

**FROM OBSCURITY TO A METROPOLITAN: A HISTORY OF THE
GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SILIGURI TOWN WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE
(circa 1835-2014)**

A Thesis Submitted

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HIMALAYAN STUDIES WITH SPECIALISATION

IN

HISTORY

By

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JULY, 2022

DECLARATION OF RESEARCH SCHOLAR

It is declared that the work contained in the thesis titled “FROM OBSCURITY TO A METROPOLITAN: A HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SILIGURI TOWN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (circa 1835-2014),” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr Karubaki Datta, Professor, Centre for Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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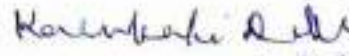
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This is to certify that Ms. Minakshee Kumari has completed her Ph.D dissertation *From Obscurity to a Metropolitan : A History of the Growth and Expansion of Siliguri Town with Particular Reference to its Geostrategic Importance (circa 1835 – 2014)* under my supervision. This is her original work. She has worked hard for it and no part of this work has been submitted for any degree so far. The dissertation may be considered for the degree of Ph.D from the University of North Bengal.


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1 FROM OBSCURITY TO A METROPOLITAN: A HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SILIGURI TOWN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (circa 1835-2014) A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements For the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HIMALAYAN STUDIES WITH SPECIALISATION IN HISTORY By MINAKSHEE KUMARI Under the Supervision of DR. KARUBAKI DATTA PROFESSOR CENTRE FOR HIMALAYAN STUDIES NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY JULY 2022

2 INTRODUCTION 1. INTRODUCING THE THEME: THE THEORETICAL CONCEPTS Fascination with the city is not new. It has existed throughout history. It is as ancient as the origin of the city itself and it can be found in the folk wisdom as well as the sophisticated social and political conjecture of the majority of civilizations. This obsession with the city- to be more precise ,with its singularity, with its strengths along with weaknesses, with its difference from the countryside can be found in all civilizations as diverse as the Roman, Jewish, . Christian, Hellenistic, Chinese, Indian, and Islamic. 1 The moment we hear the word City we start to associate certain physical characteristics such as closed agglomerations, big shopping complexes, sky scrapers, multiplexes, wide roads etc. the city becomes a physical entity. In addition to being a physical entity, a city is also a functional entity where economic, political and administrative activities are carried out. In cities, a large volume of trade, commerce and financial services is carried out, offices of enterprise groups, government offices and main units of administrative bodies are also located, which supports business opportunities. In addition to being a physical or functional entity, a city is also a social entity. Cities are heterogeneous places where people from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds live in close proximity. We can also say that cities are also a place of social reproduction, comprising the myriad interwoven behaviours and activities of its inhabitants and communities, each of which exhibits idiosyncratic lifestyle preferences and characteristics. Innovations in science, technology and communication are first experienced in cities and then carried elsewhere, whether in steam engines, automobiles, the Internet or telephones or laptops. Each location grows 1 Ellis, Joyce, John Walton, and Anthony Sutcliffe. "SN Eisenstadt and A. Shachar. Society, Culture and Urbanization. Newbury Park: Sage, 1987, 391pp." Urban History 17 (1990): 214-215.



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ABSTRACT**FROM OBSCURITY TO A METROPOLITAN: A HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SILIGURI TOWN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (circa 1835-2014)****MINAKSHEE KUMARI**

This thesis looks at the spatial, locational, economic, physical, and geo-strategic manifestations that combined to make Siliguri, which was once a village, a metropolitan city. The uniqueness of Siliguri city lies in the fact that it has no stories of the past to recount. It had no ancient or middle age lineages that it could endorse to historians and other researchers. It had no royal heritage like Hyderabad or Coochbehar or any trace of feudal prowess to boast of. It was just a halt station for the passengers to board narrow gauge trains to Darjeeling Hill station. A mere village ‘unhygienic and full of jungles and mosquitoes’, dreaded by Europeans, marauded by outlawed sanyasis, contested by Bhutanese and Kooch Rajas in the second half of the 19th century emerged as one of the largest and most developed towns of North Bengal. Siliguri has no industrial fundamentals yet the population of Siliguri metro area in the year 2014 was more than 8 lakhs and according to United Nations World Population Prospects it is projected that the metro area population would be above 10 lakhs.

Siliguri emerged as a migrant town and the profile and the nature of migration have considerably changed throughout the years. The bulk of migrants not only constituted the Bangladeshi refugees but also the persecuted Bengalis that migrated from North Eastern states like Assam etc., and the non-Bengali speaking population like Marwari, Bihari and Nepalese that came from nearby areas in search of employment and new homes. The City was kind enough to accommodate all these migrants. A large number of rural people from different districts of West Bengal and other states in India have come into Siliguri city to search for jobs, betterment of life style, better medical facilities, better educational facilities and others. The heterogeneous population composition of Siliguri was one of the spin-offs of urban transformations. The growth of population was accompanied with the growth of economy and communication.

The economic space as well as the transit spaces passed through colossal changes in context to Siliguri. The market of Siliguri caters to a large hinterland of *Duars*, Darjeeling, the entire state of Sikkim, parts of the Kingdom of Bhutan as well as parts of North-East India. Apart from trading, the ‘Tea, Tourism and Timber’ have accounted for major economic

produce. Siliguri has a large number of trade centres and readymade markets for consumer goods and is thus home to myriad retailers, wholesalers, dealers, distributors and small-scale entrepreneurs. It is the commercial nerve centre of North Bengal. The city's strategic location makes it a base for commodity supplies to the North-East region.

The main part of this thesis deliberates the geostrategic importance and military establishments of Siliguri and its role at geopolitical level. It highlights the role of militarization in the growth and development of the region. It was the Britishers who first understood the strategic importance of this location when they were formalising their bilateral relations with Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. Sino- India war, The Indo-Pak war and the creation of Bangladesh highlighted the Strategic importance of Siliguri as reflected in declassified CIA secret files. The Siliguri corridor became one of the most military-sensitive spots and this led to the militarization of the region (recent Dokhlam issues are one such example that reintroduced the international distinctiveness of Siliguri).

Siliguri is landlocked with international boundaries like Nepal in the North and West and Bangladesh in the South and East. Bhutan is not very far from Siliguri as it is approximately only 93 miles. It has no access to the sea and is traversed by NH-31, the only road that connects Sikkim to the Indian mainland. This highway also connects the North Eastern States with India peninsula through the Siliguri corridor making it one of the most strategic areas. It is also linked with the traditional trade routes of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, now a part of china. Siliguri corridor connects North East India with the rest of India. This piece of land lies between two international boundaries of Nepal and Bangladesh on either side of the corridor. Siliguri corridor also called 'Chicken's neck' is an example of Colonial delusions created in 1947 during the partition of India and Pakistan. It is a very narrow stretch of passage of about 23.5 miles. The Corridor serves Indian military bases established in North East India and Sikkim with supplies, reinforcements and other military formations. The security forces operating in these areas point out that as geographical configuration puts the North Eastern States of our country at a disadvantage for a lack of strategic depth and the Siliguri Corridor is considered as an indispensable area to provide a buffer. The Corridor is the hub of road, railway and air networks connecting West Bengal to other North Eastern states of India. Geo Strategically it is also the nucleus of existence of Seema Suraksha Bal, Indian Army, and Border Security Force and is a spot to receive all the information related to Line of Actual Control with China. Any military development in the Eastern Front from the Chinese would be carried out with an eye on incarcerating the Siliguri Corridor to cut off Northeast India from her mainland. The Siliguri Corridor is as important for China as it is for India. Given the strategic importance of the corridor it is heavily patrolled by India troops with different state and central border forces

separately. The Indian government needs to look inwards to strengthen its military defence and infrastructure near Siliguri Corridor in order to counter a plausible Chinese military in future. The strategic location of the Town and the subsequent setting up of the military bases all over the region has certainly accelerated the pace of urbanisation and overall development of the region.

In retrospect we can say that the strategic location of Siliguri made her cynosure of all eyes. The locational advantage of the region incited the proponents that led to urbanisation. The city has witnessed a rapid urban expansion. It has gobbled up the tea gardens and neighbouring rural areas evicting in a large way the tea labour and the marginalised and pushing them to fringes of the city and the adjoining rural areas.

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The journey as a Ph.D. research scholar constitutes some of the best and worst memories of an individual. One is sandwiched between time restraint and quality reproduction along with many social and personal responsibilities. Many a times drafting and redrafting and redrafting shakes the inner core of the scholars, but all the hard work is worth after accomplishing the work. My Love for history was since childhood when my grandfather would tell me the stories about Babur and Gandhi and how he participates in the freedom struggle of India.

At Masters in Delhi University I meet a bandwagon of stalwarts who were highly qualified and trained historians. I think it is at this stage when an individual is at the most crucial phase of his life. In my masters I got the required exposure to develop critical thinking and treat History not as a dead discipline. I would like to heartily thank some of the faculties who were very close to me and continuously guided me throughout the course. To name a few are Prof. S.Z.H. Jafri, Prof. R.P.Rana, Prof. Amar Farooqi, Prof. Sunil Kumar, Prof B.P.Sahoo, Prof Parbhu Mahapatra, Prof. Shaid Amin, Prof. Dilip Menon, Prof Vijay Singh, Prof. T.K.V Subramaniam, Prof D.N.Jha, and Prof Shrimali.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	Assam Bengal Railway
AIGL	All India Gorkha League
AJNDM	Alipurduar Jella Nirman Deviin Mancha
BDR	Bengal Duars Railway
CSR	Coochbehar State Railway
DHR-	Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
EBR	Eastern Bengal Railway
EEIC	English East India Company
EIR-	East Indian Railway
GNLF	Gorkha National Liberation Front
KPP	Kamtapur People's Party
NBCA	North Bengal Cultural Association
NBR	Northern Bengal State Railway
NBSTC	North Bengal States Transport Corporation
PS	Police Station
PWD	Public Works Department
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UKD	Uttara Khand Dal
UTJAS	Uttarbanga Tapashili Jati O Adibasi Sangsthan

INTRODUCTION

1. Introducing the Theme: The Theoretical Concepts.

Fascination with the city is not new. It has existed throughout history. It is as ancient as the origin of the city itself and it can be found in the folk wisdom as well as the sophisticated social and political conjecture of the majority of civilizations. This obsession with the city- to be more precise ,with its singularity, with its strengths along with weaknesses, with its difference from the countryside can be found in all civilizations as diverse as the Roman, Jewish, , Christian, Hellenistic, Chinese, Indian, and Islamic.¹ The moment we hear the word City we start to associate certain physical characteristics such as closed agglomerations, big shopping complexes, sky scrapers, multiplexes, wide roads etc. the city becomes a physical entity. In addition to being a physical entity, a city is also a functional entity where economic, political and administrative activities are carried out. In cities, a large volume of trade, commerce and financial services is carried out, offices of enterprise groups, government offices and main units of administrative bodies are also located, which supports business opportunities. In addition to being a physical or functional entity, a city is also a social entity. Cities are heterogeneous places where people from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds live in close proximity. We can also say that cities are also a place of social reproduction, comprising the myriad interwoven behaviours and activities of its inhabitants and communities, each of which exhibits idiosyncratic lifestyle preferences and characteristics. Innovations in science, technology and communication are first experienced in cities and then carried elsewhere, whether in steam engines, automobiles, the Internet or telephones or laptops. Each location grows in space, density, facilities and complexity over time. Each of the cities has its own history of growth (spatial and demographic) and development. Therefore, in a temporal sense, every city also has a story.

¹ Ellis, Joyce, John Walton, and Anthony Sutcliffe. "SN Eisenstadt and A. Shachar, Society, Culture and Urbanization. Newbury Park: Sage, 1987, 391pp." *Urban History* 17 (1990): 214-215.

Historians as well as the social scientists have conventionally linked the ‘Urban Revolution’ i.e. the emergence of towns and cities and urban means of living with modernity and progress. Early cities were considered as incubators of the socio-political institutions and technologies that made the rise of history’s great civilizations possible as discussed in the works of Gordon Childe², G. Sjoberg³, Mumford⁴, K. Davis⁵, L.W. Pye⁶ and for thousands of years towns and cities also served as the nerve centres of expanding political communities and economic networks as argued in the works of Ferdinand Braudel⁷, P. Bairoch⁸ and more recently J. Abu-Lughod⁹. The growth and expansion of cities began as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum in European countries. Thus the European experience of urbanisation is considered as the reference point for researchers seeking to understand the processes of ‘City Development’ as a whole and organic.

This thesis looks at the spatial, locational, economic, physical, and geo-strategic manifestations that combined to make Siliguri, which was once a village, a metropolitan city. The uniqueness of Siliguri city lies in the fact that she has no stories of the past to recount. She had no ancient or middle age lineages that she could endorse to historians and other researchers. She had no royal heritage like Hyderabad or Coochbehar or any trace of feudal prowess to boast of. She was just a halt station for the passengers to board narrow gauge trains to Darjeeling Hill

²Childe, V. Gordon. “‘The Urban Revolution’”. *The City Reader*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 31–39

³Sjoberg, Gideon. *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present*. Free Press, 1965

⁴Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History*. Penguin Books, 1991.

⁵Davis, Kingsley. ‘The Urbanization of the Human Population’. *Scientific American*, vol. 213, no. 3, 1965, pp. 40–53, <https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican0965-40>.

⁶Pye, L. W. ‘The Political Implications of Urbanisation and the Development Process’. *The City in Newly Developing Countries: Readings on Urbanism and Urbanisation*, edited by G. Breese, Prentice Hall, 1969, pp. 401–406

⁷Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Vol. III: The Perspective of the World*. Translated by Sian Reynold and Si N. Reynold, University of California Press, 1992

⁸Bairoch, Paul. *Cities and Economic Development: From the Dawn of History to the Present*. Translated by C. Braider, University of Chicago Press, 1988

⁹Abu-Lughod, J. *Before European Hegemony: the world system A.D. 1250-1350*. Oxford University Press, 1991.

station. From such an imperious past she rose to become a metropolis of dreams for many. She wants to be no less than Kolkata, the City of Joy. She replicates the flash and glitz of Delhi. Her elegance is defined by hi-tech townships, multi-storey shiny glass buildings, huge warehouses, cold storages, glittering bazaars, international highways, and airport and railway stations. What grace was bestowed upon her that she became a connoisseur of all eyes? This thesis not only makes an attempt to trace but also to deeply understand the growth and expansion of the Siliguri town with particular reference to its geo-strategic importance.

2. Site Of Inquiry and the Time Frame:

Siliguri, a metropolitan region, under the category of Class 1(UA/Towns) spreads over two districts in West Bengal, viz., Jalpaiguri district and Darjeeling district. Geographically it is situated at the latitude of 26°72" N and the longitude of 88°41" E. at the foot of the Himalayan mountain range. However, a hundred years before it was only a hamlet or to be more precise a halt station, but now Siliguri is one of the biggest urban centres of Northern India. It has become the gateway to North-East India and connects the hill towns of Kalimpong (a separate District from 2017), Darjeeling town, Mirik town and Kurseong town in Darjeeling district and the Seven-Sisters with the rest of India. It is bounded by the international borders of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal making it geo-strategically important. The time period of my research is from 1835 to 2014 C.E. These two dates are very crucial because in the year 1835A.D. Darjeeling was annexed from the Raja of Sikkim by the British East India Company and a 'Deed of Grant' by the Raja of Sikkim was signed on 1st February 1835. This 'Deed of grant traversed a new era of historical processes in the region and Siliguri being a part of the region stood as a prime active participant in the processes of change. The year 2014 is hallmark for the region because on 3rd December 2014, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee laid the foundation of a major international road project (also called as Asian-Highway project) connecting West Bengal via Siliguri with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. This landmark project of Rs. 1434 Crore was a part of South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation programme of Asian Development Bank (ADB). The year 2014 also saw a change in the political regime at the centre and the Modi

led government replaced the look east policy with act east policy to give more regional importance to the North east region.

3. Conceptual Theories and Review Of Literatures:

What does urbanisation mean for cities? Urban growth is usually analysed in terms of three elements: the natural increase of the people who already live in the city; the migration of people into the city from rural areas; and the expansion of the city such that populations formerly regarded as non-urban become urban.¹⁰ Of these three the first only contributes to urbanisation if the rate of increase of the urban population is greater than for the rural population-which is not usually the case. It is the second and third that shape urbanisation although even there care has to be taken with the numbers- for instance some migration to large cities may come from smaller cities- so it is intra-urban not rural-urban migration.

One contemporary definition of urbanisation is the upsurge in the number of people living in places that are defined as urban, the increase in the number of people engaged in non-agriculture and the growth in the value of the non-agricultural production in an urban-rural space. The latter two parts of the definition are valuable in drawing attention to the urbanisation that takes place on the margins of cities-"urban frontiers" they can be called. But it is useful to start with the first very simple definition: that urbanisation means an increase in the percentage of a country's population living in urban areas in towns and cities. Studies of a variety of cities in contemporary Asia suggest that the three factors contribute in roughly equal proportions to urban growth and that migration and "re-classification" contribute about equally to urbanisation. The commonly-held view that urbanisation involves only or primarily hundreds of thousands of rural people getting to the city, on foot, horse and cart, truck, train, bus or whatever is true, but not the only truth- it is part of the story. The importance of cities is growing day by day and is linked to the modernist dream and human aspiration to control nature, to excel in all areas of life

¹⁰ Turok Ivan and Gordon McGranahan. 'Urbanisation and Economic Growth: The Arguments and Evidence for Africa and Asia'. *Urbanisation*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2019, pp. 109–125, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2455747119890450>

and to better manage human life. Modern cities are places where the modern is imagined, shaped and translated. Often the progress of modern cities is directly associated with modernization, growth, development and advancement.

Urbanisation can be understood as a natural derivative and expediter of any industrial development which is driven by development of employment prospects in any urban areas as a consequence of industrial investment mainly during the ‘take-off’ stage of the economic development.¹¹ A steady flow of migrants in search of work in the ‘modern sector’ kept the real wages of the workers low. This increased the profits of the industrialists and this surplus capital was used as investment capital further leading to the growth of industrialization according to Lewis¹². By shifting people out of subsistence agricultural production and into higher ‘value-added activities’, the process of urbanisation was seen as contributing to the economic transformation of societies.

The growth of urban settlement in the developed world was the result of the industrial revolution during the 18th and 19th centuries which transformed western society into the most urbanised of the world. Here cities appeared as the necessary outcome of the concentration of the people required for the operation of industry¹³. These societies developed through internal (class) and external (colonial) appropriation¹⁴ which with the expansion of capital stock permitted the productivity of labour to rise dramatically. Hence, urbanisation in the western

¹¹Krueger, Anne, and W. W. Rostow. ‘The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto’. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, vol. 55, no. 292, 1960, p. 772, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2281618>.

¹² Lewis, W.Arthur. ‘Economic Development with Unlimited supplies of Labour.’ *Manchester School*, vol.22, no.2, 1954, pp. 139-191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9957.1954.tb00021.x>

¹³Gugler, J. "The rural-urban interface and migration" In: Gilbert, Aarid Gugler, J. *Cities, poverty and development, Urbanisation in the Third World*. Oxford University Press, 1982.

¹⁴Abu-Lughod, J., and R. Hay. *Third World Urbanisation*. Routledge, 2013

world is seen in terms of its 'connection with economic growth' and is generally associated with the level of a nation's economic development.¹⁵

So can we transfer the western experience of urbanisation to the Third World? Is the urbanisation process of Developing Countries similar to that of the industrial advanced world? If it is, why are developing nations still not able to escape from poverty and the condition of underdevelopment?

3.1 Modernisation

Modernisation theory was based on the assumption of a linear transition from a 'primitive' undifferentiated and pre-rational society to a modern differentiated and bureaucratically rational society.¹⁶ Some believed that the increasing interaction and integration between less and more developed areas will at some stages, lead to the onset of development in the former areas; especially this belief figured in the thought of ecological school who assumed that Developing Countries are very much like the developed societies, only that they are at an earlier stage and will modernise in time.¹⁷ Among the examples of such diffusionist modernisation thinking can be included the influential core-periphery model of John Friedmann¹⁸ the polarisation and spread effect concepts of F. Perroux¹⁹, and the modernisation school led by E.W. Soja²⁰, Gould P. Tanzania²¹, J.B. Riddell²², and B.J. Berry²³.

¹⁵McGee, T.G. *The Urbanisation Process in the Third World: Explorations in Search of Theory*. Bell & Son, London, 1971.

¹⁶Rimmer, P. G and Forbes, D. K. "Underdevelopment theory: a geographical review." *Australian Geographer*, vol. 15. 4, 1982, pp. 197-211.

¹⁷Kasarda, J. and Crenshaw, E. Third World Urbanisation Dimension: Theories and Determinants. *Annual Review of Sociology*. vol. 17, 1991, pp. 467- 501.

¹⁸ Friedmann, John. "The Role of Cities in National Development." *American Behavioural Scientist*, vol. 12, no. 5, May 1969, pp. 13–21,

¹⁹Perroux, F. "Economic space, theory and application." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 64, 1950, pp. 89-104.

²⁰Soja, E.W. *The Geography of Modernization in Kenya: A Spatial Analysis of Social Economic and Political Change*. Syracuse University Press, 1968.

3.2 Dependency theory:

Dependency approaches provide some insights into the inter-relationships between Developing Country's urbanisation and the global expansion of capitalist systems. This theory explains that the expansion of the capitalist system on a world scale was only possible through a core-periphery division of labour and unequal exchange which benefit the core areas at the expense of the periphery. Some believe that the patterns and process of urbanisation are best understood as part of the growth of the capitalist world economy²⁴.

Dependent urbanisation in developing societies has its roots in the colonial period. The critical point is that the developed and undeveloped countries did not emerge independently. The development of the one was integrally related to that of the other²⁵. The current social formations and productive systems of most Developing Countries have emerged in response to colonial and capitalist development. Dependency theory gave historical validity to the world-systems theory of which Wallerstein²⁶ has been the leading advocate. Wallerstein argued that the power of states in different portions of the world is dependent on the regional rates of surplus appropriation in each major zone (core, periphery and semi periphery). The Dependency approach has been criticised because of its under emphasis of internal processes in Developing

²¹Gould, P. "The Spatial Impress of the Modernisation Process." *World Politics*, Vol. 63, 1920, pp. 149-70

²²Riddell, J.B. *The Spatial Dynamics of Modernization in Sierra Leone: Structure, Diffusion and Response*. North Western University Press, Evanston, III, 1970.

²³Berry, B.J.L. "Hierarchical Diffusion: The Basis Of Development Filtering And Spread In A System Of Growth Centres." In: *Hansen, N. W. (ed). Growth Centres in Regional Economic Development*. Macmillan, London, 1972, pp. 108-1038.

²⁴Nemeth, R and Smith, D. "The Political Economy of Contrasting Urban Hierarchies in South Korea and The Philippines" In: Timberlake, M. (ed), *Urbanisation in the World Economy*. Academic Press, New York, 1985, pp. 183-206.

²⁵Gilbert, A. "Urban agglomeration and regional disparities" In: Gilbert A. and Gugler J. (eds), *Cities, Poverty and Development*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982, pp. 27-47.

²⁶Wallerstein, I. The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: concepts for comparative analysis. *Comparative Studies in Sociology and History*, Vol. XVI, 1974 pp. 387-415.

Countries.²⁷ Abu-Lughod for example argued that the most important point ignored is the lack of a theoretical framework for seeing the city as the outcome of a larger social, economic scenario.²⁸

The 'world capitalist system', concept was attacked by Skocpol²⁹ who argued that Wallerstein relied only upon arguments about economic conditions and world market interests, largely ignoring other potentially important variables such as historically pre-existing institutional patterns of threats of rebellion from below, and geopolitical pressures and constraints and political process within societies. And secondly, lack of awareness of the extent to which global forces impinge not only on Third World societies. The penetration of the capitalist system varies according to the spatial systems of the Developing Countries and is dependent on the level of capitalist development in the nation and the region. Cities perform a hegemonic role with respect to small towns and rural areas since the capitalist industrial sector has greater urban concentrations. As urban interests are more articulate and powerful, they are able to bias resource allocation, particularly infrastructure investment, in their favour.

4. Social Development Theories:

The earliest contribution about the relationship between social values and development belongs to L. Wirth.³⁰ He considered traditionalism as a barrier to economic growth and that a characteristic of many Developing Countries is the relatively high degree of prevalence of a folk-like society, which is usually opposed to rapid change and unable to adapt it quickly enough to the pressures exerted on it by the increasing integration of Developing Countries into

²⁷Drakakis-Smith, D. "Concepts of Development". In: Dwyer, D. *South East Asian Development, Geographical Perspectives*. Longman Scientific and Technical, 1990, pp. 48-77. Petras, J. *Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World*. Monthly Review Press, New York, 1978.

²⁸Abu-Lughod, J. "Urbanisation in the Arab world and the international system". In: Gugler, J. *The transformation of the Developing world*. Oxford University Press Inc. New York, 1996, pp. 211-53.

²⁹Skocpol, T. "Wallerstein's world capitalist system: a theoretical and historical critique". *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82 (5), 1993, pp. 1075-1091.

³⁰Wirth, Louis. "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 1, 1938, pp. 1-24.

the world system. The reasons for this, as prescribed by T.S. Parsons, are that every society possesses a set of 'role expectations' which individuals expect one another to perform. The society protects this series of role expectations by its system of rewards and retributions. Together, the 'role expectation' and the system of rewards and retributions constitute a 'social value system' which has a substantial ability to condition the activities of society's individual members.³¹

The role of social institutions and groups, and values in the development process is examined by Germani. He made three observations; first, in preindustrial societies, most actions are prescriptive. Secondly, change in them tends to be a violation of traditional norms and therefore is abnormal and rare, but in modern societies, change becomes a normal phenomenon. Finally, traditional societies pose an undifferentiated structure with a few institutions performing many functions, while in modern society; each function tends to be performed by a specialised institution which results in a differentiated structure.³²

Some believe that economic criteria alone cannot push a society toward economic growth but also cultural and ethical characteristics of a nation are important. An example of the former is the work of D.C. McClelland, who expanded the idea of Max Weber on the relationship between Protestantism and rise of capitalism, developed a psychological attribute he called the "need for achievement". McClelland examined the fall and rise of Athenian civilization history and then believed that societies with a higher "need for achievement" were more successful in economic growth. In seeking to determine what produces this psychological characteristic, he stated that it is not hereditary but rather is instilled in people.³³

³¹Parsons, T. S. E. *Towards a General Theory of Action*. Harvard University Press, 1956.

³²Gwynne, R.N. *Third World Industrialization in an International Framework* Longman Scientific & Technical, 1990.

³³McClelland, D.C. *The Achievement Motive in Economic Growth*. Lynne Rienner Publisher.Inc. Boulder, Colorado, USA, 1993, pp.141-57.

5. Development and Urbanisation:

Many of the present day policies regarding spatial planning stem from the locational theories as reflected in the works of A.Weber, A.Losch, W.Christaller.³⁴ Central place theory provided an account of the size and distribution of settlements within an urban system. It can be argued that central place theory is relevant to urban and regional planning because it assumes that a hierarchical system provides an efficient means of administering as well as allocating resources to regions. Key central places often grow as a focal point of growth of the region which in turn influences the rate of development over the region as a whole.

5.1 Development From Above:

Since early 1980s the terms 'development from above' and 'development from below' have gained wide acceptance to describe two different sets of development strategies (Stohr & Taylor, 1981)³⁵. Nevertheless both sets of strategies had been in use in developed nations and Developing Countries since earlier years. Different varieties of 'development from above strategies' dominated spatial planning theory and practice of the Developing Countries for about three decades starting from the 1950s. The main theme of the approach was that development would occur in a spontaneous or induced manner in a few dynamic sectors forming geographical clusters from which it would spread over time to the rest of the spatial system.³⁶ Development from above strategies i.e. the 'centre-down' or 'top-down' development paradigm

³⁴Weber, A. *Alfred Weber's Theory of the Location of Industries*. (Translated by Friedrich, C.J. from *Under den Standort der Industrien*).University of Chicago Press, 1929 (First German Edition, 1909). Losch, A. *The Economics of Location*. (Translated by Woglom, W.H., from *Die Räumliche Ordnung der Wirtschaft*). Oxford University Press, 1954 (First German Edition 1940), Christaller, W. *Central Places in Southern Germany*. (Translated by Baukin, C.W.), Englewood Cliffs New Jersey, 1966 (First German Edition, 1933).

³⁵Stohr, W. B. and Taylor, D.R.F. "Development from above or below? Some conclusions". In: Stohr, W.B. and Taylor, D.R.F. (eds) *Development from Above or Below?*.John Wiley and Sons Ltd, London, 1981, pp. 453-480

³⁶Hansen, N. M. "Development from above: the centre-down development paradigm". In: Stohr, W. and Taylor, D. R. F. (eds), *Development from Above or Below?* John Wiley and Sons., 1981, pp15-39.

has its roots in neo-classical economic theory and its spatial manifestation is the growth centre concept. Such strategies tend to be urban and industrial in nature. These are usually capital intensive industrial initiatives which demand the highest technology and depend on economic efficiency through economies of scale.³⁷

F. Perroux³⁸ introduced the concept of the 'growth pole' into the economics literature. His original work focused on the development of growth poles in economic space. This was an attempt to break away from the limitations of the central place concept of Christaller and Losch. Perroux's initially defined growth poles and specifically in relation to abstract economic space and not in relation to geographic-economic or geographic space.³⁹ Thus his primary concern tended to be interactions among industrial sectors rather than a spatial development process. According to him, poles were likely to be firms or industries or groups of industries. A.O. Hirschman⁴⁰ in his classic work 'the strategy of economic development' argued that development strategies should concentrate on a relatively few sectors than on widely dispersed projects. He maintained that key sectors would be determined by measuring the effects of backward and forward linkage in terms of input maxima. He viewed that growth is communicated from the leading sectors of the economy to the rest, from one firm to another. Hirschman expressed similar views to Myrdal regarding backwash and spread effects by the terms 'polarisation' and 'trickle-down'.⁴¹ Before explaining the growth centre concept with reference to the Developing Countries, it is worthwhile discussing Friedmann's 'centre-periphery' model. Friedmann viewed the regional policy problem as an issue of applying national policy in a spatial dimension. Friedmann's centre-hinterland model consists of four stages which trace the transformation of a spatial system from a sparsely populated and newly

³⁷Stohr, Walter B., and Fraser Taylor. *Development from above or below?: Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries*. John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

³⁸Perroux, F., Economic Space, Theory and Application. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 64, 1950, pp. 89-104.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 95

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 183-84

colonised country to a fully integrated urban and regional system in a developed country. To encourage development, he advocated hierarchy of cities as the means of assimilating the periphery with the centre or core.⁴²

5.2. Development From Below

The problems of poverty increased interregional and interpersonal disparities between rural and urban areas which resulted in the beginning of a new paradigm in the 1960s which is broadly termed 'development from below' or 'bottom-up approach'. The primary objective of this approach is social development with a focus on specific human needs. Since the majority of Developing Countries especially in Asia are essentially rural in character, the main idea behind these strategies is rural and agricultural development.⁴³

The earlier agricultural development strategies of the 1960s were capital intensive and were geared to improve the overall condition of rural people through increased output and incomes. The prime economic objective was to increase agricultural output. The 'green revolution' strategies fulfilled the objectives of self-sufficiency in food production in many countries. But the main benefits went to the land owners, the elites and others who were not in real need. Since the majority of the rural population in Developing Countries, especially in Asia and Africa, are marginal and subsistence farmers with limited access to inputs and credit facilities, the green revolution could not initiate any major change in their quality of life. Misra and Bhooshan expressed this as follows: "The green revolution strategy, however, did not mend the living conditions of the rural poor, not so much because it was inherently wrong, but because of the fact that the national Governments did not pursue other rural development strategies with the same vigour and commitment, land reforms, rural industrialisation and other

⁴²Friedmann, J. *Regional Development Policy: a Case Study of Venezuela*. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1966.

⁴³Friedmann, J. and Douglass, M. "Agropolitan development: towards a new strategy for regional planning" In: Lo F. and Saleh K. (eds), *Growth Pole Strategy and Regional Development Policy*. Regional Development. Nagoya, 1978, pp. 163-192.

rural institutional reforms lagged behind. This led to very unfavourable implications for landless and small farmers".⁴⁴

Friedmann and Douglass⁴⁵, like many other authors, observed that the centre-down paradigm of planning has frustratingly failed in Developing Countries. On reviewing the results of the accelerating industrialisation strategies in six Asian countries (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand), they concluded that the traditional paradigm generated contradictions of crisis proportions in the structure of national development.⁴⁶ They advocated the alternative strategy of accelerated rural development and called it 'agropolitan development'. They argued that the agropolitan strategy should be oriented to human needs, a more equal distribution of economic benefits and more direct participation by local people in the process of development. In the policy framework for agropolitan development, they argued that an agropolitan district should be developed by embedding some of the key elements of urbanism in dense rural areas of limited size. This policy of spatial development had to be promoted through decentralised planning and decision making. The agropolitan approach advocated the creation of self-reliant communities by selective spatial closure, communisation of productive assets and equalisation of access to bases for the accumulation of social power.⁴⁷

The agropolitan approach has been criticised by some scholars⁴⁸; because they believe that the approach does not deal with political and economic realities and is therefore utopian;

⁴⁴Misra, R.P. and Bhooshan, B.S. "Rural development: national policies and experiences". In: Misra, R.P. (ed) *Rural development: national policies and experiences*. Maruzen Asia for U.N.C.R.D., 1981.

⁴⁵Friedmann, J. and Douglass, M. "Agropolitan development: towards a new strategy for regional planning" In: Lo F. and Saleh K. (eds), *Growth Pole Strategy and Regional Development Policy*. Regional Development, Nagoya, 1978, pp. 163-192.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 164

⁴⁷Friedmann, J. and Weaver, C. *Territory and Function: the Evolution of Regional Planning*. University of California Press, 1979.

⁴⁸Gore, C. *Regions in Question; Space, Development Theory and Regional Policy*. Methuen, London, 1984. Mathur, O.P. "Small Cities and Natural Development Re-Examined". In Mathur, O.P. (ed) *Small Cities and National Development*. U.N.C.R.D. Nagoya, 1982. Soja, E.W. *The Geography of*

the approach merely substituted spatial structures or territory for class structure. On the contrary, the approach accepted that power structures not only exist between different classes in a society, but also between different units, for example, central government against local administration and production. Furthermore, important power structures exist within the district, clan, extended family and household. The agropolitan strategy, focused explicitly on these local power structures, highlights their importance

5.3 Globalisation and development:

Clark through his analysis of the world-wide urbanisation growth argued that one of the influencing factors on the urban world is that the world itself has become a coherent and integrated whole, through the globalisation of economic as well as social activity. Markets which were previously discrete and localised have merged and superseded by the world-wide patterns of production as well as consumption co-ordinated through global institutions and organisations.⁴⁹

The impact of globalisation on developing Countries has been evaluated by two groups of economic commentators. In recent years many observers like Krugman and Woods have expressed concern that globalisation may affect the ability of these nations to withstand high living standards. The most extreme expression of it was Ross Perot's warning of serious adverse impacts on the European unemployment rates especially for low wage workers.⁵⁰ The second group consisting of scholars like Thompson and Hirst criticise the pessimistic views on the economic growth of Third World and argues that these analyses suffer from the limitations of

Modernization in Kenya: A Spatial Analysis of Social Economic and Political Change. Syracuse University Press. New York, 1968. Forbes, D.K. *The Geography of Underdevelopment.* Croom Helm Ltd., 1984.

⁴⁹Clark, D. *Urban World, Global City.* Routledge, London, 1996.

⁵⁰Krugman, P. The myth of Asia's miracle. *Foreign Affairs*, Nov. - Dec., 1994, pp. 63-75. Wood, A. *North-south trade, Employment and Inequality: changing fortunes in a skill driven world.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994.

econometric statistics, but these are no more disabling than the often journalistic reports that make up a sizeable portion of the literature on Developing Countries.⁵¹

Although globalisation as an external factor seems to play an important role in the development of some Developing Countries, the secret of Asian countries' success is believed to be primarily dependent on the crucial role of their governments as an internal factor. Hamilton after analysing the main factors in the economic growth of some Developing Countries (Pakistan, Nepal, India, Thailand and Malaysia) in Asia concluded that one of the important problems of the latter was the error of 'policy voluntarism' which can be related to the World Bank's negative attitude towards government role in the economy. Hamilton's study has shown that economic growth is not necessarily inhibited by government involvement and above all, it is not the quantity of government intervention and planning that matters, but its quality.⁵²

6. Demography and Urbanisation

There is agreement that the model of demographic change based on Western experience is not adequate for the context of the developing world. Abu-Lughod⁵³ found that, in contrast to western societies, where fertility was lower than rural, the urban and rural rates have been substantially the same. Also, data show that urban death rates were higher than rural in the early stages of urbanisation in the West while it is almost the opposite in the Egypt case. By emphasising the differences between rural and urban places, Gugler has analysed the mortality data for many Developing Countries which showed that urban residents had a better chance of survival than rural people. However he believed the data to be problematic, as it is reasonable to

⁵¹Hirst, P. and Thompson, G. *Globalisation in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance*. Polity Press in Association with Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1996.

⁵²Hamilton, C. Can the Rest of Asia Emulate the NICs? In: Wilber, C.K. and Jamson, K.P. (eds). *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*. 1992, pp. 403-32.

⁵³Abu-Lughod, J. Urban-Rural Differences as a Function of the Demographic Transition: Egyptian Data and an Analytical Model. *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 69, 1964, pp. 476-90.

assume that they tend to underplay rather than exaggerate the urban-rural differential.⁵⁴ Poor countries with an overwhelmingly rural population exhibit a high fertility pattern that ensures that they are supported by their children in old age according to Lipton.⁵⁵ Caldwell⁵⁶ refuted the idea that traditional agrarian societies make irrational decisions about family size. Instead, he suggested that decisions about family size are explained by the nature of the household economy. When wealth flows from the children to the parents through their productive contribution to the household economy, it is rational to sustain a higher level of fertility. Fertility transition occurs when wealth flows from parents to children become of greater importance

Thus, the most common measure of the rate of urbanisation is the annual change in the proportion of people living in urban places; a city can grow by natural increase or through rural-urban migration. Natural population growth is a major element in urban growth, but rural-urban migration makes an even larger contribution in many developing countries.⁵⁷

6.1. Rural-Urban Migration

Migration is one of the important factors of urban population growth. Nevertheless the causes and patterns of internal migration, especially rural to urban and urban to urban movements, have been and are a crucial component of urbanisation. It is proper here to evaluate popular migration theories to understand their ability to explain patterns for urban growth. One of the earliest theories in the migration literature is that of Ravenstein's laws. The laws consist of observations based on the relationship between migration and factors such as distance, stages, economic stimuli, migration currents and rural-urban differences in the United Kingdom.

⁵⁴Gugler, J. "The rural-urban interface and migration" In: Gilbert, A and Gugler, J. *Cities, poverty and development, Urbanisation in the Third World*. Oxford University Press, 1982.

⁵⁵Lipton, M. *Why Poor Stay Poor. A Study of Urban Bias in World Development*. Maurice Temple Smith Ltd. London, 1977.

⁵⁶Caldwell, J.C. *African Rural-Urban Migration: The Movement to Ghana Towns*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1969.

⁵⁷Gugler, J. *The Transformation of the Developing World*. Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 1996.

Essentially, he was seeking to understand the causes of migration from empirical evidence. This showed that (1) migrants primarily moved a short distance from their birth place; (2) migration preceded by stages; people initially moved to the nearest towns and then transferred to the bigger urban places; (3) each current of migration produced a compensating counter-current; (4) migrants who made the largest distances usually preferred to migrate to one of main centres of commerce and industry; (5) town people were less likely to migrate than rural residents.⁵⁸

Moreover, Ravenstein⁵⁹ predicted that migration would increase over time as a result of development in the means of transport and the growth of industry and commerce. He also explained that other conditions could stimulate migration streams, such as an attractive climate, heavy taxation and compulsion. Therefore, Ravenstein's emphasis was on the economic motives which shifted population from agriculture (rural) to commerce and industry (urban). After Ravenstein, much consideration was given to the pattern and forms of internal migration in the countries of the world. Lee with his definition of migration as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence argued that despite criticisms, the laws of migration have stood the test of time. His own theory of migration, based partly on Ravenstein's laws, is underlain by two sorts of forces working in different areas which lead to push movements from rural places and to pull factors to urban areas.⁶⁰

The push-pull formula suggests that potential migrants will be subjected simultaneously to "centrifugal" forces at their place of origin and "centripetal" forces at the place of destination. This view is favoured by most writers although some researchers have stressed the importance of separating the two effects in order to achieve a better understanding of the decision making process. McGee in his study of the process of city ward migration has compared European

⁵⁸Ravenstein, E. G. Laws of migration. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. Vol. 48, 1885, pp. 167-227.

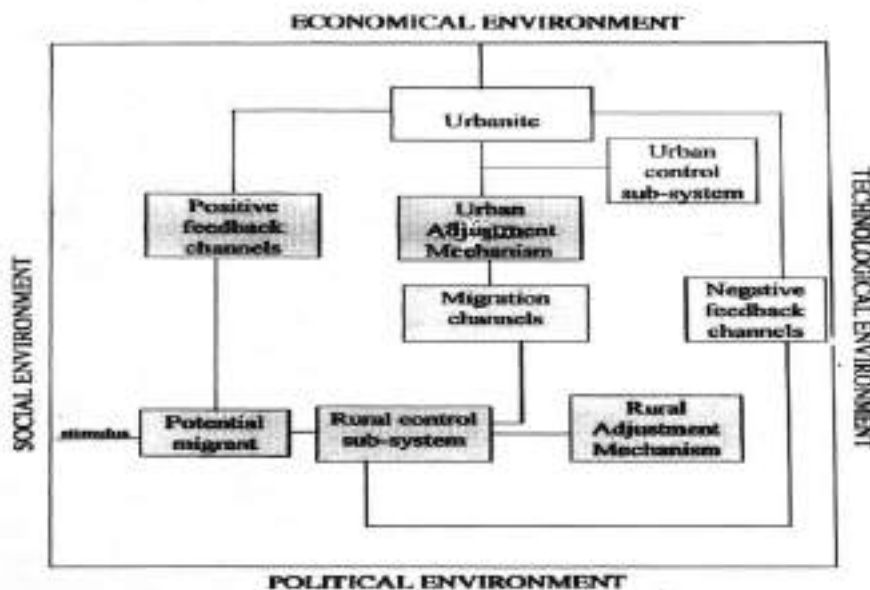
⁵⁹Ravenstein, E. G. The Laws of Migration. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. Vol. 52, 1889, pp. 241-305.

⁶⁰Lee, S. "A Theory of Migration." In: Demco, G. H. and Schnell, G. A., *Population Geography: A Reader*. McGraw Hill, New York, 1970, pp. 228-98.

rural-urban migration in the different phases of the Industrial Revolution to South East Asian rural-urban migration with which he found some similarities. But he stated that the push pull model of Western European rural-urban migration needs to be modified substantially in the Asian situation. The main motives for migration were the pressure of population and lack of jobs in rural areas; thus rural poverty was replaced by urban poverty, while in Western Europe, the transfer of rural population led to industrial development.⁶¹

Drakakis-Smith pointed out that migration usually occurs initially in response to events (natural, economic, social and political) over which those affected have little control.⁶² If this is accepted, then behavioural theories of migration will have only limited explanatory power and an understanding of the timing of migratory flows is more likely to be found in macroeconomic theories explaining structural changes in society and in the economy.

Fig 1.1: A System Schema for a Theory of Rural-Urban Migration (after Mobogunje, 1972)



Source: Mabogunje, Akin L. *Regional Mobility and Resource Development in West Africa*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972.

⁶¹McGee, T.G. *The Urbanisation Process in the Third World: Explorations in Search of Theory*. Bell & Son, London, 1971.

⁶²Drakakis-Smith, D.W. *The Third World City*. Methuen. London, 1987

As studies and discussion of the different factors of rural-urban migration and natural growth of population have shown, the urbanisation process is fast and despite some decline in the natural increase in some Developing Countries, urbanisation is not a passing phenomenon, but it is widespread and the future of developing nations will be determined by future urban generations rather than by the rural. The development strategies reviewed in the early section of this chapter revealed that one of main outcomes of national and regional development policies has been rural urban inequality.

However, some theoretical debates give more importance to the external forces in Developing Countries' population distribution. Whether one agrees or not, in the contemporary world, the massive improvement of communications through TV screens and information on urban lifestyles encourages the use of manufacturing products by movement to or contact with towns and cities around the Third World.

