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URBANISATION IN THE KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT OF ASSAM: A CASE STUDY OF THE GROWTH OF DIPHU TOWN

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Abstract

Urbanisation is the process of society, transformation from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban population. Diphu being the headquarter of Karbi Anglong district of Assam witnessed a steady growth and level of urbanization due to rise in population growth, flow migration and other associated factors. In spite of being physically remote and socio-economically backward in comparison with some other districts of Assam, it has been found that the growth of urban population is noticeably higher in this hilly district. Based primarily on secondary data, the study examines the level of urbanization in Karbi Anglong with respect to the growth of Diphu Town.

Keywords: Urbanization; Diphu; Karbi Anglong; Population; Assam; Migration.

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1. Introduction

Increase in human population on the earth's surface is responsible either for the emergence of new settlement area or for the addition of new inhabitants to an already settled area concentration of population in a particular area not only brings about the changes in its size or quantity but also it does enough in survey respect towards the growth and development of the area in relation to time and space.

Urbanization has been considered as a district 'measuring stick' of prosperity and development in a society. Factors of various kinds in combination with others are responsible for the growth of urban centres, while development of a centre is associated with the functions of production, distribution and consumption of goods and sources. It encompasses also the aspects like livelihood, education, health, art and culture, tradition, politics, science and technology, transport and communication, recreation and soon.

Urbanization mechanism in the hilly districts specially in Karbi Anglong took its own shape after 1951 when the single political unit comprising the present two hill districts was emerged. Since the emergence of first as district headquarter – Diphu have been attracting people especially rural people not only from the respective district itself but also from the respective district itself but also from the outside of the state. Rapid growth of population and their demand for new market areas, residential areas etc. have significantly change the scenario of urbanization in the Karbi Anglong region.

2. Study Area

The study area includes the districts of Karbi Anglong with special reference to Diphu Town. It has the longitudinal extension of 92 degree 09 minute E to 93 degree 52 minute E and latitudinal extension of 25 degree 32 minute N to 26 degree 33c minute N.

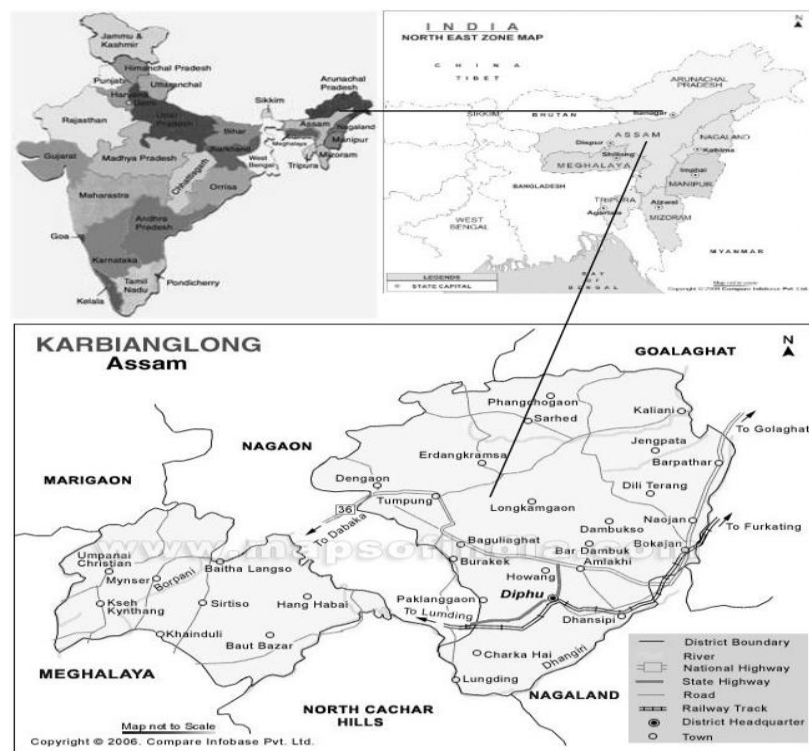


Figure 1: Map of Karbi Anglong district

3. Data Base and Methodology

This paper has been prepared with the data collected from the secondary sources like statistical handbook of Assam, Census of India, 2011 and related journals, book along with some personal observation of the study area.

4. Findings and Discussion

- **Urban Population pattern of Karbi Anglong:** Karbi Anglong the hilly district of Assam is physically remote, economically underdeveloped and socially still backward in

comparison with the other plain districts. The man-land ratio i.e. the population density in this district is significantly low. Geography and remoteness have been playing an important role in the uneven distribution of population throughout the district.

