

CHAPTER VI

DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS IN THE TOWN AND THEIR ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The process of urbanisation in India, as in many other developing countries, was strongly stamped by its colonial history for the last about two centuries (Raza and Habeeb, 1976). A polarised urban system, in which a few primate cities took away a large proportion of urban population, evolved. The contrast between explosion of cities and stagnation of small towns was sharp, and India presented a peculiar situation of over urbanisation at low level of economic development.

Urbanisation and industrial development, so strongly married in the western world, were often divorced in India (Peach, 1970). The former moved at a faster pace than the latter resulting in direct shift from agriculture to service, as in other developing countries too (McGee, 1971). Tertiary sector expanded more than the secondary, a factor contributing to the prevailing unemployment in urban India. Another salient feature of the recent urbanisation in India was the enhanced role of the accelerating natural increase rate in growth of urban population.

The British introduced local self-government into India in recent times, though India does have an ancient history in this field. Developed on the British system of local government it has never gained the strength of a healthy town management system in India (Lahiri, 1984). The Indian municipal corporations and municipalities appear to be wrecked by numerous problems, including those of structure. The greatest drawback of the Indian City government is its limited power and resources. Much of its functions are related to conservancy, maintenance of existing services, billing and collection of specific taxes etc. The development work of the city is often conducted through the various departments of the State and Union Governments like the State Public Works, housing, health etc.

While the preparation of city master plan is done by the state or planning organisation the execution of the plan faces problems. The multiplicity of bodies involved in the city make

different bodies responsible for the execution of different parts of the plan. To overcome this problem, a number of cities now have Development Authorities constituted by legislation, giving them a wide range of power to co-ordinate and implement the city master plans.

6.1 PAST DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS

The Siliguri Planning Organisation (S.P.O.), presently the Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority (S.J.D.A.), set up in 1964 by the Government of West Bengal, conducted a land use survey of Kurseong town in 1977 and proposed a guideline for future development of the town and its neighbourhood. The planning area consisted of 24 sq. km, which included Kurseong municipal area and its adjoining areas, *viz.*, Giddapahar in the east, St. Mary's and Goethals in the north and Chaitapani and Dow Hill in the northeast. About 58 percent of the total planning area comprised of lush green forest and tea gardens. The Siliguri Planning Organisation developed a conceptual plan and future land use plan for Kurseong and its future development was to be guided within that framework.

6.1.1 Conceptual Plan

The basic concepts of the conceptual plan of the S.P.O. were:

- (i) The township shall be expanded into available areas or through acquisition of new areas, the desired direction of growth being perpendicular to the existing linear development and also by renewal and spot development of the existing areas;
- (ii) The central area of the town and the Hill Cart Road shall be decongested and instead of sprawl development, land use activity will be organised into different areas;
- (iii) The town ship shall be surrounded by 'Green Belt', where Forest lands and Tea Gardens and other aspects of natural beauty will be preserved;
- (iv) There will be adequate redistribution of land use activity and various community and capital improvement projects will be taken up for better functioning of transportation, to enhance tourism and institutional development; and
- (v) For protecting and enhancing the environment quality of the township no industrial activity other than service industries of cottage and household type will be permitted within the municipal limits of Kurseong town. Growth of industries will be promoted in Dilaram, Tung and Sepoy Dhura areas.

6.1.2 Future Land Use Plan of the S.P.O.

According to the conceptual plan for Kurseong town, it was sub-divided into various development areas on the basis of special characterisation and future zoning. These were (from south to north):

