

CHAPTER III

PEOPLE

GROWTH OF POPULATION

The first enumeration of the population of the district was made at the census of the province of Avadh in 1869. The population then was 9,32,959 (a figure which included the troops that were stationed in Sitapur cantonment and some temporary sojourners) which gave an average density of 414.8 persons to the square mile, the area of the district being 2,249 square miles.* This was a very low figure as compared with other districts of Avadh, but was higher than that in Hardoi, Kheri or Bahraich. Only pargana Sadarpur, which adjoins the district of Bara Banki, had a density higher than 500. There were then 2,039 villages in this district, and of these 1,921 had less than a thousand inhabitants apiece, ninety-one had between one and two thousand and twenty-seven including the towns of Khairabad, Laharpur, Biswan, Sitapur, Mahmudabad and Paintepur which had a population exceeding 5,000 each, had over two thousand.

The next census, taken in 1881, showed an increase of 25,292 over the last enumeration, the total being 9,58,251. There was an increase in all the northern districts of Avadh, but it was more noticeable in Hardoi, Kheri and the regions north of the Ghaghra. Density in this district rose to 425.6 persons to the square mile—still a very low figure. The number of villages increased to 2,308 of which 2,198 contained under a thousand inhabitants, ninety-one had between 1,000 and 2,000 as in the previous census, and only nineteen had a population of over 2,000 persons. The number of towns remained the same but with the exception of Laharpur and Khairabad which had slightly declined in population, and Paintepur which showed no change, the remaining towns had grown considerably.

The following decade was a period of prosperity with good seasons and few serious epidemics when the population grew rapidly and was returned as 10,75,413 at the census of 1891, and the density rose to 476.9, although the district retained the same relative position to other districts of Avadh, for everywhere the increase had been enormous, the average for the whole province being over 10 per cent. Of the 2,328 villages and towns, 158 had over a thousand inhabitants and of these twenty-two contained more than two thousand persons. Of the towns, Sitapur had grown rapidly as also had Laharpur and Mahmudabad, but Khairabad and Biswan showed a marked decline and Paintepur even dropped below 5,000.

**Sitapur Settlement Report (1875)*, p. 1

The next census was that of 1901, which returned a population of 11,75,473 and showed an increase of 1,00,060 on the previous enumeration. This time the growth in Sitapur was more rapid than in any other district of Avadh, probably because the famine of 1897 had had no serious consequence here. With an increase of 9.3 per cent, the density had risen to 432.8 persons to the square mile. The figure was still low for the districts of Avadh, as it was largely exceeded in them except in Kheri, Bahraich, Gonda and Hardoi. From 1901 to 1951 there was an overall growth in the population of the district which is evident from the statement given below :

Census year	Population			Variation		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1901	11,75,473	10,96,763	78,710			
1911	10,38,996	10,64,149	74,847	-5,477 (-3.1)	-32,614 (-3.0)	-3,863 (-4.9)
1921	10,89,481	10,06,175	83,306	-49,515 (-4.3)	-57,974 (-5.4)	+8,459 (+11.3)
1931	11,67,139	10,93,575	73,564	+77,658 (+7.1)	+87,400 (+8.7)	-9,742 (-11.7)
1941	12,93,554	12,06,735	86,819	+1,26,415 (+10.8)	+1,13,160 (+10.3)	+13,255 (+18.0)
1951	13,80,472	12,76,210	1,04,262	+86,918 (+6.7)	+69,475 (+5.8)	+17,443 (+20.1)

Between 1901 and 1921 the population of the district recorded a decrease of 7.3 per cent as against the decrease of 4.0 per cent only for the State. Epidemics (the most destructive being the influenza epidemic of 1918-19) appear to have taken a heavier toll of lives in this district than elsewhere in the State. During the next three censuses the population went on increasing, though the percentage of growth in the district was 26.7 only as against 35.5 in the State as a whole. The population figures of 1951 are 17.4 per cent higher than they were fifty years before, whereas the increase in the population of the State during the same period was 30 per cent.

Births and deaths mainly account for the trend in the growth of population. The following statements give the mean decennial birth and death-rates, the rates of natural increase and the rates of the growth of population of the last three decades :

	Total	Rural	Urban
Mean decennial birth-rate—			
1921—30	35.3	36.1	24.3
1931—40	33.5	33.5	33.4
1941—50	23.1	22.4	31.2
Mean decennial death-rate—			
1921—30	25.0	25.4	19.6
1931—40	22.9	22.8	23.2
1941—50	16.0	15.7	20.1

