

POPULATION GROWTH AND POVERTY AMONG THE MUSLIM OF DHUBRI DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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Abstract: Population growth in Dhubri district is continuing to be highest in Assam in the last three consecutive national population censuses of India and it is alarming among the Muslim people of the district. Economically, the Muslim people are backward. The study was an attempt to search out the reasons behind the higher growth of the Muslim population of the district. In the study an attention is given in analyzing the relation between population growth and poverty among the Muslim of Dhubri district of Assam.

Keywords: Population Growth, Poverty, Muslim.

1. Introduction

The Global economy is seriously concerned for the higher growth of population and poverty issues. The less developed countries of Asia, South Africa and Latin America have been facing the problem of higher growth of population and poverty. India is trying its level best to solve the problem of higher growth of population and poverty since its independence but still far away from its goal.

Population problem is not solely the problem of numbers. Many less populated regions have poverty and degradation of resources and inversely, densely populated regions have prosperity and sustainable development. The consumption pattern and style of resource use is crucially important. So, population problem has a relation with human progress and human equality. "Population growth and development are linked in complex ways. Economic development generates resources that can be used to improve education and health. These improvements along with associated social change reduce both fertility and mortality rates. On the other hand, high rates of population growth eat into surpluses available for economic and social development can hinder improvements in education and health." Bruntland (1987) [1].

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Religion is an important variable in demographic analysis of a population as it influence the demographic behavior like marriage, fertility, mortality, migration etc. Islam profess, "Marry a woman who holds her husband extremely dear and who is richly fruitful" [2]. An analysis of the census data from 1881 to 2011 indicates that the Muslim have invariably had higher growth rates for each decade.

Poverty is a long standing characteristic of the economy of Assam. Due to the rapid growth of population, growth of inequalities of income and wealth, regional disparities and increased price level, the degree of poverty in Assam started to increase as the number of occupations could not grow satisfactorily. On the basis of minimum nutritional needs Dandekar and Rath has estimated from the MSS consumer expenditure data 1960-61 that about 48 per cent of Assam's population was lying below the poverty line (GoA, 1970) [3]. As per the planning commission's estimation, on the basis of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) data, 1999-2000, the population living below the poverty line in Assam was 36.09 per cent (GoA, 2002) [4].

The growth rate among the Muslim people is higher than the other due to some socio-economic and religious factor. According to the Population Census, 2001 out of total 26,655,528 people of Assam, 8,240,611 are Muslim constituting 30.9 per cent to the total (wiki, 2011) [5].

The basic objectives of the Study are:

- (i) To study the trend of population growth among the Muslims of Dhubri district of Assam.
- (ii) To find out the factors responsible for poverty among the Muslims of Dhubri district of Assam.
- (iii) To estimate the income level of the Muslims of Dhubri district of Assam.

Data Base and Methodology of the Study:

The study is a qualitative as well as quantitative scientific social work. On the basis of the objectives framed, experiments are designed and to ascertain them data are collected both from primary and secondary sources. In its first stage, an extensive study is performed to the reference books and articles relevant to the issues of the research work and information are also collected from various sources like government offices, organizations and agencies from which some of the secondary data, concepts and definitions are collected and developed.

The study is mostly based on the primary data collected through enumeration and field survey for which a field work is conducted to collect information regarding family size, position of

birth and death in the household, income and sources of income of the household, etc. of the people of the district. In the second stage of the study, the data so collected from primary and secondary sources are classified both qualitatively and quantitatively and then purposefully analyzed. Besides using simple statistical tools like averages, ratios and percentages for summarization and comparison, detailed case studies of different schemes have been carried out for identification of factors responsible for the observed utilization rates under different types of schemes.

Finally, the conclusion is drawn with the findings of the study to serve the purpose of the research work through writing of the findings in a dissertation form and formulation of analytical statements.

2. Review of Literature:

Population and poverty are the two problems those have been documented in wide range from the very beginning of the civilization. It was in the middle of seventeenth century that population studies emerged as a discipline in England. The credit of initiating a new field of empirical research in population studies goes to John Graunt, an English haberdasher, who is generally acclaimed as father of Population Studies. Right from then, population and poverty become sole of economic development prospect particularly for the developing countries of the world. Economists, Demographers, Sociologists, Planners and Policy makers have to deal with the population and poverty of every country of the world.

