CHAPTER 2
PROBLEMS OF POPULATION AND LABOUR

With their main aim of promoting economic growth in Arakan and Tenasserim, the British acknowledged the importance of human resources which were scarce in both these territories, due to prolonged warfare. Though generally, it is difficult to estimate the population of pre-colonial Southeast Asia due to the paucity of reliable indigenous sources, in the case of Java, Siam, Burma and Vietnam, there existed a tradition of enumerating households for the purpose of taxation and manpower mobilization. However, mobilization of human resources to cater for frequent wars, which characterized Southeast Asia's past, or to perform arduous royal tasks, caused frequent displacement of population. Though the population was liable for corvée, there were no comprehensive records of slaves, 1 religious functionaries and 'outlaws'. Figures of birth and mortality were also not maintained. For these reasons, it is impossible for the historian to provide sound figures on Southeast Asia's population prior to the nineteenth century. But on the whole, recent studies have shown that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

the rate of growth in Southeast Asia's population was slow, mainly due to incessant wars resulted either from internal or external factors.

Similarly, frequent wars also resulted in mobilization of manpower in Burma. Its long drawn-out history, beginning from the establishment of the Pagan dynasty which attempted to unify the various ethnic groups residing in Burma, until the complete annexation of the country by the British in 1885, was characterized by political instability. The recurrent shift in the population, coupled with the lack of information on mortality and casualties in war, do not allow for near accurate figures on Burma's population. Moreover, indigenous tax officers in Burma only compiled lists of houses, it being the traditional unit of taxation and service. Hence, the question on the number of people still remains unanswered. In addition, inadequate information from indigenous sources on territories lying on the periphery such as Arakan and Tenasserim, contribute to further problems in

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2. Ibid., pp. 33-45.
establishing an estimate on Burma's population prior to British occupation. The *sit-táns* published by Trager and Koenig stand as testimony to the insignificance of peripheral territories, namely Arakan and Tenasserim, on which it throws little light.

The atrocities committed by the Burmese upon the indigenous populace of Arakan and Tenasserim in the later part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had driven many to seek refuge in the British district of Chittagong and the mountain range of the Tenasserim province. It is therefore, interesting to see how the British authorities in both Arakan and Tenasserim, during the first twenty-six years of their rule from 1826-1852, induced the indigenous populace to return to their respective homeland.

The pre-1826 scenario of Arakan and Tenasserim as presented by most historians is one of devastation and depopulation. The post-1826 period was entirely different when the population of Arakan and Tenasserim began to gradually grow, due mainly to the peace and stability brought about by British rule. In the early years of the British rule, the acute shortage of labour

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both in Arakan and Tenasserim, but chiefly in Tenasserim, were recognized to be major obstacles to development. Appropriate steps was accordingly taken to remedy the situation.

I. ARAKAN

In January 1825, when the British began the invasion of Arakan, Thomas Campbell Robertson, then the district magistrate in Chittagong, was accompanied by a large number of Arakanese as well as the Hugh Levy which he had formed earlier in Chittagong. The majority of the Arakanese refugees at Chittagong are reputed to have supported the British invasion of their homeland as they saw this as an opportunity to regain back their ancient homeland. Accordingly, as soon as the invasion was complete, it was said that large numbers of Arakenese were returning home from Chittagong.

Although it is difficult to ascertain the number of Arakanese who returned after the war, it can be said that almost all who had earlier sought refuge in Chittagong, began to return gradually. One source states that at the time of the British annexation in 1826, the population of

Arakan was estimated at 100,000. It can be assumed, however, that the unsettled conditions of the province could not have permitted the British to take an orderly census. The first official census for Arakan seems to have been taken only in 1832/33 and, according to it, the population of Arakan in 1830 was 131,390. A look at the table 2.1 shows that within a twenty-six year period between 1826 and 1852, Arakan's population increased more than two fold. The increase appears to have been due largely to the returning numbers of Arakanese who had taken refuge in the southern parts of Chittagong, the islands of the coast and the Sundarbans of Bengal. Their migration back was evidently supported by improving conditions in Arakan and, was reported even as late as 1841.

Judging by the number of Arakanese refugees returning as late as the 1840s, Harvey's and Cady's estimates of


7. Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle (hereafter Pinang Gazette), 23 February 1850.

