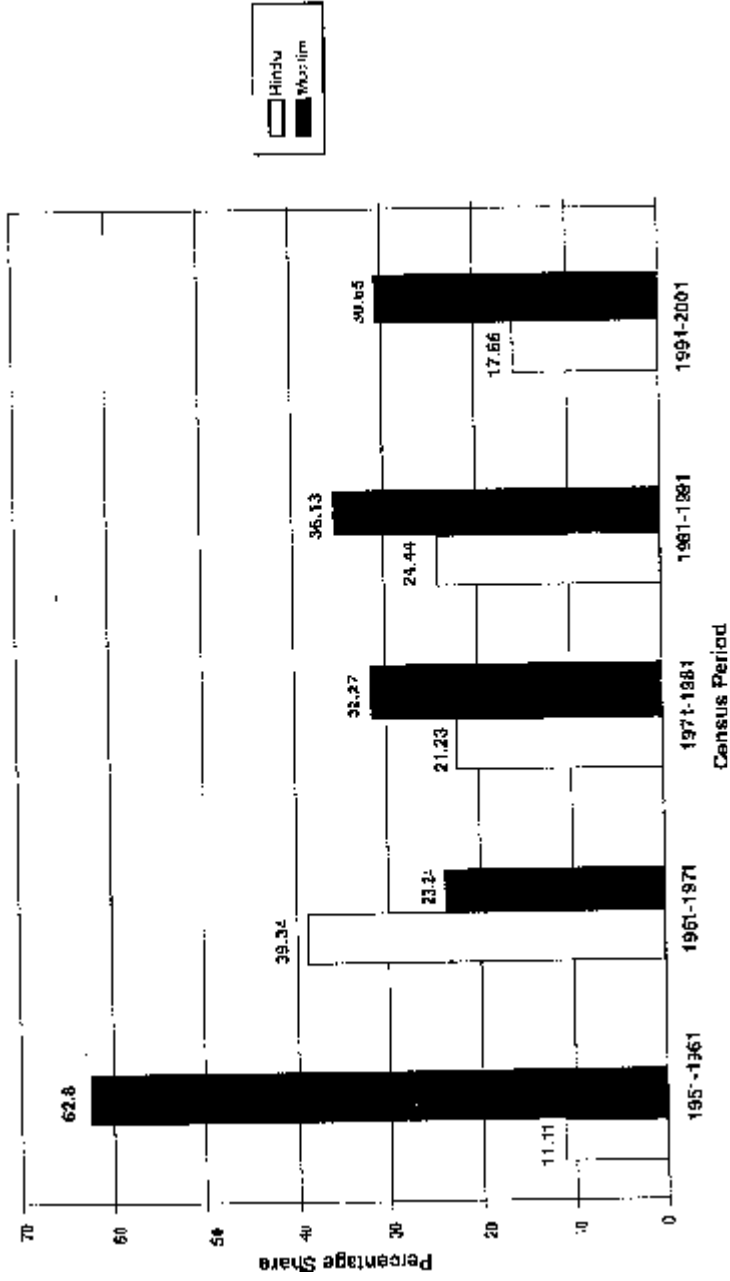


Chart no.11 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Eirbhun - 1951 - 2001

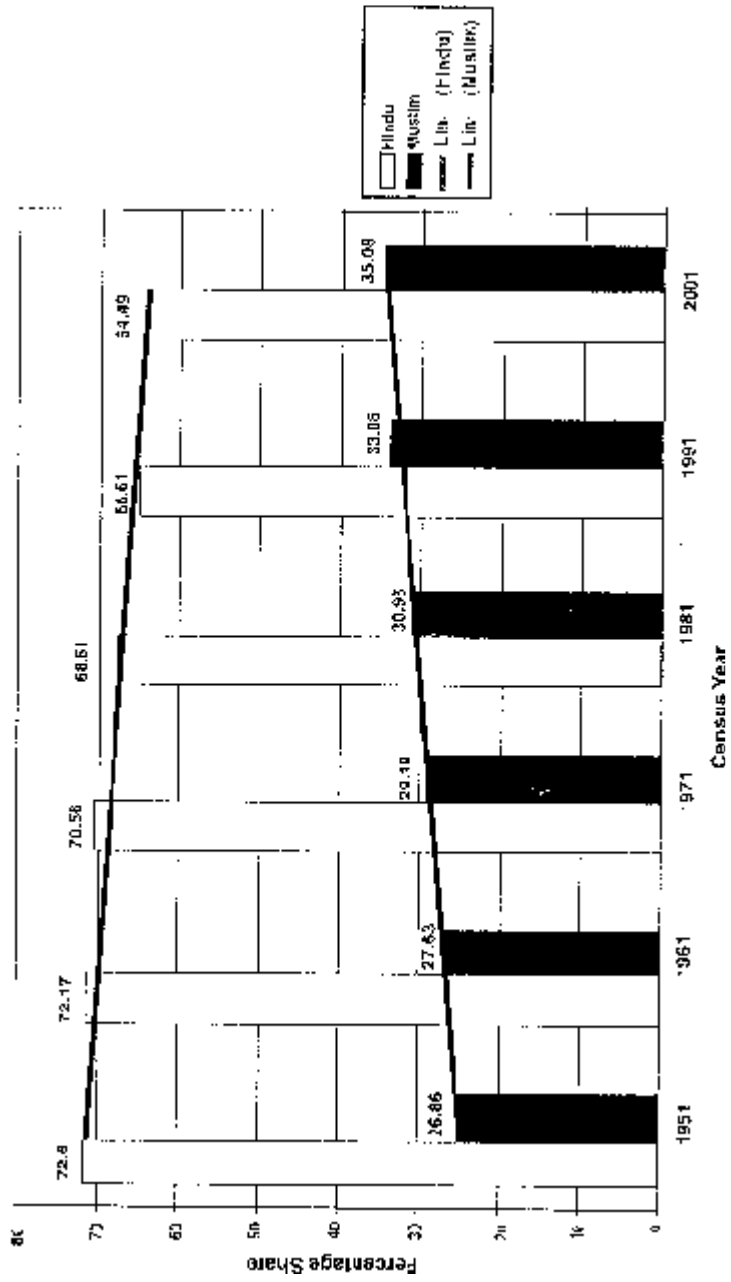


Chart no. 12 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Birbhum during 1951 - 2001

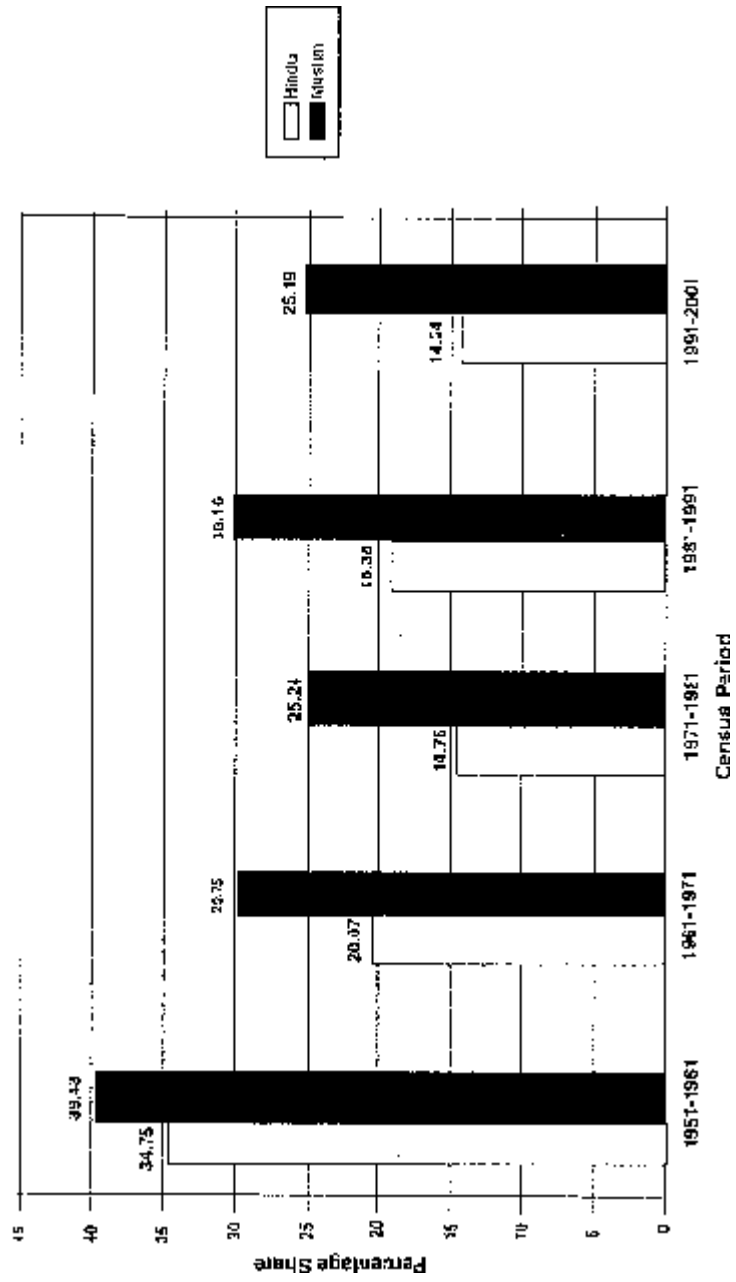


Chart no. 13 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Bardhaman - 1951 - 2001

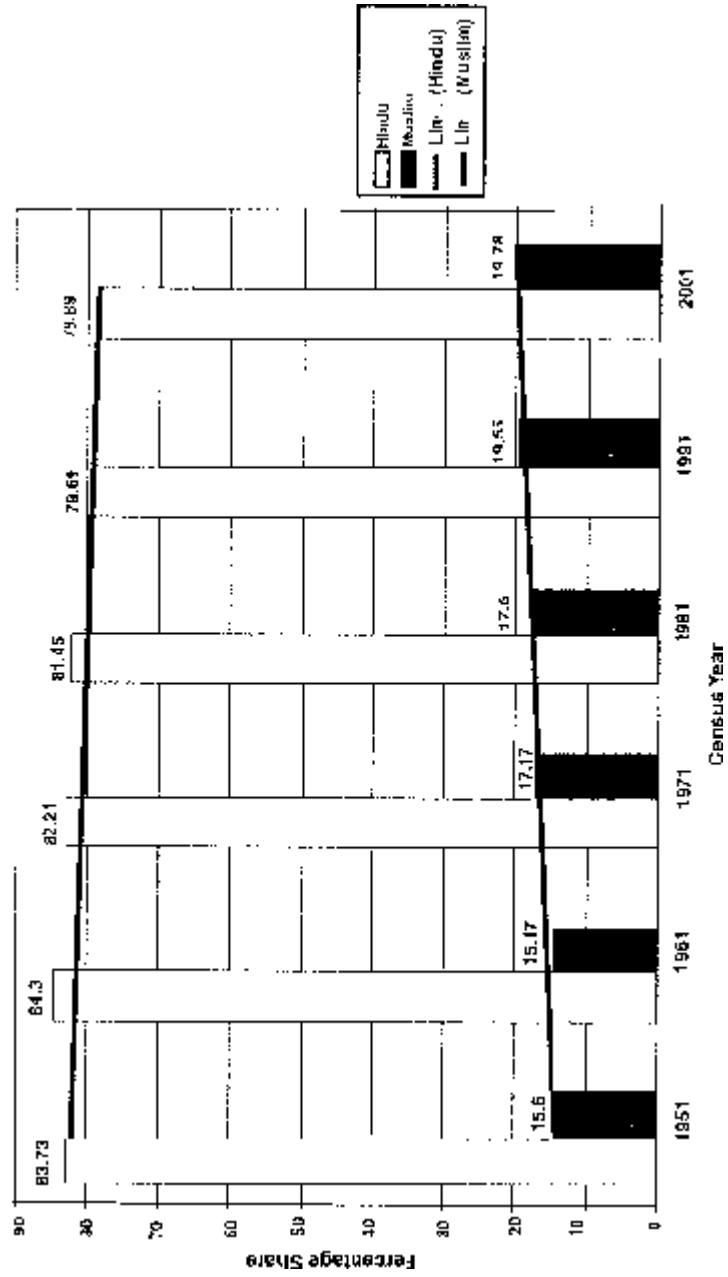


Chart no. 14 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Bardhaman during 1951 - 2001

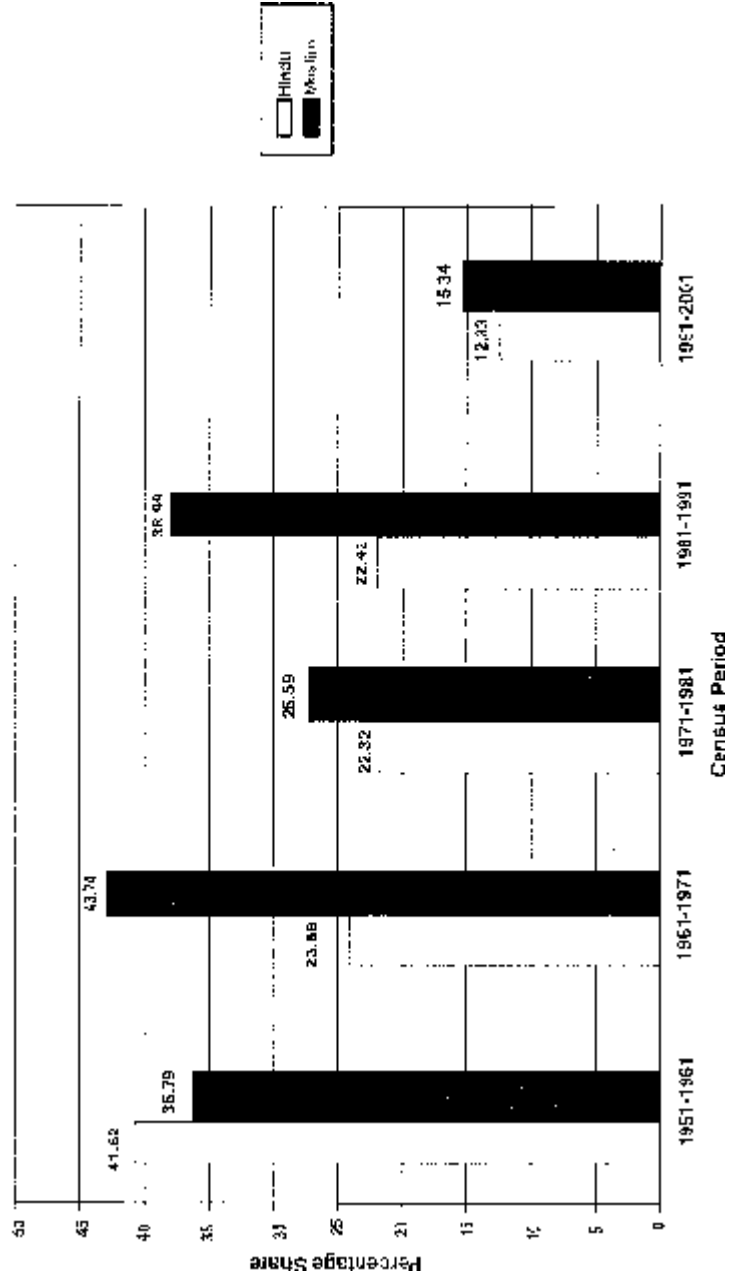


Chart no. 5 : Trend of Population share of Hindus and Muslims in Hooghly - 1951 - 2001

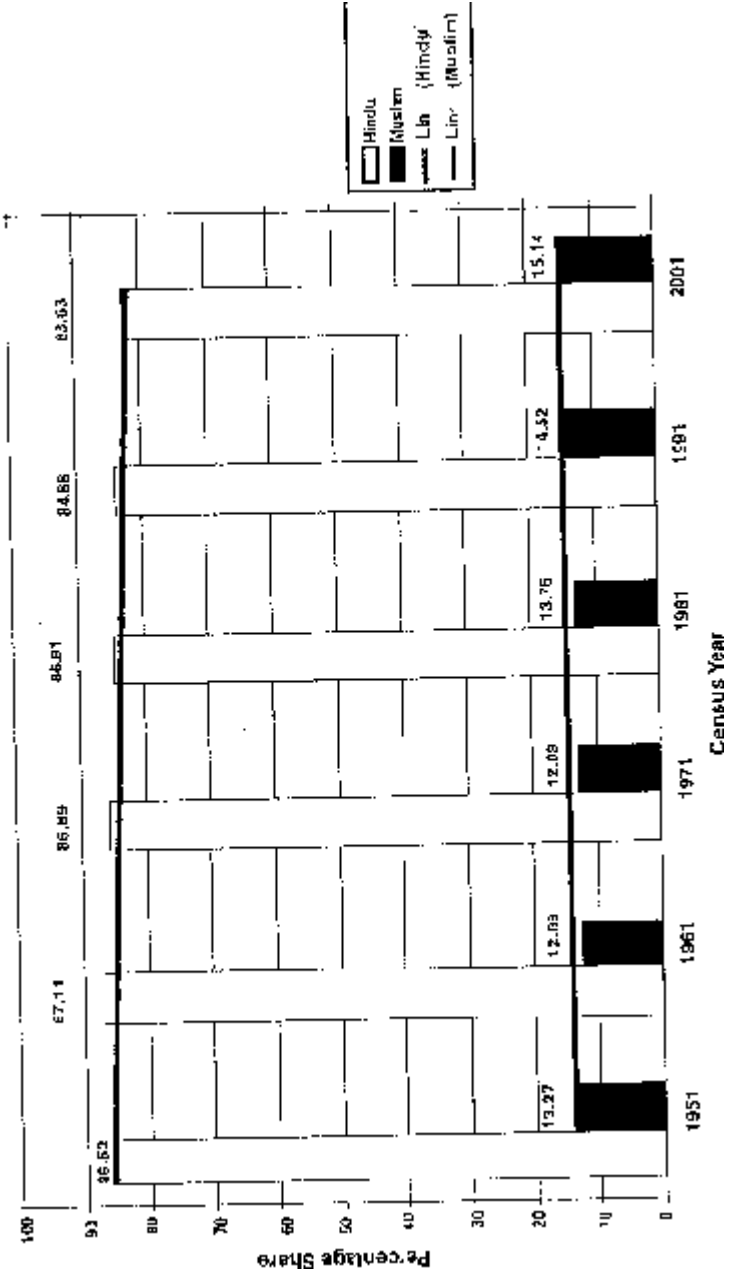


Chart no. 16 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Hooghly during 1951 - 2001

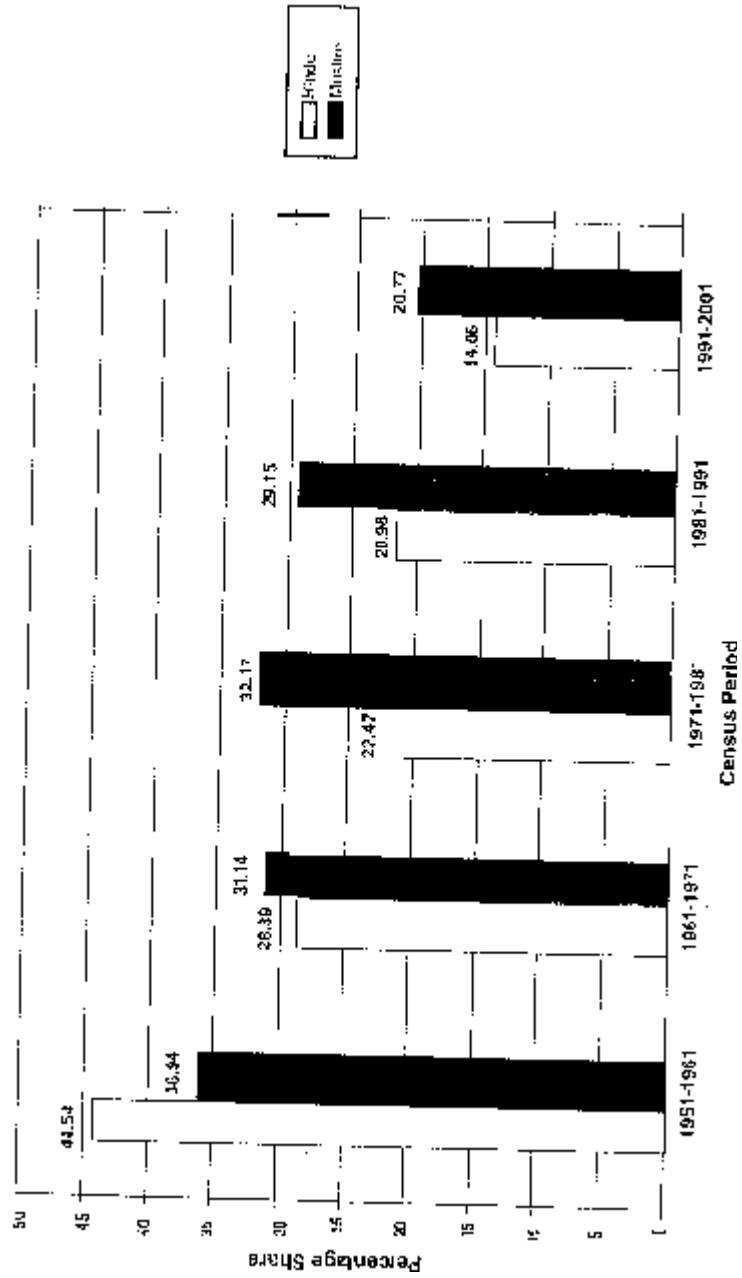


Chart no. 17 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in South Twenty Four Parganas - 1951 - 2001

