

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **COLONIAL URBAN DARJEELING: AN HISTORICAL RE-READINGS IN RETROSPECT**

The urbanization process in the Darjeeling Himalayas has been greatly influenced by endogenous as well as exogenous factors. Broadly speaking religious and trade centers, important halting places on caravan routes, capital towns of native kingdoms reflect indigenous urban centers whereas hill stations, cantonment towns', administrative headquarters have emerged out of exogenous factors.<sup>1</sup> Such factors can well be traced in the writings of Brian Hodgson, the British Deputy in Nepal. The treaty of Sagauli (1816) has been marked as the most important milestone of British trade enroute to Tibet. Hodgson had recorded that the British wanted to enter Nepal from 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, by any means. The conquest of Nepal, fuelled the British desire to do business with Tibet & China, along the Himalayan route. Hodgson thought of a British business empire extending throughout the Himalayas from India, through Nepal and Tibet into China. Hodgson emphatically suggested that this business route was in England's interest and not in the interest of the Company. England would be able to source tea, silk etc. from China. The Nepalese and Indian businessmen would earn through portage.<sup>2</sup>

The story of Darjeeling traces this path of history of the eastern Himalayas. There were other motives too. Hodgson knew that

Darjeeling had in itself the qualities of becoming an European habitation. The climate was suitable for the Europeans more like the climate back home. This hill station could be used to rule the plains, the wealth of the Himalayas could be utilized, the business from Nepal-Sikkim-Tibet and China could be controlled, the poor farmers from Scotland and Ireland could be rehabilitated and the Russians could be resisted from their expeditions to India.<sup>3</sup> Hodgson's promise about Darjeeling was taken up by his successors subsequently.

Captain Herbert as far as British historiography is concerned has made the first reference to Darjeeling as a potential urban settlement in the eastern Himalayas. In 1830 Captain Herbert, the then Deputy Surveyor General and J.W Grant submitted a report to the Court of Directors. Captain Herbert's analysis of Darjeeling of the first half of the nineteenth century is interesting. He mentions Darjeeling as being completely clothed with forest from the top to the bottom lying on the south of a great hollow formed by the River Rangit. To the north Darjeeling presented an open view of "range beyond range". The forest was so thick, according to Captain Herbert, that owing to the consequent sameness of tint and want of break or variety on the surface they formed a rather sober feature in the landscape, especially in cloudy weather.<sup>4</sup> Captain Herbert speaks of lack of habitation, thick continuous forest areas and an endless monotony.

Lt. Col. G.W.A Lloyd, Government Agent-in-charge of relations with the Rajah of Sikkim, and also in charge of the establishment of the Sanatorium or hill station of Darjeeling mentions that there had been great backwardness on the part of the 'Lepcha' population in the neighborhood to assist the British in any way.<sup>5</sup> According to Captain Herbert this was because a few years previously a group of Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim had been forced by the oppression of the Raja of Sikkim to flee from Darjeeling and its neighborhood and take refuge in Nepal. What little cultivation there had been, had been abandoned and the Raja prohibited his subjects from going to Darjeeling and helping the establishment in the creation of any new settlements. It is interesting to note that the growth of the urban unit of Darjeeling begins from this very time. Had there been no population or settlement at Darjeeling there would have been no question of fleeing to Nepal admitting the fact that the hill of Darjeeling was definitely occupied by local inhabitants, and when Captain Herbert had visited Darjeeling he too mentions about this very oppression of the Raja of Sikkim when 1,200 able bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim had to fly from Darjeeling and its neighborhood and take refuge in Nepal.<sup>6</sup> All these factors point out to two main aspects. Firstly, a settlement had existed in Darjeeling much before the coming of the British and secondly a sizeable Lepcha population had been residing in it.

Colonel G.W.A. Lloyd – the then Government Agent-in-charge in relations with the Rajah of Sikkim, also in charge of the establishment of the Sanatorium of the hill station in Darjeeling enumerates the following “There are no villages in the Sikkim hills that I have ever seen, each man or family lives in the midst of his own cultivation, but there are collection of huts in the similar style within a quarter or half a mile of each other, which scattered groups are sometimes for want of a better name called villages. When the Sikkim Rajah gave the Darjeeling Tract to us in the year 1835 there were no inhabitants on any part of it that I knew of except half a dozen Mechi huts towards the plains.”<sup>7</sup> An important development in the Himalayan sector specially in Darjeeling was the challenge of Tibet as a potential centre of trans Himalayan trade.<sup>8</sup>

Surrounded by Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet – for many a weary traveler it was on the road to Lhasa. Indeed throughout second half of the nineteenth century, commercial interests and strategic consideration of the British government shaped the destiny of Darjeeling.<sup>9</sup> Major Garstin an engineer in charge of sappers and miners was the Chief Engineer of the Lower Provinces. As member of the Darjeeling Association Committee he gives us a vivid description regarding pre-colonial Darjeeling. In his observations he mentions that the Darjeeling hills had “long and steep ascents and descends”<sup>10</sup> thick forest covered the hills, the mountains were more or less isolated, there were excellent fruit trees at Darjeeling including cattle

and poultry and the Meechis and Lepchas occupied small huts. Accordingly Hooker mentioned that being part of the independent kingdom of Sikkim, this mountain spur on the slopes of the Himalayas was very sparsely populated. There were not more than hundred inhabitants in the whole stretch of the mountains when the East India Company first came into contact with it. Hooker also comments that a principal feature of this area was that, the original inhabitants had Mongolian features wore their hair in pigtails, below Chinese types of hats, and they assume a bright and peculiar mode of dress.<sup>11</sup> They also practiced shifting cultivation indicating that the indigenous population were the Lepchas.

The origin of Darjeeling therefore can be traced to this very effort in the early nineteenth century to establish a sanitarium within the sub-continent where European invalids could recover from the heat and disease of the tropics. Yet the fact remains that Darjeeling soon became a part of the imperial system – that is, a part of the apparatus that allowed the British to rule India – and a far more integral part of the political and military power of the British.<sup>12</sup> The British were drawn to the Himalayas as a result of the Anglo Nepalese war of 1814-16. By the treaty of Saguli of 1816 the British had settled their relations with the frontier kingdom of Nepal and Sikkim. Relations with Sikkim was originated in the Anglo Nepalese war of 1816 and after the termination of the war the territory occupied by Nepal was restored back to Sikkim by the treaty of

Titalya in 1817. Thus emerged the extensive Himalayan frontier of British India soon to be dotted with a series of 'hill stations'

The development leading to the annexation of Darjeeling began after the Treaty of Titalya in 1817, which marked the beginning of formal relations with Sikkim. The Company had many advantages in securing an alliance with Sikkim – (a) future alliance intrigues between Nepal and Bhutan could be checked and (b) trade relations between China and Tibet could be initiated. Sikkim on the other hand joined hands with the British in order to repair back her lost territories. Though the Gorkhas were defeated and a treaty was signed at Sagauli, Sikkim was not made a party to the treaty.<sup>13</sup> However approximately a year and two months latter on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1817 the British signed a treaty with Sikkim known as the treaty of Titalya and rewarded Sikkim for her war efforts against the Gorkhas by restoring certain areas eastward of the Mechi river and westward of the Teesta river. <sup>14</sup>

According to Article 1 of the Treaty the East India Company ceded, transferred and made over to the Rajah of Sikkim and his successors all the hilly and mountainous country east of the Mechi River and east of the Teesta River which was formally occupied by the Raja of Nepal but ceded to the East India Company By the Treaty of Sagauli. By Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty The Raja of Sikkim promised to abide by the clauses of the Treaty and to abstain from any acts of aggression or hostility against Nepal or any other state

and agreed to refer to the arbitration of the British Government in case of any disputes arising between Sikkim and Nepal

Article 4 of the Treaty mentioned that the Raja of Sikkim would provide all military help and aid to the British Troops when employed in the hills. By Article 5 the Raja agreed not to allow any British American or European subjects to reside within his dominions without the prior permission of the British Government. By articles 6, 7 and 8 the Raja promised not to provide any protection to dacoits, notorious offenders, defaulters of revenue or other delinquents and agreed to safeguard the traders and merchants of the British Government within her territory. When war broke out between Nepal and the British East India Company the latter felt it necessary to secure an alliance with Sikkim a policy which they had followed all along during their various annexation policies in the case of British Indian colonial strategies.