50,000 and 60,000 respectively for their numbers in Chittagong was somehow conservative, as the number was obviously higher. A look at the table below shows that between 1826-1829, the total population of Arakan was estimated at 100,000, while in 1840 it was 226,542. The increase in population from 1829 to 1840 was 126,542, due mainly to the return of Arakanese refugees from the district of Chittagong. This was twice as much as that estimated by Harvey and Cady.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total No.of Increase</th>
<th>Percentage of Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1826-1829</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>131,390</td>
<td>31,390</td>
<td>31.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833/34</td>
<td>199,777</td>
<td>68,387</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>226,542</td>
<td>26,765</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>321,522</td>
<td>94,980</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>333,645</td>
<td>12,123</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Increase From 1826 To 1852</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>223,645</td>
<td>223.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The rise in population also included a rise in the foreign population, some of them temporary residents. As Arakan was administered as part of Bengal, a large number of Bengalis arrived as civil servants to take advantage of the use of Bengali as the official language in British Arakan. The shortage of labour, despite the large number of returning Arakanese, is evident in the inflow of seasonal labour from Chittagong to help with the expanding agriculture. As Phayre wrote:

Many hundreds, indeed thousands of coolies come from the Chittagong district by land and by sea, to seek labour and high wages.

Most of these seasonal labourers came to Arakan in November when the harvesting season commenced. It can also be said that the majority of them did not reside in Arakan permanently. Other than these, there were Bengalis who formed a class of petty traders at Akyab. Most of these Bengalis in Arakan were Muslims and constituted, according to one report in 1826, thirty per cent of the


12. Ibid.

total population. It is difficult to ascertain the total number of Muslims in Arakan during this period because other than Bengali Muslims, there were also Arakanese Muslims (or Maghs). However, the Indian Muslims who were mainly Bengalis amounted to only 4.7 per cent of the total population of Arakan which was 321,522 in 1846. The number of other foreigners such as Europeans, Chinese and Madrasis was small (see table 2.2), but they played an important role in the civil service and in commerce.

Arakan's boost in population was also assisted by migrations from the kingdom of Burma. As early as 1826, Paton reported that many Burmese living on the western bank of the Irrawaddy river "were anxious to settle in Arakan". This was through the An (Aeng) and Talak Passes in the Arakan Yoma which was the geographical barrier separating Arakan from the rest of Burma. Although it is difficult to confirm the number of people who crossed over to Arakan from Burma, one report in 1831 mentions the increasing traffic at the An Pass. The British authorities in India were less happy in encourag-


15. Ibid. See also Home Misc., Vol. 670, pp. 336, No. 15, To Swinton from Hunter and Paton, 13 Jan. 1826.

ing the movement, for fear of provoking Burmese hostilities against British Arakan.

Another important source of labour force was the Kula community. According to a report of 1841, the Kula amounted to some fifteen per cent of the total population. The Dom were also a source of labour force, but their numbers were not sufficiently large to earn mention in the 1841 report.

Table 2.2

Percentage of Races in Arakan in 1846

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arakanese</td>
<td>256,402</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td>25,913</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Indians</td>
<td>15,336</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Indians</td>
<td>3,135</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipuris</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19,695</td>
<td>6.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>321,522</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850.

17. Ibid., 12 June 1841, No. 12, From the Government of Bengal to Bogle, 8 May 1841.

Unmentioned in the census were a large number of peripheral hill tribes who were not absorbed directly into the British administration but proved significant to developments (refer chapter 3). These were mainly the Kyoung-tha, Kume\Kwe-me\Kami, Khyeng, Doing-muk, Mroong and the Chin. Other minor tribes included the Shandu, Anu or Kaungso and the Chaw or Kuki. These various tribes inhabited the Arakan Hill tracts covering an area of some four to five thousand square miles. Of this, only some 1,015 square miles had been brought under British jurisdiction even as late as the 1880s. This consisted a mere 195 villages inhabited an estimated 14,449 people practising the taungya or shifting cultivation.