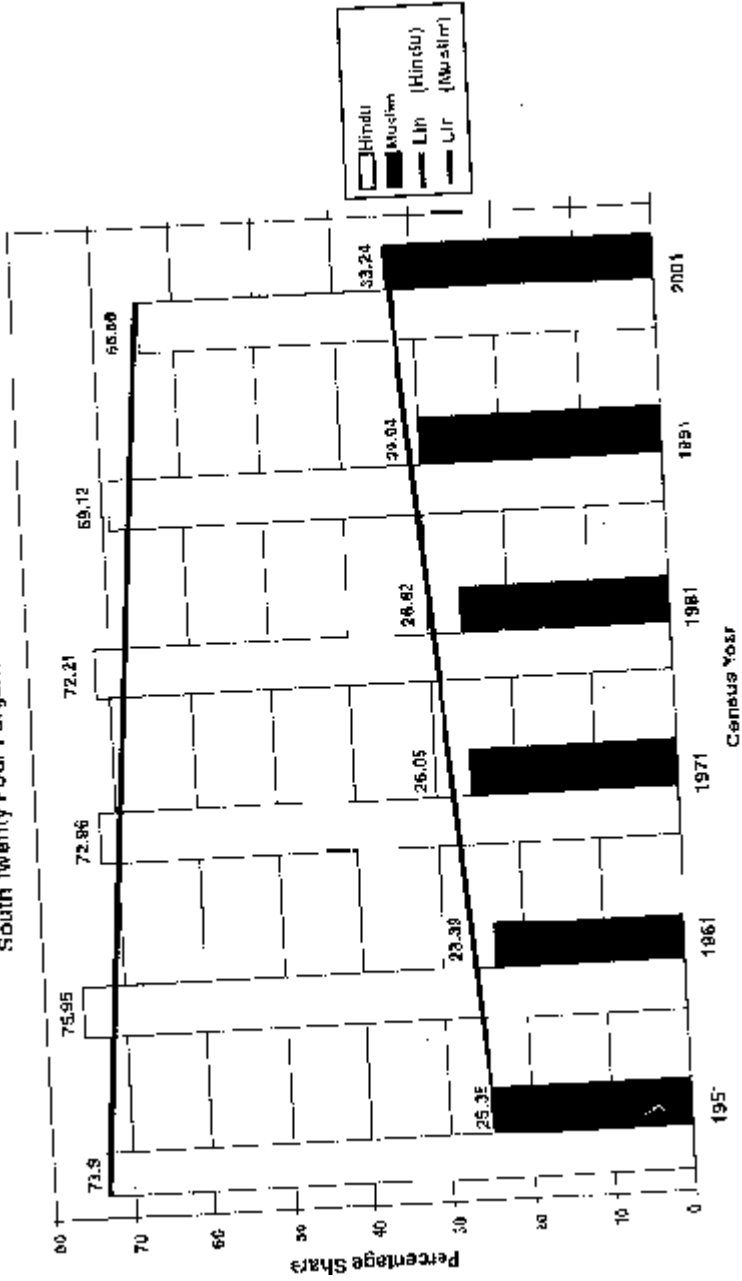


Chart no. 18 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in South Twenty Four Parganas during 1951 - 2001

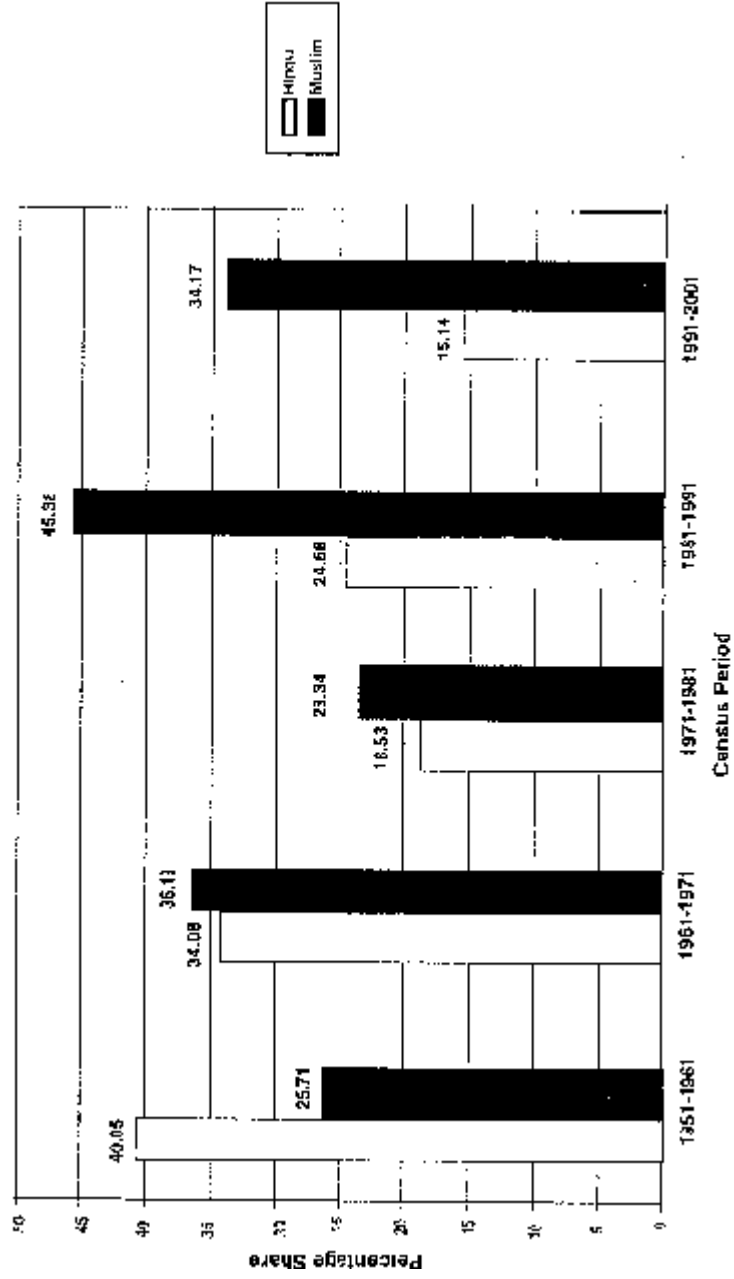


Chart no. 19 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists in Darjeeling - 1951 - 2001

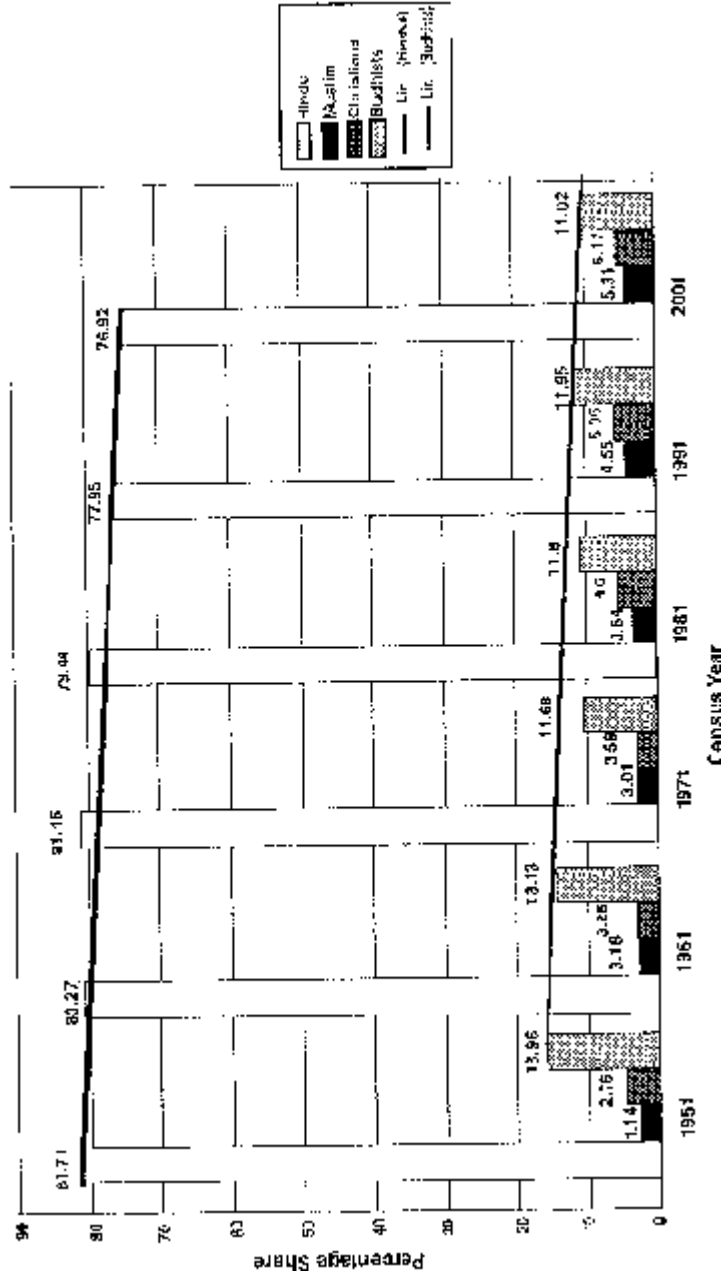


Chart no. 2C : Decadal growth rates of religious communities of Darjeeling during 1951 - 2001

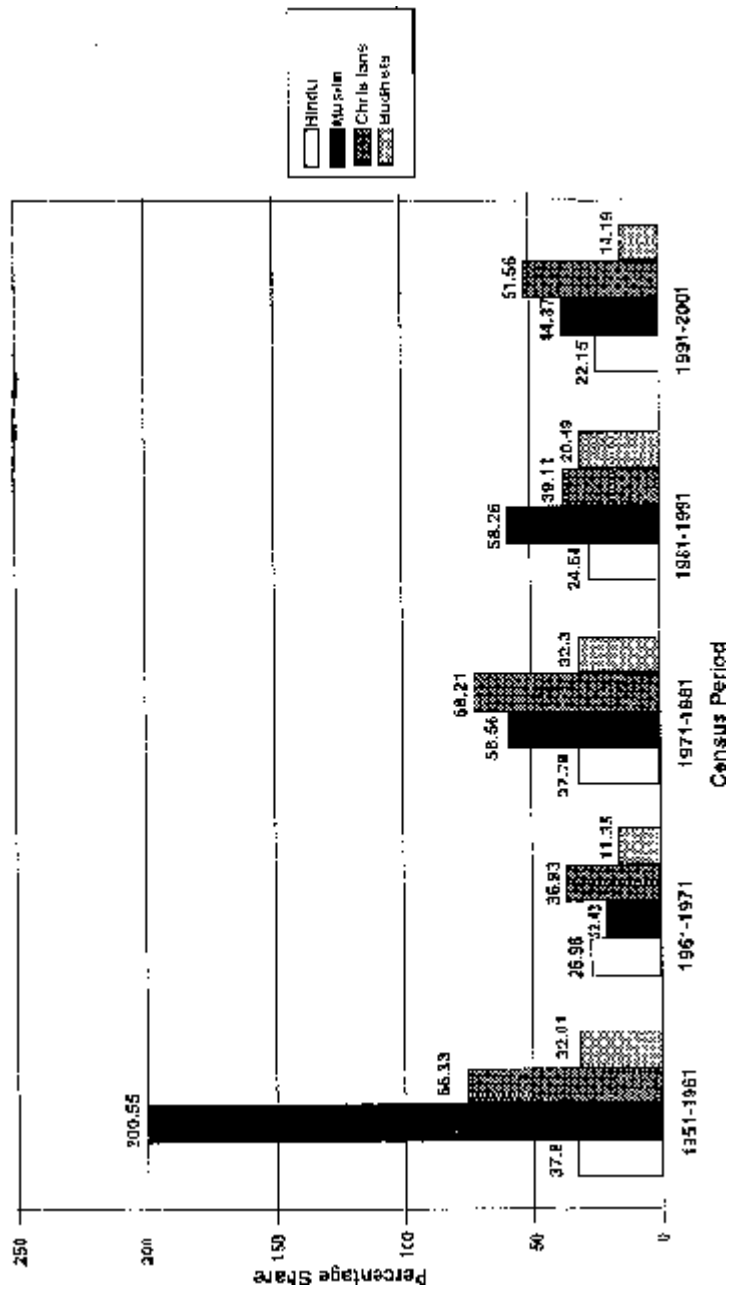


Chart no. 21 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Bankura - 1951 - 2001

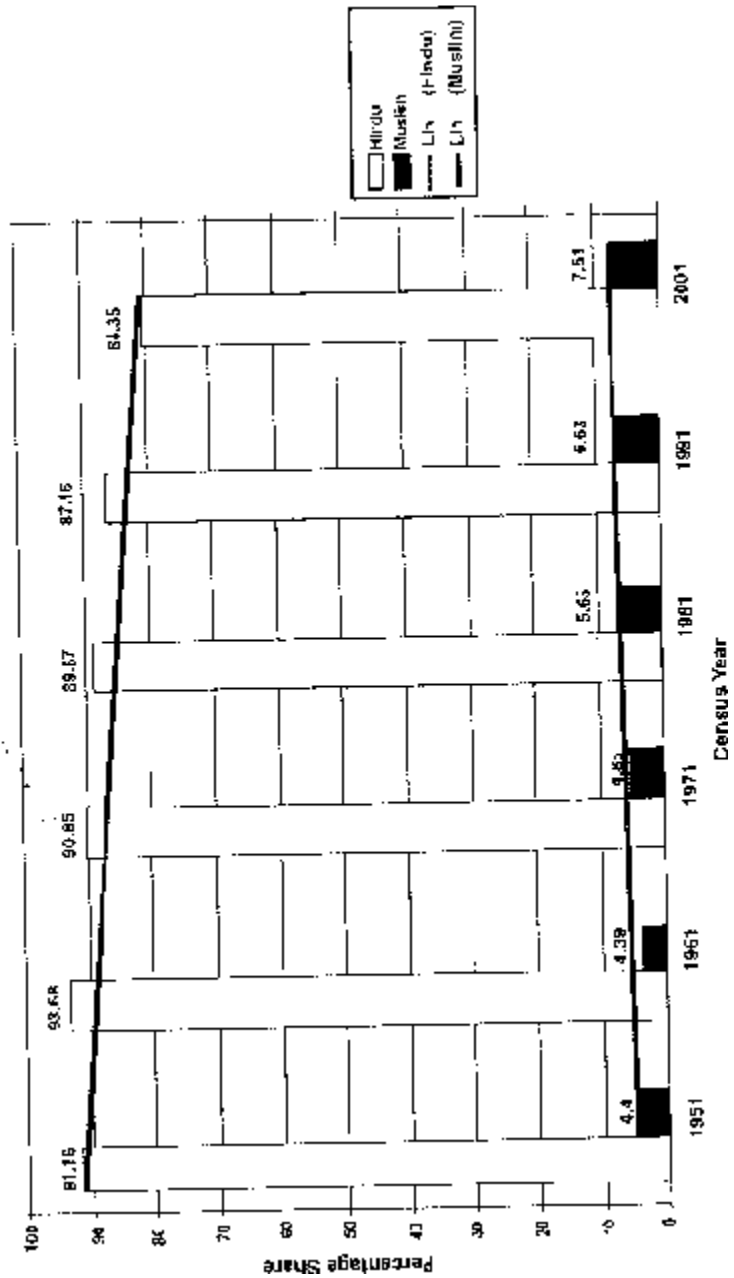


Chart no. 22 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Bankura during 1951 - 2001

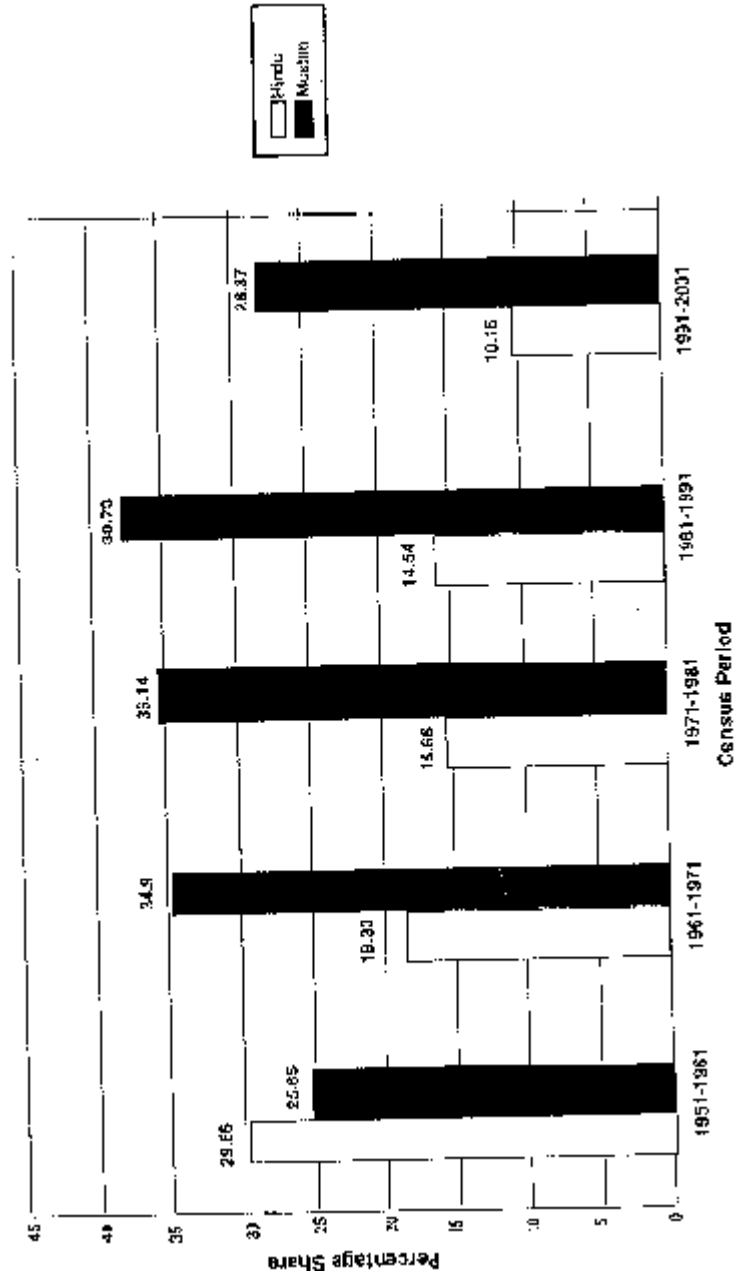


Chart no. 23 : Trend of population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Purulia - 1961 - 2001

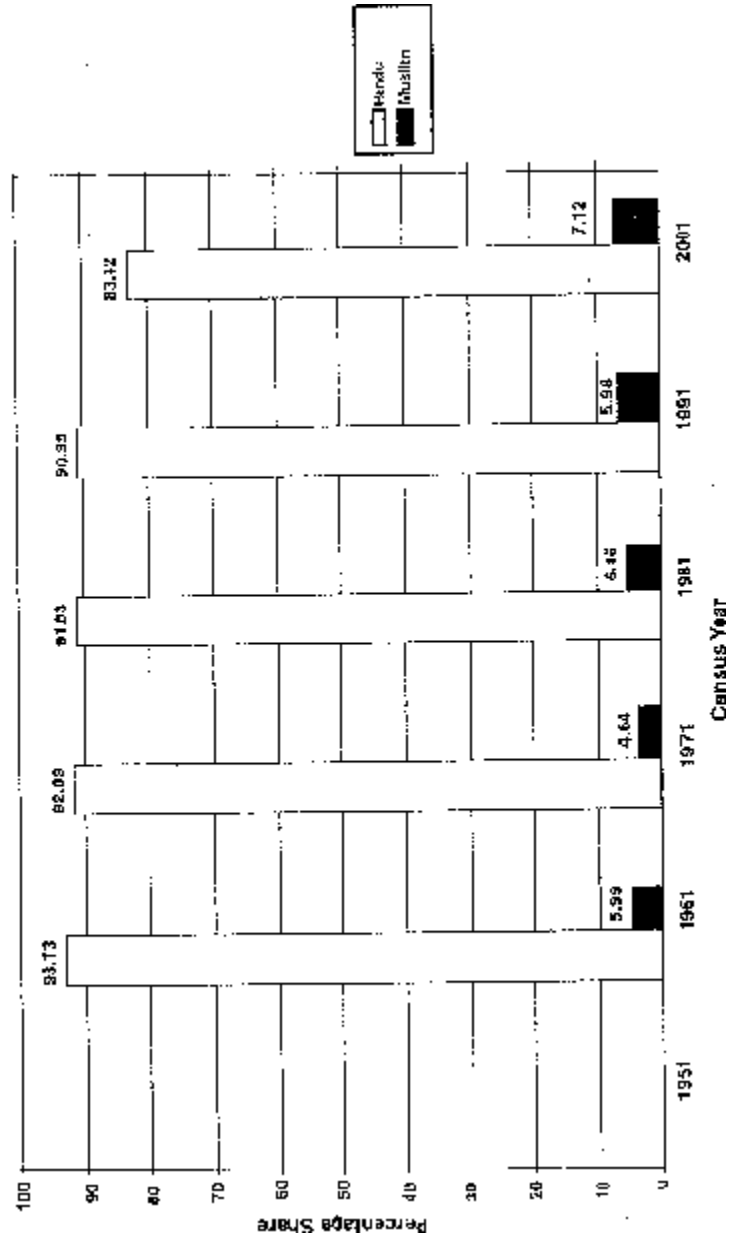
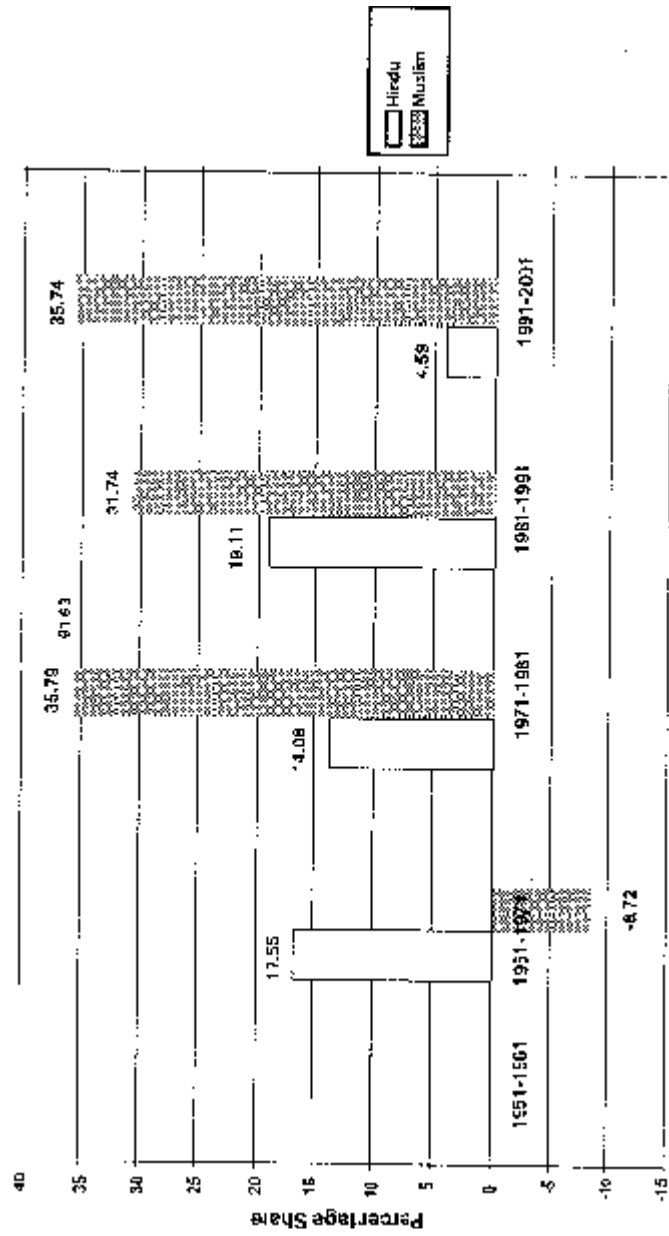


