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I. INTERVIEWS

- Interview with Arjun Gurung resident of Champasari, Siliguri , dated 15th June 2021
- Interview with Ashok Bhattacharya, Ex-Mayor of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, dated: 23rd April, 2018.
- Interview with Dhan Bahadur Rai resident of Sastri Nagar, Siliguri, dated 15th June 2021
- Interview with Ruina Chetri, resident of LIG Flat, Uttorayon Township. Dated 16th June, 2021
- Interview with Suman Tamang , who owns a Momo Shop at Ashrampara dated 16th June 2021

J. FIELD SURVEY

Fieldwork report conducted between 20018-19.

APPENDIX 1

SEVOKE RANGPO RAIL LINK

The work of construction of this 52.7 km. rail link has been entrusted to IRCON for execution and IRCON has started the development of the project. The line is passing through dense forest and will therefore, require acquisition of land. The cost of this project is Rs. 1,339 crore and is approved by the North Eastern Railway.

Figure: Sevoke Rangpo Rail Link



Source: Google Map, Silicon Graphics (2011)

APPENDIX 2

ASIAN HIGHWAY

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has embarked on a mission to improve trading activities and trade logistics between the neighbouring countries of India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Two segments of the Asian highway that are relevant to the TTMP, SJPA are AH – 2 that traverses from Nepal to Bangladesh and AH - 48 that traverses from Bhutan to Bangladesh.

Asian Highway (AH – 2)

This section of the highway passes from the south-west of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation area through the SJPA. The alignment of this section has been slightly modified as per the proposed Ring Road for Siliguri.

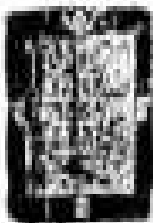
Figure: Asian Highway



Source: Google Map, SGI, 2011

APPENDIX: 3

A COPY OF THE DEED OF GRANT WRITTEN IN LEPCHA FOLLOWED BY
ITS TRANSLATION IN HINDUSTANI (1835)



Handwritten text in Lepcha script, consisting of several lines of characters.

केपिभीका हाम्मारेण गण्डुगुने वानिर्लिण पाह्म आध ह्या हारके ह्यन जोसाकाका नैम्ब
 लौग विमाह होवेसे म्मिनेने आवोनेने भादान पावेण ससकाली भाएतेहै सो हाम महामांवी
 शीलिनिमपति केपिभीका तादेव वीजुफके ताण रोहिकेसमम हानिर्लिण पाह्म नोका रिगी
 का इचिण जो पासासन जोक्केस जोखोमदिगित नरिका पूव जो महामन्सि रनेनिका पखिलीरै
 कीथोकोकमनि हौन गण्डुगुने भण्डारदि म्म १८२१ साल ताधि १९ भाष

SOURCE:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/90/Darjeeling_Deed_Of_Grant%2C_1835.gif

APPENDIX 4:**Map of Darjeeling district (1838) during regime of Rajah of Sikkim BAYLEY
(1838) Map of the Country between Titaleea and Dorjeling**

Source : BAYLEY (1838) Map of the Country between Titaleea and Dorjeling
(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/91/BAYLEY%281838%29_Map_of_the_Country_between_Titaleea_and_Dorjeling.jpg/800px-BAYLEY%281838%29_Map_of_the_Country_between_Titaleea_and_Dorjeling.jp)

APPENDIX 5:**MAP OF DARJEELING DISTRICT (1876) AFTER BEING CONSIDERED A
"REGULATED AREA" BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT**

Source: Historical Map of Sikkim in northeastern India extracted from map prepared by Trelawney Saunders, 1876, titled "The routes of Bogle, Turner and Manning between Bengal and Tibet" and published in the book, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, by Clements R. Markham, C.B., F.R.S. Geographical Department, India Office. Published by London: Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill. 1876.

APPENDIX:6**Toy train passing through Siliguri after independence in 1955**

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/04/History_1a.jpg

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Globalisation and Its Impact on Siliguri

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ABSTRACT:

Globalisation is considered an amalgam of social-cultural and economic outcomes which resulted from the opening of the Indian economy. Globalisation is conceived to be an expansion of a neoliberal market economy where market entry becomes important players. In a simple manner, globalisation has been defined as changes in the density of International and global interaction related to local or national networks. Globalisation has a huge impact on the city of Siliguri. This paper discusses the impact of globalisation on Siliguri.

Keywords: Globalisation, markets, urban sprawl, commodity, consumption

INTRODUCTION:

If we enter the city of Siliguri from the airport which is located at Bagdogra, a few kilometres from the town, after passing through a two-kilometre stretch of lush green tea gardens on both sides of NH 31A, we meet with a flyover which directs us an entry passage towards Siliguri. Here we can spot a busy market, a few glass building shops implicating some big showrooms, huge illuminating signboards on both sides of the roads announcing the coming of a new township, or a school or some hotels etc. One passes through a four-lane highway which is cautiously marked with yellow lights and barricades. The distance of 10 kilometres from the Airport to the Darjeeling-Moore sparkles the eyes of visitors because of the path is entwined with the scenic beauty of tea gardens and the distant mountain chain, which is afterwards blocked by the Campus of the University of North Bengal and the high rising buildings of Uttorayon Township.

Cities and towns are the core of the development strategy pursued by globalisation². This growth strategy led to structural adjustment in cities and towns with particular reference to spatial organisation. The government policies are in tune with the motto of making globalisation seep to every nook and corner of towns and cities in the Country. Siliguri was not free from the dominating waves of globalisation and one can witness a lot of restructuring of the spatial organisation within the city and outside the city. Siliguri turned out to be a perfect example of the by-product of local processes that was shaped by interplay of local regional, national as well as international forces.

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GLOBALISATION AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF SPATIAL ORGANISATION

The town of Siliguri began to develop from the locality called Khalpara and Naya Bazar area as these two areas were in close proximity to the town railway station. The beginning saw the construction of godown and warehouses for wholesale trade. Due to the lack of any big industrial projects the town began to serve as a wholesale trade point by supplying goods to the whole of Northeast India. Owing to its geographical uniqueness, it stood as a major hub for wholesale trade. The growth of warehouses was followed by the establishment of retail shops and consumer goods industries for local consumption. Subhashpalli one of the oldest settlements of the city located near the town railway station bears testimony to the fact that still today one can witness large warehouses flooded with packed consumer goods for supply to North East and other areas of India

The war of 1962³ awakened the Government of India to look into the connectivity issues in Siliguri and nearby areas and special care was devoted to the improvement of the roads and transport system. New bridges were built and special reference may be made to the second Mahananda Bridge which gave the scope for the growth of the city in the North-Western direction of the river Mahananda. The making of the third Mahanandabridge linked the city with the western part and it also opened in a new avenue for the expansion of the city in the Western direction. The original town which comprised the areas known as Hakim Para started to expand in all the four directions but the growth of the Siliguri Town reached its momentum only after the Government of India adopted the New Economic Policy of Liberalisation in the 1990s⁴.

The liberalization of the Indian economy had a huge impact on Siliguri and the Spatial Organisation of Siliguri was restructured. The first step in spatial reorganisation was the declaration of Siliguri municipality to Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994. From Nagarpalika the status was raised to Mahanagarpalika. Siliguri municipality which had 30 wards, new 17 wards when added to its jurisdiction and a huge area of 41.9 square kilometres came under the governance of Mahanagar Nigam. The major impact of this spatial reorganisation was that it gave impetus to the growth of Peri-urban areas in and around the municipal corporation. Another organisational restructuring was seen in revamping the SiliguriJalpaiguri Development Authority (SJDA) as a nodal agency for the development of the area. SJDA was established under the West Bengal Town and Country Planning and Development Act 1979. This establishment came into full-fledged action only after 1994 when Siliguri municipality was declared a corporation. SJDA and Siliguri Municipal Corporation came forward with a “new approach paper” for Urban Development of Siliguri. The SiliguriJalpaiguri planning area includes 6 police stations of Siliguri, Matigara, Naxalbari, Bhaktinagar, and Jalpaiguri and Rajganj. The whole area is divided into five different Community Development Blocks like MatigaraNaxalbari and Phansidewa along with Jalpaiguri and Rajganj in Jalpaiguri District. The two important urban areas which are included within SiliguriJalpaiguri Planning Area

are Siliguri Municipal Corporation and Jalpaiguri municipality along with this there are two Non-Municipal urban areas Bairatisal and Uttar Bagdogra. We also have approximately 290 rural Mouza included in SiliguriJalpaiguri planning Area. Though the planning and development activities of SJDA included Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Phansidewa and Naksalbari however the focal point was always Siliguri due to its unique geographical location.

Post-1991, when liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) was ushered into the Indian scenario the nation witnessed unprecedented growth in foreign direct investment⁵. There was also the growth of the market economy and the agendas of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation penetrated deep into the regional areas for the search of the markets. Siliguri was not aloof from the economic changes the country was witnessing and it needed an agency to carry out the infrastructure development work on a war footing. SJDA was one such agency which had to intune itself to facilitate the processes of globalisation. In the month of February 2004, SJDA came up with “perspective plan 2025”. This plan was initiated in the year 2002 and the project was funded by UNICEF. The vision of the plan was that there will be

“Improved infrastructure and services Centre for all health and hygiene along with social amenities encouraging the development of body and mind within an ecologically sustainable framework.” (SJDA, 2004, Xiii).

