Chapter 2

THE SILCHAR TOWN

The chapter depicts the organization of Silchar town in terms of various groups, their ecology, spatial expansion, interdependence and interactions with special focus on the locus of the Barman. Silchar is a major urban centre in the Barak Valley of Assam.

Assam

Assam is the biggest one of the eight states of North East India; viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. To its north lies Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan; Nagaland and Manipur are on the east; Meghalaya and Mizoram on its south and West Bengal is on its west. It has a common border with Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma). Its total area is 78,523 sq.km., of which the hills account for 20 per cent and the rest is the plains. It is situated between the latitudes $28^0 18'$ and 24^0 N and the longitudes $89^0 46'$ and $97^0 4'$ E. At present it is

divided into 27 districts; viz., Barpeta, Baksa, Bongaigaon, Cachar, Chirang, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Darrang, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Goalpara, Hailakandi, Jorhat, Kokrajhar, Kamrup rural, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karimganj, Karbi Anglong, Lakhimpur, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, North Cachar, Shibsagar, Sonitpur, Tinsukia and Udalguri. The terrains constitute two valleys; viz., Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley. The three district; viz., Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj constitute the Barak Valley. Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills are the two hill districts of Assam and the rest, 22 districts, constitute the large Brahmaputra Valley (Debnath 2004 :39, Bhatt 1998 :159, www.assam.com).

The great Assam, the ancient land of tribals, is now a state of tribal minorities in the two river valleys. The state's population is 26,638,407 (Census 2001) comprising both the tribal and the non-tribal population. The communities can broadly be divided into two categories; viz., (i) the communities living in the plains of the two valleys and (ii) the communities living in the hilly districts. The communities in the plains are subdivided into four groups; viz., (i) the Assamese and Bengali peasants of the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys respectively, (ii) the Bodo speaking communities found all over the Brahmaputar Valley, (iii) the Mishing and (iv) the some hill communities who have come down, comparatively in recent times, to the neighbouring plains and have adopted settled cultivation (Majumdar 1979 : 32-33).

The major Scheduled Tribes living in hilly and plain areas of the states are Deor, Hmar, Jaintia, Bodo-Kachari, Thengal-Kachari, Dimasa-Kachari, Hojai-Kachari, Madahi-Kachari, Mech-Kachari, Sonowal-Kachari, Karbi / Mikir, Khasi / Bhoi, Khasi, Lyngam, Lalung, Man, Kabui Naga, Konyak Naga, Rongmei Naga, Sema Naga, Rabha, Riang and Singpho. All of these tribes together constitute 12.82% of the total popula-

tion of the state (Singh 1999 : 1212-28; Census 2001).

The Hindu and Muslim, Assamese and Bengali , peasants are an extension of the peasantry from other parts of Northern India. The Hindu caste system which is much less rigid in the region than in many other part of India has the built in mechanism to absorb tribal groups into its fold. Many of the Bodo speaking tribal communities like the Boro-Kacharis of Kamrup district, the Lalungs of Nagaon district and the Chutiyas of Lakhimpur district have now indistinguishably assimilated with Assamese Hindu peasantry of the Brahmaputra Valley. The Bengali Hindus and Muslims of the Barak Valley represent the eastern extension of the Bengali culture (Majumdar 1979 :33).

The Bodo speaking communities are spread all over the Brahmaputra Valley, from the easternmost corner to the western-most one and beyond. They include (i) the Bodos and the Bodo-Kacharis of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang districts, (ii) the Rabhas of Goalpara and Kamrup districts, (iii) the Lalungs or Tiwas of Nagaon and the Karbi Anglong districts and (iv) the Sonowal-Kacharies and Chutiyas of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts. There is much similarity in their social structures with vestiges of clan organization. Some of them have the patrilineal clan organization; some of them have the clans distinctively matrilineal whereas some have completely merged in to the caste hierarchy and have lost their tribal identities (Majumdar 1979 : 33).