Chart no. 24 : Decadal growth of Hindus and Muslims in Purulia during - 1961 - 2001



Census Period

Chart no. 25: Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Howrah - 1951 - 2001

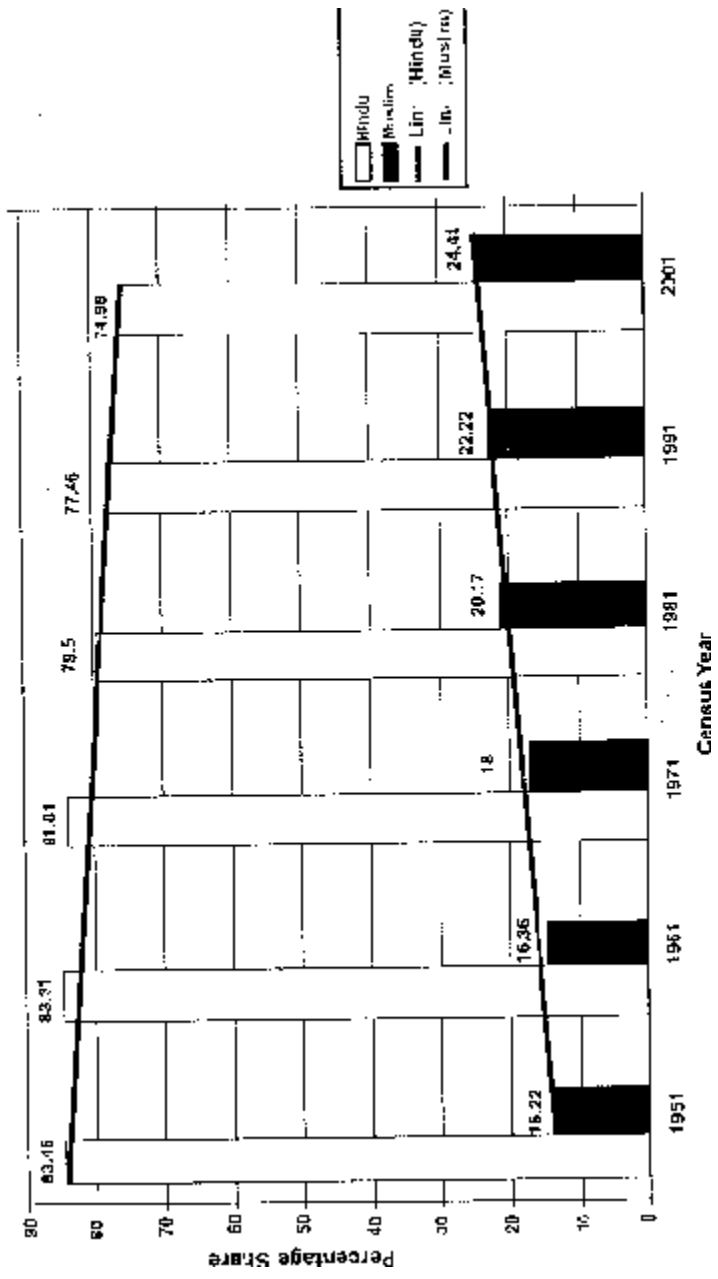


Chart no. 25 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Howrah during 1951 - 2001

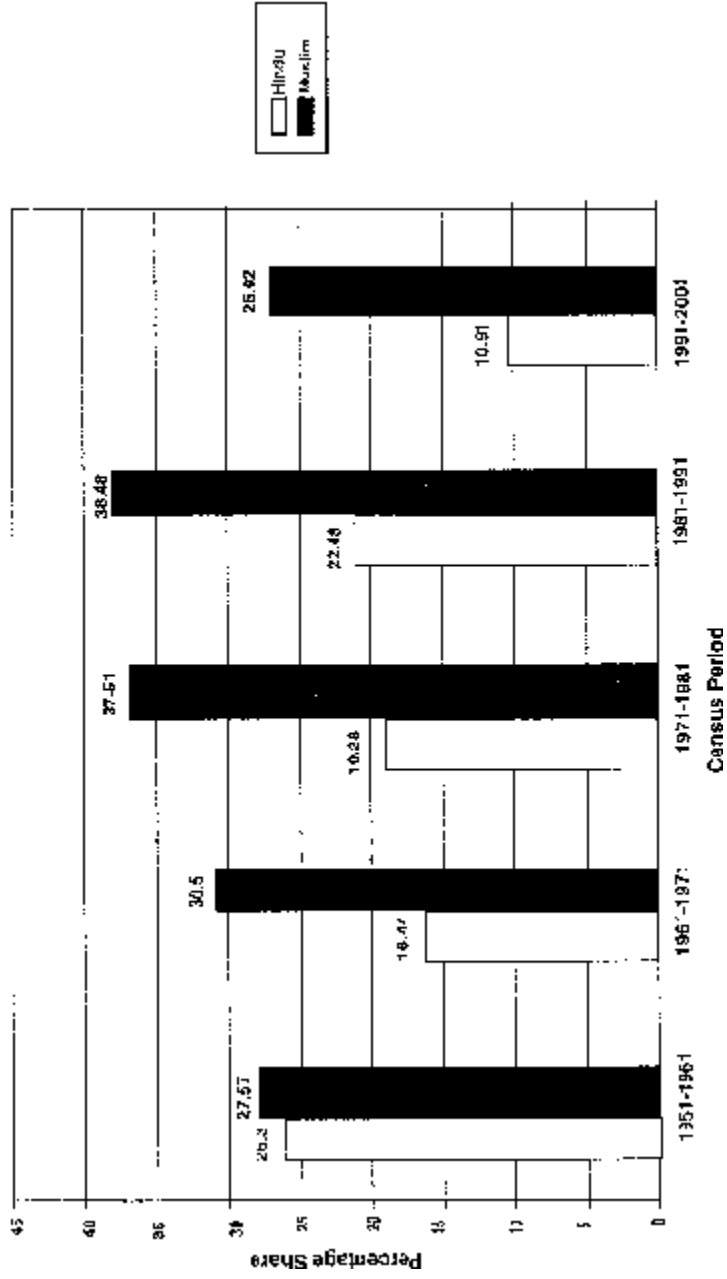


Chart no. 27 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Medinipur - 1951 - 2001

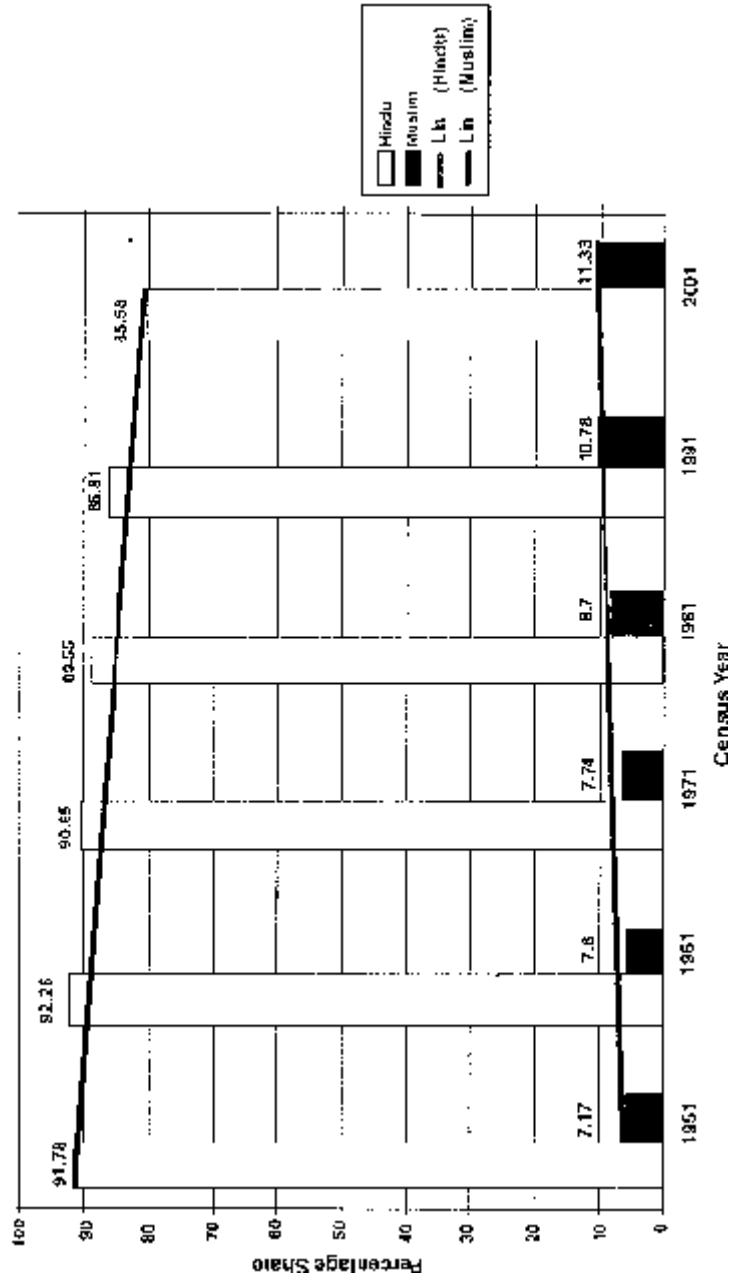


Chart no. 2A - Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims
 Medinipur during 1951 - 2001

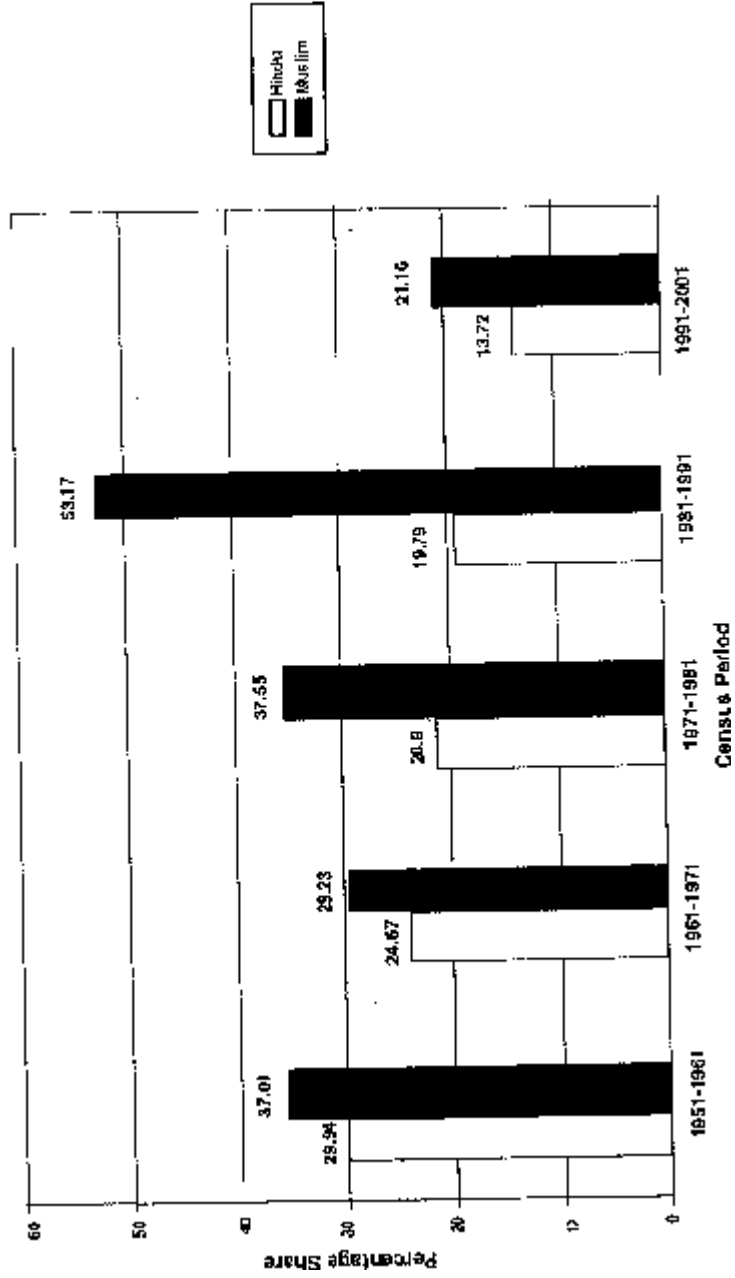


Chart no. 29 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Kolkata - 1951 - 2001

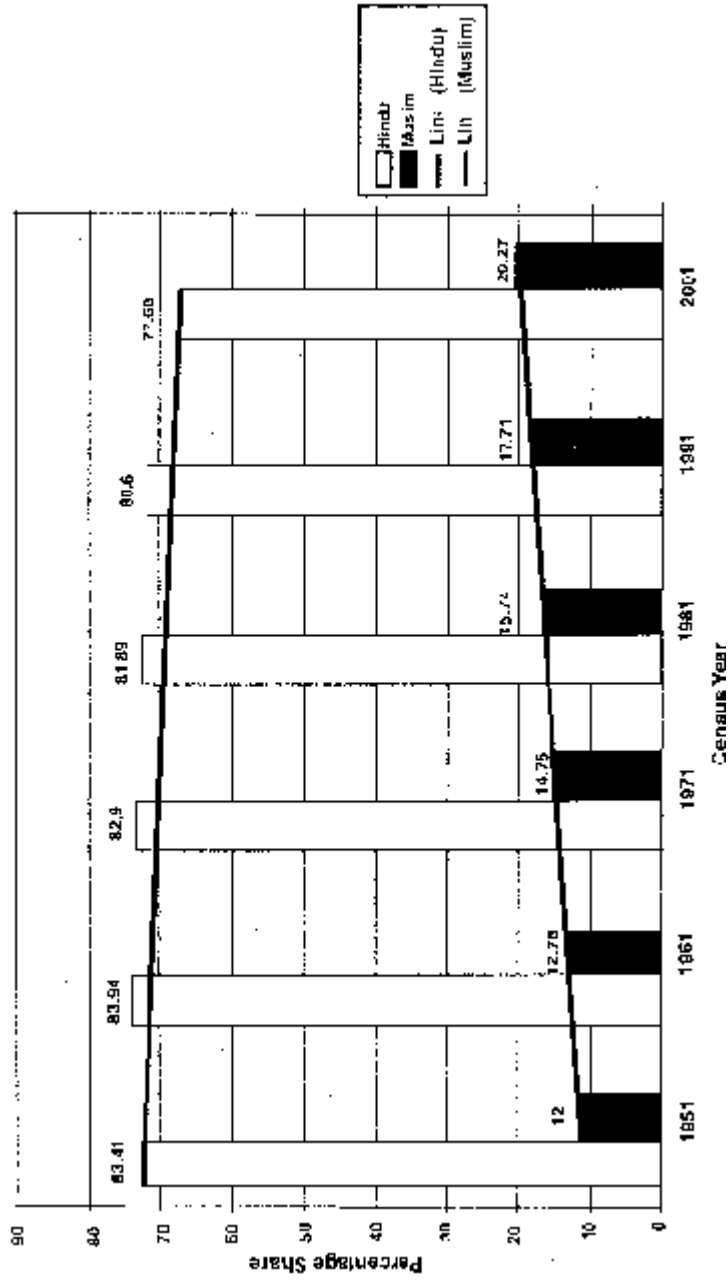
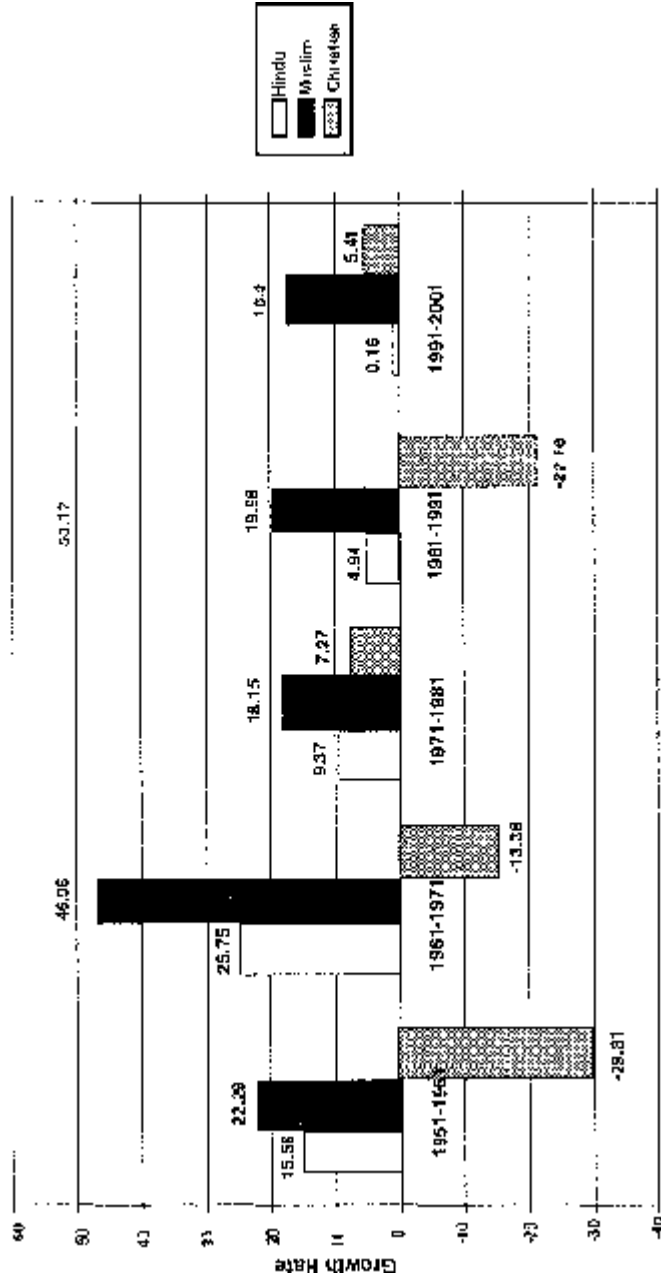


Chart no. 3C : Decadal growth rates of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Kolkata during 1951 - 2001



Census Period

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES : SPECIAL CASE STUDIES OF
FOUR DISTRICTS BORDERINGS

District : West Dinajpur / Uttar Dinajpur / Dakshin Dinajpur

Uttar Dinajpur was created in 1991, after bifurcation of the erstwhile district of West Dinajpur into Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur. A major portion of the district passes through a long and narrow stretch of land from Darjeeling in the north, Bangladesh in the east, Dakshin Dinajpur in the north, Bangladesh in the east, Dakshin Dinajpur in the south and south-east and Bihar on the west. When the erstwhile Dinajpur was bifurcated between West Bengal and then East Pakistan by the Radcliffe Award, the newly created district of West Dinajpur which came to West Bengal had no direct connection with the other three north Bengal districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar, as a large tract of the then East Pakistan and Bihar intervened between them, and there was no direct link of these three north Bengal districts with the rest of the State of West Bengal. A link was provided by the Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act of 1956, whereby a strip of land was transferred to West Bengal from the Purnea district of Bihar. Subsequently, in 1959, a part of the transferred territories lying in the north of river Mahananda was transferred to the Darjeeling district so that the Mahananda river formed the northern boundary of West Dinajpur and now Uttar Dinajpur. A new subdivision, namely Islampur, was created in the same year. Religious composition of the district after partition was as follows : Hindus 69.3%, Muslims 29.94% and other less than 1% in 1951. But, after the inclusion of a stretch of territory from Bihar in 1956, religious composition was totally changed. The share of Muslim population jumped to 39.41% and consequently the share of Hindus come down to 59.87% in the 1961 census. Continuous Hindu immigration from East Pakistan and Bangladesh during 1951-1991 has increased the share of Hindu population significantly. On the other hand, high growth of Muslim population during the last three decades (1971-2001) also indicates Bangladeshi Muslim infiltration in the district. After bifurcation of West Dinajpur, the share of Muslim population of Uttar Dinajpur jumped from 35.79% in 1981 to 45.35% in 1991. Only in the last decade (1991-2001), it had risen to 47.36%, and the share of Hindu population had come down to 51.72% (2.5% lower than in 1991). On the other hand, the share of Hindu and Muslim population in Dakshin Dinajpur as 74.01% and 24.02% respectively in 2001.

Decade-wise population shares and the growth rates on the basis of religion during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 31, 32, 33 & 34.