- (a) *Central Government Area*: The central government area lies on the southwestern part of the town. It has a large playground called the Chandmari Ground and the Constantia, Sub-divisional Officer's residence. The play field or the existing defence ground is suggested to be a major recreational area consisting of a small stadium, clubhouse, athletic centre etc. Adequate parking space will be provided slightly to the north of this area. The entire area is to be zoned as institutional public and semi-public uses.
- (b) *Tea Garden Development Area*: This area lies south-west of Castleton Tea Factory and west of the Pankhabari Road. The area slopes down towards the west from the road and is covered with tea bushes. This area has to be controlled. The Tea Research Centre has been proposed in this area and a small area on the western side in between the Tea Garden and the Central Government area is proposed to be developed as residential area specially for Government Quarters. The entire area is zoned as mixed area.
- (c) *State Government Complex*: It has the office of the SDO, the sub-divisional jail. There are some vacant lands available within the complex. At present State Government Offices are scattered. Many of these offices can be located in this complex. The area is zoned as public and semi-public with limited residential uses.
- (d) *Eagles Crag Development Area*: It lies south of the railway station and is known for its cliff just south of it. This area is a vantage point from where one can get a panoramic view of the plains. It is suggested that the area should be developed for residential uses, hotels and institutional development.
- (e) *Rajbari Area*: This is the second oldest residential area in the town. The Maharaja of Burdwan constructed his resting place here. This is already a developed area; some improvement of roads and residential uses will be permitted. Zoned as residential area.
- (f) *Spring Side Development Area*: This area lies west of the Bourdillion Road and north-east of the police station. The land slopes down towards the west from the road and is covered with tea bushes. This area will be a major new expansion for the town. The area will be developed for residential, commercial and transportation uses, hotels and some community facilities. Zoned as mixed-use development.

- (g) *Central Business District*: The Hill Cart Road and the railway line passes through this congested area. The Pankhabari Road meets the Hill Cart Road near the railway station. It is the most congested area of the town. There will be access control on the Hill Cart Road. The pressure on commercial area is to be reduced gradually. The urban renewal of the market will be taken up. Zoned as commercial area.
- (h) *Dhobi Khola Area*: This area lies on the eastern part of the town. This is a low-income area, which will require improvement. No major change is suggested. Zoned as residential area.
- (i) *College Area*: The College area once belonged to Hardeodas and Company and has been gifted by them to the College authorities. The area is a wooded area. This will be an institutional area where development will be controlled.
- (j) *Upper Town and Lower Town*: These are residential areas with some amount of commercial and institutional activities. There are some old buildings in this part of the town and most of the buildings are single storied. Environmental improvements are suggested. Commercial land use will be introduced.
- (k) *L.I.C. Development Area*: It lies east of the Bourdilion Road and is covered with tea bushes. Few encroachments had taken place. This area will be used mainly for the residential and institutional purpose.
- (l) *Railway Land*: The railway has vacant land in the northern part of the town, east of the railway track. The vacant land available in this area will be developed for an integrating and activity oriented centre for young age population of the town, including dormitory type residential facilities. The area is zoned as public and semi-public.
- (m) *School Complex*: This area lies in the northern part of the town and has schools such as St. Helen's, St. Alphonsus etc. The area will remain as such with some road improvements. Zoned as institutional area.
- (n) *Dumaram Busty Area*: This area was once a tea garden and is now deserted. Few encroachments have taken place. This area will be developed as a residential area with some roads and provisions of community facilities.
- (o) *Sanatorium Area*: No change in the set up.
- (p) *Tekbir Busty Area*: This area slopes down west of the Hill Cart Road, in the northern part of the town. There are some residential activities. The area will be developed as residential area with proper conservation.

(q) *Dow Hill Area*: The oldest schools in Kurseong Town, Dow Hill Girls' and Victoria Boys' schools, are located here. The area has large school buildings and playgrounds. This will remain as it is.

(r) *Forest Area*: The Dhobijhora Forest is a part of the town and is found in the north-eastern part of the town. It is mainly covered with Cryptomaria Japonica trees. No change and development will be strictly controlled.

(s) *Green Belt Area*: The tea gardens of Montiviot, Kurbia, Springside, Makaibari and Castleton are a part of the town. The tea gardens will remain as such and there will be control on development particularly on the western side. The area in between Hill Cart Road and L.I.C. Area will be developed as a recreational area.

6.2 ANALYSIS OF THE LAND USE PLAN OF THE S.P.O.

The conceptual plan and on the basis of which the future land use plan for Kurseong town was prepared in 1977 by the S.P.O. remained on paper and hardly any action was taken by any concerned authority for the implementation of the plans. An analysis of the land use plan shows that –

(a) *Central Government Area*: The transmitting centre of the A.I.R. has been set up at Constantia by dismantling the SDO's quarter, one of the oldest buildings in the town. No improvement has been done to the Chandmari ground, as the owner is still the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, even though many institutions use it.