The Mishings, formerly Miris, speaking a language of the North Assam branch of the Tibeto-Burman family all over the Brahmaputra Valley have come down to the plains in the recent past and have undergone a lot of changes in their habits and material culture due to adoption of settled cultivation. Similarly, the Garos in Goalpara, Kamrup, Karbi Anglong, Sibsagar and Darrang districts living far away from their homeland, i.e.,

the Garo Hills of Meghalaya and the Karbis in Nagaon district and the Khamtis in Dibrugarh district have come down from the neighbouring hills and have adopted the settled farming and the way of life of the river valley plains (Majumdar 1979 :34).

Assam has two hill districts; viz., Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. The Karbis (formerly Mikirs), the major community of Karbi Anglong, are a combination of four ideally endogamous small groups ; viz., Chintang, Ronghang, Amri and Dumrali. Some Karbis claim to be Hindus; some have been converted to Christianity and very few adhere to the traditional religion. Dimasas, the major community of North Cachar Hills, are the only Bodo speaking people living away from the Brahmaputra Valley. The Dimasa tribe is divided into 12 religious groups known as daikho. The traditional religious system of the Dimasa is very much on decline. Since 1813 A.D. a large number of Dimasas has undergone the process of Hiduization (Majumdar 1979 : 35).

Barak Valley

Barak Valley is situated in the southern part of Assam but has no similarity in respect of language, culture, tradition and cultural orientation. The valley situated between the longitudes $92^{0}15'$ and $93^{0}15'$E and the latitudes $24^{0}8'$ and $25^{0}8'$N covering an area of 69,412 sq.km is bounded in the north by the North Cachar Hills district of Assam and the Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya; in the east by Manipur; in the south by Mizoram and in the west by Tripura state and Sylhet district of Bangladesh. The river Barak which gives the name to the region traverses the mainland of the erstwhile Cachar (presently Barak Valley). Presently, the valley consists of three districts; viz., Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj. It is rich in tea, mineral water, forest and agricultural resources (Debnath 2004 :45).

Cachar District

Cachar district owes its name to the Kacharis, who ruled over the erstwhile Cachar region before its annexation to the British India in (1864 A.D.). The district was split in 1984 and 1989 to carve out two new districts; viz., Karimganj and Hailakandi respectively. Now, the Barak Valley consists of three districts viz, Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj. The area of Cachar district covers 3,786 sq.km. The district consists of two subdivisions; viz., Silchar and Lakhipur; five revenue circles, 14 blocks, 163 Gaon Panchayats and 1050 villages. The district forms a heterogeneous land of undulating ridges and plains and is situated between 90°15' and 93°16' E longitudes and 24°8' and 25°8' N latitudes in the extreme south eastern corner of the state (Debnath 2004 :45-46).

The district has a total population of 14,44,921 persons, of which 86.06% are living in the rural areas and 13.94% people in the urban areas. The literacy rate is 68.42% and sex ratio is 945 females per thousand males. The Scheduled Tribes constitute 1.29% of its population, of which 1.46% people are living in the rural areas and the rest (0.25%) in the urban areas (Census 2001). The tribal population is found mainly in Lakhipur, Sonai, Udharbond, Katigorh and Borkhola circles of the district (Paul 2001 :72).

Silchar Town

Silchar the headquarters town of Cachar district, is situated on the left bank of the Barak river in the extreme southern part of the state. The area was annexed by a British officer Lieutenant Fisher in 1833 A.D. Situated between 24°49′ N and 92°48′ E, the area is surrounded by the Barail Hills in the North, the Mizo Hills in the South, Manipur

state in the east and Bangladesh in the west. The river enters the town through eastern side and runs through its northeastern border. The town has evolved to its present state through a variety of experiences and developments since its' annexation. The name 'Silchar' has been derived from a Bengali word 'Sila-char' which means stony riverbed. Thus, the town is the stony riverbed of the Barak. Silchar Municipality Board was constituted in 1898 under Act V (B.C) of 1876. The town has been growing in size during the last one hundred years. At present, the municipal area of the town covers 15.78 sq.km (Bhattacharjee and Sen 2005 : 1, 3).