The documented account of the beginnings of Darjeeling is based on the official correspondence between the Government in Calcutta. S.W Grant, G.W.A. Lloyd and the first superintendent of Darjeeling, W.A Campbell. Two facts clearly stand out in this correspondence: the innocence of the fair-minded but ill-informed and misled Government in Calcutta during the period, when the small Lepcha settlement was acquired, and the enormous contribution of the Indian workforce of thousands of coolies and artisans toward the establishment of the urban unit of Darjeeling.

The process for acquiring Darjeeling began twelve years after the Treaty of Titalya, when a border disputes in 1827 between Sikkim and Nepal forced Sikkim to seek help from the British government. As per Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Titalya the Governor General in Calcutta deputed in 1828 A.W.A Lloyd to follow up the recommendation of J.W. Grant, the commercial Resident at Malda, and an enthusiastic explorer of the Himalayan foothills. Both the men penetrated deep into the hills as far as north Rinchinpong in the Kulhait valley of Sikkim.<sup>15</sup> They spent six days in February 1829 and were attracted by what they saw-that is a station for its citizens and troops in the mountains, and a centre to carry trade activities. The place Lloyd and Grant inspected in 1829 was an old and deserted Gorkha military station – Dorje – ling. Though Lloyd claimed to have been the only European to first glimpse Darjeeling – it was J.W. Grant who was the originator of the idea of Darjeeling's suitability.<sup>16</sup> as a Sanatorium, since Lord William Bentick has put it on record that to the extreme earnestness of the latter (Grant) in recommending Darjeeling, that place would be mainly indebted for any importance into which it may here after a rise.<sup>17</sup>

Besides the suitability of the climate both men stressed the importance as a commercial and military centre. Darjeeling was also pointed out to be advantageous from the strategic point of view as commanding a gateway to Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet.<sup>18</sup> It was also

equally important to spread Christianity by converting the local Lamas.

The British government was literally aware about the advantages that Lloyd and Grant had mentioned. In the year 1830 Captain Herbert, the Deputy Surveyor – General and J.W. Grant was deputed to examine the hilly tract. Capt. Herbert's account was equally enthusiastic and it was resolved that the British Government should utilize the earliest opportunity and open negotiations with the Raja of Sikkim for the cession of Darjeeling to the British Government in return for an equivalent in land or money. Their reports also strongly recommended Darjeeling for a sanatorium, but it was more as a cantonment for the European regiment that Darjeeling became a valuable centre to the British.<sup>19</sup> In June 1830 Lord William Bentick proposed to start negotiation with the Chogyal of Sikkim for the transfer of the tract. His minute of 17<sup>th</sup> June 1830 noted. "Mr. Smith, the Magistrate of Rungpore, may be directed to communicate to the Rajah of Sikkim the desire of the British Government to establish a Sanatorium at Darjeeling, and if the Rajah is willing to give his consent, to ascertain the terms upon which the arrangement would be most satisfactory."<sup>20</sup> However the Governor – General's proposal was opposed by Sir C. Metcalfe. His major objections were that it would arouse the jealousy of the Nepalese and also lead to conflicts with the Raja of Sikkim. The opinions must have prevailed for the subject was not resumed till 1833 when Lord

William Bentick brought it forward once again, and it was once again, was opposed by Sir C. Metcalfe on the previous grounds.

Opportunity came in 1834 when some Lepchas were forced to take refuge in Nepal due to some atrocities meted out to them by the Raja of Sikkim and Capt Lloyd was asked to look into the aspect. But it was not till 1835 that any concrete steps were taken to occupy Darjeeling and Major G.W. Lloyd who was at that time employed on special duty on the North-East frontier was ordered to negotiate the matter with the Raja of Sikkim. But the orders of the Governor – General in Council reached Major Lloyd two days later by then the Major had already met the Raja of Sikkim and had quitted the NorthEast Frontier.<sup>21</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> February 1835 the Major advanced towards Sikkim to settle a dispute of a Zamindar named Kummo Pradhan of Moroung who had embezzled the Rajah's revenue and was planning to hand over Morung to the Nepalese.

From Major Lloyd's letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 1835 we know that on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1835 Lloyd met the Rajah on the banks of the river Teesta and on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1835 Lloyd handed over in writing a formal request for Darjeeling. The request of the Governor General in council was met with counter requests by the Rajah of Sikkim. He asked for the (a) extension of the boundary of Sikkim (b) he demanded that Kummo Pradhan, his tax collector, who had absconded with two years revenue and some Lepcha chiefs who had been seized by the British Government be handed over to the Rajah's

mercy. And (c) Dabgong in the Terai is handed over to the Rajah. The third request of the Rajah was met diplomatically by the Major. He countered the Rajah's request with one of his own, the cession of Darjeeling.

By November 1836 the British was in possession of the Darjeeling Tract. Major Lloyd and Dr. Chapman, surgeon to the Governor General's bodyguard was ordered to spend nine months as "guinea pigs" at Darjeeling.<sup>22</sup> They moved to Darjeeling in November 1836 and in 1837 the suitability of Darjeeling as a hill station was recommended. At the end of the year the Government finally decided to go ahead with the establishment of Darjeeling. An official report 'Dorje-ling' was published in March 1838 to stimulate and gauge public interest and support the government efforts. Though Major Lloyd was originally entrusted with the administration of Darjeeling the reigns of administration were later handed over to Dr. Campbell who was appointed superintendent of the district.<sup>23</sup>

When the British took over Darjeeling there was no administration worth the name. The credit for initiating the ground work must go to Col. Lloyd., who was made the Government's Agent – in charge of relations with the Rajah of Sikkim and also In-charge of the establishment of the sanatorium. The task was stupendous, but the assistance Col. Lloyd received was meager, in the name of office establishment he had a Munishi and a few peons, with Rs. 60.00 as the budget. Col. Lloyd rightly complained., " I also beg leave

to present the necessity for my being relieved from the restriction by which I was originally prohibited from incurring an expense of more than 60 rupees monthly on account of establishment of a Munshee who can write Bengally as well as Persian and Hindustanee is indispensable and is surely not remunerated b 40 Rupees per month, particularly when the dearness of provisions, cold, and continually being liable to move about is considered. I can not get a decent English Writer under nearly the same amount, and I am sometimes obliged to employ many more peons than I am allowed to draw pay for, added to which they do not consider the usual pay sufficient. <sup>24</sup> However, before he could achieve anything substantial, he had to make way for Dr.Campbell to take charge of the station.

