

CHAPTER – VII

IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE TOWN

INTRODUCTION: -

Urbanization is a natural consequence of economic change that takes place as country develops. Urban areas, depending on their size and type, spread innovations to their hinterlands through various forms of urban-rural and regional linkages. Administration, trade, commerce and several urban amenities are the key urbanizing elements, which attract people from neighboring areas to Jalpaiguri town. Along with natural increase, a large influx of immigrants creates problems to its urban life. Being an unplanned old town Jalpaiguri failed to promote the modern urban facilities to its residents in an organized manner. Thus like other towns, Jalpaiguri is facing the problem of deficit and uneven distribution of urban amenities. The gaps between available urban infrastructure and their demand among the people have been increasing continuously in the town, which give birth to several problems. Some of these problems are very acute and need attention for identification. This chapter deals with some problems, which were identified at the time of field survey.

7.1 PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

River Karala is one of the natural drainage channel, which diagonally bisected the town and stretch for 5.20 km² from northwest to southeast acts as an important physical barrier. The early builders of the town have found the Tista-karala levee as relatively safe zone. Most of the European settlements were constructed along this Tista-Karala Levee. After independence the town expanded at the south of river Karala, and people like to reside in this part due to availability of urban facilities. But the growth of town was restricted at the east by river Karala. At the east of river Karala, river Dhardhara acts as a physical barrier and creates problem for the connection to the extreme east. There are seven connecting bridges on this river, which is not sufficient to connect the eastern part of the town. There are only three concrete bridges on river Karala at the southern half of the town, which is not sufficient and obstructed the flow of vehicles during the peak hours. Another two bridges at the north connect the municipality with the outer part of the town. At the east along the river Tista an impressive embankment was

constructed to protect the town from flood, which restricted the urban sewer and storm water disposal system and caused problems for the dwellers. The railway track criss-cross the town at the middle part and restricts the easy movement of the people from the southern part to the central business district of the town. There are only three railway gates such as Ghoomti no 2, 3 and Ghoomti no 4 connect the southern half to the central part of the town. Long queues of vehicles caused traffic jam at the gates.

7.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS

7.2.1 Pressure of Population

Pressure of population growth acts as an obstacle to it's growth. Growth of population accelerates the developmental process of the town and side-by-side it also hindered the growth of living standards of that center. Thus, the study of population growth has drawn much attention of social scientists not only in India, but also abroad.

The rapid population growth after independence put tremendous pressure on urban fabric of Jalpaiguri town. It is argued that the growth of population results in crisis of housing and related basic services in the town and lack of employment opportunities. Very low rate of industrialization in the town results in increase of marginal laborers, and informal workers, which further reflected in low economic condition of people. Urban poverty has resulted in proliferation of slums in the town. It is found that about 66.8% of the total population of Jalpaiguri in 2001 is non-worker. Among the non-workers 80 % are slum people, and they are mainly concentrated in Badambasti, Muslimbasti, Harijonbasti etc. area.

7.3 LAND USE PROBLEMS

Land under different uses in Jalpaiguri town, which has discussed in previous chapter (Chapter no III) shows the evolution and pattern of land use in the light of locational and historical background. It is found that the town is an unplanned town with densely populated residential areas and with a business center named Dinbazar. Higher utilization rate can be achieved by vertical development particularly for residential areas. The commercial area becomes more congested and the development takes place in an uneven manner, that need a proper plan for future development.

7.3.1 Inter Relationship Of Different Uses

The evolution of past land use pattern of the town is reflected through the existing land use pattern, which gives an impression that the types and proportions of use is not satisfactory. The central business district of the town is associated with various activities, those are unable to form a compatible relationship with other uses. As a result mixed type of land use is common here. Some industrial units are developed near C.B.D. for the easy accessibility of the business center, but required more space for its development. Some residential houses are converted into residential cum commercial uses in the commercial area of the town.

7.3.1.i Incompatible Land Use

The existing land use pattern of Jalpaiguri town is observed minutely, which reflects that some of the land uses are incompatible. It is found that some public sectors are developing in residential areas of the town, besides having a separate zone for public or semipublic uses at the eastern part of the town. Another incompatible use of land is found in the residential areas, where some small scale industries, workshops, publishing units are located haphazardly. Due to the expansion of miscellaneous uses of lands in the town without having any proper planning, incompatibility is increasing day by day. Jalpaiguri Sadar Hospital, Jail, slums along railway land among the public uses are also considered as incompatible use.