In continuation of the process of spatial restructuring, SiliguriJalpaiguri planning area has divided the whole surroundings of Siliguri⁶ based on two important aspects. Firstly it located the Zones where minimal or no future development could take place and basically these areas correspond to the core area of the city where the open space is only 6.78 per cent However the other peri-urban areas around the city of Siliguri has been marked as for potential economic zones. The peri-urban areas around the city of Siliguri have been divided into four different economic zones. Zone 1 is West Naxalbari settlements and this is hallmark due to the consolidation of production economics in these areas. Zone 2 is the extended Siliguri municipal corporation settlement in the western part of the city and this is mainly because of the 3rd Mahananda Bridge augmentation. The North-west extended Siliguri municipal corporation settlement is earmarked as zone 3 because of industrial settlements and tourism prospects in these areas. Lastly, zone 4 corresponds to the Sevoke workstation commercial and transshipment hub keeping in mind the Nathula trade prospects. The details of the economic contribution of these zones in the era of liberalisation and the free-market economy will be discussed later in this chapter. The questions arise why there was zoning practice in Siliguri? The spatial reorganisation of the city space was necessary and it provided the backdrop for Zoning Siliguri. This has to be analysed within the larger framework of urbanisation programmes to recreate neo-liberal globalised cities.

The population growth leading to urban sprawl could be one of the reasons but the will create these zones around the core Siliguri were dictated through the Liberalisation, Privatisation and globalisation discourses for creating ‘spaces’ where the big global real

estate players with the help of 'local Sharks' under the government banner of public-private partnership (PPP model) could invoke Mark's ideas of 'The Circuit of Money Capital'.

GLOBALISATION, MIGRATION AND THE URBAN SPRAWL

There is a soft cohesion between globalisation migration and urban sprawl. The new economic policy of the Government of India was changing the economic scenario of the whole country and Siliguri couldn't remain untouched from it. Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation increased the purchasing power of the people and the new world of consumerism was introduced to the Indians. The policy of foreign direct investment and new consumerism indirectly led to the growth of new markets to fulfil the needs of the people. Migration of the people was the natural outcome in the new economic scenario in the country. These new migrations led to an unequal accumulation of people in the new land of opportunities and Siliguri is one such example which shows how it transformed into a migrant town.

Urban sprawl in simple terms can be understood as an unchecked spreading of a city and its suburbs. It involves the construction of residential as well as commercial buildings in the nearby areas of city fringes. As the outlying area becomes more and more populated the consequences impact is an outward expansion of settlement patterns. The term urban sprawl was coined by William white and he defined it as a physical pattern of low-density expansion of a large urban area under market conditions into the surrounding agricultural areas. The sprawl is due to increased population pressure. The growth rate of population in Siliguri town has been phenomenal and it would not be wrong to say that it was higher than West Bengal average between the census years. The census report of 1991 reflects that the population of Siliguri municipal corporation was 2, 16,954. However, when we compare it with the census report of 2001 a decade after India witnessed the process of liberalisation we find that the total population of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation was 4,72,374. It is amazing that the decadal growth rate was 117.3 percent and it marked the highest in the history of the area. The most important question in our mind arises why and how there was such a huge decadal growth (117.3%) of the population in Siliguri⁷.

The strategic geographical location of Siliguri along with the implementation of New Economic Policy in 1991 by the Government of India could be seen as a secondary reason for huge growth rate in population but the most important reason was the huge migration of people from nearby towns, cities and States. The strategic geographical location and the new economic scenario project Siliguri as 'Land of opportunities' for doing business and getting employment and this led people to migrate to Siliguri.

It is very interesting to study the pattern of migration that has been one of the most important and primary contributory factors to the growth of population in the Siliguri municipal corporation area. Migration as a phenomenon in the whole of North Bengal is attributed to the growth of the population. In fact, population surge in many cities in the world such as New York, London, Tokyo, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi etc. has been due to migration rather than natural increase.

Transborder migration to Siliguri Municipal area and also to the nearby areas was imminent because we have data that reflects that people who migrated from Bangladesh migrated for the reason of justified political sanctuary following the partition of India in 1947 and afterwards the Indo Pak war of 1971. The people who migrated from Nepal came here for new economic opportunities in a socio-economic survey of households conducted by Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 2004, it was revealed that approximately 60.9% of the total household in Siliguri municipal corporation area were migrants from different districts of West Bengal. Approximately 13.3% of the household came from the neighbouring state of Bihar and 7.2 % of the households came from other states. It was interesting to note that approximately 17.4% of the migrants were from Bangladesh and 1.2% migrants from other countries. The migrants within West Bengal which comprised 60 per cent were actually the resultant outcome of the shutting of the Tea industries in North Bengal after post Globalisation⁸.

The scenario changed after the globalisation and with the turn of the new century tea industry was undergoing a phase of deep crisis. There are examples that as many as 72 tea gardens in the Doors were marked as unproductive and hence many were closed down. The tea gardens which are still operative are struggling for its existence. According to Gupta and Bhattacharya, more than 3000 permanent workers lost their livelihood. The five recently closed tea gardens in Alipurduar accounted for as many as 15,000 workers with 45000 dependents. The Tea industry which was considered to be the backbone of the economy lost its importance. The crisis in the Tea gardens acted as a boon in disguise for Siliguri in the era of globalisation because their workers in search of jobs migrated towards Siliguri. These migrants served as daily wage labourers in the real estate sector which saw an unprecedented boom due to globalisation.

The phenomenal rise of population led to excessive pressure on land and we observed a drastic change in the land use pattern of Siliguri municipal corporation area. The changing settlement pattern can be best understood with the use of Remote sensing and GIS techniques. Land pattern use is the product of resource utilisation by the population subsisting on it. Unprecedented growth in population leads to demand for new settlement areas which in turn is compromised with the encroachment of the nearby areas of the developing city.

The land-use statistics of Siliguri municipal corporation area of the year 1991 reflects that there was 47.9 3% of open space. This indicated that there was ample space for the accommodation of the increasing population of the Siliguri town. The reports of the year 2001 witnessed a total change scenario. The 117.7 3% decadal growth rate as reported in the Census of 2001 totally corresponded with the data that was derived from the GIS report of 2001. The GIS report of 2001 points out that the open space was reduced to area 28.0

1% from 47.9 3% of the year 1991. To make a situation worse the GIS report of 2014 says that the open space in Siliguri municipal corporation area was only 6.78%.

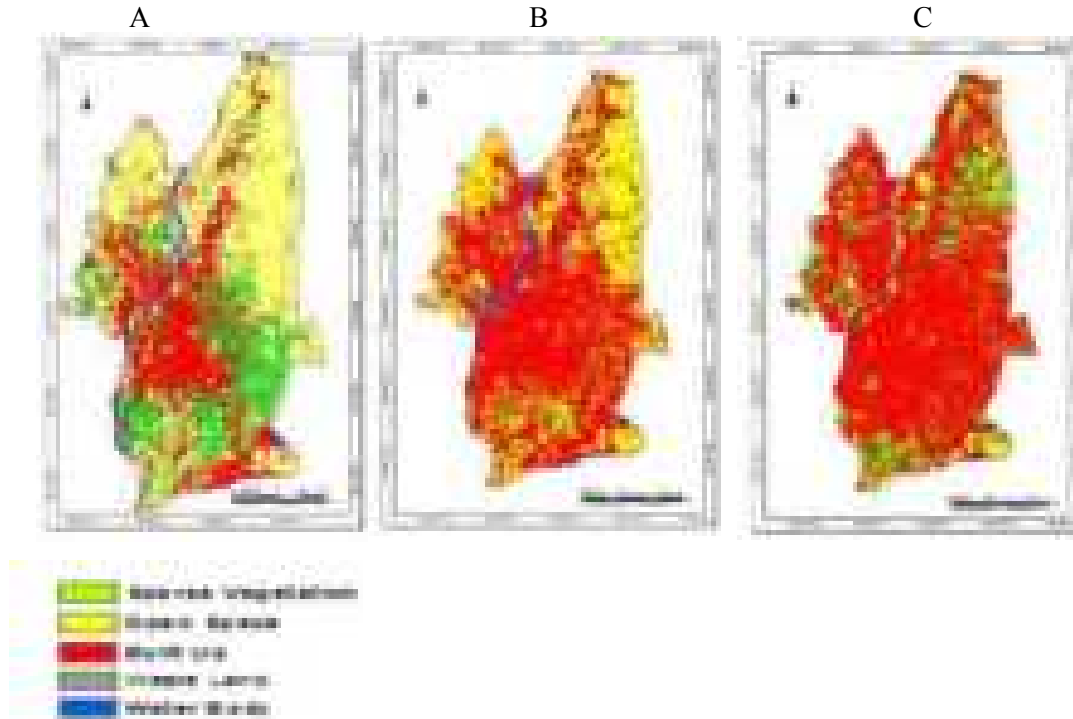


Fig. Showing Land Use GIS maps of SMC (A) 1991, (B) 2001 (C) 2017.

It is very important to understand the zoning system⁹ which was adopted by the government of West Bengal in general and implemented by the Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority. From 1990 the International Monetary Fund IMF induced structural adjustment programme SAP was introduced throughout India and it was one of the policies adopted by the government of India in new economic policy. The practice was one of the proponents of SAP and the Siliguri development area was divided into four zones as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The impact of Globalisation on Siliguri cannot be complete without studying these Zones because it was the globalisation that gave birth to these Zones to facilitate the processes of globalisation.

Zone 1 included the south-west corner of the Siliguri City and it corresponds to the present day Naxalbari area. If we minutely study the impact of SAP we can come to a conclusion that it was once a battleground for the Maoists and Naxalite now practices full-fledged commercial residential activities with facility centres like utility centres, trading centres, Agro service centres and small leather processing centres. The history of Naxalbari is not hidden from any scholar of Humanities and Social Sciences. Physiographically the area is located between Mechi River and Balasan River blessed with rich and fertile cultivable land

and the location of Kharibari Ghoshpukur four-lane bypass acts as linkages to Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The Zone 1 area shares International boundaries, in the West it shares International Thus it becomes apparent that zone 1 serves the real motto of International border trade prospect of globalisation because it is through these International passes we find the import and export of goods to Nepal, China and Bangladesh. It also provides sufficient challenge to the authorities because it is through these vulnerable points illegal cross migration and the influx of cheap Chinese products enters into India. A detailed study is made in the next chapter on the militarization of Siliguri¹⁰.