It was Dr. Campbell who deserved to be called the real architect of the administrative infrastructure, which evolved under his parental care. Though he took over as the Officer-in-civil and Political Charge he was to exercise the Police and Magisterial authority within the ceded tract.<sup>25</sup> He was also the Officer – in-civil Judge in respect of all claims, complaints and disputes cognizable in the Civil Courts of the settlement under the Acts & Regulations in force for the Bengal Presidency.<sup>26</sup>

The Officer-in-civil charge was vested with powers usually granted to Collectors as regards attachment and sale of property for arrears of rent.<sup>27</sup> He also exercised the powers of Sub-judge in disposing of appeals from the Munsifs of Kurseong and Siliguri, but

he had no power to entertain civil suits of first instance. He was vested with the power of a District Delegate and in that capacity he dealt with uncontested applications for probate of wills and letters of administration and also disposed of intestate cases and of any applications to be declared insolvent which may be made over to him by District Judge.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Superintendent, later Deputy Commissioner, was the most important officer of the British Government in the District. And it was natural that the residence and office of this officer being located at Darjeeling would lend great importance as catalyst in the process of urbanization of the place. <sup>29</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling had, no doubt, a superhuman task before him, even though he was provided with considerably enlarged establishment compared to the establishment of his predecessors. The district being non-regulated district, the land laws of Bengal were not applicable here. The tenancy system was governed by the waste land Rules 1859. Most of gardens held the land for tea under two tenures (1) Hold in grant under Old Rules (2) Hold in Fee-Simple under New Rules Land given for tea in the former case was about 18, 89, 88 acres and about 12308 acres in the latter case (in between 1866 and 1874). <sup>30</sup>

Dr. Campbell reserved the right to use discretion under the old rule. Dr. Campbell himself asserted that the Europeans for conversion of tea gardens purchased lands given to Nepali farmers. There was a heavy demand for land to start tea gardens in

Darjeeling. Even the lands given for exclusive purpose of agriculture was converted to tea. The Act passed in 1859 replaced the discretionary grant by Campbell. The most important provisions were, the grants of waste land should be put upto auction at an upset price of Rs. 10 (1) per acre, that the sale at such auction should convey a free hold title, that existing lease hold grants might be commuted to freehold under the rules at the option of the grantee and that building locations might be commuted at the rate of twenty years purchase of the annual rent. About 9172 acres of land were sold by public auction at an average rate of Rs. 12. These lands were mainly for tea cultivation in the area.

The provisions under which the lands were put up to auction created much resentment and attempts were constantly made to evade them. Many European speculators took land and sold it to the planters, Later on amendments were made to the original waste land Rule of 1859 in order to stop the anomalies. There was a Fee Simple Rule of 1862, which allowed commutation of all farming leases given previous to the introduction of the Free Simple Rules in August 1862. The area of the lands commuted under the orders of 1862 makes a total of 21,287 acres in the old hill territory commuted to freehold without being put up to auction. These rules were changed in 1864. The demand for land was confined only to the west of Teesta of Darjeeling and Kurseong area. Kalimpong area came under the British very late and was inhabited by Bhutias and Lepchas, who

were mostly farmers. The British Policy regarding the administration of territories of India did not provide a uniform system of administration. The district was made a scheduled District by the Act of 1874(10). The scheduled Districts were not placed within the ambit of the general laws and were applied only with modification or in part. The Indian Council Act 1909 also did not bring about any change in the district.

1836 was an important landmark in the urban history of Darjeeling. It was under the guidance of Lloyd and Dr. Chapman Surgeon to the Governor-Generals bodyguard that the station embarked on a policy of development, and the suitability of Darjeeling as a future hill station was recommended. By the end of 1837 the Government in Calcutta finally decided to go ahead with the establishment at Darjeeling. An official report 'Darjeeling' was published in March 1838 to stimulate and gauge public interests and supports the Government efforts. Through Major Lloyd was originally entrusted with the administration of Darjeeling the reigns of the administration was later handed over to Campbell who was appointed superintendent of the district. By 1840 for the first time a road was constructed from Pankhabari to Darjeeling and hotels for early visitors were also started in Kurseong. Soon private houses were built at Darjeeling.

Darjeeling presented a remarkable example of the growth of population, which was mainly due to immigration from outside. The

early settlers were mainly agriculturists. Under Dr. Campbell's superintendentship reclaimed forestland were utilised for housing purposes. By 1840 forty-five locations mapped out of which 43 were taken representing 32 grantees. The clamorous newspaper campaigns earlier in the year gave the impression that large masses of people were impatiently waiting to rush up to Darjeeling, to build bungalows and houses.<sup>31</sup> In fact, applications for pottahs, or building plots, started coming in. and a sketch plan of Darjeeling in 1840 shows 45 locations of which 43 were taken representing 32 grantees; of these Messrs. Lloyd, Garstin, Martin and Sam Smith owned two plots each, Dr. Pearson three and Mr. Hepper four. 28 plots of Lebong (an extension of Darjeeling) were added (giving Hepper & Martin another three sites)" which brought the total to 56 'settler'.<sup>32</sup> Two of the first applications for grants of land to reach the newly appointed officer in civil charge came from H. M. Low and Col. Lloyd."The second application was rather more than a simple formality: it turned into an emotionally charged duel between 'the discoverer and founder of Darjeeling' and his much younger rival and successor.<sup>33</sup> It appears that Col. Lloyd had applied for a large plot of land on 1 June, just before the fatal Resolution, but the reply to the application had been returned to Dr. Campbell after his takeover and had put him into the embarrassing situation of having to inform the Colonel of the Government's refusal: "I have received and recorded your application of this date for a grant of 640 acres, or

one square mile, of land at Kurseonggurry on the terms proposed in a letter addressed by you to Government as my predecessor in this office on the 1<sup>st</sup> ultimo.”<sup>34</sup> Twenty eight more plots were extended at Leybong (an extension of Darjeeling) and in total fifty six settlers looked upon Darjeeling as their as a superior cite for residential purposes. A firm of building contractors was soon engaged and the first buildings soon dotted the landscape of the hill station. By 1<sup>st</sup> August 1839 Dr. Campbell set down certain rules for regulating the assignment of building locations and grants of lands in the “hill tract attached to the station of Darjeeling for the consideration of Government’. He prefaced his code by saying that he had endeavoured to embrace all essential points likely to become subjects of reference to himself and to furnish a rule of action which would be satisfactory assurance to settlers that their interest would not be liable to be tampered with at the discretion of the Officer in charge there.<sup>35</sup>

The ‘set of rules’ was immediately passed on to the Committee of the Darjeeling Association with a request for their observations. They accepted the bulk of the proposed rules and their suggested changes were so minimal as to be of no interest here.

***Notification***<sup>36</sup>

Political Department

Fort William

Bengal

**Rule 14:**

A space of 200 yards broad on either side of the principal line of the Kurseong to Darjeeling road reserved for building locations, grants of land for farm or other cultures cannot be made in that space. <sup>37</sup>

**Rule 15:**

Building locations of an extent not exceeding 100 yards square will be allotted to applicants subject to the payment of a quit rent of 5 Rupees per annum for each allotment. <sup>38</sup>

**Rule 18:**

Lands for agricultural purposes will be assigned to applicants in lots of not less than ten acres, and leases will be granted for the same for a term of not less than 30 years, an exemption of five years payment of rent on uncleared spots will be allowed after which rent will be leviable at the rate of 2 Rupees per acre per annum. If there be no clearance made or actual occupation with implements of agriculture at the end of five years, the lessee to forfeit his tenure. <sup>39</sup>

**Rule 19:**

At Darjeeling, Mahalderam, Kurseong and Punkabarree cleared spaces shall be allotted for shops and the dwellings of trades. People within which locations a frontage of ten yards will be let in annual lease, at a rent of not less than 10 Rupees; any increase

on this sum to be left to the discretion of the Officer (in Civil) Charge who shall regulate the amount of rent by the offices received. <sup>40</sup>

