

Population Dynamics of Jhargram District: A Comparative Study with West Bengal and India

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Abstract: The Study of population is gaining importance day by day as it is the cornerstone of any developmental planning. It helps to understand the population problems of a particular area. It outlines the conditions and requirements of a specific area, enabling future development and growth to be planned accordingly. Development planning in the fields of health, education, employment, public distribution system, etc., is closely related to the demographic characteristics of an area. Jhargram district is one of the newly formed districts of the state of West Bengal. The basic motivation behind its formation lies in the area's backwardness. Therefore, the information on population growth rate, sex ratio, literacy rate, and population density is important in population studies as well as the developmental planning of the district. This paper aims to find out and analyse the population dynamics of the Jhargram District. It also intends to compare the district with its own state and country.

IndexTerms - Population Dynamics, annual growth rate, sex ratio, population density, literacy rate, urban population share.

Introduction

Jhargram district is the newly formed district that is situated in the extreme left of South West Bengal, and it suffers from acute backwardness in terms of development. This district is home to various tribal societies. Bengali and Santhali are the predominant languages of the district. A large portion of the district is covered by Sal jungle and infertile laterite soil. Its geographical location, infrastructural weakness, and poor transport network influence its demographic as well as socio-economic profile.

The Study Area

Jhargram is the 22nd district of the state of West Bengal, which was formed on 4th April 2017. Formerly, it was one of the subdivisions of the Paschim Medinipur district. It is the part of West Bengal known as Jangalmahal, characterized by its extensive forest cover throughout the district. The district is also known as the home of tribals. Jhargram District is located between 22°00' N to 22°51'06"N latitudes and 86°32'30"E to 87°14'24"E longitudes. The district is bounded by Bankura district in the north, by the Purulia district and Jharkhand state in the west. Orissa state and West Medinipur are in the south and east, respectively. It covers an area of 3037.64 sq. kms., out of which 268249 hectares is agricultural land and 59497 hectares is under forest coverage.

Topographically, it is a part of the Chotonagpur plateau. It gradually slopes down towards the east. Kankrajhore in the north west part has the highest altitude of about 300mts. The soil in the western part is unfertile hard laterite soil, whereas Gopiballavpur I, II, and Nayagram have fertile alluvial soil. The major rivers are Kangsabati, Subarnarekha, Silabati, Keleghai, and Dulang. The rivers flow from north to south or southeast through the district.

Administrative Set-Up: The district has only one Sub-division, viz. Jhargram, and 8 Community Development Blocks. There are 9 police stations. There is only one Municipality (Jhargram) and one Census town, viz. Silda. Jhargram is the district headquarters.

Objectives

The objectives of the present work are as follows:

- To bring out and analyse the changing pattern of demographic characteristics (decadal growth rate of population, population density, sex ratio, literacy rate) of Jhargram district.
- To compare some demographic components of Jhargram district with West Bengal and India.

Methodology

Data from the Census of India have been used for the present study. The data of the former Jhargram sub-division has been used to fulfill the above-mentioned objectives. As the former Jhargram sub-division of Paschim Medinipur district has been converted into Jhargram district, the researcher has used the data of Jhargram Sub-division as the data of the present Jhargram District. Various Cartographic techniques and statistical analysis have been used to represent the data sets in the study area.

Analysis and Interpretation

Total Population and Population Share of the State's Population

Jhargram district is one of the backward districts of West Bengal. As per the 2011 Census, the total population of Jhargram district was 1136548 people, and it was more than three times its population in 1901. Its population share in West Bengal's total population is very low. It was maximum in 1901 with 2.13% and showed a decreasing trend till 2011 with 1.25% of the population share. This is because of relatively infertile soil, less agriculture, and fewer work opportunities owing to the rugged topography of the Choto Nagpur Plateau fringe area. Fig.1 & 2 depict the decade-wise population of WB and the Jhargram district, and its population share of WB's total population.

