

SILIGURI : AN URBAN STUDY IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ARTS) IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
2001**

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Acknowledgement

I feel extremely grateful for having the opportunity to work on this subject under the guidance of Prof B.Bhattacharya. I am indeed very much indebted to him for his valuable suggestions, necessary corrections, kind help and constant encouragement without which this work could not have been completed.

I am also grateful to the 'Election section' of the Sub-Divisional Officer's office, Siliguri for supplying me with the 'Electoral Roll' for Assembly Election, forming the basis of my entire work. I am thankful to the office of the Directorate of Census Operations, situated at British Indian Street, Calcutta for their valuable co-operation in providing data, for this study.

It would not be out of place to mention here the name of my wife Smt. Amita Majumdar who helped me to overcome any sort of problem at the time of Field Survey and related work during the period of my research investigations.

I feel pleasure to thank profusely Sri Nilanjan Basu, Civil Engineer at Siliguri, Sri Amit Banerjee, Civil Engineer at Raiganj and Sri B.Bagchi of North Bengal university for their help in the preparation of maps.

My thanks are also due to Sri Suhas Ranjan Dey for having taken the great responsibility of the work on a computer.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention the help and unstinted co-operation I had from the North Bengal University Library and the Department of Geography and Applied Geography, North Bengal University throughout the period of my work, largely paving the way in completing this work.

Lastly, it is with profound respect and regard that I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the authorities of 'Siliguri Municipal Corporation', Siliguri, 'Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority', Government of West Bengal, Siliguri, 'National Sample Survey', Government of India, Siliguri and all the religious, Cultural and Social institutions functioning at Siliguri for imparting valuable information connected with my research and their very kind co-operation at all the stages of my field investigation.

S. Majender
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Introduction

As a student of sociology, the author's interest was primarily confined to the sociological aspects of urban life in the city of Siliguri which, enjoying an inter-state location in national as well as international perspective, has witnessed a phenomenal growth within the space of a few decades. Siliguri is the subdivisional headquarters of its namesake, lying in the plains of Darjeeling District in West Bengal. Situated on the bank of river Mahananda, Siliguri, as an urban centre, has developed fast since post-Independence (mid- 1947) days from its unique location on the only land-corridor connecting the north-eastern states with the rest of India, and its very close situation with neighbouring foreign countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and China (Tibet)- some of them lying within a reach of less than 20 km. which together have a profound role in defining the urban character of this boom-town, recording a feverish growth in the size of its population, in the spatial sprawl of its urbanscape, in the changing character of the social composition of its population, and in the growing complexity of its economic functions.

In the absence of relevant material, particularly data on urban life in the perspective of its socio-economic parameters, the study had to depend mostly on field investigations based on questionnaire (Annexure I) prepared for this purpose and carried out by the author on the basis of a house-to-house survey. And in this connection it is necessary to

mention that the study was mostly confined to the thirty wards (I-XXX) of the municipal area of Siliguri which represented the city of Siliguri prior to 1994 after which 17 more wards representing Dabgram and other mouzas were annexed to form Siliguri Municipal Corporation. But at the time of this study – and even now – no official data were available for the newly annexed area. For instance, my work is primarily based on the Electoral Roll of 1993, prepared by the Election Commission (Govt.of India) for the Assembly Election in which the area under those 17 wards was not included as it lay beyond the jurisdiction of the urban area of Siliguri city. Hence, the entire focus on the sociological aspects of the urban population of Siliguri remains largely confined to the original 30 wards of the city.

Needless to say that it had been a very hard, painstaking and difficult task, more in view of a general lack of trust and co-operation on the part of the respondents in every sphere of urban life than other factors which ultimately could be tackled by the author with time and patience and this was possible for the primary reason that having been born and brought up in this city, the author could finally make the point of his investigation meaningful to the city-residents in general.

Before we set out on a detailed study of the sociological characteristics of the city, a brief historical sketch tracing the growth of Siliguri and the factors contributing to its sudden emergence as the premier seat of urbanization in the entire region of North Bengal lying north of river Ganga, may be helpful in understanding how it came into the limelight.

Historical Background

The district of Darjeeling was formed in 1850 (W.W.Hunter, 1876) and it was expanded with the inclusion of the Terai region in 1866, as a result of which 'Siliguri' was included in the district. Before 1866, (W.W.Hunter, 1876) the road communication between the district of Darjeeling and the plains was not so convenient because there was only a narrow road at that time built in 1841 running through Pankhabari which still exists. The present Hill Cart Road was constructed in 1861 which provided a wider road for wheeled traffic from the hills to the plains. Another road originating from the northern part of river Ganga was simultaneously constructed which was connected with Siliguri as a result of which Siliguri came into prominence. (O'Malley, 1907)

* Prior to 1878, there was only one communicating route between Siliguri and Calcutta which went via Bihar through Khana junction, Bolpur and Kiul junctions, along with a ferry crossing at Ganga (Sahebganj) and another road from Siliguri to Purnia for a stretch of about 125 kms.

Subsequently, the railway line was constructed by the Eastern Bengal State Railway Company connecting Sealdah (Calcutta) with Damukia Ghat, presently lying in Bangladesh near the bank of river Padma. It was extended further from the opposite bank of Padma river at a place known as Saraghat to Siliguri through Nator, Santahar, Parbatipur (all of them lying in Bangladesh today) and Jalpaiguri in 1878 (O'Malley, 1907).

Accordingly, this provided an uninterrupted railway communication

between Siliguri and Calcutta. Subsequently, this meter gauge line was changed into a broad gauge line in 1926. Another railway line constructed in 1881 and known as Darjeeling Himalayan Railways, connected Darjeeling with Siliguri and thus added further importance to the latter.

In 1835, Darjeeling as a small settlement hardly had one hundred people(O'Malley, 1907). The population in Darjeeling gradually increased and in 1849 it crossed the mark of 10,000. After 1849, however the population of Darjeeling did not increase fast and at that time Siliguri was nothing but a tiny village with a railway station and a population of mere 500 heads was recorded in 1901. In the Gazetteer of Darjeeling 1907, Siliguri was declared as a 'swampy malarious village' with a population of only 784(O'Malley, 1907). This place was declared by the authority as unhealthy and unhygienic and it was considered as a 'depot of malaria, typhoid' etc. In spite of these demerits, Siliguri was declared as a Sub-Divisional Headquarters under Darjeeling District in 1907.

The population between 1907 and 1930 increased gradually but its overall development was not noteworthy, because till that time there was only one single two-storied pucca (brick-built) building, which proves that 'Siliguri' though had by then a larger population, there had been little improvement in its performance.

In 1920, a club was set up called the 'Sporting Union', which laid importance to the development of sports, mainly encouraging football game in the area. This was followed by the setting up of schools and libraries between 1910 and 1930. There is also enough evidence of

Swadeshi (Independence) movement in Siliguri, and 'Gandhiji' visited Siliguri in 1925 in this connection.

(In 1931, Siliguri, for the first time, was declared as a town by the Census of India, when the population of this town had increased to nearly 7,000. From then onwards this town also began to flourish culturally, and in 1935 a film was shown in the Mitra Sammilani Hall (established in the year 1909 as Bijalee Talkies and later known as Tripti Talkies) for the first time. A good number of standard plays were also performed on the stage in 1937 which further reflects the cultural development of this town.

During the period from 1931 to 1941, the population of Siliguri increased faster, mainly due to the flow of immigrants from surrounding districts in the south and nearby hills in the north. However, the increase of population during the next decade was the highest so far in any single decade for 'Siliguri' (219 % in 1941-51). ✓

(In 1949, Siliguri municipality was formed with 15 wards, each having a nominated Commissioner. Though Siliguri was declared a town in 1931, the local transport was not at all good. Only one hand-drawn rikshaw was there till 1951. In 1952; the municipality started issuing licence for rikshaw pullers, giving licence to 450 rikshaws. The electricity was introduced in this town for the first time for public use from Kurseong Hydro-Electric Power supply in 1951.)

A college was also set up in the same year(1951) named as 'Siliguri College' which was the only college the people of Siliguri had till

1971. The 'Siliguri College of Commerce' was the next to follow. In 1981, 'Siliguri Mahila Mahavidyalaya' was set up as a girls' college.

Many schools, libraries, recreation/sporting clubs and some important organisations and services set-up were established during the period 1948 to 1955, like the Terai Harasundar Public Library, the Fire Brigade(1948), the Telephone Exchange (1948), Siliguri Girls' High School (1947-48), Siliguri Sports Association (1948), Vivekananda Club (1952), Ramkrishna Byam Siksha Sangha (1948) etc. One strong indication that Siliguri was developing culturally is that one of the leading dramatists of that time, Sri Tulsi Lahiri and his troop in Calcutta gave a number of stage performances at Siliguri.

(After 1947, due to the large inflow of people from East Bengal (East Pakistan), slum areas started developing in and around Siliguri. It was during this time that the market also started to grow here and increased the flow of essential commodities. In 1949, Siliguri railway junction was built, thereby opening a new route for direct contact with Bihar and the adjoining regions. The construction of Siliguri junction facilitated the connection between the former and Siliguri Town Station via the existing narrow gauge line which ran along the Hill Cart Road. However, the narrow gauge rail line between Siliguri and Gailkhola Railway station near Kalimpong was completely washed away by the flood of river Tista in 1950, thereby ending the train link between Siliguri Town and Kalimpong.

At the time of Chinese aggression in 1962, the roads in and around Siliguri were extensively used for the movement of tanks and army vehicles, thereby improving the transport system owing to the importance it enjoyed during the war. For instance, the width of the Hill Cart Road was increased largely by evacuating the various stalls which existed on both sides of the Hill Cart Road. The Chinese aggression in 1962 brought the strategic importance of roads into correct focus and real improvement of them started since then which made Siliguri the major nodal point of the region.

Another achievement of great importance in the field of communication was the setting up of New Jalpaiguri Railway station in 1964. Siliguri Junction and Siliguri Town station were connected with New Jalpaiguri railway station. The main motive behind the building up of the New Jalpaiguri Railway station was to connect Siliguri and the adjoining areas with Calcutta by a broad-gauge railway line. The narrow gauge railway track over the existing Mahananda bridge was removed and shifted to the railway bridge and a new 32-feet wide road-bridge was built across the Mahananda river with pavement on both sides. Since the communication with the neighbouring states developed with the increase of traffic, the roads of Siliguri had to be widened and the example of such enlargement of roads was the construction of the new Mahananda Bridge replacing the old one. The construction work started in 1964 and was completed in 1967. But as the Farakka Barrage with road-cum-rail carriage ways had not come up till then, the railway link was maintained

between Siliguri and Calcutta via Khejuria Ghat on river Ganga which needed to be crossed by a ferry. After the building up of the Farakka Barrage in 1974, train communication became an uninterrupted feature between Siliguri and Calcutta. It may be noted that New Jalpaiguri became the first railway station in India to have all the three gauges (i.e. broad, middle and narrow).

In 1960, a political agitation started in Assam over the language issue as a result of which many people belonging to the Bengali community started migrating to Siliguri and settling down in the town. In 1971, the Bangladesh war triggered the flow of people comprising primarily non-Muslim Bengalis, and many of them arrived in Siliguri and other towns of North Bengal.

Myanmar (Burma) became politically independent in 1948 and since then the Myanmarese authorities had started sending back all Indians from Burma and the process was completed in 1964. A major section of the Indians were Bengali many of them originally hailing from Sylhet and Chittagong lying at present in Bangladesh. Some of them migrated to this town and started business mostly in retail shops dealing with medicine. They are popularly known as the 'refugees from Burma'.

The beginning of the ULFA agitation in Assam in 1980 has set off another flow of migrants consisting of the Bengalis, a section of them having settled down in and around Siliguri, specially after 1985, thus increasing the population of Siliguri, and all this having a deep impact on the land price of this town.

The growth of urban population in Siliguri in the decade 1981-91 was 46.83 per cent which is a noticeable increase but compared to that of the previous decade i.e. 1971-81 it is less (58.36%). But one important factor is that Dabgram (N.M.) comprising an area of 21.80 sq. km. was annexed to the urban area of Siliguri city, showing both Dabgram and Siliguri as one unit and later this additional area along with the Municipal area of original Siliguri was formed into Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994. It may be noted that at the time of the Census count of 1991 Dabgram previously treated as a separate town, showed a striking increase of population of 92.29 per cent which reflects that the people who immigrated from Assam mainly settled down in the Dabgram area as a result of which Dabgram increased so fast in population.

B. Review of the Existing Literature

There has so far been no exhaustive work on the city of Siliguri particularly focusing on its sociological transformation. Of the three Ph.D.theses, unpublished, one was done by an economist, R.Roy, entitled, "Economic change in Siliguri and problems of its urban development" (1985), and another was done by a Geographer, P.Saha, entitled "Problems and prospects of Development of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri towns", (1991), while the third was "A Study of problems and prospects of Retail Trade of Consumer Goods in Siliguri, District of Darjeeling, North Bengal" (1981), done by S.Chakraborty.

The first of them, "Economic Change in Siliguri and problems of its

bringing about the economic changes in the overall activities of the town where as in the recent thesis Saha has confined her studies to highlighting the infrastructural situations and the associated problems. The study made by Chakraborty is, on the other hand, has retail trade as its major focus. In the first two themes, social problems have featured, no doubt, but then make a minor issue and do not take into account the sociological implications of the growing nature of the present community mix.

Besides these three, there are a few short articles on Siliguri, such as ("Some Considerations of Urban Aspects in and around Siliguri", in the Indian Journal of Landscape systems and Ecological studies(1987), by H.Dutta) which also did not consider the sociological aspects of this city. Further, the very nature of the work demanded data and information not available in any published form. They needed to be collected from the area of study through personal investigations. These were to be supplemented with data and information available from secondary sources for which purpose the publications of the Census of India for different censal years have been profusely used. Books and some articles in journals offering peripheral instances having come useful at various parts of this study, may be mentioned. They are: "Social Geography" by Michael Pacitome(1987) highlighting the pattern of geographical location and socio-spatial changes; "Readings in Social Geography"(1975) edited by Emrys Jones analysing sociological manifestations of urban behaviour; " Migration and Urbanization "(1975) by Brian M. Du Toit stressing on the effect of Migration on Urbanization; "Urbanization in India:Problems

and Prospects"(1998) by Ummareddy Venkateswarlu; "Urbanization Trends in India : A Case Study of a medium town"(1981) by H.G. Hanumappa, "Rural Migrants in an Urban Setting" (1978) written by P.S. Majumder and I. Majumder have gone into the details of different aspects of urbanization in India."Migration"edited by J.A.Jackson,publications like "The World Population Conference" Vol- II (United Nations)(1967), "Urban Development Theory,Fact and Illusion"(1988) by J.Vernon,"An introduction to Social Geography" (1977) by E.Jones and J.Eyles, "Methods and Techniques in Human Geography" (1988), by G.M.Robinson, "Urban Planning Theory" (1975), edited by M.C.Branch, "The Indian city: Poverty, Ecology and Urban Development"(1978) edited by A.de Souza, "Migration Geography" (1996) by G.Kaur etc. are indirectly helpful in strengthening the ideas related to the study undertaken by the author.In this connection mention needs to be made of a few more publications having been helpful in explaining the situation in the area of study emphasising the sociological implications of the changing nature of urban character. They are "Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies" (1982), Ed.by H.Alvi and T.Shanin, "Social Relations and Spatial structures" (1985), Ed.by D.Gregory and J.Urry; "A Reader in Urban Sociology" (1991), Ed.by M.S.A. Rao etal, and "Urban Sociology in India" (1974), Ed.by M.S.A.Rao. Besides, two old publications, namely "Bengal District Gazetteer: Darjeeling"(1907) by L.S.S. O'Malley and "A statistical Account of Bengal", District of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri etc. Vol.X (1876) by W.W.Hunter were very much useful. Further, the author was benefited in many ways gleaning information of a wide range appearing in a number of

journals, occasional papers and reports, like the Journals of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, North Bengal University Review, The Geographical Memoir, The Economic Times, etc. details of which appear in the 'Bibliography'.

C. Objectives of the Study.

The city of Siliguri having the third largest urban population for any city in West Bengal within its municipal area (ignoring the case of Durgapur which has a slightly larger population but that is in the whole of the 'notified area') which, recording an increase of over ten times within a space of four decades (1951-91), makes an unprecedented record for any city in the state, if not in India, and this apparently could not happen without steady immigration.

Hence, migration came to be one of the objectives of this study but the major objective was to focus on the Social Composition of the people residing in this city and their sociological behaviour based on the investigation of some important parameters defining urban life in general. Thus, the primary objective of this study was to identify and pin-point the role of different communities constituting the urban-social fabric in evolving the existing socio-economic character of this city.

D. Methodology.

The study was largely based on primary data collected from the field, using (a) The Electoral Rolls for Assembly Election, 1993, the

Electoral Rolls of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, 1994, and data available with the "Siliguri-Jalpaiguri Development Authority (Govt.of West Bengal)", which formed the basis for obtaining information on the social composition of the urban residents of Siliguri Municipal area; (b) this was followed by the use of questionnaire prepared for the purpose for eliciting information through house-to-house survey under particular heads relevant to different socio-economic parameters selected for the study. This was supplemented further by data and information provided by secondary sources like the Census of India, Municipal records, statistics available from various public and private organisations, and maps provided by the Siliguri-Jalpaiguri Development Authority (Govt.of W.Bengal). Simple mathematical and catrographic principles have been used for processing data and preparation of the figures included in the study.

E. Chapter Organisation.

The thesis has been structured in the following manner:

It begins with an 'Introduction' which apart from introducing the area on which the study was made, includes a brief historical sketch of the city under study, followed by statements on the 'objectives of the study', 'review of the existing literature', 'methodology' and 'chapter organisation'.

This is followed by the actual work divided into six chapters. In Chapter I the growth of the city has been discussed based on census data

comparing the growth with that of the district the city belongs to and the state in which the district lies.

Chapter II highlights the spatial distribution of the different communities living in the city in order to ascertain the nature of concentration or otherwise of people belonging to different communities.

Chapter III has been devoted to the identification of the major economic activities and the comparative role of different communities in them, bringing out community-wise position in the economic performances of the city.

Chapter IV focuses on the existing nature of religious disparities among different urban communities and how far this is reflected in the languages spoken by them.

Chapter V gives an idea about the social institutions functioning in the city, their allegiance to specific groups or communities and a review of their impact on urban life through their activities.

Chapter VI highlights the findings derived from field investigations based on selected social parameters, offering an insight into the social conditions of city life.

This is followed by "Conclusion".

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Chapter I

The City of Siliguri: Growth Pattern

The population of Siliguri in 1907 was only 784¹, and it started increasing at such a fast rate that by 1931 the population rose up to 6,067 and in the same year it also got the urban status.

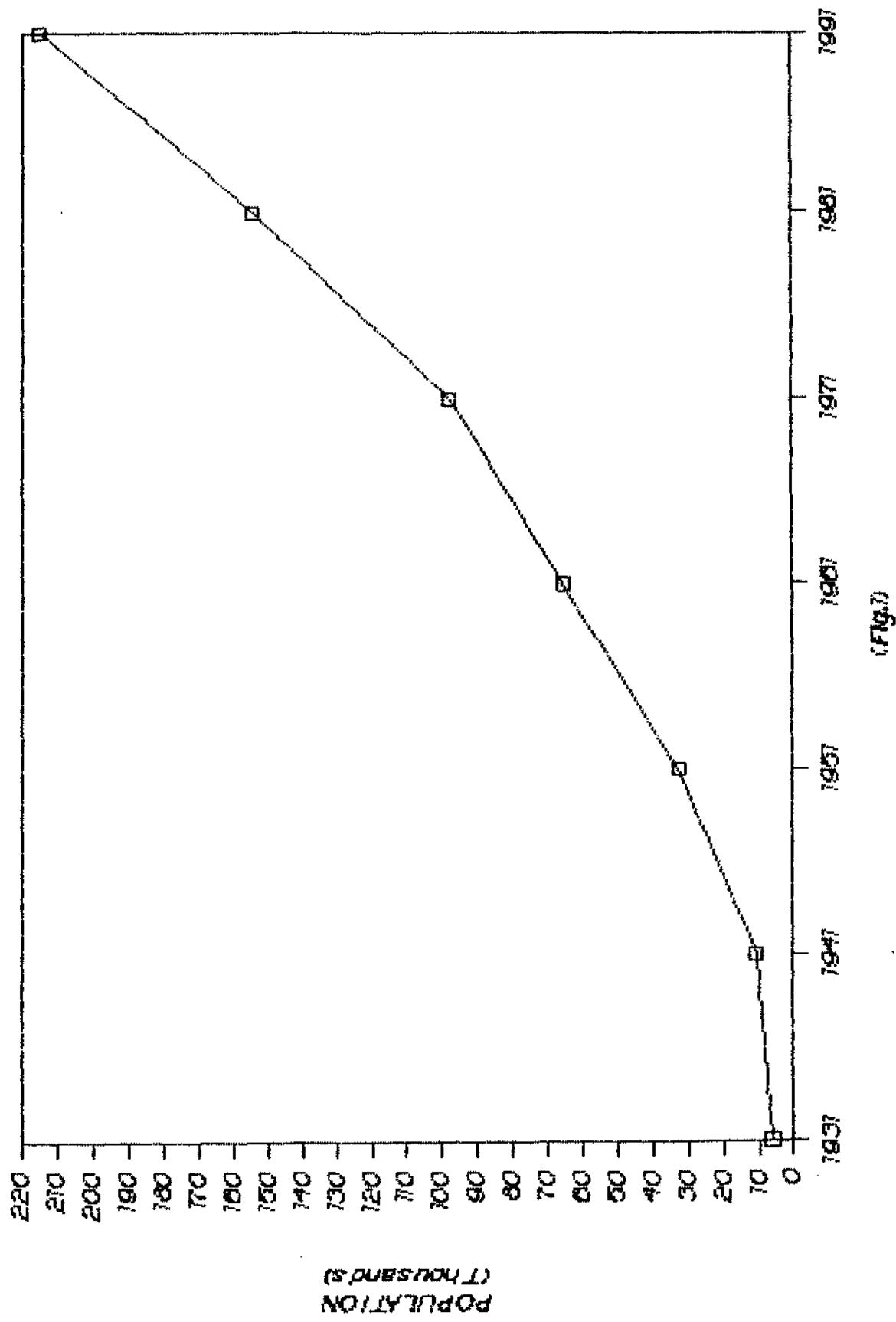
It may be interesting to note that the growth of this town since its becoming a town in 1931 has been very rapid between 1931 and 1951,² recording the highest for all time in 1951, when the population more than tripled in one decade. The rate of growth however declined in the following decades, being the lowest in the last one (Table 1.1 and Fig.1).

Table 1.1
Growth of Population in Siliguri.

| Year | Persons | Decadal Variation | Percentage Decadal Variation. |
|------|----------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1931 | 6,067 | --- | --- |
| 1941 | 10,487 | + 4,420 | + 72.85 |
| 1951 | 32,480 | + 21,993 | + 209.72 |
| 1961 | 65,471 | + 32,991 | + 101.57 |
| 1971 | 97,484 | + 32,013 | + 48.90 |
| 1981 | 1,54,378 | + 56,894 | + 58.36 |
| 1991 | 2,16,950 | + 62,572 | + 40.53 |

[Source: Census of India 1991, Paper-I and Paper-2 of 1992, Series I, Final Population Totals and Government of India, Census of India, 1951, Vol-VI, West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore, Part-II, Table-A IV.]

GROWTH OF POPULATION IN SINGURI



Though Siliguri did not increase in real size the population of this town increased at a fast rate during the last five decades and in 1981 it was declared a class I town, the first of its type in the entire region of North Bengal covering all the six districts lying north of river Ganga. Dabgram now an integral part of Siliguri, was declared rural in 1971 though it had a population of 38,000 but was declared a separate town in 1981 which then had a population of 76,210.³ After that due to physical and economic considerations Siliguri along with Dabgram and the railway township of New Jalpaiguri formed an integral unit which is the largest urban agglomeration in the region of north Bengal. In 1994, when Siliguri was declared a Corporation a large portion of Dabgram was annexed to Siliguri.

A comparative study of urban growth rate in West Bengal, Darjeeling District and Siliguri may further confirm the idea about the abnormal rate of growth of Siliguri (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2

Growth Rate of Urban Population in Different Decades

| | Decades | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 31-41 | 41-51 | 51-61 | 61-71 | 71-81 | 81-91 |
| West Bengal | 63.69 | 32.52 | 35.97 | 28.41 | 31.61 | 29.49 |
| Darjeeling District | 33.77 | 62.44 | 53.09 | 24.60 | 55.58 | 40.37 |
| Siliguri | 72.85 | 209.72 | 101.57 | 48.90 | 58.36 | 40.53 |

[Source: Census of India 1981, Series 23,
West Bengal and Census of India, 1991, Paper-I
Paper-II of 1992, Series-1, Final Population Totals]

Growth rate of towns in North Bengal

It may be noted here that the rise of population in the decade 1941 to 51 was higher as compared to other in all urban places of North Bengal but in Siliguri it was noticeably much higher than in any other town in the region. The table given below shows the growth in different towns of North Bengal in 1941-51. (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3

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 | 107.76 |
| 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]

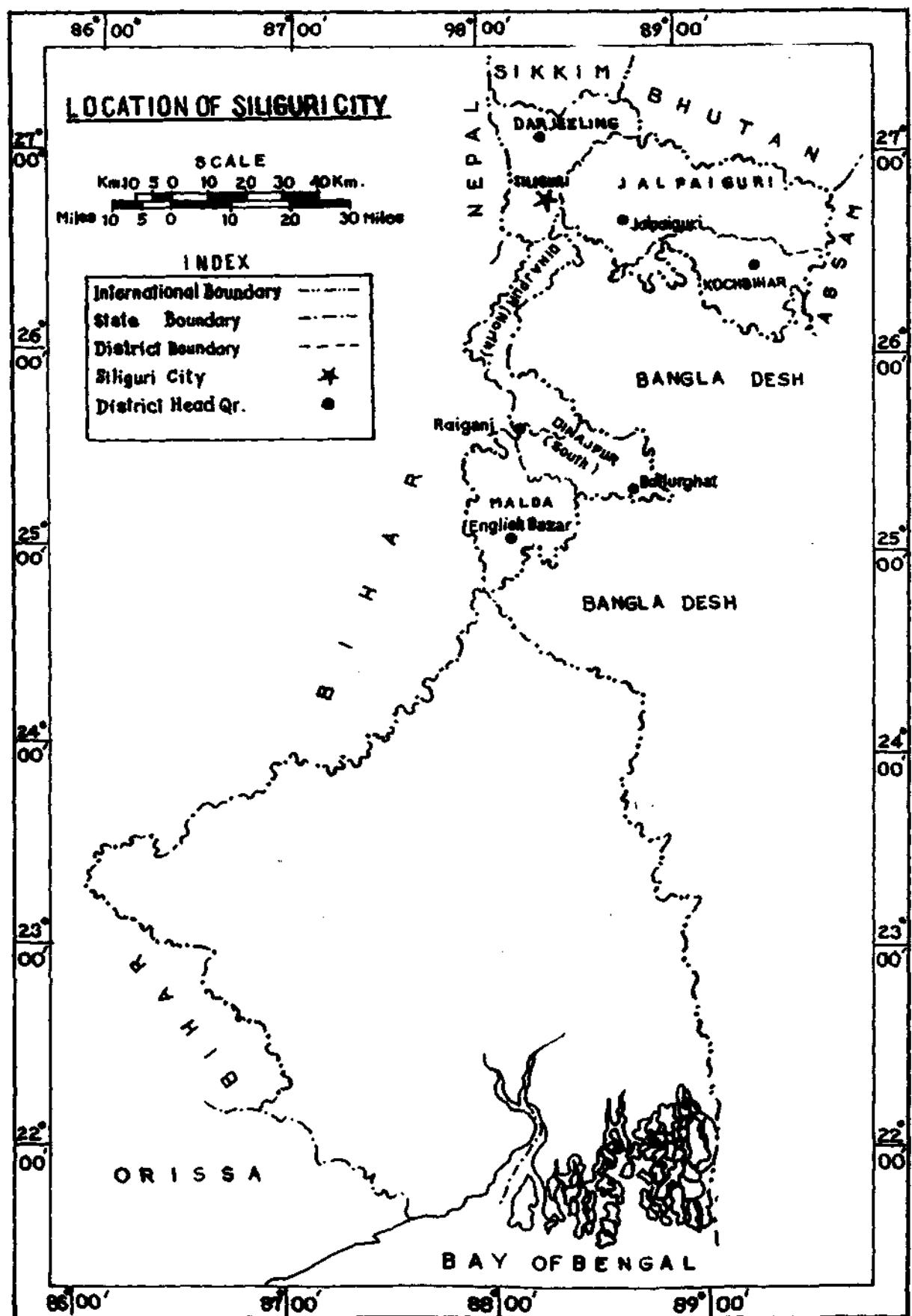


Fig. 2.

Migration

Siliguri happens to be a frontier town maintaining direct link with other North-Eastern states and after 1947 the flow of people to Siliguri increased largely due to the pull factor as it was the communicating centre and as because a new township was growing here, people of surrounding places were attracted towards this town.⁴ The following Table shows the fact:-

Table 1.4

Figures of Migration (1989)

| Original Birth Place | Migration In Percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Bangladesh | 52 |
| 2. Siliguri Surroundings | 01 |
| 3. Other District 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).]

Siliguri and Balurghat

Other than Siliguri only Balurghat of North Bengal region registered a noticeable increase of population, after 1961 for the same reason and during the period 1961-71 and 1971-81 the decadal increase of population of Balurghat were higher than that of Siliguri. The following Table shows the fact (Table 1.5)

Table 1.5

Decadal Growth of Population in Two Cities of North Bengal

| | Decadal Growth | |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 1961-71 | 1971-81 |
| Balurghat | 148.48 | 67.74 |
| Siliguri | 48.90 | 57.80 |

[Source: Census of India 1981,
Series 23, West Bengal].

Despite all these factors the population of Siliguri was higher than that of the other towns of North Bengal.

General Observations

Siliguri Town was formed with an area of 15.54 sq.kms. After the Siliguri Municipal Corporation was formed in 1994, the area of this town increased to 41.90 sq. km . As a result of this, population also increased greatly .

The main reason for this large growth of population was not the expansion of this town but because of the communication and transport facilities which gradually improved through the decades since independence, as a result of which people of different areas were attracted to this place.

Importance was given to surface transport and many new roads were constructed and even those bridges which was extensively damaged by flood were built with concrete pillars across rivers like Teesta,

Mahananda, Torsha etc. As a result of making up of new roads both the National Highway and State Highways were connected with Siliguri, (1950-67). After that the Farakka barrage was constructed in the year 1974 thus opening the road and railway link with the southern part of the country. Siliguri thus became a communication centre because it connected with both the southern and the north east adding to the link it had already with the hills and the neighbouring states like Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal etc. These factors all together were responsible for this great increase in population.

It is seen that those towns which are large in area have a tendency to increase its population, for eg. in North Bengal towns like Siliguri, Balurghat, Raiganj which are large in area have increased their population by 5 to 7 times in last three or four decades.

With the increase of population the demand for agricultural products and essential goods increased largely and due to this agricultural development took place in and around Siliguri i.e. North Bengal as a whole. The agricultural products began to be stored in Siliguri in big godowns which was built up then. From here the products were being transported to the neighbouring towns like Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Haldibari etc. and also to the hills. All these factors were responsible for converting Siliguri into a business centre.

References

1. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling*, Logos Press, New Delhi (1907), Page- 40.
2. Government of India, *Census of India, 1951, Vol- VI, West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore*.
3. Government of India, *Census of India, 1981, Series 23, West Bengal*.
4. Dr. Purnima Saha, *Problem and Prospect of Development of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri Towns: A Comparative Study* (1991).
5. Government of West Bengal, *Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority*.

Chapter II

Spatial Distribution of Different Communities

In showing the spatial distribution of the communities in the city¹ of Siliguri, it has been taken up for each ward separately as the data is available in that order and it also makes a comparative analysis easier.