Zone two represents the westward expansion of Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The north of this Zone includes Champasari, the East shares the boundary with Siliguri Municipal Corporation, the South includes the lower Mahananda Bridge up to South-west Mahananda link canal and in the west, it includes the Phansidewa-Matigara link highway. This zone is dominated by residential areas however on a survey we also find extended commercial zones Siliguri Municipal Corporation. This also facilitates municipal corporations with transportation nodes and commercial as well as institutional buildings with corporate establishments. This zone is very important because it serves as a link between the East and West border areas of Siliguri Municipal Corporation and also establishes northbound trade to Matigarahaat. Economically this is very important to Siliguri Municipal area because post globalisation period we find a development of Agro-Tech industries along with livestock-related production centres. We also have software parks and herb culture parks in this area.

Zone 3 is also very important for the Siliguri Municipal area because it represents Northwest expansion of Siliguri Municipal Corporation. Geographically this zone is restricted to Champasari and Chandmoni area. Commercial Institutions we also have all the important educational institutions of Siliguri in this area. To name a few Siliguri Institute of Technology, Pragati College of Education, Sri Sri Educational Institute. This area has also witnessed a huge investment in the real estate sector. Major realtor players like Mayfair, Bengal Ambuja, Shanthinikethan, Vishwakarma builders and other local builders are developing new ventures along NH-31 and Sevoke road of Siliguri region. Zone 4 acts as a transshipment area and earmarked as a special zone with Sevoke as it's the nodal point. It serves an important trade linkage to Nathula and rest of SJPA and the larger region.

Thus we see that the Zoning of the areas around Siliguri was a product of policies to boost Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. In return, these zones acted as feeder corridors in the growth and development of urbanisation in Siliguri Municipal area.

GLOBALISATION, MARKETS AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SILIGURI.

Market and trade liberalisation are the cornerstones of globalisation processes. In simple terms, it reflects the density change in the interaction between the global and the local, and

the international and the national. Thus economic globalisation promotes candid and greater interaction between production, organisation of production, distribution points where markets come to centrality and also consumption because the consumption pattern determines market and production graphs. Neo-liberalism demanded loose government control and regulations of economic activity in favour of the market forces. An important aspect of understanding the structural adjustment design by the government in favour of liberalisation and privatisation can only be understood as a 'conditionality' of loan packages from the International Monetary fund. The world International banks like IMF and ADB plays a vital role in forcing the Governments of any county, especially the Developing and Third world countries to open their country to Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. Easterly tries to name some of these conditionalities like 'reduced domestic credit expansion, reduced budget deficit, currency devaluation, freed controlled prices, reduced trade barriers, increased privatization and also deregulation of markets'¹¹to name a few.

Siliguri becomes the commercial hub for the entire North Bengal, North-Eastern States and also some parts of Bihar like the areas of Kishanganj and Katihar. The traditional mainstay of business in Siliguri was based on tea, tourism and timber. However post-liberalization we find the besides strengthening the traditional mainstay business the new markets that developed in and around Siliguri after the New economic policies of the 1990s catered the economic demand of the large hinterland of Dooars, Darjeeling, the entire state of Sikkim, the Kingdom of Bhutan as well as parts of North-East India. It became the nodal point of location from where the cargos are transferred from one carrier to another. The boom in the organized retail business, hospitality industry and the real estate investment completely metamorphose the economic scenario of the city. Siliguri also developed into a city with a large number of trading centres and readymade markets for consumer goods and is thus a candid home to myriad retailers, wholesalers, dealers, distributors and small-scale entrepreneurs, transforming it into the commercial nerve centre of North Bengal.

To understand the impact of globalisation on the economy of Siliguri Municipal Corporation we have to understand the State Domestic Product as a key indicator to assess the health as well as the dynamics of the economy of a region or of a state. The data on estimated net district domestic product is not available at a level below a district. Accordingly, the data on Siliguri Municipal Corporation is deduced to make an assessment of the economic activities and their movement over time in the era of globalisation.

Under the Tertiary sector, there has been phenomenal growth in SDP between 1993-94 and 2000-01 in two sub-sectors - 272% in 'Banking & Insurance' and 132% in 'Public Administration'. The widespread growth of Banking & Insurance activities has been the result of the opening of the banking and insurance business to private players in the new liberalized economic regime. The economic activity-wise data reveal that 'Retail Trade' is the single largest group of establishments in SJPA, accounting for 47.4% of the total number

of enterprises. Next in size is the group 'Community, Social and Personal services' representing 18% of the total number of enterprises in SJPA.

In analysing the impact of Liberalisation of the primary sector of Siliguri we find that the impact was very disastrous. The data compiled shows that between 1993-94 and 2001-02 i.e. approximately over the last eight years, the contribution of the Primary sector to SDP has fallen from 42.2% in 1993-94 to 31.3% in 2001-02 for the districts and it corresponds to the Siliguri municipal area¹². The fall has been considerable in Agriculture – the sub-sector that accounts for the lion's share of State Domestic Product in the Primary sector. Agriculture production is almost nil in the SMC area because when we compare the GIS data of the year 1991 and 2001 we find that the decreased open space in the SMC. These open spaces one served as land for growing vegetables and dairy activities but with the passage of the shrinking open space, the city mainly depends on its surrounding villages for vegetables and dairy activities. However, forest industries have flourished in recent decades. Siliguri has revealed a tremendous potential for wood as well as timber-based industries because the region is rich in these natural resources. It has a number of West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Ltd. (WBFDC) joinery and carpentry units that supply high-quality furniture and joinery items to the public at competitive prices. Besides, sawn timber is sold to buyers and dealers in bulk from Government sawmills in Siliguri. WBFDC is responsible for selling sawn timber like sal, teak, dhupi and jarul at fixed prices to the public through its retail sales centres in West Bengal including in Siliguri. A lot of economic activities are based on forest resources in and around the Siliguri municipal area. Baikunthapur forest is one of the important forest ranges within SiliguriJalpaiguri planning area and it provides economic livelihood to many people. Despite being a protected forest, in this era of globalisation Baikunthapur forest had been subjected to tremendous pressure for fuel, house posts, hatch and other forest produce and thereby to uncontrolled destruction of forest resources. There is another important Reserve forest, namely, Apalchand Range, a little away from SJPA and a good deal of economic activities based on the produce of the forest takes place in SJPA. Siliguri is the main market for the major forest produce. A part of Sal and miscellaneous logs extracted by West Bengal Forest Development Corporation (WBFDC) is given to government sawmills under WBFDC and the remaining sold on auction. The wood available in the region has given a boost to veneer and plywood making units in SJPA. Nevertheless, Sal timber is the most important and the highest revenue earning produce of the region. With an increase in demand for timber like Sal and Teak and consequent rise in prices, inferior varieties of timber such as Champ, Panisaj, Gamar, Jarul are finding ready markets. There is a great demand for House posts or Sal poles from the local population, tea industries and also the West Bengal State Electricity Board. Thus we see that globalisation led to the ever-increasing demand of sal and timber products which are supplied and marketed throughout North India¹³.

A considerable number of small-scale and cottage industries (grill factory, atta mills and steel furniture) are spread over the municipal area, predominantly in the wards of the Sevoke Road area and Burdwan Road. The formal service sector also contributes significantly to the local economy within the municipal corporation. It encompasses academic institutes (schools, colleges and other academic institutions), automobile repair centres, banks and post offices, health institutions, hotels, retail outlets and trading centres which are located along transportation corridors like Burdwan Road, Sevoke Road, and other major local roads. These outlets of the service sector are served by local people. As per data collected from SMC, till the year 2014, there are 31,981 commercial establishments in the city which includes Fish, meat Poultry shops 384 in number, Fruits and vegetable shops 5,341, Groceries and provisions shops 356, Eating Places 4,314, Pan and Cigarettes shops 3,500, Textile and Clothing shops 2,500, Medical shops 2,000, Computer and Electronics shops 136, Electrical Hardware and building materials outlets 1,211, Household merchandise shops 331, Furniture and Interior decoration shops 157, Jewelry shops 953, Optics and watches shops 478, Footwear outlets 1231, Recreation centres 17, Transport points 500, Service Outlets 5000 and other miscellaneous 533.

Post Liberalisation the share of the secondary sector has risen marginally. It is interesting to look at the trends of industrial growth of Siliguri¹⁴. The problem is that there is no data separately for SJP that is readily available. To look into the impact of globalisation on the industrial sector we have to make a comparative study of the set of data collected under the Annual Survey of Industries covering both Census and Non-Census sectors. The data reveals that the number of factories in Siliguri Municipal corporation, registered a fall between 1980-81 and 1990-91, there was very passive and mundane growth in fixed capital, invested capital and productive capital during this period leading to absolute decline. As for the 'number of workers' and 'number of employees', registered between 1980-81 and 1990-91 showed prosperity. This means that one hand industries, investment, and production capital were declining but there was an increase in the number of people who were ready to sell their labour.