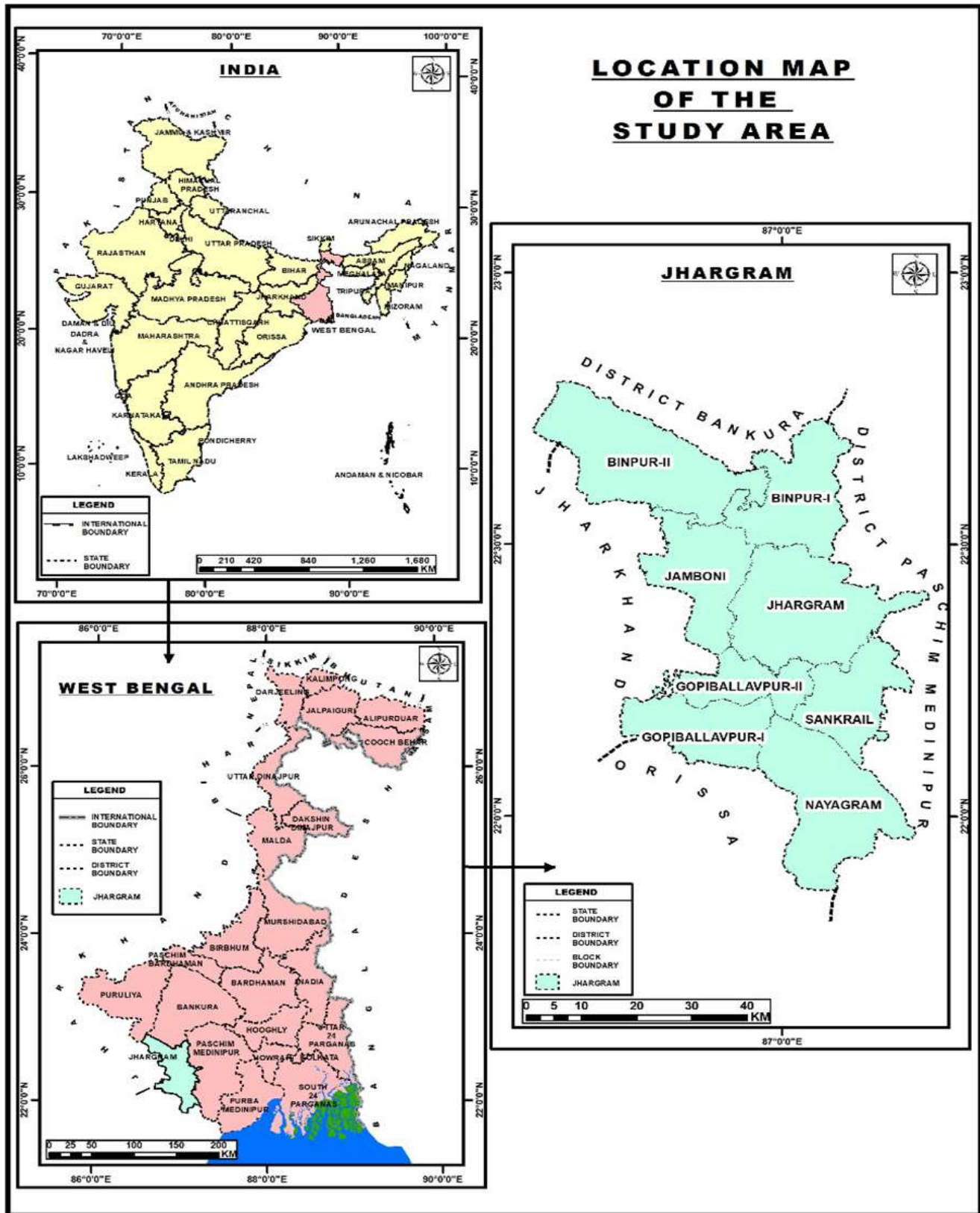


Fig.1.Location Map of the Study Area

Table 1: Decade-wise Population of WB and Jhargram Sub-division/District (1901-2011)

Decade	Total Population of West Bengal	Total Population of Jhargram District	Population Share of the district to the Total Population of WB (in %)
1901	16940088	360282	2.13
1911	17998769	366627	2.04
1921	17474348	350134	2.00
1931	18897036	389130	2.06
1941	23229552	426245	1.83
1951	26299980	461703	1.76
1961	34926279	540953	1.55
1971	44312011	658105	1.49
1981	54580647	745118	1.37
1991	68077965	874745	1.28
2001	80176797	1008030	1.26
2011	91276115	1136548	1.25