(It has to be borne in mind that Siliguri is basically a 'Bengali' city, having developed in the heart of rural and forested Bengal through decades to which people are migrating from adjoining Bangladesh and neighbouring Indian states. Its nodality has been felt more significant since the independence of India when the province of Bengal having been divided, left this town (still then a small one) as the only entry as well as exit point for any movement over the surface between the north-eastern states and the rest of India. As a result of this Siliguri gradually was transformed into a transport centre of national importance and playing the vital role of liaison between the hill areas (including the state of Sikkim) and north-eastern states and the remaining part of India , it attracted commerce which developed as one of its leading functions in no time. All these naturally had a lasting impact on the city and this came to be reflected in its population which growingly became more and more heterogeneous in character.) As a matter of fact, the increasing importance of commerce attracted people from many areas to take a direct part in that and the allied activities , the latter slowly expanding in the wake of commercial growth , which made a drastic

change in the community-wise composition of the city-population, adding further to the physical changes of the cityscape.

To obtain a comprehensive idea about the Community-wise composition, the major communities found in this city has been divided into 9 (nine) categories: (i)Bengali; (ii)Bihari; (iii)Marwari;(iv) Punjabi; (v)Nepali; (vi)Oriya; (vii)Tribal; (viii) Muslim and (ix) Others. However, it needs to be mentioned here that it is very difficult to trace the state of origin of the Muslims and hence they have been put Separately under a different category.

(In considering the community-wise composition of the population of each ward , the roads and specific localities have been mentioned as elements of identification. Regarding specific localities it needs to be mentioned in this connection as a point of further classification that particular forms like 'Patti', 'colony','para','basti' and 'nagar' appear in many cases. The meaning between them is not only different other than the fact that at many instances some of them like 'colony' and 'nagar' generally indicate a newly settled area of the refugees while 'basti' means usually, but not necessarily, a slum) In Siliguri, the word 'para' for a locality mostly stands for a locality developed earlier , quite often indicating the type of people living in. Such as 'Babupara' means 'locality inhabited by gentlemen ', Hakimpara means ' locality inhabited by the administrator ', which actually is even now true as the office and residential quarters of the S.D.O. is situated in that locality) 'Ashrampara' means a 'locality having a religious (Hindu) establishment'. All three of them together make the old part of the city or the original nucleus around which later development took place giving rise to outward expansion of the city through decades.

The Table 2.44(at the end of the chapter) shows the Bengali community forming the largest population followed by the Bihari population. The Bengali population indicates a high percentage of 64.25%. Out of a total of 30 wards, the Bengalis represent the major section of the population, though the percentage varies widely from 11.71% to 98.96% among them.(Fig. 3)

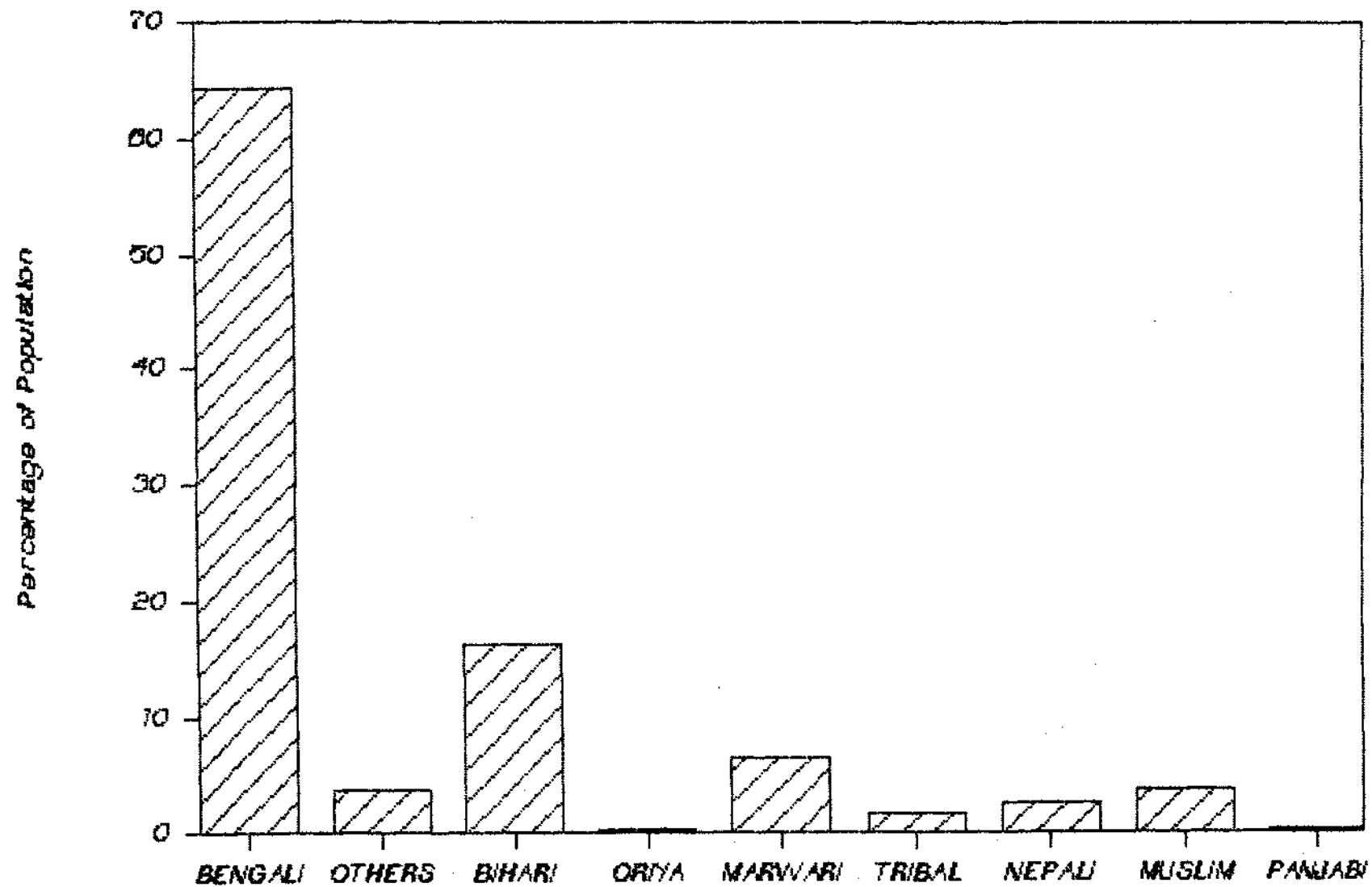
At least in ten of them, more than 90% of the total population are the Bengalis. Looking at the map(Fig. 4) it may be interesting to observe that perhaps a pattern may be detected in the geographical distribution of different communities. For instance, the wards having Bengalis as dominant population cover the eastern part of the city starting from north to south. Again among them wards lying on the fringe of the town, have the largest percentage than those in the further west. Some details about the overall character of these wards may give a clear idea about the situation. The Bengalis comprise 64.25% of the total inhabitants and two other important communities are the Biharis (16.36%) and the Marwaris (6.55%).

We may discuss the community-wise composition of different wards elaborately, starting from Ward No.I.

Ward - I.

This ward spreads over Himachal colony, Surya Sen colony, Hill Cart Road, Darjeeling more, Railgate and B.R.I.C colony , Diesel Colony, and the slum of Diesel colony , Panchanan Colony, Mahananda Colony, Kulipara and Siliguri Junction. Part of Ujanu mouja of district Darjeeling has also been annexed to ward no.I (Fig. 5) as a result of

SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF SILIGURI



(Fig.3)

the formation of Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994.

The community-wise composition of ward no.I is very much diversified as shown in the following Table.

Table 2.1
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward I.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 35.03 | 5.70 | 39.73 | 0.43 | 0.52 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 9.67 | 0.24 | 6.48 | 2.20 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

It is quite interesting to note the complex mixture of population among which the Biharis (39.73%) form the dominant position followed by the Bengali(35.03%), the Nepali (9.67%) and the Tribals(6.48%).

A major part of the Non-Bengali and Muslim population are railway employees residing in railway quarters. More or less the majority of the Tribal population are service holders in the railway department. Another part of Bihari population residing in Kulipatty(Kuli Para),the latter as name of the locality directly indicates their means of occupation as porters, is engaged in loading and unloading work of goods carried by the railways.

Ward - II.

It comprises Nivedita Road, part of Bagha Jatin Colony, Pradhan

**MAP OF SOCIAL COMPOSITION
OF SILIGURI CITY.**
(Ward I to Ward xxxx)

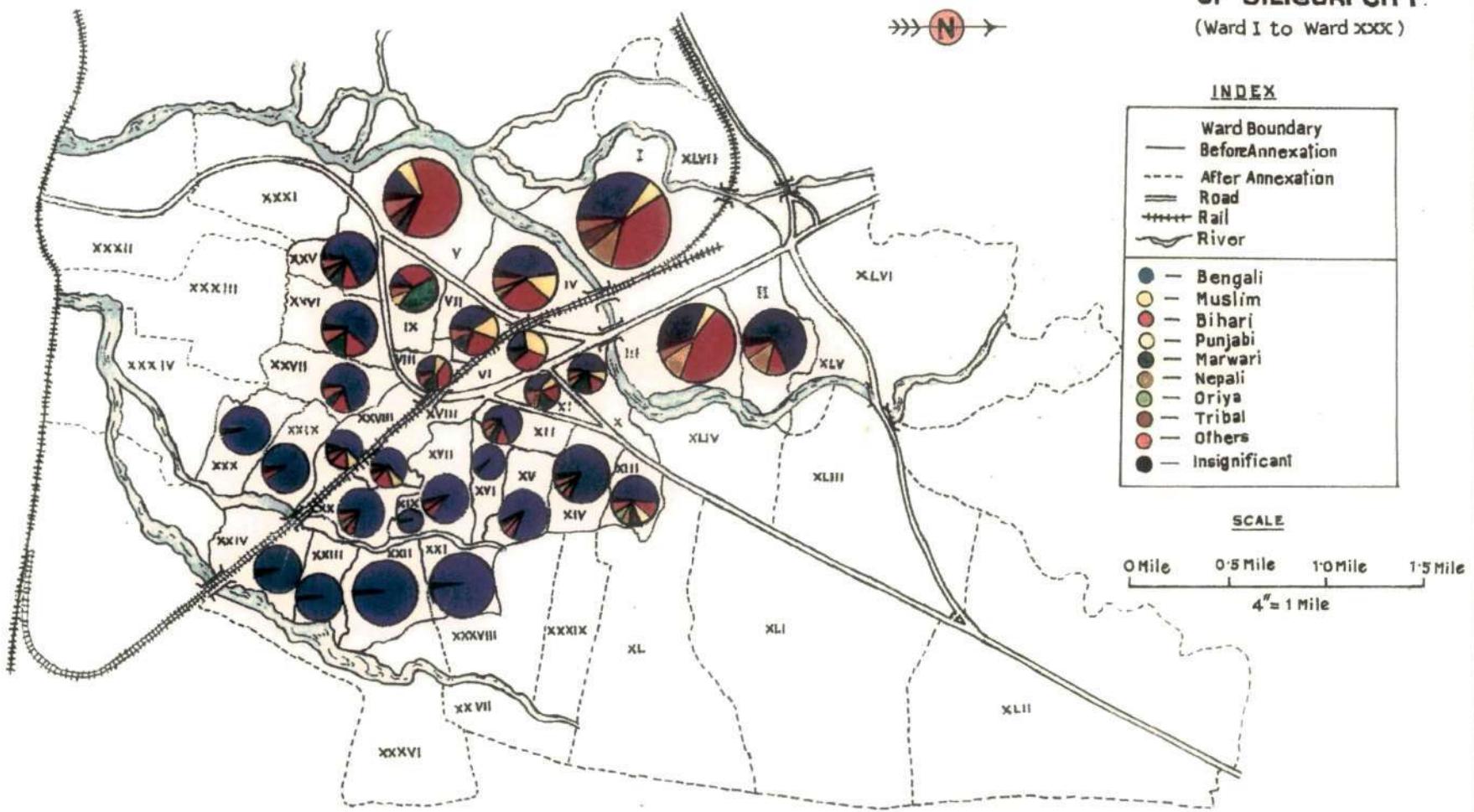


Fig. 4.

Nagar, S.N.T. Godown Road, part of Mallaguri and Patel Road. It forms the extreme corner in the northern periphery of Siliguri city (Fig. 5). The ward is totally residential. The Bengalis comprise about 67.44% of the total inhabitants and two other important communities are Biharis (12.99%) and Nepalis(11.02%) [Table 2.2].

The population of this ward has largely increased after 1981 and that was due to migration from Bangladesh and Assam.

The Bengalis inhabiting this ward are engaged in business or some of them are service holders.

The Bihari community is concentrated in the area lying in the north of river Mahananda and is engaged in different types of manual work while some of them have some small business like betel shops and little grocery shops etc.

The Nepalis of this area are relatively old residents in respect of Bengali community. They are mostly engaged in transport activities, as drivers in public or private transport or as helpers.

Table 2.2
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward II.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 67.44 | 1.71 | 12.99 | 0.40 | 1.53 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 11.02 | 0.33 | 1.38 | 3.20 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

MAP OF SILIGURI CITY

N 

INDEX

Ward Boundary



Before Annexation



After Annexation



Road



Rail



River



D.N.C.C. Pipe Line



Bridge



Mahabirathon



Siliguri Corporation



SCALE

0-mile 0.5-mile 1-mile 1.5-mile

4' = 1 mile

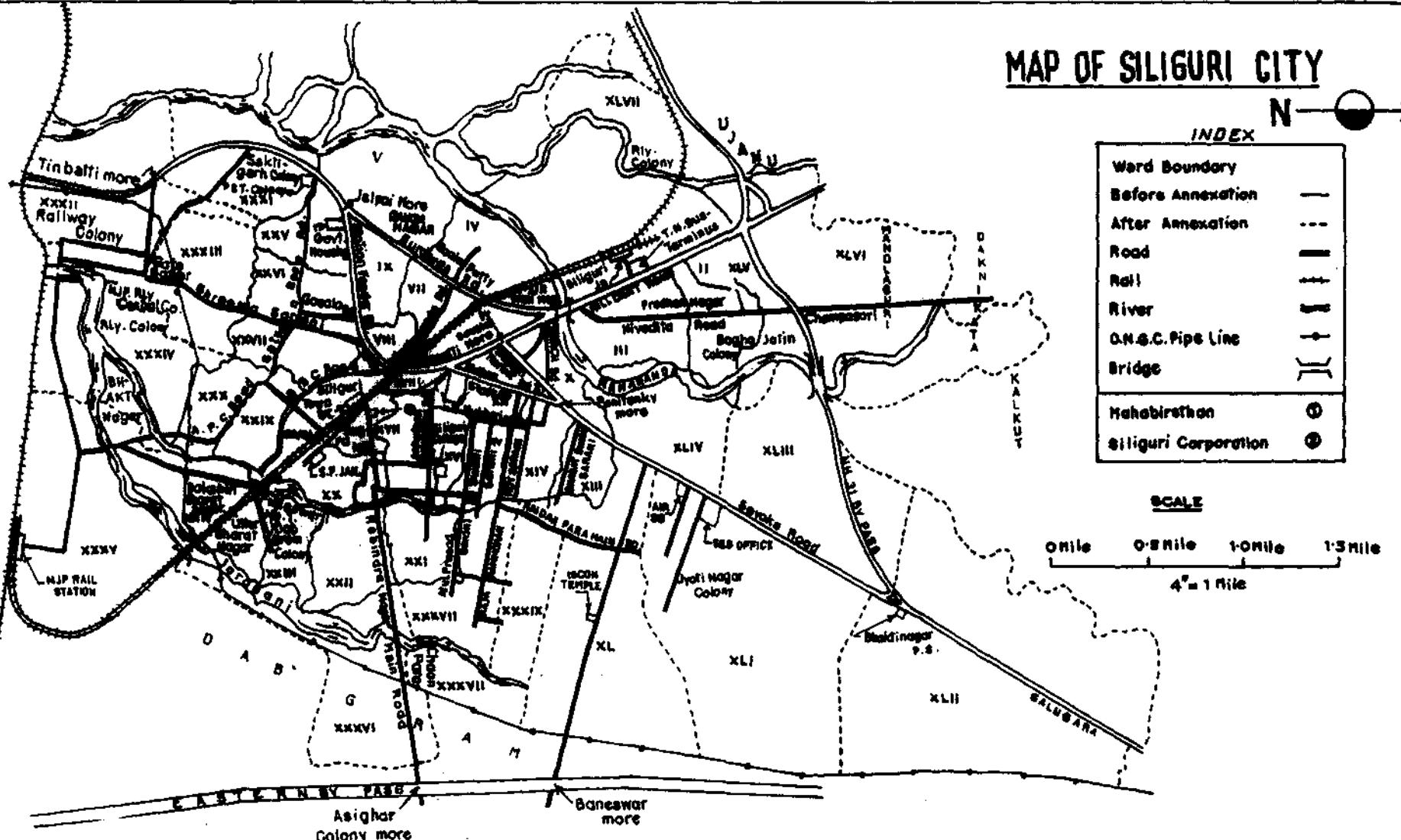


Fig. 5.

Ward - III.

Lying in the northern part of Siliguri city, it includes a number of localities and roads, such as Saimarg Road, South Bagha Jatin Colony, Gurung Basti, Bhanubhakt Sarani and Nivedita Road.

The community-wise population is as follows (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward III.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 30.92 | 2.42 | 47.54 | 0.71 | 1.63 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 10.56 | 0.23 | 1.58 | 4.41 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

This is another ward in Siliguri dominated by the Biharis as the major constituent of the population mix . The majority of the Bihari population are milkmen belonging to the Yadav community.

The Bengali and the Nepali population of this ward are associated with small scale business and the remaining part of the population are either service holders or associated with transport activities. This is another ward where the non-Bengali population is larger and the percentage of Biharis is the largest among all communities. The Bengalis though come next to the Biharis in percentage yet it is the second

lowest for the whole city. Among the communities, the Nepalis take a significant place in view of the presence of a large number of communities. The population seems to be very much diversified in character.

Ward - IV.

Lying close to Burdwan Road and bounded by river Mahananda on the west (Fig. 5), it comprises the following locality.

Adarshanagar, Chandra park, Tumol para, South Karbala, Goala Patty, Maharaj Colony and Burdwan Road.

It is an interesting feature to note that though the Bengali community forms the largest section of the inhabitants of this ward, the majority of the population are non-Bengalis, showing a varied degree of communal heterogeneity. The following composition shows the fact. (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward IV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 47.75 | 15.09 | 27.70 | 0.00 | 1.75 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 2.96 | 0.00 | 1.76 | 3.20 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

Both the Muslims and the Biharis are from Bihar and part of

Uttar Pradesh and most of them are engaged as labour in the loading and un-loading activities at nearby wholesale areas having a large number of godowns. Some of them are also engaged as rikshaw pullers and van pullers etc. A large section of the yadav community is also concentrated in this ward engaged in the occupation of dairy activities. The Bengali inhabitants here are generally engaged in business like maintaining small stalls dealing in grocery or other items of daily use. The remaining part are service holders at small and large private offices or shops.

A large portion of the Kanu(Teli) community is also found in this ward who originally came from Bihar and eastern part of Uttar Pradesh. They are running relatively a large type of business including export and import which will be discussed later.

Ward - V.

Occurring in the south-west of Siliguri city it includes Ganga Nagar, Santoshi nagar, Raniswati Mandir Road and Nutan Para near Jalpaimore.

Relatively a more diversified type of social structure is found in this ward as brought-out in the following Table.(Table 2.5)

Table 2.5

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward V.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 13.87 | 4.74 | 65.40 | 0.00 | 2.39 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 1.33 | 0.08 | 5.38 | 6.81 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

(15)

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31 Dec 2003**

The most interesting fact revealed by the Table is that the Bihari community dominates the ward(65.40%), forming the highest percentage for all the 30 wards, and the component of Bengali community residing in this ward is recorded as the second lowest in the whole city.

Further, the presence of some Other communities and the Tribals make the character of inhabitants very much diversified.

The majority of the Bihari population is however engaged as casual labour connected with construction works while another section of the population are rikshaw pullers or make a living from business.

Ward - VI.

It covers Dangipara, B.M. Sarani, Burdwan Road, M.N.Sarkar Road, Kurseong Road, Mahananda Para, D.L.Sarani, D.L.Sarkar Road, Hill Cart Road, Darbhanga tola, Chappal Patti, Alupatti, Road station, Fakir tola, Vivekananda Road, Swami Nagar Colony, Ganjagali and Batagali.

Relatively a more complex nature of social structure is found in ward no.VI as shown in the following Table (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward VI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 21.83 | 33.66 | 28.91 | 1.24 | 3.43 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 2.16 | 0.00 | 1.63 | 7.14 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

In studying the community-wise composition of the ward it is very much important to note the presence of a large number of Muslims (33.66%)- the largest so far in relation to other 29 wards of the city. A big mosque is also situated in this area. The majority of the Muslim population is non-Bengali.

Next to Muslim population, the Bihari (28.91%) and the Bengali (21.83%) constitute the second and third largest constituents. It is also interesting to observe that the "Others" indicate a large percentage of 7.14 per cent, and this is due to the presence of non-Bengali population majority of which are from Uttar Pradesh belonging to the 'Kanu' community.

The majority of the Muslim population is associated with different kinds of manual work and some of them make a living from small business. The majority of the Bihari population and the people from Uttar Pradesh are involved in wholesale business among which potato and onion have taken an important part .

Ward - VII.

This ward spreads over Vivekananda Road, Vidyasagar Road, Vidyasagar Palli, Khalpara , Nehru Road , M.G. Road , K. N. Roy Road , Vivekananda Nagar, Yadav Palli.

Relatively a more diversified social structure is found in ward no VII as shown in the following Table (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward VII

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 39.67 | 15.15 | 25.78 | 0.00 | 10.58 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 1.82 | 0.00 | 0.82 | 6.18 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly 1993.]

The Table shows a very complex mixture of population among which the Biharis(25.78%) form the most dominant non-Bengali component. Another important feature is the presence of a large number of Muslim population (15.15%) which is due to its location close to ward no. IV and VI preferred by the Muslims. The majority of the Bihari and the Muslim population of the ward are generally involved in different kinds of manual work, eg. loading and unloading work at nearby godowns or rikshaw pulling etc. The Table also shows 6.18 per cent of other communities, majority of whom belong to the Teli community originating from Uttar Pradesh and from the western part of Bihar, also known as 'Kanu' or 'Madhyadesi Vaishya' making a living from different sort of large and medium scale business.

Ward - VIII.

It covers Vivekananda Road of Khalpara, Madrasa Road, Kalinath Road, Nehru Road, M.P.M. Road, Manturam Road, Mahatma Gandhi Road,

Agrasen Road, S.P.Road, Kalahati, Sibaji Road, Naya Bazar Road, Manturam Compound Road, Mahabirsthian and Mahabirsthian Road, Railgate area, Burdwan Road, Majumdar colony, Store Yard colony, Tetul Tala and Durganagar.

The following Table shows the percentage of population belonging to different communities of ward no VIII (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward VIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 14.56 | 4.92 | 36.01 | 1.06 | 34.46 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 1.32 | 0.00 | 1.46 | 6.21 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

The Table shows a complex nature of community break-up among which the Biharis remain highest (36.01%) followed by the Marwaris (34.46%).

Almost 50% of the Bihari and the Muslim population of the ward are manual workers, engaged as rikshaw or van pullers or working as casual labour in different godowns . The remaining part of the Bihari community and the people from Uttar Pradesh, falling under the 'Others' category, are generally involved in small and medium scale business. The Marwaris of the ward (34.46%) make a living generally from large scale business including export and import.

Ward - IX.

It covers Mangal Pande Road, Jajodia Market, Station Feeder Road, Agrasen Road and bye lanes, Sreelipi Road, Jajodia clinic Road, Burdwan Road, Nehru Road, S.P. Mukherjee Road, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Dharmashala Road and Sani Mandir. The majority of the area is known as 'Khalpara', which is dominated by 'Marwari' population.

The following Table shows the percentage of population belonging to different communities of Ward.No.IX (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward IX.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 11.71 | 0.82 | 28.70 | 0.00 | 49.23 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 2.46 | 0.00 | 0.42 | 6.66 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

The Table shows a very complex mixture of population among which the Marwaris (49.23%) form the most dominant component with the highest score among all the 30 wards of the old city - area. Next to Marwari community is the Bihari representing 28.70 percent of the ward - population.

The Marwari population and some of the Biharis are generally involved in large and medium scale business including export and import.

The remaining part of the population of the ward representing the Bihari make a living generally from small business or by working as labour in nearby godowns.

Ward - X.

It represents the following locality.

Mahakal Palli, Nabin Sen Road, Sevoke Road, Kartic ch.Dey Road, Rasiklal Sarani, Hill Cart Road, Church Road , Ganesh Ram Compound, Uday Shankar Sarani, Kathal Bagan,Adarsha Palli and Sree Ram Colony. The area may be divided into two parts viz.(i)Residential and (ii)Commercial. The Bengali population represents about half of the total number of inhabitants followed by Bihari (21.32%) and Marwari (14.5%) population (Table 2.10).

The very location of the area with the two most important thoroughfares Hill Cart Road and Sevoke Road - framing it on both sides have made it a part of the CBD which alone explains the composition of its inhabitants. The Marwaris constitute the most leading and the most affluent business community in the city.

They are concentrated in the triangular area between Sevoke Road, Church Road,Hill Cart Road and Ganesh Ram compound where the residential buildings appear just behind the commercial place and the area around Hill Cart Road, Sevoke Road and Church Road is fully commercial(Fig. 4). There is a big market for electronic and electrical goods, building materials and fixtures, hardware etc. besides some transportation business, which will be discussed later.

The Bengali population is primarily concentrated in Mahakal Palli, Nabin Sen Road, Adarsh Palli, Kartik Ch.Dey Road and Rasik Lal Sarani.

The Bihari community having made its residence here is generally engaged in retail as well as wholesale business on a small or big scale. A few pockets inhabited by the Yadav community is also found here.

Table 2.10

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward X.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 50.19 | 2.51 | 21.32 | 0.46 | 14.51 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 4.32 | 0.06 | 0.85 | 5.78 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

Ward - XI.

It covers George Mohbert Road, Bidhan Road, Bidhan Market Road, Sevoke Road, Khudiram Palli, Hill Cart Road, Rajani Bagan and Seth Srilal Market. It is to be noted that the majority of the area is a market place.

Though the Bengalis as inhabitants show a dominant position, the Table(Table 2.11) gives a complex mixture of population. Relatively a more diversified type of social structure is found in this ward as brought out in the following Table (Table 2.11).

Table 2.11
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 32.65 | 2.58 | 18.56 | 0.65 | 23.87 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 4.46 | 1.40 | 0.37 | 15.46 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

The Bengalis represent 32.65 per cent which is the largest one followed by the Marwaris (23.87%) and the Biharis(18.56%). The Marwaris and some of the Biharis and the Bengalis are generally involved in large scale business.

It is also interesting to note that inhabitants grouped under the head of 'Others' in the Table show a large percentage of 15.46 which remains highest so far in comparison to other 29 wards of the city.

This is due to the communities coming from different parts of India mainly from Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, which has not been mentioned in the Table. They make their living generally from business activities.

Ward - XII.

It covers the area lying along Raja Ram Mohan Roy Road, Najrul Sarani, Bidhan Road, part of Ashutosh Mukherjee Road, Tilak Road,

part of Bagha Jatin Road, Rishi Aurobindo Road, Red Cross Road, Biman Sinha Road etc.

It is situated opposite to the Bidhan Market complex, the largest one in the city, and the area adjacent to Siliguri stadium (Fig. 5). The percentage of the Bengali community is 72.79 per cent. However, relatively a large number of Bihari population is present here comprising over 12 per cent of the total inhabitants followed by 4.24 per cent Marwaris (Table 2.12). Apart from the area covered by the market complex, it may be defined as a residential area inhabited mostly by service holders and professional people. However, the presence of a large number of business establishments naturally has attracted many people engaged in them to settle down in this ward making it a permanent home so far as their residence is concerned.

Table 2.12

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XII

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 72.79 | 0.51 | 12.62 | 0.27 | 4.24 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 3.06 | 1.00 | 1.42 | 4.09 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

Ward - XIII.

It comprises the area served by Udhampur Singh Sarani, Lala Lajpat Roy Road and by lanes, Guru Nanak Sarani, Sarbamangala Road,

Shibmandir Road, Bhagat Singh Sarani, Pranami Mandir Road. The area lies on the eastern side of Sevoke Road starting from Panitanki (crossing of Bidhan Road and Sevoke Road Junction) to near the Second Mile point on Sevoke Road and as such it represents a part of the recent expansion of the city area. All the lanes and roads mentioned above originate from Sevoke Road (Fig. 5).

This is largely reflected in the composition of its population which is more heterogeneous than most of the other wards , having a significant community mix. For instance, though the Bengalis dominate as the single largest group of inhabitants, the percentage of Biharis (11.90%), Marwaris(10.89%), Punjabis(5.79%) and Nepalis(6.69%) is quite significant(Table 2.13). Besides, the percentage of the Punjabis happens to be the highest for any ward of this city.

The Bengalis (51.33%) are mostly engaged in different services and business. But almost all the Punjabis are associated with small and large scale business. They are residing in a concentrated manner in the same area comprising Udhampur Singh Sarani, Lala Lajpat Roy Road, Guru Nanak Sarani, Bhagat Singh Sarani etc. with their business established along Sevoke Road. They seem to be in the process of enlarging their residential area adjoining Sevoke Road, gradually buying up residential properties from old residents, obviously the Bengalis , quite often offering higher price than the market rate.

The Marwaris of this area are also associated with large scale business like the Punjabis and they occupy the surrounding areas of

Sevoke Road (mainly automobiles and electrical goods which will be discussed later).

The Biharis and the Nepalis (6.69%) of this area are generally maintaining small shops or are engaged in service of the private agencies.

The percentage of people shown as 'Others' inhabiting this ward is relatively high (7.11%). This is due to the non-Sikh Punjabi population and people from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and some other parts of India in addition to the communities mentioned above.

Table 2.13

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 51.33 | 3.45 | 11.90 | 5.79 | 10.89 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 6.69 | 5.14 | 0.70 | 7.11 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

Ward - XIV:

This includes Jatin Das Sarani, Muzaffar Ahmed Road, part of Nazrul Sarani, Masterda Lane, Ramkrishna Road, Saradamani Road, Buddhadeb Basu Road and Durga Das Banerjee Road. The major area is lying in Ashram

Para on the right side of Bidhan Road, opposite to the market complex (Fig. 5). It is a Bengali dominated area, with 84.82% of the total population followed by the Bihari and the Nepali communities with 3.66 and 3.83 per cent respectively. The area is by and large residential and the majority of the population are service holders in different establishments or have a small business for living.

Table 2.14

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XIV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 84.82 | 0.76 | 3.66 | 0.76 | 1.80 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 3.83 | 0.10 | 0.14 | 4.13 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.] .

Ward - XV.

It covers Sayed Mustafa Ali Road, part of Haren Mukherjee Road, part of Raja Ram Mohan Roy Road , Swamiji Sarani, part of Nazrul Sarani, P.C.Sarkar Road (Sarani), Meghnath Sarani, Kutimil Road, Palpara, Nigam Palli, Atul Prasad Sarani, Bankim Ch.Road, Jagadish Bhattacharya Sarani, Kanailal Dutta Road etc, situated in the eastern part of Siliguri and mostly inhabited by the Bengali community with a sprinkling of Biharis (2.17%) and Marwaris (1.23%) [Table 2.15]. The Bengalis comprise 94.02% of the total population and they are engaged in business and services as occupation.

Table 2.15

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 94.02 | 0.10 | 2.17 | 0.00 | 1.23 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.38 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 2.03 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

Ward - XVI.

South of ward XV and in the eastern part of Siliguri city, ward no.XVI is situated (Fig. 5) containing Girish Ghosh Road, part of Haren Mukherjee Road, Balaidas Chatterjee Road, Jagadish Bose Road, part of Swamiji Road, Jyotsna Bekary Road, Rajani Kanta Sarani, Rasbehari Road, Siliguri College Road (Eastern part). The picture of ward XVI is the same as that of ward XV, the Bengali population representing 94.58% of the total number of inhabitants (Table 2.16).

Table 2.16

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XVI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 94.58 | 0.15 | 1.98 | 0.00 | 0.95 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.08 | 1.71 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

Ward No - XVII.

It spreads over Bagha Jatin Park, part of Subhaspally, Netaji Subhas Road, Siliguri College campus, Jagadish Ch.Bose Road, C.V. Raman Sarani, Rasbehari Sarani, Nandalal Bose Road, College Road, Sachin Sarkar Sarani, Bipin Pal Sarani etc. The area is residential , however, the locality may be described as the 'Educational Centre' because 'Siliguri College' and a number of leading schools like Siliguri Girls' High School, Siliguri Hakimpara Valika Vidyalaya and some other academic institutions are located in this ward.

