

Preface

Urbanisation ,an important component of modernisation, has just started to appear in the Himalayan territories. Sikkim's largely geographical and historical similarities with the other Himalayan kingdom is likely to render the study of urban trends in Sikkim a broad theoretical significance. In other words, study of urban development of Sikkim may lead to the understanding of the nature of urbanisation in the Himalayan states.

The second objective of the study is specific which focuses on the pattern that is likely to emerge in future on the basis of the developing economy of Sikkim. In doing so it will be essential to undertake a thorough study of existing physical conditions of the towns and bring out the present limitation in this sphere. Another major objective of this study is to focus on the nature and extent of rural urban linkages that have emerged through decades, developing some of the important places into urban centres.

Finally, on the basis of a careful micro-level investigation into the nature of growth and their spatial interaction pattern that have developed over such difficult physical conditions, the study seeks to unfold the nature of dominance of the terrain and its allied aspects over the human settlements.

There is a vast literature in the field of urbanisation but the problem is that literature is rather very scanty on the processes of urbanisation in the Himalayas in general. A few articles are available here and there on urban development in the Himalayas, is mainly devoted to the Western and the Nepal Himalayan

region. Urbanisation in Sikkim and the rest of the Eastern Himalayas has still been a neglected phenomenon and in view of this, the study seeks to fill a major gap in the field of urbanisation specially in the landlocked mountain and the under developed countries

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Methodology

Library work, field survey and laboratory work comprise the three parts of the methodology. In the pre-field stage the collection of basic information and data about Sikkim were collected from publication available in different libraries and similar organizations. This involved the study of books, journals and maps etc. On the basis of which an historical, political, social, religious and cultural profile of the country could be built up. The Census Reports, Gazetteers, Statistical Handbooks, Reports written by foreign visitors in the 17th centuries etc were heavily depended upon for this purpose.

This was followed by field investigations taken on a wide scale, making personal visits to the urban centres for the collection of primary data. Different sets of questionnaires were used for obtaining information on the economic and various social activities of the urban people. Besides, extensive use of the official records available with different government organisations were made at this stage supplemented by surveys conducted for getting correct picture of the urban land use and urban morphological character.

The processing and analysis of both secondary and primary data were made at the third stage following mathematical and statistical principles on the basis of which a large set of

tables, maps and diagrams were prepared which have been included in the thesis. Maps published by the Survey of India and other organisations, Survey and Settlement Department, Govt of Sikkim, Geological Survey, Forest Survey etc provided the fundamental base for the preparation of the thematic maps.

The study has been divided into eight broad chapters and each chapter is further divided into several sections and sub-sections covering the specific dimensions of the study. Chapter I introduces the historical and geographical background of the area under study. In the geographical section emphasis is laid on the interaction between natural environment and human habitation as in the Himalayan region the development of settlements is highly influenced by the nature of terrain and its allied aspects. In this section, the settlement and population structure of this region is discussed in detail.

Chapter II deals with the growth, development and population structure of the urban areas. In the first part detailed account of the origin of these towns and their spatial distribution is presented in this chapter. In the second part, growth and structure of the urban population including distribution and density, sex and age composition, caste and community, religion, language, occupational character and the role of migration in urbanisation are discussed in details.

In the chapter III the urban land use pattern and the emerging morphological character of the towns are taken up in detail. Chapter IV provides a detailed analysis on the internal structure of 4 selected towns.

Chapter V gives an analysis of the emerging functional

character of the towns and focuses on the rural--urban interaction pattern and the emerging hierarchical arrangement of the towns.

Chapter VI makes a detailed study of the various amenities available for the urban communities. At the same time a detailed account of the urban administration of these towns has been presented in this chapter.

Chapter VII goes into the emerging problems and prospects of urbanisation in this region, highlighting the major problems related to the growth and development of these hilly towns along with the future prospect.

In Chapter VIII, which is the concluding chapter, the major findings of the study have been summarised, making observations drawn on the basis of the findings.