7.3.1.ii Inefficient Land Use

It is found during field survey that, in some cases the land, which is at present utilized by them, can be utilized much more efficiently for other uses. The location of some schools like Marwary Girls High School at Dinbazar, Central Girl's High School and Sonaulah High School along the major business thorough fare are not suitable for this purpose. Some of the government offices are located in residential areas of the town, those are not suitable for these purpose. The land use in the congested part of Dinbazar is also considered as inefficient use.

7.3.2 Selection Of Norms And Their Application

For allocating appropriate proportion of land to different uses, the norms selected are based on Webster (1958), supplemented by Indian standard. In developing countries the urban centers, especially cities are facing a problem of over crowding, Jalpaiguri is not an exception.

According to Webster, in the average city, about 40 percent of the developed area is in residential use. The Indian Standard for this use is also the same. In Jalpaiguri town 60.3% land has devoted to this purpose, that is far above the average. The main problem of residential areas is lack of space, which is the result of high density of population and high intensity of residential land uses in the town. The large share of residential use reveals that, utilization of land for residential purpose is dominant than other uses in the town. The proliferation of several slums is due to increasing shortage of land and shortage of housing in the residential areas of the town. Another problem is that, the residential use is not continuous and interrupted by commercial and industrial uses near C.B.D.

According to Webster, in a city, 2 to 5 percent of the developed land is in commercial use, which is 6.6% in the town. The main problem of commercial use is that, it is not distributed systematically which results in unbalanced growth of commercial land use. In commercial zones, encroachment of residential houses for business purpose results in a mixed use of land, which is difficult to recognized the commercial lands in the town. The presence of go-downs in residential areas, and wholesale markets are responsible for traffic congestion and insanitary condition.

According to Webster, in an average city, 10 to 15 percent of the developed land is in industrial use, which is 0.5% in Jalpaiguri town in 2007, which is far behind from the standard norm. Except a few small- scale industries, any large- scale industrial units can not flourished, because of lack of capital resources and absence of raw materials. The major shortcomings in industrial land use are the absence of separate industrial zone, and its mixture with residential and commercial uses.

In India any town should have 16 to 22% land under public and semi-public use, where as only 5% land is devoted to this purpose in Jalpaiguri town. The problem of uneven distribution and inefficient use of land under this category are also observed. Some educational institutions, and public offices are situated at the congested part or along the major commercial thoroughfare of the town, which is unsuitable for their location.

Looked at from the urban point of view the function of the green (open space) in the town is positive. Open spaces are encroached due to excessive pressure of population and demand for land for various use. The general planning standard for parks and playground is expressed in the ratio (250 persons / hectare land), which is more than the actual average in the town. On an average, 28% of the developed area of the central city is devoted to streets (Bartholomew 1955). In Jalpaiguri town land used for such purpose is far beyond the norm.

With the increase of population, residential uses of land is increasing day by day which results in congestion in residential areas of the town. Higher utilization rate can be achieved by vertical development of residential areas.

7.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

In Jalpaiguri town the Municipal authorities promote the basic amenities, those are unevenly distributed in the town. This unscientific distribution of amenities creates several problems for the town dwellers. These problems are associated with educational, medical, transport and communicational etc.

7.4.1 Problems In Education Facilities

The existing educational facility is inadequate in eastern part of river Karala. Schools of secondary and higher secondary levels are concentrate in selected areas leaving wide gaps in western and north eastern part of the town. In respect of students in H. S and college level the institutions are found inadequate. Play ground and other infrastructural facilities are poor in some of the schools. Children in some primary schools still use to sit on the floor. The tendency of drop out by the students is become a problem in higher order schools.

7.4.2 Problems Related to Medical Facility

The medical facility in the town is far from satisfactory. In the town Sadar Hospital is situated unscientifically and inadequate for such a larger population of the town. It is found that, the number of doctors per 10,000 persons is 5.4 in Sadar Hospital, which is very low. And the number of beds per 10,000 persons was 6.079 in 2003, which was also very insufficient. It is also found that, the condition of hospital is very unhygienic. In sufficiency of vehicles is another problem of the hospital. As the hospital is located at the left bank of river Karala, the people of

entire western and southern part are lactant to avail the hospital facility. The unhygienic and unsanitary environment of the slums aggravates the spread of communicable diseases, which is one of the major problems of the town.