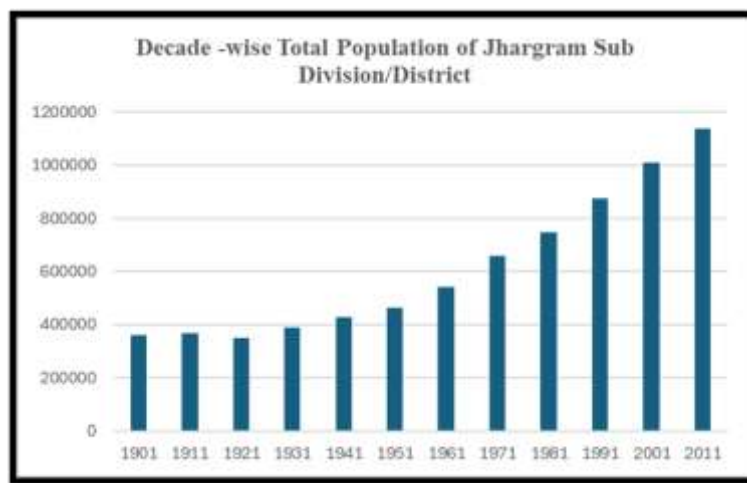


Fig.2 Decade-wise Population of WB and Jhargram Sub-division/District (1901-2011)

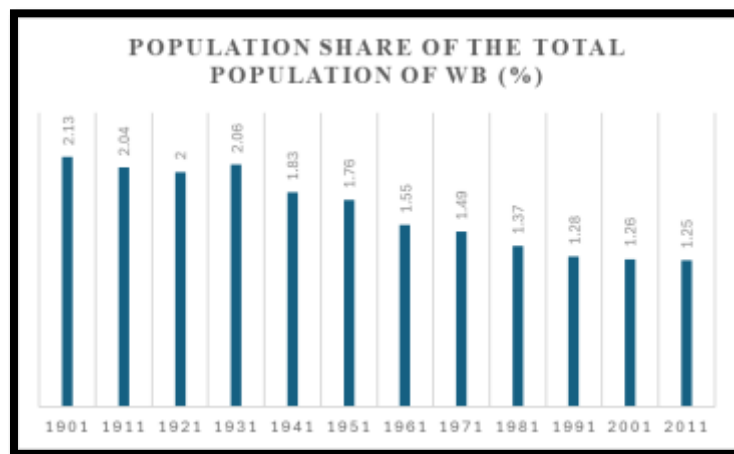


Fig.3. Population Share of Jhargram District to the Total Population of WB (in %)

Decadal Growth Rate 1901-2011

The decadal growth rate of Jhargram district is low in comparison with West Bengal. During the 1910s, both the district and its state experienced a negative growth rate owing to the devastating Spanish flu pandemic throughout the country. From the 1950s, the growth rate accelerated and peaked in the 1960s, with a decadal growth rate of 21.66%, mainly due to the influx of people after partition. After the 1980s, the decadal growth rate also increased, stabilizing at 12.75% in 2011. Low agricultural productivity, lack of irrigation and industry, limited investment and infrastructure, and socio-economic challenges in rural areas contribute to the slower growth rate in Jhargram district. Lack of urban centres in the district also contributes to the low annual growth rate. Fig.3 shows the growth Rate of Jhargram in comparison with West Bengal’s growth rate. After the 1930s, the annual growth rate of West Bengal outpaced that of the district by a large margin.

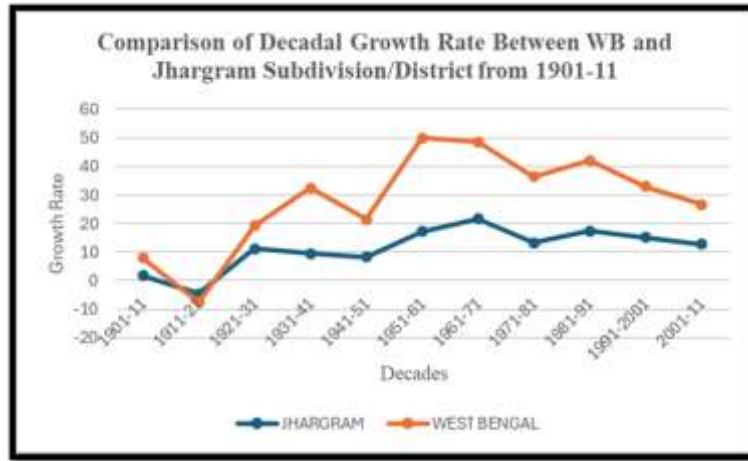


Fig.4 Comparison of Decadal Growth Rate Between WB and Jhargram District

Table 2: Decadal Growth Rate of Population Between WB and Jhargram District

Name of the District	Decadal Growth Rate of Population										
	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	2001-11
Jhargram	1.76	-4.5	11.14	9.54	8.32	17.16	21.66	13.22	17.40	15.24	12.75
West Bengal	6.25	-2.91	8.14	22.93	13.22	32.80	26.87	23.17	24.73	17.77	13.84

Sex Ratio

The district's decade-wise sex ratio has been better than West Bengal's overall sex ratio since the 1950s. The newly formed district exhibits a healthy sex ratio along with its Rural counterpart, while the sex ratio of Jhargram urban was lower till 2001. But in 2011, the sex ratio of Jhargram urban was 999. These healthy sex ratios are the expression of a good society. As this subdivision is home to various tribal societies, the cultural practices of these societies are the reason for female-favouring sex ratios. On the other hand, a lower female infant mortality rate and less sex-selective practices also contribute to these sex ratios. Male migration due to jobs may be another reason for a better sex ratio here.