By 1840, the Arakanese lived in about 960 villages spread over all the four districts of the country, with the main population concentration in the Akyab district covering an area of 5,535 square miles. In 1833\34, this area contained fifty-one per cent of the total population, and rose in 1847\48 to fifty-seven per cent (see table 2.3). This meant that more than half the total population

19. Ibid., p. 680
21. Ibid.
22. It was also referred to as Arakan Proper.
of Arakan resided in the Akyab district (see also table 2.4). A large percentage of Akyab's population was engaged in agriculture but the highest density was around the capital. Returning Arakanese soon resumed cultivation and took up most of the available land (refer Chapter 3). The shortage of labour was felt largely in the urban centre of Akyab. Apart from the better opportunities for employment and trade, the district provided better security, services and goods to attract population. For similar reason, the second largest concentration of population was the Ramree Island, which served as the naval base for the British in Arakan. The security of the area and the labour opportunities it offered for servicing the naval base would have been a prime attraction for population.

Table 2.3
Population of Arakan by its districts for 1833\34 and 1847\48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>1833\34</th>
<th>1847\48</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akyab</td>
<td>103 334</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramree</td>
<td>67 333</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoway</td>
<td>19 920</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeng</td>
<td>9 190</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>199 777</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pinang Gazette, 23 February, 1850.
Table 2.4

Population of Akyab district from 1831 to 1852

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population of Arakan</th>
<th>Total Population of Akyab</th>
<th>% of Akyab Districts Population Over the Total Population of Arakan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>131,390</td>
<td>95,098</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833'34</td>
<td>199,777</td>
<td>103,334</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847'48</td>
<td>319,976</td>
<td>184,250</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>333,645</td>
<td>201,677</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In contrast, the An (Aeng) district showed the lowest population compared with the other three districts of Arakan. Its relative geographical isolation in the interior, between the Arakan Yoma and the coastal plains of Ramree district, would have been a disincentive to population. It was strategically important because it commanded the passage through the Arakan Yoma into Burma proper. Nonetheless, it was less easily accessible from the coast and less suited to extensive paddy cultivation compared to the other three districts of Arakan.

As time passed and the economy prospered, the need for more fertile land pushed the population from the Akyab district to other areas, principally the Ramree district. This explains why Akyab's population concentration in
relation to the rest of Arakan began to decline slightly after the 1830's though continuing to maintain a lead even during the early 1850s. The Ramree District, constituting the Ramree and Cheduba Island came next to Akyab in terms of population concentration. In addition to the availability of fertile land, attraction to the area was the harbour and trading facilities offered by Kyaukpyu, on Ramree Island.

Sandoway district had, in 1847\1848 only about one-tenth of the total population of Arakan. This was due to the fact that flat land constituted only about 1\18 of the total area. The lack of agricultural land suitable for paddy meant that even in 1852, Sandoway district had only 12.8 per cent or 42,886 of the total population of 333,645 in Arakan. There was not a single town in this district which had a population exceeding two thousand.

In 1855 Arakan's population stood at 336,310, showed only a small increase of 0.8 per cent or 2,665 persons compared to the population in 1852. This was because, after the 1852 annexation of Lower Burma, the new Irrawaddy delta

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region became a greater source of attraction to population, especially to foreigners.

II. TENASSERIM

The frequent wars fought between Burma and Siam in Tenasserim, combined with the atrocities committed by both, especially the Burmese, meant that Tenasserim rarely enjoyed stability and steady growth in its population. When the British annexed it in 1826, these provinces were sparsely populated. Most of its inhabitants, constituting mainly the Mons, to escape atrocities by the Burmese, either ran into the interior or took refuge in Siam. The number of Mons who emigrated to Siam are difficult to estimate and reports vary widely. A report of 1825 fixed the number at about a hundred thousand and, later, at 30,000. As against this, the total population of Tenasserim was estimated in 1826 at 33,000, suggesting a heavy exodus of people to Siam.

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26. Ibid., 23 February 1825.
The estimated population of Tenasserim in 1826 was 33,000 while Low had earlier given a very different estimate of 50,000 people. Low's figure is likely to be inaccurate as he could have included the population of Martaban as well.

Table 2.5

Estimated Population of Tenasserim by Districts and Their Percentage for 1826

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ye</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavoy</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mergui</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>33,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pinang Gazette, 8 July 1826.