Table 1 : Population by religion in the blocks of the district of Uttar Dinajpur, 1981 and 1991

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Religion	1981	1991	Growth Rate
1.	Chopra	(a) Hindus	48360 (37.58)	62232 (37.55)	29.00
		(b) Muslims	78508 (61.10)	101254 (61.10)	29.99
2.	Islampur	(a) Hindus	64770 (37.71)	57086 (30.84)	-12.00
		(b) Muslims	106003 (61.71)	127586 (68.93)	21.00
3.	Goalpokhar-1	(a) Hindus	41970 (24.58)	114859 (31.69)	173.67
		(b) Muslims	127781 (74.84)	245407 (67.71)	92.06
4.	Goalpokhar-2	(a) Hindus	49284 (43.03)		
		(b) Muslims	63029 (55.03)		
5.	Karandighi	(a) Hindus	92660 (54.77)	120620 (52.42)	30.18
		(b) Muslims	74647 (44.13)	108722 (47.25)	45.65
6.	Raiganj	(a) Hindus	131131 (62.09)	189727 (68.45)	44.69
		(b) Muslims	79042 (37.43)	86131 (31.08)	9.00
7.	Hemtabad	(a) Hindus	41580 (53.39)	48538 (51.01)	16.73
		(b) Muslims	36106 (45.36)	46466 (48.8)	28.69
8.	Kaliaganj	(a) Hindus	128122 (83.32)	119091 (79.34)	-7.04
		(b) Muslims	25296 (16.45)	30736 (20.47)	21.50
9.	Itahar	(a) Hindus	94227 (51.78)	97760 (49.60)	3.74
		(b) Muslims	86535 (47.55)	98927 (50.19)	14.32

Table 2 : Population by religion in the blocks of the district of Dakshin Dinajpur, 1981 and 1991

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Religion	1981	1991	Growth Rate
1.	Kushmandi	(a) Hindus	76024 (63.20)	103034 (59.16)	35.53
		(b) Muslims	43553 (36.20)	66319 (38.08)	52.27
2.	Harirampur	(a) Hindus			
		(b) Muslims			
3.	Banshihari	(a) Hindus	91994 (70.24)	113403 (67.30)	23.27
		(b) Muslims	36602 (27.95)	53464 (31.73)	46.07
4.	Gangarampur	(a) Hindus	114931 (74.92)	143568 (70.20)	29.92
		(b) Muslims	35576 (23.19)	57513 (28.12)	61.66
5.	Kumarganj	(a) Hindus	72813 (69.59)	87294 (67.32)	19.89
		(b) Muslims	31434 (30.04)	40854 (31.50)	29.97
6.	Tapan	(a) Hindus	123473 (83.63)	133512 (71.41)	8.13
		(b) Muslims	23042 (15.61)	50943 (27.25)	121.09
7.	Balurghat	(a) Hindus	142734 (93.43)	172560 (93.17)	20.9
		(b) Muslims	7683 (5.03)	9636 (5.20)	25.42
8.	Hili	(a) Hindus	44289 (87.67)	54283 (87.83)	22.57
		(b) Muslims	5008 (9.91)	6160 (9.97)	23.0

(Percentage to total population of the Block shown within parentheses)

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

Block-level population growth, religion-wise, gives us a revealing picture regarding Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh into the district. All the Blocks except the headquarters, Raigonj and Balurghat, of both Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts, witnessed a massive growth of Muslim population. Special mention is necessary for the Blocks Islampur and Kaliagonj of Uttar Dinajpur, where a massively negative growth of Hindu population is distinctly visible. Again,

Tapan of Dakshin Dinajpur witnessed an unbelievable 121% growth rate of Muslims and 8.13% only for Hindus. Consequently, the share of Muslim population shot up from 15.61% to 27.25%, and that of Hindu population declined from 83.63% to 71.41% in only a decade. This appears to be mainly due to desertion of the Hindus from the area, particularly Islampur, for want of security of both their families and properties as a result of religions re-orientation.

Infiltration unabated :

The district under consideration has a long international border with Bangladesh. It has also a check post at Radhikapur (railway). Katihar-Barsoi-Radhikapur-Dinajpur railway link is now working to carry goods from India and Nepal to Bangladesh. There are some other road links with the border, e.g. Bindol, Samaspur, Malancha, Kaliganga, etc. Barbed wire fencing along the border is yet to be completed in this district.

Problems of cross-order migration, both permanent and temporary in nature, persist in the area under local political patronization and support. Apparently, this cross-border immigration of Muslims from Bangladesh has become a perennial process. The reason in many cases may be primarily economic, but other possible complicated causes relating to infiltration by Islamic militants can in no way be underestimated. However, the net effect is that this huge influx of alien population is creating a fast growing poverty-ridden Muslim enclave in the district.

In Uttar Dinajpur, a Muslim dominated area (specially Islampur sub-division), Bangladeshi Muslims including Biharis always feel comfortable to settle down. But Bangladeshi Hindu immigrants are coming mainly due to religious persecution and Intolerance as well insecurity because of their religious identity. So, in most of the cases, Hindus immigration is permanent in nature and they prefer to settle in the Hindu dominated areas. A common perception of the immigrant people is that, it is easy to establish oneself as a citizen by enrolment in the voters' list, by acquiring a ration card and some other documents from the Panchayat office or MLA or other public representatives. Apart from this, one can get job/employment and social security for one's families with the help of the locals.

In fact, as a result of the high growth rate of the immigrant Bangladeshi population in the district, these immigrants have even been occupying the major share of job and trade opportunities that have been created in the district due to developmental activities. It is noteworthy that Bangladeshi immigrant labor forces engage themselves at a lower rate of wage than the local laborers.

Crimes and its consequences :

Organized crimes, particularly, trans-border crimes are common phenomena in the district. Murder, dacoity, cattle lifting, smuggling, kidnapping, etc. are the major criminal activities available in the police record. To understand the ground realities, we can take the guage of criminal offences recorded in the police stations, number of cases tried, number of persons convicted and number of persons acquitted during 1997-2001.

Table 3 (a) : No. of offences reported during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	22	34	22	26	37
Dacoity	4	2	2	4	19
Robbery	5	-	4	5	8
Burglary	2	-	9	8	10
Rioting	49	36	25	36	45

Theft	168	177	186	165	273
Minor offences	2562	1621	96	104	—
Offences against woman	-	122	78	101	136
Others	737	553	509	518	1302
Total	3549	2545	931	967	180

Table 3 (b) : No. of cases tried during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	-	-	-	-	17
Dacoity	-	-	3	-	1
Robbery	-	-	-	-	4
Burglary	-	-	-	-	1
Rioting	-	-	-	-	64
Theft	-	-	4	-	21
Minor offences	-	-	-	15	—
Offences against woman	-	-	-	-	59
Others	687	415	-	41	273
Total	687	415	7	56	440

Table 3 (c) : No. of persons convicted during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	4	-	-	-	—
Dacoity	-	-	-	-	—
Robbery	-	-	-	-	—
Burglary	-	-	-	-	—
Rioting	-	-	-	-	—
Theft	1	-	-	-	1
Minor offences	-	1476	78	23	—
Offences against woman	-	-	-	-	3
Others	90	37	8	30	95
Total	95	1513	86	53	99

Table 3 (d) : No. of persons acquitted during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	10	-	-	-	44
Dacoity	1	-	-	-	10
Robbery	-	-	-	-	12
Burglary	-	-	-	-	1
Rioting	-	-	-	-	538
Theft	11	-	-	-	1
Minor offences	-	1	86	28	—
Offences against woman	-	1	-	-	157
Others	323	1	20	39	709

Total	345	3	106	67	1472
-------	-----	---	-----	----	------

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, Uttar Dinajpur*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

From the above tables, during 1997-2001 (5 years), offences related to the worst form of crimes like murder, dacoity, robbery, are reported to be 194, and persons convicted number only 4. No one was convicted for committing murder in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001. Only in 1997, the above mentioned 4 persons were convicted out of 22 cases. Except for some minor offences, no one is convicted in the incidents of dacoity, robbery, burglary, rioting, etc. during the above period (1997-2001). Offences against women have been reported to number only 437 during 1998-2001. But only 59 cases were tried in 2001 and 3 persons convicted. It is easily discernible that the social position of women in the district of Uttar Dinajpur remains highly vulnerable.

It is quite clear from the above tables that necessary administrative measures initiated by the concerned authorities are very weak by any standard. In a considerable number of cases of organized crimes (e.g. murder, dacoity, rape, etc.), connivance with Bangladeshi Muslims and other criminals, coupled with non-cooperation of the local administration and the party in power, aimed at avoiding any disturbance to the Muslim vote bank, are greatly responsible for damaging the secular fabric of our civil society.

Trans-border militant activities are going on :

Militant activities in the area are quite significant. The Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan (ISI) are operating surreptitiously. Other groups such as Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO), Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), 'Greater Bangladesh Forum' are also active in the district. It is now an open secret that Bangladesh is supporting all these forces by giving shelter and monetary help. Open unfenced borders of Goalpukur, Daspara and Chakulia blocks are very conducive to communications by the militants and smugglers with Bangladesh. Madrassahs on either side of the border are also giving temporary shelters to them. Taking these opportunities, they can disperse themselves to other areas in the State as well as country. Militant activities are found to be concentrated in non-government (active) Madrassahs. Police and local administration are indifferent to most of the cases. BSF vigilance in the border line has become ineffective due to non-availability of barbed-wire-fencing on the one hand and virtual non-cooperation of the local people on the other. All these factors taken together pose a real threat to our internal/external security.

Politics of vote bank ignoring social harmony :

Table 4 : Relation among the different communities in the district of Uttar Dinajpur in the eye of the people

Relations	(a) before 1971				(b) after 1971			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
(a)	18	18	19	22	7	17	14	23
(b)	7	8	3	1	13	10	8	4
©	7				23	3	2	
(d)								

Total no. of respondents = 48

1. Hindu-Muslim, a. good,

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 2. Local-outsider | b. normal, |
| 3. Bengali-Rajbanshi, | c. bad, |
| 4. Tribal-Non-tribal | d. worse |

The above mentioned respondents were selected from different socio-economic strata across the district (e.g. professionals, government employees, political personalities, teachers, businessmen etc.). It is seen from primary data that 48 respondents have expressed their views regarding relation among the different communities in the district before and after 1971. In case of Hindu-Muslim relation before 1971, 18 have opined that it was good, 7 in favour of normal, i.e. workable and 7 for bad. But after 1971, only 7 respondents feel it is good, 13 feel it to be workable, and 23 bad. From the above table, it is clearly spelt out that post-1971 Hindu-Muslim relation in the district has worsened in comparison to the pre-1971 period. To be precise, historically the Hindu-Muslim relation has become bitter in the area after the independence of Bangladesh. On the other hand, 'local outsider' and 'tribal-non-tribal' relations in the district are still as good as before 1971. It is mentionable that, infiltrated Muslim population from Bangladesh are always welcome by the local Muslims of West Bengal in most of the cases. As a result, local-outsider of West Bengal in most of the cases. As a result, local-outsider relations in the Muslim dominated Uttar Dinajpur district is good. In the case of Bengali-Rajbanshi relation, however, though it is not as good as in the pre-1971 period, it is still good and workable.

Political outfits of the region are active in furthering their own party interest, but not national interest. Slogans of peace and amity among the communities get priority only at the level of propaganda by political parties, but not in practice. Social organizations are too weak to play their role in maintaining peace and harmony among the different communities. On the other hand, organized smugglers and criminals in the district are an important factor in politics and society. Most of the political leaders depend on them for money. Uttar Dinajpur district is soon going to be a Muslim majority district. Because of a massive Muslim presence in the district, the idea of a Muslim vote bank is gradually gaining ground among the political leaders. Some important facts have emerged from the answer of the respondents regarding ground realities of Hindu-Muslim relations.

- (a) It is seen that Muslim dominated areas are not safe for other religious communities.
- (b) Islamic faith always preaches intolerance to other religious faiths. Madrassah teaching is one of the oldest institutional mechanisms to preach intolerance to other religions among Muslims.
- (c) Muslims are always trying to consolidate their position in the border areas as well as Muslim dominated areas in the district, ousting other religious communities. They are expanding their settlements in the non-Muslim areas also.
- (d) It is significant to note that a good number of mosques and madrassahs (private) have come up within the last decade in the district.
- (e) Moulvis/Maolanas are urging upon Muslims to increase their population by infiltration from Bangladesh and Bihar, by abstention from birth control, by conversion, and by having more than one wife, as permitted in the *Shariat*.
- (f) Most of the enlightened Muslims are of the opinion that independent India is not a permanent arrangement, and that the present state structure too is not adequate for the welfare of the people. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Kamtapur People's Party (KPP), Gorkhaland and organization of the like are struggling for a new system of States that will bring peace and harmony in India. A good number of leaders from the

Muslim community are also not unhappy about the emergence of such divisive forces. They feel that, at the appropriate opportunity, they can also fulfill their long-cherished desire of having a unique world of their own.

District: Murshidabad

Murshidabad was the capital of the Nawabs of Bengal during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, till the takeover by the East India Company. Murshidabad also presents a very interesting demographic profile. It is basically an agricultural district with 87.15% of the population living in rural areas. It was a Muslim majority district before Partition with a population share of 56.55% (1941). After partition in 1947, no massive migration of Muslims from this district to Pakistan is observed. On the other hand, most of them who had migrated to Pakistan came back again after the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950. A good number of Hindu refugee also immigrated in this district from East Pakistan during the 1951-1961 decade. But the post-1971 scenario of infiltration is quite different growth rates of Muslims during the last three decades (1971-2001) were 30.95%, 34.17% and 28.35% respectively, as against 19.06%, 19.60% and 15.82% only for Hindus in the respective decades. It had been possible due to a massive Muslim infiltration in this district from Bangladesh since 1971. Now the share of Hindu population in Murshidabad has drastically come down from 44.60% (1951) to 35.92% (2001), i.e. within span of fifty years. A continuously high growth of Muslim population in this district raised their share of population from 55.24% (1951) to 63.67% (2001). The growth rate of Muslim population during 1951-2001 was 294.10%, as against 175.41% for Hindus.

Decade-wise population shares and the growth rates on the basis of religion during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 35 & 36.

Table 5: Population by religion in the blocks of the district of Murshidabad, 1981 and 1991

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Religion	1981	1991	Growth Rate
1.	Farakka	(a) Hindus	55299 (41.13)	71451 (40.36)	29.21
		(b) Muslims	78948 (58.72)	105069 (59.34)	33.09
2.	Smernanj	(a) Hindus	29821 (22.45)	34966 (19.39)	17.26
		(b) Muslims	102999 (77.52)	145349 (80.61)	41.12
3.	Suti-1	(a) Hindus	85913 (41.96)	105062 (39.02)	22.29
		(b) Muslims	118643 (57.95)	164079 (60.93)	38.30
4.	Suti-2	(a) Hindus	72683 (35.39)	90867 (33.20)	25.02
		(b) Muslims	132504 (64.51)	182631 (66.72)	
5.	Raghunathganj-1	(a) Hindus	72683 (35.39)	90867 (33.20)	25.02
		(b) Muslims	132504 (64.51)	182631 (66.72)	
6.	Raghunathganj-2	(a) Hindus	72683 (35.39)	90867 (33.20)	25.02
		(b) Muslims	132504 (64.51)	182631 (66.72)	
7.	Sagardighi	(a) Hindus	65494 (41.69)	78008 (39.18)	19.11
		(b) Muslims	90261 (57.46)	118963 (59.75)	31.80
8.	Lalgola	(a) Hindus	41550 (26.68)	49897 (24.13)	37.46
		(b) Muslims	113931 (73.16)	156607 (75.74)	
9.	Bhagwangola-1	(a) Hindus	41630 (21.82)	43531 (17.98)	4.57
		(b) Muslims	149134 (78.18)	198618 (82.02)	33.18
10.	Bhagwangola-2	(a) Hindus	41630 (21.82)	43531 (17.98)	4.57
		(b) Muslims	149134 (78.18)	198618 (82.02)	33.18
11.	Raninagar-1	(a) Hindus	47889 (23.86)	54979 (21.22)	14.81
		(b) Muslims	152771 (76.12)	204135 (78.77)	33.61
12.	Raninagar-2	(a) Hindus	47889 (23.86)	54979 (21.22)	14.81
		(b) Muslims	152771 (76.12)	204135 (78.77)	33.61
13.	Msd. Jiaganj	(a) Hindus	56159 (48.56)	74258 (46.91)	32.23
		(b) Muslims	59074 (51.03)	82743 (52.28)	40.21
14.	Nabagram	(a) Hindus	64945 (52.45)	80303 (50.15)	23.65

		(b) Muslims	58091 (46.91)	77721 (48.53)	33.80
15.	Khargram	(a) Hindus	92552 (55.03)	106464 (52.63)	15.04
		(b) Muslims	75449 (44.87)	95694 (47.31)	26.84
16.	Burwan	(a) Hindus	105890 (64.16)	121106 (61.50)	14.37
		(b) Muslims	58982 (35.74)	75722 (38.45)	28.39

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Religion	1981	1991	Growth Rate
17.	Kandi	(a) Hindus	62179 (47.97)	71440 (44.71)	14.90
		(b) Muslims	67332 (51.94)	88117 (55.14)	30.87
18.	Bharatpur-1	(a) Hindus	110290 (51.72)	123497 (48.06)	11.98
19.	Bharatpur-2	(b) Muslims	102902 (48.26)	133420 (51.93)	29.66
20.	Beldanga-1	(a) Hindus	119900 (38.90)	136568 (35.44)	13.91
21.	Beldanga-2	(b) Muslims	188340 (61.10)	249818 (64.66)	32.65
22.	Nowda	(a) Hindus	48311 (36.96)	55189 (33.54)	14.24
		(b) Muslims	82414 (63.04)	109342 (66.46)	32.68
23.	Hariharpara	(a) Hindus	38685 (25.85)	43318 (23.35)	11.98
		(b) Muslims	110994 (74.15)	142220 (76.65)	28.14
24.	Berhampore	(a) Hindus	105321 (47.79)	141742 (47.44)	34.58
		(b) Muslims	114809 (52.11)	156705 (52.45)	36.50
25.	Domkal	(a) Hindus	26072 (13.57)	32231 (12.72)	23.63
		(b) Muslims	166029 (86.42)	221021 (87.24)	33.13
26.	Jalangi	(a) Hindus	49264 (36.61)	55095 (31.84)	11.84
		(b) Muslims	85275 (63.37)	117947 (68.15)	38.32

(Percentage of population share shown in parentheses)

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, Murshidabad*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

Block-level population growth rates, religion-wise, give us a revealing picture of the entire district. All the Blocks except Berhampore witnessed a tremendous rage of growth of Muslim population. At least 10 Blocks out of 25 witnessed the growth rate of Muslims to be more than double that of Hindus. This appears to be due to a huge massive Bangladeshi influx into the district, avoiding of birth control by the Muslims, and departure of the Hindus from the area for want of security of both their families and properties. It is noteworthy that a sizeable number of Hindus, deserting rural areas, have been settling in the Berhampore town and its outskirt under the Berhampore Block. In spite of that, the Hindu population growth rate (34.58%) did never cross the Muslim growth rate (36.50%) in the Berhampore Block, headquarters of the district of Murshidabad.

Changing Cultural Scenario:

The mainstream traditional Bengali as well as Indian culture is gradually fading out from the population in the region, specially among them who had settled in this region by migrating from East Bengal/East Pakistan. As a result, the elite Bengali Hindu culture, specially comprising Rabindra Sangeet, Kirtan, etc. are losing their influence in this region. In this context it is worthy of mention that the cultural alienation between the Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims is not only becoming more and more wide, but is also creating a hiatus between the urban elite and the rural masses within the Bengali Hindu society itself. In this situation, we can examine the cultural ethos practiced by the rural masses, especially Muslims and Hindus belonging to the lower

echelon of the society in this region. Religio-cultural activities, organized by the establishment of temples, mosques, dargas, churches, etc., is a common phenomenon in this sub-continent as well as in the world. During the last three decades, remarkably, on account of a massive infiltration of Muslims from Bangladesh, there has been a spurt in the construction of mosques and madrassas in the district, and a rapid growth of attendant religio-cultural activities in the region. Growth of the radical Islamic fundamentalists (pro-Taliban) in this region has to be examined in this context. Embargo (*Fatowa*) on activities of the Sufi/Baul sect, a religiously liberal section of the Muslim society, has been imposed by neo-radical Islamists. Even several types of punishment have been inflicted on them, including physical torture, fine etc. These liberal Muslims who have also been forcibly restrained from working as daily laborers, opening shops, getting irrigation water, appointing private tutors, holding congregations on the open field, and even using thoroughfares. The saddest part of this episode is that they have been debarred from using the common burial ground. Leftist leaders and activities in this district are also in favour of vigorous attempts to spread radical Islam among the members of the Sufi/Baul sect. Interestingly, the same thing has happened in Bangladesh after 1971 under the leadership of Jammaat-e-Islami. It is an obvious corollary that the Muslim community is gradually consolidating themselves through their religio-socio-cultural activities with a view to making themselves the major socio-political power in the State of West Bengal. They are already a recognizable socio-political force in the district of Murshidabad.

Infiltration Unabated:

Murshidabad has a long international border with Bangladesh. Domkal, Lalbag and Jangipur sub-divisions of the district are naturally separated from Bangladesh by the river Padma. Cross-border infiltration and unofficial trade, including cattle smuggling, are the major activities in this area vis-à-vis Bangladesh. Most of the international border with Bangladesh is riverine, and chars of the river Padma are conducive to smuggling activities.

Lists of some illegal trade and communication routes with Bangladesh are given below to comprehend the ground realities.

- (a) Jalangi to Bajumara Char, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.
- (b) Narasinghapur to Mirgonj, Bangladesh.
- (c) Sagarpara to Rajshahi Town, Bangladesh.
- (d) Singhpara to Iwardighat, Bangladesh.
- (e) Kaharpara Char to Lalpur, Bangladesh.
- (f) Dhanirampur to Alam's Char, Bangladesh.
- (g) Madhubona to Charuikuri Char, Bangladesh.
- (h) Lalgola to Rajshahi
- (i) Tetulia to Hosnabad, Bangladesh.
- (j) Deghipara to Kagmari Char, Bangladesh.