**Rule 20:**

Government reserves to itself the right of making and constructing such roads and bridges as may be necessary for public purposes in all the lands connected with Darjeeling, and also the right to such indigenous timber, stone and other materials, the produce of the land, as may be required for making and keeping the said roads and bridges etc. in repair, and for any other public works. Government also reserves to itself all mines as well as elephants' ivory and other natural productions of the tract at the bases of the Hills, also free access for all persons to all the known springs of water within the tract allotted for building locations. <sup>41</sup>

By 1913 the urban landscape of Darjeeling had changed considerably.<sup>42</sup> Reference be made of P. Robertson while he described the urban landscape of Darjeeling, that "Darjeeling is such a maze of roads and lanes that strangers easily lose themselves, and as they usually feel the steep roads and rare atmosphere very trying, it is hoped that this Guide will help them to see everything worth seeing without unnecessary wanderings." <sup>43</sup>

Robertson further describes, "From the north of the station and immediately across the railway line was the Banstead Road. Proceeding up this road one came across Turnbull Memorial School

on the right and the entrance to Malepartus, Philosopher's Cottages and Forstmann's Rink on the left. Further one found the Scotch Mission and Zenana Mission School on the right, Avalion on the left, and arriving on Auckland Road at a point opposite Ulick Villas and a little south the Union Church. As one proceeded along Auckland Road for about 280 yards, one passed the White House, The Kopje, and Rheinstein on the left and Auckland Villa on the right. To the left was the entrance to Sligo Hall, which proceeded up to Rockville Road passing on the right the north entrance to Oak Lodge, which was occupied by the Maharani School. This Woodland Hotel was on the ridge of Darjeeling spur, and fine views are obtained from it of both valleys as well as of the snows. It was fitted with electric lights throughout. <sup>44</sup>

As one leaves the station from the north and continues along the railway line for about 100 yards, one turns up Mackenzie Road on the right, and proceeds along it passing Sadi Villas and some of the Mackenzie Road houses. On the right, there were some shops. On the left, more Mackenzie Road houses, Forstmann's Rink and Beechwood House on the right and then ruby Hall and Hingun & Sons, Tailor's shops on the left to where several roads join. Keeping straight by the road, one entered Auckland Road, opposite an entrance to the Darjeeling Club. Continuing in the same direction, one passed a row of European shops on the left, to the Chowrasta, which was an open space where six roads joined in. On the right

there was a fountain and on the left the Dandy-wallas' shelter. As one proceeds up to Jalapahar Road one passes Mr. Morgenstern's flower shop and the entrance to Lodge Mount Everest on the left and then the entrance to Alma Cottage and Campbell Cottage on the right.. Fifty yards from Chowrasta lay the entrance to Ottewill's Music Shop, which was the only shop on this side of this road. Further across this road was the famous Woodlands Hotel, which exists in the same, positioned even today, and Rockville Grand. The rates were the same and they were exceptionally large. "It has an exceptionally large drawing-room from the windows of which fine views of the snows, the western valley and parts of the town are to be had, and it is fitted throughout with electric light." Moreover it was very central practically on the Chowrasta. <sup>45</sup>

From the station another road led to Banstead Road. Proceeding up this road one passes to Turnbull Memorial School. On the right, was the entrance to Malepartus, Philosopher's Cottages and Forstmann's Rink. Next one came across the Scotch Mission and Zenana Mission School on the right, Avalion on the left, and arriving on Auckland Road at a point opposite was Ulick Villas and a little south the Union Church. As one turned to the left one found Auckland Road for about 280 yards, passing White House, The Kopje, and Rheinstein on the left and Auckland Villa No. 4 on the right. The path leading up to Altamont Villas were on the right. As one turned to the right one came across Harman's Road passing the

entrance to Auckland Villa No. 3 on the right and Sligo Hill on the left. Turning to the left immediately beyond the entrance to Sligo Hall and proceeding up to Rockville Road was the north entrance to Oak Lodge, which was occupied by the Maharani School. <sup>46</sup>

Darjeeling's urban landscape therefore represented a miniature English village emanated from the St. Andrew's Church, it was built by Captain Bishop in 1843, the Government buildings. The post and Telegraph Office, the Collector's Office. Another interesting aspect that was suggestive of environments back in England was the presence of the 'Mall' at Darjeeling. The Mall was a terrain which restrained vehicular traffic and where the Britishers met in comfort and proximity. Apart from the Mall the next most familiar landmark was the number of cottages that dotted the landscape of Darjeeling. Most of these dwellings had typical British names. Thorn Cottage, Alice Villa, Avondale, Hillarrey Lodge, Haleyon House, Richmond Villa, Step 'Aside, Snow View'. Where as 'bungalows' a bybrid term of Bengali origin house virtually every Britisher in India, it was the 'Cottage' that was predominant in the hills – suggesting 'quaint atrodes of rural England'. The 'Calcutta Review' praised the "Swiss Cottage- like houses ... with their well trimmed gardens" gracing the ridges of Darjeeling. Swiss gothic remained the dominant architectural style of Darjeeling. <sup>47</sup>

So by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Darjeeling received an urban form. The health, social military and political importance was underscored

by the inauguration of large and costly public building projects. Darjeeling's physical appearance was transformed by an array of Government buildings, like the post office, Government house, the grandiose Durbar Hall, Bengal Secretariat, Cutchery, Municipal Office, Fire Station and the District Jail.

The formal transfer of provincial authority to the hill station lead not only to the establishment of Government buildings but also stately homes for heads of state. The Coochbehar Maharaja, whose residence latter became the Residence of the Governor of Bengal, the Burdwan Maharaja had their stately homes in Darjeeling. What sustained this British endeavour was the image of aloofness, which they sought to create in Darjeeling. But one of the major paradoxes is that Darjeeling or for that matters any hill station were places "where the British imagined it possible to get away from Indians depended on the contribution of the very Indians".

The revolt of 1857 lead to disorder which swept throughout northern India lead to a dramatic settlement of Britishers in the hill stations, and with the extension of the Railway along with the development of the tea industry British planters began to congregate in substantial numbers on the slopes of Darjeeling. But more significant than all this was the role of Darjeeling as a political capital. Darjeeling had become the principal residence of the Governor of Bengal and other government dignitaries. It became a political capital with an imposing array of public buildings. The

'Government Home' or the present Raj Bhawan was purchased by the British from the Maharaja of Coochbehar in 1877.<sup>48</sup> Addition and alterations were made to the existing house to adapt it for the residence for the Governor of Bengal.

Next to the Governor's Residence lay the Gymkhana Club. Official buildings like the Kutchery, the Bar Library headquarters for the police and the Forest Commissioner was also constructed. The office of the Inspector General of Civil Hospital and the Inspector General of Registration was built alongside Mount Pleasant Road. Offices of the Engineer of the Municipality, the Town Hall and the Post and Telegraph Offices on the Macherzie Road and the Jail, which was erected in 1865, became a hub of imperial power.<sup>49</sup> The Governor of Bengal at times conducted the affairs of the state from Darjeeling. It was actually Lord Canning who endorsed the idea of official visits to the hill stations. With the enlargement of the bureaucratic presence in Darjeeling the urban appearance in Darjeeling also underwent changes. What had been an overgrown Lepcha village soon started accommodating the Director General of Post Office, the Inspector General of Bengal, the Survey General of Bengal, the Director General of Telegraph and the Director General of Ordinance. By 1860 numerous governmental buildings and its boundaries stretched to all directions in Darjeeling supplemented by a rapid increase in population.