6.2. Urban Residential Mobility

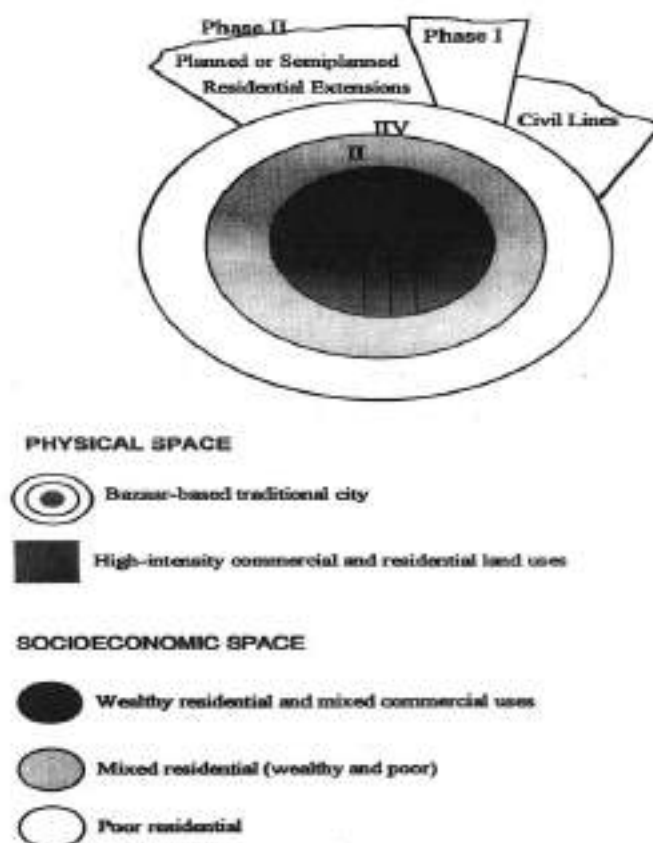
Rapid City growth in Developing Countries, due to migration and natural population increase, has changed the old pattern of population distribution in cities. A variety of theories has been developed to describe the process and factors leading to such a transition. The four best known theories are the concentric zone, the sector theory, the multiple nuclei theory, and inverse concentric theory. The first three theories were formulated based on the experience of developed countries' urban centres, while the majority of cities in Developing Countries follow the inverse concentric theory.⁶³ According to this theory, the elite and upper income classes live in the central part of the city, where they have easy access to their workplaces and urban amenities, and the lower classes reside in peripheral areas of the city.

A.K. Dutt constructed a model explaining the structure of the South Asian cities which he termed as 'Bazaar based' city model. One of the main motives of urban growth in such cities

⁶³Williams, J. F. et al. "World urban development" In: Brunn, S. D. I. and Williams, J. F. (eds), *Cities of the World, World Regional Urban Development*. Harper & Row Publications, New York, 1983, pp. 3-41.

is the increasing function of trade from agricultural exchange, transport nodes, and various administrative activities. The socio-economic space of the bazaar-based city represents a classification of different income groups. The higher income groups usually reside in the central part around the bazaar. In the second zone live the poor and wealthy together, and the third zone is occupied by poor families. It is important to consider that the structure of cities is constantly changing with the improvement of communications and the implementation of urban development plans which accentuate physical expansion. In fact residential patterns are not only the outcome of migrant or even urban residents' choice but more the product of constraints on the availability of land, housing and services in Developing Countries' urban areas.⁶⁴

Fig 1.2: Bazaar based city in South Asia (after Dutt, 1983)



Source: Dutt, Ashok K. "Cities of South Asia" in Stanley Brunn and Jack F. Williams, eds. *Cities of the World*. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.

⁶⁴Dutt, A.K. "Cities of South Asia". In: Brunn, S.D.B and Williams, J.F (eds), *Cities of the World; World Regional Urban Development*. Harper and Row, Publications, New York, 1983, pp. 325-68.

6.3 Peri-urbanisation:

Many people from villages migrate to towns and cities for jobs, livelihood, for accomplishing financial gains or education. There can be other reasons for migration too. However residing in the core of the city is highly expensive due to the fact dwelling costs in towns and cities are high. A greater affordable alternative for them is to settle down at the fringes of the city or at the periphery of the city. There could be other reasons also for any such population relocation in any city, for example development of township leads to uprooting of population that already settled there. Thus peri-urbanisation can be described as urbanisation of areas located at the fringes of a city, are intrinsically linked to the city economic growth and are characterised by mixed urban and rural activities.

.Ravetz, Fertner and Nielsen describe peri-urban regions as “a new type of multi-practical territory.”⁶⁵ The regions could be imagined as some type of intermediary zones overlapping urban and jurisdictions and are inhabited by mostly migrant populace—who're generally participating in the urbanisation process of the city. Narain, Anand and Banerjee observe that small farmers, casual settlers, commercial as well as industrial entrepreneurs, and urban middle class commuters all co-exist within the same existing territory, though with competing pursuits, practices and perceptions.⁶⁶ There also are examples of peri-city regions which were located at a distance from the town core, being engulfed, because of statutory extension of town boundaries.

7. India's Urbanisation Experience

The literature on urbanisation as a process and its spatial manifestation in terms of levels of urbanisation has been extremely varied and intensive. The process can be studied from

⁶⁵ Joe Ravetz, Christian Fertner and Thomas Sick Nielsen, “The Dynamics of Peri-Urbanization.” In *Peri-urban Futures: Scenarios and Models for Land Use Change in Europe*. Edited by K. Nilsson et al. (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2013:13).

⁶⁶ V. Narain, P. Anand and P. Banerjee, “Periurbanization in India: A Review of the Literature and Evidence,” Report for the Project – Rural to Urban Transitions and the Peri-urban Interface, SaciWATERs, India, 2013, P. 6.

perspectives of all the social sciences. In the early 60's of 20th century Bert F. Hoselitz summarised some noteworthy differences between European urbanisation and Indian urbanisation in the following words "Compared with European cities during a corresponding period of economic development, the cities of India had weak urban industry characterised by a larger number of small-scale and cottage type enterprises; the labour force was fractionalised therefore, was made up of a smaller portion of industrial workers and a larger portion of persons in unskilled service sector. All these features made economic development more difficult in India today than was the case in Europe in the 19th century."⁶⁷

R. Ramachandran discusses the trend of urbanisation in India with the objective to correct imbalances which arise from a western dominated literature. The scope and content of the book give exposition and evaluation on the general study of urbanisation, the long 500 years of urbanisation in India, and the conventional geographers' concerns with patterns of settlement.⁶⁸ Ramachandran has extensively discussed criteria for defining urban places, the theory of systems approaches to urban hierarchy in geographical space and the nature of city-region relationships. He also deals with the policy of urbanisation. India has an unequally long and varied 5000-year history of invasions and successions of cultures and peoples with their contrasting expression of urban development.⁶⁹

Following the contour of Ramachandran, Amitabh Kundu in 1994 discusses the pattern of Urbanisation with special reference to Small and Medium Towns in India. According to him, till the nineties Class- I cities in developed states grew at a quicker rate as compared to small and medium towns. Whereas in the less developed states, small and medium towns grew at a similar or higher rate than that of Class I cities. This pattern changed in the nineties. Less developed

⁶⁷ Bert F. Hoselitz, (1961) "Tradition and Economic Growth" in Ralph Braibanti and Joseph J. Spengler eds. *Tradition, Values, and Socio-Economic Development*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. London: Cambridge University Press. pp. 83–113.

⁶⁸ Ramachandran, R. "Urbanisation and Urban System in India", Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

states like Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa experienced high urban growth in their Class I cities as compared to smaller towns. Cities with a million-plus population registered higher growth than the overall growth of all the Class I cities during 1981-91 recorded 2.96 per cent growth while in 1991-2001 growth rate of 2.76 percent was recorded. During the same period, million-plus cities grew at the rate of 3.25 percent and 2.88 per cent respectively.⁷⁰ Later on P. Amis (1995) tried to understand the dichotomy between employment creation and environmental improvements. He also gives explanations on the nature of urban poverty in India and the policy response aimed at creating employment and increasing incomes as well as environmental improvement initiatives.⁷¹

G.V. and Lobo, Norbert in 2003 discusses the Rural Urban Migration and Rural Unemployment in India and its impact and the 'push' and 'pull' factors operating with varying intensity and positive effects of rural-to-urban migration overtaking negative effects in a specific regional context. They point out that rural unemployment is one of the burning problems that India has been facing. Its severity has increased in the period following the new economic reforms. To think more about it is to think more about Indian rural problems in general and rural-to-urban migration in particular.⁷²

Kundu, A. in 2003 talks about the impact of Neo-Liberal Paradigm on Urban Dynamics in India. The urban growth rate from 1951 to 1991 was generally high in relatively less developed states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and U.P. The relatively better developed states like Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal experienced low urban growth. The developed states like Gujarat, Haryana and Maharashtra recorded high or medium growth. There was a significant departure of this pattern in the nineties from the earlier decades as the developed

⁷⁰ Amitabh Kundu. "Pattern of Urbanisation with special reference to Small and Medium Towns in India" in G. K. Chandra (ed) Sectoral Issues in Indian Economy, Anand publications, 1994.

⁷¹ on Amis, P. (1995 "Employment Creation or Environmental Improvements: A Literature Review of Urban Poverty and Policy in India", Habitat International, 19(4), pp. 485-497

⁷² G.V. and Lobo, Norbert. Rural Urban Migration and Rural Unemployment in India", Mohit Publication, New Delhi, 2003

states registered urban growth above the national average while the less developed states experienced growth either below or equal to the Country's growth rate.⁷³ Imura, Hidefumi, Yedla, Sudhakar, Shirakawa, Hiroaki and Memon, Mushtaq observed the linkages between population growth, urbanisation, economic development, and environmental issues in Asian cities by focusing on the areas of transport planning and air pollution, solid waste management, and water supply and sanitation⁷⁴.

Om Prakash studied the effects and implications of globalisation and liberalisation on India's urban system. According to him, the implication of India's post-1991 liberalisation and globalisation on the national urban system, not only resulted in rapid economic growth but affected cities in different ways, primarily by the growth of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).⁷⁵ Sivaramakrishnan, K.C., Kundu, Amitabh and Singh, B.N. (2005) studied urban settlements by the comparative method. In this book, for the first time a comprehensive analysis of urbanisation trends in India was done using 2001 census data. It looks at definitional problems in the identification of urban settlements for comparative analysis. The realistic quantification of migration, its share of urban growth in large cities, the role of small and medium towns, and the growth of large urban agglomerations are also considered.⁷⁶

To define a Town or City in India, the demographic and economic indexes are important and taken into consideration in defining specific areas as town or city. The definitional parameters of an urban area in India have undergone several changes and modifications over the years. The following definition of town was adopted in 1901 census was used until 1961. a) Every municipality, civil lines and cantonment (are not to be included in a

⁷³ Kundu, A. (2003) "Impact of Neo-Liberal Paradigm on Urban Dynamics in India", in Good Governance India, Vol. 1 November-December 2003.

⁷⁴ Imura, Hidefumi, Yedla, Sudhakar, Shirakawa, Hiroaki and Memon, Mushtaq A. (2005): "Urban Environmental Issues and Trends in Asia— An Overview" published in International Review for Environmental Strategies, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 357-382.

⁷⁵ Om Prakash (2005) "Globalisation and Urban Development", Springer Publication, Berlin, Heidelberg

⁷⁶ Sivaramakrishnan, K.C., Kundu, Amitabh and Singh, B.N. (2005): "Handbook of Urbanisation in India: An Analysis of Trends and Process", New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

municipality), b) Houses inhabited permanently by not less than five thousand persons, who the provincial superintendent of the census decides to treat as a town. The definition adopted in the 1961 census was also used in 1971 and 1981. And it remained unchanged in 1991 and 2001 also. According to this definition an urban area is: a) a place which is either a municipal corporation or a municipal area, or under a town committee or a notified area committee or cantonment board, or any place which satisfies the following criteria of: a) Minimum of 5,000 persons and minimum 75% of working occupations are non-agricultural. b) Density not less than one thousand persons per square mile and c) Place should have certain pronounced urban characteristic features and amenities for example newly founded industrial areas or large housing settlements or places of tourist importance or civic amenities. Other than from well-defined towns or cities, the outgrowths of towns as well as cities have also been treated as an urban agglomeration. In the 1961 census, the idea of 'town group' was adopted in order to obtain a large image relating to urban reach. This was refined in the census of 1971 and the concept of urban agglomeration was added to obtain a better feedback on urban continuity, trends and processes of urbanisation and also other related matters. This concept without any modification had remained operative till 2001 census.

The 2011 Census has broadly classified urban areas into ensuing types:

- i) Statutory towns: Places with, corporation, municipality, notified town area committees, cantonment board etc.
- ii) Census towns: all villages with a bare minimum population of 5000 persons in the preceding census, at least 75% of male main working population involved in non-agricultural activities and a population density of minimum 400 persons per sq. km.
- iii) Urban Agglomerations (UAs): It can be understood as a continuous urban spread consisting of one or more towns.
- iv) Urban Growths (OGs): It is defined as areas around a core city or town, like university campus, railways colony, port areas, etc. mainly lying outside the ambit of town.

Cities in India are classified on the basis of population density. Prior to 2008, the cities were classified on the basis of City Compensation Allowance (CCA). CCA was an allowance paid by both public and private sectors to its employees in order to compensate the higher cost of living in metropolitan areas or Tier 1 cities. The Seventh Central Pay commission abolished the CCA classifications of Cities and adopted the earlier practice of House Rent Allowances with minor modifications. The earlier HRA classification of cities was changed from A1 to X, B1 to Y AND C1 to Z. X, Y and Z are popularly known as Tier-1, Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. Areas with population more than 1,00,000 are considered as metropolitan areas. As far Siliguri is considered Siliguri city is governed by Municipal Corporation which comes under Siliguri Metropolitan Region. The historical Population Data of microtrends.net points that the population of Siliguri Metropolitan Region in the year 2020 was 1,020,000.⁷⁷ Thus we see that Siliguri from a mere population of 30,000 in the year 1950 became a metropolitan area.

Trends of Urbanisation in India

Table 1.1: Number of Towns Percentage and Growth Rate of Urban Population in India

Since 1901

Census Year	No. Of Towns	%Urban Total Population	To	%Rural Total Population	To	Annual Exponential Growth
1901	1827	10.84		89.15		-
1911	1815	10.29		89.71		0.03
1921	1949	11.18		88.82		0.79
1931	2072	11.99		88.82		1.75
1941	2250	13.86		88.01		2.77
1951	2843	17.29		86.14		3.47
1961	2365	17.97		82.71		2.34
1971	2590	19.91		82.03		3.21
1981	3378	23.34		76.66		3.83
1991	3768	25.72		74.24		3.09
2001	4368	27.78		72.22		2.73
2011	7935	31.16		68.89		-

⁷⁷ <https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/21405/siliguri/population>>Siliguri, India Metro Area Population 1950-2022. www.macrotrends.net. Retrieved 2022-06-26.

Note: Size categories (Class) of towns by population: Class I: 100,000 or more; Class II: From 50,000 to 99,999; Class III: From 20,000 to 49,999; Class IV: from 10,000 to 19,999; Class V: from 5,000 to 9,999 Class VI: Below 5,000.

Source: Census of India for different years, Kundu, A “Trends & Processes of Urbanisation in India”, Human Settlements Group, IIED, Population and Development Branch, UNFPA, 2011

The census of 1991 had recorded a significant decline in population growth in urban areas during 1981-91, as noted above. The decade of the 1970s saw the growth rate of urban population as 3.79% - by far the highest this century - and came down to 3.09% in the 1980s. It went down further to 2.73% in the 1990s, which was the lowest since the Independence period (Table above), if the rate of the 1950s is revised upwards to take care of definitional anomalies.⁷⁸ As a consequence, the percentage of population in urban areas has gone up sluggishly from 23.34 in 1981 to 25.72 in 1991 and then to 27.78 in 2001.

Urbanisation Pattern across Size Class of Urban Centres

The distribution of urban population through size categories discloses the fact that the process of urbanisation in India was largely city oriented. This is revealed from the high percentage of urban population being concentrated in the class I cities, and this has gone up systematically in the last century. The enormous increase in the percentage share of the class I cities from 26.0 in 1901 to 68.7 in 2001 has often been credited to the faster growth of large cities, without taking into consideration the surge in the number of these cities (Table below). However, the simple reason for the growing dominance of these cities is the promotion of lower order towns into class I category. Importantly, Table below reports two growth rates for the 1970s and subsequent decades, one computed by considering the population in each category as reported in consecutive censuses, the other considering the population of the common towns only. The differences between the two growth rates are due to towns moving in and out of a

⁷⁸ The urban growth rate during the 1950s was less than that of the 1990s, but that can be explained in terms of formalisation of the definition of urban centres for the first time in the census of 1961 and the exclusion of town area committees, etc from the urban list, particularly in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Also see Kundu, A “Trends & Processes of Urbanization in India”, *Human Settlements Group, IIED, Population and Development Branch, UNFPA, 2011*

category over time. It is observed that in 1901, there were only 24 class I cities and that went up to 393 in 2001, which explains largely the increase in the share of population in this size category over the decades. However, in addition to the factors for increase in the number of large cities, the significance of a fast demographic growth in these, making the urban structure top heavy, cannot be minimised.

Table 1.2: Number of Towns and Percentage of Urban Population in Different Size Categories

CENSUS YEAR	NUMBER OF TOWNS						PERCENTAGE OF URBAN POPULATION					
	CLA SS I	CLA SS II	CLA SS III	CLA SS IV	CLA SS V	CLA SS VI	CLA SS I	CLA SS II	CLA SS III	CLA SS IV	CLA SS V	CLA SS VI
1901	24	43	130	391	744	479	26	11.29	15.64	20.83	20.14	6.1
1911	23	40	135	364	707	485	27.48	10.51	16.4	19.73	19.31	6.57
1921	29	45	145	370	734	571	29.7	10.39	15.92	18.29	18.67	7.03
1931	35	56	183	434	800	509	31.2	11.65	16.8	18	17.14	5.21
1941	49	74	242	498	920	407	38.23	11.42	16.35	15.78	15.08	3.14
1951	76	91	327	608	1124	569	44.63	9.96	15.72	13.63	12.97	3.09
1961	102	129	437	719	711	172	51.42	11.23	16.94	12.77	6.87	0.77
1971	148	173	558	827	623	147	57.24	10.92	16.01	10.94	4.45	0.44
1981	218	270	743	1059	758	253	60.37	11.63	14.33	9.54	3.54	0.5
1991	300	345	947	1167	740	197	65.2	10.95	13.19	7.77	2.6	0.29
2001	393	401	1151	1344	888	191	68.67	9.67	12.23	6.84	2.36	0.23

Source: Census of India (compiled by the Researcher)

It is evident from Table 2.5 that this is not the case. The class I cities, for example, show distinctly higher growth rates during the 1970s when compared to the lower order towns, except the class VI towns. Indeed, the class VI towns do not fall in the contour with the general pattern as they exhibit a higher growth rate. One must hasten to add that these towns constitute a special category, as many of these are industrial townships; pilgrimages centres etc. or have come into existence through the establishment of public sector units. Their growth dynamics, therefore, are outside the purview of the regional economy.

The pattern of progress has remained parallel over the past three decades though there is a general slowing in urban growth in all size categories. Nonetheless, one can note that class I

cities have an edge over class II, III, IV and class V towns especially in terms of growth rate of common towns. This gap seems to have widened a bit during 1991-2001 (see the Table). The annual exponential growth rate for class I (common) towns during the 1970s and 1980s were 3.46% and 2.96% respectively. During 1991-2001 periods there is some marginal decrease in the growth rate of class I towns to 2.76% during 1991-2001, computed on the basis of 291 common class I cities. In comparison, the growth rate for class II towns has gone down by a larger margin, from 2.759% in the 1980s to 2.37% in the 1990s. The same is the case of class II towns, the corresponding percentage figures being 2.59 and 2.27. The smaller towns (IV, V and VI together), too, indicate a sharper decline in growth rate-from 2.57% during 1981-91 to 2.22% during 1991-2001. Thus the decline in the growth rate of class I cities is less, compared to all other categories of towns. One would, therefore, stipulate that the urban structure is becoming more and more top heavy due to the higher demographic growth in larger cities, in addition to the other factors discussed above.

Higher demographic growth in the class I cities is due to both areal expansion and in-migration. These cities report the emergence of a large number of satellite towns in their vicinity. Many of these have become a part of the city agglomeration over time. There are also outgrowths that have been treated as parts of the agglomeration by the census. Further, there has been expansion in the municipal boundaries of class I cities, as discussed under the third component of urban growth in the previous section. Besides, these cities fascinate migrants from all over the country due to stronger economic as well as infrastructural base.

The growth pattern of metro cities i.e. cities having a population of one million or more further validates the hypothesis of concentrated urban development. During 1981-91, they grew by 3.25% per annum, which is higher than the growth rate of towns that existed both in the base as well as terminal year, viz. 2.83%. During 1991-2001, the growth rate decreased across all size categories, including metro cities. In the case of the latter, the rate came down to 2.88% and that of common towns went down to 2.6%. The demographic development in metro cities is,

thus, higher than that of common towns or class I cities⁷⁹. The spatial concentration of urban growth can be seen not only in terms of an increase in the share of urban population in class I cities, but also in the metro cities. The latter claimed about 6.4% of urban population in 1981. This increased to 32.5% in 1991 and further to 37.8% in 2001. It may nonetheless be noted that the difference between the growth rates of metro and class I cities has gone down significantly over the past two decades.⁸⁰

It is important to examine if the state capitals have been growing differently from class I cities or common towns during the past two decades. Interestingly, the demographic growth in the state capitals and the national capital were at par with that of the metro cities during 1981-91. The capital cities registered growth rates as high as 3.36% per annum. The percentage of urban population living in these capital cities has, however, increased sluggishly from 25.7% to 25.9% during 1991-2001.⁸¹ This is because the growth rates of the capital cities declined substantially in the 1990s (to 2.79% only) compared to the previous decade⁸². It is a matter for in-depth empirical investigation to show whether the adverse growth of capital cities is because of the strategy of structural adjustment, expenditure control or fall in the infrastructural investments by the central and state governments, etc. Similar analysis needs to be carried out to explain the greater fall in the growth of metro cities in the 1990s as compared to class I cities.

8. Urbanisation In West Bengal

West Bengal was no doubt one of the most urbanised states in the colonial period and it can be traced back to the late 18th century when Calcutta emerged not only as a port town but also as a commercial town. However, the distribution-pattern of the major urban areas shows a marked

⁷⁹ Kundu, A. "Globalisation and the emerging urban structure: Regional inequality and population mobility". In *India: Social development report*. Oxford University Press., 2006.

⁸⁰ Kundu, Amitabh. "Urbanisation and Urban Governance: Search for a Perspective beyond Neo-Liberalism." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 38, no. 29, 2003, pp. 3079–3087.

⁸¹ Kundu, Amitabh. *In the Name of the Urban Poor: Access to Basic Amenities*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993.

⁸² Kundu. *Op. Cit.*, 2003.

concentration of urban population in the Central and Western districts - especially along the River Hooghly - for example, the districts of 24 Parganas, Howrah and Murshidabad. In Eastern Bengal, where urban centres were much fewer, the largest concentration of urban population varied from place to place. The unique position held by Calcutta in the hierarchy of cities and towns in Bengal was to a large extent due to its geographical situation, its docks and harbour facilities. It was the main port of India, providing a maritime outlet for the important export staples of jute, tea and indigo. Calcutta's very existence as the capital of the British Empire in India was due to its position "as the entrance of the English seaways into India."⁸³

Calcutta which had originated with and grown at the initiative of the British power in India was a new city compared with the old and "decaying" urban areas like Murshidabad which were the traditional seats of Muslim power and still the centres of Muslim social and cultural life in Bengal. By the passage of time Calcutta had concentrated within its limits various economic functions and, according to contemporary observers, had become the common centre of all commercial operations". It had an extensive hinterland sprawled on both sides of the River Hooghly, with "satellite towns" like Howrah, Hooghly and Chinsurah, Serampore, Naihati, Baidyabati, Bansberia and Agarpara. Murshidabad continued to have the small industries which had developed here under the patronage of the Nawab's court, for example, silk-weaving and ivory-carving, as well as its manufacture of coarse cotton cloth. Serampore was reported to have "a brisk trade in silk and jute" and a hinterland of "a thriving rural population and wealthy zamindars" The smaller towns, in addition to serving their usual function as local points of distribution, produced either one type of commodity or diverse types of goods.⁸⁴

Post-Independence the level of urbanisation was 23.9% in west Bengal. It was fourth in position in comparison to other states of India. It was preceded by the State of Maharashtra,

⁸³ H. K. Spate, "Factors in the Development of Capitals", *Geographical Review*, vol. 32, 1942, pp. 127-128.

⁸⁴ M. Guha, "The Development of Urban Functions of Calcutta", *Journal of Social Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 1962, p.93.

Gujrat and Tamil Nadu. It was observed that the rate of urbanisation in the subsequent decades in West Bengal was quite at a slower pace.

West Bengal witnessed a slow rate of urbanisation till 2001 but we see that the last decade experienced a sudden increase in urban population. The assessments reveal that the growth rate of urban population declined during the period 1961-1971 and it steadily plummeted especially during 1991-2001 before shooting up during the last decade. According to Census 2011, West Bengal is a highly urbanised state in the country with 32% of the population living in urban areas.

Table 1.3: Percentage of Decadal Urban Growth Rate in the West Bengal

years	Decadal urban growth (%)	Decadal rural growth(%)
1901-1911	13.7	5.21
1911-1921	17.16	4.43
1921-1931	15.01	6.98
1931-1941	63.69	15.55
1941-1951	32.52	8.27
1951-1961	26.97	31.81
1961-1971	28.41	26.38
1971-1981	31.71	20.36
1981-1991	29.49	23.01
1991-2001	20.20	16.94

Source: Census Data (compiled by the Researcher)

According to the census of India 2011, West Bengal has seen an increase in the number of urban centres over the last one decade. The ‘census towns’ have increased from 255 in 2001 to 780 in 2011 and statutory towns have also increased from 375 in 2001 to 909 in 2011. In the year 2001, West Bengal had 58 class-I cities, as many as 29 class-II cities and only 56 class-III cities.

With a population of about 82 million in 2001, West Bengal is the fourth most populous state, with the highest population density of 904 persons per square kilometre. Greater population pressure inevitably puts more pressure on basic infrastructure as well as on the provision of health and education services. The extremely high population density obviously

affects per capita resource allocation, so whatever West Bengal has achieved has been in spite of this critical negative factor of having the highest population density in the entire nation. The variation across districts in this regard also needs to be borne in mind when considering inter-district differences in human development indicators. In terms of the more obvious indicators of human development, the state is somewhere in the middle of all Indian states. In demographic terms, West Bengal has been successful in bringing down both birth rates and death rates, with one of the most rapid declines in birth rate in India. The decline in the birth rate from 30.2 per thousand to 25.4) has been nearly double that of the all-India average over the period 1991-2001, while the decline in the death rate has been one and a half times that of the national average. Infant mortality had also declined at a marginally more rapid rate than all of India. Life expectancy in West Bengal (at 69 years for males and 65 years for females) is well above the national average. In terms of income West Bengal is a middle-income state, ranked ninth among the fifteen major states in terms of both per capita income (SDP) and per capita consumption expenditure. Several outcome indicators for health and nutrition suggest that while average conditions could have improved more rapidly, there is substantially more equality of access across the population than in other parts of India. West Bengal ranks third in India with respect to infant mortality rates. Not only that the sex-ratio of the state is also increased from the last census period.

Table 1.4: Number of towns and % of urban population by size-class in West Bengal

Census Years	No. of Towns/cities						Percentage of Urban Population					
	CI-1	CI-2	CI-3	CI-4	CI-5	CI-6	CI-1	CI-2	CI-3	CI-4	CI-5	CI-6
1951	3	4	13	24	11	7	79.5	3.7	7.7	6.3	1.9	0.59
1961	4	10	29	29	26	4	76.6	7.1	8.5	4.7	2.7	0.18
1971	5	16	32	32	25	2	75.7	10.4	7.2	4.3	2.1	0.1
1981	12	21	35	35	20	7	77.7	8.8	6.6	4.8	1.7	0.27
1991	23	18	46	32	34	7	80.0	5.6	7.	4.0	2.6	0.29
2001	27	16	43	49	83	21	83.5	4.3	5.9	3.1	2.5	0.43
2011	62	37	81	198	446	85	84.1	5.2	4.9	3.1	2.0	0.45

Source: Census of India (compiled by the Researcher)

The numbers of urban centres have increased in 62 towns to 130 towns i.e. almost double during the three decades (1951- 1981). In the period of 1981 to 2001, it has increased doubly in the state. So, it is stated that the growth of rate towns was fast and steady since post-independence in the study area. Lastly, the state has made phenomenal jump in the number of urban centres over the last one decade. The number of census towns has risen from 255 in 2001 to 909 in 2011 and the numbers of statutory towns have also increased from 375 in 2001 to 909 in 2011. The population size of various cities have slowly increased in the study area where the number of Class-I, Class-II, Class-III, Class-IV, Class-V and Class-VI towns have increased in 24 cities, 12 cities, 30 cities, 25 cities, 72 cities and 14 cities respectively from 1951 to 2001. In this period class-I, Class-IV and Class-V cities have grown comparatively than other cities (Table 2). The remarkable growth of size class cities has noticed that the state has reached 62 Class-I, 37 Class-II, 81 Class-III, 198 Class-IV, 448 Class-V and 85 Class-VI cities respectively during the last decade (Fig. 6). Therefore, medium and small size towns have high tendency for increasing than large cities in the state. Consequently, the urban centres are developing in the peri-urban area to larger cities in irregularly and haphazardly (urban sprawl) following the road connectivity. The eastern and northern parts of Kolkata are high urban sprawling than other part (Bhatta, 2009). The unprecedented growth of small and medium cities has brought in the problem of provision of public goods and services (Chatterjee, 2016).

The population are reducing in class-I towns during the overcrowded and urban problems. It is interesting to note that as a consequence of forces of development around 580 villages have converted to the status of urban areas. As expected, towns and cities are largely concentrated in southern districts which accounted for almost 90% of class-I cities and 70% of class-II in 2011. North 24 Paraganas alone had a share of 27 cities in 2011. The population of statutory towns is reducing in Barrackpore subdivision in 2011 (Pramanick, 2018). It is further noticed that the proportion of urban population in Class-I cities has risen over time. On the contrary, in Class-II, III and IV cities, the proportion of population is found to have come down. However, the last two categories present an increasing trend (Table 2). All these clearly reveal

the enormity of the problems that has come up with the pace and nature of urbanization in West Bengal. Especially, the growth of Class-I cities across the southern parts both in terms of size and number may pose a serious challenge in terms of public health, safety and quality of life in general.

9. Objectives of Study:

The main objectives of the research are:

- To trace the growth and development of Siliguri in the colonial period,
- To identify factors that led to growth of population and its impact on the changing social landscape of Siliguri.
- To discuss how the economy and communication of the region expanded over the decades
- To discuss the geostrategic importance of Siliguri and geopolitical setting of the city in the global network.
- To discuss the impact of globalisation in the growth and development of Siliguri.

10. Research Questions

The research questions are as follows-

- What were the historical reasons for the growth and development of Siliguri in the colonial period?
- What were the causes and trends in population growth and how did it impact the social landscape of Siliguri?
- What was the impact and reason behind the growth of economic sectors and markets on the urbanisation of Siliguri
- What were the causes for the growth and development of the communication system on Siliguri and what was its impact? How did the communication network of the city expanded and what has been the impact?
- What was the geostrategic importance of Siliguri and what role did it play in the growth and development of Siliguri?
- What was the impact of Globalisation on the political economy of the region?

11. Research Methodology:

An analysis of any urban area requires deep and careful examination of the elements upon which the area is built and the different forces that continuously work upon it. Any transformation of a region can be and should be understood and studied in relation to its past. There is no single methodology that dominates the urban analysis, because the complexities of urban study require an adoption of a wide range of approaches. The methodology followed in this research is qualitative in its nature.

The proposed research addresses pertinent questions which aim to add to existing knowledge on Siliguri. The aim focuses on a variety, making it more or less triangulated on, which finally leads to the incitement of different disciplines. The method followed in this research is an in-depth study of discursive textual representation of the first-level and as well as the secondary sources. This thesis draws on sources that may be considered less typical to urban history. The sourcing of secondary urban sector data is embarked on through an in-depth exploration of census of India, Gazetteers, Statistical handbooks, electoral rolls of assembly elections and municipality records.

Primary data collection and generation was done through interviews, field work and survey of the city which included observation, transect walk for understanding the nerve of Siliguri, jotting interviews and narratives. Methodologically this study has combined two methods of knowing cities: “surveying” the city for abstract knowing and “walking” the city for experiential knowing. My research was juxtaposed between archival study and digital media experiments, especially the use of GIS operation, spatial statistics, google maps and satellite images while comprehending the geostrategic importance of the landscape.

12. Chapter Organisation

The whole thesis has been laid out on Six Chapters excluding the conclusion. Chapter 1, Introduction and theoretical basis looks into initiating the whole voyage of research with a converse on the statement of problems, site of enquiry, existing theories and review of existing literature, objective of research, research questions and finally the methodology of the Research. Chapter 2, 'From Obscurity to Sub-divisional Headquarter: Siliguri in the colonial Period' discusses how Siliguri from a village turned to be an entrepot for commercial activities. Chapter 3, 'Population Growth and the Changing Social Landscape' traces how the population of Siliguri changed after independence and especially after the Indo Pakistan war when there was a huge flow of migration of people from surrounding areas and this totally altered the social landscape of the region. Chapter 4, "Communication and Economy of Siliguri" discusses how the improvement of roads and communication system had a huge impact on the economy of the region. From an agrarian economy it got metamorphosed into a logistical hub under the pressure of contemporary neo liberal urbanisation and became the most important urban agglomeration in the region. Chapter 5, 'Geostrategic Importance of Siliguri' discusses the strategic importance of Siliguri has transformed it into a military town and this had a positive impact on growth and development of the town. Chapter 6, 'Siliguri in the era of globalisation discusses the recent changes in Siliguri in the last two decades. Towards the end 'Summary and Conclusion' winds up the whole research work.

CHAPTER: 1

FROM OBSCURITY TO A SUB-DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTER:

SILIGURI IN COLONIAL PERIOD

Siliguri is a city which spans across the two districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts in the Indian state of West Bengal. The city is situated on the banks of river Mahananda and the foothills of the Himalayas. However, a hundred years before this metropolis was only a small village. This chapter tries to trace the colonial history of Siliguri along with the treatment it received from the colonial rulers and the reasons for its rapid unprecedented development.

L.S.S.O' Malley writing in 1907 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 account for only 21393 persons⁸⁵. Prior to O' Malley, W.W. Hunter in his book 'The Statistical Account of Bengal', finds Siliguri as a place irrelevant to mention. However, Hunter makes a sweeping statement that these places were chiefly inhabited by the Meches and Dhumals, two tribes who are said not to suffer from the unhealthy nature of the climate.⁸⁶ O' Malley wrote about Siliguri that Siliguri was a village to the South of Kurseong Sub- division near the left bank of Mahananda is 26^o43' N and 88^o26'E. Siliguri was 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 Cart 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 biweekly Government market. It is the last quarter of 19th century, Siliguri was headquarter of Deputy Magistrate who disposed of criminal work of the *Terai* and managed the large Government estate; initially the office was stationed at Hansquar (Hanskhawa) near Phansidewa, but latter it was moved to Siliguri in 1888 on the extension of the railway to that

⁸⁵O'Malley, L. S. S. *West Bengal District Gazetteer Darjeeling*, Logos Press, New Delhi, (first printed 1907), reprinted 1999, p. 189.

⁸⁶Hunter, William Wilson. *A Statistical Account of Bengal*. Archeological Survey of India, 1876, Vol. X, p. 67.

place. It also contained a small sub-jail and post office, *dak* bungalow, inspection house, police station and a dispensary with 20 beds, all situated on fairly high ground and its name means “the stony site” presumably because the bed of the Mahanadi close by is a mass of broken stone brought down from the hills.⁸⁷

The area in and around Siliguri was always dreaded by the Europeans at the beginning of the twentieth Century. The Europeans considered it as a fatal fever zone and travelled hastily through this region. Lady Canning caught the mysterious fever which unfortunately ended in her death while stopping to sketch a painting by the roadside on her return trip from Darjeeling. O’ Malley points out that the mortality in this region was mainly caused by fevers, which was generally malaria in nature and was very common in Terai where it accounted for 80% of the total mortality, the death rate from fever was 51 per mile in 1905.”⁸⁸He further admits the average mortality was nearly 60 per 1000 in the ten years ending (i.e. 1890-1900). In 1900 it surpassed 71 per 1000 and the average birth rate in the decade was nearly 19.4 per annum.⁸⁹ The Europeans found this place unsuitable to inhabit but O’Malley confessed that there was however, one race which inhabited this sickly region with comparative immunity, the aboriginal Meches and the Rajbanshis to a certain extent free from fever largely occurring to their cleaning away the rank Jungles around their homesteads and to the high platform on which they erect houses.⁹⁰

This tract of land was also popular for giving refuge to the *sanyasis* who were branded as bandits and robbers. The British official records these *Sanyasis* as “lawless bandits' ' who committed violence under pretence of charity. The *Sanyasis* were held in high veneration by the people of the countryside and put up a stiff resistance to the expanding British power at the end

⁸⁷O'Malley. *Op.Cit.*, p. 209

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 54

⁹⁰Hunter, William Wilson. *Op.Cit.*, Vol. X, p. 67. Hunter pointed out the names of two more tribes, Meches and Dhimals , who did not suffer from the unhealthy nature of the climate.

of the 18th Century.⁹¹ Baikunthapur, a place near Siliguri was considered to be the headquarters of the *Sanyasis*. The Baikunthpur Forest nested these ‘bandits’ who ravaged the country in armed bands numbering hundreds. Glazier⁹² described this area in the following manner, “In 1789, we have an account of a large body of bandits who had occupied the Baikunthapur Forest, Which lies at the northern apex of the district (Rangpore) right under the hills. The forest was composed of tree jungles woven with cane and was impossible except by narrow winding paths known only to the *dakoits*. The collector gathered a force of two hundred *barkandazes* and held all the entrances into the forest. Several skirmishes ensued but months elapsed before any decisive result was obtained. The marauders were at length starved out. Some escaped into Nepal and Bhutan but 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 549 *dakoits*. Lieutenant Macdonald was also sent with 180 sepoy, and he was successful in arresting the leaders of the gang, but their followers escaped into the hills. A report to the Board of Revenue, dated 29th April 1789, makes mention of the seizure of two dacoit boats of 80 and 100 cubits in length, belonging to head *sanyasis*, and gives a detailed account of the oppressions practised by these scourges, not only on the cultivators, but on the zamindars and their officers, whom they carried off and confined until their demands were satisfied.”⁹³

⁹¹Gupta, M.D. *Sanyasi Rebellion in North Bengal*. Ankur, Calcutta, 1979, p. 9. Also see Lorenzen, D.N., "Warrior Ascetics in Indian History." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, American Oriental Society, 1978, 98 (1), pp. 617–75; Marshall, P.J. *Bengal: the British Bridgehead, The New Cambridge History of India*. Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 96.

⁹² Glazier, E.G. *A Report on the District of Rungpore*. Calcutta Central Press Company Limited, 1873.

⁹³Glazier, E.G. *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers: Rangpur*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 29. For a detailed study on the sanyasi rebellion see Ghosh, J.M. *Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal*. Calcutta, 1930., Chandra, A.N. *The Sannyasi Rebellion*. Calcutta, 1977; Peter, D.V. *Gods on Earth: The Management of Religious Experience and Identity in a North Indian Pilgrimage Centre*. Delhi, 1989, pp. 146-151; In Farquhar, "The Organisation of the Sannyasis of the Vedanta", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1925; Cohn. B.S. "The Role of Gosains in the Economy of 18th and 19th Century Upper India", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, I, No 4, 1964; Roy, N.B. "Naga Sannyasi Geneshgeer and the Kuteh bihar Disturbances of 1787", in H R Gupta (ed), *Jadunath Sarkar Commemoration Volume*,

The land between southern Siliguri and Jalpaiguri was a bone of contention between the Bhotias and Koches.⁹⁴ The Koch Chieftains hotly contested Bhutanese hold over an extensive area which also included the large southern tract of land between Siliguri and Jalpaiguri. However, after the Anglo-Bhutanese war a large area was ceded to Bhutan as a part of the policy to appease the Bhutanese and in the interest of Trans-Himalayan trade.⁹⁵ This move of the Britishers was not acceptable by the Koch Zamindars. The large tract remained subject to plundering by both Bhutanese soldiers and Koch Zamindars. 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 later in 1860 the payment was discontinued on pretext of an alleged act of aggression. During the campaign of Eden in 1864 these tracts were permanently annexed to the British Dominion".⁹⁶ The proclamation regarding the annexation read that the British Government, under Article 11 of a treaty concluded on the 11th day of November 1865, has obtained from the Government of Bhutan forever the cession of the whole of the tract known as the 'Eighteen Doars' bordering on the districts of Rangpoor, Cooch Behar, and Assam, together with the Talook of Ambaree Fallacottah and the Hill territory. Thus, the territory ceded by the Bhutan Government as aforesaid was annexed to the territories of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of England. It was further declared that the ceded territory would be attached to the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William, and that it would be under the immediate control of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.⁹⁷

1958; D H A Kolff, "Sannyasi Trader- Soldiers", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 5, 1968.

⁹⁴Deb, Arabinda. *Bhutan and India: A Study in Frontier Political Relations (1772-1865)*, Firma Klm Pvt. Ltd. ,Calcutta, 1976, pp. 112-132

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 133-160

⁹⁶Proclamation Regarding Annexation of the Duars, 4th July,1866 published in Aitchison, C.U. *A collection of Treaties, Treaties Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries.* Vol 2, CXI, Calcutta, 1909, p. 306

⁹⁷Ibid.

In the days of the Dooars war (1864-65), Chandra Shekhar the “Sixteenth *Raikat*”⁹⁸ Petitioned the Government stating the services he had rendered to Eden’s mission and supplies provided to the Bhutan Duar Force “Amounting to fifty or Sixty thousand rupees”⁹⁹ and in lieu of his service the British Government should restore the Zamindari rights of his forefathers over the large tract of land ceded to the Bhutanese. The British Government rejected the plea of Chandra Shekhra Deva and henceforth the areas south of Siliguri were permanently annexed by the British Government. Thus the area which was considered as no man’s land became part of the southern sub-urban of Siliguri towns.

Siliguri’s importance to the British increased because it served as a gateway to Darjeeling. Darjeeling was annexed to the English East India Company on the 1st February, 1835 from the Raja of Sikkim. The District’ was part of the dominions of the Raja of Sikkim. In 1707 what is now the Kalimpong subdivision of the District was taken from the Raja of Sikkim by the Bhutanese. The Rajas later became engaged in unsuccessful struggles with the Gurkhas who had seized power in Nepal and invaded Sikkim in 1780. During the next thirty years they ravaged Sikkim as far as the Tista and conquered and annexed the Terai. In the meantime war broke out between the East India Company and the Nepalese at the end of which in 1817 by the treaty of Titalia the tract which the Nepalese had seized from the Raja of Sikkim was surrendered to the Company. The Company reinstated the whole of the land between the Mechi and the Tista to the Raja and also guaranteed his sovereignty. Sikkim was consequently made as a buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan.