The town has the tropical humid climate as found in the rest of the state. Generally the outskirts of the town get flooded, causing extensive damage to the poor farmers. The winter is pleasant and has generally no rains. Wind blow is generally from the north east in the morning and from the south east in the afternoon. About the end of February stormy weather sets in and in March there are often thunderstorms and frequently heavy fall of hails, doing much damage to the tea. In April and May these storms become mild. A fair amount of rain fall takes place in summer (March to May). The average annual rainfall at Silchar is 121 inches. June to August is generally the wettest period in the year. So, the summer never reaches to extreme. The early rains in the summer bring the most needed relief to the people. Like the rest of Assam, Silchar is a seismic prone area and experiences earthquakes pretty often. In general, the climate of Cachar district is temperate (Bhattacharjee and Sen 2005 : 25-26).

Municipal Wards

The municipal area of the town is 15.78 sq.km divided into 28 wards. Each ward has a ward commissioner in the board. The municipal areas of the town divided into

words are shown below :

Ward Number	The Municipal Areas Covered
1,2,3 & 4	Malugram.
5	Rongpur.
6	Janiganj, Central Road, Tulapatty.
7	A part of Janiganj, Kalibari Road, Malakar Patti, Kalibarichar.
8	Madhurbondh, a part of Lakkhipur.
9	A part of Lakkhimpur Road, Padamabeel.
10	A part of Padmabeel, Radhamadhab Road, Panpatty, Hospital Road, Premtala.
11	Shasan Road, a part of Ambicapatty, Hospital Road, Chandicharan Road.
12	A part of N.S. Avenue, Pulic School Road, a part of Radhamadhab Road.
13	A part of Sonai Road.
14	A part of Sonai Road, Saradpalli, and Kanakpur Road one each.
15	A part of Sonai Road, Link Road, and Hailakandi Road one each.
16	A part of Link Road, Sonai Road, and Hailakandi Road one each.
17	National Highway, a part of Kathal Road and Hailakandi Road one each.
18	Dascolony and a part of Hailakandi Road.
19	Chencoorie Road and a part of Panchayat Road.
20	Shivcolony, Tarani Road and a part of Hailakandi Road.
21	Subhash Nagar and a part of Shosan Road and Ambicapatti one each.
22	Ambicapatti, a part of Jail Road and Premtala one each.
23	Central Road, Najirpatti, Narshingtala and a part of Shillongpatti.
24	A part of Park Road, Club Road, Trunk Road and a part of Shamiji Road (Itkhola) and Tarapur one each.
25	A part of Vivekananda Road, Tikarbasti, Ramkrishna Mission Road and Jhalupara.
26	A part of Vivekananda Road, Ashram Road and a part of Chanmari Road.
27	A large part of Tarapur.
28	A part of Tarapur (including overbridge), Masimpur Road, a part of Karimganj Road and Chidukhandi one each.

Source : Silchar Municipal Board

The road length of the town is 96k.m., surface length is 95 k.m. (average different diagonal distance of the surface) and unsurface length is 71 k.m. (average diagonal distance of unsurface length). Water tape connections supplying water from tanks in various localities are 12,802 and street lights are 4,403. Though there are numerous market places in the town, yet under the municipality board, there are only six main market places and eight shopping markets. In the north of the town a municipal park, Gandhi Baag and a district library, Jila Granthagar, are situated. The municipal board has provided two recreation halls; viz., R.D.I. Hall and District Library Hall (Municipal Record 2001).

A national club founded in the year 1900 A.D. is today known as Silchar India Club. Another club, Silchar Town Club, was established in the year 1940 A.D. The other cultural and sports clubs like Jyoti, Cachar Club, Dishari, Bhabhikal and Shantosena accords the town a cultural relief (Bhattacharjee and Sen 2005 : 43).

The military cantonment within the limits of the Civil station of Silchar, contains 140 of land (Bhattacharjee and Sen 2005 : 6).

Educational Institutions

Silchar has the best educational institutions in the region, which attract a good number of students every year for education. Some of the reputed Government and private educational institutions are listed below.

