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# EXPLORING THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULATION GROWTH AND LITERACY RATE IN ASSAM: POLICY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND POPULATION EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

Environmental education and population education both are the urgent needs of the time considering the global degradation of environmental condition that leads to threatening of not only the environmental plants and species but also the existence of human beings on earth. As the prime factor although not unique, the tremendous population growth also has contribute largely in degrading environmental situation. The present work is an attempt to bring awareness among students and teachers about environmental problems and population problems along with some suggestions for preventive measures. The contents of the book are designed following strictly the course content of the Gauhati University (GU) for its TDC syllabus on semester system. We think that our present work will meet the requirement and expectation of the teachers and students. As far as our work is concerned, it is nascent in the sense that no other books on the aspects “Environmental Education and Population Education” confining to the latest semester syllabus of GU has so far yet being published. The book touches all the contents in a manner which enable students not only to have a complete idea about Environmental Education and Population Education but also to help them to inculcate maximum achievement in their examination.

**Keywords:** *Population education, Environmental Education*

## INTRODUCTION

Population is the most important factor for contributing in economic development. Now a days, economic development is no longer measured in terms of income alone, rather, it is the HDI (Human Development Index) that determines it in a country. In consequence, the level of economic development of a country doesn't merely depend on the quantity of population, rather, it depends on number of population acting as the resource in moulding national economy. The HDI has bridge a direct relationship between number of population and literacy rate in a country. Population in a country may be regarded either an asset or liability. When a country is suffering from overpopulation and considerable percentage of it is supposed to be dependency load, then that dependent population are regarded as liability and vice-versa. Therefore, it is the mandate of the government to prepare the population productive making them educated. Population growth is a natural phenomenon but its explosion creates a great problem throughout the country. Population explosion deals with the challenges to fulfil their daily requirements, health, education, neat environment, etc. which are related to the welfare of a country. So, the Government should take the corrective measure to deal with the population control policy. For checking population explosions, the one and only way is to go for brainstorming and persuading the targeted groups about the negative

impact of alarming growth of population. In succeeding such biological intuition, education is the most potential instrument that can change the mind-set of the people. Higher is the percentage of literacy rate, lower would be tense of faster growth of population. Besides, creating awareness among the mass people is another weapon in persuading such people in this respect.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- (i) To investigate the population growth and its interrelationship with literacy rate in Assam.
- (ii) To put Policy suggestion on the present study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigator has adopted the analytical method to make the study relevant. In the present study, basically secondary source of data are used. The study is based on secondary data collected from different sources such as published journals, books and several other publications, the population census of India and the relevant websites.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic feature reveals landscape of a country or a place in terms of size of population, density, literacy rate, rural urban population, caste wise population etc. It also gives an idea about the level of social as well as economic status of the people of a particular place. Table-1 reveals about the population landscape of Assam during 2001 to 2011

**Table-1: Population Landscapes of Assam during 2001-11**

Sl. No.	Particulars		Census	
			2001	2011
01.	Population (in Lac)		267	312
02.	Density of Population		340	398
03.	Sex-Ratio		935	958
04.	Literacy (in %)	Person	63.25	72.19
		Male	71.28	77.85
		Female	54.61	66.27
05.	Urban Population (in %)	Person	12.90	14.09
		Male	53.41	51.39
		Female	46.58	48.61
06.	Rural Population (in %)	Person	87.10	85.90
		Male	51.43	51.03
		Female	48.57	48.97
07.	SC Population (in %)		7.40	7.15
08.	ST Population (in %)		12.83	12.45
09.	Muslims Population (in %)		30.92	34.22