In the period following 1990-91, spectacular growth in not only the number of factories but also in 'fixed capital', 'invested capital', 'productive capital', 'number of workers' and 'number of employees' had taken place in Siliguri municipal area and the new zonal areas around Siliguri. The 'number of factories' recorded more than two and a half times increase, the shares in 'fixed capital', 'invested capital' and 'productive capital' had shown more than ten times rise. This is perhaps due to more capital-intensive methods being adopted among the newer factories being set up in the area. Another interesting observation that the data reveals is that although the average capital base of a factory is much smaller for the two districts than the same for West Bengal, the rates of growth in 'average fixed capital per factory', 'average invested capital per factory' and 'average productive capital per factory' had been much larger in the districts of Darjeeling in general and Siliguri in particular. On

the contrary, while the 'average number of workers per factory' has registered an increase in the SJPA between 1990-91 and 1997-98, the same for West Bengal has fallen. This implies that despite the rapid expansion of the capital base of industries in SJPA, capital intensities of industries in other industrialized districts of the state are much higher. Another notable feature of industrial growth is that the average wage per worker is far lower in the SJPA than the same for West Bengal. This can be explained partly by the lower cost of living in the two districts and partly by the lower incidence of highly skilled workers coupled with a higher incidence of migrant workers.

These phenomena are indicative of the fact that the SJPA experienced a very fast growth of factories engaged primarily in manufacturing activities in the years following 1990-91. In fact, this is the period when a new liberalized economic regime had been initiated in the country, including the abolition of the 'licensing regime' which was the main reasons for the growth¹⁵.

In the era of globalization, The distribution of the number of registered factories according to NIC classification in 2000 shows that 'manufacture of food products' constitutes one half of the total number of registered factories. The next major group in the two districts is 'manufacture of wood and wood products, furniture and fixtures', accounting for nearly 19% of the total number of factories in 2000. Around 6% of factories are found in 'repair services', which represents heterogeneous and footloose service industries. It is observed that 'manufacture of food products'; 'manufacture of wood and wood products, furniture and fixtures'; 'electricity'; 'land transport' and 'education, scientific and research services' are the ones to reckon with. There have been substantial increases in 'fixed capital', 'invested capital', 'productive capital' and 'number of workers' for the 'manufacture of food products' industry in 1997-98 over 1996-97. This is the industry whose 'net value added' works out to a relatively high figure of Rs. 300 crores during 1997-98. The relatively high concentration of units in 'manufacture of food products' in the region is due to the considerable growth of certain fruits and vegetables as well as tea plantations in the region. There are, however, two other industry groups, namely, 'manufacture of cotton textiles' and 'manufacture of wool, silk and synthetic fibre textiles' that have witnessed considerable growth in 'fixed capital', 'invested capital', 'productive capital' and 'number of workers' between 1996-97 and 1997-98 have little or no presence in SJPA. The abundant availability of forest resources in both districts facilitated the growth of this industry in the past. However, the growth has been considerably curbed in recent years due to a ban imposed by the Supreme Court of India on felling of trees in the forests. The incidence of 'repair services' units are found to be more in larger urban centres in the state of which Siliguri is one. Growth of these units can be seen without a concomitant growth of manufacturing industries. With the rise in urbanization, 'repair services' industry shows steady growth over the years in respect of the concerning attributes. Small-scale industries have been playing a significant role in the

industrial scene of SJP. It not only contributes substantially to SDP of West Bengal but also provides a great deal of employment.

In the post-GATT industrial scenario, the small-scale sector has emerged as an important segment. While the WTO-led globalisation policies have opened up new opportunities for the small-scale sector, on the one hand, the sector is also confronted by stiff, often unequal competition, on the other. The share of SJP with the exclusion of non-Siliguri part of Darjeeling in the total small-scale industrial scene of the state is not very reckonable, although the same has registered a marginal increase between 1997-98 and 2001-02. This has happened because the growth in the number of small-scale units as well as in employment in the SJP-districts has been much higher than the same in the remaining parts of the state. One interesting phenomenon of the growth has been that of Jalpaiguri experiencing much higher growth in a number of units than that of Siliguri, on the one hand, and Siliguri's witnessing very high growth in employment as opposed to slightly negative growth in employment in Jalpaiguri, on the other.

Thus, the growth of small scale industries in Siliguri has been based on labour-intensive methods of production. One of the important sub-sectors of small scale industry is Handicrafts. The industrial estates at Dabgram in Jalpaiguri and Ektiasal near Siliguri provide organized facilities for setting up of small scale industries. The example of establishing Biswa Bangla Silpihaat at Khwakhali, Siliguri bears testimony to the above fact. Lack of growth of the small-scale sector is no unique phenomenon for the region, as, under the new WTO-led globalization regime, the small-scale industries all over the country have been subjected to stiff competition consequent to withdrawal of reservations for them on a number of scores.

Both the State Domestic Product data and Economic Census data have revealed that there has been substantial growth in economic activities under the tertiary sector during the last decade. The largest share of 25% of SDP is contributed by banking & insurance businesses, which have received a boost as a result of policies of economic liberalization being followed at the national level. With faster urbanization in the region, demands for banking and insurance services rise, especially from the trading sector. The next largest group of activity is 'trade, hotel and restaurant' accounting for 20% of SDP. Whereas hotel and restaurant businesses are related to tourism, trading is a significant economic activity in the SJP region providing income and employment opportunities to a large number of people, particularly in the informal sector. In the trading sub-sector, wholesale trading activities play an important role in the economy of Siliguri municipal area as well its entire hinterland extending over the northeastern states and the countries of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. SJP houses a number of large market centres –both wholesale and retail in nature. The opening of banking and insurance businesses to the private sector as a fallout of liberalized economic regime across the country provided a fillip to this sub-sector to grow rapidly in urban areas. The growth of manufacturing industries in the Siliguri areas received impetus from the various policy reforms such as dismantling of licensing regime, the abolition of freight equalization for coal and steel, incentive schemes designed by the State Government for promotion of manufacturing industries,

liberalization of imports and exports etc. The encouragement to private investment in the backdrop of various policy reforms shall result in better utilization of the region's vast resources through the establishment of manufacturing industries in the region. The basic question that would confront planners is whether Siliguri should continue to be characterized by predominant mercantile nature of its economy or should the areas be seen as a potential manufacturing industrial base, of course, maintaining a structural balance between secondary and tertiary sector activities.

In the context of fast urbanization of the SJPA region, predominance of non-agricultural activities will continue to shape the economy of the region. So far, tertiary activities including trades and commerce have witnessed pre-dominant growth. But for the economy of SJPA and more generally of North Bengal to have sustained growth, it should be imperative to encourage growth manufacturing and processing industries in the SJPA region, as apart from marketing opportunities, the region is rich in natural and agricultural resources. A considerable contribution to SDP of the region is made by 'education and related services'. As a result, the availability of educated and technically skilled personnel in the region is more than in other places. All these resource bases facilitate the prospect of industrial growth in the region. Siliguri is also fast emerging as an information technology (IT) hub, an alternative destination for Kolkata, for info-tech companies. Siliguri already has good infrastructure and modern amenities for people who work in IT parks. Some major IT companies have already set up bases in Siliguri. The West Bengal Government has set up an IT park in Siliguri recently, to provide bigger opportunities to IT/ITES companies to start their businesses in Siliguri. However, the IT firms are located outside the municipal boundaries. The working conditions in these IT firms are very poor.

As per the 2011 Census, the city has 1.88 lakh workers who account for 37% of the total city population. The Workforce Participation Rate (WPR) has increased from 33% in 2001 indicating a net increase of 29,874 workers. Main workers account for 88% of all workers, the remaining being marginal workers who are involved in employment for less than 6 months. Analysis of the sectorial share of workers shows that about 1% of the total workers in the City are engaged in primary sector activities, 3% in the secondary sector and about 96% - a phenomenal share - in the tertiary sector. As discussed above there is meagre scope for primary sector activities within the city limits. Tea processing, timber and other manufacturing units form sources of secondary sector employment. It is also observed that these industries employ regional workforce from nearby rural areas. The workforce within the city is predominantly occupied in tertiary sector activities which include trade, transport, hotels, real estate, etc. In 1991, 85.3% of the total workforce was engaged in the tertiary sector. Out of 158,058 workers in the SMC area, only 1.9% comprise cultivators and agricultural labourers. In 2001, the secondary sector accounted for 0.3% and tertiary as much as 97.9% of the total workforce. This indicates the dominance of the tertiary sector in the economy of Siliguri¹⁶.

With the increasing role of Siliguri as a regional trading centre and also a regional transport node for the entire hinterland extending over the north-eastern states and the adjoining countries of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, the transformation of the areas both within and surrounding Siliguri began to witness changes in terms of economic pursuit and land use and development. The centrifugal forces originating in Siliguri led to spread of urban areas around and given the physiographic constraints, the urban sprawl was directed towards the formation of zones, and in the process, taking away lands under agricultural use for urban uses. This was one of the reasons for the declining share of the agriculture sub-sector. Thus we see that the areas under Siliguri Municipal Corporation have been witnessing a very fast growth of non-agricultural economic activities. Siliguri MC Area is the hub of such economic activities in not only SJPB but also the entire North Bengal comprising the districts Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. The economic importance of Siliguri derives from the vast hinterland extending over not only North Bengal but also the North Eastern States and neighbouring countries of Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. The growth of economic activities within SJPB is leading to not only increasing population and urbanization in SJPB but also due to the structural changes.