It is very difficult for the BSF alone to control cross-border movements and smuggling, since most of the people (90% approx) are associated with this trade, and local administration, i.e. Panchayet, Police, etc. as well as local political forces are party to it. On the other hand, the BDR encourages cross-border movements and cattle smuggling with the connivance of Indian locals. As a result, the relation between the BSF and the locals has become inimical. A lot of Bangladeshi people are living in charland within Indian territories with the connivance of Indian Muslims. If the BSF identify any of them as infiltrators and try to push them back to Bangladesh, the BDR refuses to accept them. Incidents of firing or cross-border clashes between the BDR and the BSF on the push-back—push-in issue are a regular feature in this area. Apart from this, the local people always try to justify infiltration, and even protect infiltrators by offering shelter and identifying them as their relatives of Indian origin. They also help them to get residential papers from the local authority.

Crimes and its consequences :

Transborder crime in this district is a major problem. All types of criminal activities, including murder, dacoity, cattle lifting, kidnapping, smuggling etc. are seen to occur in the areas of Lalgola, Bhagwangola, Ranitala, Jiagonj, Azimgonj, Jalangi, Domkol, Raninagar and Islampur of the district of Murshidabad. To understand the ground realities, we can take the gauge of criminal offences recorded in the police stations, number of cases tried, number of persons convicted and number of persons acquitted during 1997-2001.

Table 6 (a) : No. of offences reported during 1997-2001

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	141	170	178	122	104
Dacoity	24	33	31	29	18
Robbery	38	55	28	34	27
Burglary	9	13	10	20	17
Rioting	137	182	279	106	97
Theft	648	687	740	532	196
Minor offences	2532	254	2989	2234	988
Offences against woman				443	402
Others					
Total	3529	3683	4255	3520	1489

Table 6 (b) : No. of cases tried during 1997-2001

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	62	75	20	72	33
Dacoity	3	10	2	13	9
Robbery	10	13	1	16	11
Burglary	5	7	3	16	12
Rioting	85	78	69	68	18
Theft	149	194	158	336	42
Minor offences				1404	513
Offences against woman	126	861	71	-	-
Others					
Total	1240	1238	724	1925	638

Table 6 (c) : No. of persons convicted during 1997-2001

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	15	26	3	16	4
Dacoity	-	3	-	-	-
Robbery	-	6	-	-	-
Burglary	-	12	-	-	-
Rioting	11	28	16	4	-

Theft	1	407	1	1	03
Minor offences	87	296	128	221	68
Offences against woman	-	-	-	-	-
Others					
Total	114	478	148	242	75

Table 6 (d) : No. of persons acquitted during 1997-2001

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	118	105	39	39	22
Dacoity	15	9	7	5	06
Robbery	7	1	9	4	03
Burglary	1	27	17	7	01
Rioting	842	461	58	38	16
Theft	171	50	116	232	29
Minor offences	419	394	340	336	56
Offences against woman					
Others					
Total	1573	1047	586	661	133

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, Murshidabad*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

From the above tables, during 1997-2001 (five years) offences related to worst forms of crime like murder, dacoity, robbery are reported to be 1032 and persons convicted number only 73. Reported offences against women were 443 and 402 in the year 2000 and 2001 respectively; 1058 cases were tried during 1997-1999, but not a single person was convicted during 1997-2001. Offences against women are common phenomena in the rural society of Murshidabad. The precarious social position of women in the district is easily discernible from the above statistics. Except in some minor offences, very few persons were convicted in the incidents of dacoity, robbery, burglary, rioting, theft during the above period.

It is quite clear from the above tables that necessary administrative measures taken by the concerned authorities are negligible by any standard. It is understood that, a large number of criminals related with the above crimes take shelter across the border because of their religious and family/social affinity as well as illegal trade relations. Political shelter won by criminals is also a major problem.

Table 7 : Relation among the different communities in the district of Murshidabad in the eye of the people

(a) before 1971				(b) after 1971				
Relations	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
(a)	22	4	5	-	-	-	-	-
(b)	1	5	19	1	-	-	-	1
©	-	19	1	23	-	-	24	25
(d)	-	-	-	-	28	23	-	-

Total No. of respondents = 29

1. Hindu-Muslim a. good,
2. Local-outsider, b. normal,

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 3. Bengali-Rajbanshi, | c. bad, |
| 4. Tribal-Non-tribal | d. worse |

The above mentioned respondents were selected from different socio-economic strata across the district (e.g. professionals, government employees, political personalities, teachers, businessmen etc.)

It is seen from the above table that 29 respondents have expressed their opinion regarding relation among the different communities in the district before and after 1971. Hindu-Muslim relation in West Bengal always gets importance because of their comparative population strength and historical legacy. 22 respondents out of 29 have opined that it was good before 1971. But after 1971, the situation has completely changed. 28 respondents feel it is worse. It is clearly spelt out that the post-1971 Hindu-Muslim relation in the district has worsened, in contrast to the pre-1971 relation. To be precise, historically, the Hindu-Muslim relation has become bitter or worsened in this area after the independence of Bangladesh. Post-1971 Hindu migration from Bangladesh into India is one of the main causes of deteriorating Hindu-Muslim relation. On the other hand, 'local-outsider' and 'tribal-non-tribal' relations in the district are as bad as it was before 1971. In the case of Bengali-Rajbanshi relation, it has deteriorated after 1971. Barring Bangladeshi infiltration, local-outsider relation is more or less dependent on economic conditions.

Special characteristics of border subdivisions :

- (1) Smugglers and militants including radical Islamists are unitedly playing a vital role in cattle smuggling from India to Bangladesh.
- (2) Militants, disguised as a smugglers, enter into India from across the border.
- (3) Major political parties openly appease Muslim to keep their vote-bank intact, and to get due share from smuggling.
- (4) Rivalry between political parties to control smuggling often create social tension and enmity resulting in incidents of murder and other forms of serious crime.
- (5) New dimensions of women trafficking have been unearthed. Girls and young widows are coming from Bangladesh to be sent to the brothers of Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- (6) Hindus are gradually being wiped out from the border villages. Smugglers as well as locally influential persons are purchasing their properties.
- (7) Local administration is controlled by smugglers in most of the class. The BSF is facing difficulties to tackle the problem of infiltration and smuggling because of (a) the language problem, (b) protection of infiltrators and smugglers by Panchayets.
- (8) Unusually large Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh actually started from 1980 onwards. Most of them have come into India counting upon the help of their relatives in the district, or expecting other local support. They have acquired ration cards, enlisted their names in voters' list, and even managed to get citizenship or international passport through local patrons.
- (9) A large number of local youths in the district have established family ties with the Bangladeshi people by marrying Bangladeshi girls, specially in the border region. These marital of family relations are often used to serve many purposes. A permanent support base and shelter has been created in either side of the border for cross-border movements.
- (10) Criminals of either side of the border are unitedly working of push out the Hindus from the border region.
- (11) Big landholders and brick-field owners always engage cheap Bangladeshi labourers, depriving locals. It is a common phenomenon in the border region of this district. No organized movement has yet been launched against this practice because major political parties are its beneficiaries. If any individual or group raise the voice against it, he or they are punished by the musclemen. The dissenters may even be killed. As a result, a large number of local labourers migrate to other districts or States every year

for their livelihood, and relation between the locals and outsiders has been becoming sour day by day.

- (12) Smuggling has been taken up as a major employment source by a large number of people in the border region. Police, BSF and others get due shares on a regular basis.
- (13) Islamic fundamentalists are preaching in the mosques and madrassahs that the land of India owned by Akbar, Shajahan, Serajuddoula, etc. belongs to Muslims, Hindus occupied it through British help. Now the task of Muslims is to dethrone and demolish Hindu power.
- (14) A clear trend of Hindu migration from the Domkal subdivision is observed.
- (15) Criminals and smugglers have been elected in the last Panchayat election in this subdivision (Domkal). The common people had to support them because, otherwise, their security and livelihood would be threatened.
- (16) Police overlooks criminal activities supported by the ruling parties.
- (17) Private Madrassahs and Mokatabs are mushrooming in the border areas of Domkal subdivision. Some of them are directly involved in the radical Islamic movement and militant activities.
- (18) Cows and buffaloes are slaughtered in the open market as 'hat' sites all over the Domkal sub-division. Hindus are shaken by the aggressiveness of Muslim communalism.
- (19) Fake Indian currencies are disturbed in the border markets by Bangladeshi and local operators. International Hoondi (Hawala gang) operators are also active in this area.
- (20) Kidnapping of Hindu girls by Muslim youths, and smuggling them out to Bangladesh is a common phenomenon in this area.

District : Nadia

Nadia is situated on both the eastern and western side of the Hooghly river as its southward journey to the Bay of Bengal. In 1947, Nadia was partitioned and one of its sub-divisions, Kushtia, was included in East Pakistan. The entire eastern side of the district is now bordering Bangladesh. Nadia is also known all over the country and abroad for the birth place of Sri Chaitanya, one of the foremost religious reformers of the country in the fifteenth century. Now, Mayapur, the birth place of Sri Chaitanya, is famous for the IKSKON Headquarters.

Nadia is basically an agricultural district. A continuously high growth of population has occurred during the last five decades due to huge immigration from across the border. After Partition, a large number of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan immigrated to this district, and this is still continuing in spite of Bangladesh becoming independent in 1971. At the same time, continuous Muslim infiltration has been going on during the last five decades (1951-2001). Even most of those Muslims who had migrated to Pakistan after 1947 came back and settled in the district. During 1951-1961, in spite of a massive Hindu refugee settlement, Muslim population growth rate (63.16%) surpassed the GRP of Hindus (45.61%). The post-1971 growth rates of population are also interesting. The growth rate of Muslim population has been continuously higher than that of Hindu population in this district, viz., 37.11%, 34.50% and 21.90% of Muslims as against 31.67%, 28.47% and 18.58% of Hindus respectively during the last three decades (1971-2001). GRP of Muslims was 357% during the last fifty years (1951-2001), as against 285% for Hindus and their share rose from 22.36% in 1951 to 25.41% in 2001.

Decade-wise population shares and the growth rates on the basis of religion during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 37 & 38.

Table 8. Population by religion in the Blocks of the district of Nadia, 1981 and 1991

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Religion	1981	1991	Growth Rate
1 & 2	Karimpur-1 Karimpur-2	(a) Hindus	142783 (58.59)	173914 (56.65)	21.81
		(b) Muslims	100621 (41.29)	132729 (43.24)	31.91
3 & 4	Tehatta-1 Tehatta-2	(a) Hindus	155683 (65.32)	184404 (61.30)	18.45
		(b) Muslims	79842 (33.50)	112758 (37.48)	41.23
5	Kaliganj	(a) Hindus	96263 (50.18)	114507 (47.96)	18.96
		(b) Muslims	95550 (49.81)	124226 (52.03)	30.02
6	Nakashipara	(a) Hindus	108086 (52.23)	138963 (50.93)	28.57
		(b) Muslims	98680 (47.68)	133768 (49.02)	35.56
7	Chapra	(a) Hindus	77805 (43.29)	68347 (29.82)	12.16
		(b) Muslims	94942 (52.83)	152072 (66.34)	60.18
		(c) Christians	6975 (3.88)	8633 (3.77)	
8	Krishnaganj	(a) Hindus	86688 (95.20)	106929 (94.73)	23.35
		(b) Muslims	4308 (4.73)	5903 (5.23)	37.03
9 & 10	Krishnanagar-1 Krishnanagar-2	(a) Hindus	189958 (77.06)	255189 (77.32)	34.34
		(b) Muslims	55773 (22.63)	73365 (22.23)	31.55
11	Nabadwip	(a) Hindus	55343 (67.50)	69549 (66.53)	25.67
		(b) Muslims	26652 (32.50)	34961 (33.45)	31.18
12	Santipur	(a) Hindus	101712 (87.29)	148766 (88.61)	46.27
		(b) Muslims	14467 (12.41)	18608 (11.08)	28.63
13	Hanskhali	(a) Hindus	139653 (88.48)	191523 (88.55)	37.15
		(b) Muslims	18138 (11.49)	24705 (11.42)	36.21
14 & 15	Ranaghat-1 Ranaghat-2	(a) Hindus	311850 (89.70)	438924 (93.50)	40.75
		(b) Muslims	31017 (8.92)	24349 (5.19)	21.50
		(c) Christians	4672 (1.35)	5804 (1.24)	
16	Chakdaha	(a) Hindus	160040 (83.39)	257794 (84.94)	61.00
		(b) Muslims	31559 (16.44)	44514 (14.67)	41.05
17	Haringhata	(a) Hindus	99597 (73.48)	130125 (73.19)	30.66
		(b) Muslims	35817 (26.42)	47284 (26.60)	32.02

(Percentage of population share shown in parentheses)

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, Nadia*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

Micro-level population growth, religion-wise, gives us a revealing picture of influx of both Muslims and Hindus from Bangladesh. All the 17 CD-Blocks of the district have an inordinately high growth rate of Muslim population during the 1981-91 census period. On the other hand, Krishnanagar 1 & II, Santipur, Hanskhali, Ranaghat I & II and Chakdaha witnessed an enormously high rate of growth of Hindu population during the same period. Special mention may be made of Chapra and Chakdaha because of the very high growth rates (more than 60%) of Muslim and Hindu population respectively. It is interesting to note that growth rate of Muslims is remarkably high even in some Hindu majority Blocks (e.g., Chakdaha, Hanskhali, Tehatta, etc.)

But in case of Chapra, the share of Muslim population jumped from 52.83% to 66.34% within a decade (1981-91). On the other hand, Hindu population came down from 43.29% to 29.82% during the same period. Actually, Hindu population decreased from 77805 to 68347, which was a clear indication of Hindu migration. It may be mentioned that the Chapra Block is bordering Bangladesh. It is observed that a sizeable number of Hindu families have deserted their ancestral places in the border Blocks of the districts, particularly from zones of Muslim concentration, during the last three decades.

Infiltration unabated

Nadia has also a long international border with Bangladesh. Tehatta, Sadar (Krishnagar) and Ranaghat are the border subdivisions of the district. Cross-border movement / infiltration and illegal trade (including cattle smuggling) are the major activities in this district vis-à-vis Bangladesh. Most of the border areas are plain agricultural lands and a small part is riverine. This is ideal for smuggling activities and illegal immigration/infiltration. Majdia—Darshana rail link is the only legal Indo-Bangladesh communication route in the district. It is also an old and famous smuggling route. A list of some illegal trade and communication routes with Bangladesh is given below to underline the ground realities.

India	Bangladesh
Shikarpur	Pragpur
Kacharipara, Madhugari, Nasirerpara	Mahiskundi
Gopalpur, Madhubona	Bangmari
Mathurapur	Gangnabazar
Fulbari	Godigaelsa Roypur
Kacharipara, Meghna	Jamalpur
Madhugari (Waterways)	Mohammadpur/Charpara
Sarkerpara (Waterways)	Charpara
Bausmari	Bagmari

A long stretch of border is still open. Barbed-wire fencing completed so far has covered more or less 50% of the area. It is very difficult for the BSF alone to control cross-border movement and smuggling. For, a large number of people are associated with smuggling, and the local administration (police), Pachayets as well as political activists are party to it. The role of administration in maintaining law and order is awful. Cross-border immigration to this district is primarily permanent in nature. Hindu immigrants are mostly settled in the area of Chakdaha, Ranaghat I & II and Santipur blocks away from the Bangladesh border. But Muslim immigrants mostly have preferred to settle in the border Blocks like Karimpur I & II, Tehatta I & II, Chapta, Krishnagonj, etc. It is also observed, from the pattern of population growth rate during 1981-1991, that Muslims tried to settle all over the district.

Crime and Punishment :

Table 9(a) : No. of offences reported during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	70	75	72	102	124
Dacoity	11	11	6	19	28
Robbery	22	6	10	24	23
Burglary	32	19	20	14	10
Rioting	304	303	272	209	227

Theft	723	688	542	535	678
Minor offences	63	788	376	616	353
Offences against woman	620	562	596	579	609
Others	1272	2367	2100	2149	2425
Total	3117	4819	3994	4247	4477

Table 9(b) : No. of cases tried during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	22	72	97	10	43
Dacoity	2	12	18	10	1
Robbery	—	7	2	—	3
Burglary	—	1	9	—	1
Rioting	55	306	21	39	7
Theft	13	154	21	7	19
Minor offences	4	1115	102	764	60
Offences against woman	152	87	112	14	162
Others	123	1048	507	126	305
Total	371	2802	889	970	601

Table 9(c) : No. of persons convicted during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	5	12	4	10	4
Dacoity	—	—	—	10	4
Robbery	—	—	1	—	—
Burglary	—	—	—	—	—
Rioting	1	15	2	39	—
Theft	—	1	2	7	—
Minor offences	—	154	100	764	—
Offences against woman	8	27	37	14	10
Others	—	21	49	126	6
Total	14	230	195	970	24

Table 9(d): No. of persons acquitted during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	17	89	93	26	185
Dacoity	2	4	18	3	—
Robbery	—	—	1	17	—
Burglary	—	—	9	—	2
Rioting	54	312	19	30	8
Theft	13	19	19	37	13
Minor offences	4	989	2	—	67
Offences against woman	189	153	229	29	83
Others	123	896	458	507	151

Total	402	2462	848	649	509
-------	-----	------	-----	-----	-----

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, Nadia*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

It appears from the above tables that, during 1997-2001, the number of offences related to serious crimes like murder, dacoity, robbery reported to Police Stations is 603, and the number of persons convicted is 50. If we consider the overall crime picture of the district, we shall see that the total number of offences reported to various Police Stations is 20654, the number of cases tried is 5633, the number of persons convicted is 1433. It is a gloomy picture of law and justice in the district. The record of securing justice in crimes on women in the district is very bad. The total number of reported offences against women is 2966, but persons convicted during the period are only 96.

It is quite clear from the above tables that the necessary administrative measures adopted by the concerned authorities are rather negligible by any standard.

Table 10 : Relation among the different communities in the district of Nadia in the eye of the people

(a) before 1971				(b) after 1971				
Relations	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
(a)	20	5	4	2			5	
(b)	6	2	26	10			20	3
©	4	23	1	18	3	4		19
(d)	1	1			27	26		

Total No. of respondents = 31

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. Hindu-Muslim | a. good, |
| 2. Local-outsider, | b. normal, |
| 3. Bengali-Rajbanshi, | c. bad, |
| 4. Tribal-Non-tribal | d. worse |

The Above mentioned respondents were selected from different socio-economic strata across the district (e.g. professionals, government employees, political personalities, teachers, businessmen etc.)

It is seen from the above table that the Hindu-Muslim relation in India was good before 1971, according to 20 respondents. But after 1971, the relation has deteriorated. Atrocities on minorities in Bangladesh during the liberation war in 1971 as well as the post-Mujib period, i.e. from 1975 onwards, has compelled the Hindu minorities to migrate from Bangladesh to India. Bangladeshi Muslim infiltration in the district has irritated the local Hindus of whom a good number are former refugees from East Pakistan. When Bangladesh declared Islam as their state religion, the situation was further aggravated. It is now very difficult for Hindu refugees to tolerate alien Muslims in their newly built hearth and home. This is the main reason for deterioration in the relation between Hindus and Muslims after 1971. It is important to mention that a large number of refugee population has settled in the different regions of this district since 1947. Secondly, the relation between local Muslims and Hindus refugee has turned from bad to worse in the transition from the pre-1971 to the post-1971 period. Local-outsider relation deteriorated further. All this can be explained in the context of Partition. I think, the Partition hangover is still working in the mind of the Hindus and Muslims, immigrants or not. Tribal-non-tribal relation may also be explained in this context.

An important micro-level observation, based on a number of incidents is that the Islamic fundamentalist forces operating in Bangladesh as well as in India are encouraging Muslim

infiltration to reduce pressure of population on Bangladesh, and to expand Islamic influence in the border region so that the Hindu population living in this area is forced to leave the region out of fear, particularly in the case of Tehatta Sub-division. They are selling their hearth and home at throw away prices to the Muslims. It becomes easy, since the district is contiguous to Murshidabad as well as Bangladesh.

Over and above, the anti-social elements of this border region, hand-in-glove with Bangladeshi Muslims, are creating a fear psychosis among the Hindu community. Theft, dacoity, rape and murder of the Hindus are routinely performed. The administrative machinery remains a silent spectator. Consequently, internal security and social harmony are in peril.

The mosques, madrassas, makhtabs have become the centers of militants and anti-Indian activities. The police administration has become a stooge to the ruling party, and seldom acts. The Hindus are feeling that they have become aliens in their own country. They are afraid that they may become refugees again. The entire area seems to be under the control of a foreign agency like the ISI. The BSF and the customs officials have become puppets to the smugglers. The criminals are roaming freely in this area with fake currency and illegal arms. These criminals also played a great role in helping local leaders to capture the Panchayet in the last election. The direct fallout of this situation is that the party in power does not dare to disturb them for fear of losing power.

To make our border safe and secure, barbed wire fencing is absolutely necessary. The waterways should be closely guarded, and the BSF should be properly trained and motivated in this respect by infusing a sense of nationalism among them. Otherwise, the situation in this region will be worse than in Kashmir.

District : 24-Parganas

North 24-Parganas is the second largest district of India and West Bengal in terms of population. It is situated on the northern flank of Kolkata, and on the eastern bank of the Hooghly river. It is a very important district in terms of industry, trade and commerce. North 24-Parganas is also bordering Bangladesh. Before 1981, North 24-Parganas was part of undivided 24-Parganas. The vast post-Partition Hindu refugee inflow from East Pakistan to 24-Parganas had increased its population remarkably. During the last five decades (1951-2001), a continuously high growth rate of Hindu population in this district is clearly observed. (Growth rates of population in 1951-1961 and 1961-1971 are based on undivided 23-Parganas data). On the other hand, a high growth rate of Muslim population during the last five decades has also been evident. The 1981-1991 decade witnessed a massive growth rate of Muslim population, viz. 41.47%. This obviously is due to Muslims infiltration from Bangladesh. Consequently, the share of Muslim population rose from 22.43% (1971) to 24.22% (2001) within three decades, in spite of a massive Hindu immigration from Bangladesh during the same period. It will be more revealing if we go through the Block-level demographic changes. It needs a special mention that a large number of Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan after Partition came back to this district not only during 1951-1971 but also after 1971, and this remains a persistent trend till today. Another important feature that needs mention in this connection is the continuous in-flow of Urdu-speaking Muslims from Bangladesh after 1971.

Decade-wise population shares and the growth rates on the basis of religion during 1951-2001 are shown in the chart nos. 39 & 40.