Government Educational Institutions	Private Educational Institutions
Assam University	Ramanuj Gupta Junior College
A. K. Chanda Law College	Hamanginee Junior College
Teachers Training College	Surendra Memorial Junior College
Women's College	R.R. Memorial School and Junior College
Guru Charan College	Silchar Collegiate School
Cachar College	Holly Cross School
Silchar Polytechnic College	Ramanuj Gupta School
Kendriya Vidyalay Silchar	Tiny Tots Home
Narshing High School	Muktashree High School
Normal Training School	North Eastern H.S.School
Govt. Girls H.S.School	Kidzee Nursery School
Govt. Boys H.S. School	Pranabananda Vidyamandir
D.N.N.K School	South Point High School
Adhar Chand H.S.School	Netaji Memorial Institute
Silchar Medical College & Hospital	Oriental High School
	Maharshi Vidyamandir and
	Barak Valley Academy

Hospitals

The town has a good number of hospitals and nursing homes as listed below.

Government Hospitals : Silchar Medical College Hospital, Civil Hospital, State Veterinary Hospital.

Private Hospitals/Nursing Home : Siva Sundari Nari Sikha Niketan, Valley Hospital and Research Centre, Red Cross Hospital, Nightingale Hospital, Mediland Nursing Home, South City Hospital, Cachar Cancer Hospital, Green View Nursing Home, Lions Eye Hospital, Sudipta Nursing Home, Ishita Hospital, Lifeline Hospital, Ellora Nursing Home, Kay Cee Nursing Home and Sundari Mohan Seva Bhawan

Banks

In the town Banking services are provided by 18 branches of various banks; viz., Allahabad Bank, Assam Cooperative Apex Bank Ltd., Bank of Baroda, Central Bank of India (Central Road), Cachar Gramin Bank (Hospital Road), Federal Bank Ltd, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India (Main Branch), State Bank of India (Najir Patty), Union Bank of India, United Commercial Bank, United Bank of India, Vijaya Bank, State Bank of India (New Silchar).

Other Offices

Many offices of Assam Government and Government of India are located in the town; viz., All India Radio, Doordarshan Kendra, Water Treatment Plant, Treasury Office, Election Office, Land Acquisition Office, District Industries Centre, Silchar Municipal Office, Head Post Office, Telephone Exchange, Income Tax Office, Indian Airlines Office, Fire Brigade, Tea Association of India Barak Valley, Silchar Development Authority Office, District Development Office, District Commission Office and Superintendent of Police Cachar.

Police Services

The town has the police outposts in four different corners; viz., Sadar Police Station, Malugram Police Outpost, Tarapur Police Outpost and Ghungoor Police output. Besides, there is a Traffic Branch of Police for controlling vehicular traffic in the town.

Newspapers

The earliest known newspaper of Cachar was a Bengali weekly 'Silchar' edited by Babu Bidhu Bhusan Sen, a teacher of Narsing M.E. School. But its publication has

ceased by now. Presently the renowned local newspapers published from the town are Dainik Jugasankha, Dainik Sonar Cachar. The Frontier Sun and Samoyik Prasanga.

Transport System

The actual contact of the town with the rest of the country was happened with the extension of the Rail-link, the Assam-Bengal Railway which covered Silchar in 1899 A.D. The rail line entered into Cachar near Badarpur Junction, across Sylhet. A branch line from Badarpur, through the south bank of Barak, pushed up to Silchar, past Katakhal, Salchapra and Gagra. Later, at the time of world war II (1939-1945 A.D.) the services of Indian Airlines started from the airport in Kumvirgram, 20 k.m. from the town (Bhattacharjee 2005 : 15, www.silchar.com:silcharairport).

The town is connected with other districts of Assam as well as other states like Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland by road. Assam State Transport Corporation and private transport corporations like Jagannath Travels, Capital Travels, Blue Hills, Moti Travels, Zam Zam Travels, Zed Travels, etc. are providing bus services.