(b) *Tea Garden Development Area*: As per the plan the Darjiling Tea Research Institute was set up in 1980 but no Government quarters were constructed as per the proposal.

(c) *State Government Complex*: No new offices were set up in the vacant land available in the complex. Two four storied residential buildings were constructed by the P.W.D. for government employees. A Rest House for the defence personnel was constructed near the SDO's office.

(d) *Eagles Crag Development Area*: The Public Health Engineering department constructed two water storage reservoirs for proper distribution of water in the southern and south-western part of the town. Martyrs' monument, a watchtower and a park have been developed by the D.G.H.C. at this place. The Ministry of Information has constructed three sets of residential quarters for the Doordarshan.

- (e) *Rajbari Area*: The oldest residential area in the town has become congested without any development of roads. Many private schools have come up in this area. Lack of space has resulted in vertical growth in this area.
- (f) *Springside Development Area*: This area has mainly experienced residential activity. The 11KV Pankhabari Sub-station was set up here.
- (g) *Central Business District*: A large part of the market area was destroyed in a devastating fire in 1986. After that, this area is experiencing a vertical growth and is highly congested.
- (h) *Dhobi Khola Area*: Even though the area has become a residential area, the housing condition is not up to the standard and needs development.
- (i) *College Area*: No development works other than institutional has been carried out in this area.
- (j) *Upper and Lower Town*: The area has become congested with multi-storied buildings.
- (k) *L.I.C. Development Area*: Most of the area has been encroached upon and has turned into a residential area with a couple of private schools. The Polytechnic College has been set up in this area.
- (l) *Railway Area*: Encroachment of vacant land and quarters has taken place but no developmental work has been taken up in the vacant lands as proposed in the plan.
- (m) *School Complex*: No change has taken place.
- (n) *Dumaram Busty Area*: The area has developed purely as a residential area with pockets of disorganised houses.
- (o) *Sanatorium Area*: No change has taken place in this area.
- (p) *Tekbir Busty Area*: It has become a purely residential area with pockets of sub-standard houses.
- (q) *Dow Hill Area*: No change has taken place in this area.
- (r) *Forest Area*: Except the construction of some quarters by the Department of Forest, no change has taken place.
- (s) *Green Belt Area*: Except few encroachments at some places, the area has remained as such.

6.3 PRESENT DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS

The Kurseong Municipality is carrying on different infra-structural improvement programmes with financial assistance from the Union and State Governments for the town in general and the slum areas in particular. The financial assistance is provided through different schemes viz. Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), National Slum Development

Programme (NSDP), 10th Finance Commission of the Government of India for slum improvement, Basic Minimum Service (BMS), Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS), Environment Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS) and Development of Women and Children in Urban Areas (DWCUA). The municipality has fixed some targets to be achieved during a fixed time span for improvement of physical infrastructures in the non-slum and slum areas of the town. The target includes facilities like supply of piped drinking water, community bathrooms and latrines, garbage pits, drains, water tanks, roads, health care centres, shelter for the under privileged, primary school buildings and street lights to be provided to the town dwellers.

6.3.1 Target for slum areas

Under water supply scheme the municipality has drawn up a plan for laying of water pipeline of 7,000 metres and 180 community water taps with cemented platforms under NSDP and BMS programmes. The costs for execution of the schemes have been fixed at Rs. 20,50,000/- and Rs. 18,00,000/- respectively. Under NSDP 24 community bathrooms and 24 community latrines will be constructed and the total costs has been fixed at Rs. 4,80,000/- and Rs. 12,00,000/- respectively. It has been decided to convert 736 service privies to sanitary latrines under ILCS programme and the total cost has been fixed at Rs. 42,27,000/. 120 garbage pits will be constructed under NSDP with a cost of Rs. 9,60,000/-.