Table 11. Population by religion in the Blocks of the district of North 24-Parganas, 1981 and 1991

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Religion	1981	1991	Growth Rate
1	Bagdah	(a) Hindus	116584 (82.1)	159309 (83.51)	36.65
		(b) Muslims	25011 (17.61)	30969 (16.24)	23.83
2	Bongaon	(a) Hindus	182693 (79.7)	235538 (80.0)	28.93
		(b) Muslims	45845 (20.09)	58119 (19.74)	26.78
3	Gaighata	(a) Hindus	179251 (93.31)	246463 (93.43)	37.50
		(b) Muslims	12247 (6.38)	16160 (6.28)	31.95
4 & 5	Habra-1 Habra-2	(a) Hindus	139318 (74.0)	180690 (63.80)	29.70
		(b) Muslims	48089 (25.55)	101571 (35.84)	111.22
6 & 7	Barasat-1 Barasat-2	(a) Hindus	188149 (49.61)	289932 (59.25)	54.10
		(b) Muslims	191025 (50.37)	198458 (40.56)	3.90
8	Amdanga	(a) Hindus	62898 (36.4)	63545 (45.72)	1.03
		(b) Muslims	109691 (63.53)	75360 (54.21)	-31.30
9	Deganga	(a) Hindus	62898 (36.4)	74819 (31.96)	18.96
		(b) Muslims	109691 (63.53)	159109 (67.65)	45.06
10	Rajarhat	(a) Hindus	104432 (63.99)	214970 (75.15)	105.85
		(b) Muslims	58298 (35.82)	69588 (24.33)	19.37
11 & 12	Barackpore-1 Barackpore-2	(a) Hindus	247402 (77.52)	398880 (86.10)	61.23
		(b) Muslims	67447 (21.14)	61462 (13.27)	8.88
13	Baduria	(a) Hindus	63263 (39.90)	80693 (38.18)	27.56
		(b) Muslims	95202 (60.08)	130634 (61.81)	37.22
14	Haroa	(a) Hindus	72291 (53.87)	78072 (51.67)	8.00
		(b) Muslims	61852 (46.13)	73029 (48.33)	18.07
15	Minakhan	(a) Hindus	35099 (45.80)	60332 (43.62)	71.89
		(b) Muslims	41422 (54.10)	76169 (55.45)	83.89
16	Swarupnagar	(a) Hindus	89374 (57.64)	112851 (56.30)	26.27
		(b) Muslims	65668 (42.35)	87597 (43.70)	33.40
17	Hasnabad	(a) Hindus	83096 (61.79)	67787 (44.80)	-19.00
		(b) Muslims	51496 (38.24)	83328 (55.14)	61.82
18	Hingalgonj	(a) Hindus	90128 (86.00)	120180 (84.46)	33.35
		(b) Muslims	14671 (14.00)	22111 (15.54)	50.72
19 & 20	Sandeskhali-1 Sandeskhali-2	(a) Hindus	154989 (81.02)	187572 (78.34)	21.03
		(b) Muslims	35573 (18.60)	51862 (21.66)	45.79
21 & 22	Basirhat-1 Basirhat-2	(a) Hindus	96084 (45.06)	98619 (34.46)	2.64
		(b) Muslims	117172 (54.95)	187528 (65.54)	60.05

(Percentage of population share shown in parentheses)

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, North 24-Parganas*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

Block-level population growth, religion-wise, gives us a revealing picture regarding the growth of Muslim population in different Blocks of the district. In all the rural Blocks, except four, Muslim population growth rate is significantly higher than that of Hindus, particularly in the

region or Blocks bordering Bangladesh, viz. Basirhat I & II, Hasnabad, Hingalgonj, Sandeshkhali I & II, Swarupnagar, Minakhan, Baduria, Habra I & II and Deganga,, which have witnessed a massive growth of Muslim population. On the other hand, there is a decline of Muslim population. On the other hand, there is a decline of Muslim population in the newly developed urban zones like Barasat I & II (district headquarter), Rajarhat and Barrackpore I & II Blocks where a massive growth of Hindu population has taken place. Fast growing middleclass (both upper and lower) Hindus are rushing to these areas, including a good number of Bangladeshi Hindu immigrants. It is noteworthy that massive infiltration from Bangladesh (of both Hindus and Muslims) has increased the population of this district significantly since 1971.

Infiltration Unabated

North 24 Parganas has a long international border. Basirhat and Bongaon subdivisions are bordering Bangladesh. Cross-border infiltration and smuggling, including cattle smuggling, trans-border crimes, etc. are the major illegal activities in this area vis-à-vis Bangladesh. Two border check-posts (one international) for trade and passengers are also situated in this district at Petrapole (Bongaon) and Ghojadanga. Most of the border region is plain land. Cross-border movement is very easy for smugglers and infiltrators. It is very difficult for the BSF to control cross-border movement and smuggling. A large segment of border population is associated with this illegal trade and other unlawful activities. Local administration (Panchayet, police), as well as local political forces are entangled in these activities.

A List of some major illegal trade and communications routes with Bangladesh is given below to portray the ground situation.

India		Bangladesh	
(a)	Hingolgonj	Kaligonj	District :
(b)	Hasnabad	Debhata	Satkhira
(c)	Taki	Debhata	
(d)	Basirhat	Satkhira	
(e)	Ghojadanga	Bhomra	
(f)	Srarupnagar	Kalarowa	
(g)	Hakimpur	Do	
(h)	Maslandapur	Do	
(i)	Bongaon	Benapole	Jessore
(j)	Boira	Sarsa	
(k)	Bagdah	Chougacha	
(l)	Dattaphulia	Chougachha	

Transborder crime : a long term nefarious design :

Transborder crime in the district is a major problem. All types of criminal activities, including murder, dacoity, cattle lifting, kidnapping, offences against women, smuggling, etc. are seen to occur in the entire border region of Basirhat, Bongaon and Barasat Subdivisions. The life in a border village is chaotic, to say the least. It is extremely unhealthy in terms of law and order. The entire border area is the abode of transborder crimes. The border areas are the perennial targets of, for example, illegal transborder movements of people, theft and smuggling of cows, other contraband articles (supplied to and from Bangladesh), robbery by Bangladeshi intruders, women trafficking, etc.

In any Muslim dominated village, Hindus live in a state of virtual subjugation. Many of such Hindus, called *Sarbahara*, had previously been driven out of their own homes from Bangladesh.

These ill-fated Hindus settled in the border villages of West Bengal and accepted India as their own country. How they are on the verge of being driven out, for the second time, from their new settlement, and compelled to move elsewhere, away from the border. Many have already abandoned their new homes. The Hindu families in the border areas are subjected to frequent harassment by the Bangladeshi Muslim intruders who work hand in glove with a section of local Muslims and others. Theft of cows, robbery, assault on women in the Hindu families by the Muslim miscreants, are regular features in the border villages. On the other hand, the forceful imposition of the Muslim culture—the Muslim way of life in these border villages—has forced the Hindu families to feel alienated in the society. To understand the ground realities and role of the administration (police, etc.), we can take the gauge of criminal offences recorded in the police stations of the district being 1997-2001. Though a large number of cases were not recorded in the police stations because of political interference, the available record is alarming enough.

Table 12(a) : No. of offences reported during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	184	230	219	245	202
Dacoity	34	37	40	26	14
Robbery	74	65	83	79	56
Burglary	108	58	49	51	46
Rioting	628	674	505	357	785
Theft	2314	2222	2197	2115	1679
Minor offences	4325	1452	1237	1757	864
Offences against woman	—	—	905	842	667
Others	—	4861	3064	3616	2718
Total	7667	9599	8299	9088	7031

Table 12(b) : No. of cases tried during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	—	31	51	125	200
Dacoity	—	5	2	16	14
Robbery	—	13	3	40	26
Burglary	—	13	11	12	12
Rioting	—	393	31	264	284
Theft	—	164	125	183	160
Minor offences	—	1447	511	1408	754
Offences against woman	—	—	732	807	608
Others	—	1959	516	3233	2540
Total	—	4025	1982	6088	4598

Table 12(c) : No. of persons convicted during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	—	—	—	—	10
Dacoity	—	—	—	—	—
Robbery	—	—	—	—	3
Burglary	—	—	2	—	4
Rioting	—	6	—	—	4
Theft	—	1	4	2	36
Minor offences	—	356	261	15	296
Offences against woman	—	—	—	10	90
Others	—	23	152	22	151
Total	—	386	419	49	594

Table 12(d): No. of persons acquitted during the last five years (1997-2001)

Class of offence	Year				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Murder	—	2	3	—	5
Dacoity	—	—	2	—	—
Robbery	—	3	3	—	10
Burglary	—	4	9	—	10
Rioting	—	146	31	—	67
Theft	—	49	121	15	128
Minor offences	—	44	481	62	336
Offences against woman	—	—	201	65	109
Others	—	158	364	73	332
Total	—	406	1215	215	997

Source : *District Statistical Handbook, 2002, North 24-Parganas*, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal, pp. 174-177.

From the above tables on 1997-2001, it is seen that the number of offences relating to serious crimes like murder, dacoity, robbery were reported to be respectively 1080, 151 and 347, and the number of persons convicted during this period were only 13. The number of reported offences against women were 2414 during 1999-2001 (3 years), but persons convicted were only 100 during the same period. During this five-year period, the total number of offences recorded in various police stations was 41684, and persons convicted 1408 only.

It is clear from the above statistics that necessary administrative and judicial measures launched by the concerned authorities are negligible by any standard.

Table 13 : Relation among the different communities in the district of North 24-Parganas in the eye of the people

(a) before 1971					(b) after 1971			
Relations	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
(a)	16	4	4	4	4	2	—	2

(b)	17	10	5	4	20	5	3	2
(c)	19	3	—	1	27	3	2	3
(d)	—	—	—	—	2	2	—	—

Total No. of respondents = 55

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 1. Hindu-Muslim | a. good, |
| 2. Local-outsider, | b. normal, |
| 3. Bengali-Rajbanshi, | c. bad, |
| 4. Tribal-Non-tribal | d. worse |

It is seen from the primary data that 55 respondents have expressed their opinions. These have been gathered from people belonging to different walks of life. They have spoken about relation amount the different communities in the district before and after 1971. Hindu-Muslim relation in West Bengal always gets importance because of their relative population strength and historical legacy. More than one third (19) of the total respondents (55) have opined that it was bad before 1971, but 16 and 17 respondents have expressed their opinion in favor of good and moderately good relations respectively. Thus, Hindu-Muslim relation was not quite good before 1971. But after 1971, 27 respondents (i.e. half) have opined that it is bad, though 20 rate this relation to be moderately good. But only 4 are in favor of 'good', compared to 16 before 1971. It can be said from the above opinion survey that Hindu-Muslim relation deteriorated further after 1971. Post-1971 atrocities on minorities in Bangladesh and Hindu immigration from Bangladesh into India are the major causes of deteriorating Hindu-Muslim relations in the district. Declaration of Islam as state religion in Bangladesh is also a major factor for worsening relation. On the other hand, local-outsider relations improved after 1971, i.e. the Hindu community was welcoming Hindu immigrants, and the Muslim community was welcoming Muslim immigrants in their respective localities.

Chart no. 31 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Uttar Dinajpur during 1951 - 2001

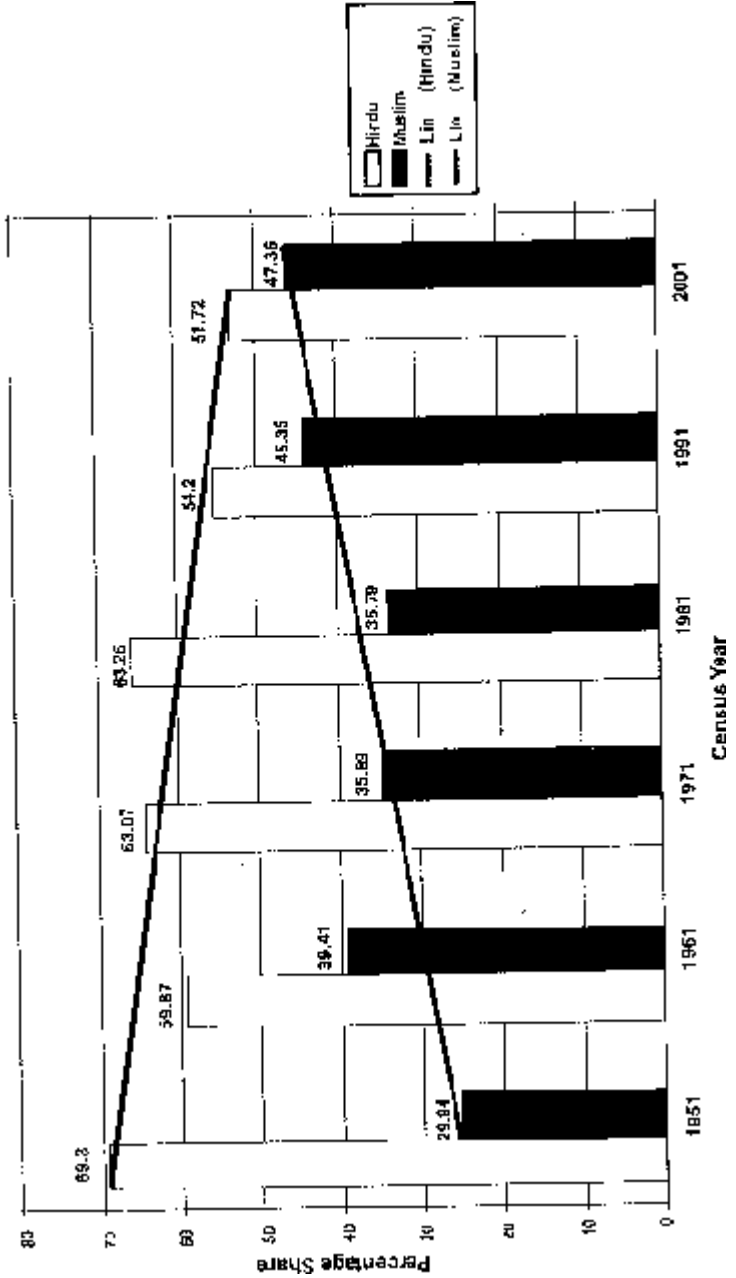


Chart no.32 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims
in Uttar Dinajpur during 1951 - 2001

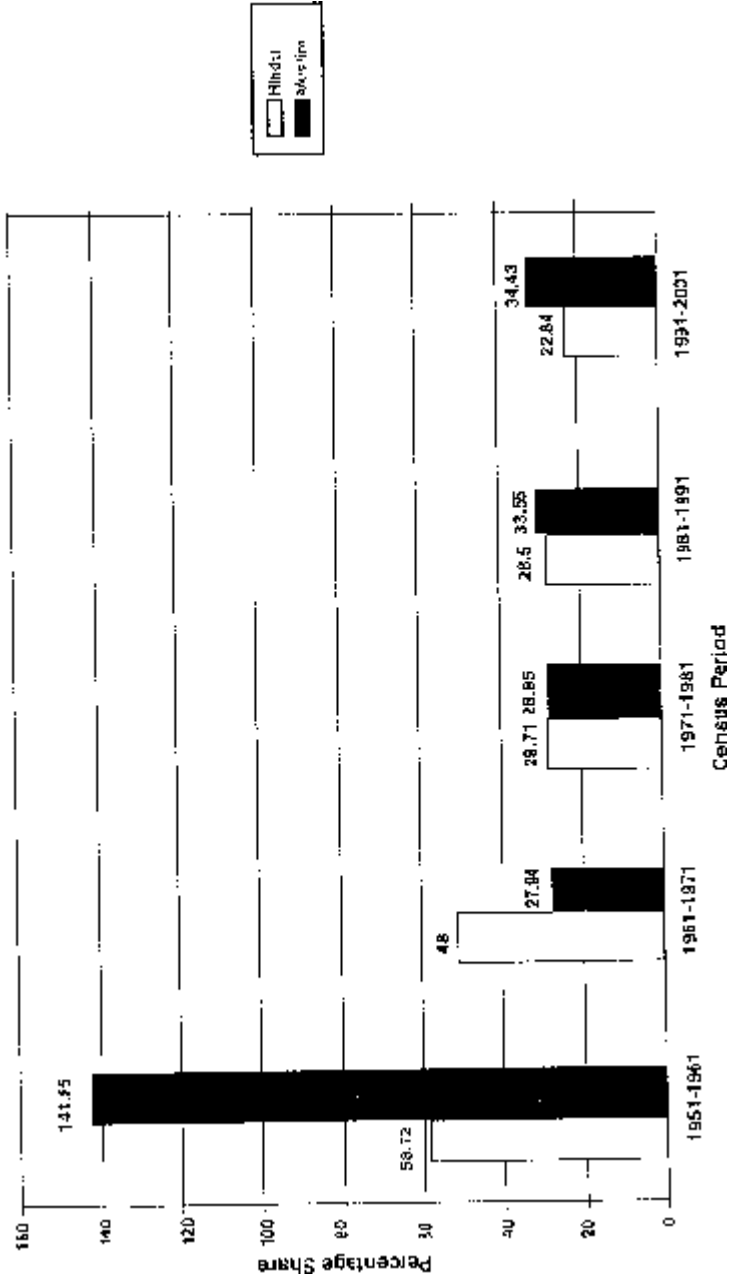


Chart no. 33 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Dakshin Dinajpur - 1951 - 2001

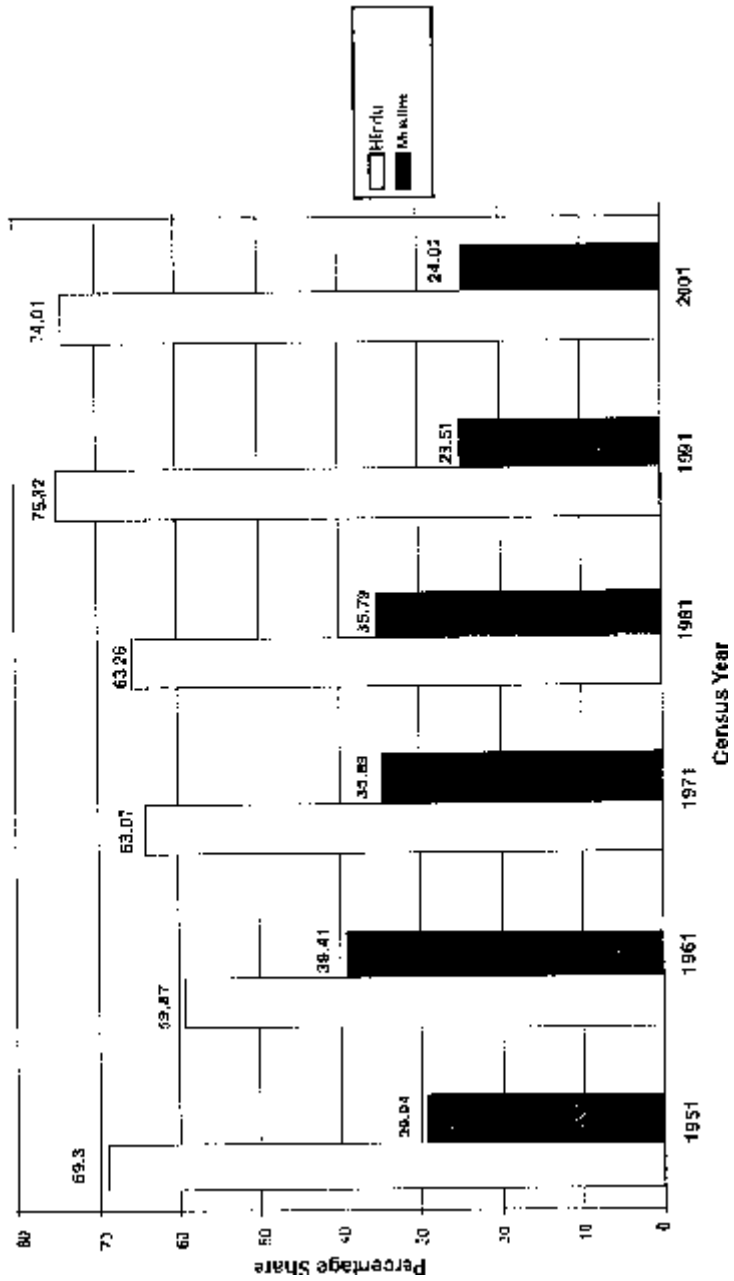
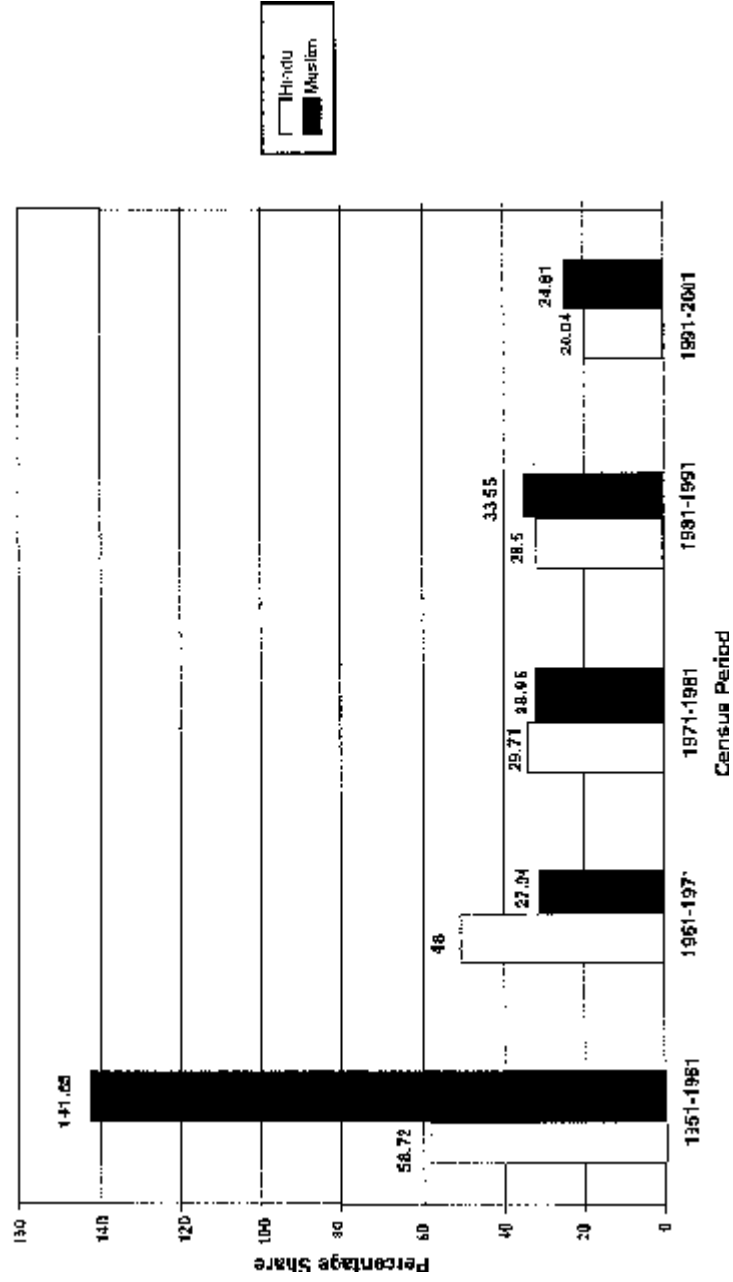
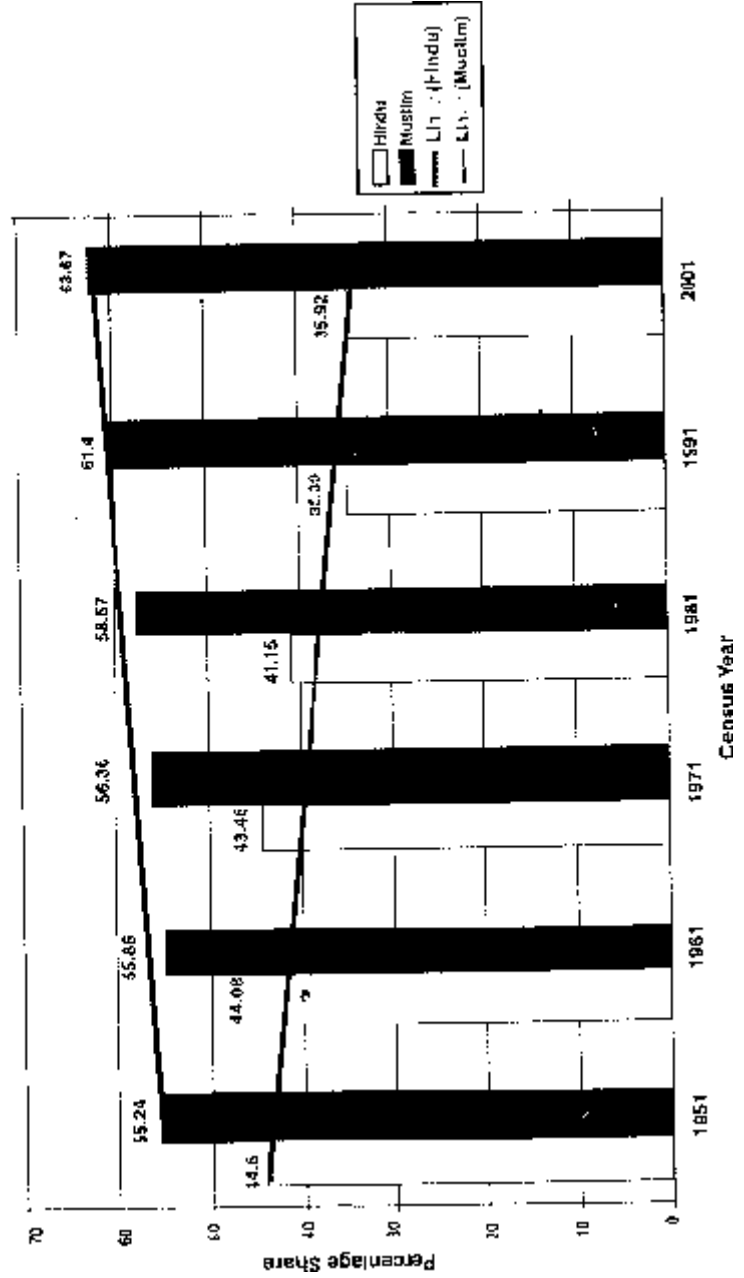