7.4.3 Problems Related To Trade And Commerce

The entire western part, northeastern parts of the town have no daily markets. There is no separate wholesale market, and specialized market in the town. Condition of shops is very poor in daily markets. And most of the vegetable or fish sallers sit under open sky. Due to insufficient space inside the shops or go-downs footpaths are used temporarily as storing place. Absence of parking spaces and space for loading, unloading results in congestion, which obstructed in easy vehicular movements in the market. Most of the markets have no proper lay out system, which results in unhygienic atmosphere in fish or vegetable markets.



Plate 9 Vegetable Shops Under Open Sky at Station Market

7.4.4 Problems Related To Small Scale Industry

The industries are associated with the shortage of space for the industrial plant in the town and shortage of capital investment. The local supply of raw materials for industrial units is inadequate and irregular. The chronic power shortage for industrial purpose is one of the important problems for its growth. So, it can be said that, lack of industrial infrastructure large-scale industries could not flourished in the town.

7.4.5 Problems Related To Transport And Communication

The economic development of any town depends upon the proper transport and communication system, but it is not up to the mark in Jalpaiguri town. Like any other Indian city the town also suffers from bad road condition, traffic congestion etc, those become most acute problem of the town. The major transport and communication problems are follows.

7.4.5.i Road Condition

Roads interlink entire part of the town; those ultimately formed a rectangular pattern of road network in the town. Majority of roads in the town are narrow and serpentine. The average width of roads in the town is not sufficient for traffic flow. Some of the roads and culverts are unsuitable for the movement of heavy vehicles. Large grooves are common along the Station Feeder Road, Mahanta Para Road, New Town Para Road, Walkarganj etc. and sides of roads are also found broken i.e., along Siliguri – Jalpaiguri Road, Hospital Road etc.

7.4.5.ii Poor Maintenance Of Roads And Bus Stands

The maintenance of roads and streets are very poor. Most of the main through fares and roads are not repaired and maintained timely by the respective department. Majority of roads of the town are full of dirt and garbage. Unremoved construction waste, debris along the road side at the innerpart of the town caused accidents specially during power cut. The busstands have no proper shades for buses and passengers. Absence of waiting rooms, lavatory facility and ill-maintenance create problems for passengers.

7.4.5.iii Absence Of Parking Space

One of the major problems being faced today is shortage of parking space. As Jalpaiguri is an unplanned town, there is no proper parking space specially in and around C.B.D and at the main business thoroughfare. Parking space is also absent in front of schools, hospital and nursing homes of the town, which caused congestion and increases the chance of road accidents. The front side of shops are obstructed by vehicles, those are parked haphazardly hindered the easy flow of customers during peak hours.

7.4.5.iv Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion has become a common problem in every city. Jalpaiguri is not an exception. During peak hours (10-11.30 a.m) heavy traffic congestion is found at Kadamtala, Dinbazar More, Beguntary, and at the crossing near Head Post Office. Railway gate i.e. Ghoomti no 3 and 4 and its adjoining areas have been suffering from intense traffic jam, which is found to be beyond control. During the closure of rail gate at the Ghoomti no 3, long queues of vehicles caused traffic jam. The buses playing between Jalpaiguri to Haldibari have no proper terminus, as a result buses occupy the half of the width of that road caused traffic congestion in that area. Due to the absence of traffic control system at the important junctions such as Provat More at D.B.C Road also caused traffic jam. The increasing number of rickshaws and two wheelers aggravate traffic congestion in the town.



Plate 10 Traffic Jam at Railway Crossing (Goomti No 3)

7.4.5.v Uneven Distribution Of Communication Facility

Communication facility is much lower at the fringe than C.B.D. Accessibility of post office is low at the fringe, and P.C.O booths are also less in number. Courier service facility is absent here. So, it can be said that, uneven distribution of communication facility is a problem for the people living at the peripheral wards of the town.

7.4.6 Problem Of Lighting System

The daily supply of electricity is quite insufficient. Short of voltage and load shading has become a great problem to the residents. During summer the frequent load shadings with a minimum duration of one hour is become common, which is intolerable. More streetlights are

required to meet the demand for public safety. But it is found at many lights posts are remaining without lamps for a long period, and municipal authority do not care about this. Most of the streetlights in peripheral wards remain disorder for long period, which aggravate the chance of road accidents, and antisocial activities. The main business thoroughfare requires more Halozen lights to check the incidents of crime at the night. A major part of the town is still remaining in darkness. More over, the services of the State Electricity Board are not satisfactory.