To renovate the condition of roads a stretch of 26 kilometres has been targeted with a cost of Rs. 39,00,000/- under NSDP and BMS programmes. 36 kilometres of concrete pedestrian walkways have been planned at a cost of Rs. 72,00,000/- and this includes both renovation and construction of new pedestrian walkways. Drains with a length of 6 km are to be constructed under NSDP with a cost of 15,00,000/. Renovation and construction of guide walls along jhoras for sewerage are to be done for a stretch of 5 km with a cost of Rs. 15,00,000/. 12 culverts with a cost of Rs. 12,00,000/- will be constructed across jhoras. 12 health care centres under NSDP will be constructed in different parts of the town with a cost of Rs. 6,00,000/. These health care centres will be the meeting place for community health guides and women of the locality and will help in dissemination of knowledge on general health, hygiene and sanitation.

The landslide prone areas, which were badly affected in 1998, will be provided with shelter houses and the total cost has been fixed at Rs. 20,00,000/- for the construction of 120 shelters. Under BMS programme 6 primary schools will be renovated at a cost of Rs. 6,00,000/. For proper storage and distribution of drinking water 48 water tanks will be constructed under

NSDP and BMS programmes at a cost of Rs. 9,60,000/- . Different localities will be provided with 120 streetlights at a cost of Rs. 9,60,000/- . The total cost, which will be incurred for the execution of construction works of different infrastructures, will be Rs. 3,27,37,000/-.

6.3.2 Target for non-slum areas

Major financial assistance will come from the 10th Finance Commission for construction of various physical infrastructures in the non-slum areas of the town. Under water supply scheme it has been planned to lay 5,000 metres of water pipeline and 130 water taps with cemented platforms for community use at a cost of Rs. 21,00,000/- and Rs. 7,00,000/- respectively. For community use 12 bathrooms and 12 latrines will be constructed at a total cost of Rs. 19,20,000/- . 60 garbage pits will be set up at various points of the town for proper disposal of garbage in the town.

At a cost of Rs. 15,00,000/-, 16 km of metalled road will be renovated and constructed. Sewerage drains of 6 km length will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 20,00,000/- . Guide walls of 9 km length along jhoras for storm drainage will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 40,00,000/- . These guide walls will help in checking vertical and lateral corrosion of the jhoras. 6 community centres and 2 community halls will be constructed at different parts of the town at a cost of Rs. 6,00,000/- and Rs. 8,00,000/- respectively. Parks, which are lacking in the town, will be constructed at 2 places at a cost of Rs. 10,00,000/- . 10 culverts will be constructed for improving road network between settlements at a cost of Rs. 10,00,000/- . New buildings will be constructed for 4 primary schools at a cost of Rs. 16,00,000/- . The total cost, which will be incurred for the execution of construction works of different infrastructures, will be Rs. 2,00,00,000/-.

6.3.3 Traffic Flow

The problem of traffic congestion, which is acute along the Hill Cart Road and at the meeting point of Acharya Bhanu Path with Hill Cart Road, the municipal body along with the district administration have taken up some measures to overcome the problem. The CBD has been divided into 8 parking zones and spots along the Hill Cart Road, Acharya Bhanu Path, Burdwan Road and Montiviot Road have been fixed for parking of vehicles. These parking zones cater to specific needs of the town and a fixed number of vehicles are allowed to park in those parking zones. The vehicles from these zones ply in different direction of the town. Restriction has been imposed on parking of vehicles especially along the Hill Cart Road and Acharya Bhanu

Path in the town. Even though the Municipality has declared the zones as fee parking zones, it is yet to finalise on the amount to be collected from the parked vehicles.

6.3.4. Income and Expenditure Statement of the Municipality

A look at income and expenditure report of the Municipality for the year 1998-99 reveals that there was an opening balance of Rs. 28,24,450/- and a closing balance of Rs. 10,37,442/-. Under the receipt head it earned about Rs. 25,00,000/- from rent from market, slaughterhouse, land and burning ghat, tax on trades and profession, registration fees and arrears of property tax. It received Rs. 3,20,000/- as taxes on entertainment, toll, trade and profession from the Government of West Bengal. All civic bodies receive this amount as a share based on population collected by the government from the whole state. It also received about Rs. 52 lakhs from the State Government as grant for pay and allowances for its employees. Under capital account it received Rs. 1,64,00,000/- as grant from the Central and State Governments for the execution of different schemes for development of infrastructures of the town. The Municipality also received an extraordinary receipt of Rs. 40,00,000/- from the government for payment of taxes and advances.