Table 3: Decade-wise change in Sex ratio

Decade	West Bengal	Jhargram District	Jhargram Rural	Jhargram Urban
1951	865	993	997	809
1961	878	973	979	772
1971	891	967	966	858
1981	911	957	924	907
1991	917	950	952	910
2001	934	963	963	958
2011	950	977	976	999

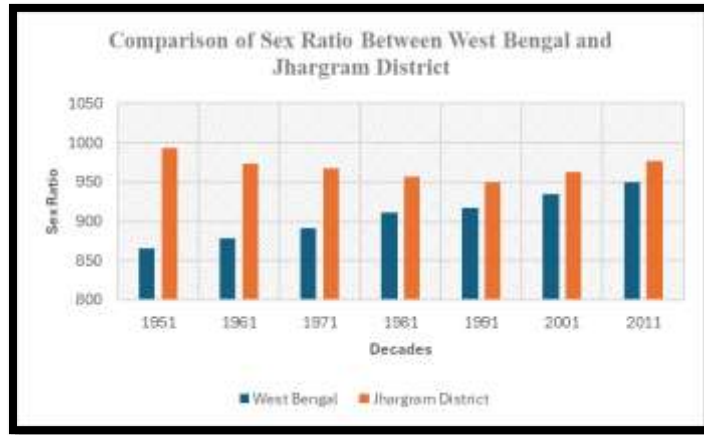


Fig.5 Comparison of Sex Ratio Between WB and Jhargram District

Literacy Rate

The overall literacy rate of the Jhargram district was quite low in 1971 (12.71%), 1981 (33.21%), and 1991 (49.19%), and lower than the national average. It outperformed the national average in 2001 but fell behind it again in 2011. Both the rural and urban literacy of the district are also unsatisfactory in comparison with the country. So, it can be concluded that this district is lagging in literacy and needs special attention from the authorities concerned. Economic hardships and a lack of educational infrastructure are the reasons for the low literacy rate in this district.

Table 4: Change in Literacy Rate (in %)

Decade	India	West Bengal	Jhargram District Total	Jhargram Rural	Jhargram Urban
1971	34.45	33.05	12.71	12.55	23.77
1981	43.57	40.88	33.21	32.21	64.30
1991	52.21	57.70	49.19	45.91	68.19
2001	64.83	68.64	73.5	62.2	84.8
2011	72.98	76.26	70.89	61.56	80.21

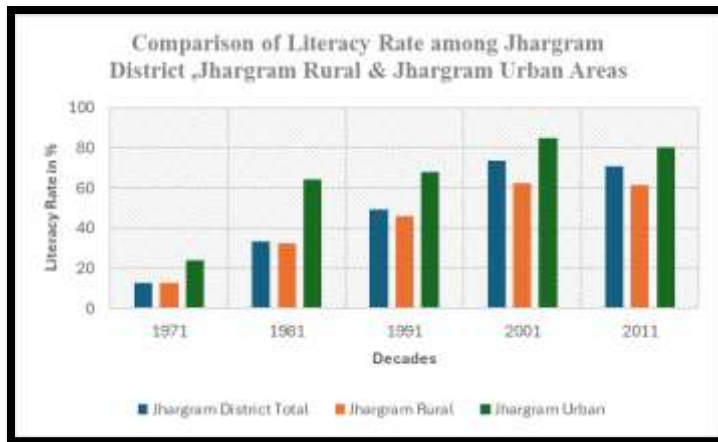


Fig.6 Comparison of Literacy Rate among Jhargram District, Jhargram Rural and Urban Areas

Population Density

The **population density of the Jhargram district** was high in the 1950s and 1960s. But it started to decrease in the 1970s onwards and kept pace with the national average population density. Natural conditions, forest cover, tribal settlements, and low development together keep Jhargram's population density moderate. The soil is hard and less fertile, making agriculture difficult and reducing population concentration. Fewer roads, rail links, and facilities also slow down population growth here in comparison with West Bengal's population density.