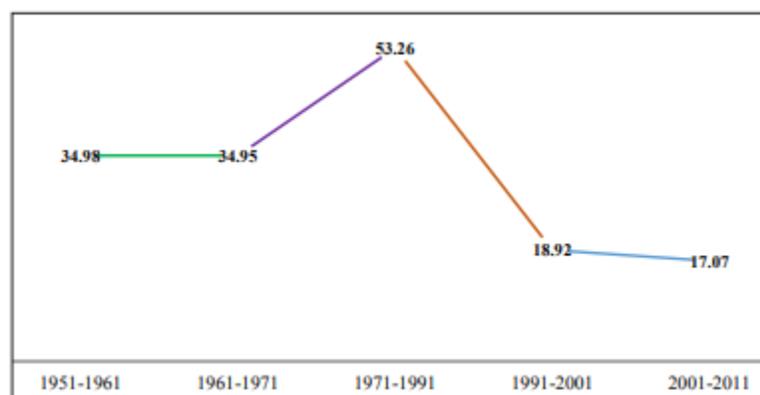
Total population of Assam was 267 lacs in 2001 that increases to 312 lacs in 2011 with an increase to 16.85%. The density of population rises from 340 per sq. km in 2001 to 398 per sq. km in 2011. It indicates a faster population growth in the state during the period. On the contrary, sex ratio in the state shows an improvement from 935 to 958 during the corresponding period which is a good indicator signalling for the economic development. Also, percentage of urban population increases compared to rural population during the period. People are gradually becoming urbanised revealing a shift of population agricultural sector to secondary or service sector. But, rate of such increase is negligible. However, the literacy rate in the state Assam increases from 63.25% in 2001 to 72.19% in 2011 with an increase in 14.13% compared to the previous decade. But, there shows a gender disparity in case of literacy in both the decade. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that rate of increase in the decadal growth rate of population (16.85%) is more compared to the increase in the literacy rate (14.13%). As the number of population increasing at a faster rate, financial pressure of the government has been increasing in meeting rising demand of meeting basic necessities of life including education

**Table-2: District-wise decadal percentage variation in Population of Assam during 1951 to 2011**

Sl. No.	District	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1991	1991-2001	2001-2011
01.	Dhubri*	43.74	43.26	45.65	22.97	24.44
02.	Bongaigaon*	36.27	35.81	38.77	22.09	20.59
03.	Kokrajhar*	55.41	54.89	61.96	14.49	5.21
04.	Chirang*	40.32	57.37	103.33	-0.08	11.34
05.	Baksa*	60.52	66.67	73.65	12.51	10.74
06.	Goalpara	37.10	45.88	54.12	23.03	22.64
07.	Barpeta*	34.39	33.91	40.97	19.62	21.43
08.	Nalbari*	33.56	31.79	75.78	14.21	11.99

Sl. No.	District	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1991	1991-2001	2001-2011
09.	Kamrup(M)*	13.30	19.99	20.77	45.91	18.34
10.	Kamrup*	45.12	44.48	81.53	14.97	15.69
11.	Darrang*	40.94	36.05	89.77	22.18	22.19
12.	Udalguri*	54.04	37.85	43.03	10.02	9.61
13.	Sonitpur*	41.99	33.17	68.08	18.11	15.55
14.	Lakhimpur	50.46	43.39	56.29	18.30	17.22
15.	Dhemaji	75.21	103.42	107.50	19.45	19.97
16.	Morigaon	37.89	37.51	50.90	21.35	23.34
17.	Nagaon	35.91	38.99	51.26	22.26	22.00
18.	Golaghat	26.04	30.85	58.12	14.27	12.75
19.	Jorhat	24.17	17.47	33.10	14.69	9.31
20.	Sivasagar	23.36	19.47	38.76	15.83	9.44
21.	Dibrugarh	30.64	22.93	37.78	13.68	11.92
22.	Tinsukia	35.92	31.02	47.03	19.51	15.47
23.	Karbi Anglong	79.21	68.28	74.72	22.72	17.58
24.	Dima Hasao	36.95	40.00	98.30	24.72	13.84
25.	Karimganj	22.96	25.13	42.08	21.87	21.90
26.	Hailakandi	27.23	23.61	45.94	20.89	21.45
27.	Cachar	22.60	23.96	47.59	18.89	20.19
Assam:		34.98	34.95	53.26	18.92	17.07

Above table shows that decadal percentage variation in population of Assam shows a declining trend during 1951 to 2011. It declines from 34.98% in 1951-61 to 17.07% in 2001-11. It means that growth rate of population was high in the decade of 1951-61 & 1961-71 because of high birth rate and also due to immigration substantial number from East-Pakistan. District-wise variation in decadal growth rate of population shows that it varies from district to district. Some district witnesses' higher percentage and some are less. Of course, during the later decades, it shows a lower percentage almost in all the districts. It is due to low birth rate compared to earlier decades. If we see the literacy rate of the state, it has been gradually increasing due to the course of time. Although, growth rate of population has been declining, it is yet as high as more than 17 per cent. Decadal percentage variation in population of Assam during 1951 to 2011 is also shown in the fig-1.