Aluko (2011) [6] observed in his study of Lagos city that when people affected by poverty are unable to lead a decent life, there is no doubt that there will be a decay of the city. Sinding (2011) [7] observed that economists, demographers and other social scientists have long debated the relationship between demographic change and economic outcomes. There is much less agreement about the proposition that lower birth rates contribute to economic development and help individuals and families to escape from poverty. Nurkse (1976) [8] explains that a circular constellation of forces tending to act and react upon one another in such a way as to keep a poor country in a state of poverty. United Nation (1970) [9] observed that a marked reduction in the birth rate in a country with a previous high birth rate could reduce population, the growth rate and age structure of the population etc. Kuznets (1965) [10] found in his empirical study that from 1750 to the 1920, the rate of population growth in each decade was distinctively higher for those countries which are today considered developed.

Bhende and Kanitkar (1978) [11] relied that some scholars in the eighteenth century observed the relationship between the potentialities of population growth and available resources, and arrived in the conclusion that population growth was therefore to be regarded as the principal cause of poverty. Coale and Hoover (1958) [12] have studied the changes in birth and death rates typically associated with economic development. Shahmace (1972) [13] opined that economic growth was achieved in Iran in a comparatively short period of time. Sukhatme (1973) [14] postulated that protein deficiency is indirectly caused by a low calorie intake.

UN (1980) [15] in its report pointed out that in a majority of countries, economic growth policies tend to take priority over population distribution policies with the result that national development programmes sometimes continues to favour the expansion of overcrowded areas. Davis (1970) [16] maintained that the current family planning programmes can never succeed in curbing the birth rates. In the second Report to the Club of Rome (1974) [17], *The Mankind at the Turning Point* evaluated several critical problem areas in particular the world food shortage, energy crisis, population growth and disparity in economic development. Thomlinson (1975-76) [18] explained the causes and consequences of population growth and its impact on food materials. Clark (1968) [19] raises the question about the poor and rich.

Gupta, Bongaarts and Cleland (2011) [20] indicate that rapid population growth can constrain economic growth, especially in low-income countries with poor policy environments. Tagore (1925) [21] wrote to Margaret Sanger and opined that in a hunger-stricken country like India, it is cruel crime thoughtlessly to bring more children into existence than can properly be taken care of, causing endless suffering to them and imposing a degrading condition upon the whole family.

NPC Report (1949) [22] submits that in 1935, the Indian National Congress set up a National Planning Committee under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. The committee recommended that the size of Indian population is a basic issue in national economic planning, Gandhi (1955) [23] declared that there can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. GoI (1951) [24] recognized that India had a population problem. Singh (1975) [25] observed that development is the best contraceptive. Anita (1993) [26] observed in her study that the population problem can no longer be divorced from the overall social and economic development of the country as a whole.

Roselin (1997) [27] examined the distribution of Muslim of Nagaon and Morigaon district of Assam and compared the population growth rate to the other social groups and found that the unplanned growth of population and wide practice of bigamy is the root cause of their

backwardness of the Muslim population. Sheikh (2004) [28] in his study found that the growth of population is higher among the char dwellers of Dhubri District. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood and flood and soil erosion greatly affect the sector. There is common poverty among them and the river displaced people have to search for alternative means of livelihood. Jafor (2009) [29] have reveals from his study that poverty is a never failing friend of the people of the area covered by the study. A chunk of 67.80 per cent of total household has been living below the poverty line in the Char of Dhubri district.

Dasgupta (2000) [30] have framed the main object of the study was to trace out the impact of immigration of the Muslim people from East Bengal into Assam and found that the demographic composition of the population in Assam was affected. Chakravarty (1997) [31], had studied the demographic trends of migrated people and its impact on Nagaon district with the objective to examine the growth of Muslim population in Nagaon District of Assam after immigration from East Bengal and reveals that the people came from Silhet were more laborious and they were skilled in agriculture, allied sector viz. cultivation, Horticulture etc.