Chart no. 34 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Dakshin Dirajpur during 1951 - 2001



Char. no. 35 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Murshidabad - 1951 - 2001



Char. no. 36 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Murshidabad during 1951 - 2001

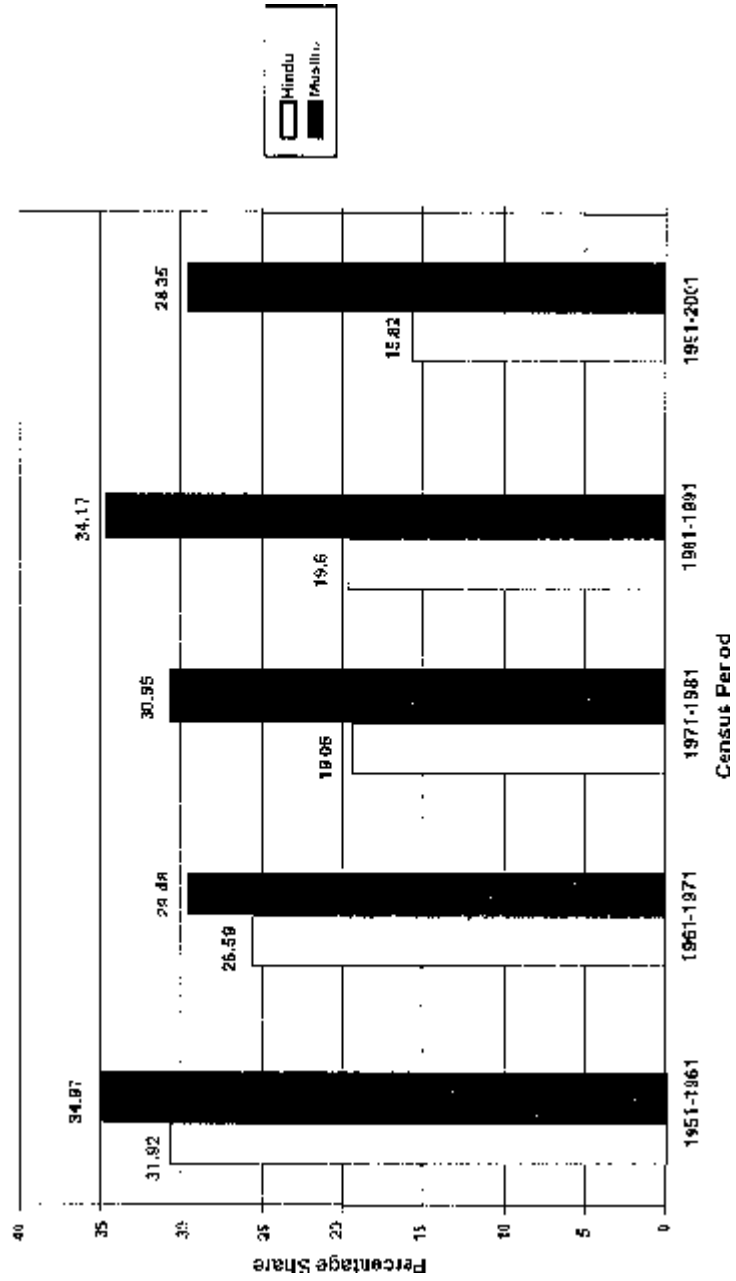


Chart no. 37 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in Madia - 1951 - 2001

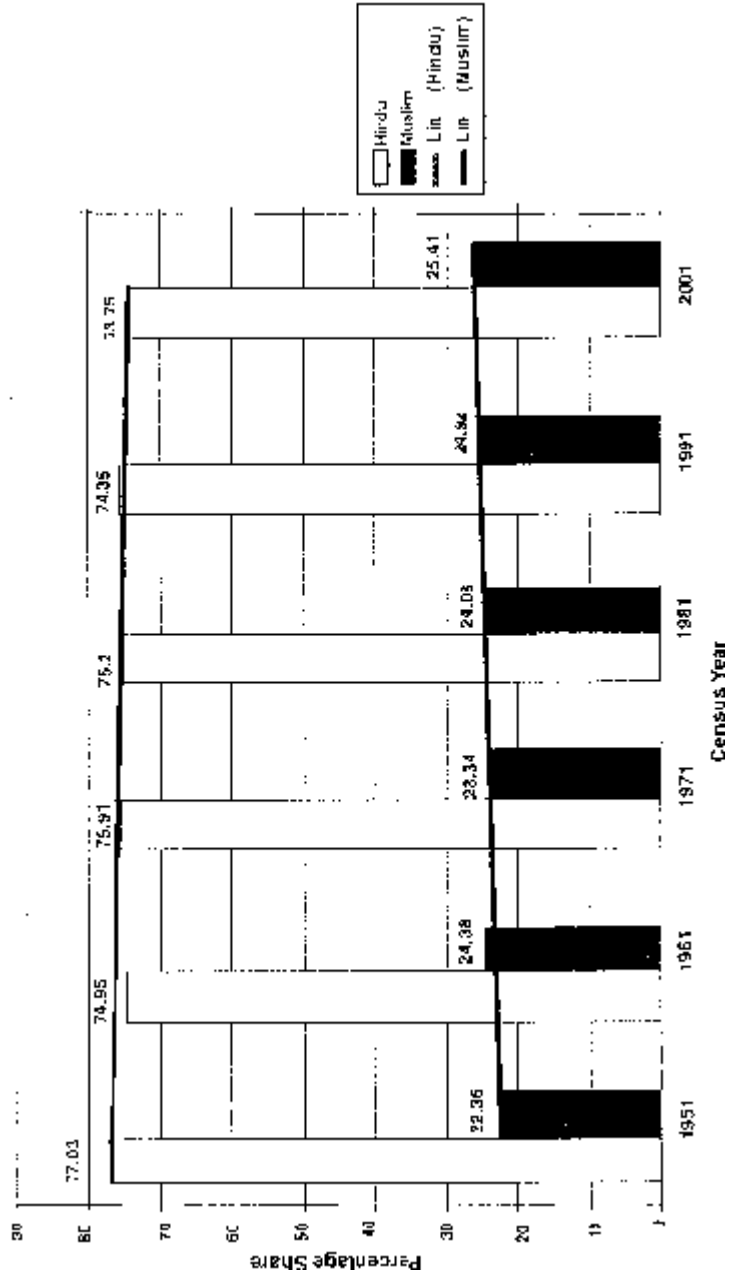


Chart no. 38 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in Nadia during 1951 - 2001

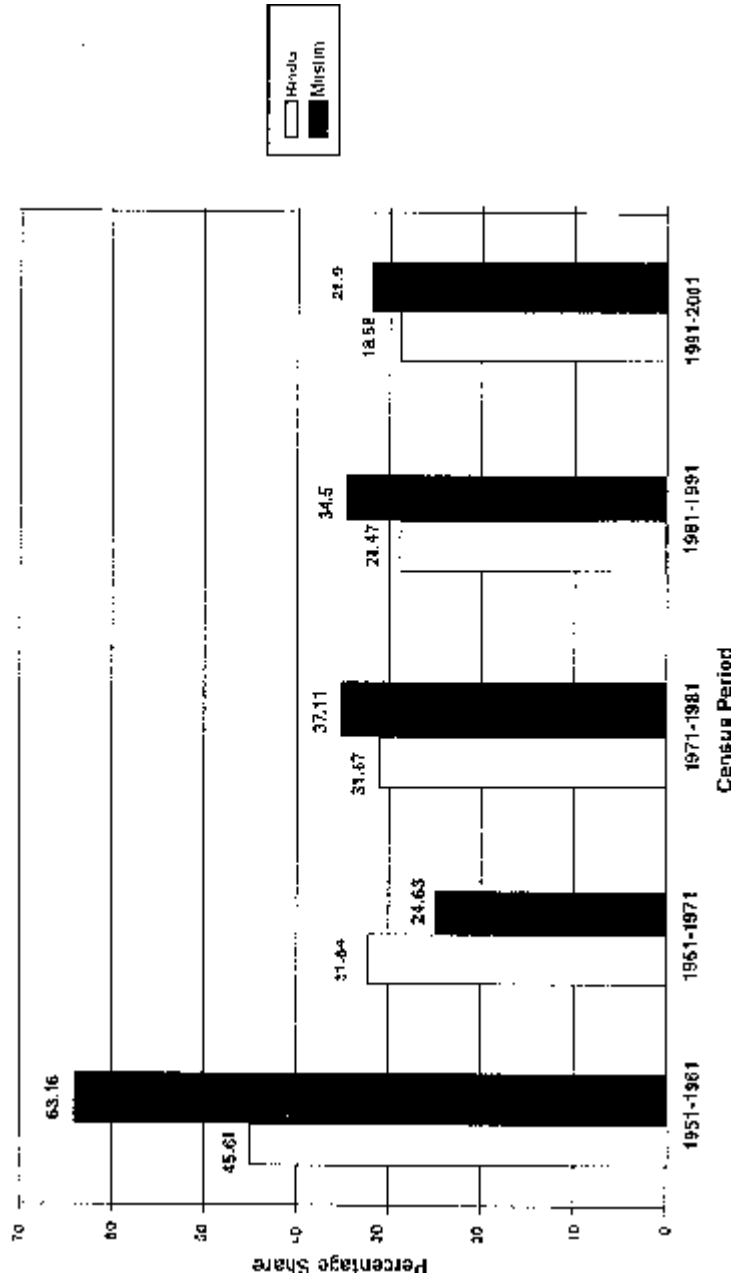


Chart no. 36 : Trend of Population shares of Hindus and Muslims in North Twenty Four Parganas - 1951 - 2001

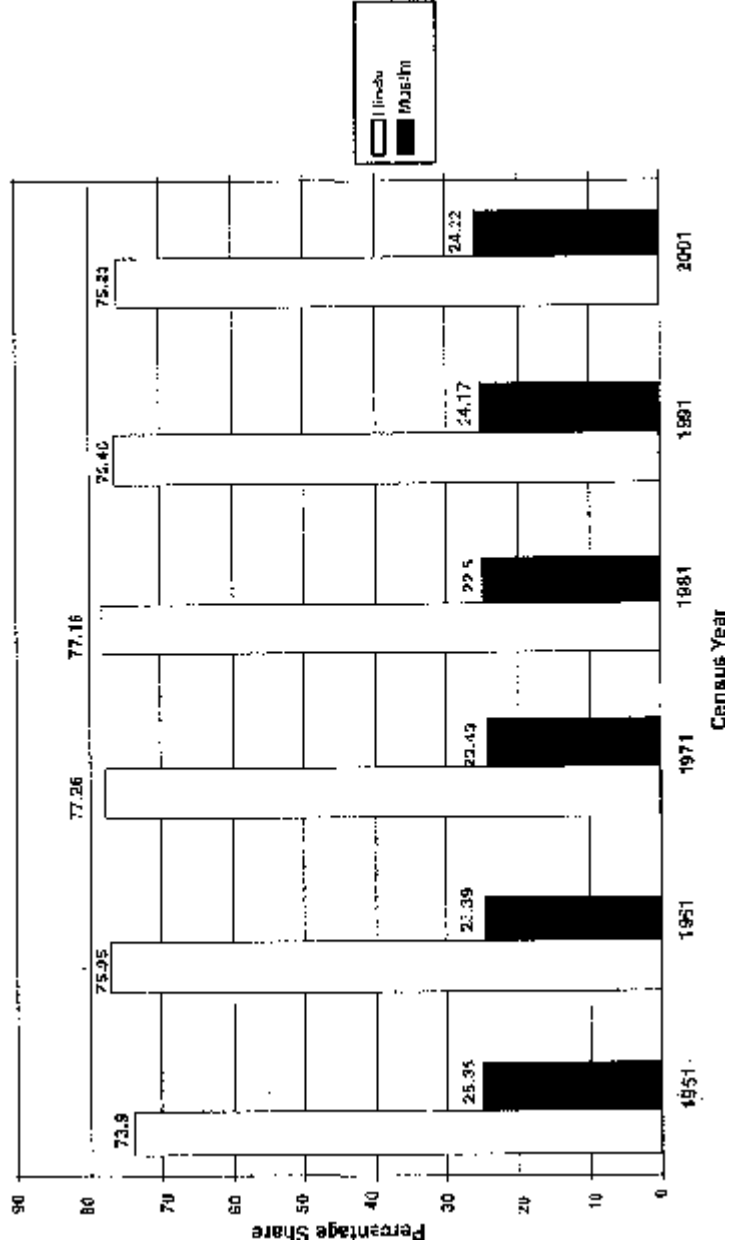
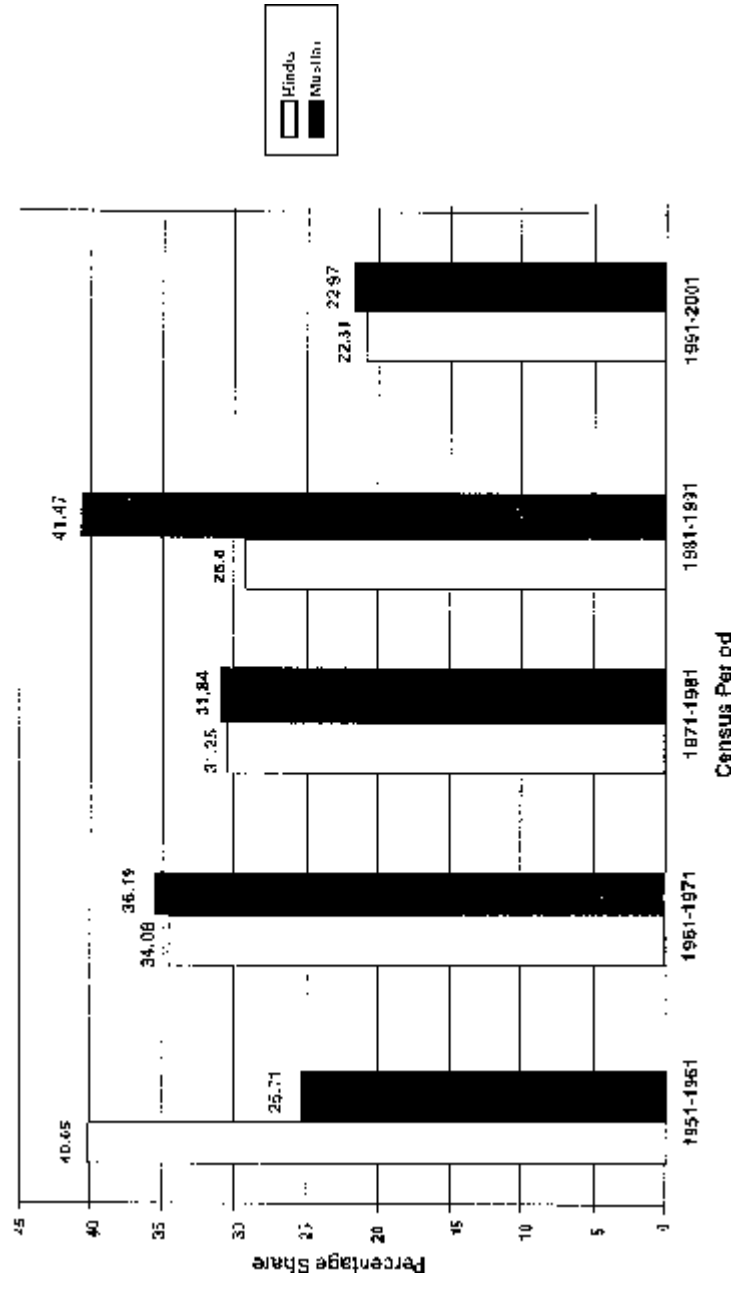


Chart no. 40 : Decadal growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in North Twenty Four Parganas during 1951 - 2001.



Conclusion

The above noted facts and the attendant analyses make it quite clear that, on account of ceaseless infiltration from Bangladesh and East Pakistan, and the tremendously high rate of growth of Muslim population, West Bengal, with 904 persons per square kilometer, has emerged as the State having the highest density of population in the whole of India. West Bengal occupies 2.77% of India's land area and accommodates more than eight percent of its population. Population control is universally recognized today as a key contributor to economic upliftment. A pertinent query is whether the excessively high rate of growth of Muslim population in all the districts of West Bengal is solely due to infiltration by Bangladeshis. Alternatively, one can ask whether it is permissible to affirm that Muslims in West Bengal are far less concerned about birth control, and far more backward in family planning than Hindus in West Bengal. If we consider the family planning scenario in the State, we can conclude that both the factors have been responsible for this abnormally high growth rate of Muslims in West Bengal.

There is another side of this story, which is no less disturbing and no less dangerous. This ceaseless increase of population through infiltration and other means assumes a new dimension when it slowly and steadily takes the shape of a sort of demographic invasion. The consequent socio-political disturbances can possibly destabilize the entire Eastern and North-Eastern region of India. Even if this is treated as 'distress infiltration' or 'economic immigration', it finally turns out to be volcanic enough to bring about the disintegration of the country. Added to it, an incessant cross-border immigration from Bangladesh deep into the regions bordering the Indian side, along with large scale cross-border smuggling have created a political climate highly favorable to the growth of an anti-Indian psyche. This is inevitable, following a tremendous transformation of the demographic composition of the society from Koch Bihar, to the southern tip of South 24-Parganas. Consequently, the prevailing practice and conditions of living of the people on the Indian side are becoming uncertain. The political and administrative security arrangements of the border region are so hopelessly threatened as to become ineffectual.

Besides, both sides of the border are inhabited by a population which is ethnically, linguistically and religiously identical. It has thus become easy for the insurgent outfits to wage a proxy war at a low level. The costs and risks of this war are low, and yet it destabilizes the security of eastern and north-eastern India.

Last but not the least, it is a matter of vital concern that the Union and the State Governments may or may not share fully the perspective portrayed above and/or adopt necessary measures to safeguard national security. As a result, alien socio-political forces can consolidate their position at the social and popular level, and gather more and more courage to accelerate their activities. Gradually, and ominously, this can foster the evolution of a pattern of social living alien to the Indian ethos nurtured through centuries of foreign rule and also the decades following 1947.

