

### 4.1.2 Distribution of Population :

Besides population growth, another important aspect is population distribution. Looking at the population distribution pattern of the state, it is observed that distribution of population and settlements is not uniform in all the regions or places. In some regions population is more and its density is also more, while in other regions population is less and density is sparse. Generally, more settlements and population in a region indicate high density of population. Similarly, the sparse settlements and less population in a region indicate low density of population there. According to the census data (Table-4.3) the population density of Assam was only 42 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 1901, i.e., during the beginning of the 20th century. As time passed, population density started to grow along with population increase and the same grew by two times in 1941 (85 person per km<sup>2</sup>) as compared to 1901. Just after the Independence, i.e., in 1951 the density of state population increased to 102 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. In the subsequent period, population density increased substantially. It is seen from the table-4.3 that population density was 286 in 1991, 340 in 2001 and 398 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2011.

Population distribution is not same in all the regions of the state depending on the varied physical environments prevalent in different regions. So, population density is also not same in all the regions. Generally, the regions having no favourable physical conditions, and developed economic and transport system have sparse settlements and less population. As against this, the regions have high population density where the favourable physical and economic conditions prevail. In table-4.4 the data on population and its density in the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys and also the hill region of Assam during 2001 and 2011 are presented. In the Brahmaputra valley population is thick due to its plain land, fertile soils and favourable conditions for development of agriculture and transport. So, about 85 per cent of Assam's population live in the Brahmaputra Valley. Its population density was 1220 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2001 and this increased to 1502 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2011. The Upper Brahmaputra Valley region is inhabited by about 21 per cent of the population of the valley accounting for population density of 371 persons per km<sup>2</sup> according to 2011 census. On the other hand, about 27 per cent of the population of the valley live in the Middle Brahmaputra Valley region which accounts for population density of 500 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2011. Similarly, the Lower Brahmaputra Valley region is inhabited by about 36 per cent population of the valley.



Table-4.4 : Geographical region-wise population distribution in Assam (2001-2011)

| Regions                       | Area (Km <sup>2</sup> ) |                 | Percentage share of Total Area |           | Population      |                 | Percentage share of Assam's Total Population |            | Population Density (Persons per km <sup>2</sup> ) |      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|--|------------|---|------|
|                               | 2001                    | 2011            | 2001                           | 2011      | 2001            | 2011            | 2001   | 2011       | 2001  | 2011 |
| (A) Brahmaputra Valley        | 56,194                  | 264110562       | 71.64                          | 85.00     | 22658369        | 264110562       | 84.63  | 1220       | 1502  |      |
| (1) Upper Brahmaputra Valley  | 21,706                  | 6625840         | 27.67                          | (21.94)   | 5847045         | 6625840         | (21.23)                                      | 327        | 371   |      |
| (2) Middle Brahmaputra Valley | 14,340                  | 8532357         | 18.28                          | (27.09)   | 7222997         | 8532357         | (27.34)                                      | 420        | 500   |      |
| (3) Lower Brahmaputra Valley  | 20,148                  | 11252365        | 25.69                          | (35.97)   | 9588327         | 11252365        | (36.06)                                      | 473        | 631   |      |
| (B) Barak Valley              | 6,922                   | 3624599         | 8.82                           | 11.24     | 2995769         | 3624599         | 11.62  | 449        | 545   |      |
| (C) Hill Valley               | 15,322                  | 1170415         | 19.54                          | 3.76      | 1001390         | 1170415         | 3.75   | 58         | 68  |      |
| <b>Assam</b>                  | <b>78,438</b>           | <b>31205576</b> | <b>--</b>                      | <b>--</b> | <b>26655528</b> | <b>31205576</b> | <b>--</b>                                    | <b>340</b> | <b>398</b>  |      |

Source : Based of Census of India data.

Note : Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of population to the total population of the Brahmaputra Valley.



Population density is relatively higher here being 631 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. In the entire Brahmaputra Valley of the state variation of population density in its upper, middle and lower parts is noticeable. Population density is higher in the middle region than that of the upper region and again it is higher in the lower region than that of the middle region of the valley. On the other hand, the Barak Valley happens to be densely populated due to its fertile alluvial plain with favourable conditions for transport and agricultural activities. According to 2011 census data, population density of the Barak valley is 545 persons per km<sup>2</sup> and about 11 per cent of Assam's population live in the valley. In contrary to this, the hill region comprising the districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao situated between the Brahmaputra and Barak Valley has sparse settlements and low population due to its inconvenient physiographic conditions. About 3.75 per cent of state population live in this hill zone and it represents the lowest population density as compared to other regions of the state. Density of population in the hill zone was only 58 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2001 and it increased slightly to 68 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2011.

District wise distribution and density of population in Assam are interesting. The population data (2001 and 2011) of the districts of Assam are presented in table 4.5. As the four districts- Chirang, Kamrup (Metro), Baksa and Udalguri were created after 2001, so their population data of that year are not given in the table. However, the data on population and area of other six districts such as Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang have changed due to creation of these four districts.