The establishment of a sanatorium led to further urban development and the corresponding growth of employment opportunities led to an increase in population. By 1852 there were seventy European houses in Darjeeling town. A hill corps was stationed there to maintain law and order and the revenue raised from the settlement amounted to Rs. 50,000. Another major factor contributing to the growth of population was the tea industry. The historical evolution of Darjeeling town was a result of therefore many factors like military defence and health. Darjeeling also developed as a sanatorium for British troops as well as civilians. In 1863 the Royal Sanitary Commission Report made a detailed study of the hill station and British Medical opinion regarded the hill stations more congenial for the health of the British troops and civilians. Places like Simla, Darjeeling, Ootacaamund soon developed as convalescent depots. <sup>50</sup> The founders of Darjeeling was to a great extent preoccupied with climate and health. The then Governor General Lord William Bentick was in favour of recommending Darjeeling as a site for a sanatorium and noted in his minutes "The great saving of European life and the consequent saving of expenses that will accrue both to the individuals and to the state". <sup>51</sup>

The attention that the Calcutta press gave to the government's efforts to establish a sanatorium in Darjeeling demonstrates how the Europeans in Bengal did indeed supported the development of Darjeeling as a health resort. And with the appointment of Dr. Arthur

Campbell of the Bengal Medical Service as Superintendent of the station in 1839 Darjeeling soon became the place for the most popular mountain sanatorium in the Eastern Himalayas.<sup>52</sup>

In Darjeeling too, by April 1883 the Eden sanitarium designed by Mr. Martin, C E the Architect to the Government of Bengal came into being.<sup>53</sup> Medical data were collected by Government physicians and most civil and military authorities in Bengal was convinced of the therapeutic value of Darjeeling. The disaster of the Afghan was of 1844 and the victory against the Sikhs in 1849 - lead to a search for places to rest and recuperate from the arduous life on the plains and Darjeeling was regarded as being extremely suitable. By 1907 there was accommodation for to sick and convalescent patients in the main building and for 18 persons in the contagious wards. 1864 started the first charitable hospital and dispensary. By 1888 it was the Victoria Hospital in Darjeeling contained 12 beds. By 1903 the population had expanded so much in Darjeeling that the accommodation of the hospital was extended considerably. By the end of the 1915 war, there was further demand for an extension of the Victoria Hospital, funds were raised and in the memory of the late Cooch Behar Maharaja - the "Cooch Behar Ward" came into existence.

The Revolt of 1857 was another great turning point of all hill stations in India and like its counterparts in other parts of the country Darjeeling was no exception to the rule. What evolved was a

heightened appreciation for the safety of the hill compound to the anxiety of the plains.<sup>54</sup> By 1864 Simla obtained official recognition as the summer capital of the Raj. By 1870(s) most of the provincial government had obtained permission to establish seasonal headquarters and summer capitals in hill stations.

The army too saw the hill stations with new eyes in the aftermath of the 1857 revolt. It had already appreciated the health benefits, it also began to appreciate their strategic value. When violence erupted in the plains below, the hill stations provided sanctuaries for many British women and children.<sup>55</sup> The military department of the government of India made an extensive survey in 1859-60 for highland locations suitable for quartering British soldiers, its intention was two fold to find out prospects for expanding existing sanatoria and also cantonments.<sup>56</sup> The 1863 Parliamentary Commission Report of the Indian Army recommended that a part of the British forces be placed in hill quarters on a rotating basis. The strategic potential of Darjeeling too was given a great deal of attention and with the development of the Himalayan Railway Darjeeling was secure from surprise attacks. Strategic conditions weighed heavily on Darjeeling. This urban unit was extremely strategically located. Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim hemmed Darjeeling on three sides. There was constant fear of intrusion. The British were extremely wary about the possibility of Nepal-Bhutan intrigues against the East India Company. In 1808 Lloyd the officer

on special duty North-East Frontier informed Fort William about a Nepali Mission to Bhutan.<sup>57</sup> Lloyd was totally without troops at Darjeeling. It was resolved that a local corps sappers and miners would be formed for Darjeeling. In February 1839, The Asiatic Intelligence wrote. "We hear sad accounts of the state of affairs at Darjeeling, arising from the neglect of government of furnish the inhabitants with the security expected. The people have got into their heads that the Goorkhas are arming and collecting in great force in the neighbourhood of intended sanatorium: a sort of panic is the result".<sup>58</sup>

Like wise military and strategic functions were extremely significant. The hill station was located in a frontier zone, adjacent to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. There was a constant fear of intrusion. The main object of British assistance to Sikkim in 1817 was to frustrate the possibility of Nepal-Bhutan intrigues against the East India Company. In 1838, Lloyd, then officer on special duty, North East Frontier, informed Fort William about a Nepali mission to Bhutan. Other reports in 1838 mentioned the danger of a Nepali threat. Lloyd was completely without troops at Darjeeling. It was resolved that a local corps of sappers and miners would be formed for Darjeeling.

It is true that no Anglo-Nepalese War or skirmish actually took place on the Darjeeling frontier after the acquisition of Darjeeling, but uneasiness prevailed. In 1854, Nepalese attacks were feared and

in 1858, Campbell reported to Captain Byers, Secretary to the Governor-General-in-Council, that Jung Bahadur of Nepal was planning an invasion of Darjeeling. In 1878, the Darjeeling administration received the news that the Nepal Darbar had strengthened garrisons all along the Darjeeling frontier. They had posted 500 men at Ilam near the frontier and sent four guns there. They has 500 men at Dunlottah and 250 at Olangorn on the Sikkim border besides a cordon of officials to prevent all exports of products, oil and grains. The Darbar had a standing army of 18,000 regulars and ample artillery of local manufacture. Their treasury was full. Through the Government of India believed that news regarding an invasion was exaggerated, they felt that a frontier force was necessary for the security of the terai part of the Darjeeling district in the 1880s. One head constable and nine men were sanctioned to improve and strengthen the police on the Nepal frontier from 1 September 1883 to 1 September 1886. There were several robberies on tea gardens in the hills as well as dacoities along the northern frontier. There was a need for a proper chowkidari system to bring all the tea gardens in touch with the district administration.

A tentative scheme was brought into effect along the Darjeeling frontier between Toribari and Simana Basti. The tea planters co-operated with the administration to make the district more secure by appointing police-chowkidars in these gardens. 'A backbone' was therefore created at no cost to the state or the district

administration. Colonel R.M. Skinnerm, District Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling, suggested that the frontier police scheme which was sanctioned for the terai only should, after a trial of three years, be extended along the entire frontier of the district on the Nepal side. He also suggested that police outposts be established at gates to maintain the main arteries leading from Nepal to Darjeeling and that a chain of patrols be established between these gates to intercept smugglers and thieves who might evade the main thoroughfare. The gates leading to the hills were Toribari (at the foot of the hills), Mirik and Simana Basti. He also proposed that a strong frontier post be placed at Jorpokri, the main gate to Darjeeling from Elam in Nepal, consisting of one head constable and eight men, of whom two would be permanently stationed at Tongloo to cover a flank route to Elam, and that the Pulbazar outpost force be increased.<sup>59</sup>

A.W. Paul, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, was of the opinion that very little had been done to keep pace with the increasing population and importance of the district. In 1872, there were no tea gardens in the hills or terai west of the Balasan. Mini, Singhia and Tumsong had not been conceived and tea gardens such as Chungtong, Soom and Takvar were unable to pay dividends. According to him, trouble had frequently broken out along this line of the district owing to their unprotected state. Tonglu and Sandakphu had not been discovered. The Singalila range forests were of no value. However, the situation was quite different in 1887. The

government for the Forest Department purchased the forests. They conserved the forests and put officers in charge. Due to the nature of their work, the officers could provide prompt protection. The increase in the number of traders also meant that police protection was necessary. The Bengal Government accepted these proposals and directed that necessary provisions should be made in the police budget for 1888 to 1889.<sup>60</sup>