⁹⁸ The *Raikats* were a branch of the Koch royal family. Siswa Singha, the founder of the house, had held the umbrella over the head of his step brother, Maharaja Viswa Singha at the time of his coronation in 1529-30. His successors at Baikunthpur had to resist persistent encroachment of the Bhutanese, the Mallas of Nepal. Also see S. C. Ghosal, *A History of Cooch Behar*, 1942, Chapter XIU, The Baikunthpur Estate of Biswa Singha survived for 410 years (1545-1955). It was abolished under the Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1954; Sanyal, C.C. *The Rajbanshis of North Bengal*, Calcutta, 1965, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Deb, Arabinda. *Bhutan and India: A Study in Frontier Political Relations (1772-1865)*, Firma Klm Pvt. Ltd. ,Calcutta, 1976, p.94

Bound by the Treaty, the Raj had to refer to refer all the disputes of the land to the British. Ten years later disagreements on the Sikkim-Nepal frontiers arose and were referred to the then Governor General. Two officers, Captain Lloyd and Mr. Grant, were assigned in the year 1828 to deal with the disputes and disagreements of the region Mr. Grant reported according to the Governor General Lord William Bentinck the numerous advantages promised for a Sanitarium at Darjeeling and also recommended its occupation for military purposes as the key to a pass into Nepal. The Governor General then assigned Captain Herbert, the Deputy Surveyor-General, to examine the country with Mr. Grant and in due course the Court of Directors sanctioned the project. General Lloyd (formerly Captain Lloyd) was directed to open negotiations with the Raja on the first convenient occasion and this occurred when General Lloyd was assigned to enquire into the causes of an incursion from Nepal of Lepchas who had taken refuge there from Sikkim. He succeeded in procuring the execution of a deed of grant by Sikkim's raja on the 1st February 1836.

This was an unconditional cession of what was then inhabited mountains, but in 1841 the Government decided an allowance of Rs 3000/- per annum as compensation for the Rajah and this was raised to Rs 6000/- per annum in 1846. The relation between the Raja and the British Government deteriorated after 1860, the grants were withdrawn and the area was annexed from Sikkim Government.¹⁰⁰ After the cession of the territory General Lloyd and Dr. Chapman were sent in 1836 to explore and investigate the climate and the capabilities of the place. They spent the winter of 1836 and part of 1837 doing this and when it was finally decided to develop the site as a Sanitarium, General Lloyd was appointed a 'Local Agent' to deal with applications for land which began to pour in from residents of Calcutta.

In 1839 Dr. Campbell, British resident in Nepal, was reassigned to Darjeeling as Superintendent. In this capacity he was in charge not only of the civil, criminal and fiscal administration of the District but also of political relations with Sikkim.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 40.

In the meantime relations with Sikkim deteriorated. The increasing significance of Darjeeling under free institutions was a source of frustration to the Lamas and some leading men of Sikkim, headed by the Dewan Namguay, who were sharers in a monopoly of all trade in Sikkim and lost their rights over those slaves who settled as free men and British subjects in the Darjeeling territory. Frequent kidnappings and demands for the return of slaves took place; however the climax was reached when in November 1849 Sir Joseph Hooker and Dr. Campbell were made prisoners, while travelling in Sikkim with the permission of the Raja and the British Government. Various demands were made as conditions of release but the Sikkimese eventually released both the prisoners unconditionally on the 24th December 1849.

In February 1850 a small force entered Sikkim and remained on the north bank of the Great Rangit River for a few weeks. But the serious retaliatory action taken was the removal of the grants of Rs. 6,000 from the Raja and the annexation of the Terai and the portion of the Sikkim hills enclosed by the Great Rangit on the North, Tista on the East and the Nepal frontier on the West. The area annexed was 640 square miles in extent. Immediately after annexation of the Terai in 1850 the southern part was positioned under Purnea District, but in consequence of the dislike of the inhabitants to this transfer it was cancelled and the whole area was attached to Darjeeling. At the time of annexation there were Bengali officers in the Terai called Chaudhuris who exercised civil and criminal powers.

The change was welcomed by the inhabitants who now had to pay only small fixed sums into the treasury in Darjeeling instead of having to meet uncertain and fluctuating demands in kind and for personal service made by Raja of Sikkim and his Dewan. Thus the tract between Siliguri and Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling gradually came under the hands of the British Government by 1850. Because of its geographical location Siliguri served as a gateway to Darjeeling hills

2.1. The Development of Railways in Siliguri in the Colonial Period

Transport plays a vital role in ‘structure and organisation of space and structures of a city’¹⁰¹ In the nineteenth century the purpose of forms of transport was to expand coverage, create and consolidate national market, in twentieth century objectives shifted to selecting itineraries prioritising transport modes, increasing the capacity of existing network and responding the mobility need, however, in the Twenty-first century transportation must cope with globally oriented economic system in a timely and cost effective way but also with several local problems such as congestion and capacity constraints.¹⁰²

The first passenger train flagged off from Howrah station for Hooghly, a distance of 24 miles, on 15th August 1854 and the first section of the East Indian Railway (EIR) was opened to public traffic on the Eastern side of the sub-continent.¹⁰³ From February 3rd, 1855 the railway had progressed westwards covering a distance of 120 miles from Calcutta and reached up to Raniganj. In October 1859 the EIR had advanced to Rajmahal in Bihar and as early as in 1860 a distance of 219 miles from Howrah was covered and Sahibgunge, the terminus of the visitor to Darjeeling, was reached.¹⁰⁴ The Eastern Bengal Railway (EBR), a private company, got concession for construction and management of railway lines commencing from the left bank of Hooghly towards the Eastern and Northern part of Bengal, including a line to Darjeeling. Construction of EBR lines commenced in April, 1859. The first train steamed out of the Sealdah platform for its then terminus - Ranaghat (45) miles on September 29th, 1862. By 15th November of the same year, the line passed through Poradah Junction on its way to Kushtia. Its extension to Jagati (62 miles) was opened in November, 1862. The line was further extended to Goalundo (45 miles) in January, 1871. In the original contract of Eastern Bengal Railway with the

¹⁰¹Rodrigue, Jean-Paul, et al. *The Geography of Transport Systems*. 4th ed., Routledge, 2016, p.1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 2006

¹⁰³Mukerjee, M. *Railways and Their Impact on Bengal's Economy, 1870-1920. Railways in Modern India*. Edited by Ian J. Ker, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.127

¹⁰⁴Dozey, E.C. *A Concise And Complete History of the Darjeeling District since 1835*, Jetsum Publishing House, Calcutta, 1922, p.8.

Secretary of State for India, this guaranteed Railway Company was to open up a rail-line to Darjeeling. In the early 1870's such good dividends were being obtained from these lines of EBR that the directors were not willing to invest money in extension including the one to Darjeeling as that might not be profitable.¹⁰⁵

On 28th August, 1877, the Northern Bengal State Railway was opened for traffic between Atrai¹⁰⁶ and Jalpaiguri. Prospect of scarcity in Bengal, owing to the failure of rains, caused urgency and construction of a line from Ganges to Jalpaiguri was pushed forward vigorously by NBR [Table: 4.1]. On 19th January, 1878 Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, opened the traffic thus establishing communication between Sealdah and Jalpaiguri and on 10th June of the same year the line was extended up to Siliguri.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the Northern Bengal State Railway attracted to itself the merchandise trade of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Rajshahi and Pabna, almost monopolising the cotton piece goods traffic and participating in a large way in the transport of tea and food grains.¹⁰⁸ For the travellers the route from Calcutta to Darjeeling was first by rail from Howrah to Sahibganj, a distance of 219 miles. Then it was followed by a steam ferry across Ganges to Karagola and by bullock cart to the river opposite Dingra Ghat. After crossing which again the traveller had to take a bullock cart or palkee ghary and crossed Purnea, Kisangani, Titalya, Siliguri and the slope commenced via Pankhabari Road, which connected the cart road at Kurseong that led the traveller to its final destination, Darjeeling.¹⁰⁹

'The opening of the rail line from Calcutta to Raniganj in 1855 reduced the laborious cart journey to Darjeeling by 120 miles, and the East Bengal State Railway pushed steadily

¹⁰⁵Bhandari, R.R. *Darjeeling Himalayan Railway*, National Rail Museum, New Delhi, 2000, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Atrai was a few miles to the north-east of Sara Ghat.

¹⁰⁷O'Malley. *Op.Cit.*, reprint 1999, p.133

¹⁰⁸ Mukerjee, M. *Op.cit.*, p. 127.

¹⁰⁹*Illustrated Guide for the Tourists to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Darjeeling*. London (1896) reprinted by Pagoda Tree Press, England, 2005, p.7.

northward in the following decades.¹¹⁰ Until the advent of the railways in the hills, ‘*Tongas*’ continued to be the only faster means of travelling from Siliguri to Darjeeling. The two most significant factors in the growth of the Railways have been the choice of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills. Those people from the neighbouring countries of Nepal had heard that ‘in Dorje-ling money is grown’ in the tea- bushes. As such more immigrants came to the district in search of such lucrative jobs. In return the immigrants’ requirements of food, clothes and shelter were to be meted out and that necessitated trade. Further tea and Cinchona plantations needed heavy machinery. ‘The hill men had to be taught the mysteries of the steam engine and the marvels of European engineering; blacksmiths, carpenters and other workmen had to learn the higher branches of the callings followed by their ancestors, and from these simple hill people had to be made the engine –drivers necessary to keep the machinery going.’¹¹¹To carry the supplies of the plantation industry in the hills and to bring back the produce for sale in India and abroad the *tonga*, the old bullock-cart, the pack-pony, and the coolies were found insufficient. As a result the planters strongly felt for the introduction of railways in the hills.

The difficulty of journey and the time taken by the Tonga i.e. two laborious days taking them to the sanatorium perhaps might have struck Franklin Prestage with an idea of a mountain tramway which could bring him fame and fortune. Prestage was working as an Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway. As EBR had thought about such ventures in the hills of Darjeeling, Prestage being associated with the East Bengal Railway, the possibility of such an idea cannot be ruled out. For which he took the help of Cary, a civil engineer in the Eastern Bengal Railway; to make plans for a groundwork scheme. While the price of rice was Rs. 98 a ton at Siliguri and Rs. 238 that in Darjeeling, he believed that a line could considerably reduce the cost of transport between the plains and Darjeeling. A railway could bring down the cartage rate by

¹¹⁰ Kennedy, Dane. *The Magic Mountain Hill Station and the British Raj*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996, p. 90.

¹¹¹ O’Malley. *Op.Cit.*, reprint 1999, p.133

half and still could be profitable.¹¹² Finally he submitted his proposal to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden. According to Newman's Guide to Darjeeling and its surroundings Sir Eden 'with his practical commonsense, 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, cheap, and easy communication with its only existing sanatorium.'¹¹³

Table 1.5: Expansion of East Bengal Railways.

Eastern Bengal Railway (B.G.)		
Main Line (Eastern Section)	Date of opening	Miles
Calcutta to Ranaghat	29-09-1862	45 ^{1/4}
Ranaghat to Jagati Jn.	15-11-1862	62
Jagati Jn. To Goalundo	01-01-1871	45
Northern Bengal State Railway Poradaha Branch (B.G.)		
Poradaha (1023/4 miles from Calcutta) to Damukdiya Opposite Sara, on the right bank of Ganges	19-01-1878	12
Main Line (M.G.)		
Sara to Atrai	19-01-1878	38 ^{1/3}
Atrai to Jalpaiguri	28-08-1877	134 ^{1/4}
Jalpaiguri to Siliguri (for day traffic for goods)	10-06-1878	23
For general traffic	01-11-1878	

Source: Bhandari, R.R. 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. *National Rail Museum Publication*, New Delhi, 2000.

One interesting fact about this Railway has been mentioned by Sri Himanshu Chakraborty that during these days North Bengal suffered from severe food Shortage. The labourers were employed to construct the line and it was considered as the Relief operation for the starving people. In other words, a large part of the Railway line was laid as a part of a

¹¹² Newman, W. *Newman's Guide to Darjeeling & its Surroundings*. Newman And Co., Calcutta, 1900, p. 4.

¹¹³ Ibid.

programme for the relief operation.¹¹⁴ Siliguri became a very important Junction for going south (namely Calcutta) to the North (namely Darjeeling) and east (namely Duars and Assam). Siliguri became a terminus for both the Railway and Road Journey.

2.2. The Making of the Roadways in and around Siliguri during Colonial Period.

Before 1835 A.D. means of communication was in a very rudimentary stage and the pioneers who visited Darjeeling after an arduous journey from Calcutta, had to pass a stretch of woodland infested with wild animals and deadly insects formed the present heart-land of Siliguri. "Guide to Darjeeling" published in 1838 points out 98 hours of journey from Calcutta. This arduous journey is described by Hooker, who in 1848 travelled from Karagola Ghat on the Ganges to the foothills.

The Making of Hill Cart Road and Other Roads

The British wanted to establish communication between Darjeeling and plains. This endeavour took shape between 1839 and 1842 when Lord Napier of Magdala, a Lieutenant in the engineers, was deputed to construct a road from Siliguri to Darjeeling.¹¹⁵

O'Malley says that this road was laid in the midst of very thick forests and also along steep ridges of 40 miles. The project was built at an expenditure of eight hundred thousand rupees.¹¹⁶ Heavy cost of transporting the military stores finally led to the construction of 'Cart Road'. The work began in 1860 and the whole road was completed by 1869.¹¹⁷ This Siliguri-Darjeeling Road approximately 25 feet in width was completed at the cost of £6,000 per mile.¹¹⁸ O'Malley points out that the most important road in the district was the 'Cart Road' from Siliguri to Darjeeling. The road was approximately 49 mile and also had a running ruling

¹¹⁴Chakraborty, H. *The History of Railways of Jalpaiguri*. District Centenary Souvenir, Jalpaiguri, 1970, pp. 349-369

¹¹⁵ O'Malley. *Op.Cit.*, reprint 1999, p. 132.

¹¹⁶ Dozey, E.C. *Darjeeling: Past and Present*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 3

¹¹⁷ Banerji, A.K, et al. *Darjeeling District Gazetteer*, 1980, p 289.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 289.

gradient of 1 in 31. It was believed by O' Malley to be one of the best mountain roads in India. Among many reasons behind the construction of this Cart road, one of them was to replace the old military road built by Lord Napier of Magdala. The road was opened to Traffic in 1869. Many hindrances came while constructing this road and the most obnoxious impediment was the fearful female anopheles mosquitoes, the carrier of plasmodium parasites.

Other than Hill Cart Road there were different pockets connecting Siliguri. The most important was Siliguri - Sevoke Road. Siliguri sevoke road was an extension of Teesta Valley Road that connected Sevoke to Teesta bridge and thus it continued to Sikkim via Rango and then to Kalingpong and Tibet by Rishi Road. Thus at the southern extremity of this road is the Valley Road where we find an extension leading from sevoke to Siliguri, a distance of 12 miles. O'Malley writes that other important roads within the vicinity of Siliguri were those of Siliguri to Naxalbari (13 miles), Kurseong to Matigara via Pankhabari (22 1/2 miles), Tirihan to Bagdogra (6 miles), Naxalbari to Garidhura (11 miles).

The Siliguri Naxalbari road passed through Matigara after it left the Darjeeling Hill Cart Road which was just over a mile from Siliguri. It is measured to be 13 miles long and Dash remarks that it was fit for heavy traffic approximately 5 tons Laden at all seasons round the Year.¹¹⁹ The Provincial Government maintained three roads north of Siliguri, these were the Matigara Kurseong Road, the Trihan Naxalbari road and Trihan Bagdogra Road. These roads were 22.5, 8.5 and 5 miles long respectively.¹²⁰ The last two carried traffic up to 5 tons laden weight yearly and were metalled throughout. The Matigara Kurseong road took 5 ton traffic for the first 9 miles and was usable for the lighter traffic up to Pankhabari. Another important road maintained by the District Board was the road from Bagdogra to Ghughijhora, which was 8.31 miles and Naxalbari to Khoribari (10.93 miles). These roads were metalled and bridged throughout. Four and a half miles of route from Khoribari to Phansidewa of total length 12.5

¹¹⁹ Dash, A.J. *Op.Cit.*, 1947, p. 183

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

miles was metalled. The road from Matigara to Phansidewa is 8.25 miles and from Naxalbari to Ambari was unmetalled.

Three local District Boards played an important part in the maintenance of the roads. These local boards were: the Sadar Kurseong Local Board, the Siliguri Local Board boards which controlled 116 miles of Terai roads and the Kalingpong Local Board..

Table 1.6: Showing the Roads maintained by the Public Work Department.¹²¹

From	To	Length
Siliguri	Sivoke	12 miles / 19.3 km.
Sukna	Adalpur	3 miles 321 ft. / 4.9 km.
Matigara	Darjeeling Hill Cart Road	2 miles 355 ft. / 3.3 km.
Station Yard Road, Siliguri		540 ft / 162 metres.
Siliguri Bazar Road		1,464 ft. / 439.2 metres
Siliguri Feeder Road		4000 ft. / 1200 metres.
New Kutchery Road, Siliguri		1792 ft. / 537.6 metres.
Matigara	Naxalbari	11 miles 3090 ft./ 18.6 km.
Ganges-Darjeeling Road (portion)		2miles 331ft. / 3.3 km.
Tirihauna	Naxalbari	8 miles 2710 ft 9 / 13.7 Km.
Tirihauna	Bagdogra	5 miles 4412 ft / 9.4 km.
Panighata	Kadama	3 Miles 720 ft. / 5 km.
Matigara to Kurseong via Pankhabari (portion)		13 miles 2640 ft / 21.7 km
Panighata	Dubhijhora	2 miles 2325 ft. / 3.9km.

Source: Mitra, J.C. *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operation in the Darjeeling Terai (1919-1925)*. Calcutta, 1927.

Table 1.7: Showing the Roads Maintained by the District Board, Darjeeling.¹²²

Road No.	From	To	Length
32	Naxalbari	Debiganj via Kharibari	14 miles
33	Khaprail	Hill Cart Road	2 miles 4 fur (4.0 km.)
34A	Garidhura	Junction of Bagdogra-Tirihana Road with Naxalbari Tirihana Road	2 miles 6 fir. 87 yds.
35	Old Siliguri	Rangapani	3 miles 3fur.(5.4 km.)

¹²¹ Mitra, J.C. *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operation in the Darjeeling Terai (1919-1925)*. Calcutta, 1927.

¹²² Ibid.

36	Rangapani	Goaltuli	5 miles (8.1 km.)
37	Matigara	Salbari	2 miles 1 fur. (3.4 km.)
38	Junction with Road no. 32(Kharibari)	Adhikari	2 miles (3.2 km.)
39	Hill Cart Road	Shahpur T.E.	2 miles (3.2 km.)
39A	Madnaguri Jote (Hill Cart Road)	Bhaismari	6 miles 1 fur. (9.9 km)
40	Dumriguri Inspection Bungalow	Phansidewa via Bagdogra hat and Harlia Bridge	8 miles 5 fur. (13.9 km.)
41	Bagdogra	Ghugujhora	7 miles (11.3 km.)
42	Tepu	Junction with Road No. 28	2 miles (3.2 km.)
43	Manjwa	Turibari	3 miles (4.8 km.)
44	Khaprail	Tirihana	4 miles (6.4 km.)
45	Hansquar	Ghugujhora	3 miles (4.8 km.)
46	Hansquar	Chaupukhuria	4 miles (6.4 km.)
47A	Junction with Road No. 41	Khoribari upto Road No. 29 in Bandarjuhli	4 miles 6 fur. 134yds. (7.8 km.)
48	Matigara-Siliguri Road near Panchanai Bridge	Champasari Forest Depot via Bhaismari	6 miles (9.7 km.)
49	Atal	Cambrian	6 miles (9.7 km.)
50	Matigara-Naxalbari Road	Bagdogra-Atal Road	1 mile 2 fur. 112 yds. (2.1 km)
51	Tirihana	Panighata via Old Terai	2 miles (3.2 km.)
52	Road No. 41	Road No. 47 via Mudi Bazar Chenga Bridge and Pahargumia	4 miles 2 fur. 112 yds.(6.9 km.)
52A	Panighata Bridge	Longview	2 miles 100 yds. (3.3 km.)
47	Atal	Junction with Road No. 31 (Narijote), Cross Roads, bye roads and ordinary Village roads (Terai)	6 miles 4 fur. 30 yds (10.5 km.)
1	Hill Cart Road	Damragram	2 miles (3.2 km.)
2	Subtiguri	Garidhura via Tarabari	2 miles (3.2 km.)
3	Old Siliguri	Matigara Hat	2 miles 1 fur. (3.4 km.)
4	Mudi Bazar	Bagdogra Thakurganj	(Merged with road no. 52)

Source: Mitra, J.C. *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operation in the Darjeeling Terai (1919-1925)*. Calcutta, 1927.

Table 1.8: Showing List of Roads under the Siliguri Local Board

ROAD NO.	FROM	TO	LENGTH
27	Matigara (Matigara-Naxalbari Road)	Phansidewa	8 miles 4fur. 3 yds. (13.7 km.)

28	Bagdogra	Atal	4 miles 5 fur. 83 yds. (7.5 km.)
29	Kharibari	Phansidewa	12 miles 4 fur. (20.1 km)
30	Garidhura	Panighata	3
30A	Panighata	Mechi	5 8 miles (12.9 km.)
31	Naxalbari	Ambari(Thakurganj)	8 miles 4 fur. (13.7 km.)

Source: Mitra, J.C. *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operation in the Darjeeling Terai (1919-1925)*. Calcutta, 1927.

Road communication was considered to be very important in this area by the government and army and because of this reason various authorities controlled the roads of Siliguri in particular and the Darjeeling district as a whole. The Central Public Work Department controlled a portion of certain major roads and some other important thoroughfares well maintained by the Public Works Department of the State Government. The final report on the Survey and Settlement Operation (1919-1925) in the Darjeeling made the following points:

“The Cart Road, the Siliguri-Sevoke road, the Siliguri-Naxalbari Road and the Naxalbari-Gayabari road were metalled and maintained by the Public Work Department. The kutcha road from Matigara to Phansidewa needs immediate improvement because of the traffic and the metallic road of the Bagdogra Thakurganj road is a chronic necessity. The intention of the District Board should be the gradual metalling of all branch and feeder roads.”¹²³

The Jayaka Committee and the Kings Plan

Jogesh Chandra Mitra report gives a detailed account on the cost of construction and maintenance of roads.¹²⁴ By the end of 1920 the bridging techniques in the hills changed considerably. Suspension bridges were taken care of and bamboos were replaced with steel wires for durability. The strategic location of the region increased the importance of roads and it was never regarded as only of local importance. The maintenance of these roads was very expensive, so expensive that the Provincial Government placed many roads for maintenance under Local Bodies and Forest Departments. In the year 1928, the Road Development

¹²³ Ibid., p. 3

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 4

Committee chaired by M. R. Jayaka recommended for a change in the road strategy of the government. In response to an appeal made by the Jayaka Committee a Central Road Fund was established.

A.J. King, special officer for Road Development, proposed minor improvements in technical road making issues in 1934. The King Plan envisaged the provision of Feeder roads as an integral part of the communication system. He found that by making some changes to road surfaces. The report of 1938 stated that there were 109.5 miles of Railways and 3179 miles of metalled and un-metalled roads in the Darjeeling district.¹²⁵

Table 1.9: Showing the mileage of the roads under each administrative authority and the average annual expenditure of them were given as follows.¹²⁶

Authority responsible for upkeep	Metalled Roads			Unmetalled Roads		
	Mileage on 31/3/1937	Annual expenditure per mile (In Rs.)	Average annual expenditure per mile (In Rs.)	Mileage on 31/3/1937	Annual expenditure per mile (In Rs.)	Average annual expenditure per mile (In Rs.)
Government roads maintained by Communications & Works Department	244.30	3,64,611	1,492	108	8,107	76
District roads maintained directly by District Board & Sub-Divisional roads maintained by Local Boards working under the District Board	21.17	8,731	412	344	33,521	98
Urban roads maintained by	25.20	(Not Available)	..	14	(Not Available)	..

¹²⁵ King, A.J. *Comprehensive Report on Road Development Projects in Bengal, Vol. VI., Rajshahi Division, Darjeeling District.* Calcutta, 1938, p. 116.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

municipalities		e))	
Village roads maintained by Union Boards	2,423	28,880	12
Total	2890.67	3,73,342	..	2,889	70,598	..

Source: Mitra, J.C. *Op.Cit.*

As per the report of the king the width of Hill Road varied from 12th to 25th feet and the usual being 16 feet between the parapet and the rain. Mr. King drew a plan of 309 miles of improved roads in the district consisting 182 miles of prevailing metalled and 83 miles of current un-metalled and 44 miles of new road. This arrangement provided a mile of upgraded road and there was for every 3.92 square miles of a tree or every 1034 has a population serving 1091 square miles or 19.02 percent of total area. Only 118 square miles were left unreserved. This scheme provided for a direct road link between the district and sub-divisional/*thana* headquarters.

The Nagpur Road Plan

The emergencies of the Second World War necessitated a very quick build-up of the strategic roads. Meanwhile in 1940 -42, the Government of India had frozen the Central Road Fund giving way to the Nagpur Plan in 1943. The Nagpur plan envisaged the construction of three main categories of road National, Provincial and Local.

Table 1.10: Showing the length of the different categories of road scheduled to be built and the revised plan in Darjeeling district in West Bengal

Category of Roads	In Darjeeling	In West Bengal
National Highway	66 KM (41 miles)	953KM (592 miles)
Provincial Highway	171 KM	1718 KM (1067 miles)
Major District Roads	323 KM	4755 KM (2953 miles)
Other District Roads	NOT AVAILABLE	4540 KM (2820 miles)
Village Roads	NOT AVAILABLE	9417 KM (5849 miles)

Source: Mitra, J.C. *Op.Cit.*

The Nagpur Road Plan was a landmark in the history of road development and for the first time an attempt was made to prepare a coordinated road development plan. The national

highway carried continuous road traffic across the states, the Provincial Road aided as the main arteries of trade, commerce. The District Roads were grouped into 'major' and 'other' and the village roads. The District Road branched off from National or State Highways lying within 2 to 5 miles of important villages. The village roads were the outer links connecting all rural settlements. The Recommendation of Nagpur Road Plan had a deep Impact on Kings Plan. Thus, came the provisions for village roads and considering the Railways complementary to the Highways was added

2.3. The Development of Tea Industry in Colonial Siliguri

Dr. Campbell in the beginning of the second half of the 19th century had started experiments with the Tea Plantation in Darjeeling. The success encouraged others to experiment with seeds distributed by the Government and this had a huge impact on Siliguri and adjoining areas. Government offered land to investors on favourable terms and by the end of 1866 there were 39 gardens in production with 10,000 acres under cultivation and an annual out turn of over 4,33,000 lbs of tea. In 1870 there were 56 gardens with 11,000 acres under cultivation employing 8,000 labourers and giving a crop of nearly 1,708,000 lbs. In the year 1910 the total area under tea leases was 123,853 acres of which 51,281 acres were under tea. In 1920 these areas had increased to 142,152 and 59,850 and in 1940 to 167,972 and 69,059. The area under tea rose to a maximum in 1948 when it was 63,227 acres; in that year the total area under lease was 165,680 acres. That is to say 258.75 square miles were under tea lease and 98.8 square miles under tea during 1948. The number of Tea gardens in Siliguri Sub-division at the time of independence was 51 in total shared by 27 gardens under Siliguri Thana, 11 gardens under Kharibari Thana and 13 gardens under Phansidewa Thana.¹²⁷ The labour force in the tea industry in 1870 was 8,000 and numbers employed, in 1921 was 44,279 and in 1940 it was 61,540. Actual population on Tea garden according to 1941 census was 1,46,508 and the Siliguri subdivision had a total labour force of 28,585 which included 13,867 workers under

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Siliguri Thana, Kharibari Thana had 5,999 and Phansedewa Thana had 8,719 workers as per census of 1941.

The British not only introduced tea in this area but for the first time in the history of India initiated “a scientific forest policy”. The successful introduction of tea plantations resulted in the clearing of large forests, necessitating the conservation of the remaining forest tract for ecological reasons. Accordingly the policy of “conservancy” was introduced in 1864. The British government noticed the danger of the reckless destruction of the forest reserves and consequently, the planning of “re-generation of trees” was given a high priority. A centre was opened at Sukna, near Siliguri for this purpose.

The introduction of forest policy and its headquarter at Sukna, near Siliguri opened up new possibilities for Siliguri Town.¹²⁸ With the locational advantage Siliguri and its suburb became an important centre of Timber selling. Before the Second World War a number of timber sawing mills on a small scale started. A Government owned mill was started in 1927 for the purpose “to break a ring of purchasers who were keeping down prices against Government and for the conversion of Second Grade Sal Log for which there was no market”¹²⁹. The description of this mill was given by Dash in 1942 is as follows:-

“The mill ran at a loss until it was remodelled in 1940. This resulted in an increase in daily output from 180 cubic feet in 1939 to 1000 cubic feet in 1944. Waste was reduced from 35 percent to 20 percent and since 1940 the mill has been working at a profit. It is a registered Factory under the Indian Factories Act and employs about 250 labourers of whom not more than 2 percent are hill men”. The two private mills, which Dash noted in Siliguri around 1940, were not registered. These mills had a circular saw for breakdown of round logs and 2 circular rip-saws. About 20 men are employed in each mill. Apart from these timber saving mills, there were plenty of saw yards at Siliguri, Naxalbari, Bagdogra and Sevoke.

¹²⁸ Dash. *op.cit.*, 1947, p. 196

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

The Second World War conditions brought a change in demand. Formerly, the demand for sawn sal was very high. But the war situation changed the demand pattern and there was a large demand for timber other than sal. With the growth of the Tea Industry the demand for plywood increased. Consequently, two small private factories started in this area from 1939 to 1945.

The Siliguri or Terai area was isolated for a long period of time. The place was malarious and people were unable to survive in the region. But with the growth of the tea industry the isolation was broken down. Great revolutionary Sri Satyen Majumdar who was brought captive in Siliguri town in that period wrote an auto-biography about Siliguri “town” of the 1920s. He says that Siliguri is a small town and nearly covered with forests on all sides. Whatever may be the direction of eyes, one can find nothing but green tall trees as if it is an island in the midst of green forests. There are streams out across Siliguri town here and there. The great “Paglajhora” (the “sad stream”) comes down to the plains and takes the name of “Mahananda”. Balason River is nearby and becomes ferocious during the monsoons. Apart from Balason and Mahananda there are small rivers with beautiful names like Rukmini and Panchandedi. During the winter one cannot imagine what those rivers became during the monsoon and the rainy season. In fact during the heavy rains Siliguri looks like a rain water loathed island.”¹³⁰ But the town becomes busy during the noon only. This is because the train from Calcutta arrives at that time. Many Europeans get down in Siliguri to take the toy-train to Darjeeling. Normally they go by first class. The Indians used to travel by second and third class. It took some time to change trains. and hawkers and vendors become very active at that time. Normally fish are brought through this train and Bengali *babus* come with their basket to buy fish. The fisherman may leave this place as soon as the next train starts and so there was a scramble to buy fish. The buying, selling, the bargainings, the hawkers, the vendors, the

¹³⁰ Majumdar, S. *Amar Biplab Gijinasa*. Manisha Press, 1973, pp. 13-27.

passengers of the train keep the place known as Siliguri busy and active at least for some time.¹³¹

Thus we see that jungles, hills, rivers, roads, railways, *haats* and almost everything in and around Siliguri participated in the growth and development of Siliguri. A mere village ‘unhygienic and , full of jungles and mosquitoes’, dreaded by Europeans, marauded by outlawed sanyasis, contested by Bhutanese and Kooch Rajas in the second half of the 19th century emerged as one of the largest and most developed towns of North Bengal. The main question arises, What would have been the fate of Siliguri, had General Lloyd and Dr. Chapman not decided to develop Darjeeling town into a sanatorium? What would be the urban discourse had Campbell not introduced the Tea industry in the region? Siliguri, a densely forested marshy land by virtue of her geographical location became a terminus traversed by roads leading to Kalimpong, Sikkim, and narrow gauge rail line along with cart road to Darjeeling. The history of the making of Darjeeling town into a sanatorium brought a new dawn for Siliguri. It seemed that though the torch of development was lit in the Darjeeling Hills by the Britishers, the light fell on the lap of Siliguri and paved a way for a new making of history. Siliguri romance with urbanisation had just begun. The journey to understand and comprehend the agencies of the historical processes in the making of this metropolis continues in the next chapter where population growth and the changing landscape of Siliguri are discussed.

¹³¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER: 2

POPULATION GROWTH AND CHANGING SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

In continuation to the previous chapter where the colonial aspect was vividly described, this chapter discusses the trends in population growth, the spatial distribution and the changing landscapes of Siliguri. What were the driving forces that led to expansion of population in Siliguri? What is the place of Siliguri in context to population index, density and urban concentration when compared to other nearby regions of North Bengal? How migration shaped the urban discourse of Siliguri and became an important vehicle for urban process and social mobility for Siliguri? This chapter tries to offer answers to some of these important queries in the process of understanding the city of Siliguri.

At the turn of the 20th century Siliguri was just a village with a population of 784 heads and there were only two towns in the region: Darjeeling and Kurseong.¹³² This village which grew up and expanded to be a metropolitan city, says Ghosh, was called Saktigarh or popularly known as ‘puratan Siliguri’.¹³³ However, Ashok Bhattacharya¹³⁴ recalls that the original town was the area known as Hakim Para near the Siliguri town railway station and it started expanding towards north and north east towards Ashram Para. In 1931, Siliguri was made a non-municipal town and received recognition as a municipal town in 1951. The population in the corresponding year was 32,000 only and the total area was 15.54 sq. km. Till 1994, Siliguri Municipality had only 30 wards under it but in 1994, after the announcement of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 17 new wards were added to its jurisdiction. The total area was also

¹³² O’ Malley writing in 1907 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 account for only 21393 persons. See, O’Malley. *Op.cit.*, reprint 2001, p. 189

¹³³ Presently it is located near the Bardaman road under Rajganj police station, Jalpaiguri District. Also see Chattopadhyay, *Puratan siliguri*, 2010.

¹³⁴ Interview with Ashok Bhattacharya, Mayor of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, dated: 23rd April, 2018.

increased from 15.54 sq km to 41.9 sq km. It should be noted that the Siliguri Municipal Corporation officially caters to two districts – Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling (as depicted in the map:3.2 below), 14 out of total 47 wards of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation fall under Jalpaiguri district.

Population Growth Trends of Siliguri City

The population of Siliguri increased even though it had no industrial fundamentals. In 1907 the population of Siliguri was only 784. In the year 1931 it got an urban status and the population increased to 6,067. The next decade saw a population growth of 10,487, a decadal variation of 4,420 which was 72.85%. With the establishment of Siliguri municipality in 1949, we see that the census report of the year 1951 witnesses 209.72% of increased decadal variation with a population of 32,480. We see that the growth of the town gained momentum just after independence of India. Firstly, there were thousands of refugees pouring in from East Pakistan after the partition. The census report of the year 1961 shows the population of 65,471, the decadal variation was 32,991 and the percentage decadal variation was 101.57%. Similarly the census report of the year 1971 shows the population of 97,484, the decadal variation was 32,013 and the percentage decadal variation was 48.98%.. The census report of the year 1981 and 1991 shows the population of 1,54,378 and 2.16950, the decadal variation was 56,894 and 62,572 respectively and the percentage decadal variation was 58.36% and 40.53%. The census report of 2001 reflects a huge decadal growth rate of 117% with a population of 472,374 This was mainly because of the up gradation of Siliguri from municipality to Corporation in 1994 and inclusion of the peripheral areas. Till the year 1994, Siliguri Municipality had 30 wards under it. Post declarations of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 17 new wards were added to the existing 30 wards.

Map 1: The Growth of Siliguri since 1900



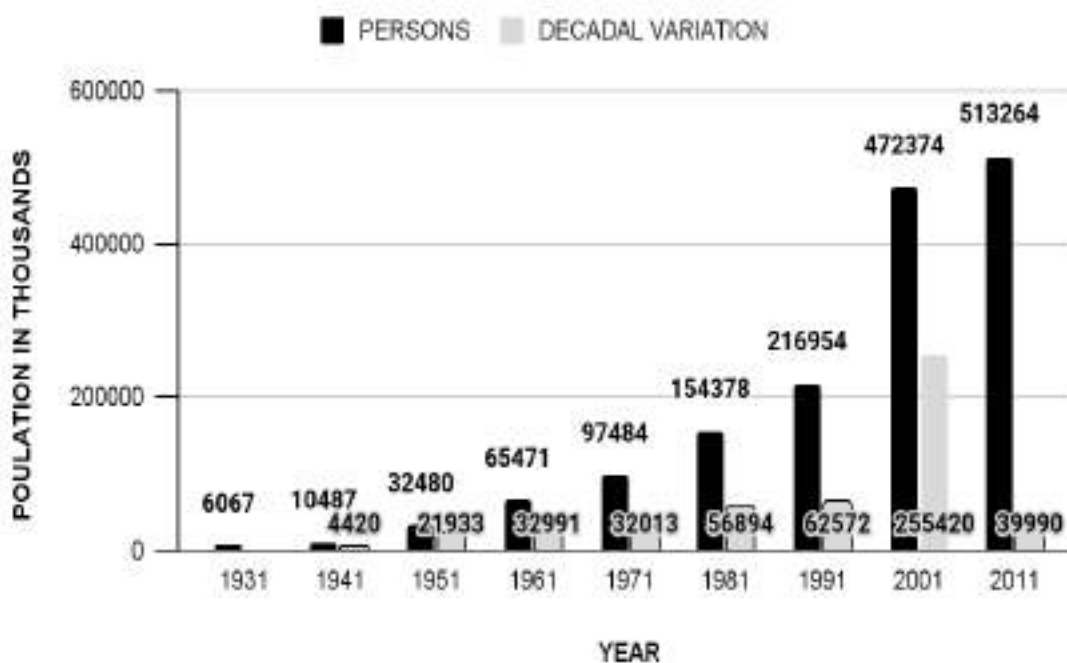
Source: Google (Image), SMC & CRIS

Map 2: The Administrative Boundary of SMC in Darjeeling District and Jalpaiguri District



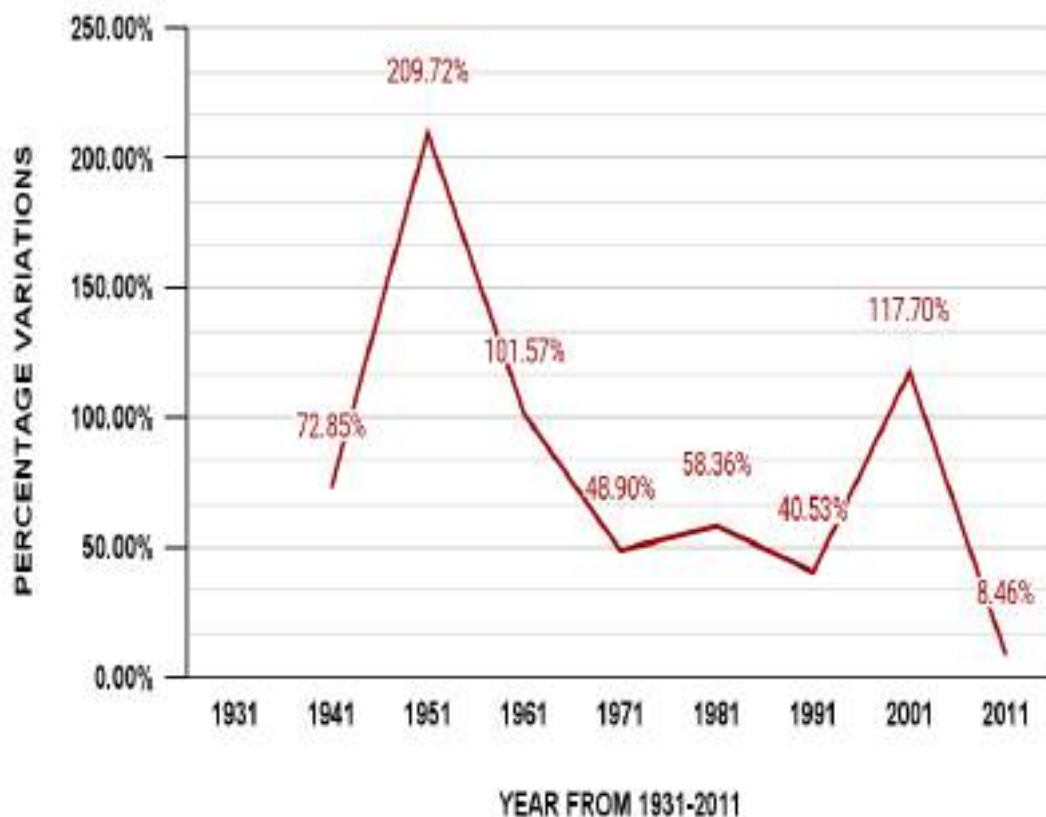
Source: Siliguri CMP, 2011

Graph 1: Population and decadal variation of Siliguri Municipal Corporation



Source: Computed by the author from Data provided by Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

Graph 2: Percentage decadal variation of Siliguri Municipal Corporation



Source: Computed by the author from Data provided by Siliguri Municipal Corporation

To understand the demographic scenario of Siliguri it is apparent to briefly understand the urban position of Siliguri. A comparative study of urban growth rate in West Bengal, Darjeeling District and Siliguri further confirms the idea about the abnormal rate of growth of Siliguri.

Table 2.1: The Urban growth rate of India, WB and Siliguri Municipal Corporation

CENSUS YEAR	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
INDIA URBAN	31.97	41.38	26.42	38.28	46.02	36.19	31.46	31.87
WEST BENGAL URBAN	63.69	32.52	35.97	28.41	31.73	29.49	20.2	29.72
SMC	72.85	209.72	101.57	48.9	58.36	40.53	117.73	8.66

Source: Census of India

Graph 3: urban growth percentage of India Urban, West Bengal Urban and Siliguri Municipal Corporation



Source: Census data.

As per details from Census 2011, West Bengal has a population of 9.13 crores, which marks an increase from the figure of 8.02 crores in 2001 census. The total population of West Bengal as per the 2011 Census is 91,276,115 of which males and females number 46,809,027 and 44,467,088 respectively. The total population progress in the decade was 13.84 percent but in the previous decade it was 17.84 percent.¹³⁵ Out of the entire population of West Bengal, around 31.87 percent live in urban areas.¹³⁶ The population growth rate documented for this decade (2001-2011) was 29.72% in the urban areas. These urban areas are spread across 19 districts of the state.

¹³⁵ In 2001, the total population was 80,176,197 among which males were 41,465,985 and females 38,710,212. See Census, 2011

¹³⁶ The total population of the urban areas of West Bengal state was 2,90,93,002. See Census, 2011

Table 2.2: Total Urban Population and its Percentage of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling District.

S.No.	Area	Population (Million)	Percentage	Population (Million)	Percentage
1.	WEST BENGAL	91.28	100	29.09	31.87
2.	JALPAIGURI DIST	3.87	4.24	1.06	27.37
3.	DARJEELING DIST	1.85	2.02	0.73	39.42

Source: Census of West Bengal, 2011.

Jalpaiguri district has a population of 38,72,846¹³⁷ and a population density of 622 inhabitants per square kilometre. Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 13.87%. Jalpaiguri has 27.37% urban population from the total population of the district. Jalpaiguri district has 4.24% of West Bengal's total population.

In comparison to Jalpaiguri District, Darjeeling district has 2.02% of West Bengal's population. The urban population of the Darjeeling district is 7.27 lakhs which is 39.42% of the total population of the district and 2.02% of the total urban population of West Bengal.

Siliguri is a fast-growing city and according to Census 2011, the population of the city was 5.13 lakhs. The population of SMC which falls in the Darjeeling district accounted for 0.32% of the total state's population and the SMC population which falls in the Jalpaiguri district accounted for 0.24% of the total state's population. SMC population which falls in the Darjeeling district, accounts for 15.93% of the total Darjeeling population and SMC population which falls in the Jalpaiguri district accounts for 5.53% of total Jalpaiguri's population. SMC's population accounts for 1.01% of the urban population of the state in Darjeeling district and 0.75% of the urban population in Jalpaiguri district. The comparison of Siliguri city's population is given in Table below:

¹³⁷ This gives it a ranking of 66th in India (out of a total of 640).

Table 2.3: Comparative Population of Siliguri City, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri as per 2011 Census.