**Fig-1: Decadal Percentage variation in Population of Assam during 1951 to 2011****Table-3: District Wise Literacy rate of Assam, Census 2011**

Sl. No.	Districts	Literacy Rate (%)
01.	Nagaon	72.37
02.	Dhubri	58.34
03.	Sonitpur	67.34
04.	Cachar	79.34
05.	Barpeta	63.81
06.	Kamrup	75.55
07.	Tinsukia	69.66

Sl. No.	Districts	Literacy Rate (%)
08.	Dibrugarh	76.05
09.	Kamrup(M)	88.71
10.	Karimganj	78.22
11.	Sivasagar	80.41
12.	Jorhat	82.15
13.	Golaghat	77.43
14.	Lakhimpur	77.20
15.	Goalpara	67.37
16.	Morigaon	68.03
17.	Karbi Anglong	69.25
18.	Baksa	69.25
19.	Darrang	63.08
20.	Kokrajhar	65.22
21.	Udalguri	65.41
22.	Nalbari	78.63
23.	Bongaigaon	69.74
24.	Dhemaji	72.70
25.	Hailakandi	74.33
26.	Chirang	63.55
27.	Dima Hasao	77.54
<b>Assam:</b>		<b>72.19</b>

In above table-3, it is seen that literacy rate of Assam was 72.19% with 77.85% male and 66.17% female. The district wise percentages of literacy rate in Assam reveals a dispersed figures. There are some districts having higher literacy rate like Kamrup Metro (88.71%), Jorhat (82.15%), Sivasagar (80.41%), Karimganj (78.22%), Nalbari (78.63%), Dima Hasao (77.54%) etc. Rest of the district comparatively show lower literacy rate. The data shows that the literacy percentage of the urban districts are higher than the rural districts. Kamrup (M) has the highest literacy rate where the Jorhat district is the second-highest literacy rate. It is very sad to know that the Dhubri district (58.34%) has the least literacy rate in comparison to all the districts of Assam though this district

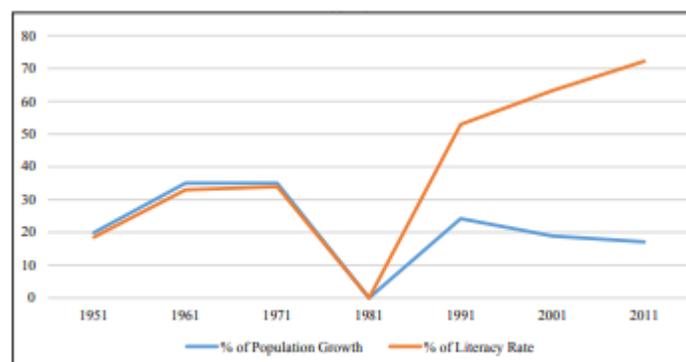
has the second-highest population of Assam. It may be due to the causes of huge areas of char areas existing in the district.

According to Survey Report, 2003-04 Dhubri district has highest char areas in Assam i.e., total 480 char<sup>2</sup> villages which 35.4% of the total population. Population growth and literacy rate are relative terms because both are two sides of the same coin. Population explosion can tremendously affect in the literacy rate in a state if the human resources are not properly nurtured. A systematic family planning and control of the population can make a healthy and knowledgeable society. Let's see the relation between the population growth and literacy rate from the following tables-4.

**Table-4: Population Growth and Literacy rate in Assam during 1951 to 2011**

Year	Total Population	% of Population Growth	% of Literacy Rate
1951	80,28,856	19.9	18.53
1961	1,08,37,320	35	32.95
1971	1,46,28,530	35	33.94
1981	-	-	-
1991	2,24,14,322	24.2	52.90
2001	2,66,55,598	18.9	63.25
2011	3,12,05,576	17.1	72.19

From the above table-4, it is clearly revealing that there is an inverse relationship between population growth and literacy rate in the state Assam during 1951 to 2011. The trend of the percentage of population growth shows a fluctuating and decreasing rate against an increasing rate in literacy during the corresponding period. The decade of 1961 and 1971 reveal a very high growth rate of population which is fuelled due to immigration from East-Pakistan due too political turmoil in the neighbouring then friendly country of India. Since then, population growth shows a decreasing rate against an increasing rate in the literacy rate. The relationship between population growth and literacy rate of Assam is shown in the line diagram in fig-2



**Fig-2: Population Growth and Literacy rate in Assam during 1951 to 2011**

## CONCLUSION

From the above study, it can be concluded that population growth and literacy go hand in hand. Unless and until population of a country are not properly educated, no policy will work properly. Population can't be controlled, if it is not controlled itself. Inconveniences of rapid growth of population should be realised by the targeted group themselves. Finally, present study on the population and literacy rates of Assam signifies that population explosion is a major issue to decrease the literacy rates of the state. There are many schemes and program for population control are run by the state but it seems to not working at all, so it's necessary to strict and systematic planning for the same. For the development of education of a state, the government should initiate the systematic and scientific scheme, program, policy and proper planning.

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