The community-wise composition of the population of this ward is shown below (Table 2.17).

Table 2.17

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XVII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 90.66 | 0.51 | 4.19 | 0.00 | 1.26 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 1.13 | 0.00 | 0.23 | 2.02 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

The above Table shows that in spite of the very high percentage of Bengali population(90.66%), the ward represents a complex character with the presence of a wide range of non-Bengali residents. The population of this area is mostly engaged in different professions like medical,

engineering etc. while some others are businessmen. For instance, the Bihari inhabitants of this area are mostly engaged in small and large scale businesses.

Ward - XVIII.

It includes Sraban Nagar, Old Station Road, Promod Nagar situated by the side of railway track extending upto special jail, Khudiram Pally (Colony), Ranabasti near Bagrakot, Lichubagan and part of Subhas palli(Ranabasti). There is a large number of slums here eg.Sraban Nagar, Old Station Road, Promod Nagar and Rana Basti etc. The slum area occurs along the railway track (Fig. 5).

The following Table shows the percentage of people belonging to different communities (in %).

Table 2.18

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XVIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 60.97 | 5.70 | 18.68 | 0.00 | 0.15 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 4.44 | 0.72 | 7.23 | 2.11 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

The community-mix is more pronounced here than in Ward XVII, with a large percentage of non-Bengali (over 40%) population than in many wards and among them the Biharis take a leading position (18.68%) while the percentage represented by the Tribals (7.23%) as well as the Nepalis are quite significant. A cursory look at the map will show that the location of this ward much closer to the CBD area has an important role in determining the communal character of the ward (Fig.4 and Fig. 5).

The Bengali population of this area (60.9%) is mostly engaged in small and large scale business, having permanent stalls. The Bihari and Muslim population is mostly engaged as labour or dailywage workers. Some of them are rikshaw-pullers.

Ward - XIX.

This ward spreads over Netaji School Road, part of Netaji Subhas Road, Netaji Girls' High School area and road, Milan Mandir Road, Kabiguru Sarani, Sukumar Roy Road, the right bank of river Fuleswari and Subhas Nagar Colony. The percentage of people belonging to different communities are as follows.

Table 2.19

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XIX.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 98.15 | 0.00 | 1.24 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.24 | 0.00 | 0.18 | 0.19 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

The Bengalis are the dominant residents and the presence of other communities is negligible.

Ward - XX.

Situated on the left bank of river Fuleswari and lying far from the CBD, ward no. XX covers Jail Road, Jyotinagar, Raja Ram Mohan Colony, Durga Das Colony, Milan Mandir Road, Netaji Subhas Road(part), A.K.Basu Road and part of Jagadish Basu Road.

The railway track connecting New Jalpaiguri Station with Siliguri city station, passes through the southern part of this ward (Fig. 5). The percentage of community-wise composition of population of this ward is as follows.

Table 2.20
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XX.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 81.35 | 1.27 | 8.21 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 2.15 | 0.00 | 6.18 | 0.84 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

While the Bengalis lead with 81.35% of the total inhabitants, the presence of the Bihari (8.21%) , the Tribal(6.18%), the Muslim (1.27%) and the Nepali (2.15%) population is noteworthy . The majority of the

Bihari, Muslim and the Tribal population is residing in the slum area which has developed by the side of railway line.

Ward - XXI.

It covers Atul Prasad Sarani, Promothesh Barua Sarani, Kabiguru Sarani, right bank of river Fuleswari and Dipchar , Daspara and Rabindra Nagar. Another important fact is that the northern and the eastern sides of the ward are surrounded by Dabgram mouza of Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri district. Part of this mouza has recently been annexed to 'Siliguri Municipal corporation ' which forming another separate ward, will be discussed later.

The percentage of residents representing different communities is as follows:

Table 2.21

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 98.96 | 0.00 | 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.26 | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.26 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

The Table shows that the Bengalis comprise over 98% of the total inhabitants and the presence of other communities is negligible. The

structure of population is not so diversified, represented mostly by the middle class and lower middle class people. Majority of the population is engaged in small business and some of them are service holders.

Ward - XXII.

Situated to the south of ward.no.XXI, the eastern, northern and southern sides are covered by Matangini Hazra Road, Fuleswari river, Kabiguru Sarani and Dinesh Ch. Sen Road. It covers Rathkhola, Netaji palli, Gokhale Road, Aurobindo Palli Main Road, Haraprasad Shastri Road, Jibanananda Sarani, Aurobindo Palli, No.1 Dabgram Colony, Surya Sen Street and Michael Road. It enjoys almost similar physical location of being another peripheral ward.

The community-wise distribution of inhabitants is as follows.

Table 2.22

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 98.58 | 0.12 | 0.86 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.15 | 0.00 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

The Table shows a strong similarity in this regard with the previous ward with Bengali population (98.58%) dominating the scene. The area is fully residential and the occupational structure of the population is more or less the same as in ward no.XXI.

Ward - XXIII.

Enjoying almost similar physical location as the previous two wards (XXI and XXII), it spreads over Surya Sen Road, Suryanagar, No.1 Dabgram, Sarat Ch. Street, Fuleswari Unnyon part of Bharat Nagar, Pritilata Road, Bharat Nagar (Fuleswari), Special Jail Road and Udayan colony. The community-wise distribution of population is as follows.

Table 2.23

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 98.20 | 0.08 | 0.89 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.44 | 0.00 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly 1993.]

This shows a strong percentage of the Bengali population followed by the Biharis(0.89%) which is very nominal.

The Bengali community forming the major section of the residents, the ward repeats features in this regard same as in other two wards mentioned above. It contains a slum developed on the bank of river Fuleswari (Fig. 5).

Ward - XXIV.

Lying south of ward XXIII, this is another ward with peripheral location, being traversed by Gurusaday Road, Ambika Chakraborty

Road, South Bharat Nagar by the side of river Fuleswari, Debasish Colony, Sramik Nagar(at the Junction point of Gurusaday Road and Rail line), part of Bharat Nagar, Prantik Pally, part of No.1 Dabgram Colony, Pritilata Road and Ramkrishna Road.

The eastern and the southern parts of the ward are surrounded by Dabgram mouza of Jalpaiguri district which has recently been annexed to Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

The rail road connecting New jalpaiguri traverses the ward more or less diagonally, dividing the ward into two halves(Fig. 5), and by the side of railways there is a big slum. The residents of this slum area are mainly the Bihari, the Oriya and the Tribals which is reflected in the following Table (Table 2.24). However, the Bengalis form the dominating group of inhabitants.

The occupational structure is more or less the same as ward no.XXIII. But the residents of slum area as stated earlier are mostly engaged in manual work like rikshaw pulling, or work as casual labour in construction works etc.

Table 2.24

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXIV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 95.29 | 0.43 | 1.92 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.37 | 0.58 | 1.00 | 0.41 | 100 |

[Source:Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

Ward - XXV.

Another fringe-ward lying in the extreme south, it covers Milan Pally and New Milan Palli, the Housing Estate of W.B.Government, Electricity sector, West Bengal State Electricity office complex, Post and Telegraph Colony, Ashok Nagar of Jalpaiguri district which has now been annexed to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, part of Burdwan Road near Jalpaimore, Station Feeder Road upto D.E.T.building (office) near Anandalok Cinema Hall. And Hindi High School, Sukanta Sarani, Mukunda Das Road, Samares Basu Sarani and all the roads from Jalpaimore to Anandalok Cinema Hall originating from station Feeder Road to the right side come under the Jurisdiction of ward no.XXV.

The southern part and the major portion of the western half of the ward surrounded by Saktigarh area of Jalpaiguri district has now been annexed to Siliguri Municipal Corporation which has been formed into a new ward no.XXI.

Relatively a more diversified community-wise composition is found in this ward as shown below.

Table 2.25
Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 66.24 | 0.69 | 4.30 | 0.00 | 10.98 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 2.26 | 0.09 | 1.10 | 7.34 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

This is another ward where a considerable section of the residents belong to non-Bengali communities and among them the most important position is adopted by two communities- the Biharis (11.30%) and the Marwaris (10.98%). Besides, the presence of "Others"(7.34%) is also substantial in consideration of a single ward and this applies to the Nepalis (2.26%) as well.

The Bengalis with 66.24 per cent represent the largest group which though is much lower than in many other wards.

The occupational structure gives the idea that majority of the population are associated with large and small scale business followed by service-holders of Government and private organisations. The Marwari population of this area is however associated with large scale business, holding dealerships of big companies and hold some export, import enterprises.

Some of the Bihari population of this area hold analogous position in business and the rest are service holders while a section makes a living as day labour. The Tribal population of this area is more than 1% and majority of them are service holders.

It is interesting to note that 'Others' as mentioned in the Table (7.34%) have come from different parts of India and majority of them being from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan did not fall under the groups mentioned in the Table.(Table 2.25).

Ward - XXVI.

Having similar location as in the previous ward, it includes Station Feeder Road starting from Telegraph office building (Near Anandolok Cinema Hall) to Police Station (i.e. Siliguri P.S.), part of Telegraph office Road, part of Milan Palli and Goshala Road, Goshala Land and Babupara, South Babupara, part of Sreema Sarani, Sukanta Sarani of Babupara, left side of Samarendra Bose Road and Satyan Bose Road (a small area) and east Milan Palli.

The southern part of the ward surrounded by Lake Town and Sukanta Palli (extension of Saktigarh) of Jalpaiguri district has recently been annexed to Siliguri Municipal Corporation formed into a new ward no. XXXIII (Fig. 5).

The community-wise composition of ward no. XXV and XXVI is more or less similar though the representation of the two main non-Bengali communities, such as the Bihari (17.69%) and the Marwari (13.82%) is much higher and the percentage of Bengali community (58.31%) has gone down further. Here also relatively a more diversified composition is found as shown in the following Table. (Table 2.26)

Table 2.26

Community-wise Composition in %, XXVI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 58.31 | 0.33 | 17.69 | 0.00 | 13.82 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.79 | 0.00 | 1.49 | 7.57 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

However, the occupational structure of this ward appears to be more or less the same as in ward no.XXV. It may be interesting to note the concentration of minority community at Siliguri, specially in respect of the Marwaris. At first they concentrated at Khalpara area i.e.in ward no.VIII and IX and slowly they spread into other areas going into wards XXV and XXVI (10.98% and 13.82% respectively) lying opposite to wards VIII and IX. In recent years this tendency has become more visible and they have started concentrating in other localities of the city as well, such as wards XXVII and XXVIII.

A large percentage of the Biharis(17.69%) and the Marwaris(13.82%) indicates a greater degree of social diversity. This is further accentuated by the presence of 'Others' (7.57%) [as shown in Table 2.26], representing different parts of India other than the groups which have been entered in the Table (Table 2.26).

Ward - XXVII.

It covers Neli Sengupta Sarani, D.I. Fund Market, Station Feeder Road from Siliguri Police Station to Siliguri Town Station, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Road (originating from Mahavirsthana), Thana Road, Siliguri Police Station Complex, No.1 Sishu Vidyalaya Road, part of Babupara, Anandamohan Basu Road, Satyan Bose Road, Aban Thakur Sarani, Deshbandhu Vidyapith Road, part of Deshbandhu para and Lenin Sarani.

The southern part of ward no. XXVII, surrounded by Jalpaiguri District, has recently been annexed to Siliguri Municipal Corporation making a new ward, no.XXXIII, comprising Lake Town and Nabagram area.

The following table shows the percentage of population belonging to different communities.

Table 2.27

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXVII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 70.19 | 1.13 | 17.02 | 0.21 | 4.67 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.94 | 0.00 | 1.57 | 4.27 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

The Table shows the complex mixture of population among which the Biharis (17.02%) form the most dominant component among the non-Bengalis. Another important feature about the character of the population is the presence of a large number of non-Bengali communities which is due to its location close to wards VIII,IX,XXV,XXVI etc., generally preferred by non-Bengali communities.(Fig.4 and Fig.5)

The majority of the Muslim and the Bihari population are manual workers engaged as rikshaw or van pullers or working as casual labour in building construction works. The Marwaris and some of the Biharis and the Bengalis are generally involved in small and large scale business. The remaining part of the Bengali population is associated with services in Government and private organisations.

Ward - XXVIII.

This ward spreads over Sarbahara Colony, Railway Institute Colony, Deshbandhu Para, Tikia Para Railway Colony, Ramkrishna Colony, Harijan Colony and Matangini Colony and a part of D.B.C. Road.

It is traversed by the railways connecting the city with New Jalpaiguri.

Relatively a more diversified social structure is found in ward as No.XXVIII shown in the following Table.

Table 2.28

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXVIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 59.23 | 10.58 | 18.24 | 0.06 | 1.30 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 1.28 | 0.00 | 6.31 | 3.00 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

It may be observed that the population of this ward exhibits very strongly two important elements: the presence of a large number (percentage) of Biharis(18.24%), the largest so far as the proportion of total population is concerned and the Muslims(10.58%) have also a significant presence. The presence of people belonging to other communities

includes the Marwaris, the Nepalis, the Punjabis and the "Others" along with a substantial percentage of Tribals gives it a very diversified character. In contrast the Bengalis comprise a little over 59 per cent of the total population.

A large slum has developed in this ward comprising Sarbahara Colony, Prankrishna Colony, Harijan Colony and Matangini Colony and the majority of the population in the slum area are Muslims, the Biharis and the Tribals and most of them make a living as casual labour. Among the Bengalis business and job in various establishments are more common.

Ward - XXIX.

Located quite far from the CBD has given rise to a number of important roads like A.P.C.Road, Lenin Sarani, (From Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Road to eastern part of Satyan Bose Road), part of D.B.C. Road, (From Lenin Sarani to Southern part of Prafullya Sarani), western part of Satyan Bose Road, part of Michael Madhusudan Road, Tarasankar Road of Deshbandhu para, Madhya Deshbandhu para (Mahamaya Kalibari and Tarasankar Road) near Fuleswari Bridge.

The entire area is residential. But a small business complex and a small market has developed along the D.B.C. Road near Fuleswari Bridge (Fig.5).

The community-wise composition of the population is not so diversified. The Table shows the fact.

Table 2.29

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXIX.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 90.97 | 1.51 | 4.60 | 0.00 | 1.32 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.35 | 0.00 | 0.51 | 0.74 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.]

It shows the dominance of the Bengali population (90.97%) and a very small percentage of the Biharis(4.60%), the Muslims (1.51%) and the Marwaris (1.32%). Here as well slums have developed on the bank of river Fuleswari and some of the Muslims, the Biharis, the Bengalis reside there. The majority of the slum dwellers are associated with business activities and some of them are service-holders either in Government or in private organisations.

Ward - XXX.

It has peripheral location and stretches upto the right bank of river Fuleswari. It covers Satyan Bose Road(part) and by lanes, APC Road (Part), P.C.Chaki Sarani, Michael Madhusudan Dutta Road and part of Vidyapith Road.

The community-wise composition of population is as follows.

Table 2.30

Community-wise Composition in %, Ward XXX.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 97.41 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.00 | 0.26 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.29 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.44 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly'1993.]

By and large this ward may be called a Bengali ward in which more than 97% of the total residents belong to that community with a mere sprinkling of few other communities besides Muslims and Tribals of very negligible number. The majority of the population are associated with medium and large scale business and the rest are service holders. Some of the Biharis and Muslims work as casual labour.

**Spatial Distribution of Different Communities
in the Newly Annexed Area of Siliguri.**

We have already discussed about the 30 wards of Siliguri Municipal area. Recently, however, in 1994, Siliguri Municipal Corporation has been formed annexing the sub-urban areas of Siliguri city. By and large the major portion of this area is still rural. The area which has been annexed to Siliguri town falls either under Dabgram mouza of Jalpaiguri district or Ujanu mouza of Darjeeling district. But it is interesting to note that the new area has mostly been taken from Dabgram mouza while in 1981 census 'Dabgram' itself was considered as a separate urban area.

The annexed area is divided into seventeen (17) wards as a result of which 'Siliguri Municipal Corporation' now comprises 47 wards. The following information will be helpful to take an idea regarding annexation and formation of 'Siliguri Municipal Corporation'. The enhanced area of the city includes a large part of its urban field, the latter till recently forming a separate area (Fig.5).

Table 2.31

Area of Siliguri Municipal Corporation

| | | Area in sq.km. |
|--|--|----------------|
| A) | Siliguri Municipality Comprising 30 Wards. | 15.50 |
| B) | Annexation from Darjeeling District | - |
| 1) | Mandlaguri (Part) | 2.10 |
| 2) | Kalkut (Part) } Daknikata (Part) } | 0.50 |
| 3) | Ujanu | 2.00 |
| C) | Annexation From Jalpaiguri District. | |
| 1) | Dabgram (Part) | 21.80 |
| Total : Siliguri Municipal Corporation Area : | | 41.90 |

[Source: Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority].

Barring five, all the remaining wards have been studied in detail for obtaining an idea about community-wise status of each while five wards were left out in the absence of ready reference. However, the community-wise composition of the inhabitants of these wards have been verified through field survey. We may now discuss the community -wise composition of new 17 wards elaborately.

Ward - XXXI.

The total Saktigarh area of Jalpaiguri district of Dabgram mouza falls under the jurisdiction of ward no.XXXI.(Fig.5).

The composition of population of this ward is not so diversified. The community-wise composition is shown in the following Table. (Table 2.32).

Table 2.32

Community-wise Compositon in % , Ward XXXI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 92.98 | 0.75 | 4.19 | 0.00 | 0.47 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 1.17 | 0.00 | 0.26 | 0.18 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

As it appears, Bengalis form the most dominant part followed by the Biharis (4.19%) and the Nepalis (1.71%) whose percentage is quite negligible in comparison to the Bengalis. The majority of the population makes a living from medium scale business. Some others are service-holders working in Government or private organisations.

Ward - XXXII.

The peripheral part of Saktigarh, Milanpally and the whole of Ashok Nagar of Jalpaiguri district come under the jurisdiction of ward no.XXXII.

The composition of population of this ward is also not so diversified. The community-wise composition of this ward is more or less the same as in ward no.XXXI. It is not possible to show the figures in a Table regarding community-wise composition of ward no.XXXII due to non-availability of raw data. But as verified by sample survey, the Bengalis show a dominant position comprising over 90 per cent of the total number of residents. The area is overwhelmingly residential in its appearance and the population of this area is mostly associated with small or medium scale business.

Ward - XXXIII.

It includes Surya Sen Colony block D (part) and block E (part), Nabagram and Lake Town, Mahasakti Kalibari Road, Sreema Sarani, Satyapriya Sarani, Ashoke Nagar (East), Sukanta Palli (East) and Gole

Bazar, New Jalpaiguri (North Colony) and N.J.P. Riy. Colony, Central Colony (East) of N.J.P.

Relatively a more diversified social structure is available in this ward. The community-wise composition of ward no.XXXIII is shown in Table 2.33.

Table 2.33

Community-wise Compositon in % , Ward XXXIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 82.21 | 0.64 | 13.40 | 0.00 | 0.43 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.98 | 0.00 | 1.12 | 1.22 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

The Table (Table 2.33) shows that the major section of the inhabitants are Bengalis (82.21%) but the Biharis (13.4%) comprise a sizeable section while the Tribals are larger in number than non-Bengali inhabitants. Most of the Bihari and the Tribal population are service-holders working in the railways, residing mostly in the railway quarters. The majority of the Bengali population, however, is small business-holders and the remaining part is employed in the railways.

Few years ago the area was very backward due to the lack of communication and distance from the heart of the city. But recently a

rapid development has taken place with betterment of the transport and communication systems. A big commercial complex has also come up recently within this ward.

Ward - XXXIV.

This area includes part of Bhaktinagar, N.J.P. area including some railway quarters.

The community-wise composition of this ward is more or less the same as in ward no.XXXV which will be discussed later. Due to non-availability of data it is not possible to present a Table, but as verified from field survey, the area is another Bengali dominated one (over 70%) with a considerable amount of inhabitants-Biharis(14-16%) and Muslims(7-9%). The Nepalis and the Tribals constitute a negligible portion of the residents.

The major part of the Bihari and the Muslim population and some part of the Tribal and the Nepali population are railway employees. The remaining part of the population is associated with small scale business. Some of the Muslim and Bihari population are manual workers, eg. rikshaw or vanpullers.

Ward - XXXV:

Lying in the part of the city it covers the remaining part of Bhaktinagar (North, South, East and West), N.J.P. and some of the railway colonies.

The community-wise mixture of the inhabitants in this ward is very much diversified in character as shown in the following Table (Table 2.34).

Table 2.34

Community-wise Compositon in % , Ward XXXV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 71.51 | 8.95 | 15.70 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 2.69 | 0.10 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation - 1994.]

The above Table shows that in spite of the very high percentage of Bengali population (71.51%), the ward represents a complex nature of community-mix, having a considerable percentage of the Bihari (15.70%), the Muslim(8.95%) and the Nepali (2.69%) population. The residents are mostly engaged either in medium or in small scale business. The remaining part of population, especially the Biharis and the Muslims is associated with the work of manual labour.

Ward - XXXVI.

Presentation of community-mix is not possible due to non-availability of data.

Ward - XXXVII.

Before annexation to the newly formed Siliguri Municipal Corporation, the ward was under Dabgram mouza (J.L. No.2) of Jalpaiguri district and represented by and large a rural settlement (Table 2.31 and Fig.5). It covers Sarada Palli, Dabgram-2, Netaji Palli, Chaon para (North East), Amtala, Chaon para(West), Niranjan Nagar Colony and Netaji colony.

The community-wise composition of residents of this ward is shown in Table 2.35.

Table 2.35

Community-wise Compositon in % , Ward XXXVII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 99.57 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.07 | 0.20 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

This is another Bengali ward of the city, with almost 99.57 per cent of the total inhabitants belonging to that community. The majority of the population is associated with small scale business and the remaining part is engaged in manual work.

Ward - XXXVIII.

The representation of community-mix is not possible due to the lack of readymade data or source.

Ward - XXXIX.

The representation of community-mix is not possible due to the lack of readymade data or source.

Ward - XL.

Before annexation to S.M.C.(Siliguri Municipal Corporation), it was under Dabgram mouza of Jalpaiguri district (Table 2.31) and some part of it was under Jangalmahal mouza. Today this ward covers Chota Fapri, Khudiram Pally, Santi Colony, Durganagar, Ektiasal, Gital Para, Asraf Nagar, Sarat Pally, Subhas Nagar, Haiderpara. The area is situated to the eastern side of Second Mile, Sevoke Road, that is in the part of the city.

The community-mix in this area is very much diversified in character. The following Table shows the fact.(Table 2.36)

Table 2.36

Community-wise Compositon in % , Ward XL.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 59.17 | 7.79 | 16.50 | 1.79 | 1.64 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 10.15 | 0.00 | 1.45 | 1.51 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

Though the major section of the residents is represented by the Bengalis (59.17%), a number of other communities comprise a substantial part. Among them the Biharis are most prominent with 16.50 per cent of the total inhabitants of this ward followed by the Nepalis (10.15%) and the Muslims (7.79%). Besides, the presence of people belonging to other communities like the Punjabis, the Marwaris and the Tribals make the ward very diversified in character.

The majority of the population is associated either with large or medium scale business. The rest is associated with small scale business or make a living as manual worker by pulling rikshaws or vans etc.

Ward - XLI.

Previously the ward was under Bhaktinagar area of Jalpaiguri district. After annexation to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, it includes Jyotinagar, Baikunthapally, Bankim Nagar, Santi Nagar (East Bairagi Para- South eastern region). The area is situated to the eastern side of Sevoke Road of third Mile, stretching from State Electric Supply Office to near Radio Transmitter.

The community-wise composition of ward XLI is shown in the following Table.(Table 2.37)

Table 2.37

Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 44.07 | 2.79 | 24.24 | 0.34 | 3.11 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 19.07 | 0.00 | 4.79 | 1.59 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]
(54)

It may be observed that the population of this ward exhibits a strong element of non-Bengali communities comprising, on the whole, about 55.93 per cent of the total number of residents. Though as a single community the Bengalis head the list with about 44.07 per cent, the Biharis (24.24%) make the second largest group closely followed by the Nepalis(19.07%). Apart from them there are the Tribals (4.79%), Marwaris (3.11%), the Muslims(2.79%), Others (1.59%) and the Punjabis (0.34%) who make the ward very much diversified in character.

The majority of the population are associated with small and medium scale business and the rest of the population are manual workers.

Ward - XLII.

It covers Salugarah (North east), Salugarah (South east), Chaon Para, Rai colony, Salugarah (West), Chiharu Jot, Prakash Nagar, Ghumchia Para and Simlu Basti. Before annexation the ward was under Bhaktinagar thana of Jalpaiguri district.

The community-wise composition of the ward is shown below.

Table 2.38
Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 46.36 | 3.22 | 23.67 | 0.09 | 0.86 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 16.29 | 0.00 | 7.42 | 2.09 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

A picture nearly similar to that of ward XLI emerges in regard to the composition of population where the non-Bengalis, on the whole, dominate the scene, comprising almost 53.64 per cent of the total residents. The Bengalis forming the single major group, represent much less than half (46.36%) while the Biharis form the second largest group with 23.67 per cent followed by the Nepalis (16.29%). The percentage of the Tribals is quite significant, having about 7.42 per cent of the total population(inhabitants), while, however negligible the percentage of the Muslims(3.22%), the Marwaris (0.86%) and the Others (2.09%) may be, the very presence of so many communities give the population a very complex character.

The majority of the population is associated with medium scale business. Among them the Nepalis are more successful in their respective business. The remaining part of the population are either small businessmen or service-holders in the Indian Military Force.

Ward - XLIII.

It covers Prakash Nagar (Southern Part), Dadabhai Colony, Gandhi Nagar, Bhanu Nagar, P.T. More. Before annexation this ward was under Bhaktinagar thana of Dabgram mouza of Jalpaiguri district and is located in the western part of the city.(Fig.5 and Table 2.31).

The community-wise composition of the ward is shown in the following Table.(Table 2.39)

Table 2.39
Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLIII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 28.61 | 8.92 | 37.80 | 1.49 | 2.12 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 17.86 | 0.00 | 1.51 | 1.69 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

The community-mix is more pronounced here. The Biharis take a leading position (37.8%) here followed by the Bengalis(28.61%) and the Nepalis (17.86%). The percentage represented by the Muslims(8.92%) is quite significant.

The Biharis form the largest group of the inhabitants and from the point of view of non-Bengali communities , it may safely be called a Bihari-Nepali ward where almost 55.66 per cent of the total population come from these two communities.

The Bengali and the Bihari population of this area is mostly engaged in small and large scale business having permanent stalls. The Nepalis are mostly engaged in transport. Some of them are associated with medium scale business.

Ward - XLIV.

It spreads over Bidyachakra Colony, New Bidyachakra Colony, Dasharath pally, Lakshmi Colony, Janata Nagar, Ramkrishna Pally, Ganganagar. The total area falls under Bhaktinagar thana of Jalpaiguri district.

The community-wise composition of the population of this ward is shown below.

Table 2.40

Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLIV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 84.63 | 2.20 | 8.53 | 0.11 | 0.41 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 3.31 | 0.00 | 0.23 | 0.58 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipality Corporation- 1994.]

The above Table shows that in spite of the very high percentage of Bengali population(84.63%), the ward represents a complex character with the presence of a wide range of non-Bengali residents. The population of this area is mostly engaged in small or medium scale of business.

Ward - XLV.

It covers Bagha Jatin colony, Fokajot, South Mallaguri, Jyotinagar, Ghosh Para, Satyajit Colony, Champsari More, Durga

Bari(Gram Panchyat:Pathar Ghata) and Darjeeling more. Before annexation, the area was under Mallaguri and Ujanu mouza of Darjeeling district. (Fig.5 and Table 2.31).

The following table shows the community-mix of the ward(Table 2.41)

Table 2.41

Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLV.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 59.43 | 4.82 | 15.96 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 13.82 | 0.00 | 5.97 | 0.00 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

This is another ward where a considerable section of the inhabitants belongs to non-Bengali communities and among them the most important position is adopted by two communities- Bihari (15.96%) and Nepali (13.82%).

The majority of the population is associated with large and small scale business followed by service-holders of Government and Private organizations. The major portion of Nepalis is engaged in sundry jobs in transport. Some of the Bihari and Muslim population make a living from some manual work on daily basis.

Ward - XLVI.

It covers Debidanga, Mede Basti, Kalkut (Fig.5 and Table 2.31), Samar Nagar, Netaji Nagar, Daknikata (Fig.5 and Table 2.31), Narmada Bagan, North Mallaguri, Pokajot, South Mallaguri, Jyotinagar, Ghosh Para, Satyajit Colony, Champasari More, Ganesh Ghosh Colony, Anandamoyee Colony, Naya Basti, Prafulla Nagar, Shib Nagar, Darjeeling more. Before annexation to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, the Ward was under Matigara thana of Darjeeling district.

The community-mix of ward XLVI is shown in the following Table.

Table 2.42

Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLVI.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 48.08 | 4.00 | 27.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 12.48 | 0.00 | 6.13 | 2.04 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

Though the Bengalis represent the highest percentage, more than half of the total number of residents are non- Bengalis. Relatively a more diversified social structure is found in this area. A considerable section of the residents is Bihari (27.27%) in this ward followed by the Nepalis(12.48%) and the Tribals (6.13%). The majority of the population either makes a living from medium scale business or is service-holders in Government or Private organizations.

Ward - XLVII.

The ward spreads over Mahamaya Colony, New Railway Colony, R.K. Nagar, Paticolony (Road No. 1,2,3,4) etc. Before annexation to Siligu Municipal Corporation, the majority of the area was under Ujanu mouza of Darjeeling district (Table 2.31 and Fig.5) and the remaining part was under Durgabari mouza (Gram Panchayat: Patharghata). The total area falls under Matigara thana of Darjeeling district.

The community-wise composition of the ward is given in the following Table.

Table 2.43

Community-wise Composition in % , Ward XLVII.

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 70.87 | 1.05 | 15.94 | 0.05 | 0.08 |
| Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
| 7.94 | 0.00 | 2.82 | 1.25 | 100 |

[Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation- 1994.]

The Bengalis lead with over 70 percent but the Table shows a varied degree of community-mix.

The presence of the Biharis (15.94%), the Nepalis (7.94%) and the Tribals (2.82%) make the ward more diversified in its community structure. The majority of the population of the ward are the employees of the railways, residing in the railway colonies which have developed in this area over a long period. The remaining part of the population makes a living from small scale business.

Some Observations

However, the detailed study of the 30 wards representing the city of Siliguri till 1993 reveal following aspects of the community-mix, throwing light on the geographical distribution and concentration of different communities (Fig.4, Fig.5 and Table 2.44). Here besides the Bengalis, we have considered non-Bengali communities grouped into eight separate categories, the latter representing the respective name of the community. This has been done on the basis of numerical superiority of each type, named after their state of origin or by which they are popularly known in the locality or some other criterion. Regarding origin it is necessary to mention that, it may go back to one or two or even more generations backward. This applies to each category in a different degree, indicating that they are settled here for a few generations in many cases. Such as people with origin in the state of Bihar are designated as Biharis; those with origin in Punjab as Punjabis; with origin in Orissa as Oriya. In the case of 'Marwaris', however, the popular name has been accepted by which they are locally known in spite of the fact that their origin is in Rajasthan. But in the case of the Nepalis it generally refers to the language they speak rather than their place of origin which might have been Nepal at one time and does not apply at present as most of them had migrated to the adjoining hill areas long ago from where they migrated again to Siliguri. Similarly, the Tribals have also lost their identity in the course of migration from place to place. As regards people grouped under the head called

'Others' present a different case. They belong to states other than those recognised above but since their number is small, they have not been considered separately as per their state of origin. The most difficult case is presented by the 'Muslims' which has been mentioned earlier.

- (a) By and large Siliguri is a Bengali city, no doubt, having not yet attained the size and character of a cosmopolitan centre. Yet, it has already acquired a distinctive character unlike an urban centre of its size in general in its population-mix (Fig.4 and Fig.5) which exhibits a widely divergent character in having a large number of communities some of which take a prominent role in not only the strength of number but in activities as well (Table 2.44).
- (b) To be more specific, out of 30 wards studied for finding out the community structure of the urban residents , there are at least six wards (I,III,V,VI,VIII,IX) where the Bengali population is less than those belonging to the non-Bengali category, represented by the Biharis, Punjabis, Marwaris, Nepalis, Oriyas, Tribals or those coming from other states of India, like the Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat etc. Besides, there are Muslims as well the statewise origin of whom could not clearly be defined from the electoral roll though information derived through field investigation indicate that they are, in general, from the adjoining state of Bihar.

