

Urbanization

Urbanization is a process of social change and one of the important characteristics of economic development. Urbanization process is continuing when industrial development and expansion take place. Moreover, when rural people move to urban place for seeking job boost urbanization. It is common feature that socio-economic requirement rural people seeks job or employment in urban adjoining areas which lead to population growth and settlement in urban areas. In Assam the process of urbanization took place only after nineteen centuries.

Assam has the largest urban population of 4.3 million (Census 2011) amongst the North-eastern States. Guwahati has about 0.9 million urban population, while the other large cities of the state are Nagaon (population 116,355), Dibrugarh (population 138,661) and Silchar (population 172,709). This indicates that Assam has a very well distributed urban population across the state. The state's level of urbanization is 14 per cent in the Census 2011, which is a 1.2 percentage point increase over the Census 2001 urbanization level of 12.9 per cent (Census of India, 2011).

The urban population of Assam stands at 43,88,756 which accounts for a percentage of 14.08 of its total population. This share was 12.90 per cent in the previous decade. On the other hand, the rural population stands at 2,67,80,516 with an overall population percentage of 85.92, which is a little less than the previous decade's percentage of 87.28. The census figures reveal that maximum urbanization has taken place in the district of Kamrup (Metro) having an urban population of 82.09 percent, while Baksa district recorded the minimum urban population with a count of just 1.28 percent. Significantly, there are 15 districts with more than 90 percent rural areas and six districts with 85-90 percent rural areas.

Kamrup (Metro) is the only district with a rural area share of less than 20 percent. Data also revealed that the State's rural population has recorded an increase of 15.35 percent during the decade 2001-2011. Among the districts, Dhubri district has recorded the highest growth of rural population of 27.13 per cent during the decade, while Kamrup (Metro) has registered the lowest growth rate of 2.93 per cent. Nalbari district with a decadal urban population growth percentage of 200.34 tops the list; Kamrup (144.51 per cent) and Goalpara (106.01) follow next. The child population (0-6 years) in the State stands at 45,11,307, with the break-up

for male and female being 23, 05,088 and 22, 06,219 respectively. The proportion of the child population to overall population at 14.47 per cent has come down from the previous decade's figure of 16.87 percent.

Occupational Distribution:

The Rural Economic Survey shows that between 75 and 85 percent of the rural population in Assam is dependent on agriculture. According to 1991 census total number of working population in Assam was 82.6 lakhs which constitute 36.9 per cent of the total population of the state. Distribution of main working force in various activities were as follows, 50.9 per cent cultivators, 12.09 per cent agricultural labourers, 10.5 per cent in livestock, forestry hunting and plantation and allied activities, 0.49 per cent in mining and quarrying, 40 per cent in manufacturing processing, servicing and repairing, 1.57 per cent in construction, 6.8 per cent in trade and commerce, 2.5 per cent in transport communication and 11.1per cent in other services.

Considering the seasonal character of agriculture in Assam and lack of employment opportunities in other fields, agricultural workers get employment on the average of 208 days in agricultural operations, 48 days in non-agricultural operations and 48 days in self-employment.

As per NSSO 55th Round data, labour force participation rates in Assam are lower than the all India average rates in all categories except a marginally higher position in case of urban male labour force in 1999-2000. Both male and female labour force participation rates in the all India level had a continuous decline in both rural and urban areas from 1983 to 1999-2000, i.e., as per 38th, 50th and 55th Rounds of NSS reports. But the trend in the growth rates of employment over the period of 1983 to 2000 for the State had a fluctuating increase. The latest NSSO 58th Round Report on Household Consumer Expenditure and Employment-Unemployment Situation in India also confirms the improving employment scenario in the State and also for all India.

Workers	Person	Male	Female
Main workers	11969690	8541560	3428130
Marginal workers	8687123	7034642	1652451
Cultivators	3282567	1506918	1775649
Agricultural labourers	3138554	2698384	440170
Household Industries workers	242071	146566	95505
Other workers	4403204	3484386	918818
Non workers	19235886	7397883	11838003

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14

Features of Occupation Structure

1. **Agriculture is Main Occupation:** In Assam, currently about 71 per cent of population is engaged in agriculture. It has given rise to disguised unemployment. Therefore, there is very little chance of reducing the burden of population on agriculture.
2. **Less Development of Industries:** In Assam about 15 per cent of population depends on manufacturing industries, mining etc. It proves that India is industrially backward.
3. **Unbalanced:** Assam economy is highly unbalanced. All production activities are not equally developed. Too much dependence on agriculture is a symptom of economic backwardness.
4. **Less Income:** Per capita income and the standard of living of the people in Assam are low. It is so because agriculture yields less income than trade.
5. **Small Villages:** Predominance of agriculture testifies that most of the people in Assam must be living in small villages and the number of people living in towns and cities must be very small.
6. **Backward Agriculture:** In Assam, about 71 per cent of population is engaged in agriculture, yet it imports food grains from other countries. It confirms that our agriculture is very backward. Thus it becomes imperative that agricultural sector should be developed.
7. **Increase in the Proportion of Agricultural Labourers:** The proportion of agricultural labourers has been rising during the period of planning. It underlines the fact that the number of wage-earners is increasing in agricultural sector.
8. **Less Development of Tertiary Activities:** Tertiary activities like services, banking and communication, transport etc. are not much developed in Assam.
9. **Trends in Occupational Structure:** That there has been no significant change in the occupational structure of Assam for the last one century.

Factors Determining Occupational Structure:

Occupational structure in a country depends on a number of economic, technological and geographical factors. These are -