Within the districts of Barak Valley bus and sumo services are available between the towns. Within the town the people move by cycles, rickshaws, autorickshaws city buses and private vehicles.

Political Climate

Politically Silchar has been all through different from the rest in Assam. When the Assam Gana Parishad formed the Government in the state, the Congress won in Silchar. When the Congress is in the state, the Bharatiya Janata Party has won in Silchar. In the recent past the people from the town have been pro-B.J.P. and pro-Congress.

The Communities

The population of Silchar subdivision and the town comprises mainly three social categories; viz., Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and General Castes as shown in the table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Distribution of the Population in Silchar Sub-Division and Silchar Town

Population	Silchar Rural (%)	Silchar Urban (%)	Whole Subdivision (%)
Scheduled Tribes	1424 (0.36)	445 (0.24)	1869 (0.32)
Scheduled Castes	76818 (19.36)	17971 (9.76)	94789 (16.32)
General non-tribal	318456 (80.28)	65689 (89.10)	484145 (83.36)
Total	**396698 (100)**	**184105 (100)**	**580803 (100)**

Source : Census 2001, office of the Deputy Commissioner, Election Branch, Silchar

The table reveals that the whole Silchar subdivision has a population of 5,80,803, of which 83.36% belong to General Caste, 16.32% are the Scheduled Castes and 0.32% are the Scheduled Tribes.

The urban area of Silchar subdivision has a population of 184105 population. Of the total urban population most of the people belong to General Caste people (89.10%). The Scheduled Castes constitute 9.76% and the Scheduled Tribes constitute only 0.24%.

Of the rural population 80.28% people belong to General Castes, 19.36% belong to Scheduled Castes and 0.36% belong to the Scheduled Tribes. These three populations are variously distributed i the wards of the town. Therefore, the following table on the distribution of the total urban population in 28 wards of Silchar town is presented.

Table 2.2 : Distribution of the total urban population in 28 wards of Silchar Town

Ward No.	Total Population (%)	Total S.C. Population (%)	Total S.T. Population(%)
1	5271 (2.86)	682(3.80)	51 (11.46)
2	8398 (4.56)	516 (2.87)	46 (10.34)
3	6429 (3.49)	54 (3.08)	8 (1.80)
4	4014 (2.18)	233 (1.30)	11 (2.47)
5	10,298 (5.59)	2022 (11.25)	31 (6.97)
6	1831 (0.99)	42 (0.23)	0
7	6407 (3.48)	2596 (14.46)	0
8	1596 (0.87)	11 (0.06)	0
9	4728 (2.57)	37 (0.21)	0
10	3038 (1.65)	51 (0.28)	0
11	3416 (1.86)	44 (0.24)	0
12	4557 (2.48)	112 (0.62)	2 (0.45)
13	4420 (2.40)	273 (1.52)	4 (0.90)
14	6038 (3.28)	401 (2.23)	0
15	3324 (1.81)	237 (1.32)	17 (3.82)
16	4755 (2.58)	65 (0.36)	1 (0.22)
17	4928 (2.68)	319 (1.78)	1 (0.22)
18	6031 (3.28)	723 (4.02)	0
19	5406(2.94)	1314 (7.31)	18 (4.04)
20	4236 92.30)	356 (1.98)	0
21	3867 (2.10)	147 (0.82)	0
22	4302 (2.34)	111 (0.62)	11 (2.47)
23	2638 (1.43)	12 (0.07)	3 (0.67)
24	5745 (3.12)	834 (4.64)	18 (4.04)
25	6117 (3.32)	251 (1.40)	33 (7.42)
26	5183 (2.82)	777 (4.32)	0
27	6740 (3.66)	995 (5.54)	142 (31.54)
28	8486 (4.61)	1474 (8.20)	38 (8.54)
Total (%)	**184105 (100)**	**17971 (100)**	**445 (100)**

Source : Census 2001, office of the Deputy Commissioner Election Branch, Silchar

The table reveals that of the total population of the town Ward No. 5 has the highest population (5.59%) and Ward No.8 has the lowest population (0.87%). Of the total Scheduled Castes population of the town, Ward No.7 has the highest Scheduled Castes population (14.46%) and Ward No.8 has the lowest population (0.06%).