Growth of Urban Population and Urban Centre in Assam and in the Karbi Anglong (1951-2011)
 Table 1 (Source: Census of India 2011)

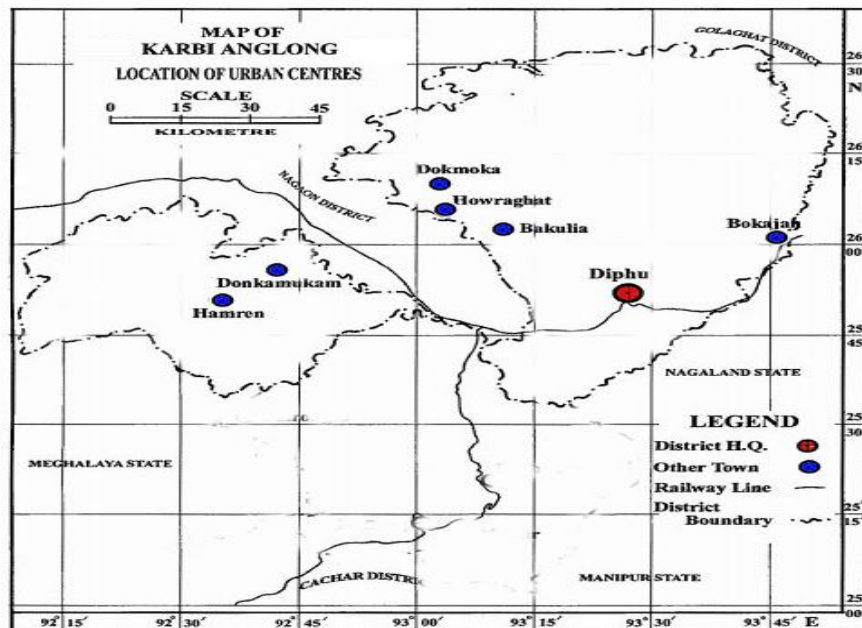
STATE & DISTRICT	YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	RURAL POPULATION	URBAN POPULATION	% OF URBAN POPULATION	% OF URBAN TO STATE'S TOTAL URBAN	NUMBER OF TOWNS
ASSAM	1951	8,830,732	8,420,439	410,293	4.65	-	25
	1961	11,872,772	10,959,744	913,028	7.69	-	54
	1971	14,625,152	13,335,930	1,289,222	8.82	-	71
	1991	22,414,322	19,926,527	2,487,795	11.10	-	86
	2001	26,655,528	23,216,288	3,439,240	12.90	-	110
	2011	31,205,576	26,807,034	4,398,542	14.10	-	214
KARBI ANGLONG	1951	125777	125777	-	-	-	-
	1961	2,254,07	2,222,90	3,117	1.38	0.34	1
	1971	3,793,10	3,691,10	10,200	2.69	0.79	1
	1991	6,627,23	5,922,57	70,466	10.63	2.83	6
	2001	8,133,11	7,21,381	91,930	11.30	2.67	6
	2011	956,313	843,347	112,966	11.81	-	7

Amongst the undivided 27 districts of Assam, Kamrup comprising the capital city of Guwahati stands on the first position in respect of urbanization. Considering districts total population, Karbi Anglong accounts for 11.81% of urban population and it ranks 10th according to population census of 2011. Out of 214 number of towns/urban of Assam, the district possess 7 number.

During the second half of the 20th century (upto 2011), the growth of urban population in this area have been taking place significantly at study rate. Till the year of 2011, there were 7 numbers of town in Karbi Anglong. Most of the urban centres are the outcome of administrative activities, for which they could simply be considered as administrative centres of course, there are some other factors to act upon the process of growth of the centres.

- 1) **Diphu:** Diphu, being the district's headquarters in the principal town of Karbi Anglong.
- 2) **Buchanan:** At the co-ordination 26.01'15'' North, parallel of latitude and 93.46'10'' east meridian of longitude, Bokajan is situated on the bank of river Dhansiri in the eastern part of Karbi Anglong district about 66 K.M. away from Diphu.
- 3) **Howraghat:** Being located latitudinally at 26.06'32'' north and longitudinally at 93.02'15'' east, Howraghat originally was a small trading centre of old Assam. With the passage of time became an administrative centre of Karbi Anglong district on the river Jamuna. The town develops over a flood-plain area with an average altitude of 81 meters above the mean seal level.