With this relatively small population the greatest task that lay ahead for Maingy was to take appropriate measures for promoting population growth. This was with the aim of ensuring economic growth and to overcome the acute shortage of labour, especially for public works.

27. Ibid., 8 July 1826.

In due course of time, Tenasserim's population began to increase but not until 1840s was the labour shortage overcome. Various factors contributed towards the growth of Tenasserim's population such as the return of the indigenous populace from Siam and immigration of foreign labour, mainly South Indian, into Tenasserim.

Realising that many local inhabitants had been held captive by the Siamese, Maingy requested the Chief of Ligor to use his influence in obtaining the release of some 1,600 captives. As a result, by April 1826, some 503 captives were sent back to Tenasserim.

On the other hand, in order to relieve these provinces from the acute shortage of labour, Maingy adopted a plan whereby convicts from India were sent to Tenasserim for public works. This system of hiring convicts, which continued to operate after the retirement of Maingy, proved an important source of labour force. Most of the public buildings around these provinces, particularly around Moulmein, were actually built by convicts and at a very low cost.

30. Ibid.
Similarly, another step towards alleviating the severe labour shortage was the rules laid down for debt-slavery with an ultimate aim of gradually eliminating the practice. With labour so scarce, by 1827, the price of debt-slaves was reported to have increased from 30 Rs.-40 Rs. to 120 Rs.-180 Rs. To facilitate this Maingy implementated a regulation whereby each slave was to be paid an allowance of two pice per day by the owner.

Alarmed by this problem of labour shortage, the Supreme authorities in Calcutta too suggested that Maingy request the Company's supracargoes at Canton to take steps to persuade the Chinese to settle in the Tenasserim provinces as cultivators. The former also suggested that news of the economic opportunities afforded by Tenasserim be published to the Chinese residents and traders in the Straits Settlements, particularly at Singapore.

31. Ibid., To Swinton from Maingy, 1 May 1827.
32. Ibid.
34. Foreign Dept., Tenasserim Political Cons., 27 September 1833, No. 87, To Maingy from the Political Dept.
There was also a substantial number of immigrants from Martaban and Rangoon. Their contribution is evident in the sharp increase of population. In 1826, the total population of Tenasserim which stood at 33,000 was less than one inhabitant to a square mile for a total area of 48,000 square miles for the whole of Tenasserim. In March 1827, only nine months later, the total population of Tenasserim had risen sharply to 70,000, showing an increase of thirty-seven thousand persons. The dramatic increase constituted a significant influx of Mons from the Burmese territories of Rangoon and Martaban after an abortive revolt against the Burmese authorities.

Apart from the initial rise in population originating mainly from those taking refuge from independent Burma or Siam, the subsequent increase did not fulfill Maingy's expectations for attracting immigrant labour. His intention of attracting large numbers of Chinese, particularly from the Straits Settlements, was not realized and the need for labour remained acute. The main drawback would seem to be the unresolved question of Tenasserim's retention and speculation that it might be returned to the Burmese.

35. Ibid., Tenasserim Political Cons., 22 June 1827, No. 37, Report by J. Crawfurd, 18 June 1827.
Three years after Maingy's retirement, in 1836, his successor, Blundell was faced with the same problem and wrote:

The want of population is a grand drawback to the prosperity of these provinces. We have large tracts of unoccupied fertile land. The sites of deserted towns and villages are numerous throughout the country....

The population of 84,917 recorded in 1835 showed an increase but did not satisfy Blundell. The "deserted towns and villages", as noted by Blundell, was an indication of the many refugees who had earlier fled and had not returned even by 1836. Further, he had expected to witness a higher increase brought about by an influx of foreigners, particularly Chinese. By the early 1840s, some five years later, there was an overall improvement in the population but this was due to a constant stream of South Indian immigrants. This originated in 1838 when the Madras Army was recruited due to a rumour of war. When the rumour subsided, relatives and friends of army personnel soon followed seeking economic opportunities in

36. Ibid., 9 August 1836, No. 1, From Blundell to Macnaghten, Secretary to the Government of India in the Political Dept., 12 July 1836.