MARKETS:

Siliguri has been growing as a distribution centre in North Bengal, Northeast India, Sikkim, Bhutan and other adjoining areas and this has led to a rapid increase in the wholesale trade markets in Siliguri. The largest wholesale market is the Siliguri Regulated Market. The distinctive features of the market are that whereas it hardly regulates prices, it handles large volumes of Merchandise composed of varied items. The items in the market come from areas both in and around Siliguri and from different corners of the country. A good quantity of agricultural produce comes to the market from Kharibari and Naxalbari areas. The items traded in the market largely flow to areas outside Siliguri and little is consumed locally. Apples and pears come from as far as Delhi and Himachal Pradesh and go to the different districts of North Bengal and the North Eastern States; mangoes come from Malda in West Bengal and Muzaffarpur in Bihar and move to local markets and Assam. A large volume of bananas come from Bihar and cater to local markets Siliguri. Sweet lemons are brought from Tamil Nadu and dispatched to both local markets and Assam. Pomegranate flows in from Nasik in Maharashtra and is sent to local markets as well as to the state of Assam and Sikkim. Among important vegetables traded are cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, tomato, potato, onion, egg, bitter gourd etc. that flow to the market from SJPB and surrounding areas. Despite the fact that the existence of large wholesale markets characterizes the economy of SJPB as a mercantile one, infrastructure in the markets is poor¹⁷.

On a survey of the Regulated market it was found that there were hardly any public utility services such as water, public convenience, telephone etc. and also there was an inadequate warehouse and cold storage facility. Interestingly, it was found that not all goods traded in

the wholesale markets are produced in Siliguri and adjoining regions but are transported from faraway places. This is why transport activities are quite booming in Siliguri. As per the report of Siliguri Municipal corporation commercial establishments in the SMC area number 45,230; of these, 33% are registered and 67% unregistered and informal in nature. About 8% of commercial establishments are wholesale shops.

Among the retail markets Bidhan Market, the chief marketing centre of Siliguri, is situated in the heart of the city, in the shape of a triangle whose vertices are HashmiChowk (or Hospital More), Sevoke More and PaniTanki More. There are three different kinds of markets within this triangle – the daily market, the New Market and the HongKong Market. Situated close to the Bidhan Market, but south of the railway line is the Mahabirthan Market and the Khalpara wholesale market. The other major markets are the DIF Market, the shopping on Hill Cart Road, the Gate Bazaar Market on Old Matigara Road, the Champasari Daily Market, the regulated market for wholesale of perishable goods, the Ghugumali Daily Market, Phuleswari Daily Market, Station Feeder Market, Jajodia Market and the ShaheedBhagat Singh Market Complex¹⁸.

Most of the economic activities in Siliguri are found in the two streets of Sevoke Road and Hill Cart Road. Many traditional stores and hotels dot the street while Sevoke Road flaunts sophisticated stores and most of the city's banks. The most preferred item in Siliguri is Darjeeling tea; the city is also well-known for its woollen garments, Tibetan paintings and wooden handicrafts that are sold in plenty on Hill Cart Road and Sevoke Road. There is also another famous market for electronic goods, which goes by the name of Hong Kong Market. The Hong Kong Market is popular with locals as well as tourists who visit the city for cheap imported goods, usually from the Chinese market as well as from places like Nepal and Thailand. Most of the gadgets available are quite cheap and thus allure tourists. Presently there are 550 shops in Hong Kong Market; these sell foreign goods like electronic items, cosmetics and clothes and employ as many as 1,500 persons.

The Seth Dress material is famous for Stationary Dress materials for women, artwork, handcrafted products and bags, eateries, food courts and there are approximately 400 shops as per the data collected from the secretary of the Union of Seth Srilal market.

Apart from these many shopping malls the rising rapidly on the roads of Siliguri signalling growth of modern infrastructure facilities in the city. The national and international branded goods' shops in these malls facilitate trading and commerce. Some of the malls are: Cosmos Mall, Sevoke Road, a large and up-scale mall, City Mall, Orbit Mall, includes an INOX movie theatre, Vegas Mall also with multiplexes, City Style mall, Sun Flower mall all situated on Sevoke road. We also have City Center, Uttarayan, and Vishal Mega Mart on the Burdwan road. Renowned automobile companies are gathering at Siliguri with their numerous Showrooms. Maruti Suzuki, Honda Sael, Toyota Kirloskar, Ford, Tata, JCB, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hyundai, General Motors are examples of this. Two-wheeler showrooms also

take their position at the Economy of Siliguri. Hero Honda, Kinetic, Honda scooters, Yamaha, Tvs Suzuki, Bajaj, LML all these top-ranked companies are now present at Siliguri.

With the growing economic transactions at Siliguri some major banks namely Standard Chartered, HDFC, ICICI, Allahabad, State Bank of India, UTI, UCO, Vijaya, IDBI and UBKG bank are opened with their branches. Maharashtra, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Karnataka Bank, Andhra Bank, Sonali Bank are some other quotable names of banks of Siliguri. In the era of Globalisation Siliguri has turned into the desired destination for most of the investors of India.

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⁷Survey of households conducted by Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 2004

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FROM OBSCURITY TO A SUB-DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTER: SILIGURI IN COLONIAL PERIOD

MINAKSHI KUMARI[†]

Abstract

Siliguri is a city which spans across the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts in the Indian state of West Bengal. The city is located on the banks of the Mahananda River and the foothills of the Himalayas. Siliguri is known for its “4T”: Tea, Timber, Tourism and Transport and is one of the fastest developing and growing metropolises of the state and also of the country. This city with sky scrapers, big hotels, many residential townships, three Railway stations and airports is lauded as the “Unofficial capital of North Bengal” by the newspapers. However, a hundred years before this metropolis was only a small village. This research article tries to trace the colonial history of Siliguri, the conduct it received from the colonial rulers and the reasons for its quick unprecedented development.

Keywords: territorial expansion; Kolkata; Jungles; TeestaTista; urban market; tea trade; Hill-stair road tea

Introducing the Region

Oxford dictionary defines ‘region’ as a continuous part of surface, space or body; administrative division. British remarks ‘sometimes as much as monkey market Hill’. Regions are areas that are broadly divided by physical characteristics, human impact characteristics and the interaction of humanity and the environment. Siliguri is spread over two districts in West Bengal, viz., Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. Masaburi, Jalpaiguri, Ragnaga, and Melbhar are some important towns near Siliguri. Siliguri is the headquarters of the

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place sub-division of Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Situated in Darjeeling district, it is the district's largest city; however, the district headquarters is located at Darjeeling.

Siliguri town the gateway to North East, Sikkim and Bihar also shares borders with three countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. The town's cosmopolitan character, given out of it being "an island of prosperity," makes it prone to both external and internal forces. Pakistan and China may pose an external threat via Bangladesh and Nepal through this narrow strip of land called the Siliguri corridor (which at its narrowest is 20 kilometers long and just 20 kilometers wide in the general area south west of Siliguri). It also connects hill stations such as Gangtok, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Mirik and the southern states with the rest of India.

The Contested landscape:

The district of Darjeeling was part of the Dominion of Raja of Sikkim. In 1790 what is now called as Kalimpong subdivisions of the district was taken from the Raja of Sikkim by the Britishers. The Raja later became engaged in unsuccessful struggles with the Gorkhas who had raised power in Nepal and invaded Sikkim in 1780. During the next 30 years they overrun Sikkim as far as the Teesta and occupied and annexed the territory. At the same time, war broke out between East India Company and the Nepalese. The war ended in 1817 by the treaty of Unahya and the tract which the Nepalese had wrested from the Raja of Sikkim was ceded to the company. The company retained the whole of the country between the Mechi and the Teesta to the Raja and guaranteed his sovereignty. Sikkim was thus made the buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan. Under the above treaty the Raja was bound to refer to the arbitration of the British government in all disputes between his subjects and those of neighbouring States. Ten years after it was signed, the disputes on the Sikkim-Nepal frontier rose and were referred to the Governor General. Two officers Captain Lloyd and Mr. Grant were deputed in 1828 to deal with the disputes. Lloyd spent 6 days in February 1829 in the 'old Gorkha station of Darjeeling' and was attracted by its advantages as a site for a Sanatorium. Darjeeling was then deserted although it had been occupied by a small

village around the residence of one of the principal feud. Mr. Grant reported to the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck about the marriage advantages promised by a settlement at Darjeeling and also recommended its occupation for military purposes as the key of a pass into Nepal. The Governor-General then deputed Captain Holburn, His Deputy Surveyor-General to examine the country with Mr. Grant and to also create the Court of the Directors approved the project. General Lloyd was directed to open negotiations with the Raja of Sikkim and he got the opportunity to negotiate only when he was deputed to enquire into the cause of an incursion from Nepal of Lapchar who had taken refuge there from Sikkim. Thus, Lloyd succeeded in obtaining the Grant from the Raja of Sikkim on 1st February 1825 and it was worded as follows:-

"the governor general has expressed his desire for the possession the Hills of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, has been recommended for the purpose of assisting the career of his government, suffering from the sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages and I, the Sikkimrajputra Raja, out of friendship and for the said Governor General, help present Darjeeling to the East India company, that is, all the land south of great Bangh river, East of Balawan, below and little Bangh river and west of Rangon and - Mithamul." This was an unconditional cession of what was then an inhabited mountain hill in 1841 the government granted the Raja an allowance of Rupees 1000 per annum as compensation and this was raised in 1846 to Rupees 4000 per annum. After the cession, General Lloyd and Dr. Chapman was sent in 1826 to explore and investigate the climate and the capabilities of the place. They spent the winter in 1826 and part of 1827 doing this when it was finally decided to develop the site as a Sanatorium. General Lloyd was appointed as a local Agent to deal with applications of land which began to pour in from residence of Calcutta. In 1826, Lloyd and Chapman found only few that created by Raja of Sikkim and by 1840 a road had been made from Parichahar thereby Singing Bhargawa there and a Hotel had been started at Karamong and other at Darjeeling, about 70 private houses were erected.

The rest of the valley was however under forest and practically uninhabited. According to Captain Herbert this was because previously about hundreds of able bodied men, forming two third population of Sikkim had been driven by the operation of the Raja of Sikkim to fly from Darjeeling and neighbourhood areas and take refuge in Nepal.