Indicator	Total population in lakh	Rural population	Urban Population	% of urban population w.r.t. Total population	Urban population comparison	Total population comparison
WEST BENGAL	912.8	621.8	290.9	31.9%	1.0%	0.3%
DARJEELING DIST	18.5	11.2	7.3	39.4%	40.4%	15.9%
SILIGURI CITY IN DARJEELING DIST	2.9	-	2.9	100%	100%	100%
WEST BENGAL STATE	912.8	621.8	290.9	31.9%	1.0%	0.3%
JALPAIGURI DIST	38.7	28.1	10.6	27.4%	20.6%	5.6%
SILIGURI CITY IN JALPAIGURI DIST	2.2	-	2.2	100%	100%	100%

Source: Census of West Bengal, 2011

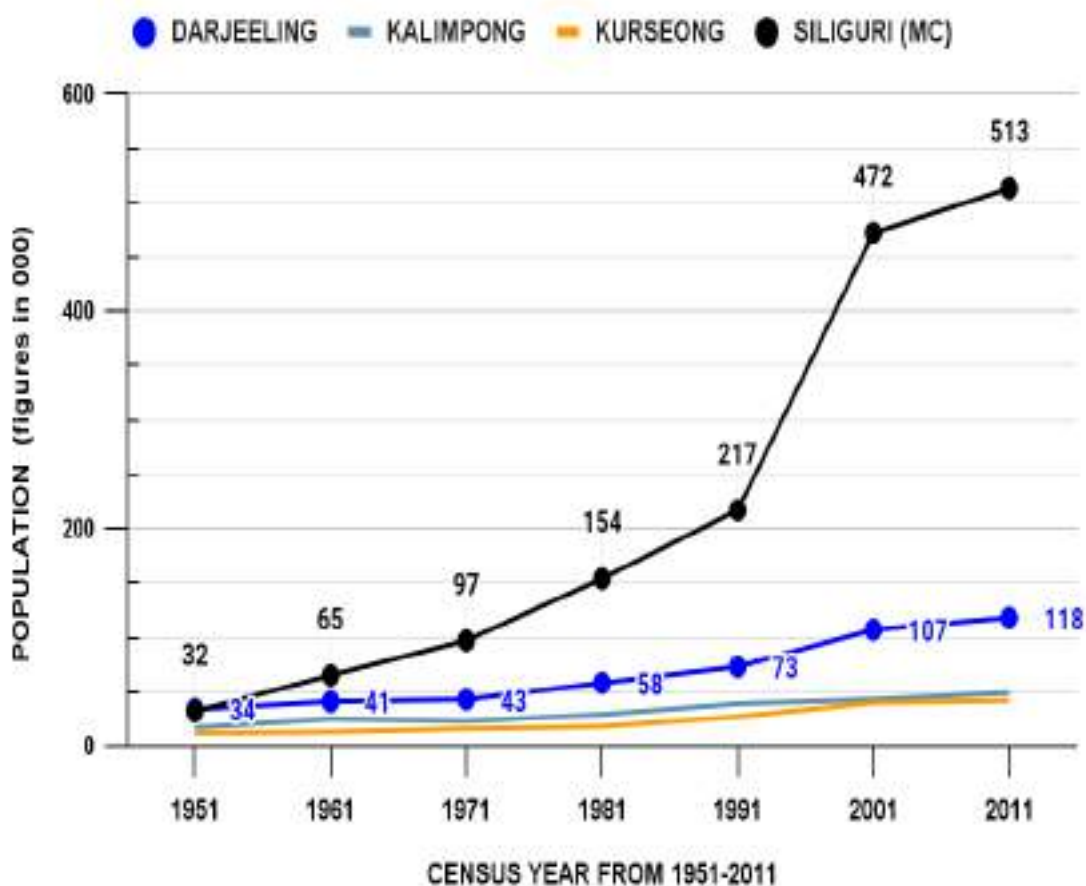
Share of Population of SMC to the Total Urban Population of the District

Siliguri showed consistently a high growth rate of population over the 60 years of its existence. From 1951 onwards, the demography of Siliguri and its adjoining areas changed rapidly due to the influx of refugees from the neighbouring districts, states and other countries. In absolute terms, the population of four Municipal towns in Darjeeling district has increased rapidly but the increase in population of Siliguri Municipal Corporation has reached sky high over the period between 1951 and 2011. According to census data, the population of Siliguri Municipal Corporation has increased by 15 times between 1951-2001, followed 3 times each by Darjeeling and Kurseong and Kalimpong by about 2.5 times. According to Census 2001, among the four municipal towns in Darjeeling district, the population of SMC was about 4 times higher

than the Darjeeling Municipality, 11 times higher than the Kalimpong Municipality and 12 times higher than the Kurseong Municipality.

From Table below it has also been observed that out of four municipal areas and the urban Darjeeling district, the SMC has recorded the highest relative increase in population during all the decades. The highest relative increase has taken place (117.51 percent) during 1991-2001, partly due to reclassification of the municipal area among other reasons, followed by (103.13 percent) in 1951-61, possibly because of huge immigration due to partition of India in 1947, 58.76 percent in 1971-81, primarily due to further immigration during and after Bangladesh war of liberation in 1971, and between 1981-91, the relative increase in population was the lowest (40.91 percent).

Graph 4: Population of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri Municipal Corporation



Source: Census data Computed by the author.

Table 2.4: Urban Population and its share to the Total Population in the District

	Total Population ('000)							Share of Population to the District's Total Urban Municipal Population.					
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
DARJEELING	34	41	43	58	73	107	118	35.5	28.1	23.7	20.4	18.4	20.6
KALIMPONG	17	25	23	29	39	43	49	17.6	17.3	13	10.2	9.8	8.26
KURSEONG	12	13	16	18	27	40	42	12.4	9.27	9.11	6.38	6.7	7.69
SILIGURI (MC)	32	65	97	154	Ok	472	513	12.4	45.2	54	54.7	54.7	90.7

Source: Compiled and computed by the author.¹³⁸

From Table above, it is clear that the share of population of SMC to the total urban Population of the district was comparatively higher than that of the share of all other Municipalities in the district from the period of 1951-2001, except 1951, when the share of population in Darjeeling Municipality to the district's total urban population was higher than the share of population in SMC. Siliguri municipal town accounts for not only the largest share of urban population among the towns of Darjeeling district but accommodating more than half the total urban population of the district since 1971. From the above table, it is also observed that the share of population has reduced substantially in almost all the municipal towns/cities except SMC during the period of 1951-1981. Between 1981 and 2001, the share of population increased marginally in Darjeeling and Kurseong Municipality. On the other hand, in SMC, the share of population to the district's total urban population has increased significantly since 1951. As mentioned earlier, it has been noted that SMC has two parts; part-I belonging to Darjeeling district with 54.69 percent population to the total urban population of Darjeeling district and part-II belonging to Jalpaiguri district with 30.94 percent population in SMC belongs to

¹³⁸ See Mitra et al (1990): "Population and Area of Cities Towns and Urban Agglomerations 1872-1971" ICSSR, *District's Census Handbook* of 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 ((Village and Town Directory), Census of India- 2001, WB, Series-20, Vol.1, 3 Note: projected population based on the AGR of 1951- 2001. b Note: SMC has been considered in Darjeeling district because the smaller proportion of population belong to Jalpaiguri district.

Jalpaiguri district, hence SMC as a whole has been considered under Darjeeling district and that's why the share of population in SMC to the total population of Darjeeling district in 2001 shown the figure of 90.77 percent and as a result the total percentage of population in all the municipal areas has crossed 100 percent.

Density and Urban Concentration of SMC Compared To Other Municipalities of the District

In the study of density, urban concentration and annual growth rate of population of the municipal towns of Darjeeling district, it is found that the density of population of Siliguri Municipality area was substantially high over the decades. The alarming point is that the density of population in SMC was much higher than that of the density in all other Municipalities of the district and the state since 1951. On the other hand, compared to other municipal corporations in the state, the density of population in SMC was significantly higher than that of the density in other municipal corporation in the state except Kolkata and Howrah Municipal Corporation, where the density of population were much higher than the density of Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 2001.

It can be deduced from the table below that among the four municipal towns in Darjeeling district, the index of concentration of urban population (a process in which an increasing proportion of urban population is concentrated in a particular area i.e. the higher the degree of urban concentration the higher is the inflow of migration in that area) in SMC was the highest over all the decades. Of the four municipal towns, in terms of urban concentration SMC alone accounted for around 55 percent of the total urban population between the periods of 1971 to 2001

From the table below it is also observed that during the periods of 1951-1991, the degree of urban concentration was declining in all the municipal towns, but in 2001, the index of concentration increased further in Darjeeling, Kurseong and SMCA. The annual growth rates of the four municipal towns in Darjeeling district showed that the growth rates were exceptionally

higher in SMC compared to the growth rates of all other municipal areas in the district for all the decades

Table 2.5: Density, Urban Concentration of Siliguri compared to other Municipalities of Darjeeling District.

MUNICIPALITY/ CORPORATIONS	DENSITY PER SQ. KM							INDEX OF CONCENTRATION. ¹³⁹				
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-01
DARJEELING	3164	3864	4065	5450	6912	10142	1135	-7.46	-4.32	-3.37	-1.97	2.15
KALIMPONG	1789	2892	2699	3328	4474	4954	5388	-0.29	-4.36	-2.76	-0.43	-1.54
KURSEONG	3020	2655	3252	3566	5299	7847	5407	-3.13	-0.16	-2073	0.37	0.93
SILIGURI(MC)	3485	4213	6273	9934	1396	11274	12250	10.89	8.83	0.62	0.06	35.99

Source: District's Census Handbook of 1971, 1981, 1991 (Village and Town Directory), Census of India-2001, 2011 WB, Series-20, Vol. I

. The annual growth rate of SMC during the period 1991-2001 was not only higher (8.09 percent than the north Bengal region (2.51 percent), rest of Bengal region (1.76 percent) and the state (1.83 percent) but was also higher than the growth rate of million plus cities like Greater Mumbai (2.70 percent), Kolkata (1.82 percent), Delhi (4.34 percent) and Chennai (1.92 percent).¹⁴⁰

Ward-Wise Population Distribution, Growth Rate and Density of SMC

Siliguri Municipality consisted of 30 wards till 1994 and 17 new wards were added to its jurisdiction after its declaration as Municipal Corporation. Subsequent to the conversion to Municipal Corporation in 1994, many of the original wards have decongested (wards 9-12 and 17) and wards in added areas have seen population increase in range of 75% to 270%. Population of 10 wards was above 100%. The decongestion of older wards has continued whereas the population increase in the added areas grew in the decade of 2001-2011. Hence, the

¹³⁹Index of urban concentration = share of urban population to the total urban population of the district in the current year- share of urban population to the total urban population of the district in the previous year

¹⁴⁰ National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) Report, 2008.

decadal population growth has reduced from 47.5% in 1991-2001 to 7.8% in 2001-2011. As depicted in Figure 18 the areas surrounding NJP station and Hill Cart Road continue to be the most congested parts of the city.

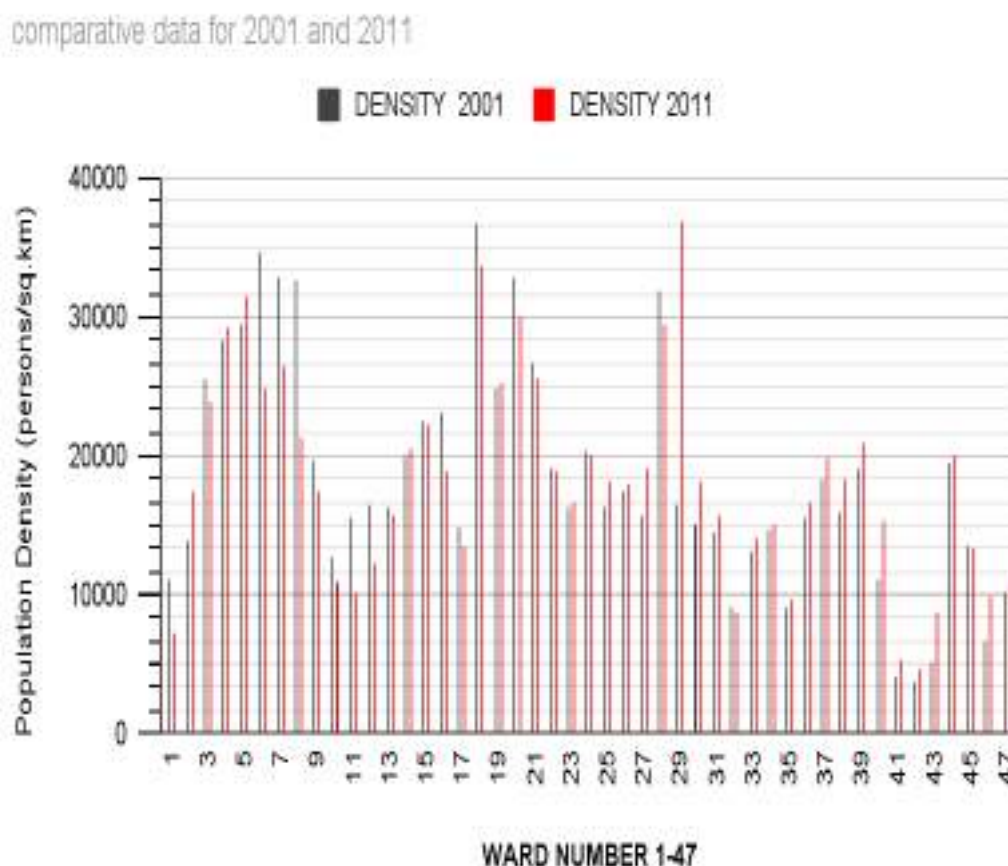
Table 2.6: Ward Wise Population, Growth Rate, Density & Area of Siliguri Municipal Corporation

WARD NUM	POPULATION 2001	POPULATION 2011	GROWTH RATE%	DENSITY 2001 IN SQ. KM	DENSITY 2011 IN SQ. KM	AREA OF WARD IN SQ. KM
1	17843	18928	-33.63%	11083	7356	1.61
2	11436	14327	25.28%	13946	17472	0.82
3	11753	10993	-6.47%	25550	23898	0.46
4	20028	20745	3.58%	28208	29218	0.71
5	15326	16369	6.81%	29473	31479	0.52
6	9023	6484	-28.14%	34704	24938	0.26
7	9889	7954	-19.57%	32963	26513	0.3
8	7843	5097	-35.01%	32679	21238	0.24
9	7306	6481	-11.29%	19746	17516	0.37
10	4720	4019	-14.85%	12757	10862	0.37
11	2933	1912	-34.81%	15437	10063	0.19
12	3772	2832	-24.92%	16400	12313	0.23
13	5070	4886	-3.63%	16355	15761	0.31
14	6407	6566	2.48%	20022	20519	0.32
15	8103	8002	-1.25%	22508	22228	0.36
16	5984	4922	-17.75%	23015	18931	0.26
17	5485	5029	-8.31%	14824	13592	0.37
18	8440	7774	-7.89%	36696	33800	0.23
19	3233	3286	1.64%	24869	25277	0.13
20	9869	9009	-8.71%	32897	30030	0.3
21	5875	5624	-4.27%	26705	25564	0.22
22	10293	10182	-1.08%	19061	18856	0.54
23	6205	6340	2.18%	16329	16684	0.38
24	11165	11045	-1.07%	20300	20082	0.55
25	8525	9459	10.96%	16394	18190	0.52
26	4873	5038	3.39%	17404	17993	0.28
27	5630	6892	22.42%	15639	19144	0.36
28	9578	8836	-7.75%	31927	29453	0.3
29	4783	10703	123.77%	16493	36907	0.29
30	6510	7819	20.11%	15140	18184	0.43
31	13404	14424	7.61%	14570	15678	0.92
32	11845	11334	-4.31%	9182	8786	1.29

33	13543	14518	7.20%	13149	14095	1.03
34	16560	16999	2.65%	14655	15043	1.13
35	14945	15820	5.85%	9113	9646	1.64
36	13653	14734	7.92%	15515	16743	0.88
37	14421	15690	8.80%	18254	19861	0.79
38	11235	13022	15.91%	15824	18341	0.71
39	11237	12353	9.93%	19046	20937	0.59
40	18164	25152	38.47%	11008	15244	1.65
41	12951	17351	33.97%	4022	5389	3.22
42	14711	19139	30.10%	3641	4737	4.04
43	9661	16339	69.12%	5112	8645	1.89
44	11522	11843	2.79%	19529	20073	0.59
45	7117	7001	-1.63%	13428	13209	0.53
46	21222	30665	44.50%	6780	9797	3.13
47	8363	9327	11.53%	10076	11237	0.83
SMC	472454	513264	8.64%	11276	12250	41.9

Source: Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

Graph 5: Ward wise population density of Siliguri Municipal Corporation.



Source: SMC data 2001 and 2011

As indicated in the Figure above, ward numbers 29, 18 and 5 are the densest wards in the city. These wards have reported density between 4,022 to 36,907 persons per sq.km. Further, 29 ward has the highest density of 36,907 persons per sq.km. Further, it has been observed that within the city there has been internal movement from the core city to peripheral areas due to congestion in the core city. Hence, wards in the core city experienced a negative population growth in the last decade.

The Making of a Migrant City

As we have seen in the above section, the population of the City has shot up at some particular phases. This has happened due to the high rate of migration from the neighbouring areas. The contemporary political developments will help one to understand the trend. It is the location of the city that has attracted the people from different neighbouring regions and ultimately made it a migrant city. Siliguri emerged as a migrants' town and the profile and the nature of migration have considerably changed throughout the years. It was a village at the start of the twentieth century with only a few thousand inhabitants and it was because of the influx of refugees and other migrants from across neighbouring countries and states that Siliguri turned into a second largest city in West Bengal only after Kolkata. The rapid increase in population of North Bengal - most importantly Siliguri- as per the notes of the Planning commission is "not due to the result of natural growth but because of significant migration".¹⁴¹ This part of the Chapter discusses who these migrants were and how Siliguri accommodated this bulk of migrants.

The bulk of migrants not only constituted the Bangladeshi refugees but also the persecuted Bengalis that migrated from North Eastern states like Assam etc., and the non-Bengali speaking population like Marwaris, Biharis and Nepalis that came from nearby areas in search of employment and new homes. This part of the Chapter also tries to establish the relation between migrants and corresponding rise in the number of slums in the city.

¹⁴¹ Manpower Journal, Institute of Applied Manpower Research publication, 2002, p. 10.

The first batches of migrants in the post-independence period were from East Bengal. Almost every district of West Bengal was equally affected by the exodus post partition of India. In most of the case the uprooted people from western parts of East Pakistan trekked hazardous paths to adjoining districts of West Bengal and their preferred destination was to resettle in and around Kolkata and undivided 24 Pargana. In the same way the oppressed, abused, victimised and frightened population of the northern part of East Bengal migrated to the neighbouring districts of North Bengal like Darjeeling, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur etc. Siliguri was in close proximity to Bangladesh as it shares a direct border with some parts of Bangladesh. This made it a favoured destination for the migrants. The Annual Report of the Department of Rehabilitation stated that during the 1st phase of refugee exodus (1946-1952) approximately 2.52 million of refugees came to West Bengal. The period from 1953 to 1956 was marked very important (see table 3.6). The table gives clear indication about the scale and magnitude of displacement during the post-partition period from the East to West. The unprecedented atrocious communal violence that broke out in 1946 at Noakhali of undivided Bengal just on the eve of independence on 15th August, 1947 was a Black day in the history of undivided India. Noakhali was the epicentre of communal riot and centering round Noakhali the flame of communal unrest scattered throughout Bengal

Table 2.7: -Migration from East Bengal to West Bengal since 15 October, 1946 to 15

January 1951(Outside Camps)

SL NO.	DISTRICT	Number of families one or more migrants	Number of persons including migrants	Total migrants since 15 October 1946 to 15 January,1951	Migrants since 31 December 1949 upto 15 January 1951
1	Burdwan	24616	106514	100805	39777
2	Birbhum	2655	12351	11524	5545
3	Bankura	2294	10223	9814	6017
4	Midnapur	6058	31797	28722	5581

5	Howrah	16827	92778	86444	49094
6	24 Pargana	100564	598833	541720	265966
7	Calcutta	76078	476759	415970	178799
9	Nadia	84913	411733	403804	267872
10	Murshidabad	14424	67763	65578	32170
11	Malda	14876	70201	68197	56806
12	Jalpaiguri	20596	107178	100675	65234
13	Darjeeling	3425	18910	17643	8757
14	Cooch Behar	22526	95890	94242	80350
15	TOTAL	429272	2308044	2143228	1200479

Source: Government of West Bengal, Report on the Sample Survey for Estimating the Socio-economic Characteristics of displaced persons migrating from East Pakistan to the state of West Bengal, 1951 (Calcutta: State Statistical Bureau)

. The Partition of India and achievement of independence paved the way for an inflow of refugees in different parts of India, especially in the territory of West Bengal which the uprooted individuals considered to be their happiest and peaceful abode of settlement after being migrated in the soil of West Bengal. Immediately after leaving behind their dear motherland, enormous valuable properties and near and dear relations; they started their journey of uncertainty in search of peace, safety and security.

The Government of West Bengal issued a declaration in 1948 stating that the cause of the then exodus was due to economic reasons. So the proper identification of a migrant as a refugee was really essential. According to Bengali public discourse the words *Udbastu* and *Bastuhara* carried two different connotations; *Bastu* was related to ancestral background whereas the word *udbastu* referred to the loss of home; as was in the case *bastuhara*. Both these implications not only indicated the shelterless condition but presented the pang and agony of Partition. When the displaced from East Pakistan were awarded with the right to franchise the displaced had switched over their allegiance to the Left in order to redress their grievances.

They voiced their demands with the slogan Amra kara? Bastuhara! (Who are we? Refugees!). In later periods those displaced persons continued to identify themselves as —refugees.¹⁴²

A migrant's recognition as a 'refugee' was the prime clause for the rehabilitation assistance in India. A 'refugee' or a —displaced person, was he who was originally the resident of East Pakistan and due to political turmoil, panic of civil disturbances and following the vivisection of India he was forced to quit his birth place.¹⁴³ But while acknowledging that fear of persecution or violence as a valid and justified reason for migration, the official definition was inaccurate regarding the preconditions of fear. It was also imprecise on the fact that to what extent it would be implemented by the Government for allotting refuge in India. The Indian government under the aforesaid circumstances took a tactical policy ignoring the complaints of everyday insecurity of East Bengal refugees and diverted attention to spectacular worse-case scenarios in Pakistan. The Government instantly declared that it was unaware of the fact that the Hindus of East Bengal had problems or it was totally ignorant of those incidents in East Pakistan which were responsible for the massive displacement.¹⁴⁴

Scenario post Bangladesh Independence:

Another major influx of Refugees came during the Liberation-War of Bangladesh. The Hindu population residing in Bangladesh tried to escape the mass killing by migrating to India. It is estimated that approximately 10 million East Bengali refugees entered India in the early months of the war and 1.5 million may have stayed back in India after Bangladesh became independent.

With the formation of the new country Bangladesh, a rapid migration of refugees came to Siliguri and started living a settled life. The illegal migrants from Bangladesh into Siliguri are mainly due to unregulated and unchecked porous international boundaries of India.

¹⁴² "East Bengali Refugee Narratives of Communal ... - Swadhinata Trust." <https://swadhinata.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/chatterjeeEastBengal-Refugee.pdf>. Accessed 21 Jun. 2021.

¹⁴³ Reports of the Ministry of Rehabilitation, 1957.

¹⁴⁴ *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, February 21, 1948.

Table 2.8: Refugee inflow from East Pakistan into India (Jan 1964-24 March 1971)

Year/states	West Bengal	Assam	Tripura	Total
1969	3713	2756	3290	9768
1970	232675	11905	6580	251160
1971	6622	968	686	8276

Source: Ministry of Supply and Rehabilitation, *Annual Report, 1977-78*

The Bangladeshi population in the Siliguri region can be seen in every nook and corner of Siliguri. It brought tremendous changes in every sphere of human life viz. social, political, economic, and cultural. Bangladeshi population mainly comprises of Hindu and Muslim population who came to territory of India so called Siliguri. It is a very difficult task to estimate the overall illegal migration. According to the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly, the reason behind the illegal migration is that due to pathetic and adverse conditions Bangladeshi people and most of them migrated to Indian territories. Actually it is to be said that mostly Hindus migrated to West Bengal to escape the atrocities of rape, murder and forced conversion to Islam. Later, a lot of Muslims started fleeing from Bangladesh to West Bengal because of extreme poverty.

The refugee inflow in the district of Darjeeling was mainly confined within the plain areas of Darjeeling district. Darjeeling district consisted of four subdivisions viz. Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong, Kalimpong and Siliguri. As the displaced persons hailed from East Pakistan, they preferred to settle in the plain areas of Siliguri subdivision. The displaced persons were not accustomed to accommodate themselves in the hilly regions of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kallingpong following an uncongenial climate of the hilly localities. Moreover, there was no industry except the tea industry. On the other hand Siliguri was a growing promising city of commercial importance. Up to 1958 there was no camp or home in Darjeeling district, only 2 Government colonies were there. Those two colonies were Mohitlal colony and Phansidewa.

Those two colonies comprised 3375 refugees. But the total number of refugees including outside camps and colonies in Darjeeling was 30,043.¹⁴⁵

In the course of time several recognized refugee colonies were set up at Siliguri. They were :Dabgram G.S. Colony(1), Dabgram G.S Colony (2), Chowpukaria G.S. colony, Matigara G.S.colony, Pati Colony, Baghajatin Colony, Mahakal pally, Adarsha Pally, Jyoti Nagar 2, Nutan Para, Adarsha Nagar, Subhas Nagar, Durgadas Colony, Prantik Colony, Shramik Nagar, B.B.D Colony, Das Colony, Debashis Colony, Dabgram Unnayan-1, Dabgram Unnayan -2, Deshbandhu colony and Udayan Unnayan etc. The following were the refugee colonies situated on the railway lands, viz. Prankrishna colony, Harizon-Masbur colony, Matangini colony-1, Matangini colony -2, Chittaranjan colony, Raja Rammohan Roy colony, Sraban nagar colony, Khudiram colony, Promod nagar colony, Swami nagar colony, Rana basti colony, Lichubagan colony, Porimol colony, Suryasen colony, Hawkers' corner market, Vivekanandanagar colony, Panchani colony, Sarbohara colony, Ambedkar colony, Jyoti nagar colony -1 and Durga nagar colony.¹⁴⁶ In Dainik Basumati, a report was published that the refugees who built huts and small cottages by the sides of the main roads of Siliguri town for running small business, the Government of India extended monetary assistance if Rs. Three lakhs were granted for the construction of new markets at Siliguri town. The Sliguri administration had to face adverse criticism regarding the construction of the markets.¹⁴⁷

Many colonies were established during this period in the city and surroundings. After the formation of Siliguri Municipal Corporation the native authority declared 154 residential areas as slums. For the migrated Bangladeshi inhabitants Siliguri had emerged as the largest urban centre of North Bengal. Thus the population of Siliguri town and its adjacent urban areas got boosted manifold and it brought new economic opportunities as well as a new scope of resettlement of the migrants.

¹⁴⁵ Hiranmoy Bandyopadhyay.Udbastu. Sahitya Samsad, 1970, p.29.

¹⁴⁶ Biren Chanda. *Gana andoloner prekhyapote Darjeeling jelar udstu andolon.* Swaranika, Sukanta Mancha, Cooch Behar 10-11 June, 2017

¹⁴⁷ *Dainik Basumati*, November 29, 1954

The refugee problem in the eastern region of the subcontinent is no doubt compounded by religion, language and ethnic factors, but the core of the conflict is not purely ethnic. The conflict is a form of negotiation between unitary national citizenship and ethnic plurality. We can see that refugees mainly came mostly in West Bengal and a large number of them came into North Bengal especially in Siliguri. The period of 1971-80 is known as the War Period. Mainly at that time the population of Siliguri saw a flow. So, it can be said that population growth in Siliguri was due to migration, refugee influx and also illegal immigrants that came from Bangladesh.

Table 2.9: Migration data of SMC based on original birth place (1989)

<u>Original Birth Place</u>	<u>Migration In Percentage</u>
1. Bangladesh	52
2. Siliguri Surroundings	01
3. Other Districts of W.B.	16
4. Other States	30
5. Other Countries	01

Source: Problem and Prospect of Development of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri Towns: A comparative study – Dr. Purnima Saha (1991).

The refugee influx helped iliguri town to grow in many ways. The Refugee Rehabilitation Department made donations to educational institutes in Siliguri like the Siliguri College and the Siliguri Commerce College. These donations were used for the construction of buildings. Land was also donated to Siliguri Girls Higher Secondary School for construction of the building because of ever-increasing demand for education from the new settlers. The State Government granted Rs. 1,50,000 to Siliguri Municipality for construction of roads, to make sanitary arrangements and also to arrange clean water supply in the refugee areas within the municipal limits.

The Refugee Rehabilitation Department also made arrangements to open a market and a 3-acre plot of land was arranged at an expense of Rs. 10,000,00 for the benefit of approximately 800 refugee traders and it was named as “Bidhan Market”. Out of total refugee colonies, half of the existing refugee colonies are situated within Siliguri town and those staying there were

mostly employed in urban occupations related to the tertiary sector of the economy. Two colonies were located in the semi-urban area whose inhabitants were also employed in the same sector. However the other two colonies located in rural areas were engaged in the primary sector.¹⁴⁸

The Coming of the Nepalis Settlers:

The dynamics of the Nepali migration is very different from the Bengali migration from Bangladesh. The socio-cultural uniformity and continuity between India and Nepal has made the Nepali entity much a part of the Indian psyche and ethos.¹⁴⁹ The ethnic cultural space shared by Nepal and Bangladesh with India intrudes the territorial space of the others.¹⁵⁰ As per the researches of Micheal Hutt on “being Nepali without Nepal”¹⁵¹ and the 1951 census report of A. Mitra on Darjeeling we see that only 19.96 per cent of the total existing population of 88,958 of the District spoke Nepali language. According to the census of 2011, there are about 10 lakh i.e 55% of the population speak Nepali language in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong district combined.¹⁵² It is very difficult to get the exact number of Nepalis living in Siliguri but today Nepalis live in every corner of Siliguri. The origin of Nepali diaspora in the region is very obscure. However, Nepalis do have a dominant presence in and around Siliguri. They came to Darjeeling when the tea plantations were established in the region by the Britishers in the 1800s. Many others came from Nepal to join the British army and they never returned back. After India’s independence, the Ghorkha forces became part of the Indian army and served the Gorkha Regiment and Assam rifles.

¹⁴⁸ Report of sub divisional officers of Siliguri as discussed in Mitra’s “*Siliguri Puraton*”.

¹⁴⁹ Behera, 2001, p iii.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Michael Hutt, “Being Nepali without Nepal: Reflections on a South Asian Diaspora.” In *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*. D. Gellner, J. PfaffCzarnecka, and J. Whelpton eds. Pp. 101-144. London and NY: Routledge, 1997, pp. 109.

¹⁵² "Siliguri-The Legitimate Claim since the Old Gorkha Days - The" 6 Jan. 2020, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/siliguri-the-legitimate-claim-since-the-old-gorkha-days/>. Accessed 10 Jul. 2020.

Many Nepalis have lived for generations in Siliguri. Initially there were two localities where the Nepalis mainly inhabited, Pradhan Nagar and Gurung Nagar (earlier Busty). Champasari area was also Nepali inhabited locality named after Champarani Rai. Gurung basti was named after Bhagbir Gurung. There follows a few examples of settlers of Siliguri.

Aniket Rai Bahadur, an old man in his early 60's was a resident of Puttabong Tea Garden in Darjeeling. His family members were employed in the Tea Garden and he remembers that they were extremely poor. He could not attend any school due to poverty even though Mount Hermon School was not very far from his home. He says that when he was only 22 years of age, he was married to a girl from the same tea garden. The economic condition got worse and he finally decided to leave the place and migrate to some other place for livelihood. He chooses Siliguri over Gangtok and Delhi thinking the city would accept him and ameliorate his worsening economic condition. Wow he owns his own momo-shop at Sabji Bazar *gali*, in Hongkong market in Siliguri. His economic condition has improved a lot. He has managed to buy a piece of land and live with his family. He has also sent his youngest son to Hyderabad to study computer engineering. Aniket Rai Bahadur loves the city very much. He showers bunches of praiseworthy words for Siliguri. It was because of this city, his second home he could improve his livelihood.¹⁵³ Ashok Lama is now a permanent employee at Siliguri IT Park. At 46, he owns a LIG flat at Uttorayan and sends his daughter to ST. Joseph school. He remembers his childhood when he used to live with his parents at Gangtok. An engineer by profession, he quickly understood that Gangtok was not the place where he could expand his dreams. He was a bright student at Sikkim Manipal Institute but he found Siliguri as the city of his dreams. He is proud to have migrated from Gangtok and says that Gangtok is not very far from Siliguri. He

¹⁵³ Interview with Aniket Rai Bahadur Rai resident of Parihavan Nagar, Siliguri , pin:734001 dated 15th June 2021

goes to his paternal house weekly to look after his parents. He proudly admits that the city has looked after his needs and dreams for the last 22 years.¹⁵⁴

That the Nepalis were present in Siliguri from the very early days, it can be inferred from the fact that the first MLA of Siliguri was George Mahbert Subba. He was also the first mayor of the town. The land over which Kanchenjunga Stadium was built was denoted by Tilak Bahadur Rai and the oldest Nepali School 'Krishnamaya Memorial School' was established in 1950. Now Nepalese live in almost every corner of Siliguri. They live in rented houses if they cannot own one. The Nepali people in Siliguri work as businessmen, who are obviously rich and well off but a huge number of young Nepalese are employed in malls and hospitals. They are seen as efficient salesmen and nurses and the big malls and hospitals readily give them employment. Among the common sights are Nepali women and men working as police constables in Siliguri. One can spot them at many checkpoints and traffic points. Nepalese are also employed as waiters in hotels, bars and restaurants.

Other than the Nepali migrants there were a huge number of Marwaris and Biharis who had migrated to Siliguri. According to a sample survey conducted in 1990's writes Samir Das, among the immigrants 60% came from Bangladesh, 17% were Biharis and approximately 8% were Marwaris. The remaining 15% immigrants came from south Bengal and Assam.¹⁵⁵ A detail of the different community migrants are discussed in the section below. The Biharis and Marwari immigrants preferred to stay within the heart of the city and refrained from settling in the outer fringes of the City. Both the Biharis and Marwari community controlled the commodity trade of the whole region and they also dominated the retail supply of all consumer goods.

Tibetan Refugees in Siliguri

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Ashok Lama, resident of LIG Flat, Uttorayon Township. Uttorayon is located along National Highway 31 near to Matigara. It is 9 km from the Bagdogra International Airport and is just 3 km from Siliguri City proper.

¹⁵⁵ Das, Samir Kumar, "Homeless in Homelands", Theme Articles, *Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 7, Issues III & IV, Autumn & Winter 2011, p. 80.

With the annexation of Tibet by China, the exodus of Tibetans Refugees to India began about the middle of 1951, which gained momentum and assumed fairly large proportions in 1956. But the main bulk of Tibetan refugees began arriving in India from 1959. The responsibility of rehabilitating the Tibetan refugees rested with an organisation called the Central Relief Committee, under the direct supervision of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India. The expenses of running the colonies and the Self-Help Centres for the Tibetan Refugees are borne jointly by the Central Relief Committee, Government of India and Central Tibetan Administration at Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh.

The Tibetan Refugees are settled mainly in the hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong and all the surrounding areas. They live either in the settlements or outside where they are known as scattered communities. But they maintain a close tie with Siliguri also. Many are settled in Salugara peat of Siliguri where Tibetan Buddhist monasteries belonging to different sects and medical centre etc have come up. The Dalai Lama Himself has visited this part of Siliguri and performed Kalachakra ceremony there. In winter many Tibetans set up shops in the Bhutia market of Siliguri where they sell woollen items.

Siliguri and the Pattern of In-Migration:

The analysis of the changing nature of in-migration and the rapid urban growth rate in Siliguri city can be studied from different sources like census of India, Migration Table (D series, 1991, 2001), Ministry of Urban Development report (2013), District statistical hand book, Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority Report, and others.

According to the census of India (1991), Siliguri city and adjoining area received 106,098 migrants from the period of 1981–1991. Table 1 shows that among the total migrants, 55.1 percent are male and 44.93 per cent are female migrants. But in the period of 1991–2001, Siliguri city and its adjoining area received 139,418 migrants. It means, around 33 per cent

migrants have increased from the period of 1991 to 2001. It is clear that Siliguri city has several pull factors for high rate of migration in North-East India.

Table 2.10: Total migration into Siliguri city, census period 1991–2001

Migration, 1991 Census			Migration, 2001 Census		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
106098	58434	47664	139418	73710	65708
In percent	55%	45%	In percent	53%	47%

Source: Census of India 1991, West Bengal and Migration Table: Migrants by Place of Last Residence to Cities by Reason for Migration, Census of India 2001, West Bengal and Migration Table: Migrants by Place of Last Residence, Duration of Residence and Reason for Migration.

Rendering to the place of last-residence in the migration data, Siliguri City has experienced a wide range of divergence. Almost half of the total migration into this city came from the different districts of West Bengal, which is generally called as migration from within the state (2001 census). This city received a huge number of migrants from its neighbour districts like Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Malda, Darjeeling and others because this region has a great opportunity to fill-up different kinds of job demands.

Among the total migrants, 53.09 per cent migrated from within the state, 32.39 per cent from other states in India and 14.78 per cent from other countries especially from Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan (Table below). Here, the most important thing is those persons who migrate from other states into India; among them, most of these migrants are male because most of them migrate in this city to search for a job.

Most of the urban areas have experienced a higher proportion of migrated people from rural areas. Siliguri has also seen a great bulk of migration from different regions; certain regions have experienced a higher concentration of rural out-migration into Siliguri that needs special attention. Table below shows that amongst the total migration, 32.39 per cent migrants have migrated from different regions of India. Among the five regions, this city experienced the highest percentage (67.22 percent) from plain states (like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) and

mountain states of North India; South India (plateau states) shows least per cent. This city also experienced migration from North Eastern states of India.

Table 2.11: Migration stream into Siliguri city, 1991–2001

Migration stream into City	Migration , 1991			Migration,2001		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Migration from within the State	41.47	49.17	50.83	53.09	49.36	60.64
Migration from outside the State	36.19	61.49	38.54	32.39	55.77	42.23
Migration from other country	22.34	55.69	44.31	14.78	57.16	42.39

Source: Census of India, West Bengal and the Migration Table D-3: Migrants by the place of Last Residence, Duration of Residence and Reason for Migration (computed by the author).

Table 2.12: Migration into Siliguri city from different regions of India, 2001 census

Regions of Migrations		
Migration into Siliguri From different regions of India 2001	Total number of In Migrations	Percentage to Total Migrants
North India (mountains states)	264	0.58
North India (plain states)	30,357	67.22
North-West India (dry plain States)	4,155	9.2
North-Eastern India (hills, plain, plateau states)	8,520	18.87
Central India (highland states)	1,293	2.86
South India (plateau states)	570	1.26
Total	45,159	100%

Source: Census of India 2001, West Bengal and the Migration Table D-3: Migrants by the place of Last Residence, Duration of Residence and Reason for Migration (computed by the author).

Table below shows some foremost states from where Siliguri received approximately 90% migrants among total migration from other states in India in the year 2001. The first five states from where this city received migrants above 90 per cent are Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana. Among the five states, the highest migrants came from Bihar (59.02 per cent). The city also has 16.14 per cent migrants from Assam, 7.71 per cent from Uttar Pradesh, 5.15 per cent from Rajasthan, 2.88% from Haryana and rest 9.01 per cent from other states of India.

Table 2.13: Migration into Siliguri city from first five leading states

States	Total		Male		Female	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Bihar	26653	5902	10507	61089	16146	55.1
Assam	7289	16.14	3746	13.58	3543	19.46
Uttar Pradesh	3483	7.71	1401	7.98	2.082	7.35
Rajasthan	2325	5.15	987	5.13	1338	5.18
Haryana	1299	2.88	531	2.83	768	2.78
Other States	4110	9.1	2884	8.59	3551	9.95

Source: Census of India 2001, West Bengal Migration Table (Migrants by Place of Last Residence, Duration of Residence and Reason for Migration).

Rural out-migration can be defined as the moving of population from rural areas towards the cities either willingly or cogently for the betterment of their lifestyle. In India as well as West Bengal, most of the people live (68.11 per cent, 2011 census) in the rural areas and the rural workers mostly depend only on agriculture activities and majority of the rural people are agricultural labourers. Out-migration is greater in the less developed agricultural areas, particularly high among the landless farmers.¹⁵⁶ An increase in agricultural productivity and

¹⁵⁶ Parganiha O, et al. "Migration effects of labourers on agricultural activities." *Indian Research Journal*, Vol.9, No. 3, 2009, pp. 95–98.

technological changes in agriculture offers a surplus for the transfer of labour to the growing industrial sector.¹⁵⁷

The Table below shows reasons for in-migration into the Siliguri city since 1991. A large number of rural populations from different districts of West Bengal and also other states in India migrated to Siliguri city to search for jobs, better educational facilities, better medical facilities, betterment of life style, and others. Among the total migrants, a large number of migrants have moved for employment, business and other purposes. About 19.44% (1991) and 14.55% (2001) of the migrants went for marriage purposes and around 30 percent migrants moved with their household. Nath and Choudhury¹⁵⁸ said that male migration rate of the age group 15–25 is greater from rural to urban areas due to educational and employment opportunities. It is clear that most of the migrants came to Siliguri city for job purposes and improvement of lifestyle.

Table 2.14: Reasons for migration into Siliguri (1991–2001 in percent)

Reason for Migration	1991 Census		2001 Census	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Work/employment	23735	17.02	23940	22.56
Business	722	5.4	8216	7.74
Education	996	0.71	2715	2.56
Marriage	20289	14.55	20628	19.44
Moved after Birth	3886	2.79	-	-
Moved with Household	37889	2718	35280	33.25
others	45101	32.35	15319	14.44
Total	139418	100	106098	100

Source: Census of India, D-3 (Migrants by Place of Last Residence, Duration of Residence and Reason for Migration).

The city is witnessing a rapid expansion of its population particularly in recent years. The population grows and the city expands, it gobbles up the existing tea gardens and the

¹⁵⁷ Barnum HN. "The interrelationship among social and political variables, economic structure and rural-urban migration." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1976, pp. 759–764.

¹⁵⁸ Nath D.C and Choudhury L. "Two regional (rural–urban) life tables for India." *Genus*, Vol. 51, No. 1/2, 1995, pp. 45–67.

neighbouring areas, evicting the tea labour and the marginalised and further chasing them into the adjoining rural areas. The city has no space for the evicted. They live mostly in slum and shanties, in the banks of Champasari and temporary sandbars that emerge during dry season on the Mahananda and the Balason River cutting across an otherwise vertically spread out city and become homeless almost as a ritual when the river and their tributaries are in spate during monsoon.

The new migrants settle in the town – occupy the high rise – raising phenomenally the land price and price of essentials. Thus we see that the heterogeneous population composition of Siliguri was one of the spin-offs of urban transformations. This issue will be taken into consideration in detail in the next chapter. The social system of this border town took shape through migration of various groups from the neighbourhood following different political developments. Massive migration led to differentiation of social and economic space. The illegal cross border movement of goods further led to expansion of urban markets. The region faced both internal as well external threats leading to heavy militarisation. The establishment of many army cantonments added to the urban growth of Siliguri. The social, military and the economic spaces of Siliguri were re-defined in phases after independence.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMY AND COMMUNICATION OF SILIGURI

Scholars have treated the economy as well as material life as one of the central themes in studying urban history of a region. In the Marxian viewpoint the trajectories of growth of the modern world are reflected through the great economic transformations that shaped world history. Scholars¹⁵⁹ tend to understand that the industrial revolution was a crucial turning point which simultaneously led to the growth of consumer culture in the world. The evolution of economic theories saw its protagonists in the works of Adam Smith (1723-90), through David Ricardo (1772-1828), Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) and John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) in conjunction with Industrial capitalism and served as an ideological justification to the economic system that evolved in different corners of the world. Economic theorists hailed Marx as one of the most influential thinkers on how economy shaped the modern world. Marx believed that human society passes through five different stages and these transitions are natural concomitant to the changes brought within. The five stages were Proto Communism- feudalism- capitalism- Communism -socialism. Marxist theory had a profound impact on the historical research regarding economic growth, industrialization and periodisation, class formations etc. Historians like Eric Habsbawn drew on Karl Marx to narrate England's path towards industrialisation and its basis in “enclosure movement, perennial capitalism and early rapid mechanisation.”¹⁶⁰

While Marxist models was guiding framework for Scholars like George Lefebvre and Albert Soboul, it was Robert Malthus a political economist who came forward with his ‘pessimistic perspective’ that population had a natural tendency to grow if not controlled , which would have an adverse impact on the availability of food supply. Thus, a corollary of demographic and economic stagnation was explained by Malthus.

¹⁵⁹Roche, Daniel. *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France (1600-1800)*, Cambridge, 2000, Neil Mckendric, John Brewer and J.H.Plumb (ed.), *The Birth Of Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth Century England*, Bloomington, 1982. Brewer and Roy Porter (ed.) *Consumption and the World of Goods*, London, 1933.