- 4) **Dokmoka:** Dokmoka, a roadside small market town on the National Highway 36 is located at the co-ordinating point of 26.12'22" north latitude and 93.03'12" east longitude. Lying on a river plain at 74 meters altitude from the mean seal level, the town spreads over an area of 2.00 sq. km. about 84 km away from Diphu.
- 5) **Hamren:** Lying on a purely hilly topography at an average of 405 meters about the mean sea level. Hamren is globally located at 25.50'40" north latitude and 92.34'30" east longitude about 170 km away from Diphu in the western part of Karbi Anglong district.
- 6) **Donkamukam:** Being situated latitudinally at 25.55'50" North and longitudinally at 92.42'20" East, this small township develops on a foot hill plain area with an average altitude of 70 meters above the mean sea level in the western part of Karbi Anglong district.
- 7) **Bakulia:** This very young township is also a road side market town Having been declared recently on 5th May, 2008, Bakulia has become the seventh town of Karbi Anglong district. Situated on the National Highway 36, Bakulia's global position is at latitudinally 26.03'36" North and longitudinally 93.11'21" East with an average elevation of 104 meters above is about 58 kilometers away from Diphu.



Source: School Atlas

Figure 2: Urban towns of Karbi Anglong District

Urbanization of Diphu Town

The process of peopling at Diphu was started with the works of construction of the railway line between Dibrugarh and Lumding connecting Chittagong of East Bengal towards the ending part of the 19th Century. Workers were brought not only from various parts of the country but also from Nepal and even from far Baghdad.

Now, the town of Diphu has acquired the class-II status in respect of its population size in 2001 census. The growth history of the urban centre is not so old, it is just a half a century of three major factors of population growth, the migration or mobility of population in either in single or

group or in the form of mass exodus from outside the area is responsible for the spatial growth of the town. Diphu was declared as town constituting of five members by the then Karbi Anglong District Council on 24th April, 1961; but it was recognized as an urban centre only from the 1971 census year. At present the total area of Diphu Town is 16.48 sq. km. according to 2011 census.

Further the establishment of new educational institution like Diphu Polytechnic at Cheksolangso of Disama area, Diphu Campus of the Assam University at Panchkilo besides the Diphu – Lumding Road, B.Ed. College and B.Sc. Nursing College near Diphu – Lumding road, Hindi Training Centre at Mentila; Navodaya Vidyalaya and Cultural Complex at Taralangso area in the outskirts of the town encourage the urban growth.

Apart from the Diphu Town Committee and the town and country planning organization (Urban Development Department) Diphu, the Diphu Development Authority (DDA) has been set up by the government of Assam on May 23rd 2003 for a better and well-planned town.

Decadal growth and density of population in Diphu Town
Table 2 (Source: Census of India 2011, Assam)

Population Parameters & Area	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	3,117	10,200	23,317	39,547	52,310	61,791
Male Population	NA	6,526	13,979	22,326	27,890	31,898
Female Population	NA	3,674	9,338	17,221	24,420	29,899
Decadal Growth (%)	-	227.24	128.60	69.61	32.27	18.14
Sex Ratio	NA	563	668	771	876	937
Area (sq. km.)	NA	5.00	9.37	16.48	16.48	16.48
Density of Population (per sq. km.)	-	2,040	2,488	2,399	3,174	3,750

Causes of Urbanization at Diphu Town

- 1) Growth of population is one of the important factor of urbanization at town of Diphu. The increasing birth rate and decreasing death rate have tremendously increases the total population of the town. The total population of the Diphu Town was 52,310 in 2001, which have become 61,791 in the year 2011. Again density of population increases from 3,174 to 3,750 during the same period. But the decadal growth of population decreases from 32.27% to 18.14% during the same period.
- 2) Large scale migration from the surrounding towns and villages for various factors contribute to the development of urbanization in this town.

5. Conclusion

Following are the major findings of the study:

- 1) The ethnic status of the town shows that out of the total households the Scheduled Tribe ST(H) population belongs to different communities including the Karbis - the dominant tribe of the district accounts for 41.75% whereas ST(Plains) for 4.85% and remaining SC, OBC and MOBC together and General category population are found to be 5.35%, 16.50% and 31.55% respectively.

- 2) Occupational status of the people displays some special characteristics. Primary activities are almost negligible except cultivation and secondary and a tertiary activity also holds some percentage among the urban population of Diphu.

Types of occupational status in Diphu Town:

- Government jobs - 28.64%.
 - Semi Government and Government Undertaking - 07.77%
 - Self Employment - 12.14%
 - Business - 25.24%
 - Cultivation - 02.43%
 - Daily Wage - 11.17%
 - Retired Person - 05.83%
- 3) The purpose of coming to Diphu by inhabitants are mainly found to be employment, business, education, for better facilities, to avail social amenities, socio – political reasons etc.

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