The non-Bengali character of the town is very much pronounced in

altogether nine(9) (I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI) out of a total of 30 wards in which the percentage of Bengali population falls below 50 per cent and varying widely between as the lowest 11 per cent (IX) to the highest of 47 per cent (IV), each of the wards naturally has a preponderance of residents belonging to different non-Bengali communities(Fig.3).

Barring the nine wards mentioned above, the majority of the inhabitants of the remaining 21 wards are Bengalis by birth but the variation in their percentage is wide enough to attract attention. For instance, there are at least four wards (XIX, XXI, XII, XXIII) where more than 98 per cent of the inhabitants are Bengalis while in altogether 10 wards (XIX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XV, XVI, XVII, XXIV, XXIX and XXX) out of 21 where more than 90 per cent of the inhabitants belong to Bengali community. On the other hand, the percentage varies from 50 per cent to 98 per cent among the 21 wards, having widely varying proportions of non-Bengali communities (Fig.4).

(c) Among the non-Bengali communities settled whether permanently or semi-permanently in the city of Siliguri, those with origin in Bihar and Rajasthan (Marwaris) have a more prominent place in numerical strength followed by the Punjabis, the Nepalis and the Muslims.

It may be highly interesting to note that the Biharis are found in each of the 30 wards though the number may widely vary; the Marwaris are found in 24 out of 30 wards, being completely absent in 6; the Punjabis are found in 12 wards, with none in remaining 18 wards; the Oriyas are still less conspicuous, being found in only 11 out of 30 wards while the

Nepalis and the Tribals are present in all the wards. The sprinkling of people coming from different other states of India is recorded in all the wards except one and the 'Muslims' inhabit 27 out of 30 wards (Fig.4 and Table 2.44).

(d) Looking from another angle, a question of preference for residence seems to be working very powerfully among the non-Bengali residents. This is clearly indicated in the selection of wards they generally have concentrated in and avoid others. Before going by each community one may look for general cases in this respect which shows that wards XV to XXIV make the most important case avoided by a number of communities. As for example, in 6 of these wards (XIX - XXIV) the Punjabis, the Marwaris and the Oriyas are completely absent while in other four [XV-XVIII] both the Punjabis and Oriyas are virtually absent (Fig.3 and Fig.4).

The presence of other communities like the Nepalis and the Muslims is also very negligible in all these wards.

(e) The question of preference for residential location becomes more pronounced when it is considered against each community. Perhaps this is more logical in view of the fact that people belonging to same community quite often seek a residence close to his or her own community in a place removed from his place of origin, so that he or she does not feel alien to the surroundings. Thus, a person having origin in Bihar or belonging to that community will naturally prefer to stay in an area where people of same community has already settled down. The idea

perhaps works with each community who have settled down in Siliguri which is reflected in the nature of concentration of people belonging to each community.

The distribution as well as the concentration of the Biharis in Siliguri city may be a case of study in this regard. Though in comparison to other communities the Biharis are more ubiquitous, their geographical distribution is, however, far from uniform. Such as, in 17 out of a total of 30 wards they are present in a recognizable number, the percentage ranging from 11 per cent to a little over 65 per cent (ward V) of the total number of residents of the respective wards. Again in 10 of these wards it is over 20 per cent of the total residents while in 4 of them it is over 30 per cent. It is further interesting to observe that in at least 4 of these wards (I, III, V and VIII) they constitute the largest section of inhabitants and hence they may be called Bihari Wards (Fig.4 and Table 2.44).

The geographical location of these wards may be of further interest in understanding the factors responsible for such concentration.

The geographical distribution of concentration of the Marwaris, forming one of the major constituents of the non-Bengali communities of the city, reveal equally interesting features. They seem to be more clannish than the Biharis in the choice of their place of residence and this is amply displayed in their nature of concentration. For instance, there are only 8 wards (VII-XI and XIII and XXV-XXVI) in which they are

mainly concentrated, representing more than 10 per cent of the total number of residents of respective wards and unlike the Biharis, their percentage drops below 2 per cent in other wards inhabited by them with two wards having more than 2 per cent and another two wards having below 5 per cent while 6 wards draw nill in this respect. Among the wards having the Marwaris, ward IX has the highest percentage (49%) which happens to be also the largest for that ward, thus making it a sort of 'Marwari Ward' and in another ward (VIII) with 34 per cent of the total inhabitants it is a very close second in size preceded by the Biharis (36 per cent). This may be called a semi-Marwari ward in which the percentage of people belonging to other communities is much less, the third largest being the Bengalis with 14 per cent of the total (Fig.4).

The Punjabis represent one of the leading non-Bengali resident communities of the city so far as economic status is concerned though in absolute numbers, they are far behind many other communities including the Nepalis and the Muslims. As a result, their distribution as well as concentration are of very restricted nature. They are confined to barely 12 wards and out of them concentration in true sense is found in one ward (XIII), representing over 5 per cent of the total inhabitants of that ward which is also the highest for this community and is a little over 1 per cent in two other wards (VI and VIII), dropping below that in the remaining 9 out of 30 wards. (Fig.4 and Table 2.44).

The picture becomes different in the case of other communities. They keep a low profile in numerical strength as well as in economic

status, no doubt, but what is socially significant is that two of them—the Nepalis and the Tribals— are ubiquitous while the Muslims are nearly so. However, apart from the Muslims, none of them constitute a significant section of the ward population. In the case of the Nepalis, there are 3 wards (I-III) where the highest percentage is over 11 per cent and this decreases sharply in the remaining 27 wards. In comparison, the Tribals have a less significant position, representing more than 5 per cent of 4 (I,V,XVIII and XXVIII) ward population, the percentage dwindling down to insignificance in the remaining 26 wards. In contrast, rather the Muslims exhibit a much stronger degree of concentration in an otherwise sprinkling character of its geographical distribution. The most striking character here is represented by ward VI where the Muslims constitute 33 per cent of the total ward population, the largest for the ward and for itself.(Fig.4 and Table 2.44)

For this reason alone it can be called a 'Muslim Ward'. Two other wards IV and VII, similarly contain a large segment of the Muslim population, comprising over 15 per cent of the ward population in each case, in another ward (XXVIII) they constitute over 10 per cent of the ward population and it is over 5 per cent in two wards— I and XVIII— but quite insignificant in the remaining 21 wards, with none in 3 wards. (Fig.4 and Table 2.44)

The 'Others' form the last category of the communities which represent people having origin in different states other than those mentioned above. Taken together their proportion is not very negligible

in all the wards, the highest over 15 per cent being in ward XI and in at least nine wards their percentage varies from over 5 per cent to over 7 per cent of the ward population.(Fig.4 and Table 2.44)

All these facts very strongly reflect the attraction of this city which is still at its infancy in comparison to giants in the field. To all appearances it seems to be a growing process to intensify further the community-mix resulting from its economic advancement.

Table 2,44

Percentage of Population of Different Communities in Siliguri City (Ward-Wise).

| Ward No. | Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari | Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Others | Total |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|--------|--------|---|
| I | 33.03 | 3.70 | 39.73 | 0.43 | 0.52 | 9.67 | 0.24 | 6.48 | 2.20 | 100 |
| II | 67.44 | 1.71 | 12.99 | 0.40 | 1.53 | 11.02 | 0.33 | 1.38 | 3.20 | 100 |
| III | 30.92 | 2.42 | 47.54 | 0.71 | 1.63 | 10.56 | 0.23 | 1.58 | 4.41 | 100 |
| IV | 47.75 | 15.09 | 27.70 | 0.00 | 1.75 | 2.96 | 0.00 | 1.76 | 2.99 | 100 |
| V | 13.87 | 4.74 | 65.40 | 0.00 | 2.39 | 1.33 | 0.08 | 5.38 | 6.81 | 100 |
| VI | 21.83 | 33.66 | 28.91 | 1.24 | 3.43 | 2.16 | 0.00 | 1.63 | 7.14 | 100 |
| VII | 39.67 | 15.15 | 25.78 | 0.00 | 10.58 | 1.82 | 0.00 | 0.82 | 6.18 | 100 |
| VIII | 14.36 | 4.92 | 36.01 | 1.06 | 34.46 | 1.32 | 0.00 | 1.46 | 6.21 | 100 |
| IX | 11.71 | 0.82 | 28.70 | 0.00 | 49.23 | 2.46 | 0.00 | 0.42 | 6.66 | 100 |
| X | 50.19 | 2.51 | 21.32 | 0.46 | 14.51 | 4.32 | 0.06 | 0.85 | 3.78 | 100 |
| XI | 32.65 | 2.58 | 18.56 | 0.63 | 23.87 | 4.46 | 1.40 | 0.37 | 15.46 | 100 |
| XII | 72.79 | 0.51 | 12.62 | 0.27 | 4.24 | 3.06 | 1.00 | 1.42 | 4.09 | 100 |
| XIII | 51.33 | 0.43 | 11.90 | 3.79 | 10.89 | 6.69 | 3.14 | 0.70 | 7.11 | 100 |
| XIV | 84.82 | 0.76 | 3.66 | 0.76 | 1.80 | 3.83 | 0.10 | 0.14 | 4.13 | 100 |
| XV | 94.02 | 0.10 | 2.17 | 0.00 | 1.23 | 0.38 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 2.03 | 100 |
| XVI | 94.58 | 0.13 | 1.98 | 0.00 | 0.95 | 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.06 | 1.71 | 100 |
| XVII | 90.66 | 0.51 | 4.19 | 0.00 | 1.26 | 1.13 | 0.00 | 0.23 | 2.02 | 100 |
| XVIII | 60.97 | 3.70 | 18.68 | 0.00 | 0.15 | 4.44 | 0.72 | 7.23 | 2.11 | 100 |
| XIX | 98.15 | 0.00 | 1.24 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.24 | 0.00 | 0.18 | 0.19 | 100 |
| XX | 81.35 | 1.27 | 8.21 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.15 | 0.00 | 6.18 | 0.84 | 100 |
| XXI | 98.96 | 0.00 | 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.26 | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.26 | 100 |
| XXII | 98.58 | 0.12 | 0.86 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.15 | 0.00 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 100 |
| XXIII | 98.20 | 0.06 | 0.89 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.44 | 0.00 | 100 |
| XXIV | 95.29 | 0.43 | 1.92 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.37 | 0.58 | 1.00 | 0.41 | 100 |
| XXV | 66.24 | 0.69 | 11.30 | 0.00 | 10.98 | 2.26 | 0.09 | 1.10 | 7.34 | 100 |
| XXVI | 58.31 | 0.33 | 17.69 | 0.00 | 13.82 | 0.79 | 0.00 | 1.49 | 7.57 | 100 |
| XXVII | 70.19 | 1.13 | 17.02 | 0.21 | 4.67 | 0.94 | 0.00 | 1.37 | 4.27 | 100 |
| XXVIII | 59.23 | 10.58 | 18.24 | 0.06 | 1.30 | 1.28 | 0.00 | 6.31 | 3.00 | 100 |
| XXIX | 90.97 | 1.51 | 4.60 | 0.00 | 1.32 | 0.35 | 0.00 | 0.51 | 0.74 | 100 [Source: Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly' 1993.] |
| Total - | 64.25 | 3.81 | 16.36 | 0.44 | 6.35 | 2.72 | 0.33 | 1.70 | 3.84 | 100 |

References

- 1.(i) Electoral Roll of Siliguri Assembly '1993.
- (ii) Electoral Roll of Siliguri Municipal Corporation '1994.
- (iii)Field Investigation.

Chapter III

Economic Participation of Different Communities: Trade and Commerce – The Major Economic Activities

In the twilight of Independence, Siliguri, as an urban centre, had a population of 32,480 heads (Census of India, 1951) which though very small as compared with its population of 216,950 (1991) barely four decades after, recorded a rapid growth of 209.7 per cent (Census of India,¹ 1951) between 1941 and 1951 preceded by a much lower growth rate of 72.9 per cent (Census of India, 1941) in 1931-41. The very fast growth of this town, a rather insignificant place till 1931 when for the first time it was recognised as an urban centre, during the earliest years of independence is rather significant, indicating the emergence of a specific functional role acquiring strength from year to year as determined by its advantageous location resulting from the partition of Bengal (1947).

This is brought out by the statistics provided by the Census of India available from 1951 onwards (Table 3.1). Statistics available for four decades show that almost since beginning activities in the tertiary sector has taken a prominent role. In 1951, for instance, more than 84 per cent of the total workers were engaged in various fields belonging to the tertiary sector represented by 'Trade and Commerce', Transport, Storage and Communication (which happen to be the activities of primary

Table 3.1
Occupational Pattern of Siliguri Urban Centre through Decades.

| Central Year | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII | VIII | IX | TOTAL |
|--------------|------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------|
| | Cultivator | Agr. Lab. | Mining Etc. | Household Ind. | Manufacturing | Construction | Trade and Com. | Transport and Com. etc. | Other Services | |
| 1951 | 1.96 | 0.45 | * 13.45 | -- | -- | -- | 32.55 | 14.08 | 37.51 | |
| 1961 | 0.33 | 0.16 | 1.01 | 2.04 | 18.25 | 3.92 | 26.17 | 20.36 | 27.76 | |
| 1971 | 0.46 | 1.30 | 1.27 | 3.66 | 11.68 | 3.13 | 28.11 | 23.83 | 26.56 | |
| 1981 | 0.25 | 0.29 | 1.27 | ----- | ----- | 98.19 | ----- | ----- | ----- | |

- This included workers engaged in 'Production other than cultivation' which included "Mining, Quarrying, Household Industry, Manufacturing, Construction" etc. taken together as clarified in Census of India, 1951, West Bengal, Vol VI, Part I A - Report.

[Source: Census of India, 1951, Vol- VI, Part- II.
 Census of India, 1961, Vol- XVI, Part- II-A.
 Census of India, 1971, Series- 22, Part-II-A.
 Census of India, 1981, Series- 1, Part- II-B(I).]

sector); and other services, when barely 13.45 per cent (including mining, quarrying) were employed by activities occurring in the secondary sector. Through the following decades the dominance of the tertiary sector has not diminished, though the percentage was slightly lower in 1961 and 1971 (74.29 per cent in 1961 and 78.50 per cent in 1971) than in 1951 in view of the fact that while there had been a visible increase in employment opportunities in the secondary sector during the two succeeding decades, 1951-71, the tertiary sector still held sway over ² three-fourths of the total employment.

In 1981, statistics for employment are not given separately for different categories but the overall employment of 98.19 per cent in secondary and tertiary sectors taken together indicates that tertiary sector is the major employer taking an overwhelming position as in the ³ previous three decades.

As the statistics are available, the tertiary activities provide employment figures under three general categories, such as (a) Trade and Commerce, (b) Transport , Communication etc. and (c) Other services including professional services , employment in public and private enterprises, social, political work etc. Among the three broad categories employment in transport seems to be steadily increasing since 1951 (14.08% in 1951 to 23.83% in 1981) while two other categories, namely trade and commerce, and other services seem to be competitive in this respect though the former appears to be gaining ground so far as statistics for three decades are considered. It is worthwhile to point

out here that the fast pace of commercial growth naturally widens the scope of further employment in the service sector no doubt, but it is the activity connected with trade and commerce which is directly responsible for opening such scopes without which as a subdivisional head quarters, Siliguri has limited scope of further expansion in employment in services.

At the same time similar reciprocity may also be witnessed in the development of two respective categories of employment areas - trade and commerce on the one hand and transport and communication on the other. A careful analysis of the situation may trace a catalytic relationship between one and the other. It is true that the great improvement in transport, especially the road, during the recent decades had a tremendous effect on the activities of this urban centre which by its own merit of enjoying a gateway location has turned out to be a place of exchange for commodities arriving from and transported to different destinations. This has naturally acted as a booster for enlarging the scope of activities connected with trade and commerce, the latter gradually becoming principal activities of this growing city.

The major thrust of this study being an analysis of the roles of different communities in the social as well as economic activities of this city , nothing could be more interesting than to find out the participation of individual communities in trade and commerce which happen to be the dominating economic function of Siliguri, making a basis for the settling down of different communities in this city.

In order to get a clear idea about the involvement of different communities in activities related to trade and commerce, information available in the Registers of Licence B-1 and B-2 (1993-94) maintained by Siliguri Municipal Corporation have been used. On the basis of data provided by these registers, tables have been prepared, showing the type of business and participation of different communities in each of them. This has been done for each ward so that a comparative assessment may be made to ascertain if there is any relationship between participation and concentration of respective communities.

For this purpose 30 wards which made up the city of Siliguri till its area was extended all on a sudden in 1994 to turn Siliguri Municipality into a Municipal Corporation have been considered here in studying the trade licence registers of the Municipality. The study was made on the basis of 30 per cent sampling.

On the basis of the data, the business activities of the city have been classified into 19 major groups. The groups are as follows:

- (1) Grocery
- (2) Medicine
- (3) Hardware and Sanitary Goods
- (4) Electrical Goods
- (5) Tea
- (6) Cloth
- (7) Furniture
- (8) Hotels and Restaurants
- (9) Stationery and Book stalls
- (10) Utensils
- (11) Motor parts (Automobile)
- (12) Footwear, Suitcase, Boxes etc.
- (13) Building Materials
- (14) Rice
- (15) Betel Leaf, Tobacco products (Biri, Cigarette, Cheroot, Zarda etc.)
- (16) Sweatmeat
- (17) Vegetables, Fish and Meat
- (18) Others
- (19) Contract/Supply

Before going into the participation of communities in various business activities, it may be worthwhile to look at the ward-wise distribution of the business establishments (Table 3.2). Altogether there are 1796 registered units [based on 30% sampling (random)] and their spatial distribution is far from uniform which is quite likely in view of the major concentration of them remaining confined to the principal commercial or shopping areas of the city. For instance, there are four wards, Nos. VI, VIII, X and XI which, together, contain over 46 per cent of the total number of business establishments. Two other wards- Nos. IX and XII may be added to these four mentioned above and the six wards have a concentration of nearly 55 per cent of the total number of shopping units of the city (Table 3.2).

As regards the types of business establishments, barring those grouped under the category of 'Others', five types dominate the scene. They are successively the categories like 'cloth', 'grocery', 'medicine', 'hardware and sanitary goods', followed by 'stationery', 'motor parts', 'electrical goods' and 'rice'.

The participation of people belonging to different communities in the retail and wholesale business of the city in each ward as given below presents an interesting picture.

Ward - I.

The community-wise composition in this ward shows a domination of the Bihari community (39.33%) followed by the Bengalis (35.03%) but in

Table 3.2
Distribution of business activities by ward in Siliguri city.

| Wards | Gro- cery | Medi- cine | Hard ware etc. | Elec- trical goods | Tea ture | Cloth | Furni- ture | Contr. Supply | Hotels etc. | Sta- tionery | Uten- ils | Motor parts | Foot- ware etc. | Build. Materials | Rice Betei | Sweet | Vegi- ables | Oth. Total | | |
|--------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------|----------------|---------------|------|------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) | (19) | |
| I | 7 | 4 | -- | -- | 1 | 2 | -- | 5 | 3 | 3 | -- | 1 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 4 | 31 | |
| II | 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 2 | -- | -- | 1 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 3 | 35 | |
| III | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | -- | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 2 | 1 | 2 | 45 | |
| IV | 9 | 2 | -- | 1 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 5 | -- | 1 | 2 | -- | 1 | -- | 6 | 29 | |
| V | 5 | 1 | -- | 3 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | 1 | -- | 1 | 2 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 11 | 27 | |
| VI | 3 | 11 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | -- | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | -- | 37 | 116 | |
| VII | 5 | -- | -- | 1 | 3 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | 1 | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 25 | 43 | |
| VIII | 17 | 8 | -- | 2 | 20 | 22 | -- | -- | 17 | -- | 4 | 1 | 5 | 49 | 10 | 2 | 16 | 121 | 294 | |
| IX | 5 | 5 | -- | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | -- | 1 | 3 | -- | 5 | -- | 3 | 9 | 2 | -- | 47 | 88 | |
| X | 1 | 4 | 33 | 13 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 5 | -- | 29 | 5 | 2 | -- | 2 | -- | 20 | 138 | |
| XI | 23 | 15 | 37 | 23 | 7 | 39 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 13 | 4 | 20 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 39 | 281 |
| XII | 6 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 3 | 5 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 2 | -- | 7 | 70 | |
| XIII | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 | -- | 1 | 2 | 6 | -- | 1 | -- | 10 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2 | 34 | |
| XIV | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 20 | -- | -- | 3 | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 2 | 6 | 48 | |
| XV | 5 | 3 | -- | 1 | 2 | -- | -- | 5 | -- | 3 | -- | 1 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 13 | 35 | |
| XVI | 1 | 2 | -- | 1 | 1 | 2 | -- | 14 | -- | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 | 1 | -- | 35 | |
| XVII | 1 | 3 | -- | 3 | -- | -- | 1 | 3 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | 4 | 21 | |
| XVIII | -- | 6 | 1 | -- | 1 | 12 | -- | 2 | -- | 6 | 2 | -- | 4 | -- | 1 | 3 | -- | 12 | 50 | |
| XIX | 3 | 1 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 1 | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 6 | 17 | |
| XX | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | 1 | -- | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6 | 16 | |
| XXI | 2 | 1 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 4 | 4 | -- | -- | 1 | 9 | 27 |
| XXII | 7 | 3 | -- | 1 | -- | 2 | -- | 9 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | 1 | 25 |
| XXIII | 7 | - | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 2 | 13 | |
| XXIV | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | -- | 2 | -- | 1 | 2 | -- | -- | 3 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | 7 | 29 |
| XXV | 2 | 3 | -- | -- | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | -- | 1 | -- | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | -- | 20 | 46 | |
| XXVI | -- | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | -- | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 2 | -- | 1 | 1 | -- | 17 | 34 |
| XXVII | 2 | 5 | -- | 3 | -- | 8 | -- | 3 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 18 | 50 |
| XXVIII | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 14 | -- | -- | 1 | 7 | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 27 | 64 |
| XXIX | -- | 3 | -- | -- | 1 | 2 | -- | 7 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 13 | 28 |
| XXX | 1 | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | 1 | 4 | -- | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 12 | 25 |
| | 141 | 122 | 101 | 86 | 59 | 144 | 35 | 140 | 31 | 95 | 8 | 90 | 28 | 37 | 85 | 31 | 18 | 32 | 513 | 1796 |

[Source: Registers of Licence, B-1 and B-2 (1993-94),
Siliguri Municipal Corporation.]

terms of economic activities so far as trade and commerce are considered, it shows a domination of the Bengali community (Table 3.33). It may be noted that out of the 30% samplings, majority of the Bengali businessmen are associated either with contract / supply or hotel and restaurant whereas the majority of the Bihari businessmen are associated with grocery or medicine.
⁵

Ward - II.

Ward no.II is a Bengali dominated area (67.44%) followed by the Bihari(12.99%) and the Nepali(11.02%) population. It shows the domination of the Bengali community in the commercial activity of the city (Table 3.3). For example, out of 35 business establishments, 18 belong to the Bengalis. The majority of Bengali population are associated with the business of grocery or in contract / supply , whereas the Biharis are associated with grocery and the Marwaris with tea.
⁶

Ward - III.

This ward is dominated by the Bihari community (47.54%) followed by the Bengalis (30.92%) and the Nepalis (10.56%). But in the field of commercial activity, the Bengalis show a dominant position (Table 3.3). The majority of the Bengali population are associated either with stationery/book stall or with furniture and grocery, whereas the Biharis are mostly associated with the business of grocery, electrical goods etc. The Nepalis are also engaged in the commercial activities on a smaller scale of a diversified character.
⁷

Table 3.3

Community-wise Distribution of Commercial Enterprises by ward in Siliguri City.

| Ward | Bengali | Bihari | Marwari | Punjabi | Nepali | Gujrati | Muslim | Others |
|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| I | 17 | 10 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 2 |
| II | 18 | 6 | 4 | -- | 3 | -- | 1 | 3 |
| III | 17 | 13 | 6 | 1 | 5 | -- | -- | 3 |
| IV | 22 | 4 | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| V | 8 | 11 | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2 |
| VI | 60 | 11 | 31 | 2 | -- | -- | 1 | 11 |
| VII | 18 | 13 | 12 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| VIII | 80 | 34 | 162 | 4 | -- | -- | 6 | 8 |
| IX | 23 | 13 | 44 | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 4 |
| X | 35 | 8 | 76 | 4 | 1 | -- | 1 | 13 |
| XI | 135 | 29 | 103 | 4 | -- | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| XII | 65 | -- | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2 |
| XIII | 17 | 3 | 10 | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 2 |
| XIV | 43 | 1 | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| XV | 32 | 1 | 1 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- |
| XVI | 35 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XVII | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| XVIII | 49 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- |
| XIX | 17 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XX | 15 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 | -- |
| XXI | 25 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| XXII | 25 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XXIII | 13 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XXIV | 28 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XXV | 31 | 5 | 10 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XXVI | 27 | -- | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| XXVII | 40 | 6 | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3 |
| XXVIII | 40 | 5 | 18 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| XXIX | 27 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| XXX | 25 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | 1009 | 174 | 500 | 21 | 13 | 1 | 15 | 63 1796 |

[Source: Registers of licence B-1 and B-2 (1993-94)
Siliguri Municipal Corporation]

Ward - IV.

The Bengalis make the dominating community in this ward (47.75%) but a considerable number of Non-Bengali population is also present as represented by the Bihari community (27.7%) and the Muslims(15.09%).

The community-wise commercial activity shows the domination of the Bengali community (Table 3.3) which holds a major share of business in grocery, automobiles and motor parts etc.Besides the Bengalis, Marwaris show some importance in the commercial activity, particularly in
automobiles and motor parts.

Ward - V.

This ward is dominated by the Biharis (65.40%) followed by a much smaller portion of Bengali (13.87%) and Tribal (5.38%) population.

The domination of the Bihari community in running the business in
grocery and electrical goods is significant. The next importance goes to
the Bengali community showing a diversified character in the field of
commercial activities.

Ward - VI.

The Muslims dominate in this ward followed by the Biharis and the Bengalis(33.66%,28.91% and 21.83% respectively). But in the field of commercial activities the Bengalis show a dominant position. The ward is very close to the CBD area of the city and some part of Hill Cart Road falls within this ward which is an important business area.

In the field of commercial activities the Bengalis show a leading position specially in the field of medicine, electrical goods, cloth, stationary and book stalls. However, the Marwaris are well in advance in the field of business in cloth. It is also interesting to note that though the ward is dominated by the Muslims, they do not show much involvement in commerce except having a few stalls for motor parts .¹⁰

Ward - VII.

The Bengalis form the major part of the population (39.67%) but the presence of a large percentage of the Biharis (25.78%), the Muslims (15.15%) and the Nepalis (10.58%) make the ward very much diversified in character.

In the field of commercial activities the domination of the Bengali community is also indicated in Table 3.3 followed by the Biharis and Marwaris.

In this ward the business in grocery is the dominating one followed by that in rice and tea (Table 3.2). These are mostly run by the Biharis and Marwaris except in grocery where the Bengalis have ¹¹ a share .

Ward - VIII.

It is another ward where the Biharis are predominant (36.01%) followed by the Marwaris (34.46%) and the Bengalis (14.50%). This area

covers some market areas of the city. eg. Kalahati, Manturam compound etc. and some parts of Khalpara.

The commercial activity of this ward is dominated by the Marwaris as shown in Table 3.3. The major business of this area is in rice run by the Marwaris followed by tea and cloth which are also held by the ¹² Marwaris .

Ward - IX.

The predominant position as residents in this ward is enjoyed by the Marwaris (49.23%), followed by the Bihari (28.70%) and the Bengalis (11.71%).

The commercial activities of this ward is also dominated by the Marwari community having its hold on the business in rice, cloth, tea and medicine. The Biharis also have a considerable share in the business ¹³ in rice .

Ward - X.

The Bengalis make the dominant population in this ward (50.19%) followed by the Biharis (21.32%) and the Marwaris (14.51%).

But in the field of commercial activities the Marwaris show their domination. This area covers a part of the commercial area of the city comprising Sevoke Road and Church Road. In this part of Sevoke Road the business in hardware and sanitary goods, electrical goods, automobiles

and motor parts is largely concentrated. It may be observed that the Marwaris show their domination in the field of hardware, sanitary and electrical goods where as the Bengalis have a sway in the field of automobiles and motor parts . It is to be mentioned that this market place is famous for hardware and sanitary goods all over the region of North Bengal, comprising the six districts lying north of river Ganga (Table 3.2).

Ward - XI.

Though this ward is more or less dominated by the Bengali community (32.65%), the presence of a substantial number of Marwaris (23.87%) and Biharis (18.56%) give it a strong character of community-mix.

In the field of commercial activities the Bengalis show a dominant position but some important businesses are held by the Marwari community. In the category of grocery, electrical goods and medicine, the Bengalis are well in advance. But in the category of cloth, automobiles and motor parts,hardware-sanitary goods, the Marwaris are very prominent.

Ward - XII.

This ward is dominated by the Bengali community (72.79%) followed by the Biharis (12.62%) and the Marwaris (4.24%). In terms of economic participation, the Bengalis are dominant, especially in the field of medicine and in contract/supply¹⁶. The other communities do not show any significance in this regard.

Ward - XIII.

The Bengali community represents the major section of population (51.33%) followed by the Biharis (11.90%) the Marwaris (10.89%) and the Nepalis(6.69%). Besides, the presence of the Punjabi 'Sikh' community (over 5%) makes it diversified in character.

Regarding economic participation, the Punjabis do not show any importance. The business in automobiles and motor parts is concentrated here and the major part of that is in the hands of the Marwari community
¹⁷ followed by the Bengalies . The latter, however, takes interest in some other types.

Ward - XIV.

The Bengalies comprise the major section of the population (84.82%) with a small number of the Nepalis (3.83%) and the Biharis (3.66%).

The commercial activities in this ward is similarly dominated by the Bengali community (Table 3.3) specially in the field of contract/
¹⁸ supply .

Ward - XV.

This ward is overwhelmingly peopled by the Bengali community (94.02%) with a sprinkling of the Biharis (2.17%) and the Marwaris (1.23%).

In the commercial activities as well the Bengalis show their
dominance, particularly in dealing in medicine, stationery and books .
¹⁹

Ward - XVI.

It also shows the domination of the Bengali community (94.58%) which is also dominant in handling the commercial activities, specially
²⁰ in the business of contract and supply . The other communities show very poor percentage of population (Bihari- 1.98%, Marwari- 0.95% and Nepali- 0.55%).

Ward - XVII.

This ward shows the domination of the Bengali community (90.66%) with a small percentage of the Bihari (4.19%) and the Marwari (1.26%) population.

The business establishments are mostly in the hands of the
²¹ Bengalis dealing mainly in medicine and electrical goods .

Ward - XVIII.

The Bengalis form the dominating community but community-mix is also pronounced due to the presence of a significant percentage of the Biharis (18.68%) and the Muslims (5.70%).

There is a small market in this ward where the business establishments are maintained mostly by the Bengalis, handling particularly cloth and medicines .
22

Ward - XIX.

It is also a Bengali dominated ward (98.15%) with domination in the field of commercial activities, particularly in handling grocery and
23
in contract/supply . A very small percentage of the Biharis (1.24%) and the Nepalis (0.24%) in the ward do not show any significant commercial activity.

Ward - XX.

Being another Bengali dominated ward (81.35%) with some Bihari (8.21%) and Nepali (2.15%) population, here the former holds the major
24
part of business, especially in the field of contract/supply .

Ward - XXI.

The Bengalis form the dominant community (98.96%) with similar domination in business activities.

Ward - XXII.

As in ward XXI, the situation is similar (Bengalis- 98.58%), the
25
Bengalis dealing particularly in contract/supply and grocery .

Ward - XXIII.

It also shows the same picture as that of ward XXII (Bengalis- 98.20%) with the same kind of business.

It may be pointed out here that commercial activities are, in fact, very little done in wards XIX to XXIII, lying quite far from the C.B.D. area of the city (Fig. 5).

Ward - XXIV.

Here as well the Bengalis comprise the major section of the population (95.29%) and it takes a leading role in commercial activities (Table 3.3) particularly in the business of contract/supply and building materials and also in grocery .
²⁶

Ward - XXV.

Though the Bengalis constitute the major section of the population (66.24%), the percentage of the Biharis (11.30%) and the Marwaris (10.98%) is quite significant.