Among the districts of Assam, as per 2001 census data, the Kamrup district is the most populous district with 2,522,324 population and the Dima Hasao district is the least populous district with 1,88,079 population of the state. But, the Nagaon district with 2,826,006 population became the most populous district of Assam in 2011 while the Dima Hasao district with 213,529 population was regarded as the least populous district in that year. In the case of population density data of 2001, the Nagaon district recorded highest density of population (583 persons per km<sup>2</sup>) and the Dima Hasao district recorded the lowest density of population (38 persons per km<sup>2</sup>) in the state. But, according to 2011 census data, the Kamrup (Metro) district has the highest density of population (2010 persons per km<sup>2</sup>). In this case, however the influence of high population concentration in Guwahati city is noteworthy. On the other hand, the Dima Hasao district has the lowest



Table-4.5 : District-wise population of Assam (2001-11)

| District           | Population      |                 | Population Density<br>(Persons per km <sup>2</sup> ) |            |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|------------|
|                    | 2001            | 2011            | 2001   | 2011       |
| 1. Dhubri          | 1637344         | 1,948,632       | 545  | 1171       |
| 2. *Kokrajhar      | 905764          | 886,999         | 256  | 280        |
| 3. *Bongaigaon     | 904835          | 732,639         | 420  | 425        |
| 4. Goalpara        | 822,035         | 1,008,959       | 451  | 553        |
| 5. *Barpeta        | 1647201         | 1,693,190       | 508  | 632        |
| 6. *Nalbari        | 1148824         | 769,919         | 509  | 763        |
| 7. *Kamrup         | 2522324         | 1,517,202       | 581  | 436        |
| 8. *Darrang        | 1504320         | 908,090         | 432  | 491        |
| 9. Sonitpur        | 1681513         | 1,925,975       | 316  | 365        |
| 10. Lakhimpur      | 889,010         | 1,040,644       | 390  | 457        |
| 11. Dhemaji        | 571944          | 688,077         | 177  | 213        |
| 12. Morigaon       | 776,256         | 957,853         | 500  | 618        |
| 13. Nagaon         | 2,314,629       | 2,826,006       | 583  | 711        |
| 14. Golaghat       | 946,279         | 1,058,674       | 270  | 302        |
| 15. Jorhat         | 999,221         | 1,091,295       | 350  | 383        |
| 16. Sibsagar       | 1,051,736       | 1,150,253       | 394  | 431        |
| 17. Dibrugarh      | 1,185,072       | 1,327,748       | 351  | 393        |
| 18. Tinisukia      | 1,150,062       | 1,316,948       | 303  | 347        |
| 19. Karbi Anglong  | 813,311         | 965,280         | 78   | 93         |
| 20. Dima Hasao     | 188,079         | 213,529         | 38   | 44         |
| 21. Karimganj      | 1,007,976       | 1,217,002       | 557  | 673        |
| 22. Hailakandi     | 542,872         | 659,260         | 409  | 497        |
| 23. Cachar         | 1,444,921       | 1,736,319       | 382  | 459        |
| 24. Chirang        | ×               | 481,818         | ×  | 244        |
| 25. Kamrup (Metro) | ×               | 1,260,419       | ×  | 2010       |
| 26. Baksa          | ×               | 953,773         | ×  | 475        |
| 27. Udalguri       | ×               | 832,769         | ×  | 497        |
| <b>Assam</b>       | <b>26655528</b> | <b>31205576</b> | <b>340</b>   | <b>398</b> |

Note : The four districts- Chirang, Kamrup(Metro), Baksa and Udalguri were created after 2001 and so their data are not given for 2001. As a result of creation of these districts, the population data of other six districts indicated by \* marks got changed.