¹⁶⁰ Walker Garhine(ed), *Writing Early Modern History*, OUP, 2005, p.161.

The works of Malthus guided historians like March Bloch, Fernand Brudel and Le Roy Ladurie, who identified a long period of ‘traditional and immobile Society’ that emerged after the 14th century Black Death. The Malthusian framework of the Annals School was criticised by economic historians who questioned “the immobility of traditional society and the assumptions that technological limitations and cultural backwardness were the factors inhibiting growth.”¹⁶¹ Historians began to look towards Social Sciences primarily anthropology and sociology to develop insights beyond Marxism and Malthusian meta-narratives.

A new insight that comes into consideration is the study of ‘space’. Henry Lefebvre’s seminal work, “The Production of Space” argued that space is produced by historical societies in three but distinct interconnected bases: ‘The Perceive Space, The Conceived Space, and The Lived Space’.¹⁶²

The Perceive Space as Lefebvre suggested refers to the element that can only be sensed by body manipulation and moves through the physical body. The Conceived Space is the idea that is derived from thinking about space and this could arise from physics, urban planning, and geography and includes the ways of drawing borders, mapping cities and imagining the area with notions based on structures prevalent in the society. The Lived Space differs from perceive and conceive basis as it could amplifier or undermine each of the two aspects and it may also contain the characteristic feature of the book perceive and concept space.¹⁶³ E Soja comments that “Spatiality is not only product but also producer and a reproducer of the relations of production as well as domination.”¹⁶⁴

The economic space as well as the transit spaces passed through colossal changes in context to Siliguri. The urge for creation of personal ‘social spaces’ by renovating Darjeeling

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 164.

¹⁶² Lefebvre, Henry. *The Production of Space*, Eng. trans, OUP, 1991, pp. 66-71, also see Walker Garhine(ed). *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

¹⁶³ Lefebvre, Henry. *Op. cit.*, p. 40, Walker Garhine(ed). *Op. cit.*, p.161.

¹⁶⁴ Soja, E. “The Spatiality of Social Life: Towards a Transformative Re-theorization” in D. Gregory and J. Urry. *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*. Macmillan, 1985, p. 110

Hills into Sanatorium by the Europeans and growth of transport and communication changed the fate of Siliguri. Cities are shaped and reshaped by many historical and geographical features but at any stage in the city's history economic boom can occur and patterns of land use can change the transporting priorities. Thus, Economy and communication can be the 'maker and breaker' of cities.

Siliguri's particular location on the narrowest part of Indian land naturally limits the scope of the city's boundary. There are strips of land on both sides of Sevoke Road (north east of Siliguri) up to Mampong forest and of NH-31 (Siliguri to Bagdogra road on West of Siliguri) up to Nepal and Bihar. Hence, the city is growing as a ribbon-development along those lines. On two sides of NH-31 there exist many tea plantations, limiting the growth. On south Siliguri's expansion is thwarted at the Bangladesh border and on the east, by Baikunthapur reserve forest. Siliguri is the commercial hub for the entire North Bengal, North-Eastern States and some parts of Bihar. The market of Siliguri satisfies the demand of the large hinterland of Dooars, the entire state of Sikkim and Darjeeling, also parts of the Kingdom of Bhutan and North-East India. Siliguri is the nodal point of location where the cargo is shifted from one carrier to another for dispatch to other destinations in the North East part of India. Naturally trading has become one of the traditional mainstays of business in Siliguri. Apart from trading, the three T's Tea, Tourism and Timber have accounted for major economic produce. Siliguri has a large number of trade centres and readymade markets for consumer goods and is thus home to myriad retailers, wholesalers, dealers, distributors and small-scale entrepreneurs. It is the commercial nerve centre of North Bengal.

The city's strategic location makes it a base for indispensable supplies to the North-East region. Thus, Siliguri has gradually developed as a profitable region for a variety of businesses. As a central hub, many national and multinational companies and organisations have set up their offices. Agriculture production is not significant in the Siliguri Municipal Corporation area. However, the surrounding areas, especially the north and north-western parts of the city, host a

few tea estates. The city mainly depends on its surrounding villages for vegetables and dairy activities

The development of the Tea industry was a big boon for Siliguri and the adjoining areas. The focus which was earlier towards the Hills now began shifting towards the terai regions. Siliguri being the foothills of the Himalayas began to develop as the 'Junction point' of trade for dispatching the teas commercially to other parts of India and especially Calcutta port from where it was further sent to different foreign countries. The development of Railways juxtaposed with the commercial development of Tea gardens at large scale in the District.

Table 3.1: Growth of Tea Industry in Darjeeling District (1951-1990).

Dist/ Region		1951	1961	1971	1981	1990	%increase over 1951
Darjeeling	Number of Tea Gardens	-	99	97	103	102	-
	Areas in Hectares	16569	18605	18245	19239	20065	21.00
Siliguri /terai	Number of Tea Gardens	-	47	48	53	82	-
	Areas in Hectares	8402	9344	10769	11314	13345	58.00

Source: Tea Statistics 1990-91, Tea Board of India, Calcutta, pp.4-10

Siliguri emerged as the third-most important centre of tea trade in the country. Post-independence two important changes took place in the Tea sector. Firstly, the establishment of the Central Tea Board in 1950 and the Tea Board of India in 1953 and the setting up of the Siliguri Tea Auction Centre in 1976 for better marketing of local tea products, gave a major fillip to the tea industry. Both domestic and foreign sales from tea gardens situated in the North-Bengal districts and Assam were now routed through Siliguri. The tea auction centre has greatly reduced the travel time of tea growers of North Bengal to market the end product. The second most important change was that the ownership of the Tea Estates changed. The Bengali owners

were replaced by the Marwari owners.¹⁶⁵The main reason for this change was that the Bengali Tea owners solely depended on the Tea Gardens for their income and were extravagant and led a lavish life. This deteriorated the financial condition of the owners and slowly the ownership passed in the hands of Marwaris.

Siliguri was turning into one of the most economically vibrant towns in West Bengal. The process of urbanisation led to the expansion of the town which had some adverse impact on the tea gardens. The tea gardens were now converted to Satellite towns owing to demand for urban expansion, for example the Uttorayan Township was erected on the burial ground of Chandmoni Tea Estate. As reported in the Telegraph (dated 21/12.2009) “the West Bengal Estate Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 2009 was necessitated by the fact that the land at these units was being used to build commercial and residential complexes and not to serve the purpose for which it had been given on lease”¹⁶⁶. Such issues of allowing the state to take over land depended on whether Lessee or the companies wanted to invest in tea or other crops as permissible under the Tea Act 1953. Tea companies were eager to give up khet land to evade payment of rent. According to the state government, such resumed land would mean to be utilised for industrial growth. However, in some cases it resulted in severe discontentment as in the case of the Chandmoni Tea Estate. This particular tea garden deserves mention here as it was the only tea garden in West Bengal that faced such alteration from tea cultivation to land being utilised for developing and promoting real estate with state patronage.

Chandmoni Tea Estate was located at NH-31 in Siliguri. This tea estate initially had a total grant area of 775.18 acres of which 351.99 acres was under tea cultivation, 274.0 acres under forest and 234 acres under khet land. This tea estate had a capacity of producing 800 lakh tonnes of tea per year. It was believed that since the owner Luxmi Tea Company had huge liabilities its management decided to convert the land into real estate. However it was

¹⁶⁵ Ghosh, A.G. *Parbatya Uttar Banga Prasanga: Darjeeling Nama*. N.L. Publishers, Siliguri, 2013, pp.99-100

¹⁶⁶ *The Telegraph*, 22 December 2009, Viewed on

(http://www.telegraphindia.com/1091222/jsp/bengal/story_11895350.jsp).

mentioned that 150 acres of land would continue tea cultivation. According to MOU (dated 18.10.1998), out of 664.395 acres of land, “it was decided that 406.64 acres of land which is now held by Chandmoni Tea Company Limited on lease for cultivation of tea, be resumed by the state government out of total land holding of the company. for development of a satellite township. The remaining land of the tea estate would continue to be detained by Chandmoni on an existing term of lease”.¹⁶⁷

Eventually, the state withdrew the lease of this Tea estate and a ‘new company’ by the name of Harshavardhan Neotia’s Bengal Ambuja Housing Development was formed that undertook the project of housing development “Uttarayan”. Biswas Saswati¹⁶⁸ reveals that 64 % of the formerly employed permanent tea garden women workers of Chandmoni T.E. are unemployed; 12 % engaged in irregular construction work as helpers, 12% as garden workers in Uttarayan (Work only for two weeks in a month), 4 % as domestic workers and 4% engaged in selling liquor. Also, the Chandmoni Tea Estate Anti-Eviction Joint Action Committee demanded a judicial inquiry into the land deal by arguing that the state government had handed over 406.64 acres of land against a sum of Rs 13.92 lakhs in 2002 (while the actual valuation was Rs 100 crore) and affected the livelihood of 500 odd workers¹⁶⁹.

The Growth of Economic Sectors and Markets in Siliguri:

Locational advantage of Siliguri led to the growth of the wholesale trade market in Siliguri as the most important distributive as well as ‘feeder Centre’ since independence. Route connectivity of Siliguri to other parts of North Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan and northeast India led to tremendous growth in the wholesale business activities. Rapid growth of trade and commerce in Siliguri is evident from the income of some commercial taxes and increase in the number of Limited companies.

¹⁶⁷ Biswas Saswati. “Development Project and Project Affected Women: A Study of the Former Women Workers of Chandmoni Tea Estate”. *UGC SAP Project Report*, September 2008

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ (http://www.telegraphindia.com/1111118/jsp/siliguri/story_14766115.jsp, *Telegraph*, Nov 18, 2011; accessed on 15.06.19).

During the period from 1955 -56 to 1964-65, there was an increase in the number of limited companies from 37 to 63. This growth amounted to 70 percent of the total growth and the number of wholesale establishments increased from 448 to 881 which corresponded to 81 percent of the total. The growth in commercial tax collection reflects the increasing trends in the wholesale as well as retail trades in siliguri.

In the period 1958-59, the total sales tax was only 8,5400 Rs only. Ten years later during the period 1968-69 the whole collection increased to 55.16,000 Rs. Only. Post Bangladesh War of Liberation and increase in the migrants in the city also led to an increase in the tax collection. The period 1976-77, witnessed the collection in crores i.e. 1,64,33,477. It was the highest figure till then. Decade after India opted the policy of liberalisation the collection of sales tax in Siliguri alone in the year 2007-8 was 120.47 crores and the total amount collected from Darjeeling District was 125.34 crores. In the year 2010-11 Siliguri contributed 205.40 crores and the total collection of the District was 207.48. Thus we see that Siliguri contribution to the commercial tax collection was more than 95% of the total tax collected throughout the District.¹⁷⁰ This was possible only due to immense growth in the whole sale trading activities in the town.

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 and low industrial economy analysis of the sectoral share of workers shows that about 1% of the total workers in the city were engaged in primary sector activities, 3% in the secondary sector and about 96% – a phenomenal share – in the tertiary sector. Tea processing, timber and other manufacturing units formed as a source of secondary sector employment. It is also observed that these industries employ regional workforce from nearby rural areas. The workforce within the city is

¹⁷⁰ Computed by the author from various Administrative Reports, Directorate of Commercial taxes, Government of West Bengal

predominantly occupied in tertiary sector activities which include trade, transport, hotels, real estate, etc.

Economy of Siliguri Municipal Corporation is predominantly based on trade and commerce. A major portion of Siliguri is covered by Cottage & Small Scale Industries. Major commercial and institutional uses are distributed mostly along the major transportation corridors of the Municipal Corporation. Economic activities of Siliguri Municipal Corporation have been categorised broadly in two sectors – formal and informal. Formal sector includes trade & commerce industries. Informal sector covers the service and other related activities.

Trade & Commerce play a major role in the generation of the local economy in Siliguri Municipal Corporation. Considerable numbers of small-scale & cottage industries were spread over the Municipal Corporation predominantly in the wards of Sevoke Road added area (Formerly in Panchayat Area) and Burdwan Road like Grill Factory, Atta Mill, and Steel Furniture. Except for the above-mentioned areas, other trade activities were considered to be the major revenue generating sectors in the Municipal Corporation. These industries are served by local and regional populations and migrating from different parts of adjacent districts and states.

Formal service sector also contributes significantly to the local economy within the Municipal Corporation. It constitutes academic institutes (schools, colleges and other academic institutions. Automobile repair centres, banks and post offices, health institutions, IT offices, retail outlets and trading centres located along the transportation corridors like Burdwan Road, Sevoke Road, and other major local roads. These outlets of service sector are served by local people as well as considerable proportions of outsiders come from various parts of the districts of Jalpaiguri, Malda, and Uttar Dinajpur. The city is the regional education hub; it has become a pioneer in imparting higher education and graduate programmes for the local as well as migrant students.

Due to the inherent geostrategic importance of Siliguri as it is centrally located and the largest town in the region including Sikkim- Darjeeling region, a big number of students flock

to Siliguri for higher education. The city has two pioneer engineering colleges popular among the science students, viz., Surendra Institute of Engineering & Management and Siliguri Institute of Technology. Among the undergraduate colleges the Siliguri College, established in 1950, is the oldest in the city. Other undergraduate colleges include Siliguri College of Commerce, Surya Sen Mahavidyalaya, Siliguri Mahila Mahavidyalaya, St. Xaviers College KGTM Bagdogra College, Naxalbari College, Salesian College and Gyan Jyoti College. There are also many B.Ed. colleges imparting technical education in the city. Among the health sector, the North Bengal Medical College, situated in Sushrutanagar, is the only medical college in the region. The medical college is connected to the main city through the third Mahananda Bridge. 10 km away from the main Siliguri city, in Raja Rammohanpur we have the prestigious University of North Bengal, which was established in 1962. There are approximately 123 schools in Siliguri run by the state government or other private organisations. Siliguri Boys High School is the oldest school of the city founded in 1918. Don Bosco School, St. Josephs' High School, Hindi Balika Vidyapith School are the other old and famous schools of Siliguri.

The Informal Sector is one of the most important revenue-generating sectors, not only in connection with local economic development, but also as a strong medium for poverty alleviation programmes. These units are found in almost all the wards of the Corporation. There are several units engaged in producing soft toys, envelopes, and manufacturing of shawl ornaments, bidi and other various handicraft products by the local Self Help Groups.

List of various skills found in different zones of the Municipal is furnished in Table below. All these indicate the importance of the various sectors contributing to the local economic scenario. At present several industries like the tea garden are closed or sick and resulting in large-scale unemployment and economic hardship for the tea garden workers. However, a detailed investigation is necessary for taking the decisions on closed industries in terms of their revival or suitable re-use of their lands.

Table 3.2: Showing details of Formal Service Sector

Sector	Nos. of Industries	Status	Person Employed
Formal			
Large Scale Industry	Not Available	N/A	N/A
Medium Scale Industry	Not Available	N/A	N/A
Small Scale Industry	750	Operational	24921
Construction Companies	1200	Operational	45000
Bank and Insurance	35	Operational	875
Service-Sector,(Including Nursing Home)	20000	Operational	25000-30000

Source: Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 2010.

The informal sector, especially the manufacturing activities require special attention in terms of organisation development, market oriented training, provision of suitable infrastructure i.e. common work shed for several units to share the infrastructure, electricity supply for units like Jari work, handicraft, adequate storage facilities clustered in suitable areas. Informal service sector people like shop owners, rickshaw pullers, washer men, construction workers; hawkers need financial support in the form of credit facilities and insurance coverage. Also, most of them require basic services like storage units, parking spaces, etc.

Table 3.3: Showing Detail of In-Formal Service Sector:

Sl. No.	Sector	Persons employed	Average Daily Income (Rs.)
1.	Rickshaw Puller	10000	150-200
2.	Van Pullers	2000	200-300
3.	Auto (Rickshaw) Driver	651	200-300
4.	Taxi / Car Driver	5325	300-400
5.	Mason	15000	150-200
6.	Construction labour	30000	100-150
7.	Hawkers	4000	150-200
8.	Plumber	1500	150-200

Source: Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 2010.

Approximately 10000 rickshaw pullers reside within Siliguri Municipal Corporation. Their average income of each is Rs. 150-200 approx. per day. Approximately 2000 cycle rickshaw van pullers reside within Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The average income of each is Rs. 250-300 approx. per day. 25000 people work in shops including suppliers and about 12% children are involved in this work. This involves shops like grocery, sweet, saloon, hotels and restaurants etc. Adults generally receive a remuneration of Rs. 1000-2000 per month but the children get Rs. 300-900 per month. Street vending is an indispensable economic activity in urban India. Street vendors account for about two percent of India's population and provide affordable as well as convenient services to a majority of the urban population. Approximately 4000 vendors reside within Siliguri Municipal Corporation. Their average income is around Rs. 5000 per month. Approximately 25000 masons and construction labourers stay within Siliguri Municipal Corporation, though many of them are originally from outskirts like Jalpaiguri, Malda, and U.Dinajpur etc. Masons earn more than Rs. 4500, whereas the labourers earn max. of Rs. 2500/month. Approximately 1500 plumbers stay within the Corporation. They earn more or less Rs. 5000/ month.¹⁷¹

Table 3.4: Showing Commercial establishments (trade) in Siliguri

S.No.	Category type	Approximate no.of Establishments
1	Fish, meat Poultry	384
2	Fruits and vegetables	5,341
3	Groceries and provisions	356
4	Eating Places	4,314
5	Pan and Cigarettes	3,500
6	Textile and Clothing	2,500
7	Medical	2,000
8	Computer and Electronics	136
9	Electrical	2,135
10	Gifts, books, stationery	754
11	Hardware, building materials	1,211
12	Household merchandise	331
13	Furniture and Interior	157
14	Jewellery	953

¹⁷¹ Datas collected from Siliguri Municipal Organisation.

15	Optics and watches	478
16	Footwear	1,231
17	Recreation	17
18	Transport	500
19	Service Outlets	5,000
20	Miscellaneous	150
21	Hotels	533
Total		31,981

Source: *Socio-economic study, SJDA, 2008.*

Commercial establishments in the SMC area number 45,230; of these, 33% are registered and 67% unregistered and informal in nature. About 8% of the commercial establishments are wholesale shops. The important commercial centres in SMC are Bidhan Market, Nivedita market, Khalpara and Mahabirsthan market.¹⁷² 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 former 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 that are sold a-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. Most of the gadgets available are quite cheap and thus allure tourists. We also find well-known automobile companies in Siliguri with various showrooms. Some of the showrooms belong to Mahindra & Mahindra, General Motors, Hyundai, Ford, JCB, Tata, Toyota Kirloskar, Honda Siel, and Maruti Suzuki. Two-wheeler brands such as Honda Scooters, Bajaj, TVS Suzuki, Yamaha, Kinetic, Hero Honda, and LML have also clinched their positions in Siliguri's economy.

Bidhan Market is in the heart of Siliguri city, bounded by Bidhan Road, Sevoke Road and Hill Cart Road. New Market and the Hong Kong Market are located within the Bidhan Market area. 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. There are 550 shops in Hong Kong Market; these sell foreign goods like electronic

¹⁷² Siliguri Municipal Organisation and Socio-economic study, *SJDA, 2008*

items, cosmetics and clothes and employ as many as 1,500 persons. One peculiarity of the shops is that they have an average area of 20 sq.m.

Table 3.5: Showing some prominent Markets in Siliguri and Workflow

S.No.	Market Name	Major Goods/articles	Category of Vendors	Number of Vendors (Approx.)
1	Hong Kong Market	watches, cosmetics, electronic goods, eateries, food courts, materials for women, bags,etc.	Stationary	550
2	The Seth Srilal market,	Dress material for women, artwork, handcrafted products and bags, eateries, food courts	Stationary	400

Source: *Source: Discussion with SMC officials*

Hong Kong Market deals especially in imported goods which are brought usually from the Chinese market as well as from places like Nepal, Thailand, etc. Seth Srilal Market is another busy shopping area in the centre of the city, which gives tourists good deals and has also gained a name for selling momos and other snack items.

Other than important commercial establishments, the city region shows vibrant trading. Informal trade contributes greatly to the city's economy. Hence, one cannot overlook the importance of the informal economy in the city. The migrant population living in slums is mainly engaged in the informal sector and comprise rickshaw-pullers, vendors, and daily wage labourers. There are also small-scale shops in the markets of the city which sell some timber and bamboo handicrafts.

Wholesale Trade and Business Firms in Siliguri

The Marwaris and some Biharis control the wholesale trade in Siliguri. The Darjeeling district, in which Siliguri is located today, can be said to have achieved its present shape and size relatively recently in 1866 following the Treaty of Sinchula (November 11, 1865) between

British India and the Kingdom of Bhutan.¹⁷³ Unsurprisingly, therefore, it is in the 1870s that the Marwaris first came to Siliguri,¹⁷⁴ lying at the heart of the then dreaded malarial Terai, although some settlements had already started in Kurseong in the 1850s-60s, Kalimpong in 1865 and in Darjeeling apparently with the establishment of the business firm by Jetmull Bhojraj in 1845.¹⁷⁵ From the late nineteenth century the number of Marwaris in Siliguri continued to swell, though they preferred to live within the city and not settle beyond the town area at least till the 1940s.¹⁷⁶ By the early 1970s, it was claimed that about 1,200 Marwaris of the Mahesree group and 1,800 Marwaris of the Agarwal group lived in Siliguri.¹⁷⁷ However, in an undated interview conducted by Narayan Chandra Saha with Ram Kumar Agarwal, an old Marwari living in Siliguri, we get an estimate that about 30,000 Marwaris, of whom 5,000 were Jains, lived in Siliguri at the start of the new millennium.¹⁷⁸ Migration of the Marwaris to Siliguri did not happen following a fixed pattern historically. In fact, it happened in four phases: pre-independence, post-independence, during trouble in Assam in the 1970s, and during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Even so, as we have noticed they never approached anything in size even in terms of becoming a considerable percentage of the population. For the longest period of time they have been directly or indirectly connected to all kinds of enterprises, such as money-lending, *jotedar* (holding of *jotes*), *araddari* (big wholesale dealing), commission agency, wholesale and retail business, export and import business, ownership of hotels, restaurant, go-downs, and lately tea

¹⁷³ The long military engagement of the Kingdom with British India is covered by Karma Phuntsho. *The History of Bhutan*. Vintage Books/Random House India, 2013

¹⁷⁴ Saha, Narayan Chandra, Darjeeling Terai Anchal Marwari Samaj: Ekti Samikshal [The Marwari Community in the Darjeeling-Terai Region: A Survey], *Itihas Anusandhan*, Vol. VIII, Calcutta, 1993, p. 345

¹⁷⁵ Dash. A.J. *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*. Calcutta Secretariat Book Depot: Calcutta, 1947, p. 174. However, Timberg could not identify the firm of Jetmull Bhojraj as a Marwari concern. See, Thomas A. Timberg. *The Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists*, Stosius Inc./Advent Books Division, 1979, p. 206

¹⁷⁶ *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, p. 71

¹⁷⁷ Yogi Nath Mukhopadhyaya. "Ai Amar Deshl [This is My Country]." *Desh*, BS Magh 23, 1379 [1973]

¹⁷⁸ Saha, Narayan Chandra. *The Marwari Community in Eastern India: A Historical Survey Focusing on North Bengal*, Decent Books, New Delhi, 2003, p. 157

plantations and tea factories as well as realty. Arthur J. Dash had earlier noted: —Marwari and Bihari control of the commodity trade of the district [Darjeeling] is practically complete and ... Marwari and Bihari control over retail supply of consumption goods is dominating.¹⁷⁹ This control has not weakened over the years. In fact, it has grown in strength and scope to encompass today nearly the entire gamut of MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), be it those involving building materials, wrought-iron, confectionaries etc. A quick look at the Souvenir of the Siliguri Merchants Association brought out in 1992 establishes this. According to the information provided here, the number of business firms registered under this association and engaged in Terai's trade and commerce was 418 in 1992. Of these, the number of Marwari concerns was 177. It accounts for roughly 50 per cent of the total business firms of Siliguri.¹⁸⁰ In the list of Presidents and General Secretaries of the Association between 1952 and 1992, we find 26 Marwari names which further confirm their dominance.

The organisation which plays a vital role in controlling not only trade and commerce but also industry in North Bengal in general, and of which the Siliguri Merchants Association is the biggest component, is the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FOCIN) with its headquarters at Siliguri. It has 36 member associations and the number of its council members was 66 for the term 1990-92. At least 29 of the 66 council members, or roughly 50 percent, were from the Marwari community. Similarly, FOCIN had 157 subscribing members in 1990, a majority of whom were Marwaris. A quick look at some of these members would reveal the extent of Marwari hold over business: Gajanand Goyal & Co. (hardware and electrical merchants), the Mittal Brothers (bankers and financier), the Bajla Bastralaya (textile retailer), Radheyshyam Agarwal (industrialist and transporter), the Jain Enterprise (government order supplier), the Singhal Agencies (welding material and foam dealer), the Singhania Bastralaya (cloth merchant), Jivanram Chetandass (petroleum products dealer), Harish Chandra Singhal (Income Tax pleader), Muniram Achiram (wholesale dealers of foodgrains), Lalchand

¹⁷⁹ Dash. A.J. *Op. cit.* p. 175

¹⁸⁰ Souvenir (A Special Issue), Siliguri Merchants' Association, 51st General Meeting, 1992

Ramabatar (tea traders), Lalchand Madamlall (wholesale tea merchants), Debidatta/Phoolchand (foodgrains dealers), Lalchand Amarchand (agency business), Lalchand Kundalia (agency business), Moolchand Periwai (broker), Pokarmall Mahabir Prasad (sawmill owner), Sohanlal Shewduttarai (edible oil, pulses, rice merchant) and so on.¹⁸¹

Given Siliguri's historical role as the coordinator of trans-border trade with Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh as well as with Calcutta, it is not surprising that the nature of business in Siliguri is heavily biased in favour of wholesale and retail trade. It is basically a service town, which from the 1960s has become an important centre of wholesale trade. Much of this wholesale trade, as we have noted, is controlled by Marwaris, and strong kinship bonds among them make it practically impossible for others to freshly enter into the business. It is likely that these wholesalers possess a high amount of liquid cash, much of it derived as profit from their trade, which changes hands rapidly without getting anchored in investment to any great extent. The city also has a very high concentration of retail trade with an incredible number of shops in operation. There are 3 shops per 100 people, whereas in Delhi the number is 0.21. Many of these shops operate at subsistence level generating disguised unemployment in the informal service sector. The informal sector can expand by absorbing unskilled labour—migrant labour from slums, as we have seen— without any major capital expenditure. On the other hand, not uncommonly for India, at the owner's level, the retailer and the wholesaler are often the same person operating from the same shop-front. Put another way, a bit of monetary inducement promptly turns the wholesaler into a retailer in Siliguri's bustling marketplaces.

Communication System of Siliguri

C. A. Bayly has remarked “the study of information, knowledge and communication is an interesting project which might help close the deplorable gap between studies of economic structures on one hand and of orientalism on another hand.”¹⁸² Before 1835 A.D. means of

¹⁸¹ Souvenir— FOCIN, North Bengal, published at its 10th Annual General Conference on June 3, 1990

¹⁸² Bayly, C. A. *“Empire and Information: Information Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870”*. Cambridge University Press, 1996

communication was in a very rudimentary stage and the pioneers who visited Darjeeling after an arduous journey from Calcutta, had to pass a stretch of rich woody and marshy land infested with wild animals and deadly insects like the most fearful female anopheles mosquitoes, formed the present heart-land of Siliguri. This sub section of the chapter looks not only at the growth and development of communication but how the economy was linked to the communication in the development of Siliguri. Siliguri is an organically growing and unplanned city. The absence of road hierarchy is pronounced which leads to many complexities. Carlo Gershenson(2008), points out that ‘a complex system is one in which elements interact and affect each other so that it is difficult to separate the behaviour of individual elements, for example a cell composed of interacting molecules, a brain composed of interacting neurons and a market composed of interacting merchants. More complex examples are an ant colony, the internet, a city, an ecosystem, traffic, weather and crowds. In each of these systems the state of elements depends partly on the states of another element and affects them in turn. This makes it difficult to study complex systems with traditional linear and reductionist approaches.’

The urban structure of Siliguri reflects a ‘linear form’, which has been formed by its road network. The road network of the city is unorganised with more intercity and local roads. Moreover, there is no definite hierarchy of the road system with most of the city roads also serving the intercity traffic. Roads are a product of human necessity to link different places. The necessity rose out of commercial demands and military obligations. It forms the basis for the urban transportation system. However, in Ancient period, usually, waterways were preferred as the best method of transportation but with the passage of time roadways became more important and demanding for transportation purposes. After the partition of the province the most important need of the West Bengal Government was an arterial road to link the northern region comprising the district of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar.

Thus, the construction of National Highway number 31 from Barhi, Bihar border to Siliguri was taken up. The NH31 assumes strategic significance as the Calcutta-Siliguri direct rail link was intercepted by East Pakistan territories. A short term package was also included in

the construction of Jalpaiguri Siliguri Provincial Highway and also improvement of Darjeeling-Pedong and Rishi Roads. Immediately after the partition the State Government of Bengal prepared a separate emergency program for border roads and approached the central government for financial assistance. A technical Committee under the Central Board of transport reviewed the plan and submitted the report in June 1949. Owing to the paucity of funds the whole proposal was overlooked until 1951 when the Planning Commission brought new road building specifications.

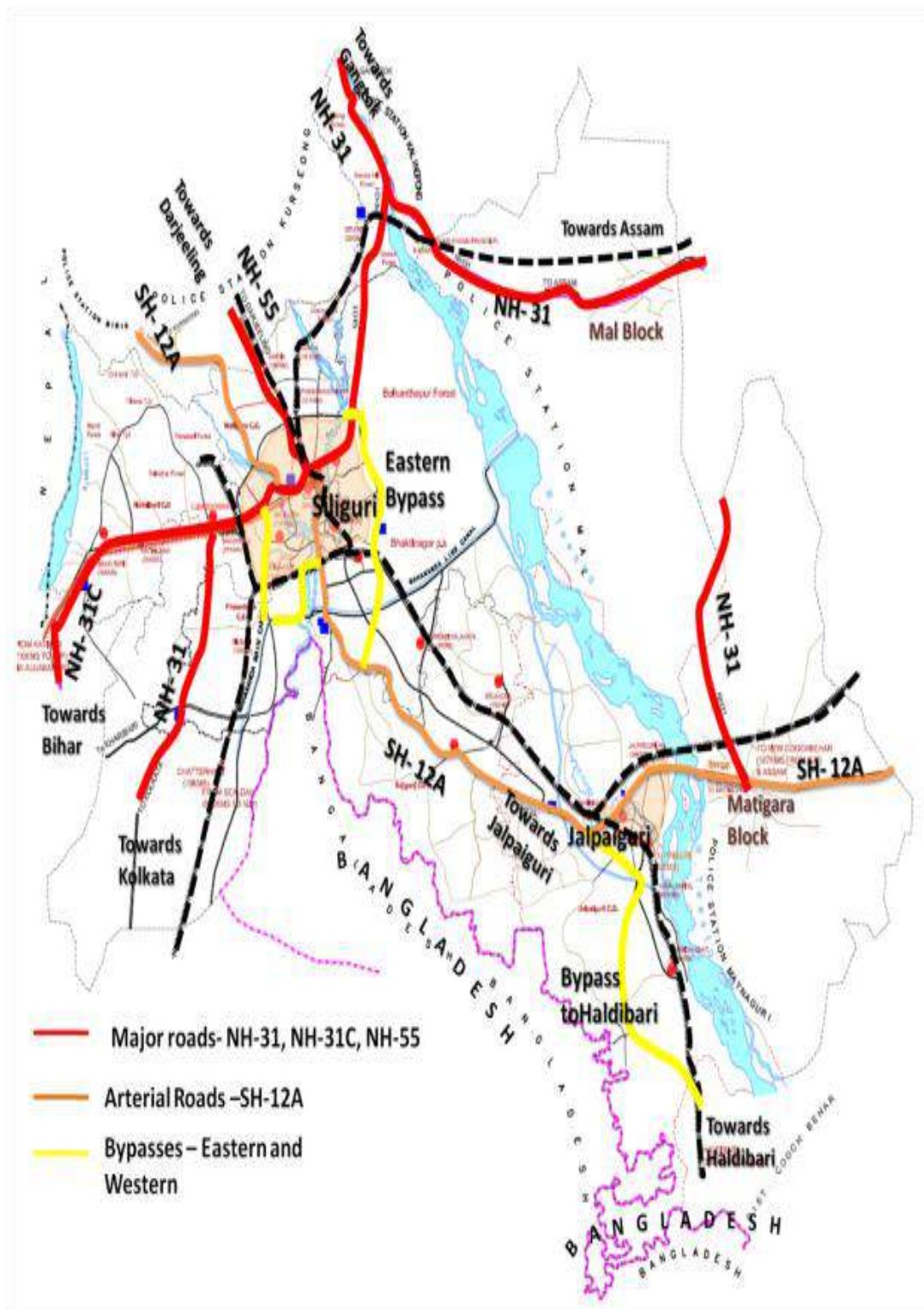
Map3: Road connectivity of Siliguri.



Source: Google (Image) and CRIS analysis

The road network of Siliguri is mostly North-South oriented, Hill Cart road being the most important corridor along this direction followed by Burdwan road. The other important roads are Sevoke Road and Bidhan Road in the city. NH 31 also passes through the city.

Map 4: Regional Connectivity Map of SJPA, 2011.



Source: SGI, 2011

As per Siliguri CMP (Siliguri Comprehensive Mobility Plans), about 4.4% of the road network consists of arterial roads, 3.2% sub-arterial roads and 8.1% inter-city and additional highway corridors. Other roads comprise 84.3 % of the total road network. The carriageway classifications of road network shows that the maximum percentage (64%) of road network is 1-2 lanes undivided and the road surface condition of most of the network (51.3%) has been observed to be poor. The National and State Highways also pass through all the six blocks within SJPA providing a high level of intra-regional connectivity. Adding more lanes and improving the quality of these roads would increase potential for development of these blocks, thereby reducing urban population pressure on Siliguri and Jalpaiguri in future. Also, there has been no major increase in road lengths within these six blocks in the last five years. The roads developed under PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna) have experienced only 10 -20% increase in length. 67% of the Village roads in SJPA are unpaved, all weather roads. However, there are missing cross-links in the road network at block level and therefore, many trips pass through major urban areas Siliguri/Jalpaiguri which increases the congestion on the urban roads.¹⁸³

Major junctions in Siliguri are Panitanki More, Air-view More, Sevoke More, Venus More, Thana More, Check-post and Jalpai More. The traffic at certain junctions along Vivekananda Road, Hill Cart road and Station Feeder Road shows a high percentage of slow moving traffic. Traffic volume as per CMP report reflects that Hill Cart road, carries relatively maximum volume, i.e., the average daily traffic (ADT) between 47,639 PCUs and 83,828 PCUs and followed by Sevoke Road which carries volume between 42,937 and 54,150 PCUs. The intensity of traffic volume varies from 83,828 PCUs (ADT) on Hill Cart Road to 16,900 PCUs at Deshbandhupara road. The variation in traffic volume of various locations clearly establishes the primary role of Hill Cart Road, Sevoke Road and Bidhan Road as most of inter and intra city traffic tends to converge on these roads from all other collector /local roads. The traffic intensity

¹⁸³ *Perspective Plan 2025*, Siliguri Jalpaiguri Planning Area, Prepared by Department of Architecture and regional Planning, IIT, Kharagpur, 2004.

on various locations indicates that the arterial road network of Siliguri comprises the above three roads along with Burdwan road, Station Feeder road and DBC road. The peak hour traffic intensity pattern has also been observed to be similar to the traffic intensity pattern for the day. The peak hour traffic ranges from nearly 9000 PCUs on hill cart road to 2700 PCUs at Burdwan road. However, the proportion of peak hour traffic is observed to vary from 6.5% to 17.9%. The peak hour on most of the locations was observed to be during morning hours. This can be attributed to the external traffic which moves into Siliguri from neighbouring areas during the morning hours in order to reach around office hours and then moves out of the city as and when their work is finished.¹⁸⁴

The composition of traffic shows that slow moving vehicles formed the maximum proportion of traffic on almost all the locations. The composition of slow modes varied from as high as 85% on Station feeder roads to 31.5 % on NH-31C. The percentage of slow moving traffic is observed to be high on local and collector roads indicating that they are the major modes of transport from the home end. The highest volume of slow moving traffic was registered on Hill Cart road – 54,000 PCUs, which is 60% of its total volume whereas the NH-31C carries a very high volume of goods vehicles. The percentage of fast and goods traffic increases on the arterial network comprising Hill Cart road, Sevoke road and Bidhan road. The total vehicles in Siliguri has doubled from 42,482 in 1996 to 86,526 in 2004 showing a high growth of 194% per annum, while from 2004 to 2014 it was found to be 169% . However, the highest growth is seen in LMV and 2 wheelers which is 107% and 97.2% respectively.¹⁸⁵

Non- motorised vehicles also contribute to congestion and urban complexities. A total of 6,283 cycle rickshaws (non-motorized three wheel IPTs) were registered in the SMC area till 2006. Also, there are around 2,000 cycle rickshaws which are registered in the neighbouring panchayat areas (2010). Additionally 1,728 pedal rickshaws for movements of goods are also

¹⁸⁴ *Siliguri Municipal Corporation: Unnayan, Udyog O Sambhabana (1999-2003)*, Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 2004

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

registered within SMC. A comparison of population and vehicular growth rates clearly brings out the disparity in their growth. In other words vehicles in Siliguri are growing at a faster rate than the growth of population.

Increasing vehicular population is one of the most important contributors of the pollution in the urban areas of the country. The chief cause for the air pollution in Siliguri is the dense vehicular traffic movement, especially along the major roads in Siliguri. Bardhaman Road, Hill Cart Road, Sevoke Road, Bidhan Road are the corridors with more air pollution. The air monitoring data given shows a high value of SPM near TN Bus stand and SNT Bus Stand because the average speed of the vehicles is very low due to recurrent congestion and also due to vehicles producing high quantities of hydrocarbons. Air pollution is also high near the truck terminal along the Vivekananda road, the Bagdogra market due to heavy vehicular traffic. Noise pollution due to urban traffic is also damaging the environment at an alarming rate. In fact motorised vehicles are accountable for about 90% of all unwanted noise worldwide. The adverse impact on health because of increasing air and noise pollution is also evidenced by the occurrence of lung cancer, asthma, allergies, various breathing ailments and mental stress issues in the urban population.

Bagdogra International Airport, Siliguri, is situated about 15 km from the heart of the city. The airport is well connected to Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati, Bangkok (Thailand) and Paro (Bhutan). The Bagdogra air force station was established on 29 November 1962 in the backdrop of the Sino-Indian border conflict. The main purpose of the Air Force Station was to exercise command and control over Fighter Squadrons, Helicopters and also for Transport Units. The starring role of the Station transformed in April 1970 when it started exercising organisational control on two Fighter Squadrons, one Helicopter Unit and also two Air Observation Posts. The Survival security support Flight was relocated to this Air Base in the month of December 1982. Subsequently in February 1989, a Signal Units was established to provide multi-channel communication facilities for Air Defense and Administrative Communication to the designated Units. A Mobile Observation Flight was

established at this Base in February 1982 to provide initial warning of airborne objects in order to alert air defence measures.¹⁸⁶ This airport is also functioned as a civil enclave at Air Force Station Bagdogra¹⁸⁷ of the Indian Air Force. It became the gateway to the hill stations of Gangtok, Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Kurseong, and to other parts of the North Bengal region and witness thousands of tourists year after year. The airport also acts as an important transport hub in the region. The Government of India conferred an international status to the airport in the year 2014.

Christopher Alexander¹⁸⁸ in his classic essay "A city is not a Tree", argues persuasively that the problem with town planning and urban development could be linked to a structure: they were dysfunctional due to their simplistic tree-like hierarchy of systems and subsystems. He further says that a naturally grown city had a more complex structure that he identifies with semi-lattice which allowed for overlapping elements. It would be worth mentioning the words of Merlin: "The ideal transport mode would be instantaneously free, have an unlimited capacity and always be viable. It would render space obsolete, this is not the case, space is constrained for the construction of transport networks, and transport appears to be economic activities different from others. It trades space with time and thus money."¹⁸⁹

Thus we see that Siliguri city acts as a convergence point to all major and minor routes connecting North-Eastern States, Sikkim, Darjeeling Hills and to the neighbouring countries of Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. The National Highways NH-31, NH-31A, NH-31C and NH-55, and the State Highways SH-12 and SH-12A are the regional road connectors that pass through the area. The National Highway 31 passes through the city and connects it to Delhi in the West and Guwahati in the East. District headquarters like Darjeeling in the North, Jalpaiguri in the

¹⁸⁶"20 Wing, Indian Air Force - Database". *Bharat Rakshak*. <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/Database/Units/20%20Wing>

¹⁸⁷ The airbase is home to the IAF No. 20 Wing, as also to the Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21 (Mig-21) FL fighter aircraft of the No. 8 Squadron and a Helicopter Unit.

¹⁸⁸ Alexander, C. *A city is not a tree*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996. pp. 118-131.

¹⁸⁹ Rodrigue, Jean-Paul, et al. *The Geography of Transport Systems*. 4th ed., Routledge, 2016.

East and other district headquarters and State capital Calcutta in the South are connected to Siliguri through State Highways. NH 31C connects Gangtok in the North to the main highway and SH-12 connects Siliguri to Cooch-Bihar. Siliguri is a natural growing town with lots of urban complexities, lack of cohesive transportation network, absence of land use and transportation integration, limited public transport options, and no intermodal connectivity. Road network lacks a functional hierarchy and there is absence of appropriate road geometry along the corridor length and at intersections. We find many unorganised on-street parking, especially in the core urban area. Encroachment of roadside activities on roads and sidewalks, Exhausted capacity of all the arterial, sub-arterial and collector roads , poor quality of roads, lack of enforcement of traffic. Though there are four railway stations (Siliguri Town station, Siliguri Junction, New Jalpaiguri Station and Bagdogra station) in and around Siliguri, these railway stations still struggle to cater to the ever increasing population of Siliguri.

CHAPTER 4

GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SILIGURI AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS IN AND AROUND THE CITY

The sovereignty of any country depends on many factors. History bears testimony to the fact that maintaining one's border is important to any bilateral or trilateral ties with neighbouring countries. Henceforth the regions adjacent to international borders are of utmost importance for the Government of any Country. This chapter deals with the geostrategic, geopolitical and the geographical importance of Siliguri. The significance of the region under study has become connoisseur in the eyes of academicians and political analysts owing to its highly disadvantageous position in geo-strategic and security terms due to its peculiar geographical features.

Geopolitics simply means the study of the impact of geography on international relations and politics of the country. It aims to comprehend how geographical variables change international political behaviour. Hence the 'space' or the territory near the international borders comes to the forefront in determining the relationship between two neighbouring countries. Boundaries can be natural like rivers or mountains separating two regions or artificial i.e. man-made like the McMahon line etc. Cohn (2003) says that geopolitics is an analysis of the old and new interactions happening between geographical 'settings and perspectives' on one hand and the political processes on the other hand.¹⁹⁰ Geostrategy is a subfield of Geopolitics and was used for the first time by Fedrick L Schuman in his article "Let Us Learn our Geopolitics" published in 1942.¹⁹¹ The two words geostrategy and geopolitics cannot be used separately and in simple words we can say that geopolitics emphasises on 'why' and geostrategy is 'how'. The

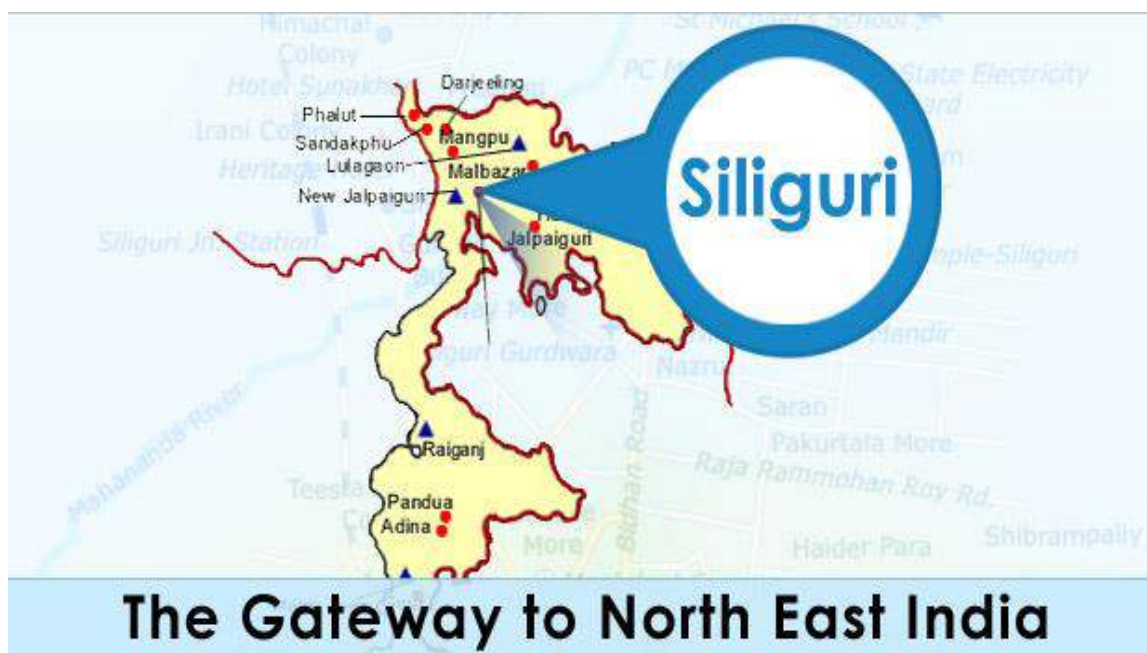
¹⁹⁰Cohen, S. B., and Rowman and Littlefield. *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, p, 11.