Sikkim Threat and Dr. Campbell

In 1838, Dr Campbell of the Indian Medical Service, British resident in Nepal as transferred to Darjeeling as superintendent. He was not only in charge of Civil, Criminal and Fiscal administration Of the District but also in charge of establishing political relations with Sikkim and adjoining foreign areas. Dr Campbell encouraged Cultivation and the population of the area which was hundred in 1809 rose to 10,000 in 1849. 'Whatever has been done here' said Mr. W.B. Jackson, an inspecting officer in 1852, was done by Dr Campbell alone and it was the efforts of Campbell that led to the establishment of no less than 75 European houses, Buildings for the accommodation of the sick in the depot and other public as well as private buildings.

However in the mean time relations with Sikkim deteriorated. The increasing importance of Darjeeling brought a sense of loss and frustration to the Lamas and other leading men of Sikkim headed by the Dewan-Margay. The Lamas and the Dewan had to bear huge loss because many slaves from Sikkim had settled as free men in and around Darjeeling. The Sikkimese resented to frequent kidnappings and demanded for return of slaves. The climax took place when in November of 1849, Sir Joseph Hooker and Dr. Campbell, while travelling in Sikkim with the permission of the Raja, were made prisoners at the command of the Dewan of Sikkim. Various demands were made as conditions of release but after some days on 24th December both were released unconditionally. In February of 1850, several punitive force entered Sikkim and remained there on the north Bank of great Rangit river for a week but the serious retaliatory action by the British was the withdrawal of the grant of Rs.500,000 for the Raja and occupation of the Terai, the portion of the Sikkim Hill.

bounded by the Rarman and the great Range on the north, by the Tista on the east and by the Nepal frontier on the west. The area involved was 640 square miles in extent.

Immediately after the annexation of the Tera in 1858, the Southern portion of the Tera had passed under the Paria district, but in consequence of the dislike of the inhabitants, the whole area was attached to Darjeeling. The Tera and the Hill territory annexed from Sikkim and managed by the superintendent who from 18th May 1858 was called the Deputy Commissioner. The change was welcomed by the inhabitants who now had to pay only some fixed sum to the treasury in Darjeeling instead of having to meet uncertain and fluctuating demands in kind or for personal services made by the Raja and the Dawa.

The annexation brought about significant changes in the relation between Sikkim and the British. Previously the Darjeeling district had been an Enclave in Sikkim territory and to reach it, the British had to pass through a country acknowledging the rule of a Foreign, though dependent Raja. After the annexation the British territory chain in Darjeeling was continuous with the districts of Paria and Rangpur in the plain and Sikkim Raja was cut off from access to the plain except through British territory.

For some years after the annexation, relations with Sikkim were not disturbed but raids on British Territories later recommenced and British Subjects were carried off and sold as slaves or detained in Sikkim. The Raja was now an old man of nearly eighty and retired to Chumbi Valley in Tibet leaving the Government to Dawa Nangyal who had assisted Campbell and Dr. Hoole in 1849. Six months negotiation proved fruitless and it was decided to take possession of the portion of Sikkim North of the Rarman and west of the great Range and British Subjects were returned, offenders handed over and security obtained against a recurrence of similar offences.

With this objective Dr. Campbell with a small force of 180 men and 160 mules crossed the Rarman in November 1861 and advanced as far as Kanchibong. He was however attacked and forced back to fall on Darjeeling.

Latter Colonel Gaskell with Sir Ashley Eden as army and special Commissioner moved with artillery and a force of 2,000 men and entered Tareborg, the Capital of Sikkim in March 1811.

The Olong Red and the abolition in favour of his son with whom on the 28th March a Treaty was made which was of particular importance to Dejeving, because it finally put an end to border troubles with Sikkim and assured full freedom for commercial access to the Sikkim border.

The Bhutan Messure:

The British Northern policy of Annexation made the Tibet and Dwaras strategically important. The land between southern Sikkim and Jhapaigari was a base of contention between the Bhutias and Kochas.¹ The Koch Chaudhars held vast Bhutanese held over extensive area which also included the large southern tract of land between Sikkim and Jhapaigari. However, post first Anglo-Bhutanese war (1774) a large area was ceded to Bhutan as a part of the policy to appease the Bhutanese and in the interest of Tibet-Himalayan trade.² This move of the Britishers was not acceptable by the Koch Zamindars. The large tract remained subject to the plundering by both Bhutanese soldier and the Koch Zamindars.

The Bhutanese were responsible for a series of incursions in which property was plundered, lives taken and many innocent persons carried off into captivity. Due to these activities the British Government took control of a large part of this disputed territory in 1842 on an annual rent of Rs. 2000 to the Bhutan Government. But 18 years after in 1860 the payment was discontinued for alleged act of aggression. In 1862 news came that the Bhutanese were preparing to make an attack on Dejeving and troops were hurried up from Dwaras to meet resistance. This was followed in 1863 by a dispatch of a special mission to Bhutan under Sir Ashley Eden to settle differences and obtain the restoration of plundered property.

The mission failed as the British envoy was compelled by threats to sign a document giving up all claims to Bhutan Dooars on the Assam frontiers. He was treated with indignity and only with difficulty in April 1864 succeeded in leaving Parashu by night and returning to Darjeeling.

Negotiations continued fruitlessly and the Government of India decided to annex the Bengal Dooars and such Hill Territory as might be necessary to prevent Bhutanese incursions into Darjeeling district. Small expeditions were sent into Bhutan in the winter of 1864. This met with very little opposition and the operations terminated when, in November 1865 the Treaty entered into by Sir Ashley Eden was replaced by a fresh one by which what is now the Kalimpong Sub-division as well as the Bhutan Dooars and passes leading into Bhutan Hills were ceded to the British in return for an annual subsidy.

During the campaign of Eden in 1864 some tracts were "provisionally annexed to British Dominion".³ The proclamation regarding the annexation read that the British Government, under Article 11 of the Treaty concluded on the 11th day of November 1861, had obtained from the Government of Bhootan, favour the cession of the whole of the tract known as the Eighteen Dooars bordering on the districts of Rangpoor, Coock Bhoon, and Assam, together with the Talook of Ardhama Pallaomah and the Hill territory on the left bank of the Teesta, up to such point as may be laid down by the British Commissioner appointed for the purpose. "It was declared that the territory ceded by the Bhutan Government as aforesaid is annexed to the territories of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of England. It was further declared that the ceded territory was attached to the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William, and that it will accordingly be under the immediate control of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, but that it shall not be subjected to the general regulations."⁴

In the days of the Dooars war, Chandra Shekharie "Sotomoh Bahadur"⁵ petitioned the Government stating the services he had rendered to Eden's mission and supplies provided to

the House Dur Pover "According to City or City Council report"³ and in line of his service the British Government should remove the Zamindari rights of his forefathers over the large tract of land vested to the House. The British Government reject the plea of Chandra Shekara Das and henceforth the entire tract of Siliguri was permanently annexed by the British Government. Thus the area which was considered as an area's land became part of the southern sub-urban of Siliguri town.

The Town

L.S.L.C. Malley never mentioned Siliguri as a town and he stated that in the Darjeeling District "there were only two towns Darjeeling and Kurseong which between them amount for only 21,000 persons". Prior to C.F. Malley, W.W. Hunter in his the Statistical Account of Darjeel, do not mention about Siliguri, however, makes a sweeping statement that these places were "chiefly inhabited by the Mocher and Dhawal, two tribes who are said not to suffer from the unhealthy nature of the climate."⁴

C.F. Malley wrote about Siliguri that Siliguri is a "village in the South of Kurseong Sub-division near the left bank of Mahananda is 26°42' N and 88°28' E. Population (1901) 784. Siliguri is the northern terminus of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, where it is joined by the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway. It is also the terminus of the Carl Road from Kalimpong and Sikkim and it thus focuses the local trade. Several jute firms are established here and in addition to the permanent shops there is a bi-weekly Government market. It is the Headquarter of a Deputy Magistrate who disposes of the criminal work of the Darjeel and manages the large Government estate; he was formerly stationed at Hanagar (Hemkhow) near Phansidewa, but his headquarters were removed to Siliguri 1888 on the extension of the railway to that place. It also contains a small sub-jail and post office, two bungalows, inspection house, police station and a dispensary with 20 beds, all situated on fairly high ground and its name means "the steep site" presumably because the head of the Mahanadi close by is a mass of broken stone brought down from the hills."⁵

The area is and around Tilgari was always dreaded by the Europeans in the beginning of the twentieth Century. It was considered as "a tract of malingering and rank vegetation" it (Tilgari) has always been dreaded by Europeans, who used in the days before the railway, to hurry through it as fast as they could travel and if possible in the early morning in order to get beyond the land fever zone. That such speed was necessary was proved by the fate of lady Cassing, who caught the fever which ended in her death while halting to sketch by the road side on her return journey from Darjeeling, by far the greatest mortality is caused by fevers, which are generally malarial in nature. ... They are commonest in Nepal when they account for 80% of the total mortality, the death rate from fever being 21 per mile in 1915. The forests frequently met with is intermittent fever with the enlargement of spleen, quotidian double quotidian and tertian being very common, but a great variety of fever are found including the deadly *Kala-azar* and black water fever.¹⁹ The death rate is appalling the average mortality being nearly 60 per 1000 in the ten years ending (i.e. 1896-1905), in 1908 while it exceeded, 71 per 1000 in that year and on the other hand, the average birth rate in the decade was nearly 19.4 per annum.²⁰ The Europeans found this place unsuitable to inhabit but O'Malley confessed that "there is however, one race which inhabits this sickly region with comparative immunity the aboriginal *Mishmi*," and the *Bhujarkis* are also to a certain extent free from fever largely occurring in their closing away the road, jungles around their huts and in the high plateaus on which they erect houses.²¹