Annexure – 1

Religion-wise share of 0-6 Population in West Bengal and Districts

Sl. No.	State/Districts	Religious communities	0-6 Population	% of 0-6 Population by religion	Share of 0-6 Population by Religious communities
1.	West Bengal	All Religious	11414222	12.24	100
		Hindu	7375023	12.69	64.61
		Muslim	3785900	18.70	33.17
		Christian	69274	13.45	0.61
2.	Darjeeling	All Religious	204643	12.72	100
		Hindu	155910	12.60	76.19
		Muslim	16910	19.81	8.26
		Christian	12816	12.92	6.26
		Buddhist	17819	10.05	8.71
3.	Jalpaiguri	All Religious	521287	15.33	100
		Hindu	419361	14.80	80.45
		Muslim	72009	19.50	13.81
		Christian	23011	15.58	4.41
4.	Koch Bihar	All Religious	387130	15.62	100
		Hindu	270279	14.44	69.82
		Muslim	116063	19.31	29.98
5.	Uttar Dinajpur	All Religious	513266	21.02	100
		Hindu	221654	17.55	43.19
		Muslim	287071	24.82	55.93
6.	Dakshin Dinajpur	All Religious	246034	16.37	100
		Hindu	170742	15.35	69.40
		Muslim	69756	19.32	28.35
7.	Malda	All Religious	6399.4	19.45	100
		Hindu	275197	16.97	43.0
		Muslim	358876	21.93	56.08
8.	Murshidabad	All Religious	1044534	17.80	100
		Hindu	306550	14.55	29.35
		Muslim	733968	19.65	70.27
9.	Birbhum	All Religious	488193	16.19	100
		Hindu	285205	14.67	58.42
		Muslim	200904	18.99	41.15
10.	Bardhaman	All Religious	903438	13.10	100
		Hindu	677889	12.46	75.03
		Muslim	213405	15.64	23.62
11.	Nadia	All Religious	606395	13.17	100
		Hindu	404503	11.91	66.71
		Muslim	197386	16.87	32.55
12.	North 24 Pgs	All Religious	1054338	11.80	100
		Hindu	690821	10.28	65.52
		Muslim	358574	16.57	34.0

13.	Hugli	All Religious	603258	11.96	100
		Hindu	476215	11.29	78.94
		Muslim	117839	15.43	19.53

Sl. No.	State/Districts	Religious communities	0-6 Population	% of 0-6 Population by religion	Share of 0-6 Population by Religious communities
14.	Bankura	All Religious	458882	14.37	100
		Hindu	375353	13.94	81.80
		Muslim	46322	19.32	10.09
15.	Purulia	All Religious	408803	16.12	100
		Hindu	333660	15.77	81.62
		Muslim	37853	20.95	9.26
16.	Medinipur	All Religious	1380497	14.36	100
		Hindu	1123118	13.66	81.36
		Muslim	211994	19.47	15.36
17.	Howrah	All Religious	513218	12.01	100
		Hindu	332610	10.38	64.81
		Muslim	177965	17.04	34.68
18.	Kolkata	All Religious	390282	8.53	100
		Hindu	274129	7.72	70.24
		Muslim	108534	11.71	27.81
19.	South 24-Pgs.	All Religious	1050120	15.20	100
		Hindu	581827	12.79	55.41
		Muslim	460471	20.06	43.85

Annexure – 2

Nehru-Liaquat Agreement

- A. The Government of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that each shall ensure to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality. Members of the minorities shall have equal opportunity with members of the majority community to participate in the public life of their country to hold political or other office, and to serve in their country's civil and armed forces. Both Governments declare these rights to be fundamental and undertake to enforce them effectively. The Prime Minister of India has drawn attention to the fact that these rights are guaranteed to all minorities in India by its constitution. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has pointed out that similar provision exists in the Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. It is the policy of both Governments that the enjoyment of these democratic rights shall be assured to all their nationals without distinction.
- Both Governments wish to emphasize that the allegiance and loyalty of the state of which they are citizens, and that it is to the Governments of their own state that they should look for the redress of their grievances.
- B. In respect of migrants from East Bengal, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, where communal disturbances have recently occurred, it is agreed between the two Governments.
- (i) That there shall be freedom of movement and protection in transit;

- (ii) That there shall be freedom to remove as much of his movable personal effects and household goods as a migrant may wish to take with him. Movable property shall include personal jewellery. The maximum cash allowed to each adult migrant will be Rs. 150/ and to each migrant child Rs. 75/.
- (iii) That a migrant may deposit such of his personal jewellery or cash as he does not wish to take with him with a bank. A proper receipt shall be furnished to him by the bank for cash or jewellery thus deposited and facilities shall be provided, as and when required, for their transfer to him, subject as regards cash to the exchange regulations of the Government concerned;
- (iv) That there shall be no harassment by the Customs authorities. At each Customs post agreed upon by the Governments concerned, liaison officers of the other Government shall be posted to ensure this in practice;
- (v) Rights of ownership in or occupancy of the immovable property of a migrant shall not be disturbed. If during his absence, such property is occupied by another person, it shall be returned to him provided that he comes back by the 31st December, 1950. Where the migrant was a cultivating owner or tenant, the land shall be restored to him provided that he returns not later than the 31st December, 1950. In exceptional cases, if a Government considers that a migrant's immovable property cannot be returned to him, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate Minority Commission for advice.
Where restoration of immovable property to the migrant who returns within the specified period is found not possible the Government concerned shall take steps to rehabilitate him.
- (vi) That in the case of a migrant who decides not to return, ownership of all his immovable property shall continue to vest in him and he shall have unrestricted right to dispose it of by sale, by exchange with an evacuee in the other country, or otherwise. A Committee consisting of three representatives of the minority and presided over by a representative of Government shall act trustees of the owner. The committee shall be empowered to recover rent for such immovable property according to law.

The Government of East Bengal, Assam and Tripura shall enact the necessary legislation to set up these Committees.

The Provincial or State Government as the case may be will instruct the District or other appropriate authority to give all possible assistance for the discharge of the Committee's function.

The provisions of this sub-paragraph shall also apply to migrants who may have left East Bengal for any part of India, or West Bengal, Assam or Tripura for any part of Pakistan, prior to the recent disturbances but after the 15th August, 1947. The arrangement in this sub-paragraph will apply also to migrants who have left Bihar for East Bengal owing to communal disturbances or fear thereof.

C. As regards the province of East Bengal and Each of the States of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura respectively the two Governments further agree that they shall :

- (1) Continue their efforts to restore normal conditions and shall take suitable measures to prevent recurrence of disorder.
- (2) Punish all those who are found guilty of offences against persons and property and of other criminal offences. In view of their deterrent effect, collective fines shall be imposed where necessary. Special Courts will where necessary be appointed to ensure that wrong doers are promptly punished.
- (3) Make every possible effort to recover looted property.
- (4) Set up immediately an agency with which representatives of minority shall be associated to assist in the recovery of abducted women.

- (5) Nor recognize forced conversions. Any conversion effected during a period of Communal disturbance shall be deemed to be a forced conversion. Those found guilty of converting people forcibly shall be punished.
- (6) Set up a commission of Enquiry at once to enquire into and report on the causes and extent of the recent disturbances and to make recommendations with a view to preventing recrudescence of similar trouble in future. The personnel of the commission, which shall be presided over by a judge of the High Court, shall be such as to inspire confidence among the minority.
- (7) Take prompt and effective steps to prevent the dissemination of news and mischievous opinion calculated to rouse communal passion by press or radio or by any individual or organization. Those guilty of such activity shall be vigorously dealt with.
- (8) Not permit propaganda in either country directed against the territorial integrity of the other or purporting to incite war between them and shall take prompt and effective action against any individual or organization guilty of such propaganda.

D. Sub-Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (7), and (8) of C of the Agreement are of general scope and applicable according to exigency to any part of India or Pakistan.

E. In order to help restore confidence, so that refugees may return to their homes the two Governments have decided (i) to depute two Ministers, one from each Government, to remain in the affected areas for such period as may be necessary; (ii) to include in the cabinets of East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam a representative of the minority community. In Assam the minority community is already represented in the Cabinet. Appointments to the Cabinets of East Bengal and West Bengal shall be made immediately.

F. In order to assist in the implementation of this agreement, the two Government have decided, apart from the deputation of their Ministers referred to in E, to setup Minority Commissions, one for East Bengal and one for Assam. These Commissions will be constituted and will have the functions described below.

- (i) Each Commission will consist of one Minister of the Provincial or State Governments concerned, who will be chairman, and one representative each of the majority and minority communities from East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam chosen by and from among their respective representative in the Provincial or State Legislatures, as the case may be.
- (ii) Two Ministers of the Governments of India and Pakistan may attend and participate in any meeting of any Commission. A Minority Commission or any two Minority Commissions jointly shall meet when so required by either Central Minister for the satisfactory implementation of this Agreement.
- (iii) Each Commission shall appoint such staff as it deems necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and shall determine its own procedure.
- (iv) Each Commission shall maintain contact with the minorities in Districts and Small administrative head quarters through Minority Boards formed in accordance with the Inter-Dominion Agreement of December, 1947.
- (v) The Minority Commission in East Bengal and West Bengal shall replace the Provincial Minorities Board set up under the Inter-Dominion Agreement of December, 1948.
- (vi) The two Ministers of the Central Governments will from time to time consult such persons or organizations as they may consider necessary.
- (vii) The functions of the Minority Commission shall be :
 - (a) To observe and to report on the implementation of this Agreement and for this purpose, to take cognizance of breaches or neglect.
 - (b) To advise on action to be taken on their recommendations.

- (viii) Each Commission shall submit reports, as and when necessary, to the Provincial and State Governments concerned. Copies of such reports will be submitted simultaneously to the two Central Ministers during the period referred to in E.
- (ix) The Governments of India and Pakistan and the State and Provincial Governments will normally give effect to recommendations that concern them when such recommendations are supported by both the Central Ministers. In the event of disagreement between the two Central Ministers, the matter shall be referred to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan who shall either resolve it themselves or determine the agency and procedure by which it will be resolved.
- (x) In respect of Tripura, the two Central Ministers shall constitute a Commission and shall discharge the functions that are assigned under the Agreement to the Minority Commission for East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam. Before the expiration of the period referred to in E, the two Central Ministers shall make recommendations for the establishment in Tripura of appropriate machinery to discharge the functions of the Minority Commissions envisaged in respect of East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam.

G. Except where modified by this Agreement, the Inter-Dominion Agreement of December, 1948 shall remain in force.

Jawahar Lal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi
8th April, 1950

Liaquat Ali Khan
Prime Minister of Pakistan

] Source : Muhammad Ghulam Kabir, Minority Politics in Bangladesh, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., India, 1980.

Annexure III

Distribution of population share and the inter censal growth rate by religious communities in Bangladesh 1951-2001 (Population in '000)

State	Religious Communities	1951		1961		1974		1981		1991		2001		Growth Rate (%) 1951-2001
		Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%) 1951-61	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%) 1961-74	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%) 1974-81	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%) 1981-91	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%) 1991-01			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	
Bangladesh	All Religions	41903	50840	21.24	71478	40.59	87120	21.88	108515	22.03	123851	18.48	195.35	
	Hindus	9239 (22.0)	9380 (18.5)	1.53	9673 (13.5)	3.12	10670 (12.1)	8.27	11119 (10.5)	5.76	11379 (9.2)	1.78	23.16	
	Muslims	32227 (77.9)	40390 (80.4)	26.88	61805 (86.4)	49.28	74657 (86.7)	22.20	60981 (86.3)	26.87	11076 (89.7)	13.32	244.68	

N. B. Other religious communities including Buddhists and Christians are negligible (about 1%)

Source : Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional), 2003, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning.

Annexure IV

State and District-wise distribution of population share and decadal growth rate by religious communities in West Bengal, 1951—2001

State / Districts	Religious Communities	1951		1961		1971		1981		1991		2001		Growth Rate (%) 1951-2001
		Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%)	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%)	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%)	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%)	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%)	Total Population (%)	Growth Rate (%)	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(5)	(4)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	
West Bengal	All Religions	24810308	32.80	34828219	44312011	26.87	54680647	23.17	68077985	24.73	80176197	17.84	223.16	
	Hindus	19462706	41.42	27523358	34811864	25.75	42207159	21.37	50866624	21.39	59104835	14.23	138.54	
	Muslims	4825496	41.82	6965287	9064338	26.76	11743253	28.55	16475835	36.88	20240543	35.01	310.13	
		(19.85)	(20.00)	(20.00)	(20.46)	(21.51)	(21.51)	(23.61)	(23.61)	(25.25)	(25.25)	(25.25)		
Chajeeing	All Religions	445280	35.96	624640	781777	25.16	1024269	31.02	1289819	25.91	1609172	23.54	281.4	
	Hindus	363836	37.80	501382	636741	28.98	813625	27.78	1033310	24.54	1237714	22.15	240.18	
	Muslims	6393	200.55	19214	23623	22.43	37289	58.56	59140	58.26	85378	44.37	1336.46	
		(1.14)	(3.18)	(3.18)	(3.01)	(3.64)	(3.64)	(4.55)	(4.55)	(5.31)	(5.31)			
	Christians	12310	86.33	20475	28637	36.93	4761	68.21	86605	39.1	89232	51.56	706.11	
		(2.76)	(3.28)	(3.28)	(3.59)	(4.60)	(4.60)	(6.05)	(6.05)	(6.17)	(6.17)			
	Buddhists	62160	32.01	82046	81358	11.35	120864	32.30	152295	28.49	177327	14.19	165.32	
		(15.95)	(12.13)	(12.13)	(11.88)	(11.80)	(11.80)	(11.95)	(11.95)		(11.02)			

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Jalpaiguri	All Religions	914538	1359292	48.27	1750159	28.78	224871	28.55	2805543	26.14	3401173	21.52	271.90
	Hindus	768878	1160954	50.8	159201	30.86	1938062	27.57	2315158	22.55	2833229	19.29	268.01
	Muslims	89099	129771	45.85	156992	20.98	193656	23.86	28054	45.13	369155	31.36	314.35
Koch Bihar	Cirilians	25481	48870	90.81	55707	14.09	83555	14.09	107909	69.98	147824	36.79	479.47
	All Religions	87458	1016906	62.45	144183	38.87	471643	26.28	3111445	22.56	2479166	14.16	260.38
	Hindus	47824	775514	62.98	111017	43.26	1398844	25.99	1689733	18.57	1871857	12.78	293.39
+Uttar Dinajpur#	Muslims	194220	247371	24.79	300496	23.98	363778	22.52	508728	37.33	800911	18.59	209.4
	All Religions	720573	1333797	83.72	169887	40.50	2404947	29.31	1887045	30.36	2441794	28.72	n.a.
	Hindus	499327	792534	58.72	1172930	48.0	1511416	29.71	1038159	28.5	1263001	22.84	
	Muslims	215739	521758	141.65	587547	27.94	890797	28.86	850281	33.55	1156903	34.43	

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
+Dakshin Dinajpur#	All Religions	720573	1023797	83.72	1255887	40.5	2404947	29.31	1230606	30.05	1503.78	22.11	na.
	Hindus	499327	792534	58.72	1172937	43.0	1521416	29.71	925660	28.5	1112575	20.04	
	Muslims	2,5739	521756	141.85	687547	27.94	660797	28.95	289279	33.55	361047	24.81	
Makrah	All Religions	507980	1271923	30.33	1612657	31.93	2031871	25.0	2637032	29.78	3290468	24.77	250.95
	Hindus	549090	854115	11.11	913283	39.34	1137192	21.23	1377844	24.44	1621466	17.68	174.87
	Muslims	346649	564331	62.8	698504	23.24	919918	32.27	1252292	36.13	1626171	30.65	372.0
Murshidabad	All Religions	1715759	2290010	33.46	2940204	24.57	3697552	25.19	4710119	28.2	6466660	23.76	241.52
	Hindus	765218	1009470	31.92	1277873	26.59	1521448	19.06	1819596	19.30	2107460	16.32	175.41
	Muslims	847615	1279256	34.97	1662406	29.48	2199121	30.95	2910220	34.17	3735380	26.35	294.10
Bhadr	All Religions	1066888	1446156	35.55	1775909	21.8	2039829	18.01	2555664	21.94	3015422	17.66	182.64
	Hindus	774327	1043061	34.75	1263117	20.07	1437946	14.75	1702259	18.38	1944806	14.24	151.07
	Muslims	286518	389513	39.47	518381	25.75	602112	25.24	844987	30.16	1057881	25.19	269.21

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Bardhaman	All Religions	2191667	3062846	40.65	3616174	27.04	4835385	23.47	6050605	25.13	6895514	14.36	214.62
	Hindus	1835108	2398875	41.62	3219542	23.89	3938375	22.32	4821490	22.42	5440052	12.83	196.44
	Muslims	341878	467669	36.79	672227	43.74	830851	26.59	1192755	38.99	1364133	15.34	299.01
		(15.60)	(15.17)		(17.17)		(7.60)		(19.55)		(19.73)		(19.73)
Nadia	All Religions	1144924	1113324	49.61	2230270	29.81	2364253	33.29	3852097	26.95	4604627	19.51	302.19
	Hindus	881955	1264173	45.61	1693006	31.84	2229177	31.67	2863891	28.47	3366095	18.58	285.06
	Muslims	256017	417706	83.16	520571	24.63	713776	37.11	950098	34.60	1170382	21.90	267.11
		(22.36)	(24.38)		(23.34)		(24.08)		(24.92)		(25.41)		(25.41)
North Twenty Four Parganas*	All Religions	4609309	6280915	38.27	4207420	34.53	5529497	31.42	7281881	31.68	8934396	22.64	r.a.
	Hindus	3406298	4770427	40.05	3250747	34.08	4288551	31.25	5495214	26.80	6721420	22.31	
	Muslims	1168629	1489135	25.71	943576	36.19	1243898	31.84	1759833	41.47	2164658	22.97	
		(25.35)	(23.39)		(22.43)		(22.50)		(24.17)		(24.22)		(24.22)
Hugli	All Religions	1554320	2231418	39.02	2872116	28.72	3657306	23.86	4352230	22.43	5041976	15.72	224.38
	Hindus	1344785	1943698	44.54	2495447	28.39	3026143	22.47	3696772	20.96	4216701	14.06	213.56
	Muslims	208230	282413	36.54	370354	31.14	489484	32.17	632175	29.15	763471	20.77	270.20
		(13.27)	(12.06)		(12.89)		(13.76)		(14.52)		(15.14)		(15.14)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Bankura	All Religions	1319259	1664512	26.17	2031036	22.02	2374815	16.93	2616065	18.12	3192695	13.75	42.0
	Hindus	1202653	1569399	29.65	1845268	18.33	2134153	15.66	2444545	14.54	2893022	10.16	23.92
	Muslims	58103	73007	25.65	98489	34.90	134085	36.14	186021	38.73	239722	28.87	312.50
Puruliya	All Religions		1390016		1662679	17.80	1853801	15.65	2245377	20.0	2500910	13.96	80.31
	Hindus		1266537		1488851	17.85	1696530	14.08	2023143	18.11	2316037	4.59	87.07
	Muslims		81521		74410	-8.72	101044	35.79	433119	31.74	180694	35.74	121.65
Medinipur	All Religions	3159022	4341855	29.25	5509287	26.89	6742796	25.39	8311912	33.57	9610788	15.68	186.12
	Hindus	3082900	4005869	29.94	4884092	24.67	6037882	20.90	7232702	19.79	8224779	13.72	166.79
	Muslims	240860	330015	37.01	426463	28.23	585887	37.55	894478	53.17	1098818	21.16	351.97
Haora	All Religions	1611373	2038477	26.51	2417266	18.58	2866861	22.74	3729844	25.71	4279099	14.60	165.18
	Hindus	1344616	1698306	26.33	1977551	16.44	2358765	19.28	2699019	22.48	3204077	10.91	138.29
	Muslims	261414	334881	27.57	439715	30.50	508448	37.51	828740	38.48	1094363	26.02	299.51

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Kolkata	All Religions	2548877	2927289	13.35	3727020	11.21	4126846	10.73	4359819	8.61	4572676	4.11	79.42
	Hindu	2125907	2457144	15.58	3089893	25.75	3379442	9.37	3548431	4.84	3552274	0.16	67.09
	Muslims	305932	374128	22.29	54937	46.96	645624	18.35	779433	19.85	926759	18.30	202.93
	Christians	75836	53229	-29.81	45106	-13.36	48463	7.27	38155	-22.86	40218	5.41	-65.97
		(2.98)	(1.82)	(1.24)			(1.20)		(0.87)				
South Tamil Nadu Parganas	All Religions	4809369	6280915	36.27	3653786	34.53	4988192	19.77	5715030	30.24	6906689	20.65	n.a.
	Hindus	3486198	4770427	40.05	2673205	34.08	3168588	18.53	3850496	24.62	4546459	15.14	
	Muslims	1323171	1510488	25.71	980581	26.19	1177083	23.34	1711297	45.30	2285967	34.17	
		(26.35)	(21.39)	(26.05)			(26.82)		(29.94)				

- Note:
1. * Until the religion data for North & South Twenty Four Parganas are the same as both the districts were under undivided Twenty Four Parganas till 1981. The figures for 1971 and 1981 have been recast. Until 1961 the recast data can not be shown for Kolkata District also. The recast figures have been shown for 1971 and 1981 for Kolkata. Growth Rate of both North and south 24-Parganas during 1961-71 estimated on the basis of undivided 24-Parganas population data.
 2. # Until 1981 the Religion data for Uttar & Dakshin Dinajpur is common as both the districts were under the erstwhile West Dinajpur until 1991. The figures for 1991 have been recast.
 3. \$ Purulia was included in West Bengal in 1956 under Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act, 1956. Hence the data for Purulia is available since 1961 only.
 4. + Growth Rate of Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur in 1981-91 estimated on the basis of undivided West Dinajpur population data.

Source for Annexures I & IV : *Final Population Totals, Distribution of Population by Religion, Director of Census Operations, West Bengal*