By 1857, the prospect of Darjeeling as a centre for the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers attracted the attention of the government. In a letter dated 10 September 1857, E. Drummond, Officiating Magistrate, Dinajpur, suggested to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that the Sebundee Corps at Darjeeling should be raised to the strength of ten full companies with British officers, completely similar to the Kumaun and Nepalese battalion. He pointed out that this body could be raised with ease from the hill men and might be called the Darjeeling battalion. According to Durmmond, "They would in every way be more efficient, courageous, and trustworthy body of men than any to be had in the plains".<sup>61</sup> On 24 October 1857, Campbell was informed that he had been authorised in his capacity of Justice of the Peace to enlist soldiers in Darjeeling into the service of the East India Company.<sup>62</sup> The significance of Darjeeling as the headquarters of the eastern zone for the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers was considerable. Between 1886 and 1904, 27, 428 Gurkha soldiers were recruited by the Darjeeling

Recruiting Centre, The Recruiting Officer for the Gurkhas established an office in Darjeeling around 1890. The annual reports of the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling contained interesting information about the purpose of recruitment. During 1891 to 1892, 1,000 hill people from Darjeeling were recruited for military transport in Burma and 350 for Chittagong. The Deputy Commissioner wrote in the Annual General Administration Report of Darjeeling for 1892 to 1893 that 500 Nepalese were recruited for the Commissariat Department in Burma and 700 for Chittagong. Some Nepalese were recruited for building work in Assam for the Gurkha Regiment and also for Lakhimpur Battalion, the Rajshahi Division for 1897 to 1898 stated that 672 men were recruited in Darjeeling for military service of whom 439 went as muleteers on the Tirah expedition and 233 to the Burma rifles and frontier hills. 200 coolies were supplied to the Lushai Survey party in Silchar for transport activity. The Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling reported that 292 coolies were recruited during 1898 to 1899 for military service as follows:

For 10 <sup>th</sup> Burma Rifles	46
For Myitkyina Battalion	109
For Ruby Mines Battalion	38
For Lakhimpur Battalion	29
For Naga Hills Battalion	20
For North Lusha Hills Battalion	50
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<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>

These were recruits from east Nepal. Apart from them, 399 coolies from the Darjeeling recruiting office were supplied to the survey party, Lushai for transport service. The Gurkha recruitment therefore provided a durable basis for Anglo-Nepalese and Indo-Nepalese relations. The heroic record of the Gurkha soldiers is a bond between London and Kathmandu and between New Delhi and Kathmandu. Many Nepalese families of Darjeeling district still claim to be part of this military heritage. <sup>63</sup>

Anglo-Bhutan relations were not amicable in the nineteenth century. The Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, wrote to Campbell in 1841 and stated that he had received orders from the Government of Bengal regarding the establishment of an adequate police force on the Rungpore frontier to protect the people from Bhutanese aggression.<sup>64</sup> The Government of India also thought it wiser not to sell arms in the vicinity of the Bhutan frontier. The communications system was developed in the Darjeeling area to allow patrols access to the Bhutan frontier.

Hyde Clarke wrote in 1859 that the hill areas should be developed and cantonments should be established as at Darjeeling. He emphasized the strategic value of this cantonments.<sup>65</sup> In his book (1881), he highlighted the development and importance of the hill stations not only as health resorts but also for transfrontier commerce and defence of the northern frontier of India. The strategic importance of Darjeeling was discussed by A. Eden, Secretary to the

Government of Bengal in a Communication (No. 1458T dated 11 July 1864) to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department:

Darjeeling needed a kind of strategic protection. It was in an exposed position. Darjeeling had in fact come to be regarded by the inhabitants of the hills of Nepal or of Sikkim, of Bootan, and of Tibet (Lhasa) not only as a centre of British wealth and civilisation, but as a point of which the British Government was most easily assailable unless protected by an adequate Military Force. There are now on Native Troops at Darjeeling. The sappers are no longer maintained as a Military Body or subject to articles of war. The convalescent Depot used to be is empty in the cold weather, and was not at any time (to) be relied on for other duty. And there could be no doubt that, while the cantonment at Senchal afforded an admirable Sanitarium for European troops, the presence of the men there gave a feeling of security to the whole of the scattered European inhabitants of the District<sup>66</sup>

In 1865 there was a proposal to construct a cantonment and barracks for European troops in Darjeeling. The committee appointed to select the site for this purpose recommended "Brianstone" in order to combine the whole complex in one ring fence with the Convalescent Depot at Jalapahar. However, Cecil Beadon, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, argued in a Minute of 28 December 1865 that the mere civil station of Darjeeling formed only a small part of the

British interest to be protected on the Sikkim hills. Numerous tea factories and other private settlements where Englishmen stayed with their families were scattered throughout the district. These were more vulnerable as far as hostile attacks were concerned than the hill station itself. The headquarters of the Darjeeling sappers was located in the hill station and the police Reserve was nearby. The Convalescent Depot occupied a commanding position in Jalapahar.

Taking all these facts into account, the hill station of Darjeeling was the very last place to be attacked. Although there was no danger of attacks by the Lepchas, Sikkimese and Nepalis and Bhutan was too far for danger, Beadon suggested that any patrol in Darjeeling would have to be nearer the frontier than Jalapahar. Sanchal was considered advantageous as a military position. There were road linkages, accesses to the defence of all points likely to be attacked and good communications with the plains. The land belonged to the government, the climate was healthy and there was abundant space for building, exercise and recreation. Beadon felt that: as a military position, it is on the whole as good as any other, if not the very best, in the hills, that it affords equal protection to Darjeeling as it stands - to the extended sanatorium, which, in all probability will be established on the Tukdar spur, to Kurseong, to Hope Town, to the Cinchona Establishment in the valley of Rungbe and to the tea plantation throughout the Province. The barracks of Sanchal command a view of the whole of British Sikkim as much as

of Independent Sikkim, of nearly all the newly acquired hill territory of Bootan and well-known mark for many miles in every direction. Among barbarous and ignorant tribes the site of a British Cantonment ever present to their view and ever reminding them of the existence of a power which is irresistible cannot fail to produce – as it undoubtedly does produce – a great moral effect.<sup>67</sup>

The Commander-in-Chief recommended the proposal, the Governor General-in-Council considered the matter and directed the adoption of necessary measures for early and permanent construction of accommodation at Senchal for a wing of British Infantry and a Battery of Garrison Artillery. It was suggested that the Senchal barracks should be arranged so as to be defensible in the event of a crisis so that a portion of the troops could move out for offensive operation. Newall wrote in 1873 that his Report of 1872 had pointed merely to a defence of the Town and Station of Darjeeling but as much valuable property was included within the district, he had thought it expedient to acquire a knowledge of the frontiers where it was possible that an enemy might be met with advantage, so as, if possible, to keep the enemy at arm's length and out of the district.