This is reflected in the ownership of commercial establishments held particularly by the Bengalis dealing mainly in furniture, while the Marwaris are engaged in dealing in tea. On the other hand the Bihari community takes part in wood furniture .
²⁷

Ward - XXVI.

Though ward no. XXVI is a Bengali dominated area (58.31%), the presence of substantial percentage of Bihari(11.30%) and Marwari(10.98%) population makes the ward more diversified in character.

Commercial activities are not important in this ward and whatever little is there, it is handled by the Bengalis.

Ward - XXVII.

It is also a Bengali dominated area (70.19%) with a large number of the Biharis (17.02%) and also some Marwaris (4.67%).

It covers some market places eg. D.I. Fund Market and the commercial sector near Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Road.

The Bengalis show their dominant position in the field of commercial enterprises as revealed in Table 3.3, especially in the field of medicine and cloth, whereas the Biharis have taken hold of the business in rice .
28

Ward - XXVIII.

The ward is Bengali dominated (59.23%) but the presence of the Bihari (18.24%) and the Muslim (10.58%) population is quite significant.

A small market has developed here, situated near Mahabirsthhan and D.B.C. Road. The Bengalis show their overall domination in dealing in medicine, stationary and book while the Marwaris show their domination in cloth .
29

Ward - XXIX.

It is another ward dominated by the Bengalis (90.97%) where the commercial activities are not at all important.

Ward - XXX.

The same fact applies to this ward, dominated by the Bengalis (97.41%) where commercial enterprises are negligible.

Some Observations

In its community-wise distribution of commercial establishments in the city of Siliguri (Table 3.3), the Bengalis enjoy a dominating position, holding over 56 per cent of the total number of establishments. The second position goes to the Marwaris with nearly 28 per cent and the Biharis occupy the third position, having more than 9 per cent of the business establishments. Compared to this the position of other communities like the Punjabis, the Muslims, the Nepalis and Others is negligible. But what is highly interesting in this respect is that in terms of the actual composition of the population it is highly disproportionate. A cursory glance at the community-wise composition of the city's population brings out the following facts.

I. It is almost axiomatic that no ward or such municipal divisions of an Indian city is completely devoid of shops, it is the rate of concentration that differs from area to area. The rate of concentration again gives rise to specific market areas some of which may be specialising in certain commodities. On the basis of this markets or parts of them quite often acquire a name from the particular commodity in which they are specialised, such as Fal-Patti (fruit market), Alu-Patti(Potato market), Chawal- Patti(rice market) etc.in Siliguri. It may be mentioned in this connection that the word 'patti' meaning market being of non- Bengali origin indicates particularly non- Bengali ownership and as a matter of fact in each of the three cases the enterprises involved in these markets are largely, if not wholly, non-Bengali.

II. There are at least 7 wards in Siliguri (XIX-XXIII), and (XXIX-XXX) where commercial activities are nearly absent. Apart from those seven, in all other 23 wards these activities are found and depending on their concentration a number of markets have taken form in the city of which the oldest one is known as 'Mahabirstahan' (Fig.5) located in the heart of the city representing the core area of Siliguri. In course of time other markets which have appeared one after another are New market or popularly known as Bidhan market, which happens to be a planned market, and Seth Srilal market.

III. Though the Bengalis still have a dominating position in commercial activities so far as only numerical strength is concerned , that is, the

number of commercial enterprises is considered, the Marwaris and the Biharis seem to have a very strong hold. There are at least 4 wards(VIII- X and XII) in which the Marwaris take a leading position while in another 6 wards (IV,VI,VII,XI,XXV and XXVIII)they have a second position in terms of the number of commercial establishment held. The next important position, ranking third, is held by the Biharis. In 2 wards (V and VII), they are in lead, coming second in other 5 wards (I- III,IX and XXVII). Thus, in 6 out of a total of 30 wards, the Marwaris and the Biharis together lead in business activities and added to this there are 11 more wards where they take the second leading position in this regard. This alone brings out the importance of these non-Bengali communities in quite a strong profile making a very significant place in 17 out of a total of 30 wards in the major economic activities of the city . On the other hand, Bengalis comprising the major part of the resident population , have domination in 24 wards while commercial activities are very little in 5 wards (XIX - XXIII) implying that there are about 19 wards(I-IV,VI,XI,XIII-XVIII,XXIV-XXX) in which the Bengalis may claim to enjoy a leading commercial role.

IV. However, if one considers the size of the business transactions along with concurrent affluence as very plainly evidenced in the property built by these establishments primarily in the form of buildings etc, one may not have any doubt that the Bengalis are far from in a competitive position in this regard and the major commercial control today is exercised by the non-Bengali community even if in

numerical strength the number of establishments they are still behind. This particular aspect remaining beyond the scope of this study we may turn our attention to find out if there is fundamental difference between the two- the Bengali and the non-Bengali communities-in regard to specialisation in commercial activities.

V. A close study of the information available does not show much of difference in this regard. The Bengalis seem to have a greater interest in three types of businesses than either of the Marwaris and the Biharis do have. The Marwaris, in contrast, take greater interest in automobile/motor parts, cloth, rice, tea, medicine, hardware and sanitary goods. The Biharis do not take much interest in motor parts or sanitary goods. They are rather more confined to grocery, electrical goods, medicine, stationery, rice and tea. The most important items in which the Bengalis are interested appears to be contract/supply, hotel, furniture, grocery, medicine, cloth and electrical goods. It can be said that besides hotel, both the Biharis and the Marwaris do not take much interest in contract/ supply as a result of which these two are mostly concentrated in the hands of the Bengali merchants. At the same time unlike the Biharis and the Bengalis, the Marwaris have least participation in the trade of grocery.

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Chapter IV

Religion and Language

The social structure of the city has already been discussed. The diversified composition of different communities adds particular significance to the study of this urban area. The structure and function of different social groups have already been taken into consideration. The result of these studies is reflected in the urban behaviour of different communities which is elaborately discussed in Chapter II.

Language and religion are two other important factors responsible for the growing social diversity. They are helpful in determining the degree of social cohesion as well as diversity and the importance of city in its relation with other cities of West Bengal.

Religion

Religion happens to be one of the most important social factors affecting the behaviour of a community. In a city there are different religions playing an important role in this respect, quite often reflected in the social behaviour of the people.

A Comparative Study

Before going into that it may be worthwhile to make an assessment of the religious composition of the city population and its position as

compared with that of the district in which it is situated and the state of West Bengal to which it belongs. The census data available for this is of 1981 and 1991.

The Table 4.1 shows the differential count of the religious communities compared with that of the Darjeeling district and with that of the state of West Bengal as a whole. Table 4.1 shows that as per 1981 census , Hindus represented by 94.58% of the total urban population in Siliguri city formed the brute majority followed by the Muslims, hardly constituting 3.96% of the total city population. The picture as

Table 4.1
Religious Communities 1981 in West Bengal

| Religious Communities | West Bengal Urban Population (in%) | Darjeeling dist.Urban Population (in%) | Siliguri(m) Population (in%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1.Buddhists | 0.31 | 8.74 | 0.48 |
| 2.Christians | 0.67 | 2.15 | 0.48 |
| 3.Hindus | 86.24 | 84.79 | 94.58 |
| 4.Jains | 0.22 | 0.20 | 0.07 |
| 5.Muslims | 12.24 | 3.61 | 3.96 |
| 6.Sikhs | 0.30 | 0.51 | 0.43 |
| 7.Other Religion and Pursuation | 0.02 | Insignificant | -- |
| 8.Religion not stated | Insignificant | -- | -- |
| Total - | 100 | 100 | 100 |

[Source: Census of India, 1981.
 Series- 23, Paper- 1,
 West Bengal.]

compared with that of Darjeeling district on the one hand and the state of West Bengal as a whole on the other for 1981 appears to be slightly different. For instance, in the district the Hindus were in majority, no doubt, but the percentage has dropped to 84.79% followed by a rise for the Buddhists comprising 8.74% of the urban population and making it the second important religion while the percentage of Muslims is slightly less than that of Siliguri city. However, the situation changes when the picture is compared with that of the state which shows Hindus forming the largest majority among the urban population in the state as a whole (86.24%) is followed by the Muslims comprising almost 12.24% of the total urban population, being much higher than that of the district as well as the city itself, whereas other religions represent a very insignificant position, none of them constituting even 1% of the urban population as far as the state is concerned.

2

The data available for 1991 census show a detectable change in the pattern of religious composition, the urban population considered for Siliguri city, Darjeeling district and state of West Bengal. It is highly significant to note that- (a) though the Hindus still form the majority of the urbanites, its percentage appears to be on the decline in all the three cases. However small it may be, the trend is not ignorable when it has in the state, the district as well as in the city commensurate with an increase in the percentage of the Muslim population in each of them between 1981 and 1991. (b) This happens to be the most visible difference in the religious composition of the urban population taking place within the space of a decade when the percentage of the

Table 4.2

Religious Communities 1991 in West Bengal

| Religious Communities | West Bengal Urban Population (in%) | Darjeeling Dist.Urban Population (in%) | Siliguri(m) Population (in%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1.Buddhists | 0.28 | 9.18 | 0.51 |
| 2.Christians | 0.51 | 2.33 | 0.50 |
| 3.Hindus | 85.02 | 83.54 | 93.08 |
| 4.Jains | 0.15 | 0.14 | 0.18 |
| 5.Muslims | 13.52 | 4.46 | 5.42 |
| 6.Sikhs | 0.26 | 0.18 | 0.26 |
| 7.Other Religion and Pursuation | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.03 |
| 8.Religion not stated | 0.12 | 0.05 | 0.02 |
| Total - | 100 | 100 | 100 |

[Source: Census of India, 1991
 Series- 1, Paper- 2.]
 West Bengal.]

Buddhist population similarly increased both for the district and the city though not for the state as a whole(Table 4.1 and 4.2). As regards the position of other religions, such as the Christianity, the Jainism, the Sikhism- taking a very minor role- the percentage is far from steady in each of the cases.

Language

Besides religion another very important sociological factor of an urban centre is the language spoken by the city population. Tables have

been prepared from the census of 1981 on the basis of households and households population by language mainly spoken in the household (inclusive of variants where grouped) as specified in Schedule - VIII of the Constitution of India. In this connection it needs to be mentioned that similar data have not been published by the census authorities for 1991 census till date or made available to the researcher by them on the plea of maintaining secrecy. Hence it was not possible to use data for 1991 census and there is no other source providing data of this type.

A Comparative Study

It may be interesting to compare the status of Siliguri city in this respect with that of the state of West Bengal as a whole by taking the percentage of people speaking different languages. This is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Languages spoken by the Urban Residents 1981 (in%)

| Language | Percentage spoken in West Bengal (Urban) | Percentage spoken in Siliguri city. |
|----------------|---|--|
| 1. Asamese | Insignificant | 0.02 |
| 2. Bengali | 75.20 | 70.80 |
| 3. Gujrati | 0.23 | 0.03 |
| 4. Hindi | 15.24 | 22.99 |
| 5. Kannada | Insignificant | Insignificant |
| 6. Kashmiri | Insignificant | -- |
| 7. Arabic/Arbi | Insignificant | 0.01 |
| 8. Bhotia | 0.01 | Insignificant |

(Contd. on next page)

Table 4.3 (Contd.)

| Languages | Percentage spoken in West Bengal (Urban) | Percentage spoken in Siliguri city. |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 9. Kharia | Insignificant | -- |
| 10. Khasi | Insignificant | Insignificant |
| 11. English | 0.05 | 0.02 |
| 12. Nepali | 0.96 | 4.61 |
| 13. Bodo/Boro | Insignificant | -- |
| 14. Dogri | Insignificant | -- |
| 15. Konkani | Insignificant | -- |
| 16. Kurukh/Draon | 0.02 | 0.05 |
| 17. Lepcha | Insignificant | -- |
| 18. Lushai/Mizo | Insignificant | -- |
| 19. Malto | -- | -- |
| 20. Munda | 0.02 | Insignificant |
| 21. Malayalam | 0.06 | 0.05 |
| 22. Marathi | 0.04 | 0.02 |
| 23. Oriya | 0.66 | 0.08 |
| 24. Punjabi | 0.38 | 0.60 |
| 25. Santhali | 0.26 | 0.01 |
| 26. Tibetan | 0.01 | Insignificant |
| 27. Sindhi | 0.04 | Insignificant |
| 28. Tamil | 0.13 | 0.02 |
| 29. Telugu | 0.60 | 0.03 |
| 30. Urdu | 6.02 | 0.62 |
| 31. Total of Other Languages | 0.07 | 0.04 |
| Total- | 100 | 100 |

[Source: Census of India, 1981. Series- 23, Paper- 1,
Table 1 to 31, West Bengal.]

(100)

As mentioned in Table 4.3, the stock of 31 languages has been taken as the languages spoken by people residing in the urban areas of West Bengal on the one hand and Siliguri city on the other for the census year 1981 and in the absence of similar data for 1991 census till the time of writing this thesis, the former forms the only basis of study of this particular social factor.

It appears from the Table that Bengali by and large enjoys absolute dominance as the spoken language of the people of the urban West Bengal, representing as much as over 75% of the total urban population and having almost the same status in Siliguri city where nearly 71% of the population speaks this language. The next important language is Hindi in both the state as a whole and the city of Siliguri but here the picture is rather reversed, the percentage of Hindi speaking people being higher (over 22%) for the city than that of the state (over 15%) unlike that of Bengali speaking people where it is higher for the state than in Siliguri city.

Thus, language more than religion brings out the heterogeneity of the urban population in a strong profile adding to the complexity of sociological characteristics of the urban population of Siliguri city.

One, however, feels interested to compare the picture in this regard between the urban areas of the District of Darjeeling as a whole and Siliguri city to find out if there is any difference between the two. The first difference that emerges from such a study as revealed in

Table 4.4

**Comparison between Darjeeling District and Siliguri
Speaking different languages (in%).**

| Language | Percentage Spoken in Darjeeling District (Urban). | Percentage Spoken in Siliguri City. |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 1. Asamese | 0.03 | 0.02 |
| 2. Bengali | 43.56 | 70.80 |
| 3. Gujrati | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| 4. Hindi | 17.19 | 22.99 |
| 5. Kannada | Insignificant | Insignificant |
| 6. Kashmiri | Insignificant | -- |
| 7. Arabic/Arbi | Insignificant | 0.01 |
| 8. Bhotia | 0.61 | Insignificant |
| 9. Kharia | -- | -- |
| 10.Khasi | Insignificant | Insignificant |
| 11.English | 0.09 | 0.02 |
| 12.Gorkhali/Nepali | 35.66 | 4.61 |
| 13.Bodo/Boro | -- | -- |
| 14.Dogri | 0.01 | -- |
| 15.Konkani | Insignificant | -- |
| 16.Kurukh/Oraon | 0.09 | 0.05 |
| 17.Lepcha | 0.06 | -- |
| 18.Lushai/Mizo | Insignificant | -- |
| 19.Malto | -- | -- |

(Contd. on next page)

Table 4.4 (Continued)

| Languages | Percentage Spoken in Darjeeling District | Percentage Spoken in Siliguri City. |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| 20. Munda | Insignificant | Insignificant |
| 21. Malayalam | 0.15 | 0.05 |
| 22. Marathi | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| 23. Oriya | 0.09 | 0.08 |
| 24. Punjabi | 0.42 | 0.60 |
| 25. Santhali | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| 26. Tibetan | 0.65 | Insignificant |
| 27. Sindhi | Insignificant | Insignificant |
| 28. Tamil | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| 29. Telugu | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| 30. Urdu | 1.09 | 0.62 |
| 31. Total of Other Languages | 0.18 | 0.04 |
| Total- | 100 | 100 |

[Source: Census of India, 1981, Series- 23,
Paper- 1, Table- 1 to 31.]

Table 4.4 is that there are at least 3 languages- Kharia, Bodo and Malto- not spoken in the district in comparison to 8 languages unrepresented in Siliguri city. Second difference is rather more striking than that of the first. For instance, though Bengali is the major language in the district, its dominance is very much dwarfed by Nepali as a spoken

language among the urbanites, representing 35.66 % as against Bengali with 43.56%. However, Hindi taking third place as a spoken language among the district population has a less significant place than it enjoys in Siliguri, in the latter 22.99% speaking this language as against 17.19% in the district. The three languages- Bengali, Nepali and Hindi- together are spoken by 96.41% of the district's urban population as against 98.40% in Siliguri city where as in the state as a whole Nepali is replaced by Urdu as the third language while it takes the fourth place in Darjeeling district as well as in Siliguri.

The case is also different about the third language which is Urdu for the urban areas of the state comprising more than 6% of the total number of urbanites while in Siliguri city the third major spoken language happens to be Nepali, constituting nearly 5% of its population.

The three languages together comprise respectively 96.46% for the state and 98.4% for the city, having hardly 3% of the remaining population speaking other languages the number of which is 28 for the state and 20 for Siliguri and this is not even 1% in respect of any other language in each case. Out of the remaining languages only one, namely Nepali (0.96%) is spoken by a little less than 1% of the state's urban population, while others are not of any significance as spoken languages in the state. Thus, as it appears the position of the other languages out of the remaining 27 is insignificant in the state. To be more precise, as the Table shows, besides three languages- Bengali, Hindi

and Urdu- 16 other languages namely Nepali, Oriya, Telugu, Punjabi, Santhali, Gujrati, Tamil being some of the languages among them have an insignificant position while the position of 11 other langages such as Kannada, Kashmiri, Arabic, Dogri etc. are spoken by even less people to feature on the percentage column taken upto two digit after decimal point. There is at least one language of the 8th schedule - Malto - not spoken by any people in West Bengal. In comparison, in Siliguri city Urdu(0.6%) and Punjabi(0.6%) take this place relegating other languages to more insignificant position. But what is more significant as revealed by the fact of the highly cosmopolitan character of the urban areas of West Bengal where as many as 30 languages are spoken and this character is no less significant even for a small city like Siliguri having people representing more than 23 language groups.

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Chapter V

Social Institutions And Their Impact On Urban Life

Siliguri, one of the most diversified cities in the state of West Bengal so far as social composition of its population is considered, has developed north of river Ganga in West Bengal and provides an interesting insight into the activities of the social institutions present in the city.

It is noteworthy to observe that number of social institutions have come up over the decades based on different religious groups or castes which have been studied for having an idea about the behaviour and attitude of different communities of the city. The survey has been made on the basis of personal interviews with the Head of the institutions/organisations or with some other active members of different institutions/organisations. Journals or leaflets published by some of them have been of considerable help in making such a study.

In this connection particular importance was attached to the history and development of the institution or the organisation and on the major activities of each of them. More or less 50 institutions/organisations came under the study as discussed in the following pages. They may be grouped into a few broad categories in terms of their activities. Such as (a) Social Organisations, primarily engaged in social

services; (b) Religious Organisations, representing different religious faiths. Some of them also including social services in their list of activities; and (c) Cultural Organisations interested in cultural performances.

(A) Social Organisations

(1) Terapanth Yuva Parishad

The Terapanth Yuva Parishad was established in the city on 9th November, 1979. The Parishad is run by the Jains, most of whom belong to the Marwari Community. The total Jain population of the city at present is approximately 1200, comprising about 300 families. The office of the Parishad is located at Station Feeder Road, a five storied building owned by the organisation.

The trust of the Parishad is maintained by the members of the parishad. At present there are 100 life members and 117 annual members.

The major activities of the Parishad are as follows:

- (i) A charitable Homeopathic clinic is maintained by Terapanth Yuva Parishad functioning for the last 12 years and about 14,000 patients are treated annually.
- (ii) The Parishad provides financial assistance to the poor students by giving four annual scholarships. Besides, it provides books free of cost and free Computer training course for 72 students for a duration of 3 months.

(iii) The Parishad also comes to the aid of people at the time of natural calamities. For instance, it provided dry food during Alipoor-duar flood in 1993, Raiganj flood in 1995 as well as in Ganganagar, Siliguri, besides providing a free clinic for medical treatment at all the said areas.

(iv) Lastly, one of the major activities of this parishad is to spread the idea of Jainism.

The head office of the Parishad is located at Ladrwon, Rajasthan.

[Source: Mr. Rajeev Jain,
Secretary.
and Mr. Mahindra Daga,
President.
Terapanth Yuva Parishad.]

(2)Uttar Banga Maheswari Sewa Trust

The Uttar Banga Maheswari Sewa Trust was established in 1976. Maheswari is a subcaste of the Marwari Community, hailing from Marwar in Rajasthan. The Maheswaris form a Hindu business class of Marwar.

The trust housed in its own four-storied building in Khalpara has following membership.

(a) Life Member - 128
(b) Founder Trusty - 11
(c) Electoral Trusty- 10

Trust Board (Total)- 21

The major activities of the Sewa Trust are as follows:-

(i) It runs a charitable Homeopathic clinic in the city treating monthly 500 patients continuing for the last five years.

(ii) It arranges for Polio Vaccination for 25 children on an average in a week continuing for the last 2 years.

(iii) It offers relief in the cases of accidents and natural calamities etc.

[Source: Maheswari Bhavan, Khalpara, Siliguri]

(3) Harijan Kalyan Samity

The Harijan Kalyan Samity was established in 1977 and having gone through certain modification since then has devoted itself to different activities from 1993 onwards.

The membership pattern of the Samity as available from their records is as follows:

12,000 in Siliguri Sub-Division
22,000 in Northern part of West Bengal
and 7,000 in Siliguri Town (approx)

The office of the Samity is situated near the stadium on Bidhan Road (Fig.5).

Their major activity as stated by the Samity is to improve their social status. And two other important activities are cultural and educational development termed by them as 'Social, Cultural, Literacy'.

[Source: Mr. Anil Prasad, Secretary,
Harijan Kalyan Samity]

(4) Marwari Yuva Manch

The Marwari Community in Siliguri city came from Rajasthan, Haryana and part of Madhya Pradesh and membership is restricted to this community only.

The Marwari Yuva Manch was established in 1985. It has 105 annual members and thrives on annual subscription and donations realised from the members and sympathisers.

The major activities of the Yuva Manch are as follows:

- (a) Any kind of Social Service.
- (b) The manch has been supplying oxygen cylinders to the patients when required free of cost, running for five years.
- (c) For four years they have a van for carrying deadbodies, the only one of its kind available with any such private organisation in North Bengal.
- (d) The Manch helps poor people who are physically handicapped by supplying artificial limbs. For instance, in 1994-95, 300-350 patients were treated by the Manch and 180 out of them were provided with artificial limbs free of cost.

The Manch has 230 branches in India and 31 branches in West Bengal alone. A building is under construction on Sevoke Road, in Siliguri where a large hospital including an orthopedic centre will come up under this project.

The Manch extended its help and co-operation at the time of natural calamities eg. flood, landslides etc. The major cases where the Manch has provided relief, so far, are as follows:

- (i) Alipoorduar flood in 1993.
- (ii) Balurghat Flood in 1996. Here the Manch served 2000 packets of food

through helicopter within 12 hours after getting message from S.D.O., Siliguri.

(iii) The Manch participated in other relief programmes also at the period of Kalimpong Land Subsidence Tragedy in 1995 and at flood in Bindu in 1995 and in Siliguri flood in 1995 supplying free medicines and food.

(iv) At the time of communal disturbance connected with the issue of Ramjanmabhumi and Babri Masjid in 1993, the timings of different trains comming from other parts of the country to N.J.P. railway station were completely upset leading to a chaotic situation. The stranded passengers at the station were provided by the Manch with baby food and medical care at that time.

[Source: Mr.Niranjan Agarwal, member.
Miss.Jyotsna Agarwal, President.
Marwari Yuva Manch.]

(5) Siliguri Tailik Baishya Sahu Samaj.

The Samaj was actually established in 1965-66, then known as 'Snehi Samaj', later,after 1970, it was renamed and today is known as 'Tailik Baishya Sahu Samaj'.

The Tailik Baishya are actually Teli by caste. Originally they came from Bihar and parts of Uttar Pradesh, comprising mainly the Bhojpuri linguistic group. They have nearly 400 members in this organisation. The total population belonging to this particular caste, 'Tailik Baishya' in Darjeeling district is nearly 10,000 of which in Siliguri it is nearly 5,000.

They are concentrated in Khalpara area of the city and the Alupatty (potato whole sale market) of Hill Cart Road, mainly making business in vegetables, potato and onion.

Apart from looking at the interest of the people belonging to this community in particular, the Samaj does not seem to have anything to do in particular as social work.

[Source: Sri Rupchand Prosad, Secretary.
Sri Vishnu Prasad, member.
Siliguri Tailik Baishya Sahu Samaj.]

(6)Madhyadesio Vaishya Seva Trust.

Established in 1980-81, the trust is run by the members found in the following manner.

1. Founder = 11
2. Trusty = 35
3. Life Member= 35

The Trust has a Yuva Manch called as 'Madhyadesio Vaishya Yuva Manch' with 300 members and has a Mahila Manch as well.

The interview held with the office bearers of the Trust did not yield information on any specific social activities in which the Trust takes active interest.

The Madhyadesio Vaishya are popularly known as 'Kanu' community of Bihar.

[Source: Mr.Motilal Gupta, member.
and Mr.Bipin Kr.Gupta, Secretary.
Madhyadesio Vaishya Seva Trust.]

(7)Bhojpuri Sewa Trust.

This particular trust has a membership of about 100 and has no such major activity. The majority of the population of Madhyadeshi Vaishya coming from Bhojpuri linguistic division of Bihar and U.P. are associated with this trust.

[Source: Mr.Nanda Kr.Singh, President.
Bhojpuri Sewa Trust.]

(8)Jaiswal Biyahut Sewa Trust.

The members forming this trust also belong to a business community coming from Bihar. By caste Vaishya, they are popularly known as Kanwar. The trust does not seem to have any major activity.

[Source: Mr.Ramanand Prasad, Secretary.
Jaiswal Biyahut Sewa Trust.]

(9)Agrasen Bhavan.

The Agrasen Bhavan situated at Agrasen Road of Khalpara, was established by the Agrawal group of the city in 1971. It is a four storied building comprising 8 blocks and 2 big halls. Generally, the hall is used for meetings or occassionally rented out for marriage ceremony which forms a major source of income for the organisation.

It has an Executive Committee consisting of 25 members.

The group keeps itself involved in a number of social activities as follows:

- (i) It maintains a charitable outdoor clinic for the last three years open for two days in a week attending to about 100-150 patients.
- (ii) A charitable Homoeopathic clinic is also maintained by the Bhavan attending on an average to 35 patients regularly.

Besides, it offers relief in the cases of accidents and natural calamities such as that in Alipoorduar flood in 1993, in Kalimpong land slide in 1994 and distributed utensils, clothes etc. in 1995 at Siliguri Junction area after the breaking out of a severe fire.

[Source: An official of Agrasen Bhavan.]

(10)The Shilpanchal.

The Silpanchal, a Social Organisation of non-Bengali Communities was established in 1955 and constructed its own building in 1986 which is situated at Burdwan Road. The Building is four storied.

It has 11 elected members and 39 life members. The Trust of the Silpanchal is maintained by donation from the members and the rent of hall given on hire.

It is primarily involved in some activities, like, it offers the hall of the building on minimum charge allowing concession for any kind of social activities such as marriage ceremony etc.

It manages a Homoeopathic clinic engaging one Doctor and one helper in which 20-30 patients are being treated regularly for the last

five years. The clinic is charitable.

[Source: Mr. Shovaram Dalmia, President.
and Mr. S. Saraf, Secretary
The Shilpanchal.]

(11) **Deokota Sangha.**

Deokota Sangha is a social and cultural organisation established in 1963 at Ashram Para by the Nepali population of the city and got registration in 1966. Later on the Sangha was shifted to Pradhan Nagar at S.N.T. Godown Road in 1975. It has its own two-storied building with a library in it. It has 300 general members, 15 Executive members and 20-25 life members.

The Trust is primarily dependent on donations and monthly subscriptions from the members. It has a 'Dharmashala' (Rest House) which seems to be a source of income.

The main objective of the Sangha comprises social, cultural and educational activities.

(i) **Educational Programmes:** In 1964, it has established a small library meant primarily for students.

The Sangha founded a Girl's school in 1970 teaching upto standard VIII. The school got recognized in 1996. Since the begining one of the major activities of the Sangha has been the publication of a quarterly magazine in Nepali named 'Baruli'.

(ii) Social and Cultural Development programmes: From its inception the Sangha has made it a regular feature to stage two to three plays a year. It maintains an Art Teaching Centre for the last 2 years established for students and young people, giving free training.

For the last five years a free 'Karate Lessons' class has been organized which is held every week coaching about 25 young men in a class.

A Sewing class for women is being conducted by the Sangha for over 10 years free of cost. About 50 persons are taking facility of this vocational training at present.

It also has a co-operative society for women.

Over and above this, a music class is held twice a week, having started teaching violin among others. Ten students are enrolled for this class which is also free of cost.

All the programmes mentioned above have the objective to make young men and women self dependent as far as practicable.

Apart from this, the Sangha takes keen interest in helping people at distress and takes part in relief programmes during natural calamities like floods, land slides etc. as are common to this region. For instance, they actively joined the relief programme in 1993 in Alipoorduar flood and also took part in the relief programme and rescue operation in Kalimpong landslide in 1996.

Some other Nepali organisations having almost similar activities in the city may be mentioned here.

(a) Yuva Barga: Located at the second Mile on Sevoke Road, Siliguri, its main activities are as follows:

- (i) It observes Bhanu Jayanti and Deokota Jayanti.
- (ii) It holds classes to assist poor students.
- (iii) It participates in operations and relief programmes at the time of natural calamities.

(b) Nepali Sahitya Pracharani Samity : Located in Mallaguri area of Siliguri, its Head Office is 'Sahitya Academy, Delhi'.

It conducts examination for both Nepalis and non Nepalis named 'Nepali Sahitya Exam'. The successful candidates get the award 'Sahitya Bhusan' in Nepali.

[Source: An Official of Deokota Sangha, Siliguri.]

(12)Lions Club of Siliguri Greater.

Established in 1981 at Sevoke Road, second Mile, Siliguri, the 'Lions Club of Siliguri Greater' has 56 members. The female organisation of the same called 'Lioness Club of Siliguri Greater' has 20 members.

In 1981-82, it started activity by establishing an Eye Hospital including O.P.D. facilities and in 1983-84, the facilities were extended further by introducing Eye operation camp , providing 35 beds for patients.

The medical service is offered free for all castes except taking some nominal charges for registration only.

More or less 100 patients are taking facility from the hospital daily. And annually 3000 operations (eye operation) is being done since 1984. The hospital is assisted by 35 staff members and 3 eye surgeons.

It further organises at least ten eye checkup camps in a week at different places surrounding Siliguri city besides organising eye operation camps in villages in winter.

Among other activities, the club takes a wide interest as mentioned below:

- (i) It runs a charitable Homeopathic clinic 3 days a week and more or less 150-200 patients are taking facility from this clinic.
- (ii) It organises mobile check up camp.
- (iii) It organises vision screening camp in schools.
- (iv) It provides facility of oxygen cylinders supplied as and when required.
- (v) Lioness subsidised X-Ray centre.
- (vi) Lioness Tailoring centre.
- (vii) Lioness Adult Education centre.
- (viii) Lioness Family Welfare Camps.
- (ix) Recently the Lions Club organised the Community Marriage Ceremony on 4th April'97 which was quite successful.

However, their main objective is 'Sight Conservation'.

The Trust of the club is run by "Fund raising Programme" e.g. lottery, collecting advertisement and sponsoring at the time of different programmes of the club.

[Source: Mr. Suresh Sinhal, P.R.O.
Lions Club of Siliguri.]

(13). Siliguri Welfare Organisation.

The organisation was established in 1977 with its office located at Rabindra Angan near Siliguri Sub-Divisional Hospital. It is a voluntary organisation.

(a) Health Service.

- (i) A charitable dispensary is maintained where about 100 patients are treated weekly (on Sundays only).
- (ii) It has a pathology unit in which 60 to 70 reports are prepared daily on an average.
- (iii) An X-Ray and an E.C.G. unit are also run by the organisation where 30 to 40 patients are getting low-cost service facilities daily.
- (iv) Some other health services offered by this organisation would not be out of place to mention here. They include running a physiotherapy unit, an immunization programme, a blood pressure check-up clinic and an orthopedic outdoor clinic. Altogether 10 doctors are engaged in maintaining these services offered free to the people.

(b) Blood Donation and Motivation

Besides, the organisation arranges Blood Donation Camps, at least 4 in a year and also motivates different clubs to donate blood. The collected blood is usually deposited to Blood Bank of North Bengal Medical College.