Table 5: Population Density

Decade	West Bengal	Jhargram District	India
1951	296	389	117
1961	394	456	142
1971	499	214	177
1981	615	242	216
1991	767	285	274
2001	904	328	324
2011	1030	370	382

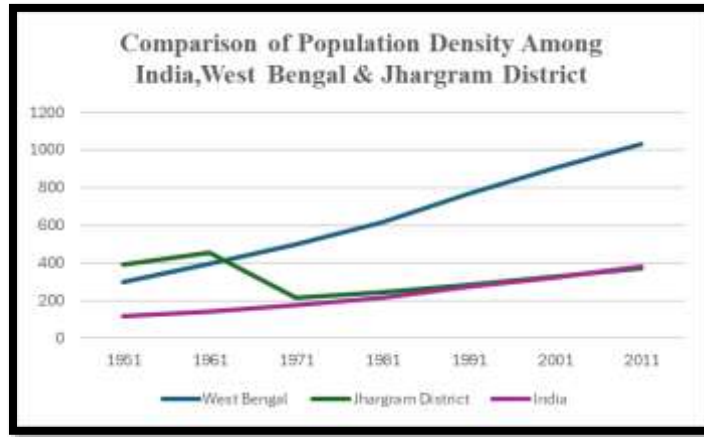


Fig.7 Comparison of Population Density among India, WB & Jhargram District

Population density of Jhargram District

Percentage of urban population

The urban population percentage of Jhargram District is very low in respect of West Bengal’s urban population, as a big part of Jhargram is still covered with forests and is tribal dominated. It is a newly formed district and lacks fully developed urban centres, with proper infrastructure and urban facilities. Low industrial development is also responsible for less urban population share. Table 6 and Fig.6 show the urban population share of the district. The district has only one non-municipal town since 1951, called Jhargram. Later, it gained municipal status in 1982. In the 2011 census, one census town named Silda was added to the district’s urban list.

Table 6: Percentage of urban population

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Jhargram	1.73	2.58	2.92	3.58	4.81	5.27	5.43
WB	23.90	24.40	24.70	26.50	27.48	28.03	31.87
India	17.29	17.97	19.91	23.33	25.72	27.78	31.16

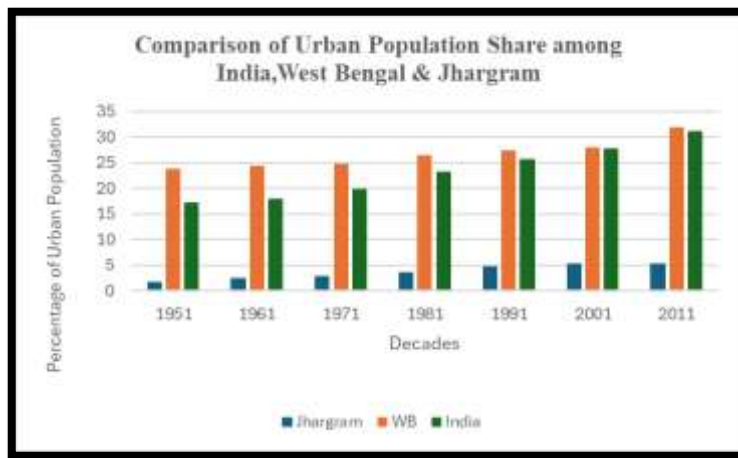


Fig.8 Comparison of Urban Share Between India, WB, and Jhargram District

Major Findings

- About 20% of the total district area is under forest cover.
- Decadal growth rate is lower than the state average.
- The population density of the district is moderate.
- Over 96% of the population lives in villages and rural areas.
- The urban population is very low.
- Districts’ overall literacy is below the state and national average.
- The sex ratio is balanced and better than the national sex ratio.

Suggestions and Conclusions

From the above discussion, a clear picture of the demographic characteristics of the Jhargram District has been revealed. The district is striving for development. Location in the Chota Nagpur plateau fringe with infertile soil is a real obstacle for development. It is lagging in literacy rate. Low agricultural productivity and a lack of industrial infrastructure are hindering the district’s progress. The Govt must take initiatives to improve agricultural practices that will be suitable for the geographical conditions and encourage forest-based small industries. Sincere approaches must be taken by the authorities to improve the educational infrastructure and transport networks. Eco-tourism around forests may be a tool for development here, and local people must be trained as guides and hospitality workers.

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