Hussain and Hussain (2000) [32] found that, 95 per cent of the people live below poverty line. Though cultivation is the main occupation a large number of people have no own cultivable land. Rahman (2004) [33] have done a case study in Alopati Char of Barpeta District on the growth of population of the char area of Assam and found that there is a high rate of growth of population in the char which is caused by high birth rate and early marriage practices.

3. Muslim Population of Dhubri District

3.1 Introduction

There are 27 district in Assam with total about 8,240,611 Muslim population among those 6 district have Muslim majority according to the Population Census, 2001. Among the district of Assam Dhubri have highest total Muslim population with 1,140,267 followed by Nagaon district figuring 1,216,455; Barpeta district remains in the third position with 977,943; Karimganj is in the fourth with 527,214; Goal Para is in the fifth with 441,516 and Hailakandi stands in sixth of the fray with 312,849 numbers of Muslim people dominating the non-muslim. The non- Muslim population of the districts are 1,106,354 in Nagaon; 405,065 in Dhubri; 662,066 in Barpeta; 470,708 in Karimganj; 314,157 in Goal Para; and 223,191 in Hailakandi in 2001.

There are 13 Muslim concentrated districts in Assam out of the total 27 districts and more or less the Muslim population is spreading in all over the state of Assam. Dhubri district have

highest percentage of Muslim population with 74 per cent, Barpeta district ranks second with 59 per cent of Muslim population, Hailakandi ranks third with 58 per cent of Muslim population, Goalpara ranks fourth with 54 per cent of Muslim population, Karimganj lies in fifth position with Muslim population of 52 per cent. Nagaon district ranks sixth in terms of total number of Muslim population with 51 per cent.

3.2 Dhubri District at a Glance:

Dhubri is an administrative district in the state of Assam in India created in 1983 before which it was a civil sub-division and district headquarter of Goal Para district. Dhubri district occupies an area of 1664 square kilometers consisting of plains, river islands, small ranges of hillocks and natural depressions. It is situated in the extreme western end of Assam and the mighty river Brahmaputra bisects the district keeping with Dhubri and Bilasipara sub-division in the northern side and South Salmara-Mankachar sub-division in the southern side. Dhubri district have three Civil Sub-Divisions comprising 14 Development Blocks, 168 Gaon Panchayats and 1138 Revenue Villages (GoA, 2011) [34].

3.2.1 Location:

Dhubri district is situated in 89.42-90.12 East- Longitude and 26.22-25.28 North- Latitude. In an average it is 30 meter above the sea level.

3.2.2 Historical Background of the Muslim Population of Dhubri District of Assam:

The history of the Muslim people of Dhubri district is associated with the Mughal empire. Dhubri was under the rule of Mughal in 1613 and thereafter a good reserve of Muslim army were installed at the Dhubri fort to protect the boundary of their empire and used to attack Ahom kingdom time to time. Some of them permanently settled in the district and huge number of low caste Hindus converted to Islam in the influence of the Awlia, Peer, Fakir and other Islamic guru who used to come to the region frequently after the arrival of Mughal. Mir Jumla, Shah Kamal, Panch Peer and others spread Islam in the region.

According to the report of Buchanan and Mills, in 1809 there were 41,000 Muslim populations out of total 176,000 populations constituting 23 per cent in the Goal Para district of Zamindary period. The zaminders of Goal Para district brought huge numbers of cultivator from East Bengal in 1911 to produce more crops and most of them were Muslim (Dev and Lahiri) [35]. The history of the immigrant Muslim of Dhubri district after 1930 is mostly associated with Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani who challenged the Line system of land enforced in all over Assam and led the immigration in the district as well as Assam (GoA)

[36]. Before partition of India in 1947 massive Muslim immigration took place in the district from which some of them changed their habitation to other district of Assam time to time.

4. Growth of Muslim Population in Dhubri District:

4.1 Trend of Growth of Muslim Population in Dhubri District:

Dhubri district was created in 1983 and the report of Census of India reveals that in 1991 there is 9,38,789 Muslim population in Dhubri district out of total 1,332,475 total population and it is 70.45 per cent to the total population of the district. In the next ten years the proportion of Muslim population has increased considerably to 74.3 per cent of the total population of the district. The total population of the district has increased to 1,637,344 adding a gross 404,869 persons to the total and the Muslim population rises to 1,216,455 adding the Muslim share of 277,666 persons.