The ward No.27 has the highest Scheduled Tribes population (31.91%) whereas the Ward No.16 and 17 have the lowest Scheduled. Tribes population. However, the Ward No.6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18, 20, 21 and 26 do not have any Scheduled Tribes population.

The non-tribal population (99.76%) comprises Bengali, Meitei-Manipuri, Vishnupriya-Manipuri, Bihari, Marwari and a little of Nepali and Assamese population. Of these, the Bengali Hindus and Muslims constitute the most of the population. The tribal population (0.24%) comprises Barman, Dimasa, Rongmai-Naga, Zemi-Naga, H'mar and Khasi population (www.silchar.com:silchartown).

The Tribals have been migrating to the far off places in the district to take up employment as the tea garden labour and the unskilled labour at construction sites. Their descendants hardly return to their home lands.

Silchar exhibits occupational distribution on community lines. Generally non-tribal as well as tribal people are working in Government and semi-Government establishments. Marwaris are in the garment and other businesses. Some Bengalis are also engaged in business for long time. Bihars are mainly engaged in cycle rickshaw pulling, coolie jobs, selling of street foods, etc.. Some Bengali Hindus and Muslims are also engaged in the rickshaw pulling. In the market, the Bengali Hindus and Muslims are engaged in selling of vegetables, fish, meat and groceries. A number

of hotels, restaurants and sweetshops are owned by Bengalis and Marwaris. A few popular ones of these are Hasty Tasty, Hotel Maruti, Borail View, Geetanjali, Indraprastha, Sudakshina, Ellora etc. Some small scale jobs such as door to door selling of vegetables, petty trade and commerce, unskilled labour for construction works, rickshaw pulling, coolie and various kinds of business have emerged. Most of the people living in the outskirts of town rely on farming and tea cultivation. Some Hinduized tribal groups living in rural areas of the district are practising settled cultivation, now-a-days. A few tribals, specially Nagas in the urban setting, indulge in prostitution for livelihood. Many educated tribals are employed in Government offices, schools, colleges, medical institutions.

Silchar the nerve centre of south Assam, was a small place in the recent past, having only a few brick buildings such as the Court House and the Church in the recent past. Yet, now-a-days, it has phenomenally grown into an urban centre of various facilities such as better educational facilities, good number of hospitals, nursing homes, better transportation facilities, better banking facilities and large number of shops and markets. These facilities attract the people of various ethnic identities in the region to migrate to the town for civic services, jobs, education, trade and commerce. Tribal people are also part of the migration and urbanization, to some extent.

The Barman

The Barman constitutes a major population of the tribal population in Silchar town. According to the census of 2001 the total Scheduled Tribes' population constitutes 0.24% of the total population of the town. The Barman population in the town has been growing steadily for a long time and, as per the field data on 30 November

2006, the Barman population alone constituted 0.25% of the total population of the town. The Silchar Dimasa Samaj the executive committee of the urban Barmans association of the recorded on 25 January 2006 on 25/01/2006,107 Barman families in the town concentrated mainly in Tarapur, Rongpur, Sonai Road, Itkhola, Malugram, Jhalupara and Hailakandi Road (Source : Rosomay Barman, the Ex-President , Silchar Dimasa Samaj). However, during the fieldwork there were enumerated 111 Barman families in all the localities of the town.

The table 2.3. presents the locality wise distribution of the Barman families and the in population in Silchar town.