¹⁹¹ "Define geostrategic | Dictionary and Thesaurus." <http://geostrategic.askdefine.com/>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

geostrategic importance of Siliguri can be understood only if we understand the geography of the region.

Located at the base of the Himalayan Mountains and nestled in the plains of Darjeeling district,¹⁹² Siliguri is the second-largest city in West Bengal and popularly known as the gateway of North Eastern India. As we have already discussed, Siliguri is landlocked with international boundaries like Nepal towards North and West and Bangladesh towards its South and East. Bhutan is not very far from Siliguri as it is approximately only 93.3 miles¹⁹³. It has no access to the sea and is traversed by NH-31, the only road that connects Sikkim to the Indian mainland. This highway also connects the North Eastern States with India peninsula through the Siliguri corridor making it one of the most strategic areas. It is also linked with the traditional trade routes of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, now a part of china. To understand the military importance of Siliguri we have to understand the Siliguri corridor and its strategic importance.

Map 5: The political map of Siliguri



(Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/newsletter/siliguri/>)

¹⁹² "DARJEELING - West Bengal Tourism." <https://wbtourism.gov.in/destination/details/darjeeling>.

Accessed 3 Mar. 2021

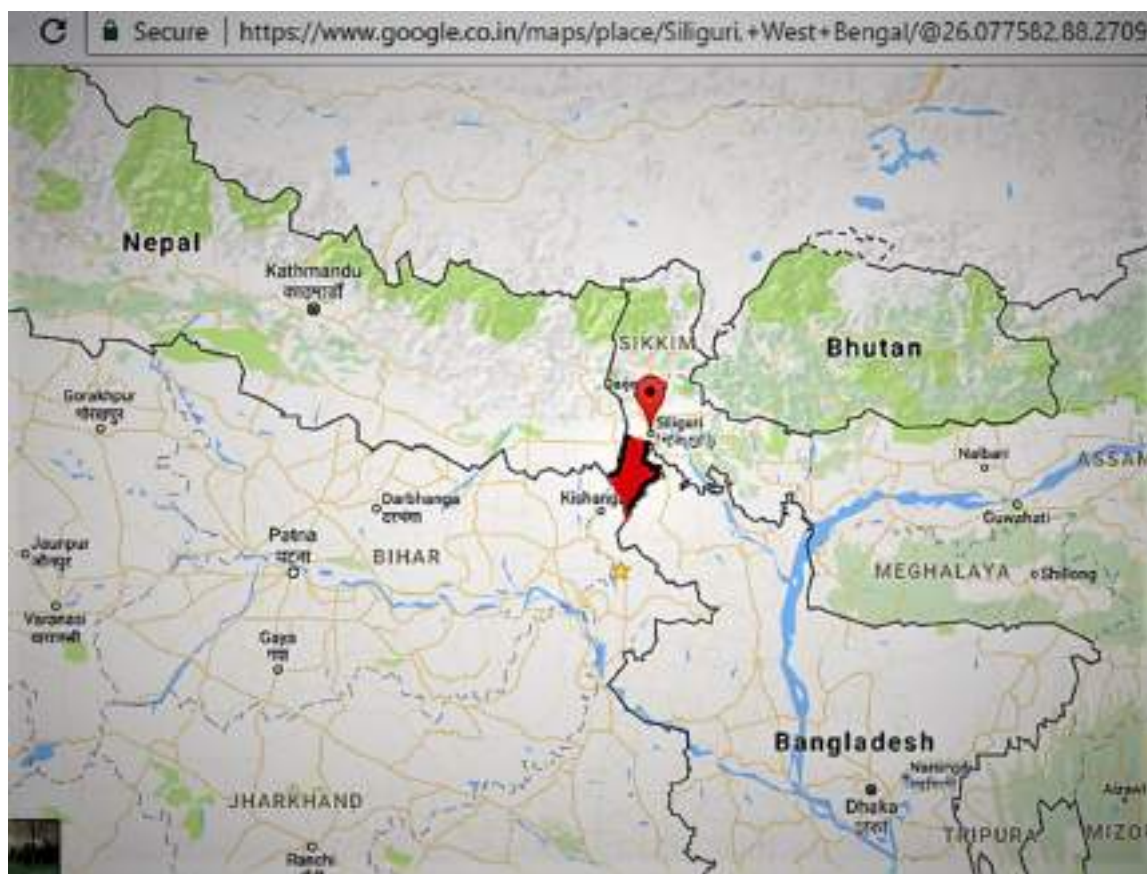
¹⁹³ "Distance between Siliguri and Bhutan is 150 KM / 93.3 miles."

<http://distancebetween2.com/siliguri/bhutan>. Accessed 24 May. 2020.

The Siliguri Corridor:

A corridor or a passage in geographical sense is a land mass that connects two or more places. Such types of passages play a very important role in political and economic relationships between neighbouring countries. There can be many types of corridors like development corridor, domestic trade corridor, foreign trade corridor, transnational corridor, transit trade corridor and trans boundary corridor(for animals).¹⁹⁴ Siliguri corridor connects North East India with the rest of India. This piece of land is situated between two international boundaries of Nepal and Bangladesh, lying on either side of the corridor and on the northern side lies the State of Bhutan.

Map 6: The Siliguri Corridor



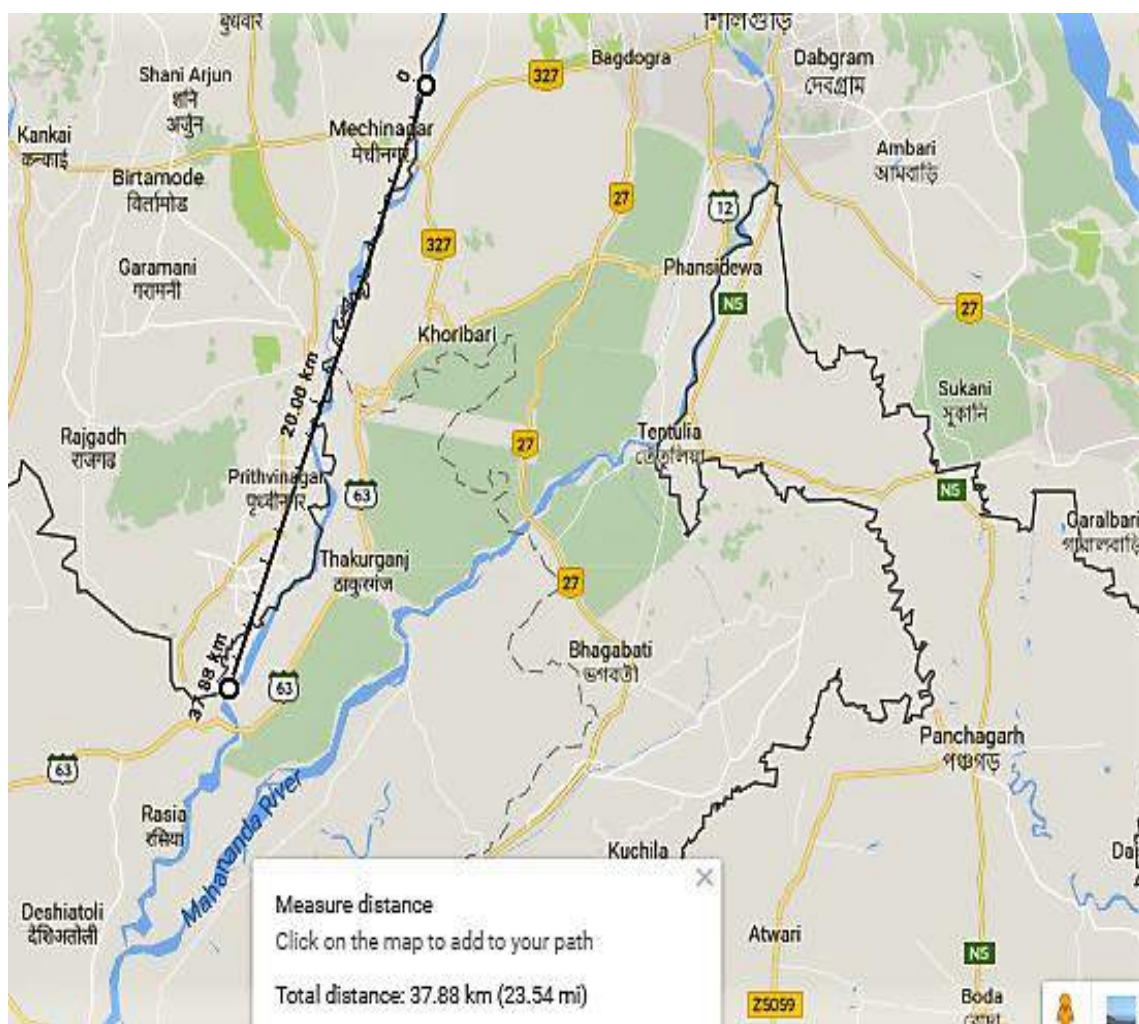
Source: Google Satellite Image.

¹⁹⁴ "Development Corridors - Gov.uk."

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08995e5274a31e000016a/Topic_Guide_Development_Corridors.pdf. Accessed 25 May. 2020.

Siliguri corridor also called 'Chicken's neck' is an example of Colonial delusions created in 1947 during the partition of India and Pakistan. It is a very narrow stretch of passage of about 23.5 miles or 37.88 kilometres. This stretch of land is in Darjeeling District of West Bengal and it connects North East India.

Map 7: The length of the corridor (23.54 miles)



Source: Google Satellite Image

The Siliguri Corridor serves Indian military bases established in North East India and Sikkim with supplies, reinforcements and other military formations. The security forces operating in these areas point out that as geographical configuration¹⁹⁵ puts the North Eastern States of our

¹⁹⁵ "The Siliguri Corridor: Question Mark on Security - Pinaki"

<https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume10/Article7.htm>. Accessed 24 May. 2020.

country at a disadvantage for a lack of strategic depth, the Siliguri Corridor is considered as an indispensable area to provide a buffer.

Map 8: The breadth of the Corridor (12.28 miles only between Nepal and Bangladesh).



Source: Google Satellite Image

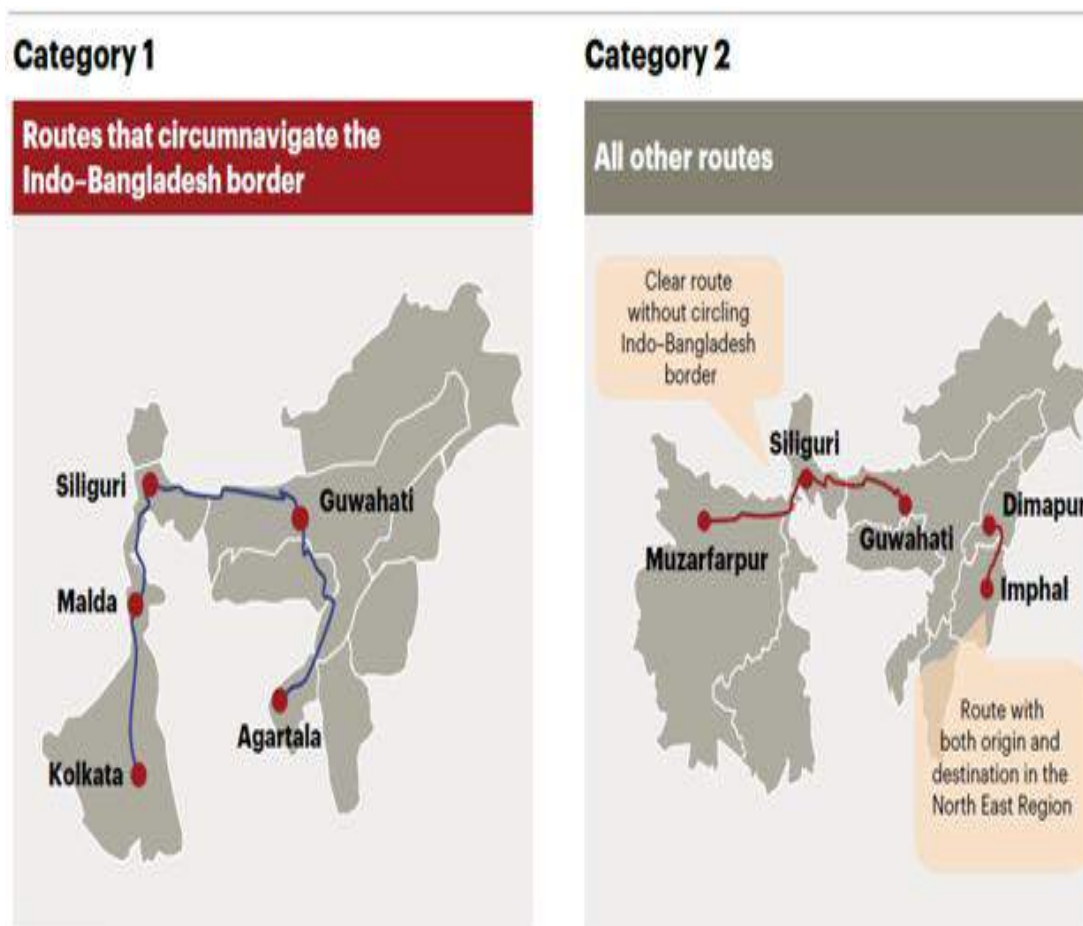
The corridor is also important in light of the vital installations which are located around it, like the airfields of Hasimara and Bagdogra, and also the oil pipelines, which run through the corridor.¹⁹⁶ The Corridor can be a blessing for landlocked countries like Bhutan and Nepal as it could be used as the shortest route to access and participate in the maritime economic activities in the Arabian Sea. A prudent effort was made in 2002 by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal

¹⁹⁶ "47341-001: South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Road"

<https://www.adb.org/projects/47341-001/main>. Accessed 24 May. 2020.

(BBIN) to establish a free trade zone through Siliguri Corridor¹⁹⁷. This cooperation initiative of BBIN was highly appreciable and also important to enhance cooperation and unity in the region, but later on the project was backed off by India due to sensitivity of the region and vulnerability concern of the Corridor.

Map 9: The Routes that connect mainland India with the North East region



Source: Google maps

Siliguri Corridor has both restricted as well as open borders at different sides on the international front. The words open border and closed border are imperious terms in geostrategic studies. The exigent demand for open borders has been made not only in terms of ‘distributive justice’ but also arguments have been put forward for freedom of movement of

¹⁹⁷ Panda, Ankit. Geography’s curse: India’s vulnerable ‘chicken’s neck’ – The Siliguri Corridor is a terrifyingly vulnerable artery in India’s geography. *The Diplomat*, 8 November, 2013.

Available at <http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/geographycurseindiasvulnerablechickensneck/> (accessed on 25 May 2019).

people.¹⁹⁸ Shelly Wilcox advocates that the free international movement constitutes basic rights of humans to migrate to the country of personal choice.¹⁹⁹ In the case of the Siliguri Corridor, it shares an open border with Bhutan and Nepal, but shares restricted borders with China and Bangladesh. There are many reasons for adopting restricted border policy with China and Bangladesh like insurgency issues also involving human trafficking, smuggling of narcotics, anti-India terrorist activities, the trepidation of Golden triangle (Thailand, Laos and Myanmar), and the policy of String of Pearls of China etc.

Human civilization in the past got divided through cultural boundaries. These boundaries though invisible had a very strong presence. These international cultural boundaries grouped people on the basis of their physical features, customs and cultures. With the passage of time humans imposed new international borders inspired by the political environment of the existing time. This made overlapping of the invisible cultural boundary and the visible imposed new international political boundaries. This overlapping of the boundaries is the root cause of international tensions between China and India. The right to ‘Claim’ a piece of ‘Land’ is the bone of contention between these two countries.

In order to understand the Geostrategic importance of Siliguri we have to understand the Sino-India relationship that has witnessed both good and bad times. The two countries are recognised as the most rapidly growing economies of the world. They hold considerable influence on global as well as regional politics. Both the countries are giants racing for modernisation, development and militarisation, to establish themselves as leaders in the region.

¹⁹⁸ See, for example, Ann Dummett, "The Transnational Migration of People Seen from within a Natural Law Tradition." *Free Movement: Ethical Issues in the Transnational Migration of People and of Money*, ed. Brian Barry and Robert Goodin, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992. Sager, Alex. 'Critical Cosmopolitanism and the Ethics of Mobility'. *Toward a Cosmopolitan Ethics of Mobility*, Springer International Publishing, 2018, pp. 69–90, pp. 69-90. Bauder, Harald. 'Perspectives of Open Borders and No Border: Perspectives of Open Borders'. *Geography Compass*, vol. 9, no. 7, 2015, pp. 395–405, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12224>

¹⁹⁹ Wilcox, S. "The Open Borders Debate on Immigration". *Philosophy Compass*, 4, 2009, p. 813-821.

They comprise 1/3rd of the world population and share 20% of the world economy.²⁰⁰ After the Independence of China, India was the first non-communist country to establish diplomatic relations with China.²⁰¹ China considered Tibet (now China) as an integral part of its territory. The existing trade relations between India and the then Tibet, which had continued since past centuries²⁰², was seen by China as ‘interference of India in the internal affairs of China’. India’s stand on Tibet (now China) and giving political asylum to the Dalai Lama further aggravated the situation. The Sino-India war of 1962 created further rifts in relations between China and India. To think that China attacked India due to the issue of Aksai Chin and India’s policies on Tibet would undermine the idea that China had foreseen India as her biggest rival for Asian Leadership.²⁰³ The war of 1962 and the defeat of India completely changed the geo-politics of Asia. In 1965 China asked India to surrender its claim on Sikkim but India refused as Sikkim was a protectorate of India. The strategic importance of Sikkim could be realised during the 1962 Indo-China war and also during the subsequent clashes at Nathu La and Chola in 1967.²⁰⁴ Sikkim (Sikkim was incorporated into Indian territory in 1975) is a strategic territory not only for India but also China. Sikkim shares borders with TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) of China in the north and north east. The State of Bhutan lies in the east and Nepal in the west. To the south lies West Bengal and the only road (NH-31) that connects Sikkim to India passes through Siliguri.

²⁰⁰ Zhang Li, "China-India Relations" - *IFRI - Institut français des relations*, Center For Asian studies, 2010.

²⁰¹ "Sino-India Relations including Doklam, border situation, and ... - PRS." Accessed May 29, 2020. <https://www.prsindia.org/content/sino-india-relations-including-doklam-border-situation-and-cooperation-international>.

²⁰² Datta, Karubaki. "Tibet trade through the Chumbi Valley— Growth, Rupture and Reopening," *Vidyasagar University Journal of History*, Vol.2, 2013-14. The article can be accessed at <http://inet.vidyasagar.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1815/1/7.%20Karubaki%20Datta.pdf>

²⁰³ Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1963, pp. 189–196.

²⁰⁴ "Strategic Importance of Sikkim - GKToday." 1 Mar. 2016, <https://www.gktoday.in/topic/strategic-importance-of-sikkim/>. Accessed 3 Mar. 2022.

China's discernible and flagrant stand is String of Pearls doctrine to encircle India. It is one of these steps taken by China to ensure its growing maritime ambition in its territory and in neighbouring oceans as well. Analysts²⁰⁵ believe that the String of Pearls theory refers to a Geopolitical theory to ensure the regime of China in the Indian Ocean against India. China is trying to make various deep sea ports in neighbouring countries of India which will provide commercial and military facilities to China falling on the Indian Ocean region between the Chinese mainland and the port of Sudan. The theory not only includes sea lines but also land choke points. The sea line runs through several countries having various choke points such as the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Mandeb, the Strait of Hormuz and the Lombok Strait also including other strategic maritime centres located in various countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Somalia.

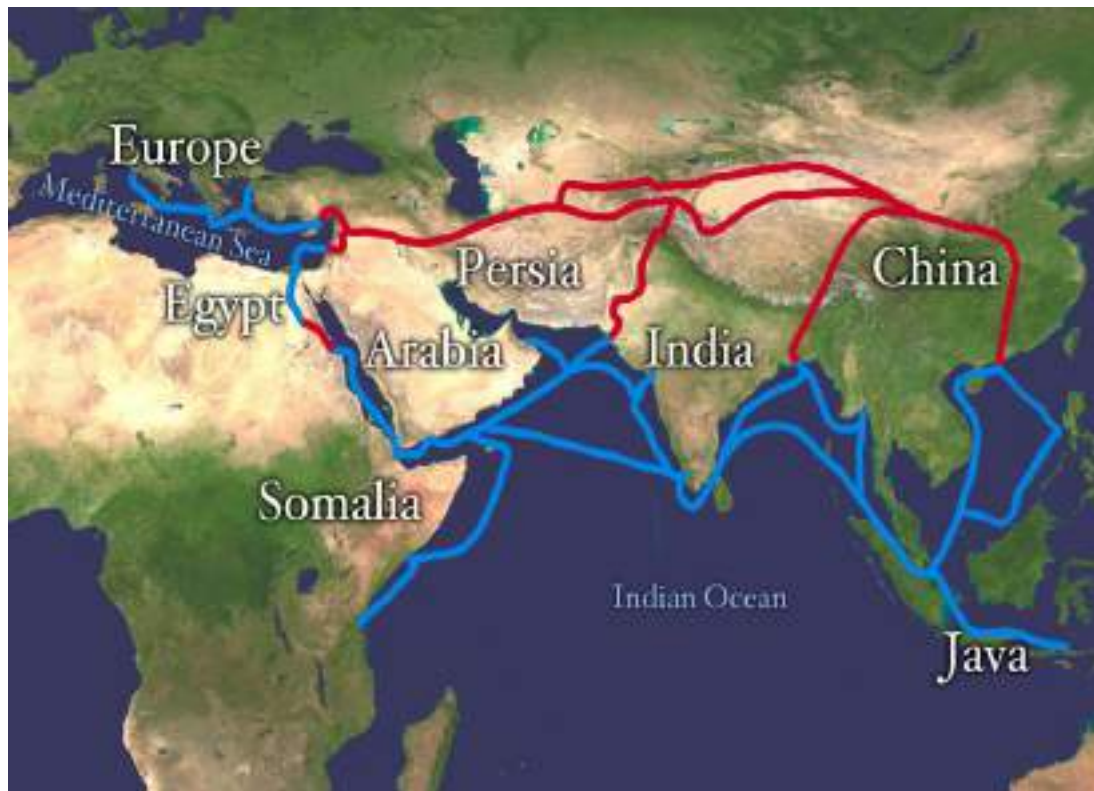
The proposed new silk route is also of big concern to India. One of the branches of the New Silk Route will pass through the Siliguri Corridor via Sikkim.²⁰⁶ This will provide a dividing passage to China to access Chinese goods into Indian Territory. This will also enhance the influence of China over North Eastern Indian States due to increased flow of cheap goods from China. The insurgency activities may rise due to direct supply of arms via this trade route. Knowing all these hindrances, the Indian government has not shown any interest in the revival of the Old Silk Route. India never accepted the above proposed route map. No Indian representative was sent to attend the Chinese conference held in Beijing. Shyam Saran, India's

²⁰⁵ Benjamin David Baker, "Where is the 'String of Pearls' in 2015?," *Diplomat*, October 05, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/where-is-the-string-of-pearls-in2015/> . Marshal Jr., "The String of Pearls: Chinese Maritime Presence in the Indian Ocean and its effect on Indian Naval Doctrine," *Calhoun* (2012), http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/27865/12Dec_Marshall_Richard.pdf?sequence=1 . Igor Pejic, "China's String of Pearls Project," *South Front*, October 05, 2016, <https://southfront.org/chinas-string-of-pearls-project/>

²⁰⁶ "Sikkim and the Silk Road: Is China making a move on India" 18 Jul. 2017, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2017/07/sikkim-and-the-silk-road-is-china-making-a-move-on-india/>. Accessed 1 Jun. 2021.

former foreign secretary has written that if One Belt One Road succeeds then India would be relegated to the margins of land and maritime both.²⁰⁷

Map 10: The String of Pearls in blue lines and China's new Silk Route that passes through Sikkim and Siliguri Corridor



(Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/En6j461v6UHKBRlw9>)

Apart from the political and economic games of China, she is now engaged in a new plot of constructing new roads in the disputed territory of Bhutan. India is apprehensive due to dialogue between the Government of China and Bhutan, wherein both are resolving their prolonged territorial disputes mutually. Various diplomatic rounds of talks have been conducted between the two countries. Indian interest in these talks lies behind the historic attack of China in 1962, when China tried to block Eastern Corridor of India. China is making a road in the

²⁰⁷ Taneja K. Mar 28, 2016, Why India is worried about China's ambitious One Belt One Road initiative, Available at <https://scroll.in/article/805632/why-india-is-worried-about-chinas-ambitious-one-belt-one-road-initiative>

disputed territory of Bhutan and India sent its troops to save the sovereignty of Bhutan. The current standoff in Doklam Plateau is proof of Chinese aggressive nature. The strategic importance of Dokhlam and Siliguri Corridor are interrelated. To understand the Dokhlam issues it is imperative to look into the Indo- Bhutan relationship.

India's Bhutanese Concern:

Bhutan, a small country, finds itself sandwiched between these two giant countries. Bhutan is the second most populous Himalayan country after Nepal. Bhutan in the past has always remained a target for Tibet, now a territory of China. The occupation of Tibet by China and the policy of territorial encroachment of China have given deep ordeal to Bhutan and in return upheld the friendship relation between these two countries, a relationship that was based on cultural exchange of religious ideas of Buddhism. The population of Bhutan is about one million but has rich ethnic diversity. Both countries have been sharing a friendly socio-economic and political relationship which is based on the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed by the diplomats of two countries in 1949 and was reorganised in February 2007. The Treaty ensures free movement of goods and people between two countries. Treaty also provides peace, equality and friendship between Indians and Bhutanese. Both the countries have established intimate bonds in the areas of foreign affairs, economy, trade, education, technology, international defence and security. According to the treaty, India provides assistance in safeguarding the borders of Bhutan from foreign aggression but will never interfere in any foreign affairs.²⁰⁸ The treaty does not mention Bhutan's status as a sovereign state and Bhutan agreed to take India's guidance and consideration while dealing with any third country especially in the matter of foreign and defence affairs. The treaty also established free trade and extradition protocols.²⁰⁹ Even after being one of the major role-players in the foreign policy of Bhutan, India never interfered in the sovereignty of Bhutan. India supported

²⁰⁸ Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Bhutan,"<http://www.Bhutannewsonline.com/treaties.html>.

²⁰⁹ Indo-Bhutanese Relations [Http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+bt0078](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+bt0078)

Bhutanese government when the country expressed her wish to renegotiate parts of the treaty to enhance Bhutan's sovereignty. India has also accepted the provision that Bhutan need not take guidance from India on foreign policy.²¹⁰

Bhutan is a landlocked Himalayan State and shares an international boundary of about 1019 Km borders with China in and India. Indo-Bhutanese boundary measures about 607 Km and Sino-Bhutanese border measures 412 Km. The boundary with India meets with the southern Himalayan range in the Duar Plains. Nepal and Bangladesh are also located in close proximity to Bhutan but do not share any international border with them.

China considers Sikkim and Bhutan as part of Tibet²¹¹ since the second century even though India has rejected such irrational claims of China. This claim of China is based on cultural affinity and China's own incorporation into the Mongol-controlled Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 AD).²¹² China has also addressed these territorial disputes with Bhutan on International fronts. The Chinese claim a total of 764 Sq Km covering the North-west (269 Sq. Km) and central parts of Bhutan (495SqKm) as their own territory. The north western part consists of the regions of Dhokla, Sinchuling Drramana and Shakhotoe in Samsthe, Paro and Hao districts and the central part includes the Pasamlng and Jarkarlung Valley of the Wangdue Phodrang districts.²¹³ Bhutan National Assembly has consistently raised the issue of the intrusion of the Chinese soldiers into the territory of Bhutan. The 470 Km Sino-Bhutanese border falls under the watershed of Chumbi valley and the crest of the great Himalayan range. The Chumbi Valley is flanked on either side by Bhutan and the Indian state of Sikkim .

²¹⁰ Singh Visits Bhutan to Show India Backs Its Democratic Changes

[Http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=ae7X6KWq6mCk&refer=India](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=ae7X6KWq6mCk&refer=India)

²¹¹ Rajan, D. S. China: An Internal Account of Startling Inside Story of Sino-Indian Border Talks, *South Asia Analysis Group*, 10-June-2008. Available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20081013182029/http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers28%5Cpaper2732.html>

²¹² Walcott, Susan M. Op. cit., 2010, 62-81

²¹³ Sarkar, Tuhina. "India - Bhutan Relations." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 73, no. 2, Indian Political Science Association, 2012, pp. 347–52.

Chumbi Valley, an important tri-junction between Bhutan, China and India is a 100-km dagger-shaped north- south salient that lies between Sikkim to the north-west, west and south-west, and Bhutan to the north-east, east and south. Approximately 100 km south of this dagger point lies Bangladesh and is also very close to Nepal and in between, lies 70 km of rugged mountainous terrain and the Siliguri Corridor.²¹⁴

According to China, the tri-junction is positioned at a place known as Gamochen, which is a few kilometres in the south of Doka La. China has constructed a road till Doka La and wants to lengthen it till the claimed point of tri-junction which is guarded by the Indian army. Gamochen, is the initial point of the Jampheri Ridge which is in Bhutan territory. China's claim is not only limited to construct roads but also to extend its reach to Siliguri Corridor. China's construction has a hidden objective to threaten Indian defence and prevent possible Indian expedition into the Chumbi Valley.

We can also see that China has upgraded the roads from Lhasa to Yadong through which the journey of 500 kilometres can be covered in just seven hours. China has also extended the railway line from Beijing-Lhasa till Yadong; that would be a high speed railway line and the mobilisation of troops and goods would be easier for Chinese PLA along LAC. New Chinese claims till Gamochen enhances the Chinese reach till Siliguri Corridor. For the last three decades, China unlike India has been betrothed in constructing roads and railway networks along the Indo China border to ensure movement of heavy war vehicles during any war like situation right up to LAC. For the same motive China has been constructing roads along Chumbi Valley up to its claimed tri junction point which was blocked by Indian troops. The construction of this road will ensure cutting off the North Eastern basic three primary formations and their units, drastically by reducing the supply of equipment and corroboration to the Indian army posts.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

Beside these border issues with Bhutan, India is also concerned about the increasing criminal activities along the India Bhutan border. However, Bhutan government has always been on the go to rally round Indian side to combat the problem of Illegal Smuggling and Human Trafficking along borders. The 699 km long border of India-Bhutan is properly demarcated and issues were completely solved in 2006. Smuggling of Cattles, Money, Wild Animal's Part (especially of Tokhey which is a species of lizard found in Bhutan and Nepal), Drugs and Gold has been increasing year by year. Steps have been taken on both sides to impede the Illicit Trade. Additionally, the Indian government has allocated a budget of 1259 Crore to improve the infrastructure along the 313km border along Bhutan.²¹⁵ In 2003-2004 insurgents camps in southern Bhutan were destroyed with the help of Bhutanese government. The military operation is widely known as "Operation All Clear". Both the governments have completed various rounds of talks to solve emerging disputes among themselves.²¹⁶

India, Nepal and the Siliguri Corridor:

Likewise Bhutan, Nepal also acts as a buffer country from an Indian security point of view and shares an open border with India and has social, cultural, political and economic exchanges. Siliguri Corridor becomes a strategic area in context to Nepal because of the Kakarvitta (Nepal) - Panitanki (India) Land Customs Station. India and Nepal relationship is based on the pillars of friendship and cooperation. It is unique because of open borders and deep-rooted heart to heart, people-to-people connection. We also see a tradition of free movement of people from across the borders since ancient times. Nepal has an area of 147,181 sq. Km. with a population of about 29 million. It has to share its border of approx. 1850 km in the east, south and west with five Indian States of Sikkim, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttarakhand and

²¹⁵ http://164.100.47.193/intranet/India%27s_Border_Management.pdf Lok Sabha Secretariat Parliament Library And Reference, Research, Documentation And Information Service (Larrdis) India's Border Management

²¹⁶ "Was India's Special Frontier Force Engaged in Bhutan's Operation" 22 Sept. 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/was-indias-special-frontier-force-engaged-in-bhutans-operation-all-clear-to-flush-out-militants/>. Accessed 3 Mar. 2021

Uttar Pradesh and also in the north with the TAR region of PRC. The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed in 1950 and it forms the base of distinct relations that exist between both the Sovereigns. This Treaty has given immense freedom to the Nepalese citizens to enjoy unparalleled advantages in India. In Nepal the majority of the people living in the terai region have kin- linkages to India. This is mainly due to inter marriages between these regions. The Indian government has continued the legacy of Britishers in maintaining the Gurkha regiment in the structural edifice of the Indian Army.

Trade and Commerce has always been the mainstay in any bilateral relations between any two countries. *Bal Chandra Sharma*, a reputed historian of Nepal has held that the beginning of India's Commercial relation with Nepal and Tibet can be pushed back as 5th Century B.C.²¹⁷ The dynamics of Indo Nepal Trade can be understood through four phases. First phase corresponds before the Treaty of Sugauli 1816, secondly, from the Sugauli Treaty 1816 to the 1923 Treaty, thirdly, from the 1923 Treaty to the 2002 Treaty and fourthly, post-SAFTA, BIMSTEC, WTO and other BTAs.

The bilateral relation between Nepal and India has also gone through different phases. A section of Nepalese has never accepted the role of India as a big brother in the subcontinent and it always wanted to ward off the 1950 friendship treaty.²¹⁸ The treaty addressed the issues pertaining to ownership of property, residence, trade and commerce between India and Nepal. The treaty had created special bond and dependency of both the nations for the issues related to supply of goods and security against foreign aggression. Beside social and economic bonds, the treaty also reemphasized security and strategic interdependence in between two countries. Both countries shared intelligence reports, fought together against threats of illegal immigrants and incoming refugees and initiated joint military exercises. Several points of tensions began in

²¹⁷ "India's Trade with Central Asia via Nepal."

http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/bot/pdf/bot_08_02_03.pdf. Accessed 1 Jun. 2020.

²¹⁸ Articles VI and VII of the 'Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal', July 31, 1950, in *India, Bilateral Treaties and Agreements*, Vol . 1, 1947–1952, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 1999, pp. 273–275.

between 1985-1990, that eventually diluted the treaty. Anti-Indian feeling in Nepal was politically motivated since the reinstatement of monarchy in 1951. The Nepalese monarchy saw India's democratic sovereignty as a threat to its molecule structure. The monarchy practices the propaganda of uniting the people of Nepal through a common anti-Indian sentiment. With the deterioration of monarchy in 2006 and arrival of Communist Party of Nepal Maoist as the largest party in 2008 increased tensions for India as because the Communist Party of Nepal most of the times show affinity to the Chinese Communist Party.

The Indo-Nepal border is roughly 1751kilometres. Though the border is open and not fenced, for the entry of goods, various transit and trading points are present at the border, which are jointly patrolled by civilians and parliamentary forces of both the countries. Mobility along Indo- Nepal territory is free of permission due to which citizens of both the countries require no visas to cross the border. Sometimes this frequent cross border movement becomes debatable as terrorists take the benefit of the situation and move freely in both the countries. Land of Nepal has been used to escape from the Indian Territory and to reach Pakistan via China by ISIS agents.²¹⁹ After 2000, cross border crime has been increased with the rampant increase in cross border crimes of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Insurgents' Movements and Weaponry. Indian Seema Suraksha Bal along with state police of three States adjacent to Nepal border patrols the borders.

Along the Corridor Kakarbhitta-Panitanki-Naxalbari is one of the busiest cross border routes in West Bengal. The open border has been misused by Racketeers, Criminals and terrorists. During the 80s-90s, Sikh and Kashmiri militants entered the Nepal border to infiltrate Indian adjacent States. ISIS agents were also arrested in North Bengal entered through the Nepal border. Beside these Indian militants many suspected perpetrators of sequential bomb blasts in India slink out of the country through the open border and secrete in Nepal. Due to strict laws against criminals in India and leniency in the legal system in Nepal many hard-core

²¹⁹ Shrestha, Buddhi Narayan. 'Diplomacy in the Perspective of Boundaries'. *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 1, Apr. 2021, pp. 37–57. DOI.org (Crossref), doi:[10.3126/jofa.v1i1.36248](https://doi.org/10.3126/jofa.v1i1.36248).

criminals of India escaped to Nepal to set up smuggling networks and criminal syndicate gangs to smuggle gold, fake Indian currency, wild animals, drugs, human organs including children and women, arms and exposures. Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Ganja from Nepal is also a serious apprehension for India. India has been used by traffickers to gather innocent women of Nepal and then channel them to Gulf Countries. During the earthquake in 2015 numerous Nepal girls were trafficked and caught in Delhi airport. Organ trading is also at its high rate due to the immense poverty in the region. Nepal border is also used for gold smuggling from Tibet to India. WikiLeaks documents have revealed that ISI is using Nepal as a source to create terrorist fronts against India and has also pushed men and explosives through open borders various times. Constructions in no man's land along the border and destroying or removing Indian pillars are new problems that have aggravated.²²⁰ The extent of the issue of borders has crossed its limit and has been misused by the criminals and terrorists; it has led to the condition of rethinking the open border status with Nepal for the security of the nation. India and Nepal have conducted a Cross-Border Crime Control Action Plan in 2013 to combat the cross border crime. Eighteen crimes identified by the agency include smuggling, trafficking, and fake currency, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, unauthorised trade, human smuggling etc. even after so many efforts done by both the government countries are not able to check the volume of cross border crime²²¹ due to some loopholes as well in the security. The importance of the Siliguri corridor would be incomplete without mentioning the Indo -Bangladesh relations.

India and Bangladesh are close neighbours sharing a boundary of 2491 miles in length and this boundary is shared with three Indian states of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. Bangladesh and India share a riverside border also. Rivers along the borders of the country have been an obstacle for fencing. It is not possible for either side to fence the reverie coast due to the meandering nature of the rivers. Almost four major rivers flow along the Indo-Bangladesh

²²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 37–57.

²²¹ Das P. September 19, 2013, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Need to effectively manage the India-Nepal Border, Available at-
https://idsa.in/idsacomments/ManagetheIndiaNepalBorder_pdas_190913

border in the Siliguri corridor. These rivers receive heavy rainfall during the months of August and September and are heavily flooded leaving the plain population in a hostile situation.

Bangladesh is important for the security and development of the North East region and the success of Look East policy and now Act East Policy also depends on cordial relations between Bangladesh and India. The assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman brought an era of troubled relations between these two countries. However, Sheik Haseena's visit to India in 2010 and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visit to Dhaka in 2011 led to the establishment of new bilateral relations between Dhaka and New Delhi. The history of Bangladesh cannot be thought of in separation from the history of Bengal of Indian State. Islamic solidarity is one of the mainstays in Bangladesh and still its links to India are Civilizational, cultural, social and also economic.

Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 till 2002, India had been the topmost trading partner of Bangladesh, but after 2002 China overtook the trade.²²² China has seized the market of Bangladeshis due to the easier trade rules than that of India. Construction of China's deep sea port in Bangladesh even after the concerns of India shows that the game is inclined in favour of China now. Bangladesh is now the 'Third largest trade partner' of China, the bilateral trade reaching US Dollar 3.19 Billion in 200. Under Asian Pacific Free Trade Agreement (APFTA) tariff barriers to 84 different types of commodities imported from Bangladesh were removed. China offered to build nuclear power plants to meet the country's growing energy demands. China imported raw materials from Bangladesh like leather, cotton textile, fish and other major exports include Textiles machinery, and also electronic products fertilisers, Cements etc.

Chinese premier Wen Jiabao's official visit to China in 2005 led to opening of gates for many agreements. Direct air-link between Dhaka and Beijing via Kunming was started. China had to

²²² Sahoo P. August 20 2011, East Asia Forum, India losing ground to China on trade with Bangladesh, Available at <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/noida-mahagun-moderne-domestic-workers-class-divide-bangladesh/story/1/18359.html>

rely on Myanmar to directly access Bangladesh through rail-route. The Kunming- Chittagong road link via Myanmar is considered to be a strategic move on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party. Besides trade, China has also heavily invested infrastructure in Bangladesh. The Bangabandhu International Conference centre, the Chittagong Bridge and many others are some examples of Chinese Investment in infrastructure. For military equipment and army modernisation Bangladesh totally relies on Chinese Counterpart. Artillery combat aircraft, missiles, patrol ships, military tanks are a few examples which Bangladesh purchases from China.

China shares no direct boundary link with Bangladesh like India; however, it has been successful in making inroads into Bangladesh political, economic and military affairs. India has missed some of the best opportunities in counting her shares in Bangladesh. China aims not only to colonise Bangladesh economically but also harness the economic and military benefits of the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh, once a part of India shared many things in common with India even though there are many areas of contention between these two countries.

One of the major areas of contention between Bangladesh and India is India's 'Construction of Farakka barrage'.²²³ This was done to divert Ganges water to increase water supply in Hooghly. Bangladesh complained that she neglected the right share of the water and construction of the Barrage had converted the huge area fit for cultivation into waterless parched land during the dry season and flooded marshy land during the monsoon season when India releases excess amounts of water.²²⁴ Other areas of concern shown by Bangladesh are that this diversion has led to an increase in salinity level and hence fisheries have been contaminated, navigations have been hindered and it also causes effects to the health of Bangladeshi citizens. The Water sharing Treaty was signed in the year 1996 for sharing the Ganges water however Bangladesh seems not to be satisfied with the Treaty.

²²³ "Political history of Farakka Barrage and its effects on ... - SpringerLink." 4 Jan. 2016, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40728-015-0027-5>. Accessed 21 Dec. 2020.

²²⁴ "Farakka Barrage Project." <http://fbp.gov.in/>. Accessed 21 Dec. 2020.

Another area of concern for India is that Bangladesh has denied India's transit facility to landlocked North Eastern regions of India²²⁵. This has led India to rely heavily on the Siliguri Corridor for its connectivity with North Eastern states. Other than this the most important problems faced by India is the issue of illegal migration. All governments of Bangladesh have denied the existence of this phenomenon even though this has been regularly flagged in the meetings of Border Security Forces. The migration of Bangladeshi into India has altered the demographic pattern of neighbouring states like Assam, West Bengal, and Tripura Meghalaya.

Two causes can be attributed to the migrant flow, firstly the pull factor and secondly the push factor. The pull factor was mainly due to economic as well as political reasons. The first phase of migration was purely political However, later onwards India became very disappointed with the issues of illegal Bangladeshi migrations. India is seen as a land of opportunities by the poverty stricken Bangladeshi nationals. The pull factors augmented with push factors like increasing population, depreciating Bangladesh economy and others.

The Indian government has tried to maintain the status quo for bilateral relations despite growing ambience of suspicion and abhorrence due to history and party due to Chinese intrusion. In 2011 the two countries signed a border demarcation Accord to end the four decade dispute. This was called the *‘Tin Bigha Accord’*.²²⁶ In the same year Indian Army and Bangladesh Army participated in a joint military exercise called ‘Sampriti II’. India is also looking forward to solving the ongoing energy crisis in Bangladesh by introducing the concept of Regional Power Trading System. Siliguri Corridor becomes more important to be taken care of because of Banglabandha Land Custom Station.