# POPULATION DENSITY OF ASSAM, 2011

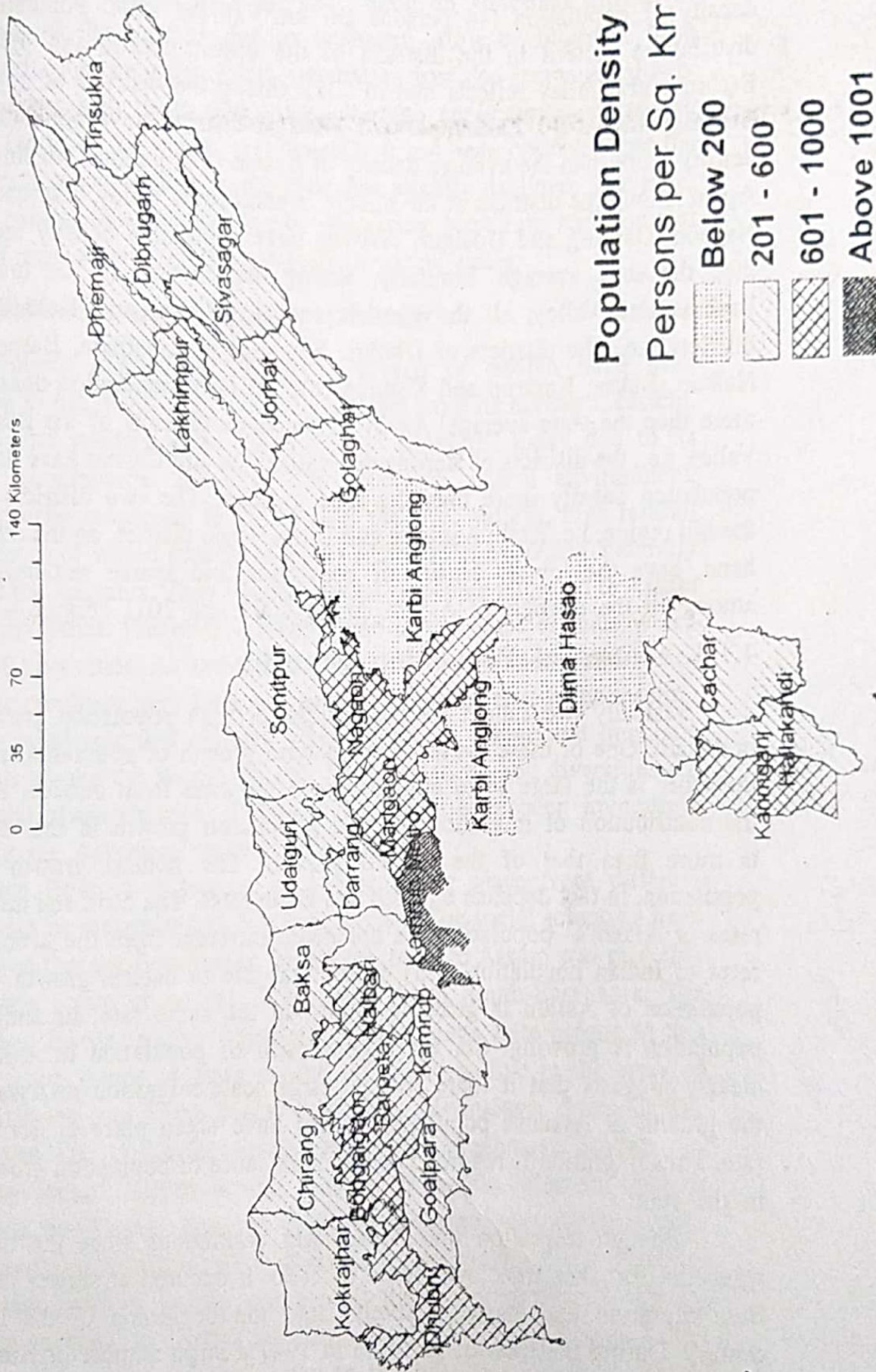


Fig. 4.3



density of population (44 persons per km<sup>2</sup>) in the state. Population distribution pattern in the districts of the upper, middle and lower Brahmaputra Valley reflects that in 2011 among the districts of upper Brahmaputra Valley, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts have population density more than the average density of Assam (398 persons per km<sup>2</sup>). Again among the districts of the middle Brahmaputra Valley, Morigaon, Nagaon, Darrang and Udalguri districts have population density more than the state average. Similarly, among the districts of the lower Brahmaputra Valley, all the districts except Chirang and Kokrajhar districts, i.e., the districts of Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari, Baksa, Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) have population density more than the state average. Again all the three districts of the Barak Valley, i.e., the districts of Karimganj, Hailakandi and Cachar have their population density more than the state average. The two districts of the hill region, i.e., Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao district, on the other hand, have the lowest density of population and sparse settlements among all the districts of Assam during 2001 and 2011 (Figure-4.3).

#### 4.1.3. Causes of Population Growth:

Basically two causes are responsible for high population growth in Assam. One of these causes is the natural growth of population and the other is the large scale migration into the state from outside. But the contribution of migration towards population growth in the state is more than that of the natural growth. The natural growth of population, in fact depends on birth and death rates. The birth and death rates of Assam's population are not much different from the average rates of Indian population. This means that due to natural growth the population of Assam is growing almost at the same rate the India's population is growing. So, the high growth of population in Assam clearly suggests that if there was no large scale migration to Assam, the growth of Assam's population would have taken place at normal rate. Thus migration is regarded as the main cause of population growth in the state.

Although migration into Assam was continuous since the time when the British took over India in 1826, it occurred at slower rate. But, migration had started actively from the beginning of the last century. During the time of partition in 1947 a large number of Hindu refugees migrated to Assam from the then East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). Again the population of Assam increased rapidly during the post Independence, period from 1951 to 2001. During this period



the growth rate of Assam's population was 232 per cent against the national growth rate of 185 per cent. Such an abnormal growth of population in the state is due to unabated flow of migrants from Bangladesh. On the other hand, population has also increased slowly due to decrease in death rate caused through applications of modern medical facilities. However, very recently it has been observed that the growth rate of population in the state has slightly declined. The main reasons behind this are the slowly decreasing birth rate and nominal check of migration from Bangladesh in recent years.