There was a belt of dense bamboo forest clothing the crest of the hills bounding the western or Nepal frontier which formed an effectual barrier to any possible invasion from that quarter but there was one weak point: behind the ridge forming the British Indian boundary called Tongloo existed the Fort of Elam in Nepal about

eight miles from the frontier, dominating a fertile valley, where the Nepalese government possessed a considerable garrison, with granaries, store-houses and several field guns. The fortress was about eight hours or less from the British Indian frontier pillar or post no. 17, which was situated at the point about equidistant from the British Indian boundary line of road turns north along the Nepal frontier and was converged on Pillar 17 from the Fort of Elam and the Nepalese Government could send troops along these roads and in the course of one long night throw a force of 5,000 or 6,000 men, with occupying the ridge from "Lepchajuggut" to "Senchal", the key of Darjeeling, by an army twenty or thirty times the strength of the garrison. He recommended that a block-house which could hold 50 to 100 native levies or police in an emergency should be constructed there. Post no. 17 could be held by police or volunteers placed in telegraphic communication with the main position of Jalapahar and would form a valuable outpost on the line of least resistance into Indian territory.<sup>68</sup>

Newall (1887) discussed the strategic importance of Darjeeling and strongly advocated the military colonisation of the hills. He referred to the views of Clive, Warren Hastings, Wellington, Munro, Bentinck, Metcalfe, Ellenborough, Dalhousie, Malcolm, Canning, Lawrence and others, all of which had favoured hill colonisation. According to him, "The occupation of a ridge of mountain forming water parting whence issue the rivers which fertilise domination of

the plain country embraced with in those rivers".<sup>69</sup> He therefore argued that the troops in the mountain ranges of Garhwal and Kumaon should command the Doab, through Dehra Dun, as far as Allahabad. The group of hill stations as far as the Ganges. Troops at Darjeeling should command southeast Tirhut and Bengal as far as the Brahmapurta. Moreover, in the event of war with Nepal, Newall believed that Darjeeling would constitute the refuge of the whole district and might find it difficult to maintain itself. There were several splendid plateaus in Darjeeling and across the Tista suitably adopted for this purpose. Newall suggested that an arrangement could be made with the Raja of Sikkim according to which the country up to the frontier might be acquired in return for a pension or money gratuity. Newall hoped that "The country up to the granite walls of Thibet would then be ours, and available for settlement, and I scarcely know of any country more calculated to form a refuge or "military circle" such as I have suggested. In this fine hill district, then, since Nepal and Valley of Khatmandoo cannot be availed of, I would suggest the establishment of a Grand Southern Military Reserve Circle for Bengal".<sup>70</sup> It is evident that Darjeeling occupied a very important strategic location in the British Indian defence perimeter. The cantonments at Jalapahar and Katapahar developed as a spatial response to the need for defending the British Indian Empire.

It is therefore hardly surprising that Darjeeling also established itself as a place of political importance. By 1850 Government statutes permitted hill stations form Municipal Governments with the authority to tax and regulate their respective urban units. Corroborating the statutes, Darjeeling Municipality was established on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1850. However popular participation and civic administration began from the year 1847. Ever since its inception, the Municipality was placed in the 1<sup>st</sup> schedule along with Khulna, Hazaribagh, Muzzaferpur, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur in which the commissioners were appointed by the local government. Each of the chairmen was to be appointed by the local government. It was only in the year 1916 a nomination cum election of the commissioners was held on trial basis. Before 1916 the Darjeeling Municipality was controlled by nominated Commissioner under the Bengal Municipal Act (III of 1884) and a special Acts (I of 1900).<sup>71</sup> When the Darjeeling Municipality was first set up in 1850 the town had a population of 20,000.<sup>72</sup>

However, what was more important from the local point of view, and from the point of view of maintenance and growth of the town itself, was the institution of the local administrative body, i.e., the Municipality which was more intimately concerned with the urbanization of Darjeeling. The Darjeeling Municipality was constituted in July 1850 in accordance with the Act of 1850, the second Hill station to have its own town administration, the first

being Simla.<sup>73</sup> Originally the limits of the Municipality were co extensive with those of the tract ceded from the Rajah of Sikkim, which covered an area of 138 sq. miles, extending from the hills below Pankhabari to the borders of Sikkim in the north. But later its limits were confined to the limits of the town of Darjeeling only which included an area of 8.85 sq. miles between Jorebungalow in the south, the Tukvar below St. Joseph's College in the North. On the East, it was bounded by the Calcutta Road and a strip of land below it. The boundary line then ran past and below the Chowrasata and the Bhutia Basti until it joined the boundary below St. Joseph's College on the West. It was further bounded by the Hill Cart Road and a strip of land below it besides another boundary line continuing past and below the Bazaar through the Happy Valley Tea Estate squaring up with the boundary below St. Joseph's College.<sup>74</sup>

The Municipality comprised of 25 members/Commissioners including the Deputy Commissioner who was the ex-officials Chairman. There was no democratic election system. The members were either officials or nominated non-officials in which the domination of the white members was pronounced. Even non-officials nominated members were mostly Europeans. It was only much later that a few Indians were nominated, though they were in no way people's representatives nor they represented their interest neither aspirations. There were other constraints, which made it difficult for the indigenous members to be effective. The formality and

protocol observed at meetings was as alien to the as it was awesome. The presence of senior bureaucrats and the uses of English added to the reluctance or inability of the local Indians to participate in the process of governance. The forum was further restricted since several areas of Municipal management were reviewed exclusively and kept confidential by official members.<sup>75</sup> The following table amply brings out the limitation of the Darjeeling Municipality from this point of view.

**Table No. II : 4**

**Classes of Municipal Members**

Year	Total	Elected	Number of Member		Europeans	Indians
			Official	Non-Official		
1891	25	-	7	18	21	4
1896	25	-	7	18	21	4
1901	25	-	7	19	22	3

Source : Annual Reports of the Darjeeling Municipality <sup>76</sup>

True the Municipality was not a representative institution, but it undoubtedly exerted itself to the utmost to make the town as comfortable and pleasant a place as possible. For after all "in a town where so much depends upon appearance and the beauty of the place forms an attraction for visitors that care had to be taken by the city fathers."<sup>77</sup> As the responsibilities of the Municipality grew with time it divided the town into nine wards and a committee comprising of Commissioners was appointed to report on and attend to the

affairs of each ward. These Committees were not entrusted with any specific powers but all questions concerning the area were referred to the respective ward Committee for report prior to begin brought before the Commissioners at a meeting. All questions regarding quarrying and excavations referred by the Executive to Ward Committee concerned before each applications were disposed of.<sup>78</sup> Beside the Ward Committees there were a number of Consultative committees formed for the various department of the administration. They consisted of Assessment, Audit & Finance, legislative, Executive, & works, Sanitation & conservancy, Hospital & Dispensary. These sub-committees considered questions of importance in their respective departments before submission fro the decision of the commissioners in meeting.

By 1900 the Municipal area of Darjeeling was divided into 10 wards. Excluding the cantonments of Jalapahar and Lebong the Darjeeling Municipality measured an area of 4.08 square miles. The activities of the Municipality were numerous; the most important activity being the generation of electric energy and its supply to the town and to neighbouring tea gardens. The water supply was obtained from springs on Senchal, the water of which was collected in two lakes and filtered mechanically. Conservation of Darjeeling town in the form of health activities like bazaars, slaughterhouses, vaccination, registration of births and deaths and creation of dispensaries was prevalent. Roads both metalled and unmetalled

existed in the Municipal area. An interesting development was the introduction of special building regulation due to loss of life from landslide in 1899. By 1900 a special Act was passed legalizing building regulations, drainage provision and protection of slopes became essential. Where hill sides had to be protected owners of private land were compelled to direct or close roads to repair or remove buildings so as to protect sites against risk of erosion and to maintain or close drains. New buildings, drains, roads were similarly controlled.