Banglabandha is a key inland port in northern Bangladesh to provide a trade link with India, Nepal and Bhutan and it is linked through the Siliguri Corridor. This inland port is only

²²⁵ "Constraints and Opportunities in the India-Bangladesh Transit Dispute."

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43550358>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

²²⁶ "Freedom from virtual captivity - The Hindu." 2 Nov. 2011,

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/freedom-from-virtual-captivity/article2592167.ece>. Accessed 12 July. 2020.

4.3 miles from Siliguri and Jalpaiguri of West Bengal. Kakarvitta, the India-Nepal border transit point is only 38 miles and the India-Bhutan border is 42 miles from the India-Bangladesh border, which borders Bangladesh. Despite the geographical proximity to the borders of India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, the issues of border control along with the territorial sovereignty increases the strategic importance of Siliguri many fold.

Siliguri: Present Military Deployment

The republic of India is guarded by the Indian armed forces that comprise Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indian Navy, Paramilitary Forces, Central Armed Police Forces, and Strategic Nuclear Command. Siliguri by virtue of its geographical location falls under the Eastern command.

The Eastern command with its headquarter in Kolkata consists of following subordinate units:

- a. 23 infantry division placed at Ranchi
- b. III Corps at Dimapur which includes 2ND Mountain Division, 57TH Mountain Division and 56TH Mountain Division.
- c. IV Corps at Tezpur Assam including 71ST Mountain Division 5TH Mountain Division and 21ST Mountain Division.

Siliguri is Headquarter of 33 Corps which includes 17TH Mountain Division, 20TH Mountain Division and 27TH Mountain Division. The Siliguri based 33 Corps was once a part of 14 Army during World War II. The Regiment was established in Siliguri along with Corps Headquarter in 1962. The 33 Corps Base at Sukhna is responsible to look after the security of North Bengal, Sikkim and if needed Bhutan. The 33 Corps comprises three mountain divisions which includes 17th Division, 20TH Division and 27TH Division and along these three Mountain Divisions we also have different Brigades Artillery and Cavalry. In the year 2003, a housing Complex was inaugurated for the jawans of Sukna Military Station and it was called Ugrah

Vihar. The project was completed with approximate 1.25 crore rupees under the Fast Track scheme within a record time of 365 days.

Sukna just on the outskirts of Siliguri at present is a part of Kurseong block, Darjeeling District. It is only 4 km from Upper Bagdogra, 6 km from Matigara, 7km from Mahananda Para and 7 km from Saktigarh. One can witness that Sukhna is surrounded by Siliguri, Naxalbari , Phansidewa and Rajganj Block. The establishment of 33 Corps has altered the demographic pattern of the area. The total population in the year 2011 according to Census of India was greater than the earlier recorded population. The total population on record was 1011 with a total number of 214 houses. The percentage of the female population was 53. Bagdogra railway station is the nearest railway station and the station is only 10 km away from Sukhna.

The impact of the establishment of 33 corps at Sukhna is that the whole area has witnessed an increase in the establishment of housing complexes. The route from Matigara traffic to the camp office witnesses Mangaldeep Sevashram Sangha, NBSTC Division Office, Modi Public School Zion Church, Sivananda Vedanta Yogashram, Mother Dairy Calcutta Matigara unit, Kagyu Buddhist Centre, a petrol pump. A big Housing Complex under the name of Vastu Vihar is nearing completion and it immediately reflects how the establishment of the locality Sainikpuri had a huge impact on the overall area. Within the Army campus we can find Kendriya Vidyalaya, Trishakti Army pre-primary school, State Bank of India, MES playground, Parth Simulbari playground and others. The camp is lush green traversed by Manekshaw Marg, which is strictly used by Army personnel.

The 33 Corps with its Headquarters at Sukhna is assisted by 2 Air Bases, at Bagdogra and the other at Hasimara. The Bagdogra airfield located in Bagdogra is only 8 km from Siliguri and is a part of district Darjeeling. The airfield is home to 1 AF's No. 20 wing. Earlier this airbase was also home to MIG -21 FLS of number 8 Squadron. The airfield also witnessed the legendary number 7 Squadron flying the Hawker Hunter at the critical period of 1971 war. Till 2012 as per field report the Bagdogra airfield was home to at least two Sukhoi-7S and a GNAT.

These aircraft were later renamed as I E -1245(GNAT) and SUKHOI B-844 became the pride of the airfield. MIG-21 airframes of retired aircraft could be spotted scattered about two dozens in number in and around the airfield.²²⁷

The Bagdogra Siliguri Military Complex was established because of the strategic Siliguri Corridor and it was very near to the nearest point between Nepal and Bangladesh. It was also 47 nautical miles away from the Chinese invasion spot of Sikkim in 1962. The Bagdogra Military Complex included barracks storage areas, residential buildings in thousands and this was one of the main reasons behind the urbanisation of Bagdogra and surrounding region.

Bagdogra in no time acquired the status of a census town of Darjeeling district. Census town is a type of town which is not statutorily notified as administered but its population has attended the urban characteristics. The criteria is that the population has to be more than 5000 and 75% of the main working population should be employed in a non-agricultural sector. Other than these two characteristics the third characteristic is that the area should have a minimum population density of 400 people per square km as per census of India to prove itself as an urban entity. Bagdogra forms a part of the greater Siliguri Metropolitan area and is well connected by roadways as well as railway stations.

The importance of Bagdogra is that it serves the region with the only ‘custom airport’ of the whole North Bengal. Traversed by two national highways NH 31 AND Asian highway it connects many important towns like Kishanganj, Gangtok, Jalpaiguri, Birpara, Malbazar Islampur Khoribari Nepal, Mirik, Pankhabari. In the analysis of the Airway facility, Bagdogra Airport acts as a civil Enclave and also as Air Force Station serving as a Gateway airport to Hill towns of Darjeeling , Kalingpong and Sikkim. This airport also has the facility to entertain the foreign tourists and provide them special permits required to travel Hill Stations.²²⁸ The airport

²²⁷ "Search Results for “qinetiq” – Defense Industry Daily."

<https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/search/qinetiq/feed/rss2/>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

²²⁸ "Bagdogra Airport Profile | CAPA." <https://centreforaviation.com/data/profiles/airports/bagdogra-airport-ixb>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

also has flights connecting all the major cities of India like New Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai Guwahati and Kolkata. It also provides facilities for helicopter flight to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. As already discussed in chapter 3 on Economy and Communication of Siliguri, the Government of India, in 2002 granted the status of a customs airport with limited International operations. The air traffic at Bagdogra crossed the mark of one million in the year 2014-15 reflecting 43.6 percent growth. Bagdogra is also connected with the Railway station which is under Northern Frontier Railways Siliguri, Katihar division. This railway connects many towns like Siliguri, Nakshalbari, Kishanganj and Katihar.

Bagdogra which was once an abode for tigers, as the meaning of the name suggests turned to an urban centre only because of the establishment of a military unit at Bagdogra. At present the economy of Bagdogra is mainly service sector chiefly because of the presence of Army personnel and Air force personnel. Though we find scattered tea gardens in and around Bagdogra, the 'Airport Market' which is renowned for its Chinese products cannot be ignored as it plays a central hub for shopping destinations.²²⁹ Bagdogra also hosts a weekly market twice on Thursday and Sunday, where fresh vegetables and fruit along with other household items are sold.. The impact of urbanisation can be also seen in establishment of banks like ICICI, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of India, State Bank of India, central Bank, syndicate bank, and insurance companies like life insurance company limited etc. have branches in and around the market of Bagdogra. We also have schools like Air Force School Bagdogra, Army Public School Bengdubi, Bagdogra Public School, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bagdogra, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bengdubi, Good Shepherd School, and Hebron School etc. These schools are affiliated to CBSE Board or ICSE Board. We also have schools which are affiliated to the West Bengal State Board like Shubham Aaya Suryanarayan Hindi high school, Chittaranjan High School Bengali medium, Balika Vidyalaya and Sister Nivedita English School. The overall Urbanisation of Bagdogra was the outcome of the establishment of military stations and airfields. Other than

²²⁹ "Best Shopping Markets in Siliguri - Nativeplanet." 6 Feb. 2019, <https://www.nativeplanet.com/travel-guide/best-shopping-markets-in-siliguri-005405.html>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

Bagdogra Military Station we also have Sevoke military station. Sevoke military station is famous for Baikunthapur army ground where the Indian Army conducts its military recruitment process.²³⁰ It is not very far from Siliguri approx 10 km and it gives passages to National Highway 31 and the NH31 A connects the town of Gangtok. It is just 23 km away from Bagdogra airfield and has its own railway station on the New Jalpaiguri Alipurduar Samathala Road line but there is no commercial stoppage for trains and it is purely used for military purposes. It is essentially constructed to connect Sevoke military station with other military stations like Alipurduar Samuktala Military station and Cooch Behar army stations et cetera.

However in 2008 the Government of India took a major step in connecting the region with Gangtok, Sikkim with rail routes. Sikkim, a strategic part of India, is connected with only a single roadway and the military has to use this only route along with civilians. The North East Frontier Railway took the construction of North Bengal Sikkim Railway link of approx. 52.7 km.²³¹ The aim of the project is to connect Sikkim with Siliguri and with the rest of India through a rail route. The rail link of the 52.7 kilometre stretch will be broad gauge (5 feet 6 inch) and the proposed speed limit will be 65 km per hour. This project was approved in 2008²³² and once completed, will connect Sikkim to the main Indian rail network. It will also boost tourism and the regional economy besides revamping the military needs of the region. About 70% of the rail route will be passing through the tunnels as per the proposal this route will have 13 tunnels and the longest being 1800 m, 100 bridges and 4 manned level crossing.²³³ This

²³⁰ "ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE, SILIGURI (WB) - Join Indian Army.." http://joinindianarmy.nic.in/writereaddata/Portal/BRAVO_NotificationPDF/Baikunthpur_Rect_Rally_notification_wef_26_Oct_to_03_Nov_18_for_PDF_file.pdf. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

²³¹ "North Bengal-Sikkim Railway Link - Railway Technology." <https://www.railway-technology.com/projects/northbengalsikkimrai/>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

²³² "West Bengal-Sikkim rail route tunnels near completion | Kolkata" 2 Sep. 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/bengal-sikkim-rail-route-tunnels-near-completion/articleshow/77880815.cms>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

²³³"Indian Railways new Sivok-Rangpo rail project: Travel from West" 30 Aug. 2019, <https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/railways/indian-railways-new-sivok-rangpo-rail-project-travel-from-west-bengal-to-sikkim-in-just-2-hours-watch-video/1691100/>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

project was undertaken to improve connection between Sikkim North East cities which mostly lie on the Chinese border and to the rest of India. This line is of national importance and it will make it convenient for the Indian Army to deploy military and logistics along the Indo Chinese border.

Other military bases include the Central Reserve Police. The CRPF is considered as one of the largest Paramilitary forces with 39 battalions.²³⁴ The main role of CRPF is to maintain law and order and also look to counter insurgency in the areas where it is deployed. The Eastern sector of CRPF has three ranges Bhubaneswar, Durgapur and Siliguri.²³⁵ The present construction of the area around Nougkhat took place after the year 2010. The area is also home to 38 ADM Ranges headquarter and the central weapon store is also located here. Siliguri also has SSB camps called Sashastra Seema Bal, Siliguri Frontier.²³⁶ The Sashastra Seema Bal is also called Armed Border Force India or Central Armed police forces under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Before 2001 it was called the Special Service Bureau but later on changed to Sashastra Seema Bal. As per record it has 67 battalions and 76337 active personnel.²³⁷

The SSB has very interesting history in the wake of Chinese conflict of 1962 when the Government of India realised that the borders do not only need Rifles but also support from local populations. The Special Service Bureau was thus conceived in November 1962 and eventually formed in March 1963. The sole objective was "Total Security prepared in the remote border areas for performing 'stay behind' roles during war."²³⁸

²³⁴ "History of CRPF | About Us | Central Reserve Police Force" 25 Feb. 2021, <https://crpf.gov.in/history-crpf.htm>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

²³⁵ "Knowing Central Armed Police Forces - The Tribune India." <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/jobs-careers/knowing-central-armed-police-forces-847951>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

²³⁶ "Siliguri Frontier - Sashastra Seema Bal." <https://ssb.nic.in/index.aspx?cid=4>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

²³⁷ "IG's Profile- SSB Ministry Of Home Affairs, Govt. Of India - Sashastra" <https://ssb.nic.in/index1.aspx?lsid=757&lev=1&lid=686&langid=1&Cid=4>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2021.

²³⁸ "Border Security: The Role of the US Border Patrol - Federation of" 11 Aug. 2010, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/RL32562.pdf>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

The Siliguri Frontier was raised on 1st April 2011 and its main headquarters is at Kolkata. The Siliguri Frontier was created out of the North Bengal part, East District of Sikkim of Guwahati Frontier and Kishanganj-Thakurganj part of Bihar. It consists of 3 SHQ, 10 BNS including one reserve 63 Battalion, 03 TCS for recruits (FTC Ranidanga, STC Falakata, ATC Barasat, TTS Kolkata and 04 AO offices. The Ranidanga sector of SSB has 41 battalions and the 8th battalion is placed at Khaprail. The SSB has a much greater role to play in this region as it covers 530 km of International border which includes 350 km of Indo Nepal and 215 km of Indo Bhutan borders.

Thus we see that the corridor is of immense importance for the security and the unity of the nation. The Corridor is the hub of road, railway and air networks connecting West Bengal to other North Eastern states of India. Geo Strategically it is also the nucleus of existence of Seema Suraksha Bal, Indian Army, and Border Security Force and is a spot to receive all the information related to Line of Actual Control with China. New Jalpaiguri is the most important railway station strategically, from where three rail networks emerge to connect the three military formation centres located right opposite to China. The most strategic road towards Tawang, a town in Arunachal Pradesh runs through here only. The road to Tawang is only 25kms away from the Line of Actual Control border with China.²³⁹ This road provides essential supplies to the 60000 troops that come under 4 corps of Army who are responsible to maintain peace and unity of the area. The road and rail network towards Dibrugarh also runs through the corridor. From the station of NJP railway link reaches till Dibrugarh a district in Upper Assam from where all the supplies are sent to different bordering check posts to China, Myanmar and Bangladesh in Nagaland and Western Arunachal Pradesh. Armies stationed in these regions are also fed by this network. The armies located in Sikkim are also fed by the supply line of the railway network of Siliguri Corridor which has 33corps. Being located as the only connecting line of North Eastern India the defence of the corridor cannot be denied or taken for granted.

²³⁹ "India wants to build a road through Bhutan's 'Yeti Territory' to counter" 8 Jul. 2020, <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/india-wants-to-build-a-road-through-bhutans-yeti-territory-to-counter-chinas-expansionist-moves-858681.html>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

The question of China's presence along the corridor is evidenced by the standoff at Doklam Plateau in the month of June 2017.²⁴⁰ On January 13, 2010, China and Bhutan completed the nineteenth round of the joint survey related to the diplomatic talks of borders of two countries in reference of the Chinese claims of the western border near Chumbi Valley (which is just 50 kilometre away from SC) and the pastoral lands of Doklam, Charithang, Sinchulumpa and Dramana. Chumbi Valley due to its geostrategic presence plays an important role in deciding the geo political role of the country for the entire north eastern region of India. Chumbi Valley has its proximity with Sikkim and Tibet as well.

In case of decreasing bilateral relations with China and quest for 'Regional Supremacy', India should be always on her toes to overcome any forced war like situation for protection of her sovereignty. She already has experiences of wars with China and Pakistan. The 'dragon' seems more volatile than Islamabad in provoking the existing border demarcation issues. The Eastern war front, encompassing the International boundaries of Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet through various mountain-passes is conducive for the Red army to launch any military assault in case of war. The Sino India war and the border tension of 1967 bear testimony to these facts.

"India and Chinese troops along the Sikkim-Tibet Border were reported still shooting at each other early this morning. Fighting however; apparently is not on the scale of yesterday's clash, the most serious in several years.

*These skirmishes stem from aggressive forward patrolling by both sides. While we have seen no major troop deployment in the area by either side, we may be in for a period of somewhat greater tension. New Delhi and Peking have exchanged diplomatic protests."*²⁴¹

----- The President's Daily Briefs, 12th Sept 1967, CIA Declassified in Part sanitised copy: CIA- RDP 79T00936A005400230001-2

²⁴⁰ "Sino-Bhutan Boundary Negotiations: Complexities of the 'Package" 19 Jan. 2010, https://idsa.in/idsacomments/Sino-BhutanBoundaryNegotiations_mbisht_190110.

Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

²⁴¹ Daily Briefs, 12th Sept 1967, CIA Declassified in Part sanitised copy: CIA- RDP 79T00936A005400230001-2

Any military envelopment in the Eastern Front from the Chinese would be carried out through three accessible routes.²⁴² Firstly, through the five passes into Nepal and from Nepal to India with an eye on incarcerating the Siliguri Corridor to cut off Northeast India from her mainland. Secondly, through the passes south of Ladakh and North-Western Nepal and finally through Chumbi Valley towards Siliguri. However passes through Arunachal Pradesh cannot be ignored which can be direct access to the lower valley of Assam. Bhutan is also seen from a positive viewpoint to make successful inroads into India to Paro Dzong, Lhuntse Dzong. The Eastern front hallmarked through Chumbi Valley Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan can serve as easy routes for communist military and logistics capabilities. Any military movement of the Red army would meet on the plains transforming Siliguri into battlegrounds .Other than Arunachal Pradesh any advancement through the Chumbi Valley or Eastern Nepal or Bhutan would culminate at Siliguri.²⁴³

The announcement of Mao Ze Dong that “Tibet as the palm having five fingers of Ladakh, Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh”²⁴⁴ clearly expresses the Chinese outlook towards its immediate neighbour. The Siliguri Corridor is as important for China as it is for India. Given the strategic importance of the corridor it is heavily patrolled by India troops with different state and central border forces separately. The Indian government needs to look inwards to strengthen its military defence and infrastructure near Siliguri Corridor in order to counter a plausible Chinese military in future. The strategic location of the Town and the subsequent setting up of the military bases all over the region has certainly accelerated the pace of urbanisation and overall development of the region.

²⁴² "Siliguri corridor: Behind China's Sikkim aggression, a plan to isolate" 3 Jul. 2017, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/border-face-off-why-china-tries-to-break-chickens-neck-to-isolate-northeast/articleshow/59420472.cms>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

²⁴³ "Twisting India's Chicken's Neck | The Interpreter - Lowy Institute." 15 Jul. 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/twisting-india-s-chicken-s-neck>. Accessed 2 Jun. 2020.

²⁴⁴ <http://morungexpress.com/five-fingers-of-tibet/>

CHAPTER 5

SILIGURI IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

Integration of the local market to the global markets through opening the economy to the world is called Globalisation. It is generally conceived that globalisation is the expansion of the neo-liberal market economy.²⁴⁵ Market assumes the role of key player which leads to changes in the nature of binaries like global/local, *desi/videshi*. Globalisation has a huge impact on the socio-cultural and economic aspect of life in a city. The growth and development of Siliguri changed momentum after the opening of the Indian economy. This chapter looks into the impact of Globalisation on Siliguri.

The geographical location of Siliguri is such that to enter the heart of the city one has to pass through a corridor of length 38 km and breadth of 20 km situated between two international borders of Bangladesh and Nepal. The moment we pass the airport, which is located at Bagdogra, we can see glass building shops, busy markets, illuminating sign boards decorated on both sides of the highway announcing vacant paths for sale, new townships or hotels and schools. The four-lane highway is cautiously barricaded and decorated with floodlights. The ten-kilometre that from Airport to Darjeeling more speaks a ton about the spatial-physical changes Siliguri has undergone. The boundary of University of North Bengal, High-rise buildings of Uttorayon Township, rail-line running parallel to highway and the scenic beauty of distant mountain chains sparkle the eyes of visitors. Cities and towns are central to the strategy of development pursued by globalisation induced development has led to structural adjustment and new spatial organisation in cities and towns. Henceforth, the policies of the government are in tune with a philosophy of percolating the essence of globalisation to every hook and corner of cities and towns. Siliguri too, could not refrain itself from the waves of globalisation as we see a lot of restructuring of physical spaces within and outline the city.

²⁴⁵ Harvey, D. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Siliguri is the best example of a city shaped by local and regional processors by national as well as international forces.

Globalisation and Restructuring of Spatial Organisation

The development of the Siliguri city began from the locality called as Naya Bazar and Khalpara. These two localities were very close to the town railway station. The beginning saw new construction of warehouses and *godowns* meant for wholesale trade. There were no big industries in the town and the town began serving as a wholesale trade point for supply of goods to North-Eastern region of India. The geo-strategic location of Siliguri transformed it into a major hub for wholesale trade. The constructions of godowns and warehouses were followed by establishment of retail shops and a few consumer goods industries, but these were meant for only local consumption. One of the earliest settlements, Subashpally, which is located near the town railway station, is an example of the fact that one can witness huge warehouses packed with consumer goods. These goods are meant to be supplied to the North-East Indian states.

The Indo-China war of 1962 was an eye opener for the Government of India and thereafter the Government devoted itself to improvement of roads and rails in and around Siliguri. New bridges were constructed and a special reference can be made to the Mahananda Bridge. This Mahananda Bridge gave ample scope to the city development and also accelerated the expansion of the city towards the North-Western direction. The construction of the third Mahananda bridge connected the city with the western areas and the city began to expand towards western direction. The expansion of Siliguri city began from the locality called Hakimpara. It was from this locality that the city began to expand in all directions and the momentum gained only after the Government adopted the new economic policy during the 1990s. The economic liberalisation had a huge impact on the city of Siliguri as because the whole spatial organisation²⁴⁶ was re-structured. The first move towards spatial restructuring was

²⁴⁶ The idea of spatial restructuring has been vividly discussed in the research article of Yu, Z., Xiao, L., Chen, X. *et al.* Spatial restructuring and land consolidation of urban-rural settlement in mountainous areas

the declaration of Siliguri Municipality as Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994.²⁴⁷ The change of status from *Nagarpalika* to *Maha-Nagarpalika* was due to pressing demand arising due to the unprecedented growth rate of the area. The *Mahanagar* region constituted a huge area of about 42 square km. The original area which comprised 30 wards was expanded with the inclusion of 17 wards to the Corporation. The total area of 47 wards recorded a total of 42 square km. within the jurisdiction of Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The major effect to this spatial reorganisation was that it gave fillip to the growth and development of nearby peri-urban areas. Another step to spatial reorganisation was making Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority (SJDA)²⁴⁸ as the chief nodal agency for growth and development of the region. SJDA was formed under the provisions of West Bengal Town and Country Planning and Development Act 1979. This body came into complete action only after 1994 i.e. only after the declaration of Corporation. SJDA and Siliguri Municipal Corporation together came forward with a “new approach paper” regarding urban Development of Siliguri.

The Siliguri Jalpaiguri planning area constituted six police stations of Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Bhaktinagar, Matigara, Naxalbari and Rajganj. The whole area was also divided into five Blocks called “Community Development Block” like Phansidewa, Naxalbari and Matigara in Darjeeling District and Jalpaiguri and Rajganj in Jalpaiguri District. There are also two non-municipal urban areas Uttar-Bagdogra and Bairatal. There are approximately 290 *Moujas* in Urban areas which are included in the SJDA area. The planning and development activities of Siliguri Jalpaiguri Planning area included Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Naxalbari, Phansidewa but the focal point has always been Siliguri due to the unique geographical location.

Post 1991 when liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) was infused into the Indian scenario, the nation witnessed huge growth in the direct foreign investment in the

based on ecological niche perspective. *J. Geogr. Sci.* 28, 131–151 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11442-018-1464-2>

²⁴⁷ "Welcome to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Siliguri, West Bengal." <http://www.siligurismc.in/>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁴⁸ "Siliguri & Jalpaiguri Development Authority." <https://www.sjda.org/SJDA/>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

Indian Economy. LPG led to expansion of market in the regional areas and Siliguri could not keep itself aloof from the vibrant economic changes the country was undergoing. Siliguri needed an agency which could pave the way for its holistic development and SJDA was one such agency which facilitated the whole process of Globalisation in Siliguri. In 2004, SJDA came forward with “Perspective Plan 2025”. The vision of the Perspective Plan was that there would be an improved infrastructure and Science Centres along with social amenities for all health and hygienic development and also for growth of body and mind within the framework of ecologically sustainable aspects. (SJDA, 2004, xiii)²⁴⁹

The whole spatial restructuring of Siliguri and adjoining areas by the Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority was based on two important aspects. The region was divided into two prospects. The settlement hierarchy within SJPA has been formulated on the basis of the dominance of Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) in SJPA, as well as in North Bengal, as a centre for trade, financial institutions, socio-cultural facilities and transportation. The opening of the Nathu La leading to new avenues in cross-border trade, commerce and tourism and the regional road and railway linkages is also an important reason for zoning the region.

The area under zone 1 includes the region in and around Naxalbari Block. Physiographically the area is in the intermediate plains between rivers Mechi and Balason. The area is well supported by rich and fertile cultivation lands in the south producing surplus rice, paddy, jute and vegetables. The contiguity to international borders in the west and southeast with Nepal and Bangladesh respectively make the region of immense importance. Zone 2 counts the Westward expansion of Siliguri Municipal Corporations. The residential areas with extended commercial zones, with important transportation nodes, facility centres and commercial and institutional like government, semi government and private corporate establishments can be found in this zone. Zone 3 includes the North-West expansion of the

²⁴⁹ "Karotoya 2021 with cover for pdf.pmd - Institutional Repository NBU."

<https://ir.nbu.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/3955/1/Karotoya%20vol%2012%20Article%20No%207.pdf>.

Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

corporation around East and West of NH 55 and is mainly restricted to the Champasari and Chadmoni areas.

Map 11: West and North West Expansion of Siliguri city



Legend	Details
	West Naxalbari settlements (Zone I) (Mainly due to consolidation of production economies)
	West extended SMC settlements (Zone II) (Mainly due to 3 rd Mahananda bridge augmentation)
	North-west extended SMC settlements (Zone III) (Mainly due to high-tech industrial zones and tourism)
	Sevok Station Commercial and Transshipment Hub related settlements (Zone IV) (Mainly due to Nathula Pass trade prospects)
	High and Low density Settlements in Central Rajgunj CD Block (Zone V) (Mainly due to Eco-tourism, consolidation of production economies)
	West extended Jalpaiguri M. settlements (Zone VI) (Mainly due to consolidation of local agro-tech production economies)
Linkages	Railways Main Roadways Nathula linkages

.Source: Perspective Plan, 2025

This area is dominated by high-technology commercial and institutional trading centres related to micro technology, software development technology, nano-technology and biotechnology. Zone 4 is basically a Transshipment zone, around Sevoke and a commercial hub. Earmarked as a ‘Special zone’ with Sevoke node and other commercial corridors, it serves as the trade linkages to Nathula and the rest of SJPA and the larger region. Zone 5 includes the Central Rajganj (Municipality) extending up to railway lines from SMC going towards Assam. A detailed analysis of the relationship between liberalisation and free market economy and development and zoning of Siliguri is discussed later in this chapter.

The main questions arise why the administrators of Siliguri opted for zoning practice in Siliguri? The spatial reorganisation was essential and it provided the background for Zoning Siliguri. This has to be evaluated within the larger framework of the aims of urbanisation to create and construct neo-liberal globalised cities. The unprecedented growth in population leading to urban sprawl could possibly be one of the reasons but the motivation to form these zones around the core Siliguri were dictated through the discourses of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation 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)²⁵⁰ could invoke Marx’s ideas of ‘The Circuit of Money Capital.’²⁵¹

Globalisation, Migration and the Urban Sprawl²⁵²

There is a soft interconnection between globalisation migration and urban sprawl. Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation introduced the new world of consumerism to the Indians. Thus the policy of foreign direct investment and new consumerism circuitously led to

²⁵⁰ "Public private partnership models (for public services) - Thales." 25 Dec. 2020, <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/markets/digital-identity-and-security/government/identity/public-private-partnerships>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁵¹ "Capital Volume II - Chapter 1: The Circuit of Money Capital." <https://www.marxists.org/subject/economy/authors/fox/ucv2-ch01.htm>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁵² "The Characteristics, Causes, and Consequences of Sprawling" <https://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/the-characteristics-causes-and-consequences-of-sprawling-103014747/>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

the evolution of new markets to fulfil the requirements of the people. Migration of the people was the natural outcome in the new economic scenario in the country. This new induced migration was responsible for unequal accumulation of people in the new land of opportunities and Siliguri is one such example which shows how from a migrant town it transformed to a transit town.

Urban sprawl can be understood as an unimpeded diffusion of the urban characters of a city into its adjoining suburbs. It includes the construction of residential and commercial structures in the nearby areas of city fringes. As the outlying area becomes more and more populated the consequent impact is an outward expansion of settlement patterns. The word urban sprawl was created by William White and 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 mainly due to augmented population pressure. The growth rate of population in Siliguri has been incredible and it was higher than West Bengal average between the census years. The census report of 1991²⁵³ reflects that the population of Siliguri municipal corporation was 2,16,954. However, when we match it with the census report of 2001, we find that the total population of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation was 4,72,374.²⁵⁴ It is remarkable 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 (17.73%) of the population in 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

²⁵³ "Darjeeling - Census of India."

https://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/DCHB_A/19/1901_PART_A_DCHB_DARJILING.pdf.

Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁵⁴ "Welcome to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Siliguri, West Bengal." <http://www.siligurismc.in/>.

Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

growth of the population. In fact, population surge in many cities²⁵⁵ in the world such as New York, London, Tokyo, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi etc. has been due to migration rather than any natural increase.

Trans-border 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.²⁵⁶ 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 post Globalisation.

The turn of the new century witnessed phases of deep crisis in the tea industry. There are examples that as many as 72 tea gardens in the Dooars 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.²⁵⁷ The Tea industry which was considered to be the backbone

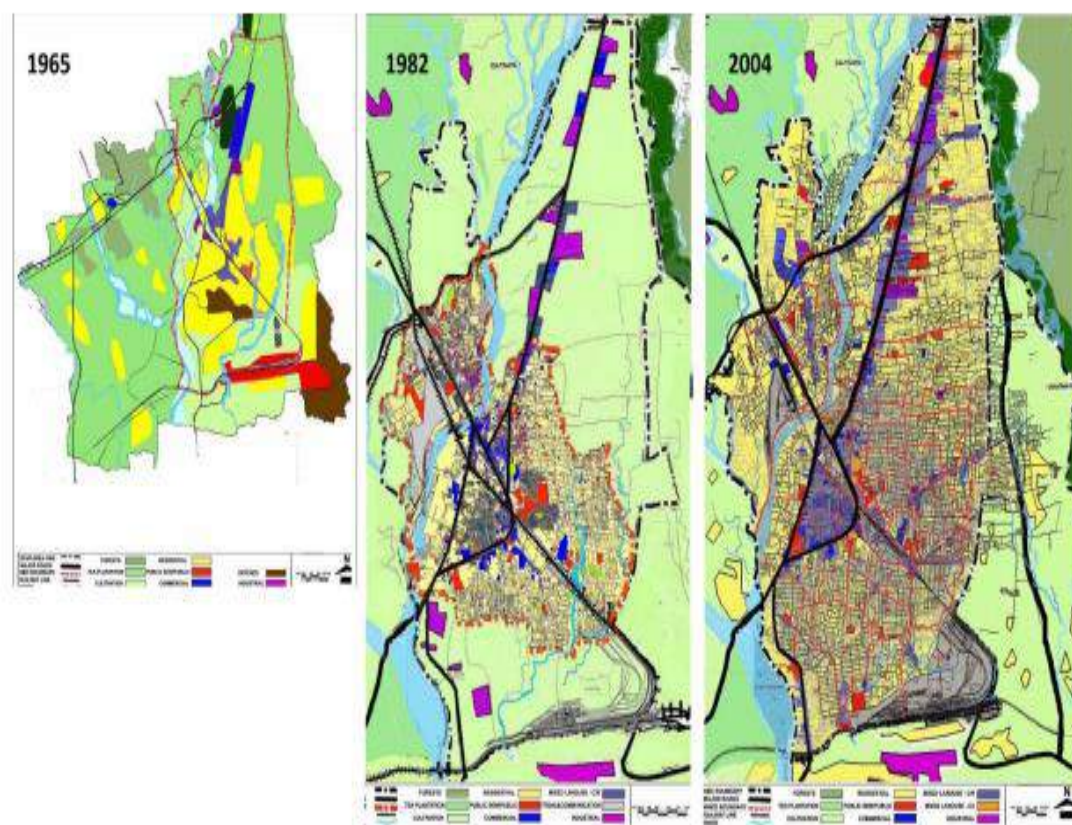
²⁵⁵ "Urbanization and the Megacity - World Population." <https://worldpopulationhistory.org/urbanization-and-the-megacity/>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁵⁶ Darjeeling District Statistical Handbook 2004, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics Government of West Bengal, published in 2005. Some dates were collected from the office of the Mayor, Sri Ashok Bhattacharya, Siliguri Municipal Corporation between 2018-2019.

²⁵⁷ Pinak Priya Bhattacharya & Jayanta Gupta, "Hunger deaths stalk Bengal tea country | Kolkata News - Times of" 30 Jul. 2014, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/hunger-deaths-stalk-bengal-tea-country/articleshow/39194027.cms>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

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.

Map 12: Siliguri land use progression trend



Source: Siliguri Municipal Corporation (2017)

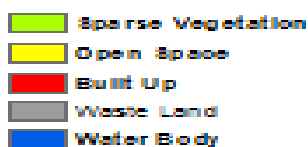
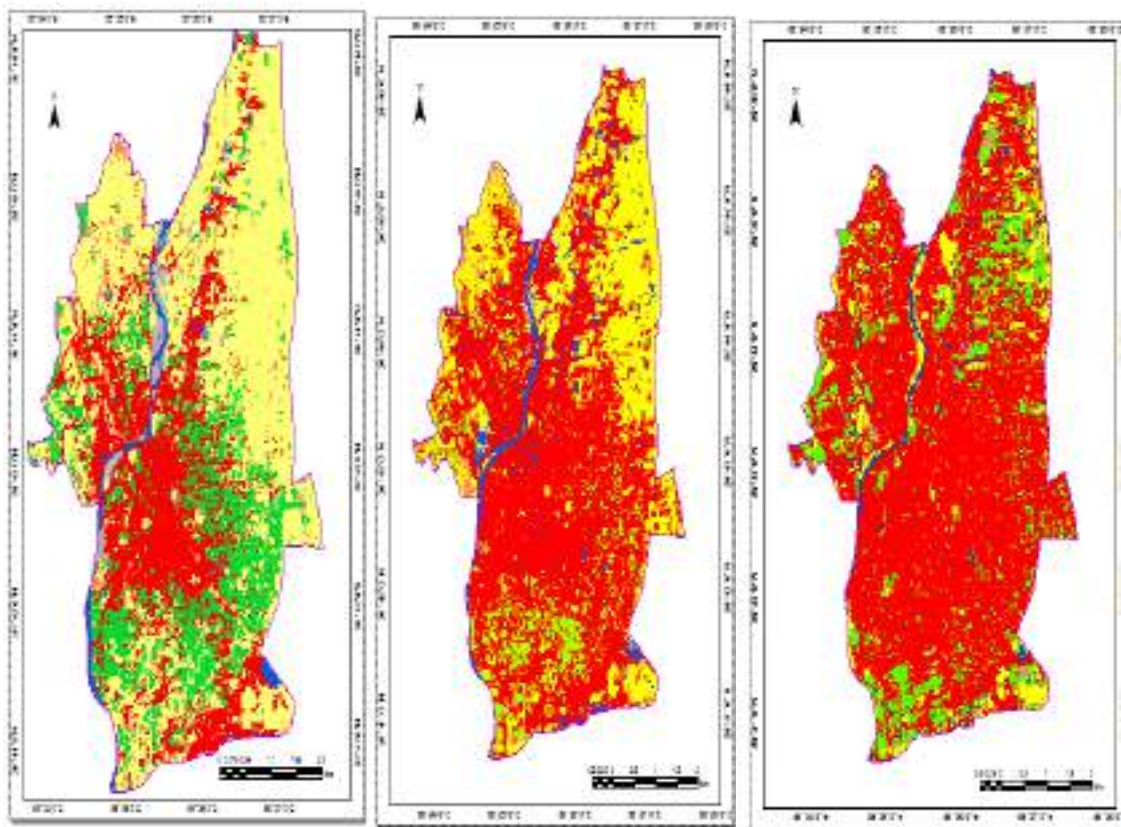
The phenomenal rise of population led to excessive pressure on land and we observed a drastic change in the land use pattern of Siliguri municipal corporation area. The changing settlement pattern can be best understood with the use of remote sensing and GIS techniques. Land pattern use is the product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

Map 13: Showing Land Use GIS maps of SMC (A) 1991, (B) 2001 (C) 2017

A

B

C



Source: Siliguri municipal Corporation

. 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 in the scenario. The 117.7 3% population 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 28.0 1%

from 47.9 3% in 1991. To make the situation worse, the GIS report of 2014 says that the open space in the Siliguri Municipal Corporation area was only 6.78%.²⁵⁸

It is very important to understand the zoning system 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. 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 through these

²⁵⁸ "Census Data 2001 - Census of India." https://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/census_data_2001.html. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021. The datas on GIS was collected from Prof. Sushma Rahotgi, Dept. of Geography, University of North Bengal.

vulnerable points illegal cross migration and the influx of cheap Chinese products enters India.²⁵⁹

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 and the South includes the lower Mahananda Bridge up to South-west Mahananda link canal and in the West and it includes the Phansidewa-Matigara link highway. This zone is dominated by residential areas. 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 Matigara *haat*. Economically this is very important to the 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 the Northwest expansion of Siliguri Municipal Corporation. Geographically this zone is restricted to Champasari and Chandmoni area. 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 the rest of SJPA and the larger region.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ "Siliguri surfacing as major illegal international gold trade hub - The" 25 Apr. 2016, <https://m.economicstimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/siliguri-surfacing-as-major-illegal-international-gold-trade-hub/articleshow/51979297.cms>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁶⁰ Fieldwork report conducted between 20018-19.

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 play a vital role in forcing the Governments of any country, 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 privatisation and also deregulation of markets to name a few. This has been discussed later as how in Siliguri the Tertiary sector saw phenomenal growth in State Domestic Product²⁶¹ between 1993-94 and 2000-01 in two sub-sectors i.e. 272% in 'Banking & Insurance' and 132% in 'Public Administration'.

²⁶¹ "State domestic product and district domestic product of West Bengal"

http://www.wbpspm.gov.in/SiteFiles/Publications/2_18052017142017.pdf. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

Post Liberalisation Economic Profile.

Siliguri became 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 organised retail business, hospitality industry and the real estate investment completely metamorphosed 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.²⁶²

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 liberalised economic regime. The economic activity-wise data reveal that 'Retail Trade' is the single

²⁶² This is an excerpt of some of the viewpoints made by the Mayor of the Siliguri Municipal corporation.

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.²⁶³

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 area. (Source: Statistical Abstract, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics, W.B). 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 null 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 Siliguri Jalpaiguri 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

²⁶³ The data was collected from *Draft Development Plan 2008-09 to 2012-13*, Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

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 India.

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, Jewellery shops 953, Optics and watches shops 478, Footwear outlets 1231,

Recreation centres 17, Transport points 500, Service Outlets 5000 and other miscellaneous 533.²⁶⁴

Liberalisation and the Secondary and Tertiary Sector of SMC

Post Liberalisation the share of the secondary sector has risen marginally. It is interesting to look at the trends of industrial growth in Siliguri. The problem is that there is no data separately for SJPA 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.²⁶⁵ 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

²⁶⁴ The data were collected from *Draft Development Plan 2008-09 to 2012-13*, Siliguri Municipal Corporation

²⁶⁵ The data were collected from *Draft Development Plan 2008-09 to 2012-13*, Siliguri Municipal Corporation

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 industrialised 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 liberalised economic regime had been initiated in the country, including the abolition of the 'licensing regime' which was the main reason for the growth.

In the era of globalisation, 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 urbanisation, 'repair services' industry shows steady growth over the years in respect to the concerning attributes. Small-scale industries have been playing a significant role in the industrial scene of SJPA. It not only contributes substantially to the SDP of West Bengal but also provides a great deal of employment.

In the post-GATT (The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) 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 SJPA 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 SJPA-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 organised facilities for setting up of small scale industries. The example of establishing Biswa Bangla Silpi Haat at Khawakhali, 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 globalisation 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 liberalisation being followed at the national level. With faster urbanisation 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 SJPA 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 North Eastern states and the countries of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. SJPA 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 the liberalised 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 equalisation for coal and steel, incentive schemes designed by the State Government for promotion of manufacturing industries, liberalisation of imports and exports etc. The encouragement to private investment in the backdrop of various policy reforms shall result in better utilisation 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 characterised 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 urbanisation 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 of 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 the 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 Census²⁶⁶, 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

²⁶⁶ "Darjeeling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011-2021, West"

<https://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/1-darjiling.html>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

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% comprises 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 Siliguri.²⁶⁷

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 SJPA 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 SJPA is leading to not only increasing population and urbanisation in SJPA but also due to the structural changes.

²⁶⁷ The datas were collected from Census Reports

Markets:

Siliguri has been growing as a distribution centre in North Bengal, North East 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.²⁶⁸ 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 of 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.²⁶⁹ that flow to the market from SJP and surrounding areas. Despite the existence of large wholesale markets characterising the economy of SJP as a mercantile one, infrastructure in the markets are poor.

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.

²⁶⁸ "Siliguri regulated market committee - West Bengal State Agricultural"

<http://wbagrmarketingboard.gov.in/Siliguri%20RMC.html>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

²⁶⁹ "Siliguri regulated market comm Mandi prices in West Bengal" <https://agriplus.in/mandi/west-bengal/siliguri-regulated-market-comm>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

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.²⁷⁰

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 Hashmi Chowk (or Hospital More), Sevoke More and Pani Tanki 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 are the Mahabirsthan 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, and the regulated market for wholesale of perishable goods, the Ghugumali Daily Market, Phuleswari Daily Market, Station Feeder Market, Jajodia Market and the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Market Complex.

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. 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 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 are rising rapidly on the either sides of the highway and roads of Siliguri signalling growth of modern infrastructure facilities in the city. The national and

²⁷⁰ Data based on the field work conducted between 2018-2019.

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 the Vishal Mega Mart standing tall on the Burdwan Road. Automobile companies are also gathering in Siliguri with their numerous Showrooms. Toyota Kirloskar, Maruti Suzuki, Honda, Ford, Tata, Mahindra & Mahindra, JCB, Hyundai, General Motors are some examples of this. Two-wheeler showrooms also take their position at the share of the Economy of Siliguri. Yamaha, Hero Honda, Kinetic, TVS Suzuki, Honda scooters, Vespa, Bajaj, LML etc. all these top-ranked companies are now present at Siliguri. With the increasing economic transactions in Siliguri some major banks both private and nationalised like HDFC, ICICI, Standard Chartered, Allahabad, State Bank of India, UTI, UCO, IDBI, Vijaya, UBKG bank etc. have opened their branches. In the era of Globalisation Siliguri has turned out to be the desired destination for most of the investors and financiers of India.

Thus we see that the liberalisation of the Indian economy had a huge impact on Siliguri and resulted in the spatial re-organisation of Siliguri. The first step in spatial reorganisation was the declaration of Siliguri municipality to Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994.²⁷¹ The spatial re-organisation of the city provided the necessary backdrop for zoning Siliguri which could be analysed within the larger framework of urbanisation programmes to recreate neo-liberal globalised cities. In return, these zones acted as feeder corridors in the growth and development of new markets in the Siliguri Municipal area.

²⁷¹ "Welcome to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Siliguri, West Bengal." <http://www.siligurismc.in/>. Accessed 3 Jun. 2021.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The research begins with analysis of conceptual theories and review of literature pertaining to urban studies. Urbanisation and development have been examined through the three macro approaches of 'Modernisation', 'Dependency' and the 'World System Theory'. From a Modernisation perspective, the transition from rural to urban society is conducive to the transformation from 'traditional' to 'modern', in terms of the technology of production and the orientation of individuals and social institutions. Dependency and World System Theory have focused on the mechanisms through which Developing Countries are made dependent on developed countries. Within many Developing Countries, the 'top-down' growth approach generated economic growth but at the cost of increased interregional disparities. The urban-bias approach was examined especially with respect to the rural-urban divide and rural-urban migration.