It also helps in solving local problems of the city, such as drawing

the municipality's attention to the poor health services, environmental pollution and raises its voice against any kind of unfairness which affects the urbanites.

The cremation of unclaimed dead bodies is also a major activity of the organisation.

The membership pattern of the organisation is as follows:

- (a) General members : 208
- (b) Executive members: 15

The trust of the Committee is run by donation and fund raised through different fund-raising programmes.

[Source: Sri Barun Mallick
Secretary
Siliguri Welfare Organisation]

(B) Religious Organisations:

Besides, Social institutions, there are some religious institutions and organisations in this city, in many cases associated with different types of activities cutting across various social groups and thus getting involved in offering services to the people.

(1) Anandamayee Kalibari, Siliguri.

One of the oldest Hindu temple in the city is Anandamayee Kalibari situated near Mahabirsthana. The temple was established in 1915. In 1925, Mr.B.A. Hallow, the then Sub-Divisional officer of Siliguri extended his help and co-operation to reform the building of the temple.

(2)Mahabir Mandir.

Mahabir Mandir of Mahabirsthian is also an old Hindu temple in the city established in 1895. The land of the temple is under D.I.market Fund of Mahabirsthian.

(3)Sree Satyanarayan Mandir, Mahabirsthian,Station Feeder Road,Siliguri.

Established in 1894, it contains some valuable idols with evidence of fine sculpture. The trust of the temple has been formed from the local businessmen.

(4)Mahananda Kalibari.

It is another Hindu temple established in 1930 by the side of river Mahananda.

(5)Shyma Math , Salban.

It was established in 1952 by a person known as Swami Arunananda for the Hindus.

[Source: (1) to (5): Mr.Kamala Prasad Sribastav, Secretary, Managing Committee, Mahavir Mandir, Mahavirsthian.]

(6)Arya Samaj , Siliguri.

The Arya Samaj, a Hindu establishment, at first was established in 1875 in Bombay by Swamy Dayananda Swaraswati.To establish it in Siliguri city the first conference was held on 9-3-1965 and it was finally established on 13-6-1965. The organisation as claimed is based on pure Indian philosophy.

It has got the following memberships:

- (i) Number of members: 211
- (ii) Executive members: 25
- (iii) Board members : 12

Over and above this nearly 3000 people are associated with this organisation from the northern part of West Bengal.

The head of the Samaj is designated as Pradhan. The next designation is Upa-Pradhan. The female members of the organisation are also associated with different kinds of activities.

2

The major activities of the Samaj lie in the following areas :

- (i) It runs a charitable dispensary open daily except on Sundays attending to 40 to 50 person everyday. There is also a Homeopathic clinic run by the Samaj.
- (ii) It organises from time to time widow remarriage and encourages inter-caste marriages.
- (iii) Religious Conversion:i.e. from Islam or Christianity to Hinduism called as "Suddhakaran" is another function of Samaj.
- (iv) Besides, provision of scholarships for poor and meritorious students is made by the Samaj. For instance, 3 to 4 students learning Sanskrit were awarded with scholarships every year for the last five years.

[Source: Mr.Ratiram Sharma, Pradhan.
Smt.Usha Gupta,Secretary.
Arya Samaj.]

(7) Sant Nirankari Mission.

The Sant Nirankari Mission of Hindu faith was established at Lahore in 1910 by Baba Buta Singh. But the activity of the mission was started actually in 1929 at Lahore by Baba Avtar Singh .
³

At present the Mission maintains 706 branches in India and 80 branches abroad. The number of such branches situated abroad are as follows:

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| U.S.A - 19, | U.K. - 18, | Thailand - 3 |
| Iran - 1, | Iraq - 1, | Japan - 1 |
| Jordon - 1, | Australia-4, | Austria - 3 |
| Srilanka- 1, | South Africa - 1 | |

In Siliguri, their activities started in 1971 and it owns now a two-storied building on S.N.T. Godown Road, Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri. Besides, the Mission has its activities all over the northern- part of West Bengal, Bhutan and Sikkim and their regional branch office covering those areas has been established in Siliguri at Pradhan Nagar in 1983.

The nature of activities carried on by the Mission may be found in the following areas:

- (i) Flood Relief - In 1993 it took an active part in helping people in Aliporeduar affected by devastating flood.
- (ii) It provides medical aid in emergency. For three years it is organising annual blood donation camps.
- (iii) The Mission comes to the aid of needy students by awarding them with scholarships etc. for the last 5 years.(3 scholarship at Siliguri and 3 at Binnaguri)
- (iv) Besides, the Mission has taken direct initiative in establishing many schools, colleges and hospitals in various parts of India. Recently they have started a Sewing class for women in Siliguri where 25-30 women are given lessons free of cost. They have purchased a land to build a school in this city. They have also a plan to build a General Hospital.

They are conducting religious classes with the help of Religious Teachers (or Gyan Pracharok). At present they have 2 religious teachers in Siliguri, 2 in Darjeeling and 1 in Bagdogra. The zonal incharge of the Mission is called 'Branch Pramukh'.

[Source: Mr.K.M.Chettri,
Br. Pramukh,
Sant Nirankari Mission, Siliguri.]

(B) Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram, Sahudangi.

The Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram, a Hindu Institution was established in May 1958 by Swami Dhrubananda⁴. Swami Dhrubananda was an eminent personality with an M.A. in Philosophy from Benaras Hindu University. Later, he did M.A. in English and also M.Sc. from Madras and Calcutta Universities respectively. He had also exceptional knowledge in Homeopathic treatment. He settled at Sodpur in Bangladesh and after Independence came to Ramkrishna Mission Ashram in Kalimpong. Finally he came and settled down in Siliguri and started teaching as an honourary professor at Siliguri college.

In 1958, he established the Ashram at Siliguri which in some ways reflects the image of Santiniketan Ashram of Bolpur.

(i) A school was started from beginning of the Ashram with a hostel which was later closed in 1978. At first the school taught upto the level of VIII. But from 1987, it was converted into a primary school. At present there are 520 students enrolled in this school named "Swamy Vivekananda Academy" studying with a nominal fee of Rs.5/- per month.

(ii) A charitable Homeopathic dispensary is also run by the Ashram since its beginning. The clinic is open daily for the patients from 9 a.m. to 12 a.m. except on Sundays. On an average 40-50 patients are treated daily by the clinic.

(iii) The Ashram distributes 60-70 blankets to the needy people in every winter and some clothes in the Puja Festival every year.

(iv) The Ashram Committee is constituted in the following manner:

- (1) Executive members - 15
- (2) Life members - 4 (Maharaj)
- (3) General members who are giving monthly subscription.

The Ashram spreads over an area of about 24 acres, a part of which is utilized for agriculture and some portion has been kept under woods.

The trust is maintained by donation, subscription from the members and the small income derived from agriculture.

[Source: Partha Maharaj.
Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram,
Sahudangi.]

(9)International Society for Krishna Consciousness(Iskcon), Siliguri.

The Iskcon at Siliguri, another of Hindu faith, was established in 1985 at Gital para,near Haidarpara, Anchal Road. It has its own building. Another large building and a large temple are under construction. The Society has acres of land.The temple which is under construction will be 121 ft. high with a length and breadth of 150 ft and 75 ft. respectively.

The society is composed mainly of two types of members.

(i) Life member: 900 (giving donation annually).

(ii) Sudama Seva member: 300 (they are paying a small amount as monthly subscription).

It has an Executive Body comprising 12 members for the management of the temple. The major source of income is in the form of donations.

The society has some social activities as follows:-

(i) Food for life:- The Programme was initiated to develop the spiritual inspiration among the people and to make them vegetarian. Food relief programmes are organised for the poor people of the city at least once in a month for the last three years.

(ii) A charitable Homoeopathic clinic is also run by the society which is open on Saturday only. Two doctors are there and on an average 150 patients are treated by the clinic every day. It is functioning for about a year.

[Source: Braja Raj Das.
Br. Temple president.
Iskcon, Siliguri.]

(10) Bharat Sevashram Sangha - Siliguri.

This is a Hindu religious organisation based on old hindu philosophy, having organisations all over India. At first it was established as 'Hindu Milan Mandir' in 1960 in Siliguri where a regular conference used to be held at 'Arya Samaj', Deshbandhupara. But actually the 'Bharat Sevashram Sangha' was established at Subhaspalli in 1964 by 'Swami

Atmanandaji- 2nd' and they started their activities in 1968 . Some important activities of the Sangha are as follows:

- (i) The Sangha runs a Bengali medium and an English-medium primary school and a hostel providing accommodation for 50 students among whom 25 are free from making any payment. The remaining 25 are paying charges for food etc. except electricity and accommodation. It is functioning for nearly 12 years.
- (ii) During the last 10 years the Sangha is maintaining two charitable dispensaries, one for homoeopathic and other for allopathic medicines. On an average 25-30 patients daily get treatment at these clinics which provide free medicines and consultation.
- (iii) Besides, it has a Mobile Clinic which is very useful for villages around the city. It makes its rounds once in a week.
- (iv) The Sangha collects money for the poor suffering from illness and in many cases send them for a better treatment to any renowned hospital of India eg. C.M.C., Vellore etc. bearing all the expenses involved in such cases.
- (v) The Sangha is a household name at the time of natural calamities like floods, epidemics etc. Its services in the recent period, namely for operations at Alipoorduar after a severe flood in 1993 and the services offered to people of Jhalong and Bindu by giving blankets, food etc. after a major landslide in 1994-95 will be remembered for a long time.

(vi) The Sangha also organises different cultural programmes, competitions etc. for encouraging students and youth in developing self confidence etc.

All the activities of the 'Sangha' are dependent on private collections in the form of small subscriptions and donations.

[Source: An official of
'Bharat Sebasram Sangha', Siliguri.]

(ii) Hans Bela Ashram.

It is an Ashram of the Hindu faith named 'Manab Utthan Sewa Samity', established in 1970 at Anchal Road, Hyderpara. It is housed in a two-storied building and has nearly 5 acres of land.

It has a membership of over 60,000. The members are mostly residents of Darjeeling Hill, Sikkim and Dooars areas. It has an Executive body comprising 30 members. The Head office of the Ashram is situated in Delhi.

The Ashram is interested in a number of social and religious activities :-

(i) It takes interest in popularising the spiritual knowledge among the people based on 'Bhagavatgita'.

(ii) For the last two years a Charitable Homoeopathic Clinic is run by the Ashram, which is open for 2 days in a week. An average of 150

patients are treated by this clinic every week. The clinic provides one doctor and one compounder.

(iii) The organisation participates in different types of programmes and rescue operations following natural calamities like flood, landslides etc. offering wearings, food, manpower and financial help.

(iv) It assists the camp organised by Lions club, Siliguri for eye operation every year.

(v) It makes free gifts of fruits to the patients in different hospitals on such occasions as 26th January or 15th August etc.

Direct participation in the following programmes may be noted.

- (a) Bijonbari fire in 1992
- (b) Alipoorduar flood in 1993
- (c) Jaigaon flood in 1995
- (d) Malda flood in 1995
- (e) Kalimpong fire in 1996

Siliguri is the Head quarters of the organisation covering whole North Bengal, Sikkim and Bhutan. The trust of the Ashram is run by donation.

[Source: Mahatma Sunita Baiji,
President.
Mr.Jit Narayan Chettri,
Secretary.

Hans Bela Ashram, Siliguri.]

(12) Mother Teresa Branch Institution : Missionaries of Charity
(Roman Catholic), Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri.

The Institution of christian faith was established in 1972 in this city with two more branches in the same year in Tindharia near Kurseong Sub-Division and in Darjeeling. The orphan home of the Institution is situated in Tindharia. It has got its own two-storied building at Pradhan Nagar.

The major activities of the Missionaries of Charity are as follows. There are 9 sisters attached engaged in performing different social activities.

(i) One General Charitable Dispensary and a Mobile Clinic are maintained by the organisation.

(ii) There are 35 beds at the institution for the sick children and for the poor patients. Children suffering from T.B. and malnutrition are taken care of who are kept at the home i.e. at the centre and treated as long as it is required, finally sending them back to their own home when fully cured.

(iii) Dry food is supplied through a rationing system to the poorest people who fall sick.

(iv) Adoption of orphan girls is one of the activities of the Missionary kept at Tindharia's orphan home and also providing education for them.

(v) Sewing class is conducted for the poor girls and on an average 35 to 40 girls are taught.

(vi) A school for the slum children has been established at "Chandmoni Tea Estate".

The Missionary obtains monitory help from the Head quarters in Calcutta.

[Source: An official of 'Missonaries of Charity', Siliguri. and Father Joe of Santi Sadan.]

(13) Santi Sadan, Roman Catholic, Gurung Basty, Siliguri.

It is a christian religious training centre for the Roman Catholics. They teach the boys successful at the Higher Secondary level (+2) and also provide accommodation for them. The students are also permitted to take further education. The boys come from different parts of India. The main aim of the institution is to prepare a student who has a good moral character for serving as a priest for Roman Catholic Community.

Originally it was established in 1977 known as Jesu Ashram. Later on the Jesu Ashram was shifted to a place near Matigara close to Siliguri. The Ashram was run by Brother Bob. At present there are 21 students at Santi Sadan. The Ashram has a branch at Mallaguri. And it is famous for its Leprosy Centre treating leprosy patients and for some other social activities.

It also maintains a hostel for girls known as "Holy Cross", situated at Pradhan Nagar. There are about 10-20 girls staying in this hostel and it is run by 3 sisters. It also has a Charitable Dispensary and a Mother and Child Health Care Unit.

Jesu Ashram, a part of Santi Sadan, is situated on the National Highway near Matigara close to Siliguri which is a Missionary organisation. It spreads over a total area of about 6 acres. It is purely a charitable organisation run entirely on donation which was established in 1971. It looks after the destitutes especially people suffering from Leprosy. It also looks after T.B. and other general patients including mother and child health care. This Ashram is run by a Director named Brother Bob assisted by four sisters who are well trained in nursing. Altogether there are thirty members engaged in different types of activities of the Ashram. It has built a large hospital with 320 beds and an operation theatre used for surgical cases in leprosy. A nursing course is offered for a duration of two years. The sole objective of the Ashram is to treat the destitutes suffering from leprosy and after recovery they are given loans to start earning. It also has an outdoor clinic near Mallaguri where patients are treated free.

[Source: Father Joe of 'Santi Sadan'
and Brother Bob of 'Jesu Ashram'.]

(14) Roman Catholic Church, Pradhan Nagar.

It was established in 1958 in Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri. The christians of the city regularly come here for participating in Sunday prayer and on different occasions.

[Source: Father Joe of 'Santi Sadan'.]

(15)Church at Sevoke Road.

It was established by Father Francis in 1927. But the existing Church building was built by George Mahbert in 1948. The christians participate in prayer on every sunday.

[Source: Father Joe of 'Santi Sadan'.]

(16)St.Joseph's Missionary High School and Church at Bhaktinagar.

It was established near Gate Bazar of Bhaktinagar by the christian Missionaries. At present there are 900 students and 20 teachers in the school.

[Source: Father Joe of 'Santi Sadan'.]

(17)The International centre for Buddhist studies and Research

Buddhist communities following 'Thero' and 'Mahajan' philosophy are found in the city. After independence the 'Barua' community, Buddhists in religious faith hailing from Chattagram district of Bangladesh, came and settled down in the city. They are the followers of 'Thero Philosophy' written in 'Pali' language.

The Gurung Basty, Pradhan Nagar and Salugarah area of the city are the places where the major part of the Buddhists are concentrated. They are the followers of 'Nyingma -pa' philosophy which is a part of Tibetan Mahajan philosophy. Some of them of Gurung Basty and Pradhan Nagar are the followers of 'Hinajan' philosophy.

The followers of 'Thero' philosophy, however, are more active and they have established a number of institutions based on 'Buddhist philosophy' such as 'Buddha Bharati', 'International centre for Buddhist Studies and Research', 'Bidarshan Dhyan Ashram' and 'Boudha Samaj'. The 'Buddha Bharati' was established in 1961 and registered in 1964. It is the centre of festivals and place of worship for the 'Barua Community'. The 'All India Conference' in the memory of 'Atish Dipankar' was held here in 1983. The inaugural address was given by Hon'ble Dalai Lama.

The International centre for Buddhist Studies and Research was established in 1983 at Gurung Basty and was inaugurated by Hon'ble Dalai Lama. They are the followers of 'Hinayan' philosophy of Lord Gautam Buddha. It is housed in a two-storied building owned by the Society and it maintains a teaching centre for languages, like 'Tibetan', 'Pali' and 'Sanskrit'. The Pali college also comes under this research centre. Quite precious books on Buddhist philosophy are kept in the library of the centre. It is the only library of its kind in North Bengal where the 108 volumes of 'Kanjur', the holy book on Buddhism written in Tibetan are available.

A school named 'Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Sishumangal Ashram School' came under the roof of this centre in 1991. Students from backward classes like SC/ST are taught here. At present there are 105 students who are also staying here getting food and lodging facilities including dress materials etc. The school is recognised by the Central Government. The

centre and the school receives financial assistance from the Central Government since 1987-88.

The Bidarshan Dhyam Ashram was established in 1981. It is famous for the teaching of 'Dhyan' of Buddhist philosophy.

The Mahajan community has also two institutions, one is 'Tamang Buddhist Society' at Gurung Basty and the other is 'Nying-ma-Pa Society' at Salugarah. Each of the society has a temple.

[Source: Vishkhu Progyananda.
International Centre for Buddhist Studies and Research, Gurung Basty,
Siliguri.]

(18)The Gurudwara of Sevoke Road.

The Gurudwara of Siliguri belonging to the Sikh community was established in 1947 at the Junction of Sevoke Road and Hill Cart Road. But in 1975 it was shifted to another spot on Sevoke Road near Panitanki. The land for this large Gurudwara was purchased by 'Guru Singh Sabha'.

Regular meetings and discussions about 'Holy Grnatha Saheb' take place in the Gurudwara. An Alms-house is also organised by this Gurudwara. The Sikh's New Year's day, the Birthday of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobindo Singhji are celebrated with great eclat. The expenditure for maintaining the Gurudwara is met by taking rent from different shops sublet by Gurudwara on Sevoke Road.

[Source: An official of 'Guru Singh Sabha'.]

(19)Bari Masjid, Mahavirshan.

The land for the construction of the mosque was donated by a person named Mirza Samsuddin Ahmed. Later on it came under 'Wakf' law.

The building of the mosque was built a hundred years ago, and the design of the floor indicates chinese influence. It has one salaried Moulabi (Priest) and expenditure for its maintanance is met by a statutory trust.

(20)Chhota Masjid, Alupatti.

It was established at the end of 19th century, mainly through the initiative of two persons, namely Khan Mohammad Khan, and Hakim Abdul Gafur. However, the new brick building was constructed in 1952-53 and made two-storied in 1967-68. The Muslim Community of the city makes use of it on all occasions for religious purpose.

[Source: (a) and (b)- Moulabi, 'Bari Masjid',
Mahavirshan.]

(C) Cultural Organisations.

Besides social and religious organisations, there are some organisations in this city particularly taking interest in cultural activities.

I. Theatre Groups and Drama clubs.

At present there is no professional theatrical group in the city, but the role of different non-professional groups is very important.

The main objectives of the different theatre groups are

- (i) They consider to have a social responsibility for fighting against all social evils.
- (ii) They aim at educating the people through their performance on the stage portraying life revealing socio-economic and socio-political problems.

The name of following theatre groups are to be mentioned here for their wide range of activities.

1.Uttal Natya Gosthi

The 'Uttal Natya Gosthi' was established on the 7th August '1977. The office is located at Deshbandhupara. They have, so far, staged 35 dramas and also participated in the 'Nandikar National Theatre Festival (1995)'. Seven members of the 'Gosthi' have been selected for a project of 'Paschim Banga Natya Academy'. The project is for young directors, who will be supported by financial help to stage new plays. This organisation was awarded for the best production prize in West Bengal in 1988.

However, all the activities of the 'Gosthi' are dependent on the member's subscriptions and the sale proceeds of the shows.

[Source: Mr. Pradeep Lahiri.
Secretary.
Uttal Natya Gosthi]

2. Damama Natya Gosthi

The 'Damama' was established on the 5th July 1973 and located at Saktigarh. They have staged, so far, 31 one-act plays and 17 long-duration plays.

The organisation participated in 'Assam Bangla Natya Protijogita' held in Bongaigaon, Assam, on several occasions. It has received the 'Disheri' and 'Rittik' which are prestigious awards of West Bengal in the field of drama.

They have a membership of 35, who are active members participating in the plays. The fund of the 'Gosthi' is run by member's subscription, donations and from sale proceeds of shows.

[Source: Mr. Partha Chowdhury
Secretary
Damama]

3. Kornic

'Kornic', a renowned theatre group of the city, was established in 1969 at Deshbandhupara. 'Kornic' have staged at least 105 plays among which 50 are one-act, 10 are street-dramas and 5 are for children. Over and above that it has staged 20 full-length plays.

It participated in Assam-Bangla Natya Competitions in 1969. Kornic did participate in Assam-Bangla Natya Competition in 1971 at Bongaigaon, Assam and received awards for best production, best director

and best music director. It also participated in competitions held at Lucknow(1973), Allahabad (1974) and Kanpur (1982) on several occasions. It had been awarded with 'Disheri' and 'Rittik'.

Kornic has a speciality in staging plays in the light of social movement, such as plays on operation barga, adult education and on environmental pollution which need mentioning.

It has a membership over 100 among whom 25 are very much active, participating in all kind of dramas. The child membership of the theatre is also a very encouraging feature.

The organisation meets its expenditure through tickets sold at the time of shows and collection of subscription and occasionally donation from the members.

[Source: Mr.Rupak Chowdhury,
Secretary and founder member
Kornic.]

4.Siliguri Rittik Natya Sangstha.

Siliguri Rittik Natya Sangstha was established on the 1st May'1984 and is now situated at Bharat Nagar.

It has staged 24 dramas among which 9 are full-length, 14 one-act and 1 is a street-drama. 'Rittik' is also the recipient of different awards like 'Rittik' and 'Dishari' etc.

It has a total membership of 48, 35 of them taking part in acting. Collection of donation, member's subscriptions and the sale proceeds of shows are the only source of sustenance.

[Source: Mr.Moloy Ghosh
Director,
Siliguri Rittik Natya Sangstha.]

5.Balaka Natya Gosthi

The 'Balaka Natya Gosthi' was established in August'1977 at Deshbandhu para.

The Gosthi has staged 47 dramas till date among which 15 are full-length, 25 are one-act plays and 7 are short-dramas.

The group was awarded with different prestigious prizes eg. 'Dishari' in 1984 and 'Rittik' in 1986. It is also the recipient of different other awards on its participation in drama competitions such as at Jalpaiguri and Belacoba on several occasions from 1987 to 1994.

It has a membership of 23 and depends on its own resources for financial requirements.

[Source: MR. Bachhu Nandi
Secretary.
Balaka Natya Gosthi].

6.Ingeet Natya Sangstha.

The 'Ingeet' was established on the 24th July, 1977 and is situated on Bidhan Road.

It has a membership of 24 and so far produced 44 dramas of which 12 are full-length plays and 32 are one-act plays.

The main motive of the organisation is to make people aware of the current socio-economic and socio-political situation.

[Source: Mr.Mantu Majumdar, Director
Mr.Ananda Bhattacharjee, Director
Ingeet Natya Sangstha .]

7.Thoughts Arena.

'Thoughts Arena' was established on the 21st February'1988, situated in east Vivekananda Palli.

It has staged 5 full-length dramas, 1 one-act play and 6 street-dramas. The group is also associated with publication work and have broughtout several issue of a little magazine entitled 'Thoughts Arena'.

Now the group is going to stage two plays based on the writing of Rabindra Nath Tagore.

[Source: Mr.Amit Basu
Secretary]

8.Siliguri Mukta Manch

The 'Mukta Manch' was established on the 27th May'1979. The Manch includes different theatre groups of the city eg. Uttal, Damama, Rittik, Balaka etc, which have been discussed above.

The Manch started staging dramas since beginning on every sunday at Road Station More (Junction). After that, from 1983-84 onwards, it was made fortnightly, becoming a monthly event later on at New Cinema ground, Siliguri. At present it organises a Drama festival every 3 or 4 months in collaboration with different groups, as mentioned above, participating in the shows which run for 3 to 4 days.

[Source: Mr.Prodeep Lahiri.
President
Siliguri Mukta Manch]

Besides the theatre groups mentioned above, a few more groups are there having come into existence very recently producing quite a number of good dramas. The groups are-

- (i) Siliguri Theatre Academy
- (ii) Srejan Sena
- (iii) Darpan.

In this connection the two existing stages need mentioning. They are the state-sponsored and constructed, Dinabandhu Mancha, and Mitra Sammilani Hall.

9.Dinabandhu Mancha

The Mancha was opened on the 1st November, 1987. It is a big 4 storied building where different cultural programmes, dramas and film shows are held regularly. The hall of Dinabandhu Mancha is fully air-conditioned, and has a sitting capacity for 900. A film festival was also arranged in this hall in 1999.

The Mancha is managed by 65 staff members. Some casual staff is also provided from out side as and when required. There is a big auditorium with modern lighting facilities and necessary gadgets along with a small library in this Mancha.

[Source: Mr.U.Upadhyay
Officer-in-charge.
Dinabandhu Mancha.]

10.Mitra Sammilani

The Mitra Sammilani' is another theatre hall in Siliguri established in 1909. The Sammilani is a two storied building situated near Hill Cart Road. The hall has a capacity for 700 seats, 456 of them ⁶ on the ground floor and 244 on the first floor .

It holds, at least, two cultural programmes a year not associated with any play. Besides, different cultural competitions are organised. Another important activity of the organisation is to organise the 'Bidhan Chandra Chess Competition' since last 29 years sponsored by 'Darjeeling District Chess Association'. The district championship for chess in 1999 was also organised by Mitra Sammilani.

The hall is also rented out for Rs.1000/- with a discount for group theatres or any charitable performance for a show which makes a source of income.

Altogether there are 220 members in this 'Sammilani' set-up, and 15 of them form the executive body.

The maintenance is derived from the (i) rent for the hall, (ii) member's subscription, (iii) bank interest and (iv) rent from shops as tenants on Hill Cart Road.

[Source: Mr. Uday Dubey
Social Secretary,
Mitra Sammilani.]

II.Libraries

i.The Bangiya Sahitya Parishad- Sub-Divisional Library

The said library was established in 1964 behind Siliguri Municipal Corporation and the building was expanded further in 1987.

The collection includes good number of old very valuable publications, old manuscripts and some rare collections of silver and copper coins. The total number books available in the library is 20,751.

The parishad has a membership, at present, of 3832.

[Source: Librarian
Bangiya Sahitya Parishad]

2.The Additional District Library

The Additional District Library was established on the 21st April'1990 near the 'Bangiya Sahitya Parishad'.

The total sanctioned strength of the staff of the library is 10. The library has a membership over 4239 at present and the total collection amounts to, about 21,000 books.

[Source: Librarian
Additional District Library]

Besides, there are quite a number of libraries in the city but those two mentioned above are really important. However, the following libraries have also earned popularity in the recent years.

- (i) Arya Samity at Deshbandhupara.
- (ii) Sailendra Smriti Pathagar at Saktigarh
- (iii) Udayan Memorial Sports Library at college para.

III.Sporting clubs.

1. Deshbandhu Sporting Union

The Deshbandhu Sporting Union was established in 1948. At first the club had a name for football and participated in different football tournaments. At present it has earned a wide reputation in table tennis, though its participation in football and cricket tournaments still continues.

The name of Smt.Bharati Ghosh would not be out of place to be mentioned here who became district champion for 5 times followed by Assam State championship in table tennis. She started the coaching centre for table tennis in 1981 at Deshbandhu Sporting Union, from which Sri Ganesh Kundu became Sub-Junior National champion in 1981-82, while a girl trainee, named Mantu Ghosh had became National champion on two occasions in 1990 and 1993 and won Sub-Junior National championship in 1988. Besides, the National championship in table tennis has also been won by a few more trainees of this club.

Another important activity of the club is organising programmes for Polio Vaccination of 50 children on an average in a week, continuing for the last 2 years.

[Source: Sri S.Bhattacharya
member.]

2.Ramkrishna Byam Sikhsa Sangha

The Sangha was established in 1948. At first its major interest was in physical exercise and Bratachari (a particular type of physical training). Later it has expanded its interest in the field of boxing, weightlifting, table tennis, badminton, football and volley ball. A karate lesson's class is run regularly for about 100 participants. One member of the club came 7th in the National championship for weight lifting competition in 1989.

The main earnings of the Sangha comes from rent from different shops sublet by the Sangha on Sevoke Road.

[Source: A member of
Ramkrishna Byam Sikhsa Sangha, Siliguri.]

3.Dadabhai Sporting Club

The Dadabhai sporting club was established in 1958 at Deshbandhu Para.

The club takes interest in football, participating in different tournaments and offers coaching to players.

Two members of the club became National champions and runners-up in the Athleetic meet of the Physically handicapped in 1988-89.

[Source: Mr. Champak Bhattyacharya
Secretary.
Dadabhai Sporting Club, Siliguri.]

4.Siliguri Table Tennis Academy.

The 'Siliguri Table Tennis Academy' was established on the 29th July'1993, having 70 students now receiving coaching from Mr.Amit Dam, a National coach. The activity of the academy is very satisfactory. Fourteen members of the academy participated in National championship. The academy has bagged National championship in table tennis for 16 times which includes Kasturi Chakraborty winning 8 times between 1992 and 1997, barring 1996 and most remarkable aspects is that she won the top National positions even twice in some of these years.

The structure of committee of the Academy is as follows.

- (i) Office bearers - 5, and
- (ii) all the guardians of the students are the members of the committee.

The expenditure on maintaining the academy is met through the collection of donation from guardians of the students or from the players who are serving in reputed concerns. The academy also collects 20% of prize money from the students who are awarded in different competitions including National championship.

[Source: Mr.Amit Dam
National coach
and Mr.Dipak Ghosh
Secretary
Siliguri Table Tennis Academy, Siliguri.]

5.Kanchanjangha Krirangan (Stadium)

This is the only stadium offers sport facilities in the city since it was built in late eighties.

'Tilak Maidan' an important and large playground was converted into 'Kanchanjangha Krirangan' on the 12th January 1988, having a sitting capacity for 35,000 people.

This beautiful stadium is claimed to have been made as per International standard. Many National and International football and cricket tournaments were organised here. The 7th Nehru Gold Cup, an International football tournament was also held from the 17th January to the 4th February 1988 in this stadium.

The office of the 'Sports and Youth Welfare' and the regional centre of 'Sports Authority of India' are situated here. It has a big hall with some rooms used for meetings or occasionally rented out for marriage ceremony which forms a major source of income for the State Government. The stadium is a Government property and the same is maintained by the 'Board of Stadium Management'.

[Source: Board of Stadium Management
Kanchanjangha Krirangan].

Some observations

There are altogether more than 46 organisations belonging to three different categories on the basis of their origin, such as, social, religious and cultural patronised by different communities. Those grouped under the social category, numbering about 12, form the second largest group, taking a greater interest in social services in true sense of the term than the other two groups and in spite of owing allegiance to the community they belong to, many of them offer services to all in an unbiased manner. Their activities vary widely, ranging from academic,

medical to religious. A close scrutiny may reveal interesting facts in this regard. For instance, the institutions or organisations set up by the Jains or the Marwaris usually take a greater interest in welfare services in the form of providing medical care through charitable hospitals, material help at the times of distress like flood, earthquakes, student aids with scholarships etc. All these services are made available for all ignoring caste and creed and from that point of view the institutions set up by the Marwari or Jain community seem to be very much open-hearted in their general outlook.

This is however not the case with some of the institutions set up by some other sub-communities belonging to the Hindu society- such as the Baishya Sahu Samaj, Vaishya Seva Trust, the Bhojpuri Sewa Trust etc. whose activities are difficult to define and never spread beyond the community.

In comparison to this the religious organisations or institutes forming the largest group with a total about 20 in the city, in general put a greater stress on religious activities though it is not the case for all of them. As a matter of fact different welfare activities also feature prominently in the work list of such organisations like Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram, Iskcon, Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Hans Bela Ashram. Each of them belong to Hindu faith with a strong religious base but it never interferes with the wide range of social services they offer in a systematic manner all through the year. Besides providing medical aid and care through hospitals established by some of

them, their support includes academic and financial help of various types offered even far beyond the city-limits.