Table: 1 Growth of Muslim Population of Dhubri District

Year	Muslim Population	Growth (%)	Total Population	Per Cent
1991	938,789		1,332,475	70.45
2001	1,216,455	29.57	1,637,344	74.30
2011	NA		1,948,632	

Source: *Census of India, 1991, 2001 & 2011.*

4.2 Quality of the Muslim Population of Dhubri District:

To know the quality of the Muslim population of Dhubri district the literacy rate, crude birth rate and crude death rate, sex ratio, urban-rural composition of the Muslim population is analysed.

4.3 Literacy Rate among the Muslim of Dhubri District:

The field survey data of the Muslim population is analysed to calculate the literacy rate and it is found that the literacy rate is 50.97 per cent and the male and female literacy rate is 54.83 per cent and 47.01 per cent in comparison to 59.36 per cent of Dhubri district. The male and female literacy rate of Dhubri district is 64.2 per cent and 54.26 per cent. The literacy rate for the urban area is 74.07 per cent and for the rural area it is 49.45 per cent. The rural area is sensitively poor in respect to the literacy rate of the urban area.

Table: 2 Literacy Rate found in the survey among the Muslim of Dhubri District

Category	Male	Female	Person
Rural	53.35%	45.45%	49.45%
Urban	77.78%	70.37%	74.07%
Overall	54.83%	47.01%	50.97%

Source: *Field Survey*

4.4 Birth Rate and Death Rate among the Muslim of Dhubri District:

The crude birth rate among the Muslim of Dhubri district is calculated from the data collected in the field survey. In the field survey, 34 numbers of children found new born baby in the age group 0-1 year and there are 1130 number of population taken as sample so the crude birth rate is calculated and found 30.09 per thousand as against 22.1 of the district.

The crude death rate is also calculated in the same process taking the total numbers of death during one year period found in the survey and the crude death rate is calculated at 9.73 per thousand as against the overall district crude death rate 7.4 per thousand.

Table: 3 Crude Birth Rate and Death Rate among the Muslim Population of Dhubri District

Description	Crude Birth Rate			Crude Death Rate		
	Total Birth	Population	CBR	Total Death	Population	DBR
Muslim Population of Dhubri district	34	1130	30.09	11	1130	9.73
Overall in Dhubri district	_____	_____	22.1	_____	_____	7.4

Source: *Field Survey*

4.5 Sex Ratio among the Muslim of Dhubri District:

The data collected from the Muslim population of Dhubri district in the field survey reveals that the sex ratio is 975 per thousand male as there is 572 male against 558 female. In the rural area the sex ratio is 973 and in urban area it is 1000.

5. Poverty level among the Muslim of Dhubri District Assam:

There are 14 numbers of household out of 281 sample size taken from the Muslim population in Dhubri district those earn less than ten thousand rupees per annum. In the income group of

range ten to thirty thousand rupees per annum there are 85 numbers of household. In the next range of thirty thousand to fifty thousand of annual income earner there are 76 numbers of household. In the range of fifty thousand to seventy five thousand there are 56 numbers, seventy five to one lakh there are 15 and in the group of more than one lakh there are 29 numbers of household.

The population size is 1130 persons from 281 household, so each household consists of average four persons and the income earning household in the range Rs.75000 to 100000 also virtually earns per capita income of Rs.20000 to Rs.22000. The household in the earning group of Rs.50000 to Rs75000 have an average per capita income is Rs15625 per annum and it is clear to derive that 252 household out of 281 sample size is under the poverty line. It is evident from the analysis of the data that 89.68 per cent of the Muslim population of Dhubri district earns equal to or less than Rs.10225 in average and 84.34 per cent of the population earns equal to or less than Rs.9527 per annum and are living below the poverty line in economic sense.

Table: 4 Household-wise Income Level of the Muslim Population of Dhubri District.