It can be well established that the spatial, economic, physical and geo-strategic manifestations combined to make Siliguri a metropolitan city. Urbanization is generally understood as a natural by-product and facilitator of some industrial development. But this is completely different in case of Siliguri because Siliguri has kept itself alive in the race of becoming a mega-city even though there is no industrial development. The model of urban development shaped by Rostow and Lewis in the early 1960's cannot be entrusted on the urban growth pattern of Siliguri. The growth and development of Siliguri cannot be understood on the platform of 'Dependency' approaches. It is probably true that development of Siliguri had its root in the colonial period but the geo-political pressures and constraints arising out of the locational position of Siliguri played a major role in the development of Siliguri. The idea of Clark that one of the influencing factors on the urban world is that the world itself has become coherent and integrated whole comes handy in understanding the impact of globalization in the urban growth of Siliguri. As discussed in this theories the pattern production as well as consumption in Siliguri was shaped by the globalization of economic and social activities.

Siliguri did not stand with the concept of traditionalism “as barrier to economic growth” as discarded by L. Wirth. It is a migrant city where there was no ‘folk like’ society that opposed to the integration of the market of the region into the world system. It whole heartedly accepted the inclusive ideas of globalization. Siliguri’s development is an example of assemblage of the urban transformation processes and it can be understood as a byproduct of interplay of region location, political choices, where geopolitics and globalization discourses played important role. Siliguri rose to its important position through decade of turbulent history of partition of India. Its location made the city geopolitically and economically very significant. The dynamics of migration has left its mark on the cultural and racial hybridity of the city. The spatial fabric and the urban forms reflected a mixture of different cultural layers.

The first chapter acts as setting the stage of this thesis. In this chapter, I have tried to trace the factors and changing political dynamics responsible for the growth of Siliguri from a small hamlet to a sub-division during the British period. The region during the whole period of 18th Century was contested as there was continuous strife between the Nepalese Raja, Sikkim Raja and sometimes the Bhutanese Raja and this discord was placated by the Britishers. Lawless bandits, Siliguri, Baikunthpur forest, and sanyasis form an interesting part of narration in this chapter. The British Frontier policy of Annexation made the *Terai* and *Dooars* strategically important. The annexation of Darjeeling from the Raja of Sikkim by the British East India Company in 1835 and the decision to make Darjeeling a sanatorium acted as a boon in disguise for Siliguri. The whole economy and communication system during this period was revamped. We see that jungles, hills, rivers, roads, railways, *haats* and almost everything in and around Siliguri participated in the growth and development of Siliguri. A mere village - ‘unhygienic and full of jungles and mosquitoes’, dreaded by Europeans, marauded by outlawed sanyasis, contested by Bhutanese and Kooch Rajas in the second half of the 19th century emerged as one of the largest and most developed towns of North Bengal. The journey to understand and comprehend the agencies of the historical processes in the making of this metropolis continues

in the next chapter where population growth and the changing social landscape of Siliguri are discussed.

The second chapter discusses the trends in population growth, the spatial distribution and the changing social landscapes of Siliguri. What were the driving forces that led to expansion of population in Siliguri? How migration shaped the urban discourse of Siliguri and became an important vehicle for urban process and social mobility for Siliguri? This chapter tries to offer answers to some of these important queries in the process of understanding the city of Siliguri.

The population of Siliguri increased even though it had no industrial fundamentals. In 1907 the population of Siliguri was only 784. Siliguri received recognition as a municipal town in 1951. The population in the corresponding year was 32,000 only. The growth of the town gained momentum just after the independence of India. The census report of the year 1961 shows the population of 65,471 and the year 1971 shows the population of 97,484. The census reports of 1981 and 1991 show the population of 1, 54,378 and 2, 16,950, but the census report of 2001 reflects a huge decadal growth rate of 117% with a population of 4, 72,374. The population of Siliguri metro area in the year 2014 was more than 8 lakhs and according to United Nations World Population Prospects it is projected that the metro area population would be above 10 lakhs. There was not one reason for such a change. The upgradation of Siliguri from Municipality to Corporation in 1994 and the inclusion of the peripheral areas changed the demographic structure of the region. Till 1994 Siliguri Municipality had 30 wards under its jurisdiction but after declaration as Municipal Corporation, 17 new wards were added to the existing 30 wards. But the main reason for the demographic transition in the region was migration.

Siliguri emerged as a migrant town and the profile and the nature of migration have considerably changed throughout the years. The Planning Commission agrees that the high surge in population was not due to the result of natural growth but because of significant

migration. The bulk of migrants not only constituted the Bangladeshi refugees but also the persecuted Bengalis that migrated from North Eastern states like Assam etc., and the non-Bengali speaking population like Marwari, Bihari and Nepalese that came from nearby areas in search of employment and new homes. The City was kind enough to accommodate all these migrants. A large number of rural people from different districts of West Bengal and other states in India have come into Siliguri city to search for jobs, betterment of life style, better medical facilities, better educational facilities and others. The heterogeneous population composition of Siliguri was one of the spin-offs of urban transformations. The growth of population was accompanied with the growth of economy and communication.

The third chapter carries the argument further by exploring the economic scenario and communication development in the region. The economic space as well as the transit spaces passed through colossal changes in context to Siliguri. Cities are shaped and reshaped by many historical and geographical features but at any stage in the city's history economic boom can occur and patterns of land use can change the transporting priorities. Thus, economy and communication can be the 'maker and breaker' of cities.

The market of Siliguri caters to a large hinterland of *Duars*, Darjeeling, the entire state of Sikkim, parts of Bhutan as well as parts of North-East India. Apart from trading, the 'Tea, Tourism and Timber' have accounted for major economic produce. Siliguri has a large number of trade centres and readymade markets for consumer goods and is thus home to myriad retailers, wholesalers, dealers, distributors and small-scale entrepreneurs. It is the commercial nerve centre of North Bengal. The city's strategic location makes it a base for commodity supplies to the North-East region. The development of the Tea industry was a big boon for Siliguri and the adjoining areas. The focus which was earlier towards the Hills began shifting towards the *terai* regions. Siliguri being on the foothills of the Himalayas began to develop as the 'Junction Point' of trade for dispatching the teas commercially to other parts of India and especially to Calcutta from where it was further sent to different foreign countries. The process of urbanisation led to the expansion of the town which had some adverse impact on the tea

gardens. The tea gardens are now converted to Satellite towns owing to demand for urban expansion, for example the Uttorayan Township was erected on the *Chandmoni* Tea Estate.

Locational advantage of Siliguri led to the growth of the wholesale trade market in Siliguri as the most important distributive as well as 'feeder Centre' since independence. Route connectivity of Siliguri to other parts of North Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Northeast India led to tremendous growth in the wholesale business activities. Siliguri acts as a convergence point to all major and minor routes connecting North-Eastern States, Sikkim, Darjeeling Hills and to the neighbouring countries of Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. The National Highways NH-31, NH-31A, NH-31C and NH-55, and the State Highways SH-12 and SH-12A are the regional road connectors that pass through the region. The National Highway 31 passes through the heart of the city and connects it to Delhi in the West and Guwahati in the East. District Headquarters like Darjeeling in the North, Jalpaiguri in the East and Kolkata in the South are well connected to Siliguri through State and National Highways.

Chapter 4 discusses the geostrategic importance and military establishments of Siliguri and its role at geopolitical level. It highlights the role of militarization in the growth and development of the region. It was the Britishers who first understood the strategic importance of this location when they were formalising their bilateral relations with Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. Sino- India war, the Indo-Pak war and the creation of Bangladesh highlighted the strategic importance of Siliguri as reflected in declassified CIA secret files. The Siliguri corridor became one of the most military-sensitive spots and this led to the militarization of the region (recent Dhoklam issues is one such example that reintroduced the international distinctiveness of Siliguri).

Siliguri is landlocked with international boundaries like Nepal in the North and West and Bangladesh in the South and East. Bhutan is not very far from Siliguri as it is approximately only 93 miles. It has no access to the sea and is traversed by NH-31, the only road that connects Sikkim to the Indian mainland. This highway also connects the North Eastern States with India

peninsula through the Siliguri corridor making it one of the most strategic areas. It is also linked with the traditional trade routes of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, now a part of China.

Siliguri corridor connects North East India with the rest of India. This piece of land lies between two international boundaries of Nepal and Bangladesh on either side of the corridor. Siliguri corridor also called 'Chicken Neck' is an example of Colonial delusions created in 1947 during the partition of India and Pakistan. It is a very narrow stretch of passage of about 23.5 miles. The Corridor serves Indian military bases established in North East India and Sikkim with supplies, reinforcements and other military formations. The security forces operating in these areas point out that as geographical configuration puts the North Eastern States of our country at a disadvantage for a lack of strategic depth and the Siliguri Corridor is considered as an indispensable area to provide a buffer. The Corridor is the hub of road, railway and air networks connecting West Bengal to other North Eastern states of India. Geo Strategically it is also the nucleus of existence of Seema Suraksha Bal, Indian Army, and Border Security Force and is a spot to receive all the information related to Line of Actual Control with China in this sector. Any military envelopment in the eastern front from the Chinese would be carried out with an eye on incarcerating the Siliguri Corridor to cut off Northeast India from her mainland. The Siliguri Corridor is as important for China as it is for India. Given the strategic importance of the corridor it is heavily patrolled by Indian troops with different state and central border forces separately. The Indian government needs to look inwards to strengthen its military defence and infrastructure near Siliguri Corridor in order to counter a plausible Chinese military in future. The strategic location of the Town and the subsequent setting up of the military bases all over the region has certainly accelerated the pace of urbanisation and overall development of the region.

Thus this chapter establishes the fact that peri-urbanization was the most important impact of militarization of Siliguri. Militarisation created new political as well as social spaces (because of huge deployment of forces who come with their families and mushrooming of markets in the cantonment area.) The Border between India and Bangladesh and Nepal is fluid,

fragile with lots of contentions. Illegal inflow of Chinese goods (displayed in the Hongkong Market, and Airport Market), and cattle smuggling (weekly cattle bazaar at Matigara Hat) are some examples of the contentions. Siliguri with international boundaries with Nepal and Bangladesh and proximity to boundaries of Bhutan and China is prone to external threat, its proximity to the North East exposes it to internal security challenges from militant organisations and other subversives trained in Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The town cannot remain unaffected by the political disturbances in the hills over the issue of Gorkhaland either.

Thus, Siliguri is hemmed in by military establishments on all sides. It is deeply patrolled by the Border Security Forces, Indian Army, the Assam Rifles and the West Bengal Police. Headquarters of BSF and Shastra Seema Bal (SSB) located in Siliguri. The Central Reserve Police Force also has a substantial presence in the area. We have two Air Force bases of the Eastern Air Command— the Hasimara Air Force and the Bagdogra Air Force. The second largest military camp of Asia, Binnaguri, is also located not very far from the town. The sprawling cantonments and airfields at Bagdogra and Salugara are reminders of this strategic location. The proliferation of military personnel in the region impacts upon the economy of the region and opens up some job opportunities and educational facilities.

I have tried to appraise the impact of globalisation on Siliguri in my last chapter . I believe that if making of Darjeeling sanatorium by the British and introduction of Tea and Timber in the mainstay economy of the region led to the breakdown of isolation of Siliguri, it was ‘New Economic Policy of Liberalisation’ of the government of India that integrated the region with the world economic system. Soon after the opening of the Indian economy the spatial organisation of Siliguri was restructured. From *Nagarpalika* the status was raised to *Mahanagarpalika*. The major impression of this spatial reorganisation was that it gave impetus to the growth of peri-urban areas in and around the municipal corporation.

Siliguri became 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 that not only the traditional mainstay business strengthened, we also see growth of new markets that developed in and around Siliguri that catered the economic demand of the large hinterland of Dooars, Darjeeling, the entire state of Sikkim, the state 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 organised retail business, hospitality industry and the real estate investment completely metamorphosed 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. Siliguri became the distribution centre for 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 impacts of economic globalisation in Siliguri are new commercial developments increasingly coming up through major real estate players. Mayfair, Bengal Ambuja Shanthinikethan, Vishwakarma builders and other local builders are developing new ventures along NH-31 and Sevoke Road of Siliguri region. A few malls have come up in Siliguri in recent years, like Cosmos Mall, City Mall, Kolkata Bazar, Orbit Mall, and Sevoke Road. Globalisation has led to growth of consumer culture among the residents of Siliguri. One simple example is the shift in consumption patterns of the middle class resident reflected in the multiplexes along with its associated digital bandwagon of social media reviews, forums, trailers, motion posters and online booking systems. Even if we make a comparative study of Bardwan, Kolkata and Siliguri we see that the urban growth of Siliguri was higher than the others. Thus, I have tried to establish that there was an indulgent cohesion between globalisation, migration, population growth, urban sprawl and markets.

In retrospect we can say that the strategic location of Siliguri made her cynosure of all eyes. The locational advantage of the region incited the proponents that led to urbanisation. The city has witnessed a rapid urban expansion. It has even gobbled up a tea garden and

neighbouring rural areas evicting in a large way the tea labour and the marginalised and pushing them to fringes of the city and the adjoining rural areas.

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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

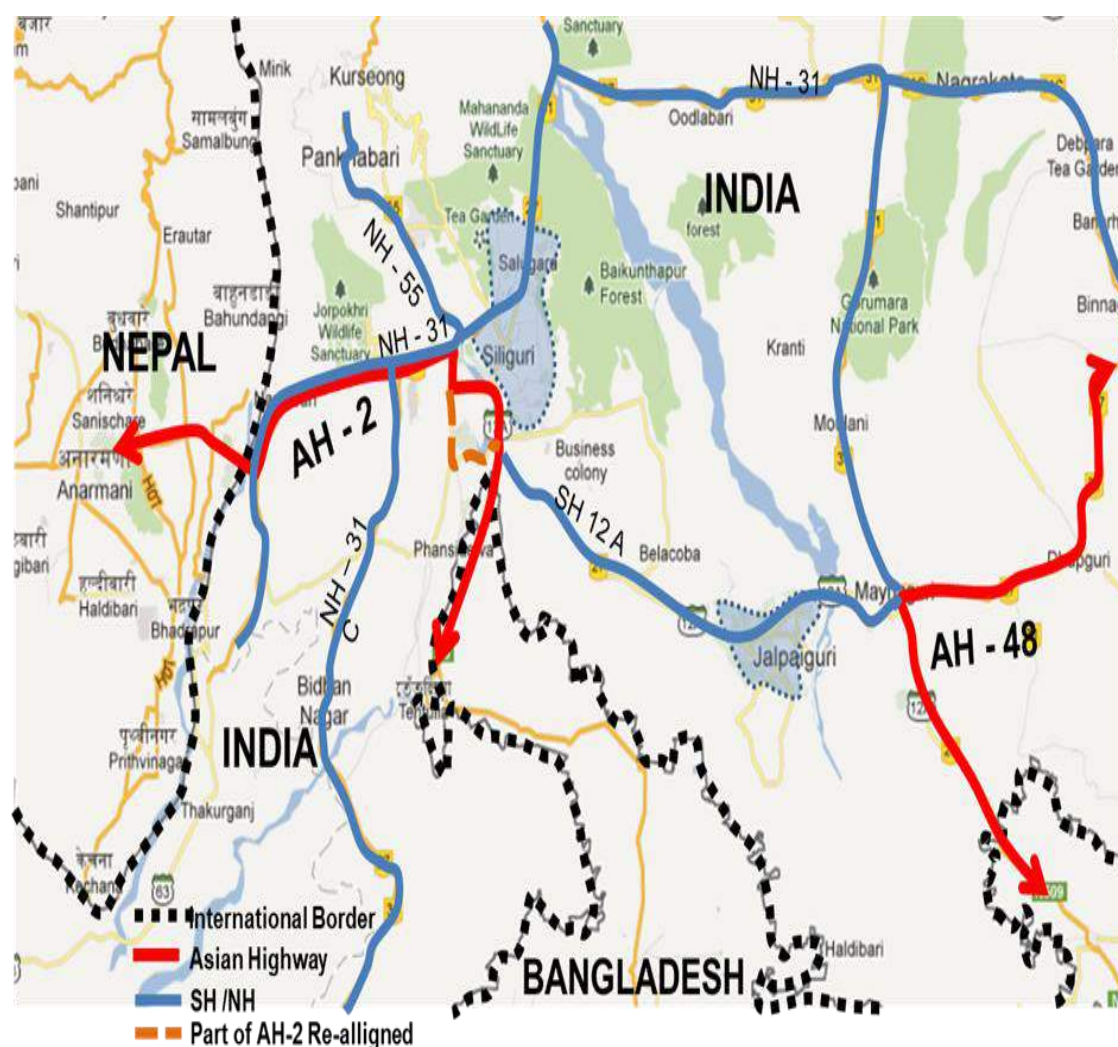
ASIAN HIGHWAY

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 approximately 10 lines of dense characters.

श्रीश्रीश्रीकृष्ण साहसारेव बाहादुरने इजिलिंग पारुङ्ग आव हावा सरुके सुवव जोसाकाका नौका
 लौग विभार होनेसे जिनगेमो आवोनेसे आराम पावेगा इसवात्ते आहतेहै सो हम महाराजाश्री
 श्रीसिकीप्रपति श्रीश्रीश्रीकृष्ण साहेव मौसुफके साथ इल्लिकेसवव इजिलिंग पारुङ्ग जोवण रिगीत
 का दक्षिण श्री वासासन श्रीकहेसु श्रीछोटादिगित नरिका पूव श्री महाननरंवि रनोनरिका पश्चिमसैत
 श्रीश्रीश्रीकृष्णमनि हैसै बाहादुरको अजायारति मन १८२१ साल तादिषि १९ भाय

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

APPENDIX 4:

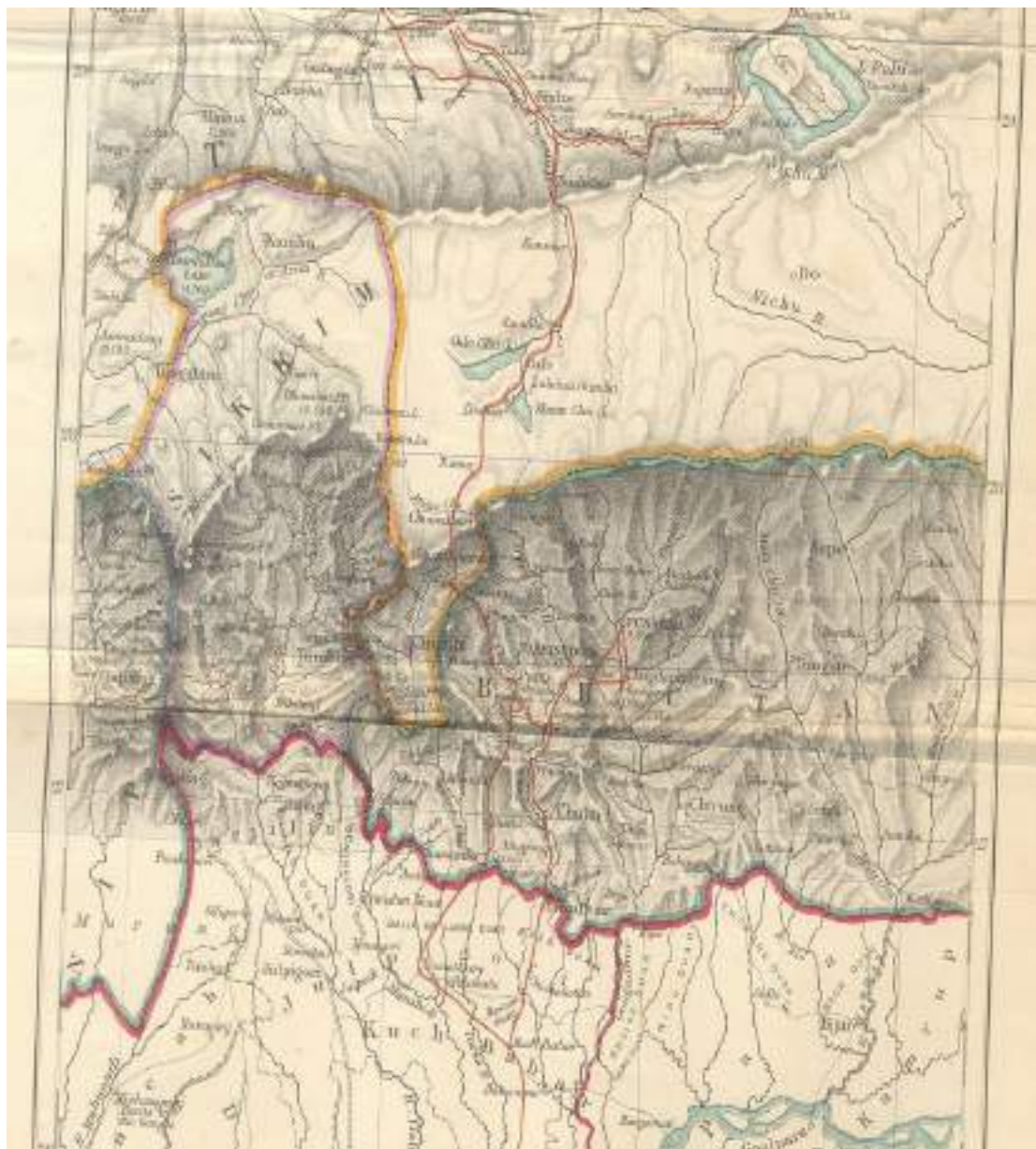
Map of Darjeeling district (1838) during regime of Rajah of Sikkim BAYLEY (1838) Map of the Country between Titaleea and Dorjeling



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-](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)
[BAYLEY%281838%29_Map_of_the_Country_between_Titaleea_and_Dorjeling.jp](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/91/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

Minakshee Kumari¹

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 47.93% 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%.

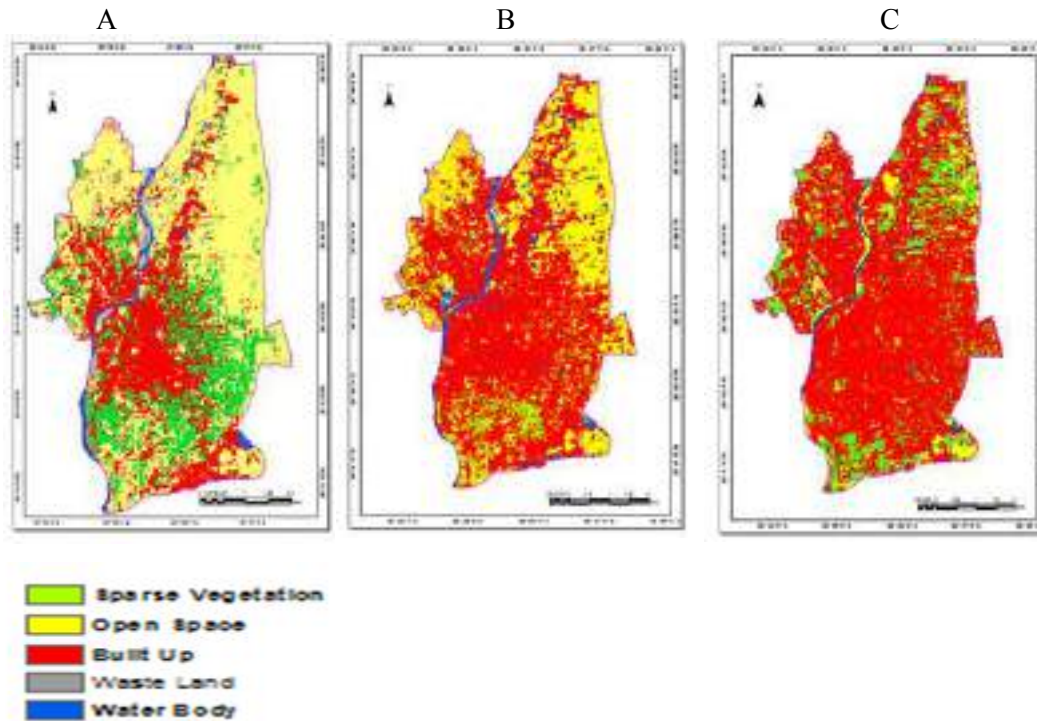


Fig. Showing Land Use GIS maps of SMC (A) 1991, (B) 2001 (C) 2017.

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 Siel, 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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¹⁰William Easterly, Ross Levine, What have we learned from a decade of empirical research on growth? It's Not Factor Accumulation: Stylized Facts and Growth Models, *The World Bank Economic Review*, Volume 15, Issue 2, August 2001, Pages 177-219,

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¹³Report of Siliguri-Jalpaiguri Development Authority, 2010

¹⁴ Kamtekar, Indivar., "*The Wartime Paternity Of India's 'Licence-Permit Raj'*". *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress. 77, 2016, 403–409.*

¹⁵2011 Census report.

¹⁶Siliguri Regulated Market Report.

¹⁷SMC report and field survey report



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ENLIGHTENMENT TO PERFECTION

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
Raja Rammohunpur, Dist. Darjeeling

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

MINAKSHEE KUMARI¹

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 metropolis of the state and also of the country. This city with sky scrapers, big hotels, many residential townships, three Railway stations and airports is boosted as the "Uncrowned 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: *terai/tarai, sanyassis, Raikats, Tongas, Teesta/Tista, urban markets, toy train, Hill-cart road, tea.*

Introducing the Region

Oxford dictionary defines 'region' as a continuous part of surface, space or body; administrative division. Brudel remarks 'mountains as much as monkey maketh Man'. 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. Naxalbari, Jalpaiguri, Rajgunje, and Malbajar are some important towns near Siliguri. Siliguri is the headquarters of the

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plains 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, grown out of it being "an island of prosperity," makes it prone to both external and internal threat. 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 northeast states with the rest of India.

The Contested landscape:

The district of Darjeeling was part of the Dominion of Raja of Sikkim. In 1705 what is now called as Kalimpong subdivision of the district was taken from the Raja of Sikkim by the Butaneese. The Raja later became engaged in unsuccessful struggles with the Gurkhas who had seized power in Nepal and invaded Sikkim in 1780. During the next 30 years they overran Sikkim as far as the Tista and conquered and annexed the terrain. In the meantime, war broke out between East India Company and the Nepalese. The war ended in 1817 by the treaty of Titaliya and the tract which the Nepalese has wrested from the Raja of Sikkim was ceded to the company. The company restored the whole of the country between the Mechi and the Tista 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 frontiers 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 Goorkha 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 kazi. Mr. Grant reported to the Governor General Lord William Bentinck about the numerous advantages promised by a sanatorium at Darjeeling and also recommended its occupations for military purpose as the key of a pass into Nepal. The Governor General then deputed Captain Hebert, the Deputy Surveyor-General to examine the country with Mr. Grant and in due course 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 causes of an incursion from Nepal of Lepchas who had taken refuge there from Sikkim. Thus, Lloyd succeeded in obtaining the Grant from the Raja of Sikkim on 1st February 1835 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 introduced for the purpose of enabling the servant of his government, suffering from the sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages and I, the Sikkimputta 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 Ranjit river, East of Balasun, kahail and little Ranjit river and west of Rungno and Mahanadi." This was an unconditional cession of what was then an inhabited mountains but in 1841 the government granted the Raja and allowance of Rupees 3000 per annum as compensation and this was raised in 1846 to Rupees 6000 per annum. After the cession, General Lloyd and Dr. chapman was sent in 1836 to explore and investigate the climate and the capabilities of the place. They spend the winter in 1836 and part of 1837 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 1836, Lloyd and Chapman found only few Huts erected by Raja of Sikkim and by 1840 a road had been made from Pankhabari thereby Staging Bungalow there and a Hotel had been started at Kurseong and other at Darjeeling, about 30 private houses were erected.

The rest of the ceded area was however under forest and practically uninhabited. According to Captain Herbert this was because previously about hundreds of able bodied Lepchas forming two third population of Sikkim had been forced by the operation of the Raja of Sikkim to fly from Darjeeling and neighborhood areas and take Refuge in Nepal.

Sikkim threat and Dr. Campbell

In 1839, 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 Cultivators and the population of the area which was hundred in 1839 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 70 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 Diwan Namgyay. The lamas and the Diwan had to bear huge loss because many slaves from Sikkim had settled as free men in and around Darjeeling. The Sikkimese restored 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 Diwan 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, small punitive force entered Sikkim and remained there on the north Bank of great Ranjit river for a week but the serious retaliatory action by the British was the withdrawal of the grant of Rupees 6000 for the Raja and annexation of the Terai, the portion of the Sikkim Hills

bounded by the Ramman and the great Ranjit on the north, by the Tista on the east and by the Nepal Frontier on the west. The area annexed was 640 square miles in extent.

Immediately after the annexation of the Terai in 1850, the Southern portion of the Terai was placed under the Purnia district, but in consequence of the dislike of the inhabitants, this whole area was attached to Darjeeling. The Terai and the Hill territory annexed from Sikkim and managed by the superintendent who from 8th may 1850 was called the Deputy Commissioner. The change was welcome by the inhabitants who now had to pay only some fixed sums in the treasury in Darjeeling instead of having to meet uncertain and fluctuating demand in kind or for personal services made by the Raja and the Diwan.

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

For some years after the annexation, relations with Sikkim were not disturbed but raids on British Territories latter 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 Diwan Namguay who had arrested Campbell and Dr. Hoker in 1849. Six months negotiation proved fruitless and it was decided to take possession of the portion of Sikkim North of the Ramman and west of the great Ranjit until British Subjects were released, offenders handed over and security obtained against a recurrence of similar offences.

With this objective Dr. Cambell with a small force of 160 rank and file crossed the Ramman in November 1860 and advanced as far as Rinchipong. He was however attacked and forced back to fall on Darjeeling

Latter Colonel Gawler with Sir Ashley Aden as envoy and special Commissioner moved with artillery and a force of 2,600 men and entered Tumlong, the Capital of Sikkim in March 1861.

The Diwan fled and the abdicated in favour of his son with whom on the 28th March, a Treaty was made which was of particular importance to Darjeeling, because it finally put an end to frontier troubles with Sikkim and secured full freedom for commerce across the Sikkim boarder.

The Bhutan Menace

The British Northern policy of Annexation made the Terai and Dooars strategically important. The land between southern Siliguri and Jalpaiguri was a bone of contention between the Bhotias and Koches.¹ The Koch Chieftains hotly contested Bhutanees hold over extensive area which also included the large southern tract of land between Siliguri and Jalpaiguri. However, post first Anglo-Bhutanese war (1774) a large area was ceded to Bhutan as a part of the policy to appease the Bhutaneese and is the interest of Trans-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 Bhutaneese soldier and the Koch Zamindars.

The Bhutaneese were responsible for a series of incursions in which property was plundered, lives take 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 Bhutaneese were preparing to make an attack on Darjeeling and troops were hurried up from Dimapur to restore confidence. This was followed in 1863 by a dispatch of a special mission to Bhutan under Sir Asley Aden 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 Punakha 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 extorted from Sir Asley Eden was replaced by a fresh one by which what is now the Kalingpong 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 these tracts were "permanently 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 1865, had obtained from the Government of Bhootan, forever the cession of the whole of the tract known as the Eighteen Dooars bordering on the districts of Rungpoo, Cooch Behar, and Assam, together with the Talook of Ambaree Fallacottah 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 Bhotan 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 Shekharthe "Sixteenth Raikat"⁵ Petitioned the Government stating the services he had rendered to Eden's mission and supplies provided to

the Bhutan Duar Force "Amounting to fifty or Sixty thousand rupees"⁶ and in lieu of his service the British Government should restore the Zamindari rights of his forefathers over the large tract of land ceded to the Bhutaneese. The British Government reject the plea of Chandra Shekhra Deva and henceforth the areas south of Siliguri was permanently annexed by the British Government. Thus the area which was considered as no man's land became part of the southern sub-urban of Siliguri towns.

The Town

L.S.S.O' 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 account for only 21393 persons"⁷. Prior to O'Malley, W.W. Hunter in his the Statistical Account of Bengal, do not mentions about Siliguri, however, makes a sweeping statement that these places were "chiefly uninhabited by the Meches and Dhumals, two tribes who are said not to suffer from the unhealthy nature of the climate."⁸

O' Malley wrote about Siliguri that Siliguri is a "village is the South of Kurseong Sub-division near the left bank of Mahananda is 26°43' N and 88°26'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 Cart 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 biweekly Government market. It is the Headquarter of a Deputy Magistrate who disposes of the criminal work of the *Tarai* and manages the large Government estate; he was formerly stationed at Hansquar (Hanskhawa) near Phansidewa, but his headquarter were removed to Siliguri 1888 on the extensions of the railway to that place. It also contains a small sub-jail and post office, dak bungalow, inspection house, police station and a dispensary with 20 beds, all situated on fairly high ground and its name means "the stony site" presumably because the bed of the Mahanadi close by is a mass of broken stone brought down from the hills."⁹

The area is and around Siliguri was always dreaded by the Europeans is the beginning of the twentieth Century. It was considered as "a tract of reeking moisture and rank vegetation it (Siliguri) has always been dreaded by Europeans, who used is 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 fatal fever zone. That such speed was necessary was proved by the fate of lady Canning, who caught the fever which ended in her death while halting to sketch by the road side on her return journey from Darjeeling, by for the greatest mortality is caused by fevers, which are generally malaria is nature They are commonest is *Tera* where they account for 80% of the total mortality, the death rate from fever being 51 per mile is 1905. The foremost 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 *Kalaazar* and Black water fever.¹⁰ The death rate is appalling, the average mortality being nearly 60 per 1000 is the ten years ending (i.e 1890-1900). In 1900 while it exceeded, 71 per 1000 is that year and on the other hand, the average birth rate is the decade was nearly 19.4 per annum.¹¹ The Europeans found this place unsuitable to inhabit but O'Malley confessed that "there is however, one race which inhabit this sickly region with comparative immunity the aboriginal Meches,¹² and the Rajbanshis are also to a certain extent free from fever largely occurring to their cleaning away the rank Jungles around their homesteads and to the high platform on which they erect houses."¹²

The Land of Lawless Bandits

This tract of land was also popular for giving refuge to the sanayasis who were branded as bandit and robbers. The British official records these Sanyasis as "lawless bandits" who pretenses of charity unleashed terror. The Sanyasi were held in high veneration by the people is the countryside and put up a stiff resistance to the expanding British power at the end of the 18th Century.¹³

Baikunthapur, a place nearby Siliguri was considered to be head-quarter of Sanyasis. The Baikunthpur forest, nested these 'bandits' who ravaged the country in armed bands numbering hundreds. Mr. Glazier described this area in the following manner, "In 1789, we have an account of a large body of bandits who had occupied the Baikunthapur Forest, Which lies at the northern apex of the district (Rangpore) right under the hills, whence they issued on their predatory excursions." The forest was composed of tree jungles enter woven with cane and was impossible except by narrow winding paths known only to the dakoits. The collector, says Glazier, got together a force of two hundred *barkandazes* and held all the entrances into the forest. Several skirmishes ensued but months elapsed before any decisive result was obtained. The marauders were at length starved out. Some escaped into Nepal and Bhutan but 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 549 dakoits. Lieutenant Macdonald was sent against them with 180 sepoy, and brought in the leaders of the gang, but their followers escaped into the hills. Three years later, as many as 1,500 crossed the Brahmaputra at Diwanganj; they had rockets, *jinjal* 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 moneylending, combined with dacoity. A report to the Board of Revenue, dated 29th April 1789, makes mention of the seizure of two dacoit boats of 80 and 100 cubits in length, belonging to head sanyasis, and gives a detailed account of the oppressions practised by these scourges, not only on the cultivators, but on the zamindars and their officers, whom they carried off and confined until their demands were satisfied."¹⁴

Administrative Developments after 1866

The year 1866 thus mark 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 pioneering difficulties and interruptions due to political disturbances now proceeded with more certainty and momentum. The Kalinpong area was first notified as a subdivision under

the Deputy Commissioner of the Western Dooars district but in 1866 it was transferred to the district of Darjeeling. This was the last addition to the district which then reached its present dimension.

After Kalimpong had been brought under British administration the district was divided into two subdivisions the headquarter Sub-Division with an area of 960 square miles including all the hills on the both sides of the Teesta and Terai Sub-Division with an area of 274 square miles which included the whole of the country at the foot of the hills. The Headquarter of the Terai subdivision were at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa from 1864 to 1880, when they were transferred to Siliguri. The meter gauge Railway of the North Bengal State Railway had been extended to Siliguri and Siliguri, at that time in the Jalpaiguri District was transferred to Darjeeling district with a small surrounding area and made the headquarters of the Terai subdivision. In the mean time Kurseong had begun to develop and 1891 it was made the Headquarter of a new subdivision which included both the Terai and the lower hills west of the Teesta.

Later in 1907 Siliguri was made a Subdivision, thus re-establishing the Terai Subdivision which had in 1891 been absorbed into the Kurseong Subdivision. Till 1907 there had been a Deputy Magistrate at Siliguri working under the Subdivisional Officer, Kurseong, and managing the Terai Government Estate under the Deputy Commissioner. Kalimpong in the meantime had been in the Sadar Subdivision with a manager of the Khas Mahals working at Kalimpong under the Deputy Commissioner, police work being controlled by an Inspector. In 1916 the Kalimpong Subdivision was created as a preliminary to working out development schemes in Kalimpong. The District was included in the Rajshahi Division until October 1905 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 jurisdictions of the District and Sessions Judge. The District was under the District and Sessions Judge of Dinajpur until October

1905 when it was placed under the Judge of Purnea and again in April 1912 it was brought under Dinajpur. The District is peculiar in respect of civil judicial powers. The Sub-divisional Officers of Kurseong, Kalimpong and Siliguri all have powers of a Munsiff and Small Causes Court Judge up to Rs. 50. Appeals from these Munsiffs and from the Munsiff 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, Munsiff and Small Causes Court Judge. But since March 1939, a Munsiff 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 1859. Appeals from the Subordinate Judge of Darjeeling lie to the District Judge of Dinajpur 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 1886 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 khas mahal (233 square miles), over most of the Bazaars 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 X of 1859 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 Chaukidari Act only in the non-tea 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 was found necessary to meet hill conditions. To regulate amenities in the small residential area of the abandoned Takdah Cantonment, one Union Committee has been established.

Roads, Railways and Communication:

The importance of Siliguri, as pointed out earlier arises because of its proximity to Darjeeling and Duars. 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 were very rudimentary, far narrow rough tracks through forests and occasional cane bridges over torrent 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 fondness for summering in the Chumli village, finding even Sikkim too damp for its taste.¹⁵

The area, which was taken over from Sikkim was almost entirely covered by forest and indeed it was reported in 1830 to be totally uninhabited. Grant's memorandum of 1830 mentioned two routes then existing northward from the plains into Sikkim. One was by "Nagree" pass and the other by the "Bubbook Galah". A Third route by the Mahananda was mentioned as having been deserted and overgrown with Jungle. The pioneers who came to open up Darjeeling after it had been ceded 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 Siliguri.¹⁶

54 hours Calcutta to Malda

16 hours Malda to Darjeeling

20 hours Dinajpore to Titaliya

8 hours Titaliya to the foot of the hills Terai and Siliguri

The whole journey to Darjeeling labeled five or six days and the discomforts were graphically described by Sir Joseph Hooker. Who in 1848 at a cost of Rs.240/- had occasion to perform the journey from Karalgola Ghat on the Ganges to the foot hills. The first measure taken to improve communication was the deputation 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 ascents from Pankhabari to Kurseong and the onto the Dow hill and Ghoom. The section of this road from Pankhabari to Kurseong is part of what is now known as the Siliguri MatigaraKurseong Road.¹⁷ This road was not practicable for wheeled traffic and the development of Darjeeling and cost of transporting military stores (Rs 2 per mound 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 1896 the specification was a road 24 feet in breadth with a general gradient of 3 in 100 and maximum gradient of 1 in 18. The road system was not only of local utility but also facilitated in national and Tran-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 villagers 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 many 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 in road from the Ghat of Ganges to Siliguri at a cost of Rs. 14,68,000/-. This road was 126 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.¹⁸ Before the completion of the Northern Bengal Railway, people wishing to reach Darjeeling were obliged to proceed from Calcutta to Sahibganj, a distance of 220 miles from Howrah terminus of the E.I.Railway, then by ferry steamer to Karagola, a journey of five hours and often more, where the unfortunate travelers were disembarked on the river side and were often obliged to wade a mile or more through the sand under a blazing sun. From there onwards the route laid along Ganges-Darjeeling road via Purneah, Kishanganj and Titalaya to Siliguri.¹⁹ The visitors to Darjeeling jolted at *Dak Gharry* and on reaching Siliguri avoided any halt in evening or at night due to malaria mosquitos nightmares and the popular Lady Canning death story.

In 1860 the East Indian Railway had been extended upto Sahebganj 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 Karagola (Ganga Ghat) either by Palki (Palanguin) or bullock cart or by Ganga from Siliguri to Darjeeling. This road was from Karagola passed through Purnea, Kishanganj and Tituliya to Siliguri."²⁰

'The opening of the rail line from Calcutta to Raniganj 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.²¹ Until the advent of the railways in the hills, 'Tongas' 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 choice of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills. It was by chance or destiny that in 1878, Franklin Prestage, the man who made the hill railway possible, came to Darjeeling along with his brother-in-law Sulyard 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 some remarkable speech, to quote '...the wearied and exhausted citizen 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 *Doars* 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 silks of China. I even hope that his dreams of social intercourse with Lhasa may be so fully realized that we may have, someday, the honor of carrying the Grand Lama to exchange religious views with the bishop of Calcutta.²² According to Newnan's Guide to Darjeeling and its surroundings Sir Eden 'with his practical commonsense, 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, cheap, and easy communication with its only existing sanatorium.'²³

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 mound was charged and war time charges got doubled.

Coolie and pack transport were much more expensive than carting. In forests, for moving timber and wood coolie transport would costs from 3 to 12 times as much as carting. Pack transport (by mules) were highly organised on the Tibet trade routes. From Phari Dzong in Tibet to Kalimpong via the Jalap La, a distance of 90 to 95 miles, Rs.6 per maund was the peace time rate. From Phari to Gangtok via the Nathu La, 65 to 70 miles, the rate was Rs.4 per maund. These rates are equivalent to about 12 pies per maund mile. The routes are severe and probably rates were cut to a competitive minimum. Rates in war time soared and at one time for the Kalimpong Phari trip touched Rs.35 per maund.

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 Darjeeling and the main line of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway carried the greater part of the produce of the Sadar 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 Simana Basti and northward (potatoes and chirutta). 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 Naxalbari 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 Guelle (29.5 miles) 1st class Rs.5-10, 2nd class Rs.2-13 and 3rd class Re. 1-6;

Siliguri to Kishanganj (69.5 miles) 1st class Rs.13-2, 2nd class Rs.6-9 and 3rd class Rs. 2-3.

Third class fares were thus 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 3.2 pies per mound mile according to the class of goods. From Siliguri to Darjeeling rates varied from 3.7 to 6.2 pies per/mound mile and downhill from Darjeeling to Siliguri upwards of 2.25 pies per mound 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 competition 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 busses 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 hills and had temporarily confused 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 consumers of goods complained about the cost of transportation. The construction of ropeways to cheapen costs has been under consideration but had only

resulted in the construction of two minor public ropeways 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 exercised their powers 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 7,104 tons of rice to Darjeeling, 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 Darjeeling in the above year, moved 1,080 tons of potatoes and 98 tons of tea.

Imports from below to Ghum included 3,505 tons of rice, 513 tons of salt, 434 tons of provisions and 1,167 tons of coal. Downward export from Ghum included 1,629 tons of potatoes, 2,190 tons of tea and 515 tons of timber.

The Siliguri-Kishanganj line handled timber, rice 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 Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway was Main Line 3,08,872; Siliguri Kishanganj Extension 4,59,204; Tista Valley Extension. 35,988

Conclusion:

Thus, Siliguri being situated in the border of hill district, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, 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 datas of 1951.

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

Name of Towns	Growth Rate
1. Siliguri	209.72
2. English Bazar	31.41
3. Coochbehar	07.76
4. Jalpaiguri	48.60
5. Darjeeling	23.44
6. Kalimpong	30.46
7. Kurseong	37.95
8. Dinhata	65.38
9. Matha Bhanga	41.54
10. Haldibari	101.66
11. Hili	20.05
12. Tufanganj	64.02
13. Mekhliganj	4.47

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

The future of a city depends on their resilience. Siliguri was once messy, unplanned, organic, marshy, 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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