In this regard, a highly laudable record is also held specifically by the Christian missionary establishments, such as the Missionaries of Charity and Santi Sadan, offering medical facilities for patients suffering from leprosy, malnutrition etc., running orphanages, sewing classes and giving other vocational trainings.

The social/religious establishments of the Sikh community equally takes great interest in welfare services including vocational training for women.

A number of organisations have come up in recent years at the initiative of the Nepali community in the city taking particular care for the youths of the community and coming to the aid of people at times of natural distress like floods, landslides etc.

The Lions Club, the only non-community and non-religious establishment, has a wide field of activity serving all the communities and has already developed a very strong and large base in Siliguri. It maintains a large area of operation in terms of the nature of services offered without which the city-population as well as people coming from the surrounding areas would have been poorer.

As a small religious community, the Buddhists have formed an organisation to serve the interest of Buddhism and Buddhist children, establishing a school for the latter.

In sharp contrast to the activities of all these different communities taking a keen interest in the welfare of the society as a whole, the Muslim community has so far remained aloof from the general trend the reasons for which remain to be investigated further.

There are at least 14 organisations engaged in cultural activities and they fall into three separate groups like drama, sports and libraries. The city seems to take a keen interest in both drama and games, particularly, table tennis, holding a very commendable record in the latter which holds big prospect for future depending on availability of funds from public sources.

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Field Survey Report: An Insight Into Major Sociological Aspects Governing Urban Life

The field survey was based on the collection of data through a questionnaire used on a random basis covering more or less a large part of the city area to make it as far as possible representative of the urban population of the city. In this regard, however, it is necessary to mention that though all the major communities are represented in the sample survey, the Punjabi community is not included in it as they are typically confined to mostly one ward (No.XIII) known as 'Punjabi para' or Punjabi locality, which did not find a place in the sample survey. The study was primarily confined to the following characteristics of the urban population focusing on the major sociological aspects.

1. Age-Group

Regarding age group representing one of such important features (as per the age of the head of the family under survey) it is found that the maximum percentage of the urban dwellers falls in the age group of 50-60 as far as the head of the family is considered. Almost 53 per cent of the head of the family belong to this age group followed by 23 per cent in the age group 30-50 years while 19 per cent head of the families are above 60 years. Thus, only 5 per cent of the heads are below 30 years in age. Thus, the most striking feature which at once draws attention of the

researcher is the apparent lower age or youthfulness of the heads, about 81 per cent of whom are below 60 years in age in a country like India where longevity is already in the increase. From another angle, the smaller percentage being 19 per cent for age above 60 years indicates two factors. Such as the older people do not thrive or they have been left at distant homes in the case of migrants. Both these factors are applicable in this case.

Table 6.1

Age group (in %)

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| (i) No.of household Surveyed | : | 500 |
| (ii) Age group (in%) | | (a) Upto 30 - 5 % |
| | | (As per the age of Head of the family under Survey) (b) 30 to 50 - 23% |
| | | (c) 50 to 60 - 53% |
| | | (d) 60 and above- 19% |

[Source: Field survey.]

The majority of the heads falling in the age group below 30 years are either residing with their old aged father or mother or living alone. The aged member of the family was unable to come for interview. In case of other age groups, the head of the family faced the questionnaire (Table 6.1).

2. Category of Family according to social groups

Six types of categories have been recognised in the family structure of the urban residents of Siliguri city. In the case of the family structure it may be interesting to observe that taking 100 as unit, the size of the family - consisting of parents and children alone- is largest in the Muslim community with 35 per cent of the total, closely followed by the Bihari community with 30 per cent. The Nepali community has the third place in this respect with 13 per cent while being lowest for the Bengali community with only 4 per cent where the family consists of parents and five children. In fact, the Bengali community has the highest percentage of the lowest family-size which is parents plus two children. Fifty-six per cent of the Hindu families are of this size, distantly followed by the Nepali community in which 18 per cent of the Nepali families have two children each, next to them being the Marwari community in which 11 per cent are two children families. On the other hand, the Muslim community again takes a lead in the larger size families considering(a) 3 to 4 children families,(b) and also in the case of more than 5 children being the largest in size as mentioned above. In this category- 3 to 4 children-25 per cent of the total of the second largest size families belong to the Muslim Community followed by the Bihari community, having 23 per cent, the Tribal communities with 19 per cent and the Marwary community with 13 per cent. On the contrary, the Bengali community has only 10 per cent and the Nepali community as well represents 10 per cent of the total in this category.

Table 6.2

Community - wise Family Types, etc. in Siliguri city.

| Types of Families | Communities | | | | | | | | Total |
|---|-------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Marwari | Nepali | Tribal | Other | Total | |
| i) Parents + 2 Children | 56 | 05 | 07 | 11 | 18 | 03 | 00 | 100 | |
| (ii) Parents + 3 to 4 Children | 10 | 25 | 23 | 13 | 10 | 19 | 00 | 100 | |
| (iii) Parents + more than 5 Children | 04 | 35 | 30 | 07 | 13 | 11 | 00 | 100 | |
| (iv) Joint Family | 10 | 05 | 12 | 40 | 13 | 20 | 00 | 100 | |
| (v) Others (residing with old aged mother or father only and widow with only one living child) | 07 | 18 | 04 | 16 | 30 | 25 | 00 | 100 | |
| (vi) Individual | 13 | 12 | 24 | 13 | 16 | 22 | 00 | 100 | |
| Total : | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | -- | 100 | |

[Source: Field Survey.]

[Other social group under Survey is negligible.
Decimal(.) fraction is rounded off]

On the whole, to be more specific, the size of the Bengali family appears to be the smallest among all the major communities in the city with more than half of its families (56%) belonging to the lowest size group of the families, the percentage decreasing steadily from 10 per

cent to 4 per cent in larger size groups. This happens to be in sharp contrast in the case of Muslim and Bihari families in which the percentage steadily increases from 7 per cent to 25 per cent and to 35 per cent among the Muslims for the three categories (small, larger and largest) whereas it is 7 per cent, 23 per cent and 30 per cent for the Biharis (Table 6.2) in the same order of categories.

This is not the same with other communities though in all the three other cases- the Marwari, Nepali and the Tribals - the component or percentage of small family is much less than that of the larger size families - being 11 per cent(small) against 20 per cent(larger) for the Marwaris, 18 per cent(small) against 23 per cent(larger) for the Nepalis and 3 per cent(small) against 30 per cent (larger) for the Tribals.

In the category of joint family, the highest percentage is found in a Marwari community followed by the Tribals with 20 per cent of the total. The Bengali community comes third in this respect with 10 per cent of the total number being joint families or where the traditional customs are still maintained even in urban life.

In the category of individuals, the highest percentage is found in the Bihari community followed by the Tribals. The category 'Individual' denotes only one person residing in the house which explains that the person involved has left his family while coming to the city which is his/her work-place.

In the category of 'Others', the Nepali community is in the top position (30%) followed by the Tribals(25%). This category denotes that 1 per cent is residing with his/her old aged father/mother or a widow is residing with only one living child (Table 6.2).

3. State of origin

The state of origin has been ascertained for each community on the basis of information gathered through questionnaire during household survey.(Table 6.3)

Table 6.3

State of Origin (in Percentage.)

| Bengali | Muslim | Bihari | Punjabi | Marwari | Nepali | Oriya | Tribal | Other | Total |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 63.79 | 4.01 | 16.33 | 0.46 | 8.21 | 3.79 | 0.56 | 2.79 | 0.06 | 100 |

[Source: Field survey.]

Again, taking the total unit as 100, it may be observed that the majority of the city residents have Bengal as their place of origin by birth. They represent almost 64 per cent of the total followed by people born in Bihar who comprise over 16 per cent. The third place goes to the Marwaris with a little over 8 per cent of the total urban community represented by them while besides the Muslims, the Nepalis form the next largest group with about 4 per cent. The place of other is insignificant among the urban dwellers.

Thus, one can say that though the city is still now dominated by the Bengali community as a place of residence, it has already yielded

much to the pressure of incomers, naturally attracted by various sources of deriving income who comprise a sizeable portion, more than one-third (36%) of the total urban dwellers of the burgeoning city of Siliguri.

4. Migration

In the absence of systematic official records, it is very difficult to ascertain the actual quantum of migration into this city though people belonging to different communities coming from different parts have come from time to time to settle down in this town, making it a permanent home in many cases. The reasons leading to in-migration have been many - political, social as well as economic etc. - varying from period to period as it could be ascertained through household investigations.

Table 6.4 shows this in-migration community-wise, and on the basis of information derived from field survey by the author, five specific periods may clearly be identified as periods of mass-movement. However it does not mean that in-migration has always taken this character. In fact, infiltration of people has gone on over the decades, getting momentum in the recent decades with increasing economic openings but never taking the character of a mass-movement.

As the Table (Table 6.4) shows, during each of the period of mass movement, the Bengalis, obviously comprising Hindus, constitute the major volume of the immigrants, ranging between 48 per cent to 77 per cent of the total. As a matter of fact, there are two major communities

found to have been involved in mass-movement. They are the Bengalis or the 'Hindus' and the 'Biharlis'. Among the immigrants after the people of Bengali or Hindu origin, the Biharlis take the next position followed by the Muslims, the Marwaris and the Nepalis. However, the proportion of other communities has been comparatively much lower than that of the Bengalis.

As the investigation reveals, even before the partition of Bengal on the eve of Indian Independence in-migration was taking place, not in the form of a mass-movement but as slow infiltration. Even then it was the people of Bengali stock that took the leading part, comprising nearly half (48%) of the total migrants into this city. It is quite apparent that people from earstwhile East Bengal were involved in this for a long time, since the beginning of the tea plantations started to be established from mid- 19th century.

But the real massmovement did not take place till the partition of Bengal in 1947, and between 1947 and 1951 more than three-fourths (77%) of the immigrants into the city of Siliguri alone was of Bengali origin, represented by the Hindus. This was followed by the period 1961-64, when the Bengali population increased rapidly due to political disturbances in Assam. At that time the people of Assam were agitating for Assamese as a state language. They demanded for immediate implementation of the said language at the official level. As a fall out of this political pressure many of the Bengalis migrated to the neighbouring state of West Bengal, some of whom settled down in Siliguri and its surrounding places. The same effect had been observed in the city of Siliguri when people

of Bengali origin residing till then in Burma were forced to migrate and some of them came to this city. They are called 'Burma(Burmese) refugee'. Those Burmese refugees are mainly associated with the business of medicine in Siliguri.

The 'Others', mentioned in column 8 of row 3 (Table 6.4), mostly came from Bangladesh due to political disturbances. But actually they are the inhabitants of Uttar Pradesh/Hariyana.

Table 6.4

Migrants in Siliguri City by Community (in %).

| Year | Beng | Mus | Bih | Mar | Nep | Trib | Oth | Total |
|--|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. Before 1947 | 48 | 10 | 20 | 11 | 08 | 03 | 00 | 100 |
| 2. 1947 to 1951 | 77 | 15 | 03 | 03 | 02 | 00 | 00 | 100 |
| 3. 1961 to 1964 | 59 | 05 | 13 | 11 | 07 | 00 | 05 | 100 |
| 4. 1971 to 1975 | 49 | 10 | 26 | 07 | 08 | 00 | 00 | 100 |
| 5. 1981 to 1988 | 49 | 12 | 18 | 03 | 13 | 05 | 00 | 100 |
| 6. Between the year from 1947 to 1991(except the years Mentioned in rows 1 to 5) | 48 | 15 | 18 | 10 | 05 | 04 | 00 | 100 |
| TOTAL- | 55.00 | 11.17 | 16.34 | 7.50 | 7.16 | 2.00 | 0.83 | 100 |

[Source: Field Survey
Fraction rounded off.]

[In row 3/col-8, the 'Others' mentioned displaced by communal riot in Bangladesh, comprise the inhabitants of Uttar Pradesh or some other states.]

Another significant incident triggering mass exodus was Bangladesh Independence War in 1971 and between 1971 and 1975, a large number of Hindus migrated to West Bengal, some of them settling down in Siliguri. During the same period it is noted that the Bihari people also migrated in large number, comprising as much as 26 per cent of the total migrants. The majority of the Bihari people came from the surrounding areas of Bihar adjoining the state of West Bengal, due to 'Pull factor' as well as push factor. In 1981 to 1988, again, the population of Bengali origin increased due to political disturbances in Assam. The migrants of Bengali origin represent 49 per cent of the total during this period when the same reason led to the migration of the Marwaris from Assam, many of whom settled down in and around Siliguri city buying up land, building houses and establishing their business shifted from their previous places of activities in Assam. They constituted as much as 18 per cent of the total migrants in the city, being the second largest.

Thus, political factors have apparently been the major ones causing in-migration, particularly from the adjoining country of East Pakistan, later turned into the independent state of Bangladesh, and from Assam taking place in the form of mass emigration. But it cannot be denied that the growing economic stature of Siliguri, gradually taking shape since independence, initiated first by the construction of the railways soon after independence taking a west-east route via Siliguri connecting Calcutta with the eastern states, opened up immense economic possibilities. The tremendous growth of Siliguri from a mere class IV town in

1941 with a population of 10,487 heads and registering an increase of 209.72 per cent in one decade alone between 1941 and 1951 when urban population for West Bengal as a whole increased by only 32.58 per cent (1961). Between 1951 and 1991, the population of Siliguri rose from a mere 10,487 to 216,950 (1991), which meant an increase of 1015.19 per cent over a period of four decades against 197.68 per cent in the urban population of West Bengal as a whole.

In other words, during this period the urban population of West Bengal increased by hardly 3 times while in Siliguri the increase was over 20 times which cannot be accounted for without in-migration and that also more in the form of massive than slow infiltration.

It was also possible to identify people through field investigation, those who had migrated into the city in the years between the periods of mass immigration. On these occasions as well the Bengalis dominated in number, comprising nearly half(48%) of the total(Table 6.4). Among the communities, Biharis, Muslims and Marwaris represented a significant portion, with 18 per cent, 15 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

In contrast, the Tribals and Others seem to have had been unaffected by such political disturbances and have come from time to time whenever the situation demanded which might have been economic in most of the cases.

It can thus be concluded that the present social composition of the urban population of Siliguri is largely influenced by in-migration resulting from political disturbances elsewhere no doubt, but its growing economic importance due to unique geographical location had been at the root of its phenomenal growth as well as its striking community-mix.

5. Community's link with its state of origin.

(a) It may be observed that almost all the people (99%) coming from different states of India has a link with his own state, which means that in spite of settling down permanently in many cases, the person has not severed his connection with home state where he maintains the ancestral home though the family has migrated long ago.

(b) But more than 40 per cent of the Bengalis coming from Bangladesh have no link with their own state which primarily is due to political reasons involving the question of nationality.

6. Community-wise difference in education among the children

In considering the educational level of children those minors below school going-age and those illiterates have been excluded to obtain a clear picture of community-wise position (Table 6.6).

Table 6.5

The Educational Level of Children (Community-wise) in Siliguri city (in %).

| | Beng | Mus | Bih | Mar | Nep | Trib | Oth | Total |
|--------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|
| (i) School Level | 35 | 75 | 64 | 53 | 59 | 70 | 00 | -- |
| (ii) Beyond School Level | 65 | 25 | 36 | 47 | 41 | 30 | 00 | -- |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | -- | -- |

[Source: Field Survey].

- Note: (i) School Level - upto matriculation/ class X
and beyond school level - From class XI - onwards.
- (ii) In computing %, children not going to school because of minor age and those who are illiterate, have been excluded.
- (iii) "Others" in the column of social group - negligible.

Here, the Bengali Community appears to be more advanced with 75 out of 100 children from these families taking higher education followed by the Marwari community with 47 out of a total of 100. The Nepali Community takes the next place with 41 in higher education and the Biharis come next with 36. The Tribals have 30 in higher education but the Muslims lag behind with only 25. It may be one of the most important indicators for the cultural level of the different communities indicating further future possibilities of the children of those communities in the social life of the urbanites.

7. People owning Living Accommodation.

People making a permanent home would always like to build a house of his own as long as his financial capability permits it. In Siliguri

city, among 100 people of Bengali origin, 73 have built their own house. Next to them are the Marwaris 69 out of 100 having own houses built in the city followed by the Biharis with 59 having own houses while 49 out of 100 Nepalis have built houses for residence. The number falls with the Tribals 41 having own houses and it is the lowest with the Muslims, 32 of them having built a permanent residence (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6

Percentage of people having own houses and percentage of people not having own houses.

| | Beng | Mus | Bih | Mar | Nep | Trib | Oth | Total |
|--|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|
| (i) % of people owning houses | 73 | 32 | 59 | 69 | 49 | 41 | 00 | -- |
| (ii) % of people not having own house. | 27 | 68 | 41 | 31 | 51 | 59 | 00 | -- |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | -- | -- |

[Source: Field Survey]

While it is quite natural for the Bengalis to build a house of their own it is far from that with the people of other communities under normal circumstances which is one of the reasons for many of them residing in rented houses. But, even then the percentage appears rather high for the Marwaris, Biharis and Nepalis and Tribals to have more than 50 or little less than that out of each 100 residents having their own houses built for the purpose of living in them. This proves to be another indication of economic as well as social stability provided by the city for different communities.

8. Year of Migration and making own houses

In this connection it may be interesting to look into the approximate dates of building own houses by different communities. The information gathered through questionnaire gives revealing facts in this regard (Table 6.8). For instance, among the Bengalis having arrived in the city before 1947, 60 per cent built their own houses by 1936 to 37; among the Marwaris, 70 per cent completed it by 1941-42 followed by the Biharis 61 per cent having done so by 1939-40; 50 per cent Muslim doing that by 1961-62; 50 per cent Nepalis by 1971-72 and 50 per cent Tribals by 1980-81.

Table 6.7

Relationship between year of Migration and making own houses.

Year of Migration | Probable Year of Making Own House (Major Trend) for Each Community with percentage shown within brackets.

| | Beng | Mus | Bih | Mar | Nep | Trib | Oth | Total |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----|-------|
| Before 1947 | 1936-37 (60%) | 1961-62 (50%) | 1939-40 (61%) | 1941-42 (70%) | 1971-72 (50%) | 1980-81 (50%) | -- | -- |
| 1947 to 1951 | 1955-56 (49%) | 1962-63 (50%) | 1959-60 (50%) | 1951-52 (78%) | 1972-73 (56%) | 1981-82 (53%) | -- | -- |
| 1961 to 1964 | 1965-66 (60%) | 1968-69 (50%) | 1968-69 (50%) | 1961-64 (71%) | 1973-74 (50%) | 1981-83 (50%) | -- | -- |
| 1971 to 1975 | 1975-77 (70%) | 1975-76 (59%) | 1971-72 (60%) | 1971-72 (80%) | 1975-76 (50%) | 1983-84 (51%) | -- | -- |
| 1981 to 1988 | 1987-88 (80%) | 1981-82 (60%) | 1986-87 (70%) | 1981-83 (90%) | 1989-90 (60%) | 1989-91 (60%) | -- | -- |

[Source: Field Survey.]

The important fact that emerges from these dates and percentages of the people of different communities involved in the process is that the Bengalis were the first(1936-37) to initiate the process followed by the Biharis (1939-40), the Marwaris (1941-42), the Muslims (1961-62) and others much later.

Among the migrants coming during the later periods, the Marwaris arriving between 1947 and 1951 took the lead in building own houses, 78 per cent of them completing that as early as 1951-52, followed by the Bengalis with 49 per cent between 1955 and 1956; the Biharis with 50 per cent between 1959 and 1960; and 50 per cent Muslims between 1962-63. Both the Nepalis and the Tribals seem to have taken a much later initiative in this direction.

The fact implies that the Marwaris have been more prompt than other communities in building houses for own use which is true for the other periods as well (Table 6.8) when the Bengalis have been the second and third in succession in this effort.

The primary reason for this, as impression gathered from field survey is the financial capability which has never been a handicap with the Marwaris but not with the Bengalis.

9. Changes in Occupation

Family occupation means Occupation of the family held through time and also some one of one's family holding the family occupation at the state of origin. Information on present occupation, previous occupation

(i.e. occupation held just before migration) and family occupation for each community have been gathered through the field survey. Previous occupation means occupation held by the person just before coming into the city.

In case of the Bengali community no family occupation could be traced. Major changes in occupation is noticed in the field of service or office job which happens to be a new introduction after migration.

In case of the Muslim community, the major family occupation is found to be selling meat and footwear. No major change is observed between previous and present occupation.

On the other hand, occupational changes have been observed in the case of the Biharis, turning from milkman to business of utensils and or something else. Another change is observed in present occupation is the introduction of service or office job. Among the Marwari community, business in different items seems to have remained as the major occupation without any change all through the period.

In case of the Nepalis, the major occupational change may be considered as turning from tea garden worker to other occupations, like shop keeper, motor driving etc. Similar instances are also observed in the case of the Tribal community where the major change is noticed to be the introduction of service or office jobs (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8

**Present Occupation, Previous Occupation (before Migration)
and family Occupation community-wise (in %)**

| | Present Occupation | Previous Occupation | Family Occupation |
|-------|---|--|--|
| Beng- | Service-10, Hotel-20, Contract/Supplier-28, Grocery-18, Cloth-4, Furniture-10, Tea-8, Others-2. | Grocery-25, Hotel-20, Cloth shop-20, Vegetable-18, Others-17 | --- |
| Mus- | Meat and Fish-29, Pan/Zarda-15, Hotel-9, Footwear-29, Rikshaw and Vanpullar-12, Others- 6. | Meat-60, Hotel-15, Others- 25. | Meat- 62, Footwear- 30, 18 did not respond. |
| Bih- | Vegetable (Potato and Onion)-15, Vegetable- (Others)-18, Rice-8, Service-8, Grocery-10, Milk-24, Utensil- 10, Rikshaw and Vanpuller-5, Others- 2. | Vegetable-36, Labour in different category- 31, Milk- 33. | Milk- 39, Vegetable- 20, 41 did not respond. |
| Mar- | Electrical/ Electronics-21, Medicine-11, Rice-10, Hardware-20, Tea- 12, Grocery-10, Cloth-12, Others- 4. | Cloth-25, Rice-31, Grocery-35, Others- 9. | Grocery -36, Rice- 35, 29 did not respond. |
| Nep- | Motor Driving and allied work- 41, Stationery-26, Furniture-19, Grocery-12, Others-2. | Tea garden worker-41, Grocery and Stationery- 39, Others-10, Labour-10. | Tea garden worker-57, Grocery and Stationery-43, |
| Trib- | Service-56, Contract/ Supply-32%, Others-12. | Tea garden worker-51%, Other worker-49%. (Agricultural labour and other labour). | Tea garden worker- 59, 41 did not respond. |

* Others- Negligible in %

[Source: Field Survey]

10. Relationship of Different Communities with Social organisations.

Six major types of social organisations have been found in the city of Siliguri. As ascertained from field investigation, the people of the city are associated with the following six types of social and religious organisations.

- (A) Religious: Here Religious means temple, mosque, church etc.
- (B) Academic: Academic organisations are associated with free coaching camp for poor students, literacy programmes, library activity (not with government aid).
- (C) Community/Social Organisations: These are set up by different castes but they have some kind of social activities: eg. (i) Terapanth Yuva Parishad, (ii) Marwari Yuva Manch (iii) Marwari Sewa Trust, (iv) Jaiswal Biahyut Sewa Trust (v) Madhyo Desio Baishya Sewa Trust, etc.
- (D) Sports and Games : Umpires' and Referees' Association, Siliguri Veterans' Club Association etc. And different clubs associated with games and sports etc.
- (E) Welfare Organisations : eg. Siliguri Welfare Organisation, Siliguri Lions Club etc. (Table 6.90).

The major idea in the investigation on this particular aspect was to find out the patronage given by different communities to various social (group) organisations of the city offering specific services to the city and its surrounding's population. This has been brought out in the form of a Table (Table 6.90) in which taking 100 as total unit the

involvement of each community with different types of social organisations has been estimated. For instance, according to this for the Bengali community the involvement in cultural activities is the highest(39%) among all other involvements, such as religious, academic, social, games and sports and welfare. In sharp contrast to this, the religious involvement is top most with the Muslim community (70%) among all its social involvements. On the other hand, both the Bihari and the Marwari communities maintain a greater involvement in offering social service through community organisations established for the purpose of activities which have been discussed in detail in chapter - V . For the Biharis,it is 33 per cent and for the Marwaris, it is 31 per cent of the total social involvements and while relegious activities take an important part of the Bihari community (22%), the Marwaris take greater interest in other welfare activities (25%). It is interesting to observe that cultural activities take precedence(29%) over others for the Nepali community and for the Tribal Communities both cultural (21%) and community services (21%) take a leading role, closely followed by sports and Games (20%) (Table 6.9).

It needs to be pointed out that in a city like Siliguri the voluntary involvement of different communities taking keen interest in offering social services, specifically ranging from academic, medical to other types of welfare of the common people, goes a long way in bringing timely help and assistance to the needy ones in a situation where the relevant public bodies always suffer from a very poor financial position and lack of expertise.

Table 6.9

Connection with social organisation (in %).

| | Beng | Mus | Bih | Mar | Nep | Trib | Oth | Tot |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----|-----|
| (a) Religious | 08 | 70 | 21 | 16 | 09 | 17 | | |
| (b) Academic (free coaching camp, Literacy programmes, Library activity etc.) | 21 | 03 | 11 | 09 | 18 | 19 | | |
| (c) Cultural (Drama / Publicity of literature etc.) | 39 | 05 | 14 | 16 | 29 | 21 | | |
| (d) Community / Social services (According to caste) | 08 | 11 | 33 | 31 | 22 | 21 | | |
| (e) Sports and Games | 14 | 07 | 11 | 03 | 14 | 20 | | |
| (f) Welfare Organisation/ Social Organisation. | 10 | 04 | 10 | 25 | 08 | 02 | | |
| T O T A L - | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | | |

[Source: Field Survey]

11. Facilities available in the city

(a) Facilities available in Residential Houses.

Perhaps, no indicator is more important than sanitary condition as determined by the existence of brick-built(pucca) or temporary (Kachha) latrine or lavatory, domestic water facility including running water, electricity, sewerage facility etc. to determine the living condition of the urbanites.

In the city of Siliguri residential houses belonging to the Marwaris seem to have better in-built facilities in their residential houses than those built by other communities. As for instance, 92 per cent houses built by the Marwaris have brick-built (pucca) latrine or lavatory and 99 per cent of them are equipped with electricity and running water. Next to that the position is enjoyed by the Bengalis, 89 per cent of their houses having brick built(pucca) lavatory, 85 per cent having running water and 84 per cent equipped with electricity. In comparison, houses belonging to other communities lag behind.

Table 6.10

Facilities in Residential Houses in Siliguri (in %).

| | BENG | MUS | BIH | MAR | NEP | TRIB | OTH | TOT. |
|--|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
| (A) Sanitation | 89 | 69 | 71 | 92 | 79 | 80 | -- | -- |
| (i) Brick-built Pucca latrine or Lavatory. | | | | | | | | |
| (ii)Temporary Latrine/well for domestic purpose. | 11 | 31 | 29 | 08 | 21 | 20 | -- | -- |
| Total - | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | -- | -- |
| (B) Electricity | 84 | 62 | 80 | 99 | 83 | 92 | | |
| (C) Running Water | 85 | 15 | 55 | 99 | 69 | 73 | | |

[Source: Field Survey .]

However, among them the Tribal houses seem to be better off than that of the other communities like the Nepalis, the Biharis or the Muslims. For example, 80 per cent of the Tribal houses have brick-built (pucca) lavatory, 92 per cent of the houses have electricity and 69 per cent have running water. Among the Biharis, 71 per cent houses have lavatory, 80 per cent have electricity but only 55 per cent have running water facility. All these facilities are comparatively less in Muslim houses, 69 per cent of which have brick-built (pucca) lavatory, 62 per cent provided with electricity and only 15 per cent enjoy the facility of running water.

These three principal indicators make a vivid portrayal of the actual present state of the urban living conditions in the city.

Turning our attention from a community - wise investigation in regard to certain socio-economic factors, we may now look into a number of other facilities available in the city affecting urban life most of the information on which is gathered from house-to-house investigation.

(b) Transport and Communication:

Most of the people(over 90%) expressed their grievances during the period of survey regarding transport and communication. The city transport is based only on pedal rikshaw which is not available at the time of need such as in late evening hours or in the rains etc. The prevailing fare rates for rikshaw or any other kind of transport is very high as compared with other urban centres of the northern part of West Bengal. The number of rikshaws having licence under SMC (Siliguri Municipal

Corporation) is 5508 and some rikshaws have a common number allotted to them by the S.M.C. and the Panchayat. There are 1860 of such rikshaws.

Besides, quite a large number of the rikshaws coming daily from the adjoining areas beyond the civic jurisdiction of Siliguri operate in the city which is illegal. But there seems to be nobody to check this illegal operation.

Apart from rickshaws, there are 2000 licensed rickshaw vans operating in the city carrying goods. There are also some auto rickshaw services available in the city in different places, such as from the court to Champasari junction engaging about 100 auto rikshaws. Another part is from Bidhan Market to Salugarah where more than 100 auto rickshaws are plying daily. Some other kind of auto rickshaw services are available in the city which are mostly on contract basis, generally from NJP railway station to other places including Siliguri. Two other routes for auto rickshaw services available in Siliguri city would not be out of place to mention here: one is from Siliguri to Fuleswari/Bhaktinagar and the other is from Siliguri to Shivmandir a place very close to the Siliguri city. The number of auto rikshaws available on contract are nearly 200 to 250.

The bus service available in the city is very poor. There is one route which is rather popular between Champasari and NJP and another route also exists between Champasari and Rabindra Angan(near the Court). But the frequency of the said services is very unpredictable.

(c) Residential Accommodation

Most of the people (over 95%) expressed their opinion that facilities available in rented houses is very poor. They have to use the lavatory or toilet outside the residences and they are also deprived of the facilities of running water and often electricity.

The rent of the house in the city generally is very high though the government has declared Siliguri as a 'C' class city. Some instances of rent for different kind of houses are given below (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11

Rent structure at Deshbandhupara : Siliguri.

| 1 Room Flat on ground floor | | and 1 Room Flat on 1st floor. |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| (i) | 1000/- * (per month) | 1200/- (per month) |
| (ii) | 1100/- * " | 1100/- " |
| (iii) | 900/- " | --- |
| (iv) | 1200/- " | --- |
| (v) | 1000/- " | --- |

* with running water.

[Source: Field Survey]

In case of two-room flats on ground floor, the rent varies from Rs. 1600 to 2000/- p.m. and for three room flats the rent varies from Rs. 2000 to 3000/- p.m.

In case of non-availability of running water the rent differs from that of the houses where the running water is available. But the difference in such cases varies between Rs.200 and 300 only.

In other places near the CBD area of the city, the rent is much higher than that of Deshbandhupara.

(d) **Health Services**

Medical facilities available in the city is far from satisfactory. Almost 90 per cent of people interviewed made strong grievances about the services of the existing medical centres. There is only one Sub-Divisional hospital in the city, but services available from the hospital is of very poor quality. An idea may be made from Table 6.12, about the existing facilities which are not to be trifled but in actual fact the maintenance being almost non-existent, these facilities do not reach the patients properly. The medical college and hospital is situated 10 Km away from the city, named, 'North Bengal Medical College and Hospital' having a wide range of facilities in the field of surgery, medicine and cardiology. But here also similar conditions prevail in the absence of proper administration. However, at present some private Nursing Homes at Siliguri are making utmost efforts for improving medical services. Nearly 50 per cent of the interviewers were of opinion that the facilities available at these private Nursing Homes and Clinics are of much better quality, no doubt, but they are highly expensive for the common people.

Table 6.12

Medical Facilities at Siliguri : Sub- Divisional Hospital

| Type and Name of Facility | Quantity |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Ward | 6 |
| a) Surgical- Male | |
| - Female | |
| b) Pediatric | |
| c) Labour Ward (Gynaecology) | |
| d) Down Ward (Infectious Diseases) | |
| e) Upper Female Ward | |
| f) Male Medical Ward | |
| 2. Specialists | 33 (Sanctioned Posts) |
| a) Medicine | 2 } |
| b) Orthopedic | 1 } |
| c) General Surgery | 2 } |
| d) ENT | 2 } |
| e) Eye | 1 } |
| f) Gynaecology | 2 } |
| g) Pathology | 1 } |
| h) Radiology | 1 } |
| i) Skin & VD (STD) | 1 } |
| j) Pediatric | 1 } |
| k) Dental | 1 } |
| 3) Chest clinic | 1 |
| Doctors | 3 |
| Auxiliary Staff | 6 |
| Group 'D' Staff | 3 |
| 4) Homeopathic clinic | 1 |
| Doctor | 1 |
| Pharmacist | 1 |
| 5) Family Planning Unit | 1 |
| Doctors | 7 |
| 6) Staff Pattern (Total)- | 34 |
| (including Administrative Staff, other auxiliary staff, para-medical staff, X-Ray Technicians, Laboratory Technicians etc.) | |
| Nursing Staff | 82 |
| Group 'D' Staff | 154. |

[Source: Accountant.
Sub-Divisional Hospital,
Siliguri.]