On the expenditure side the Municipality spent about Rs. 73 lakhs (21.5 percent of the total expenditure) against pay and allowances for its employees. The civic body spent about 6 lakhs for repair works of roads, building and vehicles. The Municipality met these expenses by mobilising its own resources and through grants provided by the state government under receipt head. The advances it received against capital account were distributed under different heads for carrying on of different developmental programmes. It included expenses on purchase of furniture, vehicles and machinery, construction of fire hydrants, shopping centre, community latrine, drainage and sewerage lines and infrastructure improvement of slums. Some of these developmental schemes take long time to be completed and thus expenses shown in one financial year may not show the actual expenses incurred in a particular year because that expense may be a payment made for an earlier work.

6.4 ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS IN THE TOWN

6.4.1 Achievement in slum areas

Under water supply scheme out of 7,000 metres of water pipeline, only 1,400 metres of pipeline have been laid at a cost of Rs. 5,80,000/- and out of 180 community water taps with

cemented platforms, only 42 have been fixed at a cost of Rs. 4,14,000/- . Out of 736 service privies 691 has been converted into sanitary latrines under ILCS programme. The target of constructing 24 community bathrooms and 24 community latrines is yet to be achieved. 10 garbage pits out of 120 have been constructed and for the rest work is going on. Only 1,800 metres of road have been repaired with bitumen and 2,400 metres of pedestrian walkway with concrete. Sewerage drain of 2,200 metres length, 720 metres of guide walls for jhoras and 1 culvert has been constructed. Work on health care centres, shelter houses and primary schools is going on and out of 120 street light poles only 3 have been fixed. Till now the municipality has spent Rs. 62,73,000/- on construction works for infrastructures.

6.4.2 Achievement in non-slum areas

Construction work under different schemes is under progress or yet to be started and thus achievement in the non-slum areas is minimal. Under water supply scheme 850 metres of pipeline out of 5,000 metres have been laid and only 10 community water taps with cemented platforms have been fixed. Out of 16 km, only 5 km of metalled road have been completed. The Municipality has spent Rs. 1,17,000/- for the renovation of its own building.

6.4.3 Traffic Flow

The measures taken by the Municipality have helped in easing the problem of traffic congestion to a certain extent but during peak hours and certain period of the year the problem become acute.

6.5 FUTURE PLANS

The different Government Agencies *viz.* the Department of Health, the Directorate of Public Health Engineering, the State Electricity Board and the Department of Tele-communication and the Kurseong Municipality have drawn up different developmental schemes for mitigating the problems faced by the town dwellers by enhancing the present infrastructure set up in the town.

6.5.1 Medical facility

To mitigate the problem faced by the Sub-Divisional Hospital the State Health Development Project of the World Bank and the Government of West Bengal has made the following plans:

- (i) to increase the number of beds in all disciplines and the projected number is 165. Proposed number beds in different disciplines are: Medicine – 57, Surgery – 40, Paediatrics – 20, Nursery – 6, Isolation – 10, Maternity – 13, Gynaecology – 15 and Paying Cabins – 10;
- (ii) a five-storied building with floor space of 186 sq. metre per floor is to be constructed in between the present chest clinic and OPD complex. The building will be provided with elevator facility. The building will provide space to – (a) chest clinic; (b) family welfare; (c) x-ray/ ECG/ Ultrasound/ biochemical and Pathology units; (d) Operation Theatre complexes with sterilisation rooms; (e) Intensive Care Unit with artificial respiration facilities for chest injury; (f) Labour Room Complexes and Nursery and (g) a Kitchen block;
- (iii) another building is to be constructed after demolishing the present SDMO's quarter (Pic. 24) for providing space to hospital's office, conference hall, library, SDMO's chamber and quarter and five set of quarters for medical officers;



Pic. 24 : The demolished SDMO's quarter.