The Land of Lawless Bandits

This tract of land was also popular for giving refuge to the assassins who were branded as bandits and robbers. The British official records these *Satyasis* as "lawless bandits" who promoters of charity unattached to any. The *Satyasis* were held in high veneration by the people in the countryside and put up a stiff resistance to the expanding British power at the end of the 19th Century.²²

Balkuchpur, a place nearly 50 miles was considered to be headquarters of Sanyasis. The Balkuchpur forest, nested these 'bandits' who ravaged the country in armed bands numbering hundreds. Mr. Glacier described this area in the following manner. "In 1799, we have an account of a large body of bandits who had occupied the Balkuchpur Forest, which lies at the northern apex of the district (Saugor) right under the hills, whence they issued on their predatory excursions." The forest was composed of two jungles inter woven with cane and was impenetrable except by narrow winding paths known only to the daksaris. The collector, says Glacier, got together a force of two hundred horsemen and held all the entrances into the forest. Several skirmishes ensued but months elapsed before any decisive result was obtained. The warriors were at length starved out. Some escaped into Nepal and others had great numbers were captured including their leaders and several of his principal associates. Within twelve months in this and other parts of the district the collector arrested and brought to trial 149 daksaris. Lieutenant Macdonald was sent against them with 100 Europeans, and brought in the leaders of the gang, but their followers escaped into the hills. Three years later, an army of 1,500 crossed the Brahmaputra at Dibrugarh; they had rockets, jayal pieces, and 110 horses. Besides these wandering thieves, there were numbers of sanyasis who settled down in hermitages, which they fortified, and where they carried on their trade of money-lending, combined with faculty. A report to the Board of Revenue, dated 29th April 1799, makes mention of the seizure of two forest boats of 80 and 100 cubits in length, belonging to head sanyasis, and gives a detailed account of the oppressions practised by these sanyasis, not only on the cultivators, but on the zamindars and their officers, whom they carried off and confined until their demands were satisfied."²⁴

Administrative Developments after 1866

The year 1866 thus marks an epoch in the History of the District. Peace was then established within and all its border and development, which had been considerable in spite of possessing difficulties and interruptions due to political disturbances now proceeded with great certainty and momentum. The Kalyanspur area was first notified as a subdivision under

the Deputy Commissioner of the Western Dooars district but in 1888 it was transferred to the district of Dooars. This was the last addition to the district which then reached its its present dimensions.

After Kalingpong had been brought under British administration the district was divided into two subdivisions the headquarters Sub-Division with an area of 190 square miles including all the hills on the both sides of the Teesta and Teerai Sub-Division with an area of 274 square miles which included the whole of the country at the foot of the hills. The headquarters of the Teerai subdivision were at Namkanta near Phansidewa from 1868 to 1880, when they were transferred to Siliguri. The metre gauge Railway of the North Bengal State Railway had been extended to Siliguri and Siliguri, at that time in the Malanguri District was transferred to Dooars district with a small surrounding area and made the headquarters of the Teerai subdivision. In the mean time Korumung had begun to develop and 1891 it was made the Headquarters of a new subdivision which included both the Teerai and the lower hills west of the Teesta.

Later in 1897 Siliguri was made a Subdivision, thus re-establishing the Teerai Subdivision which had in 1891 been absorbed into the Korumung Subdivision. Till 1907 there had been a Deputy Magistrate at Siliguri working under the Subdivisional Officer, Korumung, and managing the Teerai Government Estate under the Deputy Commissioner. Kalingpong in the meantime had been in the Teerai Subdivision with a manager of the Khas Mahals working at Kalingpong under the Deputy Commissioner, police work being controlled by an Inspector. In 1916 the Kalingpong Subdivision was created as a preliminary to working out development schemes in Kalingpong. The District was included in the Rajshahi Division until October 1917 when, as a result of the Partition of Bengal, it was transferred to the Bhagalpur Division. With the re-arrangement of the provinces it was retransferred to the Rajshahi Division in March 1912.

A similar transfer and retransfer took place of the jurisdiction of the District and Sessions Judge. The District was under the District and Sessions Judge of Dooars until October

1901 when it was placed under the Judge of Patna and again in April 1912 it was brought under Durgam. The District is peculiar in respect of civil judicial powers. The Sub-divisional Offices of Karsung, Kalirang and Siliguri all have powers of a Magistrate and Small Causes Court Judge up to Rs. 50. Appeals from these Magistrate and from the Magistrate at Darjeeling lie to the Deputy Commissioner. The Court of the Deputy Commissioner has been invested with jurisdiction under the Insolvency Act where declared debts do not exceed Rs. 5,000. The Senior Deputy Magistrate of Darjeeling was formerly vested with the powers of a Subordinate Judge, Magistrate and Small Causes Court Judge. But since March 1913, a Magistrate with powers of a Subordinate Judge and Small Causes Court Judge up to Rs. 500 has been posted in Darjeeling and he performs the work of a Magistrate in addition to his civil judicial work. The Sub-divisional Officer, Siliguri, had powers to dispose of rent and other suits under Act X of 1878. Appeals from the Subordinate Judge of Darjeeling lie to the District Judge of Durgam and to the High Court in Calcutta. By the exercise of these special powers the Deputy Commissioner could do something to secure the Hillman interests. He has in addition powers as Registrar of Births and deaths under Act VI of 1880 and powers to control the movements of Europeans across the frontiers of Nepal, Sikkim or Bhutan.

The authority of the Deputy Commissioner is greater in Darjeeling than that of the District Officers in other Bengal Districts by reason of his powers of control over a very considerable area called (233 square miles), over some of the Bhumis in the District, over the work of the District Board as Chairman and over the Darjeeling Town Administration as Chairman of the Municipality. Administration in the District has peculiarities due to the special application of various enactments. The Bengal Tenancy Act is not in force and Act V of 1879 and Act VIII of 1879 regulate the rights and liabilities of the rural population. The Bengal Local Self-Government Act and the Bengal Municipal Act have special modifications adapting them to local conditions.

The Bengal Village Self-Government Act was in force only in the Siliguri Town area and the Chakdihari Act only in the non-tax rural areas of the Siliguri Sub-Division and it is not in

force anywhere in the hills. A number of special amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act were found necessary to meet hill conditions. To regulate sanitation in the small residential area of the abandoned Takhalah Cantonment, one Union Committee has been established.

Roads, Railways and Communication

The importance of Silguri, as pointed out earlier arises because of its proximity to Darjeeling and Dooars. Before any part of what is now the Darjeeling District, had been made over by the Raja of Sikkim to the Government of the East India Company, means of Communication was very rudimentary, but narrow rough tracks through forests and occasional cane bridges over forest rivers were all that existed. It was quite possible that the Sikkim authorities considered that southward communications were of less importance than those going northward, for the ruling Family was of Tibetan Origin and showed a preference for summering in the Chumbi village, finding even Sikkim too damp for its taste.¹⁷

The area, which was taken over from Sikkim was almost entirely covered by forest and indeed it was reported in 1830 to be totally untraversed. Grant's memorandum of 1838 mentioned two routes then existing northward from the plains into Sikkim, One was by "Nigree" pass and the other by the "Sulbhoel Gahel". A Third route by the Malimawala was mentioned as having been deserted and overgrown with jungle. The pioneers who came to open up Darjeeling after it had been ruled in 1835 were confronted with an arduous journey from Calcutta before they reached the hills. Guide to Darjeeling published in 1838 mentioned 98 hours as the time the journey took from Calcutta to Darjeeling via Silguri.¹⁸

24 hours Calcutta to Malda

16 hours Malda to Darjeeling

20 hours Dooars to Teadiya

8 hours Teadiya to the foot of the hills Terai and Silguri

The whole journey to Darjeeling lasted five or six days and the difficulties were graphically described by Sir Joseph Hooker. Who in 1838 at a cost of Rs.2400/- had mission to perform the journey from Kanchai Ghat on the Ganges to the foot hills. The first mission taken to improve communication was the despatch of Lieutenant Napier to construct a road from Siliguri to Darjeeling. This was carried out from 1839 to 1842 and the road can still be seen winding its way by sharp curves from Panchabari to Karnooj and the over the Dow hill and Ghoom. The section of this road from Panchabari to Karnooj is part of what is now known as the Siliguri Maligaon-Karnooj Road.⁵² This road was not practicable for wheeled traffic and the development of Darjeeling and cost of transporting military stores (Rs 2 per maula from Darjeeling was very heavy for those times) led to search for an alternative road. This alternative road is known as the Hill Cart Road and this road starts from Siliguri and ends in Darjeeling town. Work was started in 1860 and the road was completed in 1868 the specification was a road 24 feet in breadth with a general gradient of 1 in 100 and maximum gradient of 1 in 18. The road system was not only of local utility but also facilitated in national and Trans-frontier trade. The District Board is responsible for subsidiary lines of road communication and in addition there are roads of importance to the public maintained by the Forest Department and the villages of Government Estates in the District. The various controlling authorities were shown in the list of District Roads given below. It was not thought necessary to give more details of the engineering of the roads listed. It should be understood that construction and maintenance of roads is troublesome and expensive in the hills and adjoining areas because of the mountainous nature of the land, the heavy rainfall and the liability to landslips and in the Terai because of heavy rainfall and flooding.