Darjeeling Municipality itself had a number of buildings, which were rented out. The collection of rents as well as the general administration of rent collection from land and from locations was controlled by the secretary of the Municipality while the Municipal Engineer was responsible for the maintenance and repair of all Municipal buildings, roads, water supply and drainage.

The present day three sub-division of Darjeeling district namely Darjeeling, Kurseong, Siliguri became a part of the British government by 1840. By 1865 through conquest the British Government occupied Kalimpong and the Dooars and eventually the four sub-divisions made up the district which remains till date. By the Act of 1874 Darjeeling was declared as a scheduled district. A special status was given to the district along with four other districts of Bengal – that is Acts and Regulations did not come into force unless they were specially extended to the District.<sup>79</sup> By the

Government of India Act of 1919 the term scheduled District had been replaced by a new term "Backward Tract".<sup>80</sup> The administration of the district was then vested in the Governor in Council,<sup>81</sup> who had the authority to bring about changes in the administration of the district as they thought appropriate. By the Government of India Act 1935 the administrative system in Darjeeling again underwent changes and "Backward Tract" was substituted by "Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" areas, and remained so till India gained independence in 1947.

The administrative changes of Darjeeling from "Non Regulated" to "Scheduled" to "Backward Tract" to "Excluded" to "Partially Excluded" points to one aspect, Darjeeling remained throughout the greater part of the British rule in India, exclusively designed to protect British imperial designs in the region.<sup>82</sup>

Darjeeling district was primarily designated as a Non-Regulation district. That is the Acts and Regulations did not come into force unless they were specifically extended to Darjeeling. The entire Darjeeling Hills belonged to the Non-Regulation Scheme before 1861. It was kept under the general regulation system for a short period of 1861-1870 but the necessity of taking it out of the regulation system was insisted on. Three important considerations mattered much in favour of bringing Darjeeling under Non-Regulation system : (1) preservation of indigenous system of land tenures (2) necessity of entrusting undivided responsibilities to the

District Officer (3) formulation of simple laws in conformity with native institutions and simplicity of local people.<sup>83</sup> Being inhabited by a comparatively backward and mostly ignorant tribal people, Darjeeling remained under Non-Regulation Areas and had from time immemorial enjoyed an indigenous system of land tenure which they could understand and which they did not like to part with. The appointment of the district officer in a Non-Regulation area with enough freedom to act in a given situation, as one visible authority, was guided by this consideration alone. Although such a policy was advocated for protection of simple tribal people, from the viewpoint of progress and advancement it was exclusive and detrimental. In terms of advancement Darjeeling was far ahead of districts under Regulation Laws with regard to basic civic amenities such as road improvements and maintenance, supply of drinking water, markets, health facilities and educational opportunities. Nonetheless, it was kept segregated from districts under Regulations in respect of its administration.<sup>84</sup>

The future prospective administrative arrangement for the district of Darjeeling, considered as less advanced district, was placed under the Governor-General from 1870 to 1874. After this it was brought within the purview of the Laws Local Extent Act 1874 (also known as the Scheduled Districts Act). The Act provided that in the listed districts "the normal legislation and jurisdiction were in force only in part or with modifications if necessary of any enactment

in force at the time in any part of British India". Therefore, the district was not placed within the ambit of the general laws in application over the rest of India: such laws were, as mentioned before, applied only in part or with modifications. Darjeeling district was Scheduled Area and hence outside the purview of laws applicable to the areas not coming under the Act. The administrative arrangement provided for remained unaltered for quite a long period.<sup>85</sup>

By retaining almost all the provisions for scheduled districts and their corresponding administration. The Government of India Act, 1919 brought all the scheduled districts under a new terminology, "the Backward Tract". The backward tract was subject to special laws usually reflecting simple and elastic forms of judicial and administrative procedure. The district of Darjeeling was a 'Backward Tract' and remained so till the passing of the Government of India Act 1935 which declared the district as a Partially Excluded Area. Thus an Act either of the federal legislature or the provincial legislature was not extended to the partially excluded area, unless the Governor of the province would give his assent to the application of the Act in its totality or with such modifications or exceptions as he deemed necessary. The Governor could also make regulations for such area for peace and good government.<sup>86</sup> In the case of a partially excluded area the Governor had to consult the Council of ministers so Darjeeling became a partially excluded area within the province of

Bengal.<sup>87</sup> But there was a time when the British took Darjeeling out of Bengal (Rajshahi sub-division) between 1907 and 1912, when they tagged Darjeeling to the Bhagalpur sub-division of Bihar. The reason given was the common use of Devnagari script by the Nepalis and Hindi-speaking people which made administration simpler at least in theory. But later in 1912 Darjeeling was re-transferred to Bengal.<sup>88</sup>

The district of Darjeeling thus fell apart from the general administrative system of the British territories of India though the description for this district's pattern differed from time to time. As a result, the nature of growth and corresponding urban formation had become almost a different type of historical experience. It was a part of the non-regulation areas since the acquisition of its territories till 1861. It was under the direct responsibility of the Governor-General in regard to legislation from 1870 to 1874. It was a scheduled district from 1874 to 1919. It was a backward tract from 1919 to 1935. It was a partially excluded area from 1935 to the end of the British rule.<sup>89</sup> The British Raj sought to sustain Darjeeling at any cost. The Act of 1919 mentioned that

- (a) Darjeeling would be treated as "backward tract"
- (b) The provision of the Act would apply subject to specified exceptions and modifications
- (c) The Governor was entrusted with the responsibility of determining the extent of applicability or otherwise of the Act.

(d) The Act passed by the legislature of Bengal would apply to the district subject to such exceptions and modifications as the Governor might fit.<sup>90</sup>

The separation of Darjeeling was maintained primarily on the grounds of strategic location, Military importance, race, language and interest of the inhabiting Europeans and local tribes. The striking dissimilarities with the plains-men in all the above aspects were considered factors not permitting uniform administration for the entire country. The persistent policy of the British rulers in this century to keep the district of Darjeeling segregated from the rest of British territories was not formulated and pursued always for the benefit of the people. Rather the British imperial interest was the more compelling justification for this policy. It is British imperial interest, which needed that the border areas on the north were placed under the direct management of the rulers of the empire. It is the same interest, which needed that these areas were kept out of the Constitutional reforms<sup>91</sup> (intent of which were ushering in the process of Self-Government). Thus throughout the history of British rule, the rulers never allowed the district to come within the national mainstream, and within the purview of the general administration.<sup>92</sup> This shows that there was necessity of keeping the vast frontier tract under constant vigil. There were lurking suspicions that the frontier areas under self-governing status would try to develop relationship with foreign countries inimical to British interest in India. (Among the people of Darjeeling and the neighboring countries like Nepal,

Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet there was ethnic proximity, as they were of Mongolian origin that posed a threat to British hegemony.) Above all, the fear that mismanagement of affairs in the frontier areas would lead to wider conflagration affecting the Commonwealth of Nations and the world at large.<sup>93</sup>

Between 1835 and 1947 Darjeeling area was under the British Rule. History shows that the importance of Darjeeling lay in its advantages as a sanatorium (due to the cool climate it served as convalescent homes for the sick), its position as the sole hill station of Calcutta, its occupation for military purposes, its position of strategic importance as watch tower commanding the entrance into Nepal and Bhutan and keeping vigil, its safest and shortest route to Tibet to expand trade and thwart the possible penetration of Russia. Due to its climate and geographic location Darjeeling had many advantages to offer to the British Masters as a result of which they saw it in their Imperial interest to keep the area (which was a border/frontier area) under direct management and under constant vigil and keep the administration of the area segregated from the rest of British India.

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