(e) Recreational Facilities:

Opinion in this regard differs widely with different communities which, in the opinion of the author, is not solely guided by what is available in the city but also on the attitude as well as cultural level of the community. Besides, as is understood by the author, many of them did not speak out frankly at the time of interview, the reasons for which are not very clear.

In any case, it appears that the Bengali community seems to be rather frank about it. Almost 40 per cent of them considered facilities in this regard are adequate while another 40 per cent held a different opinion. According to the latter facilities for drama, theatre and good films are not adequate. The remaining 20 per cent want scope for other types of recreational facilities like parks, institutions for games and sports to be considerably improved.

On the other hand, 50 per cent of the Bihari interviewees found the facilities adequate while 4 per cent felt the lack of literary materials available through Hindi Journals and papers is discouraging. Besides, they also miss opportunities for watching Hindi drama etc. In contrast, for 90 per cent of the Nepali community the facilities are adequate but 10 per cent wanted larger scope of watching Nepali and English films. However, the remaining communities find the facilities quite adequate.

(f) Educational Facilities:

Opinion elicited through the questionnaire on educational facilities available in the city similarly differs widely. For instances, 80 per cent of the Bengalis think that facilities are adequate whereas 20 per cent want more academic institutes, naturally, of better quality so that their children do not face tremendous competition in finding a berth in a good school (college as well) and the parents do not have to spend huge amounts in the name of investment fees at the time of admission. The Marwaris came out more strongly about it and 50 per cent of them felt the lack of good quality English-medium schools in the city. Almost 90 per cent of the people belonging to the Bihari community complained about the lack of adequate number of Hindi-medium schools. On the other hand, communities like the Muslims, the Nepalis and the Tribals expressed satisfaction in this regard which does not appear to be very frank.

(g) Price of Land:

As gathered from the people interviewed, the average price of land within the city has made a big jump from a mere Rs.400/- per katha (the popular unit) or 720 sq.ft. in 1960-65 to Rs.80,000 - Rs. 90,000.00 per katha in 1995 - till date. The 225-fold increase within a period of barely four decades is very striking, no doubt, and one is not surprised if it is mentioned that the actual market price is three to four times more than what is stated officially. All this is possible in a city which

is fast growing as exemplified in the inclusion of 17 more wards in 1994. The natural urban sprawl is taking place in the peripheral areas following the major roads where major land use is residential. But lack of living amenities in these areas make life more uncomfortable than elsewhere.

Table 6.13

Land Price in Siliguri City (per Katha or 720 sq.ft.)

| YEAR | Average Land Price (in Rupees) |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1960-65 | 400=00 |
| 1965-70 | 1000=00 |
| 1970-75 | 2000=00 |
| 1975-80 | 7000 - 8000=00 |
| 1980-85 | 15,000 - 20,000=00 |
| 1985-90 | 30,000 - 45,000=00 |
| 1990-95 | 60,000 - 70,000=00 |
| 1995-till date | 85,000 - 90,000=00 |

[Source:Field Survey]

Some General Observations

The primary intention of the field survey was to have a personal experience through direct contact with the urban residents of the city.

The information thus gathered focuses on the social status of the city highlighting the brighter as well as the darker sides of different communities constituting the population of the city.

As for instance, it is interesting to observe that almost half of the city population belongs to the age group 50-60 years and barring 19 per cent, nearly 81 per cent is in the age group below 60 years. Thus, one can consider the people in general as quite young, hence vibrant.

Regarding family-size, the Bengalis as the dominant community in terms of absolute number- as mentioned earlier- have a smaller family-size than other communities. About 56 per cent of the Bengali families are parent plus two - children families which is a good sign in many respects. In comparison, the Muslim community remains at the bottom with the largest-size families.

With 64 per cent of the total residents born in the city, the Bengalis have a greater claim as sons of the soil which is as low as 8 per cent for the Marwaris and 4 per cent for the Muslims, indicating the extent of in-migration for different communities.

However, the overall picture of migration reveals many interesting aspects throwing light on the growth of the city. Among the immigrants, again, the Bengalis predominate. Anyway, different communities having been pushed out of the neighbouring states or countries by political upheavals came to settle down in the city and have thus swelled its population by 20 times between 1951 and 1991, giving it a striking

community-mix. Nevertheless, it is very important to note that majority of the non-Bengali migrants in this city have maintained link with their ancestral homes in their state of origin in India.

On the other hand, the idea obtained from interviews about some of the socio - cultural parameters is far from encouraging, giving an impression that urban life in Siliguri is not adequately comfortable. For instance, it needs to be noted that from the educational point of view the Bengali community enjoys a better position with 75 per cent of its population having education while it goes down to 25 per cent in the case of the Muslims.

If economic and social stability is indicated by permanent living accommodation, the Bengalis enjoy a slight edge over the other communities in this regard though it is again very significant to notice that the Bengalis took a lead in building their own residence till partition after which the Marwaris came to lead. Regarding in-built facilities, it is again much better in the Marwari houses than in Bengali houses or those of other communities.

As for different cultural and social activities, there is wide variance in involvement between different communities, indicating the nature of interest.

Urban life is not very easy either in terms of local transport which is very poor, high house rent, excessively high land price, inadequate recreational facilities etc.

Conclusion

Recorded, for the first time in 1881 as a small settlement (rather a village) and mentioned again (1901) as a small railway station with a population of barely 500 heads, Siliguri has just completed its first century of existence, the said village having now developed into a city with a spectacular increase in its population touching almost 0.5 million, to be up graded from a 'C' grade to a 'B' grade city, as decided by the Government. Siliguri was declared as a town for the first time in 1931, and since then the growth rate of population has been very rapid and recorded the highest in 1951 for all time when the decadal variation was 209.72 per cent as recorded in 1951 census, for the period 1941 and 1951. The growth rate, however declined in the following decades, remaining lowest in 1991 with 39.51 per cent.

According to a news agency (Bartaman, Siliguri city, edition, 27 July 2000), the major part of this increase is taking place in the peripheral areas of the city and more recently in the newly annexed 17 wards which increased the total area of Siliguri city from about 14 sq. km to 42 sq.km in 1994. According to this report while the population has increased hardly by 2 per cent to 3 per cent in certain wards, like ward XXII and XXIII of the Siliguri city - proper (consisting of I - XXX wards) in the last 10 years, it has been about 200 per cent in some of the newly annexed wards, such as ward XLVI and XLVII.

During the course of my study of this city I have come to the conclusion that it is very much rather, an 'Indian' city, than a 'Bengali' city which is truly reflected in its population composition where the Bengalis as the earlier inhabitants comprising 64.25 per cent of the total urban population are slowly giving way to the pressure of other communities, gradually increasing in overall numbers as well as in different life-supporting and life-enriching activities carried out in this city. Besides, the nature of concentration as witnessed by me shows that some sort of segregation is already in the process of developing where people of a particular community prefer residing in a particular area chosen earlier by its own community. This has been elaborately discussed in chapter II of the Thesis. As for example, the Muslim-dominated areas are ward No. IV to VIII and the trend shows that the Muslims are in favour of living in these wards only.

Side by side the Marwari community is found to be concentrated in ward nos. VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII. In the first 30 wards under the Siliguri Municipal Corporation, it is found that the Bengali Community comprises around 65 per cent of the total residents which clearly shows the dominance of the Bengali-speaking people. But in the remaining 17 wards under the Siliguri Municipal Corporation the proportion of Bengali population is less than the 30 wards representing the older part of the city.

Of the last seventeen wards annexed recently, the Bengali population in ward nos. XL1, XLII, XLIII and XLVI shows less than 50 per cent.

By the end of the year 2000 as it seems from the survey done by the author, considering all the factors, the percentage of Bengali population within the Siliguri Municipal Corporation area, that is the proper area of the city, is likely to come down to around 60 per cent or even less. The main reason for this lies in its unique geographical location, as discussed earlier. Acting as the principal transport point for traffic originating in the northern hill areas and the north-eastern states or going in reverse direction, its role is becoming more and more important with further development in those areas and states which is clearly witnessed in its growing and ever-expanding activities in the field of trade and commerce. This particular role of Siliguri as the major link between the hills and the north-eastern states on the one hand and the rest of the country on the other has boosted its attraction for people outside the region and many of them taking a direct part in these activities find it natural for making the city their 'home'—either on a temporary or permanent basis which is at the root of changing the proportion of non-Bengali residents in the city-proper.

The fact that people belonging to different communities hailing from distant areas having settling down in the city over a considerable period further strengthens the view that the greater affluence of the city, as clearly evidenced in its fast growing large—quite massive at many instances—commercial as well as residential complexes, phenomenal increase in land price over a few decades(chapter VI), the spatial urban expansion along the major arteries like the Sevoke Road, the National Highway and the Burdwan Road etc. have acted as a strong 'pull'.

As discussed earlier (chapter II and VI), people migrating from Assam, Burma or even the adjoining economically backward states like Bihar or Sikkim seem to have been tempted by the prospective situation related to these trade and commercial and transport activities in this city which has so far been a very strong reason for them for preferring it to any other urban centre in the whole of the region north of river Ganga as a place for finding a dependable livelihood. The presence of people belonging to their own communities and settled down in this city prior to the arrival of the later migrants naturally had been an added factor for encouraging in-migration into the city. This has been the main reason behind the changing character of the composition of the city - population, with a direct bearing on its sociological behavior. The sociological transformation brings out its deep impact on different spheres of urban life, making it more and more different from all other urban centres of North Bengal.

As has been observed earlier, the business activity is still dominated by the Bengali community and as stated in chapter III, the Marwaris are also a leading partner. They, i.e., the Marwaris mainly dominate in the business of electrical and electronic goods, hardware and cloth while the Bengali community has greater interest in businesses like hotel, contract/supply and grocery. Some other businesses like making of furniture and medicine which were once upon a time dominated by the Bengalis are now fast changing hands and gradually the Marwari Community is exercising a greater control on them. While discussing about the economic domination of different communities some facts have

to be stated regarding the concentration of the Nepali and the Bihari communities. For example the concentration of the Nepalis in ward nos.I, II, III, XI, XL, XLI, XLII, XLIII, XLV and XLVI are noticeable and that of the Biharis in ward nos.I, II, III, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XLI, XLII, XLIII is remarkable while ward no.V has the highest concentration of the Biharis(65.40%). As regards the economic activity, the Biharis have advanced a lot in this regard and ward nos V and VII are a living example of their domination in this sphere. Other than the above mentioned wards they are also dominating in economic activity in ward nos. I,II,III,IX and XXVII. The business which the Marwari community are mostly engaged in are situated in ward nos. VIII,IX,X,XI although they have a dominance in ward nos. IV,VI,VII,XI,XXV and XXVIII as well. The Bihari community in Siliguri prefers mostly the business in medicine, electrical goods, stationery, rice and also tea. Other than the mentioned ones it was found by the author that all the work under Government contracts like the maintenance of roads, the construction of dams and bridges are being taken over mostly by the Marwari community which was earlier dominated by the Bengali community.

Although still now the overall domination in the business world is enjoyed by the Bengalics, the developing trend indicates an unavoidable change in this sphere taking place in a couple of years or so when the overall control on business activities, which means trade and commerce, will slip away from the hands of the Bengalics into the hands of the non-Bengali communities, represented largely by the Marwaris.

In the sphere of religion and language, noticeable changes are observed. In spite of the fact that religion-wise, the Hindus formed the

largest section of the urban residents of this city both in 1981 and 1991 with 94.58 per cent and 93.08 per cent respectively for the two censal years, there is sufficient indication that however slight the fall in the percentage of Hindu population in this city can not be ignored. In contrast, the Muslim and the Buddhist population of the city has increased in the city during the same period as is reflected in the figures available for 1981 and 1991 census (3.96% and 5.42% in respect of the Muslim and 0.48% and 0.51% in respect of the Buddhist). The field survey undertaken by the author also gives the impression that the percentage of the non-Hindu population in the city is on the rise.

In the field of languages as per 1981 Census, Bengali is the leading one (70.80%) followed by Hindi (22.99%) and Nepali (4.61%). The field survey undertaken by the author shows that the percentage of Hindi and Nepali is on the rise resulting in the fall of the number of people speaking Bengali language. Although the data for 1991 census on language is not available, the field survey done in this respect indicates that in a few years the percentage of people speaking Bengali language and those speaking non-Bengali languages is likely to be in the ratio of 50:50.

There are as many as 50 establishments engaged in social, cultural and religious services and the Marwari community, in fact, runs the majority of them involved in various types of social and welfare activities followed by the Bengali community. For instance, holding of free eye operation camps, arrangement for artificial limbs fittings etc. are done by organisations like the Lions club, the Marwari Yuva Manch,

in which the Marwari community takes a leading role. On the other hand, the Siliguri Welfare Organisation which is mostly controlled by the Bengalis, provides a large number of facilities in medical care involving people belonging to the poor and down-trodden sections of the society. These organisations also offer services at the time of severe floods, fire or similar natural calamities.

It is, however, the Christian community which seems to be the most devoted one in this respect, providing help to the destitutes and notable among the establishments run for such purposes is the 'Jesu Ashram' where one can get his or her treatment in a homely atmosphere with a motherly care. The Christian community mainly deals with leprosy and mother and child care. Hindu institutions like the 'Bharat Sebashram Sangha' which has its branches all over the country and abroad, and the 'Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram' at Sahudangi are also taking an important role in helping the poor and the needy.

In the field of culture and sports the Bengali community is the leading one and the only community which has considerable activities in this arena though the facilities are made available to the willing participants of the other communities as well. Another community to have these types of activities, though on a small scale, is the Nepali community which promotes mainly cultural activities.

In this connection it is worthwhile to mention that Siliguri has produced national-level players for indoor games like Table-Tennis for a number of years for which the entire credit may be claimed by the clubs

patronised by the Bengali community alone.

A very important insight one obtains from the investigation of the activities of these organisations is that the majority of them have a clearly defined purpose which is - social welfare. In a country like ours where a considerable section of the population living below the 'poverty line' can not often afford two meals a day for his family, treatment, education, an artificial limb or such other aids are far beyond their extremely limited means. Further, when nature strikes in the form of severe floods, earthquakes or landslides in the neighbouring areas, people dislodged rush to the nearly urban centres for help. All these organisations, housed in the city do not hesitate in coming to the aid of these people in dire need. Thus, although situated in the city, their activities never remain confined to the city-population, but spread out far beyond. Second, whether it is a social, or cultural or a religious organisation, most of them consider social welfare services as their primary aim and responsibility. Third, and perhaps, very enlightening is that in offering services religion, caste or belief are ignored. The services cut across all barriers except poverty and need. Hence, these organisations have a deep impact on the society as a whole.

Although Siliguri has made visible progress in many ways, the author, during his field investigation, has felt that there are three acute problems making life in the city difficult and these are transport, medical services and recreational facilities.

For instance, cycle-rickshaws (Numbering 7368) form the only transport available for the people in the city for internal movement and that too is insufficient in number, causing a serious problem at times of need. It may be mentioned here that for a city covering 42 sq.km. in its areal spread, a cycle-rickshaw is far from an adequate means of transport over long distances, especially when people move with their families carrying considerable amount of luggage to the railway stations - the major one lying beyond city-boundary-or bus-terminus for long-distance travels. Besides distance, time and money involved in such movements make them prohibitive. On the other hand, most of the roads in the city are not wide enough and in the absence of proper rules for parking and traffic control in the major part of the city, the rickshaws create traffic jams frequent occurrence of which causes immense difficulty specially for office-goers and school-children. There are a few auto rikshaws plying in and around the heart of the city but people living in the out-skirts have got no access to them. Bus plying on only two different routes plays a negligible role in internal movement. To improve the transport facilities of this city, the Government has to take initiative to introduce more and more city buses and auto-rikshaws in the city. Further, for rikshaws and cyclists separate passages have to be made on the main roads for avoiding unnecessary jam, and accidents the latter being a very frequent affair in this highly crowded city.

There is only a Sub-Divisional-hospital available in Siliguri which has to bear the entire pressure of about five lakh people of the city. Although there are some private Nursing Homes in the city, they do

not have the facilities of treatment for all kind of diseases, and whatever facilities are available there, they are too costly to be afforded by the common people. There is of course a Medical College and Hospital in the out-skirts of Siliguri but it being the only Medical College in the whole of North Bengal, has to bear the pressure of patients flocking from the six districts of North Bengal.

As such recreational facilities available for the people of Siliguri are not at all satisfactory. Although Siliguri has produced a large number of players for different games the facilities appear to be very limited. Kanchanjangha stadium is the only one of its type which is capable of holding some games of National stature but very few events of sports are allowed to be held here. An indoor stadium coming up at Deshbandhu Para may partly fulfil the aspirations of the sports lovers in particular in future, provided its construction does not take long.

Thus, cinema becomes the only means of recreation available for the people of this city who otherwise forced to stay indoor glued to their television sets which has become the only mode of indoor recreation. The scope and extent of other avenues of recreation in the form of staging plays etc also appear to be quite limited in spite of the fact that achievements of local people in this respect is quite praiseworthy. The existing clubs entirely privately owned and managed, have proved their worth time and again earning recognition, even at times at the national level. This is proved further in the establishment of the public theatre by the local Government.

Parks and other recreational options have yet to be opened so that there are more green and open space absolutely lacking at the moment, which are always considered the most important environmental elements keeping the health of the city unimpaired.

Though Siliguri is being provided with running water supply by the Siliguri Municipal Corporation and the roads are being widened, the rail-gate at Mahabirsthhan is a major handicap creating lots of traffic jam which can only be solved by the construction of a flyover adding, perhaps, a glamorous look to the city.

To sum up, one cannot ignore the overall significance of the geographical factor that the location of Siliguri guarding the entry and exit from the northern hill areas and the north-eastern states defined its emergence as the largest urban centre in the entire region of North Bengal, gaining fast its present position soon after the link was established between the northern and north-eastern regions and the rest of the country.

Particular location again, has a decisive role in determining the major functions of this city which are, by and large, trade and commerce followed by transport and supplementary activities. The very nature of activities on the other hand have been instrumental in attracting people from outside taking a direct hand in them. Even, as discussed earlier, people migrating from other places since Independence (mid- August 1947) have chosen this urban centre for settling down as permanent residents largely guided by the scope it offered in the expanding area of

activities related to trade-commerce and transport which however competitive, kept the opportunities open unlike it is in the case of the 'Service' (office employment) sector which happens to be a very important employer in the urban places of India.

The economic development and improvement in surface transportation with the construction of more and more traffic-worthy roads, bridges spanning the turbulent rivers, and railways providing direct links, especially with the north-east since Independence naturally eased and largely increased the movement of merchandise, the latter having greatly multiplied in amount in the meanwhile. These, along with passengers making their way in any direction, had to go via Siliguri city which had a tremendous effect on widening the scope of activities related to trade-commerce-transport and in the allied fields as is witnessed today not only in the nature and volume of merchandise handled in the city rapidly increasing the number of commercial establishments but also in the emergence of a large number of transport agencies with national permits, maintaining a large fleet of trucks and the proliferation in the number of nationalised as well as private banks within a few decades, some of them like the State Bank of India etc, having their zonal headquarters in Siliguri and the Life Insurance Corporation of India which maintains its Divisional office in Siliguri. Besides, the city makes a major transit point for road traffic and its importance may be realised from the fact that recently a 'Transport City' providing parking and other facilities and to ease traffic congestion in the city has come up in the fringe area of the city.

The resulting community-mix along with various socio-cultural and socio-economic activities have given rise to some sort of a composite society with a growing degree of interdependence between different communities. The apparent segregation witnessed in some of the residential wards arises more from affluence or the lack of it than any other factor though it is true that people coming from outside and belonging to a non-Bengali community would very much prefer living close to its own community. Nevertheless, this has no jarring effect on social cohesion exhibited on many occasions of natural calamities.

Lastly, although the city is gradually losing its character as a 'Bengali city' and adopting more and more the national character of an 'Indian city', the mixture of its population with growing addition of non-Bengali residents as the trend shows, has a positive as well as decisive role- as the author feels and understands through his experience gathered in this work - in making the society more open, more practical, more diligent and as such making it more stable.

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ANNEXURE

Questionnaire for Field Survey.

1. Ward No:

2.i) Name: First Name: Surname:

ii) Father's Name :

iii) Age :

iv) Married : Yes

No.

v) Number of family members:

3.i) Nationality. Indian Foreign.

ii) If foreigner please mention the country :

iii) State of Origin (for Indians) :

iv) Year of Migration to Siliguri :

v) Did you migrate or did your father/grand father migrate ? :

vi) If so, did he come to Siliguri ? :

vii) Reasons for migration :

viii) What sort of relationship is maintained with the state of origin ?

4.i) Educational level of the Head of the family and his wife:

(a) (b)

ii) Educational level of the children.

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

5.i) Do you own a house in Siliguri ?

ii) If yes, when was it built ? Year...:

iii) What was the price of land at that time ?

iv) What is the present price of land in the ward ?

v) Do you have the following facilities :-

a) Electricity:- b) Running Water:-

vi) Do you have any more house elsewhere outside Siliguri ?

6.i) What is your occupation now ?

ii) What was your Occupation before you came to Siliguri ?

iii) What is the present occupation of your father if he is alive ?

.....

iv) What was his occupation when he was alive ?

v) If it is not a family occupation, when the change take place and why ?

.....

.....

vi) Do you find Siliguri a convenient place for your occupation ?

.....

vii) What are your other attractions for Siliguri ?
.....

viii) What your children intend to do in future regarding occupation ?
.....

.....

7.i) Do you have any relatives in Siliguri ?

ii) If yes, in which ward they live ?

iii) Please, name the places where most of your relatives live
.....

.....

iv) Are you connected with any social organisation in Siliguri ?

v) If yes, please name it and mention since when .

a).....

b).....

vi) Are you connected with any religious organisation in Siliguri ?

vii) If yes, please name it and mention since when.

(a)

(b)

viii) Do you take any active part in their activities ?

ix) If yes, please state in what form.....

.....

.....

x) Do you find the social atmosphere of Siliguri is all right for peaceful life ?

.....

.....

xi) If not, please mention the drawbacks.

.....

.....

8.i) Do you think facilities available in Siliguri are adequate for a familyman in terms of the following :

(a) Accommodation:(Land for house building/ in terms of price.)

: House rent

: Living facilities in rented houses(like water/electricity/drainage/kitchen/toilet etc.)

(b) Education

(c) Medical Services

(d) Occupation

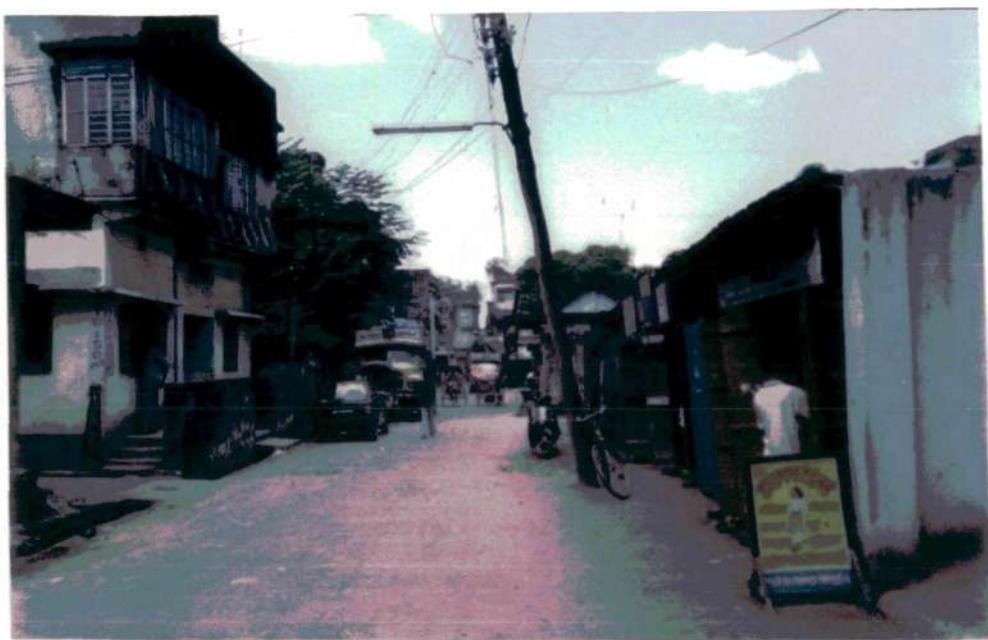
(e) Transport

(f) Sanitation

(g) Recreation.

-----X-----

Plate 1:



Locality dominated by Bihari Community

Plate 2:



Locality dominated by Marwari Community

Plate 3:



Locality dominated by Muslim Community

Plate 4:



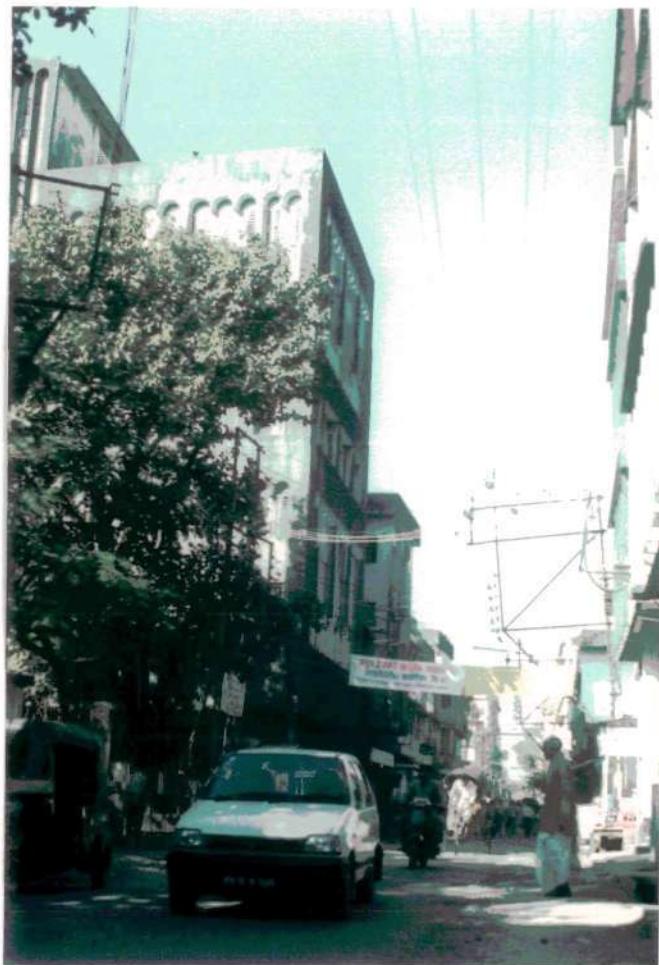
Locality dominated by Punjabi Community

Plate 5:



Locality dominated by Bengali Community

Plate 6:



Highrise buildings (Marwari Patti), Khalpara

Plate 7:



Traffic Snarl on Hill Cart Road (Near Hasmichawk)

Plate 8:



Traffic Snarl on Hill Cart Road (Near Sevoke Junction)

Plate 9:



Traffic Snarl on Hill Cart Road

Plate 10:



Traffic Snarl at Mahabirsthian (Near Railgate)

Plate 11:



Traffic Snarl on Sevoke Road.

Plate 12:



Anandamayee Kalibari (Temple), Kalibari Road.

Plate 13:



Church at Pradhan Nagar

Plate 14:



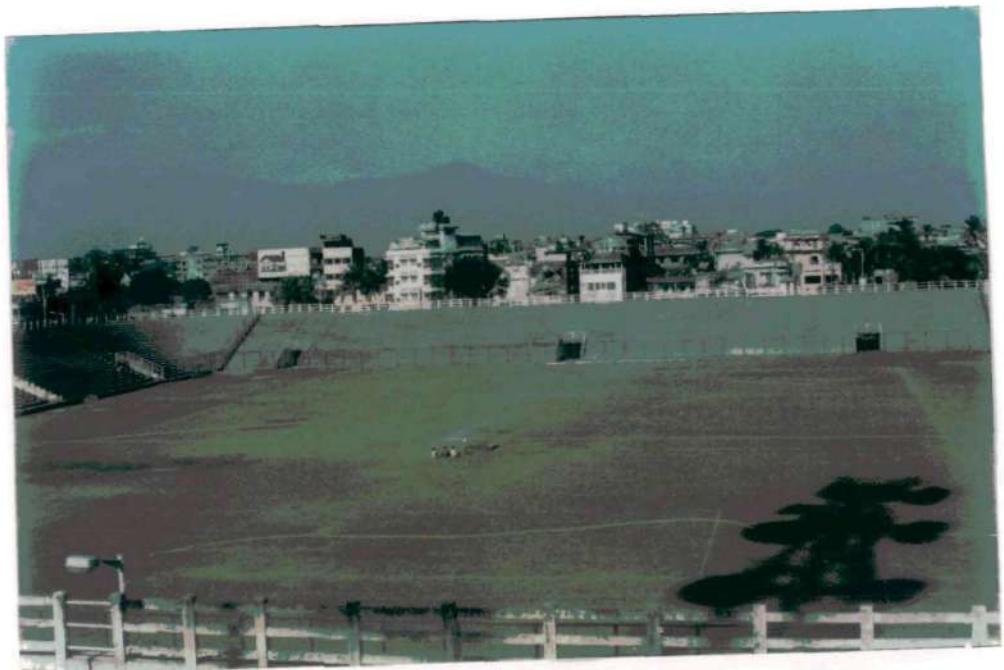
Mosque at Alupatty (Chota Masjid).

Plate 15:



Gurudwara at Sevoke Road.

Plate 16:



Kanchanjangha Krirangan (Stadium), Siliguri

Plate 17:



Dinabandhu Mancha, Siliguri

Plate 18:



Terapanth Bhawan, S.F.Road, Siliguri.

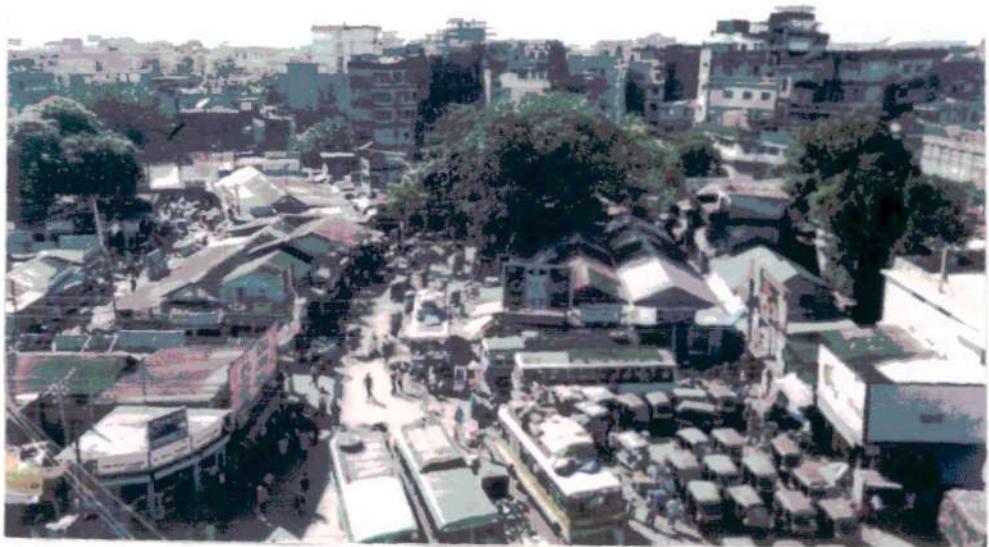
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Plate 20:



Dooars Bus Terminus- occupying a part of Bidhan Market and Bidhan Sarani.

Plate 21:



Old Market (Mahabirathan), Siliguri.

Plate 22:



Mahananda Bridge - a link between the city and its outskirts

Plate 23:



A view of a Slum.

Plate 24:



Slum- occupying a part of land of railways.