Tenasserim. As a result, by 1840, Blundell reported that there was a "large and continued importation of labour into this place of coolies and women from [p]orts on the Northern Coromandel Coast, chiefly Coringa". Encouraged by this improvement, Blundell suggested that the immigration be regulated by the Indian authorities to ensure that it was voluntary and did not give rise to malpractices through forced recruitment. Besides Akyab, there was a constant flow of Indians into Moulmein where they formed a class of petty traders. The judiciary was appropriately extended to cope with the additional business brought by the rise in immigration. The 1840s witnessed the growth in the tide of South Indian immigration into Tenasserim. By 1843, it was reported that at least a hundred South Indians arrived every fortnight at the port of Moulmein. The immigrants were not solely males, as in the past, but included women, many of whom were wives of the earlier immigrants. The increase was due to a plan by General Major Hullen of the Madras Commissary about four or five years previously, who initiated the recruitment of labourers from Madras.

38. *Foreign Dept.*, Tenasserim General Cons., 7 October 1840, No. 14, From Blundell to Bushby, Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the General Department, 9 September 1840.

39. Ibid.

40. *Foreign Dept.*, Tenasserim Judicial Cons., 16 October 1843, No. 100, From Broadfoot to Halliday, 26 September 1843.

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Most of these immigrants were artisans though some were cultivators. The Tenasserim Commissioner, Major George Broadfoot, requested that the Indian authorities take measures to enable these immigrants to remit money to their families in India. An arrangement was made for the remittance of money with Collectors at Ganjam, Viragapatnam, Rajahmundry, Masulipatnam, Tanjore and Trichinopoly. The Tamil and Telegu speaking population in Moulmein constituted about one-third of the population. By the end of Broadfoot's Commissionership, he was able to inform his superiors in India that, due to the influx of South Indian immigrants, the usage of hired convicts, except for public works, was withdrawn and debt-slavery had ceased.

Overall, by 1839/40, the estimated total population of Tenasserim was about one hundred thousand, including indigenes, foreigners and about 1,700 Indian convicts. This showed an increase of about fifteen thousand persons since 1835. While the majority of the indigenous populace was involved in agriculture, fisheries and the collection of jungle produce, foreigners were involved in a variety of occupations. The South Indians, who formed the bulk of the foreign population in Tenasserim, were mainly soldiers.

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
and labourers although there were also a few Chulias occupied in money lending and petty trading. The Chinese were merchants, shipowners, shipbuilders, spirit-brewers, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers and gardeners. The minorities such as Bengalis, Armenians, Jews and Parsis were mainly petty traders, while the bulk of the Europeans were civil servants, including a number of businessmen. 

Although there was growth in Tenasserim's population in the 1830s, it was not spectacular compared to that of Arakan. Nevertheless, the momentum in Tenasserim's population growth had begun and can be attributed mainly to the increase in the foreign population.

The Tenasserim government also implemented a liberal land policy, as of 1835, to encourage expansion of cultivation. Under the scheme, any foreigner who obtained land in Tenasserim and established cultivation within the first two years of arrival was excluded from all land duty for the first year and was obliged to pay only one-half the amount the following four years. Thus, only after the first five years were they liable to pay the full rates.

To boost population, the administrators of Tenasserim took steps to induce the hill tribes, mainly the Karens, to give up their nomadic way of life and settle permanently in the more fertile areas of Tenasserim. These people were reported to have been oppressed in the past by the Burmese who forced them to provide free labour for logging. It appears to have been viewed by them as forced labour rather than corvée obligation. In addition, they were occasionally kidnapped and taken away as prisoners or slaves, while some were stripped of their rice supplies. As a result, many of them were forced to seek refuge in the mountain gorges. Due to the oppression experienced, the British authorities were unsuccessful in inducing the Karens to leave the jungles to settle in the plains until about 1840. According to a report in 1840:

"...[A]fter fourteen years of peace, and annually strengthening confidence in the present government, the Karens to this day cannot be persuaded to come to town, because, they have the apprehensions for their personal safety."

In fact, Commissioner Broadfoot strove to "bring forward the Karens" and put them "on an equality with Burmese". But all of these attempts by the local authorities in Tenasserim did not bear the anticipated results. Obviously the dreadful memories of the past were

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44. Helfer, "Third Report on Tenasserim", p. 992

45. Pinang Gazette, 6 April 1844.
still fresh in the minds of the Karens. However, events took a turn for the better for the British. In 1843, the Karens in a letter to Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, are alleged to have expressed their gratitude for British rule which they apparently considered far better than Burmese rule. The change of attitude among the Karens was probably helped by Christian missionary efforts towards the spread of English education (see chapter 4).