Table 2.3 : Locality wise Distribution of the Barman Families and The Population in Silchar Town, November 2006

Locality	Number of Families (%)	Number of Males (%)	Number of Females (%)	Total Population (%)
Tarapur	32 (28.83)	77 (30.56)	61 (28.11)	138 (29.42)
Rongpur	26 (23.42)	59 (23.41)	48 (22.12)	107 (22.81)
Malugram & Itkhola	24 (21.62)	52 (20.63)	51 (23.50)	103 (21.96)
Jhalupara, Mission Road & Tikarbasti	7 (6.31)	17 (6.75)	18 (8.29)	35 (7.46)
Hailakandi Road & National High way	12 (10.81)	24 (9.52)	22 (10.14)	46 (9.8)
Sonai Road & other areas	10 (9.01)	23(9.13)	17 (7.83)	40 (8.33)
Total	111 (100)	252 (100)	217 (100)	469 (100)

Source : Field Survey, March 01 - November 30, 2006

The table shows that in the town the Barman population is 469 comprising 53.73% males and 46.27% females. The sex ratio is 862 females per thousand males. This low sex ratio may be because of two reasons; viz., (i) the males have migrated much more than the females for jobs and education and (ii) the natural birth rate of male is higher than the female as is evident in the table 2.4. Of their total population the largest proportion (29.42%) is inhabiting in Tarapur (Ward No.27 and 28) followed Rongpur (Ward No.5) as well as Malugram and Itkhola (Ward No.1,2,3,4 and 24). The 9.8% Barmans are found in Hailakandi Road and National Highway areas (Ward No.17); 7.46% in Jhalupara, Mission Road and Tikarbasti (Ward No.25) and 8.33% in Sonai Road area (Ward No.15) and other areas.

Of the total 111 Barman families one fourth families are each found in Tarapur and Rongpur. One fifth families in Malugram and Itkhola areas and the rest (one fourth) are in Jhalupara, Mission Road, Tikarbasti, Hailakandi Road, National Highway, Sonai Road and other areas.

However, the total Barman population in the town includes 4.26% individual males as well as females who have migrated to the town for higher education or with regard to their jobs in Government or private organizations while their families are still in the villages of their origin.

Age Structure

Age distribution of the people throws light on the nature of urbanization of a population. Therefore, the following table presents the age distribution of the Barman population in the town.

Table 2.4. : Age Distribution of the Barman Population in Silchar Town, November 2006

Age Groups	Number of Males (%)	Number of Females (%)	Total Population (%)
Children (0-14 years)	76 (30.16)	58 (20.73)	134 (28.57)
Youth (15-30 years)	50 (19.84)	53 (24.42)	103 (21.96)
Middle Aged (31-60 years)	116 (46.03)	91 (41.94)	207 (944.14)
Old Aged (60 & above)	10 (3.97)	15 (6.91)	25 (5.33)
Total (%)	**252 (100)**	**217 (100)**	**469 (100)**

Source : Field Survey, March 01 - November 30, 2006

The table reveals that over two fifths are the middle aged; over one fourth are the children; one fifth are the youth and a small fraction of the old aged. Thus, the children and the youth constitute half the population of the urban Barmans. Of the males, nearly half the people are the middle aged, about one third are the children and one fifth are the youth.

Of the females, two fifths are the middle aged, one fourth are the youth and than one fifth are the children. The old aged females are double the males. Thus, the number of males belonging to the categories of the children and middle aged is considerably higher than that of the females whereas the number of females in the categories of the youth and old aged is higher than the males.

This population structure is because of some genuine reasons. In the middle aged (31-60 years) group the number of the males is higher because they have migrated in the town with regards to jobs. But the number of the females who have migrated for the same reason is very insignificant. Females migrated because of marriage. In the children's group the number of the males is higher because the natural birth rate of the males seems to be higher than the females in the community. In the youth, the number of the females is higher because the wives of the some of the middle aged fall in this category. Consequently, in the old aged (60+) population a few widows enhanced the number of the females as compared to males.

The migration pattern also reveals urbanization of a people. Therefore, the Barmans migration pattern is probed here.

Migration Pattern

The Barmans have migrated to the town mainly from the villages of Cachar district, other districts of Assam and other states. Their migration patterns has a determining impact on their urbanization in Silchar. To know the migration pattern of their families over a span of seven decades the table 2.5. is given below.