Meanwhile decision was taken to construct a road from the Ghat of Ganges to Siliguri at a cost of Rs. 14,58,000/-. This road was 124 miles long and connected Sahibganj to Siliguri. Therefore, Siliguri became the terminal point of the Ganges- Darjeeling Hill Cart Road. Importance of Siliguri grew as it became a junction of the two roads – one leading to the

North and the other to the South.¹⁹ Before the completion of the Northern Bengal Railway, people wishing to reach Darjeeling were obliged to proceed from Calcutta to Subidganj, a distance of 120 miles from Howrah terminus of the E.I.Railway, then by ferry steamer to Kangola, a journey of five hours and often more, where the unfortunate travellers were disembarked on the river side and were often obliged to wade a mile or more through the mud under a blazing sun. From there onwards the route laid along Ganga-Darjeeling road via Parnash, Khatanganj and Titliya to Siliguri.²⁰ The visitors to Darjeeling joked at Hat Ghorey and on reaching Siliguri avoided any halt in evening or at night due to relative obscurity of the route and the popular Lady Canning death story.

In 1880 the East Indian Railway had been extended upto Subidganj and thereafter it was only necessary to travel by road north of this point in order to get to Darjeeling. "The journey to the foot of hills could be performed from the Kangola (Ganga Ghorey) either by Paluk (Palanquin) or bullock cart or by Ganga from Siliguri to Darjeeling. This road was from Kangola passed through Parnash, Khatanganj and Titliya to Siliguri."²¹

"The opening of the rail line from Calcutta to Raxigunj in 1855 reduced the laborious cart journey to Darjeeling by 120 miles, and the East Bengal State Railway pushed steadily northward in the following decades."²² Until the advent of the railways in the hills, 'Teeges' continued to be the only faster means of travelling from the foothills to Darjeeling. The two most important factors in the development of the district have been the closure of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills. It was by chance or destiny that in 1838, Franklin Prestage, the man who made the hill railway possible, came to Darjeeling along with his brother-in-law Sydney Bernard Cary. The same year the Northern Bengal Railway was inaugurated in the foothills. On that occasion the Lieutenant Governor Sir Ashley Eden had made the same remarkable speech, to quote "...the married and unmarried citizens of Calcutta within a short journey of what I have no hesitation in saying is the finest scenery and almost the purest air in the world. It brings the rapidly developing tea interests of Darjeeling and the Duars into direct communication with

the ports of export...the cotton goods, metals and salt of Europe and the indigo, tobacco and the tea of India to be exchanged with the gold dust and wool of Tibet, and the silk of China. I even hope that his dreams of social intercourse with China may be so fully realized that we may have, someday, the honor of carrying the Great Lama to exchange religious views with the Bishop of Calcutta.¹¹ According to Newman's *Guide to Darjeeling* and its surroundings his letter 'with his practical common sense, recognized the fact that a light railway, if it could only be constructed to Darjeeling, would infinitely develop that town, as well as the country through which it passed, and also put Calcutta and the whole of Lower Bengal in rapid change, and easy communication with its only visiting summation.'¹²

The Rail-Road Competition:

The course of trade and its volume depended much on the cost of transport. Costs of other means of transport would be more readily understood if consideration is first given to those of road haulage by bullock cart. There was a steady carting business in Siliguri during the colonial days. The Rangpo-Siliguri route which was approximately 46 miles, 7 annas per maseed was charged and war time charges got levied.

Coolie and pack transport were much more expensive than carting. In forests, for moving timber and wood coolie transport would cost from 7 to 12 times as much as carting. Pack transport (by mules) was highly organized on the Tibet trade routes. From Phari Strong in Tibet to Kalimpong via the Jalap La, a distance of 80 to 95 miles, Rs.6 per maseed was the peace-time rate. From Phari to Gangtok via the Naku La, 65 to 70 miles, the rate was Rs.4 per maseed. These rates are equivalent to about 12 pice per maseed mile. The routes are severe and probably rates went out to a competitive minimum. Rates in war time soared and at one time for the Kalimpong-Phari trip touched Rs.15 per maseed.

The road system of the District as well the Darjeeling Railway system both converged at Siliguri and practically the whole of the import and export trade from the plains passed through the Bengal and Assam Railway at Siliguri. A very much smaller volume of imports and exports took place via the Darjeeling-Himalayan Branch Railway to Kishanganj. In neither direction the roads were in a condition to carry an appreciable volume of trade, incoming or outgoing, and so practically all import or export took place by rail.

The Hill Cart Road from Deodueing and the main line of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway carried the greater part of the produce of the Sahaib and Kurseong Subdivisions, the supplies needed for the towns of Darjeeling and Kurseong and for the tea gardens and industries of these Subdivisions as well as the traffic from Nepal crossing the frontier at Simra Bansi and northward (potatoes and chittai). The Kishanganj branch of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway and the Terai road system serve the Terai tea gardens via Siliguri and there is a certain amount of traffic with Nepal through Naxathiari Station some of which passed through Siliguri.

The Kishanganj Section of the Railway was opened for traffic shortly before the war of 1914-1918. Its construction presented few of the peculiar engineering problems which had to be solved in constructing the main line. It lies wholly in the plains and did not use any road alignment.

Passenger fares charged by the Railway were as follows:-

Siliguri to Darjeeling (61 miles) 1st class Rs.10, 2nd class Rs.7 and 3rd class Rs.4 (Rs.4 for mail trains).

Siliguri to Ghelle (29.5 miles) 1st class Rs.5-10, 2nd class Rs.2-11 and 3rd class Rs. 1-6.

Siliguri to Kishanganj (88.5 miles) 1st class Rs.11-2, 2nd class Rs.6-9 and 3rd class Rs. 2-3.

Third class fares were then one anna per mile for the Kishanganj branch and anna per mile for the hill sections. Rates were enhanced by 25 percent or more during the 1939-45 war.

Freight rates vary according to the class of goods carried. On the Tista Valley and Kishanganj branches, war-time rates varied from 1 to 1.2 pice per hundred mile according to the class of goods. From Siliguri to Darjeeling rates varied from 1.7 to 4.2 pice per hundred mile and downhill from Darjeeling to Siliguri upwards of 1.15 pice per hundred mile according to the class of goods. Rates before the war were about 20 percent, less than those quoted.

It should be explained that freight rates on the hill were high. The fact however remains that for many years the railway had practically a monopoly of the handling of the import and export trade of Darjeeling town and the hill areas of the District and the only competitors they had to face was bullock cart traffic which was only appreciable in the Tista Valley and in the Terai.

The advent of motor vehicles from about 1930, coupled with the improvement of the roads introduced a direct form of competition with Railways. The Government tried to limit the number of Lorries and buses plying for hire.

The problem of rail-road competition in the area had by no means solved till independence. War conditions severely tested the transportation system in the hill and had temporarily surmised the issue. For instance the Railway system proved unable to handle the traffic needed to supply the greatly increased temporary war-time population of the Darjeeling town and had to be supplemented by extra-mechanical road transport (some of its military) which did not operate on a strictly commercial and competitive basis.

For a long time commuters of goods complained about the cost of transportation. The construction of ropeways to cheaper rates has been under consideration but had only

resulted in the construction of two minor public highways which operate as feeders to the railway system and did not appreciably reduce transportation costs from Siliguri to the hill areas of the District. The solution of the road-rail problem was complicated by the interest Government had in maintaining the traffic receipts and profits of the Railway and Government continued their process of limiting road transport on the Hill Cart Road with this interest in view.

The principal commodities moved by the Railway on the main line were rice and other food-grains, cement, iron, salt and building materials. Coal, provisions and miscellaneous merchandise in the upward direction and potatoes, tea, cardamoms oranges and timber in the downward direction.

In 1942-43 for instance there was an import of 7,164 tons of rice to Dujersting, 1,007 tons of salt, 540 tons of sugar, 417 tons of grains and pulses other than rice, 773 tons of provisions and 2,769 tons of coal. Downward from Dujersting in the above year, moved 1,089 tons of potatoes and 98 tons of tea.

Imports from below to Ghum included 3,505 tons of rice, 313 tons of salt, 434 tons of provisions and 1,367 tons of coal. Downward export from Ghum included 1,629 tons of potatoes, 2,190 tons of tea and 315 tons of timber.

The Siliguri-Kishangarj line handled timber, tea and jute while the Tista Valley branch carries imports of food-grains, salt, piece-goods, provisions and building materials and exports oranges, cardamoms, potatoes, timber and wool. The total number of passengers traveling during 1942-43 over the different sections of the Dujersting-Himalayan Railway was Main Line 1,08,872; Siliguri Kishangarj Extension 4,38,204; Tista Valley Extension 35,988

Conclusion:

Thus, Siliguri being situated in the border of hill districts, Nepal, Sikkim, Utkal, Assam and Bihar served as a Vital link of communication after the establishment of the road system and railway line. Siliguri which was a small hamlet covered with Jungle became an important entry and exit points of the commodities meant for Assam, Bihar, Sikkim, Nepal and the hill districts. At the time of independence Siliguri had already established its future prospects as it became the most developing town in whole of North Bengal. The Growth rate of Siliguri for the period 1941-51 was 209.72 as per census data of 1951.

Growth Rate of Towns in North Bengal (1941-51)

Name of Towns	Growth Rate
1. Siliguri	209.72
2. English Bazar	21.41
3. Chanchindhar	27.76
4. Jalpaiguri	48.89
5. Dooarsing	22.44
6. Kaleswarg	28.46
7. Karasong	27.93
8. Dibruta	65.38
9. Malla Bhangra	41.24
10. Haldibar	191.68
11. Hill	28.05
12. Tufangurj	64.02
13. Makhigurj	4.17

Source: Census of India 1951, Volume VI, West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore.

The future of a city depends on their resilience. Siliguri was once merely, unplanned, organic, messy, and feverish but still captured the imagination as a center for financial, business, cultural and social development. The following chapter will discuss about the social landscape of Siliguri with focus on population and peoples.

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