As for population concentration, the Amherst district was the most populous of the three districts in Tenasserim. This was indeed an improvement when compared to its condition on the eve of its conquest. According to Blundell:

This province (Amherst) when we obtained possession of it was almost destitute of population. There were few villages and no cultivation beyond a little grain. At the conclusion of the war when we gave up Martaban, nearly the whole population of that place quitted it to live under us and the population was afterwards further increased by a large body of [Talaings] who emigrated to Amherst Province on the failure of their revolt against the Burmese.

46. Ibid.

47. Foreign Dept., Tenasserim Revenue Cons., 26 May 1840, No. 100, From Blundell to the Secretary of the Sudder Board of Revenue, 9 December 1839.
With a total population of 213,692 in 1855, Amherst alone had some 83,146 people or thirty-nine per cent of the total population of Tenasserim. Mergui and Tavoy came second and third respectively in terms of population concentration. This was obviously due to the growing prosperity of Moulmein, the district capital of Amherst and capital of Tenasserim. With the rise of Moulmein as a shipbuilding centre, job opportunities offered by this sector and other related activities became an attraction to population. In 1840, with the total population at about a hundred thousand, Moulmein alone had some 35,000 people or thirty-five per cent of the total population of Tenasserim. Fifteen years later, in 1855, Moulmein's population stood at about 40,000, having almost half the share of the total population of Amherst district which totalled 83,146. Evidently, Moulmein's position as an administrative and business center was an attraction which induced population to reside in its vicinity. The density of population for the Amherst district in 1855 was about five inhabitants to a square mile for a total


49. *Foreign Dept., Tenasserim, Customs Original Cons.*, 5 April 1848, No. 4, From J.R. Colvin, Commissioner of Tenasserim to Captain A.P. Phayre, Principal Assistant to the Commissioner, 20 March 1848.

Table 2.6
Population of Tenasserim by its Districts for 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>83,146</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavoy</td>
<td>52,867</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mergui</td>
<td>77,679</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213,692</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


total area of 15,189 square miles of the Amherst district. Tavoy's density of population for 1855 was about seven inhabitants to a square mile for a total area of 7,150 square miles for the whole of Tavoy. This was a great improvement because the population density in 1827 had been less than one inhabitant per square mile for the whole of Tenasserim.

On the whole, Tenasserim's population growth, compared to Arakan's, proved to be slow. Although various policies were implemented aimed at increasing the population, Tenasserim's population growth failed to match Arakan's. The table below illustrates that, for the whole period, 1829-1855, the most pronounced increase was between 1845 and 1855 when Tenasserim's population increased dramatically by 67.6 per cent, constituting an
Table 2.7

Total Population of the Tenasserim Province for 1829, 1835, 1845 and 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>% of Increase</th>
<th>Total Number of Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>127,455</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>42,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>213,692</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>86,237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


increase of 86,237 inhabitants. This pointed to the growing prosperity of the provinces, particularly with reference to the logging and shipbuilding industries.

As the first regular population census for Tenasserim was taken only in 1872, it is likely that earlier figures were conservative. The total population was probably much higher if the total Karen population was taken into account. Figures on the Karen population would have been difficult to compute as they inhabited the jungles of the interior mountain ranges, not easily accessible, and were also frequently on the move, practising taungya. Since at least until 1840 the Karens could not be induced to come to settle in the plains, few of their numbers would have been included in the census reports. The Mahaken or Salon/Seelong, a seafaring race inhabiting the Mergui
Archipelago, were another important group constantly on the move, making it difficult to gain a proper estimate of their total number. Not included in the census were also other groups inhabiting the jungles of the mountain ranges, bordering Siam, who were constantly on the move between the two countries.

On the whole, the economic development and growth of population brought by British rule in Arakan and Tenasserim resulted from the cessation of war and administrative stability. A similar correlation between political stability and population growth has been noted for other areas of colonial rule such as Java. The total population of Arakan and Tenasserim showed, roughly, a threefold increase during 1826-1855 and was a reflection of economic growth.