Table 2.5 : Migration of the Barman Families in Silchar Town, November 2006

Period of Migration	Number of Females (%)
2001-06	11 (9.91)
1991-2000	21 (18.92)
1981-1990	23 (20.72)
1971-1980	19 (17.12)
1961-1970	15 (13.51)
1951-1960	11 (9.91)
1947-1950	9 (8.11)
1941-1946	1(0.90)
1935 -1940	1 (0.90)
Total (%)	**111 (100)**

Source : Field Survey, March 01 - November 30, 2006

The table reveals that the Barmans have been migrating since 1935 onwards. The families migrating in the pre-Independence period (1935-1946) constitute merely 1.8% and those migration between 1947 to 1950 constitute 8.11% of the total number of families. Thus, means the rate of their migration to the town in the pre-Independence period was negligible.

In 1951-60 the rate of migrating families (9.91%) augmented and shows a steady increase of 13.51%, 17.12% and 20.72% for the three decades, i.e., 1961-70, 1971-80 and 1981-90 respectively. Thus a constant increase of the rate in the period 1951-

90 indicates that the Barmans were gradually being drawn into various jobs under the state's departments and settling down in the town. But the rate of migration shows a constant decline since 1991 onwards perhaps due to increased connectivity between rural and urban areas in the district as well as due to decline of Government jobs in view of the liberalization, privatisation policy of Indian Government.

The patterns of urbanization and migration will lay bare through the data on birth places of the Barmans of the town. Therefore, the Barman population is distributed into the places of birth in the table 2.6 given below.

Table 2.6 : Distribution of the Barman Population in Silchar Town by the Places of Birth, November 2006

Birth Place	Number of Males (%)	Number of Females (%)	Total Population (%)
Silchar Town	86 (34.12)	60 (27.65)	146 (31.13)
Other Places of Cachar District			
Udharbond	71 (28.17)	43 (19.81)	114 (24.30)
Dholai	50 (19.84)	57 (26.27)	107 (22.81)
Borkhola	13 (5.16)	23 (10.60)	36 (7.67)
Katighara	12 (4.76)	16 (7.37)	28 (5.97)
Lakhipur	6 (2.38)	2 (0.92)	8 (1.70)
Patharkandi	1 (0.40)	0	1 (0.21)
Katlichora	3 (1.19)	3 (1.38)	6 (1.28)
Other District of the Barak Valley			
Hailakandi	2 (0.79)	0	2 (0.43)
Other Districts of South Assam			
Haflong	1 (0.40)	6 (2.76)	7 (1.49)
Maibang	0	3 (1.38)	3 (0.43)
Other Districts of Assam			
Tinsukia	0	1 (0.46)	1 (0.21)
Kamrup	3 (1.19)	0	3 (0.64)
Other Cities/States of India			
Delhi	1 (0.40)	0	1 (0.21)
Maharastra	2 (0.79)	0	2 (0.43)
Andhra Pradesh	1 (0.40)	0	1 (0.21)
Madhya Pradseh	0	1 (0.46)	1 (0.21)
Total (%)	**252 (100)**	**217 (100)**	**469 (100)**

Source : Field Survey March 01 - November 30, 2006

All places of Cachar district - 446 (95.10)
All districts of Barak Valley - 2 (0.43)
All districts of South Assam - 12 (2.56)
All districts of Assam - 4 (0.85)
Other States of India - 5 (1.07)

The table reveals that the new generation of the urban Barmans who were born in Silchar town constitutes about one third of the total population. About two thirds of the Barman population have migrated from the rural areas of Cachar district; viz., Udharbond, Dholai, Borkhola, Katighora, Lakhipur, Patherkandi and Katlichora. Among them most of the people have come from Udharbond circle (24.30%) followed by the Dholai circle (22.81%). Besides Cachar, about one tenth people migrated from other districts of Assam; viz., Haflong, Maibong, Karbi Anglong, Tinsukia and Kamrup. An insignificant proportion of the people (1.07%) has migrated from the four states; viz., Maharastra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi also.

Briefly, mainly the migration of the Barmans in the town is for education and jobs in the post-Independence times and the process of their migration and urbanization is steadily going on over the decades.

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