- (iv) renovation of the morgue for post-mortem cases as per the recent standards set by the judiciary;
- (v) incinerator for disposal of hospital wastes;
- (vi) a generator for uninterrupted supply of electricity;
- (vii) renovation and re-orientation of electricity of OPD complexes;

- (viii) setting up of Intensive Coronary Care Unit (ICCU); Public toilet and Urinal; Sick room for hospital staff and Doctor's;
- (ix) fencing the hospital's compound and setting up of security outpost.

6.5.2 Drinking water

The Directorate of Public Health Engineering has taken up an extensive plan to augment the supply of water so that the town does not face a crisis of water, which it faced in 1999. In order to supply 90 litres of water per capita per day as per the United Nation's recommendation to a population of 40,000, the P.H.E. will have to make a provision of supplying 36,00,000 litres of water per day where as its present capacity is only of 10,45,580 litres per day. In order to provide this extra amount of water the P.H.E. has drawn up some concrete plans *viz.* –

- (i) development of all the springs from where water is tapped by proper maintenance;
- (ii) afforestation on an extensive scale in the catchment areas of the jhoras by involving the Department of Forest and the villagers;
- (iii) renovation of the existing distribution system in order to check leakage of water and rationalisation of supply of water;
- (iv) laying of parallel lines especially for water pipelines coming from Thotey Khola, 8th Mile Khola and Sepoydhura to check illegal tapping. Separate facilities will be provided to the settlements through which these pipelines are passing;
- (v) by tapping jhoras below Chimney, north-east of the town, and pumping that water to Chimney for supplying it to the storage reservoir at Dow Hill;
- (vi) construction of another storage reservoir at Dow Hill with a capacity of 1,81,84,000 litres of water;
- (vii) by tapping the Eagles Crag spring below Eagles Crag and pumping that water to the Eagles Crag service reservoir for distributing water to the tail end of the municipality like Fatakdara, Dharegaon, Nayabasti and Havaldar Kothi.

6.5.3 Electricity

The West Bengal State Electricity Board is planning of up-linking all its sub-divisional and divisional offices with SATCOM (Satellite Communication) for proper management of its different offices. This facility will help the central office in Calcutta in keeping track with the

day-to-day demand and supply of electricity in different parts of the state and also the recovery of tariffs by different divisions.

6.5.4 Telephone

The sub-divisional telephone exchange has drawn up plans to modernise its equipment and enhance its capacity so that it can cater to an ever-increasing number of subscribers. It plans to convert C-Dot SBM into 2 KMBM (Kilo Multi Base Module). This system can attend to about 2,000 subscribers. The Department of Telecommunication is also planning to set up multi-exchanges at Dow Hill, St. Mary's Hill and Fatakdara and construction of a multi-exchange at Dow Hill has already been started. As the demand for telephone facility is increasing in these areas the multi-exchanges will go a long way in not only providing better facility to the consumers but also lessen the pressure on the main exchange.

A plan has been sanctioned for the construction of a three-storied building to set up a new exchange. This construction will take place at a vacant plot adjacent to the present exchange. The exchange will be a modern one with a capacity of 8,000 lines. Once this construction is completed, Kurseong town and its neighbouring areas will not have any problem in the near future.

6.5.5 The Municipality

As the number of private schools is increasing in the town, which are taxing on the civic amenities of the municipality, the municipal board of Kurseong has decided to declare private schools as commercial enterprises. This decision will go a long way in augmenting the income of the cash strapped municipality. The decision is yet to be ratified by the Government of West Bengal and no modalities have been formulated regarding the basis of assessment and the amount to be taxed on individual private schools.