7.4.7 Problems Related Water Supply

During 1991-2001 the population pressure increases so rapidly, that the water supply failed to fulfill the total demand of the people in the town. The daily consumption pattern shows that, the water supply is little bit inadequate in and around C.B.D and in the main residential area in the central part of the town. Ward no 2 and 3 have large area, where number of water stand post is very low. Broken taps and stand posts are the evidence of poor maintenance and inefficiency of the municipal authority. Clorinization process, which is used to purify the water stored in overhead tanks, is found irregular.

7.5 ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Like any other Indian town, the problem of environmental pollution exists in Jalpaiguri town. In the town the chocked drains, dump of garbage on roadsides, open drains and in sanitary streets are crux of the issue. With the growth of population along with their various activities, the environment becomes gradually crippled due to their unconsumness about the environment.

7.5.1 Problems Related To Waste Materials

The volume of liquid and solid wastes in the town is great due to large population and higher standard of living now a day. The municipal services for waste disposal in Jalpaiguri town collected garbage from both domestic and commercial areas consist of organic and inorganic matters in wide variety and form.

7.5.1.i Heaps Of Garbage

In Jalpaiguri, people don't look out for a garbage bin and throw out waste materials on the road or on the footpath. Majority of houses in C.B.D. area use road haphazardly for dumping garbage due to absence of proper dustbins. Solid wastes include rags, paper, plastics, construction waste

etc. The increasing amount of plastics emerges as a threat to its environment. Medical wastes like medicine rappers, cotton, injection bottles etc are thrown to river Karala are hazardous in nature. In most cases, the garbage finally accumulates into drains causing drainage congestion and water logging problem.

7.5.1.ii Problems Related To Waste Disposal

Jalpaiguri town use the old method of waste disposal, that is 'landfill' disposal method, which leads serious environmental problems. Garbage and rubbish tend to be dumped, and converted into landfill at the dumping ground. Leaching of germs from the landfill during rainy season causes air and soil pollution. Each particular kind of waste has separate disposal system, which is not maintained in the time of collecting and dumping. Wastewater is discharged without treatment either into river Karala, Gadadhar or into the paddy fields.



Plate 11 A Garbage Heap : Improper Sewage

7.5.1.iii Problems Related To Service

Due to inefficient sanitary workers, inadequate equipments and vehicles, the service becomes irregular which lead to spread of disease risks through insects and micro-organisms. About 12,000 lt. Septic tank sludge is removed in every month, which is not sufficient and this service is also very irregular. Liquid spray like larvaicide's is rarely used in stagnant water, as a result it become the breeding ground of mosquitoes.

7.5.2 Problems Related To Sewarage And Drainage

The town has no proper provision of drainage and sewerage, which is essential for healthy urban environment.

7.5.2.i Sewerage System

The sewerage system of the town is open channel system, and mostly is of kutchha type. The household wastewater from kitchen sinks, baths are led to drains through these, which leave organic wastes exposed and enhances the risks of spreading diseases. Problems of sewerage are very prominent in the densely populated residential zones and at the peripheral wards. In markets the environment become very unhygienic due to the absence of layout system. Most of the slum houses have no sewerage system, which is alarming for its environment. Some settlements are constructed illegally caused obstruction in sewerage system. As a result garbage and wastewater clogged the drains and generate harmful odours. The removal of sludge from drains is very irregular. The drains are not levelled according to slope, which hampered the easy flow of water.

7.5.2.ii Drainage Problem

Drainage problem is one of the major problems caused water logging in the town. Embankments along the rivers and N.F. Railway track act as the main drainage barrier. Unplanned urban growth in low-lying areas without having enough space for storm water flow aggravates the problem of water logging. The areas have been experiencing water logging hazards are –

- (a) An area between river Karala and Tista at Hospital Para, Hakim para, Sen Para are the main water logged area of the eastern part of the town. During monsoon months. This area suffers from periodic water logging caused by river Karala itself.



Plate 12 Stagnation of Water on a Main Thoroughfare

- (b) Dinbazar, Samaj Para, Babu Para area is one of the most urbanized area of the town with out having proper storm water disposal system. This area becomes ~~water~~ waterlogged after a medium shower as the drains are encroached for commercial purpose.
- (c) At present Netaji Para, Santi Para, Boilkhana area does not have any natural disposal way. The former waterway from Santi Para to Sebagram through Kanteswari Deeghi is decayed due to the increase of settlements and as a result excess rainwater is discharged over the residential area.
- (d) A vast area at the north of railway track includes New town Para. Bose Para, Tarundal, Ananda Para, Muhuri Para become water logged even after a low shower, which ultimately drained into river Gadadhar. The culverts in New Town Para and near 4 no Ghoomti are inadequate to drain the access water and caused severe water logging problem. The railway track is the main cause for water logging in this area.