Income in Rs.	Number of Household	Annual Income (in Rs.)	Percent to the Total
Less than 10000	14	1,26,000	0.72
10000-30000	85	19,97,870	11.38
30000-50000	76	32,68,000	18.61
50000-75000	56	36,40,000	20.74
75000-100000	15	12,75,000	07.26
More than 100000	29	72,50,000	41.29
Total	281	1,75,56,870	100.00

Source: *Sample Survey*

5.7 Dwelling Particulars of the Household:

Among the three fundamental needs of the human being dwelling status is also important to measure to categories one to be under the poverty line. So, an attempt to collect the dwelling particulars is taken from the sample of population of the Muslim people of Dhubri district of Assam.

5.7.1 Category of the Dwelling House:

In the study of the category of dwelling house of the Muslim household it is found that 178 numbers of household have their own house and only three household have rented house and these three is found in the urban area of the district.

Table: 5 Category of House of the Muslim Population of the District

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Household
1	Owned House	278
2	Rented House	03
3	Houseless	00
	Total	281

Source: *Sample Survey*

5.7.2 Predominant Materials of the Dwelling House:

In the study it is observed that the predominant materials of the floor of houses of 252 households are mud and of other 29 households are concrete. Houses of 192 households have wall made of thatch, grass, bamboo and wood and 52 household have used G.I. sheet to construct walls of their houses. Other 32 household have constructed wall their house using burned bricks. It is also seen that the entire household taken for the study have used G.I. sheet to construct the roof of their houses.

Table 6: Predominant Materials of the Houses of the Muslim Population of Dhubri District of Assam.

Sl. No.	Predominant Materials	Floor	Wall	Roof
1	Mud/thatch/grass/bamboo/wood etc.	252	192	----
2	Plastic/Polythene	----	----	----
3	Mud/sunburn brick/hand-made tiles	----	----	----
4	Wood/machine made tiles	----	----	----
5	G.I/ metal/asbestos sheet	----	52	281
6	Burned brick	----	37	----
7	Concrete	29	----	----
8	Total	281	281	281

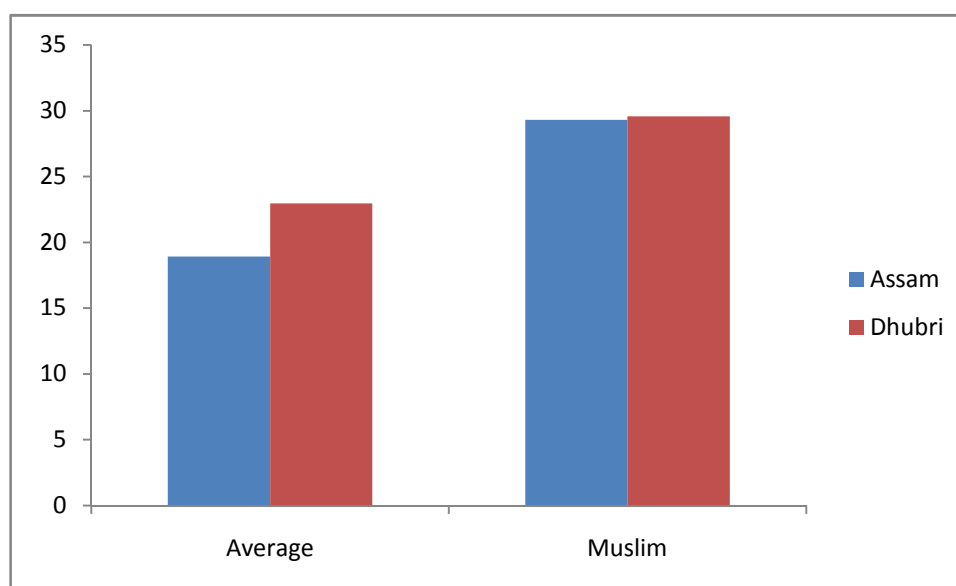
Source: *Sample Survey*

Poverty is a common characteristic of the Muslim population of Dhubri district. Four-fifth of the total Muslim population of Dhubri district lives below the poverty level. The earning and expenditure level of the people are very much traditional and agriculture based social set is there. The consumption pattern is just in the line of subsistence level. Housing system is not safe and standard.