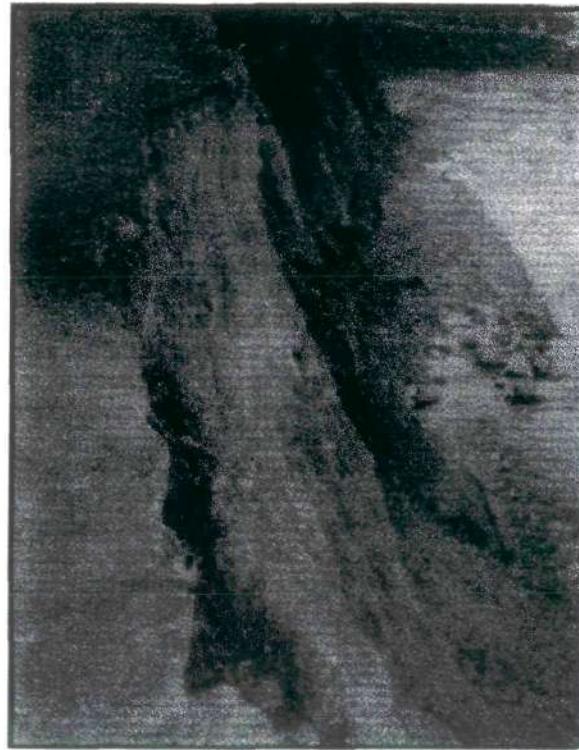
During 1999, when the town suffered from acute shortage of drinking water, the municipality spent about Rs. 10 lakhs for acquiring trucks and purchasing plastic water tanks for providing water to the town dwellers. To alleviate the problem of shortage of water during lean months the civic body has drawn up a plan of joining feeder pipelines to the existing water pipelines coming from Sepoydhura, Thotey Khola and 8th Mile Khola to boost the supply of

water to the reservoirs. The feeder pipelines will trap water from upper catchments of numerous jhoras, which are flowing towards the Balason river valley.

The town doesn't have a proper sewerage system. The old sewer lines are in bad shape and the central septic tank is non-functional. The entire sewerage finds its way to Kanti Jhora without any treatment. This has lead to pollution of jhora water and the settlements mainly of tea gardens lying along the lower course of Kanti Jhora are either forced to use the polluted water or walk long distances to get their daily need of water. The management of Montiviot Tea Garden has apprised the civic body of the problems faced by its workers residing in those settlements. The Municipality has already drawn up a plan to overhaul the sewerage system in the town and for that it had engaged a consultancy firm to provide it with necessary technical know-how. But due to a lack of response from the Department of Municipal Affairs of the Government of West Bengal for the execution of the plan, the suffering of the people living in the lower course of Kanti Jhora will continue.

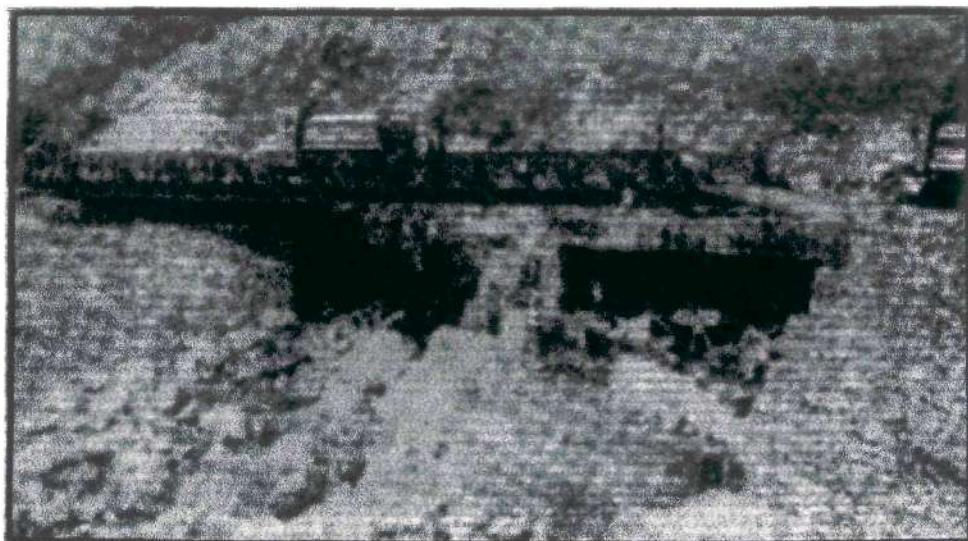
The Municipality doesn't have an incinerator to dispose off its garbage and it has appealed to the government for providing the necessary funds to set up a modern incinerator. Incineration is the process of reducing combustible wastes to inert residue by burning at high temperatures of 925° to 928° Celsius. At these temperatures all combustible materials are consumed, leaving a residue of ash and non-combustibles occupying only 5-25 percent of the original volume of the refuse. As the proposal is yet to be looked upon by the government, the garbage that is dumped west of Bourdilion Road is burnt in the open by the conservancy staff. A part of the non-burnt garbage and ash finds its way to the nearby jhora, which in turn pollute the water consumed by the villagers living in the lower course of the jhora.