Plate 13 Unpalnned Drainage – Obstructed by Railway Line

- (e) Natun para and Darjee Para located in a basin like area, which is extended up to the railway track at the south, where water logging is very common. Railway track at the south and embankment of river Karala at the east are the main drainage barriers of this zone.
- (f) At the southern part of the railway track, the general slope is from north to south. The storm water from the whole north western part is drained out through this area, and as a result when drains are not able to carry storm water it over flow the

Mahamaya Para, Harijan basti, Panda Para, Adar Para area. Unplanned urban expansion and encroachment of wet- lands at the fringe is responsible for water logging in this part of the town.

Some man made drainage is found in the town, which is not sufficient and is not so effective too.

7.6 LACK OF COMMUNITY FACILITY

Community facilities like open spaces, parks, and playgrounds, which are used by town dwellers, are inadequate in respect to its population. Parks are situated at the extreme east and most of the dwellers cannot avail the opportunity from the open space. The number of auditoriums, cinema halls is very few, and the existing recreational places are less accessible for the people of northern and western part of the town. Clubs, libraries are not many in the town. And due to lack of infrastructural facilities, libraries, clubs survive with the help of number subscription. The town requires five (5) parks per 10,000 persons, which is far from the reality. Open spaces and playgrounds are converted to residential plots due to scarcity of lands in the town, which is harmful for the ecological environment of the town.

7.7 PROBLEMS RELATED SLUMS

One of the most serious problems generated by the rapid urbanization process is the emergence of slums in the town. Continuous growth of population has led to congestion, lack of space, over-crowding and emergence of slums in the town. Shortage of housing accommodation is responsible for the growth of slum settlements on public lands, which create problem for further use of that land. Slum settlement, are prone to water logging during rainy season, and become unsuitable for living. Absence of proper sewerage, haphazard and uncontrolled dumping of wastes at the adjacent land of slum houses is associated with health and environmental hazard in slum. Slum people suffers from contagious diseases due to damp and unhygienic condition of houses, which affect the workforce of the town, specially in informal sectors. The economic condition of slum people is very poor, and mostly they are unskilled labourers. It is also found that poverty and unemployment forced some of the poor people to involve in antisocial activities, which become a serious social problem in the town.



Plate 14 Slum Area Encroaching Railway Land

7.8 INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

There are also some institutional problems such as land reform problem, problem related with land distribution among poorer, land development, taxation and other problems

CONCLUSION

The over all study reveal that the physical and socio-economic conditions of the town have deteriorated very rapidly, due to alarming population increase during the last 20 years. In the town several amenities are unevenly distributed leaving gaps between core and peripheral areas. It is found that in core area, problem increased due to congestion, shortage of housing along with mix of small-scale industries in residential area, emergence of slums etc. These all increase the complexity of urban life at the central part of the town. On the other hand the peripheral wards have less developed transport facility, inadequate lighting, medical facility etc. There areas are characterized by improper drainage, heaps of garbage on roadside, along with other problems. The increased population of the town hampered the provisions of adequate electricity supply, educational institutions, expansion of commercial activities in a balance way, and thus creates problem for the town dwellers. So, it can be said that, growth of population and urbanization has occurred along with poverty, proliferation of slums, and differential access to basic services. In Jalpaiguri town the growth of population played a conflicting role in the developmental process, which obstructed the growth of living standard. The lands are used for commercial, residential, public-purpose etc. in an unplanned way. The high intensity of land use

special mixed use of land in and around C.B.D. creates some disadvantages e.g. unhealthy condition of living, air pollution, accumulation of garbage along the roadside. The land use pattern is incompatible, and lands are not used efficiently in every part of the town. The left bank of river Karala is found neglected, as it is not well connected with right bank of river Karala. And the concentration of educational, medical business activities help in development of the area situated at the right bank of river Karala. Absence of any large- scale industry, and consumer oriented local market facility are the reasons for slow economic development of the town. It is found that roads are of severely damage prone in nature. The rapid growth of population along with tremendous increase in the vehicular traffic, are the main causes of traffic congestion along the main roads of the town. The drainage condition is very poor, and garbage is not removed regularly. As a result the absence of good conservancy services has made the town quite unhygienic. Lack of open spaces, the scarcity of parks, and public places, pose problem to the town dwellers.

Thus, several demographic, socio-economic problems become acute because the urban facilities failed to cope up with the haphazard growth due to lack of proper planning and defective implementation of earlier plans. So proper planning for balance development is needed in the town.