6. FINDINGS:

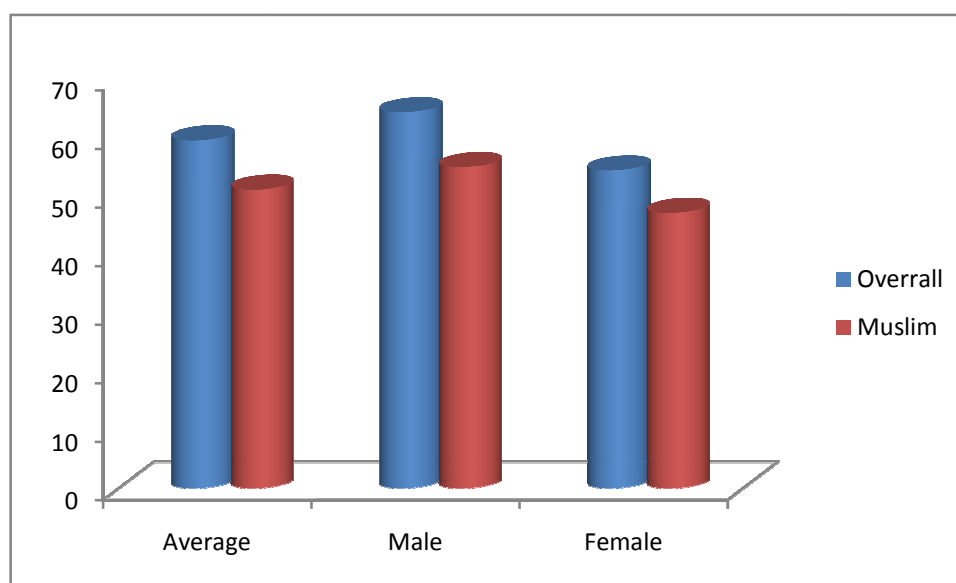
i) The growth of population of Assam is 18.92 per cent in 1991-2001 and the growth of Muslim population in Assam in 1991-2001 is 29.3 per cent. The growth of population of Dhubri district in 1991-2001 is 22.97 whereas the growth of Muslim population of Dhubri district is 29.58 per cent in 1991-2001.

Figure No.1: Population Growth in 1991-2001



ii) The sex ratio among the Muslim people of Dhubri district is 975 as against 952 of Dhubri district as a whole and Assam 954 in 2011. The crude birth rate is 30.01 for the Muslim, 22.1 for the district as a whole and 21.9 for Assam whereas the crude death rate is 9.73, 7.4 and 7.6 respectively.

iii) The literacy rate among the Muslim population of Dhubri district is found at 50.97 per cent out of which for male it is 54.83 per cent and for female it is 47.01 per cent. The census data of 2011 reveals that the literacy rate of Dhubri district is 59.36 per cent of which for male is 64.2 and for female it is 54.26 per cent.

Figure No. 2: Literacy Rate of Dhubri District in 2011

iv) The study reveals that the crude birth rate and the crude death rate of the Muslim population of Dhubri district is calculated as 30.09 and 9.73 from the data collected from the Muslim population of Dhubri district as against the crude birth rate 22.1 and crude death rate 7.4 of the overall population of Dhubri district.

v) If the average per capita income and per capita expenditure of the people are comparatively analyses then it is found that there is an average per capita surplus of income over the expenditure of Rs.1154 though the basic needs of the people remain unsatisfied.

vi) Another important fact reveals from the study that poverty is a 'never failing friend' of the Muslim people of the locality. 89.68 per cent of the people earn less than Rs.10, 225 per annum and 84.34 per cent of them earn Rs.9, 527 per annum and it is easy to assess that 89.68 per cent of the Muslim people of Dhubri are living below the poverty line.

vii) The health and sanitation, drinking water, road and communication and the other infrastructural facilities are in the deplorable condition in the Muslim dominated area of the district.

It is obvious from the study that due to lack of proper strategy, this area is lying in the vicious circle of poverty. The public authority should come forward and should adopt a direct intervention to alleviate poverty and to mobilize the human resource available, which would help the community to have a better standard life.

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