During 1998, landslides devastated a large part of the Darjiling Himalayas. There was loss of life and property and the Hill Cart Road, main arterial road between Darjiling and Siliguri, was at many places breached. A stretch of the Hill Cart Road near Pagla Jhora (Pic. 25) and the bridge across Hussain Khola, north of Kurseong town, were washed away. The Pankhabari Road also suffered from breaches at some points. Goods transportation between Siliguri and Darjiling and Kurseong were hampered as the main arterial road was damaged. Special arrangements were made by the administration to provide minimum supply of ration



Pic. 25 : Landslide across the Hill Cart Road at Pagla Jhora.

to the people by using the Pankhabari Road. On an emergency footing the Indian Army restored the contact between Kurseong and Darjiling by constructing a bailey bridge across Hussain Khola (Pic. 26). Naya Basti in ward I, Tekbir Busti and Abraham Busti in ward II, Devisthan and Kanti Jhoras in ward III, Dhobi Khola, Sherpa Busti and Subedar busti in ward



Pic. 26 : The bailey bridge across Hussain Khola.

V and Rajbari-Ranikoop in ward X in Kurseong town were badly affected by the landslide in 1998. The Municipality received a grant of Rs. 69,00,000/- from the government to overcome the problems created by the landslide. Temporary shelters were provided to the affected families.

To overcome the problem created by landslides in the future, the Government of West Bengal set up a crisis management committee of experts in June 1998 to prepare a guideline for proper handling of the crisis created by landslides and an alternative route from Siliguri to Darjiling and measures to be taken to minimise the occurrences of landslides. They recommended certain long and short-term measures to check landslides and an alternative route in case of disruption of traffic in the Hill Cart Road. The committee has in a recent meeting, given a suggestion of declaring Kurseong a no-development zone. It has also suggested of constructing a weighbridge at Sukna to check and restrict the weight of vehicles plying on the Hill Cart Road.

The Municipality has drawn up a plan to mitigate the problems created by landslides by constructing guide walls along jhoras passing through the town, restricting the construction of houses in the landslide prone areas and construction of shelter houses for the affected families. It has submitted a plan of Rs. 99,00,000/- to the government in 1999 of which the government has sanctioned Rs. 50,00,000/- for that purpose, but the Municipality is yet to receive that sanctioned amount to start its work.

CONCLUSION

Way back in 1977, the Siliguri Planning Organisation gave a conceptual and a future land use plan for Kurseong town for its even development. On the basis of it the town was divided into different zones and specific proposals were given for the development of the different zones. As there was no regulatory authority to follow up the proposals given by the S.P.O., the town has witnessed a haphazard growth. Residential land use has witnessed more growth than any other land uses in the town. Under the different developmental schemes of the central and the state governments meant for the slum and non-slum areas of the town, the municipality has undertaken many schemes for the improvement of physical infrastructures in the town. Most of the schemes are meant for areas with a high concentration of poor families and the work for development of different schemes is under progress.

To overcome the problem of traffic congestion the municipality has fixed certain spots as parking zones for the proper movement of vehicles. To improve the condition of the Sub-

divisional Hospital, the government has taken certain steps like increasing the number of beds to 165, a modern five storied building to accommodate different disciplines and provide better service to the patients, setting up of a morgue, an incinerator, a generator and an ICCU. The P.H.E. has chalked out a plan to augment the supply of drinking water to the town by developing the existing springs, renovation of pipelines, construction of another storage reservoir of 1,81,84,000 litre capacity and tapping jhoras near Chimney and Eagles Crag and pumping that water to the storage reservoirs.

The municipality has decided to recognise private residential schools as commercial enterprises and levy a tax on them. To increase the supply of water the municipality of its own has decided to join feeder pipelines to the existing water pipelines. The government is yet to respond to the proposals given by the municipality for construction of a central septic tank and an incinerator in the town.